

The Ironman

(An Insightful Analysis)

Ghanendra Purush Dhakal



Ganeshman Singh Foundation
Thapathali, Kathmandu

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**Dedicated to
those involved in the process
of consolidation of democracy
and a prosperous Nepal !**



Appreciation

Ganeshman Singh Foundation has been publishing books relating to democratic struggles, people's movements, uprisings, and revolutions in Nepal. We deal with researched work, analysis of protagonists, heroes, revolutionaries, and martyrs too. We believe that such events and their contributions may encourage the future generations to sacrifice for the sake of their motherland. This book, 'The Ironman', authored by Mr. Ghanendra Purush Dhakal is a link in the same chain. This book not only provides a historical perspective but is also an analytical biography. On top of that, this book provides credibility as it complements and supplements Ganeshman-ji's autobiography 'The Pages of My Story'.

Dhakal-ji has been close with Ganeshman Singh since 1971 AD (2028 BS), when Ganeshman-ji had been in exile in India. This relation was strengthened by their shared experiences of the Janamat Sangraha (Referendum) of 1981, the Satyagraha of 1986, and the Jana Andolan of 1990 (People's Movement 2046 BS).

After the success of People's Movement in 1990, many of the Congress Party members got embroiled in election and power

politics. However, Dhakal-ji, being involved with Ganeshman-ji's endeavour towards the consolidation of democracy, recounted the events in a book entitled 'Jana Andolan: 2046', which Ganeshman-ji had high praise for. He continued to support Ganeshman-ji's determined efforts to promote democracy, which are revealed in this book as well.

Dhakal-ji was also fully involved with the 'Janajagaran Abhiyan' (People's Awareness Campaign) which Ganeshman-ji spearheaded in the latter part of his life. It is referred to in this book as 'Ganeshman Singh's Third Struggle'. Such closeness with great men is a rare opportunity. Dhakal-ji has enriched the history of Nepal by making public the evidence of the events of that period.

Since the Ganeshman Singh Foundation aims to continue publishing non-biased analytical books such as this one by Dhakal-ji, I request all authors who write about such important periods to come forward. We will always strive to publish such books. Thank you!

Prakashman Singh

Executive Chairman

Ganeshman Singh Foundation, Kathmandu

Contents

Prologue	1
Regarding English Translation	13
A Primer	17
1. An Iron Man, A Virtuous Man, A Sage !	21
2. The Thorny Leaves of a Promising Plant !	49
3. A Prison or an Aspirational Center !	69
4. Ganeshman Singh's Role Models	103
5. People's Movement 1990	139
6. A Roadmap for the Development and Consolidation of Democracy	245
7. People's Awareness Campaign	281
8. Birbhogya Basundhara !	351
9. A Phenomenal Man !	387

Prologue

Nepal is one of the oldest countries in the world, and for more than a century in its history, it was ruled by the harsh autocratic regime of the Ranas. From 1846 AD to 1951 AD, the King was merely a ceremonial head and the Ranas (Prime Ministers) were the real rulers of the country. All positions of authority were occupied by the Ranas, whether it be a military position or an administrative position, and all words of praise and glory were reserved for the Ranas only. People were deprived of cheering for their leaders. However, on 14 February 1951 AD (Falgun 02, 2007 BS), a huge crowd of people descended on Tundikhel, the biggest public square in the heart of Kathmandu (the capital), to revere and exult their leader with slogans like 'Bir Ganeshman Zindabad!' (Bir Ganeshman, Long May He Live!) and 'Hamro Neta Ganeshman, Zindabad!' (Our Leader Ganeshman, Long May He Live!). They shouted for hours until their throats went dry. The Nepalese people, inspired by Ganeshman-ji's heroism and courage in the face of possible death against the Rana rule, believed him to be the reason they could finally escape their slavery and become respected citizens of this country. The millions of people were therefore gathered, on one hand, for gratitude and respect towards their savior and beloved leader, and on the other hand, for the joy of their own liberation. During that time, only the Ranas were bestowed with any kind of honorifics. The word leader was not uncommon in

personal circles, as Ganeshman-ji himself used to call Tanka Prasad, the Chairman of the Praja Parishad, a leader. Ganeshman-ji considered the past martyrs Ganga Lal, Dharmabhakta, and Shukraraj as his personal leaders, gurus, and even deities. However, the point to be made is that Ganeshman Singh was the only leader who was publicly accepted by millions of Nepalis. This is the reality of Nepal's history. My rationale is that historians and scholars must assimilate this fact of serious importance. Just as Bhanubhakta was called 'Adikavi', just as Laxmi Prasad Devkota was called 'Mahakavi', so should Ganeshman Singh be considered as 'Adineta' or 'First Democratic Leader' of the country because he was hailed by millions of Nepalis as their saviour. The Nepali people established Ganeshman Singh as their first democratic leader in 1951, however the Jana Andolan (People's Movement) of 1990 established him as their 'Supreme Leader'. After the success of the People's Movement 1990, King Birendra offered Ganeshman Singh the post of Prime Minister, and he was requested to accept it by not only by his own Nepali Congress but also by all the leftist forces of Nepal. However, he denied the honor. Therefore, Ganeshman Singh is the singular most respected leader in the history of Nepal.

Two incidents in particular made Ganeshman-ji an idealist and dutiful towards the people. With regard to both of these incidents, he himself says, "I have not forgotten the words of the martyrs and the faith of the people. When my body feels weak and my mind is tired, when I start thinking of spending the rest of my life in solitude apart from politics, I am reminded of the image of my friend and martyr Gangalal and his last words 'Don't forget my blood'. Similarly, I hear once again the slogans chanted by the procession of millions in my name, shouting 'Our Leader Ganeshman', and my mind tells me, 'Ganeshman! You cannot run away, you cannot escape from your responsibilities'. After

standing witness to that last sentence from Martyr Gangalal-ji, I was determined to free the Nepalese people from the clutches of tyrannical rule. *On the day that the people accepted me as their leader, I promised myself that I will not abandon or disappoint them. I have to fulfill the duty and responsibility of a leader. Therefore, I have decided I will not rest until all the people are free from tyrannical rule.'*

Ganeshman-ji is a very unfortunate politician. Through such sacrifice, penance, and suffering, Mahatma Gandhi became the 'Father' of India. His photo is inscribed in Indian currency. All over India, gardens, orchards, cities, canals, highways, and hundreds of other structures have been established and operated in his name. However, in Nepal, the name of Ganeshman Singh is forgotten like anything, while his contribution to the nation is no lesser than that of Gandhi or Mao to their nations. No one has built a single national-level institution to commemorate this person who worked so tirelessly for five decades to bring freedom and democracy to the people. How will future generations view us? This question haunts me - therefore, I am selflessly determined to do more for Ganeshman Singh to fulfill my civic duty.

This book which I have written is not only a biography of Ganeshman Singh, but also an analysis of his personality. In Nepal there is a tendency to hastily call someone a leader, statesman, or a great man just because the follower has attachment, prejudice, or attraction towards them. Or, in some cases because the follower has been influenced by them or gained benefit from their meager efforts. I believe that leaders who should be praised are being forgotten, and those who are not worthy are being exulted; I believe this is a wrong tendency.

It is an author's responsibility to confirm, from many sources and angles, that which we write. I have called Ganeshman-ji a 'virtuous man', an 'iron man' and a 'sage', therefore it is my

responsibility to prove and confirm that. In the chapters of this book, I have given in-depth and detailed arguments as to why he deserves those terms.

This book analyzes the personality of an Ironman in the political history of Nepal, to whom our generation could not do justice because of our prejudices. Although this book may not be able to awaken consciousness against these prejudices for our generation, it may be useful for future generations who will appreciate and have much to learn from a personality like Ganeshman Singh.

The launching of the so-called 'new education system' in Nepal in the year 1972, and the student movement against it, brought me to the city of Banaras, India. At an impressionable age, it is normal to be attracted to rebels and rebellion. Under the pretext of continuing my education in Banaras, I came into contact with B.P. Koirala, Ganeshman Singh, and Comrade Pushpalal. My grandfather Sardar Upendra Purush Dhakal was acquainted with the families of B.P. Koirala and Ganeshman Singh. In 1949, Sardar Upendra Purush had proved to be an instrumental person trusted by both the Rana Regime and the Nepali Congress Party in convincing B.P Koirala to break his 29-day long hunger-strike.

Of the three leaders, I grew closer with Ganeshman Singh in Banaras, perhaps because we both were from Kathmandu. Additionally, he was the grandson of Badakazi Ratnaman Singh and I was the grandson of Sardar Upendra Purush Dhakal, two individuals whose families were closely overshadowed by the feudal culture of Rana rule. Later, Ganeshman-ji became the symbol and hope of democracy, and I became his ardent supporter. Strange coincidence, ours!



Badakaji Ratnaman Singh,
Grandfather of Ganeshman Singh

The post of Badakazi that Ganeshman Singh's grandfather held was in fact the highest position of honour that any member of the general public could attain. All stations above the post of Badakazi could only be filled by members of the Rana family. Being in close proximity to the Prime Minister (Shree Teen Maharaj) and being his direct subordinate, the position of Badakazi was considered a power-center and held in the highest esteem. Additionally, the position of Sardar was only second in line to the Badakazi, and was also considered a privileged position.



Sardar Upendra Purush Dhakal,
Grandfather of the Author

In the year 1986, a few months after the leaders and activists who were jailed during the Satyagraha movement were released from jail, revered sage-politician Krishna Prasad Bhattarai encouraged me and my friends (Mathbar Singh Basnet and Hari Adhikari) to start publishing at least a weekly. Out of respect to him, we started publishing 'Vishwa Sandesh Weekly' in which Kishun-ji also used to contribute a column. In order to further enhance its readership, we decided to add a series of biography-articles of Ganeshman Singh, the supreme leader of the Nepali Congress. Every day, at a certain time we would reach

Ganeshman-ji's residence in Chaksibari and he would speak into the tape-recorder. Mathbar-ji would transcribe the audio and make the necessary edits. It started publishing in our newspaper under the title 'The Pages of My Story'. Mathbar-ji continues to do the same work to this day, and his dedication is to be appreciated!

This book is based on, and extrapolates from, Ganeshman-ji's 'The Pages of My Story' (a three-part series), as well as my own previous books 'Jana Andolan: 2046' and 'Ganeshman Singh in the Eyes of Historic Persons, 2059'. The experiences shared during my journey with Ganeshman-ji are included as well. In fact, it is believed that there is a quality and tendency of great men to never praise themselves, and Ganeshman-ji was no different. So, in this book I have tried to dissect his personality and unveil his good deeds. History would have cursed us if we had not carried out such excavations.

I took up the task of writing this book while under confinement from the deadly pandemic brought about by Coronavirus in the year 2019, which has thus far claimed almost 7 million lives. Although this deadly virus gave me the opportunity to complete this book, I strongly hope that such a calamity never be unleashed unto the world again.

Upon reading this book, one will become aware as to how the Nepali Congress Party has neglected one of the founding pillars of their own existence. Ganeshman-ji never once forgot the people, yet it is unthinkable how his own party seems to have forgotten him. We have ignored such a great ironman of this generation. Is it not our responsibility to do our part, however small, for those who have sacrificed themselves for us?

I spent the most energetic part of my life advocating for, and in support of, the Nepali Congress Party and its philosophy. It is a matter of pride for me to have been part of its history. However,

after Ganeshman Singh stopped engaging in politics, I too severed ties with the Nepali Congress. The behaviour and attitude of the Nepali Congress Party had upset and saddened many of its youth, like myself. The Nepali Congress movement was established in the service of the country and in the promotion of democracy, however its neglect of the memory of great men like Ganeshman Singh also weakened in me the enthusiasm for writing. This scenario bred distaste for Nepal's political arena, and it also stopped me from writing for over a year. But later, I recall four incidents which not only motivated me to start writing again, but also taught me that writers play an important role in society, that they should be accountable to their readers, and that a writer ought not to be selfish. I then resumed writing columns in the newspaper again, and this book is also a part of the result.

The first incident. One day as I was resting after lunch, the telephone rang. A woman by the last name of Acharya was on the other end of the line. After the formal greetings and introduction, she seemed to be an educated and matured person. She said, "Dhakal-ji! It took me a long time and much hassle to find your telephone number, but I finally found it. I am a fan of much of your writing, but I haven't read any of your articles in months. Why is that? Look, once a writer starts writing in public, he is no longer just a person. Many readers also become connected with him. Therefore, a writer must also understand his readers. You need to know that you can't just quit quietly. No, if you don't want to write, you should inform your readers that you will not be writing in the future! I've called to remind you of this responsibility.' As the phone ended, I realized from her words just how far the responsibility of a writer reaches!

The second incident. I was the last speaker at an event organized by the Ganeshman Singh Foundation. After finishing my speech, I was making the necessary arrangements as an

organizer. Out of the corner of my eye, I saw a person leaning on one of the pillars in the hall, waving his hand and gesturing to me. As I walked towards him, I realized it was none other than revered senior professor Aishwarya Lal Pradhanang. I asked, "Sir! What can I do for you?" He replied, "Mr. Dhakal! A year ago in Kantipur Daily, you wrote an article called 'Sultan for a Day', do you remember?" I said, "Yes, sir, I remember." He said, "Yes, this is what writing should be. Your articles serve society and the country. Congratulations to you, Mr. Dhakal, and thank you for the good writing!"

The third incident. I live in a joint family, in a flat system, with my elder brother Dipendra Purush and my younger brother Lokendra Purush. We live in the house built by my father on my grandfather's land. One morning, revered Krishna Bahadur Manandhar, then 86 years of age, the former Chief Secretary to the Government of Nepal, came to my house with his aide. Outside in the garden, he said to my elder brother, "Dipendra-ji! Today I have come to visit your brother Ghanendra. Will you please introduce me?" I had never met him before. Krishna Bahadur-ji, due to his advanced age, could hardly sit in my living room for two minutes. He said, "Look, Dhakal-ji! I read your articles regularly. I like them very much. Your writings on B.P. Koirala, Ganeshman Singh, the People's Movement, the values and beliefs of democracy and ethics, and such topics have a far-reaching impact on society. I do not want to miss any of your articles, so I have instructed my son to make sure that the newspaper reaches me on the days that your articles are published. I have come here just to tell you this, and to thank you." Such a respected senior, and at such an advanced age! His enthusiasm and vigor, his affection towards an ordinary writer like me – it left me shocked!

Now we arrive to the fourth incident! My wife Rekha Dhakal is a student of culture. (These days, both of us partake in the

same spiritual class, and we have been involved in it for over a decade.) One day, after seeing me not writing for a long time, she said, “Look, a personality like Ganeshman Singh is a cultural heritage of this country. It is also the right of future generations to read or seek information about the deeds of heroes like him. Therefore, more and more untold stories should be written by people like you who were in his company for long periods. One of the hallmarks of good people like Ganeshman-ji is that they do not praise themselves, rather they try to hide their contributions to society. Therefore, if you, like others who have known him for a long time, remain silent, his contribution to the nation may be wasted. So, you should not give up writing!”

These events are representative events which I consider to be rewards for the writer in me. Such feedback not only made me feel a sense of responsibility towards my readers, but also made me realize that writers should not hesitate to unveil history. As a result, I resumed writing an article every month or two.

I think the greatest and most important achievement of Ganeshman-ji's life is to bring the Jana Andolan 2046 (mass movement) to a successful conclusion. Were it not for him, the people's movement would not have taken place, and it would have been an unsuccessful undertaking despite all the difficulties. In order to prevent the erasure of this important part of history, I published a book called 'Jana Andolan 2046' in 1993. The book was unveiled by ascetic-politician Krishna Prasad Bhattarai. Speaking as the chief guest during the event, eminent leader Ganeshman Singh said, “Many people tried to write about the 1951 revolution, but not a single meaningful book was published. This time, within two years after the success of Jana Andolan 2046, our friend Dhakal-ji wrote and published this authentic book himself. On one hand, it has served the country, and on the other hand, it has made him immortal.” This compliment I received from Ganeshman-ji is what I consider to

be the most valuable gift of my life. Subsequently, in the year 2003, the Ganeshman Singh Foundation published the second book, 'Ganeshman Singh in the Eyes of Historic Persons, 2059', which is co-authored by Revatiraman Subedi and myself. In this book, Ganeshman Singh's contemporaries, regardless of their political alignments, have frankly spoken about the contributions of Ganeshman-ji. Although the experiences and perspectives of the 26 historic figures included in the book are each different, they all seem to concede on one point: that the greatest leader of Nepal is Ganeshman Singh!

My journey with Ganeshman-ji has been a long one, from 1972 to 1998. I have stood alongside him and served him as his political aide in his difficult times. Once he got involved in politics, he hardly had any opportunities to experience any moments of happiness. Even if joy appeared in his life for a moment, it would have briefly disappeared. His mind must have experienced peace and happiness in the year 1991, because it was then that the Nepali Congress came to power. It is not possible to gauge how mentally burdened he may have been after that. Thus far, he had only fought against autocratic rulers like the Ranas and Shahs for democracy, but after Nepali Congress came to power, he now shouldered a double-responsibility to protect and promote democracy. Ganeshman-ji's concerns increased after sensing both his party and the new government carrying forth the ambition of becoming 'elected' dictators. Look at the irony! Therefore, Ganeshman-ji never got time to relax and experience peace until his death.

I witnessed many personalities in this wonderful person named Ganeshman Singh. Among the seven hundred verses in the Bhagavad Gita, Lord Krishna is addressed by his disciple Arjun in many different contexts as Madhav, Achyut, Madhusudan, and so on, and so forth! Similarly, out of respect, I have also addressed Ganeshman-ji in this book with adjectives

like Decent Man, Great Man, Virtuous Man, Iron Man, Statesman, and A Sage, etc! In this book, I have made sincere efforts to explain why Ganeshman-ji is deserving of these honorifics.

In each of the nine independent chapters of this book, the subject matter is analyzed in separate manners. Trying to make each chapter complete and independent in itself may have caused some repetition, yet attempts have been made to minimize this. Furthermore, the chapters are not presented in chronological order.

Seasoned readers will understand that writing and publishing such a book is not something that can be done by a single person. I have been bolstered by the well wishes of many of my friends and colleagues in completing this work. I am indebted to my scholar friend, Mr. Sharat Chandra Wasti for reading my manuscript, encouraging me, and increasing my enthusiasm. I am also grateful to my friend and senior journalist, Dhruva Hari Adhikary, as well to my friend, Professor Kapil Shrestha, for their expert advices. Additionally, I would also like to thank senior artist, Rajan Kafle for designing the book, and my senior Prakash Prasad Upadhyay for helping me to translate some paragraphs into the Hindi language. To all my other supportive friends, well-wishers, and the Foundation family, I thank you sincerely!

Ghanendra Purush Dhakal

Kopundole, Lalitpur, Nepal

Regarding English Translation

This book, "The Ironman", is the fourth edition. It was first released in the year 2021, and all three preceeding editions were released in the Nepali language. In this edition, I have included the useful feedback received from my readers and corrected some errors. This is, of course, a matter of satisfaction for me. The response to this book has been satisfactory thus far.

I believe that there are many scholars around the world that are interested in reading or researching the life-stories of revolutionary personalities like Ganeshman Singh. However, it is neither feasible nor practical to write this book in many languages and deliver them to all locations. Therefore, keeping in mind that there are nearly one and a half billion English speakers in this world, and also considering that the new generation of Nepali youth is well versed in the English language, it was decided to translate this book into English. English is also the language of choice for most scholars, researchers, and students from all over the world. Nepal is not lacking for world-class leaders, writers, poets, scholars, artists, and religious leaders. However, the reason they have not gained universality is, among other reasons, due to information about their works and acts not being available in English.

The subject of translating a text accurately into another language is a very complex skill. There are various approaches to it. Should it be translated to retain the meaning of the text and

the feelings of the author, or should it be translated word-for-word in a literal sense? The task of translating an official letter or a report is not the same as translating a literary book. A translated text is meaningful only if the style, presentation, and essence can be retained, otherwise the liveliness of the original text disappears. There can be no better justice done to the original text than the author himself doing the translation. However, a good writer in Nepali is not necessarily as effective in the English language. It is too big a challenge for me to write a high-quality book in the English language. Therefore, I decided that I needed to outsource this task to someone more capable.

In terms of writing and language, Ganeshman-ji was a very conscious and particular person. In my long association with him, I was often impressed with the depth and breadth of his grasp of the English language. Linguistically, his knowledge of both the Nepali and the English languages was vast. In fact, even while imprisoned, Ganeshman-ji used to often discourse with BP Koirala, Kisun-ji, and Yogendraman Sherchan in English. I have been told that he even memorized most parts of the 'Oxford Dictionary' while in jail! Therefore, when writing about such a conscious student of language, I realized that the translated text ought to be of the highest caliber in order to do justice, and pay respect, to such a great personality.

These days, in Nepal, there are a significant number of excellent English writers in the new generation as well. Among them is my own nephew Nitendra Purush Dhakal, whose writings I am very impressed with. He studied at St. Xavier's and spent almost two decades abroad, finally returning to Nepal and engaging in highly intellectual work. Though he remains extremely busy, I had wished for him to translate my book into English. One day, I asked him, "Son, my book needs to be translated into English. I would be quite happy if you were the one to do it." He replied, "I would if I could. But I simply do not

have the time. This coming year is a very hectic time for me, so it would be quite impossible. How about this? If you get the first draft of the translation done by a professional, and note down your comments on it, then I will allocate some time to do the final edits and improve upon it."

This was an acceptable proposition to me and I entrusted this task to a professional translator. In due course, it was translated and sent back to me. There was much room for improvement where the nuance of the original text was concerned. I wrote down my comments and requested Nitendra to improve upon it. He accepted my request, saying that it would be an honour for him to contribute to this historical project. Thus, the two of us went over it sentence by sentence to make sure that every nuance, essence, and beat of the story was captured within the pages. His inputs and corrections were invaluable. In my opinion, he truly understood the meaning of the text and very skillfully traversed the language barrier. One of his suggestions was to remove the respectful suffix "-ji" at the end of people's names, since it is not required in English. Taking his suggestion, the suffixes are removed for all names except for Ganeshman-ji himself, since he holds the position of highest respect in this book. In reading Nitendra's revised sentences, which truly elevated my book's translation, it can be concluded that the youths of Nepal are no less linguistically talented than any native Englishman. Therefore, I am forever grateful to him for helping me with this monumental task. Thank you!

The Author

A Primer

- 1) **Rana rule:** Jung Bahadur Rana was an ambitious soldier of the royal court who took advantage of the family feuds and palace conspiracies to grab power in the country by carrying out several massacres. From his rule onwards, all sovereign rights of Nepal were vested in the Rana Prime Ministers. The King was kept under close watch and guard, and remained a closeted ceremonial puppet. Their rule began in 1846 and lasted 104 years, until the year 1951.
- 2) **King:** Although the Ranas had taken over the country, they continue to observe the lineage of the Shah Kings and seated them on the throne. However, this was only a formality, as the King was not even allowed to receive any visitors whom the Ranas had not approved. The King was stripped of all authority and couldn't even eat his daily bread without the say-so of the Ranas.
- 3) **Praja Parishad:** A party formed in secret, in the year 1941, by some enthusiastic rebel youths against the tyranny of Rana regime in Nepal. Some of its prominent leaders like Dharmabhakta, Shukraraj, Dasharath Chandra, and Gangalal were hanged by the Ranas. However, they never apologized for their actions, even if it ensured their freedom. They chose to become martyrs for the cause of democracy.

- 4) **Tanka Prasad Acharya:** The first president of the Praja Parishad. The Ranas arrested 32 activists and sentenced them to life-imprisonment, some of whom included Tanka Prasad Acharya, Ram Hari, Gangalal, Ganeshman Singh, Harikrishna, and Phanindra Raj. All imprisoned members were released after the successful People's Revolution carried out by the Nepali Congress in 1951.
- 5) **The Revolution of 1951:** The Armed Revolution conducted by the Nepali Congress, which was led by Ganeshman Singh, BP Koirala, and Subarna Samsher in India.
- 6) **Matrika Prasad Koirala:** The first president of the Nepali Congress party, which was formed in India. Within a year of the revolution's success, the Nepali Congress expelled him from the party for trying to conspire with the King to destroy democracy and fulfill his own interests. Bisheshwar Prasad Koirala and Girija Prasad Koirala were both his brothers.
- 7) **BP Koirala:** Bisheshwar Prasad Koirala was one of the founders of the Nepali Congress and also became its first president. He was a very astute and world-class statesman. After Nepal's first democratic election in 1959, BP Koirala became the Prime Minister of Nepal. But in 1961, King Mahendra used the national army to stage a coup.
- 8) **Satyagraha 1986:** A non-violent movement. The word Satyagraha was coined by Mahatma Gandhi in South Africa. Its literal meaning is Sat (the truth) and Agraha (firmness), which is 'a truth which is not changeable'. This was similar to the movement which compelled the British to leave India in 1947.

- 9) **Ascetic-Leader:** An unmarried leader who has risen above any attachment or self-interest. Krishna Prasad Bhattarai is called a Santa-Neta (Ascetic Leader) by Nepali historians.
- 10) **Jana Andolan 2046:** Also known as the peaceful People's Movement of 1990, it was a national strike movement which reinstated democracy in Nepal for the second time. It was successfully completed under the leadership of Ganeshman Singh.
- 11) **Brahmin:** In those days, the caste system was prevalent in Nepal. Among the various castes, Brahmin was considered to be the highest caste. Chhetri, Baishya (includes Newar), and Shudra were the other three castes, respectively. Ganeshman Singh was of the Newar caste.
- 12) **United Left Front:** It was an alliance of communist parties formed during the Peoples' movement in 1990. The Front had participated in the joint movement with the Nepali Congress to oppose the autocratic regime in Nepal. The Leader of this Front was Ms Sahana Pradhan representing Communist Party of Nepal (Marxist). The other constituents in the team were from Communist Party of Nepal (Marxist Leninist), Nepal Workers and Peasants Party, Communist Party of Nepal (Fourth Convention), Communist Party of Nepal (Burma), Communist Party of Nepal (Manandhar), and Communist Party of Nepal (Amatya).
- 13) **Veda:** The Vedas are a collection of poems or hymns composed in ancient Sanskrit which constitute the highest authority of religious texts in Hinduism. The four Vedas are the oldest scriptures of Hinduism, and they are: the Rigveda, the Yajurveda, the Samaveda, and the Atharvaveda.

- 14) **Mahabharat:** According to Hindu mythology, the Mahabharat War was the biggest war to ever take place in history. When differences arose between the cousin-clans of the Kauravas and the Pandavas, it led them into a war of great consequence. In it, Lord Krishna passively supported the Pandavas, and his guidance ultimately led them to victory.

An Iron Man, A Virtuous Man, A Sage !

(Initially, I had decided to name this book 'The Life Story of a Sage'. It was written accordingly and extensively, and it was analyzed from social, spiritual, and political perspectives to describe why Ganeshman-ji was a sage. However, it then seemed to me that the word Sage could convey a more spiritual feeling, and after all, Ganeshman-ji was a politician. Hence, I decided to choose a more apt term for the political arena, and thus settled on the word 'Ironman'! Truly, in his prime, Ganeshman-ji was known as The Ironman because he was a man who could not be dominated, pushed, crushed, ignored, or shaken by anyone. He was an unwavering person who could not be deterred by the lifelong imprisonment, harsh torture, or the heavy chains of the dictatorship.

When viewed from a social angle or philanthropic point of view, a great man like Ganeshman Singh is rarely found in the world today. During his imprisonment, Ganeshman-ji personally took care of a prisoner named Bal Bahadur Pandey who was a fellow participant of the same movement. Unfortunately, Bal Bahadur could not bear the torture of the Ranas and lost his mind. Anyone who knows the story of how Ganeshman-ji cared for Bal Bahadur during his four years of imprisonment, which included cleaning his feces, bathing him, and feeding him, will all agree that Ganeshman-ji is a rare person in this world. For that reason, I had considered titling the book "A Virtuous Man".

All the three words I used to describe him above - 'Ironman, Sage, Virtuous Man' - were very much in line with Ganeshman Singh's personality. I do not believe any of the three words weigh any less than the others. An honest person in politics may prefer the term Ironman, while a spiritual person may prefer Sage, or a social reformer may prefer Virtuous Man. To each their own!

It is my belief that Ganeshman-ji is the most venerable politician of this country. I arrived to the conclusion that the term should convey the purity of his political purpose while remaining respectful of his dynamic personality, hence, I named this book "The Ironman".

The writing of this chapter is purely an exercise in clarifying the meaning behind the name of this book. It is up to the astute readers to assess whether the terminology I have chosen accurately reflects the personality of Ganeshman Singh. All I can say is that it is not enough for a writer to only present a story, he should be able to examine the questions posed or issues raised from various angles and present an honest conclusion.)

There is a proverb in Nepali, 'Chorlai chautari ra sadhulai shuli' (The meadows for the thief and the noose for the saint). This saying is an accurate analysis of the nature of us Nepalis! If a person fulfills one's petty and vested interests, we Nepalis do not hesitate to praise him with lofty rhetoric. There is another saying in Sanskrit, 'Shabdam Kim Daridram' (One need not be a miser with words of praise.) Yes, we often praise someone more than we ought to, which leads to injustice to the other deserving leaders. For example, nowadays we are unknowingly devaluing the term 'martyr'. If Gangalal, Dharmabhakta, Shukraraj, and Dasharath Chand are the real martyrs, and some arbitrary leader is also called as such, would it not be an injustice to the real martyrs? Therefore, we writers must be careful about the words we choose. We have seen many sycophantic writers and so-called intellectuals praising people with long adjectives who are

unworthy of being called even an ordinary leader. Such tendency will culminate in the downfall of authors and their related counterparts. In this book, I have addressed Ganeshman Singh with the word 'Mahapurush' (Sage). Therefore, it becomes my duty to explain what a sage is, what his features and characteristics are, and what justification exists for calling him as such. Here in this book, I have tried to answer this and related things, in accordance with political values and beliefs, as well with spirituality and the Vedas. Should some feel my justification falls short and label me as yet another sycophant, I will not take it otherwise.

There is no difference between being a great man spiritually, an ironman politically, and a virtuous man in common parlance. However, the word Mahapurush itself is a word that spreads the fragrance of spirituality, thus it has a greater sense of positivity. Though this word isn't traditionally found in politics, it isn't impossible to call a great political man as a 'Mahapurush' (Sage). I place an Ironman in the same equivalent perspective as society places a person who is considered excellent. Before we examine Ganeshman-ji further, let us first understand what sort of people are called leaders, statesmen, peoples' leader, trailblazers, and superhuman. However, the word leader itself has been discussed so much in the academia of politics that it is difficult to describe all the facets of the word 'leader'. Let us not be distracted by the complexity of it. Instead, let us revisit the simple meaning of some of the rich verses in our Vedas and scriptures, as well as the views of a few philosophers.

A lot has already been said in the Vedas and our scriptures about 'rulers'. In those days, the king himself was generally known as the ruler, the leader, and the politician. However, even then, there were cases where elections were held to determine a ruler or a leader. The following are a few examples of leaders mentioned in the Vedas.

- a) In the Atharva Veda, the verses in 3/4, 3/3, 4/8 state: *"Those rulers or kings who are kind and care for the nation, who are always concerned for the welfare of the people, enjoy such love and loyalty from the people that, even if the King were to go into the forest after his reign, the people would voluntarily accompany him."*
- b) In Yajurveda, verse 1/8/16, it is said: *"Such good people, statesmen, and great men are loved even by the animals."*
- c) In Rigveda, verses 10/1/74 and 10/17/3 state: *"A ruler who is a friend during the people's hardships and joys, one who himself goes to war for their needs, who fights and subjugates the enemy and saves the people, such a person is the highest of statesman."*

Aristotle, the great philosopher of ancient Greece, also preaches as the Vedas and has said categorically: *"A commander who is insensitive, irrational, and without morals can never be called a great leader."*

Eminent leader Ganeshman Singh once said, *"Politicians only care about elections and power, but a statesman is always concerned about the next generation."*

In light of the above-mentioned scriptures, Vedas and quotations, it is appropriate to categorize the types of leaders as follows:

- 1) **Leader:** A nationalist who is committed to his principles and ideology and can lead his cadres towards his envisioned goal is a leader. Another essential quality of a political leader is his morality. An immoral person cannot be considered a good leader.
- 2) **Statesman:** A statesman is a leader who can sense the approaching calamities looming on the horizon and protects his ideology and cadres.

- 3) **People's Leader:** A statesman who can awaken action not only for his own political cadres but the entire country during times of crisis. A people's leader has the courage and the ability to walk against the current for his ideals, as needed. (BP Koirala considered Ganeshman Singh to be the only true people's leader of Nepal.)
- 4) **Trailblazer:** A people's leader who possesses the ability to formulate new principles and ideals for the nation's and citizens' welfare as per the demands of the time.
- 5) **Superhuman:** A trailblazer whose goal is salvation and liberation of the people from tyranny. I have categorized these superhumans into three further types:

5.a) Iron Man

A person endowed with all the qualities of a leader, statesman, trailblazer, and a decent man can be called an Ironman. One who cannot be pushed, pulled, crushed, ignored, or shaken by any harsh ruler. Such iron-men cannot be swayed by fear, terror, uncertainty, greed, or temptation.

5.b) Virtuous Man

What adjective can be used to describe a person who stands above the aforementioned four types? 'A Virtuous Man' is the phrase that comes to mind, for he is a person who cannot help but be involved in a philanthropic mindset. Surely, the birth (or manifestation) of such a decent person on this Earth is a matter of pride for the Earth itself.

5.c) A Sage

In spirituality, the term '*Shrotrium Brahmanistham*' is used to describe a person who has not only understood fully but also immersed himself in the Vedas and scriptures, to the extent that it is as if he has had an interview with God. This

quality may not apply one hundred percent in politics, but a man of that stature can be called a sage in politics, as well.

Now, let us examine just what kind of leader Ganeshman Singh was, from a leader to a statesman, to a people's leader, to a trailblazer, to a virtuous man, and finally an iron man.

1) A LEADER

When describing the term 'leader' above, we espoused that a person who lacks nationalism and morality, as well as lacking the qualities that a statesman should have, cannot be considered a good leader no matter how good and virtuous he may be. In this book, I have presented proof that Ganeshman-ji was the 'pioneering leader' of Nepal. There is no doubt that he was a leader, as historical facts dictate, and as I have presented in the further chapters of this book. Let us then delve into the aspects of his nationalism and his morality. Although there are many descriptions in this book about Ganeshman-ji's nationalist sentiments, I would like to quote here the words of the poet Kedar Man Byathit.

"The events I'm recounting were around the time of the first parliamentary election of 1992. Prime Minister Krishna Prasad Bhattarai, considered to be the sage-leader of Nepal, was then a candidate representing Kathmandu (constituency number one), and a mass gathering was held in Chabahil to support him. There, in front of thousands of listeners gathered on the big ground behind the Chabahil Ganeshsthan, the lauded poet Kedarman Byathit announced, "Today, all of you call Ganeshman Singh the supreme commander of the People's Movement 1990 and an honorable leader, however you must all know that he had already established himself as a great hero of Nepali politics well before today in the 1951 revolution itself." B.P. Koirala himself had said at the time that the 1951 revolution would not have been

possible without the popular image and personality of Ganeshman-ji. Explaining further, Byathit said, "We have never seen or heard the likes of a patriotic or devoted leader like Ganeshman Singh." I remember another incident, around the year 1949. I was among seven or eight political activists, and we had reached Raxaul (India) after accomplishing activities in the villages while evading the administration. Ganeshman Singh was then the commander of the Raxaul Front. We had entered the Nepali Congress camp laughing when he greeted us, "Come, come! Welcome to the Raxaul camp of Nepali Congress! You all look like you have been hungry for a week! I will arrange for some food for you." He added, "You're lucky, because just this morning alone, I saved six rupees from selling the newspapers. I will prepare a feast for you. First, wash up and get fresh." In a short time, our food was served – sattu (flour of peas), salt, onion, and a glass of water. What a feast! Ganeshman-ji fed us with great reverence, and with great hospitality he lovingly arranged beds for us. He said, "You must be very tired in Raxaul's scorching heat. Rest a bit and we'll talk later." As I lay in bed, I was overwhelmed with the affection and friendship that Ganeshman-ji had shown, and I thought to myself, "This Ganeshman! Brought up in luxurious comfort in Kathmandu, how can he be enjoying the hardships of this place?" As I wondered on it, I dozed off to sleep. However, as it is not possible to sleep very long during the day, I woke up about an hour and a half later to the sounds of whispering. My eyes fixated on Ganeshman-ji who was sitting a little farther away from me. He had laid his scarf on the floor and had put our shoes on top of it. And he was picking up our shoes one by one and removing the dirt from them and collecting it on his dhoti (sarong). I couldn't bear to watch such a scene and sprang up to grab my shoes, and asked, "Neta-ji! Why are you doing this? You, our great leader, touching the shoes of us lowly activists!!" However, Ganeshman-ji, who looked quite sad, said with tears in his eyes, "Look here! The fragrance of my

motherland is coming from these shoes. I wish I could take this soil of my country and apply it to my forehead everyday. I have been charged with grave crimes, I do not know if I will be able to visit my motherland ever again. So please don't deprive me of this opportunity to touch my motherland once more." His words shook us. His condition left us speechless. I said to myself, "What love for the motherland! What patriotism!! "

Addressing the gathering, poet Kedarman Byathit said, "I have never seen nor heard of a patriot like Ganeshman-ji in this entire world. If such a personality like Ganeshman-ji has put forward and endorsed Mr. Krishna Prasad Bhattarai, we must ensure that he wins! Thank you! "

What more could you ask for in a leader in terms of patriotism and love for the country?

2) A STATESMAN

The proof that Ganeshman-ji was an outstanding leader is evident through his political achievements in the four years following his imprisonment in 1941. Many who were jailed alongside him in the same movement spent their imprisonment hopelessly and helplessly. However, Ganeshman-ji not only challenged the security cordon of the Ranas and successfully escaped from jail, he also incepted the armed revolution of 1951 and started the process of transforming the Nepali people into honorable citizens. His stance on repealing Article 55 while drafting the 1959 constitution, and his accurate prediction and warnings about the King's interference in the upcoming referendum in 1981 established him as a statesman. From the time of his escape, the qualities of a statesman were beginning to blossom within, and eventually he would be called by many names – An Iron Man, A Virtuous Man, A Great Man, and A Respected Leader.

3) A PEOPLE'S LEADER

Ganeshman Singh had first met B.P. Koirala in Calcutta, well before the formation of the Nepali National Congress in 1948. Even at the time, he had praised Ganeshman Singh's leadership personality. At the time, BP had not yet established his name in Nepali politics. However, Ganeshman Singh had already earned a name for himself as a legendary Nepali hero. For BP, finding a personality like Ganeshman-ji was a great stroke of fortune. BP himself has said, in many places both publicly and privately, that "Ganeshman-ji is the only leader of Nepal who can produce knee-jerk call-to-action within the country in times of crisis." With endorsements like that from world-class politicians like B.P. Koirala, is there any room for doubt? Furthermore, the leadership quality shown by Ganeshman-ji in the Jana Andolan 2046 BS (People's Movement 1990) cemented him as the People's Leader.

4) A TRAILBLAZER

B.P. Koirala lived his life as an undaunted leader of the Nepali Congress until his death in 1983. So it was natural that his thoughts prevailed in the party policy. His thought on the presence of communism in Nepal was that India would express displeasure and sour relations if communists were emboldened in Nepal. Therefore, he espoused that a certain distance must always be maintained with the communists. On the contrary, BP believed that Nepali Congress being close with the King was more beneficial, and one of his popular slogans was "The King needn't be afraid of the Nepali Congress, nor should the Nepali Congress be disconcerted with the King". Ganeshman-ji did not like this strategy at all because he believed that the King could be controlled only by a joint effort of the various political parties aspiring for liberty. However, B.P.'s thoughts prevailed in Nepali

Congress throughout his lifetime as he was leading the party. After the passing of B.P. Koirala in 1983, the leadership of the Nepali Congress fell on the shoulders of Ganeshman Singh and he extended a hand of friendship to the communists. They supported all the movements and demonstrations of the Nepali Congress in their fight for freedom, and finally in 1990, the communists joined hands and participated with Nepali Congress in the People's Movement. As a result, within seven years of Ganeshman-jī's leadership, the Panchayat system was overthrown and multi-party democracy was re-established in Nepal. Under BP's policies, the Nepali Congress party had never seen such a movement, but within seven years of Ganeshman-jī's leadership, a national unifying movement was born and successfully concluded. It was his insight, his strategy, his revolutionary thinking, and his ability to implement these innovative ideas that made him a trailblazer. Due to these virtues of his, the people elevated him from the seat of a leader to the throne of a people's leader. Ganeshman-jī was the pioneer and trailblazer of co-operation between the Communist and Congress parties. That is the reason the whole country deemed him to be a 'Supreme Leader'.

5) A SUPERHUMAN

As such, there exists another category above 'Trailblazer' or 'Supreme Leader', which I will call 'Superhuman'. I propose that the person occupying that throne be categorized as an iron man, a virtuous man, or a sage. That person is one who has all the qualities of a leader, a statesman, a people's leader, and a trailblazer. A defining characteristic of a virtuous person is his 'benevolent nature', and he is in essence a 'free soul' who does not know selfishness, but only philanthropy. Indeed, Ganeshman Singh was such a virtuous man. In spirituality, such

a person is called Sadhguru or Mahapurush, but in politics let us call him an Iron Man!

This extended discussion of politics should make it clear that there are qualifications required to become a respected leader in politics. These are: (1) *A Man of Principle* (2) *Patriotism* (3) *High Moral Character* (4) *Clear Vision* (5) *Determination to Achieve Goal* (6) *Astute and Protective Nature* (7) *Unifying Charm* (8) *Philanthropic Nature*.

Politically, we have placed Ganeshman Singh on the throne of the 'Iron Man'. Yet, how can we prove that he is an individual befitting that title? Let us move on to that.

It is mentioned in the scriptures that the '*Shrotriyam Brahmanistam Guru*' is a sage. It was explained that a person who has not only understood but also immersed himself in the Vedas and scriptures, to the extent that it is as if he has had an interview with God, is a sage. Equivalent words for a sage may be a saint or guru or savant. In the realm of spirituality, such a person may be known as a guru, and in the realm of politics an iron man, and in the realm of social justice a virtuous man. The scriptures also say that in order to become a great man, one must first be a Brahmin! Now, who constitutes a Brahmin? Is it people holding the surname Oli, Dahal, Upadhyay, Sharma, etc? The answer is given by the scriptures themselves: those who do Brahmanical deeds are called Brahmins. The question then arises what Brahmanical deeds are. The explanation given in the scriptures is that a Brahmin is: (1) *a person without personal desire*, (2) *a person without anger and hatred*, (3) *a person without bias and prejudice*, (4) *a person who controls his sense-organs*. Let us now discuss these elements and find out whether Ganeshman-ji was a Brahmin or not.

5.1) A PERSON WITHOUT PERSONAL DESIRE

Ganeshman-ji worked for everyone's benefit, peace, and comfort; he did not engage in politics to attain a post, fame, or power. Had he wished for a lofty position, the Rana regime would have been a paradise for him. There was no need for him to get involved in politics to attain wealth, position, and prestige. He simply wanted to liberate the people from the Ranas's tyranny, that is all. Therefore, from the day that he entered the political sphere, he abandoned his desires. In the course of the many struggles and revolutions, he was offered many attractive positions and high-standings, but he declined them and continued to fight for democracy throughout his life. Harikrishna Shrestha, the famous merchant of Kathmandu and fellow-activist, said, "Ganeshman Singh himself is the grandson of a Kazi (courtier)! If he so wished, he could have become a courtier during the Rana rule. However, he never opted for it. Even later in life, although he was asked by King Tribhuvan to assume the position of Prime Minister, he refused! After the success of the People's Movement 1990, King Birendra told him that he was the rightful leader to become Prime Minister of the country, and offered the position to him. Once again, he refused! I have never seen such a person!" Is not this a rare example?

5.2) A PERSON WITHOUT ANGER AND HATRED

Throughout his five decades of struggles in his political life, Ganeshman-ji did not seem to have any hatred or even any special attachment towards anyone. He had a good relationship with King Tribhuvan during the period of the revolution when democracy was established, and even later. However, when King Tribhuvan tried to usurp the rights of the people, he did not hesitate to fight against him. Despite it, King Tribhuvan and Ganeshman-ji continued to visit each other in their respective homes!

Similarly, his relationship with King Mahendra was also a strained one due to frequent political struggles. However, he never faltered in helping King Mahendra whenever he was in trouble. One day, then-Prince Mahendra came to Ganeshman-ji and asked him for help. He wanted to marry Miss Ratna, the daughter of Hari Shamser Jung Bahadur Rana, however King Tribhuvan did not want to entertain this proposal. Prince Mahendra visited Ganeshman Singh's house and said, "Ganeshman-ji! My father places great value on your words. Please persuade my father to accept this marriage proposal between me and Ratna!" On the one hand, there was an ongoing political conflict with Prince Mahendra, but on the other hand, Ganeshman-ji advocated on his behalf and persuaded King Tribhuvan according to the Prince's wish. Such was his nature.

In order to save the fledgling democracy from the personal ambitions of Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala after the success of People's Movement 1990, Ganeshman Singh demanded his resignation. He simply was not afraid of anyone nor did he harbor animosity. Surprisingly, when the main opposition party UML also demanded that Girija Prasad Koirala resign, Ganeshman-ji advised him not to, saying that "The opposition is demanding your resignation. You should not resign in such a situation." This was due to the fact that if the Prime Minister had acquiesced, it would have set a precedent and damaged the foundations of democracy and the party. Therefore, he advised, "You have to resign, but not in response to the demands of the opposition. You should resign only after I tell you to do so. I shall face the blow of the opposition."

Don't these brief examples paint a picture of a person that harbors no ill will, anger, or hatred?

5.3) A PERSON WITHOUT BIAS OR PREJUDICE

A person without bias remains in a state of equilibrium where he favours no single person or holds any special attachment to anyone. True equality is in treating everyone with the same attitude. Ganeshman-ji made this sentiment meaningful in a very touching way in politics. He highly valued his friend Krishna Prasad Bhattarai, and praised him and held him in high esteem. Ganeshman-ji did not hesitate to hand over the seat of Prime Minister to him although the chair was his own to assume. Yet he never hesitated to toss his hat into the fight against a loved one politically. An example of this is when Girija Prasad Koirala was on the path to becoming an elected dictator. If he was not controlled by the party, democracy would have become tainted and the country, as we know it now, may not exist. Therefore, Ganeshman-ji not only made efforts to control Prime Minister Girija's unworthy ambitions, he also tried to persuade Krishna Prasad Bhattarai, who was then the party president, to take action against the Prime Minister. Unfortunately, Krishna Prasad Bhattarai did not dare to do so. He would tell Ganeshman-ji, "I will take action against Girija" and then he would say to Girija, "There is no need for you to resign". Upon witnessing Krishna Prasad's flip-flopping and indecisiveness, Ganeshman-ji said, "Kisun-ji goes whichever way the water flows." There are other such examples, but let us continue on with other topics.

5.4) A PERSON WHO CAN CONTROL HIS SENSES

'Dum' is a control over one's senses which leads to a state of 'Indrajit'. The state in which your sense-organs stop experiencing cold/hot in the winter/summer, such sensory suppression state is called Indrajit. Ganeshman-ji had practiced this 'Dum' through his Hatha Yoga. In 1941, when the Ranas arrested and imprisoned him, he voluntarily sacrificed all delicacies. While he was

imprisoned in Bhadracol Jail, several luxurious plates of food arrived daily from his house. He refused to accept any of them, and said to his family, "I will feed myself with the gruel they serve in jail." The sweet-toothed Ganeshman-ji opted to appease himself with small morsels of food, which could barely sustain his exercise-focused routine. Therefore, in order to maintain his caloric intake and continue exercising, he made a living washing the dishes of his fellow inmates. In exchange, he would receive a handful or wages or donations. His daily rations from the prison-authority were one paisa a day, a mug of rice, and a handful of firewood. While inside the jail, Ganeshman-ji practiced this form of sensory deprivation.

Ganeshman-ji was imprisoned in Bhadracol Jail from 1941 to 1945, however he managed to escape. In prison he developed a mindset like a yogi. Throughout his imprisonment, he never slept on the bed, instead preferring the straw mat on the floor with a stone for a pillow, regardless of the cold. This was no small feat, as even experienced yogis fail to subdue their bodily senses, but Ganeshman-ji did. Even when he was imprisoned again in 1961 in Sundarijal Jail (alongside BP Koirala, Krishna Prasad Bhattarai, and Yogendra Man Sherchan), he spent the entirety of his 8-year imprisonment sleeping the same way on the floor. Referring to this, the first elected Prime Minister in the history of Nepal, BP Koirala, said, "Mahatma Gandhi learned to live on 14 paisa a day because the people of India were paid the same under British rule. Here, Ganeshman-ji never once complained about the cold or the heat, bathed regularly, and slept on the floor with a wooden or a stone pillow. He only covered himself with a thin blanket, and in the height of winter would sometimes throw his overcoat on top." The eldest grandson of an aristocratic family, who later became a known gangster in the area of Kathmandu, to do penance and build character in this way, it is a difficult truth to believe! But such is the truth.

QUALITIES OF AN IRONMAN

These qualities of Ganeshman Singh make him a 'true Brahmin', according to the Shashtra Veda. Now let us discuss about the qualities which make him an Iron Man. Below, I have defined the qualities that constitute an Iron Man, and how Ganeshman-ji meets each of these criteria. They are: (a) *Humility* (b) *Patriotism* (c) *Inclusiveness* (d) *Saintly Nature* (e) *Forward-thinking* (f) *High Moral Character* (g) *Philanthropy*.

A) HUMILITY

No matter how great a Mahatma one may be, they cannot become a sage or an iron man if they brandish their own power, ability, and wisdom. The sage in spirituality is a person who is the nearest to God. Since the sage is a representative of God on this earthly plane, the prime quality in their nature is '*Gopaniyam Gopaniyam Prayatnatah*', i.e. great men never display their power or ability. Therefore, the seeker ought to be able to feel the personality of the Mahatma with great restraint and patience if he is to test him.

It is the same in politics. There are those who dedicate their entire life for the country and for the betterment of its people, and though they never promote themselves, they are great men. Ganeshman Singh, too, never promoted himself or the propaganda of his personality. Nevertheless, students of history know that there is no one comparable to him in the history of Nepali politics, who has sacrificed as much or suffered as much. Chairman Mao was termed the "Father of the Nation" in China for doing similar sacrifices and sufferings that Ganeshman-ji did for Nepal. India has immortalized Mahatma Gandhi by inscribing his photo on the bank notes and termed him the 'Bapu' of the Nation. Yet Ganeshman Singh was forced into near obscurity as time progressed. Even so, he had no grudges and

never boasted or promoted himself anywhere. That is why it is adequate to say that the humble qualities of a sage were present in Ganeshman-ji.

B) PATRIOTISM

Spirituality believes that God exists in every particle of this universe, yet there are places of special significance where God is said to have been born or manifested. And even God must have a special place in his heart for his homeland. Perhaps that is what love of the motherland and patriotism is. The proof of this is presented by Lord Ram himself. In the period of *Tretayuga*, Lord Ram was returning to his city of Ayodhya together with his wife and brother Laxman, after 14 years of exile. Upon reaching the border of Ayodhya, he picked up a handful of soil and said, "Janani Janmabhūmishā Swargadapi Gariyasi." Translated, this means "The place where we are born is more esteemed and beloved than heaven itself". And so, Lord Ram applied the soil of Ayodhya as a tilak upon his head.

Following Lord Ram's example, Ganeshman Singh also applied the soil of his motherland onto his forehead, as described above by scraping the dirt off his comrades' shoes in the Raxaul camp. According to the poet Kedarman Byathit, many such themes of patriotism and love of motherland are present in the life-story and biographies of Ganeshman-ji. There are other extensive examples presented later in this book. Such was the nature of Ganeshman Singh that he is a paragon of patriotism.

C) INCLUSIVENESS

The ideal and philosophy of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam is the inherent nature of a Mahapurush or an Ironman. Great men don't distinguish between the familiar and unfamiliar, they consider all human beings as one great family. Similarly,

Ganeshman-ji never showed favour to any particular person and never discriminated. He only had one singular interest - the establishment of democracy and its development. Although BP Koirala never allowed the Communists to enter the democratic mainstream of Nepal, Ganeshman-ji incorporated them in his democratic non-violent movements. It was his wise leadership that led to democracy being restored in Nepal. It was this inclusive nature of his that the opposition parties still admire to this day, and it is this same quality that steered all Nepali people to bestow upon him the respected patriotic title of 'Supreme Leader'. Not only did he never seek strife against the communists, he never encouraged or partook in vengeance against the Kings, the royal family, the Panchas, or the Ranas. He cultivated a brotherly relationship with everyone.

D) SAINTLY NATURE

'Vitrag' is a characteristic found only in the wisest of men, and it is a quality which speaks to the equality inherent in everyone. It is the reason why a virtuous saint or a wise sage neither blesses nor curses anyone, for he knows only mercy. Ganeshman-ji, too, did not show any inclination to promote anyone or demote anyone based on personal bias. However, that is not to say that he did not utilize all his efforts to remove Girija Prasad Koirala from the Prime Minister's chair when he grew too ambitious. However, he never targeted anyone, rather was fighting against the undemocratic actions which he called the 'Girija Tendency'. Even the disputes between the Prime Minister and himself were purely ideological battles. In a multi-party democracy, the role of the government is accountable to the party. Therefore, it was his stance that the Prime Minister must take decisions in consultation with and accordance with the party.

Ganeshman-ji's temperament was no different from that of the enlightened saint. I will recount a relevant event. It was about the third week of Magh 1951 and Ganeshman-ji was serving his time in Bhadragol Jail together with seven of his friends. The Rana regime had already announced their decision to hang him till death, on the charges of rebellion against the state. All that remained was for the King's royal seal to be affixed to the verdict. Had King Tribhuvan not taken refuge in the Indian Embassy just then, the decision to hang Ganeshman-ji most likely would have proceeded instead of being postponed, and his name would today be among the martyrs. However, the revolution of 1951 had reached its climax, and an agreement was reached between the Nepali Congress, the Ranas, India, and King Tribhuvan. Rumors had already reached Ganeshman-ji that he, including BP Koirala and Subarna Shamsher, would be offered ministership in the first interim government to be formed. However, he had his hesitations about becoming a minister in the cabinet alongside the Ranas, under whom so many had already suffered, struggled, and been executed. But what was the point of refusing from within the prison? So, he wrote a formal letter to his party president and had it delivered through his friends. His refusal was not accepted by his friends easily. They implored him, "Neta-ji! You are the founder of this revolution and you are its pioneer. Where else in Nepal can we find a people's leader like you? How can a cabinet formed without you truly be called a revolutionary government? You simply cannot refuse!" However, Ganeshman-ji insisted that the refusal letter reach the party president and asked his friends to deliver it despite their misgivings. In the letter, he had written, "I should not be made a minister in the new cabinet. If you must insist, then my recommendation for a minister will be our friend Sundar Raj Chalise-ji from Kathmandu". Even Chalise himself was adamant that Ganeshman-ji should be the one chosen, so he did not allow the letter to reach the party president. Such display of friendship and

dedication, such respect for one's leader! This pure essence has been lost in the politics of today. Can we look at our current political sphere and say that there are such leaders and activists who do not covet or vvy for power?

Ganeshman-ji also made such sacrifices in the year 1959 as well, when BP Koirala wanted him to again become a minister. However, Ganeshman-ji wanted to see to the party's works related to organization and development. Upon understanding his mindset, BP paid Ganeshman-ji a house visit and told him, "Look, Ganeshman-ji! Like you, I too wanted to work for the party. But if you, Subarna-ji, and I were absent from the cabinet, such a cabinet would not represent the revolution nor would it take on a national stature! That is why it is necessary for all three of us to be members in this cabinet." Apart from these two instances, there are numerous other instances which prove that Ganeshman-ji was a Vitaragi. Is there a person more worthy of the title?

E) FORWARD-THINKING

The scriptures consider great men to be a part of God himself, so there is no need to repeatedly assert that great men are prophets. They are the ones who, being a part of God, have the authority to conduct affairs like God does. Even in politics, a public leader who can understand the future, anticipate possible bad consequences, and protect his cadres, is a great leader. The power of the 'prophet' inherent in Ganeshman-ji has saved the Nepali Congress and its members from the brink of destruction many a time, and in not heeding his advice and warnings the party has also suffered big losses. A few examples of these are:

Ganeshman-ji was a person who could take great risks. He also had a habit of heading headfirst alone into a risky endeavor. One doesn't have to go too far to find evidence of this. Prior to the revolution of 1951, the Nepali Congress decided to abscond

King Tribhuvan from the Narayanhiti palace in Kathmandu and bring him to Palpa, as well as to spark a revolt in the Rana-controlled Nepal Army. These two actions are considered to be the beginning of the revolution. Given the circumstances, there could not have been a riskier action than this. The issue then remained as to who would lead this action. The question was posed in the meeting of the Central Committee of the Nepali Congress. Upon hearing the question, all the members of the committee fell silent. After all, who would be able to hang the bell on the cat's neck? The air in the room was heavy. Then, Ganeshman-ji got up and said, "I will shoulder this responsibility. This is a very risky job, so I will do it myself. After all, who else in our party understands Kathmandu and knows the Ranas better than Jarsaheb (Subarna Shamsher) and me? Subarna-ji will continue to be stationed here in India to mobilize the Liberation Army. I will go to Kathmandu and carry out this action. I do not want to push my friends into taking such a risky action and fall into the jaws of the tiger." And so, the party decided to hand over the responsibility of this operation to Ganeshman-ji. He left for Kathmandu, and his efforts eventually paved the way for King Tribhuvan's alternate escape route to Delhi, and the subsequent revolt within the Nepal Army. Ganeshman-ji was arrested but his courage had inspired the revolution into action, and the Ranas did not dare to execute him for fear of a blowback and escalation of violence. Had Ganeshman-ji not led this operation, the Ranas would have brutally massacred innumerable Congress leaders and activists. He put his life on the line to preserve the nation. Who else but an Ironman has such courage?

Similarly, in 1972, Ganeshman-ji had protested against the armed actions taken by the Nepali Congress in Okhaldhunga under the leadership of Captain Yagya Bahadur Thapa. He cautioned, "The situation is not ripe for an armed revolution. If

action is taken in such a situation, our efforts will be in vain. Making such an immature decision is equivalent to deliberately sacrificing our cadres." The party did not accept his suggestion, and as a result, the Nepali Congress lost 17 of its bonafide warriors.

After leaving India in 1977, both BP Koirala and Ganeshman-ji entered Nepal armed with new policies of reconciliation. Their arrival brought out an unexpected response in Nepal's politics. Without consulting the parties, King Birendra had decided to hold a referendum on the pretext of understanding the people's wishes. BP Koirala could not comprehend that the King's decision was a treacherous one, however Ganeshman-ji foresaw the King's intentions and warned BP to go against it. But the referendum was held and the King ended up fraudulently declaring victory for the Panchayat with 'reform' against the multi-party democracy.

The Satyagraha movement carried out by the Nepali Congress in 1986 was also a brainchild of Ganeshman Singh. After the defeat of Congress in the referendum, BP Koirala passed away in 1983 and the responsibility of protecting democracy fell on Ganeshman-ji's shoulders. The party also declared him the Nepal Congress Party's Supreme Leader. This was a period where the Nepali Congress had been unable to conduct large scale nationwide campaigns. King Birendra was trying to take advantage of this inaction and tried to convince the nation that the Panchayat system had ample scope of reform rather than the democratic parties. However, Ganeshman-ji devised the gauntlet of Satyagraha with the aim of thwarting the King's clever conspiracy and thus activated his cadres across the country. Within the party, while Krishna Prasad Bhattarai supported Ganeshman-ji's efforts, Girija Prasad Koirala had his reservations. He had knowingly or unknowingly been entwined into the King's so-called reform net. Meanwhile, the Satyagraha

began and GP Koirala was arrested on the very first day. He told a journalist that he expected the Satyagraha to last for a few days, but in fact it continued for well over a month with over 15,000 members arrested. The Satyagraha movement was not only a lifeline for the prestige of the party, it also re-established Nepali Congress as a revolutionary party which had widespread public support. Ganeshman-ji held the view that the palace was hell-bent on inflicting grief on the Nepali Congress by taking any pretext to reduce the impact of their political success. In the meantime, activist Ram Raja Prasad Singh (from the Terai region, unrelated to Nepali Congress) detonated bombs at the doors of Narayanhiti Palace, the five-star Royal Family hotel, and at the outskirts of Singha Durbar. Ganeshman-ji was forced to bring an end to the Satyagraha movement due to this incident, for it demonstrated to him that certain people may be stoked to further violence. Had he not halted the movement when he did, the palace would have labeled Nepali Congress as a scapegoat for inciting violence and fomenting disorder in the nation. Ganeshman-ji's shrewd intellect and prudent action saved his Nepali Congress cadres from the danger of the King's wrath. In addition, through the Satyagraha movement, he was successful in mobilizing the inactive democrats of Nepal.

Ganeshman Singh was not only a political prophet but also an extraordinary genius who could analyze situations in depth and maneuver them to his party's advantage. An indisputable example of this is the People's Movement of 1990. Under BP Koirala, the communists were never conducive to democracy, so the Nepali Congress never cooperated with them. However, once Ganeshman-ji assumed the reins of the party he involved the communists in every movement and demonstration. The success of the 1990 movement is itself a unique example of Ganeshman Singh's vision and unifying abilities. These examples prove

Ganeshman-ji to be a better visionary than any other leader of Nepal.

F) HIGH MORAL CHARACTER

These days, we see that political leaders do not strive to be virtuous or moral, and instead praise themselves as already having these qualities. But sage men and iron men do not fuss about in such a manner, because they are inherently virtuous and moral. In the paragraphs above, we have said that a sage is a person who has already done meritorious deeds. There is nothing left for him to prove, which is why he doesn't curry favour by pretending to be a certain way. Rather, he may prefer not to expose his strength.

Ganeshman-ji also tried to hide his great deeds. He often called himself a worthless, no-good, foolish man. In his own biographical book, he has admitted to washing his friends' clothes inside the jail, cleaning the kitchens, serving tea, and even cleaning the defecations of a mentally-ill cadre named Bal Bahadur Pandey. Is this the picture of an ordinary man? Due to his uncommon and rare nature, Ganeshman-ji is forever enthroned as a 'virtuous man'.

Ganeshman-ji advocated for morality throughout his life. Through his own example, he taught a high moral standard to everyone from every strata of society, even the King. When asked about the importance of morality in a democratic system, he gave this precise definition: "If morality is removed from a democratic system, the resulting political system will become an authoritarian regime." He tried many times throughout his life to save Nepal's democracy from this calamity, from the loss of morality. Fighting this battle throughout, he passed away on September 18, 1997 (Ashoj 02, 2054 BS).

G) PHILANTHROPY

A sage or a virtuous man needs no introduction, as his benevolent nature speaks for him. He cannot help but be philanthropic in nature, and if he should get angry it is because it is in the other's best interest. Great men do not divide people into groups but seek to unify them under the umbrella of equality.

Until he reached maturity, Ganeshman-ji was brash, rowdy, troublemaker. It was only after getting involved in politics that he abandoned such a disposition. Although, nobility and ego did persecute him for a few more years. It may have been difficult to find any leader in Nepal who did not, at some point, have to clash with Ganeshman-ji's arrogance. Even those personalities whom Ganeshman-ji himself considered his mentors and gurus, they too had to contend with Ganeshman-ji's arrogance.

Time, in its infinite wisdom, turned the arrogant brat into a very humble, cultured, civilized and disciplined person. I have come to the conclusion that this transition happened largely due to the years he spent in jail, where he practiced a form of meditative self-improvement and realization and determination. Upon his release from prison, he was hardly recognizable as the same person, the largest change being his spirit of philanthropy. The same man who used to spend his youth getting into fights began to spend his days donating money and engaging in social service. He had such a giving spirit that his own parents stopped giving him money. While yesterday he used to break into his own house to gamble away money, now he was distributing it freely. In the past, Ganeshman-ji's house would have been hounded by people asking for loan-repayments, but now it was besieged by beggars from all over the city. Even his political opponents started asking him for money! He knew full well that the person was his ideological opponent, however he would give them even

more! And when he ran out of money to give, he would empty the pockets of his friends.

Ram Hari Joshi, a politician who later became a minister, served Ganeshman-ji for three years in the capacity of his personal secretary, and he recounts that on the day when Ganeshman-ji received his monthly salary, there would be nothing left in his pocket by the time he reached home.

Similarly, when institutional bodies arrived at his door to ask for donations, Ganeshman-ji used to give everything he could. If what he had was insufficient, he would go to the bazaar and negotiate for a loan with the merchants. Journalists who saw him receiving money from these merchants would write in the morning newspaper that Ganeshman Singh was spotted receiving bribes from the merchants. He was never bothered by these news articles. Owing to his philanthropic spirit, many health institutions, schools, libraries, and sports institutes were established all over the country. Two notable examples are Lainchaur High School and Bhimsensthan's Philanthropic High School in the capital.

Upon reading the later chapters of this book, readers will be aware of the level of social work and philanthropy that Ganeshman-ji was involved in. Here was a person who took an oath to not rest for a breath until the people of his country were free of the shackles of tyranny and dictatorship. He lived with a noose hanging over his head for five decades to abide by that oath. His stubborn abandonment of personal comforts and conveniences during his stringent practice of self-control in prison was the starting point of his altruism. Human welfare was his primary interest, but he also extended his kindness to animals. On the day that Ganeshman-ji and Gangalal enrolled as members of the Praja Parishad, they encountered a monkey whose hands had been tied. Out of desperation to break free, the monkey had rolled around and cut himself all over. Unable to

bear that horrible scene, Ganeshman-ji shouted and shouted, "Who tied his hands? Show your face if you dare! Come out!" Hearing his ruckus, several people came out of the nearby houses. When they saw who it was, they said, "Kazi Saheb! This must be the work of hooligans. Cutting off the rope now may be dangerous. It's almost nightfall, we will cut his ropes once it gets dark. Please be assured that it will be taken care of." So, the next day Ganeshman-ji went back to check on the monkey and found that it had indeed been freed. Satisfied, he left some money for its food and treatment. Such was his nature. If he could not bear to see even a wild animal in bondage, how could he possibly endure human suffering!

I will recount another memorable occasion. From an early age, Ganeshman-ji loved all the dogs of his neighbourhood. He made it part of his daily routine to caress and feed them. No one was allowed to beat any stray dogs in his neighbourhood. But after he was imprisoned in 1941, these stray dogs became orphans. In 1945, when he escaped from jail and en route towards India, he chose a route that would lead him through his own neighbourhood. However, on his way there, he was harassed by a group of dogs from the adjacent neighbourhood who wouldn't let him pass. He was unable to proceed further. Suddenly, a group of dogs from his own neighbourhood appeared and rushed to Ganeshman-ji's aid by aggressively fighting with the other dogs. They were beyond delighted to reunite with their benefactor after a four years absence. Ganeshman-ji had nothing to give them as his pockets were empty, however the dogs happily climbed all over him and licked him. He was overwhelmed by their reception, and after nearly an hour of playing with them, he said, "Brothers! This friend of yours is an escaped prisoner. I can't stay with you here for long. I have nothing to give you. Let me go, because your friend is in crisis!".

The dogs let him go. Such was the relationship between Ganeshman-ji and animals!

The events described above depict a person who is above the ordinary. People who possess such character are rarely seen on this earth. Therefore, I did not feel that calling Ganeshman Singh a 'great man' would suffice. I decided to title this book "An Iron Man, A Virtuous Man, A Sage" at first, but later decided that a succinct title was more appropriate. 'A Virtuous Man' would also have been proper, however I decided that 'Iron Man' represented his political personality the best. Therefore, we are here, to read about the one and only true 'Ironman' of Nepal!

The Thorny Leaves of a Promising Plant !

(When a child achieves first place in his or her class, when someone meets a polite and well-mannered child, when a child does something to make the whole family proud, when a child exudes qualities that are of an extraordinary caliber, we say "Hune biruwako chillo paat" (i.e. the shining leaves of a promising plant). Those who came to visit Badakazi Ratnaman Singh, Ganeshman-ji's grandfather, used to lavish similar words of praise unto Ganeshman-ji. Those who did not see his mischiefs, only saw his charms, would say things like, "What an extraordinary child!" and "After all, he is the grandson of the great Kazi!" and "This is what is meant by the 'shining leaves of the promising plant'! Truthfully, Ganeshman-ji's childhood was by no means worthy of praise, which he himself says in his biography, "Being the son of a prosperous family, I had crossed all the limits of being a pampered brat." However, with the passage of time, this self-titled spoiled brat became the people's savior. He twice liberated the Nepali people from the clutches of the autocratic regime and its harsh rulers. For this, he was enthroned as the 'supreme leder of Nepal' by citizens across the entire country. His example proved that even the thorny leaves of a plant can have great promise! In a way, his life story has changed the long-held saying and challenged societal norms.

In the Bhagavad Gita, Lord Krishna says, "Whenever evil exists or dominates, where morality is destroyed, I will come to the aid

of the gentle and the wise." But can current society, which drifts farther from God, digest this verse of the Gita? Even the sciences of today such as economics, sociology, applied sciences, and history have shown time and again that bad behavior and bad qualities do not last forever. After reaching a certain point, the bad element is definitely replaced by a good element. This is an eternal truth, and this same rule can be found in Ganeshman-ji's life, too.)

Power and governance are the result of courage and wisdom. Let's look at the history of Nepal. The Licchavis were removed by the Mallas, and they themselves were displaced by King Prithvi Narayan Shah himself. At the same palace where he had flown his victory banner, Jung Bahadur Rana assassinated the ruling powers and started the tyrannical rule of his Rana family. All of this is a game of power and domination, courage and intellect! By coincidence or destiny, about ninety years later, just a few hundred steps from the same palace, a hero was born on 9 November 1915 (Kartik 24, 1972 BS) in the locality called Yatkha, and yes, that boy was Ganeshman Singh.

A GRANDSON OF A HIGH-SOCIETY ARISTOCRAT

Ganeshman-ji's great-grandfather, Ditttha Jitman Singh Shrestha, had two sons, Ratnaman Singh and Hariman Singh. At the time of Ganeshman Singh's birth, his eldest grandfather Ratnaman Singh held the post of 'Sardar' during the reign of Chandra Shamsher Jung Bahadur Rana. Among the highest positions that could be achieved by ordinary citizens, 'Kazi' was the highest and 'Sardar' was the second-highest. The dreams that fathers held for their sons were to become either Kazi or Sardar. Hariman Singh unfortunately died at the tender age of 33, in the post of Kharidar. His son Gyanman Singh started his career as a lieutenant in Taulihawa and later became a subba in Hanuman Nagar Maal (Department of Land Management). Gyanman's eldest son was Ganeshman Singh, and so his son's early

education was in Taulihawa. Ganeshman-ji's uncle was Gunjaman Singh. Due to poor health, Ganeshman-ji's father Gyanman Singh struggled through his studies before dropping out in the eighth grade, whereupon he started working. However, Gunjaman Singh completed his B.A. and B.L.

Ganeshman-ji was also the eldest grandson of that large joint family, which is another reason that he was the 'most beloved and pampered child'. Owing to this special attention and affection he received, he developed a stubborn, arrogant, and fearless nature in his childhood. As with most children, he preferred playing and frolicking around rather than reading or writing. He was also quite adorable which made it difficult for adults to say no to him. Often, his father Gyanman Singh would have to admonish him, "Son! Haven't you played enough marbles? Come and study for a bit!" Ganeshman-ji would reply, "I'll be there in just a moment" and keep postponing.

Ganeshman-ji's mother Subhadra Kumari, who was affectionately nicknamed Sani Nani (little girl) at home, was the daughter of Purnaman, one of the famous merchant families of Indrachowk. However, at the tender age of 24 she became a widow. She was of a calm and simple nature, and a goddess of love and affection. She had raised her children in the umbrella of joy and comfort.

