Ladakh and Western Himalayan Politics: 1819-1848

THE DOGRA CONQUEST OF LADAKH, BALTISTAN AND WEST TIBET AND REACTIONS OF OTHER POWERS

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with a foreword by
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for
My Parents

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ABBREVIATIONS

AJ	*Asiatic Journal*
Asi. Res.	*Asiatic Researches*
FDPC	*Political Consultations of the Foreign Department*
FDPPS	*Political Proceedings of the Foreign Department*
FDSC	*Secret Consultations of the Foreign Department*
FDSPS	*Secret Proceedings of the Foreign Department*
GJ	*Geographical Journal*
IA	*Indian Antiquary*
IHQ	*Indian Historical Quarterly*
JASB	*Jaurnal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*
JIH	*Journal of the Indian History*
JPASB	*Journal and Proceedings of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*
JPHS	*Journal of the Panjab Historical Society*
JPUHS	*Journal of the Panjab University Historical Society*
JRAS	*Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*
JRCAS	*Journal of the Royal Central Asian Society*
JRGS	*Journal of the Royal Geographical Society*
PIHRC	*Proceedings of the Indian Historical Records Commission*
NAI	*National Archives of India, New Delhi.*
Pb. SA	*Panjab State Archives, Patiala.*
RPD	*Research and Publiction Department, Government of Jammu and Kashmir, Srinagar.*

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FOREWORD

IN THE long and chequered annals of Tibet, Ladakh has had an important role to play; at times, its impingement on the affairs of its two populous, and powerful, neighbours, India and China, has been by no means unimportant either. It is now widely accepted that early in the 7th century of the Christian era, it served as the starting point for those processes of political cohesion which culminated in the knitting together of many a loose, if disparate, community that were later to emerge as the kingdom of Tibet. Unfortunately, this advantage was short-lived; Lhasa, nearer to the centre of gravity of a huge, albeit empty and treeless barren waste in the heart of Asia, developed into a more powerful seat of governmental authority than Leh which was situated far out on the peripherv. With the rise of the powerful Gelugpa sect in Amdo and western Kansu in the latter half of the 16th century, and its close political affiliations with the Mongols and the Manchus, Ladakh was further reduced to the status of a political nonentity pushed farther and farther away from the hub of life and activity that now increasingly centred around the Dalai Lamas of Lhasa.

From this position of relative neglect, if also oblivion, it was rescued by a remarkable metamorphoses in the political landscape of Central Asia in the first half of the 19th century. Thanks to the social cohesiveness and rapid political domination of the Gurkhas, the emergence of Nepal as a powerful state which sprawled across southern Tibet and Ladakh on the west was a significant development in the Himalayan politics of this period. Hostilities with John Company (1814-16) served to check this expansion; more, they sounded a warning of direct and growing British interest, and involvement, in this area, evidenced by their acquisition of Garhwal and Almorah in the western Himalayas. It followed that the Hon'ble East India Company's domain now interposed between the Gurkhas on the west and the hill territories, across

the Sutlej, of the powerful Sikh ruler of the Punjab, Maharaja Ranjit Singh in the east.

Dr. Chaman Lal Datta's study spans roughly the three decades which follow the Gurkha war and is largely an unravelling of the tangled skein barely touched upon in the preceding lines. Gulab Singh of Jammu, the Dogra feudatory of the Sikh state at Lahore had not only a grand design and vaulting political aspirations to boot, but also a clever general in the person of Zorawar Singh. He it was who translated his master's hazy dreams into cold reality by embarking on the conquest of Ladakh and Western Tibet and contemplating even that of Yarqand. Not that the Dogra incursions went unnoticed, or perhaps unchallenged. Thus William Moorcroft and Mir Izzet Ullah Khan on the one hand and Aga Mehdi (St. Petersburg's envoy-designate to the court of Ranjit Singh) and his deputy Muhammad Zahur on the other, spring readily to mind as clever men cutting ruthlessly across each other's paths with a view to safeguarding British and Russian interests in that order. The faint rumblings of the Great Game, of which the latter half of the 19th century is so full, are now clearly audible.

It may be pertinent too to underline the fact that whatever the Sikh ruler's relations with the Dogras, his disappearance from the stage and the consequent clash of wills, and arms, at Lahore that followed transformed the political scene there almost beyond recognition. It was plain as a pikestaff that the Durbar, unsteady at best, felt far from comfortable about Gulab Singh's overweening ambitions in mounting an open assault on western Tibet with its forseeable climax in a Dogra-Gurkha alliance. Nor was that all. Thus it was not without nothing that as early as 1820 William Moorcroft would fain have Ladakh come 'under the protection and guardianship' of the British; that, in 1837, Claude Wade had expressed the fear that the Sikhs would extend their dominion in the regions of Chinese Tartary 'till it should touch that of Nepal'; that in 1841, George Clerk had warned his political superiors about the Dogras' 'new scheme of ambition' in the direction of Yarqand. Earlier the great White Tsar of all the Russias had written to the Sikh potentate that he open the gates of

'friendly intercourse' and 'road of traffic' between the two states. In the final analysis, therefore, Zorawar Singh's defeat, and debacle, in 1842 was far more of a settling than an unsettling factor; his victory, would have opened a Pandora's box of Himalayan dimensions.

It should follow that Dr. Datta's is the study of a significant period in the history not only of Central Asia where it touches us at the most intimate but also, if only indirectly, of the northern frontier. My association with his work from its very inception has led me to form an excellent impression of his painstaking research, clarity of understanding and keen analysis of the complicated if sometimes confusing tangle of rivalries of trade, commerce and power politics. It is pleasant for me to record too that two other studies by my young research colleagues on Ladakh in the latter half of the 19th century and of the land trade with China through high Tartary, both of which are now nearing completion, would help shed further light, and to a degree supplement, the subject-matter surveyed in these pages. An additional reason for me, therefore, to welcome this book is that it blazes a trail and is in the nature of a pioneering effort.

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INTRODUCTION

THROUGH ALL the ages, Ladakh, one of the oldest polities in the Western Himalayas, has played a prominent part in Central Asian politics. To start with, it was used by the Indian and Tibetan invaders for establishing their colonies on either side of the Tarim basin. Leh, the capital of Ladakh was an important commercial entrepot, and the Central Asian trade route which linked Kashmir, Afghanistan and Persia with Kashgar, Tibet and China, passed through Ladakh. To-day, Ladakh's strategic importance has multiplied manifold in the context of India's present relations with Peking-ruled Tibet and the People's Republic of China. It is evident that this important Western Himalayan principality presents in itself a fascinating subject for serious study.

The second quarter of the nineteenth century was one of the most formative periods in the chequered history of Ladakh. It was during those fateful years that Ladakh became an object of frequent Dogra invasions and lost its independent existence. The country was dragged into war against its neighbours i.e. Baltistan and Tibet. In 1846, it became a part of the Jammu and Kashmir state of Maharaja Gulab Singh, while Lahul and Spiti—its two southern districts—were taken away and annexed to the newly-acquired British territory of Kangra. Finally, in 1847-48, attempts were made to demarcate the boundaries of Ladakh. The present study deals with all these aspects of its history. In addition, there is a brief sketch about religion and the administrative structure of the Ladakhi state.

The Dogra invasions led by Wazir Zorawar Singh Kahluria are no less significant in Indian History, as the conquest of Ladakh and Baltistan resulted in adding an area of about 40,000 square miles to the Sikh state and extended its boundaries in the north to their geographical limits. His invasion of Western Tibet, when he tried to extend the boundaries of the Sikh state to the other side of the Himalayas, is without a parallel in Indian History. The reactions of the British Indian

Government and of Nepal besides those of Tibet and China towards these invasions form quite an intricate, albeit interesting part of the same story. Despite their importance, these events, unlike those then happening in the north-west of India (the first Afghan War and the annexation of Sindh), have received little attention on the part of historians; in fact they have not been a subject of serious and thorough study. The present monograph is only a modest effort to fill up this gap. It thus makes an attempt at a study of the history of this obscure yet important region, of which our knowledge is still so scanty.

By 1819, Maharaja Ranjit Singh had succeeded in subduing almost all the small hilly states lying between the Sutlej and Kashmir. After establishing his supremacy in the hills in that year, the Maharaja conquered Kashmir and realised for the first time his customary tribute from the ruler of Ladakh also. This would explain why the year 1819 has been selected as the starting point of the period of this study. In 1846, Ladakh became a part of the Jammu and Kashmir state of Maharaja Gulab Singh, who recognised British supremacy. In the next two years, the British Indian Government made attempts to demarcate the boundaries of Ladakh but in 1848, all such attempts were abandoned. The period after 1848 is relatively uneventful and lacks sufficient historical interest : hereafter Ladakh continued to be peacefully governed by a *Thanadar* (later on known as *Wazir-i-Wazarat*), appointed by the Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir until 1947, when, alongwith other parts of the state, it became a part of the Indian Union. Thus, 1848 is a reasonably logical end-point of this investigation.

This monograph has grown out of a doctoral dissertation which I presented to the Panjab University, Chandigarh in 1969 and has been based for the most part on the unpublished records available with the National Archives of India, New Delhi. It deals principally with the political events. One chapter on 'Religion and Polity', however, has been included to show how Lamaism was deeply connected with the trade and administration of the country and how far religion influenced politics.

A word about spelling of proper names. I have either used those forms most common in modern books or adopted the spellings most frequently employed by British officials during the nineteenth century.

C. L. DATTA

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Chandigarh

ERRATA

p. 50, line 1, *read* omission *for* commission
p. 50, line 12, *read* collateral *for* collatoral
p. 60, line 3, *read* done *for* none
p. 80, fn. 4, line 4, *read* Basohli and Bhadarwah *for* Bsohli and Bahadarwah
p. 83, line 9, *read* Kishtwar *for* Dishtwar
p. 84, line 5, *read* Behandrata *for* Behandrate
p. 87, fn. 3, *read* pp. 65-66 *for* pp. 48-49
p. 92, line 22, *read* Soon *for* Sood
p. 105, fn. 1, *read* pp. 70-72 *for* pp. 51-52
p. 113, fn. 1, *read* pp. 93-94 *for* pp. 67-68
p. 128, last line, *read* wresting *for* wrestling
p. 138, line 17, *read* November *for* Novemper
p. 145, line 13, *read* kind *for* King
p. 147, line 7, *read* troops *for* trooys
p. 154, line 21, *read* identify *for* indentify
p. 163, line 9, *read* Once the war affected *for* Once the affected
p. 167, line 21, *read* lying *for* being
p.168, line 1, *read* Koh-Kang *for* Kho-Kang
p. 170, line 12, *read* happen that *for* happen them that
p. 174, lines 23, *read* bargain *for* bargin
p. 176, line 21, *read* novelties *for* dovelties
p. 177, line 32, *read* proferred *for* preferred
p. 181, line 12 *read* "domineering tone" *for* "domineering tour"
p. 186, line 13, *read* Ching Emperor *for* Chinese Emperor

Chapter One

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

To the east of Kashmir in the Upper Indus Valley, lies an elevated and rugged country, the tableland of Ladakh. In Tibetan it is called La-tags or Ladak, but now it is more commonly known and spelt as Ladakh. Formerly it was also called "Mar-Yul"[1] or "Mar Yool", "Ngarees" or "Mangyool."[2] The word "Mar-Yool" is an apt name as Ladakh comprises the lowest lying portions of Western Tibet.[3] In the old inscriptions of Ladakh also, Mar Yul was the general name for the westernmost portion of Ngari.[4]

Ladakh lies between north latitude 32° 45′ to 35° 50′ and east longitude 75° 45′ and 80° 30′. Its boundary is an extremely irregular outline and in shape it may be likened to a triangle, the longest side or base, which forms the southern limits, running obliquely for about 220 miles from south-east to north-west—more correctly from Bashahr via Kulu and Chamba to Kashmir.

In the north the country is bounded by the Kuen Lun range and the slopes of Karakoram, and in the west by Kashmir and Baltistan. To its south are situated the districts of Chamba, Kulu and Bashahr and on its east and south-east beyond the international boundary lie the Tibetan districts of Rudok and Chumurti.

When the Dogras conquered Ladakh in 1834, its greatest extent was from north-west to south-east. It extended "from

[1] Alexander Csoma de Koros, "Geographical Notice of Tibet", *JASB*, I (1832), p. 124. A. Cunningham, *Ladak: Physical, Statistical and Historical*, pp. 18-19.

[2] H. L. Ramsay, *Western Tibet: A practical dictionary of the language and customs of the districts included in Ladakh Wazarat*, p. 77.

[3] *Idem.*

[4] G. Tucci, "The Travels of Ippolito Desideri", *JRAS* (1933), p. 353.

the Hdu-zi [Zoji Pass] upwards, from the Chos-hbad Pass of sBal-ti-yul upwards, and from La-hdar in Zans-dkar upwards; [the region] within the Se-hdu-la Pass of Ldum-ra [Nub-ra], and within Pho-long-hdra-hdra of Byanthan."[1] Its mean length and breadth was 200 miles and 150 miles respectively; thus Ladakh (including the districts of Lahul and Spiti) covered an area of about 30,000 square miles.[2] It is one of the loftiest regions of the inhabited globe,[3] and no part of it is below 9,000 feet in height.[4]

DISTRICTS

The different districts of Ladakh are situated along the headwaters of the Indus, the Shyok, the Chenab and their tributaries, and are usually named after the rivers.

These districts are also the natural divisions of Ladakh and formed administrative units under the native rulers. In a mountainous country, despite changes wrought by war and religion, the natural boundaries of its districts generally remain unaltered. Thus, after the annexation of Ladakh by the Dogras in 1842, these districts formed various *parganas* or sub-divisions of the Ladakh Wazarat of Maharaja Gulab Singh's empire. Even today,they constitute separate administrative units of Ladakh district. A brief description of the various districts is given below.

Nubra

Nubra, literally meaning 'the western district', includes all the area drained by the Nubra and Shyok rivers. It was by far the largest district in the country, being about one hundred and twenty-eight miles in length and seventy-two miles in breadth.[5]

The Nubra Valley, which is situated on the main caravan route from Leh to Yarkand forms an important part of this

[1] A.H. Francke, *Antiquities of Indian Tibet*, II, p. 250.

[2] H. Strachey, *Physical Geography of Western Tibet*, p. 13. Cunningham, *Ladak*, p. 18.

[3] *Gazetteer of Kashmir and Ladakh*, pp. 10, 531. E.F. Knight, *Where Three Empires Meet*, p. 105. Cunningham, *Ladak*, p. 17.

[4] R. Rankin, *A Tour in the Himalayas and Beyond*, p. 178.

[5] A. Cunningham, *Ladak*, p. 21.

district. With a few miles of breadth varying here and there, it is about sixty miles long,[1] and is abundantly watered. As compared with other parts of Ladakh, it is sufficiently warm and is the most fertile area in the country;[2] many kinds of fruits such as apples, apricots, walnuts and grapes grow in it.[3]

The north-eastern part of the Nubra district consists of the Chang Chenmo Valley and the Lingzi Tang plains. The latter, also known by the general name of Aksai Chin, has a ground level from 16,000 to 17,000 feet, and are a desolate expanse of earth and rock. These plains are dotted by small salt lakes and have little or no vegetation.[4]

Ladakh

Ladakh has a local as well as a general sense; regionally, the central district in and about the valley of the Indus, in the heart of which is situated the capital city of Leh is known as Ladakh. It was the most populous district in the country, and has an area of about 4,000 square miles.[5]

The Valley of the Indus embraces more than eighty per cent. of the area of the district and runs through the entire length of the country from south-east to north-west. Besides the Nubra Valley, it forms another fertile tract in the country.

Zanskar

This district lies to the south-west of Leh and includes all region lying along the two main branches of the Zanskar river. It has an area of about 3,000 square miles and a mean elevation of 13,154 feet.[6] The greater part of this district is occupied by the ridges and ravines and is a black inhospitable glacial region, the approaches to which from any side are quite difficult, because it is situated in a maze of mountains.[7]

[1]O.T. Crosby, *Tibet and Turkestan*, p. 122.

[2]Cf. C.A.P.Southwell, "The Nubra Valley-Ladakh Karakoram", *JRCAS*, XXXVI (1942), p. 58. see also, F. Grenard, *Tibet, the Country and its Inhabitants*, p. 24.

[3]A. Neve, *Thirty years in Kashmir*, p. 227.

[4]F. Drew, *The Northern Barrier of India*, pp. 314-328.

[5]Strachey, *Western Tibet*, p. 13. Cunningham, *Ladak*, p. 21.

[6]Cunningham, *Ladak*, p. 22.

[7]F. Drew, *The Jummo and Kashmir Territories*, pp. 280-81.

Rupshu or Rukshu

It is the loftiest inhabited district in the country and its residents are known as Champas. Its mean length and breadth are ninety miles and sixty-two miles respectively, giving it an area of about 5,500 square miles.[1] The lowest level of the valleys in this district is 13,500 feet above the sea, while the mountains that surround it have a height of 20,000 to 21,000 feet.[2] The surface of these hills is chiefly disintegrated rock and that of the valleys earth and gravel. Vegetation is extremely scant, the only herbage for the flocks being found by the streams and a little on the hill sides.[3]

The presence of a salt lake valley is another unique feature of this district. The length of this valley, in a direction north-west and south-east, is thirteen miles and its width five miles.[4]

Dras, Purig and Suru

These are three small districts to the west of Zanskar, on the high road between Srinagar and Leh, and extend from the frontier of Baltistan to Zanskar. The total area of all these districts is about 4,200 square miles.[5]

Spiti and Lahul

The two formed southern districts of Ladakh. Spiti comprises the whole valley of the Spiti river, from its source to the junction of the Para river and has an area of about 1,900 square miles.

Lahul comprises the valleys of the Chandra and Bhaga rivers, as well as that of the united stream flowing upto Trilok Nath, where the Chenab river enters Chamba. It is about sixty-eight miles in length and thirty-four miles in breadth.[6] With the single exception of the valley of the Indus, Lahul possessed more cultivable land and a less rigorous climate than any of the other districts of Ladakh.

[1]Cunningham, *Ladak*, p.22.
[2]Drew, *J & K Territories*, pp. 286-87.
[3]*Gazetteer of Kashmir and Ladakh*, 1890, p. 708.
[4]Drew, *J & K Territories*, p. 292.
[5]Cunningham, *Ladak*, p. 23.
[6]*Ibid*, p. 24.

In 1846, when Gulab Singh became the Maharaja of Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh, the British Indian Government detached Spiti and Lahul from Ladakh and annexed it to the Kulu subdivision of Kangra district of the Punjab under their control. Now Lahul and Spiti form two important districts of Himachal Pradesh.

MOUNTAINS

Mountains are the most important feature in the topography of Ladakh and to the south of Karakoram, they stretch in parallel ranges from the south-east to the north-west. This general direction of mountain chains determines the courses of the rivers as well as the natural boundaries of Ladakh.[1] The land is not only hemmed between the sea of mountains, but is interspersed by high hills, in which perpendicular cliffs of about one hundred vertical feet are quite common. These cliffs are sometimes full of holes, so that the Turks have called one of them as "Kupatar-Khana" or pigeon-house, and the latter occasionally grow into caves large enough for the abode of Tibetan hermits.[2]

RIVERS

The common name for a river in Ladakh is *chhu*; thus Singgechhu, meaning the river Indus and Zanskar-chhu, meaning the river Zanskar.[3] The river system of Ladakh consists entirely of the Indus, the Shyok and the Zanskar. Here a brief reference is made to only important rivers.

The Indus

The name Indus had its origin in the Sanskrit word '*Sindhu*' meaning 'the ocean'. In Western Tibet it is known by the general name of Sinh-kha-bab i.e. the river that rises from the lion's mouth.[4]

[1]Cunningham, *Ladak*, p. 16.
[2]Strachey, *Western Tibet*, p. 18.
[3]Cunningham, *Ladak*, p. 83.
[4]W. Moorcroft and G. Trebeck, *Travels in the Himalayan Provinces of Hindustan and the Panjab, in Ladakh and Kashmir, in Peshawar, Kabul, Kunduz and Bokhara (1819 to 1825)*, I, p. 261.

The Indus rises in the interior Tibet near the Lake Manasarowar and is formed by the junction of two mountain streams; the northern stream is the Singi Kampa, which follows a semi-circular course and the southern is the Gartang chu, which takes a straight course from Gartok.[1] The joined stream takes a north-westerly direction and enters Ladakh near the Charding La; after flowing for a few hundred miles through Ladakh and Baltistan, it reaches Gilgit whence it turns south and through West Pakistan flows into the Arabian Sea.

The Shyok

The Shyok is the best known of the mountain tributaries of the Indus. It rises behind the crest of the Karakoram mountains to the north of Leh and after cutting through the higher parts of the range, joins the Indus on its right bank at Kiris. From its source to Kiris, the length of the Shyok is about four hundred miles,[2] and its important left-bank tributaries are the Chip Chap, the Galwan and the Chang Chenmo rivers.

The Nubra River

It is the right-bank tributary of the Shyok. Rising in Saichan glacier, it flows towards the south-east and joins the Shyok near the village Lokzhung. It is fed by the great conglomeration of snow-fields and peaks, which are the core of Karakoram,[3] and is about one hundred miles long.[4]

The Zanskar River

This is one of the principal left-bank tributaries of the Indus, and comprises two main branches, the Zanskar proper and the Sumgal. Its head-waters are the Yunan, Serchu, and Tsarap, all of which rise to the north of the Himalayan range near the Bara Lacha pass.[5] Mostly flowing through the Zanskar range, it joins the Indus below Leh near the village of Nimu and its length is

[1] S. G. Burrard and H. H. Hayden, *A Sketch of the Geography and Geology of the Himalayan Mountains and Tibet*, p. 239.
[2] Cunningham, *Ladak*, p. 95.
[3] *JRCAS*, XXXVI (1942), p. 58.
[4] *Gazetteer of Kashmir and Ladakh*, 1890, p. 634.
[5] *Ibid*, p. 865.

about 230 miles.[1]

ROADS

In the period covered by this study, a system of roads, in the modern sense of the term, in a country like Ladakh was unthinkable. Till recently no wheeled-traffic reached Leh, for it was only in August 1960, that a jeepable road linking Srinagar with Leh was constructed. This road has been further improved and another road from Leh to Chushul via Chang La (17350 feet) has now been completed. This is known as the "skyway" and is said to be the highest road in the world.[2]

In the first half of the nineteenth century, roads in Ladakh were no better than bridle-tracks and were, in general, both rough, and narrow pathways. Almost the entire trade of Ladakh was carried through them and these were traversed by the Dogras. Here a brief reference to important roads may perhaps be relevant.

The Central Asian Trade Route

This route connected Ladakh with Kabul and Kashmir on the one side, and Eastern Turkestan and China on the other, and was one of the most frequented in Ladakh. In ancient times also, it was the most important thoroughfare.[3] Indian conquerers after defying the climatic hazards followed this route and established colonies in the basin of the Tarim.[4]

This road covered the whole of Ladakh from the Zoji pass to Leh. From Kashmir, after crossing the Zoji La, it followed the course of the Dras river to its junction with the Suru and then reached Kargil. From Kargil it ascended the Purig valley and negotiated two comparatively easy passes, Namaki La (12,200 feet) and Photo La (13,400 feet). Then moving to the east, it crossed the Indus river at Khalatse and reached Leh. The whole distance of this trade route from Srinagar to Leh is about 220 miles.[5]

[1]Burrard and Hayden, *op. cit*, p. 247.

[2]*The Tribune* (Ambala Cantt), Monday, August 23, 1965.

[3]A. Stein, "Memoirs on Map illustrating the Ancient Geography of Kashmir", *JASB*, LXVIII, pt. I, extra No. 2, (1899), p. 93.

[4]A. Neve, *Thirty Years in Kashmir*, p. 254.

[5]*The Tribune* (Ambala Cantt), Sunday, August 16, 1965.

The caravan traders while treading this route had to face many difficulties. It was passable only from March to November, when the heavy snowfall at Zoji La closed it for practically all movement. When Izzet Ullah travelled by this route in 1812, he found the road at many places "difficult and rocky, so as to be impassable to a mounted traveller".[1] Goods between Kashmir and Leh were carried partly by men and partly by ponies. If the conveyance was by men only, it took a month or a little more to reach Leh from Srinagar.[2]

However, in the late eighteen-thirties, due to the exertions of Wazir Zorawar Singh, the condition of this road improved. Alexander Cunningham, who visited Ladakh in 1847-48 bears testimony to this effect:

The greater portion of this road, which lies in Ladak was made by Zorawar Singh after the conquest of t e country in 1834. The large bridge over the Indus at Khallach [Khalatse], as well as smaller bridges over the Wanla, Kanji, Waka, Suru and Dras rivers, were all built by the energetic invaders who knowing the value of good communications, have since kept them in excellent repair. No road can well be worse than the few marches on the Kashmirian side of the pass (Zoji La) which are still in the same state as described by Izzet Ullah in 1812.[3]

From Leh to Yarkand caravan traders followed two different routes. First was the *Zamistan* or winter route. Mir Izzet Ullah[4] travelled by this route in 1812, and was the first man who furnished some details about it. In 1821-22, William Moorcroft—that great traveller endowed with indefatigable enterprising spirit—followed in the foot-steps of the Mir, but did not visit the Karakoram pass and returned from the Nubra valley. Generally, this route passed over the beds of the rivers, which in the cold season contained little water and were frozen. These streams which formed no obstacle in winter were often impassable torrents in summer, in which season also there was much danger from the avalanches in many parts of the road.[5] It is thus no

[1] Mir Izzet Ullah, "Travels beyond the Himalaya", *JRAS*, VII (1843), p. 284.

[2] Ahmad Shah Naqshbandi "Routes from Kashmir, via Ladakh, to Yarkand", *JRAS*, XII (1850), p. 373.

[3] Cunningham, *Ladak*, p. 149.

[4] For details about him, see *infra*, Chapter IV.

[5] H. Trotter, "On the Geographical results of the Mission to Kashghar, under Sir T.D. Forsyth in 1873-74", *JRGS*, XLVIII (1878), p. 175.

wonder that despite all the hazards of a winter journey, caravan merchants selected that season for their travels.

The first obstacle on this road while moving from Leh was the Diggar La (17, 930 feet), which was a very difficult pass situated on the Kailash range. The road before reaching the Karakoram pass, passed through the narrow, winding and difficult valley of the Shyok river, the frozen surface of which was crossed "not less than thirty-six times."[1] After negotiating the Karakoram pass, it descended into the valley of Yarkand, and passing through Kugiar and Karghalik reached Yarkand.

The second route was known as *Tabistan* or summer route. The details of this route were provided for the first time in 1846 by Ahmad Shah Naqshabandi.[2] The route first crossed the Khardung La or Leh pass (17, 900 feet) and then descending the Shyok river at village Satti, where for the carriage of goods and passengers boats were often employed,[3] it ascended the Nubra valley. Thereafter, before reaching the Karakoram pass it crossed the Sasser La (17, 820 feet) which was one of the most difficult passes on this road and rarely free from snow.[4] The road in this area passed through, over and alongside glaciers for many miles. After negotiating the Karakoram pass, this route crossed the Aktagh range by the Sooget pass (18, 237 feet), and following the course of the Sooget stream, through Shahidullah reached Yarkand.[5]

The third route connecting Leh with Yarkand which does not seem to have been followed in the first half of the nineteenth century by the caravan merchants was through Aksai Chin. The route passed through the Chang Chenmo valley and the Chang Lang pass (18, 839 feet). Then across the series of high plains *i.e.* Lingzi Tang, it entered the valley of Karakash river and joined

[1]H. Trotter, *Account of the Survey operations in connection with the Misston to Yarkand and Kashghar in 1873-74*, p. 10.

[2]Details of this route orlginally written in Persian were translated into English by Mr. J. Dowson, and published in *JRAS*, XII (1850), pp. 372-379.

[3]Trotter, *Account of the Survey Operations*, p. 10.

[4]*Idem*.

[5]G.W. Hayward, "Journey from Leh to Yarkand and Kashgar and Exploration of the sources of the Yarkand River", *JRGS*, XL (1870), p. 33.

the *Tabistani* route at Shahidulla.[1]

The distance from Leh to Yarkand, by the *Zamistani* route was 530 miles; by the *Tabistani* 480 miles, while by the Chang Chenmo route it was 507 miles.[2]

In early times, caravan traders while going from Kashmir to Yarkand followed an entirely different route. It lay through Gurais, Skardu[3] and Shigar.[4] William Finch, an English traveller who was in Kashmir in 1611 AD., tells us that at that time trade between Kashmir and Chinese Turkestan passed through Baltistan.[5] When Bernier visited Kashmir in 1665 AD., he also found that the route through Ladakh was closed, perhaps due to political strife in that area, and merchants took the road of Baltistan, though the route was "extremely bad" and in every season one had to "go a quarter of a league over the ice."[6] Later when Mir Izzet Ullah visited this region in 1812, as noted earlier, merchants followed the more easy, though comparatively longer route through Ladakh. Mir Izzet Ullah wrote that from Kashmir to Yarkand via Baltistan, the journey was of twenty-five days, three of which were over the glaciers and was rarely travelled.[7] It appears that this route was abandoned partly owing to the changes in the ice on the Baltero glaciers which made it nearly impassable[8] and partly due to the fact that the caravans were plundered by the Baltis.[9]

The South-western Road

It linked Punjab, through Jammu, Kishtwar and Zanskar with Leh. From Jammu to Leh the distance by this road was about 230 miles,[10] and the greater part of it was traversed on

[1] *Ibid*, p. 34.

[2] *Idem*.

[3] It was the capital of Baltistan.

[4] It was a dependency of Baltistan.

[5] A. Stein, "Note on the Route from the Punjab to Turkistan and China recorded by William Finch (1611)", *JPHS*, VI, pt. II, p. 148.

[6] F. Bernier, *Travels in the Mughal Empire*, I, pp. 426-427.

[7] *JRAS*, VII (1843), p. 297.

[8] Bernier, *Travels*, I, p. 427 fn.

[9] G.T. Vigne, *Travels in Kashmir, Ladak, Iskardo and the Countries Adjoining the Mountain-Course of the Indus, and the Himalaya North of the Panjab*, II, p. 283. see also, *JASB*, I (1832), p. 125.

[10] Cunningham, *Ladak*, p. 153.

foot, though occasionally for a small distance a horse could also be ridden.[1] From Jammu, it proceeded to Kishtwar through Ram Nagar and Bhadarwah. From Kishtwar it took an easterly direction and after passing through the Chandra Bhaga valley near Chatargarh it negotiated Umasi La, and entered Padam, capital town of Zanskar. From Padam it moved towards the north alongwith Zanskar river, and after crossing the river at Nira Bridge, it joined at Lama Yuru with the Srinagar-Leh road.

The lofty passes on this road are seldom open before June, and they are always closed by the end of October.

From Padam there are two other routes to Leh; the first passed through Zanskar whereas the second lay through Rupshu. The latter was frequently traversed by the Dogra army between 1835-1840, for suppressing revolts in Ladakh.

The Southern Road

This road connected Leh with Kulu, Bashahr, Nurpur and other trade marts of the Punjab. It passed through Mandi and Sultanpur, then capital of Kulu; and after crossing the Rohtang pass, descended into Lahul. In Lahul, after crossing the Bara Lacha pass, it entered Rupshu, from where after negotiating Lunga Lacha La (17,000 feet), and Thung Lang La (17,500 feet) it reached Leh. This route was frequented chiefly by the inhabitants of Mandi and the surrounding hill states.[2]

The North-western Road

This road led from Baltistan and other Mohammaden districts up the bed of the Indus and connected Skardu with Leh. During the summer months, when due to the melting of the snow, the waters of the Indus were swollen, the travellers generally preferred ascending the Shyok river as far as Chhorbad, whence they crossed the Hanu pass or Chhorbad La (17,000 feet) and descended into the Ladakh district. This road was frequently traversed by the Baltis, who carried dried apricots, which were in great favour and demand in the cold countries of

[1] Vigne, *Travels*, I, p. 165.
[2] *Ibid*, p. 99.

Ladakh and Tibet.[1] This route was also followed by Zorawar Singh who conquered Baltistan in 1839-40.

The South-eastern Road

It connected Ladakh with Tibet. The distance from Leh to Lhasa is about 900 miles.[2] From Leh it followed the course of the Indus upstream; then through Gartok and Lake Mansarowar, it entered the valley of Tsang Po and reached Lhasa.

In addition to the principal thoroughfares listed above, there were many other smaller routes, which more appropriately may be called the goat-tracks. These were used by the inhabitants of Ladakh for exchanging the produce and victuals of one district with those of another.

PASSES

A pass in Tibetan is called *La*. The high mountain walls which surround and dissect Ladakh, are pierced by a number of openings or passes. For many months in a year these passes are blocked by heavy snow falls, as a result of which Ladakh is completely cut off from the rest of the world. But in summer these passes serve as Ladakh's nostrils, and allow it to communicate with the world outside. In Ladakh there are about a score of passes; mention is made here only of the important ones, especially those which had a commercial or strategic importance in the past.

Karakoram Pass (18,317 feet)

In the complex of mountains at the north-east corner of the Karakoram range, in an area where China, Tibet and Ladakh meet is situated the celebrated Karakoram pass. From time immemorial, the principal Central Asian caravan trade route lay through this pass and it was used both on the winter as well as summer routes from Leh to Yarkand.[3] Dr. Thomson, the first Englishman who visited this pass in 1847, found it totally destitute of vegetation and covered with loose shingle.[4] It is always

[1]Drew, *Northern Barrier*, p. 239.
[2]G.B. Cressey, *Asia's Lands and Peoples*, p. 165.
[3]*Gazetteer of Kashmir and Ladakh*, 1890, p. 436.
[4]T. Thomson, *Western Himalaya and Tibet*, pp. 435-36.

free from glaciers in winter and in summer from snow. The ascent on both sides is gentle and the road is good.[1] It was crossed by Mirza Haider Dughlat for invading Ladakh.[2]

The Zoji La (11,300 feet)

It connects Ladakh with the Kashmir valley, and is situated "in one of the densest snow belts in the world."[3] Like the Karakoram pass, it has also been used by caravan traders. Because of heavy snow-fall, it remains closed from the middle of November to the middle of May. According to Dr. A. Stein, Zoji La also forms the ethnographic watershed between Kashmir and the land of the "Bhauttas" or "Bhuttas", the natural inhabitants of the Indus region.[4] It often brings refreshing winds and storms into the Dras Valley, but in the past, to the inhabitants on its either side, it brought sufferings too. It was through it that in 1532 Mirza Haider first invaded Kashmir. Later in 1681-84, it was through this pass that the Mughal forces saved Ladakh from the strangle-hold of the Tibeto-Sokpa (Mongol) invaders.

Umasi La or Bardhar Pass (17,370 feet)

It is situated between Kishtwar and Zanskar, and is a snowy and difficult pass. The inhabitants of Zanskar call it Umasi La, whereas those of Paddar name it Bardhar pass. It was usually traversed by the merchants of Jammu, the Punjab, and Kishtwar, who traded with Ladakh and other Central Asian countries. In the late thirties of the previous century, this was crossed and recrossed many times by the Dogra armies when they conquered Ladakh and Baltistan.

Maryum La or Bhot Khol Pass (14,700 feet)

This pass is situated in the Wurdwan valley and connects Kishtwar with the Suru valley. For about six months it remains covered with snow and is a very difficult pass.[5] For subduing

[1] Trotter, *Account of the Survey Operations*, p. 11.

[2] For details about this invasion, see *infra*, Chapter III.

[3] *The Tribune* (Ambala Cantt), Monday, August 23, 1965.

[4] *JASB*, LXVIII, Pt. I, extra No. 2 (1899), p. 93. G.A. Grierson, *Linguistic Survey of India*, Vol. III, Pt. I, p. 55.

[5] Drew, *J & K Territories*, p. 535.

Ladakh it was also frequently crossed and recrossed by the Dogra army.[1]

TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATION

As noted earlier, in the first half of the nineteenth century, there was no wheeled-traffic in Ladakh, and goods were generally carried by riding and pack animals. Horses and mules were the most useful beasts of burden, but these could not be carried to all the places. At more difficult and narrow points, merchandise was carried by the sturdy Ladakhis on their backs. At greater height near the snowy passes, where horse and mule proved unserviceable, the yak was most useful as a weight-carrier.

The Champas of Rupshu did not carry loads on their backs. They employed their large goats and sheep known as 'huniya'[2] for carrying loads; a small pack of double bag was made to hang over the back, filled to an average weight of 24 lbs., though the stronger animal was loaded upto 32 lbs.[3]

Where there were no bridges, goods and men from one bank to the other of a river were carried through rafts. In 1837, G.T. Vigne, crossed the Dras river on a raft.[4] Ferry or 'Grukha' was also in general use.[5] The common people were usually ferried over on a single inflated skin, but more important persons were usually taken over on a raft, formed by placing a bed on two inflated skins.[6]

CLIMATE

As Ladakh is located almost entirely in the mountainous region, its climate is characterised by extremes of heat, cold and dryness. Summers are short and mild and winters long and bitter. Winter begins in September and lasts till mid-May. The hottest and the coldest months are July and January respec-

[1]R.H. Phillimore (collector and compiler), *Historical Records of the Survey of India*, IV, p. 291.
[2]Cunningham, *Ladak*, p. 211.
[3]Drew, *Northern Barrier*, p. 299.
[4]Vigne, *Travels*, II, p. 392.
[5]Trotter, *Account of the Survey Operations*, p. 10.
[6]*Gazetteer of Kashmir and Ladakh*, 1890, p. 539.

tively.[1] Most of the precipitation that falls during winter months is in the form of snow, and varies from district to district. Leh gets little snow-fall, which being very dry and powdery is blown off or absorbed within a short time of falling, while Dras, a village in Lower Ladakh, which receives snow during winter months exceeding twenty feet, is said to be the second coldest inhabited area in the world.[2] The disposition of the mountain range is such as offers little resistance to the general direction of winds and hence the scanty rainfall.[3] In some of the areas in the interior which are completely girdled by mountains, less than five inches of rain falls in a period of ten years. In the thin atmosphere insulation and radiation alike take place at an extreme tempo; mechanical disintegration of the rocks is rapid, and the saying that a bare-headed man with his feet in the shade can get sun-stroke and frost-bite simultaneously may hardly be an exaggeration.[4] The relative humidity is very low and even barley and fruit trees which are and can be grown in most of the localities in Kashmir without irrigation, cannot grow here without it. Due to excessive dryness of air, thunder and lightening are a very rare occurrence. So is the case with earthquakes; if at all one occurs, its intensity is never severe.[5]

AGRICULTURE

Nature appears to have been very niggardly in the distribution of its bounties with regard to Ladakh. Uneven terrain is one of its natural disabilities; soil for the most part consists of a desert of bare crags and granite dust. The rugged confi-

[1]The mean temperature figures collected by the Indian Meteorological Department from 1953 to 1962 for Leh during the months of January and July with Maximum and Minimum are -1.30, 13.03. and +24.66, +10.16 respectively. *Draft Fourth Five Year Plan, Ladakh District,* typed copy, p. 22.

[2]*The Tribune* (Ambala Cantt), Monday, August 23, 1965.

[3]The Annual Normals of rainfall recorded in millimeters by the Indian Meteorological Department from 1901 to 1950 for Leh, Kargil and Dras are 92.6, 264.5 and 673.0 respectively. *Draft Fourth Five Year Plan, Ladakh District,* p. 22.

[4]O.H.K. Spate, *India and Pakistan: A General and Regional Geography,* p. 387.

[5]*Gazetteer of Kashmir and Ladakh,* 1890, p. 473.

guration of land and lack of precipitation limit the land available for cultivation; the small area which is brought under the plough is mainly confined to the narrow valleys and patches on the banks of the rivers. At present (1966), the total area of land under cultivation in Ladakh (excluding Lahul and Spiti) is about 40,000 acres.[1] There is a very wide range of altitude and climate prevailing in Ladakh, and these vary even from one area to another. The physical features more often than the nature of the soil exercise great influence on the distribution and cultivation of various types of crops, vegetables, fruit and grass.

A holding is termed "Zhing-Khang"[2] and the average possession of a family is eleven 'Khal' of cultivable land or about three acres.[3] Land is levelled by hand and most of the agricultural operations are conducted by man's sinews.[4] Methods of cultivation are crude and primitive.

Irrigation in an arid land such as Ladakh is most essential. Due to irregular and variable flow of water the rivers cannot be dammed for irrigation purposes. However, in flat basins such as near Leh, now extensive diversion canals have been dug but during the period under review, in Ladakh irrigation works were quite an unheard thing. Small mountain torrents are dammed here and there and often water is carried for long distances through small channels.[5]

Barley, which forms the staple food of the Ladakhis is grown quite abundantly. It is found in both forms i.e. with beard and beardless. 'Grim' or 'Shirokh' or beardless barley has many varieties;[6] as compared with other crops it ripens more quickly and requires less manure. A little wheat is also grown in the

[1] *Draft Fourth Five Year Plan, Ladakh District*, p. 23.

[2] Ramsay, *Western Tibet*, p. 42.

[3] Cunningham, *Ladak*, p. 225. *IGI*, 1881, VI, p. 7.

[4] cf. Walter Asboe, "Farmers and Farming in Ladakh", *JRCAS*, XXXIV (1947), pp. 186-192. In this article, Asboe has discussed agricultural activities in Ladakh in great detail. For more information, see also his article "Agricultural Methods in Lahoul, Western Tibet", *Man*, XXXVII (1937), pp. 74-77.

[5] *JRCAS*, XXXIV (1947), p. 189 see also, A.F.P. Har'court, *The Himalayan Districts of Kooloo, Lahul and Spiti*, p. 182.

[6] For details of various varieties, see *JRCAS*, XXXIV (1947), pp. 190-91.

lower valleys such as Suru. Other crops grown are those of buck-wheat, mustard and millet. No rice or cotton is grown in Ladakh.

Lucerene, locally known as *Ole* is the most important cultivated forage crop. It is grown chiefly for hay to be stored for winter and subsequent use. Horses become fat upon it in the course of a month or so without any corn.[1] It is also a good remedy against the rot in sheep, if given for food for a certain time in autumn.[2] In 1965, the area under this cultivated fodder crop constituted above twenty per cent. of the total cultivated area of Ladakh.[3]

POPULATION

Moorcroft, when he visited Ladakh in 1822, estimated its population between 150,000 and 180,000.[4] In 1834, before the Dogra conquest, Alexander Cunningham calculated the total population of Ladakh at 168,000 of whom 12,000 were lamas.[5] In 1847, this population dwindled down to 125,000; the causes of reduction being a disastrous outbreak of small-pox in 1834, Dogra wars (1834-42), and emigration.[6] According to census reports, the combined population of the districts of Ladakh, Lahul and Spiti amounted to 109,104 in 1961.[7]

In the early half of the 19th century, the entire Ladakhi population consisted of two groups—the Ladakhis and the Champas. The Ladakhis inhabited the valley of the Indus and its tributaries and had permanent villages. The Champas, however, led a nomadic life on the upland valleys which being too elevated are fit only for pastoral uses.

The great mass of the people of Ladakh were Tibetan-speaking Buddhists. There was, however, a small colony of Mohammadens in Chushod near Leh, and in Dras there was a group of Dards. But Mohammadens and Dards formed a

[1] *JRAS*, XII (1850), p. 377.

[2] Alexander Csoma de Koros, *Tibetan Studies*, ed. E.D. Ross, Extra No. *JASB*, VII, 1911, p. 6.

[3] *Draft Fourth Five Year Plan, Ladakh District*, p. 212.

[4] Moorcroft, *Travels*, I, p. 320.

[5] Cunningham, *Ladak*, pp. 285-86.

[6] *Ibid*, pp. 287-88.

[7] *Census Report of India, 1961*, pp. 20-21, 40-41.

microscopic part of the entire population. Population figures seem to have been affected by polyandry and Lamaism; about the latter more will be said in the next chapter.

Unlike Kashmir and some other parts of India, there were not many invidious caste divisions in Ladakh. The only caste division was that of the blacksmiths and the musicians; they were considered belonging to a low caste called 'Bem'.[1] They lived in segregated quarters and were not allowed to become members of the church.

Land was the primary economic base of the population and almost all the Ladakhis were engaged in farming. Besides agriculture, sheep-rearing and participation in the carrying-trade of the country were important economic activities.

TRADE

So far as the indigenous produce of Ladakh was concerned, its trade was not of great value. The chief consideration in its trade, however arose from its strategic location whereby it acted as a great thoroughfare for an active commercial intercourse between Tibet, Yarkand and China on the one hand and Kashmir, Kabul and the plains of Hindustan on the other. Leh was one of the most important trade marts on the Central Asian caravan route. It acted as a great entrepot, where merchants gathered and exchanged their commodities.

Trade was a source of considerable revenue for the state and beneficial to the Ladakhis also. Although few merchants carried through trade between India and Eastern Turkestan, the mass of trade was carried on between Indians and Kashmiris who came up as far as Leh and there exchanged their goods for the products of Central Asia brought down by merchants who did not go farther south than Leh. This benefited Ladakh, for, as it was a long and bad journey from Leh to Yarkand, or even from Leh to India, merchants on reaching Leh were obliged to rest themselves for a month or two and replenish their stocks before attempting the return journey.[2] As a result, during the months of August, September and October, the Ladakhis reaped a harvest by supplying grass, grain and wood etc. to these

[1]Drew, *J & K Territories*, p. 241. Cunningham, *Ladak*, p. 291.
[2]*JRAS*, XII (1850), p. 378.

merchants and their camp-followers.[1] The country people also got little employment: their ponies, horses and yaks were hired by these merchants and they were also employed as coolies and labourers for carrying loads.

For the sake of convenient treatment of the subject, the trade of Ladakh may be divided into two parts:

1. Internal Trade.
2. External trade (Exports and Imports).

Internal Trade

This consisted in articles both imported and produced in the country and was carried by the inhabitants of one district with those of another. Mainly, this trade was carried by barter. The people of Rupshu brought salt to Zanskar and took barley in exchange. The Zanskaris, further exchanged this salt with the inhabitants of Suru for pattu (woollen cloth), some cash and barley.[2] Blankets and coarse woollens or sack cloth (manufactured in Ladakh) which was used for bags for the conveyance of goods, was another important commodity that exchanged hands within the country. In 1846, the quantity of wool used in making blankets and sacks was 20,000 small maunds, or 640,000 lbs.[3]

External Trade

Although Ladakh is surrounded by high mountains, it maintained very close trade relations with the neighbouring states. All foreign trade was carried through the Central Asian trade route and other roads, which connected this Himalayan principality with the neighbouring countries.

Exports

Foreign trade of Ladakh in home produce was confined to four items—wool, sulphur, borax, and dry-fruits. It deserves a slight notice. Wool was the chief product of Ladakh. It was of two kinds, first goat-wool or 'Le-na', which was used for

[1] Ramsay, *Western Tibet*, p. 97.
[2] Drew, *Northern Barrier*, p. 287.
[3] Cunningham, *Ladak*, p. 238.

shawls and second sheep-wool, or 'Bal', which was used for blankets and coarse clothing or for stuffing pillows and beddings. The most important wool producing district was Rupshu. It was also produced in the steppes between the Shyok and the main branch of the Indus.[1] Alexander Cunningham, who visited Ladakh in 1846-47 observed that during that period export of shawl-wool (produced in the country) amounted to 2,400 small maunds or 76,800 lbs. a year.[2] Export of sheep-wool or 'Bal' was about double that quantity or approximately about 5,000 maunds.[3] Borax and sulphur were mainly exported to the Punjab and other Himalayan hill states and the yearly quantity amounted to 500 maunds and 250 maunds respectively.[4] Dry-fruits consisted of apricots and small seedless raisins commonly called currants. These were partly imported from Baltistan and were of superior quality. In 1846, the annual quantity of dry-fruits exported was about 300 maunds.[5] A salt of soda, locally known as 'Phuli', found in the Nubra and Rupshu districts, was also exported to Kashmir and Kulu. It was used for mixing with tea so as to bring out its strength. Also it was employed for washing clothes and for dyeing wool etc.[6] In 1846, the whole value of the foreign trade of Ladakh in home produce did not exceed rupees 80,000.[7]

Imports

Besides exporting indigenous products Ladakh, as pointed out earlier, also exported some of its imports. It is difficult to assess the value of this carrying-trade passing annually through Ladakh, but it must have been considerable. Moorcroft writes that in the eighteen-twenties, a certain Kothi Mall, a banker of Amritsar, generally invested rupees two to three lakhs

[1] J. D. Cunningham, *A History of the Sikhs*, eds. H.L.O. Garrett and R. R. Sethi, pp. 1-2 fn.

[2] Cunningham, *Ladak*, p. 239.

[3] *Idem.*

[4] *Ibid*, p. 240.

[5] Moorcroft, *Travels*, I, p. 357. W. Hamilton, *Geographical, Statistical and Historical Description of Hindustan and Adjacent Countries*, p. 11.

[6] Mohammad Khan, '*Ahwal-i-Mulk-i-Ladakh*', Urdu MS. pp. 4-5.

[7] Cunningham, *Ladak*, p. 240.

annually through his agents.[1]

Shawl-wool and tea were the most important imports of Ladakh. The former was imported from Western Tibet and Yarkand.[2] Under treaty rights, Ladakh imported the entire produce of shawl-wool of Western Tibet and further supplied it to Kashmir.[3]

Tea was chiefly produced in China whence, through Lhasa and Yarkand, it was imported into Ladakh. In 1846, the quantity of tea imported was about 1,000 maunds[4] or 32,000 lbs. which accounted for rupees two lakhs.[5] This was partly consumed in Ladakh and partly exported to Afghanistan,[6] Kashmir and the Punjab.[7] About one hundred maunds of black tea of Bashahr was also imported into Ladakh, but being cheaper in price, it was usually mixed with Chinese tea and consumed by the poor classes.[8] Salt, borax, and sulphur were also imported from Chang Thang; along with the indigenous produce these articles were exported to the Punjab, Kulu, Chamba and other Himalayan hill states. In return, from these hill states, Ladakh got most of its supplies of *ghee*, butter, honey, raisins and grain.[9] The Bashahris took to Ladakh various kinds of cotton cloth, gongs, prayer-wheels etc. and brought back *kesur* or saffron (produce of Kashmir and Kishtwar), coarse shawls manufactured in Ladakh, *numdas* or felts and *dochuks* or ingots of silver etc.[10]

Important among the articles of trade through Ladakh from India and Kashmir to Yarkand were opium, shawls, saffron, red leather, spices, brocades, chintzes and copper tinned

[1]Moorcroft to Traill, Letter No. I, *Asiatic Journal*, XXI (Sept.-Dec. 1836), p. 133.

[2]W. Moorcroft to C. T. Metcalfe, 12 May 1821, *FDPC*, 10 October 1823, No. 21.

[3]See *infra*, Chap. III.

[4]Cunningham, *Ladak*, p. 248.

[5]*AJ*, XXI (Sept.-Dec. 1836), p. 133.

[6]*Ibid.*

[7]Hamilton, *op. cit*, p. 572. Moorcroft, *Travels*, I, p. 350.

[8]Moorcroft, *Travels*, I, pp. 353-54.

[9]*Ibid*, p. 358.

[10]A. Gerard, *Account of Koonawur in the Himalaya etc.*, ed. G. Llyod, pp. 181-82. J. B. Fraser, *Journal of a Tour Through Part of the Snowy Range of the Himalayan Mountains etc.*, p. 275.

vessels.[1] Chief among the imports from Yarkand were *charas*, tea, tobacco, Yambo silver, felts, silk, dried sheep skins, Russian leather, brocades, velvets and horses. A part of these articles was consumed in Ladakh but a greater part was destined for the Punjab.[2]

[1]Cunningham, *Ladak*, pp. 241, 246-47. Moorcroft, *Travels*, I, p. 357. Vigne, *Travels*, II, p. 345. Gerard, *Account of Koonawur*, p. 182.

[2]Vigne, *Travels*, II, p. 344. Moorcroft, *Travels*, I, pp. 356-57. Cunningham, *Ladak*, pp. 244-45.

Chapter Two

RELIGION AND POLITY

THE CHAPTER on religion and polity is perhaps somewhat out of place in a monograph which primarily deals with political history: in any case it is not very important. However, our purpose is to find out how far religion influenced political developments, administration and society in Ladakh. To judge this impact of religion, naturally, we shall be concerned with some details about the origin, different sects and monastic organisation of Lama Buddhism. But due to inadequacy of sources, it is not possible to present a more comprehensive picture of religion of the Ladakhis and go into details of the interrelationship of various monastic sects. The available records are also silent about the role of the monastic institutions in the external trade of Ladakh during the period discussed in this study.

Further, before its annexation by the Dogras in 1846, Ladakh continued to be governed for some time by the native kings, of course, under the overlordship of the Sikh Maharaja. Therefore, it will be of some interest to know as to what was the administrative set-up during this period.

Again, the system of gathering militia by the native Kings at the time of national emergency—an aspect discussed towards the end of this chapter—is deeply connected with the political developments dealt with in a subsequent chapter.

The information, this chapter contains, although mostly based on secondary sources, is thus quite relevant; references to it are made in the subsequent chapters.

RELIGION

Before the introduction of Buddhism in Ladakh about the third century BC., the religion of the Ladakhis consisted in the

amorphous mass of animistic and totemistic beliefs.[1] This is attested by the graffitoes representing the ibex, which are of common occurrence in Ladakh. In the totemistic cult, ibex was the most sacred animal and its worship was quite common. These beliefs were later on organised into a well-knit religious system, which was given the name of Bon.[2] In 241 BC., Asoka sent Buddhist missionaries into Ladakh, where they propagated the peaceful doctrines of Sakya Muni, and the religion of Ladakh became Buddhism, as it prevailed in India.[3] During the Kushan period, Buddhism was further strengthened in Ladakh, and from here it was introduced into China about the beginning of the Christian era.[4] In Ladakh, Buddhism continued to flourish for many centuries, and this Himalayan principality remained under the deep impact of Indian religion and culture. This is proved by the numerous inscriptions of religious nature found in Ladakh.[5] However, after about the eleventh century, Indian influence in the religion of Ladakh began to abate and this Himalayan kingdom, became under the influence of Toling, Guge's great religious centre. But, as we shall see soon after, with the rise of the Yellow hat sect or the Gelugpa in Tibet in the fourteenth century, and coming into existence the institution of the Dalai Lamas there, Guge's influenee declined and Ladakh became under the religious impact of Lhasa. In the period covered by this study, Buddhism in its Lamaist form was the popular religion in Ladakh.[6]

Lamaism was a perverted form of Buddhism. The simple creed as propagated by Lord Buddha was first clothed into mysticism by the Tantarists; later on, the Lamas impregnated it with the ancient gods and spirits of the former inhabitants, thus making it a medley of superstition, wild beliefs, and contradictions.[7] The doctrine of metempsychosis was curiously

[1]L. Petech, "A study on the Chronicles of Ladakh, Indian Tibet", *IHQ*, XV, No. 4, Supplement (December, 1939), p. 105.

[2]*Idem.*

[3]Cunningham, *Ladak*, p. 356.

[4]*Idem.*

[5]*IHQ*, XV, Supplement (1939), p. 104.

[6]cf. L.A. Waddell, *The Buddhism of Tibet or Lamaism*, p. 143.

[7]*Kangra DG*, 1883-84, II, p. 102. See also, P. S. Nazaroff, *Moved on*, p. 250.

blended with tenets and precepts very similar to those of Christianity and with the worship of grotesque divinities.[1]

The number of lamas[2] was quite large. In 1834, out of the total population of 168,000, about 12,000 were the lamas[3], thus giving one lama to thirteen members of the laity. This strength of the lamas was maintained by a custom, under which almost every Ladakhi family having more than one son, sent one of the younger ones to a monastery.[4] The sons of the Kings, generally entered the Hemis monastery.[5] All the lamas were ordained to lead a life of celebacy. Women also took to monastic life and became nuns and lived in the monasteries. They were called *chomos*.[6]

The general bulk of the people did not understand anything about religion and were strictly under the influence of the monks. In reality, the laity took a conveniently lax view of their religious duties.[7] The monks were present on the occasion of birth, marriage and death ceremonies. They administered medicines and cured the sick.[8] They also acted as exorcists and magicians and saved the laity from the evil designs of bad spirits.[9] They were looked upon as saviours from the pangs of suffering and liberators from the evil of transmigration. In fact, these monks acted as advisors and guides to the laity in every matter, and in lay life there was too much respect for these monks and unquestionable obedience to their wishes. These monks, thus played a very important part in society and their

[1]Moorcroft, *Travels*, I, p. 340.

[2] 'Lama' is a Tibetan word literally meaning 'the superior or exalted one.' Previously, use of this word was restricted to the monasteries and was strictly applicable only to abbots and highest monks, but later on, out of courtesy, almost all lamaist monks and priests were given this name. (Waddell, *op. cit*, p. 43).

[3]Cunningham, *Ladak*, p. 286.

[4]Moorcroft, *Travels*, I, p. 339. Drew, *J & K Territories*, p. 256. Knight, *Three Empires*, p. 128. Nazaroff, *Moved on*, p. 250. *IGI*, 1881, VI, p. 8.

