

HIMALAYA FRONTIER IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Edited by

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INSTITUTE OF HISTORICAL STUDIES
CALCUTTA 700 017

First Published in February, 1986

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Published by Prof. N. R. Ray
Director, Institute of Historical Studies
35 Theatre Road, Calcutta-700 017 (India)

Price : Rs. 125.00 (India)

U. S. \$ 30.00 or its equivalent in any other foreign currency

Printed in India by Sm. Karak Prab'ia Basu at K. P. Basu Printing
Works, 11 Mohendra Gossain Lane, Calcutta-700 006

P R E F A C E

OUR FEELINGS in presenting this long awaited volume—Himalaya Frontier in Historical Perspective—are mixed. We feel happy that we have been able at last to place the title before our members and the reading public. But we also regret that it should have taken seven years for bringing it out, on the basis of the proceedings of a Conference held way back in 1979. The reason for the delay—paucity of funds and demands of abnormally high cost—is well-known and not need be repeated.

It was fit and proper that Gangtok was chosen as the venue of the Seminar on the Himalaya Frontier. The response of scholars, with expertise and specialised study at their disposal, was overwhelmingly spontaneous and encouraging. The papers presented at the Conference and incorporated in this volume conform to the norm, pattern and scope as laid down by Dr. S. P. Sen, the Founder-Director of the Institute in his letter addressed to the members and invitees on the eve of the Gangtok Conference. It is worth recalling extracts from the letter, as these spell out the main guide lines :

“The theme will cover the entire Himalaya Belt from the north-eastern to the north-western extremity of India. Papers on this theme will deal with specific parts of the Frontier—Arunachal, Bhutan, Sikkim, Eastern Himalaya and Western Himalaya. The papers will cover all the three periods of History—ancient, medieval and modern. Each paper will be a study in depth and will deal with a particular sector of the Himalayan Frontier, a particular period of history and a particular aspect—political, social, religious, cultural and economic. The papers will bring out the close historical links of the different sectors of the Himalaya Frontier with the rest of India”.

In general, the papers are, as they were intended to be, in-depth studies, based on adequate documentation and enriched

with critical analysis of trends relevant to the topics or aspects thereof, dealt with in each paper. Apart from factual survey, the articles present interpretation in the context of the facts covered therein, revising, in some cases, old theories and often unfolding new spheres of thinking. A frontier as treated in the papers is more than a mere geographical boundary. Its connotation includes the territories bordering on it. In the circumstances, it is evident that a frontier cannot be properly studied, in isolation. It inevitably involves interests of several countries at the same given time or at different times. To make the study complicated, interests of nations are found to be, more often than not, in conflict with each other. Most of the papers, as such, have traversed wide areas under several governments, and in doing so, have become both intensive and extensive in contents—dealing with a multiplicity of issues—political, diplomatic, economic, social and military. Nor has cultural history been neglected. No study on Tibet, for example, can be profitably undertaken without an attempt to unveil the mysteries of its religion which is known to have so deeply influenced its politics and state-policy. The monasteries, in general, and the one at Tawang, in particular, located near the trijunction of India-Bhutan-Tibet frontiers, shed considerable light on the comparatively dark areas and the little known races about whom not much is known from other sources. The role of the Buddhist preachers in India and adjacent areas also deserves to be re-assessed in depth, as done in one of the papers. A critical review of Ahom-Bhutanese relations highlighting the Ahom policy towards the Bhutanese chiefs and a comparative study of the cultural encounters between the different races, speaking different languages and dialects and representing various levels of culture and the Indians, paving the way for common agreement and linguistic affinity among the Indo-Mongoloid races, both of which are lucid expositions, find a place in the contents of the volume. Among other subjects dealt with under the section on Eastern Himalaya are included penetrating studies, based largely on original papers, on The Changing Pattern of Northern Frontier of Bengal in the 17th and 18th Centuries and British Economic Penetration

into the North-Eastern Hills : Overland Trade and Allied Questions in the first half of the 19th century. The tribes of the N. E. Frontier, a fascinating subject, receive adequate and critical attention in three well-written papers with emphasis on and critical analysis of the British Indian Government's "policy of loose control" and the stages in the development of that policy till the outbreak of the First World War. The Development of Government under the British Rule on the same area, "a land of mystery", inhabited by diverse people, is dealt with in detail in another paper, due emphasis being placed on the analysis of the motives behind the activities of the British Government. Diverse and interesting subjects such as Mineral Prospecting in N. E. India of the mid-19th century, The Chinese claims and the British Policy on the Sikkim Frontier (1886-1890) and The Evolution of Arunachal from a Tribal area to a Full State bring the first sector to a close.

The second and the third sectors have the smallest number of papers at the rate of two each. Central Asia is thus poorly represented. There are two papers on Garhwal and Kumaon respectively, one an informative paper on the Ancient Garhwal in Historical Perspective dealing with its history, geography and religion, in particular, with reference to original literary sources and the other a critical study on the progress and development of Kumaon District under the initiative of its one-time Commissioner, Henry Ramsay. The other sector too comprises of two papers. The theme for the first paper is a detailed study of Ladakh's relations with the Sikhs and the British in the first half of the 19th century in the delineation of which the contributor brings original sources as well as findings incorporated in standard secondary works to bear on his analytical review. The other paper is likewise a diligent study on Lord Lytton and the Northern Frontier of India. Though much has already been written on the subject, the present contributor has succeeded in highlighting issues not dealt with in depth or in detail before.

Tibet to which reference has been made earlier, particularly in respect of its religion and culture has to its credit

six learned papers. The Sector on Tibet commences with a critical discourse on the Lamas and the Lama Way. The paper which follows viz. Aspects of Indo-Tibetan Contacts and Collaboration through the Ages offers a study both interesting and informative. Three papers dwell upon India-Tibetan Frontier and the Sikkim Convention of 1890—The circumstances leading to and the consequences following from its Chinese Case on the Tibet-China Frontier as presented to the Simla Conference, 1913-14 and China as a factor in determining Sikkim in Tibet Frontier. The presentation, in each paper, is both lucid and well-documented. The Status of Tibet in the Peoples' Republic of China, a necessary follow-up, is the last paper in the Sector offering, within limits, an objective scholarly study on a position which has generated a good deal of speculations and controversies.

Nepal claims three papers of which the first two deal, respectively, with Nepal's Role in 1857 and the consequences that shaped British Relations with this Himalayan Kingdom and the Role of the Gurkhas in the British Army, a subject not previously discussed in the manner or to the extent as covered by the present contributor. The third and the last paper on Nepal relates to the kingdom's Foreign Policy, which reveals, as the author claims, Persistence of Tradition. On an analysis of the major irritants between Nepal and India and earlier historical associations between the two neighbours, the author illustrates his main thesis by a reference to "the traditional fear (of the Nepalese) that economic means could be used by India to promote its political ends still influences Kathmandu's economic relations with New Delhi".

Two papers, well-documented and entitled Portrayal of Bhutan in the British Himalayan Policy—Curzon Years and the Himalayan Frontier : A Case Study of the Bhutanese part of the Frontier tread on new grounds, on a re-appraisal of available materials and bring the volume to its end.

The volume, as a whole, comprising of a total of twenty-eight papers, covering distinct areas of the Himalaya Frontier, is reasonably expected to serve the purpose of a first-rate book of reference. It is so planned as to meet the legitimate curiosi-

ties of the reading public whose growing interests in the Himalayan Frontier fall short of dependable knowledge on the subject. The publication of this volume is thus expected to substantially reduce a long-persisting lacuna of our historiography. It may be claimed with justice that the present volume is the first of its kind to be printed—an exhaustive survey and critical assessment of the Himalayan Frontier in Historical perspective.

In the preparation of this volume much labour and the labour of many have gone. We take this opportunity to convey our grateful thanks to the learned contributors and to Dr. Ratnalekha Roy, Jadavpur University (since deceased), Dr. N. N. Bhattacharyya, Calcutta University and Dr. Pranjal Bhattacharyya, Jadavpur University for their valuable assistance in the editing of the papers and to Shrimati Minati Chattopadhyaya for her sustained and active interest in the progress of printing. Shri Anupam Ray has won our thanks by placing his expertise and help in the entire process of the transformation of the press copy to a book in print. Lastly, we recall with deep appreciation the generous financial assistance rendered by the Department of Culture, Ministry of Education, New Delhi and the Department of Education, Government of West Bengal but for which a costly publication like this could not be brought out by the Institute's own resources.

Calcutta, 20 February, 1986

N. R. RAY

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- General

THE HIMALAYA FRONTIER FROM THE SANSKRIT SOURCES

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FREQUENT REFERENCES to the Himalayas in the *Rigveda* and also in the later Samhitas and Brahmana literature prove that even in hoary antiquity the importance of this region was sufficiently understood. In the *Rigveda*, the river hymn (X. 75) shows an intimate acquaintance with the whole of north-western India from the Kubha (Kabul) to the Ganga valley and mentions even insignificant streams like the Marudvridha, Arjikiya and Susoma. In other passages of the *Rigveda* the Himalayan streams find mention. The Vedas preserve distinct memories of earlier settlements of the Vedic tribes beyond the Himalayan foothills. In *Rigveda*, i. 30.9 a worshipper invokes from his 'ancient dwelling place' *pratnasyaukasah*, the god Indra whom his father formerly invoked. The Yadus and Turvasas were probably connected with Parsus of the north-west (cf. *Rigveda* VIII. 6.46). References to peoples beyond the border regions have been traced to such names as Istaśva, Tirindira, etc. The Vedic Ailas have been connected with the Oxus valley and the *Balhi* or *Balhika* region (Bactria or Belkh, cf. Pargiter, *Ancient Indian Historical Tradition*, pp. 254-299) which finds mention in the *Atharvaveda Samhita* (v. 22.5.7.9) and numerous other texts. The *Papanchasudani* (Law, *Ancient Mid-Indian Kshatriya Tribes*, p. 16) refers to the foundation of the Kuru Kingdom by a tribe from Uttara Kuru, a trans-Himalayan ruler known to the *Aitareya Brahmana*. Its customs are quoted for guidance by a Kuru king in the *Mahabharata* (*Adi*, 122.7).

It is possible to think that the Vedic tribes occupied the land of the seven rivers, *sapta-sindhaavah* or *Hapta Hindu* as it is called

in the *Rigveda* and the Avestan texts. The Vedic occupation of Eastern Kabulistan is proved by the mention of the rivers Kubha (Kabul), Suvastu (Swat), Krumu (Kurram) and Gomati (Gumal) as well as tribes like the Pakthas (cf. Pakthan) and the Gandharis (of the Gandhara region). Further east the *Rigvedic* people occupied almost the whole of the Punjab watered by the Sindhu (Indus) and its famous tributories, the Susoma (Sohan), the Arjikiya (probably the Kausi), the Vitasta (Jhelum), the Asikni (Chenab), the Parushni (Ravi), the Vipas (Beas) and the Sutadro (Sutlej). The tribes like the Purus and the Sivas occupied the country as late as the time of Alexander. In the north the Vedic tribes held a part at least of the secluded vale of Kashmira and in the Vedic hymns a small Kashmirian stream, the Marudvridha (Maruwardwan) finds mention. The Vedic literature contains stray references to the population movement from the lands outside India to the trans-Himalayan foothills in north-west down to the Ganga and the Sindhu valleys. A systematic survey of historical geography in regard to the whole of Indian northern border-land from the Vedic texts is expected to throw significant light.

The Puranic literature of the later period contains the nomenclature of India and its place in the cosmic system of the Hindus. The *Markendeya Purana* mentions (57, 59, Pargiter's trans., p. 347) that India is girdled on three sides by the sea and on the north by the Himalayan mountain range which 'stretches along on its north like the string of a bow' (*karmukasya yatha gunah*). Bodhayana and Manu and even Darius and Herodotus did not mention the whole of India by the term or as they were not acquainted with north-eastern boundary of India (Herodotus, Book III, ch. 97-98). In the Puranic literature two terms are frequently used, Jambudvipa and Bharata-varsa respectively in wider and restricted sense. The term *Jambudvipa* also finds mention in the Asokan edict (*y(i)-imaya Kalaya Jambudvipasi amisa deva ihusute dani m(i)s kata. Pakamasi hiesa phale*), and accounts of I-tsing which (I-tsing's *Record of the Buddhist Religion*, trans., Takakusu, p. 14) differentiates it from China (*ibid.*, p. 136) and Fu-nan (of Siam and part of Cambodia,

Takakasu, *ibid.*, 12-13). The Puranas and the epics again distinguish it from Sakadvipa, land of Magadvijas or sun-worshippers of the scythian land beyond the Himalayas. (*Kurma Purana*, i, 48, 36-37; *Mbh.*, vi, 11, 8-38). Jambudvipa is sometimes used as a synonym of Bharata-varsha (*Brahmanda Purana*, 37, 27, 46, 43, 32). Jambudvipa has been described as being low on the south and north, and highly elevated in the middle. (*Mark. Purana*, 54, 12f). The elevated region in the centre is styled *Ilavarta* or *Meru Varsha*. To the north of this tract lie *Ramyaka*, *Hiranmaya* and *Uttarakuru* and on the south are *Bharata*, *Kimpurusha* and *Harivarsha*. Thus Bharata, the southernmost region is separated from Kimpurusha by the *Himavat* chain (*Brahmanda*, 84.44, 53; *Matsya*, 113.28; *Indian Antiquary*, 1899, p. 1). The scholars may find faint indications from the texts a knowledge of the topography and physical features of central and northern Asia of the trans-Himalayan region covering the high plateau between the Oxus and the Tarim valleys of Afghanistan.

The southernmost Varsa—Bharata, lying between the *Himavat* and the sea (*Vayu*, 45, 75-76; *Vishnu*, ii, 3.1) is India. This India according to the Puranic cosmographers covers the whole of the Himalayan range as it includes among nine regions Udichya, Prachya and the Parvatasravina Himalayan region.

The Puranic writers conceived the entire mountain system of the world known to them as centering round *Meru* which is supposed to stand in the middle of *Ilavarta* at the centre of the *Jambudvipa* (*Agni*, chs. 107-108, *Mark.* ch. 54; Pargiter's trans., p. 275f). The terraqueous globe is described by the Puranic cosmographers as 'Saptadvipa Vasundhara' consisting of seven islands of which innermost is *Jambudvipa* girdled by the *Himavat* and *Himalaya* (*Agni* 107-5, *Brthmanda* 34.30, *Mbh.*, vi, 6.7; Abul Fazl, *Ain-i-Akbari*, iii, 30-31). The main mountain system of India or the *Kula-Parvatas* of *Bharata-varsha* as given the epic and the Puranas also include the Himalayan range (*Mbh.*, vi, 9.11; *Mark.* 57.10).

This *Himavat* covers a wider denotation in the epic and Puranic literature as well as in the Greek accounts. The *Markandeya Purana* refers to the *Himavat* as stretching along

the whole of northern frontier like the string of bow (*Mark.*, 57-59). Pargiter observes 'this implies that the *Himavat* range included the Sulaiman Mountains along the west of Punjab'. The *Mahabharata* also mentions that it stretches from the eastern to the western ocean and the city of Pushkaravati of the Peshwar region is adorned like a garland (*Mbh.* vi, 6.3; *Mark.* 54.24; Kalidasa, *Kumar-sambhava*, i.1; *Katha-sarit-sagar* 37.82). The classical writers also describe the *Imaos* as the source not only of the *Indus* and the *Ganga* but also of the *Koa* (Kabul river) and the *Souastos* (Swat) [Ptolemy, vii, 1.26, Majumdar's edition, p. 81]. This reference proves beyond doubt that the western region of the Himalayan range embraces the contiguous hill range of Afghanistan.

The intimate knowledge of the Sanskrit authors with the *Himavat* region is proved by frequent references to the hills like the Mujavat or Munjavat (*Vedic Index s.v.* and *Mbh.* xiv, 8.1.), Tri-Kakud (or Tri-Kukubha) and Saurya (Patanjali, *Mahabhasya*, Kielhorn's ed. I, p. 150). Parts of the Himalayan range remained unknown and the deficiency of acquaintance with the unexplored region was made up by legends about Maha Meru, Mainaka and other anecdotes of the post-Vedic period.

From the post-Asokan period to the rise of the Guptas India's northern borderland was disturbed by tribal movements from Central India. The epigraphic sources, the Purana chronicles, poems of Kalidasa and other Sanskrit sources like *Katha-sarit-sagar* bear very few references to the north-western borderland of India. The Saka invasion of the Kashmir region finds mention in the epigraphic references. The Epic poems of Kalidasa, or *Rajtarangini* of Kalhana or *Katha-sarit-sagar* of Sornadiva are mainly concerned with the Ganga valley rather than the mountainous region of the Himalayan range and as such the texts frequently refer to the Mahendra, Ramagiri and the hills of Dakshinapatha (*Raghu* iv, 432, 52-59) while the Himalaya finds mention in the Chinese sources and the Buddhist sources of the post-Harsha period.

THE HIMALAYAS IN EARLY TAMIL LITERATURE

K. SADASIVAN

(Kamaraj University, Madurai)

SOURCES : I have drawn the materials mostly from the earliest Tamil literature, popularly called the Sangam works. Sangam works such as *the Ettutogai* (the Eight Anthologies), *the Pattupattu* (the Ten Idylls), *the Padinenkilkanakku* (the Eighteen 'Minor' works) and the two earlier epics—*Silappadikaram* and *Manimekhalai* are of invaluable help. *Silppalikaram*, the epic of the anklet, is a mine of geographical, historical, religious and mythological information. In knowing the valour and liberality of the Tamil kings, the Puran and Aham classifications are of immeasurable importance. Information and references from the religious literatures—Tevaram, Tiruvachakam, Tirumandiram, Nalayira Divyaprabhandam, Perunkadai and Periyapuram have been drawn to lay some emphasis upon the mythological traditions alive up to the thirteenth century in Tamilnadu. To corroborate some of the evidences found in Tamil literature, I have made use of a few Sanskrit works—the *Bhagavad Gita*, the *Vishnu Purana*, the *Harivamsa*, the *Amarakosham* and the *Kumarasambhava*, and a few inscriptions—the *Velvikkudi*, the bigger and smaller *Sinmanur*, *Dalavaipuram* and the *Karunandadakkan* (Aii king) Paliattu Copper Plates of a later age.

These literary and inscriptional evidences could be used, with much meticulous care, to throw some light on some of the puzzling legends and misrepresented historical traditions of the Himalayas and its importance in the geographical, mythological and religious history of India. To avoid textual errors, I have depended upon the original texts (*mulam*) and the various original commentaries

(*urais*). For the original texts and commentaries on the Sangam literature I have referred to the standard editions of Mahamahopadhyaya U. V. Saminathaier, a scholar-teacher-translator-writer-editor, and of Rao Bahadur S. Vaiyapuri Pillai, a wizard in the Tamil research-field.

From time immemorial the mythological traditions about the Himalayas swayed over a large part of the sub-continent of India. Several hundred miles away from the Himalayas in the extreme south of the Peninsula, the Tamils have also come under the spell of these traditions. They 'have invested it with an element of the divine : it is *devatta*—a fraction of divine majesty'.¹ With the expansion of the Aryan cult and the dissemination of mythological traditions, during and after the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* epoch, came the influence of such unhistorical traditions over the Tamil country.

Most of the mythological allusions referred to in the early Tamil works are illusory. On the other hand, most of the geographical references to the Himalayas reveal that the early Tamil poets were endowed with a fund of geographical knowledge of India. Once the Tamils came under the spell of these traditions they freely borrowed and made use of such mythological traditions. They spoke and wrote very highly of the Himalayas—its ever-snow-clad peaks, its ever-lively rivers, its lovely valleys, its busy pilgrim centres and its beautiful flora and fauna. They not only pictured it as the 'abode of Lord Siva' and Hemavati (Parvati), but also of the 'home of snow', frost and fog and the *tapovans* of sages and seers. An attempt is made in this paper to give an account of the geographical, mythological, religious and historical knowledge that the early Tamil poets had of the Himalayas.

Rising high up from the Pamir knot, the folded sedimentary rocky ranges of the Himalayas² (*hi-ma-la-yaz*) 'the abode or home of snow'³, run north, north-west and north-east of the sub-continent of India. This mountain range, India's natural northern frontier, with its piled up masses of rock, is a thing of beauty, an object of adoration and a vale of veneration

from its geographical elevation⁴ to its historical exploration⁵. With its lofty-snow-capped peaks, fast flowing rivers, busy pilgrim centres, attractive flora and fauna, the Himalayas is a beauty of ages.⁶ We adore it because Indian mythology and tradition say that Lord Siva has his spiritual abode⁷ there in the Kailas, and Uma or Parvati, the consort of Lord Siva, was born there.⁸ We venerate it because of the spiritual importance attached to it by saints, sages, seers and mendicants who have performed austere and deep penance⁹ at the foot of the hills and pilgrims who have flocked at its sacred centres to have a *darshan* of the presiding deity or have a dip in the sacred river *Ganga*, and thus attain spiritual salvation.

The Himalayas gives a kind of natural protection to India from her enemies and isolation from outside world. It also serves as one of the powerful forces of national integration. Thus as a thing of beauty and protection, it is a love and joy for ever. Therefore, no wonder, it has become the central theme of many stories, fictions and myths.

As geography, climate and physical features govern the course of history, the early Tamil poets seem to have laid much stress on the history of this natural boundary of India. K. K. Pillay rightly observes: "The Tamils of the Sangam age had some idea about the geography of India. Several poets figuring in the Purananuru collection had a clear knowledge of the boundaries of the entire country".¹⁰ The sub-continent of Bharata¹¹ (its supposed legendary king after whom the country came to be called Bharatvarsha), known in Tamil as *Navalantham*,¹² is regarded as the most *praiseworthy*¹³ land. This vast land-mass has been well protected by the seas on three sides and the mighty Himalayan ranges on the north.¹⁴ The Tamills knew that the Himalayas formed the strong northern frontier of the sub-continent of India,¹⁵ and Kanyakumari as the southern tip of the vast land.¹⁶ They called it the 'Vadaperunkal' (the big stone of the north),¹⁷ and the 'Panipadu neduvari' (the lengthy mountain covered with perpetual snow).¹⁸

"On the other hand, the mere reference to 'vadamalai' ",¹⁹ remarks K. K. Pillay, "is a poser ; it might have denoted either

the Himalayas or the Venkadam hills of Tirupati. Some of the commentators, including Nachchinarkiniyar, equated 'vadamalai' with the Himalayas; but it seems to have been applicable with greater appropriateness to the hill of Venkadam, immediately to the north of Tamilaham".²⁰ But another poet, Paranaar refers to 'Vadavarai'²¹ to denote the northern Himalayas. A distinctive study of the two terms 'vadamalai' and 'vadavarai' may not make much difference. They, probably, may have meant the same. But a deep study reveals the contextual difference of both the terms. When poet Pisir Andaiyar used 'vadamalai' it denoted the Venkadam hills, and when Paranaar used 'vadavarai', in an another context, it referred to the Himalayas. Poet Pisir Andaiyar writes: "O! Annac-ceval, Annac-ceval! If you happen to go to the 'vadamalai' after having taken much *ayirai* fish (loach) from the Indian Ocean, remember you have to cross Uraiyyur (Koli), the capital of the Colas, situated in between Thenkumari and Vadamalai."²² Whereas poet Paranaar writes: "Having been annoyed by the provocative remarks of the Aryan kings the furious Imayavaramban attacked, subdued, imprinted the bow emblem on the traditionally old 'vadavarai' (Himalayas) and returned having made captives the kings who were hostile towards him".²³ It is very clear, therefore, that the meaning given by the commentator to 'vadamalai' is a misnomer.

K. K. Pillay rightly remarks: "the description of the Himalayas having constituted the northern limit of Tamilaham, found in some of the Sangam works,²⁴ is obviously a hyperbole".²⁵ Though these verses do not mean directly the boundaries of India, these could be taken to mean the north-south-east-west boundaries of India. We know that India is bounded on the east, west and south by the three seas and on the north by the mountain ranges. Another point to be borne in mind is that there was rarity of Tamil poets who were unaware of the northern boundary of ancient Tamilaham. Tolkappiyam,²⁶ the earliest extant Tamil grammar, picturesquely mentions the boundaries of our ancient Tamilaham. Tamil poets, who followed this great grammar, were also well aware of the bounds of Tamilaham. Had they been unaware of it, they would have written as 'vadamalai' or 'vadakal' instead of 'Vadaperunkal' and 'Thenkumari'.

We have discussed a few references about the ancient boundaries of India based on the early Tamil works. Now let us turn to some of the characteristic features of this mountain as revealed through these literatures. One of the poems of the Puram classification²⁷ encourages its patron to be strong, steady, and static like the Himalayas and the Podiyil hills. "Porkottimayamum Podiyamum Ponre" has been interpreted by the commentator to mean that the Himalayas and the Podiyil are static mountains having irremovable and unchangeable lofty gold-covered-peaks, sprightly, straight and strong.²⁸ Another verse from Silappalikaram reveals in crystal clear terms that the Himalayas is immovable.²⁹ The Himalayas is the 'neduvarai'³⁰ (lengthy mountain), the 'nilanu nidiya imayam'³¹ (the lengthiest mountain), and 'paruvarai'³² (the big mountain). A few more references inform that the Himalayan peaks are lofty and straight.³³ As we have already seen these lofty peaks are snow-clad, or snow-covered, or snow-capped, or snow-bound ones.³⁴ As snow is pure silver-white, the mountain appears to be silver-coated.³⁵ Distance coupled with bright sunshine may reflect to give a silver appearance. It is frost-bound or fog-bound. This natural climatic condition gives rise to avalanche, causing much damage to lives and property.

