

BRITAIN  
and the  
HIMALAYAN  
KINGDOM  
of  
BHOTAN

A. B. Majumdar

# Britain and the Himalayan Kingdom of Bhotan

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*In loving memory of my younger brother  
who was a constant source  
of my inspiration.*

**AUTHOR**



## P R E F A C E

My association with the State of Cooch Behar and the Rangpur district in the pre-independence years made me familiar with certain places and traditions having link with the Bhotanese. This developed in me the passion to search the true basis of such traditions. Subsequently, my long stay at Jalpaiguri facilitated my search by extensively moving in the Duars. There the Bhotanese had ruled for a considerable number of years, till in 1865, they were forced by the British to vacate the area

Reminiscences of Bhotanese rule are not all vivid now, for they left the Duars more than a century before. Their pattern of government, their land tenure system in the Duars underwent complete change in the British days as was the physical appearance of the Duars revolutionised. The families that had enjoyed the sunshine of favour of the Bhotan government and the families that had unspeakably suffered at the hands of the Bhotanese officers are lost to obscurity. With the passage of time, the Bhotanese frontier check-posts, their stockades and even one or two temples that enjoyed Bhotan's patronage (the like of one such was the temple of Jalpesh, noticeable in a sketch in Martin's Eastern India), have disappeared. Only a few place-names like Bhot-hat, Bhot-patti, Basa-Suba, or an obsolete ferry like Bhutnir-Ghat remain to remind us of Bhotan's presence in the Duars not long ago.

In recent years Bhotan and the Himalayan world came into a prominence that has engaged all attention. This was pre-eminently due to the aggressive de marches of China in Tibet which put the government of India under strains of fulfilling its obligations to the Indo-Bhotanese treaty of 1949. "We are members of the same Himalayan family and should live as friendly neighbours helping each other", said Jawaharlal Nehru in his address at Paro in Bhotan on 23 September, 1958. It was a new interpretation of the Indo Bhotanese relations that Nehru had envisaged. For the British, who first opened the chapter of Indo-Bhotanese relation, treated it calculating their interests in

India Independent India took up the thread of history where the British had left it, but ushered in a new phase of that relation.

This feature inspired scholarly works like Sikkim and Bhutan by V. H. Coelho, The Himalaya Border land and Modern Bhutan by Dr. Ram Rahul, Bhutan—A Kingdom in The Himalayas by Nagendra Sing or Enchanted Frontiers by N. Rustomji. Excellent works on Bhutan were Bhutan by G. N. Mehra, The Dragon Country by Nirmal Dass, The Politics of Bhutan by Leo. Rose and Bhutan by M. Aris. History of Bhutan by B. J. Hasrat printed by the Royal Government of Bhutan is a commendable addition to the list. However, the earlier Indo-Bhotanese relations in detail during the British regime did not receive particular treatment from these authors. Sikkim And Bhutan by J. C. White or The Land of the Thunderbolt by the Earl of Ronaldshay dealt with this earlier phase of the relations but from the standpoint of the British. While the Himalayan Kingdoms—Bhutan, Sikkim and Nepal by P. Karan & W. M. Jenkins is, by nature, sketchy and analysed the more recent events. Alastair Lamb in his Britain And Chinese Central Asia, drawing on a bigger canvas pointed out some of the salient features of Anglo-Bhotanese relations. Other works on the subject are primarily reports of missions sent from time to time to Tibet and Bhotan by the British Government, and are obviously one-sided accounts

The first attempt to knit together the facts in these accounts and in other official papers was made by Dr. Santiswarup Gupta in his dissertation,—British Relations with Bhutan (1942). A manuscript copy of the work is to be found in the library of the National Archives of India. Gupta's work, although a pioneer work, had one major limitation; anti-British feelings that had swayed the Indian mind round-about the year 1942, also influenced this work and stigmatized every British step towards Bhotan as imperialistic. It may be argued that this attitude of Dr. Gupta also made an unintentional reflection upon the relation of Bhotan with the present Government of India who succeeded the British

Anglo-Bhotanese relations formed a much later chapter in the history of British rule in India; but it did not evoke so much

interest, as did the other chapters. This was due to a general lack of understanding about the land and the people of North Bengal. British relations with Bhotan, however, brought to the surface the history of this region and made an impact upon the socio-economic structure that also requires a serious study. Recently, a few scholars under the auspices of the North Bengal University are engaged in research in these different aspects of the history of North Bengal.

In the late sixteenth, as well as, in the seventeenth centuries Western travellers and Jesuit missionaries in India became interested in Tibet. They spoke at length about Indo-Tibetan trade, about the extent of Tibet, its people and its government. Tibet, however, was sometimes referred to as Bhotan. There were reasons for this. The Tibetans call themselves Bod, which in Sanskrit is Bhota. Because of the linguistic, religious, and to some extent ethnological similarities, the peoples living on the southern slopes of the Himalayas were also known as Bhota; and the whole tract from Tibet to the upper limits of Bengal and Assam was known as Bhotan. "This ān affix is just a sign of the plural which comes from the old Indo-Aryan or Sanskrit genitive plural ānām; Sanskrit Bhotānām = (the land of the Tibetans) gives Bhotān (just as we have the same ān affix in Gondowān, Rajputān, Irān (earlier Erān = Aryānām)."\*

Actually, the whole tract consisted of the three Himalayan kingdoms of our times,—Tibet, Sikkim and Bhutan. British relations with the last-mentioned kingdom form the subject of the present work. The name 'Bhotan' has been used in it, although 'Bhutan' is a more familiar name. The English came to know Tibet as Tibet only after the mission of George Bogle to the Trashi Lama at Shigatze in 1774. Within a few years, they understood Sikkim had a very close relation with Tibet, but was not a part of it. The remaining kingdom, however, with which the English had first come into contact, was called by them after its regional name, Bhotan. Ralph Fitch, who had gone to Cooch Behar in 1585-86, learnt the hilly country on the north of Cooch Behar was "Bottanter" (Bhotanta ? ). Even

\* Professor Suniti Kumar Chatterjee gave this explanation in his letter to the author.



to-day, the people living at the foot of the hills know that country as Bhotan.

In the Turko-Afghan period of Indian history, except for the ill-fated expedition of Bakhtiar Khalji to Tibet, the eastern Himalaya had no particular importance in history. During the Mughal days, however, the Mughal army fought against the Kochas and the Ahoms, and extended the Mughal frontier to the north and north-east of Bengal; Bhotan, however, found no place in Mughal history barring a few references made to her by Mirza Nathan and Sihab-uddin Talish.

If the year 1765 marked the real beginning of the colonial period in Indian history, the importance of the eastern Himalaya also might be said to have begun at about that time. Nepal went under the domination of the Gorkhas and endeavoured to expand into the plains along the frontier of the East India Company. The Koch Kingdom in the north and the Ahom in the north-east of Bengal were already on the decline. Bhotan got hold of the situation and gradually established herself on the upper fringes of Cooch Behar and Assam. Placed between Nepal in her west, and Bhotan in her east, Sikkim looked around for her security. The English were not unaware of these developments. But their major interest was trade with Tibet across the eastern Himalaya. Only in the first quarter of the nineteenth century, they became fully conscious of the realities of their eastern Himalayan frontier. Then a new era of British relations with the eastern Himalayan kingdoms began. The present dissertation attempts to deal with the nature and evolution of the relations of the British with one of them,—Bhotan, during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Both published and unpublished records preserved in the repositories of the Government of India and the Government of West Bengal have been utilised in preparing the work. To the authorities of the National Archives of India, and the State Archives of West Bengal, my thanks are due. As to the collection of the secondary source materials, I gratefully remember the facilities I received from the Librarian and Staff

of the National Library, the West Bengal Central Secretariat Library, the Asiatic Society, the then Cooch Behar State Library, the Libraries of the Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner, Jalpaiguri and the Viswa-Bharati Central Library, Santiniketan.

I am particularly obliged to Professor P. C. Gupta for his guidance and valuable criticisms. Also I gratefully remember Professor N. K. Sinha, Sri S. Roy, formerly the Deputy Director of the National Archives of India and Professor S. P. Sen who encouraged me by their kind suggestions; I am sorry they are no longer with me to see this work completed. My thanks are due to Professor Ram Rahu! and Professor A. C. Bose of Jammu University for their keen interest in this work published. Finally I owe gratitude to Bharati Bhawan, Printer and Publisher of repute in the country for undertaking to bring this work before the public. I leave to my readers to judge its worth. Also I humbly ask for my reader's indulgence in printing errors that might have crept in in spite of all attention and care.

North Bengal University,  
Raja Rammohunpur, Darjeeling.  
3 March, 1984

A. B. M.



## CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
1. Bhotan – The Background ..	1-22
2. The East India Company's interest in the northern parts of Bengal and its involvement in the Affairs of Cooch Behar, Bhotan and Baikunthpur (1765-'74) ..	23-45
3. Aftermath of Peace (1774-'93) ..	46-64
4. Examination of the Pro-Bhotan Policy (1793-1838) ..	65-95
5. The Limitations of a Forward Policy (1839-1863) ..	96-131
6. War with Bhotan and After (1864-1899) ..	132-182
7. Epilogue ..	183-193
Appendices ..	195-206
Bibliography ..	207-212
Index ..	213-217
Maps ..	219-223





## CHAPTER I

### Bhotan—The Background

Bhotan is a country protected in the arms of the Himalaya between 26·41 and 28·7 parallels North latitude, and 88·54 and 91·54 longitude East. It is bounded on the north by the Jung and the Avi Districts of South Tibet; on the east by Towang in Arunachal Pradesh; on the south, by the plain country known as Duars in both Bengal and Assam; and on the west by the Phari district of Tibet, by Sikkim, and the district of Darjeeling in West Bengal. Previous to the occupation of the Duars by the British the area of Bhotan was approximately 20,000 square miles.<sup>1</sup>

Ethnology places its people in the Tibeto Burman family; linguistically, they belong to the Tibeto-Himalayan branch.<sup>2</sup> The common Sanskrit name for the Tibetans and their allied tribes is Bhota, and this is based on the national name of the Tibetans themselves, namely Bod. The form Bhotan, however, is generally looked upon as being from Bhotānta, i.e., the end of Bhota. Actually, from the standpoint of geography, the Bhotanese are known in Tibetan as 'Lhopa' signifying 'the People of the South'. The Bhotanese themselves consider their country an appendage of Bhot or Tibet.<sup>3</sup>

The natural divisions of Bhotan are those provided by the valleys of the mountains, which are noted for the extremely rugged and precipitous nature of their slopes. The land is remarkable for its climatic variations. The lower valleys in the outer hill ranges are hot, saturated with moisture and have heavy rainfall. The central region of Bhotan, on the contrary, with an elevation of 3500 ft. to 10,000 ft. above sea-level has a cold, and bracing climate. The rainfall is between 40" and 60" inches. The northern region with an elevation upto 24,000 ft. presents either rugged mountains or snowy ranges that make the tract bleak and inclement.

1. *Imperial Gazetteer of India*, Vol. 8, p. 157

2. Grierson, G. A.—*Linguistic Survey of India*, Vol. I, pp. 54-55

3. Hodgson, B. H.—*J. A. S. B.* July, 1849, p. 703

The influence of geography is pronounced in other aspects too. "Bhootan presents to the view", wrote Captain Samuel Turner, "nothing but the most mis-shapen irregularities; mountains covered with eternal verdure and rich with abundant forests of large and lofty trees. Almost every favourable aspect of them coated with smallest quantity of soil is cleared and adapted to cultivation being shelved into horizontal beds; not a slope or narrow strip of land between the ridges lies unimproved. There is scarcely a mountain whose base is not washed by some rapid torrent, and many of the loftiest bear populous villages amidst orchards and other plantations on their summits and on their sides. It combines in its extent the most extravagant traits of rude Nature and laborious art".<sup>4</sup>

The political image of Bhotan developed through a slow evolutionary process. Her early history, deeply laid in the mist of legends, presented her as Lho-Mon Tsenden Jong or South Sandalwood Country that was peopled by different clans, worshipping clan-gods and contained in "one valley" principalities. Afterwards Tibetan Buddhist influence that king Srong-Sang-Gampo of Tibet had ushered into Bhotan in the middle of the seventh century A. D. gained momentum by the visit of Guru Padmasambhava in the middle of the next century. The history of the following centuries saw the spread of Lamaism in Bhotan from Tibet and the coming of different sects into this land especially after the Gelukpas had got ascendancy in Tibet with the fall of the Mongol overlords in the fourteenth century.

Of all these sects in Bhotan the most successful was the Drukpa that answered to the religious needs and beliefs of the people of Bhotan, and was established in course of time as the most accepted form of religion of the land. What the Drukpa did for the religion of Bhotan, Ngawang Namgyal (1593-1651) the Prince-Abbot of the Drukpa sect did for the development of Bhotan's political entity. He came to Bhotan in 1616 A.D. as a refugee from Ralung in Tibet and started the process of political unification of his adopted country that made the emergence of the Bhotanese state possible. He finally overcame

4. Turner—*An Account of an Embassy to the Court of the Teshoo Lama in Tibet*, p. 216

internal opposition to his growing eminence from some of the Buddhist sects long since established in Bhotan. He built up the defence of the land by setting up new Dzongs or forts and rennovating the old ones. He organised local resistance that led to the defeat of the invading troops of Tibet at least on four occasions within his lifetime. By his hands Bhotan was transformed into a strongly defended ecclesiastical state and was given the Tsa-Yig or the code of conduct to be followed in spiritual, administrative and social matters.

The presence of Indian element in the ancient political fabric of Bhotan, although preserved in Bhotanese legends, is difficult to be straightway proved or disproved. It is said the "Tibetan troops invaded the country at the end of the ninth century A. D., drove out the Indian princes and subjects and then settled down in occupation of the land."<sup>5</sup> This reference brought us to the historical period of Bhotan; but so far as the Indian element was concerned we might discount it as the product of popular imagination.<sup>5A</sup>

According to the family history of the kings of Darrang in Assam the eldest prince Nara Singha of Cooch Behar being deprived of the throne set out from the country; at last he reached Bhotan where he became the Dharma Raja.<sup>6</sup> Had it been so, the event must have taken place at about 1554 A. D. when his younger brother Nara Narayan sat on the throne of Cooch Behar. The statement of the family history of the Darrang Kings, however, has not been confirmed by any other sources; the event might not have been impossible though.<sup>7</sup>

During the rise and expansion of the Kingdom of Cooch Behar during the first half of the sixteenth century in the northern part of Bengal and in the upper valley of the Brahmaputra her frontier in the north had touched lower Tibet.<sup>8</sup> Evidently, the historian of the early Mughal period wanted to mean Bhotan which is to the south of Tibet. Affinity of religion and culture between the Tibetans and the people living in the hills in the

5. Yust. W—Encyclopaedia Britannica. Vol. 3, p. 497

5A. Aris, M—Bhutan, p. 57

6. Goswami H. C. Darrang Rajvamsabali, p. 34

7. Gait E. A.—op. cit. p. 49

8. Abul Fazl—Akbarname. Vol. 3, p. 1067



south was so marked that Bhotan was hardly thought to have a separate entity. Hence the confusion.

The Bhotanese, it was stated by Alexander Cosma De Koros, adopted in their manners and customs much from the Indians.<sup>9</sup> This might have been a result of her early contact with the Khen rulers in the plains below and at a later period, with the Koch rulers of Cooch Behar which had gone into the mainstream of Indian culture and left a still deeper impression upon Bhotan. The use of the Koch Raj Sak or the era of the Cooch Behar Kings (calculated from the year 1510 A. D.) by Bhotan in her Bengali letters, circulation of Cooch Behar's Narayani coins in Bhotan testified to this impact. Moreover, Shihabuddin Talish in his narrative of the exploits of Mir Jumla in Assam, recorded that the people of Bhotan "spoke a dialect allied to that of the Kochas".<sup>10</sup>

Considering all this it might be suggested that Cooch Behar's influence had extended to the hills of Bhotan in the palmy days of the Koch Power, no doubt, but that a Prince of Cooch Behar was installed as the Dharma Raja there, cannot be accepted in the absence of more definite evidence. Rajopakhyan or the story of Kings (of Cooch Behar)<sup>11</sup> does not mention it, save only stating that Prince Nara Singha had abdicated the throne in fulfilment of a promise made to the wife of Prince Nara Narayan.<sup>12</sup>

Ralph Fitch who had visited Cooch Behar during his travels in Bengal (1585-86) spoke of "King Darmain" of "Bottanter", a country that was four days march from Cooch Behar.<sup>13</sup> Evidently, the traveller was referring to Bhotan and her Dharma Raja; but Ralph Fitch was not aware of so remarkable an episode in the life of Nara Singha in Bhotan although Nara Narayan was reigning in Cooch Behar at that time.

The above reference made by Ralph Fitch created a problem. The epithet 'Dharma Raja' as found in British records and

9. Koros, A. C.—Geographical Notice of Tibet J. A. S. B., April 1832, p. 125

10. Gait, E. A., *op. cit.* p. 49

11. Ghosh, J. Rajopakhyan (in Bengali) translated by Rev. Robinson

12. Choudhuri, H. N., Cooch Behar State and Its Land Revenue

13. Foster, W.—Ralph Fitch—1583-91 (Early travels in India), p. 27.

enshrined in the memory of the people of Bhotan was the attribute of the celebrated Ngawang Namgyal and his subsequent incarnations. Therefore, the existence of a Dharma Raja before 1616 A. D., his seat of power and his exact relation with the Koch royal family demand full investigations. Not only that; also Bhotan's earlier relations with the Khen people and their Kingdom of Kamtapur which was immediate precursor of the Kingdom of Cooch Behar in the same geographical region bounded by the river Karotoya in the west and the Brahmaputra in the east deserve attention. Bhotanese literary evidence indicated that a Khen King of Kamtapur waited upon the saint Padma—Gling-Pa during his stay with the ruler of Dong-Kha in Bhotan at about 1507 A. D.<sup>14</sup> Even it might not be impossible to trace this relationship between Bhotan and the country lying immediately below the hills from the thirteenth century or earlier.

To return to the question of Cooch Behar's sway over Bhotan; notice should be taken of the general causes that worked for the decline of the Koch Power from the early seventeenth century. They also accounted for the end of Cooch Behar's influence in the hills. Partition of the kingdom of Cooch Behar towards the end of the sixteenth century between the two branches of the ruling family, prolonged fratricidal wars between the two Koch royal lines, appearance of the imperialist Mughals and the Ahoms in the scene to fish in the troubled water obliged Cooch Behar to turn her back towards Bhotan. Between 1621 and 1625 Bhotan appeared to have broken off allegiance and ceased to pay tribute to Cooch Behar<sup>15</sup>. The coming of Ngawang Namgyal as a refugee to Bhotan at this time strangely coincided with the plight of Cooch Behar.

Here a reference might be made to a bit hasty conclusion drawn from unverified information of the British agents like Krishna Kanta Bose in the early nineteenth century or Chiboo Lama in the late nineteenth century. According to them Bhotan, upto the seventeenth century, peopled by the "Tehpu"

14. Aris, M.—op. cit., pp. 104-5

15. Choudhuri, H. N.—op. cit., p. 236

or Koch was under Cooch Behar<sup>16</sup>. Recently attempts were made to explain away the significance of the word 'Tehpu' by taking it as the contracted form of Thed-pa (The-pa) meaning people of the Thed valley, that is, Punakha<sup>17</sup>. Nevertheless the existence of the Koch element among the people of Bhotan, particularly in the central region of the country can not be wholly overlooked. The word 'Tho-pa' signifying the offsprings of the Bhotanese from Koch women is an illustration to the point<sup>18</sup>. Not all these Koch women were forcibly taken to the hills from the plains below. They might have been also the progenies of the Kho-chhe people who were one of the five clans knit together during the later part of the eighth century into the Bumthang political unit. Also, in this connection we might cite the experience of Isfandiyar Beg, the Mughal captain left by Mir Jumla to garrison Cooch Behar Capital in 1662. The Mughal Officer while searching for the run-away king of Cooch Behar came to the foot of the hills and captured a Bhotanese. Isfandiyar Beg discovered that the captive spoke a dialect similar to the dialect of the Koch people in the plains<sup>19</sup>. This affinity of dialects might suggest an ethnic affinity between the group of people living in the plains and that living in the lower hills of Bhotan at that time which made an interesting study for the social and cultural anthropologists. From the foregoing we reach at a tentative conclusion that during the period of the expansion of the Koch Power between 1522 and 1588 the isolated principalities in lower Bhotan atleast were brought within the political range of Cooch Behar; but the exact nature of Cooch Behar's political thrust upon that country remains uncertain till now.

However, from the seventeenth century decline of the Koch Power had started, and Bhotan also within the first half of that century achieved her own political stature under the leadership of her Dharma Raja. When Isfandiyar Beg communicated his request to the Dharma Raja to deliver up into his hands the

16. Political Missions to Bootan., pp. 108, 187

17. Aris, M.—op. cit., p. 58

18. Hasrat, B. J.—History of Bhutan, p. 17

19. Blochmann, H.—Koch Behar And Assam. J. A. S. B., 1872, vol. XLI, Part I, pp. 67-68

fugitive Koch King Pran Narayan, the Dharma Raja was in no mood to comply with that request<sup>20</sup>. His refusal was not in deference to any wishes of the fugitive king; it was, perhaps because of the Dharma Raja's dislike to seeing the imperialist Mughals becoming established on the southern frontier of Bhotan. For, a weak Cooch Behar, made weaker by the blow of the Mugals and by dissensions within the royal family presented an ideal field for Bhotan to expand herself in the plains. Moreover, within fifteen years of the death of king Pran Narayan in 1660 Cooch Behar began to feel the weight of Bhotan, her northern neighbour.

Bhotan, as she emerged in the seventeenth century was the life-work and legacy of Ngawang Namgyal. The saint-architect of new Bhotan had codified regulations for the governance of the state, the church and the people, and evolved a double-system of government in which the clergy and the laity were each assigned their role. In 1651 Ngawang Namgyal entered into retreat and meditation never to be seen in the public again. The system of government introduced by him ran a full course of more than two hundred and fifty years from 1651 till it was rejected in 1907. It will be seen that during these two centuries and a half for which the system was in operation unforeseen trends appeared in the body-politic of Bhotan and created dangerous fissures that eventually engulfed the system itself.

The administrative units of Bhotan were six in number, Paro, Thimphu, Taga (Daga), Wangdiphodrang, Puna and Tongsa, each under a governor. While the governors of Paro and Tongsa were known as Penlops those of the remaining divisions were Dzongpons. The government of the Country was a combination of the clergy and the laity, represented respectively by the Dharma Raja and the Dev Raja known in Bhotanese parlance as the Shabdrung Rimpochhe<sup>21</sup> and the Desi. The Dharma Raja held the most exalted position in the state, and was its spiritual chief; and the Dev Raja, the temporal chief, was supposed to have been appointed by the Dharma

20. Blochmann, H.—op. cit.

21. Ngawang Namgyal was reckoned as the first Shabdrung and was supposed to have delegated his secular authority to the Desi.

Raja and was to govern as his vice-regent.

The Dharma Raja succeeded as the incarnation of the Buddha. On the death of the Dharma Raja a year or two elapsed; and then the incarnation appeared in a child who established his identity by recognising the rosary, books and other articles of the deceased Dharma Raja. The procedure was adopted under the influence of the Tibetan way of finding the successors of the grand lamas. The Dharma Raja was assisted by the Je Khempo, the head-abbot and the official head of the monastic establishment. He was selected by the Drat-Shang or the Monk-Body for a period of three years. Next to the Je Khempo were four monastic officials known as Lopons holding charge of the different branches of Buddhistic study and worship.<sup>22</sup>

Both the Dharma and the Dev Rajas together with the head abbot, gelongs (monks), and the principal officers of the government resided for six months at Tashi-Chho-Dzong which was the head-quarters of the Thimphu Dzongpon. He was, in lieu of paying any revenue to the state, required to support the august body of men and meet the expenses of all local religious festivals. Similarly, the Punakha Dzongpon hosted the formidable guests for the remaining six months of the year.

Of all the provincial governors, however, the two Penlops of Paro and Tongsa enjoyed the most enviable position in the state. They together held almost three-fourths of the whole country and its population. The Penlop of Paro paid a nominal rent of 3500 Nagultrums annually to the state, ruled his province, guarded the trade-routes between Bhotan and Tibet. The Penlop of Tongsa paid 4000 Ngultrums, the Dzongpon of Wangdi-phodrang 1000 Ngultrums, and that of Taga (Daga), 3000. Each of these governors, again, was later on called upon to administer the 'Duars', the lands immediately below the hills and continuous to each one's jurisdiction.

The laws of the land were more or less customary laws. The accused was tried by the governor in whose jurisdiction violation of law might have been made. Murder, robbery, offence against the state or attempt upon the life of the Dev Raja or a Penlop

22. Hasrat, J. B.—op. cit, pp. 154-55

brought capital punishment and all properties of the offender were confiscated. Otherwise fine or blood-money was the common mode of punishment for social offences. A priest violating his code of conduct was stripped of his rank and banished from the monastery. However, there existed no regulations to govern the relation between the central and the provincial governments. The government of Bhotan was not a centralised despotism; rather it was, as will be seen, a despotism exercised by all officers ranging from the mighty Penlops and the Dzungpons down to the petty local officers—within their respective spheres.

The Dev Raja was, no doubt, the pivot of this secular administration, but he was a weak pivot. He could reign only for three years according to custom, but even then that custom held good so long as the Dev Raja could resist the aspirations of other powerful men in the country. To keep watch upon their movements or to coerce them into submission was out of question. For he possessed neither sufficient men nor sufficient money to strengthen his own hands. Bogle, the envoy of Warren Hastings to Bhotan found, in addition to these, two other great handicaps of the Dev Raja, namely, the nature of the country and the independent spirit of the people.<sup>23</sup> The revenue which the Dev Raja received was spent on religious ceremonies and in feeding the dependents of the government. Moreover, on his retirement the Dev Raja took away almost all wealth he had amassed. Thus the outgoing Dev Raja left an exhausted treasury for his successor and put him in an embarrassing position. The wisest attitude of the new incumbent in such circumstances was to remain contented with such homage as the Penlops and the Dzungpons paid to him. His zeal to govern was compromised with desire for his security. Unless he could enlist the support of one or more of the powerful nobles of the state, he must resign his place or risk a civil war. The traditional rivalry between the Penlops of Paro and Tongsa further complicated the situation. The Dev Raja usually became a pawn in the almost permanent struggle for power between them. Again, by a strange irony of fate the

23. Markham, C.—Narratives of the Mission of George Bogle to Tibet etc. p. 36

Dzongpons and the Penlops, who for their own ambition and craze for power lowered the sanctity of the de jure sovereign of the state, became sometime themselves victims of political indiscipline which was their own creation. The law of the survival of the fittest held sway over the political life of Bhotan. The Dzongpons and Penlops held ground till such time they themselves were ousted.

The Dev Raja was raised to his office through a complex process. When a new Dev Raja was to be installed the provincial governors went to the chief Lama to ascertain from the deity who should be the temporal overlord of the realm. The Chief Lama played his part, offered prayer in presence of these formidable persons and ascertained from the deity the name of the suitable person for the office. If all agreed with the name affairs went smooth; if not, civil war followed and the sword became the ultimate arbiter.

For the governance of the country the Dev Raja was provided with a council known as Shun-Lhen-Tshok. This council consisted of Lama Zimpon (confidential Secretary of the Shabdrung), Shung Droenyer (his deputy), Dev Zimpon (confidential Secretary of the Raja), the Thimphu Dzongpon, Kalyon (senior minister), and the Penlops of Paro and Tongsa. Besides, the Dzongpons of Daga and Wangdiphodrang were occasionally invited.

This composition of the council of the Dev Raja was itself a pointer to the truth that the Dev Raja should either meekly submit to what his most formidable councillors dictated, or should, like a daring pilot in extremity, take every risk upon himself and steer the country clear of the dangers from personal ambition. History proved that the Dev Raja could hardly take to the second alternative. The administrative system introduced by the first Shabdrung thus produced results quite different from what its author had expected. Of the fifty-four Dev Rajas who sat on the Golden Throne between 1651 and 1907 only fifteen maintained their position either for less than a year or for a maximum period of one year, and twenty four of them, for a period of two to four years. Again, twenty-two Dev Rajas were either assassinated, dismissed or made to resign. Only fifteen in the long list of the Dev Rajas escaped the assassin's dagger and

enjoyed comparatively a longer period of reign. This was possible not by virtue of their own merit but because the key persons of the country had rather accepted them in that position than see anyone from among them stretching hands for the royal sceptre.

This peculiar political set-up of Bhotan retarded all progress. While the common people remained in awe-stricken reverence for their rulers, and suffered from their rapacity and whims, those rulers of Bhotan never realised that they had some duties towards the country and the people. The administrative system was not based upon any scientific principle. It was corrupt and oppressive. "The incentive to peculative industry exists in every grade", wrote Captain R. B. Pemberton. "The unfortunate cultivator is the victim of a system which not only affords no protection to the weak against the injustice of the powerful but systematically deprives industry of the rewards of its labour."<sup>24</sup> Moreover, owing to the existence of the system of escheat, each officer tried to enrich himself at the cost of the deceased within his jurisdiction. Nothing could be better planned to strike at the root of national welfare. Even the humblest of the people in Bhotan bore the marks of deprivation.

The revenue of such a country must necessarily be very lean. "The total amount of revenue drawn from every source", Captain Pemberton reported, "can hardly be estimated at two lakh of rupees per annum". A correct valuation, however, was not possible, as public records were not maintained and as the revenues were almost always paid in kind. Besides, the central government could seldom ask for proper accounts of revenue from the governors of the country, and so could seldom get a true picture of the total revenues.

The relation of such a country with her neighbours made an interesting study, the key-note of which was the extra-territorial ambition of the former.

The Bhotanese were afraid of their inclement north, though Lhasa was the sacred city of the Himalayan World. Yet, how far Lhasa influenced and moulded the secular life of Bhotan was doubtful. Captain Pemberton remarked that three lamas from

24. Pemberton, R. B.—*Report on Bootan*, p. 114



Bhotan “were said to be constantly in attendance in Lassa”.<sup>25</sup> The Tashi Lama also in his letter to Warren Hastings claimed the Dev Raja as dependent on the Dalai Lama of Tibet.<sup>26</sup> The dependence of the Dev Raja upon Tibet, however, was only of a religious nature. Even in their commercial interests Tibetan traders would not come down into Bhotan beyond the limit of Phari nor in the long annals of chronic misgovernment within Bhotan, did Lhasa intervene to cure the evils of anarchy. Still rarer was the case of Chinese interference in Bhotan. It was true that Bhotan feared China, but her feelings were not the result of her servitude. “The Chinese authorities at Lhasa appear to exercise no direct control in the government of the country”, wrote Captain Pemberton. In view of the perpetual tussle for power and unceasing political intrigues in Bhotan, the possibility of Chinese interference was always there; but it was equally true that the nobles of Bhotan dared not to invite the Chinese to intervene in their affairs. “All the parties however swayed by the love of power entertain a very salutary apprehension of any direct interference in their internal quarrels by the Chinese or Tibetan officers; and would rather incur the inconvenience of their most unsettled form of government than endeavour to escape from them by appeal to a Power which they both dislike and dread”.<sup>27</sup> Thus, the relations of Bhotan with Tibet or China were not very deeply rooted. The only relation, materially significant, was that maintained by the Bhotanese caravans of trade moving upto the border of Phari. Even that was limited by the season in the mountains.

To her east and west, the mountain heights and ridges had no allurement for the people of Bhotan. The people living on those two sides might have some relations with the Bhotanese as any two border peoples usually would have; but nothing more. To her south, however, things stood different. There her eyes followed the impetuous streams that, freed from the native gorges, took a meandering course through large tracts of the Sal forest, heavy grass and reed jungles, and then expanded into the plains below. There the country and its people, unlike her

25. *Ibid*—p. 162

26. Markham, C.—*op. cit.* p. 1

27. Pemberton, R. B.—*op. cit.* p. 163

own, were prosperous. As a result of this, men from Bhotan saddled their sturdy ponies, and set forth for the south. They took whatever merchandise they could procure from their own country as well as from the Tibetans at Phari. The setting-in of the rains, however, was a warning to them; for then the mountain streams would be swollen and would make a home-ward journey extremely difficult. The Bhotanese, however, would go back from the plains with a rich merchandise, although its bulk was not great. There was always, in front of them, an uphill task that discouraged a heavy load. Yet, such an enterprise must have been worth the pains taken by the Bhotanese traders, and so, people living in the plains became familiar with regular visits of the Bhotanese. We leave here the volume of trade and the articles purchased or sold by the Bhotanese merchants. We will confine ourselves to the impact of the commercial intercourse between them and the people in the plains.

Ralph Fitch, whose object in going to Cooch Behar "was probably to make enquiries into the trade with China by way of Tibet"<sup>28</sup> did not clearly indicate that Bengal enjoyed a brisk trade with Bhotan. He, of course, noticed "cachhegate" (Chchakhata) as an important trading centre in the northern part of Cooch Behar;<sup>29</sup> but his reference to the merchants from China and Central Asia trading in Bhotan had no connection with it. In fact, he confused Bhotan with Tibet where those merchants were engaged in trade. A similar confusion was also made by Tavernier<sup>30</sup>, and subsequently by Careri who came to India in 1695.<sup>31</sup> The trade activities of the merchants of Bhotan proper were confined to north Bengal and Assam. The volume of trade was also not very large. For, a common man in Bhotan had neither the resources, nor the permission for engaging in trade. Captain Samuel Turner noticed that the leading personalities, both in Tibet and Bhotan, were chief traders. They had "the right of commanding the labour of the people whom the laws compel to bear burdens. Hence, emulation is suppressed and trade monopolised by the sovereign and by a few other persons

28. Foster, W.—op. cit. p. 24, Foot-note.

29. *Ibid.*

30. Tavernier, J. B.—*Travels in India* (Translated by Ball. V) Vol. 2 pp. 258-72

31. Sen, S. N.—*Indian Travels of Thevenot and Careri*, p. 234

in the first offices under Government".<sup>32</sup> Krishna Kanta Bose also referred to the additional income of the Dharma and Dev Rajas through trade.<sup>33</sup> These trade activities of the Bhotanese traders exclusively served the interests of the individuals, who had fitted out the caravans. Moreover, those entrepreneurs, who had no cause to love one another, must have kept each other in absolute ignorance of their own proceeds.

But the people in the plains got a quite different impression about the Bhotanese. For gradually the Bhotanese betrayed intentions other than trade; from trade, they jumped at territory. Therein originated Bhotan's ambition for expansion. The weakness of her southern neighbours became her opportunity. It is difficult to give a definite date when Bhotan's efforts for extra-territories first began. It is also not known if the central authorities of Bhotan were behind the scheme. The ambition might have originated in the Penlops of Paro and Tongsa, whose southern frontiers, from west to east, marched along Baikunthapur, Cooch Behar and Assam.

The method adopted by the Bhotanese was also their own. While they continued to send peaceful traders, Bhotanese marauders also roved in quest of plunder. We find such a reference in Purani Asama Buranji. In 1644, Allah Yar Khan, the Mughal officer in Kamrup, complained of the inroads of the Bhotanese to the Bara Barua, the Ahom officer. But Bara Barua frankly confessed his inability to control their movements in the wilds of Darrang.<sup>34</sup> In fact, the Bhotanese alone could use the ground that began from the foot of their hills and stretched down for a few miles. It was a large tract, intersected by numerous streams, subject to heavy rainfall, was hot and saturated with moisture; semi-tropical vegetation and virgin forest dominated that region. Grassy jungles began where the forest ended, and signs of human habitation appeared here and there. These lands had a special appellation to distinguish them from others in the plains. They were known in local parlance as Duars, which were veritably doors, connecting the level with the passes of the Bhotan hills.

32. Turner, S —op. cit. p. 370

33. *Political Missions to Bootan*—pp. 190-91

34. Bhattacharyya, S. N.—*Mughal North East Frontier*, p. 192

The wilderness and other difficulties of the terrain, however, did not discourage the Bhotanese, for they bore resemblance to their own native wilds. Therefore, those Duars afforded little protection to the north-eastern province of the Mughals, or to the north-western province of the Ahoms. But whereas the Mughal officer of Kamrup had complained against the Bhotanese plunderers, who entered into his province from the northern wilds of Darrang, little was heard of any such depredation on the northern parts of Kamrup and Rangamati, where too the same land-features prevailed. The possible explanation is that perhaps the Bhotanese considered it unwise to come to clash with the Mughal authorities there; the Mughal authorities also might have permitted the Bhotanese upon the lands intervening between their hills and the line of actual Mughal control. This line of actual control of the Mughals did not extend very far into the inaccessible forests that stretched for miles upto the hills. For, "the Mughals remained in Kamrup like an army of occupation, the basis of their rule being essentially military, collecting revenue, suppressing local insurrections and conducting Kheda operations"<sup>35</sup>; with regard to Rangamati, there was no variation.

When towards the end of the seventeenth century, the Mughals were obliged to vacate Kamrup in favour of the Ahoms, the latter also did not take any effective measures to beat back the Bhotanese to their native recesses. The Bhotanese, it was true, did not have to wage any battle to snatch from the Ahoms the Duars bordering on Kamrup or Darrang; on the contrary, the Ahoms tolerated the Bhotanese in the Duars, lest they should be offended by any punitive steps taken against them. For, there was always the danger of inviting their fury, while it was a very irksome job to pursue them in their mountain fastnesses. In the first quarter of the seventeenth century, even the Mughals, on one occasion, had to pacify rather than chastise the Bhotanese, who were alleged to have been scheming a raid on the Mughal north-east frontier.<sup>36</sup>

The attitude of toleration, on the part of the Ahoms, was forced upon them in the second quarter of the eighteenth

35. *Ibid.* p. 165.

36. Nathan, Mirza—*Baharistan Ghavbi* (Ed. Bhuyan S. K.) Vol. 2, p. 677

century; the Bhotanese took advantage of the declining state of the Ahoms at that time.<sup>37</sup> The Ahom Government entered into a compromise with them, and ceded the Duars to the Dharma Raja of Bhotan "to enable him to carry on the services of his deities" in exchange for some annual tribute.<sup>38</sup> So long as that annual tribute was paid, the Duars bordering upon the north of Kamrup were to remain in the hands of the Bhotanese; and those on the north of Darrang were to be administered jointly, the Ahoms holding them from 15 July to 15 November, and the Bhotanese for the remaining months of the year. In this way, Bhotan's ambition for plain-territories was gradually realised, and she spread herself in Assam, from west to east, from the Manas to the Deoshan rivers, over an area measuring roughly 990 square miles.<sup>39</sup> The Duars included therein were seven in number, five in Kamrup, viz., Bijni, Chapa Khamar, Chapa Guri, Banska, Gaukella (Gharkola); and two in Darrang, viz., Kalling and Buri Guma.

The story of the expansion of Bhotan in the north of Bengal was slightly different from the above narrative. There were as many as eleven Duars in this part, stretching from the river Manas in the east to the river Tista in the west. The Duars were subdivided into eastern and western, having the river Sankos as a boundary between them. The eastern Duars were sixty miles long between the Manas and Sankos rivers; the western, between the Sankos and the Tista were eighty miles. Each, however, had an average breadth of twentyfive miles.<sup>40</sup>

The Mughal invasion in the first quarter of the seventeenth century had broken up the eastern part of the Koch Kingdom. In 1581, it had been conferred upon Raghu, the son of Chila Rai and nephew of King Nara Narayan of Cooch Behar. But the Mughals could not enjoy the whole of that eastern half of the Koch Kingdom; they went halves with the Ahoms, who contested with the Mughals and occupied the territory upto the river

37. Gait, E. A.—op. cit. p. 307

38. *For. Pol. Con.*—14 June, 1841 (84)

39. *For. Pol. Con.*—26 July, 1841 (81)

*Political Missions to Bhotan*, p. 23

40. *Selections from the Calcutta Review*, Vol. XLVIII, Jan, 1869 to April, 1870, pp. 39-40

Manas. While two Narayan princes of King Raghu's line were placed by the Ahoms at Darrang and Beltala under their protection, two other princes of the same stock ruled over two territories, Bijni and Sidli, situated between the rivers Sanakas and Manas. Bijni consisted of two Parganas, Khunta Ghat and Habra Ghat with an area of 1000 square miles within the Mughal jurisdiction of Kamrup. The territory of Sidli was on the north of Rangamati, but the Mughals were not interested in her.

Although in the seventeenth century the Mughals and the Ahoms made the Assam valley a battle-ground between themselves for seventy years, they manifested little interest in the security of these two states. So, the Raja of Bijni was obliged to accept Bhotan's authority over his Duar, as he had accepted Mughal authority over his two Parganas. Yet, owing to the relation in which Bijni stood to the Mughals, Bhotan did not claim the overlordship of Bijni; otherwise, Bijni was not in a position to resist single-handed the Bhotanese aggressions. Even for the Bijni Duar, Bhotan's attitude was one of marked civility towards the Raja. "It is said", wrote F. Hamilton, "that the dry fish, cloth and other articles which he sends annually to Bhotan are considered merely as presents and that in return, he receives others of nearly an equal value".<sup>41</sup>

Sidli was situated to the west of Bijni between the rivers Ayee and Sankosh. Unlike Bijni, she remained completely outside the jurisdiction of the Mughals and was thus completely at the mercy of the Bhotanese. Having frequent disputes with the Bhotan over tribute, Sidli underwent terrible ordeals at the hands of the Bhotanese. Even in the days of the East India Company, only that part of Sidli which was near to the Company's frontier (Dhantala), was in a tolerable condition; for, the people living there, unless taken by surprise by the Bhotanese, could escape to the British territory.<sup>42</sup>

The Bhotanese officer, who dealt with the rulers of Bijni and Sidli, was the Suba of Chirang. This Bhotanese station was a little further to the north of the Sidli and Bijni Duars, and was at the head of a pass of the same name, leading into Bhotan proper.

41. Hamilton, F.—An Account of Assam etc., p. 73

42. *Ibid* p. 72

The area under his jurisdiction was divided into two parts, that lying to the north of Sidli was Nunmati, and that lying to the north of Bijni consisted of Nichima and Hatikura.

Next to Chirang and on its west was the Subah of Ripu Duar, who had under him the area called Raymana on the eastern bank of the Sankosh.

After the Suba of Ripu, there was the Suba of Bara Duar, which was of considerable importance. Three Duars, Bhalka, Guma and lesser Guma were included in it, and were bounded by the rivers Raidak and Sankosh, on the west and the east respectively.

To the west of Bara Duar lay Buxa Duar. Beginning from Buxa on the hill, the seat of its Suba, the Duar covered the territory between the Raidak and Torsa rivers. From the first quarter of the eighteenth century, when Bhotan's influence became predominant over Cooch Behar, the latter ceded the lands lying below the hill up to Chechakhata.<sup>43</sup> For this favour, Bhotan agreed to pay annually five Bhotanese ponies to Cooch Behar.<sup>44</sup> The country extending towards the hill produced a considerable quantity of cotton, rice and huge sal trees. In the western sector of the Duar, however, Bhotan's right to the lands was disputable. For while Cooch Behar claimed to have farmed out those lands to Bhotan, the latter claimed them as her possessions from time immemorial.<sup>45</sup> Truth, however, lay between the two rival claims. Domestic troubles of Cooch Behar, and her obligation to Bhotan for the military assistance given by the latter against the Mughals also gave an upperhand to the Bhotanese. Thereafter, the lands originally farmed out to her were subsequently claimed by Bhotan as possession. This gave rise to disputes that the East India Company was called in to settle. In fact, when Ralph Fitch visited Cooch Behar, Bhotan was four day's journey from it.<sup>46</sup> Even in 1626-27, when

43. "*Cacchegate*" mentioned by Ralph Fitch, about 20 miles to the north of Cooch Behar.

44. *Letter from the Collector of Rangpur to Warren Hastings*, 20 January, 1773 (Comm. Cir. Pro., p. 126).

45. *Cooch Behar Select Records*—Vol. I., pp. 1-2.

46. Foster, W.—Op. cit. p. 27. Fitch visited Bengal in 1585-86, and Cooch Behar, a little later.

Stephen Cacella, the Portugese Jesuit traveller went to Cooch Behar, he found Jaigaon, at the foot of the hills, included within the northern boundary of the Koch Kingdom.<sup>47</sup> So, that Bhotan had successfully pushed her southern boundary at the cost of Cooch Behar admits of no doubts.

To the west of Buxa Duar, were two Duars, Luckhe (Luxsmi) and Chamurchi, situated between the rivers Torsa and Mujnai, and between the Mujnai and the Jaldhaka respectively. They were also undefined territories. The Mughals, during Mir Jumla's invasion of Cooch Behar, went in pursuit of her King Pran Narayan, who had fled to the Bhotan hills; they halted for sometime at Kanthalbari, which was about twentytwo miles in the north of Cooch Behar. But as in the case of Buxa Duar, so in the region between the Torsa and the Jaldhaka, Bhotan succeeded in pushing her boundaries far south of Kanthalbari. So that, the few villages in Maraghat between the Jaldhaka and a branch river, Dudua, were all that remained to Cooch Behar. And Maraghat also, in future, became an Alsace between the two states.

On the west of the Chamurchi Duar and between the rivers Jaldhaka and Dharla, lay Yamerkot better known as Mainaguri Duar. It is clear from the map of Rennell<sup>48</sup> that this tract was rather narrow, for the eastern portion of Baikunthapur stretched out to obstruct its southward expanse. Afterwards, Bhotan, being pampered by the English, claimed also the eastern part of Baikunthapur, and succeeded in increasing the area of Mainaguri Duar at the cost of it.

The next Duar was the western most, and was situated between the rivers Dharla and Tista. Commonly known as Dalimkot, it began from the mountaneous tract which is at present the Kalimpong Subdivision of the Darjeeling District. In 1706, Bhotan forcibly occupied this tract from the Raja of

47. Wessels, C.—*Early Jesuit Travellers in Central Asia, 1603-1721*, pp. 122-25.

Jaigaon is approximately in 26.50 north latitude and 89.28 east longitude, and about 30 miles straight in the north of Cooch Behar. Phuntsoling, the border township of Present Bhotan is within a stone's throw.

48. Published according to the Act of Parliament, 15 August, 1779.



Sikkim.<sup>49</sup> The general line of boundary on its west was marked by the river Tista which separated Baikunthapur from the Duars as far south as the village Gopalganj; at this point the boundary crossed to the western bank of the river, and the territories of Bhotan and Baikunthapur became intermixed in a most confused and irregular manner.

Elated with success, Bhotan again attempted to extend her western border into Sikkim at about 1770. She tried to make the most of the discontent and dissensions within Sikkim. But she miserably failed this time. After that her activities became confined to the decadent Cooch Behar kingdom that lay to her south and was torn by internal feuds.

It is necessary to take notice of the manner in which those Duars were administered by Bhotan. The Officer entrusted with the administration of a Duar was known as Suba. J. Tweedie, the first British officer to assume the administration of the Duars between the Sankosh in the east and the Tista in the west, immediately after Bhotan was defeated at the hands of the British in 1864-65, and vacated the Duars, has left a valuable note in this connection.<sup>50</sup> A Suba was a Bhotanese, and so a foreigner among the people he was to govern. He was the man who represented the Dev Raja in his judicial, military, and mercantile capacities. His duty, connected with the revenue, consisted solely in remitting a portion of it to the Dev Raja, while retaining another portion as remuneration for his own troubles. His appointment was a temporary one; originating in the supremacy of the party in Bhotan to which he belonged, his continuance in office depended on that party's ability to remain in power. In the hot and rainy seasons, the Suba resided in his mountain fortress; in the cold season, he descended to the lower hills, and visited the plains to enforce obedience or to invade the

49. Dash, A. J.—*Bengal District Gazeeteers* (Darjeeling), p. 37. This happened in the reign of Chagdor Namgyal, the third ruler of Sikkim against whom there was a conspiracy in Sikkim. It was due to Tibet's intervention, however, that Bhotan did not proceed further than Kalimpong which she had brought under her occupation.

50. *Note on the Land Tenures of the Duars prevailing under Bhutia rule*, Dated 11 September, 1865 (Revenue Records of Bengal).

territory of the neighbouring States.<sup>51</sup>

Immediately below the Suba, officers were chosen from among the people of the country. "Almost all the principal officers in charge of these Duars in the plains are Kacharees, Assamees or Bengalees appointed nominally by the Sunnud of the Dev Raja, but virtually at the recommendation of the pilos in whose jurisdiction they are comprised, and without whose sanction they would never be able to retain their situations for an hour.<sup>52</sup> The chief subordinate officer was known in the Bengal Duars as the Katham; in the Assam Duars, he was known as Laskar, it being a Kamrupi word for any subordinate officer in the revenue department. This officer was a man of respectable birth and of good repute in the country. But, at the time of his appointment, due consideration was given to the highest bid, made by an individual applicant for the post, to pay the revenue of the district to the Suba. The recognised income of this officer was from the collections made from specified localities, which he was allowed to retain for himself. The existing rent was generally low, but between four to six times that rent was demanded by the Suba. The revenue officer under the Suba also kept for himself a handsome profit, very nearly equal to the sum he despatched to the Suba. In addition to their duties as revenue officers, the Kathams and the Laskars assisted the Subas in the exercise of civil and criminal authorities.

Below the Katham, was the Jotedar, who was also a superior landlord to the Chukanidar, Ryot and Praja. One became a Jotedar by purchase of a land or by a grant from the Suba. Often the Suba allowed settlers to occupy unpopulated tracts for a term of five years, more or less without any payment of revenue. At the end of such a term, however, the settler became

51. Hamilton, F.—Op. cit. p. 68. J. C. White, the first political officer for Sikkim appointed in June 1889, however, observed that among the several duties of the Dev Raja, one was to protect the ryots, and the other was to see that the Bhotanese living on the borders committed no violence into others' territory close to them. Bhotan's behaviour in her borders, however, indicated that either the Dev Raja was incapable of discharging his duties or he did not seriously mean the business.

52. Pemberton, R. B.—Op. cit. p. 48.

a Jotedar and paid such a revenue as would be fixed by the Suba. In cases of alienation, and succession, the Suba was entitled to a fee; moreover, the Jotedar was obliged to pay benevolence or forced money, which the Suba demanded from time to time. Chukanidar was a servant for fixed rent and fixed tenure. The Ryot was a tenant for a year, while a Praja, absolutely depending upon his lord, was a tenant-at-will paying half the produce of his land.

