

## **The Courtiers of Kantipur during the Malla Period (1484-1768)**

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*Prince Ratna Malla established Kantipur (presently known as Kathmandu) as an independent state in 1484 after separating it from Bhaktapur, due to the ambition of becoming the king of an independent state. At that time Bhaktapur was the capital of all Nepal Mandal. Even though Kantipur was established as an independent state, except for the regime of few influential kings like Mahindra Malla and Pratap Malla, it is believed that during the whole Malla period the courtiers appeared to be more powerful than the king in the palace. However, in the neighboring kingdoms like Bhaktapur and Patan (presently known as Lalitpur), the courtiers are considered to be powerful only when the throne king is weak. But especially in Kantipur (Kathmandu), after the death of king Pratap Malla, most of the kings who were on the throne were weak and under aged, so the Courtiers appeared as de facto rulers of the court. The king was just ceremonial and courtiers were chief of all in the state. They ruled arbitrarily. This tradition continued till later. Because of this, when the last king of Kantipur, Jayprakash Malla, wanted to*

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*rule with his own power and ability, none of the old courtiers supported him. Amidst this weak political situation, when the Gorkhali army attacked on Kantipur in A.D. 1768, the king had to flee the kingdom in retaliation for its resistance. But despite all this, some of the courtiers were devoted to their duties. However, in the end, the state ended due to the conspiratorial politics of gaining power.*

[**Keywords** : Darbariya Bhardar (Courtier), Chautara (Chief Minister), Qazi (Minister), Mayasingh Naradev, Bhuvanlaxmi, Mahiptindra, Swami Raghwananda]

## **1. Objective, Material and Method**

This research article attempts to analyze the courtiers of Kantipur during the Malla Period i.e. from 1484 to 1768. This article has been prepared in an analytical and descriptive format. Primary and secondary sources have been used by adopting a qualitative research method. Under this, primary sources include field studies, direct observation, study of unpublished texts, information obtained from subject experts have been collected. Similarly, facts have been collected from research journals and published books in secondary sources. This article has been prepared by studying and analyzing these two types of sources and presenting the facts in a descriptive manner.

## **2. Background of Kantipur during Malla Period**

According to historical documents the kingdom of Kathmandu valley existed as one strong and integrated kingdom till the time of Yaksha Malla, which was known as Nepal Mandal. At that time, the Malla kings ruled as 'Maharajadhiraj', 'Nepaleswar', 'Nepal Mandalswar' (lord of all Nepal) sitting in the Tripur Palace in the capital Bhaktapur. The surrounding areas of Kantipur, Patan, Pharping, Nuwakot, Dolakha etc. were ruled by feudal rulers who had ancestral rights (Kayastha, 2018 : 87). These feudal rulers were called Mahapatra (Baishya Thakuri). Although these Mahapatras ruled under the orders of the Malla kings, but they were not weak. As soon as there was weakness in the central, they rebelled and try to be independent. After the death of king Yaksha Malla in 1481, the eldest son Raya Malla was on the throne, but all the brothers and nephew Bhim Malla also ruled jointly (Vajracharya, 1962 : 38-42 & 133-40).

But after the death of king Yaksha Malla, due to the discordant policies of his sons, this unified state became politically disintegrated. In this process, first Kantipur and then Patan separated from Bhaktapur. But the most displeased with this was Ratna Malla, the

second eldest son of Yaksha Malla (Shrestha, 2002 : 12-14). It was said above that he wanted to be the king of an independent state. At that time, 12 Mahapatras (Baishya Thakuris) ruled in Kantipur and 3 Saptakutumba in Patan. He thought of eliminating these feudal lords of Kantipur and Patan and establishing his own separate kingdom to fulfill his previous ambitions, but the situation was more suitable to capture Kantipur than Patan. Because the 12 Mahapatras of Kantipur were weaker at that time and taking advantage of their dry politics, he thought of establishing his kingdom there. In this process, first he came to Kantipur and then he got one of those 12 Mahapatras to his side. According to the *Bhasha Vanshawali*, a chronicle, Ratna Malla received the mantra of Taleju Bhavani (clan deity of Mallas) at the time of his father and received the blessing that "try to conquer Kantipur, you will succeed" by her grace and told the same divine miracle to the Mahapatra. And killed the remaining 11 Mahapatras by feeding them poison at the feast (Lamsal, 1966 : 51). Finally, Kantipur was made an independent state and started to rule. Later, after strengthening his rule, he also gave an end to the Mahapatra, who helped him dominate Kantipur (Lamsal, 1966 : 51).