The poets have also given a picturesque description of the Himalayan peaks as having been plated with gold.³⁶ They have called it 'porkottimayam' (gold-covered peaks of the Himalayas), 'chempon-neduvarai' (pure-gold-plated long mountain), and 'ponpadu nedunkotti-mayattutchi' (gold-covered lengthy peaks of the Himalayas). To a distant man, the snow-clad lofty peaks of the shining sun, may appear as such. We doubt whether there is any gold in the Himalayas. Though the appearance is illusory, we cannot dismiss it as a poetic imagination or as an exaggeration. One of the poems of *Yapparunkalak-karikai* contains an account of pure poetic imagination. It reads: "Even the dark-black crow that reaches the snow-bound peaks of the Himalayas becomes gold-coloured".³⁷ Whereas *Perunkadai*, a later work, states that gold,³⁸ diamond³⁹ and silver⁴⁰ were there in the Himalayas. Another Sangam work, the

Pattinappalai,⁴¹ informs that "head and gold came from the 'vadamalai'. As 'vadamalai' denotes the Venkadam hills, it is unfair to take them to be the gifts of the Himalayas.

On the slopes, valleys and banks of rivers grew in abundance the bamboo trees.⁴² Bamboo sticks and bamboo rice (jungle rice) were probably used for domestic purposes. The valley contained fountains and small blue-coloured ponds,⁴³ where stags⁴⁴ and wild animals⁴⁵ such as elephants and lions drank water and quenched their thirst.⁴⁶ Stags and deer usually ate *narantham*⁴⁷ (a kind of sweet-smelling grass) which grew in abundance in the valleys of the mountain ranges. The blue-coloured ponds possessed *Nilolpam*⁴⁸ and *Kuvalai*⁴⁹, two varieties of flowers. On the hilly tracts grew thick woods like *Takara*⁵⁰ and *Venkai*⁵¹, fast growing large-sized trees. Generally, these fast growing large-sized trees were unfamiliar to cold climate. Under the shades⁵² of these big trees came pairs⁵³ of deer and stags to take rest. The thick woods contained beehives⁵⁴ and drops of honey flowed down on the ground. Pregnant rain followed thunder and lightning⁵⁵ which shook off even a snake searching for refuge in the lengthy mountain slopes.

From the foot of the lofty, silver-glittering peaks, the most sacred and ocean-like the Ganges takes its course.⁵⁶ Most of the Sangam works, while speaking in glowing terms about the sacredness and purity of the Ganga, are silent about the Indus and the Brahmaputra and other tributaries. *Perunkadai*,⁵⁷ a later work after the Sangam age, includes the Indus also in the list of northern rivers. As these rivers do not depend for their water entirely on the monsoon rains, and so these are never dry. In the mountains these rivers are roaring, raging torrents, pouring through gorges or narrow valleys, over waterfalls and amongst great rocks. When they reach the plain of northern India they become relatively slow, broad rivers, meandering lazily across the plain, but the valley is flat and the river banks are low, so that often the rivers when they come down in flood, desert their bed and make a new course.⁵⁸ Diving deep into the river, *Kendai* fish, a variety, happily enjoyed the day.⁵⁹ The fast-flowing rivers, the nodding flowers, the chant of mantras, and the moving trees produced sweet hissing sound.⁶⁰ On seeing

this, the white peacock danced with unbounded joy.⁶¹ Of all features that constitute the description of the flora and fauna, only a few are historically true, sound and meaningful. The early Tamil poets were familiar with the flora, fauna and the products of the hills of Tamilaham. On the basis of this knowledge, therefore, they may have made some assumptions of the flora and fauna of the Himalayas.

Indian mythological tradition is too peculiar and suitable to Indian mind alone. The features of this tradition is imaginative and illusory but interesting. It is the result of unbalanced, unaccountable, unfounded, unheard of and unhistorical importance and stress laid upon supernatural things and their influence upon human life. As the early Tamil poets were pious and unquestioned, they uncritically accepted and included them in their writings. They believed that the world stands erect because the Himalayas and the Podiyil act as north and south axial poles respectively.⁶² But the commentator thinks that the north is the supposed *Devaloka*. Hence the Himalayas is not expected to shoulder the weight of the earth. On the other hand, if the *Ailkudi* or *Podiyil* is not there in the south, the world would have fallen down.⁶³ This version seems to have been aimed at attaching too much importance to the Podiyil hills. To them, it seems the world ended with India, bounded by the Himalayas in the north and Podiyil in the south. But a detached scientific study proves that the world revolves round an axis, having two poles.

Having his abode at Kailas,⁶⁴ *Ammayappan*, Lord Siva, the master of dance, staged the *Kodu-Kottik-Kuttu*, the famous Sivanritya.⁶⁵ He is believed to have destroyed *Tiripura*,^{65a} an unidentified imaginary world. He is also believed to have worn the moon on his head, and thus enlightened the world.⁶⁶ In order to reduce the wrath and pride of the Ganga, he is said to have tied her round his head.⁶⁷ As the foot of the Himalayas was the home of saints and sages, where many sacrifices⁶⁸ were conducted. To perform the sacrifices successfully, they were believed to have grown the famous *muthi*⁶⁹ (three-fire). After having mastered the four Vedas, the saints and sages of the

Himalayas toured the south, and there is an instance of such saints advising Ceran Senguttuvan while he was making preparations for his northern expedition.⁷⁰ Another Tamil tradition states that Tirumular, the saintly author of *Tirumandiram*, reached Podiyil to see Agastya from Kalidas, according to the advice of Lord Siva.⁷¹

One of the ancient mythological traditions ascribes to Lord Siva the credit for having used the Himalayas (Mt. Mandara) as the churning-staff and Vasuki, the snake, as the thread for churning the sea of milk.⁷² Another tradition informs that Lord Siva took up Mt. Meru as his bow in a war with the Asuras.⁷³ A famous tradition relates the story that the ten-headed Sri Ravana tried to lift up the Himalayas by his hands, but failed. This act of Sri Ravana has been compared to a valiant and proud elephant piercing its tusks into the nearly big tree, but failing to take them back.⁷⁴ Here both Sri Ravana and the elephant were described panic-stricken and shameful. The young Anna birds (just out of their nest) are so desirable to the Devadasis (Devaloka-women or *Apsaras*) on the top of the Himalayan peaks as play-things.⁷⁵ At the Himatayas resided the so-called eleven Nathas, the Lokapalas, the Amaras (Devas), the Avunars, the saintly scholars and others.⁷⁶

About the heroism, scholasticism, and valour of Saint Agastya there is a widespread tradition from the Himalayas to Kanyakumari. Born in Tibet,⁷⁷ and taught by Lord Siva Agastya was sent to the south by him to balance the depressed north and the elevated south. Having explored, subdued and crossed the Vindhyan ranges,⁷⁸ he is said to have come down to the extreme south and raised his abode in the Podiyil hills,⁷⁹ or the Agastyamalai after him or Courtralam. Agastya was one of the famous seven *Rishis*, who resided in the Himalayas. He was one who had completely controlled his anger and possessed the great power of penance.⁸⁰ He is said to have crowned the first Pandya king of the old Madurai.⁸¹ He has been pictured as a many-sided genius, a master of all arts and crafts. He is said to have introduced literature and the sciences among the Tamil race and presided over the first and second Tamil

Sangams, believed to have been held at then Madurai and Kapatapuram respectively.⁸² The writings attributed to him are in verse form, in Tamil, and contain in all 19,647 stanzas on ancient history, religion, theology, magic, exorcism, purification, medicine, diseases, leprosy, botany, materia-medica, pharmacy, prescriptions, chemistry, sin and crime ; but these have evidently been composed by different authors, who have assumed this literary name, and some of them are of so recent a date as after the arrival of Europeans in the country.⁸³

Tradition holds that he was the leader of the first and foremost influential colony of Brahmans around B.C. 500.⁸⁴ One of the legends sought to be extracted from an obscure passage in the Sangam poem says that he confined Ravana in the meshes of his divine music and despatched the Rakshasa far away to Lanka, thus preventing him from exercising his sovereignty in south India.⁸⁵ Another legend makes him the younger brother of Brahma.⁸⁶ The smaller Sinnamanur Copper Plates,⁸⁷ the bigger Sinnamanur Plates⁸⁸ of the tenth century A.D. and the Dalavaipuram Plates of Parantaka Viranarayana⁸⁹ refer to him as the family *purohit* of the Pandya kings. A Buddhist tradition says that he learnt his Tamil from Avalokitesvara,⁹⁰ and a Siva tradition is equally persistent and avers that he learnt his Tamil from Siva (variously from Muruga).⁹¹ After his retirement from the world,⁹² he is said to have taken his permanent abode in the inaccessible recesses of the Podiyil hill.⁹³

The Agastya tale elaborated above is considered a myth, for the traditions connected with this name are so mingled with fable, that it is impossible to separate the truth. A Tamil scholar remarks : "Agastya is considered to be the product of pure imagination".⁹⁴ He holds that Tolkappiyar was made the son of Arya Jamadagni and the student of Agastya. Therefore, Agastya becomes the contemporary of Sri Rama. Jamadagni was the father of Parasurama, a contemporary of Sri Rama. Thus Agastya becomes the contemporary of Jamadagni, Sri Rama, Parasurama and Tolkappiyar. But Tolkappiyar has made no reference to his so-called father Jamadagni or to his teacher Agastya. Therefore the legend making Agastya as the teacher of Tolkappiyar is unhistorical. It could safely be said that as the name occurs in

the *Rigveda* and the *Puranas*, the tales and fables about him related to by the Tamil people might have found their way into Tamilnadu during the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* epoch, a period of the spread of north-Indian myth and legend without any resistance or challenge from the south. All the tales and traditions described here have a direct or indirect leaning towards the north-Indian mythological tradition.

This large, lengthy and lofty mountain has been an object of comparison used by the early Tamil poets to show the valour, liberality, large-heartedness and broad-mindedness of their patrons.⁹⁵ The poets showered upon their patrons long and strong life, and secured position like the Himalayas which is strong, sprightly and steady.⁹⁶ The picturesque description of the mountain with all its magnificence created an undying impression on the Tamil kings. This mountain has been an attraction to the mighty Tamil kings, who had a passion and an undaunted fervour to subdue it and carve their respective emblems on the slopes of the mountain. By doing so, they thought that they grew to the very great rank of an *adhiraja* or achieved a great thing of everlasting glory.

It seems a practice that the victors carved emblems of their banner or erected pillars of victory in the conquered land.⁹⁷ The *Silappadikaram*,⁹⁸ attributes to each of the three Tamil monarchies some conspicuous success against northern expedition of Karikala. About Tirumavalavan the *Silappadikaram* states thus: "He wanted to capture the land beyond the Himalayas. But the mighty mountain blocked his way. After suppressing his anger towards the Himalayas, he engraved the symbol of his fierce and fiery tiger (emblem) on the head of the Himalayas, the abode of the saints. Later he abandoned the idea of the conquest of the land beyond the border. On his return he was grandly greeted and presented with many gifts as tributes by the kings of Vachiranadu, Magadha and Avanti of the Gangetic Valley."⁹⁹ K. A. Nilkanta Sastri remarks: "From very early times Karikala became the centre of many myths which, in modern times, have often been accepted as serious history."¹⁰⁰ But M. Arokiaswamy, on the basis of recent researches and findings,

thinks that Karikala carried its victorious arms as far as the flaunting Himalayas in the north. He remarks : "The Himalayan expedition followed by the conquest of the region referred to here has been in past times thrown out by scholars as a Himalayan exaggeration. Recent researches, however, have proved the contrary to be true".¹⁰¹ He further states that the northern region was not unknown to the south even in those early times as was heretofore supposed, and antiquarian studies carried out on the finds of the Indus Valley, only go to confirm the opposite of what had been so far supposed. Further in the first centuries of Christian era to which this expedition must be referred, the central authority was extremely weak in the north making the possibility of a southern invasion of the north plausible. Lastly, the statements made in our literary works with regard to this expedition is so very detailed and circumstantial, mentioning the cause, course and results of the campaign that one has to accept the truth of the northern expeditions, at least those of Senguttuvan.

One of the stanzas of the Aham classification informs that Imayavaramban became furious at the provocations of the Aryan kings whom he attacked and vanquished. Thereafter, he is said to have imprinted the bow emblem on the famous and ancient mount Himalayas,¹⁰² and returned having made captives the kings who were hostile towards him. Another stanza adds that having imprinted the curved bow emblem on the Himalayas, as to make his ancestors wonder at this, he heaped near his palace at Mandai, the tributes that he received from the enemies, together with diamonds and a gold image of a lady on an Ambal (a measure of land) of land.¹⁰³ Ceralatan, another Chera king, imprinted the bow emblem on the Himalayas and hence came to be called Imayavaramban Nedunjeralatan.¹⁰⁴ The planting of the bow ensign by Imayavaramban on the slopes of the Himalayas is also a matter of much discussion. C. E. Ramachandran asks : "Would it have been possible for the Chera to take an expedition to the Himalayas in the days when there were no easy means of transportation¹⁰⁵?" He answers : "It would not have been an easy task, but certainly not impossible to go up to the Himalayas." Though some scholars doubt about the contention of the eulogy,

C. E. Ramachandran considers it a probability. If the New Maurya's (the Vamba Moriyar) invasion of the south was a possibility, it should have been equally possible for a southern dynasty to go to the north. If one of the ancestors of Imayavaramban could feed the rival armies which fought at Kurukshetra, it was certainly possible for him to undertake an expedition to the north, with the vast resources at his disposal. He, therefore, concludes : "If this is admitted Imayavaramban's expedition to the north, in all probability, was an historical fact"¹⁰⁶. If a mighty confederacy of the Tamil kings, capable of threatening the very power of king Kharavela of Kalinga in the middle of the second century B.C., was an accepted historical fact, why not the northern expedition of Imayavaramban in the first century A.D. a possibility ?

Silappadikaram¹⁰⁷ vividly describes another planned invasion of the north by Ceran Senguttuvan, who was provoked by the shameful behaviour of the north Aryan kings. It picturesquely describes the causes, course and consequences of the expedition. He is said to have defeated the Aryan kings Kanaka and Vijaya, who accepted his overlordship. Thereafter he reached the slopes of the Himalayas, picked up a suitable piece of stone for erecting the Pattini statue. When he reached the foot of the mountain, he is believed to have ordered not to do any harm to the *munivar*, who were experts in the four Vedas and chanting the Vedic mantras. After having washed the stone in the sacred Ganges, he is said to have carried it on the shoulders of the vanquished rulers of the north. As this punitive expedition proved to be a very great success, he returned with much booty and many fallen captives. On seeing the valour of Ceran Senguttuvan, many north Indian rulers including Rudran, Vichitrán, Udran, Bairavan, Chitrán, Singan, Ranudran, Sivedan were stricken with panic. M. Arokiaswami thinks, atleast with regard to the later campaign of Senguttuvan,¹⁰⁸ the hero of the third part of the epic, the north Indian expedition of the Tamils is a historical fact. "This would mean", according to C. E. Ramachandran, "that the Tamils not only tried to arrest the intrusion of the Aryans into the south, but also took expeditions

to the north to make an impression of their military might on the Aryans".¹⁰⁹ The Tamil kings tried to resist and arrest the political expansion of the Aryans into the south, but they could do nothing to stop or react to the infiltration of the myths and legends of the north into the south. As ideas penetrate faster than the power of the sword, the Tamil country too fell a prey to the imaginative tales and fables of the north Indian mythology.

Based on these unchecked mythological traditions people began to attach much spiritual importance to some centres in the Himalayan valley, which grew to be sacred and busy pilgrim centres of religious importance. To-day there are many shrines and sacred spots within the ranges to which Hindu pilgrims resort. Amongst them is Badrinath, in Garhwal, a temple dedicated to an incarnation of Visnu, 10,294 feet above the sea. Kedarnath is another Saiva temple within the Himalayas, 11,794 feet above the sea. Gangotri, also in Garhwal, at 10,319 feet of elevation, is another shrine, its vicinity being sacred to Hindu thoughts. Near it, at 13,800 feet, the Bhagirathi issues, no puny stream, from beneath a glacier.

The early Tamil poets were well aware of the spiritual importance attached to Mt. Kailas, the sacred seat of Lord Siva, who used to stage the Ananda Kuttu,¹¹⁰ another variety of nritya. They knew that there lived many learned sages, seers, saints and mendicants (munivar or anthanar) who practised deep meditation to attain salvation.¹¹¹ Though pieces of sacred stones of much strength were available in the Podiyil hills, the abode of the Agastya Rishi, Ceran Senguttuvan went to the north to pick up that piece from the slopes of the Himalayas.¹¹² And though there were a few sacred rivers flowing through Tamilaham, he washed the stone meant for the statue of the *Pattini God* in the Ganges.¹¹³ This may mean that much sacredness was attached to the Himalayas, the abode of Lord Siva, the father of the Vedas,¹¹⁴ and to the Ganges which is supposed to have taken its course from the head of Lord Siva.¹¹⁵ As there is no mention of any one of them (busy pilgrim centres) in the Sangam

works, we may safely assume that the early Tamil poets were unaware of these sacred centres, though they were well aware of mythological traditions. This amounts to saying that the early Tamil poets wrote whatever things they heard, not out of experience.

Entering into religious literature, we have abundant reference to Thiruk-ketaram,¹¹⁶ Pasupati Nepalam,¹¹⁷ Badrikasramam,¹¹⁸ Thirupidi,¹¹⁹ Salagrammam,¹²⁰ Naimisaraniam¹²¹ and other very famous pilgrim centres. Tirumular, a yogi, the master of the Vedas and the disciple of Nandi or Siva, is believed to have come down to the Podiyil hills from Kailas.¹²² Sambandar's Tevaram picturesquely describes the beauty of Thiruk-ketaram, with its attractive flora and fauna.¹²³ M. Rajamanickam says that Thiruk-ketaram is one of the twelve most famous sacred Saiva centres, having the *linga* as the presiding deity.¹²⁴ He says that Pasupati of Nepal is situated two miles away to the north of Katmandu, the capital of Nepal. The Pasupathas had their Pasupatinathar temple there. Even during the days of Asoka, the Pasupathas had their Siva *maths* there. Around 249 B.C., Asoka paid a visit to it with Sarumati, his daughter, who is said to have become a mendicant. Therefore, the Pasupatinathar temple is very old in the annals of India.¹²⁵ Thirupiridi is believed to have been a sacred centre within the Himalayan peaks.

Besides these there are other pilgrim centres such as Amtrnath, Jwala Mukhi and Hardwar. One of the great peaks, Gouri Sikhar, identified in popular mind with Everest, is held sacred as the place of Gauri's penance. The Jamuna, the Saraswati, the Brahmaputra and the Indus, besides the Ganga, and most of their tributaries on which depends the life of north India, have their crest or origin in the Himalayas. It is our national mountain. The continuity of Indian life is the supreme gift of the Himalayan range.¹²⁶

About two thousand years ago, the early Tamil poets, bards, sages and hymnists have left behind their general impression of the Himalayas. Careful study may tell us more of the topographical, geographical, geological, historical and religious know-

ledge that the early Tamil poets possessed of India. Their allusions and references to the Himalayah and the Podiyil hills, to Lord Siva and sage Agastya, to the Himalayas and Kanyakumari, show that they regarded India as one country. Their sporadic references to the Himalayas and its flora and fauna, undoubtedly, leave an impression that these early Tamil poets were more well informed than their succeeding geographers and historians. Its silver-coloured, snow-clad lofty peaks, its busy pilgrim centres, its sacred lakes, its sacred and undried rivers, its sacred seats of Lord Siva and Parvati, its sacred *tapovans*, its flora and fauna, its natural beauty and above all its age-old sedimentary, folded rocks have attracted the attention and stirred up the innermost feelings of Tamil poets and their patrons. A detailed study of the references to the Himalayas reveals that the early Tamil poets and people were religious-minded. They picturesquely portrayed it as the 'abode of Lord Siva', the master and father of the four Vedas, and of Hemavati, the consort of Lord Siva and the sacred seats of deeply meditating mendicants, sages, seers and saints. It seems they took minute care in picturing the greatness of piety, devotion and purity attached to religion. A detached study of the mythological references made in the Sangam works amounts to saying that the early Tamil poets were highly matured in keeping the traditions intact without questioning their validity, veracity and authenticity. A critical assessment of all the mythological references cited above, no doubt, informs that they made their appearance earlier in Tamilnadu, but left their deep impression upon the Tamils only after the expansion of Aryan tradition during the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* epoch.

An indepth study of the frequent comparison of the Himalayas to their great patrons speaks volumes of the greatness of the protective wall of northern India. From the early Tamil poems it could be learnt that Hinduism, especially Saivism, from Kashmir to Kanyakumari, seems to have acted as the connecting link of the cultural unity of India. The citations to north Indian expeditions arranged and effected by the Tamil kings well inform that there were historically-minded poets among the galaxy of

romantic and didactic poets. It also proves that these kings tried physically to arrest the Aryan infiltration into the south but never tried mentally to resist the penetration of north Indian mythology into Tamilnadu. As they had great respect and veneration for Lord Siva, who had his spiritual as well physical abode at Kailas, the Himalayas has been an object of adoration. One wonders to see and hear the frequent references made to the Himalayas in the early Tamil literature.

Now a few questions may arise in the minds of the readers : Did the early Tamil poets write all about the Himalayas out of pure imagination, or of pure oral tradition or out of practical experience ? If they did write out of pure personal experience, did they come into close contact with the Himalayas, having crossed about two thousand and five hundred miles ? Rarely one or two saintly poets like Ilango Adigal or Tirumular would have come to possess direct contact with the Himalayas. All others might have borrowed or depended upon them for the information. They were also not altogether out of pure imagination, for there are many facts of historical and geographical importance. Oral tradition seems to have had a strong hold over them. They might have become acquainted with them through the sages and mendicants who came over to the south from the Himalayan slopes. Though we cannot fully accept their descriptions as dependable ones, we have to appreciate the curiosity in picturing a lively narrative and their broad-mindedness in looking India as one nation.

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- ² *Puram* : 2, 39, 34, 132, 214, 369 ; *Aham* : 127, 265, 399 ; *Padirrupattu*, 2 : 1, 5 : 3 ; *Silappadikaram*, 2 : 17, 3 : 25, 3 : 26. *Imayam-Himalaya* : 1. The Himalaya ranges, one of the asta-kulapurvatam (Padir-

rupattu, 43.7) always snow-bound ; 2. Mt. Mandara which was used as the churning-staff for churning the sea of milk (*Jivakachintamani*, 963) ; 3. Mt. Meru (Kalittogai, 38) ; 4. gold-Imayappunaimanril (Kumara-pra. Chidambara Sei. 23)—*Tamil Lexicon*, Vol. I, p. 298, University of Madras, 1936.

- ³ *Puram*, 6 : 1 ; *Aham*, 265 : 2 ; *Periyapurana*, 12th Tirumurai, 1 : 2 : 1, 1 : 1 : 1.
- ⁴ 'After the Palaeozoic era, and during the secondary stage of evolution, when India was probably connected with Africa by dry land and ocean currents swept from the Persian Gulf to the Aravallis, the rock area extended over Assam and the Eastern Himalayas, while Burma, the north-western Himalayas, and the uplands beyond the Indus were still submarine, or undergoing alterations of elevation and depression.... The sea, which once flooded the area of the western frontier hills, Tibet, and Burma, was driven back ; and the marine rock deposits of the West were crushed and folded as we see them now, where their serried battalions of ridges, line upon line, present a forbidding front to the Indus Valley. The formation of a great depression was more or less coincident with the upheaval of the mountains.'—*The Imperial Gazetteer of India : The Indian Empire*, Vol. I, Chapter I, pp. 2-3.
- ⁵ Many indigenous and foreign exploratory expeditions to scale the peaks, and to take a note of the flora and fauna were conducted in this century. K. M. Panikkar holds that the complete exploration of the Himalayan valley would have happened between the Rama story and the Mahabharata battle.—*Geographical Factors In Indian History*, p. 49.
- ⁶ *Tiruvacakam*, 2-140, 16-8.
- ⁷ *Sil.*, 3 : 24 : 16 ; *Tiruvacakam* : Nithal Vinnappam : 40 ; Porrihiru Akaval 167.
- ⁸ *Sil.*, 3 : 24 : 17 ; *Harivamsa* : 1 : 18.15ff ; *Amarakosam*, 1.38ff ; *Kumarasambhava*, 1.26 ; *Silappadikaram* states : 'Born in Mahadapar Kanji, Parvati was given in marriage to Lord Siva' 3 : 25 : 131-132.
- ⁹ *Puram*, 2 : 23 ; *Padirrupattu*, 11 : 21-23 ; *Periyapurana*, 12th Tirumurai, 1 : 1 : 5 ; *Sil.* 3 : 26 : 9-10 ; 3-26 ; 100-104 ; 3 : 26 : 148-50 ; *Paripadal*, 5 : 22-3.
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- ⁴⁴ *Padirrupattu*, 11 : 21-3 ; *Kalittogai*, 92 (Marudam) : 27 : 16.
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BRITISH HISTORIANS ON THE HIMALAYAN FRONTIER (1774—1905)

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I

INTRODUCTION

THE STRATEGIC LOCATION of the Himalayan ranges and the British policies in this region are reflected in the writings of English historians. This paper is concerned with the views of these historians and of their assessment.

