

Strategic Leadership and Statesmanship of B. P. Koirala: Tread to Nation Building

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Bishweshwar Prasad (B. P.) Koirala, a multi-dimensional person, is known as people's leader and the supremo of politics. He is known as a thinker, theorist and orator of nationality, democracy and socialism in the politics. He fought continuously against the despotic ruling of the Ranas to save the Nepali society from threatening servitude. He devoted himself to set multiparty democratic system abolishing the autocratic system of Rana regime. It seems that the literary attachment was as much as the political involvement in B. P. He was studious, literary figure and consistent practitioner in paving a path for development of nation. He has worked for the upliftment of impoverished communities and have implemented strategies for the holistic development of the country. His leadership and statesmanship have worked for implementation of plans in boosting economic development of people from the grassroots level. From modernization of agriculture

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to industrial growth, he has been a powerful person in implementing logical decisions for the nation. His works express that he was a capable activist who tirelessly worked for nation development.

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1. Introduction

The Nepali society is multi-cultural, multi-lingual, multi-religious, multi-ethnic. The Nepali society is ever guided by its natural structure, geographical location, environmental condition and traditional specialties. The political scene has drawn the divisional lines in the religio-culturally integrated Nepali society and has excelled the people towards sectarian mark. Blessed with power politics (Parajuli, 2073 : 173), the power holding group has enforced the common group to live the miserable life by enforcing theories. The political stunts have been done time and again to liberate the country from dreadful tyrannical political systems. The Rana oligarchy and the tyrannical rule, the Panchayati system, were guided by the principle of controlling the basic rights of the people.

While the Rana-rule was of the utmost inhuman type, the Panchayati system was undemocratic, reactionary and uni-party despotic type. Such system had hampered the basic rights of the common people as well as pushed them in oppression (Adhikari "Shastri", 2058 : 560). In response to such a scenario, B. P. Koirala worked for the progressive development towards a democratic system against oppressive governance. With socialism, nationalism and democratic governance, B. P. Koirala worked for the social, economic, political, cultural reforms to uplift the nation by strategical governance with supervising laws. For the sake of such ideology, B. P. Koirala had expressed his political ideas from torturous jail through different ways. This article is laced with those thoughts and strategies of Koirala.

2. Historical Background

The supreme policy in a country is politics. The appropriate mobilization of politics is a tool to provide the people freedom, equality, nationality, democracy and legal state and makes them sovereign (Gautam, 2046 : 143). But, the Rana oligarchy and the tyrannical village-rule, the Panchayati system, were being operated

by minimizing all the norms of democracy and legal state. Resultantly, the Nepali people also got revolutionalized along with the global wave to obtain the basic rights. They were oriented to be sovereign people from tenant via subject (Gautam, 2063 : 173). They participated in the pursuit of coexistence to protect the freedom through different political and non-political organizations and entities. In the nick of time, B. P. Koirala pioneered to achieve nationality, democracy and socialism by formulating the principle and for these motives; he organized the people for inevitable movement (Koirala, Interview on March 18, 2004). The same background had resulted into the history of the Nepali movement.

3. Research Methodology

The historical facts are oriented to be real, objective, based on true facts and exactly to the original form of events. Based on these themes, the present article has been structured. The literary writings have said abundantly about different dimensions of B. P. Koirala. The works are done by analysis, critically examination and evaluation on such thoughts of B. P. Koirala. The existing literatures as well as research have been sources to build the article. Some original information, as primary sources, have been obtained from veterans, experienced, active politicians, freedom fighters and the affected families of the martyrs. The special attempt is to unfold the related documents, appeals, letters and ordinances/notifications to bring out the truth. Thus, the article has been prepared analytically by exploring the original and primary sources and materials.

