



Nepal's Power Elites

Rajahs, Ranas and Republic

Gaurav Bhattarai

palgrave
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ISBN 978-3-031-62457-5 ISBN 978-3-031-62458-2 (eBook)
<https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-62458-2>

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To all those
Tharghars, bharadars, *and* jagirdars;
To all those
Chiefs of chiefdoms,
And kings of kingdoms;
To all those
Ranas of Ranarchy
Raitis in Republic,
And duniyadars in Democracy;
To all those
Panches, *parliamentarians, and parties;*
To all those,
Endless exemplars of elitist emulation;

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Indebted

to historian Purushottam Shumsher, who kindly allowed me to open his precious big boxes consisting of old photographs and let me select them freely.

Obliged

to historian Hemanta Shumsher, who incessantly shared his understanding of the *Panchayat* and Rana periods.

Gratitude

to Isobel Cowper-Coles, Commissioning Editor of International Studies at the Palgrave Macmillan, for her constructive guidance and support.

Appreciative

of all the dedicated reviewers and meticulous editors at Palgrave, whose critical eyes and thoughtful suggestions contributed to further polishing this work.

Pleased

by the warm assistance and unwavering support I received from the staff at Tribhuvan University Library in Kathmandu, National Archives of India in Janpath, Delhi and Prime Ministers Museum and Library and its Manuscript Section at Teen Murti, Delhi.

Obliged

to Indreni Eco Farm, where I spent tranquil weeks immersed in reading, revising, and rewriting the draft.

Thrilled

by the insightful and inspirational remarks that I received from experts, scholars, colleagues, and my university students.

CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS

- 1757:** Armies of East India Company led by Robert Clive defeated the forces of the Nawab of Bengal at the Battle of Plassey.
- 1763:** Mir Qasim, who was made the Nawab of Bengal by the British East India Company replacing Mir Jafar, offered assistance to King Jaya Prakash Malla of Kathmandu against Prithvi Narayan Shah.
- 1767:** English Captain George Kinloch led a military expedition to Nepal after the besieged king of Kathmandu Jayaprakash Malla appealed to the British East India Company for help.
- 1769:** *Jaisi Kotha* or astrologers' chambers was established as the first foreign policy institution of Nepal. Bhanu Jaisi—one of the aides to Prithvi Narayan Shah—was given the responsibility of *Jaisi Kotha* to look after Nepal's relations with Tibet and China.
- 1788–1789:** First Nepal–Tibet War after the Gorkhali forces attacked Tibet.
- 1791–1792:** Second Nepal–Tibet War erupted after Tibet refused to pay tributes to Nepal.
- 1792:** Chinese army reached Lhasa to assist Tibet against Nepal in the Second Nepal–Tibet War.
- 1793:** Colonel Kirkpatrick's mission to Nepal, intending to find out the real causes of the war between China and Nepal.
- 1801:** Nepal and British India agreed to appoint the first British representative in Kathmandu as a resident.
- 1814–1816:** The Anglo-Nepal War took place and Nepal's defeat lost large areas of its land to British India.
- 1815:** The first batch of Gurkha soldiers was raised by the British East India Company.

- 1816:** The Sugauli Treaty was signed between Nepal and the East India Company, demarcating Nepal's borders with British India.
- 1833:** Brian Houghton Hodgson was appointed as the British Resident, who is known not only for his *realpolitik* during the pre-Rana Rana period but also for his scholastic contribution to the Himalayan studies.
- 1846:** *Kot Parva* (or *Kot Massacre*) brought Jung Bahadur to power and commenced the 104-year-old Rana family rule in the history of Nepali statecraft.
- 1850:** Jung Bahadur visited Europe and was stunned by the architectural, socio-cultural, and political landscapes in Europe.
- 1854:** Reminiscing the impression of the rule of law in European societies, Jung Bahadur managed to introduce the legal code *Muluki Ain* in Nepal.
- 1856:** Nepal defeated Tibetans leading to the signing of the Thapathali Treaty authorizing Nepal to send a high-ranking official, *Vakil*, to Lhasa to regularize the relations between Tibet and Nepal and to regulate the trading activities of the Newari merchants in Tibet.
- 1857:** British colonizers accepted Jung Bahadur's offer of the assistance of the Gorkha troops in suppressing the Sepoy Mutiny and reinstating order in the Oudh.
- 1858:** Jung Bahadur was conferred the Knight Grand Cross of the Order of the Bath, an honorary member of the military Division of the First Class.
- 1890:** The Boxer Rebellion in China convoluted Nepal–China relations after British India decided to dispatch Gurkha Rifles to China.
- 1901:** British Viceroy Lord Curzon visited Nepal's Terai for an animal hunt, which in turn made Chandra Shumsher see in the Viceroy's visit, a chance to seize the power.
- 1903:** Captain Younghusband led a British military mission to Tibet and was accompanied by the Gurkha soldiers.
- 1905:** Chandra Shumsher was honored with the Commander of the Order of the Star of India (GCSI) by British India.
- 1912:** Chandra Shumsher terminated the relationship with the Manchu court in 1912. However, Nepal's diplomatic communication with the Nationalist Government in China had not ceased.
- 1914:** The Simla Convention convened the delegates of Britain, China, and Tibet to discuss the boundaries of Tibet.