In this way, by 1484, Ratna Malla was able to suppress the Mahapatras of Kantipur and establish his independent rule there. This showed that Kantipur became independent only 3 years after the death of King Yaksha Malla. In order to not raise any opposition from his brothers in his campaign, he had arranged the main people in the family such as Rana Malla, Ari Malla, nephew Bhim Malla and Indra Malla to his side. Probably, after becoming the independent king of Kantipur, he had taken his hand on the condition that he would help Rana Malla to become the king of Banepa Satgaon. Later, Banepa kingdom was established and Rana Malla became its king, which was confirmed. Ari Malla was arranged in his favor by making him the joint ruler of Kantipur. But after strengthening his grip on Kantipur, it is understood that he was given wings. Indra Malla, who was Ratna Malla's special advisor, had won him over on condition of special honors. This is evident from the fact that he is given the epithet 'Rajochit'. But nobody knows who was Indra Malla. It was not known and people guessed he was son of Ari Malla or nephew of Ratna Malla (Shrestha, 2002 : 19). Similarly, it seems that he somehow got Bhim Malla to his side. Due to these various reasons, Raya Malla, king of Bhaktapur, could not do anything when Kantipur stood as an independent state under the leadership of Ratna Malla.

Thus, the Kantipur kingdom, which was even though liberated by Ratna Malla, after his death the courtiers became powerful. Yes, there were influential kings like Mahendra Malla, Pratap Malla in its history, yet they also used to follow the advice of their ministers. For example, Mahendra Malla used to take advice and help from Moharsingh, especially in the act of issuing silver coins-“Mahendramalli Mohar” and Pratap Malla from Qazi Bhim Malla.

### **3. Courtiers of Kantipur Palace**

During the Malla period, the powerful courtiers of this Kantipur durbar (palace) were as follows :

#### **3-1 Qazi Bhim Malla**

Towards the end of king Laxminarsingh Malla and beginning of king Pratap Malla's reign, Qazi Bhim Malla emerged as an influential Bhardar (courtier) of the Kantipur court. Although in some genealogy, he was also said to be the youngest son of King Laxminarsingha Malla (Lamsal, 1966 : 86), but other sources do not confirm this (Regmi, 1966 : 61). It is said that due to his inspiration, Pratap Malla took his father king Laxminarsingha Malla prisoner and sat on the throne. He was a capable and courageous warrior. With his advice and support, Pratap Malla tried to expand the kingdom by conducting military campaigns to attack the neighboring states from time to time. Another Bhardar (courtier) of Kantipur, Mayasingh Naradeva, a contemporary of Bhima Malla, was a rival of Bhima Malla (Regmi, 1966 : 60). However, compared to Bhima Malla, his position was mostly insignificant (Vajracharya, 1962 : 242). Moreover, Qazi Bhim Malla's fame and popularity in the state and people spread more than the king on the throne, by conquering Kuti, Kerung region, to provide special facilities to Nepali merchants in Tibet and to accept the condition of using Nepali currency in the Tibetan market (Regmi, 1966 : 61). But the opposing Bhardars, who were led by Mayasingh Naradeva, were not happy with his success. They told the king that Bhima Malla was trying to become the king of Kantipur himself with the help of Tibetans. Qazi Bhim Malla was murdered due to the conspiratorial atmosphere of the Kantipur palace (Vajracharya, 1962 : 243).