Ganeshman-ji's grandfather Ratnaman Singh had been promoted from Sardar to Kazi by Chandra Shamsher Rana. As he was occupying the highest civilian chair in the country, his power and fame was beyond compare. His house was steeped in feudal culture traditions. While the Kazi served the Prime Minister, lines of citizens showed up daily at his home to serve the Kazi and gain his favour. The new administrative chief who ascended after the demise of Chandra Shamsher was Bhim Shamsher. With the ascension of Bhim Shamsher, the fortunes of Kazi Ratnaman's family also improved further. Bhim Shamsher

promoted Kazi Ratnaman to 'Badakazi' and awarded him two lakh rupees. By today's standards, accounting for inflation, it would be equivalent to several crores. In addition to such a sum, Kazi Ratnaman was given authority to mint the coin and also given a monopoly to import cigarettes from abroad, in addition to cigarette sales and distribution nationwide. At the time, the tobacco business was considered the most lucrative business in all of Nepal. Badakazi's new position and business monopoly brought the Singh family squarely into the center of wealth and power.

MISSPENT AND MISGUIDED YOUTH

Along with the rise of Badakazi Ratnaman, the shenanigans of child Ganeshman also increased. He led his own gang of children which bullied and sometimes even beat others, and they spent their time playing hide-and-seek and swimming in the big rivers of Bagmati and Vishnumati. In order to place his grandson back on track, Badakazi made special arrangements to enroll him in the fifth-grade of the famous Durbar School, where only the children of Ranas were allowed to study. He was not very interested in study. Ganeshman-ji recounts that he studied there until the sixth grade, but hardly spent the whole day in school. One day, he ended up slapping a Rana's son a few times, which led to the Headmaster Rudra Raj Pandey grabbing him by the ear and demanded, "Why did you beat Rana-ji?" Ganeshman replied, "He said bad things about my mother, so I gave him a beating". The headmaster replied, "Just because he said a few things, it gives you the right to hit Rana-ji?" and reached for the stick, however Ganeshman-ji wriggled free and ran off. He was not inclined anymore to study in a place where the headmaster himself displayed slavery towards the Ranas regardless of justice. From then on, he would leave home in the mornings to go to school, but would roam around all day and return home in the

evenings. He would even bribe the guard at the school with a few rupees to not divulge his absence to his grandfather.

After lounging around all day without education or discipline, he became more involved in mischief and bullying. Many people complained to the administration about his misdeeds. However, who in administration would dare escalate the complaint against the Badakazi's children? None had such courage, and his misdeeds went unanswered.

Ganeshman-ji was the leader among his peers. If someone was wronged, the victim would immediately come to Ganeshman-ji to seek help. He listened to everyone's complaints and dealt out punishment, both as a leader and judge. He was a one-member judiciary, meting out justice with a slap on the ear, making the aggravator sit in a chicken position, or forcing someone to apologize. If he felt the crime was grave enough to merit a beating, he was not hesitant to oblige with his own hands.

There was an incident once where Ganeshman Singh decided to jump over a flooded Bagmati river in order to impress his hooligan friends. However, the raging Bagmati river had no care for whose grandson he was, for what does the river care? It swept him up and carried him two kilometres away to Teku Dobhan (confluence), where the merging of Bishnumati river created a swirl that dumped him onto the banks. Coincidentally, a Jyapu (farmer) who was nearby rescued the exhausted boy from the current. Had he not received help at the time, he may well have drowned. However, he had a tendency to bounce back from any fall and keep moving forward, so this incident did not shake him. One day, when he should have been in school, his uncle Tirthaman found him playing marbles in the street and grabbed him by the ears. He took him home, and Ganeshman-ji did not protest the whole way. However, upon reaching the doorway, he began to cry loudly to gain the sympathy of his grandmother who

he knew was sitting on the third floor. She ran downstairs and hugged her grandson and said, "It's okay, if you don't want to go to school. If you don't want to read, that's fine. No need to study, just open a shop and do business then. I'm fine with that. From now on, you don't need to go to school anymore."

The family was not unaware of Ganeshman-ji's shenanigans. But in the face of love, pampering, and his charms, his misdeeds were overlooked by all members of the family. Most of all, it was Badakazi Ratnaman who never saw Ganeshman to be at fault. His was a pure love and a blind love towards his grandson.

He also wanted his grandson to become Kazi and Badakazi like him. To achieve that, Ganeshman-ji needed to serve the Ranas well. So, he advised his grandson, "Look here, son! If you don't want to go to school then don't go, but you must learn to read and write. You have to be able to do a proper job for the Ranas, so study with your uncle Tirtha. You need to become a great man later, that's why you must increase your association with the Ranas." Ganeshman-ji did not like the idea of being a sycophant for the Ranas one bit. However, he did not express it in front of his grandfather.

When it became known by the family that he had left the school and gone astray, even then, no one reprimanded him or loved him any less. Still, dropping out of school made Ganeshman-ji himself feel ashamed. He says in his autobiography, "I dropped out of school. At first, I was pretending to attend school, but later I was exposed and it was quite embarrassing in the eyes of my family. One day my mother said, "Listen here, Hira-kazi! Do you know how happy your grandparents were when you were born? My grandson is lucky, he will be a great man. He believed that you would become such a personality that even if our past seven generations were trapped in hell, your deeds would free them! Do you know that he did your christening (paasni) with such pomp and

circumstance at Suryavinayak Temple? It was supposed to be the biggest feast of that time. He believed that you would have fame and glory like Lord Ganesh, which is why he named you Ganeshman. How will you fulfill that hope, trust, and confidence of your grandfather by playing marbles and swimming?" Hearing her say those words, I would feel admonished. But the next day I would be frolicking around again, repeating the same pattern of mischief and irresponsibility. My bad habits kept increasing and I even got drawn into playing cards and gambling."

The Ganeshman of yesterday who carried out small mischiefs was getting into more trouble like gambling as he grew up. His regular routine was to pretend to study English and Math with his uncle, Tirthaman for about an hour in the mornings, and to misbehave the rest of the time. During such an incident, his group got roped into in a 'gang fight' with the hooligans of Watu and Tebahal. In the midst of it, one of the hooligans sneakily swung an iron rod at his head and fractured his skull! The scar from that blow remained on his head for the rest of his life. Yet this did not deter Ganeshman-ji, and that very night he taught those hooligans a lesson and made them apologize to his group.

Ganeshman-ji was also quite witty since an early age. When he was but a child and visitors to his home asked him "What do you want to be when you grow up? No doubt a Kazi much like your grandfather?", he would reply "No, I will become Gandhi." He did not even know who Gandhi was, and had only heard the name spoken by adults in his family. Back then, tales told to children were mostly about the Ramayan. In those tales, he particularly like the characterization of Lord Narad, the messenger god. It may be because child Ganeshman had quite enjoyed how Lord Narad was able to fly everywhere he wanted, and that he could have many adventures. Perhaps Ganeshman-ji wished to travel around and see new places, as well as confront his opponents in the blink of an eye. Adult Ganeshman-ji

narrates the story of a similar adventure. At the time he was working at a four-story palace owned by Rudra Shamsher Rana, a job arranged for him by his grandfather. Suddenly, the mega-earthquake of 1934 occurred, which measured above 9.0 on the Richter scale. The whole neighbourhood erupted into cries and wail and the entire city of Kathmandu was filled with clouds of dust. The palace where he was stationed started shaking, but Ganeshman-ji, surprisingly, was rejoicing. Until then, he had not ever heard of an earthquake. Instead, he was feeling quite excited to be thrown around left and right in his office room, and he compared it to flying just like Lord Narad. However, suddenly the house started to crack, and the entire wall of the room broke apart and fell into the room. He hurriedly scrambled atop the broken wall and scooted out the hole. Only after exiting to the outside did he realize how devastating a great earthquake can be.

Sometime after that, around 5 to 7 months later, Ganeshman-ji was transferred to the palace of Padma Shamsher Rana. He had preferred to work rather than study, as he found studying to be boring. However, how much excitement could the job hold for such a fidgety youngster? He himself says, "I probably only spent one full day at the office. Other than that, I always escaped halfway through the day." And how did he spend his time? The same as always: hooliganism, gambling, beating people, etc. He was quite an unfortunate gambler, too. His monthly salary of 16 rupees would be gambled away in a single hour, so then he started gambling on credit. Within two months, he had borrowed money totaling more than 18 to 20 thousand rupees! The moneylenders started coming to his house to collect. For a few days, he was able to pacify these people with promises of delayed payment. But soon, the number of moneylenders coming to his home equaled the number of visitors coming to see Badakazi Ratnaman. Feeling desperate, Ganeshman-ji would then sneak away as soon as he saw moneylenders coming, and

run away on his horse as fast as possible. How many days could he sustain this? Finally, he decided that he needed to come clean to his family, but feeling shameful, he decided that he had no choice but to steal!

After being transferred to Padmashamsher's palace from Rudrashamsher's palace, the place seemed comparatively better to him, but even then he could not be motivated to attend work more than once every fortnight. Padma Shamsher Rana was very tolerant and friendly towards Ganeshman-ji. Sometimes, when admonishing him, Padma Shamsher Rana would say, "Don't walk around like a loafer. I know full well where and whom you are frequent with. I know of all the times you beat someone. Just yesterday I received a report about you. Look at you! Wearing such fine clothes befitting a noble, but your attitude is that of a hooligan. Is that proper?"

CONFRONTATION WITH A SOLDIER

One day, as Ganeshman-ji was about to enter his office premises on a bicycle, he was stopped by a soldier holding a rifle and birds on his shoulder. "Hey, you! Stop right there!" Ganeshman-ji stopped and asked, "What is it, why are you stopping me?" The man replied, "Oh, you think you're something else wearing fine clothes, don't you, you little Newar twat. Nowadays such clothes can even be rented out, do you hear? Those clothes don't make you a somebody!" Perplexed, Ganeshman-ji asked, "I have not done anything to you, why are you insulting me?" The soldier said, "You dare to enter the palace of the commander-in-chief in a bicycle without headlights or a bell?" Ganeshman-ji was very annoyed at the way the soldier was speaking disrespectfully to him even though he himself was being respectful, so he said, "It's the policeman's job to care about headlights and bells, not the job of a soldier!" The soldier replied, "When it comes to a loser hooligan like you, either police

or military will suffice to teach you a lesson." The soldier used foul language to berate him. Ganeshman-ji saw instant red, and he jumped upon the soldier like a leopard upon its prey, grabbing him by the neck and shoving him to the ground. He kicked the man over and over relentlessly while hurly vulgar abuse at him. The soldier cried out for help, but Ganeshman-ji kept kicking him like a football. Upon hearing the commotion, the workers in the office rushed out and separated them. Unfortunately, Ganeshman-ji's bicycle ended up on the other side and the soldier took out his anger by kicking it until it was crushed.

News of the quarrel immediately reached Padma Shamsher Rana. As per the suggestions of Ganeshman-ji's supporters within the palace, he quickly reached out to him and complained, "Commander, there was a man outside who looked to be a soldier. He insulted me and said derogatory things, so I slapped him a few times. He was drunk and he has also stolen my bicycle." Upon hearing that the man was drunk, Padma Shamsher instructed one of his men to go find out if it is true. He turned to Ganeshman-ji and said, "You really have been misbehaving quite a lot. Okay then, your bicycle will be confiscated." The man returned with his investigation and reported, "Commander! I am here to report that the abused soldier has not been drinking, but it is true that he was slapped a few times." Padma Shamsher asked, "How many times?" The man replied, "About four times, your eminency!" So Padma Shamsher said, "Oh, so you beat him four times? Your punishment will also be four times. Soldier, grab him by the ear and lift him four times!" Ganeshman-ji felt this was a very unjust decision. How could the commander decide who is in the right or wrong without listening to both sides of the story? The ruling made Ganeshman-ji think, "If they can dole out such unjust rulings to someone of my stature and nobility, then how cruel and unjust they must be to the average citizen without any

power!" This incident further fueled Ganeshman-ji's rebellious spirit against the Ranas.

DECEIVING AND GAMBLING

Despite his misgivings about the Ranas, his immediate concern was returning the money that he owed to his lenders. How could he do that? Well, the only person who would bail him out is someone that has always covered for him and loved him blindly, in essence, Kazini-ji, his grandmother. So, one day, finding an opportune time, he approached her, "Grandma! One of my friends is getting married, but he has no gold for his wedding. If we could lend him some gold, he would be able to marry with his head held high. He will return it in a few days, he's a very faithful friend and someone who helps me in my time of need." His grandmother was hesitant, saying that people are not trustworthy these days, but he convinced her by saying, "Oh, he is a very good man. I will go myself to collect it as soon as the wedding is over." Trusting her grandson's words, she handed him 12 pieces of Bangles weighing 3 tola each and a necklace weighing 60 tola. After several days, weeks, and months had passed, the jewels still had not returned. Why would a dog return a delicious bone? Sensing that his grandma would ask for their whereabouts, he started distancing himself from her. However, even that much gold did not cover Ganeshman-ji's debts. He started looking for a new person to cheat, and as misfortune would have it, his sights fell upon two gold bangles, each weighing 15 tola, that his own grandmother was wearing. He made up another story, fed it to his grandmother and took it for his purposes. He replaced them with identical fake replicas when returning them to her.

When Ganeshman-ji recounts these events, he deeply regrets it. His grandmother and great-grandmother were the two who loved him the most and protected him whenever something

went wrong, yet he deceived them. Speaking on this, he says, "I was a person of whom even hooligans were afraid, of whom even the moneylenders were afraid to ask for their repayment, of whom even the palace administrators were hesitant to take action when I skipped office, yet in front of my grandmothers I would squirm like a fish in a net. In fact, despite his swindling, it was still not enough to repay his debts. Gold was trading at Rupees 28 per tola at the time. So, then he decided to use the last option, to steal from the vault of his own home!

Ganeshman Singh, who was awarded the Human Rights Award by the United Nations, who was called the Supreme Leader of Nepal and Nepalis, who won the Outstanding Peace Run Award, who founded the country's largest political party Nepali Congress, who was awarded the medal 'Nepal Tara' by the Government of Nepal, who was the supreme commander of the Jana Andolan (People's Movement) 1990, who passed on the post of Prime Minister of Nepal with a laugh, who can believe that such a person could have been such a spoiled, entitled, bullying, lying, cheating brat?! But believe it or not, Ganeshman Singh was all of those in his childhood.

Even Ganeshman-ji's hand was forced by his immature age, his cunning wit, his stubborn nature, and the burden of debt. A person in such a situation may not think appropriately or act accordingly. That is why Ganeshman-ji himself says, "I decided to break into the house. Grandfather was not at home, he had gone to Hetauda with Juddha Shamsher Rana. During those days, Rana Prime Ministers would travel to the Terai region for a month or two to avoid the winter and partake in hunting. The Generals, Kazis, Sardars, military officers, and civil officers would also accompany him in the team. That year, Juddha Shamsher Rana had established his headquarters in Hetauda, so my grandfather was there. Taking the opportunity, I immediately withdrew 25-30 bags from the safe. Paper notes had not yet been

circulated in Nepal, and all transactions were done in silver coins. The bags contained coins in stacks of thousands which I used to repay all the loans, which was around Rs 18-20 thousand. I exchanged the remainder of the money into Indian Currency at a rate of 1:25 which came out to be around 5-6,000 Rupees IC. With this, I embarked for Calcutta, towards an uncertain future." He further says, "In fact, gambling, drowning in debt, and wasting my life were not the only reasons I stole that money. It was becoming difficult for me to show my face to my family. There are limits to lying, cheating, and misbehaving. I was cheating the same home where I filled my stomach and quenched my thirst and lay down to rest. But now, my bed had become a bed of thorns that I could not bear any longer."

Thinking that he could escape the guilt and shame, he prepared to run off to India carrying around five to six thousand Indian rupees. However, a few days before his departure, a letter fell into his hands, which was coincidentally written by his grandfather Ratnaman Singh to his son Gunjaman Singh. He opened the letter to see its contents, and Ratnaman had written, "The fact that Hira-kazi has stolen the money and wasted it is not what saddens me. My worry is that it will ruin his conduct and character - the money is no issue. Keep this incident a secret, don't let anyone know, not even your mother."

Up until this point, Ganeshman-ji believed that even if all the other members of his family knew about his bad habits, his grandfather was unaware of it. This letter shattered that illusion. He had great respect for his grandfather, and the contents of the letter only doubled his respect. He was overcome with shame and humiliation, and he could not face his grandfather again so he decided to leave the house as soon as possible.

SECONDARY STUDIES IN INDIA

It is an eternal story, the one where a person goes away to a faraway strange city, searches for community and belongingness, and seeks out a friend from his home country. Ganeshman-ji was aware that many Nepalis lived in Calcutta, among them his uncle who ran a business. He sought him out, but did not realize that his uncle would promptly return him back to Nepal. News of Ganeshman-ji's escape from Nepal had reached the uncle before Ganeshman-ji even set foot in the city. He toured Calcutta with Ganeshman-ji for a few days and after much convincing, finally persuaded him to return to Nepal. Thus Ganeshman-ji was entrusted to Madhavlal, whose father Jhamkalal happened to be Ganeshman-ji's elder cousin, who took him to Hetauda. In Hetauda, Ganeshman-ji came face to face with his grandfather Ratnaman Singh. In his autobiography, Ganeshman-ji says very poignantly about this incident, "I tried to bow my head to him, but he quickly said "Don't touch me, there's no need. Why did you have to steal? Had you asked, I would have given you the money. Did you have to break into the family coffers?" I then replied " Grandfather, I wanted to tell you about my debts, but I couldn't muster up the courage and the words would get stuck in my throat. The moneylenders kept showing up to our house and I couldn't show my face from humiliation. I even lost the jewelry I borrowed from grandmother, and I couldn't face her either. I had asked to be sent to Calcutta to continue my studies after leaving Durbar School but you insisted that I be home-schooled. I was hurt by your refusal also, which is why I chose to go to Calcutta now, for further studies." Badakazi was silent for a while, then he said, "You, study?! Are you capable of studying? Fine, it's better you stay in Calcutta. After all, how will you show your face in Kathmandu again, after what you have done? Even if you were to enter someone's home now, they would quickly hide all their valuables from you. So, whether you actually study

or not, it's better that you remain in Calcutta for five to seven years, and hopefully people here will have forgotten your misdeeds after that time. It is better that you study rather than lounge around like a loafer in Calcutta as well. If you need a tuition-master, it will be provided. Take as many tuition masters as needed, but study well. I will write to your uncle to arrange for your lodging. Should you wish to stay separately from your uncle, he will still be in charge of you. How much money do you have now?" I put all the money in front of him, and it amounted to about three thousand. "How much did you have when you entered India?" Badakazi asked. "About 5 to 6 thousand," Ganeshman-ji replied. "Where did you spend all the remainder in two weeks?" Badakazi asked. "I spent it all watching movies, touring the city, eating and making merry," replied Ganeshman-ji calmly. "Okay, from now onwards, do not visit cinemas or theatres. Don't waste any more money on such frivolous activities," admonished Badakazi, "I will give you spending pocket money of a hundred rupees per month, spend it wisely."

Ganeshman Singh's lifestyle thus far, was the culmination of his downfall. Surprisingly, even when he hit rock-bottom, he never let himself go fully. As he himself says, "Even at the height of my downfall, I never drank alcohol or smoked cigarettes." Among rogues, he was a hero. Perhaps it can be best described by saying that in his rogue nature, there was still an inadvertent virtue. It is perhaps that virtue which led Ganeshman-ji to eventually become a world-class politician. He goes on to say, "Obstacles and struggles become a challenge for me. I have never knelt before a challenge; I have always faced it."

His grandfather's mocking words regarding his studying in Calcutta became a challenge for him. He spent the next 18 months immersed in study, after all, his expenses were paid by the family and all he needed to do was read and write! He studied late into the night and went to paid tuition masters for every

subject except Nepali. Finally, the results for the Matriculation Exam (SLC) of 1939 were published, in which Ganeshman Singh had attained first division. Speaking about this achievement, Ganeshman-ji says, "I don't know the reaction of my grandfather when he received the news of my exam results, however as I returned to Kathmandu and descended from Chandragiri Hill, I felt that I had dominated over all the naysayers in my life. It was not just my false pride, because I had taken the test that my grandfather had posed for me and I had passed it. Those who may have criticized me or denounced me in my absence, all of them now had no ill words to speak of me. I was a success story, and all of them were already praising me and singing my virtues."

Twenty-four years of age is a time when a deserving young man, who had passed his Masters', can become a military officer, or join a government job, or join the police force as an inspector or a captain. However, at the age of twenty-four, all Ganeshman-ji had done was pass high-school! Yet, his pride in his achievement was beyond great. Laughingly, Ganeshman-ji recounts, "At the time, I felt that it would be hard for the earth itself to bear the weight of my success!"

It was no less a joy for the family that a depraved youngster like Ganeshman-ji to reform himself into a great student capable of achieving first-division. Seeing this positive change in his grandson, Badakazi was flying in the clouds from happiness. The rest of his family members were happy with him too. This encouraged Ganeshman-ji and he became determined to not let his success end there. He resolved to show society that he would become an even great student. Therefore, after boasting with his friends in Kathmandu for a few days, he returned to Calcutta to continue his studies in science. In those days, not even first-division students dared to study the prestigious ISC degree because it was very tough. He was admitted to Vidya Sagar, a reputed college in Calcutta, on the basis of his stellar SLC results.

As he studied there, he began to hear the term 'Inquilab' thrown around on a daily basis among the students. He did not understand the meaning of the word, but in the free environment of Calcutta he was told that it meant revolution. How could he gather its full meaning, he who had lived his entire life in Nepal where he had only heard slogans of worship to God or slogans of servitude to the Ranas. One day he asked a Bengali student for the translation of Inquilab, whereupon he understood that it means "Long Live Rebellion".

POLITICAL AWAKENINGS

In this new and exciting atmosphere of talks of revolution and rebellion, Ganeshman-ji started to lose his interest in science and became slowly attracted to the thrill of politics. Stories of Subhas Chandra Bose's miraculous personality, Mahatma Gandhi's famous deeds, and the popularity of the prominent leaders were drawing him in a subliminal way, like metal being attracted to a magnet. So he studied less and less, and began to enjoy processions, strikes, public meetings, and reading newspapers. The exam result was to be expected, he only passed in the English subject, garnering less than five marks each in all of the other subjects! This led to a paradox in Ganeshman-ji's life, should he concentrate more on studies or should he delve deeper into the uncertain path of politics? For an adult of twenty-five, the decision was his to make. So, he decided to quit his studies and enter politics. I will return to Nepal and free the Nepalis from Rana rule, he determined!

The political learnings and awakening that he experience in Calcutta would not allow Ganeshman-ji to resume a life of hooliganism like yesteryears. However, such a large shift in one's personality is no easy task. Nevertheless, he resolved to remember his own mischievous past as a bad dream, and look only towards a future where he could become a brand new

cultured person and a positive character. He decided to face that challenge head on.

At the time, there were several enthusiastic young personalities making efforts to push back against Rana rule in Nepal by promoting democratic ideas in society through social and spiritual messaging. Among them were Gangalal, Shukraraj, Dharmabhakta, Dasharath Chand, Muralidhar, and others. Circumstance led Ganeshman Singh to become involved with them, and he returned to Nepal. However, eventually, everyone was arrested and the Ranas shot dead Gangalal, Shukraraj, Dasharath Chand, and Dharmabhakta. The remaining youths, 32 including Ganeshman-ji, were imprisoned.

During his four years in jail, Ganeshman-ji continued to meditate on politics. By the force of that meditation, political culture continued to develop in him and he started to gain maturity. In addition to politics, he also mediated on and practiced social service, rebellious strategies, and revolutionary ideas together with his cadres inside the jail. Ganeshman-ji was just an ordinary political activist when he entered the jail, however, by the time he escaped from prison, he had become kind of a statesman. Most of those arrested alongside him when he entered the jail had been senior leaders, however they grew inactive and regretful of their actions, whereas Ganeshman-ji grew only bolder and more encouraged. He dreamed daily of breaking from the Ranas' prison and freeing the people from the clutches of the Rana regime. Eventually, he did successfully escape from prison, however his purpose was not just freedom for himself but freedom for all. He dedicated the rest of his life to the attainment of this goal, this objective, and this purpose. In the course of it, the Ranas inflicted indescribable pain, suffering, and torture on him. But he never wavered, nor did he compromise with anyone for his personal comfort. In honor of his revolutionary character, his rebellious spirit, his life of

struggle, and his life of sacrifice, Nepalis began to hold him in their hearts as their hero and leader. Later in life, he was awarded the Human Rights Award by the United Nations for his outstanding contributions. The Government of Nepal also awarded him the 'Nepal Tara' award which has never been given to anyone else. In addition to all these honors, the Nepali people accepted Ganeshman Singh as their 'Supreme Leader'. There are but a few leaders in this world who can claim such accolades.

When readers evaluate Ganeshman-ji's life through this lens, they may be curious as to how such a rogue man could have transformed so spontaneously after entering politics at the age of twenty-five. After all, the common saying in Nepal is, "The smooth leaves of the promising plant". It describes how a child shows promise from an early age. However, Ganeshman Singh's childhood and adolescence prove that the popular saying is wrong. Anyone who had read Ganeshman-ji's biography can now say, "Even the thorny leaves of a plant can hold great promise!"

A Prison or an Aspirational Center ?

(Ganeshman Singh's First Struggle Against the Autocracy)

(Although Ganeshman Singh lived to be a ripe old age of 82, his first quarter-century was limited to merriment, hooliganism, and the folly of youth. Out of his remaining 57 years, ten years were spent fighting against the Ranas, thirty years against the King and his Panchayat system, and five years against the autocratic tendencies of his own party, the Nepali Congress. The important thing to consider here is that during those 45 strenuous years of struggle, Ganeshman-ji never coveted power. He was offered the opportunity to become Prime Minister many times during this period, but he never accepted. His struggle was against the cruel Rana regime, against the autocratic monarchy, and against the authoritarian tendency of the Nepali Congress to seek elected dictatorship. Why would he accept the seat of power without first eradicating all these forms of totalitarianism? Therefore, he never rested. On one occasion, he begrudgingly had to accept the position of minister by his party's decision, but he never sought any position of power for himself. Rather than sitting in power, he spent fourteen years of his life in prison, eight years in exile, and two years in detention.

I have divided his 45-year struggle into three stages. The years 1941 to 1951 were the first phase of the struggle. This is the period that transformed one of the city's most notorious thugs, a spoiled

son of an aristocratic family, and a youth without any political awareness into one of the greatest legends in Nepali politics as well as a renowned revolutionary in South Asia. His four years in political imprisonment, and his ability to accept that prison as a 'sadhana kendra' (meditative and aspirational center), is what finally established him as an Ironman. This is the story of his first struggle - 'A Prison or an Aspirational Center?'

My submission that Ganeshman Singh is a great leader does not come out of emotion. Aspects of his life and the analysis of this chapter reveal that he has done extraordinary things deserving of that title. The story of his captive life is touching, exciting, and inspiring in itself. Before his arrest, he was nothing more than a spoiled brat living in comfort and luxury, wasting away his days as a thug and an idiot. Even though he was arrested for political unrest, he did not fully understand the depth of philosophy that was freedom, liberty, and democracy. Such was his naivete and clumsiness! He was deeply disturbed by the fact that the Ranas could, without remorse or punishment, be as cruel as they wanted or even abduct young girls at will. The people couldn't do anything! Even this realization only fully dawned on him after his conversations with Gangalal. Such a foggy person, within four years of his first imprisonment, had become a mature politician and a statesman.)

ENTRY INTO POLITICS

In fact, Ganeshman-ji did not get involved in politics with the knowledge and foresight of the bigger picture. Neither did he get involved in politics out of ignorance or curiosity. As a child, he had occasionally heard of Mahatma Gandhi, but he thought of him as a social worker, not a political activist. Sometimes, when his grandfather told him to become a great man, he would reply, "I will become Gandhi." He, who reached adolescence swimming, gambling, stealing, and beating people while under

the protection of a large aristocratic family, did not know anything about Mahatma Gandhi. Even though he was such a menace, no one dared to reprimand him, nor did his family deny him their affection. If he had belonged to a normal family, he would have been ostracized by society. But, who would dare to think badly of the dear grandson of the Badakazi? He was like a bull in a china shop, however, his status allowed him to get away with anything!

The general improvement in his childish nature took place after he started associating with Martyr Gangalal. Even then, it was not born of any political consciousness, but rather his disdain towards the Ranas after being reprimanded for beating a Rana's bully son in highschool and fighting with the guard at Padmashamsher's residence. He only knew that the Ranas were unjust. Even then, he did not fully realize the full extent of the injustices that the Ranas had doled out to other people. His purpose in joining the rebellion was not for the oppressed and the downtrodden, but rather to fight against the injustices that he himself had experienced.

Gangalal first met the prideful, arrogant, and self-aggrandizing Ganeshman Singh at a dinner in Kathmandu. On their way back home that evening, they were approaching Gaddi Baithak. At that moment, Gangalal pointed to two women standing at a distance with brooms in their hands, and asked, "Who could those two women be, working at this hour?" Ganeshman Singh took a look and replied, "Ah, they are the ones who sweep the streets, maybe a Kuslini or Chyamini." Gangalal then asked, "If one of the Ranas were to take a liking to them and abduct them, could that woman's husband do or say anything?" A hotheaded and arrogant Ganeshman Singh gave a knee-jerk reaction exclaiming his bravado, "Rana or not, even if I were to abduct her, her husband couldn't do anything!" Gangalal added, "Similarly, could you yourself do anything if a Rana abducts your

own sister or wife?" The thick-headed Ganeshman Singh, who had never thought about this before, mistook it for Gangalal trying to humiliate him. His hands were already brimming to punch him in the face but he settled himself. After he returned home, he lay down and wondered, "What can I do if my sister or wife is taken away by a Rana?" The question made him twist and squirm all night, unable to sleep. At the first crow of the rooster, about two or three o'clock in the morning, Ganeshman Singh showed up at Gangalal's house. Of the event, he recounts, "It was like Prince Siddhartha leaving the palace in search for an answer to grief." The difference being that Prince Siddhartha left his palace in search of wisdom, while Ganeshman-ji left his in search of rebellion.

Upon meeting him again, Ganeshman-ji said, "I think that what you said to me last night is irrefutable. I searched for an answer but could not find one. Like you said, it's not only the lower castes of Chyamani and Kuslini that are unable to protest. Even I wouldn't be able to do anything although I am the grandson of the Badakazi! You have just made me realize my helplessness and I couldn't sleep all night. So, I have come to discuss with you. It's not enough to just accept that we live in cruelty! We must throw off the yoke of the Ranas. I have thought about what possible actions we can take to change it! So, I have come to discuss with you the possibility of opening a political party!" *(This was the first and very important political dialogue of Ganeshman-ji's life. Therefore, it is not possible to enjoy this recounting by listening to a secondhand account of events. For that, the reader should intently read Volume 1 of the autobiographical book 'The Pages of My Story' by Ganeshman Singh.)*

This political dialogue with Gangalal had awakened in Ganeshman-ji the spirit of rebellion and the desire to open a political party. However, he did not yet understand what politics

was! When he was arrested in 1941, Nara Shamsher Rana spoke to Ganeshman-ji in the Putali Bagaicha (Butterfly Garden) of Singha Durbar, saying, "Ganeshman, what are you doing? You do not lack for anything. We have always appreciated you and yours. We are supposed to work together to run this nation, instead you have gotten yourself involved in such ridiculous affairs?" In reply, Ganeshman-ji said, "What good is all your appreciation, when neither my mother nor my sisters can have full dignity and security? Nowadays, if a Rana were to fancy a Chettri girl, he could abduct her from anywhere anytime without any repercussions. If some Newar abducted even a Chettri girl, he would be beaten beyond recognition and dragged all around the city. An arrest warrant would never be issued for any Rana. Even if an arrest warrant were to be issued for abduction, Chettris can get away with paying the monetary fine, but Newars would have to pay the fine and be imprisoned and face full punishment! This is a great injustice, and I am protesting it because it needs to stop." Subba Mahendra Bahadur Mahat was listening to this exchange take place, and he recalls thinking, "So much for high political principles and a thought-out cause, is this what the youth of today are sacrificing their lives for? What kind of a leader is he?" Feeling surprised, he said, "Young man, everything you just said was a matter of your personal dissatisfaction. Didn't you come here to argue for your political principles?" Upon hearing this, Ganeshman-ji felt embarrassed, and before the Subba could add anything more, he hastily exclaimed, "Yes, yes! We are here to fight for our political principles!" The Subba then asked, "So what are your political principles?" and Ganeshman-ji replied, "Bringing democracy!" Ganeshman-ji recounts in his autobiography that if the Subba had enquired any further as to what democracy means, that he would not have been able to give an answer.

In this manner, Ganeshman Singh was introduced to politics through his association with Gangalal, at a time when he didn't know any political principles, doctrines, or the concept of democracy. However, after being imprisoned together with his friends from the Praja Parishad (political party) and hearing about the tortures that martyr Gangalal and Shukraraj were put to, he applied himself to the goal of becoming a matured political leader.

START OF PRISON LIFE

Thirty-two political prisoners, including Ganeshman Singh, were imprisoned in the Singha Durbar Military Detention, where he began his first lesson in political study. It was a period for him to think carefully about his future and make the best decision. If he decided that it was a mistake to have become a member of the Praja Parishad, this would have been the time to rectify it. He had become a dishonoured character having rebelled against the Ranas, and would now never again have any opportunity to become a Sardar or a Kazi. Yet, if he apologized truthfully, the Ranas would still have forgiven him and discharged him to his grandfather Badakazi Ratnaman's care. He would have carried on living a normal life. Ganeshman-ji analyzed the situation and events of the time seriously, and determined himself to never leave the path of liberty and justice, no matter how difficult the decision, rather than to apologize and live in comfort. There were events that transpired which led him to become so resolute, some of which are mentioned here.

It was only after being under the thumb and charge of the jailers of Singha Durbar that Ganeshman-ji finally understood the difference between dominating others with the power-structure having his back, and being dominated by that very same power-structure when taking a stance against it. When he finally had to face the oppression of the rulers and their

executioners, he soon realized that he had nothing left in the world but fear. He says in his book, "When they started taking our statements and extracting information, I was trembling with so much fear that I still feel ashamed when I remember what happened then. We had barely finished eating our rice (lunch) in the morning and had ventured outside to seek the sun, when the guards sauntered towards us. Seeing them, I started panicking and thinking, "here they come again!" My feet trembled and my heart grew cold. My bones felt like wispy grapevines. I was so scared that when they yelled out the name Gangalal, I thought they yelled out Ganeshman and grudgingly stood up. The guard saw me rising and yelled out, "Not you, Gangalal!" and I felt the weight of a mountain lift off my shoulders. Even so, I was afraid that if Gangalal didn't show up immediately then I would be taken instead. So, I hurriedly called out, "Gangalal-ji, they are asking for you. Go on, hurry!" When Gangalal showed up, I was finally able to breathe a long sigh of relief, and I thought to myself, "Thank God I'm safe for today, at least." Strange, how the stain of fear clings to your soul."

Until then, he had not had to experience the fear and terror of the Rana Regime. He must have been terrified by the details of the torture inflicted upon Gangalal, which were later described by Harikrishna as a sight to behold. Harikrishna says, "I don't know what message the jailer delivered to Nara Shamsher Rana, but he came down and punched Gangalal straight in the mouth so hard that his body fell to one direction and his spectacles to the other. Nara Shamsher instructed loudly for bamboo to be prepared, and Gangalal was tied up and hoisted onto the bamboos by two people. A third person continually whipped him across the knees until the two people holding the bamboo got tired and let go. The ropes broke and Gangalal crashed to the floor like a bird shot out of the sky. Gangalal, both hands tied behind his back, fell face first onto the hard ground

and snot and saliva poured out of his mouth. Yet, the whipping and kicking and beating continued on. When the jailers finally got tired, they spat on him until his face was covered in their spit. This torture was repeated several times, and ended only after Gangalal lost consciousness. He had to be carried by four people back to his room." Seeing all this, Harikrishna was so traumatized that he could not even get up when the jailers told him to 'walk away'. It was only after drinking a jar of water that his weak legs finally mustered up the energy to start walking again.

Ganeshman-ji narrates the story of the day after the torture in this way, "It was the next day, and we had been taken to the school-house nearby. I went outside to urinate and I saw that Gangalal's body was laid face-up in the sun. His face was fully swollen and looked like a vulture. He could not open his eyes properly. There were black and blue bruises all over his body. Stains of blood were all over his clothes. He saw me coming towards him and recognized me. He gestured to his guards that he needed to urinate, and although he was severely injured, he crawled his body slowly towards me. His condition was many times more tragic and pitiful than what Harikrishna had described. Even a stone heart would have melted at his sight. He turned his head slightly left and right as much as his pain would allow, perhaps looking to see where the guards were. He said, "Ganeshman-ji, don't lose your resolve. I have told them nothing. You also don't lose your resolve." Ganeshman-ji recounts further, "Upon seeing him, my throat had gone dry. His condition had traumatized me. Hearing his words was like a spear through my heart. The two of us that were present there told him to rest assured that we would stay true to the path. After that, I immediately went back to my room. We could not save Gangalal from having to endure this pathetic state. I was stricken by the

sight of him suffering, and wished that it had been me instead of him."

TRANSFORMATION IN CAPTIVITY

Being unable to bear Gangalal's miserable condition, Ganeshman-ji had reassured him that he would not abandon his political principles. That meant that he could not reveal any secrets or endanger anyone no matter the circumstance. Now he wondered, how can I build such character? Even when hearing the stories of torture inflicted on others, he would almost wet his pants in fear. Would he be able to keep his mouth closed when the Ranas' whip fell on him? Ganeshman-ji did not believe in himself. He engrossed himself in thought as to how he could build such tolerance and endurance. He made up his mind that, he too, would be as brave and heroic as Gangalal. Why live in fear or the Ranas? Why not rather die a heroic death? It was with this determination that he began his captive life.

1) THE PRACTICE OF GATHERING COURAGE

Knowingly, unknowingly, or out of curiosity, he had already enrolled as a member in the Praja Parishad. He had not taken this membership under any pressure or compulsion. In fact, Ganeshman-ji and Gangalal were so eager to meet the Praja Parishad in person that they used to wander the forests around Swayambhu and Pashupati for months at a time. When they finally met Dharmabhakta and he bestowed membership upon them, they were so ecstatic that they called him their deity and themselves his devotees. Ganeshman-ji was so overjoyed and wanted to express his gratitude that he enthusiastically wrote a letter affirming his dedication to the cause and handed it to Dharmabhakta, although no such letter was necessary. In fact, that same letter later became the basis for Ganeshman-ji's lifelong imprisonment and property confiscation when it was

discovered by the police during a search of Dharmabhakta's house.

Ganeshman-ji did not understand the essence of politics until he was arrested. Therefore, he didn't know any excuses to escape from the mess that he had landed in. However, in some corner of his soul, political ideology and loyalty must have been dormant, because he could not just throw away the membership he had worked so hard for. How could he renounce it and show his face again in society, after he had taken an oath in front of God (Shova Bhagwati) to support the cause? That is why Ganeshman Singh, at age 25, decided that no matter what, he would not retract his steps, that he would serve the country through politics. Yet whenever he thought of the torture inflicted on Gangalal and others, his knees would get weak. How to build courage? That was his immediate priority. In order to strengthen his resolve, he would bring to mind the example of Gangalal or Shukraraj. He was beginning to find courage in the fact that Shukraraj had given a public reply to Juddha Shamsheer in front of his own courtiers at a large gathering. This was replacing the fear and terror in his mind with determination and courage.

Similarly, Tanka Prasad had also spoken fearlessly in front of the Ranas during his statement, so Ganeshman-ji asked him how he could be so courageous. "Friends say that you weren't so bold and fearless before. How did that courage come to you? Please let me know. I feel ashamed of how I was during my time at Singha Durbar. I want to forget that chapter and put it behind me, and I want to be as brave as you are. I have tried many times to summon the courage but could not. Please tell me what inspired the courage and bravery in you."

Tanka Prasad replied, "My courage or bravery is nothing, in fact. At first, when I heard of the execution of the four martyrs, I thought that these Ranas would kill me as well. So, since I was going to die anyway, I decided to not be afraid to speak out.

However, later I found out that they would not kill me because I was a Brahmin! Once I realized that, I stopped puffing out my chest and obeyed everything they said. The love of life brought me to this place. When I thought that I would die, I had no fear, but when I realized I would live, the love for life brought out the fear again. Now I'm not in any position to say anything against the Ranas. At that time, I may have spoken boldly, but that courage couldn't last. If you can throw away your love for life, courage will itself come to you. Look at Gangalal and Shukraraj! They are the ones who are brave!" Ganeshman-ji then said to himself, "Yes! This love of life makes cowards out of us. If Gangalal and Shukraraj had loved life, could they ever have made a name for themselves? I will try to be as fearless as they are." Coincidentally, Ganeshman-ji's grandfather had also sent him a communique recently, saying, "Don't entangle others unnecessarily." So, he now decided, "Even if the foundations of the earth should shake, I will not fall. I will not betray anyone. Ganeshman will not melt from anyone's fear, arrogance, or threats!" It was because of this courageous nature that Ganeshman-ji built himself into the Ironman.

2) ABANDONING HIS PERSONAL DESIRES

Ganeshman-ji commenced the practice of abandoning his personal attachments while inside the jail. When the members of the rebellion were imprisoned in the Bhadragol Jail of Kathmandu, their families would send them delicious and savory food befitting their status. Ganeshman-ji received the most variety, since he belonged to the aristocracy! He would get an assortment of dishes all prepared by talented chefs using the best available ghee and spices. However, one day, Ganeshman-ji thought, "We should not be so dependent on our families and burdening them with such additional responsibility. Especially people like us who are fighting to serve the society and country

by engaging in politics! How many more days will we continue to become a burden to our families? Since we cannot give anything to our families, we should not expect anything from our families either!" The next day, in front of all his friends, Ganeshman-ji proposed that they all decline to receive any further dishes from their homes. Many agreed that this was the right thing to do. But when it came time to eat, no one did so. After all, how could they survive on their meager allowance? The administration would give them one paisa, one-half mana of rice, two chillies, two lumps of salt, and two handfuls of firewood a day. How could it be enough? Although no one followed his example, Ganeshman-ji told his courier to stop bringing food, saying, "I am now a person who is involved in politics. I don't know how long I will yet remain in jail. I cannot do anything for my house, for my family, so I don't want to be a burden to them. Please don't bring me any more food from home. I will eat whatever the prison provides."

Now that the food delivery had been refused, how could Ganeshman-ji satisfy his hunger with the limited quantity provided by the jail? He was a big man, and both he and Harikrishna used to exercise extensively within the jail. Naturally, people with a big size become hungrier after exercising. Until yesterday, he was eating four eggs in one bite, and now the jail servings were like cumin-seeds in the mouth of an elephant! Therefore, Ganeshman-ji called out to his fellow inmates, "I am not eating enough, and it's not always easy to ask you. So, what I've decided is to do it the right way. From now on, if you give me a handful of rice from your portion, I will wash your dishes." After this, those who needed fewer portions and were too lazy to do their dishes would give Ganeshman-ji their extra portion of rice. One may imagine it was like the Gopinis making Lord Krishna dance for helpings of butter! Now, not only was his stomach full, but also stuffed. He had achieved expertise

in washing the dishes, and his work could easily be distinguished from the other dishes in the rack. The dishes washed by him would shine so bright that prisoners would look at their faces and even cut their hair using them like mirrors!

In this way, Ganeshman-ji was teaching self-reliance to prisoners inside the jail, but he also taught us on the outside through this example. There was nothing lacking in his life, being the son of an aristocratic family. However, by recounting this event in the manner which he does, he gives all of us the message and the lesson of being self-reliant, much like Mahatma Gandhi!

3) STRUGGLE AGAINST SUPERSTITION

Ganeshman-ji also commenced the struggle against superstition and blind-thinking from within the jail. He would say, "Society should be protected from being embroiled in nonsense like castes, religions, sects, and cults. Those of us who are involved in politics should reject such practices." But what could he do? This practice was prevalent inside the jail as well. Even the leaders arrested in the Praja Parishad scandal seemed to be divided on the basis of their caste and dialect. The Newars would not even touch the kitchen of the Brahmins, and the Brahmins would not touch the kitchen of the Newars! It is natural for a person to get along with his own class or category due to shared cultures and temperament. But Ganeshman-ji was of the opinion that we should not engage in discrimination. "There should be coordination and harmony among all castes. Moreover, we are involved in politics to bring about the same change, therefore we especially should not do that," he said. Everyone would nod their heads in agreement when he said such things, but wouldn't follow through on creating change. Even within the group of Brahmins, people could be heard talking about being a subgroup of Upadhyaya, Jaisi, or Kumai. This was

the epitome of idiocy. Ganeshman-ji worried about how to break such preconceived mindsets. Meanwhile, the matter started to be discussed about everyone cooking together. Even if a single kitchen couldn't be arranged, perhaps a singular group could. Ganeshman-ji proposed, "My specialty is in washing dishes and cleaning rice. Let's make a single kitchen for all, no matter how big it may be." Others did not agree with him, and said, "No, it is a matter of untouchability, so let's instead form two groups, one for Newars and one for Brahmins." This idea was accepted by all, so now there were going to be two stoves. Since Ganeshman-ji was taking on the undesirable and difficult job of washing the dishes, both groups would try to entice him to join them. However, for Ganeshman-ji this was a paradox. If he joined the Brahmins, his own caste of Newars would be unhappy with him. If he joined the Newars, then the Brahmins would say, "See that? So much for all his talk about equality! When faced with the decision, he chose the higher caste!" However, his friends did not understand Ganeshman-ji at all, and in order to awaken consciousness in them about superstition and equality, he said, "If the Brahmin group does not mind my involvement, I will choose to be with them." The Brahmins had no problem, they answered, "Why would we mind? After all, you won't be touching the kitchen. It is not necessary for a person who cleans the rice and washes the dishes to be a Brahmin."

Tensions were running high between the two groups. Naturally, Ganeshman-ji would clean and eat together with the Brahmins, but he would talk and discuss more with the Newars. He would continue making his case that racism and superstition were taboo subjects in this time of uprising.

One day, Ganeshman-ji saw Tanka Prasad Acharya and Ram Hari Sharma sitting in the corner as if they were observing the funeral rites of a departed. Intrigued, Ganeshman-ji asked them, "Why are you sitting in the corner? Did your father or mother

pass away?" They replied, "No, no one has passed away. The thing is, we have asked for *Patiya* from the Rana ruler, in order to re-confirm our higher caste. Until we get his answer, we are staying away from the untouchables." Ganeshman-ji did not understand what *Patiya* means, so Tanka Prasad explained, "We have requested his highness to re-confirm our higher caste by paying a dowry." Ganeshman-ji was amazed. Can the King or the Rana just increase or decrease someone's caste? Indeed, after a few days, the order came down, "Assimilate them into a lower caste which isn't untouchable." So, by the new order of the ruler, Ram Hari and Tanka Prasad were Brahmins no longer. They were now equal to the castes like Rai, Limbu, Magar, Newar, etc! Perhaps one could accept that the social system of the time was like that, but how can revolutionary leaders wearing bandanas on their forehead shouting for radical change in the country be so consumed by superstition? Ganeshman-ji was disappointed to see this, and said to himself, "I don't know where I'll end up if I follow such leaders, so whatever I do, I need to do it myself." He became determined that he must make an independent path and not give up. He tried often to convince his friends of his ideals. So, one day, he called together a meeting and said, "Friends! Sitting around, doing yoga, and chanting will not help anything. We must all work together to get out of this place! If we manage to escape, we can finally affect change with our political activities outside." As soon as they heard the word 'escape' from Ganeshman-ji, some of the cowards were almost wetting their pants, while others were in shock! Leader Tanka Prasad, on the other hand, said, "Ganeshman-ji, even if we escape, where will we run to? *Out of the frying pan and into the fire?* I don't think it's a good idea to try to escape."

Political leaders and activists should have been the carriers of change in a society steeped in casteism, untouchability, bigotry, and superstition. But here, the so-called political leaders

themselves were vying to get their caste back from the rulers! His ears were pricked often by the jabs, insults, sarcasm, and gossip directed at him inside the jail. The Newars would mock him saying that he had taken up a despicable job like washing the Brahmins' dishes, "Look at him, a man without self-respect! He is doing work that even a Damal would not. Woe to Ganeshman-ji!" Hearing such petty things on a daily basis, Ganeshman-ji grew frustrated and decided to leave the Brahmin kitchen. However, he wasn't interested in mixing with the Newar kitchen either. Instead, he started his own kitchen.

4) THE PRACTICE OF SENSORY SUPPRESSION

Another practice that Ganeshman-ji started for himself and for society's benefit was to suppress his personal desires. BP Koirala has written in his book about Ganeshman-ji that he turned to Hatth Yoga. Little did BP know that Ganeshman-ji had already mastered the subject by practicing sensory suppression for almost a decade before they met.

Ganeshman-ji was a person born with a tender heart. It was his nature to rejoice in the service and charity of others. One time in the jail, he saw a Madhesi prisoner in the room adjacent to him curled up and shivering with cold. When he inspected him closely, he found that the man's lips were already blue but he still had a pulse. He immediately brought his own blanket and rug over from the other room and covered him with it, and lit a fire in the hearth. The Madhesi started stirring after some time. Seeing the man's condition, Ganeshman-ji was relieved, but now he had nothing to cover himself with in the chilly night. He wondered, "The sages and ascetics meditate with little clothing in the cold of the mountains, how is it that they can do it? If I can do the same, if I can have control over my senses, then I can bear any problems that come my way. Those who are involved in politics can more easily protect themselves in any situation. So

why not practice it?" Therefore, from that day forward, he started to sleep with only a straw mat and a stone pillow. He continued this practice for the next four years in Bhadragol Jail. And he did the same later when he was arrested again, after fifteen years, and placed in Sundarijal Jail. BP Koirala once recounted, "No matter how cold it was in Kathmandu, Ganeshman-ji would sleep on a straw mat and make himself a stone pillow. Sometimes he would wear an overcoat when it was very cold." In this manner, Ganeshman-ji proved that through one's willpower, one can succeed in asserting control over the senses.

5) HUMANITARIANISM AND CHARITY

It is said that man is such an ungrateful being that he often will not even utter two words of gratitude in return for a favor. But there inside the chaotic prison, struggling with his own soul and destiny, this man named Ganeshman Singh was suddenly inspired by God to reform himself. Contrary to his nature, he took pity upon a mentally ill political companion, a person he was not particularly fond of, and served him with compassion, kindness, and benevolence. That lucky prisoner was Bal Bahadur Pandey. Anyone who has heard the story of how Ganeshman Singh served Bal Bahadur Pandey for those four years will say, "Wow! Even the famous social worker Florence Nightingale may not have performed such a task!"

The story begins like this: With the aim of fighting the Rana rule and establishing democracy in Nepal, some enthusiastic youths organized underground and formed a political organization called the Praja Parishad. However, before they could launch their special event, almost all the leaders and activists involved were arrested. Among the 32 youths arrested were Shri Shukraraj Shastri, Dharma Bhakta, Gangalal, Dasharath Chand, Tanka Prasad, and Ganeshman Singh. Bal Bahadur Pandey was also one of these arrested youths. The Ranas

tortured everyone and Bal Bahadur Pandey could not endure the torture and went insane. His lunacy was such that he stopped recognizing his own friends, and would defecate and urinate everywhere. Seeing this, his former friends started avoiding him. Even Ganeshman-ji used to do the same. The prison administration did nothing but watch. The Rana regime provided no medical treatment or help of any sort. Finally, all the remaining prisoners gathered together to discuss the matter. "What do we do with this crazy Bal Bahadur?" Everyone offered their opinions. Some wanted to appeal to the administration because it's their responsibility, while some wanted to lock him up in a room. Others said that since they were all involved in the same campaign, sacrificing for the same goal, that everyone should take turns taking care of him. Finally, it was Ganeshman-ji's turn to speak. In fact, Ganeshman-ji didn't like Bal Bahadur very much from the get go. He was put off by him. He wished that the administration would have transferred him to another jail. Bal Bahadur had become a frantic and insane person, even trying to bite anyone who got close to him. However, in front of Ganeshman-ji he would pipe down, like a snake in front of an eagle! Even so, Ganeshman-ji would start to get irritated and anxious whenever Bal Bahadur came close, he would want to create some distance between them. So, when it was his turn to speak, he said, "I was disgusted by Bal Bahadur and his craziness. Now, I want to atone for that. So, from now on, I will serve him until I am able. Unless I say that I'm tired and that I cannot do it, none of you have to worry about him."

Let Ganeshman-ji tell us the story of Bal Bahadur in his own words:

"All in all, Bal Bahadur Pandey's condition was very bad. He was not even aware of his own defecations. He used to defecate in his bed all night long, and his entire bedding and body would be smeared by the morning. It was a disgusting sight to behold. No

one dared get close to it, much less touch it. In fact, everyone would create as much distance from his room as possible for fear of having to help out. Not only that, he was not even conscious of eating, and he needed to be fed by others. His situation was such that his rice and soup would need to be mashed by another, placed in his palm, brought up to his mouth, and then he would have to be coaxed to swallow for every bite.

I had told my friends that I would take care of him, but the reality of doing so was very difficult. It was not an easy task every morning to carry a soiled and smeared person outside, and bathe him and wash his clothes. Bal Bahadur was not able to walk at all. My biggest problem was how to get him out of his room. For that, I made a big sack of cloth that would cover him from the neck down to the feet. I would hoist him up and carry him in it, and all his defecations would be contained in the sack which could then be washed and dried for the next day. That's how I managed it.

I would carry him to the tap early in the morning, which was about two hundred feet away. At the time, hot water was a luxury that even people outside couldn't provide, so there was no question of receiving any hot water inside the jail. Therefore, even in the winter months, we would bathe in cold water. I would put him in the bathing area and wash him with soap and water. After that, I would wash his blanket and rug. We had arranged for two sets of bedding to be given to him, so that when one is drying the other would be ready for use. I would then get to bathe after completing all his work. This process continued unabated until the day I escaped from prison."

Ganeshman-ji was not a person who engaged in self-aggrandizement. Nowhere is it found that he exaggerated his image. Those who critique and analyze his deeds have said that Ganeshman Singh is a person who does things that ordinary people cannot believe. In the harsh winter of Kathmandu, how could Ganeshman-ji, with chains on his hands, knees, and neck,

have taken care of such an insane prisoner? Not to mention, the winters in Kathmandu at the time were such that the water in the pipes would freeze into ice. Often the prisoners would need to light a fire under the pipe to unfreeze it and get the water flowing again. How could a boy who grew up in one of the biggest aristocratic families serve a lunatic like Bal Bahadur in such a cold winter? It's difficult to believe.

Harikrishna Shrestha, Ganeshman-ji's classmate and fellow inmate for four years, recounts, "Bal Bahadur Pandey was crazy. He also suffered from constipation. Often, his excrement would cause blockage and to get it out, Ganeshman-ji would manually insert his index finger to release it! Such was the standard of his service! Where in this world can you find a caregiver like Ganeshman-ji?"

6) POLITICAL PRACTICE AND ASPIRATIONS

Ganeshman-ji had realized, within a few days after entering the Bhadracol Jail, that nothing of consequence was going to happen there. Nothing could be done for the country, the people, or even oneself unless he escaped from there. So, he made up his mind to escape. He shared this goal with all his friends, but no one would accept this idea. Moreover, they would sarcastically discourage him. Ganeshman-ji says, "In order to discourage me, Tanka Prasad himself would joke around very loudly asking, 'Where is Ganeshman? Did he run away already?' Then he would look around in my direction and say, 'Oh there you are! I'm surprised to find you here! I thought you would be in Banaras (India) by now!' Then he would further add, 'Don't bother trying to escape. Just sit here quietly and meditate on Lord Ram's name.' Not to be outdone, I replied with a saying in Hindi, *Jo Ladata wo Marata Bande. Jo Darata, Wo Kuchh nahin karata Bande* (Rather to die a brave death than to accomplish nothing as a coward!) Should you be discouraging those who should

instead be encouraged? I may not have been successful until today, but at least I am trying. It's better to try than to laze around and do nothing.' Unable to withstand the reply, Tanka Prasad said, 'Don't be arrogant, Ganeshman. We all saw in Singha Durbar just who was floundering in the deep water! Don't act arrogant now.' But I replied, 'There's a saying that says that the first victory may belong to the ignorant, but the last victory will belong to the player! Singha Durbar was just the beginning of my race! The win-post is far away, and all that matters is who gets there first. In this way, I would challenge Tanka Prasad.'

The good deeds that Ganeshman-ji did inside the jail were really a form of '*sadhana*'. It is also said in the scriptures that "The virtues of divinity are inadvertently manifested in the one who is constantly practicing with a sense of selflessness." Tanka Prasad, who was the very first president of Nepal's very first political party, needed the fire of revolution started by Ganeshman-ji in order to finally get out of the jail. He became lost somewhere in the history of Nepal. On the other hand, even though Ganeshman Singh was only a simple member of the Praja Parishad, the courage he displayed in escaping from the Ranas' jail left an indelible impression in the minds of Nepali people everywhere. Praise for his courage spread far and wide. But does the story of his might and valor end with just that? Not at all! The revolution of 1951, the Civil Disobedience movement of 1958, the General Movement of 1980, the national level Satyagraha of 1986, the People's Movement of 1990, and the Janajagaran (Peoples' Awareness Building) Campaign of 1994 added much more to the praise of Ganeshman Singh! Even the United Nations itself awarded Ganeshman Singh the Human Rights Award for Outstanding Contribution to Human Rights and Democracy. Indeed, Ganeshman Singh was the person who ended up at the win-post. This is just a matter for context. Now let us move on once again to the walls inside the jail.

Ganeshman-ji's daily exercising was, in fact, practice for him to climb the walls of the jail. Additionally, he was also studying the possibility of digging a tunnel underneath, as well as the third option of breaking a portion of the wall. Either because they knew his planning, or because of some other reason, the prison administration decided to increase the height of the inner wall from six feet to twelve feet. Ganeshman-ji protested this decision, telling the administration, "We are already living in this caged trap. Why are you trying to raise the wall to twelve feet? Are you trying to kill us? We won't allow it. We will not allow such high walls above our heads!" A great deal of conflict and debate ensued between the prisoners and the administration, but in the end the prisoners lost. Although Ganeshman-ji's demands were not met, his bravery in confronting the jail administration made him a rebel leader.

A few days later, the administration made another decision. They now announced that all the walls inside the jail will be increased to twelve feet. Ganeshman-ji again started protesting. Even his friends were not happy with his repeated aggravations. It was not that they disagreed with what he was saying, rather that they did not want him to keep spouting anti-administration rhetoric. They simply wanted the administration to concede their decision without any struggle. It was not Ganeshman-ji's nature to partake in such wishful thinking. Therefore, he kept on declaring, "We will never allow the height of the walls to be increased to twelve feet!"

This decision of Ganeshman-ji made his friends unhappy. They would say, "This Ganeshman is going to land us all in hot water. He is planting the seeds of unrest. If it weren't for him, we would all be able to sleep in peace!" They all knew that Ganeshman-ji would not give up, so they advised him, "Look, Ganeshman-ji! The administration will not accept our demand. After a few days, they will take you to the Central Jail for being

the leader of this strike and unrest, and then what will you do?" He told them, "Even if that were to happen, I have thought about what I will do. I will go on a hunger strike until death. Better that I should die doing something worthwhile rather than dying in this prison and accomplishing nothing. Come on, bring me all of your grievances. Let's put it all on the table!"

So, now that Ganeshman-ji had decided to go on a hunger strike, he needed to figure out the problem of how to write a demand letter. His friends helped with that too. A group made homemade paper by washing old cloth and putting rice-paste on it. Another group made a reed pen and holder. Another group searched room by room and collected the black residue left by kerosene-lamps to make ink. Lastly, Ganeshman-ji himself, who had good handwriting, wrote their demands with the reed pen on the rice paper! Thus began the struggle for the direct boycott. An ultimatum of seven days was given in the demand letter. Day by day the silence went on, until it was the sixth night. Ganeshman-ji's heart was pounding from nerves, and he started wondering if the Ranas would actually leave him to die. The nightmare of his uncertain future would not let him sleep, and as he lay awake, he heard the sound of the great poet Siddhicharan Shrestha from the other corner of the room.

"Ganeshman-ji", he said, "You are still awake. No surprise, because today is the last day and the administration has not listened to you. You are also very stubborn, I know. I don't know if you and I will meet again after tomorrow, so I have written a poem such that we may live on in memory. Will you listen to it?" Ganeshman-ji recounts, "In the state that I was in, Siddhicharan's sweet voice and his comforting words were a salve on my soul. I found them cool and refreshing. I was eager to hear his poem, and he recited it thusly:"

I choose to die, not to live.
I choose to die, not to live.
Dharma, Ganga, Shukra, Dasharatha,
I choose the path to meet them.
Not to live
The eternal truth,
I want to embrace.
On the tranquil source of love,
I want to find an opportunity to bathe.
Not to live
Those who oppress from birth,
I will face them head on.
As one small particle,
I will create a world anew.
Not to live
I choose to live, not to die,
Wearing the blanket of immortality.
To wash the black stains on the country,
Rivers of my blood I will shed.
Not to live

In fact, Siddhicharan thought that the Ranas would kill Ganeshman-ji much like they had executed the four martyrs. So, his poem was really a goodbye letter. It is not uncommon for poems written by great poets like Siddhicharan to be beautiful and touching. However, it is unusual for us to witness

Ganeshman-ji's uncanny ability to recollect all six stanzas of the poem five decades later. However, he does say with great regret, "There were two other stanzas of that poem, but I have forgotten them."

Before disclosing the conflict inside the jail to the Ranas, the prison administration decided to send Colonel Indra Bahadur for an inspection. In the process of inspecting everyone's room, he also entered Ganeshman-ji's room. He told Ganeshman-ji, "Look, young man! You all are placed here to give you an opportunity to rehabilitate your character. And here you are, still causing problems!" Ganeshman-ji's blood became heated at once, and he immediately asked, "Who are you?" The man replied, "I am Colonel Indra Bahadur." Ganeshman-ji retorted, "Oh! So, you probably want to become a General someday, don't you? Then it's you that needs to improve your character. We here don't have to become anything, so we don't have to improve our character. We have been jailed for trying to correct the injustices in our country. We have no need to improve our character because we don't care about showing it to anyone!"

Ganeshman-ji himself was amazed by the fact that, just two years ago when he was a prisoner in Kali Bahadur Gan (at Singha Durbar), his legs had trembled when he was called to make a statement, and here today he was retorting directly to a Colonel! Anyone who witnessed that change would say that Ganeshman-ji had matured and become a refined adult by the experience inside the jail. In politics, a person's personality is measured by such events, just as a fever is measured by a thermometer. This was Ganeshman-ji's first face-to-face revolt against the administration after his imprisonment.

After a while, Colonel Indra Bahadur returned to the roundabout and pretended to consult with the prison staff, "Now, where can we move the wall to?" Upon hearing this, Ganeshman-ji quickly came out and offered, "You see, there is

extra space for the wall on the west side, as well as on the east and south sides. The only place where it's not possible to move the wall is the north side. Why can't the wall be widened on these three sides?" The colonel soon left, seeming to be convinced by Ganeshman-ji's argument.

Later that evening, both Colonel Indra Bahadur and the jailor apprised Juddha Shamsher Rana about the issue, saying, "Your excellency! The prisoner Ganeshman has roused the other prisoners and they are striking under his leadership to move the prison walls further away! They are complaining that if the walls are raised where it currently sits, the sun and air will be blocked and it will also pose a danger." Juddha Shamsher was silent for a while after hearing everything. "It's not wise to give anyone too much trouble and discomfort. Therefore, Indra Bahadur, you go and see if there's any extra room to move it. If it can be done, do it." Now that the commander had spoken, it was to be done. This was Ganeshman-ji's first political victory.

This ended the wall scandal, and Ganeshman-ji did not even have to fast till death. This counted as Ganeshman Singh's first satyagraha in which he stood firm and tall. Now, everyone inside the jail started to nickname him 'iron' for his determination! Ganeshman-ji's enthusiasm was at an all-time high because of this victory. The decision to move the walls six feet away had reduced the distance between the inner walls and the outer 24-foot-high wall. Also, the successful outcome of this struggle had renewed his vigor.

All he had to do now was focus all his energies on climbing the 24 feet high wall to make his escape.

EVENTUAL ESCAPE

On his first day as a prisoner in the Ranas' jail, Ganeshman-ji had resolved, "No matter what I need to endure, I will break

out of this prison one day!" Eventually, he was successful in this mission by climbing over the very high walls of the jail. Anyone who was witness to, or heard about, the thrilling story of his escape and heroism will probably say the same as BP Koirala, "*A dedicated revolutionary cannot be contained by a prison wall, by the siege of an army, or the torture of life imprisonment. On the contrary, such punishment increases the strength of his resistance.*" Ganeshman-ji was also such a heroic revolutionary.

Most of the 32 leaders and activists of the Praja Parishad who were imprisoned alongside Ganeshman-ji were not supportive of his plan to escape. Some would pretend to be receptive to his plan, but at the last moment would back out, claiming, "We are Gandhian people. It is against our principles to support a rebellion like yours, so we cannot participate". In fact, they were not followers of Gandhi but rather cowards. Did Gandhi ever advise his followers against unarmed insurgency? Such friends not only discouraged Ganeshman-ji but also betrayed him.

There were other friends who had already told Ganeshman-ji that they couldn't participate in his efforts. One such friend was Dhruva Dabadi. He could not participate, however he offered Ganeshman-ji his wristwatch because keeping track of time was an essential part of the plan. A few other friends offered their goodwill but had no material support to provide.

In fact, there were only two people who helped him to escape. The first was Compounder Chandraman and the second was Purna Bahadur MA. Although their contribution can be called small, it was nevertheless important. After speaking with the Compounder throughout the day, he finally agreed to help when the moment came. As for Purna Bahadur, it was almost as if he was sent by God, because he suddenly appeared when Ganeshman-ji was in a bind, helped out, and disappeared promptly. Let us say a few words of respect about these two.

1) COMPOUNDER CHANDRAMAN

Ganeshman-ji's relationship with Compounder Chandraman is an old one. They both knew each other well. Though, Chandraman did not approve of Ganeshman-ji's continuous aggravating actions towards the authorities. Therefore, there was no way that he would accept or even support Ganeshman-ji's jailbreaking activities. He was well aware that Ganeshman-ji was always planning for it. One sunny day, he approached Ganeshman-ji and asked, "It seems to me that you have given up trying to escape nowadays, huh?"

"Why do you care?" replied Ganeshman-ji, "Why are you asking for directions to a village that you will never visit?"

"Can't argue with that," replied the compounder, and fell silent.

Ganeshman-ji recounts, "I was not satisfied with the attitude and behavior of Chandraman, so I was just sitting there silently. But because he had raised the topic, I felt like saying something. I told him, 'More than anyone else, I am most surprised by you. See, Compounder Saheb, if you were an educated man like Dharmabhakta, the Ranas would have hanged you immediately. They spared you because you are illiterate. I am amazed at your stupidity. Was what you did not quite daring? You worked as a messenger between the Praja Parishad and the King, behind the Ranas' backs. Is someone who dared to undertake such a risky task now trying to curry favour with Juddhashamsher? Why, so he will let you out? Hah! Like that day will ever come!' As I spoke, Chandraman was listening to me like an obedient student. I added, 'Look, you may dream of being released, but the fact is that you will be imprisoned for the rest of your life. You did so much, and now look at you! In fact, what you did was no less than what Dharmabhakta himself did!'"

"What should I do?" asked Chandarman in a tearful voice.

"You needn't do anything, just help me to escape. If I am successful, you can also come with me if you want. It's your choice whether you want to stay here or not."

"What will you do once you run away?" he asked.

"I will go out there and organize a political party. After that, I will continue the revolution and come to rescue you." Chandraman was impressed by what I said. He asked, "How can I help?"

"Once I am atop the wall, all you have to do is throw me the rope and the hook! That's all you have to do," I told him.

"No problem! That much I can surely do!" replied Compounder Chandraman.

Until then, Chandraman had somehow convinced himself that he would eventually be released if he played nice. I broke him out of that illusion. To his credit, his greatest virtue was that once he was convinced of something, he would be willing to help out as much as was required. So, he even agreed to help me.

Now that I had enlisted the help of Compounder Chandraman, my enthusiasm naturally doubled! I was just waiting for the night of the new moon to arrive, so I could put my plan in action under the cover of darkness."

Thus, on the fated night, Chandraman came to Ganeshmanji's room around midnight, and the two brave men moved towards the wall under the cover of darkness. At the time that Ganeshmanji deemed most appropriate, he handed over a long piece of cloth to Chandraman (36 arms length), and started climbing the 12 feet wall. After reaching the top, Chandraman handed him the crude apparatus. Ganeshmanji then made several attempts to throw the hook atop the 24 feet outer wall. As he was trying, Chandraman whispered from below in his local Newari dialect, "Let's try again tomorrow. It's not happening!" It

was natural for him to be scared. It is human nature. However, Ganeshman-ji became successful on his next try, and started climbing the 24 feet wall. Seeing his determination, Chandraman also managed to climb atop the 12 feet wall. However, being a hefty man, he could not succeed in climbing the 24 feet wall, it was too difficult for him. But such was his nature that, instead of asking Ganeshman-ji to pull him up and endangering him too, he decided to tell Ganeshman-ji, "Go on, get out of here before they see you! Don't worry about me. I'll take care of myself somehow. Don't worry, just go. Escape!" What a sincere human being he was. What a friend! Blessed was Chandraman!

2) PURNA BAHADUR, MA

As they were preparing to climb the 12-foot wall, both Ganeshman-ji and Chandraman were startled by a tall skeletal figure that appeared out of the darkness suddenly. They both held their breath and stared at the dark figure, feeling certain that it was either a prison guard or a ghost. But, after a moment of silence, the apparition said, "What can I help you with?" As soon as he heard the voice, Ganeshman-ji recognized him as his own friend, Purna Bahadur MA! It was as if he was heaven-sent! "Quickly now, help me to climb this 12 feet wall! Give me your shoulders!" Purna Bahadur MA was over six feet tall, so Ganeshman-ji could very easily hoist himself atop the 12 feet wall with his help. In his haste to snag the hook onto the outer 24 feet wall, he forgot to thank Purna Bahadur, who quickly disappeared into the night. In any case, the help that Purna Bahadur provided in that moment of crisis was not something that just anyone would dare to do. Therefore, the adjective 'angel' that I have added to his name in this article is completely appropriate. He hastened Ganeshman-ji's escape, and with his help, a revolutionary not only liberated himself but also millions of Nepali people against the dictators. Because of Purna Bahadur's

help, Nepali people can today live as respectable citizens. In this sense, we owe him our deepest gratitude.

HOODWINKING THE SECURITY APPARATUS

Now, let's talk about Ganeshman-ji! During the entirety of his four-year imprisonment, Ganeshman-ji did not spare a single day in preparing and planning for his eventual escape. The three-tiered walls were 6 feet, 12 feet, and 24 feet respectively. These walls were 12 feet apart, and the outermost and highest wall was also outfitted with an electric live-wire barbed fence. Police were also deployed at intervals along the wall. If one policeman fell asleep, his partner was responsible for waking him up. The rounds were arranged so that maximum security was implemented.

Since this was a prison that housed hundreds of inmates, it was common for several of them to go to the toilet at random points in the night. If they had seen Ganeshman-ji that night, they may have reported him in order to gain leniency in their sentences. So how could he escape notice from the fellow prisoners as well as the guards? That is why it took Ganeshman-ji four years to plan his escape.