- 1914–1918:** During World War I, Nepal sent 10 battalions of army to British India and also encouraged Gurkha recruitment in the British Indian army.
- 1923:** The treaty of friendship between Britain and Nepal was signed by the Rana Prime Minister Chandra Shumsher and the British Envoy William F.T. O’ Connor.
- 1934:** The British government agreed to establish a Nepali legation in London. The same year, *Munshi Khana* was upgraded to the Foreign Department, along with a director-general to head it.
- 1939–1945:** During World War II, Nepal contributed its battalions to the Allied forces, and were recruited in Burma rifles, Assam rifles, and Kashmir infantry.
- 1942:** Two paper mills were established in Nepal under a joint partnership between the Ranas and Marwaris.
- 1946:** Establishment of All-India Nepali National Congress in Varanasi by those individuals engaged in anti-Rana activities and had solidarity with the Indian independence movement.
- 1947:** The Nepali National Congress was formally established under the presidency of imprisoned Tanka Prasad Acharya and acting- president Bisheshwar Prashad Koirala.
- 1947:** A tripartite agreement was signed between Nepalis, Indians, and the British that divided the existing Gurkha regiments, allocating four to the British and six to the Indians.
- 1948:** Padma Shumsher promulgated a constitution by including the recommendations offered by constitutional experts from India.
- 1948:** The Nepali Democratic Congress was established in Calcutta in 1948 by the progressive Rana family members, including Subarna Shumsher.
- 1948:** Nepal’s ambassador to Britain, General Kaiser Shumsher Jung Bahadur Rana, following the decision of the Department of State, presented his credentials in Washington.
- 1949:** Nepal applied for admission to the United Nations but Russia questioned “Nepal’s sovereign status.”
- 1949:** The establishment of the People’s Republic of China (PRC) severed Ranas’ diplomatic ties with Peking.
- 1949:** The Communist Party of Nepal was established by Pushpa Lal Shrestha in Calcutta.

- 1950:** Nepal and independent India signed the Treaty of Peace and Friendship. It was signed by the Indian ambassador to Nepal Chandreshwar Prasad Narain Singh and Rana prime minister Mohan Shumsher Jung Bahadur Rana.
- 1950:** The Nepali Congress was established following the merger of the Nepali National Congress and the Nepali Democratic Congress.
- 1950:** King Tribhuvan and the royal family, including queens, princes, and princesses, got asylum inside the Indian Embassy in Kathmandu.
- 1951:** King Tribhuvan returned to Nepal after staying about three months in Hyderabad House in Delhi.
- 1951:** Nepal received its first foreign aid from the US under the Point Four Program.
- 1952:** K.I. Singh marched to Tibet with his followers dreaming of meeting Chairman Mao—a dream that, in the end, would remain unfulfilled.
- 1952:** Chester Bowles was the first US ambassador to visit Nepal; he arrived not by car or plane but by horse.
- 1954:** India and China formulated the Five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence, popularly known as *Panchsheel* through their Agreement on Trade and Intercourse between the Tibet region.
- 1955:** Nepal achieved membership of the United Nations; the same year, Nepal established its diplomatic relations with Communist China.
- 1956:** Tanka Prasad Acharya visited China as the prime minister of Nepal.
- 1957:** Chinese premier Zhou En-Lai visited Nepal and proposed to construct a road linking Tibet and Kathmandu.
- 1959:** The American Embassy was opened in Kathmandu with Henry E. Stebbins as the first resident ambassador.
- 1961:** King Mahendra introduced the party-less *Panchayat* system.
- 1962:** India and China fought a war against each other.
- 1965:** Nepal and India negotiated a defense agreement, details of which were kept secret, and under which Nepal agreed to purchase all its military equipment from India.
- 1966:** The construction of the Kathmandu–Kodari route was completed.
- 1969:** The Indian military mission withdrew from Nepal but continued their military base at the Kalapani–Lipulekh areas.
- 1969–70:** Nepal was elected as a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council.
- 1973:** King Birendra proposed that Nepal be declared as a “Zone of Peace.”

