

INDIA AND BHUTAN

Kapileshwar Labh



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PREFACE

The present work is the first comprehensive study of Indo-Bhutanese relations in modern times. This is a revised and enlarged version of my thesis, "India and Bhutan : 1858-1910", approved for the Ph. D. degree of the Indian School of International Studies (now part of Jawaharlal Nehru University). In order to put Indo-Bhutanese relations in a correct perspective, I have included in the book an introductory chapter which deals briefly with the land, people, history and administrative structure of Bhutan.

The book seeks to identify the various factors which conditioned India's relations with Bhutan. In the initial phase, the commercial interest of the East India Company and the issue of Bhutanese incursions into the Indian territories dominated the thinking of the authorities in India, in subsequent period it was the Chinese policy towards Tibet and India which influenced their policy.

This book also makes a study of the international status of Bhutan in comparison with Nepal, Sikkim and the native states of India during the British rule and also subsequent to the British withdrawal from India.

The study of British India's relations with Bhutan is based almost solely on unpublished records available in the National Archives of India, New Delhi. Although the records pertaining to Bhutan are open to researchers only up to the year 1913, I was granted special permission to consult the records up to the year 1940. Private papers (microfilm copies) of Sir John Lawrence, Lord Dufferin, Lord Lansdowne, Lord Curzon and Lord Minto, preserved in the National Archives, have also been consulted. Unfortunately no Bhutanese records are available for consultation. Nevertheless, an effort has been made to achieve the maximum possible objectivity. The study of Independent India's relations with Bhutan is based on the parliamentary debates, White Papers, Reports of the Ministry of External Affairs, U.N. official documents and newspapers.

This work has been rendered possible mainly because of the kind interest of Professor Bimal Prasad, Professor of South Asian Studies, and Chairman, Centre of South, Southeast and Central Asian Studies, School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University. I record my deep sense of gratitude to him for his encouragement, guidance and supervision.

I must also thank Professor M.S. Rajan, then Director, Indian School of International Studies, for securing a Bihar Government scholarship for me and for providing all possible help in undertaking this work. I am also thankful to Shri Ram Rahul, Associate Professor of Central Asian Studies, Dr. (Mrs) Urmila Phadnis, Associate Professor of South Asian Studies and Dr. Satish Kumar, Associate Professor of Diplomatic Studies, at the School, for their valuable suggestions. Finally my thanks are also due to the authorities of the National Archives of India and the staff of the joint library of the School of International Studies and the Indian Council of World Affairs for their co-operation.

A grant from the Indian Council of Social Sciences Research has facilitated the publication of this Ph.D. dissertation.

I alone am responsible for the views expressed in this book.

New Delhi

Kapileshwar Labh

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Introduction

BHUTAN is bounded on the north by Tibet, on the west by Sikkim and by the Chumbi Valley of Tibet, and on the east and south by the Indian states of Arunachal Pradesh (NEFA) and West Bengal. It is roughly rectangular in shape, measuring about two hundred miles from east to west and about a hundred miles from north to south. Like many countries it has witnessed expansion and contraction of its territorial limits. In the first half of the eighteenth century, the southern border of the country touched the duars in the foothills on the Bengal and Assam borders. However, in the war of 1864-65, the British in India annexed these duars. Now the area of Bhutan is 18,000 square miles.

The country is entirely mountainous and comprises the catchment area of about seven rivers, some of which unite and flow into the Brahmaputra. The Bhutanese terrain may be divided roughly into three zones: first, the northern highlands, extending up to the watershed of the Himalayas; second, a central belt between the highlands and the foothills; third, the foothills which join the plains of the Brahmaputra basin. The northern part of Bhutan includes the snow-capped mountain ranges which rise to a height of about 24,000 feet. This zone forms a part of the Himalayan range, and the main peaks are Chomolhari (23,930 feet) in the west and Kulu Kangri (24,740 feet) in the north. These peaks are covered with snow throughout the year. The slopes of the mountains are covered with birch, magnolia and rhododendron. This zone

is almost useless except for grazing, and the population is sparse in this part of Bhutan. The central zone consists of several valleys, the altitudes varying from 3,000 feet to 10,000 feet above sea level. These valleys are relatively wide and flat, receive a moderate rainfall, and are fairly well populated and cultivable. Among them the valleys of Ha, Paro, Punakha, Thimphu and Bumthang are more fertile. This zone is nurtured by the waters of four rivers, namely the Amo-chu¹, the Wang-chu, the Mo-chu, and the Manas. The southern zone of Bhutan comprises low foothills criss-crossed by rivers and streams. This part of Bhutan is a 30-mile wide belt running from east to west. The hills, which are covered with a thick growth of tropical jungle, rise abruptly and are cut into deep valleys and gorges by rivers which are prone to sudden floods. The altitudes here vary from 3,000 to 8,000 feet above sea level. The annual rainfall is heavy, and can be as much as 200 inches. The climate is hot and humid and is considered unhealthy during the rainy season.

In Bhutan there are many ranges of the Himalayas which generally run from north to south. Mention may be made of the Masong-chung dong, separating the rivers Amo-chu and the Wang-chu; and the Dokyong-la, dividing the Wang-chu and the Mo-chu. The Black Mountain range which also follows a north-south direction, forms the watershed between the Mo-chu and Manas rivers. It divides Bhutan into two parts ethnologically and linguistically. The people living east of the range are more akin to those of the Assam hills whereas the people living west of the range possess unmistakable Tibeto-Mangoloid features. As the Black Mountain range divides eastern from western Bhutan, the Donkyla La range separates Bhutan from Sikkim, and the Tawang range separates Bhutan from Arunachal Pradesh.

The main rivers of Bhutan are, from west to east, Amo-chu or Torsa, Raidak or Wang-chu, Sankosh or Mo-chu, and Manas. The Torsa, the Raidak, and the Sankosh are known in their upper courses as the Amo-chu, the Wang-chu, and the Mo-chu, respectively. The Torsa, the Raidak, and the Sankosh

1. *Chu* means a river; and *La*, a mountain pass.

drain western Bhutan, and the Manas and its tributaries drain the eastern part of the country. The Torsa or the Amo-chu is one of the main rivers in western Bhutan. It rises in Tibet where it drains the Chumbi Valley. The natural route from India to Tibet follows the Amo-chu. The Wang-chu rises in the Great Himalayan region and flows for nearly 230 miles in Bhutan. It flows past Thimphu, the capital of Bhutan, and runs southward under the name of Raidak. The Mo-chu or Sankosh rises from the snow-capped peak of the mountain past Gasa dzong. It flows in a south-easterly direction, but, on reaching Punakha, where it is joined by Pho-chu, it turns south. The Manas or Dangme-chu, which drains eastern Bhutan, rises beyond the Himalayan range in Tibet. It enters Bhutan from the Kamang division of Arunachal Pradesh of India and runs south-west, unlike most of the Bhutanese rivers which generally run from north-west to south-east. The Lhobrak or Khru-chu is the main tributary of the Manas.

The rivers of Bhutan are, strictly, mountain streams. They flow through high rocky terrain. They are not navigable. Their current is very fierce. All rivers except the Manas and the Lhobrak flow from north to south. The trade routes between India and Tibet via Bhutan generally follow the valleys of the main Bhutanese rivers.²

The country as a whole is sparsely populated, having a density of 47 persons to a square mile with the exception of the southern region bordering India. The people of Bhutan comprise different "cultural groups", such as the people of Tibetan origin, the people of Indian origin and Nepalese settlers. The people of western Bhutan have close affinity with the people of the Chumbi valley of Tibet (bordering Sikkim), while the people of north-eastern Bhutan are akin to those of the state of Arunachal Pradesh (NEFA) in India. The people of Indian origin who settled on the southern foothills of Bhutan, came from the Assam-Bengal plains. Numerically, they form a

2. For a detailed account of Bhutan's physical features, see Pradyumna P. Karan, *Bhutan: A Physical and Cultural Geography* (Legington, Ky, 1967).

small minority. The Nepalese settlers are found in great numbers in south-western Bhutan. Of all the cultural groups, the people of Tibetan origin are predominant. The people of different regions speak different dialects. The language spoken by the western Bhutanese, called Dzongkha, is currently the official language of Bhutan.

In ancient times Bhutan lay under the sway of the kingdom of Kamarupa.³ In the political instability and turmoil that followed the death of its king Bhaskaravarman, about 650 A.D., Bhutan rid itself of Kamarupa's control, but only to be exposed to Tibetan invasion. According to the records of the British in India, Tibetan soldiers invaded Bhutan about the middle of the seventeenth century, and in the fight that ensued between Tibetans and the Bhutanese gave way and retreated to the plains. Tibetan soldiers settled in the country and formed a colony without any organization or Government.⁴

The Tibetan invasion of Bhutan took place not in the seventeenth century but as early as the eighth century when Tibet was at the height of its military power and followed an expansionist policy⁵. The Tibetan invaders encountered little resistance in Bhutan. While some local inhabitants yielded to the invaders and agreed to live under the overlordship of the Tibetans, many fled to the plains of Assam. The Tibetan invaders were followed by groups of Tibetan priests, farmers, and herdsmen who married the local people and converted them to Lamaistic Buddhism. It may also be noted in this context that it was about this time that Padmasambhava, a teacher at the Nalanda University, went to Bhutan from Tibet and propagated Buddhism there. The direct political domination of Tibet over Bhutan was short lived and ended with the decline of Tibetan power towards the ninth century. The main reason for the collapse of direct Tibetan sway in Bhutan was that the Tibetan invaders failed to organise the administration

3. Government of India, Ministry of External Affairs, *Notes, Memoranda and Letters Exchanged between the Governments of India and China*, White Paper No. 11 (New Delhi, 1959), p. 118. See also Ram Rahul, *Modern Bhutan* (Delhi, 1971), p. 18,
4. Foreign Department, Deposit-Internal. Feb. 1912, No. 5.
5. Karan, n. 2, p. 7.

of the country on a regular and systematic basis. Soon after the withdrawal of Tibetan arms, the central authority in Bhutan collapsed, and the country, by and large, became divided and fragmented, administratively and linguistically. The cultural ascendancy of Tibet over Bhutan, however, continued since the bulk of the Tibetan immigrants stayed on in Bhutan. Moreover, Tibetan lamas used to visit Bhutan for the propagation of Buddhism. In the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries a few lamas who came to Bhutan for missionary work exercised some measure of temporal control in western Bhutan.

It was not until the beginning of the seventeenth century that central authority was established in Bhutan. About 1616, Lama Ngawang Namgyal, an influential Tibetan lama came to Bhutan. He made himself the supreme religious and political head of Bhutan with the title of Shabdung, commonly known as the Dharma Raja. He founded a regular system of administration in the country and put it on a permanent basis by dividing the country into administrative units and creating a hierarchy of offices. It was during his reign that Bhutan emerged not only as a distinct political entity but also as a Power to be reckoned with by its neighbours. Tibetan troops invaded Bhutan in 1639 and again in 1647 but were repulsed with losses. Lama Ngawang Namgyal died in 1651.⁶ Although his successors were not as illustrious as he was, they consolidated the administrative set-up he had bequeathed to them. Bhutan was divided into three main administrative regions—Eastern, Central and Western Bhutan—each under a Governor called Ponlop. Each region included one or more dzongs (districts) within its jurisdiction, each under an administrator called dzongpon (district officer). Each district had its headquarters in a strongly built fort, also known as a dzong. The Ponlops headed large dzongs such as Tonga Dzong in Eastern Bhutan and Paro Dzong in Western Bhutan. They were almost supreme in their affairs. They maintained their own militia and reinforced central authority in the times of emergency. They supervised the work of the dzongpons working under them. The dzongpons maintained law and order in the areas

6. Rahul, n. 3, pp. 25-26.

under their respective jurisdictions, collected land revenue and administered justice. They were usually subject to the administrative control of the Ponlops, but those in charge of large dzongs such as those of Punakha, Thimphu, and Wangdi Phodang, exercised considerable independence and were almost equal to the Ponlops in their rank and status. The early Dharma Rajas exercised both temporal and spiritual authority. The later Dharma Rajas confined themselves to the exercise of religious power and appointed ministers to exercise authority over secular affairs. The ministers so appointed became by degrees the actual rulers with the title of the Deb Raja. In administering the country, the Dharma Raja and the Deb Raja were assisted by a State Council consisting of six important officials of the state. They were as follows : Shung Kalon (Chief Minister), Shung Donyer (Chief Secretary), Deb Zimpon (Chief of the Deb Raja's household), the Punakha Dzungpon, the Thimphu Dzungpon, and the Wangdi Phodang Dzungpon. The Paro Ponlop and the Tongsa Ponlops also attended the meetings of the Council if they happened to be present in the Bhutanese capital or when they were especially invited to attend the Council in times of emergency.

The Government of Bhutan under the early Dharma Rajas and Deb Rajas was strictly theocratic. The lamas were first in rank and first in power. The Deb Raja, himself a lama, was bound to consult priests and lamas on issues of peace and war and usually took no measure of consequence without their approval. The country enjoyed peace and political stability. Whereas the Dharma Raja succeeded himself by re-incarnation, the Deb Raja was elected by a council of lamas. Although the Deb Raja was liable to be deposed by the lamas, there was hardly any instance of such a deposition. No young and inexperienced person was raised to this office. The Deb Raja, together with other high officials, was, in the manner of Aristotle's philosopher king, celibate, mature, and mellowed. The Bhutanese rulers were acquainted not only with the affairs of State but also with every walk of life.⁷

7. Clement R. Markham. ed., *Narrative of the Mission of George Bogle to Tibet and of the Journey of Thomas Manning to Lhasa* (New Delhi, 1971), pp. 35-36.

With the passage of time, the Government of Bhutan became more feudalistic than theocratic. In the second half of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the Bhutanese chiefs, by and large, asserted themselves against the country's time-honoured usages and conventions and took over from the lamas most of the political functions as well. In the beginning, for instance, the Deb Raja used to be elected by the State Council. In later years he became merely a nominee of the most powerful of Ponlops, usually either the Paro Ponlop or the Tongsa Ponlop. Similarly, in the beginning the Deb Raja used to appoint both the Ponlops and dzongpons. The later Ponlops owed their positions to their own power, and they appointed the dzongpons from among their own followers. The country became affected with political instability. There were a number of civil wars during this period, as the various Ponlops vied with each other for office and power. The Tongsa Ponlop and the Paro Ponlop were the main contestants in the strife. The last and decisive civil war took place in 1884, when Ugyan Wangchuk, then the Tongsa Ponlop, emerged victorious and became the *de facto* ruler of Bhutan. Ugyan Wangchuk restored political stability and, in 1907, made himself the first Maharaja of Bhutan by gradually increasing his power and influence. After the establishment of the hereditary monarchy the State Council, which was an advisory body to help the Deb Raja in the administration of the country, virtually fell into disuse. The Bhutanese Agent in British India became a powerful official in Bhutan and acted as Prime Minister of the country. Like the Ranas of Nepal, Dorjis of Bhutan made this office hereditary, but the latter did not overshadow the Maharajas of Bhutan and assumed no absolute power in administering the country. Unlike the Ranas, their role remained largely that of advisors. In 1964, Lhendup Dorji's attempt at assuming the effective power of a Prime Minister ended the hereditary nature of the office.

Although Bhutan had been united under one government since the seventeenth century, it was not under an absolutely centralised administration that could extend its authority over all parts of the country. The country was virtually parcelled out among a number of semi-independent chiefs. The Ponlops

were independent in their affairs. During the nineteenth century, they even defied occasionally the authority of the Central Government.

One important reason for the absence of a strong and centralized administration in Bhutan was the lack of adequate communication between different administrative centres. Each valley remained separated from the neighbouring valleys. Moreover, the scantiness of the resources of the Central Government and want of a standing national army gave the subordinate chiefs a large measure of authority. The establishment of monarchy in 1907 marked an important step in the direction of centralization. The Maharaja became not only a ceremonial head of the state but also the head of the administration of the country. The power of appointment to different administrative offices vested in the Maharaja gave him immense power over his subordinate chiefs. With the passage of time the Maharaja began to use his discretion in filling up offices or keeping them vacant.

The foundation of the hereditary monarchy in 1907, however, did not mean the establishment of a completely centralized administration. In principle, the Government of Bhutan was vested solely in the Maharaja. In actual practice, the Maharaja was little more than an overlord of the province of Tongsa which covered roughly the eastern half of the country. The western province and some districts of Bhutan remained, more or less, beyond his control. The Maharaja was far from being in complete control over the resources of the country. The Paro Ponlop and a few local chiefs who owed allegiance to him retained the power of collection and management of revenue and contributed little to the revenue of the Central Government of Bhutan. The Maharaja, on the other hand, distributed a large portion of the subsidy that came from the British among his subordinate chiefs like the Paro Ponlop and the dzongpons of Thimphu, Punakha, and Wangdu Phodang and even among some lesser dzongpons; for this, to some extent, ensured their loyalty to him. The monasteries were practically independent of the Maharaja's control. They received not only a considerable portion of the State revenue but also a share in the British subsidy for their maintenance.

The lamas constituted a privileged class and commanded much respect from the people. The Je Khempo, the head of the monastic order, was highly revered and was almost equal to the Maharaja in status.

Throughout their history the Bhutanese people lived more or less in a state of idyllic simplicity. The various occupations to which we are accustomed today were little known in the country. Every family was generally economically self-supporting, and every man was usually familiar with such economic activities as provided him with the necessities of life. There was hardly any specialization in economic life and organization. The same men who ploughed the field were called upon to fight enemies in the event of war. Their common weapons were bows and swords. The institution of caste, which different occupations gave rise to in India, did not exist in Bhutan.

The Bhutanese society had been divided into two main classes since the time of the early Dharma Rajas. While priests and Government officials belonged to the higher class, land-holders and farmers constituted the lower class. There was no hereditary priestly class, for priests were chosen generally from among the common people. They were initiated into the priestly order at an early age. When admitted into the sacred profession, they were instructed in religious rites, and were made to take a vow to remain celibate and to kill no living creature. Government officials included the members of the State Council, Governors of states, and the principal district officers. During the time of the early Dharma Rajas, Government officials, like priests, usually remained celibate. Most of them belonged to common families and were brought up in the houses, and under the patronage of high Government officials. Initially they joined the lower posts of the administrative hierarchy, and they rose to posts of trust and responsibility only when they became sufficiently mature and experienced after holding different positions in life. Thus priests and Government officials enjoyed a high social status only by virtue of their superior knowledge and intellectual culture. They acquired no individual property and lived either on the State revenue or on the contributions made by

the people.

Landholders and farmers constituted a large class and were excluded from any share in the administration of the country. They lived at home, cultivated their lands, paid taxes, and enlisted in the militia in times of war. During the time of the early Dharma Rajas, the condition of the peasantry was fairly good. Landholders were not usually persecuted by Government officials. The taxes, moderate by any standard, were rendered still less oppressive by the simple manner of collecting them. Every family, according to the size and yield of its lands, was rated at a particular sum, which was paid in kind. Justice was usually administered in accordance with time-honoured customs and usages which bore the imprint of lamaistic influence. Criminal offences were little known among the Bhutanese people. Their simple living and their strong sense of religion preserved them from many vices to which more urbanized peoples are prone. They were almost strangers to falsehood and ingratitude. Theft and other offences seldom occurred. Murder was uncommon.⁸

With the emergence of hereditary feudal chiefs, however, the conditions of the peasantry became miserable. The feudal chiefs encroached upon the rights of the peasants and reduced the common people almost to the status of serfs. A great deal of taxation consisted of personal services by the people to their chiefs. The people of the ruling class became, by and large, dishonest, rapacious, and cared more for offices and power than for the welfare of the people. The incidence of crime tended to increase during this period. Murder was no more uncommon. Severe punishments came to be prescribed for heinous crimes. Those found guilty of murder had their limbs mutilated. Rebels and conspirators were confined in the dungeons of the dzong (fort).

The status of women was not equal to that of men. A woman could manage most affairs in a household, but she was not allowed to hold any political or administrative post. She was not allowed to live in dzongs and monasteries. During the time of the early Dharma Rajas, the priests

8. Markham, n. 7, p. 37.

and almost all officials of the Government led a life of celibacy; a woman could therefore marry only a landholder or a farmer. She worked in the field or wove clothes for members of the family and for the market. The death of the husband did not present as dismal a prospect for her as for her counterpart in India, since she was allowed to enter into a second marriage after her husband's death. The subsequent period witnessed no marked change in the status of the Bhutanese woman. Those who married Ponlops and Dzungpons lived a more comfortable life. They could go on pilgrimage together with their husbands and relatives. Their activities, nevertheless, remained confined to those of the household. Even in the modern period no woman participates in the public life of the country.

Little is known of the size of the Bhutanese population during the early period of the century. In 1912, the population of Bhutan was estimated at 3,00,000. A few foreign visitors who were able to enter Bhutan in the thirties of the present century saw numerous deserted villages and felt that Bhutan formerly must have been much more populous and prosperous. They were strengthened in their feeling by the folklore of the country. Although almost every country before the advent of modern science and medicine had to suffer the ravages of epidemics, Bhutan seems to have suffered most from such diseases as malaria, cholera, and smallpox, which took a heavy toll of its inhabitants. Moreover, a large number of the Bhutanese people were found to be victims of venereal diseases. The incidence of these diseases might have been one of the factors responsible for the low birth rate in the country. Among other factors which contributed to the dwindling of the Bhutanese population, mention may be made of the system of taxation. Taxes were assessed on each family and not on individuals. The consequence was that when a young man married, he, his wife and subsequently his children, all stayed in his father's family. The family discouraged the setting up of a separate household by any of the members, not only because it entailed fresh taxes for the new establishment but also because the parent establishment had to continue to pay tax at the same old assessment without being able to share the burden with the young members who separated. As a result,

no new houses were built, and the Bhutanese lived under most congested and insanitary conditions. Naturally their health suffered, and the birth-rate fell. Secondly, after the first occupation of the country, there was no immigration into Bhutan from its neighbouring countries for centuries.⁹ Consequently, the Bhutanese race became inbred, and this inbreeding led to degeneration among the Bhutanese people. The majority of the people were of poor physique. Towards the second decade of the present century, the Bhutanese stood in marked contrast with the Gurkhas of Nepal in respect of their martial prowess and physical fitness for enlisting in the armed forces. Under the influence of lamaistic Buddhism, the Bhutanese people engaged themselves more and more in religious dances and festivities, instead of interesting themselves in hunting, riding, and other manly sports.

The economy of the Bhutanese was based mainly on agriculture and animal husbandry. The people also eked out a living by weaving. By the twentieth century the preparation of lac and rubber became the main industries of the country. Diverse climatic conditions allowed cultivation of almost all kinds of corn. Owing to the ruggedness of the terrain, however, farming, on a large scale, was not possible. Apart from some fertile valleys in western and central Bhutan there was not much arable land. Although pastoral activities were common almost all over the country they were practised especially in northern Bhutan because of the availability of good pastures there. The Bhutanese especially reared yaks which not only provided them cheese and meat but also served as an important means of transport.

The economy of Bhutan also depended to some extent on its trade and commerce. The inhabitants of Ha and Paro in western Bhutan traded with the Tibetan inhabitants of the Chumbi Valley and Phari. There was also the trade between Assam and Tibet which passed through Bhutan during the winter months. This trade passed from Darranga *via* Tashigang in Bhutan to Tawang in Tibet, thence to Tsetang on the

9. The people of Nepal who settled in Bhutan in the nineteenth century remained confined mainly to south-western Bhutan.

Tsangpo River, and finally to Lhasa. The Bhutanese collected dyes, silk, cotton cloth, nuts, and tobacco and exchanged them for wool, tea, salt and musk from Tibet. The trade was much hampered by Bhutan's difficult terrain, dense forests, and lack of communications. The trade with Tibet has also fluctuated with the political vicissitudes of Tibet. It was usually suspended whenever China established its effective control in Tibet. Bhutan's trade was also hamstrung for want of a currency of its own. The Bhutanese economy was largely based on the barter system. In the second decade of the nineteenth century, however, the Government of Bhutan struck a crude silver coin called 'Deba'. The circulation even of this was, more or less, confined to western Bhutan. In southern Bhutan, it was the Narainee rupee, a currency of Cooch Behar, that circulated. After the establishment of the monarchy in 1907 the Government of Bhutan started getting its coins minted at the Government of India mint at Calcutta.

The social, administrative and economic conditions of Bhutan remained unchanged till the fifties of the present century. But under the able and dynamic leadership of Jigme Dorji Wangchuk, the late Druk Gyalpo,¹⁰ who succeeded his father, Jigme Wangchuk, as Maharaja of Bhutan in 1952, Bhutan forged ahead. Not only did the Bhutanese ruler endeavour to change the economic system of his country from a barter to a money economy by setting up mints and banks but he took steps to streamline the administrative structure of Bhutan in order to bring about changes in the political, social and economic life of the country. The main feature of the new administrative system is the gradual extension of the central authority to the remotest part of the country and the elimination of the old and feudal structure that stood between the common people and the central Government. Now the country is divided into about fifteen districts and the district officers are directly responsible to the Government of Bhutan. A

10. Since 1963 the ruler of Bhutan changed his title from His Highness the Maharaja to His Majesty the Druk Gyalpo. Jigme Dorji Wangchuk died in July 1972 and was succeeded by his son, Jigme Singye Wangchuk.

pyramidal structure of administration has come into being which is headed by the King of Bhutan himself. Ministers who head different administrative departments in the country since May 1968 are responsible to him. The village headman (Gapp or Mandal) holds the lowest rank in the administrative hierarchy of the country. It, nevertheless, does not mean the concentration of power at the apex. The late Druk Gyalpo introduced many features of modern representative government and attempted to institutionalise democratic processes at grass-roots. In 1953, he established the national assembly (Tsongdu) of 130 persons. Now its membership has increased to 150. While the Bhutanese King nominates about 25 per cent of the members of the assembly, the remainder of the members are elected indirectly every five years from among the village headmen. A group of villages constitute a constituency of the assembly and a representative is elected by the village headmen of each constituency. Each village headman is elected for a term of three years on the basis of "one family, one vote." The district officials and the key officials of the country are ex-officio members of the assembly. The monasteries which have independent representation in the assembly, send about ten representatives. In principle, women have as much a right to be the members of the assembly as men but no woman has been elected or nominated to the assembly so far.

The Assembly meets in the spring and autumn of every year for one or two weeks. An emergency session of the assembly, however, can be summoned any time. Its session is presided over by a speaker who is elected from among its members. In the beginning, the Chief Secretary to the Government of Bhutan used to be the speaker of the assembly. In 1966, the assembly elected a monk as its speaker for a three-year term. The Assembly can raise and discuss any internal or external issue. Although no political party exists in the country, the members of the Assembly are free to criticise the Government. Till 1968 the late Druk Gyalpo had the final veto power. He could veto any bill passed by the Assembly. Since 1968 the Assembly has been made a sovereign and supreme body. Now if the King has any objection to a bill

passed by the Assembly, he can refer it back to the Assembly with his objections. However, if the bill is again passed by the Assembly, it will automatically become an Act. Besides, if the Assembly passes a vote of no confidence in the King by a two-third majority, the king must abdicate. In 1965, the late Druk Gyalpo established an Advisory Council of nine members. Of the nine members, four represented the people, two the monasteries and three the Government. It has developed as a "Council of Elders" and advises the King of Bhutan on important internal and external affairs. By means of the Assembly and the Advisory Council, the Bhutanese King feels the pulse of his people and, by and large, respects their enlightened opinion. Thus, he enjoys the confidence and respect of his people.

CHAPTER I

Bhutan and the East India Company

FIRST CONTACTS : 1772 TO 1792

THE East India Company started taking interest in trans-Himalayan trade soon after it established control over the affairs of Bengal. The Gurkha conquest of Nepal in 1769 had resulted in the closure of the old trade route between India and Tibet by way of that country, and the deteriorating financial condition of the Company had made it imperative for it to open up a new channel of commerce.¹ The Company, therefore, turned to Bhutan, which by its proximity to Bengal, its location in the eastern corner of the Himalayas, and its closeness to the Chumbi Valley suggested itself as the obvious alternative to Nepal as a half-way home to Tibet. It thought that if it could gain access to the Chumbi Valley through Bhutan, the losses it had sustained in the closure of other routes could be made good.² The Court of Directors, in its letters dated 10 April and 3 May, 1771, instructed the Governor of Bengal to explore the interior parts of Bhutan and adjacent countries with a view to extending the trade of Bengal.³ Luckily for the Company, in 1772-73 a conflict

1. Schuyler Cammann, *Trade Through the Himalayas : The Early British Attempts to open Tibet* (Princeton, N.J., 1951), p. 108. See also Alastair Lamb, *Britain and Chinese Central Asia; The Road to Lhasa 1767 to 1905* (London, 1960), pp. 8 and 319.
2. D.R. Regmi, *Modern Nepal: Rise and Growth in the Eighteenth Century* (Calcutta, 1961), pp. 128-9.
3. Home Department, Public Consultation, 9 December 1771, No. I.

arose between the two claimants to the throne of Cooch Behar. One of the claimants sought the aid of the Bhutanese Government, while another appealed to Warren Hastings, then Governor of Bengal. This internal feud of Cooch Behar gave the Company an opportunity not only to gain possession of that State but also for establishing direct relations with Bhutan and Tibet. Hastings, who wanted to take possession of Cooch Behar, agreed to help the Raja of Cooch Behar out of "a love of justice and desire of assisting the distressed", but stipulated that in return the Raja should agree to place Cooch Behar under the control of the Company.⁴ In the ensuing war between Bhutan and the Company, the British force under Captain Jones not only drove the Bhutanese out of Cooch Behar but also captured the forts of Daling, Chichacotta, and Buxa.⁵ Peace was concluded through the intercession of the Panchen Lama⁶ and the efforts of Prithvi Narayan Shah, King of Nepal.⁷ In order to conciliate the Panchen Lama and the Deb Raja, the temporal head of Bhutan, and to secure, through their goodwill, the facilities needed by the Company for trans-Himalayan trade, Hastings decided to treat the Bhutanese "with much leniency and forbearance".⁸ The treaty that followed begins with the statement: "That the Honourable Company, wholly from the consideration for the distress to which the Bhootanis represented themselves to be reduced, and from the desire of living in peace with their neighbours, will relinquish all the lands which belonged to the Deb Rajah before the commencement of the war with the Rajah of Cooch Behar." Bhutanese merchants were allowed

4. Cammann, n. 1, pp. 155-6.

5. J.C. White, *Sikkim and Bhutan* (London, 1909), p. 264.

6. Hastings, Bogle, Turner, and other Western writers of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries generally used the term "Teshu" or "Teshoo" Lama. Later writers have used "Tashi". The correct title is "Panchen". See Cammann, n. 1, p. 27 (n. 2).

7. Prithvi Narayan Shah did not want to see the growth of British power in the Himalayas and called the attention of the Panchen Lama to the plight of Bhutan. *Ibid.*, p. 27.

8. Clements R. Markham, ed., *Narratives of the Mission of George Bogle to Tibet and of the Journey of Thomas Manning to Lhasa* (London, 1879), edn, 2, p. lxviii. See also Lamb, n. 1, p. 9.

to trade duty-free as before and their caravans were allowed to go to Rungpur annually.⁹

BOGLE'S MISSION

Having thus made a gesture of goodwill towards the Panchen Lama and the Deb Raja of Bhutan, Warren Hastings attempted to establish regular communication with the Panchen Lama through Bhutan. He decided to send one George Bogle, who had entered the East India Company's service in 1769 and had proved his abilities and trustworthiness, as ambassador to Bhutan as well as to the Lama. Alexander Hamilton, assistant surgeon to the Company, was appointed to accompany Bogle. Bogle was given a great variety of articles, chiefly of British manufacture, as specimens of the goods to be sold to them. The purpose of his mission was to open a mutual and equal trade communication "between the inhabitants of Bhutan¹⁰ and Bengal". He was instructed to examine the goods to be obtained in Tibet, and to report about the condition of the roads between the borders of Bengal and Tibet and between Lhasa and the neighbouring countries, and about the government, revenue, and manners of those countries.¹¹ He left for Bhutan with Hamilton in May, 1774. They carried presents for the Deb Raja of Bhutan and stayed at Tassisudon, the winter capital of Bhutan, as the Deb Raja's guests.¹² Bogle noticed that the Bhutanese authorities were suspicious of the motives of the Company. In his letter from Tassisudon, dated 20 August, 1774, to Warren Hastings, Bogle wrote that his servants were not allowed to buy even the small articles except through the Bhutanese officials, and that the Deb Raja seemed to be extremely anxious that he should leave Bhutan as soon as possible.¹³ Undeterred by such reports, Hastings, in his

9. Cammann, n. 1, p. 160.

10. Hastings spoke of Tibet as "Bhutan" because Bhot was the Hindu name for Tibet. See Markham, n. 8, p. 6 (n. 1).

11. Markham, n. 8, pp. 6-7.

12. White, n. 5, p. 238.

13. Markham, n. 3, p. 47.

letter dated 9 May, 1775, to Bogle, wrote that the object of his mission was to open a trade communication with Tassisudon, and through that place with Lhasa and with distant parts of Tibet. He hoped that the great advantages accruing to Bhutan by being the centre of such an extensive and lucrative commerce as the British sought to establish would induce the Bhutanese authorities to agree to Bogle's plan. He asked Bogle to impress on the Deb Raja that the Company had no other aim in Bhutan than that of making it a channel for commerce.¹⁴ Bogle, however, could not prevail on the Deb Raja to allow Englishmen to travel into Bhutan. He found that his first impression of the Deb Raja being "jealous" of the British was "well founded".¹⁵ The Bhutanese were apprehensive of the policy of the Company, and aware of the axiom that the flag follows trade. The growth of the East India Company from a small trading institution into a great repository of political power, its aggressive designs and manoeuvres in India, and the ill-advised expedition under Captain Kinloch to Nepal in 1767 confirmed the Bhutanese apprehensions about the Company. The Bhutanese regarded the Company's intrusion into their land as an instance of their habit of interfering in the affairs of other states.

Nevertheless, Bogle's mission achieved some success. He was able to extend the Company's trade to Bhutan through non-European agents. By an agreement with the Government of Bhutan, he secured the passage of British merchandise through Bhutan.¹⁶ Besides, he furnished to the Company much important information and made valuable suggestions which largely influenced the Company's policy towards Bhutan for a long time. Bogle considered it impracticable to gain possession of any part of Bhutan or to form a settlement there without the consent of the Bhutanese, and the Bhutanese, he felt, would never agree to British rule. He pointed out that there would be immense difficulties in taking possession of Bhutan by force because of its difficult terrain. He conceded

14. *Ibid.*, p. 187.

15. *Ibid.*, p. 188.

16. *Ibid.*, pp. 184-5.

that two battalions could conquer Bhutan, but felt that even two brigades could not keep the communications open. If the communications broke down, the conquest would be of no use. However, although he warned against an expedition against Bhutan, he made some observations which in his view would be of use in any possible military action in that country. He suggested the adoption of offensive instead of defensive strategy, because he felt that mere defensive action would be more expensive and vexatious. He held that the military operations should be commenced in the cold season and completed before the rains set in.¹⁷

OTHER MISSIONS TO BHUTAN DURING THE ADMINISTRATION OF WARREN HASTINGS

Bogle returned to Calcutta in June, 1775. But this was not the end of Warren Hastings' interest in Bhutan. On the other hand, he resolved to cultivate further the contacts which had been opened. In November, 1775, Hamilton, who had accompanied Bogle, was sent on a mission to Bhutan. Hamilton reached Punakha on 6 April, 1776 and was at Tassisudon in May, 1776. The main object of Hamilton's mission was to examine the claims of the Deb Raja to the districts of Ambari Falakata and Julpesh. Hamilton gave his decision in favour the Deb Raja. He reported that if the restitution of the districts were made, the Deb Raja could be induced to fulfil the agreement he had made with the Company and levy moderate transit duties on merchandise.¹⁸ In July, 1777 Hamilton was again sent to Bhutan to congratulate the new Deb Raja on his accession. Thus Warren Hastings sedulously kept up regular intercourse with the Bhutanese authorities.

In 1779 it was arranged, on the invitation of the Panchen Lama, that Bogle should meet him at Peking. But both Bogle and the Lama died before this idea could materialise. The death of Bogle, who possessed much experience and abundant tact, and of the Panchen Lama, who was friendly and well disposed towards the Company in its effort to open up Tibet

17. *Ibid.*, pp. 55-58.

18. White, n. 5, pp. 249-50.

for trade, was a great setback to Hastings's plan to extend the trade of the Company with the Himalayan states.¹⁹ However, Warren Hastings, undaunted, resolved to send yet another mission to Bhutan and Tibet under the pretext of congratulating the Regent on the reincarnation of the Panchen Lama.²⁰ The mission was headed by Captain Samuel Turner. Turner was authorized by the Company to cede the districts of Ambari Falakata and Julpesh which had been held by the Baikantpur Zemindar.²¹ This was in consonance with the policy of conciliation pursued towards Bhutan by Warren Hastings. Turner met the Deb Raja early in June, 1783. The Deb Raja acknowledged the validity of the treaty entered into by Bogle in 1775, and Turner did not consider it necessary to enter into another one until trade was established on a large scale.²² Turner's mission further strengthened Indo-Bhutanese relations.

Thus the policy of Warren Hastings towards the Himalayan countries was consistent and at the same time cautious and conciliatory. He was successful to some extent in initiating trade with Tibet through Bhutan. With the departure of Hastings there came a downward trend in the Anglo-Bhutanese relations. Bhutan, however, was not unfriendly to the Company, and it put no impediment in the way of British trade through the country. The Sino-Nepalese War, which broke out in 1792, had a most unfortunate effect on the Company's relations with Tibet. The Chinese and the Tibetans suspected the British of secretly assisting the Gorkhas. Consequently the Tibetan passes were closed to British merchandise.²³ The gains made by the missions to Tibet and Bhutan were undone, and there was considerable damage to the Company's friendly relations with Bhutan. A number of disputes also emerged.

FROM ACCORD TO DISCORD : 1793-1814

The differences between Bhutan and the Company related

19. Cammann, n. 1, p. 82.

20. Ibid., p. 83.

21. Markham, n, 8, p. lxxii. See also White, n. 5. 266.

22. Cammann, n. 1, pp. 95-96. See also White, n. 5, p. 252.

23. White, n. 5, p. 267.

to the extradition of offenders as well as to some territorial claims. The question of extradition was the most important among the factors responsible for the worsening of the relations. Article VI of the Treaty of 1774 had laid down that if any inhabitant of the Company's territories sought refuge in Bhutan, the Government of Bhutan should surrender him to the British authorities in India upon request. Under Article VII of the same treaty, Bhutanese authorities were forbidden to prosecute any inhabitants of the Company's territories without prior approval of the local Indian authorities. The Government of Bhutan, however, refused to deliver its subjects accused of crimes in India and insisted on its own judgement of them. In 1800 one Jadunath Ishwar of Bhutan together with a number of accomplices committed a dacoity in the house of Baikunth Narain of Cooch Behar. The Company's authorities apprehended a dacoit named Pullanu and sentenced him to death, but he escaped from the prison into Bhutan. The application made by the British for his extradition was turned down by the Government of Bhutan.²⁴

This was not an isolated case. The Company's several applications for the surrender of criminals were turned down by the Bhutanese authorities. The Government of India in a letter dated 26 July, 1810, wrote to the Deb Raja that the peace and tranquillity of the northern frontier of the district of Rungpur had been disturbed by the frequent robberies committed by the inhabitants of Bhutan. It pointed out that the asylum which the offenders found in Bhutan enabled them to perpetrate crimes with impunity. It stated that a daring and notorious dacoit named Mohunt Ram had sought refuge in Bhutan after escaping from India and Nepal and that the Magistrate of Rungpur had repeatedly requested Bhutanese officers to apprehend and surrender that man for trial in India, but in vain.²⁵ Its request to the Deb Raja to extradite Mohunt Ram was also rejected.²⁶

24. Foreign Department, Political Consultation, 25 March 1802, No. 25. See also Foreign Department, Political Consultation, 22 July 1802, Nos. 29 and 33.

25. Foreign Department, Political Consultation, 6 August 1810, No. 118.

26. Surendra Nath Sen, ed., *Prochin Bangla Patra Sankalan: English Synopses* (Calcutta, 1942), pp. 47-48.

Besides, there were certain territorial claims. In 1808, a dispute arose between Bhutan and Cooch Behar on the frontier of Maraghat, which was at a distance of about twenty-five miles from Julpaiguri, and which belonged to the Government of Bhutan under the Treaty of 1774. The Raja of Cooch Behar claimed twelve villages and three Hats under the name of Gird Maraghat, bounded by the river Jaldhaka on the west, the river Dudhua on the east, and an ancient road called Bhangamali on the north. The Government of India, at the instance of the Raja of Cooch Behar, instructed Morgan, Commissioner of Cooch Behar, to make an inquiry into the claim of the Raja.²⁷ The inquiry was completed by Digby, Acting Commissioner of Cooch Behar. Digby reported to the Government of India, in a letter dated 20 September, 1809, that according to the evidence given by the people living on and around the disputed land, the ancestors of the Raja of Cooch Behar had built a temple, roads and tanks on the disputed land. He decided that the land in question was the "lawful" property of the Raja of Cooch Behar.²⁸ The result of the inquiry was Communicated to the Deb Raja, who was requested to instruct his officers to withdraw from the land. The Bhutanese authorities, however, continued to retain possession of the disputed land. The Commissioner of Cooch Behar reported the matter to the Government of India and the latter, in a letter dated 12 February 1810, warned the Deb Raja that it was incumbent on it (the Government of India) to protect the territory of the Raja of Cooch Behar and that it would employ every means to enforce his right over the land.²⁹ The Raja of Cooch Behar took possession of the land in 1811-12.³⁰

BHUTAN AND THE INDO-NEPALESE WAR : 1814-16 APPREHENSIONS OF BHUTANESE HOSTILITIES

The Government of India declared war on Nepal on

27. *Cooch Behar Select Records* (Cooch Behar, 1882), vol. 2, pp. 19-20,
28. Foreign Department, Political Consultation, 24 October 1809, No. 57.
29. Foreign Department, Political Consultation, 13 February 1810, No. 67.
30. *Cooch Behar Select Records* (Cooch Behar, 1882), vol. 2, p. 20.

2 November, 1814, and Lord Hastings himself took charge of the operations. The British employed a big force of more than 30,000 men. The Government of Nepal could not muster more than 12,000 ill-equipped troops. Concentrated attacks were made from four directions to cripple the military power of Nepal. But the results of the initial campaigns were most unexpected. The troops employed by the British suffered a series of reverses. The discomfiture of British generals at the hands of the Nepalese produced consternation in a few Indian States.³¹ The Indian authorities apprehended that the Government of Bhutan might join the Gorkhas of Nepal and try to take advantage of the defeat of the British forces in the war. MacLeod, Commissioner of Cooch Behar, in a letter dated 8 November, 1814, informed the Government of India that the Bhutanese authorities were making hostile preparations. He apprehended that the Government of Nepal had sent its agent to Bhutan to instigate the Bhutanese authorities against the Company. It appeared to him that the Nepalese Government was endeavouring to induce the Bhutanese authorities to attack the Company's territories in order to divert the British troops. He advised the Government of India to keep adequate arms and ammunitions in Cooch Behar to deter any attack from Bhutan.³² The Government of India wrote to the Commissioner of Cooch Behar on 29 November, 1814, that it was unlikely that the Bhutanese authorities, without provocation on the part of the Company and merely for the sake of aiding Nepal, would hazard an armed confrontation with the British power. It ascribed the military preparations of the Bhutanese authorities to the fear or suspicion produced in their minds by the movement of the British troops in the vicinity of the Bhutanese frontier. It held that the military preparations made by the Bhutanese authorities were purely defensive in character. However, it agreed to the suggestion of MacLeod to keep an adequate force in Cooch Behar to ward off any possible attack by the Bhutanese forces. Moreover, Lord Hastings

31. Ramakant, *Indo-Nepalese Relations 1816 to 1877* (Delhi, (1968), p. 28.

32. Foreign Department, Secret Consultation, 29 November, 1814, Nos. 34-36.

addressed a letter on 29 November, 1814, to the Deb Raja in order to assure him that there was no need to fear any attack on Bhutan. He made it explicit in his letter that the sole object of the movement of the Indian troops was to chastise the Nepalese authorities and that it had no connection with Bhutan. Besides, Lord Hastings requested the Deb Raja to refuse a passage through his country to the Nepalese and to employ every means of his power to oppose them.³³

Soon after the commencement of the war, the Government of India decided to instruct David Scott, Magistrate of Rungpur, to establish contacts with the authorities of Tibet, Sikkim, and Bhutan in order to explain the causes of war and to clarify to them that the British did not aim at aggrandizement in that quarter.³⁴ With the progress of the war the Government of India became extremely concerned about the Bhutanese attitude. In a letter dated 28 February, 1815, it directed MacLeod to adopt every practicable measure for the purpose of procuring intelligence in regard to the proceeding of the Deb Raja and to give David Scott every aid which he might require in that respect.³⁵ Although by May, 1815, the British defeated the Gurkhas of Nepal, the latter were not prepared to agree to the terms of the treaty proposed by the British. Hence the British concern over the Tibetan and the Bhutanese attitude towards them. Besides, they feared that the Bhutanese might help the Raja of Cooch Behar to rise against them. MacLeod, Commissioner of Cooch Behar, wrote to the Government of India on 26 April, 1815, that the Raja of Cooch Behar was in secret communication with the Bhutanese seeking their aid to shake off his dependence upon the British. He said that the Raja had sought "aid of large military force" by offering the Bhutanese the land of Maraghat.³⁶

Thus it became necessary for the Government of India

33. *Ibid.*

34. Banarsi Prasad Saksena, ed., *Historical Papers Relating to Kumaun 1809-1842; State Records Series, Selections No. 3* (Allahabad, 1966), pp. 25-26.

35. Foreign Department, Secret Consultation, 28 February 1815, No. 65.

36. Foreign Department, Secret Consultation, 16 May 1815, No. 153.

to ascertain the nature of Bhutanese activities. In the summer of 1815, David Scott sent Kishen Kant Bose to Bhutan to find out what was happening. A person named Ram Mohan Rai³⁷ accompanied him. Bose, whose journey was considerably delayed because of his illness on the eve of his departure, reached the Bhutanese capital on 2 September, 1815. He met the Deb Raja and other Bhutanese authorities and explained to them how by their aggression the Gurkhas of Nepal had compelled the British to wage war. He wrote to David Scott that although there was not much friendship between the Gurkhas of Nepal and the Bhutanese authorities, the latter were more friendly to the Gurkhas than they were to the Company. He said that he had reason to believe that the Deb Raja was in correspondence with the Nepalese Government in regard to the Company's war with Nepal. He reported that the Bhutanese authorities had endeavoured on every occasion to impress upon him that the continuance of their friendship with the Company depended on the surrender of the land of Maraghat. He disclosed that the Deb Raja and his counsellors strongly suspected that the Raja of Cooch Behar had taken possession of the land of Maraghat with the connivance of the Company. He added that he had tried to convince the Bhutanese authorities that the Indian Government had no intention to encroach on Bhutanese territory, but that the Bhutanese authorities were not fully convinced. He held the transfer of the Maraghat land to the Bhutanese authorities was essential in order to allay their suspicion. Bose, however, failed to obtain any information relating to the disposition of the Tibetan Government towards the British.³⁸

Prior to the commencement of the Indo-Nepalese War,

37. The record does not make it clear whether Ram Mohan Rai was the great Ram Mohan Roy who had founded the Brahma Samaj in 1828. It is likely that the latter went to Bhutan with Bose. He had travelled to Tibet in his younger days after his estrangement with his father and worked at Rungpur as sheristadar, i.e., assistant to Collector of Revenue from 1809 to 1815. See Amal Home, ed., *Rammohun Roy: The Man and his Work* (Calcutta, 1933), pp. 10-11.
38. Foreign Department, Secret Consultation, 25 November 1815, Nos. 23-25. See also Foreign Department, Political Consultation, 30 November 1816, No. 40.

the Indian authorities were not prepared to discuss the Maraghat dispute. MacLeod, Commissioner of Cooch Behar, had received a letter from the Deb Raja on 3 October, 1814 claiming the land of Maraghat for himself and requesting MacLeod to investigate the dispute. To this MacLeod had replied that the issue had been inquired into by Digby in 1809 and that the result of inquiry had established the claim of the Raja of Cooch Behar to the disputed land. He had added that the Deb Raja should not pursue the subject any further.³⁹ But in response to Bose's report, the Government of India in a letter dated 27 February, 1816, instructed MacLeod to investigate the boundary dispute between Bhutan and Cooch Behar. The inquiry was made by David Scott, who succeeded MacLeod as Commissioner of Cooch Behar in 1816. Scott accepted the Deb Raja's claim on the basis of the Treaty of 1774, which had given Maraghat to Bhutan, and in consideration of the fact that till 1809, the tract in question had been in the undisturbed possession of Bhutan for a considerable period.⁴⁰ The Government of India in a letter to Scott dated 24 June, 1817 endorsed the latter's decision on the Maraghat dispute.⁴¹

The cession of Maraghat by the Company to Bhutan may have been made as a recompense for the neutrality the Bhutanese maintained during the Indo-Nepalese War, as their hostilities at the time would have been extremely embarrassing to the Company. The Deb Raja wrote a letter to David Scott, Magistrate of Rungpur, on 11 November 1815, requesting British support for his claims to the territories in dispute with the Raja of Cooch Behar. He had learnt from Bose that the violence and aggression of the Gurkhas led to the Indo-Nepalese war, and assured Scott that if the Gurkhas approached him for help in connexion with the war, he would turn down their request.⁴²

39. Foreign Department, Secret Consultation, 29 November 1814, Nos. 34-36.

40. Foreign Department, Political Consultation, 14 June 1817. No. 30.

41. *Ibid.*, No. 31.

42. Foreign Department, Secret Consultation, 25 November 1815, Nos. 23-25.

THE ASSAM DOOARS AND INDO-BHUTANESE FRICTIONS

Subsequent to the Indo-Nepalese War the Company became preoccupied with the Maratha War, the Pindari War, and the problems relating to the consolidation of acquired territories. It did not pay attention to the Bhutanese frontier till 1826.

The first Burmese War of 1825-26 is an important landmark in the history of Indo-Bhutanese relations. The annexation of Assam by the Company resulted in the extension of the Indo-Bhutanese frontier. Disputes arose frequently on the issue of the tribute due from the Bhutanese in return for their possession of Dooars in Assam, as well as on the question of their depredations into Indian territories.

As Indo-Bhutanese relations from 1826 onwards were connected with what are called Dooars, it will not be out of place to give a brief description of the tract known as the Bhutanese Dooars. At the base of the lower ranges of the Bhutanese hills there is a narrow strip of land, from ten to twelve miles in width, and extending from the Dhansiri river in Assam on the east to the river Tista, or the frontier of the Darjeeling District, on the west. This tract is known as the Bhutanese Dooars. They are eighteen in number. They take their name from the different passes in the hills which lead to Bhutan. Eleven of these are situated on the frontier of the district of Rungpur and the State of Cooch Behar, between the Tista and the Manas, and are called the Bengal Dooars. The remaining seven are on the frontier of the districts of Durrung and Kamrup, between the Manas and the Dhansiri, and are called Assam Dooars.⁴³

The eleven Bengal Dooars are :

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| 1. Dalimkote | 4. Luckee |
| 2. Zumerkote | 5. Buxa |
| 3. Chamurchi | 6. Bhulka |

43. *Political Missions to Bhutan ; The Report of Ashley Eden* (Calcutta, 1865) pp. 7-8.

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|-----------|--------------|
| 7. Bara | 10. Cherrung |
| 8. Goomar | 11. Bagh |
| 9. Keepo | |

The seven Assam Dooars are :

- | | |
|-----------------|------------------|
| 1. Booree-Gomah | 5. Chappagoorie |
| 2. Kalling | 6. Chappa Khamar |
| 3. Ghurkolla | 7. Bijni |
| 4. Banska | |

At the time of the annexation of Assam Company, Bhutan had sovereign dominion over the Bengal Dooars, but had not secured complete control over the Assam Dooars. It had entered into agreements with the Assamese ruler, and had taken possession of some Dooars by undertaking to pay in return an annual tribute consisting of yak-tails, ponies, musk, gold-dust, blankets and knives of an estimated value of Narainee Rs 4,785 and 4 annas.⁴⁴ In all the disputes between the Bhutanese and the Assamese authorities, the Bhutanese had all along been able to dictate their own decisions. The annexation of Assam by the Company changed all that. Although the Company confirmed the agreements between Bhutan and Assam, it did not allow the Bhutanese to evade the payment of any part of the tribute due to it, especially yak-tails and ponies. Consequently the disputes between the Bhutanese and the Company became more frequent.⁴⁵

Moreover, these agreements were of a complicated nature and contained in themselves the germs of constant dispute. First, though the five Kamrup Dooars—namely Ghurkolla, Banska, Chappagoorie, Chappa Khamar, and Bijni—were held exclusively by the Bhutanese, and were subject to no interference in their management by the Company, the two Durrung Dooars—namely Booree-Goomah and Kalling—were held under a joint tenure: the British occupied them from July to November

44. Ibid., p. 8.

45. Alexander Mackenzie, *History of the Relations of the Government with the Hill Tribes of the North-East Frontier of Bengal* (Calcutta, 1884), p. 10.

each year, and the Bhutanese held them for the remainder of the year. Secondly, the annual payment was made not in cash but in kind, and consequently disputes arose over the value of the articles. While, for instance, the Bhutanese contended that the Sezawals appointed to receive on the frontier the payment of the tribute frequently changed the articles originally sent and substituted others of inferior value, the Company felt that the articles sent were not of the value agreed upon. Besides, these articles, on being sold by auction, seldom realized the value at which they were estimated by the Bhutanese, and as each year's payment in consequence fell short of the fixed amount, the Company insisted on the payment of the arrears of the tribute.⁴⁶

BHUTANESE DEPREDATIONS INTO INDIAN TERRITORIES

Besides the dispute about the arrears of the tribute, the incursions by the Bhutanese into the Company's territories led to clashes between the Bhutanese and the Company. Between 1828 and 1836 the Bhutanese committed four serious depredations. The first raid was made in Chatgaree in the district of Durrung in October 1828 by the Doompa Raja of Booree Goomah Dooar. The Doompa Raja carried off some Bhutanese refugees together with an Indian subject. While the matter was under investigation by the local Indian authorities, the Doompa Raja attacked an Indian frontier outpost, killed some Indian sepoy, and carried off some men and women. David Scott, Agent to the Governor-General on the north-east frontier, wrote to the Government of Bhutan demanding the release of the captives and the surrender of the Doompa Raja but in vain. The release of captives was effected by Indian troops, and the Dooar of Booree Goomah was attached by the Company.⁴⁷ In July 1834, when the Government of Bhutan informed the Company that the offenders whose surrender had been demanded were dead, the Bhutanese were

46. *Political Missions to Bhutan*, n. 43, pp. 10-11.

47. *Political Missions to Bhutan: The Report of R.B. Pemberton* (Calcutta, 1865), p. 15.

allowed to re-occupy the Dooar on payment of a fine of Rs 2000.⁴⁸

On 28 May, 1835, only ten months after the restoration of the Booree Goomah to the Government of Bhutan, Captain Jenkins, who had succeeded T.C. Robertson as Agent to the Governor-General, reported to the Government of India that a party of fifty armed men of the Bijni Dooar had raided the village of Nogong and carried off ten persons. He also reported that the Bhutanese chief of the Bijni Dooar had not paid the tribute. He then sent a detachment of Assam Light Infantry to Bijni and rescued nine captives. He also arrested a Bhutanese officer called Dooba Raja who had planned raids into the village. Local inquiries revealed that some Bhutanese frontier officers gave protection to the robbers who paid them a share of the booty. Jenkins thereupon wrote to the Deb Raja demanding the payment of the arrears of the tribute and the surrender of all robbers hidden in Bijni and Banska Dooars and threatened the attachment of the Dooars in the event of non-compliance with his demands. He received no reply from the Deb Raja. The Company then raised an additional corps, called the Assam Sebundies Corps, for the protection of the frontier in Assam.⁴⁹ The Bhutanese, however, persisted in committing robberies in the Company's territories. On 16 November, 1835, they made an incursion into the district of Durrung from the Kalling Dooar with the connivance of Ghumbheer Wazeer, the chief officer of the Dooar, and carried off a large amount of property. Captain Mathie, the Magistrate of Durrung, requested Ghumbheer Wazeer to surrender the offenders. Wazeer temporized and made preparations to resist the demand. When Mathie advanced to the frontier of the Kalling Dooar with sixteen sepoy of the Assam Sebundy Corps, Wazeer capitulated and delivered to him a number of culprits who had participated in the robbery.⁵⁰

48. Foreign Department, Political Consultation, 14 August 1834, No. 78. See also Foreign Department, Political Despatch to the Court of Directors, 1835, No. 29.

49. *Political Missions to Bhutan*, n. 47, pp. 17-19.

50. *Ibid.*, pp. 19-20.

Soon after, the Bhutanese made another incursion. On 14 January, 1836, they committed a dacoity in the district of north Kamrup from the Banska Dooar. When the Company's demand for the surrender of the offenders and of the property looted was ignored by Boora Taluqdar, the Bhutanese officials of the Banska Dooar, Captain Bogle, the Magistrate of Kamrup, with a detachment of eighty Sebundies under the command of Lieutenants Mathews and Vetch, advanced across the frontier on 14 February, 1836, and announced the temporary attachment of the Dooar. Boora Taluqdar, who was responsible for the offence, fled to Dewangiri. The Dewangiri Raja commenced negotiations with Captain Bogle and returned nineteen of the offenders on 1 March, 1836. He, however, refused to surrender Boora Taluqdar and made military preparations to resist Bogle's other demands. Lieutenant Mathews attacked the Bhutanese, killed twenty-five, and wounded fifty men.⁵¹

The severe chastisement of the Bhutanese and the attachment of the Banska Dooar alarmed the Government of Bhutan. Many offenders including Boora Taluqdar were surrendered. On 10 May, 1836, four Zinkaffs deputed by the Dharma Raja, the Dharma Raja's father, the Deb Raja, and the Tongsa Ponlop, arrived at Gauhati.⁵² They carried letters from the Dharma Raja's father and from the Tongsa Ponlop. They declared that the Government of Bhutan had never received any letters addressed by the Company in connexion with the Bhutanese incursions into the Company's territories. They said that the attachment of the Banska Dooar had caused great distress to them and pleaded for its restoration. Jenkins offered to restore the Dooar on condition that the Zinkaffs enter into an agreement. This the Zinkaffs refused to do. On Jenkins's refusal to restore the Dooar, one of the Zinkaffs went back to the Dharma Raja's father at Dewangiri and brought from him blank papers bearing his seals. The Zinkaffs signed an *Iqrarnamah* on 2 June, 1836 obligating the Government of Bhutan to put down dacoity which had so long prevailed in the

51. Ibid., pp. 21-24.

52. Foreign Department, Political Consultation, 27 June 1836, No. 52.

dooars, and, in case of incursion into the Company's territories, to deliver up offenders on the receipt of warrants from the Company's magistrates. They agreed that in the event of the Bhutanese officers failing to arrest the offenders, the Indian police would have access to the dooars in the course of their search for culprits. They also agreed to pay the annual tribute due from all dooars to the Collectors of Kamrup and Durrung. In case of arrears accumulating to the amount of one year's tribute, the Company was to be at liberty to attach the dooars until the arrears had been liquidated.⁵³ The Banska Dooar was restored to the Bhutanese, but the agreement was not ratified by the Deb Raja.⁵⁴ The latter's action may be explained by the fact that the Zinkaffs had not been authorized by him to enter into any agreement with the Company.