II

BRITISH AND HIMALAYAN REGIONS : A SURVEY

Before considering the views of these historians, it is necessary to know a brief account of the British India relations with the Himalayan regions and the policies pursued by them in this region. The British in Calcutta first came into contact with the Himalayan region in 1774. It is believed that Warren Hastings, then Governor-General at Fort William, was first to realise the significance of the Himalayan region for India's defence and for the expansion of the British trade. In 1774 he sent Mr. Bogle into Tibet and the first attempt to establish trans-Himalayan regions began with this "unheralded move".¹ It was, however, the Gurkha War (1814-1816) that brought the British into direct confrontation with the Himalayan regions. By the treaty of Sargauli (1816) which ended the war, the territories of British

India included for the first time, the Himalayan valleys of Garhwal and Kumaon. The petty rulers of the Himalayan states up to Kangra, were liberated and brought under the paramountcy of the crown. The Nepalese evacuated Sikkim which became a British Protectorate. Besides political achievements, the British took interest in exploring the Himalayan region. In 1818, the British sent exploration of the Sutlej under Alexander Gerard who crossed into Tibet along the route which was later on developed into the "Hindustan-Tibet Road." Countries before known have been added to geography. In 1825 Lord Amherst humbled the Burmans and forced them to surrender the Himalayan regions of Assam and NEFA. Both William Bentinck and Dalhousie defined the boundary between Sikkim and British India.² By military action the British Indian Government settled prolonged dispute with the Bhutanese Government in 1865. In 1886 a Tibetan force crossed the Jhelap Pass and attacked the British Protectorate state of Sikkim, but they were driven out. In 1890 a convention was concluded between the English and China Governments which settled the Sikkim-Tibet boundary. The British India Government realised the importance of the passes from Sikkim. The result was the establishment of a trading post at Yatung, but the progress of the Trans-Himalayan communication was slow. Early in the twentieth century the British Viceroy, Lord Curzon forced the issue and the result was Young-husband's mission which marched across the Himalayan pass and concluded a treaty of 1904. The only positive result of this expedition was the stationing of a trade mission at Gyantse which remained until 1947 without accomplishing very much.

III

BRITISH POLICIES

The policies of the British rulers of India towards the Himalayan regions were a mixture of security considerations and aggressive intentions. They persistently followed the policy of isolation of the Himalayan states from one another. To secure

these objects, Sir George Hamilton, Secretary of State for India, suggested that Tibet may be made the buffer state, and the British endeavoured to create. Therefore the Chinese diplomats alleged that the British India Government purposely kept a section of the boundary in a fluid state, so that whenever the British imperialism deemed it feasible they might cross the boundary line to encroach on Chinese territory.³

IV

THE BRITISH HISTORIANS : HIMALAYAN FRONTIER

Let us see how far these views are reflected in the writings of the British historians in depicting the British Himalayan relations. Scholars like W. Hunter, Alfred Lyall, Sir Francis Younghusband viewed the whole problem of the Himalayan regions both from imperialist and India's defence points of view. For instance, Hunter and Alfred Lyall defended the British actions in relation to Nepal and Tibetan expedition in 1904.⁴ Hunter was a hero-worshipper of the tradition of Carlyle and this is revealed while he was defending the annexation of outlying districts of Sikkim by Dalhousie.⁵

Sir Lyall's remark on the British Himalayan relations is worth noticing. He says : "We should allow no interference from the North with the Nepal and further eastward. . . . Our policy is to keep off all the gates. The outer frontier of the British dominion, that our policy now requires us to defend, has immense circumstance. The consequence of this expansion of our sphere of political influence far beyond the area of our actual dominion is that the frontiers of the British empire are changing their character."⁶ The views expressed by Lyall convince us that he examined the British Himalayan relations from the imperialist point of view.

Both Lyall and Smith were proud of their social status and had contemptuous outlook towards the Asians. This is revealed when they made comment on the Bhutanese and the Burmese.⁷

However, V. Smith's views on the Himalayan Frontier

combined the security of British rule in India and the maintenance of the British prestige. With this view he traced the Nepalese, the Burmese Wars and the Tibetan expedition. He was of the opinion that the Nepalese War was the direct outcome of the annexation of Oudh by Wellesley, for it was in the ceded Gorakhpur and Basti districts that the main aggression took place. He justified Hastings' action of war on Nepal on the ground that it was the Nepalese who first started a fresh attack in Butwal in 1814.⁸ It is interesting to note that Smith defended the British annexation of the region between the Gogra and the Sutlej on the ground that the Nepalese had appeared as the unwelcome conquerors and their harshness was still a living memory in recent times.⁹ The tactical skill of Ochterloney, the planning and judicious moderation of Lord Hastings, says Smith, to enable the English to reap rich harvest in the permanent security of the Himalayan frontier.¹⁰

Regarding the First Burmese War, V. Smith observes that it was started as one of the simplest cases of aggression in modern times. But the war brought little credit to either side. The Burmans suffered for their ignorance and folly, the British for their obstinacy and lack of adaptability.¹¹

While giving opinion on the Tibetan expedition sent by Lord Curzon, V. Smith came under the influence of his master's imperialism. He was anxious to defend the prestige which had lowered on account of Curzon's forward policy in Tibet. He termed this expedition as Swan-song of British imperialism in central Asia.¹² According to him "this expedition was conceived in arrogance and imperfect knowledge, and concluded in defiance of instructions". But, he defended Lord Curzon's action by stating that "the Home Government must share the blame for not acting with great decision and restraint".¹³

P. E. Robert's narration of the British Himalayan relations is also influenced by the security of British India and His Master's imperial interest. He defended the Viceroy Lawrence's military action on Bhutan in 1865 on the ground that the Bhutanese had been carrying on the predatory activities on the British territory of Assam from the first Burmese War. The occupation of Duars by the Bhutanese and the failure of nego-

tiation forced Lawrence to resort to military action in 1865. He supported Lawrence's treaty with the Bhutanese on the following reason. He says "generosity to vanquished enemy on the part of an imperial power, provided that generosity is not abused, is not only magnanimous but sound policy. In this case the lasting tranquility that followed amply justified the Governor-General's moderation".¹⁴

Roberts followed his own method in representing some of the British activities in the Himalayan regions. For example, he observes that the envoy sent by Warren Hastings in 1774 provided valuable early source of information about Tibet.¹⁵ Nepal War was necessitated by the concentration of the Chinese force on the northern border of Nepal and ill-defined frontiers of Bengal and Oudh. Further, the Gurkhas were a very hardy, war-like stock and they soon found their narrow mountains home too confined for them. They seized some districts in the southern low lands claimed by the East India Company.¹⁶

Regarding the Tibetan expedition of Lord Curzon, Roberts supported the contention of Rosenbery that the situation of 1903 in regard to Tibet presented some rather sinister resemblance to that of 1878 in regard to Afghanistan. Further he notes : "In both cases we had very doubtful ethical or legal rights to interfere, but in both too there existed a strong feeling, in many respects no doubt well justified that our prestige would seriously suffer if we were excluded and Russia's representatives were admitted." The whole Tibetan incident, says Roberts was a "triumph of organisation and daring—a fascinating episode in the unromantic annals of modern India."¹⁷

Sir Francis Younghusband has given an exhaustive accounts of the British relations with the Himalayan states from 1774 to 1910 in his book *India and Tibet*. (A History of Relations which have subsisted the relations between two countries from the time of Warren Hastings to 1910, with a particular account of the Mission to Lhasa). He was in favour of launching forward policy—forward into future and shows both foresight and forethought.¹⁸ He praised Warren Hastings' forward policy because it combined in noteworthy manner alertness, deliberation, rapidity and receptivity. According to Younghusband : "Warren

Hastings sought to secure his borders by at once striking when danger threatened, but also by taking infinite pains over long periods of time to promote ordinary neighbourly intercourse with those on the other side."¹⁹ He was of the opinion that Warren Hastings' mission to Tibet in 1774 was the direct outcome of the Bhutanese aggression upon the English territory. To quote his own words: "Except for the unjustifiable aggression of the Bhutanese upon our neighbours, we would never have been brought into conflict with these vassals of Tibet; and but for the intervention of the Tibetan Regent on their behalf, we should not then have thought of any relationship with the Tibetans. We were not interferers."²⁰ As an ardent supporter of the expansion of the British influence in India, Younghusband criticised the British neutrality in the war between Nepal and China³¹ in 1792. Here he has not taken into consideration two relevant points. One is the British adverse balance of trade with China and another fact is that any interference from the East India Company would have an adverse effect on the Company's commercial relations with China Government.²²

Sir Francis Younghusband was an ardent supporter of Lord Curzon's expedition to Tibet in 1904. This expedition was essential on account of the increasing influence of Russia in Tibet and the Chinese action causing disorder. He was still of the view that Russia was an imperialist and she on the crest of great advancing wave of expansion. In this critical situation, Younghusband recommends: "Instead of expecting to secure peace by shrinking from having anything to do with the people, we should rather put ourselves forward to acquire increased intimacy. We should seek to secure quiet by the more effective and certain method of deliberately making use of every means we have of keeping up and increasing contact with the Tibetans"²³

Major Ross of Bradenburg, the biographer of Marquis of Hastings, viewed the Himalayan frontier from the defence of the British rule in India. His account gives the following facts of the Nepalese War. It was the Nepalese who had determined upon war and their activities on the British India border constituted danger especially to Bengal. Regarding the effect of the

war on the British, he observes, "it defined relations with Nepal—all danger for the Northern frontier removed for ever."²⁴

Some historians namely, Beveridge, Thompson and Garrat were bold enough to criticise some of the actions of the British ruler in India in relation to the Himalayan frontier. Beveridge criticised the British intervention in the Nepalese affairs as early as in 1767. He was bold in stating that the Bengal government had rashly interfered with the affairs of Nepal in that year. Further he continues to state that in the course of the campaign the Company without least semblance of justice seized rich and fertile tracts of land belonging to the Gurkha Raja. Therefore, Beveridge observes : "When the Gurkhas alleged that the tracts which they had occupied originally belonged to Nepal, there cannot be a doubt that, in regard at least to some of them, the allegation was strictly true."²⁵ Beveridge's interpretation of the treaty of Sagauli is worth considering here. The annexation of Kumaon and Garhwal to the British dominions and placing several hill rajas under the restriction of the then India government enabled the English to utilise military resources of these regions for their own advantage. Further, he was of the opinion that the treaty with the Raja of Sikkim was also an excellent stroke of diplomacy, as it interposed an insurmountable barrier between Nepal and Bhutan and thus made it impossible for these two states to go to war with each other as they ceased to be contiguous, and therefore could not engage in hostilities without violating territory which belonged to the Company, or which the Company was pledged to protect.²⁶

Thompson and Garrat dispassionately viewed the British Himalayan relations with particular reference to the Nepalese and the Burmese wars and the Tibetan expedition of 1904. Regarding the last incident, they comment as follows : "Thus ended of the least justifiable of England's little wars forced upon an essentially pacific and practically unarmed race." Finally they note : "China in fact was the one power which has reaped solid advantage of the mission."²⁷

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The above historians represented the British Himalayan relations from India's defence and their master's imperial interest. They are very careful to hide the British policy of divide and rule in the Himalayan region. Some of the historians mentioned above practically ignored the British increasing concern regarding the activities of China on the Himalayan border in mentioning Indo-Nepal relations in the nineteenth century. With the exception of P. E. Roberts, all the above historians have not made any mention of the utilisation of the Himalayan resources for the material benefit of India by the British Government. In spite of these limitations, the British historians mainly assessed the British Himalayan frontier from practical point of view, i.e., India's defence.

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- 24 *The Marquis Hastings* (Ludhiana, 1972), pp. 63, 82.
- 25 *A Comprehensive History of India, III* (Associate Press, New Delhi, 1974), pp. 11, 13.
- 26 *Ibid.*, p. 32.
- 27 *Rise and Fulfilment of British Rule in India* (Allahabad, 1953), p. 558.

- Eastern Himalaya

EARLY HISTORY OF MON-TAWANG*

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THE EASTERN END of the Brahmaputra valley, now falling in India, Tibet and Burma is one of the cross-roads of Asia. Its past is a series of migrations from Assam outwards, and into Assam from south-east Asia or Tibet. This continuous movement of people across the region has meant that a connected account of any particular part of it is difficult to construct (Murty, 1969b). One of the people who have thus moved into the region are the Mon. We have only a few tantalising glimpses of this race, who may have been even the earliest to inhabit it. One account of the Mon is that of the Burmese kingdom of Dvaravati, detailed and verifiable in many respects. Another such Mon group, with an even longer existence as an individual cultural unit is the Mon of the Shar region. The Shar Mon have inhabited Bhutan and NEFA since the earliest period of Indian history ; and may even be the original inhabitants of the area. The establishment of the Harshasila Vihara in the seventeenth century at Tawang, near the trijunction of India-Bhutan-Tibet frontiers, and that monastery preserving the oral tradition of the people makes available a great deal of information on Shar Mon. A recension of the Mon tradition available in Tawang, can place in position some of the pieces of the puzzle that is the history of the region as a whole. This article attempts such an account from the earliest times to the advent of Ahoms.

IDENTITY OF MON

Mon and the various ways it has been treated in Sanskrit, Tibetan and Chinese have already been discussed (Murty, 1960a),

* The paper, with some modifications, forms a chapter in the author's book—*Paths of Peace*, published by ABC Publishing House, New Delhi.

and it has been suggested that it could be a corruption of an original Sanskrit term such as 'manushya' and 'mayawi.' One may note further in most Bodo dialects, minor variants of the sound denote 'human being' (Choudhury, p. 484) ; and the popular view of its being a generic term, used by Tibetans for all people staying south and west of them is shared by De Filippi (pp. 253-54). The lower Ladakhi version of the Kesar saga has Mon as ugly like creatures from India (Francke, p. 358). A connection may then exist between the Mon and 'Munydri' of the epic age. The puranic lists of frontier people have 'Munydri' as inhabited by a frontier people of the eastern region ; and on the basis of the *Brihat Samhita*, it has been placed in north-eastern India. 'Munyvata' in the *Mahabharata* is, however, placed in south-west Kashmir by Zimmer (Chaudhuri, p. 87 and p. 143). According to Olschak, the earliest Bhutanese records treat the whole of the kingdom as 'Southern Mon' (p. 46) ; which may not be correct.

Suniti Kumar Chatterji refers to another 'Mran-ma' (later known as 'Byamma'), a Tibeto-Chinese people allied to the Thai, moving from some place south of either the head waters of the Yang-tze Kiang or the Hwang-ho Valley and moving into north Burma in the first millennium A.D. They are different from the 'Rman'/'Mon'/'Mun' whose land constituted Ramanadesa or Suvarnabhumi (south and central Burma) and Dvaravati (which later is identified by him as south Siam). These 'Rman' were Austro-Asiatic, as different from Tibeto-Chinese, and Indianised during the early centuries of the Christian era. The 'Mran-ma' overran Burma and absorbed the 'Rman' who have died out as a people (Francke, pp. IX-X). Dr. B. Chakravarti treats the Mon as the same as the Shar-chup whom he regarded as the original inhabitants of Bhutan, now reduced to a few villages in south-eastern Bhutan and speaking two distinct dialects of their own.

It is worth bearing in mind that the Mon exist in Manipur also. There are twenty villages of theirs in south-eastern Manipur, forming part of the Tengnoupal District. The most

important are Komla-thabi and Liwa. The entire group is known as Mayol-Monsang. This group are possibly a spill-over of the Burmese Mon.

Speculation (which is just that and nothing more) can see a connection between the 'Kinnara' of the epic age and the 'Mon'. In 'Kinnara' the first syllable 'Ki' only is relevant, since 'nara' are 'persons'. The earliest Monpa settlement in the Tawang valley was at Khinyeyi and the ruling class were the 'Gyi' or 'Khya' (Pillai). Sarat Chandra Das already saw connection between the Mon and 'Kirata' (p. 967) and Jaschke generally agrees with him (p. 420). B. K. Barua gives the specific location of the hills of Assam (Barua, pp. 4-6) to the 'Kirata'.

There are references in the epics to a possible connection between Kinnara/Mon and the Pragjyotisha kingdom. The *Ramayana* (*Kishkindhya Kanda*) has the Kirata living in the windy hills and forests of the south-east. The *Mahabharata* (*Sabha Parva*) has Bhagadatta's kingdom Pragjyotisha in north-east India, in control of Mlechha rulers. (The text, however, suggests that these non-Hindu rulers inhabited areas adjoining the sea). The hill areas of its northern region comprised the 'Antargiri' ('inner hills' or 'lower hills'), 'Bahirgiri' ('outer hills' or 'the snowy ranges'), 'Upagiri' (the 'minor' or 'foot-hills') [Barua, p. 10]. In the *Drona Parva*, the Kirata and China are counted among the subjects of Pragjyotisha. The *Sankhyasana Grhya Sutra* lists Pragjyotisha as a major pilgrimage centre; while *Kaulajnana Nirnaya* lists the shrines in the Kamakhya area of the region. Salastambha who was the first prominent king of the Madhava dynasty which ruled Pragjyotisha from the seventh to the tenth century bore the title 'Mlechhadhinatha' (Choudhury, p. 191).

Some more details can be gathered by equating Pragjyotisha with Kamarupa. According to the *Yogini Tantra*, the frontiers of Kamarupa have been traditionally held to be the 'Kanchana' mountains of Nepal in the west, the Brahmaputra's confluence (with the Tsang po) in the east, and to the north the 'Kunja', 'Kanja' mountains (Barua, p. 15). The Karatoya river is treated as the most prominent geographical feature in the region. Read with the *Mahabharata*, this would make the entire Eastern

Himalayas as constituting the 'Kanya' mountain. The peak is not possible to identify, though one may just possibly take into account the correspondence between 'Kanja' (or 'Kanya') and 'Chomo' (which can be translated as 'Yogini') of the Masang Kyung range and 'Gori' (or 'Gauri') of the Gorichen range, all of which are synonyms of 'Kanya' or Parvati, daughter of Himavat.

The difference between 'Munyadri' and the 'Kunja' mountains may be taken as the former comprising the Eastern Himalayan area in general ; while the latter is the crest of that range.

IDENTITY OF TAWANG

We have till now dealt with the location of 'Mon' in the Eastern Himalayas and their connection with the Kirata ; the Kirata of north-east being vassals of Pragjyotisha/Kamarupa kingdom ; and the identification of the mountains which are its northern frontier.

Leaving 'Mon' for the moment, we may take up the question 'Tawang', as the home of the 'Mon'. The problem is one of identifying 'Tawang' and more particularly *Ta*. It seems to me that any attempt to study the origin of the present name 'Tawang' has to be based on three considerations : (a) the name has something to do with horses, though this association need not necessarily be an ancient one ; (b) the earlier written, as different from the present spoken versions have the first syllable as 'rTa' and not 'Ta' ; and (c) the earlier references in Buddhist chronicles know the place as *Tana*. Within this context, the languages that can be taken into account are : Sanskrit, Mon, Bodo and Tibetan.

Monier-Williams gives 'Ta' as meaning, among others, 'Mlechha', 'Buddha', a 'jewel' and 'nectar' ; though with the caution that these meanings are given by lexicographers only, and no actual examples of usage are available (Monier-Williams, p. 431). Apte does not go in for this qualification ; and has 'Ta' meaning, among others, 'warrior', 'outcast', 'barbarian' and 'Buddha' (p. 463). According to Monier-Williams, 'Tana' by itself means 'offspring' or 'post'. If one is to take into account the initial consonant *ra* in *rTa*, one finds in Sanskrit, 'Tru'

meaning 'stars' in the *Rigveda*. 'Trina' is 'grass' or 'herbs'. 'Ratna' is the name of Kubera ; 'Ratna-makuta' is a Buddha ; and 'Ratnakuta' is a place name. 'Ratnaka' too is the name of a Buddha (Monier-Williams, pp. 435, 453, 864-65). I cannot find any Sanskrit word associated with 'horse' starting with the syllable 'ta'/'rta'. In 'Asvakranta', the syllable occurs at the end. 'Tru' (a 'star') does connect with the capital of Kamarupa being at Pragjyotisha (a free translation of which will be 'star of the east'). Purely a hypothesis to start work on (and nothing more than that), I would take 'Ta' meaning 'barbarian' or 'Mlechha' as the likeliest to be the original form of the name. It has the attraction of tallying with Pragjyotisha kingdom's vassals being 'Mlechha' rulers of the hill (and oceanic) areas, and the reference to the 'China'. The reference to China, (as will be dealt with later) tallies with the existence of early contacts between the Bhahmaputra valley and the trans-Himalayan areas.

Except for what Dasgupta has to say, we do not have any authentic Mon lexicon. Access to the Nam chronicles and early Mon epigraphy (of Burma) is not available to me. In northern Monpa, 'Ta' means a horse ; and 'wang' is 'to flourish'. 'Tai-bang' in archaic Meitei is the 'world' (Khelchandra, p. 403). In Bodo, 'bang' is 'flat ground' or a 'plain' (Rajkowar),

Some of the seventeenth century Tibetan Buddhist chronicles refer to the area as 'Lawang' and not 'Tawang'. This is, however, most probably a clerical error. The *Biography of the Sixth Dalai Lama* refers to the area as 'Lawok Sum' which is obviously an abbreviation of 'Mon La Lho Yul Sum'. The popular interpretation of the phrase is the Monpa one ; that the name 'Tawang' was given to the area Mera Lama in the seventeenth century, as he found that it was a place where 'horses' ('Ta') were in 'excellent condition' ('Wong'). Another such interpretation is that the word had its origin in Tertun Pemalingpa's visit to the area. The Tertun had conducted prayer to Lha Tamiding and gave 'Ka-ong' at Teli. As he had to get down from his horse ('Ta') for giving his blessing ('ong'), the place he got down from the horse came to be known as 'Taong' or 'Tawang'. There is a similarity here with the legend of how the Asvakranta temple came to be built

(Gait, p. 14). It also tallies with the important references to the north-eastern India in the *Mahabharata* being those connected with the Asvamedha. According to some Monpas, 'Ta' has always been the name of the area and 'Tawang' is the blessing ('ong') from 'Tana Mandre Khang'. This last phrase makes its first appearance in the tales of Gyelbo Kala Wangbu. The offices of the Tawang monastery (Gelong Kesang Phuntso, Dronyer Chimi Wan Gergyen Kesang Lawang, Nyerpa Khou Rinchen Tondup etc.) as well ex-Nyertsang Ugyen Tsewang of Gyankhar say that the Tawang Gomp traditionally referred to as 'Tana Mandre Khang'. They explain the name as 'Ta' (Tawang)—'na' (the place below, i.e., the Shyo village 'Mandre' (the crown or 'Makuta' used for blessing devotees after prayers, which the hill where the monastery is situated resembles and 'Khang' (place). (This ties up with 'Ratna Makuta' referred to earlier). A still another possible derivation is that it was originally 'Ta ban'—a racing horse; though this would seem unlikely.

In Buddhist chronicles, the Trala Ringwameti legend has 'Tawang'; but it is located in Central Tibet. 'Tana' of more correctly 'rTanag' ante-dates 'Tawang' and figures in the fifteenth century *Deb-tser snon-po* in connection with a number of religious dignitaries. The *Biography of the Fifth Dalai Lama* also refers to it. The various sanads of the fifth and sixth Dalai Lamas produced by China during the 1960 China-India border talks, however, refer the area as 'Mon Tawang' (MEA, pp. 122-23 and CB, pp. 44-45, 91-92).

The reference to 'China' and 'Mlechha' vassals of Pragjyotisha has been noted earlier. Such a connection is consistent with what we know of the area now constituting south-west China, Tibet and of N.E. India. At the beginning of the Christian era, the region now comprising N.E. India, northern Burma and Szechwan-Yunnan were the locale of a flourishing culture and numerous prosperous principalities. There are vague references to contacts between these principalities and the empires in the Hwang-ho and Gangetic valleys; though of the kingdoms themselves there is very little information. We also know that a major caravan

route across the Himalayas connected India and China in ancient times (Yule, p. 194). The *Chronicles of the Han dynasty* do refer to an important Chinese expedition to Central Asia in c. 122 B.C. which reported the existence of a route to India through Chiang (Tibet) and another via Yunnan. According to Chang Ch'ien, who was the leader of the expedition, there was considerable intercourse between these regions. Things from the kingdoms of Tien (Yunnan) were transported to Ta-hsia via the Indo-Gangetic plain. A series of exploratory parties were sent during the succeeding years to reconnoitre the eastern-most of these routes (that via Yunnan) ; but were unsuccessful due to opposition from Tien, especially the tribes of Kunming (Yule, pp. 55-56 ; Chavanne, pp. LXXII, LXXXII and LXXXV). The 1972 excavations at Ambari (Gauhati) by Dr. Z. D. Ansari and Dr. M. K. Dhavalikar of the Deccan College, throw light on ancient Pragjyotisha and the Indian end of the route. Ptolemy (c. 150 A.D.) also vaguely refers to a route, other than that via Central Asia which connected Pataliputra with the Chinese capital, presumably across Himalayas. A similar reference is that of 'Afra-siyab' (Gait, pp. 19-20). If the route thus referred to in early accounts existed, of course, it not necessarily be via Tawang, or even mainly the Manas Valley. It can just as easily be along the Siang or Lohit, which also avoids high altitudes.

If a hypothesis similar to that on 'Mon' has to be offered, I would suggest 'Ta' as the Mlechha area under the rule of Pragjyotisha. The Buddhist chronicles probably reinterpreted the name, because of the word's meaning in Tibetan tallying with the Asvamedha, the Asvakranta of the Tantric texts. 'Ta-na' would be the name adopted for the areas comprising the three new monasteries of Ugyeling, Sangyeling and Tsogyeling located in the flat lands below the sacred hill of 'Ta' ; and 'Ta-wang' the Dargang area in general. For the last, the explanation involving Tertun Peralingpa is the likeliest to be correct.

LEGENDARY KINGS

We have already postulated that 'Shar Mon' was the designation in the early centuries of the Christian era, for the areas now comprising East Bhutan and West Kameng. Apart from the stray references in Buddhist chronicles, the early history of the Tawang part of 'Shar Mon' is, in that order, the story of Rupati, Dekchung Apa, Naraka, Kala Wangbu, Deb Nap, Ling Kesar-Singthui tsenpu-Aku Drochungta, Drukjum Dorjee, Krilcham, Po Kanam and Padmasambhava.

RUPATI

The father of the Monpa race is sometimes given as Rupati—a prince who came from the plains of India with a thousand soldiers and settled down somewhere in the Himalayas. The prince is sometimes identified as King Drupada of the *Mahabharata*. Gyalbo Rupati, the 'Chu-sing-phu-pun-nga' (five Pandavas) and Da-nye phung-tso chung (twelve Kauravas) are in Tibetan legends, quite often credited with the founding of Tibet. Their being associated with Monyul may therefore be regarded as of little consequence. The Ruptai legend is really borrowed from Tibet and based on Sankarapati's description of migration of the prince (Shrakabpa, p. 5).

