

# *The Sikkim Saga*

*B S Das*



VIKAS PUBLISHING HOUSE PVT LTD

**VIKAS PUBLISHING HOUSE; PVT LTD**  
*Regd. Office: 5 Ansari Road, New Delhi 110002*  
**H. O. Vikas House, 20/4 Industrial Area, Sahibabad 201010**  
**Distt. Ghaziabad, U.P. (India)**

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**ISBN 0-7069-1971-8**

**1V2D4717**

## Preface

It is relevant to quote the Governor of Sikkim, Mr. B. B. Lal, from a speech he made on January 26, 1979.

“I am sure we all realise fully by now, that time and history only know how to move forward and that it is not possible for the clock of history to move backwards. Anyone who thinks in terms of history going backwards, obviously suffers from defective vision and has not taken any lesson from the past history of the world stretching over thousands of years.”

Obviously the reference was to the Chogyal and some other elements in Sikkim who still believed that status quo ante was a distinct possibility under certain circumstances. Sikkim's merger with India is a historical fact and India's disintegration alone can restore the pre-1973 status. The issue is secondary to the text of this book and if at all history is reversed, someone else will give the facts then.

Having been one of the prime actors in the merger drama, I owe it to the students of history to leave behind a record of events for reference as a primary source of information. I am not a historian but all those who attempt to reconstruct the history of Sikkim will not be in a position to isolate themselves from the subjective interpretation of facts and events contained in this book.

In 1971, when I was India's Ambassador to Bhutan, Shenkar Bajpai, the Political Officer of Sikkim, had come to stay with us. Like all his predecessors after mid-fifties, he felt concerned at the erosion of India's responsibilities in Sikkim under the Treaty of 1950. There was a lack of clear vision in our approach over the years which would one day affect India's vital security interests in the Himalayan region. The Chogyal's rule had a feudalistic approach, leaving the vast majority of his people dissatisfied. These people were reaching a stage of revolt against the prevailing corruption and economic disparities. It was time that Delhi realised the gravity of the situation and took decisive action to ensure stability

in such a sensitive region. I could not agree more seeing how the Chinese were reacting on the Bhutanese borders. The Himalayan kingdoms were too sensitively placed to be ignored to the detriment of India's security. I mention this incident in the context of the 1973 uprising when I was asked by the Prime Minister to take over the charge of the administration of Sikkim. Delhi's decisive action then prevented a dangerous situation developing in this region.

During my tenure in Sikkim and subsequently, I was exposed to the critical analysis of the events both by the press, Indian and international, and many an institutional platform. I was never shy of defending the ultimate goal though I was hesitant on the methods used. As the subsequent pages of this book will show, merger became inevitable and it was in India's interests to take the steps which she did. It could have been avoided if the Chogyal had played his cards well. But, he was too clever with himself and played into the hands of the elements who had been waiting for years for such mistakes to be committed.

It is said that the Sikkim Saga is the story of three women—dominant, proud and unbending. Undoubtedly, Indira Gandhi, the Prime Minister of India; Hope Cooke, the American wife of the Chogyal; and Elisa Maria, the Belgian wife of the Kazi were all alike and played a key role in the drama. But for the influence of Hope and Elisa on their husbands, which partly moulded their thinking, things may have been different. Had the Chogyal not taken the goodwill of Mrs. Gandhi for granted and had seen through her snubs which she administered as warnings from 1970, Bajpai's leverages would have been difficult to use. Had both Hope Cooke and Elisa Maria not aspired to be the first ladies of the realm and had confined themselves to their lure of the Mongoloid husbands and their wealth, the direction to the movement of 1973 by Elisa as Kazi's wife would not have been there. If Hope Cooke had not deserted her husband during the agitation, the Chogyal could probably have mellowed down and adjusted to the new situation. Or, if her dreams of being the American Queen of this Shangrila had been confined only to the royal court, not extending outside the Palace, many a misunderstanding with Delhi could have been avoided.

The victor was ultimately Mrs. Gandhi who, with her determined mind, outclassed everyone else. She had waited too long to close



the chapter and struck at the first opportunity when it came and decisively too. No history of Sikkim of recent times can ignore the role of the "three ladies". That itself could form the subject of a most interesting book if we also included the roles of other ladies at the court who played a substantive role behind the scenes in various ways.

My only regret is that Sikkim's beauty and culture are being eroded with the implementation of the so-called development schemes and ideas applicable to other states of India. The changes would have come about in any case but should have been gradual enabling the Sikkimese to settle down to a new system of governance and culture. In one of my addresses to the young probationers, of National Academy of Administration in 1975, I had cautioned against too rapid a process of Indianisation. My apprehensions proved correct when soon after the merger, large inputs of aid and implementation of new schemes within a short period created many ethnic, political and economic problems which the new Government under Kazi Lhendup Dorji was incapable of facing. Nor was the local bureaucracy adequate to handle the situation. Kazi's total defeat in the 1979 assembly elections was a sequel to this. Kazi had fought against feudalism and corruption for over two decades. When he finally succeeded and came into power, he failed to satisfy the aspirations of his people. Though personally honest, neither his policies nor the people around him inspired a clean image. The electorate threw his party out as they did to the Chogyal. He will have to start afresh.

I owe an apology to the late Chogyal, Palden Thondup Namgyal, for some of my criticism of his personality and reactions. In fairness to each other, both made the point that we served our political interests. This prevented a lasting ill-will. We were good friends and had mutual regard for each other. Perhaps this was my most spectacular achievement.

B.S. DAS



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# 1

## As Delhi Saw It

“Mr. Das, Sikkim is not Goa that the Government of India has sent you to take over as the Chief Administrator. We have our separate identity and Indo-Sikkimese relations are governed by a Treaty. The so-called ‘popular leaders’ are nothing but a bunch of scoundrels propped up by outside forces. If my Police had not been disarmed and dishonoured by the Indian Army, I would have exposed each and every one of them. I shall never forgive the Indian Army for this.”

And the Chogyal was an honorary Major General of the Indian Army!

This was my first meeting with the Chogyal on April 11, 1973, after taking over Sikkim’s administration a day earlier. His oracles had considered it inauspicious to receive me on the day of my arrival. It was understandable.

The previous day when I landed at Gangtok, it was a different scene. Kazi, the leader of the agitation, and all his colleagues had lined up at the helipad to receive me besides all the senior officials of the Government of Sikkim and the Political Officers’ representative, Sudhir Devere. Much against my wishes, I was conducted in a procession through the town with cheering crowds shouting anti-Chogyal slogans. Without meaning it to be so, I had thus come to be associated with the anti-Chogyal forces except that the welcome was arranged to greet India’s representative who had come to resolve all the problems.

Events had moved fast. On Chogyal’s birthday, April 4, 1973, agitated mobs had surrounded his Palace under Kazi’s leadership demanding political reforms. The Police panicked and fired. The news spread rapidly to the outlying areas and mobs had taken to the streets led mostly by the students. Administration in three of

the four districts collapsed with the Chogyal's writ confined to the Palace. It was under these circumstances that the Chogyal had requested the Government of India, through the Political Officer, to post a senior officer from India to head Sikkim's administration.

The Foreign Secretary rang me up on April 8 to convey the Government's decision to post me as the Chief Administrator. I was to take over my assignment on April 10. The two days that I had were spent in the Foreign Office for a briefing. Never had I seen the Foreign Secretary's office converted into an operations room. Long messages on situation reports were pouring in every half an hour with the Foreign Secretary, Kewal Singh, dictating replies after replies to a team of stenographers. The desk officers dealing with Sikkim were walking in and out, seeking and taking instructions every hour. Kewal Singh looked as cool and composed as ever in his immaculate dress.

The basic issues were only two: to what extent Delhi's support was to be given to the democratic forces and what were its ultimate objectives in Sikkim. I found the Foreign Secretary's mind clear on both. All support was to be given to the anti-Chogyal movement. The political leaders were to be assured of Delhi's determination to set up a popular elected government. If the Chogyal did not concede their demands, Delhi was prepared for a show-down. Even Sikkim's take-over as a centrally administered territory of India with a Lieutenant Governor ultimately heading it was not precluded. The Chogyal was to be reduced to a constitutional head during the intervening period. My immediate task was to obtain a political settlement, restore law and order quickly, hold the general elections at the earliest and set up an elected government. Indian interests were to be fully protected with Delhi having an overriding say in Sikkim's administration. My role in this would be critical. The time had come for a show-down with the Chogyal.

In between the briefings, Avtar Singh,<sup>1</sup> a Senior Secretary in the Foreign Office, returned from Gangtok after a spot study of the situation. His assessment was that the agitation could not be sustained at that pace unless Delhi increased its support. The Chogyal, though demoralised, was still adamant against making major concessions. The time was ripe to teach him a lesson for his anti-people

<sup>1</sup>Avtar Singh, a career diplomat, had held charge of the Political Officer's post in the early sixties.

postures. His advice to me was “Do not allow the Chogyal to get on top again. We will never get a second opportunity like this. 1949 should not be repeated.”

When I asked the Foreign Secretary about the possible international reaction and particularly the Chinese response, he said the Foreign Office would take care of this aspect. I was, however, to ensure that all my actions had the support of the political leaders; thus giving a legitimacy to all our moves. The feudal character of the existing system and the people’s revolt against it, were to be highlighted constantly. Since the Government of India had special responsibility under the Treaty of 1950 towards Sikkim’s good administration and which involved India’s own security, its intervention was obligatory in circumstances where law and order had broken down and a vacuum had been created by the collapse of the Chogyal’s authority. India, wedded to democratic ideals and consequent obligation devolving on her to lend support to forces fighting against tyranny in spheres of her responsibility, had a moral obligation towards the people of Sikkim. These were incontrovertible arguments. The Foreign Secretary stated: “If I and Bajpai<sup>2</sup> enunciated these principles effectively, there would be no problems.”

When I narrated my brief to Shenkar Bajpai, within minutes of my landing in Gangtok on April 10, he literally pulled his hair of which none too many were left in any case. Being the man on the spot, why had he not been told of this in such clear and concise terms, he asked. If he had known this earlier, the matter would have been resolved to Delhi’s satisfaction on the fourth itself. All these days he was only told to go on building support for the agitation and maintain its tempo. One could sustain an agitation of this nature only if the political parties were closely knit and well organised. As it was, the people who had joined the agitation from the villages, were tired and wanted to go back to their farms. How was he to maintain the tempo to the level Delhi wanted, he bemoaned. He made me repeat my instructions from Delhi several times. Only then could I tear the small page of my diary which carried my brief. Bajpai did not appreciate then Delhi’s strategy to stretch the tempo of the anti-Chogyal agitation over a longer period to justify her intervention and partly meet the international criticism of Sikkim’s take over.

We settled down to discuss the prevailing situation. The morale

<sup>2</sup>K. S. Bajpai was the Political Officer in Sikkim.

of the agitators was at a low ebb. Decades of suppression by the Sikkimese rulers had made the people docile and subservient. People joined the movement in the hope of a quick response to their demands. Aware of Delhi's support, they expected the Chogyal to give in easily. But, all these days they were just demonstrating without any tangible results. Something had to be done quickly to raise their spirits. The political leaders were aware of the 1949 happenings when Delhi rescued the Chogyal under somewhat similar circumstances. But Delhi had a different approach then.

My arrival had boosted the morale of the leaders. Bajpai and I chalked out our plan of action on the lines indicated by the Foreign Secretary. Before any of these plans could be implemented, a message came that the Foreign Secretary was arriving at Gangtok. And, this happened only within four days of my arrival. It surprised us but we sensed that something had happened in Delhi to necessitate Kewal Singh's visit. Our suspicions were confirmed when he briefed us soon after his arrival.

My appointment had hit the headlines in the press. Many described it as a "take over". Even the foreign press had flashed the news as one of significance. It was a stick to beat India with as was in the case of Goa when Indian troops marched in there. The Chogyal had used the same argument. I may have become a celebrity overnight but all this caused serious embarrassment to Delhi. Perhaps, this accounted for Kewal Singh's hurried visit and subsequent low key posture in handling the situation without giving up the ultimate objectives. Delhi also did not anticipate that the agitation would peter out so soon despite her massive support. Aggressiveness, therefore, changed to conciliation which immediately put the critics of India and the Chogyal on the defensive.



## A Historical Perspective

The history of Sikkim dates back to 1641 when a horde of Tibetans overran this area inhabited then by a small tribe of Lepchas. The latter are reported to have migrated to this area from one of the tribal regions of northeast India. Beyond being animists, indolent and fun loving, the British records do not reveal very much about their origin and culture. Nor has any serious study been done on them, having been integrated politically and culturally with the invading Bhutia tribe of the Tibetans.

The first phase of Sikkim's history is linked to the "blood treaty"<sup>1</sup> signed between the Bhutias and Lepchas which promoted the growth of a multiple ethnic society with the invaders providing the ruling dynasty. The Lepchas were converted to the Lamaist Buddhism of the Tibetans. The new religion and ruler made a deep impression on the social and economic life of the community. The dominance of the Bhutias was so overwhelming that the Lepchas remained the poorest and the most neglected of the people, barring a few who intermarried with the Bhutia elite to reach the level of equality. Mostly confined to the northern belt of Sikkim in an area called Dzongu, they lived their life of indolence and negligence contributing little against the aggressive exploitation by the Bhutias of the riches in land and forest. When the British came to Sikkim, in the late eighteenth century, their missionaries converted a few of them to Christianity.

The advent of the eighteenth century saw an aggressive Nepal encroaching on the Sikkimese territory. This was the beginning of the second phase in Sikkim's history. While a small trickle of Nepalese into Sikkim had started at the beginning of the eighteenth century,

<sup>1</sup>A treaty was signed in 1641 between the two tribes recognising the leader of the invaders as the spiritual and secular head. A monument commemorating it is located at the place of signing the treaty.

Nepal's invasion in 1774-75 and subsequent occupation of Sikkim's western region, led to a substantial settlement of the Nepalese on her territory. By 1790, Nepal extended its hold over the entire lower Teesta basin in the East. Helpless against the powerful invaders, the Sikkim ruler sought the assistance of the British East India Company who had by then established their stronghold in eastern India with the weakening of the Mughal rule. Nepal's occupation of Sikkim came to an end in 1812, when the British troops of the East India Company intervened and defeated the Nepalese forces. But, the Nepalese settlers stayed back.

The British interests in Sikkim were linked to their trade and political interests in Tibet. Both Bhutan and Sikkim were the possible gateways to Tibet. Sikkim, besides being weaker of the two, had an easy access. On February 10, 1817, Sikkim signed a treaty with the East India Company surrendering all her rights to deal with any foreign power and conceded unhindered right of free access to the British to Tibet border. Sikkim became a de facto protectorate in 1861 when this treaty was further revised. The Anglo-Chinese Convention of 1890 put a seal on this status.

The ethnic scene of Sikkim began to undergo a rapid change with the advent of the British. Not only had the early Nepalese settlers multiplied in numbers, the British needed more Nepalese labour to develop Sikkim's communication network for access to Tibet. By 1891, the Nepalese constituted fifty-one per cent of Sikkim's population, reducing the Lepchas to nineteen per cent and Bhutias to sixteen per cent. This excluded Darjeeling which had been ceded by the Sikkim ruler to the British as a health and recreation resort forming part of the state of Bengal under British occupation. The rapid development of the tea estates on the periphery of Bhutan and Sikkim and large deployment of Nepalese labour there, further added to their migration both into Bhutan and Sikkim.

The entire ethnic scene had changed in Sikkim by 1947 when the British left India and India became independent. The Nepalese constituted seventy-five per cent of Sikkim's population reducing the Bhutia community to eleven per cent and the Lepchas to fourteen per cent. In terms of inter-ethnic group interaction, it acquired the attributes of a plural society with the focal point of its management being the ruler whose shrewd manipulations succeeded in co-opting at the top, the ethnic notables in the economic,

administrative and political fields.

The Bhutia rule had seen the emergence of a new social class called the Kazis who constituted the top echelon of the bureaucracy for the Bhutia rulers. They became the power behind the throne acquiring a social and economic dominance. It threw up its own problems in later years creating a new class conflict overriding ethnic considerations. The “haves” and “have nots” got clearly demarcated and became the nucleus of the political and economic alignments crossing the ethnic barriers. So long as the British ruled directly through their Political Officer, the ethnic imbalance and interaction of this had no major impact on Sikkim’s governance. The Bhutias retained their dominant position supported by the elite from the various ethnic groups. The Lepchas remained as an appendage of the Bhutias with hardly any political or economic leverage. Barring a few elite amongst the Nepalese, the vast majority were sharecroppers or confined to petty trade or employed as labourers or workers. Their political status was second class and their power and numbers stood curbed by the enforced and manipulated parity with the minorities.

The political environment in India in the last few years of the British rule had affected the subdued anti-establishment forces in Sikkim. Exposed to the Indian political scene, the democratic aspirations of the Sikkimese political groups saw the stepping up of their activities. This was evident by the coming together of a segment of the patrician Kazi aristocracy and neo-rich plebians in the shape of the Sikkim State Congress. Inspired by the movement launched by Gandhi and Nehru in India, this party came up with a definite programme of abolition of landlordism, formation of an interim government, paving the way for a democratically elected ministry and finally accession to India like any other princely states. The newly formed government of free India in 1947 was already engaged in the process of integrating the Indian States. The Maharaja<sup>2</sup> of Sikkim, visualising such a possibility, formed a counter political group, the National Party, demanding status quo and separate and distinct political personality for Sikkim linked to India only as a protectorate under a Treaty.

<sup>2</sup>Sikkim’s ruler was conferred with the title of Maharaja by the British like the rulers of other princely states.

While the Sikkim State Congress represented all the three ethnic groups with its programme and ideology of struggle against the exploitation by the rich landlords under a feudalistic system and setting up a democratic government, the National Party constituted mainly the loyalist Bhutias whose own interests demanded supporting the theocratic feudalism of Sikkim's ruling pattern of the Tibetan Lamaism. The ruler was not only the secular but also the religious head and their incarnate guardian of Buddhism which could not be separated. Interestingly, both the parties were led by Bhutias. A third political group, the Rajya Praja Sammelan, mainly consisting of Nepalese, emerged which wanted complete union with India with a closer association with the Nepalese of Darjeeling. It goes to the credit of the people of Sikkim then and subsequently that they lent support to the non-communal forces led by the Sikkim State Congress.

The change in the pattern of Indo-Sikkimese relationship after 1947 and the emergence of the Maharaja's new personality on the scene, led to several developments in later years affecting the ethnic and political issues. The ethnic scene became the scenario of not only bitter conflicts but rapid political changes. To maintain the supremacy of the Bhutia-Lepcha community, who were more loyal to the ruler, an intricate system of parity between them and the majority was evolved. It was extended even to the appointments in the Government and award of scholarships to students. Elections to the Sikkim Council, the legislative wing, were conducted on a parity formula which required a certain percentage of votes from the minority communities as obligatory. Thus there were cases of the Nepalese candidates who obtained the majority of votes but would be denied the seat having failed to get the required number of the minority votes. This way the Maharaja could play about with the loyalties of the candidates. It led to considerable disaffection amongst the Nepalese majority. Those of the Bhutia or Lepcha community who joined hands with the majority were penalised in several ways.

The economic imbalances amongst the three communities were also marked. The Bhutias owned the best of lands, and controlled business and urban property. The Lepchas, mostly confined to Dzongu area in the north in their "ancestral home", lived in utter poverty despite their rich cardamom growing lands. The Nepalese were agriculturists with limited land rights and were mostly sharecroppers.

The biggest imbalance however was almost half the land of Sikkim being vested with the Maharaja and his family as private estates. Most of it consisted of cardamom growing areas and rich forests which gave a substantial income. He also had a fairly large share in urban property besides his other business interests within and outside Sikkim. This did not end there. Out of a revenue budget of forty million rupees for Sikkim in 1973, one-tenth of it was spent on the Privy Purse and the palace bodyguards, an elite military police guarding the Palace. Use of public funds for giving indirect benefits to the ruler and his family was evident. The handful of Palace coteries made full use of the Maharaja's patronage at the cost of others. A further complicating factor in these vested interests was that of the Kazis who dominated the economic scene; a handful of them controlled the business besides the most productive land. They were the Maharaja's men who enjoyed all the favours and neglected the interests of the poor agricultural workers who were mostly sharecroppers. All communities were affected by the role of the Kazis and consequently aroused their hostility towards these people who controlled the economy of Sikkim. Kazi Lhendup Dorji was one of the exceptions who joined hands with the suppressed people and raised the banner of revolt against the ruler.

All these factors contributed towards general dissatisfaction amongst the people. With Buddhism as the state religion, the vast majority of Nepalese, who were Hindus, resented its dominance. Language was yet another issue. Sikkimese was the official language without any roots. It meant a Tibetan script with a local dialect spoken by less than ten per cent of the population. The Lepchas who had their own dialect were forced to learn Tibetan in schools. Yet, the commonly spoken language, even amongst the Bhutias and Lepchas, was Nepalese.

Even prior to 1947, the political leaders of Sikkim had come in close touch with the Indian National Congress leaders. Gandhi and Nehru were their political "Gurus" and the idea of democracy fired their imagination. The disintegration of the princely states in India gave these leaders a hope of similar possibilities in Sikkim. Since the Sikkimese were ruled by the British directly, with the Maharaja as the nominal head, these leaders hoped that the new Indian pattern would be applied to Sikkim also. They, therefore, demanded Sikkim's merger with India on the same basis as other princely states. In 1946, when the Interim Government was formed

in Delhi in preparation for the British to leave India, the leading political party of Sikkim then, the Sikkim State Congress led by Tashi Tsering, a Bhutia, made three demands—bringing about a democratic set up in Sikkim, abolition of landlordism and merger with India. This party launched a formal agitation in 1949 which led to the formation of an elected government which unfortunately lasted just over a month. The Maharaja, who was then the Maharajkumar,<sup>3</sup> played his cards shrewdly. He highlighted the distinct culture and separate identity of Sikkim. If Sikkim, which had been treated by the British differently than the other princely states of India under a special treaty, were to accede to India, it would be the end of the indigenous people who represented the real personality of the State. The National Party, representing the Bhutia-Lepchas, also argued its case effectively for protecting the culture and identity of the original settlers since the 17th century. Sikkim posed no strategic threat at that time. Perhaps, Bhutan's example came in handy. In spite of Bhutan's legal status as a semi-independent country, unlike Sikkim, both kingdoms had come to be associated as similar in their origin and culture. India had already signed a treaty in 1949 with Bhutan almost similar to the one British had with her. Sikkim could continue as a protectorate of India as was the case under the British. These arguments prevailed on Delhi and governed the new arrangements despite Sardar Patel's<sup>4</sup> views to the contrary. Patel visualised a threat developing from the Chinese and consequent strategic importance of Bhutan and Sikkim to India. Nehru's idealism decided the issue finally, maintaining the status quo vis-a-vis these two kingdoms. Although the 1949 agitation by the Sikkim State Congress against the ruler exemplified the new trends in Sikkimese politics, Delhi took a stand that the posting of an Indian Dewan as head of the administration would adequately meet the crisis and went ahead with the signing of a treaty in 1950 retaining Sikkim's status as a protectorate. It was a wrong decision. The posting of a Dewan was also a wrong step as it undermined the Political Officers' responsibility to administer the State of Sikkim.

<sup>3</sup>The eldest son of the Maharaja and consequently his successor, Palden Thondup, was in fact not the eldest. His elder brother, the rightful heir, having died while serving as a Royal Air Force Officer, Palden was recalled from his monastic life and made the Maharajkumar.

<sup>4</sup>Sardar Patel was then India's Home Minister and consequently in charge of the states.

While it is true that the role of the Political Officer from an administrator of Sikkim had undergone a change, even during the later part of the British rule, he continued to act as a Resident as was the practice in other Indian States. Sikkim being a bordering state of Tibet, the concept of a Resident with more executive powers and a direct say in the administration was rigidly followed and the Maharaja was a nominal head for all practical purposes. The induction of Dewan changed this concept.

The new arrangements enabled the Maharaja to emerge as the dominant personality on the Sikkimese scene. The role of the Political Officer underwent a significant change when the Indian Dewan became instrumental in exercising the power on behalf of the Maharaja. Besides the conflict which began to surface between the Political Officer and the Dewan, who were of matching experience and seniority, the Maharaja began to treat the Political Officer more as India's diplomatic representative than Delhi's agent to supervise and control the affairs of Sikkim. The Political Officers themselves became the victims of such an illusion when the style of functioning of India's Foreign Office changed from that of the Political Department<sup>5</sup> under the British.

The Maharaja, who later came to be addressed as "Chogyal,"<sup>6</sup> began to exercise executive power through the Dewan. Soon, the discriminatory practices against his Nepalese subjects came into full play leading to their complete economic and political domination. Barring the first Dewan, the others who followed lost their status and power by becoming the Chogyal's senior most civil servant under his direct command. This was contrary to the spirit of the understanding arrived at with the Foreign Office in 1949 under which the Dewan was an instrument of check on the Chogyal's abuse of his administrative powers. For the people of Sikkim, the Dewan stood devalued and with the erosion of the power of the Political Officer, the Chogyal became the centre of power for them. Delhi thus lost its leverage to check the growing independence of the Chogyal.

<sup>5</sup>The Political Department handled India's foreign relations and the princely states till 1947. When the British left in 1947, India's new Foreign Office took over the affairs of the Himalayan kingdoms and the affairs of the princely states passed on to the States Department of the Home Ministry.

<sup>6</sup>Chogyal is a Tibetan title indicating the ruler's supremacy over secular and religious matters, a system which prevailed in Tibet.

Soon, the Chogyal's ambitions got the better of him. His manipulations of the elections to install his chosen men in power on one hand and moves to obtain a status for Sikkim similar to Bhutan, brought him into conflict with the majority of his people and Delhi over the years. Playing one politician against the other and depriving the vast majority of his Nepalese subjects of equal rights and opportunities: economic or political, he eroded his base as a ruler. When he started asserting his personality beyond internal issues and came into conflict with Delhi, the anti-Chogyal political parties began to look forward for India's support which Delhi gave in full measure from 1972 onwards. The Chogyal having lost his credibility with the Indian Government and committing one mistake after another, Delhi took full advantage. The agitation of April 1973 was a sequel to these developments.



## The Grim Situation

The situation was grim when I assumed charge. There was a total collapse of the administration. With wide scale looting and burnings, panic prevailed everywhere. All the administrative offices, shops and schools were closed. Gangtok gave the appearance of a ghost town with the most visible people being the Indian Army patrols. All road communications to the outlying areas had been blocked. The Police had deserted their posts with all their firearms and wireless sets looted. In Gangtok, the Police had been disarmed and confined to their barracks for fear of retaliation by the thousands of people who had joined the agitation from all over Sikkim. The Chogyal was confined to his Palace, guarded by his Palace Guards. The Indian Army had put road blocks near the Palace to prevent the mobs from entering that area. The Sikkimese officers were completely demoralised and sharply divided on ethnic lines. And Delhi had not provided me with a single person to deal with the situation.

The outlying areas in the East, West and South<sup>1</sup> were in a worse situation. All the civil servants had been forced to join the agitation. The jails had been taken over and old scores were being settled by confining a few there illegally. Local students were acting as policemen and administrators. A number of government offices had been burnt and valuable revenue records destroyed. Food supplies were dangerously low. The major cause of worry was the disappearance of the Police weapons and wireless sets which could be misused by undesirable elements.

<sup>1</sup>There were four administrative districts in Sikkim—Mangan in the North, Gangtok in the East, Namchi in the South and Gyezing in the West. North was entirely inhabited by the Bhutias and Lepchas, the Nepalese being barred from settling there. The other three districts were predominantly Nepalese except for Gangtok town.

Such was the scenario and my immediate task was to bring back the administration on its feet. Before I could even consider any concrete steps, the news came of large scale mobilisation of the Bhutia community in the north, by the pro-Chogyal elements and the National Party. They were being collected in hundreds and brought to Gangtok to stage counter-demonstrations in support of the Chogyal. The situation was further aggravated by the news of large scale supply of firearms to them from the Palace. Panic prevailed in Gangtok and a serious communal clash was apprehended. In such a situation, the minorities would have been wiped out in no time in the outlying areas of the East, West and South where the Nepalese were overwhelming in numbers. The Indian Army, though not equipped to deal with such a situation, could prevent serious clashes in Gangtok. But, outside Gangtok there was no force available with me to prevent a bloodshed. The only option left was to warn the Chogyal and the National Party leaders of the grave consequences which would follow if the pro-Chogyal elements indulged in violence. Delhi would hold them fully responsible. This had the desired effect and the demonstrations passed off peacefully. The presence of Indian Army patrols was also a major deterrent. Had they been forced to fire on these mobs, Delhi's position would have become very embarrassing and the repercussion abroad would have been severe. Bajpai and I heaved a sigh of relief when the mobs dispersed and went back to their homes after two days. That was the first and the last display of the Chogyal's supporters in such an organised manner.

What amused me most was the demand of these demonstrators for free supply of food during their stay in Gangtok on the grounds that a similar facility was being given to the Chogyal's opponents who had gathered in the capital. We did not wish to discriminate in a matter of such inconsequence, specially when the political parties were providing for the subsidised rations. I offered them free transport to go back to their homes which was accepted promptly.

The agitators against the Chogyal had been camping in Gangtok in thousands. They had come from distant villages and had already spent over two weeks sleeping and living in the open. Barring Kazi and Narbahadur Khatiwada,<sup>2</sup> none of the other leaders had the

<sup>2</sup>Kazi Lhendup Dorji, President of the anti-Chogyal Sikkim National Congress, was leading the agitation. Narbahadur Khatiwada was his wife's adopted son and was one of the chief leaders of the agitation. He is of Nepalese

will power to sustain a prolonged profile of confrontation. After all, most of them had been used to comforts which an agitation did not provide. The fear was that the agitators may get out of hand and with the Gangtok police disarmed, and confined to their barracks, things may become serious. As a decision had been taken to negotiate a settlement, the agitators had to be persuaded to return home.

The police was brought back on duty in Gangtok. All the administrative offices, schools and shops were opened in the capital and normalcy began to set in. This led the agitators to realise that a new administration had taken over which would be independent of the Chogyal. They began returning to their homes. Simultaneously, I requested the GOC of the Indian Army to reduce the Army presence in Gangtok and send small groups to the outlying areas to help in restoring normalcy and create a climate of confidence. But the Army would not move without civil magistrates.<sup>3</sup> We had no Indian magistrates and one was not sure how the local populace would react to the Chogyal's officers accompanying the Army patrols. It could be misunderstood and embarrass the Army as well as the new administration. Having no choice, I sent the Sikkimese officers and followed them myself addressing several meetings of the people every day. Within a few days, we were able to re-start the district administration and all the civil servants and the police reported back for duty. Delhi's full support was assured to the agitating people in their struggle for a democratic set up. Sending Sikkimese officers with the Army turned out to be a boon. Not only the conduct of these officers was exemplary, it immediately built up a rapport with the local people. Though it took a long time to restore complete normalcy, things began to settle down and a semblance of authority restored.

But, these were the interim solutions. The areas affected were mostly Nepalese. The Bhutia-Lepcha minorities located in these areas were feeling insecure and when the agitators began returning

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origin. Much later, after the merger, he fell out with both and became their political opponent.

<sup>3</sup>Under the Indian Army regulations, if the Army is used to assist the civil administration in law and order matters, civilian magistrates should accompany their units and give written orders where force is to be used unless the Army units are attacked when no such orders are necessary.

to their villages, this fear grew to panic. The Army could not play the policing role nor was it appropriate to involve it in civil administration. Without having capable assistants who had no local affinities or attachments and without a well-trained police force to offer protection and deal with law and order, the administration could not be restored to normalcy.

My frantic requests to Delhi led to the posting of three young IAS officers from the West Bengal Cadre—K. M. Lal, J. N. Sanyal and D. K. Manavalan. Young and energetic, they created considerable impact on the people when they were located as officers on special duty in the affected areas. Soon, a batallion of the Central Reserve Police was also placed at my disposal which was dispersed to all the outlying areas to assist the local police. The minorities felt secure and so did the pro-Chogyal leaders who had the least confidence in the local police. To avoid any misunderstandings with the local officers who resented the induction of outsiders to run the administration, I let the districts be run by the same bureaucracy which had served the Chogyal and used the three officers from India for overseeing the law and order situation under my direct supervision. These bright and dedicated officers not only added considerable strength to the new administration but also impressed the people through their competence and hard work. Their contribution at that time was crucial.

My one major worry was that all the firearms and wireless sets located with the police in these districts had been looted during the agitation. It was a very delicate issue compounded further by the fact that, in any drive to recover them, I would have had to take legal action against the political leaders of the agitation. The Chogyal and the Police Commissioner were adamant that I should prosecute them. It would have served the Chogyal's purpose admirably. But, I could not afford to do so. These were the very leaders of the anti-Chogyal movement. The biggest worry was that if these arms fell in undesirable hands, it would create a major problem.

Then I changed my strategy and calling all the political leaders, asked them to get these arms back and deposit them with the local police stations. I gave fifteen days time after which I would spare none. The leaders pleaded that they were not involved in this and could only plead with their followers to return them wherever they may be. I had to assure that none would be prosecuted. Almost all the looted weapons and the wireless sets were returned, some even

at my house, I heaved a sigh of relief at the expiry of the fifteen days. The poor Police Commissioner continued to pester me to permit him to take action under the law. I never answered nor passed any order. The Chogyal, of course, was furious. When I was leaving Sikkim, I told the Police Commissioner:

“Even the law makes a distinction between legitimate illegal action and illegitimate illegal action where political issues are involved. You should not go by the book when moral issues are involved as the book has no answer to them.”

He was bold enough to say:

“I only know of one law which is legal and as far as I am concerned it was a crime committed and you became an accessory when you accepted the surrendered weapons. However, you were my boss and it was your decision. My conscience is clear that I pointed out the provisions of the law. I stand by the book.”

Such were the complexities I had to face in April when I took over.

## The New Approach

Kewal Singh's new approach of a negotiated settlement with the Chogyal embarrassed us considerably vis-a-vis the political leaders. The new line was that the agitation had completed its task. We should now look forward for a tripartite alliance between Delhi, the Chogyal and the political parties. Such a settlement should ensure continuance of the Chogyal as a constitutional head with certain reserved powers to be exercised by him in consultation with the Chief Executive who would be Delhi's nominee. In case of any dispute, Delhi's decision would be binding. While there shall be an elected assembly and an executive council nominated out of its Members on the advice of the Chief Executive, the elected government would have initially only unreserved subjects to deal with. The Chogyal's dynasty would be assured of continuity. What, in effect, the "new approach" meant was the transfer of all important powers to the Chief Executive who would virtually rule the State at Delhi's behest. If this was all that was needed, it could have been easily ensured under the 1949<sup>1</sup> arrangements and the Treaty itself. Delhi did not have to propound a moral thesis in support of its democratic ideals.

It was a let down for the principles on which we had publicly based our stand. Also, the new idea was not workable. It would bring Delhi in direct confrontation with the political parties we were supporting and the Chogyal would bide his time to lend full

<sup>1</sup>In 1949, when a similar agitation by the political parties had been launched and the Palace surrounded, an agreement was arrived at between the Chogyal and the Government of India under which a Dewan, appointed by Delhi would head Sikkim's administration with the reserved powers being exercised by the Chogyal through him. Dewan's main task was to ensure good administration. Although the Dewan was to work directly under the Chogyal, he could not be removed without Delhi's approval.

support to them against us. A draft agreement prepared jointly by the Foreign Secretary and Bajpai was virtually a funeral oration for the anti-Chogyal forces. Bajpai's own officers felt that India had a moral stature which this document sought to erode.

Obviously, the straight approach indicated to me in Delhi had undergone a change due to pressures, internal or external. The latter appeared to be more probable. This in turn led to internal pressures to handle the problem differently. I do not have any reliable information on this beyond the Foreign Secretary's casual remark, "Certain countries have not been too happy." I distinctly remember that during my briefing on April 8, Kewal Singh had used the words "approval at the highest political level is inevitably involved in such matters." It was, therefore, evident before leaving Delhi that my brief was cleared at the level of Prime Minister. There was tremendous publicity in the Indian and foreign press on my appointment. Most of the headlines indicated our intention of taking over Sikkim. The fact that Kewal Singh mentioned to me of the Prime Minister's unhappiness at the unusual publicity given, confirms my suspicion that some foreign governments friendly to India, cautioned against any hasty steps. Strong reactions in China, Pakistan and Nepal and a critical view abroad generally, made Delhi change its strategy from confrontation to a negotiated settlement.