The details of his plan were like so. The outer wall of the prison was 24 feet away from the Gol Ghar (round-house) where he was kept. The height of the last and most difficult wall was also 24 feet. So, he devised a plan to save all the pieces of cloth given to him in the jail. He binded together 4 arms length of cloth for six months to achieve the necessary final length. Then he took one of the iron rods from the cuffs that were hammered onto his wrists and ankles, and he bent it into a hook. He then started practicing throwing the hook 24 feet away to snag on rough surfaces, but he could never do it. Instead, he often felt that he would get caught and punished.

The biggest challenge he faced was the human component. With the security guards patrolling the walls and the prisoners going to the toilet, how could he ensure that he had enough time to make multiple attempts at the wall? He came up with a dramatic plan! One morning at dawn, he splashed mud all over his clothes and shouted to the others, "I was just haunted by an angry spirit in that toilet! The ghost pushed me and threw me all over the place! I barely managed to get out! Friends, don't visit that place after nightfall! It is cursed!!" This caused a stir among the prisoners. They began to say, "If even the bold and brave Ganeshman-ji was thrown around by the ghost, what chance do we have?" The guards also heard this story and grew afraid of walking around that spot at night. Ganeshman-ji was quite relieved!

Ganeshman-ji had also cleverly managed to convince the bricklayer working on that specific portion of the wall to make the top of the wall more flatted in that spot. Normally, the wall would be angular and curved at the top to prevent escape. He did this when the administration was rebuilding the wall from six feet to twelve feet.

The guard on duty nearest to the spot of his escape also suffered from asthma. He would often get coughing fits lasting for several minutes. So, Ganeshman-ji knew that if the guard started coughing, he would not need to worry for the next four to five minutes, because the guard would be too occupied to be glancing about. Therefore, his total operation needed to be completed within five minutes!

He also could not practice throwing his hook during the daytime, so he would practice at that spot in the dead of night around the time of each new moon. Therefore, Ganeshman-ji must have stealthily practiced his throwing technique hundreds of times during those years.

Finally, after much planning and bold action, our hero Ganeshman Singh hoodwinked the Rana security apparatus and became a revolutionary the likes of which Nepal had never seen. His escape from the clutches of the autocratic Ranas on a new moon in the year 1945 displayed his bravery and prowess to the whole world.

When Ganeshman Singh had entered the Bhadragol Jail four years ago in 1941, he was a naïve and simple person who could neither understand politics nor comprehend the problems of society! He did not know what philanthropy and morality really mean. However, the man that emerged from the prison that night was no longer the same person. He was an adult, a responsible revolutionary, and a statesman, with the sole goal of leading all Nepalis to a better future. What could be a greater aspiration and transformation than this?

Ganeshman Singh's Role Models

(The magnificent ancient temple of 'Dattatreya' can be found about one and a half kilometers east of the Bhaktapur Durbar Square. The meaning of 'Dattatreya' is a trinity of the three gods, Brahma, Vishnu, and Maheshwar. After describing it as such, do we need to further explain the magnificence of the deity and power inherent in the word? Even the powerful Lord Dattatreya himself considers 24 other personalities as his gurus, and some of them even consist of Lata (creeper), Briksa (tree), Panchhi (bird), and Kumalkoti (insect). Meaning, there is some good quality to be found in each and every living being or element. Therefore, there is something to be learnt from each and every element in this universe. Ganeshman-ji also considered four great personalities as his gurus and heroes. These four humans are considered to be bastions of sacrifice, revolution, compassion, principle, and loyalty in the political history of Nepal.

Prior to his first arrest, Ganeshman-ji was nothing more than a spoiled son of an aristocratic family. Until that time, he was not only a hooligan, a brat, and a leader of thugs, but also an idiot. It was only after he went to jail and transformed himself into a real hero that we writers started calling him a superhuman. Isn't his story similar to that of the sage Valmiki? Sage Valmiki was known in his youth as Ratnakar the Bandit! He was a notorious professional robber. He was so depraved that he could not even utter the name of God Rama. The word 'Mara' (Dead) was always on his lips. As the story goes, he once came into contact with a

saint, and the saint told him to chant the name Rama (God) constantly. Ratnakar replied, "My tongue cannot speak that word. I have done nothing but kill people, so I can only speak the word Mara." The saint advised him, "Okay then, just chant the word Mara (dead). Continue chanting it until I return this way next time." So, Ratnakar kept chanting the name frequently as part of his daily routine. His sincerity was such that he kept saying 'Mara Mara Mara Mara' with concentration, never giving up, until soon his words went from 'Mara Mara Ma Ra Ma' to 'Rama Rama Rama'. Due to his eventual rehabilitation and his continued diligence to the spirituality arts, this professional robber eventually became such a wise and accomplished sage that he finished writing the epic saga 'Ramayana' even before the manifestation of Lord Rama!

In the same way, Gangalal emerged in Ganeshman-ji's life as a guide and an inspirational personality. Despite all the adversities he faced, he made Gangalal's words his guiding mantra. Eventually, his reverence towards the words Gangalal left him with, and his continual grinding against the autocracy, made him into the Ironman.

Ganeshman-ji has been greatly influenced by four people in his political life. He considered all of them as his role models, in the same way that Lord Dattatreya also considered 24 personalities as his mentors. Let us then delve into the qualities of these four role models, and see how they influenced Ganeshman Singh.)

GANGALAL AND GANESHMAN SINGH

While living in Calcutta, India, under the pretext of studying, Ganeshman-ji started thinking that he should go to Nepal and enact some change through politics, but that thought did not take shape into reality. Meanwhile, he started hearing news from Nepalis residing in Calcutta that some enthusiastic youths in Nepal were conducting political propaganda under the pretext of preaching religious texts. Upon hearing this news, Ganeshman-ji thought, "Someone else has already started the work that I want to do! What if someone else wins that race?" His heart sank, but then he considered the reality of it. "Can such a huge challenge be achieved by just anybody? No. This work cannot be accomplished by anyone but me! Nothing is going to change in Nepal unless I leave from here." At the time, Gangalal had become such a household name among the Nepali society in Calcutta that everyone would say that his words were like honey. They would exaggerate his deeds greatly with each retelling. They would say that when he speaks, his listeners become rapt with attention. Ganeshman-ji was not bothered by this, but it did lead him to think, "This is the name that I should have earned." However, as Gangalal kept rising in popularity, his ears began to ring and he began to burn in the flames of jealousy. Therefore, Ganeshman-ji decided to return to Nepal to surpass all these so-called rising leaders! But once he was back, how could he get into politics? Who would help him, a member of one of the greatest aristocratic families? He was an arrogant person, whereas politics requires humility, modesty, and simplicity. These were qualities with whom he had enmities, for all he had were arrogance, jealousy, and hatred. He couldn't bear to hear praise of anyone else but himself, and he wanted to lead like a feudal lord! Why get into politics if one is this way? However, Ganeshman-ji was still trying to get into the group under the pretext of engaging in politics. One day, a program headed by

Shukraraj and Gangalal was taking place in Indrachowk's *Dabali* (meeting place). It wasn't just hundreds, but thousands of people who were attending the event. Under the pretext of telling a religious story, Gangalal made a political speech. Ganeshman-ji was listening intently, and he was highly impressed by Gangalal's rhetoric, fearlessness, and demeanor. He thought to himself, "It is true what the Nepalīs of Calcutta said in their praise for Gangalal. He is an admirable young man!" But although Ganeshman-ji had thought highly of him, his arrogance would not let him raise Gangalal on a pedestal. He told his friends, "He may have spoken well, but it is not worthy of such adoration. It's easy to speak in front of regular helpless folk. Just wait a few days, and you'll see that he will apologize to the Ranas."

Coincidentally, one day his friend Harikrishna told him, "Oh, Ganeshman-ji! I am inviting Gangalal for dinner tomorrow evening. You are invited too!". Ganeshman-ji replied haughtily, "Oh! Well, did you invite Gangalal to meet with me, or did you invite me to meet with Gangalal?" Harikrishna shook his head, "Why you do always have to be so arrogant? That's not very good!". Deciding to play into his pride, he further added, "Okay, fine, now that I've invited you, shall I ask him to join us?" Ganeshman-ji said, "Okay, I don't mind." In reality, he was excited and looking forward to meeting with him, but outwardly he pretended to be indifferent.

The next day they met at the pre-arranged time and place. Harikrishna introduced Ganeshman-ji and Gangalal. Although they were meeting for the first time, Ganeshman-ji did not show cultured behaviour and instead took a thorny attitude. Gangalal was very humble and gentle, while Ganeshman-ji seemed to be arrogant, haughty, and boastful. Every phrase he uttered was prideful and uncomfortable. His boasts had to do with his physical strength, his wealth, and the high status of his grandfather's position. If Gangalal had behaved like him,

Ganeshman-ji would have lost his temper! But Gangalal was a humble and patient person like a sadhu. He wasn't afraid of Ganeshman-ji, but his gentle nature would not allow him to retaliate. Ganeshman-ji kept insulting Gangalal sarcastically throughout the evening, but Gangalal gave accurate and polite answers from time to time. Ganeshman-ji even called Gangalal a hypocrite for his cheap popularity, and spoke about how he himself is different because his deeds speak greater. It was an uncomfortable atmosphere for his friends, and finally the dinner came to an end. As they were heading back home, Harikrishna asked Ganeshman-ji, "It will soon be night. Since you and Gangalal are heading in the same direction, do you want to go together and continue talking?" Ganeshman-ji replied in a hoarse voice, "I don't mind if he wants to go with me." On the way home, he kept prodding Gangalal with his barbs. Praising himself, he said, "Look, Gangalal-ji! There is nothing wrong with giving speeches and gaining cheap popularity, but I never bothered with giving speeches. That's because the public doesn't have the awareness or capacity to understand such speeches. I don't care about making a name for myself through speeches. I am instead trying to instill self-esteem in people. For that, I first started through disobedience. Forget about other people, when even the Rana ruler and commander Juddha Shamsher himself would ride by on his elephant, I would remain standing while everyone else bowed. Even if he looked back, I would still remain stubbornly standing. So, I did it the right way, through my actions, not for some cheap popularity or praise." Perhaps Ganeshman-ji's continual boasting, arrogance, and constant injury made Gangalal feel a little unbearable, so finally he replied in a gentle way, "I admire that you didn't bow to the Rana commander. But does one person's disobedience make a difference? Even if you didn't bow, your father, uncle, and grandfather still bow and cheer." Taken aback, Ganeshman-ji replied, "They do that because they take salary from the Ranas.

They are under his employment so they must do that. But what does it matter if they bow? I have no relationship with that. I am acting individually.” Gangalal added, “However, you are proud of being the grandson of the Kazi. This is your family that you are speaking about. It’s a bit inconsistent to say that they have nothing to do with you.” Ganeshman-ji was confused about how to answer this. He got tongue-tied and decided that Gangalal was paying him back in a similar way to how he himself had attacked thus far with his sarcasm and barbs.

(This period is one in which Ganeshman-ji was abruptly transformed from Hira-kazi to a rebellious political leader. Such an important context of the country's greatest rebel leader cannot be done justice by the interpretation of any one writer. Therefore, to provide more vivid context and accuracy of dialogue, the story has been quoted from the pages of Ganeshman-ji’s own autobiographical book ‘The Pages of My Story’, specifically Chapter I pages 39 and 40.)

Then, pointing to two women standing underneath the dim glow of the lamp, Gangalal asked, "Who are those two women standing over there at this late hour?"

Ganeshman-ji answered, "Oh, those are road-sweepers, perhaps from the Kuslini or Chyamini castes."

Gangalal added, "Imagine for a second, those two women were forcefully abducted by one of the Ranas. Could either of their husbands do anything?"

Ganeshman-ji didn't even think about the depth of the question, and instead replied boastfully, "Forget about the Ranas, even if I myself were to abduct them, their husbands couldn't do anything!"

Gangalal's next question was, "In the same way, what can you really do if your sister or your wife is forcefully abducted by a Rana?"

Ganeshman-ji recounts that he was left speechless.

At first, Ganeshman-ji questioned whether Gangalal was trying to humiliate or make fun of him. Because of this, for the rest of the night, Ganeshman-ji didn't act decently towards Gangalal, acting harshly and ignoring him. He recounts, "After Gangalal left, I too went home. However, storms were raging in my mind and heart along the whole way. How can I avenge the insult? What is the answer? When I reached home and lay down to sleep, I felt restless. No one has ever dared to give me such a retort! My mind wandered like a boat lost in a storm. I couldn't sleep at all. I tossed and turned and kept thinking about the question he asked: What can you do if your wife or sister is forcefully abducted by a Rana?"

As the night wore on, so did the intoxication of alcohol. What can I really do? The question plagued him. The only thing he could do if such a situation occurred would be to throw stones at the Rana's car! And even then, he would need to be able to escape the fort immediately otherwise he would face serious punishment! If that were not possible to do, that atrocity would need to be tolerated silently. So, what Gangalal said was true. As his mind and heart were restless, he couldn't find a good answer and couldn't fall asleep.

As soon as the night started to disappear, he got up at the first crow of the rooster and left his house in a hurry, much like Prince Siddhartha leaving the palace to find an answer to suffering. The difference was that while Prince Siddhartha had left his palace due to his feelings of distress, Ganeshman-ji left due to the feelings of rebellion. He went straight to Gangalal's door where the whole family was still asleep. The city of Kathmandu was quietly and

peacefully slumbering. I was perhaps the first to break the silence that night.

“Gangalal-ji!”

“.....”

“Gangalal-ji!”

“.....”

Everyone was fast asleep, so it was only after calling out a few times that a voice spoke from inside, “Who is it? Who is calling this early before dawn?”

It was Gangalal, and Ganeshman-ji recognized him by his voice. “It is me, Ganeshman!” he called out.

“Ah, Ganeshman-dai!” He got up immediately, lit a lamp and called me up. “Come, come. Come upstairs.”

As I reached upstairs, he sent his wife away and gestured to the chair. He was intrigued and looked surprised to see me there so early. “Why, Ganeshman-ji, at this early hour?”

“What you said yesterday, it just played on my mind. It seemed irrefutable to me! I searched for an answer but could not find anything. It is as you have said. It’s not only Chyamini and Kuslini castes, but also me that is helpless against the Ranas. That realization made me feel so bad that I couldn’t sleep all night. So, I have come to discuss with you. It’s not just enough to realize this situation, we need to also change it. So, I have come to you to ask for your support in opening a political party, Gangalal-ji!”

Gangalal smiled gently. There was no mirth in that smile, no sarcasm. He seemed to pity my over-enthusiasm.

He said, “Look, Ganeshman-dai, opening a political party is not like setting up a stall on the street. It’s not so easy. There needs to be a lot of organizational work required to open a political

party, a lot of people, a lot of courage, and a lot of resources. Ours is a country without any citizen rights, so that makes it even more difficult. Everything needs to be done in secret. Even our organizations would need to conduct activities secretly. Just announcing that we have opened a political party and spreading our leaflets will not accomplish anything. There would be no meaning to it. If you are so inclined, then let us search for the Praja Parishad. They publish leaflets and are somewhat organized. Let's go find it and become its members!"

Thus, they decided to search for the Praja Parishad. As Ganeshman-ji returned home, he felt light and excited. There was no hesitation or uncertainty in his mind, and he was determined to do something. But where to find the Praja Parishad? Who was its leader? How to subscribe to it? It is said that a man who seeks God will find him, so why could these two not find an underground group? They set out to search, but they could only spend Saturdays searching for it. The other days, Gangalal had to attend to his career of teaching students and earning tuition money to support his family.

In this manner, during one of their searches, they met up with Dharmabhakta. He accompanied them on their quest to find the hidden group. And this very trip ended with both Ganeshman-ji and Gangalal getting membership into the Praja Parishad! In fact, the secret of the matter was that Dharmabhakta himself was the founding member of the Praja Parishad! He had been closely examining the activities of these two enthusiastic youngsters, Gangalal and Ganeshman-ji, for some time. That day just happened to be the last day of their examination, and when the trio finally reached Bijeshwari from Swayambhu, it was already dusk. Upon reaching there, Dharmabhakta announced, "You have passed the examination. With the Goddess Bhagwati as my witness, I hereby bestow upon you both the membership of the Praja Parishad."

Prince Siddhartha was traumatized when he saw an old man, a sick man, and a dead body. So, he left the palace to find out the cause of suffering and how to achieve peace. It was during this time that he became a Mahatma and was later called Lord Buddha. The history of Ganeshman Singh is similar, because of the question that Gangalal had inserted into his mind, "What can you do if your wife or sister is forcefully abducted by one of the Ranas?" Since hearing that question, Ganeshman-ji could not breathe a sigh of relief until he accomplished his goal of freeing the Nepali people from the shackles of tyranny. Eventually, he earned the name 'Ironman Ganeshman Singh'.

Nowhere in his autobiographical book does Ganeshman-ji refer to Martyr Gangalal as 'Guru'. But Ganeshman-ji, in his five decades long political career, has said hundreds of times, in places both privately and publicly, that, "Even though Gangalal and I were both members of the Praja Parishad together, he was the one who awakened my political consciousness." He had the chance to escape from the Ranas' clutches. But I was the one, speaking of idealism and principle, who persuaded him to get arrested. I have always believed that I was the one who pushed such a wonderful and decent man into the tiger's cage. I am grieved to imagine the level of torture that the Ranas inflicted on him. I often wish that it was me instead of him in that place, receiving that punishment." His feelings of guilt and regret made him firmly determined in his mission. In his autobiography, he writes, "If the hard apple had not fallen on Issac Newton's head, he may not have had the inspiration to find the Theory of Gravity. In the same way, if Gangalal had not shattered my false pride with his words of truth, then I would probably not have had the opportunity to actively and positively contribute to a great revolution. The more I tried to find the answer, the more difficult and complex the answer became. The question itself was unsolvable, and that uncomfortable question became the source

of my respect for Gangalal, and it is a relationship which is revered and enshrined in my heart almost 46 years after his martyrdom.”

Gangalal's two sentences:

- 1) “Ganeshman-dai, don't leave the path. I haven't told them anything. You also, don't abandon the path.”
- 2) After news of Gangalal's execution by hanging was read out, and as he was walked to the gallows, Gangalal quietly said to Ganeshman-ji, “Don't forget my blood, Ganeshman-dai.”

These two sentences spoken by Gangalal inspired Ganeshman-ji's long and struggling political life. His own Praja Parishad friends who were imprisoned alongside him embroiled themselves in distractions, while his own enthusiasm and courage increased. It was not uncommon for Ganeshman-ji to be overwhelmed with despair, sometimes both inside and outside the jail. However, when the dark gloomy clouds of despair loomed over him, those two sentences of Gangalal would spur him on to gather energy to continue the fight against totalitarianism. Therefore, even though Gangalal called Ganeshman-ji his elder-brother, in fact, he was Ganeshman-ji's teacher and source of inspiration.

SHUKRARAJ SHASTRI AND GANESHTMAN SINGH

Ganeshman-ji's first meeting with Shukraraj Shastri was in Calcutta, while he was publishing his new book *Brahma Sutra*. Ganeshman-ji, on the other hand, was neglecting his studies and indulging in news of Indian politics under the pretext of studying ISc. When it came to exam time, he could not garner any more than five marks in Physics, Chemistry, and Mathematics subjects, only doing well in English. Ganeshman-ji would spend all his time attending public meetings to listen to personalities like Jinnha Sahib, Nehru, and Subhash Chandra Bose, and squander away his grandfather's money.

He had collected around himself a gang of like-minded Nepali youth. Living in a foreign land, they did not engage in any illegal activities, but they spent their time bullying new guys from Nepal. They were living the life of wasted youth.

Shukraraj Shastri was not only a scholar but also very much a refined gentleman. His erudition spread far and wide. Within Nepal, he was spreading political consciousness among the people through recitations of the Purans and interpretations of *Bhagwat Gita*. He was also an educated man well versed in logic. A jealous Ganeshman-ji didn't like anyone else from Nepal having a higher stature than himself. So, he and his group decided to have some fun and insult a learned, knowledgeable and hardworking person, thinking that it would reaffirm their own superiority.

Thus, Ganeshman-ji took his friends to the place where Shukraraj was staying. After a simple introduction, the boys asked some questions with the intention of humiliating Shukraraj. Shukraraj had such eloquence and erudition that even great scholars used to show him respect. What could the misguided youth like Ganeshman-ji and his congregation talk about? On the contrary, Shukraraj, in order to educate the

children, asked them the age-old question, "Can you tell me whether the chicken came first or the egg?" After some internal debate, Ganeshman-ji answered "The egg." Shukraraj replied, "No, it was the chicken!" The boys asked him, "How?" Shukraraj then launched into a lengthy debate with such potent articulation that everyone was awestruck by him. Later, everyone bowed to him and said, "Thank you, Shukraraj-ji! We are satisfied with your arguments."

"Okay, then come again tomorrow and we will talk about some other things," said Shukraraj.

Influenced by Shukraraj's scholarly, rational, and eloquent discourse, the appetites of the youth were further aroused, so they returned the next day. Shukraraj asked them, "Are you satisfied with yesterday's discussion?" Everyone said in unison, "Yes, that's why we came today!" So Shukraraj told them, "Okay then. Today, I will ask you the same question, and you tell me the answer." The boys nodded, and proceeded to recite all the points of argument that Shukraraj had said the day before. Then Shukraraj said, "Actually, yesterday when I told you that the chicken came first, I made a mistake. It's the egg that came first." The boys asked, "How?" and Shukraraj once again launched into such an irrefutable argument that the boys were left awestruck. No one could be unaffected by Shukraraj's erudition and reasoning. Ganeshman-ji also bowed down. But he soon revealed his jealous nature again, insulting Shukraraj by attacking his weakness, saying, "Why would a man of forty-two who calls himself a scholar, an educated man, and a reformer, marry such a young woman?" Shukraraj deftly gave a roundabout answer to Ganeshman-ji's foolish question and the matter was evaded.

Even though Ganeshman-ji expressed his immature reaction towards Shukraraj, feelings of respect were growing within and he had already started to consider him as an 'iron' man. In all the time that he stayed in Calcutta, he never strayed away from his

closeness with Shukraraj. Ganeshman-ji was quite impressed by Shukraraj's erudition and eloquence. Additionally, Shukraraj was convinced that without a democratic system the country could never belong to all of its citizens. That is why Ganeshman-ji became his admirer.

Moreover, when Ganeshman-ji read in the newspaper 'Vishwamitra' that the revolutionary Shukraraj Shastri of Nepal had met with Mahatma Gandhi, his respect for him grew even more.

Furthermore, the level of courage that Shukraraj had shown in front of the Rana ruler and commander Juddha Shamsheer in front of the assembled '*Bharadari Sabha*' boosted the enthusiasm of the revolutionaries and raised the morale of political leaders and activists. Upon hearing the story and the statement of Shukraraj, Ganeshman-ji started considering Shukraraj as truly great. The event was as follows.

Never before in the history of the Rana rule had there been such a great assembly. In addition to all of the Rana's nephews, all military officers as well as all civil officers were also present in the *Bharadari Sabha*. On the main dias, all the Ranas and their cousins were also present according to their rank. In front of this great hall, Juddha Shamsheer announced, "Brothers! We are gathered here today to tell you about a grave matter and to ask for your opinion on it. Look at these men standing before me. Do you know who they are? These are the people of the so-called Praja Parishad. Their purpose is to take the governance system in their own hands. They conspire to overthrow our government with the help of the lower caste socialists of India. They want to reverse the rule that has been in place for almost a hundred years, the rule that has been instated with the trust and respect of the citizens! What shall we do with these traitors?"

There was a moment of silence in the hall. Again, Juddha Shamsher continued, "The one who sows the seeds of unrest is this Jyapu named Shukraraj. Do you know how he goes about doing it? He takes his advice from a man named Gandhi in India, and he is trying to disrupt this nation."

Before Juddha Shamsher could finish his speech, Shukraraj Shastri interrupted him and said, "What a spectacle, Maharaj! This may be the first time in the history of Nepal that the Prime Minister has asked the advice of so many people in the matter of governance! This is a spectacle where you are calling us traitors without first seeking your courtiers' advice and opinion. We should be given a chance to speak before we are put to the bayonet."

"How dare you speak, you Jyapu!" yelled Juddha Shamsher, "Look at this insolent Jyapu, sowing the seeds with the advice of Gandhi! If you don't shut up, I will have my people trample you to death where you stand!"

It was obvious that answering back to the commander, especially in front of all the assembled, was a huge insult to the Rana Prime Minister. He was therefore furious and raging with anger.

Shukraraj also responded with the same vigor and agility, "I am ready, Maharaj! I am asking you for justice, not for mercy! You have gathered so many brothers and high officials here and no one has been given a chance to speak. Only you have given your opinion. This is a one-sided spectacle, saying whatever you like and calling us traitors. We who are accused should be given the chance to speak and defend ourselves! We are only asking for justice!"

"Again?! You speak more, Jyapu?! I'm going to trample you myself! Who do you think you are?" Juddhashamsher's anger was

so great that rage blinded him and he could have been capable of doing anything.

After Ganeshman-ji was imprisoned for the first time, he was faced with the reality of his 'courage'. In fact, no matter how brave he may have seemed on the outside, inside the jail he felt meek, timid, and cowardly. He himself says, "Ganeshman, whose name was dreaded in all the three cities of the valley, looked like a limp stray dog when he entered the jail." But he was aware of how timid he was. Therefore, in order to get rid of this fear and cowardice, he began to search. In the meantime, he heard about the torture that Gangalal was being put to, and spoke with Gangalal afterwards. He asked himself, "If Gangalal did not open his mouth in spite of so much torture, why can't I?" Similarly, the heroic courage displayed by Tanka Prasad during his speech had also given him energy. Meanwhile, Ganeshman-ji's grandfather Ratnaman had sent a message to his grandson, saying, "Confess to the crimes that you have committed, but do not implicate anyone else, even if you lose your life." Now he started becoming stubborn and firm.

The personality of Shukraraj Shastri, who dared to embarrass the Rana Prime Minister Juddha Shamsher was imprinted in Ganeshman-ji's mind. On one hand, Ganeshman-ji was simply a participant who trembled when having to face a simple interrogation. On the other hand, Shukraraj Shastri was one of the main leaders of the revolution, and he was unafraid and outspoken before such a large assembly of the Ranas themselves. The fact that Ganeshman-ji had insulted and disrespected such a great personality like Shukraraj Shastri is a fact that he always deeply regretted.

DHARMABHAKTA AND GANESHPAN SINGH

Dharmabhakta, a 'decent man' living in the core area of Kathmandu between Ombahal and Jhochhen, was educated and coached in Calcutta, the then-capital of India. He was a man with a strong body, a sharp intellect, and a sense of deep nationalism. He was even the 'Bengal Champion' in the boxing competition. He was possessed with a strong desire to establish a 'democratic Nepal' by freeing Nepal and Nepalis from the clutches of the Ranas. Therefore, he decided to form an organized political party with like-minded people to fulfill this goal and aspiration. With the involvement of some enthusiastic youths of Kathmandu, Dharmabhakta secretly set up a political organization called 'Nepal Praja Parishad'. In the process of achieving this mission, he gladly accepted the fired bullet from the Ranas into his patriotic chest, but never allowed even a syllable of apology or regret to utter from his lips.

After staying in Calcutta and gaining mastery in reading, writing, and boxing, Dharmabhakta returned to Nepal and served in the Ranas' court while secretly planning for the independence of Nepalis. Later, the Rana government appointed him as an instructor to teach wrestling and boxing to King Tribhuvan. Taking advantage of this opportunity, Dharmabhakta provided political training to King Tribhuvan along with exercise. Dharmabhakta made even the King a rebel against the Rana's dictatorship! Once the King had become sympathetic towards the rebel organization, he began to mobilize the youth. Dharmabhakta came into contact with Ganeshman-ji during this process.

Dharmabhakta had opened a gymnasium in his own house in *Ombahal*. There, he exercised regularly and taught wrestling and boxing to youths who were interested. His gym was getting a lot of publicity. In a short time, the gymnasium began to

become a gathering place for young people. At the time, Ganeshman-ji used to call himself 'Shere Nepal' (the Lion of Nepal). He had an ego and a delusion that there could be no other person in Nepal who was stronger than him, who knew better than him, and who was more courageous than him. So, he was looking for an opportunity to prove his strength to Dharmabhakta to settle the matter. One day, while Ganeshman-ji was passing by *Ombahal*, he saw a strong-shouldered wrestler oiling himself in the sun. He arrogantly thought, "How can there be two lions in the same forest?" His ego made him enter the gym. Dharmabhakta humbly asked, "Who are you looking for, young man?" Acting nonchalant, Ganeshman-ji replied, "I didn't come looking for anyone in particular. I just heard there was a gym that opened here recently, so I thought I would stop in and take a look." "Oh," replied Dharmabhakta, "Do you know how to wrestle?" Ganeshman-ji boasted, "I learned and played wrestling in the YMCA gym when I lived in Calcutta. I am a seasoned player!" "Okay then, show me what you learned," said Dharmabhakta. Ganeshman-ji thought, "Oh, what a rude man! He talks as if he's the teacher and I'm the student. I will show him!" With this, Ganeshman-ji started showing him all the poses he had learned. Dharmabhakta said, "Okay, if you want to wrestle, come from tomorrow onwards!" Ganeshman-ji did not reply and instead stared at the boxing-gloves in a corner of the room. "Are you interested in boxing as well?" Dharmabhakta asked. Ganeshman-ji replied, "Yes, I box." In response, Dharmabhakta said, "If you want to box with me, you can come the day after tomorrow. How about that?" Ganeshman-ji nodded his head and left.

Dharmabhakta's strong body and his charming personality had impressed Ganeshman-ji. Like an iron to a magnet, he felt like going back to Dharmabhakta's gym. It was also his effort to make Dharmabhakta realize that Ganeshman-ji is no small

wrestler. He even dreamed of punching Dharmabhakta in the throat and laying him flat on the ground, all so that he could lay claim to the boast that he dominated over Dharmabhakta. So, he returned to the gym for the promised game of boxing a few days later. Ganeshman-ji was also no less an important asset for Dharmabhakta. Young people like Ganeshman-ji could prove valuable to him for achieving the purpose of the Praja Parishad. On top of that, Ganeshman-ji was not just an ordinary young man. Even at their first meeting, Dharmabhakta had already appraised him as a diamond which could prove useful in time. Ganeshman-ji also represented an aristocratic family that could influence even the rulers, so Dharmabhakta did not pass up the chance to enlist Ganeshman-ji into his gym. His friends in the Praja Parishad warned him that it would be too risky to include the Kazi's own grandson in the rebellion party. The friendly boxing match was also an assessment opportunity to see if Ganeshman-ji could be a good fit. In the match, Dharmabhakta let Ganeshman-ji think he was winning for the first few hits. Then Ganeshman-ji got bold and thought that this is his opportunity to show his dominance. He aimed for the throat and threw his strongest punch. Dharmabhakta evaded and decided to land a punch on Ganeshman-ji's nose so squarely that the latter fell flat on the ground. Ganeshman-ji recounts, "When I woke up, I saw that Dharmabhakta was sprinkling rose water on my face." Since this day, Ganeshman-ji started treating Dharmabhakta as his guru. However, Dharmabhakta was not in the mood to open himself up to Ganeshman-ji. He was unknowingly taking an examination of Ganeshman-ji's character and was assessing him for initiation into the party.

As the days went by, they grew closer and became more informal. Ganeshman-ji used to believe that the mind of Dharmabhakta must be as thick as his body, for he did not seem to be an intellectual. He would say to him, "You are just a big

lump of meat and skin! You are afraid to talk about politics even inside your home. I have never seen such a timid and cowardly person like you.” In reply, Dharmabhakta would say, “Yes, I am as cowardly as you say. I don’t know how to talk about politics like you guys. After all, I am a salaryman in employment of the Ranas!”

Ganeshman-ji used to walk around proudly saying that he was a brave man without any fear. Even in his quest to find the Praja Parishad, Ganeshman-ji would often speak frankly of how he explored the *Sleshmantak* Forest, or the *Nagarjuna* Forest, or the *Swayambhunath* Forest. Dharmabhakta even warned him many times to play his cards close to the chest. But Ganeshman-ji would dismiss these advices as the cowardly fears of Dharmabhakta. Such was the difference between the leader and the immature youth.

One day, after a long and secret examination, Dharmabhakta asked him, “Ganeshman-ji, isn't Gangalal your best friend?” “Yes he is,” Ganeshman-ji replied, “In fact, we have been searching for the Praja Parishad together for many months now. We want to become members, to change this country, and to bring democracy.” Being careful, Dharmabhakta asked, “Would you be willing to bring him to meet me?” Ganeshman-ji replied, “Yes, of course I can bring him. I would have brought him here to meet you already by now, but I thought that you would be too afraid to meet a political person like him.” Dharmabhakta pretended to muse, and said, “You are absolutely right! An employed person like me who is in service to the Ranas shouldn’t be meeting a political upstart like him. Let’s not meet here. How about we meet in a forest somewhere and we can walk and talk without fear of anyone finding out?” Ganeshman-ji agreed to this, and he set the time to meet for the coming Saturday.

On Saturday, the three of them pretended to meet by coincidence at *Kalimati* and made their way towards the

Swayambhu forest. All the two knew was that Dharmabhakta was interested to be acquainted with Gangalal, but in fact Dharmabhakta had internally planned to initiate them into the Praja Parishad organization.

Dharmabhakta was well aware of the extent to which personalities like Gangalal and Ganeshman-ji could contribute to the Praja Parishad. There was no room for doubt about Gangalal's courage, commitment, and loyalty to the people. On top of that, Gangalal was extensively popular. Therefore, Dharmabhakta had made up his mind to induct them into the Praja Parishad. He had already conducted a meticulous examination of both of them for the past six months, of which they were fully unaware. Even so, Dharmabhakta took them on another assessment for the next six hours before revealing himself.

Dharmabhakta started as soon as they started climbing for *Swayambhu* through *Kalimati*, *Tahachal*. First, he brought up the topic of the pamphlet published by the Praja Parishad. As soon as he raised the issue of the pamphlet, Ganeshman-ji joked, "Leave it, don't even bother. A scared person like you discussing issues of politics? You're afraid that even your own home's walls have ears. You need to be as fearless as we are to discuss such things. Today is going to be a wasted day because we had to schedule this meeting to introduce you two. We could have been out there looking for the Praja Parishad instead." Dharmabhakta remained silent. After a while, he asked, "What will you do if you meet the Praja Parishad in this forest?"

"It's better to work towards our goal than to spend time talking about the impossible. Let's just get to why you wanted to meet Gangalal first," Ganeshman-ji said. "Oh no, I just heard his name a few times, and I wanted to meet him in person," Dharmabhakta replied. After some casual conversation, Dharmabhakta once again asked, "Wouldn't it be something if I

found the Praja Parishad for you guys today?” Ganeshman-ji grew exasperated at the question. “Listen, a scaredy cat like you doesn’t even need to show us. If you can even give us the right hints to where they are, I will consider you my guru!” Seeing such a timid person repeatedly asking about the Praja Parishad, Ganeshman-ji started to doubt. Could this be similar to Kalnemi? Kalnemi was a demon in the epic Ramayana who disguised himself as a Jogi in order to prevent Hanuman from invading Lanka. Could this person also be trying to prevent us from finding the Praja Parishad? Upon hearing the word Kalnemi, Dharmabhakta said, “Yes, I am a coward. But I wish you well. I will never betray you. But I wonder why you are so interested in them?”

“Interested?” Ganeshman-ji answered, “You do not know how much effort we have put into this. The places we went, the things we did!” Then, Dharmabhakta said, “Did I not tell you earlier, that you may be washed away by an unsuspecting river?” Ganeshman-ji grew tired of his playfulness, “Oh let it go, Dharmabhakta-ji. Why are you bragging about things you cannot do? We are really trying to find it seriously!” Then Dharmabhakta grew serious and with a determined face, told them, “Since you have so much interest in the Praja Parishad, let me tell you something. You ought to know that I am one of the founding members of the party!” Both Ganeshman-ji and Gangalal could not utter a word but stared in silence at Dharmabhakta's face. Now, Ganeshman-ji thought to himself that this person must be Kalnemi, trying to deter them from the right path by distracting them. So, he asked Dharmabhakta a question, “What proof do you have that you are a founding member of the Praja Parishad?” Immediately, Dharmabhakta opened the zip on the belt tied around his waist and pulled out a piece of paper. “Here, this is the proof. This is the leaflet of the Praja Parishad that will come out the following week!”

Ganeshman-ji recounts, “Before taking the paper, my body was shaking. The blood circulation had seemed to stop. My legs were trembling. I could not read the letter due to the darkness. So, I went to the nearby rest-area and lit a match. It was still too difficult to read, so we decided to go to Dharmabhakta-ji's house to read it in full. On the way, Dharmabhakta-ji stopped suddenly and said that according to the rules of the Praja Parishad, one must take an oath before a temple. And since we had reached Bhagwati's temple, why not go down to Bijeshwari and do so. We both agreed without any hesitation at all.”

All three of them stood in front of Goddess *Bhagwati*. Dharmabhakta in the middle and Ganeshman-ji and Gangalal on either side. Dharmabhakta touched Bhagwati's feet and the two of them also did the same. Then Dharmabhakta announced, *"From today onwards, we will give life and limb to strengthen the Praja Parishad. In that process, we may get caught and put to death, but we will not betray anyone as long as we breathe!"* After the oath Dharmabhakta put his hands on their shoulders and said, “Now onwards you have become the member of Praja Parishad, let us go to my house and read the pamphlet carefully.”

Describing the situation immediately after, Ganeshman-ji says, “Our minds were overjoyed. Our reward for the long penance, hard work, diligence, and concentration was our induction into the philosophy of the Praja Parishad. We reached Dharmabhakta-ji's house rejoicing internally. We closed the window in the room and intently read the paper. I read it three times over and over again. Gangalal did the same. The draft was very good. The lettering was just as good!”

Gangalal and Ganeshman-ji both decided to go back to the house a few days after the pamphlet was issued, to express their gratitude to Dharmabhakta for granting the membership of the Party. This was the same person, the same gym, that Ganeshman-ji had been to several times. But the difference

between then and now was indescribable. In their first meeting, Ganeshman-ji had thought Dharmabhakta was a thick-headed bodybuilder. But this time, it was like having a dialogue with a great soul. Ganeshman-ji interprets this meeting as follows: *"He was the same person whom I had seen rubbing oil on his body when we first met, but today the enormity and singularity of his personality was revealed in a different way. A completely courageous and dedicated person with such intellectual eccentricity! Words of gratitude for his rare grace towards us were insufficient for us, or rather, our words were powerless that day to express the feelings of gratitude in my heart."*

Ganeshman-ji further says, "I made myself as humble as possible and said, 'My brother, you have bestowed a great debt on us. From now on, you are not only our Dai but also our Guru, our Leader, our future, and our Deity. This is what we have come to say. From now on, please don't call me 'tapai' (honorific title), just call me 'you'. In return for making us members of this esteemed party, please accept this small gift from my part."

Words of such gratitude to the person who gave the ordinary membership of a party called Praja Parishad? That too, from the lips of an arrogant person like Ganeshman-ji? What a surprise! For reference, Ganeshman-ji was the same leader who later picked a bone with the King for the simple reason that the King called BP Koirala 'you' instead of 'tapai'. And this same Ganeshman-ji here, he pleads with Dharmabhakta to call him 'you' as a gesture of his humility. The secret of why this is so can be stated in one sentence: *a revolutionary warrior does not only have the virtues of rebellion. Humility, honesty, and gratitude are his jewels.* And yes, in spite of his outwardly persona, Ganeshman-ji was also rich in all these qualities.

Dharmabhakta and Ganeshman-ji also had a quarrel once. Ganeshman-ji, while boasting to his friends while sitting around in the sun, told them that a leaflet would be published in the

following days with such and such details at a certain time. He told everyone to study the pamphlet and meet together the very next day for discussion. The news spread through the grapevine and reached the administration's ears as well as Dharmabhakta's ears. However, the chief of the office tasked with quelling unrest luckily laughed it away, thinking it to be the boasts of a spoiled brat, "So, a hooligan like Ganeshman now knows the ins-and-outs of the Praja Parishad's activities?" However, Dharmabhakta, on the other hand, became very disappointed. Should he not have given Ganeshman Singh the party membership? He was burning in the fire of guilt, and he sent people to collect Ganeshman-ji. However, the boastful young man thought he was getting called for some kind of praise. He arrived with enthusiasm, but no sooner had he stepped foot in the door when Dharmabhakta started berating him.

"Everyone told me that the city's most notorious hooligan, thug, and the spoiled grandson of the Kazi may be a spy and implored me to not induct him into the party. Do you know how many people were against it? Yet, I took you. I never thought that you would repay me in this way! You are a useless fool. Will you be able to withstand the torture of the Ranas when they string you up on the bamboo and beat your calves bloody? You will tell on everyone and burn them!"

Ganeshman-ji recounts, "He berated me for a long time. I had not even climbed the stairs. I never thought that he could be so fired up and exploding like the kernels of heated corn. Standing in a daze, I felt paralyzed, unable to go up or down the ladder. It was as if my body had gone numb because my blood circulation had stopped. My eyes began to shimmer and my ears became deaf, my mouth went dry. I grew aware of Dharmabhakta-ji saying, 'You don't have to come to my house from today onwards. Go!' When I thought about the fact that Dharmabhakta had expressed regret and remorse for making me

a member of the Praja Parishad, I felt restless. My first reaction was again a rude one. Even when I spoke so daringly, why did he scold me instead of praising me? But a few days later, my anger and pride had subsided and I began to balance my thoughts. I finally understood my mistake and the meaning of Dharmabhakta-ji's abuse. Even years later, when I think back to this childish behaviour, I always feel ashamed."

"A week later, Dharmabhakta called me. I went to see him, and he too had calmed down. His demeanor and mannerisms were as affectionate as ever, overflowing with belonging and trust. I was probably a little scared when I stood in front of him, so he started saying with more warmth than before, 'Look Ganeshman! I love you with all my heart. That love is not only because you are a member of the Praja Parishad. I have grown attached to you since the first day I met you, and when a person bonds on their first meet it is a deep and lasting bond. Because I love you, I have become soft and weak towards you. I know that you are a capable person who will do the thing that you put your mind to. But, after listening to your pamphlet case, I thought that there cannot be a person more irresponsible than this! That is why I bursted upon you. You endangered everyone. You shouldn't have turned around and left from here in a fit of rage. I'm sorry you got angry. I wonder when I stopped reminding you and started getting angry with you. That was not my intention. People make mistakes. I called you here to correct that mistake. Listen, Ganeshman. From now on, you must not think like you are the grandson of a Kazi family. You are no longer Hira-kazi (family nickname meaning 'the jewel of the Kazi'). You no longer wear that uniform. From the day you took the oath to become a member, you abandoned that life. You have to forget the old identity that you used to be. Forget it. This is what I called you here to remind you. Remember these words and take them to heart!"

Ganeshman-ji replied, "I was very hurt by your words that day. If you had advised me like this, I also wouldn't have gotten angry. You insulted me without giving me a chance to speak, which made me sad. That's the reason I left angry. From now on, I will always remember what you said."

This scolding from Dharmabhakta became an important lesson for Ganeshman-ji. After this incident, he came to understand the importance of responsibility and privacy in politics. Not only that, Ganeshman-ji also learned that one should be able to listen to the advice of the elders and remain patient. For the lessons he taught and the personality that he was, we must also respect Dharmabhakta as a 'role model' in the same way that Ganeshman-ji does.

Ganeshman-ji, in his book, described himself as a 'devotee' of Dharmabhakta. A devotee's relationship is only with God. This means that Dharmabhakta was a 'God' for Ganeshman-ji. Yes, it may be an exaggeration to give the status of God to any one individual. But, if one sacrifices his entire life for the sake of the people, if one does not take the slightest opportunity to enrich himself for the sake of the welfare of the people, why should anyone take issue if he is compared to God? Gangalal and Ganeshman-ji themselves are the proof that Dharmabhakta had godliness. He was a person who identified such diamonds like Ganeshman-ji and Gangalal and groomed them to become the heroes they are today. In this sense, is it any exaggeration for Ganeshman-ji to consider himself a devotee of Dharmabhakta?

B.P. KOIRALA AND GANESHPAN SINGH

Ganeshman-ji and Bishweshwar Prasad Koirala (BP Koirala) were peers. However, at the time when BP Koirala was studying in an Indian university, Ganeshman-ji had already been life-imprisoned for rebellion against the Rana regime. By the time that BP Koirala had joined the socialist party movement in India to protest against the British occupation, Ganeshman-ji had already served four years in the Bhadragol Jail and even escaped from its impregnable fortress. He had already become popular among Nepalis as a legendary hero. After his escape, Ganeshman-ji crossed the rivers, hills, and dense forests of Nepal to reach India on foot. Bishweshwar Prasad Koirala finally entered the politics of Nepal only after Ganeshman-ji had spent another five years in Calcutta, Varanasi, Darjeeling, Sikkim, Kalimpong, Dehradun, and Assam, in order to organize the Nepalis in India and involve them in the struggle. By this time, it was almost certain that the British would flee India. Therefore, now that it was time to pay attention to Nepal's politics across the border, BP Koirala publicly invited the Nepalis in India for a political meeting. By this time, the name 'Ganeshman-ji' was already recognized as a revolutionary leader and a legendary hero in the region of South Asia.

Ganeshman-ji was determined to establish a strong political party. But what bothered him was that he had roamed underground in India under a pseudonym. It was not possible for him to stay at the same address for too long. If he was caught by the British administration, he would have been handed over to the Ranas, so it would be tantamount to committing suicide if he opened a political organization under his own leadership. He was of the opinion that a person with status should take over the leadership and help him to form a strong political party. Therefore, he said to Dilliraman Regmi, a scholar in Varanasi, "Regmi-ji, work done at the right time has great importance.

Let's open a political party. You lead it. I will help you. Your job is just to invite the people. I will do the rest. Let's go ahead with this." Regmi replied, "Ganeshman-ji, you are right. However, in my opinion, I don't think we should open such a party until the British exit from India. On top of that, I am a sick person, how much help can I possibly provide?" Ganeshman-ji implored, "All you need to do is to sign a Statement, how difficult can it be? I will draft it myself on a piece of paper." However, Dilliraman did not dare move forward with this idea.

The name of the person who connected Ganeshman-ji and BP Koirala was Devshankar Lal. He was a businessman. He had business houses in Calcutta and Vanaras, and his business house was known as Nepali Kothis (warehouse). His business was very popular among Nepalis, and even the rickshaw-men knew the route with their eyes closed. Devshankar was not only a trader but also a very clever and agile man. He had an amazing ability to capitalize on situations. He was not only a friend and well-wisher of Ganeshman-ji, but also one of his protectors and benefactors during his stay in India. Therefore, Ganeshman-ji had to think about all the angles if he ever wanted to disagree with Devshankar.

Devashankar had kept his eye on BP Koirala for quite some time. He was impressed by BP's activism, his contacts with Indian leaders, his organizational skills, his intellect, and his revolutionary character. Therefore, he felt that if he could connect BP Koirala with Ganeshman-ji under some pretext, the two could give rise to a new party that could create better conditions for revolution in Nepal. Due to Ganeshman-ji's stubbornness, arrogance, and conceit, Devshankar was struggling to get this accomplished. Finally, as his closest friend, he said in a reprimanding manner, "This is not the way, Ganeshman-ji! If you are like this, how will you ever succeed in politics? You must be humble and make yourself look ordinary

in order to win people over. Only then can you influence others. If you sit around thinking too highly of yourself, who will care about you in today's age? Only through humility and modesty in accordance with your sacrifice and penance, a feeling of reverence and respect will be created in the people, otherwise you will fall prey to your own pride."

Ganeshman-ji says in his own words that he pondered on what Devashankar had advised him. "Even though Devashankar is younger than me in age, he is wiser than me in intellect. Though I pretended to ignore him, his words were still in my mind. I was repeating to myself every word he said. But stubbornness and Ganeshman were not two different elements."

A few days later, Ishwar Baral and Krishna Prasad Bhattarai also told Ganeshman-ji that BP Koirala is not a person who would just put out a statement and keep silent afterwards. Upon hearing this, Ganeshman-ji finally thought, "Could it be that BP is the same person who keeps appearing to my mind as my imaginary friend? The person I'm searching for, could it be this fellow? Let's meet with him at least once, let's test him. If we see eye to eye, we will travel on the same road together, otherwise we will go our different ways. No more stubbornness, I will go to Calcutta to meet him."

After arriving in Calcutta and meeting BP for the first time, Ganeshman-ji recounts in his book, "Our first meeting was arranged by DK Shahi, a very gentle man. It wasn't just myself but many other Nepalis who had gathered from all over India to meet and speak to BP. The program was taking place in a Bengali's house. The people present at the venue, and their enthusiasm to meet BP, told Ganeshman-ji that he must be a great man. Before BP's arrival, Ganeshman-ji had been taken there with great respect by DK Shahi and DN Pradhan. Although Ganeshman-ji was trying to act gentle and humble, as advised by Devshankar Lal a few days ago, he couldn't contain the nature he

was born with. Looking at the throngs of people waiting to meet BP, Ganeshman-ji was thinking, "Fools! The revolutionary who broke out of the Ranas' jail is right beside them, but the deer are looking for musk elsewhere." Suddenly there was a murmur, and everyone started looking out of the window. Ganeshman-ji also looked out of the window without leaving his seat, but did not see anyone who looked special. People were gathered around a central figure who was being ushered in. A thin man, who looked like he would be blown over by the wind! In a little while, they all entered the room. One of them got up and said politely, "Our leader, Bishweshwar Prasad Koirala!" Then the introductory program started. After some introductions, DK Shahi got up and introduced Ganeshman-ji, saying, "BP Babu! Let me introduce you to Ganeshman-ji! The revolutionary leader who broke out of the Ranas' jail!" As soon as BP heard the name, he got up out of his seat and immediately approached Ganeshman-ji. BP Koirala said, "Ganeshman-ji! I had a great desire to meet you. I have talked to Dhruba many times to arrange a meeting with you. I'm so glad that we met today. How about we sit together after this meeting?" BP was standing and speaking to him very politely but Ganeshman-ji did not even get up from his chair. After all, he was the victim of his own ego and pride. Later in life, Ganeshman-ji said many times, "I did not even show the simplest courtesy to Koirala-ji. What must he have thought?"

After hearing BP's speech in that first meeting, Ganeshman-ji formed his opinion. He recounts, "This is the person I was looking for. He is the one who can do what needs to be done. This is the reason why I respected and revered Koirala-ji, and I was determined that, no matter what, I will support this man." From that first speech, Ganeshman-ji deduced the following four summations about BP:

- 1) He was endowed with an amazing ability to draw political similarities between the Rana occupation and

the British occupation, and analyze them and draw conclusions benefitting the democratic struggle of Nepal.

- 2) Just as skilled physicians can diagnose diseases through the pulse and pallor of a patient, so did BP have the art of influencing people and manifesting their inner feelings into words, all for a larger national cause.
- 3) His analysis was that “the British will soon exit India, and after their departure we can overthrow the Rana regime which has enjoyed their protection. Thus, we cannot delay in opening a political party. The Interim Government of India has no choice but to help us. India cannot hurt us anymore.” This was an astute conclusion.
- 4) There can be no leadership from a person without willpower. In BP that willpower was abundant. If there was any person that could be tasked with this responsibility, he was it. He was the right person.

After the first meeting with Bishweshwar Prasad Koirala, Ganeshman-ji became enamored with BP. Ganeshman-ji says in his book, “He showed me such friendship and intimacy on our first day that I was moved from within. That day, without letting anyone know, I broke my pot of arrogance and let it dissipate.”

Now let us turn towards Bishweshwar Prasad Koirala. He was, likewise, not lacking for praise when it came to Ganeshman-ji. For him, finding Ganeshman-ji was like finding a deity when searching for rocks. There was no personality that came anywhere near to Ganeshman-ji not only within his party, but also in his eyes. BP had potential and he also had a lot of willpower. Gathering the new interim government of India's support for his movement was an easy enough game for a man of his ability. He did not lack for ideals and principles. However, that alone is not enough for a revolution. He needed such a

people's leader for the revolution that the person's personality would instill belief in the people that the leader will not betray them. A well-known people's leader is needed for any revolution. Since BP had only ever dabbled in politics in India, all those who supported him were only Nepali expatriates. He needed someone who not only understands Nepal but also the Nepali people as well as the Ranas' court. If such a person is difficult to find within Nepal, how can one hope to find such a person abroad? In BP Koirala's imagination, he had hoped for a person of Ganeshman-ji's caliber, one who had already created history and established credibility with the people. The name Ganeshman Singh was already celebrated by millions of Nepalis. On top of that, he was aware of every single aspect of the Rana rule and their decision-making process. That is why when Bishweshwar Prasad Koirala found Ganeshman Singh, it was like finding a diety among the rocks.

BP Koirala said to Ganeshman-ji in their second meeting, "Ganeshman-ji, just as Lord Hanuman had no idea of his own power, so too, you do not understand your own importance. Let me tell you about the three qualities that you have that cannot be found in anyone else, qualities that will help us to achieve our goals! They are:

- 1) You are the direct lineage of a family that has enjoyed special favor from the Ranas. Your family background would have been enough for you to gain prestige in position, money, and contemporary society. Your contribution to changing Nepal by sacrificing your luxurious life in an aristocratic family is an exemplary example for all.
- 2) You bravely escaped from prison and not only released yourself, but also challenged the security apparatus of the Rana regime. You have become an example that a dedicated revolutionary cannot be contained by the

prison wall, by the siege of the army, or the torture of life imprisonment. On the contrary, such punishment creates in a revolutionary the strength of resistance.

- 3) You will be an invaluable asset to any party that will be formed in Nepal. You will be the historical figure who represents the very first People's Uprising in the history of Nepal."

Both Ganeshman-ji and Bishweshwar Prasad Koirala analyzed each other's personalities and characteristics, and there was no exaggeration in either of them. Instead, it is said that the leaders of that time had a culture of praising each other freely. The relationship between Ganeshman-ji and BP was even more sophisticated. Such grand behaviour is not seen today in our political leaders.

In the Purans and scriptures of Hindu philosophy, sometimes the relationship between Lord Rama and Lord Shiva is mentioned. There is a story that Lord Shiva listens with rapt attention whenever the syllable 'Ra' is mentioned, so that he may hear the full name of Rama and enjoy bliss. Before invading Lanka, Lord Rama erected the Linga of Lord Shiva on the southern coast of India and named it Rameshwaram. What love for each other, even among Gods. What harmony. Indeed, the same kind of love, respect, and harmony was present between BP and Ganeshman-ji. There was no jealousy or personal conflict between these two personalities. It was beyond normal human nature.

Devshankar Lal, who ran a large business house in Vanaras, was not only a successful businessman but also a person with a patriotic and a revolutionary spirit. The efforts he made to reconcile Ganeshman-ji and Bishweshwar Prasad Koirala is something that should not be forgotten. He had already surmised that the revolution could not be successful without the

joint efforts of these two, so he tried to forge them together at any cost. It almost cost him his friendship with Ganeshman-ji because he pushed him to swallow his pride and cornered him into travelling to see BP. It was his spark that led to the duet that would become the key to the success of the 1951 revolution.

This lifelong pair of Ganeshman Singh and BP Koirala never broke throughout their lives. They were brought together by history's need and circumstance, and the Rana and Shah rulers tried very hard to break that bond. They never succeeded. Ganeshman-ji was always very careful about this. Even if any of BP's opponents praised him, Ganeshman-ji would say with suspicion, "He has become jealous of our friendship." There was an incident where King Tribhuvan wanted to remove Matrika Prasad Koirala from the post of Prime Minister and appoint Ganeshman-ji as the new Prime Minister. When the King asked Ganeshman-ji, he quietly murmured to himself, "Do you think I don't understand your play, Thakuri? Your plan is to break me and BP apart. I understand all too well." But out loud, he said, "Your Majesty! I cannot make a unilateral decision when there are other leaders in my party. Therefore, I will consult with my party." Such was the unshakeable strength of their friendship and their trust in one another.

The influence and respect that Ganeshman-ji felt during his first meeting with Bishweshwar Prasad Koirala never diminished until his very last day. Even though he was senior to BP Koirala in all respects, he never once claimed superiority. Basically, Ganeshman-ji's nature was that once he accepted someone, he would fulfill his relationship with that person with full loyalty. Ganeshman-ji always considered BP Koirala to be one of his role models and a great leader.

People's Movement 1990

(Ganeshman Singh's Second Struggle Against Autocracy)

(The People's Movement 1990 was the very first non-violent people's uprising in Nepal, for the establishment of democracy. Its conceptualization, its composition, and its leader was none other than Ganeshman Singh. From a nationalistic point of view, this People's Movement was of a fundamental and specific nature.

The struggle against the autocracy (Panchayat System) established by King Mahendra after the assassination of democracy in 1961 with the might of the army was the second struggle of Ganeshman-ji's life. During the course of that period, many prominent leaders like BP Koirala, Ganeshman Singh, and others struggled for years from prison, from exile, and from home-arrest. BP Koirala passed away without being able to bring the struggle to a successful end. After his passing, Ganeshman Singh did not let the torch of struggle burn out. Eventually, the People's Movement 1990 under his leadership established Nepali people as the sovereign citizens of a democratic country. Ganeshman-ji has literally said, "The People's Movement 1990 has fulfilled the dream of the martyrs and the aspiration of the Nepali people to become independent and respected citizens. It took me 39 years to bring the country to this stage. In this process, I have endured difficulties even more than a stray dog. But now, I have forgotten those sad days. I now feel that I have finally repaid the trust of Martyr

Gangalal and the Nepali people. This is the most important satisfaction that the People's Movement has given me."

The People's Movement 1990 was fundamental in the sense that the Nepali people, the Nepali Congress, and even the Communists all united under the flag of human rights and freedom in order to bring it to a successful conclusion. It was also encouraged by the world community. Where else have foreign nations attended the national conference of a rebel party and reiterated their commitments to supporting their movement? It is a noteworthy and pleasant achievement that the talks between King Birendra and Ganeshman Singh were secluded to the extent that no other powerful states were allowed to have any influence. This was the biggest and most patriotic achievement of People's Movement 1990. Apart from it, there has not been a single movement, struggle, or revolution in Nepal till date whose agreements have not been finalized on foreign lands or without foreign influence. In that sense, the Nepali people are grateful to Ganeshman Singh, the supreme commander and respected leader of this very first nationalist mass movement.)

BACKGROUND

The Nepali Congress started its struggle against the tyranny of King Mahendra in December 1961, after the King's coup d'etat was carried out misusing the power of the national army. During this coup, the King sentenced Ganeshman-ji, BP Koirala, Krishna Prasad Bhattarai, and hundreds of other leaders to life imprisonment. The top leaders were arrested and Ganeshman-ji was kept in Sundarijal Jail for eight years. Due to various political pressures from inside and abroad, the Panchayat government released them from prison in 1969, but did not allow for a conducive environment for the released prisoners to stay in the country. So, they were forced into exile in India with some hundreds of their members. This period of exile lasted eight

years, from 1969 to 1977. During this period, the Nepali Congress continued to wage many small and large revolutionary actions. They were leading those struggles from across the border. Among these, the Okhaldhunga Uprising, the Janakpur Incident (where a bomb was thrown into the car of King Mahendra), the airline hijacking, and the looting of three million rupees were prominent.

Although the Nepali Congress was under the leadership of BP Koirala, Ganeshman Singh, and Subarna Shamsher during that time, BP Koirala was the key person. Naturally, it was the policies of BP Koirala that prevailed. Even though Ganeshman-ji was among the top three leaders of the party, his ideas were generally not implemented, because he advocated for a large-scale unified action. Nepali Congress, at the time, was conducting small-scale movements. Although his big ideas were not implemented, Ganeshman-ji did not spare any effort to participate and sharpen his weapons for the upcoming struggles.

Ganeshman-ji was never in favour of doing petty actions that yielded small and temporary victories. His thinking was different. He used to say that whatever we do, it should be big and impactful. If the revolution is to take place, it should be bigger and more effective than 1951. If a People's Movement is carried out, it should be done at the national level. His argument was that such small attacks only led to the loss of life or imprisonment for the activists. The members are like our children, we have to protect them. So, we shouldn't be taking chances to strike back wherever we get a small window of opportunity. The Nepali Congress should instead adopt the strategy of waiting it out and conserving their strength until we can rouse the people into a national level struggle. But the Party took a different stand and for the sake of small victories, the Nepali Congress lost many of its promising leaders and activists.

In the year 1983, BP Koirala passed away and the responsibility of leadership for the party fell upon the shoulders of Ganeshman Singh. Now that he was responsible for the actions of the party and couldn't point to anyone else for any of its failures, he decided to do things his way. He reiterated his new strategy of engaging different ideologies, where even the opposition would be welcome to join the fight against the monarchy. He said, "Let us not abandon the communists who want to join hands with the Nepali Congress for the cause of freedom!" Many praised his new approach. Whether they meant it or not was yet to be seen. So, Ganeshman-ji was waiting for the right opportunity to test their words.

He decided to not allow the party leaders and activists to become comfortable with inaction. He planned to hold a national level Satyagraha Movement in 1986. This decision by Ganeshman-ji left the followers of BP Koirala in a dilemma. However, despite their misgivings, they supported the Satyagraha Movement. Although that movement may have seemed normal, it had great significance in national politics. It lasted for about a month and about 15,000 leaders and activists from all over the country filled Nepal's jails to their capacity. Another major achievement was the support it garnered from the communists. The moderate communist elements even accepted Ganeshman-ji as their leader and participated in the Satyagraha. The movement's political achievements were as follows:

- 1) Till then, Nepali Congress had adopted twin strategies of 'Neither fight against the King nor surrender to the King' and 'Never cooperate with the communists'. In the changed context of deteriorated political developments in the country, Ganeshman-ji gave a new and clear message with the new strategy of 'Accept cooperation

from the communists and fight against the anti-democratic King’.

- 2) This movement conveyed the message to the government that thousands of leaders and activists were ready to be imprisoned for the cause and bear any suffering.
- 3) It also proved that Nepali leftist parties would support the Nepali Congress to further the cause of democracy and human rights.
- 4) It also became clear that the communist parties would not hesitate to fall in line behind a matured and wise leader like Ganeshman Singh.
- 5) It also proved that the Nepali Congress members were disciplined, organized, and had full confidence in Ganeshman Singh as their leader and commander.

The Panchayat government did not release the thousands of activists arrested during the Satyagraha Movement at once. They were gradually released over a process of about 14 months. During this period, it would not be practical for the Nepali Congress to hold any special party-wide program. Therefore, the party-leaders were waiting and watching. Ganeshman Singh, on the other hand, came up with a new plan. He spent the days analyzing world politics and assessing possible consequences. In the meantime, King Birendra began to assure the people that the Panchayat elections would be democratized. Even Girija Prasad Koirala of the Nepali Congress became lulled by the false assurances of the King. He met with King Birendra several times for discussions, and his confidence in the King’s plan was growing. He began to appeal to his own party to acquiesce to the King. Due to Girija, even young and popular members of the party like Bipin Koirala, Shiva Bahadur Khadka, Sher Bahadur Deuba, and Ram Chandra Poudel were advocating for the King’s

proposal. Bipin Koirala and Shiva Bahadur Khadka supported the King's 'democratic efforts' by publishing formal statements of their own. However, Ganeshman Singh and party president Krishna Prasad Bhattarai knew that they had to stop this trend from spreading, so they advised young leaders Sher Bahadur Deuba and Ram Chandra Poudel to not believe the hype.

THE RISE OF A NEW APPROACH

While defining a 'statesman', it was said that 'A statesman is a leader who can not only anticipate the crisis or opportunity looming on the horizon, but also navigate its possible consequences and keep his followers safe.' Ganeshman-ji had kept an eye on the ongoing political news of foreign nations, and he had come to the conclusion that an unprecedented wave of democracy and human rights was about to sweep the globe. If this wave of change was not taken advantage of, then Nepal would lag behind and the opportunity may be lost. Explaining this to his party members, Ganeshman-ji said, "The wave of democracy is spreading across the globe. After World War II, there has been a continuing push-back against colonialism and democracies have been established in newly independent countries. In the sixties, many small independent countries lost their democracies and dictators took over. Some of these dictators were even supported by democratic countries because they believed that the small nations would progress better under the dictatorship. Now they have broken out of that illusion. Now, democratic countries like the USA, UK, Canada, Germany, etc are standing up for the rights of the people. They have opened their eyes. Now is the time for us to be independent!"

With this analysis, Ganeshman-ji became determined to take advantage of this favourable political climate. It is in this context that he developed the idea of a People's Movement. But how was he to proceed? With whom could he gather support, and would

it be enough? Such questions made him anxious. Finally, he decided to do it by enlisting everyone's help. But he was determined that even if his party had to do it alone, they would still do it.

Ganeshman-ji was very much aware of the history of Nepal. He knew very well that there was no point in being a 'spent force'. He knew the power of strength, and he was well versed in the history of the rulers of Nepal. The Gopalvanshi had been displaced by the Kirants, who in turn were displaced by the Licchavis, and then by the Mallas who were rich in culture and civilized behaviour, but only to be replaced by the Shahs who preyed on their weakness. Thus, he knew that 'strength' was crucial in any coup d'etat. And he also knew that the strength he sought would not be possible without public support. Therefore, he put every effort he could towards building that public support.

DESIGNING THE PEOPLE'S MOVEMENT

Ganeshman-ji decided, "The world situation is favorable. Now, if the other components required for the movement can be counted on, the People's Movement can surely achieve success." That is why he decided that it was the right time to start the People's Movement.

Just like how an architect or an engineer designs a house by carefully studying all the components and their most effective arrangement, so too, Ganeshman-ji prepared a sketch (roadmap) of the proposed movement. The following elements were necessary in the draft he prepared.

- 1) A personality whose leadership would be universally accepted.
- 2) Provide time for the King to rectify his mistakes.

- 3) Accept cooperation from the communists and other parties.
- 4) Gather the support of India for the cause.
- 5) Ensure the goodwill of the Western powers.
- 6) Bring the press and media into the fold.
- 7) Awaken and mobilize the people for the movement.

If Ganeshman-ji could collect these necessary ingredients, he believed his mission could be successful. So, he set about to confirm each of them.

1) A PERSONALITY WHOSE LEADERSHIP WOULD BE UNIVERSALLY ACCEPTED.

The primary element that could not be taken for granted was the choice of a personality that people could rally behind. The most respected leader is one who can win the trust of all parties and the people. In the absence of such a universally accepted leader, it would be very difficult to mobilize the people for such a large movement. Naturally, a movement that the people do not believe in will never succeed. There was a similar situation before the 1951 revolution. Ganeshman-ji was barely 35 years old at the time, and despite his youth he had earned the reputation of a legendary heroic figure. At the time, an enthusiastic young man by the name of Bishweshwar Prasad Koirala was studying at a University in India and had started gathering supporters. BP Koirala had analyzed that the British were withdrawing from India, and with their departure the Ranas would also finally lose their protection. If the Nepali people revolted at the right time, the Ranas could be removed and a democratic system could be established in Nepal. For that reason, BP Koirala had started organizing the Nepalis living in India to form a strong political party. However, his organization needed credibility and a leader

that people could rally to. When he first met Ganeshman-ji, he thought to himself that, finally, he had found such a leader. And Ganeshman-ji, too, upon meeting him, thought the same thing, “I have met BP Koirala, and finally my search for a leader is now over.”

For the revolution of 1951, both BP Koirala and Ganeshman-ji were in a hurry to elevate each other as the leader, but the situation was not the same this time around. However, the search did not take very long because he was told by his party that there could not be a more appropriate person to lead this movement than Ganeshman Singh himself. After all, Ganeshman-ji was one of the crucial top-leaders of Nepali Congress who courageously won the people’s trust and inspired them. He accepted their choice. But his concern now was whether the other parties would be so amenable. So, he set out to bring them into the fold as well.

2) PROVIDE TIME FOR THE KING TO RECTIFY HIS MISTAKES.

In starting this process, Ganeshman-ji decided that the first step should be to inform the King. Therefore, 500,000 signatures were collected from all over the country and a memorandum was registered in His Majesty’s Secretariat at the Narayanhiti Royal Palace. The memorandum said, “If the multi-party democratic system is not restored peacefully in time, the Nepali Congress will launch a massive nation-wide People’s Movement in the near future. It is unable to predict what casualties this whirlwind might take. Therefore, let there be time to demonstrate political understanding.” Regardless of the warning, the petition signed by 500,000 Nepalis did not elicit any change from the King for months.

3) ACCEPT COOPERATION FROM THE COMMUNISTS AND OTHER PARTIES.

The Nepali Congress had not cooperated with the communists in any movement or revolution until then. Some of their moderate elements had supported Ganeshman-ji in the Satyagraha Movement, but Ganeshman-ji formulated a new concept to formally invite communists to join hands to carry out his agenda of the People's Movement. The issue that prevented Nepali Congress from doing so earlier was that the Party feared that Nepal would be drawn into the dispute between India and China which would prove detrimental to Nepal's relationship with India. It had adopted a strategy to be more amenable to working with the King rather than the communists, and the result was that the King found it easier to rule by dividing the country into two major camps. These experiences strengthened the idea of Ganeshman-ji who was adamant that this situation must be broken.

He began to tread carefully with great caution. He decided to enlist the support of the moderate communists for his purposes. Ganeshman-ji believed that even if the communists did not provide any material support, the rumours of the two parties working together could create positive vibes and inspire the people to support the movement! The communists themselves were fractured into different camps, so bringing them all together for dialogue was a challenge in itself. However, using various methods, he arranged a meeting and took the help of Maniklal and Padmaratna Tuladhar, who were known as the intellect of the communist parties in Nepal. Although the communists had lots of infighting, they were positive towards Ganeshman-ji. The first discussion took place at the home of Padmaratna Tuladhar in Lazimpat. In that meeting, Tulsilal, Manmohan, Krishnalal Varma, and other leaders like Jhalanath Khanal and R.K. Mainali were present. Ganeshman-ji gave them

a long speech about his proposed People's Movement. He told the communists, "If you want to join this movement, you are welcome. If you choose to abstain, do so but at least don't work against us. This will be the last and final battle of the Nepali people against the dictatorial King. If the people come out losers in this movement, it is not possible to say whether this country, as we know it, will survive or not. Therefore, this is a movement to save the country itself. History is recording these events, and it will not forgive those who oppose this national movement." In reply, the communists said, "We cannot trust the Nepali Congress. They may bring us along but will not hesitate to leave us in the middle of the stream helpless. Can we really trust them?" Ganeshman-ji replied, "I understand. Can you trust me?" Manmohan Adhikari immediately replied, "It was only because of you that we supported the Satyagraha Movement in 1986. Today, on behalf of my party, I assure you that if you lead it, we will support your movement." The rest of the parties also gave him their consent. Satisfied, Ganeshman-ji told them on his way out, "I am pleased to receive your support. During the course of this complex movement, communication may be difficult. Since clear communication is important for proper coordination, I ask you to create an inter-party committee to receive and disseminate information. It will make it easier for me to get in touch with all of you. Please think about it."

According to this suggestion, all the seven communist parties formed a temporary alliance. In time, that alliance became a factor in the unification of the Communist Party. That is why some political scholars like to infer that Ganeshman-ji was the father of the Unified Communist Party. In this manner, everyone had given the reins of leadership to Ganeshman-ji and were ready to support him. The task of selecting a leader with universal appeal was complete.

4) GATHER THE SUPPORT OF INDIA FOR THE CAUSE.

Ganeshman-ji then increased his contact with neighboring India. The Indian Congress was not negative towards the Nepali Congress. The Indian leaders of those time included Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, Jayaprakash Narayan, Vallabhbhai Patel and other leaders of socialist parties, and they were very positive towards democracy in Nepal. They were all grateful to Nepal for our leaders' contributions to their own country's independence, for example BP Koirala, Ganeshman Singh, Krishna Prasad Bhattarai, and Manmohan Adhikari. However, for whatever reason, India helped King Mahendra to orchestrate a coup in 1961 which made Nepal's democracy suffer for three decades.