4. The Thought of B. P. Koirala

B. P. Koirala had obtained the education from Deepnagar, Tedhi; Gandhiashram, Benaras; Patana, and Calcutta. He had practiced the law in Darjeeling, the degree which he had got from Calcutta in 1937 A.D after his graduation in Management stream (Chattarjee, 1982 : 69). He had expanded his area of interest during study. Koirala had enhanced his horizon in nationality, democracy and socialism. By the concept of these three, he had vowed to liberate Nepali people by providing the worldwide basic rights. He had analytically studied the contemporary western philosophical and literary creations (Chaterjee, 1980 : 107). Koirala ornated his logic with behavioral science. He tried to expand his intelligence globally

(Upadhyay, Interview on January 2004). His eloquence, personality, logical power to interpret a thing from different perspectives helped him for the strategic planning for nation development.

5. The Indian Freedom Movement

B. P. Koirala had witnessed the crest of Indian movement against the British Rule. He became active in the Indian freedom movement by the inspiration of his father, Krishna Prasad Koirala. Becoming the chief of student wing of Indian National Congress, B. P. had propagated the wave of freedom fight through news articles. His writings in the Searchlight, Yugwani, Sharda, Janata, Gorakha, Gorkha Sansar, Hindustan like magazines against colonialism was awakening the Nepali people (Koirala, Interview on April 25, 2004).

The Britishers were ruling over India politically by entering through commercial company. They had imperial over Indian culture and contemporary issues. Such were the fueling why there was a revolt against the Britishers in India. B. P. had participated in the movement through sister wings of the political party, viz: students', labourers', peasants' and non-resident Nepalis' organizations. During protest, B. P. Koirala had to go in police custody of Bankepur, Hazaribag (Brown, 1996 : 210), where Dr. Rajendra Prasad Shrivastav, Jay Prakash Narain, Morarjee Desai, Ahmed Kidwai, Bijay Laxmi Pandit and others had also been jailed. In Patna, B. P. Koirala and his colleague Devendra Singh and others were captured. Beside this, B. P. Koirala had keen interest and full faith in Mahatma Gandhi's non-violence movement against Britishers: the Quit India, to which the Indian people had massive support (Acharya, Interview on Feb. 28, 2002). B. P. had vowed to organize the same movement in Nepal which was on the base of Gandhi. B. P. Koirala had opportunity to communicate, interact and plan for Nepal with those Indian leaders and freedom fighters who were in the custody and who had met B. P. Koirala in the course. In those days, B. P. Koirala studied rapidly in the jail. He had been blessed with the literary and political wits of Shelley, Keats, Shakespeare, Tagore, Nehru, Bernard Shaw, Dickens, Karl Marx, Gandhi, Sumitra Nandan, Nirala, Jay Shankur Prasad, Karl Popper, Tom pine, Lincoln, Stenberg, O'Neill, Hemingway, Rousseau, Voltaire, Montesquieu, and Aristotle. From the background of Indian freedom movement, B. P. Koirala had lectured dauntlessly at many

occasions on the platform of socialist international. His addressing was of higher quality than Nehru, Jaya Prakash Narayan and Desai that was confirmed by the then banner news. B. P. Koirala sent the cuttings of his articles, news and pamphlets against the Rana Regime (Sharma, 2055 B.S : 109). He had written them in different jails of India and had sent them to Nepali students like Sri Kasheenath Gautam, Sri Bhadra Sharma, Balchandra Sharma, Gopal Prasad Bhattarai, Rudra Prasad Giri, Purna Bahadur Brahmin, Kedarnath Vyathit in India. The despotic Rana rule was weakening as the 'C' class Ranas were uncooperative to them. Vanishing of the British rule from India was a signal of creating a problem for power holding Ranas in Nepal.