The Foreign Secretary's sudden dash to Gangtok could only be explained in this light. Avoiding a direct confrontation between Delhi and the Chogyal, a strategy evolved where the conflict would be between the elected assembly, representing the views of the people, and the Chogyal, representing feudalism and a suppressor of people's aspirations. As Delhi would have to arbitrate in such a conflict, the advantage lay with the assembly and the elected government. Delhi's decisions would derive legitimacy through the will of the people reflected by the elected body. It was a clever move and paid dividends in the long run. The Chogyal had very little support left and would have to depend on the goodwill of the elected body and the Chief Executive representing Delhi's interests. The priorities were to negotiate a settlement, hold the elections quickly and set up an elected government. It foreclosed all options for the Chogyal who by this time was committed to the setting up of a fully democratic government.

The first action of the Foreign Secretary was to meet the parties led

by Kazi Lhendup Dorji and K. C. Pradhan.<sup>2</sup> They were assured, in unusually large doses, of Delhi's full support to their demands for a democratic set up. But a sentence was always added "the Chogyal was being extremely difficult" and all efforts were being made to bring him round. If he did not, Delhi would do its duty. Next came the pro-Chogyal National Party led by a discredited old man, Netuk Lama, whose past history was full of shady deals as a senior Executive Councillor. The National Party leaders were fully briefed by the Chogyal which was evident from the discussions held with him. Their main contention was that the agitators were all outsiders from Darjeeling and leftists.<sup>3</sup> They commanded no local support. Sikkimese leaders lending support to this were not the real representatives of the people. They deserved to be criminally tried for the mass destruction they had caused. The Government of India owed a responsibility to the Bhutia-Lepcha communities who were the indigenous people. The Chogyal was the symbol of unity and the ruler. Any attack on his personality or his privileges would hurt the people. And finally, and most emphatically, Sikkim had a separate identity under the 1950 Treaty. Any change in the political structure would be a breach of faith on the part of the Government of India. The Treaty became the point of emphasis. Yet, these were the very people demanding its revision prior to the April agitation. It was understandable how the Treaty became sacrosanct for the National Party and the Chogyal so soon after the trouble broke out. Kewal Singh assured the leaders of Delhi's concern for the Bhutia-Lepchas, the Chogyal's prestige and sanctity of the Treaty. He went one step further of assuring parity between the majority and the minority which was a major point of dispute on the demand of "one man one vote" by the anti-Chogyal parties. To be fair to the Foreign Secretary, he did make it clear to them that a democratic set up was a must and the Chogyal would have to play a constitutional role.

And then ensued the long discussions with the Chogyal. The first

<sup>2</sup>K. C. Pradhan was the President of the Janata Congress. Of Nepalese origin, he was earlier a close friend of the Chogyal as well as his business associate. They fell out and K.C. Pradhan was arrested in March 1973, for subversion when he criticised the Chogyal and demanded enquiry into the Council elections held in 1973. His party joined hands with the Kazi's Sikkim National Congress and launched the April 1973 agitation.

<sup>3</sup>For the first few months of my joining, the Chogyal's main contention was that the communists and other Nepalese leaders from Darjeeling has been leading the agitation. When asked to produce evidence, he could not. The only outsider who used to come with the Kazi was his Nepalese lawyer from Darjeeling.



issue he raised was that of my designation. The Chogyal could not stomach the title “Chief Administrator”, it stank of colonialism and must be changed. Earlier, amongst ourselves, we had decided to change it to “Chief Executive”, a much better and powerful designation. The Chogyal not realising its implications fell for it. Later, when I explained to him in a lighter vein that the Chief Executive is the head of a government or a state in international parlance, he was furious and never forgave us for this. “I knew there was a catch somewhere! Otherwise, how could Kewal Singh so promptly accept my suggestion to change the designation,” he said.

The Chogyal, a bitter man, accused Delhi of instigating “these hooligans” who had no support within Sikkim. They burnt and looted innocent people and should be all locked up, specially Kazi whose adopted son Narbahadur Khatiwada, a Nepalese, and Kazi’s wife, of Belgian origin, were Communists and consequently a danger both to Sikkim and India. The Chogyal would not accept “one man one vote” demand as it would extinct the Bhutia-Lepcha communities once for all. As usual, he claimed to be the real friend of India and recollected how he had cautioned the Indian Prime Minister in 1972 of the brewing trouble on the borders of Sikkim. He very firmly demanded a clear assurance of the validity of the 1950 Treaty in writing and an opportunity to meet the Prime Minister. Kewal Singh had enormous patience but he could not stomach the virulent attack on the Indian Army and the Government of India. For once, Kewal Singh was firm in his language. Assuring the Chogyal of three things—continuance of the Chogyal and his dynasty with personal privileges due to them; parity between Bhutia-Lepchas vis-a-vis Nepalese; and the Treaty being honoured—he took serious exception to the Chogyal’s insinuations and asked him to read the writing on the wall. He could only function as a constitutional head, the power being vested with the people.

Kewal Singh again talked to the Kazi group. His approach was the same; encouraging them to keep up their demands and assuring Delhi’s stand by their side. The Chogyal was becoming difficult but Delhi would not give in. Assessing the overall situation and directing me to quickly restore normal administration, he returned to Delhi the next day. Both Bajpai and I were asked to pursue the talks with all the parties involved.

At the time of the agitation, there were three political parties in Sikkim. The Sikkim National Congress led by Kazi Lhendup Dorji

and the Janata Congress, led by K.C. Pradhan, had joined hands to lead the revolt against the Chogyal, forming a joint Action Committee. The National Party, led by Netuk Lama, was pro-Chogyal but had its own reservations on the policies of the establishment. Barring Kazi, other political leaders were comparative newcomers and had little hold over the masses. Kazi thus had a distinct advantage besides his immense popularity as an established anti-Palace crusader over two decades. K.C. Pradhan's Janata Congress was of recent origin besides the leader's own credibility being dubious having been a close friend of the Chogyal earlier till they fell out over a business deal. Pradhan's arrest in March 1973 made him a hero overnight and he took full advantage of his new image, specially in lending support to the agitation led by Kazi. Netuk Lama had an unsavoury reputation and the Chogyal's support to him had upset many others in the Party. Unlike the Kazi and his party, the pro-Chogyal party had no mass base, even amongst the Bhutias or Lepchas. Thus Kazi emerged as the unquestioned leader of the masses.

The Kazi found his Belgian wife, Elisa Maria Kazini, an astute and highly volatile worker lending not only active support to the movement but forming its brain trust. She had adopted a young Nepalese, Narbahadur Khatiwada, as her son who was dynamic and the bitterest enemy of the Chogyal. On ethnic considerations also this was the most powerful combination and acceptable to all the communities. Kazini had been banned from Sikkim by the Chogyal a year back for her anti-Palace utterances and she operated, thereafter, from her abode in Kalimpong, a small town on the Indian soil adjoining Sikkim. Kazi, the father figure of Sikkimese politics, Kazini, the brain trust, and Narbahadur, the young fire-brand with great organisational capacity, were the trio who dominated the scene all through the agitation.

The Chogyal's hatred of all these three was only too obvious. Kazini's radical views, her personal hatred of Gyalmo and her own ambitions to become the "first lady" were enough reasons for the Chogyal's hatred. And Narbahadur of course fuming all the time demanding the removal of the Chogyal. The Chogyal dubbed the Kazini and Narbahadur as Communists which was not true. Radicalism was a facade for their ambitions to gain power. It built up their image amongst the people.

With these rigid postures, the Chogyal would refuse to see the

reality of Kazi having emerged as the key factor in any political settlement. Despite my best efforts, I could not persuade him to open a dialogue with the Kazi who was a moderate and had an emotional and religious attachment to the institution of the Chogyal besides his concern for the future of the Bhutias and Lepchas who represented the traditional culture of Sikkim. This was a fatal mistake which drove quite a few of the Chogyal's supporters to the Kazi's camp ultimately.

Bajpai was another of Chogyal's bug bear. He considered him as the mortal enemy which again was a myth. Bajpai was always of the view that the Chogyal alone could give a stable direction to the Sikkimese politics, if he accepted a constitutional role for himself leaving the Chief Executive to exercise power on behalf of Delhi within a controlled democratic set up. It would have met the needs of the people as well as the Government of India. He did want to put the Chogyal in his place. For him the Chogyal was no more than a mere constitutional ruler within the concept of an Indian protectorate controlled and directed by Delhi.

It would be incorrect and misleading to assume that the personality conflicts were responsible for the events of 1973 though they did contribute substantially. For years, the Chogyal and Hope Cooke, his American wife, had been building an anti-Indian platform in Sikkim and abroad. With her contacts in the USA and elsewhere, she began raising fundamental issues like Sikkim's claim to Darjeeling which had been ceded in 1835 to the British. She even widely circulated a pamphlet on the subject. Controlling education directly as Chairman of the Textbooks Committee for the schools, subtle anti-Indian nuances were introduced in the textbooks by her. Going one step further, she began organising the young boys and girls through a Study Forum to raise issues on the provisions of the 1950 Treaty, demand its revision and ultimately obtain sovereignty and independence for Sikkim. Her direct involvement in these things was noted by Delhi. The Chogyal actively assisted by her, started subtle propaganda through a local newspaper against the Indian institutions and agencies located in Sikkim. Articles appeared frequently in the paper demanding revision of the Treaty and claiming a status for Sikkim similar to Bhutan. An anti-Indian demonstration on India's national day confirmed Delhi's suspicions of the Chogyal's active involvement.

## The Agreements

The Chogyal's reactions to the Foreign Secretary's visit were obvious. He saw a ray of hope in the position being restored to status quo ante with minor changes. In reality, he made a crucial mistake in this assessment. While it was obvious that Delhi's earlier posture of no negotiations, unless demands were conceded, had changed to a negotiated settlement, the crucial issue of a popularly elected government being set up, never changed. The Chogyal continued to attack the leaders and the Political Officer and thereby Delhi by implication. Any wise person would have seen the change in Delhi's approach and prepared himself to get the best bargain out of the new mood in Delhi. Even the political leaders failed to grasp the subtle nuances of Kewal Singh's approach. They put all their eggs in one basket leaving no bargaining position with either Delhi or the Chogyal. The cards were all in Delhi's hands.

Kewal Singh returned to Delhi asking us to deal tactfully with all the parties and persuade the Chogyal to be reasonable. While I could persuade the political leaders to be reasonable and accommodating, the Chogyal had misunderstood the visit of the Foreign Secretary and taken it as a sign of our weakness. He thought in turn to persuade me to be reasonable, I being "his" Chief Executive. For days, he would either call me to the Palace or send his Secretary, Jigdel Densappa, to my house for a discussion. The conversations would go on endlessly till late at night trying to convince me of the perfidy of Kazi and evilness of Bajpai. They hoped to put me against the Political Officer knowing well that the issues were not personal but of policies. Luckily, Bhutan had taught me enough patience to put up with the Mongoloid monologues without much damage. Neither succeeded in converting me but my "tact" was running out in terms of my irritability. It was almost a Chinese torture.

Kewal Singh returned on April 22 with a draft agreement which he asked me and Bajpai to vet. It left many issues vague like the powers of the proposed elected government. The Chogyal's dynasty was assured of continuity and so were his personal privileges. But, he was to exercise his residuary powers only through the Chief Executive who would refer every dispute to the Political Officer for Delhi's arbitration in case of disagreement. It hardly met the aspirations of the political parties whose hopes we had raised to a point which matched the system governing any other Indian State. Conceding "one man one vote" principle, the draft restricted it to parity between the majority and the minority to protect the Bhutia-Lepcha interests. In effect, it only meant a revised 1949 arrangement with the Dewan being replaced by a powerful Chief Executive keeping an effective check on both the Chogyal and the elected government. The answerability of the Chief Executive would be to neither but to Delhi. I personally felt that for such an arrangement, we need not have taken all the steps that we took since the outbreak of trouble. The Chogyal could have been made to sign this that very day his administration collapsed. But, more than that, it did not touch the core of the issue. We were not seeking arrangements where the conflict would inevitably shift from "between the feudal system" and "the democratic forces" to between the Chief Executive and the elected representatives. The Chogyal would love such an arrangement and would have emerged as the non-controversial figure backing the politicians behind the scene against the Chief Executive. I made my views known to the Foreign Secretary. The Chogyal made lot of noises in his usual way but finally put his seal on the agreement. It was a bilateral understanding to enable the tripartite arrangements (between Delhi, the Chogyal and the political parties) to be worked out. That would be the final agreement.

Kewal Singh left asking us to sound the political parties on the proposed arrangements. As anticipated, the issue of reserved subjects like home, finance and general administration was raised. They felt that unless all the powers are vested with the elected government, the Chogyal would gradually erode the system and the Chief Executive like the earlier Dewans, would be of no consequence. Kewal Singh was informed of this. A new draft was prepared in the Foreign Office making some minor changes based on the discussions with the leaders. The Foreign Secretary then returned to Gangtok on May 7 with a new draft agreement. When the Chogyal saw it,

he went into fits of anger, though the new one had only given part of the reserved subjects to the elected government with the Chief Executive still retaining the actual authority. On Kewal Singh's assurance that the tripartite agreement was basically the same as of April 23 except for minor variations to satisfy the political parties and should, as such, be treated as a "Public Relations Document", did the Chogyal cool down. But the Chogyal sought an explicit assurance that the Treaty of 1950 will continue to govern Indo-Sikkimese relations and all arrangements would flow out of its provisions. This was accepted. Later the Foreign Office confirmed this stating that the Treaty and any subsequent understandings arrived at would govern these relations. It left many a loopholes for either side to interpret. Neither side except us felt satisfied. The proposed agreement gave all powers to Delhi.

The famous May 8 Agreement<sup>1</sup> was signed at 9 P.M. in the Palace. At first, Kazi and his group refused to go to the Palace. K. C. Pradhan and B.B. Gurung<sup>2</sup> expressed a fear that the Chogyal would poison their liquor! Narbahadur Khatiwada protested on principle and wanted the Chogyal to come to the India House to sign the document. After great persuasion, they trooped into the Palace. Used to years of subservience, they bowed to the Chogyal in reverence and the latter let them have it. He was full of liquor already and surcharged with emotions; he accused the leaders of betrayal and sell-out to India. Sikkim and her people would never forgive them for their treachery. Instead of him, they would now have an Indian Chogyal to rule. They were not worthy of being called Sikkimese having sold their country. None uttered a word as if they were under a spell. The Chogyal's performance was superb. He took out his pen and signed. The others followed including the National Party and Kewal Singh. The Foreign Secretary swallowed all the abuses showered on the political leaders that night but never forgave the Chogyal for this.

The world press flashed the news of this Agreement. Many Indian papers came out with some caustic comments. Some reflected the doubts most of us had in Sikkim. The point of conflict had been shifted from the Chogyal to the Chief Executive. I was greeted by

<sup>1</sup>See Appendix 1.

<sup>2</sup>B.B. Gurung was a seasoned old Nepalese with a reputation of changing his loyalties rather frequently. He was earlier a friend of the Chogyal and few trusted him in his party, having changed his political affiliations several times.

the Chogyal the next day with the words "Welcome Mr. Das, our new Chogyal." It summed up the Agreement. None amongst the political leaders realised then the significance of the shift of power from the Chogyal to Delhi. The Sikkimese officers did and a number of them asked me how the new system was going to function. The Chief Executive would combine the offices of the Speaker of the new Assembly and also head the Government as the Chairman of the Executive Council (later designated as the Council of Ministers). He would virtually be the Chief Minister having his final say in the appointment of the Ministers and the allocation of portfolios. Conflict between him and the Chogyal would be resolved only by Delhi through the Political Officer. I could never understand how our brilliant legal luminaries thought such an arrangement workable. As the Speaker, the Chief Executive would have to give rulings and take note of the legislative and executive omissions. Yet, as Chief Executive he would be holding important portfolios and answerable to the Assembly. How would he answer questions in the Assembly on his departments when he was presiding as the Speaker? None of these questions was answered when I raised them with the Foreign Secretary. His words were "Be tactful and handle the situation. It is the personality that counts." He did not accept my contention that systems were more permanent than personalities.

The Indian press, by and large, hailed the May Agreement as a significant breakthrough. Kazi and his partymen considered it as a major victory against the Chogyal. The Chogyal, knowing that such an arrangement would not work for long, remained a silent spectator for some time. But, he sensed that it was only an eyewash. Delhi, he thought, was preparing for bigger things. He had hoped to get away from this through the April 23 Agreement and an assurance from Kewal Singh that the Treaty remained valid. His first disillusionment came when the May Agreement was placed before the Indian Parliament. He called me and asked the implications. When I told him that this was going to be the basis of the new political arrangements, he blew up. Based on the assurances of the Foreign Secretary, he considered it only a public relations document, treating April 23 Agreement as the valid one. When told that a subsequent agreement on the same issue supersedes the previous one, specially when it was a tripartite agreement and placed before the Indian Parliament, he accused the Foreign Secretary of duplicity

and breach of faith. When Jigdel Densappa<sup>3</sup> intervened to say that he had advised against signing the May Agreement and what I was saying was correct, it made matters worse. The Chogyal lost complete confidence in Kewal Singh and his doubts that Delhi was planning the merger of Sikkim never left him thereafter.

Strangely, whenever Bajpai and I raised the issue of Delhi's ultimate objectives with Kewal Singh, he would go into a shell. I never had an inkling to his mind. Merger was then a dirty word for him. It was only by chance that Narbahadur Khatiwada once mentioned to me as to why was India beating about the bush and does not clearly spell out that merger was the ultimate solution. He would sell the idea to the people and it will be accepted. I did not respond but casually broached the subject with the Kazi. His reply was instantaneous. When the issue was raised by his party in 1946, Delhi let them down. He was not sure of India's position on this now and a second let down would be disastrous for the party. Also, the Chogyal would be the beneficiary if his party even mentioned the word. If Delhi gave full backing, he would take the chance only then. We never discussed the subject again.

Soon, the ethnic issues began to surface. Both the Bhutias and the Lepchas were afraid of the ultimate dominance of the Nepalese. The May Agreement enhanced their fears. They realised that the Chogyal was going to lose all his powers and, therefore, incapable of offering any protection. The only hope lay with Delhi. In keeping with their traditional attitude of leaning towards the centre of power, some old Bhutia leaders began contacting me on the quiet seeking guarantees from Delhi for their community and interests. The Lepchas, having no trust either in the Bhutias or the Nepalese, debated this issue amongst their leaders and the Lepcha officers. One day, they all came to see me and expressed their feelings in very precise and clear terms. The centre of power had shifted to Delhi and, therefore, the Chief Executive would now be the key factor in Sikkim's governance. Yet, sooner or later, the Nepalese will dominate the scene to the detriment of the minorities. If Sikkim remained a

<sup>3</sup>Jigdel Densappa was Secretary to the Chogyal officially but was more of a conscience keeper and a confidant. His father Rai Bahadur Densappa, a well known personality of Sikkim, had served the Chogyal and his father as an adviser. This work had now fallen on the shoulders of his son who was the sole spokesman of the Chogyal in all discussions with Delhi.



separate entity, the Nepalese would take over the Government and the Chief Executive would be forced to govern to their bidding. The Lepchas, having suffered under the Bhutia rule for centuries, would become second class citizens under the Nepalese. They had, therefore, come with two suggestions: Sikkim should be merged with India and centrally governed and Lepchas and Bhutias should be given the privileges of the Scheduled Tribes<sup>4</sup> of India as was done in West Bengal. When I asked if all the Lepcha leaders subscribed to their view, they confirmed it. No one would however give a written memorandum on the issue for fear of being dubbed as traitors. Since it was not within my authority to give any assurances, least of all commitments, I agreed to inform Delhi of their request, which I did.

Narbahadur Khatiwada, as a Nepalese leader, had different reasons to be pro-merger. He realised that if Sikkim remained a separate entity under the May Agreement, the powers of the Chief Executive and the parity between the Nepalese and other communities would prevent Nepalese dominance. He wanted to be "the leader" of the Nepalese exercising all the powers. This could be possible only if Sikkim became a state of India where the parity would have to go under the Indian Constitution and the majority under "one man one vote" system would rule. He would under these conditions, easily capture the leadership of the ruling party and head the Government ultimately.

The Chogyal realised these trends and, as a countermeasure, sought explicit guarantees from the Prime Minister of India assuring Sikkim of its separate identity under the Treaty. As no written assurance came to him and his meeting with the Prime Minister elicited no encouraging response, he became frantic and set about creating rifts amongst the political leaders through money and exploiting nationalistic sentiments. Knowing well that the officers were a key factor in giving advice to the leaders, he used them as emissaries, chief of whom were M. M. Rasailey, the Auditor General, Kunzan Sherab, the Finance Secretary and C. D. Rai, a politician turned civil servant, heading the Publications Department. Of course,

<sup>4</sup>Scheduled Tribes are classified as backward tribes under the Indian Constitution with their special customs and culture. They enjoy certain economic and land rights specially reserved to ensure their development. They also enjoy reservations in jobs.

Jigdel Densappa, his Secretary was in any case his most loyal and devoted supporter throughout. He was the only honest and sincere person amongst them. Karma Topden, the Chief of Security to the Chogyal, was the Intelligence Chief contacting various people and worked upon them. His loyalties were personal to the ruling family and though he was aware of the fruitlessness of these efforts, he remained loyal till the end even when the Chogyal was removed in 1975.

Such were the reactions to the May Agreement amongst the various parties on the Sikkim scene. Bajpai and I often discussed these issues. He genuinely believed that the only viable and lasting solution to Sikkim's problem was a "deal with the Chogyal". This involved shifting the centre of power to Delhi with the Chogyal acting as a constitutional head, seeking guidance and directions from Delhi through the Indian Chief Executive. Despite his dislike for the Chogyal he felt that the Chogyal was the only intelligent and stable factor. It was unfortunate that the Chogyal always misunderstood Bajpai's intentions and accused him throughout of working towards merger. Bajpai only used the political elements to cut the Chogyal to size and reduce his powers to the advantage of Delhi. But the matter went out of his hands when Kewal Singh took personal charge of the situation.

My own views were different. Once Delhi had given assurances to the political leadership of setting up a democratic government, a popularly elected government had to be set up. India, being the world's largest democracy and having always believed in and supported democratic ideals, could not go back on its words. If objectives were different, it should not have supported an anti-Chogyal movement on these lines but confined it to lesser issues of enquiring into the rigging of elections and ensured more economic and political rights for the majority. Our purpose would have been adequately served by posing a serious threat to the Chogyal's position and getting the concessions we wanted. This could have been easily achieved within three days of the threat. To that extent, Bajpai and I agreed. The only difference was in our approach towards Delhi's commitments to the political parties, who I felt could not be let down.

I advised the Chogyal to appreciate three basic issues. India's interests in Sikkim were dominant due to its strategic location and Sikkim, therefore, could never hope to be a sovereign independent

country. Delhi being committed to a democratic form of government, the Chogyal's position would have to be that of a constitutional head. Lastly, in the larger interests of Sikkim and her people, he should settle his differences with the Kazi. I cautioned the Chogyal that his options were closing every day. If he followed my advice, he would not only restore his credibility vis-a-vis Delhi but also emerge as a leader of his own people. I even prepared a policy paper for him. The Chogyal rejected my advice. He still went on accusing Bajpai and Kewal Singh of duplicity and Delhi's desire to destroy him. The political leaders were a bunch of criminals he repeated. He wanted them to be arrested for the crimes committed during the agitation. He could never agree to discuss matters with Kazi or negotiate with him. His approach became an obsession with him and he refused to move in any other direction and left no openings for himself.

# 6

## My Dilemma

The time given to me to restore normalcy, negotiate a political settlement and set up an elected government made my task an unenviable one. With the total break down of the administrative machinery and absence of supporting staff from India, it was a tall order. Sikkimese officers were divided on ethnic lines and almost all were politically aligned. The April agitation had already eroded their credibility and morale. To use them to fulfil the time bound programme was an extremely delicate task. Besides, intelligence on the political front and connected matters was non-existent. The Chogyal had controlled the intelligence set up with his trusted and loyal men. They were of no use to me. For reasons unknown, the Indian intelligence agencies refused to assist me when earlier they fed regular information to the Dewans. My repeated requests for assistance were turned down. They felt they could not expose themselves. Yet, everyone knew them and they were in constant touch with all the political elements.

Despite the invaluable assistance given by the three officers from India and the Central Reserve Police battalion in creating a climate of confidence, it was impossible to cover an area of over two thousand five hundred square miles of the territory and perforce, I had to depend on the local shattered bureaucracy. The Army had already withdrawn its units. Its continued presence would have been an embarrassment. One factor which ultimately came to my rescue was the Sikkimese trait of subservience to authority. The centre of power had shifted to the Chief Executive and self-interest determined the gravitation towards me. There was no parallelism in the exercise of power, all the authority being vested in the Chief Executive. The Sikkimese officers realised this and started functioning under my command. They had confronted a similar situation in 1949 when the Dewan became the supreme authority but the Chogyal

eroded his powers successfully within a short period of three years. Those officers who came too close to the Dewan then suffered. Now they had to keep their options open. The Chogyal, of course, made no secret of his contempt for those who tried to be loyal to me and thereby to the emerging political leadership whose cause I was supporting.

My dilemma was partially resolved by the dual system I evolved in my governance. I strengthened the bureaucracy by delegating powers to them never known before. On the other hand, I involved the politicians in controlling the over-enthusiastic elements who were taking law into their own hands. Officers were assured of full protection irrespective of their loyalties and involved in decision making. They were unused to such exercise of authority but soon began to enjoy their new status. I never questioned their personal loyalty to the Chogyal or others unless this affected their official work. Barring one or two cases where I had to intervene strongly, the rest fell in line and worked as a team. The politicians, on the other hand, enjoyed exercising control over their constituents for the first time. Sponsoring their cases and getting quick response, they strengthened their position. It was a delicate game but proved successful. Amongst the Sikkimese officers, Sherab Kazi, the Chief Secretary was of immense help. Though a Bhutia, he alone amongst the officers made a clear distinction between his duties as a civil servant and his personal feelings. His weakness in intellect was adequately compensated by his loyalty. Being the senior most officer, I protected his position fully. What helped was his non-controvertibility despite his brother being a close relation of the Chogyal.

The most intelligent and difficult officer was M.M. Rasailey, a Nepalese. Close to the Chogyal, he had to be elevated to an innocuous post of Auditor General. He represented that this post was like his counterpart in India which could be only under the head of state. I overruled him saying that Sikkim was not a country and his status was that of an Accountant General of a state in India. He will, therefore, work under me. Generally disliked by his colleagues, my firmness in handling him made the other officers quite happy.

C.D. Rai was of a different culture. Having been a politician and a minister in 1949, he was a latecomer to the civil service. Shrewd and clever, he never let anyone know his true feelings. Ambitious

as he was, sitting on the fence was his forte. Sometimes, he would be with the Chogyal and sometimes seemed to be close to the anti-establishment forces. I kept him at a distance but he never indicated his resentment. Behind the scenes, he was one of the biggest opponents of the new set up.

The dominant group of Pradhans in the civil service and amongst the influential Nepalese, was led by K.C. Pradhan, Conservator of Forests. Well educated and having earlier been a protégé of the Chogyal, he was having his contacts with both the sides. His namesake and brother was a politician and second in command to the Kazi. A cousin, M.P. Pradhan, was the Finance Secretary. The trio were a formidable force but traditionally, the Pradhans were not trusted by other Nepalese. They were fairly cooperative and I had no serious problems.

Jigdel Densappa, though a civil servant, belonged to a different category. Being the Chogyal's Secretary and confidant he represented him in all the political discussions and for all purposes acted as his emissary. I had therefore to deal with him differently but always making the point that as a civil servant he was under my charge. A well educated and clever man, he was head and shoulders above others.

A brief discussion of these personalities highlight the importance of the civil servants in the local hierarchy and how they mattered in the local political scene. They had to be taken note of and that is where my administrative problems arose. The only way I could handle them was to reduce their political leverage and to treat them as civil servants. It was a partial success though I could not prevent their constant contact with the political elements.

On the political front, the first controversial issue that came up was the setting up of an advisory council pending the elections and framing of a new constitution under the May Agreement. There were three political parties on the scene. My proposal to have a fifteen-man council with five representatives from each was strongly objected by the Chogyal and the National Party. They raised the issue of parity between the Bhutia-Lepchas and the Nepalese and questioned the right of the other two parties to nominate ten members. As the advisory council's function was to advise the Chief Executive pending setting up of an elected government, every side had a stake. The Chogyal took the position that the May Agreement did not provide for such an arrangement.

According to him, the State was to be administered by the Chogyal directly through the Chief Executive. After endless discussions which would go into early hours of morning at the Palace, the Chogyal relented. His approval was necessary on all important matters under the Agreement unless overruled on reference to Delhi. This threat worked as in many other cases.

The Council was set up in June 1973 and soon it became a platform for mutual attacks. A stage came when the National Party decided to boycott its proceedings. The issue arose out of the merger of the two anti-Chogyal parties into "Sikkim Congress". They had thus ten seats against five of the National Party who demanded an equal number which was rejected by me on the grounds that there were three parties at the formation of the Council and if any party merged, it did not affect the composition of the Council. It was not a very logical decision but circumstances dictated my decision. National Party's boycott helped me in having only one party to deal with and considerable work was done on the development side in the sadly neglected rural areas. It also gave me a fairly good idea of the aptitude and calibre of the leadership likely to govern Sikkim. It was heartbreaking. Barring Kazi, none had the maturity or the understanding. Narbahadur was the only other who could shape well if he gave up his extreme views. Integrity was also not a virtue amongst them barring three or four. But in Sikkim, corruption was a way of life; for the elite particularly.

The Chogyal became restless. His powers had been reduced and we began to have endless quarrels on matters of day-to-day administration. He felt that all powers of the Chief Executive must flow out of him. Except on important policy matters, no other required his approval under the Agreement. I had exercised far more powers in my earlier assignments. For the Chogyal even the delegation of powers to my subordinates was an important matter needing his consent. Before I joined, he had centralised all the administrative powers under him and had gone to such absurd limits where even repairs to government vehicles could only be sanctioned by him. The financial powers of such a senior officer like the Chief Secretary were limited to a paltry sum of rupees three hundred (thirty dollars) and every case beyond that had to go to the Chogyal for approval. Yet, the Chogyal equated his senior officers to the top most civil servants in India. It was a sight to see these officers staying in five star hotels in Delhi on tour without

even getting an access to even middle level officers of the Government of India. And who paid for this luxury? It was an Indian subsidy to the revenue budget of Sikkim!

Late one night, I had a showdown. I told him he needed a senior clerk as the Chief Executive and I was not the one qualified for that. If he felt upset at my decisions, he should request Delhi to find a substitute. I offered to resign. He knew he had no powers to change me and he quickly cooled down. Nevertheless, I made a formal request to the Foreign Secretary that in view of the situation having stabilised in Sikkim, I should be relieved. My request was turned down.

From the very beginning of the agitation, the Chogyal had believed that he still enjoyed the confidence of his people. He wanted to tour round the State and convince his people how a few misguided elements were acting to the detriment of Sikkim. He was wrong on both counts. Controlling the people meant using force through his police and the Sikkim Guards,<sup>1</sup> a small para-military force trained by the Indian Army. Exposure of the few meant arresting the political leaders. Both were unacceptable. He pressed for going on tour to the Nepalese areas to which I could not object. I, however, cautioned him that the mood of the people in these areas was hostile and he would face violent crowds. Disbelieving it, he sent his own trusted men in advance to prepare for the visit to the West and South. They were almost lynched and, but for the intervention of the Central Reserve Police, they would have been killed. He insisted on my accompanying him on this tour. The political leaders advised against it saying that they could not guarantee our safety. I was blunt with them. If any violence occurred, I had adequate forces to deal with the situation. I had come to govern and the Chogyal's safety and prestige were my concern.

<sup>1</sup>The Sikkim Guards were formed as a Sikkimese para-military unit on the understanding that they would be attached to the Indian Army units in case of need as a symbol of Sikkim's participation in the defence efforts. Consequently, they were trained and commanded by an officer of the Indian Army. Gradually, their role became restricted to that of Palace Guards though the Chogyal took pride in exhibiting them as his mini Army. It had less than 250 members under the direct control of the Chogyal to whom the Indian Army Commander was responsible. Its loyalty was, therefore, to the Chogyal. This elite force was ultimately disbanded in 1975 when Sikkim became an Indian State.



We set out on this most unfortunate tour. Heavy deployment of the CRP became necessary particularly due to the insistence of the Chogyal to be escorted by his Palace Guards who were hated and that too under a Captain who had opened fire on the agitators earlier. Captain Chetri was one of the most hated officers and his accompanying the Chogyal was misunderstood by the people. All through our tour, the Chogyal met with hostile crowds and abusive placards including shoes hung as buntings. No one came to pay homage to him as was the custom in the past. He and I sat together in the car, passed rows and rows of jeering crowds shouting anti-Chogyal slogans. At one place where the placards were very abusive, I had to warn the local leaders. I was bitterly criticised for protecting the Chogyal and accompanying him.

The trip was a disastrous one for the Chogyal. Being used to be received with ceremony and people paying their homage to the ruler, here he was being greeted with abuses and offensive placards. People turned their backs wherever he went. He could not even speak to his people barring half a dozen monks who called on him at Gyezing. I had not visualised such hostility from the people. Perhaps, for the first time, the Chogyal realised that his confidence was crumbling to pieces. He said with tears in his eyes, "I did so much for them all these years. I never realised they had turned against me." I pitied him. In a way, it was the beginning of a change of heart in him and when I said, "I am truly sorry to see this spectacle. I can only assure you of my great personal regard," he clasped my hand and fell silent. We were close to each other for the first time and our dealings became less acrimonious thereafter.

I had neglected the North where a majority of the Bhutias and Lepchas resided. The reception given to me in these places far exceeded the one given in the Nepalese areas of the East, South and West. What shocked me was the appalling conditions of the people here. Even the monasteries, so sacred and part of their life, were crumbling to pieces. I never doled out more relief as I did on this tour. For the first time, people felt their lot would soon improve. Monastic grants were trebled, agricultural loans sanctioned and water supply and irrigation schemes cleared on the site. Many other measures were taken and a development officer located to cover these areas. To this the Chogyal reacted adversely. He called me and accused me of playing politics. I asked him how was

it that he claimed to be the leader of these people when such neglect had occurred over these years. Raising the economic standards of the people was not politics. The Lepchas who produced the largest cash crop of cardamom were the poorest because of exploitation by some of his closest friends who bought the crop in advance at very low prices against loans given at the interest rate of 100 per cent. How could he call it playing politics if this trade was taken over by the State assuring fixed market prices to the growers? There was no answer beyond saying that I had no powers to sanction these schemes. More than the Nepalese, the Bhutia-Lepchas always gravitated towards power and they knew I was the power then. Their reactions were obvious.

By the end of 1973, my "one man" administration had been consolidated and the political scene changed. It almost appeared as if the political leaders wanted this arrangement to continue indefinitely but they knew it could not last and like all politicians they wanted to exercise power. The Chogyal's constant efforts to make the May Agreement fail by putting up rival groups, also made them restless. While I enjoyed exercising power, it was obvious that it could not last long. I could not function as the new Chogyal. It was time that the May Agreement was implemented at the earliest and the new leadership established. Enough time had been wasted on semantics and fruitless discussions. So, we entered the most crucial phase of political action.

## The Elections

The May Agreement envisaged that the elections be held under the aegis of the Chief Election Commissioner of India. From May to December 1973, we had not initiated any positive action to hold the elections. Delhi decided to push the elections through in early 1974. The then Chief Election Commissioner of India, T. Swaminathan, visited Gangtok to hold discussions with the Chogyal and the political parties. Several problems cropped up, the first being the appointment of an election commissioner. The Chogyal wanted a Sikkim nominee under his control. This was not acceptable to the political parties including the National Party who felt that any local man would not be free from pressures. It was agreed to have a senior officer from India who would function directly under the Chief Election Commissioner. A very seasoned and able officer, R. N. Sen Gupta, was posted whose handling of the elections was praised even by the Chogyal.

The other major issues were the delimitation of the constituencies and revision of the electoral rolls. The May Agreement provided for a thirty member Assembly. According to the parity formula, fifteen seats were allotted to the Bhutia-Lepchas and the remaining fifteen to the Nepalese including one for the Scheduled Castes. Soon, both the sides demanded separate seats for the monks, the Scheduled Castes and a caste called the Tsongs, who though Nepalese in origin, claimed to be a distinct ethnic group. Swaminathan had endless discussions with all the parties including the Chogyal but no agreement could be arrived at. As a compromise formula, we decided to offer a package deal. There would be thirty-two members instead of thirty in the new Assembly with two reserved seats—one for the Scheduled Castes and the other for the monasteries. This maintained the parity, the Scheduled Castes being of Nepalese origin and the monk coming from the Bhutia-

Lepcha group. The offer was finally accepted by all the parties. We rejected the claim of the Tsongs as they had always been a part of the Nepalese. Our action in increasing the number of seats was technically wrong unless a fresh tripartite agreement was signed to modify the May Agreement. But, under the prevailing circumstances, these technicalities had no relevance. Later, this was rectified under the new Constitution approved by the Sikkim Assembly.