DEKCHUNG APA

According to Monpa tradition, which may be regarded as more reliable, the earliest inhabitants of Tawang were the Mimayang (literally 'sprites'), a race of jungle-dwellers who dressed like witch and could disappear from sight at will. These immigrants from the plains are taken to have first populated the Dargong rong (Tafang Chu) valley; the original settlement being at Khinye, west of Bleteng. From there, they later migrated to Dudung Khar; and finally to Kharsanang where the earliest villages established by them in the area were those of Buskhar,

Teikhar, Birkhar, Shyamkhar and Thrimu-Nyetenkhar. The immigrants had no regular system of government and the affairs of the community were not by the 'Gyi' who constituted the hereditary aristocracy among some members of the caste are still found in the Kharsanang and one such being the Kharteng Syengu family.

Again according to local folk-lore the first chief of these Mon settlers was Dekchung Apa. Before him, the Mon were scattered in various villages and while realising that they were a single race, had no unified administration or code of conduct. The land was sparsely inhabited. Dekchung Apa who regarded this state of affairs as unsatisfactory went to every corner of the world trying to persuade some virtuous prince to come and rule the Mon. His efforts were unsuccessful and finally he had to undertake the task himself. Dekchung Apa regarded the task of kingship as behaving like the ruler as well as the ruled (which has been variously interpreted). His travels and his discussions with the God of the Nether World etc. are the subjects of popular folk-dance performance during Torgyap.

NARAKA

If we accept that the eastern Mon were under the control of Pragjyotisha, the first historical ruler of the area may be Naraka. Kakati who has gone into the Narakasura legend concludes that Naraka was a political adventurer from Mithila who established himself in power in Pragjyotisha sometime during 200 and 500 A.D. (Barua, p. 16). If the Mon area's connection with his kingdom is accepted, the references to Rupati in Monpa tradition would be a later modification of the legend by Tibetan annalists, a modification consequent on the change over to Tantric Buddhism of the Tibetan variety in the Manas valley.

KALA WANGBU

Gyelbo Kala Wangbu is another prince of Mon, popular in the folk-lore of Tawang. He is sometimes identified with Po-

Kanan Gyelbo and perhaps belongs to the period when Buddhism was still fighting local animist forces. The prince was born near Tana Man Khang and married Khandro Drowa Zangmu of Lhagyala (present Kala circle of Kameng district). Kala Wangbu's son, Lhase Gyelbo was the first king of the Dargang Rong Valley and Namshu-Thembang (at this time known as Yul Pema Chen) [Murty, 74].

DEB NAP

Whether or not Dekchung Apa and Kala Wangbu ever existed, it is likely that Tawang was one of the areas under Dev Nap who established himself around the sixth century as master of Eastern Bhutan. Apa B. Pant who was P.O. Sikkim in 1954-61 records in his unpublished tour-diary, the following account of the king :

“Before the sixth century A.D. Bhutan's history is just mythology. From the sixth century onwards Bhutan can be said to have some records of important historical personalities and events. Before the sixth century there were many small chieftains in all parts of Bhutan specially in eastern and central Bhutan; but with the arrival of Deb Nap (black king) folk-lore changes to history in Bhutan. Deb Nap was a small chieftain in the Paro Valley in the western-most part of Bhutan. By strength and valour he ruled ruthlessly the valley people. He fought against the lamas and drove some of them into Tibet. He was, however, driven out of Paro by the people and established himself as a chieftain in the Boom-thang valley in Central Bhutan. He built a huge fortress at Byagar and made himself king of all the eastern parts of Bhutan. Deb Nap ordered the lamas to discover for him precious idols supposed to have been hidden in one of the sacred lakes nearby. The lamas being terrified of Deb Nap dug out from the sacred lake wax box. Three images were hidden in this box. Deb Nap got very furious to see only a box and no images and hit it with a sword. He hit it so hard that all the three images were damaged. Two of them are still installed in monasteries in Bhutan. The third one was taken away to Tibet.”

SINGTHUI

If the Kesar *namdar* available in East Bhutan—Tsona and Tawang are to be believed, Monyul first came into contact with Tibet in the time of Kesar. Mon was at this time ruled by Singthui Tsenpu. This chief fell foul of Ling Kesar Gyelbo, the greatest of Tibetan folk-heroes who can be roughly assigned to the sixth and seven centuries A.D. Aku Drochungta, uncle of Kesar attacked Mon Singthui Tsenpu Gyelbo, conquered the Mon country and imprisoned Singthui for some time.

Apparently, one war did not end the matter as Kesar himself fell in love with the Mon King's flower-like daughter Gyiti. Kesar's fourth major campaign was, therefore, against Mon. A great battle was fought at Tsari Chorsam and Singthui as well as his Bhutanese Prime Minister Kalu Thochyo defeated, with Singthui dying on the battle field. Kesar wed the King's daughter and took Singthui's principality of Tawang and his vassal chieftains of Tsari, Chayul and Kanam in Tibet. This is according to the local version. The Ladakhi version of the Kesar legend does not deal with this particular exploit ; which is probably part of Kesar's wars against the Horpa in that recension (Francke, pp. 243-313). According to B. Chakravarti the princess was Sing-ljang Lhrogma and her birth-place either Mon or Bhutan. Both may be regarded as tallying to an extent with references in Muslim chronicles, accepted by many that Sangaladeva, King of Kamarupa and Bhutan, with his capital at Lakhanavati had fought the Huna and the Vanga successfully but was defeated by the ruler of Turan. The date of Sangaladeva has not been settled as yet.

Aku Drochungta is probably a historic person and the same as Drukchung Dorji, king of Bhutan. Apa B. Pant's unpublished tour diary has the following about this ruler :

"In the tenth century, in the Thimphu valley amongst the Wang people arose a great ruler ; his name was Drukjum Dorji. He built many monasteries and ruled wisely. He had five sons. He one day took all these five to a precipice and threw them into the river saying that if any one of them was wise enough and good enough to serve the people he would be saved. All of them

were saved and one of them, Kunley became a very famous lama. In Bhutan today are many descendants of Kunley as well as of all the other four.

Aku Throchungta thus did exist, even though his inclusion in this particular Kesar exploit is an anachronism. Singthui Tse Gyelbo, the Monpa king is sometimes identified in Mon folk-lore with Jang Po Kanam Gyelbo, held to be first historic king of Tawang Kanam Gyelbo's original home was 'a great distance to the north' (presumably in the northern Po Valley, seeing his name) and he had entered Tawang at the head of a small force. The Monpas were dissatisfied with his rule. After a few years he was driven out by the Mon and returned to Tibet. His followers who had married local Mon girls, however, stayed on and their progeny have continued till now as a separate caste known as Masang. The legend bears a marked resemblance to that concerning the Milok who strayed into Bhutan during the eighth and ninth centuries.

Perhaps the Masang legend is a distortion of what historical fact was the wedding of a Mon princess to some distant prince. Gyiti will then be either Amritaprabha or K'rilcam. We know from the *Rajatarangini* that in the fifth century A.D. Amritaprabha, a princess of Pragjyotisha married Meghavahana, king of Kashmir and that the king constructed a vihara for foreign bhikshus. Amritaprabha's father himself had constructed a stupa at the behest of a missionary from Loh. (Choudhury, p. 137). This however, will be a Buddhist monk from Mustang and not Shar Mon. (Murty, 1969a).

A nearer example is in the *Ladakhi Chronicles* and the *Fifth Dalai Lama's biography*; which refer to a more definitely established contact between Tibet and the Mon area. The Nepalese and Chinese queens of Strongtsen Compo (582 A.D.—c. 650 A.D.), Bhrikuti and Wen cher are referred to in all works on Tibet. The king had a third queen also, Princess, K'rilcam from the Mon area, who bore him an heir, Monsron-mon-btsan (Pethec, pp. 53-54). This son was declared the Crown-prince at the age of 13, but died 5 years later, before his father Thongji; legend has the

prince as living for many years more, and credits him with the establishment of the Shardukpen Kingdom (Sharring, 6). The actual successor to Sronstsen Gompo was not the son of K'rilcam Mon-sron-mon-btsan; but Gun-sron-gun-btsan who ascended the throne in c. 650 A.D.

THE KAMARUPA EXPEDITION

If it is accepted that the marriage of K'rilcam was a major event in Mon history, the other parts of early Mon legend, Kesar's invasion and Po Kanam's stay in Kameng, can also be suggestive of the expedition to Dawaka (Nowgong) by a Tibeto-Nepali force, by Wang-suen-tse and Chian-chiu-jen in 647 A.D.; or perhaps even the expeditions which Khrisron Detsen (c. 775—c. 797 A.D.), Kukhri Btsanpo (c. 798—c. 804 A.D.) and Ralpa-chen (c. 817—c. 836 A.D.) are supposed to have led into Bengal (R. C. Mazumdar in *History and Culture of the Indian People*: Vol. III, pp. 100-6 and Vol. IV, pp. 445-46). The genuineness of the account has however been questioned (Sen, pp. 3-5). The route, via Tawang or via Mela would be the easiest for such an expedition to Nowgong; if it took place at all.

The Kingdom of Kamarupa was headed by Bhaskara Varma (c. 594—c. 650 A.D.) at the time of the Dawaka expedition. We have only a few tantalizing references to Bhaskara Varma, as a contemporary of Emperor Harsha, and a powerful king of the north-east who ruled up to Burma and China. His state extended over a thousand li in all directions from Pragjyotisha, V. Smith regards the king (Choudhury, p. 171) as belonging to a tribe like that of the Koch, coming from present Bhutan. P. C. Choudhury disagrees; but treats the family itself as 'alpine' (pp. 184-85).

One is inclined to think that Salastambha (c. 650—675 A.D.) the next important king of Pragjyotisha bearing the title 'Mlechhadhinatha' (i.e., paramount lord of the Mlechha), strengthens the hypothesis that Tawang was part of Bhaskara Varma's kingdom.

BUDDHISM : PADMA SAMBHAVA

One is on a less confusing trail when one comes to religious history. The earliest Buddhist saint to have visited Monyul is Padma Sambhava, a contemporary of King Khrison Detsen (c. 755—c. 797 A.D.) and traditionally credited with the conversion of the tribe to Dharma. We could perhaps see a connection between conversion and the influence of Bhaskara Varma. The account of Sambhava's visit is summarised by Waddell as follows :

“When the Guru, after passing through Nepal, reached Monyul, the enemy-god (Agri-lha) of Z' an-zun, named Dsamun, tried to destroy him by squeezing him between two mountains, but he overcame her by his irdhi-power of soaring in the sky. He then received her submission and her promise to become a guardian of Lamaism under the religious name of “Rdorje Gyu-bun-ma.” The saint is then credited with another successful encounter against the Mimayang (Waddell, pp. 382-83).

Apart from these, Padma Sambhava also visited the site where later, Karpotsang Gompa was founded and revealed the sacredness of Shou, Taktsang, Domzang and Ugyeling. The passage dealing with this in the *Du Kala Namdar* (Tawang Library copy), which is held to be of great esoteric significance, runs as follows in free translation.

“Ugyen Rimpoche revealed that the Tsang Valley, the Nye Valley, the Lho Valley and the Kongbu Valley are the ‘Le go shi’ (the four entrances to rightful endeavour). The configuration of the mountains of the ‘Go shi’ resembles that of sharpened swords. The waters of the streams flowing from them are inky-black. The jungles are thick and dark. The plains are shaped like bows. The sky looks like a scimitar. The food of the people consists of vegetables and fruits and their clothes are like the flames of a fire stoked by strong winds. In the rocks and at the sources of streams are situated many holy places. These ‘Go shi’ of Poyul Kimosong are at Trumon Le-go in Tsang. Trak le-go in the Kongbu, Sheu-ta-go in Mon and Trinthag le-go in Nye. The ‘Le-go shi’ protects the peace of Tibet. If warriors from Hor or any other place try to enter the land, they will be stopped by

the Tiger-door of Shou (Shou-ta-go). The mountains behind the Tiger-door are a white wall (of snowy ranges). The mountains in front are shaped like angels singing and dancing. Amidst these is situated an area which is like a fully open Pema Tapgye flower. Above, the land is narrow ; while lower down in the distance are Shar tso, Seru and Lhou, on the other side of the Himalayas. The sacred place of Trongteng is located above these three tops. The peaks of the mountain of Trongteng are like a trident. The land of three 'tso' (i.e., Shar, Seru and Lhou) looks (from above) like a triangle and one feels as if he were in the presence of Risum Gompo. Here there are mountains reaching up to the sky and climbing them one can see the hills and lands of the holy men (i.e., plains of India and Tibet). The resting place of the saint Lupon Sembotra is in this very region. Of this sacred land, Domgo (spider-web) is as holy as the trunk is important to a human body. Siktsang (fox-hole) is like the mouth. Taktsang (tiger-lair) is like the mind. Gompaphu to the south is like knowledge. The sacred place of Trinle is situated among these. At Guru Truphuk are available all types of precious minerals. To the right of this is Tsegyel Phukpa cave from which nectar and holy water capable of curing all ills flow. To the left of the cave one can see the abode of gods from which the waters of longevity come out. Above the cave is the peak which is the celestial abode of Gyalchen Namsay. It is the place where Ugyen Sangye-gnipa sat, attended by four angels of fearsome appearance with faces shining like moon-light reflects on water and who acted as his 'dwarapala'. From this place flows the stream, bathing in which one will be rid of human ills. Southwards is the 'Sankha' (conch-shell) entrance where one can pray and attain whatever one desires. Westwards is holy Ugyeling where any one can attain salvation and supreme knowledge. The Shou ta-go which protects one from all harm is to the north."

Though Bhutan's border with Tibet has a Monla Karchung and Tibet itself has plenty of places known as Taktsang ; the references to Domsang, Shou and Tsok-sum make reasonable the identification of the area involved as Tawang. The signi-

ficance of Padmasambhava's revelation would appear to be that it had been recognised fairly early, that Tibet extended up to Shou only and territory south of the snowy mountains and in their vicinity was a separate entity known as Mon.

According to B. Chakravarti, Padmasambhava's efforts were greatly aided by the first historical king of Bhutan, Naguchi also known as Sindhuraja (eighth century A.D.), whose control extended to the north to Hor and in the south to the plains, with his capital near Byakar (Bhutan). Tradition has Naguchi waging several wars with king Narabuda, then ruling over the Brahmaputra valley. It is tempting to identify Narabuda with Aradha, father of Pralamba, the Madhava (Salastambha) dynasty. Naguchi may be a corruption of 'Na Gyelbo' and meaning the same as 'Debnap'.

KARMAPA MISSIONARIES OF TWELFTH TO THIRTEENTH CENTURIES

While the visit of Padmasambhava to the Manas valley is a historical fact and the visit to Tawang almost certainly so, the effective conversion of what now constitutes East Bhutan and West Kameng (and which Tibetan historians designate Shar Mon) should perhaps be assigned to a later date and lesser personages. This could reasonably be that of the founder of the Drupka schools of Buddhism and coinciding with the Muslim conquest of Eastern India. The Kargyupa sect of Nyingma Buddhism was founded by Marpa (died in *c.* 1152 A.D.); and its offshoot the Karmapa sect by Rangchung Dorjee (Karma Bakshi) (*c.* 1109—*c.* 1192 A.D.). Some of the earliest Buddhist shrines in Tawang, those of Domzang, Garam (Jangda), Jang and Bangajanga were all founded by Karmapa Rangchung Dorjee (*c.* 1109—*c.* 1192 A.D.) and are still extant. Karpotsang, now more famous than all these and equalled only by Bangajanga in popularity, was founded some years later by Tertun Ranalingpa, one of the disciples of Gyalwa Karmapa. Karmapa's teachings indirectly provided inspiration for the

enunciation of the Drukpa doctrine by gTsanpa rGya-rags (Dharmaswamin Tsangpa Yeshey Dorjee : c. 1161—c. 1211 A.D.). Dorjee's disciples Loraspa (c. 1187—c. 1250 A.D.) and rGod-Tshanpa (Gompo Debnap : c. 1189—c. 1258 A.D.) are respectively the founder of the 'Lower sMed Brug' and 'Upper Drukpa' (sTod Brug) to which the whole Buddhist Bhutan now belongs. In doctrine, the difference between Karmapa and the Drukpa is mainly about the identity of the pronunciation whose revelations are adopted. The solidification of the adherents of these various doctrines into separate sects was a somewhat lasting phenomenon. It is therefore, difficult to decide whether the earliest monasteries of Tawang which tradition places at Ugyeling the now-destroyed Tsogyeling and Sangyeling (Tsangpungrong) were Karmapa or Drukpa shrines. Widely current folk-lore assigns them to Ugyen Zangpu, a disciple of Padmasambhava and brother of Tertun Pemalingpa. The Tertun belongs to the thirteenth century, or at the early fourteenth century, and is referred to in the *Blue Annals*. That he was a contemporary of Gyalwa Karmapa is wrong ; since Ugyen Zangpu was a direct ancestor through six generations of the sixth Dalai Lama (c. 1681—c. 1707). Another notable person referred to in the *Blue Annals* in connection with the area is Gadpa Kiriti who visited Mon Pano and Bumatang (Roerich, p. 421) during this period.

The part played by Loraspa in this conversion of the Mon area to Drukpa Buddhism is recorded by gZon-nu-dpal as follows : "After that (i.e., the rebuilding of the Lhobrag-mKharchu temples) he (Loraspa) proceeded to Bumthan in Mon country and established abstinence among the natives of Mon who resembled beasts. He also founded (in Bumthang) the monastery of Tharpa-glin. After that he proceeded to Sengeri. There he forced monks, who had relaxed their vows to observe them and bestowed on about 1500 novices the great initiation of Samvara. After that he performed a great memorial service for a month and half preached continuously the doctrine" (Roerich, p. 676).

KHILJI EXPEDITION (c. 1205 A.D.) :
INVASIONS ACROSS THE HIMALAYAS

The gap of almost three centuries between the proselytisation of the Monpas attempted by Padmasambhava and the establishment of several major monasteries in the area of Rangchung Dorgee and Ugyen Zangpu is difficult to dissociate from events in the Brahmaputra valley proper. c. 1199-1202 Bengal was being overrun by Bakhtiyar Khilji, Viceroy of Eastern and North-Eastern India, who with large army destroyed monasteries and slaughtered monks. This resulted in general exodus of Buddhist scholars into the Eastern Himalayas further on into Tibet. One effect of this was a great strengthening of Buddhism in Bhutan, from where missionaries penetrated also into the Monpa area, including Tawang.

In c. 1205 A.D. Bakhtiyar Khilji's troops overran the Kamrup kingdom. The expedition crossed the Karatiya river, overrunning some tribal territory, journeyed into the hills and invaded 'Tibet', where he was checked by 'Mongol cavalry' in vast open plain and then returned to Lakhnabati. K. A. Nizami has given a general account of this Bakhtiyar Khilji expedition across the Himalayas (Nizami, pp. 175-77). He has used extensively *Tabakat-i-Nasiri* by Minhajus Siraj, compiled during 1259-60 A.D. Several of his identifications of place-names can, however, be questioned. The Nagmati river up to which the expeditionary force marched is identified by him as the old Tista on the basis of Blochman. He separately quotes Habibullah's suggestion that Bagmati may be identified with Barnad. The place where the river joined Hindustan, 'Samund' translated as the 'ocean'. The large stone-bridge of 20 arches crossing which Khilji located his camp is identified as that of Silhako, on the authority of Habibullah. The town of Karbattan, point five leagues from which the army reached after 15 days' march in the hills, is identified as Kumrikotah due north of Gauhati in Bhutanese foot-hills. R. Rahul too thinks that the expedition was to south Bhutan (pp. 19-20).

It seems to me the reference to Karbattan can denote some

area much farther north. If the latter half of the name 'pattana' ('town'), 'Kar' is much more likely to be in the upland of the Manas. It is also worth remembering that the earlier settlements were in the Bleting-Sanglum area of Tawang. The place-name had ended with the suffix *Khar*. There is no reason why 'Samund' was not be the Saumara region between the Bhairavi and Dilkrang rivers referred to in the *Hara-Gauri samvada* (Barua, pp. 13-14 and 210).

Further, in my opinion, the reference to enemy 'cavalry' appears to indicate that Khilji's men did succeed in crossing the Himalayas. While the route taken by the expedition across the Himalayas is not known, the stage at which it was undertaken, appears to exclude Bhutan proper and locate it much further to the eastern side. The major ones among the ancient routes in this area were : (a) Dewangiri/Kalaktang-Tashigong-Tsona, (b) along the Sisng and (c) along the Lohit. The poverty of the tribes inhabiting the latter valleys and Khilji's anti-Buddhist feelings appear to be the first as likelier to have been chosen by him. Some modern Assamese historians, notably H. C. Ray and N. K. Bhattasali, suggest that the expedition was, in fact, moving eastwards after crossing the Karatiya river and was destroyed by Vallabha Deva (Gait). According to N. N. Acharya, the Kamarupa king at whose hands Khilji suffered defeat was Prithu, a descendant of either Vaidya Deva or Vallabha Deva, and who died in 1228 A.D. (pp. 135-37). In any case, it seems likely that the clash with the Kamarupa force took place when the expedition was on its way back from Tibet, Kamarupa and Darang districts are hardly hilly country, which the force passed through, before the battle.

MONGOL EXPEDITIONS OF THE THIRTEENTH CENTURY

Firishta briefly refers to what may have been a sequel to the expedition of c. 1205 A.D. In c. 1244 A.D., a Mongol army from Tibet attempted to invade Mongol by the same route as that used by Khilji, but was defeated by the local officers (Yule, pp. 78-79). This expedition could be one of those despatched by Galdan Khan

after the invasion of Central Tibet in *c.* 1239 (Richardson, p. 38), since Sumpa Khampo's *drag bSam Zon bKan* briefly refers to the King Gun Tan, a nephew Chengis Khan as having conquered all Tibet, southwards up to and eastwards up to Kon (Tucci, p. 652). From the scantiness of the information and passing nature of Firishta's reference, one can possibly presume that it was more of a raid for plunder rather an invasion; and the party was destroyed in the hills itself, before reaching the plains. The supposition is strengthened by lack of interest in the Himalayas shown by the Mongols as well the Khiljis subsequently. The next major Mongol expedition to Tibet and Tali (Yunnan) by Kublai Khan in *c.* 1252 ignored Assam. In *c.* 1256-57 when Kamrup was again overrun by troops under Malik Yuzbeg, there is no reference to his evincing interest in Tibet either.

Monpa tradition has what seems to be a reference to one more of these expeditions. Both the Drugpa and the Drikungpa claim their doctrines to have been revealed by Pemalingpa. Ugyen Zangpu is not credited with having inspired any special sect; but did found several monasteries in Tawang. They are traditionally believed to have been destroyed by a 'Sokpo Shamkhar'. This particular Sokpo Shamkhar exploit may be the same as the destruction of Drikungpa shrines in Mon by Anlen (*c.* 1290 A.D.). It may alternatively be some unrecorded raid by one of the parties sent out by Gusri Khan during the sixteen forties, not by Sumpa Khampo (Tucci, p. 654). The latter seems unlikely, since it seems to have occurred before the time of Ugyen Zangpu; and even our fixation of Ugyen's time is revised, the monasteries would have been hardly established, before they were demolished. The prominence they have in the local tradition suggests they had a much longer life.

TUGHLAQ EXPEDITION (*c.* 1337 A.D.)

The last major invasion across the Himalayas during the medieval period is that of Mohammad-bin Tughlaq in *c.* 1337 A.D. An army of 100,000 cavalry perished in the attempt; while another of equal strength came back from half-way. The route

followed by the expedition has been the subject-matter of controversy and may have covered the Shar Mon area. If Li is taken as sufficient authority the expedition is totally ignored in Chinese chronicles. He refers only to the *Cambridge History of India* which says that the expedition was under Malik Nikpai and via Nagarkot in Kangra (Li, p. 23). According to Ibn Batuta, the army used Jidiah, a town at the base of the mountains as its starting point for entry into the hills (Yule, p. 73). Mazumdar depends on Barani and Ibn Batuta and refers to it as an invasion of Qarachal, lying between India and China (Mazumdar, Raychaudhuri and Dutta, p. 316). According to him 'Qarachal' are the mountains of Kumaon-Garhwal.

K. A. Nizami takes into account the data available in Ibn Batuta's *Rehla*, the *Fatuhāt-i-Firuz Shahi* and Isami's *Fatū-al-Salaten*, Al-Umari's *Masalikul Absar fi mumolikel Amsor* (mid-fourteenth century), Umar-al-Makki's (Haji ud Daibur) *Zafarū Walih bi Muzaffer wa* (c. 1605—c. 1611 A.D.), as well as *Firishta*. He rightly ignores Barani's *Haji ud Daibur's* and *Firishta's* guesses at what the purpose of the expedition was; and accepts Ibn Batuta and Al-Umari's statement that in spite of a military disaster, the obedience of the Qarachali was obtained (Nizami, pp. 522-23). Nizami does not identify the reference to Jidiya and falls in with Barani's guess that it was a campaign in the western Himalayas; mainly, since Ibn Batuta had placed the area ten-days' march from Delhi. A re-checking of Ibn Batuta's text will be necessary before the Western Himalayas hypothesis can be accepted.

If 'Qarachal' is taken as 'Black Mountain Range', the only prominent range of the name is that separating Tashigong from Bumtang. If Jidiah is Sadiya, the route tried cannot unreasonably be identified with that along the Lohit. If the reference to 'Black Mountain Range' is to be regarded as decided (and it is not an uncommon name), the route is likely to be that along the Manas or Bhareli and either through Mela (Tashigong-Bhutan) or Tawang (NEFA).