PEMBERTON'S MISSION TO BHUTAN

The Company did not have sufficient information in regard to Bhutan. It believed that its communications to the Deb Raja were often withheld by the frontier officers of Bhutan. Hence it decided to send an envoy to the court of the Deb Raja before adopting any policy towards Bhutan. It communicated its intention of dispatching a mission to Bhutan. In its reply the Government of Bhutan urged the postponement of the mission. The Company, however, stuck to its decision and intimated the approximate date of the arrival of its mission in Bhutan.⁵⁵

THE INSTRUCTIONS OF THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA TO PEMBERTON

Captain Pemberton, who possessed an expert knowledge of the States and tribes on the north-eastern frontier, was appointed on 7 August, 1837, to proceed on a mission to the Deb Raja of Bhutan, and eventually to the Dalai Lama of

53. *Political Missions to Bootan*, n. 47, pp. 17-19.

54. *Ibid.* pp. 19-20.

55. Foreign Department, Political Despatch to the Court of Directors, 1837, No. 53, para 267.

Tibet if practicable and convenient.⁵⁶ The Government of India explained to Pemberton that the chief object of his mission to Bhutan would be to establish relations between the Governments of Bhutan and India on a sound footing. It referred to the frequent instances of collision on the Indo-Bhutanese frontier, and also to the difficulty experienced in recovering the arrears of tribute from the Bhutanese authorities. It, further, expressed concern over the dacoities to which its Indian subjects were exposed from the inhabitants of the Assam Dooars who were reported to have planned their incursions under the encouragement and protection of the local officers of Bhutan. Pemberton was directed in the first instance to persuade the Government of Bhutan to make over to the former the management of the Assam Dooars in lieu of the annual payment of a fixed sum, while disclaiming any desire to acquire additional territory. He was asked to explain to the Bhutanese authorities that the Company had no desire to derive any pecuniary benefit from the transaction and that the proposed cession of the dooars was to afford the means of improving the relations between the two Governments. If the above proposition was rejected by the Government of Bhutan Pemberton was to urge acceptance of the commutation of the tribute for a tract of land or for a fixed and regular money payment. He was, further, directed to request the Government of Bhutan to introduce such reforms in the administration of the frontier districts as would secure internal peace and protect the people of India against the inroads of the Bhutanese subjects.

Besides, Pemberton was told to discuss with the Bhutanese authorities the desirability of improving Indo-Bhutanese commercial intercourse, which, though formally agreed upon in the Treaty of 1774, had remained virtually suspended. He was asked to try to convince the Bhutanese authorities of the sincerity of the Company's friendship and to assure the Bhutanese authorities that his Government sought no exclusive advantage from commerce and that its main object was to introduce an unrestricted intercourse between the subjects of

56. Foreign Department, Political Consultation, 7 August, 1837, No. 2.

the two countries. Finally, he was directed to consider it incumbent upon him to inquire particularly into the political constitution of Bhutan, to ascertain not only the nature of its internal administration, but also the nature of its connexion with or dependence upon other States such as Tibet, Nepal, and China, to assess the attitude of the Bhutanese towards the British, and to discover how far their policy towards India was influenced by any external Power.⁵⁷

PEMBERTON AT PUNAKHA

Captain Pemberton accompanied by Griffith, a famous Botanist, and an escort of twenty-five soldiers under the command of Ensign Blake, left Gauhati for Bhutan on 21 December, 1837. Intent on obtaining information regarding East Bhutan, he resolved to enter the country by the Banska Dooar and Dewangiri. He was detained for some time on the frontier and was again delayed for twenty days at Dewangiri. He was advised to return to the frontier and re-enter Bhutan by the Buxa Dooar Pass, the route which had been followed by Bogle and Turner. However, Pemberton was at length allowed to proceed through the district of the Tongsa Penlop. The difficulties on the way protracted his journey, and he could not reach Punakha until 2 April, 1838.⁵⁸

Pemberton drew up a treaty and submitted it to the Deb Raja on 25 April, 1838. This treaty postulated, among other things, an unrestricted intercourse between the subjects of Bhutan and the Company; the extradition of offenders, both Bhutanese and Indian, wanted by the Company's authorities in connexion with the crimes committed in the Assam Dooars; and the right of the police of the Company to enter the dooars in search of offenders in case the frontier officers of Bhutan failed to arrest the culprits. The Government of Bhutan was asked to pay the tribute for the dooars in cash and not in kind, and the payment was to be made directly to the Collectors of Kamrup and Durrung by the Zinkaffs. In the event of any

57. Ibid.

58. Foreign Department, Political Consultation, 3 April, 1839, No. 136,

dooar falling into arrears to the extent a year's tribute, the Company was to take possession of it until the dues were fully realized. The Government of Bhutan was to depute its officials to assist in defining and demarcating by mutual agreement the disputed boundaries of the Assam Dooars. The accredited agents of Bhutan were to reside permanently, one at Gauhati in Assam and the other at Rungpur in Bengal, in order to prevent the possible suppression of correspondence between the two Governments by the frontier authorities of Bhutan.⁵⁹

Pemberton, however, failed to reach an understanding with the Bhutanese authorities. The treaty was not signed by the Deb Raja. Not only did the Bhutanese Government forbid Pemberton to proceed to Tibet, but it refused to forward a letter from him to Lhasa. The mission withdrew from Bhutan on 9 May, 1838. Pemberton ascribed his failure to the nominal power of the Deb Raja,⁶⁰ but there were other reasons. Pemberton had insisted on the payment of the tribute in Narainee rupees, a currency of Cooch Behar, whereas the Bhutanese wanted to pay the tribute in Deba rupees, a Bhutanese currency. The Bhutanese authorities stated that they would not be able to pay in Narainee rupees because the latter were not available in Bhutan.⁶¹ Moreover, the Bhutanese were suspicious of the Government of India. Although by 1838 the visits of Bogle and Turner had been forgotten in Bhutan, the aggrandisement of British power in India at the cost of native rulers had made an indelible imprint on the Bhutanese mind. The arrival of Pemberton's mission in Bhutan had excited a feeling of great apprehension and anxiety in Bhutan. For the Bhutanese authorities the ultimate object of the mission was the conquest of Bhutan. Pemberton was not allowed to communicate with the people of the country, and the movements of the members of his mission were closely watched by Bhutanese officials.⁶²

Although Pemberton failed to achieve the chief objects for which he had been sent to Bhutan, his mission was not

59. Ibid.

60. Ibid.

61. Foreign Department, Political Consultation, 12 September, 1838, No. 110. See also Ibid., Nos. 7-9.

62. Foreign Department, Political Consultation, 3 April, 1839, No. 136.

entirely fruitless. Aided by Griffith and Ensign Blake, he drew up a valuable report on Bhutan, its rivers, roads, geology, government, priesthood, revenue, military resources, agriculture, manufactures, trade, population, and civil and social conditions.⁶³

POLICY ADVOCATED BY PEMBERTON

Besides, Pemberton's suggestions had an important bearing on the subsequent policy of the Company towards Bhutan. In his report dated 30 November, 1838, Pemberton wrote to the Government of India that although a rigid policy would justify the immediate permanent occupation of all dooars, both in Bengal and in Assam, there were some important motives for pursuing a less severe policy than that which "stern justice" demanded.⁶⁴ He mentioned that these dooars formed the most valuable portion of Bhutanese territory and that the Bhutanese depended upon them for their very subsistence. He pointed out that the policy of excluding the Bhutanese altogether from these possessions might sever one of the strongest strings to control them. He expressed the view that the weight of punishment should fall more heavily upon the Tongsa Penlop than upon other members of the Government of Bhutan, and for two reasons. First, it was the Tongsa Penlop that had objected to the treaty proposed by Pemberton. Secondly, Bhutanese incursions into Indian territories were made, in most cases, from the part of Bhutan which fell under the jurisdiction of the Tongsa Penlop. Pemberton suggested the temporary occupation of the dooars in Assam which were under the Tongsa Penlop. He observed that it was vain to expect either the fulfilment of the then existing agreements or the conclusion of a new one without a temporary occupation of the dooars. He maintained that if the dooars were totally and unconditionally annexed, the Company should be prepared not only to defend the whole line of the Bhutanese frontier but eventually to attack the Bhutanese fortresses in their hills. He stated that the Chinese

63. Ibid.

64. Ibid.

and Tibetan authorities would not bother to resist British arms, but the invasion of Bhutan would greatly excite their already extravagant suspicions and jealousy of the Company. He apprehended that the invasion of Bhutan by the Company's troops would make that country "an instrument" of Nepal, and Bhutanese hostilities in concert with those of Nepal would cause a great inconvenience to the Company.

Pemberton laid stress on the necessity of the permanent residence of an official of the Company in the Bhutanese capital. He stated that an Indian official in Bhutan would be able to watch and counteract unfriendly external influences as well as internal misrule. He observed that although the Deb Raja was extremely opposed to the proposition of the permanent residence of an official of the Company in Bhutan, the measure would be highly popular with the people of Bhutan. He held that the Government of Bhutan would readily accede to it if the restoration of the dooars was made conditional to the demand of the Company. He advised the Government of India to forego altogether the tribute paid by the Government of Bhutan and to demand a nominal rent as an acknowledgement of continued Indian sovereignty over the dooars in Assam if the Bhutanese authorities in return would agree to the proposition of the permanent residence of an official of the Company in Bhutan.⁶⁵

AFTERMATH OF PEMBERTON'S MISSION :

ANNEXATION OF THE ASSAM DOOARS

The failure of Pemberton's mission had an important repercussion on the policy of the Government of India towards Bhutan. The Government of India shelved the policy of moderation and negotiation and embarked on a coercive policy in dealing with Bhutan. In a letter dated 12 September, 1838, it directed Captain Jenkins, Agent to the Governor-General on the north-eastern frontier, to prepare a plan for the settlement of all pending subjects of difference with the Bhutanese. It said that this plan should, with its approval be communicat-

65. Ibid.

ed later to the Bhutanese authorities as "ultimatum".⁶⁶ Jenkins after consulting Captain Mathie, Collector of Kamrup and Captain Vetch, Collector of Durrung, advised the Government of India in a letter dated 15 September, 1838, to endeavour to operate on the fears of the Bhutanese authorities as there was no chance of effecting any measure by an appeal to their reason and good feelings. He stated that the Government of India should extend no concession to the Bhutanese authorities inasmuch as the concessions would bring nothing in return. He mentioned that traders from India had formerly traded with Lhasa through Bhutan, but that Bhutan had been closed to them subsequently "either from the jealousy of the Government or its ill-conduct of the traders". He proposed to the Government of India that it should take possession of the dooars, and pay an allowance to the Government of Bhutan out of the revenue of the dooars. He deprecated the measure to seize the dooars, and said that the Company should give them up as soon as the Bhutanese paid up the arrears of the tribute.⁶⁷ Nevertheless, towards the end of 1838, when Jenkins had not sufficient troops at his disposal, he appeared reluctant to take any measure which might create an open rupture with Bhutan.⁶⁸

The Assam Dooars were not annexed for quite some time because the Company was in trouble all along the northern frontier at that time. In 1838, war with Nepal was a possibility. The Pandes, who had assumed power after the fall of Bhimsen in July 1837, had no popular backing. They encouraged militarism and raised an anti-British bogey in order to maintain their hold on the Nepalese Government and the army. The British had trouble with the Court of Ava also. The new King of Burma, Tharrawaddy (1837-45), refused to consider the treaty of Yandaboo of 1826 binding on him, and the British Resident had to retire in the face of hostility. Above all, the north-west frontier engaged the most serious considera-

66. Foreign Department, Political Consultation, 12 September, 1838, No. 116.

67. Foreign Department, Political Consultation, 21 November, 1838, No. 98.

68. *Ibid.* 21 November, 1838, No. 99.

tion of the Company. The extension of Russian influence to Persia and Afghanistan alarmed the British, for they saw in it imminent danger to the security and tranquillity of their Indian Empire.

Jenkins wrote to the Government of India in a letter dated 1 June, 1839, that the Bhutanese authorities had not only refused to make the regular payment of their tribute but also been guilty of the grossest misrule over the inhabitants of the dooars. He recommended to the Government that it should annex the dooars. He, however, mentioned that if the Company was not prepared to take permanent possession of all the dooars, he would suggest the annexation of at least two dooars, Kalling and Booree-Goomah, after the termination of its term of jurisdiction, until all points of disputes with Bhutan were settled. He stated that he did not expect any attempt on the part of the Bhutanese authorities to offer armed resistance. However, he advised the Government of India to be prepared for the contingency of the Bhutanese starting hostilities.⁶⁹

The Company was not prepared to involve itself on the north-eastern frontier when it was preoccupied with the Afghan War. British troops had occupied Qandhar in April, 1839, had stormed Ghazni on 23 July, and were advancing to Kabul. In a letter dated 24 July, 1839, the Government of India ordered Jenkins to write to the Deb Raja for the surrender of the persons detained in Bhutan and for the payment of the tribute in Deba rupees or their equivalent. It instructed him to avoid situation in which the Company might feel obliged to interfere, and to give to every measure of coercion as far as possible "a limited and provincial character."⁷⁰

Jenkins wrote to the Deb Raja on 8 August, 1839, mentioning the demands of the Company but received no reply. On the ground of "further aggression" by the Bhutanese he attached the Kalling and Booree-Goomah Dooars in October, 1839, and wrote a letter to the Dharma Raja stating

69. Foreign Department, Political Consultation, 24 July, 1839, No. 93.

70. *Ibid*, 24 July, 1839, No. 94.

that the dooars which had formed part of Assam could be held by the Government of Bhutan only as long as that Government fulfilled the terms of the agreement. Since, however, the tribute had remained unpaid and the representations to the Bhutanese authorities for the liquidation of the arrears had gone unheeded, and since plunderings and even murders were frequent in the dooars and the inhabitants of the dooars were subjected to every kind of oppression,⁷¹ the Company had felt obliged to take the measures it did.⁷² The Bhutanese authorities made representations to the Company requesting that the attached dooars should be restored to them. Their requests were ignored. The Court of Directors in a dispatch dated 11 May, 1841, approved of the attachment of the Durrung Dooars and authorized the Government of India to exercise its power over all the Assam Dooars. It pointed out that the protection of the inhabitants of the dooars was incumbent on the Government of India. It held that the Bhutanese authorities had forfeited their right to the dooars by their misgovernment of the country and their sheer inability to control their own officials, irrespective of their failure to fulfil their engagement in regard to the tribute⁷³.

On 21 May, 1841, Jenkins received letters from the Deb Raja and the Dharma Raja. The Dharma Raja said in his letter that their country was being ruined by insurrection, and asked that the attached dooars should be restored and a "gentleman" should be sent to Bhutan. Jenkins thought that the Bhutanese authorities could be induced to transfer the management of the dooars to the Company and that the deputation of an official to Bhutan was likely to achieve more success than Pemberton's mission.⁷⁴ The Government of India, however, was opposed to sending another mission to Bhutan when the Bhutanese authorities were divided into two factions of equal strength and were contending for supremacy in Bhutan.⁷⁵ On 14 June,

71. Foreign Department, Political Consultation, 13 November, 1839, No. 74.

72. *Ibid.*, No. 75.

73. Foreign Department, Political Despatch from the Court of Directors, 11 May 1841, No. 12.

74. Foreign Department, Political Consultation, 14 June, 1841, No. 83.

75. *Ibid.*, No. 86.

1841, Lord Auckland addressed letters to the Deb Raja and the Dharma Raja warning them that if Bhutan continued to be in a state of anarchy and the Indian frontiers continued to be violated, the Government of India would be compelled to occupy all dooars.⁷⁶ On 6 September, 1841, on the receipt of a report from Jenkins describing the miserable state of the Assam Dooars and the continued migration of the population, the remaining Assam Dooars were permanently taken over by the Company. As compensation, a sum of Rs. 10,000 per annum was paid to the Government of Bhutan for the loss it had incurred as a result of the Company's action.⁷⁷

In taking possession of the Assam Dooars the British were actuated by two factors. First, it was the economic potentialities of the dooars which largely induced the British authorities to annex the dooars. The dooars had valuable and fertile lands, and if properly and extensively cultivated, they might yield enormous wealth. Ensign Scott, Assistant in Political Charge, Durrung Magistrate Office, wrote to Jenkins in a letter dated 19 September, 1839 that these dooars had the richest and the most fertile lands in Assam and that if they were taken by the Company, they would yield a considerable amount of revenue.⁷⁸ Secondly, with more and more inroads being made into the Company's territories by the inhabitants of the Assam Dooars the Company became concerned over the problem of establishing peace and security on the frontier of Assam. To guard the frontier with the help of regular troops would have been not only costly but also difficult on account of the extremely bad climate in the area. The Company, therefore, took possession of the dooars in order to put down violence and lawlessness.

After the occupation of the Assam Dooars, the Government of India which was engaged in the Afghan War, the annexation of Sindh, and the Sikh Wars, slackened its interest in Bhutan. Besides, there was no such complicated agreement between the Bhutanese Government and the Company in

76. *Ibid.*, No. 85.

77. *Political Missions to Bootan*, n. 43, p. 23.

78. Foreign Department, Political Consultation, 13 November, 1839 No. 73.

regard to the Bengal Dooars as in case of the Assam Dooars. Hence, fewer disputes took place from 1841 onwards, and the relations between the two Governments were, by and large, peaceful. The Company followed a policy of non-interference towards Bhutan. Even Lord Dalhousie, whose tenure of administration was marked by the stupendous growth of the British Empire at the expense of many Indian States, did not depart from this policy. In 1855, Colonel Jenkins, Agent of the Governor-General on the north-east frontier, informed the Bengal Government that the Dharma Raja had been deprived of his authority by the rebellious chiefs of Bhutan. He stated that the Dharma Raja was anxious to put himself under the Company's protection. The Government of India in its letter dated 4 May, 1855, directed the Bengal Government to inform Colonel Jenkins that it had no desire to interfere in the internal disputes of Bhutan.⁷⁹

TOWARDS CONFRONTATION

In March, 1855, a Bhutanese party led by two persons—one an uncle of the Dharma Raja and the other Jadoom or Dewangiri Raja—reached Gauhati to demand an increase in the amount of compensation paid for the Assam Dooars from Rs 10,000 to Rs 15,000 (or at least to Rs 12,000). Having failed to achieve their object the Bhutanese, on their return to Bhutan, committed several robberies in the Banska Dooar, chiefly in the houses of the Government officers, plundering property to a large amount and torturing people to make them disclose their property.⁸⁰ Soon the Government of India received further reports of such cases. These incursions were instigated by the Dewangiri Raja. Colonel Jenkins, Agent of the Governor-General on the north-east frontier, with the approval of the Government of India, closed the dooars, cut off

79. Foreign Department, Political Consultation, 25 May, 1855, Nos 58-60. See also Foreign Department, Political Despatch to the Court of Directors, 22 November, 1855, No. 64.

80. Foreign Department, Political Consultation, 11 May, 1855, Nos 73-83. See also Foreign Department, Political Despatch to the Court of Directors, 22 November, 1855, No. 64.

all communications between the plains and the hills, and wrote to the Deb Raja demanding the surrender of the offenders. The Deb Raja, this time, took strong action against his subordinate officials. He removed the Dewangiri Raja from office, and imposed a fine on the Tongsa Penlop, the brother of the Dewangiri Raja, under whose jurisdiction the Dewangiri Raja worked.⁸¹

The direct communication of Colonel Jenkins to the Deb Raja piqued the Tongsa Penlop, and the latter addressed a "threatening and offensive" letter to the Agent demanding the payment of half of the fine inflicted on him by the Deb Raja and the surrender of some of the Bhutanese subjects who had been arrested by the local authorities of the Company. He said that he had found out "on strict inquiry" that some followers of the Dewangiri Raja had "helped themselves to firewood, fruit and whatever other eatables they could find". He declared that the assertion of the Company's authorities "as regards their entering dwelling houses and plundering money and valuable property" was false. To the Tongsa Penlop, the proceedings of the frontier officials of the Company smacked of subterfuge and machination. The object of the Governor-General's Agent, according to the Tongsa Penlop, in misrepresenting facts and in "styling the ryots of the Dharma Raja as thieves and robbers" was to break the ties of friendship and harmony between the two Government.⁸²

The "offensive" letter addressed by the Tongsa Penlop stung Jenkins to the quick. In a letter dated 13 November, 1855, he proposed to the Bengal Government that the value of the property plundered by the Dewangiri Raja or with his connivance should be deducted from the Bhutanese share of the revenue of the Assam Dooars. He further suggested in the same letter that the Bhutanese should be punished "by the instant occupation of all Bengal Dooars, the only measure likely to be effective, short of invading the country". He held that the occupation of the Bengal Dooars would compel the Bhutanese to seek conciliation with the Government of India

81. *Papers Relating to Bootan Accounts and Papers* 1865 xxxix p. 3.

82. *Ibid*, pp. 27-28.

in the hope of being admitted to a share of their revenue as in the case of the Assam Dooars.⁸³ Although the Government of India, to which the Bengal Government had referred the matter, did not accede to the proposition to the instant occupation of the Bengal Dooars, it reacted strongly to the violation of the Company's territory by the Bhutanese and the overbearing tone of the letter written by the Tongsa Penlop to Colonel Jenkins. In a letter dated 11 January, 1856, it wrote to the Bengal Government asking it to take some effective means to put a stop to the "aggression" of the Bhutanese and to protect its subjects from "constant alarm and actual injury" caused by the Bhutanese incursions into the Company's territories. It stated that although it was most anxious to avoid collision with the Bhutanese Government, it felt that it was "impossible to tolerate the insolvent and overbearing tone" of the Tongsa Penlop's letter to its representative on the north-east frontier. It required the Tongsa Penlop to apologize for the "disrespect" he had shown towards its representative and, through him, to the Government of India. It authorized Colonel Jenkins to inform the Tongsa Penlop that unless he forthwith consented to that demand, it would take measures which would have a damaging effect on his authority on the frontier. Further, the Tongsa Penlop was to be informed by the Agent that the value of the property plundered would in any case be deducted from the Bhutanese share of the revenue of the dooars and that any repetition of aggressive movement would be followed by the permanent occupation of the Bengal Dooars. It observed that although the Deb Raja was the nominal head of the Government of Bhutan, he would be held responsible for the delinquencies of the Tongsa Penlop and for those of his brother, the former Dewangiri Raja.⁸⁴

In response to these instructions, Major Hamilton Vetch, Acting Agent of the Governor-General on the north-east frontier, addressed to the Tongsa Penlop a letter dated 21 January, 1856, through the Dewangiri Raja. The Dewangiri Raja, however, for fear of the Tongsa Penlop being offended,

83. Ibid. pp. 23-24.

84. Ibid. pp. 31-32. See also Foreign Department, Political Despatch to the Court of Directors, 20 September, 1856, No. 97.

suppressed the letter.⁸⁵ In a letter dated 18 March, 1856, Colonel Jenkins wrote to the Bengal Government that the Tongsa Penlop and the Dewangiri Raja had, in collusion, evaded the demand for apology and that it seemed to him useless to refer the matter again to them. He wrote to the Dharma Raja and Deb Raja on 16 March in order "to deprive them of any plea of ignorance" and to provide them with one further opportunity to comply with the demands of the Government of India. He, however, considered it inexpedient to take any active measure for the attachment of the dooars until after the rainy season.⁸⁶

ABDUCTION OF ARUNG SINGH

The Governments of India and Bhutan were still at loggerheads when an incident took place further aggravating the strain in their relations. In April, 1856, Arung Singh, who was the hereditary Zamindar of the Gooma Dooar in Bhutanese territory and who had taken refuge in India in order to evade his obligations to the Bhutanese authorities, was carried off forcibly by the Bhutanese. In a letter dated 14 May, Colonel Jenkins recommended to the Government of Bengal that it should address the Bhutanese authorities and demand the punishment of the offenders.⁸⁷ However, in the eyes of Captain W. Agnew, Principal Assistant Commissioner of Gawalpara, Arung Singh, was neither a British subject nor a refugee entitled to protection by the Government of India.⁸⁸ Sir F. Halliday, Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, did not take a serious view of the matter because, according to him, the trespass on the Company's territory by the Bhutanese had been provoked by Colonel Jenkins's "patronage" of Arung Singh. Arung Singh had been permitted to reside in the Company's territory while he still held his zamindari in Bhutan and evaded the payment of "just dues" to the Government of

85. Foreign Department, Political Consultation, 9 May, 1856, No. 41.

86. *Ibid.*

87. Foreign Department, Political Consultation, 27 June, 1856, No. 15-16.

88. *Ibid.* See also *Papers Relating to Bootan*, n. 81, pp. 44-45.

Bhutan. In a letter dated 5 June, 1856, F. Halliday suggested to the Government of India that a friendly application should, in the first instance, be addressed to the Bhutanese Government informing it of the incident and requesting an explanation of the occurrence.⁸⁹ However, the Government of India did not consider it "consistent or politic to take the very friendly and moderate tone" recommended by the Lt.-Governor of Bengal. It instructed Halliday to demand of the Bhutanese authorities a punishment to the offenders and an apology for the acts of their subordinates, and "to give them warning (already fully authorized) that if atonement is not made for the new aggression, the Government of India will hold itself free to take permanent possession of the Bengal Dooars".⁹⁰

Before the Agent of the Governor-General received these instructions, the Bengal Government received a communication from him to the effect that the Dharma Raja and Deb Raja, the Tongsa Penlop and the Dewangiri Raja, had made apologies for their previous misconduct.⁹¹ Colonel Jenkins, who had been extremely annoyed by the Tongsa Penlop's "insolent and overbearing tone", was mollified by this apology, and in his letter dated 3 June, 1856, he wrote to the Government of Bengal that he might be permitted to resume his correspondence with the Tongsa Penlop. He recommended the deputation of an officer to Bhutan to promote better understanding with the Bhutan authorities and to raise the Bhutanese share of the dooar revenue to Rs 12,000 from Rs 10,000.⁹² The Bengal Government concurred with all the suggestions made by Colonel Jenkins except the one concerning the deputation of an official to Bhutan. It, however, demanded a full satisfactory explanation for "more recent aggression committed in carrying off Arung Singh" from the Company's territory. The Government of India, in its letter dated 16 July, 1856, agreed with the views expressed by the Bengal Government.⁹³ Colonel Jenkins was ordered to carry out the instructions already issued.

89. Foreign Department, Political Consultation, 27 June, 1856, Nos. 15-16.

90. Ibid., No. 17. See also *Papers Relating to Bootan*, n. 81, p. 50.

91. Foreign Department, Political Consultation, 18 July, 1856. No. 19.

92. Ibid, 18 July, 1856, Nos. 19-21.

93. Ibid, 18 July, 1856, No. 21.

In August, 1856, Colonel Jenkins addressed the Deb Raja and the Dharma Raja demanding the rendition of Arung Singh and informing them of the determination of the Government of India to annex the Bengal Dooars in case of their failure to comply with its demand. The Deb Raja in his reply admitted the abduction of Arung Singh, but defended it on the ground that the person carried off was "a servant" of his own. Colonel Jenkins had also written to the Deb Raja demanding the surrender of some persons charged with certain crimes. The reply from the Deb Raja to that demand was equally "unsatisfactory" to Colonel Jenkins. The Deb Raja asserted that the British subjects had committed "serious depredations" on Bhutanese territory and deplored the apathy on the part of the British officials in apprehending the offenders. He denied the charge of the British officials that the Bhutanese were to blame for the border outrages.⁹⁴

Colonel Jenkins, in a letter dated 15 November, 1856, suggested that any further reference to the Bhutanese authorities would be useless and recommended that "the only measure which promises to be effective is the annexation of the Bengal Dooars".⁹⁵ Reports of further outrages also came in. A merchant, named Saligram Osaval, who had gone to Mynagooree to trade, was arrested and his release refused. Two men were reported to have been carried away from Cooch Behar.⁹⁶ The Government of India wanted to take some measures towards the execution of the threat which had already been given to the Bhutanese Government. But it knew very little of the political condition of Bhutan. It was not sure who held supreme authority, or whether there was any effective chief authority at all in Bhutan. It did not also know the extent of the jurisdictions of the different subordinate rulers along its frontier. In view of the extremely unhealthy climate of the territory, it wanted to know if the pressure proposed to be applied to the Bhutanese Government by seizing the Bengal Dooars might not be equally applied by withholding the revenue of the eastern

94. Foreign Department Political Consultation, 23 January, 1857, Nos. 10-13.

95. Ibid.

96. *Political Missions to Bootan*, n. 43, pp. 32-33.

dooars, and, in case of incursion into the Company's territories, to deliver up offenders on the receipt of warrants from the Company's magistrates. They agreed that in the event of the Bhutanese officers failing to arrest the offenders, the Indian police would have access to the dooars in the course of their search for culprits. They also agreed to pay the annual tribute due from all dooars to the Collectors of Kamrup and Durrung. In case of arrears accumulating to the amount of one year's tribute, the Company was to be at liberty to attach the dooars until the arrears had been liquidated.⁵³ The Banska Dooar was restored to the Bhutanese, but the agreement was not ratified by the Deb Raja.⁵⁴ The latter's action may be explained by the fact that the Zinkaffs had not been authorized by him to enter into any agreement with the Company.

PEMBERTON'S MISSION TO BHUTAN

The Company did not have sufficient information in regard to Bhutan. It believed that its communications to the Deb Raja were often withheld by the frontier officers of Bhutan. Hence it decided to send an envoy to the court of the Deb Raja before adopting any policy towards Bhutan. It communicated its intention of dispatching a mission to Bhutan. In its reply the Government of Bhutan urged the postponement of the mission. The Company, however, stuck to its decision and intimated the approximate date of the arrival of its mission in Bhutan.⁵⁵

THE INSTRUCTIONS OF THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA TO PEMBERTON

Captain Pemberton, who possessed an expert knowledge of the States and tribes on the north-eastern frontier, was appointed on 7 August, 1837, to proceed on a mission to the Deb Raja of Bhutan, and eventually to the Dalai Lama of

53. *Political Missions to Bootan*, n. 47, pp. 17-19.

54. *Ibid.* pp. 19-20.

55. Foreign Department, Political Despatch to the Court of Directors, 1837, No. 53, para 267.

Tibet if practicable and convenient.⁵⁶ The Government of India explained to Pemberton that the chief object of his mission to Bhutan would be to establish relations between the Governments of Bhutan and India on a sound footing. It referred to the frequent instances of collision on the Indo-Bhutanese frontier, and also to the difficulty experienced in recovering the arrears of tribute from the Bhutanese authorities. It, further, expressed concern over the dacoities to which its Indian subjects were exposed from the inhabitants of the Assam Dooars who were reported to have planned their incursions under the encouragement and protection of the local officers of Bhutan. Pemberton was directed in the first instance to persuade the Government of Bhutan to make over to the former the management of the Assam Dooars in lieu of the annual payment of a fixed sum, while disclaiming any desire to acquire additional territory. He was asked to explain to the Bhutanese authorities that the Company had no desire to derive any pecuniary benefit from the transaction and that the proposed cession of the dooars was to afford the means of improving the relations between the two Governments. If the above proposition was rejected by the Government of Bhutan Pemberton was to urge acceptance of the commutation of the tribute for a tract of land or for a fixed and regular money payment. He was, further, directed to request the Government of Bhutan to introduce such reforms in the administration of the frontier districts as would secure internal peace and protect the people of India against the inroads of the Bhutanese subjects.

Besides, Pemberton was told to discuss with the Bhutanese authorities the desirability of improving Indo-Bhutanese commercial intercourse, which, though formally agreed upon in the Treaty of 1774, had remained virtually suspended. He was asked to try to convince the Bhutanese authorities of the sincerity of the Company's friendship and to assure the Bhutanese authorities that his Government sought no exclusive advantage from commerce and that its main object was to introduce an unrestricted intercourse between the subjects of

56. Foreign Department, Political Consultation, 7 August, 1837, No. 2.

the two countries. Finally, he was directed to consider it incumbent upon him to inquire particularly into the political constitution of Bhutan, to ascertain not only the nature of its internal administration, but also the nature of its connexion with or dependence upon other States such as Tibet, Nepal, and China, to assess the attitude of the Bhutanese towards the British, and to discover how far their policy towards India was influenced by any external Power.⁵⁷

PEMBERTON AT PUNAKHA

Captain Pemberton accompanied by Griffith, a famous Botanist, and an escort of twenty-five soldiers under the command of Ensign Blake, left Gauhati for Bhutan on 21 December, 1837. Intent on obtaining information regarding East Bhutan, he resolved to enter the country by the Banska Dooar and Dewangiri. He was detained for some time on the frontier and was again delayed for twenty days at Dewangiri. He was advised to return to the frontier and re-enter Bhutan by the Buxa Dooar Pass, the route which had been followed by Bogle and Turner. However, Pemberton was at length allowed to proceed through the district of the Tongsa Penlop. The difficulties on the way protracted his journey, and he could not reach Punakha until 2 April, 1838.⁵⁸

Pemberton drew up a treaty and submitted it to the Deb Raja on 25 April, 1838. This treaty postulated, among other things, an unrestricted intercourse between the subjects of Bhutan and the Company; the extradition of offenders, both Bhutanese and Indian, wanted by the Company's authorities in connexion with the crimes committed in the Assam Dooars; and the right of the police of the Company to enter the dooars in search of offenders in case the frontier officers of Bhutan failed to arrest the culprits. The Government of Bhutan was asked to pay the tribute for the dooars in cash and not in kind, and the payment was to be made directly to the Collectors of Kamrup and Durrung by the Zinkaffs. In the event of any

57. Ibid.

58. Foreign Department, Political Consultation, 3 April, 1839, No. 136,

door falling into arrears to the extent a year's tribute, the Company was to take possession of it until the dues were fully realized. The Government of Bhutan was to depute its officials to assist in defining and demarcating by mutual agreement the disputed boundaries of the Assam Dooars. The accredited agents of Bhutan were to reside permanently, one at Gauhati in Assam and the other at Rungpur in Bengal, in order to prevent the possible suppression of correspondence between the two Governments by the frontier authorities of Bhutan.⁵⁹

Pemberton, however, failed to reach an understanding with the Bhutanese authorities. The treaty was not signed by the Deb Raja. Not only did the Bhutanese Government forbid Pemberton to proceed to Tibet, but it refused to forward a letter from him to Lhasa. The mission withdrew from Bhutan on 9 May, 1838. Pemberton ascribed his failure to the nominal power of the Deb Raja,⁶⁰ but there were other reasons. Pemberton had insisted on the payment of the tribute in Narainee rupees, a currency of Cooch Behar, whereas the Bhutanese wanted to pay the tribute in Deba rupees, a Bhutanese currency. The Bhutanese authorities stated that they would not be able to pay in Narainee rupees because the latter were not available in Bhutan.⁶¹ Moreover, the Bhutanese were suspicious of the Government of India. Although by 1838 the visits of Bogle and Turner had been forgotten in Bhutan, the aggrandisement of British power in India at the cost of native rulers had made an indelible imprint on the Bhutanese mind. The arrival of Pemberton's mission in Bhutan had excited a feeling of great apprehension and anxiety in Bhutan. For the Bhutanese authorities the ultimate object of the mission was the conquest of Bhutan. Pemberton was not allowed to communicate with the people of the country, and the movements of the members of his mission were closely watched by Bhutanese officials.⁶²

Although Pemberton failed to achieve the chief objects for which he had been sent to Bhutan, his mission was not

59. Ibid.

60. Ibid.

61. Foreign Department, Political Consultation, 12 September, 1838, No. 110. See also Ibid., Nos. 7-9.

62. Foreign Department, Political Consultation, 3 April, 1839, No. 136.

entirely fruitless. Aided by Griffith and Ensign Blake, he drew up a valuable report on Bhutan, its rivers, roads, geology, government, priesthood, revenue, military resources, agriculture, manufactures, trade, population, and civil and social conditions.⁶³

POLICY ADVOCATED BY PEMBERTON

Besides, Pemberton's suggestions had an important bearing on the subsequent policy of the Company towards Bhutan. In his report dated 30 November, 1838, Pemberton wrote to the Government of India that although a rigid policy would justify the immediate permanent occupation of all dooars, both in Bengal and in Assam, there were some important motives for pursuing a less severe policy than that which "stern justice" demanded.⁶⁴ He mentioned that these dooars formed the most valuable portion of Bhutanese territory and that the Bhutanese depended upon them for their very subsistence. He pointed out that the policy of excluding the Bhutanese altogether from these possessions might sever one of the strongest strings to control them. He expressed the view that the weight of punishment should fall more heavily upon the Tongsa Penlop than upon other members of the Government of Bhutan, and for two reasons. First, it was the Tongsa Penlop that had objected to the treaty proposed by Pemberton. Secondly, Bhutanese incursions into Indian territories were made, in most cases, from the part of Bhutan which fell under the jurisdiction of the Tongsa Penlop. Pemberton suggested the temporary occupation of the dooars in Assam which were under the Tongsa Penlop. He observed that it was vain to expect either the fulfilment of the then existing agreements or the conclusion of a new one without a temporary occupation of the dooars. He maintained that if the dooars were totally and unconditionally annexed, the Company should be prepared not only to defend the whole line of the Bhutanese frontier but eventually to attack the Bhutanese fortresses in their hills. He stated that the Chinese

63. Ibid.

64. Ibid.

and Tibetan authorities would not bother to resist British arms, but the invasion of Bhutan would greatly excite their already extravagant suspicions and jealousy of the Company. He apprehended that the invasion of Bhutan by the Company's troops would make that country "an instrument" of Nepal, and Bhutanese hostilities in concert with those of Nepal would cause a great inconvenience to the Company.

Pemberton laid stress on the necessity of the permanent residence of an official of the Company in the Bhutanese capital. He stated that an Indian official in Bhutan would be able to watch and counteract unfriendly external influences as well as internal misrule. He observed that although the Deb Raja was extremely opposed to the proposition of the permanent residence of an official of the Company in Bhutan, the measure would be highly popular with the people of Bhutan. He held that the Government of Bhutan would readily accede to it if the restoration of the dooars was made conditional to the demand of the Company. He advised the Government of India to forego altogether the tribute paid by the Government of Bhutan and to demand a nominal rent as an acknowledgement of continued Indian sovereignty over the dooars in Assam if the Bhutanese authorities in return would agree to the proposition of the permanent residence of an official of the Company in Bhutan.⁶⁵

AFTERMATH OF PEMBERTON'S MISSION : ANNEXATION OF THE ASSAM DOOARS

The failure of Pemberton's mission had an important repercussion on the policy of the Government of India towards Bhutan. The Government of India shelved the policy of moderation and negotiation and embarked on a coercive policy in dealing with Bhutan. In a letter dated 12 September, 1838, it directed Captain Jenkins, Agent to the Governor-General on the north-eastern frontier, to prepare a plan for the settlement of all pending subjects of difference with the Bhutanese. It said that this plan should, with its approval be communicat-

65. Ibid.

ed later to the Bhutanese authorities as "ultimatum".⁶⁶ Jenkins after consulting Captain Mathie, Collector of Kamrup and Captain Vetch, Collector of Durrung, advised the Government of India in a letter dated 15 September, 1838, to endeavour to operate on the fears of the Bhutanese authorities as there was no chance of effecting any measure by an appeal to their reason and good feelings. He stated that the Government of India should extend no concession to the Bhutanese authorities inasmuch as the concessions would bring nothing in return. He mentioned that traders from India had formerly traded with Lhasa through Bhutan, but that Bhutan had been closed to them subsequently "either from the jealousy of the Government or its ill-conduct of the traders". He proposed to the Government of India that it should take possession of the dooars, and pay an allowance to the Government of Bhutan out of the revenue of the dooars. He deprecated the measure to seize the dooars, and said that the Company should give them up as soon as the Bhutanese paid up the arrears of the tribute.⁶⁷ Nevertheless, towards the end of 1838, when Jenkins had not sufficient troops at his disposal, he appeared reluctant to take any measure which might create an open rupture with Bhutan.⁶⁸

The Assam Dooars were not annexed for quite some time because the Company was in trouble all along the northern frontier at that time. In 1838, war with Nepal was a possibility. The Pandes, who had assumed power after the fall of Bhimsen in July 1837, had no popular backing. They encouraged militarism and raised an anti-British bogey in order to maintain their hold on the Nepalese Government and the army. The British had trouble with the Court of Ava also. The new King of Burma, Tharrawaddy (1837-45), refused to consider the treaty of Yandaboo of 1826 binding on him, and the British Resident had to retire in the face of hostility. Above all, the north-west frontier engaged the most serious considera-

66. Foreign Department, Political Consultation, 12 September, 1838, No. 116.

67. Foreign Department, Political Consultation, 21 November, 1838, No. 98.

68. *Ibid.* 21 November, 1838, No. 99.

tion of the Company. The extension of Russian influence to Persia and Afghanistan alarmed the British, for they saw in it imminent danger to the security and tranquillity of their Indian Empire.

Jenkins wrote to the Government of India in a letter dated 1 June, 1839, that the Bhutanese authorities had not only refused to make the regular payment of their tribute but also been guilty of the grossest misrule over the inhabitants of the dooars. He recommended to the Government that it should annex the dooars. He, however, mentioned that if the Company was not prepared to take permanent possession of all the dooars, he would suggest the annexation of at least two dooars, Kalling and Booree-Goomah, after the termination of its term of jurisdiction, until all points of disputes with Bhutan were settled. He stated that he did not expect any attempt on the part of the Bhutanese authorities to offer armed resistance. However, he advised the Government of India to be prepared for the contingency of the Bhutanese starting hostilities.⁶⁹

The Company was not prepared to involve itself on the north-eastern frontier when it was preoccupied with the Afghan War. British troops had occupied Qandhar in April, 1839, had stormed Ghazni on 23 July, and were advancing to Kabul. In a letter dated 24 July, 1839, the Government of India ordered Jenkins to write to the Deb Raja for the surrender of the persons detained in Bhutan and for the payment of the tribute in Deba rupees or their equivalent. It instructed him to avoid situation in which the Company might feel obliged to interfere, and to give to every measure of coercion as far as possible "a limited and provincial character."⁷⁰

Jenkins wrote to the Deb Raja on 8 August, 1839, mentioning the demands of the Company but received no reply. On the ground of "further aggression" by the Bhutanese he attached the Kalling and Booree-Goomah Dooars in October, 1839, and wrote a letter to the Dharma Raja stating

69. Foreign Department, Political Consultation, 24 July, 1839, No. 93.

70. Ibid, 24 July, 1839, No. 94.

that the dooars which had formed part of Assam could be held by the Government of Bhutan only as long as that Government fulfilled the terms of the agreement. Since, however, the tribute had remained unpaid and the representations to the Bhutanese authorities for the liquidation of the arrears had gone unheeded, and since plunderings and even murders were frequent in the dooars and the inhabitants of the dooars were subjected to every kind of oppression,⁷¹ the Company had felt obliged to take the measures it did.⁷² The Bhutanese authorities made representations to the Company requesting that the attached dooars should be restored to them. Their requests were ignored. The Court of Directors in a dispatch dated 11 May, 1841, approved of the attachment of the Durrung Dooars and authorized the Government of India to exercise its power over all the Assam Dooars. It pointed out that the protection of the inhabitants of the dooars was incumbent on the Government of India. It held that the Bhutanese authorities had forfeited their right to the dooars by their misgovernment of the country and their sheer inability to control their own officials, irrespective of their failure to fulfil their engagement in regard to the tribute⁷³.

On 21 May, 1841, Jenkins received letters from the Deb Raja and the Dharma Raja. The Dharma Raja said in his letter that their country was being ruined by insurrection, and asked that the attached dooars should be restored and a "gentleman" should be sent to Bhutan. Jenkins thought that the Bhutanese authorities could be induced to transfer the management of the dooars to the Company and that the deputation of an official to Bhutan was likely to achieve more success than Pemberton's mission.⁷⁴ The Government of India, however, was opposed to sending another mission to Bhutan when the Bhutanese authorities were divided into two factions of equal strength and were contending for supremacy in Bhutan.⁷⁵ On 14 June,

71. Foreign Department, Political Consultation, 13 November, 1839, No. 74.

72. *Ibid.*, No. 75.

73. Foreign Department, Political Despatch from the Court of Directors, 11 May 1841, No. 12.

74. Foreign Department, Political Consultation, 14 June, 1841, No. 83.

75. *Ibid.*, No. 86.

1841, Lord Auckland addressed letters to the Deb Raja and the Dharma Raja warning them that if Bhutan continued to be in a state of anarchy and the Indian frontiers continued to be violated, the Government of India would be compelled to occupy all dooars.⁷⁶ On 6 September, 1841, on the receipt of a report from Jenkins describing the miserable state of the Assam Dooars and the continued migration of the population, the remaining Assam Dooars were permanently taken over by the Company. As compensation, a sum of Rs. 10,000 per annum was paid to the Government of Bhutan for the loss it had incurred as a result of the Company's action.⁷⁷

In taking possession of the Assam Dooars the British were actuated by two factors. First, it was the economic potentialities of the dooars which largely induced the British authorities to annex the dooars. The dooars had valuable and fertile lands, and if properly and extensively cultivated, they might yield enormous wealth. Ensign Scott, Assistant in Political Charge, Durrung Magistrate Office, wrote to Jenkins in a letter dated 19 September, 1839 that these dooars had the richest and the most fertile lands in Assam and that if they were taken by the Company, they would yield a considerable amount of revenue.⁷⁸ Secondly, with more and more inroads being made into the Company's territories by the inhabitants of the Assam Dooars the Company became concerned over the problem of establishing peace and security on the frontier of Assam. To guard the frontier with the help of regular troops would have been not only costly but also difficult on account of the extremely bad climate in the area. The Company, therefore, took possession of the dooars in order to put down violence and lawlessness.

After the occupation of the Assam Dooars, the Government of India which was engaged in the Afghan War, the annexation of Sindh, and the Sikh Wars, slackened its interest in Bhutan. Besides, there was no such complicated agreement between the Bhutanese Government and the Company in

76. *Ibid.*, No. 85.

77. *Political Missions to Bootan*, n. 43, p. 23.

78. Foreign Department, Political Consultation, 13 November, 1839 No. 73.

regard to the Bengal Dooars as in case of the Assam Dooars. Hence, fewer disputes took place from 1841 onwards, and the relations between the two Governments were, by and large, peaceful. The Company followed a policy of non-interference towards Bhutan. Even Lord Dalhousie, whose tenure of administration was marked by the stupendous growth of the British Empire at the expense of many Indian States, did not depart from this policy. In 1855, Colonel Jenkins, Agent of the Governor-General on the north-east frontier, informed the Bengal Government that the Dharma Raja had been deprived of his authority by the rebellious chiefs of Bhutan. He stated that the Dharma Raja was anxious to put himself under the Company's protection. The Government of India in its letter dated 4 May, 1855, directed the Bengal Government to inform Colonel Jenkins that it had no desire to interfere in the internal disputes of Bhutan.⁷⁹

TOWARDS CONFRONTATION

In March, 1855, a Bhutanese party led by two persons—one an uncle of the Dharma Raja and the other Jadoom or Dewangiri Raja—reached Gauhati to demand an increase in the amount of compensation paid for the Assam Dooars from Rs 10,000 to Rs 15,000 (or at least to Rs 12,000). Having failed to achieve their object the Bhutanese, on their return to Bhutan, committed several robberies in the Banska Dooar, chiefly in the houses of the Government officers, plundering property to a large amount and torturing people to make them disclose their property.⁸⁰ Soon the Government of India received further reports of such cases. These incursions were instigated by the Dewangiri Raja. Colonel Jenkins, Agent of the Governor-General on the north-east frontier, with the approval of the Government of India, closed the dooars, cut off

79. Foreign Department, Political Consultation, 25 May, 1855, Nos 58-60. See also Foreign Department, Political Despatch to the Court of Directors, 22 November, 1855, No. 64.

80. Foreign Department, Political Consultation, 11 May, 1855, Nos 73-83. See also Foreign Department, Political Despatch to the Court of Directors, 22 November, 1855, No. 64.

all communications between the plains and the hills, and wrote to the Deb Raja demanding the surrender of the offenders. The Deb Raja, this time, took strong action against his subordinate officials. He removed the Dewangiri Raja from office, and imposed a fine on the Tongsa Penlop, the brother of the Dewangiri Raja, under whose jurisdiction the Dewangiri Raja worked.⁸¹

The direct communication of Colonel Jenkins to the Deb Raja piqued the Tongsa Penlop, and the latter addressed a "threatening and offensive" letter to the Agent demanding the payment of half of the fine inflicted on him by the Deb Raja and the surrender of some of the Bhutanese subjects who had been arrested by the local authorities of the Company. He said that he had found out "on strict inquiry" that some followers of the Dewangiri Raja had "helped themselves to firewood, fruit and whatever other eatables they could find". He declared that the assertion of the Company's authorities "as regards their entering dwelling houses and plundering money and valuable property" was false. To the Tongsa Penlop, the proceedings of the frontier officials of the Company smacked of subterfuge and machination. The object of the Governor-General's Agent, according to the Tongsa Penlop, in misrepresenting facts and in "styling the ryots of the Dharma Raja as thieves and robbers" was to break the ties of friendship and harmony between the two Government.⁸²

The "offensive" letter addressed by the Tongsa Penlop stung Jenkins to the quick. In a letter dated 13 November, 1855, he proposed to the Bengal Government that the value of the property plundered by the Dewangiri Raja or with his connivance should be deducted from the Bhutanese share of the revenue of the Assam Dooars. He further suggested in the same letter that the Bhutanese should be punished "by the instant occupation of all Bengal Dooars, the only measure likely to be effective, short of invading the country". He held that the occupation of the Bengal Dooars would compel the Bhutanese to seek conciliation with the Government of India

81. *Papers Relating to Bootan Accounts and Papers* 1865 xxxix p. 3.

82. *Ibid.*, pp. 27-28.

in the hope of being admitted to a share of their revenue as in the case of the Assam Dooars.⁸³ Although the Government of India, to which the Bengal Government had referred the matter, did not accede to the proposition to the instant occupation of the Bengal Dooars, it reacted strongly to the violation of the Company's territory by the Bhutanese and the overbearing tone of the letter written by the Tongsa Penlop to Colonel Jenkins. In a letter dated 11 January, 1856, it wrote to the Bengal Government asking it to take some effective means to put a stop to the "aggression" of the Bhutanese and to protect its subjects from "constant alarm and actual injury" caused by the Bhutanese incursions into the Company's territories. It stated that although it was most anxious to avoid collision with the Bhutanese Government, it felt that it was "impossible to tolerate the insolvent and overbearing tone" of the Tongsa Penlop's letter to its representative on the north-east frontier. It required the Tongsa Penlop to apologize for the "disrespect" he had shown towards its representative and, through him, to the Government of India. It authorized Colonel Jenkins to inform the Tongsa Penlop that unless he forthwith consented to that demand, it would take measures which would have a damaging effect on his authority on the frontier. Further, the Tongsa Penlop was to be informed by the Agent that the value of the property plundered would in any case be deducted from the Bhutanese share of the revenue of the dooars and that any repetition of aggressive movement would be followed by the permanent occupation of the Bengal Dooars. It observed that although the Deb Raja was the nominal head of the Government of Bhutan, he would be held responsible for the delinquencies of the Tongsa Penlop and for those of his brother, the former Dewangiri Raja.⁸⁴

In response to these instructions, Major Hamilton Vetch, Acting Agent of the Governor-General on the north-east frontier, addressed to the Tongsa Penlop a letter dated 21 January, 1856, through the Dewangiri Raja. The Dewangiri Raja, however, for fear of the Tongsa Penlop being offended,

83. Ibid. pp. 23-24.

84. Ibid. pp. 31-32. See also Foreign Department, Political Despatch to the Court of Directors, 20 September, 1856, No. 97.

suppressed the letter.⁸⁵ In a letter dated 18 March, 1856, Colonel Jenkins wrote to the Bengal Government that the Tongsa Penlop and the Dewangiri Raja had, in collusion, evaded the demand for apology and that it seemed to him useless to refer the matter again to them. He wrote to the Dharma Raja and Deb Raja on 16 March in order "to deprive them of any plea of ignorance" and to provide them with one further opportunity to comply with the demands of the Government of India. He, however, considered it inexpedient to take any active measure for the attachment of the dooars until after the rainy season.⁸⁶

ABDUCTION OF ARUNG SINGH

The Governments of India and Bhutan were still at loggerheads when an incident took place further aggravating the strain in their relations. In April, 1856, Arung Singh, who was the hereditary Zamindar of the Gooma Dooar in Bhutanese territory and who had taken refuge in India in order to evade his obligations to the Bhutanese authorities, was carried off forcibly by the Bhutanese. In a letter dated 14 May, Colonel Jenkins recommended to the Government of Bengal that it should address the Bhutanese authorities and demand the punishment of the offenders.⁸⁷ However, in the eyes of Captain W. Agnew, Principal Assistant Commissioner of Gawalpara, Arung Singh, was neither a British subject nor a refugee entitled to protection by the Government of India.⁸⁸ Sir F. Halliday, Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, did not take a serious view of the matter because, according to him, the trespass on the Company's territory by the Bhutanese had been provoked by Colonel Jenkins's "patronage" of Arung Singh. Arung Singh had been permitted to reside in the Company's territory while he still held his zamindari in Bhutan and evaded the payment of "just dues" to the Government of

85. Foreign Department, Political Consultation, 9 May, 1856, No. 41.

86. Ibid.

87. Foreign Department, Political Consultation, 27 June, 1856, No. 15-16.

88. Ibid. See also *Papers Relating to Bootan*, n. 81, pp. 44-45.

Bhutan. In a letter dated 5 June, 1856, F. Halliday suggested to the Government of India that a friendly application should, in the first instance, be addressed to the Bhutanese Government informing it of the incident and requesting an explanation of the occurrence.⁸⁹ However, the Government of India did not consider it "consistent or politic to take the very friendly and moderate tone" recommended by the Lt.-Governor of Bengal. It instructed Halliday to demand of the Bhutanese authorities a punishment to the offenders and an apology for the acts of their subordinates, and "to give them warning (already fully authorized) that if atonement is not made for the new aggression, the Government of India will hold itself free to take permanent possession of the Bengal Dooars".⁹⁰

Before the Agent of the Governor-General received these instructions, the Bengal Government received a communication from him to the effect that the Dharma Raja and Deb Raja, the Tongsa Penlop and the Dewangiri Raja, had made apologies for their previous misconduct.⁹¹ Colonel Jenkins, who had been extremely annoyed by the Tongsa Penlop's "insolent and overbearing tone", was mollified by this apology, and in his letter dated 3 June, 1856, he wrote to the Government of Bengal that he might be permitted to resume his correspondence with the Tongsa Penlop. He recommended the deputation of an officer to Bhutan to promote better understanding with the Bhutan authorities and to raise the Bhutanese share of the dooar revenue to Rs 12,000 from Rs 10,000.⁹² The Bengal Government concurred with all the suggestions made by Colonel Jenkins except the one concerning the deputation of an official to Bhutan. It, however, demanded a full satisfactory explanation for "more recent aggression committed in carrying off Arung Singh" from the Company's territory. The Government of India, in its letter dated 16 July, 1856, agreed with the views expressed by the Bengal Government.⁹³ Colonel Jenkins was ordered to carry out the instructions already issued.

89. Foreign Department, Political Consultation, 27 June, 1856, Nos. 15-16.

90. Ibid., No. 17. See also *Papers Relating to Bootan*, n. 81, p. 50.

91. Foreign Department, Political Consultation, 18 July, 1856. No. 19.

92. Ibid, 18 July, 1856, Nos. 19-21.

93. Ibid, 18 July, 1856, No. 21.

In August, 1856, Colonel Jenkins addressed the Deb Raja and the Dharma Raja demanding the rendition of Arung Singh and informing them of the determination of the Government of India to annex the Bengal Dooars in case of their failure to comply with its demand. The Deb Raja in his reply admitted the abduction of Arung Singh, but defended it on the ground that the person carried off was "a servant" of his own. Colonel Jenkins had also written to the Deb Raja demanding the surrender of some persons charged with certain crimes. The reply from the Deb Raja to that demand was equally "unsatisfactory" to Colonel Jenkins. The Deb Raja asserted that the British subjects had committed "serious depredations" on Bhutanese territory and deplored the apathy on the part of the British officials in apprehending the offenders. He denied the charge of the British officials that the Bhutanese were to blame for the border outrages.⁹⁴

Colonel Jenkins, in a letter dated 15 November, 1856, suggested that any further reference to the Bhutanese authorities would be useless and recommended that "the only measure which promises to be effective is the annexation of the Bengal Dooars".⁹⁵ Reports of further outrages also came in. A merchant, named Saligram Osaval, who had gone to Mynagooree to trade, was arrested and his release refused. Two men were reported to have been carried away from Cooch Behar.⁹⁶ The Government of India wanted to take some measures towards the execution of the threat which had already been given to the Bhutanese Government. But it knew very little of the political condition of Bhutan. It was not sure who held supreme authority, or whether there was any effective chief authority at all in Bhutan. It did not also know the extent of the jurisdictions of the different subordinate rulers along its frontier. In view of the extremely unhealthy climate of the territory, it wanted to know if the pressure proposed to be applied to the Bhutanese Government by seizing the Bengal Dooars might not be equally applied by withholding the revenue of the eastern

94. Foreign Department Political Consultation, 23 January, 1857, Nos. 10-13.

95. Ibid.

96. *Political Missions to Bootan*, n. 43, pp. 32-33.

the authorities in the Bhutanese Court. He was convinced that the Bhutanese would "have to swallow the bitter pill" despite their hesitation and obstruction.⁴³

With much difficulty, marching on through dense forests, and crossing rivers, the mission reached Sipchoo, a place ten miles from Dalimkote, on 31 January, 1864. The coolies supplied to the mission by the Dalimkote Soubah had only been engaged to go as far as Sipchoo, where they were to be relieved by another set of coolies. The local Bhutanese official treated the mission with contemptuous indifference and refused to assist it. Two courses were here open to Eden—either to return to India or to proceed to the Bhutanese Court leaving behind the chief part of the escort and almost all the baggage. He was determined to give the Bhutanese no opportunity to "make capital of the position" and to blame him by saying that his efforts to settle the differences were half-hearted. Although he clearly understood that the Bhutanese policy was to force him by "passive resistance and by discouragement" to return to his territory, he felt that he should go on unless he was positively ordered to quit Bhutanese territory by the Bhutanese Government. Besides, he was resolved to evince no timidity and pusillanimity and thus give his own Government a chance to censure him. He decided, therefore, to push on leaving behind heavy luggage, stores, and the escort except fifteen Sikhs. When the mission arrived at Saybee, a small Bhutanese village, Eden met the Zinkaffs dispatched by the Bhutanese Government. These Zinkaffs wanted to stop the onward journey of the mission and turn it back to the frontier. They had brought two letters addressed to the Dalimkote Soubah. The first letter, which was intended to be shown to Eden, instructed the Soubah to settle the differences with Eden regarding the frontier, without mentioning the attitude of the Bhutanese Government towards the mission. The second letter prescribed a severe punishment for the Soubah for allowing the mission to advance to the Bhutanese Court and ordered him to induce the mission to return without offending the British. The intention of the Bhutanese Government was clear as crystal in this letter.