The electoral rolls were a problem. Prepared under the old rules of the Sikkim Government, they were weighed in favour of the minorities depriving the Nepalese community of a large number of votes. Both sides were keen to enrol as many of their communities as possible. But, they also knew that any reopening of the issue at that time would not only lead to a large number of fictitious claims being made on the grounds of citizenship but also delay the elections. It was finally agreed that the old electoral rolls should form the basis for the elections to the new Assembly. Objections alone would be invited under the electoral rules.

The Chief Election Commissioner revisited Sikkim to finalise the delimitation of the constituencies. To fit in the twenty-five per cent ethnic group of Bhutia-Lepchas into fifty per cent of the seats was a delicate problem. Excepting six constituencies in the North and the capital, the rest were all Nepalese majority areas. After a great deal of debate and discussions, the earlier constituencies were sub-divided and split to accommodate fifteen seats for the minorities, the sixteenth seat for the monks posing no problem. The elections were announced for April 1974.

Another issue cropped up on conduct of the poll. None of the parties wanted the local staff to handle the elections or man the polling booths because of their personal and ethnic loyalties. We had to have over a hundred trained polling officers and at least four returning officers. With great difficulty, we were able to collect these people from India and deploy them despite the very difficult terrain.

In times of adversity, the mind sometimes turns towards self-destruction. That is what happened to the Chogyal. Each of his actions contributed finally to his ouster. One of these was his decision to form a new party on the eve of the elections. Though the National Party was basically his creation, it had, over the years, acquired a political base in Sikkim's post-1947 history. In spite of the events of April 1973, which had shaken it badly, it still had some old and

well known political figures who had retired from active politics but commanded the respect of an important segment of Sikkim's population. Even Kazi and some of the older anti-establishment leaders respected them. The Chogyal first chose to set up a youth wing of this party called the Youth Pioneers under the leadership of his niece Sodarla.<sup>1</sup>

These Pioneers were a bunch of discredited hoodlums even in the eyes of the Chogyal's supporters. And when they indulged in drunken brawls and strong arm tactics, their credibility went down totally. Being associated with the Palace and consequently the Chogyal and his sister Cocoola, the National Party leaders were disheartened and gave up all serious efforts to fight the elections. Realising the failure of the Youth Pioneers and apathy of the National Party, the Chogyal set up a new party called the Peoples' Democratic Party. It was led by some dissipated inconsequential Bhutias and Nepalese. The worst was when these leaders came into conflict on the same election platform on issues like parity or the Chogyal's future role.

Realising the inherent dangers of being completely wiped out, the old and respected Bhutia leaders came to plead with me to persuade the Chogyal to meet the Kazi. They realised that the only safeguard against Nepalese domination in the future would be the Kazi. Kazi himself felt that to avoid such a situation, some senior and respected Bhutia and Nepalese leaders from the opposite side should stand for elections. Both Bajpai and I were also of the same view. I had a detailed discussion with the Chogyal on this. He first denied his links with the new Party despite his own brother-in-law heading it. Then he sought to discredit the National Party leaders who could have come to his rescue. Disheartened, none of these leaders contested the elections.

Knowing Kazi's worry and my own feeling that the election of some of the respected political elements from the minority communities was vital for Sikkim's political stability, I called a few of them and discussed these issues. I even called Sonam Gyatso<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Sodarla was the eldest daughter of Chogyal's sister Cocoola. An interior decorator by profession, she had no political base or experience. The Youth Pioneers, whom she headed, consisted mostly of young Bhutia boys and girls who were either taxi drivers or petty shopkeepers.

<sup>2</sup>Sonam Gyatso was earlier married to the Chogyal's second sister. He was a business man by profession and had no political base. But his own standing amongst the Sikkimese was high.

Chogyal's brother-in-law and leader of the new People's Party. The latter admitted that he had been forced into an embarrassing situation by the Chogyal having to associate with the most undesirable elements in the new party. His personal loyalty to the Chogyal precluded any other choice. The other leaders were agreeable to stand but wanted unopposed election. Kazi could not accept this unless they joined his party. In case they chose to stand as independent candidates, he was prepared to put non-entities from his side assuring them an easy victory. Even this was courageous on Kazi's part to offer. But in the larger interests, he was prepared to take such a risk with his supporters. It was unfortunate that these leaders backed out.

The People's Democratic Party set up the largest number of candidates but it failed to win a single seat. The only opposition candidate who won was from the National Party which fought half-heartedly. If Chogyal had not set up candidates from the People's Party against the National Party in the predominantly Bhutia areas of the North and the Gangtok town, at least three more opposition candidates would have been easily elected to the Assembly on National Party ticket.

I had very much hoped and expected that at least eight to ten seats would go to the opposition to have a stable and effective parliamentary system. This would also ensure the preservice of a cultural and political balance so necessary for Sikkim. But, the election results surprised all including the Kazi. Kazi's party swept the polls winning thirty-one out of the thirty-two seats. There was no allegation then, even by the Chogyal, of any rigging of the polls. Press parties from India and abroad covered the polling in almost all the districts. In fact, the Chogyal complimented the Election Commissioner Sen Gupta on the fair conduct of the elections. Not a single election petition was filed. Much later, the Chogyal and some of his friends alleged that the elections were rigged. Barring the fact that Delhi's support to Kazi was known to the voters, not a single case of malpractice in the polling was either alleged or brought to the notice of the Election Commissioner.

There was no leader of Kazi's stature on the scene. The battle was between the Kazi and the Chogyal. Instinctively, people gravitated towards Kazi knowing well that the Chogyal was a setting sun. Besides the hostility of the Nepalese and a substantial number of Lepchas, the erosion of the Chogyal's authority and Delhi's support to the Kazi, saw the complete defeat of the pro-Chogyal elements.

Kazi, himself being a Bhutia and partly Lepcha, also helped in dividing the Bhutia votes. The wrong moves made by the Chogyal in putting up a new party and his refusal to treat the Kazi as the only balancing factor amongst the three communities, were crucial mistakes. My efforts, to bring about some realisation of this by the Chogyal, failed primarily because my bonafides were suspect with him.

The results were a clear indication of the mood then prevailing. The Chogyal was both the secular and the religious head. But, even the monks ditched him by electing a Sikkim Congress candidate. The Kazi emerged as the strong man and those sitting on the fence finally turned towards him as a man destined to rule Sikkim. The Kazini banned so far from entering Sikkim, made a triumphant return. The Chogyal in his hour of defeat did not forget his graces. He invited all the newly elected members for a generous feast and hugged and kissed the Kazini, his mortal enemy.

The election results were a final blow to the Chogyal. He stood isolated and shattered. The inevitability of his playing a constitutional role dawned on him finally but his inherent weakness lay in not accepting the obvious. He appeared to be reconciled to the new situation but, behind the scenes, he began subverting the loyalty of Kazi's supporters. He certainly knew more about the character of some which we were not aware of so well. However, he failed to realise one basic fact. His confrontation was no more with the Kazi but with Delhi which had the strength to deal with all situations. Over the years he had come to believe that Delhi lacked the tenacity to pursue a matter to its logical conclusion and having experienced the contradictions in Delhi's establishment at the senior most levels, he still hoped to sway a few to his side. He decided to give a fight. But, it was a different Delhi he was dealing with.

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## The Crucial Resolution

There was never a dull day. One problem had barely been resolved when the next cropped up. As Chief Executive, one could never escape them. Hardly had the dust settled down on the elections when the question of administering the oath to the Assembly members came up along with my oath of office as the Assembly's President. Barring me and the lone Opposition member, none others were willing to go to the Palace monastery to be ordained under the traditional Buddhist style.<sup>1</sup> Kazi demanded that the oath be administered by me in the Assembly precincts as was the normal legislative practice elsewhere. The Chogyal was naturally opposed to a break in tradition. Knowing well that such an opposition was in keeping with the general political environment then prevailing, Bajpai and I had to find a solution. I agreed to be ordained as the President of the Assembly in the traditional style. To me such a regalia was always welcomed. In turn, I would then administer the oath to the members in the Assembly Hall.

Then came a bombshell from Kazi's followers. They would boycott the inauguration of the Assembly if the Chogyal were to do it. They wanted the Chief Justice or the Chief Executive to inaugurate. I refused to accept this saying that the Head of Sikkim was the Chogyal and no other person could legally inaugurate the session. Under the old system, the Chogyal not only inaugurated the Sikkim Council but there was no discussion on his address. A vote of thanks was to be moved immediately in his presence. As the new Assembly had not framed its own rules, it was agreed after long debates that the Chogyal would inaugurate but leave the Assembly immediately thereafter. The Members would then debate the address and move a vote of thanks.

<sup>1</sup>Under Sikkimese traditions, oath of office was given in the Palace Monastery under the chanting of the Buddhist scriptures and blessings of the high priests.



I was sworn in on May 10, 1974 as the first President or Speaker of the new Assembly by the Chief Justice in the Tsug-lha-khang monastery in the presence of the Chogyal. Later, I administered the oath to all the members in the Assembly precincts after which the Chogyal delivered his inaugural address. The Chogyal till then had no constraints on expressing his views as would be the case as a constitutional head.<sup>2</sup> But, the Chogyal's address was an exercise in self control in spite of his bitterness. He made Sikkim's status as the keynote of his address when he stated, "We should bear in mind that the future of our country and the survival of our Sikkimese identity rests on the level of our wisdom, maturity and performance."<sup>3</sup>

The Assembly was adjourned to the next day and the Chogyal's address was then debated. I outlined the tasks of the new Assembly in my address by saying, "While the objectives before us are clear, it is my duty as the President to add a word of caution. Any elected body has to work within a particular framework which has a legal sanction. The fundamentals and the legality of the system have been clearly defined by the Agreement of May 8, 1973. No doubt, the details of procedure and the business of the House have not been spelt out in detail. This will have to be a gradual evolutionary process, guided, if necessary, by expert advice. This is not a difficult task so long as the parameters of our functioning are defined, which the May Agreement already contains."<sup>4</sup>

It was necessary to highlight the May 8 Agreement both for the benefit of the Members and the Chogyal in the absence of a regular constitution at that time. All the legislative or administrative functioning would have only the sanction of the Agreement. It fell to my lot to interpret the Agreement in the day to day functioning of the Government.

Kazi Lhendup Dorji was formally designated as Leader of the House. While moving the motion on the vote of thanks, he made two far-reaching and significant points which have had a major bearing

<sup>2</sup>As a constitutional head, he would have had to express the views of the elected government. Since no government had till then been formed nor the new constitution promulgated, the Chogyal was free to express his personal views.

<sup>3</sup>An extract of the Chogyal's inaugural address to the Assembly on May 10, 1974.

<sup>4</sup>See proceedings of the Assembly—Appendix 2.

on the future events in Sikkim. They related to the framing of a new constitution under the May Agreement and Sikkim's participation in the political and economic institutions of India. He moved a formal resolution saying:

“The Assembly accordingly resolves and hereby requests the Government of India to depute immediately a Constitutional Adviser for (i) giving a legal and constitutional framework for the objectives of this Resolution; (ii) defining the powers of the Chogyal, the Chief Executive, the Executive Council and of the Assembly; and (iii) recommending to the Government of India specific proposals for further strengthening Indo-Sikkim relationship and for Sikkim's participation in the political and economic institutions of India, as desired by this Resolution.”

Realising the wider implications of such a Resolution, I gave the lone member of the Opposition, Kalzang Gyasto,<sup>5</sup> the first chance to speak before the voting on the Resolution. When he did not do so, the motion was put to vote having been already seconded. None, including the Opposition member, opposed it. It was passed unanimously. Two days later, Kalzang Gyasto wrote to me in English saying that his support to this Resolution was based on a misunderstanding. He did not know English and could not understand the Resolution. When I drew his attention to the fact that the motion before the House was both in English and Nepalese and his own Resolution on the vote of thanks was in English, how could he now claim a “misunderstanding”. I had specifically asked him in the Assembly to speak on this important subject but instead of opposing it, he supported it. Much later, he admitted that he moved the application on behest of the Chogyal who was furious with him for supporting a Resolution of such far-reaching consequences and patently against the policy of the National Party which he represented. I would give Kalzang Gyatso the benefit of doubt. He and many other Members did not understand the real implications of part three of the Resolution.

This Resolution had far-reaching implications. What could be Sikkim's participation in the economic and political institutions of India without active membership of the related bodies? These could be only the Planning Commission on the economic side and the

<sup>5</sup>Kalzang Gyatso, a Bhutia, was the only candidate to be elected on the National Party ticket.

Parliament on the political. The Planning Commission was already involved in the formulation of Sikkim plans and allocation of funds. "Participation" had a different connotation. Even if it meant closer involvement with the deliberations of the Planning Commission, there could be no such involvement on the political side except through membership of the highest legislative body of India. This could not be possible unless Sikkim was listed amongst the Indian States under the Constitution which was not so. I could not visualise any other political institutions which involved the use of the word "participation".

The Chogyal realised the seriousness and grave implications of this crucial clause. He was convinced that all this was a prelude to Sikkim's ultimate merger with India. It was for the first time that he realised his mistake in not coming to a settlement with the Kazi but by then it was already too late. He decided to give a fight through public demonstrations on the one hand and seeking a meeting with the Prime Minister on the other. With Mrs. Gandhi, such a position was totally untenable.

In 1979, Narbahadur Khatiwada, the seconder of this famous Resolution, made a public statement that the Political Officer, Bajpai, had misled him. I took part in all the deliberations that took place prior to the moving of the Resolution in the Assembly. It was Narbahadur who amongst all in his party was the prime mover behind the Resolution. Not only did he know the full implications of such a move, he had all the time been suggesting an unequivocal acceptance of the concept of merger. It was Delhi which was dragging its feet and making no commitments. For him to say that he was misled speaks poorly of his political leadership. Kazini, who was the cleverest of all the Sikkim Congress leaders, had vetted the Resolution in the presence of Narbahadur and only after the party had discussed and cleared it that the Kazi moved it before the Assembly. No one could have forced the party to take a step of such far-reaching consequences nor would the party have dared to seek such an arrangement unless it had the full backing of the people behind it.

## The Beginning of the End

The Chogyal, who had accepted the May 8 Agreement with great reluctance, had nevertheless reconciled to the consequential changes. But he was confident that in a few years, he would be able to win over his political opponents and subvert the authority of the Chief Executive as he had done with the Dewans earlier where the last of them, a very seasoned Foreign Service Officer, I.S. Chopra, was reduced to the post of the Chief Commissioner, Girl Guides and Scouts. When the Resolution of 1974 seeking Sikkim's participation in the political and economic institutions of India was passed, he immediately believed that the May 8 Agreement was an eyewash and Delhi had nothing short of merger in mind. Besides seeking an immediate interview with the Prime Minister, he set about building an opposition within the Sikkim Congress and sought support amongst the officers and the students.

The Resolution was forwarded to him by me as the Chief Executive. He immediately questioned the legality of the motion on the grounds of its going beyond the provisions of the May 8 Agreement. A copy of the Resolution along with the Chogyal's observation was sent to Delhi. Accepting the request of the Assembly, Delhi sent a constitutional expert with a draft constitution to be presented to the Assembly and to the Chogyal.

The draft did not satisfy any side. I was aghast at the anomalies and unworkability of the provisions. As it stood, every important legislative or executive action would have had to be referred to Delhi for resolving the triangular disputes between the elected leaders, the Chogyal and the Chief Executive. When I pointed out the anomalies to the constitutional expert, he agreed to revise the draft marginally but felt that since the centre of power had moved to Delhi, its direct involvement in every matter was inevitable. He quoted the example of the centrally administered territories.

Kazi, through his partymen, demanded that there should be a Council of Ministers instead of an Executive Council; there should be a regular Speaker elected from amongst the Assembly Members; and the Ministry should control all the portfolios including, Home, Finance and Planning. Meanwhile, the Chogyal had also managed to create dissensions amongst the Sikkim Congress leaders, two of whom were up in arms against the proposed constitution. They demanded a Prime Minister, reduction of the powers of the Chief Executive and a separate and distinct identity for Sikkim. Almost all the Sikkimese officers who were active behind the scenes lent full support to this demand and opposed any participation in the political and economic institutions of India. All of a sudden we found opposition building up from every side. The Chogyal, of course, was up in arms and sought the legal assistance of an Indian lady lawyer, Bhuvaneshwari Devi, threatening even to take the case to the United Nations. He questioned the competence of Delhi to frame a constitution for Sikkim and wanted the whole issue to be decided by a referendum. Having built up considerable opposition to the Resolution and the draft constitution, he pressed for a meeting with the Prime Minister.

After several discussions with the constitutional expert and obtaining Delhi's concurrence, it was agreed to modify the draft. A Council of Ministers was substituted for the Executive Council, the post of a Deputy Speaker was provided and a provision was made to transfer other subjects under the purview of the Assembly on the recommendations of the Government of India. The chapter on association with India included "seek participation and representation for the people of Sikkim in the political institutions of India".

The Assembly was summoned on June 20 to consider the draft constitution.<sup>1</sup> Feelings ran high and we learnt that large scale demonstrations would be organised to prevent the Assembly from meeting. Sikkim Congress leaders R.C. Paudhiyal and N.K. Subedi<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>See Appendix 3.

<sup>2</sup>R.C. Paudhiyal was a young Nepalese leader who was then aspiring to become the leader of the youth wing of the Sikkim Congress and was bitterly opposed to Narbahadur Khatiwada. He subsequently became a Minister but was dismissed when he fell out with Kazi on the Nepalese issue.

N.K. Subedi was an unknown figure till the April 1973 agitation. He came up with the support of the local students in western Sikkim but soon lost his credibility when he was exposed for his secret deals with the Chogyal.

threatened a fast unto death in the Political Office. All efforts to persuade these two leaders to fall in line with Kazi failed. There were heated exchanges with the Political Officer. Kazi sought my good offices to persuade these two to support the proposed constitution. My personal relations with them were fairly good and I had a long session with them. They were adamant on the Prime Minister issue and separate status for Sikkim. I failed to convince them but they were less aggressive and agreed to have a detailed discussion within the party.

The Chogyal succeeded in rallying the officers almost totally to his side. They decided to force their way into the Assembly and physically prevent the Assembly from meeting. Their families and a fairly substantial number of the students joined hands. Before the Assembly session could start, several hundred demonstrators poured in from all sides. Earlier, Bajpai had suggested my imposing a curfew but it was not practicable in the mountains which had so many access points to the Assembly hall that no one could check people moving in. I posted an adequate force around the Assembly.

The demonstrators moved in from three sides and converged on the Assembly. The frontline consisted of civil servants. When the mob tried to approach the entrance, they were cautioned by the magistrate not to move ahead and disperse. They did not obey the orders. A cane charge by the police was ineffective and when the mob tried to force their entry into the Assembly, the police fired tear gas which dispersed the crowd.

It was a painful duty to perform but none could be allowed to prevent a meeting of the Assembly; persuasion failed and force had to be used.

The firing of tear gas not only led to wild accusations by the Chogyal but even Bajpai, who was earlier for stricter action, called this "uncalled for". I was furious. I not only supported the young magistrate but took full responsibility on my shoulders. Hardly a dozen persons had received minor bruises and no one was seriously injured. A big procession was taken out in the evening which abused Bajpai for all the miseries brought on the Sikkimese people. Representatives of the processionists came to see me with a memorandum and very politely, they expressed their protest. R. C. Paudhiyal, who had gone on fast, withdrew his threat and N. K. Subedi disappeared out of panic. The Assembly met in the

evening and suggesting certain amendments approved the draft constitution. My strong action that day, the first and the last, had its desired effect. I was fully supported in this by the Kazi and Narbahadur Khatiwada as well as other party leaders. The officers gave written apologies except M. M. Rasailey, the Auditor General. I relieved him of his duties for breach of the Service Conduct Rules. Two days later, he came to my house accompanied by Narbahadur to apologise. I reinstated him. In Sikkim, people respected authority and I was determined to exercise it. Not a single arrest was made nor any prosecutions launched. I was, therefore, most shocked when Delhi expressed its unhappiness over my action. My only strength then lay in the support I received not only from the political leaders but even those who had for one reason or the other participated in the demonstrations.

Kazi to a degree and the other leaders were considerably shaken up by these events. It goes to the credit of Narbahadur who alone stood up and gathered support for the party's acceptance of the new Constitution. This demoralised the Opposition completely. The Chogyal rushed to Delhi to see the Prime Minister and the Foreign Minister. He was very firmly advised to go along with the views of the Assembly.

On June 24, I forwarded to the Chogyal the resolution of the Assembly on the new Constitution along with the amendments suggested. I also requested him to convene a session of the Assembly at the earliest for the final consideration of the Government of Sikkim Bill incorporating the Constitution. The Chogyal stated in reply :

“The contents of the proceedings have far reaching proposals that affect also the Government of India. It is my intention to discuss the same with the notes we have been preparing on the draft constitution in Delhi. A copy of the proceedings may be forwarded to the Government of India through the Political Officer on our behalf.

As set out in my letter of June 15, 1974 to Her Excellency, the Prime Minister of India, it is necessary that the three major principles that I have mentioned there should be fully safeguarded, viz. the setting up of a democratic institution ensuring the maximum participation of the people in the Government of Sikkim; safeguarding the legitimate interests and responsibilities of Government of India in Sikkim and guaranteeing the separate identity of

Sikkim.”

He advised against calling the Assembly to session. He stated:

“At this stage, I do not think it advisable to hold an immediate meeting of the Assembly in view of the tension prevailing in Gangtok. You are aware I am leaving for Delhi and hope the situation here will remain calm and peaceful so that our talks can be successfully concluded.”

His talks having failed in Delhi, the Chogyal rang me up from there to inform the Assembly of his views on various resolutions passed by it. The Assembly was summoned on June 28, and the Chogyal's views were conveyed to the members. The Assembly after considering them decided to take up the reading of the Bill clause by clause. Both Paudhiyal and Subedi attended this session and voted along with others in favour of the Bill. They freely expressed their views on issues which worried them and these were faithfully recorded in the proceedings.<sup>3</sup> Others also expressed similar views. The Bill was finally approved by the Assembly unanimously, the lone opposition member being absent.

The Chogyal was a disheartened man after his return from Delhi. He had fought at every stage using every bit of his intelligence he could imagine. He failed every time. After all Delhi had decided to ditch him and he had no support internally to make an impact. All his options had closed one by one. The only option open to him was to leave a record that he fought desperately for Sikkim and let history and his people judge him at a suitable time. It was in this mood that he finally decided that all the legal and moral aspects should once again be placed before the Assembly by him and if this final appeal was also to be turned down by the people's representatives, he would give his consent to the Bill already passed. He prepared a detailed note in consultation with his legal adviser Bhuvaneshwari Devi and the Assembly was summoned on July 3 to consider his views.<sup>4</sup> He wanted to come before the House himself and read out his long and well-drafted appeal. The Assembly did not permit him this privilege in spite of my repeated requests. He, therefore, asked me to read it out on his behalf. I did so. The Assembly reiterated its earlier views and rejected the Chogyal's note suo moto.

<sup>3</sup>See Appendix 4 containing the proceedings of the Assembly.

<sup>4</sup>See Appendix 5.



In spite of the road blocks and heavy rains, Kewal Singh landed in Gangtok in the early hours of fourth morning to see the completion of phase two of his strategy. The Chogyal put his seal to the Bill on July 4 and it became an Act<sup>5</sup> which sealed the fate of Sikkim as a separate entity. It goes to the credit of the Chogyal that he in this moment of his biggest defeat, showed no pettiness. He invited all his opponents in the Assembly to witness the signing of his own death warrant. Kewal Singh was elated as he carried a copy of the document back to Delhi. Before he left, I requested him to relieve me of my responsibilities and post a substitute. I was a very tired man. Also, my task was now over. He agreed to do so.

<sup>5</sup>See Appendix 6.

## Associate Status

Though the elections took place in April 1974, the Government could not be formed till July. The circumstances were unusual. Under the May 8 Agreement, there was a provision for an Executive Council to be formed on the Chief Executive's recommendations on the same lines as the pre-1973 Sikkim constitution. While signing the Agreement, there was an understanding with the political parties that a new constitution shall be framed after the Assembly had been set up. It was decided to await the draft constitution which was being prepared in Delhi by an expert. I, therefore, continued to exercise all executive and legislative powers till the new Constitution was promulgated on July 5, under the Government of Sikkim Act.

The new Constitution provided for a Council of Ministers. I had to recommend the names of the Ministers to the Chogyal. Everyone in the Kazi's party who had some importance, became a candidate for Ministership. If their wishes were to be fulfilled, half the Assembly members would have to be accommodated.

I persuaded Kazi to have a small Council of five persons maintaining a parity between the Bhutia-Lepchas and the Nepalese excluding the Chief Minister. We also agreed that the Council shall be expanded to eight later. Narbahadur Khatiwada insisted on becoming a Minister. There was instant opposition to this both from the senior and junior leadership.

This posed a major problem. He deserved a Ministership having been the most active and effective leader of the movement after the Kazi. Yet his domineering attitude and his Nepalese parochialism had upset most. Others were also afraid that he would dominate the political scene as the Kazi's conscience-keeper to the disadvantage of others. The Kazi realised that induction of Narbahadur into the Council at that stage would split his party. He sought my

assistance to dissuade him from insisting on a Ministership. By this time, relations between the Kazi and her adopted son had begun to sour. She managed to build up an opposition to her son within the inner coterie of the Party. The Chogyal who had to approve the names was so hostile to him that it was almost certain that he would reject his inclusion.

I was faced with a very complex situation. Narbahadur's contribution in the agitation had been more than any other leader. He also had a popular base amongst the rural people whom he had promised radical land reforms. But, faced with hostility within the inner group of the Sikkim Congress, I had no alternative but to offer him the post of Parliamentary Secretary to the Chief Minister with the assurance that he would be included in the Council of Ministers which shall be expanded shortly. Very reluctantly he accepted. I was able to finalise the names of the Ministers in consultation with the Kazi as the Chief Minister. It was a crucial mistake not to have honoured the commitment to Narbahadur when the Council was expanded after my departure from Sikkim. It would have prevented many unfortunate developments which took place later. He finally broke away from the Sikkim Congress which weakened the leadership.

As provided under clause 30 of the new Constitution, entitled "Association with Government of India", the Chief Minister made a formal request to me on July 24 to ask Delhi to take suitable action fulfilling the objectives laid down under this clause of the new Constitution. I duly forwarded it to the Chogyal and to Delhi. The request meant the amendment of the Indian Constitution. Sikkimese representation in the Parliament could only be possible if Sikkimese territory became a part of India. The Chogyal discussed the Chief Minister's request with me. He understood the implications. He requested me to draft a letter for the Prime Minister and take it personally to Delhi and plead for him and Sikkim. So far, he had consistently opposed involvement of any Indian in presenting his views to Delhi. He always said, "Sikkim's interests can only be represented through a Sikkimese." Under the new Constitution, I was his Chief Adviser; even earlier, I was his appointee technically and was obliged to render advice, which I did. But he consistently refused to listen to me. When the new Constitution was enforced, he realised how wrong he had been. He now sought my assistance but it was too late. Nevertheless, I agreed to

prepare the letter for the Prime Minister and take it to Delhi.

The letter pleaded for the continuity of Sikkim's separate identity under the 1950 Treaty and May 8 Agreement. The Chogyal also told me that he was prepared to reopen the earlier proposal of T. N. Kaul of association with India and that I should make this offer on his behalf. Knowing how much Kewal Singh was opposed to that proposal, I told the Chogyal how late he was and the chances of reopening the issue were nil. Yet, he wanted me to make an effort leaving the entire matter in my hands. When I discussed this with the Foreign Secretary, the expected rebuff came without any formalities and I conveyed this to the Chogyal on return.

On August 12, the Chief Minister again wrote to me for Delhi's reply to his request of July 24, which I dutifully forwarded to both Delhi and the Chogyal. The Chogyal noted on this letter that he awaited Prime Minister's decision on his letter. Delhi did not wait for long and sent a draft constitutional amendment Bill (Thirty-sixth Amendment Act of 1974) which stated:

“After Article 2 of the Constitution, the following shall be inserted, namely:

2A—Sikkim, which comprises the territories specified in the Tenth Schedule, shall be associated with the Union on the terms and conditions set out in that Schedule.”

The Bill was introduced in the Parliament and was passed with an overwhelming majority and Sikkim became in September 1974 an associate state of India providing her representation in the Indian Parliament.

The associate status was still short of merger and gave a distinct personality to Sikkim compared to the other Indian States. Even the elections of the Sikkimese representatives to the Indian Parliament were to be under the Sikkim's Constitution. The Assembly could also amend Sikkim's Constitution, and as I understood, it could at any time withdraw its representatives from the Parliament. None of these privileges was extended to any other state. The Chogyal's status under the new Constitution still remained intact. These were the plus factors and I tried to convince the Chogyal that no merger had taken place. This was my line with others who came to me in large numbers to understand the implications. Even my Sikkimese valet asked me, “Sir, does this mean I have become an Indian? I hope not.” When a few months later I faced the young Indian and Sikkimese Civil Service Probationers in the National Academy of

Administration at Mussoorie, I was asked the same question and the implications of the new arrangement. I argued the same way before them. The only new point I made was that the new pattern guaranteed equal rights to the Sikkimese on par with the Indians and it opened new opportunities and vistas for the Sikkimese to play a vital role on the Indian scene.

I left Sikkim on September 16, 1974.

## The Merger

When I had visited Delhi in July with the Chogyal's letter to the Prime Minister, I was informed that my request for a transfer had been accepted and B.B. Lal, the then Secretary of the Planning Commission and an erstwhile batchmate of the Chogyal in the Indian Civil Service Course of 1942, had been selected to replace me as the Chief Executive. Bajpai, the Political Officer, too had been transferred and was to be replaced by Gurbachan Singh, another career diplomat. Both B.B. Lal and Gurbachan were to come to Gangtok during our stay and work as our understudies for a brief period. Since B.B. Lal was many years senior to me, it was embarrassing to have him as my understudy. He was therefore designated as the Special Adviser till he took over as Chief Executive. I fixed September 16 as the date of my departure. Kazi and his colleagues were most unhappy at this change and wanted Bajpai and me to stay on. They were unable to persuade either of us. Our task had been completed and it was time to leave.

The most pleasant surprise came to me from the Chogyal who I thought had hated me for being the instrument of his destruction. He was in Delhi and he rang me up pleading that I should stay on and that he was requesting Delhi to keep me in Sikkim. I thanked him profusely but declined. It was his greatness that in spite of all the anguish I caused him, in many ways eroding his authority and position, he should have still thought well of me and even developed a degree of affection. That he continued to have the same feelings till his death is a tribute to his generosity and character. Few would do so under similar conditions.

The farewell given to me was unbelievable. Even those who had suffered owing to my role, in those disturbed conditions and Delhi's policy towards Sikkim, turned out in full strength to say farewell. The streets were full of people all the way, even along the route to the borders of India.

Was merger the next step to be taken? I could not get an answer to this question from Kewal Singh. It had to be a political decision dependent on the will of the Sikkimese people was the only indication I had. But, Kewal Singh anticipated that the Chogyal will not accept the new arrangements easily and may cause problems which the political leadership of Sikkim may not be able to handle. The international reaction was being built up with anti-Indian demonstrations in Nepal and Chinese virulent propaganda. The associate status was a workable concept but left many loopholes to be covered. When the idea of an association which T.N. Kaul suggested giving much better terms had been rejected, there was every likelihood of the present arrangements being sabotaged and weakened despite the majority support of the people. Since Sikkim was now an associate state of India under the Thirty-sixth Constitutional Amendment Act, no aberrations could be permitted. For all practical purposes, the merger had been accomplished though not formally.

Kewal Singh was justified in his assessment of the likely developments in Sikkim. The Chogyal had not reconciled himself to the new arrangements. His American wife, who had settled down in New York, was active amongst the influential circles in the USA. China and Pakistan were vitriolic in their attack on India. Nepal's reactions had been bitter and hostile. Bhutan's controlled silence was an expression of its worry on Indian intentions there. Reactions amongst India's friends had also not been encouraging. The Chogyal drew courage from these developments but he also realised that unless there was a weakening of the new power that ruled Sikkim, the foreign reactions had little relevance by themselves as far as India was concerned. He, therefore, sought to erode the credibility of the Sikkim Congress by creating internal dissensions. Anticipating Delhi's next step and the final one i.e., the merger of Sikkim, he decided to give a fight. His main advisers at this stage were his sister Coocoola and Bhuvaneshwari Devi, the legal expert and his close friend.

The officers and a few old friends of the Chogyal in the Sikkim Congress like K.C. Pradhan became the handy instruments. Once in power, the political leaders had already started quarrelling to share the spoils. B.B. Gurung, an old veteran, was unforgiving for being denied any office. Narbahadur Khatiwada, denied the ministerial chair, was in a fret. K.C. Pradhan always had lurking ambitions

to be the Kazi's successor. These were the expected reactions. What came as a help to them and others was the change in Delhi's attitude in dealing with Sikkim.

A smooth take over and the new status of Sikkim without any serious hurdle had made Delhi complacent. One significant factor was lost sight of. The Chief Executive and consequently Delhi had now replaced the Chogyal as the point of conflict. The style of dealings with the new Ministers had changed. Earlier, the political leaders were given a treatment by the Foreign Office matching those from foreign countries. Being a part of India now, they were of lesser consequence. Any dominating attitude of an Indian official was misunderstood and resented. Kazini, an extremely sensitive lady, began to be resentful of this attitude. Kazi too could not remain unaffected; though he was the only person to realise that without Delhi's support neither he nor any other Sikkimese leader could hope to survive for long and in the ultimate analysis, the Chogyal would be the gainer. Kazini's rupture with her adopted son, Khatiwada, led to anti-Narbahadur forces drawing closer to her and putting all the blame on him for bringing all of them to this stage. What lent support to this view was the role of the Indian advisers in the new Government. Their presence and active involvement in running the affairs of the State, even after a popular Government have been set up, was resented. The Chogyal and the Sikkimese officers fully exploited these sentiments. But, as usual, he overstepped the mark and made serious mistakes which forced Delhi to take steps which the Chogyal wished to prevent.

The first serious indication of these developments came when a memorandum was drafted by some of the important Sikkim Congress leaders under the leadership of K.C. Pradhan, Minister of Agriculture, in which several major demands were made, questioning the bonafides of Delhi. It was alleged that the Kazini was the brain behind this and the pro-Chogyal elements had lent their support to it. Kazi who was on tour was put on the mat by the Political Officer and the Chief Executive and the issue was forced leading to the dismissal of K.C. Pradhan from the Cabinet. Though the crisis passed, it was apparent that things were more serious than what appeared on the surface. Kewal Singh visited Gangtok and made it clear to the Kazi and his colleagues as well as to the Political Officer and the Chief Executive that such grey areas would not be tolerated. Without Delhi's support, the Sikkim Congress



leaders were helpless. P. N. Han's dismissal had the desired effect.

It was the Chogyal who finally provided the opportunity that Kewal Singh was waiting for. He was invited in his personal capacity by the Nepal Government for the coronation of the King. Delhi cleared his visit, but had second thoughts realising that with all the foreign delegations attending the coronation, the Chogyal would do mischief. The Chogyal's departure could not be prevented and Kewal Singh took full advantage of his visit to Nepal. He not only met the Chinese delegation but gave a press conference in Kathmandu criticising Delhi and the Sikkim Congress leaders. He questioned Delhi's motives and the legality of Sikkim's new status.

There was an immediate reaction in Delhi and Gangtok. Kazi came out with a counter-attack on the Chogyal stating that the latter had not reconciled himself to the democratic aspirations of his people and had been playing a destructive role. As such, he had lost the complete confidence of his people and demanded his removal. For Delhi, the Chogyal's contact with the Chinese posed a threat. When the Chogyal returned, he was confronted with demonstrations in the border town of Rangpo, leading to a clash between the Sikkim Guards and the demonstrators. R.C. Paudhial, a prominent Sikkim Congress leader, was badly injured and was removed to the hospital in a serious condition. The anti-Chogyal feelings ran high and even those whom the Chogyal had managed to win over, realised that without supporting the popular mandate which had made Sikkim an associate state, they would stand to lose everything. The new set up had given them power they had never enjoyed and could not afford to lose it. Moreover, the masses were anti-Chogyal and they could not be ignored by them.