6. Awakening Thoughts of B. P. Koirala from Jails of India

B. P. Koirala was put in different jails of India but he was provided the special facilities of a political captivity in Bankepur, Patna, Calcutta and Hazaribag jails. He developed his academia and increased the political height by the attachment with different politicians and earning many well-wishers of India. It was when, B. P. Koirala fell sick. As he became a popular leader, he got the treatment of his disease with the help of Indian friends in India, England and the USA. B. P. Koirala used his popularity to create a political environment by his followers and well-wishers in the favour of democracy to root out the Rana rule in Nepal. He had promised and mastered a plan to abolish the Rana rule to make the Nepali people free from any despotic system by ensuring the constitutional power of the king (Adhikari, 2055 B.S. : 213). It was the peak hour of movement against the Britishers in India. The Britishers were releasing the political captives rapidly to quit India anytime. B. P. Koirala got release from Hazaribag jail. He directed his followers, who were lover of democracy and devoted to root out the despotic Rana rule from Nepal, to work against the Rana in Nepal in underground way. The global wave of nationality, democracy, liberty, equity, secularity, socialism, legal state, universal brotherhood touched Nepal warmly and they were going to be compulsory for Nepal (Adhikari, 2059 B.S. : 177). Assimilating the same global perspective, B. P. Koirala approached to liberate Nepali society through principle of nationality, democracy and socialism.

Integrating the organizations of Nepali people in India under umbrella of Nepali Congress, B. P. Koirala pioneered the democratic movement in Nepal.

7. The Labourer's Movement of Biratnagar

In the collective leadership of Girija Prasad Koirala, Tarini Prasad Koirala, Manohari Baral, Kalika Prasad Gupta, Gehendra Hari, Manmohan Adhikari and others, the thousands of labourers working in Biratnagar industrial estate initiated the 'No Work, a Picket' demanding the professional rights. The organization was being externally operated and approached from Jogabani by Matrika Prasad Koirala, B. P. Koirala, Bishwobandhu Thapa and others. The movement was massively supported by the women, students and commoners. The local Rana government, Wada Hakim, arrested the participants including women to crush the movement and they were carried to Kathmandy via Dhankuta. The movement became successful. It was the first important organizational movement and structure against the Ranas which won the faith of mass people (Gautam, 2046 B.S. : 189). In the background of the Biratnagar industrial movement, it is believed that the People's Revolution of 1950 (2007 B.S.) was set.

Due to the effect of the labourer's movement of Biratnagar, Padmashamsher had announced to give the basic rights of the people gradually. Resultantly, the constitutional law 2004 B. S. was implemented. But it did not come in practice. 'There would be satyagraha all over the country in case the captives of Biratnagar stir were not released', was a great headache for the Ranas. The Indian leaders had to build the pressure over Rana rulers. Thus, the Biratnagar stir was to be the political movement not only in Nepal but outside also. It is accepted that this moment was the base for People's movement of 1950 (2007 B.S.).

8. Medical Treatment of B. P. Koirala

The problem in throat of B. P. Koirala was felt in those days when he was busy in freedom fight of India. Dr. Rajendra Prasad, Jay Prakash Narain, Mahatma Gandhi and his well wishers had helped B. P. to operate his throat in Bo(Mu)mbay. B. P. Koirala continued to participate in the political turmoil. But his disease reappeared when he was in the Nepali jail. Doctors Bharat Vaidya, Siddhimani and

others did their best but the result was null. The health news of B. P. spread all over just like a fire in straw. Padmashamsher had no relief under the pressure group of Indian leaders and Nepali people without releasing B. P. Koirala. Though Padmashamsher had claimed that there was no any pressure for the release of B. P. Koirala, he was wrong. After release, he was admitted to the noticeable cancer hospital of India. Meanwhile, Padmashamsher resigned from his post of Prime Minister from Ranchi (India) and sent his resignation through Narendramani Dixit under the pressure of Mohanshshsher. Nepal went politically in the hand of high despotic and reactionary person, Mohanshamsher, from where there was no chance of improvement in the condition.