THE TRIBAL KINGS :
THE KHYAN

The position during the thirteenth century was that the most prominent kingdom on the northern bank of the Brahmaputra was the kingdom of Kamarupa, also known as Kamata. The ruling dynasty were the Khyan who had succeeded the Palas ; and the Kamata kingdom covered the Goalpara and Kamarup districts. To the east its boundary was the Barnadi. Beyond the Barnadi, in the territory extending up to Subonsiri, the northern valley was ruled by a number of petty chieftains known as Bhuyan. To the east of the Bhuyan territory was the Chutiya kingdom. The Bhuyan chiefs were nominally feudatories of the Kamata kingdom. The boundary between Bhuyan and the Kamata varied from time to time, depending on the strength or weakness of the ruling Yang king.

The accounts of the Khyan period are confused by the references to Bhutan and Bhutea, without differentiating them into Drukpa, Monpa and Thongji. This confusion, however, is understandable ; since eastern Bhutan and western Kameng did constitute a single cultural unit at this period. This is also the 'Shar Mon' of the Tibetan chronicles.

The position of the three Monpa areas during the Kamata period was : Bhutan controlling the north and south Monpa areas, while the central Monpa area was under the Thongji. The Bhutanese and Thongji were apparently under the suzerainty of the Khyan.

We know almost nothing about the details of the relations of the kingdom of Kamata with these Bhutanese and the Monpa. The only definite fact available is that Tantric Buddhism was prevalent in the north-east, prior to the Muslim conquest that after the Khilji invasion of Bengal, a large number of prominent Tantric Hindu adherents and Tantric Buddhist adherents fled northwards into the Himalayan region in general and Kamarupa in particular. There can be a connection between these and the temple of Ugratara in Gauhati, which is believed to have been built by Ratnapala or Indrapala in eleventh century A.D., after the worship Ekajati was brought by Nagarjuna from

Tibet to Kamarupa (Choudhury, p. 424). Buddhist pilgrims from the eastern Himalayas started visiting the Hayagriva temple at Hajo in Kamarupa district ; and Bhramarakunda (Bhairab Kund) now in the southern Monpa area, becoming an important pilgrimage centre for both Buddhists and Hindus, may be assigned to this period.

THE THONGJI

The tradition of the tribe, as recorded by R. R. P. Sharma has the establishment of the kingdom occurring in the century by Tibetan immigrants. One could discount the hypothesis of a Tibetan origin of the tribe. It is much more likely that Thongji were one of the tribes displaced from the plains during the eastward expansion of the Kamata ; and that earlier, the area was one of the Bhuyan chieftainships which extended from the Kamata kingdom eastward up to the Subansiri.

The arguments in favour of the Tibetan origin of the tribe are : (a) the extensive use of Tibetan honorifics in the language, (b) the Shardukpen tradition and (c) the orthodox Gelukpa religion which the tribe professes. As against these : (a) The dress of the tribe, whether of men or women, is practically the same as that of the neighbouring Miji and Hrusso (Aka). (b) Except for the honorifics, most of the basic words of its language are common with those of the two definitely non-Tibetan tribes to the east. (c) The orthodox tradition of the Thongji gives as much prominence to the connection with the plains, as it does with Tibet. In fact, their coming to power is credited to a grant from the kings in the plains. (d) The genealogies available do not permit the origin of the first paramount chief to go back to the eighth century ; and place him possibly as late as the beginning of the fifteenth century. (e) The tribe started off by being Gelukpa ; and prior to the conversion to the yellow sect was not Buddhist. (f) Finally, the tribe's history has practically no reference to contact with Tibet (except that of origin), and has extensive references to relations with the Koch and the Ahoms.

The establishment of the Thongji oligarchy and the extension of that tribe's control over the central Monpa area probably occurred during the fourteenth century itself. This hypothesis is based on the consideration that the time the take-over of the central Monpa area occurred is : before the conversion of any of the Monpa and the Thongji to the yellow sect, before the extension of Bhutanese control over the northern and southern Monpa region, and after the Thongji tradition treats the oligarchy as established.

There may not be any connection between the oligarchy and Koch tradition that the king of Tawang during the fifteenth century was a Saira Raja or Silpati (Sanyal, p. 5) ; Tawang was a part of Bhutan. The Thongji do not seem to be an offshoot of the Koch.

THE NYINGMA SAINTS : THIRTEENTH TO FOURTEENTH CENTURIES

Apart from the above, we also know the names of a few religious leaders who had connections of various sorts with the Tawang area in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Tana was the birth-place of the thirteenth-century sage Khon-rste-ba, also known as Be-sgom, who held discussions with the 11th ct. Chos-rje-lotsaba Khrolde (that is Khrolde the holy translator at Skyiron (Kyirong) according to the *Blue Annals* (1476 A.D.) [Roerich, p. 421 and p. 433]. Tana Tusi (rTa-nag bdud rtsi) is mentioned as a prominent disciple of one of the chelas of Rodrikpa (sGro-sbug-pa), during the thirteenth century. At Tana-Nasar (rTa-nag gnas-gsar) was born Jamyang Sandhup Dorjee (1295-1376 A.D.) in a family of Nyingma scholars. Another prominent monk also from Tana-Nasar was Sangye Rinchen Gyeltsen Zampo (1350-1431 A.D.) (Sans-rgyas Rin-chen rgyal-mtshan-dpal-bzanpo) (Roerich, pp. 149-51). There is then a brief reference in the seventeenth century *Biography of the Fifth Dalai Lama* to the construction of a shrine for Thupten Namgyal (T'ub-brtan-rnam-rgyal) at Tana during the fifteenth century by Kun-bzan-po, Sopon (Rdson-dpon) of Rimpung (Rin-spuns) and a vassal of bsod-rams

Senge of Garam (Tucci, p. 642). If our dating is correct, Ugyen Zangpu is another such historical personage of this period connected with the northern Mon area. Drupto Thantun Gyalbo who lived during the fifteenth century is also said to have visited Tawang. The two double-cantilever iron suspension-bridges of Chaktsam (Mokto) and Drokung (Pangchen) are believed to have been constructed under his supervision. Recently Sarkar (1978) has given some details of these works as preserved in local tradition and, basing himself on Snelgrove and Richardson, assigns 1385-1462 as Thantun's date. Nyingma works are yet far from exhaustively studied ; and it should be possible to obtain further details for this period.

TO SUM UP

Mon was a generic term used by the Tibetans for all people staying in the hills south and west of them. Tawang was known to the early Aryans as Ta, Mlechha-inhabited part of the Pragjyotisha kingdom. At the beginning of the Christian era, the principality seems to have been on the routes connecting the Brahmaputra valley with Central Asia, Tibet and China. In Mon legends, the earliest kings of Tawang are often identical with those of Bhutan. A Mon girl was married to Srongtsen Gompo and Tawang may have been on the route followed in the seventh century Tibetan invasion of Assam. The conversion of Mon Tawang to Buddhism was done by Padmasambhava and from the twelfth century onwards there are numerous references to visits of Karmapa and other Nyingma saints to the area. During the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries Indian expeditions to Tibet and Mongol expeditions to India passed through the Mon area. The Mon were ruled during these centuries by the Khyan kings of Kamata and by the Thongji oligarchy.

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THE BHUTANESE POLICY OF THE AHOMS

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THE ESTABLISHMENT of their authority in Assam valley had brought the Ahoms into contact with the Bhutanese who maintained commercial relations with the plains through the *duars* or passes. There were seven such *duars* in the Assam-Bhutan borders, viz., Bijni, Chapakhamar, Chapaguri, Baksa and Ghor-khola in Kamrup and Kulling and Buriguma in Darrang. To the east of Buriguma, the Koriapara *duar* had seven subdivisions held by *Sath Rajas* or seven chiefs who were subordinate to the Chief of Towang (Sona Dzungpon), who was a vassal of the authority of Lassa. The *Char-duar* or four passes in the further east were held by Bhutanese chiefs, known as Kampos, independently of Punakha or Towang.¹

Ahom Policy towards the northern tribes

The *duars* were held by the chiefs and to the each of these, a market was appended through which extensive trade was carried on. As a matter of fact, the trade was the main basis of hills-plains relations in the entire north-eastern sentinel of India in the pre-colonial period, accomplished through an organised market system in the plains to the mutual benefit of the people in the hills and the plains—the surplus generation of an area balancing the deficit in the other, and the political boundary never stood on the way of trade and with it, the culture exchange—the unimposed instrument of Indian integration.² The *duars* therefore, formed the main channel of contact between the Ahoms and the Bhutanese as well, either of Bhutan proper or those independent of Punakha. Besides the periodical markets, the annual trade fairs were held in important *duars* and Koriapara deserves a special

note in this context. This extensive *duars*, consisting of about 15,000 *puras* of land, enjoyed the unique distinction of the entire Assam trade with Tibet passing through it. The transit station on the Assam side was Geegunshur, while the trade mart at Chouna, about four miles off Assam supplied to Tibet Assamese silk, Tussa cloth, rice, iron and lac,, skins, buffalo horns, pearls and coral and received in return, rock-salt, gold dust, woollens, Chinese silk, horses and chowries. The trade was voluminous and this is illustrated by the fact that, inspite of political turmoils in Assam caused by internal plots and rebellions, in 1809 the trade in Koriapara fair amounted to rupees two lakhs.³

The trade was no doubt to the mutual advantage, but predatory character of some of the hill tribes was to the definite disadvantage of the people in the plains and the Ahom monarchs, therefore, endeavoured to combat the challenge through a system known as *Posa*. Some of the British officers described it as 'black-mail',⁴ while others preferred to call it 'tribute'.⁵ The *modus operandi* of the system might explain it better. The border trade secured economic benefit to the people and accrued revenue to the Government, and the Ahom rulers, consequently, were anxious to keep it going. On the other hand, the *duars* were used by the predatory tribes for occasional raids in the Ahom territory which had to be effectively checked. The Ahom Government therefore, sought to secure the forbearance of the chiefs of the *duars* by granting them *Posa* whereby the chiefs were entitled to certain income from the plains and were entrusted in return with the maintenance of law and order in their respective *duars*. The policy was well considered because the raids were possible only through the *duars* and the chiefs were better suited to repel the aggressions of their own people. From the Ahom point of view, the chiefs were looked upon as their agents and some of them even enjoyed official rank. The *posa* was, therefore, essentially 'bribe', if not 'salary' or 'allowance'. But these rights were not permanent and resumable at the pleasure of the Government. The *Sath Rajas* of Koriapara, for example, had full jurisdiction over the *duars* for eight months in the year and during remaining four months, these passed under the control of the Ahom Govern-

ment.⁶ Dr. H. K. Barpujari⁷ has compared it with the Maratha *Chouth* and it can as well be equated with the *matha-rakha* conceded by the Bengalee *Zamindars* of Mymensingh and Rangpur to the Garo chiefs.⁸ This *posa* system was introduced for the first time by Pratap Singha, the Ahom monarch (1603-41), and had since then formed the network of the conciliatory policy towards the trans-Himalayan tribes like the Bhutanese, Nagas and the Arunachalis. It was Pratap Singha himself who had granted *Posa* to the Bhutanese chiefs of Koriapara and Charduar in return of annual tribute.⁹

Ahom-Bhutanese

Until the beginning of the seventeenth century, the Ahoms did not come into direct contact with Bhutan as the area extending from Koch Behar to Darrang was under the Koch rulers who exercised some authority over the Bhutanese. The Koch State was dismembered into the western and eastern kingdoms and the territory from Goalpara to Darrang eventually passed under the Mughals. Pratap Singha, the Ahom monarch, pushed back the Mughals from Darrang and Kamrup and installed Dharma Narayana, the fugitive Koch prince of eastern kingdom, as the tributary ruler of Darrang in 1616 A.D.¹⁰ This brought the Ahoms on the Bhutan frontier. Deva Raja of Bhutan, thereupon, demanded from Dharma Narayana the district of Nagamatee which according to him actually belonged to Bhutan but was seized by the Koches. On refusal of Dharma Narayana to comply with the demand, the Government of Bhutan despatched a seven hundred strong army against Dharma Narayana. Pratap Singha, the Ahom monarch, immediately reinforced the Darrang Army and in the war that followed the Bhutanese were thoroughly routed and compelled to make peace by resigning a part of the Bhramarakunda (Bhairabkunda) to Dharma Narayana who built a fort and a temple there.¹¹ In 1635, the Ahom monarch handed over Koch Hajo to the Raja of Darrang and the latter thus came to exercise his authority over the areas bordering Bhutan in Kamrup wherein during the political uncertainty caused by the Mughal Wars the Bhutanese had taken possession of the plains south of their hills up to Gohain Kamal Ali.¹²

Chandra Narayana, the grandson of Dharma Narayana, re-occupied the territory including the *duars*. The Bhutanese thereupon demanded the territory up to Gohain Kamal Ali and in return, agreed to pay tributes in terms of horses, yaktails, musks and blankets to the Ahom Government. The Darrang Raja recommended the offer to the Ahom Government, but Jayadhvaj Singha, the Ahom monarch (1648-63), immediately sent the army under Ahom officers and asked Chandra Narayana to join with his troops and to take charge of the territory up to Bhramarakunda. In the battle that followed the Bhutanese were defeated and requested the Ahom officers and the Darrang Raja for the territory up to Gohain Kamal Ali and promised in return, annual tributes to the Ahom monarch and presents to Darrang Raja and the Ahom officers. Jayadhvaj Singha now accepted the recommendation of the officers and allowed the Bhutanese Government of Punakha the possession of the said territory, but he wanted his officers and the Darrang Raja to impress upon the Bhutanese his prowess before granting the request. The Bhutanese agreed to pay annual tribute to the Ahom Government and presents to the Raja of Darrang and the Ahom officers. The control of the seven passes in Kamrup and Darrang and the territory extending to Gohain Kamal Ali thus passed into the hands of the Bhutanese, of course in return of annual tributes. The Raja of Darrang was directed by the Ahom monarch to receive the tribute and to manage all transactions with the Bhutanese.¹³ The Darrang *duars* (viz., Buriguma and Kulling) were, however, to be surrendered to the Ahom Government for four months (mid-June to October) every year. The annual tributes paid by the Bhutanese in terms of yaktails, ponies, musk, gold-dust, blankets and knives amounted about to rupees five thousand at the time the British took over Assam.¹⁴

The Ahom relations with the Bhutanese since then appears to be peaceful. However, during the Moamaria rebellion in Assam towards the end of the eighteenth century some of the 'rebel chiefs' had taken asylum in the Bhutan *duars* and Krishna Narayana, the Raja of Darrang, one of the rebel leaders, was supported by the Deva Raja with Bhutanese soldiers to fight

against the Ahom monarch. After his defeat at the hands of Captain Welsh, Krishna Narayana along with some of his principal supporters and a section of the *Barkendazes* recruited by him from Bengal, took refuge in Bhutan and indulged in sporadic disturbances in Assam.¹⁵ In 1802, Kamaleswar Singha, the Ahom monarch (1795-1811), sent an embassy to Bhutan under one Pankaj Choudhury for the restoration of the peaceful relationship between the two kingdoms, and Deva Raja and Dharma Raja of Bhutan, in return, sent envoys to the Ahom court with valuable gifts. This was the first formal diplomatic exchange between the Ahoms and the Bhutan Government. The Bhutanese envoys, however, complained to the Ahom monarch about the oppressive conduct of the Ahom officers. The inquiry immediately ordered by the Ahom Government, however, revealed that the Bhutanese had transgressed their southern boundary and occupied some areas that belonged to the Ahoms. Samudra Narayana, the newly appointed Raja of Darrang, was accordingly asked to push back the Bhutanese to their own limits.¹⁶

Eastern Bhutanese

The Bhutanese of Koriapara and Charduar, as has already been mentioned, entered into the *posa* system with the Ahoms in the seventeenth century. The chiefs of Charduar possibly worked true to the arrangement so that no serious disturbance in that *duar* has been recorded in the *Buranjis*. The *Sath Rajas* were also generally particular in the payment of the tributes and surrendering the *duars* for four months in the year to the Ahom officers as stipulated in the arrangement. The controversy over the collection of the taxes in the *duar* occurred in 1688 during the reign of Gadadhar Singha, the Ahom monarch (1681-96), when the *Sath Rajas* prevented the Ahom officers from collecting the taxes from the Kachari betel-nut traders. The *Barphukan*, the Ahom viceroy of Lower Assam, immediately despatched an army which succeeded in realising Rs. 3,000 as compensation. But the Bhutanese in 1690 killed an Ahom officer who went for collection from the said Kacharis; but the accused were arrested and the chiefs paid Rs. 1000 towards compensation. Next year, the officer was again prevented from collection but a display of the

troops and construction of three forts in the frontier had secured the submission of the chiefs.¹⁷ No serious disturbance has since then been recorded in the *Buranjis* from the Koriapara *duar* as well.

Conclusion

The Ahom policy towards the Bhutanese chiefs, either subordinate to the Royal Government of Bhutan or independent of Punakha, like other tribes on the northern frontier of their kingdom, depended on the political exigencies of the situation. The *Posa* was basically a conciliatory method ; but it was authorised by Pratap Singha at a time when he was faced with the repeated challenges of the Mughals from the west and the Kacharis and the Jaintias on the east and south-east. He, therefore, could not risk the antagonism of the northern tribes. The benefit of *posa* was extended only to the tribes on the northern frontier like the Bhutanese, Akas, Daflas, Miris, Nagas e'c. It should be noted that the arrangements under the system were always preceded by a successful display of military superiority of the Ahom Government. The surrender of the plains up to Gohain Kamal Ali to the chiefs of the Bhutan *duars* might appear as an extreme conciliatory measure. This was also effected when the Bhutanese army had been completely defeated and the territory up to Bhramarakunda had actually been taken charge of by the Ahom forces. The Ahom monarch had further asked his officers to impress upon the chiefs the military prowess of his Government before complying with the Bhutanese request for the surrender of the territory. The exigency of the political situation in this deal is very important. The area was just liberated from the occupation of the Mughals and the repetition of the catastrophe (which actually occurred within few years) was very much in sight. An unfriendly Bhuttan would cause only additional anxiety during the encounters with the Mughal invaders, whereas the pacified chiefs of the *duars* might be of some advantage in such an eventuality.

The *Posa* system, on the other hand, rendered the chiefs subordinate to the Ahom Government. They were required to pay

annual tributes. The Bhutanese chiefs of Charduar were independent of any superior authority, and were since the beginning of the seventeenth century tributary to the Ahoms. They paid annual tributes in their hill products and acknowledged the authority of the Ahoms. The chiefs of the Koriapara and Bhutan *duars* were feudatories to Towing Raja and the Deva-Dharma Rajas of Punakha respectively, and also tributary to the Ahoms. The chiefs of the Bhutan *duars* entered into such terms with the Ahoms within due knowledge of the Government of Bhutan and the Ahom monarchs considered the latter as tributary to their authority. The *duars* in any case served as the buffer regions between the two kingdoms.

The *duars* were commercially important to the people on either side of the borders and served as the common market of Assam, Bhutan and Tibet and some of them were frequented by the Chinese traders. The commercial products of Assam could be exported to those countries, and vice-versa was the results. The markets also played their part in the exchange of culture, ideas and technology. The Ahom rulers found the markets to the advantage of the people in their territory and an important source of revenue to the government. The policy, therefore, was to encourage the trade, and officers, known as *Duarias*, were appointed for the management of the passes.

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CULTURAL ENCOUNTER AND EXCHANGE IN THE EASTERN HIMALAYAS

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CONVENTIONALLY the Eastern Himalayas consist of the Darjeeling district, Sikkim State, Kingdom of Bhutan and Arunachal State. But some geographers would like to mark the Eastern Himalayas from the eastern Sherpa land of Nepal. One of the most important aspects of the history of these states is a process of cultural encounter and exchange, i.e., interaction between different cultures. The problem is to be seen from two angles: that of diversity and conflict on the one hand, and that of agreement and fusion on the other, both in terms of a comparative study of these states or of local history of a particular state. The problem thus seems to be one of unity in diversity—a well-known expression for the scholars of Indian history. The process may also be seen as a dialectical process of evolution in the thesis-antithesis-synthesis cycle: people of different languages, races and cultures after an initial period of hostile contact or reaction in some cases finally settled down for a peaceful comingling and cultural and racial fusion with their predecessors in the land in varying proportions and under special local conditions in different areas.

The Eastern Himalayas present a highly diversified cultural landscape. The Mongoloid tribes from Tibet, Indo-Aryan people from north India, and the Lepchas from Assam and Burma settled in the Himalayas have developed separate cultural patterns, and have created multi-racial and multi-lingual problems. Thus there is a wild diversity of races and tribes in the Eastern Himalayas. In Nepal we find the Gurung, Limbu, Magar, Kiranti,

Bhotia, Khas, Thakurs, Rai, Tharu, Boksas, Newar, Sunwar, Dhamang and Sherpas. The Gurkhas are the descendants of the primitive tribes that intermarried with Rajputs and other Hindus. In Sikkim we find Lepchas, Mun, Bong, Thing, Rong, Yak tamba, and Bhodja. In Bhutan we find a Brugpa Bhodju, Miche, Kechari, Moran, and Chutiya. The Bhotias include a number of ethnic groups of recent Tibetan origin. There are also Nepali-Hindu settlers whose presence adds to the political discontent in Bhutan. In Arunachal, there are too many tribes and sub-tribes like Abor (Adi) and Sherducpen, Monta, Datla, Apatani, Miri, Memba, Khamba, Mishmi, Singpho, Khampti, Wanchoo, Tangpa and Nocte and some Tibetans, a few Lepchas and in the southern border some Nepalis. The languages spoken in Nepal are Khas, Kami, Bhramu, Pahari, Hayu, Tibetan, Newari and tribal languages of the Lepchas, Bhotias, Magars, Thamis Sunwars. Principal language of an ethnic group is further divided into many sub-languages and dialects. There is a notable distribution of the major language groups, e.g., the language in the Terai and in the lower Himalayan Valleys is Pahari, Hindi being also found in the Terai. In the great Himalayas Tibeto-Burman Newari is most important but Magarkura, Gurungkura and Kiranti are also used. Tibetan dialect is used by the Bhotias in northern frontier. The people of Sikkim belong to different races: the Lepchas, the Tibetans, the Bhotias, the Nepalese and others from north India, who speak different languages. In Bhutan, in addition to tribal languages Tibetan and Bhot are spoken. The Tibetan dialect is subject to great local variations due to mountain barriers, which impede free communication between different parts. The linguistic and ethnic diversity in Bhutan is mainly of a domestic sort involving Buddhist Mongoloid population. In Arunachal, besides the numerous tribal languages of variant dialects Tibetan dialect is used by the Bhotias and Nepalese language is spoken by the Nepalese. Population of Darjeeling, observes the District Gazetteer, is very heterogeneous. Majority in the hills are of Mongoloid origin belonging mainly to the Nepalese but also to the Lepchas, Bhotias and Tibetans. There are, lower down, Marwaris, Bengalis, Hindusthanis, Punjabis, Kashmiris and even

Jews, Armenians and Chinese. In the Terai are the backward Koches or Rajbanshis, and Mundas, Oraons and Santals in the tea garden areas. Among the Nepali castes there are Khambus, Murmis, and Kirantis take the title Rai, Murmis are known as Tamang Bhutias and take the title of Lama. The Limbus take the title Subba. There are also the Khas, Chhetri, Magars, Gurungs and Newaris. The latter take the title of Pradhan and the Yakhas take the title Dewan. The Lepchas are aboriginal inhabitants (Kong). The Bhotias of Darjeeling are divided into four classes: Sikkimese Bhotias who are a mixture of the Lepchas and Tibetans, Sherpa Bhotias from eastern Nepal, Dharma Bhotias of Bhutan and the Tibetans. Darjeeling contains a polyglot population. Half of the people of Darjeeling speak Nepalese of different dialects which is mostly spoken in the hills. Of these dialects most common are Khambu, Murmi, Limbu, Lepcha and Magar. One-fifth of the population speaks Khas—a hybrid form of Hindi derived by the Khas from their Aryan ancestors. It is known as Khaskura—the lingua franca of Nepal. Other languages spoken in Darjeeling are Bengali, Urdu, in the urban area, Tibetan, and tribal languages of the Rajbanshis, Koches, Oreans, Santals and Mundas. This characteristic of racial-linguistic differences is suggestive of cultural diversity or encounter. Customs vary from place to place all over the Eastern Himalayas. The social customs and habits, the totem and taboo and particularly the rules of matrimony, endogamy and exogamy, funeral customs, rituals, popular festivals and dances—present a picture of endless diversity in the Eastern Himalayas.

This element of cultural diversity among the Himalayan people has been aggravated by the compartmentalisation of land and high rate of illiteracy among them which have favoured retention of tribal and cultural identity. Elevation and climatic differences along with varying soil capacities are so pronounced as to induce variant cultural patterns within relatively small areas. Regional identity is aided by the difficulties of communication which effectively block the exchange of ideas and normal acculturation expected in smaller countries. Residents of one settlement have little in common with their neighbour settlements.

Even in the major population centres the occupational pattern and economic systems tend to divide the people rather than to cement them together. Lacking a common history and a common purpose, there is little to bind one Himalayan inhabitant to another in any movement of unity.

This lack of common racial background produces racial and cultural encounter among the Sikkimese. Thus there is racial encounter between the Bhotias and the Lepchas, but more crucial than this is the racial and cultural encounter between the Lepcha-Bhutias on the one hand and the Nepalese on the other whose large-scale infiltration into Sikkim has produced a wave of Nepali culture in Sikkim which has threatened the existence of Lepcha-Bhutia culture. This is why in Bhutan the Nepalese immigrants are strictly confined to the south and are not very well-treated by the local people, notwithstanding Rustamji's impression from his interview with the King of Bhutan that the latter "had no intention of discriminating against them". It is because of the same reason that the large floating population of the Sherpas, Bhutias and Tibetans in Darjeeling are slow to integrate, as foreign observers like Trevor Braham notes it, with the local population. In Nepal the height of the Himalayas, the tranverse nature of its valleys, communication difficulties, and its bitterly cold winters not only contribute to the isolation of the country from the outside world, but also complicate communications between the local inhabitants. This inter-regional isolation is an obstacle to acculturation between the tribal and ethnic groups and has created diversity in her local population. This diversity tends to be an encounter in some cases because of some factors. Many of the Nepalese tribes have developed a strong caste system derived from Hindu culture and all Nepalese tribes have a sense of tribal identity. The large-scale migration of Mongoloid groups from Tibet and Indo-Aryan speaking north Indians which apparently accompanied the early settlement of Nepal has produced a complex racial pattern and cultural encounter.