The relationship between the King and the Prime Minister of India, Rajiv Gandhi, had soured due to the failure of a treaty regarding trade and transit between the two countries. This uncomfortable situation was also adding fuel to the fire between the two nations. Ganeshman-ji did not spare any effort to turn India towards his cause, and as a result of his efforts, the Indian government was forced to distance itself from the King and his Panchayat system and move closer to the democrats.

The activities of the Indian Congress were progressing in such a way that it was becoming easier for them to support the democratic movement in Nepal. The ruling party of India, the Indian National Congress, was celebrating its diamond jubilee with pomp and pageantry in Bombay. Political parties and heads of government from around the world were gathered there. Prime Minister Marichman Singh was also present on behalf of the Head of Government from Nepal, and Ganeshman Singh was also invited as a representative of the Nepali people. In fact, the event was like the world's political '*Kumbh Festival*' (one of the largest gatherings). At the same time, the Nepali Congress'

relationship with the Indian National Congress was also getting stronger. Ganeshman-ji had already had discussions with other influential leaders of India like Chandra Shekhar, George Fernandez, Madhu Dandwate, Sharad Yadav, and West Bengal Chief Minister Jyoti Vasu and the result was positive. Everyone had expressed their commitment to support the proposed movement. His stay in Bombay doubled Ganeshman-ji's spirits. He took advantage of that occasion to win over the leaders of the Western nations and the democratic parties within India, who were all chanting the mantra of human rights and democracy. His happiness knew no bounds.

5) ENSURE THE GOODWILL OF THE WESTERN POWERS.

Ganeshman-ji used this political 'Kumbha Festival' as a means to draw the world's attention to his proposed People's Movement. Ganeshman-ji had the opportunity to speak with the leaders of Western nations such as the United Kingdom, Germany, France, the United States, Israel, and the leaders of socialist internationals. He entrusted the leaders and members of the Nepali Congress who were stationed in Europe and the United States to build on this positive dialogue and strengthen the relationship further.

6) BRING THE PRESS AND MEDIA INTO THE FOLD.

Even though everything seemed favorable at first glance, Ganeshman-ji could not be certain. He would find solutions to any areas of weakness that could negatively affect the People's Movement. Thus, he made extensive efforts to harken the national and international media to his cause favourably. He used his favorite national and international correspondents to reach out to individuals and organizations who were beyond his reach. At the time, there was only one daily national newspaper and TV channel in Nepal, and they were under government

control. There were a few private media companies but they were not very effective. In those days, only the 'weekly' newspapers informed the public opinion, and many of these were anti-government, thus they were drawn to Ganeshman-jī's cause.

The 'Memorandum' given by the Nepali Congress to the King to bring about necessary reforms and reinstate the multi-party democratic system had yielded no response for several weeks. Meanwhile, the King was not unaware of Ganeshman-jī's activities in preparing for the movement. Ganeshman-jī wanted to know the King's reaction before proceeding further, so he contemplated a meeting between them. It is said that the King was troubled by seeing how India has warmly afforded Ganeshman-jī a high level of respect and welcome in their Diamond Jubilee program as a leader of the Nepali people, while the Prime Minister Marichman Singh was also attending the function. Then, one morning, a message arrived to Ganeshman-jī's home that Prime Minister Marichman Singh wanted to meet. The next day, the PM himself came to Ganeshman-jī's residence and said, "We have to make an appointment with the King." Ganeshman-jī agreed, and a meeting was set.



Ganeshman Singh arriving at Narayanhiti Palace
to meet King Birendra Bir Bikram Shah.

During the meeting, the King addressed Ganeshman-ji as his grandfather's friend and paid him due respect. Although pleasantries were exchanged, the King did not utter a single word about the memorandum submitted by the Nepali Congress. Therefore, Ganeshman-ji himself spoke up, "Your Majesty, the situation in the country is very critical. If there is no timely improvement from His Majesty, we will be forced to launch a People's Movement in the near future. It is not our interest to carry out a mass movement, rather it is our obligation. It has been proven that in the absence of democracy, nationalism and sovereignty cannot be safeguarded. Therefore, democracy is needed to save our nation. As the forthcoming movement will take a large shape, it is not possible to say whom it will sweep away. Therefore, it is wise to stop the planned movement from occurring by making the necessary reforms. If Your Majesty announces the end of Panchayat system and restore multi-party democracy, everything will be resolved. His Majesty needs to understand this in time. I came to this meeting because I wanted to express the sensitivity of the situation to Your Majesty." King Birendra listened to everything with great patience and finally said, "Okay, Ganeshman-ji. I will definitely give you my thoughts on this matter." However, news from the King never came. Ganeshman-ji also did not want to waste precious time playing the waiting game, so he started focusing on launching the People's Movement.

Ganeshman-ji was feeling enthusiastic because of the successful factors in his favour. The format that he had drafted for preparation of the People's Movement had gone well. He first got his own party on board and chose a leader for the movement. Then he gained the trust and support of the communist parties. After that he notified the King so that he may yet do the right thing. He then garnered the backing of almost all of the influential parties in neighboring India. Lastly, he also gained the

reassurance of the democratic and socialist countries of the world. Not only that, he was receiving well-wishes from human rights organizations around the world, as well as positive press from international media outlets. Now, who could shake such an iron personality? In fact, Ganeshman-ji's state was like that of Arjun in the story of Mahabharat, when he readied for battle by collecting mighty-weapons from every power centre (Shiva, Bishnu, Krishna, Durga). In the same way, the world community was patting Ganeshman-ji on the back. Therefore, Ganeshman-ji's confidence was bolstered and nothing could stand in his way anymore.

7) AWAKEN AND MOBILIZE THE PEOPLE FOR THE MOVEMENT.

After all the preparations were over, Ganeshman-ji started focusing on the people. For this, he started a psychological campaign to drive away fear from the minds of the people. At the beginning of his political career, Ganeshman-ji had undergone a character-building meditation to get rid of any fear from his heart. He used to go to the cemetery-pyres in the dead of night and practice meditating there to hours, saying that if he was to be an anti-Rana revolutionary, he needed to remove the emotion of fear from his heart. It would not be practical to tell the people to do the same, so Ganeshman-ji started giving them courage by speaking up against the King. He began to say fearlessly, "This monarchy has proven to be very expensive for Nepalis. The country can no longer support it. When we served in the Cabinet in 1959 and 1960, the present King's father and grandfather would request two-hundred thousand rupees, which we would deny! Now the King is said to be one of the richest men in the world today. How is this possible? The people are getting poorer and the King is getting richer!" Hearing him speak, the populace would bite their tongues and say, "This Ganeshman-ji! He surely is fearless. He can speak things like this in public

without any fear in his heart!" A few days later, a program was held in Kathmandu on the occasion of Nehru's centenary, and in that program, Ganeshman-ji again taunted the King in harsher words than before. "There are so many problems in the country, but His Majesty doesn't care. When the Prime Minister of India Rajiv Gandhi wanted to meet with His Majesty to find a solution to the Nepal-India problem, he was informed that His Majesty was out on a hunt! In the same way that King Nero was playing his flute as Rome burned around him, our Majesty the King also sits hunting atop the Nagarjuna Forest watching our country burn! Now we have decided to launch a decisive People's Movement to end this Panchayat system and restore our democracy! This is a common movement for all common people. Everyone should help out as much as they can. If you cannot help, at least do not go against it. Until now, His Majesty has taken advantage of the divisions that lay between us, between Congress and Communists, and encouraged us to fight each other. Now that situation is no longer. All the political forces are united and aware. You can all be reassured. The People's Movement is sure to succeed. Today, there is an unprecedented wave of change and democracy around the world. The walls of dictatorship are crumbling everywhere."

This bold and poignant statement made by the Ironman provided the Nepali people with great hope, inspiration, courage, and strength to stand up against the monarchy and its power. The muted voice of the common Nepali people was given a loudspeaker through Ganeshman-ji's speech, which led to people suddenly agitating and demonstrating in favor of the People's Movement.

While the roar of the Ironman filled the Nepali people with courage, it also frightened the King and his cronies. As a result, King Birendra immediately ordered his government to arrest Ganeshman-ji. News of Ganeshman-ji's arrest spread like

wildfire across the country. Thousands of pro-democracy activists from across the country descended on Kathmandu and surrounded the Nepal Police Club where Ganeshman-ji was kept. As he was being arrested, Ganeshman-ji told reporters, “The Government has arrested me for fear I may bring agitation. But what the government does not understand is that this movement is not only Ganeshman Singh’s. Whether I remain or not, the Nepali people will not stop this movement. It is foolish of the government to think that arresting me will pacify the Nepali people. This movement is neither mine nor the Nepali Congress, it is the movement of Nepali people for their human rights and freedoms. I had already warned those who would make ashes of our country that this would happen. If this nation does not exist, none of us will exist. My only concern is to save the nation. Medicine is always bitter, it is the patient’s choice to ingest the medicine. The duty of the doctor is to advise the patient to take the medicine, so I have advised them that there can be no nation without democracy. I remain steadfast by my statement.”

Schools, colleges, and campuses across the country were closed in protest of Ganeshman-ji's arrest. All markets were closed in protest. Traffic was similarly closed. To escape this escalating situation, the King’s government decided to release Ganeshman-ji immediately after registering a case against him. The Kathmandu District Court took his statement, in which Ganeshman-ji said, “The sovereignty and independence of the country cannot be protected by words, only by deeds. We are not against the constitutional monarchy, but we are against the dictatorial system. If someone thinks that this is an accusation against an organization or an individual, then it is a misinterpretation by their own guilty soul. You need to understand the intention and meaning behind my words.”

The Kathmandu District Court ordered his release immediately on the date after taking his statement.

The King's audacity in arresting Ganeshman-ji meant that Ganeshman-ji was making the right ripples. Otherwise, why would the King make such a decision? If the pressure of the People's Movement had not fallen on the King, perhaps the King would not have cared for Ganeshman-ji. Contemplating this, Ganeshman-ji said in a program, on the Day of Reconciliation, in January of 1990:

"We are proceeding with our People's Movement because our hand has been forced. Our movement will not stop until a multi-party democratic system is established. Today, our country has become fodder. I am convinced that a small spark will ignite and engulf this entire country into the movement."

In order to rouse the grassroots-level people, Ganeshman-ji himself, being the focal point and symbol of Nepal's political aspirations, had to visit the entire country. However, such a large-scale visit was not possible due to the King's watchful eye and his own poor health. How could he communicate directly with the people when he couldn't give speeches across the country?

He came up with a solution. By the month of December, 1990, he had sent signed handwritten letters to millions of Nepalis, addressed to their names personally. The irony of it was that all these letters were being delivered by the King's own governmental postal service. Who says that God doesn't have a sense of humour?

The strength of Ganeshman-ji's personal letter to the masses was as follows:

Dear [Name of Citizen],

Jai Nepal!

It has been 29 long years since the Panchayat system was imposed, forcibly ending the democratic achievements of the 1951 revolution which took countless lives and sacrifices. During this period, the Nepali people have been deprived of their natural right to speak, write, rally, organize, and have not been given any legitimate way to resist. They have not been allowed to stand up against exploitation, injustice, corruption, inflation, smuggling, and the like.

In my meeting with His Majesty, I had said that the first step towards national consensus should be the formation of a national government and the announcement of parliamentary elections for a multi-party democracy. I am of the view that the country belongs to all, and that if all are given the right to participate in elections on the basis of their chosen organization's manifesto, all the problems will be solved by the people themselves. I had put forward to His Majesty whatever is in the best interest for the welfare of the country and the people. It is plain for everyone to see here what the result of that dialogue was.

The crisis caused by the stalemate in Nepal-India relations, the unprecedented cost of living, and the neglect of all political parties and the people is not something that can be forgotten or ignored. In such a situation, we Nepalis have no choice but to join the People's Movement. Our movement has now become a matter of life and death.

This movement belongs to the Nepali people. This is not a movement for power by a political party. The goal of the movement is clear – a national government and a multi-party system of governance! Therefore, this movement needs the sympathy, support, and participation of every Nepali citizen.

I do not think that anyone can oppose this movement except for regressive forces which have vested interests. Furthermore, do not forget that if this movement for the establishment of democracy is not successful, then Nepal and Nepali people will slowly cease to exist.

Today, an unprecedented wave of change for democracy is sweeping the world, and the walls of dictatorship are crumbling. The triumph of democracy is spreading everywhere. Our enthusiasm for the democratic movement has been seen all over the country, and it is not hidden from anyone. Such a favorable climate of national and international support for a movement has never been seen before. Even in such an opportune situation, if we remain inactive or apathetic, we will not only darken the present but also the future of the generations to come. Therefore, I am confident that you will prove your participation in the People's Movement to the extent that you can, according to your own position, capacity, and standing. The opportunity to fulfill such an important national obligation comes rarely in one's life. Right now, that moment has come in our lives.

My desire to express my views directly to you and understand your opinions remains unfulfilled due to the antagonistic situation in the country and my poor health condition, therefore I have tried to contact you through this letter. The nation has high expectations from you. I hope and trust that you will not dally in fulfilling this sacred duty.

Yours,

Ganeshman Singh

Chaksibari, Kathmandu.

This historic letter from a statesman to his countrymen is said to be among the best in the world. There is no sign of a falsehood in it. There is no personal interest at all. There is no prejudice against anyone in it. It accurately analyzes the situation of the country. It teaches the nation to follow in the footsteps of a changed world. In it, the King is reminded once again to listen to the people while there is yet time. The people have also been implored to act so that their future generations may not have to suffer the result of their inaction. It further states that this movement is not a grab for power by any particular party, and that people from all walks of life have been given the facility to engage in the great sacrifice for democracy according to their own position, suitability and capacity. Ganeshman-ji also strongly urges those who choose to abstain from participating to not oppose it. Where can we find such a world class leader today?

This letter from Ganeshman-ji brought a positive stir all across the country. In fact, the letter fostered a national vibe in terms of democracy and civil rights. Those who felt helpless or apathetic until yesterday started saying, “Ganeshman-ji is right. We must do something to fulfill our responsibility towards our nation.”

With such a positive sign present, the Nepali Congress decided to announce an official decision in January, stating, “The National Conference of the Nepali Congress will be organized in Kathmandu on 18, 19, and 20 January 1990 to discuss and decide on when and how to start the upcoming People's Movement.” This statement did not go unheeded by His Majesty's Government, and they too started lobbying. The government unexpectedly released twelve communist political leaders and activists, including Mohan Chandra Adhikari. Releasing the extremist communists and imprisoning those congress followers who were demonstrating peacefully was a crime by the

government in itself. It was clear for everyone to see that the government had flawed intentions. The communist leader Mohan Chandra Adhikari, said in a magazine interview, “What this nation needs first and foremost is sovereignty. First, we must strengthen our nationalism and only then can we talk about democracy. The Prime Minister has asked everyone to help protect nationalism.”

After hearing this, Ganeshman-ji decided that he should co-opt Mohan Chandra Adhikari and thwart this strategy of the government to label the upcoming movement as an anti national act. Therefore, he organized a luncheon in honor of Mohan Chandra Adhikari, who was shocked to see the respect shown to him by someone of Ganeshman-ji’s stature. After that, he did not dare to go against the People’s Movement. With this, Ganeshman-ji broke the weapon that Prime Minister Marichman Singh had aimed at the movement.

Concluding that the King should now not be given any more time to conspire, Ganeshman-ji used his contacts to further engage his foreign friends. The ruling party in India and all the national parties circulated statements in support of the Nepali Congress. This raised the spirits of Ganeshman-ji and the entire Nepali Congress. He then invited prominent leaders like the Chief Ministers of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh to attend the Nepali Congress’ National Conference in Kathmandu. Another staunch supporter was Jyoti Basu of West Bengal.

Furthermore, he took into confidence influential foreign leaders who had historically been close with BP Koirala and Ganeshman-ji, like Chandra Shekhar, Madhu Dandwate, George Fernandez, and Sharad Yadav.

NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF THE NEPALI CONGRESS

The National Conference of the Nepali Congress was held in the courtyard of Ganeshman-ji's private residence, and could be said to be of an international standard. The flag-raising, highly disciplined participants, which constituted of all the national parties of India, the United States, the United Kingdom, West Germany and even Israel, made it an unprecedented conference in the history of political parties in Nepal.

Historically, Nepal's have never been able to achieve success in any struggle without the goodwill of India. Therefore, Nepal's rulers have always had to ascertain how much backing a particular party has from India in order to assess their threat level. So, at first, King Birendra did not heed the roar of Ganeshman-ji, thinking it to be the shrieks of a lion whose fangs had been blunted with old age. He thought there was no power of action behind Ganeshman-ji's words. Taking advantage of this underestimation, Ganeshman-ji had already made internal preparations within the country and garnered international support. The King remained unaware of the scale of his plan and thought that even if a hundred-and-fifty Congress members attended the conference, they could be controlled with batons under the name of maintaining peace and security. Then, on that fine afternoon, it was reported to the King that all the representatives of the ruling parties of India and the leaders of all the national parties, led by Janata Dal president and senior leader Chandra Shekhar, had come to attend the conference of the Nepali Congress. Upon hearing the news, the King and his government were taken aback. Immediately, the King's government sent a small group of its cronies to the Everest Hotel where the guests from India were staying to agitate them. After the senior Indian leader Chandra Shekhar made mincemeat of these sycophants, the delegation slunk back to their homes.

The short-sighted Indian and Nepali politicians, who have never understood the depths of the relationship between our two countries, have always had a love-hate relationship with each other. When their self-interests align, then they love each other, otherwise they hate each other. However, matured and cultured statesmen who understood each other's contribution and importance were always respectful and supportive of each other. Even Nepali leaders familiar with the history of India-Nepal relations were well aware that if they could not get the support of India, then the situation may have become similar to the prior kings of Indian states before the independence, Kashmir, Sikkim, and Bhutan. Unbalancing these relations could put the harmony between both nations into jeopardy.

The King's government was in a state of disarray since the arrival of Indian politicians and was further surprised and terrified to see the attendance of United States, Britain, Germany, France, and Israel at the conference. They were in disbelief at the active presence of global news organizations and their positive reporting of the events.

Even around the world, the presence of major nations expressing their solidarity for the manifesto and struggle of a rebellion party is a rare event. Such a gathering would be understandable if a country had politically collapsed, been economically ruined, undergone a genocide event, torn by war, been a victim of terrorism or attempting to rebuild after the war. But no such situation had occurred in Nepal. Furthermore, the major world powers attending the conference of a banned political party is significant. The solidarity they showed towards the organization and resolution of the Nepali Congress is something that has never happened in history and most likely will never happen in the future as well.

In addition to the matter of international relations, the fact that Nepali Congress and the fractured communists presented a

united front despite all of the government's trickery and divisive games was another shocking example. After all, it was almost impossible for the Nepali communists to unite and engage in any common struggle because their stances were always in opposition. However, at the conference, Leftist leader Manmohan Adhikari and chairperson Sahana Pradhan announced that they would also be participating in the People's Movement led by the Nepali Congress.

Another thing that Ganeshman-ji wanted to test were the members of his own party. Many of them had supported the movement half-heartedly though they gave verbal assurances. General Secretary Girija Prasad Koirala himself had made statements to the press against his own party, saying, "The Satyagraha proceeded only due to Ganeshman-ji's stubbornness. Now that it is underway, I expect it will last a few days at most!" He was unhappy with Ganeshman-ji's plan because he had bought into the lie and assurance from the King that the Panchayat system was undergoing an improvement. But this time, seeing the enthusiasm of the Nepali Congress members and the positive global coverage, Koirala seemed to be excited. In his brief speech, he spoke against the King and the Panchayat. Party chairman Krishna Prasad Bhattarai also made a speech. He was a personality who always delivered on his words. His only reservation was about how to finance such a large movement, but he was reassured that Ganeshman-ji had taken care of that too. So, he delivered a fiery speech with unwavering determination, with not even a shadow of doubt. For the event, thousands of Nepali Congress members descended on Kathmandu for the People's Movement, without care or fear of the government's detention, arrest, or torture. Huge crowds of people sat on the road from Thamel Chowk in the north to Chhetrapati Chowk in the south to listen to their beloved leaders giving their speeches. Seeing this unbridled enthusiasm of these

spectators, India's Janata Dal leader Chandra Shekhar literally said in his speech, "Seeing all the enthusiastic youths here, I am convinced that Nepal does not need the support of any friendly country, not even India, to achieve democracy. Carry onward with your faith and determination, we will always support you as a colleague, as a soldier of democracy, and as a neighbor for whatever help you need." He continued, "I congratulate these young people, and I congratulate their mothers who have lit the torches of hope while suffering through a miserable life. That sorrow will disappear, the pain will fade. The democratic future looks bright, and Nepal will once again be an example to the world. This is my wish."

After the conclusion of the three-day national conference, Ganeshman-ji was very happy. However, he did not allow happiness to blind him. He was very careful to not hurry, because he was a skilled warrior who was cautious about all possibilities. When training security personnel, it is taught that they should leave no stone unturned. Ganeshman-ji was waiting for the last and final chapter, which was the decision of the people. Prior to the Mahabharat war, Arjun must have been similarly pleased when he was assured of Lord Krishna's help in the upcoming war. However, Ganeshman-ji knew that a general or a supreme commander should remain patient and not celebrate victory prematurely.

Ganeshman-ji had written in his autobiography, recalling the time he passed his Higher Secondary Education and placing in First Division, that he had such self-esteem and happiness that his feet didn't touch the ground. The success he achieved that day was millions of times greater than that adolescent success, but he remained silent. He had become a matured and responsible leader, as well as a world-class sophisticated personality. Although he did not express his happiness, those who knew him well would say, "We have never seen Ganeshman-

ji as happy as he was after the conclusion of that National Conference.” Analyzing all this, it would not be an exaggeration to say that the success of that National Conference constituted perhaps three-fourths of the victory of the People’s Movement 1990.

The Government Response

The National Conference of the Nepali Congress didn’t just encourage the anti-Panchayat forces, but also scared the socks off the King himself and his government. Therefore, on the evening of the first day of the conference, an emergency meeting of Panchayat dignitaries was held. These also included Prime Minister Marichman Singh and Chairman of the Panchayat Policy and Inquiry Committee Navaraj Subedi. The Panchayat meeting decided on the following strategies:

- 1) Protesting at the Everest hotel where Indian leader Chandra Shekhar was staying, and handing him a memorandum.
- 2) Condemning the Nepali Congress party by all Panchayat units across the country, for the heinous political crime of inviting foreign citizens to influence the politics of Nepal.
- 3) The Prime Minister and the chairperson of the inquiry committee would make public statements against the Nepali Congress and deal with them.
- 4) To form nationwide ‘resistance committees’ against the so-called People’s Movement.
- 5) To organize a huge Pancha Rally in Kathmandu in the month of January.

Ganeshman-ji had been preparing for the People’s Movement 1990 for the last one year. He had sounded the first

trumpet of his plan as a warning during his meeting with King Birendra. After that, he prepared his own party's members. Then he prepared the leftists to join and support the initiative. Then he called on the political forces of India to support him. Finally, he cultivated the local and foreign media. He made the world community his own. One wonders how much difficulty he must have endured to put it all together. He did not do these things in secret. He was like an open book. It was no secret that the world was drawn to his movement on the occasion of the Diamond Jubilee of the Indian Congress in Bombay, where the King and the people were both made aware. Nor was the understanding with Nepal's leftists a secret. Even though all this had transpired in the open, the government was asleep with false confidence. When one person or one party was making such a political journey, the government was sleeping soundly like a cannabis user! It was only after the Nepali Congress party formally challenged the King in the presence of thousands of activists, in the presence of the world community, and in the special presence of India, that the government was shaken into making its tearful decisions.

The first of those decisions was to hand over a memorandum of protest to senior Indian leader, Chandra Shekhar. The Panchayat government had lost sleep after the emotional speech made by Chandra Shekhar at the inauguration. Therefore, under the very high-level decisions of the government, the District Panchayat chairpersons of Kathmandu, Lalitpur, and Bhaktapur took a joint procession of around 30 to 40 people to the Everest Sheraton Hotel where Chandra Shekhar was staying, to hand him a letter of protest. They had even planned to use disrespectful language in their protest to him. But when Chandra Shekhar reminded them in an authoritative way of their own inferior standing, their mouths ran dry. The letter of protest stated:

“We had thought you to be a responsible leader of India and a friend of the Nepali people. But the activities you have carried out in our country over the last two days are indicative of your insensitivity towards Nepali sentiments. Therefore, your pretentious hatred towards Nepali nationality and self-esteem becomes clear. Your actions have confirmed your dangerous determination to insult the Nepali national institution and your desire to nakedly interfere in the internal affairs of the Nepali people. You have tried to incite violence in our country. Instead of being able to go to the people, you have tried to advocate for the voices of some who show courage only for your flattery. You have declared yourself a judge to decide what is right and what is wrong for Nepal. We used to believe that the days of the British oppressors were over, but under the guise of empty pomp, you have displayed your desire to oppress other nations and to suppress their sovereignty. You need to return back to your country and contemplate on your duplicitious intentions with regards to all aspects of your life.”

After this, with government funding, many panchayats, gatherings, assemblies and public meetings began to be sponsored all over the country. Following Marichman and Navaraj in these assemblies and rallies, the Panchayat followers began to insult those who wanted democracy. It had become commonplace to accuse democratic leaders of being foreigner's puppet, wolves in sheep skin, backdoor politicians, and foreign brokers. Headlines such as 'Condemned for provoking the people', 'Unbridled talk against Nepalis is an abominable act', 'Unrestrained efforts against national unity are unforgivable', 'Condemned for attempts to enflame Nepali self-esteem' started filling the pages of government newspapers. A campaign was launched to present the impending People's Movement as a heinous evil attempt to cause foreign interference in the internal affairs of the country, to spread chaos in the name of politics, and

to inflame and dethrone the monarchy. Naturally, the Panchayat Policy and Inquiry Committee played the biggest role behind all of this. Due to this activism, committees that railed against the People's Movement were formed unannounced from the central level to the district level in order to spy and prepare records on followers and their actions, to use state authorities and facilities to stop them, and to prevent all movement-supporting activities by all means.

In insulting the Nepali Congress, the Panchayat followers used terms to describe Ganeshman-ji and others as leaders who were basically rejected by the people, people who were involved in backdoor-politics, and criminals who acted unconstitutionally. Such phrasing was often heard in speeches given by them.

In the Pancha Rally, Prime Minister Marichman Singh Shrestha said, "It is ridiculous to talk about bringing democracy to the country through foreign intervention and influence. It is an irresponsible and treacherous practice. This rally has made it clear that we Nepalis will always reject any weak-minded people who try to become leaders through foreign sources or influence. These foreigners are making statements without knowing the entirety of Nepal and listening to only a few self-centered people. They are making deranged statements about our country pretending not to see or understand the democracy that Nepalis are already practicing and enjoying. Nepalis should build their own destiny, not be influenced by abroad and not make decisions based on foreign interference!"

Speaking as the chief guest at the Fourth Municipal Council of the Kathmandu Municipal Panchayat in March, Prime Minister Marichman Singh said, "The foundations of a democratic Panchayat system are very strong. It is well known that it has faced political challenges, hurricanes, and obstacles from time to time. The language and behavior by those who have

not interacted with the people in thirty years, who have been conspiring in backrooms and calling that governance, is in no position to influence anyone. They are those whose politics started from an anti-national sentiment, whose politics are run by foreigners, and they act here at the behest of foreigners. Those who do politics in the country through external influences are automatically rejected by the political current of our nation. Nepalis are well aware of the tricks of those who try to come to power with empty slogans of democracy. Our nation's people are already aware, they will not be confused or tricked by lies and rumors. It is ironic that those who dream of change here are trying to imitate the change in Eastern Europe!"

The next day, the Panchayat Policy and Inquiry Committee Chairman, Navaraj Subedi gave an interview to Nepal Television. In the interview, he said that he, and others, should reiterate these points across the country in various meetings. Those points were:

(1) The Panchayat system is a democratic system. Its foundation is strong and sound. (2) It will deal with terrorists and destabilizing factors as per the wishes and suggestions of the people and show them an iron fist. (3) India is interfering in Nepal under its policy of expansionism. (4) A handful of Nepali Congress leaders are causing this ruckus in the name of Peoples' movement at the behest of foreigners. (5) The government has not arrested and tortured anyone except the terrorists. (6) The people have made their voice known through the large gatherings of Pancha Rallies throughout the country and actions have been taken against the few who are unconstitutional actors. (7) This is an Indian ploy to disturb the political stability and the peace and security of Nepal. (8) Our nation has already rejected the foreign interference in 1961, be it in ideological forms or the governance. Today, we see the whole of Eastern Europe following in our footsteps. (9) India was unsuccessful in its economic

blockade against us. They thought we would bow down but we proved them wrong. Hence, they are now playing a proxy-war through this so-called People's Movement. (10) When this attempt fails, these bad actors will now try to spread terror here. We will never allow that to happen. (11) The Nepali Congress is taking this stand with the help of the communists. Just wait and watch, the communists will one day turn against them and displace them, and only then will they and the western world finally open their eyes.

Since the world's public opinion was in favor of the Nepali Congress, the Panchayat decided that the unity among the participants of the movement must be broken. To that end, they decided to undertake following strategies:

- 1) The western nations should be advised not to support this movement as it puts communists at the center. This action will contribute towards breaking the bond between India and the western countries regarding this movement.
- 2) India is imposing its expansionism by using this opportunity to support the so-called democrats of Nepal.
- 3) The only real beneficiaries of this movement are going to be the left-leaning terrorists.
- 4) The government should propagate the statement that the Panchayat system has not infringed on human rights in violation of international norms.
- 5) The government will make every effort to show that it stands firm and undaunted by the actions of the Nepali Congress.

Amidst these ongoing debates from both sides, the Nepali Congress President, Krishna Prasad Bhattarai, and the Leader of the United Left Front, Mrs. Sahana Pradhan, formally signed a

joint statement just before the celebration of the national democracy day in March. Such an appeal was published for the first time ever, after the completion of basic understandings and agreements regarding the tenuous working-unity of the Nepali Congress and the communist parties. The appeal mainly explained the need of the peoples' movement, its objectives, and the common programs during the preliminary phase. The full text of the appeal is as follows:

"It has been 29 years since the autocratic Panchayat system was imposed on the Nepali people. All the rights of the Nepali people have been seized. Their voices have been silenced. All rights and freedoms, including political rights, have been restricted. They are not allowed to gather unarmed, arrange political meetings and rallies, or demonstrate peacefully. They have even been deprived of the universal human rights prescribed by the United Nations.

Their economic life is even more dire. Inflation has skyrocketed. Life is chaotic due to unemployment. Smuggling and corruption has become the economic backbone of this system. The economic gap between a handful of rich people and the general public is widening day by day. Ordinary people's lives have become financially dilapidated and they are having difficulties in making ends meet.

The Nepali people are in a constant struggle against the injustice, oppression, and exploitation being perpetrated by this anti-people Panchayat system. Today, the Nepali people have become aware and conscious. A Nepali has no choice but to take to the streets to fight for their basic rights and to live with dignity. Today the whole country is agitating. This situation is encouraging. The Nepali people are demanding change with one voice. On the whole, the People's Movement is favorable from every point of view. Although the Nepali Congress and the Communists have their own different ideals and philosophies,

today we have reached a consensus on these issues. This unity among various communist groups into a single purpose will definitely give great impetus to the People's Movement. On the other hand, the situation of political consensus that has emerged today is new and historic in itself. We are at the most favorable position for our movement. The politics of division run by this cruel system is no longer going to work. There was no consensus among our parties yesterday, but today we all have the same immediate political goal, the same slogan: 'End the autocratic Panchayat System and establish a Multi-Party Democratic System.' We call upon all peace, progress, and democracy-loving democrats, leftists, labours, students, youth, farmers, employees, teachers, lawyers, journalists, and business-owners to join this movement. No force can stop us if we are united. The People's Movement is truly a movement by the people. Let us, without any hesitation or doubt in our minds, fearlessly break the trappings of this autocratic regime. Victory belongs to the truth. Truth is the power of the people. The days of the autocratic Panchayat system are coming to an end. It is stumbling, it is on its last legs. Tomorrow belongs to us. The politics of tomorrow is ours. Therefore, let us all join hands in this movement to establish a multi-party democratic system in the country. Change is inevitable.

Our next public programs will now be as follows:

- 1) February 18, 1990 (the national democracy day): All parties will demonstrate nationwide, breaking the ban imposed on parties for the last 29 years. We will hoist up the flags and banners of our respective parties and hold processions and public gatherings.

- 2) February 19, 1990: We will impose a nation-wide strike (Nepal Bandh) by closing all transport, academia, business, factories, industries, and shops.
- 3) February 25, 1990: We will fly black flags, wear black bandanas, hold public protests, and arrange public meetings nationwide to observe a Black Day against the current Panchayat system.
- 4) March 2, 1990: Again, we will impose a nation-wide strike (Nepal Bandh) on this day.

Other programs will be published later. However, at the local level, we ask you to continue to utilize the time in between these events according to the situation.”

The People’s Movement was engaged in final preparations, while realizing the rising democratic sentiments among the people and keeping a watchful eye on the heinous and ridiculous manipulations of the government. There was less than a month left for the People’s Movement to start. Therefore, the Nepali Congress and the United Left Front were engrossed in strategic preparations day and night. As the Nepali Congress had already taken a unanimous decision a few months ago to launch the movement, Ganeshman-ji’s preparations were going on smoothly and continuously. However, the United Left Front (Communists) was not as ready because it had just been formed. The hasty formation of the United Left Front did not allow for much time to create an atmosphere of full trust, consensus, and understanding between the communist groups which had butted heads and mistrusted each other until then. On top of that, there was a very short period of time for coordination at different levels of their parties, sister-organizations, and other components. Nevertheless, by maintaining consensus and understanding on the basics, the leftists worked hard to prepare their side. However, if the United Left Front had been formed a

few months prior, they would have had the opportunity to prepare better and push more effectively. Therefore, given the constraints of time, the United Left Front also accepted Ganeshman-ji as the supreme commander of the People's Movement and decided to carry out any important and national programs only with his final approval. In fact, that moment established Ganeshman-ji as a Supreme Leader of not just Nepali Congress, but of all parties and the nation.

During this period, the foundations of unity for working together were laid according to the vision of the Nepali Congress. All parties would prepare their own programs, fix each other's programs when necessary, and carry out the activities smoothly. The Nepali Congress formed action committees at various levels. The Central Action Committee at the highest level was formed under Jagannath Acharya, and it included Marshal Julum Shakya, Shailaja Acharya, PL Singh, Omkar Shrestha and Bal Bahadur KC. At the Action Committee level, there were Haribol Bhattarai, Tirtharam Dangol, Shri Ram Shrestha, Gyanendra Karki, Prakash Man Singh, Bal Krishna Khand, and Navindra Raj Joshi. The United Left Front also set up a secretariat consisting of Mrs. Sahana Pradhan, Radhakrishna Mainali, Nilambar Acharya, Krishna Raj Burma, Lilamani Pokhrel, Shyam Krishna Koju, and Siddhilal Singh to prepare programs and make other arrangements. It was agreed that the joint task-force of the Action Committee and the Left Front Representatives would finalize the programs prepared by the joint-decisions of the Central Action Committee of the Nepali Congress and the Secretariat of the United Left Front. Meanwhile, the most powerful communist party among the United Left Front, the Communist Party of Nepal (Marxist-Leninist) Party, had also formed their own committee to liaise directly with Bal Bahadur KC of the Nepali Congress.

The Nepali Congress had issued a statement on February 1, 1990, establishing the program for the first two days of the movement. The statement read, “Starting on February 18, our huge procession and meeting in Tudikhel will break the 29-year-old ban by carrying forth our four-colored flag of the Nepali Congress. In that historical mass meeting, the leaders of the Nepali Congress will declare that ‘all the parties in the country are now open and independent from today itself’. Leftists will also attend the meeting. All educational institutions and transport will be shut down on February 19, and the movement will continue until a multi-party system is established formally. Until the Supreme Leader or the Trioka announces its completion, the movement will not stop.”

Meanwhile, the Panchayat government started cracking down on newspapers and magazines who wrote in favour of the People’s Movement. The seizure of newspapers, the closing of presses, and the looting of newspapers by congregations continued unabated. Editors, publishers, and press owners were arrested, beaten, and tortured. Nepalis working for foreign media were threatened for reporting news related to the movement. But no matter how much the government panicked, the newspapers did not stop their written support of the movement (except for the small Panchayat-supporting newspapers whose circulation was not more than 200 copies a day). Instead, they protested against government intimidation by leaving an empty space where the editorial column would usually be. The government issued a statement on February 15 urging all newspapers to fulfill their obligations by publishing with restraint, balance, and dignity.

In early February, the government arrested Sahana Pradhan, Leader of the United Left Front. Nepali Congress central leader Mahendra Narayan Nidhi was also arrested in Janakpur. The Supreme Commander of the People’s Movement Ganeshman-ji,

the Acting President of the Nepali Congress Krishna Prasad Bhattarai, and the General Secretary of the Nepali Congress Girija Prasad Koirala were also detained at their respective residences on February 17.

The government thought that even though this movement was called the People's Movement, it was a movement carried out by the same activists of Satyagraha 1986. Therefore, after harassing, intimidating, and arresting tens of thousands of members, they believed that it would fade away and eventually fail. The King's government did not believe that the people would show up to support the movement. Therefore, the government expended its energy in arresting the members of the Nepali Congress and the Communists. Similarly, the government's analysis was that the detention of the leaders would automatically destroy the morale of the activists, and thus, the movement could be defeated. However, the government miscalculated. The success of the National Conference had lifted the morale of the activists of all the political parties and any semblance of fear had left the minds of the people. The atmosphere for the movement had become remarkably positive. The working-unity of the Nepali Congress and the United Left Front had inadvertently had a psychological effect on the Nepali people. As a result, a new kind of nationalistic sentiment had emerged among the people. Therefore, even the people previously sitting on the sidelines started saying that this time, surely, the country must be freed from the shackles of tyranny.

PEOPLE'S MOVEMENT 1990 BEGINS

In the same way that summiters who reach the final stage of climbing Sagarmatha (Mount Everest), after years of preparation, feel excited, enthused, and challenged, Ganeshman-ji was also in the same mood on February 18, 1990. In the same way that an avid student, who has prepared himself for the SLC examinations for ten years, eagerly awaits the day of examination with vigor, determination, and anxiety, so too Ganeshman-ji awaited February 18, 1990 (Falgun 7, 2046 BS).

Ganeshman-ji was not anxious because he had worked hard for this day. It was not himself that would be put to the test. He was not selfish in expecting a reward for his hard work, sacrifice, and penance. He was a doer, a man of action! He had the same mantra, the same purpose, and the same goal for decades, and that was to free all Nepalis from the shackles of tyranny and make them honorable citizens. For this reason, even at the advanced age of 75, he still had the passion, the vigor, and the sacrificial spirit of a 20-year-old.

One of the secrets hidden in Ganeshman-ji's great personality is something only a serious scholar who analyzes Ganeshman-ji's life story and knows his mind can discover. He never expressed this quality anywhere at all. That secret is this: Ganeshman-ji truly was a 'Bir' in the truest sense of the word. Both he and BP Koirala formed the Nepali Congress for the purpose of revolting in 1951. He prepared both himself and his fellow-members for the revolution. He arranged the means and the resources for the revolution. He prepared the people. He received the blessings of Mahatma Gandhi and led by example, jumping headfirst into the fires of the battlefield. Even before the revolution itself started, Ganeshman-ji had himself taken the responsibility of whisking King Tribhuvan away to Palpa and instigating a revolt within the Nepal Army. In the week he spent

travelling to Kathmandu for this plan, he devised an even riskier plan to assassinate all the Ranas in one fell swoop by blowing up their general assembly (Gaddi Baithak Palace) where they assemble to observe the *Indrajatra*. He had also shared this plan with his small group of 8-10 people who were accompanying him in the mission. What boldness and the audacity, for a single person to attempt to defeat the all-powerful tyrants of the country who had reigned for over a hundred years!

What seems like foolish prejudice to the common man does not apply to a Bir. It is simply how a Bir thinks. They dare to do things that seem impossible to others with full sincerity. Ganeshman-ji had spent his childhood years playing games in the same neighborhood, a few hundred yards away from the assembly hall. It wasn't just local games like Dandibio, Ghwai, Telkasa, Lukamari, and Guchcha that he entertained himself with around that area, but also hooliganism with his friends. Being from an aristocratic civil family who had served the Ranas for many years, he knew the weaknesses of the Ranas better than most. Therefore, he believed that his action would be successful. All the planning was going accordingly, people, weapons, bombs, and cartridges had been planted on the spot, but on the night before the assembly a member of his team betrayed him and leaked the plan. Were it not for that one defector, the Ranas could have possibly been dealt with much sooner. Regardless of the failed outcome, the history of Nepal will never forget his heroic deeds.

Indeed, that incomplete mission was something that plagued him for the rest of his life. Perhaps he was looking for a similar momentous step that could bring about such a sea-change once again. Just as Arjun, the archer and protagonist of the Mahabharat story, saw only the eye of the bird perched on the tree and not the whole bird, Ganeshman-ji also saw the end of autocracy by sharpening the People's Movement.

Barbarik, the disembodied warrior in the Mahabharat, was remorseful that he could not even be martyred in the Great War at *Kuruchhetra* and had to miss the battle because of Lord Krishna's trickery. Similarly, Ganeshman-ji also considered his efforts incomplete because he could not fulfill his resolve to change the era in 1951. Therefore, he was determined to not just achieve partial success but to win decisively. He was trying his best to make this opportunity 'once and for all'.

Similar to how it takes a hundred strokes of an axe to cut down a huge tree, Ganeshman-ji had kept weakening the Panchayat system with each of his blows. Now the last and final blow was the support and push of the people. Ganeshman-ji was confident about getting the full support of the people. And why wouldn't he be confident? After all, he was not in it for himself. He had no intention of becoming the Prime Minister or making any money. His goal was to empower Nepali citizens and make the dreams of the martyrs a reality.

Ganeshman-ji, being a matured leader, did not urge all the people to assemble all at once. He had arranged the program of the People's Movement in phases. In the first phase, he and his fellow leaders would lead their activists around the city's major centers and call upon the intellectual class. With this, the messaging would reach and inspire students, retailers, and businessmen in transport sector. In the second phase, he would urge teachers, professors, lawyers, doctors, paramedics, engineers, professional organizations, and farmers to participate in the movement. In the third phase, the entire general public would be amassed and march. But how could the common citizen participate? For this, Ganeshman-ji had instructed them, "This is a People's Movement. Therefore, every citizen can participate by disobeying the government however they can. However, we should never resort to violence." He added, "Our aim is to paralyze the government through our expression of

public dissatisfaction and non-cooperation, and to remind the King that the public opinion of the country and the whole world is against his system of governance, his actions, and his principles. Let him be warned, either listen to the voice of the people while there is still time, or be prepared to suffer the consequences! This is the message that our People's Movement will give to the king.” It was for this that Ganeshman-ji was expending all his energy.

Ganeshman-ji knew that the government would definitely arrest him and the other party leaders after the People's Movement started. Forseeing such a situation, he had made extensive preparations to prevent the movement from slowing down, by assigning backup plans for each leader. In this process, a series of action committees were formed. They discussed questions like: how to maintain dialogue between action committee and leadership? How to combine the required resources? What kind of programs can be effective? They had done their homework on such things.

Furthermore, in addition to the programs fixed by the Central Action Committees of the Nepali Congress and the United Left Front, the local committees were also given the freedom to implement practical programs in their own way. Ganeshman-ji had planned everything by the evening of 17 Feb 1990, when the government decided to put him under house-arrest, just a day before the movement was formally begun. News that the supreme commander of the People's Movement had been detained spread like wildfire across the country, as well as abroad, in an instant.

From his detention, Ganeshman-ji sent a poignant message to the people which doubled their enthusiasm. In the message, he said:

“My wish to take to the streets carrying our flag in the People’s Movement tomorrow, for the end of the autocratic Panchayat system and restoration of multi-party democracy, cannot be fulfilled due to my detention. Our arrests and the nationwide cycle of repression will not slow down or weaken the momentum of the People’s Movement. It would not be possible for me at the age of 75 to have such unprecedented vigor and enthusiasm if I did not believe that such repression and arrest would only add fuel to the fire of this movement, that the people would avenge their humiliation and fight for their natural rights.

This is not just a movement of the Congress and the Communists. It is a movement of all people from every walk of life and every category of society for our fundamental, civil, and political rights, therefore I have called it a movement of national liberation. It is unfathomable that anyone would waste such an opportunity to peacefully overthrow this autocratic dictatorship that has enslaved Nepalis for the last thirty years.

This movement will be decisive and historic. I am confident that, presented with such a golden opportunity, everyone will support the movement and realize the dream of a bright future.

The people have never lost. The final victory belongs to the people. The victory of the People’s Movement in Nepal is certain.”

The enthusiastic and inspired people were further incensed by the King's message on the occasion of Democracy Day. In the King's message, the Panchayat system was fully advocated in the name of national interest, values, and aspirations of the people. The full text of the message (excluding the address) was as follows:

“On the auspicious occasion of Tribhuvan Jayanti and our National Democracy Day, first of all, we pay our heartfelt homage to the late King Tribhuvan and all the Nepalis who have been martyred for democracy.

The transformation of 1951 was the beginning of the process in moving the country towards modernization, in line with timely democratic norms. In 1961, Nepal adopted a party-less democratic Panchayat system for the development of democratic ideals committed to the people's aspirations and national interest, values, and beliefs. Approved by the national referendum, this arrangement has certainly proved to be in line with the needs of the people. While the tradition of respecting the majority is a democratic culture, the decentralization embraced by this system is also an important basis for involving the people in the decision-making process of the country's development, as well as in strengthening the democratic culture. According to democratic norms, politicians should also develop the habit of exercising their rights and respecting the majority while acting responsibly.

Today, the Nepali people have become conscious and capable of maintaining the values and dignity of democracy through democratic practices that are taking place in their own villages. Nepal's development is based on the determination and commitment of Nepalis. Democracy thrives on the character of selfless spirit and dedication to the interests of Nepal and Nepalis. Any Nepali who approaches the people in their determination to do something for the nation need not isolate themselves from the warm atmosphere of national understanding and consensus.

Finally, in today's context, considering our geopolitical situation, let's be aware of our duty towards the nation and realize the essence of King Tribhuvan Festival Day and our National Democracy Day. This is our wish today."

THE HISTORIC PEOPLE'S MOVEMENT COMMENCES

February 18, 1990. This was a historic day! On 7 Falgun 2007 BS, on this very day, democracy had been established in Nepal for the first time. Today was the day when the decisive People's Movement, for the end of the autocratic Panchayat system and the restoration of multi-party democracy, will begin again under the leadership of the Nepali Congress. This day arrived with great curiosity, courage, and determination. The freedom-loving Nepali people, who were determined to 'do or die' for democracy, had been agitating since the morning even though the People's Movement was scheduled to start at noon. There was intense curiosity in the public about what would happen in the afternoon.

February 18, 1951, was the same day that the armed revolution led by the Nepali Congress established democracy for the first time in Nepal. A scant ten years after that, in 1961, the Panchayat system was imposed by killing democracy, but ironically the government used to celebrate Democracy Day on this day every year. Tribhuvan Jayanti (commemoration) also used to be observed the same day since the King had contributed towards the noble cause of bringing democracy to the country. His Majesty the King would deliver a message to the nation in the morning followed by a procession of Panchayat followers, government-staff, soldiers, police, etc, would go around the city and gather at the Tudikhel grounds for main functions towards the afternoon. The government officials would give a speech, and this entire event was called a Public General Meeting.

The government, as usual, ordered all the Panchayat followers and all the staff to assemble at the Dasharath Stadium in Tripureshwor. Students and teachers from schools and campuses, as well as lower-level staff and workers working in the private sector and industry, had also gathered there. A large

contingent of judo-karate students trained by the National Sports Council had also been summoned for fear of encounters with the protesters. There were plenty of police and soldiers.

As the people were gathering at Dasharath Stadium (the national stadium named after the martyr Dasarath Chand), the King was inaugurating the new terminal building of Tribhuvan International Airport. The King and Queen had been brought in by helicopter from the city of Pokhara, 200 km away, for the inauguration of this new terminal building, which was actually only 4 km away from the Narayanhiti Royal Palace. The program was being held amidst heavy security to show that the People's Movement had not cowed the government. However, after the inauguration ceremony, the King had departed for Pokhara by helicopter as scheduled, and his ministers and cronies were to hurry back to Dasharatha Stadium to participate in the Democracy Day procession.

As the King was about to inaugurate the new terminal building, at around 12 o'clock noon, thousands of people were marching on the streets in the heart of the capital. Breaking the twenty-nine-year-old ban on demonstrations, the people waved flags of both the Nepali Congress and the communist parties. From Khichapokhari and Pyukha, the procession marched on the roads without a second's delay, chanting slogans calling for the end of Panchayat and for the establishment of multi-party democracy. The procession, which did not seem to be disturbed even by the bullets being fired at it, had already gathered about 10,000 people when it reached Juddhashamsher's statue. The huge crowd watching from both sides of the road greeted the procession with great cheer and applause and chants.

Seeing this unrepentant and unimaginable procession, the 'special security forces' that had been deployed to control them at New Road were left speechless. The police mutely stared at them and did not raise their weapons or make any attempt to

hold them back. Seeing this, the protesters became more enthusiastic and even the people watching from both sides of the roads started joining the procession in droves. From there, the procession turned towards Indrachowk, and houses on both sides showered them with flowers, red-abir-powder, and pamphlets.

In front of the Indrachowk Akash-Bhairav temple stood a large contingent of policemen wearing iron hats and safety jackets, wielding canes, shields, and bamboo sticks. When they saw the huge procession approaching, people shouting deafening slogans and waving party flags, they fired several rounds of tear gas and started charging the crowd with batons. A momentary struggle ensued between the police and protesters. The dispersed group was sheltered by houses and shops who locked the doors to keep out the police. I myself (the author) was locked in an electric shop with 63 people. About 500 people had taken shelter just beyond the procession trying to wash away the tear gas from their eyes. All in all, about 500 protestors were cordoned off and arrested by the police during this encounter in Indrachowk.

This was the first and main demonstration. Immediately after this, a huge procession started from Sundhara and another from Pako Pokhaldyang. Both of them clashed with the police in different places as they demonstrated around different parts of the city. During one of these clashes, senior leftist leader Manmohan Adhikari was arrested at Ratna Park.

Meanwhile, the government procession started from Dasharath Stadium with circling the statue of Tribhuvan situated nearby and proceeded towards the New Road area. The procession, led by the Prime Minister, Ministers and Panchayat followers, reached the Khichapokhari-Pyukha intersection, the site of the first demonstration of the People's Movement. The agitators started chanting slogans against the Panchayat from

both sides. After the police started using brute force against them, the general public was also getting injured and all of a sudden bricks and stones started raining on the government procession from both sides. The situation became uncontrollable. Even the four-wheeled horse-buggy with the picture of King Tribhuvan was proceeding very slowly, and the horses were rearing up their legs and refusing to go forward. The ministers and the Panchayat followers started fleeing in panic. The procession was disrupted. Most of the staff and professors had already fled back to Dasharath Stadium. In previous such festivals, the government was always very strict about attendance, and the Ministry of Home Affairs would take strict action against absenteeism; however, today, all the attending members scattered and most were nowhere to be seen, not even the judo-karate force.

After a while, when the police had dispersed the ‘protesters’ and cleared a route, the government procession resumed. The size of the procession had decreased substantially. Shortly afterwards, the procession met public opposition in front of the Juddha Shamsher statue in the New Road area again. The courage of the Panchayat followers failed them and they fled the scene. The remaining attendees decided to mend the pre-planned route and hurried to take a shortcut towards Indrachowk. Soon they met the very protestors who had just, a while ago, been subjected to tear gas and batons. Insults were hurled at the procession and people shouted slogans. Again, the police charged to protect the procession and struck a large number of people. With no intention of giving up, the small procession was ready to turn Indrachowk into a killing-field. Another route was cleared and the Panchayat procession rushed towards Asan. At this time, a few powerful ministers snuck back into the procession after having fled and making their way back to it through side-streets.

After the government procession reached Ratna Park from Asan and Bhotahiti (since the pre-planned route to Tudikhel through Kamalakshi-Jamal-Tindhara-Pakhshala had to be canceled), the mob again attacked the Panchayat followers without caring for the police. The procession was dispersed due to the stones being pelted by the people. The police also started throwing stones back at the people, and the ministers and Panchayat followers all started throwing rocks back at the people as well. However, in the face of the people's storm, they were unable to make much of an impact. There was a big and long struggle under the fly-over bridge near the Electricity Authority. Police used their tear-gas and batons and shields to finally usher the procession to enter Tudikhel, however it seemed that Tudikhel itself did not want to comply. The Panchayat followers were in no mood to hold any meeting there. Rather than sitting in the chairs set out for them, they stood around with their hats in their hand looking around nervously and frightened. At the same time, the people clashed with the police at the entrance of Bagbazar from Ratna Park, and the police again used tear gas. As a result, the Panchayat government rally ended immediately, and the followers all fled back home hurriedly with special security escorts.

After that, the enthusiasm and vigor of the people of Kathmandu did not stop, having 'defeated' the government's violent efforts to curtail it. Till late in the evening, small and big processions were still coming out from different parts of the capital with slogans like "Down with the Panchayat!" and "We will definitely bring about democracy!".

Other demonstrations in major cities and headquarters outside the capital were also successful. Narayangadh, Chitwan, saw tens of thousands of protestors come out to clash with police, and two were killed. The government called in the army to suppress the movement. In Biratnagar, at Devkota Chowk,

tear gas was deployed dozens of times and warning shots were fired above the protestors' heads dozens of times. Another large encounter and clash occurred with the police in Pokhara. In different parts of the Terai and the Hilly regions, a bunch of Panchayat processions were disrupted. A total of five people, including one in East Palpa, Rampur, were killed on the day, while one policeman was killed in a clash with protesters in Hetauda.

On the very first day of the People's Movement, the program met with significant success as well as spontaneous mass participation across the country. The enthusiasm and morale of the agitating leaders increased and their happiness was as high as Sagarmatha (Mount Everest). Although the government had disconnected all telephone lines from Ganeshman-ji's house during his detention, the supreme commander of the People's Movement had a secret telephone line which the government was not aware of. Using that telephone, Ganeshman-ji was made aware of the ongoings and the successes of the movement on that day.

The unfolding of that day's events gained prominence in the prestigious international media channels. Powerful media outlets, such as the BBC and Voice of America, put Nepal's events at the forefront of their international news and described them in detail. World opinion began to turn in favor of the agitators. There was no reputable international media outlet that did not cover the incident. Meanwhile, the Panchayat government, in an attempt to cover the sun with their hands, started publishing news in their own government newspapers under the headline 'Extremists pelted the government procession with stones'. They attempted to gain sympathy from anti-communist nations by presenting the events as the actions of extremist communist terrorists in Nepal. They further stated that the democratic party

of Nepali Congress had no hand in it, which was a very pathetic and ridiculous effort to repaint the events.

On the second day of the People's Movement, a nationwide strike of 'Nepal Bandh' was called. Like the previous day, this day's program was also a complete success. Markets, transport, educational institutions, factories, and businesses in all urban areas of the nation came to a standstill on that day.

The demonstration on February 18 was a resounding success across the country. This success encouraged the protesters and humiliated the government. Thousands of unarmed people from different parts of the capital, the epicenter of the movement, seemed to be vibrating the earth with their deafening slogans. What could the poor policemen do? In front of millions of people, what could a few hundred or even a few thousand policemen accomplish? Furthermore, the freedom and democracy movement was also for the personal freedom of the police and their children! So, they made half-hearted attempts to charge at the protestors for fear of their commander's wrath, and would stay still again. Such was the people's movement! It meant that there was participation from every section of society. Members of security agencies, such as the police and the army, were also secretly in favour of the movement. So, although they wielded sticks and guns, they too wanted the movement to succeed. Obviously, there were some police that were violent, but that number was small. Even despite all this, the government arrested 3,500 protesters on the first day of the agitation.

The next day was the national strike of the Nepal Bandh. The whole country was at a standstill. Although there was such a big national movement ongoing, the King showed indifference and stayed out of touch. He had arrived by helicopter the previous day and left immediately after, and no comment from him was forthcoming. The behaviour of King Birendra did not satisfy the people. Additionally, the message broadcasted by Ganeshman-ji

at the end of the first day had boiled the blood of the people. At a place called Nasaman in Bhaktapur, the police had beaten and fired at the protestors. As a result, five protesters had been martyred.

On February 20, there was no national program scheduled, but the people took to the streets to protest the police killings. Meanwhile, in Jadukuha of Janakpur, the police had searched the house for a Nepali Congress member called Shivadhari. Upon not finding him, the police had tied up and beat the rest of his family inhumanely. When the people found out, they went to protest against the police, but in return the police fired 15 rounds and killed three women and a teenager on the spot. These women, of Jadukuha, were the first women to martyr themselves in this democratic movement. Meanwhile, at the Nepal Bar Association, a motion was called to denounce murder and violence. About 300 lawyers boycotted the session and gathered on the premises of the Supreme Court to demand the end of the Panchayat system and the declaration of a multi-party system. Similarly, the women of Biratnagar protested against the genocide committed by the government by wearing black bandanas on their foreheads and holding lanterns.

Similarly, the government police did not hesitate to take action against the doctors who were protesting at the Tribhuvan University Teaching Hospital. The government used torture methods on the activists like keeping them in cold water for hours, putting their heads in the sewers, applying electric shocks, torturing their genitals, starving them, beating them, and breaking their limbs. However, the enthusiasm of the agitators only heightened further instead of decreasing.

On February 25, it was decided to fly black flags all around the country. The program was led by Mayor Haribol Bhattarai, who won the Kathmandu Municipal Panchayat election on behalf of the Nepali Congress, and Padmaratna Tuladhar, a

popular MP from the United Left Front who won the Rastriya Panchayat election from Kathmandu. On this day, the government had used excessive force to threaten the whole country from protesting, however, after three o'clock in the afternoon, even the police could not stop the millions of protestors. Leaders Haribol and Padmaratna planted the black flags and this program, too, was very successful all over the country.

The announced program of the first phase of the movement was only till March 2, 1990. In the meantime, the government had been issuing search warrants and verbal warnings to operators of shops and mills who closed their factories. They threatened them with heavy tax penalties if they did not open or run their businesses properly. They also confiscated bill-books of taxis, with the condition that it would be returned to the drivers only after they could furnish proof that they had operated their taxis on the day of the national strike. In order to demonstrate to the people that the city bazaars are not closed and that the city is running normally, the government switched license plates on their government vehicles to private-license plates and ordered the vehicles to drive around the city relentlessly.

The government, alarmed by the pressure of the movement, devised a new strategy to divert the attention of the world community and turn it away from the agitators. The points of this strategy were: (1) this movement has gone beyond the control of the Nepali Congress, (2) the communists are terrorizing the nation, and (3) the world community should help the Panchayat government to control this communist terrorism. His Majesty's Government said in a statement: "Some international elements have tried to create an atmosphere of insecurity and terror in our society through extremist acts of sabotage. The local administration warns that it will spare no

effort to fully control such terrorist activities aimed at spreading chaos and disorder.”

The Supreme Commander of the People’s Movement understood the government’s conspiracy, so he published a brief statement. In the statement, he said, *“The dictatorial Panchayat system, which has been based on brutal repression of the people for almost 30 years, has tried to cover up the fact that more than 32 peaceful and unarmed protesters have been killed. They falsely accuse the protesters of being ‘extreme communists’. By blaming the agitators for the vandalism carried out by its own agents, the Panchayat Government has tried to be a duplicitous figure. The real terrorist and extremists are the Government themselves, who respond to a peaceful and unarmed protest with guns and bullets. The attempts of the government to break apart the unity of the Nepali Congress and the Communist Parties is futile. We are one. Our movement will continue until we reach our common goal.”*

Before entering the second phase of the People’s Movement, Ganeshman-ji reviewed its positive and negative aspects, as well as its weaknesses. He was extremely satisfied with the pace of the movement, the pressure it created on the rulers, the impact it had on the common Nepali populace, and the reactions of the foreign nations. The only disadvantage he experienced during this period was the lack of a medium for mass communication, such as radio, television channel, or magazines. Back then, the media was not like the age of the internet today. If a weekly newspaper did the bare minimum of publishing Ganeshman-ji’s message without any cuts or edits, that would have to be cause for satisfaction. What he really needed was a separate radio station for such activities. However, such things were not possible during the Panchayat rule. Therefore, Ganeshman-ji asked his members to publish a newspaper called ‘People’s Movement News’ which would only publish news relating to the People’s Movement. A total of ten issues were published during

its lifetime, and it was considered the official document of the People's Movement. The newspaper was secretly edited and published by the Nepali Congress, and they could finally communicate directly with the people. Additionally, newspapers and foreign media outlets across the country also provided substantial support. Nevertheless, it emerged as the most trusted news source relating to the movement.

The Nepali people were not swayed by the naked charade of the government, nor by their pressure and displays of power, nor by the rivers of revenue they spent shamelessly beating their own citizens. Instead, they retaliated against the barbarism. They did their best to fight for their rights, even if it meant being martyred. The first phase showed that the people had been awakened, and it proved the the Panchayat system's days were numbered. Thus, the first phase of the movement was successful to the extent that the martyrs did not give their lives in vain.

National programs were then published for the second phase of the movement, which would last until March 23, 1990. Under this second phase, nationwide processions and public meetings would be held on March 9 where they would burn the effigies of the Panchayat system. Party flags would be distributed across the country to the general public on March 10, 11, 12 and the people would be briefed, and a large rally would be taking place on March 13. A national strike was declared for March 14, and on March 24 they would mark People's Unity Day by holding a procession of all parties, organizations, and professions waving their individual flags.

A day before the start of the second phase, Supreme Commander Ganeshman-ji issued an emotional appeal to his countrymen, while also sternly warning the Panchayat elements to not attempt to oppress the people, stating that the movement would continue until Nepalis achieved true democracy. Ganeshman-ji said in his appeal:

"Today, we are all united together in this common cause to dedicate ourselves to the great sacrifice of restoring democracy through our peaceful People's Movement. The achievements so far have convinced me that the strong desire for democracy is ubiquitous, and that its rising tide has firmly withstood the bullets, sticks, boots, and torture of the murderous Panchayat system.

The murderous Panchayat system, with their aim of discrediting our purely peaceful People's Movement, had already instigated violence in Nepali society even before the movement was formally launched. Thousands of activists were arrested, and they even started the contrived attacks on the students (who are supposed to be the police of democracy). The dignity and modesty of the female students were ruined when the government stripped them naked. This humiliating national disgrace took place in the presence of those who claim to be so-called proponents of Nepali femininity, they who were standing by enjoying this tragedy and violence. All Nepalis who care for the modesty and character of their daughters should spit on these Panchayat goons and their supporters. This is the strongest response to brutal violence.

The Nepali people are only asking for the restoration of the democracy that they themselves won by shedding rivers of blood in 1951. Despite the sincere efforts of the people to recover democracy through peaceful methods, an attempt has been made by the Panchayat government to spread terror by carrying out naked displays of violent abuse of power. Who was it that massacred people by firing on peaceful demonstrations in different parts of the country without any reason and without any provocation? Who were those that fired? Who are the killers? Who are those martyrs that were shot to death? Today, tens of thousands of our countrymen are dumped in cold warehouses and are being fed boots and sticks instead of a meal and a drink. The only crime that these victims of Panchayat violence committed was 'the desire for democracy'. Something which is considered a

natural right all over the world has become an unforgivable crime for the genocidal Panchayats. But I believe that if it is a crime to seek and obtain democracy, then in the days to come, Nepalis will continue to commit such crimes proudly and with self-respect and dignity, until such time that they are given the freedom to follow their beliefs, to stand up, to be respected citizens, to live without fear, and to progress themselves.

In order to disrupt any People's Movement, a dictatorial regime conspires with hired ponies. We all know that the Panchayat system is really just the rule of the sycophants and the cronies. Therefore, we know that their condemnation of democracy and the People's Movement is mired in transaction. We know that every word of condemnation, praise, speech, and rhetoric is based on their transactions. The Panchayat have been forced to expose even their own spies that they sent to infiltrate the political parties. In the coming days, more and more information about the spies of the Panchayat system will be received through their radio and television stations, and finally the process of purification of political parties will be completed. It is no longer difficult to identify wolves who wear sheepskin in our midst.

The dictatorial Panchayat system established by plundering all the resources of the country and foreign-aid is now in a state of stagnation. But it has not collapsed yet. For this, more sacrifices, more loss, more determination is required from all self-respecting democracy-loving Nepalis. This is the demand of the struggle for democracy. In the meantime, I would like to make a heartfelt appeal to the international community, which has provided strong moral support to the great democratic movement of the Nepali people, to refrain from providing any kind of material support to the genocidal Panchayat system until the outcome of our decisive struggle is a positive one. Do not provide them with any more opportunity to misuse the foreign-aid given to the Nepali people,

which they use to inflict more atrocities on the Nepali people who are tired of extreme exploitation and oppression. I would like to appeal to the international community to not believe the deceitful propaganda of the genocidal Panchayat system where they speak of respecting human rights, when in reality, the Nepalis are involved in a life-or-death decisive struggle for democracy.

On behalf of the democratic movement, I have considered it necessary to warn the police and army personnel who have become instruments of torture under the genocidal Panchayat system. Nepali life is neither cheap nor is history going to be forgiving towards you. Your heinous acts of playing with the lives of innocent, peaceful, democratic Nepalis under the excuse of being compelled by your uniform should be stopped immediately, and any inhuman, unjust, and cruel order should be disobeyed. Nepalis will not forgive any part of the Panchayat machine, whether it is big or small, in this conflict. Unfortunately, the Panchayat thugs are leading the country in such a direction.

In conclusion, I bow before all the Nepalis who have suffered casualties during this struggle for democracy, and I salute all those who are leading the crusade, free from fear and terror.

Violence is not our means to an end, but those who impose it on us will realize the eternal truth that every action has a natural response.”

In addition to the national programs given by the Action Committee, the general workers and the people across the country continued to implement many peaceful programs on their own. Among them was a program organized by female professors at Padma Kanya College in Kathmandu on the occasion of International Women's Day. The burning of Panchayat idols was widely discussed in every town and village and village-panchayats in Nepal.

The sentimental statement made by the esteemed leader Ganeshman-ji seemed to liberate the people from their terror and fear of the government. Even the average citizen, who until yesterday stayed away from fear of talking about such topics, now started carrying the Congress-Communist flag, even hanging it at their homes and planting it in public places. One could say, upon seeing the hundreds of local-assemblies gathered around the country with teeming crowds, that the word 'fear' had completely left the minds of the people.

On March 14, the people started harassing any police, tax officers, officials of the Magistrate's Office, and Panchayat officials who were entering the urban areas in an organized fashion with the intention to thwart the National Strike. Almost all urban areas of Nepal generally looked like empty zones on that day.

Generally, teachers, staff, and students are considered to be a conscious and influential class among the general public. However, the teachers and staff had not organized a formal protest, even though the students had. This shortcoming was also met in the second phase of the movement.

All the employees of the Kathmandu-based Agriculture Development Bank staged a one-hour 'pen down' in support of the People's Movement. They refused to work for the whole hour, and this was the first involvement by employees in the People's Movement. Supreme Leader Ganeshman-ji called upon the teachers and said, *"Teachers will surely fulfil their national obligations, seeing as how all sections and groups of society have shown their support and gotten involved in this month-long national People's Movement. I have faith in them."*

Immediately after Ganeshman-ji's call, all the teachers in the country decided to put forward their professional demands to help the People's Movement. They decided to 'put down their

pens' on March 21 and take to the streets on March 31 to protest against the Panchayat system.

Now every section of society, including the learned and enlightened group, started sending the message that they are all connected to the spirit of the People's Movement. To display this connection, eminent writers, artists, and painters of the country showed solidarity by wearing black bandages and marching in the square of Saraswati Sadan, Trichandra College.

Seeing the People's Movement heading towards success rapidly day and night, the King and the Panchayat leaders started cursing the movement's leaders and tried to use force to break the Congress-Communist unity. Even 40 Honorable moderates from the Rastriya Panchayat, like former Prime Minister Lokendra Bahadur Chand, Rajeshwar Devkota, Shreebhadra Sharma, Dr. Yadav Prasad Pant and Keshar Bahadur Bista started publishing statements saying, "No victory can be achieved from violence and confrontation. The solution to the political problem must be found through political means. We are committed to the development of democracy. We firmly believe that no Nepali should miss out on the fundamental issue of national unity."

The King, without even understanding the growing rift within his own Panchayat government and system, kept doggedly clinging to the dying tree of the Panchayat system and even went to Pokhara himself to make a speech surrounded by his cronies. The meaningless statement made by the king at the Pancha-Rally in Pokhara only served to intensify the people's agitation. King Birendra had said:

"No political system is an end in itself, rather it exists as a means for the rights, interests, and progress of the people. Since our political tradition is based on the people's consensus, everyone is well aware of the fact that the Panchayat system has always operated in accordance with the decisions of the people through a

national referendum. The dynamic nature of the Panchayat system allows us to fulfill the desires and aspirations of the people in the coming days by learning from the past experiences with our people. In this way, we have been making timely improvements to this system for the past three decades and will continue to do so in the days to come. One should not forget that it is the responsibility of every democracy-seeker to adopt the process and practice of finding solutions to problems through constitutional methods.

Any unconstitutional action that disrupts peace, stability, and security impedes the enjoyment and development of democratic rights. Everyone has to understand the fact that it does not benefit anyone. Nothing can be solved by irresponsible and unrestrained action, and by ignoring the interests of the country and the people. Every Nepali has to fulfill his responsibility towards the nation and society by uniting with mutual understanding, discipline, and commitment. Political activists should never forget the fact that the service of the people and their conduct is the main basis for maintaining the faith, trust, and support of the people.

The destiny of Nepal and Nepalis is shaped by none other than Nepalis themselves, and the efforts and solution to safeguarding Nepal's self-esteem lies in the unity of all Nepalis."

The movement had now crossed the borders of the Kingdom of Nepal and Nepalis abroad had started holding rallies in support of the movement in front of the foreign nation's city halls and parliaments. In this process, Nepalis living in New Delhi, Washington DC, London, UK, and Germany all held demonstrations and submitted memorandums of support.

In the second half of the second phase, the employees of the Provident Fund also put their pens down. Similarly, the teachers closed their schools in support of the movement. Meanwhile, Jagannath Acharya of the Nepali Congress and Chairman Radhakrishna Mainali jointly signed and issued a statement

urging the people not to pay the tariffs relating to land, water, drinking water, and electricity. Similarly, the two coordinators of the movement had appealed in writing to donor countries, including the Nepal Group, to not provide any loan assistance to the Panchayat government and to abstain from any treaties with it.

The second phase of the movement completed on March 23. Ganeshman-ji, the supreme commander of the People's Movement, reviewed it and briefed the leaders of his findings. He expressed his feelings:

"The second phase of our movement was a resounding success. At a glance, it may seem that the expected result was not achieved in this period. However, this phase was also very fruitful. The number of arrests and deaths of activists has decreased. However, participation in the movement has increased. Every aspect of national life has come to be connected to this movement now. I don't think any sector will be left untouched. In this sense, the second phase has been very successful. It will soon be seen that the achievements of this second phase will provide the final push to the Panchayat. Therefore, in the third phase of this program, we have to plan such programs that the people will feel, 'Let me not regret the fact that I did not contribute to such a great national movement.' It is possible that this third phase will prove to be decisive for our movement."

By this point, more than 20,000 protesters had been arrested. Therefore, more arrests could prove risky. In view of this, the following national level programs were decided for the third phase. (1) A nationwide blackout from 7:00 pm to 7:10 pm on March 29, (2) A prayer/vigil in memory of the martyrs at religious places around the country on April 4, and (3) the burning of the autocratic Constitution nationwide on April 9. Other local programs were to be decided by local committees and run as needed.