The importance of these Duars, was enormous to Bhotan. As it has been already noticed, in Bhotan the material welfare of the people was a purpose foreign to her rulers. The inhabitants of the Duars, therefore, could not expect a different treatment at the hands of the local officers of the Bhotan government. In the words of Pemberton, "enjoying no fixed salaries and deriving but little advantage from the barren mountains" the Penlops and Subas looked upon the Duars as the most lucrative field for exploitation.<sup>53</sup> However, so long as, their activities were confined to these Duars alone, their neighbours in the plain country had nothing to say against them. But the ease with which they had established themselves in the Duars made them bold; and the Bhotanese began to use them as bases for armed raids into the neighbouring countries. They were, however, unaware of the rise of the British power in Bengal; and therefore, could not calculate that their activities in the Duars would lead to serious consequences, if British influence was extended over the territories bordering on the Bhotanese Duars.

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53. *Ibid.* p. 48.

## CHAPTER II

### **The East India Company's Interests In the Northern Parts of Bengal And Its Involvement In the Affairs of Cooch Behar, Bhotan And Baikunthapur—1765-74**

The beginning of the East India Company's interests in the northern parts of Bengal, and in Bhotan was also the beginning of a long and interesting narrative. It was linked with the Company's receiving the Dewani on 12 August, 1765. For the firman of the Delhi Emperor had brought the English to the northernmost district of the Suba of Bengal. The district although generally known as Rangpur, was really an amalgam of extensive patches of lands added to it at different dates and taken from different owners.

Rangpur proper consisting of six Chaklas or revenue divisions, had belonged to Cooch Behar. Iradat Khan, the son of the Mughal Viceroy Shaista Khan in Bengal, conquered three of them, namely Fatehpur, Qazirhat and Kakina, in the last decade of the seventeenth century; but it took twentyfive years more for the Mughals to get a secure foothold in the district of Rangpur. As for the remaining three divisions of Boda, Patgram and Purvabhad, they defended themselves with difficulty till, in 1711 A.D., a compromise was effected. Those divisions were nominally ceded by Cooch Behar to the Mughals, but were held in farm by Shanta Narayan, the third Nazir Dev, of Cooch Behar on behalf of her King Rupnarayan (1693-1714).<sup>1</sup>

At the time of the acquisition of the financial administration of the country by the East India Company, Rangpur had an area of 2679 square miles.<sup>2</sup> The District was "productive of the valuable articles of raw silk, opium, tobacco and sugar besides a superabundance of grain with the other necessaries of life

1. Firminger, W. K.—*Bengal Dist. Records* (Rangpur), Vol. I, p. 14.

2. Firminger, W. K.—*Fifth Report from the Select Committee*, Vol. 2, p. 259.

beyond the wants of home consumption carried abroad for sale".<sup>3</sup> But Rangpur had already been in a declining state; in 1765 Rennell found "little worth remarking about Rangpur, it being only a principal gunge (market) and like most of the others, the houses are built of mats and bamboos, there being but one brick-house in the town".<sup>4</sup> The lands, except the portion of Cooch Behar, were distributed among several zamindars, whose ancestors had once been appointed by the Cooch Behar authorities to collect revenue. Those zamindars had transferred their allegiance successively from Cooch Behar to the Mughals, and from the Mughals to the Company. The Mughals had always farmed out the lands, and so the zamindars never paid their revenue directly to the government. The system continued till to the acquisition of the Dewani by the English. But the demand and collection of revenue had been always at variance. "For the year 1171 B. S. (1764-65 A.D.), the preceding the commencement of the English management of the revenues, the demand was Rs. 509,182, the collections were Rs. 487,882".<sup>5</sup>

Within the jurisdiction of Rangpur was included the Thanadari with the district of Rangamati "stretching on both sides the river Birmahpooter easterly to the confines of Assam and throughout a barren or for the most part uncultivated region of 2629 sq. miles, of no present worth to the sovereign, excepting the price of a few elephants annually in the interior of the neighbouring wilds".<sup>6</sup>

This reference brings into memory the four Sarkars, which the Mughals had so laboriously built up in the north eastern frontier of Bengal at the cost of the eastern branch of the Koch Kingdom. But, towards the close of the seventeenth century, the Mughals fell back before the advancing Ahoms, and clung to their only Sarkar, Bangal Bhum, comprising Baharbund, Bhitarbund, and Goalbari on the north bank of the Brahmaputra,

3. Op. cit P. 341.

4. Touche, F. D. La—*The Journals of James Rennell* (Memoirs of the Asiatic Society of Bengal) 1910, Vol. 3(3), p. 55.

5. Firminger, W. K.—*Bengal Dist. Records* (Rangpur), Vol. I, p. 14.

6. Firminger, W. K.—*Fifth Report from the Select Committee*, Vol. 2, p. 341.

and Rangamati and Goalpara on its southern bank. A Mughal officer was stationed at Rangamati; but in the declining days of the Mughals, it is not known what else he had to do except "to encourage the growth of forests and reeds that the fierce Assamese might not penetrate farther east and south."<sup>7</sup>

But the north-western part of Rangpur, unlike the north-east, retained its importance even when the Company was settling down in Bengal as the prospective ruling power. In this part was situated the pargana of Baikunthapur or Battrish Hazari, the nucleus of the present district of Jalpaiguri. The pargana was not included in any of the rent-rolls prepared either by prince Suja or Murshid Kuli Khan. In 1770, J. Grose, on behalf of the East India Company, forwarded from Rangpur his demand upon Baikunthapur for rates of izaras, but only to be disappointed. On 21 July, 1770, he informed R. Becher, the Resident at the Darbar of Murshidabad, that Baikunthapur had denied the authority of the Company to make any such demand. Grose, however, opined that the pargana had long since been annexed to Rangpur.<sup>8</sup>

Baikunthapur as a permanently settled area comprised approximately 450 square miles.<sup>9</sup> Originally granted as an appanage by Cooch Behar to the Raikats (who were connected with the ruling family of Cooch Behar and who held the umbrella over the Kings of Cooch Behar at the time of their installation), Baikunthapur covered a far wider area in the palmy days of Cooch Behar. The Raikats were the hereditary grand ministers of the Kingdom of Cooch Behar, and guarded its western frontier that, according to Akbarnama, extended to Tirhut. From the late seventeenth century, however, the state of things totally changed. Civil dissensions had thrown Cooch Behar into permanent confusion. The Raikats ceased to hold the umbrella,

7. Firminger, W. K.—*Bengal Dist. Records* (Rangpur), Vol. I, p. 12.

8. *Supervisor's correspondance*, Murshidabad Comptrolling Council of Revenue—Letter No. 2.

9. Milligan, J. A.—*Final Report on the Survey and Settlement of the Jalpaiguri District*—p. 74.

Martin recorded the territorial possessions of the Raikats to be 380 sq. miles of which only 222 sq. miles were in actual cultivation. —*Eastern India*, Vol. 3, p. 441.

threw off their allegiance, and even tried to play the role of king-makers. Foiled in that, they began to prey upon the territory of Cooch Behar. But it did not bring any permanent good to the Raikats. For one thing, they were not successful; besides, the Mughals were then advancing from their post at Ghorghat upon Rangpur, while the Bhotanese, being invited by the disaffected members of the ruling family of Cooch Behar, came down from their hills to the southern plains below. Caught between the two fires, Cooch Behar, of course, accepted the lesser evil. On the one hand, she fought desperately against her enemies advancing from the south; on the other, she admitted Bhotan's influence upon her internal affairs. But Cooch Behar's humiliation did not necessarily mean Baikunthapur's gain.

According to the official history of Cooch Behar, when the Mughals under the leadership of Iradat Khan overran the southern territories of Cooch Behar, Baikunthapur subjected herself to the Mughals.<sup>10</sup> Had it been so, when Cooch Behar, in the beginning of the eighteenth century, was returning the blow of Baikunthapur, the nearest Mughal faujdar would have marched to the aid of Baikunthapur; but he did not. Again, the conjecture that on the acceptance of peace from the Mughals by Cooch Behar in 1711, Baikunthapur also accepted Mughal authority,<sup>11</sup> is not a happy one. In fact, Baikunthapur upheld her dignity and independence at least for the next twentyfive years, after which she was humbled by the Subadar of Bengal.

The Raikats were safely entrenched in an area, the inaccessibility of which must have discouraged their invaders. "Hemmed in, as it is, on three sides by a dense forest and on by many miles of malarious Terai, it appears sufficiently secure from ordinary enemies during a great part of the year."<sup>2</sup>

Dharma Dev, the 13th Raikat (1709-24) left Baikunthapur and settled at Jalpaiguri. It became the capital of the Raikats. For many years to come, however, it did not look like a town, nor did it have any dwelling house of brick except a temple of that material. Dharma Dev was not wrong in judging the time to

10. Choudhury, H. N.—Op. cit. P. 240.

11. Ahmad, A.—*History of Cooch Behar State* (Bengali), Part I, p. 233.

12. Hooker, J. D.—*Himalayan Journal*, Vol. 2, p. 18.

transfer the capital from Baikunthapur. In 1711, Cooch Behar and the Mughals had made peace. There was no immediate indication of any new threat of war from Murshid Kuli Khan, the Subadar of Bengal, who from 1717 to 1727, had only one passion, that for economy in administrative expenses.

But evil days were ahead, and fortunately Dharma Dev Raikat did not live to witness them. Shujauddin (1727-39), having succeeded Murshid Kuli Khan, appointed Saulat Jang, the son of Haji Ahmed and nephew of Alivardi Khan, as the Naib faujdar of Ghoraghat and Rangpur. Saulat Jang, in 1736, took up the cause of a disaffected prince, Dina Narayan of Cooch Behar and placed him on the throne for some time.<sup>13</sup> Whether impelled by his aggressive nature or encouraged by his success in the Cooch Behar affairs, it is not known, Saulat Jang invaded Baikunthapur and carried away Bikram Dev, the Raikat-designate and his younger brother Darpa Dev as hostages to Rangpur. Cooch Behar, however, quickly regained her position, but Baikunthapur could not.

The story of Baikunthapur's humiliation was narrated to Warren Hastings by the Naib of Boda, when he went to the Presidency; his narrative was the earliest information about Baikunthapur's subjection to the Subadar of Bengal.<sup>14</sup> The Naib of Boda, however, did not mention the exact date of the event. It took place probably in 1737-38. For soon after the death of Nawab Shujauddin in March, 1739, a conspiracy to dethrone his successor Sarfaraz was afoot; that involved Saulat Jung's father and uncle, and so did not permit him to stay at that time far-away North Bengal. And from 1740, Qasim Ali Khan, Alivardi's brother-in-law became the Rangpur faujdar.

According to the Naib of Boda, Baikunthapur was again visited by faujdar Qasim Ali Khan "to reduce Bycuntpore to a more avowed subjection." For over a decade Alivardi's government was busy in trying conclusions with the Afghans and the Marathas. The situation in Baikunthapur, meanwhile, became such that called for immediate intervention by the

13. Mercer & Chauvets—*Report on Cooch Behar in 1788*, Vol. 2, p. 169.

14. Letter from the Committee of Circuit to Purling in Rangpur, 23 Dec. 1772 (Comm. Cir. Pro. pp. 34-36).



Rangpur faujdar. This took place immediately before the battle of Plassey. The two Raikat brothers accompanied him to Baikunthapur. After seventeen years' confinement in Rangpur they were restored to their paternal estate, but were expected to remember the circumstances of their long exile. Qasim Ali's kindness to Baikunthapur was political. His was a policy of limited liability. For the closing years of Alivardi were years of gloom and despair, and men in authority felt uneasy for the future after the death of the aged Nawab.

From 1756 the Rangpur faujdar paid little attention to Baikunthapur. Within the period of six years following Plassey, the change of Nawabs,—Mirjafar to Mir Qasim and then Mirjafar again,—agitated also the distant province of Rangpur. While the old faujdar Qasim Ali sought to hold Rangpur to the cause of the deposed Nawab Mir Qasim and drew the British fury upon him<sup>15</sup>, Baikunthapur became so bold as to ignore the realities of British domination over Bengal. Perhaps she thought that the political revolution in Bengal gave her the opportunity to resume independence which she had lost to the Nawab some years ago. But the British denied her the opportunity.

In a letter to Warren Hastings on 31 July, 1772, Purling, the Collector of Rangpur mentioned that Baikunthapur paid annually Rs. 10,000/-.<sup>16</sup> It, however, appeared from the improved rent-roll of Faqir Coondy<sup>17</sup> that the bondobasti jumma of Baikunthapur in 1763 was Rs. 30,651/-, but actual collection was not there on record.<sup>18</sup> This again brings us to the reference made by T. Grose, the Supervisor of Rangpur, on 20 April, 1770, to the British Resident at Murshidabad that Baikunthapur was paying a certain sum annually, but was reluctant to put up any papers for examination and exact valuation of the country.

In fact, Baikunthapur became bold beyond her strength. But there were forebodings of evil, which Darpa Dev, the 16th

15. *Bengal, Past and Present*, Vol. 5, p. 209.

16. *Comm. Cir. Pro.* p. 23.

17. The name given by the Mughals to their conquests in Rangpur after the name of the Pargana that lay across Ghoraghat.

18. Firminger, W. K.—*Fifth Report from the Select Committee*, Vol. 2, p. 343.

Raikat (1758-93), could not possibly read. The distracted state of affairs within Cooch Behar from the mid-eighteenth century revived ambition in Darpa Dev to aggrandise himself, and in view of this, he entered into an alliance with Bhotan. The British, however, could not accept Baikunthapur's attitude towards the authorities of Bengal; nor could they approve of Baikunthapur's independent line of action in seeking the alliance of Bhotan against Cooch Behar.

British jurisdiction being extended over Rangpur and Baikunthapur, the East India Company became also interested in the countries situated on their frontiers. There was Sikkim and Nepal in a north westerly direction from Baikunthapur. Sikkim, however, in the years the British got the Dewani, presented no attraction either to trading or political interests. But it was otherwise in respect of Nepal.

The coming of the Gorkhas to power in Nepal strangely coincided with the East India Company's coming to power in Bengal. The ruling Newars of Nepal were set aside by the Gorkhas, who, later on, continuously expanded into the tracts beyond the river Dudkosi in the east, which had marked the eastern boundary of the Newar Kings.<sup>19</sup> But the British were not immediately concerned with that; rather as the traditional trade route between Bengal and Tibet passed through the Newar provinces of Kathmandu, Bhatgaon and Patan, the British feared a breakdown of trade if the Gorkhas closed that route. Thomas Rumbold, the Chief of the factory at Patna, repeatedly expressed his concern over the stoppage of trade through this route.<sup>19A</sup> So, in 1767, the East India Company sent help under Captain Kinloch in response to an appeal from the Newars against the Gorkhas. But Captain Kinloch and his troops had to struggle in vain against all the hardships of the deadly Terai that intervened between the British territory and Nepal. For, Captain Kinloch was called back by his authorities; it became imperative at that time to oppose Hyder Ali in the Deccan.<sup>20</sup> The Newar King was ousted by the Gorkhas. And

19. Old field, H. A.—*Sketches from Nepal*, Vol. I, pp. 53-54.

19A. A. Long, J. Rev.—*Selections from unpublished Records of Government, 1748-67*. (971).

20. Auber, P.—*Progress of British Power in India*, Vol. I, p. 181.

the British had to accept it as *fait accompli*. Nevertheless, they remained ever eager for the trade that had once passed between Bengal and Tibet, and for which Nepal was the principal channel. Their attempt to gain the point by sending James Logan in the winter of 1769-70, failed. King Prithvinarayan was cold to British proposal of trade through Kathmandu, and forced upon the British the necessity of finding some alternative routes. And, in 1771, the Court of Directors suggested exploration into Assam and Bhotan for such possibilities.<sup>21</sup>

On the north east frontier of Rangpur lay the Kingdom of the Ahoms. The Ahoms were, however, in a state of decline. The kingly office was over-shadowed by the *grandees* of the Kingdom; "the war-like spirit which animated their ancestors had almost evaporated. . . . the people were already priest-ridden and sectarian disputes began to strangle their patriotic inspirations."<sup>22</sup> In spite of these signs of decay, the country remained prosperous. A large trade brought Bengal and Assam close to each other. In 1808-9, exports from Bengal amounted to more than two lacs of rupees, while exports from Assam, more than a lac.<sup>23</sup> So it is clear that this trade in the mid-eighteenth century must have been three to four times its volume in the first decade of the nineteenth.<sup>24</sup> No wonder, therefore, merchants like Daniel Rausch, William Dow, Wheatland, Lear, Macculum, Bigger, Hugh Baillie and many others, with or without particular permission, had crowded the north-eastern parts of Rangpur, established factories, and vied with one another to reap the harvest of the Assam trade. Even the Society of Trade, set up for the benefit of the covenanted officers of the Company, maintained agents to conduct the monopoly trade in tobacco, betelnut and salt atleast up to 1768.

Bhotan was not a neighbour of the company in the sense Assam was. Rather Cooch Behar was the neighbouring country of Rangpur, and Bhotan, that of Cooch Behar. The Bhotanese

21. *Home. Con.*, 9 Dec., 1771 (1).

22. Gait, E. A.—*A History of Assam*, p. 183.

23. Martin, M.—*The History, Antiquities, Topography and Statistics of Eastern India*, Vol. 3, pp. 660-61.

24. Sen, S. N.—*Prachin Bangla Patra Samkalan* (Records in oriental languages, Bengali letters), Vol. I, Introductions.

merchants carried their trade in Cooch Behar, and through Cooch Behar into Rangpur. Besides, from 1765, Bhotan's political prestige in the State of Cooch Behar stood high. The presence of a Bhotanese agent at the Capital of Cooch Behar, his recommendations in the choice and confirmation of the successor to the Kingly office in Cooch Behar presented a sharp contrast to her past glories; for even at the end of the sixteenth century, that Kingdom had extended to the Brahmaputra river in the east, the hills of Assam and Bhotan in the north, Ghoraghat in the south and Trihut in the west.<sup>25</sup> The Koch King's era had been introduced, and it was observed even in Assam, Kachhar, Manipur and Bhotan. From the second half of the seventeenth century, however, misfortune dogged the Kingdom. Internecine quarrels among the members of the royal family, incapacity of the rulers to put down the forces of disruption, doubtful allegiance of the officers and repeated onrush of the Mughals laid Cooch Behar prostrate. It was because the Mughals had failed to follow up their initial success in Cooch Behar that she was able to survive, sacrificing only her eastern branch of rulers, her three territorial divisions in Rangpur, and agreeing to hold the remaining three divisions in Rangpur as fiefs of the Mughal Empire. Yet, Cooch Behar was not absolutely out of danger. A new thunder cloud was hovering in her sky. This was Bhotan, which had already earned a place of gratitude for her assistance to Cooch Behar against the Mughal faujdar of Ghoraghat. Bhotan's presence in Cooch Behar, however, intensified the political dissensions in that country. The three highest dignitaries of the Kingdom were the King, the Nazir Dev and the Dewan Dev. All of them were descended from the same royal line but were unable to act in harmony. While the Nazir Dev was in charge of the army, the Dewan Dev was in charge of civil affairs. They two enjoyed the major share of the State's revenue (nearly 70%), leaving a small portion for the real ruler of the land. Evidently, the monarch was the weakest among the three highest dignitaries, and as such, his position depended upon the fidelity of the one or of the other; it was impossible to hold both of them in leading strings and so the only course left open for him was to play the one against the other. This prospect

25. Stuart, C. H.—*History of Bengal*, p. 211.

pleased the Bhotanese and created an opportunity for their almost permanent stay in that Kingdom with a control over its internal politics. But the British did not seem to have been aware of this situation in Cooch Behar; when Warren Hastings came as the Governor of Fort William in Bengal, he desired the Kingdom "to be formally re-annexed to province of Bengal".<sup>26</sup> With Bhotan, however, the Company was eager to enter into trade-relations, although that country was little known to its officers. But Purling, the Rangpur Collector, had already made the suggestion to Warren Hastings to drive back the Bhotanese from Cooch Behar to their hills and to make the hills "our boundaries".<sup>27</sup> From Rangpur Purling watched the developments that followed Bhotanese activities in Cooch Behar.

Within seven years of the grant of the Dewani, the responsibility of the East India Company assumed a new character. In August, 1771, the Court of Directors had resolved "to stand forth as Dewan". On 3 August, 1773, Warren Hastings in his Council at Fort William, clearly stated the Company's "interest in the welfare of the country" as Dewan, and as Governing Power, "a right a obligation to maintain it".<sup>28</sup> Then followed administrative reforms that sought to establish the authority and influence of the Company over the country from end to end. Districts were placed under the charge of Collectors, who, unlike the previous Supervisors, were entrusted with a greater dignity and a greater responsibility. The Committee of Circuit was formed to make tours in the districts, investigate and complete settlements of land and revenue. In place of the Comptrolling Councils of Revenue in Calcutta, Murshidabad and Patna, one Board of Revenue was set up in Calcutta, and the exchequer also was removed to that place. Calcutta was fast becoming the capital of Bengal and the Company drew attention of the English people and their government.

The Court of Directors, however, continued to warn their

26. Letter from Warren Hastings to Purling in Rangpur on 27 Oct. 1772 (Comm. Cir. Pro. p. 27).

27. Letter from Purling to Warren Hastings on 2 Aug. 1772 (Comm. Cir. Pro. p. 24).

28. Firminger, W. K.—*Fifth Report from the Select Committee*, Vol. I, Introduction, p. X.

servants that they were agents not of a military, but of a trading body; it particularly forbade them to change the nature of their relations with the people of India. The anxiety of the Court of Directors was due to the financial straits it was subjected to. Acute shortage of specie was distressing the Directors. The East India Company in its mercantile capacity, observed Hunter, carried to China each year a million sterling from Bengal. Madras, too, constantly required specie from Bengal to purchase its investments; and Bombay, which did not pay the expense of the government, had also to be supplied from the same source.<sup>29</sup> Firminger has quoted from John Macgregor's Commercial Statistics to show that in 1765 England exported to India specie to the value of £157,415, and then for the following thirty years could export no more.<sup>30</sup>

It was strange that with all these facts before him, Warren Hastings should get the Company involved in a war with Bhotan, who, in league with Darpa Dev of Baikunthapur, had designed to subjugate Cooch Behar. The reason for his action, however, was given by Warren Hastings himself. In his letter to Sir George Colebrooke in London, on 15 January, 1773, Warren Hastings disavowed any project of conquest; but he characterised his expedition against the Bhotanese in Cooch Behar as an "undertaking which can complete the line of our possessions or add to its security".<sup>31</sup> Evidently, Warren Hastings outlined, a general policy to be followed not only by him but also by the later Governors General in their endeavour to make the Company's authority in the country real and complete.

Warren Hastings, however, did not abandon the idea of exploring the possibilities of English trade in Bhotan and beyond. It might be argued that the necessity of contacting Bhotan in the interest of English trade demanded a cordial beginning of the relations between Bhotan and the East India Company. Such a beginning, it was true, could not follow from an armed conflict. But Warren Hastings, on his part, must

29. Hunter, W.—*The Annals of Rural Bengal*, Vol. I, p. 303.

30. Firminger, W. K.—*Fifth Report from the Select Committee*, Vol. I, p. CIXXVI.

31. Gleig, C. R.—*Memoirs of Warren Hastings*, Vol. I, p. 279.

have been aware of this implication. He had, as it will be seen, his own arguments, and he knew very well how to soothe the feelings of an injured enemy. By his energy and patience, he was able to turn the hostility of Bhotan into her friendship for the East India Company, and launch the Company towards Bhotan and thence into the Himalayan World.

Meanwhile, too much interference by Bhotan in the affairs of Cooch Behar made the latter restive, and gave occasion for British interference in support of Cooch Behar. King Dhair-yendra Narayan (1765-83) of Cooch Behar, within a few years of the beginning of his reign, became disgusted with his elder brother, Ram Narayan. He was the Dewan of the Kingdom, but acted in close alliance with the Bhotanese agent in Cooch Behar. The King at last put the Dewan to death, and appointed another brother, Surendra Narayan in his place. At this time, Bhotan did nothing; but within a year of the incident, she took Cooch Behar by surprise by kidnapping both the King and his Dewan. This happened at the end of the year 1770. The King with his Nazir, his Dewan and other officers of the kingdom had gone to Chechakhata to hold the annual banquet in honour of the Suba of Buxa duar and others from Bhotan. The King and his Dewan, however, were caught unawares by the party from Bhotan and despatched to the hills.

For the next two years, Bhotan controlled the affairs of Cooch Behar by placing Rajendra Narayan, the king's brother on the throne. In 1772, he died. Khagendra Narayan, the Nazir Dev, then proclaimed Prince Dharendra Narayan, the Naib-Raja or the deputy-king during the absence of his father in Bhotan. The Bhotanese agent in Cooch Behar, however, refused to accept this, and brought reinforcements from Bhotan to meet the challenge of the Nazir Dev. Bijendra Narayan, the son of the late Dewan Ram Narayan was declared King and sent to Chechakhata for his safety. The royal family of Cooch Behar together with the officers of the court fled the country. Despairing of success against Bhotanese troops, which garrisoned the main fort at Cooch Behar, the Nazir Dev was, at last, driven to seek the help of the East India Company; and so he approached Purling, the Collector of Rangpur. The action of the Nazir Dev produced far-reaching consequences in the history of

north-eastern India.

In July, 1772, Purling apprised Warren Hastings of the political confusions in Cooch Behar; he had also requested Darpa Dev of Baikunthapur to sever his alliance with Bhotan but received a haughty reply. On 2 August, 1772, Purling laid before Warren Hastings his recommendations to get possession of Cooch Behar "which has a great character for the fineness of it and the state of cultivation it is in", and secondly, to have "the hills our boundaries".<sup>32</sup>

Warren Hastings accepted Purling's recommendations and on 27 October, 1772, the Council at Calcutta resolved to undertake the defence of Cooch Behar.<sup>33</sup> Four Companies of Sepoys were to be deployed for the task; but as the expenses of the war were to be borne by Cooch Behar, 50,000 rupees were to be paid into the hands of the Collector of Rangpur immediately. Besides, Cooch Behar, being cleared of her enemies, would be annexed to the province of Bengal, and should agree to pay one-half of her annual revenues in perpetuity. The other half should go to her King and his heirs, provided they continued firm in their allegiance to the Company.<sup>34</sup>

Then prompt action was taken by the British. Four Companies of troops under Captain Jones marched into Cooch Behar. A copy of the treaty to be executed by the King of Cooch Behar was despatched from Calcutta to Dacres and other gentlemen of the Committee of Circuit at Rangpur.

Meanwhile, the Bhotanese in Cooch Behar were worsted in the first encounter. On 22 December, the main fort of Cooch Behar was occupied by the British with a loss of eighteen persons. Their enemies had retreated leaving six hundred of their men dead. From Cooch Behar the Bhotanese moved out and took position at Chechakhata, and proposed peace. Really, however, the Bhotanese wanted to reorganise themselves under the cover of peace-talks. But Purling believed them, and,

32. *Comm. Cir. Pro.* p. 24.

33. *Ibid.* P. 27.

34. Articles of Treaty between the East India Company and Dharendra Narayan, Raja of Cooch Behar—*Cooch Behar Select Records*, Vol. I, pp. 244-45.



therefore, on his part, proposed that they must leave Cooch Behar and admit a quiet possession of the country by the British; besides, they were to remain within their limits immediately below the hills. On 17 January, 1773, Purling informed the Committee of Circuit that he had succeeded in convincing the Bhotanese of his viewpoint and that they had gone back to their "boundary about 4 coss below the hills".<sup>35</sup>

But that the Bhotanese had deceived him was very soon detected by Purling. On 20 January, 1773, he frankly confessed this in his letter to Warren Hastings.<sup>36</sup> Previously, Purling was under the impression that the Bhotanese had retreated to their frontier, which extended to about eight miles below the hills. Actually, however, they remained at Chechakhata and thus, occupied the whole territory from Chechakhata to their own hills. But the lands in question legally belonged to Cooch Behar. For the previous sixty years, Bhotan had been permitted to enjoy them on payment of five Tungun ponies each year to Cooch Behar. Chechakhata was the farthest accessible place from Cooch Behar in the direction of Bhotan. Beyond Chechakhata dense forest stretched up to the slope of the hills. None but the Bhotanese were permitted there.<sup>37</sup> Chechakhata was an ideal ground, where Bhotan, eluding the vigilance of the British, could muster her troops to give battle. Also, there she employed the mercenary Sannyasi forces to stand against the British, and in the event of a defeat, provided them with the natural cover of the forest to retreat.

To remedy his past error, Purling denied the Bhotanese any time to dig in, and despatched troops under Lieutenant Dickson to capture and hold Chechakhata. Lieutenant Dickson, however, marching upon Chechakhata, found the place deserted by the Bhotanese. Even the Sannyasis, who were encamped nearby became afraid, and, before any engagement took place, fled.<sup>38</sup> Lieutenant Dickson continued his advance and on 23 February, took possession of the fort and the pass

35. *Comm. Cir. Por.* p. 80.

36. *Ibid.* p. 126.

37. *Ibid.*

38. *For. Sec. Con.* 11 March, 1773 (8).

of Buxa. But it was a short-lived success. During the three days the British remained at Buxa, there was a continuous and heavy rainfall. The British forward posts were constantly attacked and harassed by the enemy. Besides, Lieutenant Dickson got intelligence that a large number of Bhotanese was planning to surround him. So, Lieutenant Dickson ordered his troops to fall back on Chechakhata.<sup>39</sup>

The withdrawal of the British troops from Buxa was carefully planned. They would have reached Chechakhata safely, except one sergent, who was ambushed on the night of 25 February. The retreating British, however, did not fare well because of the rashness of a Subedar. The Bhotanese, from their position in the hills, rolled down large blocks of rock upon the British files moving through the hill-tracks towards the plain. The Subedar stopped the rearguard and ordered his men to fire back upon the enemy; but his action cost the British fourteen sepoy.<sup>40</sup>

The authorities at Calcutta did not easily accept the retreat of the British troops. On 11 March, 1773, Purling received orders from Fort William to take possession of all the cultivated country extending to the foot of the hills as the frontier line of Bengal. Operations against the Bhotanese were to continue till they were completely driven out of the country.<sup>41</sup>

Meanwhile, the Bhotanese had decided to attack the defence posts of Lieutenant Dickson at Chechakhata and dislodge British from that area. On 16 March, they moved carefully in the first light of day and fell upon the British. Their plan, however, failed, although for the British the victory was hard-earned. For, Lieutenant Dickson admitted that he had to fight for his life.<sup>42</sup>

At this stage, Bhotan, for the second time, made another gesture to terminate hostilities. On 2 April, 1773, Purling referred Warren Hastings to a letter received from the Dev Raja Zhidar (1769-1773) of Bhotan. The Dev Raja had proposed the withdrawal of British forces "from all the northern part of

39. *For. Sec. Con.* 11 March, 1773 (9).

40. *For. Sec. Con.* 11 March, 1773 (10).

41. *For. Sec. Con.* 11 March, 1773 (10).

42. *For. Sec. Con.* 22 March, 1773(1-2)

Beyhar and delivering up of Bycuntpore.” Purling, however, could not bear the pretensions of Bhotan, and so did not reply to the letter of the Dev Raja.<sup>43</sup>

The question of delivering up Baikunthapur did not arise at all. On 23 December, 1772, the Committee of Circuit in its letters to Purling had already decided upon the occupation of Baikunthapur. There were two serious allegations made against Darpa Dev, the-then Raikat. He had treated the lawful authority of the Company with contempt; and he was giving countenance to the Sannyasi depredators, who infested Rangpur. The Raikat, therefore, had “forefeited all claim to the Company’s lenity and protection.”<sup>44</sup>

Purling had it in mind to spare Captain Jones for the reduction of Baikunthapur only after he finally settled with Bhotan. But the situation on the western front was pretty grave and demanded immediate attention. Darpa Dev, who had advanced upon the western part of Cooch Behar, got confused at the initial set-back of the Bhotanese in Cooch Behar; he, however, gathered himself together and enlisted a large band of sannyasi forces. Captain Jones, therefore, leaving two companies of sepoys in Cooch Behar marched against Baikunthapur. Captain Stuart of 19 Battalion also advanced from Dinajpur upon Jalpaiguri.

The British forces on the western front, met with little resistance. The Sannyasi forces fled before the marching columns of Captain Jones. From Patgram to Bhot-hat, it was, for Captain Jones, a straight march to victory. The enemy crossed the river Tista and sunk all the country boats they had made use of; but on the opposite bank of the river Captain Stuart was waiting for them. On 3 February, 1773, the main forces under Darpa Dev clashed with Captain Stuart. The contest was neither long nor hard. Only two men of Captain Stuart’s detachment were wounded, but the enemy fled with all speed suffering a casualty of fourteen men. The fort of Jalpaiguri lay open to the victor. The Raikat with his Sannyasi forces evacuated the country. Three days after this debacle

43. *For Sec. Con.* 8 April, 1773 (5).

44. *Comm. Cir. Pro.* pp. 34-36.

of the Raikat, Captain Jones also landed in Jalpaiguri.<sup>45</sup> Captain Jones now planned to attack the Bhotanese fort of Dalimkot on the hill above Baikunthapur while Captain Stuart held Jalpaiguri. Warren Hastings had already ordered for reinforcements to join Captain Jones.<sup>46</sup>

Warren Hastings became optimistic about a successful conclusion of the war. The success of British arms in several encounters up to the date had made him confident; more than that, he looked forward to the day when the Bhotanese would be only too glad to have an outlet for their merchandise into Bengal through their passes and through Cooch Behar.<sup>47</sup> He also was no less eager to open the line of trade into Bhotan. Already he had suggested to Purling to give the Bhotanese "a just idea of our inclination to be upon good terms with them."<sup>48</sup>

From the autumn of 1773, operations were resumed by the British. But the Dev Raja's position in his own country had, in the meantime, become precarious and shaky. He had been raised to the throne about four years before. "Having been employed in different enterprises against the neighbouring chiefs and having filled the high offices in the country, he acquired a considerable degree of wealth and importance before his succession to the office of the Dev Raja and owed his election more to intrigue and a dread of his power than to the free choice of the clergy."<sup>49</sup> His bold and restless spirit could not tolerate any check upon him from any quarters. But, there was a rival faction, which did not tolerate his over-bearing manners. Among its several arguments against him were his disregard for the advice of the lamas, and his intrigues to render Bhotan, an independent country, into a Chinese province.<sup>50</sup> But the most convincing arguments against him were that the Dev Raja had failed in his designs on Cooch Behar, and that the overwhelming defeat of Bhotan at the hands of the British had

45. *Comm. Cir. Pro.* pp. 172-73.

46. *For. Sec. Con.* 17 February, 1773 (10).

47. Letter to Purling, 31 March, 1773, Gleig—Vol. I, p. 296.

48. *For. Sec. Con.* 17 February, 1773 (10).

49. Markham, C.—*Narratives of the Mission of George Bogle to Tibet etc.*

50. *Ibid.* p. 41.

robbed him of all his glamour and authority. Getting hints of an impending rising against him, the Dev Raja fled the country but could not escape the wrath of his rivals.

At this stage, the then Tashi Lama of Tibet, the third Panchen Lama intervened. A deputation consisting of a Tibetan named Paima and a Hindu monk Purangiri Gossain arrived in Calcutta with a letter from the Tashi Lama. On 29 March, 1774, the deputation presented the letter to Warren Hastings.<sup>51</sup> The Tashi Lama deprecated the rashness of the previous Dev Raja in waging a war against Cooch Behar and the East India Company; the reverses that he had suffered were a just punishment. The Tashi Lama now offered himself as a mediator of peace between Bhotan and the British. "I request", he wrote, "you will cease all hostilities against him and in doing so you will confer the greatest favour and friendship upon me."

To Warren Hastings, the Tashi Lama's letter offered a long-cherished opportunity of drawing nearer to Bhotan and Tibet. The enormous influence that he enjoyed in the Himalayan world and in the Court of the Chinese emperor, was the ground of Warren Hasting's belief. So, on 5 April, 1774, the draft of the treaty to be executed by Bhotan was drawn up and on 25 April, 1774, it was signed and ratified at Fort William.

There were ten articles in the treaty; it was agreed (1) that in consideration of the distress of Bhotan and her desire to live in peace with her neighbours, the Company would give up all lands of Chechakhata and Paglahat in the east, of Kiranti (Krant), Maraghat and Lukhepore (Laksmipur) in the west, which Bhotan enjoyed before the commencement of the war; (2) that, Bhotan would pay an annual tribute of five "Tungun" horses to the Company for the lands of Chechakhata; (3) that, the royal prisoners were to be set free; (4) that, the Bhotanese traders, without having to pay duties would trade as before and their caravans would be allowed to go to Rangpur annually; (5) that, the Dev Raja would never cause incursions into any part of the country that came under the Company's

51. *For. Sec. Con.* 4 April, 1774 (5). King Prithvinarayan of Nepal is said to have implored the Tashi Lama to mediate for Bhotan and stop British interference in the Himalayan States.—Woodcock, G. *The Early British Explorers into Tibet*—p. 38.

protection; (6) that, should any subject of the Company desert and take shelter in Bhotan, the Dev Raja would cause him to be delivered up immediately upon application being made for him; (7) that, should any subject of Bhotan have any demands upon or disputes with any subject of the Company the matter would be settled through the Magistrate or the officer of the Company in its frontier district; (8) that, since the Company treated the Sannyasies as its enemies, the Dev Raja would not allow anyone of them to take refuge in any part of the territories now conferred upon Bhotan, nor should permit any Sannyasi to enter the Company's territories through any part of Bhotan. If, however, Bhotan failed to drive them out of her territories, information should be given to the British Resident at Cooch Behar. Moreover, should the forces of the Company, in pursuing the Sannyasis, ever enter the ceded territories of Bhotan, that should not be regarded as a breach of friendship; (9) that, should the Company require, Bhotan would allow its men to cut timber in any part of the woods under her hills without charging any duty; (10) that, there should take place a mutual restitution of the prisoners of war.<sup>52</sup>

The full significance of the first Anglo-Bhotanese war was to be found in the relations of the Company with Cooch Behar, Baikunthapur and Bhotan in the years to come. On 31 March, 1773, Warren Hastings, in a letter to John Purling in London, held out the hope that the occupation of Cooch Behar would be a "far more valuable acquisition than expected, being in fertility and abundance equal to any district of the same dimensions in Bengal."<sup>53</sup> The high hopes of Warren Hastings were not belied. The king of Cooch Behar got back his throne by relinquishing a half of the revenue of the state to the British as an annual tribute. This tribute was fixed at Sikka rupees 62,722 in the year 1780.

Bijendra Narayan, who had been raised to the throne of Cooch Behar by Bhotan but taken under her protection at Chechakhata, succumbed to its malarious climate. In 1775, Dharendra Narayan who had been declared the Naib-Raja during

52. *Cooch Behar Select Records*—Vol. 2, pp. 58-59.

53. Gleig, C. R.—Op. Cit. Vol. pp. 295-6.

the tumultuous days of Cooch Behar, also died. Dhairyendra Narayan, released from captivity in Bhotan, then took charge of the State. The British succeeded where the Mughals had failed. For the first time in her history, Cooch Behar was obliged to accept the paramountcy of a power that had established itself over the Suba of Bengal. The immediate gain of Cooch Behar was that she was saved from the pernicious effects that Bhotanese domination had produced in her body-politic. How much was she benefited by her contact with the British was to be seen in the future years that gradually opened the modern period in her history. From the standpoint of British interests, it might be said that without involving in a major war the British were able to extend their political frontier towards the hill in the north that had so long been ignored by the rulers of Bengal.

It should be noted too that Bengal had not yet settled down to peace and tranquility. Besides, countries on the north and north-eastern frontiers of Bengal became scenes of disturbance. For some years past, the Sannyasis and the Fakirs had become a source of real trouble to the government of Bengal. They were motley bands of people in mendicant's robes consisting of bonafide Sannyasis and Fakirs, as well as of merchants, depredators and fighting elements; they were so intermingled that it was difficult to single out the really honest from the rougues among them. They were distributed in considerable numbers over a large area on the frontiers of Rangpur, Dinajpur and Purnea districts. Their quasi-permanent home, was in eastern Morang between the river's Mechi and Mahananda then under Sikkim. They accepted no authority, moved at will from one place to another, desperately fought the Company's troops and even sometimes held them at bay. When they were overpowered, they fell back; but it was not always possible for the Company's troops to trace them in the difficult jungle and mountain terrains. Often to avoid suspicion the enrolled themselves in the armed retinue of the Chiefs and Zaminders and fought as hired mercenaries. Greatly troubled, as he was, by these "hordes of desperate adventurers" Warren Hastings already decided upon their suppression.<sup>54</sup> No wonder, therefore, that Cooch Behar, being assured of the protection of

54. *Cal. Pers. Cores*—Vol. 4, (706-7).

Company, was also required to dismiss any Sannyasis either in the army or in the royal guards.

Operations against Baikunthapur were an action taken by the Supreme Power against its disloyal subordinate. Baikunthapur, however, showed a spirit of defiance without having the vigour to follow up. As a result, she was for ever humbled. Three days before the ratification of the treaty between Bhotan and the Company, Kinkar Baksi, the Vakil of Darpa Dev Raikat, petitioned Warren Hastings for the reinstatement of his master on payment of an increased revenue to the Company.<sup>55</sup> In order to restore law and order, the Company's troops hunted out the Sannyasis from place to place, till they sought a safer retreat in the wilds of Morang, its eastern part up to the river Mechi being under the weak administration of Sikkim, and the western, up to the river Kosi having been recently occupied by Nepal.

Thus, British intervention in the armed conflict of Cooch Behar, Baikunthapur and Bhotan was not without justification. British domination of Cooch Behar led to the extension of their interest and influence beyond Rangpur. At the same time, the Company was able to vindicate its rightful authority upon Baikunthapur; besides, it secured a strategic ground from where it could keep watch upon any intruder from the wild region beyond the river Mahananda, flowing on the western border of Baikunthapur. Perhaps with this end in view, Captain Jones had suggested to Warren Hastings the potentiality of Sannyasikata and its three forts within Baikunthapur on the bank of the Mahananda to command the whole country.<sup>56</sup>

Though not in 1774, within a few years of it, the wild tracts between the Mechi and the Mahananda developed into a source of danger for the Company's districts of Purnea, Dinajpur and Rangpur. King Prithvi Narayan of Nepal having made himself the master of the country decided to expand into the plains. He knew of the strong sentiments of the British against the Sannyasis and Fakirs, who usually came from the direction of Morang and scourged the northern districts of Bengal. That by holding Morang, Nepal would hold back the Sannyasis and Fakir raiders, was adduced as a good ground for expanding into that

55. *Rev. Bd. Pro.* 22. April, 1774 (13).

56. *For. Sec. Con.* 22 July, 1773 (2).



area. Prithvi Narayan's plea did not convince Warren Hastings, who, in August 1774, requested the King of Nepal to desist from such a course.<sup>56A</sup> But involved as he was in the affairs of Cooch Behar, Baikunthapur and Bhotan, Warren Hastings could not take any step to counteract Nepal's advance in Morang.

The ease with which Nepal had occupied Morang up to the Mechi river made her bold to cross the Mechi into Sikkim's part of Morang that bordered on the Company's districts of Rangpur and Purnea. In April, 1780, George Bogle, the Collector of Rangpur, alerted the Chief of the Provincial Council of Revenue in Purnea, against the depredations on the border of Baikunthapur by a rabble belonging to Jemadar Gangaram Thapa of Nepal. For nearly six years the English were obliged to keep strenuous watch upon their movements from the Baikunthapur side of the frontier. Gangaram increased his strength by enlisting all the lawless elements found in Morang.<sup>57</sup> Nepal at last became aware of the magnitude of British indignation, condemned Gangaram's actions and assured the British of Nepal's friendly disposition.<sup>58</sup> Eastern Morang, however, went under the control of Nepal, and not before the middle of the nineteenth century did the British decide to annex it to Bengal.

Apart from the necessity of maintaining law and order in the frontier district of Rangpur, the authorities at Calcutta cherished the hope that peace with Bhotan would open up the channel of British trade in the Himalaya. Even during the operations of war against Bhotan, they had enquired to Purling about the opportunities for the sale of their manufactures in Bhotan.<sup>59</sup> Purling, however, could not, at that hour, give any favourable opinion. But the authorities in London recommended a search for the scope of the Company's trade in the countries to the north of Bengal.<sup>60</sup> The offer of mediation by the Tashi Lama, was, therefore, welcomed by Warren Hastings. Not only had the Lama proposed an end of hostility between Bhotan and the Company, but also laid, for the first time, the line of

56A. *Calender of Pers. Correspondence*—Vol. 4, (137, 219-20).

57. Firminger, W. K.—*Rangpur Records*, Vol. 4, Letter Nos. 52, 54, 56.

58. *Op. Cit.*—Vol. 6 (Letter of 14 May, 1786, from Macdowall to Cowper, President, Committee of Revenue).

59. *Home. Con.*—21 June, 1773 (10).

60. *Pub. Letter from Court*—7 January, 1774.

communication between Tibet and British India. Warren Hastings' energies were, henceforward, directed to maintain that line and explore fresh fields of trade in and beyond the Himalaya.



## CHAPTER III

### Aftermath of Peace (1774-93)

On 4 May, 1774, Warren Hastings informed the Board of Revenue that the Tashi Lama's letter had been answered; and that he, on behalf of the East India Company, had proposed a general treaty of peace and commerce between Bengal and Bhotan. To execute the desires of the Court of Directors he had decided upon deputing a European servant of the Company to negotiate with Bhotan. Warren Hastings, then, arranged to get a passport for him. The person, whom he had selected for the task, was George Bogle, a man "of intelligence, assiduity and exactness of affairs". The Court of Directors also was duly informed.<sup>1</sup> On 7 May, a letter was addressed to the Tashi Lama; in it Warren Hastings expressed his desire to establish commercial relations between the Company and Tibet. He announced also the proposed mission of Bogle to the Tashi Lama.<sup>2</sup>

On 13 May, Bogle received his instructions. He was reminded of the purpose of his mission,—“to open a mutual and equal communication of trade between the inhabitants of Bhotan and Bengal”. He was to keep a diary of whatever merited his attention. He was specially to take note of all facts about the country he would visit,—the form of government, the mode of collecting the revenue and the character of the people. He should also enquire what countries lay between Lhasa and Siberia, and between China and Kashmir, and what means of communications were there. Tibet's trade with Bengal by gold and silver was also to be ascertained and if possible, information as to the course and navigation of the river Brahmaputra and the state of the countries through which it ran were to be collected.<sup>3</sup>

1. Markham, C.—Op. cit., p. 25.

2. *Cal. Pers. Corres.* Vol. 4 (1010).

3. Markham, C.—Op. cit., pp. 6-8.

The instructions given to Bogle clearly indicated the wide vision of the Governor-General as well as his thoroughness in learning all relevant facts in minute detail. Three salutary results might follow from the mission of George Bogle.<sup>4</sup> It might be argued that the friendship and goodwill of the Tashi Lama would be a check upon the unruly character of the Bhotanese. Secondly, with the Lama's co-operation, a trade-route between Bengal and Tibet might be opened across Bhotan. Thirdly, the greatest benefit would come, if through the influence of the Tashi Lama, the British could make a favourable impression at the Court of Peking. In fact, however, the British achieved very little. The prospects of success for Bogle's mission were dimmed by suspicion about the Europeans in the minds of the people of the hills and that suspicion only deepened on the arrival of Bogle in the Himalaya. Although Bhotan did not prove discourteous to him, Tibet refused to admit him. On 16 July, 1774, Bogle reported to Warren Hastings the sad news. At Tashi-chhodzong in Bhotan, he received the Tashi Lama's message that, his country being subject to the emperor of China, whose order it was not to admit any Mughal, Hindustani, Pathan and Firingi, he was helpless.<sup>5</sup>

Of course, Bogle suspected that the Tashi Lama himself was averse to his visit, and that his reference to China was a mere pretext. But Warren Hastings was less perturbed. On 10 August, 1774, he wrote back to Bogle, "if it is true that you cannot pass without an order from the emperor of China, perhaps you might still be allowed to leave some persons with the Rajah till such a licence could be obtained, or I should be well pleased to obtain a footing even at Tassuddea (Tashi-chhodzong) and make that a central point of communication with Lahassa. . . . Make what promises or engagements, you please, with your Rajah; I will ratify them".<sup>6</sup>

Thereupon, Bogle became busy collecting information and conferring with the Dev Raja and his officers on the advantages

4. Lamb, A. - *Britain and Chinese Central Asia*, p. 13.

5. On 5 August the Dev Raja also wrote to Warren Hastings a similar letter, and requested to recall the mission.  
*Cal. Pers. Corres. Vol. 4*, (1199).

6. Gleig, C. R.—*Op. cit.*—Vol. p. 415.

of a regular trade between Bengal and Bhotan. He came to learn that the annual caravan from Bhotan to Rangpur was principally an adventure of the Dev Raja, his ministers and the principal governors of Bhotan. The chief traders of Bhotan were very jealous of the traffic; so, it became difficult for Bogle to make them believe in the advantages they would also reap following a brisk trade between their country, Tibet and Bengal. To promote a better understanding between Bhotan and the Company, Bogle, on 11 October, 1774, pleaded with Warren Hastings for the issue of parwanas to the Bhotanese caravans proceeding to Rangpur; he also referred to a happy indication that some Bhotanese traders had expressed their desire to lead their caravans to Dinajpur and even to Calcutta.<sup>7</sup>

To this Warren Hastings responded promptly and in his address to the Dev Raja on 28 November, 1774, he assured him that "strictest orders have been issued to the officers of Rangpur and Ghoraghat dependent on the Subah of Bengal (the Paradise of Nations) that they do not obstruct the passage of the Bhotan merchants to those places for the purpose of carrying on their trade as formerly, but that they afford every assistance to their caravans."<sup>8</sup> With the letter Warren Hastings enclosed a parwana for the Bhotanese traders.

Meanwhile, Bogle had moved into the Phari district of Tibet and reached Shigatse, where the Tashi Lama was living. Here again, as in Bhotan, Bogle was received with courtesy, but the Tashi Lama could not give any assurance of success of the British mission. "The Company", he said to Bogle, "was like a great king and fond of war and conquest; and as my business and that of my people is to pray to God, I am afraid to admit any Firingis into the country."<sup>9</sup> The Lama further said that several persons including the Gyeltsap Rim-po-chhe, the Regent at Lhasa during the infancy of the Dalai Lama, had advised him against admitting Bogle to Tibet.

In spite of this discouraging remark against the British,

7. Markham., C.—Op. cit.—p. 52.

8. *Ibid.*—pp. 53-54.

9. *Ibid.*—p. 137.