But this factor of diversities and encounter should not be exaggerated. It is there no doubt, but it is largely counter-

balanced by some factors of basic unity. Thus notwithstanding this racial-linguistic conflict, the fact remains that the most of the Eastern Himalayan people belong to the Mongoloid stock. Most of them speak the non-pronominalized Himalayan Tibeto-Burman dialect, the variant being caused only due to the existence of an old heterogeneous substratum of population which has exercised influence on languages. Thus we find in Grierson's Linguistic Survey of India that non-pronominalized dialect is spoken in Central and Eastern Nepal, Sikkim, Bhutan and immigrants to Darjeeling. Variant dialects of Sikkim, Nepal and Darjeeling are yielding to Nepalese. All the languages of Nepal are found in Darjeeling and its neighbourhood. The principal languages with their variant dialects in the Eastern Himalayas are Bokey/Bhot/Tibetan and Nepali/Khaskura/Pahari. These two principal languages dominate in Eastern Nepal, Sikkim and Bhutan. Even then quest for one or two lingua franca characterises the life of the people all over the Eastern Himalayas and Nepalese and Tibetan compete for the position of honour. At the same time during these three hundred years Indian vernaculars, i.e., languages from the plains have systematically infiltrated into the courts and marts all over the Eastern Himalayas. The universalism of Nepali from Kangra Dharmasala in the Western Himalayas to Lohit Kamrupa in the Eastern Himalayas was a feature till the treaty of Sagauli (1815) when the East India Company cut down the Nepali expansionism to the size which is now the kingdom of Nepal. Nepalese as later Prakrit deeply rooted in Sanskrit was a vernacular of North India. Sanskrit learning took roots among the Newaris and a new Newari literature grew up at the end of the fourteenth century. The history of Indian civilisation is the expansion of Sanskrit culture and its slow and inevitable acceptance by all the various people of India and sub-Himalayan India express Pan-Indianism. This element of fusion in the evolution of a common culture of north-eastern and sub-Himalayan India is still continuing viz., among the Magars, the Gurung of Eastern Nepal, the Newars, the Buddhist and Brahmanical inhabitants of the Nepal valley, the Kiranti people of Central and Eastern Nepal. Of these the Magars, the Gurungs and the Newars whose language has not been affected by

Austric have become largely modified by admixture with high-caste Hindu elements from Indian plains at least in their upper classes. This is clearly a case of progressive Indianisation or Hinduisation of these Mongoloid peoples bringing them within the fold of Sanskrit culture viz., the culture brought to the Indo-Mongoloids of Nepal by both the Brahmin priests and Buddhist monks and there are sanctuaries of Hindu faith in Nepal. The intimate Sanskrit culture brought by the Newari monkish scholars and spreading from there to Darjeeling, Sikkim and Bhutan, had a direct and natural influence in shaping the orientation of the Newari speech towards Sanskrit. The Newaris in Nepal early adopted an Indian alphabet and preserved the Sanskrit literature of Mahayana Buddhism although they have retained their own Tibeto-Burman language. A lesser known fact is that Bengali towards the end of the eighteenth century was the language of communication between the states in north-eastern India (e.g., Coochbehar) and the English East India Company. Even communications from Bhutan and from some districts of what is now Arunachal were in Bengali, as we find in the Bengali records in the Foreign and Political Department of the East India Company, preserved in the National Archives of India.

Thus we find that this factor of influence of Indian language and culture serves to be a catalyst for the Himalayan culture binding the Eastern Himalayan people into some common agreements : linguistic affinity and cultural exchange—fusion of Indo-Mongoloid cultures.

This process of Indianisation or Hinduisation of the Himalayan culture as a cementing force reaches its acme with the factor of religion. Hinduism, Buddhism and tribal cults with their different and variant forms prevail in the Eastern Himalayas. More interesting are the Vaishnavite and Shaivite strongholds in several tribal areas as in Arunachal. The major religion in the Eastern Himalayas are Buddhism and Hinduism. In the sub-Himalayan regions bordering Bengal, observes the 1951 Census Report on the Castes and Tribes of West Bengal, the Bhotias and some other tribes profess Buddhism greatly mixed up with the ancient tribal rituals. Lamaistic rituals and institutions play

an important role in the areas marginal to Tibetan Buddhism. Buddhism is the state religion of Sikkim and Bhutan. Buddhism was introduced in Sikkim in mid-seventeenth century by the Lamas from Lhasa. From this time when the tangible history of the country begins it was closely associated with Tibet and its customs and institutions were largely guided by those of Lhasa. In Sikkim Buddhism and Hinduism exist in synthesised form and there is hardly any conflict between them. Sikkim became a part of the Tibetan-Buddhist world and yet it was not fully Buddhist.

Nepal embodies extraordinary mixture of Buddhism and Hinduism and many deities are worshipped alike by the Buddhists and Hindus here. "Nepal," observes Olaf Caroe, "is independent of India, and not a part of India, but they have special relations—they are joint masters of the Himalayas. In Nepal Hinduism and Buddhism meet. Nepal is now in effect a Hindu state with proportion of Buddhist subjects."

O'Malley takes an extreme view of the matter. Thus in the West Bengal District Gazetteer he points out that : "On the whole Hinduism seems to spread at the expense of Buddhism." In the Imperial Gazetteer however, we find a different note : "It has been said that Hinduism is gradually replacing Buddhism throughout Nepal. But of this there has been little evidence. The Buddhists enjoy complete religious liberty and are a contented community. Both Buddhism and Hinduism exist and flourish side by side in about equal strength." In fact this confusion is mainly because of the factor that the British for reasons of their own would mark a distinct difference between Buddhism and formally closed the doors of recruitment into the army to anyone of those who would claim preference for Buddhism or association with Tibetan Buddhism. Many Nepali recruits of dominantly Buddhism or Sikkimese background would declare their credentials as from Nepalese Hindu stock. Ganju Lama the Indian V.C. known as destroyer of Japanese tanks enlisted in Jalapahar Kata-pahar recruiting center as a Darjeeling Tamang, i.e., one who was not hundred percent Buddhist.

The ruling dynasty in Nepal, majority of the Gurkhas, Tharus, Boksas and certain sections of Newars are Hindus.

Generally, Hinduism in Nepal is of Tantric cult. There is also a Vaishnavite cult in the ruling dynasty, inasmuch as the king of Nepal holds himself, as Leifer points out, as an incarnation of Vishnu. Vaishnavite cult is also found among a large number of Nepalese who worship the 'Hanuman' as a God. These Vaishnavites are found also in Darjeeling district both in the hills and in the plains. The Newar society has been divided into many castes and guilds on the model of Brahmanical Hindu society.

Buddhism as we find in Nepal is a mix-up modified by Hindu practices and doctrines. The largest followers of Buddhism in Nepal are the majority of the Newars, Bhotias, Limbus and Lepchas. Though there are different sects among them, the distribution of religious groups does not follow the lines of ethnic development, their religious customs and ceremonies are much alike. The Hindu Newars of Nepal, observes the 1915 Census Report quoted above, have two margas : Siva marga and Buddha marga. It focusses on the Savite cult among the Newars. The Newari Buddhism, according to Suniti Kumar Chatterjee, is mixed with Tantrism. The Newari Buddhists profess to be Mahayanists but they mixed up, observes the said Census Report, subsequent *yanas*.

Lamaistic Buddhism in Sikkim and Bhutan and Buddhism and Hinduism in Darjeeling and Nepal are known to preserve the elements of primitive cults. Thus in Bhutan the people profess Buddhism, but their religion, as in the case of Tibet, largely partakes of the old Bon religion which preceded Buddhism. This consists of devil worship and propitiatory sacrifices in which animal life is freely taken is abhorrent to Buddhism. Sacred books of Buddha are brought from Tibet and are frequently recited, but they are seldom understood by the people.

In Sikkim also Buddhism is nothing but, as one may notice in the Sikkim Gazetteer, a worship of God, demons, and ghosts based on the system of animal sacrifices. Buddhism as the established church did not mean the total banning of the pre-Buddhist customs and rituals. The Lepchas, according to Dr. Campbell are Buddhists. But according to Dr. Lathan they are not Buddhists. Trevor Braham supports Lathan as he holds

that Lepchas are animists. N. K. Sinha also subscribes to the latter view when he observes that the Lepchas are not Buddhists and they practise their own religions and rituals. While in the north among the Mongols animal sacrifices were altogether prohibited and penalized, in the south the yearly festival of bull sacrifice was not prohibited among the Lepchas. Animal sacrifices and a few other non-Buddhist customs continued despite the frowning of the yellow sect on the sacred valley of Rice. Thus Lamaism in Sikkim and Bhutan may be defined, in terms of the Sikkim Gazetteer's observations, as a mixture of Buddhism with a prepondering amount of mythology, mysticism and magic. The doctrine of incarnate Lamas and the worship of the canonized saints are of recent origin readily accepted as it protected the people from the evils. The above Census Report refers to this element of man worship as 'Nathism' and a bridge to unite the Lamas on the one hand and the Gurus or the spiritual guides of the Hindus, on the other. We may trace here Hindu influence in the religion of Sikkim and Bhutan.

We find similar mix-up of Buddhism in Nepal and Darjeeling. Craving for protection against malignant gods and demons cause people to pin their faith on charms and amusements. They erect tall prayer flags in places believed by them to be infested with evil spirits. Hinduism as we find in Nepal or Darjeeling is very much dominated by primitive popular religion like demonlatry, exorcism and bloody sacrifices. The Bong or the sacrificial priest is a cunning expert who indicates the offended demon and prescribes the proper sacrifices to appease him. There is the practice of primitive paganism among the Limbus and Kirantis. According to Hodgson the Kirantis have no name for God, no priestly order, while Campbell points out that the Limbus believe in a supreme God-Sham Mungh, God of the Universe, and other deities like Mhang Mo, Takpaka Hem-Shang-Mung—the destroyer, Teba-sum, the God of Wisdom, Mungol Mo the preserver and Hem sung the household God. They have no temples or images but they make sacrifices, believe in sorcery, witchcraft, and exorcism. According to Risley, the Limbus are professedly Saivas worshipping Mahadeva and Gauri the deities most favoured

by the Hindus of Nepal. They have to observe conformity with the surroundings of Nepal, but beneath it there lies their original pantheon religion, survived in the form of household or forest Gods. They worship a lot of spiritual beings, whose attributes are ill-defined and whose very names are not easy to ascertain : Yuma, Kapoba Theba household Gods, and propitiate once in five years by slaughter of buffaloes, pigs or fowls. Himaraya, the God of the forest is propitiated on Sundays by offerings of sheep, goats, fowls, pigeons and Indian corn. A stone under a tree on roadside is smeared with vermillion and bound with thread and this place of sacrifice is marked by consecrated rags tied to a bamboo pole. In addition many evil spirits are appeased in social functions of the Bijuas—a class of wandering mendicants peculiar to Southern and Eastern Nepal. Thus the leading principle of the Limbu religion is Animism.

Again, to an average Lepcha, Risley points out, mountains and rocks, forests and streams present ill-defined but formidable powers who threaten mankind with a variety of physical ills and needs constant appeasement through exorcists. For the Sherpas there is a special God on the Khambu peak, and to the Sikkimese Kanchanjangha is a sacred mountain God who is regularly worshipped by them. The most important festival of Sikkim is the worship of the Snowy Range—a dance festival celebrated every year. The very idea of desecrating the peak by heavily booted heathen mountaineers, was appalling to the Sikkimese. Hence the objection of the Sikkim Government to Charles Evans' adventure to the top of Kanchanjangha. This concept of deity is alien to Buddhism. It is nothing but paganism or Shamanism. The Lepchas only flirt with the mysteries of Buddhism, observes the said Census Report.

The Mechs and Rochs worship the Sej (Euphorbia) as the symbol of the supreme deity like the Kacharis. Among the Rajbanshis there are three Goddesses : Kali-thakurani or the Goddess of sickness, Gramdevata or the Goddess who prowls in the villages to cause illness among the children, and Bisahari-Thakurani or the source of all pains. All these Goddesses

should be appeased, according to these people, by sacrifices for their protection from the power of evil. In Arunachal also we find among the tribal people practice of animism : the same trend of appeasement of the unscrutable powers by sacrifices for protection from the evil. There is also found in some areas like Twang practice of Tibetan Buddhism.

In this context, we should mention the later scholars like Snellgrove and Nebesky. These scholars have no doubt added much to our knowledge about Hindu Tantra, Buddha Tantra and Bon or Shamanism. They have not differed much from the broad conclusions of Waddel or Risely who found both Hinduism and Buddhism very much debased in the Himalayas. According to them, both Buddhism and Hinduism were very much mixed up not doubt with each other's rituals and mystic elements and also both borrowed heavily Animism/Shamanism. But these scholars would only differ as to the details of exchange of ideas and rituals between Buddhism and Hinduism and between these religions on the one hand and Animism/Shamanism on the other—for instance the older scholars categorically identified Hindu Tantra and Buddhism as one sort, while Snellgrove and other later scholars would find some fundamental and basic differences in the mystic philosophy of the two religions.

We should also specifically mention, in this discussion of the history of Buddhism in the Eastern Himalayas, the factor of Tibetan influence. Buddhism as prevalent all over the Eastern Himalayas is Mahayana mixed up with local, especially with Tibetan, ingredients. In Nepal Tibetan Buddhism co-exists with Hinduism. In Sikkim, Tibetan Buddhism became a distinct church of Nyingma order with the King as the protector of the Church (Chogyal). In Bhutan, Tibetan Buddhism was altogether nationalised and the Kargyu sect in Bhutan came to be called Drukpa Kargyu. The church in Bhutan was an independent national church. The church in Sikkim was not as much independent as the church in Bhutan. When Darjeeling was permanently transferred to the British, Dalai Lama's government almost excommunicated the Maharaja of Sikkim, and would not permit

regular customary pilgrimage to Lhasa by the ruling family.

Thus we find that notwithstanding the above diversities, there is a basic linguistic and religious unity in the Eastern Himalayas. It is largely brought about by the factor of Indian influence : fusion of Indo-Mongoloid culture. Each ethnic religious group retained its separate culture and identity, but at the same time there was a happy assimilation. This process of cultural exchange is progressing fast with the gradual reduction of the communication problems in Eastern Himalayan regions.

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CHANGING PATTERN OF THE NORTHERN FRONTIER OF BENGAL IN THE SEVENTEENTH AND EIGH- TEENTH CENTURIES

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A NATION'S HISTORY is incomplete without the history of its frontier. This is remarkably true of India. Time and again the course of her history was determined by events in the frontiers. But to what extent did a frontier-awareness find its place in the political thinking of India in different periods of her history is a matter to be seriously examined.

A land and its people cannot be separately treated ; so also a frontier and the people living there. In fact the problems in a frontier or the question of its security have a direct bearing upon the attitude and living conditions of the people living in that frontier. Even British India refused to take notice of this, although ever since the British had ushered Indian history into its colonial period, problem of a scientific frontier or its security became a major factor in their political calculations. To the British, feelings of the Indian people or their way of living were not material points. The British depended rather on their power and diplomacy than on the Indian people in the frontier. Their frontier policy was the handma'nd of their colonial ambitions and was meant to subserve the needs and interests of their colonial empire in India. Indian people in the frontier had nothing to do with it. They were impressed by the power of the British in organising and defending a frontier, but they did not know if they too had a role in contributing to that defence strategy. In this respect there was hardly any difference between the days of

the Mughals and the days of the British. Indians having had lived enough under the Mughals failed to discover any community of interest grown between them and Delhi ; nor did the British as the successor of the Mughals bring in any better understanding between the ruler and the ruled. This apathetic mind of the people in the frontier grown in course of centuries reflected the weakness and failure of the rulers of India. They failed to grow great in common with the people of the land. Against this background, the changing pattern of the northern frontier of Bengal in the days of the Mughals and in the early years of the British may be examined.

From the time when Bengal became a subah under Akbar its northern frontier repeatedly engaged attention of the Mughal subadars. There was on this frontier the Kingdom of Koch Bihar of considerable extent and power. It extended in the east to the Brahmaputra in Assam, in the west up to Tirhut, in the north to the mountains and in the south to river Karotoya on the other side of which stood Ghoraghat, the frontier outpost of Bengal. Peopled mainly by the ethnic groups like the Koch (Rajbansi), the Khen, the Mech, the Rabha and the Garo, Koch Bihar from the very beginning of her history joined the mainstream of Hindu religion and culture. The Vaidiks from Kanyakubja found royal patronage ; Brahmanical worship and rituals entered her people's life who had also preserved some of the cultural and religious legacies of their own. Administration centred round the king, but the high offices in the government were manned by immigrant Bengalees selected for their administrative skill. An agrarian society formed the economic base of the Kingdom, maintained an army, according to *Akbarnama*, of 4,000 cavalry, 2,00,000 infantry, 100 elephants and 1,000 battle-ships. Perhaps this burden of the army was more than that the agrarian economy of the kingdom could bear for a longer period. Within one century Koch Bihar sank into exhaustion and could hardly resist a superior power advancing against her.

In order to uproot Afghan power in Bengal the Mughals stood in need of Koch Bihar's friendship and neutrality. Also Koch Bihar having sufficiently learnt of Mughal strength reciprocated.

The two entered into a treaty of friendship (1578) A.D.). Within a few years, however, there took place a partition of the Koch Bihar kingdom. The eastern half stretching from river Sankosh towards Assam fell to the lot of Raghudeba of a branch of the ruling family of Koch Bihar, and the other half, to Lakshminarayan of the main line. The two princes did not pull on as smoothly as they had the Kingdom partitioned between themselves. Watching each other with envy and suspicion they became at last sworn enemies. This unfortunate trend of their relation invited the warring Mughals and Afghans into the scene leading ultimately to the humiliation of both the princes. Raghudeb enlisted the support of Isa Khan to counteract which Lakshminarayan threw himself into the protection of Man Singh. This situation served Isa Khan's strategy; he could divert Mughal attention to their ally on the northern frontier by embarrassing Lakshminarayan with aggressions from the Assam side.

After the death of Isa Khan and after the Afghans were brought to their knees during the subadarship of Islam Khan (1608-1613), the Mughals seriously thought of extending Bengal's frontier towards the north. Enmity between Koch Bihar and her eastern branch was continuing. On top of it Lakshminarayan by agreeing to be a vassal of the Mughals joined hands with Islam Khan to conquer the eastern Koch kingdom expecting to be rewarded by some portions that had belonged to his ancestors. Parikshitnarayan, son of Raghudeb, fought valiantly against his adversaries but was overpowered. His principality was annexed to the Mughal empire (1613) and a Mughal faujdar was placed in Kamrup. Koch Bihar gained nothing for the Mughals did not want to share the spoils with a vassal chieftain.

In 1657 Prince Suja, Subadar of Bengal, having gone to war with Aurangzeb for the imperial throne, the northern frontier of Bengal was in jeopardy. Koch Bihar threw off her allegiance to the Mughals, ceased paying tribute, sacked the region of Ghoraghat and at last advanced towards Kamrup. The Mughal faujdar fled the country in panic. Koch Bihar, however, failed to occupy Kamrup for the expanding Ahoms proved to be a more

powerful contestant for the country. For four years there was no trace of Mughal domination beyond Ghoraghat. Aurangzeb, on ascending throne, sent Mir Jumla as Subadar of Bengal to restore imperial prestige in the north. By his superior generalship Mir Jumla overran Koch Bihar, and named it Alamgirnagar (1661). Then he dislodged the Ahoms from Kamrup and advanced into the heart of Assam. Battling against heavy odds and rigours of the climate of Assam Mir Jumla compelled the Ahoms to sue for peace on his terms. Expeditions of Mir Jumla, however, were a triumph, without success. No sooner had he, struck down with fatal illness, left the northern frontier in early 1663 than Koch Bihar recovered herself and the Ahoms pushed back the Bengal frontier on the other side of the river Manas which remained as such till the day the East India Company got the Dewani of Bengal.

From 1665 internecine quarrel that had led the eastern branch of Koch Bihar into ruin began to rage with all fury and shook Koch Bihar to its foundation. It originated from the scramble for power among the princes of the ruling family ; it weakened the administrative machinery by encouraging personal ambition and aggrandisement of the officers of the Kingdom. It invited also the Bhutanese in the neighbouring hills to come down and interfere in the civil dissensions in Koch Bihar. The western branch of the ruling family that had so long faithfully guarded the kingdom's western frontier drifted apart in disgust and eventually dwindled into decay.

Internal troubles of Koch Bihar served as the signal for the subadar of Bengal to encroach upon the southern parts of the Kingdom. The officers of Koch Bihar who had been in charge of those parts sold the pass to the Mughals. The Mughals rewarded them by confirming their Zamindari rights to the respective areas they had administered. Thus by 1693 A.D. three outlying Chaklas or revenue districts of Fatehpur, Karjirhat and Kakina became Mughal districts. There were three more Chaklas, Purvabhag, Boda and Patgram left to be conquered. The Mughals were strongly resisted by Koch Bihar in collaboration with the Bhutanese until in 1711 A.D. both the belligerents came to an agreement. The above three revenue districts were

annexed to Bengal but bestowed upon Koch Bihar as imperial fiefs.

Within the course of a century the Mughals added to the northern frontier a territory measuring 2297 square miles lying between rivers Karotoya and Brahmaputra. In the north of Bengal Mogul-hat became now the frontier outpost. Between Mogul-hat and Koch Bihar there flowed river Dharla as a natural boundary; on the eastern side of the northern frontier a territory of 2629 square miles was consolidated under Rangamati as another Mughal frontier outpost being separated from the Ahom Kingdom by river Manas, and from Koch Bihar by river Sankosh. Evidently the rate of Mughal advance in north Bengal was slow. After the great debacle of Mir Jumla, expansionism as a policy of the empire was discarded. Besides, from the last few years of Aurangzeb's reign, Delhi was in desperate need of revenue which only the Subah of Bengal regularly supplied. Therefore, Kochwara or the territory wrested from Koch Bihar, bringing a handsome revenue to the state exchequer made the Subadar of Bengal refrain from taking any plan of invasion of the remaining territory (1302 square miles) of the Koch Bihar Kingdom. The jungle-clad terrains of Koch Bihar stretching up to the hills in the north were an impediment before the Mughal horsemen. The bitter experience of Isfandiyar Bag roaming in the wilds in search of the run-away King of Koch Bihar hung heavy on Mughal mind. The Mughal never realised the importance of the Himalaya as the northern frontier of Bengal, nor had they taken seriously the intimate contact of Bhutan with Koch Bihar or its far-reaching consequences. In fact the Mughals were more interested in the revenue of the country as a whole and so long as its collection was ensured they did not bother about its frontier. Even the faujdar under whose charge was given this newly constituted frontier district of Rangpur so much disliked the climate of the place that except at critical revenue seasons he did not care to visit the land. No wonder that although the country was productive of valuable commercial articles of raw silk, opium, indigo, tobacco, sugar besides a superabundance of grains its principal place Rangpur did not flourish as it should have done. Major Rennell in

1765 A.D. found nothing remarkable about Rangpur which looked like a principal 'gunge' or market. Rangamati was worse still. The Fifth Report recorded that it was throughout a barren or for the most part uncultivated region of no present worth to the sovereign excepting the price of a few elephants annually caught in the interior of the neighbouring wilds. An officer was there at Rangamati, but in the declining days of the Mughals he had nothing else to do except to encourage the growth of forests and to prevent the fierce Assamese from crossing the border.

About thirty years before the East India Company received Dewani, Bengal had made a fresh effort to extend the northern frontier line. Sujauddin was then the Nawab of Bengal. His Naib-faujdar of Ghoraghat-Rangpur, Saulat Zung, had taken under protection Dinanarayan, a disgruntled prince of royal family of Koch Bihar, marched into that Kingdom and placed Dinanarayan on the throne. Elated with success he then advanced upon Jalpaiguri the seat of administration of the Raikats of Baikunthapur. They represented the western branch of the ruling family of Koch Bihar, enjoyed the hereditary position of grand-minister of Koch Bihar, guarded the western part of the Kingdom and held umbrella over the kings during coronation. However, from the middle of the seventeenth century they had chosen to remain away from the politics of Koch Bihar and contented with their territory of Baikunthapur of 380 square miles of which more than half was covered by dense forests. Further to the west from their boundary marked by river Mahananda the strip of territory extending up to Tirhut which they had been entrusted to take care of slipped away from their hands. The Raikats, however, did not regret for it. Rather they were happy that they had remained at a safe distance from the blast of Mughal aggressions against Koch Bihar and had maintained their independence. Baikunthapur, however, succumbed this time to the blow of Saulat Zung and delivered into his hands the two heirs of the Raikat family. Baikunthapur became a part of Bengal and was placed under the administration of Rangpur where the two heirs of the Raikat family were kept interned for long seventeen years.

Saulat Zung's operations against Koch Bihar and Baikunthapur were not very effective. His operations were no part of any plan of the government of Bengal, nor did Saulat Zung find time to take follow-up actions. Hardly had he gone out of North Bengal on the eve of his uncle's (Alivardi) preparation to seize the throne of Bengal in 1740, Koch Bihar with the assistance of the Bhutanese drove out Dinanarayan. Baikunthapur did not deny allegiance to Bengal so long as her two representatives remained confined in Rangpur; but when from the mid-eighteenth century clouds of political uncertainty started gathering in the sky of Bengal, northern frontier for the time-being receded to the background. Baikunthapur maintained a quite formal relation with Rangpur. Murshidabad took no notice of it, and even did not bother about whether Baikunthapur paid the stipulated amount of revenue to the exchequer. Following Plassey, the change of Nawabs from Mir Zafar to Mir Kasim and then to Mir Zafar avain made a large communication gap between Murshidabad and the northern frontier. The two Raikat hostages at Rangpur were permitted to return to their estate before Plassey; since then their attitude to Murshidabad became one of arrogance until they were completely subdued by the British in 1772-74.