43. Foreign Department, General A, September 1865. No. 48A (42-50).

Eden, however, continued his journey to Punakha undaunted.⁴⁴

EDEN'S FOOLHARDINESS

On 10 February, 1864, the mission left Saybee for Hah on the way to Paro. From Saybee to Paro Eden showed his reckless adventure in crossing two perilous passes, namely Taigon and Choolah Passes. The mission had a terrible task in crossing the Taigon Pass. The snow was deep, and the thermometer registered 17°F. Two coolies died of cold and exhaustion in crossing this Pass. On reaching Hah on his way to Paro, Eden came to know that one of the chief officers of the Paro Ponlop, Governor of Western Bhutan, and two special Commissioners from the Deb Raja were coming to stop him but had been detained by the snow on the opposite side of the Choolah Pass. He apprehended that if the deputation from the Bhutanese Court got across the Pass before he did, he would be delayed indefinitely from reaching Paro. He decided to forge through the Pass and forestall them. The Hah Dzongpon attempted to postpone the departure of the mission till the arrival of the officials from the Bhutanese Court, but Eden succeeded in getting round him. In forging through the Pass, he staked the life and safety of the members of the mission. The mission had to march through deep snow continuously for fifteen hours without food. As the mission advanced from Hah, the snow became deeper and deeper, and the men and the horses were sunk most of the time up to the neck. Eden himself wrote: "Evening began to draw on whilst we were still on the Pass, and the coolies became frightened and desponding and many wanted to be allowed to lie down and die." After crossing the Choolah Pass the mission did confront the deputation dispatched from the Bhutanese Court, and Eden was asked to return to the frontier, but he had his way.⁴⁵

44. Foreign Department, Political A. September, 1864. No. 53.

See also *Political Missions to Bootan*, n. 10. pp. 69-76.

45. Foreign Department, Political A. September 1864. No. 53.

See also Foreign Department, General A. September 1865. Nos. 42-50.

THE MISSION AT PARO

The mission reached Paro on 22 February, 1864. The reception of the mission at Paro was far from friendly and encouraging. Eden described that "every place in which we proposed to pitch our tents was objected to" on some trifling excuse or other "and we were kept standing on sandy plain for more than two hours with a strong wind blowing up from the valley". The Cheeboo Lama was sent for and reprimanded by the Paro Ponlop for bringing Englishmen into the country. Eden was informed that Paro Ponlop had been "positively prohibited" by the Bhutanese Court from allowing the mission to proceed. Strict vigilance was imposed on the movement of the members of the mission, and their communication with the Bhutanese people was rigidly controlled. Eden then threatened to return to Darjeeling and to put the responsibility and consequences of the failure of his mission on the Paro Ponlop. This threat produced a change in the conduct of the Paro Ponlop towards the mission, and he sent messengers to Punakha to seek permission for the mission to proceed. After waiting for sixteen days at Paro for the permission of the Bhutanese Court, Eden again threatened that he would go either to Darjeeling or to Punakha without waiting any longer for the consent of the Bhutanese Court. The Paro Ponlop then withdrew his objection to the mission's journey to Punakha, but stated that he expected no good for the mission in the Bhutanese Court. When the news of the departure of the mission from Paro for Punakha came, the Bhutanese Court again sent messengers to induce the mission to return to Paro. But Eden was not to be persuaded.⁴⁶

THE MISSION AT PUNAKHA

The mission reached Punakha on 15 March, 1864. A few days after its arrival, the Bhutanese authorities sent for the Cheeboo Lama and abused him "in unmeasured terms" for conducting the mission into their country. On 17 March,

46. Foreign Department, Political A, June, 1864. No. 123.

See also Foreign Department, Political A. September 1864. No. 53.

1864, when the members of the mission were granted an interview with "the Amlah or Council" of Bhutan, they were received by "a disorderly crowd of sepoy and servants" of Bhutan armed with "several stones and pieces of wood", and were "kept standing out on a plain in the burning sun, exposed to the jeers and impertinencies (*sic*) of several hundred persons". The Tongsa Ponlop, Governor of Eastern Bhutan, who was the dominant member of the Bhutanese ruling hierarchy, acted as the spokesman of the Bhutanese Government. The talks between the Bhutanese and the British were carried on through the Cheebo Lama, for he alone knew the languages of both sides. The draft treaty embodying the demands of the Government of India was submitted for deliberation. The Bhutanese authorities studied it for two days. The Tongsa Ponlop raised objections to Articles VIII and IX. Article VIII related to the appointment of an agent at Punakha, and Article IX to free commerce between the two countries. The Tongsa Ponlop also referred to the return of the Assam Dooars but did not insist on it in the first round of negotiations.⁴⁷

Eden was not granted an audience either with the Deb Raja or with the Dharma Raja till 20 March, 1864. The interview, when it was finally granted, turned out to be unsatisfactory. The Tongsa Ponlop acted as their spokesman. Moreover, Eden was not received with the dignity and decorum becoming an envoy of the British Empire. Instead of being received inside the palace, he was taken into a small tent in which the Bhutanese Almahs were seated, and the members of the mission were directed "to sit on mats in the sun". Every opportunity was taken to humiliate the mission.⁴⁸

When the interviews with the Deb Raja and the Dharma Raja were over, the Bhutanese chief and the British envoy sat again to discuss the terms of the draft treaty. After going through the treaty all over again, the Tongsa Ponlop stated that a clause should be added to the treaty restoring the Assam Dooars to the Bhutanese. He said that unless it was done,

47. Foreign Department, Political A, June, 1864. No. 123. (122A-131).

48. *Ibid.*

nothing else could be discussed or agreed to. Eden retorted that the Assam Dooars would in no circumstances be returned to the Bhutanese, and that it would be advisable for them to forget them altogether and take steps to prevent the loss of other parts of their territory which would inevitably follow a refusal to comply with the British demands. The policy of holding out threats followed by Eden had been quite effective in overcoming the opposition of the local Bhutanese officials on his way to the Bhutanese Court, but it utterly failed in the Court. Eden's threatening rejoinder to the demand of the Tongsa Ponlop infuriated the latter, who took up the draft treaty, crumpled it up, and said that he would have nothing to do with Eden and would resort to war to regain possession of the Assam Dooars. Thereupon the other Bhutanese chiefs assured Eden that they would comply with the demands of the Government of India and that the Tongsa Ponlop would be "resisted". Eden knew of the tremendous influence of the Tongsa Ponlop in Bhutan, and his proceeding to deal directly with the other chiefs of Bhutan regarding the terms of the treaty was, therefore, an ill-conceived move. On 24 March, 1864, when the Bhutanese chief and Eden sat down to conclude their negotiation, the Tongsa Ponlop repeated his demand, and no other Bhutanese chief had the courage to contradict him or to oppose him.⁴⁹

EDEN IN TROUBLE

Eden had expected to control the affairs in the Bhutanese Court in the same way as he had brought the Dalimkote Soubah under his thumb. But he caught a Tartar in the Bhutanese capital. On 24 March, 1864, when Eden refused to accede to the Tongsa Ponlop's demand, he was publicly insulted and derided in the Bhutanese Court. Eden himself wrote :

The Ponlop took up a large piece of wet dough and began rubbing my face with it ; he pulled my hair, slapped me on the back, and generally conducted himself

49. *Ibid.*

with very great insolence. On my showing signs of impatience or remonstrance, he smiled and deprecated my anger, pretending that it was the familiarity of friendship, much to the amusement of the large assemblage of bystanders.⁵⁰

Eden had to pocket all these insults. He did not have enough troops with him to overawe the Bhutanese. On 25 March he was asked to sign an agreement by the Bhutanese authorities by which the Government of India was to restore the Assam Dooars, to deliver all Bhutanese slaves and political offenders who had taken refuge in India, and to agree not to encroach on Bhutanese territory. Eden pleaded that he had no authority from the Governor-General of India to enter into such an agreement as had been proposed by the Bhutanese authorities. He was, nevertheless, informed that he "must sign and seal the paper". Eden replied that he would do nothing more than convey the Bhutanese demands to the Governor-General of India. On receiving that message, the Tongsa Ponlop told the Cheeboo Lama that unless Eden agreed to sign the treaty, he would imprison both Eden and the Cheeboo Lama and confine them in the dungeon of a fort. Augda Forung Dzungpon, another Bhutanese chief, said that no good would result from any negotiation with the British and that war should be commenced with them by killing all those who were in their hands.⁵¹

On the evening of 25 March, Eden consulted the members of the mission. He said that in order to avoid the difficulty in which the mission was placed, he could adopt one of three courses: he could either allow the Bhutanese authorities to detain the Cheeboo Lama and himself on condition that the rest of the members of the mission were allowed to return to India in safety; or make an attempt to escape at night; or sign the treaty which had been forced upon him. Eden thought that his detention would place the Government of India in a very difficult position. It would have to send a force to secure his release, but it would find it no easy matter as the season

50. *Ibid.*

51. *Ibid.*

would soon turn unfavourable, and all Bhutanese rivers would be flooded, and many of them would be just impassable. Besides, Eden reasoned that if a British force entered Bhutan, the Bhutanese would threaten to take his life unless the force was withdrawn. As for effecting his escape, he saw little chance of eluding the Bhutanese with a small escort of fifteen Sikhs. He, therefore, came to the conclusion that the only course left to him was "to pretend compliance" with Bhutanese demands.⁵²

When Eden said that he would comply with the Bhutanese demands and made presents on behalf of the Government of India to the Bhutanese chiefs (these presents took a good deal of time to reach Punakha for want of coolies), there was a noticeable change in the Bhutanese behaviour towards the mission. Thus, on 27 March, 1864, the members of the mission were treated "with far greater civility than on former occasions". On 29 March, 1864, Eden signed and sealed two copies of the treaty, but added the words *under compulsion* on each copy in order to prevent the execution of the treaty. However, he gave the Bhutanese no inkling to believe that he had acted under duress. To the Bhutanese, the treaty seemed to have been signed with all formalities of a voluntary engagement. Eden, moreover, accepted the Bhutanese gifts for the Viceroy of India.⁵³

MAIN REASONS FOR THE FAILURE OF THE MISSION

Besides the traditional Bhutanese policy of keeping the British at arm's length, there were several causes for the failure of Eden's mission. The mission was dispatched to Bhutan at a time when its Government was dominated by a chief who was most anti-British in his attitude. This attitude might have been due to two factors. First, he was the person who had been most injured by the annexation of the Assam Dooars.⁵⁴ Secondly, the confidential adviser of the Tongsa Ponlop was an Indian rebel who had gone to Bhutan after the Mutiny. Not only had he prejudiced the Tongsa Ponlop and

52. *Ibid.*, para 22.

53. *Ibid.*, paras 24-26.

54. *Papers relating to Bootan*, n. 2. p. 10.

other chiefs against the British, but he had also tried to seduce the sepoys of the escort of the mission.⁵⁵ Besides, the British demands were extremely obnoxious to the Bhutanese, and Eden's dogged determination to push on to the Bhutanese capital in the teeth of Bhutanese opposition further enraged the Bhutanese authorities. Sir John Lawrence, then Viceroy of India, rightly remarked that Eden showed want of judgment in pressing on after his arrival at Paro.⁵⁶ Moreover, the discrepancy between Eden's venturesome enthusiasm to force the mission into Bhutan on the one hand and his diplomatic amateurishness and want of a clear understanding of the Bhutanese character on the other could not but lead to the failure of his mission. Furthermore, the association of the Cheebo Lama with the mission enhanced the Bhutanese ill-feeling towards it. Cheebo Lama was suspected by the Bhutanese of having planned the mission for his own good. He was an eyesore to the Bhutanese, and they never missed an opportunity to hurl abuses at him.⁵⁷

To sum up, after quelling the revolt of 1857 the Government of India turned its attention to Bhutan. It requested the Bhutanese Government to surrender Arung Singh and other captives detained in Bhutan against their will. On the failure of the Bhutanese Government to comply with the above demand, the British took possession of Ambari Falakata, the Bhutanese territory on the west of Tista, in 1860. But the annexation of Ambari Falakata worsened Indo-Bhutanese relations. Hopkinson, who succeeded Colonel Jenkins in 1861, was inclined to fall in line with his predecessor, who had advocated the annexation of the Bengal Dooars in order to coerce the Bhutanese into submission. He, however, put forth the idea of a mission to Bhutan as an alternative to the annexation of the Bengal Dooars for enforcing the British demands. The mission, led by Eden, pressed into Bhutan against the will of the Bhutanese chiefs. But the Bhutanese upset the calculations of Eden, who, being coerced and insulted by the Bhutanese,

55. Foreign Department, Political A, June, 1864. No. 123, para 18.

56. Letter from Sir John Lawrence to Lord de Grey, dated 22 March, 1866. Lawrence Papers. Reel No. 2.

57. Foreign Department, Political A, June, 1864. No. 123, para 21.

agreed to their terms and conditions and left the Bhutanese capital in humiliation.

The relations between the Governments of India and Bhutan in 1863-64 followed the same pattern as the relations that existed between the Governments of India and Sikkim in 1861. The Sikkimese, like the Bhutanese, resisted the demand of the British to surrender offenders and criminals wanted in connexion with offences and crimes committed in India. In March, 1861, the Government of India forced the Government of Sikkim to agree to a treaty by which the latter acceded to free commerce between India and Sikkim and also undertook to surrender all offenders to the Indian authorities. In 1864, Eden was sent to Bhutan to negotiate a similar treaty with the Government of Bhutan. The Bhutanese not only refused the demands of the Government of India but also ill-treated Eden and extorted a treaty from him. Eden signed the document in order just to ensure the safe return of his mission to India. But the Bhutanese, as we shall presently see, were finally brought to heel by British arms.

CHAPTER III

Indo-Bhutanese Hostilities And Peace 1864-66

DECISION TO PUNISH BHUTANESE AUTHORITIES

The British mission to Bhutan in 1864, which was professedly an attempt to establish peace and friendship, turned out to be a prelude to war and annexation. Not only did the British mission fail to achieve its object, but the British envoy to Bhutan suffered unprecedented humiliation. The British were hardly the people to let the Bhutanese go unpunished. On his return from Bhutan, Eden proposed three alternative courses of action to punish the Government of Bhutan. The first course was to occupy the whole country permanently; and the second, to occupy it temporarily and to withdraw at a convenient time after destroying all forts and letting the people see and feel the British power; and the last, to annex the Dooars and Julpesh permanently.

Eden dwelt upon the merits of each course. According to him, the permanent occupation of the whole of Bhutan held out the prospect of a European settlement in Bhutan and of the command of the commerce of North-West China and Central Asia. He, therefore, liked it best of all the three courses of action he had suggested. As the second alternative held little appeal for him, he recommended that the Government of India should adopt the third alternative if it was unwilling to adopt the first one.¹

1. Foreign Department, Political A. June 1864. No. 125 (122A-131). See also Surgeon Rennie, *Bootan and the Story of the Dooar War* (London, 1866.) p. 155.

The Government of India referred Eden's proposals to Sir Charles Wood, Secretary of State for India. Wood, in his dispatch dated 18 July, 1864, informed the Government of India that he was not prepared to sanction Eden's first or second proposal. He was averse to sending an expedition into Bhutan for the purpose of destroying the forts of the Bhutanese chiefs. He stated that if some stable Government was established in Bhutan, it was desirable for the Government of India to establish such relations with Bhutan as ordinarily existed between independent states. He, however, saw no prospect of that object being attained in the then existing state of affairs in Bhutan. He apprehended that the appearance of a British force in Bhutan would render the establishment of a stable Government still more difficult unless the Government of India set up in the Bhutanese Government some friendly and powerful Bhutanese chief. He did not relish the idea of the Government of India actively interesting itself in setting up any particular chief to control the Government in Bhutan, for, according to him, any such involvement on the part of the Government of India in the affairs of Bhutan would practically result in another form of annexation, the disadvantages of which far outweighed the advantages. He held that the occupation of all the dooars was the best course as it would place the Government of India in the most advantageous position in dealing with any Government of Bhutan or with the Bhutanese chiefs by whose sanction or connivance certain lawless elements were organizing inroads into Indian territory.²

Meanwhile, the Government of Bengal decided, with the approval of the Governor-General of India, to withhold the payment of the Bhutanese share of the revenue of the dooars and other lands, to suspend all communication with the Bhutanese authorities, to prevent the exportation of arms and ammunitions into Bhutan, and to strengthen the police on the frontier.³ Sir John Lawrence, Viceroy of India, in letters dated 9 June, 1864, wrote to the Deb Raja and the Dharma Raja repudiating the agreement signed by Eden at Punakha.

2. *Papers relating to Bootan: Accounts & Papers, 1865.* xxxix, pp. 220-1.

3. *Ibid.*

He informed the Bhutanese authorities that he had annexed the district of Ambari Falakata and forfeited the annual payment of Rs 2,000 previously made to the Government of Bhutan by way of rent for Ambari Falakata. He said, also, that he had ordered the discontinuance of the payment of Rs 10,000 to the Government of Bhutan as the Bhutanese share of the revenue from the Assam Dooars. He warned them that unless they surrendered by 1 September, 1864, all the subjects of the British Crown, including those of Cooch-Bihar and Sikkim, numbering more than 300, detained in Bhutan against their will, and all the property which had been carried off from British territory, or Cooch-Bihar, or Sikkim, during the previous five years, he would take further measures against them.⁴

Sir Cecil Beadon, Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, in his minute dated 22 July, 1864, wrote to the Government of India that it should take strong action to punish the Bhutanese for the outrages which had been committed by the Bhutanese Government and its officers during the past thirty or forty years, the acts of rapine and violence perpetrated by them on Indian territory, and the crowning act of insolence in humiliating Eden in the public Durbar of Bhutan and compelling him against his will to sign a treaty. He felt that the forfeiture of the annual payment of Rs 12,000 paid till then on account of Ambari Falakata and the Assam Dooars was not enough. He held that the Bhutanese did not deserve any magnanimity and forbearance on the part of the Government of India. He was sure that the Government of India could, at any time, by putting forth a minute fraction of its strength and by spending an inappreciable amount of its resources, "crush" that state, but that, through all these years, it had vainly preferred moderation to "justice" and had contented itself with making repeated, though vain remonstrations.⁵

Beadon reminded the Government that the Bhutanese Government had disregarded with impunity the warning of the Company in 1856. He stated that he would not be surprised

4. C. U. Aitchison, comp., *A Collection of Treaties, Engagements and Sanads Relating to India and Neighbouring Countries* (Calcutta, 1909). vol. 2, pp. 298-300.

5. Foreign Department, Political A, September 1864. No. 42 (41-44.)

if the Bhutanese authorities, secure in their ignorance of the power of the Government of India and confident in the inaccessibility of their mountains, set at naught the warning and the demands that the Government of India had conveyed to them in its letters dated 9 June, 1864. He had no doubt that the Bhutanese Government was determined to insist on implementing the agreement signed by Eden under duress. In support of this belief, he cited the letter reported to have been written by Dalimkote Soubah to Eden to the effect that the Deb Raja had sent orders to him directing him to act according to the terms of the agreement signed by Eden.

Beadon, therefore, urged the Government of India not only to enforce its demands in the event of the Bhutanese Government failing to comply with them by 1 September, 1864, but also to take measures to protect its Indian subjects on the Bhutanese frontier from such acts of lawless violence as those from which they had so long suffered. As to the course which should be pursued in the event of the failure of the Bhutanese Government to agree to the demands made by the Government of India, he recommended the occupation of all the passes so that all the territories bordering on Bhutan could be effectively protected against the incursions of the Bhutanese marauders. He pointed out that the crest of the hills was the only position in the Dooars where the British troops could stay throughout the year without damage to their health. He maintained that to possess the Dooars without occupying the passes and the outer ranges of the hills would not do, for it would still mean danger to the border areas of India from hostile moves from that quarter. Besides, he suggested the occupation of a hill tract to the north of Dalimkote in order to fortify both Darjeeling and Sikkim from any attack from Bhutan. He explained that this tract was in the same position towards Darjeeling as the Dooars were towards the plains of India, and that its addition to the Indian Empire was demanded by the same considerations which required the annexation of the dooars, namely the security and fortification of the Indian Empire. He, further, pointed out that besides the timber and its potentiality for tea cultivation, it commanded the direct route from India to Sikkim and thence to Tibet. He

said that he was extremely averse to the temporary occupation of Bhutanese territory. He held that no conditions of indemnity would bind the Bhutanese authorities and that if the Government of India occupied the dooars only to relinquish them afterwards, it would expose the inhabitants there to a system of oppression worse than any under which they had ever lived. He strongly urged that the Bhutanese territory to be occupied should be annexed to British India for ever. He estimated that they could easily realize a revenue of a lakh and a half of rupees from the Bengal Dooars, and proposed to offer Rs. 25,000 a year to the Government of Bhutan and to hold out a promise to them of an increase on this payment up to Rs. 50,000 on such condition as the Government of India might think fit to impose. He stated that he expected that the Bengal Dooars under a better administration would yield a revenue of not less than four or five lakhs of rupees.⁶

Meanwhile, the Bhutanese Government sent its reply to the demands of the Government of India. The Dharma Raja, in a letter dated 3 August, 1864, wrote to Sir John Lawrence that Eden had never made any complaint to him while he was at Punakha for the ill-treatment allegedly meted out to him by the Bhutanese officials. He asked the Governor-General of India either to send a fresh mission to Bhutan or to receive one from himself. The Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal considered the reply of the Bhutanese Government to be "extremely unsatisfactory". He advised the Government of India to reject both alternatives, as he expected no good from further negotiation with the Bhutanese Government and considered it inconsistent with the dignity of the Government of India to receive a mission from Bhutan after its envoy suffered such an outrageous humiliation in that country. In any case, he considered it "perfectly useless" to attempt to enter into any negotiation with Bhutan until it had been made to realize the power of the Government of India. He strongly pressed the Government of India to sanction the proposals made by him in his minute dated 22 July, 1864.⁷

The Government of India, in its letter dated 12

6. *Ibid.*

7. Foreign Department, Political A, December 1864, No. 1 (1-30).

September, 1864, to the Government of Bengal, said that Sir John Lawrence had received only an evasive letter from the Dharma Raja in reply to his letter dated 9 June, which was calculated to convey to the Bhutanese Government a solemn and deliberate warning. It stated that the Government of Bhutan had offered no apology for the indignities to which the late envoy had been subjected, and given no guarantee against a repetition of such indignities in the event of another envoy being deputed to Bhutan. It mentioned that Sir John Lawrence had found in the Dharma Raja's letter nothing either in spirit or in substance to encourage the hope that the Government of Bhutan might yet comply with "the just requisitions" of the Government of India. It observed that after the treatment which the mission had received at the hands of the Government of Bhutan, it was improbable that the latter could for a moment have seriously expected that it (the Government of India) could entertain the proposal for the dispatch of another envoy to Bhutan. It expressed the conviction that the Dharma Raja's intention in proposing to receive or send a mission was only to protract the negotiation and gain time. It added that though there was no clear and positive refusal of the demands of the Government, one could see from the way these demands had been ignored that the Government of Bhutan did not mean to comply with them.⁸

Thus Sir John Lawrence decided to enforce his demands through coercive measures. He resolved "upon administrative and military considerations" to secure the effectual control of the passes from Dewangiri in the east to Dalimkote in the west. He was averse to acquiring more Bhutanese territory than was absolutely necessary to ensure the security of the Indian frontier. He made it clear that there should be no serious encroachment on indisputable Bhutanese territory and that the occupation should be confined to setting free from "a hated and desolating tyranny" a tract inhabited by a race which had no affinity with the Bhutanese but which was closely connected with the people of India and was expected to co-operate with the Indian authorities in the "renovation"

8. *Ibid.*, No. 6.

of the Dooars. He authorized Beadon to order military preparations for the permanent occupation of the Bengal Dooars and all important passes, but instructed the military department that the posts to be occupied for securing the command of the passes into the plains should not be pushed further northward than might be imperatively necessary to attain the objects of security and health for small garrisons whether composed of troops or police.⁹

Sir Charles Wood had already sanctioned the permanent occupation of the Dooars. He had also consented to the occupation of the posts at the crest of the passes.¹⁰

THE BRITISH PLAN OF OPERATIONS

Sir Hugh Rose, Commander-in-Chief, planned to launch the offensive against four important positions of Bhutan, namely Dewangiri, Sidlee, Buxa, and Dalimkote, which were considered to be places of strategic importance and the possession of which was expected to inspire awe in the Bhutanese and to facilitate the occupation of other parts of Bhutan.¹¹ The operation was planned from four divisions or districts.¹² The easternmost or right division was the country between the Manas and the Bar Nuddee, known as Kamrup, with Gauhati as the base. The right-centre division was that portion of the Gawalparah District which lay between the Godadah and the Manas. Gawalparah formed a convenient base for this division. The left-centre division was formed between the Jerdeeker and the Godadah along the northern boundary of Cooch-Bihar. Through the centre of this division ran the main line of communication from India to Punakha and Tassisudon, the summer and winter capitals of Bhutan. The fourth division comprised the country between the Jerdeeker and the Teesta, with Jalpaiguri as the base. A force consisting of about

9. *Ibid.*

10. Letter from Sir Charles Wood to Sir John Lawrence, 1 September 1864. Lawrence Papers. Reel No. 1.

11. Foreign Department, Political A, December 1864, No. 7 (1-30).

12. Military Department Proceedings. September 1864, No. 369. See also Foreign Department, Political A, December, 1864, No. 7 (1-30).

five thousand troops.¹³ was thus divided into four columns to be assembled at Gauhati, Gawalparah, Cooch Behar, and Jalpaiguri to march against Dewangiri, Sidlee, Buxa, and Dalimkote respectively.¹⁴ Sir Hugh Rose kept in view the strategic importance of Darjeeling in the operation against Bhutan. He apprehended a Bhutanese attack on it by way of diversion and made suitable arrangements for its defence.¹⁵

Brigadier General W.E. Mulcaster, who had gained experience in the British campaigns in Afghanistan and in the Punjab and who was commandant of the Eastern Frontier Brigade in Assam at this time, was given charge of the operation against Bhutan. But as there were too many columns and too long a line of operation for one man to supervise, Brigadier General Mulcaster was told to superintend the operations especially of the right and right-centre columns, and Colonel H.F. Dunsford, with the rank of Brigadier General, was appointed to command the two left columns in subordination to Brigadier General Mulcaster. These officers accompanied by staff officers, were ordered to proceed to their respective bases of operation in order to superintend the preparatory arrangements for the offensive and to make a thorough acquaintance of the areas concerned.¹⁶ Besides, some civil officers were appointed. Colonel Haughton, Commissioner of Cooch Behar, was appointed Chief Civil and Political Officer. As Political Officer, he was to be in charge of British relations with Bhutan and to exercise the power and functions exercised by the Governor-General's Agent on the north-east frontier. As Civil Officer, he was to attach himself to the headquarters of the left and left-centre columns and bear responsibility for supplies and transport facilities.¹⁷ Besides Colonel Haughton,

13. The total strength is mentioned in a few books as 10,000 troops. See Surgeon Rennie, *Bootan and the Story of the Dooar War* (London, 1866), P. 157. See also Amantulla Ahmed, *History of Cooch Behar*, Sarat Chandra Ghoshal, trans. (Cooch Behar, 1942), p. 448.

14. Military Department Proceedings, September, 1864, No. 377C.

15. *Frontier and Overseas Expeditions from India* (Compiled in the Intelligence Branch Division of the Chief of the Staff Army Headquarters (India) (Simla, 1907), vol. 4, p. 137.

16. Military Department Proceedings, September 1864, Nos. 371-372.

17. Foreign Department, Political A, December 1864, No. 17 (1-30).

four civil officers were appointed. Captain Lance and Donoghue were posted to the left columns, and Metcalf and Dribeng to the right.¹⁸

THE BRITISH PROCLAMATION AND TERMS OF PEACE

On 12 November, 1864, the Government of India issued a proclamation explaining why it proposed to occupy the Bengal Dooars and the tract of the hill territory of Bhutan which commanded the passes into the plains. Translations of the proclamation in the local languages were circulated widely in the territory proposed to be annexed.¹⁹ The Bhutanese people were told that it would be in their interest to tender submission to the British.²⁰ The publication of the proclamation generally produced a good effect. It gave the people to understand that the object of the British Government was not the annexation of the whole of Bhutan as they had apprehended.²¹

The Government of India directed that no overture from the Government of Bhutan was to be considered except on the following conditions :

(1) The Bhutanese should surrender all the Bengal Dooars and the hill territory on the left bank of the Teesta up to such points on the watershed of the lower range of hills as might be laid down by the British commissioner.

(2) The Bhutanese should surrender the "two documents extorted from Mr. Eden" and send a chief of rank to make apology for their "misconduct" to the British envoy.

(3) The Bhutanese should surrender all captives detained in Bhutan against their will.

(4) The Government of Bhutan should enter into a treaty of friendship for the future.

The Government of India declared that if the Government of Bhutan was willing to negotiate on these terms, it

18. *Frontier and Overseas Expeditions from India*, n. 15. p. 138.

19. Foreign Department, Political A, December 1864. No. 29 (1-30).

20. Foreign Department, Political A, December 1864, No. 215 (214-224) ; see also Rennie, n. 13, pp. 167-8.

21. *Report on Native Papers of Bengal* for week ending 3 December, 1864.

would offer it an annual grant of Rs. 25,000, which might be increased with reference to the prosperity of the territory annexed from Bhutan up to Rs. 50,000, but this grant was to depend entirely on the "will and pleasure of the British Government and the proper behaviour" of the Bhutanese chiefs.²²

THE COMMENCEMENT OF HOSTILITIES

The Government of India completed all the preparations and initiated hostilities against the Bhutanese by the end of November 1864.²³ The British troops occupied Gopalgunj, Mynagoree, and Demohene without resistance.²⁴ The local officials of the Government of India had claimed that the Bhutanese subjects were willing to come under British protection and they would have "their entire goodwill" in occupying the country.²⁵ But the Bhutanese people did not welcome the British troops when they entered the Bhutanese territory. The Soubah of Buxa²⁶ and Chamoorchee²⁷ positively refused to submit to the British. The Soubah of Dalimkote who was expected to be friendly to the British, refused to surrender and made ready to defend his fort.²⁸ The British soldiers who marched to the fort of Dalimkote were assailed by the Bhutanese by arrows and musket shots at the ridge. The Bhutanese killed two British soldiers and wounded several others, including two officers, Captain Macgregor and Lieutenant Loughman, the former by a musket shot and the latter by an arrow.²⁹ On arrival at the fort several British soldiers

22. Military Department, Proceeding A, February 1865, No. 233 (233-524). See also Foreign Department, Political A, December 1864, No. 28 (1-30).

23. *Frontier and Overseas Expeditions from India*. n. 15, p. 138. See also Rennie. n. 13, p. 166.

24. Foreign Department, Political A, December 1864, No. 215 (214-224). See also Rennie, n. 13, p. 168.

25. Foreign Department Consultations, 23 January 1857, No. 10 (10-13). para 8.

26. Foreign Department, Political A, December 1864, No. 222 (214-224).

27. Foreign Department, Political A, February 1865 No. 12 (7-20).

28. Foreign Department, Political A, December 1864, No. 219 (214-224).

29. *Ibid.*, No. 220 (214-224). See also Rennie, n. 13, pp. 171-2.

were wounded by the missiles from the fort. While the British were using 5½ inch mortars against the Bhutanese to capture the fort, a "frightful accident" occurred as a result of a shell bursting at the mouth of one of the mortars and exploding a barrel of gun-powder, which resulted in the death of three artillery officers and several artillery men.³⁰ Brigadier General Dunsford himself had a narrow escape from being one of the victims of the explosion.³¹ The mortars did very little damage to the fort, and the Bhutanese continued to hurl stones and shoot arrows at the British troops. The British troops, several of whom were badly wounded, "kept firing at them in the fort to no purpose". At length, with the help of armstrong guns and mortars, the British troops were able to capture the fort.³² The advance of the British troops on Chamurchi was at first resisted and repulsed by the Bhutanese soldiers, who wounded twelve British soldiers. On 1 January, 1865, however, the British captured the place killing thirteen Bhutanese soldiers.³³ The advance guard of the British column advancing on Dewangiri was opposed and attacked by the Bhutanese, but the capture of Dewangiri was effected by Captain Macdonald by a successful diversion of the Bhutanese force.³⁴ By the end of January, 1865, the British troops had captured all important Bhutanese posts along a line of about a hundred and eighty miles.³⁵

The British troops gave a poor account of themselves in the capture of the fort of Dalimkote. They had fought with sophisticated weapons like cannon and artillery and exposed the fort to heavy fire for more than eight hours.³⁶ The Bhutanese fort contained no piece of artillery, and with the exception of a few jingals and matchlocks, the Bhutanese

30. Military Department, Proceedings A, February 1865, No. 322 (233-524).

31. Rennie, n. 13. pp. 172-73.

32. Foreign Department, Political A, December, 1864, No. 220 (214-224).

33. *Frontier and Overseas Expeditions from India*, n. 15, p. 140. See also Rennie, n. 13. pp. 179-80.

34. Foreign Department, Political A, December 1864. No. 224 (214-224).

35. J. Talboys Wheeler, *Summary of Affairs of the Government of India in the Foreign Department from 1864 to 1869* (Calcutta, 1868), p. 412.

36. *Frontier and Overseas Expeditions from India*, n. 15, p. 139.

means of defence consisted chiefly of stones and bows and arrows.³⁷ Nevertheless, the Bhutanese loss was insignificant in comparison with that of the British. The Bhutanese suffered only four casualties, whereas the British casualties were three officers and seven soldiers killed, and seven officers and fifty-six soldiers wounded.³⁸ The success achieved in the operation against Dalimkote was gratifying to Sir Charles Wood, Secretary of State for India, but he remarked that the loss of lives had been more than Beadon had expected. Beadon had been wrong in assuming that the Bhutanese would not resist.³⁹

THE BHUTANESE BRAVADO : THE BRITISH RETREAT FROM DEWANGIRI

Soon the war with Bhutan appeared to be over, and the British decided to withdraw their troops, leaving the annexed territory to the administration of civil authorities. The Bhutanese, however, decided to hit back. They made preparations to attack the whole line of posts from Chamurchi to Dewangiri,⁴⁰ and gave warning to the British of their intended attack,⁴¹ but no attention was paid to them. The Tongsa Ponlop also wrote a letter to the British at Dewangiri that if they did not evacuate Dewangiri within a week he would take measures to eject them.⁴² Under the command of the Tongsa Ponlop the Bhutanese attacked the British at Dewangiri on the morning of 30 January, 1865. The attack was repulsed after some six hours' fighting. In the night, however, under the cover of darkness, some Bhutanese managed to enter into the heart of the place and inflicted severe loss on the British garrison. Though the Bhutanese had been repulsed, they were by no means defeated, and they renewed their attack on the British garrison. On 3 February, 1865, they erected a stockade within

37. Rennie, n. 13, p. 174.

38. *Frontier and Overseas Expeditions from India*, n. 15, p. 139.

39. Letter from Sir Charles Wood to Sir John Lawrence, 7 January, 1865, Lawrence Papers, Reel No. 1.

40. *Frontier and Overseas Expeditions from India*, n. 15, p. 142.

41. Foreign Department, Political A, March 1865, No. 279 (266-290).

42. Rennie, n. 13, p. 195.

the jingal range of the camp of the British troops and succeeded in occupying the mouth of Durrungah Pass, thus cutting off the British from communication with the plains. The British under Lieutenant Welchman attacked the Bhutanese stockade, and they lost five men in the operation. The stockade, however, remained in Bhutanese possession, and no second attempt was made by the British to take it. On 4 February, Captain Cunliffe, with large ammunition escorted by forty soldiers, endeavoured to reach the position, but finding that the pass had been occupied by the Bhutanese, he retired to Kumrikatta. The retreat of Captain Cunliffe had a demoralising effect. The British troops who had seen Captain Cunliffe's retreat decided to evacuate. The evacuation commenced at 12 midnight on 4 February, 1865. The advance guard of the retreating column was reportedly attacked at the mouth of Sunbankatta Pass by a few Bhutanese who fired at them and pelted stones. The main column lost its way in the darkness. The retreat was a disgrace and a disaster. The British troops darted off in panic leaving behind arms, ammunition, and other belongings and abandoning the wounded to their fate.⁴³ It was indeed a total rout, but the actual loss of life was small because the Bhutanese did not pursue the retreating troops until it was too late.⁴⁴ It was said that the retreat was due to want of ammunition and the loss of access to the spring of water. But it was really due to great carelessness and the want of simple precautions required in hill warfare. The troops had failed to entrench themselves. They had also felt nonplussed by the absence of any decisive and vigorous action.⁴⁵

It is noteworthy that the Tongsa Ponlop behaved with considerable forbearance in the moment of victory. The British prisoners of war were treated well. The Tongsa Ponlop received British messengers "invariably" with kindness.⁴⁶ His conduct in war was thus quite civilized and chivalrous in contradiction

43. Foreign Department, Political A, March 1865, No. 273. See also *Frontier and Overseas Expeditions from India*, n. 15, p. 143.

44. Letter from Sir John Lawrence to Sir Charles Wood, 2 March 1865, Lawrence Papers, Reel No. 2.

45. *Ibid.* 18 February 1865.

46. Rennie. n. 13, pp. 200-1.

to the impression formed of him by Eden.

The Bhutanese attack on Dewangiri was but one of a series of their offensives to oust the British from their country. On 25 February, 1865, the British post Bisensing was attacked, but the Bhutanese were driven off. In the beginning of February, 1865, the Bhutanese threatened Buxa and erected a stockade near the British post. On 6 February, 1865 Lieutenant Gregory proceeded with 150 Gurkhas to attack the Bhutanese stockade, but was obliged to retire with a loss of two officers. Thirteen of his soldiers were wounded. The Bhutanese also attacked Tazigong, the British post in the Balla Pass, and the British had to withdraw their garrison from there. On 4 February, 1865, Colonel Watson, on arrival of reinforcements, including armstrong guns and mortars, attempted to capture the Bhutanese stockade, but after engaging the Bhutanese for a couple of hours and finding it difficult to dislodge them, he retired with a loss of two officers and several soldiers killed and wounded. At the same time Chamurchi was also threatened. Major Pughe, finding the Bhutanese in a strong position behind the stone entrenchment, and the force at his disposal unequal to the task of driving them out, waited for fresh reinforcement, and when it came, the Bhutanese were driven out. They, however, returned and reoccupied the entrenchment.⁴⁷ Thus the Bhutanese threatened and attacked almost simultaneously the whole line of posts occupied by the British troops.

THE IMPACT OF THE BRITISH RETREAT

The British retreat from Dewangiri and Balla formed a landmark in the Indo-Bhutanese War. It elated the Bhutanese and stimulated their efforts to expel the British from their country. It hardened the Bhutanese attitude towards the British terms of peace and ultimately prolonged the war. The Deb Raja in a letter dated 20 February, 1865, wrote to Colonel Haughton demanding compensation for losses suffered in the war as a condition for making peace. The Deb Raja wrote: "I am glad to learn that you intend to make peace. If you

47. *Frontier and Overseas Expeditions from India* n. 15, p. 144.

will give me what I demand as compensation for my loss I will be also glad to make peace ; but if you act according to your wish, then I shall not make peace.”⁴⁸ The Bhutanese victory, moreover, raised the Bhutanese in the estimation of the British. C.T. Metcalfe, Civil Officer of the Bhutan Dooar Field Force, reported on 15 February, 1865, that the British encounter with the Bhutanese had shown that the Bhutanese could collect a far stronger force of men than the British had ever given them credit for. The Bhutanese had a good system of military organisation, and had larger resources in the shape of food in the interior than the British had believed. The Bhutanese soldiers were cool under fire, and were admirable marksmen in respect of both fire-arms and bows. Though the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal disagreed with “many” of Metcalfe’s conclusions,⁴⁹ it could not be denied that the Bhutanese had proved different from what Eden and Beadon had considered them to be.⁵⁰

The British reverses in the war with Bhutan was a severe jolt to British prestige. The British had been worsted in a fight with a people whom they considered “barbarous”.⁵¹ It was thought that if bows and arrows could drive the armstrong guns out of the field, the British would no longer be looked upon as invincible. The British disgrace and disaster at Dewangiri incensed both the Viceroy, Sir John Lawrence,⁵² and the Secretary of State, Sir Charles Wood.⁵³ The Government of India took immediate steps to retrieve its tarnished prestige as well as to strengthen the posts remaining in its possession.⁵⁴ Sir Huger Rose, Commander-in-Chief of India, was replaced by Sir William Mansfield. A change in command of the Dooar Field Force was also made.⁵⁵ Brigadier-General Tombs, commanding at Gwalior, was appointed in place of Brigadier-

48. Foreign Department, Political A, April 1865, No. 129 (120-155).

49. Foreign Department, Political A, April 1865, No. 122 (120-155).

50. Letter from Sir John Lawrence to Sir Charles Wood, 18 February, 1865, Lawrence Papers, Reel No. 2.

51. Foreign Department, Political A, April 1865, No. 123 (120-155).

52. R. Bosworth Smith, *Life of Lord Lawrence* (London, 1883), vol. 2, p. 470.

53. Letter from Sir Charles Wood to Sir John Lawrence, 10 March, 1865, Lawrence Papers, Reel No. 1. See also *Ibid.*, 17 March, 1865.

54. *Frontier and Overseas Expeditions from India*, n. 15, p. 145.

55. *Ibid.*

General Mulcaster, and Brigadier-General Fraser Tytler was nominated to succeed Brigadier-General Dunsford. The whole force was divided into two independent commands, the Right Brigade under General Tombs, and the Left Brigade under General Tytler. Large reinforcements were sent to the Dooar Field Force.⁵⁶ The latter half of February 1865 witnessed hectic activities in Calcutta concerning transportation of the arms and ammunition and troops to the frontier of Bhutan.⁵⁷

THE RECAPTURE OF DEWANGIRI : AN ISSUE OF BRITISH PRESTIGE

H. Hopkinson, Agent of the Governor-General and Commissioner of Assam, suggested postponement of the recapture of Dewangiri till the following winter.⁵⁸ But the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal favoured not only the recapture but also the retention of Dewangiri. He maintained that the possession of Dewangiri had an immediate bearing on the success of the negotiation with Bhutan as a leverage to secure advantageous terms of peace at an early date. He stated that the abandonment of Dewangiri a second time was likely to stiffen the Bhutanese attitude in the negotiation.⁵⁹ Sir John Lawrence, Viceroy, was opposed to the immediate recapture of Dewangiri because he apprehended that the troops might fall ill and thus be prevented from accomplishing the task. But the members of the Council were in favour of the recapture of Dewangiri. So Sir John Lawrence left the issue to the discretion of General Tombs. He, however, refused to consent to the occupation of Dewangiri.⁶⁰ Tombs was told to retake the position of Dewangiri as soon as he could.⁶¹ Tombs, therefore,

56. Military Department, Proceedings A, February 1865, No. 321 (233-524).

57. Rennie, n. 1, p. 206.

58. Foreign Department, Political A, February 1865, No. 244 D (203-246).

59. Foreign Department, Political A, March 1865, No. 197 (197-199).

60. Letter from Sir John Lawrence to Sir Charles Wood, 23 February 1865, Lawrence Papers, Reel No. 2. See also *Ibid.*, 2 March 1865.

61. Military Department, Proceedings A, February 1865, No. 489(233-524). See also Foreign Department, Political A, February 1865, No. 238 (203-246), para 2.

made very elaborate preparations for the recapture of Dewangiri. It was as if he had gone to the frontier with "unlimited power from the Supreme Government". He made on the Commissioner of Assam exorbitant demands beyond the resources of the country and asked him to get them by "proper pressure".⁶² The resources of the district of Kamrup were severely taxed to meet the needs of the troops. Hopkinson himself observed that the British were positively dismembering the district of Kamrup to retrieve Dewangiri.⁶³ He considered the enterprise ill-conceived, and repeatedly urged that the order for the immediate attack on Dewangiri should be countermanded. But preparations for an advance against Dewangiri went on apace.⁶⁴

THE BHUTANESE OVERTURES OF PEACE AND THE RECOMMENCEMENT OF HOSTILITIES

The Bhutanese, however, were not prepared for a war. Soon after the commencement of hostilities they appealed to the British to make peace.⁶⁵ The Paro Ponlop wrote on 22 January, 1865, to the Cheeboo Lama and to Eden deploring the unprovoked British attack on Bhutan and requested them to work for peace.⁶⁶ Colonel Haughten, who had been empowered by the Government of India to entertain Bhutanese proposals for peace, maintained that it was highly unlikely that the Bhutanese would agree to the British terms.⁶⁷ On 17 February, 1865, the old Dalimkote Soubah and other Soubahs arrived unofficially at Balla to meet Colonel Haughten in order to ascertain the British intentions. They stated that they were not furnished with credentials because the British authorities had returned a letter from the Deb Raja in which he had stated that the British mission had been properly treated in Bhutan. Colonel Haughten stressed the determination

62. Foreign Department, Political A, March 1865, No. 198 (197-199).

63. Foreign Department, Political A, March 1865, No. 277 (266-290).

64. Foreign Department, Political A, April 1865, No. 6.

65. Foreign Department, Political A, February 1865, No. 250 (249-251).

66. Foreign Department, Political A, March 1865, No. 3 (3-4).

67. Foreign Department, Political A, February 1865, No. 250 (249-51).

of the Government of India to adhere to its own terms of peace.⁶⁸ Haughton maintained that the Bhutanese overtures of peace were aimed at gaining time and forbade the suspension of partial or irregular hostilities.⁶⁹ After making full preparations the British recommended hostilities. On 15 March 1865 General Tytler occupied Balla, and on 23 March and 24 March he captured the Bhutanese stockades at Buxa and Chamurchi, from both of which the Bhutanese had ejected the British earlier.⁷⁰ By the end of March 1865 the British reached Kumrikatta, and Dewangiri was recaptured on 2 April.⁷¹ But soon after it was abandoned on the ground of its being an unhealthy place.⁷² The Government of India brought the operation to an end with the commencement of the rains. It found that the occupation of all the hill posts was untenable during the rains and decided to hold as few posts as manageable. The posts of Dalimkote and Buxa were held and strengthened. The military authorities were of the view that Chamurchi was untenable,⁷³ but the Viceroy consented to its retention in deference to the advice of Colonel Haughton and Beadon.⁷⁴

THE PROPOSED EXPEDITION TO PUNAKHA TO COERCE THE BHUTANESE CHIEFS INTO SUBMISSION

The Bhutanese still would not accept the British terms. During the cessation of hostilities, however, the Government of Bhutan showed its inclination to negotiate by frequent correspondence with the British authorities.⁷⁵ In May 1865 the Bhutanese authorities sent envoys to ask for the restoration of the territories conquered by the British troops.⁷⁶ The British

68. Foreign Department, Political A, February 1865, No. 244C (203-246).

69. Foreign Department, Political A, February 1865, No. 248 (247-248),

70. *Frontier and Overseas Expeditions from India*, n. 15, pp. 149-51. See also Rennie, n. 6, pp. 285-8.

71. Foreign Department, Political A, April 1865, No. 152 (120-155).

72. Letter from Sir John Lawrence to Sir Charles Wood, 14 April 1865, Lawrence Papers, Reel No. 2.

73. Foreign Department, Political A, April 1865, No. 141 (120-155).

74. Letter from Sir John Lawrence to Sir Charles Wood, 1 July 1865, Lawrence Papers, Reel No. 2.

75. Wheeler, n. 35, P. 414.

76. Foreign Department, Political A, June 1865, No. 28 (27-28).

Indian Government declined to enter into any negotiation on the basis of the restoration of the Dooars to the Bhutanese and threatened to attack and destroy the Bhutanese power in the event of their refusal to agree to the British terms.⁷⁷ The Bhutanese chiefs repeatedly wrote to the British officials expressing their concern for peace but temporized on the British terms. They expected to "beg back" the territories that had been conquered by the British.⁷⁸

Though the Government of India was determined to make the Bhutanese agree to its terms, it was opposed to the continuance of war. The conduct of war in Bhutan was extremely difficult and costly. The difficulty in the Bhutanese war arose from the extraordinary unhealthiness of the tract. The hills were steep and almost impenetrable.⁷⁹ The war was a heavy drain on the exchequer of the Government of India. It involved an expenditure of two-and-a-half lakhs of rupees per mensem, exclusive of the costs of maintaining civil departments, the police, and the roads.⁸⁰ Sir John Lawrence sought the permission of Sir Charles Wood to coerce Bhutan into submission by dispatching an expedition to Punakha. He wrote to Sir Charles Wood: "It may be much cheaper to go to Punakha and dictate terms than to carry on a border warfare which may last for years."⁸¹ He saw neither honour nor profit in the continuance of war.⁸² Sir Charles Wood agreed to the proposal of the Viceroy to send an expedition into Bhutan, but he preferred to strike a blow at the Tongsa Ponlop, the holder of real power, rather than at the Deb Raja and the Dharma Raja.⁸³

The Government of India, meanwhile, tried its best to

77. Foreign Department, Political A, June 1865, No. 28 (27-28).

78. *Report on Native Papers of Bengal* for the week ending 11 February, 1865.

79. Letter from Sir John Lawrence to Lord Cranborne, 8 November, 1866, Lawrence Papers, Reel No. 2.

80. Letter from Sir John Lawrence to Sir Charles Wood, 15 June, 1865, Lawrence Papers, Reel No. 2.

81. *Ibid.*, 8 April, 1865.

82. *Ibid.*, 23 November, 1865.

83. Letter from Sir Charles Wood to Sir John Lawrence, 15 April, 1865, Lawrence Papers, Reel No. 1.

get the Government of Bhutan to agree to its terms both by persuasion and by intimidation. On 1 September 1865 Lieutenant-Colonel Bruce, who had succeeded Colonel Haughton, was authorized to increase the amount to be immediately paid to Bhutan beyond the initial sum of Rs. 25,000 in the event of his being satisfied that some further concession would materially aid the negotiation.⁸⁴ He was, however, forbidden to arouse any expectation of a higher sum being paid eventually than what had already been announced, *i.e.* Rs. 50,000. He was also instructed to threaten the Bhutanese envoys that the offer of the pecuniary grant would be withdrawn if they did not submit to the demands of the Government of India *without delay*.⁸⁵ He was further instructed to insist on the restoration of two guns which had been abandoned by the retreating British troops. He was also directed to seek for military posts on the right as well as on the left of the British frontier and to ensure that the British boundary on both sides included places sufficiently high and commodious to afford a healthy location for the British troops.⁸⁶ Meanwhile the Government of India made vigorous preparations to send an expedition to Punakha to enforce its demands. Sir John Lawrence assured Sir Charles Wood that the Bhutanese would give in when they saw the British troops "hanging over them on the ridge preparatory to advance".⁸⁷ Although the Deb Raja had, in his letters to the British authorities dated 13 September 1865, deplored British highhandedness, he was inclined to yield to the British terms.⁸⁸ The Government of Bengal recommended a prompt display of force at the psychological moment.⁸⁹ The Government of India was not opposed to an early advance on Punakha, but there were important reasons for delay, such as the general indisposition of troops in Assam and Bhutan, the inexpediency of moving fresh troops through the low lands,

84. Foreign Department, Political A, September 1865, No. 2 (1-2), para 4.

85. Foreign Department, Political A, September 1865, No. 50 (48-50).

86. Foreign Department, Political A, September 1865, No. 2 (1-2), para 5.

87. Letter from Sir John Lawrence to Sir Charles Wood, 25 July 1865, Lawrence Papers, Reel No. 2.

88. Foreign Department, Political A, October 1865, No. 31 (31-36).

89. Foreign Department, Political A, September 1865, No. 108 (108-112).

the insufficiency of transport facilities for a forward movement, and want of adequate supplies on the spot.⁹⁰ The Government of India was not oblivious of the disaster of Dewangiri and wanted to move with care and circumspection. It consented to the building of roads to the Buxa ridge and its continuance towards Chuka and held that in the event of the Bhutanese overtures being genuine, the stoppage of the construction of roads could be turned to good purpose as a concession.⁹¹

THE BHUTANESE SUBMISSION TO THE BRITISH TERMS : THE CONCLUSION OF TREATY

The British preparation for attack on Punakha was complete by the month of October 1865, and the season also became favourable to the British troops by that time. On 4 October the order was given by the Government of India for an advance into Bhutan from Buxa and Dewangiri. On 23 October Dewangiri was re-occupied.⁹² It was extremely difficult for the Bhutanese chiefs to resist for long the attack by the British who had not only vast resources but also the advantage of artillery and cannon over the Bhutanese stones, bows and arrows and matchlocks. The Bhutanese requests to the Governments of Nepal⁹³ and Tibet for help⁹⁴ had been turned down. The threat to Punakha and the bellicosity of the British made the Bhutanese give in. On 6 November 1865 the envoys sent by Bhutan conveyed acceptance of the four conditions of peace laid down by the Government of India on 12 November 1864. They, however, objected to the surrender of the guns, a condition that had been "imposed" on the Bhutanese "at the eleventh hour". On 11 November 1865 they signed the treaty on behalf of Bhutan. They were also reported to have executed a separate agreement to the effect that Bhutan was not entitled to the money under the

90. *Ibid.*, No. 111, para 3.

91. Foreign Department, Political A, September 1865, No. 61 (61-62).

92. *Frontier and Overseas Expeditions from India*, n. 15, p. 152.

93. Foreign Department, Political A, March 1865, No. 246 (244-248).

94. *Ibid.*, No. 267 (266-290).

treaty until the British guns, which were in the possession of the Tongsa Ponlop, were restored. Colonel Bruce reported that the Deb Raja and the Dharma Raja proposed to depute agents to the Tongsa Ponlop immediately to obtain the guns and that in the event of their failure they would resort to force and would apply for British assistance if required. The Government of Bengal proposed to advance the first instalment of the annual payment under the treaty by way of subsidy in order to enable the Government of Bhutan to fulfil its agreement. It expected that the payment of money would strengthen the Government of Bhutan in dealing with the Tongsa Ponlop. The Government of India maintained that no money was due to Bhutan until the guns held by the Tongsa Ponlop were returned. It did not consider it expedient to commence new relations with the Government of Bhutan by giving it an advance of money. On the treaty being signed the hostilities were suspended, but the Government of India declared that the construction of roads and the British occupation of the forward positions would continue until the Tongsa Ponlop showed his acquiescence in the treaty by the surrender of the guns.⁹⁵

Under the treaty, which was signed at Sinchula on 11 November, 1865 Bhutan consented to the cession of the Assam and the Bengal Dooars and of such portions of the hill tract on the left bank of the Teesta as might be required by the British Commissioner appointed to lay down the boundary. It also agreed to surrender all British subjects as well as the subjects of Sikkim and Cooch Behar detained in Bhutan against their will ; to the mutual extradition of criminals ; to the maintenance of free trade ; to the arbitration by the Government of India in all disputes between the Government of Bhutan and the Raja of Cooch Behar and Sikkim.⁹⁶ In consideration of the cession of territories by the Government of Bhutan, and in fulfilment of the conditions of the treaty, the Government of India undertook to make an "annual allowance" of Rs. 25,000 to be paid to any Bhutanese official not below the rank of a Dzungpon, who might be authorized by the Government of Bhutan to receive it. The Government of India agreed that

95. Foreign Department, Political A, November 1865, Nos. 59-66.

96. Foreign Department, Political A, December 1865, No. 62 (55-76).

it might raise the value of this allowance up to Rs. 50,000 but never more than Rs. 50,000. It fixed the allowance to be paid to the Government of Bhutan as follows :

On the fulfilment by the Government of Bhutan of the conditions of this treaty, Rs. 25,000 ; on the 10th of the following January, the first payment, Rs 35,000 ; on the 10th of the succeeding January Rs 45,000 ; and on the 10th of every January thereafter Rs 50,000.⁹⁷ Thus Colonel Bruce promised two payments : Rs 60,000 if the conditions of the treaty were fulfilled by the Government of Bhutan before 10 January 1866 although he had been forbidden to exceed the maximum yearly amount of Rs 50,000. All this appeared vexatious to Sir John Lawrence, not on account of increased expenditure, but because it looked like—as indeed it was—a payment for guns.⁹⁸

BHUTANESE PROTEST AGAINST ARTICLES 2 AND 9 OF THE TREATY

The Government of Bhutan wanted to settle the boundary with India with great precision, but the treaty left it to be determined by the British Commissioner.⁹⁹ It also wanted to minimise contacts between the people of the two countries, as it felt that the war of 1865 was due to frequent intercourse between the people. The Deb Raja apprehended that free commerce might again lead to conflict between the two Governments.¹⁰⁰ Hence he was averse to Articles 2 and 9 of the Treaty (Article 2 provided for a separate commissioner to fix the Indo-Bhutanese boundary, and Article 9 stipulated free commerce between the two countries). He returned the Treaty after erasing Articles 2 and 9.¹⁰¹ The Government of India, however, took a firm stand and threatened to renew the hostilities and to enforce blockade unless the Government of Bhutan signed the Treaty in its entirety. The Deb Raja finally

97. *Ibid.*

98. Letter from Sir John Lawrence to Sir Charles Wood, 23 November 1865, Lawrence Papers, Reel No. 2.

99. Foreign Department, Political A, December 1865, No. 61 (55-76).

100. *Ibid.*, No. 195.

101. *Ibid.*, No. 71 (55-76).

ratified the Treaty "without reservation" in the latter part of December, 1865.¹⁰²

AN ESTIMATE OF THE TREATY

The English Press in India was extremely opposed to the Treaty. This was not totally unexpected. When the terms of the Treaty were under discussion, Sir John Lawrence had written to Sir Charles Wood that "a great howl" had been raised by the English papers against the terms of the proposed Treaty which appeared to have thwarted the hope of the British tea-planters in India of helping themselves to much good land in Bhutan on its annexation. He had, however, made clear his own opposition to the annexation of the whole of Bhutan on two grounds. First, the annexation of Bhutan was likely to cause alarm in Tibet. Secondly, the economic potentiality of Bhutan minus its dooars was negligible. Its annexation would cost more than it was worth at any rate. Nevertheless, the Government of India took "the lion's share", stipulating to give the Government of Bhutan a mere trifle which it could deny or withhold on any pretext.¹⁰³ Article 5 of the Treaty, which provided that the British could, at any time when the conduct of the Bhutanese might give cause for dissatisfaction, suspend an allowance which was essential to their bare existence, gave the British a great hold upon them. It was rightly perceived that this provided a strong material guarantee for the "future good conduct" of the Bhutanese authorities.¹⁰⁴

THE BRITISH EXPEDITION FOR THE RECOVERY OF GUNS

According to the agreement with Bhutan, the British

102. *Ibid.*, No. 209.