Bogle did not lose heart. He told the Tashi Lama that the only desire of Warren Hastings was to open a free trade between Bengal and Tibet; and he left it entirely to him to consider the best means of doing it.

Bogle learnt from the Tashi Lama that the Tibetan merchants were accustomed to carry their commodities to Phari, where the Bhotanese merchants also proceeded with their indigenous productions as well as with those purchased by them in Bengal. At Phari, the traders of Tibet and Bhotan exchanged their commodities; but it was the Bhotanese who controlled the Bengal trade. Formerly, a quantity of Bengal trade flowed into Tibet through Morang and Sikkim; but the track having been infested with Sannyasis and fakirs, had been completely abandoned.<sup>10</sup> The Tashi Lama told Bogle of his concern over the decline of the trade with Bengal. He admitted that the Nepalese could not be trusted; for, not only had Nepal been forcibly encroaching upon the territories of her eastern neighbour in the hills, but also had demanded of Lhasa to direct the Tibetan merchants to go to the Nepalese trade station on the border of Shigatse and trade exclusively with the Nepalese. To Bogle's offer of British mediation in this affair, the Lama added that Nepal had also requested Lhasa to have no relations with them.<sup>11</sup>

It became clear to Bogle that the scope of Bengal's trade with Tibet was very limited. Also, the Tibetan merchants were reluctant to leave Phari their traditional mart. Should the British still desire a direct commercial intercourse with Tibet, Bhotan, for the time-being appeared to be its only channel. Above all, the permission of the authorities at Lhasa was necessary for the Tibetan merchants to trade directly with Bengal. The response of Lhasa on this point, however, was not satisfactory. Two deputies from Lhasa, on the request of the Tashi Lama, came and saw Bogle. They spoke of the risk of giving umbrage to the Chinese emperor by allowing Bogle into Tibet without his express consent.

Bogle came to know that China had established her supre-

10. *Ibid.*—p. 128.

11. *Ibid.*—p. 158.

macy upon Tibet some seventy years before by a timely intervention in the quarrels between two contending parties in Tibet.<sup>12</sup> So, there might be some reasons for Tibet's fear of allowing an Englishman into the country without previous permission from China. Bogle also understood fully that so long as the Lama Rimpo-chhe was in power at Lhasa, Tibet would remain a forbidden land to the British. The Tashi Lama also must have been feeling uneasy at the prolonged stay of Bogle in Tibet; for the eminence enjoyed by the Tashi Lama in Mongolia and China had already created enemies at Lhasa.<sup>13</sup> Thus, the possibilities of British trade in Tibet, that Warren Hastings had calculated, began to fade. The Tashi Lama, however, at the farewell interview told Bogle that he would try through the Lama of Peking to get permission for the English to go to the Chinese emperor. He also expected that within a year or two the Dalai Lama would come to power and then he "shall have no difficulty in carrying any point that the Governor pleases." He advised Bogle to send an Englishman to him again at that time. But so long as the Regent of Lhasa was there, the Company should send a Hindu, not an Englishman, as the envoy.

How far the Dalai Lama would help the English in Tibet was a matter of conjecture. Bogle, however, could not afford to despair. The East India Company stood in need of only a fair field of trade at Canton. That fair field was being persistently denied by the Chinese officers; the English were not getting the means of direct representation at the Peking Court either. So, if the Tashi Lama could help the English in Peking, that would be something worth having. Bogle, therefore, was justified in retaining his faith in the words that the Tashi Lama had spoken. His report on 25 May, 1775, from Tashi-chho-dzong will bear it out.<sup>14</sup> Bogle argued that if the Dev Raja permitted the Tibetans to come down to Bhotan, then Rinjipu in Paro might be fixed up as the central mart for Tibet-Bengal trade. For, Rinjipu was situated on the road from Bhotan to Phari

12. *Ibid.*—p. 138.

13. Lamb, A.—Op. cit., p. 4.

14. Markham, C.—Op. cit., pp. 182-86.

and was connected with Bengal by Dalimkot, Lakhi and Buxa duars. It appeared to Bogle from the trade catalogue of Bhotan and Tibet that rock-salt, wool and tea from Tibet constituted the main items that were exchanged for Bhotanese rice. Tobacco and betelnut of Bengal, however, enjoyed a wide market in Bhotan. So, if the Dev Raja could be persuaded to allow a free trade through his country, then traders of Bengal might go with other merchandise also and dispose of them at Rinjipu; they might carry them even to Tibet provided that the Tashi Lama could procure for them the necessary permission.

Warren Hastings too was thinking along the same lines. On 9 May, 1775, he had already directed Bogle to make his utmost endeavours "to settle conditions with the Raja for the establishment of an entire freedom of trade between his country and Bengal".<sup>15</sup> By the same letter, he authorised Bogle to inform the Dev Raja that the Company was ready to relinquish the customary duty of Rs. 2,000- exacted from the annual Bhotanese caravan at Rangpur; the Company also would be happy to see a reciprocal kindness shown by Bhotan to the traders from Bengal. Warren Hastings was opposed to the idea of forcing any terms upon Bhotan. The country was not rich enough to justify its conquest, nor was it an easy ground to capture and hold. Therefore, to overcome the hesitation or doubts of the Dev Raja, Bogle was to convince him that the Company had no other motive than that of a fair and honourable trade-deal. That would serve well the material interests of Bhotan and the Company alike. A few months before, Warren Hastings had written to the Dev Raja, offering him his best co-operation. He expressed great concern in case the Bhotanese traders should come across any difficulties during their stay in Bengal. The Governor-General might be wholly ignorant of the causes of their complaints, and he never wished any to occur. The distance between Calcutta and Punakha at this time obviously hindered immediate contact and settlement of any question at issue. Therefore, the Governor-General requested the Dev Raja "that a Vakil should reside here on your part to deliver your letters

15. Markham, C.—Op. cit., pp. 186-7.



to me and lay before me any representations you may have to make to me.”<sup>16</sup>

Bogle came down from Bhotan in June, 1775. He had not accomplished much. In fact, in return for a free movement of Bhotanese traders all over Bengal and their exclusive right to carry home indigo, tobacco, hides, and betelnut, Bogle was able to procure from the Dev Raja a free passage of only non-European traders from Bengal into Bhotan.<sup>17</sup> In his letter of 9 June, 1775, from Cooch Behar, he admitted to Warren Hastings that there was, at the moment, no fair prospect for the Company's trade in the Himalaya. The Bhotanese, in spite of all his persuasions, feared that the more the foreign merchants frequented their country, the more would they be robbed of their own profits from trade with Tibet. Bogle, however, made one concrete suggestion. In his opinion, the Bhotanese could be “effectually conquered only by the opportunities which a greater intercourse and more intimate acquaintance with the English may afford them of observing their fidelity to engagements and the moderation of their views.”<sup>18</sup> With regard to trade in Tibet, Bogle was aware of the obstacles which the English faced. But the ample scope of trade in Tibet should prevent the Company from despairing. Tibet depended on large supplies from other countries, and was able to pay back in gold-dust, coral, yak-tails, wool, musk and rock-salt. Merchants from distant countries crowded the Tibetan marts. It was imperative, therefore, that the English should endeavour to overcome the obstacles which stood in their way.

On 13 December, 1775, Warren Hastings and his Council discussed the report of Bogle. Due importance was given to the performance of Bogle, and a monthly salary of Rs. 1200- was granted him during the period of his mission. Warren Hastings decided to keep up a regular intercourse with the Tashi Lama of Tibet and with the Bhotan authorities. Evidently, the Governor-General did not accept as final ‘the

16. Markham, C.—Op. cit., p. 54.

17. *Home. Con.*—19 April, 1779 (4).

18. *Ibid.*—Op. cit., pp. 187-90.

failure of his first effort to reach Tibet. Rather, he became ready to grasp every chance to please both Bhotan and the Tashi Lama. On 5 December, 1774, having learnt from Bogle the desire of the Lama, he had granted him, for ever, a hundred bighas of land on the bank of the river Hooghly, opposite to Calcutta; he even arranged to lay out a garden and to construct a house and a temple for the Tibetan pilgrims visiting Bengal.<sup>19</sup>

Warren Hastings became kind to the Bhotanese also. The merchants from Bhotan were allowed to travel with their caravans to Rangpur without having to suffer at the frontier ferries and check-posts. At the annual fair in Rangpur, stables for their beasts of burden, and houses for the Bhotanese merchants were erected at the cost of the government. The Bhotan authorities, however, traded upon the kindness of the Governor-General. The language of the Anglo-Bhotanese peace treaty was rather vague upon the lands ceded to Bhotan. Besides, nothing was done subsequently to demarcate their boundaries. Bhotan took advantage of this; and the Dev Raja, through his Deputy, Tam Choopi Suba, placed before the Governor-General his claims upon the lands of Ambari-Falakata and Jalpesh, both belonging to the Zamindary of the Raikat of Baikunthapur.<sup>20</sup> Orders were immediately issued to the Provincial Council of Revenue at Dinajpur to redress the grievances of Bhotan and also to assure her freedom from all exactions and restrictions on her trade<sup>21</sup>. Above all, Warren Hastings made a present of 5,000 rupees to the Dev Raja as a mark of the Company's friendship.<sup>22</sup>

These measures were prompted by the Governor-General's scheme to depute Dr. Alexander Hamilton, (who had accompanied Bogle in the first mission) on a good-will mission to Bhotan. Dr. Hamilton started in November, 1775, and reached Punakha in April, next year. Dr. Hamilton, however, failed to proceed to Tibet as the Tashi Lama did not like it.

19. *Cal. Pers. Corres.* Vol. 5 (253).

20. *Gov. Gen. Pro.*—29 September, 1775 (4827-8).

21. *Ibid.*—(4833-4).

22. *Cal. Pers. Corres.*—Vol. 4 (2083).

The Chinese Officer was at Tashil-humpo. Dr. Hamilton, therefore, performed his duties only in Bhotan. With his experience about the authorities of Bhotan, he came back fully convinced that Ambari-Falakata and Jalpesh should be made over to Bhotan. Nothing short of that would make her believe in the friendship of the Company. But W. Harewood, the Chief of the Provincial Council of Revenue at Dinajpur, whom Warren Hastings had directed to examine the claims of the Dev Raja arrived at a different conclusion. In his letter to the Governor-General on 20 May, 1777, he opined that the Dev Raja's claims upon Ambari-Falakata and Jalpesh were inadmissible, as those rightfully belonged to Baikunthapur.<sup>23</sup>

The opinion of Harewood really posed a problem for the Governor-General. Bhotan was still like a bird in the bush. No doubt, the bait of Ambari-Falakata and Jalpesh was alluring to Bhotan; but nobody could definitely say that Bhotan would reciprocate the generosity of the Company. In July, 1777, Dr. Hamilton again went to Bhotan to greet the new Dev Raja Jigme Sengye as well as to enquire about Tashi Lama; but he came back disappointed and shattered in health. In December, 1778, there arrived in Bengal one Nirpur Paiga, the Vakil of the Dev Raja. He had brought with him a letter that categorically denied any privileges to the English and other Europeans in Bhotan,<sup>24</sup> Bhotan's declaration closing her doors to all Europeans was quickly followed by another representation. The Vakil complained that Darpa Dev of Baikunthapur was in occupation of the lands pertaining to Kranti, Ambari-Falakata and Jalpesh, and that the Nazir Dev of Cooch Behar occupied still greater area of the territories ceded to Bhotan by the British.

It might be argued that Bhotan was putting undue pressure upon the Bengal government. Warren Hastings, however, with an uncommon patience tolerated her gracefully. On 6 April, 1779, he decided that the lands in question were "very trifling and not worthy to stand as an obstacle to the friendship

23. Extract of a letter from Purnea, 11 January, 1787, to the Collector of Rangpur—Firminger, W. K.—*Rangpur Records*, Vol. 6.

24. Sen, S. N.—*Records in Oriental Languages (Bengali Letters)*, Vol. I, No. 1.

and satisfaction of a neighbouring and independent State.”<sup>25</sup> So, a list of Bhotan’s complaints together with the orders of the government was sent to Goodlad, the Collector of Rangpur. The Collector was to ensure that Bhotan got immediate possession of the lands she had claimed. Darpa Dev of Baikunthapur should be made to show the account of the revenue collected by him from those lands since the first year of the peace treaty. That account being placed, Bhotan’s claim upon the revenue of those lands should also be settled. Besides, the Chiefs of Baikunthapur, Cooch Behar and Rangamati should be told never to send either men or warrants into Bhotan’s jurisdiction except with the specific permission of Bhotan’s officers. Claims against any subject of Bhotan should be made either to the Bhotanese officers on the frontier, or to the Collector of Rangpur. The Collector should also take necessary steps to satisfy any claim of a Bhotanese against any subject of Bengal. In due consideration for Bhotan’s request to re-establish the mint at Cooch Behar, the Rangpur Collector should see that no merchant from Bhotan suffered from want of currency. The Collector, therefore, should provide them with as much Narayani coins as they required at a rate of exchange satisfactory to them. Further, those merchants should be given every help and protection they asked for; and the Chiefs, Zamindars and officers in the northern part of Bengal should be informed accordingly.<sup>26</sup>

Never before had the Governor-General thought of granting so many concessions to the Bhotanese. His present attitude, however, was due to his intention to depute Bogle once again to the Tashi Lama. The Lama Rim-po-chhe, who, a few years ago, had been considered a major obstacle to Bogle’s entry into Tibet, was now dead. On 19 April, 1779, Bogle was appointed to proceed again to Tibet. With the help of Tashi Lama, Bogle was to try to open “a communication with the Court of Peking, and if possible, to procure leave to proceed thither”. Warren Hastings compared this venture to contact China with “the navigation of unknown

25. *Gov. Gen. Pro.* 6 April, 1779 (1346-55).

26. *Gov. Gen. Pro.* 6 April, 1779 (1335-62) 2-6.

seas". "The attempt", he frankly admitted, "may be crowned with the more splendid and substantial success; or it may terminate in the mere satisfaction of useless curiosity. But the hazard is small, the design is worthy of the pursuit of a rising state."<sup>27</sup> The hopes of the Governor-General were shared by all. Even Philip Francis, who could not wholly concur with Warren Hastings, could not deny altogether the usefulness of such a step.<sup>28</sup>

Unfortunately, however, the mission had to be abandoned before Bogle could leave Calcutta. From Purangiri Gossain the authorities at Calcutta got news that the Tashi Lama was going to Peking in September and that he had desired Bogle to go to Canton by sea and join him in the capital of China. Upon this, Warren Hastings sought to procure for the Tashi Lama some finest corals and pearls, to be presented to the Chinese emperor, and some beautiful and swift Arab horses to be presented to the emperor, from his side.<sup>29</sup> Before long, however, he received the disheartening news that the Tashi Lama had died at Peking on 12 November, 1780. Within a few months of this, Bogle also died at Calcutta.

During all these events the Company's relations with Bhotan remained as cordial as possible. On 7 May, 1779, Goodlad, the acting Collector of Rangpur addressed a letter to the Council of Revenue pledging all his efforts to satisfy the Bhotanese.<sup>30</sup> The Governor-General's policy of appeasement, however, was not endorsed by all. The Dinajpur Council had failed to see the propriety of Bhotan's claims upon Jalpesh and Ambari-Falakata. Even Purling, who had been at Rangpur both before and after the first Anglo-Bhotanese war, was not aware of any such claims.<sup>31</sup> Warren Hastings, however, had his own ideas. He cherished within him the hope of seeing Tibet opened

27. *Home. Con.* 19 April, 1779 (1).

28. *Pub. Con.* 19 April, 1779 (7).

29. *Cal. Pers. Corres.* Vol. 5 (1555).

30. Firminger, W. K.—*Bengal Dist. Records* (Rangpur), Vol. 4, letter (17).

31. Report of Purling to the Board of Revenue on 20 March, 1790—*Cooch Behar Select Records*, Vol. 1, p. 10.

her doors to the Company one day. Although Dr. Hamilton, the Tashi Lama and Bogle passed away one after one, he did not lose heart. Since the road to Tibet lay across Bhotan, he could not afford to estrange Bhotan. This not unreasonable supposition was proved, when on 12 February, 1782, Chhag-zo-kusto the half-brother of the late Tashi Lama, sent Warren Hastings the information that the departed soul of his brother had re-appeared in an infant in their country. Purangiri communicated this message of friendship from the Regent of Tashilhumpo. It seemed to the Governor-General that the road to Tibet was restored. Without delay, therefore, he decided upon a fresh mission to Tibet. That was to be led by Captain Samuel Turner of the Bengal Military Service, accompanied by S. Davis of the Bengal Engineers and Dr. R. Saunders.

The Turner Mission left Calcutta early in the year 1783, and reached Checha-khata in early May. There, the Bhotanese Zinkafs were waiting to conduct the mission to Bhotan. On reaching the summer capital of Bhotan in the early part of June, Turner's first duty became to cede Ambari-Falakata and Jalpesh to Bhotan. Then, in September, the mission started for Tibet. As it had happened with Bogle, this time also only two Englishmen, Turner and Dr. Saunders were admitted into Tibet. Besides, the antipathy of Tsomoling, the new Regent of Lhasa, confined the mission within Tasilhumpo. However, Turner's mission was not a complete failure. He brought for Warren Hastings useful information, and added to what Bogle had already brought. Especially, his report, submitted to the Governor-General at Patna on 2 March, 1784, threw light upon the nature of China's control over Tibet. Tibet, according to that report, did not bend under the immediate authority of China; but fear of China's power over-awed the Tibetans "in all their proceedings, and produces a timidity and caution in their conduct more suited to the character of subjects than allies."<sup>32</sup> They avoided any situation that invited Peking's attention and active interference. But Tibet offered

32 Turner, S.—Op. cit., p. 253.

a field for a variety of mercantile projects. Her mines and minerals "are capable of opening to them such inexhaustible sources of wealth as to be alone sufficient to purchase everything of which they stand in need."<sup>33</sup> Besides, the Regent at Tashilhumpo promised Turner help for all Indian merchants coming to trade with Tibet. They were promised transport right from the frontiers of Bhotan, and also a place for disposing of their commodities during their stay in Tibet. Turner, of course, did not insist upon the Regent's signing an agreement to that effect, because that would be valid only during the minority of the Tashi Lama. While in Bhotan, Turner was deeply moved by the friendly disposition of that government. So, he did not press the authorities of Bhotan to sign a treaty for the regulation of the Company's trade by means of the agency of Indian merchants through the territory of Bhotan.<sup>34</sup>

Having been, so long, tossed upon hopes and dupes by turn, Warren Hastings was, at last, in sight of success. Contact with Lhasa was still far off. Only the first step to land in Tibet was gained; but that was enough for the present. Warren Hastings wanted to see if a non-European caravan from Bengal would be tolerated by the Tibetan authorities in their country. In April, 1784, the government invited the people of Bengal to carry trade with Tibet through Bhotan. The traders should assemble in February, 1785. A complete list of those articles likely to get a ready market in Tibet would be announced. Besides, the first enterprise would be exempted from all duties. An advertisement was, accordingly issued on 20 May, 1784, by the government.<sup>35</sup>

Much enthusiasm was also noticed among the Indian merchants. Purangiri Gossain, who, played a conspicuous role in maintaining the link between Calcutta and Tashilhumpo, informed Turner that before he reached Tashilhumpo, merchants from Bengal had already brought their commodities in Tibet, and many others were on the way.<sup>36</sup> This effort

33. *Ibid.*—p. 370.

34. *Ibid.*—p. 376.

35. *Rev. Comm. Pro.*—20 May 1784 (3-4).

36. Turner. S.—Op. cit., p. 428.

on the part of the Indian merchants was clearly in response to the advertisement issued by the government on 20 May, 1784. But Warren Hastings had started for England, before he could get the news from the Gossain himself. Purangiri Gossain, however, told Turner that everyone at Tashilhumpo had expressed an anxious desire to continue the friendly relation between Bengal and Tibet. The infant Lama, and the Regent of Tashilhumpo had also given letters for the Governor-General.<sup>37</sup>

The extra-ordinary success that followed the mission of Samuel Turner was hailed from every quarter. Macpherson, who became the acting Governor-General in February, 1785, expressed the hope that the happy relation established with Tibet should continue. So, he desired to use the services of Purangiri Gossain for the purpose.<sup>38</sup> Already, in October, 1784, Purangiri represented the Company at the installation ceremony of the infant Tashi Lama in Tashilhumpo monastery in the presence of the Dalai Lama, and the Chinese Ambans. The Court of Directors also arranged for a mission to the Court of Peking under Lieutenant-Colonel Cathcart. Besides, the Court expressed reliance upon the friendly disposition of Bhotan, and enjoined that Bhotan should not be disturbed by any section from the British side.<sup>39</sup> Also, the Dev Raja while congratulating the successor of Warren Hastings hoped that "the same friendship and attachment as was found with his predecessor" would continue.<sup>40</sup>

The soft policy of Warren Hastings towards Bhotan continued for a few more years after him, and the Bengal Government attended to every complaint lodged by Bhotan. Thus, in February, 1787, on her complaining that she could not get possession of Ambari-Falakata owing to the opposition of Baikunthapur, immediate actions were taken to pacify her. Similarly, on her demand, the village of Bhot-hat was taken from Kanta Babu of Kasim-bazar and was given to Bhola

37. *Ibid.*—p. 430.

38. Markham. C.—Op. cit., p. LXXV.

39. *Public letter from Court*—23 March, 1787, Paraa, 232-235.

40. *Cal. Pers. Corres.* Vol. 7 (500).



Kayet a subject of Bhotan.<sup>41</sup> Even the charges for the bearers and porters of the Bhotanese agent, Tomba Suba, travelling to Calcutta, were accepted by the government as a political charge.<sup>42</sup> Besides, Cooch Behar was ordered to pay for the silver that Bhotan was said to have given her for converting it into Narayani coins. The estates of Bijni and Bidyagram in Goalpara were placed under the faujdar of Rangamati to ensure that Bhotan regularly got her tributes from those territories.<sup>43</sup>

In the midst of this smooth flow of affairs, an unforeseen calamity broke out and upset the entire progress of British interests in the eastern Himalaya. This was the invasion of Tibet by Nepal, an event which also brought the Chinese into the scene. Bengal's trade with Tibet was suspended, and consequently Bhotan's door was also closed to the merchants of Bengal.

By 1780, Nepal had established herself in the eastern part of Morang between the rivers Mechi and Mahananda. This tract of 271 square miles came under Sikkim's possession sometime in the latter half of the seventeenth century. How it came into Nepal's possession is altogether a different story. To briefly narrate, the Gorkhas took advantage of the rival factions in eastern Morang and became the master. But from the year Nepal had set foot on eastern Morang the north-western parts of Rangpur were exposed to occasional raids by the Gorkhas in league with the unlawful people living in eastern Morang. Warren Hastings is said to have contemplated a campaign against Nepal, but that did not materialise.<sup>44</sup> In January, 1784 he decided to send a friendly mission under Foxcroft to Nepal.<sup>45</sup> But within a few months of it, the Governor-General left India, and nothing more was heard about the mission.

The Nepal government, however, in a letter of 13 May, 1786, to the Collector of Rangpur, professed peace and amity

41. *Cooch Behar Select Records*—Vol. I, p. 4.

42. Rev. Comm. Pro.—11 April, 1786 (14, 15) C. R.

43. *Ibid.*—17 July, 1787 (6, 7).

44. Lamb, A.—*Tibet in Anglo-Chinese Relations*, J. R. A. S. 1958, p. 2.

45. *Cal. Pors. Corres.*, Vol. 6, p. 324.

with the Company's government; also it gave an apologetic explanation for all the outrages committed by the Gorkha Jemadar Gangaram Thapa within the territories of Baikunthapur.<sup>46</sup> Obviously the Nepal government did not desire to leave the British offended in the rear when it had decided to engage in a war in the north. In July, 1788, the Gorkhas burst into the valley of Tibet. The four border districts of Tibet in the areas of Kuti and Kerong Pass were their objective. A simultaneous attack was made on Sikkim to secure the trade route through Sikkim and Chumbi Valley opened by Tibet in 1784.

The authorities of Tashilhumpo naturally turned to the East India Company for help. Macdowall, the Collector of Rangpur reported on 9 December, 1788, to the authorities at Calcutta that two Muslim "Ambassadors with Dispatches for your Lordship" from the Tashi Lama of Tibet had seen him the previous night. From their talks, Macdowall learnt that Nepal had attacked the Lama's country.<sup>47</sup> Lord Cornwallis, however, on 27 February, 1789, informed the "Teshoo Lama" that his government could not render any help, for the distance between Calcutta and Tibet was considerable, and the Company had received no provocation from Nepal; besides, China would dislike any British interference in the conflict between Nepal and Tibet, since the latter was protected state of China.<sup>48</sup>

After a lull of two years the Tibeto-Nepalese conflict in the late summer of 1791, became a serious affair owing to the presence of imperial troops headed by General Fukang-an. Purangiri came to Calcutta with letters from Lhasa. The Lhasa authorities requested the British to remain neutral.<sup>49</sup> The difficulties of Nepal was an opportunity for Lord Cornwallis to send Abdul Kader to Kathmandu in November, 1791, with British terms for a commercial agreement. The result was the commercial treaty, signed on 1 March, 1792 between the two governments. Lord Cornwallis, however,

46. Firminger, W. K.—*Bengal District Records* (Rangpur), Vol. 6.

47. *Home. Con.*—22 December, 1788 (27).

48. Diskalkar, D. B.—*Macartney papers preserved in the Satara Museum*, (J. B. O. R. S. Vol. 19, 1933—pp. 372-73).

49. *Ibid.*—p. 375.

was embarrassed when Nepal being encouraged by the commercial treaty appealed the Governor-General for help with munitions of war.<sup>50</sup> On 15 September, 1792, Lord Cornwallis gave his reply expressing his inability to help, for that would be against "the general policy of the British Government", and would be "inconsistent with connection that has so long prevailed between the Company and the (Chinese) Emperor".<sup>51</sup> Lord Cornwallis, however, to effect peace in the Himalaya decided to send Colonel Kirkpatrick to mediate between Nepal and China. But Nepal had already been forced to sign on 30 September, 1792, an ignominious treaty with China; when in mid-February, 1793, Colonel Kirkpatrick reached Nepal he found there no work for him. He was bowed out of the country.

Lord Cornwallis' neutrality in the Tibeto-Nepalese war cost the East India Company heavily. First, the Nepal government looked upon the commercial treaty with the British as a dead letter. Secondly, the Chinese hold upon Tibet was tightened for good, bringing to an end, in consequence, all advantages that the traders from Bengal had just begun to enjoy in Tibet. The trading pilgrims in Tibet were suspected as agents of the British, and driven out of the country. Thirdly, Lord Macartney, whose embassy to China coincided with these turmoils in the Himalaya, realised China's distrust of the activities of the British in the Himalaya on the frontier of China. Chinese re-action to the events in the Himalaya, perhaps, did not materially affect the mission of Lord Macartney; but, since the Tibeto-Nepalese war, British interests in the Himalaya and the re-action of China towards them became a major factor in eastern Himalayan politics.<sup>52</sup> When in 1798, after the prolonged storm in the Westminster Hall were over, the absurdity of his "seeking an intercourse with China through Tibet and Bhotan" was pointed out to Warren Hastings.<sup>53</sup>

50. *Ibid.* p. 377.

51. *Ibid.*—pp. 383-84.

52. Lamb, A.,—*Tibet in Anglo-Chinese Relations (1767-1842)*, J. R. A. S., 1958, Parts I & II, p. 30.

53. *The Nesbitt Thompson Papers*, VIII, No. 80 (Bengal Past and Present, Vol. 20, p. 11).

This new development in the Himalaya became also an opportunity for Bhotan to evade her obligation to allow traders from Bengal into her territory. It was an obligation, which she had once accepted under duress although it proved to be a blessing for her. For, it had enabled her to bargain successfully with the British, and advance her southern frontier into Bengal. Practically, the recommendations of the Dinajpur Council to keep Bhotan within the frontier of the year 1774, were rendered invalid by the charitable disposition of Warren Hastings. So, when in May, 1787, Lord Cornwallis issued orders to the Collector of Rangpur to adjudicate the boundaries between Baikunthapur, and between Bhotan and Cooch Behar, it was found that Bhotan was not in need of it. According to the report of Macdowall, the Collector of Rangpur, Bhotan had even taken possession of a number of villages that had no connection at all with Jalpesh which had been conferred upon her. In July, 1787, when Messrs Mercer and Chauvet were asked by the government to make such arrangements as to prevent any disputes between Baikunthpur and Bhotan, the Bhotanese agents communicated to Chauvet that no more investigation was necessary.<sup>54</sup>

But, for so long Bhotan was wooed by the British with the ultimate object of promoting their trade in the Himalayan world. Now, after the Tibeto-Nepalese war, that trade having abruptly come to an end, there was no logic in appeasing Bhotan any longer. The chief traders of Bhotan must have permitted the traders from Bengal to use her roads in the hope of annexing more lands in the plains of Bengal. Lands in the plains, in fact, were from the point of revenue, more promising than her trade. But, it was impossible for the Company to hold back the territorial concessions made to Bhotan because of the cessation of Tibetan trade with Bengal. To take them back would mean an open rupture with Bhotan again.

So, with an unfavourable balance in their transactions with the Bhotanese, it became imperative for the British to review the policy adopted, hitherto, towards the Himalayan countries in

54. *Cooch Behar Select Records*, Vol. 1, pp. 8-10.

general, and towards Bhotan, in particular. The recent experience gained by them from the Tibeto-Nepalese war underlined a note of caution for the Company. For, the shadow of China in the Himalaya was unmistakably seen. Therefore, British policy towards Bhotan, in future, would very much depend upon the consideration of this factor as well. From that standpoint, the beginning of the nineteenth century marked also the beginning of a new epoch in the history of Anglo-Bhotanese relations. In view of any Chinese interference in the southern slopes of the Himalaya again, the line of action to be taken by the British in respect of the Himalayan Countries would converge with the line of Chinese advance. Thus, British softness towards Bhotan, that had sprung from the necessity of trade in the Himalaya was required to be diverted into a new channel to meet the necessity of guarding the northern frontier of Bengal.



## CHAPTER IV

### **Examination of the Pro-Bhutan Policy**

(1793-1838)

Bhotan was less worried over this Tibeto-Nepalese war, which eventually paralysed Bengal's trade with Tibet. Rather, she was glad that the merchants from Bengal did not frequent her roads. For, the less often they came, the fewer were the chances of her losing her own share of the Tibetan trade. But Bhotan believed that she could still bargain with the government of the Company even though she herself was unwilling to make any concessions. From the last few years of the eighteenth century to the thirties of the nineteenth her relations with the British took a new turn. The latter took a great risk by allowing Bhotan to expand, out of proportion, into the plains just along their newly acquired frontier in the north.

As there was no clear demarcation on some parts of Bhotan's southern frontier, there were attempts on the part of the Bhotanese to encroach upon the adjacent villages of Baikunthapur and Cooch Behar. Reports began to reach the authorities at Calcutta that robberies were often committed by the Bhotanese within the boundaries of Baikunthapur and Cooch Behar. The Company had not till then instituted well-defined boundaries of police posts along the frontier. So, it was not possible for the Company's government to keep watch upon every symptom of violence and disorder on this frontier of Bengal. Besides, standing midway between the period of a romantic attraction for Bhotan and the period of a realistic assessment of the situation in the Himalaya, the Company was beset with hesitation over whether it should give up its pro-Bhotan policy.

This hesitation was first revealed in their attitude to the dispute between Cooch Behar and Bhotan over the taluq of Bhalka. Bhalka comprised eighteen villages situated

on the east and west banks of the river Sankosh. Kumar Karindra Narayan held them under a Jagir tenure from the ruler of Cooch Behar. Bhotan claimed that the villages had been transferred to the Suba of Buxa by a deed of gift by the jagirdar. The corroborating documents however, could not be produced by Bhotan. In 1794, Charles Andrew Bruce, the earlier Commissioner of Cooch Behar, had decided the case in favour of Cooch Behar. But next year, on representation from Bhotan, orders were issued by the Governor-General Sir John Shore to probe into the matter again.<sup>1</sup> Consequently, Richard Ahmuty, the Commissioner of Cooch Behar, on the grounds that seven of the villages on the east Bank of the Sankosh had a large number of Bhotanese ryots, made them over to Bhotan, leaving the rest to Cooch Behar.<sup>2</sup> In 1800 A. D., Raja Harendra Narayan of Cooch Behar appealed to the British government for justice against the decree dispossessing him of a fair portion of Bhalka. But the decision was not altered.<sup>3</sup>

This must have emboldened the Bhotanese, for within a year they gave further proof of their delinquency. A person, named Pullanee (Payroo in Bhotanese letters), being charged with murder and robbery in the house of Kumar Baikuntha Narayan of Cooch Behar, had been sentenced to death by the British government; Pullanee, however, fled from confinement and took shelter in Bhotan. From the deposition of Pullanee, Jadunath Isore, a subject of Bhotan, was also found to be involved. But he was in Bhotan. According to the article of peace-treaty of 1774, and in all fairness to equity and justice, the British government demanded that Pullanee be surrendered and that Jadunath Isore be made to pay Rs. 4000/- as compensation to the family of Baikuntha Narayan. The Bhotan government, while professing firm friendship for the British, refused either to hand over Pullanee or make

1. Hunter, W. W.—*Bengal Mss Records in the Board of Revenue* Vol. 1, p. 139 (35) Sl, 4911.

2. *Cooch Behar Select Records*—Vol. I, pp. 33-34.

3. Sen, S. N.—*Op. cit.* (25).

Jadunath pay the compensation. On the contrary, it held both the cases to be fabricated, and as such, declined to comply with the requests of the British government.<sup>4</sup>

Meanwhile, owing to Bhotan's efforts to push her boundary forward from the side of Maraghat and Chamurchi into the jurisdiction of Cooch Behar, a new dispute cropped up. The British government, however took a firm stand. On 15 April, 1809, Bhotan was informed that the British government was in favour of a peaceful adjustment of claims, and that it would also protect Cooch Behar from all unjust aggressions.<sup>5</sup> An enquiry was instituted; and James Morgan, the Commissioner of Cooch Behar, reported to the government of Bengal that the lands in question (12 villages and 3 hats) actually belonged to Cooch Behar. For, the local people also pointed out that the revenue of those lands had been collected by Kumar Devendra Narayan, Officer on the part of Cooch Behar; it was only after the murder of that officer by the Bhotanese that Bhotan began to encroach upon those lands. Moreover, the lands were within Cooch Behar's portion of Maraghat fixed by Purling long ago.<sup>6</sup> Still, the British government wanted to solve the dispute by negotiations with the government of Bhotan, and so requested the Dev Raja to send a responsible officer to the frontier. At the request of the British government two officers of Bhotan went to the place of dispute, the British being represented by J. Digby, the acting Commissioner of Cooch Behar. On the strength of circumstantial evidences, Digby upheld the decision taken by Morgan.<sup>7</sup> Upon this, the British informed the Dev Raja on 19 October, 1809, that Bhotan should withdraw from those lands which her subjects had occupied "by gradual encroachment during a long course of years" and should take "necessary measures to prevent any similar encroachments in future".<sup>8</sup>

4. *For Pol. Con.*; 25 March. 1802 (25).

5. *Cooch Behar Select Records*—Vol. I, P. 188.

6. *Ibid.*—pp. 186-87.

7. *Ibid.*—p. 193 (Letter of J. Digby to G. Dowdes Well, 20 Sept. 1809).

8. *Ibid.*—p. 194.



Bhotan, however, paid no attention. And, on the representation of Digby on 5 January, 1810, the government suggested that she should be requested to withdraw peaceably; should that fail, a military force was to be employed in support of the ruler of Cooch Behar.<sup>9</sup> The time was indeed unsuitable for any other step for Bhotan was passing through a period of civil war and so negotiations would be fruitless. The political climate of Bhotan in its characteristic way generated intrigues, strifes and craze for power among men in high position. From 1805 to 1811 no Dev Raja felt secure on the throne nor could they bring stability of the government. As many as five Dev Rajas reigned during this period, but hardly did each one hold the sceptre for the year. Moreover, the Bhotanese officers had become so distrustful of the English that even Rev. W. Robinson, the Baptist Missionary, failed to procure, at about this time, permission to reside and preach in the territories of Bhotan.<sup>10</sup>

Lord Minto, however, was against creating bitterness, and so in February, 1810, referred Bhotan to her unjust occupation of the lands adjudicated to belong to Cooch Behar.<sup>11</sup> At last, on the report of Digby that Bhotanese forces under the Suba of Chamurchi had attacked the subjects of Cooch Behar, the government decided to send troops.<sup>12</sup> The arrival of British troops in Maraghat under Captain Lewis Bird produced striking results; it proved, beyond doubt, the usefulness of military action instead of fruitless negotiations. The Bhotanese being afraid of fighting with the British troops quitted the boundaries of Cooch Behar territory.<sup>13</sup>

At this stage, Lord Minto faced a strange dilemma. Tenderness shown to Bhotan had only encouraged her unreasonable demands; so sympathy for Cooch Behar led her to believe that under the protection of the British government, she could retaliate against Bhotan. The Dev Raja lodged a complaint that in the presence of British troops the ruler of Cooch Behar

9. *Ibid.*—p. 195.

10. Robinson, J.—*Memoirs of Rev. W. Robinson*—p. 105.

11. *For. Pol. Con.*; 13 February, 1810 (67).

12. *Cooch Behar Select Records*—Vol. I, P. 201.

13. *Ibid.*—p. 203 (Letter of Digby to Dowdeswell, 25 April, 1811).

had encroached upon Bhotan's territorial jurisdiction. Even, the Commissioner of Cooch Behar became very perturbed by the alleged provocation given by Cooch Behar in inciting Bajradhar Karji, a Zamindar in Mainaguri Duar, to rise in mutiny against Bhotan. Moreover, the news of the harassment of the Bhotanese traders at Cooch Behar on their way to Rangpur, was really disquieting. Cooch Behar's conduct was not quite in accord with the commitments of the British government to Bhotan.<sup>14</sup>

Bhotan was annoyed with the British Government, which appeared to her to be favouring Cooch Behar unduly. In January, 1811, she turned down the request of the British Government to send troops to apprehend Mohunt Ram, a robber, who fled the Company's territories to Bhotan. Bhotan's plea was that the sight of British troops would scare away the simple-minded Bhotanese. She, however, declared that she herself would punish Mohunt Ram severely.<sup>15</sup> Bhotan also refused to accept British arbitration in fixing the river Gilandi as the boundary between Bhotan and Cooch Behar in Chamur-chi duar. She pleaded that owing to destruction by fire of a decree on the disputed lands, she had failed to convince Digby of her right to those lands, conceded by Warren Hastings. The ruler of Cooch Behar, however, by producing a decree given by Purling, which was at variance with the earlier one given by Warren Hastings to Bhotan, had succeeded in establishing his rights. Bhotan, therefore, proposed to send her own Vakil, Ram Nath Kayet, to the Governor-General to represent her in the matter.<sup>16</sup> But the British government had nothing more to do, for the boundary award was already communicated to the Bhotan government.

The general situation in the eastern Himalaya went, in the meantime, against British interests. Therefore, it was not possible to attend to the affairs of Bhotan or Cooch Behar without making a reference to that situation. By 1813, relations between the Company and Nepal deteriorated rapidly, leaving

14. *Cooch Behar Select Records*—Vol. I., pp. 209-11.

15. For. Pol. Con.; 13 April, 1811 (68).

16. *Ibid.*—13 November, 1812 (49).

no scope for peace between them. And in November, 1814, Lord Hastings, the successor of Lord Minto, was compelled to declare war against Nepal.

Having no definite understanding with the principalities in the eastern Himalaya, the British government might reasonably suspect an undercurrent of anti-British intrigues among them. Above all, Sino-Nepalese relations as determined by the treaty of 1792, largely contributed to the fears of the British of Chinese intervention in the event of Nepal being attacked by a foreign Power. Dr. B. Hamilton, who stayed in Nepal more than a year suspected Nepal of using China against the British. It was necessary to remove China's suspicions by making it clear to her that the British Government had no desire to annex the kingdom of Nepal. But efforts were made in 1812 by Nepal during her mission to Peking at every fifth year, to incite China against the British. Alleging that the British, after the conquest of Nepal, would fall upon Lhasa, Nepal appealed for Chinese help.<sup>17</sup> Therefore, the British government thought it was an urgent necessity to come to a friendly understanding with Bhotan, as well as to enter, for the first time, into a political relationship with Sikkim. Sikkim was closely connected with Lhasa; and owing to the fact that she had suffered heavily at the hands of the Gorkhas, might be easily enlisted as an ally of the British. Also, she might become a new channel of friendly communications between Lhasa and the British government the old channel being dried up in the last decade of the eighteenth century. Accordingly, in December, 1814, David Scott, the Collector of Rangpur was directed to contact Lhasa either through Bhotan or through Sikkim. Bhotan was particularly requested not to act against the British.<sup>18</sup> There was a marked improvement of the political climate of Bhotan also at about this time.

On 5 January, 1815, the Dev Raja Mewang Dugyal wrote to the British government that he had learnt

17. Lamb, A.—*Tibet in Anglo-Chinese Relations* 1767-1842 J. R. A. S., Parts 3 & 4, 1958, p. 29.

18. Lamb, A.—*Britain and Chinese Central Asia*—p. 42.

from a letter of the Governor-General, on 29 November, 1814, of the circumstances leading to the Anglo-Nepalese war. Should the Nepalese try to cross Bhotan's territory to attack the British, the Dev Raja would immediately inform the British government. Besides, the Dev Raja treated as baseless the British allegation that Bhotan was mobilising troops at the passes of Dalimkot and Chamurchi.<sup>19</sup> Two months afterwards, another letter from Bhotan reached the Collector of Rangpur with this assurance that the relation of Company and Bhotan was like one "between milk and water"; and as such, Nepal could not drive any wedge between them. The Dev Raja was even prepared to send a passport for a trustworthy agent whom the British government had proposed to despatch.<sup>20</sup>

But the British Government could not be reassured. Captain Latter, deputed on the special mission to win over Sikkim to the British side, gave hints of a "secret understanding subsisting between the Goorkhas and the Dev Raja".<sup>21</sup> As a result, Macleod, the Commissioner of Cooch Behar, who had gone to Calcutta on duty was immediately ordered back to his station.<sup>22</sup> Macleod discovered that a secret correspondence was going on also between Bhotan and Cooch Behar. The ruler of Cooch Behar had sent his brother-in-law, Karindra Nath on a mission to Bhotan "having for its express object an offer to the Bhooteahs of all the lands in Maraghat." Cooch Behar, in return, asked for "a large military force" to help her in effecting Cooch Behar's independence.<sup>23</sup> A messenger, sent by Macleod to Buxa, brought the information that 400 fighting men from Bhotan had assembled at the Buxa pass. Macleod, of course did not suppose that the Bhotanese would enter into an immediate open hostility; but he strongly suspected that the Bhotanese were preparing to occupy the lands of Maraghat. He, how-

19. Sen, S. N.—*Prachin Bangla Patra Sankalan* (134).

20. *Ibid.*—(135).

21. Capt. Latter to the Government of Bengal, 4 February, 1815.  
*Cooch Behar Select Records*—Vol. I, p. 333.

22. *Ibid.*—p. 89

23. *Ibid.*—p. 345.

ever, believed that the occupation of Maraghat by Bhotan could not be valid simply because the ruler of Cooch Behar had conceded to it. So, for the defence of that area, Macleod placed a detachment under Ensign Pigot in Maraghat, and asked Ensign Barstow of Jalpaiguri to send forty men to join Pigot.<sup>24</sup>

The measures adopted by Macleod brought quick results. In the middle of May, 1815 Ensign Pigot informed Macleod that on the arrival of British troops, the ryots and men on the Bhotanese frontier were seized with panic, and were ready to fly for safety. The rumour was in the air that the British were advancing to annex Bhotan.<sup>25</sup>

The authorities at Calcutta, however, could not believe the story of the conspiracy against the British by Bhotan and Cooch Behar. J. Monckton, the acting Chief Secretary, wrote to Macleod on 16 May, 1815, that the British government was "left with suspicion without proof." He added that had the ruler of Cooch Behar desired to part with any portion of his territory, the British would not prevent Bhotan from occupying it. But if the ruler ceded the territory in the expectation of Bhotan's assistance against the British he would be "responsible for the consequences for such an act of treachery". The British government, however, did not believe that the Subas of Buxa or Chamurchi would involve their government in anti-British activities. The British government had given Bhotan no provocation; there was no possibility of Nepal coming to the aid of Bhotan in case Bhotan drifted into a war with the British.<sup>26</sup>

Still the British thought to remove even the remote chances of an unholy alliance between Bhotan and any other states; and in view of that, it decided to win over Bhotan. Towards the end of June, 1815, David Scott, the Collector of Rangpur received two Bhotanese Zinkafs, Chitatandu and Chitatashi. They spoke to the Collector

24. *Ibid.*—p. 347.

25. *Ibid.*—p. 348.

26. *Ibid.*—pp. 95-97

about Bhotan's difficulties at the Rangdhamali ferry ghat over the river Tista, across which lay the road from the Duars to Ambari-Falakata. The road fell within Baikunthapur, and hence the trouble. As regards Maraghat, the representatives raised the old dispute with Cooch Behar over lands. Bhotan's difficulties at Rangdhamali ferry ghat could be easily solved by the Collector; and on 3 July, 1815, he sent a cordial reply to the Dev Raja assuring him of necessary action. With regard to Maraghat, however, he proposed to send one of the Zinkafs back to Bhotan to bring relevant papers on Maraghat.

But David Scott had something more in his mind. He wanted to "obtain through the means of these agents some letters of consequence", which Cooch Behar was alleged to have written. One of them, before going back to Bhotan promised to bring for the Collector "the documents in question", if they at all existed. Besides, a person from Macleod went to the Suba of Chamurchi and remained there "under pretence of waiting to accompany the Zinkaf on his return to Rangpur."<sup>27</sup>

In pursuance of the wishes of his government expressed in December, 1814, Scott also sent Krishna Kant Bose to Bhotan. He was accompanied by Rammohan Roy. Rammohan Roy, who subsequently became the most luminous figure at the dawn of the renaissance in Bengal in the nineteenth century, had been the principal native officer in the Collection of revenues under Digby, the Collector of Rangpur from October, 1809 to April, 1814.<sup>28</sup> Rammohan Roy was in service from December, 1809 to April, 1810; he, however, remained in Rangpur till March, 1815.<sup>29</sup> The mission of Krishna Kant Bose had been decided upon by David Scott at that time. Instead of following in the tracks of Bogle and Turner, Krishna Kanta Bose and Rammohan Roy took a different route and travelled through Goalpara, Bijni and Sidli to Chirang pass. There, they had to wait for two months for escorts from Bhotan for the final stage of their journey

27. *Cooch Behar Select Reports*—Vol. I, pp. 12-13.

28. Coll. Sophia Dobson—*Life and letters of Raja Ram Mohan Roy*, (Ed. Hem Chandra Sarkar), pp. 151-161.

29. Home Amal—*Ram Mohan Roy—The Man and His Work*, p. 32.

to Punakha. It was not known, however, why Krishna Kanta and Rammohan took a round-about way, instead of the straight one through Buxa to go to the Capital of Bhotan. Bhotan put no bar to their entry by the Buxa Duar. Besides, the previous mission to Bhotan and Tibet took that route.

Captain Pemberton and Sir Ashley Eden called this errand of Krishna Kanta Bose an attempt to settle some existing boundary disputes. But an important point must have been missed by both of them. The question at issue was not a boundary dispute; for the old revenue records, that were necessary for the settlement of the dispute, were available in the Surveyor-General's office and in the office of the Board of Revenue. The Anglo-Nepalese war was still raging. So the British government was keen to gather information about Bhotan through its own agent. Besides, the government decided to forward a letter addressed to the Chinese officers posted in Lhasa.<sup>30</sup> Evidently, the fear of Chinese interference in the political turmoils in the Himalaya haunted the British in India. Krishna Kanta, however, failed to get into Tibet. The channel of friendship that had brought previous British missions to Tibet was dried up many years ago. To what extent did Krishna Kanta succeed in his mission to Bhotan was not known either. Only he left to us an interesting account of Bhotan.

In September, 1815, the Bhotanese agent came back to Rangpur with a letter from the Dev Raja. The Dev Raja communicated his difficulties in producing the documents bearing on Maraghat. For, they were in the temple of God Mahakal, and its door was opened once in twelve years. The Dev Raja, therefore, requested the British government to settle the affairs of Maraghat with the help of the papers in its own possession. Should that not be possible, the Zinkafs were to return to Bhotan. The Dev Raja particularly mentioned in his letter that Krishna Kanta Bose and Rammohan Roy reached Chirang, and necessary arrangements were made to conduct them to the Capital.<sup>31</sup> Scott forwarded this letter to the government

30. Sen, S. N.—*Prachin Bangala Patra Sankalan* (140).

31. *Ibid.* (139).

and also attached representations from the Zinkafs, protesting strongly against the decree given previously by Digby on Maraghat. Scott was of the opinion that the Bhotanese were bent upon receiving a favourable decision, "without any very strict enquiry." The Bhotan government also aimed at procuring some advantages from the Goorkhas," and so did not like the Zinkafs to stay on at Rangpur.<sup>32</sup> In this context, Scott asked for instructions from his government about Bhotan's claim upon Maraghat. Regarding the much-awaited intelligence of the secret negotiations between Bhotan and Cooch Behar, one of the Zinkafs admitted that negotiations were going on.

On the other hand, Macleod, who in the middle of May, 1815, had received a stricture from the government for his hasty conclusions about the alleged conspiracy between Bhotan and Cooch Behar, was searching for positive evidence. About the end of September, he thought he could furnish the proof. A sepoy over-heard conversations between the ruler of Cooch Behar and his officers, from which he learnt that they had decided to ask for military help from Bhotan. Macleod got this information from the sepoy himself.<sup>33</sup>

Meanwhile, Munshi Fazalullah, Macleod's agent, came back from Buxa with a letter from its Suba. The Bhotanese officer admitted that the ruler of Cooch Behar had proposed a satisfactory settlement of the existing territorial disputes with Bhotan on the basis of military aid from that country. In reply to Cooch Behar's proposal, however, the Suba frankly admitted his inability to take up arms against the Company with whom Bhotan was bound by friendship.<sup>34</sup>

A red-nosed man may be a teetoteller, but it becomes hard to believe him. So, however, much the Suba of Buxa professed his friendship to the Company, the British government was not quite free from doubts. It, therefore, advised Macleod to pursue the matter. The government would not mind offering 3,000 Narayani rupees, and even more, to the Suba of

32. *Cooch Behar Select Records*—Vol. I, pp. 13-17.