The truth behind was Qazi Bhim Malla had reached Lhasa in Tibet during the conquest campaign, made a treaty with the Dalai Lama (supreme leader of Tibet) there and returned to spread the

trade of Kantipur to Tibet. When he came back, the day was Tuesday and he could not meet the king. Because it is believed to be unlucky to meet on Tuesday. So, he went to his own house and stayed at home. But the opponents used this as an excuse and told the king that Bhim Malla is trying to become the king of Kantipur himself with the help of Tibet. Therefore, the king immediately caught him from his house and executed him (Lamsal, 1966 : 85-86). Thus, during the conquest campaign, Bhim Malla, a brave, courageous and patriotic man who reached the capital of Tibet and made a treaty with the Dalai Lama, was accused of being a traitor and sentenced to death. That's why his wife Bhuvanlaxmi cursed that 'may those who do good work in the Nepal Durbar never be well !' while going for Sati (Chalise, 1991 : 260). That is why Nepal is still called 'the country cursed by *sati*'.

Bhim Malla's own character also seems to be partly responsible for his murder. Although Bhima Malla was patriotic and honest, he imprisoned the weak and incompetent king Laxminarsingh Malla and placed his son Pratap Malla on the throne. But this hospitality later became the main reason for his inhumane murder as Pratap Malla was suspicious about the person who had deposed his father can also betrayed him. It was not unusual to see such an attitude in Pratap Malla, who was an ambitious and skeptical personality. That's why, following the agitation of the opponents, he cut off a patriotic Nepali who gave the state so much economic benefit and prestige without even looking at the face. But later when he came to know the truth, he became mad with remorse. For fifteen years he remained helpless and inactive, he could not dare to attack any kingdom.

### **3.2 Chautara Devidas Chikuti (1674-1683)**

As Pratap Malla was an ambitious and influential ruler, during his reign the Bhardars (courtiers) were subdued before his personality (Vajracharya, 1976 : 20). But after his death, the Bhardars got a chance to raise their position. As a result, political instability appeared in the palace (Vajracharya, 1976 : 23). Pratap Mall succeeded his sons as king by turns, while he was still alive. Towards the end, the youngest son Mahipatindra Malla was made the heir to the kingdom, which was contrary to tradition (Rajvanshi, 1984 : 1-2). This gave the Bhardars a golden opportunity to determine their own path. In this situation, some of the Bhardars wanted to fulfill his wishes, while another Bhardars tried to make Nripendra Malla, the eldest among the living, as the king. There was no agreement between the trustees. The throne

remained vacant for three months. In fact, this situation seems to have arisen because all the sons of Pratap Malla were minors at that time. In the end, Srinivas Malla, King of Patan (Lalitpur) and the eldest of all Malla clan and Jitamitra Malla, King of Bhaktapur, came to Kantipur and Srinivas Malla calmed everyone down by giving the crown to Nripendra Malla, the eldest of the living. Parthivendra and Mahipatendra, second and third sons of late king Pratap Malla, were called the younger kings (Rajvanshi, 1963 : 7). At that time, Nripendra Malla was only twelve years old. Therefore, Chikuti, the old Bhardar of Kantipur, who had taken refuge in Patan, was made sit in the post of Chautara by Srinivas Malla.

As king Nripendra Malla was very young, So Chikuti himself began to wield all the political powers. He died in 1680, seven years after becoming king. For two weeks there was no king in Kantipur. According to a senior historian T.R. vaidya, this happened because of the custom of not making a new king until the 13-days Kajkiriya (death rites) are completed (Bhandari, 1982 : 39). After that the kings of Bhaktapur and Patan came to Kantipur and placed his brother Parthivendra Malla on the throne. Even during the reign of Parthivendra, Chikuti managed to remain in the post of Chautara. But Chikuti's growing influence made his opponents even more disaffected. Therefore, the opponents, especially Laxminarayan Joshi, started a game to kill him.