The Sikkim Assembly met and passed a resolution on April 10, 1975<sup>1</sup> demanding removal of the Chogyal and merger with India to protect the interests of the people of Sikkim who had chosen a democratic system which could only be protected by meeting these demands. A referendum was organised on April 14, on the issue of merger to seek public opinion. The result went overwhelmingly in favour of the merger. Accepting this verdict, the Indian Parliament agreed to the merger. Exactly after a month, Sikkim became a full fledged State of the Indian Union, closing once for

<sup>1</sup>See Appendix 7.

all the controversial chapter since 1947. What would have been a natural process of integration in 1947, took twenty-eight years to complete. One is reminded of Nehru's words in a different context:

“We may make mistakes and pay for them, but surely the greatest mistake is not to view the whole scheme of things in its entirety, realistically and objectively, and to decide on clear objectives and plans. If once this is done, the next step of complete co-ordination follows much more easily and by coordinated effort can real results be achieved.”

It fell to the lot of his daughter and successor, Mrs. Indira Gandhi, to review the mistakes made in Sikkim and take positive action to modify them. As Rikhi Jaipal, India's Ambassador to the United Nations stated, some countries were active in the UN to embarrass India and when Delhi took certain steps, these countries wanted the whole issue to be debated in the General Assembly. He was against step by step philosophy which gave opportunity to India's enemies to build up an anti-Indian lobby. He advised quick and decisive action. By its very culture, the UN respected decisiveness as the world has seen in many cases. Probably, his views also weighed with the Foreign Office in making up its mind to close the chapter once for all. All credit goes to Mrs. Gandhi and her able Foreign Secretary, Kewal Singh.

With the merger, the historical era of the Political Office came to an end. B.B. Lal, the Chief Executive, took over as the first Governor of Sikkim on April 16, and the affairs of the new State passed on to the Home Ministry. No tears could be shed on the extinction of the Political Office. It had begun to shed its glory of the pre-independence days by eroding its own powers which, in the case of Sikkim, remained valid till the last days. All the anguish of the past years could have been avoided if it had played its part effectively. Perhaps, the contradictions in the Foreign Office and lack of a long term direction were equally responsible. What T.N. Kaul visualised was perhaps an association of the Himalayan kingdoms with India, each retaining its own identity and independence but functioning within the overall guidance and orbit of India in matters of foreign policy and defence. He believed in the ultimate acceptance by the Chinese of such an arrangement, India's special interests in this region being historical and accepted by China by implication. Kewal Singh believed otherwise.

For him, Nepal was an example of erosion of Indian interests. Bhutan's entry into the UN was a blunder. Sikkim having been a part of India prior to India's independence could not be permitted any liberties. When the Chogyal gave him the opportunities to rectify a historical error, he used them fully with the knowledge and consent of the Prime Minister. After all, never had India had such a determined and strong head of government as Mrs. Gandhi. Kaul was an idealist brought up during the Nehru era with a belief in India's intrinsic values which could not be compromised. Kewal Singh was a hard-headed bureaucrat who reacted to situations without attachment. The Political Office's confusion over the years was understandable with such contradictions.

## The Three Hill Tops

Politics in Sikkim revolved around the three hill tops housing the Political Officer, the Chogyal and the Dewan. When the British decided to set up the Political Agency in 1889, in keeping with the role and prestige of the Empire they chose a hill top higher than that of the Maharaja's Palace. This was always a sore point with the Chogyal. The year 1949 saw the emergence of the third power factor with the appointment of an Indian Dewan. He was located on a hill top between the two but lower in height. Their power equation correlated to these locations as if by design. It mattered a lot in Sikkim. As someone said, "If the Political Officer sneezes, it must be heard clearly in the Palace." The breeze of course carried it through the central hill top of the Dewan. This triangle was distorted in due course when the Chogyal very effectively overwhelmed the Dewan's hill top from 1952 onwards. It became a part of the Palace set up and formed the dividing line between the conflicting interests of the Chogyal and the Political Officer. Physically too, the road connecting the Dewan's house to the Residency was demarcated on these lines. The Sikkim Government maintained the road upto the Dewan's house and the remainder was maintained by the Government of India. This sometimes led to awkward situations when a landslide would block the road right at the point of demarcation. These were all post-1947 developments. Prior to that, the highest hill top was the only seat of power. Ridiculous as this may sound, these hill tops reflected the trends of Indo-Sikkimese relationship after 1947.

The first Indian Political Officer carried the day with him as it was too soon for the power equations to develop by then. So did the first Indian Dewan who was posted at a critical time to oversee the administration on behalf of Delhi though technically he was under the Chogyal. But, the very induction of the third element gave the leverage to the Chogyal he was looking for. To post a very senior officer of almost the same seniority and standing as the the Political

Officer, not only gave the Chogyal a stick to lean on but brought the two senior Indians into direct conflict. Though the Political Officer ranked senior, the Dewan had his own hierarchy in the civil service and, for a civil servant, nothing counts more than his official pedigree which determines his style of functioning. The second Dewan not only belonged to this elitist concept, he also happened to be a batch mate of the Chogyal in the Indian Civil Service. The then Political Officer was of different origins and believed more in his role as a messiah than as a political agent of Delhi. The Dewan joined hands with the Chogyal and soon lost his value. The Chogyal enjoyed the scenario as it served his purpose admirably. The Dewan of course became more Sikkimese than the Sikkimese themselves. It earned him no respect of the Chogyal or of the Sikkimese people. The story still prevails in Gangtok that once the Chogyal in a moment of rage, turned the Dewan out from the Palace. Everyone expected a stern reaction from the Dewan. The only reaction was that the Dewan became even more docile. From that day, the Chogyal never looked back and treated all the future Dewans as instruments to lower the Political Officer's authority.

The Chogyal played the game beautifully. He would first honour the Dewan with all the regalia. Once the Dewan became indebted to him, he would raise his ego to a level where the Dewan had to contest the Political Officer's supremacy. Gradually, the Dewan's status and powers would be reduced by the Chogyal when he failed to get the better of the Political Officer and he would then be used solely for the purpose of creating rifts. The third Dewan and the then Political Officer, a new product of the Foreign Service, were not even on speaking terms. Their sarcastic repartees across the table in social gatherings were the subject of continuous gossip and amusement amongst the Sikkimese. What could be more amusing than to see the two top Indian stalwarts quarrelling like street women. Yet, both enjoyed the hospitality and lavish care of the Chogyal: one by virtue of his office as the Political Officer and the other for rendering services to undermine that office.

There was also a third element involved in these goings-on. They were the top bureaucrats and Army brass visiting Sikkim. Entertained lavishly at the Palace, they would be exposed to a long narration of the pettiness and misdeeds of the Political Officer, which, in a few cases were true. While a posture of support to the

Political Officer had to be maintained, the senior officers were gullible enough to swallow a lot from the Chogyal. The Dewans would also be used to spin out a few juicy stories. Sympathy for the Chogyal would gradually develop. The Political Officers were mostly from the Foreign Service and, used to the normal diplomatic life abroad, had hardly the acumen or experience to deal with the affairs of a kingdom steeped in intrigue and guile. For quite a few, Gangtok was a hard posting as is known in foreign service parlance, and one had to undergo this torture to earn a comfortable posting on completing the tenure. They chose different styles to function and exist. These weaknesses were fully exploited by the Chogyal and he managed to obtain concessions after concessions over the years. Some of the Political Officers saw through the game and tried to oppose such moves. But, some of the top bureaucrats in Delhi were too amenable to the charm and persuasion of the Chogyal and his family and the charms were used in full measure.

The fourth Dewan never got either his powers or his title. He was designated as the Principal Administrative Officer and was commonly known as the "PAO saheb." A decent man that he was, he tried to avoid the pitfalls but having been deprived of the sinecure of his office, he had no leverage either way. Thus the agreement arrived at between the Chogyal and the Foreign Office in 1949 on the role of the Dewan petered out without a serious protest from Delhi. If the Political Officer had at that time been restored with his 1947 authority, no one would have shed a tear at the disappearance of the Dewan's Office and the Chogyal's emerging power could have been curbed. But the top hill had by then been reduced in stature and the Palace hill had almost become the chancery to which the Political Officer got accredited. No Sikkimese officer would even accept an invitation to India House without clearance from the Palace when earlier, it was obligatory on all the local personalities to be present on such occasions. The Sikkimese Executive Councillors, who would be no more than members of a Municipal Council in India, began demanding and getting a protocol treatment almost matching the Ministers of a semi-independent state. In Delhi, they would be conducted by an official of the Foreign Office and offered hospitality in the Ashoka Hotel.

In 1969, the Chogyal began thinking of appointing a Prime Minister not only to reduce the role of the Political Officer to that of an Ambassador but also to thereby seek an equivalent status for

Bhutan by implication. The Principal Administrative Officer had completed his tenure by then and Delhi was pressing on the Chogyal to appoint a Dewan in his place. The Chogyal wanted to get rid of the connotations of an Indian State which the title of the Dewan signified. He selected a very senior retired Ambassador of the Indian Foreign Service. This gentleman was well known for his weaknesses and the Chogyal was aware of these. Being senior to the Political Officer in the same service and pliable to the extreme, he would serve the purpose admirably. When the Political Officer pointed this out, the Foreign Office took a written assurance from this officer who stated that he would not only be loyal to the Political Officer but even to his peon! No greater proof was needed to substantiate the man's reputation. As soon as his appointment came through, the Chogyal designated him as the "Sidlon" which in Sikkimese language meant "the Prime Minister". A feeble protest by Delhi had no effect on the Chogyal and very soon all communications to him from the Political Officer carried this title. Yet, it was always stated that Delhi had never accepted this designation.

The inevitable happened. The Sidlon sold himself completely to the Chogyal. It was during his time that the first ever anti-Indian demonstration of India's Independence Day took place in front of the Political Office. However, he failed to obtain any of the advantages for the Chogyal that were expected and his qualities were soon discovered. The Chogyal not only took away all his administrative powers by 1972 but, adding insult to injury, he kept the Sidlon occupied as the Chief Commissioner of the Girl Guides and Boy Scouts. No other senior Indian Officer brought such a disgrace to his office in Sikkim as he did. The last gamble of the Chogyal had also failed.

The third hill lost all its validity till the 1973 agitation revived it to almost unparalleled heights. It not only became the headquarters of the Chogyal's final liquidation in 1975, having become the residence of the Chief Executives, but ultimately became the only hill top to exercise real power when the Chief Minister shifted there finally. The tallest hill top still exercises power on behalf of Delhi but only constitutionally as a Governor of any other Indian State. The next lies in ruins which reflects the glory of the past with the Chogyal as the lone occupant having finally lost the battle of the hills. These hills will always speak of the past history and future interplay of forces in times to come.

## The Post-mortem

Speaking to Jayaprakash Narayan in 1977, Wangchuk, the second son of the Chogyal stated, "India took our body but not our soul." Sikkim's merger was neither a question of the body nor of the soul. It was merely an issue of completing the unfinished chapter of India's integration. The issues were political and not moral. Did Sikkim have an independent identity to India's? The records speak for themselves.

When Claude White was appointed as the first Political Officer of Sikkim in 1889, his charter of duties clearly spelt out that he was to administer the State of Sikkim. In his book *Sikkim and Bhutan* he says:

"The Government of India made a proposal that I should remain in Sikkim with the title of Political Officer and administer the affairs of the State in conjunction with a Council composed of the Chiefs, Dewans, Lamas and Kazis and of which I was to be the President. This proposal I accepted . . . .

"In 1903, when it was decided to send a Mission to Lhasa, I was appointed one of the Commissioners and on conclusion of the Mission, I was placed in charge of our political relations with Bhutan as well as that portion of Tibet which came under the sphere of influence of the Government of India, in addition to my political and administrative work in Sikkim."

The difference in the charter of duties vis-a-vis Sikkim and Bhutan/Tibet spells out clearly Sikkim's status as an Indian State. That this was also accepted by the Chinese is evident by the provisions of the Anglo-Chinese Convention of 1890 which stated:

"It is admitted that the British Government whose protectorate over the Sikkim State is hereby recognised, has direct and exclusive control over the internal administration and foreign relations of that State and except through and with the permission of the



British Government, neither the ruler of the State nor any of its officers shall have official relations of any kind, formal and informal, with any country.”

The boundaries of Sikkim with Tibet were clearly demarcated during the British days in line with other Indian territories. Making a distinction between the status of Bhutan vis-a-vis Sikkim, the British Secretary of State for India stated in 1924:

“Bhutan then is not at present a part of India; the frontier of India runs along the foothills and not as in Sikkim on the main Himalayan range.”

This statement clearly indicated Sikkim’s boundaries with Tibet being the Indian boundary and consequently Sikkim being a part of India. Otherwise she would not have been shown as an Indian State under the Government of India Act of 1935 nor could the Maharaja of Sikkim have been a member of Chamber of Princes.<sup>1</sup> The office of the Political Officer was called the Residency as in other Indian States and this designation remained till as late as 1967.

That the status of the princely state of Sikkim was in fact inferior in a way to other states was evident by the fact that the Political Officer was to directly administer the State which was not so in other cases except in the tribal regions of India. None of these facts can be contested and Sikkim’s status as an Indian State remains undisputed till 1947. As Professor Ram Rahul rightly states in his book *The Himalaya as the Frontier*:

“As a Princely State of India, Sikkim was under the paramountcy of the British Crown. By making Sikkim its protectorate, new India secured for itself rights compatible with Sikkim’s internal autonomy. The Government of India would have been within its rights if absorption of Sikkim into the Indian Union had been contemplated as in the case of other Princely States.”

This view was further corroborated by Sir Olaf Caroe who was the head of the Political Department of the British Indian Government till 1947 dealing with the Indian States.

There must have been, therefore, other reasons for the new Indian Government in 1947 not to have integrated Sikkim under

<sup>1</sup>The Chamber of Princes was a body of rulers of Indian States of which the Maharaja of Sikkim was a member.

the Instrument of Accession<sup>2</sup> which applied equally to all the princely states and that too despite the demand of the largest political party of Sikkim seeking merger with India. The records for that period not having been made public so far, one can only surmise the reasons.

Bhutan and Sikkim had come to be associated as of common origins (migrants from Tibet) and culture despite their distinct legal status. The Indo-Chinese relations being warm, Sikkim posed no danger as a border state. If Nepal and Bhutan could pose no problem, Sikkim was of lesser consequence. The three Himalayan kingdoms being contiguous, they would be ideal as buffer states in the Himalayan region. The Maharaja also argued his case effectively, supported by his National Party of Bhutia-Lepchas, highlighting the distinct culture of Sikkim with its origins being different than other princely states and more akin to Bhutan. Accusing the British of colonising a tiny State, he played on the high ideals of the new India. It was a different India and danger from China had not emerged then. He succeeded in retaining a separate identity for Sikkim and reconciling to a “protectorate” status. Sardar Patel was the only one to visualise a possible threat from China but perhaps, it was felt that the Treaty of 1950 adequately protected Indian interests. India did not visualise then that the Himalayan buffer was going to be as thin as a paper as proved by the events of 1962 when the Sino-Indian war broke out.

The question historians and political analysts would ask—was it necessary to merge Sikkim in 1975 if it was not so in 1947? Perhaps, that is the only relevant question. The other question could be on the legality of Indian intervention in 1973 when the anti-Chogyal agitation broke out. The second can be answered within the legal framework of the 1950 Treaty itself. Under it, good administration ensuring equal rights and social justice for all sections of the Sikkimese people was India’s responsibility. The Political Officer and the Dewan were Government of India’s instruments to ensure peace and stability in Sikkim so necessary for India’s security. If a situation arose where this was threatened, Delhi had full right to intervene under the Treaty. Its intervention in April 1973

<sup>2</sup>When the British transferred power to the new Government in 1947, it was left open to the princely states to accede to the Indian Union, provided for under the Instrument of Accession and under which the States were integrated.

was, therefore, perfectly valid. Setting up a democratic system under the May 8 Agreement was equally valid to fulfil the obligations and responsibilities conferred upon the protecting power. It is the first question alone that needs a satisfactory and convincing answer. For that an analysis of the events from 1947 to 1975 is necessary.

The Treaty of 1950 while preserving Sikkim's distinct identity, clearly envisaged India's political frontiers covering Sikkim. The protectorate concept was based on that. Defence frontiers of India directly covered Sikkim unlike Bhutan and Nepal where separate agreement or understandings were necessary. Internal administration of Sikkim was in any case within the overall purview of Delhi. The Political Office was given the role of Delhi's watchdog to oversee, ensure and implement these basic provisions. The Chogyal was entrusted the responsibility of internal administration but under the overall guidance and control of the Political Officer who was not conducting India's political relations but supervising the implementation of the Treaty provisions implied or specified. India's intervention in 1949 when the first anti-Chogyal movement took place, clearly established her sphere of responsibility and formed the basis of the 1950 Treaty.

Over the years, the Chogyal eroded Delhi's authority inching his way to ultimately seek a revision of the protectorate concept and acquire for Sikkim a status similar to Bhutan and finally independence and sovereignty. Every concession given from a national anthem to a separate flag to the formation of a small military force and treating the Chogyal as head of a government, being received at the airport by our Prime Minister, were leading towards that end. The Political Officer began to be treated as India's Ambassador and the Dewan as a Sikkimese Civil Servant. All this was happening when the Chinese threat loomed large over India's Himalayan belt. The cartographic war by China showing Sikkim as part of Chinese territory despite the Anglo-Chinese Convention of 1890, occupation of Tibet leading to Dalai Lama's escape in 1959 and the Sino-Indian war of 1962 were dangerous portents which made this region extremely vulnerable.

The year 1962 should have made Delhi realise the dangers of erosion of its powers in the Himalayan kingdoms. But, it was a weak Delhi then. The Foreign Office even began to have qualms of conscience on describing Sikkim as a protectorate. Some began to

feel that it smacked of colonialism drawing sarcastic comments in international forums. Unable to find an American parallel to a protectorate concept, they being then the only quotable conscience keepers of democracy for our Foreign Office, an exercise was being undertaken to find a more acceptable nomenclature. Surely Nehru, a champion of the third world and an anti-colonialist in the truest sense must have considered this aspect before accepting this so-called "immoral terminology" for Sikkim. It was India's loss of stature after 1962 that made the Foreign Office lose its balance, and concessions after concessions began to be given when the Chogyal, sensing Delhi's weakness and discomfiture, started making noises and extracted as much as he could, eroding Delhi's responsibilities under the Treaty. Some senior functionaries in Delhi were no less responsible in lending a helping hand. For all practical purposes Sikkim began to be equated with Bhutan in the Political Officer's dealings which the British scrupulously avoided. Between 1950 and 1970, moves by Delhi, some deliberate and others by neglect were leading towards a semi-independent status for Sikkim. Delhi's dealings were not related to a policy but to personalities of the Foreign Secretaries and Political Officers, each with differing views, sometimes carefully nurtured by the love and care bestowed by the Chogyal and his family members.

With the Chogyal's open demand for revision of the Treaty, his secret contacts with the Chinese and Pakistani diplomats, creating a climate of anti-Indianism with his suspected involvement in anti-Indian demonstrations on India's Independence Day celebrations, convinced Delhi of the dangers. Meanwhile, the political parties within Sikkim were becoming increasingly restive with the Chogyal's manipulative elections, suppression of the Nepalese majority and disenchantment with the economic policies. Even his own National Party was getting disillusioned with the Chogyal's coterie of sycophants and time-servers and consequent concentration of political and economic power in the hands of a few persons closely linked to him. India could not continue to be a whipping boy for all the failures and shortcomings. Discontent amongst the populace built up very rapidly, when despite India's massive aid, the beneficiaries were the select few. The political parties took full advantage of the simmering discontent.

Realising the internal dangers and the Chogyal's flirtations with foreign elements inimical to India, T.N. Kaul tried to persuade

the Chogyal to agree to a permanent association with India. A draft document was prepared and the Chogyal was about to put his seal on it when his British legal adviser advised against it. The Chogyal backed out and Kaul never forgave him for that. It was the end of a close friendship built over two decades. Bhutan's joining the United Nations in September 1971, made the Chogyal force the pace of events in terms of his open demand for revision of the Treaty and his increased contacts with the anti-Indian lobbies abroad.

The Chogyal was cautioned several times and told in no uncertain terms of Delhi's total rejection of the demand for the Treaty revision. Mrs. Gandhi, who was hopeful till 1971 of seeing the Chogyal a chastened man after the snubs she gave, became cool and the new Foreign Secretary, Kewal Singh, sensing her mood, began to work out a new strategy of no deals with the Chogyal and asked the Political Officer, Bajpai, to lend support to the mass based anti-Chogyal parties clamouring for a democratic set up. The Chogyal was to be rendered ineffective in due course. This was the year 1972. It is doubtful if any long term policy on Sikkim's association or merger had been decided at that stage. It was, however, clear that the Chogyal had become *persona non grata* with Delhi finally and all the inhibitions of the past had disappeared. This realisation had not dawned on him and he continued to pursue his policy of pushing Delhi hard. He made a fatal error in manipulating the Sikkim elections in 1973, driving his political enemy, Kazi Lhendup Dorji to the wall. He did not even spare his erstwhile business partner, K.C. Pradhan, the leader of the Janata Congress whom he arrested in March 1973. Thus, all his earlier political loyalists like B.B. Gurung, Nakul Pradhan and K.C. Pradhan, who also suffered in the rigged elections, joined hands with the Kazi, who emerged as the sole leader of the oppressed people.

## Was Merger Necessary?

There is no easy answer to this question. One can only say that events within and outside Sikkim forced the issue. Several questions have to be answered to come to this conclusion. Was there a popular uprising against the Chogyal in 1973? What was Delhi's role in this? Could not the provision of the 1950 Treaty have been used to protect India's vital interests? Did the May 8 Agreement not meet the requirements of democratic set up adequately? Finally, what has India gained in the ultimate analysis?

The 1973 movement was undoubtedly a popular uprising. That Delhi lent its full support to the movement is also an undeniable fact. As early as 1949, an uprising had taken place against the Ruler. It was only Delhi's intervention which had saved him then. If there were reasons for a revolt in 1949, there were many more for the people to revolt in 1973. Earlier chapters have clearly revealed the frustrations of the majority. The politics of manipulations, specially in the elections and the economic benefits accruing only to a handful of people had eroded the confidence in the Ruler. What kept the resentment in check was the ambiguous position of Delhi. Pampering of the Chogyal over the years was understood as support to him from the mighty Government of India. It was impossible for people to react unless this support was withdrawn. When this happened in 1973 and the Chogyal made the fatal mistake of rigging the elections in March that year, an immediate cause for reaction by his political opponents was fully exploited. Delhi's support had been assured in full measure. Thousands of Sikkimese poured into the capital and the agitation assumed dimensions beyond the Chogyal's comprehension. Barring one out of the four districts, all came under the control of the agitators. No agitation could be launched by Delhi without the active support of the people. Even at this stage the Chogyal could

have retrieved the situation by accepting all the four demands of the political leaders and taking the wind out of the agitation. He forced the political leaders into Delhi's lap in rejecting the major demand of "one man, one vote". Having no political support of his own, he destroyed all his chances when Delhi ditched him. The only option available to him was to concede the demands which a seasoned and mature politician would have done. But he was not a politician. His strength was derived from Delhi only which he never appreciated nor realised. The first two questions have been answered.

Whether the provisions of the Treaty were adequate to protect India's interests, an answer is obvious from the earlier chapters. Delhi having eroded its position over the years would have found it inconvenient and embarrassing to revert to the 1947 position. It would have meant withdrawal of all past concessions, giving an opportunity to the Chogyal to malign India at all the forums available to him. It would also not serve the interests of the people who wanted a total change in the style of governance.

The power would have rested with the Chogyal which the people did not want. Nor could Delhi be certain of the Chogyal. He had successfully eroded Delhi's authority earlier and could do so again, this time using the democratic forum to become the point of conflict. Sikkim could not have been administered centrally beyond a point. The experiment of the Dewan had failed. So would have been the fate of the Chief Executive. A new arrangement and a lasting one was, therefore, necessary. And this could only be possible by the direct and full support of the masses. The Chogyal had demanded the revision of the Treaty several times. When the agitation broke out, he wanted the Treaty to be preserved and its provisions honoured in full. He used occasions to suit his convenience. He could not, therefore, be trusted.

The May 8 Agreement was evolved within the parameters of the Treaty. It would have been a workable arrangement if all the signatories cooperated. But, the Chogyal's reactions soon after, gave cause for concern. His reluctance in becoming a constitutional head and resistance to transfer the reserved subjects to the elected government made it obvious that the new arrangements would be sabotaged. The political leaders themselves had several reservations. Their distrust of the Chogyal apart, the entire premise of the agitation was to secure full democratic rights. The parity formula and the

role of the Chief Executive precluded the full play of a democratic set up. They wanted the same privileges that an elected government of a state in India enjoyed. When they saw the provisions of the draft constitution framed under the May 8 Agreement, they realised that the new arrangements would be a repetition of the 1949 set up which made them the losers in the ultimate analysis. The very first demand made inside the Assembly was to have a full fledged Council of Ministers and that the Assembly should elect its own Speaker. They wanted the powers of the Chief Executive to be defined.

Experience of the past three decades had clearly taught them one lesson. Delhi, with all its good intentions, allowed arrangements to be tinkered with by vested interests. It was mainly by neglect and lack of consistency in policy. So, they needed a constitutional and legal guarantee to back up the new arrangements. Neither the Treaty nor the May 8 Agreement provided it. The Assembly, therefore, sought participation in the political institutions of India which would enable them to get the rights and privileges under the Indian Constitution. Delhi could not have found a better arrangement and they lent full support to this demand.

This demand could not have come on its own unless the Indian side had been consulted in advance. That all the three ethnic communities had shown an eagerness for a permanent arrangement with Delhi for different reasons could not be denied. For them a separate identity for Sikkim was different than the Chogyal's. Each believed that the Indian Constitution alone could protect their interests and Sikkim would still retain its distinctiveness. International nuances could be understood only by the Chogyal and a few of his officers. The people saw and interpreted the distinctiveness in terms of exercising power within Sikkim without any curbs as imposed by the Chogyal.

Psychologically too, the political leaders and the people were wedded to India. The Nepalese majority had no affinity to the tribal origin of Sikkim, that is the Bhutia-Lepchas. Affinity to Nepal was limited to a few rich families who had intermarried there or had business links. Under the British, Sikkim was an Indian State and the exposure was, therefore, to the Indian environment. The Nepalese also had no love for the so-called Sikkimese language or the Buddhist religion. The Ruler was of Tibetan origin and drew no attachments. The only link to him was limited to his status and title as



the Maharaja of a princely state. Lepchas, the second largest community, had been neglected and suppressed culturally and linguistically ever since the Bhutia invaders came in 1641. In fact, if any community had any cause for attachment to a Sikkimese personality, it should have been the Lepchas who ruled Sikkim before 1641. But then, they had no concept of a nation-state nor was Sikkim known as such then. The Bhutias never permitted the development of their culture and identity linked to Sikkim and forced Buddhism and the Tibetan language on them. Poverty was part of their life and a change in governance made no difference to them. Delhi alone could look after their interests, specially economic. Their brethren across the border in India were much better off. For the Bhutias, the reasons were far more complex. Any Nepalese domination would be suicidal. But, even amongst themselves, the Kazi aristocracy had played economic havoc. The few "haves" amongst them were those close to the Ruler. When they saw the power shifting from the Chogyal to Delhi, they joined the mainstream being assured of their economic and cultural interests fully protected. Religion basically was the main link with the Ruler who in their system headed both the secular and the religious hierarchy. But, this attachment was nowhere near the one Tibetans had for the Dalai Lama. The Bhutia contact with Tibet was limited to the aristocracy in Sikkim who intermarried there and conducted business. The majority of the Bhutias had no attachment to Tibet nor had Sikkim's personality evolved to an extent where they had any significant understanding or involvement in the nationalistic sentiments. The nationalistic sentiments were confined to the educated elite which constituted a very small minority. It is here that the Chogyal failed singularly. He was all through under an illusion that he had created a nationalistic environment amongst his people under his leadership and he could fight his battle from this platform. Delhi thus faced no problem on this issue when the Assembly sought Sikkimese representation and participation in the political institutions of India. Interestingly enough, the nationalistic sentiments came to the surface only after the merger when many mistakes were made by the Home Ministry in the governance of Sikkim through rapid Indianisation of the system and a large influx of Indians. Kazi's leadership began to be questioned only then and when he failed to satisfy the people, he lost all the seats in the 1979 elections.

The May 8 Agreement not having proved satisfactory or adequate

to meet the aspirations of the elected body and the Chogyal's reluctance to the complete acceptance of the devaluation of his powers, Delhi moved more positively towards a closer association of Sikkim with India. The request had come from the Assembly which suited Delhi. Delhi could not have forced this on the elected leaders. One has to see this in the correct perspective. The choice was clear. Either the political parties could have lived with the May 8 Agreement without ever hoping to get out of the feudalistic system which still retained the Chogyal as the head or seek a guaranteed democratic system under the Indian Constitution. The internal compulsions forced the issue and a deliberate choice was made for the latter.

For Delhi, the question was that of a continuous lurking danger in one of its most strategic and sensitive border areas. Even if Sino-Indian relations normalised in the near future, Sikkim's strategic importance would still remain. The political and defence compulsions precluded any erosion of Delhi's authority. The Himalayan kingdoms formed the northern periphery of Indian defence. Nepal had succeeded in making a dent with its balancing game. Bhutan was gradually asserting her newly acquired position to the detriment of India. No such chances could be visualised in Sikkim which in any case had no claims historically or legally to even a semi-independent status. The Chogyal's efforts to seek revision of the Treaty, his contacts with foreign parties detrimental to India's security and his claims to a status for Sikkim similar to Bhutan had clearly brought out the potential dangers of the situation developing in this region. The May 8 Agreement did not cover the possibility of the political parties themselves becoming difficult at a later date and seeking similar privileges for Sikkim. At that time there would be no Chogyal to confront on moral issues of feudalism versus a democratic system. The confrontation with an elected government would have been extremely difficult and embarrassing with India's enemies taking full advantage of her discomfiture. When the opportunity came with the Resolution of the Assembly, Delhi did not have to look back. Being in a strong position with the full backing of the popularly elected Assembly, Delhi's mind was made up to accept the request and make Sikkim an associate state of India. It would be pertinent to point out a friendly caution given by the late King of Bhutan in 1969:

“The way Government of India is pampering the Chogyal will lead to serious consequences sooner than later. Delhi will then have as

a big problem on its hands.”

The King was aware of the goings on in Sikkim including the Chogyal's contacts with foreign parties. Sikkim also provided a buffer between Bhutan and Nepal which the King wanted to be a safe one for Bhutan's own security. Only India could ensure this.

The associate status of the Sikkim served the needs of Delhi as well as the people. The new arrangements protected Indian interests fully and this would have probably lasted but for the serious mistakes made both by the colleagues of Kazi and the Chogyal. The threat to Kazi's Government caused by K. C. Pradhan's questioning the entire premise of the new set up and the Chogyal's reaction in Nepal during his visit there for the coronation, besides the clash that took place on his return, forced the issue of merger. It was clear that so long as Chogyal remained in power even nominally and his attitude to the new arrangements remained hostile, a durable system could not be ensured. Kazi's Government realised the threat which had every chance of escalating. Delhi also opined that India's enemies abroad had not reconciled to the new status and arrangements and they would use every occasion to create problems in future. It became necessary to close the chapter once for all by holding a referendum on the merger issue raised by the Assembly. This served admirably India's interests if the result was in favour. Having already been included in the list of Indian states when Sikkim became an associate state, the merger remained a mere formality. But it needed a popular mandate which came in through a direct reference to the people who overwhelmingly voted in favour of the merger.

Thus the compulsions within and outside left little choice. Merger became necessary on these accounts. That Delhi encouraged it with the support of the people of Sikkim cannot be denied. It suited and served both sides. Besides correcting a historical error of 1947, it served India's interests as it prevented a threat developing in this region. As a full fledged state of the Indian Union, all internal and external factors could be taken care of within the overall national policy. India, therefore, stood to gain from every point of view.

Morarji Desai's statement as Prime Minister that he was against Sikkim's merger reflects the guilt complex of some Indians on moral grounds. The issue was not moral. Judged in the historical perspective or even legally, Sikkim was always a part of India till 1947. The Sikkimese people had wanted a merger then like any other

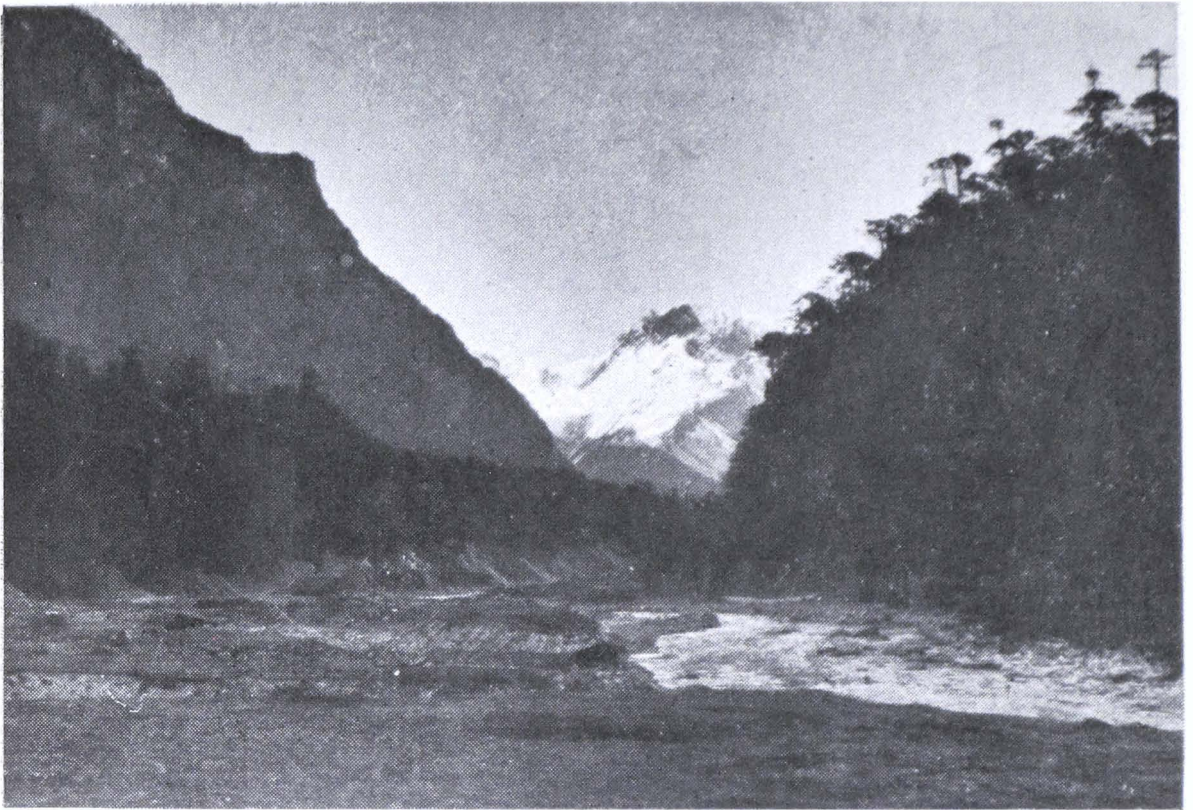
princely state. They expressed the same view in 1975. The moral aspect, therefore, had no relevance. Had Sikkim been an independent entity and India had tried to annex it, one would be with those suffering from a guilt complex. The situation in Sikkim was different. One could also not ignore the very vital national interests which governed Delhi's moves. Sikkim's location and not size was the governing factor. The Chogyal had every right to resist Delhi as he did. No one could deny him this privilege nor honour. But, he chose the wrong grounds. Instead of fighting through his people, he chose first to fight against them and then Delhi.

One fact remains undisputed. Even if Delhi had merger in mind from the very beginning of the agitation, as many believed, the Chogyal could have easily prevented it if he had come to a settlement with his political opponents at the very beginning of the uprising. He misjudged the situation completely and went on making mistakes. At one stage, Delhi had come to accept that. So long as Sikkim's affairs could be administered directly by Delhi through the Chief Executive, it would serve the purpose. It would have protected the Chogyal and his dynasty. However, it is doubtful if such an arrangement would have been durable. The Chogyal was not far too wrong when he repeatedly stressed the point that those who were being supported by Delhi now would become its deadliest enemies one day. One could not substitute the Chogyal with the Chief Executive and get away with it. The next agitation in due course would then have been against Delhi in which the Chogyal and the political parties would have been partners. India's enemies would have exploited the situation fully and posed a threat in a most sensitive region. Delhi probably anticipated these problems and chose the only course available to serve its interests. Opportunities seldom repeat themselves. 1947 offered one which India missed. When it repeated itself in 1975, it was a lucky break and Delhi grabbed it. One, therefore, does not have to seek an answer to the question "was merger necessary?"