9. The Secret Arrival of B. P. Koirala to Own-land: Nepal

There was unfavourable condition to return Nepal and organize a political organization during the reactionary rule of Mohanshamsher so, medically half-cured B. P. Koirala and his comrades decided to reach Kathmandu through Janakpur via Cheesapani and Dhulikhel in a disguised form. Ganeshman Singh was a fugitive and in exile in India. He was advised to organize remaining in India for there was a shoot-at-sight order in Nepal. B. P. Koirala, Krishna Prasad Koirala, Kedarman Vyathit and some others met Bodh Prasad Upadhyay in Janakpur to cross Cheesapani. B. P. Koirala was in disguised form of a karmic Brahmin of Nepal enchanting forever: the dhaka cap, pyjama, vertical red spot of paste of sandal wood on the body, and religious texts as well as sandal wood and sacred-rice in a leaf plate in the hand (Sharma, 2059 B.S. : 77). While Kisunji became the ever enchanting disciple of B. P. Koirala, Kedarman Vyathit, on the other hand, was a seller of he-buffalo under the leadership of Bodhnath Upadhyay to enter Cheesapani Fotress with family. The government in-charge enquired Upadhyay but released the group soon seeing them as pundits. They easily reached Bhaktapur through Dhulikhel where, the same Vyathit, was introduced as a cloth trader. B. P. Koirala started to organize politically in underground way in polymorphs by shifting the location after first entry in the house of Tripuber of Kathmandu. There was a threat upon B. P. Koirala for there were wide range of police check-ups and under cops. Meanwhile, B. P. Koirala came in

the grip of police from house of Tripuber while Vyathit escaped and Kisunji had already fled to India as per the suggestion of B. P. Koirala.

10. The Agonizing Imprisonment

After all B. P. Koirala was arrested. He was put in the dark cell which was cold, very small and of the area of 8 x 7 square feet. He had no blanket, bed. He had no time for wearing shoes and coat. The jailer did not provide B. P. Koirala even the food on the very first day. He was served with fried potato, beaten rice, chilly and radish-slice for three days. He was to fall with fainting due to severe cold (Sharma, 2055 B.S. : 91). He was to squat-and-down to warm his body. The nearby watchwoman in the women's prison handed over B. P. Koirala her own silver water pot which she had used for the toilet, after three days of his imprisonment. After cleaning the silver pot well, B. P. Koirala used to cook porridge on a small oven for livelihood with rice, the vegetables like radish and spinach which he bought with the saved money from same amount of rice, that is: he ate half of the food to save money. His body was chained and nailed but, again, the army boy was to watch him whole night by catching the iron chain. To defecate, there was a small hole in the same small cell which was to be covered with a brick to stop the smelling. Such was the hellish life of B. P. Koirala in the jail. The same watchwoman (Sharma, 2055 B.S. : 97) was to penetrate the small pieces of paper to B. P. Koirala either with shoes or socks through that orifice which was to become the material to write. She was to handover the chits to Purna Bahadur M.A. Purna, in turn, was to provide those writings to kinsmen and Indian media for publishing. It was only the way by which people could know the torturous daily life of B. P. Koirala and his further desire and plan.

The watchman of men's prisons also called Lama and belonged to Tamang caste, was from military with a fitful health. B. P. Koirala attracted him one day while he was washing the handkerchief embroidered by his wife and buzzing the local song. B. P. Koirala put forward a proposal asking the watchman, "How do you sustain with the salary of rupees thirty? If you assist me a little, I will provide a job in Indian Gorkha soldier" (Sharma, 2055 B.S. : 98). The Tamang watchman accepted B. P. Koirala's proposal and went to meet Purna Bahadur M.A. with a plan told by B. P. Koirala. First time, the