Chikuti's special name was Devidas Chikuti. He was an old Bhardar of Kantipur during the time of king Pratap Malla. But after disagreeing with Pratap Malla, he was imprisoned. Later, after being released from captivity, the then king of Patan went to Srinivas Malla to seek refuge. Later, due to Srinivasa Malla, he became the Chautara of Kantipur. His personality was high. He became all-in-all of Kantipur for about nine years during the reign of king Nripendra Malla and Parthivendra Malla. From the collision with Pratap Malla, it is understood that his personality and ambition was as high and bold as Pratap Malla. He placed his relatives in all the important high positions of the state. Khas, Magar got 'Umrao' to his side and killed Mandhata Singh, the illegitimate son of Pratap Malla, who had become powerful in the politics of Kantipur at that time. Also, he ran a single rule, discarding all his opponents. But just like a person who rises as soon as he falls, Chikuti's downfall also started. Especially his opponents, who were dissatisfied with his increasing power and pomp, started to become stronger against him. Laxminarayan Joshi



was the chief among the anti-Bhardars. It was through his activism that a conspiracy was prepared to eliminate Chikuti. After getting a hint of this conspiracy, in October 1683, Chikuti, without he telling anyone, went to Patan with his family. Since it was not safe there, he went to live in a village called Budhsingh, across the Trishuli River 8 kos (16 miles) west from Kathmandu (Vajracharya, 1962: 242-43).

Thus, after Chikuti's escape, King Srinivas Malla of Patan came to Kantipur and asked Laxminarayan Joshi, Bawat, Jayakrishna and his son Srikanthu to form a council of ministers (Vajracharya, 1962 : 237 & 276). On the other hand, Chikuti retired from politics and engaged in religious work. Meanwhile in July 1687, King Parthivendra Malla died due to poisoned food. When their king Parthivendra Malla was killed by poison, the people of Kantipur made a big protest. "Who poisoned our king? Find out and kill him" The people of Kantipur started gathering in front of the Hanumandhoka Royal palace. Chikuti's rival Laxminarayan Joshi had a hand in creating this disturbance. As the disturbance was increasing, King Jitamitra Malla of Bhaktapur, who was the eldest old man in Malla clan that time, came there and calmed everyone down (Regmi, 1966 : 137). Parthivendra's eight-year-old son Bhupalendra Malla was crowned and appointed Laxminarayan Joshi as Chautara (Regmi, 1966: 138). Then Chikuti and his accomplice Bhardar (Courtier) spread rumors that this poison had been used by Vanshidhar. At that time Chikuti had come to Devpatan with some of his followers. Later, Chikuti, his family and some followers were beaten to death by the local people (vajracharya, 1962 : 237-38 & Regmi, 1966 : 138). In this way, Laxminarayan had a main roled in ending Chikuti by uplifting the people.

### **3-3 Chautara Laxminarayan Joshi (1683-1690)**

Laxminarayan Joshi was a shrewd, cunning and ambitious politician. He was an influential Bhardar (courtier) who was adept at scheming and playing political tricks, and had the ability to incite public opinion. Therefore, he played an active and egoistic role in brutally suppressing Chautara Devidas Chikuti to facilitate his destination. In fact after the death of Pratap Malla, Laxminarayan was the only such ruler who took over the power amid the political instability in Kantipur state. Since Chikuti was forced to flee in 1683, Chautara Laxminarayan ruled Kantipur for about seven years until his own assassination in August 1690. After his death, no other

Bhardar ruled there as powerfully as he did. Chautara Laxminarayan is seen as the most influential and powerful Bhardar in the history of Kantipur. As a matter of fact, Laxminarayan seems to have become powerful because he was the main source of Chikuti's brutal oppression and the lover of Riddhilaxmi, the queen of King Parthivendra Malla. According to the *Bhasha Vanshawali*, a chronicle, Laxminarayan used to sleep in the palace, eat in the palace, wear the clothes and jewels worn by the king and sit on the king's bed. He didn't even go to battle, he just stayed with the queen day and night (Lamsal, 1966 : 99).

After suppressing the opponents like Chikuti, Minister Vanshidhar and others, the cunning and clever Laxminarayan Joshi now wanted to kill Prince Mahipatendra Malla, the youngest son of late Pratap Malla. Although the prince had no interest in politics, but he was a close contender for the throne. Therefore, seeing that his future would not be assured as long as he and his supporters remained, Mahipatendra was physically tortured and imprisoned in 1685, with the intention of bringing about his downfall. But after a few months, he escaped from prison and reached Patan to take refuge. Even so, Laxminarayan asked the king of Patan, Srinivas, to hand him over, seeing that he would be a danger to him as long as he remained safe. But it was said that he was not handed over guaranteeing the safety of his life.