33. For Pol. Con.—27 October, 1815 (47).

34. Sen, S. N.—*Prachin Bangla Patra Sankalan* (138).



Buxa as the price for any letters from the Cooch Behar to the Suba. Macleod's public spirit was also highly praised by the government, this time.<sup>35</sup>

In November, 1815, Scott received a letter from the Dev Raja.<sup>36</sup> The Dev Raja was happy to receive Scott's agent and his companion; also the letter from the British government to the Chinese officers at Lhasa was duly forwarded by him. The Dev Raja, however, reminded the Collector of Rangpur that his claims upon the lands of Maraghat were not yet settled. As for British anxieties about Nepal, he again gave assurance that Bhotan would not attend to any requests from Nepal which were against the British interest.

The British however, still had doubts about Bhotan. Macleod had been told to secure from the Suba of Buxa the original letters written by the Cooch Behar ruler. Three letters, two from Cooch Behar to Buxa, and one from Buxa to Cooch Behar, came into the hands of Macleod. But those letters, instead of clarifying the situation, only increased the confusion already existing. For, the letter from Buxa revealed the desire of the Suba to enter into an alliance with Cooch Behar and Nepal against the British; of the two from Cooch Behar, one agreed to such an alliance, while the other was against any hasty decision.<sup>37</sup> The British government, however, could not take any steps on the basis of these letters alone. Besides, in December, 1815, a definite peace treaty between Nepal and the British government was proposed and finally signed in March, 1816.

The peace was an opportunity for the British government to come closer to the Sub-Himalayan countries and set up its diplomatic frontier with one of them. The hilly tracts to the east of the river Mechi, and the part of the Terai between the Mechi and the Mahananda were taken from Nepal and transferred to Sikkim by the treaty of Titalya (Tentulia), 10 February, 1817.<sup>38</sup> This tract was once a favourite

35. For. Pol. Con.—27 October, 1815 (54).

36. Sen, S. N.—*Prachin Bangla Patra Sankalan* (140).

37. *Ibid.*—(151, 152).

38. Aitchison, Cu. U.—*Treaties, Engagements and Sanads.*—Vol. I, No. LVIII.

resort of free-booters, who used to raid the northern districts of Bengal. Though uneconomic to hold, it might have been retained by the British Government for the security of its own frontier districts. But the friendship of Sikkim was more valuable. The British Government wanted to be certain of its relations at least with one of the Himalayan countries. Tenderness for this little principality, unlike that for Bhotan, was expected to bring grateful return for the British. Oppressed, as she had been, by both Nepal and Bhotan, Sikkim eagerly accepted the British and felt relieved. Tibet had enough sympathy for her, not that strength to sustain her in her distress specially after the humiliations of Tibet at the hands of Nepal. The treaty of Titalya was thus a singular success of the British. On the other hand, the worries of the British did not end with peace with Nepal; they feared a new danger from the other side of the Himalaya. It was the jealousy of China for British success in the Himalayan world.

Gardner, the British Resident at Kathmandu, was afraid of Peking's re-actions to the British advance in the Himalaya. Even Lord Hastings thought of withdrawing the Residency from Kathmandu, should China desire it.<sup>39</sup> There was, however, no need for so much anxiety. The English at Canton faced more opposition about this time no doubt; but the Peking authorities did not appear to be prejudiced against the British at Canton on account of their advance in the Himalaya. Lord Amherst's mission to Peking was not affected by it either.<sup>40</sup> In fact, Peking knew of the enormous cost, financial and military, of an armed intervention across the Himalaya. The Chinese Commander in Tibet in his letter to Captain Latter on 25 September, 1816, expressed his disbelief in Nepal's allegations against the British in the Himalaya.<sup>40A</sup>

39. Lamb, A.—Op. cit., p. 46. Sec. Consults. Sept., 1816, (43).

40. Ellis, H.—*Journal of the Proceedings of the late Embassy to China*, p. 196.

40A. Sec. Consults. Sept., 1816, (19).

Lord Hastings was Prepared to withdraw the Residency only if Peking agreed to place an agent at Katmandu to resist Nepal from doing harm to the British. The Chinese Commander in Tibet, however, found no reason for a Chinese agent at Kathmandu. Sec. Consults. Jan., 1817 (7); *Ibid.*—May 1818, (69). Withdrawal of the British Resident was, therefore, considered unnecessary.

Although the Chinese at Lhasa did nothing against the British at that time, they had to be cautious. With regard to Nepal and Sikkim, they hoped to stand upon the treaties entered into with those countries; with regard to Bhotan, they decided to act more tenderly. Therefore, the question of Maraghat was re-opened by the British government. On 24 May, 1817, Scott, the then Commissioner of Cooch Behar, recommended that it be settled in favour of Bhotan.<sup>41</sup> Scott did not agree with the earlier decision of Digby; for the claims of Bhotan rested upon the treaty of 1774 and her actual possession of the lands. Moreover, Bhotan's attitude appeared to him very considerate, for she admitted Cooch Behar's rights to twenty-eight chalas or hamlets in Maraghat. On 14 June, 1817, the authorities at Calcutta upheld Scott's recommendations; they were entirely satisfactory, and "perfectly just".<sup>42</sup> Such were the exigencies arising out of the recent conflict between Nepal and the British government.

Here ended the first phase of the pro-Bhotan policy of the British Government. British zeal for Tibetan trade, for which the pro-Bhotan policy had been initiated by Warren Hastings, was on the wane by 1816-17. After that, the security of the northern frontier of Bengal became the question at issue. The Himalayan policy of the British government based on political considerations also began to take shape about this time. The treaties of Segauli with Nepal, and Titalya with Sikkim became its foundation; the pro-Bhotan attitude of the British also favoured this policy. The policy, moreover, was linked up with the established hegemony of British power in India in 1818. One critic characterised the policy of the British towards Bhotan as "a policy of pure expediency" based on an obliging or an indifferent attitude towards Bhotan to suit the British purpose.<sup>43</sup> The criticism, however, has missed the truth. The history of British relations with Bhotan had distinct periods. Its beginning and its development were logical, not haphazard. Admission by the British

41. *Cooch Behar Select Records*, Vol. 2, p. 19-21.

42. *Ibid.*—pp. 21-22.

43. Gupta, S.—*British Relations with Bhotan*, p. 85.

of Bhotan's right to the Duars, and refusal later on to admit those rights, were the natural consequences of one and the same policy which was still in a formative stage. So, the other opinion that "the British were lured to Bhotan through the fertility of the Duars",<sup>44</sup> is also difficult to accept. In spite of the potentiality of the Duars for timber-trade and producing cotton, or for future plantation of tea, the authorities at Calcutta were not thinking along those lines. Their policy originated in British commercial interests in Tibet, and subsequently, was guided by the larger British political interests in the Himalayan region. The assumption of the sovereignty of Assam by the British government in 1826, only put a new force into it, and ushered in the second phase of its pro-Bhotan policy.

The Ahom rulers avoided the unpleasant task of keeping constant watch upon the violent Bhotanese on their frontiers by an arrangement with them. In lieu of an annual tribute, in cash and kind, the Bhotanese were allowed to occupy the Duars in Assam. The tribute for the five Duars in Kamrup was as follows<sup>1</sup>.

<i>Duar</i>	<i>Cash</i>	<i>Gold</i>	<i>Ponies</i>	<i>Musk</i>	<i>Yaktails</i>	<i>Daggers</i>	<i>Blankets</i>
		( <i>tola</i> )		( <i>Bags</i> )			
Banska	901/-	11	15	11	11	11	11
Gaukealla (Gharkola)	395/-	2	5	2	2	2	2
Chapa- Khamar	450/-	2	5	2	2	2	2
Bijni	260-4-0	11	16	11	11	11	11
Chapaguri	546/-	11	16	11	11	11	11

With regard to the two Duars in Darrang, the Ahoms, agreed to hold them from 15 July to 15 November, and Bhotan for the remaining months of the year. Bhotan made the collection of the revenue, and paid the Ahoms a portion of it.<sup>2</sup>

44. Dharmpal—*Administration of Sir John Lawrence in India*, p. 235.

1. For. Pol. Con., 11 February, 1835 (99).

2. A revenue statement of Buri Guma and Kalling Duars of Darrang revealed that their revenue amounted to Rs. 4989, as 2 and 8 p, and Rs. 1752, as 8 respectively—Parl. Papers (House of Commons), Vol. 39, 1965, p. 193. The British Government, however received only Rs. 390- annually from Bhotan for the Buri Guma Duar, (Pol. Con. 13 Nov. 1839-73).

The British government, after the annexation of Assam in 1826, continued this arrangement. Sezawals, officers employed to collect the revenue went to the Duars, and collected the tribute from the Bhotanese. The tribute in cash was deposited in the local treasury, and the articles received as tribute in kind were sold by public auction. But the amount realised together with the cash received every year fell far short of British expectations. It is not easy to fix the responsibility for this discrepancy. It is not known how the Ahom rois faineants solved this difficulty. Alexander Mackenzie put the blame upon the Bhotanese officers who caused the British to be swindled.<sup>3</sup> Captain R. B. Pemberton, however, held the sezawals responsible; it were they who did the mischief "by changing the articles actually received and substituting in their stead others of inferior value."<sup>4</sup> Whosoever's fault it was, the discrepancy was increasing year by year, and the British government could not afford to neglect it.

Again, the alternate jurisdiction of the two governments in the Darrang Duars had the most unwholesome consequences. Virtually, the effects of British administration for four months of the year were easily undone by the Bhotanese administration that followed the British; and hardly had the British government begun to attend to the problems left behind by the Bhotanese officers, when its term of administration was over. The people, in general, therefore, lived a miserable life. But there were some who took advantage of this unsettled state of affairs. It suited their designs. During the term of British administration, they quietly withdrew from the Duars, only to come back when Bhotan resumed the charge. All these factors clashed with the purpose of the British government to enforce law and order in Assam. Above all, those designing persons, sheltered by the Bhotanese administration, might, any time, cross the British frontier and create troubles.

3. Mackenzie A.—*History of the Relations of the Government with the Hill Tribes of the North-East Frontier of Bengal.*, p. 10.

4. Pemberton, R. B.—*Op. cit.*, p. 50.

At the end of October, 1828, when Bhotan administered the Duars, British fears were realised. Dumpa Raja, the chief Bhotanese officer of Buriguma, aided by Nakfula Karji and others, entered the British pargana of Chatgeri, burnt and plundered the thana and carried off ten persons including three women. The outrage was said to have been in answer to the arrest of two Bhotanese subjects by the police. Those two Bhotanese again had kidnapped some British subjects. David Scott, the Agent to the Governor-General on the North-east Frontier, strongly resented it, and sent troops to the affected Duar. Of the persons carried off, five were rescued and eight Bhotanese were arrested and detained as hostages.<sup>5</sup> British troops remained in occupation of the Duar, and Scott was in favour of occupying it till the Dumpa Raja was arrested.<sup>6</sup> The British government, however, although agreeing to a temporary attachment of the Duar, did not endorse Scott's action in detaining the Bhotanese as hostages.<sup>7</sup> Lord Bentinck rather desired to make a search into the origin and nature of such troubles and eradicate the chances of their occurrence in future.

However, owing to the presence of British troops in Burigama Duar, the rest of the British subjects were also rescued. About the end of 1831, the Dev Raja requested the British government to release the Duar, for the Dumpa Raja was dead. In March, 1832, the Tongsa Penlop also made the same request. But the Tongsa Penlop who at this time became the Dev Raja Dorje Namgyal made no commitments as to the punishment of the ring-leaders of the last raid or compensations to the victims. So, the British government remained in occupation of the Duar.

In the meantime, T. C. Robertson succeeded Scott as the Agent on the North-East Frontier. Immediately on his arrival at Gauhati in early 1832 a fresh outrage by Bhotan against Cooch Behar was reported to him. Nineteen persons including fourteen female members of the

5. Sec. Con., 4 December, 1828 (4).

6 *Ibid.*—12 March, 1830 (7).

7. *Ibid.*—19 December, 1829 (17, 18).

family of one Wali Muhammad were seized by the orders of the Suba of Buxa "on account of a debt alleged to be due from the head" of that family. Robertson deputed Lieutenant Bogle, the Assistant in Goalpara, to investigate the nature and extent of the Bhotanese raid. He also assured the ruler of Cooch Behar of British protection.<sup>8</sup>

But these were no remedies at all, and Robertson himself was aware of it. Yet, at the moment, he could do nothing more. There was no means of making a direct contact with the Bhotan government or of getting a prompt reply from that end. Infact symptoms of civil war were again visible in Bhotan and held the Dev Raja in jeopardy. Robertson, therefore, suggested the permanent annexation of the Buriguma Duar.<sup>9</sup> He arranged with his Government to depute Major Lloyd and Lieutenant Brodie to adjust the boundaries between Bhotan and Cooch Behar, and between Bhotan and the British territories. He also tried to collect reliable data about the possibility of a Sino-Bhotanese junction, if the British government inflicted punishment upon Bhotan for her raids. Meanwhile the civil war in Bhotan had ended and a new Dev Raja took the throne. He was Adap Thrinley. About the end of August, 1833, Bhotan in this name of the Dharma Raja demanded the restoration of the attached Duar. Robertson took his time and suggested that the Dharma Raja be made to swear to the death of the Dumpa Raja and his associates, and agree to compensate for those who suffered. But soon after this, Robertson revised his opinion. The much-awaited data came into his hands, and the Agent began to suffer from fear and uneasiness.

Bhotan, according to his information, was not subordinate to China; she had rather an understanding with Lhasa and could ask for help in case of emergency. The Tibetan military post was at Phari on the North-West border of Bhotan. And it was likely that the Chinese in Tibet would not remain passive if Bhotan approached the Lhasa authority for help against the British. Besides, rupture with Bhotan would adversely affect British trade interests; the trade between

8. *Cooch Behar Select Records*—Vol. 2, pp. 53-4.

9. *For. Pol. Con.*; 7 January, 1833 (82).

the mountains and the plains had for the time being suffered, but it could be revived. Also, all works "in progress for the improvement of the internal administration of Assam", would have to be suspended if the relations between the British and the Bhotan governments continued hostile. Above all, operations against Bhotan could never bring good results; if offensive, there was "the imminent hazard of a war with China", if defensive, that "must be confined to an unhealthy region at the foot of the hills." Robertson, therefore, recommended that a British envoy go to the court of Bhotan "to settle the terms of commercial intercourse between the States", and to arrange for the payment of tribute in such a way as may diminish the chances of mis-understanding arising from this source." To protect the British frontier from Bhotanese raids, he, however, proposed the posting of of Irregular Corps in "the gorges of the passes" throughout the year, and "one or two Regular Battalions at Durrang."<sup>10</sup>

Robertson's arguments for avoiding an armed conflict with Bhotan were readily accepted by Lord Bentinck, who was more inclined to peaceful relations with foreign Powers. But he did not approve of Robertson's suggestion to despatch an envoy to Bhotan. The Government believed the existing differences would be "adjusted without recourse to such a measure".<sup>11</sup> But Robertson was not happy. The Bhotanese officers on the frontier could not be trusted. His own efforts in making representation to the Bhotan Court were not successful either. The Agent had reasons to believe that letters addressed by him to the Court were intercepted on the way. So, Robertson, before handing over the charge to Captain F. Jenkins in March, 1834, pleaded again with the government for the despatch of an envoy to Bhotan.<sup>12</sup>

The coming of Jenkins as the Agent to the Governor-General, on the North-East Frontier, was a land-mark in the history of Anglo-Bhotanese relations. It might be said that on his arrival the thaw was in sight. Zinkafs from Bhotan came

10. *For. Pol. Con*; 12 December, 1833 (75, 76).

11. *Ibid.*— 12 December, 1833 (77).

12. *For. Pol. Con*; 25 March, 1834 (38-41).



down to plead with the new Agent for the release of the Buriguma Duar. Both the Dumpa Raja and Nakfula Karji, the leaders of the last aggression, were reported dead. Bhotan also agreed to pay Rs. 2000- as compensation to the sufferers. Considering all these, Jenkins ordered the release of the Duar.<sup>13</sup> Herein, Jenkins acted on his own discretion. After going through the records in the office of the Agent, he became convinced that the difficulties with Bhotan were "in some measure occasioned by the officers who held charge in our part". They oppressed the people of the Duar for money and that accounted for counter-oppression by the Bhotanese.

Jenkins proposed to his government that instead of mere exercise of police in Buriguma for four months of the year, the British should negotiate with the Dev Raja "for a commutation of this and all similar rights on other Duars for a given extent of land on any part of our frontier". Secondly, Bhotan should allow a Zinkaf to reside with the Agent to the Governor-General. He would serve as the channel of communication with the regional Bhotanese officers and with the government of Bhotan. Similarly, the British government should have a Vakil at the Court of Bhotan to explain its views on any situation that might arise. Jenkins, like his predecessor, suspected that letters from the Agent to the government of Bhotan were either suppressed or improperly translated.<sup>14</sup>

Lord Bentinck gave a general approval of the measures proposed by Jenkins, and also of his action with regard to Buriguma. The British government was aware of the defects of dual control of the Darrang Duars. It welcomed the commutation proposal of Jenkins, and authorised him to open negotiations with a proper agent of Bhotan at the proper hour. But the government disagreed to Jenkins's suggestion of inviting a Bhotanese Zinkaf to reside at Gauhati, or that of deputing a British agent to the Bhotan Court. Even Jenkins was told not to give any hints upon that subject in any communications with Bhotan.<sup>15</sup> The government was unwilling to encourage Jenkins if he wanted to break new grounds.

13. *Ibid.*—14 August, 1834 (77).

14. *Ibid.*

15. *Ibid.*—14 August, 1834 (78).

Perhaps, the Bhotanese thought they could continue their depredations with impunity. From their one Duar or another they made incursions into the adjacent British villages. These incursions took place during Bhotan's term of administration of the Duars. Besides, lawless people, harboured in the Duars by the Bhotanese officers, became the spear-head of these incursions. They plundered and went back to the Duars, where they shared the booty with their patrons. Thus, in May, 1835, a party of fifty men from Bijni Duar fell upon Nowgong; in November, Darrang was visited by the raiders from Kalling Duar. In January, next year, a more organised dacoity was committed in north Kamrup by the Bhotanese from Banska Duar.

Charles Metcalfe was then the Provisional Governor-General after Lord Bentinck. A detachment of Assam Light Infantry stormed the Bhotanese stockade in Bijni Duar and captured the Bhotanese deputy in Bijni. The raid upon Nowgong had been planned by him. The Bhotanese deputy, however, was released after the British subjects kidnapped by him were traced. The British now raised an additional force, the Assam Sibandi Corps, and allotted a new task. Previously the main duty of the Sibandi Corps was to support the civil authorities in the collection of revenue within the provinces. Men, who were natives of the affected region and could stand the unhealthy climate of the Duars, were specially selected for the Assam Sibandis. Captain Matthie, the Magistrate of Darrang, marched into Kalling Duar with Sibandi troops. The Duar officer became nervous, and surrendered twelve persons alleged to have committed robbery in Darrang. Their offence, however, could not be proved. The British government, then turned to the affairs of Banska Duar. The Duar officer was under the Raja of Dewangiri which, again, was a district of Tongsa or East Bhotan. Bogle, the Magistrate of Kamrup, accompanied by Lieutenant Mathews and a detachment of Sibandis, proceeded to Banska. On 14 February, 1836, Bogle reached Hazargong, the residence of the Duar officer; but he along with his companions had already shifted to Dewangiri. Bogle addressed a letter to the Raja of Dewangiri with a request for his co-operation in rounding up the mis-

creants responsible for the raid in Kamrup. But the Raja of Dewangiri evaded the request. On 16 February, 1836, Jenkins directed Bogle to remain in occupation of the Duar till the chief of Dewangiri gave a written assurance of the peace and security of British villages bordering upon the Duar.<sup>16</sup>

Jenkins wrote to his Government to make an end of all incursions of the Bhotanese even at the hazard of hostilities. In case the Bhotanese dared to attack the British troops in Banska, it would be imperative on the British government to take possession of all the Assam Duars. Should the Bhotanese be still unwilling to behave themselves the attachment of all the Bengal Duars was the answer.<sup>17</sup>

Meanwhile, the Raja of Dewangiri came down from the hills, and handed over to Bogle nineteen offenders; but none of the leaders were there. The Raja of Dewangiri instead of going back to his hills, stationed a strong party near the gorge of Dewangiri pass. Bogle, fearing new troubles advanced upon the gorge of Dewangiri pass, and on 7 March, in the evening, encountered the enemies. The Bhotanese in spite of their numerical superiority were put to retreat by the firepower of British muskets. The Raja of Dewangiri fled to the hills; officers of the Banska Duar with other six subordinates made a voluntary surrender. Nearly ninety culprits were handed over to the British by the Duar authorities.

The authorities at Calcutta sharply re-acted against the pressure that Jenkins sought to bring upon Bhotan. He was moving a bit too fast, and his authorities did not like it. Perhaps, they wanted to leave the matter for the decision of the permanent Governor-General. Jenkins got a mild reproach from above. Two more companies, an addition to the existing strength of the Assam Sibandis, were ordered. Bitterness with Bhotan was "to be sedulously avoided by all means". The government held the local officers of Bhotan responsible for all violence on its frontier; the head of the state was not "cognizant of them". So, the British troops were ordered to leave the Duar. For, the local officers of Bhotan must have

16. *For. Pol. Con.*; 14 March, 1836 (91).

17. *Ibid.*—14 March, 1836 (87).

already learnt that the British government would reoccupy it, if it was necessary.<sup>18</sup>

The tumults in Banska alerted the authorities of Bhotan. On 10 May, 1836, Zinkafs from Bhotan gave Jenkins two letters, one from the Tongsa Penlop, the other from the Dharma Raja. The Tongsa Penlop regretted the events in Banska, and admitted his ignorance of them. He, however, promised to look personally into the grievances of the British government. The Dharma Raja also professed a deep regard for the friendship of the British government, and hoped the difficulties would be amicably settled.<sup>19</sup> Both the Tongsa Penlop and the Dharma Raja were eager for the release of the Duar.

Without departing from the line of the government's policy, Jenkins insisted upon the Zinkafs signing an agreement. After some hesitation, they signed it on 2 June, 1836. The agreement dwelt upon the broad points of dispute. Bhotan agreed to check all frontier outrages in future. In case of an aggression she would deliver the offenders to the British government; should she fail, the British police would have access to the Duars to search for those offenders. Bhotan should see that regular payment of tribute was made through her own officers. Should the tribute fall into arrears for one year, the British government would attach the Duar concerned, till the arrears were recovered.<sup>20</sup> The agreement, however, remained mere proposals; it could not carry the sanctity of a treaty, for it was not subsequently ratified by the Dev Raja.

So, Jenkins was 'back to the position he had started from. The expedition into Banska became a triumph without success, the agreement, a mere scrap of paper. But Jenkins did not despair. Lord Auckland, the new Governor-General had expressed the desire to send an envoy to the Bhotan Court, and asked Jenkins to enquire and suggest how a British envoy should be sent.<sup>21</sup>

18. *For. Pol. Con.*; 14 March, 1836 (93, 94).

19. Pemberton, R. B.—Op. cit. Appendix 4 & 5.

20. *Ibid.*—Appendix 2.

21. *For. Pol. Con.*; 18 April, 1836 (4).

On 9 June, 1836, Jenkins sent a lengthy report that established his familiarity with the nature of frontier troubles, his quick judgement and the boldness to look ahead of his time. He was always in favour of a direct contact with the Bhotan Court.

The British government stood much in need of correct information about the dependence of Bhotan and Tibet upon China. For, British trade with Bhotan and Tibet suffered mainly from the influence of China in Tibet. But Bhotan according to Jenkins, was averse to the Chinese. Tibet also bore the Chinese yoke very impatiently. Jenkins argued that in the event of collision between the Chinese and the British governments, the Bhotanese, owing to their dependence on the Assam and Bengal trade, would rather "throw themselves under our protection"; should the Tibetans also revolt against China, the British government would reap advantage from the situation. On the other hand, if the Chinese ever occupied the castles and forts in Bhotan, it would deepen the impression in the hills that the British government was faced with a superior power. The impression, owing to "the known greatness of the Chinese Empire", already existed. Should Bhotan, therefore, refuse to receive a British mission, that would indicate the paramount influence of China already extended over her. Then, the British government also would have to arm itself for any emergency.<sup>22</sup>

Lord Auckland, on hearing this from Jenkins, decided to send a mission to the Court of Bhotan. Drafts of letters addressed to the authorities in Bhotan and Tibet by the government of India were sent to Jenkins for any alteration or addition he might suggest.<sup>23</sup> Lord Auckland, however, did not think exactly along the same lines as Jenkins. From the end of June, 1836, he became busier with the military enterprise on the north-west frontier. That did not allow him to engage in an equally strong action on the north-east frontier of India.

The northern frontiers of Bengal at about this produced fresh troubles for the British. Hargovind Katham, a zamindar

22. *Ibid.*—27 June, 1836 (52-59).

23. *Ibid.*

in Mainaguri Duar on the Bengal frontier revolted against the government of Bhotan and asked for British aid. His estate extended over Bhot-hat, Mainaguri, Changmari, and Gopal-gunge, in length about 30 Kos, and 6 to 12 Kos in breadth. He paid an annual revenue of Rs. 8500- to the Bhotan government exclusive of presents and the expenses of religious ceremonies.<sup>24</sup>

The eminence of the Kathams in Bengal Duars was due to the resourcefulness and abilities of one Haridas Katham who rose to the position of the munshi at the Bhotan court in the twenties of the nineteenth century. But Haridas paid an enormous price for the fortune that he had founded for his descendants. In 1831, he fell a victim of the scramble for political power in Bhotan; and since then his descendants struggled on against the factions that came to power in Bhotan and determined to dispossess the Kathams. The revolt of Hargovind and his request to Jenkins to take him under British protection gave a chance to argue for an exchange of Assam Duars' tribute for the estate of the Katham. On 31 January, 1837, Jenkins requested the government to mediate and end the dispute.<sup>25</sup>

Lord Auckland, however, was against any measure that "might be irritating to Bhotan" or might bring the British to any serious predicament. A mission to Bhotan always depended on the mood of that government, and the Governor-General expected a successful mission to Bhotan this time. Towards the middle of 1837, the government of Bhotan sent the Suba of Chirang to wait on the Governor-General. It communicated its difficulties with regard to the Katham and requested the Governor-General to strengthen its hands to subdue the rebel.<sup>26</sup> Lord Auckland considered the request and informed the Dev Raja that the Katham would not get any support from the British. He also communicated his desire to depute a mission to the Court of Bhotan "to have all matters so arranged" that there remained "no cause for future

24. *Political Mission to Bhotan*, p. 34.

25. *For. Pol. Con.*: 27 February, 1837 (59).

26. *Ibid.*—17 April, 1837 (68).

mis-understanding.”<sup>27</sup>

The views of Lord Auckland were not to the liking of Jenkins; but the Governor-General could not act otherwise. First, the Court of Directors had advised him to follow in the footsteps of the peaceful and reforming Lord Bentinck; secondly, he had to look into the affairs of Afghanistan; lastly, the government of India awaited the opinion of the Court of Directors upon the measures already adopted against the Bansa Duar. Pending arrival of the Court’s opinion in this matter Lord Auckland avoided any hasty steps. Besides, the Court had already been informed that a mission to Bhotan was in preparation.<sup>28</sup>

What Lord Auckland would have done cannot be inferred, had the opinion of the Court of Directors reached Calcutta about this time. For, the Court held the Duars as integral parts of Assam; they had belonged to the British government, yet it was desirable to avoid their attachment as long as possible.<sup>29</sup> The Court, as Jenkins had suggested, desired the government of India to give up the tribute of the Assam Duars in exchange for the Bhotan government giving up its claim upon the Katham.<sup>30</sup> But this Court’s opinion reached the Governnor-General long after he had taken action for an amicable settlement with the Bhotan government through a British envoy.

In early August, 1837, Captain R. B. Pemberton of 14 Regular Native Infantry was asked by the government of India to conduct the mission to the Court of Bhotan. His main task was to bring Anglo-Bhotanese “frontier relations upon an improved footing” and to recover the arrears of tribute from Bhotan. The British wanted Bhotan to transfer the Assam Duars in lieu of an annual payment of subsidy by the British. Should Bhotan disagree, the alternative proposal was the commutation of British tribute of the Duars, for a tract of land or for a moderate and fixed money payment.

27. *Ibid.*—17 April, 1837 (72-75).

28. *Political letter to the Court*—16 January, 1837 (3).

29. *Political letter from the Court*—9 August, 1837 (17).

30. *Ibid.*—28 March, 1838 (18).

The British was eager to improve the commercial intercourse with Bhotan as well as to improve law and order in Bhotan's frontier districts. Besides conferring with the Bhotan authorities on the revolt of Hargovind and on the question of currency, Pemberton was required to contact Tibet "to perpetuate and consolidate a friendship, the foundation of which was laid so happily and so long ago." Lord Auckland wrote letters to the Dharma and the Dev Rajas of Bhotan with a request to improve the existing friendly relations between the two governments. Being afraid of causing any misunderstanding between him and the Chinese at Lhasa Lord Auckland, in his letter to the Dalai Lama, wrote clearly the circumstances and the purpose of the Pemberton Mission. The Governor-General also hinted at the forthcoming friendly visit of the British envoy to Lhasa "after so long an interval has been suffered to elapse without the renewal of friendly demonstration on either side."<sup>31</sup>

At the end of October, 1837, Captain Pemberton was ready for his mission. His party, besides Dr. Griffith and Ensign Blake, consisted of one Subedar, one Havildar and twentyfive Assam Sebandis. On 23 January, the following year, the party reached Dewangiri, where the Raja of Dewangiri received the mission. On 15 March, the mission reached Tongsa; and on 8 April, the Dev Raja choki Gyaltshan received Captain Pemberton at Punakha. On 8 May, the mission started for India, and came down from the hills by the Buxa Duar.

The mission of Captain Pemberton was a failure. The Bhotanese dignitaries were not impolite; but Captain Pemberton felt that underneath their seeming politeness, they concealed hatred and suspicion for the British envoy. He could not proceed to Tibet either. "This was not only prohibited", wrote Captain Pemberton, "but a direct and unqualified refusal given even to forward a letter to Lassa".<sup>32</sup>

During his stay in Bhotan, Captain Pemberton presented to the Dev Raja the draft of a treaty. It consisted of twelve articles and proposed that : (1) Bhotan should give British subjects free access into her territory; (2) should any

31. *For. Pol. Con.*; 7 August, 1837 (2. 3, 3A).

32. Pemberton, R. B.—*Op. cit.*, p. 90.



British subject desert into Bhotan, he, on the request of the British, should be delivered by Bhotan. The British government would act likewise if the subject were a Bhotanese; (3) should a British subject commit an offence in Duar for which Bhotan paid tribute, he should be surrendered to the nearest British officer for trial. If, however, the offence was committed in the independent hill territory of Bhotan, he might be proceeded against by Bhotan in accordance with the customs prevailing; (4) if a Bhotanese subject committed offence against a British subject, Bhotan should surrender him to the British Magistrate sending parwana to that effect. In case of her failure, British police would go into Bhotan to arrest him; (5) if any Bhotanese subject had any demand on or dispute with a British subject, he should apply to the Magistrate of the district where such dispute took place. The Magistrate would immediately investigate and do justice to the applicant; (6) the payment of tribute, in future, should be made by Bhotan in cash alone. The British government, however, would not increase the amount of tribute; (7) in future, a Bhotanese agent should pay the tribute to the Collectors of Kamrup and Darrang. In the event of the arrears going up to a year's tribute, the affected Duar would be attached and administered by British government till the arrears were fully realised; (8) the Dev Raja should issue a peremptory order to the Dewangiri Raja for the surrender of twelve Cachhari subjects of the British government; (9) the Dev Raja should take decisive measures to stop aggressions of the Bhotanese Duar officers against the subjects of the British government; (10) the Dev Raja should depute a suitable person to co-operate with the British officers in demarcating the boundaries of the Assam Duars; (11) agents of the Bhotan government should reside permanently at Gauhati and Rangpur to maintain cordial relations between the two governments; (12) with a view to clearing up the accounts of the Duars Bhotan should immediately send to Gauhati persons acquainted with the accounts of the Duars. The amount decided by the agent to the Governor-General should be fully paid.<sup>33</sup>

Had these articles been accepted by the Dev Raja, the new treaty would have been complimentary to the treaty of 1774.

33. Pemberton, R. B.—Op. cit., Appendix—3.

Captain Pemberton, however, was surprised to find that the Dev Raja was destitute of all authority. Dev Raja Choki Gyaltsan was virtually a non-entity. He admitted to Captain Pemberton that he had no particular objection to signing the treaty; but the Penlop of Tongsa would not allow him. Captain Pemberton, therefore, realised that it was useless to carry on negotiations with such a government.<sup>34</sup>

Lord Auckland assigned the failure of Captain Pemberton to the untrustworthy character of the Bhotanese and the powerlessness of the Dev Raja.<sup>35</sup> Thereby, his government ignored certain basic facts that affected the last mission. It was wrong on the part of the government to presume that all its grievances would be redressed by a direct contact with the Dev Raja alone. This was due to the government's imperfect knowledge of the political conditions within Bhotan. The country had relapsed into a state of political instability for the last seven years. Accession of a Dev Raja to the throne and his ouster were equally unpredictable in this situation. A tide of revolt and counter-revolt made by the mighty governors of the provinces dominated the scene. When Captain Pemberton entered Bhotan, an ex-Dev Raja was still contending for power and refused to vacate the palace of Taashi-cho-dzong.<sup>37A</sup> Such a state of affairs could never bring success to the British mission. Even one year after Captain Pemberton's mission, the government did not know which of the two Dev Rajas was the de jure ruler of the land.<sup>36</sup> The greatest surprise for the government, however, was caused by the news that the Bhotan government and the Katham were reconciled. The Dharma Raja pleaded with the government of India to permit Hargovind to buy some ammunitions from Rangpur.<sup>37</sup> In spite of their contact

34. *Ibid.*,—Concluding observations.

35. *Eor. Pol. Con.*—25 July 1838 (77).

36. *Ibid.*—13 November, 1839 (74).

37. *Ibid.*

37 A. Pemberton had made a Confusion. It was Sangya, the Shongar Dzungpon who did really eclipse the authority of Dev Raja Choki Gyaltsan, forced him into the background and placed his son nephew Dorje Norbu on the throne. This was, however, challenged by Tashi Dorje, the Thimphu Dzungpon who asserted himself as the Dev Raja in 1838. Thus for sometime two Dev Rajas reigned in Bhotan.

with Bhotan for so many years, the British knew so little about that country.

It is held in some quarters that a more generous attitude on the part of the British would have made the mission a success.<sup>38</sup> But that was not possible. Until there was a stable central authority in Bhotan display of generonsity would be futile. For it would not evoke any response from Bhotan. Her political life was so vitiated that even the shabdrung of the period, Jigme Norbu (1831-61) became a helpless spectator of the rot. Not only that; some twelve years later on when the Monk-Body made him the Dev Raja also he was forced to quit the the throne in favour of Dzungpon of Shongar.

The treaty proposed by Pemberton in April, 1838, was basically the same as the Iqrarnama which the Zinkafs had signed in June, 1836, in the presence of Jenkins. But as that Iqrarnama was never ratified, so was also the treaty.

Lord Auckland was sorry for his failure to settle peacefully all differences with the Bhotan government. On 16 August, 1838, he submitted his views to the Court of Directors that the British government should protect at all costs the British frontier as well as the British subjects from Bhotanese outrages.<sup>39</sup> The Court of Directors also were not very optimistic. A few months before, the Court had expressed their doubts about Bhotan agreeing to the transfer of the Duars to the British for a pecuniary equivalent. The Court advised that some arrangements with Bhotan for regular payment of the tribute and prevention of the disorders in the frontier should be preferred to the employment of military coercion against the Bhotanese.<sup>40</sup> Coming to know of Pemberton's failure, however, the Court directed the Governor-General "to take the means within his power for enforcing the payment of tribute and repressing the frontier dacoities by the attachment of one or more Duars."<sup>41</sup>

British relations with Bhotan came to a stand-still. All efforts of the government of India to maintain peace with Bhotan and also to keep its own frontier quiet, proved abortive.

38. Gupta, S.—Op. cit ; p. 116.

39. *Letter to the Court (Pol)*—16 August, 1832 (17).

40. *Letter from the Court (Pol)*—19 September, 1838 (53).

41. *Letter from the Court (Pol)*—10 July, (1839 (13).

The government learnt how difficult it was to reconcile both these ends. For, peace with Bhotan and security of the British frontier were inextricably connected; the one could not be had without losing the other. The second phase of the pro-Bhotan policy, like the earlier one, gave no return to the British Government. So, a forward policy, advocated by Jenkins a few years before, but rejected by the government of India at that time for fear of disturbing the peace of the Himalayan region, now came up for reconsideration.

Captain Pemberton's "Report on Bhotan" was considered of immense value. In fact, it added to the information already collected by Bogle and Turner. The Court of Directors desired to get the Report printed and asked all British officers dealing with Bhotan to get a copy of the Report.<sup>42</sup> Pemberton, however, did not point out any line of action that would lead to an end of all troubles which the Bhotanese created in the British frontier. He was in favour of "a less severe course of policy than that which stern justice and insulted forbearance demand."<sup>43</sup> In his opinion, temporary attachment of the Duars would be helpful on occasions, but permanent occupation of the Duars was, on no grounds, to be encouraged. Pemberton had considered the problem of defence of the whole line of British frontier in the Duars. He wanted to avoid any chances of causing annoyance to the Lhasa authorities and the Chinese representatives in Tibet. In the interest of British relations with Tibet this factor was worthy of consideration. Therefore, he suggested that on the one hand, a firm and forbearing policy towards Bhotan was necessary; on the other, by appointing a permanent officer in Bhotan the British government should "watch and counteract the evil consequences of unfriendly external influence and of internal misrule." For this, if necessary, the British should renounce altogether the tribute now paid by Bhotan for the Duars and be satisfied with a nominal quit-rent as an acknowledgement of British sovereignty over them.<sup>44</sup>



42. *For. Pol. Con.*; 10 July, 1839 (48).

43. Pemberton, R. B.—*Op. cit.*; concluding observations.

44. *Ibid.*

## CHAPTER V

### The Limitations of A Forward Policy (1839-1863)

By the time the government of India decided upon a forward policy towards Bhotan, Assam had risen to a prominent economic position. This was due to her land and climate which was suitable for growing tea. The monopoly of trade in China tea yielded an enormous revenue to the East India Company. "Scarcely a single item of the Company's imports, except cotton", remarked S. Ball, the Inspector of Tea, "would ever be brought to China, but for the purchase of Tea."<sup>1</sup> In the year 1833, however, the Chinese government refused to renew the Company's monopoly trade in tea. So, the East India Company was obliged to engage in tea-plantations in its own territory of Assam. In 1790 the authorities at Calcutta had requested Purangiri Gossain to bring from Tibet some tea seeds, or plants<sup>2</sup> but the outbreak of the Tibeto-Nepalese war, and the intervention of China on behalf of Tibet, kept the British away from the Himalayan battleground. Also, the idea of procuring seeds or plants of tea from Tibet was shelved for ever. Then, on 24 January, 1834, Lord Bentinck appointed a committee of eleven Englishmen and two Bengali gentlemen to enquire into the prospect of tea-plantation in India.<sup>3</sup> About the end of the year, the enquiry was complete, and the Committee of Tea Culture reported to the government of India about the indigenous tea plants found in upper Assam.<sup>4</sup> A great impetus was received, and the plan for producing tea in Assam rapidly progressed. In early 1836, small samples of manufactured tea were despatched

1. Ball, S.—J. R. A. S., Vol. 6, 1841; Article 9, p. 183.

2. Sarkar, S. C.—*A Note on Purangiri Gossain* (Bengal—Past and Present), Vol. XLIII, April-June, p. 87.

3. Chakravarti, B. B.—*Introduction of Tea Plantation in India* (Bengal—Past and Present), Vol. LXI, July-December, p. 58.

4. Letter from the Committee of Tea Culture to the Govt. of India, 24 Dec. 1834 J. A. S. B., Jan. 1835, p. 42.

to Calcutta, and Lord Auckland was happy with their quality.<sup>5</sup> The government of India, from then on, began to treat the new enterprise tenderly, and it expected Assam to become one of the richest provinces in India.<sup>6</sup> Assam's resources could not, however, be fully utilised, so long as Bhotan distracted the attention of the government.<sup>7</sup>

No wonder, therefore, the Governor-General had asked Jenkins to submit a specific plan to end all existing disputes with Bhotan.<sup>8</sup> Jenkins was ready with his plan. In his opinion, the time had come for operating on the fears of Bhotan rather than for appealing to her reason.<sup>9</sup> Within two months of Jenkins' suggestion for a strong-arm policy against Bhotan, the Kalling Duar in Darrang was in ferment. Gambhir Uzir, the Kacchari Duar-officer, was murdered by some Bhotanese. The Uzir had made a great fortune, and expressed to Jenkins his desire to settle in British territory. He strongly disliked the conduct of some Bhotanese officers who gave encouragement to some professional criminals. They became active when the Duar came under Bhotanese jurisdiction of the year. Gambhir had to pay grievously for his honesty. Jenkins looked upon the incident with great concern. He had administered the Duar efficiently, and had been particular about the payment of British dues. But Bhotan was in a political confusion owing to two Dev Rajas reigning at that time. Should the lawlessness in the Duars spread into the British frontier, there was no authority in Bhotan to appeal to.

In January, 1839 Jenkins, therefore, proposed the annexation of the Kalling Duar. He adduced the further reason that Bhotan had not paid, so far, either the arrears or the current year's tribute for the Kamrup Duars.<sup>10</sup>

The government of India appreciated the suggestion but it sent Jenkins a note, sounding caution. China still loomed large

5. Ukers W. H.—*All About Tea*, Vol. I, p. 145.

6. *For. Pol. Con.* 16 January, 1839 (53).

7. *Ibid.*—21 July, 1839 (39).

8. *Ibid.*—12 Sept., 1838 (116).

9. *Ibid.*—28 Nov., 1838 (49).

10. *For. Pol. Con.*—27 March, 1839 (78-79).

in the eyes of the British. "Insignificant as the immediate power of Bootan is", wrote the government, "it would, if seriously menaced or straitened, be supported by a state with which it can never be, for our interest, to come into collision". The government of India, however, did not object to a temporary attachment of any Duars "for which a heavy arrear is due or from the managers of which atonement may be requirable."<sup>11</sup> The Duars were to remain attached so long as Bhotan was not free from political dissensions. But whenever Bhotan should be in a condition to negotiate, the British government would listen to her claims and adjust them.

Jenkins, however, did not feel happy. On the evidence of some documents of the Ahom rulers he wrote to the government that never were the Bhotanese given an upper hand in the Duars. They received from the ryots in the Duars what the Ahom Government had prescribed. If they did not behave themselves, they were turned out of the Duars. It was only during the Ahom decline that they successfully encroached upon the sovereign rights of the Ahoms to the Duars. They also took advantage of British leniency. Jenkins found Sidli had paid tribute to the Company till the days of Captain Turner's embassy to Bhotan; but only to please the government of Bhotan, the authorities at Calcutta ignored the Company's claims upon Sidli. British lenity, however, went unrewarded. So, Jenkins strongly felt that the occupation of Kalling and Buri Guma Duars was necessary. Should Bhotan however, dare to oppose, the British will have to think of occupying the Bengal Duars too.<sup>12</sup>

But the government of India was yet inclined to make allowance for the powerlessness of the government of Bhotan over its subordinate officers near the British frontier. It, therefore, suggested separate treatment for each of the Duars, giving every measure of coercion a limited character. Moreover, to avoid open hostility with the government of Bhotan, British officers in the frontiers were advised to be tactful.<sup>13</sup>

11. *For. Pol. Con.*—27 March, 1839 (81).

12. *Ibid.*—12 June, 1839 (72);  
24 July, 1839 (94).

13. *Ibid.*—24 July, 1839 (94).

On 8 August, 1839, Jenkins addressed a letter to the Dev Raja, but received no reply. One of the two rival Dev Rajas was dead. The ex-Dzongpon of Thimphu was now the sole Dev, Tashi Dorje. Jenkins then informed the Dharma Raja about the grievances of the British against the Bhotanese officers in the Duars. He stated clearly that all requests for redress having been ignored by Bhotan, the government of India was going to occupy the Darrang Duars.<sup>14</sup> On 12 October, Ensign Lockett, the officer commanding the Lower Assam Sibandi Corps at Tezpur was ordered to occupy them. He, however, was told not to fire upon the Bhotanese unless compelled to do so. On 13 November, Lord Auckland approved of Jenkins' measures.<sup>15</sup>

From the year of the Anglo-Nepalese war, whenever the British Government considered the question of adopting a strong policy towards the Himalayan countries, it also considered the probability of adverse reactions among the Chinese at Lhasa or of anti-British intrigues among the Himalayan countries. In June, 1838, the government of India looked upon the visit of two deputations from Nepal to Bhotan with a sense of uneasiness.<sup>16</sup> Pemberton also referred to the despatch of emissaries to Lhasa by Nepal when the government of India was ready to send him to Bhotan. Being asked by the government to throw light on it, the British Resident at Kathmandu failed. He, however, suspected secret overtures between Nepal and Bhotan and suggested that efforts should be made to guard Sikkim against infiltration of anti-British intrigues. But the government of India could do nothing more than ask its agents at Darjeeling and Gauhati to ascertain the nature and extent of anti-British intrigues being hatched by Nepal and Bhotan.<sup>17</sup> As to Sikkim, although the Treaty of Titalya provided the basis for British alliance with that country, the government of India was not sure if Sikkim could be used as a fender between Nepal and Bhotan. For, although at the

14. *Ibid.*—13 November, 1839 (74).

15. *Ibid.*—13 November, 1839 (75).

16. *Letter to the Secret Committee*—11 June, 1838 (13).

17. *For. Sec. Con.*—20 November, 1839 (73-75).



request of Lord Bentinck Sikkim made over Darjeeling as a 'gift' to the British her reactions were not immediately known. Moreover, Darjeeling, an ideal hill-station and a strategic post in the eastern Himalaya, was an enclave in Sikkim territory. Access to Darjeeling from the British territory in the plains very much depended upon Sikkim's loyalty to the British. The government of India had no idea about the shape of things to come in the eastern Himalaya.

Not only in Darrang, but also in the adjacent Duars the government of India got involved in troubles. Charduar and Kuriapara were on the eastern frontier of Darrang, and at the eastern extremity of the southern end of Bhotan. A group of Chiefs known as Sat Rajas (not necessarily seven in number)<sup>18</sup> levied black-mail upon these Duars. They had nothing to do with Bhotan. They were a tribal people of the hills and were subject to the Raja of Towang, who again was a tributary of Lhasa.<sup>19</sup> An Assamese in the service of the government of India was murdered in the frontier of Charduar by a chief belonging to the Sat Rajas. The government of India wanted to carefully deal with them. Their relation with the Raja of Towang might help the British in acquainting Lhasa "with the real nature and motive of our occupation of the other Duars of Assam".<sup>20</sup> But contrary to the expectation of the British, the Towang Raja remained totally indifferent to the letters which Jenkins had addressed to him. Jenkins, thereupon, wanted to evict the Sat Rajas from the Duars, and the government of India approved of his proposal.<sup>21</sup> In October, 1839, the Lower Assam Sibandis started operations in Darrang as well as in Charduar and Kuriapara.

The government of India desired Jenkins to hold those Duars only up to the end of 1840.<sup>22</sup> This was partly due to Lord Auckland's heavy commitments on north-western frontier of India and partly due to the absence, till then, of an

18. Bhuyan, S. K.—*Anglo-Assamese Relations* (1771-1816), p. 35.

19. *For. Pol. Con.* 15 May, 1839 (113).

20. *Ibid.*—27 March, 1839 (82).

21. *Ibid.*—24 July, 1839 (91-2).

22. *Ibid.*—25 May, 1840 (119-21).

express approval from England. Action taken against the Darrang Duars and the Sat Rajas, however, made two things clear. First, Jenkins' insight into the problems relating to the north-east frontier was superior even to that of Pemberton who had visited Bhotan. Secondly, the Chinese at Lhasa evinced little interest in the recent British measures against the Bhotanese in Darrang Duars or the Sat-Rajas of Charduar and Kuriapara. Still how long the Chinese at Lhasa would maintain their indifferent attitude was difficult to foresee. On the part of the British in India the forward policy was given trial, and it was wise to wait and see the results.

The Duar officers of Bhotan, however, learnt nothing from the British resumption of the Darrang Duars. From Sidli there were fresh Bhotanese outrages in the Khuntaghat pargana of Bijni.<sup>23</sup> The government of Bhotan, on the other hand, offered, in future, better articles of tribute and promised to clear up all arrears. But Jenkins was not convinced by this offer. In the past Bhotan never took any steps against the wanton aggression committed by its subordinate officers in the British frontier. The Magistrate of Goalpara insisted upon the occupation of Bijni and Sidli Duars.<sup>24</sup> Jenkins himself wanted to force the government of Bhotan to come to British terms. To him, the occupation of the remaining Duars in Assam and even of those in Bengal frontier was the only answer to Bhotanese outrages.<sup>25</sup> Jenkins, however, did not aim at coercion alone. The positive character of his statesmanship urged him to offer Bhotan a share of the revenue of the annexed Duars. Bhotan was mainly interested in the income from the Duars. So, a regular and a handsome subsidy from the government of India would compensate for the loss of territories which she could never claim as her rightful possessions.<sup>26</sup>

In September, 1841, the government of India agreed to the occupation of the five remaining Duars in Assam. The Chinese at Lhasa were constrained to remain passive. Peking was in

23 *Ibid.*—10 August, 1840 (99).

24. *Ibid.*—15 March, 1841 (87).

25. *Ibid.*—14 June, 1841 (84).

26. *Ibid.*—14 June, 1841 (86).

distress on account of the opium war that England at this time waged against China, and could not afford to pay attention to any developments on the other side of the Himalaya. The Court of Directors had authorised the government of India to proceed against the Assam Duars.<sup>27</sup> Lord Auckland, therefore, accepted Jenkins' proposal for a subsidy to be paid to Bhotan in lieu of the Duars to be annexed. He, however, wanted that subsidy to be calculated upon the average revenue of the Duars for the previous 5-10 years. Besides, the subsidy would be paid only if Bhotan agreed to stop outrages in future in the British territory.<sup>28</sup> Accordingly, on 8 October, 1841, Jenkins ordered Lieutenant Scott to complete the annexation of the Darrang Duars; and on 11 November, Captain Mathie, the Duars in Kamrup. The operations were over before the year ended. Bhotan did not put any strong resistance to the advancing British.