What has India gained in the ultimate analysis? It is begging the question. As an Indian State, Sikkim shall always be on the leash whatever may be the problems that might crop up in future.

A question invariably asked was why such a prolonged process was necessary when the issue could have been resolved within a few days by holding a referendum immediately after the uprising. Physically it was possible but tactically, it would have been a



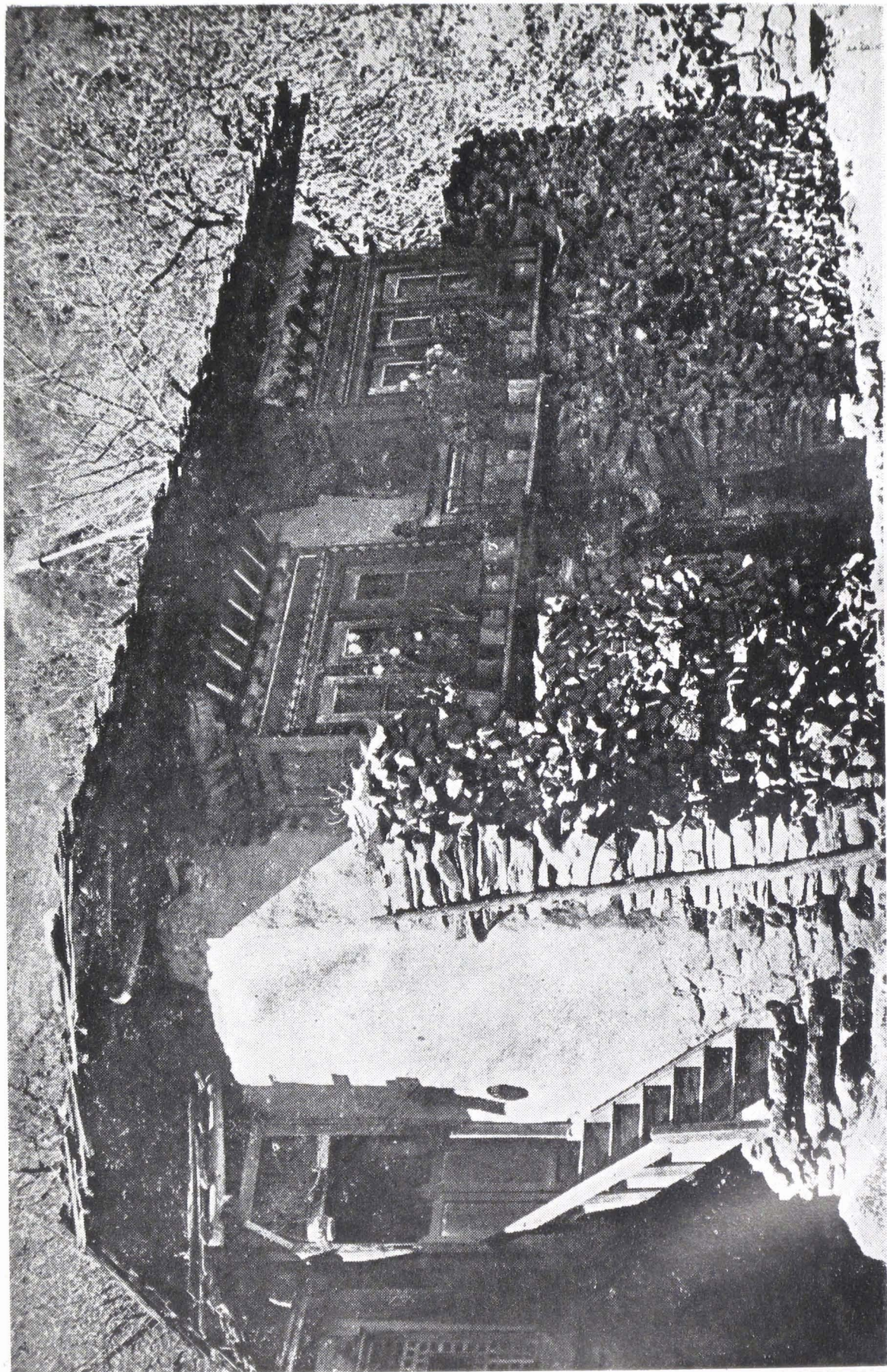


Sikkim's national symbol—the Kanchanjanga.

The Sikkim flag facing Kanchanjanga.

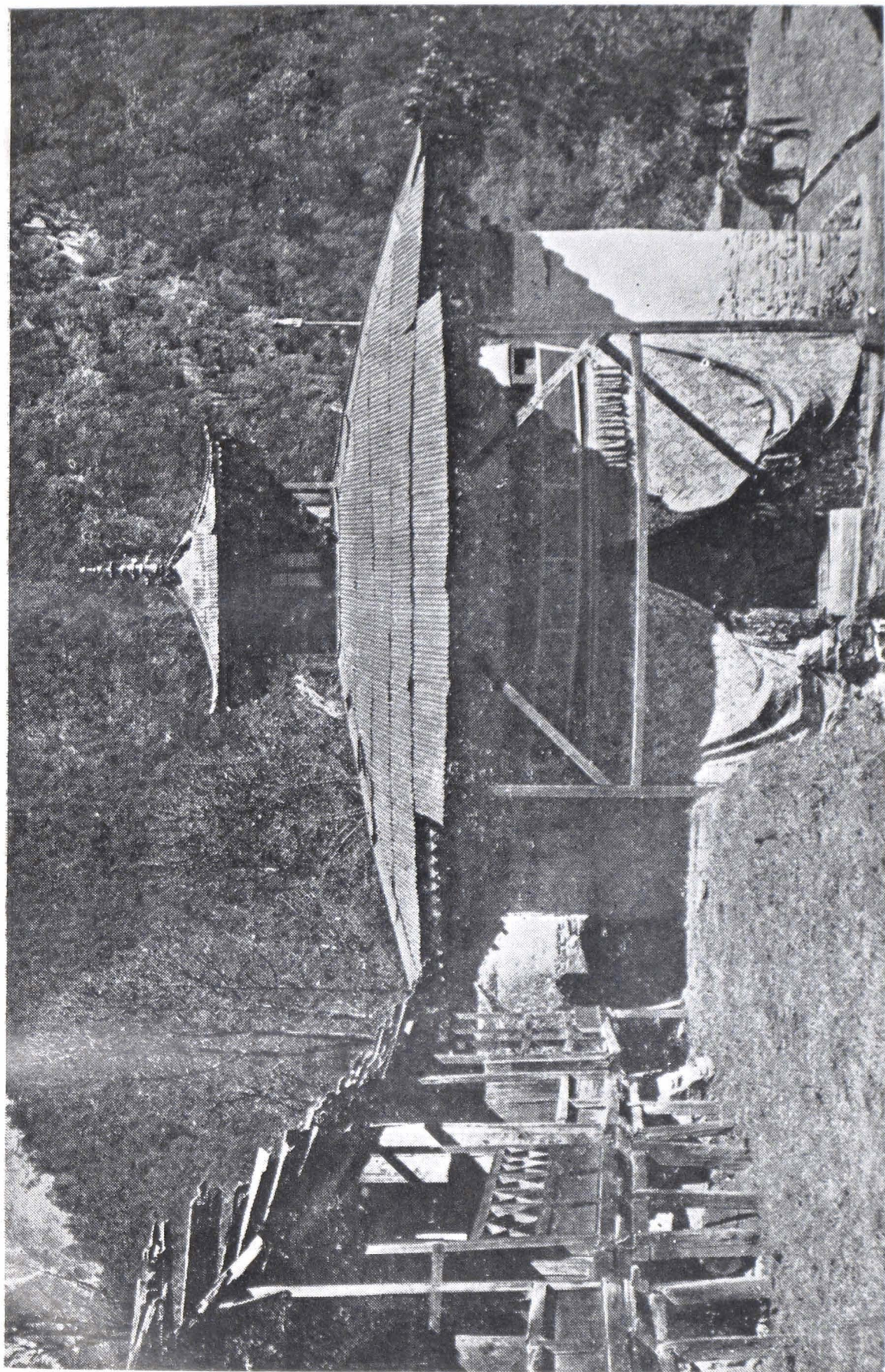






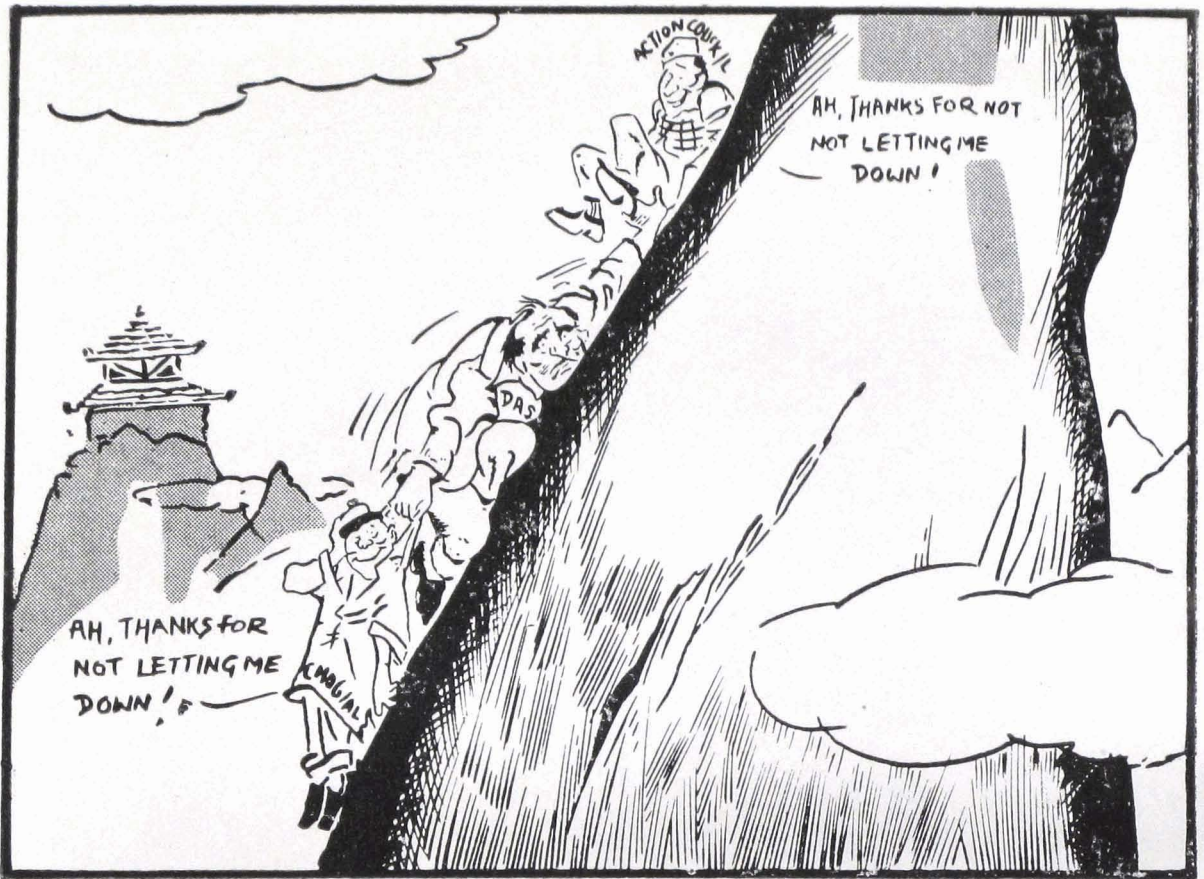
A dilapidated monastery in the North.





The neglected monasteries of the North.





The different reactions in Sikkim on the author's arrival.

Kazini in a moment of triumph after Kazi's victory in the 1974 elections.





The prime actors. (L to R) The author and K.S. Bajpai.



The first meeting of Kazi with the Chogyal after 1973 on the signing of the Government of Sikkim Act of 1974. (L to R) The Foreign Secretary, Kewal Singh, the Chogyal, Kazi and the author.







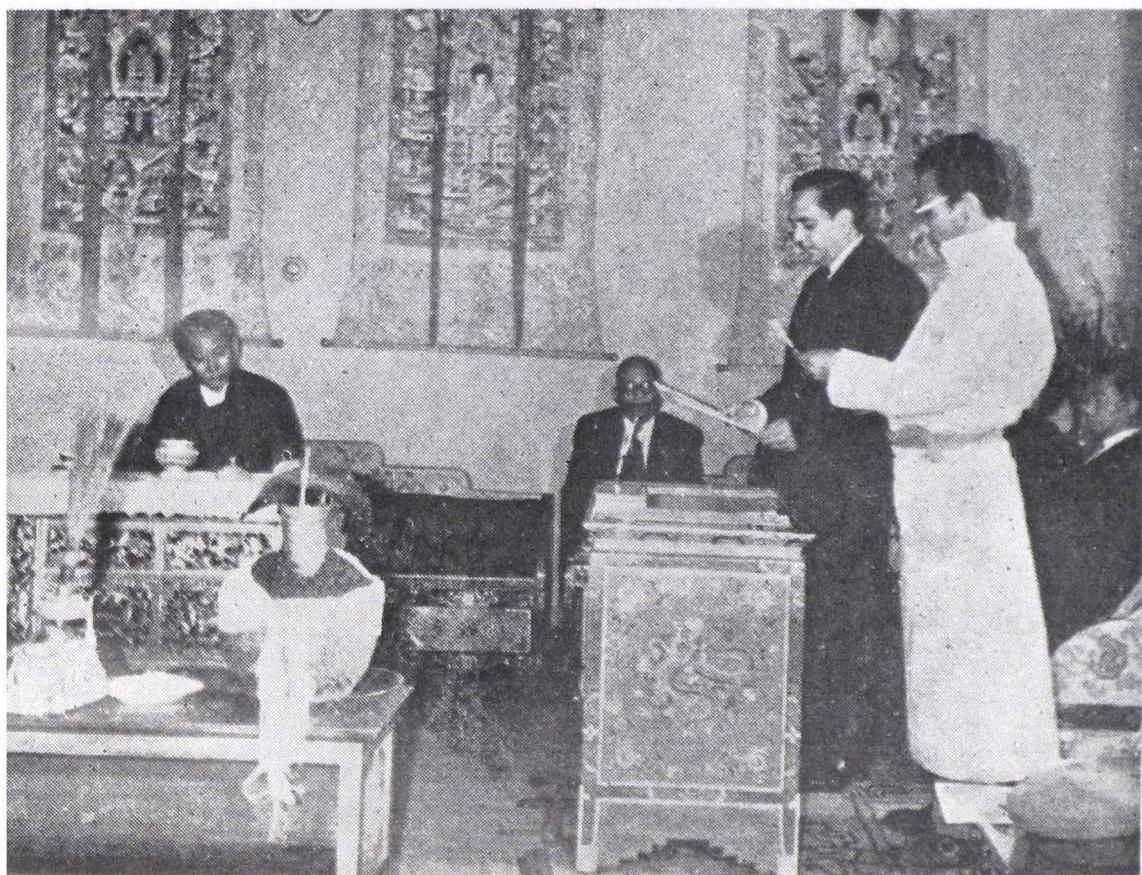
The coming together of two arch enemies—the Chogyal and Kazi Lhendup Dorji on the occasion of the signing ceremony of the new constitution which enabled Sikkim to become an Associate State of India.



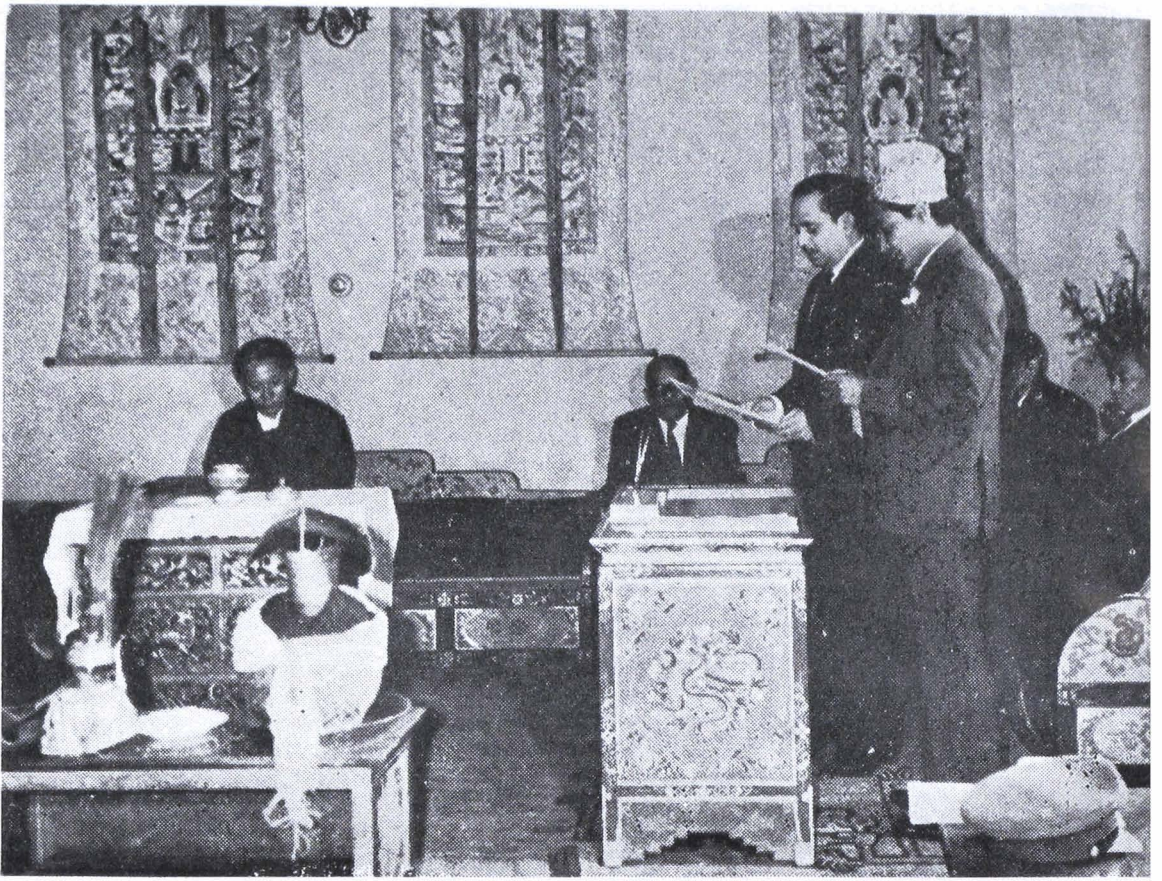


The new Cabinet (1974). (L to R) Dorji Kazi, K.C. Pradhan, Kazi Lhendup Dorji, Renzin Lhepcha and B.P. Dahal.

The author administering the oath of office to the Minister, Dorji Kazi.







The author administering the oath of office to Nepalese Minister, K.C. Pradhan.

The author administering the oath of office to Lhepcha Minister, Renzin Lhepcha.





mistake. When the uprising took place, the issues were totally different. It is also doubtful if Delhi had at that stage made up its mind on the issue of merger. The April agitation was against the Ruler and his misdeeds. That issue had to be resolved first and the reactions outside had to be carefully watched and analysed. India was being criticised even for her intervention which was done on the request of the Chogyal himself within the provisions of the Treaty. Had the issue of merger been raised then, the international reaction would have been severe. It was necessary to establish a new system with a popular mandate and see how it reacted on a closer relationship with India. The initiative had to come from the people whom the Assembly represented. When it came, Delhi had popular mandate to react which it did. Every step subsequently taken was a consequence to the expression of the will of the Assembly which also got formulated by the Chogyal's mistakes lending a helping hand to Delhi to become the friend, philosopher and guide to the political leaders. The process had to be prolonged. Delhi faced many phases of uncertainty which few are aware of. It was unsure of the ultimate outcome and proceeded very cautiously and slowly. It had several options in mind and chose the best when the opportunity came.

## My Role

Fate destined me to be closely linked to the Himalayan kingdoms of Bhutan and Sikkim but with very different roles. Opening the first resident diplomatic Mission<sup>1</sup> in 1968, I saw the evolution of Bhutan in 1971 as a sovereign independent country towards which I had to contribute significantly. In Sikkim I became an instrument of converting a protectorate into a State of India. I did not decide the policies in either case. Yet, in these kingdoms, where personality factor was predominant in every sphere, I was inevitably involved deeply.

Drawing on the goodwill I earned in Bhutan and with my closeness to the Royal family to whom the Chogyal was related, the Chogyal sought the support of the Bhutanese to influence me. Within a few days of my taking over in Sikkim, the King of Bhutan's representative came to see me. Without coming to the point directly, he conveyed the King's request that I should resolve the problem in an amicable manner and with a degree of sympathy and understanding that I displayed in my dealings with Bhutan. I assured that I had these very intentions but the Chogyal will be well-advised to listen to my advice. After a few months, the Queen Mother of Bhutan, Ashi Kesang, visited Gangtok and came to see me. The reason for her visit was an appeal to her by the Chogyal to use her good offices with me and Delhi in protecting his and Sikkim's interests. Chogyal never drew a clear distinction between his interests and that of Sikkim. The Queen Mother, for whom I had great regard and affection, told me how unhappy the Chogyal was. She had advised him to follow my advice knowing fully well that having been a friend of Bhutan, I would be equally good to the Chogyal. I explained how different the issues were and

<sup>1</sup>I was posted to Bhutan first as Special Officer and then as India's representative, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary from 1968 to 1972.

how wrong the Chogyal's approach had been in dealing with his own people and Delhi. There was still time for him to make a realistic assessment. I would be only too happy to advise him and if he listened, I may be able to protect his interests. As for his fears about the Bhutias and Lepchas, representing Sikkim's culture and personality, I would never permit any erosion or extinction of their culture so long as I was dealing with the affairs of Sikkim. Ashi Kesang agreed that the Chogyal was too emotional and head-strong and his policies and approach towards Delhi had been misconceived. She would advise him to seek my advice and was confident that with her experience of me in Bhutan, I would be a true friend. She also invited me to Bhutan saying, "My son (the new King) needs your advice as a friend. Please do come." The Foreign Office advised me against accepting this invitation for fear of embarrassing the position of my successor there. It was a debatable point because, besides allaying the fears of the King on Sikkim, there were other issues related to Indo-Bhutanese relations in which I could have helped both the sides.

The Chogyal, who had been utterly hostile till then, mellowed down slightly. We discussed at length the real issues involved in the prevailing situation. I had a peculiar position officially. Technically, I was an appointee of the Chogyal and thus his subordinate as head of Sikkim's administration. Yet, de facto, I was Delhi's representative, having been appointed to administer Sikkim. It was difficult to reconcile the two extreme positions. Nevertheless, I told the Chogyal that I would, as his Chief Executive, advise him freely and if he disagreed or felt that he wanted me to be replaced, he could request Delhi to do so and I would be the happiest person. He knew and I knew too that such a request would not be accepted though I had made a request to the Foreign Secretary, soon after the May 8 Agreement was signed, to be relieved. I felt that the Chogyal had no confidence in me and for a proper implementation of the Agreement, a non-controversial person would be best suited to handle the situation.

The Chogyal knew of my views and yet he never made a request for my transfer. Our endless arguments went on. He wanted me to prosecute the political leaders who participated in the agitation. I refused. He wanted me to remove the officers sympathetic to the Kazi group. He wanted me to obtain his approval on all matters of administration. He wanted me to counter balance the Political

Officer. I refused. But, all these matters were incidental. His real desire was to use me to destroy his enemies, the political leaders and if that was not acceptable, to bring about a change in Delhi's approach of support to Kazi and his party. When I suggested that Delhi's approach could only be changed if he took the lead in accepting a constitutional position and transferred all his powers to a democratically elected government, he reacted very strongly by saying, "What! Transfer power to these hoodlums? I can not sell Sikkim to these goondas." When I asked him to invite the Kazi for a frank chat, he said, "Never! Kazi is selling Sikkim to India. If he wishes to see me, he can make a request. Kazi does not represent the people. I do."

The day after the Queen Mother of Bhutan had left and the Chogyal was slightly mellowed, I told him in the presence of his Secretary, Jigdel Densappa that his options were closing day by day. Why an intelligent man like him does not try to understand the fundamental change in Delhi's approach and assess rationally what were the real issues instead of harping day in and day out on trivial matters? I was prepared to define in very precise terms Delhi's interests and he had then to evolve his own approach. As the Chogyal, he was not a Bhutia but a Sikkimese and his vast majority of subjects were Nepalese who were against him. If he did not command their support how did he hope to get anything out of Delhi? Could I write down the basic issues he asked? I agreed to do so.

I prepared a policy note the next day. The points made were: (a) Sikkim could never hope to have an independent status; (b) Delhi was committed to support a democratic government in Sikkim; (c) the Chogyal will have to accept the position of a constitutional head; and (d) Sikkim's identity was maintainable within these parameters. I also analysed the past events and the mistakes made leading to the present situation. One significant lesson to learn from these was that no ruler could hope to maintain his position without the full support of his people which the Chogyal did not have. Confrontation with Delhi was futile. Today's Delhi was different from that of the past. On the most sensitive issue of the rights of the indigenous people, the Bhutias and Lepchas, I mentioned that neither community was indigenous and were only earlier settlers and no minority could rule a majority. Parity between the two under the May 8 Agreement was itself a big concession



which would fully protect the interests of the minorities.

The line of action was to seek Delhi's specific and written assurance on preserving Sikkim's identity and conceding voluntarily the setting up of a democratic government under "one man, one vote" system with the Chogyal's role limited to that of a constitutional head. The Chogyal should offer full and unqualified support to the duly elected government. He should also make a commitment that Sikkim would not seek a semi-independent status or revision of the 1950 Treaty.

It was unfortunate that all these points and much more were conceded by the Chogyal only under pressure from his political opponents actively supported by Delhi. At no stage did the Chogyal try to carry his opponents with him. He gave every opportunity to the political leaders and thereby Delhi to reduce his position first to a figurehead and then his final elimination. In fact, the Chogyal knew of Delhi's toughening attitude even a year earlier to the agitation and the support that was being given to the anti-Chogyal political groups. If the Chogyal as an intelligent and shrewd person had conceded the four demands<sup>2</sup> of the political leaders in April itself, Delhi would have been in no position to do anything beyond accepting the arrangements between the two sides. Ultimately, the Chogyal by refusing to come to such an understanding with his opponents and confronting Delhi thereby, lost his rulership and his kingdom. In fact, negotiations between the two sides had begun on April 4, the day of the agitation itself, but broke down on the issue of "one man, one vote" which he had to concede when Delhi intervened.

The Chogyal had all through believed that Delhi's moral values since the Nehru era and sensitivity to any international criticism would prevent her from taking a tough posture. The Chogyal also banked on his foreign contacts for support, particularly in America and also on the Chinese hostility towards India. Sikkim after all had been described earlier by the Chinese as one of the five fingers of her palm. He did not visualise the magnitude of the agitation and hostility of his Nepalese and Lepchas subjects. Till the end, he

<sup>2</sup>The four demands at the time of the April agitation were (a) release of the arrested leaders; (b) enquiring into the rigging of the 1973 Council elections; (c) one man, one vote system of election; and (d) setting up of a democratic system of government.

hoped to retrieve the situation through international reaction and a revolt within the Sikkim Congress. He completely misjudged Delhi's strength and determination.

The Chogyal's own stubborn nature was supplemented by the advice he received from his family members and a small group of officers close to him. Gyalmo, his wife, alone probably anticipated the course of events and she left Sikkim for good on August 16, 1973—sad and disillusioned. This left the field open to the sister who had no love for Gyalmo. Coooola had already caused enough damage by her anti-Indian outburst to the press in April. She now sought to further it by egging on the Chogyal to give a fight. Amongst the four officers who formed the close advisory group, only Jigdel, his secretary was personally loyal and, more than others, emotionally involved. He was ultimately the only one left by his side. His father, the grand old man of Sikkim, Rai Bahadur Densappa, had served two rulers of Sikkim with distinction. Jigdel, though not inheriting the intelligence of his father, was a product of the new generation and extremely able. Acting as Chogyal's emissary on all important matters, he was his conscience keeper. I tried my best to convey through him the writings on the wall. But, he was equally convinced of Delhi's duplicity and righteousness of "the cause" and was consequently the "believer". Honest as he was, unlike others, he sacrificed his personal interests to stand by Chogyal's side.

In my dual role, I tried to maintain a balance without losing sight of the ultimate objective of reducing the Chogyal's powers and setting up of an elected government. When the Chogyal failed to get any satisfaction out of Delhi, either directly or through his emissaries, he desperately sought my help. It was too late and in any case I doubt if my intervention would have changed the course of events. I could only bring about an understanding between him and his opponents which may have given him a degree of respect and status which he totally lost when the merger finally came. Barring Narbahadur Khatiwada, all other political leaders were amenable to my approach. As it happened, it was ultimately Narbahadur who came closer to the Chogyal much later while the others discarded the Chogyal completely. Politics makes strange bedfellows.

My role was made easier by the rapport between me and Bajpai. We acted as a team without any reservations between us.

After two decades, the Political Officer and the administrative head of the Sikkim Government acted in unison. Despite every effort by the Chogyal and some of his advisers to create rifts between us, we remained totally unaffected. We had our disagreements but they were quietly resolved without ever coming to the surface. Besides our close personal friendship, we could never be identified as belonging to any camp. In the past, the Political Officer was Delhi's man and the Dewan, a protégé of the Chogyal. We were both Delhi's men. For the first time, the political parties and the officials had an exposure to such a combination. However much some of them may have disliked it for their own reasons, they realised the futility of intrigues which Sikkimese personalities excelled in with their feudalistic culture.

But it played havoc with our personal lives. In the small town of Gangtok, we were constantly watched and observed and reported upon to each camp. Even our family picnics and outings were subjects of gossip. Some of our local servants trained over the years, were regular messengers on the goings on in our household. Those who have lived in Sikkim alone can appreciate the strains caused by a total lack of privacy. One could never take liberties. The habits of each Political Officer and the Dewan and their weaknesses would reach the ears of everyone of significance in the town. Soon, they would begin to be exploited. For me, it was easier to accept and adapt to this Mongoloid culture having had four years of similar exposure in Bhutan where the privacy was even less sacrosanct. But, Bajpai's four years in Gangtok had begun to take their toll. His predecessor N. B. Menon in three years had a worse time and almost had a breakdown. Such was the environment in which one lived and worked. One could not but admire Claude White's grit and determination in spending eight years in Sikkim consolidating the British hold on Tibet, Bhutan and Sikkim. And he was a civil engineer by profession!

## The Women

I bade her farewell in Gangtok on August 16, 1973. Sarah Lawrence, née Hope Cooke, a young American seeking the adventures of the East, met Prince Palden Thondup Namgyal of Sikkim in 1959 and fell in love. The Prince was indeed charming and well educated. What more could one want if added to it was the lure of a kingdom so remote yet so alluring. And then the prospects of becoming a Maharani which few American women could ever dream of! For the Prince, love apart, the fascination of the white race was an equally compelling factor.

Attractive, educated and well connected, Hope Cooke provided all that Prince Palden wanted in a consort, specially her American origin. The origin itself gave a charisma and made news in the international press. For a tiny remote Himalayan kingdom all this publicity enhanced the image of Sikkim. Prince Palden loved that as it brought Sikkim into instant limelight. The marriage attracted a large foreign presence. When Prince Palden succeeded the throne on his father's death, his coronation was splashed all over the foreign press, specially American. Hope Cooke became the first lady of the realm. Aspiring to be formally titled as the first American Queen of an Asiatic dreamland, she began playing her role in the true style of the newly converted. She acquired not only the dress and graces of the blue blooded Sikkimese royalty, she pretended to be the true embodiment of a Tibetan princess with her inexhaustible capacity to bow and whisper in the softest of tones. One had to beg her pardon several times before one understood her. The story went that only in her private apartments would she occasionally burst out in the true American slang and would let herself go. The change in her was phenomenal. But for her marked freckles and western features, it would have been difficult to distinguish between her and a blue blooded lady of the royalty.

The titles of Maharaja and Maharani were not only inadequate but indicated a subservient status. To be the King and Queen, Sikkim had to become an independent kingdom. Hope Cooke lent full support to her husband in his efforts towards this direction. Within a few years, the Maharaja became the Chogyal, a Tibetan title akin to a King and she the Gyalmo, the Royal Consort. Sikkimese began addressing them Their Majesties, the King and Queen of Sikkim. Foreigners visiting Sikkim too addressed them as such. The Government of India, of course, refused to recognise the titles of King and Queen and treated them as the ruling Maharaja and Maharani of a protectorate of India. The only concession Delhi made was to accept their Tibetan titles of Chogyal and Gyalmo. It was a sore point with them and they strove by every means to promote Sikkim's independence and sovereignty which only brought them into clash with Delhi and led to the events of 1973.

The Chogyal could not have married better to promote his ideas. Hope Cooke realised that while her husband would operate on the political front, she would cover the deeper psychological aspects encompassing the people, specially the young educated. She had to capture their minds through various ways and confront Delhi at the people's level adding strength to the Chogyal's efforts at the official levels. Supported by their foreign friends who included even some diplomats located in Delhi, pressure could be built up all round over a period and concessions could be extracted from the Government of India in a manner which would bring Sikkim at least on par with the semi-sovereign status of Bhutan.

Besides starting with a study of Sikkim's status prior to British advent into India and historical claims on Darjeeling and Sikkimese enclaves in the Chumbi Valley of Tibet under the occupation of China, she took over the supervision of the education in Sikkim. Each textbook for schools was revised in a manner which identified Sikkimese as a distinct and separate race—culturally, ethnically and politically. The aspirations of Sikkimese to have their own flag, their own system of government and separate identity were highlighted in a very subtle manner. The Indian was the villain of the piece and specifically identified as not only totally different to a Sikkimese but as an oppressor through pictorial nuances. One typical picture was of an Indian holding an umbrella with a Sikkimese standing near him getting wet. The title said, "This is an Indian." Closer affinity to Tibetan culture was emphasised though ninety per

cent of the population had not even the remotest connection to this culture. The Sikkimese dialect, an offshoot of the Tibetan language, which had neither a written nor a spoken base, not spoken even by a handful, was nevertheless made the official language.

These were inherent contradictions in the situation and could not be easily reconciled with the realities. With the masses being mostly Nepalese and having no education, Hope Cooke could not penetrate them. The young educated Nepalese close to the Palace and mostly belonging to the few rich families, were cultivated and brain-washed into believing that they had a Sikkimese identity which could come into full play only outside the periphery and domination of India. Yet, these very Nepalese families had close links with Nepal and some of them secretly displayed the King of Nepal's photograph in their homes.

Hope Cooke set up a Youth Study Circle where discussions of a political nature were regularly held. Most of these young members were children of Bhutia families close to the Chogyal. Some of the Lepchas and Nepalese inducted in this circle were only incidental and never close to the inner group. But, this forum was used fairly effectively in brain-washing all the foreign visitors. Outside Sikkim, they were used for anti-Indian propaganda.

She was at her best as a hostess entertaining non-Indians. Such occasions were frequent and used for hitting out at the Indians and Delhi. Senior visiting Indian officials who could be sympathetic to Sikkimese aspirations were always special guests and entertained lavishly. Some "very special" ones stayed as Palace Guests. The husband-wife team acted in perfect coordination with an eye always towards highlighting the injustice of Sikkim being treated as a colony of India. When it came from a person like Hope Cooke, it had the expected impact on the visiting foreigners, particularly the American press.

Hope Cooke had a dual personality. In public, she was an embodiment of Sikkimese culture. Bowing gracefully from the waist and speaking softly, almost in whispers, one was struck by her tremendous adaptability to a total antithesis of the American culture. But, the strain of years of a controlled public behaviour was too much and she began to crack up privately. The marriage itself was not proving too durable and one began to notice a hostility between the husband and wife. Both were heavy drinkers and sometimes emotions could not be controlled in public.

The traditional Sikkimese never took to their foreign Queen. And, of course, Chogyal's sister Coocoola could hardly stand her. With Hope around, Coocoola in spite of her oriental cunning and feline charms, felt cut off. For the common Bhutia-Lepcha, she was an outsider and they were in any case neither well versed with political nuances nor motivated by a new Sikkimese personality which was being propounded. The absence of either a popular political leadership or support of the masses towards this end, confined the new ideas to a very small circle of people located in the capital. This fact was never appreciated by either the Chogyal or the Gyalmo. All their efforts had the atmosphere of an artificiality and taken to be a Palace dictat. Hope Cooke, therefore, failed to cover the grassroots. Also, her ambition to be the Queen of a sovereign country deflected her from the main task of giving a national identity to the heterogeneous people of Sikkim. She was not of the origins which could endear her to the masses.