[5]Francke, *Antiquities*, II, pp. 121-123, 126. L. Petech, "Notes on Ladakhi History", *IHQ*, XXIV, No. 3 (Sept., 1948), pp. 227, 229, 230.

[6]*Imperial Gazetteer of India, Provincial Series (1909)*, XVI, *Jammu and Kashmir State*, p. 99.

[7]Knight, *Three Empires*, p. 132.

[8]Doughlas, *Beyond the High Himalayas*, p. 169.

[9]*Kangra DG*, 1883-84, II, p. 102-103.

influence pervaded in every phase of a Buddhist Ladakhi's life.

Prayer-wheel, Manis and Chortens

In the religious service, prayers occupied an important part, which was entirely the work of the lamas. Prayer was also performed through mechanical operation i.e. with the help of a prayer-wheel. It was made of all sizes, from the pocket wheel to be turned on the hand as one walked along, to the common wheel of the village which was turned by water, and prayed for the community in general.[1] The prayer-wheel consisted of a cylinder, in which were arranged, one on the top of the other, sheets of paper inscribed with the sacred formulae and the sheets were wound on the axis. The prayer-wheel was to be turned in a particular direction, doing contrary was considered as sacrilegious.[2] The Buddhist magic formula *'Om-Mani-Padme-Hum'* meaning 'Oh, thou Jewel in the Lotus!' was uttered by the laity and the monks alike. The formula seems to have originated in India,[3] and was addressed to Avalokitesvara or Padmapani,[4] and had been popular as far back as fourth century AD.[5] Flags inscribed with prayers were fixed at the top of the houses and monasteries: as they fluttered in the wind, they were considered offering prayers for the community in general.[6] In every village and often along the road side in the uninhabited area, there were *Manis* or stone dykes which varied in shape and size. These *Manis* were sometimes half a mile long[7] on

[1] *Kangra DG*, 1883-84, II, p. 103. Drew, *J & K Territories*, p. 255. Knight, *Three Empires*, pp. 132, 149. Murray Aynsley, *Our visit to Hindustan, Kashmir and Ladakh*, p. 93. Ramsay, *Western Tibet*, p. 124.

[2] W.W. Rockhill, *The Land of the Lamas*, p. 334. G. Henderson, *Lahore to Yarkand*, p. 50.

[3] Victor Jacquemont, botanically proving this point remarked that lotus was peculiar to the lukewarm and temperate waters of India and Egypt. There was not one of its genus or even of its family in Tibet. Its extreme beauty and abundance in the tanks dug near the Indian temples rendered it celebrated in the Hindu legends. Jacquemont, *Letters from India*, I. p. 297. See also, Rockhill, *The Land of the Lamas*, p. 326.

[4] A.H. Francke, "The Meaning of the 'Om-Mani-Padme-Hum'," *JRAS*, Pt. II (1915), p. 402.

[5] Rockhill, *The Land of the Lamas*, p. 326.

[6] Egerton, *Journal of a Tour Through Spiti*, p. 55. Knight, *Three Empires*, p. 149.

[7] Henderson, *Lahore to Yarkand*, p. 49.

which were flung small pieces of slate or flat stone, inscribed with mystic formula. These slabs were votive offerings from all classes of people for the attainment of some particular object.[1] While walking, these *Manis* were to be left on the right hand.[2] People often made considerable detours in order to do so. In larger villages there were chortens or dedicatory pyramids erected in honour of *Sakya Thubba* or of some holy Buddhas.[3] These chortens consisted of a square basement,[4] surrounded by some steps, on which stood the dome or principal part of the edifice, which in shape was like an inverted truncated cone. The dome was surmounted by a lofty pinnacle, crowned by a sacred crescent-shaped emblem.[5] Sometimes on many big rocks on the road side, colossal figures of some deities were carved. All these *Manis*, chortens, and stone-inscriptions represented signs of the people's thought for their religion.

Monasteries

But by far the most important religious edifices in the country were monasteries or the abode of the lamas. Almost every village had a monastery of greater or lesser importance; it sometimes held one or two lamas, and sometimes it was the home of hundreds.[6] Generally, these were situated at secluded places.[7] Inside these lamaseries were the images of Buddhas, of apotheosised lamas, of Rimbochi, Atisha and other saints.[8] These monastic establishments were quite rich and controlled important portions of the wealth of Ladakh. From early times the kings had made numerous grants of lands to the monasteries,[9] and some, like Hemis, the monastery of the royal house,

[1] *Kangra DG*, 1883-84, II, p. 103. Robert Shaw, *Visit to High Tartary, Yarkand and Kashgar*, p. 8.

[2] Egerton, *Journal of a Tour Through Spiti*, pp. 56-57. Drew, *J & K Territories*, p. 259.

[3] Earl of Dunmore, *The Pamirs*, p. 84.

[4] E.F. Neve, *Beyond the Pir Panjal*, p.143.

[5] *Gazetteer Kashmir and Ladakh*, 1890, p. 545.

[6] Drew, *J & K Territories*, p. 254. *IGI*, 1881, VI, p. 8.

[7] Cunningham, *Ladak*, pp. 312-13. I.L. Bishop, *Among the Tibetans*, p. 47.

[8] *Kangra DG*, 1883-84, II, p. 112. Drew, *J & K Territories*, p. 255. Dainelli, *Buddhists And Glaciers of Western Tibet*, p. 265.

[9] Francke, *Antiquities*, II, p. 109.

held extensive properties.[1] According to Cunningham's estimate of the revenue of Ladakh before the Dogra conquest, 4,000 households out of a total of 24,000 were assigned to the monasteries.[2] The lands of the monasteries were cultivated by the working lamas[3] and often these were given to farmers on metayer basis, that is the tillers handed over half the produce to the monasteries and were exempted from taxation and *begar* or free carriage.[4]

In order to maintain the large establishment of monks and pay the expenses of ceremonials, these monasteries had various avenues of income. Its own endowment lands were the primary source of income.[5] It received alms from the laity and also derived a good income by engaging in trade, and advancing money and grain on loan to the laity.[6] Though sometimes the poorer classes were heavily in debt to these religious institutions, yet they were not harsh creditors. The Editor of the Imperial Gazetteer of India remarked :

> When the debtor is hopelessly involved, the monastery takes possession of half of his land for a period of three years. The land is restored to the debtor and the debt written off. The monastery will never sue a debtor, nor is land permanently alienated for debt.[7]

Monastic Organisation

In each big monastery, there were two kinds of lamas, who worked under two different head lamas. In spiritual matters *skushok* was the head. To assist him there was a *Lolon* or abbot, one *Chos Timpa*, or a controller of the lama meetings, and *chhomspon* or the director of the religious dances.[8] These spiritual monks devoted their time to prayers, and in holding religious congregations and ritual dances.

[1] *Ibid*, p. 110. Sven Hedin, *Trans-Himalaya : Discoveries and Adventures in Tibet*, III, p. 63. Knight, *Three Empires*, p. 193.

[2] Cunningham, *Ladak*, p. 270.

[3] G.E. Hutchinson, *The Clear Mirror: A Pattern of Life in Goa and Indian Tibet*, p. 87.

[4] Knight, *Three Empires*, p. 200.

[5] Thomson, *Western Himalaya*, p. 185.

[6] *FDSC*, 31 December 1847, No. 130.

[7] *IGI, (1909), Provincial Series*, XVI, p. 101.

[8] Amar Nath, *Echo of the Unknown*, p. 197. Mohan Krishan Dhar, "The Land of the Lamas", *Kashmir*, March 1955, p. 74.

In temporal affairs, *Chhagzot* or *Chagzot* was the managerial head.[1] He was assisted by a *Nyerchhen* or a steward, a *Nyerpa* or a store-keeper, and *Phi-Nyer* or a farm steward.[2] Some of the *Chagzot* had good business powers and to some was also entrusted the administration of a small district around the monasteries.[3] These working monks attended to the temporal interests of the community, they cultivated land, carried trade, collected rent from the tenants of the monastery, travelled through the villages to beg alms for the brotherhood,[4] and advanced grain and money on loan.[5] In addition to these administrative duties, the working monks performed some military functions also. According to Cunningham, in eastern Ladakh, forts were 'castellated monasteries', the defence of which was entrusted to the monks assisted by a few of the armed peasantry, who performed the duty by turns, under the command of one dignified with the title of *Kharpon*.[6] Sometimes high lamas participated in the affairs of state;[7] in 1848, when Lieutenant Henry Strachey visited Hanle, he found the whole district "under the secular control as well as religious ministration of the Prior and his monks."[8] The paucity of information available makes it impossible to tell how and by whom these working monks were appointed, what was their tenure of office and to whom were they responsible.

Monastic Orders or Sects

A group of monasteries with a common organisation and doctrine formed one monastic order or sect. Each order acknowledged one master as founder and interpreter of its doctrines. In

[1]Drew, *J & K Territories*, p. 256. Doughlas, *Beyond the High Himalayas*, p. 197.

[2]Amar Nath, *Echo of the Unknown*, p. 197. Mohan Krishan Dhar, *loc. cit*, p. 74.

[3]Drew, *J & K Territories*, p. 256.

[4]Lyall, *Kangra Settlement Report*, p. 129. W.S.R. Hodgson, *Twelve years of a Soldier's life in India*, p. 111

[5]Knight, *Three Empires*, p. 129. *IGI, 1909, Provincial Series*, XVI, p. 99.

[6]Cunningham, *Ladak*, p. 279. See also *FDSP*, 31 December 1847, No. 130.

[7]Francke, *Antiquities*, II, p. 123. See also Ram Rahul, *The Government and Politics of Tibet*, p. 102.

[8]Strachey to Lawarence, 25 September 1847; *FDSC*, 31 December 1847, No. 130.

Ladakh, there were many monastic orders, most important being those of the bKa-rgyud-pa, with its main monastery at Hemis and the dGe-lugs-pa, with its main monastery at Spituk.[1] The bKa-rgyud-pa or the Red sect lamas considered the Dharma Raja or Great Lama of Bhutan as their head and wore red clothes. It controlled majority of the monasteries including, the one at Hemis which was the richest and most influential in Ladakh. The followers of this order were less ascetic than the Gelugpa or Yellow sect lamas: they were allowed to marry and engage in trade and farming. All the monasteries belonging to this order, in whichever country they were situated, looked to the Dharma Raja of Bhutan as the spirtual head.[2] As this dignitary headed the mother monastery, all the abbots of the monasteries of this order were appointed by an order given in his name.[3] The monasteries of the same order were also linked by what may be called the chain of affiliation. For instance the abbot of the Guru Ghantal monastery in Lahul sent a yearly tribute of about rupees thirty, half in cash and half in goods to the abbot of the Togna monastery in Ladakh, who forwarded it with other tributes on his own account to that of Kangri Donjan near the Lake Manasarowar in Tibet, whence it went in the same way to the head monastery of Pangtang Dechinling in Bhutan.[4] Generally, the kings of Ladakh were the patrons of this sect. For this patronage, sometimes they paid a heavy price. We are told by the *Chronicles of Ladakh*, that one of the causes of the Tibetan-Ladakhi-Mughal war of 1681-84, in which Ladakh lost all the territory to the west of Mayum pass was religion.[5]

The Gelugpa or the Yellow sect was founded in Tibet by Tsong Khapa (1357-1417 AD).[6] He was a monk of exceptional intellectual attainments, religious devotion and proselytising ability. Being indignant at the vice and corruption of the monks of his time, at the superstitious practices and the rites of sorcery,

[1]For a sectwise list of monasteries in Ladakh, see Ramsay, *Western Tibet*, p. 83.

[2]*Gazetteer Kashmir and Ladakh*, 1890, p. 544.

[3]Lyall, *Settlement Report*, p. 129. See also, *Kangra DG*, 1883-84, II, p. 110.

[4]Lyall, *Settlement Report*, p. 129.

[5]For details, see *infra*, Chapter III.

[6]cf. H.E. Richardson, *Tibet And Its History*, p. 40.

which degraded Lamaism, Tsong Khapa undertook to purify it and restore the primitive cult as propounded by Lord Buddha.[1] He even sent a mission to Ladakh, where it was enthusiastically received by the Ladakhi King, Trak-bum-de (*c.* 1410-1440 AD).[2] Probably, as a result of this mission, the King adopted the doctrines of the reformed sect and issued the Mulbe edict aiming at abolishing the ritualistic practices of the Dards, especially animal sacrifices.[3] In 1578, Sonam Gyatso, the reincarnate Lama of the Yellow sect and a zealous missionary received the title of Dalai Lama[4] from Altan Khan of Tumed, the leading prince of Mongolia. Hereafter, the followers of this sect began to look to the Dalai Lama as their spiritual head and were ordained to lead a life of celebacy and asceticism.[5] The austerity, discipline, and spiritual quality of the Dalai Lama attracted the attention of some influential nobles of Tibet and kings of the neighbouring states. The last King of the first Ladakhi dynasty is also said to have sent rich presents to the first Dalai Lama.[6] The aura of religious supremacy of the Dalai Lama spread in all the neighbouring lands such as Ladakh, Nepal, Sikkim, Bhutan, Burma, Western China and Mongolia, and Lhasa came to be recognised as the Rome of the Buddhist world. When Ngawang Lobzang Gyatso, the Great Fifth Dalai Lama (1642-1682 AD), assumed temporal and religious powers, his religious supremacy, as well as his government appears to have been vaguely recognised by other Lamaist sects and governments of the neighbouring Tibetan speaking states.

The spiritual supremacy of the Dalai Lamas, sometimes influenced the policies of an immediate neighbouring country. Both

[1] *Ibid.* see also, L. De Milloue, "How the Temporal power of the Dalai Lama was founded", *IA*, XXXIII (1904), p. 311.

[2] *IHQ*, XV, Supplement (1939), p. 114.

[3] Francke, "The Rock Inscriptions of Mulbhe", *IA*, XXXV (1906), pp. 75-76.

[4] Literally, 'Tale' (Dalai) means 'Ocean'; later on this title was applied retrospectively to his two predecessors. Richardson, *Tibet And Its History*, p. 41.

[5] cf. J.D. Cunningham, "Notes on Moorcroft's Travels etc., *JASB*, XII, Pt. I (1844), p. 187. Knight, *Three Empires*, p. 127.

[6] *IHQ*, XXIV, No. 3 (Sept. 1948), p. 219.

Ladakh[1] and Bhutan,[2] on some occasions appealed to Lhasa for the settlement of their ruler's royal succession. We also find members of the royal family of Ladakh, performing the funeral rites of the kings at Lhasa.[3] The abbot of Hemis monastery in Ladakh, though a follower of the Red sect, many times visited Lhasa and Tashilhunpo in connection with receiving ordination for a batch of novices.[4] This recognition of religious supremacy of the Dalai Lama by the independent rulers of the neighbouring states has often been called, though quite erroneously, political supremacy of the former over the latter.

Having perused various aspects of the religion of the Ladakhis we may now sum up the influences of this religion. In Ladakh, it played a very important part in the daily and social life of the poeple. In the midst of the ignorant Ladakhis, who were full of superstitious veneration and fear the lama was a universal man, the savant par excellence: he was doctor, astrologer, sorcerer, educator and teacher. Further, by segregating a large proportion of youngmanhood into monks and an enforced celebacy, it checked the increase in population. This social consequence indirectly led to the economic prosperity of the Ladakhis.

In political affairs, Lamaism, did not assume the same position as it did in Tibet. True, high lamas often participated in the affairs of state, yet all officials of the government were laymen. This was unlike Tibet, where the administration was run by the monk officials. Further, unlike the Dalai Lama of Tibet, who was an incarnate Lama and the supreme controller of spiritual and temporal affairs, the supreme ruler of Ladakh was a lay king.

THE STATE AND THE GYALPO

Very little is known about the structure of the Ladakhi Government before the Dogra conquest. Various travellers, men of pluck and courage imbued with the spirit of adventure and new explorations, who visited this Himalayan principality and

[1]cf. Francke, *Antiquities*, II, p. 121.
[2]See L. Petech, *China and Tibet in the Early 18th Century*, pp. 145-46.
[3]*IHQ*, XXIV, No. 3 (Sept. 1948), pp. 220, 227.
[4]*Ibid*, pp. 229-230.

have thrown a flood of light on the social, geographical and economic aspects of the country are sadly silent on the administrative set-up. In the chronicles of Ladakh and writings of William Moorcroft, we find only stray and inconclusive references. Alexander Cunningham is the only author, who gives some details, but in some respects his observations are incomplete and self-contradictory. Thus, in the absence of any treatise and adequate source-material, it is difficult to present a comprehensive and detailed picture of the administration of Ladakh under its own kings. Here an attempt is made to draw only a general outline.

The nature of government was a mild despotism.[1] The head of the state was King, popularly known in Ladakh as *Gyalpo* (rGyal-po). His office was hereditary and for centuries he was a descendant in the same family. Leh was the capital of the country.

In running the central government, the King was assisted by a council of officers. The constitution of this council has been variously described. The *Chronicles of Ladakh* tell us that this council was made of three grades of officials. The first were the chief ministers (*bKah-blons*) in number four or five and hereditary; the second, the ministers (*blon-po*), hereditary, and also few in number, and the third, the elders (*rgangsum*), three or four persons of some standing and experience especially selected.[2] The council in the form described above was established by King Nyi-ma Nam-gyal (*c.* 1705-1734).[3] Sometimes, the King and his group of officers took counsel with important monks.[4]

According to Cunningham and Moorcroft, the conduct of affairs was generally entrusted to the Prime Minister or Kahlon.[5] He was also styled as "*the minister*", or *Bangki Kahlon*,

[1] Cunningham, *Ladak*, p. 257. H.D. Torrens, *Travels in Ladak, Tartary and Kashmir*, p. 187.

[2] Note by K. Marx in Francke, *Antiquities*, II, p. 123.

[3] *Ibid.*

[4] cf. Francke, *Antiquities*, II, pp. 123, 126. *IHQ*, XV, Supplement (1939), pp. 149-50 et passim.

[5] Cunningham, *Ladak*, p. 257 Moorcroft, *Travels* 1, p. 334. *Gazetteer Kashmir and Ladakh*, 1890, p. 534.

or "the powerful minister[1]". Other chief officers, who took part in running the central government were *Nuna* (or *Nono*) *Kahlon* or deputy minister;[2] *Lompos* (blon-po) or chief municipal and military officers and governors of towns, *Mak-pon* or "Commander-in-chief", *Chagsot* or "Lord high treasurer", *Shakspon* or "Chief Justice", *Kharimpons* or "Magistrates", *Kaka-Tadsi* or head-master of the horse, and *Chagsi-gopa* or *Kotwal*, an officer equivalent to that of the Mayor.[3] In addition to participating in the administration of the central government, sometime some of these officers were petty rulers of districts. When Moorcroft visited Ladakh in 1820, Nono Kahlon was the governor of Mulbe, and perhaps was the same person as the Kahlon of Purig.[4]

About the appointment of the Prime Minister, Cunningham wrote that this office was almost hereditary and was restricted to a member of one of the families of the principal *Kahlons* or governors of districts. His choice was determined as in other countries, either by royal popularity and successful intrigue, or by greater popularity and superior abilities. Possession however gave so firm a grasp of power, that the office was usually retained in the family for several generations.[5] The apparent power of the Prime Minister was absolute, but his real power was much curbed by the wide-spread authority of the monastic establishments, and by the partial independence of the petty *Gyalpos* and district *Kahlons*. The last Prime Minister before the Dogra conquest was Ngorub Stanzin, who had married King's daughter, and was a petty *Gyalpo* of the Chimra Valley.[6]

From the events described in the *Chronicles of Ladakh*, the relative power of King and Prime Minister seems to have varied. When the King was strong, he overruled his *Kahlon* and

[1]Cunningham, *Ladak*, pp. 258-59.

[2]*Ibid.* Moorcroft, *Travels*, I, p. 334. J.D. Cunningham, however wrote that the meaning of Nuna or Nono was not deputy, but it was simply a title of respect, and as such was applied very generally. *JASB*, XIII, Pt. I (1884), p. 245.

[3]Cunningham, *Ladak*, p. 259. Moorcroft, *Travels*, I, p. 335. *Gazetteer Kashmir and Ladakh*, 1890, p. 535.

[4]Moorcroft, *Travels*, I, p. 248; II, 18-19.

[5]cf, *Ladak*, p. 258.

[6]Cunningham, *Ladak*, p. 258.

council of officers. Sen-ge-Nam-gyal (*c.* 1600-1645) never allowed anyone else to override his opinion and retained all the powers of government in his own hands.[1] In the case of Nyima Nam-gyal (*c.* 1705-34), his *Kahlon*, who was a nobleman of Gya, "began to nibble away the royal power" and appropriated lands in places as far as Purig. Further, instead of sending his younger sons to the church, he gave them lands.[2] About Tse-pal-Nam-gyal (*c.* 1790-1834, 1840-41), the last independent King of Ladakh, it is reported that:

> with the officials of the old regime he could not agree. This King took the privy seal from the Prime Minister (to the palace) and himself consulted with the headmen of villages, lords etc., all men of new type. The noble families he did not attend to. The king of Zanskar, the minister of Burig, and others were kept in Ladakh imprisoned. The new men that stood before him were made governors of the palace, and everywhere the old customs were destroyed.[3]

The administration of districts and towns was in the hands of hereditary chiefs, which once had been independent rulers. Under this category, Cunningham mentioned the *Gyalpos* of Nubra, Gya, Spiti, Zanskar, Pashkym, Sod, Suru and Hembabs or Dras.[4] The titles of these officials varied in different districts. The petty *Gyalpos* and *Kahlons* were also called *Depons* or "district Chiefs" or *Tanzins*.[5] In western Ladakh, where Mohammaden elements predominated, they were known as *jo*.

These chieftains were also *Kharpons* or Commanders of forts,

[1] *IHQ*, XV, Supplement (1939), pp. 149-50.

[2] Francke, *Antiquities*, II, pp. 226-27. Ippolito Desideri, who visited Ladakh in 1715 AD also tells us that the son of the Prime Minister was Governor of either Lama Yuru or Bazgo. cf. F. De. Fillippi, ed. *An Account of Tibet—The Travels of Ippolito Desideri* (1712-1727), pp. 76, 378.

[3] Francke, *Antiquities*, II, p. 125. This King may have been active during the first few years of his reign; when Moorcroft journeyed to Ladakh in 1820-22, about the King he remarked : "The character of the Raja is a compound of timidity, sensuality and indolence. He gives up the reins of government wholly to the Kahlon and except on occasions of festivity or of ceremonies connected with religion, confines himself almost wholly to his houses of which in different parts of the country he has several suited to the difference of the season. (Moorcroft to G. Swinton Secretary to Govt., 6 February 1822, *FDPC*, 20 September 1822, No. 68).

[4] cf. Cunningham, *Ladak*, p. 258.

[5] *Ibid*, p. 259. Moorcroft, *Travels*, I, 325.

and exercised many powers. They heard cases of judicial nature and dispensed justice. The *Gobas* or headmen of the villages under their jurisdiction, in running the local administration were responsible to them. At the time of emergency, the *Kharpons* raised local levies and arranged to supply allotted quota of soldiers to form the militia. In addition, as referred to earlier, some of these chieftains also took part in the central administration.

It appears that generally the administration of towns and districts in central Ladakh was in the hands of local hereditary chiefs. But in the case of districts situated at the fringes of the empire, such as Dras and Spiti, officials sent from the central Government also exercised some powers. In Spiti, there was a *Nono* or local chief, but in addition an official of the Gyalpo who visited Spiti to collect the revenue at the time of harvest, also exercised some authority.[1]

In Dras, there was a local ruler (*Jo*), and a *Kharpon* or governor sent from Leh. They collected the revenue, managed to pocket one-third, and sent the rest half to Leh and half to a neighbouring Kashmiri landlord (*Malik*) who shared the district with Ladakh; also the *Nono* Kahlon had authority to raise contributions in the district towards the expense of building a fort.[2]

The local administration or government of villages was in hands of village headmen and elders known as *Gobas* or *Mipons* or *Grong-pons*. The headman performed some judicial, revenue and military functions. He was under the control of petty chiefs or minister in-charge of his district. But in the case of villages, directly under the control of the King, in revenue matters, the village headman was accountable to the Phygzed, or Lord High Treasurer. The latter submitted such accounts to the Prime Minister, who was the keeper of the privy purse of the King and his family.[3]

[1]Moorcroft, *Travels*, II, p. 69. Gerard, *Account of Koonawur*, p. 147. *Kangra DG*, 1897, Pts. II to IV, p. 76.

[2]Moorcroft, *Travels*, II, pp. 41-42. Francke, *Antiquities*, II, p. 181. *JRAS*, VII (1843), p. 286.

[3]Cunningham, *Ladak*, pp. 260, 262, 275-77.

Much information is not available about the various departments of the central government under the native kings of Ladakh. However, some scattered and tantalizing references are found about the army.

There was no standing army in Ladakh. Every family or house throughout the country was obliged to send one ready-armed soldier at the call of the government.[1] The petty *Kahlons*, *Lonpos* and *Gobas* also furnished various number of soldiers from their respective districts, towns and villages. In 1820-22, when Moorcroft visited Ladakh, Banka Kahlon, whose district was comprised of seventy villages, used to send seven hundred armed men into the field when required.[2] Cavalary was formed of all those persons who had horses whereas the remainder formed the infantry.[3] Artillery consisted of matchlocks, though these were not sufficient in number; in 1820-22, ten men had one matchlock.[4] The arms were swords, lances, matchlocks, bows, arrows and shields.

Every soldier was responsible to arrange his own food. For this each man was generally attended by another male member of his house or family, who carried the joint provisions on his back during the daily marches, while the soldier usually carried his arms; occasionally, they relieved one another. Under this arrangement, in case of death also, the state had a substitute at hand, while the family preserved the arms, clothes and horse (if he had one) of the dead, all of which otherwise would have been lost.[5]

The *Chronicles of Ladakh* allude that the position of a general or *Makpon* was usually conferred upon a *Kahlon* or *Lonpo* at the beginning of a campaign.[6] Other military titles such as *Stong-pon* and *Gyapon* were also conferred on the different *Kahlons* and *Gobas* according to the numerical strength of soldiers

[1] *Ibid*, p. 275. Moorcroft, *Travels*, I, p. 335.
[2] Moorcroft, *Travels*, I, 425.
[3] Cunningham, *Ladak*, p. 276.
[4] Moorcroft, *Travels*, I, 336.
[5] Cunningham, *Ladak*, p. 278. *Gazetteer of Kashmir and Ladakh*, 1890, p. 538.
[6] Francke, *Antiquities*, II, pp. 113-127, 128, 238, 239, 240, 258. Cunningham (*Ladak*, p. 276), however says that this "Makpon or Commander-in-Chief was either a member of the royal family or one of the principal Kahlons."

furnished by their respective districts and villages.

There were small castles throughout the kingdom which played important part in the defence of the country. These castles were controlled by local governors (*Blonpo*) who were also designated as *Kharpons* or Commanders of forts. In Western Ladakh, castles of Pashkym and Sod, at the time of Zorawar Singh's invasion in 1834, were well fortified and offered stiff resistence to the Dogra army. In Eastern Ladakh, however, forts were 'castellated monasteries', the defence of which was entrusted to the monks, assisted by a few of the armed peasantry.

Thus we find that in Ladakh there was no standing and centralised army; it was an army or militia based upon the military duties of local chiefs. This militia was not very reliable, took time to assemble, was undisciplined and ill-armed, and being composed of peasantry, could not be kept under arms for a long period. As soon as the war for which they were summoned was over, the militiamen returned to their homes.

Nevertheless, notwithstanding these drawbacks, this system of gathering militia appears to have suited well to the then Himalayan kingdom of Ladakh. The army thus collected was strong enough to repel all attacks of their immediate neighbours such as Baltistan, Rudok and Gartok, who were as ill-organized and unsoldierly as the Ladakhis themselves. But, the latter were bound to be defeated by a well-equipped and better-organized army such as that of the Dogras.

Administration Under the Dogras (1834-46)

Although Wazir Zorawar Singh conquered Ladakh in 1834, the state was not annexed until 1842, when the Ladakhi Gyalpo was permanently deposed. From 1834 to 1846, Ladakh was ostensibly under the suzerainty of the Sikh Maharaja but its actual administration was under the control of Raja Gulab Singh, who assumed all the prerogatives and crown lands of the Ladakhi King and became the chief trader in Ladakh.

After 1842, the state was divided into five sub-divisions or districts[1] and each district was placed under the control of a

[1]These districts were : Ladakh (central district around Leh), Zanskar, Kargil, Dras and Nubra.

Thanadar who exercised military command as well as civil authority. They were independent of each other, and were responsible to Raja Gulab Singh.[1] Generally speaking, the administration was run on old lines. However, unlike the past, Raja Gulab Singh imposed a tax on the monasteries[2] and introduced death sentence on the slaughter of kine. In the early years of their rule, the Dogras put to death about eight persons in the different districts of Ladakh who violated this law.[3] For the maintenance of law and order, they constructed forts at important and strategic places such as Dras, Pashkym, Kargil, Suru and Leh. At all these places were stationed small garrisons well-equipped with guns and matchlocks.

In case of Spiti, for four years, i.e. from 1839-1842, the *Thanadar* of Ladakh took rupees 2,000, two ponies and twenty-five sheep annually. For the next three years i.e. from 1843-45, the cash was reduced to rupees 1,031 but 100 iron crowbars were added and the number of sheep increased to sixty.[4]

The Dogra rule was not without advantages to the Ladakhis. First, because of their conquest of Ladakh, centuries-old plundering expeditions which the Baltis and the Ladakhis had led on each other stopped for ever. This eased the tension on the borders of the two states, and the people now no longer lived in dread of each other. Secondly, Zorawar Singh and his successors had taken pains to construct roads and other arteries connecting important places in the country. This benefited the Ladakhis because their principal means of livelihood were derived from the transport of merchandise. The better means of communication facilitated the work of the labourers. Thirdly, the introduction of forceful Dogra rule brought security to the people; there was complete extinction of theft and other crimes. Finally, the Dogra rule gradually opened Ladakh to the outside world. Hither-to-fore this mountain-locked state had not felt the impact of modern civilization. In this context, Alexan-

[1]Hashmat Ali, *Tarikh-i-Jammu wa Riasat-hai Maftuha Maharaja Gulab Singh* (in Urdu), p. 421.

[2]The total sum paid by these religious establishments to the state amounted to Rs. 6,300 annually. cf. Cunningham, *Ladak*, p. 272.

[3]*Ibid*, p. 268.

[4]*JASB*, XIX, No. VI (1850), p. 438. *Kangra DG*, 1883-84, II, p. 146.

der Cunningham, the only writer who gives an over-all picture of the Dogra administration of Ladakh from 1842-46 observes:

...the measures which Maharaja Gulab Singh has taken for the maintenance of his power in Ladakh are judicious and effective. Many people grumble, but the dissatisfaction is principally confined to the upper classes who have lost their power...To the lower classes the change of government has in some respects been of very decided benefit, for although they may now pay directly a large amount than formerly to the state, yet indirectly they pay a less sum, as there is now only one duty throughout the country in place of the numerous charges which were formerly exacted by all the district Kahlons and petty Gyalpos.[1]

[1] *Ladak*, pp. 282-83.

Chapter Three

HISTORICAL CONSPECTUS

THE POLITICAL history of Ladakh is not easy to treat; there are no sources extent on this history before the tenth century AD. The chronicles of Ladakh upto this period deal with cosmogony and have no historical value. With the establishment, however, in the 10th century of the first Ladakhi dynasty of Tibetan origin, more light begins to shed. Yet it is not until the second half of the 15th century when the Namgyal dynasty came into power, that Ladakhi chronicles become of some historical value. For the sake of convenience, this survey is divided into two broad sub-divisions—the first dealing with the history of Ladakh from ancient times to the end of the reign of its first dynasty in the second half of the 15th century. Here the narrative is partly based on archaeological finds and partly on obscure and tantalizing references about Ladakh in the histories of neighbouring states. By piecing together all such references, we can construct, however tentative the framework, an outline of major developments in and around Ladakh.

The second part deals with the period from the latter half of the 15th century to the beginning of the nineteenth. With the coming into power of the second Ladakhi dynasty in the second half of the 15th century, chronicles of Ladakh expand both in scope and content. During this phase, the narrative is mainly based on Ladakhi chronicles, though histories of the neighbouring states of Kashmir, India, China and Eastern Turkestan also provide useful information about this Himalayan kingdom.

In this survey an attempt has also been made to discuss the relations of Ladakh with the surrounding countries. For the matter of that, we are concerned not only with Ladakh but also, quite briefly, with the history of, and developments in

such neighbouring territories as Baltistan, Kashmir, India, China and Central Asia.

The early history of Ladakh is shrouded in darkness. The Ladakhi chronicles like the chronicles of the Punjab Hill States, and of Tibet, trace the origin of the state to divine interposition and are full of fables and myths. The period in which the state seems to have been founded is lost in the mists of antiquity and cannot, with any degree of certainty, be easily ascertained.

The first glimpse of the country's history, thanks to the persistent and painstaking researches of Dr. A.H. Francke, belongs to the second century of the Christian era. At that time the population of Ladakh was composed of Dards, an Indo-Iranian tribe, and Ladakh itself formed a part of the great Kushan empire.[1] The Kushans, with their capital at modern Peshawar had established a strong empire in northern India and the adjacent territories. Under Kanishka (*c.* 120-162 AD), the Kushan empire was at the acme of its glory and his dominions included Baltistan, Ladakh, and some parts of Eastern and Western Turkestan.[2]

The reign of Kanishka was also the time for the spread of Buddhism. This religion had already been introduced in Ladakh and Turkestan during the reign of Asoka.[3] When Kanishka held his famous fourth Buddhist Council in Kashmir, it is believed that all his subjects including the Ladakhis took part in it. This further strengthened Buddhism in Ladakh and Khotan.

During the Kushan period, Gandhara art was also introduced in Ladakh, and it is believed that the Ladakhis of those days spoke a *Prakrit* dialect. Even in Baltistan, which was situated half-way between Khotan and Ladakh, the *Kharoshthi* script was in vogue.[4]

[1]This is proved by the *Kharoshthi* and *Brahmi* inscriptions which Dr. Francke discovered at Khalatse in Ladakh. See A.H. Francke, "Notes on Khotan and Ladakh", *I A*, LVII (1929), p. 110. See also *Archaeological Survey of India Annual Report, 1905-6*, p. 165.

[2]*IA*, LVII (1920), pp. 110-111.

[3]Cunningham, *Ladak*, p. 356.

[4]*IA*, LVII (1920), pp. 110-112.

From the decline of the Kushan empire at the end of the second century AD. till the 7th, not much is known about Ladakh. It is believed that after the decadence of the Kushans, some of the areas under their control were conquered by other powers, whereas some fell under the control of local chieftains; China conquered all the territories in Eastern Turkestan, whereas in Ladakh many princedoms under local chieftains sprang up. Francke, summing up the post-Kushan situation in Ladakh wrote:

> As regards politics, Western Tibet or Ladakh did not come under the Chinese, when the power of the Kushanas declined. It was apparently governed by local chiefs, whose names have occasionally been preserved in inscriptions and tales. Thus, at Khalatse, according to a Gupta inscription, a certain Satyawati (or Srima-Charpati), and according to oral reports, fifty or sixty miles higher up the Indus Valley, a certain Suryawati, are mentioned.[1]

In the 7th century commenced a vigorous triangular struggle among the Tibetans, the Chinese and the Arabs to dominate Central Asia, which continued for another hundred years. In order to understand the role, which Ladakh may have played in this contest, it appears worthwhile to discuss this struggle briefly.

The three main contestants as pointed out were China, Tibet and the Arabs, and the issue was the domination of Central Asia. In China, on the ruins of the short-lived Sui dynasty(589-604), the powerful Ta'ng dynasty (618-907) came into being, which embarked on series of conquests. In the west, in 630 AD Chinese Emperor Ta'ng Tai Tsung (627-649 AD) conquered the whole of Eastern Turkestan, and established "Four Garrisons" at Kashgar, Khotan, Kucha and Karashahr. In the next two decades, he extended his power to Western Turkestan also. The great land routes passing through Central Asia were now more firmly under Chinese control than at any time since the Han.[2]

In Tibet, in the seventh century, various tribes were organised into a single state for the first time. Before that Tibet had been parcelled out among a number of clans each headed by its

[1] *IA*, LVII (1920), p. 150.

[2] For details, see K.S. Latourette, *The Chinese; Their History and Culture*, pp. 181-83.

chief. Soon after its unification, the Tibetans embarked upon a policy of large scale military expansion. Nomadic and semi-settled tribes of Tibetan and Turkestan stock, who inhabited the land between Tibet and China were the first targets of the Tibetan forces. After establishing their sway over them, the Tibetans pressed on into China, and in 635 their young King, Song tsen Gampo, demanded and received a Chinese princess as his bride.[1] In 670, Tibet defeated China and acquired control over Eastern Turkestan. But this conquest was short-lived, for in 692, a Chinese expeditionary force reconquered the "Four Garrisons."

The Tibetans turned their attention in other directions also. They acquired control over Nepal and their activities extended on to the other side of the Himalayan crest.[2] Western Tibet (*i.e.* the territory west of the Mayum pass), which hitherto was not under the control of Lhasa was also conquered. In their westward drive and as a result of their northern campaigns, the Tibetans came in contact with the Turks and in the last quarter of the 7th century concluded a military alliance with some local rulers of Turkestan against China.[3] Soon thereafter, Baltistan, which was the key to Turkestan and the possession of which might have enabled the Tibetans to make flank attacks on the Chinese defensive system in Central Asia, became the chief arena of struggle between Tibet and China.

This powerful position of the brave mountaineers of Tibet seriously endangered Chinese sovereignty over Turkestan. This menace, which continued to trouble China upto the beginning of the 9th century was further accentuated by the appearance of the crescent on the horizon. The Arabs, who had started on their phenomenal career of conquest under the impulse of Islam, were now beginning to make themselves felt in Persia and Central Asia. They also became allies of Tibet and throughout the 8th century, made a common cause against China.[4]

In the first half of the 8th century, China also found an ally

[1]See Richardson, *Tibet And Its History*, pp. 28-29.

[2]*Ibid*, pp. 29-30. M. Rahula Sankrityayana, *History of Central Asia: Bronze Age (2000 BC) to Chengiz Khan (1227 AD)*, p. 73.

[3]Richardson, *Tibet And Its History*, p. 60.

[4]*Ibid.*

in Kashmir which for about quarter of a century baulked Tibetan expansion into Turkestan. We learn from the Annals of T'ang dynasty that King Tchen-lo-pi of Kashmir, identified with Chandrapida (*c.* 711-19 AD) sent an embassy to the Chinese court soliciting aid against the Arabs who were now threatening his territories.[1] There is no knowing what the Chinese reaction to this request was, but in 722, 4,000 Chinese soldiers presumably in conjunction with the Kashmiris, entered Baltistan, and repulsed the Tibetans, who were then endeavouring to control the passes leading into Turkestan.[2] Ten years later, the great Kashmiri King, Lalitaditya Muktapida (*c.* 724-761 AD), with the help of other Indian rulers raided the northern and eastern countries and defeated the Dardis and the Tibetans.[3] Muktapida's ambassador to the Chinese court is said to have invited the auxiliary Chinese force of two hundred thousand for which his master proposed to establish a camp on the shores of Mahapadma or Wular lake.[4] But as the Kashmir King could not get direct and substantial aid from China, in 737 another Tibetan invasion occurred, when they expelled the Kashmiris from this crucial pass area and formed a junction with the Arabs. In 747 the fortunes of war again changed when Kao Hsien-chin, the Chinese general in charge of the "Four Garrisons" in Eastern Turkestan, successfully led an expedition from Kashgar, across high and difficult passes, into the Pamirs and the Hindu Kush to the Upper Oxus and Baltistan. His object of breaking the Tibeto-Arab coalition was achieved and he established a Chinese garrison in Gilgit.

Nevertheless, the Chinese success was temporary for in 751 Kao Hsien-chih suffered a crushing defeat at the hands of the Arabs, and the Chinese were compelled to withdraw from Gilgit as well as from their other possessions in the extreme west.[1] This defeat further shook the foundations of the Chinese

[1]Ma-twan-lin, "Thien-chu-India", trans, James Burgess, *IA*, IX (1880), p. 21. See also, P.N. Kaul Bamzai, *A History of Kashmir*, p. 110.

[2]*IHQ*, XV, Supplement (1939), p. 101.

[3]*Ibid.* See also, *Kalhana's Rajatarangini*, English trans. by M.A. Stein, I, p. 91, Introduction.

[4]*Rajatarangini, op. cit*, I, p. 91.

[5]Pandit Daya Ram Sahni "References to the Bhottas or Bhauttas in the Rajatarangini of Kashmir" (Notes from Tibetan sources by A. H. Francke), *IA*, XXXVII (1908), p. 181.

dominion in the Tarim basin. In Kashmir, King Lalitaditya's empire did not last long after his death about 760. The Tibetans, after establishing their control over Baltistan penetrated farther and farther into Central Asia and China. In the west, Tibet controlled Gilgit, Hunza and Swat; in the east, Tibetan generals and ministers occupied and administered almost the whole of Kansu and the greater part of Szechwan and northern Yunnan.[1] In 763, they even captured Ch'angan, western capital of the T'ang's where the Tibetan commanders crowned a T'ang prince, as emperor of China.[2] The rule of this puppet, however lasted for fifteen days, but the Tibetan power had reached its climax.

In the last decade of the eighth century, Tibetan power began to decline. This was mainly due to the fact that its erstwhile friends, being apprehensive of Tibet's unchecked expansion, turned into enemies. In the east, the Shan Kings of Nan Chao (Yunnan), hitherto allies of Tibet, entered into peace alliances with China in 791, and defeated a strong Tibetan army sent to punish them.[3] In the west, the Caliph of Baghdad, Harun al-Rashid (785-809 AD.) entered into a friendly alliance with China in 798 and soon attacked Tibetan possessions. Although Tibet, without much loss of territory, withstood this joint Chinese-Arab attack, the expansionist policies of the Tibetans were effectively checked, and hereafter, they were mainly on the defensive.[4]

The Arabs and the Chinese, because of mutual dissensions could not make much headway against the Tibetans. By a strange coincidence, in the first half of the 9th century, the three great powers, which played a prominent role in shaping the history of Central Asia were now on the decline. The Caliphate, soon after the death of Harun ul-Rashid in 809, disappeared from the political life of Turkestan. In China, the T'ang empire, though it was yet to lose the mandate of Heaven,

[1] cf. Richardson, *Tibet And Its History*, p. 30.

[2] *IHQ*, XV, Supplement (1939), p. 66. Sir Charles Bell, *Tibet: Past and Present*, p. 28. C.P. Fitzgerald, *China: a Short Cultural History*, p. 299. See also, Tieh-Tseng Li, *Tibet: Today and Yesterday*, p. 6.

[3] *IHQ*, XV, Supplement (1939), p. 73.

[4] *Ibid*, pp. 73-74.

was also on the verge of extinction. Tibet, exhausted by the long and desultory warfare was dissolving into tiny fragments and soon ceased to exist as a strong power. Under the force of circumstances, China and Tibet concluded a peace settlement in 822,[1] and thus ended this long drawn-out triangular struggle.

In the absence of any clear reference about Ladakh in any of the chronicles, it is difficult to describe the exact fate of this Himalayan principality during the 7th, 8th and 9th ceuturies. But it is apparent that because of its geographical situation, it could never keep aloof; at least Tibetan armies, while conquering territories to the north and west of Ladakh, must have moved through the latter. Furthermore, it is assumed that about the middle of the eighth century, when the political horizon of Tibet had expanded and it established suzerainty over Western Tibet and Baltistan, the fate of Ladakh could not have been dissimilar. According to Dr Petech, the celebrated Italian scholar:

Ladakh did not constitute an integral part of the Tibetan State, but must have been considered as a dependency, or even as a kind of colony, since, like the whole of Western Tibet, it remained outside the territorial organization of the Tibetan army as described in *Padma-lkai-tanying*, Part V, Chapter 4.[2]

Whatever may have been been the pattern of political relationship between Lhasa and Leh during this period, it is certain that Tibetan control of Ladakh was quite nominal and nor did it last long. When Kyi-de Nyi-ma-gon, early in the tenth century founded the Western Tibetan kingdom and became the ruler of Ladakh also, he did not find any trace of Tibetan rule in Ladakh.[3] The first mention of Tibetan people in Ladakh, we find in Hudud al'-Alam, a geographical treatise composed in 982-83.[4] In this connection Prof. Petech observes that the "earliest tangible token of the existence of Tibetans in Ladakh are the inscription of Alchi, dating no further back than the 11th or

[1]The text of this treaty together with the additional documents was inscribed in Tibetan and Chinese on stone pillars. For an English version, see Richardson, *Tibet And Its History*, Appendix 1, pp. 244-45.

[2]*IHQ*, XV, Supplement (1939), p. 102.

[3]*Ibid*, p. 103.

[4]*Hudud al'-Alam* (The Religions of the World), tr. by V. Minorsky, p. 93.

12th century."[1] Thus, it appears that the process of "Tibetanization" began in Ladakh after the establishment of a Tibetan dynasty there.

By the end of the 9th century as pointed out earlier, Tibet had plunged into a state of anarchy and the various chieftains were engaged in endless hostilities. Under these circumstances about 900 AD, Kyi-de Nyi-ma-gon, a descendant of one branch of the old ruling Tibetan dynasty was compelled with a small party of his followers to take refuge in West Tibet, where he was well received by the King of Purang.[2] Within a short period, presumably with the help of Purang, Kyi-de Nyi-ma-gon, not only conquered the whole of West Tibet, but also asserted his sway over Ladakh,[3] Zanskar, Spiti and Lahul. Thus were laid the foundations of the first independent Ladakhi dynasty which continued to govern the country till about the middle of the 15th century.

The vast kingdom, a remarkable achievement of Kye-de Nyi-ma-gon, did not long survive. Probably on his death around 930 AD, it was parcelled out among his three sons. According to Ladakhi chronicles, the eldest son Pal-gyi-gon received Ladakh and the Rudok area; the second, Tra-shi-gon, Guge and Purang; while the third, De-tsuk-gon was given Zanskar, Spiti and Lahul.[4]

The chronicles of Ladakh further describe the extent of territory secured by the eldest son. According to these Pal-gyi-gon received

Mar-yul of Mnah-ris, the inhabitants using black bows; Ru-thogs of the east and the gold mine of Hgog; nearer this way Lde-mchog-dkar-pe; at

[1] *IHQ*, XV, Supplement (1939), p. 104.

[2] Purang was a small state between the Mayum pass and the Kailash Range.

[3] Central district around Leh.

[4] Francke, *Antiquities*, II, p. 94. The chronicles of central Tibet, however state that the eldest son received Ladakh, the second son Guge and Zanskar, and the third Purang. But here the Ladakhi chronicles should be followed, as they were immediately concerned with these events. Further, as Dr. Petech points out, there is no evidence of an independent Purang state in this period, whereas the Zanskar chronicles assert that De-tsuk-gon, the younger brother, "became king of Pa-dam (Dpal-Idum) in Zanskar." (*IHQ*, XV, Supplement (1939) p. 108).

the frontier Ra-ba-dmar-po; Wamle, to the top of the pass of the Yi-mig rock; to the west to the foot of the Kashmir pass, from the cavernous stone upwards hither; to the north to the gold-mine of Hgog; all the places belonging to Rgya.[1]

The kings of this dynasty except Utpala (*c.* 1080-1110 AD), the seventh king, were weak and had little historical importance. Before his accession to the throne, Utpala was a petty chieftain, but after becoming king, he conquered many neighbouring territories. According to the Ladakhi chronicles during his reign: the united forces of Upper Ladakh and Gsam [Lower Ladakh] invaded Nun-ti [Kulu]. The King of Nun-ti bound himself by an oath, so long as the glaciers of Ti-se Kailasa do not melt away, nor Lake Ma-phan Manasarovar dry up, to pay tribute or dues. He also subjected Blo-bo [a district east of Guge] from Pu-hrans [Purang] downwards hither in the south the country of Bre-Sran (?) to the Lake Chu-la-me-hbar; (possibly Badrinath in Kumaun) in the west, from Ra-gan-hgrensin and stag-khu-tshur (two villages in Baltistan, West Skardo) upward higher; in the north from Ka-sus (?) upwards. (They all) paid an annual tribute and attended the Darbar (literally, see the king's face.)[2]

By the end of the 14th century, Muslim rule had established itself over Kashmir; its kings were anxious to extend their conquests in the north and east. In 1405, King Sikandar of Kashmir (1394-1416 AD), conquered Baltistan and adopted most brutal and ruthless means for converting its Buddhist population into Muslims. Not long after, during the reign of King Zainul Abidin (1420-1470 AD), Ladakh suffered two invasions from Kashmir.[3] One of these was not serious, but in the other, the Kashmiri forces not only ransacked Ladakh but Guge[4] also, and both acknowledged the suzerainty of Srinagar. However, it appears that Zain-ul Abidin had no intention of permanently occupying these areas and returned after collecting plunder and extorting tribute. Surprisingly, in the chronicles of Ladakh, there is no mention of Zain-ul-Abidin's invasion of Ladakh. On the contrary, these tell us that the Ladakhi King Lo-tro-chok-den (*c.* 1440-1470 AD) conquered the whole of Western Tibet and realised a rich booty or tribute from Guge.[5] Francke

[1]Francke, *Antiquities*, II, p. 94.

[2]*Ibid*, p. 96.

[3]cf. *IA*, XXXVII (1908), pp. 188-89.

[4]A small state in West Tibet. It was famous for its capital Tsaparang, and its royal temple and monastery at Toling.

[5]Francke, *Antiquities*, II, p. 101.

reconciling the commission with the facts, concludes that the Ladakhi King, defeated by the invaders, was forced to join them in their expedition to Guge, and then may have shared the plunder.[1]

It appears that during the reign of Zain-ul Abidin, Kashmir maintained its nominal sovereignty over Ladakh, and the Ladakhi King Lo-tro-chok-den depended on Kashmiri support for retaining royal power. But after the death of Zain-ul-Abidin in 1470 AD, when there was anarchy in Kashmir, Lo-tro-chok-den was also deposed and imprisoned alongwith his brothers by Lha-chen Bha-gan—a prince descending from a collatoral branch of the ruling family. With the deposition of Lo-tro-chok-den ended the first Ladakhi dynasty.[2]

Lha-chen Bha-gan (*c.* 1470-1500 AD), the founder of the Nam-gyal dynasty, taking advantage of internal disorder consequent on the death of Zain-ul-Abidin, re-established Ladakh as an independent state. Meanwhile, to bring the land again under its control, King Hasan Khan (1472-84 AD) of Kashmir, despatched two armies around 1480, who, thanks to their mutual dissensions, could not achieve much. For, while one was defeated, the other, after some initial successes, was forced to withdraw.[3]

In September 1532, Ladakh suffered one of its most disastrous invasions in the shape of the Mongol onslaught from the north. In 1532, Sultan Abu Sayed of Kashgar set out with his army for a holy war against the infidels of Tibet. Earlier, his Amirs had many times raided Ladakh,[1] yet the invasion of 1532 was carefully prepared and led by the Khan in person. One part of his army he placed under the control of his able commander Mirza Haider who, though a brave warrior, was a narrow-minded and fanatical Muslim. This contingent which was also accompanied by Prince Sikander Mirza, the Sultan's second son, took the old caravan route over the Karakoram and entered Nubra, the northern district of Ladakh.

[1]Francke, *Antiquities*, II, p. 101.
[2]*IHQ*, XV, Supplement (1939), p. 117.
[3]*IA*, XXXVII (1908), pp. 190-191.
[4]Mirza Muhammad Haider Dughlat, *Tarikh-i-Rashidi* (A History of the Moghuls of Central Asia), trans., E.D. Rose, ed., N. Elias, pp. 403-417.

The Khan himself had planned to take an eastern route; by starting from Khotan, he wanted to cross into Western Tibet by one of the direct routes.[1] But because of the scarcity of food and fodder and the advanced season, he abandoned that route and followed the same road by which his lieutenants had come.

Mirza Haider, after entering Nubra, plundered the inhabitants and forced them to embrace Islam. Yet there was resistance: the chiefs of Nubra under the leadership of the one Burkapa, retired within the castle of Mutadar,[2] and were besieged. Mirza Haider wrote:

On the appointed day, I approached the fort, (of Mutadar in Nubra) and the talons of Islam, seizing the hands of infidelity, the enemy were thrown into disorder and routed. Having deserted the fort, they fled in confusion and dismay, while the Musalmans gave them chase, as far as was possible, so that not one of these bewildered people escaped. Burkapa was slain, together with all his men; their heads formed a lofty minaret—and the vapour from the brains of the infidels of that country reached to the heavens. Thenceforth no one dared offer resistance.[3]

After this ghastly massacre, Mirza Haider moved down to Leh, where two rulers of Ladakh, 'Lata Jughdan' and 'Tashikun', hastened to wait on him.[4]

Meanwhile, severe winter set in and there was no place in Ladakh which could be regarded as suitable for winter quarters; so Kashmir was selected for the purpose. The Khan of Kashgar also joined Mirza Haider, but the former's health had been impaired by excessive drinking and *damgiri* or mountain sickness. The Khan was apprised of the decision of wintering in Kashmir, but as he was not strong enough to cross the high passes leading into the valley, it was decided that with 1,000 men, the Khan should proceed to Baltistan, which could be easily reached without causing *damgiri*.[5]

[1] *Ibid*, p. 420 fn.

[2] This place is probably Hundar, near the junction of the Nubra and Shyok rivers.

[3] *Tarikh-i-Rashidi*, p. 418.

[4] This observation of Mirza Haider roughly depicts the situation actually existing in Ladakh at that time. The country was then split between King Kra-sis-Nam-gyal ruling from Sheh, the Capital of Ladakh, over most of the territory, and the Yab-c'an-gyal-po Lha-dban-Nam-gyal ruling, under his brother's suzerainty over an unknown, but small area in Lower Ladakh. cf. *IHQ*, XV, Supplement (1939), p. 123.

[5] cf. *Tarikh-i-Rashidi*, pp. 417-21.

With the rest of his soldiers, numbering about 4,000 Mirza Haider descended into Kashmir and easily put down the feeble resistance offered by the Kashmiris.

Just then, in Nubra, which had borne the brunt of Mongol attack, revolt broke out against the invaders and the insurgents forced Mongol officials to flee the districts. It was after a good deal of trouble and some difficulty that the Mongols suppressed this insurrection. The Ladakhi King, Tra-shi Namgyal, who had connived at the conduct of the rebels was executed by the Mongols.[1] He was replaced by his brother's eldest son, Tshe-wang Nam-gyal (*c.* 1533-75 AD).

After spending the winter in Kashmir, towards the end of May 1533, Mirza Haider re-entered Ladakh. Time was now ripe for the conquest of Tibet. Haider was to attempt this conquest with Lhasa[2] as its objective and the Khan was to return to Kashgar.

The Mongol army set out from Leh on or about July 4, 1533 and with lightning speed moved into West Tibet. There was no resistance except at Kardung,[3] where a 'Rai of Hindustan',[4] with his 'Katar-dar infantry' reinforced the local populace and fought a battle.[5] He was finally defeated and the Mongol army

[1] *Ibid*, p. 423.

[2] Mirza Haider states that 'Ursang', which "Is the Kibla and Kaba of all Khitai and Tibet, and has vast idol temple", was his objective (*Tarikh-i-Rashidi*, pp. 411, 454). From this, it appears that he either refers to Lhasa and the Potala Palace of the Dalai Lama or Shigatse and the Panchen Lama's great monastery Tashilhunpo.

[3] A palce in Purang district, situated between Lake Rakastal and Taklakot.

[4] Mirza Haider's account, does not make it clear as to who this 'Rai of Hindustan' was. N. Elias, editor of *Tarikh-i-Rashidi*, conjectures that 'Katar-dar' (literally meaning small sword) may be 'Khukhri', a peculiar weapon of the Gurkhas and 'Rai (Raja) may be a king from Nepal, However the chronicles of Ladakh state that this chief was that of '*Hdzum-lan*' or Jumla. (Francke, *Antiquities*, II, p. 105). Jumla is a district in Western Nepal conterminous with Purang district of West Tibet. It is assumed that the Hindu Raja of Jumla, whose ancestors had once fled from Islamic persecution in India may have considered Mirza Haider's movements with apprehension, and thus rendered help to the natives of West Tibet.

[5] *Tarikh-i-Rashidi*, pp. 454-55. Here, it may be noted that Mirza Haider does not clarify as to who was victorious. From the circumstances it appears that the Mongols were defeated at least in one battle in which Haider's brother, Abdullah Mirza was cut to pieces.

further penetrated into Central Tibet but because of intense cold and shortage of victuals, it returned from 'Askabrak'.[1]

Paradoxical as it may seem, the Ladakhi chronicles have not a word to say about Mirza Haider's invasion. But it is understandable: all those events which proved humiliating to the Ladakhis have not been deliberately recorded. On the other hand, the chronicles mention that Tshe-wang

Going to war, while yet quite a young man, he conquered all the country from Nam-rins in the east.[2]

From this it appears that Mirza Haider, during his invasion of West Tibet might have taken his puppet, the Ladakhi King, with him.