After the annexation of the Assam Duars, the question of subsidy arose. Jenkins found it difficult to calculate, as the government had suggested, the average of the revenue of the previous 5-10 years. As in Bhotan correct accounts of revenue were not maintained by the authorities, so in the Duars the exact amount of the revenue could not be known from any reliable Bhotanese papers. Jenkins, therefore, proposed to pay Bhotan 1/3 of the net current revenue, which in 1841, was estimated at 26,000 rupees. Lord Ellenborough, the new Governor-General, however, desired to give Bhotan an opportunity to have her say in this matter.<sup>29</sup> This was necessary too. By the occupation of the Duars in Assam, the government of India added 1600 square miles of territory to its north-eastern frontier, and now could well afford to be more kind to the government of Bhotan. In fact, the government of India wanted to make the gradual extension of the frontier in the eastern Himalaya tolerable to its people. It decided to pacify them. So the Sat-Rajas of Kuriapara were granted, in 1843, an annual subsidy of Rs. 5,000 in exchange for their

27. *For. Pol. Con.*—16 September, 1841 (69-70).

28. *Ibid.*—20 September, 1841 (73-74).

29. *Ibid.*—12 October, 1842 (79-81).

rights to that Duar.<sup>30</sup> The case of the Sat-Rajas of Charduar and their collaborators, the Tebhangias, was under consideration of the government for similar financial help in exchange of their right to levy blackmail.

The government of India also did not ignore the expectations of Sikkim who as an ally of the British deserved favours at their hands. The suggestion of the British Resident in Nepal in October, 1839, for drawing closer to Sikkim was acted upon. The government of India paid her an annual subsidy of Rs. 3,000 for the hill of Darjeeling, that brought the government of India a little above Rs. 4,000 as revenue in the year 1840-41. Within five years this amount of subsidy to Sikkim was doubled. The British government wanted to be sure of its only strategic foothold in the long line of the eastern Himalaya.

Pacification of Bhotan became the next objective of the government of India. To keep her in good humour, the requests of the Chiefs of Sidli and Bijni for their Duars to be taken under British protection were rejected by Lord Ellenborough. Even, the recommendations on the subject made by Jenkins were not accepted.<sup>31</sup> In fact, the British were eager to close the chapter of wasteful quarrels with Bhotan over the Assam Duars. The only obstacle to the payment of subsidy to Bhotan was, so far, her own delay in signing the agreement of peaceful relations with the British subjects in the frontier. A few years ago Bhotan would not hesitate to give such an undertaking. But after the Assam Duars were annexed by the government of India, Bhotan realised the risk of signing any agreement with the British. She was aware of her own incapacity for controlling the officers in the frontier. They were at the root of all her troubles with the British government. Bhotan had lost the Assam Duars, but she could not afford to lose the compensatory allowance which the government of India was willing to pay. So instead of executing any new engagement, Bhotan chose to depend on the generosity of the British. The government of India, however, was prepared to offer Bhotan

30, Aitchison, C. U.—Op. cit., Vol. I, No. LIII.

31 *For. Pol. Con.*—30 March, 1842 (180-83).

the subsidy whether she signed the agreement or not. But the report of the Resident in Nepal about a Bhotanese envoy attending the Court of Nepal caused the government of India much anxiety. The payment of subsidy, therefor, was held over. Of course, after annexation of the Assam Duars the government of India could always hold the Bhotanese at bay. It allowed the Bhotanese into Assam only as peaceful traders. On any indications of their unseemingly conduct, the government could seal the border and suspend altogether Bhotanese trade in Assam.

Such a step was taken by the British in 1845. Following an outrage in Baska by the Bhotanese of Dewangiri, the Duar was closed; on pain of losing their trade, the Bhotanese yielded to British demands.<sup>32</sup> In 1846, therefore, when Bhotan made requests for the subsidy, the Governor-General's Agent on the North-east Frontier released the first instalment of Rs. 10,000 for the year 1845-46. Next year, in addition to the subsidy for 1846-47, he also paid Rs. 30,000 for 1842-43, 1843-44 and 1844-45. The Agent to the Governor-General reasoned that so much money at a time would make Bhotan believe in the honesty of the British; it would also induce her to enter into the agreement which the government of India so much desired.<sup>33</sup> Future events, however, would show how far the government of India was justified in expecting so much of Bhotan. At the moment, the Governor-General and his Agent were relieved of a great anxiety. The prospect of an expanding trade between Assam and Bhotan no longer occupied their mind; rather, they were happy that, without a major conflict with the Bhotanese, the government of India was able to establish British sovereignty over the Assam Duars.

The affairs of the Assam duars constituted but one side of the Anglo-Bhotanese relations in the eighteen-forties; the other side was connected with the affairs of the Bengal Duars. The last report received by the government of India from the frontier of the Bengal Duars was about the reconciliation of Hargovind Katham with Bhotan. Hargovind, in the meantime, had made

32. *For. Pol. Con*—28 March, 1845 (148-52),  
25 April, 1845 (188-89).

33. *Ibid.*—2 January, 1847 (16-23).

his way into the factional fights between the two mutually hostile Dev Rajas. He sided with the ex-Dev. The reigning Dev Raja, however, set up Durga Dev, of the Baikunthapur Raikat family, against Hargovind. He was the izaradar of Ambari-Falakata under Bhotan; but he was not contented with the izaradari alone. He longed to grab the territories on the east bank of the Tista, then under the occupation of Hargovind. This son of the Raikat family revived in him the ambition of the family he belonged to and ventured to extend the eastern limits of Baikunthapur beyond the Tista. Long ago his fore-fathers had joined hands with Bhotan against Cooch Behar in the hope of expanding on the other side of the Tista. But the outcome of this unholy alliance was that it was Bhotan, not Baikunthapur, who had reaped the harvest. With the blessings of the reigning Dev Raja Durga Dev Raikat was elated by the prospect of an extensive territory. Only the Katham was to be eliminated by force. Hargovinda, however, did not yield; and so the whole sector between the rivers Tista and Jaldhaka became a battlefield between the two contestants.

To keep the British frontier free from troubles, the government of India sealed the border of Rangpur.<sup>34</sup> But this measure helped Durga Dev more than it helped to maintain the neutrality of the British. Durga Dev was first a British subject, and then an izaradar under Bhotan. So his adversaries could not attack him in Ambari-Falakata without passing through the British territory of Baikunthapur. On the other hand, Durga Dev easily got men and materials from his own country to fight Hargovind in Bhotan territory.<sup>35</sup> The ex-Dev Raja pointed out this anomaly and requested Jenking not to allow British subjects swell the number of Durga Dev's fighting forces. In September, 1841, the situation rose to climax. Durga Dev got his rival murdered and the Dev Raja conferred upon Durga Dev the territories of Kranti, Gopalgunge, Mainaguri and Changmari. The ex-Dev Raja, however, to weaken the partisans of the reigning Dev Raja won over the Subas of Dalimkot and Chamurchi, and incited them against Durga Dev Raikat. There were also the heirs of late

34. *For. Pol. Con.*—2 October, 1839 (95).

35. *Ibid.*—2 November, 1840 (71).

Hargovind to avenge his death.<sup>36</sup>

In January, 1842, Dr. A Campbell, in charge of civil affairs in Darjeeling, was deputed to enquire into the situation. Dr. Campbell proceeded to the frontier and saw for himself the miserable plight of the locality and its people. At Bakali he conferred with the Subas of Dalimkot and Mainaguri. After going through details of the origin and consequences of the troubles, he straight-way accused Durga Dev of the part he played against Hargovind, and the advantages he took of his status as the izaradar under Bhotan, and as a British subject.<sup>37</sup> The government of India took prompt action. Durga Dev was compelled to sever his relations with Bhotan; moreover, he was told in clear language not to go into Bhotan territory without permission from the Rangpur Magistrate.<sup>38</sup> In the meantime, Bhotan became willing to transfer the izaras of Ambari-Falakata to the government of India in the hope of the regular receipt of its rent. Durga Dev in spite of his cordial relations with Bhotan had proved himself a defaulter. The government of India at once agreed to hold Ambari-Falakata in firm. In February, 1842, on an annual rent of Rs. 800—the government took over the management of the territory that Warren Hastings, as a mark of friendship, had conferred upon Bhotan.<sup>39</sup> The only remaining task of the government was to disarm the heirs of the late Hargovind. On the misfortune of the family, they had repaired to Patgram in Rangpur. But the Magistrate of Rangpur took advantage of their residence in Patgram, to exact personal bonds of Rs. 3000—from each of them requiring them not to lead armed men into Bhotan territory.<sup>40</sup> Thus, after three generations of Kathamship, the family of Haridas Katham went to live in obscurity under British protection.

The British frontier in the north of Bengal, even after the chapter of the Kathams was closed did not become peaceful. Boundary disputes between Bhotan and Cooch Behar, and between Bhotan and Rangpur led to Bhotanese violence upon

36. *For. Pol. Con.*—18 October, 1841 (60).

37. *Ibid.*—7 February, 1842 (136).

38. *Ibid.*—7 February, 1842 (139).

39. *Ibid.*—24 August, 1842 (139).

40. *For. Pol. Con.*—24 August, 1842 (143).

the people living within the British frontier. In spite of the desire of the government to get the boundaries "clearly defined by some distinct and lasting mode of demarcation", nothing was done. In a private letter to Dr. Campbell, Jenkins admitted that the government had no officer to spare for the task; also it did not take upon itself the entire financial burden, for it was not known if Bhotan would pay her share of the expenses.<sup>41</sup> On 10 January, 1841, the government permitted Dr. Campbell to conduct all correspondence with the Bhotan authorities relating to boundary affairs in the frontiers of Rangpur and Cooch Behar.<sup>42</sup> To his proposal of marking off the boundaries even at the cost of the government, however, the latter did not agree. So, police guards were posted at the important places in the frontier of Baikunthapur, and a Company of Bhagalpur Hill Rangers at Titalya. But this also did not restore peace in the frontier.

For nine years Dr. Campbell held his new assignment. His efforts to emulate and vie with Jenkins as a frontier officer left only a short chapter of unproductive enthusiasm. Not only was Dr. Campbell confused by the constantly disturbed state of the Duars, but also Jenkins was opposed to Campbell's dealing with the disputes in the Rangpur and Cooch Behar frontiers. For police purposes Campbell could act more promptly than Jenkins could from his station in Gauhati, but if Campbell's actions in the Rangpur or Cooch Behar frontiers towards Bhotan produced serious political consequences, neither Jenkins nor the government of India admitted them.

In February, 1842, the government permitted Dr. Campbell to mark off at the cost of the government Rangpur's frontier with Bhotan. Peace in this frontier lasted only for three years. This was not due to any change either in the attitude or in the policy of Bhotan. In fact, the central government of Bhotan did not wield that much of authority over its frontier officers for which it might be said that their activities in the British frontier

41. Dr. Campbell's letter to the Govt. of India, 25 November, 1841, No. 347 (*Cooch Behar Select Records*) Vol. 2, pp. 101-13.

42. Bayly, H. V.—*Note on Bhootan Frontier*, 25 March, 1850 (Govt. of Bengal Political Papers—*Bhutan, Sikkim and Tibet*).



were motivated or controlled by their government. Rather, it was the recent annexation of the Assam Duars by the British that restrained the Bhotanese officers in the Bengal Duars; but that was also temporary. There were cases of disputes between Bhotan and Cooch Behar over land and robbery in the frontier villages of Cooch Behar committed from the side of Chamurchi Duar of Bhotan. Dr. Campbell intervened and adjudicated the disputes finding the Bhotanese officer of Chamurchi quite sensible.

Dr. Campbell was soon disillusioned, and charged the frontier officers of Bhotan as being unscrupulous, untruthful and dishonest body of men.<sup>42A</sup> The occasion was a dispute between Cooch Behar and Bhotan for the possession of a piece of land about 4225 yards in length and about 1600 yards in width along the windings of the river Gilandi in Chakla Kheti of Cooch Behar. Sakalu Prodhan and Seva Napit were subjects of Cooch Behar and were in possession of the land. But three to four hundred people from Bhotan's territory of Bala Duar claimed the land and took away, forcibly a great quantity of paddy and mustard from the lands of Sakalu. In the presence of the representatives of Bhotan Dr. Campbell examined the case, and found the Bhotanese in the wrong. His impression about the Bhotanese frontier officers was not at all favourable. The Bhotanese in the Duars were insufferable. In his view, no measure other than "the resumption of lands contiguous to ours and formerly bestowed on them by us" could bring security of the British frontier. Dr. Campbell also hinted at the lands of Jalpesh and Bhot-hat.<sup>43</sup>

But the government was not bothered about the boundary disputes between Cooch Behar and Bhotan so long as the Bhotanese did not carry violence into British territory. The police posts maintained in the Bhotanese frontier at Bakali, Jiranganj and Chura Bhandar were considered equal to any border violence. In fact, since 1846, affairs in

42A. Dr. Campbell's letter to Secy. to the Government of Bengal, 6 March 1845, *Cooch Behar Select Records, Vol. II*, pp. 118-19.

43. Dr. Campbell to the Govt. of Bengal, 6 March, 1845 (*Cooch Behar Select Records, Vol. 2*, pp. 117-20).

the Punjab were fast developing against the British. So, neither Lord Hardinge nor Lord Dalhousie, who succeeded him, paid attention to Bhotanese incursions into Cooch Behar. These incursions, as time went on, increased agitating Dr. Campbell. But Lord Dalhousie asked him "to interfere as little as possible in matters belonging to foreign territories." Dr. Campbell argued that as the Paramount Power the government should not allow Cooch Behar to use her own means of obtaining redress from the Duar officers.<sup>44</sup> But on 6 October, 1848, he was again told that Cooch Behar was not under protection in that sense as to require such interference.

British indifference towards Cooch Behar's difficulties created by a foreign Power was opposed to the spirit of the eighth Article of the treaty between Cooch Behar and the British. No doubt, till the death of King Harendra Naryan in 1839, the relations between Cooch Behar and the British were not cordial. Going to introduce British currency and to improve the administration and justice in Cooch Behar, the government faced opposition from her ruler, and subsequently gave up the idea. But since Raja Sibendra Narayan succeeded his father to the throne in 1839, the relations between Cooch Behar and the British government definitely improved. After a lapse of many years Jenkins, as the agent to the Governor-General visited Cooch Behar. The government refrained from interfering in the internal affairs of Cooch Behar, but upheld British paramountcy. It did not permit Cooch Behar to try in her own Courts any subject of Bhotan committing offence within Cooch Behar. Such cases were to be "excepted from the common rule of local jurisdiction", and Dr. Campbell was deputed to the Bhotan frontier to see to it.<sup>45</sup> In 1847, Raja Sibendra Narayan of Cooch Behar died. His successor was a minor, and the government decided to take the state under its care during the Raja's minority.<sup>45A</sup>, Besides,

44. *Ibid.*—11 September, 1848 (*Cooch Bihar Select Records*. Vol. 2, p. 140).

45. Govt. of India to Jenkins—22 June, 1842 (*Cooch Behar Select Records*, Vol. 2, p. 109).

45A. Govt. of Bengal to Govt. of India—14 December, 1848, *Op. cit.*, pp. 143-7.

it approved of the services of Dr. Moor as the physician and tutor of the boy-king.<sup>45B</sup> Evidently, the British were not as indifferent about Cooch Behar as it appeared to be. In truth, Lord Dalhousie was then in the final phase of the Anglo-Sikh war. He did not come to any decision about the measures to be taken against the Bhotanese in the Bengal Duars. For, in respect of the Assam Duars, the government was aware of its own sovereign rights; to the Bengal Duars, on the contrary, it accepted long ago the similar rights of Bhotan. To resume its own rights was one thing, to resume the admitted rights of Bhotan was another. As a result of this attitude of the government the Bhotanese usually broke into the frontier villages of Cooch Behar and plundered with impunity.

In the middle of 1850, the government made a rearrangement of the duties of its officers on the Bhotan frontier. Lord Dalhousie desired his agent on the North-east frontier to deal with all situations created by the Bhotanese on the Bengal frontier. The Magistrate of Rangpur, as well as, Dr. Campbell in Darjeeling were ordered to place all facts about Bhotan before the Governor-General's agent.<sup>46</sup> Hardly was this arrangement completed than the prevailing disorders in the Bengal Duars spread towards Rangpur. It was found that a small detachment was incapable of apprehending any party of Bhotanese miscreants; for, the moment they crossed into their own tracts, they were quite safe from pursuits. It was also found that the problems in the frontier were not created by the Bhotanese alone. British subjects also tried to fish in the troubled water. In the first week of October, 1853, Jenkins reported against Phedu Kumar, who like his brother Durga Dev Raikat, made an attempt to occupy Mainaguri and other areas by force. He failed; but the government was very annoyed. The Bengal government was, therefore, directed to enquire into the unseemingly conduct of the British subjects living near the Bhotan frontier, and punish

45B. Govt. of Bengal to Dr. Ralph Moore—4 Jan., 1849, *Op. cit.*, p. 141.

46. Govt. of India's letter to the Agent, North-east Frontier, 14 June, 1850 (1360), *Govt. of Bengal Political Papers—Sikkim, Bhotan, Tibet.*

any such, if found guilty.<sup>47</sup>

Only a precise and a definite line of action could resolve complications in the frontier. British passivity to the frontier incidents in north Bengal emboldened the local Bhotanese officers and their under-agents. In March, 1854, a party of Bhotanese entered Peshak in the eastern part of Darjeeling and plundered the house of a Bhotanese who had migrated from west Bhotan and settled down there. Dr. Campbell, to prevent another such raid, placed a guard at Peshak and a police picket between Peshak and the Tista. But events in the Bengal Duars raised an echo in Assam. A Bhotanese aggression from the Banska duar in 1850, was treated as a minor incident, and a mere closure of the affected Duar was sufficient for making the Bhotanese yield. In early 1855, an organised robbery was committed in Kamrup by the men of the chief of Dewangiri. He was the brother of the Tongsa Penlop, the most powerful baron in Bhotan. Jenkins directed the Magistrate of Kamrup to arrest all armed Bhotanese visiting his district. He also protested to the chief of Dewangiri and sent a copy of it to the Dev Raja. Besides, from the deposition of six Bhotanese arrested in Kamrup, it was affirmed that the chief of Dewangiri was not only the instigator, but also received the spoils of the robbery.<sup>48</sup> The action taken by Jenkins in Kamrup alerted the government of Bhotan. The Dev Raja was reported to have dismissed the Dewangiri chief, and asked the Tongsa Penlop to pay double the amount of money involved in the robbery in Kamrup. The Tongsa Penlop, however, sent a sharp rejoinder to Jenkins demanding of him of half the fine imposed by the Dev Raja. Despairing of redress, therefore, Jenkins on 13 November, 1855, strongly advocated immediate occupation of the Bengal Duars as "the only measure likely to be effective short of invading the country."<sup>49</sup> The government of India too was very perturbed. On 11 January, 1856, Lord Dalhousie asked Jenkins to demand

47. Govt. of India's letter to the Bengal Govt., 4 November, 1853 (4700)—*Govt. of Bengal Political Papers—Sikkim Bhotan. Tibet.*

48. *Parl. Papers—Vol. 39, 1865, pp. 177-78.*

49. *Parl. Papers—Vol. 39, 1865, p. 191.*

of the Tongsa Penlop apology for the disrespect shown in the person of Jenkins to the government of India. Also, the value of the property plundered by the Dewangiri robbers was to be deducted from Bhotan's subsidy for the previous year. Besides, payment of the subsidy was to be entirely withheld 'until all the offenders who had been demanded were surrendered'. The Governor-General expected these measures to produce effect. If not, Jenkins should occupy the Bengal Duars permanently. The question of giving Bhotan a share of the revenues from the annexed Duars in Bengal should be left to the Governor-General for decision. The British government was aware of the weakness of the central government of Bhotan; but it could not be that the subjects of the British government should suffer for that. The central government of Bhotan must share the penalty for the delinquency of the frontier officers whom it was its duty to check.<sup>50</sup>

Jenkins communicated the decision of his government to the Dev and the Dharma Rajas, and also the Penlop of Tongsa. The measure produced good result. The government of Bhotan apologised, and Jenkins deducted nearly three thousand rupees from Bhotan's subsidy, being the estimated value of the property plundered by the chief of Dewangiri.<sup>50A</sup> In the meantime a body of armed men from the Bhalka Duar of Bhotan entered the British territory of Ghurla and carried off Aran Sing, a hereditary Zamindar of Guma Duar who had settled down in Ghurla. Captain Agnew, the Principal Assistant Commissioner of Goalpara, regarded Aran Sing neither as a British subject, nor a refugee from Bhotan territory. Jenkins however, differed. Whatever Aran Sing's purpose in residing in British territory, the fact that he was kidnapped from there was a sufficient ground for asking the Bhotan authorities for adequate atonement.<sup>51</sup> The government of Bhotan, however, in reply to Jenkins' strong protests claimed Aran Sing as its servant and so requested Jenkins not to bother about him.<sup>51A</sup>

50. *Ibid.*

50A. *For. Pol. Consult*, 18 July, 1856 (19-20).

51. *Parl. Papers*—Op. cit., p. 204.

51A. Rennie D. F.—*Bhotan and the Duar War*, Appex. B, p. 401.

The Bengal government wanted to refer the subject to the Bhotan government for an amicable settlement. But Lord Canning refused "to take the very friendly and moderate tone" recommended by the Bengal government. In his letter dated 25 June, 1856, to the Lieutenant-Governor he demanded of Bhotan apology for the acts of her dependents, and their punishment. Should the government of Bhotan not atone for their offence, the government would permanently occupy the Bengal Duars.<sup>52</sup>

The Bengal government, still believed that the British subsidy for Bhotan was the most effective means of bending Bhotan to the will of the British. It suggested that Bhotan must realise some day that violence in the British frontier ultimately made her loser. And, since the Bhotan government had been for some time requesting an increased subsidy, it might also be asked to behave as peace-loving neighbour on the ground that their request might be considered.<sup>53</sup> These arguments made a strong appeal to judicial temperament of Lord Canning. If the authorities of Bhotan offered full satisfaction regarding the abduction of Aran Sing, he was also prepared to raise Bhotan's subsidy from Rs. 10,000 to Rs. 12,000.<sup>54</sup>

Jenkins, however, was not at all happy. He again pleaded for the annexation of the Bengal Duars. From the eighteen-fifties the barons of Bhotan engaged themselves in power-contest making the central authority of the country virtually ineffective. Such a government could not offer any remedy for the British grievances. The Bengal Duars between the Manas and the Tista bore a wretched look. The people living there welcomed British rule. Jenkins, referred to the prayer of the Raja of Sidli for coming under British protection. A similar prayer was made in the beginning of the year by the people of the Bengal Duars. They even promised to take up arms against Bhotan if the British government sent reinforcements for fighting on their sides. Jenkins, therefore, proposed that the Bengal Duars be occupied

52. *Parl. Papers*—Op. cit., p. 207.

53. *Parl. Papers*—Op. cit., p. 207.

54. *For. Pol. Con.*—18 July, 1856 (19-20).

and the government of Bhotan given a share of their revenue.<sup>55</sup>

No sooner had Jenkins placed his views before the government than he learnt of Salgram Oswal's arrest by the Bhotan authorities in Mainaguri. Oswal was a merchant living in Sholemari with in Cooch Behar. He went to Mainaguri on business, and was arrested on the charge of holding the property of a deceased Bhotanese subject. Besides, fifty armed men from Bala Duar went to Sholemari and carried off three men, three women and some cash property. Those women, however, were subsequently released on payment of Rs. 1400/- and on promise of Rs. 1000/- more to be paid.<sup>56</sup> At about the same time the Bhotanese of Mainaguri committed outrages in the villages of Saptibari and Bakali in Rangpur frontier. The government was perplexed. It decided to send one regiment of Native Infantry to the Rangpur frontier, and another to Goalpara. Still, the government desired neither open hostility with Bhotan nor the additional burden of the Bengal Duars. They were productive, but from the government's point of view, were very unhealthy for the Europeans and the Indians alike. The Government of India wanted rather to know if outrages in the British frontier on the western Duars could be stopped by withholding Bhotan's share of the proceeds of the eastern Duars. That was possible only as long as Bhotan and her government were one. and there was no division of authority or interest there. The government had but vague ideas on those points; Lord Canning, therefore, asked Halliday, the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal to make a tour in the frontier and submit his findings on the mutual relations of the authorities of east and west Bhotan.<sup>57</sup>

On 28 January, 1857, Jenkins furnished his government with the necessary information on the mutual relations of the authorities of Bhotan. The sources of information were two Bengali ex-officers of the government of Bhotan. Jenkins did not certify the information to be authoritative, but it answered well the enquiries of Lord Canning. The authority of the Dev Raja

55. Jenkins' letter to the Govt. of Bengal, 13 Nov, 1856 (125): *Govt. of Bengal Political Paper—Sikkim, Bhutan, Tibet.*

56. Rennie, D. F.—*Bhootan and the Dooar War*—P. 402.

57. *Parl. papers*—Op. cit., pp. 226-27.

over the entire country was only nominal. The Penlops of Tongsa and Paro were the virtual rulers of east and west Bhotan respectively. All troubles in the British frontier of Bengal resulted from the indulgence given by the Penlop of Paro to his subordinates. The withholding of the British subsidy on account of the eastern Duars would have no effect upon him. For, the two Penlops were independent of each other and the Dev Raja had no control over either of them. On 5 March, 1857, the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal also gave the same account. He found no reason for treating Bhotan and her government as one. The authorities of Bhotan were not of one purpose or interest. Nevertheless, he did not advise withholding of the subsidy for the Duars in Assam. That would penalise only the central government of Bhotan and the Penlop of Tongsa for an offence which was not theirs. Besides, there were indications of an improved situation within Bhotan. The rebellions which had so long thrown the country into confusion were at an end with the accession of a comparatively powerful Dev Raja in 1856. He was Sonam Tobgyal. The Lieutenant-Governor, therefore, wanted the highest dignitaries of Bhotan to be warned against the misdeeds of their frontier officers in future. Should this warning also go unheeded by them, Ambari-Falakata and Jalpesh "part and parcel of the Bykuntpore Zemindaree of Rangpore" were to be first annexed. If further measures were necessary, portions of the Bengal Duars, most convenient to invade and hold, should be occupied.<sup>58</sup> Lord Canning accepted the recommendations of the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal.<sup>59</sup> He, however, desired Ambari-Falakata to be annexed at the first instance. Should that fail to produce any effect upon Bhotan, Jalpesh was to be annexed. But, the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal was desired not to communicate to the authorities of Bhotan when or how the government of India would "act in the event of the demand being refused." The Lieutenant-Governor was requested to inform the Dharma and Dev Rajas of this decision of the

58. *Parl. papers*—Op. cit.—Pp. 218—22.

59. The Govt. of India's letter to the Govt. of Bengal, 14 April, 1857 (1603)—*Govt. of Bengal Political Papers—Sikkim, Bhutan, Tibet*.



government. The Penlops of Tongsa and Paro also were to be duly informed.

Meanwhile, in February, 1857, the 73 Native Infantry from Dacca and the 11 Irregular Cavalry from Dinajpur moved to their new station in Jalpaiguri. This measure was co-ordinated with the decision to construct of bigger fortification at Ghurla near the Guma Duar. On 17 September, 1857, Jenkins issued necessary instructions to Lieutenant Marshall, the executive engineer.<sup>60</sup> But the Mutiny of 1857 stayed all proceedings. The proposal to set up a permanent cantonment in Jalpaiguri was dropped. Even, the loyalty of the troops in Jalpaiguri was shaken.<sup>61</sup> Troops of the 73 Native Infantry and 11 Irregular Cavalry were sent to Madarganly (7 miles in the south of Jalpaiguri) on the bank of the Tista. They were to resist the mutineers of Dacca, who had been advancing across Rangpur. But the troops of Jalpaiguri rose in revolt and marched towards Purnea.<sup>62</sup> No wonder, therefore, on 12 October, 1857, Jenkins wrote to the government of Bengal not to communicate to the Bhotan authorities the strong opinions of the government. For, if British relations with Bhotan took a hostile turn, the government, owing to the progress of the Mutiny, would find it difficult to spare troops for the Bhotan frontier. Threats, unless backed by sufficient force, would only exasperate, not frighten, the Bhotanese.<sup>63</sup> The government concurred with the arguments of Jenkins and for the time being refrained from pressing its demands upon Bhotan. A forward Policy again suffered defeat before it could be applied at all.

The difficulties of the British government encouraged the Bhotanese frontier officers. Towards the end of 1857, the Bhotanese from Bala Duar trespassed into the border of Cooch Behar, and ransacked the house of Sakalu Prodhan of Kheti. The servants of Prodhan were wounded in resisting the Bhotanese

60. *Parl. papers*—Op. cit.—P. 235.

61. Mujumdar R. C.—*Sepoy Mutiny and the Revolt of 1857*—P. 63.

62. Buckland C. E.—*Bengal under Lieutenant-Governors*—Vol. I.—pp. 130-31.

Roy Choudhuri, P. C.—*Bihar District Gazetteers*—Purnea, pp. 90-91.

63. *Parl. papers*—Op. cit. pp., 252-55.

who carried away the son and son-in-law of Prodhan, and plundered one hundred and twentythree buffaloes and properties worth three thousand rupees. Jenkins made protests to the Dev Raja, who agreed to hold an enquiry. But the local Bhotanese officers refused to probe the allegations made by Jenkins, until a revision of the boundaries of Kheti was made.<sup>64</sup> After the dacoity in Prodhan's house, the people of the locality abandoned their homes in alarm. The Cooch Behar authorities with their small body of inefficient sepoy failed to restore peace and security there. In spite of Jenkins' requests for placing a guard under a European officer in the disturbed locality, the Bengal government was unable to help him.<sup>65</sup> Even, the British government could not take any action upon the intelligence that some rebel sepoy of Dacca were desperately making for the Bengal Duars on the border of Rangpur. Gordon, the British officer, who chased them was so misguided by the Suba of Mainaguri that the rebels safely crossed the Rangpur border.<sup>66</sup>

The decision of the government to hold the line of the British frontier in north Bengal was thus compromised to the necessity of stamping out the Mutiny. Therefore, persons abducted and held by the Bhotanese frontier officers were left to their tender mercies. The Court of Directors, however, interfered and made the government active. The Court was aware of the failure of the Bhotan government in preventing outrages in British territory. It looked upon the apologies made by the Bhotan government from time to time as meaningless. The Court, therefore, deprecated the previous idea of the Governor-General of inducing the Bhotan government to be on good terms with the British by an increase of the subsidy. The Court rather noted with approval the last decision of the government to annex Ambari-Falakata, and Jalpesh.<sup>67</sup>

64. *Cooch Behar Select Records*—Vol. 2, pp. 212-14

65. Bengal Government to Jenkins, 28 Jan. 1858 (398).

66. Buckland C. E.—*Op. cit.*—pp.130-31.

67. Political letter from the Court, 18 August, 1858

*Parl. papers*—*op. cit.*, P. 236.

On 5 January, 1859, Jenkins wrote that both Aran Sind and Ramdulal Sarkar, abducted sometime ago, were reported to be dead. He, however, had doubts about the truth of the report given by the Bhotan authorities.<sup>68</sup> The behaviour of the Bhotanese, at length, became tiresome to Jenkins. Cooch Behar had made representations to him upon thirty cases of Bhotanese outrage during 1857-58. Jenkins did not fail to write about them to the Dev Raja or to the local officers, but without any results. "Unless our Government", wrote Jenkins, "punish the Soobahs by the attachment of the Dooars" British subjects would end their days in confinement in Bhotan.<sup>69</sup> The government of Bengal also was in favour of "the occupation of one or more of the Dooars" until British demands were fully complied with.<sup>70</sup> On 10 June, 1859, Lord Canning, therefore, resolved to execute the penal measures adopted in April, 1857.<sup>71</sup>

The government of Bhotan, however, found a new excuse. The new Dev Raja who was enthroned, in 1856 politely admitted his ignorance of the British grievances.<sup>72</sup> Jenkins was bored and totally lost faith in correspondence. The Bengal government, on the other hand, felt sympathy for the new Dev Raja and revised its previous opinion for the punishment of Bhotan. It now held that should the government decide to strike, the blow would not be effective, but would "expend the best bolt in its quiver". In the opinion of the government of Bengal, the present Dev Raja should be given a chance to exert his authority over the country and to do justice to the British<sup>73</sup>. Jenkins, therefore, was required to inform the Dev Raja that immediately on the next outrage made by his subjects in British territory or in Cooch Behar, Ambari-Falakata would be occupied by the British Government. The Duar officers of Bhotan, however, were heedless of the proceedings between their government and the government of India. On 12 January, 1860, Jenkins reported a robbery in Ghurla

68. *Parl. papers*—op. cit. P. 239.

69. *Beng. Lt.-Gov. Pro. (Pol.)*—April, 1859 (5).

70. *Ibid.*—(7).

71. *Parl. papers* —op. cit. P. 252.

72. *Ibid.*—P. 255.

73. *Beng. Lt.-Gov. Pro. (Pol.)*—January, 1860 (12).

from the Guma Duar. This incident compelled the government of India to take action. On 31 January, 1860, Lord Canning ordered Ambari-Falakata to be occupied; he wanted the Bhotan government to be informed that this territory would be released only after the British demands were met.<sup>74</sup> Sir Charles Wood, the Secretary of State also was not in favour of "any measures of permanent occupation".<sup>75</sup> On 29 June, 1860, he gave sanction to the occupation, for the time-being of Ambari-Falakata only.<sup>76</sup>

Jenkins, however, in carrying out the orders of the Government of India went a bit further. Not only did he hold the occupation of Ambari-Falakata to be "permanent and absolute"; but also he threatened the authorities of Bhotan that unless the required reparations were made "more territory would be seized". The government of India, on the contrary, had never intended to deny "hopes of future restoration of the territory that had been seized". So, Jenkins was rebuked and directed to strictly abide by the desires of the supreme government in future.<sup>77</sup> The British were not committed to any policy of retributive coercion; Jenkins was clearly told about that. Meanwhile, the government of India decided to give no further orders till the re-actions of Bhotan were known.

The mutual relations of Sikkim and the government of India were, about this time, greatly strained. Kidnapping of British subjects by Sikkim from Darjeeling, for sometime past, brought matters to a head. Dr. Campbell, the superintendent of Darjeeling, with the forces at his disposal failed to cope with the situation. It was feared that Sikkim might join forces with Bhotan against the British. On 20 December, 1860, Dr. Campbell reported from Darjeeling that the Dewan of Sikkim had been negotiating with Bhotan for her assistance against the British. In his opinion, the government of India should "either guard against it or provide for it". The government of Bengal, however,

74. *Parl. papers*—op. cit.—P. 257.

75. Letter of the Secy. of State to the G. G.-in-Council, 12 January, 1860 (2).

76. *Parl. papers*—op. cit.—P. 258.

77. *Parl. papers*—op. cit.—Pp. 258-60.

thought it wise not to hold out any threat to Bhotan at this stage. Rather, it desired that Dr. Campbell should not be authorised to deal with any affairs relating to Bhotan.<sup>78</sup> The government of India also did not want to confuse the affairs of Sikkim with those of Bhotan. The former, owing to the nature of her political relations with the British, stood on a different footing. Moreover, it was impolitic to antagonise both Sikkim and Bhotan at the same time. The government of India had already resolved to deal firmly with Sikkim. British troops under Colonel Gawler had been ordered to proceed against her. Ashley Eden as the Envoy and Special Commissioner, was to accompany the troops.<sup>79</sup>

The government of India waited for full one year expecting a change in Bhotan's attitude owing to her loss of Ambari-Falakata. But nothing such took place. There was no indication that the present Dev Raja Nagzi Pasang was more capable than his predecessors of controlling the frontier officers. Bhotanese outrage in the British and Cooch Behar territories continued. In the beginning of the year 1861, Bhotanese from Gopalganj carried off an elephant of Messrs Dear and Co. of Siliguri. The officer of Gopalganj, however, denied the allegation, but offered to give an elephant on payment of three hundred rupees, a gun and a telescope. The Suba of Dalimkot, the higher officer of the region, when contacted, pretended to know nothing about it. On the other hand, he expressed his concern for the rent of Ambari-Falakata which the government of India withheld and put the Dharma Raja to financial distress. But the Government of India would release the rent only when satisfactory relations with Bhotan were established.<sup>79A</sup>

It was useless to hold correspondence with the Dev Raja on Bhotanese depredations. The channel of British correspondence with the government of Bhotan, was either the Dewangiri Chief or the Suba of Buxa. But it was doubtful if letters from the government of India reached the government of Bhotan. Even if it reached, it was likely that the

78. *Beng. Lt.-Gov. Pro. (Pol.)*, January, 1861 (17).

79. *Ibid.*—(18-20).

79A. *Ibid.*— February, 1861 (100-2).

Bhotan government gave a reply on the lines suggested by the influential frontier officers. Hopkinson, the successor of Jenkins to the North-East Frontier Agency, in the middle of June 1861 received from the Dev Raja such one reply that made him recommend the occupation of Jalpesh on the other side of the Tista. He wanted even to proceed further and occupy Dalimkote and Yamerkote Duars.<sup>80</sup> Hopkinson's strong feelings were justified. Not that he alone received evasive reply from the government of Bhotan to his complaints against outrages made within the British frontier by the Bhotanese living on the other side but records in his office indicated that his predecessor had also had the same experience. The government of Bhotan always asked for the name of the places in Bhotan from where the culprits had gone into the British frontier and committed offence. But no action followed from the side of Bhotan even after these information were communicated to her. Still, the government of Bengal advised patience. Also the government of India's hands were tied by the Secretary of State's earlier directive not to go beyond Ambari-Falakata. Besides, it was expected that the desire of Bhotan for recovering the forfeited rent of Ambari-Falakata would induce her to satisfy the British demand.<sup>81</sup>

But Hopkinson differed on this point. He faced facts. The Dev Raja was not the sole authority in the country. The Penlops divided the government between themselves; their authority again was encroached upon by the frontier officers. Under these circumstances two alternative courses of action were open to the British. First, to watch helplessly Bhotanese depredations along the line of the frontier of Rangpur and Cooch Behar; secondly, to consider the question of sending a mission to Bhotan to deal direct with the Dev Raja. Hopkinson favoured the second alternative and suggested that a British agent should be permanently placed in Bhotan. This was in accordance with the policy of the government of India. Personally, however, he believed in the occupation of the Bengal Duars making provision for an allowance, as in Assam, to the Bhotan autho-

80. *Ibid.*—September, 1861 (55).

81. *Beng. Lt.-Gov. Pro. (Pol.)*, January, 1862 (40).

rities. "The Soobahs", he argued, "would be kept on their best behaviour by the fear of payment being withheld."<sup>82</sup> In December, 1861, the government of Bengal also spoke in favour of a mission and pleaded with the Government of India for the opening of a permanent British Agency in the capital of Bhotan. Lord Canning, however, did not think a British Agency necessary at the moment. Rather he preferred a direct contact with the central authorities of Bhotan by means of a British mission to that country.<sup>83</sup>

From the year 1862, the Government of India handled with care all frontier incidents so that the Bhotan authorities could raise no excuse for refusing a British mission into their country. Devikanta and Indramohan of the family of late Hargovind, had been for some time past intriguing against the Suba of Mainaguri. The government immediately ordered their arrest and instituted proceedings against them.<sup>84</sup> At about the same time, the government got reports of alleged movements of Bhotanese troops. While a party of Bhotanese moved from Dalimkot to Mainaguri, another got ready on the Sikkim-Darjeeling frontier. A third, under the Suba of Dalimkot planned to cut off the road connecting Darjeeling and the plain at Pankhabari.<sup>85</sup> The truth of this information was not ascertained by the government of India, but its anxiety was really great. The government ordered its own troops at Danapore to the neighbourhood of Darjeeling.<sup>86</sup> The tension, however, soon subsided, and the information of the hostile intentions of the Dalimkot Suba proved inaccurate. Meanwhile, in the middle of February, 1862, Hopkinson reported the arrival of a mission from the Court of Bhotan in the person of one Darpan Raja. He was "a confidential officer of the Secretary of State to the Deb Raja." Hopkinson hoped to "put his visit to profit."<sup>87</sup>

The meeting between Hopkinson and the Darpan Raja did

82. *Ibid.*—(43-4).

83. *Parl. papers*—op. cit., p. 277.

84. *Beng. Lt.-Gov. Pro.* (Pol).—February, 1862 (31, 33, 35).

85. *Ibid.*—(9-10).

86. *Ibid.*—(16).

87. *Cooch Behar Select Records*—Vol. 2, pp. 243.44.

not come up to the expectation of the government of India. The meeting revealed only two things; first, the Dev Raja was eager for an increased subsidy; secondly, he was not interested in the fate of Ambari-Falakata. Hopkinson deduced from the trend of his talks that the rent of Ambari-Falakata had never gone to the central government of Bhotan. Rather, the Penlop of Paro and his subordinates misappropriated it. Hopkinson placed before the Bhotanese agent the views of his government about the frontier troubles. He also communicated the desire of his government to send a mission to the Bhotan Court to settle all points at issue. But, the Bhotanese agent only spoke of his master's innocence, for the local officers had always concealed facts from him.<sup>88</sup>

In March, 1862, Lord Elgin came as the Governor-General and Viceroy. He set himself to the task of preparing the mission to Bhotan that his friend and predecessor had initiated. In the first week of April the government of India directed the government of Bengal to depute a special messenger to carry information to Bhotan about the proposed British Mission. Accordingly, a person named Mukunda Sing of Khuntaghat in Goalpara was appointed. He, for some years, had served a former Dev Raja, and so was entrusted with this duty. In July, 1862, Mukunda Sing started for the capital of Bhotan through Chirang pass, and on 9 September, reached Tashi-chho-dzong. On 21 September, he was granted an interview by the Dev Raja, and on 28 September, took leave of the Bhotan Court for his return journey to India. Mukunda Sing did not find the attitude of the Bhotan Court very helpful. The Dev Raja brought counter-charges of depredations made by British subjects along Bhotan's frontier. Rather, he wished a proper enquiry to be instituted before an envoy was sent by the government of India. Zinkafs from Bhotan would contact the British authorities and communicate further facts.<sup>89</sup>

The government of India was unwilling to postpone the mission to Bhotan and so decided to guard itself against any chances of Bhotan's complaining. British subjects who cultiva-

88. *Beng. Lt.-Gov. Pro. (Pol.)*, March, 1862 (59).

89. *Beng. Lt.-Gov. Pro. (Pol.)*—January, 1863 (48).



ted lands near the Bhotan frontier or who for the purpose of trade travelled by the roads that crossed and re-crossed the undemarcated line of Bhotan frontier were not always safe; but the British officers on the frontier were particularly asked to deal with their Bhotanese counter-parts with tact and moderation so that the government of Bhotan could not find the plea to refuse the mission. Thus, when the Deputy Magistrate of Titalya in Baikunthapur was on tour on the frontier in March, 1862, he found people in utter helplessness, the soil rich, although not a thousandth part of it under cultivation.<sup>90</sup> The government only noted what he had reported. Again, despite repeated Bhotanese outrage from Sidli and Chirang, the government was unwilling to attach the Bhotanese Lakheraj in Khuntaghat pargana in fear of causing of annoyance to Bhotan.<sup>90A</sup>

Usually, a frontier officer of Bhotan held his office until turned out by force by his successor who had gained the place of confidence at the level of the superior officers. Thus, the Katham of Mainaguri was thrown out of office at this time and he took shelter in British territory. But he was asked by the government to take the first opportunity to move out of British Territory.<sup>91</sup> Similarly, the Suba of Ripuduar fell into disgrace and came to Parbatjoar in Goalpara. Some two hundred Bhotanese were after him. The government only asked him to go back to Bhotan or move to some other place far from the frontier.<sup>92</sup> All eyes were now set on the proposed British mission to Bhotan. Sir Charles Wood in his letter of 29 November, 1862, approved of it. The Secretary of State wanted the Dev Raja to be told of the consequences of his failure "to restrain his marauding subjects". The Dev Raja had taken British forbearance to mean their weakness; but his error should be pointed out to him. The question of a permanent British Agency in Bhotan would be decided after the results of the mission were known.<sup>93</sup>

The government of India took some time to prepare for

90. *Ibid.*—March, 1862 (56).

90A. *Ibid.*—May, 1862 (31).

91. *Ibid.*—November, 1862 (18, 21).

92. *Ibid.*—(1, 2, 29, 30).

93. *Parl. Papers*—Vol. 39, p. 283.

the mission. The Zinkafs from the Bhotan Court were due to arrive. Lord Elgin wanted "to hear what they have got to say". He did not entirely deny the allegations of the Dev Raja against the British subjects living on the frontier.<sup>94</sup> The Bhotan Court, however, was silent. No Zinkaf from the Court came to confer with the government of India. In April, 1863, the government of India learnt that although some Bhotanese had come to the Agent to the Governor-General on the North-East Frontier, they were from the Penlop of Tongsa to receive the subsidy. They were not aware of any intention of the Dev Raja to send Zinkafs.<sup>95</sup> In fact the Dev Raja, at this time, Nagzi Pasang was having hard times being challenged by the Penlop of Tongsa and the Punakha Dzongpon.

On 11 August, 1863, the government of India appointed Ashley Eden as the British envoy to Bhotan. On the same day Eden received instructions from Lord Elgin. Eden was to explain in a friendly way the circumstances leading to the stoppage of the rent of Ambari-Falakata. The British had "no intention of occupying that territory any longer than the Bhotan government by refusing compliance with its just demands", rendered such occupation necessary. Eden should also demand the restoration of all persons and properties carried off from British territory or territories under British protection. Should Bhotan agree to remove all the grievances of the British an annual subsidy of Rs. 2000/- or a sum equal to 1/3 of the net revenue of Ambari-Falakata would be paid to Bhotan; the management of that territory, however, should remain in the hands of the government of India. Eden should also offer to require into the definite complaints of Bhotan against British subjects. Some satisfactory arrangements should be made for the restitution by both the governments of persons guilty of crimes in each other's territories. Besides, Bhotan should be informed that Cooch Behar and Sikkim were protected states of the British. Any aggressions against them, therefore, would be an unfriendly act on the part of Bhotan. The government of India was also keen on a free-trade with Bhotan, and, to effect that,

94. *Bengal. Lt-Gov. Pro. (Pol.)*, February, 1863 (24).

95. *Ibid.*—April, 1863 (14).

desired to place one permanent agent in that country. But that would depend on the success of Eden's primary objects.<sup>96</sup>

Eden was also furnished with a draft treaty, covering nine points, viz., (1) peace and friendship between the two governments should continue; (2) the government of Bhotan within six months from the date of the ratification of the treaty should release persons and properties carried off from the British territories, Sikkim and Cooch Behar; (3) after the restitution of those persons and properties, the government of India would deliver Ambari-Falakata to Bhotan on condition the latter guaranteed against future depredations. The government of India, however, was willing to pay her an annual subsidy on account of that territory, should Bhotan agree to transfer it to the government of India; (4) the government of India was prepared to institute full investigation and assure full redress for any outrages committed by British subjects in Bhotan territory; (5) the government of India also agreed to surrender any Bhotanese found to have taken refuge in British territory after committing any serious offence like murder, rape, dacoity, arson, forgery in his own country; (6) the government of Bhotan also would act likewise if such offenders from British territory took shelter in Bhotan; (7) the government of Bhotan should abide by the arbitration of the government of India in all disputes with Sikkim or Cooch Behar; (8) it should receive, with due honour, British envoys sent from time to time; (9) there should be free trade between the two governments, and both of them should accord equal treatment to each other's subjects.<sup>97</sup>

After the failure of the last mission under Captain Pember-ton, Lord Auckland had remarked in despair, "...fruitless missions of this kind will only tend to aggravate our embarrassment and are not creditable to the British Power."<sup>98</sup> Really, the circumstances leading to the mission of Eden were not more favourable than they had been in 1838. Soon after Eden had addressed the Dev Raja on 10 November, 1863, about his intend-

96. *Beng. Lt.-Gov. Pro. (Pol.)*—November, 1863 (40).

97. Eden, A.—*Report on the State of Bhotan and on the progress of the Mission. 1863-64*, Appendix—VIII-X.

98. Governor-General's Despatch (Pol.), 26 July, 1841 (2049).

ed journey, he came to know that ambition, hatred and jealousy had made Bhotan a battleground. The Dev Raja Nagzi Pasang was thrown out at last and a new Dev Raja sat upon the throne under the shadow of the Tongsa Penlop. The ex-Dev Raja did not despair but banking upon the help of the Penlop of Paro endeavoured to get himself back to power.<sup>99</sup> So, Eden did not expect a happy weather in his drive. Moreover, despite several communications made by the government of India to the government of Bhotan on the subject of Eden's mission, the latter sent no reply: In the last week of December, 1863, the government of India wrote to Eden about the situation but expressed, at the same time, the hope that the new Dev Raja might be willing to cultivate the friendship of the government of India and strengthen his own position. The government of India, therefore, found no reason why Eden should not set out.<sup>100</sup>

In fact, after the death of Lord Elgin in November, 1863, Sir William Denison looked after the affairs of India till the arrival of Sir John Lawrence in January, 1864, as the permanent Viceroy and Governor-General. The acting Governor-General, therefore, only laboured to expedite the work that had been commissioned by his predecessor. Yet, when silence on the part of Bhotan was so eloquent, the government of India should have been more cautious. To anticipate that the new Dev Raja, Tshe-wang Sithub would desire friendly terms with the British government was asking too much of him. For, few Dev Rajas in Bhotan had any independent policy of their own. It was given to few of them to reign as well as to govern. Knowing full well the situation before him, Eden undertook the ominous journey to Bhotan, while the authorities in England and India alike hoped for the success of the Mission.