That's why there was a talk of making an offering in Teku Dobhan (confluence). But when Laxminarayan's Kantipure vassals tried to take Mahipatendra by force, the people of Patan rose up and beat the Kantipures and drove them away (Lamsal, 1966 : 97). Even after this incident, Laxminarayan was trying to capture Mahipatendra. Mahipatendra too was wandering in hiding. After the assassination of his brother King Parthivendra, he became even more helpless. During this time, he took refuge with Swami Raghavananda, a South Indian priest of Pashupati. Although the nephew Bhupalendra was the king, but the queen mother Riddhilaxmi was a puppet of Laxminarayan. Knowing that he was taking refuge in Pashupati, Laxminarayan ordered his men to cut off Mahipatendra's head. According to the same order, he was caught while lying down, tied with a rope and brutally beheaded. This incident was around September 1687. Swami Raghavananda, deeply enraged by the inhumane killing of the prince who had taken refuge with him,



renounced the priesthood of Pashupati and left the kingdom of Kantipur never to return (Lamsal, 1966 : 98).

After the ambitious and self-willed Chautara Laxminarayan began to stay in the palace, King Parthivendra's queen Riddhilaxmi fell in love with him. An immoral relationship was established between them. Probably the king must have smelled this immoral relationship because of which in July 1687, Laxminarayan poisoned food and gave it to King Parthivendra. After the death of the king, Laxminarayan, who received the dignity of the royal mother, became equal to the king in the eyes of the people. Even after killing all the reins of the regime, his ambition was not fulfilled. He wanted to keep his existence in history. That is why he was able to engrave his name Laxminarayan on one side of King Bhupalendra Malla's currency(coins). In this way, he took the entire reins of the state in his hands, and even wrote his name "Laxminarayan" on the coins, and with his political style, he came to look like a king.

Laxminarayan created a big upheaval not only in the internal politics of Kantipur, but also in the neighboring states. Even those who helped him to reach power by placing in the Chautara post of kantipur, he did not hesitate to plot even against such benefactors. This shows that he was selfish and cunning. After suppressing all his opponents, he now started trying to merge Bhaktapur with Kantipur. For this, Patan was also brought to his side. At that time, King Jitamitra Malla and his Chautara Bhagiram were ruling together in Bhaktapur. Laxminarayan began to pressurize Jitamitra to remove Bhagiram from his post, as his wishes would not be fulfilled as long as an influential Bhardar (courtier) like Bhagiram remained in Bhaktapur. But Jitamitra was not in favor of removing such an influential person without fault. Therefore, with the help of Patan, Kantipur attacked Bhaktapur and started causing suffering to the people there (Vajracharya, 1962 : 274). Rebellion spread among the distressed people. And unable to stop the growing public discontent, the old king Jitamitra went to Kantipur to take refuge. Meanwhile, the people of Bhaktapur surrounded the palace, but did not find Bhagiram. Finally, they surrounded Bhagiram's house and looted all the property and set fire to the house (Lamsal, 1966: 99). At that time, Bhagiram escaped and saved his life. Later, when the situation was equalized, he returned to the previous place.

In this way, during his seven-year rule, he killed innocent king, princes and courtiers, and conspired even in the Malla states of the

valley to protect his power. After living a life of luxury with royal splendors, in August 1690, a group of relatives of the Khasas (non Newars) who were killed in Chikuti's assassination suddenly attacked and ended Laxminarayan's reign (Regmi, 1966 : 145 & Vajracharya, 1962 : 274). Then Mansingh was given the post of Chautara (Vajracharya, 1962 : 280).