In January 1534, when the Mirza arrived back in Ladakh, he was in straitened circumstances: his Tibetan expedition had taken a heavy toll of his soldiers, the survivors were suffering badly from frost-bite and had impaired healths; many of the Mongols left behind at Leh had fled to their country and the Khan, on his way back to Kashgar had already died. But to the Mirza's pleasant surprise, he was given every assistance by the people of Upper Ladakh, with those help he established his winter headquarters at Sheh,[3] the then capital of Ladakh.[4] He stayed in Ladakh for another two years and plundered Baltistan and Zanskar. The Ladakhis, realising their inability to oust the aggressors, now offered passive resistance—a formidable weapon in a land where everything was sparse. The Mongols also met with serious resistance at Suru, where Maulana Kudash, one of Haider's lieutenants, alongwith his soldiers was put to the sword. The Mirza confided, "although our forces numbered some 700 men, yet, on account of our poverty, and want of arms, we were unable to avenge him."[5]

Mirza Haider's Tibetan adventure was nearing its end. Rashid Sultan, the new Khan of Kashgar had begun his reign

[1] *Ibid*, p. 455. 'Askabrak' or 'Astakbark' is not identified on maps of Tibet, but as the Ladakhi chronicles (Francke, *Antiquities*, II, p. 105) allude, it may be Nam-rins (Ngam-ring), a post on the Ladakh-Lhasa trade route, a few day's journey west of Shigatse.

[2] Francke, *Antiquities*, II, p. 103.

[3] It is eight miles south-east of Leh on the Indus.

[4] *Tarikh-i-Rashidi*, p. 460.

[5] *Ibid*, p. 462.

by putting to death all those whom he suspected of plotting in favour of his brother, Sikandar. Mirza Haider feared that, since he was known to be on friendly terms with Sikandar, he also may not meet a similar fate ? Giving up the idea of returning to Kashgar, in 1536, he left for Badakhshan.

During their stay of about three and a half year in Ladakh, the Mongol army drained away the already scanty resources of this principality. The Ladakhis also lost a king, but the Namgyal dynasty, thanks to the passive resistance of the people, survived. It was only the beginning, the dynasty had yet to suffer more humiliating defeats at the hands of its powerful neighbours.

However, with the departure of Mirza Haider for Badakhshan, Ladakh's troubles were not over. After the conquest of India in 1526, the Mughal Emperor, Babar had made an unsuccessful attempt to extend his control over Kashmir. Unfortunately for the Kashmiris, Mirza Haider who was to reconquer Kashmir, escaped from Badakhshan to Lahore, where he was kindly treated by the Mughals and even referred to as 'brother' by the Mughal Emperor, Humayun.[1] With the support of the Mughals, Mirza Haider defeated the Kashmiri King, Sultan Ismail Shah II, who was not on good terms with the other nobles of Kashmir. This happened in October 1540; for another eleven years till his death in 1551, the Mirza remained *de facto* ruler of Kashmir.

After establishing himself securely in Kashmir in 1545, Mirza Haider again invaded Ladakh—the field of his most venturesome activities. His first expedition met with little success; yet in his second invasion in 1548, he occupied both Ladakh and Baltistan, and placed them under the charge of Mulla Qasim and Mulla Baqi respectively.[2] This Kashmiri suzerainty, however, was short-lived, for in 1551, after Haider's death when Kashmir again reverted into the hands of a weak ruler, the Baltis and the Ladakhis threw away the Kashmiri yoke.

The danger from Kashmir did not disappear by the passing away of Mirza Haider. In 1553, Ladakh suffered an incursion from Haider Chak, the new ruler of Kashmir, though it did

[1] *Ibid*, p. 473.
[2] Mohibbul Hasan, *Kashmir under the Sultans*, p. 136.

little harm. In 1562, the new Kashmiri King, Ghazi Shah, planned a large expedition aiming at the conquest of the country. But due to non-cooperation and absence of a united attack, the Kashmiri army was defeated and repulsed by the Ladakhis.[1] For the next two decades i.e. till its conquest by Akbar in 1586, Kashmir remained under the control of weak rulers who continued to quarrel among themselves. Under these conditions, Ladakh had little to worry from Kashmir.

With the disappearance of the Kashmir menace, and having withstood the serious onslaughts from the northern and western invaders during the previous century, Ladakh was now geared up for war. Guge, which was in the throes of economic decline and Baltistan, which was divided among many petty chieftains, became the victims of Ladakhi imperialism. The powerful Ladakhi King, Tshe-wang Nam-gyal (*c.* 1535-75 AD), led successful invasions against these states and greatly extended the boundaries of Ladakh, which now ran from the Mayum pass in the east to Baltistan and perhaps Chitral in the west.[2] Tshe-wang Nam-gyal even conceived of an attack on the Mongols (Hor) to the north, probably to avenge the wrongs done to Ladakh by Mirza Haider, but he was dissuaded from doing so by the people of Nubra.[3] The latter, fearing that their commerce which was vital with Central Asia was likely to suffer, may have implored their sovereign to desist from such a risky adventure.[4]

Tshe-wang was the first great king of the second royal dynasty of Ladakh. Under him, the country for the first time showed signs of expansion beyond its own limits and established its sway over Guge, Lower Ladakh and Baltistan. Indeed in his period, we reach the terra-firma of Ladakh's chequered history.

This strong Ladakhi kingdom did not survive long. About 1575, after the death of Tshe-wang Nam-gyal who had no son, there were fratricidal quarrels about the succession which greatly weakened the governtment a the centre. The result was

[1] *Ibid*, p. 152.

[2] Francke, *Antiquities*, II, p. 105. Cunningham, *Ladak*, pp. 318-19.

[3] Karl Marx, "Three Documents relating to the History of Ladak," *JASB*, New Series, LX (1891), Pt. I, p. 126.

[4] *IHQ*, XV Supplement (1939), p. 131.

that districts at the fringes of the empire again became independent under local chieftains. Guge, and Balti chieftains regained their freedom. This situation has been succinctly summed up in the chronicles, which state:

Upon this (Tshe-Wang Nam-gyals' death) all the vassal princes in one place after another lifted up their heads.[1]

The situation was serious and the new King, Jam-wang Nam-gyal (*c.* 1580-90 AD), Tshe-wang's brother, made an attempt to reestablish Ladakhi control over the rebel tributary chiefs of Lower Ladakh, but utterly failed. In Purig (the district west of Leh between Ladakh and Baltistan), there was a quarrel between two chieftains; the Ladakhi King, taking sides with one of the contenders found himself at war with Ali Mir Khan, the Balti ruler.[2] Ali Mir, realising the strategic importance of Purig, which was Baltistan's bulwark, opposed with arms Ladakh's intervention in this district. After the Ladakhi army had crossed all the passes towards Purig, the Balti forces adopted dilatory tactics and avoided pitched battles. The war dragged on undecided until all the passes were blocked by snow. The Ladakhis could not get any succour from their base of operations and were easily defeated. Jam-wang Nam-gyal, alongwith his whole army was forced to surrender. Next spring, finding the Ladakhis defenceless, Ali Mir invaded Ladakh, plundered the monasteries, burnt all the religious books, and threw others into water.[3] The Baltis, not unlike Mahmud of Gazni, fully gratified their religious fanaticism.

Ali Mir was a sagacious ruler. His conquest of Ladakh appears to have convinced him of the impossibility of retaining that extensive territory for a long time. On his return from the Ladakhi expedition, he set free the Ladakhi King and concluded peace, which was conditional. The Ladakhi King accepted a daughter of Ali Mir as his wife,[4] and his two sons by the previous Buddhist wife were excluded from succession to the

[1]Francke, *Antiquities*, II, p. 106.

[2]*JASB*, New Series, Vol. LX, Pt. I (1891), p. 127.

[3]*Idem*, Cunningham, *Ladak*, p. 320.

[4]According to Francke (*Western Tibet*, p. 93), the object of Ali Mir in arranging this marriage was to draw the Ladakhi King quietly over to Islam.

throne. Ladakh was forced to recognize the Balti King as its suzerain.

The boundaries of Ladakh were greatly circumscribed by Ali Mir. According to the Ladakhi chronicles, these now ran from, "Purig upwards and from, Bran-rtse downwards."[1]

Ali Mir's daughter bore to Jam-wang Nam-gyal two sons, the eldest Sen-ge Nam-gyal succeeded his father who died towards the close of the sixteenth century.

Sen-ge Nam-gyal (*c.* 1600-1645 AD), emulating his uncle Tshe-wang Nam-gyal, greatly extended the boundaries of his kingdom that had shrunk under his maternal-grand father (Ali Mir Khan). Was it the transfusion of Muslim blood in the old dynasty which worked to the advantage of the country? Under Senge Nam-gyal and his son Del-den Nam-gyal, Ladakh reached the pinnacle of the short-lived Greater Ladakhi Empire.

Guge, an ancient kingdom in Western Tibet, was the first victim of Ladakhi aggression.[2] The reason for hostilities, which continued intermittently for about sixteen years was the refusal of the king of Guge to accept Sen-ge Nam-Gyal's sister as his queen, a matrimonial alliance having been decided about two years earlier.[3] This incident took place in 1614, and soon Ladakh declared war on Guge. The continuance of war for a long time created disorder in Guge and there was rebellion against the king in 1624. In 1630, Sen-ge Nam-gyal defeated Guge and removed its king to Ladakh as a prisoner. At about this time Ladakh also conquered Rudok, which was a dependency of Guge.[4]

On the other side, in Baltistan drastic changes were taking place. The strong Balti state, a remarkable achievement of Ali Mir had suffered an eclipse. In 1637, taking advantage of a fratricidal quarrel about the succession, Zafar Khan, the Kashmiri

[1]This limit, apparently did not include Purig. Bran-rtse is Tanktse or Drangtse, a village cast of Leh on the road to Pangong lake and Rudok. (Francke, *Antiquities*, II, p. 107).

[2]With its capital at Tsaprang, Guge then occupied the area around the mountainous region of the upper Sutlej, though its boundaries varied from century to century. After this Ladakhi invasion, it met its extinction.

[3]For details, see *IHQ*, XV, Supplement (1939), p. 140.

[4]cf. *IHQ*, XV, Supplement (1939), pp. 142-45.

Governor of the Mughal Emperor, Shah Jahan (1628-58), placed a puppet on the throne of Skardo. This Mughal advance towards his western frontier forced Sen-ge Nam-gyal to pay his attention to that sector. In 1639, he invaded and conquered the key-district of Purig which had been lost by Ladakh after the death of Tshe-wang Nam-gyal. However, in doing that he came in conflict with the Mughals. The latter, helped by the Balti ruler, defeated Sen-ge Nam-gyal at Kharbu; the Ladakhi King patched up the quarrel by promising to pay a tribute to the Mughals, and renouncing his claims over Purig. As the cold season had advanced, the Mughals, after stationing a small garrison at Kharbu withdrew to Kashmir. The Ladakhis, finding that Mughal garrison, due to the closure of Zoji La by heavy snowfall, was not in a position to get any succour from Kashmir, attacked and repulsed it. But the Ladakhis did not occupy the district, thus it appears there was no recurrence of hostilities and things remained unsettled for many years. Sen-ge Nam-gyal's promise to pay tribute was not serious and he never honoured it. Nor did the Mughals enforce it at that time.[1]

After patching up with the Mughals, Sen-ge Nam-gyal again turned his attention eastward and invaded Tsang—an important state in Tibet—with which because of its ill-determined borders, Ladakh was having occasional quarrels. For such an adventure, circumstances were quite favourable for Ladakh: in China, the Ming dynasty was in decline and the Manchus were imposing their domination; in Tibet, the Kings of Tsang, who were the supporters of the Karmapa sect, were at war with Gusri Khan, a Mongol prince of Qosot tribe, and a supporter of the Gelugpa sect. In 1642, Gusri Khan defeated and killed the Tsang ruler, and displacing the Karmapa Lamas, set up the fifth Dalai Lama as religious head of the country.

In these circumstances, Ladakhi forces crossed the Mayum Pass and meeting with no armed resistance penetrated deep into Tibetan territory. When they were about ten miles from Sakya monastery, in one of the actions they suffered defeat at the hands of Tsang forces and withdrew to the Mayum pass. Prolonging the war was not in the interests of either belligerent:

[1] *Ibid*, pp. 142-45.

the Tibetans were busy with the Mongols, and the Ladakhis were fighting too far from their base of operations. A peace settlement was reached which confirmed the Ladakhi King in full possession of all Tibetan territory west of the Mayum pass.

The exertions of the Tsang campaign which Sen-ge Nam-gyal led personally impaired his health; while on his way back to Ladakh, he died at Hanle.[8]

By conquering all the smaller states surrounding Ladakh, Sen-ge Nam-gyal greatly extended the boundaries of his kingdom. He was Ladakh's only King, who pursued an ambitious policy of aggrandizement. In addition to being a great warrior and conqueror, he was an ardent patron of Buddhism. He founded many monasteries including the famous one at Hemis and granted landed estates to the lamas and their religious establishments.

Sen-ge Nam-gyal was succeeded by his eldest son, De-den Nam-gyal (*c.* 1645-75 AD). He was a worthy son of his great father. After consolidating his power, he conquered Purig, Sod, and other small principalities in Lower Ladakh.

In the early sixties of the seventeenth century,[2] Ladakhi forces invaded Baltistan and conquered Khapalu and Chorbad in the lower Shyok Valley and assigned these lands to loyal Muslim chiefs.[3] But the kings of Skardo, who had been the loyal subjects of the Mughals since 1637, begged help from their suzerain. Aurangzeb, the Mughal Emperor visited Kashmir in 1663 and threatened Ladakh with war.[4] De-den Nam-gyal, seeing the impossible task of fighting with the mighty Mughals, immediately submitted and recognised Mughal suzerainty. But

[1]*JASB*, New Series, LX, Pt. I (1891), p. 134. *IHQ*, XV, Supplement (1939), pp. 146-47.

[2]According to the *Chronicles of Ladakh*, these conquests took place in the years "Water-Ox" and "Wood-Tiger" which correspond to 1673 and 1674 respectively. But as Dr. Petech remarks (*IHQ*, XV, Supplement (1939), pp. 151-54), the dates of the Ladakhi chronicles are not reliable; linking the sequence of events which led to Mughal intervention in this region and ultimate Ladakhi recognition of the Mughal suzerainty in concrete terms, it appears that De-den Nam-gyal may have conquered these places in 1661 and 1662.

[3]Francke, *Antiquities*, II, p. 112.

[4]F. Bernier, *Travels in the Moghul Empire*, p. 422. *IHQ*, XXIV (Sept., 1948), p. 220.

Aurangzeb, a stern champion of Islam could not be trifled with merely by a pious declaration of recognition, much as De-den's father had none after 1639. The Ladakhi King promised regular payment of tribute and had to send an embassy to Kashmir with typical Tibetan presents such as crystal, musk, jade and yak tails.[1]

De-den Nam-gyal further promised to abide by certain conditions such as the construction of a mosque at Leh, striking imperial coins in his country and reading the *Khutba* in the name of the Mughal Emperor. Next year when Aurangzeb left Kashmir, Saif Khan, the local Mughal Governor, seeing Den-den Nam-gyal evading the payment of tribute and ignoring other conditions laid down by treaty, despatched a certain Mohammad Shafi to Ladakh to see and ascertain the compliance of these terms. De-den had to obey and complied with all the requirements which the Emperor acknowledged in the following words:

His Majesty, having learnt from Syf Khan, Nazim of the Soobuh of Cashmeer, that Raja Dilden Numjul from attachment to the Moghul court, had tendered his allegiance and submission in token of which he is ready to cause the Koothbah to be read and the imperial coin to be struck in this country of (little) Tibut, and will also erect a Musjood[2] (for the Muslims) and fulfil other engagements made with the Khan herewith, invests the Raja with the Khilats of the Tibut Raj, let the Raja in question considering this as a special mark of favour, continue to evince the utmost fidelity that he may thereby entitle himself to a continuance of the Royal favour.[3]

Den-den Nam-gyal throughout his life seems to have remained a faithful feudatory of the Mughals. This is proved by the

[1]Bernier, *Travels*, p. 422. *IHQ*, XXIV (Sept., 1948), p. 220. F. Bernier, the famous French traveller who met this embassy in Kashmir had given some details about it. cf. *Travels*, pp. 422-23.

[2]The mosque was constructed at Leh in AH 1077 or 1667 AD. The date of its erection is contained in an inscription above the door of the mosque. (Francke, *Antiquities*, II, p. 147.).

[3]From the Emperor Alamgir to Raja Dilden Numjul in the 8th year of His Majesty's reign. *English Translation of Persian Letters Received from January, 1822 to June*, 1822, Vol. 70, Pt. I, No. 131 (2) A. See also, *FDPP*, 20 Sept. 1822, No. 64. (These documents were discovered by William Moorcroft in Ladakh when he visited that kingdom in 1820-22. Later on, he transmitted these documents to the Foreign Department; at present these are available in the National Archives of India, New Delhi).

issuance of the *firmans* at the Mughal court acknowledging the fealty of the Ladakhi King in the ninth and fifteenth years of Aurangzeb's reign.[1]

Den-den, like his father, Sen-ge Nam-gyal was a great ruler of Ladakh. Though he was forced to acknowledge Mughal suzerainty, he successfully administered the lands conquered by his great father. At the time of his death about 1675, the Ladakhi kingdom attained its largest extent. It included Ladakh and its dependencies of Nubra, Dras, Purig, the lower Shyok Valley, Guge, Purang, Rudok, Spiti, Upper Kinnaur, Lahul and Zanskar.[2]

In the meantime in Tibet, as noted earlier, the Fifth Dalai Lama had become the religious head in 1642. After the death of Gusri Khan in 1655, he became the sole arbiter of Tibetan affairs. This was due to the fact that the successors of Gusri Khan evinced little interest in the administration of Tibet and were merely satisfied by appointing a Regent, who spoke for their interests at Lhasa. Gradually, even this Regent came to be appointed by the Fifth Dalai Lama who was a man of great determination and strength of character. For the creation of a powerful Tibetan state, Ladakhi supremacy of West Tibet was certainly not acceptable to the Dalai Lama. Thus a conflict between the two powers was bound to arise and it was not long in coming.

Somewhat absurdly, the cause of the Tibeto-Ladakhi war (1681-84),[3] that greatly reduced the dominions of Ladakh and which, but for the Mughal intervention, might have spelled the

[1] *English Translation of Persian Letters Received from January, 1822 to June 1823*, Vol. 70, Pt. I, No. 131 (2) B, and C; see also M.L. Ahluwalia, 'Ladakh's relations with India—an Historical Study', *PIHRC*, XXXIII, pt. 2, p. 1.

[2] *IHQ*, XV, Supplement (1939), pp. 155-56.

[3] Francke (*Antiquities*, II, p. 118) and Cunningham (*Ladak*, p. 327). Wrongly say that this war occurred in 1650 and 1685-86 respectively. Dr Petech, after thoroughly studying Mughal and central Tibetan chronicles says that war continued from 1681 to 1683. ("The Tibetan-Ladakhi-Mughal war of 1681-83", *IHQ*, XXIII (1947), pp. 169-99). The close scrutiny of the events reveals that though active hostilities ceased in 1683, yet peace negotiations lingered on for sometime; under these circumstances the final peace treaty (Treaty of Tingmosgang) appears to have been signed in 1684.

country's doom was a question of little import. According to Tibetan sources, the Ladakhis were persecuting the Yellow hat sect and fomenting trouble in the border district of Tsang. On the other hand, Ladakhi chronicles assert that the Tibetans were persecuting the Red hat sect and Lhasa was at war with a Red sect incarnate who held spiritual and temporal sway over Bhutan.[1] The Ladakhi king declared himself in favour of the Reds[2] and took his quarrel w th Lhasa more seriously. Be that as it may, these religious quarrels and the consequent insecurity of the trade-routes affected the commerce of Tibet. The Dalai Lama and the Mongol King Dalas Khan, a temporal though nominal suzerain of Tibet could not long remain indifferent to these religious and economic issues. War broke out in 1681; the Dalai Lama entrusted the command of the Tibetan forces to Ga-den-tshe-wang-pal-sang-po, a monk of Tashilhunpo monastery. Ga-den, finding little Ladakhi resistance easily reached near Manasarowar, where he entered into an alliance with Raja Kehri Singh of Bashahr.

On the other hand Sakya-rgya-mtso, the Prime Minister and Commander-in-Chief of the Ladakhi forces, who was the most powerful man in the realm also prepared to meet his adversaries. At that time, Nono Bitadsoki, one of the Ladakhi leaders, keeping in view the superior horsemanship and fighting qualities of the Mongol troops advised the Ladakhi ruler to avoid a pitched battle with the Tibetans.[3] The Ladakhi Commander, however, decided not only to fight a pitched battle but also sent a formal challenge to Ga-den:

A Savage like you dare to approach in order to insult with his envy our liege lord! Well, when we fight it out, if you win, you may tie your horse to the lion gate of the palace (of Leh)! if we win, we shall tie our horses to the inscription pillar of Lhasa.[4]

Ga-den accepted the challenge and as the chronicles remark, after defeating the Ladakhis he did tie his horse to the lion gate at Leh. After these victories, the Tibetans took possession of the whole country as far as Nyoma,[5] and besieged Basgo. As

[1]cf. *IHQ*, XXIII (1947), pp. 172-73.
[2]G. Tucci, *Tibetan Painted Scrolls*, I, p. 76.
[3]*IHQ*, XXIII (1947), p. 177.
[4]*Ibid*, p. 178.
[5]It is situated on the Indus about twenty-five miles to the west of Leh.

the Basgo fortress was well-provisioned and there was a regular supply of water in it,[1] the siege became a long drawn out affair and lasted for about six months.[2]

De-ge Nam-gyal (*c.* 1675-1700 AD), the Ladakhi King seized by panic had already fled to Lower Ladakh; soon he implored the aid of his suzerain, the Mughals.[3] Ibrahim Khan, the Governor of Kashmir, perceiving that the Tibetan possession of Ladakh will adversely affect the flow of shawl-wool into Kashmir, with which was deeply connected the economy of the valley, took up the Ladakhi cause with the Emperor. In addition, the Mughals were also bound in honour to protect their vassal from falling into the clutches of a power, which on the religious plane—this would be an important consideration with a ruler like Aurangzeb—was fundamentally hostile to them.

Aurangzeb, despite his being busy in the Deccan approved of the proposal of Ibrahim Khan to actively assist the Ladakhi King; soon an expeditionary force of 6,000 men, partly raised in Kashmir and partly called from Kabul, under the command of Fidai Khan, the son of Ibrahim Khan, marched into Ladakh. The Mughals assisted by the forces from Baltistan and Lower Ladakh defeated the Tibeto-Mongol troops and pushed them to the traditional Ladakhi-West Tibet border at Tashigong.[4]

Fidai Khan, the Mughal Commander, after extorting an understanding from the Tibetans that Ladakh proper be left inviolate in the hands of the Ladakhi King and after getting a heavy bribe from Tibetan and Bashahr officials left for Kashmir.[5] He was also in a hurry to get back safely into the valley before a heavy snowfall closed the Zoji La.[6] Before returning, however, he wrested some concessions from the Ladakhi ruler. These were in addition to those which the country had accepted in 1664. De-ge Nam-gyal, under the Mohammaden title of Aqabat or

[1] A.H. Francke, "Archaeology in Western Tibet", *IA*, XXXVI, (1907), p. 85.
[2] Cunningham, *Ladak*, p. 327.
[3] *Ibid*, G.M.D. Sufi, *Kashir*, I, p. 277.
[4] *IHQ*, XXIII (1947), pp. 183-85.
[5] *Ibid*, p. 186.
[6] *IHQ*, XXIII (1947), p. 186.

Aqubet Mahmud Khan[1] accepted Islam.[2] He also undertook to strike coins in the name of the Emperor and to repair the mosque constructed in 1667. The King was also required to send his younger son, Jigs-bral Nam-gyal as a hostage to Kashmir.[3] Further, after every two years Ladakh was to pay a tribute to the Governor of Kashmir, the terms of which were now decided in detail. Ladakh suffered territorial losses also: Raja Bidhi Singh of Kulu, who had helped the Mughals was given Upper Lahul; Purig and other principalities conquered by the Ladakhis during De-den Nam-gyal's period were restored to their original rulers.[4]

The Tibetans, exhausted by the continuation of hostilities for a long time, and being afraid of renewed Mughal intervention were also anxious to patch up with the Ladakhis. To arrange the conditions of a peace treaty, the Tibetans selected a Red sect Lama, Mi-pam-wang-po. The purpose of the Tibetans in selecting this religious dignitary whose former incarnations had always been the patron Lamas of the Ladakhi Kings is quite clear but, how this Red sect Lama, whose cause the Ladakhi King championed, decided against Ladakh is not understandable. Ladakh swallowed the bitter pill administered by the Lama: Western Tibet i. e. territory to the West of the Mayum pass, conquered by Ladakh in 1640 was given to Tibet. Its revenues were to be used for defraying the cost of sacrificial lamps, and of religious ceremonies to be performed at Lhasa.[5] "But the king of Ladakh reserved to himself the village of Monthser[6] in the Ngarees-Khor-sum that he may be independent there and he set aside its revenue for the purpose of meeting

[1]This became the generic name of the rulers of Ladakh. In 1834, when the Dogras conquered Ladakh, Tse-pal Nam-gyal, the then Ladakhi Gyalpo was also known by this name.

[2]Francke, *Western Tibet*, p. 109. Moorcroft, *Travels*, I, pp. 336-337.

[3]Cunningham, *Ladak*, pp. 328-330. Francke, *Antiquities*, II, p. 118.

[4]*IHQ*, XXIII (1947), p. 193.

[5]Francke, *Antiquities*, II. p. 116. Ramsay, *Western Tibet*, p. 175.

[6]The administration of Monthser or Missar village, the sovereignty of which Ladakh retained, remained in the hands of the Ladakhi Kings till 1842, when the Dogras annexed Ladakh. After that, until quite recently this village continued to be administered by the Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir.

the expense involved in keeping up the sacrificial lights of Kang-ree (Kailash) and the holy lakes of Mansarowar and Raks-Tal."[1] Ladakh also surrendered Upper Kinnaur to Bashahr, an ally of the Tibetans. The boundary between Ladakh and West Tibet was fixed at the Lhari stream at Dem-chok.[2]

In addition, there were some commercial stipulations, one of which laid down that the entire wool export and transit trade of Ladakh was a firm monopoly of Kashmir. Four Kashmiri merchants settled at Spitak were to supply all this wool to Kashmir. Further, all the wool of Chang Thang (north-western Tibet) was to be supplied to Ladakh only. Ladakh and Tibet also agreed to exchange some trade missions on the basis of reciprocity. These missions were to be commercial and religious in nature; the Dalai Lama was to send a merchant to Leh every year with a few hundred bales of brick tea. This was known as the Chaba[3] mission. This merchant while passing through Ladakh enjoyed *Ula* or free transport and many other cognate facilities. On the other hand, the Ladakhi Kings who recognised the religious and spiritual superiority of the Dalai Lama, were to send some presents to His Holiness and other Lamaist authorities.[4] This was known as Lapchak or Lopchok meaning "yearly salaam".[5] The Lapchak mission while in Tibet enjoyed *Ula* and other facilities which the Chaba mission got in Ladakh. The real purpose behind these missions was commercial, for the privilege was of a very lucrative nature.

[1]Francke, *Antiquities*, II, p. 116. see also, Ramsay, *Western Tibet*, p. 175.

[2]*Ibid*, The Lhari stream which flows into the Indus, is about five miles to the south-east of Dem-chok.

[3]'Chaba' or 'Chabba' literally means 'tea-ees' i.e. 'tea merchants' (J. D. Cunningham, "Notes on Moorcroft's Travels in Ladak etc." *JASB*, XIII, Pt. I, 1844, p. 217). According to Ramsay, (*Western Tibet*, p. 20), the Leh officials called the Lhasa commercial agent as 'Chaba' which was a corruption of 'Chhapa' meaning 'tea man'. The correct title of this official was the 'Zhungtsong pa', meaning the merchant of the 'Deyva Zhung' (the Dalai Lama) of Lhasa.

[4]Francke, *Antiquities*, II, pp. 116-17.

[5]Ramsay, *Western Tibet*, pp. 85-86. When Mir Izzet Ullah visited Leh in 1812, he found that the Ladakhi Raja sent "annually a contribution or charitable donation to the Guru Lama of Lassa." cf. *JRAS*, VII (1843), p. 290.

Thus Tibetans under the garb of Chaba took a few hundred horseloads of tea to Ladakh and returned with dry apricots, saffron and sugar etc., and so were the Ladakhi caravans allowed to carry large quantities of other commodities for trading purposes. These caravans on their way to Lha'sa, halted for a few weeks at important places such as Gartok, Kardum and Shigatse,[1] where they disposed of their goods and purchased articles such as musk, turquoises, and brick-tea. All this turned out to be a highly profitable enterprise for the Leh officials and monasteries which had been granted monopoly under the system. Thus, these commercial benefits, prevented the exchange of these missions falling into desuetude and they continued for many years even after 1846, when the Dogras became the rulers of Ladakh.

The Tibet war administered a calamitous blow to Ladakh; and thanks largely to Mughal help, it barely escaped political extinction at the hands of the Tibetan-Mongol army. Consequently, the work of Sen-ge Nam-gyal and of De-den Nam-gyal in creating a large kingdom was washed out. The Mughal suzerainty which Ladakh had accepted in 1664 was further confirmed. It appears that throughout the reign of Aurangzeb, Ladakh continued to abide by the terms imposed by the Mughals. This is proved by the issuance of Mughal *firmans* from time to time particularly when a new ruler came to the throne requiring Mughal confirmation of his authority. Representative of this Imperial endorsement is what Emperor Aurangzeb wrote to the Ladakhi King in the thirty-ninth year of his reign:[2]

Having been apprised of the death of Raja Akibut Muhmood Khan, grandfather of Raja Nurmiya Numjul,[3] His Majesty is pleased to confer on the latter a Khilat, together with a Munsub Zattee[4] of 1000 and 1500 horse, 500 of them double-mounted. For this being duly gratified let the

[1]H. Trotter, "Account of the Pundit's Journey in Great Tibet from Leh in Ladakh to Lhasa, and of his return to India via Assam", *JRGS*, XLVII, 1877, p. 87 fn.

[2]*Foreign Department Political Proceedings*, 20 September 1822, No. 64. See also, *English Translation of Persian Letters Received from January 1822 to June 1822*, Vol. 70, Pt. I, No. 130 (2), D. (*NAI*)

[3]This King was probably Ni-ma Nam-gyal (*c.* 1700-1725 AD)

[4]*Munsub Zatee* or *Zat* rank was military title under the Mughal Emperors. The rank indicated the actual number of horsemen maintained by the official.

Raja so exert himself in the management of the country under his administration in such manner as effectually to prevent the turbulent Kalmaks (Mongols) from making incursions into those parts during the winter. Moreover let him keep the inhabitants of his Raj happy and content with his Government; and further use his most strenuous exertions for the propagation and extension of the Moslim religion which conduct will be for his advantage, both here and thereafter.

None of the Ladakhi Kings of the 18th century was great as a warrior, or as a politician or as an administrator; most were slaves of personal pleasure and lived dissolute lives. Some of them quarrelled over succession; others proved worthless creatures and allowed themselves to be dominated either by the court officials or their *Gyalmos* (Queens). This state of affairs seriously diminished royal prerogatives and reduced the King to a non-entity. Reviewing the story of these Kings one cannot help feeling that the dynasty was on the decline.

Yet, in the first half of the eighteenth century, Ladakh once again figured in Central Asian politics; this, as will be noticed presently was a result of its geographical situation, whereby it played the passive role of a spy—akin to the one played by it in the 7th and 8th century.

The Great Fifth Dalai Lama, after securing Tibetan autonomy under the patronage of the Qosot Mongols, had extended his influence among other Mongol tribes. In the quarrels, that ensued among these Mongols, the Lama tried to protect the Qosot and the Khalkha tribes with whom he had close relations, from the Dsungars—another most warlike Mongol tribe which had asserted its sway in Turkestan and controlled the Ili Valley. By pursuing such a policy the Tibetan ruler, who was on friendly terms with the Ch'ing Emperor was also "warding off a threat to China, for the energy and ambition of the Dsungars, had created in Central Asia a powerful and aggressive rival in the Ch'ing dynasty."[1] However, before his death in 1682, the Great Fifth had appointed Sengye Gyatso as his Regent. But the latter disliked the Chinese and tried to establish friendly relations with Galdan Khan, the restless chief of the Dsungars.[2]

On the other hand, Lha-sang Khan (1705-1717 AD), the titu-

[1] Richardson, *Tibet and its History*, p. 46.
[2] *Ibid*, p. 47.

lar Qosot ruler of Tibet, unlike previous Qosot Kings after Gusri Khan, wanted to establish real control over Tibet. But the all powerful Regent would not allow him to do this. In order to achieve his ends, Lha-sang, with the help of the Chinese Emperor, K'ang Hsi (1661-1722), defeated and killed the Regent in 1705, removed the sixth Dalai Lama and gathered all power in his own hands.[1]

This extension of Manchu-Qosot influence over Tibet was against the interests of Tse-dban-rab-brtan (1697-1727 AD), the Dsungar King of Kashgar. Because of the then political situation in Central Asia, it was of the highest importance for the Dsungars to acquire influence over Lhasa. The man who ruled over Tibet in harmony with the Lamas was sure to have at his disposal the influence wielded by the Lama Church, a fact of great political import in the Mongol world.[2] The Manchu Emperor of China appears to have already well understood this political importance of Tibet in dealing with the Mongols. In January 1717, the Dsungar Khan with a view to outmanoeuvre Lha-sang, pushed his armies through a difficult but direct route.[3] He was successful: the Dsungars stormed Lhasa, and killed Lha-sang.

The Ch'ing Emperor, who, in return for imperial support had already got the promise of a regular payment of annual tribute by Lha-Sang,[4] could not but view with the gravest concern the extension of hostile Dsungar influence over Tibet. In 1718, he sent an expeditionary force to expel the Dsungars, but it was defeated. In 1720, the Emperor sent a larger army, which defeated and drove the Dsungars from Tibet. The establishment of a Chinese protectorate over Tibet now appeared to be complete

[1]For details, see Petech, *China and Tibet in the Early 18th Century*, pp. 8-10.

[2]*Ibid*, pp. 25-26. see also, Bell, *Tibet: Past and Present*, p. 209.

[3]This route was very rarely traversed by the caravan traders or others. After crossing Kunlun Range through Yangi Pass, this route entered into Yarkand River Valley whence, after traversing Qara Qash basin, it passed through the western side of the Lingzi Tang plains and the Chang Chenmo Valley. From Chang Chenmo over the Lanak La, it finally entered into the Rudok district of Western Tibet.

[4]Petech, *China And Tibet in the Early 18th Century*, p. 15. Richardson, *Tibet and its History*, p. 47.

It was after the expulsion of the Dsungars from Tibet that Ladakh came into limelight at Lhasa and Peking. According to Ch'ing dynasty records, a Ladakhi mission after visiting Lhasa reached Peking in August, 1724.[1] The purpose of this mission was to convey some information about Dsungar movements in Kashgaria. Ladakh, because of its geographical situation, got such information with a fair degree of accuracy from various caravans which visited Turkestan. In 1732, De-yon Nam-gyal (*c.* 1725-39 AD), the Ladakhi King, wrote to the Chinese Residents at Lhasa:

I dedicate myself to taking care of the affairs of the state; I follow the noble religion of Buddha... I am trying to obtain information about Ye-erh-Ch'i-mu (Yarkand), which is a region belonging to the Dsungars.[2]

Subsequent missions from Ladakh to Lhasa in 1737, 1738, 1743, and I731, also provided the Chinese with accurate information about Dsungar activities and plans in Turkestan.[3]

But after 1757-58, when the Manchus finally crushed the long and valiant resistance of the Dsungars in the Ili Valley, Chinese interests in the far away kingdom of Ladakh ceased altogether. Ladakh's relations with Tibet also slackened, though for the next three decades some of the Ladakhi dignitaries continued to visit Tashilhunpo and Lhasa for religious purposes.[4] After 1785, we do not find any mention of Ladakh or of Ladakhi envoys in Tibetan or Chinese documents for about half a century.

Thus, during the first half of the 18th century, when a tenacious struggle between China and the Dsungars for dominating Tibet was going on, the former valued Ladakhi friendship if only in getting accurate information about Dsungars movements in Kashgaria. Because of Ladakh's strategic position, China was also anxious not to let the Dsungars spread their tentacles over Ladakh; this would have provided them with a convenient handle with which it would have been easy to beat China in

[1] *IHQ*, XXIV (Sept. 1948), p. 222. see also, Petech, *China And Tibet in the Early 18th Century*, pp. 213-14.

[2] *IHQ*, XXIV (Sept., 1948) p. 223.

[3] *Ibid*, pp. 225-226. Petech, *China And Tibet in the Early 18th Century*, pp. 213-14.

[4] See *supra*, p. 31-32.

Tibet. That explains as to why the Ch'ing Emperors, occasionally, sent costly gifts[1] and tried to cultivate friendship with the Ladakhi rulers.

Ladakh also seemed to appreciate Chinese friendship, whereby they could ward off any eventuality of being engulfed by the Dsungars who, after their expulsion from Lhasa in 1720, continued to hover around till the final debacle of 1757-58.

Coming to the end of the rule of the Ladakhi Kings, a few incidents which occurred during the reign of the last Gyalpo, Tse-pal Nam-gyal (*c.* 1790-1834, 1840-41), may be noticed. The people of Kulu, through the Lasar Valley, invaded Spiti. Meeting no resistance, they destroyed many villages and returned with yaks, horses and other booty. When the residents of Spiti petitioned their King to wage a war of revenge against Kulu, he disapproved of their proposal and rebuked them.[2] About 1825, Ratanu, the powerful Chamba Governor of Paddar, invaded Zanskar[3] and made it a tributary to Chamba.[4] In this case also, Tse-pal Nam-gyal did not help his subjects in Zanskar.

The state of affairs on Ladakh's border with Baltistan was no whit different. In 1821, a strong Balti force intruded into Ladakh, plundered the villages and returned with loot.[5] Ahmad Shah, the shrewed Balti ruler, seemed to have taken full advantage of Tse-pal Nam-gyal's weak rule and such Balti inroads had become quite frequent.

Regarding internal administration during the reign of Tsepal Nam-gyal, the Ladakhi chronicles repeat the same woeful tale: With the officials of the old regime he the King could not agree. This

[1]While in Ladakh, in 1821, Moorcroft saw a letter which was written probably by the Manchu Emperor Chien Lung (1736-1796 AD) to the ruler of Ladakh. It contained a long list of gifts such as pieces of silk, lapus lazuli, jasper and agate etc.; some of these gifts alongwith the letter were carefully preserved in a monastery near Pheang. cf. *AJ*, XXI (September-December, 1836), p. 141.

[2]*FDPP*, 20 September 1822, No. 74. Francke, *Antiquities*, II, p. 125. Moorcroft, *Travels*, I, pp. 456-57; II, pp. 63-64.

[3]Francke, *Antiquities*, II, p. 126, wrongly says that this expedition was led by the Kishtwaris.

[4]J. Hutchison and J. Ph. Vogel, "History of the Chamba State", *JPHS*, X, p. 59. H. Goetz, "History of Chamba State in Mughal and Sikh Time", *JIH*, XXXI, Pt. II (August, 1953), p. 153.

[5]*FDPP*, 20 September 1822, No. 63.

King took the privy seal from the prime minister to the palace, and himself consulted with the headmen of villages, lords, etc., all men of new type. The noble families he did not attend to. The King of Zanskar, the minister of Bu-rig and others were kept in La-dvags imprisoned. The new men that stood before him were made governors of the palace, and everywhere the old good customs were destroyed.[1]

In 1821, when Moorcroft was staying at Leh, a political revolution took place and almost succeeded. During a festival one of the lamas having fallen into a trance, became the vehicle for a supernatural voice which proclaimed that the Gyalpo was unworthy, and thus renounce the throne and give the reins of the government to his son. The people taking the utterance of the lama as coming from a supernatural power shouted their approval of it. Tse-pal Nam-gyal who was a weak ruler became intimidated and made up his mind to abdicate. The incident was however a ruse played by the Governor of Leh, who had been insulted by the king and whom the spirit of enmity and hatred had led to seek his revenge in this way. None the less, the plan was foiled by the Queen who, refused to accept the lama's proclamation for what it pretended to be. At the meeting where the ruler was to have abdicated in favour of his son, she prevailed upon the King to declare not only of continuing to rule but even of punishing those who opposed him. This declaration was accepted and no one raised a protest. The King retained his throne, the Governor of Leh continued in his office and no punishment was meted out to the lama.[2]

Another incident. In April, 1822, when the King was away from Leh, attending a religious ceremony, a seditious placard was affixed to one of the main gates of the city. This paper accused the King of many acts of tyranny and contrasted the able and beneficient rule of his predecessor with that of his own.[3] It further warned the King that if he did not mend his ways, the "Elders of Ladakh" will be compelled to depose him and ask the principal Europeans[4] (Moorcroft and Trebeck),

[1]Francke, *Antiquities*, II, p. 125.

[2]Moorcroft, *Travels*, I, pp. 332-34, 458.

[3]A. H. Francke (tr.), "The Chronicles of Ladakh, according to Schlagintweit's Manuscript", *Journal of the Proceedings of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, New Series, VI, No. I (1910), p. 422.

[4]*FDPC*, 20 Sept. 1822, No. 74.

then at Leh, to assume the Government. Moorcroft considered it a *rus de guerre* of his commercial opponents.[1] Whatever the reason, these incidents throw enough light on the then internal state of affairs in Ladakh. The administration had become hollow and the officialdom at Leh did not care for the King and openly resented his rule. The King led a life of indolence and dissipation and did not take steps to maintain the integrity of his kingdom; the rule of Leh was in full disintegration and, it appears as if the then Ladakhi kingdom had earned a name among its neighbours for being an easy prey to conquerors. In due course, this may have travelled as far as Jammu where, the Dogra Raja Gulab Singh, a feudatory of Maharaja Ranjit Singh had risen to power. The conquest of Ladakh by the Dogras in the thirties of the 19th century, forms the subject of one of the subsequent chapters in this narrative.

LADAKH'S RELATIONS WITH SURROUNDING STATES

Having discussed the main outlines of the past history of Ladakh, it may not be out of place to say a few words about Ladakh's relations with its neighbours. The few questions of foreign policy which this Himalayan kingdom had to deal with were simple. With Eastern Turkestan (Sinkiang), Ladakh was connected by a caravan trade route and had friendly commercial relations since time immemorial. The difficulties of passage of the Mustagh or Karakoram range prevented the rulers of Turkestan from attempting frequent invasions of Ladakh. Nor did the powerful Ladakhi kings, who at one time held sway over all the small states surrounding Ladakh ever attempted an invasion of Turkestan. True, in 1532, Ladakh suffered a disastrous invasion from Turkestan, but the direct target of Mirza Haider's invasion was 'Ursang' (Tibet) and not Ladakh. The latter suffered because of its being situated on the easy route leading from Yarkand to Lhasa.

With Baltistan in the west, upto the 15th century Ladakh had friendly relations. During the Kushan period both the states formed a part of the Kushan empire, which extended even to the northern side of the Tarim basin. In the 7th and 8th centuries, the history of both Ladakh and Baltistan was linked up

[1]Moorcroft to Traill, Letter No. 3, *AJ*, XXI (1836), p. 143.

with that of Tibet. This, as has been noted earlier, was due to the keyposition of this area in Central Asia. When Tibet extended its domain, it appears that both Ladakh and Baltistan formed parts of Tibetan dominion. From the 9th to the 15th century, it appears that both the states had a common religion i.e. Lama Buddhism,[1] and were on friendly terms with each other. It was after the introduction of Islam,[2] that Baltistan entered into an irreconcilable opposition with Ladakh. Now it was the Ladakhis who ruled over Baltistan for a while, then again the Baltis devastated Ladakh. Because of the absence of any natural barrier between them, the two countries continued to indulge in plundering expeditions and border inroads. This continuous warfare generated a great deal of ill-will and kept up unfriendly feelings between the two states. This state of uneasiness and mutual distrust came to an end when in 1841, Zorawar Singh Kahluria, the intrepid Wazir of Raja Gulab Singh of Jammu, conquered and annexed both these states.

With Kashmir and India, from the earliest times, Ladakh's relations appear to have been very close. The *Kharoshthi* and *Brahmi* inscriptions show that in the second century of the Christian era, Ladakh was a part of the Kushan Empire and was no doubt under the religious and cultural influence of India. Buddhism which had been brought into Ladakh during the reign of Asoka, was further strengthened in the period of Kanishka. Epigraphical data (inscriptions and sculpture) further prove that even after the decline of the Kushans, Ladakh retained Indian cultural imprints for many centuries. Kashmir and Ladakh were connected by a caravan trade route and had close commercial ties.

From the 14th century, relations between Ladakh, and Kashmir again grew closer. King Rinchana of Kashmir (*c.*

[1]It appears that from the Kushan times, Baltistan continued to be a Buddhist country. Later on Gandhara art was also prevalent in this area. It produced an important religious authority *i.e.* sBal-te-dgra-bCom (b. 1129, d. 1215), who erected many famous monasteries around Skardo capital of Baltistan). cf. Francke, *Antiquities*, II, pp. 183-84.

[2]About the introduction of Islam in Baltistan, no definite date can be fixed, but it appears that in the beginning of the 15th century, when King Iskandar of Kashmir, the iconoclast, invaded Baltistan, he also forced the Baltis to become Muslims.

1320-23 AD), is said to have been a Ladakhi prince.[1] After Rinchana,when Muslims became the rulers of Kashmir, their invasions over Ladakh became quite frequent. Many a time, they raided Ladakh and quite often penetrated deep into its territory. The Kashmiri King Zain-ul Abidin, the Bud Shah (1420-1470 AD), not only overran the whole of Ladakh but Guge too. Ladakh recognised him as suzerain and paid him tribute. After him, Ladakh's fortunes as an independent state fluctuated with the increase or decrease of power in Kashmir until 1639, when it acknowledged Shah Jahan, the Mughal Emperor of India, as its suzerain. This Mughal suzerainty was confirmed during the reign of Aurangzeb. After the decline of Mughal power in India, Ladakh recognised the Afghans—the new rulers of Kashmir—as its suzerain. In 1819, when Maharaja Ranjit Singh conquered Kashmir, he realised tribute from Ladakh. Thus we see that in earlier times the connections of Ladakh were with the south-west and never with the east. So, what Moorcroft observed in this context is totally incorrect. He wrote, inter alia,

> The earlier history of Ladakh is that of Tibet in general, as it originally formed one of the provinces of that kingdom, governed as to temporal matters by an independent prince, and in spiritual affairs by the Guru Lama, or Chief Pontiff of Lassa.[2]

From the beginning of the 10th century upto the last quarter of the 17th, the history of Ladakh remained interwoven with that of *Western Tibet* (the territory west of the Mayum pass with important constituent states of Purang and Guge). During this period, Ladakh and Western Tibet were politically independent of Lhasa, though there was an identity of language and religion among the three. Ladakh, Guge and Purang, often became victims of the same aggressor (*e.g.* Zain-ul Abidin of Kashmir and Mirza Haider Dughlat of Kashgar), and occasion-

[1] *IA*, XXXVII (1908), p. 187.

[2] Moorcroft, *Travels*, I, p. 336. This somewhat legendary version fostered by Moorcroft, has been accpeted and repeated by many later writers. See, for example, Cunningham, *Ladak*, p. 316. C.U. Aitchison, *A Collection of Treaties, Engagement and Sanads etc.* (Calcutta, 1931), XII, p. 2. R. Temple, *Journals kept in Hyderabad, Kashmir, Sikkam and Nepal* (London, 1887), I, p. 306. K.M. Panikkar, *The Founding of the Kashmir State*, p. 75.

ally, whenever there was a strong King, he ruled over all the three states, otherwise tney continued to be under their own chiefs. Sen-ge Nam-gyal, the great Ladakhi King, conquered Western Tibet about 1640, and for about the next four decades it remained under the control of Ladakh. But after the Tibeto-Ladakhi-Mughal war (*c.* 1681-84), Ladakh ceded Western Tibet to central Tibet and since then it has been under the control of Lhasa.

With Central Tibet, Ladakh appears to have come into contact in the 7th and 8th centuries when the former not only conquered Western Tibet and other surrounding states but also dictated terms to China. But in the 9th century, when Tibet began to fold up, its outlying dependencies declared independence. Early in the 10th century, in Western Tibet and Ladakh, an emigre dynasty, though Tibetan in origin, established new kingdoms. In the next few centuries, as has been observed earlier, although Ladakh shared with Tibet, the development of some Lamaic institutions, yet the latter had no control over the former and entered into what may be called the dark ages of its history. Till the mid-seventeenth century, Tibet continued to be a weak state and had little to do with the politics of Ladakh. In the words of Prof. Luciano Petech,

> ...historical development of Ladakh was indissolubly connected with the destiny of the neighbouring Indian regions, while on the contrary the political contacts with central Tibet were always rare and occasional, in spite of the identity of language and religion.[1]

With *China*, Ladakh came into contact in the first half of the 18th century, after the former had established its protectorate over Tibet.[2] The Ch'ing Emperor's concern with Ladakh was only to get correct information about the movements and activities of the Dsungars of Ili, who had overrun Tibet in 1717-18, and for another four decades continued to move about it. Ladakh, because of its favourable geographical situation, supplied such information and it appears to have been appreciated in Peking. Further, the Ch'ing Emperor was also afraid

[1]L. Petech, *A Study on the Chronicles of Ladakh, Indian Tibet*, p. 4.

[2]Before the 18th century, with the exception of the shadowy suzerainty of the Kublai Dynasty, Tibet was never under the control of any foreign power.

that Ladakh might not be used as a cat's paw by the powerful Dsungars. However, after the late seventeen-fifties, when the Dsungars were finally defeated, even this limited and indirect relationship between Ladakh and China ceased altogether.

Chapter Four

FORMATION OF THE POLITICAL TRIANGLE

IN THIS chapter is sketched the rise of three powers, the Sikhs, the Dogras and the British, and their attitudes vis-a-vis Ladakh upto 1834. In order to understand their attitudes in a true historical perspective, a brief description of the process of integration in the Punjab and the hilly areas contiguous to Ladakh is given.

After acquiring control over territories in the Western Himalayas, the Sikhs, the Dogras and the English became interested in the commercial potentialiti s of Ladakh and Western Tibet. Here, *Pashmina* (Pashm or shawl-wool) was the most lucrative article of trade. Since trade in shawl-wool influenced the politics of Western Himalayan states in the late thirties and the early forties of the nineteenth century, it may be worthwhile to deal with it in detail, more specifically of the attempts made by the British, the Sikhs and the Dogras to divert the flow of shawl-wool into areas within their respective spheres of influence.

The closing decade of the 18th and the opening years of the 19th century were marked by the emergence of forces which worked for integration in the history of the Punjab and the west Himalayan hill states. In the Punjab, Ranjit Singh had risen to power and was making a new map of the Land of the Five Rivers. After defeating many *Misldars* (Sikh chieftains) who had become powerful on the ruins of the Durrani empire, he laid, in 1799, the foundations of a Sikh monarchy in the Punjab. In the same year, he captured Lahore—the Imperial City of the Punjab—and started on a plan of systematic aggression. His fondest wish was to subdue all the Sikh chieftains who were ruling on either side of the Sutlej and establish a

strong Sikh state in the Punjab. He was assiduously devoting the next few years to realise his aim but, in the cis-Sutlej territory, to his great disappointment, he was checked by the British, a new rising power on the Indian sub-continent. In 1809, the Sikh ruler had to sign a treaty with the British, undertaking not to further invade the cis-Sutlej torritory and molest the chieftains of this area who were declared to be under British protection.[1]

After his plan to expand to the south and east of the Sutlej had been checked, Ranjit Singh turned his attention in other directions. He had already adopted the plan of conquering the hill states in the north and north-east of the Punjab simultaneously, with the Punjab plains. In the Kangra hills,[2] the Maharaja's serious rival was Raja Sansar Chand Katoch who, like his Sikh adversary, had embarked upon a career of conquests over the chiefs of the eastern hill states of the Punjab, little realising that by doing so he was weaving a web in which he himself will be enmeshed.

By 1805, Raja Sansar Chand had made "himself into the supreme lord of the hills; reduced one state after another; had according to tradition, 22 hill chiefs attending court, subdued Chamba, Mandi, Kulu, Guler, Kahlur, Nurpur, Kutlehr and Bengahal.[3]" Before discussing Ranjit Singh's conquest of the Kangra hills and in order to make the course of events clear, a brief description of the advance of the Gurkhas of Nepal, a new power which had risen in the hills, may be noted.

In the seventeen-sixties, an event of the first magnitude in the history of Nepal occurred; the Gurkhas, a warlike tribe under the able leadership of Prithvi Narayan Sah began a rapid

[1]J. D. Cunningham, *History of the Sikhs*, eds. H.L.O. Garrett and R.R. Sethi, Appen. XXV and XXVI, pp. 352-54.

[2]In the Kangra hills between the Sutlej and the Ravi, there were fourteen states—Kangra, Guler, Gaswan, Datarpur, Siba (all offshoots from the same stock), Kutlehr, Shahpur, Kulu, Mandi, Suket, Bangahal, Nurpur, Kotila and Chamba. This political group of the states was also known as Jullundur group. See H. R. Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, III, p. 21.

[3]B. N. Goswami, 'The Social Background of the Kangra Valley Painting', (Unpublished Ph. D. thesis, Panjab University, 1961), P. 49.

process of expansion. They soon conquered all the small states in that part of the Himalayas, which now forms Nepal, including the Newar states of Kathmandu, Bhatgaon and Patan.[1] Soon, their inroads on Tibetan territory to the north became frequent; their large-scale invasion of Tibet was ultimately checked by the Chinese in 1792 when, the latter not only defeated the Gurkhas but also dictated terms to them. After having been checked in the north, the Gurkhas turned to the west, and engulfed all the small hill states between Nepal and the Sutlej lying to the south of the main Himalayan axis. Having subdued these hill states they crossed the river, ostensibly on the invitation of some of the local chiefs like the Rajas of Kahlur and Mandi, who feared Sansar Chand, but in reality to implement their expansionist policies. It is said that they were keen to conquer the hill tracts as far west as Kashmir, and even of establishing their power in the Punjab plains.[2] Their forces under Amar Singh Thapa, Rudrabir and Nain Singh defeated Sansar Chand at Mahal Mori in May, 1806, and pressed on to Kangra where the latter had entrenched himself. The Gurkha invasion became persistent and irresistible. Sansar Chand in despair looked around for an ally and found one in Ranjit Singh.

Sansar Chand's request for assistance was in consonance with Ranjit's own ambitions. In May, 1809, the Sikh ruler advanced into the hills with a large army and compelled the Gurkhas to retire across the Sutlej.[3] But this aid was too expensive: Sansar Chand had to surrender the fort of Kangra to Ranjit Singh and was reduced to the position of a vassal.

Surrender of Kangra—the gateway to the hills—precipitated the downfall of other hill principalities lying between the Sutlej and the Ravi. The Maharaja now embarked upon a career of conquest in the hills and made and unmade the map of the hill states as he pleased. The hill princes were captured, subdued, made subservient and exiled. The story of their downfall is

[1]For a lucid and succinct account of the rise to power of the Gurkhas in Nepal, see D.R. Regmi, *Modern Nepal : Rise and Growth in the Eighteenth century* (Calcutta, 1961), pp. 52-103.

[2]*Punjab States Gazetteer*, 1920, Vol. XII-A, Mandi State, p. 44.

[3]G. C. Barnes, *Report of the Land Revenue Settlement of the Kangra District* (Lahore, 1889), pp. 10-11.

consistent: Guler in 1813-14; Jaswan and Nurpur in 1815; Datarpur in 1818 and Kutlehr in 1825.[1]

After the expulsion of the Gurkhas, and the occupation of Kangra, Ranjit Singh took immediate steps to consolidate these conquests. Desa Singh Majithia was appointed *Nazim* or Governor of the hills[2] and asked to survey the country.[3] The new Nazim realised tribute from all the Kangra hill states including Kulu, Suket and Mandi and perfected the Sikh machinery of conquest.

Soon after 1799, Ranjit Singh had paid attention to the Jammu hills also. But unlike the Kangra hills, in this hilly region, he had to reckon with the individual chieftains. Between the Jhelum and the Ravi, there were twenty-two states.[4] The rulers of these states recognised the nominal supremacy of the Durrani monarchs of Afghanistan.[5] But when the Kabul monarchy became weak, they asserted their independence and mostly kept quarrelling among themselves. In 1800-1801, the Punjab ruler advanced to Jammu. Raja Jit Singh of Jammu immediately tendered his submission and presented customary tribute.[6] Not long after Ranjit Singh subdued Basohli, which was situated to the south of Jammu and in 1809, the Raja of Chamba also recognised the Sikh ruler as his overlord.[7]

But it was only after 1809, when his own expansion beyond

[1] *Ibid*, pp. 10-13. *Kangra District Gazetteer, 1883-84*, I, pp. 40-45.