On 4 January, 1864, Eden left Darjeeling. On the way to Paro he was served with a letter from the Bhotan Court complaining against British neglect of Bhotan's grievances. Again, at Paro he learnt that the Bhotan Court did not want the British mission to proceed. But Eden did not pay attention to

99. Eden, A.—Op. cit., pp. 55-56.

100. Beng. Lt. Gov. Pro. (Pol.)—January, 1864 (11).

this; he left Paro and reached Punakha in the middle of March. The country was in severe political turmoils. Tshe-wang Sithub was out of office before Eden started on his mission. Kague Wangchuk was upon the throne at that time. The ex-Dev Raja Nagzi Pasang did not cease giving troubles to the reigning Dev Raja, who, in fact, was bored. For several days nobody in Punakha took notice of the British Mission. On 17 March, Eden was summoned by the Dev Raja's council. The draft of the treaty which Eden took with him was scrutinised and strong objections were raised particularly to the Articles VIII and IX of the treaty. After three days, the Dev and the Dharma Rajas granted Eden an interview. What he wondered at was the predominance of the Penlop of Tongsa over the two highest dignitaries of Bhotan. The Penlop personally received the letters addressed by the Governor-General to the Dev and the Dharma Rajas. Then, as their spokesman, he told Eden that he himself would answer all questions. On 22 March, Eden was granted another interview. The draft of the treaty was read and agreed to except the Articles VIII and IX. Eden realised that by omitting those two articles he could please the Penlop of Tongsa. So, he made a fresh draft, and submitted it for signature. But even then, the Penlop demanded the addition of a new article by which the Assam Duars were to be given up by the government of India to him. He also demanded the whole revenue of those Duars collected by the government of India since 1842.

Eden, however, admitted his inability to add any new articles. Thereupon, the Penlop took a large piece of dough and besmeared his face. The dzongpon of Wangdi-Phodrang threw chewed betel-leaves on the face of Dr. Benjamin Simpson. Chiboo Lama, the interpreter of Eden was robbed of the watch that was a presentation from the Governor-General. The Penlop declared that he must have the Assam Duars, failing which he would prefer a war with the British. On 29 March, Eden, for the last time, was called to the Court of Bhotan. There, he was given the draft of an agreement and asked to sign. Eden signed, but put the words "under compulsion" on both the copies of that agreement. Then, the Penlop of Tongsa gave him a third copy for his signature; but that was too much,

and Eden refused to sign.<sup>101</sup>

Fortunately, for the British mission, there was division among the nobles in Bhotan. The dzongpons of Wangdi Phodrang, Tashi-chhodzong, and Punakha were reluctant to be dwarfed by the ambition of the Penlop of Tongsa. The Penlop of Paro kept himself away from the Bhotan Court. The supremacy of the Penlop of Tongsa thus seemed more apparent than real to the British. In the evening of 29 March, Eden decided to leave Bhotan before any further insults came upon the mission. Under cover of darkness, the mission stealthily resumed its homeward Journey. On 1 April, it arrived at Paro, and on 12 April, at Darjeeling. On 21 April, Eden submitted the official report of his mission.<sup>102</sup> His only achievement was the rescue of one of the many persons held as slaves in Paro.<sup>103</sup>

It was natural that for all the humiliations suffered by Eden and his party, the odium should be cast upon Bhotan. Eden, himself, spoke of "the boorish incivility and great indifference" of the Bhotan authorities.<sup>104</sup> But a few years later, Brigadier-General Tombs opined that Eden failed, because the Bhotanese had misunderstood him; they feared that the mission was prelude to the British conquest of their country.<sup>105</sup> Such an impression about British Power in Asia in the nineteenth century was not entirely baseless. Even in the eighteenth century, the Tashi Lama spoke to Bogle about the fondness of the English people for war and conquest. With regard to Bhotan, however, the British government had not up to then betrayed any designs of imperialistic expansion. For, it might be remembered that not only the peace-loving Lord Bentinck, but also the succeeding Governors-General had never accepted Jenkins' concrete proposals of 9 June, 1836, to dominate Bhotan in order to counterbalance any progress of Chinese influence in the eastern Himalaya. Fear and distrust among the Himalayan people shaped their attitude towards the British Power, no doubt; but that Eden failed because of "the unfair,

101. *Parl. papers*—Op. cit., pp. 307-310.

102. *Ibid.*—Vol. 52, 1866—P. 207.

103. Eden, A.—Op. cit.—pp. 104-5.

104. *Ibid.*—P. 69.

105. *Beng. Lt.-Gov. Pro. (Pol.)*—February, 1867 (21).

unsatisfactory and the aggressive policy of the British Government"<sup>106</sup> was also not true. In fact, the weakness of the theocratico-monarchism in Bhotan was the main hindrance to Eden's success. British proposals embodied in Articles VIII and IX for sending envoys from time to time, and for restoring free trade between the two governments were by themselves, not offensive. But because the Penlop of Tongsa did not allow any agreement with the British until his own claims were settled, Eden's mission also came to an end.

The responsibility for Eden's humiliations, however, lay equally upon the government of India. For, the government was aware of Bhotan's unwillingness to receive a mission. Besides, with the experience of Captain Pemberton before it, the government of India argued from the wrong premise that a settlement could be made with the Dev Raja alone. British desire to treat with the de jure ruler of Bhotan was just but unpractical. The growing importance of the Penlop of Tongsa in the political life of Bhotan should not have been totally ignored. In fact, the government of India's future relations with Bhotan were based upon the steady and loyal friendship of the house of Jigme Namgyal who had become the Penlop of Tongsa in 1853, and laid the foundation of his family's fortunes.

C. U. Aitchison, then the under-Secretary to the government of India in the Foreign Department, wrote on 19 May, 1864, a precis on the Anglo-Bhotanese relations. He made Eden wholly responsible for the disgrace of the mission. According to Aitchison, Eden made no official reports on the difficulties of the mission. When he began to suspect troubles, it was his duty to come back and save the mission from disgrace. Even, Sir John Lawrence was influenced by the views of Aitchison; and in his letter of 1 June, 1864, to Sir Charles Wood opined that Eden should have returned to Darjeeling from Paro itself.<sup>107</sup>

The British press, however, rendered yeoman service and

106. Gupta, S.—Op. cit. P. 192.

107. *Parl papers*—Vol. 52, 1866. P. 205.

*Parl. papers*—Vol. 39, 1865, P. 306.

helped to bring truth on the surface. In the public press, Aitchison was charged with "disingenuousness and untruthfulness" for the precis prepared by him.<sup>108</sup> Really, during his journey to Bhotan, Eden wrote several demi-official letters to the Secretary to the government of India in the Foreign Department, as well as to the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal. Those letters kept the government well-informed of Eden's difficulties in his mission to Bhotan.<sup>109</sup> Aitchison, however, in self-defence dubbed those letters "unofficial papers", not to be cited "in justification of official missions". But this could not exonerate Aitchison from the charges levelled against him. On 18 September, 1865, Sir John Lawrence also in his letter to the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal referred to his own discussions with the latter on the expediency of recalling Eden. But it was then too late. Nevertheless, the Governor-General did not wholly blame Eden.<sup>110</sup> Sir Charles Wood, however, mildly reproached the government of India for making imperfect statements on Eden. He disagreed with Aitchison's contention. In his opinion, demi-official and even private letters addressed to public functionaries were to be treated as official papers. The Secretary of the State, therefore, found the Lieutenant-Governor at fault. For, in spite of several discouraging letters from Eden, he asked him to advance to the capital of Bhotan. Even, the Governor-General, at that time, did not give the Secretary of State the true picture. As a result, the Secretary of State had also previously been biased against Eden.<sup>111</sup>

Indeed, Eden's was the last of the British missions to Bhotan; his failure also indicated the last fruitless attempt to solve differences with Bhotan by negotiations and agreements. By showing disrespect to the British Mission, and getting a treaty signed by Eden under duress, the authorities of Bhotan put the British in a most awkward position. War was then the only answer to the challenge thrown by Bhotan.

108. *Parl. papers*—Vol. 52, 1866, P. 205.

109. *Ibid.*—Pp. 207-210.

110. *Ibid.*—P. 210.

111. (Pol.) letter from the Secy. of State to the Governor-General—1 February, 1866—*Parl. papers*—Vol. 52, 1866—Pp. 217-18.



## CHAPTER VI

### War With Bhotan and After (1864-1899)

Sir John Lawrence, in the middle of 1864, resolved to "do something to punish the leading men in Bhotan".<sup>1</sup> He was convinced that negotiations would be of no use any more. Therefore all payments for the Duars and other lands were stopped, police posts on the frontier strengthened and civil as well as military authorities were directed to be on the alert. On 9 June, the Dev and the Dharma Rajas were informed that Ambari-Falakata was permanently attached and payments from that tract as well as from the Assam Duars ceased for ever; moreover, if British subjects numbering about three hundred and all properties carried off by the Bhotanese depre-  
dators were not restored by 1st September next, further measures would follow.

These threats, however, fell on deaf ears. The Tongsa Penlop and the chief of Dewangiri demanded of the government of India compliance of the treaty signed by Eden at Punakha. Even the Suba of Dalimkot wrote to Eden that the Bhotan government had directed all the Subas to act upon the articles of that treaty. Reporting these incidents in the third week of July, 1864, Lieutenant-Governor Beadon advocated immediate occupation of the Bengal Duars "up to the crest of watershed of the outer hills as well as the outer range of hills abutting on the Assam Dooars". The Lieutenant-Governor also proposed that a sum of Rs. 25,000 be offered to Bhotan as her annual subsidy with the promise of increasing the amount up to Rs. 50,000. The subsidy could be paid from the surplus revenue of the annexed territories.<sup>2</sup>

Meanwhile, the Dharma Raja replied to the Governor-

1. Governor-General's (Pol) despatch to the Secretary of State, 1 June, 1864—*Parl. papers*, Vol. 39, 1865, Pp. 306-7.

2. *Parl. papers*—Vol. 39, 1865, pp. 389-92.

General's letter of 9 June. He did not apologise for the insult to the last British envoy. Rather, he expressed his ignorance of it, and blamed his subordinate officials. So, he requested a fresh mission from the government of India. He was even ready to send one from his side. The government of India, however, refused to attend to it.

The sending of another mission to Bhotan was out of the question; there was no guarantee, either that the government of Bhotan would honour an agreement made by its representative. It was likely that the government of Bhotan wanted to delay the measures that the government of India was going to adopt. The government of Bengal, therefore, urged in favour of immediate action.<sup>3</sup> At last, on 26 August, the Governor-General decided "to instruct the Military Department to prepare for the measures of coercion by which alone there is now any prospect of bringing the Bhotan government to reason". The Governor-General, however, did not desire a general invasion of the country. The Bengal Duars were to be occupied; besides, the dominant posts in the plains as well as in the hills, from Dalimkot in the west to Dewangiri in the east, were to be captured and held. The detailed plan of the operations of war was to be prepared by the Military Department. The Governor-General suggested deployment of three equipped columns, the Left column on the Bengal frontier, the Centre and the Right columns on the Assam frontier.<sup>4</sup>

The decision of the Governor-General was in accordance with the recommendations of the Secretary of State. Of the three courses of action suggested by Eden for the punishment of Bhotan, the Secretary of State had endorsed and sanctioned the third one — permanent annexation of the Bengal Duars. The idea of setting up a stable government under a friendly and powerful chief and maintaining him in power by British help was repeatedly and successfully acted upon by the British in India. But that idea only suggested "another form of annexation". Sir Charles Wood did not approve of it with regard to Bhotan. For it would make obligatory for the

3. *Ibid.*—P. 421.

4. *Ibid.*—Pp. 436-39.

British to maintain and defend such a government in Bhotan. He rather preferred the occupation of only the Bengal Duars. That would place the government of India "in a most advantageous position to deal with any government" that might be established in Bhotan, or "with the Chiefs by whose sanction or connivance the inroads of the plundering bands into the low country have been encouraged".<sup>5</sup>

During September and the next two months, the government of India went ahead with its preparations for the war. The Duar Field Force was made ready to mount the attack in four columns of troops, the Right column from Ghargaon upon Dewangiri; the Right Centre upon the tract between the rivers Gadadhar and Manas; and the Left Centre column or the main column at Cooch Behar, upon Chechakhata and Buxa. The objective of the Left Column at Jalpaiguri was Dalimkot as well as the protection of the British flank from enemy attack from the directions of Tibet and Sikkim. A part of this column was to advance upon the right bank of the Tista, and cover Mainaguri, Chamurchi and Lakhi Duar. Brigadier-General W.E. Mulcaster was given the command and control of the whole operations. While he remained with the Right and Right Centre columns, Colonel H. F. Dunsford remained with the Left and Left Centre.<sup>6</sup> Provisions were also made for the immediate administration of the country to be occupied. So, the army was accompanied by a number of civil officers headed by Lieutenant-Colonel J. C. Haughton, the Agent to the Governor-General on the North-east Frontier. The civil officers were to carry out the survey of the country to be occupied and mark distinctly the boundary between the territory of Bhotan and that of British India. Measures should be taken to re-arrange the revenue system that prevailed in the areas liberated from the Bhotanese occupation. Revenue settlement was to be made for one year at the moment, but due consideration was to be given to the just rights of all classes of people. With this end in view the officers were to study the

5. (Pol) Despatch of the Secy. of State to the Governor-General, 18 July, 1864 (39).

6. Quarter-Master General to the Govt. of India, 8 September, 1864—Parl. papers—Vol. 39. 1865, Pp. 447-452.

character of the prevailing tenures of land and correctly assess the rights and dues of the ryots. Since the expenses of the operations would be heavy, the government of India decided to retain all territories conquered from Bhotan. The legitimate claims of Cooch Behar upon some portions of the Bengal Duars, although strongly recommended by Jenkins, did not find favour with the government of India.<sup>7</sup>

In early November, 1864, Sir John Lawrence proclaimed the impending operations against Bhotan. All Chiefs, Zamindars, Mandals and inhabitants in the areas of operations were called upon to submit to the British and assist the invading British army and the officers entrusted with the duty of administering the territories occupied. The Governor-General guaranteed protection of life, property and private rights, and assured justice to all who did not resist.<sup>8</sup> The government of Bengal was apprised of the conditions on the basis of which any proposals for peace from the side of Bhotan might be accepted. Bhotan should surrender the Bengal Duars and hill territories on the left bank of the Tista up to such points on the watershed of the lower range of hills as might be laid down by the British Commissioner; Bhotan should also give up the two copies of the treaty signed by Eden under duress and send an officer of rank to apologise for the misbehaviour to the British envoy. She must surrender all captives held in Bhotan, and enter into a treaty of friendship pledging satisfactory behaviour in future. Should Bhotan agree to these terms, the government of India would give her an annual subsidy of Rs. 25,000 to be hereafter doubled. But the payment of the subsidy should entirely depend on the will and pleasure of the government of India and on the proper behaviour of the Bhotanese.<sup>9</sup> Copies of the Viceroy's proclamation were sent to the British Resident at Kathmandu and to the British Minister at Peking. The government of Bengal was asked to send a copy to the Lhasa authorities also.<sup>10</sup>

7. *Ibid.*—P. 469, 475.

8. Aitchison, C. U. —Op. cit.—Vol. 2, No. CVIII.

9. Govt. of India to Govt. of Bengal—12 November, 1864, *Parl. Papers*—Vol. 39, 1865—P. 482.

10. *Parl. Papers*—Vol. 39, 1865—P. 489.

The government of India did not want that Tibet and China should impute any deeper motive on the sending of the British army in the Himalaya. That the government of India was afraid of antagonising Tibet and the Chinese at Lhasa was not to be denied. But these were unnecessary fears. Nearly twenty years ago the British, while going to annex Assam Duars, did not face any opposition from either Tibet or China. While Tibet was powerless to act alone, China was severely embarrassed by the consequences of the opium war that lowered Chinese prestige in Tibet also. Besides, recent events in the Himalaya made it clear that concerted action by Tibet and China was not a reality as it was supposed to be. Whereas in the Tibetan-Nepalese war of 1792, China, on behalf of Tibet, drove out the Gorkhas and dictated peace within a few miles of their capital, Nepal invaded Tibet and exacted from her free-trade concessions, an annual payment of Rs. 10,000 and even extra-territorial rights in 1856. China, however, did not move on behalf of Tibet at that time. Rather, the Chinese Amban being satisfied that Nepal would continue to pay respect to the Emperor in spite of this war, gave his seal on the Tibet-Nepal treaty. Again, in 1860, British relations with Sikkim deteriorated, and the British army marched upon the capital of Sikkim. The Dewan fled the country. The old ruler, Tsugphu Namgyal abdicated in favour of his son, Sidkyong Namgyal. He was obliged to accept British terms on 28 March, 1861, from Ashley Eden, the British envoy and special Commissioner. As before, Tibet and China remained silent. In fact, China, at this time, was passing through the tremour of the Taiping Rebellion followed by humiliating treaties that she signed under military pressure of the Western Powers. The recent turmoils in the Himalaya did not produce any echo in distant China. As to Tibet, whatever her reactions to the advance of the British army in the Himalaya, she was powerless to organise an anti-British co-alition of the Himalayan countries. Moreover, the Dalai Lama was a minor and his government was run by the ministers who, owing to the strange and premature death of the three preceding Dalai Lamas, were able to set up a ministerial rule in Lhasa. It, however, lacked in that force and sanction which the rule of a Dalai Lama could command.

Above all, a deep and abiding jealousy existed between the authorities of Lhasa and Shigatse, both of whom regarded even a nominal presence of China in Tibet necessary to counter each other's extravagant claims. This nature of the Sino-Tibetan relations helped, to a great extent, British action against Bhotan.

On the part of Bhotan there was no change of attitude that might remove the chances of war. Towards the end of August, 1864, the government of India learnt that the Bhotan Court had requested Chiboo Lama to pacify the English; but at the same time the government of India got information from the Gangtok Kazi that Bhotan was trying to enlist sympathy of the Chinese at Lhasa.<sup>11</sup> Confusing information as they were, the government of India resolved to stick to its previous decision. In the first week of November, 1864 the Deputy Commissioner of Darjeeling forwarded letters reported to have been written by the Dev and the Dharma Rajas. Bhotan, they wrote, had done no wrong to the British, and so her conscience was free. Were the British, however, "bent on violent measures", Bhotan also "will have to act".<sup>12</sup> Meanwhile, the Secretary of State sent his approval of the military arrangements made by the government of India; only the Governor-General was reminded to restrict operations to the Duars.<sup>13</sup>

On 28 November, the advance guard of the Left Column moved into Mainaguri and captured it almost without a blow; two days later, it entered Domohani at the junction of the river Tista and the Dharla. Simultaneously with this progress, the main body under Colonel Dunsford crossed the Tista at Paharpur a little north of Jalpaiguri town. Thereafter, the Left Column, having successfully driven out the Bhotanese from the plains, besieged the stronghold of Dalimkot in early December. Within a month the forts of Dalimkot, Damosong and Chamurchi came under British possession.<sup>14</sup> The Left

11. *Ibid.*—P. 439.

12. *Ibid.*—P. 485.

13. *Ibid.*—P. 454.

14. *Mil Pro.*—December, 1864 (220).

Centre Column under Colonel Watson, on 28 November, had marched upon Chechakhata, and finding little resistance marched right up to Buxa. The Bhotanese only made a stand at the Bala pass commanding the Lukhi Duar, but were quickly overcome.<sup>15</sup>

In the eastern sector, on 2 December, 1864, the Right Column under Colonel Campbell and accompanied by Brigadier-General Mulcaster crossed the Brahmaputra at Gauhati and made for the Dewangiri hills. The task of the Right Centre Column was to take possession of the Bijni and Sidli Duars, and send patrols both to the right and left to gain information about the route into Bhotan through Chirang pass as well as about the intention of the enemy. On 10 December, the Right Column launched attack on Dewangiri. The Bhotanese had mustered a strong force on the line of advance of the British troops but left the fort unguarded. Captain Macdonald, with fifty India policemen took an unfrequented footpath pointed out to him by a local guide, and captured the fort of Dewangiri. Six companies of the 43 Light Assam Infantry and two mountain Howitzers were sited on the heights of Dewangiri.<sup>16</sup> On 17 December Brigadier-General Mulcaster with the rest of his troops proceeded to Sidli where Colonel Richardson of the Right Centre Column was waiting for him. On 8 January, the following year, the combined forces occupied Bishensing and found the fort to be a house of stone occupied by an old Lama.<sup>17</sup> Leaving three companies and fifty Indian police, the troops returned to Sidli, Brigadier-General Mulcaster to Gauhati and two squadrons of the 5 Bengal Cavalry went to Jalpaiguri. The operations against Bhotan were thus over, and whole of the Duars including the key-positions in the hills were occupied by the British forces. But nobody suspected that the quiet withdrawal of the Bhotanese from their positions was the temporary lull before a storm. In fact, no sooner had the Bhotanese overcome the first shock of the British invasion than they resolved to hit back. The Dharma Raja on 29 December, requested Nepal to intervene either as a mediator or as a helper. Nepal, however, refused to get

15. *Ibid.*—January, 1865 (264).

16. *Pol. A. Pro.*—December, 1864 (224).

17. *Pol. A. Pro.*—February, 1865 (81B), March (245, 246).

involved in any way.

Bhotanese counter-attack was prompt, deliberate and well-co-ordinated. During the last few days of January and the first few of February, almost all the dominating positions in the lower range of the hills held by the British were invaded by the revengeful Bhotanese. The British forces were thrown on the defensive and, eventually, dislodged from their positions. Their most painful experience was their withdrawal from Dewangiri, "so cowardly a conception, so bad a management or so disastrous a result."<sup>18</sup> To retrieve the prestige of British arms, the government of India immediately called up its forces from Meerut, Lucknow and Calcutta. While Brigadier-General Tombs, commanding at Gawalior replaced Brigadier-General Mulcaster, Brigadier-General Tytler took over from Colonel Dunsford.

In March, 1865, operations were resumed from the right and left flanks respectively under the command of Brigadiers-General Tombs and Tytler. Within two weeks, the British forces cleared Bala, Chamurchi and Buxa of the enemy.<sup>19</sup> On 2 April, they reconquered Dewangiri. But the government of India could not follow up these victories. Even, the various positions re-captured by the British forces were evacuated except Dalimkot, Buxa and Chamurchi. The foremost reason was the impending monsoon that would upset all arrangements for their safe occupation.<sup>20</sup> Really, with the advent of the rains, the mountain terrains would be extremely difficult to negotiate. The dry beds of the numerous streams that drained the hill sides, would be swollen and would cut off all communications between the hills and the plains. The very few tracks leading to the hills were, in the cold season itself, too narrow for laden animals; during the rains, they would deny any approach to

18. Macgregor Lady—*Life and Opinions of Sir C. M. Macgregor*, Vol. 1, P. 235.

*Mil. Pro.*—February, 1865 (348).

*Ibid.*—(487).

19. *Mil. Pro.*—March, 1865 (766).

*Ibid.*—(799)

20, *Pol. Despatch to the Secretary of State*, 16 June, 1865 (68).



them. Moreover, the country in the vicinity produced few staples that the troops required; nor were there labourers, baggage-animals or mules to be found. The commissariat, therefore, would find it extremely difficult to meet the administrative needs of the army. Above all, the uncongenial climate would impair the health of the men in service, while administrative deficiencies would tell upon their morale and their efficiency as soldiers.

The net result of the last operations was, however, a partial vindication of the lost prestige of British arms. Besides, the Bhotanese were entirely cut-off from the plains, which were guarded by organised police force along the foot of the hills. Only, the two Howitzers left behind by the retreating forces from Dewangiri could not be recovered.

Despite reverses in battle, the government of Bhotan did not show any inclination to enter into a formal treaty on the terms already declared by the government of India. The Governor-General, therefore, felt embarrassed. He was afraid of the cost of life and money if the defensive arrangements were to be continued for an indefinite period of time. Not only the number of police required to guard the plains would be considerable, but also the proportion of troops to be maintained in reserve. The great insalubrity of the plains, moreover, was a standing threat to the health and morale of the troops. Therefore, he thought of sending an expedition to the capital of Bhotan in the cold season, and of compelling the government of Bhotan to accept peace. The Governor-General, however, did never think of permanently occupying the country.<sup>21</sup> He was aware of the strong objection of the Secretary of State to a direct invasion of Bhotan. But direct invasion of that country was the most convincing argument, the British Government could put to Bhotan and make her sue for peace. Towards the end of June, 1865, the plan of the expedition was ready in the Military Department. The British, from Buxa and Dewangiri, would simultaneously invade Punakha and Tongsa. Punakha was the seat of the government, and Tongsa was the residence of the Penlop, who in fact,

21. *Ibid.*

had been the source of all the troubles.<sup>22</sup>

If a direct invasion of Bhotan could be avoided, the Governor-General was for it. On 5 June, 1865, he had already addressed a letter to the Dev Raja stating that the offer of peace was still open to him.<sup>23</sup> The Governor-General was aware of the difficulties of the commissariat, hardships of the officers and men falling sick, and lastly, of the heavy financial commitment.

By a happy coincidence, on 13 July, two Zinkafs came to Buxa and presented a letter from the Dev Raja to Lieutenant-Colonel Bruce, the officiating Chief Civil and Political officer. The Dev Raja had desired peace.<sup>24</sup> Dev Raja Tsul-thrim yonten was willing to surrender his claim upon the Bengal Duars and receive whatever pecuniary allowance the British might grant him; but he desired that the Duars were open to his subject carrying on trade in dried fish, cotton, oil, broad-cloth, sandalwood, resins, betel nuts and betel leaves. At a conference with the majority of the nobles of Bhotan the Dev Raja had clearly announced his decision to make peace with the British. Here was an opportunity for the Governor-General to get over his present difficulties. For, on 26 August, 1865, he learnt from the Adjutant-General of the Army that the expeditionary force was not ready. It would not reach the Duars probably before December of that year.<sup>25</sup> So, the British took cover of diplomacy, and the Governor-General desired Lieutenant-Colonel Bruce to continue negotiations with Bhotan on the subject of peace till the troops actually commenced their advance. The British political officer was even authorised to increase the amount of subsidy beyond the original sum of Rs. 25,000. For such an offer might help him progress in his talks.<sup>26</sup> Colonel Bruce, however,

22. The Quarter-Master-General to the Govt. of India, 27 June, 1865: *Parl. papers, Vol. 52—1866, P. 178.*

23. *Parl. papers, Vol. 52—1866, P. 177.*

24. Lt.-Col. Bruce to the Govt. of Bengal, 10 August, 1865, *Parl. papers, Vol. 52, 1866, P. 189.*

25. *Parl. papers—Vol. 52—1866, P. 193.*

26. The Govt. of India to the Bengal Government, 1 September, 1865 *Parl. papers, Vol. 52—1866, P. 223.*

was asked to limit the offered subsidy to Rs. 50,000. Besides, he was to insist upon the restoration of the two guns which fell into the hands of the Bhotanese. In the event of the peace being agreed upon the British government would require on the right as well as on the left of the frontier a few posts sufficiently high, commodious and healthy to accommodate British troops. But upto nearly the end of September, the government of India was not ready to commence a fresh offensive into Bhotan.<sup>27</sup>

Fear of a fresh invasion, however, led to interesting reaction within Bhotan. The Central Government and the provincial government of Tongsa drifted apart on the issue of peace with the British. Ram Mallick, a Bengali munshi of the Dev Raja, who had accompanied the Zinkafs to Buxa narrated before Bruce the inner conflicts which gripped Bhotan. The Dev Raja had tried to impress upon the Tongsa Penlop the advisability of ending the war against a superior power. The Tongsa Penlop expressed surprise at the timidity of the Dev Raja as well as of those western chiefs who stood behind him. The Tongsa Penlop asked them to leave defence of the whole country to him and retire. Should the country, however, want to come to a settlement with the British, the Penlop demanded, as the price of his consent, either the same amount the British used to pay Bhotan for the Assam Duars, or the entire revenue of the mountain tract under his jurisdiction.<sup>28</sup>

Colonel Bruce was convinced that prompt advance of the British troops would help the Dev Raja and the Western chiefs to make peace in spite of the Tongsa Penlop. Colonel Bruce sent his munshi, Rammohan Aditya to the Penlop of Paro and the Dev Raja to verify what the Bhotanese Zinkafs or the Bengali munshi of the Dev Raja had said. Colonel Bruce learnt from him that Bhotan was not prepared for another war. The Dev Raja was inclined to peace; only he wanted that the British government should increase the annual subsidy to fifty thousand rupees. Compared to his loss of eighteen duars, he did

27. *Ibid.*—23 September, 1866—Vol. 52, 1866, p. 223.

28. Col. Bruce to Beng. Govt. 29 Sept., 1865. Parl. papers., Vol. 52, pp. 223-4.

not ask for too much. The point on which the Dev Raja had insisted was not all a hindrance to peace. The government of India already thought of conceding that point.

There was now a slight change in the plan of renewed operations against Bhotan. The British troops should as quickly as possible march upon central Bhotan. The Commander-in-Chief of the Army wanted the Left Column to march upon Punakha by Buxa and the Right Column, upon Tongsa by Dewangiri. The sooner was Dewangiri captured, the better would be the position of the government of India for forcing the Penlop of Tongsa to agree to peace. To this, the Governor-General consented.<sup>29</sup> Special instructions were issued to Colonel Bruce. The advancing army should spare the villages and their inhabitants unless they resisted. Food and all necessary commodities should be paid for. People who worked with the troops were to be paid their wages. The people of Bhotan should not form the idea that the British army went to conquer their country. Even Punakha and Tashi-cho-dzong should be left unhurt if they were found undefended; nor were the Dev and the Dharma Rajas and other dignitaries to be interfered with if they remained peaceful. In case, the central government of Bhotan accepted the terms of the British and admitted its inability to control the Penlop of Tongsa, the British troops were to march against that chief. Then, the Dev and Dharma Rajas should be asked to co-operate with the British to subdue and expel the Penlop of Tongsa from Bhotan.<sup>30</sup>

Meanwhile, the Left Column occupied the heights of Buxa and the Engineers Unit began to construct the road to Punakha and establish a firm base in a forward direction from the heights. The army was moving in co-ordination with Colonel Bruce who, meanwhile, conducted negotiations with the government of Bhotan. But owing to sickness among the two Regiments engaged in the frontier, the Military Department could not undertake operations of a real invasion. So, whatever it did was for strengthening the hands of Colonel Bruce to bring diplomatic pressure upon Bhotan. At the end of October,

29. *Parl. papers*, Vol. 52, pp. 243-5; 249-50.

30. *Parl. papers*, Vol. 52, pp. 227; 234.

1865, the Right Column occupied Dewangiri.<sup>31</sup> How far a dash upon Tongsa from Dewangiri would succeed, was, however, a matter of conjecture. For, the distance of 133 miles between the two places and adverse factors affecting the Commissariat made immediate advance upon Tongsa almost impossible.<sup>32</sup> Yet, from November, the prospect of peace looked bright. The government of Bhotan realised that it could not resist the British troops already within Bhotan. Moreover in the face of the national calamity the barons of Bhotan had failed to place the country's interests above theirs. Within one year the Monk-Body had installed four Dev Rajas by turn expecting political stability to prevail. But factional fights and self-interests reigned supreme. Lupon Tsondu Pakar, the Dev Raja of the critical year 1865 found no way out but to come to British terms whether the Penlop of Tongsa liked it or not.

On 6 November, 1865, Colonel Bruce informed the government that Bhotan had agreed to the four basic conditions of the proposed treaty of peace that had been laid down by the government of India in November, 1864. Bhotan, however, pleaded her inability to immediately restore the two guns which the British troops had left behind during their evacuation from Dewangiri last year. She requested for the payment of a portion of the subsidy under the treaty, but offered to forgo the remainder till the guns were restored.<sup>33</sup> The Governor-General, however, objected to it. He was not inclined to show any favour to Bhotan till the guns were restored. The governor-General empowered General Tytler and Colonel Bruce to confer with the Bhotanese agents on the best means of dealing with the Penlop of Tongsa. Colonel Bruce, however, was told that if the government of Bhotan signed the treaty, Bruce should report as to what extent the preparations for war could be reduced.<sup>34</sup> The Governor-General could not afford a full-scale war with Bhotan. The natural difficulties before the invading forces were enormous. The financial commitments also

31. *Parl. papers*. Vol. 52 pp, 255-6.

32. Mac Gregor C.M.-Op. cit. p. 73.

33. *Parl. papers*. Vol 52, p. 255.

34. *Parl. papers*. Vol. 52, pp. 255-6.

were heavy. The Governor-General admitted afterwards to the Secretary of State that "no part of this great expenditure could have been reimbursed by the poor and impoverished state of Bhootan."

In the morning, on 8 November, agents of the Dev Raja surrendered to Colonel Bruce a copy of the treaty which Eden had been forced to sign. They reported that the other copy had been taken away by Eden himself. Their report was confirmed by Chiboo Lama who had assisted Eden in translating the treaty.<sup>35</sup> Two days after, the agents of Bhotan signed the agreement for the restoration of the guns. They promised not to claim any subsidy from the government of India till the guns were returned. On the following morning at 10 O'clock the final treaty of peace was signed at Sinchula, a few miles north of Buxa on the Raidak river.<sup>36</sup>

The treaty of Sinchula provided for :

(1) perpetual peace and friendship between the two governments; (2) surrender by Bhotan of the eighteen Duars together with Ambari-Falakata and the hill-territory on the left bank of the Tista for ever; (3) release of all British subjects, and subjects of Sikkim and Cooch Behar detained in Bhotan; (4) payment to Bhotan by the government of India Rs. 50,000 each year (rupees 25,000 in the first year, Rs. 35,000 on 10 January following, Rs. 45,000 on the next 10 January, and Rs. 50,000/- on every succeeding 10 January); (5) the right of the British government to suspend the payment, either in whole or in part, if Bhotan failed to check all future outrages from her side; (6) surrender by the government of India on written demand from Bhotan, of any Bhotanese taking shelter in British territory but accused of any of the crimes, viz., murder, rape, kidnapping, dacoity, personal violence, arson, forgery, perjury; (7) surrender by Bhotan of any British subject accused of crimes specified above, but taking shelter in Bhotan and also of any Bhotanese, who after committing any of those crimes in British territory escaped to Bhotan; (8) arbitration by the government of India in all disputes between Bhotan and Sikkim,

35. *Ibid.* p. 259

36 Aitchison C. U.- Op, cit. Vol. 2, No. CX

and between Bhotan and Cooch Behar; (9) free trade between the two Governments and fair and equal treatment by each to the other's subjects.

The government of India did not withdraw troops immediately after the signing of the treaty of peace with Bhotan. The Governor-General wished that the construction of the road from Sinchula towards Chukha on the route to Punakha should continue. Troops were asked to maintain their position on that line. This was expected to produce effect both on the government of Bhotan and the Penlop of Tongsa. The Dev Raja had been given two months time to bring down the guns as well as to make the Penlop of Tongsa submit. No doubt, a greater effect would follow from the advance of the British troops upon Punakha; but that would have been dearly purchased and would have been justified only if Bhotan could not be brought to her knees by any other means.<sup>37</sup>

On 29 November, 1865, Sir John Lawrence ratified the Treaty of Sinchula at Calcutta and the government of India awaited the exchange of the ratified treaty. The situation, however, was not wholly in favour of the government of India. Had Bhotan known of the difficulties of the British troops operating in her hills, and had she been a little organised she could put the government of India in unforeseen trouble. The British troops were exposed to the deadly malaria of the Duars; moreover, cholera broke out in the camps at Cooch Behar and Buxa creating panic among the troops. Consequently, the troops marching towards Assam for reinforcing the Right Column were halted.

On 2 December, 1865, Colonel Bruce making an appreciation of the operational conditions submitted a discouraging report. Quick advance of the British troops into the interior of Bhotan was not possible. The speed of work in the construction of the fair-weather road from Buxa towards Punakha was very slow. The Engineers worked for two and a half months, but could not complete even twenty miles of it. Judging by this speed of work it might be said that the forward troops could not reach Wangdiphodrang before next May or June, and Punakha,

37. *Parl. papers*. Vol. 52, pp. 235-7.

three or four months more. Meanwhile the rains would set in and wash away the road. The advancing troops, as a result, would have no way to fall back, for the old and the narrow path which the Bhotanese used was already done away with at the time of making the new road. Moreover, Colonel Bruce did not like the idea of helping the government of Bhotan to subdue the Penlop of Tongsa. For there was no guarantee that the expedition against Tongsa would succeed. Rather, it would indefinitely prolong the stay of the British troops in that country under hostile circumstances. It would also require continual working on the road for many months before the British troops were engaged in actual fighting.<sup>38</sup> Better, the government of Bhotan should try its own means of settling accounts with the Penlop of Tongsa, and the British should extend aid of a limited character in case the government of Bhotan failed.

The opinion of Colonel Bruce was sound and realistic; it could not be ignored under any circumstances. Bhotan, however made things easy for him, and allowed the government of India to extricate itself from its difficult position. Colonel Agnew had written from Dewangiri to the Penlop of Tongsa about the guns. The Penlop in reply sent a Lama to communicate that the guns would be soon returned. On 26 December, Colonel Bruce also confirmed the news.<sup>39</sup> Thus the last obstacle to the finalisation of the treaty was removed. On 3 January 1866, the ratified treaties were exchanged, and the long drama came to an end.<sup>40</sup>

The government of India, however, did not bother to enquire about the real intentions of the Penlop of Tongsa, who quietly accepted the peace and saved the government of India from the hazards of an expedition into the enemy country. The disposition of the Penlop of Tongsa, however, was a significant point which the government of India should not have lost sight of. What reason was there for the silence of the leading provincial governor of Bhotan who, in the previous years, had

38. *Ibid.*—pp. 283-4.

39. *Ibid.*—p-286.

40. *Ibid.*—pp- 287.



vehemently opposed the British government? Did he submit to the inevitable or did he temporarily withdraw to prepare his future plan of action? British relations with Bhotan in the years to come were very much involved with these questions.

To Sir John Lawrence, the Treaty of Sinchula was "consistent with our interest and honour". The territories ceded by Bhotan were "necessary to secure the integrity of our frontier." The subsidy promised would "prove a strong inducement for the maintenance on our frontier of peace and order."<sup>41</sup> These views of the Governor-General were fully shared by the Secretary of State. Besides, on 1 February, 1866, the Secretary of State expressed the hope that the existence of a strong government in Bhotan, and the prosperity of her people would prove the "best securities for the permanent peace of our frontier."<sup>42</sup>

The treaty of Sinchula was the central event of the history of Anglo-Bhotanese relations. The immediate gains of the British were immense. The western Duars with an area of 1863 square miles<sup>43</sup> were split up into the three subdivisions of Dalimkot, Mainaguri and Buxa. From January, 1867, Dalimkot was transferred to the Darjeeling district; and two years later, the rest of the western Duars together with the Titaliya subdivision of Rangpur formed the new district of Jalpaiguri. The eastern Duars, consisting of 1570 square miles<sup>44</sup> were incorporated with the Goalpara district of Assam in December, 1866. The British desire in the days of Warren Hastings to have the lower range of the hills as the northern boundary of British possessions in Bengal was fulfilled by the treaty of Sinchula. Besides, the government of India had always wanted to deal with only one authority for the whole of Bhotan. For, the existence of several authorities defeated all efforts to settle the disputes that took place in the long line of frontier.

The treaty was an opportunity for the central authority

41. *Ibid*—pp- 235-37.

42. *Ibid*—pp- 279-81.

43. *Imperial Gazetteer of India* (Eastern Bengal And Assam- p- 235.

44. *Ibid.*—p. 524.

in Bhotan to assert itself. The fear of a direct invasion of the country by British forces paralysed the local chiefs of Bhotan. They had no unity among themselves. They thwarted the solidarity of the country and threw the country's honour to the wind. The treaty of Sinchula was a just lesson for them. They acquiesced in the treaty signed by their central authority. Now, it was for the central authority of Bhotan to act and liberate itself from the disabilities that had kept it politically crippled so long.

From British standpoint the treaty of Sinchula, however, had some limitations. First, the provision of free-trade made in the treaty was not enough for the purpose. British trade with Bhotan ultimately aimed at trade with Tibet. The prospect of this trade, however, depended on the attitude of the Lhasa authorities, and co-operation of Bhotan. During Eden's mission, the proposal for free-trade provoked angry protests in the Bhotan Court. Even before signing the treaty of Sinchula, Bhotan objected to the provision for free-trade, and desired it only at the frontier posts between her and British India.<sup>45</sup> The scope of Article IX of the treaty, therefore, was barred by practical difficulties. Secondly, a stable and a friendly government in Bhotan was all that was desired by the government of India. For, the government of India would be happy in placing the treaty allowance only into the hands of such a government. But the Dev Raja, with whom the treaty was made, was not the man to fulfil the expectations of the government of India. The position of a Dev Raja in Bhotan proved his powerlessness. On top of it the Dev Raja Sondu Pakar was tired of the rivalries among the leading barons of Bhotan. The government of India also was not committed to help him on the throne. British misgivings about the future Anglo-Bhotanese relations started here. The nature of the government of Bhotan in the years to come, as well as the leadership of the country, were unpredictable. For some time, therefore, the government of India was obliged to keep watch upon the current of internal politics that

45. Telegram of Lt. Col. Bruce to the Bengal Government, 3 December, 1865

*Parl. papers*—Vol. 52, 1866, p. 276

surged throughout Bhotan immediately after the treaty of Sinchula.

In the beginning of the year 1867, the Government of India came to know of the serious internal dissensions among the chiefs of Bhotan. On 10 January, Colonel Haughton, the Commissioner of Cooch Behar Division learnt from the representative of the Dev Raja that the Penlop of Tongsa had claimed the lion's share of the British subsidy for his surrendering the two British guns. As a result, the first instalment of the treaty allowance paid by the government of India in March, 1866, was not distributed. The representative of the Dev Raja also enquired if the government of India would help his master against the aggressive Penlop. Colonel Haughton paid Bhotan's representative Rs. 35,000 for the year 1866; but told him that except when British interests were at stake, the policy of the British government was "to avoid all intermeddling with the affairs of countries beyond our border".<sup>46</sup>

From February, 1867 however, the political situation of Bhotan drifted towards a civil war. The Penlop of Tongsa contrived to make himself supreme in the country by placing his own relations in the key-positions of the country. He abdicated in favour of his elder brother, and moved towards Punakha. There he wanted to set up his own son as the Dharma Raja, and, himself, as his Secretary for the time being. He, however, aimed at a more important place in the country. Personal enmity between the Dzungpons of Punakha and Wangdiphodrang, and the sympathy of the Dev Raja for the latter encouraged the ex-Penlop of Tongsa. The Dev Raja was afraid of his life and contemplated resignation. The election of a new Dev Raja in his place was to take place in February. The contestants were the ex-Penlop of Tongsa, the old Penlop of Paro and the Dzungpon of Wangdiphodrang.<sup>47</sup>

The political disturbance in Bhotan created difficulties for the government of India. The road between Buxa and Punakha was closed at Chuka and that stopped local supplies for the

46. LT. Col. Haughton to the Bengal Govt., 15 January, 1867, Beng. LT-Gov. Pro. (Pol), October, 1867 (13).

47. *Ibid.* March, 1867 (1).

British garrison at Buxa. There was a rumour that the partisans of the ex-Penlop of Tongsa wanted to prevent the British troops at Buxa from interfering.<sup>48</sup> The rumour had no basis at all. But to remove the hardships of the Buxa garrison, Colonel Haughton proposed the withholding of the subsidy for 1867, till a clear assurance was given by Bhotan to keep the road open.<sup>49</sup> Sir John Lawrence approved of it. The government also agreed to Colonel Haughton's second proposal that the agent of the Bhotan Government receiving the treaty-allowance must be an officer of high rank, and that he should go to Darjeeling to receive the allowance.<sup>50</sup> This arrangement would serve two purposes of the government of India. The government of India would get correct information about the political situation in Bhotan: secondly, in her own interest, Bhotan would be obliged to clear the road between Buxa and her interior parts rather than take the trouble of sending her agent to Darjeeling through Paro.

In February, 1868, agents of the Dev Raja met Major Murray, the Officer-Commanding at Buxa. He had come for the allowance and pleaded for the payment at that station. They offered to pay all the expenses of Colonel Haughton for his journey to Buxa. Even, they offered two thousand rupees personally to Major Murray if he took the trouble to see that their prayer was granted. But no amount of persuasion on the part of the Bhotanese officers convinced the government of India. It became clear, however, that the government of Bhotan was afraid of the Penlop of Paro through whose territory the agent of the Dev Raja must travel with the money after receiving it at Darjeeling.<sup>51</sup> The Dzongpon of Punakha already went over to the side of the ex-Penlop of Tongsa; the Dev Raja did not trust the Chief of Paro, whose allegiance to the existing government of Bhotan was subject to question. As expected, the government of Bhotan re-opened

48. LT-Col. Haughton to the Bengal Government, 25 September, 1867, Beng. LT-Gov. Pro. (Pol), October, 1867 (13).

49. *Ibid.*—December, 1867 (1)

50. Government of India to the Bengal Government, 31 January, 1868.

51. LT-Col. Haughton to the Bengal Government, 12 February, 1868, Beng. LT-Gov. Pro. (Pol) March, 1868 (1).

the road from Buxa to Punakha. In March, 1868, the government of India released the allowance of Rs. 45 000 for the year 1867.

The government of Bhotan was now in the throes of civil war. The rival claims to the office of the Dev Raja could not be adjusted by any other means. The Dzungpon of Wangdiphodrang in the name of his government, appealed for British intervention.<sup>52</sup> His appeal was rejected. Colonel Haughton communicated to the Dzungpon the decision of the British to remain neutral in the quarrels of its neighbour. British neutrality, however, did not mean the attitude of indifference. Rather, the British officer in the frontier wanted to get reports on the progress of the civil war in Bhotan. Efforts were made by Colonel Haughton to gather information through the government of Sikkim. He even proposed that not only should the government of Bhotan receive the treaty allowance at Buxa instead of at Darjeeling, but also a permanent agent of that government should stay in India.<sup>53</sup> Sir John Lawrence agreed, and as an experimental measure sanctioned the expenditure of Rs. 800/- for the residence, and of Rs. 50 for the monthly allowance of the agent of the Bhotanese government.<sup>54</sup> Haughton was also asked to pay Bhotan the treaty allowance at Buxa if her agent were of rank stipulated in the treaty.

The year 1869 was critical for the present government of Bhotan. In January, the Dev Raja, being at his wit's end, requested for British military help. His agent who had come to receive the treaty allowance placed his master's request. A similar request made by the Dzungpon of Wangdiphodrang was turned down by the government of India only a few months before. So, the agent of the Dev Raja was told that it was not possible for the government of India to help his master.<sup>55</sup> The Bhotanese agent, however, sought the permission of the government of India for purchasing arms and ammunitions from any firm

52. Beng. LT-Gov. Pro. (Pol)-June, 1868 (31).

53. *Ibid.*—September, 1868 (1).

54. *Ibid.*—December, 1868 (20).

55. Telegram of the Bengal Government to LT-Col. Haughton 12 January, 1869.

within the British territory. He also wanted to enrol some Nepalese at Buxa into the army of the Dev Raja. This the government of India did not permit. When, however, the Bhotanese officer induced one hundred Nepalese labourers of the Forest Department in Buxa to go to Bhotan, he was asked by Colonel Haughton to leave Buxa within twenty four hours. Not only that; had not the government of Bengal restrained Colonel Haughton, he was for imposing a heavy fine upon the Dev Raja for his failure to send back those Nepalese labourers within a specified date.<sup>56</sup> The attitude of Colonel Haughton also invited the displeasure of the Duke of Argyll, the Secretary of State, who advised Lord Mayo to keep aloof from all complications of Bhotanese Politics.<sup>57</sup>

In the middle of May, 1869, the ex-Penlo of Tongsa established himself in central Bhotan. The Paro Penlop had joined hands with him and gave him the trump card. His men destroyed the bridge on the river at Chukha which was also the key to Paro and Tashi-chho-dzong. While the Dzungpons of Thimpu and Wangdupho-drang from their strongholds desperately gave resistance, the Dev Raja remained powerless under the strict surveillance of his adversaries. The two Dzungpons, however, requested Colonel Haughton for helping them in their distress. They were even prepared to accept British mediation in order to end the civil war. But without a similar request from the ex-Tongsa Penlop for British mediation, the government of India was not in a position to act. The Dzungpon of Punakha, a partisan of the ex-Tongsa Penlop, had already told Colonel Haughton that they suspected of British support to their opponents. This they did not welcome. Colonel Haughton, in order to allay their suspicion, made it clear that the British government had no desire to get involved in their internal quarrels. It paid the treaty allowance only to the government of Bhotan, and it was for that government to apportion its share among the different chiefs in Bhotan. The British government was not in any way concerned with that. "You have no enemies" concluded Colonel Haughton, "but your selves."

56. Beng. LT-Gov. Pro. (Pol)—April, 1869 (32-34).

57. *Ibid.*—October, 1869 (4, 6).

The steady progress of the ex-Penlop of Tongsa, however, put the British into a dilemma. The British without departing from the announced policy of non-intervention, could not help the Dev Raja. On the other hand, the memory of the violent intrigues of the ex-Penlop against the British was too much to permit the British to remain totally indifferent. His quiet acceptance of the Sinchula treaty with Bhotan, was a mystery at that time. The opponents of the ex-Penlop of Tongsa tried to rouse up British sentiments against the latter by suggesting that the ex-Penlop after exterminating the pro-British chiefs in Bhotan would commence war with the government of India.<sup>58</sup>

The British officer in the frontier, however, did not take this warning seriously. For, with the destruction of the bridge at Chukha, the approach to Buxa for an invading army of Bhotan was, for the time-being, lost. The Governor-General, however, was advised by the Duke of Argyll to keep Buxa "in such a state of defence as to be able to repel any sudden attack."<sup>59</sup>

At the same time the associates of the ex-Penlop of Tongsa tried to impress upon the Government of India that the inner conflicts of Bhotan should not concern the British. The Penlop of Paro put in a more straight way that in Bhotan "enemies turned friends and friends, enemies in a moment". The government of India should not pay attention to these. He and the ex-Penlop of Tongsa were trying hard to give the Dharma Raja a peaceful reign.<sup>60</sup> A similar letter from the Dharma Raja also reached Colonel Haughton. The Dharma Raja requested him to protect his country from all foreign invasions and not to entertain any appeal, even, in his name, on any subject that might create disputes.<sup>61</sup> From their correspondence, however, it was clear that both the Penlop of Paro and the Dharma Raja were acting under the direction of the ex-Penlop of Tongsa. The reference to 'foreign invasion'

58. Thimpu Dzongpon to LT-Col. Haughton, 13 January, 1869.

59. Political Despatch, 27 September, 1869.

60. Penlop of Paro to LT-Col. Haughton, 18 August, 1869.

61. LT-Col. Haughton to the Bengal Government, 2 September, 1869.

made by the Dharma Raja perhaps originated from the rumour that Thimbu and Wangdiphodrang had applied to Nepal for help. There was, however, no reason to suspect of Nepal's intervention in the internal quarrels of Bhotan. Nepal, as it was evident from her attitude during the second Anglo-Bhotanese war, would not adopt a policy precipitating an open break with the British government. Nepal, at this time, was more interested in developing a closer relation with Peking that had been undermined to some extent by the Tibeto-Nepalese war of 1856.