Such was the state of northern frontier till the Nawab parted with his authority as dewan and made over to the East India Company the defence of his country. Then from the time when Warren Hastingh took over as the Governor-General, the northern frontier of Bengal loomed large in British calculations. The British were moved by three considerations. The first one was extension of the Company's trade with Assam and Bhutan across the northern frontier. Next consideration was to interpose the authority of the Company who as a governing power had equally a right and obligation to maintain it. And the third consideration which Warren Hastings put in his characteristic way was "to complete the line of our possessions or add to his security".

After Plassey the Company's servants, and their agents being largely imitated by private European traders did make the

frontier district of Rangpur towards Assam a fresh field of exploitation and began to trade in all common articles produced or consumed in the country. Notwithstanding the disapproval of the Home Authorities the covenanted officers of the Company kept till 1768 the profits of internal trade by holding monopoly of salt, tobacco and betelnut. After them merchants like Lear Dow, Raush followed the trails of Chevaliar or Hargrave of the mid-eighteenth century, made a parade of their armed retinues to over-awe and prevent people from trading freely at the Assam Customs Houses. London at the same time was pressing for new channels of commerce. This made Warren Hastings entrust Baillie with the task in consideration of his previous experience of managing inland trade as the agent of the covenanted officers of the Company.

In the middle of the eighteenth century the Ahom monarchy was already on the decline. There was no possibility of a revival of Ahom power, and so Bengal's political frontier with Assam was safe. The frontier became a base of a growing trade with Assam. Goalpara, Jogighopa and Rangamati became busy trade centres. Bengal salt in exchange of Assam's lac and silk dominated all other staples and generated rivalry between Company's interests represented by Baillie and private interests represented by Raush, Dow and others. Often this rivalry would spread inside Assam and merchants with their private soldiers coerced the officials of Assam Customs Houses for monopoly of purchase and sale of salt and other articles. Fraudulent use of the Company's seal was also common with the merchants of Bengal. To check these irregularities restrictions on salt between Bengal and Assam were withdrawn. Trade in salt and in other articles were opened to all. Still the situation did not improve. Assam was groaning under years of misrule, official tyranny, ravages made by the people of the Moamaria sect in revenge of their persecution at the hands of the government. The chaos and confusion prevailing in Assam became a source of anxiety for the British; irregular activities of the traders and mercenary soldiers from Bengal, no less. The frontier could not be closed without jeopardising trade; on the other hand, interference in the affairs of Assam would be another

instance of the spirit of ambition and conquest of the British. Lord Cornwallis decided upon a middle course, and on the appeal from Gourinath the Ahom King, sent Captain Welsh "to endeavour to compose the civil feuds of Assam by the amicable interposition of our good offices". Within two years of his stay in Assam Captain Welsh restored peace by defeating the forces of disruption and lawlessness, gave the Ahom King a breathing space and sought to correct the maladies of Ahom administration. He was, however, recalled in the midst of his work by the next Governor-general. Assam relapsed again into a period of anarchy and confusion that in the long run allured the Burmese into the scene. How far British good officers could cure the deep-rooted maladies of Assam even if Captain Welsh had not been recalled by Shore was open to question; but that his return created a vacuum which was filled up by the Burmese was not to be denied. But the British did not accept such a position. The northern frontier of Bengal towards Assam would be secured only by making Burma withdraw from Assam. That was a story of the early nineteenth century.

The prospect of the Company's trade with Bhutan was linked up with how the British could negotiate with that country. Bhutan had secured for herself a position in Koch Bihar marked with respect and gratitude of the latter. A large tract of territory measuring 1863 square miles from the base of the hills and bounded by river Tista in the west and river Sankosh in the east was given to Bhutan in farm. The presence of a Bhutanese agent in Koch Bihar and even his friendly advice in major political decisions were accepted by her. However, a crisis of confidence between Koch Bihar and Bhutan took place in 1770 when Bhutan made a prisoner of the Koch Bihar King and set up another of her own choice. Koch Bihar appealed to the East India Company to deliver her from the oppressions of Bhutan and agreed to become a tributary state under the Company.

Warren Hastings welcomed the situation for bringing Koch Bihar to its "former dependence on Bengal". The magistrate of Rangpur through whom Koch Bihar negotiated for British help was in favour of confining Bhutan within her hills and of having

the hills as the northern boundary of Bengal. Bhutan was unable to stand British attack and begged for peace. Also Warren Hastings was eager for a just peace with Bhutan. The Tashi Lama of Tibet had made a personal request for it. In that Warren Hastings saw a line of communication between Tibet and British India established. A great expectation arose in the Governor-general for reaching a new horizon of trade in the Himalaya and beyond. Bhutan was to be the gate-way to Tibet, and the good offices of the Tashi Lama, to the Court of Peking. Warren Hastings knew that "like the navigation of unknown seas" his attempt might be crowned with splendid success or might terminate in the mere satisfaction of useless curiosity. Still he endeavoured to maintain the line of communication between the British and the Tashi Lama, and meticulously attended to whatever requests and complaints Bhutan had made to him.

Softness of Warren Hastings for Bhutan which often proved to be unreasonable had also some bearing upon the northern frontier of Bengal under review. Koch Bihar had accepted the paramountcy of the British; the vast jungle terrain stretching up to the hills which Bhutan had taken from Koch Bihar in farm was treated by Warren Hastings as confirmed possessions of Bhutan. Not only that; as there was no clear demarcation on many parts of Bhutan's extended frontier in the south, she began to encroach upon villages of either Koch Bihar or Baikunthapur. Any resistance from them drove Bhutan to seek redress from the British. Thus Ambari Falakata, a 15 square mile territory situated in the heart of Baikunthapur was given to Bhutan. This was only one instance of such unreasonable deals. At the same time robberies were often committed by organised bands of Bhutanese within the boundaries of Baikunthapur of Koch Bihar. Since the Company had not instituted well-defined police posts along the frontier, it was not possible for the Company's government to keep watch upon every symptom of violence in the frontier or to bring the culprits to book.

At last an unforeseen incident brought the limitations of British pro-Bhutan policy on the surface. In 1788 Nepal burst into Tibet. The Tashi Lama in distress turned to the British for

help which could not be given for Nepal had given no provocation. When the Chinese imperial troops marched into the Himalaya to punish the audacity of Nepal, the latter appealed to the British for munitions which again was turned down on the ground that China had given no provocation to the British. This neutrality of the British exacted a heavy price from them. Nepal refused to have any official relationship with the British. China's hold on Tibet was tightened more than ever before, and owing to China's vigilance Indian traders found it impossible to remain in Tibet. It also afforded Bhutan an opportunity to evade her obligation to allow traders from Bengal into her hills. Thus, so far as Bengal's northern frontier was concerned, the British took sufficient risks. Apart from the problem of law and order created by Bhutan in the frontier, the aggressive marches of China in the Himalaya put the British on the alert. Future of the northern frontier of Bengal lay in strengthening its security by adding the hills to the line of its possessions as it had been suggested earlier by the Rangpur magistrate.

Before ending this discussion on the changing pattern of the northern frontier of Bengal, situation in its westerly direction should be taken into account. The north-western boundary of the Koch Bihar Kingdom as shown in Akbarnama had receded towards the east from river Kosi and stopped at river Mahananda which flowed on the western boundary of Baikunthapur. Exactly when this happened is not known. This narrow strip of territory between the Kosi and the Mahananda, better known as Morung, was "remarkable for its extreme flatness (in many parts giving the character of a swamp), its stiff clayey soil and for its pestilent climate". Below this tract was Purnia. King Prithvinarayan of Nepal having made himself master of his country decided to expand into the plains. His eyes fell upon Morung which was too weak to resist any external aggression. In 1774 Nepal occupied Morung up to river Mechi and promised Warren Hastings a tribute. Warren Hastings did not like Nepal expanding into that area; but deeply engrossed, as he was, in the affairs of the Himalaya he hardly could pay attention to Nepal. The ease with which Nepal had occupied Morung up to the Mechi made her bold

to cross that river and grab at the eastern part of Morung lying between the Mechi and the Mahananda. This territory measuring 230 square miles touched on the boundaries of Purnia, Dinajpur and Rangpur and was under Sikkim at this time. Placed by geography between Nepal and Bhutan who were far more powerful than her, Sikkim had already sacrificed considerable portions of her hills to those neighbours. Against Nepal's advance upon her only possession in the plains Sikkim was helpless. The British were not worried over Nepal's occupation of eastern Morung, for it did not pose any immediate problem for the security of Rangpur. Everything depended on the relation Nepal maintained with the British. It was after the conclusion of Nepal-Tibet War (1788-93) when China's power and prestige in the Himalaya stood high that the British began counting their gains from their activities on the northern frontier of Bengal. They found that Tibet had closed her doors to the British; that Bhutan taking advantage of British passion for the Himalayan horizon had exacted concessions after concessions but had never wished the British mission succeed. Nepal offended by the British attitude of neutrality during her war with Tibet and China refused to honour even a commercial treaty made with them. Apprehending an undercurrent of anti-British intrigues among the sub-Himalayan states the best manoeuvre the British might make was to negotiate with Sikkim who would be only too glad to receive a British proposal of friendship. Therefore, in place of extending the frontier of trade in the Himalaya the British shall have to have the frontier of diplomacy extended to and a diplomatic outpost established in the hills. Developments in the Himalaya up to the end of the eighteenth century hinted at that. The idea of Warren Hastings regarding the completion of the line of possessions in north Bengal and adding to its security gradually moved to its materialisation in the next century. When this northern frontier of Bengal was determined in that century on a clear and permanent basis, it was time for examining the life of the people in the frontier, their attitude to the ruling power who created the frontier and above all their feelings for the frontier where they were to live.

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BRITISH ECONOMIC PENETRATION INTO NORTH EASTERN HILLS : OVERLAND TRADE AND ALLIED QUESTIONS, 1800—1850

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THE ANGLO-NEPALESE WAR of 1814—16 is conventionally described as a British move to contain Gurkha aggression on the British India border territory of Basti and Gorakhpur.¹ A deeper probe has, however, revealed British designs on Nepal under Gurkha rule since 1768. The East India Company intended to revive fabled Nepal trade and open up China through Nepal and Tibet. Kinloch and Logen expeditions had tried to subvert Prithvinarayan's Gurkha rule by effectively siding with the Newar Raja Joyprokash Malla.²

The British attempted systematic penetration into the eastern sector of the Himalayan trade during the time of Warren Hastings. Hastings in a minute of 19th April, 1779 had outlined his long-term northern policy : 'Like the navigation of unknown seas which are exploited not for the attainment of any certain or prescribed object but for the discovery of what they may contain ; in so remote a search, we can only propose to adventure for possibilities.'³ Hastings planned the missions of Bogle (1774 & 1779), Turner (1783), Purangir Gossain (1785) to Tibet and Hamilton (1775) to Bhutan. Markham writes : 'The opening of the road through Nepal and obtaining the abolition of the duties and exactions which have lately been imposed on trade in that country appears an object of great importance towards establishing a free communication between Bengal and Tibet.'⁴

His policies were kept up by Cornwallis who through the

instrumentality of Jonathan Duncan, Resident at Benares, secured a commercial treaty with Nepal on 1st March, 1792 which agreed on a reciprocal duty of 2½% on exports and imports between India and Nepal and indemnity in case of robbery and theft. The treaty was silent on trade with Tibet. Nepal had wooed British assistance in view of Nepal's war with Tibet. But the British would not side with Nepal and be rather friendly with Tibet. Nepal broke off ties and however, Captain Kirkpatrick, Cornwallis' special emissary might try to repair Anglo-Nepalese relations, he received a rebuff. The Gurkhas were suspicious of British solicitude for Tibet and refused to commit military assistance. In the words of D. R. Regmi, 'it delayed British infiltration into Nepal for at least another fifty years.'⁵

Kirkpatrick, however, had made a clumsy survey of the trade routes in Nepal and observed that 'the woollen staples of Great Britain and warm flannels of the finer sort' had unlimited prospect in trans-Himalayan commerce through Nepal. In his memorandum, he urged : 'If we wish to push our commercial speculation into the western parts of Tibet.....we must for this purpose turn our eyes towards Nepal.....' Nepalese hostility is ascribed by him to 'unremitted jealousy with which the administration had all times discouraged the free ingress of strangers.'⁶

Kirkpatrick was followed by Abdul Kadir in 1795 who found Nepalese brokers between Indian merchants and Tibetan counterparts doing brisk business. The trade pact of 1792 would have undersold them. Hence, the Burbar kept it inoperative. He suggested direct trade with China and Tibet bypassing Nepal. Next explorer was Captain Knox who in the wake of the Treaty of 1891 went to the Nepal Durbar with instructions to obtain information about the valuable mineral and agricultural products of Nepal, the possibility of introducing European and Indian manufacture there and opening trade with Tibet and Bhutan.

Walter Hamilton in his Gazetteer noted how European copper was driving Nepal copper out of market and the jealousy and ignorance of Nepal administration stood in the way of an extensive traffic between Tibet and the British territories.⁷

The above sketch of calculated commercial penetration should

explain why the Gurkhas were wary of British intentions. Nepal suffered from anxiety and not jealousy and ignorance. She was studiedly undermined. As one sober British surveyor, Dr. Francis Buchanan-Hamilton was to point out candidly, 'I am indeed persuaded from having seen a good deal of people in this state of society that all interference of other Governments by treaty does injury and that all the merchants will suffer less and push the trade farther, if left entirely to their own exertions'⁸

It was no wonder, therefore, when Bhim Sen Thapa (1806-87) determined to build an Asian Front against the growing British colonialism.⁹ Add to that the candid remarks of Brian Hodgson, assistant resident at the Durbar on the commerce of Nepal in 1831-32 : 'It is scarcely necessary for me to remark that a connection was originally sought by us purely for commercial purposes, which purposes the Government up to the beginning of this century directly and strenuously exerted itself by arms and by diplomacy to promote'.¹⁰

The background of the Anglo-Nepalese War of 1814-16 can now be seen in better light. The Gurkhas sought to break the cordon of trading outposts which subverted Nepalese trade and paid the penalty by being defeated in the hands of the British and surrendering choice areas in the western, central and eastern Himalayas in the Treaty of Sagauli (1816). British success only whetted her desire to monopolise Himalayan trade across Tibet to China. To that task, Hodgson was engaged for 20 years of his life. He visualised a commercial empire for the British spreading over from India through Nepal and Tibet to China. He 'secretly and carefully applied to some of the oldest and most respectable merchants of Kathmandu and the other chief towns of the valley for conjectural estimates of the total annual amount of imports and exports and the number and capital of the chief commercial towns of the valley'.¹¹

He located '52 native and 34 Indian merchants engaged in foreign commerce both with the South and the North' and found 'that the trading capital of the former was not less than 50,18,000 nor that of the latter less than 23,05,000'. A third of these merchants were natives of the plains. 'Many native merchants

of Benares have established flourishing kothees at Kathmandu ; the Cashmirians of Patna have had kothees there for ages pastlakhs of the natives of Oude, Behar and north eastern Bengal of all ranks and conditions annually resort to Kathmandu to keep the vernal festival at Pasupatikshetra. Businessmen of Benares have more than 10 kothees at Kathmandu while Bengal merchants have abstained.....The native merchants at Calcutta have whilst there, a hard struggle to maintain with their European rivals in trade but at Kathmandu they have no such formidable rivalry to contend with. Because Europeans not attached to the Residency have no access to the country.....but every native is free to enter Nepal at leisure.'¹²

Hodgson was not content with the Anglo-Nepalese trade which averaged about 26 lakhs sicca rupees. He sketched a route from Calcutta to Peking of 2880 miles in about 87/99 stages at the end of which 'the merchant enters Setchwan, the commercial province of China onto Yengtze and Hoangho where he may sell his European and Indian products and purchase tea or silk or other products of China'. Hodgson was the avant-gards of British colonialism in Asia, ready to move the most insurmountable mountain in the world. The schemer writes : 'But England and China and not Calcutta and China, it may be argued must be the sites of the production any consumption of the truly valuable articles of commerce of which the Nepalese and Indians would have little more than the carrying trade . . . Let the native merchant of Calcutta and of Nepal take up this commerce and whilst we, though not the immediate movers, shall yet reap the great advantage of it.'¹³

Hodgson's exhortation to Bengalee marchants was mainly to use them as the errand-boys of colonialism and not to foster them.

Hodgson saw Tibet as a happy hunting ground for British commerce. 'With her musk, her rhubarb, her borax, her splendid wools, her mineral and animal wealth, her universal need of good woollens and her incapacity to provide herself or to obtain supplies from any of her neighbours, Tibet may well be believed capable of maintaining a large and valuable exchange of commodities with Great Britain through the medium of our Indian subjects and the

people of Nepal.' Hodgson showed the way to intra-Asian country trade through the hills which was the main line of profit for the British in India. He even chalked out the detail of the route, manners, cost of carriage and the nature and amount of duties levied by the Nepal Government en route to Lhasa. Reviewing trade through Nepal, Hodgson appraises the Government of the enormous demand for English broad cloth in Tibet, popularity of British imitations of Indian handkerchief and cashmere shawls among the middle and lower orders in Nepal, use of English chintzes and finer cotton fabrics among upper and middle classes.

He further informs that satins, silks and velvets of China were giving way before British broad cloths and velvets. Indigo and opium were in great demand in Tibet. There was demand also for British guns, scissors, mirrors, wall shades, chandeliers, tumblers, wine glasses. The people in Nepal were beginning to use British crockery and glassware at their tables. The Tibetans already used British plates and dishes.¹⁴

Of the exports from the hills, major items were gold of the value of Rs. 175,000, rusk (Rs. 55,000), copper Pice (2,50,000), Nepal Rs. (2,00,000), elephants (67,200), horses (45,000), timber (3,00,000).... About paper, Hodgson writes: 'the paper of Nepal is an admirable article which ought to be substituted for flimsy paper of the plains for the records of every office in Bengal.' 'He highlights tea to be had from Lhasa 'in any quantity'. 'The Nepalese saul forest is an inexhaustible mine of timber', writes Hodgson. Copper coins were supplied in bulk from Nepal to the plains. There were lead, sulphur and zinc mines in Nepal but no skill to work them profitably. The net produce of rice of the low lands of Nepal was exported to Patna chiefly on Government account which paid for luxuries of British India imported by Nepal. Still the hills had adverse balance of trade against British India.¹⁵ This was so by over 4 lakhs as a result of British economic penetration.¹⁶

It is interesting to note that from the Table illustrating Trade of Nepal that huge quantities of indigenous goods were sold by Indian merchants in Nepal. Country chintzes from Tanda, Bareilly,

Furrakabad, Dacca, Jamdani, Muslins of Bihar, Santipur, Chandrakona, Sahans of Dacca, Santipur, Kora cloth of Darbhanga, Jahanabad, etc., Dacca turban, Maldah cloth, Murshidabad cloth, Benares kinkhabs, Cashmere shawls, Bengal silk thread, *pan* of Bihar and Bengal, tatee horses and buffaloes were regular items of trade and accounted for more than half of the import trade. This had a special significance for the plains economy. Overland trade was one of the major outlets through which the so-called subsistence economy responded to market forces from pre-British times. The economy was sufficiently monetised and the mercantilist policies of the Company could not prevent the commercial operations of the Indian merchants through the hills. Deindustrialisation was, therefore, less complete than supposed and commercialisation of an agrarian economy was not all due to British thrust to find investments for Europe. It had grown spontaneously and created elbow-room for the Indian merchants to grow and run a parallel economy with the British.

British economic penetration to Nepal, however, meant adverse balance of trade for her, underselling of her merchants and decline of local industries like copper, iron and other indigenous wares. Worst of all, surveillance and subversion of the Durbar by the British Resident at Kathmandu, attempts to use Nepal as a transit station for trade with China and Tibet to the exclusion of Nepal, repeated trade missions pressurising her to accept commercial treaties under veiled threat compromised Nepal's independence.

The way Hodgson tried to thrust the treaty of 1835 on Nepal proved irksome to Bhim Sen Thapa. He was overzealous and peremptory in his demand for a bilateral treaty. But the Durbar was unwilling to co-operate. To the British, it was Nepalese obstinacy and ignorance. But it was Nepal's business which the British could not dictate.¹⁷

Nepal remained under the British umbrella throughout the period under review. The rise of Rana policy in Nepal and prompt British recognition of Jang Bahadur (1846-77) as the prime minister turned the scale in favour of the British. Jang Bahadur helped the British during the Sikh War (1848-49) and the Revolt of 1857. One of his reasons as he stated in his Des-

patch to the Government of India was in his own words 'that I know the power of the British Government and that put against it, although I might have temporary success for a time, my country would afterwards be ruined and the Gurkha dynasty annihilated.'¹⁸

We have taken a good look at Hodgson to understand the nature of British economic penetration into Nepal. But his reports remain inexhaustible for other allied questions. Hodgson in another paper on colonisation of the Himalayas urged the Government to take up colonisation of the Hills for a number of shrewd reasons. He writes: 'I trust that the general subject of the high capabilities of the climate and soil of the Himalayas and their eminent fitness for European colonisation having once been taken up will never be dropped till colonisation is a fait accompli and that the accomplishment of this greatest, surest and soundest and simplest of all political measures for the stabilisation of the British power in India may adorn the annals of Lord Canning's administration.' His main idea was to use the Hills as the European habitat nearing home weather and as the headquarter for 'drawing forth the natural resources of the region like timber, drugs, dyes, hides, horns, ghee and silk.' The European colony would be a godsend to the striving peasantry of Ireland and Scotch highlands and they would serve as a 'far more durable, safe and cheap barrier against Russian aggression than expenses of war against Russia in Persia.

The value of tea as a cash crop in the Himalayas was noticed by Hodgson and for 25 years, it was nurtured in the Residency garden into 'an indigenous and most abundant species' by him. Seeds were procured from China and planted in Kathmandu. These broad hints from Hodgson were well taken by Campbell who began developing Darjeeling into such an European settlement during his residency. Darjeeling was Sikkim territory occupied by the Gurkhas and returned to her by the British after the War of 1816 following Gurkha expulsion from that hill. In 1885, it was taken back from Sikkim to build a British sanatorium to make Hodgson's dream a reality.

A compensation was paid to the Sikkim Raja. This was the beginning of the subversion of Sikkim. Because of frequent trespasses into Sikkim by Campbell, Superintendent of Darjeeling and Hooker the Botanist at the Residency, Campbell was imprisoned by the Sikkim Durbar. A military expedition was sent against the Raja to release Campbell in 1850. As a penalty, the revenue paid for Darjeeling (Rs. 50,000) was stopped and Sikkim was further deprived of the Lower Morung territory bearing Rs. 36,000 as revenue and a portion of the Hill. Thus, Sikkim was badly fleeced for questioning her stealthy subversion. The Raja was reduced to abject poverty. As Welby Jackson in his report on Darjeeling noted in 1854, 'the political relations with the Sikhimis have been much contracted as well as facilitated by the appropriation of the Morung tract by the British Government. In consequence of his outrage on the representative of the Government, the Raja is now almost without revenues and is a supplicant to the British Government for a pension'.¹⁹ This is an example of ruthless frankness.

The petition of the Raja is a telling document. He prays for restoration of his land and compensation and assures good conduct. He begs to be excused for the ill behaviour of his father's servants and craves generosity of the Company's Government.²⁰

Campbell's comment on the petition exposes the British motives behind severity of penalty on the Sikhmi Raja whose whole revenue was confiscated. Campbell writes: 'Freedom of travel in Sikkim now in abeyance and the trade with Thibet to be relieved from all exactions and hindrances in transit would greatly improve the resources of Darjeeling and add to its attractions as a sanatorium. If the Raja would agree to both and satisfy us.....; the generosity of Government might then be exhibited by a small annual gratuity to the present Raja as long as his good conduct deserved it.' Welby Jackson offers the gloss on it in his approval of the suggestion to grant pension if free travel and protection to all persons travelling under the care of British Government were conceded for private adventures.²¹ He continues: 'the present disturbed state of the

Chinese Government affords a good opportunity of breaking through the obstacles it has hitherto thrown in the way of travellers and of merchants bringing their goods from Thibet into the British dominion..... Free access into Thibet through the Sikkim territories would seem to be the best mode of effecting this. The road is well known from Darjeeling to Lhasa..... the distance is estimated at a month's journey and the two large towns, Phari with a population of 4000 and Geanchii Shubur with a population of 20,000 lie on the road. The value of imports into the British dominions by this route is now estimated at Rs. 50,000 annually and no doubt it might be greatly increased were greater facilities offered to the merchants'.²²

The intransigence of the Nepal Government stood in the way of converting Nepal into an European mart and the centre of transit route to Tibet and China. Darjeeling to Lhasa through Sikkim provided an alternative route. So, Sikkim was systematically subverted on one pretext or the other especially when China was in distress around the fifties of the nineteenth century.

So strong was the commercial greed that the British did not give up lower and the upper Morung even after their acquisition of the trade route to Lhasa. Cotton, rice, hemp, jute etc. were commercially produced in these areas for trans-Himalayan and plains trade. Cotton from American seed was especially promoted. It was expected to raise production from 3,000 maunds to 60,000 maunds.²³ Darjeeling acquired a new importance in the changed circumstances. Hodgson was vindicated. It was rapidly organized as a commercial headquarter for Himalayan trade and European health resort. The route to Lhasa was mapped out by Campbell.²⁴

Tea cultivation was avidly taken up. Campbell saw to its culture in the Superintendent's nurseries. Upwards of 2,000 plants were growing from 7,00 to 2,000 ft. altitude of different ages from 12 years to seedlings of a few months. He sought the expertise of Mr. Fortune on deputation to China by the Court of Directors during his return journey to Calcutta for better

culture of the plant in the hills. The hill-station was steadily built up from the 1860's under the energetic J. W. Edgar, Deputy Commissioner, Darjeeling and C. E. R. Girdlestone, Resident of Nepal. New serpentine roads encircling terraced residential areas came with amazing rapidity through local funding. The queen of the hill stations was thus a byproduct of colonial exigency. The Darjeeling-Lhasa route through Sikkim in lieu of Nepal route which lay in abeyance because of 'rigid facts of geography and variable facts of politics' made Darjeeling a reality from the brainchild she was of Brian Hodgson.²⁵ The Anglo-Sikkimese treaty of 28th March, 1861 was the pinnacle of British success in economic penetration into the north eastern hills. Article VIII abolished all restrictions on travellers and monopolies in trade between the British territories and Sikkim. A free reciprocal intercourse and full liberty of commerce was assured. This was the euphemism for the complete subversion of Sikkim by the British.