[2] cf. L. H. Griffin, *The Rajas af the Punjab* (London, 1873), p. 582. Syed Muhammad Latif, *History of the Punjab* (Calcutta, 1891), p. 382. J. Hutchison & J. Ph. Vogel. *History of the Punjab Hill States* (Lahore, 1933), I, p. 322.

[3] *Punjab Government Record Office Monograph No. 17, Events at the Court of Ranjit Singh, 1810-17* (Lahore, 1935), pp. 211-12.

[4] These states were, Akhnur, Riasi, Kishtwar, Rajouri, Punch, Kotli, Bhimbar, Khari-Khariali, Jammu, Bahu, Dalpatpur, Samba, Jasrota, Trikot, Lakhanpur, Mankot (Ram Kot), Behandrata, Chaneni, Bhoti, Bhadu, Balor (Bsohli) and Bahadarwah. Out of these, the first eight lying between the Jhelum and the Chanab were under Muslim chiefs, whereas the rest were under the control of Hindu rulers, mostly Rajputs. cf. Gupta, *op. cit*, pp. 20-21.

[5] *Ibid*, p. 32.

[6] J. Hutchison and J. Ph. Vogel, "History of Jammu State" *Journal of the Punjab Historical Society*, VIII, No. 2, p. 129.

[7] Hutchison and Vogel, *History of Panjab Hill States*, I, p. 321.

the Sutjej had been checked and when he had expelled the Gurkhas from the Kangra hills that the Sikh ruler paid serious attention to Jammu. His plans to conquer Kashmir were then taking concrete shape, for the materialisation of which it was necessary to subdue all the hill principalities to the south of the Pir Panjal range. In 1812, the Sikh army, after defeating the confederated Muslim chiefs of Akhnur,[1] Rajouri and Bhimbar[2] turned towards Jammu. Although the Raja of Jammu had tendered his submission to the Maharaja in 1801, it appears that his Rajput subjects did not submit to this alien yoke and in 1809, and 1810 there were uprisings against the Sikhs engineered by the Dogra dare-devils such as Mian Dedo.[3] The Sikhs after suppressing these revolts, deposed the Raja and assigned Jammu, in *jagir*, to Prince Kharak Singh.[4]

In Kashmir, Ranjit Singh had to reckon with the moribund Durrani empire. In the first two decades of the 19th century, because of frequent changes in Afghanistan, and virtual suspension of the Afghan monarchy, the administration of Kashmir also suffered. The Maharaja, taking advantage of lawlessness and dissensions, successfully[5] conquered Kashmir, in 1819.

Immediately after the conquest of Kashmir, Maharaja Ranjit Singh sent his emissaries to Ladakh demanding tribute and customary presents,[6] which the Ladakhi Kings had been pay-

[1]*JPHS*, Vol. VIII, No. 2, p. 133.

[2]*Gazetter of Kashmir, 1873*, p. 109.

[3]For details about Dedo, see Kirpa Ram, *Gulab Nama* (in Persian), (Jammu, 1875), pp. 148-55. Thakur Kahan Singh Balauria, *Tarikh-i-Rajgan-i-Jammu wa Kashmir* (in Urdu), (Lahore, 1929), I, pp. 82-83. A.N. Sapru, *The Building of Jammu and Kashmir State Being the Achievement of Maharaja Gulab Singh*, (Lahore, 1931), pp. 5 et passim. Panikkar, *Founding of Kashmir State*, pp. 27-29. Narsingh Dass Nargis, *Gulab Singh* (in Urdu), (Jammu, 1960), pp. 129-40 ff.

[4]There is disagreement about the date of final subversion of Jammu and its annexation to the Sikh kingdom. Editor of *Kashmir Gazetteer, 1873*, (p. 111), says that Ranjit took possession of Jammu in 1809, when the last of the rightful descendant of Jammu ruling family died. Lepel Griffin says that this event occurred in 1816. Drs. Hutchison and Vogel, however, say that this happened in 1812. (*JPHS*, VIII, No. 2, p. 130).

[5]Ranjit Singh had previously invaded Kashmir in 1814, though unsuccessfully, when the Sikh army because of the treacherous conduct of the Rajas of Rajouri and Bhimbar suffered much and had to return with great loss.

[6]Gerard, *Account of Koonawur*, p. 153.

ing to the rulers of Kashmir. The Gyalpo (King) of Ladakh paid the tribute'[1] and the emissaries of the Maharaja returned to Kashmir. In October, 1820, the Maharaja's envoy again visited Ladakh, realised the tribute and exhorted the Gyalpo to make the payment regularly. The Prime Minister of Ladakh also wrote to the Sikh *Nazim* of Kashmir that at that time Ladakh was in danger of being invaded by Raja Ahmad Shah of Baltistan, and if necessity arose, he would apply for assistance.[2] It appears that the Gyalpo continued to pay this tribute regularly to the Sikh *Nazim* of Kashmir until 1834, when the Dogras invaded Ladakh. The state of affairs in Ladakh before 1834 has been described in the chronicles as follows:

> To say 'Salam' to the king of Ladakh, there came annually from Kashmir called Malig[3], and together with him about 100 assistants ponymen. In return to this, the king of Ladakh sent with a men from Kha-la-tse, called Drag-chos-don-grub, various products of Ladakh, for instance a yak, a sheep, a goat, a dog, and also more valuable things.[4]

Though Jammu had been annexed to the Sikh kingdom and many other adjoining hill chieftains subdued, uprisings against the Lahore Durbar in Jammu hills did not cease. The man who was to restore order and complete the work of Sikh conquest in this area was Dogra Raja Gulab Singh. Born in 1792 (5th Katik, 1849 Vikrami Samvat),[5] he was descendant of a collateral branch of the ruling family of Jammu. About 1810, after trying his luck at many places, he joined the service of Ranjit Singh. He was a brave soldier and soon impressed the Maharaja by his faithful and obedient conduct. Later on, Gulab Singh called to Lahore his younger brothers Dhian Singh and Suchet Singh also. These Dogra brothers, played an active role with the Sikh army in many conquests and being accomplished courtiers, soon won the favour of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. In 1819, Dhian Singh was appointed *Deodiwala* or

[1] *Ibid*, P.H. Egerton, *Journal of a Tour through Spiti* (London, 1864), p. 41. A.F.P. Harcourt, *The Himalayan Districts of Koolo; Lahoul and Spiti* (Lahore, 1874), p. 77.

[2] *FDPP*, 20 September 1822, No. 63.

[3] Malig or Malik was an official appointed by the Governor of Kashmir to Leh to collect the customary tribute.

[4] Francke, *Antiquities*, II, p. 250.

[5] *Gulab Nama*, p. 87.

Minister-in-waiting.[1] Gulab Singh also got the command of troops and was chiefly employed for suppressing insurrections in the hills around Jammu and west of the Chenab.[2] Later, pleased by the meritorious services rendered by him in the conquest of Attock, Multan, Kashmir and in suppressing the rebellions of the Rajas of Rajouri and Bhimbar, Ranjit Singh in 1820 granted Jammu in *Jagir* to the Dogra chieftain.

Not long after, the Maharaja asked Gulab Singh to subdue Tegh Singh, Raja of Dishtwar—a state in the interior of the Himalayas. Tegh Singh had offended Ranjit Singh by providing asylum to Shah Shujah, the ex-king of Kabul who had escaped from the Maharaja's captivity in 1815. Gulab Singh captured Tegh Singh,[3] sent him to Lahore and annexed his state.[4] In recognition of his services, Ranjit Singh entrusted the administration of the Jammu hills to Gulab Singh in 1822, and granted him, and his successors, the principality of Jammu with the hereditary title of Raja. His brothers Dhian Singh and Suchet Singh were also made Rajas and granted *jagirs* of Bhimbar, Kussal, Ram Nagar, and Sambha.[5] With Gulab Singh's elevation, fate of other hill principalities around Jammu was sealed.

The Dogra brothers, as they came to be known, made a common cause. While Dhian Singh and Suchet Singh generally lived at Lahore, Gulab Singh usually resided in Jammu and looked after the *jagirs* of his brothers also. Dhian Singh's holding the post of *Deodiwala*, made him come to close contact with the Maharaja, and in 1828 he was appointed Prime Minister, which office he held till his death in 1843. This appointment further increased the influence of the Dogra brothers in the Sikh court. Dhian Singh looked after Gulab Singh's interests at the Lahore Durbar and pushed their common cause. Clearly, political influence of Dhian Singh greatly helped Gulab Singh in

[1] *Ibid*, pp. 130-31.

[2] Drew, *J & K Territories*, p. 13. *JPHS*, VIII, No. 2, p. 131.

[3] For details about the supervision of Kishtwar by Gulab Singh, see Vigne, *Travels*, I, pp. 181-82.

[4] *Gulab Nama*, p. 138. *JPHS*, VIII, No. 2, p. 131. Sir Richard Temple, *Journals kept in Hyderabad, Kashmir, Sikkim and Nepal* (London, 1887), I, p. 306) wrongly says that the possession of Kishtwar was taken in 1833.

[5] *Gazetteer of Kashmir, 1873*, p. 111.

entrenching his position in the hills. After becoming Raja, the latter took great pains to consolidate and extend his possessions. The smaller states of Riasi, Sambha, Dalpat Pur and Akhnur had already been subdued. Kishtwar and Mankot were conquered about 1820, Behandrate and Chaneni in 1822[1] and the fort of Samarth in 1825.[2] In addition to Jammu hills, Gulab Singh held large tracts of territory in the Punjab plains and also obtained monopoly of the salt mines of Pinddad Khan.[3] In short by 1834, Gulab Singh

came to be considered after Ranjit Singh the greatest chief in the Punjab. Nominally these conquests and annexations were made in the name of the Sikhs and as extensions of the kingdom of Lahore, but in reality Gulab Singh was practically independent.[4]

For running the administration and to keep under control such large areas Raja Gulab Singh possessed, the Maharaja had authorised him to raise and keep his own army. The Dogra Raja, ambitious as he was, had trained and equipped with great care a large army, mainly consisting of the inhabitants of the hills. Further, he was fortunate in having in his service a most able, intrepid and faithful officer, Zorawar Singh Kahluria, about whom more will be said in the next chapter. By the acquisition of Kishtwar, the boundaries of Gulab Singh's possessions had become conterminous with those of Ladakh. With these rich resources—a large territory and a well-equipped army headed by an able general—Gulab Singh, as and when the occasion arose, was ready to conquer new lands.

The third power, which in the first two decades of the nineteenth century acquired possessions in the Western Himalayas was the Hon'ble English East India Company. Founded in 1600, for about a century and a half, it was primarily concerned with trade. But in the meantime, it became interested in acquiring territory and carved out an empire for itself. The Governor-General Lord Wellesley (1788-1805), by pursuing a spirited and forward policy, pushed the frontiers of the Company upto the banks of the Jamuna in the north. In the next five years, thanks

[1] *JPHS*, VIII, No. 2, pp. 132-133.

[2] Panikkar, *Founding of Kashmir State*, p. 37.

[3] *Ibid*, pp. 38-39. A. Burnes, *Travels in Bokhara etc.* (London, 1834), II, pp. 284-85.

[4] *JPHS*, VIII, No. 2, p. 134.

to the Napoleonic danger in Europe,[1] the Company extended its frontier westward for about two hundred miles, and now the Sutlej became her boundary with the Lahore Durbar.

The newly-acquired British territory lying between the rivers Jamuna and Sutlej was bounded in the east by the Gurkha possessions. We have already noted how the Gurkhas of Nepal had engulfed the hill states lying between Nepal and the Sutlej and how in their westward expansion, they were checked by Ranjit Singh in 1809. After suffering a defeat at the hands of the Sikh ruler at Kangra, Gurkha encroachments on the Gangetic plains and the Company's newly acquired territory increased enormously. It was clear that either the Company should withdraw or alternately surrender it to the Gurkhas. But the British could ill-afford to do either. A logical result, therefore, was the Anglo-Nepalese war of 1814-16 in which the Gurkhas were defeated and forced to make some territorial concessions. Under the Treaty of Sagauli (March 1816), they ceded to the Company, all territory lying between the rivers Kali and Sutlej. This included Kumaon, Garhwal and many other hill states (later christened the Simla Hill States). And important of these was Bashahr, with an area of 3,820 square miles;[2] this brought British possessions contiguous to Ladakh and Western Tibet.

This hilly region was of great advantage to the Company. It was thought to be of potential value as a source of revenue, and as a site for the development of hill stations,[3] where British

[1]Napoleon Bonaparte of France and Czar Alexander I of Russia concluded the Treaty of Tilsit in July, 1807, one of the details of which was a combined invasion of India by the land route. This spurred the English to launch diplomatic offensive: missions were despatched to Tehran, Kabul and Lahore. Charles (later Sir Charles) Metcalfe was sent to negotiate an alliance with Ranjit Singh who at that time was invading cis-Sutlej territory. But in the meantime Britain concluded treaties with Turkey and Persia, and this resulted in easing the situation in the Near East as also in the Middle East. The bogey of Franco-Russian invasion of India thinned. With the change in European situation there was change in British attitude towards Ranjit Singh also: the Sikh ruler was asked to stop his invasions on the cis-Sutlej area which now was declared to be under British protection.

[2]*Punjab States Gazetteer, 1910*, VIII, No. 2, pt. A, p. 3.

[3]Later on Simla and Naini Tal hill-stations developed in this area.

valetudinarians could take refuge from the heat of the plains.[1] Commercially also this tract was of great advantage. In this context the Earl of Moira, later the Marquess of Hastings,[2] recorded:

> By the possession of Kumaon, your Hon'ble Committee is aware, that we possess a direct and not difficult road into the Oondes, or country producing the animal which bears the shawl-wool, and into the vast region of Tartary: a circumstance which opens views of great advantage to the commercial and manufacturing interests not of this country only, but also of Great Britain.[3]

From a political and military point of view, the area was no less important. Underlining these gains, the Governor-General wrote to the Secret Committee again,

> We are now not only freed from that evil (Gurkha menace) but are secure from the consequences which would ensure, were Ranjit Singh, or any ambitious and powerful chief, to establish himself in the hills beyond the Sutlej. In such an event, we could not, without a commanding influence in the hills on this side of the river, and the possessions of a frontier enabling us to penetrate and occupy them at any time, ever be secure against the danger of a chief of that character, establishing his own power there, and thus taking in flank one of the most valuable and important positions of our north-western frontier line. From such a danger, which will perhaps not be deemed chimerical, we are now effectually secured.[4]

Surprisingly, as the Governor-General had perceived, such a danger from the other side of the Himalayas became a real threat to the English within a quarter of a century. In 1841, as we shall see in the next chapter, the Dogras under Wazir Zorawar Singh over-ran the whole of Western Tibet contiguous to the British hill possessions. Then, the British were in a commanding position to watch and check any Dogra invasion of British territory from that side.

Thus we see that by the first quarter of the 19th century three powers had risen in the Western Himalayas. Maharaja Ranjit Singh, after his conquest of Kashmir in 1819, realised tribute from Ladakh and enjoyed trade privileges, which the

[1] W. Hamilton, *The East India Gazetteer* (London, 1828), II, p. 102.

[2] He was the Governor-General of India from 1813-23.

[3] *Papers relating to the Nepaul War, Printed in Conformity to the Resolution of the Court of Proprietors of East India Stock of 3rd March, 1824*, p. 761. Secret Letter from Lord Moira, 2 August, 1815.

[4] *Papers Relating to the Nepaul War*, p. 762. Secret Letter from Lord Moira, 2 August 1815.

erstwhile rulers of Kashmir—the Afghans and the Mughals—had been enjoying. Raja Gulab Singh of Jammu, though a feudatory of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, controlled Jammu hills and Kishtwar which were adjacent to Ladakh. The English, on the other hand controlled all the hilly tract lying between the rivers Kali and Sutlej, the boundaries of which as has been remarked, were also conterminous with those of Ladakh and West Tibet.

These powers, after acquiring territories in the Western Himalayas, became interested in the commercial potentialities of Ladakh and West Tibet. As known in Kashmir, *Pashmina* or shawl-wool, the fine under-coat of Tibetan sheep and goats, was the most important articles of trade in this region. It was used for the manufacture of the famous Kashmiri shawls, an article of clothing highly prized both in Europe and Asia. Shawl wool, coming mainly from Western Tibet was deeply interlinked with the economies of Ladakh and Kashmir. Chang Thang or the northern arid wastes of Tibet, with the districts of Rudok and Gartok is the most important shawl-wool producing area.[1] Because of its elevation and aridity, the area is coated with a short and succulent grass which provides excellent pasturage for sheep and goats.[2] Under the peace treaty, concluded after the Tibeto-Ladakhi-Mughal war (*c.* 1681-84 AD), Tibetan authorities undertook to supply the entire wool of this region to Ladakh.[3] At the same time, Ladakh under a separate treaty with the Mughals, further undertook to supply all this wool, alongwith its indigenous produce, to Kashmir.[4] This practice appears to have been followed throughout the 18th century.

From time immemorial, Kashmir was the only manufactory where shawls were produced and its looms were fed with the wool procured as above from West Tibet and Ladakh. The economy and prosperity of Kashmir was dependent on the shawl

[1] *FDPP*, 10 October 1823, No. 21.

[2] J.B.N. Hennessay (Ed.), "Report of Pandit Kishan Singh's Explorations in Great Tibet and Mongolia (1879-82)." *Survey of India Records* (Dehra Dun, 1915), VIII, Pt. 2, p. 224.

[3] For details, see *Supra*, pp. 48-49.

[4] *Ibid.*

industry, and that is why, the rulers of Kashmir, be it the Mughals or the Afghans, steadfastly clung to the clauses of the treaty of 1684 relating to shawl-wool and continued to get this commodity from and through Ladakh. On the other hand shawl-wool was an important article in the imports and exports of Ladakh[1] and was a lucrative source of income to its ruler and other high state officials. Hence the Ladakhis maintained a well-guarded monopoly on the shawl-wool produced in West Tibet, and any attempt to export this article to areas other than Ladakh was severely punished by Tibetan authorities. Thus, it was under strict treaty rights, and not as a result of custom and usage, as a recent writer has said,[2] that Ladakh got the monopoly of West Tibet's shawl-wool. Any dislocation in the flow of this commodity from the aforementioned old and well-frequented route was bound to affect adversely the economies of both Ladakh and Kashmir.

After becoming a territorial power, John Company had become interested in the trans-Himalayan trade, and because of its obvious value, shawl-wool had attracted the notice of the British. In 1774, while commissioning George Bogle[3] to Tashilhunpo, Warren Hastings, the Governor-General, had requested him "to send one or more pair of the animals called Tus, which produce the shawl-wool.[4] In 1799, the Board of Agriculture also asked the Court of Directors, if they could secure samples of shawl-bearing sheep of Tibet with a view to breeding it in England. The Court instructed the Bengal Government to procure specimens, with precise directions as to the care of the animals during their long voyage to England.[5] In the opening years of the nineteenth century, the manufacturing coalition on the

[1]See *Supra*, pp. 19-21.

[2]See A. Lamb, *Britain and Chinese Central Asia : The Road to Lhasa 1767 to 1905* (London, 1960), p. 58.

[3]For details of Bogle's mission to the Panchen Lama, see C. Markham, *Narratives of the Mission of George Bogle to Tibet and of the Journey of Thomas Manning to Lhasa* (London, 1876), pp. 1-210. See also S. Cammann, *Trade through the Himalayas* (Princeton, 1951), pp. 27-81.

[4]Markham, *Narratives*, p. 8.

[5]Bengal Despatches, Vol. 34, Bengal Commercial Despatch of 31st October, 1799, quoted in Lamb, *op.cit*, p. 58.

continent was dead-set against Britain,[1] and the acquisition of shawl-wool was very much desirable to the Company.[2]

Though Bogle[3] and later Samuel[4] Turner had given some information about shawl-wool[5], much was not known till 1812, when William Moorcroft, a resourceful and intelligent young employee of the Company penetrated into West Tibet and visited Gartok, the then principal centre of shawl-wool trade. Moorcroft, a veterinary surgeon and a native of Lancashire, had joined the Company's service in 1808, and was soon appointed Superintendent of the Company's stud-farm at Pusa near Patna.[6] In 1811, he sought and obtained permission from the Governor-General's Agent at Fatehgarh "to penetrate into Tartary" and to collect specimens of mountain ponies and shawl-wool goats.[7] British officials in Calcutta were "horrified" and considered Moorcroft's venture "replete with danger to himself and his companions and so little likely to be productive of advantage to the public service."[8]

Moorcroft's enterprise was certainly quite hazardous. He was not only to deal with the ever-vigilant Tibetans, who would not allow a foreigner to enter their country, but also to elude the hostile Gurkhas, then masters of the Himalayas. Accompanied by Captain (later General Sir John)

[1]cf. Moorcroft to Traill, letter No. IV, *Asiatic Journal*, XXI, p. 217.

[2]*FDPC*, 20 September 1822. No. 67.

[3]Bogle reported that shawl-wool came from goats in the regions of Western Tibet and was an important item of export to Kashmir. (Markham, *Narratives*, p. 126).

[4]After Bogle's mission and death, in 1783 Warren Hastings, commissioned Turner to Tashilhunpo. For details of his mission, see S. Turner, *An Account of an Embassy to the Court of the Teshoo Lama in Tibet* (London, 1800). See also, Cammann, *op. cit*, pp. 82-101.

[5]Turner attempted to bring out some shawl-goats and later tried to send them to England, but he was not much successful. (Cammann, *op.cit*, p. 84 fn. 11).

[6]For details about his early career, see Moorcroft, *Travels*, I, pp. xix-xxii (introduction).

[7]*Historical Records of the Survey of India*, collected and compiled by R.H. Phillimore (Dehra Dun, 1950), II, pp. 80, 430.

[8]*Idem*.

Hearsey, and disguising themselves as Gosains,[1] under the assumed names of Maya Puri and Hargiri,[2] they crossed the Niti pass and entered 'Undes'.[3] While at Gartok (the capital of West Tibet), Moorcroft was told that Shawl-wool of West Tibet was sold to the Ladakhis only.[4] In 1810, a British merchant, Mr. Gillman of Bareilly, through some middlemen purchased a small quantity of shawl-wool but when the Ladakhis came to know about it they protested to the Garpon or the Tibetan Governor of Gartok, who issued an edict forbidding the sale of shawl-wool to any but the Ladakhis, on pain of death.[5] Later on, by giving many presents such as those of broadcloth and coral beads—things very much liked by the Governor[6]—and also by offering little more money than the Ladakhis would have given for the same quantity, Moorcroft purchased a small quantity of shawl-wool, and in his account of this journey, published in the *Asiatic Researches* in 1816 observed:

I consider this day as the epoch at which may be fixed the origin of a traffic, which is likely to be extremely beneficial to the Hon'ble Company.[7]

In the early years of the nineteenth century because of the oppression of the Afghan Governors in Kashmir, many skilled workers were compelled to leave that valley. Many shawl-manufacturers took refuge in Amritsar, Nurpur, Ludhiana and adjoining hills, carrying alongwith them their families and the wherewithal of their professional skills.[8] The influx of these

[1]Gosains were the trading pilgrims of India, whose humble deportment, holy character and professions of high veneration for the Panchen Lama, procured them not only a ready admittance to Tibet but also great favours at Tashilhunpo. (Markham, *Narratives*, pp. 124-25).

[2]C.E.D. Black, *A Memoir on the Indian Surveys, 1875-1890*, (London, 1891), p. 152.

[3]In Moorcroft's own words, 'Undes' or 'Oondes' was 'country of wool' situated to the north of Garhwal. *Foreign Misc.*, 125, p. 30 (*NAI*).

[4]*Asiatic Researches*, XII (1816), p. 451.

[5]*Idem.*

[6]Mr. Webb, who for sometime carried survey work in the Western Himalayas, observed that when the authorities in Lhasa came to know about the visit of Moorcroft and Hearsey to Gartok, they dismissed the Governor from service, probably for accepting these presents. Later, the Governor was summoned to Lhasa, where, perhaps he was given more punishment. cf. *Historical Records of the Survey of India*, collected and compiled by R.H. Phillimore (Dehra Dun, 1954), III, p. 45.

[7]*Asiatic Researches*, XII, p. 456.

[8]*FDPP*, 10 October 1823, No. 27. *FDSPS*, 22 Nov. 1841, No. 25. See also, Moorcroft, *Travels*, I, pp. 110-111.

Kashmiri artisans was bound to promote and facilitate the work of manufacturing shawls in the Indian plains. In 1818, Shugn Chand, a rich banker and treasurer of the Delhi Residency, started a venturous project of manufacturing shawls under his personal inspection getting the workmen and material from Kashmir.[1]

In 1815, when Bashahr came under British protection, the Company retained possession of Kotgarh,[2] a small village on the Sutlej, from where to tap the lucrative shawl-wool of West Tibet into the Company's territory was easy. Soon after, with a view to purchase wool from Tibetan traders and also to divert the wool trade from Kashmir into territories under British control, a factory was established here.[3] Rampur, the capital of Bashahr, also began to develop into a shawl-wool trading centre. For the convenient transit of wool, it was thought necessary to have good roads in Kinnaur, the north-eastern part of Bashahr, which is conterminous with Ladakh and Tibet. Tracks, which in 1818 could hardly be used by the travellers and were almost impassable, were repaired and within two years, the people of Kinnaur started bringing sheep, laden with wool to Rampur.[4] The wandering shepherds of Tibet, when unwatched could easily be induced to part with their wool for more money and merchandise of the plains; due to encouraging attitude of British officials, the residents of Kinnaur, though not allowed to purchase shawl-wool openly, began to smuggle "it in small quantities of two and three pounds each to a person."[5] This situation may be summed up in the words of Alexander Gerard:

> Since the British have thought it worth their while to buy it (shawl-wool) the Chinese (cis) have not been so scrupulous, and they now sell it to the highest bidder. Last year one person from Namgea Lache, a country

[1] *Punjab Government Records, Delhi and Ludhiana Residency and Agency* (Lahore, 1911), I, p. 168.

[2] *Punjab States Gazetteer*, 1910, VIII, No. 2, Pt. A, p. 8.

[3] G.Llyod (Ed.) *Narrative of a Journey from Caunpoor to the Boorendo Pass in the Himalaya Mountains etc. by Major Sir W. Llyod and Captain Alexander Gerard's account of an attempt to penetrate by Bekhur to Garoo and the Lake Mansarowara etc.* (London, 1840), I, p. 174.

[4] Gerard, *Account of Koonawur*, pp. 115-16.

[5] *Ibid*, p. 116.

on the bank of the Brahmapootra, eighteen days journey S.E, of Mansurowur, brought about twelve hundred weights of it, and the trade is on the increase.[1]

In Kumaon region also, the traders were active in bringing shawl-wool from West Tibet and soon this commodity formed an important item in the imports of Kumaon.[2]

Thus, the arrival of the English in the Western Himalayas upset the long-established commercial framework of this area, and shawl-wool of Western Tibet started flowing into channels other than the old and customary ones. This was bound to cause anxiety to the rulers of Kashmir and Ladakh.

On the other hand, Maharaja Ranjit Singh also appears to have grasped the importance of shawl-wool trade. Full encouragement was given to the traders who had emigrated from Kashmir to Nurpur and Amritsar. At Amritsar many thousand shawl manufactories were opened,[3] which were fed partly by the wool imported from Tibet and partly from Bokhara.[4] An attempt was also made to manufacture shawls at Lahore.[5] Desa Singh Majithia, the Sikh *Nazim* of Kangra hills, was said to be busy in building a city called Tilokhpur, not far from Kot Kangra, where he had already established one hundred shops of shawl workmen.[6] Sood after the conquest of Kashmir in 1819, Ranjit Singh appointed one Jawahir Mal, a native of Shikar Pur; who collected duties on shawls and other articles of merchandise, of different description imported, exported, or manufactured in Kashmir. He undertook to pay the Maharaja a fixed amount every year. Under his judicious management there was rapid increase in the number of shawl manufacturers,[7] and shawl goods brought to the state exchequer an income of about twelve lakh rupees, which was expected to increase to rupees thirteen and a half lakhs in 1821.[8]

[1]Gerard, *Account of Koonawur*, pp. 115-16.

[2]cf. G.W. Trail, "Statistical Sketch of Kumaon", *Asiatic Researches*, XVI (1828), p. 194.

[3]*FDPP*, 10 October 1823, No. 27.

[4]Moorcroft, *Travels*, I, p. 111.

[5]*Punjab Government Records*, I, p. 168.

[6]*FDPP*, 10 October 1823, No. 27.

[7]The number of shops in 1819, before Ranjit's occupation of Kashmir was 6,000; it rose to 16,000 in 1821. (*FDPP*, 10 October 1823, No. 28).

[8]*FDPP*, 10 October, 1823, No. 27.

In 1821, the supply of shawl-wool from West Tibet into Ladakh decreased. It was said that about 150 horse-loads of this commodity had been smuggled into areas other than Ladakh. This caused great anxiety to the king of Ladakh, his ministers and Kashmiri traders.[1] This diminished supply of wool was bound to have its effect on the looms of Kashmir. Hence, the Sikh *Nazim* of Kashmir despatched a special envoy to Ladakh to investigate the causes of the decrease in shawl-wool imports.[2] It was suspected that the decrease was due to the activities of William Moorcroft, who at that time was sojourning in Ladakh. The Maharaja also wrote to Mir Izzet Ullah,[3] Assistant to Moorcroft:

Since the duties of the district of Cashmeer are chiefly derived from the import of shawl-wool and thread and it has been lately stated to me that from some cause or other, the transport of shawl-wool from Tibhut into Cashmeer has fallen off very much...apprise me... what may be the cause of deficiency on the import of shawl wool and thread from Tibhut.[4]

Moorcroft, on behalf of Izzet Ullah replied that decrease in shawl-wool was due to the breaking out of an epidemic among the cattle, in which lakhs of shawl goats of Ladakh and Chang Thang had died.[5] The English traveller further assured the Maharaja that his object in coming to Ladakh was not to purchase shawl-wool for the Company.[6]

The third power in the Western Himalayas—Raja Gulab Singh—was also not slow to grasp the potentialities of shawl-wool trade of Ladakh. By the establishment of shawl manufactories at Amritsar and Nurpur, wool was in great demand in the plains. The shawl manufacturers of these places would not like to get their supply of wool through a circuitous and expensive route via Kashmir and Ladakh. Thus, as the chronicler of Maharaja Ranjit Singh tells us, Raja Gulab Singh had started to draw the wool direct from Ladakh through Kishtwar

[1] *Ibid*, No. 28.

[2] Moorcroft to Trail, letter No. 3, *AJ*, XXI, (Sept.-Dec., 1836), p. 143.

[3] For more information about Izzet Ullah, see *infra*, pp. 95-96.

[4] *English Translation of Persian Letters Received from January 1822, to June 1822*, Register No. 70, Pt. I, letter No. 131 (6) B. (*ANI*).

[5] *English Translation of Persian Letters Received from September 1821, to December 1821*, Register No. 69 A, letter No. 263, (*ANI*).

[6] *Ibid.*

into territories under his control. In November 1834, Mihan Singh, the Sikh Governor of Kashmir complained to Maharaja Ranjit Singh that shawl-wool was going from Ladakh to Jammu and that "on account of the inattention of the Maharaja, Kashmir had become absolutely deserted and its affairs had gone from bad to worse."[1] The Governor of Kashmir had previously made repeated representations to the Maharaja in this connection but, Bhai Ram Singh, Minister-in-Waiting, out of regard for Raja Kalan (Dhian Singh) never made a report to the Maharaja.[2] Ranjit Singh rebuked Raja Dhian Singh for all this, and there the matter appears to have rested. But Raja Gulab Singh was not to remain content with importing a part of the Ladakhi shawl-wool only, he was eager to subdue completely Ladakh and the neighbouring areas, ostensibly for the Maharaja, but actually for himself. His plans in this regard will be discussed in the next chapter.

Moorcroft's visit to Ladakh alluded to earlier furnishes a good deal of information, that helps in understanding the Company's attitude vis-a-vis Ladakh. It would, thus demand some detailed treatment. On his way to visit some Central Asian countries, in September 1820, Moorcroft reached Leh. The ostensible object of his mission was to procure horses to improve the breed within British provinces and to explore the possibilities of opening trans-Himalayan regions for British commerce. But it is probable that another motive of his journey was to get intelligence about the policy and commercial penetration of Russia in this region. He was accompanied by George Trebeck and Mr. Guthrie. The former, son of a Calcutta lawyer had volunteered himself, acted as a supervisor and carried survey work, while the latter was in the service of the Company and worked as an assistant-surgeon. Moorcroft was also accompanied by Mir Izzat Ullah Khan, a member of a Kashmiri merchant-house with its headquarters at Patna and with widespread branches in Kashmir, Nepal, Western China, Tibet and Bengal. In 1809, Izzet Ullah had accompanied Elp-

[1]Sohan Lal Suri, *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar III, tr. V.S. Suri (New Delhi, 1961), p. 213.

[2]*Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar III, p. 213. see also, Mohammad Ul-Din Fouq, *Mukammal Tarikh-i-Kashmir* (in Urdu), (Lahore, 1912), III, p. 39.

hinstone on his political mission to Kabul,[1] and was taken into the Intelligence Department of the Company and was mainly employed by the Delhi Residency. In 1812, he was employed by Moorcroft to reconnoitre routes to Bokhara via Leh, Kashgar, Samarkand and Kabul.[2] Izzet Ullah had successfully completed this mission and kept a detailed journal in Persian about various stages and the objects that attracted his attention.[3] In the present mission, he was assisting Moorcroft as an interpreter and linguist.[4]

Although Moorcroft was not clothed with diplomatic powers by the Company's Government, yet he had their permission and sanction and was allowed two years leave with full pay. He was styled as 'Meer Akhoor' or 'Superintendent of the Hon'ble Company's Stud',[5] and was furnished with certificates of introduction in English, Russian, Persian and Chinese languages, signed, on sealing wax, with the Company's large seal.[6] He was also furnished with presents to different chiefs[7] of the countries which he was to visit, but most of the property which he carried in his cavalcade[8] belonged to two English firms of Calcutta, Messrs John Falmer and Co., and mackillop and Co.

The Ladakhis like the Tibetans, were very much allergic to the name of a Westerner and put all kinds of obstacles in Moorcroft's entry into Ladakh. But once in Leh, by persistent efforts of Mir Izzet Ullah and by his own persuasive eloquence and prodigal distribution of presents, the Company's official soon

[1]Gholam Hyder Khan, 'Journal about Moorcroft's Journey to Ladakh, Kashmir, Balkh and Bokhara 1819-1825', (Ed.) Hearsey, *Asiatic Journal*, XVIII (Sept.-Dec., 1835), p. 108.

[2]C.T. Metcalfe (Resident at Delhi) to John Adam (Secretary to Government), 11 January 1814. *FDPC*, 25 January 1814, No. 44.

[3]This Journal was translated into English by Prof. H.H. Wilson and published in the *Calcutta Quarterly Oriental Magazine and Register*, III & IV (1825), and the *JRAS*, VII (1843). Later on, an official translation of it was published by the Foreign Department Press, Calcutta, 1872.

[4]*AJ*, XVIII (Sept.-Dec. 1835), p. 108.

[5]*FDPP*, 14 May, 1819, Nos. 100-101.

[6]*AJ*, XVIII (Sept.-Dec., 1835), p. 108.

[7]*Ibid.*

[8]Moorcroft's Mission had taken the form of a caravan: his luggage was conveyed through the British territories by sixty mules and other beasts-of-burden belonging to the British Government. (*Idem.*)

won the confidence of the Ladakhi King and the Leh officialdom. Suspicion and distrust was succeeded by a full measure of confidence. He stayed in Ladakh for two years,[1] and despatched very detailed reports dealing almost with every aspect of Ladakh and its inhabitants. Here, we are only concerned with Russian intrigues in this area as these were noticed by Moorcroft, his signing of a commercial agreement with the Ladakhi authorities and finally, his recommendations to Fort William for accepting the allegiance of Ladakh.

While in Ladakh, Moorcroft was surprised to find that Russia had already made some overtures to win the favour of the Ladakhi ruler. The Prime Minister showed him a letter from the Emperor of Russia addressed to the Raja of Ladakh which had been brought to the latter by a person named Agha Mehdi[2] about six years earlier.[3] The purport of the letter was to open commercial intercourse with Ladakh. Agha Mehdi, who was sagacious and had proved successful in the first mission was now again assigned a diplomatic mission. He was given two letters addressed by the Emperor of Russia to the ruler of Ladakh and Maharaja Ranjit Singh. The Agha was also given a quantity of rubies, emeralds and other articles of Russian make mainly to serve as presents to be given to the aforementioned chiefs. For the successful completion of his mission, a considerable amount of gold-ducats called 'Booth Kees' was also placed at his disposal.[4] From Shamei on the Irtish, the Agha was escorted to Turfan Yangi, on the borders of Chinese Turkestan, by a troop of Russian cavalary.[5] While at Kashgar,

[1]Francke's observation that "the reason why Moorcroft spent such a long time at Leh was his attempt to arrange for the king of Ladakh's tendering his allegiance to the East India Company" (*Antiquities*, I, p. 60), does not seem to be correct. On the contrary, we find that in pursuance of his plan, Moorcroft made strenuous efforts to get permission to enter Yarkand, but the Chinese authorities did not issue the passport and he had to wait and stay in Ladakh for all this time.

[2]For details about his career, see Moorcroft, *Travels*, I, pp. 384-86. *AJ*, XXI (Sept.-Dec., 1836), pp. 137-38.

[3]Moorcroft, *Travels*, I, p. 383.

[4]*FDPP*, 26 July 1822, No. 56.

[5]Moorcroft (Superintendent of Hon'ble Company's Stud on deputation to Chinese and Oozbuk territories) to Metcalfe (Secretary to Government), 6 May 1821. *FDPC*, 10 October 1823, Nos. 23, 25.

he was said to have assured the Mohammadens of that place of support from Russia in their attempt to shake off the Chinese yoke, and even had invited the heir of that principality to St. Petersburg, with a promise that he would be helped by a Russian army to recover the dominions of his ancestors.[1] All this, Moorcroft feared, would result in the supremacy of Russian influence and trade in Eastern Turkestan.

At Yarkand, Agha Mehdi, in conjunction with a phalanx of Kashmiri traders, who, seeing their trade monopoly in danger were inimical to Moorcroft, successfully foiled the latter's attempts to visit that place. Later on, when the Agha moved down to Leh, Kissak Shah, the principal judge at Yarkand gave him a letter containing instructions about Moorcroft's entry into Chinese territories.[2] But the Agha could not reach Leh, for, while crossing the Karakoram mountains, he was suddenly taken ill and died soon after. His papers including the one about Moorcroft were destroyed by his followers.[3] Mohammad Zahur, the Agha's assistant or deputy, arrived at Leh with a small caravan in April, 1821. But not being so discerning as Agha Mehdi and being a votary of the pleasures of the flesh, Mohammad Zahur squandered away the large sum at his disposal and gave up the intention of returning to Russia.[4]

Puzzled Moorcroft, who had hoped to meet the Agha in rencontre at Leh felt a bit relieved and wrote to a friend that "all circumstances considered, it is probable that we have gained rather than lost by not having received the instructions or rather by the death of the Agha."[5] Moorcroft further observed that if the Agha had lived a few years longer, he might have produced scenes in Asia that would have astonished some of the Cabinets in Europe.[6]

From Agha Mehdi's followers, Moorcroft procured two letters which had escaped destruction. These were written by Count Nesselrode, Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs and

[1] *FDPC*, 10 October 1823, Nos. 23, 25.
[2] *AJ*, XXI (Sept.-Dec., 1836), p. 137.
[3] *FDPP*, 20 September 1822, No. 66.
[4] Moorcroft to Metcalfe, 6 May 1822. *FDPC*, 10 October 1823, No. 25.
[5] *AJ*, XXI (Sept.-Dec., 1836), p. 137.
[6] *Ibid*, p. 138.

Privy Councillor of Czar Alexander I, and addressed to Maharaja Ranjit Singh and the King of Ladakh. The letter to Ranjit Singh was written in Russian language,[1] and at Yarkand it was opened by Agha Mehdi so as to get it translated into Persian. In the letter, Agha Mehdi was styled as "one of the aulic counsellor of the state of Russia."[2] Inter alia, it requested the Maharaja to receive the Agha with every attention and consideration, assuring him at the same time of all assistance to any native traveller or merchant of the Sikh ruler.[3] The letter to the Raja of Ladakh was similar in tenor and differed in address only.[4]

Moorcroft surmised that the purpose of Agha Mehdi's mission was political. One probable object of Czar Alexander was the invasion of British India through a direct Kokand-Ladakh route across the highlands of Pamir. By following this route, there were less chances of opposition from the enemy: Chinese posts at Yarkand and Kashgar were not on the way and over the rest of the steppe, were not many forts, troops or guards. Resistance, if offered by the nomadic Kirghiz hordes of these areas, could be easily overcome.[5] Alternately, the British traveller thought that the Russian Emperor also contemplated invasion of China. For both these objects, goodwill and friendship of the Ladakhi King and Maharaja Ranjit Singh were desirable and Agha Mehdi had been despatched to achieve these objects. In any such invasion, both Ladakh and Kashmir, because of their geographical situation, would serve as convenient military advance-posts, where an invading Russian army, exhausted after a long march through the mountains, would

[1]On Moorcroft's request this original letter in Russian characters was also translated into Latin by Alexander Csoma de Koros, the Hungarian scholar, who at that time happened to be in Leh, cf. T. Duka, *Life and Works of Alexander Csoma de Koros* (London, 1885), pp. 28-29.

[2]*FDPC*, 10 October 1823, No. 25 A.

[3]For details, see *Infra* Appendix A.

[4]*FDPC*, 10 October 1823, No. 24.

[5]*FDPP*, 20 September 1822, No. 63, pp. 178-80. These proceedings are quite detailed: Moorcroft's single letter containing his recommendations regarding Ladakh's allegiance and other details about this Himalayan principality, consists of about eighty fullscape manuscript pages. Therefore, for the sake of easy reference, pages of the proceedings are given.

take respite and replenish its supplies.[1]

Agha Mehdi's mission spurred Moorcroft to take some active steps for securing commercial concessions for the British. He was convinced that Russians were pursuing their objective with vigour and if the British wished to counteract their designs, they will have to act quickly. On 4 May, 1821, the Company's official, on behalf of English merchants signed a commercial engagement with the Raja, the Prime Minister and other authorities of Ladakh. Under this agreement British merchants were permitted to trade with Ladakh and through it with the Chinese and Western Turkestan. The Ladakhi authorities also allowed a reduction of nearly one-fourth of the amount of the duties which was levied on merchandise of traders from the Punjab.[2] Moorcroft's real object in concluding this commercial agreement was not only to seek access to Ladakh and its environs for British trade, but also to compete with the Russians who, after grasping the potentialities of Central Asian trade were busily engaged in introducing their goods in these markets. As far back as 1812, after his visit to Gartok, he had written to the then Governor-General, Lord Minto that

> the vigorous trade carried on by the Russians in the neighbourhood of the Hon'ble Company's possessions is highly prejudicial to the Company's Commercial interests, which if not timely counteracted, will probably lead to events, which may disturb the tranquillity and endanger the safety and security of the Company's provinces.[3]

This commercial agreement was followed by an offer of allegiance of Ladakh to the Company. What motivated the Ladakhi authorities to tender this allegiance and what role did Moorcroft play to bring it about? These are difficult questions to answer. Yet, Moorcroft's remarks that he simply acted as a medium for forwarding the memorial to the Company,[4] which was proferred,[5] are not convincing. On the contrary, in the *Chronicles of Ladakh* we notice that Moorcroft and Trebeck, sensing the danger of Ladakh being conquered by others, offered

[1] *Ibid*, pp. 181-85.
[2] For more details, see *Infra* Appendix C.
[3] *Foreign Misc.* No. 125, Para I. (*NAI*)
[4] Moorcroft, *Travels*, I, p. 420.
[5] *Ibid*, pp. 419 at passim.

to build a 'tower' (fort) in Ladakh,[1] but this offer was rejected by the Ladakhi authorities.[2] It appears, that on Moorcroft's advice, Mir Izzet Ullah and his friends in Ladakh took pains to convince the Ladakhi authorities that the best solution to save Ladakh from any invasion by the Sikhs or Russia or any other power was to accept the protection of the Company and place Ladakh under British guardianship. Whatever the reasons, a tender of allegiance was made to the Company.[3] Important clauses in the memorial were that the Company's Government was not to interfere in the internal administration of Ladakh, but if the latter suffered aggression from any other power, then, on application from the Ladakhi King, the Company was to send its forces to protect this Himalayan principality. Expenditure incurred on such an expedition was to be defrayed by the Company.[4]

While forwarding this memorial to Fort William, Moorcroft took great pains to bring to the notice of the British Government the manifold advantages which would accrue to the latter by accepting the allegiance of Ladakh. This Himalayan kingdom, he observed, would greatly facilitate the project of tapping the lucrative shawl-wool trade and also act as a key for opening the vast markets of Chinese Turkestan and other Central Asian countries for British goods. Militarily, Ladakh was invulnerable. Its sky-high mountains, deep ravines and unfrequented narrow footpaths were it strong defences, and the Company's monthly expenditure for maintaining peace in this area would not exceed rupees one thousand.[5] Further, it would be an excellent base for operations against China if the necessity ever arose, and British presence in Ladakh, in addition to keeping in awe Maharaja Ranjit Singh, would forestall any Russian attempt to invade India from the north.[6] Moorcroft was anxious to save Ladakh from being conquered by Ranjit Singh or any other power. In this context he observed:

should Raja Ranjit Singh unhappily succeed in obtaining Ladakh through the British Government rejecting its tendered allegiance, all the fair hopes

[1] Francke, *Antiquities*, II, p. 125.
[2] *Ibid.*
[3] *FDPP*, 20 September 1822, No. 64.
[4] For details, see *Infra* Appendix A.
[5] *FDPP*, 20 September 1823, No. 63, pp. 171, 194.
[6] *Ibid*, pp. 101, 193-94,

now entertained of commercial enterprise being carried to an indefinite extent in this direction must be considered as completely blasted and destroyed.[1]

In the end, Moorcroft requested that if the allegiance of Ladakh be not acceptable to the Government, then they should keep the matter as a secret[2] until he returned or until his papers on the commercial capabilities of the countries to the north-west of India were published.[3]

Moorcroft's long stay in Ladakh and his activities there, had raised suspicions in the Sikh ruler's mind. The Maharaja despatched a pair of *Harkaras* to Ladakh, and wrote to Moorcroft and Izzet Ullah making searching enquiries about their objects and activities in Ladakh and desired to know everything in "full detail".[4] Moorcroft replied that after signing a commercial treaty with the authorities of Ladakh, he was busy in settling the duties to be levied on English merchants in Yarkand.[5] He further wrote that rumours were afloat in Ladakh that the Maharaja was contemplating to send a *Thanadar* with some force to Ladakh. The English traveller impressed upon Ranjit Singh, that any such action was fraught with many dangerous consequences. Instead of increasing, it will stifle the supply of shawl-wool from Ladakh to Kashmir, thus annihilating the economy of the latter. In Moorcroft's own words, as he later wrote to a friend, his purpose in writing this letter was to alarm Ranjit's ruling passion and avert any probable Sikh invasion of Ladakh until the Company determined upon the tender.[6]

[1] *Ibid*, pp. 203-204.

[2] Prof. H.H. Wilson, Editor of Moorcroft's *Travels* (I, p. 420), wrongly says that while forwarding the tender of allegiance to Bengal, Moorcroft immediately apprised Maharaja Ranjit Singh about this matter. On the contrary, we find Moorcroft anxious not to let the Maharaja know anything about it until the Company decided about this matter. Moorcroft's apprehension was that if Ranjit Singh got information about the tender, by sending his troops to Ladakh, he would certainly forestall the Company's probable action there.

[3] cf. *FDPP*, 20 September 1822, No. 63, p. 204.

[4] *English Translation of Persian Letters received from January 1822 to June 1822*, Register No. 70, Pt. I, letter No. 131 (6) A & B. (*NAI*)

[5] *Ibid, Sept. 1821 to Dec. 1821*, Register No. 69 A, letter No. 263.

[6] Moorcroft to Trail, letter No. 1, *AJ*, XXI (Sept.-Dec. 1836), p. 139.

Moorcroft's letter raised apprehensions in the Maharaja's mind and he perceived in it a hidden threat. Ranjit Singh's Agent at Delhi, handed over this letter in original to Sir David Ochterlony, British Resident, and desired to know British intentions. The Governor-General wrote to the Maharaja expressing regret and surprise that Moorcroft's letter excited apprehensions in the Lahore ruler's mind.[1] Ranjit Singh was told that Moorcroft had acted without any sanction,[2] and that an offer of allegiance from Ladakh was received and rejected. The Maharaja was further assured of British friendship. The Panjab ruler, acknowledging this letter observed:

Should therefore any weak-minded person venture to put forth anything inconsistent with the relations subsisting between us and without the privity or consent of either Government, it shall not be regarded and should be discountenanced by our Governments so as to prevent its exiciting any suspicions on either side.[3]

Moorcroft's recommendations about the acceptance of the allegiance of Ladakh, thus fell on deaf ears and most of his correspondence made little impression on the Company authorities. The British Indian Government not only rejected Ladakh's offer of allegiance but also disapproved of Moorcroft's conduct and disowned him.[4]

After Moorcroft's visit, Ladakh was no longer a *terra incognita*. This leads to certain questions. If his observations about Ladakh's commercial, strategic and political importance were correct, then why did the Company refuse the allegiance with Ladakh which was offered to the British on a silver platter? And if Russian overtures befriending the chiefs of this area for the purpose of creating difficulties for the British in India were correct, then how would the Company's interests and possessions in India remain safe? Answers to these queries are not far to seek. First of all, the Company had recently fought expensive wars with the Gurkhas, the

[1]Governor-General to Ranjit Singh, 20 October 1821, *English Translation of Persian Letters Issued, 1821*, Register No. 71, letter No. 140. (*NAI*)

[2]Moorcroft, *Travels*, I, p. 421.

[3]Ranjit Singh to Governor-General, 5 February 1822. *FDPC*, 9 February 1822, No. 25.

[4]*FDPP*, 20 October 1821, No. 92.

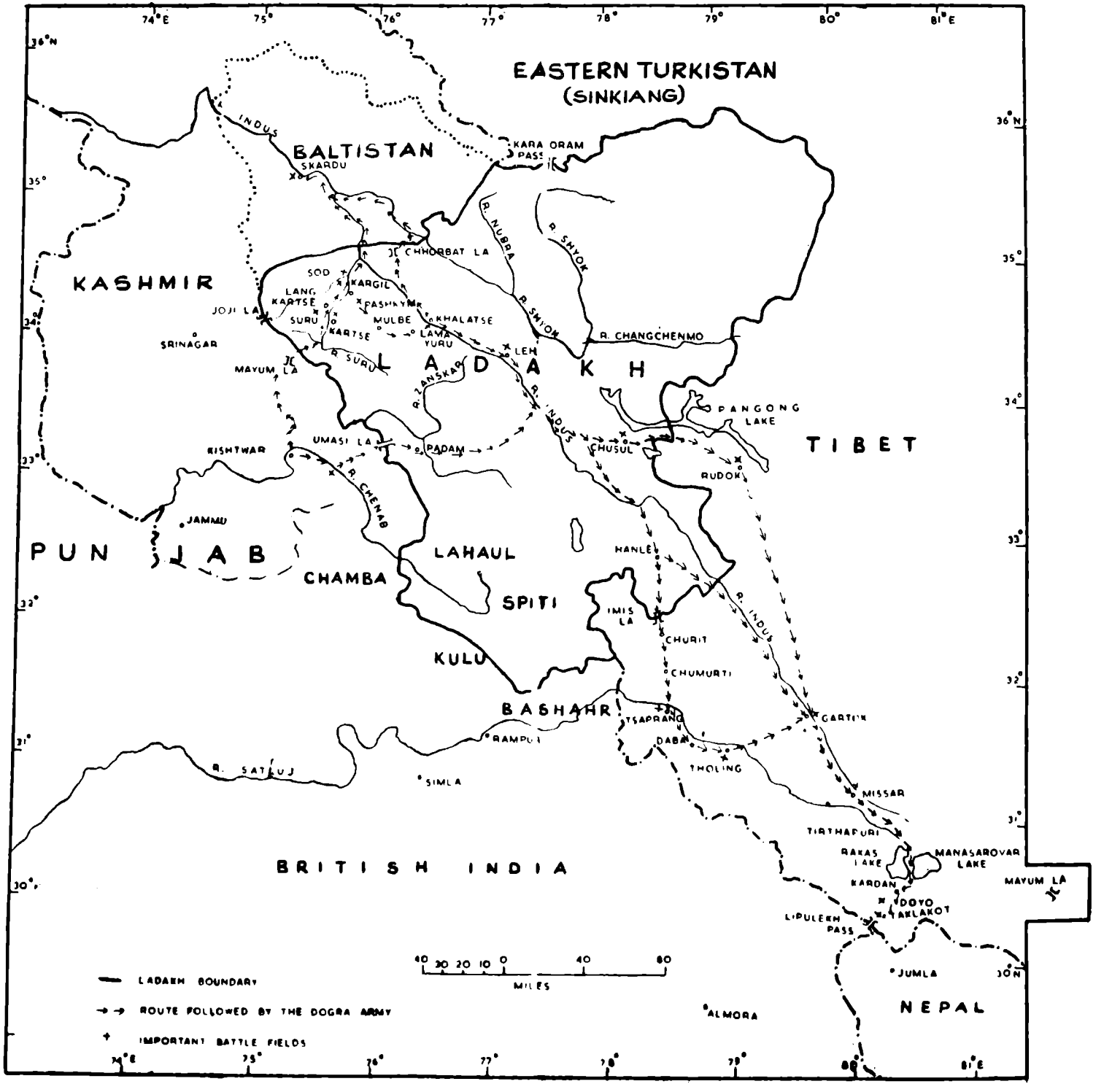
Pindaris and the Marathas, and had just about begun to digest the big slices of territories acquired during the Governor-Generalship of Lord Hastings. Under these circumstances, the Company's Government was not prepared to commit itself to a remote territory. Secondly, the Company was apprehensive lest any interference in Ladakh should provoke Chinese resentment, thus endangering British commerce with China by sea. Thirdly, the Company at that time did not want to give umbrage to Ranjit Singh. The British knew that after his conquest of Kashmir in 1819, Ranjit Singh had received tribute from Ladakh and it was under his sphere of influence. Moreover in the year 1821, the British Government had not yet become apprehensive of the accumulation of wealth and power in the hands of Ranjit Singh, otherwise they may have tried to limit his expansion in that direction, as they later on did in the case of Sindh. Finally, and this was important, a Russian threat of the invasion of India from the north was not as dangerous or probable, as it was from the north-west. The British in Calcutta must have known that India had always been invaded from the north-west and never from the north. Moreover, from this side, it was yet a long way for the Czar's troops to reach the Indian borders: Eastern or Chinese Turkestan, Kokand and many other independent Central Asian Khanates intervened, which then were certainly not friendly towards Muscovy.

While there is no doubt about the authenticity of the letters written by St. Petersburg to Maharaja Ranjit Singh and the King of Ladakh, yet, after the death of Agha Mehdi and the defection of his followers, the Agha's mission failed completely. In retrospect, it is evident that the Russians never pursued their feelers in Ladakh and Kashmir. So, the Agha's mission may be said to be a stray incident, which greatly perturbed and alarmed Moorcroft, who was overzealous to extend and protect British interests. In fact, in many respects Moorcroft anticipated future developments: his warning of the Russian intrigues along the whole northern frontier of India, and his advocacy of extending British influence to Ladakh, were problems which later attracted the attention of the British Indian authorities. Further, by saying that the outcome of

the rivalry between Britain and Russia was to be the decisive factor in Central Asian politics, Moorcroft was running far ahead of his times. The 'Great Game,' in common parlance, became a pre-occupation of the latter part of the nineteenth century.

LADAKH

ROUTE FOLLOWED BY THE DOGRA ARMY 1834-1842



Chapter Five

THE DOGRA CONQUESTS

CONQUEST OF LADAKH

IN A previous chapter it was noticed that in the first quarter of the nineteenth century, there was great internal disorder in Ladakh and the ruling authorities there were unable to check foreign inroads.[1] Taking advantage of this and being tempted by the lucrative shawl-wool of Ladakh, Raja Gulab Singh decided to conquer the Himalayan principality. For launching such an adventure, his occupation of Kishtwar, which commanded two of the roads into Ladakh, the Dogra Raja was already in an advantageous position. But the invasion of Ladakh, Gulab Singh did not lead in person. His Wazir responsible for the conquest of Ladakh and the adjoining areas was Zorawar Singh Kahluria, about whom, a word may not be out of place here.

Zorawar Singh was born in a Rajput family of Kahlur (Bilaspur) in 1786,[2] hence Zorawar Singh Kahluria.[3] When sixteen, he killed his cousin[4] over a property feud and immediately left Kahlur for Hari Dwar.[5] Here, he came in contact with Rana Jaswant Singh, a *Jagirdar* of Marmat Galihan,[6]

[1]See *supra* pp. 51-52.