March 26 was the festival of Ghode Jatra. The Prime Minister and other high-ranking officials, including the Queen, were present at the Royal Military Pavillion (Tudikhel) to watch the procession, and thousands of Nepalis had also gathered to watch. At that same time, huge balloons flew to the skies from Sundhara carrying the flags of the Nepali Congress and the Communist Parties and hovered around the Royal Military Pavillion. The Queen and the spectators all watched the balloons mingling around in the sky overhead. This unique scene had garnered a lot of attention all over the country.

One day before the start of the third phase of the movement, on March 27, Ganeshman-ji published a poignant appeal addressing the Nepali people. The appeal stated:

“Allied countrymen,

Seeing that the people's movement formally launched for the restoration of democracy has found voice in all corners of Nepal, and that the people are determined to destroy the fortress of dictatorship, the so-called 'active and dynamic leaders' of the Panchayat have tried to cover up their authoritarian rule by giving empty assurances that the Panchayat system has been improving since its inception and will continue to improve. The constitution brought about by the so-called 'hugely mandated' Panchayat government, ratified by the Ratriya Panchayat, and even blessed by the King was itself destroyed by using the ruthless brute force of the army. Now it is claimed that the Panchayat system put in place on that day has been improving ever since. All conscious countrymen have seen well what the reforming Panchayat is like, how ruthless, oppressive, and tyrannical it has been. We have all understood the indisputable truth that the Panchayat political system can never be cleansed of its dark history after abusing all its power, resources, and means for the last thirty years.

The Panchayat constitution did not allow us Nepalis to speak and did not allow us to gather. It is responsible for thousands of Nepalis suffering in cold prisons, and thousands more have been forced to take refuge abroad as they could not bear the repression. To live within the bounds of that same constitution, and to hope for improvement from within the limits of that same constitution, is tantamount to making Nepalis live in slavery forever. Nepalis do not accept slavery from God himself, let alone selfish authoritarian rulers.

I humbly request every Nepali to understand the reality of the hollow assurances of reform given for the sole purpose of reducing our movement's strength, and for fear of exposing the Panchayat's corrupted dealings in the international arena. As our People's Movement is about to enter a decisive phase, the scattered rulers resort to such cheap dramatic practices to try to cast off the serious crisis that has befallen them. The authoritarian rulers of present-day Nepal have fallen prey to such a cheap ruse.

I would like to ask my countrymen, and those in the intellectual international community who have a heartfelt sympathy for our plight, these following questions:

- 1) What sort of a constitution is the Panchayat constitution, where all human rights are banned forever?*
- 2) What sort of a constitution is the Panchayat constitution, where every thought, expression, and peaceful dissent against the Panchayat is considered a revolt against the state?*
- 3) What sort of a constitution is the Panchayat constitution, where the so-called people's representatives are like fattened animals with insensitive, irrational and immoral behaviour, constantly forced to work against their spirit and conscience?*

- 4) *What sort of a constitution is the Panchayat constitution, under which a handful of dictators, in the name of so-called people's representatives, can freely plunder the country and swindle all the international aid?*

Therefore, on the basis of the current consciousness that has awakened in the Nepali public, I am excited to say that Nepalis expect nothing more than the restoration of democracy that they secured by shedding their blood in the People's Revolution of 1951. Nepalis do not need handouts. Instead, upon gaining democratic rights for themselves, the people liberated those imprisoned-cuckolds from their golden cages and elevated them to the status of rulers once again. In return for that generosity and goodwill, the Shahs returned the favour by turning this country into a prison camp on December 15, 1960.

Even today, Nepal has become a prison and a torture camp similar to Nazism. In addition to those representing all aspects of Nepali society, infants are being held in this concentration camp. I am greatly saddened that I have not been able to stand together with you inside the torture camps set up across the country. However, I am tormented and my heart cries out in compassion for all of you.

I urge my fellow countrymen to take this People's Movement to its climax, to the tumultuous proclamation which will put an end to the dictatorial rulers of this country and force them to suffer the consequences of their crimes.

Frightened by the growing pressure of the current People's Movement, I have received information that the dictatorial rulers are planning to physically eliminate the agitators. So maybe in the coming days you will hear the news that other sons of the country have been martyred. I urge the Nepali people to be mentally prepared to counter this state-sponsored terrorism.

Again, I emphasize that the People's Movement will continue until then. Unless Nepalis are allowed to become honorable citizens instead of slaves. Until this country become the common property of all and not just a private land or a playground for the rulers.

It is said that history repeats itself, first as a tragedy and then as a farce. But I say, Nepal is on the verge of historic change, moving towards perfection. Perhaps history did not consider the 1951 struggle as complete, therefore it has now faced us with authoritarian rulers once again so that we may accelerate towards true freedom.

A society that desires to change the status quo must go through this process. Our current situation is no different. Believe me, victory ultimately belongs to the people. The rulers of Nepal cannot be an exception to this eternal rule of history."

The beginning of the third phase of the movement was special. Programs such as workers' agitation, strikes, pen-downs, sit-ins by teachers and professors, protests by bank and provident fund employees, and sieges by office bearers (including the Vice-Chancellor of TU) continued throughout the country. There was now hardly an area that the movement had not touched.

The blackout program (turn off the lights) on March 29 was seen as a useless move by many. What good could it possibly do, asked the naysayers. Therefore, in order to answer the doubters, the students organized a campaign to advocate for the event. Police tried to use power to disrupt their activities. However, this time the protestors also decided that it was time to answer bricks with stones. Now, wherever police were gathered, the protestors also gathered. Soon, police posts and vehicles started burning in flames. Until yesterday, the people had not attacked the police, but this time they decided that the only answer to violence was

violence. On the day of March 29, it seemed that all the campuses around the city had turned into a battleground between the police and the students.

The blackout program, which started at 7:00 pm, took the movement to unimaginable heights. It made it easier for the average disempowered citizen to show their support. However, it made it equally difficult for the police and security forces! Everyone had turned off their lights and slogans and chants were yelled out from windows, balconies, and roofs. The slogans around the city were deafening. Who could the police arrest, whom could they prosecute? They went around speaking into megaphones to tell the people to turn on their lights, but who would listen? Some people also started guerilla-style attacks on the police from the shadows. The police did not know from where they were being hit. At the same time, torch processions started popping up in various parts of the city. Local meetings were held and the protestors waged tactics like stopping security personnel from entering parts of the city. Since turning off the lights was an easy thing to do, many localities, towns, and villages then started the practice of turning off their lights all night and declaring the area a government-free zone. The government did not know how to break this movement. Who could they prosecute? How could they counteract? Could the security forces indiscriminately attack the general public? Would the world community tolerate such mass attacks? The government could not resolve these and other similar issues. Meanwhile, a memorandum was written to Indian Prime Minister Vishwanath Pratap Singh, on behalf of the movement, after it was learned that an Indian envoy was planning to come to Kathmandu to sign the 'Indo-Nepal Trade and Transit Treaty'. The memorandum stated that "if the Indian government enters into any new agreement with the rejected Panchayat system, it will not be acceptable to the Nepali people." Indeed, the Indian

envoy arrived to Nepal, but left without having reached any agreement.

Now, with the nationwide non-cooperation of teachers, and the daily clashes between the students and the police, the government decided to close down the educational institutions. This ultimately indirectly helped the agitators. On the other hand, the government started panicking after the 'pen-down protest' started reaching the civil servants, following the example of the Nepal Bar Association, Professors' Union, and Bank Employees. How could the police respond? They were tired all day from clashing with protestors, and exhausted at night by running after instigators during the blackout hours. Even the police were on the verge of surrendering their weapons to the people.

It is said that rulers are blinded by power. Indeed, in this scenario the King seemed to be a fool. At a time when the movement was stalling the entire country, instead of fulfilling the legitimate demands of the people, he decided to re-affirm the deeply-unpopular Prime Minister Marichman Singh by installing a new cabinet of ministers who were supposed to be hardliners. This means that the King had either failed to gauge the power of the people or proved himself to be a fool. The people took this development as a challenge, and as a result, heavy clashes took place across the country on Jan 3, 1961. Thousands of rallies across fifty or more cities marched ahead. The security personnel, including the police, were either in a state of shock or had themselves sided with the protesters. This was a situation where the government employees themselves had started disobeying the government.

By the middle of this third phase, the three major cities of the capital - Patan, Bhaktapur, and Kirtipur - had declared themselves government-free (autonomous) zones, thus demonstrating that the People's Movement had mobilized the

support of the people down to the grassroots level. Even the women in the cities were ready with home-made weapons, agricultural tools, empty jugs, plates, and sticks in their hands! The scenes showed that, now, if the King kept up his foolishness and refused to see wisdom, the entire monarchy would be blown away by the winds of change.

Meanwhile, the agitators came up with a simple plan to take the movement to new heights. After it was approved by the Supreme Commander Ganeshman Singh, a journalist working for Gorkhapatra (a government-owned national daily newspaper), Sharach Chandra Wasti, drafted the appeal and it was published and distributed extensively. The appeal quoted the bank employees as saying, *“Withdraw your money from the bank immediately! If it is not withdrawn in time, the Panchayat government will seize it. The government is implementing a plan to empty the banks and take all the money of the people before fleeing the country! Therefore, withdraw immediately!”* The appeal continued on to say:

“In order to suppress the People’s Movement for the restoration of democracy in the country, the present government is constantly withdrawing the money you have deposited in the commercial banks. In the last 35 days, the government has withdrawn more than one billion rupees by stealing 40 million from some, 35 million from another, and 30 million from yet another. In the last week, high pressure has been placed on banks to double their reserves for extraction of money. We, the bank employees, are not in a position to refuse. If we refuse to transfer the money, we stand not only to lose our jobs but are also threatened with jail and danger to life.

If this trend continues, Nepali banks will reach the point of bankruptcy within a week or two. We are shocked to see your hard-earned money being squandered in this way. Since we have taken this job with the moral responsibility of protecting your money,

our hearts are pounding and our souls are weeping. They are depositing the money in foreign banks under fake names like Pamphadevi.

Therefore, we heartily appeal to all our account holders, brothers, and sisters, to withdraw all the money you have deposited from the bank as soon as possible. Do it as soon as you can and close your bank account. We are compelled to appeal to you because our souls are riddled with guilt as your property is being looted. It is your money, so you can decide what to do with this information. Tomorrow, if the banks go bankrupt, you cannot accuse us of remaining silent. We have warned you in time, and with this we rid ourselves of guilt.

Act now! Protect your property from being looted. Withdraw your money and close your bank accounts. Hurry and save yourself before the bank sinks!”

The appeal spread like wildfire across the country. As a result, when the banks opened the next morning, thousands of people had lined up to withdraw their money. After revealing to the government the critical situation, in which the treasury of the Central Bank could be emptied within a day, it seemed that the King finally was beginning to come to his senses.

The reshuffling of the cabinet headed by the same Prime Minister, whom the people wanted to hang, was nothing more than an expression of desperation. Anyone who analyzes the pressure of the People's Movement would conclude that there are only two ways to quell it. These are (1) dare to commit genocide like Hitler did, or (2) fulfill the demands of the protestors. There was no third option. But the King was making yet another foolish attempt to cross a raging river with such an unpopular Prime Minister, such was his state of stupidity. Realizing this, Ganeshman-ji issued a message from his hospital bed on April 4, 1990. The message stated, “Those who obstruct

democracy will have to pay the price.” The full text of the warning message was as follows:

“Transformational countrymen,

In my previous appeal, I warned you that in the days to come, many more fellow countrymen will have to sacrifice their lives for the sake of democracy. I am not happy that my fears have come true, and I am filled with rage. I am enduring its excruciating pain in this prison-like hospital.

Incidents such as the one in Lalitpur, which attempted to turn a purely peaceful movement into a bloodbath, remind me of the unforgettable struggle of the heroic inhabitants of Timisoara, a small town in Romania, against tyranny. If Timisoara was a prelude to the fall of Romanian tyranny, could not Lalitpur also be a symbol of the downfall of Nepali dictatorship? I am convinced that we are on the verge of change. The last straws of the dictatorship are the massacres in Lalitpur and Kirtipur. The Nepali people, who have been waiting for divine justice, are immersing themselves for democracy without any hesitation, fear, or selfishness. This unprecedented sacrifice will surely bring about divine justice very soon, and then our current political demands will be adequate, relevant, and supporting the will of the people. I would like to warn the autocratic ruler that the focus of the people's uprising is no longer the Panchayat system but its founder and supporters. This is what the aspirations of the people reflect, in the writings on the wall and the angry slogans chanted by thousands. When I called for an immediate end to the state-sponsored terrorism, I said, "Every action has a response." What you are seeing now is the response to the actions of the crown, which has been placed on a lazy dog's head. I have repeatedly warned the public that this country is heading for a major upheaval, and that the monarchy will be the first victim of that upheaval if left untreated in time. Maybe history allows such a thing. In the tumult caused by the natural course of history, the

voices of conscience like mine are almost lost in the chaos. Probably the destiny of Nepal is telling me, "Ganeshman! I am accelerating, don't try to stop me". If that is the wish of Nepali destiny, then I bow to it.

Power is always begging for corruption, and an authoritarian power is even more corrupt. A living example of this statement is the current authoritarian ruler of Nepal, who has neither been restrained nor held accountable despite national outrage and international condemnation. The arrogant rulers who have been consumed by the corruption of their arrogance will probably change their minds only when they are thrown into the garbage bin of history. Therefore, I appeal to all to accelerate the pace of history, which is eager to bring about a fundamental change, so that as soon as possible, Nepalis can be freed from the present pain, suffering, and sorrow. There is only one easy way to achieve that liberation: to forget the house, the farm, the factory, the courtroom, and to take to the streets in such large numbers that the magnitude of our tremors trembles the hands carrying guns and teaches them to honor Nepali lives.

In the meantime, I would like to thank all the international colleagues who share in the pain and suffering of the Nepali people, because their sympathetic expressions have helped to heal our wounds.

We have brought democracy once, and we will get it back. We are ready to pay any price for this. Those who obstruct democracy will have to pay the price, and the time has now come to reap what you sow!"

There is a saying in English, "Hit the Iron when it's hot". That is, do the right thing at the right time. From the beginning of the third phase of the movement, the situation was changing sporadically. In fact, the final days of the Panchayat had already begun with the third phase of the movement. The situation was

changing so rapidly that Ganeshman-ji, as the Supreme Commander, needed a way to respond to the changing events in a timely manner to protestors all over the country. For this purpose, the movement had nothing but a newspaper called 'People's Movement News'. It was not sufficient. Therefore, a radio station was needed. After consulting with my friend Mathbar Singh, my journalist friend Sharach Chandra Wasti consulted some radio experts and secretly arranged to set up a temporary but powerful radio station. Ganeshman-ji gave permission to implement it and the responsibility of arranging the required amount (around one lakh rupees) fell on my shoulders. We had planned to set up and run the radio station within a week.

Meanwhile, the movement was gaining ground rapidly. The King was terrified and summoned his confidants to the palace for consultation. The meeting was attended by Prime Minister Marichman, Rastriya Panchayat Chairman Navaraj Subedi, former Prime Ministers Kirtinidhi Bista, Surya Bahadur Thapa, Lokendra Bahadur Chand, Nagendra Prasad Rijal, former Rastriya Panchayat Presidents Ram Hari Sharma, Rajeshwar Devkota and Nain Bahadur Swar. On the same day, the King consulted with the army and police chiefs.

The movement up to April 5, 1990, was reviewed by the court's intelligence itself. The intelligence report said that almost all government bodies were paralyzed and inactive. It said that there was intense public dissatisfaction with the government, and that the movement was getting out of control. The only area of the nation that the movement had not gained support from was the staff of the Palace, the Royal Nepal Army, and the Nepal Police. However, even in the Nepal Police, a few hundred policemen were currently being detained at the head office after refusing to fire upon their 'brothers'. Therefore, the conclusion was reached that the Nepal Police was corrupted and could not

be trusted anymore. Frightened by this situation, King Birendra called another meeting. Marichman and Navaraj had not been invited to the meeting that day. The King told the assembled that the situation in the country had deteriorated. He informed them of his intention to form a new cabinet under his own chairmanship and asked for their participation. His sycophants advised him, "Your Majesty. If you chair this new cabinet, then the target of this movement will be directed squarely at you. Destabilizing events are occurring all around the country. In such a situation, it may not be wise for you to chair the cabinet yourself." Therefore, at 6:45 am the next day, King Birendra announced, in his own voice on Radio Nepal, that Lokendra Bahadur Chand had been made the Prime Minister to head the new cabinet since the existing cabinet had failed to protect the life and property of the citizens, and had failed to maintain peace and security in the country. Ironically, this address and decision came a scant five days after the King had reconstituted the dissolved cabinet of Marichman Singh. The new Council of Ministers was authorized to hold talks with people of different political persuasions, convene a session of the Rastriya Panchayat, set up a Constitutional Reform Suggestion Commission, and set up a Commission of Inquiry to investigate the loss of life and property. In addition to Prime Minister Lokendra Bahadur Chand, Nayan Bahadur Swar, Pashupati Shamsheer Rana and Achyut Raj Regmi were appointed as ministers in the cabinet. With a relatively moderate majority in the cabinet, and some ministers having old relations with the Nepali Congress, there was little hope that they would be able to effectively deal with the Nepali Congress.

Dozens of people had already been killed and thousands maimed in the People's Movement. It was politically bankrupt for the King to think that a supreme commander like Ganeshman-jii would compromise by devaluing their

martyrdom. However, before Ganeshman-ji could respond, the people themselves came out of their houses and started chanting, "*The royal proclamation is a betrayal! Down with the Panchayat system!*" Everyone was on the streets. Perhaps the only people left in the households were the elderly and the children. Anywhere you looked, in any direction of the city, you would see millions of people involved in protests and rallies. It was so packed that it would take two hours to cover a distance of fifteen minutes. Millions of people shouting slogans on the road were sprayed with flower, abir, and well-wishes from people on both sides of the road. Some threw water down from their balconies in order to help keep the protestors cool. During this period, the police had abandoned any hope of controlling the crowd and were nowhere to be seen. This unprecedented scene of a non-violent movement occupying an entire country in the twentieth century may be unique to world history.

Hundreds of thousands of protesters emerged from places that are considered the heart of the capital in Kathmandu, from the areas of Juddhasadak, Khichapokhari, Tripureshwor, Teku, Kalimati, Darabartol, Basantapur, Indrachowk, Bhedasing, Asan, Kamalakshi, Chhetrapati and Thamel. They were chanting slogans and the procession was from Ratna Park to Sundhara on one side and from the Electricity Authority to Bhadrakali on the other side, surrounding the Royal Nepal Army Headquarters. Ganeshman-ji was taken to the roof of the Bir Hospital, by the doctors sympathetic to the cause, to see the the oceans of people amassed below. When they got the chance to see their beloved people's leader, millions of people shouted in one voice, "*Bir Ganeshman! Long may he live!*". Ganeshman-ji's wife Mangaladevi and senior communist leader Manmohan Adhikari waved to the crowd from atop the roof.

On their way home in the evening, the people returning home numbered in the thousands. Flags, placards, and other

movement-related materials were seen in the hands of almost everyone. Just then, the police started firing upon the civilians who were walking from the King Birendra statue to Kamaladi, killing dozens. Similarly, another group of police fired upon the thousands of people heading towards Kamalakshi-Asan from Jamal. It is unknown just how many people the police killed that night. This violent incident sparked a wave of public hatred and animosity towards the police. It was not possible to deem when, or if, this hatred would ever fade.

Meanwhile, the newly appointed Prime Minister Lokendra Bahadur Chand and his ministers were sworn in under heavy security.

Residents of Kathmandu woke up on the morning of April 7, 1990, to find that a curfew had been imposed. Before this, Nepalis did not even know what the word ‘curfew’ meant. During the curfew, security forces had even banned windows from being opened anywhere in the city. A housewife from Lalitpur lost her life that day when she opened her window to look outside and the police shot her dead.

Meanwhile, the newly-appointed cabinet decided to release all the political prisoners across the country and began dialogue with the movement’s senior leaders. Prime Minister Lokendra Bahadur Chand himself and his minister Achyut Raj Regmi visited the hospital to meet Ganeshman-ji, the supreme commander of the People’s Movement, who was being treated at Bir Hospital. Similarly, two ministers Pashupati Shamsheer Rana and Nain Bahadur Swar went to meet Nepali Congress President Krishna Prasad Bhattarai. Apart from them, the ministers also met Girija Prasad Koirala and the communist leaders Manmohan Adhikari and Sahana Pradhan. They demanded the release of Padmaratna Tuladhar and Daman Nath Dhungana from custody to create a conducive environment for talks.

THE PEOPLE'S MOVEMENT AT ITS PEAK

There were only two personalities at either end of the People's Movement 1990. They were Ganeshman Singh, the supreme commander leading the People's Movement, and King Birendra Bir Bikram Shah Dev, the patron of the Panchayat System. Against the backdrop of both, there were dozens of communist parties allied with the Nepali Congress, with even the world community supporting the People's Movement. On the other hand, both the proponents of the King-led Panchayat system, the government itself and some anti-democratic countries, had their full strength against the movement. The pressure on the movement had increased abruptly on April 6, 1990. In response, both sides took stock of the changed situation, and Ganeshman-ji gave an overall assessment to the people.

The gist of his assessment was as follows:

- 1) *His desperate activities have made it clear that the King has been worn down by the widespread and effective participation of the people. Therefore, we must make the the last and most effective push at this time. Victory is guaranteed!*
- 2) *Ganeshman-ji needed a response strategy in case the King completely embraced the path of violence. In such a situation, there would be no chance of communication with Krishna Prasad Bhattarai and Manmohan Adhikari. Sympathetic foreign nations would also be out of touch. In such a situation, the only options would be to fight back harder or lay down and die. So, he decided that the non-violent movement needed to push even stronger, so that the hands of the police would tremble before they even reached for their guns. There was no other choice.*

- 3) *The King may approach for negotiations at any time in order to come to an agreement. In such a case, the offer may be raised to hold negotiation talks in India, or another country. However, Ganeshman-ji was not going to accept that. If talks were held in foreign lands, then there may be foreign interference. In 1951, the democratic revolution concluded with talks held between the parties in India. Ganeshman-ji called this tripartite agreement (between India, the King, and Nepali Congress) a betrayal. The only way forward is to reach an agreement in our own nation, said Ganeshman-ji. Therefore, he was determined to have the agreement take place in Nepal.*

He had also made another decision regarding the agreement. It was obvious that, since Ganeshman-ji was the Supreme Commander of the movement, he would also be chosen to lead the negotiations. However, he decided that he would not sit together with the King unless the movement's demands were first accepted. He was of the opinion that, after such a great struggle having taken place and so many having been killed, what would be the purpose of negotiating at the table? So, he decided to not sit at the negotiation table unless the Panchayat System was formally dissolved.

On the other side, King Birendra and his government were terrified of the possible consequences. The situation in the country, and the information that he was receiving, put him in a fix. So, he calculated the situation and came to the following conclusions:

- 1) *The Panchayat system, which had been nurtured for the last 30 years, had not been accepted by the people. Since the monarchy is the institution of all Nepalis, it would be wise to act in line with the people's wishes. Therefore, it would be best to reach an agreement with the agitators*

before any other country has a chance to interfere and take advantage of the chaos.

- 2) *If the decision is to reach an agreement, then there is no use delaying the inevitable. Let us then conclude these matters as soon as possible.*
- 3) *Therefore, in order to lead negotiations, a more moderate government is appropriate, led by a moderate Prime Minister. Therefore, the King removed Prime Minister Marichman Singh on April 6, and formed a new cabinet under Prime Minister Lokendra Bahadur Chand with liberal ministers who had sentimentality with both the Nepali Congress and the Communists.*

Seen in this way, both sides had taken a thoughtful approach. There was no doubt that both sides were patriotic at heart. Both forged ahead according to their own philosophies. Soon, negotiations were announced and the process started.

The day of April 7 was a nationwide curfew. On this day, the new Prime Minister and his new cabinet worked to secure the release of key leaders arrested during the agitation. They also reached out to top leaders in the movement to start negotiations. Communist leaders Padmaratna Tuladhar and Sahana Pradhan, as well as Nepali Congress leader Daman Nath Dhungana were released. On that same evening, Prime Minister Lokendra Bahadur Chand paid a courtesy call to Ganeshman-ji, who was in the hospital. He returned the very next day to meet with him again. Rejecting the Prime Minister's offer to hold talks, Ganeshman-ji said, "Our struggle is with the King, not with you (the government)." The Prime Minister replied, "His Majesty is always ready to listen to you. But first you must recover and be well." Ganeshman-ji placed his demands, "First, His Majesty must make a public declaration that the demands of the movement have been met: those are the end of the Panchayat

System and the establishment of multi-party democracy. Only then will the process of negotiation begin!” Knowing that victory had all been achieved, why would Ganeshman-ji relent an inch? After all, Ironman that he was!

Returning to the palace with the response of Supreme Commander Ganeshman Singh, the Prime Minister discussed with the King and promptly returned to Bir Hospital on the same day. He relayed the positive message from the King. By this time, Ganeshman-ji had already discussed with his allies Krishna Prasad Bhattarai, Girija Prasad Koirala, Manmohan Adhikari, Sahana Pradhan, Radhakrishna Mainali, and Jhala Nath Khanal about the changed situation and talks. Prime Minister Chand told Ganeshman-ji, “His Majesty is agreeable to your terms, and looks forward to starting the negotiations.” Ganeshman-ji told the Prime Minister, “We have not heard any proclamations from the King yet. I assume it’s being prepared. I will send our authoritative representatives to speak with the King. If the King makes the public declaration after meeting with them, then only I shall meet with the King.” In this manner, Ganeshman-ji cautiously placed each step such that the movement was always protected from all possible risks.

After Ganeshman-ji's approval, Nepali Congress' Acting-President Krishna Prasad Bhattarai and General Secretary Girija Prasad Koirala, together with the United Left Front President Sahana Pradhan and member Radhakrishna Mainali, were taken to Narayanhiti Palace at 9 pm to hold talks with the King.

The news that movement-leaders were holding talks with the King spread like wildfire through telephones among the people who were shuttered in their homes due to the curfew. Once the talks started at the palace, Radio Nepal and Nepal Television both announced that they would be extending their broadcasts past their usual closing times, which was at 11:00pm and 10:00pm respectively. After that announcement by the

stations, the curiosity of the people throughout the Kingdom knew no bounds.

At 11:05 pm, citing the royal palace, the stations announced that the 'ban on political parties' was lifted, and that the constitution would now be amended accordingly. In this regard, the statement issued from the royal palace said:

"Considering the unity of Nepalis and the current international environment, and as per the aspirations of the Nepalis, the phrase 'party-less' in the Constitution of Nepal (1963) is hereby removed. Accordingly, the Constitution Reform Suggestion Commission will compile suggestions and prepare a report with the reflections of the different ideologies of the Nepalese society and submit it to His Majesty. It has been an established fact that His Majesty has always respected people's aspiration towards political traditions and the ideals of democracy and proclaimed timely political reforms."

After this, Nepal Television immediately broadcast a short interview with the representatives of the People's Movement at the palace. The four of them said that the People's Movement had now definitely ceased as the ban on political parties was lifted by removing the phrase 'party-less' from the Constitution of Nepal. They also said that it was contradictory to maintain the Panchayat System in the current context and thus they have demanded with the king that the Panchayat System be dissolved soon. During the interview, Krishna Prasad Bhattarai said, "His Majesty is a decent gentleman. It is because of His Majesty's generosity and his passionate love for the people that our multi-party demand has been accepted today." Girija Prasad Koirala said, "We are now faced with a great opportunity, where if we sincerely bond together on the basis of national consensus and abandon our animosities, jealousies, and hatred, Nepal will have a bright future. We should all single out the elements of anarchy that work to devalue this democracy." Mrs. Sahana Pradhan

clarified that she saw the potential to achieve freedom and human rights in her first meeting with the King. “The demand for our multi-party system has now been met,” she said, “In the People’s Movement, Nepali Congress and United Left Front had the same step, voice, and thinking.” Radha Krishna Mainali said, “Now that our demand for the end of ‘party-less’ system and the establishment of multi-party system has been met, if we can use it properly, the Nepali people will finally be able to enjoy the political rights they seek.”

Thus, the People’s Movement for the establishment of democracy, which started on February 18, 1990, was successfully completed on the fiftieth day.

As soon as the announcement was made on radio and television that multi-party democracy was reinstated after 29 years of Panchayat rule, the people took to the streets in boundless joy, chanting slogans, rubbing red-abir-powder on each other’s faces, and dancing with happiness. However, many of the security forces stationed to keep them under curfew had orders to shoot on sight. The curfew had not yet been lifted, so the armed security forces fired upon them and many were killed. Thus, on that night, the joy of the capital turned into sorrow and mourning. However, in other cities around the Kingdom, the joyful festivities carried on throughout the night.

VICTORY CELEBRATION ON APRIL 9, 1990

In struggles, revolutions, movements, or even in competitions, it is natural for one party to lose and another party to win. In revolutions or movements, if the top leaders do not exercise good judgement, the stronger party may lose and the weaker party may emerge victorious. In politics, sometimes there is even a situation where neither side wins and a third side emerges victorious. The third party uses events to their

advantage such that the real winners are sidelined. The outcome of the 1951 revolution was just so. The Nepali Congress had revolted against the Rana rulers, sacrificing hundreds of lives, injuring and maiming thousands, suffering countless destruction of homes, in order to win democracy. However, in the end it was not the Nepali Congress that took the mantle of government, but rather the clout of the reinstated King. What could the Nepali Congress do? They took the pretense of democracy that was offered and accepted it, hoping that the King would prove better than the Ranas. It was this kind of situation that Ganeshman-ji was trying to avoid once again.

Therefore, on this victorious day, Ganeshman-ji was expressing his happiness cautiously. A third party could sneak into the talks and gain a foothold during this first stage of negotiations between the King and the Nepali Congress. Therefore, Ganeshman-ji countered that risk by holding talks within the King's palace. The result was immediate, with the King lifting the ban on political parties. However, the removal of the Panchayat system was still not complete, so he still had not breathed a sigh of relief. Therefore, on April 9, he published another emotional statement. The full text of the statement was as follows:

"The Nepali Congress, which has always been at the forefront in the democratic struggle, wants to maintain its determination to play a leading role in establishing full-fledged democracy in Nepal. Let no one doubt our determination that, as the only party responsible for the destiny and future of the country, we will continue to fulfill this great responsibility entrusted to us by sacrificing everything, as we have done in the most difficult times of the past.

The Nepali Congress is not under any illusion that our movement is complete simply because the phrase 'party-less' has been removed from the current constitution. The Nepali Congress

is not so easily trapped into believing that democracy is restored simply because one is now allowed to wave their party's flags and signboards. This struggling party which emerged from the masses full well understands the political consciousness of the average Nepali. People can no longer be deceived. I hope that everyone now understands the consequences of what whirlwinds may ensue if the people should feel cheated again. In such a case, it will sweep away any who stands in its path.

The response of the Nepali Congress will be proportionate to the actions taken in the coming days, as to how honestly the multi-party system is incorporated into the new constitution. Therefore, I say, the democratic struggle is still going on, even if its manifestations are different now. Until democracy is restored, until the natural rights of the Nepali citizen to fully participate in their own destiny is restored, the Nepali Congress will reserve the option of determining what form this struggle takes according to time, circumstance, and convenience.

Since the phrase 'party-less' has been lifted from the present Panchayat Constitution, it has now become a paradoxical hollow document, because it is undeniable that the constitutional legitimacy of its enforcers has ended. However, to perpetuate these contradictions at the expense of our trust will throw doubt onto the honesty, credibility, and willingness to act in accordance with the changed circumstances. I expect an honest culture of respect for the Nepali people, who have suffered for four decades under cheating, conspiracy, deceit, and betrayal. The Nepalis of this age are neither slaves nor vassals. Their only desire is to become honorable citizens who have the opportunity to build their nation. The Nepali Congress is still unwavering in its determination to fulfill this desire."

Ganeshman-ji's statement created enough pressure on the King to quickly meet the remaining demands, and it also warned the Nepali people against declaring victory prematurely.

After hearing the royal proclamation of the King on the night of April 8th, the people wanted to express their joy on the streets, but the curfew did not allow them to do so. On the next day, April 9, Radio Nepal announced that the curfew was lifted at 6:30am, and the sea of people took to the streets to celebrate victory. People of all classes, ages, and communities, carrying party flags, wearing flags, congratulating each other, chanting slogans, singing songs, dancing and expressing immense joy of democracy, were everywhere. The heartfelt joy of liberation from dictatorship and attainment of independence was spreading in every Nepali. Similar jubilant processions took place in all parts of the Kingdom and huge public rallies were held everywhere to welcome democracy.

As the day progressed, the joy and excitement of the people increased. The streets of the capital were painted red by the abir-powder. Roads, streets, and houses were brimming with the insignia of hammer-and-sickle. In Kathmandu, for the first time ever in history, immeasurable, immense crowds were circling the city in endless processions, playing music with band instruments and performing folk and modern dances. Motorcycles, cars, taxis, tempos, vans, jeeps, buses, minibuses, trucks, and other vehicles were all part of the procession. Huge gatherings and assemblies celebrated the welcome of democracy all over the country.

Hundreds of thousands of people from all corners of Kathmandu turned out in droves, marching around the three cities and finally attending an open-air rally at around 3pm. The wide streets on the left and right sides of the 'Open Air Theatre' were also fully packed with people. Addressing the historic gathering, the esteemed leader Ganeshman-ji said:

“The multi-party system that we demanded is now ours! Other things yet remain to be done. Only then will we have finally achieved true democracy. For that, everyone must work together.”

Similarly, other leaders also addressed the gathering: Acting President of Nepali Congress, Krishna Prasad Bhattarai, General Secretary of Nepali Congress, Girija Prasad Koirala, Jagannath Acharya, Haribol Bhattarai, Mangaladevi Singh, Bal Bahadur KC, Bal Krishna Khan, United Left Front Leader, Sahana Pradhan, Honorary president Tulsilal Amatya, Padmaratna Tuladhar, Nirmal Lama, Krishna Raj Burma, Bishnu Bahadur Manandhar, Manmohan Adhikari, Jhala Nath Khanal. All of them stressed the importance of the people in the victory of the People's Movement, and the need to work tirelessly to institutionalize its achievements.

During his address, Girija Prasad Koirala had said, "This victory is not just the victory of us democrats, but also of the King, and also of the Panchayat." Upon hearing this, there was commotion in the assembly. Girija wanted to speak further but the rabble from the crowd would not let him continue. Communist leader Padmaratna Tuladhar and Nepali Congress leader Haribol Bhattarai tried to pacify the people, but to no avail. They became more aggressive, and even Krishna Prasad Bhattarai tried to interject and calm them down but to no avail. Finally, Ganeshman-ji himself stood up on the dais and reprimanded the shouting masses, saying, *"How can you call yourselves a democrat? What kind of democracy are we looking for, if a person cannot speak his mind? If you call yourselves democrats, then please be patient and listen to everyone."* Gradually, everyone calmed down and eventually, the program ended peacefully. This incident made two things clear. First of all, the people did not want to hear the names of the King or the Panchayat in any positive light. Secondly, it showed that Ganeshman-ji was the true leader of the people. He could go against the crowd and do what no other leader on that dais could. Where they all failed to persuade them and calm them

down, his words of reprimand were listened to and everyone fell silent. He was an omnipotent leader in a true sense.

DISSOLUTION OF PANCHAYAT

After mutual discussions and debates on April 10, the Nepali Congress and the United Left Front came to the conclusion that all Panchayat bodies must be dissolved immediately. As a result, they issued a joint statement on April 11, and put forward their eight-point demands. The demands were as follows:

- 1) We demand the immediate dissolution of both the Rastriya Panchayat (Parliament) and the Council of Ministers that were formed on the basis of non-party-system, as the ban on 'party-less' was lifted by His Majesty the King on April 8, 1990.
- 2) The sentiments contained in the current Constitution of Nepal have become contradictory to today's changed multi-party political system. Therefore, the articles and sub-articles that contradict the changed situation should be immediately repealed by His Majesty the King.
- 3) All Panchayat bodies from the district level to the village level should be dissolved, without affecting the daily life of the local people.
- 4) The movable and immovable property of the Panchayat and its related organizations should be nationalized.
- 5) The political prisoners arrested during the People's Movement, as well as those who were imprisoned before for political punishment should be released, and their cases dismissed.
- 6) The families of the martyrs of the current movement should be given adequate financial assistance with due respect and the injured should be treated free of cost,

and be provided with necessary assistance to fulfil the basic needs.

- 7) A Constitution Commission should be formed with proper representation from both the United Left Front and the Nepali Congress.
- 8) The perpetrators of the violence should be punished appropriately by an impartial inquiry for the torture employed in the suppression of the People's Movement.

Another joint general meeting of the Nepali Congress and the United Left Front was held in Patan on April 12. The meeting was addressed by Krishna Prasad Bhattarai, Beni Bahadur Karki, Mangala Devi Singh, Basu Risal, Sahana Pradhan, Tulasilal Amatya, Nirmal Lama, Jhalanath Khanal, etc. On the occasion, the leaders stated that the eight-point demands that were proposed jointly had been delivered to the King, and that if the demands were not met in time the protests would resume.

On that same day, Supreme Leader Ganeshman-ji met King Birendra at the Narayanhiti Palace and raised the issue of the eight-point demands. But when the King said he had no information about it, Ganeshman-ji expressed displeasure at Prime Minister Lokendra Bahadur Chand's behavior. When Ganeshman-ji requested that the demands be included in the New Year's message on April 15, 1990, the King told him that the New Year's message had already been prepared but that the demands would be met as soon as possible.

On the day after the new year, on April 16, talks were organized between the government and the united-parties on the eight-point demands at the Royal Nepal Academy at 11:00 am. Assistant General Secretary, Yog Prasad Upadhyay and eminent lawyer Daman Nath Dhungana from Nepali Congress, as well as Krishna Raj Burma and Nilambar Acharya from the United Left Front, were nominated for the talks. On the

government side, there was Prime Minister Chand and Ministers, Pashupati Shamsheer Rana and Achyut Raj Regmi. However, the government still tried to stall the talks for two hours, and they still had not reached an agreement by nightfall. Then the agitations started again as slogans continued late into the night. Some government vehicles were slightly damaged and demonstrations were held. The talks continued until morning without any conclusion and ultimately failed. Then, the remaining morale of the Panchayat followers was shattered by the intense public pressure and displeasure.

The King addressed the nation by a royal proclamation at 8:50 am on April 17, dissolving Articles 25, 26-A, 27, 28, 29, Articles 2-A, Article 41-B and Article 67-A of the Constitution of Nepal. With this, the Rastriya Panchayat and the Panchayat Policy and Inquiry Committee were dissolved. Some of the disbanded sections were related to organizations relating to the Panchayat and other sections were related to ensuring a 'party-less' system. Thus, the Panchayat was finally dissolved by royal proclamation. This declaration also directed Lokendra Bahadur Chand's cabinet to carry out the daily activities of government until further notice.

FORMATION OF INTERIM GOVERNMENT

On the afternoon of April 18, 1990, esteemed leader Ganeshman-jii met the King and conversed for two hours on the formation of an interim government. King Birendra repeatedly requested him to assume the post of the Prime Minister in this interim government, since the King felt that Supreme Leader Ganeshman-jii was the rightful person to lead the country. However, he politely declined the request, citing his poor health and the need to travel abroad for treatment in the near future. In fact, this was but an excuse from Ganeshman-jii. Being a supreme leader who was spearheading a national movement, would

anyone else in his position willingly reject such power? There is speculation that Ganeshman-ji, being of similar noble spirit like Mahatma Gandhi, had no hunger for power. Others speculate that he was chosen by the people, therefore he did not want to accept the position through the grace of the King. In any case, he sacrificed the honor and instead recommended that Krishna Prasad Bhattarai, Acting-President of the Nepali Congress and an old friend, be appointed Prime Minister.

Later that day, during a press conference at Ganeshman-ji's residence, the press was informed that the Nepali Congress had nominated Krishna Prasad Bhattarai for the post of Prime Minister. This nomination was also supported by the United Left Front.

On Ganeshman-ji's recommendation, an eleven-member Interim Council of Ministers was formed. The cabinet consisted of four members from the Nepali Congress (including the Prime Minister), three from the United Left Front, two nominated by the King, and two from the independent intellectual community. The Interim Council of Ministers was formed as follows:

- 1) Krishna Prasad Bhattarai, Prime Minister - Royal Palace, Defense and Foreign Affairs
- 2) Mrs. Sahana Pradhan, Minister - Industry and Commerce
- 3) Keshar Jung Rayamajhi, Minister - Education, Culture and General Administration
- 4) Achyut Raj Regmi, Minister - Housing and Physical Planning
- 5) Mahendra Narayan Nidhi, Minister - Water Resources and Local Development

- 6) Yog Prasad Upadhyaya, Minister - Home and Communications
- 7) Nilambar Acharya, Minister - Law and Justice, Labor, Social Welfare and Tourism
- 8) Marshal Julum Shakya, Minister - Supply, Construction and Transport
- 9) Jhalanath Khanal, Minister - Agriculture, Land Reform, Forests and Land Conservation
- 10) Devendra Raj Pandey, Minister - Finance
- 11) Mathura Prasad Shrestha, Minister - Health

AN UNPRECEDENTED INCIDENT

With the success of the People's Movement 1990, two unprecedented events were recorded in Nepal's history. Until then, every Prime Minister of Nepal had been appointed by the King himself at his own discretion, or by the recommendations of a majority party. However, at this time, the person who was appointed as the new Prime Minister was not solely decided by the King but decided under the recommendation of a common citizen, Ganeshman-ji himself. A common citizen instructed the King to appoint another common citizen as Prime Minister, and the King obeyed. Krishna Prasad Bhattarai became the new Prime Minister at Ganeshman Singh's recommendation.

Now on to the second incident. The swearing-in ceremony of the newly appointed Council of Ministers was held at Singha Durbar. Ganeshman-ji was also present. It was customary for the King to give instructions to the newly formed cabinet after the completion of their oaths of duty and secrecy. However, for this new cabinet, Prime Minister Krishna Prasad Bhattarai requested

Ganeshman-ji to instruct the ministers in lieu of the King. This was a first in Nepal's history, and Ganeshman-ji said:

“Since it is the responsibility of the Council of Ministers to implement the changes that we have brought to the system through the People's Movement, please pay attention to the important things without getting distracted by the small things.

This history has been created by the blood of the Nepali people. Members of the Council of Ministers must always internalize this and work for the best interests of the people.

I believe that, just as the Nepali Congress and the Communists, who hold different ideologies, have succeeded in making the People's Movement a success, so too can the Interim Council of Ministers work towards making this government a complete success.

The Council of Ministers should give priority to holding elections and to drafting a democratic constitution within a year. Other things are secondary. Under no circumstances should you delay or postpone the constitution-drafting and election process. In fact, it is not necessary that you achieve any goal except for these two. However, the government needs to continue its regular work, regardless.

Now, we have to build a fully democratic and prosperous nation. If there is any threat to democracy in the future, let us face it united.

The interim government may not be able to take big steps, but it is possible to build the foundations to point the country in the right direction. Now, there is no escaping the people with excuses.

As ninety-five percent of Nepalis are farmers, it is them who suffer the most through tyranny or poverty. Therefore, the remnants of the feudal system must be eradicated from the roots. This will be done gradually.

The Nepali people have had to suffer due to the lack of a Trade and Transit Treaty with India. Let the new government pay attention to this, as well.”

On the occasion, Prime Minister Krishna Prasad Bhattarai promised to end the stalemate between Nepal and India and restore harmony, establish good relations with all neighbors, adopt a market-oriented economy, give voting rights to those over 18, issue a new democratic constitution within a year, and hold the general election. He said, “My goal is not to become Prime Minister, but salvation. Since salvation includes freedom, my goal is the freedom of all Nepalis.”

Thus, after the formation of the Interim Cabinet under the Prime Ministership of Krishna Prasad Bhattarai on April 19, 1990, the People's Movement came to a happy end, and this ancient country called Nepal once again entered the democratic era.

ACHIEVEMENTS OF PEOPLE'S MOVEMENT 1990

It is an achievement in itself that in this 21st century, a non-violent movement like the People's Movement came to a successful conclusion. At the time when the People's Movement was being prepared in Nepal, dictators were massacring millions in Eastern European countries, who were protesting communism and advocated for democracy and freedom. Regardless, people everywhere were flying the flags of victory. There was no doubt that the rights of the people would be established in Nepal as well. The movement was moving towards its climax. It would not have been possible for democracy to be restored in just 49 days if the King had not relented after the deaths of about fifty people. Had the King suppressed his conscience, thousands of protestors would have been martyred. In this sense, the People's Movement achieved unimaginable success. After all, what other national struggles have been able to convey this level of participation and the positive message it imparted? If we were to discuss the details of the achievements of the People's Movement, it would fill another book. However, some of the most important achievements of the People's Movement can be summarized as thus:

1) REAFFIRMATION THAT THE PEOPLE ARE INVINCIBLE

The people are an invincible force. The People's Movement 1990 reaffirmed that, although it could be paused by bullets momentarily, it could not be stopped forever. Ganeshman-ji, the supreme leader of the Nepali Congress, certainly did the work of sowing the seeds of this movement, planning its composition, and preparing the necessary strategy for its operation. All the political parties of the People's Movement unanimously made him the 'Supreme Commander'. Therefore, in terms of leadership, it is not far-fetched to give him glory. But he himself

had said, “We may have started the People’s Movement, but later the people got ahead of us. They were ahead, and we were behind.” Indeed, some of the programs that proved decisive in the People’s Movement 1990 were not prepared under anyone’s direction, nor were such programs heard about anywhere else. Those programs were purely the original works of the Nepali people, which proved to be inspirational for peace-loving demonstrators who believe in non-violence. Some of these programs included: (A) Declaring a particular area a ‘government free zone’ and preventing the government’s thirst for violence from entering there. (B) Declaring a ‘black-out zone’ by turning off all the lights so that the police would be confused in the darkness. (C) The ‘ocean of people’ that descended on the streets on April 6 was not a call-to-action from any party or group. It was something that the people did spontaneously. (D) The warning for depositors to withdraw all savings from the banks because the government will confiscate it, turned out to be an original idea that, if allowed to continue, would have bankrupted and collapsed the entire Nepali economy. (E) Similarly, prayer meetings held in temples, mosques, and churches pleading with God ‘to educate and reform the Panchayat government’ extended the movement to the grassroots level without any discrimination on the basis of religion, and also humiliated the Panchayat. Therefore, the confirmation of the fact that the people are invincible is an indescribable achievement.

2) NO INTERFERENCE FROM FOREIGNERS

Foreigners have always played a decisive role in all of the transformative struggles that have taken place in Nepal till date. The revolution of 1951 was initiated and carried out by the Nepali Congress but its final agreement was reached in Delhi. That, too, with the support of India. In 1961, King Mahendra all but

practically sliced the summit of Sagarmatha (Mount Everest) and handed it to China in order to gain their support for his anti-democratic coup. Similarly, King Mahendra handed over the sovereign land of Nepal, Kalapani and Lipulek, to India. In recent years, before the Second People's Movement of 2006, the 12-point agreement between the warring Maoists and the seven major parliamentary parties (including the Nepali Congress) was concluded in Delhi, under the watchful eye and leadership of India. Accordingly, the roadmap for moving forward after the success of the Second People's Movement (2006) was also drawn in Delhi. Furthermore, in 2016, India imposed an economic blockade on Nepal due to its dissatisfaction with the promulgation of the new Constitution of Nepal.

Indeed, the leaders of all the political parties in India had said in their speeches at the National Conference of the Nepali Congress, "Seeing the enthusiasm of the Nepali people, it is evident that you need no one's help to achieve democracy. However, should you require our help, we are always ready. Not just your Indian friends, but also the United States, United Kingdom, France, Germany, and other democratic nations of the world. Therefore, rest assured, because victory will be yours. Democracy and human rights will be victorious!" After hearing such speeches from foreigners, the Panchayat government had said, "Nepalis will not be fooled by these non-patriotic agitators who claim to bring democracy by riding on the backs of foreigners." Their sycophants had begun to use the terms 'wolves', 'back-room politics' and 'foreign interference' to describe the Nepali Congress. However, although the government was claiming that Ganeshman-ji had invited foreign-interference in the National Conference, Ganeshman-ji himself said in his speech on that day, in front of the attending nations:

“Friends, there is no need to hesitate or panic. This time, along with our enthusiasm, vigor, and aspirations, India is with us once again. This time, India has also learned their lesson about what happens when democracy is ignored and autocracy is supported. India is compelled, for whatever reason, to side with us now. If India had shown even a fraction of the moral support that it shows us today, just thirty years ago in 1951, our situation would have been different today.

I wonder if it is simply the irony of history, that the United States, being the largest democracy in the world, disregarded our plight and chose to support the autocrats. The small nations of the world yearning for democracy would look to it, but it would turn its face away. After all, it was in the race for global supremacy. That is why the United States has supported sinking dictators all around the world. But since the Russian Prime Minister Gorbachev has abandoned any pretense of supremacy, the world scenario has changed. A new wind of democracy has blown since the Soviet Union adopted a softer and more flexible policy. Since the United States also supports it, the international situation is now not in favour of authoritarian dictators. This is why our victory is certain.”

In this way, Ganeshman-ji was a world-class politician who had the courage to slap the world-powers of United States and India right in front of themselves and the world media. Surprisingly, despite such a backlash, the United States, the West, and India did not stop supporting the People’s Movement, but instead showed even greater commitment. Had Ganeshman-ji ridden on the back of foreign powers to get what he wanted, he would have succeeded in his mission decades ago. The world-powers, no doubt, tried to collect on their debt with King Mahendra, King Birendra, Girija, Prachanda, and Madhav Kumar Nepal. They may have tried with Ganeshman-ji, too, but the results show that the decisive moments in the People’s

Movement of 1990 was brought about by the citizens of this country, and not the power of foreign nations. No matter how much Ganeshman-ji may try to hide it, any rational person will surely guess that those foreign powers must have tried to win him over to establish their own self-interests in this country. Some analysts have said that “Because of Ganeshman-ji's iron personality, they did not dare to put their interests in front of him.” Whatever the reason was, even at the movement's peak, foreign powers played no part in its success. Therefore, out of all the movements in Nepal till date, the only nationalistic and patriotic movement that foreigners have not been able to intervene in, is the People's Movement 1990. Having said that, we Nepalis can raise our heads proudly because of the situation and the iron will of Ganeshman-ji. King Birendra must also be given thanks for defending the country's sovereignty. Could there be a greater source of pride for Nepalis? Therefore, the manner in which Ganeshman-ji prevented foreign-interference in our internal affairs is the only real example of its kind in the modern history of Nepal.

3) THE DAY WHEN THE MEDITATION OF AN ASCETIC IS FRUITFUL

This iron personality named Ganeshman Singh started his political journey with two resolutions. To accomplish these, he battered and honed his mind and soul for fifty years. He hammered his resolve so much that he became known as an Ironman. In completing the People's Movement 1990, the fruits of his meditation, determination, and penance were finally complete.

Ganeshman-ji's first resolution was to “keep the promise made to martyrs”. After his friend and fellow-revolutionary Gangalal was sentenced by the Ranas to be hanged until death with the charges that he had acted against the ruling government and the nation, Gangalal had stopped by Ganeshman-ji and said

to him, **“Don’t forget my blood.”** He became one of the martyrs for this country. Since that moment, Ganeshman-ji had resolved, *“I will not rest until I have fulfilled the dream of democracy that my friend Gangalal saw for this nation. I will not back down from it even if I have to pay for it with my life.”*

Ganeshman-ji’s second resolution was on February 13, 1951, the day that he was released from prison. On that day, millions of Nepali people had gathered in Tundikhel, laughing, playing, and celebrating Ganeshman-ji’s release from jail. They were shouting in unison, *“Bir Ganeshman! Long may he live!”* Ganeshman-ji was enjoying their adulation when another chant went up, *“Our Leader, Ganeshman! Long may he live!”* At this, Ganeshman-ji stood up in his open jeep and shouted back, “Hold on a second! I’m no leader! Don’t call me a leader.” But the millions of people would not hear him. He told some youths, “Go, tell them. Tell them that Ganeshman is not a leader.” The youths disappeared into the crowd but the chants kept continuing and ringing for hours in his ears, *“Our Leader, Ganeshman! Long may he live! Our Leader Ganeshman! Long may he live!”*

The reason that Ganeshman-ji did not seek to call himself a ‘leader’, although he was easily in a position to become one if he so wished, was that he knew very well the burden of responsibility that the word ‘leader’ carries. He used to feel that if a person who was looked up to as a leader could not fulfil his responsibilities, it was tantamount to a crime. Indeed, he was afraid of that responsibility and the crime! But what could he do, because the people would not listen to him. The slogans continued throughout the day until he finally relented and accepted that, “Fine, you won’t listen to me. In that case, I have no option but to act as your leader.” However, that acceptance came with a personal vow, *“I will not breathe a sigh of relief unless all of you are freed from the shackles of tyranny and dictatorship.”*

The only solution to both of these resolutions was 'total democracy'. In the dark ages of the Rana regime, it was not so easy to even dream of establishing democracy. Ganeshman-ji says, "I made the resolution. So now, it had to be done." Therefore, Ganeshman-ji struggled for five decades to fulfil these two resolutions. He did not back down from his resolve in any way, and he continuously struggled for fifty years to liberate the Nepali people from tyranny. He was called the 'Ironman' because of his never-ending nature of constant struggle. The success of the People's Movement 1990 made the penance of an ascetic like him fruitful. Ganeshman-ji himself has said in his autobiography, "In fact, the People's Movement 1990 has relieved me from what I owe to the people."

4) THE VICTORY OF GANESHMAN-JI'S NEW DOCTRINE

Since returning to Nepal in 1977 from exile, together with BP Koirala (who had a policy of National Reconciliation), Ganeshman-ji's different views and opinions had begun to emerge. Under the National Reconciliation policy, BP Koirala was soft on the King, agreeing with the King on patriotic issues and fighting with the King on democratic issues. Ganeshman-ji, on the other hand, was tough on the King and would not hesitate to earn support from the left for the end of the Panchayat system and a truly democratic system. BP had stated the slogan, "The Panchayat followers need not be afraid of Nepali Congress, likewise, the Nepali Congress need not be wary of the King". However, Ganeshman-ji had taken the stance that the Nepali Congress should not be intimidated by the Panchayat followers. This would also prevent the tricky strategy of the King, who since 1961, had been using communists to weaken the Nepali Congress. Ganeshman-ji was convinced that true democracy would never arrive by begging for it. Because of this, he had the clear vision that the people needed to fight the autocrats.

Therefore, for the sake of nationalism and democracy, Ganeshman-ji moved towards formulating a new strategy for the restoration of democracy. He presented a different view than BP Koirala, espousing that consensus, participation and reconciliation between the anti-Panchayat forces and those who want to restore democracy is the true 'national reconciliation'.

The People's Movement 1990 was the result of this completely new strategy by Ganeshman-ji and he should be solely credited for this successful innovation. . Because of this polarizing strategy which went against the doctrine of the Nepali Congress Party thus far, traditionalists within the party, who believed in a give-and-take relationship with the King, were not pleased with the new policy leap. Therefore, they did not help the People's Movement much. Their only favour was that they did not publicly oppose the People's Movement. In such a situation, if the People's Movement 1990 had failed, one can easily guess how much Ganeshman-ji would have been affected by such elements. Therefore, the People's Movement was also a victory of Ganeshman-ji's innovative strategy. Building on the base of the success of the jointly conducted Peoples' movement, Girija Prasad Koirala, carried along Ganeshman-ji's strategy in the later phases during his leadership. Girija also adopted a similar strategy of joining hands with all parties and succeeded in displacing the monarchy from Nepal altogether in 2008!

After the demise of Mahatma Gandhi, the patron saint of non-violence, the politics of 'violent protest' grew stronger across all of South Asia. As a result, non-violence began to be displaced. Nepal was also being affected by the same thing. By defeating the King's violent tactics through the people's peaceful and disciplined uprising, Ganeshman-ji's strategy revived Mahatma Gandhi's doctrine of non-violence. The People's Movement established that "Non-violence protest is a perennial thing, and its relevance will last forever."

BENEFIT FOR THE MONARCHY

When Girija Prasad Koirala said in the victory celebration, on April 9, 1990, that the victory belonged to the King as well, he was lambasted and not allowed to continue. Naturally, the public was very angry. However, what he meant was not untrue. He was not allowed to justify himself there due to the public uproar, but the following points describes the reasons:

1) THE MONARCHY WAS SAVED

Scholars or historians who have studied the history of Nepal are well aware that India's influences have mostly prevailed in transformative movements in Nepal. It is kind of an undeclared policy of theirs to take either side at times between the King, Government, or the People. Within just nine months of the Nepali Congress government being established in 1951 by displacing the Ranas, India did not hesitate to support the Nepali Congress and step on King Tribhuvan again. Therefore, the next 10 years were favorable for India. India also supported King Mahendra's plan to overthrow BP Koirala's elected government in 1961, after only seventeen months. In 1989, the ego clash between King Birendra and the Prime Minister of India Rajiv Gandhi paved the way for the People's Movement 1990. Although the movement launched by Nepali Congress had garnered moral support from India, Ganeshman-ji managed to seclude the crucial talks from any outside influence in a very wise move. When the whole country became engulfed by the flames of the People's Movement, King Birendra made a sensible decision to finally relent and take refuge in the people's understanding. His wise decision prolonged his rule for at least another two decades until his death. Had his brother King Gyanendra been as wise, conscious, and restrained as King Birendra, he would not have lost the ancestral seat of monarch

in 2008. Therefore, it is not inappropriate to say that King Birendra also achieved victory by safeguarding the ancestral heritage of his ancestors - the monarchy.

2) WHY RISK THE MONARCHY TO PROTECT THE PANCHAYAT?

The Kings of this country spent 30 years establishing the Panchayat system in the country. The end result was continued poverty, illiteracy, disease, underdevelopment, and instability in the country. The King risked his reputation only to keep the Panchayat followers in power. But for thirty years, they could neither win the hearts of the people nor harness any international support. What, then, was the point of keeping a broken system? King Birendra pondered this. Therefore, he decided one morning that the monarchy should not be allowed to sink with the Panchayat. Therefore, the agreement was reached that the experiment of multi-party democracy would be given permission. What was the result of this on the monarchy? The people ended up thanking him for stopping the violent actions of the government, and the world community accepted him as a democratic King that could co-exist with democracy. Therefore, the King also emerged victorious.

3) ALL THE PRIVILEGE WITH NO BLAME

BP Koirala used to say, “The King has no choice but to be a patriot. If the country remains, then only can he be a King. Who will consider him a King if he does not have a country?” As a result, the monarchy remained even after the advent of the multi-party system. In the Panchayat system, when something went amiss, the blame would ultimately befall the King, because it was his system of governance that had failed. However, in a multi-party democracy, he was the constitutional monarch. He was entitled to all the honors, dignity, and privileges that a King should receive, however the burden of guilt or mismanagement

has to be borne by the party in power. All the privilege with no blame! As long as he is not overly ambitious and power hungry, there is no more comfortable position for a King than in a constitutional monarchy. Therefore, this was still a victory for the King.

4) AGREEMENT WITH A PRINCIPLED LEADER

In revolutions, wars, and struggles, if one side wins and the other side loses, then there is no need for negotiation. However, if the leadership of the losing party is wise, it can reduce the damage through compromise. It is not uncommon for an unreliable and cunning leader to use negotiations to create unforeseen circumstances. However, if the leaders on both sides are credible, responsible, and principled, it is not impossible for both parties to emerge with a compromise that ensures both their ideals. King Birendra pondered, “The people do not back down from their demand of a multi-party democracy. If I do not give them what they want, anything could happen next. Thousands of citizens will be killed. Foreign nations will start interfering and taking advantage of this country. In the end, the only victor may be a foreign country. Who knows, the monarchy may be abolished. Therefore, it is better to reach an agreement with the people in time.” Eventually, the King had a positive dialogue and a meaningful agreement was reached with Ganeshman Singh. As a result, both sides felt that they had won. The King’s defeat was the sacrifice of the Panchayat system. As the patron of the Panchayat, the monarchy should have sunk with it, but it did not because King Birendra was a statesman. He had foreseen the crisis looming on the horizon against the monarchy, so he laid down his weapons and surrendered himself to the people. In doing so, he saved his throne of monarchy, his property, his children’s right to the throne. Everything remained the same in terms of position, prestige, value, dignity, and crown.

The only loss was a Panchayat system that the King had been supporting at the risk of his reputation. A Panchayat system which neither had the diplomacy nor the strength to deal with the opposition. What would be the purpose of committing suicide instead of just cutting off the rotten limb? Therefore, to be able to take such a decision was a victory for King Birendra's wisdom. Later, in 2008, his own brother King Gyanendra could not do the same and clung to his arrogance, which ended in the abolishment of monarchy in Nepal.

However, it is important to mention that King Birendra was able to take this wise decision only because the other side of the struggle was led by a principled and ethical leader like Ganeshman Singh. If not for him, if a hardliner had been in his place leading the movement, the King may have been displaced completely. Indeed, after the victory of the People's Movement, some extreme communists said to Ganeshman-ji, "Ganeshman-ji, today you have the upper hand. You are not only the Supreme Commander of the People's Movement but also a Supreme Leader. The whole of Nepal is united behind you today. This situation will definitely not last forever. Therefore, this is the right time to overthrow the monarchy and establish a republic in this country. Let us move ahead with it. You will have our full support!" After hearing their words, Ganeshman-ji said to them, "I understand your sentiments. I, too, am not far away from this sentiment. But things are not achieved by sentiment alone. When we started this movement, we did not make the abolishment of monarchy one of our demands. Our demands were two-fold: (1) The establishment of multi-party democracy, and (2) the end of the Panchayat System. That is all we asked for, and the King has fulfilled our demands. Now, can we continue to ask for demands which were never made? Is that not immoral? Would the Nepali people, who have sacrificed so much for this movement, view this as a welcome consequence when it was

never presented to them in the first place? Would they consider it an ethical move? How could they ever trust me as a leader if I change my words from time to time? So please don't ask me to do this unethical and unprincipled thing."

Those extreme communists replied, "If you do not overthrow the monarchy, then we will continue to fight in order to turn this country into a republic. Our People's Movement will not stop, it will continue until this has been achieved." Ganeshman-ji told them, "I wish you good luck! You can carry on with a separate movement with those demands."



Ganeshman Singh with King Birendra Bir Bikram Shah
and Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala.

King Birendra had made an agreement with an organic, principled, and sophisticated Ironman like Ganeshman-ji. Therefore, he could rest easy knowing that no misfortune would befall him. In a somewhat similar situation in 2008, his brother King Gyanendra also finally relented and had to unwillingly hand

over the power to the leaders of the 'Second People's Movement 2008' by force. However, when Nepali Congress leader Girija Prasad Koirala and Communist leader Pushpa Kamal Dahal received the lock-and-key to the nation, they took a different approach. As a result, one morning, they sent one of their ministers as an envoy to the Narayanhiti Palace to deliver the message, "The country is now a republic. Please hand over your crown and proceed to your house in Maharajgunj with your belongings." King Gyanendra was taken aback because his understanding was that he would be allowed to remain, and that the country would not become a republic.

To be sure, King Birendra survived such a situation only due to the grace of the true lion that was Ganeshman Singh. There was no other reason. In fact, the real victory of King Birendra was to be able to encounter, and come to an agreement with, such a great, moral, and principled leader.

A Roadmap for the Development and Consolidation of Democracy

(In 1992, the Nepali Congress was in the process of preparing a manifesto for the first general election. Ganeshman-ji wanted to include some of the proposals that he had put forward and discussed with the party. Therefore, he had asked me to prepare his thoughts as a draft. I had recorded him speaking about these issues into my tape recorder, so I prepared a draft of the election manifesto accordingly. He also gave me the responsibility of disseminating and discussing the draft within the party. In addition to Ganeshman-ji, Krishna Prasad Bhattarai, and Girija Prasad Koirala, I explained the draft to all the so-called intellectual leaders of the party in a closed-door meeting. Upon completion, they said, “Well done, it is very good. Most of the points should be included in the manifesto.” However, unfortunately, not a single point of Ganeshman-ji’s proposals were included in the final manifesto published by the Nepali Congress.

It has now been thirty years since his words were captured on that tape. The suggestions he gave then have been lost to history. When I tried to re-open that cassette in order to present those proposals to the public, I found that the cassette had deteriorated beyond repair. I set out to search the records of the Nepali Congress but to no avail. By chance, I was able to find some written notes in my collection, and based on those I prepared the material for this chapter. Since I am the person who recorded and

transcribed his words, as well as prepared the written draft and discussed it with party leaders, I believe that I have reflected Ganeshman-ji's sentiments accurately in this chapter.

This chapter is also important because it makes it clear that Ganeshman Singh was not only a leader by chance or circumstance, but was worthy of being called a leader in all respects. He had a far-sighted vision and a clear agenda of how to develop this country. Other than Ganeshman-ji, the only other leader that I have seen who had a similar level of insight and foresight was BP Koirala.)

BACKGROUND

Ganeshman-ji knew very well that democracy could not be saved if the poverty, destitution, and deprivation in the nation were not addressed. Therefore, he opined that the government must take the first step towards eradicating them. In his statement on the day democracy was achieved, he said, "The political revolution has now been completed. From this day forth, in order to protect this political freedom, we must achieve success in the economic revolution. If we fail, democracy will be replaced by not only the bogus Panchayat System, but the more dangerous authoritarian tendencies, and the Nepalese people may have to accept not only poverty and destitution, but also slavery!" He had neither the aim nor the desire to rule. His goal was singular, and it was to bring about true democracy. Therefore, he dedicated his entire life for the establishment and promotion of democracy. Not only could he anticipate the imminent danger that was looming on the horizon, he was able to warn the people and teach them how to deal with the threats. The declarations made by him, which never were included in the manifesto, is one of such documents. It warns of the catastrophe the country will face if the political leaders do not exercise caution in this regard.

Ganeshman-ji was grateful to the Interim Prime Minister Krishna Prasad Bhattarai, who is considered an ascetic leader in Nepal, for drafting the constitution and holding the subsequent general election in accordance with it. Back in 1951, after the successful completion of the revolution, Ganeshman-ji, BP, Survarna Shamsher, and India were all unable to bring about a democratic constitution and hold elections; therefore, he was not only happy to see Krishna Prasad successfully moving everything forward on time, but was also convinced that democracy itself would be promoted and protected.

The constitution had been drafted and promulgated. The general election was also approaching. One day, I reached Ganeshman-ji's residence in the afternoon. Coincidentally, Ganeshman-ji had just finished eating and was resting comfortably in his living room. He called me in as soon as he saw me. After a minute of silence, he said, "Dhakal-ji! The election is now approaching, and we all have to get involved in its preparation. Everyone should support the party as much as is possible with their capabilities. These days I have been thinking of you. Well, the thing is, you know our party quite well. Who knows to whom they will turn to for help. It is better that we do our duty by ourselves. So, the thing is, we should also draft our manifesto for the upcoming election and put forward our suggestions to the party. This requires serious research and writing. I want to task you to take on this responsibility and keep improving on the draft. What do you say?" I replied, "Yes, Ganeshman-ji. It will be my honour." He added, "Okay then. In about a day or two, I shall dictate my thoughts to you. Make sure to study the manifesto prepared by BP Koirala for the purpose of the 1959 election as well. If the party asks for our help, we will be ready to provide it. If they don't, well, at least we tried." I said to him, "Alright, Ganeshman-ji. Please give me your source materials and I will get started on it immediately." With that, I

got up to leave since he was waiting to meet with another visitor momentarily. As I was leaving, Ganeshman-ji said, "Let's sit at the same time again the day after tomorrow."

Over the course of many years of interactions with him, I experienced that Ganeshman-ji had an amazing ability to convey his thoughts and views in a formulaic way. In order to record Ganeshman-ji's autobiography 'The Pages of My Story', a team of us would be present at his home daily to record a series of interviews into a tape recorder, the day before its publication. The team consisted of myself (a member of the editorial board of Vishwa Sandesh Weekly, Mathbar Singh Basnet (the transcriber for the book), and journalist Hari Adhikari. I have seldom seen a person with such presence of mind like Ganeshman-ji in my long life of writing and my career in journalism. He was very conscious of history, with an amazing ability to vividly depict old events, and possessed the art of conveying them in a formulaic and accurate manner.

Time and again, I got the opportunity to see the uniqueness of Ganeshman-ji's ability. As planned earlier, I reached Chhetrapati again the day after tomorrow. I knew that Ganeshman-ji would convey all his thoughts vocally, so I kept a cassette recorder in my pocket. After the general formalities, Ganeshman-ji began to speak, "Thanks to the dedication and immense sacrifices of the Nepali people, the political revolution has now reached its final stage. With the success of the general election, the political revolution will be completed. In order to bring it to its sustainable and meaningful outcome, it is essential to carry out an economic revolution in the country. If the economic revolution is not successful, then there is no meaning to the political revolution having succeeded. In that case, not only will democracy be abducted, but also our sovereignty will be at stake. That is why I have been emphasizing the inevitability of the economic revolution. Again, it is not a magic wand which

works with a simple twirl! To make the economic revolution a success, we need the vision of the government, sincere efforts, objective use of resources, maximum use of scientific skills and technology, and most importantly, positive public participation. For this, the government should make sincere efforts. We have to be able to gain the trust of the people. Therefore, in order to make the character of the leaders in the government credible, they must act in a disciplined, honest and selfless manner. At the same time, simplicity should be reflected in the nature and behavior of the leader. Apart from this, the leaders and the elected representatives should not limit themselves to just within their constituencies, but should rather give their utmost attention to contribute to the national development and the national vision. We must create the feeling that if the whole nation is developed, then the local problems will be solved automatically. However, we must never forget that the success of our development will depend on the rural economy. One thing we Congressmen should never forget is that the armed revolution of 1951 in this country was carried out by the Nepali Congress. Similarly, the successful People's Movement of 1990 was also started and led by the Nepali Congress. The 1991 Constitution of the Kingdom of Nepal was also promulgated by the Nepali Congress. The upcoming general election will also be successful under the leadership of the Nepali Congress. A party with such historical significance and credibility cannot be found anywhere else in the world.

Therefore, in order to make our glorious history ever the brighter, we have to respect and abide by this constitution more than anyone else. If we ourselves ignore or violate the constitution, how can we expect the King or the communists to abide by it? With this in mind, we must place each step with extreme care. If the Nepali Congress violates the constitution knowingly or unknowingly, or we have not been able to maintain

its dignity, then 'time' will not wait for us to rectify our mistakes. In that case, time will select a new power to take over the responsibility of the country's development. So, let us understand this sensitivity well. At the moment, we have achieved the protection of the people's liberty. The leaders and cadres of the Nepali Congress should work in such a manner, enduring suffering and hardships, such that no one will be able to curb these achievements. I estimate that the next 15 years will be a critical period, therefore we must be careful about it. After this time, the people will have become aware and educated as to the importance and protection of democracy. Education, health, and employment will have crossed a milestone and democracy will have flourished. Who will then dare to tamper with it?

In light of these major issues, I am determined to successfully accomplish the economic revolution within the next 15 years by formulating the necessary plans. The Nepali people, including the leaders and members of the Nepali Congress, have to work harder in order to fulfill this important responsibility.

Before we start planning, something that we Congressmen cannot forget is that the Nepali Congress is a democratic socialist party. We should never compromise with anyone at the cost of democracy and socialism. We believe that through socialism and the successful conclusion of the economic revolution, we will be able to truly serve Nepal and all Nepalis. In view of all these, the following measures should be taken for the promotion of democracy and for the success of the economic revolution. In addition to the listed measures, the party must also enlist the help of intellectuals and relevant experts.