watchman delivered the writings of B. P. Koirala on the cover of soap and cigarette to Purna Bahadur for which he got rupees five. The watchman collected the pieces of paper and butt of pencils and carried to B. P. Koirala by hiding in the shoes. Purna Bahadur sent that stationery through watchman afterward. The letter handed over to Sushila Koirala on the cover of the soap explained well the torturous life of B. P. Koirala. The letter reached ultimately in the hand of Nehru through Kisunji and Balchandra Sharma. Nehru sobbed reading the letter. There was a rumor of whipping B. P. Koirala and his hearing in the court. The pressure of his release was built heavily. Despite the pressure, Mohan Shamsheer was not to release B. P. Koirala. Ultimately, news broke out in the Indian media that B. P. Koirala was to sit on a fast-unto-death from third of the lunar day, the Akshaytriteeya. The painful old disease of B. P. Koirala is unmentionable in the word. It was uncertain when B. P. Koirala would pay the debt of nature. She was Rosha Koirala who informed the world about the terrible condition of B. P. Koirala, Nona Koirala, on the other hand, stole Koirala's writings from under the bricks of his sitting place, hid them in her blouse and later on publicized them in media. The Indian ambassador mediated on the twentieth day of fast between B. P. Koirala and Mohan Shamsheer but in vain. The Prime Minister, Mohan Shamsheer, rather took the strategy of breaking the fast through Tarini Koirala and Girija Prasad Koirala. But Tarini Koirala and Girija Koirala suggested B. P. Koirala to continue the fast-unto-death for it was reaching its peak. On the twenty-fourth day, Susheela Koirala reached Patna to meet Jay Pakash Narayan who was under the treatment of his leg. Narain phoned Nehru from his hospital bed. Nehru responded quickly by sending the message to Mohan Shamsheer through Bijay Shamsheer and he himself called Mohan Shamsheer on the twenty-sixth day to release and save his life. Susheela Koirala returned Kathmandu by bus as the muddy and wet runway was unfit for plane. The mother Divya Koirala, his wife and Rosha could meet B. P. with the help of Bijay Shamsheer only in the dawn of Tuesday for the government officials did not use to let meet on Tuesday. The Prime Minister said, "B. P. is in your responsibility. Now, save his life by breaking the fast-unto-death." But Divya reacted dauntlessly, "My son is the captive of you Ranas. It's responsibility of the government. We won't sit with B. P. in such condition and we won't escort him out until he is

not released through process." On the anger of Mohan Shamsher, "Haven't we any prestige?" Divya refuted boldly, "The prestige of my son hailed to bring democracy in the country is high and more respectful than any despotic ruler" (Chaterjee, 1982 : 95). She angered, "I had followed the funeral rites of my husband. You have pushed my son also in the same condition."

On the suggestion of the doctors Narendramani, Siddhimani and Bharat Vaidya, B. P. broke the fast by drinking liquid of pulse after his release by Mohan Shamsher on the twenty-ninth day. He was so lean and thin. He even needed a person for daily work. He became one of the popular leaders of democratic countries in the world.

The democratic movement was at its peak after the release of B. P. So many political organizations had been set and the Nepali people were committed to set democracy in Nepal. The socialist leaders of India were encouraging Nepali people by living in Nepal while there was full moral support of other Indian leaders like Gandhi, Jay Prakash, Desai, Bijay Laxmi Pandit, Acharya Narendradev, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, and Nehru.

The People's Revolution of 1950 (2007 B.S.) to occur under the leadership of the Nepali Congress was the desire of B. P. (Gupta, Interview on September 4, 2004). As the preparation was going on for People's Revolution formulating the People's Government under Badahakim of Palpa, Rudra shamsher, king Tribhuvan became refugee in Indian embassy of Kathmandu. They were escorted safely to Haiderabad of India. Meanwhile, Mohan Shamsher made new king Gyanendra Shah and minted the coin in the name of new king, who was left in Kathmandu by king Tribhuvan. The act was severely criticized. In Bairganiya, Nepali Congress declared to uproot the Rana rule with weapon. The avian against Rana rule touched the sky in Biratnagar, Birgunj, Jhapa, Bhadrapur, Palpa, Nepalgunj, Janakpur and other towns and districts. Despite refusal of B. P., there happened the tripartite agreement in Delhi under the leadership of Nehru. The interim government was formed in Nepal. There were disputes, differences and competitions among them. There seemed the fractions in Nepali Congress. King Tribhuvan favoured Matrika Prasad Koirala, a brother of B. P. After the death of king Tribhuvan, his eldest son, Mahendra, heired. He was visibly reluctant to address the political rights. B. P. attracted the commoner to Nepali Congress