The teamwork of the husband and wife lasted till it could. When their own relations began to sour and they extended their political confrontation to a combination of the anti-establishment forces and Delhi, they cracked up. Hope Cooke had no permanent stakes as she never could become a Sikkimese at heart. Only the Chogyal had everything to lose being the son of the soil. One could not deny that Hope Cooke very ably supported the Chogyal in all his moves to embarrass Delhi and they extracted many a concession which Delhi should never have conceded. But, in the long run, she became a handicap to him as her foreign origins made her a suspect in the eyes of her own people and Delhi equally. What were his reasons for listening to her advice? I have no doubt in my mind that she provided foreign support behind the scenes. She had built up a small lobby in the United States and amongst a few other foreigners, specially diplomats, whose interests were anti-Indian. What better opportunity could be available to them than the anti-Indian postures of the ruler of a Himalayan kingdom bordering Tibet. Many in India considered Hope Cooke a CIA agent. Some of her activities and American contacts might have given cause for such suspicions, but there was no convincing evidence to substantiate the same.

When the April 1973 agitation got out of hand and the Chogyal's position became hopeless, the first to realise that the end had come was Hope Cooke. It was a one sided battle and while the Chogyal

hoped to retrieve the situation with his experience of an uncertain Delhi of the past, Hope Cooke had no such illusions. For her, the battle was lost. She began preparing herself to quit the scene or was she advised by her friends to quit? I am being cruel in saying but for her, Sikkim had no meaning without her dreams coming true and the marriage was already on the rocks. At this moment of her husband's biggest trial, she deserted him.

The Chogyal pleaded with her to stay but she was adamant. Her excuse was that both her and her children's lives were in danger. It was totally wrong though some of the violent demonstrations near the Palace on Chogyal's birthday could have upset her. Delhi was committed not only to provide full protection which it did but had also assured continuance of the Chogyal's dynasty, though with very limited powers. It was, therefore, obvious that Hope Cooke's departure was planned for other reasons, one of which was certainly the shattering of her dreams to be the Queen of a sovereign country. Love for the Chogyal was only incidental to her ambitions.

When she decided to leave on August 16, 1973 for good, I went to say goodbye to her. She said, "Mr. Das, I am now leaving. This has been a shattering experience. My husband needs sympathy and understanding. Please do look after him." Tears rolled down her cheeks. I did not know her well. She could not have said more. It was all over for her.

Hope Cooke divorced the Chogyal finally in 1979 and as the Chogyal wrote to me later, it was sad but inevitable. No other lady influenced the mind and actions of the Chogyal more than her. To that extent she must share the blame for the events that led to the agitation of 1973 and the ultimate merger of Sikkim in 1975.

Elisa Maria Kazini was a far more interesting and colourful personality. A Belgian by origin and a naturalised Britisher, she landed in the Asiatic dreamland after her youthful years had already ended in Europe. She claimed close friendship with Kemal Ataturk of Turkey and the late Chou En Lai, the Prime Minister of China. I could only confirm the signed photographs of these world personalities displayed in her house. She had been married to a British diplomat in her younger days and may well have met these personalities. With her excellent knowledge of French and a keen interest in history and world events, she must have cultivated people in position. When she came to India in her fifties to teach French in Delhi after the end of her first marriage (one does not know if it



was the first or second), she diverted her attention to the Indian personalities. She did not succeed beyond a point. Perhaps her weakness to speak non-stop, gave little opportunity to her Indian friends who themselves loved to talk. Indians generally like to hear their own voice and less of others. When she met Kazi Lhendup Dorji in Delhi through an Indian political friend, she discovered the ninth wonder of the world. She could talk as much as she wanted to him without any reactions. Besides Kazi's lack of knowledge of English, he spoke very little despite being a politician. But, that itself was hardly a reason for this alliance.

Kazi was an upcoming politician in Sikkim and had good relations with the Congress leaders in India. One such person was H.V. Kamath to whom Elisa Maria was very close. Like Hope Cooke, Elisa too had a lure for things oriental and fascination for the unknown. Kazi himself was an ambitious man and for him, a white skinned consort with a brilliant mind and good contacts was worth an alliance to match his arch enemy, the Chogyal. Elisa's courtship with Kazi remains shrouded in mystery but they decided to get married. The two leading limelights on the Sikkimese political scene, the young Maharaja and a budding politician with an eye on the future, chose their collision course through their foreign wives. The wives took an instant dislike for each other basically because of their dominant characters and ambitions to be the first lady. Elisa could only acquire this right by actively participating in the political struggle against the Chogyal led by Kazi, the emerging anti-establishment leader. There was then no idea or even a remote possibility of Sikkim becoming a part of India. On the contrary, Sikkim was gradually moving out of the protectorate concept to a semi-independent status. Kazi could be the Prime Minister or President of an independent Sikkim and Elisa could then be the first lady. Where else could she get such an opportunity. Sikkim's emerging independence was perhaps the only common link between Hope Cooke and Elisa. But, for that the Chogyal had to be eliminated; politically being the hereditary ruler. So, Elisa entered the political fray with all her characteristic gusto and taking up the cause of the Nepalese masses, she became an acceptable factor without difficulty. Her clever move to adopt a young Nepalese upcoming leader, Narbahadur Khatiwada as her son, lent considerable weight to her political standing. She took the precaution of not coming directly on the scene and acted through her husband

and her adopted son.

With her husband being a Bhutia and her son being a Nepalese, the combination was ideal for the political appeal. However, she soon realised that the Chogyal was too powerful a factor to be reckoned with merely through political opposition in Sikkim. The only way was to win Delhi's support to confront him. When the Chogyal went on making one mistake after another in upsetting Delhi without his people's political support, Elisa, who was commonly known as Kazini (being the Kazi's wife), began to line up support for establishing a pro-Indian democratic set up, reducing the Chogyal to a mere constitutional head. She became the brain trust of the 1973 movement against the Chogyal. As her entry to Sikkim had been banned by the Chogyal, she operated from Kalimpong, a sub-divisional headquarters of Darjeeling district in India. It helped the movement a lot. Residing in India so close to Sikkim, her house in Kalimpong became the operational headquarters for the movement launched in April 1973. All major decisions and important meetings of the Joint Action Committee would take place there. Raids made by the Chogyal's police at Kazi's offices in Sikkim yielded nothing and in fact had the contrary effect on the people psychologically who considered this action as another of Chogyal's oppressive acts to destroy a legitimate movement of the people led by their leader. The Chogyal not being able to do anything in Kalimpong, an Indian territory, nor having any where-withal to keep an eye on the moves being planned there, seethed in anger. He could not accuse Government of India openly of launching a movement against him from an Indian base. At best he could only say that foreign elements were instigating a revolt and Kazi was a stooge in their hands. He called these agents Communists and subversionists posing a threat to India as well as to Sikkim, knowing fully well that there were no Communists. His constant efforts to highlight the danger of outside elements led by Communists from across the border of Darjeeling was to draw the attention of the Indian and foreign press, specially the latter but failed to produce any evidence of which there was none in any case.

Nothing suited Delhi better as this diverted the attention from the obvious Indian support. Elisa took full advantage of the Chogyal's discomfiture. When I met her for the first time in Kalimpong after the May 8 Agreement, one could see the tremendous satisfaction she had derived in having won the first round against the

Chogyal. She considered this as her personal victory giving Kazi and her son only the second place in credit. She was ruthless in her denunciation of the Chogyal and Hope Cooke. Both Kazi and Khatiwada sat as non-entities that evening which I spent with her. Even her remark on Kazi that in her nineteen years of marriage, he had never responded beyond a smile or a "Hmph" elicited no response from the husband. Kazi could only dare tell me in private that his wife talked too much and was "too ambitious". The Kazi was always a pathetic sight in front of his wife.

Like Hope Cooke, Elisa too failed to realise her ambitions and is perhaps more disillusioned today than her arch rival. She chose for herself the second position as the Chief Minister's wife when Sikkim became a State of India in 1975. When Kazi finally lost the elections in 1979, even that position and power was lost to her. She meddled too much in Sikkim politics on Kazi's becoming the Chief Minister and consequently shared more blame for the political and administrative blunders which Kazi made as the Chief Minister and head of the ruling political party which in any case lost its credibility by its frequent mergers with the ruling parties at the Centre. Elisa now lives in seclusion in her magnificent house in Kalimpong, bitter and humiliated. The Chogyal had the last laugh in spite of losing Hope Cooke and his kingdom.

In her late seventies, Elisa is as sharp in her intellect as her tongue. Few had such a colourful past and such opportunities. Success and failures are cyclic but the satisfaction of having had such a full and purposeful life eludes many. To that extent Elisa is one of the few lucky ones, at least she fought, won and lost. Hope Cooke did not even give a fight. Elisa, despite all her faults and her age, dominated the Sikkimese scene for almost a decade and only her memoirs which she is now writing will show how she felt about her own contribution and the satisfaction derived from her very eventful life. Her memoirs will undoubtedly be partisan and pungent. But, they will be a pleasure to read specially her views on people and personalities. Few could match her bite when she speaks about personalities and scandals surrounding them.

The main actor in the Sikkim saga was of course Mrs. Indira Gandhi. I can say with confidence that none amongst the political leaders of India of the past and present could have taken such a decision as she did on the merger of Sikkim. She never gave out her mind but knew exactly what she wanted. When the Chogyal

crossed the barriers of her tolerance, she made up her mind to teach him a lesson and remove the cause of friction in a sensitive area. She of course by her very nature was unforgiving. More than that, she had a sense of destiny. What greater opportunity could come to her than correcting the historical error of 1947 and go down in Indian history as a legendary figure of unmatched grit and determination. The means were secondary and fear of international reactions or opinion of little value so long as she could see it through successfully with the support of the Sikkimese masses. Be it the 1971 Indo-Pak war or explosion of a nuclear device in 1974 or merger of Sikkim in 1975, these would go down in India's post-1947 history as events of great significance. The merger of Sikkim was certainly an act of great courage in the face of the likely response of China and the reactions of the rest of the world. The Chogyal totally misjudged her as did many others in India and abroad. There was no going back for her once she decided to teach him a lesson. Her snubbings in 1971 and 1972 should have alerted the Chogyal but he mistook them for Mrs. Gandhi's usual coldness.

It is an insult to compare Mrs. Gandhi to Hope Cooke or Elisa. They were not a patch on her. All three were ambitious, the only common feature. Mrs. Gandhi had all the cards up her sleeves and her ruthlessness was unmatched. Her reference is only in the context of Sikkim's merger and the decisive role played by her.

It was not only the two foreign wives who played a role in Sikkim politics. There was Princess Coocoola, the Chogyal's sister and Rani Bhuvaneshwari Devi, an Indian advocate who became the Chogyal's legal adviser and conscience keeper when Hope had left and Sikkim was on the point of becoming an associate state of India. Prior to Hope's arrival on the Sikkimese scene and for sometimes even later, the two sisters of the Chogyal, Coocoola and Coola, were the frontliners. Charming and vivacious and gifted with the traditional business instinct of the Tibetans, they cultivated the important Indian officials who mattered. Princess Coola left the scene when she married an Indian. The Chogyal had decreed that having married a foreigner, she lost all citizenship and property rights. The edict applied only to Sikkimese girls. That left Princess Coocoola on the scene. Running a prosperous business from Gangtok and Calcutta, thanks to the favours bestowed by Indian officials charmed by her appealing personality, she wanted to be the main

adviser to the Chogyal even on political matters. The emergence of Hope Cooke on the scene and the instant dislike between the two, curbed her style and spirits. Nevertheless, she continued cultivating her contacts with the senior Indian officials and some foreigners and used them not only for her business deals but also for projecting Sikkimese aspirations. She made virulent attacks on India's support to the 1973 agitation and when Hope Cooke left Sikkim, she came closer to the Chogyal. She could do little then as the curtain was already drawing on the Sikkimese scene and her business instincts warned her to play safe with most of her wealth invested in India.

Rani Bhuvaneshwari Devi did her bit in encouraging the Chogyal to give a fight. As a lawyer, her documentation of Sikkim's case of a distinct and separate personality and the breach of faith by India under the treaty obligations was undoubtedly esoteric. But, where was the forum for her presentation? Not a single member read it or understood it when I placed it before the Assembly. Outside Sikkim, there was no court of appeal. Yet, her perseverance and belief in the justness of the Chogyal's fight even after Sikkim's merger, was commendable.

"The women made the Sikkim scenario utterly romantic," said one of the leading Indian journalists when he visited Sikkim during the days of turmoil. I could not agree more.

## Personalities as I Knew Them

Kazi, in spite of what one may say on Kazini building him up, is a unique personality. Originally a monk like the Chogyal, he had a long standing career as a political leader since 1947. Though not gifted with much intelligence and partly handicapped by his lack of expression, he was the only leader with a mass base. And being acceptable to the vast majority of the Nepalese in spite of being a Bhutia, gave him an unquestioned political credibility. In fact he was the only stabilising factor then in the Sikkimese politics. It is tragic that his position was eroded considerably soon after the merger by none other than the Indian National Congress. While his personality suited the Sikkimese scene, he made a poor impression on the Indian leaders used to a breed of more experienced and sophisticated Chief Ministers. Yet, his capacity to overcome his opponents and anticipate a situation, was his biggest asset. Throughout the agitation, he alone could be trusted and his style of low key manoeuvrings and basic honesty, gave him a credibility even amongst the Chogyal's supporters.

There were several occasions when he would discuss sensitive issues all alone with me. Kazi was basically a very lonely man. One could sense it during such meetings. Once he dropped in late at night asking me to intervene in his domestic problem between the Kazini and Narbahadur. He had tried to resolve the issues and had spent three hours with them but failed. I went to his house immediately. I thought I had resolved the conflict between the mother and the son but the next morning, Kazini left for Kalimpong in a huff. Kazi came to see me again and I persuaded Narbahadur to apologise to his mother, which he did. Kazini returned. When some of his colleagues would fail to agree and the atmosphere would become vitiated, Kazi would bring them round to me and we all would sit for hours trying to resolve the differences. When I was confronted with

a problem, like the Chogyal inaugurating the Assembly or wanting the leaders to make a gesture towards him, I would in turn seek Kazi's personal help. He was the only leader true to his word. He respected the institution of the Chogyal and wanted it to be preserved to maintain Sikkim's heritage and cultural identity. His only condition was that the Chogyal should accept the new changes with grace and give him his support. He also realised the dangers of Nepalese dominance and fully shared the anxiety of his community. He felt that he was the best safeguard to protect their interests. If, however, the Chogyal did not cooperate, Sikkim's only alternative left was Delhi to protect the rights and culture of the minorities besides giving the Nepalese an opportunity to play their rightful role as a controlled majority.

Kazi's weakness lay in his lack of decisiveness and administrative acumen. He therefore had to depend considerably on Indian advice and support. Belonging to the minority community, he could not assert his views forcefully fearing the hostility of the Nepalese. He depended considerably on Narbahadur to handle this aspect. Once Narbahadur and he fell out, he was directly exposed to the Nepalese pressures. It was at this critical juncture the Indian leaders eroded his credibility, thus weakening his leadership.

Narbahadur Khatiwada was a fire brand and ideally suited to an agitational environment. Gifted with oratory and organisational ability, he used these to the maximum during the agitation and subsequent confrontation with the Chogyal. Being Kazi's adopted son and of Nepalese origin, he became an instant leader amongst the Nepalese. If people had to be collected en masse overnight to agitate, only Narbahadur could do it. Delhi owed a lot to him. Besides Kazi, there was no other leader of his guts and mass appeal. He aroused the hatred and admiration of his colleagues equally. If Chogyal hated any one more than the Kazi it was Narbahadur and dubbed him as a Communist.

Narbahadur was neither a radical nor a Communist by ideology. He used radical ideas for his mass appeal. He was ruthlessly ambitious and had few scruples. His only honest belief was in the emergence of the suppressed Nepalese whom he wanted to lead one day. He could only do so if the Chogyal was destroyed and Sikkim became a part of India. Amongst all the leaders, his mind was clear on the issues and his ultimate goal. He often said, "Who is there after Kazi except me. Others were all stooges of the Chogyal and

sycophants.” This upset other political leaders who were out to draw blood. The Bhutias and Lepchas knew of Narbahadur’s extreme pro-Nepalism. All joined hands to make Kazi and Kazini have second thoughts. Narbahadur underestimated the Kazini. When he began showing too intimate an interest in Hemlata Chetri, in spite of being married, Kazini disowned him. The hostility of other leaders and Kazi’s own fears of Narbahadur’s ambitions made him lukewarm towards him. After all Kazi could not afford to face a crisis on account of Narbahadur. Kazini’s disowning him also removed the leverage Narbahadur had. The commitment made by Kazi to make him a Minister when the Cabinet was expanded was never honoured. Typical of Sikkimese character, when the centre of power ditched Narbahadur, he was left with little support. That was the parting of ways and beginning of the bitter hostility between the Kazi and Narbahadur.

To call Kazi an “illiterate traitor” or to allege that all the resolutions of the Assembly were drafted by Bajpai, the Political Officer, and forced on the leaders, is typical of Narbahadur’s character. Kazi may not be educated but Narbahadur must bear full responsibility for the merger if the word traitor is being used in that context. If amongst the Sikkimese leaders, any one was enthusiastic on this issue, it was he. No doubt, the important resolutions for the Assembly were discussed by the Political Officer but it was Narbahadur who not only interpreted them to others being the literate one, he also actively built up support for them. It was he who explained the implications to Kazi who did not know English well. As for duress or pressure, Narbahadur never complained of this even once during my eighteen months’ stay in Sikkim or later when he remained with the Kazi.

Ambition was Narbahadur’s weakness. Otherwise the time was in his favour. If he had waited and built up his political career under the Kazi, showing real concern for the people, he would have emerged as the only viable alternative to Kazi. But ambitions destroyed many politicians. Yet, I had great regard for him as a leader of men. I feel it was patently unjust not to have made him a Minister and I am positive that he would have mellowed down considerably in a position of responsibility.

All others on the Sikkimese scene, barring the Chogyal, were of little consequence. The Chogyal overshadowed everyone. Graceful, intelligent and a man of culture, he reflected his personality all



round. Even in his worst moments he exhibited a grace befitting his heritage. His tragedy was his training as a civil servant amongst whom he felt most comfortable. In several socials, particularly where the Indian Civil Service crowd used to be present, he would often say, "Ah! I am now amongst my own crowd." And a bureaucrat was never trained to be a politician. Surrounded by sycophants and courtiers, most of whom were civil servants, he felt utterly secure. But no permanent edifice can be built on the quicksand of opportunism. A politician, an astute one particularly, feels the pulse of his constituents constantly and makes his moves accordingly. To succeed, a politician knows his enemies much better than the opportunist friends. Every move then becomes a calculated and a well planned one. This is where the Chogyal faulted. He underestimated his adversaries and miscalculated the time. Every move that he made was mistimed and he overplayed his cards. There were people cleverer than him who countered every move with greater finesse.

Yet, no one could accuse the Chogyal of one thing. He was sincere and simple minded in his belief in the ultimate resurgence of Sikkim as an independent identity. For over two decades he gave a tough fight, sometimes giving nightmares to the Political Officers and the Foreign Office. It was he who reduced the 1949 arrangements under an Indian Dewan to nullify by making the last one the Chief Commissioner of Girl Guides and Scouts. He got his national anthem and his Sikkim Guards. He was personally received as Head of a Government by our Prime Minister. And he reduced the role of the Political Office to that of an Indian Mission. All this was done by one single man, Palden Thondup Namgyal. When he lost the final round and lost his kingdom, he earned more admirers than he ever had. That he still preferred to stay amongst the ruins of his dreamed empire and regal glory wanting history to judge him as a crusader, speaks volumes of the man and his faith in the cause.

And there was Shenkar Bajpai, the Political Officer who was brought up in the true British traditions, had clarity of thought with his priorities clearly defined. He outshone all other Political Officers in his determination to exercise authority and power on Delhi's behalf. Like a true Britisher, he had a weakness for the royalty and the elite. But, he had no qualms of conscience to destroy them when larger issues were involved. He sought to reduce the Chogyal to the pre-1947 status. When the Chogyal resisted it, he did not hesi-

tate for one moment to seek his destruction. If we had Political Officers of this mettle, there would have been no 1973 in Sikkim.

Other personalities in Sikkim fitted in within these interplay of forces. The leaders of the past like Sonam Tsering, Kashiraj Pradhan, Netuk Lama, and Martem Topden had lost their importance politically though they still involved themselves behind the scenes occasionally. But, one personality was incomparable, Rai Bahadur Densappa. He was a scion of the old guard, cultured, suave and a real replica of the old blue blooded aristocracy. He had served the earlier Chogyal, Tashi Namgyal, as adviser and continued to hold the same post with his son later though not actively. Being one of the richest with a fabulous collection of old Tibetan antiques, he lost the most in the April 1973 agitation when his house was burnt down. Yet, he showed that degree of self control and grace which fitted his ancestry and culture. No one in Sikkim knew more of Buddhist history and culture, specially in the Tibetan context, than he and his whole personality reflected his intellect and elegance of a scholar. But he never made any compromise with tradition. It resulted in tragedy. His eldest son Jigdel, Chogyal's Secretary, and the eldest daughter could never get married as he considered all other Sikkimese families too inferior to have relations with. His younger son and daughter defied him and he never forgave them. I spent many a pleasant hour with him discussing the political situation and the emerging trends. He never allowed any bitterness to creep in personal relationship. Though all out a Chogyal supporter and utterly contemptuous of the new political leadership, he was the only one who always told me that Delhi would always govern Sikkim's destiny and the way to educate the Chogyal was to be firm with him. It was the only way to save whatever was left of Sikkim of the past. I have met hardly any personality in the Himalayan kingdoms of such radiance and charm as the Rai Bahadur. It was utterly shocking to learn that after my departure, he was almost on the point of being made to ride a donkey with a blackened face in public. He was saved from this humiliation by Kazi and the Kazini. It would have been the darkest day for Sikkimese culture and her history.

## Sikkim as an Indian State

To integrate an area and its people physically is easier than emotionally. The eagerness to introduce changes to bring Sikkim on par with other Indian States, was laudable but the time factor is always crucial for readjustment, be they political or administrative. This factor was lost sight of. The transfer of governance from the Ministry of External Affairs to the Home Ministry itself brought about a big change in style in dealings with personalities and problems. This was the first noticeable impact on the Sikkimese. Gangtok stood devalued in the vastness of India, and its politics revolved round the whims and fancies of the governing politics at the Centre. Except for Mrs. Gandhi, no other politician or political party understood Sikkim's politics and its ethnic dimensions in the evolving problems of the northeast. Nor did they realise that as the newest State with a tribal culture and the circumstances under which it merged with India, it needed a different style of governance and handling. Even the senior officials of the Centre lacked the correct perspective. One of them even stated that Sikkim was too insignificant in size and population to be taken note of. They failed to realise that it took nearly three decades to correct a historical distortion and it would need all the finesse and political acumen to stabilise an area so strategically located with all its ethnic problems and personalised politics.

Sikkim had its own state-based parties even prior to India's independence. The Sikkim Congress was none other than the Sikkim State Congress of the forties. Soon after the merger in 1975 the Congress Party of India began pressing on the Kazi to merge the Sikkim Congress with the Indian National Congress. The Sikkim Congress had won its mandate from the people under its own flag and without any imported leadership. Having acquired power for the first time, being in opposition throughout, it needed

settling down under the changed environment, so necessary for Sikkim's political stability. This was not allowed to happen and Kazi left with no choice, merged his party. Very soon, the direct involvement of Congress leaders from Delhi in Sikkim Congress affairs removed the leverage Kazi had vis-a-vis his colleagues. Inevitably, Kazi's colleagues gravitated towards the Centre, weakening Kazi's position in the State. Kazi stood devalued, a fateful blow!

The Emergency threw up a new force, the Youth Congress, which became all powerful, spread its tentacles to Gangtok and Ambika Soni its President, visited Sikkim to set up a body there. An inexperienced politician, she failed to realise the interplay of forces in Sikkim and the importance of Kazi. She chose Kazi's arch enemy Narbahadur Khatiwada as the President of the Sikkim Youth Congress creating parallel power centres. Having obtained direct access to Sanjay Gandhi, Narbahadur set about eroding Kazi's authority drawing away to his side some reliable supporters of the Kazi. A stage was reached in early 1977 when Kazi was not sure if he would remain the Chief Minister. Orissa was the example before him with West Bengal in deep trouble. When he made his polite representations to the central leaders, he was rebuffed. What saved Kazi were the indiscreet pronouncements of Narbahadur Khatiwada which upset the central leadership. While all this was going on, the old anti-merger forces were gathering strength. They depicted Kazi as Delhi's stooge, with no mind of his own. "We told you so", began to be accepted. And when Kazi began rushing to Delhi for directions on matters which strictly concerned the local administration, his credibility was eroded even amongst the civil servants. Kazi himself made the mistake of depending too much on the Governor and the Indian advisers attached to him. The Sikkimese civil servants not only resented it but played an active role behind the scenes in deriding Kazi as a Chief Minister. It was not that Delhi was unaware of these trends. They ignored the danger signals. Meanwhile the proposed land reforms became a highly controversial issue linked to ethnic interests. One could see the serious rifts developing in the Cabinet. The ethnic alignments came into full play and they inevitably affected the political alignments. The issue of parity and unregistered Nepalese voters became major issues.

The unexpected and sudden announcement of the elections in March 1977 for the Lok Sabha saved the day for the Kazi. As soon

as the results were announced and the Janata Party came to power, Narbahadur dissolved the Youth Congress and set up a unit of the Janata Party. He lost no time along with others in maligning the Kazi as a stooge of the Indira Government. Not having the acumen commensurate with the requirements of an all India scene, Kazi failed to rush to Delhi like other state leaders and his credibility suffered further with wrong assumptions being made in Delhi about Sikkimese politics. When I advised the Kazi of the dangers, he rushed to Delhi to meet the new leaders of the Janata Party who, by then, were equally keen on Kazi merging the Sikkim Pradesh Congress with the Janata Party. When Kazi suggested that in the larger interests of his State, he should restore his party's old name and assured unequivocal support to the policies of the Janata Party, he was left in no doubt that such a move would not be viewed with favour. Thus came the second merger of the parties. Kazi was dubbed as "a man of mergers". Being totally dependent on Delhi, the Sikkimese political leadership was left with no choice. To blame the Kazi would be unfair under the circumstances.

Both these mergers were blunders. In a sensitive State, such a de-stabilising factor had its own consequences. There being no alternative leadership in Sikkim and Kazi's loyalty towards the Centre being unquestionable, maturity and sound political judgement demanded the strengthening of the Kazi as a leader of the Sikkim State Congress. The people of Sikkim had known and lived with this Party for decades and given it an overwhelming mandate to govern. When they saw the rapid changes in its personality with dictates from Delhi, they began to doubt its effectiveness and questioned its leadership for such weakness. I never saw Kazi so demoralised and disillusioned as then.

Outmanoeuvred by the second merger of the Sikkim Pradesh Congress with the new Janata Party, Khatiwada promptly joined with the anti-merger (Sikkim's merger with India in 1975) forces. He became not only a bitter critic of Delhi, but also demanded that Sikkim be restored to the status prior to 1974. He, the strongest supporter of the merger, now accused Delhi of subterfuge and colonialism. He and others, particularly with Kazi's leadership weakened, introduced a new element in Sikkim's politics which became an issue in the 1979 elections of the State Assembly and consequently a realignment of forces took place, displacing the Kazi totally, whose party lost every single seat.

Rapid process of Indianisation of the administrative structure has been another mistake. Sikkim's bureaucracy having had a different culture, was inadequate even to handle the problems thrown up immediately after an elected Government was set up in 1974. Its ethnic loyalties and a localised concept of governance did not make it adequate to bear the new responsibilities as a State of India with the dictates of a legal and political system applicable to the other States of the Indian Union. The highly personalised social and administrative structures of Sikkim needed gradual inputs of the new system.

The Kazi's leadership of the 1973 movement against the Chogyal was very different than as a Chief Minister and leader of the ruling party in 1975. Once the Chogyal was displaced, the internal contradictions within the Sikkim Congress surfaced. They reached their climax before the 1979 elections. Besides, Kazi's credibility as a Sikkimese "father figure" stood totally eroded by his party's merger first with the Indian National Congress in 1975 and then with the Janata in 1977 through interference and pressures by the political leaders of the two parties. Ethnicity again became a focal point for various alignments.

Narbahadur Khatiwada led the first split in 1977 with six of his MLAs resigning from Kazi's party. But the second split, organised by Ram Chandra Paudhial on a purely ethnical basis favouring the Nepalese, was far more serious. It also had economic overtones of discontent against Kazi's failure to implement the land reforms in favour of the Nepalese sharecroppers. What brought the final break was the decision of the Government of India to do away with parity between the Bhutia-Lepchas and the Nepalese and reallocation of seats on the basis of the ethnic citizenship register dating back to the Chogyal's days which had formed the basis of the electorate in 1974 Assembly elections. Paudhial claimed that over 30,000 Nepalese Sikkimese had been overlooked. With the inclusion of the Indian settlers as Sikkimese citizens, the general seats under which the Nepalese were to contest, had been practically reduced to equality in numbers, if not less, with the Bhutia-Lepchas who secured an advantage of twelve, reserved seats having been notified as Scheduled Tribes. Thus, out of thirty-two seats in the Assembly, with twelve seats reserved for Bhutia-Lepchas and three for Scheduled Castes and Sangha (the monastic order), only seventeen seats were left for the Nepalese

and the rest. It was worse than parity for the seventy-five per cent who were Nepalese. Kazi's concurrence to this formula alienated him from the Nepalese group led by Paudhiyal who formed a new party called Sikkim Congress (Revolutionary).

Besides these splits within the ruling group, Kazi also lost his grip over the administration and with the very large aid pouring in from the Central Government, corruption and inflation hit the people badly. The anti-merger forces led by an ex-Kazi supporter, Narbahadur Bhandari, took full advantage of Kazi's predicament with the support of Bhutia-Lepchas or people disillusioned with Sikkim's economic and political ills consequent to her merger with India. Every economic issue was fully exploited and the blame for inflicting indignity on Sikkim was laid at the Kazi's doors. It was a unique case where the ruling party lost every single seat and an unregistered party under Bhandari's leadership called the Sikkim Janata Parishad fighting as "independent", emerged as the new ruling group identifying and supporting the nationalistic sentiments towards Sikkim's separate personality distinct from India.

Morarji Desai's very unfortunate statement on Sikkim's merger reduced the Kazi's credibility to zero. The forces who opposed the merger as the major group. Deploring the remarks of the Janata leaders, Bhandari the new Chief Minister said, "How do I become the Chief Minister of an Indian State being a Nepali myself?" He exploited the Nepalese sentiments to his advantage and Kazi the blue-eyed boy of Delhi who led Sikkim to the Indian family, correcting an error of 1947, became persona non grata not only with the then Janata leaders but, even with the new Government of Indira Gandhi at the Centre in 1980 when her party gave legitimacy to Bhandari's party by giving it the Congress-I symbol and support. Again, the Chogyal had the last laugh.

In the new Government of Bhandari, the parity came back in the formation of the Cabinet with four Bhutia-Lepchas and four Nepalese as Ministers. Not only the Kazi but the Nepalese lost both ways. It is now a weapon in the hands of Paudhiyal to use effectively. His weakness is his personality. Yet, being the leader of the largest opposition group, he poses a serious threat to Bhandari government. Thus, in spite of a visible harmony amongst the ethnic groups in the form of Bhandari's party, the undercurrents may lead to a situation where clashes on the privileges and rights of different ethnic communities may surface sooner than later. The



rising communal sentiments amongst the Nepalese in northeastern states of India and with the highly articulate Nepalese leadership in Darjeeling, it is possible that Darjeeling leadership may play a significant role in Sikkim posing a threat to the present delicate inter-ethnic relationship.

## Uncertainties of the Future

A tiny speck in the vastness of India with its Himalayan serenity, Sikkim seems to be insignificant in the vast multitude of problems facing other States of India. Yet, behind that Mongoloid droopiness of the eyelids, lies a dangerous streak of potential trouble more serious than one of the "seven sisters" of the northeast. Its emergence as a Nepalese speaking State, its geographical location with Tibet, Nepal and Bhutan surrounding it on three sides, its ethnic discontent and power distortions linked to it the, "son of the soil" politics of the adjoining northeastern states affecting the Nepalese settlers there and the demand of a Gorkhaland by the Darjeeling-Nepalese with an eye on Sikkim, are some of the dimensions of the problems which need a careful study based on the perceptions of tomorrow. China's trouble potential in this region with its non-acceptance of Sikkim's merger with India and Nepal's mother country image in the eyes of the two million Nepalese settled in the northeastern region besides the Bhutanese problems with its own vast Nepalese population, cannot be ignored easily or lost sight of in the national context. The custodian of the problem of the States, the Home Ministry, unfortunately cannot be credited with a perception of the wider issues with its narrow confines of a stereotyped approach and failure, therefore, to anticipate the problems of tomorrow. The emergence of a Nepalese speaking State within India has itself given a national identity to the Nepalese settlers all over the northeast and meets their linguistic and cultural aspirations visibly. Yet, this fact has neither been used nor exploited to advantage, overcoming the emotional appeal of the demand for a Gorkhaland by the Darjeeling-Nepalese and such other Nepalese Indians who want a cultural homeland delinked to Nepal which distracts them from their loyalty to their country of adoption. The most unfortunate statements by the political leaders of Nepal being

foreigners or Nepali being a foreign language even when Sikkim had become a part of India, are examples of our weak perceptions.

Sikkim has now become the key factor in the Nepalese identity of the settlers in India which throws up its own dangers and yet offers a solution in integrating them into the national fold. But, first the scene within Sikkim needs a critical analysis. The 1973 agitation against the Chogyal was a product of the economic frustrations of the vast majority combining all the ethnic groups with of course the numerical strength and support of the majority, the Nepalese, who were the main sufferers under the Chogyal's regime. It was not a movement for a Nepalese homeland. Even now, the Nepalese in Sikkim are not afflicted by the Nepalese phobia nor aware of their potential power. They still seek their identity as Sikkimese and work within its polity. However, the large economic inputs running over 180 million rupees annually compared to 40 million in 1974 have suddenly opened up tremendous economic activity, the relevance of which is gradually dawning on the Nepalese majority who wish to use their numbers as a decisive weightage in decision-making, realising at the same time that political power goes hand in hand with economic power. The 1974 elections were based on parity giving no leverage of numbers to the majority. The 1979 elections, despite parity removed, still denied them this privilege. The new ruling party of Bhandari emerged victorious by playing on the emotive aspect of a Sikkimese personality having been destroyed through Delhi's stooge and henchman, Kazi, who not only betrayed the people but gave an administration, riddled with corruption. How Indian aid, which had been trebled then, was misused for personal gains by Kazi's party was constantly highlighted. Kazi's credibility was so low and his party so faction-ridden that he could hardly contest these charges. Bhandari, therefore, got overwhelming support from all the ethnic groups. But, his victory did not give the Nepalese majority any weightage, specially with the Bhutia-Lepchas again having emerged as the key factor in the states governance. This realisation is gradually beginning to dawn on the Nepalese. The main opposition under Paudhyal's party now comes from them posing a threat to the Bhandari government. The ethnic conflicts are beginning to surface. This may spill over to Darjeeling in due course. The close affinity between the Nepalese of Darjeeling and Sikkim lends support to this view.

The highly articulate and politicised Nepalese leadership of

Darjeeling has an eye on Sikkim. There is already a considerable Nepalese migration into Sikkim with the increased economic opportunities available there. The Gorkha League of Darjeeling demanding a Gorkhland considers an enlarged State of Sikkim with Darjeeling as its part, a viable and attractive proposition. If the leadership of Sikkimese-Nepalese passes on to the Gorkha League, such a demand could well be expected. The historical fact of Darjeeling having once been part of Sikkim will be used as an additional argument. If the mistake of 1947 in denying merger to Sikkim with India could be corrected in 1975, why could Darjeeling not be restored back to Sikkim thus fulfilling the aspirations of a homeland for the Nepalese?