103. Letter from Sir John Lawrence to Sir Charles Wood, 15 June 1865, Lawrence Papers, Reel No. 2. See also *Ibid.*, 23 November 1865 and 2 February 1866.

104. J.W.S. Wyllie, *Essays on the External Policy of India* (London, 1875), p. 6.

expected that their guns, which had been abandoned by the troops during their retreat from Dewangiri and which had fallen into the hands of the Tongsa Ponlop, would be delivered to them by the Government of Bhutan by 10 January, 1866.¹⁰⁵ But the Tongsa Ponlop refused to join the Deb Raja in subscribing to the British terms of peace. He wanted to negotiate separately with the British in order to receive his own share of the allowance.¹⁰⁶ Lieutenant Grey, Assistant Political Agent, was inclined to deal directly and treat him as a party to the treaty so that he might be induced to surrender the British guns. The Government of India, however, refused to recognize or negotiate separately with the Tongsa Ponlop.¹⁰⁷ It considered itself bound by a regard for its own prestige to recover the guns,¹⁰⁸ as well as to coerce the Tongsa Ponlop, who appeared to be hostile to the British.¹⁰⁹ Sir John Lawrence would not "let him stand out and defy" the British. He wrote to Sir Charles Wood that if the Tongsa Ponlop proved recusant, he would be in favour of coercing him.¹¹⁰ Sir Charles Wood had no objection to the Tongsa Ponlop being coerced. He, however, suggested to the Government of India that it should act as an ally of the Deb Raja in acting against the Tongsa Ponlop.¹¹¹ But the Government of India wanted to settle the matter before the season became unfavourable to its troops. The guns had not been restored even by 3 February 1866. Sir John Lawrence considered that the Government should either give up the effort or act at once. The failure of the Deb Raja and Dharma Raja in soliciting British aid in coercing the Tongsa Ponlop was ascribed to "their weak and vacil-

105. Foreign Department, Political A, February 1866, No. 31 (29-38).

106. Foreign Department, Political A, January 1866, No. 25 (23-26).

107. *Ibid.* Sir John Lawrence followed a similar policy in Afghanistan and disapproved the proceedings of Sher Ali's brothers independent of Amir's authority. See S. Gopal, *British Policy in India* (Cambridge, 1965) p. 44.

108. Foreign Department, Political A, December 1865, No. 217 (217-218).

109. Foreign Department, Political A, February 1866, No. 31 (29-38)

110. Letter from Sir John Lawrence to Sir Charles Wood, 21 December 1865, Lawrence Papers, Reel No. 2.

111. Letter from Sir Charles Wood to Sir John Lawrence, 28, August 1865, Lawrence Papers, Reel No. 1.

lating character and their fear of the Tongsa Ponlop". The Government of India resolved to dispatch troops against the Tongsa Ponlop.¹¹² But the ignominious retreat from Dewangiri on 4 February was still green in the minds of the British military personnel. General Tytler was, therefore, not inclined to act unless he was provided with a very large force. The command of the expedition was ultimately given to Colonel Richardson.¹¹³ General Tytler resigned his command of the frontier in protest, and he was replaced by Colonel Reid, the officer who had distinguished himself at Delhi in 1857.¹¹⁴ On 4 February Colonel Richardson marched from Dewangiri towards Tongsa.¹¹⁵ The sole object of the expedition was the recovery of the guns. Lieutenant Grey, who accompanied the force as political and civil officer, was instructed that if the guns were returned on the way to Tongsa, the force should return at once.¹¹⁶ The Viceroy favoured decisive action and ordered Lieutenant Grey to entertain no overture for delay unless military considerations dictated such a course.¹¹⁷ By a rapid and sudden march¹¹⁸ the British expeditionary force astounded the Bhutanese and no sooner had Colonel Richardson reached the Manas on 23 February than they surrendered the guns.¹¹⁹

To sum up, the Government of India, on the recommendations of Eden and the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, decided to annex the Bhutanese Dooars and the hilly tract on the left bank of the Teesta. It chalked out a plan of operations against Bhutan and aimed at occupying the four strategically important places of Bhutan, namely Dewangiri, Sidlee, Buxa, and Dalimkote, by four different columns of troops. Though the Bhutanese were not prepared for war, they resisted

112. Foreign Department, Political A, February 1866, No. 31 (29-38).

113. Letter from Sir John Lawrence to Lord Cranbone, 8 November 1866, Lawrence Papers, Reel No. 2.

114. Letter from Sir John Lawrence to Sir Charles Wood, 8 February 1866, Lawrence Papers, Reel No. 2.

115. *Frontier and Overseas Expeditions from India*, no. 15, p. 153.

116. Foreign Department, Political A, February 1866, No. 36 (29-38).

117. Foreign Department, Political A, February 1866, No. 144 (140-149).

118. Foreign Department, Political A, February 1866, No. 107.

119. Wheeler, no. 35, p. 153.

the British troops at several places. The British troops, however, occupied the Bhutanese Dooars and important hilly posts by the end of January 1865. In the beginning of February the Bhutanese made a bold effort to oust the foreign troops from their country. The retreat of the British troops from Dewangiri and Balla had a strong impact on both the Bhutanese and the British Governments. It encouraged the Bhutanese to resist British coercion and gave a severe jolt to the British prestige. The British recommenced hostilities in March and recaptured the places they had been forced to evacuate. They had to suspend hostilities during the rainy season. Sir John Lawrence saw neither honour nor profit in the continuance of hostilities and brought the Bhutanese round to his terms of peace on 11 November, 1865, by threatening to attack Punakha itself. But the Tongsa Ponlop refused to return the British guns which had fallen into his possession during the retreat of the British troops from Dewangiri. Sir John Lawrence dispatched an expedition against Tongsa on 4 February 1866, and the guns were restored on 23 February. Thus the Government of India succeeded in bringing the costly and inglorious war to a successful conclusion and in coercing the Bhutanese chiefs into submission.

Although the Government of India commenced the offensive against Bhutan to avenge the ill-treatment meted out to Eden at Punakha, it was largely actuated by strategic and economic considerations. The annexation of the dooars and the hilly posts was meant to protect the entire Bhutanese frontier from any hostile move on their part. Security so achieved did not mean much expense to the British because the dooars produced more revenue than required for defence. The Government of India saw no advantage in the conquest of the whole of Bhutan. It wanted Bhutan to be peaceful and friendly, and felt that the Treaty of 1865 was a guarantee of peace and of Bhutanese friendship.

CHAPTER IV

Consolidation of Relations : 1866-1898

BHUTAN'S REACTIONS TO THE TREATY OF 1865

The Bhutanese authorities had been apprehensive of British policy since 1772. They had been forced that year to sue for peace in their dispute with the Raja of Cooch Behar. The conflict of 1864-66 convinced them that unless they walked warily the British would finish them. Though the Indo-Bhutanese War proved costly and vexatious to the Government of India, it was a severe punishment to the Bhutanese authorities. The Government of Bhutan had to apologize for its conduct towards Eden and return the treaty signed by him at Punakha.¹ It also had to restore a few British subjects detained in Bhutan and part with a large slice of its territory for ever. The Bhutanese authorities attributed the war and the disaster to the free intercourse between the peoples of the two countries at the Indo-Bhutanese frontier.² They were extremely averse to free commerce between Bhutan and India for the same reason.³ They, therefore, thought it wise to seek a precise demarcation of their boundary with India. Thus the war heightened the tendency of the Bhutanese authorities to insulate their country from all contact with the outside world. Bhutan became a forbidden land, and no European was allowed to enter it. The Bhutanese authorities objected even to

1. Letter from Sir John Lawrence to Sir Charles Wood, 2 February 1866, Lawrence Papers, Reel No. 2.
2. Foreign Department, Political A, December 1865, No. 195.
3. *Ibid.*

European tourists or sportsmen visiting their land.⁴ The only visit by a European to Bhutan during the period under study was the one paid by Captain Anderson in 1897. His object was to collect zoological and botanical specimens. He obtained permission to travel in Bhutan from a Bhutanese official near Buxa. His case was, however, exceptional, for he had been living for three years at Buxa and had succeeded in establishing contact with the Bhutanese authorities and in winning their special regard. But even he stayed in Bhutan for just about a week and did not go very far from Buxa.⁵

The Bhutanese authorities apprehended the British interference in their internal affairs, and so they tried to keep them in the dark about what was happening inside Bhutan. In September 1867 not long after the conclusion of the Treaty of 11 November, 1865, they stopped their contacts with the British. They closed the road at Chuka Bridge which led to the interior of Bhutan, and no one was allowed to pass either way.⁶ Lieutenant-Colonel J.C. Haughton, Commissioner of Cooch Behar, regarded the closure of the road as an act contrary to the spirit of Article IX of the Treaty of November 1865. He wrote to the Dharma Raja and the Tingboo Dzungpon, a local Bhutanese officer, remonstrating against the closure of the road, but no notice was taken of his letters. He advised the Government to withhold the annual subsidy due to the Bhutanese Government till it tendered an explanation as to the closure of the road and gave an assurance that it would not occur in future.⁷ The Government of India approved of the temporary withholding of the annual allowance to Bhutan.⁸ The failure of the Government of Bhutan to send an officer of the prescribed rank in January 1868, provided an additional ground to the Government of India to withhold the subsidy. It would be recalled that Article IV of the Treaty of 1865 had provided that the officers to be deputed to receive the subsidy should be "not below the rank of Jungpen". Although

4. Foreign Department, External B, February 1897, Nos. 188-89.

5. Foreign Department, External B, July 1899, No. 108 (107-8).

6. Foreign Department, Political A, October 1867, No. 152.

7. Foreign Department, Political A, December 1867, No. 58 (57-59).

8. Foreign Department, Political A, December 1867, No. 59 (57-59).

the Bhutanese official who had been sent to Buxa in January 1868 was an accredited representative of the Deb Raja and the Dharma Raja, he was not a Dzungpon.⁹ When the Government of Bhutan sent a Dzungpon, an officer of the rank specified in the Treaty of 1865, to Buxa on 8 February, 1868 to receive the subsidy, the Bhutanese authorities were informed that the payment would be made at Darjeeling only to a proper person and on a satisfactory explanation about the closure of the road.¹⁰ The Bhutanese officials did not like the idea of having to go to Darjeeling to collect the subsidy. But their entreaties in this behalf fell flat on Haughton, who wanted to bring home to the Bhutanese how they had erred in closing the road and in deputing an officer of inferior rank. Sir Stafford H. Northcote, Secretary of State for India, concurred in Haughton's proceedings, and said that he expected his firmness to induce the Government of Bhutan to fulfil the terms of the Treaty of 1865.¹¹ The annual subsidy was, at length, paid at Darjeeling on 15 October 1868 on receiving an assurance from the Bhutanese officials that the road had been opened again and that its temporary closure was due to certain internal disputes.¹² It is, however, interesting to note that the British authorities did not withhold subsidy in January 1878, when the Government of Bhutan had sent an official of a rank inferior to that of a Dzungpon.¹³ Again in January 1879, the annual subsidy was paid to a Bhutanese official who was not only inferior in rank, but also with no authority from the Government of Bhutan.¹⁴

RECONCILIATORY MEASURES OF THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

The British authorities assumed a firm attitude to make the Government of Bhutan reconcile to the conditions of the

9. Foreign Department, Political A, February 1868, Nos. 104-7.
10. Foreign Department, Political A, March 1868, No. 29 (27-35).
11. Foreign Department, Political A, November 1868, No. 78.
12. Foreign Department, Political A, April 1868, Nos. 22-25.
13. Foreign Department, Political A, April 1878, No. 145 (145-9).
14. Foreign Department, Political A, May 1879, No. 139 (139-42).

Treaty of 1865, but, at the same time they also tried to soothe the sore caused by the loss of territory by encouraging friendly relations with the Bhutanese authorities. They sought to develop close contacts with the Bhutanese authorities in order to draw them out of the seclusion into which they had gone as a result of their fear of British expansionism. In 1875, Sir Richard Temple, Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, met the Deb Raja at Buxa and expressed friendship for him.¹⁵ This was the first ever occasion when a Deb Raja met one of the English Governors. The British authorities tried to forge amity between the two countries also by sending presents and by respecting Bhutanese susceptibilities in matters in which their own interests were negligible. In 1867, Lieutenant-Colonel J.C. Haughton, the Commissioner of Cooch Behar, purchased guns for the Tingboo Dzongpon as a token of his friendship.¹⁶ In 1883, when a new Deb Raja was elected, the Commissioner of Rajshahi was directed to send the Raja a telescope as a present from Sir Rivers Thompson, Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal.¹⁷ In 1894, A.W. Paul, Deputy Commissioner of Darjeeling, presented a rifle with a bayonet and a scabbard and fifty rounds of ammunition to the Tongsa Ponlop.¹⁸ In March 1884, the Government of India, on the recommendation of the Government of Bengal, granted to the Deb Raja a tract of hill country near Buxa in the Jalpaiguri District in consideration of the religious sanctity attached by the Bhutanese people to a *deostan* (*devasthaana*, temple) which was situated within the tract and which was of little value to the Government of India.¹⁹ Besides, the Government of India took a few concrete steps to establish friendly ties between the peoples of the two countries. In 1868, Colonel Haughton proposed to the Government of Bengal that it should encourage the Government of Bhutan to send its young men to the British territories to learn English,

15. C.U. Aitchison, comp., *A Collection of Treaties, Engagements and Sanads Relating to India and Neighbouring Countries* (Calcutta, 1909), Vol. 2, p. 290.

16. Foreign Department, Political A, December 1867, No. 58 (57-59).

17. Foreign Department, Political A-1, October 1883, No. 88.

18. Foreign Department, External B, January 1894, Nos. 148-51.

19. Foreign Department, Internal A, October 1884, No. 232.

Urdu, or Bengali.²⁰ The Government of India, on the recommendation of the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, sanctioned the proposal for educating a few Bhutanese children at the Government school at Darjeeling on a monthly subsistence allowance of Rs 6/- each in order to encourage communication between Bhutan and India.²¹ The Government of Bhutan did not show interest in the British proposal that the Bhutanese children should be educated in India, but the British authorities did not give up the matter, and Colonel Haughton was instructed to renew his effort to induce the Government of Bhutan to send its children to Darjeeling for education.²² The desire for seclusion was so deep-rooted among the Bhutanese people that Colonel Haughton found it impossible to induce the Bhutanese to send any of their young men to Darjeeling to be educated. Hence he admitted three young Bhutanese, who had settled in Sikkim, to the school at Darjeeling and allowed them each a subsistence allowance of Rs 6 a month. The Government of India had wanted only *bonafide* natives of Bhutan to be educated with a view to improving the intercourse between the peoples of the two countries, but Colonel Haughton went beyond the intention and order of the Government. The Government of Bengal, however, maintained that although the young Bhutanese admitted by Haughton to the Government school at Darjeeling were natives of Sikkim, their education would be of great advantage to the Government in that it would enable it to keep up communication with the Bhutanese people.²³

APPOINTMENT OF A BHUTANESE AGENT IN BRITISH TERRITORY

It was difficult for the British authorities to maintain a regular intercourse with the Government of Bhutan in the absence of any channel of communication. The Government of Bengal had long been advocating the establishment of a

20. Foreign Department, Political A, September 1868, Nos. 333-5.
21. Foreign Department, Political A, January 1869, No. 48.
22. Foreign Department, Political A, July 1869, No. 215 (214-8).
23. Foreign Department, Political A, August 1870, Nos. 365-6.

permanent agency in the Bhutanese capital. The Government of India, however, considered it inexpedient to place an agent in Bhutan because it apprehended that his presence would embroil it in the internal politics of Bhutan.²⁴ It sought instead the establishment of a Bhutanese agency in India to provide information to them about Bhutan and to form a channel of communication with the Government of Bhutan. In the absence of an official representative of the Deb Raja, it decided in February 1867 to receive an agent of the Tingboo Dzongpon and granted a subsistence allowance to him.²⁵ In September 1868, Colonel Haughton proposed to the Government of Bengal to prevail upon the Government of Bhutan to depute an agent to represent it permanently in India and to grant him a "sumptuary allowance".²⁶ The Government of India, on the recommendation of the Government of Bengal, agreed to the proposal made by Colonel Haughton. It also sanctioned an expenditure of Rs 800 for the residence of the Bhutanese agent and Rs 50 a month as his allowance.²⁷ The Government of Bhutan suggested the name of Fentook, Colonel Haughton's interpreter, to the office of Bhutanese Agent in India. Fentook had repeatedly visited Bhutan, and he had been the medium of communication between the British and the Bhutanese authorities since 1864. But he was not a native of Bhutan. Since there was no likelihood of the Government of Bhutan appointing any agent other than Fentook, Colonel Haughton recommended acceptance of the appointment of Fentook as Bhutanese Agent. He held that the advantages of having an authorized agent of the Government of Bhutan outweighed all other considerations. He expected Fentook to be useful by being in direct and regular communication with the Bhutanese authorities. The Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal approved of the appointment of Fentook in June 1870 and permitted him to draw the salary sanctioned for the post by the Government of India. The appointment of Colonel Haughton's interpreter to the office of Bhutanese

24. Foreign Department, Political A, July 1865, No. 112, para 7.

25. Foreign Department, Political B, January 1873, Nos. 31-35.

26. Foreign Department, Political A, September 1868, Nos. 333-5.

27. Foreign Department, Political A, January 1869, No. 48.

Agent amounted to making a virtue of necessity, and it appeared incongruous to the Government of India. As the appointment had been recommended by both Colonel Haughton and the Government of Bengal, the Government of India did not withhold sanction, but it would regard the appointment as temporary and hoped that it would be possible to make some more satisfactory arrangement.²⁸ The Government of Bhutan appointed its own national to the office of Bhutanese Agent in 1776. The Government of India thus succeeded in opening a channel of communication with the Government of Bhutan.

POLICY OF THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA TOWARDS THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES AND THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT OF BHUTAN

The Government of India maintained its official relations with the Government of Bhutan and disfavoured the practice of dealing directly with the Ponlops over the head of the Deb Raja. In November 1865, Sir Charles Wood, Secretary of State for India, instructed Sir John Lawrence, Viceroy of India, to maintain and support a Central Government in Bhutan with which the Government of British India could deal directly.²⁹ The policy of the Government of India then was to act as an ally of the Government of Bhutan in coercing the Tongsa Ponlop to return the British guns in February 1865. This policy was continued even after the recovery of the guns. In 1868, the Paro Ponlop, who had been friendly to the Government of India, was reported to have expressed a desire to depute his agent permanently to Dhumsong in India. Colonel Haughton wanted to seize this opportunity of cultivating close relations with the authorities of Western Bhutan, and recommended to the Government of Bengal that the proposal of the Paro Ponlop should be accepted. The Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal replied that he had no objection to the proposal. The Government of India, however, stated that while the representative of

28. Foreign Department, Political A, August 1870, Nos. 75-77.

29. Letter from Sir Charles Wood to Sir John Lawrence, 17 November 1865, Lawrence Papers, Reel No. 1.

the Paro Ponlop could be received with such courtesy as was befitting to him, such a representative could hardly be acknowledged officially as such by the Government for he would not at all represent the actual Government of Bhutan.³⁰ It supported the authority of the Deb Raja by recognizing him as the sole disposer of the annual subsidy. In 1869, when the Poona Dzungpon complained to the Government of India that his share of the subsidy had been withheld by "the Aundipore Dzungpon and the Jhingboo Jungpen", it kept out of the dispute over the distribution of the annual subsidy among the Ponlops and Dzungpons and gave full discretion to the Deb Raja to deal with the matter as he liked.³¹ It disapproved of the proceedings of the Tongsa Ponlop, who wanted to deal with the British authorities independently of the Government of Bhutan. In 1882, the Tongsa Ponlop wrote to the local authorities and laid claim to a share in the annual subsidy paid to Bhutan by the Government of India under the Treaty of 1865. He wrote in his letter that he possessed the Bhutanese offenders who had been accused of murdering two shopkeepers in the Barpeta Subdivision of Kamrup and whose custody the British authorities had demanded from the Government of Bhutan. He offered to give them up if his claim to a share in the subsidy was recognized. But the Government of India refused to be black-mailed and rejected the Tongsa Ponlop's offer. The action of the Tongsa Ponlop was regarded as "irregular and improper" and he was informed that he should thenceforward communicate with local authorities of Bengal only through the Deb Raja.³² The Government of India said that it did not like to question the sovereign rights of the Deb Raja in any matter. In 1869, it turned down the proposal of Colonel Haughton to call upon the Deb Raja to surrender the Nepalese coolies whom the Bhutanese envoy had enlisted as soldiers in Indian territory, and to fine him in the event of his failure to comply with the British requisition.³³

30. Foreign Department, Political A, April 1868, Nos. 26-28.

31. Foreign Department, Political A, May 1869, No. 188.

32. Foreign Department, Political A, August 1882, Nos. 408-9.

33. Foreign Department, Political A, May 1869, No. 189.

OUTRAGES AT THE INDO-BHUTANESE BORDER AND THEIR CAUSES

While the Government of India tried to maintain and support the central authority of Bhutan as against that of the Ponlops and Dzungpons, it held the Government of Bhutan responsible not only for the action of its officials but also for the activities of its subjects. Article V of the Treaty of 1865, which gave the Government of India the discretion to withhold the subsidy, was effectively used to reduce the Government of Bhutan into submission in case of disagreement or conflict. In 1874, a few Bhutanese subjects committed dacoities in India. The Government of India thereupon demanded Rs. 1,000 from the Government of Bhutan by way of compensation. The Government of Bhutan claimed that it had ordered an inquiry into the matter, but the Government of Bengal said that it did not believe in the fruitfulness of the inquiry and, with the approval of the Government of India, authorized the Commissioner of Cooch Behar to deduct the money from the annual subsidy.³⁴ The efficacy of Article V was again seen in the case of the Bhutanese raid on a village named Chunbati near Buxa. The object of the raid (which occurred on 29 March, 1880) was to recover some slaves who had escaped from Bhutan and settled in British territory.³⁵ Six persons were carried off. Ten of the raiders were reported to have been identified. The British authorities demanded on 19 May 1880 the restoration of the captives and the surrender of raiders in accordance with Article VII of the Treaty of 1865.³⁶ The Deb Raja did not seem inclined to comply with the British requisition, and he requested the Government of Bengal in his turn for the extradition of a Bhutanese subject named Doje Seetoo, who was said to be the instigator of the raid³⁷ and who had, according to the Deb Raja, absconded to India after committing a crime in

34. Foreign Department, Political A, October 1874, Nos. 15-17.

35. Foreign Department, Political A, July 1880, Nos. 61-63.

36. *Ibid.*, No. 62.

37. Foreign Department, Political A, September 1880, No. 161 (159-63).

Bhutan. The British thereupon withheld the annual subsidy,³⁸ and the Government of Bhutan had to yield to the British pressure. Though the captives were not Indian subjects, the Government of Bhutan made over captives as well as raiders to the British authorities at Buxa in July, 1881.³⁹

It will not be out of place to analyse the causes of the disturbances and the acts of violence on the Indo-Bhutanese border. Ashley Eden in his report on Bhutan dated 20 July 1864, mentioned that the aggressions committed by the Bhutanese people on the British territory had been "unparalleled in the history of nations".⁴⁰ This was not, however, the fact. The fact was that the subjects of both countries, Bhutan and British India (including Cooch Behar), committed depredations on both sides of the Indo-Bhutanese border. There were more than one factors responsible for this state of affairs on the border. The Indo-Bhutanese boundary till after its demarcation in 1867-68 and in 1873-74 was of "a very undefined and uncertain character."⁴¹ It is only natural that a boundary undemarcated for miles in an area with dense forests should have given rise to frequent disputes. Moreover, the law and order situation on both sides of the Indo-Bhutanese frontier was slack and left much to be desired. The places in the neighbourhood were a hotbed of marauders and miscreants. The authorities of British India and those of Cooch Behar were not less responsible than those of Bhutan for this unsatisfactory state of affairs.⁴² The Deb Raja repeatedly wrote to the British authorities that the people of India stole men and cattle and sold them to the Bhutanese people.⁴³ The local British officials on the frontier acted in certain cases in an irresponsible manner and extended sympathy to the

38. Foreign Department, Political A, April 1881, No. 340. See also Aitchison, n. 15, p. 291.

39. Foreign Department, Political A, August 1881, No. 280 (280-2).

40. Foreign Department, Political A, September 1864, No. 53, para 15.

41. Foreign Department, Political A, June 1872, No. 664 (633-64).

42. Foreign Department, Political A, September 1865, No. 64 (63-66).

43. Foreign Department, Political A, September 1865, No. 109. See also Foreign Department, Political A, October 1865, No. 67.

offenders.⁴⁴ Furthermore, the issue of extradition of offenders often caused misunderstanding and tension. Both the Bhutanese⁴⁵ and British authorities⁴⁶ were unwilling to hand over persons who had been guilty of offences in their respective areas. Sometimes those who had committed crimes in Bhutan were given refuge in neighbouring Indian territories, and the Bhutanese people made incursions into India to capture such offenders.⁴⁷ The abduction of Arung Singh in 1856 was an instance of this kind of lawlessness. The Government of India which, after the Indo Bhutanese conflict of 1864-66, had shown great keenness on the preservation of peace and the *status quo* on the frontier, favoured the demarcation of its boundary with Bhutan. This in its view, was essential to the maintenance of peaceful relations with that country.

THE INDO-BHUTANESE BOUNDARY AND ITS DEMARCATION

In the hostilities of 1864-65, the Government of India had not considered it expedient to occupy more Bhutanese territory than what was strategically important. At that time it had invited the opinions of three of its Commissioners, General Tytler, Colonel Bruce and Colonel Agnew. The three had stated on 5 October 1865 in a joint memorandum:

We would recommend that the boundary line be drawn so as to include within British territory the mountain tract which lies between the Rivers Teesta and Jhaldaka, and extends northward as far as the frontiers of Sikkim and Tibet. We are of opinion that, besides this, no part of the hill territory of Bootan should be annexed, except so much as is requisite for the establishment of our military frontier posts.⁴⁸

The Government of India agreed to this boundary in its

44. Foreign Department, Political A, November 1868, No. 146.

45. *Papers Relating to Bootan; Accounts and Papers XXXIX, 1865*, p. 53.

46. Foreign Department, Internal B, July 1909, Nos. 48-49.

47. Foreign Department, Political A, August 1869, No. 206 (205-11).

48. Foreign Department, Political A, June 1872, No. 644 (643-44).

letter dated 8 November 1865, with the proviso that sufficient land for a permanent post should be included at Buxa and Dewangiri. It authorized Colonel Bruce, who was then negotiating the terms of peace on behalf of the Government of India, to embody the general terms of the memorandum in the treaty.⁴⁹ Article 11 of the Treaty of 1865 contained the following provision:

It is hereby agreed that the whole of the tract known as the 18 Dooars bordering on the districts of Rungpur, Cooch Behar, and Assam, together with the talook of Ambaree Falacottah and the hill country on the left bank of the Teesta up to such points as may be laid down by the British Commissioner appointed for the purpose, is ceded by the Bhutan Government to the British Government for ever.

When the Bhutanese representatives expressed their desire for a precise definition of the boundary, Colonel Bruce explained to them that the boundary could not be specifically determined and laid down until the area had been surveyed, and assured them that the Government of India had no intention of annexing more of the mountains than might be necessary to afford a secure and permanent frontier and sites sufficiently high and commodious for the location of troops above Buxa and Dewangiri.⁵⁰

The work of surveying the boundary was taken up in 1867-68. The boundary between Bhutan and Jalpaiguri was laid down by J.H.O.'Donel of the Revenue Survey Department, under instructions from Colonel Haughton, who was then the Chief Civil and Political Officer of the Division. In his letter dated 17 January 1867 to O'Donel, Colonel Haughton listed the following as the considerations to be kept in view while carrying out this work:

(1) A strict adherence to the spirit of Government instruction not to include any territory that could be called a hill tract; (2) the obtainment of clear and easily recognizable lines; (3) the inclusion of all lands in the plains so far as

49. *Ibid.*

50. *Ibid.*

practicable; and (4) the inclusion of all Mech, the tribal people of Dooars, and the exclusion of all Bhutanese cultivators.

The Indo-Bhutanese boundary was, however, not demarcated in its entirety in 1867-68. Although the boundary between Bhutan and Cooch Behar was demarcated, the boundary between Bhutan and Assam was left undemarcated. In 1870, the Deb Raja pressed Colonel Haughton that the boundary between Bhutan and Assam should be clearly laid down. Sir William Grey, Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, directed the Commissioner of Assam to take steps to this end. Colonel Agnew, as officiating Commissioner of Assam, strongly opposed such demarcation. He stated that the boundary had been settled and explained to the Bhutanese authorities in 1866, and maintained that the demarcation of boundary would be unnecessary and would only cause irritation to the Bhutanese authorities. He was, however, mistaken, for the undefined boundary soon gave rise to misunderstanding and friction between the authorities of the two countries. Although the Government of India had annexed Dewangiri, it had done nothing to establish its own administration there. In fact, British authorities had never intended to occupy Dewangiri. All that they wanted was to include it in British territory so that they could at any time occupy it in the eventuality of Bhutanese hostility. The Deputy Commissioner of Kamrup used to visit Dewangiri annually to collect taxes from its inhabitants. But since the Bhutanese at Dewangiri had received no protection from the British authorities, they started making difficulties about the taxes due from them. The Tongsa Ponlop complained that there was no peace and order at Dewangiri and proposed that he might be allowed to take possession of it. Besides, the Bhutanese authorities collected taxes from the woodcutters who worked in the forests on their border with Kamrup. Colonel Hopkinson forbade the local Bhutanese authorities to collect such taxes in view of the British claim to the outer slopes of the hills on which the forests stood. Colonel Haughton, however, differed with him. He pointed out that in 1865, the *foot of the hills* had been prescribed as the limit of British and Bhutanese territories except at Buxa and Dewangiri. There was thus no

unanimity of opinion even among the local British authorities as to the actual line of boundary. Colonel Hopkinson contended that the Assam Dooars had been British territory since 1841. The Government of Bengal agreed with him and maintained a distinction between the Dooars of Assam annexed in 1841 and those of Cooch Behar ceded in 1865. The latter had been marked off with boundary pillars in 1867-68, but the former had not been demarcated. To the Government of Bengal, the expression, "a direction along the foot of hills", in the correspondence of 1866 seemed to have been loosely used to express the boundary.⁵¹

The Government of India, however, stated in its letter dated 22 June, 1872, that no distinction had been made between the eighteen Dooars at the time of conclusion of the Treaty of 1865. It lent no weight at all to the contention of the Government of Bengal that the Government of India had obtained some of these Dooars in 1841. It made it clear to the Government of Bengal that the definition of the Indo-Bhutanese boundary should follow the line explained to the Bhutanese representatives at the time of concluding the Treaty of 1865 and deplored the attempt to adhere to a stringent and one-sided interpretation of it. Although it advised the Government of Bengal to take enough of the lower part of the Bhutanese hills for the security and permanence of the frontier, it was opposed to impoverishing the Bhutanese people by depriving them of all the valuable forests on the southern slopes of the hills. It felt that the pursuance of a hard line policy towards Bhutan would lead to frequent quarrels with the Bhutanese authorities. It, therefore, directed the Government of Bengal to survey and demarcate the boundary as early as possible. It added that though the responsibility for the demarcation of the boundary rested with the Commissioner appointed by the Government of India, the Government of Bengal should request the Government of Bhutan to depute its representative to accompany the Commissioner during the demarcation.⁵² In September 1872 Major J.M. Graham, Deputy Commissioner of Durrung, was appointed Boundary

51. Foreign Department, Political A, June 1872, Nos. 633-64.

52. *Ibid.*, No. 664.

Commissioner.⁵³ Graham settled the boundary between Assam and Bhutan during the cold session of 1872-73. Dewangiri and the land lying between the Deea and the Matunga, marked off in the north by the erection of pillars, were declared to be Indian territory.⁵⁴ The Government of Bhutan was requested through the Commissioner of Cooch Behar to send a representative to meet the Boundary Commissioner on the border. But the Government of Bhutan did not send any representative, and the work of demarcation was completed unilaterally.⁵⁵ The Deb Raja of Bhutan was averse to sending his representative to meet the Boundary Commissioner because he wanted the Government of India to readjust the boundary, leave the hills to Bhutan, and confine itself to the plains.⁵⁶ While demarcating the boundary at Dewangiri, Major Graham came across a Bhutanese Zinkaff who had been appointed the chief of Dewangiri by the Tongsa Ponlop and authorized to collect taxes from the people of Dewangiri. The Government of India instructed the Government of Bengal to warn Bhutan that the proceedings of the Tongsa Ponlop would not go unpunished, and it authorized the Government of Bengal to deduct the amount "wrongfully" raised by the Zinkaff from the annual subsidy in accordance with Article V of the Treaty of 1865. It stated further that if the Tongsa Ponlop was not disciplined, the payment of the subsidy would be withheld altogether till proper satisfaction was given by the Government of Bhutan to the Government of India.⁵⁷

The Government of India tried to give a permanent character to the Indo-Bhutanese boundary. In 1868 it turned down a request of the Bhutanese authorities to cede some land in lieu of the payment of money, and told the Commissioner of Cooch Behar to convey its decision to the Government of Bhutan, courteously but firmly, so that there might be no room for any misapprehension or any renewal of request.⁵⁸ In

53. Foreign Department, Political A, October 1872, Nos. 371-3.

54. Foreign Department, Political A, June 1873, No. 133 (132-54).

55. *Ibid.*

56. Foreign Department, Political A, June 1873, No. 129 (127-31).

57. *Ibid.*, No. 134 (132-54).

58. Foreign Department, Political A, January 1869, No. 41 (40-49).

1880, due to a defect in the demarcation of the boundary, the Government of Bengal declined to admit the claim of the Deb Raja to the tract of land containing the *deostan* mentioned earlier, but the tract was given to Bhutan as an act of grace.⁵⁹

In 1887, the Commissioner of Rajshahi proposed to ask the Government of Bhutan to cede a strip of land on the boundary between Bhutan and the Jalpaiguri District, which, according to him, had been wrongly included in Bhutan when the boundary was laid down in 1867-68. The Government of Bengal did not consider it expedient to question the correctness of the boundary since its demarcation had been accepted and approved by the Government of India.⁶⁰ The acquisition of land was, however, deemed desirable and the Commissioner of Rajshahi was permitted to negotiate with the Government of Bhutan as to the terms on which the land might be ceded to the British. The bargain was struck at Rs 10,000, and the Government of India sanctioned the purchase of the land.⁶¹ Besides these minor adjustments, there was no alteration in the Indo-Bhutanese boundary. All differences as to the boundary were settled with reference to the line laid down in 1867-68 and 1872-73. In 1892 the old boundary between Bhutan and Jalpaiguri was delimited.⁶² It was found that a double line of pillars existed over a portion of the border at Jalpaiguri. Nobody seemed to know when, by whom, and for what purpose the inner line of pillars had been erected. H.J.H. Fasson was thereupon deputed to redemarcate the boundary as shown in the main circuit maps Nos. 2 to 7. He was instructed that no deviation should be permitted from the boundary as originally laid down. The boundary pillars were restored wherever they had broken down or disappeared.⁶³

THE POLICY OF NON-INTERFERENCE IN BHUTAN AFFAIRS

Not only did the Government of India take measures to

59. Foreign Department, External A, September 1888, No. 188 (188-202).

60. *Ibid.*

61. Foreign Department, External A, October 1888, Nos. 139-40.

62. Aitchison, n. 15, p. 293.

63. Foreign Department, External A, March 1892, No. 170 (170-03).

lay down a well-defined boundary in order to avoid differences with Bhutan, but it also took care to reassure the Bhutanese people of its peaceability by refraining from meddling in their affairs. It scrupulously followed a policy of non-interference in the affairs of Bhutan. This was because it did not want to give the Government of Bhutan any cause for offence. It also wanted to keep itself aloof from any involvement in Bhutanese politics. During the period covered by this chapter three civil wars took place in Bhutan: one in 1868-69, the second in 1877, and the last in 1884-85. The Government of India, however, adhered to its policy of non-interference and took no active interest in them.

The first civil war arose as a result of a dispute between the Andigorung Dzongpon and the Poona Dzongpon. The Andigorung Dzongpon requested the Deputy Commissioner of Gowalpara for assistance, but his request was turned down.⁶⁴ The Government of India forbade the Bhutanese insurgents to extend hostile activities to, or to recruit soldiers from inside Indian territory. The Bhutanese Agent, who had been residing at Buxa, was ordered to quit India in 1869, when it was found that he was enlisting Nepalese subjects and purchasing ammunition.⁶⁵ The local British authorities were instructed to prevent political refugees from Bhutan from staying anywhere near the frontier. The Government of Bengal informed all its officers on the border that if the Bhutanese insurgents sought asylum in British territory, they should be sent well within the British frontier line where their movement could be watched and where they would be much too far to give trouble to their opponents.⁶⁶ The Duke of Argyll, Secretary of State for India, also favoured a policy of strict neutrality in the internal conflicts in Bhutan. The Government of India proposed that if both contending parties should apply to Colonel Haughton, Commissioner of Cooch Behar, and ask him to settle their dispute and if they should both pledge themselves to abide by his decision, he might be permitted to arbitrate.⁶⁷ The Secretary of State for India, however, did not concur in this proposal,

64. Foreign Department, Political A, June 1869, Nos. 80-81.

65. Foreign Department, Political A, April 1869, Nos. 149-55.

66. Foreign Department, Political A, August 1869, Nos. 64-67.

67. *Ibid.*, No. 207 (205-11).

and instructed the Government of India to confine itself to insisting on a rigid observance, by all contending parties alike, of the neutrality of the British.⁶⁸

At the beginning of 1877, the second civil war broke out. Punakha Dzungpon and his adherents raised the standard of rebellion against the Deb Raja. For about seven months they put up a fight, but they were finally defeated towards the end of 1877. Two leaders of the rebellion, the Paro Ponlop and the Punakha Dzungpon, took asylum with some of their followers in Indian territory. The Deb Raja of Bhutan wrote to the British authorities demanding not only British assistance but also the rendition of the Bhutanese rebels. He mentioned in his letter that when Sir Richard Temple, Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, met him in 1875 at Buxa, he had expressed great friendship for him (the Deb Raja) and had assured him British help in the event of a rebellion against him. Sir Ashley Eden, Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, courteously told the Deb Raja in his letter dated 2 January, 1878, that he had misunderstood what Sir Richard Temple had conveyed to him and reiterated the British policy of non-intervention in Bhutanese affairs. He added further that the British would surrender only criminal offenders under the provisions of the Treaty of 1865 and not political offenders who, owing to the civil war in Bhutan, might take refuge in Indian territory.⁶⁹ He informed him that the Bhutanese rebels had been disarmed on arrival at Buxa, and assured him that the Indian territory would not be allowed to be used by the Bhutanese political offenders for their hostile activities. He declared that so long as the rebels remained peaceful, they would be allowed to stay in Indian territory, according to the British custom.⁷⁰ The Bhutanese political refugees stayed at Darjeeling for about two years until a change in the political condition of Bhutan made it possible for them to return to their own country.⁷¹ When the Bhutanese refugees were in a state of extreme destitution at Darjeeling, the Government of Bengal granted them pecuniary assistance so that they

68. Foreign Department, Political A, January 1870, No. 140 (140-2).

69. Foreign Department, Political A, February 1878, No. 174 (166-76).

70. Foreign Department, Political A, September 1878, No. 32 (29-44).

71. Aitchison, n, 15, p. 291.

might maintain themselves properly, but it said that the grant was being made on condition that they lived in a peaceful way and held no communication with the Bhutanese people save through the Deputy Commissioner of Darjeeling. The Government of India cautioned the Government of Bengal that it should give no room for the Deb Raja to accuse the British of deviating from absolute neutrality and directed it to keep a close watch on the activities of the Bhutanese refugees.⁷²

The third civil war in Bhutan took place in October 1884. Of the two factions which waged war, the one consisted of the Deb Raja, the Thimpu Dzongpon, and the Punakha Dzongpon, and the other comprised the Tongsa and the Paro Ponlops and some Dzongpons. The cause of dispute was that the Tongsa Ponlop's share of the British subsidy had been withheld by the party led by the Thimpu Dzongpon. The Tongsa Ponlop emerged victorious from the war. In July 1885, the Thimpu Dzongpon, together with some of his adherents, fled to Tibet and appealed to the Chinese Resident for help.⁷³ Although the Yamen knew very little about what was going on in Bhutan, the Chinese Resident in Tibet decided to intervene in Bhutan on his own responsibility.⁷⁴ The Chinese Resident in Lhasa summoned a conference at Phari to investigate the cause of the civil war, but the Tongsa Ponlop and the Paro Ponlop refused to attend it. In March 1886, the Tibetan and Chinese agents acted as arbitrators and settled certain terms of agreement between the Tongsa Ponlop and Alu Dorzi (the former Thimpu Dzongpon), but the award was never implemented.⁷⁵

This civil war was important in more than one respect. First, it was the last civil war in Bhutan during the period under study. It resulted in the emergence of Ugyen Wangchuk, the Tongsa Ponlop, as the supreme ruler of Bhutan. Under the long and strong rule of this man the Government of Bhutan became fairly stable. Secondly, the Tongsa Ponlop

72. Foreign Department, Political A, September 1878, Nos. 29-44.

73. Aitchison, n. 15, p. 192.

74. Letter from N.R. O'Connor, British Charge d'Affaires, Peking, to Lord Dufferin, Viceroy of India, 29 December 1885, Dufferin Papers, No. 122, Reel No. 525.

75. Aitchison, n. 15, p. 292.

was not friendly to Tibet and was eager to establish closer relations with the Government of India than had existed till then. Eventually he became a close ally of the British. Thirdly, the civil war of 1884-86 was the last occasion on which the Chinese Resident in Tibet was able to intervene in Bhutan. Fourthly, in 1885-86 the British policy of non-intervention was put to a severe test. Although the Government of India in 1886 claimed no supremacy over Bhutan, it did not regard it as lying within the sphere of Chinese influence.⁷⁶ It was totally opposed to the establishment of Chinese influence south of the Himalayas. Nevertheless, it continued to observe the policy of non-interference in the affairs of Bhutan. In the beginning of 1885, the Deb Raja wrote to the Viceroy of India requesting for arms and ammunition. But not only did the Government of India refuse to comply with the request of the Deb Raja but it also considered it advisable to withhold for some time the annual subsidy to be paid to the Government of Bhutan on 11 January, 1866.⁷⁷ Sir Rivers Thompson, Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, was of the opinion that the subsidy should not be refused if the Deputy Commissioner of Jalpaiguri, who made the payment, was able to satisfy himself that the Bhutanese official arriving to receive it was the duly authorized agent of the *de facto* Deb Raja. The Government of India said, however, that it was opposed to subsidizing one Deb Raja while the Government of China supported another.⁷⁸

THE CHINESE INTERFERENCE IN BHUTAN AND THE POLICY OF THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA TOWARDS IT

Two things explain why the British took no exception to the interference in the affairs of Bhutan by the Chinese Resident in Tibet. First, the British had been seeking Chinese co-operation for the improvement of Indo-Tibetan trade. Both J.W. Edgar, Deputy Commissioner of Darjeeling, and Colman Mucaulay, Finance Secretary to the Government of Bengal, who visited the Sikkimese-Tibetan border in 1873 and 1884

76. Foreign Department, Secret E, August 1886, Nos. 627-49.

77. Foreign Department, Internal A, October 1885, No. 238 (236-47).

78. Foreign Department, Secret E, January 1886, No. 90 (77-91).

respectively, attached great importance to eliciting China's co-operation in promoting Indo-Tibetan trade. Secondly, in 1884-86 there was a possibility of a war between Britain and Russia. The Russian advance to Merv in February 1884 and to Panjdeh in March 1885 had produced a crisis for the British and made it necessary for them to seek China's friendship. China in British eyes was a potential bulwark against Russian aggrandizement in Asia.⁷⁹

The British had found as early as the seventies of the last century that successive Chinese Residents in Tibet had endeavoured to establish their suzerainty over Bhutan. During a visit to Sikkim in the spring of 1876, J.W. Edgar, Deputy Commissioner of Darjeeling, learnt that when the Deb Raja of Bhutan met the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal at Buxa in 1875, the ex-Deb Raja of Bhutan and a former minister of the Sikkim Raja had written to the Chinese Resident in Lhasa that the British intended to invade Tibet and had requested the Government of Bhutan to construct a road for the British troops and help the British in other ways. The Chinese Resident in Lhasa deputed a Chinese officer called Phaphen to proceed to the Bhutanese border and inquire into the matter. The Chinese official was accompanied by a Tibetan official. On arriving at the border the two summoned the ex-Deb Raja of Bhutan to appear before them, but when the Bhutanese chief refused to comply with their order, they proceeded to Tassindon in Bhutan, where, according to the information received in Sikkim, they concluded a treaty with the ex-Deb Raja enjoining the Bhutanese to restrain their "bad practices". It was not explicit to Edgar as to what the "bad practices" were, but he guessed that the Chinese Resident in Lhasa had in mind the dealings of the British with the ruler of Bhutan. Edgar expressed his apprehension that the interference of the Chinese and Tibetan authorities in the relations between the British and the Government of Bhutan was fraught with grave danger. He pointed out in a communication to the Government of Bengal that the interference by the Chinese officials in the

79. Memorandum from the Viceroy to the Secretary, Government of India, Foreign Department, 18 September 1886, Dufferin Papers, No. 158, Reel No. 530.

affairs of Bhutan might, if unchecked, again involve the Government of India in a conflict with the Bhutanese authorities. He strongly recommended that the Government of India should forbid Chinese and Tibetan officials to hold direct communications with the Bhutanese authorities. The Government, however, did not consider it expedient to take action in the matter.⁸⁰

The conciliatory policy of the British towards China facilitated the intrigues of the Chinese Resident in Tibet. He got an opportunity to fish in the troubled waters of Bhutan on the occasion of the civil war in 1885-86. Unhampered in his effort to interfere in Bhutan in 1885-86, the Chinese Resident claimed supremacy for China over Bhutan. He demanded the power of veto on "any future appointment" to the office of Bhutanese Ponlops or Rajas,⁸¹ although the Bhutanese people had till then been unfettered in the choice of their governors and rulers. On the recommendation of the Chinese Resident in Tibet the Chinese Emperor consented to confer on the Paro Ponlop and the Tongsa Ponlop the titles of *Dzassaks* (chieftains). Soon after, the Chinese Resident modified his former recommendation. During his visit to the frontier in connection with the negotiations relating to the Sikkimese-Tibetan convention in 1889-90, he was to ascertain the relative influence exercised by the Tongsa Ponlop and the Paro Ponlop, and he prevailed on the Emperor of China to give the Tongsa Ponlop and the Paro Ponlop the titles of chieftain and sub-chieftain respectively.⁸² In 1891, he sent to the Paro Ponlop a golden letter with the seal of the Chinese Emperor.⁸³ Through the exchange of letters and presents, the Chinese endeavoured to set up their authority beyond their frontier.⁸⁴ The Government of India took no steps to counteract the Chinese moves in Bhutan. However, it moved with circumspection lest its action should arouse Bhutanese suspicion. In 1890, A.W. Paul, Deputy Commis-

80. Foreign Department, Political B, December 1879, Nos. 163-7.

81. Foreign Department, Secret E, February 1887, No. 440 (439-50).

82. Foreign Department, Secret E, November 1890, No. 88 (88-90).

83. Foreign Department, Secret E, March 1892, No. 56 (56-58).

84. Letter from the Marquess of Lansdowne to the Viscount Cross, 9 August 1889, Lansdowne Papers, No. 44, Reel No. 2.

sioner of Darjeeling, suggested the deputation of a British officer to Tassisudon in Bhutan in order to develop intimate relations with the Bhutanese authorities, but his proposal came to nothing. It was considered "impolitic" to send a British officer to Bhutan unless he was "cordially" invited by the Bhutanese authorities.⁸⁵ The British refrained from remonstrating against Chinese interference in Bhutan for two reasons. First, Anglo-Chinese co-operation was still an important consideration in British policy, and the British were disinclined to take measures which might offend Chinese susceptibilities. Secondly, the Treaty of 1865, which governed the relations between the Governments of India and Bhutan, gave no right to the British to prevent the Chinese authorities from interfering in Bhutan.

COMMERCIAL RELATIONS OF THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA WITH BHUTAN

For a few years after the conclusion of the Treaty of 1865, the British were insistent on the implementation of Article IX, which provided for free commerce between India and Bhutan. It has already been mentioned that in 1868, the British adopted a firm attitude towards the Government of Bhutan when the latter stopped free communication at Buxa between the peoples of Bhutan and India. The Government of Bengal wanted to convert Dewangiri into a commercial centre, and attached great importance to the place because of its location on one of the main routes of possible communication with Tibet.⁸⁶ In 1874, it granted Rs.10,000 to the Kamrup District Road Committee to meet the cost of constructing a road to Dewangiri which was intended to be a line of communication into the interior of Bhutan.⁸⁷ During 1885-86, a great effort was made to develop Indo-Tibetan trade. The Government of Bengal initiated correspondence with the Tashi

85. Foreign Department, Secret E, February 1892, Nos. 1-22.

86. Foreign Department, Political A, November 1873, No. 60 (60-65), para 4.

87. Foreign Department, Political A, February 1874, No. 179 (176-82).

Lama with a view to promoting British commercial interests.⁸⁸ Colman Macaulay, Financial Secretary to the Government of Bengal, was greatly elated at the prospect of a revival of the Tibetan policy of Warren Hastings. The Tibetan authorities had stopped trade at Phari on the "ostensible pretext" that the lives of the traders were insecure during the journey between Phari and the Jeylep Pass.⁸⁹ Although Lord Dufferin, the Viceroy, was not earnest about the dispatch of a British mission to Lhasa because of its probable complication with China, Macaulay took advantage of his furlough in Britain in the summer of 1885 and impressed Lord Randolph Churchill, Secretary of State, with the advantages of a mission to Tibet. Lord Randolph agreed that a mission should go under the leadership of Colman Macaulay. In early 1886, the mission was about to proceed to Lhasa. On the eve of his departure to Lhasa, Macaulay urged the Government of India to make the Bhutanese authorities co-operate with the British in improving trans-Himalayan trade. He said that he planned to meet the Tibetan, Sikkimese, and the Bhutanese authorities at Kophu and to make an understanding with them to secure the peace and tranquillity of the region. He pointed out that there was a provision in the Treaty of 1865 which enabled the British to put an end to a state of affairs which hampered commerce. He proposed to the Government of India that it should pay the annual subsidy to the Government of Bhutan, not at Buxa but at Kophu, a place on the Sikkim side of the Jeyley Pass, close to the trijunction of Bhutan, Sikkim, and Tibet.⁹⁰ This measure was intended to induce the Bhutanese authorities to maintain peace and security in that region. But the Macaulay mission was abandoned in June 1886 in consideration of an immediate settlement with China in Burma.⁹¹ With the abandonment of Macaulay's mission the scheme of paying the annual subsidy to Bhutan at Kophu and of enlisting Bhutanese co-op-

88. Telegraphic correspondence from the Viceroy to Secretary of State for India, Dufferin Papers, No. 68, Reel No. 519.

89. Foreign Department, Secret E, August 1886, No. 648 (627-49).

90. *Ibid.*

91. Telegraphic correspondence from Viceroy to Secretary of State for India, 2 June 1886, No. 628, Dufferin Papers, Reel No. 519.

ration in promoting commerce fell to the ground for good. Moreover, Article IX of the Treaty of 1865 had always been a dead letter so far as the goods transported from India into Bhutan were concerned. The traders from India were not usually allowed to enter Bhutan.⁹² The Bhutanese authorities possessed a monopoly of the foreign trade of Bhutan. Free commerce was likely to cause them a great loss.⁹³ This was perhaps the principal reason for their opposition to free commerce. However, the Government of India did not insist on the fulfilment of this Article of the Treaty. The conciliatory policy of the British in this and in some other respects paid them rich dividends in the shape of Bhutanese friendship. In 1888 a conflict took place between the British and the Tibetan Governments, and the Bhutanese authorities used the occasion to show how greatly they valued British friendship.

THE BRITISH CONFLICT WITH TIBET IN 1888 AND THE BHUTANESE ATTITUDE TOWARDS IT

The Tibetan authorities were against the Macaulay mission, and they decided to oppose it by force. In the beginning of 1886, they sent troops to Lingtu and fortified it. When the mission was abandoned, the Tibetans began to withdraw their troops from Sikkim. In September 1886, only a small garrison had been left at Lingtu, and even this was due to be withdrawn within a few months. In October 1888, the Chinese authorities remonstrated with the Tibetans against their opposition to the mission, which had been authorized by the Chinese Emperor. As a gesture of defiance to the Chinese the Tibetans strengthened their garrison at Lingtu, and declared that they would not withdraw their troops unless the British agreed to send no mission to Tibet and allow no European official beyond Lingtu. In the beginning Lord Dufferin, Viceroy of India, was not in favour of a strong policy towards the Tibetans because he feared that it might be mistaken by China as a policy aimed at encroaching on Tibet. He was inclined to think that the Tibetans

92. Foreign Department, External A, March 1904, Nos. 66-125, Department Notes, p. 5.

93. *Ibid.*

would withdraw from Lingtu of their own accord if they were assured of the peaceful intention of the British.⁹⁴ Even at the end of 1887, however, the Tibetans gave no inkling of their intention to leave the place. On the contrary they took certain measures to establish their own administration there. The presence of the Tibetan force on the territory of Sikkim was likely to prove detrimental to the relations of the British not only with Sikkim but also with Bhutan.⁹⁵ In the beginning of 1887 Lord Dufferin referred the issue to the Chinese and requested them to procure the withdrawal of the Tibetans from Lingtu. He gave them ample time to bring their influence to bear on the Government of Lhasa, but the Tibetans turned a deaf ear to their representations.⁹⁶ When all peaceful methods failed, he took recourse to arms. In March 1888, a force under Brigadier-General Graham drove out the Tibetans from Lingtu. In May and in September, 1883, the Tibetans returned, but they were repulsed.⁹⁷ During the military operations in Sikkim, the Tibetans requested the Bhutanese authorities to join them against the British. But the Bhutanese did not comply with the Tibetan request.⁹⁸ They wrote to the British of their peaceful and friendly attitude towards them and sent their agents to help settle the differences between the British and the Tibetans.⁹⁹ The only Bhutanese chief who was reported to have aided the Tibetans was Alu Dorzi, the ex-Thimpu Dzongpon, who had fled to Tibet in July 1885, and had sought Chinese and Tibetan assistance after his reverse in the Bhutanese civil war of 1885-86.¹⁰⁰

94. Letter from Sir Steuart Colvin Bayley, Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal to Sir Donal MacKenzie Wallace, Private Secretary to Viceroy, 24 May 1887, No. 703, Dufferin Papers, Reel No. 531.

95. Letter from Lord Dufferin to Sir Alfred C. Lyall, 27 February 1888, No. 143, Dufferin Papers, Reel No. 527.

96. Letter from Lord Dufferin to General Graham, 5 September 1888, No. 159, Dufferin Papers, Reel No. 534.

97. Sir Francis Younghusband. *India and Tibet* (London, 1910), pp. 48-49.

98. Foreign Department, Secret E, August 1890, No. 286 (286-92) para 5.

99. Telegraphic correspondence from Chief Secretary to the Government of Bengal to Foreign Secretary, Government of India, 21 August 1888, No. 165, Dufferin Papers, Reel No. 533.

100. Aitchison, n. 15, pp. 292-3.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE BHUTANESE NEUTRALITY IN THE BRITISH CONFLICT WITH TIBET IN 1888

Bhutan's neutrality during the conflict between the British and the Tibetans in 1888, marked a significant phase in Indo-Bhutanese relations. The Bhutanese could have exploited the conflict to their own advantage by joining the enemies of the British. They could also have insisted on a revision of the Treaty of 1865 as a price for their neutrality. The combination of the Bhutanese and the Tibetans would have caused an embarrassing position for the Government of India. The peaceful and friendly attitude of the Government of Bhutan towards the British on the other hand signified that Bhutan had reconciled itself to the loss of territory it had suffered after the hostilities of 1864-65. It strengthened British friendship with Bhutan. It provided an additional justification for the Government of India not to approve the hard line proposed by the local British authorities towards Bhutan.

In the beginning of 1891, the Bhutanese people were reported to have committed depredations in several villages in Kamrup and robbed the villagers of 60,000 maunds of paddy. The Deb Raja of Bhutan informed the British that the facts were much exaggerated and that his subjects were engaged in bartering Bhutanese products for paddy according to their custom and that, although petty pilfering had occurred, no force was used.¹⁰¹ It was agreed at the instance of the Deb Raja that there should be a joint inquiry into the matter by Bhutanese and British representatives. The Government of Bengal wrote in a letter dated 16 December, 1891, to the Government of India that it should be allowed to withhold the payment of Rs. 10,000 out of the subsidy payable to the Bhutanese in January 1892. The Government of India, however, did not agree. All the same, it instructed the Government of Bengal to draw the attention of the Government of Bhutan to Article V of the Treaty of 1865, and to the power of withholding subsidy on account of Bhutanese outrages in British territory.¹⁰² The Assam administration communicated to the

101. Foreign Department, External A, December 1893, No. 56 (50-70).

102. Foreign Department, External A, December 1892, No. 98 (91-113).

Government that the warning conveyed to the Government of Bhutan had produced no effect and that further Bhutanese depredations had been reported in Kamrup. A deduction of Rs. 706-12-0, being the cost of the maintenance of a police outpost at Kakolabari was, therefore, made from the Bhutanese subsidy for the year 1893. The Bhutanese and British officials who had been deputed to make a joint inquiry into the Bhutanese depredations in Kamrup reached no agreement. The Chief Commissioner of Assam in his letter dated 19 June 1893 proposed that a sum of Rs. 3,000 should be deducted from the Bhutanese subsidy payable in January 1894. He also suggested that the cost of maintaining the police outpost at Kakolabari should be made a permanent charge on the Government of Bhutan. The Government of India, however, did not concur in the proposals made by the Chief Commissioner of Assam. It considered it inexpedient to take any action which would lead to political friction with Bhutan and disturb its cordial and friendly relations with that country when the Bhutanese attitude had been friendly towards the British for several previous years, especially during the British conflict with Tibet.¹⁰³

To sum up, after the hostilities of 1864-66, the British authorities in India endeavoured to convert a resentful Bhutan into a friendly neighbour. Although they took a serious view of the Bhutanese closure of communication between India and Bhutan in 1868, and held the Government of Bhutan accountable for the incursions made into British territory by the Bhutanese people, their policy towards Bhutan was, by and large, cautious and conciliatory. They strove to foster friendly feelings between India and Bhutan by their winning behaviour towards Bhutanese authorities, by sending them presents, granting stipends to their young men to study at the Government school at Darjeeling, and complying with their requests for various things in which they themselves (i.e. the British) were not greatly interested. They also took certain measures to stave off differences and disputes with the Government of Bhutan. They secured the appointment of a Bhutanese Agent

103. Foreign Department, External A, December 1893, Nos. 50-70.

in Indian territory to open a direct channel of communication with the Government of Bhutan. The undemarcated Indo-Bhutanese boundary, which was likely to give rise to disputes, was demarcated in 1867-68 and in 1872-73. Moreover, the Government of India adopted a policy of non-interference in the affairs of Bhutan so as to allay the suspicions of the Bhutanese people. The Chinese Resident in Tibet took advantage of such policy of the Government of India and endeavoured to meddle in Bhutanese affairs. However, the policy of conciliation and circumspection adopted by the Government of India towards Bhutan had a wholesome effect. The Government of Bhutan refused to comply with the request of the Tibetan authorities to join them in 1888 in their conflict with the British. The neutral and friendly attitude adopted by the Government of Bhutan towards the British during the Anglo-Tibetan conflict in 1888 had an important bearing on Indo-Bhutanese relations in subsequent years and paved the way for closer relations in following years.