by campaign. King Mahendra conducted the people's election in 2015 B.S. in which Nepali Congress won by two-third majority (Adhikari, 2059 B.S. : 311). After many months of result of the elections, B. P. Koirala was accepted the Prime Minister. The first elected people's government did some very popular works like abolition of land property, the Birta, land reforms, protection of rights of tenancy, economic reform, expansion of foreign relation, reforms in legal affairs as well as in social matter. The king was afraid of such popular works of the government and so, he banned the political parties and organizations and captured the ministers and leaders (Gautam, 2048 B.S. : 221). Some leaders again exiled themselves in India. King Mahendra kidnapped the democracy and brought the party less ruling, the Panchayat, in Nepal which was again on the route of the then Rana rule.

When B. P. was in Sundarijal jail, he was kept under a sharp watch and he was not allowed to read the Gorkhapatra and Rising Nepal. B. P. was to write the political messages and literature in the gap of two paragraphs. He was to use the code word and letter : 'R' for Ramesh Pandey and 'Hadraj' for Indian Ambassador. His writings were edited or directly published to enrich Nepali literature. Among them, his many manuscripts have got vanished. Even the handwritten name list of those people who were always ready to sacrifice the life for B. P. could not keep his manuscripts safely (Sharma, 2054 B.S. : 114). But the materials that were obtained, have immortally rated B. P. as "One Person with many Dimensions" or "One Person, Many Personalities."

11. Conclusion

B. P. Koirala is a multidimensional person regarded as a pioneer in politics. Regarding his political thought, the nation has not yet adopted and implemented all the ideas. He was a true devotee of democracy who was ever fighter for full-fledged democracy. Had his health assisted B.P, he would devote totally to the work after which the nation would have progressed by leaps and bounds. His dream was to change the country drastically by the principle of nationality, democracy and socialism. He had even worked for the designing and implementation of his principle. He used to execute the plan by placing the photo of a peasant as eyewitness. To make Nepali people sovereign, so many political phases including policy of reconci-

liation, referendum, hunger-strike, people's movements of 1990 and 2006 occurred in Nepal on the leadership of B. P.

B. P. is considered as a great thinker of sex-psychology in literature. His literary works and their critical evaluation proved the matter. Many thinkers do not accept B. P. as an exceptional person but his selfless devotion in politics proves himself to be an exceptional leader. Politico-culturally, he was a believer of coexistence. He had full faith over political culture.

In almost all political movements, revolutions and turmoil in Nepal, there are prints of B. P.'s thought and principle. While following his thoughts and principles, a citizen or a politician sigh freely in democratic vein. His attempts of policy and political acts to establish his ideologies are praiseworthy.

A good leader is important for the development of a nation. B P was a politician with whose work, the country moved in a direction of development and growth.

Interviews

Acharya, Shailaja, February 28, 2002, Interview in Biratnagar. (Acharya is niece of B. P., his trustworthy, a women leader, minster in Government of Nepal, freedom fighter of democracy).

Gupta, Kalika P., September 4, 2004, Interview in Jogbani of India (Gupta- a Follower of B. P., an active participant in political changes of 1947/1950, a democratic force).

Koirala, Narayan Prasad, April 25, 2004. Interview in Biratnagar. (Koirala is a Veteran supporter of Democracy. Socialist. activist and freedom fighter.

Koirala, Nona, March 18, 2004, Interview in Koirala residence, Biratnagar (Koirala- wife of Keshav Koirala, a politician, minister and a democratic fighter).

Upadhyay, Bodh P., February 1, 2004, Interview in Janakpur (Upadhyay is democratic fighter, a cadre of Nepali Congress, a person to help B. P. cross Cheesapani in disguised form).

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