[2]cf. Narsingh Das Nargis, *Zorawar Singh* (in Urdu), (Jammu, 1964), p. 7. Hutchison and Vogel ("History of Jammu State", *JPHS*, VIII, No. 2, p. 134), however say that Zorawar was a *Sarotara* or illegitimate son of the Raja of Kahlur.

[3]Carmichael Smyth *A History of the Reigning Family of Lahore*, (Calcutta, 1847), p. 198, wrongly says that Zorawar was a native of Kussal near Riasi.

[4]Narsingh Das, *op. cit*, p. 8.

[5]A shrine of the Hindus on the river Ganges.

[6]It was then a small *jagir* in Jammu hills. At present it is known as *Doda*, and is an important district in Jammu province of J & K State.

who took him in his service and brought him back. Even as a child Zorawar had possessed remarkable physical prowess, and now under Jaswant Singh's patronage, he became dexterous in handling the weapons of offence and defence.

After some time Zorawar Singh entered the service of the Dogra chief Gulab Singh. In 1815, the latter put him in charge of the defence of Riasi fort[1]—a job which he did admirably when it was attacked by Mian Dewan Singh, another contender for the possession of Riasi *Jagir*.[2] Soon after, Gulab Singh accepted Zorawar's proposal for the better utilisation of supplies to the troops and appointed him Inspector of Commissariat Supplies in all the forts north of Jammu under Dogra control.[3] Herein he effected a considerable saving; the practical results achieved impressed Gulab Singh with his innate ability and earned Zorawar Singh quick promotions.[4] When Gulab Singh became Raja and administrator of the Jammu hills, he appointed Zorawar Singh as Governor of Kishtwar and Kussal in 1823 and soon after gave him the title of *Wazir*.[5]

Wazir Zorawar, great organising genius that he was devoted the next decade in consolidating and extending the territories of Gulab Singh in the interior of Jammu hills. In Kishtwar, he got the land measured and fixed the state share at fifty per cent;[6] he also introduced many judicial reforms there.[7] Further he perfected the military machine of the Jammu Raja. Sky-high mountains of Kishtwar were used for the training of soldiers and its fertile plateau was to serve a

[1]cf. Panikkar, *Founding of Kashmir State*, p. 24.

[2]Narsingh Das, *Zorawar Singh*, pp. 12-13.

[3]Smyth, *op. cit*, p. 198.

[4]*Ibid*, According to *Lahore Darbar Records*, "Note by Sita Ram Kohli", III, Aa 41, p. 1, (Pb. S.A.), Zorawar was taken in Maharaja Ranjit Singh's regular army in 1819 as an Adjutant on rupees eighty per month; he was promoted to the rank of a Commandant in 1820 and gradually rose to be a Colonel on Rs. 360/- a month. Later on, a platoon was also named 'Zorawar Singh Platoon'. This reference about the early career of Zorawar Singh Kahluria, however, appears to be incorrect.

[5]Smyth, *op.cit*, p. 199.

[6]Pandit Shaiv Ji Dar, *Tarikh-i-Kishtwar* (in Persian), (Srinagar, 1962) p.53.

[7]*Idem*.

convenient spring-board for the conquest of Ladakh and Baltistan.

In July, 1834, with hand-picked infantrymen numbering about 5,000, Zorawar Singh started on an adventurous career of conquests. Moving from Kishtwar over the Maryum La or Bhot Khol pass,[1] the Dogra army descended on the province of Purig. There was little resistance at first because the Ladakhis were taken by surprise, but on 16 August 1834, at Sanku, a Ladakhi force of nearly 5,000 under the command of the minister of Stog, a young and dashing lieutenant, gave a battle to the Dogras.[2] The Ladakhis had entrenched themselves on a hill and defended it tenaciously for a whole day, but their quaint matchlocks were no match for the fire-power of the Dogras. Soon the Ladakhis were dislogded from their positions and after suffering defeat, across the Russi La, escaped to Shergil.[3]

The Dogra army then moved on to Suru, where it halted for sometime and constructed a small fort. Zorawar, realising the necessity of having adequate provisions during such a hazardous compaign as the one he was conducting in a rugged and barren land, had given strict orders to his soldiers not to destroy the crops, which at that time were ripe. This politic measure not only provided victuals to the army, but also led to the immediate submission of the farmers of Suru district who placed themselves under Dogra protection. Soon, the invaders overwhelmed Langkartse and Kartse, and took steps to consolidate these conquests. Dogra pickets were stationed in the area and a tax of rupees four per head was realised from the peasantry of the surrounding villages. After taking these measures the Wazir moved towards Pashkym and Sod.[4]

By this time the whole of Ladakh was astir with commotion. Tse-pal Nam-gyal, the Ladakhi king had sent his

[1]For details about this pass, see *supra*, p. 14.

[2]Cunningham, *Ladak*, p.333. *Western Tibet*, p. 139-40.

[3]Francke, *Antiquities*, II, p. 251.

[4]Deposition of the Vakil of the Raja of Ladakh before Col. H.T. Tapp, Political Agent at Subathu, *Foreign Department Political Consultations* 9 January 1837, No. 24, enclosure No. 2. see also, Francke, *Western Tibet*, p. 140.

ministers to mobilise all other districts which had not yet sent any warriors. The retreating Ladakhi army advanced with reinforcements and fought a pitched battle in the plain of Pashkym. Unfortunately for the Ladakhis, the minister of Stog, their brave and dashing captain was killed by a musket ball. His death was a signal for a general fight. The Ladakhis fled helter skelter; most of them across the pashkym bridge escaped towards Mulbe and Shergil. After crossing the Wakha river[1] they destroyed the bridges, but the Dogras crossed the river on inflated skins and stormed Pashkym fort.[2] This was easily taken possession of, for it was unoccupied and the petty chieftain of Pashkym had fled to Sod, another important place in Lower Ladakh. The assailants then moved towards Sod and started cannonading the fort which was strongly fortified by the Ladakhis. Salam Khan,the *Kiladar* of Sod, fought bravely and nothing was effectcd in ten days although forty Dogra soldiers were killed and many rendered *hors-de-combat.* Ultimately one day Mehta Basti Ram, an enterprising and brave colonel in Zorawar's Army, in the small hours of the morning accompanied by five hundred soldiers, under the covering fire of his battery, vigorously assaulted the fort. By day-break the Dogras gained possession of the fort and made many hundred Ladakhis their prisoners.[3]

After these actions, Zorawar Singh would have pushed ahead with his scheme of the conquest of Ladakh, but he received reports to the effect that a Dr. Henderson, said to be an agent of the East India Company, was staying with the King of Ladakh. He suspended his operations and reporting the matter to Raja Gulab Singh sought fresh instructions. Gulab Singh in turn wrote to Maharaja Ranjit Singh, who immediately addressed the Political Agent of the Company at Ludhiana to ascertain the meaning of such proceedings. The Agent satisfied Ranjit Singh with an assurance that Dr. Henderson had crossed the Sutlej in direct violation of the orders of his Government and that the Company did not

[1]It is a tributary of the Suru river.

[2]*FDPC*, 9 January 1837, No. 24, enclosure No. 2. Francke, *Western Tibet*, p. 140.

[3]Cunningham, *Ladak*, pp. 334-35. Francke, *Western Tibet*, p. 141.

entertain the slightest idea of interfering with the Maharaja's conquests northwards.[1]

After this explanation, Zorawar was desired to proceed further with his operations. But this took about three months and in the meantime winter had set in. Under these circumstances, after realising war indemnity, the *Wazir* perhaps would have liked to retire to Kishtwar for some time and reinvade Ladakh when the winter was over. He made an offer to the Ladakhi authorities that if they paid rupees 15,000 then the Dogras would get back to their own country.[2] Leaders of the Ladakhi army at Shergil and Mulbe appear to have welcomed this proposal and requested the King to make this payment. In the case of King's refusal, they even offered to raise the amount by realising 'six Jau'[3] from every soldier.[4] Though the king was prepared to make the payment, the domineering Queen, Zi Zi, forbade his doing so. On the contrary, the conduct of the leaders who had forwarded the proposal was condemned and Prime Minister, Ngorub Stanzin and the minister of Nubra were asked to go and bring Zorawar's head.[5] At the same time, all the necessary measures were taken to mobilise the war potential of the country and reinforcements rushed to the scene of battle. A little while after, the King, the Prime Minister and other important court officials collected an army of nearly 20,000 and reached Mulbe.[6]

When the Dogra general, according to a previous understanding, sent some of his agents to collect rupees 15,000, the Ladakhis not only seized and put them to death but, by a

[1]cf. B.C. Hugel, *Travels in Kashmir and the Punjab* (London, 1845), pp. 101-2. Cunningham, *Ladak*, pp. 10-11.

[2]Francke, *Western Tibet*, p. 142. Maulvi Hashmat Ali, (*Tarikh-i-Jammu Wa Riasat hai Maftuha Maharaja Gulab Singh*, in Urdu, (Lucknow, 1939), p. 348), says that in addition to Rs. 15,000 the Wazir also demanded an annual tribute of Rs. 9,000. The chronicles of Ladakh, however, say that money demanded by Zorawar at this occasion was 1,000 'Silver rupees'. (Francke, *Antiquities*, II, p. 128.).

[3] A Ladakhi coin equal to about one-fourth of a rupee.

[4]Francke, *Antiquities*, II, p. 128.

[5]*Idem*.

[6]Cunningham, *Ladak*, p. 335. Francke, *Western Tibet*, p. 144.

circuitous route attacked the invaders in their rear. Many Dogra soldiers were made prisoners and with their hands and feet bound thrown into the river. Realising his precarious position, Zorawar Singh ordered a retreat to Langkartse, an operation that was beset with some difficulty.[1] Now was the proper time for the Ladakhis to pursue their adversaries but, they left the Dogras unmolested for about four months and thus lost a golden opportunity to expel the assailants from Ladakh.

Early in April, 1835, the Ladakhi army advanced towards Langkartse. Zorawar, after getting intelligence about their movements, despatched an advance-column of about one hundred soldiers to meet them. After reaching the environs of Langkartse, the Ladakhis entered into long deliberations about their future course of action. Further, after a long and tiring march through the snow, they were exhausted and settled down to prepare their evening meals. Sensing the situation to be quite favourable, the Dogra advance-column delivered a surprise attack and soon their companions also joined them. A battle was fought, in which the Ladakhis, because of their not having an organised force and lack of cohesion and unity of action, without giving stiff fighting took to their heels. Truly, as Alexander Cunningham has remarked, "the indolent votaries of an almost worn-out faith were no match for the more active and energetic worshippers of Mahadeo and Parbati."[2] In their attempt to escape over the snow-bridge, about four hundred Ladakhis were drowned in the river while many more with their leader Ngorub Stanzin were made prisoners. The Dogras also suffered losses: three of their leaders, namely Uttam Wazir, Hazru Wazir of Una and Surtu Rana, alongwith a score of soldiers were killed and about sixty wounded.[3]

The battle was a turning point in the Dogra-Ladakhi hostilities. It greatly demoralised the Ladakhis who appear to have given up the idea of fighting with the invaders. The latter, on the other hand were greatly encouraged and a large quantity of provisions and clothing also fell into their hands.

[1]See Cunningham, *Ladak*, p. 336.
[2]*Ibid*, p. 281.
[3]*Ibid*, p. 337.

The weather was becoming warm and now Zorawar Singh, using the prisoners and other natives as the carriers of Dogra baggage, advanced to pursue the fleeing Ladakhis and again reached Pashkym, whence the assailants marched to Mulbe and then, via Kharbu, reached Lama Yuru. There was no resistance as morale of the Ladakhis had been shattered and they were fleeing before the Dogras. The peasantry and other inhabitants of the villages on the way were anxious to save themselves from the depredations of the invaders and hastened to offer *nazars*, in the form of horses, money and provisions to the Wazir. In return, they received Dogra protection.[1] At Lama Yuru, the Wazir received a letter from the Ladakhi King in which he sought the cessation of hostilities and offered to discuss terms of peace provided his personal safety was guaranteed. The Wazir agreed and both parties met at Bazgo,[2] and discussed the preliminaries of a peace settlement.[3] Later, for finalising the terms, both parties moved to Leh. Zorawar Singh, however, left the main camp at Bazgo and took a small party of about one hundred soldiers with him. After the latter reached Leh, an untoward incident took place which, but for the King's solicitations, might have led to an open conflagration again. The Dogra Commander held a gathering in which, after the usual custom in the Lahore Darbar, he offered a *sadka* or *sarwarna*,[4] of rupees one hundred to the King's son, but the latter mistaking the action either for an insult or for treachery drew his sword. His followers did the same, whereupon the Dogras also drew their swords. But the King fell upon his knees and clasped Zorawar's hand while the prince and his followers retired to another place. The news of this incident soon reached the main Dogra camp at Bazgo and next morning about 5,000 soldiers reached Leh.[5]

The invaders stayed in the capital for about four months. Under the peace settlement, the kingdom was restored to the

[1]cf. Francke, *Antiquities*, II, p. 251.

[2]A small town situated on the right bank of Indus, about twenty miles to the west of Leh.

[3]See Cunningham, *Ladak*, p. 338.

[4]It was a sort of votive offering; money offered was woven over the head of the person concerned.

[5]cf. Cunningham, *Ladak*, pp. 338-39.

Gyalpo, but he now became a vassal of Raja Gulab Singh and through him of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. The Ladakhi King, in addition to paying a yearly tribute of Rs. 20,000, was also asked to pay Rs. 50,000 as war indemnity. Out of this indemnity a sum of Rs. 37,000 was at once realised, partly in cash and partly in jewels. The balance, the Gyalpo undertook to pay in two instalments within four months.[1] The Dogras also stationed Munshi Daya Ram, as their representative in Leh.[2] Thus, before the commencement of winter, Zorawar Singh, in October, 1835, with his entire army re traced his steps. As a result of this expedition Dogra influence extended further eastward and Ladakh came within the effective control of Raja Gulab Singh.

When the Wazir reached Lama Yuru, he heard that the people of Purig and Suru had revolted[3] and had put to death the entire Dogra garrison including Mian Nidhan Singh, the Dogra *Kardar* of Dras and Kargil.[4] By forced marches, Zorawar Singh soon reached the troubled area and quelled the rebellion. Here, he came to know that colonel Mihan Singh, the Sikh Governor of Kashmir, not only incited the Ladakhis against the Dogras but had also given them active support by sending one of his officers namely Fateh Singh Jogi[5] with many soldiers. The opposition of Mihan Singh was due to his apprehension that Dogra proceedings in Ladakh

[1]Cunningham, *Ladak*, p. 339. *The Chronicles of Ladakh* however do not mention the war indemnity at all and give the amount of yearly tribute as Rs. 5,000 (Francke, *Antiquities*, II, p. 129).

[2]Panikkar, *Founding of Kashmir State*, p. 78. see also, Hashmat Ali, *Tarikh-i-Jammu*, p. 354.

[3]It may be noticed that Suru and Purig had always been a Strong bulwark of Ladakhi defence. It was here that about three hundred years ago, when Mirza Haider invaded Ladakh, he met a strong resistance. The Dogras had also to fight many actions in this area, the inhabitants of which resisted the foreign invasion with much determination. Not only that, there was frequent recurrence of revolts also. Thus it is wrong as Arthur Neve (*Thirty Years in Kashmir*, p. 246) has said that because the people of Suru were Mohammadens, they cared little for the allegiance to the Buddhist King of Ladakh.

[4]cf. *Gulab Nama*, p. 249.

[5]*Idem*, Cunningham, *Ladak*, p. 340, wrongly gives the name of Mihan Singh's officer as Jala Singh Gopi.

were likely to ruin the shawl industry of Kashmir and he had already complained to the Maharaja about the import of shawl-wool from Ladakh into Jammu hills.[1] At Suru, the Dogras hanged many Ladakhis. This had the desired effect: all the *Zamindars* of the district without much opposition, hastened to tender their submission and promised to behave in future.

The Dogras had hardly returned to Jammu when news came in that an insurrection had broken out in Ladakh. The Gyalpo, on the instigation of some of his chief counsellors, and Mihan Singh had closed the roads to the merchants and had confiscated the property of the officials having pro-Dogra leanings. The Ladakhi King had also tortured and imprisoned Munshi Daya Ram, the Dogra representative at Leh. Winter was now in full swing and snow had closed all the passes; besides, there was a likelihood of strong Ladakhi resistance on the Kishtwar-Suru-Leh route.[2] Yet, delay in quelling the rebellion was likely to offset the Dogra plan of a complete subjugation of Ladakh. Zorawar Singh, therefore, with charateristic energy and celerity of movement again marched to Leh, this time following a direct though difficult route via Zanskar.[3] Miphi Sata, a Ladakhi guided the Dogras through this route and was richly rewarded for his services.[4] Through forced marches, within few days, the Wazir reached Chimre, a village above Leh and the Ladakhis were completely surprised to hear about his arrival. The Gyalpo hastened to wait upon the Wazir at Chushod and expreseed contrition over what had happened. The heir-apparent of Ladakh, Prince Chog Sprul, who was implicated in the uprising, with his mother and some followers ran towards Spiti, whence he escaped into the British-protected territory of

[1]See *supra*, pp. 67-68.

[2]See Francke, *Western Tibet*, p. 148.

[3]From Kishtwar via Paddar and over the Umasi La, this route passed through Zanskar and then descended into the Indus Valley. There are about six passes on this route and it remains open for four or five months of the year. For details, see Drew, *J & K Territories*, pp. 535-36. see also Le Marquis De Bourbel, *Routes in Jammu and Kashmir* (Calcutta, 1897), pp.63-67.

[4]cf. Cunningham, *Ladak*, pp. 340-41.

Bashahr.[1] Details about his movement and attempts made by him to secure help from the British against the Dogras will be discussed in the next chapter.

The Wazir accompanied by the Gyalpo, then moved to Leh and realised the balance of war indemnity amounting to Rs. 13,000 besides some additional expenses of the army. To make up this amount, the property[2] of the royal family and Leh officialdom was accepted. Zorawar Singh now refused to take anything on trust. The old King was deposed and given a small *jagir* in the village of Stog near Leh. The kingship was then, offered to Dragchos of Khalatse, who was generally deputed by the Gyalpo on a trade-bearing mission to the Governor of Kashmir. But he had always been a faithful servant of the Gyalpo; therefore, looking at this offer as an attempt at making him a traitor to the ruling dynasty, he refused to accept it.[3] The offer was now made to Ngorub Stanzin, who had married the King's sister and was his Prime Minister for a number of years.[4] He was reportedly not on good terms with the ruler and during the first Dogra expedition, after the battle of Langkartse when he was made a prisoner, he had helped Wazir Zorawar Singh. He accepted the Dogra offer and became the new ruler of Ladakh. A fort was also constructed in Leh where, under Dalel Singh, three hundred Dogra soldiers were stationed. After making these arrangements Zorawar Singh returned to Jammu in March 1836, taking with him Dragchos, the new ruler's son and some other well-placed Ladakhis, as hostages for the better behaviour of the new King.[5] Soon after, Raja Dhian Singh presented to Ranjit Singh a document containing the agreement of the new Raja of Ladakh with the Maharaja.[6] A tribute of Rs. 30,000 and a variety of presents were also offered to the Sikh ruler.[7] Ranjit Singh, in addition received a deputation in Lahore sent in the name of Ngorub Stanzin and in this way

[1] *FDPC*, 9 January 1837, No. 24.
[2] This included tea, wool, jewels, gold and silver utensils etc.
[3] cf. Francke, *Antiquities*, II, p. 252.
[4] Francke, *Western Tibet*, p. 150. Hashmat Ali, *Tarikh-i-Jammu*, p. 358.
[5] Cunningham, *Ladakh*, pp. 341-42. Francke, *Antiquities*, II, p. 252.
[6] *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar III, p. 431.
[7] *FDPC*, 8 August 1838, Nos. 28-29.

accorded recognition to Gulab Singh's conquest.[1]

Before leaving Leh, Zorawar Singh had ordered Colonel Basti Ram and Wazir Lakhpat Rai[2] to pacify and annex Zanskar, which had still held out. The Dogra dignitaries marched thither with 1,500 soldiers and after restoring peace in Zanskar moved down to Jammu via Paddar.[3] Yet, to keep communications with their garrison in Zanskar open, the Dogras left about thirty men at Chatargarh in Paddar.[4]

However, the people of Paddar, who were under the control of the Chamba Raja, were not well-disposed towards the Dogras of Jammu. Especially, Ratanu, the *Palsara* or Chief official of the Chamba Raja, was opposed even to a temporary sojourn of the Dogra soldiery in Paddar, lest it should turn into a permanent occupation, Meantime, there was a rebellion in Zanskar and the entire Dogra garrison there was put to the sword. Ratanu, on hearing this, attacked the Dogras at Chatargarh and expelled them from his territory. This was too much for Raja Gulab Singh, who, in the spring of 1836, sent a strong force under Zorawar Singh to avenge the insult. Besides, by annexing Paddar, the Dogras would be removing that bottleneck on the direct and short route from Kishtwar to Leh, where their movements had often been impeded by the jealous deputies of the Chamba Raja. The bridge over the Chandrabhaga had been dismantled by Ratanu; and the river was in spate, as a result, for three months the Dogras could achieve nothing. Ultimately, they overwhelmed the fort of Chatargarh, razed it to the ground, constructed a new one there and named it

[1] *Ibid.*

[2] He was originally the Prime Minister of Raja Tegh Singh of Kishtwar. At the time of subversion of Kishtwar by the Dogras, Lakhpat had helped Raja Gulab Singh. The latter, soon took him into his service. Thereafter, Lakhpat served his new master most faithfully and was many times despatched on important military expeditions. He was killed in 1846, while he was quelling the resistance of Sheikh Imam-ud-Din of Kashmir. cf. Panikkar, *Founding of Kashmir State*, pp. 168-69.

[3] Cunningham's this part of the narrative is not clear. He mixes up Padam (Spa-dam) with Paddar. (*Ladakh*, pp. 342-43). Padam at that time was the head-quarters of Zanskar district of Ladakh, whereas Paddar situated in the Chandrabhaga (Chenab) Valley, between Pangi and Kishtwar, was a Parganah of Chamba State.

[4] cf. *Punjab States Gazetteer* (1910), Vol. XXII A, Chamba State, p. 105.

Gulab Garh.[1] Some of the people of Paddar were put to death and the territory was then annexed to the Jammu dominion.

After settling the affairs in Paddar, the Wazir marched towards Padam. But the cold was so intense that twenty-five soldiers were lost on the glaciers near the Umasi La and many more lost their hands and feet from frost-bite.[2] Peace however was soon restored in Zanskar, whence the Dogras marched towards Leh. Here Ngorub Stanzin, the new Gyalpo, was accused of having complicity with the rebels of Zanskar besides which, he was suspected of fomenting trouble in other parts of Ladakh. When Stanzin heard about the approach of Dogras in Zanskar, he fled precipitately towards Spiti. He was, however, chased by the energetic Rajputs of Jammu and after a skirmish with his followers captured at the village of Tabo in Spiti and brought back to Leh, where he was imprisoned. Like the Ladakhi prince, Chog Sprul, it appears, his intention was to escape to the British-protected territory of Bashahr. The Gyalpo, however, was deposed,[3] and the aged Tse-pal Namgyal reinstated in his former position. He agreed to pay an yearly tribute, with the additional stipulation that the expenses of the Dogra troops stationed in Ladakh were to be defrayed by him.

Zorawar had to return to Ladakh again early in 1839, this time to subdue the rebellion which was being incited by a Ladakhi leader named Sukamir of Hembabs in Purig.[4] The latter had issued a call to arms to the whole country against

[1] *Punjab States Gazetteer* (1910), Vol. XXII A, Chamba State, p. 105. Hutchinson and Vogel, *History of the Punjab Hill States*, I, pp. 323-24. *JIH*, XXXI, Pt. II (August, 1953), pp. 153-54.

[2] Cunningham, *Ladak*, p. 344.

[3] According to Cunningham's narrative (*Ladak*, pp. 343-44), deposal of Stanzin appears to have taken place in 1837. But according to the chronicles of Ladakh, Stanzin remained King for about six years. (Francke, *Antiquities*, II, pp. 131, 252). G.T. Vigne, an English traveller who visited Ladakh in 1838-39 calls the Raja as Marut Tunzin and says that he was a puppet in the hands of the Dogra Raja Gulab Singh (*Travels*, II, pp. 352–53). From all this, version of the Ladakhi chronicles appears to be more correct, and the deposal of Nagorub Stanzin may have taken place in 1839 i.e. one year before the Dogra conquest of Baltistan.

[4] cf. Francke, *Antiquities*, II, p. 252.

the Dogras. Several other influential men of Purig such as Rahim Khan of Chigtan and Hussain of Pashkym had also joined with Sukamir and an army was being gathered in the environs of Leh. Before the gathering storm could burst, Zorawar Singh through a direct route via Zanskar entered Leh at the head of a large army. The rebels were completely surprised. Although some of them, including Rahim Khan and Hussain escaped towards Baltistan, others, trying to deceive the Dogra general rapidly changed colours: "we have all come here to say *salam* to you. We want to make a petition."[1] But Zorawar was a discerning and seasoned leader, he knew what was being cooked. Sukamir, the arch-rebel was caught and publicly executed.[2] Some of his prominent associates were also given exemplary punishments, a fact that created a great awe in the minds of the Ladakhis.

This was the Dogra general's fourth and last campaign into Ladakh. His frequent incursions had broken the back of Ladakhi resistance, and the people of this small yet important kingdom in the Western Himalayas, appear to have given up the hopeless task of raising the banner of rebellion against their new energetic masters. Except in 1842, when they revolted at the instigation of the Tibetans, the Ladakhis continued to show a peaceful demeanour throughout the period of Dogra rule which lasted till 1947. Soon after its conquest, Ladakh did, however, become a convenient base for invading Baltistan and Western Tibet. But before discussing the Dogra invasion of Baltistan, it may be worthwhile pausing for a moment and ponder over the various causes of Ladakhi defeat.

First of all, there was no standing and centralised army in Ladakh.[3] Ladakhi militiamen who fought with the Dogras were undisciplined and ill-armed. There was no cohesion or unity of action among them. On the other hand, the Dogra army was very well-organized and much better equipped. The Dogras, who formed a part of Maharaja Ranjit Singh's army, had learned more up-to-date techniques of fighting, whereas the Ladakhis because of their geographical conditions and social

[1] *Idem.*

[2] M.L.A. Gompertz, *Magic Ladakh* (London, 1928), p. 184.

[3] See *Supra*, pp. 36-38.

habits, had been living in isolation and were quite unaware of these tactics. Secondly, religion of the Ladakhis was also a contributary factor for their defeat, Lama Buddhism, due to its pacific teachings, appears to have made the Ladakhis peace-loving and indolent, and it degenerated the fighting spirit of the people. Further, this religion segregated a large proportion of youngmanhood into monks, and thereby limited the fighting-manpower of the country.[1] Thirdly, as the *Chronicles of Ladakh* bear out, Ladakhi militiamen had to carry their provisions, weapons and accoutrements with them.[2] All these articles formed a heavy load and impeded the mobility of the soldiers. The Dogras on the other hand, had a separate commissariat arrangement. Furthermore, while in Ladakh, in accordance with the Napoleonic maxim, they used the natives as carriers of their baggage and providers of their provisions. Fourthly, the Dogras possessed superior weapons. They had a good park of artillery, whereas the Ladakhis had none. The Dogras had jingals and muskets which were far better than the out-dated Ladakhi matchlocks. The Ladakhis, even did not have these matchlocks in sufficient number. Finally, the Dogras were fortunate in having an experienced and skilled general as their leader. Zorawar Singh could not be easily overawed by the overwhelming number of the enemy, nor did unfavourable circumstances spur him to quick action. He became beau-ideal of the Dogra soldiers and was a source of constant inspiration to them. On the other hand, unfortunately for the Ladakhis, their daring and promising leader, the minister of Stog, was killed in one of the early actions; after his death all other Ladakhi leaders proved to be good-for-nothing.

CONQUEST OF BALTISTAN

After Ladakh it was the turn of Baltistan or Little Tibet.[3]

[1] See *Supra*, pp. 24-25.

[2] Francke, *Antiquities*, II, p. 151.

[3] The proper name was *Tibet-i-Khurd* (Little Tibet), by which prefix it was distinguished from *Tibet-i-Kalan*, the name applied to Ladakh. The country was also frequently called Iskardu from the name of its well-known fort and capital.

This was an ancient kingdom,[1] with an area of about 12,000 square miles,[2] and situated in the Indus Valley to the west of Ladakh. The state was divided into eight sub-divisions or districts. i.e. Iskardo, Khartaksho or Kharmang, Khapalu, Tolti, Parkuta, Shigar, Rondu and Astor. These districts were under the control of different hereditary chieftains but they owed fealty to Ahmad Shah, the powerful ruler of Skardu and were mostly his kith and kin.[3] In the first four decades of the nineteenth century there was constant unrest in Baltistan, for, these chieftains either kept quarreling among themselves or remained at war with the Gyalpo of Ladakh.[4]

The propinquity of the Sikhs had raised apprehensions in the mind of Ahmad Shah and he thought that after the Sikh conquest of Kashmir, Baltistan would be the next target of Ranjit Singh's policy of aggrandizement. In order to save himself from any such eventuality, the Balti ruler, therefore tried to cultivate friendship with the British and sought protection from the Company's Government. When William Moorcroft was in Ladakh (1820-22), Ahmad Shah, by sending presents of gold-dust and some trifles tried to make friends with him.[5] He even further proferred his help to Moorcroft by furnishing porters, provisions and letters of introduction to the Mohammaden chieftains on the road to Badakhshan and Kokand.[6] Moorcroft did not very much encourage the offers and friendly gestures of Ahmad Shah, as these might have given umbrage to the Ladakhi authorities, whose hospitality he was then enjoying and who, at that time were at daggers drawn with the Balti chief. Yet, he wrote an ambiguous letter to Ahmad Shah, holding out promises of British support. Therefore, hereafter the Balti ruler continued to expect British help.[7] In 1827, when Lord Amherst, the then

[1]cf. Drew, *Northern Barrier*, p. 200.

[2]See Vigne, *Travels*, II, p. 249.

[3]*FDPC*, 5 October 1835, No. 53 A. see also, C.L.Datta, "Zorawar Singh's conquest of Baltistan", *JIH*, XLVII, Pt. II(Aug. 1969), p. 329.

[4]*JASB*, I (1832), p. 125.

[5]Moorcroft to Swinton, 6 February 1822. *FDPC*, 20 Sept. 1822, No. 68. *FDPP*, 20 September 1822, No. 74.

[6]Moorcroft to Metcalfe, 4 May 1821. *FDPC*, 20 September 1822, No. 60

[7]See N.K. Sinha, *Ranjit Singh* (Calcutta, 1951), pp. 125-26.

Governor-General, deputed C.M. Wade on his first mission to the Punjab, Ahmad Shah wrote to Wade. His letter was, however, intercepted on the way by the Sikhs.[1] In 1829, the Gyalpo of Baltistan again despatched some letters to Wade, now the Political Agent of the Company at Ludhiana, and henceforward till the Dogra conquest of Baltistan in 1840, kept a clandestine correspondence with the British. The British attitude to his overtures for placing himself under their protection will be discussed in the next chapter.

In 1831, when Victor Jacquemont, a Frenchman, visited Kashmir, Ahmad Shah took him for a British agent and immediately despatched his Wazir, Chiragh Ali Shah, with many presents and a letter to be given to for Jacquemont. Chiragh Ali came under the guise of supplying specimens of plants and animals for Jacquemont's collections and told him that Ahmad Shah was the most obedient servant of the British and Baltistan was their (British) country. Chiragh Ali, finally disclosed that he was on a secret political errand, but the Frenchman soon dismissed him.[2] In the late eighteen-thirties when G.T. Vigne, an English traveller visited Baltistan, Ahmad Shah took him for an officer of the Company and thought that Vigne was despatched by the British Government to ascertain his (Ahmad Shah's) pretensions of friendship and solicitude for seeking British protection against the Sikhs. The Balti ruler gave an "exceedingly kind, flattering and hospitable reception" to Vigne and sought political alliance with the Company. But Vigne told Ahmad Shah that he was not an employee of the Company and that he was visiting Baltistan for the sake of his personal pleasure and the advancement of scientific knowledge.[3]

Ahmad Shah's fears about the Sikh invasion of Baltistan were not unfounded. Kirpa Ram, the Sikh Governor of Kashmir, about 1825 invaded a small territory known as 'Kathai' situated between Kashmir and Baltistan; though the first Sikh attack was repulsed, yet in one of the later ex-

[1] *FDPC*, 5 October 1835, No. 53-A.
[2] cf. Jacquemont, *Letters from India*, II, pp. 147-53.
[3] Vigne, *Travels*, II, pp. 236 ff.

peditions they took possession of this territory.[1] Later on, prince Sher Singh during his Governorship of Kashmir (1831-33) invaded Baltistan, but as the Baltis were vigilant, the Sikh invasion failed.[2] In order to defend his country from such an incursion, the Gyalpo of Baltistan had taken some defensive measures. Vigne, when he visited Baltistan in 1837, found that between Gurais and the Burzil pass, the Balti ruler had destroyed every house, so that a Sikh invading force could find no shelter or provisions.[3] Further, on the direct road leading from Kashmir to Skardu over the Deosai plateau, at many strategic places he had constructed gates or *Darwazas* which were designed as some sort of booby-traps.[4] But it is an irony of fate that the Dogra attack which sealed the destinies of Baltistan as an independent state in 1840, came from another direction altogether i.e. from the Indus Valley above Skardu.

The Dogra ruler Gulab Singh may have conquered Baltistan earlier, but he was apprehensive of active hostility from Mihan Singh, the Sikh *Nazim* of Kashmir, who, as noted earlier, was quite jealous of Dogra incursions in Ladakh. But after Ranjit Singh's demise when there was commotion at Lahore, Mihan Singh was "alarmed into concessions by the powerful and ambitious Rajas of Jammu, and he left Iskardu, and the whole valley of the Upper Indus, a free field for the aggression of their lieutenants."[5] Occasional intercession offered by C.M. Wade, British Political Agent at Ludhiana, in Ahmad Shah's favour and visits of some Englishmen such as Dr. Henderson, G.T. Vigne and Dr. Falconer to Baltistan in the thirties of the nineteenth century, also to some extent helped Ahmad Shah to postpone the evil day.[6]

[1] *FDPC*, 5 October 1835, No. 53-A.
[2] cf. Vigne, *Travels*, II, pp. 208, 216.
[3] *Ibid*, p. 213.
[4] *Ibid*, pp. 243-44.
[5] cf. J.D. Cunningham, *History of the Sikhs*, p. 217.
[6] Mackeson (Assistant Pol. Agent, Peshawar) to Clerk (Pol. Agent, Ludhiana), 18 July 1840. *FDSC*, 1 March 1841, No. 126. See also, Vigne, *Travels*, II, p. 375.

However, in 1839, Zorawar Singh turned to Baltistan for, which a *casus belli* was not difficult to find. Ahmad Shah had declared that after his death not Mohammad Shah, his eldest living son, but Mohammad Ali Khan, a son by another wife would succeed him.[1] This arrangement naturally offended Mohammad Shah who, with some followers escaped to Kashmir and solicited assistance from the Sikh Governor.[2] He reached Srinagar on 7 September, 1836 and soon after offered *nazar* to the Governor. The latter, in return sent a *ziafat* of one hundred rupees to the fugitive prince, and granted three rupees per diem for his subsistence besides holding out assurances of protection and help.[3] After staying for sometime in Kashmir, Mohammad Shah met Zorawar Singh at Suru in Lower Ladakh. The Wazir treated him kindly and promised every help.[4] Mohammad Shah stayed in Purig for a couple of years and then shifted to Leh. But sometimes in 1839, when the Ladakhis were trying to throw away the Dogra yoke, with the connivance of the Ladakhi authorities, a party of Skardu troops marched into Leh and whisked away Mohammad Shah.[5] Zorawar Singh, hearing of this, at once wrote to Ahmad Shah that by forcibly seizing the refugee, the Baltis had committed aggression on the Dogra territory for which the Balti ruler was responsible. He

[1]G.T.Vigne (*Travels*, II, pp. 255-56) says that the cause of estrangement between Ahmad Shah and his son was that the prince when entrusted with the government of Husora by way of trial, had abused his authority and thus proved incompetent as a ruler. Thereupon Ahmad Shah determined to give the throne to his other son. Hashmat Ali (*Tarikh-i-Jammu*, pp. 576-77), however says that the root cause of this trouble was the new Gyalmo (Queen), step-mother of Mohammad Shah. Mohammad's mother had died, and the new Gyalmo wanted to make her own son as the next King of Baltistan. To achieve this object she prevailed upon Ahmad Shah to declare her son as the heir-apparent.

[2]*Akhbar-i-Ludhiana* (Ludhiana), 7 January 1837.(*NAI*), Ganda Singh ed, *The Punjab in 1939-40* (selection from the Punjab Akhbars, Punjab intelligence etc.), (Patiala, 1952), pp. 24 ff.

[3]Wade to Government, 30 December 1836. *FDPC*, 31 January, 1837, No. 28.

[4]*FDSC*, 1 March 1841, No. 127.

[5]Cunningham, *Ladak*, p. 346. see also, Hashmat Ali, *Tarikh-i-Jammu*, p. 362.

also demanded immediate release of Mohammad Shah. But to this letter Ahmad Shah vouchsafed no reply.[1] Naturally, Zorawar Singh now decided to invade Baltistan.

In November 1839,[2] the Dogra general assembled all the Ladakhi militiamen, including their leader Banka Kahlon and the aged King and asked them to march with the Dogra army for the conquest of Baltistan.[3] This was a wise step: it would suppress the insurrectionary spirit of the Ladakhis, at the same time making them useful for the invaders. Zorawar Singh divided his army into two columns. The first, mainly consisting of the Ladakhis and led by Mohi-ud-Din Shah, a Dogra officer,[4] was to enter Baltistan over the Chorbat La. Later, marching along the right and then on the left side of the river Shyok and passing through Khapalu, it was to descend into the Skardu district.[5] With the second, the Wazir himself marched from Kargil[6] towards Garkon, whence via Marol and Kharmang they proposed to reach Skardu. The Dogras crossed the Indus near Garkon to its right side, but in order to follow the then usual road to Skardu, they were again to cross the Indus to its left bank. From Garkon the invaders descended into Chathathang and marched towards Marol.[7] But to their most unpleasant surprise, the Ladakhi rebels, after crossing the river had destroyed the bridge near Marol.[8] Moreover, a strong Balti army under the command of Gulam Hussain, the Minister of Ahmad Shah, had

[1] *Idem.*

[2] *Ambala Division Records*, Pol. Agent Subathu to T.T.Metcalfe (Agent to Lt. Gr. N.W.P., Delhi), 25 May 1840, No. 713 (*Pb. S.A.*). Alexander Cunningham (*Ladak*, pp. 346-47), wrongly says that Zorawar started on this expedition in the end of 1840.

[3] cf. Franke, *Antiquities*, II, pp. 131, 253.

[4] From available sources, it is not known as to what was the designation of this officer.

[5] Hashmat Ali, *Tarikh-i-Jammu*, p. 363.

[6] It is an important station on the Srinagar-Leh road; here the road which comes over the Zoji La divides into two, one going to Skardo and the other to Leh. This place was the scene of fighting between India and Pakistan in August, 1965.

[7] Hashmat Ali, *Tarikh-i-Jammu*, p. 364.

[8] *Ibid.*

gathered on the left side of the Indus at Marol.[1] Under these conditions, the invaders were obliged to march along the right side of the river, but there was no way out and they had to cross stupendous cliffs and deep ravines quite often and at many places the valley was nearly impassable.

After marching for a few days, although the Dogras received the submission of the chief of Khartaksho,[2] their condition was becoming critical. To cross the river no way was in sight while provisions were running short in the Dogra camp. The Wazir appointed Mian Nidhan Singh with 5,000 soldiers to collect supplies. But the Baltis lured this column into an ambuscade about fifteen miles away from the main Dogra Army and fell upon it in large numbers. Nidhan Singh with his whole column except four hundred men was put to the sword. The remainder returned with great difficulty to the main column and told their woeful tale to the Wazir.[3]

The Dogras were now in a very precarious situation. The winter was in full swing and their provisions had exhausted. Their difficulties were further accentuated by the heavy fall of snow which had closed all the passes from behind. It was not easy to construct a bridge over the Indus because the Baltis in their thousands were keeping a round-the-clock vigil on the opposite bank. The pitiable condition of the invaders has been aptly described by Alexander Cunningham in the following words:

With an impassable river in their front, and certain starvation both from cold and hunger, whether they retreated or remained in their present position, the majority of the troops paid no attention to orders, and of the few who still obeyed, none did so with alacrity. The Dogra army had halted in this position for fifteen days, exposed to frost by night and to hunger by day. Many had sought shelter from the snow amongst the overhanging rocks and there they sat listless and vacant, and utterly indifferent

[1]Cunningham, *Ladak*, p. 347.

[2]It is said that Raja Ali Sher Khan of Kharmang or Khartakso, was having political differences with Ahmad Shah. In 1834, when Zorawar had invaded Ladakh for the first time, Ali Sher Khan had entered into a secret alliance with the Wazir and had requested him to invade Baltistan. (Hashmat Ali, *Tarikh-i-Jammu*, pp. 352-53, 591-92 ff. A.Neve, *Thirty Years in Kashmir*, p. 275.

[3]Cunningham, *Ladak*, p. 347. Francke, *Western Tibet*, p. 156.

whether they should be cut off by the sword of the enemy or be frozen to death by the cold.[1]

But the ingenuity, courage and skill of Colonel Basti Ram, the hero of Sod, saved the Dogras. His was a last bid to extricate his companions from this difficult situation. Accompanied by about forty daring soldiers, at the dead of night, Basti Ram moved along the river to reconnoitre if it could be easily bridged at some place, while another party keep up a small fire upon the Baltis on the opposite side to distract their attention. At last, at one place near the Wanko pass they discovered that except about thirty feet in the middle, the river was so thickly frozen that a man could easily pass over it. Soon, with the help of Ali Sher Khan, the chieftain of Kharmang and some local tribesmen, who probably acted as their guides, the assailants, before the day-break made an ice-bridge[2] over the river.[3] The main Dogra army thereupon marched to the place after receiving Basti Ram's message. At first a small party led by Basti Ram crossed the river and fell upon the Baltis. A bloody battle started, but in a hand to hand combat, the Baltis were no match for the energetic Dogras. The former were defeated and ran towards Skardu. The invaders pursued their fleeing adversaries for nine miles as far as Marwan and slaughtered them mercilessly. In this battle about three hundred Baltis were killed; losses on the Dogra side were comparatively few, although about five hundred of them had been rendered unfit to fight by the intense cold and frost-bite during the last few days.[4] To replenish his resources, Zorawar Singh halted for a few days at Marwan. Here, he handsomely rewarded Colonel Basti Ram and about thirty soldiers for making the ice-bridge and for their out-

[1]Cunningham, *Ladak*, pp. 347-48.

[2]Francke (*Western Tibet*, p. 157), writes that the Dards of Deh, a local tribe often made bridges across the river in winter. Their method is that they fasten several beams to the banks in such a way that these project into the river. After sometime, floes accumulate and beams are frozen in the encrustation of ice, over which it is possible to walk, then more beams are fastened to the first and process repeated until the other bank is reached.

[3]*Ibid*, Hashmat Ali, *Tarikh-i-Jammu*, pp. 366 ff.

[4]cf. Cunningham *Ladak*, p. 349.

standing services during the last action.[1] Then, via Hamzigund and Kharmang the Dogras moved down the Indus; near Gol, the other column which had been sent over the Chorbat pass, without doing much fighting joined the main army. And the invaders, then moved towards Skardu.[2]

Ahmad Shah had prepared for such an eventuality. The fort of Skardo was situated on the edge of a high plateau. From three sides it was surrounded by the deep waters of the Indus and on the fourth, the passage leading to the main citadel was steep and extremely difficult. The Balti rulers had fortified this stronghold and was also stated to have laid in a stock of provisions, which could last for three years.[3] Thus, because of difficulty of access and sufficient provisions, it was believed by the Baltis that the fort was impregnable. The invaders soon beleagured the fort and probably cut off its water supply.[4] After a few days, siege, the Dogras, hardy mountaineers as they were, one dark night stole round from their position in front of the chief fort, and taking the guards by surprise, climbed the hill. After a hand to hand fight with the guards, they took possession of the small fort near the summit and in the morning started firing at the main citadel. Another action was fought in which many Baltis were killed and others, including Ahmad Shah, made prisoners.[5] The fort was razed to the ground and Ahmad Shah's palace within it dismantled.[6] From this fort, rich treasures, a large quantity of provisions, many matchlocks, swords and other implements of war fell into the hands of the invaders. With the fall of Skardu, other chieftains of Baltistan also soon submitted to the Dogras. Ahmad Shah was deposed and in his place, Zorawar Singh installed Mohammad Shah as the new King of Baltistan.[7]

[1] *Ibid.*

[2] Hashmat Ali, *Tarikh-i-Jammu*, p. 371.

[3] Duncan, *Summer Ride through Western Tibet*, p.286.

[4] Cunningham, *Ladak*, p. 349. *Gazetteer Kashmir and Ladakh, 1890*, p. 196.

[5] Drew, *Northern Barrier*, pp. 208-9. see also *JIH*, XLVII, Pt. II (August, 1969), pp. 335-36.

[6] Drew, *Northern Barrier*, p. 207.

[7] *Akhbar-i-Ludhiana* (Ludhiana), 2 May 1840. *Delhi Urdu Akhbar* (Delhi) 17 May 1840. *Aina-i-Sikandar* (Delhi), 25 May 1840 *(NAI)*.

Mohammad Shah became a vassal of Raja Gulab Singh and was to pay him an annual tribute of Rs. 7,000. In order to overawe the Baltis, Zorawar Singh, on the pain of death asked Ahmad Shah to arrange for the arrest of Rahim Khan of Chigtan and Hussain of Pashkym, who, after fomenting rebellion in Ladakh had escaped into Baltistan. Soon the two rebels were produced. Their limbs were hacked in a lucerene field before a large crowd which had been assembled to witness the scene.[1] The Dogra Commander, as a further safeguard against any future rebellion, constructed a fort at Skardu and under Bhagwan Singh Kishtwaria, garrisoned it with a strong Dogra contingent.[2] After making these arrangements, Zorawar Singh ordered Ahmad Shah and his prominent chieftains to assemble their armies and march with the invaders back to Khadak. The return journey to Leh via Khapalu and Chorbat La commenced in the middle of 1840. But near Khapalu, smallpox broke into the army camp and took a heavy toll.[3] Tse-pal Nam-gyal, the aged Ladakhi King who was worn-out with the exertions of the Balti campaign also fell a victim to the epidemic and died. Banka Kahlon, the leader of Ladakhi forces, also soon followed the King to his grave. Their bodies were brought to Ladakh and buried at Stoge near Leh, with all customary rites. Wazir Zorawar Singh, on reaching Leh installed the grandson of Tse-pal Nam-gyal, then a boy of about eight years as the new nominal ruler of Ladakh.[4]

The conquest of Baltistan further extended the dominion of Raja Gulab Singh to the north-west of Ladakh. Again, henceforth, Balti inroads on the Ladakhi territory which had so much worried the rulers of Ladakh during the past few centuries, stopped altogether. It also brought relief to the people of Baltistan who were unhappy on account of their chiefs having continual quarrels with each other or with the kings of Ladakh.

[1]Francke, *Antiquities*, II, p. 253.
[2]Cunningham, *Ladak*, p. 349. Hashmat Ali, *Tarikh-i-Jammu*, pp. 374-75.
[3]cf. Hashmat Ali, *Tarikh-i-Jammu*, pp. 375-381.
[4]Francke, *Antiquities*, pp. 131, 254. Cunningham, *Ladak*, p. 350.

INVASION OF WESTERN TIBET

By 1840, the Dogras had firmly established their authority throughout Ladakh and Baltistan and were ready for fresh conquests. Wazir Zorawar Singh, now thought of establishing an empire in Central Asia. His only path for expansion in the circumstances lay north and northeast—towards Yarkand and Western Tibet. He asked the Chinese Governer of Yarkand to depute an agent to attend on the Lahore Durbar and acknowledge the suzerainty of the Sikh Government.[1] There was an ostensible reason behind this move: the British were fighting the Opium War (1839-1942); the Chinese Emperor, when apprised of the friendship subsisting between the English and the Sikhs, is said to have ordered his Governor in Yarkand to confiscate and destroy the entire stock of opium of the Punjab traders valued at about eight lakhs of rupees.[2] "Raja Gulab Singh is now" wrote George Russel Clerk[3] to the Supreme Government, "intent on a new scheme of ambition...he now hopes to find in the seizure and destruction at Yarkand of opium belonging to traders and subjects of the Sikh Government, the means of inciting the Durbar to authorise his attempting the conquest of Yarkand, an enterprise, which his Wazir there, Zorawar Singh has long considered to be easy of accomplishment".[4] Clerk, further believed that the Dogra troops in Ladakh were inured to mountain warfare and cold, and if not opposed by the independent Mohammaden chieftains to the north of the Tarim basin, were quite capable[5] of wrestling Yarkand or "any tributary in that position" from

[1]Zorawar Singh issued challenge in vaunting language: "remit an annual tribute according to an engagement, without giving rise to any disturbance and bloodshed in your country. The neglect of this advice will at last entail shame and ruin on your country, and your comforts, and you will then repent." (From Wazir Zorawar Singh to the Ruler of Yarkand, nodate: *FDSC*, 1 March 1841, No. 126).

[2]*FDSP*, 25 January 1841, No. 91.

[3]The British Agent for the affairs of the Punjab and North-West Frontier.

[4]Clerk to Government, 2 January 1841. *FDSC*, 25 January 1841, No. 90.

[5]Mackeson, the British Agent at Peshawar, however, was of the opinion that the Dogra troops, though capable of conquering Gilgit and adjacent areas down the Indus, were incapable of conquering Yarkand. Mackeson to Macnaughten (Envoy and Minister at the Court of Shah Shujah, Jallalabad), 14 January 1841: *FDSC*, 22 February 1841, No. 56.

China.[1]

The Anglo-Chinese negotiations over the first Opium War were taking an amicable turn and thus any Dogra invasion of Yarkand at that time was likely to be productive of embarrassment and inconvenience to the British Government. The British Agent at the Lahore Durbar recommended to the Sikh Maharaja "to require Raja Gulab Singh to desist from his designs on Yarkand".[2] Did the Dogras abandon the invasion of Yarkand of their own accord, or were they dissuaded from so doing by the Lahore Durbar on a recommendation from Clerk? From the scanty sources available, we do not get a clear answer to this query. But it appears, that Zorawar Singh, great military general that he was, realising the manifold difficulties involved in such a risky and somewhat useless adventure abandoned it, and turned his attention towards Western Tibet, which was comparatively easy of access.

The scheme to conquer Tibet appears to have been in Zorawar's mind as far back as 1836. Thus the chronicler of Lahore Durbar tells us that after the conquest of Ladakh, while presenting his *nazar* to Maharaja Ranjit Singh, Zorawar Singh had sought the Maharaja's blessings for the conquest of Tibet, a country, which "extended over a distance of five hundred Koss" and was conterminous with China.[3] He further told the Maharaja that he was ready to kindle the fires of fighting and "by the grace of ever triumphant glory of the Maharaja, he would take possession of it."[4] But the prudent Maharaja, foreseeing hostile reactions to such an adventure from bigger powers such as China and the British had counselled caution and forbidden the impatient Dogra general from going much beyond Ladakh.

By 1840, however, circumstances had changed. Maharaja Ranjit Singh had died in 1839 and after his death Kanwar Nau Nihal Singh, *de facto* ruler of the Punjab, with the help of the Dogra brothers, had organised a strong party and was

[1] *FDSC*, 25 January 1841, No. 90.
[2] *Ibid.*
[3] *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar III, p. 282.
[4] *Ibid.*

in foreign affairs, a protagonist of the 'forward' policy. He was anxious too to offset the British policy of encirclement by entering into an anti-British alliance with Nepal—the only independent Hindu state on the Indian sub-continent. There had earlier been a brisk exchange of delegations between the Sikhs and the Gurkhas, but as British territory lay between the Punjab and Nepal, all attempts in this connection had been foiled by the ever-vigilant British Agents. When Gulab Singh had first annexed Ladakh, it had been rumoured that his one object was, to establish a direct territorial link between the Punjab and Nepal.[1] Now it was believed that by annexing Western Tibet, Zorawar Singh wanted to build a chain of forts from Ladakh to the borders of Nepal on the other side of the Himalayas, and thereby effect the much-desired alliance with Nepal.[2] Again, Western Tibet was reputed to posses some gold-mines. It was also reported that various monasteries situated in this part of Tibet were quite rich.[3] So Zorawar's other objective was to acquire the monastic riches and gold-producing lands.[4] The third and the most important object of the Dogra invasion was to ensure the normal flow of shawl-wool from Western Tibet to Kashmir via Ladakh. Thomason, then Secretary to the Government of

[1]Claude Wade, the Governor-General's Agent at Ludhiana, had observed in 1837, "The information gained by me in my late visit to Lahore was that among other objects of ambition, Raja Gulab Singh had in taking Ladakh, one was to extend the conquest down the course of the Spith (Sic) until they approached the north-eastern confines of the Nepalese possessions in order that he might connect himself with that Government ostensibly with a view to promote trade between Lassa and Ladakh, which the commotions in Tibet have tended to interrupt, but in reality to establish a direct intercourse with a power which he thinks will not only tend greatly to augment his present influence but lead to an alliance which may at some future period be of reciprocal importance." *FDPP*, 12 June 1837, No. 41).

[2]Lushington (Commissioner of Kumaon) to Thomason (Secretary, North-West Province), 25 August 1841. *FDSC*, 13 September 1841, No. 20.

[3]H. Lansdell, *Chinese Central Asia: A ride to Little Tibet* (London, 1893), p. 296.

[4]Cunningham, *Ladak*, p. 351.

North-West Province, wrote to the Supreme Government:

the more immediate object of this extension of Sikh operations to the eastward is to monopolise the Pusham trade and by preventing a particle of the shawl-wool entering Bashahar from Chinese Tartary to force the article to the Cashmere market alone.[1]

Raja Gulab Singh's anxiety about the welfare of Kashmir was now due to his fond expectation of soon possessing it for himself.[2] With that aim in view, by conquering Ladakh and Baltistan, he had already surrounded the valley from the north-eastern side and commanded all the roads leading from Kashmir either to Tibet or Ladakh, or towards the plains.[3] After 1834, because of political unrest in Ladakh and Baltistan, shawl-wool from West Tibet had started to flow into Bashahr and other territories under British protection. The Dogras, by conquering the West Tibet wool-producing areas wanted to monopolise the lucrative shawl-wool trade. That is why, early in 1841 Zorawar Singh revived old claims of Ladakh over Tibetan territory to the west of Mayum pass, which in the past had remained under the control of Ladakhi Kings.[4] The Wazir wrote to the Garpon[5] of Gartok not to supply 'Pashmeena' (Shawl-wool) to any other area except Ladakh and also demanded a tribute from the latter.[6] But the Garpon sent only five horses and five mules;[7] the Wazir felt insulted at this and soon invaded Western Tibet.

The strength of Zorawar's army was about 6,000;[8] out of

[1]Thomason to Maddock, 31 July 1841, *FDSC*, 16 August 1841, No. 36.

[2]Clerk to Maddock, 4 September 1841, *FDSC*, 20 Sept. 1842, No. 65. *FDSC*, 25 October 1841, No. 26.

[3]*Private and Confidential Letters From the Governor-General of India to the Secret Committee of the Court of Directors of the East India Company*, (Printed solely for the use of the cabinet, no date and place): G.G. to Secret Committee, 29 September 1839, pp. 10-11.

[4]This territory known in Tibetan as Na-ris skor-gSum, with important districts of Rudok, Gartok, and Taklakot was ceded by Ladakh to Tibet during the reign of De-ge Nam-gyal (*c.* 1675-1700 AD) For details, see *supra*, pp. 65-66

[5]The Tibetan local Governor.

[6]*FDSP*, 21 June 1841, No. 15.

[7]*Ibid.*

[8]The strength of this army *i.e.* 12,000, given by the chronicles of Ladakh (Francke, *Antiquities*, II, p. 254), appears to be inco rrect.

this number nearly 3,000 were the Dogra soldiers of Kishtwar and Jammu and the rest were the Ladakhis and the Baltis.[1] The former, mostly armed with matchlocks and muskits formed the nucleus of the army and was the fighting force, whereas the Baltis and the Ladakhis constituted auxiliary troops or camp-followers of Zorawar's army. In addition, the local population was also conscripted for carrying provisions, tents and accoutrements. Each villager was made responsible for carrying about 150 pounds,[2] which load he had to convey on horses, yaks, donkeys, or on his own back. The Dogras also had about six small guns, probably jingals, which could be carried by men or mules.[3] The Wazir also took with him some important dignitaries both from Baltistan and Ladakh; these were Ahmad Shah, the dispossessed Balti ruler, Chang Nabdan, the Kahlon of Bazgo, Nono Sunnum, the brother of Chang Nabdan, Gulam Khan, the son-in-law of Rahim Khan, the *Kiladar* in-charge of Spiti district and Gonpo (Mgon-po), steward of the powerful Hemis monastery.[4] All this was in accord with Zorawar's scheme of employing the newly conquered against fresh adversaries. It was a most politic measure, otherwise these chieftains might have revolted during his absence.