### **3.4 Qazi Jhagal Thakur as Chautara ( 1700-1722 & after)**

After the death of Laxminarayan, Rajmata (queen-mother) Riddhilaxmi remained active in the government. But when King Bhupalendra became eligible, the exact identity of the mother and son could not be found. Especially when the son suspected that his mother's love affair with Laxminarayan and his father Parthivendra's death was due to his mother, a quarrel arose between the mother and son. As a result, the king left the palace and sometimes went to Guhyeshwari, sometimes to Sankhu and sometimes to Devpatan. After a few days, he entered the palace and imprisoned his mother, and then sent her to Tauthali, where she died as a prisoner (Dahal, 1984 : 70-71). About six months after the death of her mother, King Bhupalendra Malla also died near Ayodhya in India during his pilgrimage in October 1700. After that, his five-year-old son Bhaskar Malla was placed on the throne of Kantipur. Rajmata Bhuvanlalaxmi took the entire reins of the state and ran the Nayabi (regency) regime (Rajvanshi, 1985 : 15). The influential Bhardar Qazi Jhagal Thakur became Chautara. Chautara Jhagal Thakur's influence in the Kantipur court continued throughout the reign of King Bhaskar Malla. And this situation continued for a few years during the reign of the next king Jagajjaya Malla (Regmi, 1966 : 173).

It is known from a palm leaf of 1719 that king Bhaskar Malla changed his name to Mahindrasimhadeva Malla when he was young (Rajvanshi, 1985 : 16). Also, he was very good at catching wild elephants. He was brave and ambitious. That is why he used to go to Terai Jungle and catch elephants. At the same time, he became friends with the Muslims there, so he brought many Muslims to Kantipur. During his reign, the influence of Muslims increased in Kantipur (Rajvanshi, 1985 : 17). These Muslims were musicians, scent manufacturers, and bangle suppliers for the court. It was said that the presence of these persons went to offend religious susceptibility of the mass of the people, who were all Hindus and there were some

disturbances but the intervention of the ruler saved the new settlers from molestation, and later on there was a reconciliation, so that the Muslims, could live in peace (Regmi, 1966 : 174).

Jhagal Thakur was also one of the famous and influential Chautaras of Kantipur at that time. A favorite Muslim of the king was also included as a Qazi (minister) in his cabinet. In fact, the importance of Kantipur in the overall politics of the valley was increased during the reign of King Bhaskar Malla and the main role behind this was Jhagal Thakur's diplomatic ability. Jhagal Thakur was a master player of Gohar era politics (the policy of colluding with one to defeat the other). Being ambitious and expansionist, he wanted to expand the influence of Kantipur in the surrounding states. In particular, he wanted to keep Patan under the control of Kantipur. So, he tried to align Bhaktapur against Patan.

In the then unstable political situation of mutual jealousy and discord, it was customary for one state to plead with another state in case of crisis. Even Patan could get help from Bhaktapur against Kantipur's wishes. If Bhaktapur and Patan were united, Kantipur alone would not be able to do anything. Therefore, in this situation, Jhagal Thakur through his diplomacy in July 1703, made Bhaskar Malla to write a treaty letter to King Bhupatindra Malla of Bhaktapur that included a bond regarding a joint front between Kantipur and Bhaktapur to subjugate Patan. A bond of Rs 36,000 was kept along with the treaty. In this treaty, there were conditions such as that Bhaktapur should not open the road to Patan without Kantipur's permission, that Kantipur should be considered as the chief when making pleas between the kings. The period of this treaty was kept for twelve years, but due to circumstances, this treaty was broken after a few years. However, giving place to the importance of Kantipur in this treaty, that is, Bhaktapur accepting the supremacy of Kantipur, was a particularly noteworthy aspect of this treaty.

In this way, Jhagal Thakur, through his diplomatic ingenuity, on the one hand sealed Bhaktapur against Patan through a treaty, and on the other hand, apart from outwardly having a special relationship with Patan, he was also inwardly conciliating the courtiers there to his side. Meanwhile, when the throne of Patan was vacant, he succeeded in making Bhaskar Malla, the king of Kantipur, the king of Patan as well. After the death of King Yoganarendra Malla of Patan, there was no legitimate son, first his daughter's son Lokprakash Malla, then Vanij (nephew) Indra Malla became the king. But within three years of