Before the year 1869 ended, the scheme of the ex-Penlop of Tongsa was completely successful. The Dzungpon of Thimphu found it useless to die in arms, and, therefore, submitted to the ex-Penlop of Tongsa. The Dzungpon of Wangdiphodrang was isolated and subsequently murdered by the men of the ex-Penlop of Tongsa. The remaining enemies were scattered and powerless. There being none to challenge his position the ex-Penlop of Tongsa now looked for the legality of his authority. The stage was set for the election of the Dev Raja in the way it had previously taken place so many times in the history of Bhotan. The Lamas of Bhotan knew of the risk of ignoring the ex-Penlop of Tongsa who was irresistible; they knew also how to make the lot fall on the right man. In the middle of 1869, Colonel Haughton received intelligence that the ex-Penlop of Tongsa had already ordered his men to proceed to Buxa for the treaty-allowance.<sup>62</sup> The payment of the treaty-allowance, however, could be refused so long as the ex-Penlop of Tongsa did not become the *de jure* ruler of country.

The government of India might not welcome the remarkable achievement of the ex-Penlop; but it was an accomplished fact. A new turning point in the history of British relations with Bhotan was in sight. The way the British government treated the ex-Penlop of Tongsa, and subsequently, his successors, was not only interesting but also illustrative of the mature diplomacy of that government. Upto the last hour of the recent struggle for power in Bhotan, the British government paid the allowance to the agent of the Dev Raja

62. Beng. LT-Gov. Pro. (Pol), March, 1870 (54).



although he had been fast losing ground. British policy was dictated by two considerations—first, the Dev Raja, despite his precarious position in the country, was till then the lawful authority; secondly, the ex-Penlop of Tongsa was reported to have tried to get help from Tibet and even to get in touch with any mutineers who might be found in Nepal. The ex-Penlop of Tongsa, however was disappointed in that. Tibet was suspicious of the growing contacts between China and Nepal and was unable to look into the affairs of a neighbouring country; nor could there any mutineers of 1857 be found in Nepal at that time. The British government, therefore, carefully watched the progress of the political dissensions that were coming to a conclusion without any interference from outside.

On 9 March, 1870, Colonel Haughton received a letter from the ex-Penlop of Tongsa announcing his election to the office of the Dev Raja. The new Dev Raja Jigme Namgyal requested Colonel Haughton to send Fentuk, his interpreter to Bhotan.<sup>63</sup> The British officer did not congratulate Jigme Namgyal for his success, it was true, but he did not object to the sending Fentuk to Bhotan. The disposition of the Dev Raja, towards the British was to be ascertained. He believed that a clear understanding of the views of the British government through the agency of the interpreter would help Bhotan to maintain friendly relations with the government of India. The government of India also favoured the idea. Instead of absolute inaction and of meddling by the offer of subsidies, watchfulness and friendly intercourse with a neighbouring state appealed more to Lord Mayo. So, the government of India agreed, for the time being, to the request of the Dev Raja to recognise Colonel Haughton's interpreter as his agent too; but the Governor-General desired a responsible officer of the Bhotan Court to come to receive the subsidy and serve as a direct channel of communications between the two governments.<sup>64</sup> The appointment of Fentuk, however, signified the willingness of the new Dev Raja to start a fresh chapter of British relations with him. It seemed, he wanted to bury the past. Fentuk could speak Bhotanese

63. LT-Col. Haughton to the Bengal Government, 10 March, 1870.

64. Beng. LT-Gov. Pro (Poi)-October, 1870 (13).

as well as English, although he was not a native of Bhotan. The Dev Raja honoured him with the rank of a Dzungpon and Vakil and instructed his officers in the frontier towards India to act always in consultation with him. The arrangement also pleased the Secretary of State for India, who did not see any practical inconvenience likely to follow from Fentuk's appointment.

A stable and a friendly government was all that the government of India had longed to see in Bhotan. Jigme Namgyal, the new Dev Raja was considered in Bhotan as the only man of ability who ever occupied the throne after the Dev Raja Zhidar of Warren Hastings' times. Moreover, the government of India found no reason to suspect that the ex-Penlop of Tongsa still bore within him hatred against the British. Perhaps, he loved his own power and affluence, and if the British did not stand in his way he also had no quarrel with them. During the three and half years he was upon the throne he proved this by his behaviour with the government of India. The boundary between India and Bhotan from the Manas to the Deoshan rivers was completed by Colonel Graham without requiring the presence of Bhotan's representative at the time of the demarcation. Only over the inclusion of Dewangiri within the Indian frontier was there a minor opposition from the side of the present Penlop of Tongsa, but that was overcome. The smooth laying of the boundary line in the Assam sector induced the government of India to complete also the demarcation of the frontier in the Bengal sector that had been neglected but wrongly reported to have been done.<sup>65</sup>

Friendly disposition of the Dev Raja Jigme Namgyal was strong inducement for the government of India to take up again the question of trade. The Duke of Argyll expressed his eagerness for friendly relations with Tibet restored.<sup>66</sup> The British statesmen of the nineteenth century, like those of the eighteenth, believed that the Lhasa authorities were not averse to the expansion of their trade with India; but Chinese prohibition

65. *Ibid.*-August, 1873 (95—98, 118,120).

66. *Political Despatches*—24 March, 1870 (33).

5 May, 1870 (48).

was the sole obstacle to British Commercial interests in Tibet. So it was thought necessary to take up the matter with the authorities in Peking.<sup>67</sup> On 24 April, 1873, the Society For the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce of England submitted to the Secretary of State for India concrete proposals of British trade with Tibet and Central Asia. The Society pleaded for (1) a better access to Tibet from the side of Sikkim; (2) completion of the Calcutta-Darjeeling railway; (3) removal of any restrictions upon the trade with Tibet through Bhotan from Bengal and Assam; (4) permission of the Peking authorities for un-restricted trade along the whole frontier of Tibet; (5) establishment of consular agencies with the Chinese authorities at Lhasa.<sup>68</sup> On 4 June, 1873, the Duke of Argyll sent these proposals to Lord Northbrooke in India. In deference to his wishes, the government of India made earnest effort to re-open trade communications through the states of the eastern Himalaya; fairs were arranged on the Indo-Bhotanese border posts to attract traders from the mountains. A direct route to Tibet from Darjeeling through Sikkim, however, was considered more useful.<sup>69</sup>

Meanwhile, the ruler of Sikkim approached Sir George Campbell, the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal, at Darjeeling for an increase of his allowance. Opportunity was immediately taken to get from him the promise of all assistance in this matter.<sup>70</sup> The British wanted to increase his allowance from Rs. 9,000 to Rs. 12,000 and at the same time to send a team under J. W. Edgar to survey the proposed road to the Tibet border through Sikkim.

In October, 1873, the Dev Raja, the famous ex-Penlop of Tongsa, retired and his cousin and a follower Kyit-Shalpa stepped upon the throne. The existing government of Bhotan bore distinct marks of efficiency owing chiefly to the powerful hands that worked behind the throne. There took place only one border incident the like of so many of the past that had

67. Beng. LT-Gov. Pro. (Pol). September, 1870 (4).

68. *Ibid.*—October, 1873 (10-3).

69. *Annual Administration Report of Bengal, 1873-74.*

70. Buckland—*Op. cit.* vol. 1, pp 554-5.

embittered Anglo-Bhotanese relations again and again. Some Bhotanese visiting Kamrup in Assam committed dacoity in the market of Subankata in the early part of 1874. When the matter was brought to the knowledge of the Dev Raja, he promised to hold an enquiry and hand over the plundered property as well as the guilty persons to the Commissioner of Cooch Behar.<sup>71</sup> The Bengal government, however, as a penal measure, authorised the Commissioner to deduct one thousand rupees from the treaty-allowance. The government of India also approved of it.<sup>72</sup> After these incidents the Dev Raja placed two Zinkafs on the border of Dewangiri to keep watch upon the Bhotanese traders who would cross the border and enter Kamrup. His aim was to prevent repetition of dacoities in Indian territory by any one of them. This attitude of the Dev Raja was helpful and the government of India expected the trade between India and Bhotan on the border to increase. The favourable opinion of the government of India about the government of Bhotan was further strengthened by the friendly meeting between the Dev Raja and Sir Richard Temple, the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, at Buxa. The Government of India was elated with the hope of constructing a road through Bhotan to the border of Tibet. For this, the Dev Raja gave the necessary permission

The smooth tenor of life in Bhotan, however, received a jolt again in 1874. The trouble had long been brewing. It originated in the activities of the eldest brother of the previous Dev Raja. Being lifted by the tide of fortune he became the Penlop of Tongsa in 1870. But he had a rival for that exalted position and that rival was his own brother-in-law. So he made a compromise with his brother-in-law. It was agreed that in 1873 he should retire from governorship of Tongsa in favour of his brother-in-law, which, in fact, he did not. Had the ruling and the ex-Dev Rajas been sympathetic to their relation at Tongsa, the situation would have been different. Having received no support from them the Penlop of Tongsa sought assistance from the

71. Beng. LT. Gov. Pro. (Pol), August, 1874 (16-17).

72. *Ibid.*—October, 1874 (3).

73. *Ibid.*—March, 1877 (6-7).

Dzongpon of Punakha and the Penlop of Taga. The Dzongpon of Wangdiphodrang and the present Penlop of Paro, who were also brothers-in-law of the Dzongpon of Punakha, took side with the Penlop of Tongsa.<sup>73</sup> Family connection among the barons of Bhotan, however, were not factors deciding political questions. In fact, there was a rift in the family-in-power, and detecting the rift the chiefs of Paro, Punakha, Wangdiphodrang and Taga made a common cause against the predominant influence of Jigme Namgyal in the country.

The government of India was worried. The present government of Bhotan was friendly towards the British. A change in the political fabric of Bhotan might lead to an unpredictable situation. Fasson, the Assistant Magistrate of Buxa reported about the difficulties of the present and the ex-Dev Rajas. The insurgents set up their own nominee as the Dev Raja at Punakha, and people said that the Dev Raja at Punakha would soon enter into correspondence with the government of India on the subject of his recognition.<sup>74</sup> On the other hand, the Bhotanese agent at the time of receiving the treaty-allowance in January, 1877, asked the Deputy Commissioner of Cooch Behar if his government could have some maskets. The Commissioner of Rajsahi and Cooch Behar Division found no objection to the request of the Bhotanese agent, and so suggested that the maskets meant for Cooch Behar might be sold to the government of Bhotan at twenty-five rupees each.<sup>75</sup> The government of Bengal and the government of India agreed.<sup>76</sup> with their experiences about the present government of Bhotan for the previous seven years the British fixed up their notion about that government and were evermore concerned for its security.

The insurgent chiefs also made an appeal for British intervention in the civil war of Bhotan. An officer of the insurgent party met Edgar, the Deputy Commissioner of Darjeeling, with a letter signed by the Chiefs of Punakha, Paro, Wangdiphodrang and Taga.<sup>77</sup> The insurgents tried to play upon British fear

74. *Ibid.*—April, 1877 (25-7).

75. *Ibid.*—March, 1877 (4-5).

76. *Ibid.*—May, 1877 (5).

77. Edgar to the Commissioner of Rajsahi, 27 November, 1877.

of the interference of the Lhasa authorities in Bhotan. They reported that the British Project of road construction across Bhotan to the border of Tibet was known to Lhasa, as a result of which one Tibetan and one Chinese officer came to Tashi-chho-dzong. Those officers promised the government at Tashi-chho-dzong all help in resisting the British Project. Their offer to the government of Bhotan made the ex-Dev Raja overconfident, and he began to take a high-hand in all matters of the State. He kept the whole of the last year's treaty-allowance for himself denying even the Dharma Raja any share of it. The country was seething in discontent, and the armed rising against the tyranny of the ex-Dev Raja was but a natural course of action. The insurgent chiefs also addressed an appeal to the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal professing their loyalty. They expressed their eagerness to know when did the government of India want to implement the project of road construction; they were ready with one thousand men to help the project.<sup>78</sup>

That the British were very sensitive to the possibility of a junction between China and the Himalayan countries was not to be doubted; but although China evinced some interest in the formation of such a junction, it was far from being realised. China endeavoured to come closer to Nepal whom she began to think important for her Himalayan interests against British advance. In January, 1878, a Chinese officer visited Nepal to congratulate Ranadip Singh her new Prime Minister, and confer a title of honour upon him. But nothing more was achieved. Besides, Tibet for whom China was very much concerned, did not appreciate Chinese efforts to appease Nepal who had been her erstwhile enemy.

The appeal of the insurgent chiefs of Bhotan, whatever their contents, was not accepted by Lord Lytton, nor was it considered important by him. After some months of desultory fights there occurred a split in the camp of the insurgents. The rival Dev Raja at Punakha contemplated surrender to his government. Suspecting his treachery the Penlop of Paro made him a prisoner. The Taga Penlop, meanwhile went over to the side

78. Beng. Lt.-Gov. Pro. (Pol), March, 1878 (32).

of the reigning Dev Raja. The fort of Punakha also threw open the gates to the royalists. The officer of the fort had his own axe to grind. In the month of November, 1877, the insurgents were on the brink of collapse. The Dzungpons of Wangdiphodrang and Punakha braved a battle with the royalist forces near Paro, but were worsted. The Dzungpon of Wangdiphodrang became a prisoner of war, and the Dzungpon of Punakha fled the country to take shelter under the British at Buxa. Only the Penlop of Paro continued to resist the royalists. But he too was overpowered, and in the middle of November, left Paro for Buxa. Gradually the number of refugees at Buxa from Bhotan rose to one hundred and twentyfive. Lieutenant-Colonel Winson, the Officer Commanding at Buxa, disarmed the whole party of refugees and arranged to remove them from the frontier.<sup>79</sup> The government of Bengal suggested to settle them at Jalpaiguri or Kurseong, and sanctioned the amount of twenty rupees to each of the insurgent leaders and debited them to political contingencies.<sup>80</sup>

The crisis of the government of Bhotan was over, its arch-enemies having been away from the country. The Dzungpon of Wangdiphodrang who had been made a prisoner of war received death-penalty. The Penlops of Taga and Tongsa were kept under surveillance. The government of Bhotan requested the government of Bengal to hand over the insurgents who had taken shelter under the British.<sup>81</sup> The government of Bengal, however, treated the refugees as political offenders, not as ordinary criminals, and was, therefore, not bound by the treaty of 1865 to deliver up them to the government of Bhotan. The British Officers in the frontier were instructed accordingly. By detaining the insurgents within the British territory the government of India decidedly rendered help to the government of Bhotan. Their absence from Bhotan gave peace and quiet which the government of Bhotan as well as its people needed so much.

79. Lt.-Col. Winson to the Commissioner of Rajsahi, 29 November, 1877.

80. Bengal Government to the Commissioner of Rajsahi, 12 December, 1877.

81. Dev Raja to the Lt.-Governor of Bengal, 1 December, 1877.

On 26 April, 1878, Sir Ashley Eden, then the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, wrote to the Dev Raja in the same line.<sup>82</sup> The British officers also thought of rehabilitating the refugees. The government of Bengal sanctioned sixty rupees monthly for each of the leading insurgents for a period of six months from May, 1878. Besides, the sum of one thousand rupees was advanced to them without any interest to engage them in trade. An additional amount of three hundred rupees was granted for improving their houses. Five hundred acres of land, a few miles away from Kalimpong, were finally selected for the refugees to settle down.<sup>83</sup>

Jigme Namgyal, who as the Penlop of Tongsa had been once the enemy of the British, and subsequently as the Dev Raja, became a friend, was still the most formidable man in Bhotan. In early 1879 his consin, the reigning Dev Raja died. This event tended to tilt the political balance once again. Ambitions and intrigues came out in the open that prompted Jigme Namgyal to step into the scene and clear the stage. He made Chhogyal Zangpo, one of his trusted lieutenants, the Dev Raja. This was the last triumph in his political carrier. From 1870 he had kept his control over the authority of the country, and jealously guarded it from other aspirants. He fought and resisted the forces of disruption and helped the growth of a powerful and stable government in Bhotan. In 1881, however, his eventful life came to a natural end; yet his profound influence outlived him. Chhogyal Zangpo reigned upto 1882 when Lam Chewang, another faithful follower of Jigme whom the latter had rewarded with the charge of Thimphu Dzong sat on the Golden Throne. He, however, died a natural death in 1884. The next Dev Raja, Gawa Zangpo who quiteley ascended the throne was obliged to respect the memory of late Jigme Namgyal. So, the eldest son of Jigme Namgyal was made the Penlop of Paro, and the youngest, the Dzongpon of Wangdiphodrang, while their uncle continued as the governor of Tongsa.<sup>84</sup> The political supremacy of the house of Jigme Namgyal was thus ensured.

82. Beng. Lt.-Govt. Pro. (Pol); February, 1879 (14).

83. *Ibid*—February, 1879 (15-16; 29).

84. *Ibid*—June, 1885, (181-199).



Up to the end of 1884, peace prevailed in Bhotan. That was due to the new political norm which the late Jigme Namgyal had set up by making the Dev Raja the sole authority in the state. The emergence of an undivided authority in Bhotan also helped the government of India to settle any disputes with less difficulty than had been possible before. The 80 miles long frontier between Jalpaiguri and Bhotan ran through inaccessible forests, and the boundary pillars were not properly erected. Actually, a double line of boundary pillars, nearly a mile apart, was in existence at one place. The Public Works Department failing to follow the original marks laid down by the Survey Department created the confusion. The place was known as Totopara or the locality of the Totos. They were a small tribe who reared orange groves and paid sixty rupees as annual rent to the British. The Suha of Bala Duar claimed Totopara as falling within the boundary of Bhotan, and so compelled the Totos to pay the same amount of rent to him also. But the government of Bengal did not permit. The Deputy Commissioner of Jalpaiguri went to the place and explaining to the Suba the reasons for such a misunderstanding demolished the erratic line of pillars in the presence of the Suba himself. Then the government of Bengal ordered Fasson, the Assistant Magistrate of Buxa, to demarcate the boundary line quickly and correctly.<sup>85</sup> The government of Bhotan acquiesced; for having had to guard against any uprising, the government of Bhotan avoided any discord with government of India that professed a helpful attitude towards it.

Next, the question of emancipation of the persons forcibly held as slaves in Bhotan came up for a settlement. They were the subjects of Sikkim, Cooch Behar and also British subjects. These unfortunate people were long ago carried off from their homes. So long the government of India was unable to negotiate on the subject with the government of Bhotan. The actual number of the people held up in Bhotan was not known. Moreover, they were considered as the property of their owners, for slavery was a recognised institution in the country. In consideration of these difficulties the Commissioner

85. *Ibid.*—April, 1877 (21).

of Rajsahi and Cooch Behar division was against raising the question. He feared that any proposal made by the government of India for their release would be rejected by the government of Bhotan. Even if Bhotan accepted the British proposal, she would demand an adequate price for their emancipation. In consequence, a new financial responsibility would come upon the government of India, for it was not known who else should pay for their manumission. The government of Bengal, therefore, was reluctant to pursue the matter. It argued that since the road to Buxa was clear, it was not difficult for any of those slaves to get away from the hills if he really wanted to do so. But the truth was that they themselves were unwilling to come back, for they were afraid of becoming social outcasts on their coming home.

Evidently, the government of Bengal wanted to avoid the question of liberation of the slaves in order to avoid an unending correspondence with the government of Bhotan. The government of India also considered the problem in its all aspects. But Lord Lytton felt that as the treaty of 1865 provided for the release of all British subjects detained in Bhotan against their will, the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal should further enquire about them and be satisfied that they could escape from bondage without any risk to their person.<sup>86</sup> In order to stop all enquiries about the slaves in Bhotan the Dev Raja informed the government of India that the report about the British subjects held as slaves was based on hearsay; and that from the day of the treaty of 1865 Bhotan did not permit even a dog to be enslaved. Yet, his government was prepared to receive such deponents who should point out where the British subjects were held in slavery. On this, the government of India retreated. The sending of deponents would be merely to expose them to troubles.<sup>87</sup>

Bhotanese aggression in the British frontier became a rare phenomenon after a stable government in Bhotan had come into existence, and all the powers were centralised in the hands of the family of Jigme Namgyal. However, in the early part of

86. *Ibid.*—September, 1878 (17-20).

87. *Ibid.*—March, 1881 (33-4).

1880, during the reign of Chhogyal Zangpo some untoward border incidents took place. Among the Bhotanese who lived on the frontier, there were some who always took advantage of political uncertainty in Bhotan and made inroads in the British frontier villages. In 1874, this had happened in Kamrup, in 1880, in Chunabhati near Buxa. However, due to the stern attitude of the British government and also due to the desire of Jigme Namgyal to live in peace with the British, the situation was controlled before it could deteriorate. Lord Ripon straightway refused to pay Bhotan her subsidy.<sup>88</sup> In consequence, the main culprits were surrendered by Bhotan for trial and punishment by the British Court. The government of Bengal instructed the Commissioner of Rajsahi Division to send the convicts to Darjeeling to undergo their terms of imprisonment.<sup>89</sup>

The agreeable attitude of the government of Bhotan impressed the government of India. It resumed payment of the subsidy to Bhotan; even it consented to cede a small tract of hill territory near Buxa, known to the Bhotanese as Deosthan or the abode of God. In 1880, Bhotan pleaded for the release of the tract; the government of India, however, was not willing to consider Bhotan's request for Deosthan until the dispute over the raid on Chunabhati was settled.<sup>90</sup> British complaints over the Chunabhati raid, however, were satisfactorily attended to by the government of Bhotan. Lord Ripon, therefore, in November, 1884, granted its request for the piece of land, retaining only the forest area.<sup>91</sup>

In Bhotan, the mantle of Jigme Namgyal fell upon his youngest son, Ugyan Wangchuk, the Dzungpon of Wangdi-phodrang. He vacated his province for one of his partisans, and took over Tongsa, where his uncle at about that time was murdered. The murderers were hastily disposed of that denied any enquiry in the matter. Like his distinguished father, Ugyan also at first aspired to be the man behind the throne. In

88. *Ibid.*—December, 1880 (17).

89. *Ibid.*—September, 1881 (1, 4, 5).

90. *Ibid.*—February, 1881 (1).

91. *Ibid.*—November, 1884 (2).

early 1885 symptoms of a civil war were on the surface again. Dev Raja Gawa Zangpo tried to deny his indebtedness to the house of late Jigme Namgyal for the throne he sat upon. He listened to the advice of the Dzungpons of Punakha and Thimphu and thus denied Ugyan Wangchuk the usual share of the British subsidy. But young Ugyan proved himself more than a match. The disgruntled nobles of Bhotan made yet another attempt to overthrow the house of Jigme Namgyal. The Dev Raja appealed to Lord Dufferin for help, which was politely refused.<sup>92</sup> The Dharma Raja remained neutral. In the middle of May, 1885, the Dev Raja fled the country and took shelter in a monastery twelve miles north of Punakha. Then, amidst the usual scenes of talks of compromise, Ugyan got rid of his opponents by treachery and bloodshed. The Dzungpon of Punakha lost his life, and that of Thimpha and his followers fled to Tibet.<sup>93</sup> Ugyan, however, did not take the throne for himself. In August, 1885, the Yangbe Lupon was nominated to the throne and became the Dev Raja Pam Sangye Dorje. Ugyan remained the defacto ruler of the land. In the first week of January, 1886, the agent of the government of Bhotan came to Buxa to receive the British subsidy, but he was refused.

In fact, the recent political struggle in Bhotan spoke of far-reaching consequences which perturbed the British officers in the frontier. Rivers Thompson, the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal was not unwilling to subsidise the de facto ruler of the land and thus help him to consolidate his power.<sup>94</sup> But Lord Dufferin decided otherwise. He was anxious about the result which the situation in Bhotan produced on the other side of her frontier. The Commissioner of Rajsahi Division, on 18 November, 1885, reported that the Chinese at Lhasa had closed all trade between Darjeeling and Tibet. Moreover, there was a rumour that they had taken up the case of the ex-Dev Raja Gawa Zangpo and decided to interfere in Bhotan.<sup>95</sup> This

92. Government of India to the Government of Bengal, 15 May, 1885.

93. Beng. Lt.-Gov. Pro. (Pol)—July, 1885 (19), October, 1885 (4-5).

94. *Ibid.*—January, 1886 (188).

95. *Ibid.*—February, 1886 (17).

was corroborated by the information sent by the Raja of Sikkim in the second week of December, 1885. One Tibetan and one Chinese Officer actually came to phari. They refused to accept the impaired authority of the Dharma Raja or the installation of the new Dev Raja who was a puppet in the hands of Ugyan of Tongsa. They desired Ugyan to proceed to phari and answer for his actions.<sup>96</sup> Having also heard from the British Charge-de-Affairs in Peking that China might intervene in the internal quarrels of Bhotan, Lord Dufferin decided against payment of the subsidy to the present Government of Bhotan. Although the Commissioner of Rajsahi Division as well as the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal were in favour of making the payment, the Governor-General did not welcome the situation where "the government of India should be subsidising one Dev Raja, while the government of China was supporting another".<sup>97</sup> The Deputy Commissioner of Jalpaiguri was, therefore, instructed by telegraph to holdup payment due on 10 January, 1886.<sup>98</sup> The payment was not to be resumed till the government was satisfied about Bhotan's non-alignment with any other power.

In fact, the government of India at this time was unable to treat Bhotan independent of either Lhasa or Peking. From the dawn of the nineteenth century one important factor affecting the aim of the Government of India's north-east frontier policy was the chance of China's interference in the eastern Himalaya. This the government of India always sought to eliminate. So, if the information were true that the recent political upheaval in Bhotan had engaged the attention of Tibet and China, then the whole British plan of advancing their political and commercial interests in the eastern Himalaya was in jeopardy. Lord Dufferin's decision to stop the subsidy of Bhotan was, therefore, justified. But the likelihood of Chinese interference in Bhotan depended very much upon the Sino-Tibetan relations, the exact nature of which was not examined by the government of India in a true historical perspective.

96. *Ibid.*—January, 1886 (16-17).

97. *Ibid.*—January, 1886 (18).

98. *Ibid.*—January, 1886 (19).

Ever since had China emerged successful in the triangular contest for Tibet among the Qosot Mongals, their Dzungar brethren and the Manchus in the first quarter of the eighteenth century, she admitted the tradition of Tibet ruling herself, but put a stamp of China's suzerainty upon the government of Tibet. The two Ambans posted at Lhasa kept watch on China's interests in Tibet and rendered advice whenever the Tibetan government asked for it. The Tibetans, however, outwardly showed deference to China while maintaining within themselves some reservation about China's control upon them. Both Bogle and Turner had noticed this ambivalence of the Tibetans.

From the time of Tibet-Nepal War in the late eighteenth century, China tried to make her predominance in Tibet real. From the beginning of the nineteenth century almost to the end of it, all the four Dalai Lamas mysteriously died barely before they were of age. The government of Tibet was run by the Regent and his men under the supervision of the Ambans. The presence of those imperial agents, however, did not evoke in the whole of Tibet that reverence due to a suzerain Power; only in Lhasa there was some awareness of it. A large Chinese presence in Tibet and the air of superiority maintained by the Ambans even towards the venerated Lamas caused occasions for resentment among the Tibetans in spite of China's handsome financial assistance to their important monasteries. No wonder, Manning, the first Englishman to set foot in Lhasa, observed that the Tibetans "without any emotions of regret" would like to see the Chinese ousted from their country. But then periodical frictions among their men at the top that had helped a fellowship grow between the Tashilama or the Regent and China also enabled the Chinese to make the best bargain out of them.

However keen, China was incapable of concealing from the Tibetans the growing symptoms of the dynastic decline of her Manchu rulers. The Dogra invasion of West Tibet in 1841 and the Nepalese invasion of Tibet in 1856 proved to the Tibetans that China was no more equal to any exigencies taking place on Tibet's borders. The Patron-Priest relation between the two countries was already affected; but as was her wont, China did not admit the presence of any foreigners except

that of her own in Tibet. On the other hand, the idea of the known greatness of the Chinese Empire was too strong for the government of India to think of Tibet independent of China. Not only that; the government of India had genuine misgivings about China's susceptibilities to the advance of British interests in the eastern Himalaya. In order to promote British trade with that country the government of India in the 1870s desired consular agencies with the Chinese authorities established. But the British Legation in China had doubts about its success. Tibet herself was averse to a free intercourse with the formidable British, an attitude that China exploited in her own interest.

The distance at this time between Peking and Lhasa and the enormous difficulties of the Chinese government at home kept her engaged there. Her officers at Lhasa, however, were aware of the affairs of the Himalayan countries. They understood that Sikkim and Bhotan were not dependable barriers against British advance. Edgar, the Deputy Commissioner of Darjeeling, during his visit to the Sikkim-Tibet frontier in October, 1873 met with strong objection of the Chinese Amban to the British ever crossing Tibet's frontier or even constructing a road to that frontier across Sikkim.<sup>99</sup>

Perhaps China was not opposed to some amount of Indian trade made in the border of Tibet, but she would like to guard against British influence making headway in the country. The Chinese Amban had already submitted to his government the proposal for extension of China's suzerainty over Bhotan.<sup>100</sup> But the government of China was then not in a position to consider the proposal. But when in early 1886 the government of India by virtue of the extraordinary provision of the Chefoo convention signed ten years before deputed Colman Macaulay to head a mission to Tibet, China took advantage of agitation in Tibet at that time and diverted the attention of the British government to another area. The British stood in need of Peking's consent for the settlement of the north-east frontier of Upper Burma then recently annexed as well as for the transfer of

99. Edgar J. W.—*Sikkim and the Thibetan Frontier*, pp. 16-17

100. Sir J. Walsham—*From Peking to Lord Dufferin*, 5 & 9 November, For. Pol. Con 1886 (59, 60)

China's suzerainty over Burma to the British government. China cleverly read the British mind and consented to part with her suzerainty over Burma which she could not hold on indefinitely against British desire. For the sake of Burma the Macaulay Mission was withdrawn by the British government. How far were this acquisition of the suzerainty of Burma by the British an adequate compensation for their losing the game with China in the border of Sikkim was open to question. But it was true that China endeavoured to restore her image in Tibet.

China was temporarily relieved, but not Tibet. Having had to face a stronger people whom Tibet did not trust nor could resist, she took cover behind the name of China. "The politico-mystical aura of the Empire" was to her an effective means of standing any aggressive overtures from outside. To her Chinese suzerainty was bearable because of distance which was an eight-to-ten months' journey between Peking and Lhasa. But then China claimed her rights to suzerainty without playing the real patron of Tibet. In fact, Tibet was developing her personality that went unnoticed by the British in India, but not by the Chinese in Tibet. She wanted to assess the nature of the British thrust in the Himalaya that had become a reality. To her the British were 'like a great king fond of war and conquest'. She looked with disapproval upon British efforts from the 1860s to collect topographical information of her country by secretly sending out reconnaissance parties. She was much concerned over the completion of the road through Sikkim upto the Jelap pass, and went to the length of forbidding her traders in Phari not to enter sikkim.<sup>101</sup> She refused to allow the Macaulay Mission step into her territory, and even deployed a small force in the Chumbi Valley. In early 1886, she held a conference at Galing in the Chumbi Valley and asked both Sikkim and Bhotan to attend. Bhotan did not and thereby created in the British an impression different from what Dufferin had held. Thutob Namgyal of Sikkim, on the other hand, obliged Lhasa. He had been for some years past residing in the Chumbi itself. Emboldened by the British Mission withdrawan and blessings of

101. Bengal Lt. Governor's proceeds (Fo) Feb, 1775 (1).



Nechung oracle at Lhasa, a body of Tibetan militia came down and constructed a strong base on Lingtu at a height of 12000-13000 feet overhanging the trade route from India to Tibet across of Jelap Pass.

As Lingtu was well within Sikkim, Lord Dufferin held that Sikkim had acted against articles 19 and 20 of the Anglo-Sikkimese treaty of 1861 and forfeited her right to her annual subsidy payable by the government of India. J. C. White, before his taking over as the Political officer in Sikkim, made his visit to that country in November, 1887, with the object of inducing the youthful Raja of Sikkim to come back to his country. He failed. The government of India was perplexed. The position of the Tibetan militia at Lingtu was a challenge to the Anglo-Sikkimese relations.<sup>102</sup>

Thutob Namgyal had expressed his inability to accept the invitation of the government of India till Lhasa permitted him to do so. Never before had British advance in the eastern Himalaya been so badly challenged. The government of India however, did not accept that its hard-earned progress in the eastern Himalaya should be lost in this way.

China understood the seriousness of the situation, and so requested the British Minister in Peking to persuade the government of India not to use force.<sup>103</sup> The government of India agreed to wait hoping the Tibetans would peacefully withdraw acting under the salutary advice of China. Whether China really did give such advice will never be known. For, on her part to advise Lhasa to beat a retreat was to confirm her helplessness to stand by the Tibetans during crisis. China would not take that risk. Rather, she should move slow till such time the Tibetans suffered a reverse and China was in a comfortable position to settle matters with the British in behalf of Tibet. That would, on the one hand, prove to the Tibetans that they could not afford to go along in this world without the help of China; on the other, deny the British government any chances to settle directly with Lhasa.

After an ultimatum to the Tibetan Commander at Lingtu

102. For. Sec. E, January, 1888 (1)

103. For. Sec E, January, 1888 (37)

and a request to Lhasa (both of which were ignored), British troops under Brigadier Graham routed the Tibetan militia in March 1888 and advanced twelve miles into the Chumbi. But in order to avoid offending Chinese susceptibilities they fell back to Gnatong within Sikkim. Neither were the forces of Lhasa match to the British nor did the Chinese at Lhasa rush help for the Tibetans. Tibet in her distress turned to Nepal for help. But Nepal held back prudently. Only Thutob Namgyal took an unrealistic view of the whole situation and from a sense of injured vanity refused to have anything to do with the British political officer appointed in Sikkim.

The behaviour of Bhotan, on the other hand, during these years of tension in the eastern Himalaya was that of a mature mind. It spoke of the farsight of the young penlop of Tongsa. It also helped the government of India to form a correct estimate of the present government of Bhotan. The penlop of Tongsa decided to keep his country out of all external complications. Neither could he afford to lose the British subsidy by giving umbrage to the government of India nor did he dare flout the government of Tibet. The spiritual authority of Lhasa was the basis of her power over the people in the eastern Himalaya. Unlike Sikkim, therefore, Bhotan remained silent to Tibet's call. In her circumstances, silence was golden. After the Tibetan militia withdrew from Lingtu, Lhasa again requested Bhotan to draw near Tibet. But the penlop of Tongsa held on to his policy of non-alignment. British sensitiveness to Chinese or Tibetan pretensions in the Himalayan states were well known.

It was mainly in China's attitude and to some extent in Sikkim's that the government of India met with obstacles to a quick settlement of the Sikkim-Tibet question. Tibet, as on previous occasions, fell back suffering reverse in battle, while China emerged in the scene in the role of a mediator. Mortimer Durand, the Foreign Secretary to the Government of India, who led the British team for negotiation with the Chinese Amban, had been instructed to uphold British position in Sikkim as agreed to between them in 1861. The Amban, on his part, harped on the theme of the time-honoured relation between Sikkim and

Tibet.<sup>104</sup> Chinese proposition dropped ominous hints that since Sikkim fell within the sphere of Tibetan influence China might claim an open door in that country when necessary. The government of India could hardly accept this situation. Negotiations stopped for a few months in consequence. The Raja of Sikkim in fear of facing displeasure of the government of India was still away in Chumbi. British anxiety that subsidised state might sell the pass was acute. Mortimer Durand even thought of a temporary suspension of the treaty-allowance of Bhotan.<sup>105</sup> It was argued that unless Tibet's claim on Sikkim was forever put to an end, the government of India would not be sure of its relations with Bhotan also. For the treaty of Sinchula did not debar the government of Bhotan from entering into political relations with either Tibet or China. Under these circumstances the government of Bengal opined in favour of giving some weightage to Sikkim's tender relations with Tibet.<sup>106</sup> Lord Lansdowne did not deny this relation between the two, but he wanted the Raja of Sikkim to "modify his relations with Tibet" in the changed context. The Viceroy laying stress upon China's pretensions in many parts of the southern slopes of the Himalaya spoke against conceding any point that would compromise British interests in that region.<sup>107</sup>

Almost a year was consumed by the Sikkim-Tibet talks. The Amban posing that he was a mere guest in Lhasa and so "could not put aside the real masters" tried to shelve the issue that made the government of India think of closing the chapter so far China was concerned. The government of India could have really taken a bold stand and laid aside China's claim to represent Tibet. It was impossible for China to contest with the British Power on this issue in the faraway Himalayan plateau. A mere threat not to recognise China's place in the Sikkim-Tibet question made her see reason. She resumed talks that culminated in the Anglo-Chinese convention signed at Calcutta on 17 March, 1890.

104. Durand to Govt. of India, 1 January, 1889

105. Foreign Department letter, 12 February, 1889 (28)

106. Beng. Lt. Gov. Pro (Pol) April, 1889 (11)

107. Lord Lansdowne's telegram to Lord Cross, 2 May, 1889

It may be noted that the idea of treating Tibet independent of China had flashed for a moment in the mind of the British officers, but that too faded out as soon as the prospect of a settlement with China's agreement looked bright. In fact, in order to permanently define the status of Sikkim and Sikkim's border with Tibet cooperation of China was considered essential. Only a few years ago China's cooperation helped the British Government in respect of Burma. Moreover, Britain was in the threshold of 'splendid isolation' and so did not consider it worth straining her relations with China too much. It was a part of Britain's general policy at that time to show utmost forbearance to China and as far as possible to accommodate her interests in other parts of the continent. The Anglo-Chinese convention of 1890 defined the boundary between Sikkim and Tibet, accepted Sikkim as a British protectorate, the government of India exercising direct and exclusive control over the internal administration and foreign relations of that state. The convention left the question of providing increased facilities for trade across the Sikkim-Tibet frontier to be decided jointly by the signatory powers. Thus, was Tibet's claim upon Sikkim resisted with the help of China. But the matter did not end there. None of the signatories at this time cared to know of the reactions of Tibet to the above decisions taken.

From 1890, Sino-Tibetan relations abruptly took a new course. The treaty stipulations of 1890 were not liked by Tibet; only she was powerless to formally protest against them. Therefore, she decided to maintain distance between herself and the great Powers and follow a policy of her own. She gave shelter and a pension to the Dzungpon of Thimphu, who being unable to stand the strength of Ugyan Wangchuk of Tongsa had fled to Tibet. She gave shelter to the eldest son of the Raja of Sikkim who preferred an ordinary life in Tibet to the princely life in his own country.

Whatever the fate of the Anglo-Chinese convention of 1890, the government of India was annoyed by the obstinacy of the Raja of Sikkim absenting himself from the Capital. He was not interested in the pattern of administration that had been introduced in Sikkim by J. C. White with the help of a three-member State Council. The part played by the Rani of Sikkim

“who was altogether Tibetan in her sympathies and ideas” added to the anxiety of the government of India. J. C. White was convinced that Sikkim’s affairs hinged upon the settlement of the China-Tibet question.<sup>108</sup> The Sikkim State Council desired Thutob Namgyal came back to his Capital; but the Raja ignored them. J. C. White personally saw him but failed to induce him to reside in Gangtok.

The stoppage of the allowance of Thutob Namgyal from November, 1891 made matters worse. The Raja, in January, 1892, made attempt to find his way to Tibet through Nepal. The government of Nepal, however, stood in his way. With the help of Nepal, Thutob Namgyal was brought from the Nepal frontier to Darjeeling and kept under surveillance. He was deprived of regality for a period of three years. Lord Lansdowne also thought of setting aside the claim of the eldest prince of Sikkim in favour of his younger brother who was receiving education at Darjeeling.<sup>109</sup> The government of India rewarded Bir Shamsheer, the Prime Minister of Nepal, with the title of Knight Commander, Star of India, as a mark of gratitude and friendship.

While Sikkim was undergoing political transformation, Lhasa held on to her aim to keep off from the British. On 5 December 1893, Regulations, ten in number, regarding trade, communication and pasturage between Sikkim and Tibet were agreed to by the representatives of the British and the Chinese governments at Darjeeling. A Tibetan Minister was present at this time but took no part in the deliberations nor did he put his signature on this document. These Regulations, however, failed to bring expected results. The government of India had insisted upon obtaining Phari as the trade mart. Instead of Phari, Yatung just on the Tibet side of the frontier and unsuitable as a mart was provided. And that too was cut off from the rest of the country by a wall the Tibetans had built on their side. Phari, on the other hand, was situated far inside Tibet and was the traditional centre of trade between herself and the eastern Himalayan countries. Again while goods

108. For Sec. consults. October, 1891 (301-2)

109. For Sec. E. November, 1893 (585-87)

other than arms, liquors and other specified items were to be "exempt from duty for a period of five years", Indian tea was not included in the list of duty free items but was allowed "at a rate of duty not exceeding that at which Chinese tea is imported into England." On top of it, goods allowed to pass Yatung free were subjected by the administration of Tibet to a duty of 10 per cent while passing Phari to take the only road into Tibet. The Chinese Officer at Lhasa admitted his helplessness against Tibet's behaviour.

The political officer in Sikkim in June 1894 and the Deputy Commissioner of Darjeeling in November next year found Tibet unwilling to implement the Anglo-Chinese Convention or the Trade Regulations. Her feelings were that she was not a party to either of them and so was not bound to honour them. The government of India as before accepted the situation with forbearance and took a wait-and-see policy. In spite of Tibetan obstructiveness the volume of trade that passed between India and Tibet through Sikkim was an interesting phenomenon by itself. In 1892-93, the value of imports into India amounted to Rs. 3,51,519 and that of export Rs. 2,29,177. But from 1894-95 it went up till in 1898-99 it reached the figure of Rs. 11,21,019 in imports and Rs. 10,17,685 in exports.<sup>110</sup> That showed that Tibet would allow trade with British India in her frontier under conditions not to be dictated by the governments of China and India alone; Tibet had as much to say as the two other powers. Increase in trade, however, was a good ground for Lord Elgin to keep at the policy of forbearance even after the Tibetans pulled down the boundary pillar set up by J. C. White on the Jelap pass and occupied a strip of territory near Giagong in north Sikkim. Lord Elgin's government sought to rely upon the good officers of the Chinese agent in Tibet rather than to act upon the suggestion for reparations made by the political officer in Sikkim.<sup>111</sup> From the Sino-Tibetan relations one more point became clear. Until Tibet lay prostrate at the feet of China, Chinese interests in the Hamalaya would not become a reality. This point also had

110. For Sec. consults. January 1900 (146-47)

111. For Sec. E July 1895 (103-4)

a direct bearing upon the future of British relations with Bhotan.

As in the case of Tibet, so in the case of Bhotan, the year 1890 made the government of India review its policy in the light of the latest developments, on 7 August 1890, the British Minister at Peking informed Lord Lansdowne about a memorial submitted to the Chinese Emperor by Sheng-tai, the Amban at Lhasa.<sup>112</sup> The memorial received imperial approval and was published in the Peking Gazette on 18 July, 1890. Sheng-tai had proposed to pursue the policy adopted by his predecessor in 1886 for controlling the political affairs of Bhotan. During his stay in the frontier in connection with Sikkim-Tibet negotiations he had enquired into the conditions prevailing in Bhotan and learnt that the present Tongsa Penlop was the real master of the country and that the Penlop of Paro was his subordinate colleague. The people of Bhotan also reposed the highest confidence in the Tongsa Penlop. In view of this, Sheng-tai proposed to invest the Penlops of Tongsa and Paro with the hereditary titles of Chieftain and Vice-Chieftain respectively under the Emperor of China.

This proposal of Sheng-tai, however, did not call for any immediate change in British policy towards Bhotan. First, there was a wide gap between Sheng-tai's proposal and its execution. Tibet, whom China meant to use as door-mat when stepping out for the Himalayan frontier, had lost faith in China. And a disaffected Tibet was not expected to subserve China's material interests in the Himalaya. Then, Bhotan had decided to remain aloof from all conflicts in the eastern Himalaya. It was only in the middle of 1890, when Ugyan Wangchuk stayed away from the capital for quite a few months near the frontier of Tibet that the government of India was a little worried. It knew that the Dev Raja had resigned and the throne remained vacant throughout the year. It did not know, however, if this was an after effect of the memorial of the Amban or due to his presence in the Sikkim-Tibet frontier. Only in early 1891, the government of India was relieved of its anxiety. For, Bhotan did not really sell the pass.

112. For Sec. November, 1890 (88-90)

In fact, Ugyan Wangchuk went to the monastery of Hlaubung, where the head lama had died leaving behind considerable property. As the deceased lama was his uncle, Ugyan Wangchuk was engaged at Hlaubung for a few months to secure that property. During his absence from the capital no decision in any important matters of the state was possible. So the election of the Dev Raja was held over. Besides, the year 1890 was looked upon by the Bhotanese as the inauspicious Black year.<sup>113</sup> Bhotan, however, under the guidance of Ugyan Wangchuk enjoyed all the blessings of a good government. Lieutenant Colonel Boileau, the Deputy Commissioner of Jalpaiguri, in his report to the Commissioner of Rajsahi Division on 4 April 1890 expressed satisfaction for Bhotan's relations with the government.<sup>114</sup> One or two border incidents did not adversely affect the relations between the two. The government of India had no cause for suspecting the government of Bhotan of any anti-British tendencies; The offer of investiture by the Chinese Emperor did not generate any enthusiasm in the penlops of Tongsa and Paro either.

In early 1891, Ugyan Wangchuk returned to his seat at Tongsa. The authority of his government was as strong and stable as any which had ever held power in Bhotan.<sup>115</sup> No measures were taken for election of the Dev Raja. The government of India did not worry about it either. During the absence of Ugyan Wangchuk from the capital there were Bhotanese raids in the frontier of Kamrup. The Assam administration established special police posts. The government of India deducted the cost of these police posts from the subsidy to be paid to Bhotan in 1893. But in the next year on the request of the government of Bhotan the deducted amount was fully restored. Evidently the government of India avoided estrangement with Ugyan Wangchuk over the trivial amount of a few hundred rupees.

Meanwhile, Thutob Namgyal of Sikkim completely

113. Dy. Commissioner, Darjeeling to the Commissioner, Rajshahi Div, 1 May, 1819

114. For Sec. October, 1891 (301-2)

115. Chief Secretary, Bengal Government to the Secretary, Government of India, 14 June, 1892



surrendered to the government of India. Then with a subservient Sikkim on the left and a friendly Bhotan on the right, the government of India came to a position to directly contact Lhasa, and remove her opposition to the British. The thirteenth Dalai Lama escaped premature death which had been the fate of all his previous incarnations in the nineteenth century. He assumed full powers at the time when China's imperial prestige was shattered by her defeat at the hands of Japan and she herself stood bewildered at the competition among the European Powers to wring out concessions from her on one pretext or another. The emergence of a Dalai Lama for the first time in the nineteenth century as the central figure of Tibetan body-politic and the eclipse of the imperial prestige of China were important factors in British calculations. Never before had the British found such a favourable climate in the Himalaya. The steady growth of the trade between India and Tibet from 1894-95 was also a factor to be reckoned with. J. C. White was pressing for the development of woollen export trade and sending specimens of English woollen fabrics to Tibet for inspection of the Tibetan traders.<sup>116</sup> But to his disappointment he found that Lhasa was opposed to the entry of British and even Sikkimese subjects into Tibet. Thus was Indo-Tibetan trade robbed of the chance of its development to the greatest possible extent. No improvement of the situation was possible unless Tibet could be persuaded to believe that British intention was honest and without any ulterior motive.

Long before Tibet had brought Bhotan and the British together on the path of peace. Now at the close of the nineteenth century Bhotan agreed to help a direct relationship grow between Tibet and the British without having to wait for China's consent in this matter. Ugyan Kazi, the agent of Bhotan at Kalimpong during his visit to Lhasa in September 1899 and again in June 1901 pleaded with the Lhasa authorities for the government of India. The Lhasa authorities, however, refused to directly deal with the British. Even the letter from Lord Curzon to the Dalai Lama was sent back unopened. It

116. Chief Secretary, Bengal Government to Chief Secretary, Government of India, 27 September, 1897

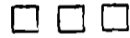
was clear that Lhasa took recourse to her old plea again, namely, China would not approve a direct communication between Lhasa and the British. But this was a half-truth and so was an unconvincing argument. China's control over Lhasa, at this time, was minimal. After the Boxer rebellion, the Chinese Government issued a decree calling upon all subjects of the emperor of China not to persecute foreigners who came to the Chinese provinces "to engage in industrial pursuits or in diffusing religion". This decree, which was served on Tibet also, made little impression upon the Tibetans. They, in fact, listened to China only when they thought it useful to do so.<sup>117</sup> A close contact with the British at the behest of China was not accepted by Lhasa, and so she was not willing to act according to the decree of the government of China.

The reported intimacy between Tibet and Russia, in the meantime, caused the new Viceroy Lord Curzon great worries. Whether Russia was a real danger to the North East Frontier of India was open to question; but the very idea that a formidable Power appeared in that horizon was enough to exasperate Lord Curzon. That idea induced him to seek Nepal's support for British policy towards Tibet. Russian intrigues in Tibet had alerted Nepal too and led her to pledge that her interests were "entirely bound up with those of the British Government in India". The danger of a Russian eruption into Tibet ever after magnified the importance of the friendship of Bhotan. It also ran into the fact that Bhotan actually stood within the defence perimeter of India.

To what extent the Tibet policy of the government of India moulded its future relations with Bhotan belongs to the history of the twentieth century. It is out of the range of the present discourse. However, that part of the story was the culmination of British relations with Bhotan. The events of the 1890s only gave broad hints about it. The place of Bhotan in British diplomacy in the twentieth century was far removed from that in the days of Warren Hastings. A scientific frontier in the North-East of India was inconceivable without the inclusion of Bhotan in it. The political sunshine

117. Kawaguchi Ekai—*Three Years in Tibet*, pp. 519-20.

that followed the ascendency of the house of Jigme Namgyal in Bhotan was promising. And the government of India waited till the right moment and reaped the full harvest of its patience and diplomacy in the first ten years of the present century.



## CHAPTER VII

### Epilogue

In the previous chapters an attempt has been made to survey the origin and development of Anglo-Bhotanese relations. Historical periods, in spite of some distinct features of each, are but parts of one continuous process. To isolate and treat them as clear-cut periods will be to reduce a full circle to number of mere broken arcs. Yet, the evolution of the relationship between the British and the Bhotanese governments has, in the course of about one hundred and thirty years, left us three definite periods, the early, the middle and the modern one.