Zorawar Singh's attack on Western Tibet was three-pronged and well-planned.[5] Mobilising his army in the spring[6] of 1841, he placed the first contingent of about 500 soldiers under the command of Gulam Khan. Early in April 1841, this column entered Rupshu; passing through Hanle, headquarters of Rupshu district in Ladakh, it over-ran the Tibetan posts of Churit, Chumurty, Tsaparang and Tholing. Gulam Khan met some

[1] *FDSC*, 1 November 1841, Nos. 36-38.

[2] Francke, *Antiquities*, II, p. 254.

[3] Cunningham to Clerk, 21 October 1841, *FDSC*, 22 Nov. 1841, No. 23-see also *Foreign Misc.* No. 334, p. 648.

[4] *FDSC*, 22 November 1841, No. 23. See also, Francke, *Antiquities*, II, p. 133.

[5] See the sketch map facing page 105.

[6] Francke (*Western Tibet*, pp. 161-62), wrongly says that Zorawar started this expedition at the approach of winter; see C.L. Datta "Zorawar Singh's invasion of Western Tibet," *JIH*, XLIV, Pt. II (August 1966), p. 531.

resistance at Tsaparang and Tholing, but the Tibetans were easily defeated and their leaders slain. In the Tsaparang fort, he found a large quantity of grain, two jingals, some ammunition and other property.[1] Gulam Khan plundered the Buddhist monasteries at all these places and is said to have broken all the idols with iconoclastic zeal.[2]

The second column was placed under the control of Nono Sunnum. This contingent moved upstream along the Indus; taking the middle route, it conquered and plundered Tashigong and then proceeded in an easterly direction to join with the main army.

Zorawar Singh himself led the third column. With nearly 3,000 soldiers, following the route to the south of the Pangong lake, he invaded Rudok and conquered it on 5 June, 1841. There was little resistance, the fort was completely sacked and the Tibetan local governor of Rudok made a prisoner. Here, in addition to other articles of booty some ammunition also fell into the hands of the invaders.[3] From Rudok, the Dogra force advanced by detachments towards Gartok, the district headquarters of West Tibet. Since the place had been evacuated by the Tibetans, it was conquered without any difficulty.[4] Now the first two columns also joined with the Wazir, and the entire army moved in a south-easterly direction along the old caravan route between Ladakh and Lhasa. At Dogpacha, a place near Missar,[5] the governors of Gartok had collected about 1,200 men, mainly inhabitants of the country.[6] They had also requi-

[1]Cunningham to Clerk, 8 November 1841, *FDSC*, 20 Dec. 1841, No. 40. J.H. Batten (Senior Assistant Commissioner, Kumaon) to G.T. Lushington (Commissioner of Kumaon) 18 August 1841. *FDSC*, 13 September 1841, No. 17.

[2]Cunningham, *Ladak*, pp. 351-52. Francke, *Western Tibet*, pp. 162-63.

[3]Lushington to Thomson, 9 August 1841, *FDSC*, 30 August, 1841, No. 27. *FDSC*, 20 December, 1841, No. 40.

[4]Lushington to Thomason, 6 Sept. 1841, *FDSC*, 27 Sept., 1841, No. 46. see also, *JIH*, XLIV, Pt. II, (August 1966), p. 532.

[5]Missar at that time, was a regular dak post on the Gartok-Lhasa route. It is about one day's march from the famous Lakes Manasarowar and Rakastal. (*FDSC*, 13 September 1841, No. 18).

[6]Batten to Lushington, 21 August 1841, *FDSC*, 13 Sept. 1841, No. 18. see also, *Foreign Misc*, No. 334, p. 286.

sitioned the services of about 250 Jukpas tribesmen[1] with a view, it appears either to attack the invaders or to receive their attack unitedly. On August 7, an action was fought, in which some persons belonging to both sides were killed. But the Tibetans could not bear the Dogra onslaught and fled towards Taklakot, a place about fifteen miles from the border of Nepal. The Wazir, in order to conquer the entire territory to the west of Mayum pass, then marched towards Taklakot.

The first alarm sent by the governor of Rudok had been heard in Lhasa and Tibetan authorities had hastily despatched general Pishi (pi-hsi), with a small force to check the sudden and quick thrust of the invaders. Pishi had hurried to Taklakot, but when the Dogras reached that place, the former, seeing the hopeless task of facing a strong army pulled behind the Mayum pass and sent for immediate and heavy reinforcements from Lhasa.[2] After some feeble resistance, on 6 September, 1841, the Dogras took possession of Taklakot and soon constructed a fort there which was supplied with provisions. A garrison of nearly 300 soldiers was then stationed here and placed under the control of Colonel Basti Ram. Zorawar Singh's conquest of Western Tibet was now complete.

Before his invasion of Western Tibet, the Wazir was reported to have announced[3] that he wanted to perform the customary offers and usual *Pradaksina* at the holy places of Manasarowar and Kailash Parbat.[4] Now he proceeded to take a holy bath in

[1]Jukpas or Chukpas was a tribe of robbers, which infested Western Tibet at that time. Their mobile bands usually plundered the caravan traders and soon disappeard on horses which were kept ready for the purpose. As this tribe was partially organised and well-armed, it was taken into service by the local Tibetan authorities and pressed against the Dogras. *FDSC*, 13 September, 1841, No. 18; see also *JASB*, XIII, Pt. I (1844), pp. 182-83.

[2]M.W. Fisher; L.E. Rose and R.A. Huttenback, *Himalayan Battleground: Sino-Indian Rivalry in Ladak* (New York: London, 1863), Appen. pp. 157-58.

[3]Fisher et al, *Himalayan Battleground*, Appen. p. 157.

[4]Lake Manasarowar and Mount Kailash are considered most sacred places by Hindus and Muslims alike. For centuries pilgrims have thronged there from the plains to walk round the sacred mountain and bathe in the holy waters of the Lake; a visit to these places ensures both sanctity and renown. C.G. Rawling, *The Great Plateau* (London, 1905), p. 263.

the Lake Manasarowar and offer a golden idol at the Kailash temple.[1] But the religious observances did not make him forget the political aspects of his task. Simultaneously with his movement into the western part of Tibet, he had taken steps to consolidate the newly acquired territories. He had stationed his own soldiers at every post and constructed fortresses at such strategic places as Rudok, Gartok, Churit, Chumurti, Kardam, Tirtha Puri and Taklakot. All these forts were also garrisoned with the Dogra soldiers. Roads were repaired,[2] and arrangements made to collect revenue according to the old practices. Tibetan local functionaries were taken into service and asked to contact and pacify the populace.[3] The Wazir also adopted measures to ensure the supply of shawl-wool from Western Tibet to Ladakh. Orders were issued to sell shawl-wool, as per old practice, to the Ladakhis only. Those who defied this edict were hauled up and the traders of Bashahr and other British-protected hill territories, who tried to smuggle this commodity were severely dealt with. As *de-facto* ruler of West Tibet, the Dogra Commander issued a general *hukam namah*, directing all the people to pay him taxes which heretofore they had been paying to Tibetan authorities.[4] The Bhotias[5] who traded with

[1]Battan to Lushington, 21 August 1841, *FDSC*, 13 Sept. 1841, No. 18. see also, *Foreign Misc*, No. 334, p. 336.

[2]Cunningham to Clerk, 8 November 1841, *FDSC*, 20 December, 1841, No. 40.

[3]Lushington to Secretary (N.W. Province), 10 November 1841, *FDSC*, 6 December 1841, No. 57.

[4]*FDSP*, 11 October 1841, No. 50.

[5]The Bhotias were the residents of Kumaon and Garhwal, who traded with West Tibet or 'Undes'. As their homes were situated in British territory, for all intents and purposes they were British subjects. Yet, for carrying trade, which was "the life and soul of a Bhotia" and without which "he would soon become an half-starved savage", they annually passed into West Tibet and resided there for some months. During that period they paid taxes to the ruling authorities there and in return got its protection and support. For the term of their residence in Tibet, they were treated by the Tibetan authorities as their own subjects. *FDSC*, 30 August 1841 No. 29. *FDSC*, 13 September 1841, No. 20. J.H. Batten, *Official Reports on the Province of Kumaon* (Agra, 1851), p. 219. C.A. Sherring, "Notes on the Bhotias of Almora and British Garhwal" *Memoir of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, Vol. I, No. 8 (Calcutta, 1906), p. 118.

West Tibet were also cessed, as in the past.[1] Necessary facilities were provided to them for carrying commercial transactions with the Hunias,[2] their counterparts on the other side of the Himalayan crest.[3] The Dogra conquest of Western Tibet had alarmed the Bhotias, but to allay such fears, the Wazir despatched Colonel Basti Ram to meet Mr. Lushington, then Commissioner of Kumaon. Basti Ram and Lushington met at Kala Pani[4] on 8 October, 1841; the Dogra dignitary told his British counterpart that Zorawar Singh was anxious to do everything to secure and place the commercial traffic of the Bhotias on its former footing.[5] From all this it would seem that the Wazir had no idea of vacating his new conquests, and like Ladakh and Baltistan, he wanted to make West Tibet a part of the Dogra dominions.

The Dogra conquest of Western Tibet caused a flutter in the dovecots of the Kathmandu Durbar. Their proximity to the western fringe of Nepal, enthused the Nepalese King. The latter now thought that the time had come to get back Kumaon from the British, which they had seized after the Anglo-Nepalese War 1814-16. Various Dogra-Nepalese attempts to form an anti-British alliance and the attitude of the Kathmandu Durbar towards the Dogra incursions into Tibet will be discussed in the next chapter.

The British Government was also greatly perturbed. The fear of a Dogra-Sikh Nepalese repprochement, stoppage in the import of the lucrative shawl-wool into territories under their protection, maltreatment of their subjects by the Dogra soldiery, and the fear that Dogra invasion of West Tibet may not jeo-

[1]Lushington to Thomason, 20 September 1841, *FDSC*, 11 October 1841, No. 46.

[2]The 'Hunias' or 'Hoonias' were the residents of 'Hundes', the portion of Tibet opposite the Almora and Garhwal Districts of the then North-West province, cf. Sherring, *loc. cit*, p. 118.

[3]Lushington to Thomason, 11 November 1841, enclosing the translation of a report received from Chinta Muni Joshi, Patwari of Byans Bhot, *FDSC*, 20 Nov. 1841, No. 28.

[4]A small village in the Byans district of Kumaon; it is situated about ten miles from the Tibetan frontier.

[5]Lushington to Edwards (Offg. Secretary, N. W. Province) 9 Oct. 1841, *FDSC*, 1 November 1841, No. 36.

pardise the peace parleys then going on with China, were reasons enough for the British to be spurred into action. Their deputing a special Commissioner to West Tibet to see the evacuation of that territory by the Dogras, their pressurising the Lahore Durbar to recall Zorawar Singh back to Ladakh within a specified date, and their lurking fear that any such pressure may not antagonise the Dogras and the Sikhs, whose help they badly needed at that moment in their war with the Afghans, are interesting, albeit intricate threads of Western Himalayan politics, which belong to the next chapter.

However, the Dogras were not allowed to digest their new conquests. General Pishi's request for re-inforcements were promptly attended by the authorities at Lhasa. The latter, collected a Tibetan Army[1] of about 10,000 and immediately despatched it to expel the 'Shenpas'.[2] The leader of this army was Kalon Surkhang and it had a strong park of artillery. With the help of merchants and the Tashilhunpo monastery,[3] provisions which could last for about nine months were also transported to the front. When Zorawar Singh heard about the arrival of this Tibetan force, he opened negotiations for the cessation of hostilities of course, but not without demanding his price. He desired the Tibetans to recognise him as the ruler of Western Tibet[4] and to idemnify the cost of various

[1]It may be noticed that this was not a Chinese army as Alexander Cunningham (*Ladak*, pp. 352 et passim), and some other writers have said. It was rather purely a Tibetan army. cf. Hsuan-tsung Shih-lu (Imperial Records of the Ch'ing Dynasty), Chap. 361, pp. 16-29; Chap. 366, pp. 106-16 etc. quoted in Tieh-Tseng Li, *Tibet Today and Yesterday* (New York, 1960), p. 60. see also, Richardson, *Tibet and its History*, p. 72. J.D. Cunningham, the British Commissioner, who was despatched to West Tibet to report the details of this war to the British Indian Government also observed, "from what I hear, I infer, that all the troops are provincial and that Vizeer Zoorkung (Surkhang) is himself a native of Lhasa." Cunningham to Clerk, 2 February 1842, *FDSC*, 30 March 1842, No. 101.

[2]'Shen-pa' or 'sen-pa' literally meaning 'the Singh people' was a term used by the Ladakhis, Tibetans and Chinese to refer to both Sikhs and Dogras (Fisher et al., *Himalayan Battleground*, Appen. 155).

[3]*Ibid*,pp. 158-60.

[4]Lushington to Edwards, 9 October 1841, *FDSC*, 1 November 1841, No. 36.

actions fought by him.[1] His other condition was that the Tibetans, as heretofore had been the practice, must send all the shawl-wool to Ladakh otherwise he would invade Lhasa.[2] These terms, however, were not acceptable to the Tibetans and they saw in it a hidden threat.

Meanwhile, winter had set in and the heavy fall of snow had closed the Mayum pass. It was now hoped that the negotiations would linger on till next spring. but the Tibetans discovered a bypass, which enabled them to go on the other side of the Mayum La. They invested Taklakot early in November and sent detachments to surround the other Dogra Military posts also. The small Dogra garrison of about 100 soldiers at Kardam under the command of Awtara Kishtwaria was put to the sword,[3] and Basti Ram who was beleagured in Taklakot was cut off from the main Dogra army. When this disaster took place, Zorawar was wintering at Tirtha Puri near Lake Manasarowar. About 7 Novemper, he despatched 300 soldiers under Nono Sunnum to check the advance of the enemy, but this detachment was surrounded at Kardam, to the south of Lake Manasarowar and annihilated.[4] Nono Sunnum escaped and returned to the main Dogra camp. On 19 November, the Dogra general despatched another column of 600 soldiers under the joint command of Gulam Khan and Nono Sunnum. But like the first advance-column, it was also cut to pieces and the two leaders were made prisoners.[5]

The Dogra army was now in a critical position. Zorawar Singh's success had reached its high water-mark and the capture of Western Tibet was the pinnacle of his glory. What followed was somewhat in the nature of an anti-climax. There was no hope of his receiving any succour either from Jammu or from Lahore. Nau Nihal Singh, a protagonist of the 'forward' policy had died on 5 November, 1840. After his

[1] Cunningham to Clerk, 3 May 1841, *FDSC*, 6 July 1842, No. 42.

[2] *FDSC*, 1 November 1841, No. 36.

[3] Lushington to Hamilton, 13 January 1842, *FDSC*, 7 February 1842, No. 106. *FDSC*, 27 December, 1841, Nos. 16-17.

[4] Cunningham to Clerk, 12 February 1842, *FDSC*, 30 March 1842, No. 102.

[5] Same to same, 27 December 1842, *FDSC*, 7 February 1842, No. 75.

death the Lahore Durbar became a cockpit of conflicting ambitions and discordant interests. Sher Singh, the new Maharaja unlike Nau Nihal Singh was weak and experiencing great difficulty in keeping his throne safe from the Sindhanwalias. Raja Dhian Singh, being anxious to retain his position as Prime Minister was keeping all his hill-troops in readiness for any eventuality;[1] Raja Gulab Singh was busily engaged at Hazara and Peshawar, quelling rebellion and helping the British in their war with the Afghans.[2] Zorawar Singh had sent for reinforcements from Leh and other Dogra Military posts.[3] Although Mian Magna, Commandant of the Dogra garrison at Leh, and other Dogra functionaries incharge of fortified posts moved towards Lake Manasarowar, where the fighting was going on, yet due to the closure of all the passes by snow, they were unable to reach the battlefield and returned to their respective posts.[4]

The Dogra general now realised the gravity of the situation: he was surrounded in the depth of winter, retreat was impossible and he was facing the enemy, nearly three times the strength of his own troops. The Tibetans, who were inured to the cold climate had closely beset the 'black devils,[5] Zorawar broke up his camp at Tirthapuri and advanced towards Taklakot perhaps with the intention of effecting a junction with Basti Ram,[6] but all the by-paths had also been blocked by the Tibetans. The Wazir, a man of indomitable courage as he was, endeavoured by reckless bravery to instil some ardour in his men; acting on the Napoleonic maxim that attack was the best

[1]Clerk to Maddock, 11 January 1842, *FDSC*, 24 January 1842, No. 61.

[2]It was the first Anglo-Afghan War; Raja Gulab Singh was commanding the Sikh contingent which had been sent there to keep the Khaibar pass open for the English army.

[3]Cunningham to Clerk, 20 December 1841, *FDSC*, 7 February 1842, No. 75. *FDSC*, 27 December 1841, No. 17. H.T. Prinsep, *Tibet, Tartary and Mongolia* (London, 1852), p. 23.

[4]Cunningham to Clerk, 6 January 1842, *FDSC*, 21 March 1842, No. 84.

[5]The Tibetans called the Dogras with the sobriquet of 'black devils'. cf. *The Bengal Herald* (Calcutta), 8 Jan. 1842.

[6]Lushington to Hamilton, 13 December 1841, *FDSC*, 10 Jan. 1842, No. 96. Cunningham to Clerk, 20 December 1841, *FDSC*, 7 February 1842, No, 75; *FDSC*, 27 December, 1841, No. 17.

form of defence, he fell upon the enemy. The first action was fought on 10 December, 1841, and fighting continued for three days. On 12 December, near Do-Yo, Zorawar was struck by a ball in the right shoulder and fell from his horse. But he was not a man who would give in easily: seizing the sword in his left hand, he put to death many of his enemies before he was speared to death by a Tibetan warrior.[1]

After Zorawar Singh's death, the Dogras having fought one of the most gruesome battles in the history of warfare,[2] lost heart and gave way.[3] Many of the Ladakhis, Baltis and Hunias deserted the invaders and joined with the Tibetans. Rai Singh, Zorawar's second-in-command, with some other important dignitaries such as Ahmad Shah, Nono Sunnum, Bazgo Kahlon, Gulam Khan and about 800 Dogra soldiers were made prisoners.[4] Ahmad Shah was treated honourably and later on used by the Tibetans for the furtherance of their own ends.[5] Gulam Khan, the desecrator of the monasteries was hacked to death. This was unlike other prisoners of war who were treated kindly and sent to Lhasa, where, after a few years, some of them joined Tibetan service[6] and were provided with Tibe-

[1]Lushington to Hamilton, 13 Jan. 1842, *FDSC*, 7 Feb. 1842, No. 106. Cunningham to Clerk, 12 Feb. 1842, *FDSC*, 30 March 1842, No. 102. Francke, *Antiquities*, II, p. 134. *The Friend of India* (Calcutta), 16 December 1841.

[2]H.H. Dodwell ed., *The Cambridge History of India*, V, (Delhi, 1955), p. 546.

[3]It may be noticed that at about this very time and under similar conditions the British force at Kabul was over-powered by the Afghans, and almost whole of it annihilated.

[4]J.D. Cunningham to Clerk, 1 May 1842, *FDSC*, 22 June 1842, No. 24. A. Cunningham, *Ladak*, p. 354.

[5]It is wrong as Cunningham (*Ladak*, p. 354) and some other writers have written that Ahmad Shah died within a few months after Zorawar's defeat. In fact he was again seized by the Dogras and brought to Kishtwar gaol where he died about 1845. See Francke, *Antiquities*, II, p. 138. *Punjab Government Records*, VI. *Lahore Political Diaries, 1847-49* (Lahore, 1915), p. 38. E.V. Schonberg, *Travels in India and Kashmir* (London, 1853), II, pp. 122-23.

[6]One of the Dogra officer, who was taken in the Tibetan army is said to have fought against the Nepalese in the eighteen fifties. Major Ramsay (Resident in Nepal) to G.E. Edmonstone (Secretary, Foreign Deptt.) 8 December 1856, *FDSC*, 30 January 1857, No. 16.

tan wives.[1] After 1846, when Gulab Singh became the Maahraja of Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh, he hoped to get these prisoners liberated, through the instrumentality of the British Government.[2] Ultimately, at the intercession of the latter and with the help of Jodh Bikram Singh Thapa, the Nepalese representative at Lhasa, in 1856, fifty-six of these prisoners returned to Jammu via Nepal,[3] but most of them settled down permanently in Tibet and refused to leave that place.[4] The descendants of the latter met Sir Charles Bell, when he visited Lhasa in the nineteenth-twenties.[5]

A word about the fate of the Dogra garrison at Taklakot. Colonel Basti Ram had also tried to join Zorawar Singh, but finding the way blocked by the enemy, he had to return to the Taklakot fort. From there, he made a couple of sorties which enabled him to set things right in the fort.[6] This citadel was well supplied with water, provisions and ammunition, and all this, combined with its natural strength,[7] enabled Basti Ram to hold out for about a month. But when he heard about the disaster which befell Zorawar Singh, Basti Ram thought that discretion was the better part of valour. Leaving the camp fires burning and horses tied,[8] he, alongwith nearly 250 soldiers escaped over the Lepu Lekh pass into British territory and reached Almorah, where they were treated kindly by Lushington, the then Commissioner of Kumaon. Yet, while crossing the snow-capped mountains they suffered much and for a handful of grain many of them sold their swords, hel-

[1] *Ibid*, Francke, *Antiquities*, II, p. 255.

[2] *Punjab Government Records*, VI, pp. 52, 254-55.

[3] Governor-General to Secret Committee, 22 January 1857, No. 6.

[4] *FDSC*, 30 January 1857, No. 16.

[5] cf. Bell, *Tibet, Past and Present*, p. 243.

[6] Batten to Hamilton, 9 December 1841, *FDSC*, 20 December 1841, No. 5; *FDSC*, 27 December 1841, No. 17; *FDSC*, 3 January 1842, No. 130.

[7] It was situated at an elevated place and was like a huge maund; the dwellings were excavated in the centre and the sides were loopholed for defensive purposes. C.E.D. Black, *A Memoir on the Indian Surveys 1875-1890* (London, 1906), p. 50.

[8] C.A. Sheering, *Western Tibet and the British Borderland* (London, 1906), p. 197.

mets and armour.[1] The deadly cold reduced them to half their numbers and the survivors were much worn-out and emaciated. Some of them suffered from grievous wounds, and were maimed for life.[2] The story of Napoleon's retreat and the sufferings of his army during the Moscow campaign was repeated.

Meanwhile, the victorious Tibetan army moved ahead and sent strong detachments to capture Gartok, Rudok, Tholing, Dapa, Tsaparang and other Dogra strong-holds. By the end of March 1842, it had expelled the invaders and reconquered all their posts.[3] Zorawar Singh's invasion of Western Tibet, for all practical purposes came to nought and the high hopes of the Dogras to annex the Western part of Tibet with their dominions were shattered to smithereens.

Zorawar's was a bold bid to cross the traditional geographical frontiers of India, but due to a variety of reasons, he failed to annex West Tibet. First, he had advanced far, too far in an inhospitable country which was least favourable to military movements.[4] He could not get any succour from his base of operations, which was situated about a thousand miles behind the highest mountains of the world. Again, Zorawar's army was a motley assemblage of the Baltis, Ladakhis and others, and had no common force either of interest or of discipline. With the exception of a small number of Dogras, the rest were not soldiers in the real sense of the term and had been forced to accompany the invaders. The Baltis and the Ladakhis, inherently sympathised with the Tibetans and at the first appearance of the latter, deserted the Dogras. Further,

[1]Some of these implements of war, which had been collected by the Rajbar of Askot, were seen by Charles A. Sherring, when he visited this part of Western Tibet in the summer of 1905. The Rajbar of Askot, who is said to have given generous assistance to the fugitives, was given a commendatory certificate by the British Commissioner of Kumaon. (*Idem.*)

[2]Lushington to Hamilton, 13 January 1842, *FDSC*, 7 February 1842, No. 106. see also, *Foreign Misc.* No. 335, pp. 214, 216, 276-77.

[3]*FDSP*, 30 March 1842, No. 89.

[4]It may perhaps be relevant to recall here that in this region and under similar circumstances, Tibetan expedition of Mirza Haider Dughlat, the great warrior and minister of the Khan of Kashgar had also failed in 1533. See *supra*, pp. 53-54.

as Czar Alexander once remarked in another context, General Winter proved the greatest enemy of the Dogras. Unlike the Tibetans, they were not inured to frost and snow and were altogether ill-fitted to bear the fatigues of snowy and rugged trans-Himalayan regions. In this context Alexander Cunningham observed:

The Indian soldiers of Zorawar Singh fought under very great disadvantages. The battle-field was upwards of 15,000 feet above the sea and the time mid-winter, when even the day temperature never rises above the freezing point, and the intenese cold of night can only be borne by people well covered with sheep skins and surrounded by fires. For several nights the Indian troops had been exposed to all the bitterness of the climate. Many had lost the use of their fingers and toes, and all were more or less frost-bitten...the more reckless soldiers had actually burned the stocks of their muskets to obtain a little temporary warmth. On the last fatal day not one-half of the men could handle arms.[1]

Finally, Zorawar's commissariat arrangements failed in Western Tibet. The country was barren and could not afford to support even a small army such as that of the Dogras. When all the passes closed, the invaders could not get provisions either from Ladakh or from any other side. While facing starvation in the chilly climate of the Land of Snows, it was hardly possible to fight with a large army which was well-supplied with provisions and was better-equipped.

Zorawar Singh was a great military strategist and a skilled and brave general.[2] His greatest contribution was the conquest and consolidation of Ladakh and the surrounding area which now constitute the northern frontier of India. About him, K.M. Panikkar has aptly remarked:

Besides being an intrepid commander, as the Ladak and Baltistan campaigns had shown him to be, he was also gifted with considerable political

[1]Cunningham, *Ladak*, p. 353.

[2]Even the Tibetans recognised his valour. According to one tradition, when he was killed, his flesh was cut into small portions and every family in the neighbouring area took a piece and suspended it from the roof in the house, the idea being that the mere presence of the flesh of so great a man must of necessity confer a brave heart on the possessor. There is a very big chorten erected at Do-yo over his bones and the place is regarded with veneration. cf. Sherring, *op. cit.*, pp. 197-98. see also Swami Pranabananda, *Exploration in Tibet* (Calcutta, 1950), pp. 135-36.

ability. His settlement of the newly conquered provinces bears witness to this. To have marched as army not once or twice, but six times over the snow-clad ranges of Ladakh and Baltistan, 15,000 feet above sea-level, where the air is so rarefied that people from the plains can hardly live with comfort, is a wonderful achievement. To have conquered that country after successive campaigns and reduced it to a peaceful province is an exploit for which there is no parallel in Indian history. His greatness will shine through the pages of Indian history as that of a great and noble warrior.[1]

Final Dogra Expedition: Signing of the Peace Treaty, 1842.

The disastrous end of the Dogras produced far-reaching political reactions throughout Ladakh and Baltistan. The hope of the Ladakhis and the Baltis to throw away the Dogra yoke was revived. The Tibetans even talked of invading Kashmir, and chuckled with glee on the prospects of revenge and plunder. Gonpo, the Steward of the powerful Hemis monastery in Ladakh and a great favourite of the old King (Tse-pal), who fell into the hands of the Tibetans about the time of Zorawar Singh's death, was now sent to Leh to rouse the Ladakhis against the Dogras.[2] Gonpo issued a call to his countrymen that Zorawar was dead, that the remnants of the Dogra force were being pursued by the Tibetan army and the time had come for Ladakh to prepare for war.[3] As a consequence, people revolted every where and all the Dogra garrisons in Ladakh, except the one at Leh were put to the sword. Thanadar Magna Ram and Commandant[4] Pehlwan Singh, leaders of the Dogra garrison in Leh, on hearing about the death of their brave leader had taken steps to fortify their strong-holds. Pehlwan Singh strengthened a stable of the Ladakhi Kings as a defensive post and established a link with Magna Ram, who was occupying the fort which some years back had been constructed by Zorawar Singh. They also collected large quantities of provisions and ammunition. The Dogra soldiers who had fled from various posts in Western Tibet such as Hanle,

[1]Panikkar, *Founding of Kashmir State*, p. 82.

[2]*FDSP*, 6 July 1842, Nos. 41-42.

[3]Francke, *Antiquities*, II, p. 135.

[4]Pehlwan Singh's designation was 'Kumedan' which appears to be an equivalent of Commandent. *Gulab Namah* pp. 261 ff.

Tholing and Churit, also joined their comrades in Leh, and the strength of the garrison was about, 1,000.[1]

After reaching Leh, Gonpo, with the help of Ladakhi and Balti soldiers invested the Dogra strongholds, and declared Jegs-med Nam-gyal[2] as a sovereign ruler.[3] He himself became his Minister and after gathering such descendants of the old functionaries of the Ladakhi court, who had survived, held a regular *Durbar*[4]. The Ladakhis were keen to obliterate all traces of Dogra rule before any succour could reach Leh from Kashmir or Jammu and posted strong picquets at all strategic points on different roads leading to Leh.

Ahmad Shah, the dispossessed Balti King, who was held in a King of honourable durance by the Tibetans was also asked to foment trouble in Baltistan. He sent one of his confidants to Skardu with a message to the chieftains of Baltistan that the man whom they so much dreaded had since been killed and the time had come to avenge the wrongs perpetrated by the Dogras. The chiefs of Rondu, Khapalu[5] and Shigar gathered a large army and imprisoned the Dogra garrison in Skardu. Mohammad Shah, the then Balti King and a vassal of Raja Gulab Singh, who refused to align himself with the insurgents was also imprisoned. Gulam Hussain, the ex-minister of Ahmad Shah, with a Balti force marched towards Leh to help the Ladakhis in beating down the Dogra garrison there.[6]

Strenuous attempts were made to capture the Dogras, but Magna Ram and Pehlwan Singh resorted to a sally from the fort and put to death many of their adversaries.[7] This greatly demoralised the besiegers and helped the besieged to set things in order in the fort. In April 1842, a strong Tibetan detachment under the command of General Pishi also arrived at Leh,

[1]Cunningham to Clerk, 4 March 1842, *FDSC*, 31 August 1842, No. 10. *FDSC*, 6 July 1842, No. 42. *FDSC*, 30 March 1842, No. 101.

[2]The nominal ruler of Ladakh, whom Zorawar Singh had made king in 1840.

[3]Cunningham to Clerk, 2 May 1842, *FDSC*, 6 July 1842, No. 41.

[4]*FDSP*, 6 July 1842, No. 42.

[5]*FDSC*, 6 July 1842, No. 42. Cunningham to Clerk, 1 April 1842, *FDSC*, 29 June 1842, No. 146. Hashmat Ali, *Tarikh-i-Jammu*, p. 396.

[6]Francke, *Antiquities*, II, p. 136.

and a concerted assault was made; though this battered an outer tower of the fort, but the garrison bravely held out.[1]

When Raja Gulab Singh heard about the death and defeat of his illustrious Wazir, as noted earlier, he was directing the Sikh force at Peshawar which had been sent there to help the British who were fighting with the Afghans. Raja Dhian Singh who had made common cause with his brother, raised a relief army of about 5000 hill soldiers. It was well-equipped to endure the cold and also armed with some pieces of artillery.[2] Under the command of Dewan Hari Chand and Wazir Ratanu, in February 1842, this army marched to Ladakh via Kashmir.[3] Mian Jawahar Singh, the son of Raja Dhian Singh was asked to advance from Jammu with a reserve force of 2,000 soldiers.[4] Sheikh Gulam Mohi-ud-Din, the new Sikh Governor of Kashmir also detached a strong force of about 1,000 men to Ladakh.[5] Dewan Arjan Mal Gondlia, an important dignitary of Raja Gulab Singh, who was actively associated with the relief expedition tells us that the Sheikh also arranged for many thousands of labourers to carry the Dogra equipment and provisions, and helped in clearing and repairing the road leading to Leh.[6]

Fighting some actions with the Ladakhis who had blocked the road, and after a fatiguing march which had been rendered tedious and difficult first by the heavy snow fall and then by the breaking of bridges over the torrents, the Dogra army

[1]Cunningham to Clerk, 19 May 1842, *FDSC*, 14 September 1842, No. 50. *FDSC*, 22 June 1842, No. 40.

[2]Clerk to Maddock, 20 January 1842, *FDSC*, 31 January 1842, No. 91. *FDSC*, 21 March 1842, No. 89.

[3]It may be noticed that hitherto all the Dogra armies which invaded Ladakh, moved from Kishtwar either via the Suru valley or Zanskar. This was due to the inimical attitude of Mihan Singh, the Sikh Governor of Kashmir, who would not let the Dogra army pass through Kashmir, though this route of comparatively easy. Mihan Singh was killed in 1841. Sheikh Gulam Mohi-ud-Din, his successor, was a puppet of the Dogra brothers.

[4]*FDSC*, 31 January 1842, No. 91. *Foreign Misc.* No. 335, p. 176.

[5]*FDSC*, 30 March 1842, No. 98.

[6]*Autobiography of Dewan Arjan Mal Gondlia* (Urdu MSS.), pp. 10-12. I am indebted to Dewan Narsingh Dass Nargis of Jammu, for enabling me to have a look over this Ms. which is now in his possession.

reached the environs of Leh in May, 1842.[1] On hearing its approach, most of the Ladakhis and the Baltis dispersed to their homes, and the Tibetan army raising the seige Pulled back along the Indus river and halted near Chimri, about forty miles from Leh. Jegs-med Nam-gyal, the young Ladakhi King, accompnied by Gonpo also fled with the Tibetans. The latter, started strengthening their new positions, wlth more trooys arriving from Gartok and provisions floating down the Indus to sustain them.[2] After resting for sometime at Leh and refurbishing their resources, Dewan Hari Chand and Wazir Ratanu started in the pursuit of the enemy and set up their camp, a few miles away from the Tibetans. A pitched battle was fought in which both the contestants suffered, though losses on the Tibetan side were comparatively heavier. They (Tibetans) also lost one of their leaders namely Pun Aghim.[3] The Lhasa force was defeated and retreated towards the Pangong Lake where it encamped near Chushul, presumably in the same area which was the scene of heavy fighting between India and China in October, 1962.

Simultaneously with the sending of Dewan Hari Chand and Wazir Ratanu to Ladakh, measures were taken to suppress insurrenctions in Zanskar, Nubra, Spiti and Baltistan. A detachment of 300 soldiers moved from Kishtwar into Zanskar;[4] a strong contingent was despatched towards Nubra;[5] Baba Lachhman Singh, at the head of 2,000 soldiers marched from Kangra via Kulu to Spiti.[6] Presently order was restored in all these far-flung districts of Ladakh. The task of pacifying

[1]Clerk to Government, 6 May 1842, *FDSC*, 22 June 1842, No. 20.

[2]Governor-General to Secret Committee, 17 August 1842, No. 32.

[3]Lahore Durbar to Rai Kishan Chand (The Sikh Vakil with Governor-General's Political Agent at Ludhiana) 15 Aug. 1842, *FDSC*, 25 October 1842, No. 95. Raja of Bashahr to Political Agent Subathu, 16 July 1842, *FDSC*, 14 Sept. 1842, No. 40. Clerk to Cunningham, 20 Aug. 1842, *FDSC*, 26 October 1842, No. 91.

[4]Cunningham to Clerk, 28 August 1842, *FDSC*. 12 Oct. 1842, No. 84, *FDSP*, 19 October 1842, No. 46.

[5]Same to Same, 5 Aug. 1842. *FDSC*, 7 Sept. 1842, No. 29.

[6]*Ibid*, Clerk to Maddock, 2 May 1842, *FDSC*, 8 June 1842 No. 56. *FDSC*, 26 Oct. 1842, No, 90. see also M. L. Ahluwalia, 'Relations of Lahore Durbar with China, *PIHRC*, XXX, Pt. II, p. 5.

Baltistan was entrusted to Wazir Lakhpat Rai, another high ranking officer of Raja Gulab Singh. With a strong force of 3,000 soldiers, Lakhpat marched from Kishtwar to Baltistan via the Suru valley and Kargil.[1] Like the relief force under Dewan Hari Chand and Wazir Ratanu, he also fought many an action on the way. Ali Sher Khan, chief of Khartaksho and the erstwhile ally of the Dogras, who had not joined hands with the rebels greatly helped Lakhpat Rai.[2] With forced marches, the latter reached Skardu, punished the rebels and got Mohammad Shah and the Dogra garrison relieved. Lakhpat Rai despatched strong columns to other parts of Baltistan also where normaley was restored. Many of the rebels were hanged and not a few made prisoners. Mohammad Shah was restored to his previous position on the old terms and for his help now a strong garrison of 300 soldiers was stationed in the Skardu fort. After making these arrangements and taking with him many arch-rebels of Baltistan and Purig, Lakhpat Rai returned to Jammu.[3]

In Ladakh, both the antagonists remained encamped in the Pangong Lake area for sometime. The Dogras realised that in order to carry their point with Lhasa troops, they must force the latter to fight a decisive action before the commencement of the cold season. But the Tibetan camp was situated in the lower part of a narrow valley, and the storming it would have meant considerable loss of life on the side of the Dogras, so they were hesitant to take the offensive for some time. Soon however, fighting started and raged indecisively for about two weeks. The Dogras ultimately dammed up a channel and flooded the Tibetan camp.[4] Seeing his position to be critical, Kalon Surkhang, Tibetan Commander, sent a message from the camp that he was willing to come to terms. The Dogra now demanded the surrender of the Ladakhi King,

[1]Cunningham to Clerk, 31 August 1842, *FDSC*, 12 October 1842, No. 86.

[2]*FDSP*, 3 August 1842, No. 29. Hashmat Ali, *Tarikh-i-Jammu*, p. 410.

[3]Hashmat Ali, *Tarikh-i-Jammu*, pp. 413-14.

[4]Cunningham to Clerk, 27 September 1842, *FDSC* 9 November 1842, No. 61. Francke, *Antiquities*, II, p. 136.

Gonpo, and Ahmad Shah. This having been done, the Tibetans came out; a pitched battle was fought in which most of them were killed while others fled. A large quantity of provisions, ammunition and military equipment which the Tibetans had seized from Wazir Zorawar Singh also fell into their hands. Surkhang, Pishi, two Kahlons and many other Tibetan officers and soldiers were made prisoners[1] and brought to Leh.[2]

After suffering this reverse, the Tibetans appear to have abandoned the cause of the discredited ruler of Ladakh. They had already expelled the Dogras from Western Tibet, so they realised the uselessness of carrying on an unprofitable warfare. On the other hand, the Dogras also seem to have realised that for the sake of a barran country they were materially injuring Kashmir. If Ladakh could continue to enjoy the old reciprocal commercial concessions with Tibet, then they were willing to patch up the quarrel. Moreover, winter was approaching with all its rigours and the Dogras were having a lurking fear that the tragedy of the previous year may not be repeated. Thus, both the parties were willing to come to terms. The peace treaty which took the form of an exchange of documents embodying the undertakings given by each side to the other was concluded at Leh on 17 September, 1842.[3]

To understand the treaty provisions, it is necessary to look at both the Persian and Tibetan documents, for the Dogra treaty

[1]It appears that some of these prisoners were later on taken to Jammu. Charles Hardinge and Captain Hardinge, who visited Jammu on 14 April, 1846, wrote that Raja Gulab Singh showed them Tibetan furniture, dresses and many other such curiosities which were brought as booty from West Tibet and also told them that there were still some Tibetan Wazirs and soldiers as Prisoners at Jammu. cf. Charles Hardinge and Captain Hardinge, "A Journey to Kashmir", *English Mss.* pp. 19-20. No. M/480, *Pb. SA*).

[2]Francke, *Antiquities*, II, p. 136. Choga Garpon (One of the Governors of Gartok) to Wazir of Bashahr, 17 September 1842 , *FDSC*, 11 January 1842, No. 42 (enclosure I).

[3]It may be noticed that terms of the peace treaty were nogotiated by the ranking officers of both the sides i.e. Dewan Hari Chand and Wazir Ratanu from Dogra side and Kalon Surkhang and Bakshi Shajput from the side of the Tibetans, and it appears that before signing the agreement, no reference was made either to Lhasa or to Raja Gulab Singh

lists only the restrictions placed on the Tibetans, and the converse is true of the Tibetan version. The Tibetans guaranteed that:

We shall neither at present nor in future have anything to do or interfere at all with the boundaries of Ladakh and its surroundings as fixed from ancient times and will allow the annual export of wool, shawls and tea by way of Ladakh according to old established customs.[1]

They further undertook not to help any of Gulab Singh's opponents who may enter Tibet, and also offered not to place any hindrance in the way of Ladakhi traders who may visit Tibet.[2]

The Tibetan document containing the guarantees given by the Dogras, stated that in future, perpetual friendship shall prevail between the Dogras and Tibet. The Ladakhi King and his family were permitted to stay in Ladakh provided they did not "indulge in any intrigue" against the Dogras.[3] The Ladakhi King, if he so desired, was allowed to send the annual gifts, to the Dalai Lama and his ministers. For the promotion of trade between the two powers, the Tibetan document contained two provisions. The first postulated that "no restriction shall be laid on the mutual export and import of commodities—e.g., tea, piece goods, etc., and trading shall be allowed according to the old, established custom."The second required the Ladakhis to provide transportation (*Begar* or free cooliage) and accommodation for Tibetan traders in Ladakh. This privilege was on the basis of reciprocity; the Tibetans were obliged to arrange for transportation and accommodation for Ladakhi traders whenever the latter visited Tibet.[4] As this treaty did not bind the suzerains of both the sides. soon after, a supplementary treaty with similar provisions was concluded between the Governor of Kashmir (representing the Lahore Durbar), and the Lhasa officials on behalf of China.

The chronicles of Ladakh and British sources fully agree with the above versions of Persian and Tibetan documents. Accord-

[1]C.U. Aitchison, *Treaties and Engagements etc.* (Calcutta, 1933), XIV, p. 15. Panikkar, *Founding of Kashmir State*, pp. 84-85.

[2]*Ibid.*

[3]*Ibid*, p. 86.

[4]*Ibid.*

ing to the former, "conquered Ladakh" with the frontiers it had during the time of the Ladakhi Kings, was annexed by the "high Government" (Maharaja Sher Singh's Sikh empire). Everything on the Tibetan side of the border remained under Tibet, in other words old Ladakhi claims to West Tibet were relinquished. Lapchak and Chaba,[1] periodical trade missions, based on reciprocal obligations, were to continue as in the past.[2]

Though the British Indian Government did not receive the official text[3] of the treaty, yet immediately after the cessation of the Tibeto-Dogra hostilities, when agents of the Raja of Bashahr visited the Garpon of Gartok for paying customary yearly present, they procured a version of the treaty which was signed on behalf of the Lahore Durbar and the Chinese Emperor. This is a simple document of six articles,[4] and as remarked earlier, fully agrees with the Persian and Tibetan versions.

[1]For details, see *supra*, pp. 65-66.

[2]Francke, *Antiquities*, II, p. 137.

[3]It was first in 1889, that Captain Ramsay, British Joint Commissioner at Leh procured a document dealing with the treaty. This has been given by A. Lamb *(Britain and Chinese Central Asia*, p. 76*)*. Again, in 1921 when there was a minor dispute over the Tibet-Ladakh border, the Tibetan Government sent a copy of the Persian note to the Government of India. cf. *Report of the officials af the Government of India and the peaple's Republic of China on the boundary question*, (New Delhi, Government of India, Ministry of External Affairs, 1961). p. 53. The Persian text has been published in Sapru, *The Building of Jammu and Kashmir State*. Appendix I, pp. i-ii. Both these documents agree well with other versions.

[4]For details, see Appendix E.

Chapter Six

BRITISH POLICY AND NEPAL'S REACTIONS

IN 1836, AFTER Zorawar Singh's first expedition to Ladakh-the King and the heir-apparent of Ladakh, made several representations to Claude Wade, the Governor-General's Agent at Ludhiana, requesting help against the Dogras. Wade brought these overtures to the notice of Maharaja Ranjit Singh but did not press his point further as the affair "related to the other side of the Sutlej".[1] In November 1838, the Ladakhi King sent a special agent to Colonel H.T. Tapp, Political Agent at Subathu, seeking British protection and undertaking to pay *nazarana* to the Company.[2] Although Tapp observed that if the Government took Ladakh under its protection, it would considerably facilitate the commerce of the Company's territories with Chinese Tartary,[3] yet the Government advised him "not to encourage the Raja to expect our protection."[4] The hardpressed Gyalpo did not despair: he sent an embassy[5] to Sir Henry Fane, the British Commander-in-Chief, then at Simla, requesting him to procure a *parwana* from Maharaja Ranjit

[1] *FDPP*, 8 August 1838, No. 28.

[2] "In consequence of the unprosperous and ruined condition of my country", the king wrote to Tapp, "I have not been able to pay *nazarana*. I am willing to show loyalty and obedience to the British Government, but I cannot on any account place myself in subjection to the Sikh authority". (Raja of Ladakh to Tapp, no date, *FDPC*, 9 January 1837, No. 24, enclosure No. I).

[3] Tapp to T. T. Metcalfe (Agent to Lt. Gr., North-West Province, Delhi), 22 Nov. 1836, *FDPC*, 9 January 1837, No. 24.

[4] *FDPC*, 9 January 1837, No. 25.

[5] This embassy consisted of seven men; unfortunately, while in Simla, they contracted smallpox and all of them died. (*FDPC*, 14 August 1837 No. 7-9; *FDPC*, 17 July 1837, No. 81).

Singh, and another from his own Government restraining the invaders from further depredations.[1] The British Commander-in-Chief, however replied that "as the country of Ladakh was beyond the limits of the Company's dominions", no aid could be given to the Ladakhi ruler.[2]

Towards the close of 1837, Chog Sprul, the Ladakhi prince, who was being hotly chased by the Dogras escaped into the British-protected territory of Bashahr. But for the prompt measures taken by the British aurhorities,[3] the Dogras might have entered Bashahr and whisked the prince away. The British sympathised with the fugitive prince and Wade recommended to the Supreme Government that inaddition to providing political asylum to the refugee, "a suitable allowance" should also be granted to him for his subsistence.[4] In Wade's opinion, such a policy of providing shelter to the royal refugee was likely to show

> both to the maharaja and his vassals, the Dogra brothers that we are not insensible to that system of wanton encroachment on their neighbours which has produced on the Indus a state of tumult and disorder, which threatens to introduce on the banks of that river a combination of new influences perhaps to the peace of our Government than that of the Maharaja[5].

[1]Jank Raften Numkin (Raja of Ladakh) to C-in-C 30 August 1837, *FDPC*, 20 December 1837. No. 7.

[2]*FDPC*, 20 December 1837, No. 8. In an earlier communication on this subject, the G. G. had written to the C-in-C "that no hope of assistance can be held out to the Raja of Ladakh with whom the British Government have no political connection". (*FDPC*, 17 July 1837, No. 83).

[3]On coming to know that the fugitive prince was being pursued by the Dogras, Col. Tapp immediately issued a proclamation that any armed force passing the frontier into Bashahr in pursuit of the son of the Raja of Ladakh will be considered in the light of enemies of the British Government. (Tapp to Wade, 31 October 1837, *FDPC*, 17 Jan. 1838, No. 26). Captain Wade also wrote to Lt. Mackeson (his assistant then staying with Maharaja Ranjit Singh at Lahore) to ask the Maharaja to issue an order to Raja Gulab Singh to withdraw his troops from Bashahr frontier "where their presence while an object of alarm to a chief who is living under the protection of the British Govt. is likely to be viewed with any but friendly feelings by the Governor-General of India (Wade to Mackeson, 15 Nov. 1837, *FDCC*, 17 January 1838, No. 26).

[4]Wade to Government, 1 March 1838, *FDCC*, 8 Aug. 1838, No. 28.

[5]Wade to Government, 1 March 1838, *FDPC*, 8August 1838, No.28.

Wade's recommendations were accepted: the Ladakhi prince was given political asylum, though the measure was "not altogether free from risk of political embarrassment."[1] A stipened of Rs. 200 per mensem was also sanctioned to the royal fugitive, and in addition a house at Kotgarh was rented for him at Rs. 800 per annum.[2]

Ahmad Shah, the Balti King, as noted earlier,[3] was very much afraid of the Sikhs and was quite anxious to place himself under British protection. There was a frequent exchange of letters between him and Wade. In response to Wade's wish, Ahmad Shah procured intelligence of passing events in Eastern (Chinese) Turkestan.[4] He promised to provide the English, should they be interested, safe passage through his country to Yarkand.[5] Ahmad Shah further offered to co-operate[6] with the Company in the scheme of opening the navigation of the Indus to commerce by engaging the merchants from his part of the world to send their merchandise by way of Rupar.[7] The Balti ruler wrote to Wade:

It must not be concealed that from the beginning, I have been moved by an anxiety beyond bounds to connect myself with the well-wishers and faithful servents of your Government by ties of friendship and to indentify without reserve with their interests[8].

[1]Government to Wade, 10 March 1838, *FDPC*, 8 August 1838, No. 29.

[2]Governor-General to Secret Committee, 4 April 1838, No. 10.

[3]See *Supra* pp. 118-21

[4]The British at that time were intrested in the commercial potentialities of China and were axious to know the internal political affairs of that country. Ahmad Shah despatched special messengers to Eastern Turkestan and informed Wade that at that time there was no peace and a revolt had broken out against the Manchus. Wade passed on this information to the Supreme Government and it corroporated with the intelligence gathered by the Select Committee at Canton. Hereafter, the Governor-General desired Wade to continue to procure such intelligence. Cf. Wade to Macnaughten (Secretary, Governmert of India), 15 Sepetember 1835; *FDPC*, 5October 1835, No.53-A.

[5]Ahmad Shah to Wade, no date, letter No. I, *FDPC*, 5 Oct. 1836, No. 53-A.

[6]Wade to Secretary, 20 April 1836,Ahmad Shah to G-G, no date, *FDPC*, 23 May 1836, Nos. 109-110.

[7]It appears, Ahmad Shah wrongly thought that the Indus passed through Rupar. Actually it is the Sutlaj river which flows through Rupar.

[8]Ahmad Shah to Wade, letter No. 4, *FDPC*, 5 Oct. 1835, No. 53-A.

Wade, reciprocating Ahmad Shah's friendly gestures replied:

British Government has adue regard for everyone with whom it has any amicable relations. I as well as Government which I serve are aware of your sentiments of friendship.[1]

These remarks of Wade, though couched in terms and professions of general amity, were misconstrued by Ahmad Shah. He thought that the British had thereby extended their protection over Baltistan. When Raja Gulab Singh asked Ahmad Shah to enter in to friendly relations with him, the Balti ruler curtly replied that "by dint of perseverence he had been able to bring himself within the shadow of Huma,"[2] so he did not bother about the friendship of the Jammu Raja.[3]

When in the late eighteen-thirties, G.T. Vigne, an English traveller, visited Baltistan, his presence was regarded as an important event by Ahmad Shah, who, like Nawab Jabbar Khan of Kabul, manifested a strong natural predilection for the intimacy and friendship of Europeans.[4] Through Vigne, the Balti ruler tried to interest Wade in his claims over a *jagir* in Kashmir and some parts of the district of Purig, which at that time were controlled by the Sikhs, but in the past had been the possessions of Ahmad Shah's ancestors.[5] In reply to a reference about such claims of the Balti ruler, the Governor-General enjoined on Wade that although

no proper opportunity ought to be omitted of cultivating a friendly understanding with this Chief, but you must be careful, not to use any expression, which could excite in him a hope of our interposing on his behalf with any of his neighbours.[6]

Unfortunately for Ahmad Shah, that moment arrived which he had been trying to avert for the last twenty years: in Novem-

[1] Wade to Ahmad Shah, 23 February 1834, *FDPC*, 5 October 1835, No. 53-A.

[2] Huma is a bird of fable; it is said that he who comes under its shadow acquired prosperity. Verily, no one avoides its shadow. Ahmad Shah compared the British to Huma.

[3] Wade to Macnaughten, 30 December 1836, *FDPC*, 30 January 1837, No. 28.

[4] Wade to Macnaughten, 20 April 1836, *FDPC*, 23 May 1836, No. 109.

[5] *Ibid.*

[6] Governor-General to Wade, 23 May 1836, *FDPC*, 23 May 1836, No. 112.

ber 1839, Zorawar Singh invaded Baltistan.[1] Hard pressed Ahmad Shah sent two of his sons to the Political Agent at Ludhiana,[2] and repeatedly sought British help. "I long ago", wrote the Balti Gyalpo to the Political Agent, "put myself under the only asylum, the British protection and considered myself among the dependents."[3] Ahmad Shah further wrote that since long he considered Baltistan as the country of the British Government, and looked upon himseif merely as the Governor of a garrison appointed by the British.[4] Although at one time, the British Government contemplated interceding on behalf of the Balti ruler, and remonstrate "in friendly language" with the Lahore Durbar'[5] later it gave up the idea and veered round to its earlier policy of non-interference in such affairs. The Governor-General instructed George Russel Clerk, Wade's replacement at Ludhiana, that on the question of Dogra subversion of Baltistan "there can be no reason for interference on the part of this Government."[6]

Although British policy towards the Kings of Ladakh and Baltistan, who made repeated solicitations for help remained non-committal, yet with Zorawar Singh's invasion of Western Tibet, the British attitude vis-a-vis the Dogras changed. In the late eighteen-thirties, due to disorder and unrest in Ladakh and Baltistan, trade of Western Tibet with Bashahr and other British-protected hill states increased enormously, albeit to the detriment of that with Ladakh and Kashmir. In 1837, the first year for which some figures are available, the quantity of shawl-wool imported from Western Tibet into Bashahr was 1080 *maunds*, which rose to 1548 *maunds* in 1840.[7] The total trade of Bashahr in 1837 was valued at Rs. 55,529; in 1840,

[1]For details about Zorawar's invasion of Baltistan, see *supra* pp. 118-27.

[2]These two brothers were detained at Srinagar by the Sikh Governor of Kashmir.

[3]Clerk (Pol. Agent, Ludhiana) to Government, 31 May 1840, *FDPC*, 1 March 1841, No. 127, enclosure No. 1.

[4]Mackeson (Pol. Agent, Peshawar) to Clerk, 18 July 1840, *FDPC*, 1 March 1841, No. 126.

[5]*Ibid*

[6]Governor-General to Clerk, 1 March 1841, *FDPC*, 1 March 1841, No. 129.

[7]Cunningham to Clerk, 14 December 1841, *FDPC*, 24 Jan. 1842, No. 20.

this figure increased to Rs. 109,807 thus in four years registering steep increase of nearly two hundred per cent. With the arrival of Dogra forces in Western Tibet, these commercial benefits disappeared: the flow of shawl-wool and other commodities into Bashahar dwindled beyond all expectations—in 1841, the quantity of shawl-wool imported fell to 169 *maunds*,[2] and the total trade was valued at Rs. 19,679.[3] J. C. Erskine, Political Agent at Subathu, reported that the Sikhs were determined to stop all trade between Chinese Tartary and Bashahr.[4] By occupying Spiti and adjacent areas, the Dogras had already cut the tracks on one hand between Bashahr and Ladakh, and on the other between Bashahri traders, who carried their trade with Ladakh were also assessed and duty was levied on goods which entered into Western Tibet from Bashahr. This was unlike the previous arrangements: under an old agreement between the Rajas of Ladakh and Bashahr, the subjects of the latter traded freely with the possessions of the former.[5] It was also reported that Zorawar Singh had issued an order prohibiting the export of shawl-wool and borax from Western Tibet to Bashahr.[6] Five Bashahri traders who defied this order were put to the sword and many others were robbed of their property and imprisoned.[7]

Apart from the commercial losses and indignities sustained by the traders of Bashahr, its Raja was afraid that the Dogras wanted to seize his trans-Sutlej possessions. Rumours were afloat of Zorawar's intention to occupy Kinnaur, the north-eastern district of Bashahr, a part of which was situated to the north of the Sutlej and was contiguous with Ladakh and West

[1]Same to same, 27 May 1842, *FDPC*, 22 June 1842, No. 36.

[2]*FDPC*, 24 January 1842, No. 20.

[3]*FDPC*, 22 June 1842, No. 36.

[4]Erskine to Hodgson (Resident in Nepal), 20 July 1841, *FDPC*, 23 August 1841, No. 65.

[5]Cunningham to Clerk, 23 November 1841, *FDPC*, 27 Dec. 1841, No. 37. *FDPC*, 34 January 1842, No. 20. *FDPC*, 9 November 1842, No. 61.

[6]*FDPC*, 27 December 1841, No. 37.

[7]Raja of Bashahr to Erskine, Political Agent at Subathu, 6 September 1841, *FDPC*, 25 October 1841, No. 23. see also, *Foreign Misc*, No. 334 pp. 284, 286.