- 1990:** The popular movement branded as *Jan Andolan* that led to the dissolution of the *Panchayat* system paved the way for a return to multiparty democracy, culminating in the adoption of a new constitution.
- 1996:** The Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) started an armed insurgency.
- 2003:** The United States designated the CPN-Maoist as a terrorist organization.
- 2004:** Nepal became a member of the World Trade Organization (WTO).
- 2005:** A 12-point agreement was signed by the Seven Party Alliance (SPA) and the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist).
- 2006:** The Comprehensive Peace Accord (CPA) was signed by the Seven Party Alliance (SPA) and the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist).
- 2008:** The newly elected Constituent Assembly declared Nepal a Federal Democratic Republic and abolished the 240-year-old monarchy.
- 2013:** China announced One Belt One Road (OBOR), later popularised as Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).
- 2015:** India imposed an unofficial economic blockade on Nepal—at a time when the landlocked country was grappling with the aftermath of a devastating earthquake.
- 2016:** The Transit and Transport Agreement was signed between Nepal and China, enabling Nepal to access Chinese sea and land ports for its trade thereby reducing the country’s reliance on Indian ports.
- 2017:** Nepal joined BRI; the same year, there was a military standoff between the Indian military and the People’s Liberation Army of China over the construction of a road in the Doklam area, a disputed trijunction between China, India, and Bhutan.
- 2019:** President Xi Jinping of China paid an official visit to Nepal. It was a visit of a Chinese president to Nepal after a gap of 23 years.
- 2020:** Nepal–India border problems resurfaced in Lipulekh following India’s inauguration of a new road, “Mansarovar Yatra,” *via* the disputed territory.
- 2020:** Nepal’s parliament unanimously endorsed the new map including the disputed territories with India.
- 2022:** Nepal signed the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC); the same year, Nepal rejected the State Partnership Program (SPP).
- 2023:** United Nations general secretary Antonio Guterres visited Nepal.
- 2024:** Indian prime minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the statue of the Hindu God Ram in Ayodhya.

ABOUT THE BOOK

To the ambitious Shah Rajah like Prithvi Narayan, foreign was *Muglan*—the abode of non-believers. Foreign was *Bhot*—the Nepali term for Tibet. Foreign was *Firangi*—the British colonizers. To the Rana ruler like Jung Bahadur, foreign was a little broader: crossing the sea, reaching Europe, meeting Queen Victoria, consuming foods prohibited by the then Nepali state, stucco palaces, English language, ballroom, and many more. Even those Shah Rajahs, susceptible to the prowess of both—the regent queens and Rana rulers—were thrilled by the domain of foreign, either by seeing the British Residents in Durbar, or by gazing at the menus of the European departmental stores. Following Indian independence, however, King Tribhuvan had the pleasure and privilege of swotting up more about the realm of foreign, be it during the ball dance with Erica or in Boris’s Club 300, or during his stay in Hyderabad House. His son, Mahendra, dared and darted Nepal’s foreign across the post-war international system through his visits and interlocutors. At the height of the Cold War, to Eton-educated Birendra, the sphere of “foreign” had to be dealt with the know-how of negotiation and conciliation. As the experiences, exposure, and escapade of ruling groups—be they *panches* or parties—steadily descended and spread to the larger public domain through arts, literature, media, and networks, the leaders and ministers from the political parties brazenly branded elites’ ploys, in dealing with the external world, as foreign policy, and the elites’ interests as the national interests.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AD	Anno Domini
ADB	Asian Development Bank
APF	Armed Police Force
AI	Artificial Intelligence
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
BIMSTEC	Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation
BJP	Bharatiya Janata Party
BP	Bishweshwar Prasad
BRI	Belt and Road Initiative
CESIF	Centre for Social Inclusion and Federalism/Centre for Social Innovation and Foreign Policy
CFPA	China Foundation for Poverty Alleviation
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CIAA	Commission for Investigation of Abuse of Authority
CIDCA	China International Development Cooperation Agency
CA	Constituent Assembly
CPC	Communist Party of China
CPN (UML)	Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist–Leninist)
CSA	Civil Service Act
CSA	Cooperative Services Agreement
DCM	Deputy Chief of Mission
DIRD	Department of International Relations and Diplomacy
DoI	Department of Immigration
EPG	Eminent Persons' Group
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization

FDI	Foreign Direct Investment
FNCCI	Federation of Nepalese Chamber of Commerce and Industries
FP	Foreign Policy
GATC	General Agreement for Technical Cooperation
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
GCI	Global Civilization Initiatives
GDI	Global Development Initiatives
GSI	Global Security Initiatives
IFA	Institute of Foreign Affairs
IMETP	International Military Education and Training Programme
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organization
IPS	Indo-Pacific Strategy
IR	International Relations
ISAS	Institute of South Asian Studies
JNU	Jawaharlal Nehru University
MCC	Millennium Challenge Corporation
MEA	Ministry of External Affairs
MNC	Multinational Companies
MOFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NAM	Non-Aligned Movement
NC	Nepali Congress
NCP	Nepal Communist Party
NDC	Nepali Democratic Congress
NCCCI	Nepal China Chamber of Commerce and Industry
NFASR	Nepal Foreign Affairs Service Regulation
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NNC	Nepali National Congress
NPC	National Planning Commission
NR	Nepalese Rupees
NSC	Nepal Study Centre
OBOR	One Belt One Road
PCVs	Peace Corps Volunteers
PDP	<i>Panchayat</i> Development Project
PhD	Doctor of Philosophy
PL	Public Law
PLA	People's Liberation Army
PM	Prime Minister
PMO	Prime Minister's Office
PRC	People's Republic of China
PRI	Policy Research Institute
PSC	Public Service Commission

PSHC	Parliamentary Special Hearing Committee
PTI	<i>Panchayat</i> Training Institute
RMB	Ren Min Bi
RNA	Royal Nepal Army
RNAC	Royal Nepal Airlines Corporation
RPP	Rastriya Prajatantra Party
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
SPP	State Partnership Program
SUSI	Study of United States Institutes
TU	Tribhuvan University
UN	United Nations
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
US	United States
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USOM	United States Operation Mission
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
USTCM	United States Technical Cooperation Mission
VC	Vice Chancellor
VDP	Village Development Program
VPA	Village <i>Panchayat</i> Act
VPN	Virtual Private Network
WB	World Bank
WHO	World Health Organization
ZOP	Zone of Peace

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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Prologue to the Tales

“SALAM,¹ SAAB”

It was a crisp morning. The thudding sounds of mud-stained sturdy boots resonated in a synchronized rhythm inside a dimly lit corridor of Kharipati Military Academy. I had no military background. Graciously, I was invited to teach Strategic Studies to the cadet officers in the academy. So, I wasn't a *Saab*—the shortened form of *Sahab*.² But I was mistaken. Everyone was *Saab* there. Not only the senior military officers. The university dean was Dean *Saab*. The university vice-chancellor was VC *Saab*. And I was Professor *Saab*. More than a gesture of respect, it was a cue of ritual: a deep-seated tradition transcending mere respect. In the university, where I teach, I am a Sir. Thus, *Saab* appeared outlandish to me. Not that I hadn't heard the loanword before. The preference for *Saab* over Sir made me reflect, though I understand that the latter title continues to echo the remnants of coloniality.

As in different societies across South Asia, the term *Saab* has considerable resonance in Nepali society. Despite Nepal's deification of its non-colonial history, Nepali society is wrought not only by the lingering practices associated with *Sahab/Saab* but also by the enduring use of the title *Jyu*.³ The linguistic fusion of both terms, resulting in a hybrid *Sahabjyu*,⁴ serves a dual purpose. On the one hand, *Sahabjyu* represents the fusion of available honorifics to embellish the elite lexicon. On the other

hand, the term signals the unfading appeal and influence of the term *Sahab/Saab*. For instance, the usage of titles such as *Jaar Saab* for major generals may appear conventional in the hierarchical structure of the army and align with the expected respect afforded to high-ranking military officials. However, the extension of similar honorifics beyond the high-ranking officers illustrates how the term is pervasive, encompassing a wide range of professional and societal roles.