CHAPTER V

Bhutan and the Younghusband Mission to Lhasa : 1899-1904

THE viceroyalty of Lord Curzon witnessed an important change in the policy of the Government of India towards its neighbouring states. Curzon was determined to extend British influence and to prevent foreign Powers from establishing a foothold in states bordering on India. His policy towards Tibet resulted in the dispatch of a mission to Lhasa. The mission played a significant part in the British relations with Bhutan as well.

BHUTAN AS A FACTOR IN THE DISPATCH OF THE MISSION

Soon after his assumption of the viceroyalty in January 1899, Curzon found that he had reason to believe that there were Russian agents in Lhasa. On 24 May, 1899, he wrote to Lord George Hamilton, Secretary of State for India, that the Tibetan authorities were being approached by Russia, and that there was little doubt in his mind that "the Russian agents and possibly even some one of Russian origin" had been in Lhasa.¹ He resolved to open negotiations with Tibet, not through the Chinese Amban, who was "an obstacle and a fraud", but with the Tibetans themselves.² In 1899, he felt confident of establishing direct communications with the Government of Tibet. He thought that he would be able to

1. Letter from Lord Curzon to Lord G. Hamilton, No. 23, 24 May 1899, Curzon Papers, Reel No. 1.
2. *Ibid.*

enlist the services of a few agents through whom it would not be difficult to enter into direct relations with the Dalai Lama of Tibet.³ So long as he expected to get into direct contact with the Government of Tibet, he did not attach much importance to the reported intrigue of Russian agents in Tibet. In October 1900, when he heard a report that the Tsar of Russia had received Agvan Dorjief, ⁴ he felt that the Tibetan mission to the Tsar was a "fraud", and wrote to Lord Hamilton accordingly. He said in his letter to the Secretary of State that Tibet was much more likely to turn to the British for protection than to Russia. He expected that the communication which he was trying to establish with the Dalai Lama might inaugurate a new era in the relations between the Governments of Tibet and India.⁵ Ugyen Kazi, the Bhutanese Agent at Darjeeling, who had free access to Tibet, was first employed to write to the Dalai Lama. In September 1899, and again in December 1899, Ugyen Kazi wrote letters to the Dalai Lama, proposing to him, in general terms, that he should come to an understanding with the British. The replies he received showed that the Dalai Lama was not willing to deal directly with the British. In 1900, under the advice of Captain Kennion, Assistant to the British Resident in Kashmir, a letter from Curzon was entrusted to a Tibetan official at Gartok who undertook to hand it over to the Dalai Lama. But the letter was returned unanswered after a few months. It seemed to Curzon that it was hopeless to get at Lhasa from the western side, and he fell back upon Ugyen Kazi as the only channel of communication between the Governments of India and Tibet.⁶ Curzon's apprehension of the establishment of Russian influence in Tibet deepened with his growing difficulties in establishing contact with the Government of Tibet. In a letter dated 11 June 1909, he wrote to Hamilton that if Tibet held

3. *Ibid.*

4. Dorjief was a Buriat Buddhist monk. Although he was a Russian national, he had settled in Tibet and reached the high office of the Grand Almoner to the Dalai Lama. See K.M. Panikkar, *Asia and Western Dominance* (London, 1953), p. 162.

5. Letter from Lord Curzon to Lord G. Hamilton, No. 72, 18 November 1900, Curzon Papers, Reel No. 2.

6. *Ibid.*, 8 May 1901, No. 32, Reel No. 2.

aloof from the British, the Russians would establish a protectorate in Tibet within the next ten years. He had no fear that Russia would invade India from a Tibetan base; what he feared was that the Russian agents in Tibet would spread disaffection in Bhutan and other Himalayan states and unsettle the northern frontier of India. He described the danger posed by the possibility of a Russian protectorate in Tibet in these words:

In itself, this might not constitute a military danger—not at any rate for many years to come. But it would constitute a political danger ; for the effect upon Nepal, Sikkim and Bhutan, would be most unsettling and might be positively dangerous.⁷

In June 1901, while Ugyen Kazi was going to Lhasa, he was entrusted with a letter from Curzon to the Dalai Lama. Curzon proposed to Hamilton that if he did not get a reply from the Dalai Lama to his letter, he would take recourse to force with the ultimate object of concluding a treaty in Lhasa putting the relations between the Governments of India and Tibet on a better footing than they had been in the past. But Hamilton did not concur in Curzon's proposal.⁸

Curzon, however, felt that the obvious Tibetan hostility to, or dislike of, the British was not to be tolerated. The Tibetans were not only frustrating the British attempts to open negotiation with them but also ignoring the Sikkimese-Tibetan Convention of 1890 and the Trade Regulations of 1893. He felt that if he failed to establish contact with the Dalai Lama, he should insist upon the due execution of these agreements. He wrote once again to Hamilton that the Dalai Lama should be firmly told that he could not "trample with impunity" on a British treaty or "behave as Germany might do to Denmark".⁹ Between June and August 1901, Agvan Dorjjeff was again received by the Tsar. After the second Dorjjeff mission, the India Office also expressed great concern in the Tibetan situa-

7. *Ibid.*, 11 June 1901, No. 38.

8. Letter from Lord G. Hamilton to Lord Curzon, 11 July 1901, No. 45, Curzon Papers, Reel No. 2.

9. Letter from Lord Curzon to Lord G. Hamilton, 31 July 1901, No. 52, Curzon Papers, Reel No. 2.

tion and mentioned that the Dalai Lama's attitude was similar to that adopted by the Afghan Amir, Sher Ali, in 1876, when he refused to receive a mission from the British Government whilst carrying on negotiations with the Russian authorities in Central Asia. But it differed with Curzon both as to the gravity of the danger and to the method which should be adopted to counter it and was inclined to proceed more cautiously than Curzon desired. In October 1901, Ugyen Kazi returned from Tibet with Curzon's letter unopened and its seal intact. He stated that he had handed it to the Dalai Lama, but that the Dalai Lama had refused to accept it.¹⁰ In 1902, Curzon began to suspect that a Russian protectorate over Tibet was not so remote an event as he had thought in June 1901.

In the summer of 1902, the Tibetan situation acquired further urgency. In May 1902, Curzon came to know of a secret treaty between Russia and China regarding Tibet. He wrote to Hamilton on 28 May, 1902, that if the reported treaty were confirmed, he would put a British army in Lhasa without the slightest delay.¹¹ The dilatory tactics employed by the Chinese Government in the matter of sending its official to meet the British Political Officer in Sikkim about this time lent credence in Curzon's judgement to the rumour of a secret agreement between China and Russia regarding Tibet. In November 1902, he became a firm believer in the existence of a secret understanding, if not a secret treaty, between Russia and China about Tibet, and he regarded it as his duty to frustrate "this little game" while there was yet time.¹² The Russian Government denied the allegation that it had concluded an agreement concerning Tibet, but to Curzon the Russian denial proved nothing. Although the Home Government was not inclined to agree to Curzon's point of view that the Tibetan refusal to answer letters was an offence, that a trade convention which had been concluded with Tibet's nominal suzerain but to which Tibet objected would be binding, and that Tibet's refusal to honour the convention could be made

10. *Ibid.*, 5 November 1901, No. 75.

11. *Ibid.*, No. 41, 28 May 1902, Reel No. 3.

12. *Ibid.*, No. 91, 13 November 1902.

an excuse for reprisals,¹³ it gave its consent to the dispatch of a British mission to Lhasa.

THE CONCERN OF THE BRITISH AUTHORITIES IN INDIA ABOUT THE BHUTANESE ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE MISSION

The spectre of Bhutanese hostility haunted the British authorities in India in the beginning of the advance of the British mission to Lhasa, because Bhutan's frontier ran parallel and very close to the line of the progress of the mission and the Bhutanese people had ancient ties with Tibet and their religion was the same as that of Tibetans. The Government of Bengal strengthened the military force, quietly and unobtrusively, on the Bhutanese frontier.¹⁴ It was, at the same time, anxious to sound the Bhutanese authorities and to detach them from the Tibetans if they were in favour of them (the Tibetans). It, therefore, suggested in August 1903, that the Commissioner of Rajshahi should invite the Tongsa Ponlop or the Paro Ponlop to meet him at Buxa in the following cold season so that the British might explain their position in regard to Tibet and find out how the Bhutanese Government would react. In a letter dated 24 September, 1903, the Government of Bengal pressed its suggestion that a meeting between the Commissioner of Rajshahi and a Bhutanese chief should be arranged at Buxa in the following month. Colonel Francis E. Younghusband, Commissioner for Tibet Frontier Matters, proposed to sound the Bhutanese authorities in regard to the reconnaissance of a route by a British official for constructing a road from India to Tibet through Bhutan. He also wrote to the Government on 3 October 1903 to make an endeavour through the Maharaja of Cooch Behar to secure the neutrality, if not the active co-operation, of Bhutan.¹⁵ The Government of Bengal, with the approval of the Government of India, wrote to the Tongsa Ponlop a letter on 9 October, 1903, and

13. Letter from John Brodrick to Lord Curzon, No. 78, 6 November 1903, Curzon Papers, Reel No. 3.
14. Letter from J.A. Bourdillon to Lord Curzon, No. 124, 15 October 1903, Curzon Papers, Reel No. 10.
15. Foreign Department, Secret E, November 1903, Nos. 159-234.

invited him to come to Buxa or to Kalimpong, whichever he found more convenient, to meet C.R. Marindin, Commissioner of Rajshahi, who had been deputed to meet him as the Plenipotentiary of the Government of India, on as early a date as possible in the month of November 1903. It informed the Tongsa Ponlop that the Government of India was "desirous of obtaining the good offices of the Government of Bhutan" in securing a satisfactory solution of its difficulties with the Government of Tibet. It also sent a gold watch and a gold chain as presents to the Tongsa Ponlop.¹⁶

On the eve of the proposed meeting of C.R. Marindin with the Tongsa Ponlop, the Government of Bengal in a letter dated 8 November, 1903, to the Government of India, made a number of proposals, all aimed at securing the co-operation of Bhutan in the proposed expedition to Lhasa. Firstly, it proposed that an increase should be made in the annual subsidy to Bhutan as it was likely to have much weight with the Bhutanese chief in deciding if he would allow the exploration of the valleys of Amo Chu and Di Chu through which a road was proposed to be constructed from India to Tibet. (Sir Andrew Fraser, Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, suggested that the increase might be any sum up to Rs 25,000 on condition that the road through Bhutan was built and maintained.) Secondly, it proposed that Marindin should be authorized to agree to the levy of reasonable transit duties by the Bhutanese authorities in order to stimulate their interest and co-operation in the construction of the road. It observed that although, according to Article IX of the Treaty of 1865 with Bhutan, the trade between India and Bhutan was to be free and no duties were to be levied, the Article had all along been a dead letter in respect of the goods transferred from India to Bhutan. Thirdly, it proposed that the British right to a tract of 70 to 80 square miles in the western part of the district of Darjeeling, which had been "wrongfully" held by Bhutan owing to "a mistake" made in the survey of 1866-67 should be waived.¹⁷ In September 1903, Charles Bell, who had been conducting

16. Foreign Department, External A, March 1904, No. 66 (66-125).

17. Foreign Department, External A, March 1904, Nos. 66-126, Foreign Department Notes, pp. 5-6.

the settlement of Kalimpong, a subdivision of the district of Darjeeling bordering on Bhutan and Sikkim, had, while examining old papers, discovered that the British Government had been kept out of the possession of some 80 square miles of land which should have belonged to it. Although the Government of Bengal realized that it was difficult to obtain possession of the territory which had remained for about thirty-eight years in the undisputed occupation of Bhutan, it felt that it could use its claim to move the Bhutanese authorities to allow it to build a road through Bhutan.¹⁸ Moreover, the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal and the Chief Commissioner of Assam were both in favour of ceding to Bhutan a strip of territory between the Monass and the Daranga in the north of the Kamrup District in order to secure Bhutan's friendship and co-operation at that time.¹⁹

The Government of India did not concur in the proposals put forward by the Government of Bengal. It directed the latter to instruct Marindin to confine himself to sounding the Bhutanese authorities on their general attitude and willingness to assist the British with transport and, if Bhutan agreed to co-operate, hinting at the favourable consideration by the Government of India of any Bhutanese request that might be made. It was, nevertheless, circumspect in its policy towards Bhutan and was concerned about the Bhutanese attitude, especially before the British occupation of the Chumbi Valley in December 1903. It instructed the Government of Bengal in its letter dated 2 November, 1903, to impress Marindin that the main objective at the meeting with the representative of the Bhutanese Government was to secure neutrality, if not the active friendship, of the Bhutanese Government in the event of British operations in the Chumbi Valley. It maintained that the British proposal for the survey of the Amo Chu and Di Chu valleys was likely to arouse alarm or suspicion in the Bhutanese mind and directed that Marindin should for the time being avoid making any reference to this proposal. It opined that if he con-

18. Letters from J.A. Bourdillon to Lord Curzon, No. 103b, 1 October 1903, Curzon Papers, Reel No. 10.

19. Foreign Department, External A, March 1904, Nos. 66-125, Foreign Department Notes, pp. 6 and 13.

fined his reference to the only corner of Bhutan through which the proposed road would pass, it might arouse less objection.²⁰ Bhutan's neutrality was important to the British for two reasons. First, from the military point of view, although the British Government was powerful enough to overcome Bhutanese armed resistance, the hostility of the Bhutanese would have been extremely embarrassing to the British. Secondly, if the Bhutanese stayed neutral, their neutrality could be used as a psychological weapon to make the Tibetans agree to British terms. Moreover, the British aimed at isolating Tibet from the other Himalayan states in order to demonstrate Tibetan intransigence.

THE ROLE OF THE BHUTANESE GOVERNMENT DURING THE ANGLO-TIBETAN ALTERCATION

During the Anglo-Tibetan dissension following the Tibetan opposition to the British mission, the Bhutanese Government had endeavoured to remain neutral and to play the role of a mediator between the Tibetans and the British. But the British were suspicious of the Bhutanese attitude. When there was delay by the Government of Bhutan in deputing its representative to meet the British official, the British suspicion regarding the Bhutanese attitude increased. C.R. Marindin wrote to the Tongsa Ponlop on 19 December, 1903, that he had received reports that hostile preparations were being made in Bhutan, and he warned that he would not assure his Government that the Bhutanese authorities intended to remain friendly and to abide by the Treaty of 1865 until a Bhutanese chief met him. The Tongsa Ponlop in his reply dated 30 December, 1903, assured him that the reports of hostile preparations in Bhutan were false and wicked, calculated to cause ill-feeling between the British and the Bhutanese. He asserted that if the British authorities in India doubted the truth of his statement they might depute a few officials to examine the Bhutanese castles. He claimed that his "unsullied feelings of friendship" towards the British were like "a piece of unsullied white

20. *Ibid.*, March 1904, No. 67 (66-125).

scarf". He informed Marindin that the Tibetans had also received "a similar, wickedly false report", namely that Bhutan had joined hands with the British against the Tibetans, and were suspicious of the intentions and activities of the Bhutanese authorities.²¹

The Tongsa Ponlop took too seriously the British request conveyed to him by the Government of Bengal in its letter dated 9 October, 1903, that the British Government was "desirous of obtaining the good offices of the Government of Bhutan" in securing a satisfactory solution of its difficulties with the Government of Tibet. He considered it his duty to step in between the two contending Governments as a peace-maker and mediator also because of Bhutan's proximity to and its close relationship with both Tibet and British India. While the Bhutanese Government was bound by the Treaty of 1865 to be friendly to British India, it was attached to Tibet by the tie of a common religion. The Tongsa Ponlop wanted to ascertain the intentions of both the British and the Tibetan Governments before he set out from Bhutan to meet the British official. In his letter dated 15 November 1903 to C.R. Marindin he acknowledged receipt of the British presents of a gold watch and a gold chain through Ugyen Kazi and requested him to inform him of the British terms in the negotiations with the Tibetans. He further added that he had written a letter to the Dalai Lama, and that he would inform him (Marindin) of the date and place of his meeting as soon as he received a reply to that letter. He was aware of the fact that Bhutan was a small country and that the Bhutanese "humble effort" would scarcely be necessary for negotiation between the Tibetan and the British Governments if the Chinese Amban endeavoured to effect a settlement between them. He, however, stated that he was prepared to negotiate on behalf of the British authorities in India if they thought that the Chinese Amban would represent the Tibetan interest. He expressed his willingness to meet the British official at a place near Rinchingong so that he might help the British negotiations with the Tibetans, but added that if the British official had any separate and important

21. *Ibid.*, No. 99.

matter to be discussed between the British and the Bhutanese Governments alone, he preferred to meet him at Buxa.²²

With the British occupation of the Chumbi Valley in December 1903 the political management of Bhutan was transferred from the Government of Bengal to Colonel Younghusband, Commissioner for Tibet Frontier Matters, acting under the direct control of the Government of India. Colonel Younghusband wrote on 25 December, 1903, to both the Tongsa Ponlop and the Paro Ponlop requesting them to meet him at Chumbi and informing them that since the matter was urgent and no Bhutanese representative had met the British official, he had sent an Indian surveyor with a few escorts to Bhutan in order to explore a new route by which a road might be constructed connecting the Chumbi Valley with India. The Bhutanese authorities lent every assistance in the exploration of the new route through the Amo Chu and Di Chu Valleys, and the surveyor saw no warlike preparations anywhere in Bhutan. The Bhutan Council and the Tongsa Ponlop deputed a Bhutanese envoy, the Trimpuk Dzongpon, to meet Colonel Younghusband at Chumbi. The Bhutanese envoy arrived at Phari on 14 February, 1904, and was received by E.H. Walsh, Assistant to Colonel Younghusband. He explained that the Government of Bhutan deferred the deputation of an envoy to meet the British official because it thought it best to wait for a reply to its letter from the Government of Tibet. He reiterated the friendship of the Government of Bhutan for the British, and handed over to E.H. Walsh a permit for the construction of a road through Bhutan from Bengal to the Chumbi Valley.²³ Curzon was "agreeably surprised" at the Bhutanese good temper and friendliness.²⁴ The Bhutanese envoy stated that his Government was very much concerned over the Anglo-Tibetan differences and expressed his willingness to tender his good offices. Colonel Younghusband explained to the Bhutanese envoy the British position in regard to Tibet. The Bhutanese

22. *Ibid.*

23. *Ibid.*, Nos. 112-13.

24. Letter from Lord Curzon to John Brodrick, No. 12, 10 March 1904, Curzon Papers, Reel No. 4.

envoy thereupon met the Lhasa delegates, acquainted them with the British terms of negotiation, and conveyed to Colonel Younghusband the Tibetan point of view.²⁵ When he found that neither the British nor Tibetans were prepared to modify their stand, he returned on 13 March, 1904, to Bhutan.²⁶ When the Trimpuk Dzongpon's good offices failed to patch up the Anglo-Tibetan differences, the Bhutanese authorities became extremely anxious. They felt that they must somehow avert the disaster of an Anglo-Tibetan conflict. The Bhutanese concern for the peaceful settlement of the Anglo-Tibetan differences may be gauged from the fact that the Dharma Raja, the Tongsa Ponlop, and the Trimpuk Dzongpon wrote letters to the Maharaja of Cooch Behar requesting him to exercise his influence in order to establish peace between the Tibetans and the British. The Bhutanese chiefs hoped that the Maharaja of Cooch Behar, because of his close contact with the British in India, might prevail on them to modify their terms.²⁷

The British expedition, after inflicting severe casualties on the Tibetans at Guru, reached Gyantse on 11 April 1904.²⁸ The Tongsa Ponlop in a letter dated 16 April 1904 informed Colonel Younghusband that he had written to the Dalai Lama proposing to effect a settlement with the British, and urged him not to move further until he received a reply to his letter.²⁹ Colonel Younghusband was disinclined to receive the Tongsa Ponlop at Gyantse till the end of May 1904, but when he learnt that the Tibetan councillors were afraid to meet him unless the Tongsa Ponlop was present there, he telegraphed to him to reach Gyantse as soon as possible. The Tongsa Ponlop, accompanied by Lama Serkhangtulku, who had been deputed by the Dalai Lama with a letter to the Tongsa Ponlop requesting him to mediate between the British and Tibetans, arrived at Phari on 2 June 1904.³⁰ He was received by E.H. Walsh

25. Foreign Department, Secret E, June 1904, No. 290 (219-99).

26. Foreign Department, Secret E, July 1904, No. 34 (7-105).

27. *Ibid.*, Nos. 153-173.

28. Sir Francis Younghusband, *India and Tibet* (London, 1910), p. 180.

29. Foreign Department, Secret E, July 1904, No. 266 (258-387), Encl. No. 1.

30. *Ibid.*, No. 490 (483-619).

and given a guard of honour.³¹ The Tongsa Ponlop said to Walsh that in tendering his mediation he was prompted by his own desire to prevent the bloodshed of the people and was not actuated by the interest of the Government of Tibet. He, however, informed Walsh that the British terms of settlement were unacceptable to the Dalai Lama and that negotiation on those terms was "impossible". During his interview with Colonel Younghusband, the Tongsa Ponlop frequently pressed him to show patience. He deprecated the advance of the British mission to Lhasa, and warned that "nothing would be gained by the mission going to Lhasa" as the Dalai Lama along with his Government would leave the Tibetan capital before its arrival.³² The Government of India, however, declined to accept the Tongsa Ponlop as a mediator between the Government of India and Tibet and maintained that it would negotiate with no one except the duly accredited representatives of the Government of Tibet.³³

Although the British did not accept the Tongsa Ponlop's mediation, they allowed him to tender his good offices.³⁴ The presence of Bhutanese chiefs in the British camp during the Anglo-Tibetan imbroglio was intended not only to produce a demoralizing effect on the Tibetans but also to impress the border people and to enhance British "prestige" among them.³⁵ Colonel Younghusband did not believe that the Bhutanese chiefs would be able to effect a settlement, but he regarded the good offices of the Bhutanese chiefs as an important means of bringing the Bhutanese authorities closer to the British than before.³⁶ Moreover, the Government of India utilized the good offices of the Bhutanese chiefs to convey messages to the

31. *Ibid.*, No. 442 (435-42).

32. *Ibid.*, No. 502 (483-619).

33. *Ibid.*, No. 372 (258-387).

34. The difference between good offices and mediation is that, whereas the former consists in various kinds of action tending to call negotiations between the conflicting states into existence, the latter consists in direct conduct of negotiations between the parties at issue on the basis of proposals made by the mediator. See L. Oppenheim, *International Law* (Bombay, 1926), edn 4, vol. 2, p. 10.

35. Foreign Department, Secret E, July 1904, No. 34 (7-105).

36. Foreign Department, Secret E, June 1904, No. 290.

Dalai Lama by a channel through which it was sure to reach him. The Tongsa Ponlop was asked to inform the Dalai Lama that the British had no desire to injure the Tibetans or their country or to interfere with their religion, and that all they wanted was a settlement of their differences with them.³⁷ He was also asked to warn the Dalai Lama that if he failed to arrive at a settlement at Gyantse the British mission would advance to Lhasa.³⁸ It may, however, be noted in this context that the status of Bhutan as a recipient of British subsidy weakened considerably its role as a mediator between the British and the Tibetans. It was difficult for the Government of Bhutan to forgo British subsidy and to remain absolutely neutral. In 1904, the Government of India did not give its annual subsidy to Bhutan till its envoy arrived at Phari and assured the British officers of Bhutan's friendly attitude. The position of Bhutan as a mediator was further undermined by its supply of provisions and transport to the British mission, as well as by its compliance with British request for permission to make a survey to establish a route through Bhutan.³⁹ Bhutan became more or less an ally of the Government of India.

UGYEN KAZI, BHUTANESE AGENT

In Indo-Bhutanese relations during the first decade of the present century, Ugyen Kazi played a significant role. It was Ugyen Kazi who was largely responsible for bringing about a close understanding between the Bhutanese and British authorities. Although the Government of India's plan to extend its sphere of influence into Tibet through Ugyen Kazi failed in 1901, a similar plan in respect of Bhutan succeeded. A brief sketch of Ugyen Kazi's life and family may help an understanding of the role played by him not only during the years 1899-1904 but also in subsequent years.

Ugyen Kazi was born in 1861, at Shabisa, a village south of Paro. His father, named Shapenjo, was a trader and carried on trade between Darjeeling and Tibet. He had a

37. Foreign Department, Secret E, July 1904, No. 372.

38. *Ibid.*

39. *Ibid.*, No. 16 (7-105).

second residence at Kalimpong. He was loyal to the British authorities in India and rendered a valuable service to Eden during his mission to Punakha. He used his influence during the British conflict with the Tibetans in 1888 to prevent his countrymen from joining the Tibetans against the British. He died in 1889. Like his father, Ugyen Kazi proved himself useful to the British authorities in India. In December 1887 he delivered Lord Dufferin's ultimatum to the Tibetan Commandant at Lingtu, and throughout the Anglo-Tibetan dispute in 1888, he served the British as his father did.⁴⁰ He was appointed Bhutanese Agent at Kalimpong shortly after the Anglo-Tibetan conflict of 1888. He had free access to Lhasa, and he used to go there frequently for his private business. Although the Government of Bengal did not trust him fully, it utilized him as a medium of communication with the Tibetan authorities. In 1898, when Ugyen Kazi went to Lhasa, the Government of Bengal took the opportunity to send a few presents to the Tibetan ruler, and Ugyen Kazi was asked to sound the attitude of the Tibetan authorities towards the Government of India. In 1899 he was instructed to write to the Dalai Lama and plead with him to develop a close relationship with the British in India. It has already been mentioned that in June 1901 Ugyen Kazi was entrusted with a letter from Curzon to the Dalai Lama. In October 1901, he returned with the letter and reported that the Dalai Lama had refused to accept it. Curzon did not believe that Ugyen Kazi ever saw the Dalai Lama or handed the letter to him. On the contrary he considered him a liar and "a paid Tibetan spy".⁴¹ The Government of India wanted to get to the bottom of the matter and made inquiries through the local authorities. Although there was no conclusive evidence then to prove that Ugyen Kazi gave the letter to the Dalai Lama, the Tibetan reactions to the activities of Ugyen Kazi served as testimony to Ugyen Kazi's loyalty and faithfulness to the British. In September 1902 the Tibetan authorities forbade Ugyen Kazi to enter

40. Foreign Department, Secret E, July 1905, No. 10 (1-10).

41. Letter from Lord Curzon to Lord G. Hamilton, No. 75, 5 November 1901, Curzon Papers, Reel No. 2.

Lhasa.⁴² The Dalai Lama also wrote a letter to the Tongsa Ponlop in August 1902, accusing Ugyen Kazi of having made a journey to Lhasa as a spy of the British and not as a subject of Bhutan. He requested the Tongsa Ponlop not to employ Ugyen Kazi any longer.⁴³ On the other hand, E.H. Walsh, Deputy Commissioner of Darjeeling, reported that he had received information from various sources that Ugyen Kazi had an interview with the Dalai Lama but that no mention had ever been made of any letter having been presented by him on behalf of the Government of India.⁴⁴ He stated that a Tibetan trader who had accompanied Ugyen Kazi, and Ekai Kowa Gochi, a Japanese monk and traveller who had been then at Lhasa, had heard nothing during their stay in Lhasa of any letter having been brought by Ugyen Kazi. The Government of Bengal also obtained an original letter in Tibetan purporting to have been addressed to Darkey Sardar, a Tibetan frontier officer,⁴⁵ by the Tibetan Council in which it was asserted that not a word had passed between Ugyen Kazi and the Dalai Lama relating to any letter from the Government of India and that no such letter was ever presented to the Dalai Lama or returned by him.⁴⁶

Although Ugyen Kazi remained an object of British suspicion and distrust, he served the Government of India with an unwavering loyalty during 1903-04. He acquainted the British authorities with the Bhutanese attitude towards the Government of India. He obtained the permission of the Government of Bhutan for the British exploration of a route through Bhutan to construct a road from Bengal to the Chumbi Valley⁴⁷ and lent every assistance to the survey party engaged in the exploration of the route. He induced the Bhutanese chiefs

42. Foreign Department, Secret E, October 1902, Nos. 117-118.

43. Foreign Department, Secret E, July 1905, No. 10.

44. Foreign Department, Secret E, September 1903, Nos. 98-102.

45. Darkey Sardar was a man of bad character and was on bad terms with Ugyen Kazi. The Bengal Government did not put much trust in the statements contained in the letter alleged to have been received by Darkey Sardar. See Foreign Department, Secret E, September 1903, Nos. 98-102.

46. Foreign Department, Secret E, September 1903, Nos. 98-102.

47. Foreign Department, Secret E, September 1906, Nos. 65-66.

to tender their good offices in the settlement of the differences between the British and the Tibetan authorities. It was largely due to his influence that the Tongsa Ponlop accompanied Colonel Younghusband to Lhasa.⁴⁸ In December 1904 the Political officer in Sikkim recommended Ugyen Kazi to the Government of India for the grant of the title of Rai Bahadur to be conferred on 1 January 1905. But Curzon still held that there was no evidence to show that Ugyen Kazi had delivered his letter to the Dalai Lama.⁴⁹ The Dalai Lama alone could positively state if Ugyen Kazi did make over Curzon's letter to him, and it was only in 1910, after the flight of the Dalai Lama to India consequent on the Chinese invasion of Tibet, that the Dalai Lama confirmed that Ugyen Kazi had delivered Curzon's letter to him.⁵⁰ By that time Ugyen Kazi had been able to dispel the British distrust of himself to a great extent and had received many favours from the British for his help to them in achieving their objective in Bhutan. There were, however, two reasons why the Government of India suspected Ugyen Kazi of not having delivered Curzon's letter to the Dalai Lama. First, the British authorities in India were not convinced of Ugyen Kazi's reliability. Secondly, Ugyen Kazi had incurred, by his success in ingratiating himself with the British, the jealousy of a few persons who maligned his character.

THE PROPOSED ROAD FROM INDIA TO TIBET THROUGH BHUTAN

During the advance of the British mission to Lhasa, the Government of India realized the need for a direct road from India to Tibet. Tibet was then approached along the lower Tista Valley by a tract notorious for its many steep ascents and descents, crossing the Jelap La, a pass, which is 14,390 feet high.⁵¹ Tibet was almost inaccessible because of the absence

48. Foreign Department, Secret E, July 1905, No. 10.

49. Foreign Department, External B, September 1906, Nos. 65-66.

50. Telegraphic Correspondence with the Secretary of State for India, No. 78, 3 March 1910, Minto Papers, Reel No. 8. See also Foreign Department, Secret E, June 1910, Nos. 276-550, Notes, p. 24.

51. Foreign Department, Secret E, January 1904, Nos. 40-63.

of a good road from India to Tibet. Colonel Younghusband suggested to the Government that it should make Tibet easily accessible to the British by constructing a good road to Tibet.⁵² The route by the Amo Chu or Di Chu through Bhutan was reported to have a gradual fall all along the way from Phari to India along the valleys of these rivers without there being any pass of considerable altitude.⁵³ Colonel Younghusband was eager to reach an agreement with the Government of Bhutan in regard to the construction of a road through Bhutan. The Government of Bhutan had been approached, but no Bhutanese official was deputed to meet the British authorities in India. Ugyen Kazi, the Bhutanese Agent, gave a *purwana* on behalf of the Tongsa Ponlop, and Colonel Younghusband sent an official with a small escort to Bhutan in order to explore routes in the Amo Chu and Di Chu Valleys. By 16 February, 1904, the exploration of routes by the Amo Chu and the Di Chu was completed. The Amo Chu Valley was full of jungles and was sparsely populated whereas the Di Chu Valley was open and well populated. The exploration indicated that Bhutan could prove a better and shorter route from India to Chumbi, although through a malarial zone, with better gradient and lower altitude, than the then existing route through Jelap La and Nathu La Passes. Colonel Younghusband met the Trimpuk Dzungpon, the Bhutanese envoy, at Tuna on 19 February 1904 and held out a hope to the Bhutanese envoy that the Government of India would give a "liberal subsidy" to the Government of Bhutan for permitting the British authorities to construct a road through Bhutan.⁵⁴ On 6 March, 1904, the Government of Bhutan sent a "permit" to Walsh through the Bhutanese envoy to enable him to make the survey and build a road.⁵⁵

General Macdonald, the commander of the military force of the mission, emphasized the need for an alignment of the road on which a light railway could be laid out subsequent-

52. Foreign Department, Secret E, March 1905, Nos. 101-170.

53. Foreign Department, Secret E, April 1903, Nos. 130-172, Appendix to Notes.

54. Foreign Department, External A, March 1904, Nos. 94, 112 and 115.

55. Foreign Department, Secret E, March 1905, No. 101, (101-70).

ly. He maintained that a light railway would overcome the natural barriers which rendered movement into Tibet difficult. The officer in charge of the survey bore in mind the views expressed by General Macdonald at the time of conducting the survey. In March-June 1904, after a survey of several routes to the Chumbi Valley through Bhutan, Steven, the engineer, recommended the route "following down the Amo-Chu from Assam Rang-tsa crossing over the Du-lung Chu somewhere near its junction with the Amo-Chu, probably at about 6,500 feet, rising again to the saddle near Dhopi-Dara about 9,500 feet and thence down the east side of the Jiti Valley across a small nullah to the plain near Jhat-Jhora".⁵⁶

In view of its increasing involvement in Tibetan affairs, the Government of India directed the Government of Bengal in a letter on 21 May 1904 to open up the route to Tibet with as little delay as possible. The Government of Bengal strongly advised postponement of the work on the road during rains. Although the Government of India accepted this suggestion, it impressed on the Government of Bengal the extreme urgency of the work and instructed it to make all necessary arrangements in advance so that no time would be lost in undertaking the work at the earliest possible date after the rains.⁵⁷

By the end of 1904, the Government of India made a reappraisal of the importance of the proposed road from Bengal to Tibet through Bhutan. The British mission from Lhasa returned in September 1904. Soon after, the construction of the proposed road through Bhutan was postponed indefinitely on the ground of its high cost.⁵⁸ The proposed road was meant to create a permanent means of exerting British pressure on Tibet. But the Government of India became extremely scrupulous in its policy towards Tibet after 1903-04, following the opposition of the Home Government to Curzon's Tibet policy. Hence the proposed road from Bengal to Tibet through Bhutan lost its importance after the return of the British mission from Lhasa in September, 1904.

To sum up, Curzon was resolved to prevent foreign

56. *Ibid.*, March 1905, No. 113.

57. *Ibid.*, No. 136.

58. Foreign Department, External A, October 1906, Nos. 78-97.

Powers from establishing a footing in states bordering on India. His fear that the Russians were in the process of establishing their protectorate over Tibet and the unsettling effects that such a development was sure to have on the Himalayan states led him to dispatch a mission to Lhasa. At the beginning of the advance of the mission, the Bhutanese attitude towards it was a matter of great concern to the British authorities in India. Although the Government of India did not agree to the proposals made by the local authorities to secure the friendly co-operation of Bhutan by holding out inducements in the form of cession of territory or increase of subsidy, it was very much concerned about securing Bhutanese neutrality, if not co-operation, and was scrupulous in its policy towards Bhutan. Ugyen Kazi played an important role in bringing about an understanding between the Bhutanese and the British authorities in India. The Government of India secured the permission of the Bhutanese Government to survey and construct a road from Bengal to Tibet through Bhutan. The Government of Bhutan endeavoured to play the role of a mediator between the Government of Tibet and the Government of India, but it became, by and large, an ally of the Government of India and provided all manner of assistance to the mission. Although the construction of the road through Bhutan was indefinitely postponed after the return of the mission from Lhasa in September 1904, the Indo-Tibetan discord of 1903-04 marked a significant phase in Indo-Bhutanese relations. The Bhutanese and the British authorities developed closer relations than ever before. The Bhutanese, who were almost strangers to the British in India till 1903, became their "enthusiastic" allies in 1904.

CHAPTER VI

Towards British Protectorate over Bhutan : 1905-1907

THE years following the Younghusband Mission to Lhasa witnessed a reorientation of Indo-Bhutanese relations. Ugyen Wangchuk, the Tongsa Ponlop and virtual ruler of Bhutan, cast in his country's lot with the British. He did so for two reasons. First, the success of British arms against the Tibetans had made a strong impact on his mind. He had not expected that the British would defeat the Tibetans at Gyantse. Although in 1888 the British had driven the Tibetans out of Lingtu, a place in Sikkim, they had never fought the latter in "the heart of Tibet". Moreover, the Tibetan fort at Gyantse, which was built of solid rock on a great height and which was being defended by a large Tibetan force, was almost impregnable. But the British stormed the fort and occupied it without much difficulty. The Tongsa Ponlop, who had watched the British military action, became greatly impressed with the British military power.¹ Secondly, the Tongsa Ponlop feared that the Chinese might undertake a punitive expedition against Bhutan for offering assistance to the British expedition against the Tibetans. Although Bhutan was not under the Tibetan or Chinese political control, the Chinese considered that Bhutan, together with all other Himalayan states, lay within the broad framework of their empire.² The Tongsa Ponlop wrote to Lord Curzon in 1905, that he would "henceforth" look to the

1. Foreign Department, Secret E, July 1904, No. 606. See also Sir Francis Younghusband, *India and Tibet* (London, D 10), p. 216.
2. Leo E. Rose, "Sino-Indian Rivalry and the Himalayan Border States", *Orbis* (Philadelphia, Pa), vol. 5, Summer 1961, pp. 202-3.

Government of India for "protection and justice" in the event of an invasion of Bhutan by any foreign power.³

THE CONFERRMENT OF THE HONOUR OF THE K.C.I.E. ON THE TONGSA PONLOP AND WHITE'S MISSION TO BHUTAN

From 1905 onwards, the Government of India treated the Bhutanese chief more or less like the ruler of an Indian State. It conferred on him the insignia of a Knight Commander of the Indian Empire (K.C.I.E.) in recognition of the services he had rendered to it in the settlement of its dispute with Tibet in 1903-04. In his letter dated 1 January 1905 Curzon informed the Tongsa Ponlop that one of his first acts after his return from home (England) was to acquaint him that the King-Emperor had conferred upon him the high distinction of K.C.I.E.⁴ J.C. White, Political Officer in Sikkim, was deputed to Punakha in April, 1905, to present the Tongsa Ponlop with the badge of a K.C.I.E. Major F.M. Rennick accompanied White to represent the Intelligence Department of the Government of India. A.W. Paul, who had cultivated friendship with the Tongsa Ponlop also went to Bhutan with White in response to the Tongsa Ponlop's invitation.⁵ The reception accorded to White's mission to Punakha in 1905 was in contrast to that accorded to any of the earlier missions sent to Bhutan by the British authorities in India. Bogle and Turner, who went to Bhutan in 1775 and 1783 respectively, had been received not with warmth but only with formal courtesy. Pemberton had been treated with veiled hostility in 1837-38 by the Bhutanese people. In 1864, every obstacle was placed in the way of Eden's mission. White's mission to Bhutan in April 1905, was the first occasion when the Bhutanese authorities gave a cordial reception to a British mission. White was treated almost royally. Everything that was possible for the Government of Bhutan was done for White's

3. Letter from Ugyen Wangchuk to Lord Curzon, No. 81, N.D., Curzon Papers, Reel No. 11.
4. Letter from Curzon to Ugyen Wangchuk, No. 26, 1 January 1905, Curzon Papers, Reel No. 11.
5. J.C. White, *Sikkim and Bhutan* (London, 1909), p. 105.

comfort. The British who had gone to Bhutan previously had not been allowed to move freely inside Bhutan. White travelled throughout Bhutan and took every opportunity to see the country and the forts and monasteries of Bhutan. He formed a different idea of the Bhutanese people and their customs from that held by the British who had gone there earlier. Former travellers had described the Bhutanese people as being filthy in their habits and as dunkards and cowards. White found them courteous and clean.⁶

The presentation of the decoration of K.C.I.E. to the Tongsa Ponlop by a representative of the Government of India had an important bearing on Indo-Bhutanese relations. It contributed to the growth of Ugyen Wangchuk's power and position in his country and enhanced British influence in Bhutan. It showed that the Government of India recognized the pre-eminent position of Ugyen Wangchuk among the Bhutanese chiefs. White's visit to Bhutan in 1905 provided him with an opportunity to establish his relations with all important Bhutanese officials, who were appreciative of the Government of India for the honour given by it to the Bhutanese chief. The Deb Raja, along with the members of the Bhutanese Council, wrote to the Viceroy of India expressing his gratitude for the honour shown to Ugyen Wangchuk and imploring him to regard him "with parental kindness and affection equalling the love of a mother for a child".⁷ Towards the end of 1905 the Tongsa Ponlop paid a visit to India, and this event was another milestone in the growth of Bhutanese dependence on British India.

THE TONGSA PONLOP'S VISIT TO INDIA

In a letter dated 20 January 1905 White proposed to the Government of India that it should invite the Tongsa Ponlop to Calcutta on the occasion of the visit of the Prince of Wales to India. He foresaw a great political advantage in the Tongsa Ponlop's visit to India and his pilgrimage to Buddha Gaya. He thought that the news of the Tongsa Ponlop's pilgrimage

6. Foreign Department, External A, February 1907, No. 40.

7. Foreign Department, Secret E, June 1905, No. 753 (743-54).

to the holy shrine of Buddha Gaya and of the welcome accorded to him would have great effect in disabusing the minds of the Buddhist people of Bhutan and other Himalayan states of any suspicion that the British in any way wanted to injure their religion.⁸ While White was in Bhutan in April 1905, he proposed again to the Government of India that it should invite the Deb Raja and the Tongsa Ponlop to Calcutta on the occasion of the arrival of the Prince of Wales in India as a return for the hospitality shown to him in Bhutan. The Government of India held that the presentation of the insignia of K.C.I.E. to the Tongsa Ponlop constituted a sufficient mark of distinction and favour to the Government of Bhutan, and it was averse to add the further compliment of an invitation to Calcutta.⁹ In July, however, White again urged the Government to consider his proposal to invite the Bhutanese chiefs to India. This time the Government of India agreed to White's suggestion and authorized him to invite the Bhutanese chiefs to visit India on the occasion of the arrival of the Prince of Wales in India. But while doing so it made it clear that the Bhutanese chiefs would be treated just like the rulers of other Indian States. This is the only reference one can draw from the remark in the letter that Deb Raja and the Tongsa Ponlop might pay their respect to the future Emperor of India like the rulers of other Indian States.¹⁰

THE TONGSA PONLOP IN CALCUTTA

The Tongsa Ponlop arrived in Calcutta towards the end of 1905. The Deb Raja, being a monk, lived a secluded life and did not accept the invitation. The Tongsa Ponlop was treated as the representative of the Deb Raja and was given a salute of 15 guns on his arrival in Calcutta.¹¹ The Maharaja of Sikkim and the Tashi Lama of Shigatse also reached Calcutta in response to the invitation of the Government of India. They were accommodated in Hastings House, Alipore, and were treated

8. Foreign Department, Secret E, April 1905, No. 44.

9. Foreign Department, Secret E, May 1905 Nos. 89-90.

10. Foreign Department, Secret E, December 1905, No. 47 (44-127).

11. Foreign Department, Secret E, March 1906, Nos. 45-56.

as the guests of the Government of India. White showed a warm hospitality to them and paid personal attention to their comfort. He was always careful to respect the susceptibilities of the visitors from the Himalayan states and even violated the instructions of the Government in gratifying them. The Government of India directed White to dispense with the exchange of presents between the Government and the visitors from Bhutan, Sikkim, and Shigatse. White, however, permitted the Tongsa Ponlop of Bhutan and the Maharaja of Sikkim to present gifts not only to the Viceroy without first obtaining the sanction from the Government, but also to the Prince of Wales in violation of the express order of the Government prohibiting the presentation of gifts. He maintained that if the presents brought by the personages of Bhutan and Sikkim were rejected, it would hurt their feelings. He laid stress on the importance of exchanging gifts and prevailed on the Government to allow the visitors to make purchases at the expense of the Government while they were being shown round the shops of the city. He held that the presents they would take back with them would remind them of their visit to India and of the treatment they received as the guests of the Government of India.¹² He also permitted the Bhutanese and Sikkimese rulers to export from India certain arms and ammunition without the sanction of the Government. He was brought to book for this action.¹³ Thus White endeavoured to humour the rulers of Bhutan and Sikkim even at the risk of the displeasure of his own Government.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE TONGSA PONLOP'S VISIT

Although Lord Minto wrote to Morley, Secretary of State for India, informing him that there was nothing of political interest in his interview with the chiefs of the Himalayan states,¹⁴ the visit of the Bhutanese chief had great political significance. The relations of the Government of India with

12. Foreign Department, External B, March 1906, No. 85.

13. Foreign Department, External B, July 1906, No. 245 (236-247).

14. Letter from Lord Minto to John Morley, No. 8, 28 December 1905, Minto Papers, Reel No. 5.

the Government of Bhutan were then in a state of flux, and the Government of India wanted them to be on the same pattern as its relations with the Indian States. In agreeing to the proposal of White to invite the Bhutanese chiefs to India the aim of the Government of India was not to return the hospitality they had extended to him in Bhutan but to allow them to pay their respects to their future emperor like the rulers of the Indian Princely States. It was disinclined to acquiesce in the Bhutanese ruler remaining aloof after the fashion followed for many years by Nepal. The Tongsa Ponlop on behalf of the Deb Raja and the Council of Bhutan presented *nazars* at the reception of the Prince of Wales. He also handed over, on behalf of the Government of Bhutan, a letter to the Viceroy mentioning that the entire Bhutanese nation revolved loyally to attend on the Government of India as the stars and the constellations attended on the sun and the moon. The letter stated :

Henceforth His Most Gracious Majesty the King-Emperor and His Excellency the Viceroy are as the sun and moon, and we the minor chiefs under the Supreme Government as the stars. As the stars and constellations never fail in loyally attending on the sun and moon, so do we the entire Bhutanese nation resolve to do likewise to the Supreme Government, hoping that as the sun and moon are like the parents of the whole world, we also will enjoy the blessings of their beneficent rays for ever and ever till the cessation of worldly existence.¹⁵

Although the letter was only "complimentary" in nature, the profession of loyalty made in the Tongsa Ponlop's letter amounted to the expression of a desire that Bhutan should be included among the Princely States of the Indian Empire. This was in accord with the thinking of the Government of India. By 1907, the Government of India maintained that Bhutan was a native State under the suzerainty of the British Government.¹⁶ The Secretary of State for India, however,

15. Foreign Department, External A, May 1906, Nos. 84-86.

16. Foreign Department, Secret E, April 1907, No. 118 ((116-88)).

was averse to any controversy as to whether or not Bhutan had become a native State in India under the suzerainty of the British Government.¹⁷ Nevertheless Bhutan was, to all intents and purposes, brought within the British sphere of influence.

J.C. WHITE AND HIS POLICY TOWARDS BHUTAN

J.C. White played a significant role during this phase of Indo-Bhutanese relations. He started his career in the Public Works Department in 1876 in Bengal. During the Anglo-Tibetan conflict of 1888-89 he was sent as Assistant Political Officer with the expeditionary force. On the conclusion of peace in 1890, he became Political Officer in Sikkim. In 1903, when a mission was sent to Tibet, he was appointed joint commissioner with Colonel Younghusband.¹⁸ On the conclusion of the mission, when it was decided to create a new political charge including Sikkim, Bhutan and such portions of Tibet as fell within the British sphere of influence, directly under the Government of India,¹⁹ Colonel Younghusband strongly recommended White for this charge. Although Sir Andrew Fraser, Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, did not think that White was a suitable man for important political work, the Government of India decided eventually to appoint him to the new charge.²⁰

White advocated a policy of active interference in the internal affairs of Bhutan. In his letter dated 20 January, 1905, he asked the Government to support Ugyen Wangchuk against other aspirants to power in Bhutan. He pointed out that Ugyen Wangchuk was not only a valuable ally and friend to the Government of India but also a very powerful chief in Bhutan who had declined the office of the Deb Raja and procured the election of his nominee, Cholay Tulku, to that office. He held that it was in the interest of the Government of India that Ugyen Wangchuk should continue in power. He suggest-

17. Foreign Department, Secret E, August 1907, Nos. 300-303.

18. Foreign Department, External A, July 1907, Nos. 5-10.

19. Foreign Department, Secret E, July 1905, Nos. 21-45.

20. Foreign Department, External A, April 1908, Nos. 33-44.

ed to the Government that in order to keep Wangchuk in power it should provide him with some arms and ammunition. He maintained that if a small number of weapons were placed at the disposal of the Bhutanese chief, it could not be a source of danger to the Government of India while the mere possession of them by Ugyen Wangchuk would deter his enemies from challenging him to settle the issue by the arbitrament of arms. He argued, moreover, that by giving Ugyen Wangchuk rifles and at the same time limiting the supply of ammunition, the Government of India could increase the dependence of the Bhutanese chief on the British authorities in India.²¹ In June 1905, Ugyen Wangchuk wrote to the Viceroy invoking British help in making his Tongsa Ponlopship hereditary—that is, in ensuring that it descended from father to son for generations.²² This letter might have been written at White's instance, for he was very keen on bringing British influence to bear on the internal affairs of Bhutan. However, the Government of India, in conformity with its old policy of non-interference in the internal affairs of Bhutan, turned down Ugyen Wangchuk's request. In a letter dated 25 July 1905 to the Tongsa Ponlop it acknowledged his letter but made no reference to the request that he had made.²³ Curzon did not attach much importance to Bhutan. According to him, White was unduly pampering a petty border chieftain. He observed with irony that White had begun to regard Bhutan as if it were "the heel of the universe." He turned down White's proposal to give arms and ammunition to Ugyen Wangchuk. As for White's suggestion that the Government of India should assist Ugyen Wangchuk in making his office of Ponlopship hereditary, Curzon stated: "I should think it a most unwise thing to support or guarantee one of the Ponlops (even the ablest) against either of the Rajas. If he is the strongest man, he will support himself."²⁴

21. Foreign Department, Secret E, April 1905, No. 44.

22. Letter from Ugyen Wangchuk to Lord Curzon, No. 254, Curzon Papers, Reel No. 11. See also Foreign Department, External B, October 1905, No. 5-6.

23. Foreign Department, External B, October 1905, No. 6.

24. Foreign Department, Secret E, April 1905, No. 44.

Curzon, who was obsessed with the Russian menace to India, could not appreciate Bhutan's vulnerability to Chinese intrigue. But White regarded the Chinese threat with serious concern. He was a far-sighted man, and his long contact with the Himalayan states had given him an awareness of the Chinese menace to the British interests in Bhutan. He wanted to put Bhutan on a par with Sikkim, where the British position had been made fully secure by 1890.

WHITE'S PLEA FOR REVISION OF THE TREATY OF 1865

With this purpose in mind, White laid great stress on the need for a revision of the Treaty of 1865 with Bhutan. He pointed out that while the Treaty of 1865 provided that Bhutan's disputes with Sikkim and Cooch Behar should be settled by reference to the Government of India, it did not warrant British intervention in any of Bhutan's disputes with Tibet or China. He felt that this made the Government of India helpless in the face of Chinese or Tibetan intervention in the affairs of Bhutan. He suggested that it would be expedient to revise the Treaty while the British were still administering the Chumbi Valley and while the Bhutanese attitude was extremely friendly towards the Government of India. In particular he proposed to the Government that Article VIII of the Treaty of 1865 should be altered by the addition of the words "and any other neighbouring states" after "Sikkim and Cooch Behar" and that the annual subsidy to Bhutan should be increased to Rs. 100,000 if Bhutan agreed to the alteration proposed in the Treaty. He also considered it desirable to add certain clauses to the Treaty of 1865 which were found in the Indo-Sikkimese Treaty of 1861 and which would empower the Government of India to keep its military forces in Bhutan, and maintain them there to build roads, to prevent the cession of the Bhutanese territory to any foreign Power, and to allow no hostile force to enter that country. He added that if the Government of Bhutan objected to the addition of these clauses, they might be dropped. He was, however, very keen that the alteration proposed by him to Article VIII of the Treaty of 1865, should be carried out at all costs. He

emphasized the need to prevent China from extending its influence on the southern side of the Himalayas and pointed out how easy it would be to take appropriate measures before the British evacuation of the Chumbi Valley in 1908. He feared that the Chinese would try to dominate the Chumbi Valley after the withdrawal of British troops from that place and that they might interfere in Bhutanese affairs as well.²⁵ In the beginning of 1907, before the British evacuation of the Chumbi Valley, the Government of India received a report through the Nepalese representative in Tibet that the Chinese representative in Tibet had, with a view to promoting co-operation between Nepal and Tibet, instructed the Government of Tibet to send its military personnel to Nepal and familiarize itself with the military methods of that country. It also learnt that the Chinese Resident had described Nepal, Tibet and Bhutan as countries owing allegiance to China and had exhorted them to stand together against the British.²⁶ In view of these activities of the Chinese Resident, White wrote to the Government on 8 April, 1907, stating that the alteration proposed by him to the Treaty of 1865 would be the best method of counteracting any attempt on the part of China to undermine the allegiance of Bhutan to the Government of India. In order to frustrate the Chinese design on Bhutan, he suggested that besides the addition of a few clauses similar to those found in the Indo-Sikkimese Treaty of 1861, Article VIII of the Treaty of 1865 with Bhutan should be altered to read thus :

The Bhutan Government hereby agree to refer to the arbitration of the British Government all disputes with, or causes of complaint against, all neighbouring states, and to abide by the decision of the British Government: and the British hereby engage to enquire into and settle all such disputes and complaints in such manner as justice may require, and to insist on the observance of the decision by neighbouring states.²⁷

25. Foreign Department, Secret-External, June 1907, No. 637 (635-49).

26. *Ibid.*, No. 639.

27. *Ibid.*, No. 640.

In April 1907, the Bhutanese chiefs decided to install Ugyen Wangchuk as hereditary Maharaja and chief ruler of Bhutan. White urged the Government of India to seize this opportunity of concluding a new treaty with Bhutan. He also urged the Government to recognize Ugyen Wangchuk as the Maharaja of Bhutan and to grant him a personal salute of 15 guns, the same number as his neighbour, the Maharaja of Sikkim, received.²⁸ He left no stone unturned in his endeavour to get the Government of India to agree to revise the Treaty with Bhutan. He met the Viceroy,²⁹ and wrote to the Government several times. On 20 November he wrote a letter to J.R. Dunlop-Smith, Private Secretary to the Viceroy, asking him to bring home to the Viceroy the menace of Chinese intrigue in Bhutan and the need to revise the Treaty of 1865.³⁰

The Government of India considered it undesirable to raise the question of a revision of the Treaty of 1865 or to do anything which might lead Ugyen Wangchuk to believe that he had a guarantee of protection from the Government of India for his dynasty.³¹ It wanted to see how the new Government of Bhutan worked before taking any steps towards a revision of the Treaty. It had, however, no objection to White's presence at the ceremony of installation if he was invited by Ugyen Wangchuk.³²

One could see that in 1907, the attitude of the Government of India towards Bhutan was no longer the same as it had been in 1905. In 1905, the Government of India had taken a light view of Bhutan and had thought that it had authority enough to prevent any intrigue on the part of the Bhutanese authorities with either China or Tibet. By 1907, the Government of India became aware of Bhutan's vulnerability to Chinese intrigue, especially because of China's for-

28. *Ibid.*, No. 643.

29. Foreign Department, Secret-External, October 1907, No. 206.

30. Foreign Department, Secret E, January 1908, Nos. 488-515, Foreign Department Notes, p. 18.

31. Telegraphic Correspondence from the Viceroy to the Secretary of State for India, No. 266, 8 June 1907, Minto Papers, Reel No. 7. See also Foreign Department, Secret-External, June 1907, No. 646.

32. *Ibid.*

ward policy in Tibet, and was inclined to accept White's point of view. However, White's suggestion for a revision of the Treaty of 1865 was not approved by the Government because of certain considerations. First, the alteration of the Treaty of 1865 contemporaneously with the installation of Ugyen Wangchuk as the hereditary Maharaja would have appeared as though Ugen Wangchuk's acceptance of the new position had been actually brought about by a guarantee of protection from the Government of British India. Secondly, the Secretary of State for India was so sensitive about anything on the Tibetan frontier that the Government of India considered it inappropriate to broach a large question such as British relations with Bhutan at that time.³³ In a dispatch dated 3 May 1907. Morely, Secretary of State for India, mentioned that he considered it undesirable to moot the question whether or not Bhutan had become a Native State in India under the suzerainty of the British Government.³⁴ Last but not the least important, Lord Minto had formed a very bad opinion of White. He had no faith in White's diplomatic ability and integrity.³⁵ He suspected that there had been "a great deal of disagreeable wire-pulling on the part of White on his own behalf both in Sikkim and Bhutan".³⁶ Nevertheless, the enthronement of Ugyen Wangchuk went a long way towards the consummation of White's objective in Bhutan.