Such a demand has several implications for Sikkim. The Nepalese in Darjeeling are much greater in number and highly political. They will become the dominant factor displacing the political leadership in Sikkim or at least push them in the background. It would also aggravate the ethnic conflicts within Sikkim as the Bhutia-Lepchas would be reduced to a mere ten per cent losing their political leverage.

Bhandari is aware of the dangers and hence against such a demand. Yet, he supports the demand for a Gorkhland in Darjeeling and is even prepared to involve the Sikkimese in fighting for it. Why? He feels that by such a strategy, he shall be able to divert the attention of the Sikkimese-Nepalese who are demanding the weightage of their numbers in Sikkim's political and economic governance. It is a dangerous game. Any involvement in the demand for a separate state for Darjeeling could well bring out the sentiments amongst the Sikkimese-Nepalese for a Nepalese dominated government in Sikkim. The communal forces will then have their full play. Counteraction by the Bhutia-Lepchas who will stand to lose most cannot then be prevented. Though the Chogyal once wanted Darjeeling to be restored to Sikkim, he would be the first to raise a banner of revolt against such an idea and would become an instant leader of the minorities. The Nepalese leadership of Sikkim would then be forced to look up to the Gorkha League and join hands with them. There are already indications of a close rapport building up with the formation of the Sikkim-Darjeeling Friendship Association and behind the scene contacts.

Strangely enough, a view was projected by some Bhutia leaders during the 1973 agitation that the ideal solution lay in merging

west and east Sikkim with Darjeeling and carving out a Bhutia-Lepcha dominated state in the rest of Sikkim. According to them, it would satisfy the aspirations of the Nepalese on the one hand and preserve and protect the indigenous culture of the Bhutia-Lepchas on the other. They also expected that quite a few of their settlers living in Darjeeling would migrate to the newly carved state and increase their strength and viability. Any involvement of Sikkimese-Nepalese in the demand for a Gorkhaland or an enlarged Sikkim with Darjeeling's merger could lead to a counter demand from the Bhutia-Lepchas on the above lines.

Such a scenario would be one of conflict and the end of a multi-ethnic society which still takes pride in being called Sikkimese. Its repercussions on Bhutan also cannot be lost sight of. Bhutan has almost half a million Nepalese settled contiguous to the Indian borders. While every effort is being made by the Government there to integrate the community in the mainstream of Bhutanese life, devoid of equal political and economic rights with the ruling community of Drukpas, any resurgence of Nepalese nationalism just across their border, is bound to affect them emotionally. And emotions have no controlled dimensions. This scenario could go wrong but cannot be swept aside easily. Much will depend on Delhi's anticipation of events and chalking out a well thought out plan to handle the ethnic problems of this region. The other scenario and an encouraging one could be the emergence of multiple-identity-dominated scene consolidated by the Nepalese sense of belonging to a homeland of theirs in Sikkim giving them full participation in the governance of their State along with the other ethnic minorities. The Bhutia-Lepchas assured of protection of their economic rights and political role may adjust themselves to the new role of the majority. Much will depend on the maturity and understanding displayed by the Nepalese leadership of Sikkim. If Bhandari's government succeeds in implementing the economic policies to the advantage of "have nots" of all the ethnic groups and is able to prevent the Nepalese leadership passing on to the Darjeeling-Nepalese, one can hope to preserve the Sikkimese distinctiveness of a multi-ethnic society living in harmony.

Whichever way the wind blows, the emergence of Sikkim as a Nepalese speaking State of India cannot be ignored. One will have to use this aspect in the best possible manner in the national context. Sikkim cannot remain unaffected by the events in other

parts of the country, specially in the north and northeast. Unlike the days of the Chogyal, when its isolation could be ensured, it is now fully exposed to the national scene like any other state. Its politics is governed by the political leadership at the Centre, perhaps more than in any other state. It will, therefore, not be its size but its strategic location and ethnic complexities that shall be the determinate factor. In the Sino-Indian context, it shall retain its importance even if the relations normalise.

## The Chogyal

I have left this as the last chapter for more than one reason. A lone and forgotten man who lost his kingdom, his wife and everything that he stood for, stuck to his Palace, his people, his Sikkim till he breathed his last. Unbending in his misfortunes, he dreamt of some one, some day appreciating the righteousness of his cause and placing him in history as a true nationalist who fought single-handed against all odds for what he believed in. His silvery grey hair and the small wrinkles on the face alone spoke of the strain of the past years but they made him look even handsomer than he was. The so-called friends deserted him as is the way with the world. Yet, he showed no rancour, no bitterness and held his head high. To leave his people and Sikkim was totally unacceptable to him. He still called his abode "The Palace" and himself "Thondup of Sikkim". Many of his old subjects paid homage to him during his lifetime and on his death. In his solitude, he reflected on his past mistakes but had no regrets. Because, the pride in himself and for Sikkim were the only reasons he lived.

How do I know all this? Perhaps, I am one of the very few who had the privilege to know him closely both in his glory and in his adversity. It fell to my lot to guide him and to lure him in favour of India as a ruler because that was my mandate. I believed then and now that Sikkim had no separate political identity outside India, historically or legally, and 1947 should have seen her as a part of India. As an Indian, that is my conviction.

I had nothing personal against him. I have criticised him in my book for the mistakes he committed. As a person, I hold Palden Thondup Namgyal in great esteem. I have met few personalities in my long career who could stand up and fight for a cause. For him, more than his personal gains, Sikkim's identity was a cause. That he fought using all means available to him does credit to him.



His battle was one sided and against all odds. That did not deter him as it was a question of his faith in the righteousness of the cause. Many accuse him of intrigues and unreliability. But, which ruler or for that matter a politician does not have that stigma attached to him, specially in an oriental environment. His intrigues were directed towards achieving his cherished goal of seeking an independent status for his kingdom. Who could have blamed him for this? He was apt to go astray very often and sometimes act in an irresponsible manner. That did not deny him the privilege of his beliefs. Consequently, no one could blame him for using all his energy into a struggle for something he believed in. From that angle if character counts, as it does, he was certainly a man of character. He wanted power and the only limits of power are the bounds of one's belief.

Recently, before he died in January '82 I took the liberty of advising him through a common friend to join the mainstream of the national scene forgetting the past as many rulers of the erstwhile princely states had done. His reactions were anticipated. He neither rejected nor accepted but stated: "I am a Sikkimese and I belong to this place. How can I leave my people and my country." That is what he was. But, knowing him as I did, he, despite his pride, had deep-rooted links with the Indian environment and heritage. Given proper encouragement and respect, he would have played his part in consolidating the new relationship in spite of his overt reluctance to accept the inevitable. What role could be assigned to him, in politics or administration commensurate with his past status and rich experience, was a matter for the political leadership to decide. Whatever it might be, his contribution should have been positive and in our national interest. It would also have resolved the problem of doubt some have had in Sikkim on the wisdom of becoming a part of India. He shall always remain a rallying point for such elements if and when the ethnic problems cause their own complications. As they say, be generous to the losers and they shall be more reliable in friendship than the believers. In the totality of India, Palden Thondup Namgyal was too insignificant. But, Sikkim is a part of India and in that context, he had a very useful role to play given the respect that he expected and deserved.

## THE AGREEMENT OF MAY 8, 1973

On 8 May, 1973, an agreement was signed at Gangtok between the Chogyal, the leaders of the Political Parties representing the people of Sikkim and the Government of India.

The Agreement, among other things, provided for a Legislative Assembly for Sikkim elected on the basis of adult franchise, an Executive Council responsible to the Assembly and safeguards for minorities.

Under the Agreement, India was to provide the head of the administration (Chief Executive) to ensure democratisation, good administration, communal harmony and social development. The elections for the new Assembly were to be held within a few months. The Assembly was to be elected every four years on the basis of adult franchise under the supervision of the Election Commission of India.

The new Assembly was to be set up on a "one man, one vote" franchise, but with a provision that no single group from the Bhutia, the Lepchas or the Nepalese will hold a dominant position. The Assembly was given powers to propose laws and adopt resolutions on fourteen subjects including finance, economic and social planning, education and agriculture. But it has no power on four topics, namely, the Chogyal and the members of the ruling family, matters before the courts, the appointment of the Chief Executive and members of the Judiciary, and issues which are the responsibility of the Government of India. Only the palace establishment and the Sikkim guards remained directly under the Chogyal. A significant feature of the Agreement was the omission of the police department in either lists of subjects to be dealt by the Assembly or those outside its purview.

The Agreement is important for many reasons. For the first time in Sikkim's history, the people, represented by popular forces, became the acknowledged participants in the political process. Secondly, it has frustrated Chogyal's ambition to make Sikkim a sovereign state. It not only reiterated India's control over the defence and foreign relations of Sikkim, but also made it clear that the Chogyal is subordinate to New Delhi. In any dispute between the Chogyal and the Indian nominated Chief Executive, New Delhi's ruling will be final.

### WORKING OF THE AGREEMENT

After the signing of the May 8, 1973 Agreement, life in Sikkim once again became normal. In August, the two important constituents of the JAC, the Janata Congress and the National Congress, met at Namchi and decided to merge themselves to form a new party called Sikkim Congress. Kazi Lhendup Dorji was elected President and K.C. Pradhan as Vice-President. The new party decided to have a tricolour with blue star in the Centre as its flag and the ladder as its election symbol.

On the basis of the tripartite Agreement of May 8, 1973, elections were held from April 15 to 19, 1974, under the supervision of a Chief Election Commissioner deputed by the Election Commission of India. The 32 seats were divided among Bhutia-Lepcha and Nepalese communities. The Sikkim Congress contested all the seats. The pro-Chogyal National Party contested only five seats. The real fight was between the Sikkim Congress and the 26 Independent candidates, who came together at the last moment under the name "United Independent Front."

The Sikkim Congress in its election manifesto tried to allay fears of the minority communities of Bhutias and Lepchas by declaring that "the Sikkim Congress shall introduce a special programme for the safeguard of the interests of the minority communities and backward classes in Sikkim."

The manifesto made special reference to land reforms, by declaring that Sikkim Congress would ensure "the immediate abolition of private Estate." Meaning thereby the abolition of the Private Estate of the Chogyal. The manifesto further declared that "No land must be left untilled and no tiller left without land."

Lastly, the manifesto spelt out the attitude of the Sikkim Congress towards India in these words:

The Sikkim Congress will seek to strengthen the bonds that already exist with the Government and the people of India. The Sikkim Congress is aware that the democratic development of Sikkim has benefited from the interest shown by the Government and people of India. Although for historical reasons our progress towards democracy has been slower, we also aspire to achieve the same democratic rights and institutions that the people of India have enjoyed for a quarter of a century.

The Sikkim Congress won a land-slide victory by securing 31 of the 32 seats in the New Assembly and polled about 70 per cent of the votes. All the 15 Assembly seats reserved for the minority have also been captured by the Sikkim Congress with its own Lepcha and Bhutia candidates. The party President, Kazi Lhendup Dorji, was returned unopposed from the Tashiding Constituency. The Congress won a notable victory when its candidate wrested the Sangha (monasteries) seat. In this functional Constituency, there were about 2000 Buddhist Lama voters representing 57 recognised monasteries.

This was the first time that a candidate other than the one representing Monasteries Association and backed by the National Party had won the Sangha seat.

The National Party and the United Independent Front tried India-baiting by constantly referring to the enlarged "Indian presence." The National Party which secured 11 out of the 18 elective seats in February, 1953, could now secure only one seat. Alongwith the United Independent Front, it could secure only 30 per cent of the votes polled. The Independent Front in May, 1974, formed themselves into the Prajatantra Party. The party adopted anti-India stand and began to spread concocted stories about collusion between Sikkim Congress and the Government of India to harm the interests of Sikkim. But its vile propaganda failed to make any impact on the masses of Sikkim.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE SIKKIM ASSEMBLY  
MAY 10, 1974

The President said:

“Honourable Members, this Assembly stands duly constituted and I call the Assembly to order. My heartiest congratulations to all the Honourable Members of the first Assembly duly constituted today.”

The leader of the Sikkim Congress Party in the Assembly, Mr. L. D. Kazi, offered a scarf to the President.

At 12.30 P.M., the Chogyal arrived at the Assembly House and was received by the President and conducted to the dias. Inaugurating the Assembly, the Chogyal said:

“A little while earlier our newly elected Members of this august House which has been reconstituted as the Sikkim Assembly took the solemn oath of loyal and dedicated service to our people, upon whom has devolved the sacred duty of sharing with us the responsibility of serving the country.

“We are passing through a very critical period in our history but, nevertheless, I am sure the Honourable Members present who have sworn to uphold our constitution will live upto the high expectations and will contribute their utmost in our earnest endeavours for the promotion of the welfare and prosperity of the Sikkimese people through selfless devotion and service. I would, in all sincerity, urge the Honourable Members and the civil servants in the administration to take note of the fact that these are crucial testing times for us. Constructive criticism is an essential ingredient of healthy democratic system and it is far easier to criticise than to shoulder responsibility. Thus, those of us placed in position of responsibility must try to work in harmony and produce tangible results for the

ultimate benefit and satisfaction of our people.

“While striking this word of caution let us also take a brief stock of the substantial progress we have achieved so far. Just a glance at our budget figures over the years tell that our modest Government revenue of about Rs. 10 lakhs, a little over two decades ago, has rocketed to Rs. 400 lakhs in 1973/74, a record we can be justly proud of. Unless we can match the increasing burden of all round services to the people with such measures of financial and economic advancement we shall run into difficulties in sustaining this growth leave alone improving upon it.

“All these achievements have been possible through the generous aid and assistance received from the Government of India, who have financed the entire Development Plans in the country till today and have always extended every possible assistance in all our needs. We must, therefore, place on record our deep sense of gratitude to the Government and the people of India for their kind generosity and abiding friendship. With the active cooperation from the Honourable Members and every section of our people I am confident that the age-old bonds of friendship and close understanding between India and Sikkim will be further strengthened with more enduring ties.

“What we have achieved today is the result of the relentless efforts of our forefathers in the past. Likewise, our actions of today will go to shape the destiny of the generations to come. It is, therefore, the inevitable symptom of the evolutionary process which warrants us to take utmost care and balanced judgement in the exercise of our actions of today. We should also bear in mind that the future of our country and the survival of our Sikkimese identity rests on the level of our wisdom, maturity and performance. So long as we fail to fathom these basic essentials our efforts will have been meaningless.

“In conclusion I would enjoin upon the Honourable Members once again that they should live up to the high expectations in discharging their onerous responsibilities with understanding and cooperation all round. And in this same spirit I shall look forward to sharing with them a happy ear of selfless service to our people and our country.”

The President adjourned the House till the next day at 11 A.M.

May 11, 1974

All the Members were present.

The President Mr. B. S. Das addressed the House as follows:

“I am very happy to welcome today the Honourable Members of this august body. We are all grateful to the Chogyal for inaugurating the newly elected Assembly. It is indeed a historic occasion, in the sense that a broader based body, larger than the previous one, has been elected for the first time on the principle of “one man one vote” and has been designated as the Assembly of Sikkim, taking shape in keeping with the natural process of evolution of a democratic system. The elected representatives have thus naturally certain responsibilities, the fulfilment of which will undoubtedly require strenuous and dedicated efforts.

“Perhaps, no other system requires so much of care, caution and sacrifice as does democracy. Both, the system and the cause of democracy, are such which need inherent discipline and a great degree of personal sacrifice. Every action of a member in the House or outside is constantly under public scrutiny and criticism. Therefore, the personal or official life of an elected representative is a matter of public concern and the elector makes his choice the next time on that basis. That alone is the biggest safeguard of a democratic system.

“This august body will, therefore, have to conduct itself in a manner which is worthy of the system and of the confidence and trust the people have placed in it. Let us pledge ourselves on this very historic day to serve the people of Sikkim with dedication and a spirit of humility. Our main goal should be the welfare of the society in the larger context. Let no one, irrespective of class, religion or community, feel ignored or neglected. To ensure peace, stability, economic progress and equal rights for all is our mandate and we cannot afford to falter or stumble in fulfilling these objectives, without destroying the whole system. I am sure that we in this body shall be worthy of the trust placed in us by the people.

“While the objectives before us are clear, it is my duty as the President, to add a word of caution. Any elected body has to work with a particular framework which has a legal sanction. The fundamentals and the legality of the system have been clearly defined by May 8 Agreement of 1973. No doubt, the details of procedure and business of the House have not been spelt out in detail, but this will have to be a gradual evolutionary process guided, if necessary, by



expert advice. This is not a difficult task, so long as the parameters of our functioning are defined, which the Agreement already contains.

“I, as President, pledge myself today to maintain the dignity and honour of this august body, and assure the Honourable Members of my fullest cooperation and dedication to the service of the people of Sikkim.

“Thank you.”

Mr. L. D. Kazi moved a motion of thanks and read it in Sikkimese. Its English and Nepali translations were rendered by Mr. C. S. Roy and Mr. R. C. Paudhyal respectively. The motion of thanks moved is as follows:

“Mr. President, Sir,

On behalf of our Assembly Party, and as its leader, I take this opportunity to table and to express this Motion of Thanks for the inaugural speech of the Constitutional Head made at the opening of the first-ever Assembly constituted on the principle of “one man one vote” basis in this tiny Himalayan state.

“This has been made possible by the peaceful movement of our Sikkimese people for the fulfilment of their long-cherished and legitimate aspirations for a truly democratic way of life in Sikkim. Further, I would like to avail myself on this occasion to express our deep-felt gratitude to the Government of India on behalf of our entire Sikkimese people who have reposed their near absolute mandate in my Party, and also on behalf of our Party, the Sikkim Congress, which has always adhered to democratic principles. We also appreciate the untiring efforts made by the Government of India in the furtherance of the cause of democracy in its protectorate, the State Sikkim, and towards the achievement of a truly responsible government in Sikkim where the will of our people will always prevail.

“To us, and to the people of Sikkim, this is a truly historic occasion which ushers in a people-oriented Government wherein the welfare of the common man, social, economic and political, will all be justly and properly ensured. Mr. President, Sir, under your able guidance we are sure that an era of the new life for the Sikkimese people will be heralded whereby they too can exist with dignity and as useful members of society.

“Mr. President, Sir, there is no denying the fact that the establishment of democratic rule in Sikkim will be on the broad basis of

the historic May 8, 1973, tripartite Gangtok Agreement to which the political parties, the Government of India and the Chogyal of Sikkim are the signatories. In all fairness, the terms of this Agreement should be honoured and abided by the parties concerned. Yet, society is a growing thing and the evolution of democracy being a continuous process, those who fail to adjust themselves to the change of time and circumstance will have perforce to face stark reality in all its consequences, and that, too, with a medicum of grace.

“We are entirely confident that a fully responsible government will be established in Sikkim and that all the signatories to the May 8, 1973, Gangtok Agreement will work towards the fulfilment of the provisions embodied therein.

“In democracy, in the ultimate analysis, the people constitute the prime and vital factor that matters. Without the people there can be no government, no state and no ruler. The voice of the people, therefore, is to be heard, honoured and respected. We have given our pledges to the people and they must be fulfilled. Towards that end we earnestly seek the cooperation of one and all in the government.

Last, but not the least, we express our deep appreciation of the Election Commissioner and to the other members of his staff for their impartial, free and fair conduct of the recent elections to the Sikkim Assembly based on the principle of “one man, one vote.”

In conclusion, Mr. President, Sir, I wish to extend my gratitude to you on my own behalf and also that of my Party colleagues in the Assembly for presiding over the inaugural session of the Sikkim Assembly and conducting the same with that decorum and prestige befitting the democratic manner and process.

I know that this occasion will be rendered in the annals of history not only as the glorious advent of the long-awaited democracy in Sikkim, but also in the further cementing of the already existing bonds of good relationship between Sikkim and the Government and the people of India.

## RESOLUTIONS

The Sikkim Assembly,

Conscious of its responsibilities as the first elected body truly representative of the people of Sikkim as a result of the first election in Sikkim conducted freely and fairly on the democratic principle

of "one man, one vote".

Recalling the inherent responsibilities of the Government of India for the security and defence of Sikkim, for its external relations, and for good administration in Sikkim.

Reaffirming the principles, purposes and provisions of the historic Agreement of May 8, 1973, between the Government of India, the leaders of the political parties in Sikkim and the Chogyal of Sikkim, which provides the framework for a democratic and responsible government in Sikkim and for closer relations between India and Sikkim hereby solemnly declares and resolves as follows :

*A*

1. The constitutional framework established for Sikkim by the Agreement of May 8, 1973, must be speedily developed to give full effect to the objectives and fundamental tenets of the pre-ambular paragraphs of that Agreement, including in particular greater legislative and executive powers for the elected representatives of the people.
2. The constitutions of local self-government must be developed, inter alia, by the decentralisation of the administration, the establishment of a true and comprehensive panchayat system and the constitution of a municipality in Gangtok.
3. The role and functions of the Chogyal cannot be more than those of a constitutional head of the Government of Sikkim. In consideration for the discharge of these titular functions, the Government of India are requested to afford him such honours, privileges and emoluments as are considered appropriate.

*B*

1. The economic development of Sikkim needs to be designed to bring the maximum benefit to the common man. It is essential that the lot of the vast majority of the people, would depend on agriculture for livelihood, should be improved to this end, greater emphasis should be given to improvements in the fields of agriculture, horticulture and animal husbandry.
2. To ensure the economic progress of Sikkim, priority should be given to the development of mining, industries, hydroelectric power and communications.
3. Schemes should be drawn for solving the unemployment problem in Sikkim, particularly among the educated unemployed.
4. Greater facilities should be given to the people in the countryside for their welfare, particularly for the supply of drinking

water and irrigation schemes. More schools and hospitals should be open and mobile dispensaries organised.

5. The Government of India has generously undertaken the planned development of Sikkim for 1954 onwards, and crores of rupees have already been provided to the State. The Assembly requests the Government of India to increase its financial assistance to Sikkim and ensure its proper utilisation. The Planning Commission of India should, while preparing plans for the economic and social development of India, include within its ambit the planned development of Sikkim and appropriately associate officials from Sikkim in this work.
6. The Government of India should provide special facilities to Sikkimese students for study in India in institutions of higher learning. They should also be eligible for employment in India at par with the nationals of India, including in the all-India services.

**C**

1. The Assembly expresses its gratitude to the Government of India for the assistance rendered by them in promoting the establishment of democratic government in Sikkim and arranging for the conduct of elections which have brought this Assembly into being.
2. The Assembly is grateful to the Government of India for providing a Head of Administration (Chief Executive) in Sikkim to achieve and safeguard the needs and objectives set out in the Agreement of May 8, 1973, and assures him of its fullest cooperation in the discharge of his responsibilities.
3. The Assembly requests the Government of India to take steps to ensure further development of democratic institutions, communal harmony, good administration and rapid economic and social advancements in Sikkim.
4. The Assembly requests the Government of India to safeguard in particular the rights and interests of all the different ethnic groups in the political, economic and social welfares of Sikkim.
5. Reiterating its determination to further strengthen the relations between India and Sikkim, taking note of the Government of India's responsibility for the security and defence of Sikkim, for its external relations, and for good administration in Sikkim, and bearing in mind the special interest and responsibility of the Government of India for the further democratic

evolution and rapid economic and social development of Sikkim, this Assembly resolves and hereby requests the Government of India to examine the modalities of further strengthening Indo-Sikkim relationship as already agreed to in the Agreement of May 8, 1973, signed between the three parties, and to take immediate steps for Sikkim's participation in the political and economic institutions of India.

6. The Assembly accordingly resolves and hereby requests the Government of India to depute immediately a Constitutional Adviser for (a) giving a legal and constitutional framework for the objectives of this resolution; (b) defining the powers of the Chogyal, the Chief Executive, the Executive Council and of the Assembly; and (c) recommending to the Government of India specific proposals for further strengthening Indo-Sikkim relationship and for Sikkim's participation in the political and economic institutions of India, as desired in this resolution.

*Proposer*

*Sd/-Lhendup Dorji  
Leader of the Assembly Party of the  
Sikkim Congress in the  
Sikkim Assembly*

*Seconder*

*Sd/- N.B. Khatiwada*

Mr. N.B. Khatiwada supporting the motion of thanks and the resolutions moved by the leader of the party said that this Assembly constituted on democratic principles would always look forward to ameliorate the pathetic conditions of the poor people of Sikkim. He also said that under the able guidance and protection of the President, who is an experienced officer, this Assembly should be in a position to work for the welfare of the people of Sikkim. He further said that the members have made certain promises to the people, like measures of land reforms and such other welfare projects, and laws which, he was confident to implement by this Assembly.

Mr. Kalzang Gyatso moved his motion of thanks as follows :

“As the only Sikkim National Party member in this House I would like to propose a vote of thanks to the Chogyal Chempo for the enlightening speech on the occasion of the inauguration of the newly reconstituted Sikkim Assembly. I would request the Honour-

able President that this be kindly conveyed to the Chogyal Chempo on our behalf. I am confident that our Honourable colleagues in this House will live to the expectations and the responsibility that has been entrusted to us and the mandate that we are carrying as representatives of the Sikkimese people in this House. Our Honourable colleagues who form the majority in this House will not fail to bear in mind the promises that we have made to the voters and try to fulfil the same during the short term of four years that we are likely to be here. In doing so, I am sure we will not forget to identify ourselves as a country in the eyes of the world which is focussed on us right now and uphold its rights and privileges as also those of our people to whom we are pledged to serve in this august body.

“May I also place on record by offering our vote of thanks to the Honourable Members and the President for his inaugural speech. I am sure that the Honourable Members in this House will join me in this. What has been stressed by him in course of his speech and with the guidance and wisdom which he will be exercising on us in the course of deliberations in the House from time to time as will be afforded full opportunity to serve our people to the maximum extent in the floor of the House and safeguard the rights of the Sikkimese whom we are privileged to serve as their representatives.

“I would also request the Honourable President to convey our sincere thanks to our friend and neighbour, the Government of India but for their efforts and cooperation we would not be here to serve our people.

“Last but not the least, I would convey my thanks to the Honourable Members who will be forming the Government in the next few days. We shall look upon them so that our aspirations of the people and their demand is fulfilled and not lost sight of by them while the new people’s Government comes into being.

“Thank you.”

The President asked the motion to be seconded but as no member seconded it, the President declared that the motion not admissible, not being seconded.

The President then said if any member was opposed to the motion of thanks moved by Mr. Kazi Lhendup Dorji he may raise his hand. No one opposed it. The President asked Mr. Kalzang Gyatso if he was opposed to the motion he stated or not, the

motion was passed unanimously.

Mr. Khatiwada wanted to say something against the second motion tabled by Mr. Kalzang Gyatso, but the President ruled it out of order as it had already fallen through.

The leader of the party, Mr. L.D. Kazi placed the written version of the motion of thanks on the table of the House.

The President thanked the House, and declaring the session adjourned sine die, said that the date for the next session would be intimated later.

*Secretary to the Sikkim Assembly*



**PROCEEDINGS OF THE SIKKIM ASSEMBLY  
HELD AT 9.45 P.M. ON THURSDAY,  
JUNE 20, 1974**

The President said:

“Honourable Members, on your request the Government of India had deputed a Constitutional Adviser to frame the constitution for Sikkim. A draft of that constitution is before the Honourable Members, which has already been circulated with the agenda. The Members are now requested to consider the draft, discuss it and give their views.”

Kazi Lhendup Dorji, the Leader of the House, said the Members had some amendments to suggest and express their views.

The following amendments were moved, seconded and passed without any opposition. On each motion of amendment the President asked if any members opposed the motion.

(1) Shri N.B. Khatiwada moved the following amendment:

*Chapter V, clause 28 (2) (a)*—after the words, “any other agreement entered into between the Chogyal and the Government of India”, the words “with the knowledge of the Government of Sikkim” be included. The mover further expressed that this was necessary, so that the Chogyal of Sikkim may not enter into any agreement without the knowledge of the properly elected Government of Sikkim.

Shri K.B. Limbu seconded the motion.

(2) Shri B.P. Dahal moved the following amendment:

*Chapter II, clause 3*—that the words “hitherto enjoyed by him” be deleted and following be substituted in its place:  
“as will be appropriate and benefitting his office.”

Shri Nayan Tsering Lepcha seconded the motion.

(3) Shri B.B. Gurung moved the following amendment:

*Chapter III, clause 13 (i)*—that the following be added after the words “Speaker thereof”:

“In due course of time Assembly will have an elected Speaker.”

Shri B.P. Dahal seconded the motion.

(4) Shri K.C. Pradhan moved the following amendment:

*Chapter III, clause 23 (2) (a)*—that the following be added:

“Within the definition of a family normally defined.”

Shri B.P. Dahal seconded the motion.

(5) Shri N.B. Khatiwada moved the following amendment:

*Chapter II, clause 7 (2)*—that the following be deleted:

the word “while” in the fourth line and the words after “Scheduled Castes”.

Shri Rinzing Tongden Lepcha seconded the motion.

(6) Shri N.B. Khatiwada moved the following amendment:

*Chapter VI, clause 30 (c)*—that after the words “political institutions of India” and “and Parliamentary system of India”.

Shri B.B. Gurung seconded the motion.

(7) Shri N.B. Khatiwada moved the following amendment:

*Chapter VI, clause 31*—that the following be added:

“and appeals from the High Court of Sikkim should lie in the Supreme Court of India.”

Shri K.C. Pradhan also expressed his view that since the people of Sikkim are poor, they may not be able to afford to go to Delhi, the Supreme Court judges or a tribunal may be brought in Sikkim.

Shri C.S. Roy seconded the motion.

(8) Shri N.B. Khatiwada moved the following amendment:

*Chapter VI, clause 32 (i)*—that the following be added:

“as enjoyed by the citizens of India under part III of the Indian Constitution.”

Shri Rinzing Tongden Lepcha seconded the motion.

Kazi Lhendup Dorji, the Leader of the House, asked the members to move other resolutions.

(i) Shri B.B. Gurung moved the following resolutions, read in English and translated in Nepali by Shri B.P. Dahal:

“The Sikkim Assembly, recalling the resolution passed with the unanimous support of all the 32 members of the Sikkim Assembly in its meeting held on May 11, 1974:

“Having examined the constitutional framework for Sikkim proposed by the Constitutional Adviser deputed by the Government of India, which is to be known as the Government of Sikkim Act of 1974 and circulated already by the President of the Sikkim Assembly to all members and hereby laid on the table of the House, desiring that full effect be given immediately to the Bill which incorporated the objectives of the Agreement of May 8, 1973, and the resolution passed by the Sikkim Assembly on May 11, 1974, and recording that it is our expectation that the Government of India will continue to assist us in the full realisation of these objectives:

“This House, hereby, solemnly declares and resolves as follows:

“The Sikkim Assembly fully endorses the proposals of the Constitutional Adviser as contained in the Draft placed on the table of the House and circulated to all the Honourable Members, and calls for giving full effect immediately to its provisions pending further advances.”

Shri Narbahadur Khatiwada seconded the resolution.

The resolution was passed unanimously, without any opposition.  
(2) Shri C.S. Roy moved the following resolutions, read in English and translated in Nepali by Shri N.B. Khatiwada:

“Whereas the interests of the Sikkimese people require the fuller participation of Sikkim in the economic and social institutions of India;

“And whereas provision is made in S. 30 of the Governments of Sikkim Bill, 1974, for modalities whereby this closer relationship may now be established;

“The Sikkim Assembly hereby solemnly declares and resolves as follows:

1. The Government of Sikkim should take all necessary steps to attain fully the objectives of Article 30 of the Government of Sikkim Act, 1974, securing first and immediately the following objectives, namely:

- (a) The Planning Commission of India should include the planned development of Sikkim in plans it prepares for the economic and social development of India and appropriately associate officials from Sikkim in such work;
- (b) opportunity should be afforded to the Sikkim Minister concerned or his deputy to participate in the discussions of the National Development Council of India or any similar body

when questions of plans concerning Sikkim come up for consideration during deliberations on the development of India;

- (c) the facilities provided by financial institutions in India relating to banking, life or general insurance, should be made equally available to the people of Sikkim, as they are available to citizens of India;
- (d) special facilities for study should be provided by the Government of India for students from Sikkim in institutions for higher learning in India;
- (e) candidates from Sikkim duly qualified should be eligible for employment in the public services of India (including the all-India services) at par with citizens of India;
- (f) the people of Sikkim should enjoy the fundamental rights available to the citizens of India under Part III of the Constitution of India;
- (g) in every Constitution there is a provision to provide for amendments to the Constitution, but the Draft Constitution and now proposed Bill does not clarify the issue about important and essential amendments to this act once it is passed. Therefore, the House solemnly resolves that the Constitutional Adviser and the Government of India should provide this provision immediately.

“The Assembly accordingly resolves that immediate steps should be taken by the Government of Sikkim to request the Government of India to take such measures as may be necessary in order that the above objectives are secured within the shortest possible time.”  
Shri K.B. Limbu seconded the resolution.

The resolution was passed unanimously, without any opposition.

There was no other business and the President adjourned the House sine die.

*Gangtok*  
*June 21, 1974*

*Sd/-*  
*Secretary to the Sikkim Assembly*

PROCEEDINGS OF THE SIKKIM ASSEMBLY  
HELD AT 7 P.M. ON FRIDAY,  
JUNE 28, 1974

The President made the following statement:

“As the Honourable Members are aware, this House met on June 20, 1974, to consider the draft constitution. The proceedings of the House and the resolutions and amendments which were passed by them were duly conveyed by me to the Chogyal for his information and orders. On June 24, he sent me a note giving his views, and on June 27, 1974, the Chogyal rang me up from Delhi and asked me to inform the Assembly Members of his views on the resolutions passed by the Honourable Members. The following is the text of the Chogyal’s comments:

‘Reference your Most Immediate Note No. M/285/74 dated 24.6.74 regarding proceedings of the Assembly meeting of the June 20, which I received under your covering note No. M/282/74 of June 22, 1974. The contents of the proceedings have far reaching proposals that affects also the Government of India and it is my intention to discuss the same with the notes that we have been preparing on the draft constitution in Delhi. Copy of the proceedings may be forwarded to the Government of India through the Political Officer on our behalf.

‘As set out in my letter of June 15, 1974, to Her Excellency the Prime Minister of India, it is necessary that the three major principles that I have mentioned there should be fully safeguarded, viz. the setting up of a democratic institution ensuring the maximum participation of the people in the Government of Sikkim, safeguarding the legitimate interests and responsibilities of the Government

of India in Sikkim and guaranteeing the separate identity of Sikkim. Nothing in our constitution should contain or omit anything that detracts in any way from these three objectives that I have reiterated to Her Excellency, the Prime Minister of India. I have put this forward without any personal interest or attempt to reserve any powers that are not in consonance with the moving time of the present era. These endeavours and objectives may kindly be conveyed to the Members of the Assembly as I unfortunately did not have the opportunity to address them on June 20, 1974.

‘At this stage I do not think it advisable to hold on immediate meeting of the Assembly in view of the tension prevailing in Gangtok. You are aware that I am leaving for Delhi and hope the situation here will remain calm and peaceful so that our talks can be successfully concluded.

‘As President of the Assembly, I have received repeated representations from the Leader of the House for calling an emergent session of the Assembly. The Leader of the House vide his letter of June 25 has again reminded me to convene an emergent session of the Assembly to finalise the Bill being the Government of Sikkim Act, 1974, and giving effect to their resolutions and amendments as passed by them on June 20. The Leader of Assembly Party and other Members of the Assembly have also brought to my notice the urgency of this problem in view of the critical situation prevailing in Sikkim. Taking all these factors into consideration, I have requested the Honourable Members to assemble today to consider the matter in the light of the Chogyal’s views as I have read out, and the matter is now open for discussion and consideration’.

Kazi Lhendup Dorji, the Leader of the House, after seeking the permission of the Chair, spoke as follows:

“Mr. President,

“We are obliged to you for your wise decision in reconvening our sitting to discuss the draft constitutional framework for Sikkim to be known as the Government of Sikkim Act. This has become of utmost and gravest importance, for which the decision of this House must be made known to the people without delay. As you well know, Sir, the people of Sikkim have come to Gangtok leaving their work and families to express their anger at the attempts to obstruct this House from performing its duty and to express their support for our decision that this Bill be given effect without delay.