Tibet.[1] Certainly, there was evidence that the Dogra brothers for the last several years, had been trying to ascertain the position of the trans-Sutlej possessions of Bashahr, ultimately, with a view to annexing these with the Sikh dominions. In 1838 Raja Dhian Singh had secretly despatched his agent, named Devi Singh, "One of the most notorious intriguers about the court of Lahore" to Bashahr. Devi Singh's objects were to inveigle the Ladakhi prince to recross the Sutlej,[2] and to ascertain the circumstances under which the Raja of Bashahr held his possessions to the north of the Sutlej.[3] Wade, then Political Agent at the Sikh Court had informed his Government that:

> Ranjit Singh has hitherto advanced no pretensions to the supremacy of the trans-Sutlej possessions of the Raja of Bashahr and if left to himself would be unlikely to do so, but Raja Dhian Singh or his brother will do as they have done in Ladakh, first try to introduce their authority and then make it a point of honour with their master to maintain his claim.[4]

In 1841, the Lahore Durbar sent two persons named Jiwan Singh and Ganeshi Dass to Rampur to enter into certain enquiries connected with the frontiers of Bashahr.[5] On the other hand, Raja Gulab Singh under his signature "Takado Jeno Sree Ram Jye"[6] also wrote to Wazir Zorawar Singh to send a sketch of the boundaries of the Bashahr territory and the neighbouring countries to Jiwan Singh and Ganeshi Das.[7] It was said that these emissaries demanded a daughter of the Raja of Bashahr in marriage for one of the sons of Gulab Singh,

[1]Cunningham to Clerk, 21 October 1841, *FDPC*, 22 November 1841, No. 23.

[2]The Ladakhi prince had been granted political asylum in Bashahr; the Dogra brothers regarded his presence there dangerous to the permanence of their authority in Ladakh, and therefore were anxious to entice the royal fugitive back to Ladakh where either he was to be incarcerated or poisoned. (*FDSC*, 8 August 1838, No. 28).

[3]*Ibid.*

[4]*Ibid.*

[5]Erskine to T.T. Metcalfe, 24 September 1841, *FDSC*, 25 October 1841, No. 22.

[6]This was the "autograph signature" of Raja Gulab Singh which he had adopted in matters connected with the foreign affairs, probably, without the information of the Lahore Durbar. *Ibid.*

[7]*FDSC*, 25 October 1841, No. 22, enclosure No. 2.

and threatened in case of refusal to seize the trans-Sutlej possessions of Bashahr.[1]

The British reaction to these proceedings of the Dogras was one of surprise and unease. For a time neither the real intentions of the invaders, nor the true extent of their ambition was very clear. Clerk had addressed the Lahore Durbar a number of times soliciting information regarding Zorawar's objective and movements in Western Tibet,[2] but the usual reply which he received was that the "Sikh Government had not received any intelligence from that quarter."[3] Clerk wrote to his superiors that the replies of the Durbar in this case were dictated by Raja Dhian Singh, and would continue of be so until the Maharaja was alarmed at the prospect of the consequences of the dissatisfaction of the British Government.[4] In August 1841, Clerk suggested to the Supreme Government that:

> some perfect system of intelligence of passing events, on the eastern frontiers of Chinese Tartary should be instituted, otherwise.....it may hereafter be found that a convenient means of introducing a vigilant superintendence there has been omitted, and that the substance has been abandoned for the shadow.[5]

Such a system, he opined, was that a competent British agent should go to that area and see things with his own eyes; his presence would interrupt "political intrigues, should Zorawar or his master have conceived any in that quarter, detrimental or embarrassing to the interests of the British Government or its allies."[6]

In pursuance of this advice, Lieutenant Joseph Davey Cunningham, the future historian of the Sikhs, and at that time Clerk's assistant at Ludhiana was appointed on a special political mission and was asked to travel up the Sutlej to a point near the Tibetan frontier where active hostilities were going on

[1] *FDSC*, 22 November 1841, No. 23. see also *Foreign Misc*, No. 334, p. 652.

[2] Clerk to Maharaja Sher Singh, 27 August 1841, *FDSC*, 20 September 1841, No. 65. enclosure No. 1, *FDSC*, 27 September 1841, No. 42.

[3] *FDSP*, 18 October 1841, No. 67.

[4] Clerk to Maddock, 9 September 1841, *FDSC*, 27 September 1841, No. 69.

[5] Same to same, 10 August 1841. *FDSC*, 30 August 1841, No. 69.

[6] *FDSC*, 30 August 1841, No. 89.

between the Dogras and the Tibetnas.[1] Cunningham's duties were manifold: he was instructed to inquire the intentions of Wazir Zorawar Singh or his subordinates in advancing to or towards Rudok and subsequently moving down upon Gartok and Manasarowar, the number and description of troops with which he or his officers had captured the latter place and the other places lying between that and the Niti pass, his tenure of the district of Chumurti, the cause or pretext of these encroachments, and the nature and ramifications of the trade which for sometime past had been a bone of contention on the one hand, between Yarkand and Ladakh and on the other, between Bashahr and Ladakh.[2]

The crux of the problem was shawl-wool.[3] The figures showing the rapid rise of this commodity into Bashahr from 1837 to 1840 and then steep fall in 1841, which Cunningham so diligently collected, have already been noted. Clerk under instructions from his Government asked the Lahore Durbar to restrain Zorawar Singh from molesting the trade and territory of Bashahr.[4] In this connection, in reply to an order issued by the Lahore Government, Zorawar Singh observed:

> The fact is that a quantity of pusham for shawls and of tea was usually imported to Cashmere, but it was since a year or two that the merchants purchased these commodities very dear and imported these to Hindoostan and the thereby greatly injured the shawl manufacture of cashmere.[5]

The British Government was incensed at this reply, and immediately wrote to Clerk that the explanation offered by Zorawar Singh of his reason for interfering with the course of

[1] *Bhandari Family Archives Papers*, S. No. 328, Register A, Pt. III. Letter dated 27 September 1841, from Clerk to Maharaja Sher Singh (Persian MSS. *Pb. SA*). see also, *FDSC*, 28 September 1841, No. 71,

[2] Clerk to Cunningham, 25 Sept. 1841. *FDSC*, 25 Oct. 1841, No. 28, see also, C.L. Datta, "Zorawar Singh. Political Mission of J.D. Cunningham, 1841-42", *Bengal: Past and* Present LXXXVIII, Pt. I (Jan.-June 1969), p. 84.

[3] For details about the produce and flow of this important article of trade, see C.L. Datta, "Significance of shawl-wool trade in Western Himalayan Politics", "*Bengal: Past and Present*, LXXXXIX, Pt. I (Jan.-June 1970), pp. 16-28.

[4] *FDSC*, 6 September 1841, No. 42.

[5] Wazir Zorawar Singh to Lahore Government, no date, *FDSC*, 6 September 1841, No. 43.

trade beyond the frontiers of Bashahr was quite inadmissible. It further stated that if the object of Dogra encroachments along the northern line of the Himalayan range was to establish for themeselves a monopoly of the trade of that region, such a measure was quite deleterious to the British-Protected hill states.[1] The Governor-General, therefore directed his Agent to insist upon the immediate withdrawal of all road restrictions imposed on trade by the Dogras and to impress on the Maharaja that

in the peculiarly intimate relations which subsist between the British and Lahore Governments such pleas as that advanvanced by Zorawar Singh were of a kind which ought not to be admitted by either of the allied parties and certainly ought not to be communicated with any semblance of concurrence and support, the justification of an unfriendly, almost hostile proceedings.[2]

The Dogras continued their successful depredations, and soon occupied all Tibetan territory to the east of Kumaon. This occupation, like the case of the Bashahri traders earlier, brought many sufferings for Bhotias,[3] the residents of Kumaon and Garhwal. The latter's condition was even more unfortunate because the Dogra invasion had occurred at a time when they were preparing to cross the Himalayas for carrying commercial transactions. Trade was the only source of their livelihood. It was quite profitable,[4] and was carried on during certain seasons of the year by barter.[5] There was great consternation and excitement among the Hunias, the counterparts of the Bhotias in Western Tibet and most of them, leaving behind their hearths and homes had fled to the neighbouring

[1]Government to Clerk, 6 September 1841, *FDSC*, 6 September 1841, No. 44.

[2]*FDSC*, 6 September 1841, No. 44.

[3]For detailed explanation, see *supra* p. 135 fn 5.

[4]During 1840-41, imports from Western Tibet into Kumaon amounted to Rs. 155,700, and exports from the latter to the former were valued at Rs. 79,375, thus giving the Kumaon traders a profit of nearly one hundred per cent (Lushington, Commissioner of Kumaon, to Thomason, Secretary, N. W. Province, 27 August 1841, *FDSC*, 20 September 1841, No. 27).

[5]The Bhotias exchanged the wheat and rice of Kumaon and Garhwal, and "the broadcloth and other articles of English manufacture" for the salt and borax of West Tibet. (Lushington to Thomason, 25 August 1841, *FDSC*, 13 September 1841, No. 20.).

territories. Therefore trade of this area for all practical purposes was at a stand still. The poor Bhotias, who had made purchases for making their annual trip to the Tartary on the other side of the Himalayan crest were obliged either to suffer the prevations resulting from its cancellation, or to run the grave risks involved in visiting the western part of Tibet at such a juncture.[1] Fear of an imminent economic ruin stalked the country. The Lieutenant-Governor of the North-West Province cautioned the Government that the Dogra occupation of West Tibet was fraught with much future mischief and calculated if not promptly met eventually to imperil the prosperity and tranquility not only of Kumaon, but of all our frontier provinces.[2]

But that was not all. The proximity of the Dogra rule to the states under British protection raised another problem: the natives Western Tibet, in order to save themselves from the rapacity of the invaders sought shelter in British territories; this provided the Dogras with a plea for incursions into the states under British protection.[3] On 15 September, 1841, one Kesra Singh, a Dogra official, accompanied by some soldiers entered the Parganah of Byans in Kumaon and demanded from Bhotias, in the name and by order of Zorawar Singh, who was "equal of any English Governor-General", the ravenues or dues formerly paid by them to the Tibetan authorities.[4] When the Bhotias refused to comply this demand, they were threatened with dire consequences and a small sum was extorted from them.[5] Zorawar Singh had also issued a *hukam namah* directing the Bhotias to pay him all the dues which they had hitherto been paying to the Tibetan authorities.[6] Now, it appeared, as if the sovereignty of the British-protected hill territories was about to be violated.

[1] *FDSC*, 13 September 1841, No. 20.
[2] *FDSC*, 30 August 1841, No. 27.
[3] Minute of Lieutenant-Governor, N.W. Province, 28 September 1841, *FDSC*, 11 October 1841, No. 46.
[4] Lushington to Secretary, (N.W. Province), 23 September 1841, *FDSC*, 11 October 1841, No. 50.
[5] *FDSC*, 11 October 1841, No. 48.
[6] *Ibid*, See also, *FDSC*, 11 October 1841, No. 50.

Yet, of greater concern was the likelihood of an anti-British Dogra-Sikh-Nepalese rapprochement and the fear of Chinese intervention and consequent approach of the Chinese army to the Indian frontier—an aspect discussed towards the end of the present chapter.[1] All these considerations spelt out in the preceding pages made the restraining of the Dogras a compelling necessity for the British. The progress of the war and its consequential ramifications established that mere vigilance and alertness were not enough. Once the affected the commercial and political interests of the British, sterner measures were felt to be imperative. Thomason, Secretary to the Lieutenant Governor N.W. Province warned that

If we submit to this injury, loss of influence and loss of consideration must inevitably follow, and the arrogance and presumption of our neighbours will be proportionally increased. The value of the trade from a political point of view is of little moment, but the simple fact of its being stopped for any length of time must dispirit our own people and give confidence to those who have achieved this act, to attempt others.[2]

The Governor-General instructed Clerk to inform Maharaja Sher Singh that it was impossible "for the British Government to hear without displeasure of outrages of this atrocious nature against its subjects or those of its dependents",[3] and that if Zorawar Singh were not restrained, the long standing Anglo-Sikh amity would be irreparably damaged. Fort William brought heavy pressure to bear on the Sikh ruler to recall the Dogra general and his troops within the former boundaries of Ladakh, and set a deadline (10 December, 1841), for the withdrawal of the Dogra forces.[4] If compliance was not made by that date then the British Government threatened to adopt its own measures for curbing the unwarrantable and hostile proceedings of those under whose direction Zorawar was acting.[5] The Lahore

[1] See *infra* pp. 169-82.

[2] Thomason to Maddock, 4 September 1841, *FDSC*, 13 Sept. 1841, No. 19.

[3] Governor-General to Clerk, 1 November 1841, *FDSC*, 1 November 1841, No. 38.

[4] *Bhandari Family Archives Papers*, S. No. 329, Register A, Pt.III. Letter dated 19 October 1841 from Clerk to Maharaja Sher Singh (Persian MSS, *Pb. SA*). See also. *FDSC*, 22 November 1841, No. 16.

[5] Government to Clerk, 8 October 1841, *FDSC*, 11 October 1841, No. 47.

Durbar was also asked to give signal punishment to Kesra Singh and his party and adequately compensate the Bhotias who had been assessed for the payment of revenue by the Dogras.[1] J.D. Cunningham, who had already been deputed to West Tibet, was asked to witness and report on its evacuation by the Dogras.[2] The Maharaja was further told that the Governor-General was aware that the invasion of Western Tibet was the act of the Dogra Rajas, undertaken for their own private gains, and perhaps without the knowledge of the Sikh Maharaja, but the responsibility for such proceedings, lay squarely on the Lahore Durbar itself,[3] and it was the Maharaja's duty to put an instant stop to their aggressions either by his own means or if those are not adequate to the purpose by uniting with the British Government to affect that object.[4]

These stern measures of the British paid dividends: Maharaja Sher Singh immediately ordered Zorawar Singh to move back within the former possessions of Ladakh.[5] Further more, he was asked to present rupees 525 as *zaifat* and rupees 125 as *sarwarna*[6] to Lieutenant Cunningham; the Wazir was also desired to procure a *Razinama* or certificate of satisfaction from the British observer in West Tibet (Cunningham).[7] The Maharaja also assured Clerk that orders had been issued to indemnify the Bhotias, and Kesra Singh and his party, who were said to have perpetrated atrocities on the British subjects had been summoned to Lahore where they were to be suitably punished.[8] Sher Singh admitted too that he could not afford to impair his ami-

[1] *Ibid.*

[2] Clerk to Cunnigham, 25 October 1841, *FDSC*, 8 November 1841, No. 45. *FDSC*, 11 October 1841, No. 47.

[3] Government to Clerk, 16 August 1841, *FDSC*, 11 October 1841, No. 47.

[4] Same to Same, 20 September 1841, *FDSC*, 20 September 1841, No. 66.

[5] Clerk to Maddock, 31 October 1841, *FDSC*, 22 Nov. 1841, No. 18, enclosing the translation of a letter from Maharaja Sher Singh to Clerk, *FDSC*, 22 Nov. 1841, No. 20.

[6] For meaning, see *supra* p. 111 fn 4.

[7] *FDSC*, 22 November 1841, No. 18.

[8] Clerk to Government, 4 November 1841, *FDSC*, 22 November 1841, No. 20.

cable relations with the British.[1] But, even before his orders could reach the Dogra Commander or be acted upon, a large Tibetan army had already moved from Lhasa. In the depth of winter, it surrounded the Dogras and after fighting some pitched actions, defeated and killed Zorawar Singh on 12 December, 1842.[2] By a strange coincidence, the British demand for the withdrawal of Zorawar Singh and his troops within a specified date was completely fulfilled, though in a manner, different from the one desired by the concerned parties.

The Tibetan army, having made a short work of the Dogra troops, swooped down upon Ladakh and laid siege to Leh. In this reversed situation what should be the British policy? Now that the Dogras, as was desired by them had been expelled from Western Tibet, should the Tibetans be restrained from attacking Ladakh, which the British recognised for the past so many years as a Sikh protectorate? Clerk's considered view was that the British need not care to restrain the Lhasa troops from releasing Ladakh from the Sikhs, but they should interfere to prevent the "extension of Chinese authority west of Ladakh." To prevent any violation of the British frontier, Cunningham had suggested the advisability of posting a small force close to the frontier and constructing a small fort at the strategically important border outpost of Chango in Kinnaur.[3] Clerk, agreeing with Cunningham had advised his Government to strengthen the border by posting the 'Nusserree' and the 'Sirmoor' battallions on the frontier, so that they would "act promptly for protection or for interference, or it would give weight to advice."[4] The Supreme Government, however, rejected these recommendations as it did "not contemplate any armed interference in disputes beyond the mountains",[5] and desired Cunningham simply to be a "looker on".[6] Thus, after the Dogras had been expelled from Western Tibet,

[1] *Ibid.*
[2] For details, see *supra* pp. 139-40.
[3] Clerk to Maddock, 11 January 1842, *FSSC*, 24 January 1842, No. 61.
[4] *FDSC*, 20 July 1842, No. 60.
[5] Clerk to Government, 17 May 1842, *FDSC*, 6 July 1842, No. 40.
[6] Government to Clerk, 25 May 1842, *FDSC*, 6 July 1842, No. 43.
[7] Same to same, 24 January 1842, *FDSC*, 24 January 1842, No. 62.

the British attitude was no longer hostile towards them, and they (British) reverted to their earlier policy of non-interference.

Yet, the out-break of Anglo-Afghan hostilities made British neutrality somewhat difficult to maintain. Early in 1842, after suffering a disaster in Afghanistan the British were anxious to avenge opprobrious and annihilating defeats. But they were in a desperate situation: their own base was far away, and for maintaining their lines of communications they badly needed help from the Lahore Durbar. The latter asked Raja Gulab Singh, who at that time was suppressing rebellions in Hazara to co-operate with the British relief expedition which was being organised at Peshawar. The Raja rendered good help in arranging provisions and carriage, and contributed to the safe transit of General Pollock's army through the Khaibar pass. At this time news reached him of the debacle which had overtaken Zorawar Singh and his army in Western Tibet. Naturally, he was much grieved and pressed the Lahore Durbar to allow him to go to Jammu or Kashmir, whence he could arrange reinforcements for safeguarding his possessions in Ladakh. His anxiety for the safety of his dominions was fully shared by his brother, Raja Dhian Singh. Clerk informed his Government that

> the first present object of the Minister's (Dhian Singh) anxiety is the critical position of his dominion in Ladakh, and in so far as this places Cashmere in jeopardy, the Maharaja is also dissatisfied with the reports that are received of the hostile intentions of the Chinese authorities, and the rebellions of the Ladakhis instigated by them.[1]

He further wrote that the assistance of the Sikhs in terms of soldiers, supplies, and carriage to the English in their war with the Afghans, "will have to be compensated sooner or later and this may prove embarrassing; or it may be illrequited, and that will be dishonourable."[2] Raja Gulab Singh also appears to have been conscious of it: he requested active military aid from the British.[3] The latter were in a very uncomfortable position.

[1]Clerk to Government, 18 May 1842, *FDSC*, 2 November 1842, No. 29.

[2]*Ibid.*

[3]Capt. H.M. Lawrence (Assistant Agent to G-G, Peshawar) to Clerk, 5 May 1842, *FDSC*, 8 June 1842, No. 47-48.

If they did not assist the Sikhs what will be the attitude of the Lahore Durdar? Would it not weaken British position vis-a-vis Afghanistan? On the contrary, if they did render active military help to the Sikhs in their renewed trans-Himalayan expedition, would it not affect the Sino-English parleys then taking place in China bringing hostilities in the first Opium war to a close? The British, did not give military assistance to the Sikhs and simply wished success[1] to their relief expedition. Protection of British Commercial interests in China by re-establishing cordial relations with the Manchu Emperor was thus far more important than giving help to Raja Gulab Singh.

Nevertheless, requests of Gonpo, advisor to the young Ladakhi King and the virtual ruler of Ladakh for British help against the Dogras[2] were turned down.[3] J.D. Cunningham, who was then on the frontier, was asked to act as mediator if this should prove acceptable to the Dogras.[4] Lord Ellenborough then Governor-General, even offered a *quid pro quo* to Raja Gulab Singh : if the latter abondoned his schemes of conquering trans-Himalayan territories, then the British would allow him to conquer territory being between the right bank of the

[1]Governor-General to Clerk, 21 March 1842, *FDSC*, 21 March 1842, No. 85. Mr. W.W. Bird, a member of the Supreme Council, however, was of the opinion that instead of expressing a pious wish, the Lahore Durbar should have been assured that "in the event of their offering us real and effectual assistance on the present occasion (first Anglo-Afghan War) they might depend upon us to assist them in return should their possessions on the side of Ladakh, be exposed to danger in cousequence. Such an assurance, I recollect from Mr. Clerk's letters, would have removed at-once all their disinclination towards us, and have induced them to lend us that aid which we may otherwise look for invain. Nor it would have been attended with any risk, which we have not to incur even were no assurance to be given. For, unless the Chinese come down in such strength, as the Lahore Government is unable to resist, our assistance will not be required, and if they do, our interposition will be immediately necessary for the safety of our own territories." (Minute by W.W. Bird, 27 March 1842, *FDSC*, 30 March 1842, No. 2).

[2]Gumbo to Cunningham, 18 April 1842, *FDSC*, 6 July 1842, No. 42.

[3]Cunnigham to Gumbo, 3 May 1842, *Ibid.*

[4]Governor-General to Clerk, 19 May 1842, *FDSC*, 22 June 1842, No. 26.

Indus, the Suffeid Kho-Kang and the Himalayans.[1] In order to facilitate the accomplishment of this object, the British were further willing to place Jallalabad in the hands of the Dogras.[2] Tempting as it must have looked, this was not acceptable to Raja Gulab Singh, who fully understood that the new territory which the British desired him to conquer, due to its insulated position was not of much use to him, whereas Ladakh and Western Tibet were contiguous to the Dogra dominions.

The British were unlikely to gain any credit, even if they assisted the Tibetans against the Dogras. Cunningham observed that British intervention though solicited by the Tibetans, would "be studiously concealed from the Emperor" by the Chinese Governors, who would "garble the truth."[3] Even English mediation, "would be left untold."[4]

Tibetan rule was not beneficial in another way also. Cunningham, in his anxiety to restore the commercial traffic of Bashahr with Western Tibet had written to Kalon Surkhang, the Tibetan Commander, in general terms desiring that for the promotion of trade between the two states, no impediments should be put by the Tibetan authorities.[5] Surkhang's reply was that if the people of Bashahr proved in the presence of the Ladakhis that in the past they (Basharis) had been trading in shawl-wool, then they (Basharis) would be permitted to carry trade. But, "if it is otherwise and the people of Bashahr took advantage of the disturbances consequent of Zorawar Singh's arrival, to trade in shawl-wool, they cannot be allowed

[1]Governor-General to Clerk, 27 April 1842, *FDSC*, 1 June 1842, No. 25. See also, *FDSP*, 2 November 1842, No. 30-A.

[2]*Ibid.*

[3]Cunningham to Clerk, 24 September 1842, *FDSC*, 11 January 1843, No. 42.

[4]*FDSC*, 11 January, 1843, No. 42. Cunningham's observation about the Chinese and Tibetan officials that they would misrepresent the facts to the Ch'ing Emperor is remarkably correct. From Chinese and Tibetan documents we learn that these officials usually obfuscated the facts and conveyed distorted versions of the real happenings on the frontier to the Manchu Emperor. Cf. Fisher et al, *Himalayan Battleground*, Appen. pp. 155-76 et passim.

[5]Cunningham to Surkhang, 6 July 1842, *FDSC*, 31 August 1842, No. 65, Enclosure No. 1.

to continue this trade according to the present orders of the Lhasa rulers to me."[1] In reply to another communication from Cunningham on the same subject, Surkhang's rejoinder was that although throughout Western Tibet there was profit on the trade in shawl-wool, yet it was not the practice of the rulers of Tibet to interfere with any old custom.[2] J.H. Batten, senior Assistant Commissioner of Kumaon, had also reported that.

> the temper of the Chinese, towards our Bhotias has been most oppressive and haughty and the latter say, of the two, they would far prefer the Sikhs under Zorawar Singh to the Chinese under Kulum Singh Kevang (Kalon Surkhang ?)[3]

The Dogras and the Tibetans, realising the futility of carrying the war any longer, though not without measuring each other's strength and without British participation, signed a treaty of peace on 17 September, 1842. The terms of this treaty,[4] except the one relating to the export of shawl-wool from Western Tibet to Ladakh, conformed to the wishes of the British. The latter would have liked the contracting parties to modify this clause but, as the Sikhs and the Chinese were independent, nothing could be done at that time. However the British, as will be noticed in the following chapter, attempted to do this in 1846, when they became the paramount power vis-a-vis the Dogras.

NEPAL'S REACTIONS

After the Anglo-Nepalese war of 1814-16, as has been noted earlier,[5] the British by seizing Kumaon, Garhwal and the adjacent hill states had created a wedge of territory between the Lahore and Kathmandu Durbars thus destroying all possibilities of a direct contact between the two states. Ranjit Singh was conscious of it and had noted with regret the expulsion of the Gurkhas from this hilly region. It is worthwhile to quote

[1]Surkhang to Cunningham, 20 July 1842, *FDSC*, 5 October 1842, No. 75.

[2]Same to same, 16 August 1842, *FDSC*, 12 October 1842, No. 84.

[3]Batten to Secretary (N.W. Province), 9 December 1841, *FDSC*, 27 December 1841, No. 17. see also *Foreign Misc*, No. 335, p. 6.

[4]For details, see *infra* Appendix E.

[5]See *supra*, pp. 85-6.

the following significant words which in 1814, the Maharaja used in a private conversation with Bhai Gurbaksh Singh, Dhana Singh Malwai and others:

Though apparently sincere friendship is supposed to exist between myself and the English people, yet in reality our relations are merely formal and conventional. Therefore, I had thought out to myself that in case the English should act differently in their dealings with me, I would call upon the Gurkhas and make friends with them and in case they showed any hesitation I intended to make over the fort of Kangra to them to win their comradeship. Now they have been expelled from the mountains and it cannot be said when they would cherish a desire for the above mentioned region. I never expected such a thing to happen them that mountainous regions would be evacuated by them suddenly.[1]

In the late eighteen-thirties when the British decided to set bounds to the Maharaja's ambitions on the west as they had already done on the east and south, Ranjit Singh felt dissatisfied with his erstwhile friends. The importance of the words which he had used in 1814 becomes clear: the exchange of missions between Nepal and the Lahore Durbar became quite frequent after 1834,[2] and the emissaries of Nepal which previously were hardly given any royal audience were now received with great honours. General Matabar Singh, the finest Gurkha soldier, who entered Punjab in 1838, was soon given a high command in the Lahore service and efforts to enlist the Gurkha troops by the Sikhs were stepped up. After Ranjit Singh's demise, Nau-Nihal Singh, *de facto* ruler of the Punjab and the Dogra brothers became very keen to forge an anti-British league with the Gurkhas, which was intended to serve as the keystone of the projected coalition of the Indian powers against the English.[3]

Ever since the Anglo-Nepalese war of 1814-16, the Kathmandu Durbar had become a cockpit of intrigues against the English. But in the late thirties, anti-British feelings in

[1]See *Punjab Government Record Office Monograph*, No. 17, p. 192.

[2]Cf. *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar III, pp. 250, 275, 294, 297, 361 ff.

[3]I. B. Bannerjee "Nao Nihal Singh and the Nepalese Mission to Lahore," *Proceedings of the Indian Historical Records Commission*, XXII (October 1945), pp. 17 et seq. H.R. Gupta, "Sikh-Nepal Relations", *Ibid*, XXXII (February 1954), pp. 52 et seq. Ganda Singh ed., *The Punjab in 1839-40*, pp. 172 et passim.

Nepal rose to new heights and relations between the two powers were strained almost to the breaking point.[1] Nepal, then ruled by the Kala Pande Ministry, which was implacably hostile to the British,[2] was spinning a web of intrigues with almost all states in India in the fond hope of setting up a confederacy of anti-British powers. Political missions were even despatched to Burma, Kabul, Herat and Tehran.[3] In 1840,[4] the Kala Pandes made every effort to raise the war potential of the country[5] and even attempted to kill the British Resident at Kathmandu. The British were aware of all these activities and for many years had watched them with apprehension. At last in 1840, they decided to take military action against Nepal,[6] but because of their involvement in wars with China and Afghanistan this could not be done, though as a precautionary measure a corps of observers consisting of some com-

[1]In 1838, Bhim Sen Thapa, The Prime Minister of Nepal warned B.H. Hodgson, the British Resident in Nepal, that the Durbar were preparing "for hostilities in October should it be found that the accounts from Ava, Pekin and Lahore were favourable". F. Tuker, *Gurkha-the story of the Gurkhas of Nepal* (London, 1957), p. 100.

[2]The Kala Pandes, with Ranjing Pande as their chief was the ruling party. They had come into power after an eclipse of about thirty years and were now assisted by the senior *Rani* or *Queen.* For the internal affairs in Nepal and its political relations with the Britlsh Government from 1835 to 1839, see Report of J.R. Tickell, Assistant Resident, *FDSC*, 18 January 1841, No. 74.

[3]*FDSC*, 18 January 1841, No. 74.

[4]For the political relations of Nepal with the Company in 1840, see Report of Lt. C.H. Nicholetts, Assistant Resident, *FDPC*, 11 November 1853, No. 23.

[5]New founderies for manufacturing the sinews of war were founded, large quantities of ammunition were rushed to the frontier, and a census of Nepalese military power was taken, showing that the country had available the prepostrous number of 400,000 trained men. In order to provide funds for an invasion of India, new taxes were imposed and salary of the soldiers was slashed, (*Ibid*, see also, Tuker, *op.cit*, pp. 105-6).

[6]Hodgson wrote to his father, "Yet all is unsettled, and my ambition is bounded just now to keeping things any how together until the return of the season of action in November, when I sadly fear, it will be indispensable to inflict the long-merited and long-provoked punishment"- Quoted in W.W. Hunter, *Life of Brian Haughton Hodgson* (London, 1896), p. 89.

panies of cavalary, infantry and artillery were despatched to the frontier.[1] Realising that the Pande Ministry was at the root of all troubles, in November 1840, the British suceessfully prevailed upon the Nepalese King to turn the Kala Pandes out of office and set up a new Ministry.[2] Although the new Ministers leaned heavily upon the British Resident, B.H. Hodgson, "its architect, buttress and galvaniser,"[3] yet anti-British feelings continued to prevail in the Kathmandu Durbar.[4] It was under these circumstances that the King of Nepal heard of the Dogra conquest of Western Tibet. He became extremely anxious to extract some gain out of this Himalayan situation. His restiveness greatly increased when he was approached for military assistance by the Ladakhis.

The Tibeto-Dogra hostilities once again revived Ladakh's hope of emancipation from Dogra rule. The Ladakhis had already made repeated requests to the British for substantial aid against the Dogras, but all these supplications had gone abegging.[5] Now they tried to get help from Lhasa and Kathmandu. A mission of six men, under the guise of conveying the ashes of the deceased Ladakhi prince set out for Lhasa.[6] In March 1841, two members[7] of this mission arrived at Jumla, the north-western district of Nepal contiguous to West Tibet. They were

[1] *FDPC*, 11 November 1853, No. 23. see also, 0. Cavenaugh, *Rough Notes on the State af Nepal, its Government, Army and Resources* (Calcutta, 1851), p. 224.

[2] This Ministry headed by Fateh Jang Chautriya, a royal collateral, was very well-disposed towards the British Government. The other chiefs of Nepal called it the "British Ministry". Cf. T. Smith, *Narrative of five Years Residence at Nepal, 1841 to 1845*, (London, 1852), II, p. 97.

[3] K. Mojumdar, "Nepal And the Sikh-Tibetan War", *Bengal : Past and Present*, LIXXXII, Pt.I, (January-June, 1963), p. 13.

[4] *FDPC*, 11 November 1853, No. 23. see also, J.T. Wheeler, *Diary af Events in Nepal (1841-46)*, (Simla, 1878), pp. 4-14.

[5] See *supra* pp. 152-4.

[6] Clerk to Hodgson, 29 June 1841, *FDSC*, 2 August 1841, No. 122.

[7] These two persons were Meepham Namdole and Soonam Paljore ; the former was the 'Guru Lama' and the latter the 'Comptroller of the household' of Chog Sprul, the decesased Ladakhi prince who, for some time stayed at Kotgarh and was a pensionary of the British. (Tapp to Hodgson, 21 May 1841, *FDSC*, 21 June 1841, No. 68)

closely questioned by the Nepalese Governor, so as to ascertain that the mission was not just a ruse of the British to gauge the reactions of the Kathmandu Durbar to the Himalayan conflagration.[1] The envoys on reaching the Gurkha capital made a "pitious statement of Sikh oppression" and offered to place Ladakh in the hands of the Nepalese King as dependency of Nepal in lieu of his military help against the invaders.[2] This appeal flattered the vanity of the Nepalese King,[3] and he now thought that the time had come to fish out of the troubled waters of Western Himalayan politics. The Ladakhi mission was not given any assurance and was detained at Kathmandu; the Nepalese King was wary, he first thought it prudent to know the reactions of Lhasa to such an appeal from Ladakh.[4]

The King looked at the war as a god-send to avenge the wrongs done to Nepal by the British in the Anglo-Nepalese war of 1814-1816. The Nepalese request to get back Simla from the Company having been met with a refusal,[5] they now decided to get back Kumaon by force. Moreover, if the Kathmandu Durbar could establish a territorial link with the Lahore Durbar on the other side of the Himalayas, it meant breaking that political isolation of Nepal from other Indian states which had been a cardinal objective of British policy. The King became very much agitated and was extremely anxious to seize the opportunity as a means of grinding his own political axe. He summoned the Minister, Choutariya Fateh Jang Shah his brother, Guru Prasad Shah, Dalbhanjan Pande, Kaji Kaloo Shahi, Ranganath Pandit and Ramdal Pande, the principal nobles, with a view to rallying their support to his scheme of making a simultaneous attack on Tibet from Jumla, and securing by a *coup de main* a neighbouring gold mine. After the occupation of the mine it could be "easily held by compromise or bargain with either the Sikhs or Tibetans as the price

[1]Hodgson to Lushington, 2 April 1841, *FDSC*, 12 April 1841, No. 144.

[2]*Ibid*, Same to Same, 26 March 1841 , *FDSC*, 5 April 1841, No. 112.

[3]Hodgson to Clerk, 26 March 1841 , *FDSC*, 5 April 1841, No. 110.

[4]Hodgson to Maddock, 5 July 1841, *FDSC*, 19 July 1841, No. 27.

[5]Cf. B.D. Sanwal, *Nepal and the East India Company* (Bombay, 1955), pp. 252-53.

of military aid to one or the other in their present struggle."[1] But the councillors were against such a furtive attack on Tibet, which had given no offence to Nepal; moreover matters relating to theBritish were still in an unsettled state.[2] The King felt chagrined over the discouraging disposition of his concillors, whom he hated as stooges of the British Resident. Nevertheless to join hands with the Dogras, the King now instructed Hastbeer Khawas,[3] the Governor of Jumla, "to hasten in person or by a trusty deputy to Zorawar Singh" and to convey to the latter the King's readiness to aid him in his ambitious projects in Western Tibet.[4]

For a time all went well with the Dogras and the Gurkhas and there was a frequent exchange of missions between Zorawar Singh and Hastbeer Khawas.[5] It seemed as if the long-cherished Sikh-Dogra-Gurkha dream of combining in an anti-British alliance was about to be fulfilled. But, there appeared one snag: the Dogras demanded that some of the Hunias, who had fled from Western Tibet and were residing in Jumla were to all intents and purposes their subjects, and hence they (Hunias) should pay all taxes to the Dogras—*de-facto* rulers of Western Tibet. If that was allowed "then everything will go on with entire goodwill and amity between us".[6] The King found it a hard bargin and Hastbeer did not accede to this demand of the Dogras.[7] While steps were taken to iron out this difficulty, twelve hundred Gurkha soldiers were rushed to Yarri to guard the frontier as a precautionary measure.[8]

[1]Hodgson to Maddock, 31 July 1841, *FDSC*, 16 August 1841, No. 42. *FDPC*, 11 November 1853, No. 23.

[2]*Ibid.*

[3]Hastbeer was appointed as the Governor of Jumla when the Kala Pandes Ministry was in power ; he was in special confidence of the palace and was not responsible to the new pro-British Chautriya Ministry. (*FDSC*, 16 August 1841, No. 43. *FDSC*, 4 October 1841, No. 40).

[4]Resident to Government, 19 September 1841, *FDSC*, 4 October 1841, No. 40.

[5]*FDSC*, 4 October 1841, No. 37. *FDSC*, 8 November 1841, No. 41. *FDSP*, 29 November 1841, No. 28. *Foreign Misc*, No. 335, p.6.

[6]Lushington to Thomason, 20 September 1841, *FDSC*, 11 October 1841, No. 46.

[7]*Ibid.*

[8]*FDSC*, 11 Octocer 1841, No. 46. *FDSC*, 6 December 1841, No. 59.

Thus the Dogras, after establishing themselves quite close to the frontier of Nepal were gravitating towards an alliance with the Kathmandu Durbar. The concern, and apprehension, of the British increased commensurate with the propinquity of the Dogras to the Nepalese kingdom. Clerk wrote that

there would be a degree of insecurity to British interests in the connection of Nepal to any Hill State to the west ofi t, and that inscurity would, I conceive be imminent in an union of the abundant resources of the Jummoo Rajas with the malevolence and bravery of the Gurkhas Army.[1]

T.C. Robertson, the Lieutenant-Governor of North-West province, also reported that the Nepalese, who longed to get back Kumaon, were willing to co-operate with the Dogras. Robertson's conclusion was that the Sikh "occupation of Mandi, invasion of Kulu, and demonstration against Bashahr" were all parts of a plan to reach the Nepal frontier.[2] In a spirited note Robertson, cautioned his Government that

if Lahore-Kathmandu axis were allowed to acquire strength and consistency, I cannot but think that the tranquillity and prosperity of Kumaon will be thereby grievously and durably affected.[3]

But to the English a fact of yet more serious concern was the fear of Chinese intervention in this war. After all Tibet was a Chinese protectorate and such a possibility was not ruled out. The British at that time were fighting with China and were afraid that the Chinese may regard the Dogra attack on Tibet as English-inspired and emanating from the same impulse which had brought the 'barbarian ships' on their eastern frontier.[4] Clerk was of the opinion that

the hostile position towards tributaries of the Chinese Government, in which the Sikhs are now exhibited, might prove embarrassing under such circumstances as an approaching pacification at Pekin : for that Government will, of course, in the present state of affairs there, impute the invasion of its territories by the Sikhs, to the instigation of the British

[1]Clerk to Maddock, 4 September 1841, *FDSC*, 20 September 1841, No. 65.

[2]Cf. Minute of Lieutenant-Governor of N.W. Province, 28 September 1841, *FDSC*, 11 October 1841, No. 50.

[3]*Ibid.*

[4]*The Friend of India* (Calcutta), 11 November 1841.

Government.[1]

Under these circumstances, the Chinese might be tempted to create a diversionary attack on India to weaken the British effort in China itself,[2] or they may instigate Nepal—their tributary—to make a sudden thrust into British territories. Nepal was already willing to do such a service to Peking. During the past few years, the King of Nepal had sent many missions to Lhasa and Peking professing his extreme eagerness to throw off his "allegiance" to the British and to "resume the old career of his ancestors" by strenghening Nepal's bond with the Celestial Empire.[3] When the Ladakhi envoys approached Kathmandu for help, the Nepalese Durbar, as noted earlier, referred the appeal to Lhasa and secretly instructed its *Vakil* to inform the Chinese Amban there, of the Durbar's readiness to put troops into motion in that direction, provided the Chinese Government could be induced to sanction the measure. In reply, the Chinese Amban stated that

> the Chinese Government has no title or purpose to interfere with the Ladakh politics, and that the Durbar would do well to confine itself to its established circle of connection, cherishing peace and good faith within that circle, and less heedful of dovelties beyond it.[4]

Thus, though both Tibet and China distrusted the war-like Nepalese and though Nepal's repeated entreaties to Lhasa and Peking failed to bear any fruit, the British were greatly alarmed. Hodgson, who had already cautioned his government,[5] now, in a note ringing with anxiety observed that unless the British prevailed upon the Lahore Durbar to restrain the un-

[1] *FDSC*, 20 September 1841, No. 65.

[2] Cf. A. Lamb, "Tibet in Anglo-Chinese Relations : 1767-1842", *JRAS*, (April, 1958), p. 41.

[3] *FDSC*, 18 January 1841, No. 74. *FDBC*, 11 November 1853, No. 23.

[4] Hodgson to Government, 20 May 1841, *FDSC*, 31 May 1841, No. 154. *FDPC*, 11 November 1853, No. 23.

[5] In July, 1841, Hodgson wrote that "if it be not the desire of government that the attention of China should be just now needlessly drawn to this quarter, the sooner these wanton encroachments of the Jammoo family upon the states or districts contiguous to Ladakh are discountenanced the better." (Hodgson to Maddock, 30 July 1841, *FDSC*, 16 August 1841, No. 41).

bridled ambition of the Jammu brothers,

With Chinese, Sikh and Gurkhas, we shall ere long find ourselves, of necessity, involved in a labyrinth of trans-Himalayan politics, the clue to which may be difficult to find and unprofitable to use when found[1].

Hitherto, the British had watched all these developments with close attention and considerable disquiet. But the threat posed by a possible arrival of the Chinese forces on the Indian frontier added to the fear of Dogra-Nepalese repprochment took on nightmarish proportions in British minds. Now, they were convinced that in order to restrain the Dogras some sterner measures will have to be taken. But the British were not in a position to take any military action, for they were deeply involved in the Opium War and the Afghan War, where most of their armed forces were committed. Under these circumstances, only diplomatic pressure could be exerted on the Lahore Durbar. *The Friend of India* wrote:

There is nothing but the Wand of Popilius—an order from the Council Chamber in Calcutta—which can prevent their (Dogras) moving on and conquering Lassa itself.[2]

Lord Auckland, the Governor-General, at last decided to act. As has been noted earlier, a deadline was set within which the Sikh Maharaja was asked to secure the withdrawal of the Dogras back to their previous positions in Ladakh. The Lahore ruler agreed, but before the order could reach Zorawar, he was overwhelmed by a large Tibetan army; soon the Dogras were defeated and most of them including Zorawar Singh were killed. The English fear of Chinese military action on the Indian frontier vanished with the Dogra debacle.

The King of Nepal was also following the trend of events with great interest. The Nepalese agent at Jhoolaghat kept the Durbar posted with the latest developments.[3] After the defeat of the Dogras, the Nepalese preferred help to the Tibetans in expelling the invaders from Western Tibet, and the offer was repeated many times.[4] But the Tibetans, aware as they were of

[1]Hodgson to Government, 12 October 1841, *FDSC*, 11 October 1841 No. 89.

[2]*The Friend of India* (Calcutta), 11 November 1841.

[3]*FDSC*, 20 December 1841, No. 35.

[4]Cunningham to Clerk, 12 February 1842, *FDSC*, 30 March 1842, No. 102. *FDSC*, 14 September 1842, No. 51. *FDSC*, 9 November 1842, No. 61.

the opportunistic tactics of the Nepalese King, refused these overtures.[1] The hope of Nepal to exploit the Western Himalayan conflagration dimmed with the disastrous defeat of the Dogras. Her restlessness also died down with the termination of hostilities and conclusion of peace.

The Western Himalayan crisis did not assume greater complexity due partly to the effective restraint of Nepal by both the British and Chinese diplomacy. The war convinced the British that restraint on Nepal was essential to the preservation of peace in the northern frontier of India. It further underscored the fact that a major political event in the Himalayan region was certain to be far-reaching in its effects; the whole region might be aflame. Since China had political and commercial interests in the area, a major event was most likely to affect adversely the British commercial interests not only with Western Tibet but with China also. Hence the British not only exerted diplomatic pressure on the Lahore Durbar to secure the withdrawal of the Dogras but even determined to take active military measures.

The Tibet-Dogra hostilities also shed some light on the fundamental principles of Chinese policy in the Himalayan area. Peking's basic objectives were to maintain the status quo in Western Tibet, and to avoid interference beyond its borders; Ladakh was clearly beyond the Chinese sphere of influence. In this context Hodgson wrote:

> over Ladakh the Chinese Viceroy at Lassa has himself just declared (what indeed was priorly known), that he neither claims nor desires any sort of authority.[2]

Although Zorawar Singh's invasion of Western Tibet did not result in any of the unpleasant possibilities which for a time worried the British Government, it is not without political significance. It led to a closer acquaintance of the English with the Western Himalayas. Lieutenant Cunningham who was sent to the frontier on a political mission, during his stay of a year there, inter alia, submitted detailed reports to his Government dealing with the complex and anomalous interrelationship of

[1] *Ibid.*

[2] Hodgson to Erskine, 4 August 1841, *FDSC*, 23 August 1841, No. 65.

Himalayan states, their ignorance about the laws of war, and their trade and commerce. These aspects of Cunningham's despatches may be briefly touched upon here.[1]

When Cunningham reached Kinnaur in October 1841, the King of Bashahr complained to him that for about the last sixty years, he had been receiving a tribute of thirty '*Punkhees*' or pieces of woollen cloth from Peri, a village in the Manning *Parganah*—a sub-division of Spiti under Ladakh.[2] But, for the year under review, the King feared that due to Zorawar Singh's orders these '*Punkhees*' were not given to him. Cunningham on further enquiries found that these pieces of wollen cloth were really due to the Bashahr Raja, and were paid through the Ladakhi functionaries who resided at Manning.[3] However, he was surprised to find the Raja of Bashahr (under British Protection) collecting some pieces of cloth as tribute from a village of Ladakh, which was under Sikh paramountcy. Similar was the case of village Gheo, "situated at a good day's journey" to the northwest of Churit in West Tibet. From this village the Bashahr Raja received annually a trifling amount of rupees seven and a half, and for the year 1841 this sum too remained unpaid.[4] Yet, another anomally which Cunningham noticed in this connection was that the King of Bashahr, a British tributary, used to send presents to the Tibetan Governor of Gartok once in every three years.[5] The Raja was afraid that if he did

[1]For a more detailed account reference may be made to C.L. Datta, 'Zorawar Singh: Political Mission of J.D. Cunningham, 1841-42' *Bengal: Past and Present* LXXXVIII, Pt. I (Jan-June, 1969), pp. 82-89.

[2]Cunningham to Clerk, 21 October 1841, *FDSC*, 22 November 1841, No. 23.

[3]Cunningham to Clerk, 8 November 1841, *FDSC*, 20 December 1841, No. 40.

[4]*Ibid.*

[5]Cunningham to Clerk, 3 August 1842, *FDSC*, 7 September 1842, No. 28. It may be noticed that at about this very time, G.T. Lushington, the Commissioner of Kumaon, also reported to the Government that under the "Tibet rule" Garpon of Taklakot, a Tibetan functionary, annually appointed one of his representatives to go to Byans villages (a sub-division of Kumaon under British control) to collect payment settled between the parties as the price of privilege of trade. This payment having been made, the Bhotias hereafter obtained permission to

not send the same, his subjects would incur the displeasure of the Tibetans and consequently their trade would suffer. It was also observed that when a new Raja of Bashahr took the *Gaddi*, he received presents from the Governor of Gartok.[1] Cunningham further remarked that the Raja of Sikim, who was a British feudatory, was still sending presents to the Grand Lama. "I apprehend", the British Commissioner recorded, "that all the Grand Lamas or incarnations admit the supremacy of Lassa in temporal affairs, and these presents of the Sikkim Raja may be equally liable to misconstruction with others."[2]

Thus, all this was a complex situation where "multiplicity of relations" and "divisions of allegiance" existed. In Western political parlance, it was not clear as to who was the paramount power and who was the sovereign of whom? Cunningham informed his Government that time had come to remodel the relations of the hill states under British protection with the border states under Chinese rule. He observed:

> The consolidated empires of England and China have met one another along the Himalayan mountains and it is time that the doubts should be at an end. It is not for us to share with others the allegiance of petty princes nor should we desire that our dependents should have claims upon the territories of foreign states. Our feudatories should have no political connection with strangers although we may allow them to interchange friendly letters and even visits with their neighbours under the rule of others. The presence of Chinese collector in our territory...is I think extremely objectionable and our traders should only pay the usual customs duties at the usual places of collection beyond our own boundary.[3]

Another matter which Cunningham commented upon and acquainted his Government with was the ignorance of the Himalayan states about the laws of war, and behaviour of the belligerents towards the neutrals. After the defeat and death of Zorawar Singh, when the Tibetans army swooped down upon Ladakh and besieged Leh, one Ladakhi and his wife, fled from their country and took refuge in Kinnaur. The *Oomzud*

proceed to Taklakot where some other dues were levied on them. (Lushington to Edwards, 9 October 1841, *FDSC*, 1 Nov. 1841, No. 36).

[1] *FDSC*, 7 September 1842, No. 28.

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] *Ibid.*

(Tibetan local authority) of Tashingong asked Cunningham to surrender these persons to the Tibetan authorities of the neighbouring post of Churit, as they were 'Tibetan subjects'. Cunningham, however, refused to surrender them, because they had taken shelter in a state which was neutral.[1] But his reply irritated Kalon Surkhang, the Tibetan Commander, who wrote to Cunningham that if not at present, at least after the cessation of hostilities, these persons should be surrendered, otherwise it might cause differences between the "two Governments."[2] Cunningham, while pointing out this ignorance of the "half barbarous Asiatics" about the laws of war and principles of international law observed that "domineering tour" of the Surkhang's letter:

> further affords an additional reason for modifying the relationship of our subordinate principalities with Lassa and for coming to any explicit understanding with the Peking Commissioner about these relations and about some of the more obvious points of international law.[3]

Cunningham also submitted detailed reports on the import and export trade of Bashahr. Rampur, the capital of Bashahr was quite a busy trade mart, where fair were held every year. In the first half of the nineteenth century, when the inhabitants of Kashmir, due to oppression of the Afghans and the Sikhs, left that valley and settled in the Indian plains, these fairs became quite important.[4] Now the traders from Ladakh, West Tibet, Kumaon, Bashahr and the Indian plains visited these fairs, and exchanged their commodities.[5] *Churrus* or Opium,

[1] *FDSP*, 7 September 1841, No. 23.

[2] Zoorkang (Surkhang) to Cunningham, 10 August 1842, *FDSC*, 26 October 1842, No. 91.

[3] Cunningham to Clerk, 20 August 1842, *FDSC*, 26 October 1842, No. 96.

[4] Cunningham to Clerk, 22 October 1841, *FDSC*, 22 November 1841, No. 25.

[5] The principal articles of import from Western Tibet into Bashahr were: shawl-wool, sheep, woollens, sheep wool, borax and salt. In addition many other articles of luxury or use or curiosity such as chowries, felts, silks, tea, leather, sulphur, musk, chinaware, coral, amber etc., were also imported. Of exports to Tibet, mules, wooden cups, cotton piece goods, grain, dried fruits, brass pots and spices were the main; besides, a considerable quantity of indigo, horse-shoes, broad-cloth,

till the then recent prohibitive regulations of the Chinese Government was an important item of export to Yarkand.[1] But the most important and lucrative item of trade was shawl-wool which was brought to Rampur from Rudok and other districts of Western Tibet.[2] Cunningham diligently collected the statistics of imports and exports of Bashahr during the years 1837 to 1841,[3] and pointed out that if the British wished to improve the trade of their hill states with Western Tibet, "a road should be carried from the tableland of Tibet to the plains of India, and the transport of merchandise be simplified and rendered secure." Such a measure, Cunningham suggested, would induce the merchants of Delhi and Amritsar:

> to come forward with their large means and to embark in the trade of the Chinese provinces, and to secure among other advantages the continued manufacture of shawls in the plains.[4]

Cunningham's suggestion and recommendations greatly influenced the future course of British Himalayan policy. As will be noticed, his doctrine that British feudatories should not be allowed to pay any kind of tribute except religious in nature to any other power, was first put into effect in the case of Spiti in 1846.[5] This very principle governed the settlement regarding Burma in 1886 and of Sikkim in 1890, and led the Indian Government to examine with interest and some anxiety the tributary status of Nepal to the Chinese Empire.[6] In consonance with Cunningham's other suggestions, transit duties in Bashahr were abolished in 1847,[7] and the work of constructing a road—later known as the Hindustan-Tibet Road—linking the Indian plains with Western Tibet via Simla and Chini was taken up in the eighteen-fifties. The importance of this high way in the context of Indias present relations with Peking—ruled Tibet can hardly be over emphasised.

sugar, tobacco and medicinal seeds were carried to Ladakh or to the Gartok fair. (Cunningham to Clerk 13 November 1841, *FDSC*, 13 December 1841, No. 42).

[1] *Ibid*, see also, *Foreign Misc*, No. 334, p. 812.

[2] *FDSC*, 22 November 1841, No. 25.

[3] See *supra*, p. 156.

[4] *FDSC*, 13 December 1841, No. 42.

[5] See *infra*, p. 187.

[6] Cf. Lamb, *Britain And Chinese Central Asia*, p. 80.

[7] See, *Imperial Gazetteer of India* (Oxford, 1908), VIII, pp. 94-5.

Chapter Seven

BRITISH SUPREMACY AND THEIR CONCERN OVER THE BOUNDARIES OF LADAKH

AFTER SETTLING his scores with Tibet and entrusting the administration of Ladakh to the Thanadars,[1] Raja Gulab Singh, now turned his attention to developments nearer Jammu. It is beyond the scope of this survey to discuss the part played by the Raja in the Lahore politics of eighteen-forties. Towards the close of 1845, when the first Anglo-Sikh war broke out, the Raja kept aloof and did not help her suzerain, the Lahore Durbar. But after the decisive battle of Sobraon, at which the British were victorious, the Sikh court appointed Raja Gulab Singh to negotiate peace with the British. The Raja played the part of a mediator, and the British were happy and told him that for displaying such a disposition he would soon he rewarded.[2] Under Article XII of the Treaty of Lahore, signed on 9 March, 1846, Raja Gulab Singh was recognised an independent sovereign both by the Lahore Durbar as well as the British Government.[3] Thus the long-cherished ambition of Raja Gulab Singh to become an independent ruler was realised, yet the manner in

[1]These *Thanadars* were the appointees of Raja Gulab Singh, and were solely responsible to him.

[2]"I told the Rajah", the Governor-General wrote to the Secret Committee, "that I recognised the wisdom, prudence, and good feeling evinced by him in having kept himself separate from these unjustifiable hostilities of the Sikhs, and that I was prepared to mark my sense of that conduct, in the proceedings which must now be carried through". (Governor-General to Secret Committee, 19 February 1846, No. 6).

[3]Cf. C.U. Aitchison, *A Collection of Treaties, Engagements and Sanads, etc.*, Revised and continued upto 1929 by the authority of the Foreign and Political Department (Calcutta, 1931), I, p. 53.

which he got control of the different territories which constituted his domain is both significant and interesting.

Under Article IV of the Treaty of Lahore, the Sikh Maharaja, in place of a cash indemnity of rupees one crore (ten millions) ceded "all his forts, territories, rights and interests, in the hill countries, which are situated between the Rivers Beas and Indus, including the province of Kashmir and Hazara."[1] On 16 March, 1846, Raja Gulab Singh signed the treaty of Amritsar with the British, whereby he became the Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir. Under this treaty, the British transferred "for ever, independent possession, to Maharaja Gulab Singh and the heirs male of his body all the hilly territory or mountainous country, with its depenencies, situated to the eastward of the river Indus and westward of the river Ravi, including Chamba and excluding Lahul."[2] In lieu of this territory, Maharaja Gulab Singh was to pay a sum of rupees one crore to the Company; later on, out of this amount a remission of rupees twenty-five lakhs was allowed as compensation for Kulu and Mandi districts which, because of their commercial and strategic importance, the British kept under their own possession.[3] Under the Treaty of Amritsar, inter alia, Maharaja Gulab Singh recognised the supremacy of the British Government and was to allow the boundaries of his state with the Chinese Empire to be determined by a joint frontier commission. Further, he was to pay a small annual tribute to the British, and the latter were to help and protect the Maharaja from external aggression.[4] Thus for all practical purposes, the chief results of the Treaty of Amritsar were: the British became a paramount power vis-a-vis the Dogras; Gulab Singh was freed from the control of the Lahore Durbar and recognised as

[1] Aitchison, *Treaties and Engagements*, 1931, I, p. 51.

[2] *Ibid*, XII, p. 21.

[3] Lord Hardinge, the Governor-General wrote to the Secret Committee, "It is highly expedient that the trans-Beas portion of Kulu and Mandi, with the more fertile districts and strong position of Nurpur, and the celebrated fort Kangra—the key of the Himalayas in native estimation—with its districts and dependencies should be in our possession". (Governor-General to Secret Committee, 4 March 1846, No. 7).

[4] See Aitchison, *Treaties and Engagements*, XII, pp. 21-2.

an independent ruler not only of Jammu, Ladakh and Baltistan—territories already conquered by him—but of Kashmir and Hazara also.