In my view, the basis for development depends on four phases. (1) Winning the trust of the people, (2) Preparing the infrastructure, (3) Preparing a launch strategy (4) Achieving an economic revolution.

PHASE I) WINNING THE TRUST OF THE PEOPLE

The Nepalis people have suffered unimaginably for the last century and a half. They have been forced to toils for centuries in the hardships of hunger, illiteracy, and disease. They do not have a concept of freedom; the word 'government' means to them a cruel and autocratic ruler. Therefore, they have never even entertained the idea that a government can be established in the service of the people, and can be dismantled if it fails to serve the people. All they have known is that the government is the master and the citizen the slave.

After the revolution of 1951, the Nepali Congress tried to turn the deprived human component into sovereign citizens, but King and the feudal lords could not stand it. Under the excuses of various pretexts, the Nepali people were further deprived of the opportunity to become sovereign citizens with full rights until the movement of 1990.

Therefore, we must now educate all Nepalis that they are no longer under the heel of anyone, that they are free and sovereign, that the constitution is now in their favour. They need to know that, according to that same constitution, they can form the government of their choice, and that even their children can become the Prime Minister of this country. Neither the King nor the communists will ever fulfill the obligation to make the people aware and conscious. They, too, want to rule this country by keeping the people as simpletons and producing labor like slaves.

History has placed this responsibility on the shoulders of the Nepali Congress. That is why the leaders and members of the Nepali Congress have to go from village to village, not to raise money or taxes, but to provide education, health, and employment. The people who have been exploited indiscriminately by sooth-sayers for centuries are not likely to

believe our lofty rhetoric easily. Therefore, we must convince the people that the Panchayat is gone and that the democratic socialist system has truly arrived. Therefore, to win their trust, there are some things that we can do.

A) RELIEF

As soon as the word relief is mentioned, the word 'compassion' comes to one's mind. We think of the mercy or kindness shown by the big people to the small people, the rich to the poor, the strong to the weak, the educated to the illiterate, or by the authority to the subjugated. Nepali Congress does not believe in such a thing. The relief that should be received from the country is, in fact, a citizen's civil right. This is an eternal thing. The socialist nation assumes responsibility for all the needs of its citizens. Western socialist countries have embraced the principle that the state must provide for its citizens from the cradle to the grave. In rich and prosperous countries, such requirements have been met by the state.

However, the Nepali Congress cannot provide false assurances that a poor country like Nepal can provide such facilities right now. There should be a goal to provide quality education and health free of cost to the people as we proceed towards attaining democratic socialism in the country. Though it would not be possible to provide such facilities immediately we should be continuously trying for it. Nevertheless, the government will provide as much relief as it can. It is also the duty of the Congress to do so.

In my opinion, there are two types of relief: (1) Immediate Relief (applied across the nation through a singular decree) and (2) Short-Term Relief.

Furthermore, there are many types of immediate reliefs. Of these, we need to focus on the following:

1) IMMEDIATE RELIEF

Availability of essential consumer goods at cheaper price

It is not uncommon to be able to implement a mixed economy or a democratic socialist economy. However, a welfare state must embrace a mixed economy in order to move forward with respect for human rights. In this context, Ganeshman-ji had made this suggestion with the objective of providing immediate relief to the Nepali people.

In those times, Nepal's economic affairs were largely dependent on India. That is why when Rajiv Gandhi imposed an economic blockade on Nepal, the country became like a fish out of water. Perhaps it was that experience which led Ganeshman-ji to advise that the country should be self-reliant in essential materials. He was aware that unless Nepal became self-reliant, it would have no choice but to rely on India. Furthermore, making it cost-effective was a complex and insurmountable task. However, Ganeshman-ji had done deep study into it. According to his research, between ten to twenty percent cost was added to the daily necessities at each of the four-five steps on the supply chain, by middlemen as they imported the goods from India. Because of this, almost all materials were almost twice as expensive to the Nepali consumer. Therefore, he suggested that if the government could make special arrangements to halve the number of middlemen, the price could easily be significantly reduced. He told the government, "If organizations like National Trading Limited, Salt Trading Corporation, Nepal Food Corporation, and Agricultural Supply Corporations can make arrangements to purchase directly from India, these consumer goods will be available to the public for half the price!" The government's effort should be to make these governmental institutions competitive with private sector importers, and that

is something that we can surely achieve. If Ganeshman-ji's plan had been implemented, cooperatives distributing cheap and accessible materials in every village could have been activated. Through such tens of thousands of cooperative markets, it could provide direct and indirect employment to the millions of educated-but-unemployed citizens. It is unknown now how big a financial and economical impact this plan would have had on the nation's development. Countless times I visited the leaders of the Nepali Congress with Ganeshman-ji's proposal in hand, but in the end these plans did not take shape.

Encouraging the marginalized communities

This small and delicate country called Nepal is inhabited by people of many castes, religions, languages, uniforms, genders, and communities. Over the past century, the rulers who have ruled here have exploited the sensitive diversity of our country in order to strengthen their dynasties. There has never before been an attempt to build a nation by seeking unity in diversity. As a result, even though it looks like peace at first glance, the fires of hatred burn deep inside. The state has never made any sincere effort to douse this fire. Never in the history of Nepal has any government or ruler moved the country forward by encouraging the betterment of the marginalized communities.

Therefore, the Nepali Congress will continue to involve them by providing them with due respect and opportunity. This means that while appointing people in positions that are under the domain of the government, the first priority should be given to qualified people in the tribal castes like Rai, Magar, Gurung, Bhote, etc living in the mountains and remote hills. The second priority should be the Madhesis, then only the Newars, and finally the Brahmins and Chettris. If the Nepali Congress fails to understand these sentiments, then an arbitrary negligence will create space for the inciting group to capitalize the moment to

fuel the fires of resentment of these marginalized communities and burn the entire country.

In order to prevent this from becoming a reality, the feelings of the marginalized castes, religions, genders, and regions must be understood and valued. Only when this is done will the people say, “After centuries, finally we have a government that understands us and cares about us.” This is the perfect tool to emotionally integrate this diverse nation. If the Nepali Congress cannot capture this moment and start the process of national integration, who else can?

Providing scholarships for the aspiring students

Until high quality government schools are established in each district, the government should provide scholarships to those underprivileged students to study in any of the available boarding school in the district or locality. In fact, with the aim of aiding this dream of Ganeshman Singh, we, a small group of his associates have established the 'Ganeshman Singh Scholarship Program' under the chairmanship of Sharach Chandra Wasti. It should also be noted that not a single rupee was accepted as donation or grant for this scholarship program.

Under this program, 435 needy students have so far been enrolled in more than 100 prestigious boarding schools in Kathmandu within 10 years. The program provided study and educational materials free of cost from grades 1 through 10. This facility was coordinated in more than 100 schools with the help of the principal of the Amar Adarsh Vidyalaya, Basant Kumar Shrestha, and the principal of Ekta Boarding School, Arjun Adhikari.

If such special programs embodied with scholarships could be arranged by common people like us, why can't the government or the party do the same or better?

Old Age Allowance

Public welfare states have been providing various benefits to their citizens such as unemployment allowance, disability allowance, maternity allowance, and old age allowance. It is not possible for a country like ours to distribute such allowances or money. But as a humble gesture, the new and democratic government should provide old age allowance in order to convey the message that it is doing something to respond to the pain, grief and suffering of the old age people. It will certainly be well received by the beneficiaries. Ganeshman-ji could not succeed to get such idea through his own party while in the Government but the United-Maxist-Leninist led government in 1995 was quite receptive.

One day, when the Prime Minister Manmohan Adhikari came to Khumaltar to meet Ganeshman-ji, Ganeshman-ji said to him, "Honorable Prime Minister, the Nepali people have suffered a lot. I don't know how much you can do for all of them, but I do have a small request. Please provide old age allowance to the aged elderly of this country, even if it is only five hundred rupees a month. If you do this, I will never forget this favour of yours."

This proposal was very well taken by Prime Minister Adhikari and he immediately responded, "Ganeshman-ji, rest assured. I cannot say how much it will be, but I will arrange for an old age allowance as per your wish." Thereby, an old age allowance of Rs. 200 was introduced for the first time in the Government's incentive plan.

This scheme immortalized Prime Minister Manmohan Adhikari and raised the UML Party's stature in the eyes of the people. This was an opportunity that the Nepali Congress squandered.

II) SHORT-TERM RELIEF

Training and Employment

Thousands of Nepalis have been going to different cities in India for years in search of employment. Similarly, thousands of Indians have also come to Nepal. Nepalis do not have skills, so they work in laborious tasks or in blue-collar jobs. Due to this, the income of Nepalis is very low. However, the workers from India, even though they belong to the middle-class, are skilled. Therefore, they remit large sums of money from Nepal to their home country. A few thousand Indian workers can take as much money out of Nepal as hundreds of thousands Nepali workers can bring in. We must correct this balance of remit. If even a few days or weeks of training can be given to our citizens in order to educate them, their income can increase dramatically. If various kinds of skills are imparted, those workers might choose to stay in the country and improve conditions here, or even if they work abroad their incomes will increase unimaginably.

Nowadays, modern machinery such as loaders, bulldozers, excavators and other machinery have taken away the livelihood of the workers in underdeveloped countries like Nepal. Therefore, the use of machinery such as loaders and bulldozers should be discouraged and human labor should be given priority. By doing so, the adverse effects brought about by such technological adoption can be mitigated for a few more years.

After arranging such relief efforts, a truly pro-government sentiment will start taking hold in the public. We must all work together to make it happen. The feeling that this government and democracy must be protected at all costs will awaken in the masses. This trust and confidence that the people place in the party will prove to be the most invaluable asset for the government.

Building new schools and colleges

The government should take responsibility for the education of the children on a priority basis by first identifying their castes, tribes, and poor families. For such underprivileged people, residential schools like Budhanilkantha in Kathmandu should be opened in every district and the children of these marginalized communities should have access to study in those schools. The existing governmental schools in their respective districts can be renovated as per the necessity and used for this purpose.

Health Insurance

Ganeshman-ji was very concerned about the people's right to health. He often stated that it is the right of the people to get health care. That is the essence of socialism. However, it may not be possible for the state to provide this type of service to everyone at once. Therefore, he suggested that it should be done in phases. He was of the opinion that "health insurance should be provided to the Nepalis who live below the poverty line, first and foremost." To that end, we must find out how many citizens fall into that category.

Upon experiencing the unexpected advances in health, education, employment, old age allowance, and the affordability of essential consumer goods, the whole nation will speak with once voice, *"Finally, we have a government which listens to and cares about the needs of the people. We must protect and promote this democracy by any means necessary."* Indeed, this psychological change will prove to be the biggest asset of democracy. With this sentiment in place, the Nepali Congress can confidently forge ahead with the task of long-term planning for the future of the nation, and commencing the necessary steps.

The Nepali people are straightforward, what they want most is to have trustworthy leadership. People will support any leader with half-filled stomachs if they trust in them. The rulers here always considered themselves feudal lords. Therefore, the minds of the Nepali people are bitter. As long as the leader has a tendency towards self-sacrifice, forgiveness, kindness, selflessness, and frugality, Nepalis will believe in him completely. Therefore, leaders must be the first carriers of change in the country because their followers will walk in their footsteps. Therefore, leaders and activists who want to do politics should immediately start building their character.

PHASE II) PREPARING THE INFRASTRUCTURE

Having gained the trust of the people, we should then enter the second phase of development. The second phase is to fulfil the duty of the government by identifying and building infrastructure. Ganeshman-ji had selected the infrastructure for development as follows: (A) Land, (B) Labour, (C) Capital (D) Enterprise.

Before discussing development infrastructure, let us first figure out what our development goal is. What is it that we want to do? Are we aiming to build big planes, ships, computers, cars? No, the first goal is to produce daily necessities for local consumption. Due to the inability of the Panchayat system to understand this essential task, the country was plunged into the abyss. Their failure teaches us a lesson. That is why Ganeshman-ji always said that any plan needs to have the underprivileged Nepali people at the center of it. In addition, we should be able to complete the required infrastructures within five to ten years to achieve the goal of our economic revolution. For that, he deemed it appropriate to target two different goals. They were: (1) Arrangement for the production, storage, distribution, and trading system of daily necessities, (2) Formulation of the long-

term plan and the preparation of necessary infrastructure to achieve it.

What constitutes essential daily necessities? All the items that a person uses during the day, from the time of waking up to the time of bed, are essential consumer necessities. For example, soap, water, toothpaste, lentils, rice, salt, oil, vegetables, spices, clothes, books, copies, pens, firewood, utensils, medicines, and dwellings. It is not an impossible task to become a self-reliant country if technology is used to set up some new industries and improve agricultural methods.

The next question is about formulating a plan for the fulfillment of long-term goals, and the necessary infrastructure needed for it. For this, Ganeshman-ji said, “The foundations of Nepal's development are as follows: (a) Modern agricultural production and a green revolution, (b) Promoting quality rather than quantity tourism and making them more commercial, (c) Exporting water resources to India so that Nepal holds the cards, (d) Establishing export-oriented industries, (e) Linking herbal trade and production with modern means, (f) Protecting national forests, and (g) Fostering manpower.

The infrastructure required for the above-mentioned projects constitutes the following: (a) Roads (b) Ropeways (c) Tunnels (d) Education (e) Health (f) Safety (g) Law (h) Capacity Building (i) Nationwide Construction of Warehouses (j) Reliable organization of labor supply and training of workers (k) Establishment of own industries for concrete, steel, sand, ballast, bricks, iron, and other construction materials. In addition, procurement channels should be established for the necessary raw materials from selected places abroad. Avoid unhealthy growth of industries such that the internal economy cannot be disrupted. The government will take care of all the needs of the industrialists and provide quality services within a certain timeframe.

A) LAND

Land reform

If individuals become richer then the society as well as the country becomes richer. Since the vision of democratic socialism would be reflected in such directions, the Nepali Congress had already tried to implement a mixed economy. The Nepali Congress will not only protect the property rights of every Nepali, but will also create a conducive environment for each individual to earn income. The government will provide financial incentives, appropriate technology support and required management skills. In terms of agriculture, the Nepali Congress will be on the side of the workers and farmers who are solely dependent on land or agriculture. Agricultural land and housing can be arranged for the landless, and ownership of the land will be transferred to the real farmers by giving proper compensation to the landowners for their unproductive lands. If those land are not used by the farmers for production purposes such land will be taken back and handed over to another farmer.

It is an established fact that the majority of our citizens are dependent on farming and agriculture. Therefore, we must pay special attention to this sector. Otherwise, the development of our nation will not be possible. Other than agriculture, the foremost tenets of development, such as industry, business, roads, canals, and other economic activities are dependent on land. Therefore, we must focus on proper land management.

Development and Modernization

Since the backbone of our economy is the rural economy, the vision of the Nepali Congress should be to make economic progress without destroying the originality of the indigenous villages. As far as is possible, medium-level industries should be established in every rural area of the country. In the case of

agriculture, each village development committee will produce almost all the food it needs in its own village.

In the case of education, at least one high school and one regional graduate college should be available. The National Planning Commission may introduce additional practical plans and programs which do not conflict with the Nepali Congress's vision. In making such a plan, it may be necessary to integrate VDCs in many remote places and develop settlements. The idea of developing small settlements and villages in the status quo may not be practical in terms of investment and its return. In such a situation, by integrating multiple VDCs and shifting them to convenient places, modern VDCs can be developed as improved progressive model panchayats. The settlements to be developed should be arranged in a way that is strategically cost-effective, and they can be further develop into an economic zone in the long run. If the culture of the area can be reflected in the development of the settlement, then the area may also emerge as an attractive tourist destination.

Use of Technology

Without increasing the productivity of agricultural land, we cannot ameliorate the quality of life of those dependent on it. To that purpose, a Green Revolution is a must. In order to achieve it, ample capital and know-how is also needed, which is not possible with the status quo. Therefore, at present, we can only utilize the medium-standard technology which is at our disposal. There is no alternative to becoming self-reliant other than through these methods. However, we must continue to prepare the factors that will make the Green Revolution possible. With the proper effort and determination, it is not an impossible task. Our country's topography and geographical viability is quite favourable for this purpose.

Co-operatives and Farming

Community production and distribution is the backbone of democratic socialism. There is no alternative but to make the society strong and prosperous. Therefore, the Government of the Nepali Congress will run special programs for collective farming, collective fishing, collective animal husbandry, community markets, management, and banking.

Most of the schemes mentioned above are primarily targeted at individuals and communities. Individuals and communities will therefore be the direct beneficiaries of such projects.

Individuals, communities, and governments will be made parallel competitors in the production, storage, and distribution of essential consumer goods related to the people. This provision will prevent parties from being irresponsible or giving monopolies to anyone. The government will invest all of its power and energy in such services to the people.

In order to successfully carry out the points mentioned above, a separate land-management study needs to be conducted. The results of the study will direct the types of economic activities that are feasible for each region.

Overall, it is my belief that the land should be managed and utilized in this way.

Land Management

The segmentation for land-use for industry and business should be as such: large scale industries should be established and operated in the Terai region, medium scale industries in the prosperous inner-Terai region, and small and cottage industries in the hilly regions.

Since Nepal's topography is inconducive towards big industries, perhaps light industry may be more suitable for

Nepal, similar to how Switzerland has success with watches and cheese. It may therefore be suitable for Nepal to produce lighter items like computers, calculators, fountain pens, and dot pens.

B) LABOUR

The overall picture of labour in Nepal is ironical, because there is ample labour supply yet there is a shortage of labour. It may seem strange at first glance, but in fact this is the reality. In other words, there are plenty of available workers but they do not possess the skills necessary. Due to this, the industries in Nepal import skilled labour from other countries. On one hand, while labourers remain unemployed in Nepal, industries are paying a much higher price for imported labour. In order to free the country from this dilemma and regulate the economic activities properly, we should properly manage the following: (1) Training Labour, (2) Education, (3) Ownership Stake for Shareholder.

Training Labour

There is enough labour available in Nepal. But the irony is that because they are uneducated and not competent enough to handle all kind of works, they are often unemployed. Even those who are employed earn low wages and do not significantly contribute to enhance the overall productivity where they work. Therefore, in order to increase the overall living conditions of the workers and increase their productivity, special plans should be devised to appropriately train them. It will increase the capacity and also the income of workers on one hand and on the other, the country will not need to import skilled labor from elsewhere.

Education

Labourers, whether they are involved in agriculture or industry, are exploited and deprived, mostly due to the landlords

and mill-owners. There is a reason behind this, and that reason is illiteracy. Until such time that labourers become educated, they will not be able to escape exploitation. Only an educated labourer can raise his voice for his rights and benefits. That is not to say that uneducated labourers have not fought for their rights in the past, however they have ultimately become the tools of various interest-groups due to their own lack of awareness. Therefore, their livelihood could not ever be improved. This scenario is favourable to both the King and the communists, because poverty, illiteracy, and scarcity are the mediums through which they fulfil their objectives. However, Nepali Congress, being a democratic party, supports and believes in fostering the ability of every labourer to ascertain right from wrong because only then can they serve the country better. It is for this reason that education has been prioritized.

Ownership Stake for workers

Conflict between the workers and the mill owners has become a staple worldwide. In order to prevent such anomalies in Nepal, Nepali Congress has a plan to experiment in certain industries by engaging workers as the shareholder of the company itself. If this experiment is successful, arrangements can be gradually made to give workers an ownership stake in their respective industries.

C) CAPITAL

It is not imperative for sufficient resources to be present for capital formation. Indeed, it definitely helps. However, even if limited resources are available, if they are utilized in a proper way, it is not difficult to generate capital. If economic activities continue in an ongoing fashion, whether large or small, capital multiplies. Capital formation and economic activities are two interdependent and positively correlated elements. Therefore,

economic activities must be given the highest priority. If economic activities continue in all areas, regardless of village or city, rich or poor, small or big, hill or terai, prosperity is guaranteed. Five to ten years for such an endeavour is not an issue. All of this falls under the realm of the private sector. Now let us talk about what activities the government can carry out to accelerate capital formation. They are:

- (1) Facilitating seeds, fertilizer, and irrigation for farmers,
- (2) Establishing infrastructure for Agriculture-based industries,
- (3) Progressive taxation for the agricultural traders, and reduce the complexity of the taxation process.

There are three processes of capital formation. They are:

Increase in economic activities

Throughout this five-seven years period, we will have made the necessary arrangements for daily subsistence. That means we will be self-reliant. While being able to stand on one's own feet is a matter of pride, it is not enough for the success of the economic revolution. This self-sufficiency will take care of the day-to-day problems. In this period, every citizen will come under the tax net, whether or not they are liable to pay taxes. These arrangements will at least contribute to create a roster of people for the uses of the government. This will be an important achievement in planning for the development of the country.

Foreign Borrowing

In borrowing from foreign allies, the World Bank, and other similar international bodies, special emphasis should be placed on ensuring that our country's self-esteem does not have to be held hostage. Ganeshman-ji said that the People's Movement 1990, which was successfully carried out, has raised the country's reputation on the world map. At the same time, if we can maintain this proud honor of the Nepalis, the world community

will support us with open hearts. In anticipation of such a day, I have repeatedly warned that the character of our leaders should not be tarnished. Even if this is insufficient, I am ready with my alms-bowl to travel the world to ask for aid personally.

Foreign Investment

The miraculous revolution of communication, science, and technology has turned the whole world into a small village. Therefore, we should not be an introvert to restrict investments in the country in the name of self protection. Rather, we should offer investment friendly environment to attract foreign investments in the country while maintaining our self-respect and dignity. This will eventually contribute towards the capital formation needed for our development. If we can arrange such investments for few decades, we may reap the rewards by not being dependent on anyone else's financial support in the long run.

D) ENTERPRISE

The twenty-first century is not one of strength and might. Rather, it is the age of intellect and wisdom. Therefore, without improving the intellect and wisdom of Nepalis, we will never be able to accelerate towards development in the contemporary world. In order to get past his hurdle, enterprise and entrepreneurs should be protected and developed as per the demand of the times.

The educational state of our country is dire. If we do not increase our capacity in time, we will always lag behind the contemporary world. If we are not able to compete with the rest of the world and make good use of our own resources, how can we make good use of that capital? Even if the countries around the world have shown goodwill towards us and provided additional capital, it would not be enough if we have no internal

capacity. Therefore, we have to work towards upgrading our human capital and entrepreneurs, and for this we have to pay attention to the following things:

Enhance the capacity of civil service

Not everyone in Nepal's civil service is corrupt or incompetent. They look incompetent or corrupt because of extreme political dominations. In fact, I think more than fifty percent of the employees in Nepal's civil service are competent and capable. If they are provided with timely training, their abilities will not be any less than world-class. Therefore, let us arrange for their training and coaching.

Involve the youth in development work

The future of the country depends on the shoulders of the youth. The educated youth in Nepal are enthusiastic but they do not seem to be very involved in politics. This lack of youth participation in politics may cause bigger problems in the nation. Therefore, plans will be formulated to engage educated, semi-educated, and uneducated youth in development works and also in political field. The youth should be prepared in such a way that they can take the reins of leadership in the country if needed.

Import technology and advancements

Whether it is in agriculture, industry, or trade, we must introduce modern technology. China, India, and other countries which have made great leaps in development have also done so using the imported technologies. During the period of liberalization, China used to send tens of thousands of its youth abroad every year to acquire knowledge. They carried out this process for ten years, and today we see the results in their nation's progress. We ought to do the same.

Even in recent memory, goods produced in China were not trusted by the rest of the world. However, ever since industrialists from all over the world started investing in China, global consumers have become dependent on Chinese products. This has happened because of technology import. Therefore, according to our capacity and needs, we also need to import technology, foreign investment, and foreign capital.

Prepare world class managers

After arranging training for all civil servants, the administration of Nepal may be made efficient and sound. But, how can we convert our overall economic system and activities to a world class level? We do not have such world class managers. Therefore, private sector assistance and involvement can be sought to fill this gap. Entrepreneurs should pay special attention to this, and the government will only take on the role as a facilitator. This should take place over a number of years. If the government believes that the private sector will be tardy in this work, then it is not impossible for the government to arrange other means.

PHASE III) PREPARING A LAUNCH STRATEGY

The above-mentioned works should be completed by the Nepali Congress government within a period of five to seven years. By this time, our land, labour, capital, and management capacity will be fully refined and competitive. At such a time, we will have our domestic necessities fulfilled, and we will be equipped with the required infrastructure and internal capacity for taking a developmental leap (take-off point) towards the economic revolution.

By this point, the overall picture of our country would be as follows.

OVERALL OUTLOOK

- 1) As the land reform plan will have been successfully implemented by then, the farmers will also have become landowners. Similarly, the previous landowners will also have invested the government-compensation amount for their unproductive lands into business and industries.
- 2) Every Nepali will have access to the basic necessities of life affordably and easily.
- 3) Every Nepali shall have access to clean drinking water, minimum health care, and education.
- 4) Every old person, above the age of sixty-five, will be receiving an old age allowance.
- 5) Every household living below the poverty line shall have at least one person who is either employed or is receiving unemployment benefit.
- 6) Every person below the poverty line will have medical insurance.
- 7) Underprivileged castes who have qualified for the post of political appointee will be prioritized by the Government.
- 8) At least one boy or girl from each caste, tribe, underprivileged community, and poor family shall be educated in a standard local boarding school.
- 9) The traditional agriculture will have been mechanized and a medium-level modern agricultural system will have been developed.

- 10) Each village development committee will have a Junior Agricultural Technician (JTA) and other development volunteers to offer services to the needy.

The above-mentioned rural reform efforts will awaken a positive spirit in all Nepalis and also spearhead the nation towards reconstruction.

URBAN OUTLOOK

Now let us take a look at the situation in the major cities and the capital, Kathmandu.

- 1) There will be promising progress in employment for the educated-yet-unemployed people.
- 2) With the help of the government, cooperatives will have not only opened outlets to distribute daily necessities, they will have already been on track for growth and development.
- 3) Clean and pure drinking water will start flowing from household taps and faucets.
- 4) The quality of government schools will be enhanced and private schools will also be established as required.
- 5) Due to additional study and coaching from world class accountants, managers, and businessmen, there will be thousands of educated Nepalis both at home and abroad.
- 6) There will be an inspired wave among the public to save the heritage and culture of cities.
- 7) World class services will be provided in tourist destinations.
- 8) The government and the private sector will parallelly run the transport service.

- 9) Gardens and orchards will have been constructed.
- 10) Every city dweller, realizing the importance of cleanliness, will participate in campaigns to protect the environment.

POLITICAL OUTLOOK

In light of the positive results mentioned above, the nation itself will have achieved the following in the political arena.

- 1) Parliamentary democracy and the multi-party system will gradually show signs of positive change. The values of morality will have been incorporated in politics.
- 2) Those in power will act in line with the virtues and values of democracy. They will not be lured towards power and arrogance. They will never violate the principles of the constitution and the law of the land. Krishna Prasad Bhattarai is a good example for future generations because of his efficiency, courage, endurance, and frugality.
- 3) Because of the increasing participation of the young social-workers into politics, the political arena will have become more ethical and liberal.

ECONOMIC OUTLOOK

From an economic point of view, Nepal will have made unexpected progress within these five to seven years. The nation's coffers will have increased at least fifty-fold. During this period, the country will have made strides in the following areas.

- 1) At least 3,000 MW of electricity will have been generated.

- 2) At least 2,000 km of asphalt roads shall be constructed to facilitate large and medium scale industries.
- 3) Personal details and information of every citizen and foreign worker will be brought within the tax net.
- 4) Every Nepali community will have gotten rid of water-borne diseases due to the supply of potable drinking water.
- 5) An industrial village shall be established in a suitable place.
- 6) World-class private and governmental-banks will be seen competing in the home market.
- 7) The training, education, and other opportunities given to the workers will have raised their overall morale. Furthermore, the plan to enable them to have ownership stake of their own industries will have instilled confidence in them.
- 8) Due to the positive effects of land reform, land productivity will have increased unimaginably, and landless squatters will have disappeared.
- 9) Due to this changed overall economic activity, the transport system will have improved tremendously in the whole country.

ADMINISTRATIVE OUTLOOK

- 1) We will see that Nepal's administration will be agile, accurate, and competitive.
- 2) Laws guaranteeing the protection of domestic and foreign investment and ensuring their freedom to make their own profit will have been implemented.

- 3) World-class accountants, managers, and entrepreneurs will have been produced in sufficient numbers.

EXPORT OUTLOOK

Export oriented industries would be set up to bring a positive net gain in the nation's balance of trade, such as (1) Garment (2) Carpet (3) Pashmina (4) Herbs (5) Medicine (6) Light materials such as: watches, pens, toys etc.

In addition to the industries mentioned above, other industries can also be set up as per the suggestions of experts. The experience of developed nations can guide us in the field of industrial revolution.

PHASE IV) ACHIEVING AN ECONOMIC REVOLUTION

Although the above-mentioned infrastructure goals are not a silver bullet for the economic revolution, it is hard for anyone to argue that they are insufficient. The economic revolution has to be completed on the basis of these infrastructures. In deciphering the meaning and operation of an economic revolution, we have many examples of other countries who have experienced it and carried it out successfully. Such technical work can be assisted by foreigners. The following issues need to be emphasized within the mindset of the Nepali Congress.

- 1) Generation of hydropower should be increased to at least 10,000 MW within 10 years.
- 2) Necessary services should be provided to attract at least one million quality tourists.
- 3) Since agricultural land has been handed over to the real farmers, agricultural production should have increased at least tenfold.

- 4) Taking advantage of geographical diversity, non-seasonal products like vegetables and fruits can be sold at high prices in the Indian market.
- 5) Our agricultural products will be of such quality that they can easily compete in foreign markets.
- 6) Export of fish, processed meats, and dairy products such as ghee, cheese, butter, chocolate etc.
- 7) Products of agro-based industries such as oilseeds, sugar, flour, rice, jams, jellies, fruits, canned foods, etc will be exported.
- 8) Arrangements will be made to export 'branded' herbs with minimum processing required.

A CULTURAL CITY FOR THE TOURISM ECONOMY

All of the three cities in the Kathmandu Valley are cities of cultural significance in the world. If we can protect and promote them, we will never run out of resources. It will also go a long way in raising Nepal's profile in the world. Apart from this, if we can present Lumbini, Janakpur, Pokhara, and Chitwan in the tourism market, unimaginable benefits can be reaped.

Our ancestors passed on to us landmarks, temples, language, and culture as our rich cultural heritage. What will we leave to the next generation? Therefore, let us build a new cultural city for this. Let us build a modern road of 25-30 km length in Kathmandu, the capital of the country. Let us build houses on both sides of the road that reflect the culture of all 75 districts of our country. Such activities not only enhance the beauty of the city but also attract tourists. Tourists who come to Kathmandu who do not have time to visit all of Nepal will at least get a brief overview of Nepal after visiting this cultural city. In addition to its many positives, the biggest positive aspect of such a cultural

city is the spirit of national integration. It conveys the message that the people of the four castes and thirty-six sub-castes that live in seventy-five districts of Nepal are all a singular Nepali identity.

Ganeshman-ji said, "I don't think this is an impossible task. After the mega earthquake of 1934, Juddha Shamsheer built a shopping lane in Kathmandu's Indrachowk. It covered the road between his own statue to the Lord Akashbhairav temple, much to the delight of cities like Calcutta and London! Even to this day, it is still able to demonstrate our creativity. Therefore, if suitable, let us arrange to make such a cultural city that reflects our own original architecture and cultural heritage."

FEATURES OF THE MANIFESTO

- 1) In all of the manifestos published and distributed by political parties in Nepal till date, they have stated in a manner similar to how a fundraiser speaks to their donor, "If you vote for us, we will give you such and such facilities." However, Ganeshman-ji, in his proposed manifesto, has sought to convey the message that the Panchayat system has now been abolished and true democracy has come, and that its aim is to provide public service and relief, to understand the problems and the situation of the people, to explain the essence of liberty to the people. For this, political leaders and activists should have simplicity and a sense of service, and they should be servants and not rulers of the people. This psychoanalysis by Ganeshman-ji was a completely new approach.
- 2) Ganeshman-ji was a champion of the downtrodden and the ignored people. There was no question of him not addressing their representation in the manifesto. He also

specified the order by which appointments should be made by the government. The first priority should be given to the tribes and marginalized people living in the mountains and remote hills. The second priority should be the Madhesis, then only the Newars, and finally the Brahmins and Chettris. It will also help in bridging the discrimination gap between castes, religions, genders, and languages in our country. This action would dramatically accelerate the process of national integration.

- 3) Ganeshman-ji's best quality was his magnetic personality and his strength was his morality. He used to say that the Panchayat system collapsed due to its immoral characters. Therefore, in his manifesto, he had advised all leaders to develop a credible and moral personality and to always be true to their word.
- 4) Ganeshman-ji was well aware of the nature and capability of Nepali politicians. He was worried that the leaders of the Nepali Congress might themselves tear down their own constitution. Therefore, through this manifesto, he tried to bind the leaders of his own party to publicly commit to the principles outlined in the constitution and to never violate its dignity. He said, "If the Nepali Congress does not observe the dignity of its own democratic constitution, how can we expect the King or the communists to abide by it?"
- 5) Involving his party members in social work and evaluating them on that basis was a novel idea of his. If the power of the youth could be mobilized according to his planning and vision, then this country would surely produce moral politicians in the long run.

Therefore, after knowing the clear vision and roadmap that Ganeshman-ji had planned out for Nepal, and his aim to transform it within five years, ten years, and fifteen years, it makes one want to say, “A visionary leader like Ganeshman Singh has never been seen in Nepal's political realm until today.” Since he is no longer physically with us, the responsibility of implementing his dream now becomes ours.

People's Awareness Campaign

(Ganeshman Singh's Third Struggle Against Autocracy)

(During his lifetime, Ganeshman-ji led the struggle against authoritarianism, totalitarianism, and tyrannical rulers. He spent fifty-five years, from 1941 to 1996, fighting against three forces: the despotic rule of the Ranas, the tyranny of the Shahs, and the ill-conceived tendencies of his own party leaders' anti-democratic thinking (which he called 'Girija Tendency'). Democracy was established in 1951 as a result of his struggles, but it was hijacked by the Kings. Moreover, his own party, the Nepali Congress, was instrumental in tearing apart that hard-earned democracy. He was able to bring the struggle to an end, but he died at the age of eighty-two without being able to fulfill his dream of consolidating democracy. This 'Final Struggle' can prove to be a unique insight for those who want to know how painful it would be to have to fight with one's own successors and against one's own party.)

In world politics, it is rare to find such iron personalities who have fought for five decades for human rights against one dictator after another. Every time Ganeshman-ji achieved success, another tyrannical situation arose, and he continued to fight. Even so, he never gave up.)

BACKGROUND

There is a popular proverb in Nepali vernacular that goes, “I aim for the tree, but the axe aims for my knee”. In English, there is a similar proverb, “Man proposes, God disposes.” The supreme leader of the People’s Movement 1990, Ganeshman Singh, had dreamed of fulfilling the vision of prosperity and ensuring the future of the country through democracy. Before launching the People’s Movement, he had spread his dream across the nation to the commonfolk and mobilized support for the proposed movement. The people did not disappoint him and eventually the People’s Movement succeeded. Although the people never disappointed him, his own party the Nepali Congress, did not help Ganeshman-ji to fulfill his pre-agitation promises. Therefore, he was disappointed, and thus it is said here that “As I aim for the tree, my axe aims for my knee”.

Ganeshman-ji designed and implemented such a large and complex People’s Movement. After he made it successful, the interim government was formed, the constitution was made, the election was held, and Nepali Congress formed the first ever elected government singlehanded with a comfortable majority in the House. Then the conspiracies began against Ganeshman-ji, insulting and disrespecting him as if he was a nobody. The behavior of the Nepali Congress was like that of a spoiled son who wastes away all the earnings of his parents and disregards them. They disregarded him like an ungrateful child.

As time passed, it was not only the Nepali Congress but also the non-participants, such as the leftist communists, who started bragging and taking credit for having brought about the People’s Movement. This tendency grew to such an extent that even the Panches (Panchayat members against whom the movement was conducted) themselves started suggesting that the People’s Movement had been successful because of them. On the other

hand, Ganeshman Singh, the supreme commander of the People's Movement, was saying, "People say that Ganeshman Singh brought the People's Movement to a success. That is not so! It is the people themselves who carried out this movement, not the leaders. The leaders only created the environment for it to proceed. That is all I did."

Ganeshman-ji used to combine old proverbs and Nepali culture in a very lively and poignant manner. Culturologist and centenarian Satya Mohan Joshi said in an interview, "Ganeshman Singh-ji is a big fan of Nepali culture. If he had to explain a special context, he would present it to the Nepali people in a very poignant way by connecting it with culture. To illustrate who really started the People's Movement, he gave an accurate representation of the Nepali culture by saying, 'In the Machindranath Jatra (festival), the chariot is pulled all across the city by thousands of people (in Lalitpur). Naturally, where there are thousands of people gathered, stray dogs will be attracted. Finding little space among the throngs of people, some dogs found their way to the empty space underneath the chariot. As they walked between its wheels, keeping pace with the chariot, one dog says to another, 'Wow, we are really doing a good job of carrying this huge chariot on top of us!' Another dog boasted, 'It's no big deal to carry this load for the likes of us!'" In the same way, when other leaders were bragging about their exaggerated part in the success of the 1990 movement, Ganeshman-ji would quietly smile to himself, thinking, "If a goat could plow fields, then why is a bull necessary at all?"

There is a similar context in the story of Mahabharata. After the end of the war, all five Pandav brothers were celebrating victory with their well-wishers. Lord Krishna was sitting next to them and watching the festivities. As the festivities progressed, all five Pandavs were overtaken by arrogance. One of them bragged, "I did this, and I did that. That is why this war was

successful!" Another added, "We would have lost the war if it were not for my intellect!" Yet another said, "If I had not appeared at the right time, all would have been lost!" And another said, "War requires not only strength but also wisdom. This war is the proof that no one else had that wisdom." The fifth one said, "The victory of the war requires an innate understanding of the art of war. Therefore, I am the only one who should get the credit for this victory!" Krishna was sitting quietly and smiling to himself, thinking, "It is understandable that the others forgot my teachings, but how can Arjun himself forget? I will have to give them their medicine." As the dialogue between the Pandav brothers escalated, one of them said, "Let us go to Lord Krishna and settle the matter." Everyone agreed to this and approached him. Yudhistir, the eldest of them, asked, "Lord Krishna, who among us played the most significant role in the battle of Mahabharata that ensured our victory? Please tell us." Lord Krishna replied, "If I should name any of you, it could be argued that even Bhagwan makes mistakes. So, instead I will direct you to a brave man who has analyzed this war from the beginning to the end. What I can tell you about him is only that none of you are even worthy to touch his feet. So then, go see him. Do you see that head hanging on the bamboo over there? He is that great man. Calm your minds before him and ask him your questions."

Heeding Lord Krishna's command, the five Pandavs approached the person hanging on the bamboo and found him to be a disembodied head. They bowed their heads, and asked their question. The disembodied head said, "Pandavs! You all fought in the great battle as per your strategy and your capacity. But, the entire events from the beginning to the end were shadowed by Lord Krishna's Chakra (wheel). Now, decide for yourself who really brought about this victory." The Pandavs then felt ashamed after hearing the words of the great hero.

Who was this great disembodied hero? The story of the head hanging on the bamboo is very interesting in itself. The thing is, he was a personality whose heroic nature was known only to Lord Krishna. Therefore, on the first day of battle, Lord Krishna waited to meet him because he knew that this hero would turn the tide of battle against the Pandavs. As he came hurrying to the battlefield, Lord Krishna intercepted him and asked him which side of the battle he had chosen to fight on. The man replied that he would fight for Duryodhan because that was the weaker side of the two, and his discipline dictated him to always fight for the weak. Lord Krishna could not convince him to switch sides, so he beheaded the man with his Sudarshan Chakra. Although the hero was happy to meet his end through Lord Krishna himself, he was saddened to be deprived of the opportunity to fight such a historic and fateful war. He implored Lord Krishna to let him watch the battle, at least. His request was accepted and Lord Krishna placed his head atop a long bamboo so that he may watch the entire Mahabharat battle unfold. The name of that brave warrior and hero was Barbarik!

NEW GOVERNMENT AS PER THE PEOPLE'S MOVEMENT

In a decisive meeting between King Birendra and Ganeshman-ji regarding the formation of a new government, the King had requested Ganeshman-ji to accept the post of Prime Minister, citing that he was the supreme commander of the People's Movement as well as the supreme leader of the Nepali Congress. However, Ganeshman-ji did not accept the offer and said that it would be more appropriate to hand over the seat to Krishna Prasad Bhattarai, the President of the Nepali Congress, which King Birendra accepted.

After this, a brief meeting was held between Ganeshman-ji, Krishna Prasad Bhattarai, and Girija Prasad Koirala after returning to his residence in Chaksibari. In that meeting,

Ganeshman-ji narrated the whole encounter with the King, and further told them thusly.

“As I have explained, Krishna Prasad Bhattarai will be the new Prime Minister of the next interim government. Regarding the formation of the cabinet, we shall sit down and discuss again about who will be included in it. The government will have to be formed in a day or two. Girijababu is also here, so let me tell you something, listen carefully. Democracy has been restored because of the great sacrifices made by the Nepali people after thirty years of struggle. If we do not act wisely, the people may have to once again deal with the regression of their liberty like in 1961. Therefore, until the new constitution is completed, we should take even the smallest steps with great caution. There may be grand conspiracies like before to prevent the drafting of a democratic constitution. Therefore, we have a big responsibility on our shoulders. If we do not succeed this time also, democracy will not be retained, the sacrifices of the people will be wasted, and the sovereignty of our country may also be lost. Therefore, please listen to my suggestions and think on them:

- 1) Being an interim government, we only have two responsibilities:*
 - a. To make a constitution within the stipulated time.*
 - b. To hold general elections in accordance with the new constitution.*

Holding general elections should be the primary goal for the Prime Minister as well as our party. If we do not fulfill these two obligations successfully, the Nepali people will not forgive us. Therefore, please understand the sensitivity of these two issues. The whole party stands behind you, Mr Prime Minister. The biggest power we have is the people, and fortunately they are on our side so far. And I am with you always as your helper. I do not covet power.

- 2) *Also, there is the matter of running the government. I have three views on it:*
- a. *Provision of relief. The people restored democracy by displacing the Panchayat system. For that, we must make arrangements to immediately ease their livelihood and suffering, as their reward.*
 - b. *Our diverse country is divided on the basis of caste, religion, language, and gender. We must be able to convey the message that a democratic system values all people. We must show that democracy does not allow discrimination and injustice. Therefore, we will give priority to the marginalized as much as possible by incorporating all classes, religions, languages, and regions in the posts to be appointed by the government.*
 - c. *The third thing to keep in mind is that the personality of our leaders. Any party-leader or Prime Minister should be clean, pure, and respectable. For this, they must display simplicity, frugality, humility, and keeping their promise. If we can do that, we will be able to win the people's trust and confidence. It is this trust and confidence that becomes our capital and asset for the forthcoming elections. In addition to these, we still have a lot more to do. I will also try to put these things in writing. The number one thing we cannot forget is that our party is a democratic socialist party."*

Thus, both leaders accepted Ganeshman-ji's proposal, saying "With a 100% certainty, we will do this!" Ganeshman-ji was also reassured. Despite sporadic misunderstandings over time, the cabinet headed by Prime Minister Krishna Prasad Bhattarai did a very good job. Its only two tasks were making the constitution and holding elections on time, but these works were the pillars of democracy. Therefore, Ganeshman-ji highly appreciated Krishna Prasad Bhattarai for these two deeds, even though the government did not carry out any other significant task. After

the successful revolution of 1951, despite the presence of visionaries like BP Koirala, Ganeshman-ji, and Subarna Shamsher, they had to wait for ten years to hold the first parliamentary elections due to the interference from two Kings, Tribhuvan and Mahendra. Thankfully, Krishna Prasad Bhattarai fulfilled the same responsibility in his first year as Prime Minister. Furthermore, he managed to keep a clean and pure image which made the politicians of the contemporary world envious of his personality.

Due to the unblemished personality of Krishna Prasad Bhattarai and the omnipotent personality of Ganeshman-ji, the Nepali Congress was able to win a comfortable majority in the parliamentary elections of 1992. However, the irony is that Prime Minister Krishna Prasad Bhattarai, who was so popular inside and outside the country, lost the election. That defeat eventually turned out to be unfortunate for democracy and the country. An unexpected situation arose when the blame for the Prime Minister's defeat was placed on Girija Prasad Koirala's shoulders. Ganeshman-ji's verbal directive to these leaders regarding keeping their image trustworthy was shaken by this development. Therefore, Ganeshman-ji was placed in a very difficult situation. It was the first real sign of trouble for the Nepali Congress, which considered itself the messiah of democracy. It was becoming clear to see that Girija had devised a strategy to become Prime Minister. However, taking action against him would be counter-intuitive because it would only hurt the party itself. Therefore, both Krishna Prasad and Ganeshman-ji were in dire straits. They decided to wait until the opportune time to take action. In the same way that an egg-merchant does not disturb a broken egg in his basket for fear of breaking the adjacent fragile eggs, the leaders also decided not to turn on Girija.

The relationship between Ganeshman-ji and Girija resembled a brotherhood. Girija never failed to show respect to Ganeshman-ji. After the restoration of democracy, their relations became more widely known, and Ganeshman-ji was known to repeatedly reprimand Girija like his son, but Girija never returned a disrespectful reply. However, he never followed through on Ganeshman-ji's advice either. So, their relationship was like a child who respects his parent but doesn't listen to what the parent says.

SUGGESTIONS TO GOVERNMENT REGARDING RELIEF

Ganeshman-ji did not have any personal hopes regarding Girija Prasad Koirala. He only had three interests regarding the government: (1) to provide relief to the people, (2) to consolidate democracy, (3) to make their best efforts in view of the forthcoming elections. Simply, his entire energy was concentrated in these three areas. If the government had made a small but sincere effort to provide relief to the people, the people could have gotten the following facilities within a year.

1) MEASURES TO REDUCE MARKET COST

Ganeshman-ji had repeatedly urged the government to provide relief to the people. In that context, his first suggestion was to reduce the price of daily necessities. However, no results were seen for a long time. It seemed to Ganeshman-ji that the price of goods imported from India could be greatly reduced. One day, explaining his thoughts, he said to me, "When the goods coming to Nepal from India reach people's houses, courtyards and kitchens, the prices have gone up due to middlemen. This was a small problem then, but now it is a big problem. This is what I have experienced. So, if the number of middlemen can be reduced by any means, the price would go down automatically, wouldn't it?" I replied, "Yes, it would. That

is very straightforward.” He then continued, “I want you to research into this area. If it is feasible, then let us make a plan and submit it to the government as our suggestion. This can bring great relief to the people regarding the prices of everyday items.” I started the study, and after about fifteen days I found out that his suspicions were correct. The daily necessities were handled by middlemen at six or seven levels before it reached the consumer, and depending on the nature of the goods a middleman stood to make between ten to sixty percent profit. Therefore, if proper arrangements could be made and the number of intermediaries reduced, the prices would surely go down. I made an action plan and Ganeshman-ji further modified it.

The proposed scheme would have reduced prices and provided employment for at least 60,000 educated unemployed across the country. It would be implemented in every Gram Panchayat, and the plan was to utilize inactive government institutions to run this program. The waylaid institutions of the government, the Food Corporation, the Agricultural Input Corporation, the Salt Trading Corporation, and National Trading Corporation could be activated for this purpose. Even the organized private sector and relevant cooperatives could be activated, and gradually the steps towards a socialist democratic economy could be achieved. Ganeshman-ji had sent me with this positive message to the Prime Minister. Over the telephone, he told PM Giriya, “We have formulated a plan to aid the government in providing services to the people. Please read it and implement accordingly. Dhakal-ji is coming to see you.” The next day, at the appointed time, I reached the Prime Minister's residence in Baluwatar. After the usual greetings I handed over the letter of recommendation and explained the summary verbally. It didn't feel to me like he was paying attention. Then he said, “All right. I will study it. You should also send a copy to

the Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission, Dr. Ram Sharan Mahat, and discuss with him as well.” I then exited his residence and handed over a copy to Dr. Mahat as well. However, he was not conducive to discussion on the topic, and after months of no news, I visited the PM again. Upon seeing me again, he called his chief adviser Dirgharaj Koirala and asked him about the feasibility of the proposed plan. Dirgharaj replied, “The plan seems to be good, but it certainly is ambitious.” I immediately added, “Ganeshman-ji’s plan allows for convenient and accessible delivery of essential goods to the people without the government having to spend a single extra penny!” Immediately, PM Girija got up from his couch and said, “Let’s discuss more about it later.” However, there was never a later, and within a year or so he had failed as a Prime Minister and ended up dissolving his party’s convenient majority in parliament, earning himself a stigma.

After Girija Koirala failed to implement the presented proposal, the same was advised to PM Sher Bahadur Deuba in 1997, however yet again nothing came of it.

2) HEALTHCARE INSURANCE

In those time, the government of Nepal was spending more than four billion rupees on public health through the Ministry of Health. But the achievement was negligible. If all of the Nepalis were insured for health treatment by using just one billion rupees out of that four billion, the government would be able to provide public health facilities directly to the people. The biggest achievement of this program would be that the citizens could avail the facilities from a health institution of their choosing. Had this program been implemented, the confidence and trust of the people towards the Nepali Congress and the democratic system itself would have increased.

3) OLD AGE ALLOWANCE

Ganeshman-ji repeatedly gave written and verbal suggestions to his own party's government to implement social programs like 'Old age allowance'. However, the government never showed any interest in it. Finally, in the year 1996, Ganeshman-ji appealed to the Prime Minister of the CPN (UML) Manmohan Adhikari and asked him to arrange such a scheme. Manmohan Adhikari agreed to his request, and in fact, the CPN-UML communist party implemented the 'old age allowance'. This was, in fact, the only national-level policy that established the CPN-UML as a credible national party in the eyes of the Nepali people.

4) INCLUSION AND REPRESENTATION

Ganeshman-ji had described 'inclusion' as 'emotional relief'. He said that, as long as the people fail to understand that the country is theirs, that they are honorable citizens, Nepal will not progress. Therefore, in order to win their trust, the marginalized people should be included to join the system of governance. It is not enough to shout for your rights. Concrete action is necessary. Therefore, underrepresented castes, religions, genders, communities, and languages should be given priority in the posts to be appointed by the government. If this were to be done, it would provide an emotional component to the process of national integration. It would also spread a positive message that even the faceless get representation in a democracy.

5) MODERN EDUCATION

There was an idea to establish schools like Budhanilkantha, a modern boarding school built by the United Kingdom in Kathmandu, for the purpose of imparting modern education to children of deprived and marginalized communities. Until such

an arrangement could be made, the government would send such needy children to governmental boarding schools.

OTHER SUGGESTIONS TO GOVERNMENT

The above is about relief efforts. Apart from this, Ganeshman-ji also gave political, economic, social and administrative suggestions to the government. The suggestions were as follows:

1) POLITICAL

- a) **The Dignity of the Constitution:** Ganeshman-ji said to his party and the head of government that we have the primary responsibility and duty to uphold the dignity of the constitution, especially because it was made by us. If we do not respect the constitution then why would the King or the communists adhere to it? Therefore, first and foremost, we NC leaders have to respect, honor, and appreciate the strength of the Constitution.
- b) **Morality:** The democratic system is a very delicate system. Therefore, it can never be overseen by an immoral leader else its tenets will be at stake. Therefore, its operators must always be ethical.
- c) **Reliable Leadership:** Ganeshman-ji has clearly stated that the leadership must always stay true to their words and never promise anything that is undeliverable. In addition, simplicity, frugality, and ideology are the hallmarks of leadership. Therefore, if the leadership can make these things part of its integral structure, the trust of the people can be won.

- d) In conducting affairs of the government, the government must follow the party's principles, and the government needs to have party support in its decisions.
- e) Training should be arranged to prepare the young generation for leadership development and for the responsibility of building the nation. Their evaluation should be done on the basis of the social service work that they have performed.

2) FINANCIAL

- a) Ganeshman-ji advised that a democratic socialist economy should be implemented. The state should work for the protection of downtrodden farmers and workers, along with the right to conduct business as per one's personal desire. He was of the view that the pace of progress could be accelerated if the farmers were given the right to own land, and if the laborers were given the right to a certain portion of the profits of their mill as shareholders.
- b) The government should make arrangements to run private and public institutions in parallel by discouraging monopolies in the economy.
- c) Since the economic revolution needed to be completed within the next fifteen years, the government and the party should work together by making a time bound schedule. For this, experience and technology should also be imported from abroad.
- d) Arrangements should be made to bring every citizen of the country under the tax net. This will make it easier for the government to identify hidden assets, identify the real impoverished people, and plan accordingly.

- e) Focus should also be on the maximum utilization, distribution, and export of water resources.
- f) The country does not benefit from tourists who spend little money while in Nepal. Therefore, tourist-attractions should be created such that the tourists are provided quality service such that they spend accordingly.
- g) Nepal's herbs are world famous, therefore their commercialization should also be prioritized.

NON-COMPLIANCE OF THE GOVERNMENT

No one can argue that these suggestions were born of personal interest. However, the government did not listen to these suggestions. In fact, what they actually ended up doing was the opposite of what Ganeshman-ji had suggested.

Let's look at a few examples:

- 1) Ganeshman-ji had said that the principle of inclusion should be applied in every governmental appointment. On the contrary, PM Girija appointed seven ambassadors, six from the Brahmins and one from the Chettri group.
- 2) Ganeshman-ji had suggested a mixed economy under the principles of a democratic socialist economy. But the government, by imposing a capitalist economy, privatized some of the most important industries in the country.
- 3) Ganeshman-ji advised that the leaders should be trustworthy and respectable. However, by misusing government resources, party-chairman Krishna Prasad Bhattarai was again sabotaged in the by-elections by his colleague in the same party.

- 4) By making an economic plan to provide financial relief to the people, Ganeshman-ji urged the government to reduce prices. On the contrary, the government has hurt the people by increasing prices.
- 5) Ganeshman-ji urged the government to provide old age allowance, at the very least. He would say this repeatedly, however the Prime Ministers of his own party did not listen to him.
- 6) The government should seek the advice of the party, advised Ganeshman-ji. But less than nine months into his party's rule, six senior party ministers were ousted from the cabinet in one morning by PM Girija Koirala without consultation with his own party.
- 7) Ganeshman-ji asked that the young party members be trained to have high moral character and integrity. On the contrary, they were converted into brokers and agents to sell timber, firewood, and telephone licenses (quotas). It is a shame that Nepali Congress could not even produce ten young men who can capably carry out the national responsibilities.
- 8) New methods and manners of corrupted behaviours took hold during this period. There was already corruption in departments like tax, customs, and forestry. However, new spheres of corruption widened in education, health, tourism, and administration, too. It was a humiliation for the Nepali Congress.
- 9) The scandal of the Royal Nepal Airlines Corporation dominated airwaves around the nation for months and people still remember it well years after the incident. It is a grave shame to a party like Nepali Congress.

- 10) Ganeshman-ji had urged to build courageous bureaucratic employees that serve the country, but instead the government targeted the employees with distrust which caused them to become impotent.
- 11) Ganeshman-ji had warned that if the Nepali Congress did not respect the dignity of the constitution, why would other parties respect it? However, the government deliberately violated the constitution several times, and even made efforts to reach agreements with India with just a simple majority vote instead of a two-third majority in the Parliament.
- 12) Ganeshman-ji had warned that mid-term elections should not be held under any circumstances. The Central Committee of the Nepali Congress also decided that mid-term elections were not necessary. But Prime Minister Girija decided to dissolve the House of Representatives without consulting first with his own party! Could it be a greater crime against one's own party?

Ganeshman-ji then fell into a dilemma as to what action to take. The iron personality of Ganeshman-ji was not someone who gives up. He did not give up against the Ranas. He did not give up against the Shahs. Why would he concede defeat to a corrupt Prime Minister and a self-centered party? He decided that advising the government was useless since it didn't yield any positive results. He wanted to find out whether there was any integrity left in the Nepali Congress. Before protesting or taking any action against them, he decided to check the commitment of the NC leaders and members.

He decided to make a systematic schedule by which to evaluate the government, and urged the party leaders and members at various levels to partake in it. Though the first stage

was the smallest, in speaking with the highest leaders of the party, he said, “If the party is to participate in the parliamentary elections in three years, the work of the current government needs to be result-oriented and radically improved. Otherwise, the Nepali Congress has no future. Not only did I warn that this would happen, I also gave the government formulas for improvement. But the government seems to be groggy with sleep. Tell me, how will you answer the people in three years time about your accomplishments? I have warned you all in time, there is still ample time for results. I have given you proposals. Now it's up to you to decide. Even if you did not like my suggestions, the party should at least follow its own manifesto! You have not done even that much. Do not take my words for granted. I have no personal interest in this, only the interest to consolidate democracy. But I can see clearly that the pace at which the government and the party are moving will not be enough. A radical change is needed in both the government and the party. While there is yet time, I have warned you to improve, otherwise, you will not have my support in the upcoming elections!” After Ganeshman-ji’s statement, the party chairman Krishna Prasad Bhattarai and Prime Minister Girija both said, “We will start a review process to improve both our party and the government”. But neither happened. So, Ganeshman-ji started a new experiment to make the Nepali Congress aware of the stagnation of the government and the inaction of the party.

He named this experiment ‘Janajagaran Abhiyan’. Janajagaran means the awakening of the masses! Therefore, even though Ganeshman-ji called it Janajagaran, his first thought was to awaken the party. If he failed to awaken realization within the party, he was determined to take this experiment to the people.

He divided the ‘party-members awareness campaign’ into the following phases:

- 1) Including the members of the Central Executive Committee in this campaign.
- 2) Awakening the honorable members of the parliamentary parties.
- 3) Awakening the members of the Mahasamiti (Mahasamiti).
- 4) Awakening the members of the General Convention and understanding their views.
- 5) Understanding the feelings of the Nepali Congress by interacting with the working committee of the districts. Making efforts to spread awareness parallelly in this process.

Ganeshman-ji tried his best to bring the government under control. He used to express his dissatisfaction in meetings amongst the party leaders, saying that their internal issues should be corrected and not given a chance to leak outside into the public. In such meetings, Girija would reply, “Yes, I will do so, Ganeshman-ji.” However, in a few days he would have done the opposite. He would brush away Ganeshman-ji’s admonitions by feigning ignorance. After that, Ganeshman-ji extended the scope of his Awareness Campaign to the Central Committee. Even there, Girija did not follow through with any positive changes. Instead, he began pressuring party chairman Krishna Prasad to expel the protesting members. After Krishna Prasad procrastinated on the issue, Girija looked for a way to trip him up. Coincidentally, the by-elections were being held in Kathmandu, Constituency Number 1, at the same time. Using this opportunity, Girija again sabotaged Krishna Prasad Bhattarai which led to his defeat by the UML communist candidate Vidya Devi. This incident escalated the controversy within the Nepali Congress. It was the responsibility of the chairman of the party to take action against such undisciplined

behaviour. However, Krishna Prasad Bhattarai could not muster up the courage to take action against the Prime Minister. Ganeshman-ji had warned him many times, “Take disciplinary action against Koirala immediately, otherwise the party will be dysfunctional. If there is no party, who will take care of the country and democracy?” Although Krishna Prasad Bhattarai supported Ganeshman-ji’s views, he did not have the courage and kept procrastinating on the issue.

After his pleas with the party-leaders failed to reign in the government, Ganeshman-ji warned the members of the party’s Central Committee and advised them to control the autocratic tendencies of the Prime Minister. He believed that the hard-boiled and proven members of the Central Committee of a party like the Nepali Congress would understand conscience and principle. In his past experiences, he had served alongside members who were self-respecting, principled, and mature. Although each of them followed some senior-leader or the other within the party, he felt that when push came to shove, they would stand on the side of principle and reason. In the past, there had been instances when BP Koirala’s staunch supporters had argued in favour of Ganeshman-ji’s ideas, and Ganeshman-ji’s own supporters had argued in favour of Subarnashamsher’s ideas. After settling the debate, these supporters would return to their own camps. It was this power, this force, and this conduct that helped to make successful the armed revolution of the Nepali Congress. Ganeshman-ji thought that the present Central Committee members might have the same qualities. The members of the Central Working Committee of the Nepali Congress at the time were: Party Chairman Krishna Prasad Bhattarai, General Secretary Girija Prasad Koirala, and Senior Members Mahendra Narayan Nidhi, Shekh Idris, Dhundi Raj Shastri, Mangaladevi Singh, Shailaja Acharya, Nona Koirala, Basu Risal, Jagannath Acharya, Yoga Prasad Upadhyay, Treasurer Beni

Bahadur Karki, Ram Chandra Poudel, Sher Bahadur Deuba, Rambabu Prasai, Bal Bahadur Rai, Bhim Bahadur Tamang, and the party's supreme leader Ganeshman Singh. The proposal submitted by Ganeshman-ji was discussed by the Central Committee of the Nepali Congress but no conclusion was reached. Jagannath Acharya of Bhaktapur was one of the only members of the Central Committee who openly supported Ganeshman-ji's proposal. Ganeshman-ji was disappointed but not discouraged by the level of tactics within the highest unit of the party. Now his gaze was fixed on the members of parliament.

Ganeshman-ji believed that elected people's representatives from all over the country would be principled and accountable. He summoned 114 lawmakers from his party and told them, "Girijababu is destroying the principles and values of democracy. I have tried many times to stop him on this wrong path but I could not. Now this responsibility has fallen on your shoulders, the people's representatives. Go ahead and save democracy." Most of the lawmakers understood the essence of Ganeshman-ji's concern, but they could not assure him of their open support for fear of the government's wrath. However, some of the more principled Nepali Congress lawmakers, who were outraged by Girija and had openly declared themselves supporters of Chairman Krishna Prasad Bhattarai, promised to support Ganeshman-ji. In this way, those who had promised to support Ganeshman-ji came to be known as "The 36" and those who were in favor of Girija came to be known as "The 74". This group advocated the sentiments of Ganeshman-ji and Krishna Prasad Bhattarai all the way from the parliament to the party, kind of like a pressure group.

So, this pressure group was formed within the party, but it did not have the energy or the courage of Ganeshman-ji to violate the norms of parliament and party discipline. However, they presented a challenge for Girija. Ganeshman-ji was pleased

to have formed this group but was still not convinced. The reason for this was the same, that there were very few principled people within that group also. Most of these 36 Members of Parliament would immediately hide their tails if party-chairman Krishna Prasad Bhattarai beckoned them to do so. Ganeshman-ji had accepted their support as it was better than having nothing. But even so, he would have gone at it alone if he needed to. Such was his nature.

Ganeshman-ji now thought about shaking the lower-level party members, starting with the grassroots level. That lower level was the party's General Convention which was being held in Kalbalgudi, Bhadrapur. Speaking at the convention, Ganeshman-ji, citing the example of a ship, said:

“There are holes in this ship. Water is flowing in and out of it like our enemies. I have repeatedly pleaded with the head of government and the head of the party to stop our enemies in time. I have even cried in front of them, but they sit with cotton in their ears. Therefore, if you General Convention members do not become aware immediately, then this ship called the Nepali Congress will sink, and we all sink with it! If it were just you and me sinking, I would not be so worried, but the future of our country and our democracy is linked to the Nepali Congress. So, please save it! If you fail to put pressure on the Prime Minister of your own party, you too will drown along with him. As the supreme leader of the party, I feel helpless seeing the water coming in from holes everywhere. I can run to save my life, but a leader should never turn his back. So, I will drown together with you! Jai Nepal!”

This poignant statement by Ganeshman-ji had sparked in the members the blood of patriotism and loyalty to the democracy. But the members who were trapped by greed and ambition were not so eager to possibly lose their jobs by following Ganeshman-ji. His sentiments were appreciated and

respected, however the real followers who Ganeshman-ji could count on numbered but a few. But true leaders do not work by relying on their number of followers. Whether it is one or a hundred thousand, a true leader cares only for the welfare of the country and its people.

Meanwhile, in order to increase pressure on the government, Ganeshman-ji stated, “The Nepali Congress should not die together with this government. Governments come and go, but the Nepali Congress party is a permanent element. If an incurable disease like cancer is found in any part of the human body, it is advised to surgically remove it. In the same way, the Prime Minister, failing to show good performance, needs to resign. If he doesn’t do so voluntarily, then the party ought to be able to remove him.” In this manner, he brandished the demand of PM Girija’s resignation as his weapon.

Then, the Nepali Congress decided to hold its Mahasamiti Meeting in Bharatpur, and Ganeshman-ji was naturally invited, being the Supreme Leader. He decided not to attend the meeting, for it would have been worthless to participate as a witness to the misdeeds of the party leaders.

Instead, he sent a long letter to the party chairman asking him to convey his views to those members present. The full text of the letter reads:

Bir Hospital, Kathmandu
27 July 1994
Mr. President, Nepali Congress,
Central Working Committee,
Kathmandu

Tolerance is a greater guilt than crime

As a founding member of this party, I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to you for inviting me to attend today's important meeting of the Central Committee. Despite my strong desire to attend the meeting, it could not be possible due to my poor health. Therefore, I have tried to put my thoughts and views through this letter. I also request you to place it in the meeting if you think it is appropriate.

In the circular sent for the meeting, it was mentioned that a meeting of the Central Working Committee will be held to discuss the current unusual political situation and reach a consensus. Now the question arises, how did this situation come about? Who brought it? In my opinion, the answers to these questions lie in the solution to the problem itself. I have been publicly expressing my views and thoughts on this issue. Friends of the Central Working Committee, including you, are not unaware of my opinion. So, I don't think it is necessary to repeat all of them here.

The problem that the party and the country are facing today is indiscipline! The indiscipline began when the Prime Minister broke the understanding among the party leadership and started appointing people who had lost the general election to public office. He also upset the ethnic balance in such appointments. He further reshuffled the cabinet and ousted six senior ministers without the consent of the party. I had protested against this

action at that time. I had warned, "It is the dog who wags his tail, not the other way around!" If not listening to the party is the fault of the Prime Minister, then the party's inability to properly direct the government is also a big weakness of the party itself. All of our problems today are caused by the same indiscipline and inaction. We cannot find the solution without first finding the root of the problem. And the root of the problem is the same indiscipline and the party's practice of covering up and evading these issues. It is already too late to treat it. Although late, I am happy that the party has regained its consciousness.

I have raised all these issues in the Central Working Committee, Mahasamiti, and General Convention of the party. Although I received enthusiastic support from the members of the party, my friends in the Central Committee did not understand my point of view in time. Or, to put it another way, I may have failed to explain it convincingly to them, so they were not ready to take the right steps at the right time. The meeting of the Mahasamiti also did not yield any concrete solution. As a result, I have come to the conclusion that the Nepali Congress believes it has fulfilled its mission and has now become a tired and a fatigued party. There seems to be no life in its blood anymore. But the stand taken by 36 of our honest Members in the Parliament and present General Secretary Mahendra Narayan Nidhi has made it clear that there is still some life left in this party. I had given up expecting such action from the present form of this party. That is why I started the Awareness Campaign in order to make our members aware and conscious. Unfortunately, in the midst of the process, I became unwell and am now in a hospital bed.

Mr. President,

I don't have to describe to you the saddening condition of the values and beliefs that we fought for all of our lives. This precious democracy that we achieved from the struggles of the people is now on the verge of death, and it is because of us.

The damage done to democracy and to the party in the last three years is not easy to recover from. When the party showed restraint and understanding, the Prime Minister considered it a weakness and adopted a policy of subverting it. You even forgave the unforgivable crime of sabotage in the name of defending party unity and democracy. But even that did not create an atmosphere of understanding and cooperation between the party and the government. The just demands of the 36 MPs were not heard or appreciated. After the government failed to listen to the people, the party, and the country, they were compelled to take that action since there was no positive response from the party regarding a change in governmental leadership. They chose the right path in order to bring about change in the governmental leadership. Their actions are in line with parliamentary practice and the universal standards of democratic tradition. Instead of accepting it as an expression of dissatisfaction by his peers and resigning from leadership, the Prime Minister instead recommended dissolving the House of Representatives. In doing so, he has seriously damaged the very essence of democratic values, norms and parliamentary system. He did not consult with the very parliamentary party which chose him to become leader by the party's decision. I have no words to express how apolitical, immoral, and undisciplined this action by the Prime Minister was, to dissolve the Parliament simply because the MPs did not agree with him.

To assassinate (dismiss) 113 lawmakers of his party in one fell swoop for his own petty self-interest, to cast aside the sacrifices of the countless numbers of lives over the last 30 years to establish and form this very House of Representatives, can there be a more unforgivable crime? To recommend dissolution of the parliament after suffering a defeat in parliament is an inexcusable and deplorable crime by Girija Prasad Koirala. He cares not for the party above his own ego. It is said that the one who witnesses the

crime and does nothing is a greater culprit than the perpetrator himself. To remain an inactive bystander is to increase the audacity of the criminal.

It is said that to commit sin is to be human, to repeat sin is to be animal, and to atone for sin is to be divine. Even if the party does not punish Girija Prasad Koirala for his grievous sin, the people surely will. The people will punish not only him but also the Nepali Congress.

The party will not sacrifice itself into death for any one person. Therefore, the party should take immediate action against Girija Prasad Koirala. We should never hesitate to take disciplinary action against anyone when it comes to the question of the party and democracy. He has been involved in undemocratic activities many times before. The party overlooked it multiple times but now there remains no room for forgiveness. Action has become the only solution. History does not repeat itself but events themselves do repeat. Indeed, the situation resembles how the party took action against Matrika-babu in 1953. If our founding leader BP Koirala were alive today, he himself would have put this motion forward.

Mr. President,

The stance that our General Secretary has maintained is, in fact, the stance of the party which is in line with the traditions of the Nepali Congress. After his defeat in the House of Representatives, the recommendation made by the Prime Minister one day after his own resignation to dissolve the House of Representatives, and the royal announcement the very next day carrying out the resigned Prime Minister's recommendation, has created quite a serious situation in the country! Other than a few exceptions, His Majesty has not violated the dignity of the constitutional monarchy in the last four years. I still believe that if we can convince His Majesty of the gravity of the real situation,

he will rescind the announcement and re-instate the dissolved House of Representatives.

On this occasion, I would also like to appeal to the honest and loyal friends of the party to not stand at the crossroads of indecision anymore. Everyone must decide whether they want to support the party and the democracy, or support an individual. Even genuine gold needs to be scraped in order to test it. This is the moment of crisis where the members will be tested and revealed. I am confident that our experienced members, who have traveled thus far on this long arduous road and overcome many obstacles, will make the right decision today to move forward.

Jai Nepal!

Ganeshman-ji's letter created a political wave across the country. Democracy-loving people grew emotional. Respect for Ganeshman-ji was still growing. Most of the party workers appreciated Ganeshman-ji's sentiments, but they were still unable to openly support him for fear of the government's displeasure. This was the stark difference between past Congress members and current Congress members. Back then, when leaders of the party used to have disputes, members and activists also took sides in those debates and the merits of each side were discussed. Participating in debates never led to bitterness or animosity. While there was competitiveness, it was never at the cost of principles and ideals. But when we look at the nature and quality of the leaders and members of today, we see that such a political culture does not exist anymore. Where did such leaders and members disappear? Can democracy be protected and consolidated through such self-centered men? Ganeshman-ji was very worried and bothered by all of these things.

Discussions at the Bharatpur Mahasamiti meeting, and the letter sent by Ganeshman-ji, seemed to have made the party somewhat serious, but it was not made a topic of discussion.

Instead, a meeting was held by the party's Central Committee to discuss Ganeshman-ji's letter. After seven days of meeting, the decision was read out from the roof of the office by Assistant General Secretary Basudev Risal. "It has been decided that from now on the party will not make Ganeshman-ji unhappy, and Ganeshman-ji also should not continue to ask for the Prime Minister's resignation!" Truly, what a wonderful decision! This is what is meant by 'when you mine a mountain, you find rats'. Such an easygoing and apolitical decision by the Central Working Committee of the Nepali Congress, a party which is one of the oldest democratic parties in Asia, and a party which its leaders and members consider the 'Messiah of Democracy'! The implication made by the Committee in this decision was the misinterpretation that Ganeshman-ji was upset that he had not received his due share of power. Therefore, giving him some share will make him happy and defuse his crusade. What an insult to the Ironman!