By extending the title *Saab* to individuals outside traditional positions of authority—such as referring to university professors as *Professor Saabs* or to sons-in-law within the family as *Jwai Saab*—this practice implies the perpetuation of social stratification through titles and honorifics across various domains. Along with the medical doctors, PhD graduates in the social sciences are also beguiled by the compound expression of *Dr. Saab*, which signifies both honorific status and scholarly achievements. Yet the tradition of addressing coach and car drivers as a *Driver Saab* may not imply the same level of professional prestige as it does in the case of a doctor, although it may hint at an effort to hoist the social status of service roles through the use of honorifics.

The title *Saab* serves less as a mark of respect and more as an inheritance of deep-seated social hierarchies. The continuing tradition of addressing the male descendants of the medieval kings in the far-western region of Nepal as *Babu Saabs*⁵ inherits the socio-cultural practices tied to chiefdoms and feudalism that once prevailed in the Indo-Gangetic plains and the Himalayas. While both sons and sons-in-law are reverentially called *Saab*, the daughters and daughters-in-law are similarly bestowed with corresponding honorifics. Among the Thakuris of Nepal, there is a tradition of addressing the female members as *Muiya-Sahab* or *Mui-Sahab*. Both terms are the diluted version of the loanword *Memsaab*,⁶ which gained popularity in the Indian subcontinent during the period of British colonialism.

In the shadow of British colonial rule in India, the loanword *Sahab/Saab* was adopted and popularized by the acquiescent Indians to address white colonial officers, a word infused with both reverence and submission. Already, this cultural practice of using *Sahab* as a mark of high rank and authority had transcended borders, weaving its way into the princely states and chiefdoms of Nepal, wafting through the air of Mughal splendor that once swept across North India. While the attendants, aides, and nobles who served in the courts of Nepali *Rajahs* were quick to adopt such stratified practices, emulating the deference shown to foreign powers, the Rana rulers in the nineteenth century were equally swift to follow

suit. They, too, embraced the custom, addressing the British resident officers posted in Kathmandu as *Sahibs*, a gesture that reflected not only their acquiescence to colonial influence but also their desire to align themselves with the perceived power and prestige of the British Empire. This practice, therefore, became another emblem of the growing connections between Nepal's ruling elites and the colonial power, solidifying a hierarchical structure that surpassed both local and foreign boundaries.

In the twentieth century, despite their fervent and often-vocal opposition to the privileges and pleasures of the *Rajahs* and Ranas, the Nepali communists and democrats found themselves, perhaps paradoxically, unable to fully escape the pervasive shadow cast by these loanwords. These words, steeped in the socio-cultural legacies of a bygone era, had woven themselves so deeply into the fabric of Nepali society that, even in the face of ideological resistance, they continued to carry with them the cultural baggage of the regimes they resist. This persistence reveals a deeper truth: political ideologies may shift rapidly, but language, as a vessel of power, prestige, and social conditioning, is far more resistant to rupture. .

Despite their keen pursuit of progressive ideals, these leaders found themselves helpless to fully untangle the intricate web woven over centuries—a web where elite lexicons, traditional sources of power, and stratified hierarchies are bound together in an unbreakable embrace. These connections, forged in the cauldron of feudal dominance and colonial linkages, became so deeply embedded in the very soul of Nepal's society that even the so-called revolutionary reforms could not dislodge them completely. The lingering influence of these historical forces remains a constant source of critique for today's Republic, for the shadows of old hierarchies continue to loom large, subtly shaping its political discourse and social fabric. In the echoes of the past, the Nepali Republic often finds itself at odds with the very ideals of equality and justice it seeks to uphold.

While not everyone addressed as *Sahib/Saab* is necessarily a member of the elite group, the widespread diffusion and use of this term illustrates how the elite lexicon—imbued with the values and privileges of a select group of influential and powerful individuals—was gradually woven into the fabric of the public domain. This transmission elucidates how language, often a tool of power, serves to normalize and reinforce social hierarchies, inexorably nurturing the values and ideals of the privileged class into the collective consciousness of society.