THE INSTALLATION OF UGYEN WANGCHUK AS THE HEREDITARY MAHARAJA OF BHUTAN AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE

The honour of K.C.I.E. conferred on Ugyen Wangchuk and the warm reception accorded to him in India had immensely enhanced his position in Bhutan. The Bhutanese chiefs emulated the Government of India in doing honour to Ugyen Wangchuk by choosing him the hereditary Maharaja

33. Foreign Department, Secret-External, June 1907, Nos. 635-649, Department Notes.

34. Foreign Department, Secret E, August 1907, No. 300 (300-3).

35. Letter from the Viceroy to the Secretary of State, No. 1, 5 July 1906, Minto Papers, Reel No. 5.

36. *Ibid.*, No. 29, 4 June 1908, Reel No. 6.

of Bhutan. In a letter dated 18 April 1907 Ugyen Wangchuk wrote to White: "I write to inform you that owing to the British Government having conferred a certain title on me, the ministers and people of Bhutan also have again and again asked me to accept the honour of becoming their Maharaja, and I have therefore acceded to the above wish."³⁷ White sought the permission of the Government to attend the ceremony of Ugyen Wangchuk's installation as the hereditary Maharaja in response to the wish and invitation of Ugyen Wangchuk. He wanted to go to Bhutan with great pomp and splendour as the representative of the British Indian Empire. He asked the Government to sanction Rs. 18,000 for presents to be offered to the Bhutanese chiefs. He said that when he had gone to Bhutan in 1905 to present the insignia of K.C.I.E. to Ugyen Wangchuk, he had estimated that he would need Rs. 15,000 for presents, but regretted that only a sum of Rs. 8,000 had been granted, so that he had experienced great difficulty in making the sum suffice in any way.³⁸ He wrote that he was not disposed to "give an impression of meanness" on the part of the Government of India and ultimately succeeded in prevailing on the Government to sanction Rs. 14,000 for this occasion.³⁹ Accompanied by Major F. Rennick as Intelligence Officer, Captain W.L. Campbell as assistant, and H.G. Hylop, White reached Punakha on 15 December. He was cordially received by the Tongsa Ponlop, and also by all the leading nobles and officials of Bhutan, including the Paro Ponlop, the Thimbu Dzungpon, the Punakha Dzungpon, and the Deb Zimpen.⁴⁰ On 17 December 1907 Ugyen Wangchuk was installed on the throne as the hereditary Maharaja of Bhutan. The Viceroy addressed a letter to Ugyen Wangchuk mentioning that he had learnt with pleasure that the whole governing body of Bhutan had elected him as the hereditary Maharaja of Bhutan and

37. Foreign Department, Secret-External, June 1907, Nos. 635-649, Encl. to No. 643.

38. *Ibid.*

39. Foreign Department, Secret-External, October 1907, No. 223A (206-29).

40. Foreign Department, External A, December 1908, Nos. 41-44.

tendering his best wishes for a long and prosperous rule.⁴¹

The installation of Ugyen Wangchuk as the hereditary Maharaja and supreme ruler of Bhutan was a significant event in the history of Bhutan. Since the seventeenth century the Government in Bhutan had been subject to a dual control, exercised by the clergy and the laity, in the persons of the Dharma Raja and the Deb Raja. In course of time these persons came to hold only nominal power, the real power passing into the hands of semi-independent Ponlops who scrambled among themselves continually for the supreme authority and nominated in turn their own puppets as the Dharma Raja and the Deb Raja. Such a form of Government resulted in frequent civil wars.⁴² The enthronement of Ugyen Wangchuk ushered in a stable and strong Government. Moreover, it was an event of considerable importance in respect of Indo-Bhutanese relations. Ugyen Wangchuk was fully aware of the power of the Government of India and was eager to seek its protection. He accepted the office of the hereditary Maharaja of Bhutan "fully relying on the continued friendship and support" of the Government of India.⁴³ Thus Ugyen Wangchuk's elevation to the throne of Bhutan facilitated the establishment of a British protectorate over Bhutan.

WHITE'S FRIENDSHIP WITH UGYEN WANGCHUK AND THE POLICY ADVOCATED BY HIM TOWARDS BHUTAN

During the tenure of his office as Political Officer in Sikkim, White had established very cordial relations with Ugyen Wangchuk. He was thus able to promote friendly relations between Bhutan and the Government of India. The success achieved by him in winning Ugyen Wangchuk's confidence was important in view of the vulnerability of Bhutan to Chinese influence. In July 1907, when it became known that the time for White's retirement was approaching, the Government of India received a petition from Ugyen Wangchuk requesting that White should be given an extension of

41. Foreign Department, Secret E, January 1908, Nos. 488-515.

42. Foreign Department, Secret-External, June 1907, Nos. 635-49.

43. *Ibid.*

service.⁴⁴ This bore ample testimony to the intimacy which White had developed with the Bhutanese ruler. Lord Minto, as we have already stated, had formed an extremely bad opinion of White. He did not have any faith in him. Nor did he consider it advisable to grant him an extension of service. In the beginning of 1908 White was granted leave preparatory to his retirement in October 1908.⁴⁵ Of course he could not see the fruit of his labours during his tenure of office, but his foresight and wisdom in anticipating the dangers of the establishment of Chinese influence in Bhutan and his energetic efforts to prevent it made the work of his successor quite easy.

On the eve of his retirement, White put forth a few guidelines for the Government of India in its relations with Bhutan. First, he stressed the need to amend the Treaty of 1865. He strongly advocated an alteration in the wording of the Treaty which would exclude the danger of Chinese interference in Bhutan. He endeavoured to bring home to the Government the fact that if the Chinese Resident succeeded in interfering in Bhutan, the British difficulties would increase a thousand-fold and that the Government of India would be embroiled in a long-drawn-out dispute on the north-eastern frontier. Secondly, White suggested to the Government that it should meet the aspirations of the newly elected Maharaja in the same spirit in which he had approached the Government of India. He held that the Maharaja of Bhutan was anxious to improve his country and better the lot of his people, and that it would be difficult for him to carry out the much-needed reforms without some pecuniary assistance from the Government of India. He recommended that the Bhutanese subsidy should be increased to Rs 100,000 and maintained that an alteration in the Treaty would provide a suitable opportunity for such an increase. Thirdly, he pointed out that one of the important means for enlisting the goodwill and allegiance of Bhutan was to make the interests of Bhutan coincide with those of the Government of India. He proposed to the Government that

44. Foreign Department, External B, September 1907, Nos. 25-28.

45. Foreign Department, External A, April 1908, Nos. 33-44.

it should bring the Bhutanese people into contact with those of British India by assisting the Bhutanese authorities in building roads and in developing the trade and economic resources of their country. He maintained that the Bhutanese trade should find an outlet into India and not into Tibet. He was convinced that although the Bhutanese inclination might be to trade with Tibet inasmuch as Bhutan was nearer to Tibet in climate and customs, it would not be difficult to attract them to India if the means of communications were improved. He held that the improvement of communications between Bhutan and India, followed by the development of the natural resources of Bhutan on the Indian border, would cement the British connexion with Bhutan and make the Bhutanese interest identical with that of the British. He further added that if the Bhutanese people developed an interest of such enterprises as mines, tea gardens, and forest industries, and increased their income, they would be brought more and more into intimate relations with the British in India. He thus built up a strong case for increasing the subsidy to Bhutan and showed how, by an insignificant outlay the Government of India might secure the goodwill and friendship of Bhutan and ward off the infinite trouble and expenditure which must inevitably descend on the British in the event of Bhutan being unfriendly or in the event of its being dominated by an unfriendly Power. He cautioned the Government that if it would not take these proposals into consideration, the inevitable consequence would be to drive Bhutan into the arms of China.⁴⁶

To sum up, during the years 1905-7, the Government of India brought Bhutan virtually under its suzerainty. In 1905, it conferred on Ugyen Wangchuk the honour of K.C.I.E. for the services he had rendered to it in the settlement of its dispute with Tibet in 1903-04, and invited him to India on the occasion of the arrival of the Prince of Wales to pay his respects to the future Emperor of India. J.C. White strongly advocated a revision of the Treaty of 1865 in order to exclude the danger of Chinese interference in Bhutan. Curzon, who saw an external threat to India only from Russia, did not

46. Foreign Department, Secret E, May 1908, Nos. 68-69.

bother to make a new treaty with Bhutan. He thought that the Government of India had sufficient power to thwart Chinese intrigue in Bhutan. Minto, who succeeded Curzon as the Viceroy of India, was not averse to White's proposal to conclude a new treaty with Bhutan and to bring the latter under the formal protection of the Government of India. Morley, Secretary of State for India, however, was not prepared to sanction such a measure during this period. Although White did not achieve his objective during his tenure of office, he made the task of his successor quite easy by forging a close relationship between Bhutan and India and by bringing into focus the dangers of the exposure of Bhutan to Chinese influence.

CHAPTER VII

India, China and Bhutan : 1908-1910

ALTHOUGH the Government of India had brought the Bhutanese ruler under its tutelage by 1907, there was no treaty formalizing this tutelage. According to Article VIII of the Treaty of 1865, Bhutan was bound to refer to the arbitration of the Government of India its disputes with the rulers of Sikkim and Cooch Behar, and to abide by the decision of the Government of India. It was not, however, bound to regulate its relations with Tibet or China in accordance with the advice of the Government of India. Nor was it bound to accept the British verdict in respect of complaints that Sikkim and Cooch Behar might prefer against it. In fact, in January 1888, Lord Dufferin took exception to an article in *The Scotsman*, which had described Bhutan as a protected state, and held that Bhutan was "an independent state".¹ In 1908, however, two events took place which hastened the establishment of British protectorate over Bhutan. The first was the withdrawal, in January 1908, of British troops from the Chumbi Valley. The second was the replacement of J.C. White, Political Officer in Sikkim, who had been in the bad books of Lord Minto, by Charles Bell. While the former event encouraged the Chinese to think of establishing their suzerainty over Bhutan, the latter facilitated the conclusion of a treaty with Bhutan which brought it under the protection of the Government of India.

1. Letter from Lord Dufferin to Frank D. Finlay, No. 66, 30 January, 1888, Dufferin Papers, Reel No. 527.

CHINA'S FORWARD POLICY AND ITS PRETENSION TO SUZERAINTY OVER BHUTAN

In the wake of the British mission to Lhasa, 1903-4, China initiated an active policy towards Tibet and other Himalayan states. The mission to Lhasa had involved a serious loss of face to the Government of China, and it reacted with unexpected vigour. Before 1904, there was only the "make-believe" of Chinese suzerainty over Tibet, and Tibet was, for all practical purposes, unfettered in the management of its internal affairs. After 1904, China began to take measures to establish its effective authority in Tibet.² The Chinese representative in Lhasa sought not only to gain control over the Tibetan administration but also to bring Nepal, Bhutan, and Sikkim under the dominance of China. He likened the union of China, Tibet, Nepal, Bhutan, and Sikkim to the blending of the five principal colours, viz. yellow, red, blue, black, and green, and emphasized that the amalgamation of these states would produce an excellent political model like a beautiful design resulting from the mingling of colours by a skilful painter.³ He also compared China to the mouth of a man, and the position of Tibet, Nepal, Sikkim, and Bhutan to that of the "molar teeth side by side in a man's month".⁴

The policy of the British Liberal Government was to avoid complications on the Indian frontiers. In line with this policy John Morley was firm about the evacuation of the Chumbi Valley,⁵ although Lord Minto was averse to it.⁶ The presence of British troops in the Chumbi Valley was a powerful deterrent to China's forward policy. The withdrawal of those troops in January 1908 was a strong fillip to China's ambitions. Soon after the withdrawal of British troops, the Chinese Amban or Resident in Lhasa endeavoured to establish

2. H.E. Richardson, *A Short History of Tibet* (New York, 1962), p. 95.

3. Foreign Department, Secret-External, June 1907, No. 638.

4. *Ibid.*

5. Letter from Aurther Godley to Lord Minto, No. 2, 3 January 1908, Minto Papers, Reel No. 6.

6. Letter from Lord Minto to John Morley, No. 6, 22 January 1908, Minto Papers, Reel No. 6.

Chinese suzerainty over Bhutan. On 14 February 1908, Captain W.L. Campbell, British Trade Agent at Yatung, reported on the basis of the intelligence he had received that a Chinese official was soon going to visit Bhutan and would leave a garrison of 20,000 Chinese troops there.⁷ Shortly afterwards Ugyen Kazi, the Bhutanese Agent, showed Charles Bell, Officiating Political Officer in Sikkim, certain letters which the Maharaja of Bhutan had received from the Chinese Amban in Lhasa and the Popon, the Chinese magistrate of Pipitang in the Chumbi Valley.⁸ The Amban's letter stated that Bhutan was the southern gate of the Chinese Empire. It added that Bhutan lay under the suzerainty of China and informed the Maharaja that he would soon send a Chinese official to Bhutan. The Popon's letter was very peremptorily worded. It ordered the attendance of the Bhutanese chiefs at the boundaries of their territories to conduct the Chinese mission through Bhutan.⁹ In April 1908 Ma Chi Fu, the Popon, accompanied by twenty Chinese soldiers, proceeded to Bhutan. The British Political Officer in Sikkim thought that it was not desirable to take any action until it was known how the Bhutanese authorities received the Chinese mission.¹⁰

The Maharaja of Bhutan did not acquiesce in the Chinese claim of suzerainty over Bhutan.¹¹ He declined to meet the Chinese official on some pretext, and Ma Chi Fu was not able to proceed beyond Paro.¹² Although the attempt to assert Chinese suzerainty over Bhutan thus failed in 1908, there was every likelihood that China would renew it with greater insistence as it knew that if it could penetrate as far as Bhutan, its hold on Tibet would be greatly strengthened.

In the spring of 1908, the Government of China appointed Chao Erh-feng, Viceroy of Szechuan, as Resident in Tibet, and transferred his brother, Chao Erh-hsun, Viceroy at Hankow,

7. Foreign Department, Secret E, May 1908, Encl. 168 (168-71).

8. Foreign Department, Secret E, July 1908, Nos. 585-90.

9. *Ibid.*

10. Telegraphic Correspondence from the Viceroy to the Secretary of State, No. 249, 11 April 1908, Minto Papers, Reel No. 7.

11. *Ibid.*, No. 264, 20 April 1908.

12. Foreign Department, Secret E, July 1908, Nos 585-90.

to Szechuan with a view to avoiding friction and ensuring harmonious co-operation.¹³ In October 1908, according to the information of the Government of India, Chinese troops occupied Chamdo and other parts of Eastern Tibet. The Chinese Government raised the strength of the Lhasa garrison to 1,500 Chinese and 3,000 Tibetan troops, dispatched Chinese drill-instructors to Tibet with a view to starting a military college in Lhasa, and imported into Tibet arms and ammunition in large quantities.¹⁴

BRITISH CONCERN OVER CHINESE POLICY

The British authorities in India realized the grave import of the Chinese activities on the north-eastern frontier of India. They saw that it was imperative to prevent China from encroaching on Bhutan if they wanted peace on the frontier. They did not attach much strategic importance to Tibet inasmuch as the country from the Indian frontier right through to Mongolia was cold and infertile and was unlikely to support large masses of troops. China stationed large troops in Szechuan, a Province of China which bordered on Tibet and which financed in large measure the yearly Tibetan drain on the Chinese exchequer and thus, to some extent, determined Chinese policy.¹⁵

Nepal, Sikkim and Bhutan, on the other hand, were temperate and fertile and capable of supporting large troops. The British authorities in India were keen on maintaining them as buffer states. They realized that the establishment of a Chinese foothold in these countries was likely to constitute a menace to the northern and north-eastern frontier of India.¹⁶ The British position in regard to the exclusion of Chinese influence from Sikkim and Nepal was entirely satisfactory. By 1890 the Government of India had acquired

13. Foreign Department, Secret E, October 1908, No. 137 (116-37). See also Sir Francis Younghusband, *India and Tibet* (London, 1910), p. 362.

14. Foreign Department, Secret E, October 1908, No. 137 (116-37).

15. *Ibid.*, Encl. No. 133.

16. *Ibid.*

direct and exclusive control over the internal administration and foreign relations of Sikkim. Although Nepal was not a protectorate of the Government of India, the office of the British Residency in Kathmandu was a powerful means to counteract Chinese influence in Nepal. Bhutan alone remained vulnerable to Chinese influence inasmuch as China claimed suzerainty over Bhutan. However, the Bhutanese people claimed to be an independent nation, owing allegiance neither to the Government of China nor to the British.

Charles Bell realized the magnitude of the danger from China to British India. In a note he pointed out that if China succeeded in establishing its suzerainty over Bhutan, it would be highly prejudicial to the British interests. He mentioned that the stationing of Chinese troops in Bhutan and the interference by China in Bhutan's administration would bring about a state of affairs on the north-eastern frontier which in course of time might develop into a serious menace. He proposed that in view of the great importance of the British interests at stake, it was necessary for the Government of India to persuade Bhutan to place its foreign relations under British control.¹⁷ His proposal was thus more drastic than any that White had made. He held that the alteration of the Treaty of 1865 as proposed by White in his letter dated 8 April 1907 would not be workable even if Bhutan agreed to that proposal, for the Government of India could not "insist on the observance of the decision by the neighbouring states" in the case of Tibet in the same way that it could in respect of the States of Sikkim and Cooch Behar, which were under British control. Besides, according to White's proposals, the Government of India would intervene only in the event of disputes between Bhutan and its neighbouring states. Charles Bell pointed out that if the Bhutanese authorities received Chinese agents, the Government of India would be helpless to prevent them from doing so. Hence he advised the Government of India to persuade Bhutan to place its foreign relations under the British. He suggested that in return the British should agree to abstain from interference in the internal administration of the

17. *Ibid.*

country.¹⁸ He endorsed his predecessor's view that the Government of India should provide the Bhutanese ruler with substantial economic and engineering assistance in building roads and in improving communications between India and Bhutan. He also favoured the laying out of gardens and working out of mines in Bhutan under European and Indian supervision with a view to bringing the Bhutanese people into the contact of the British in India, and suggested an increase in the annual subsidy of the Government of Bhutan from Rs. 50,000 to Rs. 100,000.¹⁹ Besides, he advised the Government to establish the same extradition arrangements between Bhutan and British India as prevailed between the Indian States and British India. He pointed out that the procedure laid down in Act VII of 1854 which under Article VI of the Treaty of 1865 governed British India's extradition arrangements with Bhutan, was cumbrous and did not work well. Under the procedure laid down in Act VII of 1854, an order of the Government of Bengal was necessary not only for the extradition of offenders demanded by Bhutan but also for the holding of an inquiry to find out whether there was sufficient evidence under British law for extradition. The accused had thus ample opportunity to abscond before the warrant of arrest was issued. Charles Bell wanted to do away with this procedure and to adopt the procedure laid down in Act XV of 1903, as it would empower him to deal with extradition arrangements with Bhutan.²⁰

The Government of India accepted Charles Bell's proposals. It maintained that it could not afford to let China establish its influence in Bhutan. It held that under Chinese influence, Bhutan, being coterminous with the British territory for about 240 miles, could not fail to raise complications of a grave kind on the north-eastern frontier and might eventually necessitate the location of a considerable force on the Indian side of the Bhutanese border. In a dispatch dated 1 October 1908 the Government of India strongly proposed to John Morley that in order to "frustrate the evident designs of China

18. Sir Charles Bell, *Tibet Past and Present* (Oxford, 1924), p. 101.

19. Foreign Department, Secret E, October 1908, Nos. 125 and 133.

20. Foreign Department, Secret E, March 1918. No. 662 (662-9).

on Bhutan" Charles Bell should be authorized to initiate negotiations with the Maharaja of Bhutan, and to increase the subsidy up to Rs. 200,000 a year in return for the Bhutanese consent to place the external relations of Bhutan under British control. It mentioned that it was inclined to help the Maharaja of Bhutan in building roads and in developing the resources of Bhutan provided the capital to be invested for this purpose was of British or British Indian origin and the process of development was gradual.²¹ Moreover, as recommended by Bell, it proposed the adoption of the procedure laid down in Act XV of 1903 in the matter of extradition and to empower the Political Officer in Sikkim to try, at his discretion and on behalf of the Government of Bhutan, any British subject who might abscond to India after committing offences in Bhutan.²²

The Secretary of State for India agreed with the Government of India that a grave change had taken place in the political situation on the north-eastern frontier of India owing to the emergence of China's forward policy and the attempt of the Chinese Amban to establish suzerain rights in Bhutan. On 22 April 1909 the India Office wrote to the Foreign Office and explained how in the past the Government of India had had no reason to concern itself actively with the foreign relations of Bhutan. "A clear necessity alone could, in Viscount Morley's opinion, justify a departure from the policy of non-intervention in the affairs of the regions so distant and inaccessible." It said that it considered it necessary to take such steps as might be practicable "to maintain Bhutan in its present state of independence as regards China and Tibet". The Secretary of State for India in his dispatch dated 25 January 1909 approved of the proposal of the Government of India to enter into negotiations with the Bhutanese ruler for a treaty by which the external relations of that State would be placed under British control.²³ He, however, considered it undesirable to enlarge

21. Foreign Department, Secret E, October 1908, No. 137 (116-37).

22. Telegraphic Correspondence from the Viceroy to the Secretary of State, No. 291, 8 October 1909, Minto Papers, Reel No. 8. See also Foreign Department, Secret E, March 1910, Nos. 662-9.

23. Foreign Department, Secret E, May 1910, No. 208 (208-62).

the scope of negotiations by bringing in the issue of extradition.²⁴

CHARLES BELL'S MISSION TO BHUTAN

New events moved fast. With the approval of the Secretary of State, the Government of India authorized Charles Bell in October 1909, to proceed to Bhutan at an early date to negotiate with the Maharaja of Bhutan. It told him that if he found the Maharaja and his advisers inclined to agree to place Bhutan's foreign relations entirely in the hands of the Government of India, he should affirm the intention of the Government of India not to interfere in the internal administration of Bhutan and promise to increase the subsidy up to Rs. 100,000 or, if necessary, up to Rs. 200,000 a year. It also told him that he should seek to substitute the following in place of Article VIII of the Treaty of 1865 :

The British Government undertakes to exercise no interference in the internal administration of Bhutan on its part, the Bhutanese Government agrees to be guided by the advice of the British Government in regard to its external relations. In the event of disputes or causes of complaint against the Rajas of Sikkim and Cooch Behar, such matters will be referred for arbitration to the British Government which will settle them in such manner as justice may require, and insist upon the observance of its decision by the Rajas named.

It cautioned him that if the Maharaja objected to the British terms, he should refrain from expressing any opinion or in any way committing himself, but report to the Government the objections of the Maharaja for its consideration. It informed him that if the Maharaja asked for an explicit declaration of the steps which the British Government would take to support him against China, he was to say merely that the circumstances of each dispute would be considered when reported for the advice of the British Government. It directed

24. Telegraphic Correspondence from the Secretary of State to the Viceroy, No. 317, 3 November 1909, Minto Papers, Reel No. 8. See also Foreign Department, Secret E, March 1910, No. 665 (662-9).

him to explain to the Maharaja the implications of his placing the foreign relations of Bhutan under the British Government and to tell him that he should not enter into any agreement with the authorities of foreign states without the consent of the British Government and that he would not, without the consent of the British Government, permit agents or representatives of foreign Powers to reside in Bhutan or part with land to the authorities of any foreign state. It authorized him to assure the Maharaja of the willingness of the British Government to assist him in developing the resources of his country but asked him to avoid, as far as possible, any discussion of details in a form likely to delay or prejudice an agreement in respect of the foreign relations of the state. It also sanctioned the presentation of a hundred Martini-Henry rifles in addition to gifts costing not more than Rs 10,000.²⁵

NEGOTIATIONS THROUGH UGYEN KAZI AND THE CONCLUSION OF A TREATY ON 8 JANUARY, 1910

Charles Bell did not proceed to Bhutan until he made sure of his success through the co-operation of Ugyen Kazi, the Agent of the Bhutanese Government in India. He had been careful for a few years past to keep Ugyen Kazi in good humour so as to be able to utilize his services when necessary.²⁶ He was aware of the fact that the Maharaja of Bhutan trusted Ugyen Kazi implicitly, and he copied the example of White, his predecessor, in patronizing the Bhutanese Agent with a view to maintaining friendly relations with the Bhutanese authorities through him. As officiating Political Officer in Sikkim in December 1906, he had recommended Ugyen Kazi to the Government for the title of Rai Bahadur, and had said that Ugyen Kazi had served the British well and that he might continue to offer his services if the Government of India appreciated them.²⁷

In 1909, Bell initiated negotiations with the Maharaja of Bhutan through Ugyen Kazi. He acquainted Ugyen Kazi with

25. Foreign Department, Secret E, May 1910, No. 212 (208-62).

26. *Ibid*, No. 235.

27. Foreign Department, External B, April 1907, Nos. 48-52.

the British proposals and promised an increase of Rs 50,000 in the annual subsidy to Bhutan.²⁸ Since negotiation was largely to depend on Ugyen Kazi, he held out a hope to him, with the approval of the Government of India, that his pay would also be increased in the event of Bhutan concluding the proposed treaty with the Government of India.²⁹ About 15 December 1909 he received intimation that the British terms were acceptable to the Government of Bhutan. Thereupon he proceeded to Bhutan, accompanied by Captain Kennedy, the Medical Officer at Gyantse, and reached Punakha on 7 January 1910. He was cordially received by the Maharaja and other authorities in Bhutan. The treaty was signed and sealed on 8 January 1910. The Bhutanese seals included those of the Maharaja of Bhutan and the members of the Bhutanese Council.³⁰ The Viceroy ratified the treaty on 24 March 1910, and the treaty was published on 26 March 1910.³¹ In June 1910 the Maharaja of Bhutan wrote to the Viceroy acknowledging his letter regarding the ratification of the treaty.³²

CHINA'S ATTEMPT TO SUBVERT THE TREATY OF 8 JANUARY 1910

The Indo-Bhutanese Treaty of 8 January 1910 was a turning point in the history of Bhutan. It proved an effective means to checkmate China's ambitions in Bhutan. The Chinese threat to Bhutan was not chimerical. In April 1908, the Chinese Amban in Lhasa had made no secret of his attempt to assert China's suzerainty over Bhutan. Even after the conclusion of the Treaty of 8 January 1910, China attempted to undermine the British position in Bhutan. In June 1910 the Bhutanese Agent at Phari reported that the Chinese Amban had sent a letter to the Maharaja of Bhutan demanding an explanation from him for allowing certain followers and the property of the Dalai Lama to pass through

28. Foreign Department, Secret E, May 1910, No. 235 (208-62).

29. *Ibid.*, Nos. 208-62, Foreign Department Notes, p. 6.

30. *Ibid.*, No. 235.

31. *Ibid.*, No. 256.

32. Foreign Department, Secret E, July 1910, Nos. 5-7.

Bhutan. The Amban was also reported to have written to the Bhutanese ruler ordering that the Chinese-Tibetan rupees should be allowed to circulate in Bhutan.³³ On hearing of this, the Secretary of State instructed the Government of India to stop all direct correspondence between China and Bhutan. He stated that the Maharaja should, in the event of his receiving letters from the Amban or any other authority from China send them to the British Political Officer in Sikkim, who would either draft an answer in consultation with the Maharaja or, if necessary, refer them to the Government of India for instructions.³⁴ Consequently, the Government of India on 16 July 1910 directed Bell to instruct the British Trade Agent at Yatung to inform the Chinese Frontier Officer that since the external relations of Bhutan were controlled by the British Government, any letter which the Chinese Frontier Officer might send to the Government of Bhutan should be sent through him to the Political Officer in Sikkim for transmission.³⁵ Nevertheless, the Chinese Resident in Tibet persisted in interfering in Bhutanese affairs. The Viceroy of India informed the Secretary of State for India in a telegram dated 4 October 1910 that the Chinese Amban addressed a letter dated 8 August 1910 to the Bhutanese authorities in words which amounted to a claim of Chinese suzerainty over Bhutan. The letter was addressed to the Deb Raja, although the office of Deb Raja had been abolished with the election of Ugyen Wangchuk as the Maharaja of Bhutan. The Amban ignored the change which had taken place both in the internal and in the external administration of Bhutan. The Government of India decided to "protest at once against such a letter" in view of the "Chinese habit of tentative aggression". (If aggression was challenged firmly and promptly, it was disavowed; if not, aggression followed aggression until Chinese domination was completely established.)³⁶ The British *Charge*

33. Foreign Department, Secret E, August 1910, Nos. 263-81.

34. Telegraphic Correspondence from the Secretary of State to the Viceroy, No. 194, 8 July 1910, Minto Papers, Reel No. 8. See also Foreign Department, Secret E, August 1910, Nos. 263-81.

35. Foreign Department, Secret E, August 1910, Nos. 263-81.

36. Foreign Department, Secret E, January 1911, No. 131 (124-207).

d’Affaires in Peking informed the Viceroy of India in a letter dated 29 October 1910 that the Government of China had, in its reply to his note of protest dated 14 October, vindicated its Amban’s action in addressing letters to the Bhutanese authorities and had maintained that Bhutan was a “vassal” state of China.³⁷

The British Government decided to insist on the observance of the procedure laid down by it, and resolved to acknowledge no letters addressed otherwise than through it. The India Office in its dispatch dated 14 December, 1910, informed the Foreign Office that the treaty concluded by Bhutan of its own free will had been communicated to the Government of China, which had, therefore, no excuse to ignore the relations formally established between Bhutan and India. It maintained that the Treaty of January 1910 put Bhutan, as far as the conduct of its foreign relations was concerned, on the same footing as Sikkim. It made it clear that it was not prepared to allow China to extend its influence to Bhutan, which was remote from the sphere of direct Chinese interest and in a close relationship with the Government of India.³⁸ It rejected the claim of the Government of China to suzerainty over Bhutan and considered itself bound to resist any attempt on the part of China to impose its authority on, or, in any way to interfere in Bhutan.³⁹ After this the Government of China did not challenge the British position in Bhutan, and the British succeeded in maintaining the status of Bhutan as a buffer state between China and British India.

AN APPRAISAL OF CHINESE CLAIM TO SUZERAINTY OVER BHUTAN

It will not be out of place here to make a short study of the status of a vassal state in order to examine Chinese claims to suzerainty over Bhutan. A state under suzerainty is considered a mere part of the state which enjoys suzerainty over it. It “has those rights only which have been expressly

37. *Ibid.*, No. 153.

38. Foreign Department, Secret E, July 1911, No. 250 (248-80).

39. *Ibid.*, No. 279.

granted to it and the assumption of larger powers of external action than those which have been distinctly conceded to it is an act of rebellion against the sovereign". It is either absolutely or mainly represented internationally by the suzerain state. All international treaties concluded by the suzerain state are binding upon the vassal state, if an exception is not mentioned. If the suzerain state embarks upon a war, the vassal state is also *ipso facto* at war on the side of the suzerain state. Besides, the suzerain state is responsible to some extent for all actions of the vassal state.⁴⁰

The history of Bhutan from the eighteenth century onwards reveals that the Bhutanese authorities were masters of their own affairs and that no foreign Power ever exercised any control over them. Bhutan never joined the Chinese or the Tibetans in a war against a foreign Power. China fought wars with Britain in 1839-42 and 1859-61, and with Japan in 1894. Tibet fought wars with Nepal in 1792 and in 1856, and with the British in 1888, but in all these wars Bhutan remained neutral. Moreover, Bhutan conducted its foreign relations independently of China or Tibet. As early as the beginning of the eighteenth century the Deb Raja invaded Sikkim and held that country for about six years.⁴¹ In 1773, the Government of Bhutan interfered by force in the affairs of Cooch Behar. When the East India Company sent an expedition to Bhutan on behalf of Cooch Behar and captured Bhutanese territories, China did not figure in any way during the conflict. Prithvinarayan Shah, the Raja of Nepal, who did not like the growth of British power in the Himalayas, called the attention of the Panchen Lama to the plight of the Deb Raja. The Panchen Lama thereupon wrote a letter to Warren Hastings, requesting him to treat the Deb Raja with "clemency".⁴² Such a letter, however, cannot be regarded

40. William Edward Hall, *A Treatise on International Law* (Oxford, 1917), edn. 7, p. 29. See also L. Oppenheim, *International Law: A Treatise* (London, 1928), edn. 4, vol. 1, p. 186.

41. C.V. Aitchison, comp., *A Collection of Treaties, Engagements and Sanads Relating to India and Neighbouring Countries* (Calcutta, 1909), vol. 2., p.286.

42. Schuyler Cammann, *Trade through the Himalayas: The Early British Attempts to Open Tibet* (Princeton, 1951), p. 27.

as entitling Tibet to suzerainty over Bhutan. On 25 April, 1774, the Government of Bhutan concluded a treaty of peace directly with the East India Company without making any reference to the Panchen Lama. It may be recalled that during the Indo-Tibetan discord of 1903-4, the Bhutanese authorities also pleaded with the British to make peace with the Tibetans. But it does not mean that the latter were under the suzerainty of Bhutan. Tibet never represented the Bhutanese Government in dealing with India or other foreign states. China, which claimed to be the suzerain of Tibet, did not allow the latter to enter into any agreement with a foreign Power till 1911. In September 1904, when Curzon attempted to put an end to the "fiction" of Chinese suzerainty over Tibet and forced the Tibetans to sign the Lhasa Convention, China requested the British to recognize its special status in Tibet. The British agreed to the Chinese claim and the Anglo-Chinese Adhesion Agreement was signed in 1906. Moreover, China undertook to pay indemnity to the British on behalf of Tibet.

China's claims to suzerainty over Bhutan either directly or indirectly through its overlordship in Tibet have no basis in history. In fact, the history of British relations with Bhutan negatives these claims. In 1841, the East India Company annexed the Assam Dooars of Bhutan. In 1864, the Government of India declared war on Bhutan, annexed a large slice of Bhutan, and concluded a treaty of peace in 1865. In all the above wars, annexations and treaties, the British dealt with Bhutan directly and without any reference to China. If China had been Bhutan's suzerain, it would not have been a silent spectator to foreign aggression on its vassal state. Moreover, the Bhutanese authorities were supreme in the affairs of their state and foiled all attempts of the Chinese Amban and of the Tibetans to impose their authority on Bhutan. In 1885, Aloo Dorzi, the Thimpu Dzungpon, being defeated by the Tongsa Ponlop in a civil war, fled to Tibet and sought Chinese and Tibetan assistance. The Chinese Amban and the Tibetans endeavoured to restore Aloo Dorzi to his authority in Bhutan, but failed to do so.⁴³ During the Indo-Tibetan

43. Foreign Department, Secret E, January 1911, No. 179 (124-207).

conflict of 1888, the Chinese Amban and the Tibetans asked the Bhutanese ruler to give assistance to Tibet, but the Bhutanese ruler declined.⁴⁴ In 1904, Ugyen Wangchuk, then the Tongsa Ponlop, accompanied Colonel Younghusband to Lhasa without seeking or obtaining the permission of China. Furthermore, China did not take exception to White's mission to Bhutan in 1905, when he presented the insignia of K.C.I.E. to Ugyen Wangchuk, nor to his mission in 1907, when he represented the Government of India at the installation of Ugyen Wangchuk on the throne of Bhutan.⁴⁵ Bhutan never paid tribute⁴⁶ to China or to Tibet.⁴⁷ The Bhutanese people no doubt used to give presents to the Dalai Lama, the head of their religion.⁴⁸ But the religious offerings to the Dalai Lama by the Bhutanese people did not mean Bhutan's *political* subordination to Tibet. In fact, Bhutan was independent of Tibet and China during the period under study.⁴⁹ The Chinese claim to suzerainty over Bhutan in the years 1908-10, was at variance with the facts of history. Besides, by 1907, Bhutan had become a protectorate of the Government of India, in fact if not in name.

THE INDO-BHUTANESE AGREEMENT ON EXTRADITION

In 1909 the Government of India decided to put its extradition arrangements with Bhutan in conformity with its

44. *Ibid.*

45. *Ibid.*

46. Unlike Bhutan, Nepal was obliged by the Treaty of 1792 to send a quinquennial tributary mission to China. But the tributary mission did not signify Nepal's subjection to Chinese political control. See Kanchanmoy Mojumdar, *Indo-Nepalese Relations 1837-1877* (Thesis, Ph.D., Indian School of International Studies, New Delhi, 1962), pp. 443-4, fn. 12. See also Ramakant, *Indo-Nepalese Relations* (Delhi, 1968), p. 346.

47. Foreign Department, Secret E, January 1911, No. 179 (124-207).

48. Bell, n. 18, p. 100.

49. Leo E. Rose holds, on the authority of the Chinese sources, that the Chinese claim to suzerainty over Bhutan was untenable. See Leo E. Rose, "Sino-Indian Rivalry and the Himalayan Border States", *Orbis* (Philadelphia, Pa), Vol. 5, Summer 1961, p. 203.

extradition arrangements with the Princely States. But, as we have seen above, the issue of extradition, at the instance of the Secretary of State, was not raised till the conclusion of the treaty which brought the external relations of Bhutan under British control. After thus securing control over the external affairs of Bhutan, the Secretary of State for India, in his dispatch dated 25 March, 1910, authorized the Political Officer in Sikkim to negotiate an agreement with the Government of Bhutan on the following lines: The British Government would agree, on demand duly made in writing by the Government of Bhutan, to surrender under the provision of Act XV of 1903 all Bhutanese subjects, accused of any crimes specified in the first schedule of the said Act, who might take refuge in the British territory. The Government of Bhutan would agree, on requisition being made by the Government of India or any officer authorized by the Government of India, to surrender any British subject or subjects of a foreign Power whose extradition might be required in pursuance of any agreement by the British Government with the said Power, accused of any crimes specified in the first schedule of Act XV of 1903, who might take refuge in the territory under the jurisdiction of the Government of Bhutan, and also any Bhutanese subject who, after committing any crime in Indian territory, would flee into Bhutan, on such evidence of their guilt being produced as would satisfy the local courts of the district in which the offences might have been committed.⁵⁰ The agreement was concluded on 21 November, 1910.⁵¹ On 25 January, 1911, the Political Officer in Sikkim was invested by the Government of India with the powers of a Political Agent for the State of Bhutan.⁵²

The agreement on extradition between Bhutan and British India was not based on the principle of reciprocity. While the Government of India undertook to extradite only Bhutanese subjects and no British subjects, the Government of Bhutan undertook to extradite not only British subjects or

50. Foreign Department, Secret E, October 1910, Nos. 104-7.

51. Foreign Department, Secret E, January 1911, Nos. 120-3.

52. Foreign Department, Internal A, February 1911, Nos. 22.

subjects of a foreign Power whose extradition was required in pursuance of any agreement made by the British Government with the said Power, but also Bhutanese subjects who, after committing offence in British territory, took refuge in Bhutan. It was out of the question in 1910 for the British to give Bhutan jurisdiction over European British subjects. In fact the British then enjoyed extraterritorial jurisdiction in most countries of Asia.⁵³ As a general rule, the ordinary courts of the native States in India did not try European British subjects.⁵⁴ This want of reciprocity in the extradition of offenders between British India and the native States was justified on the ground of inequality in the state of civilization and jurisprudence under the British Government and the native States.⁵⁵ The Government of India reduced Bhutan to a status similar to that of the native States in India in respect of its extradition arrangements with that state. The Government of Bhutan retained jurisdiction over the British Indian subjects in Bhutan, but the Government of India was not prepared to leave its subjects to the will of the Bhutanese authorities. It was the duty of the Political Officer in Sikkim to preserve the mean between the Bhutanese idea of justice and the British idea of fair treatment without undue interference in the internal administration of Bhutan and without partiality towards British Indian subjects.⁵⁶

THE STATUS OF BHUTAN UNDER THE TREATY OF JANUARY 1910

As a result of the Treaty of 8 January, 1910, Bhutan remained no longer a fully sovereign state. It lost its external sovereignty and became a mere protectorate of the British Government of India. The British in India took the control of the external affairs of Bhutan. They thought that the "implica-

53. K.M. Panikkar, *Indian States and the Government of India* (London, 1932), p. 94.

54. Charles Lewis Tupper, *Our Indian Protectorate* (London, 1893), p. 365.

55. *Ibid*, p. 368.

56. Foreign Department, Internal B, October 1912, Nos. 183-8.

tions" of the treaty authorised them to do so. They made it clear to Bhutan that under the treaty of 1910, the latter would not deal with foreign countries without the consent of the former.⁵⁷ On 23 December, 1910, Sir Edward Grey, British Foreign Secretary of State, clarified the status of Bhutan to the Chinese Government through Sir J. Jordan, British Minister at Peking, that the Treaty of 1910 put Bhutan, as far as the conduct of its foreign relations was concerned, on the same footing with Sikkim.⁵⁸ Besides, Bhutan looked to the Government of India for protection against Chinese expansionism, and the Government of India considered itself bound to resist any Chinese aggression on Bhutan. However, Bhutan did not form part of the British Indian Empire. It was completely independent in its internal administration. Charles Bell thought that the Treaty of 8 January, 1910, implied a change in the fundamental relations of the Government of India with Bhutan. He mentioned in a letter to the Government of India, dated 25 January, 1910, that after the conclusion of the Treaty of 8 January, 1910, "Bhutan was incorporated in the British Empire".⁵⁹ But the Secretary of State reminded the Government of India that the Treaty was intended only to achieve the security of that part of the Indian frontier from external aggression and intrigue. He instructed the Government of India to bear in mind the British policy of non-interference in the internal affairs of the States bordering on India. In a dispatch dated 15 April, 1910, he held that the new Treaty:

marks no departure from the settled policy of His Majesty's Government upon all the frontiers of India, which is to undertake no extension, direct or indirect, of the administrative responsibilities of the Government of India, and to derogate in no respect, beyond the letter of our treaty rights, from that measure of internal independence which we have engaged to respect in the states concerned.⁶⁰

57. Foreign Department, Secret E, May 1910, No. 212. (208-62).

58. Foreign Department Secret E, July 1911, No. 253 (248-86).

59. Foreign Department, Secret E, May 1910, No. 235 (208-62).

60. Foreign Department, Secret E, June 1910 Nos. 128-30.

The Government of India continued the policy of non-interference in the internal affairs of Bhutan. In November, 1910, a few European firms wanted to initiate certain industrial enterprises in Bhutan and sought a guarantee by the Government of India for the enjoyment of the rights conferred on them by leases or agreements made with the Government of Bhutan, but the Government of India refused to give any guarantee on the ground that Bhutan had complete control over its internal administration.⁶¹ Thus the status of Bhutan differed from that of Sikkim. The British had acquired in Sikkim as early as 1890 a "direct and exclusive control over the internal administration and foreign relations",⁶² whereas they had no right to interfere in the internal administration of Bhutan. The status of Bhutan also differed from that of the native states in India. While the former was a protectorate, the latter were vassal states of Great Britain. As the nineteenth century progressed, the Government of British India almost absorbed the separate entities of Indian states so far as their foreign relations were concerned. Bhutan had, for some purposes, a position of its own as an International Person. British treaties with Bhutan, though executed by the Governor-General in Council of India, were treaties between foreign countries. From the point of view of International Law Indian states had no separate external relations at all. Bhutan, on the contrary had external relations, though by the treaty of 1910, it bound itself to be guided by the advice of the British Government in regard to them. Moreover, Bhutan was more independent than Indian states. The interference of the Government of British India in the internal affairs of the Indian states was "comprehensive and pervading."⁶³ The British paramountcy over the Indian states put them in a class different from that of Bhutan. Although the Government of India never openly disavowed their treaty obligations to the rulers of the Indian states, those obligations were respected only in theory. In practice, the British Residents accredited to the Indian states acted on the assumption of right incidental

61. Foreign Department, Secret E, December 1910, Nos. 793-4.

62. Aitchison, n. 41, p. 331.

63. Panikkar, n. 53, p. 101.

to British supremacy rather than on the strict interpretation of the terms of the treaties.⁶⁴ On the contrary, the Government of India took care not to rub the Bhutanese authorities the wrong way. It placed no British agent or troops in Bhutan and depended mainly on the friendliness of the Bhutanese authorities for the maintenance of its control over the foreign relations of Bhutan.⁶⁵ It allowed no Europeans to visit Bhutan and honoured the susceptibilities of the Bhutanese authorities who were averse to welcoming Europeans in Bhutan. In 1910 the Government of France requested the British Government to allow M.G. Toussaint to visit Bhutan for the purpose of studying the Buddhist religion. The India Office in its dispatch dated 30 November, 1910, regretted its helplessness to meet the wishes of the French Government, and mentioned that the Bhutanese people were exceedingly jealous of the presence of Europeans in their country and that even British subjects were not allowed to cross the Indo-Bhutanese frontier.⁶⁶ Moreover, the residence of Europeans in Bhutan would raise the issue of jurisdiction over them. The Government of India was, in fact, intent on avoiding complications and misunderstanding with the Government of Bhutan. Bhutan remained practically a sealed country till the end.

To sum up, soon after the withdrawal of the British troops from the Chumbi Valley in January 1908, China endeavoured to establish its suzerainty over Bhutan in pursuance of its forward policy. The Government of India became greatly concerned over the emergence of the Chinese menace on the north-eastern frontier of India and prevailed on the Secretary of State for India to authorize Charles Bell to negotiate a treaty with the Maharaja of Bhutan aimed at putting the external affairs of Bhutan under British control. Bell obtained the co-operation of the Bhutanese Agent, and a treaty between the Indian and the Bhutanese Governments was signed on 8 January 1910. China did not like this deve-

64. Pandit Syama Sankar, *The Nature and Evolution of the Political Relations between the Indian States and the British Imperial Government* (Geneva, 1932), p. 88.

65. Foreign Department, Secret E, February 1912, Nos. 410-6.

66. Foreign Department, External B, January 1911, Nos. 553-5.

lopment. It attempted to subvert the position acquired by the British in Bhutan by the Treaty of 8 January, 1910. But the British Government adopted a firm attitude towards China and frustrated the latter's designs on Bhutan. Bhutan became a protectorate of the Government of India under the Treaty of 1910. However, the Government of India followed a cautious policy towards Bhutan. It stationed no British Resident in Bhutan, allowed no Europeans to visit that State, and scrupulously refrained from interfering in the internal administration of the state.

CHAPTER VIII

Bhutan under British Tutelage

1910-47

THOUGH, as mentioned in the previous chapter, the Government of India brought the external affairs of Bhutan under its control by concluding a treaty with that country in 1910, it did not feel satisfied; for it was afraid lest the Chinese should undermine the position it had gained in Bhutan by that treaty. It, therefore, sought on the one hand to frustrate every attempt by China to interfere in the affairs of Bhutan, and, on the other, to build up and maintain close and cordial relations with the Bhutanese ruler. It was, indeed, determined to keep China out of Bhutan altogether, by force if necessary. At its instance, Sir Ugyen Wangchuk, K.C.I.E., Maharaja of Bhutan, ignored the order of the Chinese Amban in Lhasa to introduce Chinese-Tibetan coins into Bhutan, and paid no heed to the written demand of the Amban to render explanation for allowing certain Tibetan refugees to pass through Bhutan.

The other measure which the Government of India took to prevent China from establishing its influence in Bhutan was that it did not let the latter relapse into isolation. The Maharaja of Bhutan was invited and even granted a pecuniary assistance to attend the Coronation Darbar at Delhi in 1911. The Maharaja, accompanied by thirteen notables of Bhutan, attended the Delhi Darbar. The political importance of his visit cannot be under-rated. Not only was the Maharaja impressed with the military and economic power of the British in India, but he also joined the chiefs of the native Indian States to pay homage to his suzerain, the

British King-Emperor. He was also invested with the insignia of Knight Commander of the Star of India (K.C.S.I.), and Ugyen Dorji received the title of Raja as a personal distinction.¹ Thus, in view of the action of the Bhutanese ruler receiving titles from and paying homage to the British King-Emperor, the Chinese claim to suzerainty over Bhutan fell to the ground.

The Government of India had an important leverage in the friendly dispositions of the Bhutanese chiefs. All the Bhutanese authorities during this period were friendly to the British in India. Even Dawa Paljor, the then Paro Ponlop, who had been apprehended for his predilection for the Chinese, cast in his lot with the British in India by 1911 and wrote to Raja Ugyen that he would not communicate with the Chinese in Tibet without prior reference to the Political Officer in Sikkim. The Government of India had a staunch friend and ally in the Maharaja of Bhutan, who had by now become the most dominating personality in Bhutan. Not only was he supreme in the foreign affairs of his country, but he also assumed considerable power in the internal administration of the country. Local chiefs who had enjoyed considerable independence in earlier years, as well as the monasteries, suffered a diminution in their importance as the Maharaja asserted himself more and more and exercised his power independently of them. The monasteries in Bhutan, though influential, ceased to matter much as they did in Tibet. Devoting themselves almost entirely to religious affairs, they interfered but little with the Maharaja's administration. However, the Maharaja was wary in making any alterations that affected them. Previously the monasteries in Bhutan were more or less subject to the influence of those of Tibet; Sir Ugyen gradually shook off his country's spiritual subjection to Tibet. It is wrong to hold, as is commonly held, that Bhutan was all along in spiritual bondage to Tibet. By the first decade of the present century the Bhutanese monasteries grew independent of their Tibetan counterparts and of Tibetan lamas. The Bhutanese priests ceased to visit

1. Foreign Department, External A, May 1912, Nos. 9-12.

Lhasa to get religious education and enlightenment.²

The growth of the Maharaja's power was a powerful antidote to the Chinese attempt to supplant the British in Bhutan. The task of the latter in meeting the Chinese challenge was considerably facilitated by the internal conditions of China from 1911 onwards; for China became fully pre-occupied with its internal troubles. Long civil wars in China made it little more than a geographical expression. The Government of the Dalai Lama recovered its *de facto* independence, expelled Chinese garrisons from Tibet, and adopted a policy of friendly relations with the Government of India. It is noteworthy that the factor which enmeshed the British in Bhutanese affairs in the years 1908-10, was China's domination of Tibet and China's attempts to establish its suzerainty over Bhutan. The Indo-Bhutanese Treaty of 1910 was aimed specifically at precluding Chinese influence from Bhutan. With China preoccupied with its own internal affairs and with the establishment of close and friendly relations with Tibet, the danger of Chinese intrigue in Bhutan declined. The British, therefore, relaxed their control over the external affairs of Bhutan. They were disinclined to interfere in matters in which their interests were not at stake. The Maharaja of Bhutan was allowed not only to exchange friendly and complimentary letters with the Maharaja of Nepal but also to settle petty frontier and other disputes with Tibet by mutual agreement. In 1913, when the *chhangjud* (official Head steward) of the Darchen Lama, a Bhutanese subject, was murdered by certain lamas of the Shibtang Gompa of Taklakote, a dispute arose between the Bhutanese residents in Western Tibet and the Tibetan lamas of Taklakot. The Maharaja of Bhutan wanted to know whether or not the Tibetan Government would pay any compensation for the death of the *chhangjud* and punish the persons responsible for the murder. The Government of India advised the Maharaja to write to the Tibetan Government directly regarding the matter.³

2. *Ibid.*

3. *Ibid.*, August 1914, Nos. 2-5.

By 1914, with the normalization of Bhutan's relations with Tibet, the ruler of Bhutan directed his efforts towards the development of Bhutan on modern lines. In comparison with the native Indian States, Bhutan was a backward state. Its economy and means of communications were almost primitive. Sir Ugyen Wangchuk was anxious to do what he could for the advancement of his country. During his visits to Calcutta and Delhi in 1905 and 1911, respectively, he had seen the technical and educational progress that India had achieved, and he was anxious to introduce some modernization in Bhutan. He was particularly concerned about improving communications and developing the economy of his country. He was aware that education on modern lines was essential to progress. For the sake of educating Bhutanese youngmen he was prepared to relax the prohibition on the entry of foreigners and get a few British teachers on regular employment to teach in Bhutan. One stumbling block in the introduction of a comprehensive scheme of modern education was the lack of adequate finance. Bhutan on the whole was very poor. The annual subsidy of a lakh of rupees given by the Government of India constituted a very considerable proportion of the total available revenue, and one half of this subsidy was earmarked for the use of the monasteries and local chiefs. Without money the Government of Bhutan could hardly provide for the education of the common people. However, with the help and co-operation of some Scotch missionaries of Kalimpong, it launched a programme of education on a limited scale. Raja Ugyen Dorji took an active interest in the matter. In the winter of 1914 forty-six Bhutanese students, all belonging to some of the leading families of Bhutan, began to attend the Scotch Mission School at Kalimpong. In the following summer the Government of Bhutan opened a school at Ha in Bhutan for the further education of the students who had studied at Kalimpong during the winter. In 1915 it established a school at Bumtang also. The Bhutanese boys were taught Hindi and English, besides other subjects. Teachers to be employed in Bhutanese schools were trained at the Kalimpong school. W.W. Hornell, Director of Public Instruction, Bengal,

interested himself in the education of Bhutanese boys and granted a certain number of stipends tenable at the Kalimpong school for the training of those offering to teach in Bhutanese schools.⁴

The Maharaja of Bhutan also attempted to develop the natural resources of the country and improve its financial position. On 23 January, 1914, he appointed J.C. White, ex-Political Officer in Sikkim, as his representative and agent and empowered him to draw up agreements or leases with persons desirous of making investment in Bhutan. White set forth three schemes (a) the lease of land near the border of British India (b) the development of the mineral wealth of Bhutan and (c) the exploitation of the vast timber and bamboo resources of Bhutan. The Government of India being anxious to assist in the development of Bhutan on reasonable lines, recognized in March 1914 the appointment of White as the Maharaja's agent and representative. In 1914, it seemed that Bhutan was going to be thrown open to British and Indian capitalists and industrialists. On receipt of the approval of the Government of India, White got in touch with the capitalists. However, White's scheme for the exploitation of the natural resources of Bhutan came to nothing; for a difference arose between Raja Ugyen Dorji and White over the payment of White's personal expenses which the latter estimated at Rs. 45,000 a year. Raja Ugyen referred the matter to the Maharaja, who decided to cancel the appointment of White as his agent and to appoint no European agent in developing his country on the lines suggested by White.⁵ Since White knew Bhutan better than any other European and had a close acquaintance with the Maharaja and other Bhutanese authorities, he was more likely to succeed as the Maharaja's agent than any other European. His removal, indeed, was a setback to the plan of exploitation of the resources of Bhutan by European or Indian capitalists. Bhutan was not, in fact likely to be completely open to the capitalists since the Bhutanese people, by and large, were strongly

4. Foreign and Political Department, External B, August 1916, Nos. 32-34.

5. Foreign and Political Department, External A, July 1914, Nos. 1-7.

disinclined to admit Europeans to their country. The outbreak of the World War in August 1914 ruled out any experiment of exploiting the natural resources of Bhutan by the capitalists of Europe.

The issue of the economic development of Bhutan was overcast by the exigency of the war effort. Bhutan could not isolate itself from it. When the Political Officer in Sikkim informed the Maharaja of Bhutan that the war had broken out with Austria-Hungary and Germany, the Maharaja wrote to him in reply that the Bhutanese Government was placing financial and military resources of Bhutan at the disposal of the British Government. He sought permission to render any assistance in terms of money and troops. He also made a donation of a lakh of rupees to the Imperial War Relief Fund. This was a big contribution in view of the poverty of Bhutan. Bhutan possessed no trained and equipped army. So it was not in a position to help the British with troops. However, it tried to help the Government of India in enlisting recruits from among the Bhutanese and the Nepalese settlers in Bhutan. When in 1915 the Government of India found that it had not been able to get adequate Gurkha recruits from the usual sources, it decided to recruit from among the Gurkha population near the southern border of Bhutan. The Government of Bhutan made every effort to induce both the Nepalese and the Bhutanese to enlist in the Indian Army. It offered to remit for three years the taxes of those who would enlist. It also promised to give further rewards to the recruits in proportion to the merit of their services under the Government of India.⁶

The efforts of the Government of Bhutan to obtain recruits for the Indian Army did not meet with success. The Bhutanese were averse to enlisting in the army. The need for Gurkha troops was adequately supplied by the ruler of Nepal. In comparison with Nepal's contributions to the war effort, Bhutan's contributions, in terms of men, money, and materials, were little. The Gurkhas of Nepal enlisted in large

6. Foreign and Political Department, External B, May 1916, Nos. 36-45.

numbers, and towards the end of the war there were as many as twenty battalions of Gurkhas in the Indian Army. Nepal's financial help was equally considerable. Nepal provided Rs. 600,000 for the conduct of the war, besides gifts and small contributions. Consequently the British recompensed Nepal in 1919 by recognizing the Maharaja of Nepal as "His Majesty" the King of Nepal and finally, in 1923, by concluding a Treaty of Friendship which formally recognized Nepal as an independent country and removed its prohibition on that country's employing Europeans and Americans without the prior permission of the Government of India.⁷ Although in February 1919, Lord Chelmsford, Viceroy of India, conveyed to the Maharaja of Bhutan his appreciation of the sincere loyalty which had animated the latter throughout the period of war and of his "generous" contribution to the British war effort, Bhutan was not rewarded in any way. It is noteworthy that though Bhutan was not formally recognized as an Indian state, it was from 1905 onwards in the process of being included in the coterie of Indian states. Hence, possibly, Bhutan's contributions, along with those of the native Indian states, were deemed as having been made in discharge of its duties towards its suzerain.

Bhutan shared with the Indian sub-continent the effect of the war on its economy. The people of Bhutan also faced a hard time in consequence of war. The import trade of Bhutan decreased since there was an abnormal rise in the prices of such commodities as cotton and woollen piece-goods, twist and yarn, brass and copper, iron and iron-sheets which constituted its imports from India. The political agitation which marked the Indian political scene after the war was not noticeable in Bhutan. There was no political consciousness among the Bhutanese people, and they had no political expectations from the British. Bhutan, by and large, remained in peace and tranquillity. We may, however, note in passing that some Indian revolutionaries, particularly the members of the Jugantar Party, made Bhutan a base for their activities

7. Asad Hussain, *British India's Relations with the Kingdom of Nepal 1857-1947* (London, 1970), pp. 289 and 307.

and used Bhutanese territory as a refuge in 1919.⁸

Raja Ugyen Dorji, who, next to the Maharaja, was the most important personality in Bhutan towards the end of the first decade of the present century, and who engaged himself actively in the war effort on behalf of Bhutan, died on 22 June, 1916. He had been appointed by the Government of India to the post of Bhutan Agent as far back as 1888-89. During the first few years of his appointment Ugyen Dorji's duties as Bhutan Agent were practically confined to delivering messages from the officials of British India to the Bhutanese Government and *vice-versa*. But with the passage of time his influence and responsibilities increased considerably. He became one of the important councillors of Bhutan and received the high rank and office of Deb Zimpon from the Maharaja, who not only empowered him to settle all frontier disputes on his behalf but also placed him in charge of the extensive low-lying land bordering on British India. Thus he assumed a dual role. On the one hand he was appointed and paid by the Government of India to look after its interest in Bhutan, and on the other he undertook to safeguard the interest of Bhutan not only as a high Bhutanese official but also as landlord of the territory bordering on India. Raja Ugyen did his job well. He enjoyed the full confidence of the Maharaja of Bhutan and co-operated loyally with the Government of India. He lived for a considerable part of each year at Kalimpong, where he carried on large business. He also built some good houses at Kalimpong for the accommodation of important visitors from Tibet and Bhutan. These houses also became a good source of income to him. Sonam Tobgay Dorji, the son of Raja Ugyen Dorji, who succeeded his father in 1916 not only as the Maharaja's agent for the administration of the land bordering on British India but also as Deb Zimpon, used to receive about Rs. 5,000 every year by way of rent on these houses in the mid twenties of this century.⁹

The death of Raja Ugyen Dorji was a great loss to

8. Foreign and Political Department, External-B (Secret), January 1920, Nos. 25-29.

9. Foreign and Political Department, External, File No. 419-x, 1925.

Bhutan. He was a most experienced official of that country. With his experience of working with a number of officials of British India he could have represented the Bhutanese case in any negotiation with the British in India more ably than any other Bhutanese. Besides, he encouraged modern education and met most of the expenses incurred in connection with the education of Bhutanese boys at Kalimpong and Ha.