becoming king, Indra Malla died on Chaitra Shukla Purnima 1766 B. S. (March 1709). After this, Mahindra Malla, an illegitimate son of Yoganarendra Malla, became the king (Gyawali, 1962 : 188). But when this king was still there, Nayab (Regent) Yogmati called King Bhaskar Malla of Kantipur for the great bath (Maha Snan) of Rato Machhendranath, which was to be done on the day after Chaitra Shukla Purnima (1972 : 7). Mahindra Malla also died a few years later, so Viranarsinha became the king. Then Riddhinarsimha Malla, the son of nephew of Yoganarendra Malla, became the king. He also died soon. After this, Bhaskar Malla was made the king of Patan by the Bhardars of Patan who were supporters of Jhagal Thakur and Chautara post there was given to Jhagal Thakur. Thus, Thakur's desire to subjugate Patan was easily fulfilled. And Bhaskar Malla became the joint king of Kantipur and Patan (Lalitpur) for about five years. From this, it is known that Jhagal Thakur was a skilled diplomat. In fact, it seems that Bhaskar Malla of Kantipur was placed instead of Bhupatindra Malla of Bhaktapur on the throne of Patan, which became vacant after the death of Riddhinarsinha Malla, it was the diplomatic ability and capability of Jhagal Thakur. However, in spite of this, king Bhaskar Malla was pleased with the Muslims, so he appointed a Muslim as Chautara (chief Minister) in the place of Jhagal Thakur. But it aggravated the situation. There was a revolt of entire populace, high and low Pramanas and Khasas against this action of the king, and the Muslims were beheaded all except five of them who then left the country (Regmi, 1966 : 174). In this situation, Bhaktapur attacked Nuwakot, a Kantipur subordinate area, but could not succeed. After this Jhagal Thakur was again made Chautara (Munankarmi, 1968 : 131).

Another thing was that during the reign of King Bhaskar Malla specially in April 1716, a terrible epidemic disease spread. The main symptoms of this disease were ear pain and fever, which entered in the Kathmandu Valley after a gap of hundreds of years. After being touched by this disease, death would soon occur. During his time, there was a "Adhik Maas" (intercalary month) in Ashwin (September-October). Therefore, even though there was an astrological statement that the Dashain festival should not be celebrated that year, but he declared that he would celebrate the festival regardless of it. As a result, the astrologers of the time said that such an epidemic was caused by a divine disaster. In order to keep the

king away from the epidemic, Qazi Jhagal Thakur had arranged and kept the king along with the queens safely in Kindol. At that time, a Jogi came and preached that if all the Brahmins, Fakirs and poor people in the country could be fed willingly, the epidemic would end. According to Jogi's sermon, Qazi called all the Brahmins and the poor and gave them food. As a result, the epidemic calmed down. 18,714 people died due to the disease epidemic (Rajvanshi, 1985 : 18). There was no account of how many bipedal and quadrupedal animals died. One day a Jyapu (local farmer) was coming from the farm. The king saw him through the window and asked him how the epidemic was now. That Jyapu prayed that the epidemic disease had now completely subsided. Hearing this, the king could not stay like a prisoner in Kindol, so he jumped out of the window and went to Hanumandhoka palace. The queens also went along with the king. That night, the king was touched by the epidemic and became a victim of that disease and died on the Bhadrakrishna 11th day of BS 1779 (1722 August) (Ancient Nepal, 1970 : 4). King Bhaskar Malla died due to this epidemic which had been spreading for six years. He was childless. Therefore, after this, the dynasty of the Suryavanshi kings ended in Kantipur and the rule of another dynasty began, that is, the dynasty of Pratap Malla's son came to an end and the dynasty of daughter, that is, the daughter of Pratap Malla's son Mahipatendra Malla, Jagajjaya Malla ascended the throne of Kantipur. After Jagajayya, his son Jayaprakash Malla became the king (T. R. Vaidya, personal communication, May 4, 2018).