This Assembly and the entire people of Sikkim are shocked at the tactics adopted by the Chogyal and his ill-advised advisers to delay adoption of this Bill. We are amazed that instead of facilitating the due process of law the Chogyal should allow himself to be a party to such efforts to delay and deny the due process of law. We cannot tolerate such a situation any longer. It is no longer enough for us to express our opinion on this matter. We must move forward so that the blessing of democracy, under law, are immediately available to our people and the antiquated feudal hierarchy can no longer repress us. The proposed Bill is entirely in conformity with the Agreement of May 8, 1973, to which the Chogyal is a party. We are totally unable to understand how he can object to this Bill. As I will explain later, our feeling is that this Bill allows too much for his powers and privileges. After his actions of the last few days, our people are actually convinced that he could have no role left to play but since we understand the Government of India would like him to retain his honour and position, we are prepared to give him one last chance to come to reason. As we have already appealed to the Government of India, we would have liked them to enforce this Bill immediately. Under the May 8 Agreement, it is your duty, Sir, as Chief Executive, to inform the Political Officer that there is a difference of opinion between you and the Chogyal in regard to the development of democratic government and efficient administration in Sikkim, and it is the duty of the Government of India to give its binding decision on this difference. Under the May 8 Agreement, to which I repeat the Chogyal is a party, you have a special responsibility to ensure the proper implementation of the constitutional and administrative changes in Sikkim, smooth and efficient running of its administration and the continued enjoyment of basic and fundamental freedoms by all sections of the population in Sikkim. All these interests of the Sikkimese are threatened now by these nefarious activities of the Palace. Now that the Chogyal has run to Delhi and had yet more talks with the Government of India, we would have liked, as we have already appealed, that the Government of India should exercise its responsibility under the May 8 Agreement and tell the Chogyal that this Bill must become law forthwith. We again hereby formally make this request. We can no longer wait for the Chogyal to stop his dilatory tactics on one excuse or another and so prevent the enactment of this Bill. We have no wish to embarrass the Government of India and on the

contrary have always wanted to give our full cooperation but in this matter this Assembly cannot be denied the right not only to be heard but show unmistakably what it wants, and what it wants is the immediate adoption of this Bill. We are sorry if this in any way inconveniences the Government of India, but we will not and shall not wait any longer.

“Mr. President, you will have noted from the amendments moved and unanimously approved at our last meeting on June 20 that this House feels that the constitutional framework for Sikkim provided by the Draft Government of Sikkim Bill should go even further to fulfil the objectives of the Agreement of May 8, 1973, and the resolution of this House of May 11, 1974. We still feel these objectives would be better met by the changes we had suggested and the proposal we have made in our resolution of June 20 being implemented. It is our view that the Bill still leaves too much of the old feudal system and preserves too much of the powers and privileges of an out of date hierarchy. It is the unanimous view of this House that fuller democratisation will come to Sikkim. The Government of India which has discharged its rights and responsibilities for Sikkim so sympathetically to the cause of the Sikkimese people in helping us to make the great advance towards fully responsible government will continue to help us. Frankly, we must say that we do not think the Government of India should show any sympathy for the Chogyal or the feudal system which he has so long imposed on us. Specially after his recent behaviour, Government of India should give no consideration to his view. We understand the Government of India still hope the Chogyal will realise his responsibilities to the people of Sikkim and accept this Bill. The people of Sikkim have demonstrated massively in favour of this Bill and we quite honestly do not see why it should matter any longer whether the Chogyal accepts it or not. The Government of India have shown their approval by transmitting to the Chogyal and to us the Bill prepared by the Constitutional Adviser after full consideration with the Chogyal and Members of this House. And this House has already called for its full implementation. The two parties principally concerned are thus in agreement and we would like the Government of India immediately to exercise the authority it has in accordance with the Agreement of May 8, 1973, to take note of the action of this House and ensure that the Bill comes into force immediately whether the Chogyal likes it or not. How-



ever, it has always been our wish to work in the fullest cooperation with the Government of India and we are willing to leave it to their best judgment. To facilitate the speedy adoption of the Bill which is of utmost importance to the people of Sikkim, we adopt the Bill as drafted, but we wish to make it clear that when the laws are enacted or rules and regulations made or any other steps taken to fill up the constitutional framework, all these further laws, steps etc. should be based on the sense of this House as expressed in the various amendments we have moved. We accordingly have incorporated those amendments in the form of a resolution which we now place on the table of the House. I now ask the Members to further consider the Bill clause by clause.

Mr. N.B. Khatiwada:

While supporting the speech delivered by the Honourable Leader of this House I would like to draw attention of the House that the Chogyal who has not been able to see the writing on the wall and he has again and again gone to Delhi embarrassing Delhi by withholding assent. We are very happy that the Honourable Leader of the House made quite clear that this is the last chance for the Chogyal; after this there will be no role to play except to abdicate. Mr. President, Sir, I hope that we can now have the discussion of this Bill. Copies of the draft constitution have been given to the Honourable Members and we now move that the Assembly discuss the draft constitution.

Mr. President:

You are right in saying that copies of the Bill were already circulated quite some time ago when the Members had occasion to consider it for purposes of passing the resolution. Do I now take it that the Honourable Member is moving for the introduction of the Bill? It is a motion for the introduction of the Bill?

Mr. Khatiwada:

Yes. Mr. President, Sir, I also think that in that case there are a few resolutions which with the permission of the President of the House could be read on the floor of the House.

Mr. President:

No, I thought I understood from the Honourable Member that he had suggested the introduction of the Bill. Your amendments and resolutions will come later on. Is there any Honourable Member to second this motion?

(Mr. Nayan Tsering Lepcha seconded the motion)

Mr. President:

Motion moved that leave be granted to introduce the Government of Sikkim Bill 1974. All those Honourable Members in favour of the motion may kindly raise their hands.

All those against this motion may please raise their hands...

“The Ayes have it.”

“The Ayes have it.”

“The Ayes have it.”

Motion has been adopted unanimously. Honourable Members have the right to formally introduce the Bill.

Mr. L.D. Kazi:

I introduce the Bill.

Mr. President:

Honourable Member, Mr. Kazi, has introduced the Bill. Honourable Members who wish to express their opinions on the Bill may kindly do so.

PROCEEDINGS OF THE MEETING OF THE  
SIKKIM ASSEMBLY HELD AT 3.45 P.M. AT  
THE ASSEMBLY HOUSE ON WEDNESDAY,  
JULY 3, 1974

All the Members were present except Messrs Kalzang Gyatso Bhutia and Tasha Tangay Lepcha.

The Assembly was called to order by the President.

The President read out the following address of the Chogyal, copies of which along with enclosures were circulated to all the Members:

“I have come to address the Honourable Members as we are faced with the sacred task of framing a constitution for the country which will have far reaching effect on Sikkim, her people and her very close relationship with India, our protecting power. This is undoubtedly a historic measure which the Honourable Members, as the elected representatives of the people, and the Chogyal have a responsibility to study and understand very carefully before adopting the proposed Bill. There have been differences of opinion between different sections of the people on the Bill which is inevitable in a democratic process and we must learn to accept and tolerate these in the larger cause of our country and our people. Our duty is to ensure that these differences do not ultimately bring unhappiness and sufferings to the people at large.

“Since the Honourable Members had endorsed the draft ‘Government of Sikkim Bill 1974’ and had proposed amendments through the resolution passed in the House on June 20, 1974, it was incumbent upon me not only to discuss the proposed Bill with the Government of India but also to seek legal advice and other

consultations so that the Honourable Members may have a fuller appraisal of the various implications in the Bill. A constitution should be in consonance with aspirations of our people and the Honourable Members for establishing a fully responsible and democratic government and to safeguard Sikkim's separate identity under the 1950 Indo-Sikkim Treaty which would be affected by *Clause 30 in Chapter VI* of the Bill.

It is on this account that I went to Delhi, only after the Honourable House have had the opportunity of taking up the Bill on June 20, 1974, and returned last night at the earliest opportunity, after my last meeting with the Prime Minister of India June 30, evening. I have, therefore, not tried to delay or obstruct the Assembly from taking up the Bill.

I am placing before the House my detailed comments on the Bill in its original form and further comments on the either amendments proposed by the Honourable House on June 20, 1974. These comments prepared with legal advice could show the important lacunae and anomalies as has been noticed. While placing these comments before the Honourable House I would like to repeat once again that I do not seek any reservations for myself personally. The three basic principles I have kept in mind, which also have been conveyed to the Prime Minister of India on June 15 and the Honourable members through my note of June 24, 1974, to the President of the Assembly and to which I am irrevocably committed are:

1. the maximum participation by the people of Sikkim in the governance of our country which means the establishing of a fully responsible and democratic government of Sikkim;
2. respecting the legitimate rights and responsibilities of the Government of India to Sikkim; and
3. ensuring the separate identity and internal autonomy of Sikkim guaranteed under 1950 Indo-Sikkim Treaty.

My viewpoints have now been laid before the Honourable House for considering the Bill in the larger interest of Sikkim, her people and Indo-Sikkim relation.”

The address of the Chogyal with its enclosures were placed on the table of the House.

Kazi Lhendup Dorji made the following speech:

“President Sir,

We have heard the Chogyal tell us what he wishes to take note of regarding the proposed Government of Sikkim Act, 1974, before

its final enactment. I am obliged to say that we do not understand the need for any such process. Despite attempts, to obstruct and even to humiliate us and the members of the Assembly have sought patience to secure cooperation of the Chogyal in the hope that the development of democratic government can proceed forthwith in an atmosphere of universal goodwill and harmony in the same spirit, we do not wish to indulge in any recriminations or reproaches but it is impossible to avoid noting the fact that the Assembly's wishes which have been so overwhelmingly supported by the people of Sikkim have been ignored and flouted. We were called into session on May 20 and although there were deep feelings amongst our Members about previous indifference if not hostility on the part of the Palace the Chogyal could have explained to us his views on the proposed Bill then and there. He chose to avoid session while his so-called supporters even tried to prevent it. His basic position has already been communicated to us by you at the session of the Assembly on June 28. Our own position has been reiterated beyond any possibility of doubt or change by our adopting the Bill in our session of June 28. We immediately requested the Chogyal both directly and through you, to give effect to the Bill without delay. He has refused to do so and is still holding it up. We do not understand what is to be gained by further delay. Every hour that passes is only increasing resentment among the people of Sikkim and making more difficult the task of reconciliation and development of cooperative functioning amongst us all, which is so urgently needed. If the Chogyal has a role to play he must begin it by enabling this process to begin at once by giving effect to the Bill straightaway. We are aware of the various points relating to the Bill that he has in mind. On our part what we wished to be embodied in the Bill was already provided for in the Agreement of May 8, 1973, and the Chogyal like us had over a year to formulate and discuss ideas. We have been reiterating our wishes both in discussions with the various officials of the Government of India including the Foreign Secretary, in addition to the Political Officer, we have made our wishes known to the people of Sikkim during the elections in which the overwhelming support given by the return of 31 out of 32 Members of this House from the same platform. We again made our demand known in the resolution of May 11, 1974, adopted by the Sikkim Assembly unanimously.

The draft Bill provides a framework called for in all our discus-

sions and public speeches and resolutions. So there is no need for further discussions now. We therefore once again urge that the Bill be made an Act at once. I, therefore, move that the Bill be adopted in the form already passed by the House on June 28, 1974.”

Mr. Rinzing Tongden Lepcha then moved the following resolution: “The Sikkim Assmby,

Having already twice expressed its decision on the Government of Sikkim Bill 1974, by its resolution of June 20, 1974, and by passing the Bill on June 28, 1974.

Having been called into session again to hear the views of the Chogyal whose assent to the Bill has been so long awaited.

Having heard the views of the Chogyal.

Now hereby solemnly affirms and declares that it again endorses and adopts the Government of Sikkim Bill 1974 in the form in which it was passed on June 28 and again calls for the Bill to be given effect to immediately and also reiterates its resolutions of June 20 and 28.”

Mr. N. B. Khatiwada seconding the resolution stated as follows: “The Sikkim Assembly,

Strongly condemning the delay in the enactment of the Government of Sikkim Bill 1974 by the Chogyal.

Recalling that it has already approved the Bill and called for its implementation.

Recording further that it is meeting here today under the protest of all its Members solely because the Government of India have urged us that it might be in the interest of reconciliation and harmonious development of Sikkim’s democracy.

Deeply regretting that the Chogyal has not heeded the similar advice given to him by the Government of India to heed the wishes of the people of Sikkim without delay.

Hereby solemnly affirms and declares that this House stands by the Government of Sikkim Bill 1974 as endorsed in its resolution of June 20, 1974, and passed on its meeting of June 28, 1974, hereby endorses it again and hereby calls for its enactment today.”

The President put the resolution to vote and it was unanimously passed by the House.

Mr. C. S. Rai moved the following resolution:

“The consensus of opinion of the Sikkim Congress Assembly Members is that the Chogyal should put his assent to the Government

of Sikkim Bill 1974 before addressing the Sikkim Assembly. We, the elected Members of the Sikkim Assembly, will give him another three hours time either to assent to the said Bill, which is the first ever written constitution of Sikkim wherein there is a provision for him to remain as the Constitutional Head, or he has to quit the Sikkimese political scene for good. Our Members are not at all willing to hear him addressing the Assembly without his first putting his signature to the Government of Sikkim Bill 1974. As elected Members representing the people of Sikkim and as members of Sikkim Congress under the leadership of Kazi Lhendup Dorji Khangsarpa, we refused to recognise the very presence of the Chogyal since he has betrayed the very Sikkimese people, who is the source of power social, economic and political in Sikkim. In the ultimate analysis the people of Sikkim that counts and not the Chogyal who claims to be half-divine. We have so long and so far tolerated and endured his whims and his suppressions of the Sikkimese people but neither the Sikkimese people nor we as their elected representatives are going to tolerate him or his whimsical wishes. Either the Chogyal will remain in Sikkim without the people or the people will remain in Sikkim without him. But the people of Sikkim will always abide by and live in perpetual and everlasting friendship with the people of India because we feel that the destiny and the future of Sikkim and India is interlinked.

**REITERATING** our resolutions unanimously adopted at the meeting on June 20 and the reiteration of the same by the meeting of the Sikkim Assembly, representing the voice of the people, on June 23, 1974.

**REAFFIRMING** our shock and dismay that the Chogyal has not only disowned these efforts but has ignored the decisions of the Assembly.

**NOTING** that he has slipped out of Gangtok in the dead of night rather than face the people, and even after returning back to Gangtok he is using the same dilatory tactics to mar and obstruct the advent of real democracy and a popular Government in Sikkim. We are for the people and Sikkimese are entirely with us. Because under the arbitrary rule of the Chogyal and the feudalistic order existing in Sikkim our people had suffered so long and they are not prepared to suffer any longer.

We, therefore, hereby **RESOLVE** that the constitution be brought into immediate effect and if the Chogyal has so little respect for the

wishes of people, then he can have no role left to play except to abdicate.”

Mr. N. B. Khatiwada seconded the resolution.

The resolution was put to vote by the President and was unanimously passed by the House.

The President declared the House adjourned till the next sitting.



APPENDIX 6

SIKKIM

DARBAR

GAZETTE

EXTRAORDINARY  
PUBLISHED BY THE AUTHORITY

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*Ex. Gaz.*

*Gangtok, July 6, 1974*

*No. 1*

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*The Government of Sikkim Act  
1974*

**NOTIFICATION No. 35/S.C.**

Dated Gangtok, July 6, 1974

Having received the assent of the Chogyal of Sikkim on July 4, 1974, the Government of Sikkim Bill 1974 which was passed by the Sikkim Assembly on July 3, 1974, has now become the Government of Sikkim Act 1974 and it is hereby notified for general information as follows :

**THE GOVERNMENT OF SIKKIM ACT, 1974**

An  
Act

to provide in pursuance of the historic agreement of the 8 of May 1973, between the Chogyal, the leaders of the political parties representing the people of Sikkim and the Government of India and of the unanimous desire of the Members of the Sikkim Assembly expressed in the meeting of the Assembly held on May 11, 1974, for the progressive realisation of a fully responsible government in Sikkim and for further strengthening its close relationship with India.

**CHAPTER I**  
**PRELIMINARY**

- |                                     |   |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| <i>Short title and commencement</i> | 1. This Act may be called the Government of Sikkim Act, 1974.<br>(2) It shall come into force on the fourth day of July 1974.   |
| <i>Definitions</i>                  | 2. In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires,<br>(a) "Assembly" means the Sikkim Assembly;<br>(b) "Chief Executive" means the Chief Executive referred to in section 28;<br>(c) "Chogyal" means the Chogyal of Sikkim;<br>(d) "Member" means a member of the Assembly; |

CHAPTER II  
THE CHOGYAL OF SIKKIM

*The Chogyal and his privileges*  
*The Chogyal to exercise powers and perform functions in accordance with this Act*

3. The Chogyal shall take precedence over all other persons in Sikkim and he shall continue to enjoy the honour, position and other personal privileges hitherto enjoyed by him.
4. The Chogyal shall exercise his powers and perform his functions in accordance with the provisions of this Act, and nothing contained in section 3 shall affect the provisions of this section.

*Executive action in Sikkim how to be expressed*

5. All executive action of the Government of Sikkim taken in accordance with the provisions of this Act shall be expressed to be taken in the name of the Chogyal.

CHAPTER III  
SIKKIM ASSEMBLY

*Assembly for Sikkim*

6. (1) There shall be an Assembly for Sikkim.  
(2) The total number of seats in the Assembly to be filled by persons chosen by direct election shall be such as may be determined by law.

*Election to the Sikkim Assembly*

7. (1) For the purpose of elections to the Sikkim Assembly, Sikkim shall be divided into constituencies in such manner as may be determined by law.  
(2) The Government of Sikkim may make rules for the purpose of providing that the Assembly adequately represents the various sections of the population, that is to say, while fully protecting the legitimate rights and interests of Sikkimese of Lepcha or Bhutia origin and of Sikkimese of Nepali origin and other

Sikkimese, including Tsongs and Scheduled Castes no single section of the population is allowed to acquire a dominating position in the affairs of Sikkim mainly by reason of its ethnic origin.

*Election Commission of India may conduct elections*

8. For ensuring free and fair elections in Sikkim, the Chogyal shall appoint a representative of the Election Commission of India nominated by the Government of India in this behalf and the elections shall be conducted under the supervision of such representatives, and for this purpose the representatives shall have all the powers necessary for the effective discharge of his functions.

*Qualifications for Membership of Assembly*

9. A person shall not be qualified to be chosen to fill a seat in the Assembly unless he:
- (a) is an elector for any constituency and makes and subscribes before some person authorised by the authority conducting the election an oath or affirmation according to the form set out in the Schedule;
  - (b) is not less than 25 years of age;
  - (c) possesses such other qualifications as may be specified in any law for the time being in force.

*Elections on the basis of adult suffrage*

10. (a) The elections to the Sikkim Assembly shall be on the basis of one man one vote, that is to say, every person who on the prescribed date is a subject of Sikkim, is not less than twenty-one years of age and is not otherwise disqualified under this Act or under any other law on the ground of residence, unsoundness of mind, crime or corrupt or illegal practice shall be entitled to be registered as a voter at any such election.
- (b) Every person whose name is for the time being listed in the electoral roll of any constituency shall be entitled to vote at the election of a member from that constituency.

*Duration of Assembly*

11. The Assembly shall, unless sooner dissolved, continue for four years from the date appointed

- for its first meeting and no longer, and the expiration of the said period of four years shall operate as a dissolution of the Assembly.
- Summoning of Assembly* 12. The Chogyal shall, on the advice of the President of the Assembly, summon the Assembly to meet at such time and place as he thinks fit, but for six months shall not intervene between its last sitting in one session and the date appointed for its first sitting in the next session.
- Speaker and Deputy Speaker of Assembly* 13. (1) The Chief Executive shall be an ex-officio President of the Assembly and as such shall perform the functions of the Speaker thereof.  
(2) The Assembly shall, as soon as may be, choose a member to be Deputy Speaker thereof who shall act as Speaker during the absence of the President of the Assembly from any sitting of the Assembly.
- Right of Chogyal to attend and address meetings of Assembly* 14. The Chogyal may address the Assembly after intimating to the President of the Assembly his intention to do so.
- Oath or affirmation by Members* 15. Every member of the Assembly shall, before taking his seat, make and subscribe before the Chogyal or some person appointed in that behalf by him an oath or affirmation according to the form set out for the purpose in the schedule.
- Vacation of seats* 16. If a member of the Assembly :  
(a) becomes subject to any disqualification mentioned in section 7 for membership of the Assembly ; or  
(b) resigns his seat by writing under his hand addressed to the President of the Assembly, his seat shall thereupon become vacant.
- Disqualification for membership* 17. (1) A person shall be disqualified for being chosen as, and for being, a member of the Assembly.  
(a) if he holds any office of profit under the Government of Sikkim other than an office

declared by law not to disqualify its holder;

(b) if he is of unsound mind and stands so declared by a competent court;

(c) if he is so disqualified by or under any law.

(2) For the purpose of this section, a person shall not be deemed to hold any office of profit under the Government of Sikkim by reason only that he is a Minister.

(3) If any question arises as to whether a member of the Assembly has become disqualified for being such a member under the provisions of sub-section (i), the question shall be referred for the decision of the Chogyal and his decision shall be final.

(4) Before giving any decision on any such question, the Chogyal shall obtain the opinion of the Election Commission of India or such other election authority as may be specified by the Government of India for the purpose, and shall act according to such opinion.

*Penalty for sitting and voting before taking oath etc. or when disqualified etc.*

18. If a person sits or votes as a member of the Assembly before he has complied with the requirements of section 15 or when he knows that he is not qualified or that he is disqualified for membership thereof; he shall be liable in respect of each day on which he so sits or votes to a penalty of one hundred rupees to be recovered as a debt due to the Government of Sikkim.

*Powers, privileges of members*

19. (1) Subject to the provisions of this Act, and to the rules and standing orders regulating the procedure of the Assembly, there shall be freedom of speech in the Assembly.

(2) No member shall be liable to any proceedings in any Court in respect of anything said or any vote given by him in the Assembly or in any Committee thereof, and no person shall be so liable in respect of the publication by or under the authority of the Assembly of any report, paper, votes or other proceedings.

*Powers and functions of the Assembly*

20. (1) Subject to the provisions of this Act, the Assembly may discuss, make recommendations or make laws for the whole or any part of Sikkim with respect to any of the following matters, namely :

- (a) Education;
- (b) Public Health;
- (c) Excise;
- (d) Press and Publicity;
- (e) Transport;
- (f) Bazars;
- (g) Forests;
- (h) Public Works;
- (i) Agriculture;
- (j) Food Supplies;
- (k) Economic and Social Planning including State Enterprises; and
- (l) Land Revenue.

(2) Subject to the provisions of this Act, the Assembly shall also have the right to discuss and make recommendations with respect to any matter not enumerated in sub-section (1) which may from time to time be referred to it by the Chief Executive.

(3) The Chogyal shall, on the recommendation of the Government of India, by notification in the Sikkim Durbar Gazette add any other matter to the matters enumerated in sub-section (1), and thereupon the matter so added shall be deemed to have been included in that sub-section for the purposes of this Act.

*Assent to Bills*

21. When a Bill has been passed by the Assembly, it shall be presented to the Chogyal and latter shall either give his consent to the bill or withhold his assent therefrom.

Provided that the Chogyal may, as soon as possible after the presentation to him of a Bill for assent, return the Bill to the Assembly with a message requesting that they will reconsider the Bill or any specified provisions thereof and, in

particular, will consider the desirability of introducing any such amendments as he may recommend in his message and, when a Bill is so returned, the Assembly shall reconsider it accordingly within a period of three months from the date of receipt of such message and if it is again passed by the Assembly with or without amendment and presented to the Chogyal for assent, the Chogyal shall not withhold assent therefrom.

Provided further that the Chogyal shall reserve for the consideration of the Government of India any Bill which would, if it became law, affect any of the responsibilities of the Government of India or any of the special responsibilities of the Chief Executive referred to in section 28 and shall act according to the decision of the Government of India.

*Courts not to inquire into Proceedings of Assembly*

22. (1) The validity of any proceedings in the Assembly shall not be called in question on the ground of any alleged irregularity in procedure.  
 (2) No officer or member of the Assembly in whom powers are vested by or under this Act for regulating the procedure or the conduct of business or for maintaining order in the Assembly shall be subject to the jurisdiction of any court in respect of the exercise by him of these powers.

*Rules of procedure*

23. (1) The Assembly may make rules for regulating, subject to the provisions of this Act, its procedure and the conduct of its business.  
 (1) or in any other provisions of this Act, the Assembly shall not discuss or ask questions on any of the following, namely :  
 (2) Notwithstanding anything contained in subsection;  
 (a) the Chogyal and members of the ruling family;  
 (b) any matter pending before a court of law;  
 (c) the appointment of the Chief Executive or members of the Judiciary;



- (d) any matter which is exclusively the responsibility of the Government of India, whether under this Act or under any agreement or otherwise.

#### CHAPTER IV COUNCIL OF MINISTERS

*Council of Ministers to aid and advise the Chogyal*

24. (1) There shall be an Executive Council (in this Act referred to as the Council of Ministers) with one of the members thereof at the head who shall be designated as the Chief Minister and the others as Ministers.
- (2) The Council of Ministers shall be in charge of the administrative departments allotted to them and shall advise the Chogyal in respect of all matters within their jurisdiction.
- (3) Every advice tendered by the Council of Ministers shall be communicated to the Chogyal through the Chief Executive who may, if he is of opinion that the advice affects or is likely to affect any of his special responsibilities or the responsibilities of the Government of India referred to in section 28, require the Council of Ministers to modify the advice accordingly.
- (4) The question whether any, and if so what, advice was tendered by Ministers to the Chogyal shall not be inquired into by any court.

*Appointment and removal of ministers*

25. (1) The Chief Minister and other Ministers shall be appointed by the Chogyal on the advice of the Chief Executive.
- (2) The Council of Ministers shall be responsible to the Assembly.
- (3) Before a Minister enters his office, the Chogyal or such other person as may be authorised in this behalf, shall administer to him the oaths of office and of secrecy according to the form set out for the purpose in the schedule.

- Extent of executive power of the Council of Ministers* 26. The executive power of the Council of Ministers shall extend to the matters referred to in section 20.
- Conduct of business* 27. The Chogyal shall, on the recommendation of the Chief Executive taken in consultation with the Chief Minister, make rules for the allocation of business to the Ministers and for the more convenient transaction of business.

### CHAPTER V THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

- Chief Executive and his functions* 28. (1) At the head of administration in Sikkim, there shall be a Chief Executive, who shall be a person nominated by the Government of India and appointed to that post by the Chogyal.
- (2) The functions of the Chief Executive shall be to ensure that :
- (a) the responsibilities of the Government of India in or in relation to Sikkim as respects all or any of the matters referred to in the Agreement of the 8 of May, 1973, between the Chogyal, the Government of India and the leaders of the political parties representing the people of Sikkim, or in any other agreement entered into between the Chogyal and the Government of India, whether before or after the commencement of this Act;
- (b) the special responsibilities of the Chief Executive referred to in the agreement of the 8 of May, 1973, aforesaid; are duly discharged.
- (3) The Chief Executive shall have all the powers necessary for the discharge of his functions and responsibilities, and the executive power in Sikkim shall be so exercised as to ensure compli-

- ance with any decisions taken or orders or directions issued by the Government of India in the due discharge of its responsibilities.
- Performance of functions by the Chief Executive* 29. (1) The Chief Executive shall:
- (a) where any action taken in the performance of his functions concerns a matter the administrative functions relating to which have been allocated to a Minister, act in consultation with the Minister in respect thereof;
  - (b) submit all important matters to the Chogyal for his information and for his approval of the action proposed to be taken;
 

provided that where immediate action is required the Chief Executive may take such action as he thinks fit and shall obtain the Chogyal's approval as soon as after the action has been taken as possible.
  - (c) Advise the Chogyal in respect of all other matters.
- (2) Where difference of opinion arises between the Chief Executive and the Chogyal in respect of any matter, it shall be referred to the Government of India for decision and the decision of the Government of India shall be final.

## CHAPTER VI GENERAL

- Association with Government of India* 30. For the speedy development of Sikkim in the social, economic and political fields, the Government of Sikkim may :
- (a) request the Government of India to include the planned development of Sikkim within the ambit of the Planning Commission of India while that Commission is preparing plans for the economic and social development of India and to appropriately associate officials from Sikkim in such work;

- (b) request the Government of India to provide facilities for students for Sikkim in institutions for higher learning and for the employment of people from Sikkim in the public services of India (including the all-India services), at par with those available to the citizens of India;
- (c) seek participation and representation for the people of Sikkim in the political institutions of India.

*Independence of Judiciary  
Basic human rights and fundamentals of freedom*

- 31. All judges shall be independent in the exercise of their judicial function and subject only to this Act and the laws.
- 32. (1) All sections of the people in Sikkim shall enjoy basic human rights and fundamental freedoms without discrimination.  
(2) The Government of Sikkim shall make every endeavour to secure for the people of Sikkim the enjoyment of the aforesaid rights and to maintain and promote communal harmony.  
(3) Notwithstanding anything contained in the aforesaid provisions, special provision shall be made for the advancement or the protection of the aboriginal inhabitants of Sikkim and other minorities.

*Existing Assembly to be the first Sikkim Assembly under this Act  
Power to remove difficulties*

- 33. The Assembly which has been formed as a result of the elections held in Sikkim in April, 1974, shall be deemed to be the first Assembly duly constituted under this Act, and shall be entitled to exercise the powers and perform the functions conferred on the Assembly by this Act.
- 34. If any difficulty arises in giving effect to the provisions of this Act, the Chogyal may, in consultation with the Chief Executive, by order, do anything not inconsistent with the provisions of this Act, which appear to be expedient or necessary for the purpose of removing the difficulty.

By Order

*J. T. Densappa,  
Secretary to the Chogyal*

**THE SCHEDULE**  
(Form of Oaths or Affirmations)

**I**

(see section 9-a)

- (1) Form of oath or affirmation to be made by a candidate for election to the Assembly.

“I A.B. having been nominated as a candidate to fill a seat in the Assembly do swear in the name of God solemnly affirm that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the Constitution of Sikkim as by law established.”

**II**

(see section 15)

- (2) Form of oath or affirmation to be made by a Member of the Assembly.

“I A.B. having been elected as a member of the Assembly do swear in the name of God solemnly affirm, that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the Constitution of Sikkim as by law established and that I will faithfully discharge the duty on which I am about to enter.”

**III**

(see section 25)

- (3) Form of oath of office for a member of the Council of Ministers

“I A.B. do swear in the name of God solemnly affirm that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the Constitution of Sikkim as by law established and that I will faithfully and conscientiously discharge my duties as a Minister and that I will do right to all manner of people in accordance with the Constitution and the law without fear or favour, affection or ill-will.”

**IV**

(see section 25)

- (4) Form of oath of secrecy for a member of the Council of Ministers.

“I A.B. do swear in the name of God  
solemnly affirm that I will not directly  
or indirectly communicate or reveal to any person or persons  
any matter which shall be brought under my consideration or  
shall become known to me as a Minister except as may be  
required for the due discharge of my duties as such a Minister.”

## THE TEXT OF THE CONSTITUTION (THIRTY-EIGHTH AMENDMENT) BILL, 1975

Be it enacted by Parliament in the twenty-sixth year of the Republic of India as follows :

1. (1) This Act may be called the Constitution (Thirty-eighth Amendment) Act, 1975.
- (2) It shall be deemed to have come into force on the date on which the Bill for this Act (Introduced in the House of the People as the Constitution [Thirty-eighth Amendment] Bill, 1975), as passed by the House of the People, is passed by the Council of States.
2. In the first Schedule to the Constitution, under the heading "1. THE STATES", after entry 21, the following entry shall be inserted, namely :
 

*"22 SIKKIM The Territories which immediately before the commencement of the Constitution (Thirty-eighth Amendment) Act, 1975, were comprised in Sikkim."*
3. After Article 371F of the Constitution, the following article shall be inserted, namely :
 

*"371F. Notwithstanding anything in this Constitution,*

  - (a) the Legislative Assembly of the State of Sikkim shall consist of not less than thirty members;
  - (b) as from the date of commencement of the Constitution (Thirty-eighth Amendment) Act, 1975 (hereafter in this article referred to as the appointed day):
    - (i) the Assembly for Sikkim formed as a result of the elections held in Sikkim in April, 1974, with thirty-two

- members elected in the said elections (hereinafter referred to as the sitting members) shall be deemed to be the Legislative Assembly of the State of Sikkim duly constituted under this constitution;
- (ii) the sitting members shall be deemed to be the members of the Legislative Assembly of the State of Sikkim duly elected under this Constitution; and
  - (iii) the said Legislative Assembly of the State of Sikkim shall exercise the powers and perform the functions of the Legislative Assembly of a State under this constitution;
- (c) the period of five years referred to in clause (1) of article 172 shall, in the case of the Legislative Assembly of the State of Sikkim referred to in clause (b), be deemed to have commenced on the appointed day;
  - (d) *until other provisions are made by Parliament by law, there shall be allotted to the State of Sikkim one seat in the House of the People and the State of Sikkim shall form one parliamentary constituency to be called the parliamentary constituency for Sikkim;*
  - (e) the representative of the State of Sikkim in the House of the People in existence on the appointed day shall be elected by the members of the Legislative Assembly of the State of Sikkim;
  - (f) Parliament may, for the purpose of protecting the rights and interests of the different sections of the population of Sikkim, make provision for the number of seats in the Legislative Assembly of the Sikkim which may be filled by candidates belonging to such sections and for the delimitation of the assembly constituencies from which candidates belonging to such sections alone may stand for election to the Legislative Assembly of the State of Sikkim;
  - (g) the Governor of Sikkim shall have special responsibility for peace and for an equitable arrangement for ensuring the social and economic advancement of different sections of the population of Sikkim and in the discharge of his special responsibility under this clause, the Governor of Sikkim shall, subject to such directions as the President may, from time to time deem fit to issue, act in his discretion;



- (h) all property and assets (whether within or outside the territories comprised in the State of Sikkim) which immediately before the appointed day were vested in the Government of Sikkim or in any other authority or in any person for the purposes of the Government of Sikkim shall, as from the appointed day, vest in the Government of the State of Sikkim;
- (i) the High Court functioning as such immediately before the appointed day in the territories comprised in the State of Sikkim shall, on and from the appointed day, be deemed to be the High Court for the State of Sikkim;
- (j) all courts of civil, criminal and revenue jurisdiction, all authorities and all officers, judicial, executive and ministerial, throughout the territory of the State of Sikkim shall continue on and from the appointed day to exercise their respective functions subject to the provisions of this Constitution;
- (k) all laws in force immediately before the appointed day in the territories comprised in the State of Sikkim or any part thereof shall continue to be in force therein until amended or repealed by a competent Legislature or other competent authority;
- (l) for the purpose of facilitating the application of any such law as is referred to in clause (k) in relation to the administration of the State of Sikkim and for the purpose of bringing the provisions of any such law into accord with the provisions of this Constitution, the President may, within two years from the appointed day, by order make such adaptations and modifications of the law, whether by way of repeal or amendment, as may be necessary or expedient, and thereupon, every such law shall have effect subject to the adaptations and modifications so made, and any such adaptation or modification shall not be questioned in any court of law;
- (m) neither the Supreme Court nor any other court shall have jurisdiction in respect of any dispute or other matter arising out of any treaty, agreement, engagement or other similar instrument relating to Sikkim which was entered into or executed before the appointed day and to which the Government of India or any of its predecessor Govern-

ments was a party, but nothing in this clause shall be construed to derogate from the provisions of Article 143;

- (n) the President may, by public notification, extend with such restrictions or modifications as he thinks fit to the State of Sikkim any enactment which is in force in a State in India at the date of the notification;
- (o) if any difficulty arises in giving effect to any of the foregoing provisions of this article, the President may, by order, do anything (including any adaptation or modification of any other article) which appears to him to be necessary for the purpose of removing that difficulty;

provided that no such order shall be made after the expiry of two years from the appointed day;

- (p) all things done and all actions taken in or in relation to the State of Sikkim or the territories comprised therein during the period commencing on the appointed day and ending immediately before the date on which the Constitution (Thirty-eighth Amendment) Act, 1975, receives the assent of the President shall, in so far as they are in conformity with the provisions of this Constitution as amended by the Constitution (Thirty-eighth Amendment) Act, 1975, be deemed for all purposes to have been validly done or taken under this Constitution as so amended."

4. In the Fourth Schedule to the Constitution, in the Table :

- (a) after entry 21, the following entry shall be inserted, namely :

**"22. SIKKIM I"**

- (b) existing entries 22 to 25 shall be renumbered as entries 23 to 26 respectively;
- (c) for the figures "231", the figures "232" shall be substituted.

5. The following consequential amendments shall be made in the Constitution, namely :

- (a) Article 2A shall be omitted;
- (b) in Article 80, in clause (1), the words and figure "subject to the provisions of paragraph 4 of the Tenth Schedule", shall be omitted;
- (c) in Article 81, in clause (1), the words and figure "and paragraph 4 of the Tenth Schedule" shall be omitted;
- (d) the Tenth Schedule shall be omitted.

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