By the year 1921, of the forty-five Bhutanese boys who had gone to Kalimpong for English education, thirty-three passed Middle School, and four of these sat for the University Entrance examination in the following year. At the Bumtang school eight students reached the sixth standard. The Maharaja of Bhutan wanted these students to be trained in different technical fields after their Matriculation so that their services might be available for the development of his country. He wanted some of them to be educated as teachers, medical and veterinary doctors, civil and mining engineers, and others to be trained in scientific methods of agriculture and dairy-farming, in the manufacture of cotton and woollen textiles, in tanning, in forestry, and in printing. He wrote to the Viceroy of India, requesting him to provide financial and other assistance in training Bhutanese students. About this time the Government of India was offering educational and training facilities to some Tibetan students with a view to helping Tibet to stand on its own¹⁰. This precedent strengthened the Bhutanese case. About this very time, *i.e.*, in 1921, the Earl of Ronaldshay, then Governor of Bengal, visited Bhutan. He was so impressed by the sincere loyalty of the Bhutanese authorities towards the British that he wrote to Lord Reading, then Viceroy of India, recommending that the Maharaja of Bhutan should be given facilities in India for the higher and specialized training of a certain number of young men whom he had been educating on Western lines during the past few years. The Government of India considered the Maharaja's plan sympathetically and agreed in 1924 to arrange for the training of some selected Bhutanese students in various

10. Tsepon W.D. Shakalepa, *Tibet: A Political History* (New Haven Conn. 1967), p. 249.

technical subjects. It provided a sum of Rs. 48,629 for this purpose to be spent over a period of 2 to 4 years.¹¹

From 1924 to 1929, a few selected Bhutanese students who had passed the Matriculation examination were trained in different technical institutions in India. Two Bhutanese students were trained as teachers at the Training School at Bhagalpur; two as Sub-Assistant Surgeons at the Campbell Medical School, Calcutta; two as tanners at the Harness and Saddlery Factory, Kanpur, three as Rangers at the Forest School, Dehra Dun; one as a mining engineer at the Bengal Engineering College at Sibpur, Calcutta; and two as Veterinary Assistants at the Veterinary College, Calcutta. Besides, two Bhutanese students received training in lac cultivation in the Palamu district in Bihar. The Government of Bhutan also sent two non-matriculate students for military training at its own expenses. They were attached to the Gurkha Rifles at Shillong.

Modern education was introduced in Bhutan in the second decade of the present century, but it was not followed up largely for want of resources. Money was needed not only to educate children but also to find avenues for the employment of the educated youth. The Bhutanese ruler was conscious of the fact that unrestricted education of Bhutanese young men without adequate means of channelizing them into the development process of the country would lead to unrest in Bhutan. That is why English education at large was discountenanced. In 1926 the school at Bumtang was closed down, and only two Bhutanese students were allowed to study at the Kalimpong High School.

Sir Ugyen Wangchuk, who introduced modern education in Bhutan, was getting on in years. In 1924 he entered his sixty-first year, and he was troubled by the problem of ensuring the continuity of his dynastic rule. The institution of Kingship had not struck deep root in Bhutanese soil. The Bhutanese Maharaja stood in marked contrast with his counterpart in Nepal, where an occupant of the throne was a god-king venerated by the people at large, and the Ranas, how-

11. Foreign Department, External, File No. 263, 1923.

ever powerful, could not venture to supplant him for fear of the people's wrath. In Bhutan the people, by and large, had not yet wholly and finally switched their allegiance from their local chiefs to their Ring. In 1907, Sir Ugyen Wangchuk had made himself the first Maharaja of Bhutan from the position of the Tongsa Ponlop. But he had not reduced the autonomy and power of other Bhutanese chiefs. The Maharaja of Bhutan was, for all practical purposes, only the chief among the Bhutanese chiefs. As the time of his departure for the next world drew near, the Maharaja apprehended that on his death there might be opposition to the accession of his son to the Bhutanese throne from other chiefs of Bhutan. He would possibly have been glad if the Government of India had guaranteed the succession of his dynasty. But the latter was little inclined to interfere in any internal affair of Bhutan, still less to shoulder the responsibility of regulating a disputed succession in that country.

When Sir Ugyen Wangchuk died on 21 August, 1926, Colonel F.M. Bailey, Political Officer in Sikkim, apprehended trouble in Bhutan. He feared trouble from Dorji Rapden, who then held the office of Deb Dronyer and who had married Aji Pedon, the eldest daughter of the late Maharaja. A son of Dorji Rapden, aged about 26, was the Paro Ponlop. Maharaj-kumar Jigme Wangchuk, aged 20, heir to the late Maharaja, was a son of Sir Ugyen Wangchuk by his second wife. Before his birth, Dorji Rapden, and later Chhir-Panjoo (Tsering Paljor), his son, had been presumed to be heirs. The relations of Dorji Rapden with the late Maharaja had been strained for some time at the latter's death. It was considered probable that he would stake his claim to the throne and obtain adherents by exerting his influence and by making a lavish distribution of the money he had amassed by trading.

Although the Government of India was averse to the policy of interference in the internal matters of Bhutan, the former was not completely indifferent to the impending turmoil in that country. A peaceful succession to the Bhutanese throne was important for the Government of India. When Jigme Wangchuk wrote to Lord Irwin, Viceroy of India, reporting the death of his father on 21 August, 1926, and requesting for

himself the same kindness and favour from the Government of India as had been conferred upon his father, the Viceroy extended to him prompt recognition. In his *kharita* (letter) dated 9 September 1926 to Jigme Wangchuk, he addressed the latter as the Maharaja of Bhutan, and hoped that the close and friendly relations that had been established between the Government of India and Bhutan during the lifetime of Sir Ugyen Wangchuk would be preserved and strengthened day by day.¹²

Dorji Rapden could have ventured to take recourse to force to usurp the throne with the aid and abetment of a foreign power, but such aid was not available to him when the British, whose influence in Bhutan was then at its height, favoured no change in the line of succession. There was thus no opposition of any kind to the accession of Jigme Wangchuk to the throne of Bhutan. He was formally installed at Punakha on 14 March, 1927. Lieutenant-Colonel F.M. Bailey and all important officials of Bhutan were present at the installation ceremony. The Government of India conferred upon the new Maharaja the title of C.I.E., and Bailey presented the insignia to him on this occasion. On 3 June 1930 the birthday of the King-Emperor, Jigme Wangchuk was awarded the title of K.C.I.E., and J.L.R. Weir, Political Officer in Sikkim, was deputed in February 1931, to Bhutan to present the badge of the title to the Maharaja.

Jigme Wangchuk began his rule peacefully but the period of his rule was marked by some new problems that his predecessor had not faced. Sir Ugyen Wangchuk had been a powerful ruler. In the civil war of 1884, he overcame his adversaries once and for all. The older Bhutanese chiefs and their followers remembered the war, and held the late Maharaja in great respect and awe. That generation was gradually being succeeded by younger men, and some of these were ambitious and were sometimes prone to be turbulent. In August 1931, the Shabdung Rimpoche, who was 28 years of age, became discontented with the administration of Jigme Wangchuk and endeavoured

12. Foreign and Political Department, File No. 509 X, Sec. —Extl. 1927, Nos. 1-72.

to "overthrow" his rule. P.P. Karan says that the Shabdung Rimpoche even went to Tibet to seek military and political help to overthrow the Bhutanese ruler, that the Government of India requested the Government of Tibet not to interfere in Bhutan, that Tibet respected the request, and that the Shabdung Rimpoche did not return to Bhutan but died in exile.¹³ There are also reports that the Shabdung Rimpoche did not go to Tibet although he opposed the authority of Jigme Wangchuk ; that he once thought of going to India and meeting Mahatma Gandhi, that he was prevented from leaving Bhutan, and that he committed suicide thereupon at Punakha on 12 November, 1931.

By the thirties of the present century, although the common people of Bhutan were not yet politically conscious the *elite* were not completely out of touch with the events taking place in India. They knew of Mahatma Gandhi and of the freedom struggle waged by him against the British in India. It is likely that the Bhutanese young men who came to India after 1924 to get training in different technical fields and stayed there for varying periods from 1924 to 1929, were influenced by the ideas of the Indian freedom struggle and carried it to Bhutan on their return. The Bhutanese authorities, however, were the allies of the British in India, and they viewed the freedom movement in India as rank rebellion against established authority. During this period the Government of Bhutan, possibly to make sure that there was no internal threat to its rule, decided to maintain some soldiers trained in modern arms. The Maharaja possessed about 500 rifles and carbines and some quantity of ammunition which had been supplied to his father, Sir Ugyen Wangchuk, at different times by the Government of India. But he had no well-trained soldiers. In 1931, the Government of India agreed, at the instance of the Government of Bhutan, to arrange for the military training of fifteen Bhutanese young men at Shillong for a period of two years from January 1933 to December 1934. The Government of India had sanctioned in 1924, a sum of Rs

13. Pradyumna P. Karan, *Bhutan : A Physical and Cultural Geography* (Lexington, 1967), p. 7.

48,629 for the training of the Bhutanese students in India in different technical institutions, but a sum of about Rs 9,000 had been left unutilized. This was now used to finance the Bhutanese young men deputed for military training at Shillong. The Government of Bhutan paid such expenditure as was incurred in excess of this sum.¹⁴

The problem that faced the new ruler of Bhutan was want of old and experienced advisers. His chief adviser was Raja Sonam Tobgay Dorji. Though Raja Dorji had inherited the political sagacity of his father, he was still young and inexperienced. Apart from Raja Dorji, the Maharaja had a few confidential servants who could give information on past events. They, however, held no rank and were merely servants. Hence the Maharaja turned to the Political Officer in Sikkim for advice on important affairs of Bhutan. In view of such reliance by the Maharaja upon the British, it may be said that Bhutan would have agreed to join the federal union of India under the Government of India Act of 1935, if the British had advised it to do so. But the British Government of India had no such plan.

Though the British in India did not define the status of Bhutan in explicit terms, they had regarded Bhutan more or less as an Indian native State since 1905. Had Government of British India so desired, it could have incorporated Bhutan among the Indian native states. But, then, it would have entailed immense responsibilities on the Government of British India without corresponding advantages. As a paramount power, the Government of British India had taken upon itself the task of maintaining peace not only in British India, but also in the native Indian States. It had frequently interfered in the affairs of the native Indian States ostensibly to regulate disputed succession, suppress rebellion against the lawful ruler, and prevent gross misrule. It had also developed an India-wide system of roads and railways ignoring the boundaries of the native Indian States. There was, therefore, no need for the British in India to increase their commitments in Bhutan. Apart from keeping China off, all that they expected of

14. Foreign Department, External, File No. 254-X, 1932,

Bhutan was friendly co-operation and general amenability to their control, and this they had secured under the treaty of 1910. Besides, there was no danger of China's encroachment on Bhutan. As mentioned above, from 1912 onwards, China was fully preoccupied with troubles at home. It could not exercise its suzerainty even over Tibet, let alone Bhutan. So the British Government of India was not inclined to include Bhutan in the category of Indian states. In 1924, it held explicitly that Bhutan, though under British suzerainty, was outside India and was not a native Indian State.¹⁵ As a matter of course, the Government of India Act of 1935 did not provide Bhutan a seat in the Upper House (Council of States) of the Federal Legislature of India.

The status of Bhutan, however, was not equal to that of Nepal. Although there was a British Resident in Nepal and not in Bhutan, Nepal was more independent than Bhutan. The King of Nepal, like the rulers of other independent countries, never accepted any foreign titles, whereas the Maharaja of Bhutan, like the rulers of the native Indian States, received titles from the British Government. Similarly the King of Nepal never paid homage to, nor acknowledged the suzerainty of, the King-Emperor. The Bhutanese ruler attended the Delhi Durbars in 1905 and again in 1911 and paid homage to the British rulers along with the "feudatory chiefs" of the native Indian States. The policy of holding Delhi Durbars was a policy inaugurated by Lord Lytton, and it was continued by Lord Curzon and Lord Hardinge. On each occasion, the emphasis was on the expression of allegiance by all native Indian rulers to the British Crown. On such occasions Nepal was usually represented by its Prime Minister, who acted as the representative and Ambassador of his Government and took his seat in the block reserved for "distinguished visitors and Foreign Representatives."¹⁶

Besides, the status of Bhutan continued to be like that of

15. Sir Benegal Rau, *India's Constitution In The Making* (Madras, 1963), p. 395.

16. Hussain, n. 7, p. 297.

the native Indian States in respect of its extradition arrangements with the Government of India. The latter did not accept the principle of reciprocity as regards the extradition of offenders to Bhutan and refused to hand over British subjects to the Government of Bhutan even where a crime was committed on the Bhutanese territory. In September, 1917, the Agent of Bhutan asked for the extradition of one Gang Singh Rai, who had been accused of assaulting a Bhutanese forest peon. The Political Officer in Sikkim informed the Bhutanese Agent that as the accused was a British subject, he could not be delivered to the Bhutanese Government for trial. That the Government of India was not prepared to hand over its subjects was categorically laid down in an extradition case in 1930. That year the Government of Bhutan demanded the extradition of one Akal Singh, who allegedly defrauded the Bhutanese Government of a large sum of money. It claimed that Akal Singh was a Bhutanese subject by virtue of his long residence in Bhutan, cultivation of land, and payment of taxes to the Bhutanese Government. Akal Singh was a British subject by birth. Though the dispute between Akal Singh and the Bhutanese Government was settled by compromise, the Government of India said that it would not agree to surrender British subjects for trial by Bhutanese courts even though the treaty with Bhutan did not bar such surrender.

A mere extradition treaty between Bhutan and British India cannot be held to have established the equality of the two parties. The Government of British India had also concluded extradition treaties with a few native Indian States, but the latter were not equal to the former in status.¹⁷ Thus Bhutan's status was not higher than that of the native Indian States as far as extradition arrangements of British India with Bhutan were concerned. As in the native Indian States, so in Bhutan, the Government of India could object to the trial of any European British subject by a Bhutanese court or ask to have him tried in a British court. In fact, the status of Bhutan was undefined, and that country was regard-

17. Julian Palmer, *Sovereignty and Paramountcy* (London, 1930), p. 97.

ed more or less as a native Indian State till 1924, when the Government of India explicitly declared that Bhutan was not a native Indian State. The effect of this decision was that the Government of India could not technically claim jurisdiction in Bhutan over a European or British subject committing an offence in Bhutan, or object to the trial of such a subject by the Government of Bhutan. The Government of India, however, did not negotiate a fresh treaty with Bhutan to exercise its jurisdiction over European British subjects in Bhutan. The "close door" policy of Bhutan towards foreigners ruled out the chance of any European British subject bringing himself within the purview of Bhutanese laws. The Government of India thought that if any question of jurisdiction over British subjects arose in Bhutan, friendly offices of the Political Officer in Sikkim would be able to prevent a miscarriage of justice without raising awkward legal points.

In the past, extradition issues were what embittered Indo-Bhutanese relations. During the period under study, relations between the Indian and Bhutanese Governments were quite friendly, and there was on the whole mutual co-operation in apprehending and punishing fugitive offenders. Although the Government of India was opposed to the extradition of British subjects to Bhutan for trial by Bhutanese courts, the integrity of Bhutanese territory, as the integrity of any other independent country, was considered inviolable. The police of British India were not to enter Bhutan in pursuit of criminals. In 1920, they followed one criminal into Bhutan and arrested and brought him back into Indian territory without the due process of extradition. This was an "irregularity", and the Government of Bhutan condoned it at the instance of the Deputy Commissioner, Darjeeling, after receiving an assurance from him that such incidents would not occur again.¹⁸

In internal affairs Bhutan, like Nepal and other independent countries, enjoyed unfettered autonomy. The tea-planters of the Indian districts bordering on Bhutan wanted

18. Foreign and Political Department, Secret E, June 1921, Nos. 288-90.

the authorities of British India to interfere in Bhutanese affairs so as to promote their interests. The Government of India considered it inadvisable to accede to their wishes and left Bhutanese authorities entirely free in the internal administration of their country. In 1915, the Governments of Bengal and Assam, at the instance of the tea-planters, tried to persuade the Bhutanese Government to establish a three-mile zone free of liquor shops on its side of the Indo-Bhutanese border on the condition that a similar zone would be established on the Indian side as well. The tea-planters had on various occasions complained that their labourers were becoming increasingly addicted to liquor and that the cheapness of the liquor smuggled from Bhutan had made it impossible to check the menace. Although arrangements for establishment on such zones on both sides of the border had been proposed from time to time, the Bhutanese Government had turned down such proposals, saying that it was not prepared to agree to the removal of such shops within a three-mile zone on its side except on receipt of compensation. The Government of India did not press the Bhutanese Government in view of the autonomy of Bhutan in its internal administration and directed local governments to take measures to prevent smuggling of liquor from Bhutan into Indian territory.¹⁹ However, since the preventive measures entailed considerable expenditure on the maintenance of an inordinately heavy excise staff and also caused friction frequently with the Bhutanese authorities along the southern border of Bhutan, the Government of India agreed in 1917 to pay an annual compensation of a lakh of rupees, and in return the Bhutanese Government undertook to remove all liquor shops within a ten-mile zone on the border between Bhutan and the Indian districts of Jalpaiguri, Goalpara, Kamrup, and Darranga. Though this agreement was initially only for a period of five years, it was renewable.²⁰

However, as the Bhutanese authorities were averse to Europeans' travelling in their country, the Government of

19. Foreign and Political Department, External-B, March 1915, Nos. 302-307.

20. Foreign and Political Department, External-A, November 1917, Nos.5-8.

India never insisted on them to allow a foreigner to visit Bhutan. Neither the Bhutanese Government nor the Indian Government could prevent foreigners from publishing such accounts of their journeys through Bhutan as were likely to offend Bhutanese susceptibilities or to cause embarrassment to the Bhutanese authorities who did not appreciate publicity. One of the main reasons why the Bhutanese authorities were reluctant to grant permission to the Europeans to visit their country was their resentment of the proselytising activities of the missionaries. They felt that once they started permitting the Europeans to enter Bhutan, it would be difficult later on to keep missionaries out of their country. Their suspicion was not altogether unfounded. For instance, there was one Sutherland. This man was the head of the Training Institute at Kalimpong and was friendly to the Maharaja and Raja Dorji. He had also supplied teachers to the schools at Ha and Bumtang in Bhutan and superintended the teaching in those schools. This man, according to Major W.L. Campbell, Political Officer in Sikkim, was "a fanatical creature", for he had made an endeavour to obtain a site for a church at Gangtok in Sikkim, and it was clearly his intention to use the Bhutanese schools as a means to propagate Christianity in Bhutan. Indeed, a Scotch missionary paper hailed Sutherland's visit to Bhutan and reported thus in 1918 :

Among the changes that are taking place in almost all non-Christian lands, none is more gratifying than the new spirit that is moving in Bhutan. It cannot indeed be described as an open land yet; but the door is clearly opening. One of the latest signs is an interesting visit which Dr. Sutherland... was able to pay to the country last year.... Some of the lamas were not altogether pleased that a European and a Christian missionary should be allowed to enter their land ; but the significant fact is that the party met with no opposition....²¹

21. Major W.L. Campbell in his letter dated 20 September 1918 to Sir Hamilton Grant, Foreign Secretary to the Government of India, enclosed a copy of a cutting from a Scotch missionary paper. Foreign and Political Department, External-B, January 1919, Nos. 6-7.

Sutherland had very close rapport with Raja Dorji, and through him he kept in touch with the Maharaja of Bhutan as well. He visited Bhutan in 1917 at the invitation of the Maharaja for the purpose of advising him on educational matters.

In every case permission to visit that country had to come ultimately from the Bhutanese Government, though the applications were always routed through the Political Officer in Sikkim. In 1924, Sir Francis Younghusband, the man whom the Maharaja had accompanied to Lhasa in 1904, wrote a letter to the Maharaja introducing a close friend, Captain Noel, who wanted to go to Bhutan to take photographs and cinematographs. The Government of India informed the Political Officer in Sikkim that it had no objection to his forwarding Younghusband's letter to the Maharaja of Bhutan, but it also directed him to explain to the Maharaja that the Government of India had no desire to put the slightest pressure on the Maharaja to accede to the request and that he should be guided solely by his own judgement.

Among the Europeans who wanted to visit Bhutan, only a few British nationals—either the officials of the Government of India or persons well introduced by it—were permitted to visit Bhutan. In 1932, the Secretary of State for India forwarded to the Government of India a letter addressed by the Assistant Secretary, British Museum (Natural History), requesting that permission might be granted to G. Sheriff and F. Ludlow to visit and stay in Bhutan for six months for collection of botanical and ornithological specimens for the British Museum. G. Sheriff and F. Ludlow were intimate friends of F. Williamson, Officer on Special Duty in Sikkim. Ludlow had been a teacher at the English School at Gyantse and was personally known both to the Maharaja and to Raja Dorji. Nevertheless the Maharaja grudgingly granted them permission to stay in Bhutan only for two months and said that he regretted that he was unable to grant them permission to stay for as long a time as six months as other Bhutanese chiefs and lamas were sure to resent it. Except a few Britishers, no nationals from America or from any European country other than Britain were usually allowed to visit Bhutan. In 1936, Robert Ripley

and Joseph Simpson, accredited representatives of International News Photos, American News and Photographic Services, sought the permission of the Government of India to visit Bhutan in order to obtain data and photographs concerning the manners and customs of the people there. The Government of India informed them that permission to visit Bhutan could be granted only by the Maharaja but that it would "almost certainly be refused".²²

Bhutan thus followed a close-door policy in order to preserve its way of life and its autonomy. This policy succeeded in achieving these objectives, but it had an adverse impact on the country. It proved a drag on the development of the country. The Bhutanese Government did not open up communications and develop trade and commerce. The natural resources of the country remained untapped and its economy stagnant. When the Second World War broke out, Bhutan was not in a position to help the British war effort in terms of men or money. On the contrary, with the rise in the prices of goods as a sequel to the war, Bhutan needed increased financial aid to maintain its State officials and monasteries. This was to some extent met by the Government of India which raised its subsidy to Bhutan by as much as a lakh of rupees with effect from 1 January 1942 for the period of the war.²³ There were no irritants between the Bhutanese Government and the British in India, and their relations continued to be friendly till the end of British rule in India.

22. Foreign and Political Department, External File, No. 435-X, 1936.

23. External Affairs Department, File No. 386-X, 1939.

CHAPTER IX

The Emergence of Bhutan as an Independent Country : 1947-72

THE withdrawal of the Pax Britannica from India in 1947 was an important event not only for the people of the Indian sub-continent but also for the people of Bhutan. With the end of the British rule in India, the Bhutanese, who watched with interest India's struggle for freedom from British rule, hoped to open a new chapter in their history by ending their tutelage under the British. They accepted the British as their overlord but they did not want to submit to the overlordship of any other people. Bhutan never broached the revision of its treaties of 1865 and 1910 with the Government of British India. Soon after the British left India in 1947, Bhutan expressed the desire to put its relations with India on a new footing. On 23 April 1948 a Bhutanese delegation visited Delhi and made a request to the Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, for revision of the Anglo-Bhutanese treaty of 1865. It was prepared to forego its subsidy, if India would return 800 square miles of the Bhutanese territory ceded to British India by the treaty of 1865.¹

In the light of China's policy towards Bhutan, India did not consider it fit to leave Bhutan to its own fate. The attitude of the Chinese Communists towards Bhutan and other neighbouring countries was the same as that of the Manchus. As early as in thirties, Mao-tse-Tung's perspective of China included almost all the countries lying on its periphery such as

1. Lorne J. Kavic, *India's Quest For Security : Defence Policies, 1947-1965* (Delhi, 1967) p. 53.

Mongolia, Tibet, Burma, Nepal, Sikkim and Bhutan.² By the summer of 1949, the Communists captured almost all parts of the Chinese mainland, and were to establish their own government. India foresaw the danger to which Bhutan was exposed with the establishment of the communist rule in China. Thus the consideration for security of its own as well as Bhutan's, impelled India to maintain a close relationship with Bhutan. India forestalled China in Bhutan by signing a Treaty of Friendship with Bhutan in Darjeeling on 8 August, 1949. Under this treaty, India guaranteed Bhutan's internal autonomy and increased the annual subsidy to Rs. 5,00,000 while Bhutan agreed to be guided by the advice of the Government of India in regard to its external affairs. The treaty provided for free trade between India and Bhutan. India undertook to provide facilities for the carriage, by land and water, of Bhutanese produce. The treaty also allowed Bhutan to make free use of forest roads along the border. It gave Bhutan the right to import with the approval and assistance of the Government of India such arms, ammunition, machinery, war-like material or stores as may be needed for the defence and welfare of Bhutan.³

Although the treaty was, by and large, based on the Anglo-Bhutanese treaties of 1865 and 1910, India made a friendly gesture towards Bhutan by agreeing to return 32 square miles of territory in the Dewangiri district of Assam. Bhutan coveted this territory for a long time since it was commercially important for the country. Ugyen Wangchuk, Maharaja of Bhutan, wanted to purchase this land to build rest houses for the Bhutanese who used to visit a trade fair at Darranga, held annually for three months, from January to March. In November 1919, the Maharaja had made a request to the Government of British India to sell Dewangiri to Bhutan. But the Government of British India had turned down the request at the instance of the Chief Commissioner of Assam who held that tea-gardens and plantations would be adversely

2 *Ibid.*, p. 38.

3. *Foreign Policy of India, Text of Document 1947-59*. (New Delhi, 1959) pp. 17-19.

affected by the advancement of the Bhutanese border.⁴ Thus the British in India were not prepared in 1919 to make such a gesture towards Bhutan (as the Government of India did in 1949) for fostering relations of friendship and neighbourliness with that country.

Nevertheless, Bhutan continued to entertain misgivings as to India's intention towards it. It was reluctant to forge close economic and cultural ties with India. It followed the traditional policy of keeping aloof from the outside world and continued, as in the past, to regulate the entry of outsiders, including Indians, into Bhutan. One important reason for Bhutan adopting such an attitude was that the 1949 treaty with India was as vague about Bhutan's status as a fully sovereign and independent state as was its treaty with the British. Moreover, China's occupation of Tibet in 1950, aggravated Bhutan's apprehension. It feared that it might be absorbed by India into its own system of government as Tibet had been assimilated into China's. Its apprehension that India would also follow imperialistic policy towards it, may have been the main reason for its ambivalent attitude towards the concept of Himalayan federation embracing Nepal, Sikkim and Bhutan. However, the latter soon saw through the scheme which had been advocated mainly by the Nepalese politicians and publicists with a view to creating a "Greater Nepal."⁵

Although Bhutan continued to maintain distant relations with India, there was a new phase in its policy when Jigme Wangchuk died and his son, Jigme Dorji Wangchuk, assumed the royal sceptre of Bhutan in 1952. In January 1954, the new Maharaja of Bhutan paid a state visit to India and spent three weeks here as a state guest. His visit contributed to a better understanding between the two countries. It stimulated Indo-Bhutanese co-operation for mutual benefit, though the areas of co-operation remained limited. The only problem that confronted the Indo-Bhutanese authorities at that time was the ravage caused by flood in southern Bhutan and Assam. In the summer of 1954, India sent Rs. 50,000 to Bhutan for

4. Foreign And Political Department, External B, May 1920, Nos. 858-62.

5. John Rowland, *A History of Sino-Indian Relations. Hostile Co-existence* (New Delhi, 1967), p. 183.

the relief of flood-sufferers.⁶ The Bhutanese Government extended its co-operation to Indian authorities in taking flood control measures. Flood control stations were opened at various places in Bhutan. Students from Bhutan were given facilities in India for getting training in river gauge and rain gauge observations. The Government of India also provided some assistance for the development of Bhutan. For instance, in 1956, the Government of India made a gift of about 146 tons of fertilizers costing about Rs. 42,000. In addition, hospital equipment worth about Rs. 2½ lakhs and medicines and drugs worth about rupees one lakh were presented to Bhutan.⁷ However, Indo-Bhutanese co-operation worked on a restricted scale. The Bhutanese authorities felt no necessity to improve communications and socio-economic conditions on modern lines. They were not disposed to open their country to Indian technical personnel. The Government of India was also disinclined to embarrass them by proposing or taking measures which were likely to be construed by the latter as interference in their internal affairs. India and Bhutan maintained such relations till the late fifties when China's policy towards them compelled them to work in close co-operation for their mutual security and interest.

CHINA AS A FACTOR IN INDO-BHUTANESE RELATIONS

As mentioned in the above chapter, China was an important factor in the relations between Bhutan and British India. It was always on the look-out to extend its influence into Bhutan and other Himalayan states. With the establishment of a Communist regime in China, there was no change basically in China's approach to its relations with Bhutan and other states lying on its southern borders. So far as its neighbouring countries were concerned, the difference between the Chinese empire and Communist China lay in their power. While British India dealt with a "fiction" of the Chinese empire, India faced a resurgent and powerful China. The Government of India was not unaware of the strategic impli-

6. *Report 1954-55*, Ministry of External Affairs, G.O.I., p. 6.

7. *Ibid.*, 1956-57, p. 7.

cations of the emergence of a vigorous and centralised China under Communist rule for Bhutan and other Himalayan countries. But it thought that the best way of precluding the influence of Communist China from these countries would be not to match China in military terms but to establish friendly rapport with the Chinese Government. In pursuance of this policy, India recognized Communist China without delay and acquiesced in China's occupation of Tibet in October 1950. Furthermore, it supported China's rightful place in the United Nations and concluded the Sino-Indian Treaty of 1954 based on the five principles of Panch Sheel.

For nine years China did not question India's special treaty relationship with Bhutan. It gave an "unwritten recognition of India's special relationship with Nepal, Bhutan and Sikkim."⁸ The Chinese did so because they were not disposed to raise their border differences with India or the Soviet Union till they built up in their country an infrastructure for the growth of their political and military power. Soon after founding the People's Republic of China in October 1949, they engaged themselves in national reconstruction. Towards the end of the fifties, they consolidated their power, built up an independent nuclear capacity and hence were in a position to settle scores with their neighbouring countries.

By July 1958, Communist China laid claim not only to vast Indian territory but Chinese maps also showed about 200 square miles of Bhutanese territory as part of Tibet. In accordance with the Treaty of 1949, Nehru took up the matter with China on behalf of Bhutan. In a letter dated 22 March, 1959, Nehru wrote to Chou En-lai that the publication of Chinese map showing parts of Bhutanese territory as if they were in China, was not in accordance with long established usage as well as treaties.⁹ Chou En-lai replied to Nehru in his letter dated 8 September, 1959, that the boundary question between China and Bhutan did not fall within the scope of "our present discussion". He also stated that China had

8. Bhabani Sen Gupta, *The Fulcrum of Asia : Relations among China, India, Pakistan and the U.S.S.R.* (New York 1970), p. 34.

9. *White Paper 1954-59*, Ministry of External Affairs, GOI, n. d., p. 57.

“always respected the proper relations” between Bhutan and India.¹⁰ Nehru in his letter dated 26 September, 1959, made it clear to Chou En-lai that under its treaty relationship with Bhutan, “the Government of India are the only competent authority” to take up with other Governments matters concerning Bhutan’s external relations.¹¹ Although China did not recognize India’s special relationship with Bhutan, Nehru was firm to maintain it. He also held that India was bound to protect Bhutan against foreign aggression. When the Communist Chinese made propaganda that Bhutan and Sikkim were parts of the Chinese territory in the past and were “bound to return to the Chinese motherland” within a few years, Nehru declared in the Lok Sabha on 28 August, 1959:

“The Government is responsible for the protection of the borders of Sikkim and Bhutan and of the territorial integrity of these two states and any aggression against Bhutan and Sikkim will be considered as aggression against India.”¹²

Although the Indo-Bhutanese treaty of 1949 contained no reference to the defence of Bhutan, India assumed the responsibility for the defence of Bhutan because of China’s ruthless actions in Tibet and its aggressive posture towards Bhutan. In 1959, both India and Bhutan were taken aback by China’s military actions in Tibet. Nehru sincerely believed that China would honour Tibet’s autonomy. He was shaken in his conviction when China obliterated Tibetan autonomy in 1958-59. China’s accusation of India’s complicity in the Tibetan uprising, and India’s sympathy for and asylum to the Dalai Lama and other Tibetans who fled to India, shook to the foundation the entire structure of Sino-Indian relationship. Similarly the Tibetan revolt and its ruthless suppression by China made a deep impact on the Bhutanese authorities. The Chinese fought the Tibetan rebels in the vicinity of the northern border of Bhutan. The Bhutanese became aware of what happened in Tibet. Although they did not grant permission to Tibetan refugees to enter Bhutan, many of them infiltrated into their country and narrated the ghastly atrocities perpetrated by the

10. *Ibid*, No. 2, September-November 1959, p. 30.

11. *Ibid.*, p. 41.

12. India, *Lok Sabha Debates*, series 2, vol. 33, session 8 of 1959, col. 4801.

Chinese troops on Tibetans. The flight of the Dalai Lama to India and the assemblage of Chinese troops near Bhutan's northern border alarmed the Bhutanese. Jigmie Dorji, then Prime Minister of Bhutan, visited India in August 1959, and sought "a written guarantee" of Indian support in the event of a Chinese attack on Bhutan.¹³ As Nehru made it clear in the Lok Sabha that India was committed to protect Bhutan against any attack, there was no need for Bhutan to enter into a defence agreement with India.

In February 1961, a high-level meeting took place in Delhi presided over by Nehru and attended by the Maharaja of Bhutan, V. K. Krishna Menon, then India's Defence Minister, and the three Indian Chiefs of Staff, to formulate a new programme for the defence of Bhutan. The Indian Government decided to take some steps to counter any Chinese attack on Bhutan. The strength of Indian defence forces available to defend Bhutan were substantially increased. An intensive study for Indian Air Force operations over Bhutan was undertaken. An elaborate survey of Bhutan's defence requirements was made.¹⁴

China had no intention to attack Bhutan. What it intended was to break India's special relationship with Bhutan and establish direct relations with that country. In 1960, it made overtures through some private persons to Jigmie Dorji, Prime Minister of Bhutan, for initiating direct negotiations on the border dispute between the two countries. It also offered considerable economic aid to Bhutan.¹⁵ The Chinese offer cut no ice with the Bhutanese. The Maharaja of Bhutan declared in 1961 that Bhutan had no desire to enter into direct negotiation with China. Although Bhutan declined the Chinese offer, its policy towards China was quite cautious. The Maharaja said that they did not want to be either friends or enemies of China.¹⁶

Although China's offer cut no ice with the Bhutanese in 1960, it attempted to undermine India's relations with the Himalayan states by launching war on India in 1962. Possibly

13. *Daily Telegraph*, 13 August, 1959.

14. Kavic, n. I, pp. 77.

15. *Asian Recorder*, 28 May-3 June, 1961, p, 3802,

16. *Ibid*,

one of its objects in resorting to war with India was to demolish the dominant influence that India enjoyed in the Himalayan states. China succeeded in achieving its object to some extent. India's prestige and influence suffered in these states as a sequel to the reverses suffered by the Indian forces in the Sino-Indian war in October 1962. Prior to the war, India was generally reckoned by these states as a bulwark, as during the British rule in India, against any aggression from China. The Sino-Indian war drove home to them that India, unable to protect itself, would not be able to protect them in the event of an attack. Bhutan, which was already cautious towards China became still more careful in its gesture towards its powerful neighbour on the northern border. At a Press conference in Delhi on 26 October, 1962, Jigmie Dorji refused to be drawn into any discussion on the security of his country in the context of the Chinese aggression.¹⁷ Nevertheless, China failed in its ultimate object inasmuch as Bhutan continued to stand by its treaty of 1949 with India and kept up the close co-operation of mutual benefits between the two countries. Bhutan made no efforts to maintain an equidistance between China and India as Nepal often did in the sixties. However, China's failure to supplant India in Bhutan did not deter the Chinese from attempting to subvert India's special relationship with Bhutan. In 1964, the Chinese attempted to fish in the troubled waters of Bhutan. They took advantage of the assassination of Jigmie Dorji, Prime Minister of Bhutan, to befriend Bhutan and denigrate India. Although no diplomatic relations existed between China and Bhutan, Chou En-lai, Chinese Premier, sent a condolence message to Jigme Dorji Wangchuk, the late Druk Gyalpo, over the death of Jigmie Dorji.¹⁸ Besides, Chinese publicists put the blame on India for the incident. How they endeavoured to alienate the Bhutanese from India may be seen in what a *Jen-min Jihpao* commentator wrote about the plotters of the assassination of Jigmie Dorji in 1964. The Commentator wrote :

17. *The Times of India* (Delhi), 27 October 1962.

18. *Survey of China Mainland Press* No. 3198, 14 April 1964, p. 22.

“It is clear to all now that the plotters of the assassination were none other than those who have been trying hard to control Bhutan. In the past few years, the tendency for independence and freedom from Indian control was growing in Bhutan. Prime Minister Dorji had made great efforts in this respect. He had rejected India’s aid and hoped that Bhutan would receive aid directly from other countries”.¹⁹

As a matter of fact, the persons behind Dorji’s assassination were no foreigners but a few Bhutanese themselves who represented the conservative elements of the country and were unhappy with Dorji’s attempts to introduce reforms and modernization in Bhutan. They felt that Dorji “bartered his country, its tradition and antique ways of life for glamour and veneer of sophistication.”²⁰ The crime was perpetrated on 5 April, 1964, when the King of Bhutan was away in Switzerland undergoing a medical treatment. The conspirators attempted to capture power through a *coup d’etat*, but the timely return of the King frustrated their design. The culprits were arrested and were executed after proper trial.

The fact that Jigmie Dorji was not anti-Indian but “anti-communist”²¹ demolishes the charge insinuated by the above commentator against India. It was Dorji who closed the Tibetan border with Bhutan, banned trade with Tibet, and launched the process of modernizing Bhutan with India’s aid and co-operation.

MODERNIZATION OF BHUTAN

In the light of what occurred in Tibet in 1958-59, the Bhutanese resolved that they must act themselves to avoid a fate similar to that of the Tibetans. They realized that the rapid development of Bhutan on modern lines was essential for its security and stability. Hence they threw off their traditional close-door policy and became earnest to modernize their

19. *Ibid.*, No. 3221, 19 May 1964, pp. 13-14.

20. Pradyumna P. Karan, *Bhutan : A Physical and Cultural Geography* (Lexington, 1967) p. 15.

21. *Ibid.*, p. 12.

country with Indian financial and technical assistance. The Government of India also eschewed its indifferent attitude towards the socio-economic progress of Bhutan in view of China's aggressive posture towards the states on India's northern border. In September 1958, Nehru undertook an arduous journey to Bhutan and in his talks with the Bhutanese ruler emphasized the need for building roads between India and Bhutan and within Bhutan itself. He also expressed India's readiness to give technical aid and other kinds of assistance. In September 1959, when Jigmie P. Dorji came to New Delhi and discussed development problems with the Government of India, the latter agreed to make available funds upto a ceiling of Rs. 15 crores to the Government of Bhutan for the construction of roads in Bhutan.²² The Government of India decided to provide an annual subsidy of Rs. 7,00,000 from 1960 onwards, to Bhutan for the development of the country. This subsidy was distinct from the political subsidy of Rs. 5,00,000 being paid to the Government of Bhutan under the treaty of 1949. It was to enable the Bhutanese Government to draw up its development plan on a systematic pattern.²³

In 1961, an Indian Planning Commission team visited Bhutan to study the economic conditions and natural resources, and recommended a development plan. Since 1961, Bhutan has implemented two Five-Year development plans and has launched the third in April 1971. The First Five-Year Plan (1961-66) had a total outlay of Rs. 17.47 crores. The Second Five-Year Plan which concluded on 31 March, 1971, had an outlay of Rs. 28 crores. Both Plans were solely financed by India. Substantial progress was achieved during the first two Plans in the fields of communication, agriculture, animal husbandry, power development, education and health services.

Within a short time, communications in Bhutan improved remarkably. When Nehru visited Bhutan in September 1958, it took him about a week on mule or yak to reach there *via* Sikkim and the Chumbi Valley. Today, Thimphu, the Bhutanese capital, can be reached in five hours by an auto-

22. *Report 1958-59* Ministry of External Affairs, GOI, p. 12.

23. *Ibid.*, 1959-60, p. 16.

mobile from Phuntsoling, Bhutan's border town adjacent to West Bengal. Steps have been taken to build a network of roads linking various important places of the country. Four roads have already been constructed from the Indo-Bhutanese border to different places situated in Bhutan. These are : (a) Phuntsoling-Paro road, extended upto Thimphu and north of Wangdiphodrang on the Sarbhang-Punakha road ; (b) Sarbhang-Punakha road ; (c) Hatisar-Tongsa road ; and (d) Samdrupzongkhar-Tashingang road. Besides, work is in progress on the construction of the 480 Kilometer long east-west lateral highway over the 13,000 feet high Pele la. This road connects Tashingang, Byakar, Tongsa and Wangdiphodrang. Work has also commenced on the construction of the Tongsa-Byakar road, and on the Tongsa-Bumthang road. These days the state transport service carries passengers and freight over a wide area in Bhutan. It contributed over Rs. 4 millions to the state exchequer in 1970.²⁴ In addition to roads, small air landing strips have also been constructed at Paro and Thimphu. A weekly air service between Hashimara in India and Paro in Bhutan started functioning from 26 December, 1968. Since 1961, Bhutan also took steps to modernize its postal system with Indian technical assistance. Previously there was no regular system for the transmission of mail to the interior parts of Bhutan. Mail was sent by special messengers. By the mid-sixties, not only was regular postal system established but telegraph facilities were also introduced in the country. The Indian personnel who assisted the Department of Posts and Telegraphs in the initial stage in Bhutan are being gradually replaced by the Bhutanese. The Bhutanese staff is likely to take over the telephone exchanges at Thimphu, Paro and Phuntsoling during the third Plan, 1971-76. They are being trained in India for this purpose.²⁵

Substantial progress has been made in the field of education since the Plan began in 1961. The number of school-going children in Bhutan was about 2,500, before the Plan. By 1971, the number has increased to 15,000. Bhutan has over

24. *Annual Review 1970-71* vol. I, Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, (New Delhi, 1972), p. 295.

25. *Ibid.*

100 schools including two public schools, a teachers' training institute and a technical institute. Besides, about 500 Bhutanese students were receiving education in India in 1970. Now the education is not limited to boys only. Girls are also given equal opportunity in this sphere. Of late they have gone to other foreign countries for higher education and training. In March 1971, four women were undergoing training in Australia and New Zealand in medical science and secretarial work.²⁶

Since 1961, the administration of Bhutan has taken measures to increase medical facilities in the country. Prior to 1961, there were only a few dispensaries in Bhutan but they also lacked proper facilities and staff. In the beginning of the first Five-Year Plan, a Department of Health was established. By 1971, there were five hospitals and 35 dispensaries functioning in the country. The Bhutanese Government has launched with the assistance of Indian personnel, an extensive campaign to eradicate malaria, leprosy, goiter and venereal diseases.

Since the Plan began, the Bhutanese Government attempted to improve the economy of the country by taking various measures. It established a Department of Agriculture and opened a number of experimental farms. The Department of Agriculture has encouraged the Bhutanese peasants to use modern methods of farming. It has also made an attempt to increase the area under fruit and vegetable cultivation. In 1969, a team of experts from the Indian Council of Agricultural Research visited Bhutan to advise the Bhutanese Government on agriculture and animal husbandry.²⁷ The Government also took steps to develop animal husbandry which is an important source of livelihood of the Bhutanese people. It created a Department of Animal Husbandry in 1961, and during the first five-year plan period, set up livestock farms at Sanchi, Thimphu, Paro, Bidung, Lingmoythang and Mera-Khaling. A cheese-making plant at Sagargona and a *mithun*-breeding farm at Thromang were set up during the second Plan. Eight veterinary dispensaries were established and more than 50 thousand animals were treated for various diseases by

26. *Ibid.*, p. 293.

27. *Report 1969-70* Ministry of External Affairs, GOI, p. 34.

the end of the second Plan. During the third Plan more veterinary dispensaries are to be opened to control the epidemics among cattle. To man the Veterinary and Animal Husbandry Department in Bhutan, 12 Bhutanese students were trained in India in the first plan and 28 in the second plan periods.²⁸

The Bhutanese Government has proposed to set up various industries, such as match splints, cement plants, manufacture of sulphur and magnesium carbonate and a plywood factory. Besides, the possibilities of establishing fertilizer, pulp and paper factories, the resin and turpentine industry are also being explored.²⁹ Bhutan has a great potentiality for industrial development. It has immense forest reserves. Moreover, extensive deposits of minerals such as coal, dolomite, graphite gypsum and lime-stone have been discovered. For developing industries, emphasis has been laid on the development of power. In September 1961, India and Bhutan signed an agreement for the construction of a hydro-electric project on the Bhutan-West Bengal border. The project was completed in 1968. While India met the entire cost (Rs. 5 crores) of the project, power is being shared between Bhutan and West Bengal. Bhutan receives 259 Kws. daily. The plant is supplying power to south-western Bhutan which has no supplies of coal and oil. The experts of the Central Water and Power Commission of the Government of India who visited Bhutan in 1960 advised it to set up micro-hydels at various places to meet immediate needs. Thimphu, Paro and Wangdiphodrang have been electrified. A mini-hydel power plant has been set up at GidaKom for the Leprosy Hospital.³⁰

By 1970 Bhutan took strides towards modernization. It set up banks and mints and changed its economic system from a barter to money economy. It abolished slavery in the country and codified its laws. The building of roads, hospitals, dispensaries, schools and the generation of hydro-electricity marked the beginning of a new era in Bhutan. India has

28. *Sikkim Herald* (Information Service of Sikkim), 6 March 1972.

29. *News Review on Countries Bordering India*, Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses (New Delhi, 5 January 1972) p. 4.

30. *Kuensel* (A Weekly Official bulletin of the Royal Government of Bhutan), 4 May 1971. p. 4.

played a key role in the development process of the country. It has provided finance and technical assistance for Bhutan's first and second five-year plans. The Government of India also have agreed to provide Rs. 33 crores to finance Bhutan's third Five-Year Plan which commenced in April 1971. The Plan provides for several schemes in vital sectors of development such as agriculture industry, education, transport, communication and health. India continues to provide the services of experts in these fields at the request of the Bhutanese Government.³¹

Bhutan no longer remained a forbidden land for Indians since the sixties. Indo-Bhutanese relations entered a new phase during this period. Although the two countries had had long political relations, there was little contact between them. The relations were confined to the official level. In the sixties, India and Bhutan exchanged a number of goodwill visits which added a new dimension to their relations. The ball was set rolling by Nehru himself when he visited Bhutan in September 1958, for the first time. This was followed by a delegation of five members of the Indian Parliament, which visited Bhutan in October 1967. Jigme Dorji Wangchuk, the late Druk Gyalpo, visited India in February 1961 and in April 1966. A seven-member delegation of the Royal Advisory Council of Bhutan paid a goodwill visit to India in December 1967. In March 1968, Morarji Desai, then Deputy Prime Minister of India, paid a goodwill visit to Bhutan. In May 1968, Indira Gandhi, Prime Minister of India, visited Bhutan. The late Druk Gyalpo welcoming her described the bonds of friendship between India and Bhutan as being such "that nothing can ever shake or destroy". Indira Gandhi said that India wanted Bhutan to develop its own system based on its rich culture and heritage. During this visit the Indian Prime Minister inaugurated the 127-mile Phuntsoling-Thimphu Highway, a major Indo-Bhutanese co-operation project which links the capital of Bhutan with its principal trade and commercial town near the Indo-Bhutanese border. Indira Gandhi also laid the foundation stone of

31. *Report 1971-72 Ministry of External Affairs, GOI, p. 13.*

“Bharat Bhavan” (India House) which accommodates the office and residence of the Special Officer of India in Bhutan.³² Although the Indian Political Officer in Sikkim continued to be in overall charge of India’s relations with Bhutan, the Government of India in 1967 decided to appoint a special officer in Bhutan with the consent of the Bhutanese Government. The first incumbent of this office, Brijbir Saran Das, assumed charge in Thimphu on 23 January, 1968. The Special Officer of India in Bhutan co-ordinated Indian co-operation schemes with Bhutan and generally acted as a liaison officer of the Government of India with the Bhutanese Government in matters of mutual interest.³³

Besides the exchange of visits of representatives and officials of the two Governments who often met and discussed matters of mutual interest, cultural and educational trips have also been frequently arranged between India and Bhutan in recent years. A twenty-member delegation of Bhutanese Lamas visited places of Buddhist pilgrimage in India in January 1967. A fifteen-member troupe of the Kathak Kala Kendra from New Delhi visited Bhutan in March 1967 and gave performances which were greatly appreciated. A group of 40 Bhutanese school boys visited India on Bharat Darshan from 14 January to 12 February, 1968.³⁴ A Bhutanese cultural troupe visited New Delhi in January 1969 and took part in the Folk Dance Festival.³⁵

India’s friendly relations with Bhutan were highlighted by the state visit of V.V. Giri, President of India, to Bhutan in April 1970. Welcoming the President, the King of Bhutan said that the visit was a historic event, not only because it was the first time that a Head of the State was visiting Bhutan, but also because it was a proof of strong bonds of goodwill and friendship between the two countries. The President observed that India and Bhutan were not merely two neighbouring countries but very close friends sharing a common heritage

32. *Ibid.*, 1968-69, p. 15.

33. *Ibid.*, 1967-68, p. 23.

34. *Ibid.*, p. 24.

35. *Ibid.*, 1968-69, p. 75.

and understanding throughout history.³⁶ The ties of friendship between India and Bhutan were further strengthened by the exchange of various delegations. A 16-member Indian folk dance troupe visited Bhutan in August 1971. Five delegations from Bhutan, each consisting of a separate group of persons such as members of the Tsongdu, members of the Royal Advisory Council, officials, students and teachers and artists visited India in January-February 1972.³⁷

BHUTAN'S EMERGENCE IN THE COMITY OF NATIONS

India won Bhutan's friendship and goodwill largely by helping the latter to acquire its due place in the comity of nations. Since China put an end to Tibetan autonomy in 1958-59, Bhutan became keen to gain international recognition of its status as a sovereign and independent state. So it wanted to establish direct diplomatic relations with foreign countries. However, the late Druk Gyalpo was not in haste. Before entering into direct relations with foreign countries, he desired the modern development of his country. He said, "We have at present no roads, no trade or industry. We must develop our state first."³⁸ In the aftermath of the Sino-Indian war of 1962, which shook Bhutan's confidence in India's capability to protect it from Chinese aggression, it began to think of joining the United Nations.³⁹ India's response to the aspirations of the Bhutanese was cautious but quite positive. Its policy has been to gradually broaden Bhutan's contacts which proved beneficial to the latter without involving it in big power politics. India sponsored Bhutan's membership of the Colombo Plan and a Bhutanese delegation participated as an observer at the meeting of the Colombo Plan Consultative Committee in November 1962. Bhutan was admitted as a full member of the Council at its 17th session held in Colombo on 7 March, 1963.

36. *Ibid.*, 1970-71, p. 17.

37. *Ibid.*, 1971-72, p. 13.

38. *Asian Recorder* 28 May—3 June 1961, p. 3802.

39. *Rahul*, n. 5, p. 109.

Since then many members of the Colombo Plan provided technical assistance to Bhutan and offered scholarships for Bhutanese students. According to the 18th annual report of the Colombo Plan Council for Technical Co-operation for 1969-70, Bhutan had 26 trainee and student places and one expert upto 1969. Technical assistance received by 1969 amounted to \$68,600. (Australia \$ 500, Japan \$47,000, New Zealand \$21,000 and Thailand \$100). Japan supplied scientific equipment worth \$28,000 in 1969. Of the 13 Bhutanese trained in 1969, Australia provided 5 places, Japan 3, New Zealand 3 and Singapore 2. A two-member Australian team visited livestock farms in western and eastern Bhutan in September 1970. It discussed with the Bhutanese Government Australian assistance to Bhutan in various fields. The Australian Government made a gift of 14 trucks to Bhutan under the Colombo Plan aid programme in July 1970. Next to India, Australia is the largest donor of aid to Bhutan.⁴⁰

Although Bhutan desired to become a member of the United Nations, it was not prepared to assume the responsibilities and obligations of the U.N. till the year 1966.⁴¹ The Pakistani Press made propaganda that the "Indian Government is strongly opposed to any Bhutanese attempt to join the U.N."⁴² But India had no intention to stand in the way of Bhutan becoming a member of the U.N. On 5 June, 1967, in the Lok Sabha, M.C. Chagla, then Minister for External Affairs, stated: "The Government of India would be happy to sponsor Bhutan for membership of the United Nations and other international bodies when Bhutan expresses its readiness to assume the responsibilities and obligations of such membership."⁴³ Bhutan was not even a member of the Universal Postal Union till 1967. In April 1967, India sponsored Bhutan's application for admission to the Union. Bhutan became a member of the Universal Postal Union in March 1969.⁴⁴ By the year 1970, Bhutan

40. *Annual Review 1970-71*, n. 24, pp. 293-94.

41. India, *Lok Sabha Debates*, series 3, vol. 57, session 15 of 1966, col. 36.

42. *Dawn (Karachi)*, 4 November 1966.

43. India, *Lok Sabha Debates* series 4, vol. 3, session 2 of 1967, col. 2857.

44. *Report 1967-68*, Ministry of External Affairs GOI, p. 22. See also *Ibid.*, 1969-70, p. 33.

became prepared to assume the responsibilities and obligations of the U.N. India sponsored Bhutan's application for membership of the U.N. in December 1970. It also made every possible effort to canvass support among the member-nations of the U.N. for Bhutan's admission. On 7 February, 1971, the Security Council unanimously recommended to the General Assembly Bhutan's application for admission to the U.N. The close and friendly relations between India and Bhutan were manifested by the visit of the King of Bhutan to New Delhi in April 1971. The visit was followed by the establishment of the Royal Bhutan Mission in New Delhi in May 1971. Bhutan's first representative in India, Lyonpo Pema Wangchuk presented his credentials to the President of India on 17 May, 1971.⁴⁵ India also appointed B.S. Das as its representative in Thimpu on 15 July, 1971.⁴⁶ On 21 September, 1971, Bhutan became a full-fledged member of the U.N. Prince Namgyal Wangchuk, leader of the Bhutanese delegation who addressed the General Assembly on 21 September, 1971, on the occasion of the admission of Bhutan to the U.N., thanked, on behalf of his King and the people of Bhutan, all members of the U.N., and in particular India "which has spared no efforts in securing our admission" to the world body. He said : "this is a historic occasion for us and marks the realization of one of our most cherished dreams."⁴⁷ The Bhutanese desire for becoming a U.N. member would have, indeed, remained an unfulfilled dream if Communist China had entered the world body before Bhutan did. Possibly China's veto in the Security Council would have been used against the admission of Bhutan to the U.N. Not only did China refuse to recognise India's special relationship with Bhutan, but it looked upon the latter, more or less, as an extension of the Tibetan part of China. Chinese officials in Tibet expressed openly in 1959 that China would "liberate" Bhutan and Sikkim in due course.⁴⁸ Nevertheless, Bhutan

45. *Kuensel* 19 May 1971, p. 4.

46. Report 1971-72, Ministry of External Affairs, GOI, p. 12.

47. *GAOR* Session 26, A/PV 1934 mtgs, 21 September 1971, p. 67.

48. *White Paper* No. 2, Ministry of External Affairs, GOI, September—November 1959, p. 118.

showed its statesmanship and foresight by voting in the U.N. on 25 October, 1971, in favour of the Albanian resolution which sought to expel Nationalist China from U.N. membership and seat Communist China in the U.N.

Before May 1968 when the Late Druk Gyalpo appointed the first Council of Ministers, the Bhutanese ruler himself looked after foreign affairs. In fact, Bhutan previously followed an isolationist policy and concerned itself little with world events. Although no foreign minister of Bhutan was appointed in 1968, Lyonpo Dawa Tsering, then Minister for Development, began to look after Bhutanese foreign affairs. In June 1972 Dawa Tsering was appointed Bhutan's first foreign minister. He travelled widely representing his country in many international conferences. In September 1971 he was a member of the Bhutanese delegation to the U.N. General Assembly at the time of his country's admission to the U.N.⁴⁹

After Bhutan became a member of the U.N., it began to express its views on world affairs. Bhutan affirmed its commitment to the ideals of the United Nations Charter and to the policy of non-alignment and friendship with all countries.⁵⁰ It welcomed the prospect of the advent of a new era of real peace in the world resulting from the new relations which were established by President Nixon's recent visit to China and the Soviet Union. It noted with satisfaction the agreements recently signed between the Federal Republic of Germany and Poland, the Four-Power agreement on Berlin and the contacts which had recently been made between the Federal Republic of Germany and the German Democratic Republic to improve the relations between them. It welcomed the contacts which had recently been established between the leaders of South Korea and North Korea to establish durable peace in their country. It also noted with gratification the visit of Kakuei Tanaka, Japanese Prime Minister, to China in September 1972 and the decision which was taken to normalise relations between Japan and China.⁵¹

49. *The Statesman* (Delhi), 19 June 1972.

50. Statement in the General Assembly of the U.N. by Dawa Tsering, 4 October 1972. *GAOR*, Session 27, A/PV 2053, mtgs, pp. 6-10.

51. *Ibid.*

Bhutan extended its sympathy and support to the people of Bangladesh during their struggle for national liberation. The late Druk Gyalpo visited the refugee camp in Salt Lake area, Calcutta and took initiative in collecting funds in aid of Bangladesh refugees in India. Bhutanese ministers and members of the royal family launched a door-to-door drive to raise funds. By these means and through charity and cultural shows Bhutan contributed about Rs. 7 lakhs to the relief of Bangladesh refugees.⁵²

Bhutan welcomed the emergence of Bangladesh as an independent nation and was the second country to recognise it, India being the first. Bhutan's decision to recognise Bangladesh was a bold step in view of the active Chinese support for the Pakistani position and thus indirect opposition of China to the liberation movement in Bangladesh. In extending recognition to the new nation, Bhutan, however, was prompted by its own national interest. It realised that a friendly Bangladesh, in addition to a friendly India, would be of great help to it in developing trade and commerce. A land-locked country, it saw the advantage of another trade outlet.

However, India's victory in the war with Pakistan in December 1971, when nearly one lakh Pakistani soldiers surrendered to the Indian Army, raised India's prestige in Bhutan. The Bhutanese confidence in India's capability to defend their country against Chinese aggression, which was to some extent shaken in 1962 as a sequel to India's reverses in the Sino-Indian war, was much restored as a result of the recent conflict with Pakistan. Bhutan's relations with India continue to be guided by the Treaty of 1949 even after the former joined the U.N.⁵³

Bhutan welcomed the outcome of the recent Simla summit meeting between the leaders of India and Pakistan which resulted in some significant progress towards a durable peace on the sub-continent. Bhutan is deeply interested to ensure that the Indian Ocean and their adjoining areas should be free from becoming an area of confrontation between the

52. *Report 1971-72*, n. 31, p. 13.

53. *Ibid.*, p. 12.