### **3-5 Taudhik Qazi**

Taudhik Qazi was an old courtier of the Kantipur court when Jayaprakash Malla was king. But later, when he did not get along with King Jayaprakash Malla, he appeared as an opponent of Jayaprakash. Especially after the Gorkha's troops occupied Nuwakot, the Kantipure army sent by Jayaprakash Malla under the leadership of his chief Kashiram Thapa to take it back, Kashiram Thapa went to his home in Palanchok when he could not face the Gorkha forces. Jayaprakash Malla was angry with Kashiram Thapa because he did not come even after calling him repeatedly. Kashiram was familiar with Jayaprakash's angry nature. But once when Kashiram came to visit Pashupati Nath, he was caught. He and his associates were killed. Old Qazi Bhinkhwal was also killed on the



suspicion of his association with Kashiram. A similar suspicion was cast on Taudhik Qazi, but he escaped and took refuge in Patan.

In this way, when the internal strife and conspiracy was going on in Kantipur, Gorkha took the help of Bhaktapur and took possession of the areas of Changu, Sankhu, Mahadevpokhari, Naldum, Dolakha under Kantipur. In this time, Taudhik Qazi attacked Kantipur with the military support of Patan and deposed Jayaprakash Malla and placed his two-year-old son Jyotiprakash on the throne and made Rani Dayavati a guardian. He became the chief minister of the state. He sent an army and took back the territory conquered by the Gorkhas. After this, for about four years, Jayaprakash Malla was deposed and went into hiding. Similarly in 1750, Taudhik Qazi knowing that Jayaprakash was hiding in Deupatan, near Pashupatinath, sent an army to capture him. Jayaprakash turned the army to his side and returned to Kantipur, took his son Jyotiprakash in his arms and sat on the throne of Kantipur. Queen Dayavati was imprisoned. Taudhik Qazi committed suicide (Lamsal, 1966 : 113-14).

#### **4. Conclusion**

In this way, since the establishment of Kantipur as an independent state, the politics of the place were dominated by the Darbariya Bhardars (Courtiers). For instance, during the time of Ratna Malla, the founding ruler who established Kantipur as an independent state, an influential Bhardar named Indra Malla appeared, who helped Ratna Malla in every way to establish a state in Kantipur. Similarly, during the reign of King Mahendra Malla, there was a nobleman named Moharsingh, who helped the king especially in issuing eight masa (wait of eight rattis) coins of silver. Therefore, the king also stamped the name of that money (coin) in exchange for his active goodness. Therefore, the coin of the king was still famous as "Mahendramalli Mohar". Due to the quality of that coin, the currency was later circulated in the Tibetan market. Similarly, another famous Bhardar of Kantipur was Bhima Malla. Although, he was brutally oppressed by falling into the courtier's conspiracy at that time. But he remained remarkable in history because of the work he did for his country. For example, by bringing Nepal's trade to Tibet, it increased Nepal's international respect and reputation, and brought great economic benefits to Nepal every year. Therefore, it cannot be said that all the Bhardars (courtiers) of

Kantipur were of bad character. Especially the courtiers of the beginning, who rose above their personal interests and always worked dedicatedly for the supreme good of the king, the state and the people. But the later Bhardars, instead of being honest and patriotic, proved to be characterless leaders who did not hesitate to do any vile and depraved act for their selfishness. Like Devidas Chikuti, Laxminarayan, Jhagal Thakurs. Even though they had rich and reputed family backgrounds and influential personalities, but they forgot their duty to the king, the state and the people and indulged in personal selfishness and lust for power. Perhaps the unstable political situation at that time is equally responsible. It has been mentioned above that if the king sitting on the throne had been qualified, capable and powerful, these courtiers would never have been powerful. Due to the fact that the kings were weak and of advanced age, the Bhardars (courtiers) became as frenzied as unbridled horses. That is why when Jayaprakash Malla, the last Malla king of Kantipur, tried to rule with his power and skill, no one supported him, everyone turned against him. Amidst this weak political situation, when the Gorkhali forces attacked Kantipur, the king had to flee the kingdom at that time. However, King Jayaprakash Malla was not a man who was afraid of swords and war. But because he could not get support from anywhere, he was forced to leave the state. The kingdom of Kantipur fell because Jayaprakash's Courtiers had joined the enemy kingdom.

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