This arrangement was mutually advantageous to the Dogras and the British. Gulab Singh at last saw the fulfilment of his long-cherished ambition of an independent Dogra state. The British, on the other hand, in addition to getting a handsome amount, saved themselves from formidable difficulties involved in the occupation or defence of their newly-acquired territories.[1] Another object with which they were mainly concerned and which they fully achieved by this agreement was the maintenance of a balance of power in this region. The establishment of an independent Rajput dynasty in the north would serve as a useful check on the turbulent Sikhs, whose power though crippled at the battle of Sobraon, was never crushed at all. Thus both these powers would serve as a check on the ever-aspiring Mohammadens who coveted the possessions of Kashmir and Delhi.[2] Furthermore, the British Indian authorities were obsessed by the ever-present fear of a Russian invasion of India and at about this time, this fear was the mainspring of Indian foreign politics.[3] They were presumbly thinking of a "buffer zone". So it appears that the British thought that a friendly and independent Dogra state will play a more useful role as a buffer-state between their Indian possessions and

[1]Lord Hardinge made these points amply clear when he wrote to the Secret Committee: "Its (territory ceded to Gulab Singh) occupation by us will be, on many accounts disadvantageous. It would bring us into collision with many powerful chiefs, for whose coercion a large military estabiishment at a great distance from our provinces and military resources would be necessary. It would more than double the extent of our present frontier in countries assailable at every point, and most difficult to defend, without any corresponding advantage$ for such large additions of territory. New, distant and conflicting interests would be created, and races of people, with whom we have hitherto had no intercourse, would be brought under our rule, while the territories, excepting Cashmere, are comparatively unproductive and would scarcely pay the expenses of occupation and management". (Governor-General to Secret Committee, 4 March 1846, No. 7).

[2]Governor-General to Secret Committee, 19 March 1846, No. 8.

[3]H.H. Dodwell ed., *Cambridge History of India*, (Delhi, 1955) V, p. 544.

Russia on the northern frontier of India.

After the settlement of the Treaty of Amritsar, the British took up the work of demarcating the boundaries of Gulab Singh's newly established state, for it was feared "that the hope of plunder and desire of revenge" might again tempt the Maharaja to invade Western Tibet.[1] Any such invasion was likely to be deleterious to the British: not only would it stop the import of shawl-wool into their territory, but the entire commerce of their hill states with Western Tibet will come to a standstill. It was also possible that due to "His Celestial Majesty's ignorance of any distinction between the rulers of India and the rulers of Kashmir", such an invasion might affect the "peaceful relations" of the British with the Chinese Emperor. Therefore, "the British Government determined to remove the most common cause of all disputes in the East—an unsettled boundary."[2]

Yet another consideration which necessitated the demarcation of the boundaries at an early date was the commercial interests of the newly-acquired British territories of Nurpur, Kulu and Mandi. Nurpur was a flourishing trade mart and it received shawl-wool from the traders of the eastern hill states and not from Kashmir. But by giving Spiti, the boundaries of which were conterminous with Kulu, Bashahr and Western Tibet, to Maharaja Gulab Singh, the British had actually interposed a rival territory between their possessions on the Sutlej and the shawl-wool producing district of Chang Thang. This was likely to impede the flow of shawl-wool and other commodities from West Tibet into British territories. Therefore, by compensating the Maharaja elsewhere, Spiti was taken and added to British dominions,[3] Thus, aftere the Treaty of Amritsar, Lahul and Spiti, the two southern districts of Ladakh were dismembered from that country and added to the British possessions of Kangra, Kulu and Mandi. Now it became necessary to define the northern boundaries of these districts with the other districts of Ladakh.

[1]Cunningham, *Ladak*, p. 12.

[2]*Ibid*, pp. 12-13.

[3] *Ibid*, p. 13. Harcourt, *The Himalayan Districts of Kooloo, Lahoul and Spiti*, pp. 41, 132. *Kangra DG, 1883-84*, I, p. 93.

Accordingly, towards the end of July 1846, the British Government appointed Mr. P.A. Vans Agnew and Captain A. Cunningham as Boundary Commissioners; the former was to be in command, whereas the latter was to assist him in his enquiries and map the line that his (Cunningham's) "own researches may establish as the best".[1] The Cemmissioners were to demarcate first, a boundary between British territory (Lahul and Spiti) on the south and Gulab Singh's territory of Ladakh on the north, establishing clearly the points at which the two meet with the Tibetan frontier; and then, a boundary between Ladakh on the west and Tibet on the east. For laying down this boundary, the Commissioners were given two instructions, first, in terms of territory they were to be generous to Gulab Singh;[2] secondly, from the side of Spiti, the British wanted to prevent the ingress of Jammu troops or traders into West Tibet; therefore, the Commissioners were advised to draw the boundary line in the east to such points of territory, as was clearly beyond Maharaja's influence.[3]

The second object which the Commississsioners were desired to perform was to settle the revenues of Spiti. While assessing the district, they were asked not to realise more than three-fourth of what the Sikhs had been taking and to "see that whatever here then is laid on the people, is fairly distributed."[1] They were further desired to see that the people of Spiti discontinued all kinds of payments, except the religious presents which they had hitherto been giving to their neighbours of Tibet, Ladakh, Kulu and Bashahr;[2] this was suggested by J.D, Cunningham in 1842. To facilitate matters, Maharaja Gulab Singh was asked to aid the British party, and send

[1]H.M. Lawrence (Agent to G-G., North West Frontier) to Vans Agnew and A. Cunningham, 23 July 1846, *FDSC*, 26 December 1846, No. 1332.

[2]"Where you differ let the Maharaja have the advantage. Bear in mind that, it is not a strip of more or less of barren or even productive territory that we want but a clear and well defined boundary in a quarter likely to come little under observation". *Ibid.*

[3]*Ibid.*

[4]Lawrence to Agnew and Cunningham, 31 July 1846, *FDSC*, 26 December 1846. No. 1335.

[4]*Ibid.*

two intelligent agents from Leh who should assist the British Commissioners.

In addition to the above, the Commissioners, by avoiding as far as possible any cause of offence to Maharaja Gulab Singh and his people or to the Chinese authorities, were instructed "quietly and unostentatiously" to make enquiries as to the "lines of trade between Central Asia and the Panjab."[1] H.M. Lawrence, the Agent to the Governor-General, North-West Frontier and Resident at Lahore, was at pains to impress upon the Commissioners that wheresoever they went and with whomsoever they came in contact, they were to tell that no duty will be levied on shawl-wool or other commodities that may be brought by the Chinese or Tibetans or other traders into British territory.[2] Agnew and Cunningham were further asked not to enter into commercial engagements with any party, for it was hoped that trade "will soon find its way, where best protected and least taxed."[3]

The British were anxious to settle the trade question; they wanted to have free access to the Tibetan wool market. After the signing of the Sino-Sikh Treaty of 1842, according to which[4] transmission of Tibetan trade to places other than Ladakh was prohibited, the trade of Bashahr had received a set-back.[5] Now that the British were a paramount power vis-a-vis the Dogras, it was thought desirable to get that obnoxious trade clause amended or annulled.

There were indications that the Tibetan authorities were also willing to enter into some form of agreement, In 1845, the Garpon of Gartok, informed the Raja of Bashahr that if the latter could procure a letter from the British authorities addressed to the "Chief of Lassa intimating the wish of the British Government that the clause in the treaty of the Chinese with Gulab Singh granting the latter a monopoly of the shawl-wool

[1] *FDSC*, 26 December 1846, No. 1332.
[2] *Ibid*, *FDSC*, 26 December 1846, No. 1335.
[3] *FDSC*, 26 December 1846, No. 1332.
[4] For details, see Appendix E, Art. II.
[5] J.C. Erskine (Superintendent, Hill States) to Government, 19 July 1847, *FDSC*, 28 August 1847, No. 159.

trade should be set aside," then all restrictions on the traders of Bashahr for buying shawl-wool from West Tibet will be removed.[1] Thus, considering the circumstances favourable, Lord Hardinge, the then Governor-General addressed a letter to the "Vizeer of Lassa-Gartope" informing him that after the Treaty of Lahore, the Sikh Government has ceded to the British in perpetual sovereignty the hill territories including Ladakh, and that Maharaja Gulab Singh, who now controlled Ladakh was under British supremacy; therefore all the treaty engagements which the Sikhs or the Dogras may have made with Tibet in 1842, were now transferred to the British Government. Under these changed circumstances. the Governor-General desired that Article II of the Tready of 1842, which was "highly injurious to the interests of the British Government and its dependents" should be cancelled and suitably modified so as to include the names of the traders of British territories.[2] The Tibetan authorities were further informed about the deputation of Vans Agnew and Cunningham to the frontier and it was desired that the Lhasa "Vizeer' should also "depute confidential agents" who would point out to the British representatives and those of Maharaja Gulab Singh "the exact limits of the Chinese frontier" with Ladakh.[3]

The task of delivering this letter was entrusted to Anant Ram, an official of the Bashahr Raja, who could speak and write Tibetan and Hindustani. Anant Ram was selected to perform this duty because the experience of the British to establish direct contacts with Tibet during the past few years had not been encouraging; the Tibetans had refused to entertain any communication from the Europeans. Further, after the Treaty of Nanking, British relations with China were, on the surface at any rate, friendly and peaceful, so it was thought desirable that as China suzerain of Tibet, might render useful help in achieving the objects of the Boundary Commission. There-

[1] *Ibid*

[2] Governor-General to the Vizeer of Lassa-Gartope, 4 August 1846, *FDSC*, 26 December 1846, No. 1336; see also, R.H. Huttenback, "Gulab Singh and the Creation of Dogra State of Jammu. Kashmir and Ladakh" *Journal of Asian Studies*, XX (1960-61), p. 488.

[3] *Ibid.*

fore, the Governor-General despatched one copy of his letter (addressed to the Lhasa authorities) to Sir John Davis, the British Plenipotentiary in Hongkong, requesting him to suggest to the Chinese Minister there that the Celestial Emperor should depute Commissioners to proceed to the western frontier of Tibet to lay the boundary lines jointly with their British and Dogra counterparts.[1]

Vans Agnew and Cunningham started from Simla on 2 August and spent the next few months in delineating the boundaries of Lahul and Spiti with the territories of Maharaja Gulab Singh. Moving from Phalang Danda or the boundary stone between Lahul and Zanskar to the east, the Commissioners, mapped the boundaries of Lahul and Spiti upto the Tso Morari Lake—a place near which the boundaries of Ladakh, Tibet and Spiti meet.[2] In this demarcation, the Commissioners adopted the general plan of selecting as boundary such mountain ranges as formed the watershed lines between the drainages of different rivers.[3] As for settling the revenues of Spiti, Vans Agnew made a summary settlement and fixed rupees 753 per year as the revenue payable by the district to the Government.[4] As regards demarcating the boundary between Ladakh and Tibet, the Commissioners could not do that partly owing to Imam-ud-Din's[5] rebellion in Kashmir and disturbances in Hazara,[6] and partly due to the lateness of the cold season. Vans Agnew, however, wrote a detailed memorandam in which he pointed out that because of the inclement weather, difficulty of access to stations for survey, carriage difficulties and absence of roads in the mountainous terrain to be traversed by the Commissio-

[1]Governor-General to J. Davis (British Plenipotentiary in Hong Kong), 29 August 1846, *FDSC*, 26 Aug. 1846, No. 1338.

[2]Cunningham, *Ladak*, p. 14. *FDSC*, 30 Dec. 1846, No. 703.

[3]For details, see "Memo by Capt. A Cunningham, detailing the boundary between the territories of Maharaja Gulab Singh and Briitsh India, as determined by the Commissioner's P.A. Vans Agnew and Capt.. A Cunningham," *JASB*, XVII Pt. I (1848), pp. 295 et seq.

[4]*F.D. Pol. Progs*, 31 December 1847, No. 2538. *Kangra DG, 1883-84*, II pp. 146, 148.

[5]He was the last Governor of Kashmir (1845-46) appointed by the Lahore Durbar.

[6]*FDSC*, 28 August 1847, No. 151.

ners, it will at least take two years to accurately survey the eastern and northern boundaries of Ladakh.[4]

Anant Ram, who was sent in 1846 to deliver Lord Hardinge's letter to the Tibetan authorities was not very successful in his mission; he was not allowed to proceed beyond Gartok and the Tibetans there would not let him see the Garpon. After repeated representations when at long last Anant Ram met the Garpon, the latter was reluctant to accept the letter, for it was addressed by the British authorities with whom the Tibetans could not have any direct dealings whatsoever. Nevertheless, the Garpon told Anant Ram that he would be forwarding the letter to Lhasa, but there was little hope of receiving an answer for a year at least[1]

Early in 1847, the Raja of Bashahr reported that some Chinese officials had arrived at Gartok.[2] Although it was believed that they were the Chinese Boundary Commissioners, whose deputation to the western frontier of Tibet had been asked by Sir John Davis,[3] Hardinge suspected that "these Chiefs may have been sent as much for the purpose of preventing our Commissioners from crossing the boundary, as for defining it."[4] Nevertheless, the Governor-General was determined to appoint a second Commission for the purpose of carrying out the objects which could not be completed in the previous year. This Commission was to consist of three persons: Captain Alexander Cunningham, Lieutenant Henry Strachey and Dr Thomas Thomson. They were selected not only on the grounds of their "general qualifications of energy,

[1] *FDSC*, 27 August 1847, No. 154.

[2] Cunningham, *Ladak*, p. 14. In this connection it may be noticed that early in 1848, when Lieutenant Strachey was carrying on explorations on the Tibet-Ladakh frontier, he gathered that what actually the Garpon told Anant Ram was that the Governor-General's letter could not be forwarded to Lhasa; after the expiry of a year, it was still lying in the Garpon's office. Further, Tibetan translation of the letter "was found so illetrably penned as to be quite unintelligible". (Strachey to Resident at Lahore, 26 Jan. 1848, *FDSC*, 27 May 1848, No. 73).

[3] Cunningham, *Ladak*, p. 15.

[4] Government to Resident at Lahore, 10 July 1847, *FDSC*, 28 August 1847, No. 156.

[5] Governor-General to Secret Committee, 28 July 1847, No. 48.

temper and prudence, but more especially on account of their scientific attainments," for which they were favourably known to the Indian sub-continent.[1] A. Cunningham was to be the Senior Commissioner, whereas H. Strachey, who had recently returned from an adventurous tour to Lake Manasarowar, and Dr. Thomson, a well-known naturalist, were to be his assistants. The Commissioners, in addition to demarcating the Ladakh-Tibet boundary, of course, in collaboration with the Dogra and Chinese Commissioners, were "to make particular enquiries respecting the lines of the trade" between British India and Central Asia, and to secure the abolition of that clause in the Treaty of 1842, under which Ladakh enjoyed the monopoly of Tibetan shawl-wool trade. The clause under reference had operated injuriously to the interests of Kinnaur traders and was not favourably looked upon by the Chinese themselves.[2] Further, after the Dogra conquest of Ladakh many 'abuses' such as the imposition of heavy duties and the establishment of *Chowkis* or octroi posts at many places had impeded the flow of trade of British hill states with Yarkand. These 'abuses' were first brought to the notice of the Government by Vans Agnew, who had pleaded with Maharaja Gulab Singh to remove these prohibitory duties, but was not very successful.[3] Now, it was reported that the *Kardars* of the Maharaja, did not allow the traders of British hill states to enter Ladakh and carry on their usual commercial speculations with Yarkand.[4] So, the Commission was asked to secure

[1] *Ibid.*

[2] Governor-General to Secret Committee, 28 July 1887, No. 48. Government to Cunningham, 27 July 1847, *FDSC*, 28 August 1847, No. 162. *FDSC*, 28 August 1847, No. 150.

[3] According to Vans Agnew, between Nurpur and Yarkand, the traders had to pay a duty of rupees forty-nine and a half on every horse load (of about three *pakka maunds*). Agnew told Maharaja Gulab Singh that the imposition of such a heavy transit duty would lead to the desertion of the Ladakh road by the Nurpur and other British Indian merchants and consequently the revenue of the Maharaja would suffer. Yet, all that the latter promised was to reduce the duty by rupees three per *maund* from Nurpur to Karakoram. (*FDSC*, 28 August 1847, No. 154).

[4] Erskine to Government, 19 July 1847, *FDSC*, 28 August 1847, No. 159.

the removal of these obstructions.[1]

The issuance of these detailed instructions for the improvement of British trade with Tibet and other countries of Central Asia seems to have been motivated by the presence of Russian traders and Russian goods in these regions. There appears to have been a lurking fear in Hardinge's mind that inundation of markets of the countries of "high Asia" situated on the periphery of British India, with Russian goods will be injurious to the interests of British manufacturers. This is clear from his report to the Court of Directors

> It seems to me strange, notwithstanding even the mountain barrier of the Himalayas assuming the passage to be equally difficult on both sides, that Russian goods, burdened with all the additional expense of a tedious as well as dangerous land carriage should be able to compete successfully with those of British manufacture in countries adjoining our own empire.[2]

In addition to achieving the aforementioned objects, the Commissioners were asked "to endeavour to increase the bounds of...geographical knowledge of those remote regions." Cunningham was to follow the course of the Indus and conduct his observations on both sides of the river down to Gilgit, whence he was to proceed to Dardistan. After conducting his antiquarian researches there, he was to return to the Punjab through Hazara. Strachey was to follow his researches in West Tibet and, if possible he was to visit Lhasa and then travelling along the course of Tsangpo or river Brahmaputra, to return to British territory through Bhutan or Darjeeling. Thomson was to employ himself in ascertaining the mineral resources along and within the British frontier.[3] The Commissioners were told explicitly that the objects pertaining to Tibet were to be achieved by peaceful means, if possible, with the willing co-operation of the Tibetans, but if the latter resisted, the Commissioners were not to force their way. The period of their appointment, as earlier, suggested by Vans Agnew, was to be two years.[4]

[1] Governor-General to Secret Committee, 28 July 1847, No. 48.
[2] *Ibid.*
[3] *FDSC*, 28 August 1847, No. 162. Governor-General to Secret Committee, 28 July 1847, No. 48.
[4] *Ibid.*

The Tibetans looked on the Commission with the deepest suspicions. When the Commissioners reached the Tibetan frontier on 29 August, contrary to expectations, no Chinese or Tibetan agents had reached the place. Further, the headmen and *Zamindars* of the Tibetan frontier villages put all kinds of obstructions in the way of British Commissioners[1] and, Tibetan authorities posted "usual levies of the country people" on every pass leading into Western Tibet.[2] Earlier reports that some Chinese officials had reached the frontier were found to be incorrect. Initially, Sir John Davis, was optimistic and hoped that the Chinese would agree not only to the delineation of the Tibet-Ladakh boundry, but would also be willing to reassess Chinese trade policies towards India.[3] But the Chinese officials were unwilling to demarcate the boundary and Davis' presistent efforts which he continued throughout 1847 and 1848 did not bear any fruit. In reply to his letter, regarding the establishment of commercial intercourse of British hill states with the Chinese territory of Tibet, Keying, the Chinese Viceroy at Canton, told Davis that no more concessions as laid down in the treaties of Nanking could be granted to the British. With respect to the demarcation of the Tibet-Ladakh frontiers, Keying observed:

> the borders of those territories have been sufficiently and distinctly fixed so that it will be best to adhere to this ancient arrangement and it will prove far more convenient to abstain from any additional measures for fixing them.[4]

On Davis' insistence, Keying, transmitted the whole tenor of the former's despatch to the Emperor, and was informed

[1]Cunningham to Lawrence, 29 August 1847, *FDSC*, 27 November 1847, No. 22.

[2]Strachey to Lawrence, 25 September 1847, *FDSC*, 31 December 1847, No. 130.

[3]Davis to Hardinge, 10 November 1846, *FDSC*, 28 August 1847, No. 139.

[4]Keying (Chinese Viceroy at Canton) to Davis, 13 January 1847, *FDSC*, 28 August 1847, No. 145. It may be noticed that in 1848, similar reply was received from the Garpon of Gartok, who told Henry Strachey's correspondents that Tibet's boundary with Ladakh was "fixed of old". (Strachey to Lawrence, 25 September 1847, *FDSC*, 31 December 1847, No. 130).

that the matter will be discussed by Ch'i-shan, the Chinese Resident in Lhasa.[1] Although the Emperor commanded Ch'i-shan "to examine into this affair and manage accordingly,"[2] yet nothing was done by the latter. This nonco-operative attitude of Ch'i-shan was due to the fact that he was not well-disposed towards the British. As a background, it may be relevant to mention that towards the close of the year 1839, when Ch'i-shan was sent to Canton as Viceroy of that province, he failed to restrain the British and in the Opium War which started soon after, the Chinese were defeated by the British. Thereafter, Ch'i-shan was disgraced, plundered and even condemned to death by the Emperor, but, at the last moment, through the intercession of his friends, he was pardoned and appointed as Resident at Lhasa. This was considered a sort of banishment into Tibet.[3]

The attitude of the Dogras towards the Commission was not very co-operative either; Maharaja Gulab Singh was afraid, perhaps rightly, that any trade settlement between the British and the Tibetans was likely to affect his monopoly of shawl-wool trade with Western Tibet. Colonel Basti Ram and Mian Jawahir Singh, two *Motmids* or confidential agents of the Maharaja, who were asked to meet their British colleagues at Hanle, did not reach there at the expected date. When at long last, they joined their British counterparts near Leh,[4] they were not anxious to demarcate the eastern boundary of Ladakh. Cunningham believed that the absence of the Maharaja's Commissioners on the frontier was deliberate and designed "to delay, as long as possible if not absolutely to thwart altogether the final settlement of the boundary."[5]

[1]*FDSP*, 28 August 1848, No. 148. Keying to Davis, 7 January 1848, *FDSC*, 31 March 1848, No. 36.

[2]Keying to Davis, 8 August 1847, *FDSC*, 3 October 1847, No. 28.

[3]Cf. J.F. Davis, *Chinese Miscellanies, A Collection of Essays and Notes* (London, 1865), p. 7. see also, Huc and Gabet, *Travels in Tartary, Tibet and China* trans. by W. Hazlitt, ed. P. Pelliot, (London, 1928), II, p. 202.

[4]Mian Jawahir Singh joined the Commissioners at Puga on September 22, and Col. Basti Ram at Giah on September 27, 1847. (Cunningham to Lawrence, 27 September 1847, *FDSC*, 31 December 1847, No. 136).

[5]Cunningham to Resident, 20 October 1847, *FDSC*, 31 December 1847, No. 133.

Under these circumstances, the British Commissioners were left with no alternative, except to carry on explorations individually. From Bashahr's frontier with Tibet, they wanted to reach Hanle, district headquarters of Rupshu in Ladakh, by the direct route which passed through West Tibet. But the Tibetans did not allow them to enter into their territory, hence, the Commissioners followed a circuitous route through Spiti. Cunningham and Thomson, leaving Strachey at Chumar, moved to Hanle, whence travelling to the left of the Indus, they reached Leh in October, 1847. From Leh, Thomson, following the Leh-Yarkand route, visited the Nubra district and the Karakoram pass, and carried out his researches in the Shyok valley. Cunningham, intending to visit Gilgit, moved down along the Indus into Lower Ladakh, but due to the lateness of the season all passes leading into Baltistan had been closed, so he crossed into the vale of Kashmir where he conducted antiquarian researches. Information collected by these officials on the little-known regions of Ladakh and Western Tibet was later published in Cunningham's *Ladak* and Thomson's *Western Himalaya and Tibet*.[1]

From Chumar, following a south-easterly direction, Strachey visited the Ladakh-Tibet frontier and then marched to Hanle. Here, unlike his other two colleagues, he was put to much trouble for about a weak: the sub-prior or Resident Lama of Hanle imposed restrictions on his movements, and refused to supply cattle and men for the conveyance of his camp. He was freed from this virtual prison by the Dogra soldiers.[2] Strachey felt that the Lama did all this on the instigation of the Tibetan authorities of Gartok.[3] As the season had advanced and it was not possible to carry on the exploration work for sometime, Strachey moved down to Leh. Here he was informed that Tibetan authorities did not like Dogra rule in Ladakh

[1]T. Thomson, *Western Himalaya and Tibet* (London, 1852). See *FDSP*, 29 December 1849, No. 332, for the original MSS of Thomson's book.

[2]Strachey to Basti Ram (Thanadar of Leh), 21 September 1847, *FDSC*, 31 December 1847, No. 130. Strachey to Lawrence, 26 September 1847, *Ibid.*

[3]Strachey to Lawrence, 25 September 1847, *FDSC*, 31 December 1847, No. 130.

and that while Dogra communications remained unnoticed, the deposed Ladakhi King was held in high respect, his communications, being promptly attended to.[1] Under these circumstances, after procuring introductory letters from the dispossessed Gyalpo of Ladakh and the treasurer of the famous Hemis monastery, Strachey resolved once again to press on communications with the Lhasa Government. This time, though not without resistance, he succeeded in reaching Tso-Shaladat Lake,[2] beyond which he was not allowed to go. Here, he was visited by the *Dzong-pon* or Tibetan local authority of Rudok, to whom Strachey explained "the circumstances, which had given rise to the presence of British Agents on the Lhasa frontier."[3] The British Commissioner, further apprised the Dzong-pon about the nature of his business and the advantages which might accure to the Tibetans by establishing direct contact with the British.[4] The Dzong-pon gave a patient hearing and his subordinates, who were accompanying him also appeared to be in complete agreement with Strachey's remarks. None the less, the British Commissioner felt that not withstanding his friendly demeanor, the Dzong-pon would not inform his superiors in Lhasa about his meeting with an Englishman.[5] Therefore, thinking that it was futile to make further attempts to penetrate into Tibet, Strachey devoted himself to demarcate the eastern boundary of Ladakh, in which task he was greatly helped by the clear marking of much of the Tibet-Ladakh border by boundary pillars set up in 1684. He prepared an excellent map which, alongwith his other explorations in this region was published in his book, *Physical Geography of Western Tibet.*[6]

The British Government was now fully convinced of the futility of making further attempts to communicate with the Tibetan or Chinese authorities; in April 1848, "for all political purposes," it decided to wind up the Boundary Commission,

[1] *Ibid.*

[2] It is situated at a distance of about twelve miles from Rudok.

[3] Strachey to F. Currie (Resident at Lahore), 10 June 1848, *FDSC*, 7 October 1848, No. 8.

[4] *Ibid.*

[5] *FDSC*, 7 October 1848, No. 8.

[6] H. Strachey, *Physical Geography of Western Tibet*, (London, 1853).

though Dr. Thomson was allowed to prosecute his scientific discoveries for another year.[1]

Thus the second Boundary Commission, like the first one, could not demarcate the Ladakh-Tibet boundary. Its failure to do that was mainly due to the hostile attitude and non-cooperation of the Tibetan and Ladakhi authorities. Nevertheless, its activities were not without political significance. Strachey reported in 1848 that the Tibetans put every kind of obstruction on the frontier and that through any of the means of direct communication at the disposal of the British Indian Government, it was not possible to establish a direct contact with the Dalai Lama or his Government at Lhasa. He observed that the Chinese Resident at Lhasa could not be addressed with any advantage except "through the medium of his own Government and her Britannic Majesty's Agent in China."[2] This view was accepted by Government. Strachey further suggested that a letter from an officer of the Governor-General's rank should not be addressed to the Dalai Lama, and for promoting trade, friendly contacts should be established with local Tibetan officials through native agents.[3] Finally, he urged that should any letters be written to the Tibetans, in future, greater care should be taken in their translation.[4] It was probably after this suggestion that the British authorities showed a greater interest in the study of Tibetan language.

[1]Government to Resident, 22 April 1848, *FDSC*, 27 May 1848, No. 80.
[2]Strachey to Resident at Lahore, 26 January 1848, *FDSC*, 27 May 1848 No. 73.
[3]*Ibid.*
[4]*Ibid.*

Chapter Eight

CONCLUSION

AN ATTEMPT has been made in the preceding pages to review the Dogra conquest and the invasions of Ladakh, Baltistan and Western Tibet, while some aspects about the religion of the people of Ladakh have been briefly touched upon. Comments wherever, necessary, have appeared in the body of the text. However, at this stage in the narrative, a few words as a way of principal conclusions, may not be out of order.

A study of the past history of Ladakh reveals that throughout its chequered history, it has preserved continuity and identity of life. The Ladakh of old chronicles is easily recognizable in the Ladakh of the 19th century, and very often the self same things noted centuries ago attract the visitors' attention to-day.

The continuity of Ladakhi life is mainly due to its geographical situation: parallel ranges of sky-high mountains which surround Ladakh have kept it unaffected by the cataclysmic changes that were enacted in Kashmir, the plains of Northern India, Tibet and Eastern Turkestan. The rugged terrain and almost inaccessible passes, made invasion difficult and conquest practically impossible. Again, the invaders from India preferred the salubrious climate of Kashmir to the hardships and scanty rewards of a trans-Himalayan campaign into Ladakh. Resultantly, for centuries Ladakh was ruled by the same dynasty and remained unmolested, absorbed wholly in her medievel, if not primitive affairs while its neighbouring territories witnessed frequent dynastic changes.

Another strong reason for this continued identity is the devotion which the Ladakhi has for his own country and religion. No doubt, recently, a microscopic part of the population has shifted to other places, but the Ladakhi does not willingly

leave his country. The climate, food and mode of life of other places are often as strange to him as they are to a visitor to Ladakh. Ladakh's traditions, its costumes, its monasteries and gompas, its ritual dances are remembered, cherished and transmitted from generation to generation and the result is that there is a general impression of continuity and identity.

The constitution of the Government of Ladakh before it was annexed by the Dogras was despotic and feudal,[1] but its administration was by and far more mild and paternal. The central government was largely built by assigning additional duties to a number of hereditary noblemen who were petty rulers of districts, where they collected revenue, administered justice and performed military duties. Although the king was the supreme authority and could grant *jagirs* to his subordinates, it is not clear as to what extent he actually had the power to resume the land of the local rulers. At some places, especially in districts on the fringes of the kingdom, a local administration by officials appointed by the king, as distinct from the local rule of noblemen also appear to have been weakly developed.

The church very much influenced the social and daily life of the people. In politics, however, Lamaism was less important since the supreme ruler was a lay king and not an incarnate Lama as in Lhasa. True, sometimes the lamas participated in the local administration, but the kings of Ladakh never allowed the priesthood to lay its hands on the temporal powers, and lay government was never subordinated to religion. This was again unlike Tibet where sacredotal power was most deeply and firmly established. Monasteries in some places were well-endowed with lands and often, they played an important role in the defence of the country.

The rise of the Dogra Raja Gulab Singh, a feudatory of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, in Jammu hills in the first quarter of the 19th century was a development of great significance in the Western Himalayas: it led to the unification of a number

[1]Feudalism here has been used in the sense that power in Ladakh was mainly derived from the *jagirs*. But this feudalism should not be confused with the feudalism of Western Europe which had different basis.

of diverse principalities under one forceful rule. Although Ranjit Singh, after his conquest of Kashmir in 1819, realised the customary tribute from the king of Ladakh, yet Gulab Singh did not like Ladakh's nominal political allegiance to the Lahore Durbar. He wanted to conquer this Himalayan kingdom ostensibly for the Sikh Maharaja but in reality for himself. His conquest of Kishtwar brought him right upto Ladakh's doorsteps, and the working of centrifugal forces at Leh further facilitated his task of the subjugation of Ladakh.

Zorawar Singh's conquest of Ladakh and Baltistan had a great importance in shaping the destiny of the Western-Himalayas, It determined the ruin of the Ladakhi and Balti Kingdoms and established the paramountcy of the Lahore Durbar over these territories, thus extending the boundaries of the Sikh state in the north to its true geographical limits. The Dogra invasions also broke the shell of isolation, into which the peaceful and timid people of Ladakh had been living for the past so many centuries; henceforth, a stream cf visitors and explorers started flowing into this obscure region.

Zorawar Singh's invasion of Western Tibet is a great landmark in Indian history no less than in Central Asian. This was a bold attempt to extend the frontiers of the Sikh state beyond the natural boundary of India. Though he conquered Western Tibet, due to manifold adverse and hostile circumstances, unlike Ladakh and Baltistan, he could not make it a part of the Dogra dominions. Had he received full help from his base of operations, had the Lahore Durbar given all assistance to him, had Raja Gulab Singh at the time of his illustrious Wazir's critical position in Tibet been at Jammu, and had the attitude of the British Government been helpful, there is every possibility that the brave Dogra general, might have advanced to Lhasa. Thus, he would have become a precursor of Sir Francis Younghusband. All this not withstanding, the Tibeto-Dogra war of 1841-42, is not without significance, the border between Tibet and the Sikh state, as settled in the peace which closed this war is the border that now separates the Indian Republic from the People's Republic of China, and the entire territorial settlement laid down at that time has remained un-

changed until quite recently when Peking has tried forcibly to grab some parts of Ladakh.

British Policy in this area was largely determind by strategic considerations. The scare of Russian invasion was always there, but British authorities in Calcutta knew that Ladakh was contiguous not to the ever-sprawling dominions of the Czar as to the moribund Ch'ing dynasty. Moreover, it was fairly well-known to the British that between Ladakh and Russian possessions, Ili. Kokand and many another Central Asian Khanate intervened. Furthermore, the British sense of security was reinforced by the well-known historical fact that since early times the course of foreign invaders lay not across the stupendous Karakoram and Pamir ranges but through the low-lying western Hindu Kush range i.e. India's frontier with Afghanistan. Had it not been so, perhaps Ladakh and Baltistan would have become British protectorates much earlier before the Dogras moved into this area.

In addition to strategic reasons, the economic motive was another important consideration in the formulation of British policy. Due to Industrial Revolution in England, British merchants were in search of new markets and fresh sources of raw materials. The highly-remunerative shawl-wool was an important article of trade in this area and it was chiefly a product of Western Tibet. Under the old treaty terms, its entire produce was exported to Kashmir via Ladakh, this at any rate was the practice since 1681-84, which was followed throughout the 18th century. Any export of shawl-wool to areas other than this was punished by Tibetan and Ladakhi authorities, and deeply resented by the rulers of Kashmir. After the Anglo-Nepalese war of 1814-16, when British India came into closer physical contact with Ladakh and Western Tibet, a sizeable quantity of shawl-wool started flowing into British territory. In the late thirties of the 19th century, due to frequent Dogra invasions of Ladakh and Baltistan and consequential unrest and disturbed conditions there, the imports of shawl-wool into British-protected hill states increased beyond all expectations. The British merchants-cum-rulers were not unhappy at this development. No wonder their policy towards the Kings of Ladakh and Baltistan, who made repeated requests for help

against the Dogras, remained non-committal and neutral, for their gain was the maximum without any direct involvement.

But when Zorawar Singh invaded Western Tibet, British attitude vis-a-vis the Dogras underwent a significant change. Export of shawl-wool from Western Tibet, into hill states under British protection stopped, consequently the recently-developed Tibet trade on which many British subjects depended for their livelihood, came to a standstill. Failure to protect this trade and prevent frequent Dogra incursions into their territory reflected on British strength. Fear of Chinese intervention and the likely conclusion of a much-publicized anti-British Dogra-Nepalese alliance deeply upset the British policy-makers in India. That would largely explain why they not only set a deadline within which the Dogras were asked to move back into Ladakh but even determined to take military action against the latter in case they refused to withdraw. A little later, when Raja Gulab Singh, who was helping the British in their war with the Afghans, asked British help against the Tibetans, the English, kept scrupulously aloof. Any active military help to the Dogras at this time was likely to jeopardise the Sino-British peace parleys then going on in Peking. Protection of British commercial interests in China, by maintaining cordial relations with the Ch'ing Emperor, was therefore far more important than taking sides with the Dogras. Hence the British did not view with favour to the annexation of Western Tibet by Raja Gulab Singh and supported the maintenance of a status quo there.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

LETTER FROM COUNT NESSELRODE, RUSSIAN FOREIGN MINISTER TO MAHARAJA RANJIT SINGH.[1]

To
The Illustrious,
Rajah Ranjit Singh,
Ruler of the Panjab and Chief of
the Sikh Nation.
After compliments

At this time, the respectable Aga Mehdi son of Rufeel, the Agent or Counsellor for the affairs of the merchants of Persia and Tartary trading to Russia, who is an old and attached friend of yours, has arrived here and has made frequent mention of your excellent qualities and disposition, the justice and wisdom of your administration, your friendly conduct towards neighbouring states and travellers visiting your country and more especially your attention to all merchants subjects of Russia who trade to that quarter.

The above favourable reports of your character and Government have afforded me the most lively satisfaction and have inspired me with a sincere desire to cultivate a correspondence with you. I have further communicated the substance of what I have heard regarding you to my Imperial Master Alexander I, of all Russias, who had been graciously pleased to express his wishes for the increase of your power and reputation and the continued prosperity of your dominions.

[1] *FDPP*, 10 October 1823, No. 25 A.

So much indeed is His Imperial Majesty gratified by the rumours which reach him from all the quarters of your love of justice and benevolent disposition that he has instructed me to despatch to your court an Envoy charged with letters in order that the gates of friendly intercourse may be thrown open and the road of traffic between the merchants of Russia and the Punjab cleared from all impediments.

In compliance therefore with the orders of my Imperial Master, I address to you this letter of compliments and congratulations which I have entrusted to the respectable Agha Mehdi, one of the aulic Councillors of the state of Russia. I feel satisfied that on his arrival in your dominions, you will receive him with the attention and consideration befitting his rank and circumstances and will afford him every assistance in the prosecution of his commercial speculations.

In conclusion I beg to offer you an assurance that when any people of business, merchants or travellers of whatever description belonging to your nation may visit Russia they will be received in the most friendly manner and will experience a degree of consideration exactly in proportion to their rank and station.

Sd/- Nesselrode,
Minister for Foreign Affairs,
Privy Councillor,
Knight of Several orders etc.

Dated Saint Petersberg,
1820.

APPENDIX B

DRAFT OF ENGAGEMENT PROPOSED TO BE MADE WITH THE RAJA AND THE KALOON OF LUDAGH SUBMITTED BY WILLIAM MOORCROFT IN PERSIAN, FOR COSIDERATION OF THE MOST NOBLE THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL-IN-COUNCIL DATED LEH, JULY 30TH, 1821[1].

Proposed engagement with the eminent and right worthy Akibut Muhmood Khan (Title) Raja of Ludagh and the trusty and faithful servant, Chuhwan Tundih, the Kaloon, drawn up for their satisfaction conformably to the address submitted by them to the British Government, praying to be received amongst the number of states enjoying its protection.

Art. I The territory of Ludagh shall ever remain under the protection and guardianship of the British Government.

Art. II The officers of the British Government shall at no time make any demands on revenue from the principality of Ludagh.

Art. III The Raja of Ludagh and the Kaloon shall always conduct the Government of the country of Ludagh in their own way; and the officers of the British Government shall abstain from all interference whatever in its internal administration.

Art. IV In disputes on matters of trifling importance, the Raja and Kaloon shall adjust them after their own way. Should an affair of great importance, however, occur effecting the very existence of the state of Ludagh, assistance shall be afforded by the British

[1] *English Translation of Persian Letters Received from January 1822, to June 1822* Vol. 70, Pt. I, letter No. 131/3B. (*NAI*)

Government upon application for the same being submitted. Should any necessity arise in sending a military force, the charges for the same shall not be defrayed by the Ludagh chief; but they will do their best to furnish whatever supplies may be requisite on the march of the troops due compensation for the same being made by the British authorities.

Art. V The above articles shall ever be in force and perpetually binding upon the British Government so long as the Raja of Ludagh and Kaloon evince a good disposition towards that Government and a general desire to promote its interests.

APPENDIX C

COPY OF AN ENGAGEMENT BY WILLIAM MOORCROFT SUPERINTENDENT OF THE HON'BLE COMPANY'S STUD TO THE RAJA AND KALOON AND OTHER CHIEFS AND ELDERS OF LADAKH FOR ESTABLISHING A COMMERCIAL INTERCOURSE WITH BRITISH MERCHANTS AND FOR THEIR PASSAGE THROUGH THE COUNTRY OF LADAKH TO CHINESE AND OOSBEC TOORKISTAN.[1]

I William Moorcroft deputed on the part of the British merchants of Calcutta to establish a commercial intercourse with the North-Western parts of Asia having arrived at Leh, the capital of Ladakh have had various interviews with the Raja and authorities of that country and have been treated with attention and civility by them.

Having signified a desire that British merchants should have as free commercial communication with this country as traders from other places, the authorities of Ladakh have entered into a written engagement that such communication should be established. And for their satisfaction, I hereby promise that any caravan destined for Toorkistan by the way of Yarkand shall be accompanied by not more than fifteen or twenty soldiers for its protection. And also that any caravan intended to proceed to the same countries by other roads shall have alongwith it for safeguard no more than 50 soldiers including non-commissioned officers.

The usual duty on merchandise entering Leh is thirteen rupees Mahmood Shahee on seventy munwattees, the munwattee being one and a half to the yamboo of China.

[1] *FDPP*, 20 September 1822, No. 60.

To make a friendly reference to British merchants, the authorities of Ladakh have agreed that the duty on the above weight of seventy munwattees of their merchandise shall be 10 Mahmood Shahee rupees.

And on the part of the British merchants of Calcutta, I engage that the duty according to this rate upon such merchandise of theirs as shall enter Leh shall be duly paid by the person or persons having charge of it to the officer of customs at that place.

And as far as I have it in my power, I also promise that friendship shall always be maintained between British merchants and the Rulers of Ladakh and that such of the former as shall enter this country shall abide by the above terms as being the conditions by which an intercourse should be maintained. And further that no injury shall happen to the country of Ladakh from the commercial engagement now made. And that British caravans shall not go from Gurdok to Leh.

And having now received from the authorities of Ladakh their before mentioned agreement in writing, duly sealed and executed in the manner with them customary on the part of the merchants by whom I am deputed and of myself, I engage that as long as they shall act in conformity with it, the above articles shall not be receded from.

Sd/-
W. Moorcroft.

Dated at Leh the 4th day of May in the year of Christ one thousand eight hundred and twenty one.
Sealed and signed in the presence of George Trebeck.
Sealed and signed in the presence of Meer Izzut Oollah Khan.

APPENDIX D

MINUTE BY THE HON'BLE THE LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR, NORTH-WEST PROVINCE DATED MEERUT, 28TH SEPTEMBER, 1841.[1]

1. Though the letters, of which copies are appended, are in a private form, I still consider it proper to bring them on record, because they are replies to a public despatch dated 23rd, received by me in duplicate at this station on the evening of the 26th instant from Mr. Lushington, the Commissioner in Kumaon.

2. The original despatch has gone to Agra whence a copy has doubtless been ere this transmitted to Calcutta.

3. The following item of intelligence communicated by Mr. Batten, the Senior Assistant, since the departure of Lushington for the frontier, strike me, as being of sufficient importance to warrant my transferring them from the pages of a private correspondence to a more public document and thus bringing them officially to the knowledge of the Government of India.

4, Mr. Batten's notes commenced on the 18th instant, the date of Lushington's departure from Almorah and the 24th is the date of the latest that I have received. The substance of their contents is as follows:

5. Zorawar Singh is daily increasing his force at Tuklakote, and evidently intends to winter there having collected from the stores of the people of the country, grain enough to support his army and render him for this year independent of our trade.

6. His party at that post is understood to have been lately increased, but is not thought to exceed seven or eight hundred Sikhs with a rabble of some thousand Ladakhis.

[1] *FDSP*, 11 October 1841, No. 50.

7. The general belief among the Hoonias is, that the Goorkhas now 1,200 strong, it is said at Yaree, their frontier post in Joomla, intend to come to an understanding with the Sikhs, though this is retarded by dispute, as to with whom is to rest the right of taxing the Joomla Bhotias of the Hoomla pass, neither party likely to concede it to the other.

8. Letters have gone to Joomla and thence to Nepal, but it is not known whether any reply has reached Zorawar Singh, who is said to give out that he is on most friendly terms with the British Government, but that he will not relinquish his right as successor to the Chinese Government in Tibet.

9. It is commonly thought that it is the intention of the Sikhs to establish a communication by a chain of small forts between Ladakh and Nepal and that to this the Goorkhas will readily assent.

10. On the 10th instant three armed sowars entered our territory by the Beans Pass to demand restoration of some Sikh horses alleged to have been brought down by some refugee Hooniah and sold to our Bhotias.

11. A verbal altercation ensued and the Sikhs retired to Tuklakote, speaking in a vaunting strain and naming Zorawar Singh as a chief, the equal of any English Governor-General.

12. On the 21st instant, a report arrived from Beans stating that Zorawar Singh had sent a *hukam namah* signed by himself directing the Bhotias to pay the revenue due to Tibet of which he had become ruler by conquest or to stand the consequences.

13. Neither the Bhotias, nor the public officers who furnish the report had the presence of mind to secure the messenger or what would have been better, the paper of which he was the bearer.

14. Upto the 15th instant small parties of armed sowars still continued to enter the Beans pass, and it was reported at Almorah on the 21st September, that a detachment of 300 mounted men had gone to demand tribute of the Bhotias of the Jawahir pass.

15. Whether this is correct or not, is not yet known but on the 19th instant, a Chinese officer was officially reported to have appeared at Jawahir on the part of Zorawar Singh to

warn the refugee Hooniah to repair to their houses on pain of being pursued.

16. It is believed that the Hooniahs have told Zorawar Singh that the passes belong to the Chinese and not to the British Government, a pretension, once before advanced and settled by Mr. Traill, who went up and fixed the crest of the passes as the line of demarcation between Kumaon and Hoondes.

17. Zorawar Singh is said in compliance with orders conveyed in a letter from, Rajah Goolab Singh, whom he styles his 'malik' or Lord to have released 1,200 sheep, and 20 men of a place called Mechun, (I presume in our territory), whom he had detained at Taklakote, but it is not yet known, whether he has compelled these men to pay a fine of 500 rupees which he formerly demanded as the price of their discharge.

18. Such are the leading particulars of the intelligence received from Almorah, intelligence that may be severely relied on as coming through one as thoroughly conversant with the language and character of the people who furnish it as Mr. Batten, and which goes for to verify an opinion expressed, if I am not mistaken, so long since as in 1837 by Sir C. Wade that the Rulers of the Punjab would extend their dominion in the regions of Chinese Tartary till it should touch that of Nepal.

19. To this junction, I have ever expressed my own suspicions that all their recent-advances along our frontier, their occupation of Mandi, invasion of Kooloo, and demonstration against Bussahir have directly tended, and if such a junction be allowed to acquire strength and consistency, I cannot but think that the tranquillity and prosperity of Kumaon will be thereby grievously and durably affected.

20. It is clear from the many passages in the intelligence that it is in the protection to be afforded by us as a duty of humanity to parties flying from tyranny and rapacity of the invaders that the main risk of collision at present exists.

21. Zorawar Singh's name is notorious for cruelty, and it is no uncharitable conclusion that of such a character arrogance is also a pretty prominent attribute—the one quality will drive many to seek refuge in our dominions, the other will urge him

to demand their surrender and when that fails, to resort to outrage in vindication of what to his savage mind will appear his natural right. Thus protected jarring to end in open hostility would seem to be the most likely consequence of the occupation of Tibet by the delegate of the virtual Rulers of the Punjab, even if the intruder stood alone, and not in a position, where he must gravitate towards an alliance with that state, which while it longs to recover Kumaon is known to look upon that province, as the quarter in which we are most vulnerable.

22. In this opinion of the Goorkhas my own slight acquaintance with the localities of the province inclines me strongly to concur.

23. Indeed if it be considered that Kumaon while open throughout the year, to the invasion from the east, is cut off by the intervention of the pestilential belt of the Turaee from all military communication with the plains during at least five months of the summer and autumn, it must at once be seen how exposed to insult and injury it must at those seasons be.

24. These circumstances of its position do not escape the notice either of the people of Kumaon or of their former Rulers, nor will they, we may rely upon it, be overlooked in the connection, now drawing on between the most wealthy and the most warlike of our independent neighbours.

25. For this year all may soon be settled by the snow which generally closes the easiest of the passes, that by Beans by the 20th October, but as the security thence derived will be mutual, Zorawar Singh if suffered to remain where he is, will have nearly 5 months in which to cement alliances and digest and mature his plans for the future annoyance of the people of Kumaon.

Meerut
28th September, 1841.

Sd/-
T.C. Robertson.

APPENDIX E

TRANSLATION OF A TREATY OF PEACE[1] AND AMITY CONCLUDED BETWEEN THE CHINESE AND SIKHS, SUBSEQUENTLY TO THE DEATH OF WUZEER ZORAWAR SINGH, SIGNED BY KALOON ZORKUND ON THE PART OF THE FORMER, AND RUTNOO WUZEER AND DEWAN HURRY CHAND ON THE PART OF THE LATTER.

The following chiefs here in assembled in the city of Le on the 28th Assuge, 1890 Sumbut, corresponding with 17th October, 1842, viz. Kaloon Zorkund and Dewar Jeesy on the part of the Chinese, and Shah Gholam on the part of the Ruler of Lahore, and Rutnoo Wuzeer and Hurry Chand on the part of Raja Goolab Singh besides others of inferior note belonging to both parties. It was mutually agreed, that a treaty of amity and peace should be concluded between the Chinese and Seiks, the conditions of which as undermentioned were recorded in writing in the presence of the chiefs aforesaid, and likewise Sib Chu Tukpun Peesy, and Laumba Wuzeer both, confidential advisers of the Viceroy of Lhassa.

Art. I That the boundaries of Ludak and Lhassa shall be constituted as formerly, the contracting parties engaging to confine themselves within their respective boundaries, the one to refrain from any act of aggression on the other.

Art. II That in conformity with ancient usage, tea, and Pusham shawl-wool shall be transmitted by the Ludak road.

Art. III Such persons as may in future proceed from China to

[1] *FDSC*, 24 May 1843, No. 62.

Ludak or from Ludak to China, not to be obstructed on the road.

Art. IV That no renewal of the war between the chiefs of the Raja Goolab Singh and those of the Viceroy of Lhasa shall take place.

Art. V That the above mentioned conditions shall remain in force without interruption, and whatever customs formerly existed, shall not be removed and continue to prevail.

Art. VI It is understood that in signing the above treaty, the contracting parties are bound to a true and faithful observance of all the provisions thereof, by the solemn obligations attached to the Holy Place called "Gengri to the lake of Shanta Lari and to the Temple of Kojoon Cha in China."

True Translation
Sd/- J.C. Erskine,
Political Agent,
Subathu.

A NOTE ON THE BIBLIOGRAPHY

So far as historical research is concerned, Ladakh is not an entirely uncultivated field. General Alexander Cunningham who visited Ladakh in 1846-47, was the first to write about it. His book (*Ladak, Physical, Statistical and Historical*, London, 1854), gives only a general account of Ladakh and includes a small chapter on its history. This account of the previous history of Ladakh begins with about 1580 AD, and is said to be based upon a Ladakhi chronicle. But as Cunningham held—though wrongly—that prior to the 16th century, no native chronicles of Ladakh were extant, his account is quite brief and sketchy. Cunningham also gives a factual account of the Dogra invasions of Ladakh, which, he says, is mostly based upon the information supplied to him by Mehta Basti Ram— a trusted Lieutenant of Wazir Zorawar Singh. Cuningham's *Ladak*, which also deals with the physical features of Ladakh and several social institutions of its people, though obsolete in some respects, is truly a model of scientific and patient enquiry, and has been drawn upon heavily.

Dr. Emil Schlagintweit, one of the three celebrated German brothers, who visited Ladakh in 1856, for the first time brought to public notice, the existence of '*La-dvags rGyal-rabs*' (Royal Chronicle of Ladakh), a document which dealt with the early history of Ladakh; in 1866, he published in Munich the text and translation of this document. Dr. Karl Marx, a Moravian missionary, who stayed in Ladakh for some years, not only further elaborated the researches of Dr. Schlagintweit, but also brought to light two other Ladakhi documents; later, he translated all these documents in English. But in the field of Ladakhi history, invaluable pioneer work was done by Dr. A.H. Francke. He was also a Moravian missionary; and a versatile scholar, who spent some years in Lahul and

Ladakh and carried detailed researches into the dialects, customs, folk-lore, ethnology and archaeology of Western Tibet, in 1909, on being commissioned by the Government of India, he carried out a detailed archaeological survey of Ladakh and produced a monumental work, (*Antiquities of Indian Tibet*, two parts, Calcutta, 1914-26). The first part of Francke's book gives the personal narrative of his adventures and researches while the second contains all inscriptions, 'Royal Chronicles of Ladakh', and other 'Minor Chronicles' (chronicles of Tibetan-speaking regions neighbouring Ladakh), which Francke collected during the course of his tour. Unfortunately, the *Chronicles of Ladakh* are limited in scope; like the *Wamsavalis* of many other mountain states, they are a happy amalgam of fable, fiction and fact, and are notoriously barren of details of any other interest than geneological. In the light of the very scanty information contained in the *Chronicles of Ladakh*, and the one supplied by Tse-brtan of Khalatse,[1] Francke, in his *Antiquities of Indian Tibet*, II, has re-edited Cunningham's account of the Dogra wars. But his narrative, like that of Cunningham, in some respect e.g. Dogra invasion of Western Tibet, and their final expedition to Ladakh, is quite brief and bristles with chronological mistakes.

Dr. Luciano Petech, an eminent Italian scholar, is one of the more recent in the line, who has made a thoroughly scientific study of the *Royal Chronicles of Ladakh*. But unfortunately, his work (*A study on the Chronicles of Ladakh, Indian Tibet*, Calcutta, 1939),[2] which is more comprehensive than the work of his predecessors in the field, closes with the Tibeto-Ladakhi-Mughal war (*c.* 1681-84 AD). After him this field has not attracted any other serious student, and with the exception of two articles, also written by Dr. Petech, no addition has been made in the last quarter of a century to our knowledge of the

[1]When Dr. Francke made acquaintance with him (1899-1905), Tse-brtan, was an old man who, in his younger days had done military service in the Dogra wars (1834-42).

[2]With the exception of first three chapters which deal with cosmology and mythology, the rest of this book was also published in the *Indian Historical Quarterly*, XV, No. 4, Supplement (December, 1939), pp. 39-189. I have consulted both the sources.

history of Ladakh. In spite of their limited scope, this study has frequently drawn from all these sources, more particularly the contributions of Drs. Francke and Petech.

The second and the most important source on which this monograph is based, are the English manuscript records, available with the National Archives of India, New Delhi. These are the Secret and Political Proceedings and Consultations of the Foreign and Political Department of the Hon'ble East India Company's Government for the years 1819-23, and 1834-48. The Secret and Political despatches from the Government to the Court of Directors of the East India Company also throw important sidelight on the events discussed in this book.

The contemporary Persian, Urdu, and English newspapers and news-letters, also contain useful information; they are not only a mine of information on the political events, but often give excellent corroborative evidence.

Some contemporary Persian works also provide useful information. Most important of these are *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh*, Daftar III, and the *Gulab Nama*. *Umdat-ut-Tawarikh* was written by Lala Sohan Lal Suri, the *Akhbar Nawis* or chronicler of Maharaja Ranjit Singh and has now been translated into English by Shri V.S. Suri. *Gulab Nama* was written by Dewan Kirpa Ram, Prime Minister of Maharaja Gulab Singh, and Ranbir Singh, and published in Jammu in 1875.

A contemporary Chinese document, *Hsi-Tsang Tsou-Shu*,[1] (Tibetan Memorials and Reports), Volume I, which gives information about the Dogra-Tibetan war of 1841-42, has also been used in this study. While using such Chinese and Persian documents, which are full of overtones of hyperbolic penegyrics and reveal only one side of the shield, one has to be cautious.

[1]This book was compiled by Meng Pao, Imperial Resident at Lhasa from 1839 to 1844; English translation of the more important reports and memorials concerning the Dogra War appear in *Himalayan Battleground : Sino Indian Rivalry in Ladakh* by Margaret W. Fisher, Leo E. Rose and Robert A. Huttenback (New York : London, 1963), Appendix, pp. 155-76. I have used this source.

The narratives and reports of European travellers form another important source. For this area they are a storehouse of information and have the distinct advantage of being written from acute personal observation of the authors and at a period under the review of this investigation. William Moorcroft, the veteran Himalayan explorer, stayed in Ladakh for about two years (1819-21), and wrote very detailed reports about this Himalayan kingdom and its inhabitants. His information about the trade of Ladakh and its relations with Kashmir, Delhi, Lhasa and China is both revealing and valuable. All this information we find scattered in various reports and despatches which Moorcroft submitted to the Indian Government. These despatches are now available in the National Archives of India. The book dealing with his *travels* also contains some of this information. The works of A. Gerard, Jacquemont, Vigne, Hugel and the near-contemporary works of Frederic Drew are too well-known to be evaluated here again. The accounts of Strachey and Dr. Thomson have also proved useful. The contemporary accounts of native travellers such as Mir Izzet Ullah, Ahmad Shah Naqshbandi and Gholam Hyder have been consulted, occasionally to advantage. *Gazetteers* of Kashmir, Ladakh, Jammu, Kangra district, and other *State Gazetteers* of the neighbouring areas also contain much additional information.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

I. (a) *ORIGINAL UNPUBLISHED DOCUMENTS*

The investigation is essentially based on the undermentioned Proceedings of the Foreign and Political Department of the Hon'ble East India Company for the years 1819 to 1824 and 1834 to 1848 available with the National Archives of India, New Delhi. These Proceedings comprise correspondence exchanged between the Commissioner of Kumaon, Political Agencies Ludhiana, Ambala, and Subathu, and Foreign Department, on the one hand, and the Government of India and the Secret Committee of the Court of Directors of the East India Company, on the other.

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(b) *FDSC.* *Secret Consultations of the Foreign Department*

(c) *FDPP.* *Political Proceedings of the Foreign Department*

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