What could such a decision by the Nepali Congress possibly have achieved in distracting him from his journey? Ganeshman Singh was a man who had risen above pride, humiliation, anger, or hatred. He cared for principles and ideals, not petty self-interest. He moved forward with determination. He tried to remind the party leaders as well as the Central Committee again. There seemed to be some signs of success, but that too ultimately proved futile. Then he turned towards the General Convention and the Mahasamiti. No matter his pleas, his doctrine was rejected by those in power. However, he still did not give up. He was most disappointed and hurt by the inaction of the Nepali Congress Working Committee and the party chairman Krishna Prasad Bhattarai. In a multi-party system where the winning party selects the government, the government was running the party according to its own convenience. Relating to this unnatural scene, he said, "It is the dog who wags his tail, not the

other way around. Therefore, I cannot remain in the Nepali Congress until there is a purification within the party. I will limit myself to the role of 'watchdog' and guard democracy. Anyone who believes, like me, that democracy should be protected can join me in this mission. As long as there is even a little bit of life left in my body, I will never let this lamp of democracy, which was hard-won through the suffering of a great many Nepali people, go out."

During this period, Ganeshman-ji tested the militancy of the leaders and members of his party at every level. The result was extremely negative. Barely ten percent of the members seemed to support Ganeshman-ji. At the upper level, it was even less. Out of the 25 members of the Central Committee, only Mr. Jagannath Acharya (the Bhaktapur district representative) supported him. There were 114 MPs in the House of Representatives and 40 in the National Assembly. Out of 154 total MPs, only 36 supported Ganeshman-ji but, they too, were in reality the loyalists of party chairman Krishna Prasad Bhattarai. Apart from the same Jagannath Acharya, no other MP supported Ganeshman-ji out of his own volition.

Ganeshman-ji was very saddened to see this level of unprincipled chaos within his party. He was saddened by the fact that the very same party members who had fought for decades against the tyranny of the Ranas and Shahs were now helpless in front of Girija Prasad Koirala.

He then finally decided to bring his campaign to the people to make them aware of the autocratic tendencies present within the party, after realizing that the current members of Nepali Congress did not even have the courage to kill a simple housefly.

Upon realizing that it would seem paradoxical to rally against the very same party where he was a leader, he declared:

“Even if I have left the Nepali Congress party, I will forever remain active for the consolidation of democracy. As long as I live, I will fulfil the role of the guardian of democracy!”

JANAJAGARAN ABHIYAN (AWARENESS CAMPAIGN)

Some of the party-members were intoxicated with power, while others were hanging on the coattails waiting for scraps to fall into their mouths. Gone were the members who used to talk about principles and ideals. With the situation like that, Ganeshman-ji was in a dilemma as to whom to befriend in order to bring this issue into the limelight. Therefore, he decided to understand the opinion of the people. Ganeshman-ji had always been supported by the general public. Because of their support, he had mustered the courage to fight against three Rana Prime Ministers and several Kings. The difference was that, in those days, the Nepali Congress had not betrayed Ganeshman-ji. Therefore, the general public had always heeded his every call enthusiastically. But this time, the situation was changed. He was acting alone without party support. Therefore, he was concerned whether the public would show up for him this time too. He set his purpose to understand the mindset of the people, to correct their misunderstandings, to expose the authoritarian tendencies of the Nepali Congress government, and to gather support for the consolidation of democracy. He knew that publishing statements from the comfort of the capital Kathmandu was not going to motivate people into action. That is why he decided to approach the doorsteps of the people and interact with them. He started the Awareness Campaign (Janajagaran Abhiyan) with the objective of awakening people for the protection of democracy, and to that end he decided to travel the country and meet with activists and the general population. He had two motives behind this decision: (1) To know how many Nepali Congress activists (district-level) were

really willing to openly support him, and (2) To ascertain the level of public support for his political doctrine. Therefore, his country tour was focused on collecting strategical assessments of the support for his future actions.

After declaring that he could not stand by and witness the crime that had been committed against democracy and the party, there was no chance that Ganeshman-ji would return to his party-assigned offices. Therefore, one day he told me and Ramji Kumar Shrestha (his personal secretary), “There is no need for me to go to Nepali Congress party offices now. Set up a liaison office where our friends can visit daily. A small room big enough for three or four people is enough. I will manage my upcoming programs from there. Please make the arrangements as soon as possible.”

After receiving this order, we two, along with Press Advisor Sharach Chandra Wasti, started looking for a suitable house. Within a few days we had set up office in Dillibazar, Ghattekulo, on the ground floor of Shridhar Prasad Timilsina's house. It was furnished with ordinary tables and chairs, and only the living room was well decorated. Ganeshman-ji would be on premise from one o'clock to four o'clock in the afternoons. Thus, we helped him plan the program for his country tour. The message that he was going on a nationwide visit had stirred up politics all over the country.

It was decided that Ganeshman-ji would first visit the eastern region, specifically Biratnagar. Badri Basnet, a former NC leader from Biratnagar, was in charge of organizing programs in the eastern region. Ganeshman-ji was accompanied by his personal secretary Ramji, Nabin Chitrakar, and myself.



Ganeshman-ji conversing with a spiritual leader from Taiwan in his own office. The author stands in the background.

Upon learning that Ganeshman-ji was headed to Biratnagar, Prime Minister Girija Koirala personally called Ganeshman-ji and appealed, “Ganeshman-ji, I heard that you are going to Biratnagar. When you get there, I ask that you please stay at the Koirala Niwas (home). You have a very long and old relationship with us. Until today, whenever you have visited Biratnagar, you have never stayed at any other place. I hold you in the same esteem and respect as I hold my brother, BP Koirala. So please reside there. You know that it fully furnished and there is everything that you may need. There is also enough space to host small events. If you stay someplace else, it will not send a good message to our party-members. So, please stay at the Koirala residence.” Ganeshman-ji could not deny Girija-babu's request. The next day, he came to the liaison office and informed us of the details of the phone call. “I have decided to stay at the Koirala Niwas,” he said, “Please relay this message to our friends in Biratnagar.”

Ganeshman-ji's visit to Biratnagar started the next day. Coincidentally, Girija's daughter Sujata Koirala was also headed to Biratnagar on the same flight. After the usual greetings with her, Ganeshman-ji departed the plane and went with the welcome-team awaiting him at Biratnagar. We also joined the team and reached the Koirala Niwas shortly after. Ganeshman-ji was warmly welcomed by the seniors of the house, Nona Bhauju and Shailaja Acharya.

Sujata Koirala has already reached the residence as well. She approached our group and asked, "How many friends are in Ganeshman-ji's team?" Secretary Ramji replied, "There are five of us." Sujata said, "Unfortunately, there is not enough room for so many people here. The house can accommodate only one extra person in addition to Ganeshman-ji. Tomorrow my group will depart and there will be space available here." Sujata's words were not bad, however, seasoned party-members were well aware that the Koirala Niwas would always arrange accommodations for any number of guests in the past. However, after BP's passing, the residence was passed down to Sujata's generation and the situation certainly looked unique. Regardless, arranging for our own accommodations in a metropolis like Biratnagar was no big deal. Our friends and relatives in the city were plentiful. We then accepted the hospitality of Rajiv Rijal, the son of Chandi Rijal of Bargachhi.

The evidence that Ganeshman-ji was a 'Vitaragi' was proven the very next morning. A vitaragi is a person who can not be affected by fear, terror, greed, or self-interest. Two to three hundred members had gathered on the premises of the residence. Biratnagar was known as a place where the surname Koirala was taken seriously and held in high esteem. But here in Biratnagar itself, inside the premises of the Koirala residence, in the presence of senior members of the Koirala family, he addressed the large gathering and vehemently implored that the

Prime Minister should resign immediately because he had committed corruption, nepotism, immorality, and treason to the party. Seeing Ganeshman-ji's courage, the party members and family members were stumped and looked at each other's faces in uncomfortable silence. After the program, we enjoyed some tea and went to Badri Basnet's house. After the afternoon meal, Ganeshman-ji again addressed a gathering organized by the members at City Hall. Then, our team left for Dharan.

(An interesting aside: Ganeshman-ji used to wear a ring on his finger. I do not know whether the ring was an expensive one or not. But there was an incident that showed that he had great attachment or special affection towards the ring. After addressing a meeting organized by the campaign-activists in Biratnagar, Ganeshman-ji stopped by the Koirala residence before departing for Dharan. On the road there, he asked his secretary, Ramji, "Hey now, where's my ring?" Ramji answered, "You were wearing it, weren't you? Let's call the residence and ask." He said, "No, let us return there" so we did. Although we searched the room, we could not find it. We went back on the road but Ganeshman-ji's face did not look as lively as before. A simple ring should not have held great significance for such a detached vitaragi person like Ganeshman-ji. Yet it did, and it was surprising. What could have made such a great personality anxious? That is a question to which we do not have an answer. It may be an interesting mystery to solve.)

During his visit to the Eastern Region, Ganeshman-ji interacted extensively with activists from Dharan, Dhankuta, Damak, Birtamod, Ilam, Panchthar, and Taplejung. Activists and supporters had come from far and wide to listen to him. He said almost the same thing in all those programs that he had said at the Koirala residence in Biratnagar. Overall, Ganeshman-ji's speech contained the following:

- (1) The government displayed an authoritarian tendency by disobeying the party.
- (2) Girija ran and won as a member of the NC party in the elections, yet now that he is PM he chooses to disregard the party. Can such behaviour protect and consolidate our democracy?
- (3) The party appeared helpless and weak before the government. The central leadership is not longer productive or effective. Therefore, the grassroots members of the party need to be active. The tail is wagging the dog instead of the other way around. This unnatural situation needs to stop.
- (4) The current government has given shelter to nepotism and cronyism.
- (5) Inclusiveness has been thrown out the window. Corruption is encouraged. The people are not made to feel like the Panchayat has been dislodged and that true democracy is here.
- (6) I gave many suggestions to provide relief to the citizens in their daily lives, but they were not heeded.
- (7) The Tanakpur agreement with India was officially signed and the PM lied to the people saying that it is only an understanding between nations. Such an immoral government should resign immediately. Morality demands it. How can the party hope to win the upcoming elections with such an immoral government?
- (8) If we do not carry out the economic revolution, we will never be able to protect and consolidate this democracy.
- (9) Without consulting with the party, Koirala unilaterally removed the senior respected honest ministers. If this tendency cannot be reversed, how can the party be united?

(10) The government has broken all the boundaries of morality. Now, if the court decides that the Tanakpur scandal is indeed a treaty between nations, then the Prime Minister must resign at once.

After completing the Eastern Region trip and returning to Kathmandu, we conducted a review of the campaign with Ganeshman-ji at the liaison office. Some shortcomings and positive aspects were also discussed. Ganeshman-ji seemed satisfied, but it seemed to me that he was holding something back. It was not our place to pry unless he wanted to reveal it, so we remained silent. Then he said, “After one month, we have to visit the western region similarly. Please sit together and come up with the program.” Therefore, after contacting our friends from the western region, we scheduled the cities of Bhairahawa, Butwal, Palpa, Syangja, Pokhara, Baglung, Parbat, Tanahu, Nuwakot and Dhading.

In the one-month period between the Eastern and Western visits, a historic event took place in the country. The Supreme Court termed the Tanakpur agreement reached by the Prime Minister with India as a treaty. This dealt a severe blow to the government. Commenting on the court’s order, Ganeshman-ji said, “People had understood it to be a treaty. The Prime Minister did not agree. Now that the court has ruled that it is such, it is a matter of morality and ethics. He should resign from the post of Prime Minister and pave the way for another deserving person from his own party to become the Prime Minister.” However, Girija Prasad Koirala was unabashed. He stated, “The court is only interpreting the law which is made by the parliament. It would not be appropriate for me to resign without first understanding the views of the Parliament. After all, that is the body which makes the laws. I will seek advice from the Parliament.”

PRIME MINISTER GIRIJA KOIRALA'S PLOY

The court's decision meant that the 'treaty' had to be approved by a two-third majority in the parliament, according to the Constitution. Nepali Congress did not have a two-third majority, therefore Prime Minister Girija was claiming that it was not a 'treaty' but just an 'understanding', and he was trying to bolster this 'understanding' through a simple-majority vote in Parliament. In order to get his party on board with this idea, he called together a Parliamentary Party Meeting of the Nepali Congress, where Ganeshman-ji was also invited. It was Girija's ploy to get this decision approved in the presence of Ganeshman-ji and Krishna Prasad Bhattarai in order to subdue them and falsely paint a picture of their support. Meanwhile, the communists had been engaged in nationwide agitations lambasting the Prime Minister's actions as an anti-nationalistic move which was in favour of India. Ganeshman-ji was concerned to see that the national unity brought about by the People's Movement 1990 between the Nepali Congress and the United Left Front was being fractured. He worried that reactionaries, such as the King, may take advantage of this precarious weakening of the people's unity to destabilize democracy once again. Therefore, Ganeshman-ji full well understood this tactic and decided not to attend the meeting and instead to send a letter in protest. Because, if he did not protest, who would dare to go against Girija? Had Girija succeeded, it would have signed a death warrant for the Nepali Congress party. Eventually, because of his letter, this ill-conceived effort by Prime Minister Girija failed. The letter gave the members courage to stop violating the constitution and ultimately protected the Nepali Congress from the stigma of being labeled 'the treasonous party'. This letter, which he published prior to leaving the party, is known as "Letter-Bomb" in Nepali politics, and the full text of it was as follows:

There Is No Alternative To National Consensus

Mr. President,

Nepali Congress, Central Working Committee, Kathmandu.

As I am not able to attend this important meeting of the Parliamentary Party being held today, I am conveying to you through this letter what I have felt and what I have seen. If it seems appropriate, I would like you to share it with our friends.

Mr. President,

Democracy, which we restored almost three years ago with the support of all Nepalis, is now in grave danger. I have warned of this fact before. But sad to say, it was not only the main opposition party but also our own party that did not listen to me. I repeat, both the nation and democracy are in crisis today, and they are both seeking our support for survival. Since the existence of one is connected with the other, we are also connected with it. We cannot escape that responsibility.

The suffering that we endured for the last thirty years was the result of forces that succeeded in dividing our national unity. The day we united those elements were defeated. We are now knowingly or unknowingly strengthening those who are trying to make democracy a failure by dividing the forces of the People's Movement. Our party has failed to find out the hidden forces that are escalating our differences and thwarting our achievements. This is the crux of the problem.

To vote for a simple majority in the House of Representatives regarding the Tanakpur case is tantamount to signing a death warrant. My conscience will not allow it, so please do not force me to go against what my conscience dictates.

The chasm between the government and the opposition is not incurable. I still do not feel that it is too late to join hands and find

a suitable formula for national consensus. National consensus is indispensable not only for the Tanakpur problem, but also for the parliamentary system and the value of democratic life. If the party turns a blind eye to such a shocking truth, then who else will open our eyes?

How can we blame others if our own eyes are closed? I am not saying that the opposition is not irresponsible and arrogant. Their irresponsible actions are also responsible for weakening democracy. But by saying this, we are shying away from our own responsibility. Let us not forget that only a stand made for the principles of democracy is praiseworthy. The insistence on sacrificing party and democracy for power is not to be tolerated. Such obstinacy will be condemned tomorrow by history.

Mr. President,

Don't take my letter and my view otherwise. I am writing my thoughts as a tireless soldier of the party and democracy. What I see now in the context of the party and the government is that the tail is wagging the dog, not the dog who is wagging the tail. In the multi-party system that we have adopted, the party should run the government, but our irony is that now the government is running the party. The current rift between the party and the government, and the anomalies that have resulted from it, are all the result of that. That is why the blame does not lie with one person, but rather the party and its leadership as a whole. I will not run away from that responsibility. We all established the Nepali National Congress under the leadership of our great leader, BP Koirala, with the determination to end the Rana rule in Nepal and establish a democratic system of governance. From that day till today I have always been working as a disciplined soldier of the party with many ups and downs. In the meantime, I have never suppressed the voice of my conscience. Now that I am 78 years old and have dedicated my entire life to democracy, the party, and the Nepali

people, do not force me to go against my own conscience in my final years.

As I said in the meeting of the party's Mahasamiti in Bharatpur, there is a hole in the ship of the Nepali Congress. If the hole is not fixed in time, it will sink one day. Just as an honest captain does not leave a ship when he sees the possibility of an accident, so too, I will not leave this ship. I will sink with this ship.

At the public meeting in Birgunj, I apologized to the people for not being able to work in accordance with the people's faith in the protection and consolidation of our democracy. I will not repeat that here. I wish for the party to awaken its conscience and consciousness to correct our recent erroneous policies and uphold its glorious tradition. However, this wish of mine may soon prove to be a useless cry, because the minds of the declining institutions, individuals, and society are corrupted. When the mind is corrupted, one cannot hear, think, or judge anything.

I have fulfilled my duty in advising that the party is not headed in the right direction. I am ready to accept the consequences of whatever the party decides. You can be certain of that.

Mr. President,

In conclusion, I repeat, there is no alternative to national consensus. National consensus must be sought at any cost. I make a heartfelt appeal to my friends: If possible, let us withdraw the proposal which is now blocking the path of national consensus. If necessary, let us postpone the bill in the House until the next session. If that happens, the opportunity and conditions for building a national consensus will be favorable and we can and should make sincere efforts for it once again. In politics, it is very important to make a decision before it expires, and that moment of importance is now in your hands. I am confident that you will use it wisely.

Jai Nepal!

8 March, 1993

Chettrapati, Kathmandu

DISPUTE UNDER THE GUISE OF PRINCIPLE!

Prime Minister Girija was stunned when his desire for approval by a simple majority was met with such resistance. However, he was not one to let go of his own stubbornness, "Our parliamentary democracy is the Westminster system of Britain," he said, "Once a Member of Parliament is elected Prime Minister, no matter what he does, the party cannot interfere." On the other hand, Ganeshman-ji was saying, "In a democracy, one person can never be made autocratic. A parliamentarian must be accountable to the party on whose ticket and manifesto he has been elected. Therefore, the Prime Minister cannot take a single step without the parliamentary party's advice, which elected him. If the Prime Minister does not act in accordance with the party's manifesto, the party may recall him."

Both arguments had merit. But in the Prime Minister's argument, if an individual uses democracy for the fulfillment of his self-interest and high ambitions, who will control him? Yes, his party should cooperate to prevent the possibility of such a situation. The party's job, duty, and responsibility is to assist its government, to exercise caution, and to take action against the Prime Minister if necessary. If this were followed, then no one would be allowed to become an elected dictator." Again, at a time when materialism was in its infancy and morality was in a state of decline, it was not advisable to allow any possibility of an individual to become autocratic. In this sense, Ganeshman-ji's argument was appropriate.

Girija Koirala was a person who had a tendency to follow through with his idea without regard to questions like good-or-bad, ethical-or-unethical, right-or-wrong. If a person with such a nature had the ability to judge right from wrong, would he be called great? What Girija felt on the inside was that the Nepali Congress had won the 1992 general election solely because of his

efforts alone. According to him, Chairman Krishna Prasad Bhattarai and Ganeshman-ji did not contribute much in the election, therefore, they must be sidelined. He felt that Ganeshman-ji was obstructing the rhythm of the government by burdening the government with suggestions after suggestions. Therefore, he had come to the conclusion that he would dissolve the parliament under any pretext and run the Nepali Congress alone on his own.

Also, the King would traditionally present the government's annual program in Parliament. It was customary for the PM's government to submit a motion of thanks to the King for presenting it on behalf of the government. During the voting of that motion, the 36 members of parliament of the Nepali Congress stayed absent. After the motion was defeated, the humiliated Prime Minister resigned as the head of government. The King accepted the resignation, and it was announced that Prime Minister Girija Koirala would remain in office until further notice as a caretaker government. However, the next day, citing a press release from the royal palace, the news was published, "As per the recommendation of the Prime Minister, His Majesty King Birendra has dissolved the House of Representatives and fixed a date for new elections." Can the Prime Minister, who resigned the previous day, recommend the dissolution of Parliament? Only in Nepal is this kind of thing possible.

Supreme leader Ganeshman-ji immediately responded, "It is not only unconstitutional and immoral for the resigned Prime Minister to dissolve the House of Representatives, it is also a step against parliamentary tradition. Therefore, the parliament should be reinstated immediately." Ganeshman-ji's demand was also supported by the meeting of the Central Committee of the Nepali Congress, and the members of the committee, led by General Secretary Mahendra Narayan Nidhi, went to the royal palace and handed over the official decision of the party. But the

King had no interest in it. He had fixed his heels to create a mess within the Nepali Congress. Therefore, he kept on procrastinating in cahoots with the resigned Prime Minister. Eventually, the dissolution case reached the court. The court, ignoring the values of democracy, sensitivity, and morality, ruled in favour of the Prime Minister. Thus, of the four constitutional institutions, three of them (the King, the Executive, and the Judiciary) were instrumental in destabilizing and weakening the newly established democracy. The people did not care much about the King because it was obvious that the new system was not his choice. But they were saddened and disappointed to see that even the court did not uphold the spirit of democracy.

Ganeshman-ji's complaint to the court was that the practice of democracy had only just begun in Nepal. At such a time, the three branches of the constitution - the executive, the judiciary and the legislature - should decide for the good of democracy and the country, and not misinterpret ambiguous sentences in the constitution, which may serve the reactionaries. After all, judges are also citizens of this country, and their children are also the recipients of democracy and stability as well.

Going further, Ganeshman-ji added, "Let us agree that the Prime Minister has special rights in the constitution. However, can a minority Prime Minister do as he pleases? Had the court been able to establish that the power of the Prime Minister to exercise such power was reserved only in the case of a majority party rule, then at least a megalomaniac with ambitions of autocratic rule could be curtailed. After all, isn't the essence of democracy a majority government?" Eventually, the court's decision became a factor of instability in the country. The chief executive, that is, the Prime Minister, should also have realized, "If I do not respect the spirit and letter of the constitution at this time, then why should the next Prime Minister adhere to the constitution, now that I have set a precedent?"

On the very day of the formation of the Nepali Congress interim government, Ganeshman-ji had instructed that if the NC does not follow the letter and spirit of their own constitution then no one else would adhere by it. He now said, “Just because Girija could not convince the parliamentarians to his side, he has angrily dissolved the entire parliament. This confirms that his government has taken the path of totalitarianism.” Seeing this mess, Ganeshman-ji further accelerated the pace of his Awareness Campaign.

The country began to be divided towards two poles. The King and those that sought instability of the democracy were in favor of elections while the rest of the parliament was in favor of restoration. Eventually the authoritarians won, and the election looked likely to proceed. Ganeshman-ji thought, at least the people have been reminded and made aware. Now Girija’s tendencies can be displaced through this election. But the scenario within the Nepali Congress was such that Ganeshman-ji could not influence or select a suitable candidate for the next Prime Minister. Therefore, to get out of this dilemma and save the party, he decided that it was best that the Nepali Congress be removed from the position of governance. He decided, “Let’s displace the Nepali Congress as it is now, give it time to correct its internal compass. We will see what happens later.” After all, it would be the communists who would take over if Nepali Congress loses. Since Ganeshman-ji had allied with them for the People’s Movement in 1990, he thought that they can be controlled and reasoned with by keeping them within the bounds set by law to protect democracy.

The physical health of the Ironman, who had fought against three Rana Prime Ministers and three Kings, had severely taken a toll during the period where he was fighting with his own party. He himself used to joke, “My friends call me Ironman. In fact, I have taken such beatings from all these authoritarians that it

might be more apt to call me Grinded-Ironman.” Due to his advanced age, his physical condition was very poor. Even with the help of a stick, he could barely walk two or three steps in one full minute. It took him 15 to 20 minutes to get out of the car and reach his room. He needed another person’s help to be lifted into the car. Even in such a situation, it was difficult to comprehend with what enthusiasm and energy he was touring the country and calling on the people to rise up against tyranny. He used to say, “Even though my body is worn out and dying, my enthusiasm and vigor are not dead yet. I will not give up fighting for democracy until my last breath.”

Ganeshman-ji did not have the time to form a new party, raise it with his teachings, and establish it as the government. In his weak condition, he did not see the possibility of forming a new party. He pondered upon his options. One option was to support the moderates within the Nepali Congress and find someone who was daring enough to rise up against the 'hard liners' within the party. This strategy would definitely block the possibility of the Nepali Congress coming into power. Therefore, he decided to support such a candidate and prevent the Nepali Congress from ascending to power in the upcoming elections.

The battle that Ganeshman-ji was fighting with the ruling party was a difficult one, because not only were they the most powerful party in the nation, they were also supported by all the democratic countries of the world. Those foreign nations were not supporting the Nepali Congress because it was doing a good job, rather because the only other alternative was the Communist Party. They feared that communism might take hold in Nepal and displace democracy in the midst of this instability. Therefore, the world community was using all its influence and might to save the Nepali Congress government. Ganeshman-ji felt this very well, but he had more faith in the power of the people than in any other power.

INTEREST OF WORLD POWER IN NEPALI POLITICS

In the year 1994, former Prime Minister and Chairman of the Nepali Congress, Krishna Prasad Bhattarai, phoned me one morning and said, “Babu, can you come to me with your car at 1:30 this afternoon?” I said, “Sure, Kisun-ji!” I reached his residence at the agreed time and he said, “Sit down. The US Assistant Secretary of State for South Asia, Robin Raphael, has just arrived in Nepal. I have an appointment with him today. That’s why I need your help.” By help, I knew that he was referring to my car. He had called me a few times before for such occasions. I had the opportunity to drive him around many times during such restrictive situations. He added, “The communists (UML) always plague and terrorize the city. During such times, it’s important to get in the car with someone who knows how to drive well. My driver is not very good, he speeds up when he needs to go slow and slows down when he needs to go fast.” With such conversations, we reached the hotel Yak and Yeti. He asked me to wait for him and entered the lobby. Returning in about an hour, he said, “Let’s go.” From there, we went to the central office of the Nepali Congress in Baneshwor. Ganeshman-ji’s room was on the first floor of the office, and both Kisun-ji and I entered his room. Ganeshman-ji was busy in discussions with the members, so after a moment, Kisun-ji told the members in the room to go out. He gestured me to remain in the room. Then Kisun-ji said to Ganeshman-ji, “Ganeshman-ji, I have just met with Raphael, the US Assistant Secretary of State for South Asia. He had many opinions on the contemporary political issues of Nepal.”

Ganeshman-ji replied, “What is special about this?” Kisun-ji continued, “Nepal’s democracy is new, so everyone’s support is required for its process of consolidation. The communists are trying to destabilize democracy. The US Secretary says that instead of valuing the importance of democracy, the Nepali Congress is inviting instability from the highest leaders of the

party (pointing to Ganeshman-ji) by demanding the resignation of the Prime Minister. Such behaviour must be stopped. Girija should not be deprived of completing his full five-year term. It does not make the democracy look good.” After listening to Kisun-ji, Ganeshman-ji said, “Can a Prime Minister who goes against the party’s principles, ideals, and values protect democracy? Can a person who cannot even unite his own party members get the support of the opposition and the whole country? Does the United States think that the current government is doing a good job? If this government with such a weak operational capacity is kept, will the Nepali Congress be able to compete in the coming elections in two years time? Having done nothing for the people, who will vote for us? Why would the people vote for a party that does not even do the bare minimum for the people? With what face will we go out there to ask for votes? Did you not tell him all these things? Will the US fight the next election for the Nepali Congress?” Kisun-ji, who was listening to Ganeshman-ji’s theoretical and practical questions, looked confused. After staring out of the window for a while, Kisun-ji said, “Okay then, Ganeshman-ji. I’ll be on my way.” With this, he got up and exited. I also asked leave from Ganeshman-ji, because after all, I was his driver for that day.

Ganeshman-ji was not really opposing a person named Girija Prasad Koirala. He was protesting against anti-democratic tendencies and he was working for the better performance of his government. He was urging Girija to follow the values and norms of democracy and unify the party. He only started demanding for his resignation after failing to see any improvement after advising him a thousand times.

Once he had set his mind to displacing Nepali Congress from power, there was no question about bowing out due to pressure from the US. He had reinforced his determination to complete his mission, no matter the interference from the world

communities. However, without any organized power or money, it was going to be a difficult fight ahead. Such a struggle requires strong organizational power and sufficient financial backing.

One day I said to him, “Ganeshman-ji, under your leadership, we are fighting the Nepali Congress and its own government. You have decided to defeat the Nepali Congress in the upcoming election. But we have neither nationwide organization nor resources. There is not a penny in our coffers. We even have to scrounge around to pay rent for this office. If finances cannot be arranged, how will we support our candidate in the upcoming election?”

He gave me a succinct reply, “Can we beat those in government by competing for money?” I said, “No sir! We cannot win against them with money, nor should we be competing for money. However, we do need money for the necessary things.” He responded, “I know, but what can we do. I have asked my usual donors (who used to give to the Nepali Congress), but they have replied that if they give even one rupee to our cause then the government will give them hell. They all say to wait until after the election, and only then can they help us financially. What would be the point of that?” I understood. The government and the party-leaders had chosen to financially blockade Ganeshman-ji.

He further continued, “As far as our organization is concerned, it is not something that will happen today itself. It takes time, and we don’t have time. So, whether you think in terms of party or image or leadership, in the end it is me alone that has to do it. For the last one to two years, I have gone house to house all across this country to raise awareness. I trust the Nepali people, they will not disappoint me. To this day, I have not given up. I don’t hold any personal desires. Destiny will fix everything, so let’s believe in that. But we must remain active!”

ENDORSEMENT OF A NEW PARTY

Meanwhile, Jagannath Acharya, a Member of Parliament from Bhaktapur and the only supporter of Ganeshman-ji in the Central Committee of the Nepali Congress, approached him with a proposal to open a new party called 'Jana-Congress' and make Ganeshman-ji its patron. "Everyone has the right to open a party in a democracy," said Ganeshman-ji, "My best wishes to the party that you are going to open. I will help you as much as I can, but as far as my homage is concerned, I ask you not to do that. I have already stated that I will be a guardian of democracy. That is why I abandoned the Nepali Congress, the party that I founded five decades ago. Now, my age and bad health does not allow me to be active. But you can go ahead with my support. The newly formed party may compel the Nepali Congress to open their eyes to act with integrity. Therefore, you may move forward with it. I will support it." The newly formed party was inaugurated by Ganeshman-ji. Speaking as the chief guest, Ganeshman-ji said, "The process of formation and dissolution of a party is normal in a democracy. It keeps happening. This party is formed with the aim of serving the country and the people, and with the aim of making this country on par with other developed nations through principled conduct. We established the Nepali National Congress in 1946 in the same spirit. We renamed it to Nepali Congress after the merger between Prajatantra Congress and Nepali Rastriya Congress in 1950. The same Nepali Congress launched an armed revolution in 1951, less than a year after its founding, and with that, democracy was established in the country, displacing the 104-year-old Rana rule. The life of the Nepali Congress, which has struggled since then, is full of the history of struggle, revolution, and movement. How many such parties are there in the world? Today, the party with such a long history has come under the control of the Prime Minister who aims to become autocratic. The party president remains unable

to keep him in check. What have I not done to free the party from its clutches? I appealed to the members of the Central Committee and to the parliamentarians. Let us save the party, I told them. I have cried in front of them, but most have stuffed cotton in their ears. Since they do not listen, I am dragging this dilapidated body around to appeal to the people through my Awareness Campaign. Today, you are opening a party and trying to save democracy in this country. Do it! Good luck! If the Nepali Congress corrects itself by your efforts, that would be a wonderful outcome. If not, then you will have to carry forward the spirit of the original Nepali Congress. Jai Nepal!"

Most of the members of the newly formed party, Jana Congress, were disgruntled members of the Nepali Congress. Apart from Jagannath Acharya, Badri Basnet, and Durga Subedi were also among the leaders. The key office bearers of the Jana Congress Central Working Committee were as follows:

- Jagannath Acharya, Chairman.
- Manoj Prasad Lakol, General Secretary.
- Mahendraman Singh, Treasurer.

The Jana Congress had expanded its organization to 54 districts of the country in a short time. However, in the election of 1995, candidates were fielded in only 32 constituencies. Since the candidates of the Jana Congress were mostly leaders and members from the Nepali Congress, it was certain that they would take away votes from the Nepali Congress party. Indeed, that very thing happened. Although none of the Jana Congress candidates won their elections, they pulled away enough votes that Nepali Congress lost the general election.

GANESHPAN SINGH'S UNIQUE NATURE

Ganeshman-ji had walked around the country appealing that Prime Minister Girija Koirala should resign. Taking this

opportunity, the main opposition party, UML, created chaos around the country by breaking rail-guards along major roads and setting fire to telephone booths. Prime Minister Girija was overwhelmed by all this and handed Ganeshman-ji a resignation letter, saying, “Ganeshman-ji, you have made your displeasure against me well known. You have been asking for my resignation for many days now. Even the opposition is harassing me. Kisun-ji’s supporters are also giving me grief. How can I operate in such an environment? So, here is my resignation. Take it and release me from all this chaos.”

Ganeshman-ji said about his resignation, “Look, Girija-babu, you should have resigned immediately. When you were unable to complete the task, or were faced with an environment which didn’t allow you to complete the task, you should have allowed another worthy person to assume the responsibility. This is what democracy needs. You refused to give up power then, but now when the UML opposition pressures you, you are ready to give up? Does it not send the message that the Nepali Congress has bowed before the opposition? If you resign today, the opposition will learn to do the same thing over and over again. If we comply with such demands from the opposition, how can the Nepali Congress protect its dignity? That’s why you will not resign today. You will resign at the appropriate time when I tell you to. Stay strong now, I will face the opposition.” After Ganeshman-ji entered the fray, the pressure of the opposition gradually weakened. Later, when the situation had calmed down, Ganeshman-ji called the Prime Minister and said, “Now the situation is favorable in all respects. So, resign now, and the party will make a new arrangement.” Prime Minister Girija agreed, but never complied. In the end, Ganeshman-ji had no choice but to continue and accelerate the Awareness Campaign. Now that the election was around the corner, he dropped his last weapon, his statement entitled ‘My Appeal’.

MY APPEAL

Dear Brothers and Sisters!

The People's Movement 1990 took place for the establishment of multi-party democracy by abolishing the Panchayat system. The heroic struggle of the Nepali people and the inspiring sacrifices of many martyrs have brought this movement to success. The democracy that we are enjoying today is a beautiful achievement of that People's Movement. Sovereignty in the people, a parliamentary system based on adult franchise, a constitutional monarchy, inalienable human rights, and a constitution guaranteeing all these in perpetuity are the products of that movement. In this context, I would like to pay tribute to all the martyrs of democracy and greet all the Nepali people.

The glorious responsibility that you conferred unto me as the supreme commander of the People's Movement 1990 will not only end with the success of the People's Movement, but also with the institutionalization of all its achievements in order to uplift the living standards of the Nepali people through economic revolution and build a new prosperous Nepal. I am confident that the dream of all of the martyrs will be fulfilled only then. I was not only optimistic but also diligent in fulfilling that responsibility. However, the group that came to power in the country after the People's Movement has been using economic corruption and immorality as its motto to empty the stomachs and the national economy of the Nepali people day by day. I was shocked to see that the currently ruling government was trying to regress back to the pre-People's Movement era, and instead of curbing this tendency, the party was giving it blind and irrational support. I repeatedly tried to stop such activities by raising my voice in all of the statutory forums of the party, from the General Convention held at Kalbargudi (Jhapa) to the Mahasamiti and the Central Working Committee, but my voice always felt helpless in the face of their

power mania and vested interests. After the situation of the country and democracy became quite dire, I finally started the Awareness Campaign with the objective of visiting you all personally from Mechi to Mahakali to present before you the reality. But I suddenly had to undergo medical treatment due to a major accident which broke my stride. Thanks to your well wishes, I am better now, but according to the doctors' advice, it will take some time for me to move like before. Meanwhile, with the help and the support of the regressive forces, influenced by a sick mentality, the ill-elements intended to make a direct and decisive attack on nationalism and democracy, and therefore, mid-term elections were forced on the country. It has been driven by personal whims, which was not necessary for the country at all. The forces behind the People's Movement did not support it. However, it is our destiny today to partake in the mid-term elections despite this imposition. The only option left is for us to go to the people's courts, as other means of defending democracy are proven ineffective and useless. In the current context, I believe that this mid-term election could be an opportunity for us to defeat the autocratic tendencies which undermine the dignity of parliament and democracy for its own vested ambitions and interests. It is because of this belief that I appear before you today with my feelings through this appeal.

The spirit of the People's Movement

There have been many struggles and movements in the country for decades to bring about democracy. I have been involved in all of them as a dedicated soldier, and I also highly appreciate all of their contributions. But the truth is that only the People's Movement of 1990 could achieve success because its spirit was completely different from all of the previous struggles and movements. This sentiment was that "Consensus, participation, and reconciliation among the anti-Panchayat forces were indispensable for nationalism and democracy." As a harbinger of

'National Reconciliation', I have been pushing this sentiment repeatedly since 1977. But the greatest opportunity to put it into practice was only available to me in the form of People's Movement 1990. I firmly believe that carrying forward the spirit and vigor of the People's Movement vividly into the future is the only way to ensure the protection and enhancement of nationalism and democracy. Furthermore, the goal of raising the living standard of Nepali people can be achieved through an economic revolution, which will ensure the creation of Nepal's golden future. If this does not happen, anti-democratic, authoritarian forces, and totalitarian tendencies will once again grip this country, and the Nepali people will have to return to the Dark Ages. At that time not only will democracy end, our nationality will also end and the existence and identity of Nepalis will also be looted.

Unfortunate situation

Unfortunately for us, after the success of the People's Movement, the task of institutionalizing its achievements fell into the hands of those who did not agree with the spirit of the People's Movement. On the contrary, those groups wanted to move forward by reconciling with the anti-democratic forces. This tendency is led by Girija Prasad Koirala. He was not in favor of the People's Movement. Despite his fierce opposition, he did not publicly oppose the party's decision. In fact, that is his only contribution to the People's Movement. Even after that, his group has repeatedly tried to place hurdles on the movement before it reaches its goal. This is the reason why, as the People's Movement was coming to an end, he was in a hurry to prove it as a 'victory of the Panchayat as well'. When he came to power due to procedural reasons, his mission started to look more like a sabotage of democracy. He started treating the People's Movement forces as enemies and proceeded by shaking hands with those against whom the People's Movement had taken place. Dedicated activists of democracy were deliberately insulted. The party was openly

disregarded, and in many cases, like Tanakpur, he did not hesitate to lie to the supreme court and the parliament. He began to ignore and disobey court orders. Democracy in Nepal is a multi-party system but Girija did not communicate with the opposition, nor did he communicate with his own party members, nor with the Speaker, and nor with any constitutional body. He stubbornly took action by himself. Instead of implementing the agreements made with the opposition, he deceived them and delayed progress. Promises made to his own party leaders and friends were not fulfilled. Authoritarianism was fostered by trampling on democratic values. No attention was paid to enhancing national dignity. Actions against the national interest began to take place continuously. Political games were being played at the expense of the dignity of the country. The people began to feel more exploited, neglected, and insecure than they had felt even during Panchayat system. Inflation, unemployment, and market prices have skyrocketed in three years. The underprivileged do not have the opportunity to move forward and improve their lives, and the lives of the common people have also become extremely difficult. Nepotism, groupism, and racism began to prevail. Occupants of the seats of power started openly stating that taking commissions or bribes is not illegal, and the orgy of corruption began. There was widespread misuse of foreign aid. Reports of corruption and irregularities by the Prime Minister himself began to be heard from parliamentary committees. The education sector became chaotic and no attempt was made to build a self-respecting and clean image in the civil service. The field of social service and charity has also become confused. The ideals of socialism were abandoned. Land laws that have been approved by the competent authorities have not been implemented, and instead of protecting our national capital and national industries, they have been sold at pennies to others, including foreigners, without any hesitation. The communication sector has been widely misused. In short, all of the government's efforts have proven that the achievements of the

People's Movement were in vain. The dreams of the martyrs and the aspirations of the people were reduced to dust.

After-effect of the Party-Less System

Multi-party democracy is a party-based system. In this, the parties contest elections on the basis of their manifestos. People vote for the party. The majority party forms the government and implements its manifesto. The party decides who will lead the government. The government obtains the consent of its party when making important decisions, and also seeks the approval of other parties in the House on matters of special importance. This is the general practice and tradition all over the world. But the 'Girija tendency' did not capture this essence of democracy. PM Girija could not free his thoughts and actions from the influence of the pre-1990 Panchayat system. Girija Koirala was not directly elected as the Prime Minister by contesting the election on the basis of his personal appeal, but rather as a candidate of the Nepali Congress party and based on its manifesto. The party selected him to the post of Prime Minister. But as soon as he reached the position of Prime Minister, he appeared blindly stubbornly committed to disregarding any advice, consent, or indirect role of the party in any of the decisions of the government. They were all unacceptable and undesirable to him. It seemed as if he was eager to run party-less government, once elected through the multi-party system. In other words, he wanted to become an elected dictator. A few days later, he started walking around saying that the people had elected him as the Prime Minister for five years. He was not ready to correct his misconceptions, even though most of the intellectuals of the country warned him not to misinterpret. The people had elected all the members of the House of Representatives for a term of five years. However, he killed their public mandate in one fell swoop and has been repeating such a big lie over and over again without any shame. Hitler and his comrades believed that people tend to believe a lie which is

repeated a hundred times. It's strange, why does the 'Girija tendency' inherit this model?

Weakness of the party

It is impossible to follow the party's ideology when one has the opposite mentality. The same thing has happened here. The ideals of the Nepali Congress such as nationalism, democracy, and socialism were devalued during the reign of the 'Girija tendency'. National identity and sovereignty began to be attacked. The values of democracy were shattered. In the name of privatization and open economy, the ideal of socialism was thrown in the trash. The manifesto of the Nepali Congress was turned into a useless piece of paper.

The agreement reached between the Prime Minister and the party-leadership on the two main issues, not appointing losers of the election into important posts, and giving special opportunities to under-privileged communities in government appointments, was not followed. Extensive factionalism in the name of money and power polluted the party, and the party organization was repeatedly threatened with destruction if it tried to curb the tyranny of Girija. The principle that the government is appointed by the party was disregarded. However, in spite of all this, the party continued to shoulder the wrongdoings of the Girija government. Letting someone run the country does not mean making him a dictator, nor does it mean that the party ought to overlook all the wrong things he does. Therefore, I was of the view that the party should remove any person from government who does not adhere to the party's ideals. I repeatedly complained to the party about this. In the Tanakpur case, the court ruled that the agreement done with India constituted a 'treaty'. In this case, I tried to convince the Prime Minister to resign immediately on moral grounds. But the party has always sided with the Prime Minister, and even after the Supreme Court's decision on Tanakpur, a resolution calling the Prime Minister's resignation

'irrelevant' was passed. As such things happened again and again, I felt that the Nepali Congress was losing its most valuable asset, its ethics. I urged the all-powerful party president to replace the Prime Minister and to radically change and encourage the party structure at all levels towards institutional integrity. I told him in clear words, "If these two things do not happen, I will not be able to support the Nepali Congress in the elections that are due after three years." Unfortunately, the party-president lingered and did not heed me. The party's journey towards immorality, lack of principles, and aimlessness continued.

Nepali Congress and I

Despite realizing all this, my attachment to the Nepali Congress is not easily broken. It is a party that I have founded, raised, and spent my life in. I could see that the Nepali Congress had abandoned the ideals and principles that it was born with. Millions of young people in the country had dedicated themselves to the Nepali Congress for it was the symbol of the struggle for democracy. Now that energy and desire for the democratic struggle remains no more in the party. By evaluating it from all sides, I came to the conclusion that the Nepali Congress has fulfilled its mission, that it has now become a corrupt spent-force in which there can be no new life. However, due to my lifelong inseparable relationship with the Nepali Congress and my heartfelt attachment, I had decided to spend my life with it. Separating from the Nepali Congress was unthinkable for me. That is why I had said in the meeting of the Mahasamiti in Bharatpur, "There is a hole in the ship of the Nepali Congress, and if it is not fixed in time, it will sink one day. As a captain does not leave his ship, I too will sink together with the Nepali Congress."

Why did I leave the Congress?

However, as I scrutinized the events of the last year and contemplated on the worst-case scenarios at the national level, I

found myself standing at a very difficult crossroad. At that juncture, the dreams of nationalism, democracy, and the martyrs stood with their faces downcast. On the other hand, the group that stood ready to destroy it all was wearing the guise of my party, carrying the party's signboard, flag, structure, and power of government. That group stands to assassinate the principles and ideals to which I have dedicated my life. That group comprises of the forces and tendencies that I, my party, and the entire Nepali people, struggled against for so long. In this situation, instead of following the lifeless signboard of the Nepali Congress with irrational sentimentality, I have decided to separate from the Nepali Congress party after listening to my own conscience. I consider it more appropriate to fulfill my duty towards the country, people, democracy, and the martyrs. However, in order to restore its ideology, principles, and warrior spirit, all undemocratic forces, tendencies, and distortions that currently prevail within the party have to be eradicated first. Unless this is done, the Nepali Congress will not be able to become the mainstream of democracy again, so it must be completely rejuvenated. Towards this end, the first step is to completely defeat the 'Girija tendency' in the upcoming elections.

Why mid-term elections?

As I have said before, this mid-term election was imposed on the country, and it was motivated by the personal interests of ill elements. It was not necessary at all for the country, and the forces behind the People's Movement are not in support of it. To make my point clearer, I would like to briefly mention its background. Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala sabotaged party chairman Krishna Prasad Bhattarai in the by-election by misusing government resources and means. At that time, a strong voice was raised within the party that Prime Minister Girija should resign, or at the very least, disciplinary actions should be taken against him. The Central Working Committee met eight times to take a

decision in this matter, but despite the majority of the working committee presenting a written opinion in favor of disciplinary action, it failed to take a concrete decision. Thus, the decision to implement disciplinary action was left to the party chairman himself, Krishna Prasad Bhattarai. Thirty-six lawmakers who experienced direct sabotage were of the view that action should be taken against the Prime Minister in order to maintain party discipline. At the same time, in a special session of Parliament, opposition parties brought a motion of no-confidence against the Prime Minister. If the intention was to overthrow the government, these thirty-six lawmakers would have voted in favor of the proposal and the government would have been overthrown. However, they did not do so because it was not their intention to remove their own party from government. They only wanted the Prime Minister to be replaced. The government survived, but the next day, the Prime Minister scoffed at these lawmakers, saying, "If you wanted to remove me, why didn't you vote for the motion of no-confidence? Now that you have expressed your confidence in me, with what face will you ask for my resignation?" In this way, he belittled them. Meanwhile, the party president provided amnesty to the Prime Minister and attended the meeting called by the Prime Minister of his 74 supportive lawmakers in Baluwater. Misrepresenting this, the Prime Minister falsely declared unanimous party solidarity and further insulted the dissenting 36 lawmakers of his party. In a bid to educate and rebuke the Prime Minister, the 36 lawmakers stood absent from parliament during a motion of thanks to the King for announcing government policies and programs. This was a warning to both the Prime Minister and the party president that they will remain absent if the party does not fulfill its promises within the stipulated time. However, this one failed motion of thanks was no reason for the Prime Minister to resort to dissolving the parliament. Especially since many of the government's similar proposals and bills had not been passed in parliament for similar reasons before. Our

constitutionalists and most of the constitution-makers have expressed similar views. However, without informing his party, Girija recommended to the King that the parliament be dissolved and mid-term elections announced. The party had also already passed a resolution calling the mid-term elections irrelevant. In fact, the real reason for dissolving the parliament arbitrarily, disregarding all shame and morality, was for a different ploy. In a few days time, an impeachment motion was going to be tabled in the parliament regarding Girija's involvement in the Shanewani Scandal (Royal Nepal Airlines Corporation), and given that thirty-six of his own party lawmakers were looking for his resignation, it was likely to pass. This would have ended his political career forever, therefore he pre-empted it by dissolving parliament altogether. Apart from Girija Koirala's greed for power, there was no other reason for this expensive mid-term election. To what extent is it justifiable for the people and the nation to suffer so much for the sake of one's ambition for the chair? How can any conscious Nepali citizen ever forgive the Girija-group for this unforgivable crime? Does it make any sense for a majority party to dissolve its own government, conduct a mid-term election, and approach the people to ask for their votes so that they may reconstitute government again? Can these representatives of anarchy and instability talk about national-stability? Why should any citizen vote for such politicians? Shall we be subjected to yet another mid-term election within the next year?

Let's remove the obstacles

I have now reached the end of my life. In this life, I have overcome all the ups and downs of pain, torture, struggle, revolution, success, failure, honor, position, award, etc. I have no passion or hatred for any of them. Now I am not bound by any party. Nationalism and democracy are my only interests. And institutionalizing the achievements of the People's Movement 1990, ensuring the process of brightening the future of Nepal

through an economic revolution, and realizing the dreams of the martyrs has become the ultimate goal of my life. This work cannot be accomplished without the engagement and active support of all of you. I am confident that I will receive your support and assistance as always. In this context, our first duty is to eradicate the 'Girija tendency' through this mid-term election, which is the biggest obstacle in the way of our goal. I have the moral support of all of the loyal Nepali Congress members who have emerged as rebel-candidates all over the country in order to defeat the Girija-group in the upcoming elections. I have to help them with my deed, promises, and intentions, but due to my physical constraints, I am in a position to help only with my mind and words. I am not even in a position to help them with material resources, and this saddens me greatly. However, I believe that the brave and prudent Nepali people, who have been overcoming various dictatorial tendencies even in the midst of extremely complex circumstances over time, will defeat the ill-elements. This is my appeal to you. I heartily urge you to vote for the sincere candidates who have come forward to establish the ideals of the Nepali Congress, and for those candidates who are still loyal to the party ideology and are morally rebellious. Where there are no such candidates, vote for the candidates who were involved in the mainstream of the People's Movement 1990, and who identify with its essence and spirit. Completely defeat the undemocratic, incompetent, and corrupt forces, and ensure an environment conducive to the formation of government by the supporters of the People's Movement.

Let us defeat the 'Girija tendency'. Let us preserve nationalism and democracy. Let us eradicate poverty from the country.

Jai Nepal!

Ganeshman Singh

Khumaltar, Lalitpur

Date: October 31, 1994

(Note: This public letter (appeal) from Ganeshman Singh is in itself an evaluation and a living history of the Nepali Congress and its government from 1992 to 1995.)

On the one hand, Ganeshman-ji's Awareness Campaign was plaguing the Nepali Congress, while on the other hand, the newly established Jana Congress party with Ganeshman-ji's blessings was taking away crucial votes in the elections. On top of that, there was the stigma of the Nepali Congress government's inaction, corruption, lying, and the dissolving of its own majority parliament. All these negativities forced the Nepali Congress to its knees, yielding only 83 seats in the 1995 election. The UML communist party could not get an absolute majority with its 88 seats, and it therefore formed the new minority government due to being the largest party in the Parliament.

As much as the Nepali Congress was saddened by this decision of the people, Ganeshman-ji was just as happy that his strategy was successful. But his happiness did not last for more than a few days, because the challenge against democracy rose again in his old age. If a party established on democratic ideals like the Nepali Congress had such a hard time adhering to democratic principles, how could an extremist party like the UML communists be expected to adhere by it?

Meanwhile, the UML had made its party chairman Manmohan Adhikari the Prime Minister. Manmohan was a matured leader, therefore, Ganeshman-ji was optimistic to an extent that he could be reasoned with. But would Girija let Manmohan stay in power for long? Indeed, soon he stated, "I will huff and puff and blow their communist government away." Indeed, within nine months, Manmohan Adhikari was replaced by Sher Bahadur Deuba of the Nepali Congress. The chain of instability that began after that never stopped in Nepal's politics. The disease of instability remains equally powerful to this day. In

those times, at least a personality like Ganeshman Singh was still alive to fight it. Who will fight against such tendencies today?

Ganeshman-ji had stopped caring about which party was in power. What he cared most about was the importance of democracy and its indispensability for the protection of our nation's sovereignty. To that end, he went around reminding people and making them realize this. One day, he suddenly fell from a chair at Bharatpur Airport and had to be hospitalized for a long while. After that, for months on end, he had to be taken back and forth from Kathmandu to Delhi for treatment.

Even after this accident, Ganeshman-ji maintained dialogue with the people through his statements. However, his body had finally worn out. Now the Awareness Campaign had become orphaned because its leader was bedridden.

Finally, with the yet unfulfilled dream of seeing true democracy flourishing in Nepal, the Ironman Ganeshman Singh passed away at the age of 82, on 18 September 1997.

ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE AWARENESS CAMPAIGN

Ganeshman-ji was not able to fully bring his Awareness Campaign to the desired meaningful conclusion because of his passing, but he certainly succeeded to a large extent in stopping the authoritarian tendencies present within his own party. Had he not been able to dispel that tendency through the 1995 election, perhaps the Nepali Congress would have had to always bear stigma of being the party that choked the fragile seedling of democracy into a disfigured system. In that sense, the Awareness Campaign succeeded in its goal to a large extent. When the achievements of the Awareness Campaign are weighed by historians, they will find the following:

- 1) This campaign was fully successful in displacing the 'Girija tendency' within the Nepali Congress, which intended to lead the country like an elected dictator.
- 2) Democracy is more important than a political party, and the nation is more important than democracy. The campaign gave the message that members should not hesitate to fight against their own party.
- 3) Ganeshman-ji was not against the Nepali Congress. The statements that he made during the campaign made it clear that he was only opposed to authoritarian tendencies. He said to the newly formed and emerging parties, "Your efforts can inspire the Nepali Congress to improve." He was trying to rectify his own party.
- 4) Ganeshman-ji taught the leaders and members across the country to never compromise with anyone at the cost of democracy.
- 5) Ganeshman-ji's message was that within a democratic party structure, all leaders, members, activists should have the ability to openly debate, discuss, and even argue on the merits, without resorting to sabotage, infighting and conspiracy.
- 6) Ganeshman-ji gave the message that if party members are unwilling to change their ways, then the fight must continue by rousing the people and knocking on door-to-door if need be.

Despite Ganeshman-ji's best efforts, the Awareness Campaign he launched to defeat the ill elements worked only for immediate elections. However, the 'Girija tendency' never went away within the party, and after his demise, that same poisonous tendency has now become an integral part of almost all the major parties in Nepal. It is not impossible to get rid of it, but it is very

difficult. To get rid of it, we must be able to continue the struggle like Ganeshman-ji showed us. Otherwise, that trend will completely dominate Nepal's politics. One wrong precedent set by a single Prime Minister in 1995 still plagues the country with its infection thirty years later. It is unknown at this time how long such ill ambitions will last. Therefore, the question is presented: should a permanent platform like the Awareness Campaign be maintained within each party under the leadership of such idealists?

GIRIJA PRASAD KOIRALA'S REPENTANCE

The democratic system is considered to be one of the most delicate and fragile political systems in the world today. Other systems can be more easily administered by autocratic rulers wielding guns and swords. Those systems look to have stability, however human dignity, mutual respect, and human rights have no place in such a system of governance. In a democratic system, the people are endowed with all these rights, but its operation is a very difficult task. Guns and swords are not acceptable tools in a democracy. Such weapons only make democracy much more fragile. Democracy is like a delicate rose which wilts when mishandled. There is no place for rigidity or cruelty in a democracy. Hitler's approach was not a democratic one. Only a gentle, honest, and moral leader can run a democracy. A ruler who clings to power by misinterpreting the letter and spirit of the constitution in his own way cannot protect and promote democracy. Sadly, in the three decades since democracy was restored in Nepal, there have been thirteen Prime Ministers, however only one or two of them have been able to understand the essence of democracy.

Apart from Krishna Prasad Bhattarai, Girija Prasad Koirala was the only Prime Minister after the restoration of democracy in 1991 whose towering personality could have helped to

promote and strengthen democracy. Prime Minister Krishna Prasad Bhattarai had proven himself by doing what no one else could in ten years time, that is, to promulgate a democratic constitution, hold general elections, and to limit the King's ambitions. But in the case of Girija, in 2000, he hatched a conspiracy to oust Bhattarai, his own party president. Soon after smelling some conspiracy cooking up within the party to oust him from the Chair, PM Bhattarai straightaway went to the parliament to announce that he is resigning and also tendered his resignation to the king immediately. He was praised and immortalized by everyone. Girija could not demonstrate that level of personality because his temperament, his immoral behavior, self-pride and his tendency to misuse democracy eroded his image. He deprived himself of the privilege of being called a statesman. The call for mid-term elections not only tarnished Koirala's political image, but also distorted national politics. Almost all the Prime Ministers who succeeded Girija Prasad Koirala learned from his example. As a result, the country suffered. Democracy could not be nurtured. The reactionaries and the regressive forces were given the opportunity to increase their influence. The country was on the path of decline and the element of democracy was shrinking.

Leaders like Ganeshman-ji were shocked to see such tendencies present in a responsible post like the Prime Minister. How could that tendency ever lead to his dream of consolidating democracy? Therefore, Ganeshman-ji concentrated all of his energy on its protection and in the end defeated the 'Girija tendency', as he termed it, through his Awareness Campaign. Just as Lord Krishna destroyed his entire dynasty (Yaduvanshi) and proceeded to Golok, Ganeshman-ji also defeated the autocratic elements within his own party (Nepali Congress) and in the year 1997 finally took his rest.

Girija's sycophants used to ask, "What did Ganeshman-ji stand to gain by destroying our party, the Nepali Congress?" The answer to that was not understood by any of them except Girija himself, later in life. Although Girija grew to understand the reason too late, he never publicly mentioned it.

It seems that Girija Prasad Koirala grew to regret the mid-term general elections he caused. He never said so literally, but it seems that he was looking for an opportunity to show that he had improved. He was of the mindset to correct his past mistake at the opportune time. Following Girija's example, later Prime Ministers Manmohan, Surya Bahadur, Sher Bahadur, and KP Sharma Oli also followed the same path by dissolving the parliament. Thus, the poisonous seed of mid-term general elections planted by Koirala in 1995 had taken huge shape by 2002. Indeed, later, his disciple Sher Bahadur Deuba also used the same poisonous weapon to make it easier for King Gyanendra to take power. This incident finally presented the opportunity for Girija to correct his mistake. He declared a movement against the king's tyranny. The very first demand of the movement announced by Girija was to restore the dissolved House of Representatives. He declared, "The movement will not stop until the parliament is reinstated." As the rebellion increased in intensity, King Gyanendra also escalated his cruel tactics. His forces pressed back hard, torturing the citizens. He ordered use of force against Girija, aged 82, who suffered a baton stick to his skull. What more did Girija need? He went straight to the leader of the violent underground communists, Prachanda of the Maoist Party. He enlisted Prachanda into his movement and also sought the goodwill of India. Slowly, the situation started becoming favorable. Violent parties like the Maoists all united under the umbrella of Girija's non-violent movement. This movement had now taken the form of a Second People's Movement. Millions of citizens descended on the streets. Finally,

the King relented, seeing no way out. He was forced to reinstate the parliament, and after that, Girija and Prachanda together dethroned the King. Finally, a federal republic was established in the country.

In this way, Girija Prasad Koirala succeeded in atoning for the mistake he made by dissolving the parliament twelve years ago in 2007. Although he rehabilitated his image, the nation paid his mistake many times because five Prime Ministers learned from that one bad precedence he set. Due to this, the country collapsed economically. The government of Nepal spends between thirty to thirty-five billion rupees to hold a single general election. Experts say that, in addition to the visible expenditure of the government, the invisible expenditure by the political parties is at least double that. That means that the country spends more than one trillion rupees on a single election! Therefore, it stands to reason that five trillion rupees have been spent on the five mid-term elections. Now, let the Nepali people decide whether the politicians who waste the resources of the country are actual leaders of the people, or are they the leaders of squandering. Even if the country will recoup that loss after years of economic activity, how and when can we eradicate this anti-democratic tendency of acting like elected dictators? That is both the question and the problem.

There is little point in discussing further the wrongdoings of our leaders. The important thing to take away from this is that the people must warn the government to not make such foolish mistakes again in the service of self-interest and pettiness, and to not waste our country's precious resources on their whims and fancies. It is only asked of the citizens that they fulfil their civic obligation.

Birbhogya Basundhara !

(A Bir who avails all of Mother Earth)

(Birbhogya Basundhara is a spiritual phrase whose meaning is complex. 'Bir' does not simply mean a brave person. A 'Bir' is a personality who avails the whole of existence, as in, a person to whom the universe itself pays its respects. Although scholars have defined 'Bir' in their own ways, almost all of them agree on the following: "A selfless person who can strive for the betterment of the society, the country, and humanity as a whole is a Bir."

A Bir is completely devoted to his goal, yet he never compromises his ideology to achieve that goal. A Bir has many qualities, of which patriotism and revolutionary spirit are the most essential. A person who compromises his ideology to achieve his goal can still be called a brave man, however he can never become a Bir. Only a Bir can bring any revolution or struggle to a successful conclusion.

The word Bir is a very ancient one. Later, in politics, the word Iron Man was also used to describe such a Bir personality. George Washington, Mahatma Gandhi, and Sardar Patel of India were also considered iron men. Ganeshman Singh was the only person in Nepal to be addressed by the word Iron Man. Indeed, we have seen such heroes in our own lifetimes, and sometimes we have even helped them. Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Subhash

Chandra Bose, BP Koirala, and Ganeshman Singh were similar 'Birs'. Even among these, there is a strong opinion that Mahatma Gandhi and Ganeshman Singh should be valued the highest.)

A Bir is a person whom the whole world adores. The Chakravartis in the times of the Purans were similarly heroic. Birbhogya Basundhara has been described in the scriptures as such: the one who is blessed with the opportunity to avail or enjoy the whole of earth (Basundhara), is called the Bir. It does not mean to own the earth, rather it is the earth itself who admires and congratulates the Bir.

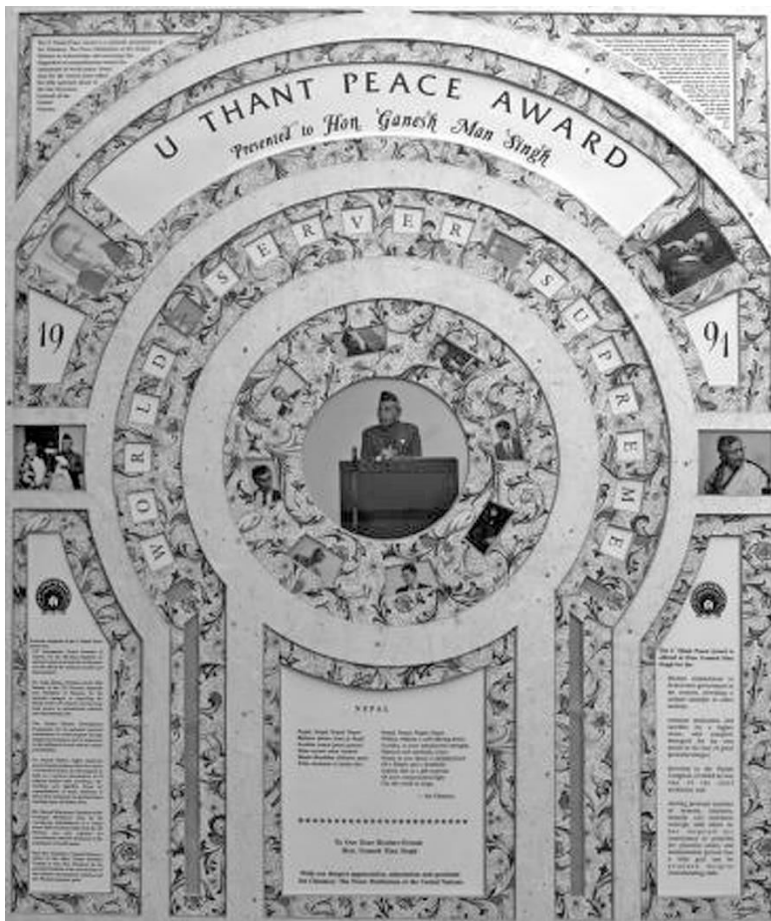
In reward for Ganeshman Singh's selfless devotion to human rights and democracy, he was honored by the Nepalis people with the title of 'Supreme Leader' and 'Ironman'. In recognition of his contributions, the Government of Nepal awarded him the highest medal of the nation, the 'Nepal Ratna'.

He was also awarded the Peace Run Award in 1994 by a world-renowned organization based in the United States. In 1993, he was awarded the 'Human Rights Award' by the United Nations for his outstanding work.

Atal Bihari Vajpayee, the then-Prime Minister of India, a renowned South Asian scholar and leader, congratulated Ganeshman-ji in his address at the UN General Assembly. He said, "The honor bestowed on a great man like Ganeshman Singh by the United Nations today is not only his honor, but also the honor of the entirety of South Asia. He is a respected politician throughout Asia. I also congratulate him." After Vajpayee finished speaking, all the heads of state and government present there greeted Ganeshman Singh with applause.

The adulations extended to Ganeshman-ji by the Nepalis people, the Government of Nepal, neighboring countries, world-

renowned organizations, and even the United Nations itself were the adulations for a Bir. Therefore, the Sanskrit sentence 'Birbhogy Basundhara' is appropriate to describe Ganeshman Singh. Let us then assess what type of Bir he was, and whether he really is deserving of the title. Firstly, let us discuss the difference between a Bir and a revolutionary.



Ganeshman Singh, the Supreme Leader of Nepal, is the first person from Nepal to receive the U Thant Peace Award.



Ganeshman Singh is the first statesman from South Asia to receive the Human Rights Award from the United Nations in 1993.



In recognition of his sacrifices to establish democracy in Nepal, the Government of Nepal conferred unto Ganeshman Singh the very first "Nepal Ratna" Award, which will never to be awarded to any other individual in the future as per its decision.

A BIR AND A REVOLUTIONARY

In common parlance, the word Bir means brave. Therefore, Bir and revolutionaries are placed in the same category because they are thought to be synonymous. However, even though every Bir is a revolutionary, not every revolutionary is a Bir. A revolutionary is one who willingly risks his life in pursuit of the principles of a revolution. A revolution is not something that can be accomplished by one person alone, hundreds if not thousands of people participate in it. They are governed by the codes of conduct formulated by their leaders. Since innumerable people are involved in the revolution, it is impossible for the leadership to be able to bind everyone within the codes of conduct. There is no shortage of immoral people in society. Therefore, some anti-elements which are disguised within the movement may deliberately try to disrupt it. Sometimes the leadership recruits 'hired mercenaries' to artificially enlarge the size of the movement. In some cases, the informants of the oppressor will infiltrate the ranks of the movement in order to keep a close eye on their plans. If such informants die in the process of the revolution, they too will be unwittingly honored as martyrs or revolutionaries. But if the revolution succeeds, those hypocrites will be two steps ahead of others in taking credit for its success. It is customary to adorn revolutionaries with titles such as 'freedom fighters'. Since the same standard of respect is given to all who partook in the movement, true believer or not, hero or coward, it is not appropriate to call a revolutionary as a Bir person. That is why it has been explained that 'even though every Bir is a revolutionary, not every revolutionary is a Bir'. Let us now discuss the essential qualities of a Bir.

The primary qualification of a Bir is patriotism. The word Bir is not a personal thing in itself. Personally, one may be called brave or valiant or strong, but a Bir is one who does not hesitate to sacrifice his life for the sake of his homeland and his country.

He is ready to martyr himself. Indeed, the people of the entire nation can hold their heads high because of such Birs. The following incidents prove that Ganeshman Singh was one of the foremost Birs in the history of Nepal. Just as a person is called a Bir in politics, so a person is called a Sage in spirituality. It is very difficult to identify people who are Sage or Bir. The scriptures explain how to identify them. Therefore, an attempt has been made here to examine the personality of Ganeshman Singh in both a political and a spiritual way. There are basically four types of qualities required to be called Bir and Iron Man in politics. They are: (1) Self-respect and patriotism, (2) Revolutionary, (3) Ideological, and (4) Dedicated.

1) SELF-RESPECT AND PATRIOTISM

Let us take a look at some of the events that history has not been able to record, in order to know and understand the level of his self-respect and patriotism.

King Tribhuvan was relegated to live within the palace under such tight control of the Ranas that he would rather choose to live life as a free citizen than as a hidden and trapped deity. Therefore, he secretly threw his support behind the promising leaders of the Praja Parishad who were rallying against the Ranas. Because of this, Ganeshman Singh's attitude towards King Tribhuvan was becoming favourable. That is why, after the success of the 1951 revolution, the Nepali Congress brought back the exiled King to Nepal and reinstated his throne. However, King Tribhuvan, despite his promise to support the will of the people, displayed his personal ambitions and kept postponing the Constituent Assembly elections that he had promised. Seeing such behavior from the King, Ganeshman-ji used to compare him to a snake and tell an interesting story to go along with it.

In the harsh winter months of Kathmandu during January and February, a good man who was visiting the Pashupatinath

temple early in the morning saw a shivering snake on the side of the road. The heart of the devout man was moved by compassion, so he placed the snake under his armpit and rescued it. After warming up its body, the snake bit the man, killing him. In the same way, King Tribhuvan was freed from his lifelong bondage by the Ranas because of the armed revolution carried out by the Nepali Congress. Yet he betrayed that revolution and attempted his own autocratic rule. The Nepali Congress always stood firm against this tendency of the King. Unexpectedly, King Tribhuvan died in the year 1955, and Crown Prince Mahendra became the King. He also followed in his father's footsteps after he ascended to the throne. This pushed the Nepali Congress to once again launch a 'disobedience movement' against the King. When this movement was approaching success, a debate emerged within the party regarding keeping the King or dethroning him. Considering it necessary to understand India's views in order to bring this complex debate to a meaningful conclusion, the party's High Command decided to secretly send one of their senior leaders to meet with Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru. Ganeshman-ji was chosen for this task because Nehru highly valued him.

1.1) Ganeshman Singh and Jawaharlal Nehru

On the first day of Ganeshman-ji's arrival in Delhi, after brief pleasantries, Prime Minister Nehru said to him, "You have just arrived today. Please rest. We will have formal talks tomorrow." He was treated with the hospitality befitting a national level official visit, and he was escorted to Nehru's offices the next day at one o'clock. However, after arriving, Ganeshman-ji was kept waiting in the same room for an hour or two. This raised his ire, and he thought to himself, "Why does this good man humiliate me like this? I did not come here to ask for personal favours. I have come as the envoy of the people of my country and my party." However, reminding himself that he should maintain

diplomatic decorum, he tried to calm himself. Having to wait alone on someone else's terms, at their offices? He must have been irked. Finally, one of Nehru's aides came in and politely said, "Sir, the Prime Minister is waiting for you in his office. This way please." The word 'waiting' struck a nerve in Ganeshman-ji. He said to himself, "Who is waiting, me or him? Dumping me for two hours in a lonely room and calling it waiting? Let's see if I leave here without a word or two. After all, the dignity of my country is in question!" Upon seeing Nehru standing steadfast at his office door waiting to welcome Ganeshman-ji, he was awed by Nehru's radiant personality. Why wouldn't he be? In those days, Nehru was considered to be one of the most influential politicians in the world. His intelligence, his temperament, his rhetoric, his culture, and his conduct were praised all over the world. Overall, Nehru's personality was incomparable. However, Ganeshman-ji himself was also no less a formidable man. His revolutionary personality had already become a legend in South Asia, which Nehru was well aware of. That was why he himself had stood up to receive Ganeshman-ji at the door. This meeting was a special and historic one. Before Nehru could get any glimpse of the dissatisfaction within him, he composed himself. Nehru took him to the couch near his table and asked him, "Ganeshman-ji, I hope that you are well. Did you have any problems in Delhi?" This question tugged at Ganeshman-ji's ego. He thought, "Oh, how nice! Making the neighbouring country's representative wait for hours outside his office, and then asking if I encountered any problems?" But diplomacy did not allow him to violate his country's dignity, so he instead replied, "I am very well, Nehru-ji. Due to the generosity of your staff, I had the opportunity to read all the newspapers published today in Delhi from beginning to end. I am grateful for it."