As the American anthropologist Franz Boas (1938) observed, different societies can independently develop similar cultural traits at the same time, especially when individuals are free to create their own distinctive linguistic and cultural markers. Still, there may be underlying connections, which

should be explored as part of a specific historical process of diffusion (the spread of certain cultural traits) and modification (how cultural traits change in new contexts) through the currents of trade, the whispers of communication, and the tides of migration. In this dynamic process, the preferences, tastes, and structures of the elite intricately weave their influence across generations, leaving an indelible mark on diverse cultures through language, education, media, and social networks. What they left behind, shaped by power and privilege, remains rooted in the very fabric of society, subtly guiding norms and values for years to come.

The annals of Nepali statecraft are rich with episodes that vividly illustrate these intricate political and cultural transmissions, be it in the age of the expansion of empires or during the period of state formation. Despite Nepal's assertion of a non-colonial identity, the term's widespread usage elucidates how colonial and elite lexicons have permeated the local social structures of even those societies that were not directly colonized. The term *Sahab/Saab* was already in use in pre-colonial South Asia, particularly within the Persianized cultures, including Mughal India, where Persian was the language of administration, culture, and elite communication. It meant "lord," "master" or "owner." In pre-colonial South Asian societies, it meant landowner, nobleman, or powerful officer. During the period of colonialism, the colonial officers, particularly in the environment of official and bureaucratic communication, were addressed as *Sahab*. In pre-colonial times, the term implied not only respect and authority but power asymmetry across social divisions. However, in the colonial era, the term was popularized as a way of both accepting and asserting colonial authority over the colonized population, thereby further entrenching the term within the local lexicon as a linguistic marker of colonial hierarchy.

Sahabs, being well-versed in law, administration, politics, and education, played a pivotal role in enabling the Nepali ruling elites to align themselves with the British colonial system. These areas of expertise catalysed the Rana elites to navigate and integrate into the structures of colonial governance, affirming their roles within the colonial framework. The cultural tastes of the *Sahabs*—encompassing architecture, fashion, literature, music, hunting, and leisure activities—became powerful symbols for the Nepali elite. These practices, regarded as refined and sophisticated, captivated the ruling class, drawing them toward the cultural norms of the colonial officers. In embracing these British customs, the Nepali ruling elites not only signaled their affiliation with the colonizers but also solidified their own privileged status within the colonial hierarchy.

Alongside the persistence of colonial and hierarchical values, which continue to be expressed through language and cultural practices, the material and sensory dimensions of elite identity reveal a more tangible assertion of power. This is largely secured through the consumption of luxury goods and the cultivation of a carefully curated appearance, both of which serve as markers of cultural capital. In this context, the consumption patterns and outward displays of wealth and status offer a tangible expression of contemporary elite identity. These material symbols of power and prestige stand in contrast to the more abstract, discursive and historically ingrained forms of symbolism—such as the term *Sahab*—which were once used to signal authority and social hierarchy.

Therefore, it becomes increasingly meaningful to explore modern manifestations of elite power by focusing on these concrete markers of identity, as they provide a clearer window into how the elites assert their influence in today's world. Through these markers, we glimpse how both the weight of history and the allure of present-day consumption intertwine to shape the social and cultural landscapes where power is silently, yet profoundly, asserted. Now, let me delve into another case. In this case, we examine the life of a contemporary Nepali elite figure, whose strength and influence are shaped by modern symbols of wealth, status, and exclusivity. This case contrasts with traditional elite symbols and reveals variations in the evolution of power structures in contemporary Nepal.

He stepped out of his sleek Hummer, dressed in a finely tailored suit. He took out his shades and waved his right hand toward the men standing to greet him. The fragrance coming from his body spread into the open air, causing an olfactory effect that both appealed to and overpowered the senses of his staff present in the lobby of the Kantipur publication, with the smells of fine wood and exotic flowers. When he offered his hand for me to shake, as he did with others, I could feel his skin's texture and color. I also saw the elegance conveyed by polished shoes and impeccable grooming. He had aesthetically pleasing teeth, suggestive of high-quality dental care. This was the first time I had met Kailash Sirohiya. Like many others, I was one of his staff, a person whose name he hardly knew. This was back in 2010, when I was working with *The Kathmandu Post*. Not only was his opulent Hummer often mentioned in the talks and conversations in the canteen of the Kantipur Publications, but so also were the delays in paying the journalists working for him. In those days, the office of Kantipur Publications was located in Tinkune. As I left the job after only a few months, opting for a career in academia rather than journalism, I never