The early period began in the last quarter of the eighteenth century with a conflict with Bhotan. Purling, the-then Collector of Rangpur, had suggested the idea of confining the Bhotanese to their hills; but Warren Hastings, Governor-General of the East India Company had different ideas. The prospect of a flourishing English trade with Tibet through Bhotan softened his attitude towards the Bhotanese and led him gracefully indulge even the unreasonable demands of Bhotan to grab at territories below her hills. The prospect of English trade with Tibet, however, faded out on the outbreak of the Tibeto-Nepalese war of 1788-92. The East India Company woke up to find that the expansion of Bhotan in the plains and the contiguity of her frontier with that of the Company were only of the most unhappy consequences. For, the Bhotanese from their side could not give any guarantee for a quiet frontier nor could they reciprocate the kindness received by them at hands of the British. Therefore, the early period of Anglo-Bhotanese relations, from the British stand-point, might be considered as wholly unproductive. The traffic was invariably one way, and the Company failed to get any profits from the investment it had made.

The middle period of this history began roughly in the nineteenth century, and covered the greater part of it. Two questions agitated of the British statesmen during this periods. First,

there was the question of dislodging the Bhotanese from the plain country leading to their hills. Their activities in that area adversely affected the peace on the Bengal and Assam frontiers. The second question was more intricate; it was the question of Chinese influence over the sub-Himalayan states. Besides, the fast growing British Empire in India created misgivings in those sub-Himalayan States about British intentions. All these factors became mixed up, and produced a long phase of tension and suspense, of disappointment and hesitation in British policy towards the north-east frontier. That phase, however, ended in the sixties of the nineteenth century, when the British government made up its mind and drove the Bhotanese out of the Duars to their hills where Purling had once suggested they should be confined.

The treaty of Sinchula, 1865, by which Bhotan gave up all territories in the plains that she had grabbed, brought the history of Anglo-Bhotanese relations to the threshold of the modern period. In the nineteenth century, it might be said, the twentieth had begun. The political affairs in the Himalaya that were aggravated by Sino-Tibetan relations in the twentieth century, and that also proved critical for British relations with Bhotan, had actually started in the period post—1865.

The British government had then thought that true British interests lay in providing the government of Bhotan, in lieu of the eighteen Duars, with a liberal subsidy “as the means of enforcing its authority over its chiefs and functionaries and of compelling them to execute the engagements which it has been entered into.” The British, however, should have foreseen that a more advanced policy was the setting-up of a friendly and stable government in Bhotan, and acceptance by the British of the obligation to maintain and defend it. The rapid succession of events in the last fifteen years of the nineteenth century formally brought the British on to that track.

The question of the security of the northern frontiers of Bengal and Assam from Bhotanese inroads being settled in 1865, the question of Chinese pretensions upon the southern slopes of the Himalaya came to the forefront. The British government was disturbed by Sikkim's disowning of British allegiance being followed by the entry of the Tibetan militia

into Sikkim. British troops routed the Tibetan militia; in order to remove any political claim of Tibet upon Sikkim, the British government was obliged to acknowledge Chinese suzerainty over Tibet. The British protectorate over Sikkim also was recognised by China. Thus, there resulted a scientific frontier for India in the north of Sikkim bordering upon the Himalaya wall. Only, a wide gap existed on the Bhotan frontier towards Tibet, but for which that scientific frontier could have been extended along the eastern arms of the Himalaya. Besides, the suzerainty of China, being formally asserted over Tibet, pointed menacingly at the vulnerability of Bhotan from the north.

Happily, the stability of the Bhotan government under the guidance of the house of Jigme Namgyal, and its decision to remain composed in the face of provocations either from Lhasa or from Peking, deeply impressed the British government and subscribed to the view that British interests were inseparably related to the fortune of the house of Jigme Namgyal. The inclusion of Bhotan within the shadow of the British Empire of India and holding her to British interests were dictated by the logic of history. With these realities about the future British relations with Bhotan established, this discussion could be ended. But it would be better to refer to the events in the eastern Himalaya in the early twentieth century and point out how much these owed to the preceding century.

Lhasa was determined, at the beginning of the present century, to keep away from the British; but alleged Russian intrigues at Lhasa against British interests urged Lord Curzon to forcibly enter Lhasa. China was embarrassed over the Russo-Japanese war; and the reluctant approval of Lord Curzon's desires by the Home authorities in London prompted the expedition of Colonel Younghusband to Lhasa in 1903-4. The helplessness of China against Tibetan obstructiveness induced the government of India to impress Lhasa by its own powers. British officers did not turn their eyes away from the brisk trade between India and Tibet in spite of the Lhasa authorities. Militarily the British expedition was successful; politically, however, it was a great set-back. The success of British arms produced reactions in the Chancellories of Europe

that made the British to withdraw from Lhasa. The Government led by the Liberal party in late 1905 took the decision. Sir Charles Bell states, "by going and coming out again, we knocked the Tibetans down and left them for the first comers to kick."<sup>1</sup> For China who had stood dismayed all the while the British occupied Lhasa, entered Tibet in the wake of British withdrawal from that country and made Chinese suzerainty over Tibet real and complete. The Dalai Lama had fled to Mongolia as the British troops entered his country. China seized the opportunity and announced to the Tibetans that the Dalai Lama had ceased to rule.

Political ascendancy of China in Tibet had never been, in the past, so blatant as it became this time. By allowing China to negotiate again for and on behalf of Tibet, the British government only accepted the legal position of China. The Lhasa Convention of September 1904, that had very nearly established British triumph in Tibet was dropped in favour of the new Anglo-Chinese Convention of April, 1906. By this Convention China undertook that like Britain every other Power also would be debarred from obtaining any kind of concession in Tibet and interfering with the territory or internal administration of the Country. Indian trade, as before, was confined to Yatung, Gyantse and Gartok. Only the government of India was now permitted to lay telegraph lines connecting India and the trade marts. By the Anglo-Russian Convention of August 1907, Britain further pledged to Russia to respect the territorial integrity of Tibet as well as the suzerainty of China over that country.

From the autumn of 1906 China began an aggressive bid to consolidate her position in Tibet by bringing her under rigid control. She shook off her complacency for a loose suzerainty she had so long exercised in the distant dependency of Tibet. She appointed Chang Yin-tang, one of her resolute officers, as the High Commissioner in Tibet. Chang's arrival in the scene

1. Bell, C.—*Tibet, Past And Present*, p. 71

Also, "The Oxford History of Modern India" has dubbed the expedition as "the Swan-Song of British imperialism in Central Asia." (Ed. 1965) p 310

ushered in a scheme of administrative reorganisation; at the same time attempts were made to explore the possibility of bringing Nepal, Bhotan and Sikkim close to Tibet to counterbalance British advance in the Himalaya. Strength of Chinese troops at Yatung, Gyantse and Chumbi was increased, and the British Trade Agents posted there were denied direct communications with the Tibetan authorities. The Trade Regulations signed in April 1908 were precise upon the rights of China while restricting the privileges of British officers and subjects.

What really troubled the government of India was that Tibet, having been completely delivered up into the hands of China, brought that Power and the Himalayan states into a dangerous proximity to each other. The intention of China to invest the penlops of Tongsa and Paro with the title of nobility in 1890 was known to the government of India. In the first decade of the twentieth century China only reoriented her approach to those Himalayan states and expressed the desire to make a compact family of these countries "united like brothers under the auspices of China".<sup>2</sup> According to her, Nepal and Bhotan might stand up as barriers on the British side of the frontier. This desire of China bore a new significance that took colour from the vigorous actions of Chao Erh-feng, one of the formidable generals of China, who had been sent to Tibet to complete the subjection of the country. The government of India disturbed at the "clear sign of a forward policy by China" kept watch upon the disposition of both Nepal and Bhotan.

While the Amban at Lhasa was liberal in his praise of the efficiency of the Nepalese government and sought to flatter Nepal, she, on her part, was not averse to the Chinese authority restored in Tibet and Tibet returned to old normalcy; but programmes of administrative reforms adopted by Chang and followed up by Lien Yu after him belied Nepal's expectations. Chang aimed at more than her traditional hold upon Tibet that called forth armed resistance by the Tibetans. This made Nepal worried about her trade interests in Lhasa. Lord Minto noticed this nervousness in Nepal caused by the advance of Chinese

2. Bel. Charles—op. cit. p. 92



influence in Tibet but he believed that her behaviour with the British was still friendly and correct.<sup>3</sup>

About Bhotan the government of India had held a favourable opinion. At the time of the British expedition to Lhasa Ugyan Wangchuk procured his government's permission for the construction of a direct road to the Chumbi valley through Bhotan.<sup>4</sup> The British expeditionary forces had wanted to avoid the high passes between Sikkim and the Chumbi. Preliminary survey of the area was made, but the project was subsequently given up on the score of expense. Colonel Younghusband highly praised the services rendered by the government of Bhotan which had endeavoured, at that time, to effect a settlement between the governments of India and Tibet.<sup>5</sup> In March 1905, J. C. White went to Punakha to present the insignia of honour of the Knight Commander of the Indian Empire to Ugyan Wangchuk. The Tongsa Penlop received a title of nobility at the hands of the British at last. The confidence of the British in the character and ability of Ugyan Wangchuk met with a full measure of success. In January 1906, he came down from the hills and on behalf of Bhotan attended the Darbar of the Prince of Wales at Calcutta,—an unprecedented phenomenon in the whole history of British relations with Bhotan.

At home Ugyan Wangchuk now stood at the height of his power. In 1907, Deb Raja Chhogley Tuelku having had tasted power for four years grew haughty and came to a clash with Ugyan Wangchuk. For this he grievously paid and lost the throne; the lay and spiritual nobles chose Ugyan Wangchuk as the Deb Raja. His elevation to the kingly office on 17 December, 1907 introduced in Bhotan, for the first time, the principle of hereditary succession to the throne. This put an end to feudal anarchy and private wars. Moreover, with the death of the Dharma Raja in 1904, there was no further reincarnation of the Dharma Raja till 1907; even his presence thereafter would not affect Ugyan

3. Lord Minto to Lord Marley, 21 January, 1909

4. Aitchison C. U.—op. cit. Vol 2, No. CXII.

5. Younghusband, F.—op. cit. p. 336

Wangchuk's position. The power of the Church over the State was broken long before.

British expectation for a stable and friendly government in Bhotan had never been so fully realised. It was time to strengthen the tie of friendship with that State. J. C. White already suggested that Bhotan should be requested to refer to the government of India all her disputes with the neighbouring states and that the government of India should increase her annual subsidy on that account. Charles Bell, who succeeded White as the Political Officer in Sikkim in April 1908, held different views. He believed that the government of India would have nothing to do if Bhotan voluntarily sought China's assistance in her affairs. In fact, she was being exhorted by the Chinese officer in Tibet to thrive and grow stronger with the help of China.<sup>6</sup> Therefore, Bell proposed that Bhotan and the government of India made a treaty which would place the foreign relations of Bhotan into British hands and would guarantee Bhotan's internal autonomy. Lord Minto also sent his suggestions to the Home government on those lines.<sup>7</sup> The Dalai Lama having been on exile for five years returned to Tibet at the end of December 1909. While at Peking in 1908, he had received an imperial decree urging him as a "Loyally submissive vice-gerent" of the Chinese Emperor to carefully "obey the laws and ordinances of the Sovereign State", and report in all matters to the Imperial Resident in Tibet. The British realised at last that withering of "real Tibetan government" was prejudicial to British relations with the Himalayan States. The Home government, therefore, approved the proposal of a fresh treaty with Bhotan, and the Treaty of Punakha, 8 January 1910, was the result. The Articles IV and VIII of the treaty of 1865 were revised. The government of India agreed to pay Bhotan one lakh rupees as annual subsidy from 10 January 1910, and to desist from interfering in the internal affairs of Bhotan. The government of Bhotan agreed to be guided in its external relations by the government of India. In respect of Sikkim and Cooch

6. Bell, C.—*op. cit.* p. 101

7. Lord Minto to Lord Marley, 1 October, 1908

Behar, Bhotan agreed to refer all cases of disputes to the government of India for arbitration.

The balance of the Himalayan politics disturbed by the recent Chinese activities in Tibet was fairly redressed by the cordial entente between the governments of India and Bhotan. The treaty of Punakha diplomatically covered up the long gap in the Himalayan wall where Tibet meets Bhotan. That was the only development that the north-east frontier of India then needed. However, had Bhotan entrusted her defence too to the government of India, solidarity of the Indian frontier in the Himalaya would have been complete. But that was too delicate an issue to be raised by the government of India at that time. The next best measure, therefore, lay in incapacitating China in her attempts to draw near the Himalaya and engage in anti-British intrigues.

Early in February, 1910, Chinese troops from Szechuan marched upon Lhasa that made the Dalai Lama take refuge in India. The Chinese government issued a proclamation deposing him. The British Minister in Peking made a representation to the Chinese government expressing concern for the extinction of "an effective Tibetan Government", and for British rights in Tibet recognised by treaties. To this the Chinese government gave assurance that measures adopted in Tibet did not aim at subverting the Tibetan government or at denying British rights in Tibet. The British government was at first convinced and in May, 1910 Charles Bell communicated to the Dalai Lama that the British government would not intervene between China and Tibet, but would recognise the *de facto* government at Lhasa.<sup>8</sup>

Lord Minto, however, thought on a different line. Although increase in Chinese strength near the Himalayan border did not spell out any immediate danger, but the fact that China had not relinquished her special position in relation to the three States bordering on Tibet was not a happy indication. From the middle of 1910, China made frequent references to Nepal and Bhotan as her vassal states which the government of India viewed with strong dislike. It was seen in the past few years

8. Charles Bell—Op. cit. p. 113

that one settled policy of Bhotan was to remain aloof from all conflicts between the major Powers in the Himalayan slopes. Enquiries made by the Chinese Amban whether Bhotan was willing to come to an understanding with China met with cold response. The Amban's desire to see Chinese currency accepted in Bhotan, was also ignored by the latter.<sup>9</sup> As to Nepal, her reaction to China's aggressive activities in Tibet helped the British government to take a hard line. China was sternly warned against extending her hands across the Himalaya and intriguing to split Anglo-Nepalese relations.<sup>10</sup> China's claims upon Nepal provoked strong objections from the Nepal Darbar also. It requested Peking not to send any envoy with patent of title for the Prime minister that had become for some time past almost customary.<sup>11</sup> In the middle of 1911, when the Amban requested for a Nepalese mission to Peking like the several ones sent every five years since 1792, Nepal declined to act except on the advice of the government of India.<sup>12</sup>

The Chinese Revolution of 1911 that brought the downfall of the Manchus and established the Republic of China also turned the scale in favour of the government of India. In November of that year the Chinese garrisons in Tibet mutinied and disowned the Amban. Desultory fighting took place between the Chinese and the Tibetans followed by dark days of anarchy and confusion. The Republic of China tried to save face by claiming Tibet to be on an equal footing with the provinces of China proper and sending fresh troops to Tibet to restore China's authority. This the British government did not agree to. An autonomous Tibet under nominal suzerainty of China was what the government of India had wanted. In the middle of 1912, the Dalai Lama returned to Lhasa. This gave heart to the Tibetans to intensify their struggle against China.

The British government now placed before the Chinese government the proposal of an autonomous Tibet. Lord Hardinge went further and demanded that China formally agreed

9. Op. cit. p. 114

10. Jordan to Prince Ching, 17 January, 1911

11. Sec. Consults—January, 1911 (164,166)

12. Sec. E. Consults—February, 1912 (6)

to have hands off Nepal and Bhotan.<sup>13</sup> The question of recognition of the new born Chinese Republic by the British government made China compromise her position in Tibet. By the end of 1912 her power in Tibet was irreparably broken; her troops that had surrendered were deported by the Lhasa authorities through India. Yuan Shi-Kai, the President of the Chinese Republic, agreed to a conference to be held at Simla for the settlement of the issue in question. In October 1913 the conference assembled at Simla, and on 27 April 1914 a convention was initialled by the plenipotentiaries of China, Tibet and India. The convention upheld Chinese suzerainty over Tibet, but China engaged not to convert Tibet into a Chinese province. The British government also engaged not to annex any portion of Tibet. That part of Tibet lying furthest from Peking and nearest to the Himalaya was rendered autonomous and known as Outer Tibet. Special British interests in that region for "the maintenance of peace and order in the neighbourhood of the frontier of India and adjoining states" were also agreed to.<sup>14</sup> China agreed never to send into Outer Tibet Chinese troops, to station civil and military officers there, nor to establish Chinese colonies in the country. Only the Chinese Amban would remain at Lhasa with a military escort of three hundred men. The British agent at Gyantse was authorised to visit Lhasa in order to settle matters which could not be settled at Gyantse. Besides, the Simla convention abolished the Trade Regulations of 1893 and those of 1908. In their place a fresh treaty was to govern the trade between India and Tibet.

The Simla Convention, however, combining ultimate Chinese suzerainty with internal autonomy of Tibet was the result of the failure of the British government either to assert its own influence upon Tibet or to totally exclude Chinese influence upon her. Yet a safe distance between China and the Indian frontier was accomplished; particular care was taken of the north-eastern sector of this frontier. Here a line called after

13. Lord Hardinge to Lord Crewe—29 April, 1912.

14. Philips, C. H.—*The Evolution of India and Pakistan* (Select Documents—pp. 487-488)

Sir A. H. Macmahon, Secretary to the government of India in the Foreign Department, was drawn to demarcate the respective boundaries of India and Tibet. The Macmohan Line ran eight hundred fifty miles between Bhotan and Assam towards Tibet, and about a hundred miles from the Assam frontier which now included Towang. The Simla Convention, however, lost much of its force on China's subsequent refusal to ratify it. Tibet, on the contrary, accepted it as binding upon herself and India. Perhaps she thought that the Simla Convention gave her a guarantee both against the Chinese and the British. The Chinese proverb 'Eight Ounces, half a Pound' explains her mind. For, as a people, the Tibetans had little to choose between the Chinese and the British.

Despite China's disavowal of the Simla Convention, the government of India could afford to wait till such time China revived her Tibetan interests and resumed aggressive de marches in the whole of the Tibetan plateau. So long as that did not happen, acceptance by Lhasa of the Indian border in the eastern Himalaya and the fact that the British stood behind the mountains, guaranteed the security of Bhotan from the north as well as the security of the north-east frontier of India.





## Appendices

### ARTICLES OF THE TREATY OF PEACE BETWEEN THE HONOURABLE EAST INDIA COMPANY AND THE DEB RAJA OF BHUTAN, 1774.

1st : That the Honourable Company, wholly from consideration for the distress to which the Bhootans 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, namely, to the eastward, the lands of Chitchacotta and Pagolahaut, and to the westward, the lands of Kyruntee, Marragaut, and Luckypoor.

2nd : That for the possession of the Chitchacotta Province, the Deb Rajah shall pay an annual tribute of five Tangun horses to the Honourable Company which was the acknowledgement paid to the Behar Rajah.

3rd : That the Deb Rajah shall deliver up Dhujinder Narain, Rajah of Cooch Behar, together with his brother, the Dewan Deo, who is confined with him.

4th : That the Bhootans, being merchants, shall have the same privilege of trade as formerly, without the payment of duties; and their caravan shall be allowed to go to Rungpoor annually.

5th : That the Deb Rajah should never cause incursions to be made into the country, nor in any respect whatever molest the ryots that have come under the Honourable Company's subjection.

6th : That if any ryot or inhabitant whatever shall desert from the Honourable Company's territories, the Deb Rajah shall cause him to be delivered up immediately upon application being made for him.

7th : That in case the Bhootans, or any one under the Government of the Deb Rajah, shall have any demands upon or disputes with any inhabitant of these or any part of the Company's territories, they shall prosecute them only by an application to the Magistrate, who shall reside here for the administration of justice.

8th : That whereas the Sunneeyasies are considered by the English as an enemy, the Deb Rajah shall not allow anybody of them to take shelter in any part of the districts now given up nor permit them to enter the Honourable Company's territories, or through any part of his, and if the Bhootans shall not of themselves be able to drive them out, they shall give information to the Resident on the part of the English, in Cooch Behar, and they shall not consider the English troops pursuing the Sunneeyasies into those districts any breach of this Treaty.



9th: That in case the Honourable Company shall have occasion for cutting timber from any part of the woods under the Hills, they shall do it duty free, and the people they send shall be protected.

10th: That there shall be a mutual release of prisoners.

This Treaty to be signed by the Honourable President and Council of Bengal, etc., and the Honourable Company's seal to be affixed on the one part, and to be signed and sealed by the Deb Raja on the other part.

Signed and ratified at Fort William, the 25th April, 1774.

*WARREN HASTINGS WILLIAM ALDERSEY*

P.M. Dacres

J. Laurell

Henry Goodwin

J. Graham

George Vansittart

TRANSLATION OF THE DOCUMENT WHICH  
MR. EDEN SIGNED UNDER COMPULSION IN 1864.

Agreement :

That from to-day there shall always be friendship between the Feringees (English) and the Bhotanese. Formerly the Dhurma Raja and the Company's Queen were of one mind, and the same friendship exists to the present day. Foolish men on the frontier having caused a disturbance, certain men belonging to the British power, living on the frontier have taken Bulisusan (Julpigorie ?) between Cooch Behar and the Kam Raja, and Ambaree, near the border of Sikim, and then between Banska and Gowalparah, Tangamutte, Bokalibaree, Motteeamaree, Papareebaree, Arioetta, and then the seven Eastern Dooars. Then certain bad men on the Bhoteah side stole men, cattle, and other property, and committed thefts and robberies, and the Feringees men plundered property and burnt down houses in Bhotan. By reason of these bad man remaining, the ryots suffered great trouble; and on this account the Governer-General, with a good intention, sent an envoy, Mr. Eden, with letters and presents, and sent with him Cheebo Lama, the Minister of Sikim, and on their coming to the Dhurma and Deb Rajas, making petition, a settlement of a permanent nature has been made by both parties. The Dhurma Raja will send one agent to the east and one to the west; when they shall arrive on the frontier of the company's territory, they shall, after an interview with the Feringees agents, receive back the tracts above mentioned belonging to Bhotanese, and the Bhotanese will in like manner surrender offenders to the

Feringees. After that each shall take charge of his own territory, look after his own ryots, and remain on friendly terms, and commit no aggressions, and the subjects of either State going into the neighbouring State shall be treated as brothers.

If, notwithstanding, any bad men on either side shall commit any aggression, the rulers of the place in which the offender lives shall seize and punish him. And as Cheeboo Lama is the interpreter between the Feringees and the Bhoteahs, the Sikimese are therefore henceforth to assist the Bhoteahs. We have written about that the settlement is permanent; but who knows, perhaps this settlement is made with one word in the mouth and two in the heart. If, therefore, this settlement is false, the Dhurma Raja's demons (Names omitted) will, after deciding who is true or false, take his life, and take out his liver and scatter it to the winds like ashes. The Bhotan army will take possession of Sikim, and if the Feringees attempts to take land from Bhotan, the Bhoteahs, Sikimese and Beharees will invade the Company's territory; and if the Behar Raja shall invade Sikim, the Bhotanese, Sikimese, and the Company shall invade Behar. Whichever of the four States, Bhotan, Feringees, Behar, Sikim, commit aggression, the other three shall punish it; and if, whilst this agreement remains, any other enemy shall arise to any of the States, the other shall all assist him. This agreement is made between the Feringees and the Bhotanese. And this is the seal of the Dhurma and Deb Rajas.

Seal here attached.

*Ashley Eden*

(Under compulsion)

The year Singee, 21st month, Danopipa

#### PROCLAMATION REGARDING THE ANNEXATION OF BENGAL DUARS (12th NOVEMBER, 1864)

For many years past outrages have been committed by subjects of the Bhootan Government within British Territory, and in the territories of the Rajahs of Sikkim and Cooch Behar. In these outrages property has been plundered and destroyed, lives have been taken, and many innocent persons have been carried into and still held in captivity.

The British Government, ever sincerely desirous of maintaining friendly relations according to the Treaty of 1774, has endeavoured from time to time by conciliatory remonstrance to induce the Government of Bhootan to punish the perpetrators of these crimes, to restore the plundered property, and to liberate the captives. But such remonstrances have never been successful, and even when followed by serious warning, have failed to

produce any satisfactory result. The British Government has been frequently deceived by vague assurances and promises for the future, but no property has ever been restored, no captive liberated, no offender punished and the outrages have continued.

In 1863 the Government of India, being averse to the adoption of extreme measures for the protection of its subjects and dependent allies, despatched a special mission to the Bhootan Court, charged with proposals of a conciliatory character, but instructed to demand the surrender of all captives, the restoration of plundered property, and security for the future peace of the frontier.

This pacific overture was insolently rejected by the Government of Bhootan. Not only were restitution for the past and security for the future refused, but the British Envoy was insulted in open Durbar, and compelled, as the only means of ensuring the safe return of the mission, to sign a document which the Government of India could only instantly repudiate.

For this insult the Governor-General in Council determined to withhold for ever the annual payments previously made to the Bhootan Government on account of the revenues of the Assam Doars and Ambaree Fallacottah which had long been in the occupation of the British Government, and annexed those districts permanently to British territory. At the same time still anxious to avoid an open rupture, the Governor-General in Council addressed a letter to the Deb and Dhurma Rajahs, formally demanding that all captives detained in Bhootan against their will should be released, and that all property carried off during the last five years should be restored.

To this demand the Government of Bhootan has returned an evasive reply, from which can be gathered no hope that the just requisitions of the Government of India will ever be complied with or that the security of the frontier can be provided for otherwise than by depriving the Government of Bhootan and its subject of the means and opportunity of future aggression.

The Governor-General in Council has therefore reluctantly resolved to occupy permanently and annex to British territory the Bengal Doars of Bhootan, and so much of the Hill territory, including the Forts of Dallingkot, Punakha, and Dewangiri, as may be necessary to command the passes, and to prevent hostile or predatory incursions of Bhootanese into the Darjeeling District or into the plains below. A Military Force amply sufficient to occupy this tract and to overcome all resistance, has been assembled on the frontier, and will now proceed to carry out this resolve.

All Chiefs, Zemindars, Munduls, Ryots, and other inhabitants of the tract in question are hereby required to submit to the authority of the British Government, to remain quietly in their homes and to render assistance to the British troops and to the Commissioner who is charged with the administration of the tract. Protection of life, and property and a guarantee of all private rights is offered to those who do not resist, and strict

justice will be done to all. The lands will be moderately assessed, and all oppression and extortion will be absolutely prohibited.

The future boundary between the territories of the Queen of England and those of Bhootan will be surveyed and marked off, and the authority of the Government of Bhootan within this boundary will cease for ever.

By order of the Governor-General in Council

(Sd.) *H. N. Durand, Colonel,*

Secy. to the Government of India.

Fort William,

The 8th November 1864.

### THE TREATY OF SINCHULA, 1865

Article 1 : There shall henceforth be perpetual peace and friendship between the British Government and the Government of Bhootan.

Article 2 : 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 District of Rungpoor, Cooch Behar and Assam, together with the Talook of Ambaree-Fallacottah and the Hill territory on the left bank of the Teesta up to such point as may be laid down by the British Government for ever.

Article 3 : 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 4 : In consideration of the cession by the Bhootan Government of the territories specified in Article 2 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 of 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 1st 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 5 : 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 6 : The British Government hereby agree, on demand being duly made in writing by the Bhootan Government, to surrender, under the provisions of Act VII 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, 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 using forged documents, counterfeiting current coin, knowingly using base or counterfeit coin, perjury, subordination of perjury, embezzlement by public officers or other persons, and being an accessory to any of the above offences.

Article 7 : 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 8 : 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 9 : 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, the 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 10 : The present treaty of Ten Articles having been concluded at Sinchula on the 11th day of November 1865, corresponding with the Bhootcha 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 Donai, the ratifications of the same by His Excellency the Viceroy and Governor-General or His Excellency the Viceroy and Governor-General-in-Council and by their Highnesses the Dhurm and Deb Rajahs shall be mutually delivered within thirty days from this date.

*H. Bruce,*

Lieut.-Col.

Chief Civil and Political Officer

In Dabe Nagri,

In Bhootcha language.

This treaty was ratified on the 29th November, 1865 in Calcutta by me.

*John Lawrence,*

25th January 1866

Governor-General

## CONVENTION BETWEEN BRITAIN AND CHINA RELATING TO SIKKIM AND TIBET, 1890

Signed at Calcutta on the 17th March 1890

Ratified at London on the 27th August 1890

### ARTICLE I

The boundary of Sikkim and Tibet shall be the crest of the mountain range separating the waters flowing into the Sikkim Teesta and its affluents from the waters flowing into the Tibetan Mochu and northwards into other rivers of Tibet. The line commences at Mount Gipmochi on the Bhutan

frontier, and follows the above-mentioned water-parting to the point where it meets Nepal territory.

## ARTICLE II

It is admitted that the British Government, whose Protectorate over the Sikkim State is hereby recognized, has direct and exclusive control over the internal administration and foreign relations of that State, and except through and with the permission of the British Government, neither the Ruler of the State nor any of its officers shall have official relations of any kind, formal or informal, with any other country.

## ARTICLE III

The Government of Great Britain and Ireland and the Government of China engage reciprocally to respect the boundary as defined in Article I, and to prevent acts of aggression from their respective sides of the frontier.

## ARTICLE IV

The question of providing increased facilities for trade across the Sikkim-Tibet frontier will hereafter be discussed with a view to a mutually satisfactory arrangement by the High Contracting Powers.

## ARTICLE V

The question of pasturage on the Sikkim side of the frontier is reserved for further examination and future adjustment.

## ARTICLE VI

The High Contracting Powers reserve for discussion and arrangement the method in which official communications between the British authorities in India and the authorities in Tibet shall be conducted.

## ARTICLE VII

Two joint Commissioners shall, within six months from the ratification of this Convention, be appointed, one by the British Government in India, the other by the Chinese Resident in Tibet. The said Commissioners shall meet and discuss the questions which, by the last three preceding Articles, have been reserved.

## ARTICLE VIII

The present Convention shall be ratified, and the ratifications shall be exchanged in London as soon as possible after the date of the signature thereof.

In witness whereof the respective negotiators have signed the same, and affixed thereunto the seals of their arms.

Done in quadruplicate at Calcutta, this 17th day of March, in the year of our Lord 1890, corresponding with the Chinese date, the 27th day of the second moon of this 16th year of Kuang Hsu.

## TREATY BETWEEN GREAT BRITAIN AND BHUTAN, 1910.

Signed at Punaka, Bhutan, on the 8th January 1910.

Ratified at Calcutta on the 24th March 1910.

Whereas it is desirable to amend Articles IV and VIII of the Treaty concluded at Sinchula on the 11th day of November 1865, corresponding with the Bhutia 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 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 Elliot-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. 100,000) 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 Maharaja 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 Maharajas named.’

Done in quadruplicate at Punaka, Bhutan, this eighth day of January in the year of our Lord one thousand nine hundred and ten, corresponding with the Bhutia date, the 27th day of the 11th month of the Earth-Bird (Sa-ja) year.



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TO THE MID-NINETEENTH CENTURIES.

12th Raikat. Bishnu Dev.	(1687—1709)
13th Raikat. Dharma Dev.	(1709—1724)
14th Raikat. Bhupa Dev.	(1724—1736)
15th Raikat. Bikram Dev.	(1736—1758)
16th Raikat. Darpa Dev.	(1758—1793)
17th Raikat. Jayanta Dev.	(1793—1800)
18th Raikat. Sarba Dev.	(1800—1847)

THE KINGS OF COOCH BEHAR UPTO THE  
MID-NINETEENTH CENTURY.

Vishwa Singha	(1522—1554)
Naran Narayan	(1554—1587)
Laksmi Narayan	(1587—1627)
Bir Narayan	(1627—1633)
Pran Narayan	(1633—1665)
Moda Narayan	(1665—1680)
Basudeb Narayan	(1680—1682)
Mahendra Narayan	(1682—1693)
Rup Narayan	(1693—1714)
Upendra Narayan	(1714—1763)
Debendra Narayan	(1763—1765)
Dhairyendra Narayan	(1765—1770)
Rajendra Narayan	(1770—1772)
Dharendra Narayan	(1772—1775)
Dhairyendra Narayan	(Second time 1775—1783)
Harendra Narayan	(1783—1839)
Sibendra Narayan	(1839—1847)

THE DEV RAJAS OF BHOTAN FROM THE MID-EIGHTEENTH  
CENTURY TO EARLY TWENTIETH CENTURY.

- |   |             |
|---|-------------|
| 1. She-ra Wangchuk                                  | (1744—1764) |
| 2. Druk Phuntsho                                    | (1764—1766) |
| 3. Druk Tenzin                                      | (1766—1769) |
| 4. Zhidar   | (1769—1773) |
| 5. Kunga Rinchen                                    | (1773—1776) |
| 6. Jigme Sengye                                     | (1776—1788) |
| 7. Druk Tenzin                                      | (1788—1792) |
| 8. Sonam Gyaltshen                                  | (1792—1799) |
| 9. Druk Namgyal                                     | (1799—1803) |
| 10. Sonam Gyaltshen<br>(Tashi Namgyal ?)            | (1803—1805) |
| 11. Sangye Tenzin                                   | (1805—1806) |
| 12. Umze Parop &<br>Boep Choda                      | (1806—1808) |
| 13. Shabdrung Jigme<br>Dragpa & Tsulthrim<br>Dragpa | (1809)      |
| 14. Shabdrung Jigme Dragpa                          | (1810—1811) |
| 15. Yeshey Gyaltshen                                | (1811—1815) |
| 16. Tshaphu Dorje                                   | (1815)      |
| 17. Sonam Drugyal                                   | (1815—1819) |
| 18. Tenzin Drugda                                   | (1819—1823) |
| 19. Choeki Gyaltshen                                | (1823—1831) |
| 20. Dorje Namgyal                                   | (1831—1832) |
| 21. Adap Thrinley                                   | (1832—1835) |
| 22. Choeki Gyaltshen                                | (1835—1838) |
| 23. Darje Norbu &<br>Tashi Dorje                    | (1838—1847) |
| 24. Tashi Dorje                                     | (1847—1850) |
| 25. Wangchhug Gyalpo                                | (1850)      |
| 26. Shabdrung Jigme Norbu                           | (1851)      |
| 27. Chagpa Sangye                                   | (1851—1852) |
| 28. Damchhoe Lhundup                                | (1852—1856) |
| 29. Sonam Tobgyal &<br>Shera Tharchhin              | (1856—1860) |
| 30. Nagzi Pasang                                    | (1860—1863) |
| 31. Tshewang Sithub                                 | (1863)      |

32. **Kague Wangchuk** (1864)
33. **Tshewang Sithub** (1864)
34. **Tsulthrim Yonten** (1865)
35. **Tsuendue Pakar** (1865—1870)
36. **Jigme Namgyal** (1870—1873)
37. **Kyit Shapa** (1873—1879)
38. **Chogyal Zangpo** (1879—1882)
39. **Lam Tshe Wang** (1882—1884)
40. **Gawa Zangpo** (1884—1886)
41. **Pam Sangye Dorje** (1886—1903)
42. **Tuelku Yeshey Goedub** (1903—1907)
43. **Ugyan Wang Chuk** (1907—1926)

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# Index

	Page		Page
<b>A</b>			
Abdul Kader	61	Baikuntha Narayan	66
Adap Thrinley	82	Bajradhar Karji	69
Agnew Captain		Becher, R.	25
Ahom Rulers—Settlement of Assam		Bell Charles, Sir	158
Duars with Bhotan	98	Bengal Duars	
Aitchisan, C.U.—Precie of	131	—Area of	148
Allah Yar Khan	14	—Annexation Proposal of	114, 132
Alexander Cosma de Koros	4	—Annexation of	132, 133
Alexander Hamilton	53	Bhotan	
—Goodwill Mission of		—Early political Relations of	5, 6, 12
Alexander Mackenzie	54	—Political Divisions of	7
—Falakata —	53, 54, 57	—Government in	7, 8, 9
—Firm of	105, 106	—Relations of Tibet with	12
—Annexation of	117, 119, 132	—Relations of China with	12
Anglo Chinese Convention,		—Relations of Mughals with	15
1890 175		—Relations of Ahoms with	16
,, of 1906	185	—Extra-territorial Ambitions of	16
Anglo Nepalese War	70	—War between the English and	35
Anglo-Russian Convention, 1907	186	—English Treaty with	40
Aran Sing	112	—Trade between Tibet and	49, 50
—Death Report of	118	—Permission to Non-European	
Assam		traders given by	52
—Trade in	30	—Facilities for the Traders of	53
Assam Duars		—Concession to the English	
—Area of	16, 102	withdrawn by	65
—Tribute of	79	—Revenge of	139
—Annexation of	102	—Proposed invasion of	140
—Payment of subsidy for	102, 104	—Acceptance of peace by	144
—Subsidy Increment		—Difficulties in invading	146
proposal for	113	—Expenditures for the Agent of	60, 152
—Subsidy Increment		—Chinese Pretensions in	
proposal rejected	114		170, 186, 190
Assam Sibandi Crops		Bir Shamsher	176
—Raising of	85, 86	Bishen Sing Fort	
Ashley Eden		—Occupation of	138
—Special Commission for Sikkim	120	Bikram Dev Raikat	27
—Embassy to Bhotan	125	Bhola Kayet	60
—Obstacles on the		Bogle George	44
way of	127	—First mission to Tibet	47, 48, 52
—Escape of	129	—Second mission to Tibet	55
—Controversies		—Death of	56
on the failure of	130, 131	Bogle, Lieutenant	82
Ahmuty R.	66	Boileau, LT-Colonel	179
<b>B</b>			
Ball, S.	96	Boxer Rebellion	181
Baikunthapur		Brodie, Lieutenant	52
—Early History of	25	Bruce LT-Colonel	141
—Raikats of	26	<b>C</b>	
—Invasion by Qasim Ali	27	Campbell, Dr.	
—English indignation for	38	—In charge of Darjeeling	106
—Invasion by Saulat Jang	27		

	Page		Page
—Works on the Bhotan frontier	107, 108	—The Thirteenth	180
—Relieved of duties on the Bhotan frontier	120	—Flight of the	185
Campbell, Colonel	138	—Flight to India of the	189
Campbell, G. Sir	158	—Return of the	190
Careri	13	Drat-Shang	8
Cantonment of Jalpaiguri	116	Dhairiyendra Narayan	34, 42
Chambak Fort		Dharendra Narayan	34
—Tibetan militia in	172	Debendra Narayan	67
—English expedition against	173	Denison, Sir W.	127
Chang-Yin-Tang	186	Desi	7
Chagzo-Cusho	57	Devi Kanta	122
Chao-Erh-Feng	186	Deosthan Lands	
Charles Andrew Bruce	66	—Grant of	166
Charles Metcalfe	85	Dewangiri Fort	
Chechakhata		—English retreat from	139
—Feast at	34	—English recapture of	139
—English Capture of	36	Digby, J.	67, 68
Chiboo Lama		Dina Narayan	27
—Companion of Ashley Eden	128	Duars	
—Bhotan's request to	137	—In Bengal	18, 19
Chita Tandu Chita Tashi	72	—In Assam	17
Chila Rai	16	—Administration in	20
China		—Land tenure system in	21
—Memorial on Bhotan	178	Duar Field Force	
—Apathy of Bhotan to	179	—Difficulties of the	134
—Investiture of Bhotan's officers by	178	Dumpa Raja	81, 84
Choeki-Gyalt shan	91	Dunsford, Colonel	134, 137
Chunabhati Raid	166	Durga Dev Raikat	105, 106
Chumbi	171, 173	Durrand	174
Committee of Tea Culture	96	Duke of Argyll	153, 154, 158
Cooch Behar		<b>F</b>	
—Influence of, on Bhotan	4, 5	Fasson	160
—Chaklas of	23	Fazal-ullah Munshi	75
—Decline of	5, 31	Fentuk	156
—Bhotan's influence on	31	Firminger	33
—Clash between Bhotan and	34	Francis, Philip	56
—English Protection to	35	Freedom of Trade	
—Secret letters to Bhotan from	76	—Between Bengal & Bhotan	48
—English indifference to	109	Foxcroft	
—Rejection of the claims of	135	—Mission of	60
Chhogyal Zangpo	163	Fukangan	61
<b>D</b>		<b>G</b>	
Dacca Mutineers		Gawa-Zangpo	163
—Flight to Bengal duars of	117	Gardner	77
Darjeeling		Galing	171
—Gift of	100	Gambhir	97
—Subsidy for	103	Gangaram Thapa	44, 61
Darpa Dev Raikat	27	Gordon	117
—Ambitions of	29	Ghurla	
Darpan Raja	122	—Fortification of	116
David Scott	70, 73, 78, 81	Graham, Colonel	
Dharma Dev Raikat	26	—Laying of the Boundary by	157
Dalai Lama		Grose, J.	25, 28
—Premature death of	180	Goodlad, R.	55
		Gyeltsap Rimpoche	48
		Gyantse	186

	Page		Page
<b>H</b>			
Haji Ahmed	27	Karindra Narayan	66
Harendra Narayan King		Kinloch, Captain	
—Death of	109	—Expedition of	29
Hargavinda Katham	88, 105	Kinkar Baksi	43
—Estate of	89	Kirk Patrick, Colonel	62
—Revolt of	105	Khagendra Narayan	
—Conflict with Durga		—Contact with the English	34
Dev Raikat	105	Khen	5
—Death of	105	Krishna Kanta Bose	
Harewood	54	—Mission of, to Bhotan	73, 74
Haridas Katham	89	Kuriapara Duar	
Haughton, Colonel	134	—Subsidy for	102
Hopkinson		Kyit Salpa	158
—Agent, N. E. F.	121	<b>L</b>	
—Proposals of	122	Lam Chewang	163
Hamilton, F.	17	Lama Rimpoche	48, 50
Halliday, F. Sir	114	Latter, Captain	71, 77
Hugh Baillie	30	Lear	30
H.Labung	179	Lhasa	
<b>I</b>			
Indra Mohan	122	—Chinese Control on	169
Iradat Khan	23	—Macoulay Mission to	170
Isfandiyar Beg	6	—Convention of, 1904	185
<b>J</b>			
Jalpesh		Lewis Bird, Captain	68
—Annexion Proposal of	115	Lingtu	172
Jalpaiguri		Lin-Yu	187
—Birth of the district of	148	Loben	8
—Mutiny in	116	Lopon Yanbe	167
Jadunath Isore	66	Lhopa	1
James, Morgan	67	Logan	30
Je-Khempo	8	LLoyd, Major	82
Jenkins, F.		Lord Amherst	77
—Release of Buriguma by	84	Lord Auckland	87
—Proposal by, for a Bhotanese		Lord Bentinck	81, 84
Agent at Gauhati	84	Lord Canning	
—Strongarm Policy of	86, 98	—Judicial Temperament of	113
—Over enthusiasm of	119	—Proposal of, for Mission	122
Jigme Namgyal	156, 160	to Bhotan	
—Death of	163	Lord Cornwallis	
Jigme-Sengye	54	—Refusal to Nepal's prayer by	61
John Shore, Sir	66	Lord Curzon	181
John Lawrence, Sir	127, 132	Lord Dalhousie	
Jones, Captain		—Attitude to Cooch Behar	109, 110
—In Cooch Behar	35	Lord Elgin	123, 127
—In Baikunthapur	38	Lord Dufferin	167
—In Dalimkot	39	Lord Ellenborough	102, 103
<b>K</b>			
Kague Wangchuk	128	Lord Hastings	77
Katham	21	Lord Lansdowne	174
Kanta Babu	59	Lord Lytton	161
Kamrup Duars	79	Lord Macartney	62
—Annexion of	102	Lord Mayo	153
		Lord Minto	68
		Lord Northbrooke	158
		Lord Ripon	166
		<b>M</b>	
		Macaulay Colman	
		—Withdrawal of the mission of	171
		Macculum	30

	Page		Page
Macdowall	61, 63		
Macdonald, Captain	138		
Macgregor, J.	33		
Macleod			
—Allegations against Cooch Behar by	71, 75		
Macartney Lord	62		
Macmahon, A. H.			
—Line	192		
Macpherson	59		
Marshall, Lieutenant	116		
Matthie Captain	85, 102		
Mathews Captain	85, 102		
Mercer & Chauvet	63		
Mewang Dugyal	70		
Mir Jumla	6		
Mir Jafar	28		
Mir Qasim	28		
Monckton	72		
Morgan	67		
Mukunda Sing	123		
Mulcaster, Brig. General	138		
Murray, Major	151		
Murshid Kuli Khan	25, 27		
N			
Nagawang Namgyal	2, 7		
Nakfula Karji	81, 84		
Nagzi-Pasang	120		
Namgyal Thutob	172, 176		
Nara Singha, Prince	3		
Narayani Coins	60, 75		
Native Infantry			
—Revolt of	116		
Nepal			
—Expansion of	60		
—Invasion of Tibet by	61		
Newars	29		
Nirpur Piaga	54		
P			
Padma Sambhava	2		
Paima	40		
Parwana to Bhotanese Traders	7		
Pam Sangye Dorje	167		
Pran Narayan King	7		
Pemberton, R. B. Captain	90		
—Mission to Bhootan	90		
—Treaty-Proposal with Bhotan	91		
Pigot Ensign	72		
Peking Gazettee	178		
Phari	82, 176		
Political Refugees at Buxa	162, 163		
—Rehabilitation of			
Prithvi Narayan	30, 43		
Purangir Gosain	56, 58, 59, 61		
Purling, J.			
—Proposal regarding Cooch Behar	35		
—Proposal regarding Bhotan	32		
		Q	
		Qasim Ali	
		—Faujdar	27, 28
		R	
		Raghu, King	16
		Railway	
		—Calcutta-Darjeeling	158
		Raikats	
		—Captivity of the	27
		—Release of the	28
		Rajendra Narayan	34
		Rajopakhyan	4
		Raja of Dewangiri	85
		Ralph Fitch	4, 13
		Rammohan Roy, Raja	73
		Ramnath Kayet	69
		Ramdulal Sarkar	
		—Death report of	118
		Rammohan Aditya	
		—Journey of to Bhotan	142
		Ram Mallick	142
		Ram Narayan	34
		Rangpur	
		—Early history of	23
		Ranadip Sing	161
		Rausch Daniel	30
		Rev. Robinson	68
		Richardson, Colonel	138
		Rivers Thompson	167
		Robertson, T.C.	81, 83
		Rumbold Thomas	29
		S	
		Sakalu Prodhan	108, 117
		Salgram Oswal	114
		Samuel Turner, Captain	
		—Mission of	57
		—Failure of, to visit Lhasa	57
		—Comments on Sino-Tibetan Relations by	57
		—Success of	58
		Sannyasis	36, 38, 42, 43
		Sarfaraz	27
		Sat Rajas	100, 102
		Saulat Jang	27
		Search for Tea Seeds	96
		Shanta Narayan	23
		Shabdrung Rimpoche	7
		Sheng-Tai	
		—Memorial on Bhotan by	178
		Shibendra Narayan—death of	109
		Shihabuddin Talish	4
		Shujauddin	27
		Sidkyong Namgyal	136
		Sikkim	
		—Early English relations with	71, 76

	Page		Page
—Subsidy of the Raja of	103, 158	—Appointment of	139
—Estranged relations of the		Totos	
English with	119, 172, 176	—Revenue paid by	164
—Chinese remonstrance		Tsondu Pakar	144
with	171	Tsugphu Namgyal	136
—Attendance at the Galing		Tsulthrim Yonten	141
Conference by	171	Tsomoling	57
—Flight of the Raja of	176	Towang	
—Complete surrender of	176	—Raja of	100
Siliguri		Trade Regulations (1893)	176
—Messrs. Dear & Co. of	120	Treaty	
Simpson Benjamin, Dr.	128	—Between the English &	
Simla convention, 1914	191	Bhotan	40
Sinchula Treaty	145	—of Commerce between the	
Slaves	165	English & Nepal	61
Sonam Tobgyal	115	—of Titalya	76
Subankata		—of Segauli	76
—Dacoity in	166	—of Punakha	188
Stuart, Captain		—Proposals, of Eden	126, 128
—March of	38	Tulku Cholay	189
Surendra Narayan	34	Tweedie, J.	20
Stephen Cacella	19	Tytler, Brig-General	
Shun Lhen Tshok	10	—Appointment of	139
Shung Droenyer	10	U	
T		Ugyan Kazi	180
Taiping Rebellion	136	Ugyan Wangchuk	167
Tam Choopi Suba	53	—British Honour to	187
Tavernier	13	—Attendance of, at the Darbar	
Tashi Lama		of the Prince of Wales	187
—Mediation of, in Anglo-		—Election of, as the Dev Raja	187
Bhotanese conflict	40	W	
—Bogle Mission, discouraged		Warren Hastings	
by	47	—Attitude of, to	
—Journey of, to Peking &		Cooch Behar	32
Invitation to Bogle	56	—Help given to Cooch	
Tefu	5	Behar by	35
Tea		—Attitude of, to Bhotan	39
—End of monopoly trade		—Desire of, for free trade	
in	96	with Bhotan	61
—Plantation of, in Assam	96	—Gift to Dev Raja by	53
Temple Richard, Sir		—Appeasement of Bhotan	
—Meeting with Dev Raja	159	by	53, 55, 59
Tomba Subah	60	Walli Muhammed	82
Tibet		Watson, Colonel	138
—Trade possibilities in	177	Wheatland	30
—Ascendency of China in	169	White, J.C.	172, 176
—Conflict between Nepal		Winson, LT-Colonel	162
and	169	William Dow	30
—Proposal of Trade with	158	Wood, Charles Sir	119, 124, 131, 134
—Road construction to	159, 161	Y	
—Closure of Trade with		Yatung	176
—Trade in	177	Younghusband, Colonel	
—Obstructive Policy of	180	—Expedition of	185
—Intimacy of, with Russia	181	Yuan-Shih-Kai	191
—Revolt of Chinese garrison		Z	
in	190	Zimpon	10
Tshe-Wang Sithub	127	Zhidar	37, 39
Tombs, Brig. General			



**SKETCH OF BHOTAN &  
ADJACENT PLACES.**

BASED ON ROYAL GEOGRAPHICAL  
SOCIETY & SURVEY OF INDIA MAPS.  
SCALE-1 : 19,00000











# SKETCH OF BENGAL & ASSAM DUARS

BASED ON RENNELL'S BENGAL  
ATLAS PEMBERTON'S MAPS &  
SURVEY OF INDIA MAP

SCALE-1" = 16 Miles.