There was no way that Nehru would not understand Ganeshman-ji's delicate diplomatic language. He looked dazed

and confused, and immediately picked up a paper from his desk and pressed the call-bell. His assistant entered, and Nehru immediately scolded him, "In the list prepared here for me, the meeting with Ganeshman-ji is set for three o'clock. Why was he escorted here and made to wait before the meeting time?" The gentleman was very embarrassed and said, "I made a mistake, Mr. Prime Minister." Nehru further added, "Do you know who this person is? He is one of the greatest leaders of this region. I am instructing you that, from now on, whenever Ganeshman-ji wants to meet me, an appointment is to be set immediately!" Trying to normalize the situation, Ganeshman-ji said, "It's nothing. I wasn't too inconvenienced by it. I am fine, Nehru-ji." Ganeshman-ji recounts that Nehru looked ashamed at this mismanagement.

After this introductory matter, Nehru showed great sincerity in Ganeshman-ji's visit and requested him to speak about the reason for his visit. Ganeshman-ji explained the reason for his coming to Delhi and the message of his party. "Nehru-ji, our country's monarchy has never been conducive to democracy. We freed the King from the clutches of the Ranas, carried him on our shoulders, and re-seated him on the throne. But even this King does not seem to be in favor of democracy. The Nepali people, led by our party, are demonstrating with a polite disobedience movement these days. If we want, we can easily remove the monarchy. But in order to make this critical decision, our party needs to know the thoughts and opinions of our international friends. This is the reason my party sent me to meet you. Please give us your opinion, Nehru-ji." After listening, Nehru thought for a while and then said, "Ganeshman-ji, I am fully aware of the potential of your party. I am also convinced that your people can overthrow the monarchy whenever they choose to. There is no question or dilemma in this. However, what needs considering is that the history of monarchy in Nepal is very old. Therefore, it is

natural that its roots will also be strong due to its age. Yes, you can uproot the monarchy, but just think, after uprooting the strong and deep roots, an equally deep pit will be formed there. Will your party be able to fill that pit? If the answer is yes, if you can do it, then go ahead, you will have my support.” Ganeshman-ji was wise enough to understand the minds of Nehru on this issue. After that, the meeting was concluded with other formalities.

1.2) Ganeshman Singh and Zhou/Mao

It was around 1960 or 1961 that a team comprising of the key members of Nepal's first elected government was on a visit to China. This delegation was led by BP Koirala. Discussions were ongoing between Prime Minister Zhou Enlai from China and Prime Minister BP Koirala's team on issues of mutual interest. In the midst of it, a statement was made by the Chinese team that Mount Everest belonged to China. In response, on behalf of Nepal, team leader Prime Minister BP Koirala put forth his arguments and evidence with great caution and skill. However, the Chinese Prime Minister would not budge. He kept saying, “No, Mount Everest belongs to China. You have to accept that.” Zhou Enlai was considered a world-class politician, and seeing his irrational stubbornness, BP Koirala sensed that Ganeshman-ji might interject. Ganeshman-ji was seated next to him, and he was well acquainted with Ganeshman-ji's temperament. Therefore, BP adjourned the meeting for the next day. Later, he said, “Ganeshman-ji, I understand that you cannot tolerate China's attitudes towards our sovereignty. How would I myself ever accept his words? But, one must be patient in diplomacy. So, please exercise patience. There is going to be a serious discussion tomorrow.” Ganeshman-ji agreed, but he felt that the government's determination was not enough to address the question of his country's self-respect.

The meeting resumed the next day. Once again, China brought up the same argument regarding the ownership of Mount Everest. Going even further, China argued that Nepal does not even have a Nepali name for Mount Everest. How can Nepal claim an object or area when no word exists in its own language to describe it? BP immediately replied, "We have been calling Mount Everest by the name 'Sagarmatha' for hundreds and thousands of years before it was ever known to the world. To this day we call it Sagarmatha, not Mount Everest." In response, Chinese Prime Minister Zhou Enlai said, "We also have our own name for it. We call it 'Chomolungma'." Immediately, BP replied, "There is no such word as 'chomolungma' in Chinese. That is a word in the language of Tibet. We even have proof of this." He presented the proof that was brought from 'Jaishichowk', Basantapur Durbar, in Kathmandu. But China was still not acquiescing. Ganeshman-ji's hair bristled watching these activities. He suddenly decided to speak up, and said, "Your Excellency Prime Minister Zhou Enlai! There is no point in having this endless and irrational debate. In discussions where written evidence is not respected, there is no meaning in discussing only for the sake of discussion. China is our closest neighbour, and we don't want to antagonize our relationship. However, these sorts of situations have led to wars between many countries in history. We do not want to imagine such a situation. Therefore, it may be appropriate to discuss this matter some other time!" Ganeshman Singh's very strong but dignified warning was steeped with patriotism, and those present at the meeting who heard his words accepted him as an Iron Man. Later, BP Koirala himself told Ganeshman-ji, "You took the stance that any true patriot should take. I applaud you for that. But from here on, it is not possible to say what our relations with China will look like."

The Nepal delegation was scheduled to return home in a few days. After dinner, all members went to sleep in their hotel rooms. BP Koirala was reading a book in his own room when, suddenly, five or six army generals entered and stated, "Our Chairman Mao Tse-tung wants to meet with you right now. Let's go!" BP looked at the clock and said, "It's twelve o'clock at night. I'm in a night-gown. How is that possible?" The general said, "No, he has personally come to the hotel to meet you. Let's go down to the lobby!" Feeling amazed, BP made his way downstairs. Upon entering, he could easily make out the profile of Chinese Chairman Mao Tse-Tung from afar. After all, the Chairman was one of the world's four or five most prominent leaders. In the hotel's large and grand lounge, excitement arose within Nepal's first elected Prime Minister Bishweshwar Prasad Koirala. Mutual meeting and greetings were held at once, and after the usual formalities, Chairman Mao initiated the discussion and said, "Your Excellency Prime Minister, I am fully aware of the two-day long negotiations between your team and our team. I am of the view that this issue should not be delayed or prolonged. Therefore, I am proposing a middle-ground solution. Please accept it. The proposal is a 'Water-Shed' one. That is, the face of the mountain where the water flows towards China belongs to China, and the face of the mountain where the water flows towards Nepal belongs to Nepal. I believe this is a good proposal for both countries. Therefore, I hope that you accept this proposal." BP Koirala was at a loss for words for a moment. But this is BP we are speaking of. He immediately composed himself, forgetting his awe of Chairman Mao and putting aside the differences between a small country and a big country. Without allowing any feelings to influence him, he said very humbly and with diplomatic dignity, "Mr. Chairman, according to our ages you are like my father. I have great respect for you. It is not my intention to disrespect you, nor is it my nature. However, I cannot go beyond what my country's historical evidence dictates.

Furthermore, I am not alone in making such a decision. Nepal is a democratic country, therefore, as a Prime Minister, I am fully accountable to the Parliament of my country. Therefore, I will put the proposal of His Excellency before the parliament. I will surely inform the Chinese government with the results, no matter what conclusion the Parliament of Nepal may vote on. Please don't ask me to make this decision alone.” It didn't take long for the situation to return to normal after this. After a brief chat, the two leaders parted ways.

As it was already past midnight, BP did not want to wake his delegation to tell them about the incident with the Chinese Chairman. At breakfast the next day, he told Ganeshman-ji and the rest of the team the happenings of the night before. He also said, “We have come this far as a direct result of the patriotic manner in which Ganeshman-ji manifested in our formal talks yesterday.”

1.3) Ganeshman Singh and Inder Kumar Gujral

Ganeshman Singh left the Nepali Congress after making countless efforts to remedy his party and its leaders, which were all in vain. Thenafter, he tried to limit himself to the role of 'watch dog' for the country and democracy. At the same time, the then-Prime Minister of India, I.K. Gujral, was scheduled to visit Nepal. At the time, Ganeshman-ji used to come to his own private office in Kamalpokhari almost daily. Because he had left the party, people who had aspirations with the Nepali Congress, or those who feared its displeasure, did not dare to visit him. When party leaders and members themselves did not visit, there was no chance of any government official ever visiting. The people who were present in that office daily were Ramji Kumar Shrestha (his personal secretary), Sharach Chandra Wasti (his press-advisor), and myself. All visitors to the office were managed by the three of us, and they included retired politicians,

researchers, journalists, and foreigners. Among those who helped Ganeshman-ji, as needed, was also Nabin Chitrakar.

One day, the Indian Ambassador to Nepal, KV Rajan, said in a telephone conversation with Ganeshman-ji's personal secretary that "The Prime Minister of India is coming to Nepal. Arrangements need to be made to have Ganeshman-ji meet with him. Please report back in time." The news was reported to Ganeshman-ji but he didn't put forward any response. The next day, the ambassador called again and said, "Sooner would be better." The news was again conveyed to Ganeshman-ji but he replied in an uncharacteristic way, "Stop bothering me. Just tell him that I'm not well, and that it won't be possible to have a meeting this time." The secretary informed the embassy as per Ganeshman-ji's wish. After a few days, the ambassador called for the third time, "If it is difficult for Ganeshman-ji to walk up the stairs, we will make arrangements to meet him on the lower floor." Upon being asked for a third time, Ganeshman-ji retorted to his secretary angrily, "How many times will you keep bothering me with the same question? I have already given you my answer!" Therefore, the secretary did not dare to bother Ganeshman-ji again and firmly told the embassy that it would not be possible.

A meeting with the Prime Minister of a friendly nation is a political matter. So, one day Ramji and Sharach Chandra said to me, "Maybe if you talk to him and ask him to reconsider, if you put it in a political perspective, perhaps that might work?" So, I agreed to try. One day, I entered Ganeshman-ji's room and finding the proper context, I added, "Ganeshman-ji, you have left the party that you yourself gave birth to. The government doesn't listen to you, instead it would rather give you grief. There is no political decorum in the opposition party. Neither the leaders nor the members come to seek your advice with any excuses. You also did not create a separate group or entity that could carry on

your ideals and principles. In such a situation, the Prime Minister of India himself is seeking to meet with you. Yet, you are turning him away. How does politics work? How do you establish your ideals and ideas? How will you further serve the people?" Whether it was seeing my ignorance or my naivete, Ganeshmanji smiled and said, "Look, why should I meet the Prime Minister of India? If I meet him, will he fulfill what you have just said? You do not know Indian leaders. You will not find nationalists anywhere else like the leaders of India. They are the kind of nationalists who cannot get along with nationalists of another country. Only those country-leaders whose patriotism is weak have friendships with them. Do you know why they are now getting in touch with the leaders and the government of our country? It means that India is in the mood to get something from us. I know their nature. They are only attempting to meet me in order to build a picture that they have my support and the support of the Nepali people. What then is the point of waiting in line to meet him? Have you read Shakespeare's play 'The Merchant of Venice'? The leaders of India are like the Jewish character Sylak. They want a pound of flesh from our Nepali bodies. I cannot and will not do that. My conscience does not allow me to tarnish my country's identity. That is why I will not meet with the Prime Minister of India. Our current government does not hesitate to grant them their wishes, so let their PM meet our PM instead of me. Why should I meet him?"

I was shocked to hear Ganeshmanji's words. When I realized that I had presented my ignorant views to such a great nationalist, I was overwhelmed with shame. But this dialogue with such a great leader helped me to understand the essence of nationalism. That moment has been an unforgettable lesson to me. Another thing to remember here is that, even though Ganeshmanji did not want to meet him, after the Indian Prime

Minister arrived to Nepal, he himself went to visit Ganeshman-ji at his private residence in Chaksibari as a courtesy call.

All of the three historical events presented above are incomparable lessons for the young nationalists of this country. Such events are not mentioned by great men in their biographies. Witnesses of history should honor such incidents, so that future generations can learn from these incidents and conduct themselves accordingly.

2) REVOLUTIONARY

A Bir is born from the integration of courage, ideology, patriotism, and dedication to the people. In the absence of these four qualities, one may look like a revolutionary but he can never be a Bir. Ganeshman Singh was a revolutionary endowed with these four qualities.

There are two types of courage. Some are born brave, while others gain bravery through dedication to a cause. Ganeshman-ji had a courageous nature from birth, and he also awakened courage by doing meditation with the force of Hath-Yoga. Ganeshman-ji's childhood and adolescence can be summed up as being a troublesome child from an early age. His grandfather had enrolled him in the prestigious Durbar School. But rather than being a good student, he slapped a Rana's son and chose to bunk school when reprimanded. He even refused to bow to the Rana rulers even though army generals and civil officers were doing so. These deeds were either his courage or his stupidity. But one thing is for sure, the scandal of beating a Rana's son and one of the Rana's soldiers must have aroused the spirit of rebellion in Ganeshman-ji.

In speaking of Ganeshman-ji's courage, it is important to remember the incident where he jumped into the 150-meter-wide raging Bagmati river in his childhood. He was only a boy of

ten or twelve when he boasted to his friends that he could swim across the powerful river during a big flood. Big trees, cows, buffaloes, and houses stood no chance against the might of the flooded Bagmati. However, true to his word, Ganeshman-ji jumped off the embankment of Tripureshwor (Thapathali) and was swept two kilometers away, to a tributary with the river Bishnumati, where a farmer saw him and rescued him. Should we call his act couragerous or stupid? How could a child of ten or twelve not know the consequences? His friends cautioned him to not proceed, because it was dangerous. However, he was adamant that he could cross it. Therefore, it can be deduced that it was his brave spirit as a child, to jump when no one else dared. This can be corroborated by child psychologists as well. Recounting this childhood memory later in life, Ganeshman-ji used to tell reporters, “In a similar way, before I can make a decision about any subject, my conscience just jumps into it and takes over. That is my nature.” Yes, this quality of Ganeshman-ji is courageous. Since we have touched upon his courage, let us call upon some other courageous examples.

2.1) Daring escape from Rana's prison

In Ganeshman Singh's long political life, he was arrested for crimes that could have resulted in his death penalty four different times. Detailed explanations of these are explained in this book elsewhere. However, the event that most proves his courage and patience is his plan to break out of the Rana's Bhadracol Jail and escape. The Rana prisons were as secure as Hitler's own prisons. The disappointments he suffered while fleeing and the stories of misery he endured may be similar to stories of other brave revolutionaries. His years of solitary dedication to escaping from that prison were in fact no less than a sage rishi's years of meditation. In fact, his successful struggle in escaping has earned him a seat of respect that no one else has been able to attain.

2.2) Plan to assassinate all the Ranas

At the beginning of the 1951 revolution, the Nepali Congress decided to whisk away the King from Kathmandu, establish him in Palpa, and instigate a revolt within the Nepal Army. The issue was discussed in the Central Committee of the Nepali Congress, and leader and frontman for this plan had to be chosen. When no one volunteered, it was Ganeshman Singh who immediately got up and said, "I will take the responsibility of implementing this party decision." BP Koirala said to him, "Ganeshman-ji, you are right in that no one in our party knows Kathmandu and the palace better than you. However, we need your influence with the people to inspire them and make this revolution successful. You might lose your life in the process. I cannot send you." In reply, Ganeshman-ji said, "The Ranas have martyred four of my friends who were with me in politics. I am living a borrowed life. While I am grateful for the kindness that you have shown me, I will be the one to lead this action. I am ready to martyr myself for this country." In the end, his determination and his courage won against the party leaders and he was chosen to lead. Before bidding him farewell, Subarna Shamsher treated him to dinner at his home. Normally, Subarna Shamsher would not shake hands with anyone, but on that last day he held on to Ganeshman-ji's hand for a long time.

After he marched onwards with the action plan, Ganeshman-ji held a meeting with his team in the city of Banepa, on his way to Kathmandu. He told them, "We all know what the actionable outcomes given by the party are. However, in addition to this, we must also take other actions which will ensure that the revolution fulfils its mission quickly and more easily." Hearing this, his team-mates said, "You are our leader. We are ready to do anything you say!" Ganeshman-ji then told them his plan, "Before we proceed with our plan to abduct the King, why not make a 'single grave' for most of the Ranas, including the

commander, who are currently in Kathmandu?” His team-mates were excited but cautious, “But how can such a small group of us bring down so many, against the might of the state? Can we really get them all together in one place and succeed in our mission?” Ganeshman-ji assured them, “If we do not falter, and if we do not lose our courage, then we can surely succeed. On the day of Indraajatra, the Ranas gather at the Gaddi Baithak Palace. We have to seize this opportunity to take action.” Seeing his courage and his planning, the rest of them were enthused and filled with hope. They replied, “Yes Ganeshman-ji! We are with you. We will go ahead with your plan.”

Historians who study revolutions will surely say, “A history of a revolution where a leader who sparked the revolution then carrying out the final courageous task of entering into enemy territory and killing the rulers is rarely heard of. On top of that, for a leader to escape from prison and return to the battlefield, to the center of the fight, is also unheard of. From this point of view, Ganeshman Singh's courage was unique.” However, this plan to entomb the Ranas all at once was leaked by one of the cowards in his party, and the Ranas got wind of it. Flustered by this, they set out on a massive hunt for Ganeshman Singh. Fortunately, sympathetic friends were able to get him out of Kathmandu. However, border-patrol managed to arrest him at Thori in the India-Nepal border, and he was imprisoned and tortured again.

2.3) Captured in Thori, Birgunj

After changing into their disguise in Kathmandu and travelling through the jungle for seven days on foot, they reached the Nepal-India border hungry and thirsty. At a place called Thori, just adjacent to the border, as they were about to make the crossing, they were captured by border security forces. After his arrest, Ganeshman-ji was placed before the Governor of

Birgunj, Som Shamsher. Looking at Ganeshman-ji from the upper-floor balcony of his house, the governor reprimanded the constable. "You fool! Who is this common Newar that you have brought. This is not Ganeshman!" The constable replied, "My Lord, this is indeed Ganeshman. Look closely, do you not recognize him?" The governor again was not convinced, "You are being stubborn. That is not Ganeshman at all." The constable bowed before the governor and said, "My Lord, I vouch for the fact that he is, in fact, Ganeshman. There is no way that I will make a mistake in recognizing the face of the man who teased me in Raxaul three years ago. The disguise he had adopted is making it difficult for you to recognize him. If you doubt that this is him, please call Bakhatman and Tilakman, they will recognize him." Probably seeing the confidence shown by the constable and his request to call the Subbas, Som Shamsher said, "Oh, I see, it does look like him. That is Ganeshman! What a mess he is! Where did you find him?" The constable replied, "In Thori, my lord!" Som Shamsher asked, "Which way did you come from?" and the constable replied, "By the way of the forest, my lord." Joking, Som Shamsher said, "It's a wonder you didn't get eaten by the tigers and the wolves!" An unbowed Ganeshman-ji retorted, "Do you think that tigers and wolves will dare eat my head? Me, who will eat all of your Rana heads! Do you think I will die without eating you first?" The governor was taken aback by his fiery words, and Ganeshman-ji pounced on the opportunity, adding, "What a rude and mannerless man you are! Standing there, talking down from the balcony. Get your ass down here if you want to continue talking."

Insulted by Ganeshman-ji's words, the governor quietly slipped back into his room. When night fell, he made his way to the cell where Ganeshman-ji was kept. "How dare you insult me in front of everyone! I have a reputation to keep. I am here now, okay tell me what you need to. It's one thing to insult someone

in private, but you should never insult someone in public like that.” In reply, Ganeshman-ji said, “You tried to act superior to me, showing off your governor’s power. I just put you back in your place. You forgot that you were speaking to Ganeshman Singh. I just reminded you.” Unable to respond to Ganeshman-ji’s fire, the governor went back to his house.

2.4) Confrontation with Hari Shamsher Rana

After his arrest, it was ordered by the Governor of Birgunj that Ganeshman-ji be transferred to Kathmandu on foot and be imprisoned there. It is an interesting story which has already been discussed in previous chapters. Here, the story of Ganeshman-ji’s torture by the Rana Hari Shamsher, and his courage in the face of that inflicted pain, is presented.

Ganeshman-ji was brought to Kathmandu escorted by two extra trucks full of armed soldiers, for fear that the Nepali Congress revolutionaries might try to ambush the transport and abscond him. A large crowd had gathered to witness the transport because news of his capture had spread. Seeing the crowd gathered, Ganeshman-ji started mocking the soldiers, “Have you seen the crowd gathered at the Pashupatinath Temple on the festival of Ekadashi? Yeah, these people have come to see me just like that. Don’t you dare hurt them.” In those times, the name Ganeshman Singh was synonymous with bravery and a legendary Bir in the eyes of the general public. Therefore, the public always imagined him to be larger than life, just like Kalbhairab. However, the man inside the security cordon looked to be a normal man. So, someone from the crowd shouted, “They said that they arrested the leader of the Nepali Congress Ganeshman Singh, but this is just a common Newar!” In support, another shouted, “They claimed to have captured a tiger but in fact it’s just a mouse!” Yet another shouted, “He looks nothing like a leader of the Nepali Congress, look at his scrubby face and

clothes!" Another joked, "They just captured a coolie from Kalimati and called him Ganeshman!" The common people had imagined that Ganeshman Singh would be a fearsome and awe-inspiring man because of his dangerous feats and shenanigans. But here they saw a tired, miserable, and helpless person. Gradually, the crowd started thinning out. As per the special security arrangements, the soldier took Ganeshman-ji to the eastern gate of Singha Durbar.

Coincidentally, the very same person who took Ganeshman-ji's statement and interrogation ten years ago in Singha Durbar was now the person taking it again. He was Mirsubba Mahendra Bahadur Mahat. Seated on the couch on the upper platform was a hefty figure who looked to be the weight of three whole men. He was none other than Hari Shamsher. Ganeshman-ji already recognized him from his visage. Mirsubba Mahat started his statement with asking for his name and caste. It was only asked out of formality, but Ganeshman-ji threw a rejoinder at the seated Hari Shamsher, "You already know those details. Why do you ask again?" Mahat replied, "Since your grandfather had you live separately, I am asking for your new address. Shall I put down Yatkha or Kilagal?" Ganeshman-ji replied, "Well, if you must ask, then my home is the entirety of the Kingdom of Nepal." Hari Shamsher, listening to this disobedient answer, started muttering angrily, "Ae (expletive)! You are a prisoner, know your place. Answer the questions directly, or else!" Ganeshman-ji glanced at him and replied towards Mahat, "Who is this rude man interrupting another's conversation? Didn't anyone teach him any manners?" Hearing this, Hari Shamsher lost his composure, "You (expletive) lowlife. You dare address me with the common vernacular! Whip him! Whip him immediately!" Although Ganeshman-ji knew full well that he was Hari Shamsher, the fearsome general of the special court, he still pretended not to know him. "Who the hell are you to shout so

much? Why are you still disturbing me? You dared to address me with the common vernacular, so I will address you the same way! I am giving my statement to the Mirsubba. Shut your mouth!" The general was so enraged that he shouted, "Whip him! Whip him immediately! Keep whipping until he knows his place!" Immediately there was a downpour of whips so fast upon Ganeshman-ji's body that he barely had any time to breathe. The whips fell so fast, one after the other, that only the sounds could be heard whoosing through the air but the eyes couldn't follow. They fell upon his back and wrapped around his body, tearing off the skin where it touched. He flexed his back and clenched his fists and teeth. From prior experience, he knew that this was the way to bear the pain. No matter the pain, he did not fall or let out a single word in pain, because he did not want to give the Rana pleasure. Even the floggers got tired and took turns whipping him. Eventually, Ganeshman-ji could not bear the pain and finally fell to the ground. The general ordered him to be picked up and whipped even more. The soldiers complied but Ganeshman-ji could not stand anymore and fell again. They kept whipping him on the ground as well. Just then, Mirsubba Mahat and Sardar Upendra Purush Dhakal entered the room. They pleaded with the general, "My Lord, you must pause the whipping. He is already at death's door. Please call it off, my lord. Otherwise he will die right here!" Finally, Hari Shamsheer said, "Enough. Fall back" and the floggers stopped. Hari Shamsheer turned towards the soldiers and said, "Which of you needs to urinate? Go ahead and piss on his face." Even that did not satiate his anger. "Take him away like a dead dog. Drag his body all the way to the cell!" Two soldiers then dragged Ganeshman-ji's bloodied body down the stairs and away. This persecution took place in the Kathghar building in the Putali Bagaicha of Singha Durbar. Ganeshman Singh proved the saying, **"A Bir can be broken, but he can never be made to bow."**

A few days later, a soldier who was present at the statement hearing saw Ganeshman-ji crawling his body towards the sunlit portion of the jail grounds. He called out, "Hey Ganeshman! I want to ask you a question. Answer it truthfully." Ganeshman-ji said okay. The soldier asked, "Which one of your parents is a Newar? Your mother or father?" Ganeshman-ji replied, "Both of them are Newars." The soldier had a hard time believing it. How can a Newar boy be such a Bir! "I was there," he said, "and you displayed such bravery! You greatly insulted our general, and you were beaten so badly but you never cried out! Do you know that you got 603 lashes?! I stopped counting after that. If you really are the son of a Newar, then your mother must be blessed to have such a son come from her womb! All of us soldiers who were present there were impressed by your fearlessness and tolerance!" (At the time, the general public believed that only the Chhetris were graced by God to be brave and courageous.) It was dinner time, and the soldiers were on their way to eat rice. Another soldier said, "How will you get to the kitchen in your condition? Shall we bring the food here for you instead?" Ganeshman-ji replied, "I am quite hungry, but if I eat then my stomach churns and I must crawl to the toilet. It is far away so it's better not to eat." Another soldier said, "That's not a problem. You must eat. We will carry you to the toilet if needed." Bolstered by their kind words, Ganeshman-ji accepted to eat the food they offered. Recounting that day, Ganeshman-ji says, "I have eaten at a lot of big banquets and even food from the palace. However, the taste of lentil soup, rice, and mustard greens from that dinner still lingers in my mouth."

It is inconceivable that Ganeshman Singh, the protagonist of unimaginable tales of courage like those mentioned above, would have suffered so much physically. A great book can be prepared just discussing his courageous feats and the torture he

suffered. Therefore, let us put an end to the context of his courage here.

3) IDEOLOGICAL

When Ganeshman-ji first became involved in politics, the only thing he knew about democracy was that a kidnapper of women would be treated to the same justice regardless of caste in a democratic system. Only later did he truly understand the principles of democracy and liberty. However, even though he did not understand the greatness of the doctrine at that time, he was convinced that he should not break his oath and concede, and never betray his comrades. Below are some examples of his ideology.

3.1) Never broke his oath

He took an oath in front of the Goddess Bhagwati Mata (Bijeshwari) to never betray the movement or its members even if his life was endangered. He made this promise to Dharmabhakta, the founder of the Praja Parishad while taking the membership of the Party. He kept that promise and never betrayed the revolution, even in torture.

3.2) Resisted and endured torture

The Ranas tried everything they could to make Ganeshman-ji divulge the names of his co-conspirators, Dharmabhakta and Gangalal but he never opened his mouth. Whenever he felt he was at the end of his rope, he would remember and find strength in Gangalal's words to him, "Don't leave the path. Stay true."

3.3) Never informed on anyone

He never let his self-respect falter, even when he almost fainted after receiving more than 600 lashes. Nor did he give them anyone's information.

Some other examples of his ideology:

3.4) Refused to accept a Ministership

Ganeshman-ji was not happy with the so-called Delhi Agreement between India, the Ranas, and the Nepali Congress after the success of the armed revolution of 1951. The inclusion of the Nepali Congress in the cabinet formed under a Rana Prime Minister was neither right in principle nor morally appropriate. Similarly, he was not able to digest India's interference in Nepal's internal affairs. So, he protested this arrangement. When he was asked to become part of the cabinet, he refused. He disclosed this in a letter to the party president. However, BP Koirala convinced Ganeshman-ji to obey the Party's decision and accept the position offered to him. Ganeshman-ji's weakness was that he could never refuse the decision of the party, no matter even if it meant his death.

3.5) Raised doubt on the referendum

His condition for the formation of an interim government in 1981 for the fairness of the referendum is another example. The movement started by the fraternal organizations of the Nepali Congress and the Communist Party, namely Nepal Student Union and All Nepal National Independent Student Union, took on a new political color in 1980. Unable to tame the movement, King Birendra issued a proclamation calling for a referendum to decide what kind of political system the people themselves demanded. The referendum was a democratic tool to understand the will of the people, but in order for it to be conducted fairly, an acceptable interim government needed to be formed. Ganeshman-ji reminded BP Koirala and the general public of the need for it, but neither the King nor BP himself listened to him. In the end, just as Ganeshman-ji had suspected, the King

declared victory for the Panchayat system by playing tricks. Had BP heeded these warnings, the result would have been different.

3.6) Did not acquiesce to the King

Ganeshman Singh was the supreme commander of the first people's movement in the history of Nepal. After struggling to tame the 49-days-long People's Movement in 1990, the King wanted to meet Ganeshman Singh for dialogue. Ganeshman-ji was detained under hospital-arrest, and the proposal came through the Prime Minister. Ganeshman-ji became suspicious that this was yet another conspiracy of the King. Therefore, he rejected the offer to meet, and immediately issued another public statement, *"The peaceful people's movement has reached a turning point! With a small push from the people, this autocratic Panchayat system has been weakened to the point of toppling. Therefore, all democracy-loving people should participate in the people's movement and give the last push!"*

Days after his public appeal, oceans of people descended on the streets to join the protest. Overwhelmed by the situation, King Birendra felt that Ganeshman-ji's help was indispensable to keep the situation from blowing out of control. With a special request to understand the gravity of the situation, the King once again sent Prime Minister Lokendra Bahadur Chand as his special envoy to Bir Hospital for decisive talks. Ganeshman-ji told Prime Minister Chand that it was against the principles of the movement for the supreme commander of the agitating party to meet with the King, that is, unless the King accepted all the demands of the movement and declared that the Panchayat system had been dissolved and multi-party system would now be established. In reply, Prime Minister Chand said, "There should be a discussion about how your movement will determine the methods or procedure to achieve its goals. This is why His Majesty desires to meet you."

Ganeshman-ji replied, "Okay, then I will send some of my responsible friends." Immediately, Ganeshman-ji assembled a negotiating team of Krishna Prasad Bhattarai, Girija Prasad Koirala, Sahana Pradhan, and Radhakrishna Mainali and sent them to meet with the King. Such was his stance. Such was his self-respect and principles.

3.7) Rejected the push for a republic

The People's Movement 1990 had concluded successfully and both the Congress and the Communists were holding victory rallies jointly and separately across the country. After the meeting between the King and Ganeshman-ji in April of 1991, any lingering doubts and suspicions were also erased. Though Krishna Prasad Bhattarai, the representative of the agitators and the president of the Nepali Congress, became the Prime Minister in April, the Left party suddenly staged a large procession in Kathmandu chanting, "We do not accept the King-Congress alliance! This agreement is a fraud. Republic is our demand. The people's movement has not stopped. Our movement is continuing." This separate movement by the communists unrelated to the people's movement was gaining momentum.

Therefore, Ganeshman-ji spoke out in a program in a forceful manner, "Come on! The people's movement never demanded that the country be turned into a republic. Our demands are only the end of the autocratic Panchayat system and the establishment of a multi-party democratic parliamentary system. If we have achieved both of these things, then for what purpose are there still protests asking for a republic? Is it not unethical to ask for things that were never demanded? Don't run after such immoral methods!" After his clear stance and principled statements, the separate movement died down within a few days.

3.8) Demanded his own PM's resignation

In the years 1993 and 1994, Prime Minister Girija Prasad was possessed by the ghost of self-aggrandizement. He had abandoned his principles, ideals, values, and beliefs. He had but one goal - power, power, and power. That was all! He would not hesitate to compromise with anyone, no matter how low he had to stoop. He was adamant that his goals could only be achieved if he had total control over the party. Therefore, to self-centered groups within the party who rode his coattails, he had become their messiah. However, the common Nepali was already fed up by his weak governance within two-three years. On the whole, the Nepali Congress was rapidly moving towards the gaping pit of unpopularity, less than a year after having established their government. In such a situation, Ganeshman Singh, being the supreme leader, and Krishna Prasad Bhattarai, being the party president, had a natural responsibility to protect the party. However, Bhattarai had been gravely politically damaged by the unimaginable defeat in the parliamentary elections and he had become ineffective. What a state the party was in, when the party president and the prime minister both had lost their image.

Ganeshman-ji knew very well that the day the Nepali Congress becomes weak is the day that the foundation of democracy would also be weakened. He realized that Koirala and Bhattarai, who were both trapped in the throes of self-aggrandizement and toxicity, would never be able to successfully lead the party. Thus, Ganeshman-ji started asking for the Prime Minister's resignation. Koirala's government expended all its energy trying to paint Ganeshman-ji's campaign as a result of personal dissatisfaction. However, Ganeshman-ji was never after the seat. Would he have given up the Prime Minister's seat when it was offered to him? Could a person have any chance of being Prime Minister if he didn't want him to? However, without taking the historical facts into account, the government

continued to assassinate his character systematically. The one-sided propaganda of the government began to imprint the message into the minds of even foreign allies that Ganeshman-ji was creating instability in the country.

3.9) Asked the King to speak respectfully

Ganeshman Singh was a very gentle and cultured person. He had due respect for everyone. He gave up his bad habits of gambling, cards, and hooliganism to fight for the sake of the country, its people, and its democracy. He changed his very nature and his personality to do so. He never used insulting words against anyone. But if someone did not show due respect to him, he would not hesitate to treat them the same. In the year 1980, BP Koirala met with Ganeshman-ji to brief him about his meeting with King Birendra. Before he could speak, Ganeshman-ji asked him, “BP Babu! What terms did the King use to address you? Simple terms (timi) or honorific terms (tapai)?” BP replied, “Simple terms. He addressed me as timi (you).” Ganeshman-ji asked, “And you did not protest?” BP continued, “I went there with the mission to convince the King to start addressing the public with tapai (honorific terms), so I didn’t pay much attention to how he was addressing me.” Ganeshman-ji was quite saddened by this. How dare the puny King address the leader of the greatest revolution in Nepal like an inferior commoner? He determined to give the King the right retort when the time was favourable. A few months before the start of the People’s Movement in 1990, Prime Minister Marichman Singh came to Ganeshman-ji’s house and said to him, “The King wants to meet you, please make an appointment.” Just a few days ago, Ganeshman-ji had said a few choice words about the monarchy. “In the near future, the Nepali people will create a storm through their peaceful movement. If the rulers of Nepal fail to change themselves in due course of time, it is not clear who will be swept away by the storm!” This was not something that the King would

fail to understand. So Ganeshman-ji thought, "If it yields a positive result, why not. If the King doesn't see reason, there is always the weapon of the mass movement." So, he agreed to meet with the King.

King Birendra first met Ganeshman-ji at the Narayanhiti Palace. At the beginning of the meeting, King Birendra addressed Ganeshman-ji respectfully and said, "Ganeshman-ji, you are my grandfather's friend! You have made a great contribution to democracy and to this country. I am confident that you will continue to contribute in the days to come." The responses of Ganeshman-ji to it and other related events are already explained in detail in appropriate places in this book. Here I am bringing up another similar instance between the King and Ganeshman-ji for the reader's knowledge.

In between above discussions, Ganeshman-ji said to the King, "Your Majesty! This is the age of democracy. In a democracy, no one wants to be insulted by anyone. One should be able to respect and honor the other. That is democratic culture. This tradition must be observed by everyone from the King to the rank file. What I mean is, in this democratic age, I do not think that the King's vernacular towards political leaders, Prime Ministers, and ministers as 'timi' (you) appropriately reflects the dignity of the democracy." The King continued to speak in inferior terms to his ministers in the Panchayat system even after Ganeshman-ji's suggestion.

However, after the People's Movement concluded, he did address Prime Minister Krishna Prasad Bhattarai as 'tapai', but to Girija in the third person (they). Ganeshman-ji wanted to transform doctrine into practice and develop it as an integral part of democratic culture. That is why he never feared any person from any strata of society. Where to find such a leader!

4) DEDICATED

Ideology and dedication are two closely related words. An ideological person can be inactive depending on the situation. But a dedicated person is always active. A dedicated person is also more disciplined. Therefore, it is not a trivial matter to dedicate oneself to the attainment of goals. Ganeshman Singh's dedication to his cause was unique. Below are some examples.

4.1) Forsook the life of luxury

Despite all his luxury, Prince Siddhartha's mind would not stay inside the courtyard of the Palace. He was unwilling to be bound within the boundaries of his family, his society, and his state. So, he abandoned the luxurious life of the court and set out in search of the answer to alleviating the suffering of mankind. The devotion he showed to his goal made him a great man. His goal was not just to become a Mahatma. Prince Siddhartha's hard penance established him as a deity. Today, he is known and worshipped all over the world as Lord Buddha.

Ganeshman Singh's biography reads almost like that of Prince Siddhartha. He was born in the house of Ratnaman, who was the highest-ranking administrative member of the Rana period, with the post of Badakazi. Having been born into an aristocratic family, he had no doubt that he would someday become a Sardar or a Kazi. Even had he chosen not to work throughout his life, only the Ranas could surpass him in fame and fortune. Born into such a family, Ganeshman-ji, like Prince Siddhartha, left the comforts and conveniences and jumped into the political abyss with the goal of making Nepali people dignified citizens through establishing democracy. By the way, I have dared to compare Ganeshman Singh's life with that of Prince Siddhartha. I apologize to anyone who thinks this is an exaggeration. However, Krishna Prasad Bhattarai, who is considered to be an ascetic-leader of this country, has written in

a book, *“In the entire history of Nepal, the personality, leadership, and achievements of five people have been remarkable. They are Gautam Buddha, Prithvi Narayan Shah, Jung Bahadur Rana, BP Koirala, and Ganeshman Singh. Although Ganeshman-ji belonged to a very affluent family like Gautam Buddha, he gave up his pleasures and chose the path of misery. He suffered a lot for the rights, entitlements, and prosperity of Nepal and the Nepali people.”* Buddha preached a new philosophy to the people to escape misery, hatred and sufferings and thus, respected as a God. Similarly, Ganeshman Singh also showed selflessness and gave opportunity to the Nepali people to live with dignity and a taste of freedom and democracy. The dedication with which he endured unimaginable sorrows and hardships for five decades is why he has been established as an unparalleled leader in the history of Nepal.

4.2) Followed a humanitarian and ascetic life

Ganeshman Singh spent more than five decades of his long eighty-two years in politics. During his lengthy political career, he spent fourteen years in prison, eight years in exile, and nearly two years in detention. It is not that other leaders and politicians have not suffered grief for the country with a dedicated spirit, but it is rare to find anyone who has suffered so much for so long. Evaluating the leaders and activists who have entered into politics in the history of Nepal, it is often seen that only those who are in a very weak economic condition, or people from middle class families, are involved in politics. Only a very few affluent families partake in politics, like the Ranas, Shahs, and rich merchants. These affluent families do not continue in politics for long and escape when the going gets tough. It is probably only Ganeshman Singh who entered into politics from the elite class but remained devoted for five decades. Ganeshman Singh is the only person who, after making his debut in public life, has given up all the comforts of his past life and embraced a

new life as an ordinary citizen. He used to appease his hunger with the jail stew, turning away the delicious varieties of dishes brought daily from his home. He washed the clothes and dishes of others in the jail. He even gave up the comfort of the bed, making a straw-mat his bedding and a hard stone his pillow. Words fail to describe the dedication of such a great man! He was indeed a person who did not shy away from making sacrifices and penance for the attainment of his goal. After reading about such politicians in Nepal, the new generation can swell their chests with pride and lift their heads up high because such superhuman men existed here. They will surely say, “Nepal gave birth to such a legend like Ganeshman Singh. Blessed is Mother Nepal!”

This objective analysis carried out to prove that Ganeshman Singh was a Bir is conceivable in itself. There is no exaggeration, no biased emotion, and no prejudice. A text written with emotion does neither justice nor provides analysis nor recounts history accurately. Mother Nepal herself bows down to such men who define an era.

Indeed, upon reaching this point, it is appropriate to say that Ganeshman Singh gives meaning to the phrase 'Birbhogya Basundhara'.

A Phenomenal Man !

(God has placed many a virtuous and meritorious soul on this earth. Some are ascetics, some are yogis, some are symbols of sacrifice, some are martyrs, some are scholars, some are oceans of love and harmony, some are emblems of revolution, and some are examples of compassion! All in all, superhumans! We have heard the stories of many such people, all possessing different qualities, and we have discoursed with many of them. It is a rare and unfathomable thing to find all these qualities available in one person. If one finds such a person possessing all these qualities, he or she cannot but accept that this certainly is a 'Phenomenal' person. This is how I feel about Ganeshman-ji.

When I sat down to analyze Ganeshman-ji, I thought that I should analyze his human qualities. But as I studied him, I found that he surpassed normal human qualities. In examining his work, I realized that he did many things that no normal 'man' can do. I came to the conclusion that it is not possible for any normal political leader to do any of these things.

This is the last chapter of this book which analyzes the personality of Ganeshman Singh. After writing everything, I had a thought, "How many great politicians like Ganeshman Singh are actually here in this contemporary world?" This was quite a difficult and complicated question. Let us assume that there are ten such people in the world. What do we gain with knowing that statistic? While the question may in some way be rhetorical, it

helps to inspire a new generation of curious youths to be proud of their elders and ancestors, and to encourage them to do good from their example. For that reason, it might be worthwhile to discuss this subject.

Readers have already read in the previous chapters the virtues of Ganeshman-ji. It may seem as if the same points have been repeated in a few places. However, I have done so knowingly as the context demands, for it is the substance of his character analysis. It is only a few points that have been repeated, four qualities in particular out of hundreds of qualities that were present in Ganeshman Singh. These four key qualities presented below are rarely found in humans today. Far be it for a political leader to have these qualities.

In addition to the four key qualities, I would also like to point out two more qualities which are not commonplace. However, if an idealist, a selfless man, and a great leader puts his heart into it, it is not impossible. Although, in today's environment, it will be difficult to find a politician who is endowed with them.)

In spiritual texts, there is a story of the great sacrificial sage named Dadhichi Rishi. Once, the demons had managed to completely defeat the Gods. In their plight, the Gods ran to where Dadhichi Rishi was meditating and begged for help. The sage rishi had an angry nature, but he was also a sacrificial man. He removed the spinal cord from his body and handed it over to the gods, saying, "Make a thunderous weapon with my bones and slay the demons with its help!" The gods did so and victory was achieved.

Ganeshman-ji, too, much like the sage rishi Dadhichi, set a standard of sacrifice in Nepali politics the likes of which no one had seen, or have met since. He abandoned his comfortable life in the aristocratic family and immersed himself into the uncertain future of politics at such a dark time in our history. For

five decades, he continued the struggle to fight for the liberation of the millions of Nepalis, never once taking rest and never once forgetting the oaths and words of the martyrs who came before him. He was charged with four counts of hanging and received hundreds of lashes. All his possessions were confiscated by the regime, but this iron man never wavered. Eventually, as per his resolve, he fulfilled his promise and responsibility. He further declined the Prime Minister's post or any seat of power for his personal gain. Can such a person be considered any less than the sage rishi Dadhichi? But ironically, instead of expressing our gratitude to him, many of us showed our miserly natures. This is the sad thing.

Some of Ganeshman-ji's works and dispositions are unimaginable in general. A few qualities that earn him the title of a superhuman are as follows:

1) AN HONEST AND GRATEFUL NATURE

There were two things that Ganeshman-ji did that may seem unbelievable to those obsessed with material matters. Until he achieved these two things, he did not enter into any agreement with anyone for five decades, nor was he derailed by sorrow, torture, pain, or deprivation. These were: to continue to struggle against tyranny until the wishes of Martyr Gangalal was fulfilled, and to not take rest without having freed the Nepali people from the shackles of tyranny. To make both of these resolutions meaningful, the establishment of true democracy was essential. In those dark days, such a goal was like capturing a star in the sky. Even so, he was optimistic. To achieve this, Ganeshman-ji fought three different struggles with three authoritarians for five decades. Of the pain and suffering he endured during this struggle, he says, "In this long political journey, I have suffered worse than a stray dog. Sometimes the thought arose that I should leave politics and lead a peaceful life. No one would have

blamed me if I did so, but as soon as the thought of leaving entered my mind, I would hear Martyr Gangalal's voice in my ear, and the voices of thousands of citizens chanting my name as their saviour. They believed in me. I could not leave them with the work half completed."

I don't know how the new generation can believe these facts, that Ganeshman-ji devoted himself to fulfilling the promise to a martyr and the aspirations of the people, and endured great suffering for it. But believe it or not, it is a true story, and my request to the youth is to find out for themselves how many people like Ganeshman-ji actually existed in this world.

2) A NATURE OF AVOIDING DAMAGE TO OTHERS

How many supreme leaders in the histories of revolution have started off by painting a target on their own foreheads? Let us put all this in context. BP Koirala considered Ganeshman-ji a revolutionary hero. On the other hand, Ganeshman-ji also considered BP as his hero. The fact that each considered the other as their leader means that both of them were leaders of the highest caliber in this nation.

The pre-revolutionary Nepali Congress had decided to free King Tribhuvan from the Narayanhiti palace in Kathmandu and bring him to Palpa, in order to create a revolt against the Ranas and weaken their control over the Nepal Army. It was a herculean task. This action was considered to be the beginning of the revolution. The question arose at the Central Working Committee meeting as to who would lead this action. None of the members spoke up, none dared to risk their lives in such a risky venture. However, it was Ganeshman-ji who offered to do it himself, saying that he would not unnecessarily endanger anyone else's life and that he was the one who understood the capital and the palace the best.

BP Koirala and Subarna Shamsheer had planned to use Ganeshman-ji's credible and heroic image as the inspirational core of their 1951 revolution in order to make it a success. However, here Ganeshman-ji was willingly venturing into the lion's den and could very possibly get his head cut off. So, they tried to stop him from leading the task force to Kathmandu, but he had already resolved himself to do so and did not listen to them. He eventually blazed ahead and was unfortunately arrested when the plan went awry. The Rana rulers tortured him as much as they could, and in the end they planned to sentence him to hang until death from a tree in the forest. However, due to the public pressure of the popularity of Ganeshman-ji and the fear of throwing fuel on the revolution fire, the Ranas backed away from that decision. Eventually, the revolution was successful, and Ganeshman-ji survived and continued to liberate the people through true democracy.

What needs to be considered here is that Ganeshman-ji was a fugitive in the eyes of the Ranas and in the eyes of the law. However, he was crowned in the minds and hearts of the masses as a legendary hero and a revolutionary leader of South Asia. He was the leader of the highest caliber in the party at the time. Yet he chose to risk his life in the defense of others and in the pursuit of justice. How many such heroes exist in this world?

3) HIS ABILITY TO COMMAND HIS SENSES

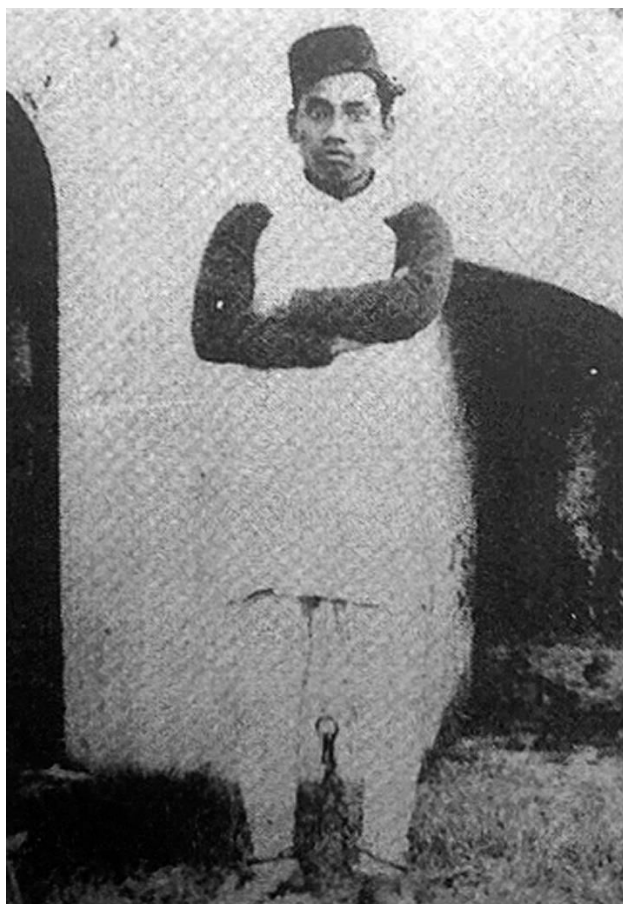
The warrior Ganeshman Singh spent fourteen years of his life in prison under harsh conditions. In the cold winters of Kathmandu, he would sleep only on a straw mat and a stone pillow, with a thin blanket or his own overcoat draped over him. Such was the nature of his zeal in practicing command over his bodily senses, in order to hone himself into the kind of sacrificial warrior and leader the country needed him to be. He would say, "Those who are trying to practice politics should prepare

themselves for all types of circumstances." This suppression of the senses was practiced by stubborn individuals like Siddhartha Gautama and Mahatma Gandhi, but rarely is it ever heard of political leaders doing so. What he did and accomplished is not only unimaginable, it is also something that no ordinary human can do.

4) AN EXEMPLARY NATURE OF SERVICE

Bal Bahadur Pandey, who was a fellow activist with Ganeshman-ji, could not bear the torture of the autocrats in imprisonment. He posed a problem for the prison authorities and its inmates as well, because he had lost his mind and even the control over his bowels. As a result, even his former friends started to shun him and walked away when he came near. One day, a divine realization was imparted unto Ganeshman-ji, and he gathered his friends together and told them, "From now on, I will take the responsibility of caring for Bal Bahadur. You need not be troubled by him anymore." He started taking care of him immediately, and served him for four years despite the difficulty. He served him everyday until the day he finally escaped from that jail. Let us recount what sort of duties he performed for Bal Bahadur Pandey. In fact, his mental state was such that he would defecate everywhere and try to bite anyone who came near. But Ganeshman-ji tied together thick cloths of khadi that could cradle Bal Bahadur from neck to toe. Every morning, he would carry him to the tap about two hundred feet away and would wash him in the freezing waters of the Kathmandu winter, then wash his clothes with soap, dress him in warm garments, feed him his morning meal, and only then could Ganeshman-ji finally take a bath. Such was his duty and his diligence and his compassion for four years. Readers, ask yourself, who in today's age is willing to go so far for a stranger? In this age where even the children you have birthed, whom you have given education

and culture, throw their old parents in an old-age home. How can such children believe the story of the man called Ganeshman Singh who did so much for the crazed madman Bal Bahadur Pandey for four years? Aside from all this, let us also reveal the condition of Ganeshman-ji himself.



Ganeshman Singh bound with nails in Bhadracol Jail



Clipping from the government-owned sole newspaper in Nepal (Gorkhapatra) urging escaped convict Ganeshman Singh to hand himself over to the authorities and thereby avoid the penalty of execution.

Ganeshman-ji was jailed on the charge of committing a crime against the state. It was natural that his legs would be chained, his hands handcuffed, and his neck in a metal brace. There would be a chain linking all the three cuffs so that he wouldn't have full freedom of movement. How could such a restricted person serve Bal Bahadur? Can a prisoner with chains

and cuffs do all these tasks easily? Furthermore, how could he climb the 24 feet high prison walls with all these hanging on him and weighing him down? Is that not surprising?

The qualities of Ganeshman-ji mentioned above are truly wonderful. Even if one of these qualities were seen in a different yogi, a different revolutionary, a different social worker, or a different politician, it would be believable. But here was one man with all these qualities together, so it can be said that Ganeshman Singh was truly incarnated as a superhuman.

5) NO DESIRE FOR POWER

In addition to the extraordinary qualities already mentioned, some leadership qualities distinguished Ganeshman-ji from the rest of the politicians. He had no desire for power or the chair. In fact, he had a distaste for it, and he gave away any opportunity for power freely. Much has been said before in this regard. Let me share with you a conversation I had with him regarding his rejection of the post of Prime Minister.

In today's world, we see on a daily basis that there are political squabbles for power and the right to sit in the chair. It has become common here for one brother to trip another in the race for the seat of power. It has become a common thing for former friends to quarrel with each other like stray dogs fighting over a rotten bone. How can we, who grew up in such an environment, believe that Ganeshman-ji was indeed such a generous and selfless person. He did not hesitate to hand over the post of Prime Minister to another. Many of us ungratefully said about such a hero and a hard worker, "Ganeshman-ji was not capable of handling the position of Prime Minister, so he declined. Why else would he have given up the power and prestige he would have received?" Those who said it might have assessed it based on their own life experiences, but this

statement made me very restless. I used to wonder to myself how we could be so ungrateful. This level of stinginess towards a great man who made us honorable citizens is alarming. This is the same great man who fought against tyranny for decades, endured pain and suffering like anything, yet never surrendered. I have spent decades researching the personality that was 'Ganeshman Singh'. I am aware of every aspect of his personality. I have stood witness to his strengths and his weaknesses. I have read extensively his statements, his vision, and the roadmap that he put forward for national development. Moreover, he was a true worshipper of the Bhagavad Gita. Can such a man of action ever be called incapable? The accusation of incompetence against him made me very sad.

One day, I held a discussion with Ganeshman-ji himself in this regard. I raised the issues of these and other similar allegations and said, "Ganeshman-ji, at your urging and inspiration, I wrote the book 'Jana Andolan: 2046'. Time permitting, and given the opportunity, I have set a goal to write another book covering the post-revolution debates. Though I have started writing the manuscript, I have come to a dilemma concerning a certain point in history. It has to do with you. Would you be so kind as to clarify it for me?" Ganeshman-ji listened and asked, "What is your dilemma? Tell me what it is, and I'll untangle it for you." So, I continued, "Ganeshman-ji, there is one inexplicable incident that occurred in your life, one which has raised many questions. In order to avoid historians from having to speculate on this subject after your passing someday, it is better that you explain your motivations in your lifetime. Why did you not accept the post of Prime Minister despite the will of the people and the will of the King? By not speaking about it, you have given space to those who cultivate doubts, speculations, and misunderstandings. Some even accuse you of being incapable. Some claim that you have a desire to

become a 'Bapu' like Mahatma Gandhi himself. And some postulate that you abandoned it for health reasons. What is the truth?"

The context of history that I had presented probably inspired him to say something. He said, "I thought that I would take this with me. But you raised the issue of my responsibility to history. So, I will tell you. Listen. I cannot claim that there is no ounce of truth in the things you have said. But the truth of the matter is that, I as the Supreme Commander, had the goal to bring a democratic constitution and general election at any cost. That was my first duty and responsibility. I also decided that the person who would be best suited to facilitate and diplomatically deal with these responsibilities should be the Prime Minister. I was afraid that if the democratic constitution was not drafted and elections were not held on time, the country would have to face the same misfortune as after 1951. I saw the possibility that this hard-won democracy could fail again due to the irrationality of the leadership; this democracy that was bought by the blood of the people and their immense sacrifices. As the leader of our people's movement, it was my responsibility and obligation to keep the country free from this crisis. I understood the sensitivity and importance of this work. I was also confident that I would be able to carry out this responsibility successfully. In order to fulfill this responsibility, I needed the support of my own party and fellow communists. I believed that the communists would help me. Again, they had no choice but to partake and help me. Now what was left was to deal with my own party. I was the honorary 'supreme leader' of my party, but my proposal was accepted only to the extent that my advice did not harm anyone's interests. Otherwise, it would have been wise for me to remain silent in front of my fellow leaders. I felt that, with the country and democracy in such a fragile situation, there were more important things than coveting the seat of Prime Minister. I would never

have accepted the post of Prime Minister unless my entire party would wholeheartedly support it. Yes, I was loved by both the people and the King. But my party never told me, 'Become Prime Minister, we will follow you.' If I had been an ambitious person, I would have snatched the seat of the Prime Minister, claiming, 'I am the supreme leader of the revolution who has been chosen by the people as well as the King. I will bend the party to my will'. However, I did not want that either."

Ganeshman-ji continued to say, "I have examined the guts of every leader of my party. The two current leaders, Krishna Prasad Bhattarai and Girija Prasad Koirala, are so ambitious of the chair that they will stoop down to any level necessary to get the position. Out of these two, Bhattarai is indifferent to anything but the status of Prime Minister. In that sense, I value Bhattarai over Girija Babu. In this contested environment, my acceptance of the post of Prime Minister would provoke the ambitions of these two leaders. I did not accept the post of Prime Minister as it would not be conducive for the fledgling democracy to anger both Bhattarai, who holds the party's legal reins, and Koirala, who holds the support of the cadres. Had I accepted it, I would have been the direct target of merciless onslaught from within the party. Therefore, I rejected the post of Prime Minister because democracy should not once again be made the sacrificial lamb. However, I still had to make a decision. Who do I throw my support behind, now that I had declined? I decided to choose the more decent one among the two candidates, so I chose Bhattarai. Whenever I, Kisun-ji and Girija-babu were at odds in policy-decisions, the Nepali Congress would approve whichever policy had the support of any two of us. Therefore, me becoming the Prime Minister would have opened the door for both of these leaders to gridlock based on their ambitions. After Kisun-ji was made the Prime Minister, such gridlock was averted. I had assumed that Kisun-ji would remain Prime Minister for five

years. In five years time, the fledgling democracy would have been strengthened and Girija-babu would also have matured. I had planned to have Kisun-ji retire after those five years and then make Girija-babu the Prime Minister. Alas, in the end, it was not to be.”

Regarding the accusation of incompetence leveled against him, Ganeshman-ji said, "It is not for me to say how capable or incapable I am. I will be analyzed by history. But since the day I entered politics, I have served the people with full loyalty, love for the motherland, and dedication for democracy. During the post-movement period, my health was suffering from some kind of ailment, or maybe because of some bad habits. I'm not sure what it was. I had to spend five to seven hours a day in the bathroom for health reasons. So, at a time when the Prime Minister of a newly established democracy should have been highly active, a person like me who needed to spend five to seven hours a day in the bathroom should not be occupying that chair! I even told the King that my poor health was the reason I declined. I had made a pledge before the people to eradicate poverty, to eradicate corruption, to provide sound administration, to protect and promote democracy, and to raise the head of a proud Nepal before the entire world. It was my duty to deliver those services to the people. So, when I declined to be the Prime Minister, I put forward Bhattarai's name hoping that I could fulfil this mission through him. I chose him so that these goals would not be lost in the turbulence of political machinations and selfish ambitions. But it all went in vain. In fact, you can call this my incompetence.”

Reacting to the statement that Ganeshman-ji wanted to be Mahatma Gandhi, he said, “People have been saying for a long time that I have a sacrificial nature, that I am unselfish. But I have never made any sacrifices or shown generosity in a planned way. Whatever I have done, I have done instinctively or naturally. I

am always aware of my duty. I don't give my conscience much time to make any decision. So, my decisions are never slow. I will immediately do what my conscience dictates. Even when Krishna Prasad Bhattarai was given the post of Prime Minister, I did not give it much thought. I told you, I had a view towards him, and a feeling. On that basis, I told the King that Krishna Prasad Bhattarai was the best person for the post of Prime Minister. Now, should anybody really be comparing me with Mahatma Gandhi? It should not be like that. Yes, I am very much influenced by Gandhi-ji. It is the tendency of a person to follow a good person. But I would never dare compare myself with a supreme person like him. If I have some deep-rooted aspiration to follow in the footsteps of Gandhi-ji, I am not aware of it. I would ask that you not compare me with such a great human being like Gandhi-ji."

6) INCLUSIVENESS

There is a saying, "If you want to bring down any country, first of all you must shatter all its sovereign elements. Collapse the foundations of its stability, and the country will collapse in on itself." Yes, the same statement applies to the political system. To collapse Nepal, its stability such as its culture, language, religion, and ethnic unity must be disturbed and it will destroy itself. Therefore, those who seek to destabilize our country have attacked our culture, our language, and the ethnic harmony that stands as a symbol of our unity.

In that similar manner, an attack was launched on yet another stable foundation of democracy, from those that were its enemy. That target was Ganeshman Singh, the father of democracy, who stood alone as the authoritative figure of democracy in Nepal! They started attacking him in a planned manner to sack him. The first strategy was to attack his character. He was accused of being a nepotic politician, saying

that he fights only for his Newar community. He was accused of it in the newspapers and in speeches, but all the rumors were beaten. No one believed such accusations. Why would they? He was not in any executive position. Ganeshman-ji used to dismiss these claims with grace, telling people, "Thousands of dogs keep barking in the face, but the elephant keeps walking to the marketplace." None of their tactics were working, but if they were to thwart democracy, then they must weaken its pillar of defense, Ganeshman Singh.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala and Ganeshman-ji were butting heads over many other political issues. Ganeshman-ji would raise ideological issues but Koirala would ignore it. The Prime Minister even fired six senior ministers without consulting his own party. There was strong opposition from both inside and outside the party. Ganeshman-ji also took a firm stand against him in this regard. The quarrel kept escalating, and Koirala dealt yet another blow by appointing six new ambassadors to foreign countries without consulting the party. Of the six newly appointed ambassadors, five belonged to the Brahmin caste and one to the Chettri caste. Ganeshman-ji had promised the leaders in a meeting held on the first day of the new government that ethnic balance would be maintained for any appointments. Koirala's government had violated that understanding. Therefore, warning the government, Ganeshman-ji stated, "The government has tried to disrupt the ethnic harmony of Nepal by appointing only Brahmins and one Chettri as ambassadors. It has also ignored the decency and understanding among its leaders." What more could the anti-Ganeshman reactionaries need? They wrote 'Breaking News' in huge headlines in newspapers, "Ganeshman's Jihad against Brahminism!" Similar headlines started to be published in a series. Its effect was so deep-rooted that Brahmins and Chettris across the country also started to wonder if Ganeshman Singh

really opposed their castes. His enemies were successful in spreading such false messaging all over the country.

Meanwhile, another news headline was also published saying that Ganeshman Singh was upset because his nephew Durgeshman was not made Vice Chairman of the National Planning Commission. This news also struck a big chord. Now, even the supporters of Ganeshman-ji began to wonder if Ganeshman-ji's honesty had not started to deteriorate due to his old age.

One day, when the time and circumstances seemed appropriate, I asked Ganeshman-ji, "Ganeshman-ji! Did you take a stand for Durgeshman then?" He said simply, "Yes, I took a stand." He further added, "After the establishment of democracy, I had invited Prime Minister Kisun-ji and Girija Babu to my home to discuss matters of governance. On that day, we also reached an understanding on some issues. In that very meeting, I told them that the people have great confidence in us, so we should not let them down. We must be accountable to the people, and we must always stay true to our word. Otherwise, the people will no longer believe in us. That's what I had reminded Kisun-ji of. Without letting me know, Kisun-ji had assured Durgeshman that he would be appointed to the post of Deputy Chairman of the National Planning Commission. But since this action had not been implemented for months, Durgeshman told me one day, 'Kisun-ji had assured me of this position, but a lot of days have gone by and nothing has happened'. Durgeshman was a fully qualified person for the that job. He studied in the United States. He has a PhD. He deserves it. One day I reminded Kisun-ji of our first understanding and reminded him about Durgeshman. My issue with it was out of principle. Even if it were someone other than Durgeshman, my stand would be the same. Now, how many people am I going to defend myself to? There is so much outrage over this, saying 'Ganeshman is seeking his share!' If I had asked

for my share, I would have asked for more. Would I have asked only for Durgesh's position? Would the supreme leader of the party be satisfied with such a small thing?" I understood Ganeshman-ji's words very well, and I thought to myself, "What an injustice to someone of his caliber, a person with the highest ideals and a history of sacrifice for this country." Only God can correct such injustice.

GANESHPMAN SINGH AND BRAHMINS

Coincidentally, of the many newspapers that attacked Ganeshman-ji's communal personality, many editors belonged to the Brahmin community. Those editors were Brahmins because their parents and grandparents were Brahmins. They did not know anything about being a Brahmin other than the last name Upadhyaya, Jaisi, or Kumai (sub-castes of Brahmin). They were not aware of the qualities required to become a Brahmin, for if they knew, how could their pens describe such a great man like Ganeshman Singh as anti-Brahmin? I do not know if any of those editors and writers, who decided to damage one of the strongest pillars of democracy, are still alive today, but if they are they should know how much Ganeshman Singh valued Brahmins.

- 1) In 1941, Ganeshman-ji became a member of the Praja Parishad, whose leader at the time was Tanka Prasad Acharya. That very same year, the Rana ruler arrested and imprisoned them. Impressed by the heroic statement made by Tanka Prasad in front of the Rana ruler, Ganeshman-ji asked Tanka Prasad in jail, "The bravery and courage you showed when they took your statement at Singha Durbar, the way you confronted the Ranas, how did you get such courage? Please tell me how I too can learn it." He had such respect for a Brahmin leader, Tanka Prasad. Later, Ganeshman-ji tried his best

to make the same Tanka Prasad Acharya the honorary president of the newly formed Nepali Rastriya Congress.

- 2) Ganeshman-ji remained in Bhadragol Jail for four years after his arrest in 1941. Two kitchens were built for the 36 inmates inside the jail. One for the Brahmins and one for the Newars. It was forbidden for one caste to touch the stove of another caste. Though Ganeshman-ji spent most of his daily activities with his Newari friends, he shared meals in the Brahmin kitchen and washed the dishes. Such was his kindness towards Brahmins.
- 3) After escaping from prison in 1945, Ganeshman-ji had been secretly organizing a like-minded political party in India for seven years. In the process, he urged a Brahmin (Dilliraman Regmi) to become the party president, saying "I will do all the work. All you have to do as party chairman is to sign the statement."
- 4) Ganeshman-ji met another Brahmin in Calcutta, who we all now know as Bishweshwar Prasad Koirala. Although BP was junior to him in politics, Ganeshman-ji decided to consider Koirala as the party leader and pledged himself to stand by his side. Furthermore, BP Koirala also considered Ganeshman-ji as his leader.
- 5) Ganeshman-ji was in Bhadragol Jail, in Kathmandu in 1951, when the Nepali Congress reached an agreement with India, the Ranas, and King Tribhuvan. His fellow inmates at the time were Sundar Raj Chalise and seven others. On the outside, a Rana-Congress coalition government was being formed. News arrived that Ganeshman-ji would be made a prominent minister in this government. However, Ganeshman-ji refused and sent a letter to party president Matrika Prasad Koirala saying, "Don't make me a minister! If you have a

compulsion to choose someone from Kathmandu, then my friend Sundar Raj Chalise should be chosen." Sundar Raj Chalise was also of Brahmin caste.

- 6) In the year 1953, King Tribhuvan decided to make Ganeshman-ji the Prime Minister. After hearing this, Ganeshman-ji went to the King and told him, "It is BP Koirala who should be made the Prime Minister. But this decision is not up to the King or me to decide. It is a decision that should be taken up by the party." It is not necessary to say that BP Koirala was also a Brahmin.
- 7) After the 1959 election, both BP Koirala and Ganeshman-ji were not eager to join the government. Ganeshman-ji said, "You become the Prime Minister, I will work in the party." In response, BP Koirala said, "A government that does not include both of us can neither represent the revolution nor can it take on a national shape. So, we both need to be active in this government." Here, too, once again Ganeshman-ji put forward a Brahmin.
- 8) Yet another time that he donated the Prime Minister's chair to another Brahmin was Krishna Prasad Bhattarai. Ganeshman-ji had such a long collaboration with him that it was not just enough to make Krishna Prasad the party president, he also declined the Prime Minister position in favor of him.
- 9) In the year 1987, the Nepali Congress had adopted a new policy of not participating formally in the elections, but to send some cadres to capture outposts of the Panchayat system through elections. The political environment was such that, if Ganeshman Singh endorsed any candidate, that person would be certain to win the post of the Chief of the Kathmandu Municipality. With such power at his command, Ganeshman-ji

endorsed Haribol Bhattarai, a Brahmin. He won the election by a landslide.

- 10) In 1987, it was decided that Ganeshman-ji's autobiographical book 'The Pages of My Story' would be published. The person who moved forward in this endeavor was Mathbar Singh Basnet. Although not a Brahmin by caste, his actions denote him as a Brahmin because of his contribution to the book. Just like how when Vedavyas spoke, Lord Ganesh filled 18 Purans with writing, in the same way Ganeshman-ji spoke into a tape recorder and four big books were prepared. There are yet two or three volumes still remaining to be published, which will be published in the near future.
- 11) The last Brahmin. After Ganeshman-ji started the Janajagaran Campaign, we opened a separate liaison office in Kathmandu. He appointed another Brahmin, Sharach Chandra Wasti, as his 'press advisor'. I don't remember him formally appointing anyone before Sharach Chandra. Since then, Ganeshman-ji's messages, correspondence, and statements have been prepared and disseminated through him. One day, after learning that Sharach Chandra was a wrestler from Vanaras, Ganeshman-ji asked me, "How could such physical strength and intellect be possible in the same person?" He was impressed by Sharach Chandra's intellectual ability. He wanted him to serve the country by being in a position where he could make a positive impact. He told me one day, "This country did not get the honor of such a great scholar's service!"

Even though the editors who wrote 'Ganeshman's Jihad against Brahmanism' had surnames that denoted them as Brahmins, they did not earn the name. They were merely tools of reactionaries who were ready to create instability in Nepal and

tear down 'the pillar of freedom' that has become a symbol of democracy. It is because of that small mindset that even after three decades of democracy being established in this country, true democracy has not been able to flourish here.

A DELICATE SECRET TO BE UNDERSTOOD!

About thirty million citizens currently live in this delicate and sensitive country called Nepal, one of the most ancient countries in the world. What we need to understand is that both the strengths and weaknesses of this country are its geographical and ethnic diversity. The person who truly understood this was Ganeshman Singh. Other political leaders did not bother to understand this delicate balance. Therefore, the sovereignty of our country is gradually weakening. Grasping the sensitive essence of this balance, Ganeshman Singh had put forward in his first agenda (in the first meeting among the three leaders) that it must be protected. He said, *"Ours is a diverse country with different castes, religions, sects, languages, education, and rural areas. Most of the tribes here have been exploited by all sorts of rulers for centuries. No single group can succeed here, nor can the country develop unless this community realizes that the Panchayat system has gone and democracy has come. Let us make a plan to provide relief and encouragement to all the marginalized communities, and for some time, let the government provide the fullest extent of its facilities."*

In this, Ganeshman-ji had even denoted the priority for the beneficiaries that, the first priority would be Dalits, the displaced, and the Janajatis living in the mountains and high hills. Then the Madhesis, and finally the Newars. He suggested that Brahmins and Chhetris should be given the last priority, as they were of the privileged castes. Not only did both Bhattarai and Koirala nod their heads in approval of Ganeshman-ji's proposal, they also literally said, "Yes, Ganeshman-ji. We agree

with you.” Although they gave their verbal consent, it was never put into practice. It was Ganeshman Singh’s efforts to push back against this sort of tendency within the party that earned him the ire of his own party. Had the Nepali Congress listened to Ganeshman-ji and followed his inclusive plan, there would not have been a rise of the Maoists or Communists in the nation. Even if they had risen in some form, it would never have reached the stratas that it has today. In this sense, the deaths of the 17,000 Nepalis killed during the Maoist Insurgency could have been prevented had Ganeshman-ji’s suggestion been implemented.

Taking into account and contemplating the sensitivity of all these things, it can be said that Ganeshman Singh was the voice for the voiceless. He was the medicine for the ill. He was the shelter for the helpless. He was the protector of the exploited. He was the messiah of the tribes, the neglected, and the marginalized. He was the savior of the untouchables. The United Nations have very rightfully conferred unto a deserving soul the 'Human Rights Award' in 1993 AD for his courage, bravery, and commitment to these ideals. For this, all Nepalis give our thanks to the United Nations.

Having researched, meditated, and analyzed upon the plethora of his deeds and actions, I am reaching my conclusion, though my pen has already inscribed it: A Phenomenal Man! A Superhuman!