Super Powers. It supported the proposal to declare the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace.⁵⁴

A critic of Bhutanese foreign policy may say that its policy is no other than India's. But this is not so. What the Bhutanese have taken into consideration is their own national interest. In the context of the geo-political situation of Bhutan, the latter's policy of non-alignment and friendship with all countries simply means friendship for both of its big neighbours, India and China. Although Bhutan, for its own interest, rather its political survival, has not yet followed the policy of equal friendship with India and China, it has adopted a cautious policy towards the latter and scrupulously kept aloof from the acrimony of the Sino-Indian dispute. Its policy is realistic. It is aware of the fact that it cannot forge close relations with China in the near future in the light of latter's policy towards it. Its close ties with India pay dividend to it. It has been forging ahead along the path of progress without losing anything.

THE INTERNATIONAL STATUS OF BHUTAN

As mentioned in the foregoing chapter, the status of Bhutan became one of protectorate by the treaty of 1910. Since Article 2 of the Indo-Bhutanese Treaty of Friendship of 1949, by which Bhutan agreed to be guided by the advice of the Government of India in regard to its external relations, is patterned on the Indo-Bhutanese Treaty of 1910, it has been assumed that Bhutan continued to be an Indian protectorate. In keeping with this assumption Nehru's visit to Bhutan in September 1958 was alleged to have been intended to remind the Bhutanese authorities that "their lawful overlord is in Delhi and not in Peking."⁵⁵ Independent India did not, however, consider Bhutan its protectorate. On the contrary, it regarded that country as a sovereign, independent state.⁵⁶ Nehru's visit to Bhutan was meant to develop India's closer relations with Bhutan and not to assert the overlordship of the former over

54. *GAOR* session 27, A/PV 2053 mtgs, pp. 6-10.

55. *Economist* (London), vol, 188, No. 6005, 27 September 1958, p, 1010,

56. Karan, n. 20, p. 19.

the latter. In a public meeting at Paro, Bhutan, on 24 September, 1958, Nehru said that India's only desire for Bhutan was that it should remain independent and choose its own direction and progress. He said:

“Some may think that since India is a great and powerful country and Bhutan a small one, the former might wish to exercise pressure on Bhutan. It is essential that I make it clear to you (Bhutanese people) that our only wish is that you should remain an independent country choosing your own way of life and taking the path of progress according to your will.”⁵⁷

The relation between Independent India and Bhutan differed in its basic approach from that which existed between the British in India and Bhutan. Since 1910, the British not only controlled the latter's external relations but also asserted that the country was a British protectorate. The Bhutanese did not ever deny the British position in their country. They did not claim then that their country was a sovereign, independent state. The treaty of 1949 which, like the treaty of 1910, does not mention the term “protectorate” has no meaning as far as the status of Bhutan is concerned, as both India and Bhutan hold that the latter is a sovereign, independent state. In 1961, the late Druk Gyalpo declared in India that Bhutan had the right to establish direct relations with foreign countries if it desired to do so. He also described his country's status as “sovereign independent state”.⁵⁸ In such context Article 2 of the Treaty of 1949 does not imply that Bhutan is an Indian protectorate. It means that Article 2 of the Treaty provides for mutual consultation in such matters as are vital to both India and Bhutan. The latter is forbidden under the treaty to act unilaterally in such matters. In the present world no state is absolutely independent. Every state has accepted some obligations under bilateral or multilateral treaties. Bhutan did not establish diplomatic relations with other countries partly because of the lack of finance and partly because it intended to keep aloof from international politics. India's financial and technical assistance in the development of

57. *Foreign Policy of India : Text of Documents 1947-54*, (New Delhi, 1959) edn. 2, p. 15.

58. *Asian Recorder*, 28 May-3 June 1961, p. 3802.

Bhutan has been provided only at the instance of the Bhutanese Government. This imposed no limitation upon Bhutanese independence. Similarly India's repeated declarations for the protection of Bhutan against any external aggression by no means encroached on Bhutanese sovereignty, since any protection was to be provided only at the request of the Bhutanese Government. Dawa Tsering, Bhutanese foreign minister, said in the General Assembly of the U. N. on 4 October 1972 that "our relations with India are based on equality and mutual trust and advantage".⁵⁹

The issue whether Bhutan is a sovereign, independent country or not was settled, when it became a member of the U. N. in September 1971. Article 2 of the U. N. Charter mentions that the U. N. organisation is based on the principle of the "sovereign equality" of all its members. However, all member-states of the U. N. are not considered fully sovereign states. For instance, Byelorussia and Ukraine, the two member states of the U. N. are regarded as semi-sovereign states since they are constituent units of the Soviet Federation.⁶⁰ Bhutan, however, stands on a different footing. It does not constitute a part of India. It may be debatable whether or not all members of the U. N. are fully sovereign states but to Bhutan the organization of the U. N. is a "free association of sovereign countries."⁶¹

59. GAOR, Session 27, A/PV 2053 mtgs, pp. 6-10.

60. T.T., Poulse, "Bhutan's External Relations And India", *The International and Comparative Law Quarterly*, (London April 1971), p. 208,

61. GAOR, session 26, A/PV 1934 mtgs, 21 September 1971, p. 67.

CHAPTER X

Retrospect and Prospect

THE history of Indo-Bhutanese relations during the period of British Rule in India is, by and large, the story of the clashes and conflicts between the British in India and the rulers of Bhutan, leading finally to peace, mutual adjustment and understanding. In its earliest phase, the policy of the East India Company towards Bhutan was largely commercial in its motivation and approach. Following the conquest of Nepal by the Gorkhas in 1769 and the consequent disruption of trade between India and Tibet by way of Nepal, the British in India tried to develop a trade route to Tibet through Bhutan as an alternative to the Nepalese route. Although British intercourse with Bhutan had begun with a war in 1773, Warren Hastings made persistent endeavours to disabuse the minds of the Bhutanese rulers of their suspicion against the British in India and was successful in the establishment of commercial relations with Bhutan. However, trade between India and Tibet received a setback owing to the Sino-Nepalese War of 1792, and the importance of Bhutan as a channel of commerce with Tibet declined. In subsequent years, the relations between the Bhutanese and the Indian Governments were ruffled by their disputes in respect of territory and the extradition of offenders.

During the Indo-Nepalese War of 1814-16, however, the British strove to remove apprehensions from the minds of the Bhutanese authorities as to their intention towards Bhutan and adopted a conciliatory policy. They needed peace with Bhutan because they had enough trouble elsewhere. The Maratha War, the Pindari War, and the problems of consolidation of acquired territories kept them fully preoccupied.

Hence they did not pay any attention to the Bhutanese frontier till 1826.

During the years 1826-64, Indo-Bhutanese relations were marked by frequent clashes. The annexation of Assam in 1826 by the East India Company resulted in the extension of the Indo-Bhutanese boundary, and the relations of the Company with Bhutan assumed a new dimension. Frequent disputes took place on the issue of the tribute which the Bhutanese Government paid for the possession of the Assam Dooars and also on account of Bhutanese depredation into Indian territories.

Moreover, the Bhutanese authorities refused to yield to the British demands for the surrender of those offenders who, after committing crimes in India, escaped to Bhutan. The Government of India alternated the policy of negotiation with that of coercion in order to make the Bhutanese authorities agree to its demands. During the years 1828-36 it adopted punitive measures against the Bhutanese authorities by holding a few Bhutanese Dooars in temporary possession, but these measures did not solve the problem. In 1837, the Government of India sent Capt. Pemberton to Punakha on a mission to negotiate with the Bhutanese authorities, but this mission failed. As a result, the British gave up the method of negotiation for the settlement of differences with Bhutan and annexed the Assam Dooars in 1841. The annexation of the Assam Dooars put an end to one of the main sources of conflict, namely the payment of the tribute by Bhutan. There were fewer disputes than before. The relations between the two remained undisturbed till 1855, when Bhutanese depredations into Indian territories and the Tongsa Ponlop's offensive letter to the Agent of the Governor-General on the north-east frontier occasioned a dispute which was further aggravated by the abduction of Arung Singh, a Bhutanese subject, from Indian territory in 1856.

The Government of India threatened to take coercive measures against the Bhutanese Government for its failure to surrender offenders. But the uprising in India, which broke out in May 1857, rendered it difficult for the Government of India to enforce its threat. After suppressing the revolt and

establishing peace and order in India, it authorized Col. Francis Jenkins, Agent of the Governor-General on the north-east frontier, to write to the Bhutanese Government demanding the surrender of Arung Singh and all Indian subjects detained in Bhutan against their will. On the failure of the Bhutanese Government to comply with this demand, Jenkins took possession of Ambari Falakata, the Bhutanese territory on the west of the Teesta River, in 1860. But the Bhutanese authorities refused to yield to the Government of India, and the relations between the two Governments became worse than before.

In 1861, Capt Henry Hopkinson succeeded Jenkins as Agent of the Governor-General on the north-east frontier. Like his predecessor, Hopkinson advocated the annexation of the Bengal Dooars in order to coerce the Bhutanese authorities into submission. As an alternative, he suggested the dispatch of a mission to Bhutan. The Government of India accepted the alternative, appointed Ashley Eden to lead the mission, and instructed him to negotiate with the Bhutanese Government on the retention of Ambari Falakata by the former, arrangements for the extradition of criminals, and free commerce between Bhutan and India. Eden, who was sanguine about the success of his mission, entered Bhutan on 4 January 1864 without the consent of the Bhutanese Government. The Bhutanese authorities were extremely reluctant to receive the mission and endeavoured, by their passive resistance and discouragement, to compel Eden to return. Eden, however, persisted and reached Punakha on 15 March 1864. The Tongsa Ponlop, who exercised great influence in the Government of Bhutan, refused to negotiate with Eden unless the Government of India agreed to restore the Assam Dooars to Bhutan. He felt annoyed at Eden's statement that he would incur the displeasure of the Government of India if he refused its terms of negotiation. He insulted and ridiculed Eden publicly in the Bhutanese capital. Moreover, he asked Eden to sign an agreement with Bhutan restoring the Assam Dooars and delivering Bhutanese offenders to that country. Eden feared that the Tongsa Ponlop would coerce him to agree to his terms. He, therefore, signed the agreement, but

added the words "under compulsion" on the copies of the agreement, without giving any indication to the Bhutanese authorities that he had acted under duress.

After Eden's return from Bhutan, the Government of India repudiated the treaty with Bhutan signed by Eden on 29 March 1864 and decided to punish the Bhutanese authorities for ill-treating Eden and for extorting the treaty from him under the threat of violence in Punakha. It annexed Ambari Falakata and forfeited the annual payment of Rs. 12,000 paid to them till then on account of Ambari Falakata and the Assam Dooars.

Moreover, the Viceroy, Sir John Lawrence, warned them that unless they delivered by 1 September 1864 all Indian subjects detained in Bhutan against their will, he would take further measures against them. The Dharma Raja in his letter to Sir John Lawrence, dated 3 August, 1864, proposed further negotiations between the two Governments. But Lawrence, who was intent on securing the possession of Bhutanese hill-posts and on precluding the Bhutanese authorities from holding any jurisdiction over the low lands so as to remove for ever the source of conflict with Bhutan, rejected the Dharma Raja's proposal and ordered military preparations for the occupation of the Bengal Dooars and the strategically important Bhutanese hill-posts.

In November 1864 the British launched an offensive against Bhutan. Although the Bhutanese authorities resisted the British troops at many places, the latter occupied all Bhutanese Dooars and important hill-posts by the end of January 1865. In the beginning of February, the Bhutanese authorities showed unexpected courage and compelled the British troops to evacuate some Bhutanese hill-posts. The retreat of British troops from Dewangiri and Balla made a strong impact on both the Bhutanese and Indian Governments. On the one hand it proved a blow to British prestige, and on the other it stimulated Bhutanese resistance against the British. The Government of India recommenced hostilities in March, and recaptured the places which its troops had been forced to evacuate. The Bhutanese Government sued for peace but wanted to negotiate with the Government of India on the con-

dition of the restoration of the Bhutanese territories conquered by British troops. The continuance of hostilities proved costly and vexatious to the Government of India, and the latter brought the Government of Bhutan to its terms of peace on 11 November 1865 by the threat of an invasion of the Bhutanese capital. By the treaty of 11 November 1865 the Government of Bhutan consented to the cession of the Assam and Bengal Dooars and some parts of the Bhutanese hilly tract. It also agreed to surrender all Indian subjects detained in Bhutan against their will, to the maintenance of free trade, and to the arbitration by the Government of India between the Government of Bhutan and the Rajas of Cooch Behar and Sikkim. The Government of India undertook to provide to the Bhutanese Government an annual allowance not exceeding Rs 50,000 on the condition that the former should stop the allowance on the failure of the latter to abide by the terms of the treaty. The annexation of the whole of Bhutan was not effected because the economic potentiality of Bhutan minus its Dooars was almost nil. Besides, the nature of the terrain and the lack of communications in Bhutan would have rendered the administration of that country by the Government of India an extremely difficult task. Hence, the British authorities in India preferred the existence of Bhutan as a buffer between India and Tibet to its annexation.

The years which followed the cessation of Indo-Bhutanese hostilities marked the end of one phase in Indo-Bhutanese relations and the beginning of another. From 1866 onwards the British authorities in India strove to convert a sulky Bhutan into a friendly and co-operative neighbour. Although they adopted a strong attitude against the closure of their communications with Bhutan in 1868 and held the Government of Bhutan responsible for any incursion made by the Bhutanese people into Indian territory, their policy towards Bhutan was, on the whole, circumspect and conciliatory. They endeavoured to develop close relations with Bhutanese authorities by being reasonable and friendly, by sending them presents, by granting stipends to their students to study in the Government school at Darjeeling, and by respecting their susceptibilities in matters in which the interest of the Government of India was little

involved. They took a few measures to avoid disputes and misunderstandings with the Government of Bhutan. They appointed a Bhutanese agent in Indian territory to open up a direct channel of communications with the Central Government of Bhutan. They demarcated the Indo-Bhutanese boundary and adopted a policy of non-interference in the affairs of Bhutan.

In 1885, the Chinese Resident in Lhasa took advantage of an internal power struggle in Bhutan and endeavoured to meddle in Bhutanese affairs, but the Government of India scrupulously refrained from interfering in the internal affairs of Bhutan. The policy of conciliation and non-interference adopted by the Government of India contributed to the growth of Indo-Bhutanese friendship and co-operation. The Government of Bhutan refused to comply with the request of the Tibetans to join them in their conflict with the British in 1888.

The Bhutanese authorities and the British in India developed closer relations than ever before during the progress of the Younghusband Mission to Lhasa. The Government of India got the permission of the Bhutanese Government to survey and to construct a road from Bengal to Tibet through Bhutan. Ugyen Wangchuk, then the Tongsa Ponlop of Bhutan, endeavoured to patch up the rupture between the Tibetan and the Indian Governments, but he became, by and large, an ally of the Government of India by providing assistance to the Younghusband Mission and by accompanying the latter to Lhasa. Although the construction of the road through Bhutan was indefinitely postponed after the return of the Younghusband Mission from Lhasa in September 1904, the Indo-Tibetan dispute of 1903-4 paved the way for the augmentation of further influence of the Government of India in Bhutan.

The years which followed the Younghusband Mission brought about a reorientation in Indo-Bhutanese relations. In 1905, the Government of India began to treat the Bhutanese ruler like a ruler of an Indian State. It conferred on Ugyen Wangchuk the honour of K.C.I.E. for the services he had rendered to it during its dispute with Tibet in 1903-4, and invited him to India on the occasion of the visit of the Prince of Wales to pay his respects to the future Emperor of India.

Moreover, Ugyen Wangchuk, who saw the possibility of the Chinese committing aggression on Bhutan to punish him for giving assistance to the British in 1903-4, looked to the Government of India for protection in the event of an invasion of Bhutan by China. Indeed, J.C. White repeatedly urged the Government of India to preclude the danger of Chinese interference in Bhutan by revising the treaty of 1865. Although he failed to achieve his objective during the tenure of his office, he made the task of his successor, Charles Bell, much easier by establishing a close relationship between the Bhutanese and the Indian Governments and by highlighting the vulnerability of Bhutan to Chinese intrigue. In 1907, Ugyen Wangchuk, who was eager to seek the tutelage of the Indian Government, was installed as the hereditary Maharaja of Bhutan. His elevation to the throne of Bhutan further enhanced the influence of the Indian Government in Bhutan.

Bhutan's emergence as a British Protectorate in January 1910 was hastened by China's attempt to establish its suzerainty over Bhutan in 1908. Soon after the withdrawal of British troops from the Chumbi Valley, China asserted its suzerainty over Bhutan in pursuance of its forward policy towards the Himalayan states, a policy which it had followed ever since the return of the Younghusband Mission from Lhasa. The Government of India became greatly concerned over the emergence of the Chinese menace on the north-east frontier of India. Sikkim and Nepal were comparatively safe and protected from Chinese influence, and Tibet had ceased to be a threat to the defence of the Indian frontier. Bhutan, however, was still exposed to the Chinese influence. China claimed suzerainty over Bhutan, although the Bhutanese people claimed to be an independent nation, owing allegiance neither to the Government of China nor to the British. The Government of India resolved to prevent China from establishing its foothold in Bhutan, and, with the approval of the Secretary of State for India, authorized Charles Bell to enter into negotiations with the Maharaja of Bhutan in order to bring the external affairs of Bhutan under the control of the Indian Government through a treaty. The treaty with Bhutan was concluded on 8 January 1910 with the co-operation of Ugyen Kazi, the

Bhutanese Agent, who had been largely instrumental in bringing about a close relationship between the Bhutanese and the British authorities in India since 1903. As a result of the treaty of 8 January 1910, Bhutan became a protectorate of the Government of India. It made over the control of its foreign relations to the Government of India and made itself entirely dependent on the latter for protection against Chinese expansionism. The Government of India in its turn committed itself to protecting Bhutan from Chinese designs,

The British followed, by and large, the same policy with Bhutan which had governed their relations with other countries bordering on India. By the end of the 19th century the British had created a belt of protected or dependent states, outworks of their Indian Empire, whose foreign relations were either wholly dominated or controlled by them. They had already established their hold on the foreign affairs of Afghanistan, Kalat, and Chitral on the north-west frontier of India, Mascat and Trucial Chiefs in the Persian Gulf, and Nepal and Sikkim in the north and east of India. The Indo-Bhutanese Treaty of 1910 filled up a gap in the protective belt, which the British had built around their Indian Empire. This treaty proved beneficial to both the Bhutanese and the British. The Bhutanese authorities obtained a handsome amount by way of annual subsidy from the British. Moreover, Bhutan, by virtue of the Indo-Bhutanese Treaty of 1910, under which the British Government considered itself bound to resist China's attempts to establish its authority in Bhutan, was able to escape China's subjection in 1910-11. China, which had been pursuing a forward policy towards the Himalayan states since the departure of the Younghusband Mission from Lhasa, staged a full-fledged invasion of Tibet in February 1910. It would have penetrated into Bhutan as well if the latter had not enjoyed the protection of the British. The Indo-Bhutanese Treaty of 1910 proved advantageous to the British as well. It was not the intention of the British to take possession of Bhutan. What they intended to do was to preclude China or any other foreign Power from establishing its influence in Bhutan. They achieved their object by the treaty of 1910, inasmuch as they secured a legal title to influence and direct

the foreign relations of Bhutan. The treaty also secured to them peace and tranquillity on the Bhutanese frontier. The cost of defending the Bhutanese frontier would have been a heavy drain on the exchequer of the Government of India if Bhutan under Chinese influence had necessitated the location of a considerable force on the Indian side of the Bhutanese border.

After the conclusion of the treaty the British in India did not relax their vigilance lest the Chinese should sabotage the treaty and interfere in the affairs of Bhutan. Their efforts to counter the Chinese challenge in Bhutan were considerably helped by China's pre-occupation with its own internal troubles. With the withdrawal of the Chinese menace on the Bhutanese borders, the Bhutanese ruler was able to bend his energies towards the development of his country on modern lines. Modern education was introduced in Bhutan, but its progress was hampered for want of funds. Moreover, the outbreak of the First World War made the economic development of Bhutan an issue of secondary importance. However, in view of the firm loyalty shown by the Bhutanese authorities to the British, the Government of British India in 1924 made training facilities available to Bhutanese students in different professional and technical fields. In August 1926 Sir Ugyen Wangchuk died. There was an apprehension that on his death there might be disturbances in Bhutan. Fortunately nothing untoward happened, and his son, Jigme Wangchuk, succeeded his father without any opposition.

Jigme Wangchuk, the new Maharaja of Bhutan, was young and inexperienced. He was also handicapped without an old and experienced Bhutanese adviser. Besides, he confronted a new problem—a problem which his predecessor had not faced. In 1931, Shabdung Rimpoche became dissatisfied with his administration. His (Shibdung Rimpoche's) opposition to the Maharaja posed a threat to the rule of the latter. The Bhutanese ruler decided to meet this threat by maintaining some soldiers trained in the use of modern arms and ammunition. At the request of the Government of Bhutan, the Government of India gave military training, for the first time, to 15 Bhutanese young men in India at Shillong for a period

of two years from January 1933 to December 1934. During the Second World War when Bhutan faced an economic hardship as a result of the rise in the prices of goods, the Government of India raised its annual subsidy to Bhutan by a lakh of rupees with effect from 1 January 1942.

The relations between Bhutan and British India remained friendly till the end of British rule in India. The Bhutanese authorities, of course, feared that their autonomy might be jeopardized by too close a contact with the British, but the latter respected their susceptibilities and discouraged the intercourse of Indians or foreigners with the Bhutanese people. The Bhutanese policy of aloofness succeeded in preserving Bhutan's autonomy but left the country backward economically, politically and socially.

With the end of the British rule in India, the British protectorate over Bhutan came to an end. Although Independent India, in the light of China's pretension to suzerainty over Bhutan, patterned its Treaty of Friendship of 1949 on the Anglo-Bhutanese treaties of 1865 and 1910, it did not lay claim to protectorate over Bhutan, as the British Government of India did since 1910. Moreover, it showed a friendly gesture towards Bhutan by returning 32 square miles of territory in the Dewangiri district of Assam. The Government of British India was not prepared to make this concession to Bhutan in 1919. Nevertheless, in the initial phase of its relations with India, Bhutan apprehended that India would continue to treat it as its protectorate and would debar it from emerging as a fully sovereign and independent country. Consequently Bhutan continued the old close-door policy, restricted the entry of Indians into Bhutan and discouraged the establishment of close economic and cultural ties with India. India and Bhutan maintained, more or less, distant relations till the late fifties when China's policy towards them impelled them to work in close co-operation in the interest of their mutual security. Besides, in 1958-59 the ruthless suppression of the Tibetan revolt by China, the flight of the Dalai Lama and the assemblage of Chinese troops near Bhutan's northern border, made a strong impact on the Bhutanese authorities. They realised that their country must develop rapidly on modern lines lest they should

meet the fate of the Tibetans. Hence they gave up their policy of aloofness and within a short period took strides towards modernization. With India's financial and technical assistance, it built a network of roads, opened a number of schools and hospitals. It set up banks and mints, abolished slavery in the country and codified its laws.

India won Bhutan's friendship not only by assisting the latter in the process of modernization but also by helping it in securing an international recognition of its status as an independent country. With India's sponsorship, it became a member of the Colombo Plan in 1962, and of the Universal Postal Union in 1969. Not only did India sponsor Bhutan's application for membership of the United Nations, it also made every possible effort to canvass support for it among the member-nations of the U.N. for Bhutan's admission. Thus, Bhutan became a member of the U.N. in September 1971. By securing the U.N. membership for Bhutan, India dispelled the wrong impression created by countries unfriendly to India that the latter had been standing in the way of Bhutan's aspiration for the membership of the world body.

After securing its entry into the U.N., Bhutan began to contribute to peace and stability of the world in general, and Asia in particular. On 25 October 1971 it voted in the U.N. in favour of the Albanian resolution which sought Communist China's admission in the U.N. As Bhutan is a small country flanked by the two big powers, China and India, it will be ideal, if Bhutan is able to maintain normal relations with both of its neighbouring countries without involving itself in the big power politics. But this is not likely to take place in the foreseeable future unless China reorients its policy towards Bhutan. Since the late fifties China has adopted different methods to alienate Bhutan from India. On the one hand, it endeavoured to befriend the Bhutanese people by offering considerable amount of economic aid in 1959. On the other hand, it allowed its troops in Tibet to make incursions into Bhutanese territory in 1966 and 1970, possibly to coerce Bhutan to seek direct redress from Peking. In fact, China is not inclined to recognise Bhutan as a distinct political entity. It looks upon it, more or less, as an extension of Tibet and is

resolved to "liberate" it sooner or later. However, there is no military threat from China now. The main danger to which Bhutan is exposed from the north is China's subversive activities. China has been sending its agents into Bhutan to create class conflicts and confusion.

It has also been preaching its ideology through pamphlets. Addressing a Press conference in Thimphu on 26 April 1970 the late Druk Gyalpo disclosed that the Chinese had airdropped some pamphlets on the thoughts of Mao in Northern Bhutan in 1969. He also added that the Bhutanese army patrols had promptly collected and burnt them. Thus, in the light of China's attitude towards Bhutan it may be said that if China had entered the U.N. before Bhutan did, the latter's aspiration for U.N. membership might have remained unfulfilled. It was a major achievement of Indian diplomacy to secure U.N. membership for Bhutan before Communist China.

India's policy towards Bhutan has been, by and large, realistic and imaginative. Without involving Bhutan in big power politics, India has broadened the former's contacts with the outside world to an extent which has proved beneficial to Bhutan. Besides, India refrained from taking recourse to any measure which was likely to arouse bitterness against it. Thus it did not station its army in Bhutan, but sent only a few military officers for imparting training to the Bhutanese Army.

India's close relationship with Bhutan is bound to contribute to peace and stability in this part of Asia. However, Bhutan, being sandwiched between two big countries, is sensitive about its national sovereignty and territorial integrity. It is noteworthy that the Bhutanese National Assembly (Tsongdu) in 1960 not only condemned China's cartographic aggression on Bhutan but also took exception to a few Indian maps which depicted the Indo-Bhutanese border in a thin line as an interstate boundary and not in thick line as an international boundary. India has, however, always regarded Bhutan as an independent country and made it clear that it is mainly interested in the independence, stability and economic viability of Bhutan. Thus, India's interests and those of Bhutan are not contradictory but complementary. Their relations are expected to continue to be close and friendly.

APPENDIX I

Treaty between His Excellency the Right Honourable Sir John Lawrence, G.C.B., K.S.I., Viceroy and Governor-General of Her Britannic Majesty's Possession in the East Indies, and Their Highness the Dhurm and Deb Rajahs of Bhootan concluded on the one part by Lieutenant-Colonel Herbert Bruce, C.B., by virtue of full powers to that effect vested in him by the Viceroy and Governor-General, and on the other part by Samdojey Deb Jimpey and Themseyrensey Denai according to full powers conferred on them by the Dhurm and Deb Rajahs—1865.¹

Article I

There shall henceforth be perpetual peace and friendship between the British Government and the Government of Bhootan.

Article II

Whereas in consequence of repeated aggressions of the Bhootan Government and of the refusal of that Government to afford satisfaction for those aggressions, and of their insulting treatment of the officers sent by His Excellency the Governor-General in Council for the purpose of procuring an amicable adjustment of differences existing between the two States, the British Government has been compelled to seize by an armed force the whole of the Doars and certain Hill Posts protecting the passes into Bhootan and whereas the Bhootan Government has now expressed its regret for past misconduct and a desire for the establishment of friendly relations with the British Government, it is hereby agreed that the whole of the tract known as the Eighteen Doars, bordering on the Districts of Rungpoor, Cooch Behar and Assam, together with the Talook of Ambaree Fallacottah and the Hill territory on the left bank

1. C.U. Aitchison, comp., *A Collection of Treaties, Engagements and Sanads Relating to India and Neighbouring Countries* (Calcutta, 1909), vol. 2, pp. 303-6.

of the Teesta up to such points as may be laid down by the British Commissioner appointed for the purpose is ceded by the Bhootan Government to the British Government for ever.

Article III

The Bhootan Government hereby agree to surrender all British subjects as well as subjects of the chiefs of Sikkim and Cooch Behar who are now detained in Bhootan against their will, and to place no impediment in the way of the return of all or any of such persons into British territory.

Article IV

In consideration of the cession by the Bhootan Government of the territories specified in Article II of this Treaty, and of the said Government having expressed its regret for past misconduct, and having hereby engaged for the future to restrain all evil-disposed persons from committing crimes within British territory or the territories of the Rajahs of Sikkim and Cooch Behar and to give prompt and full redress for all such crimes which may be committed in defiance of their commands, the British Government agree to make an annual allowance to the Government of Bhootan of a sum not exceeding fifty thousand rupees (Rupees 50,000) to be paid to officers not below the rank of Jungpen, who shall be deputed by the Government of Bhootan to receive the same. And it is further hereby agreed that the payments shall be made as specified below :

On the fulfilment by the Bhootan Government of the conditions of this Treaty, twenty-five thousand rupees (Rupees 25,000).

On the 10th January following the first payment, thirty-five thousand rupees (Rupees 35,000).

On the 10th January following forty-five thousand rupees (Rupees 45,000).

On every succeeding 10th January fifty thousand rupees (Rupees 50,000).

Article V

The British Government will hold itself at liberty at any

time to suspend the payment of this compensation money either in whole or in part in the event of misconduct on the part of the Bhootan Government or its failure to check the aggression of its subjects or to comply with the provisions of this Treaty.

Article VI

The British Government hereby agree, on demand being duly made in writing by the Bhootan Government, to surrender, under the provisions of Act of 1854, of which a copy shall be furnished to the Bhootan Government, all Bhootanese subjects accused of any of the following crimes who may take refuge in British dominions. The crimes are murder, attempting to murder, rape, kidnapping, great personal violence, maiming, dacoity, thuggee, robbery, or burglary, knowingly receiving property obtained by dacoity, robbery or burglary, cattle stealing, breaking and entering a dwelling-house and stealing therein, arson, setting fire to village, house, or town, forgery or uttering forged documents, counterfeiting current coin, knowingly uttering base or counterfeit coin, perjury, subornation of perjury, embezzlement by public officers or other persons, and being an accessory to any of the above offences.

Article VII

The Bhootan Government hereby agree, on requisition being duly made by, or by the authority of, the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, to surrender any British subjects accused of any of the crimes specified in the above Article who may take refuge in the territory under the jurisdiction of the Bhootan Government, and also any Bhootanese subjects who, after committing any of the above crimes in British territory, shall flee into Bhootan, on such evidence of their guilt being produced as shall satisfy the local court of the district in which the offence may have been committed.

Article VIII

The Bhootan Government hereby agree to refer to the arbitration of the British Government all disputes with, or causes of complaint against, the Rajahs of Sikkim and Cooch Behar, and to abide by the decision of the British Government; and

the British Government hereby engage to enquire into and settle all such disputes and complaints in such manner as justice may require, and to insist on the observance of the decision by the Rajahs of Sikkim and Cooch Behar.

Article IX

There shall be free trade and commerce between the two Governments. No duties shall be levied on Bhootanese goods imported into British territories nor shall the Bhootan Government levy any duties on British goods imported into, or transported through, Bhootan territories. Bhootanese subjects residing in British territories shall have equal justice with British subjects, and British subjects residing in Bhootan shall have equal justice with the subjects of the Bhootan Government.

Article X

The present Treaty of ten Articles having been concluded at Sinchula on the 11th day of November 1865, corresponding with the Bhootea year Shim Lung 24th day of the 9th month, and signed and sealed by Lieutenant-Colonel Herbert Bruce, C.B., and Samdojey Deb Jimpey and Themseyrensey Denai, the ratifications of the same by His Excellency the Viceroy and Governor-General in Council and by Their Highness the Dhurm and Deb Rajahs shall be mutually delivered within thirty days from this date.

APPENDIX II

Letter from the Government of India to the Secretary of State for India, dated 1st October 1908, concerning Chinese activity on the North-Eastern Frontier and the relations of the Government of India with Bhutan.²

For some months past our attention has been called to the unusual energy of the Chinese in Tibet and their obvious preparations for an active policy on our North-Eastern Frontier.

2. Apart from any question of new movements in China, the action of the Chinese in Tibet clearly proves their purpose to establish effective dominion in that country. The transfer

2. Foreign Secret E, October 1908, No. 137 (116-137).

of Chao Erh Feng, the able and determined Viceroy of Szechuan, to Lhasa ; the assignment on Szechuan revenue of a grant of from 400,000 to 500,000 taels per annum for the re-organization of the Tibetan administration ; the appointment of Chao Erh Feng's brother to the Szechuan Vicerealty "with a view to avoiding friction and ensuring harmonious co-operation" the occupation by Chinese troops of Chamdo and other portions of Eastern Tibet ; the establishment of a military post at Nagchuka north of Lhasa ; the increase of the Lhasa garrison to 1,500 Chinese and 3,000 Tibetan troops ; the efforts to raise a Tibetan army stiffened by Chinese troops, and the proclamation issued in this connection ; the despatch of 15 drill instructors to Tibet, including two Japanese ; the transfer of 14 cadets from the Szechuan Military College with a view to starting a military college at Lhasa to which Gurkha students will be invited from Nepal ; the import of rifles and ammunition in large quantities—a consignment of 7,000 rifles has reached Lhasa—the establishment of schools and the creation of a police force ; all this evidence, which has been collected from the reports of our local officers, the specially valuable letters of the Nepalese representatives in Tibet (courteously sent to us by the Nepalese authorities), and the despatches of His Majesty's Minister at Peking, points unmistakeably to the existence and steady accomplishment of a clearly defined policy.

3. It is early as yet to forecast the future relations in Tibet of the Chinese and Tibetans to one another and to ourselves ; but it is clear that the *status quo* on this part of the frontier has already been materially altered. The policy which H.M.'s Government have laid down in regard to Tibet limits our interest in purely Tibetan affairs to the observance of treaties and trade regulations. The local Chinese and Tibetan officials are still obstructive, and the appointment of Chang Tachen to the Wai-wu-pu does not augur well for conciliation and accommodation in the near future. Our officials, however, must keep on the best terms possible with both Chinese and Tibetans, not yielding our rights under treaty or agreement, but not seeking to push forward our interests. In other words, we must pursue a policy of watchful inactivity.

4. The portion of Tibet bordering on India is cold and infertile, incapable of supporting any considerable number of troops. The states intervening between Tibet and the plains of India are, on the other hand, temperate and fertile countries capable now, or in the near future, of supporting troops in large numbers. Nepal already supports an army, and the virgin soil of Sikkim and Bhutan is fast being brought under cultivation. The Chinese evidently realise the importance of obtaining a footing in these countries. When in a figure of speech, Chang Tachen likened the union of China, Tibet, Nepal, Sikkim and Bhutan to the blending of the five colours, and compared the position of Tibet, Nepal, Sikkim and Bhutan to that of molar teeth side by side in a man's mouth, he doubtless gave expression to Chinese aspirations. From his position in the Wai-wu-pu, Chang Tachen will be able to promote those aspirations, which, indeed have already taken shape in a deliberate attempt to obtain some recognition by Bhutan of the suzerainty of China.

5. At the beginning of April, Ma Chi Fu, late Popon of the Chumbi Valley, set out for Bhutan with a guard of twenty Chinese soldiers and attended by the Tibetan physician to the Phari Jongpens. A few days later the Bhutan Agent, Ugyen Kazi, showed Mr. Bell copies of two letters which the Maharaja of Bhutan had received from the Amban at Lhasa and the Popon of Pipitang in the Chumbi Valley. The Amban's letter, after reciting that Bhutan was under the suzerainty of China and was the southern gate of the Chinese Empire, informed the Maharaja that he was sending an officer to report on the condition of the country. The Popon's letter, which was very peremptorily worded, ordered the attendance of the Ponlops and barons at the boundaries of their fiefs to conduct the Chinese mission through them. Mr. Bell assures us that there can be no doubt as to the genuineness of these letters; although not allowed to take copies of them he was able to examine them carefully. He was also permitted to see the correspondences which have passed between the Maharaja and his agent on the subject. The Maharaja wrote that, since the establishment of the present regime in Bhutan, some 240 years ago, there had been no record of any Chinese mission coming to Bhutan or of

China claiming suzerainty over it. The Agent advised the Maharaja to reply that when engaged in war against the British, Bhutan had received no assistance from China, that she had never paid tribute to China, nor had any of her officials been paid by China. In the result, Ma Chi Fu received so unmistakable a rebuff that he proceeded no further than Paro and returned to Tibet early in May.

6. Thus the attempted assertion of suzerainty over Bhutan failed; but there is every likelihood that it will be renewed. And assuredly it will be renewed with greater insistence as the Chinese strengthen their hold on the Chumbi Valley. Now we cannot afford to let the Chinese establish influence in Bhutan. As already indicated Bhutan could soon maintain considerable bodies of Chinese troops. It is coterminous with British territory for about 240 miles. It rolls down on the south in low hills and shades away over a mere geographical line to the Doors which are occupied by tea-planters and other British capitalists. Moreover it is fast becoming a Nepalese state. Already, three-quarters of the population of Sikkim are Nepalese and the Gurkhas, who are multiplying fast, are streaming over into the vacant spaces of Bhutan. For obvious reasons, it is of real importance to keep the Gurkha states under our own control. Indeed, the establishment of Chinese influence in Bhutan could not fail to raise complications of a grave kind on the North-Eastern Frontier and might eventually necessitate the location of considerable force on our side of the border, where now two companies of native infantry afford sufficient protection.

7. We are strongly of opinion that the time has come to frustrate the evident designs of China on Bhutan; and local conditions are favourable for a blocking policy. The Maharaja of Bhutan is well disposed towards us and is highly incensed with the Chinese and Tibetans over a fracas which took place quite recently between some Bhutanese and the Chinese and Tibetans at Phari. Moreover being in urgent need of money, he is anxious to develop his country. The subsidy of Rs. 50,000 which he receives annually from us is distributed between the monks and nobles on whose support he depends to maintain his position. He is particularly anxious

to make roads in, and attract outside capital to, Bhutan. At the end of the correspondence, which commenced in 1905, and after visiting the Maharaja, Mr. White, then Political Officer in Sikkim, made four proposals to us with a view to the settlement of this important question, *viz.* :

- (i) To increase our subsidy from Rs. 50,000 to Rs. 1,00,000 ;
- (ii) to assist the Durbar to develop their communications with India , providing them with tools and explosives to open up the Buxa-Paro route ;
- (iii) to permit and encourage the investment of outside capital in mines and tea gardens and other industries ;
- (iv) to get control by a new treaty of Bhutan's external relations.

These proposals have been examined and approved by Mr. White's successor, Mr. Bell.

8. We have carefully considered the matter, and have come to the conclusion that increase of the subsidy is desirable, and that we should not resist the declared wishes of the Maharaja to open up his country for development by roads and by the investment of outside capital, provided that capital is of British or British Indian origin, and that the process of development is gradual, commencing from the southern side. Calcutta firms have already begun to interest themselves in Bhutan and have even applied for permission to prospect there. The Government of Eastern Bengal and Assam have objected to the extension of tea gardens in Bhutan on the grounds that the clearing of forests and the denudation of the banks of streams may lead to flooding on the British side of the border, and that the influx of Nepali coolies may cause troublesome complications. There would be some political advantages in holding back the industrial development of Bhutan, and we agree with Mr. Bell that the position should be fully explained to them before according to the wishes of the Durbar. The risks to capitalists of investment in a backward border state must also be made known. If after these precautions have been taken, there is demand on both sides for industrial expansion, it would, in our opinion, be impolitic any long to resist it. In return, and before any other consideration, we think that the oppor-

tunity should be taken to endeavour to secure the control of Bhutan's external relations by treaty.

9. We, therefore, recommend to your Lordship that Mr. Bell should proceed quietly to Bhutan at an early date and enter into secret negotiations with the Maharaja on the lines indicated above. Should the Maharaja be disinclined to bind himself by a treaty, we would ask your Lordship's sanction to authorise Mr. Bell to offer him a further increase of the subsidy to a limit for the total subsidy of two lakhs of rupees a year, conditionally on the negotiation of a satisfactory treaty. We enclose a draft treaty to form the basis of discussion between Mr. Bell and the Maharaja. It may be necessary to guarantee the Maharaja against aggression, and we suggest that Mr. Bell should be authorised to incorporate some provision to this end in the treaty, should the Maharaja insist upon it.

10. The claims of the Chinese to exercise suzerainty over Bhutan have never been recognised by the Indian Government, have lately been rejected by the Bhutanese and are at best shadowy. Against the religious offerings at Lhasa, and occasional vague and unsupported assertions on the part of the Chinese, we can advance the following convincing arguments :

(a) We made our present Treaty of 1865 and have dealt with the Bhutanese without reference to the Chinese ; and the Chinese did not assist the Bhutanese when we made war with them ;

(b) In 1905, the present Maharaja, who was then Tongsa Ponlop and Minister, came down to Calcutta to present *nazars*, a token of subordination, to His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, to whom he also handed a letter addressed to the Viceroy, in which he, on behalf of the whole Bhutan Durbar and people, recognised the supremacy of the British Government ;

(c) We established the present Maharaja without reference to the Chinese ;

(d) The Maharaja, the chiefs and the people of Bhutan reject the Chinese claim to suzerainty ;

(e) The Chinese have never given any subsidy to Bhutan ; nor have they paid any Bhutanese officials. On the contrary, we pay a yearly subsidy to Bhutan, the acceptance of

which is regarded as a sign of subordination.

Nevertheless, in view of the present attitude and susceptibilities of China and with a view to overcoming any possible reluctance on the part of the Maharaja, we recommended that in the first instance the treaty should be kept secret.

11. We believe that the measures now proposed will adequately secure our position on the North-Eastern Frontier and protect our interests in that quarter from the dangers by which they now are threatened ; and this at a comparatively small cost, without undertaking serious responsibilities and without in any way departing from the policy of His Majesty's Government. Indeed, in the circumstances that have arisen, it is the corollary of the policy which necessitated our withdrawal from Tibet, that the Chinese should not be allowed to get a footing in Bhutan, and thereby bring into being a North-Eastern Frontier question. We need not dwell at greater length on the importance of excluding foreign influence and intrigue from Nepal, Sikkim and Bhutan. Our position in regard to the exclusion of foreign influence and intrigue from Nepal and Sikkim is entirely satisfactory, and the circumstances of the present occasion offer a peculiarly favourable opportunity for establishing our position in this respect satisfactorily in Bhutan.

APPENDIX III

Letter from India Office to Foreign Office, dated 22nd April 1909, concerning the proposed treaty with Bhutan in regard to the external relations of that state.³

I am directed to enclose—to be laid before the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, copy of a despatch, from the Government of India, dated 1st October 1908, proposing that, in view of the policy being pursued by China in Tibet, negotiations should be opened with Bhutan Durbar for a secret treaty by which the external relations of that state should be placed under British control.

2. In the past the Government of India have had no

3. Foreign Secret E, May 1910, Nos. 208-262.

reason to concern themselves actively with the relations of Bhutan and Tibet, which, so far as our knowledge goes, have not been of a nature to cause serious trouble between the two countries. A clear necessity alone could, in Viscount Morley's opinion, justify a departure from the policy of non-intervention in the affairs of the regions so distant and inaccessible. But there can be no doubt as to the gravity of the change that has taken place in the political situation on this section of the Indian border owing to the recent development of Chinese policy in Tibet. In April last, the Chinese Amban made an attempt to assert sovereign rights in Bhutan, and the circumstances in which the Dalai Lama left Peking in December on his return to Lhasa indicate that the attitude of the Tibetan Government towards the adjoining states of Bhutan, Sikkim and Nepal will be governed in future by considerations of purely Chinese policy. The time has, therefore, come, Lord Morley recognises, to take such steps, as may be practicable to maintain Bhutan in its present state of independence as regards China and Tibet. The establishment of effective Chinese suzerainty in Bhutan might not only necessitate expensive arrangements in the immediately adjoining British districts for the protection of the valuable tea estates situated along the frontier from Jalpaiguri to Tejpur, but would produce a disturbing effect on the mind of the Nepalese Government. Our present friendly relations with Nepal, which it is of the utmost importance to maintain, would certainly be shaken if the Durbar had reason to think that we were indifferent to the absorption by China of their neighbour Bhutan.

3. The friendly attitude of the Maharaja of Bhutan, which was markedly shown by the part he played when Tongsa Ponlop, in the latter stages of the mission to Lhasa, has been confirmed by his dealings with the British Government since his installation as hereditary ruler of the state in December 1907. His Highness then requested the assistance of the India Government in opening up the resources of the southern portion of his state adjoining the British border. More recently, on the occasion of the dispute at Phari, which has since been settled to the satisfaction of Bhutan, the Maharaja

wrote spontaneously to the Political Officer in Sikkim, stating that the Bhutanese were encouraged, by the favour they had received in the past from the British Government, to hope that "consideration will be bestowed on whatever reasonable prayer we shall be obliged to make". The present state of affairs thus affords a suitable opportunity of approaching the Bhutan Durbar with proposals for an agreement as to the external affairs of the state.

4. Our present relations with Bhutan are governed by various arrangements and particularly by the Treaty of 1865, the relevant Article of which, No. 8 provides that the Bhutan Government will refer to arbitration of the British Government, and accept their decision in all disputes with, or causes of complaints against, the Rajas of Sikkim and Cooch Behar, while the British Government undertake to enquire into and settle all such disputes and complaints in such manner as justice may require, and to insist on the observance of their decision by the Rajas in question. These documents conclusively establish the right of Bhutan to enter into diplomatic engagement with us, and their effect is to vest in the Government of India a certain measure of control over the external relations of the state, limited, however to those interests which more immediately concern the Government of India.

5. The proposals of the Government of India are that Mr. Bell, the Political Officer in Sikkim, should proceed to Bhutan at an early date, to enter into negotiations with the Maharaja for a secret treaty. Their intention is that Mr. Bell should commence by discussing the question of the industrial development of the districts of Bhutan adjoining British territory, and that if a satisfactory understanding is arrived at on this point, he should then proceed to open negotiations for a treaty on the lines of the draft enclosed with the Government of India's despatch. The first Article of that draft, which provides that "the external relations of Bhutan shall be controlled by the British Government" is alone considered essential by the Government of India. The others provide that the Durbar shall not without the consent of the British Government either enter into any agreement with a Foreign state, or permit the residence of the Agent of a Foreign state, or part with land

to the representative of a Foreign state. These the Government of India would leave to the discretion of Mr. Bell to secure if the Durbar are willing. It is proposed that Mr. Bell should be authorised to add to the treaty a guarantee against aggression, should this be insisted on. The existing subsidy of Rs. 50,000, is to be increased, if necessary, to Rs. 2 lakhs.

6. The first consideration involved in the Government of India's proposal is the effect that the suggested treaty may have on our relations with China. There is no evidence of the existence of any definite Chinese rights of which the conclusion of a treaty of the kind by the Bhutan Durbar would contravene, while, as already shown, the history of our past relations with Bhutan may be held to establish the right of the Durbar to enter, if they choose, into such a treaty. Their action in doing so would, in fact, amount to no more than extending the right they have given us under the existing treaty of controlling a portion of the foreign concerns of the state. If this view is accepted, Lord Morley agrees with the Government of India that any treaty that may be concluded should be kept secret unless circumstances render it necessary for Bhutan to invoke our aid under its provisions. It may be that no questions involving risk to the status of Bhutan as against China and Tibet may arise. In that case there will be no reason to disturb the existing state of affairs under which the Bhutan Durbar themselves deal with the affairs of that portion of their frontier. Should encroachments necessitate our intervention we shall be in a better position to deal with the question if our action is based on a formal agreement with Bhutan.

7. As regards the situation in Bhutan, it seems possible that, though the Maharaja is evidently desirous of our support against Chinese encroachment, His Highness may prove opposed to the proposed treaty, as diminishing the measure of independence his country enjoys at present. It must be remembered that the change in the form of Government in Bhutan, by which the Tongsa Ponlop has become hereditary ruler, is of quite recent date, and it is not impossible that His Highness may take the occasion of any negotiations to ask for a

dynastic guarantee which would involve an obligation, in certain contingencies, of interference by us in the internal affairs of the state.

8. The conclusion at which Lord Morley is inclined to arrive, after consideration of this difficult question, is that Mr. Bell should be allowed to proceed to Bhutan on an opportunity presenting itself, to discuss with the Maharaja the question both of the industrial development of Bhutan and of the external relations of the state. Should the Maharaja and his advisers evince a disposition to enter into an agreement for placing the whole of his foreign relations in our hands, Mr. Bell should be authorised to affirm our intention of not interfering in the internal administration, promise an increase of the subsidy to two lakhs, and conclude, subject to ratification by the Viceroy, an arrangement somewhat on following lines, substituting a fresh Article 8 for that Article of the Treaty of 1866. The revised Article might run somewhat as follows :

“The British Government undertakes to exercise no interference in the internal administration of Bhutan. On its part, the Bhutanese Government agrees to be guided by the advice of the British Government in regard to its external relations. In the event of disputes or causes of complaint against the Rajas of Sikkim and Cooch Behar, such matters will be referred for arbitration to the British Government which will settle them in such manner as justice may require, and insist upon the observance of its decision by the Rajas named.”

9. Should the Maharaja object to the term stated, it will be the duty of Mr. Bell to report his objections and views fully for consideration and orders, without committing himself to any opinion. Again, if the Maharaja asks for an explicit declaration of the steps which the British Government will take to support him against China, he should be informed that the circumstances of each dispute must be considered when he reports them for the advice of the British Government which will then satisfy him as to the extent and manner of the support which it is prepared to give. Mr. Bell, in course of conversation, may explain to the Maharaja that it will necessarily follow from any obligation which the British Government

may accept to advise him and support him in the conduct of his foreign affairs, that he, himself, does not enter into any agreement with the authorities of Foreign states without our consent, and that he does not, without the same consent, permit agents or representatives of Foreign Powers to reside in Bhutan or part with land to the authorities, representatives or officials of any Foreign States. When this is understood the proposed amendment of Article 8 concluded, it will be convenient to embody the understanding in a Kharita or letter addressed to the Maharaja by the Viceroy.

APPENDIX IV

Letter from the Secretary of State for India to the Government of India, dated 25 June 1909, giving instructions in regard to the proposed treaty with Bhutan.⁴

His Majesty's Government have approved the proposal in your secret despatch in the Foreign Dept., No. 174, dated the 1st October 1908, that negotiations should be opened with the Bhutan Darbar for a treaty, by which the external relations of that state should be placed under British control. But it has been decided that, should the Maharaja prove willing to enter into arrangements of the kind, the terms of the agreement to be proposed to him should take the form of a revision and expansion of Article 8 of the existing Treaty of 1865. The exact wording of the revised Article I would leave to the discretion of Your Excellency's Government, but its substance should be to the following effect :

“The British Government undertake to exercise no interference in the internal administration of Bhutan. On its part the Bhutanese Government agrees to be guided by the advice of the British Government in regard to its external relations. In the event of disputes or causes of complaint against the Rajas of Sikkim and Cooch Behar, such matters will be referred for arbitration to the British Government which will settle them in such manner as justice may require,

4. Foreign, Secret E, May 1910, No. 208 (208-262).

and insist upon the observance of its decision by the Rajas named.”

2. These terms, while involving less of a departure from the existing relations between the Government of India and Bhutan than those of the draft treaty proposed by your Excellency, will secure to His Majesty's Government the necessary status for intervention in the event of Chinese aggression.

3. The question of keeping the treaty secret has since then been further considered. His Majesty's Government have arrived at the conclusion that our position towards China will be weakened if the real nature of our relations with Bhutan is concealed. The time and manner of making the treaty known will be determined after it has been signed. Meanwhile, the Bhutan Darbar should understand that the negotiations and their result are not to be disclosed in any quarter.

4. The conditions that should govern the negotiations are sufficiently explained in paragraphs 8 and 9 of the letter to the Foreign Office of the 22nd April 1909, and need not be recapitulated here.

5. As regards the question of industrial enterprise in the portions of Bhutan adjoining British territory, Mr. Bell should be authorised to assure the Maharaja of our willingness to assist him in developing the resources of his country, and to avoid, as far as possible, the discussion of details in a form likely to delay or prejudice an agreement, in respect of the foreign relations of the state.

APPENDIX V

Treaty between His Excellency the Right Honourable Sir Gilbert John Elliott-Murray-Kynynmound, P.C., G.M.S.I., G.M.I.E., G.C.M.G., Earl of Minto, Viceroy and Governor-General of India in Council, and His Highness Sir Ugyen Wangchuk, K.C.I.E., Maharaja of Bhutan—1910.⁵

Whereas it is desirable to amend Articles IV and VIII of the Treaty concluded at Sinchula on the 11th day of

5. Foreign Department, Secret E, May 1910, Encl. to No 234 (208-62).

November 1965, corresponding with the Bhootea year Shing Lang, 24th day of the 9th month, between the British Government and the Government of Bhutan, the undermentioned amendments are agreed to on the one part by Mr. C.A. Bell, Political Officer in Sikkim, in virtue of full powers to that effect vested in him by the Right Honourable Sir Gilbert John Elliott-Murray-Kynynmound, P.C., G.M.S.I., G.M.I.E., G.C.M.G., Earl of Minto, Viceroy and Governor-General of India in Council, and on the other part by His Highness Sir Ugyen Wangchuk, K.C.I.E., Maharaja of Bhutan.

The following addition has been made to Article IV of the Sinchula Treaty of 1865.

“The British Government has increased the annual allowance to the Government of Bhutan from fifty thousand rupees (Rs. 50,000) to one hundred thousand rupees (Rs. 1,00,000) with effect from the 10th January 1910.”

Article VIII of the Sinchula Treaty of 1865 has been revised and the revised Article runs as follows :

“The British Government undertakes to exercise no interference in the internal administration of Bhutan. On its part, the Bhutanese Government agrees to be guided by the advice of the British Government in regard to its external relations. In the event of disputes with or causes of complaint against the Maharajas of Sikkim and Cooch Behar, such matters will be referred for arbitration to the British Government which will settle them in such manner as justice may require, and insist upon the observance of its decisions by the Maharajas named.”

Done in quadruplicate at Punakha, Bhutan, this eighth day of January in the year of our Lord one thousand nine hundred and ten, corresponding with the Bhutea date, the 27th day of the 11th month of the Earth-Bird (Sa-ja) year.

APPENDIX VI

Indo-Bhutanese Friendship 1949⁶

The Government of India on the one part, and His

6. *Foreign Policy of India, Text of Documents 1947-59* (New Delhi, 1959), pp. 17-19.

Highness the Druk Gyalpo's Government on the other part, equally animated by the desire to regulate in a friendly manner and upon a solid and durable basis the state of affairs caused by the termination of the British Government's authority in India, and to promote and foster the relations of friendship and neighbourliness so necessary for the wellbeing of their peoples, have resolved to conclude the following treaty, and have, for this purpose named their representatives, that is to say, Sir Harishwar Dayal representing the Government of India, who has full powers to agree to the said treaty on behalf of the Government of India, and Deb Zimpon Sonam Tobgye Dorji, Yang-Lop Sonam, Chho-Zim Thondup, Rin-Zim Tandin and Ha Drung Jigmie Palden Dorji, representing the Government of His Highness the Druk Gyalpo, Maharaja of Bhutan, who have full powers to agree to the same on behalf of the Government of Bhutan.

Article I

There shall be perpetual peace and friendship between the Government of India and the Government of Bhutan.

Article II

The Government of India undertakes to exercise no interference in the internal administration of Bhutan. On its part the Government of Bhutan agrees to be guided by the advice of the Government of India in regard to its external relations.

Article III

In place of the compensation granted to the Government of Bhutan under Article 4 of the Treaty of Sinchula and enhanced by the treaty of the eighth day of January 1910 and the temporary subsidy of Rupees one Lakh per annum granted in 1942, the Government of India agrees to make an annual payment of Rupees five Lakhs to the Government of Bhutan. And it is further hereby agreed that the said annual payment shall be made on the tenth day of January every year, the

first payment being made on the tenth day of January 1950. This payment shall continue so long as this treaty remains in force and its terms are duly observed.

Article IV

Further to mark the friendship existing and continuing between the said Governments, the Government of India shall within one year from the date of signature of this treaty, return to the Government of Bhutan about thirty-two square miles of territory in the area known as Dewangiri. The Government of India shall appoint a competent officer or officers to mark out the area so returned to the Government of Bhutan.

Article V

There shall, as heretofore, be free trade and commerce between the territories of the Government of India and of the Government of Bhutan; and the Government of India agrees to grant the Government of Bhutan every facility for the carriage, by land and water, of its produce throughout the territory of the Government of India, including the right to use such forest roads as may be specified by mutual agreement from time to time.

Article VI

The Government of India agrees that the Government of Bhutan shall be free to import with the assistance and approval of the Government of India, from or through India into Bhutan, whatever arms, ammunition, machinery, warlike material or stores may be required or desired for the strength and welfare of Bhutan, and that this arrangement shall hold good for all time as long as the Government of India is satisfied that the intentions of the Government of Bhutan are friendly and that there is no danger to India from such importations. The Government of Bhutan, on the other hand, agrees that there shall be no export of such arms, ammunition, *etc.* across the frontier of Bhutan either by the Government of Bhutan or by private individuals.

Article VII

The Government of India and the Government of Bhutan agree that Bhutanese subjects residing in Indian territories shall have equal justice with Indian subjects, and that Indian subjects residing in Bhutan shall have equal justice with the subjects of the Government of Bhutan.

Article VIII

(1) The Government of India shall, on demand being duly made in writing by the Government of Bhutan, take proceedings in accordance with the provisions of the Indian Extradition Act, 1903 (of which a copy shall be furnished to the Government of Bhutan), for the surrender of all Bhutanese subjects accused of any of the crimes specified in the first schedule of the said Act who may take refuge in Indian territory.

(2) The Government of Bhutan shall, on requisition being duly made by the Government of India, or by any officer authorised by the Government of India in this behalf, surrender any Indian subjects, or subjects of a foreign power, whose extradition may be required in pursuance of any agreement or arrangements made by the Government of India with the said power, accused of any of the crimes, specified in the first schedule of Act XV of 1903, who may take refuge in the territory under the jurisdiction of the Government of Bhutan, and also any Bhutanese subjects who, after committing any of the crimes referred to in Indian territory, shall flee into Bhutan, on such evidence of their guilt being produced as shall satisfy the local court of the district in which the offence may have been committed.

Article IX

Any differences and disputes arising in the application or interpretation of this treaty shall in the first instance be settled by negotiation. If within three months of the start of negotiations no settlement is arrived at, then the matter shall be referred to the arbitration of three arbitrators, who shall be nationals of either India or Bhutan, chosen in the following manner:

- (1) One person nominated by the Government of India ;
- (2) One person nominated by the Government of Bhutan ;
- (3) A judge of the Federal Court, or of a High Court in India, to be chosen by the Government of Bhutan, who shall be Chairman.

The judgment of this Tribunal shall be final and executed without delay by either party.

Article X

This treaty shall continue in force in perpetuity unless terminated or modified by mutual consent.

Done in duplicate at Darjeeling this eighth day of August, one thousand nine hundred and fortynine, corresponding with the Bhutanese date the fifteenth day of the sixth month of the Earth-Bull year.

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