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EVOLUTION OF BRITISH TRIBAL POLICY ON THE NORTH-EAST FRONTIER OF INDIA (1865-1914)

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THE IMPORTANCE of a country's frontier depends largely on the pressure of a foreign power on it. Till the end of the nineteenth century the north-east frontier of India, unlike the famous north-west frontier, was not a gateway of foreign invasion of the heartland of India. Hence the north-east frontier remained almost unknown to the outside world till Chinese threat suddenly transformed it into a live frontier on two occasions, in 1910-14 and from the 1950's onward. Since the 1950's a lot has been written on the history of this once dormant frontier, especially on British policy on this frontier since the first appearance of Chinese threat in 1910. But an important aspect has been frequently either wholly or partly ignored, viz., British policy towards the tribes of this frontier both before and during the first Chinese threat. The purpose of the present paper is to analyze this aspect of British policy. The reason why the British adopted a certain policy rather than another apparently more effective to meet the Chinese threat since 1910 lay at least partly in the history of British relations with the tribesmen. It was not until 1910 that to the local problem posed by the tribes was added the international problem of a Chinese menace. But in tackling the Chinese problem, the British had to bear in mind their experience of the tribal problem. Moreover, certain administrative measures vis-a-vis the tribes to reduce British responsibilities on the frontier caused much confusion later on and deflected the British from adopting the best possible line of action to meet the first Chinese threat.

British policy towards the tribes after the annexation of Assam was essentially the same as that of their Ahom predecessors. The policy of the Ahoms was one of conciliation backed by a display of force when conciliation failed. The Ahoms tried to keep the peace on the frontier by granting the tribes a subsidy, called *posa*. But this did not always prevent tribal raids in the plains, and the Ahoms sometimes sent punitive expeditions to punish the guilty hillmen.¹ The *posa* was not an uncertain exaction, but a fixed payment. The Ahom government arranged that some peasant families of the frontier villages should pay their annual dues to the tribesmen instead of to the state. After the annexation of Assam the British found the custom in force which virtually recognized the tribesmen's claim to a share in the produce of the plains. Although the British did not really like the system, and some local officials like Captain Gordon, Assistant Agent to the Governor-General, even expressed an opinion against it in 1844, the *posa* was not stopped. However an important change was introduced. The Ahom rulers had allowed the hillmen to directly collect the *posa* from the plains villages. But the British administration entered into agreements with the tribes under which the latter would receive the subsidies directly from government officers. This change was calculated to reduce frictions between the hillmen and the plainsmen on the one hand, and to win the hillmen's gratitude to the government on the other. By 1866 nearly all the important tribes were in receipt of annual subsidies from the government, with the only exception of the Mishmis.

The payment of annual subsidies was however one aspect of British tribal policy. Like their Ahom predecessors, the British realized the need for backing the policy of conciliation by military power. They became particularly aware of this need in the 1860's after repeated Abor raids in the plains. In 1865 Captain Comber, Deputy Commissioner, Lakhimpur, and Colonel Hopkinson, Commissioner of Assam, argued that the policy of conciliation had failed, branded it as no better than blackmail, and urged upon the government the need for military measures against the tribes. Hopkinson even advised direct occupation of the tribal

country.² But the Bengal Government did not admit that the policy of conciliation had failed and even ascribed tribal outrages to the inadequacy of the subsidies. However, Sir John Lawrence, supported the idea of military preparedness, though not of the occupation of the tribal country.³ The policy which thus crystallized in the 1860's was essentially one of non-interference backed by punitive measures when necessary. But the tribal country was not to be occupied in any circumstances. Obviously the British were not interested in territorial annexation or economic exploitation of the hills. Their real purpose seems to have been to follow a policy which would cost the least to the administration and at the same time provide a measure of security to the plains from tribal attacks.

The policy of non-interference was reinforced by the introduction of the Inner Line on the northern borders of Darrang and Lakhimpur in 1875-76. The line was designed to prevent frictions with the tribes arising from undesirable extension of tea plantation into the tribal country and the activities of rubber traders who too often tried to cheat the tribal rubber collectors. Within the line the government was to exercise full administrative jurisdiction, but beyond it the government would not interfere except politically. North of the line on Outer Line was laid down as far east as Nizamghat. The Outer Line was virtually the limit of political control. But there were confusions regarding its precise status. In 1911 some members of the British House of Commons even assumed that it was the external boundary of India.⁴ But this line was never India's international boundary; it was only an administrative measure adopted by the British unilaterally without reference to any other government. Alastair Lamb's claim that it represented India's international boundary on this frontier is motivated and misleading.⁵ The fact is that India had no international boundary on this frontier till 1914.

The policy of non-interference was not however a great success, and it appears from the complaints of the Deputy Commissioners of Darrang and Lakhimpur, that in the 1870's a large area at the foot of the Abor hills was deserted by the plainsmen

because of tribal oppression. The government tried to check the unruly tribesmen by economic and military means. The economic measures consisted of the suspension of the *posa* and of blocking tribal trade in the plains which were so important in tribal economy. When these economic measures failed and in cases of serious outrage, the government sent punitive expeditions against the offending tribes. It is important to note here that the punitive expeditions were not always prompted by the degree of tribal ferocity, since there were people among the military who considered an expedition necessary not so much to punish tribal outrages as to train the officers and men of the army.⁶ The expeditions often indulged in wanton destruction. But the hillmen did not take long to forget the effects of the expeditions as it was admitted by the Assam authorities. The policy of non-interference was obviously unsatisfactory, but it was never seriously reviewed in spite of the plainsmen's sufferings. Only when certain British economic interests in Assam were threatened by tribal exactions, that the prudence of this policy was challenged at the beginning of the twentieth century.

Some European timber firms complained of tribal blackmail of their employees when the latter entered the forests north of the Brahmaputra to secure timber. Since the forests lay beyond the Inner Line the hillmen refused to accept the British view that they were within British territory. Hence the firms suggested that the Inner Line should be pushed north to the foot of the hills in order to bring the timber forests under full government protection. Sir Lancelot Hare, Lieutenant-Governor of Eastern Bengal and Assam took up the matter seriously in 1906. He suggested certain measures to convince the hillmen that the forests, even though beyond the Inner Line, were in British territory.⁷ Noel Williamson, Assistant Political Officer, Sadiya, suggested that the best way to control the tribes was to establish advance posts in the hills. Hare, however did not support a formal forward policy as suggested by either the timber firms or Williamson. Instead, he was in favour of a free intercourse with the tribesmen by encouraging them to visit and settle in the plains and by regular visits to the hills by British officers. Such measures, if acted upon, would have indirectly undermined

the policy of non-interference which Hare thoroughly disapproved. But neither Minto nor Morley was in favour of abandoning the old policy. They were anxious to avoid serious complications with the tribes which might result from an extension of control in the hills as was implied in Hare's policy. Morley also opposed the idea of establishing advance posts in the hills which might start an indefinite process of annexation. Thus an active forward policy advocated at a lower official level was by stages set aside by the higher authorities. Williamson, in direct touch with the tribes and consequently wiser than anyone in the realities of the frontier, suggested an open forward move by establishing posts in the hills. Perhaps he did so in view of the growing Chinese activities in eastern Tibet. With less knowledge of the frontier Hare recommended a departure from the old policy but suggested means which were milder than Williamson's. Far from the frontier and with little knowledge of the tribes, both Minto and Morley opposed any departure from the old policy.⁸ Thus the pressure of local circumstances on the frontier failed to change the policy of non-interference. It was eventually Chinese threat which convinced the higher authorities of the serious consequences which might ensue if the old policy continued any longer.

Paradoxically, it was British policy towards Tibet which was largely responsible for the Chinese threat on the frontier. There is evidence to believe that the Chinese position in Tibet seriously declined on the eve of the Younghusband Mission. The Tibetans refused to provide the Chinese Amban with transport when the latter wanted to see Younghusband at Gyantse; and in Lhasa Younghusband found the Amban almost without any money because of Tibetan hostility.⁹ The British expedition however greatly alarmed the Chinese who, fearing that Tibet might be altogether lost, decided to restore their position in Tibet. And their task was greatly facilitated by the Younghusband Mission, and the Anglo-Chinese Convention of 1906 and the Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907. On the one hand, the Younghusband Mission weakened the authority of the Dalai Lama, the leader of Tibetan opposition to China. On the other, the two

conventions not only excluded Russian interference in Tibet but also tied the hands of Britain and allowed China a free hand there. China quickly seized the opportunity, to push troops through eastern Tibet, began to occupy important centres of eastern Tibet from 1906 onward, and finally captured Lhasa in February 1910. Almost immediately after the fall of Lhasa, the Chinese began to probe the tribal country on the north-east frontier of India. This new situation unavoidably called for a new policy and the abandonment of the policy of non-interference.

Charles Bell, Political Officer in Sikkim, was closely watching the Chinese in eastern Tibet. In July 1909 he cautioned the India Government against the Chinese who, he was afraid, might turn their attention to the tribal area north of Assam. But his warning went unheeded. When in August 1910 he repeated the warning Lhasa had already fallen to the Chinese and the first Chinese probes in the Mishmi country had been reported. There was no knowing that the Chinese would not instigate the tribes to raid the plains and thus create a situation similar to that which had vexed the British for a long time on the north-west frontier. Bell proposed certain administrative changes to meet the new situation. He considered it undesirable that the neighbouring Deputy Commissioners of Darrang and Lakhimpur should exercise any control on tribal affairs. Instead, the tribes should be grouped into two, each placed in charge of a political officer directly responsible to the Foreign Department of the Government of India. Since the Local Government should not handle an emerging international problem, Bell thought it preferable to bring at least the international aspect of the problem under the direct control of the Government of India.¹⁰ Bell's suggestion materialized before long, although none of the officers was placed under the Government of India's Foreign Department. As regards tribal policy, Bell proposed an overall departure from the old policy. He suggested the conversion of the tribal belt into a buffer zone under British protection where no foreign power should be allowed to have relations with the tribes. This was a half-way measure between full administrative control and absence of all control whatsoever, prompted no doubt by the past British experience of the troublesome tribes. Minto accepted Bell's

forward policy, since the Chinese might otherwise extend control over the tribal area and approach dangerously near the Assam plains. H. S. Barnes, a member of the India Council, was particularly enthusiastic about bringing the tribes under protection. But the old policy had not yet lost all support in high places. Morley negated the whole move and postponed a final decision till the next Viceroy, Hardinge, assumed office and submitted his views.

Hardinge's first reaction to the situation was virtually a reaffirmation of the policy of non-interference. But meanwhile Morley, a staunch supporter of masterly inactivity on this frontier, had left the India Office. F. A. Hirtzel, Secretary to the Political and Secret Department, India Office, sharply criticized Hardinge, pointing out certain bare facts of European economic interests in Assam which would be seriously threatened by a Chinese advance.¹¹ Hardinge also soon changed his mind. In June 1911 he argued for a new tribal policy which however was not a complete departure from the old policy. He wanted to leave the hillmen in no doubt that they were under British protection, but he was not prepared to give them any guarantee of protection. This clearly incongruous policy had the only advantage of not committing the government so that it could back out if necessary without any loss of face to the tribesmen. Crewe, the new Secretary of State for India, saw the advantage and approved Hardinge's decision not to give a formal guarantee of protection. But at the same time he agreed with Hirtzel that for the success of the policy it would be essential to protect the tribesmen from the Chinese, even though without a formal guarantee of protection.¹² As we shall presently see, Hirtzel was the only man at the India Office who had some clear idea about the frontier and tried to pursue a consistent policy; nearly everyone else suffered from confusions.

Hardinge soon discarded his half-hearted approach in favour of an openly forward policy. Perhaps the immediate cause of this change was provided by Captain F. M. Bailey of the Political Department, who had just returned from a remarkable journey from China to India via the Mishmi country and

had reported that the Chinese in eastern Tibet were trying to bring the Mishmis under their control.¹³ In September 1911 Hardinge finally abandoned the policy of non-interference. He admitted that Chinese intervention called for a new policy, viz., a policy of loose political control. This new policy, as he envisaged, would have a threefold objective: protection of the tribesmen from external aggression, minimum interference in their own affairs, and pursuit of such a line of action as would convince the tribes that they were not independent.¹⁴ Hardinge thus wanted to create a buffer zone under British control as had been first suggested by Bell. By September 1911 the official attitude to tribal policy underwent a fundamental change.

But in the absence of an occasion for it, it would have been difficult for the government to suddenly initiate a new active policy without drawing the unwelcome attention of the Chinese who were taking an interest in the tribal area. A convenient opportunity was provided to the government by the Abors who murdered Williamson in March 1911. The government decided to send not only an expedition against the Abors but also two simultaneous missions which were to operate in the Mishmi and Miri sections of the frontier. Apart from the special objective of the Abor expedition to avenge the murder of Williamson and punish the guilty Abors, the proposed operations in the hills had some common tasks. First, British officers were to visit many villages in the hills and explain to the tribesmen that in the future they would be under British control, although of a loose political nature. Secondly, if any Chinese officials or troops were met with in the tribal country, they were to be persuaded or even compelled to withdraw north of the "recognized" limits of Tibet. Thirdly, the tribal country was to be explored and surveyed as far as possible to gather information for the alignment of an Indo-Tibetan boundary. Once such a boundary was fixed, no Chinese in the future would be allowed to penetrate south of it. Clearly the last two objectives had nothing to do with the murder of Williamson; they were the direct consequence of the Chinese threat.¹⁵

Major-General H. Bower commanded the Abor expedition

with A. Bentinck assisting him in political matters. The Mishmi mission was led by W. C. M. Dundas, Assistant Political Officer, Sadiya, with Major Bliss assisting him in military matters. G. C. Kerwood, Subdivisional Officer, North Lakhimpur, headed the Miri mission. The expedition and the missions operated in the hills during the open season of 1911-12. They achieved their objectives; but no Chinese were found in the hills. The experience gathered during the operations suggested the need for some actual measures in two clearly distinct spheres if the new policy was to be effectively implemented. First, it was essential to take some steps right in the midst of the tribal country which would serve as visible symbols of the government's authority, since punitive expeditions and temporary occupations had hitherto failed to impress the tribes adequately. Secondly, it was necessary to introduce some structural change in the frontier administration.

Bower proposed for the purpose of exercising political control over the Abors the establishment of three military police outposts at Rotung, Pasighat, and Kobo. He was supported by both the Assam Government and the Government of India, since past experience had proved the impossibility of controlling the Abors from the plains. Thus the higher authorities in India saw the wisdom of a measure more than four years after Williamson had pointed to its necessity.¹⁶

But in London it met with a mixed reception. Of the three proposed posts, Rotung was beyond the Outer Line and thus outside the limits of ordinary British jurisdiction. Montagu, Under-Secretary of State, firmly opposed the Rotung post which, he thought, would violate his parliamentary statement that the Abor expedition did not intend to extend the area of administration.¹⁷ Montagu did not realize that the proposal was meant not to extend the limits of administration, but to extend political control over the tribes. Obviously he failed to distinguish between ordinary administration and loose political control. Sir W. Lee-Warner, Member of the India Council, did not think that the proposed posts could be considered as contrary to the decision against extension of the administrative boundary or as anything but a necessary step to implement the new

official policy already adopted. The Political Committee of the India Council also decided by a majority that the Rotung post would not contravene the parliamentary statement of Montagu.¹⁸ But Crewe was reluctant to approve the Plan which, he feared, would arouse strong parliamentary protest. He adhered to his decision even when Hardinge argued that without the posts it would be impossible to pursue the new policy, and that a complete withdrawal from the hills might be construed as a sign of weakness by the hostile hillmen who would thus be encouraged to indulge in fresh outrages requiring further operations in the hills. Crewe sanctioned the posts at Kobo and Pasighat but not at Rotung. The Rotung post was negated because Crewe thought that it would be the first step to an extension of political influence in tribal country which was not the policy of the government.¹⁹ Crewe was not personally opposed to the eventual transformation of the tribal country into a fully administered area as a consequence of a chain of posts in the hills. He was in this respect perhaps influenced by the Foreign Secretary, Grey's insistence that the tribal area could be properly protected from Chinese intrusion only by bringing it under administration. But the Government of India did not think that an extension of regular administration in the hills was at all feasible, and Crewe did not support posts in the hills for fear of parliamentary criticism.²⁰

Obviously this was a confusing decision betraying a lack of clear understanding at the India Office of the new policy which had already been approved. There was manifest vagueness in the approach of Crewe and Montagu to the problem. The only alternative to regular administration of the tribal country, which was believed by the Government of India to be impracticable at the time, was the exercise of a loose political control to meet the new situation. But was it at all possible to exercise that control without an extension of political influence in the tribal area? Further, was it possible to exercise that control without posts in the hills? Hirtzel considered both to be impossible. He criticized the decision of Crewe which, he thought, was an abandonment of the policy of loose political control.

Although the proposed military police post in the tribal country was thus set aside, it was shortly revived in a different form. A trade post in the hills was suggested for two purposes. First, it would facilitate an uninterrupted trade between the hills and the plains by breaking the trade blocks jealously maintained by the hillmen living near the plains against those living in the remote villages. Secondly, it would help the government maintain a visible presence of British authority among the hillmen. The post was to be held by a rather large armed guard of 100 military police for several months in the year. Yambung, which lay ten miles further into the hills beyond Rotung, was chosen for the site of the trade post.²¹ Montagu again opposed the suggestion, since he saw no distinction, except that of language, between the earlier proposal of a military police post and the latter proposal of a trade post. He believed that the real motive behind the latter proposal was to plant a police post in disguise leading to administration. In spite of his opposition, Crewe approved the trade post provided that the post was in no sense to be considered as an administrative or political step.²² The trade post was soon found to be inadequate, and a scheme of road construction in the hills was proposed. It was suggested that a road should be built at least up to Riga and the trade post should be pushed ahead with the progress of the road construction. The Local Government believed that such measures would not only keep the trade open but also facilitate the exercise of political control in the hills. However, to allay any misgivings of the India Office, the Chief Commissioner stated that the proposed measures did not aim at a permanent occupation of the hills contrary to the Secretary of State's declared policy. They were rather essential for implementing that policy, since only the fringe of the tribal country had been touched at the time and no influence, much less any loose political control, could be exercised over the tribes unless an advance was made.²³

It appears that the above measures were not implemented and the official interest in this frontier lost all senses of urgency due to several reasons. One principal reason was the outbreak of war in Europe. In 1914 the Government of India decided

not to allow, until the end of the war, any operation on this frontier which might require military help.²⁴ Equally important was the disappearance of Chinese threat with the expulsion of the Chinese from Tibet after the fall of the Manchu dynasty, and the delimitation of an Indo-Tibetan boundary in 1914.

Although the actual measures taken in the tribal country fell far short of what was necessary to implement the new policy, some basic structural changes were introduced in the frontier administration. In January 1912 Bower proposed the division of the frontier into eastern, central, and western sections. Each section was to be placed under a political officer. The Local Government recommended that the political officers should work directly under the Chief Commissioner of Assam. In July 1912 the Chief Commissioner however made slightly different proposals. The entire tribal area, east of the Subansiri-Siyom divide, comprising the eastern and central sections, should be in the charge of an officer enjoying the rank of a Deputy Commissioner and working immediately under the Chief Commissioner; he was to be helped by four assistant officers. The area west of the Subansiri-Siyom divide was to be placed under another political officer who also would work directly under the Chief Commissioner. The first officer named for the eastern and central sections was W. C. M. Dundas, and the one for the western section was Captain G. A. Nevill.²⁵ In September 1914 the southern boundaries of the three sections were notified to separate them clearly from the adjoining plains districts of Darrang and Lakhimpur. In 1919 the eastern and central sections were renamed as the Sadiya Frontier Tract, and the western section as the Balipara Frontier Tract.²⁶

Thus the new policy of loose political control was not accompanied by a definite forward move into the hills. Only a few, hesitant measures were adopted, caused mainly by the fear of complications with the tribes and by confusions at the India Office. After a brief limelight the frontier relapsed into relative insignificance leaving serious problems for future generations to solve.

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ABBREVIATIONS

- I.F.P., Pol.*—*India Foreign Proceedings*, Political, India Office Records.
- P.D.* —*The Parliamentary Debates*, London (Official Report).
- P.S.S.F.* —*Political and Secret Subject Files*, India Office Records.

EASTERN HIMALAYAN FRONTIER AND DEVELOPMENT OF GOVERNMENT THEREIN DURING THE BRITISH PERIOD

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I

FRONTIERS are always enchanting, be that frontiers of a country or of knowledge, for man's thirst for knowledge, of knowing the unknown, ever since the dawn of humanity, impels him to undertake hazards for the conquest of the unreached; wherever there is limit on his progress he tries to exceed that; from the borderland the vision of the unknown beyond always appears to be picturesque and romantic and bacons adeventurers and explorers to unveil the mysteries.

The Eastern Himalayan Frontier has till now remained a land of mystery and has aroused in people much curiosity about it. The imposing Buddhist Gompa of Tawang with its grace and grandeur, a journey through the Bomdi La and Se La, the snowy heights of Subansiri, the unexplored Namche Bowra, the roaring gorge of the mighty Brahmaputra winding through the dense forests of the Siang District, the unexplored peaks of the Eastern Himalaya with its captivating romance and beauty, and above all, the kaleidoscopic panorama of the myriad tribes of the region with their feasts and festivals, lend enchantment to the frontier and fill the people with a sense of awe and wonder.

II

A frontier in a political sense is meant to be a boundary line between two independent sovereignties, either demarcated or delineated. The term, however, has not been used here in that sense; it is meant to be a stretch of territory lying between Indian State of Assam and Khamtyul division of Tibet. Its northern boundary line begins from the tri-junction of Bhutan-Tibet-India on the west and runs along the watershed of the Brahmaputra through the Eastern Himalaya to the tri-junction of India-Burma-Tibet to the easternmost tip of Indian territory.¹ This is known as the famous McMahon Line. To the west lies the State of Bhutan and to the east stands Burma. The south is bounded by the State of Assam. The territory thus included forms mostly the Arunachal Pradesh and excludes the district of Tirap from this Union Territory.

If we cast a glance at the map it will be evident that this territory in the Indian parts of the Eastern Himalaya, rather spurs of the main Eastern Himalayan range is coming down to the valley of the Brahmaputra southwards. Geographically, the Eastern Himalayan range from the eastern border of Bhutan through the gorge of the Tsanpo (Brahmaputra) up to the the synaxial bend in the Mishmi hills lies entirely within Tibet and Assam.² Compared with the sub-Himalayas, the information about the more interior parts of the range "is restricted and vague". According to Augusto Gansser, the Eastern Himalaya can be divided into four structural units : (i) The sub-Himalayas consist of Siwalic sediments of the tertiary period lying mostly in the southern part of the region ; (ii) the lower Himalayas lying between the main boundary and the main central thrust comprise varied sedimentary and metamorphic rocks ranging in age from palaeozoic to Mesozoic ; (iii) north of the central thrust the basal crystalline thrust sheet to the Higher Himalayas ; (iv) great thickness of fossiliferous Tertiary sediments cover the crystalline thrust sheet of the Higher Himalayas.³

Information about the soils is meagre. The rocks are generally of the Himalayan type "Shale schist and conglomerates", derived soils are sandy and clayey in the lower reaches of the

valley ; soil acidity is high ; cleared forest lands exhibit a thick layer of leaf-mould, rich in organic matter ; soils brought down from higher altitudes by rain are alluvial, being loams or sandy loams mixed with pebbles ; soils in the valleys are clayey alluvium rich in organic content.⁴

At least three major climatic zones can be recognised and temperature, pressure precipitation and winds vary with altitude. The foot-hill areas are hot and humid and have a sub-tropical climate, and finally in the higher region (beyond 7000 feet) Himadri (Alpine) type climate is found. Flora and fauna vary with climate and soils, from tropical evergreen in the foot-hills to coniferous in the higher elevations and high Himalayas in the extreme north.⁵

This territory of the Eastern Himalayan frontier may be divided conveniently into hills for historical study after names of the tribes or people who inhabit it. From the west they are the Mompā, Thonji, Shardukpen and Aka hills of the present Kameng district, the Nishi (Dafla) hills of the Subansiri district, the Adi (Abor) hills of the Siang district, and the Idu, Taraon and Miju (Mishmi) hills of the Lohit district.

These hills are inhabited by numerous tribes of Mongolian stock who are said to have wandered into these present habitats from the north-east, from the upper waters of the Yangtse Kiang and Ho-ang-ho rivers of south-west China.⁶ I have a different opinion regarding their origin and immigration.⁷ I hold them to be of southern Mongolian stock as suggested by Prof. Haddon⁸ and I believe that they went to China from the Indo-Gangetic and Brahmaputra valley and were again driven out of their strongholds of south-west China by the successors of Kublai Khan. These tribes speak language of North Assam group of the Tibeto-Burman family.⁹

Though the tribes of these hills are sub-divided into numerous sub-tribes they offer striking similarity in their social organisation and cultural pattern. Society is patrilineal and caste system does not exist except among the Mompas. Social grades exist among the Akas and a member of clan will not marry into a lower clan. The Nishis are hardly divided into clans but are divided into exogamous groups. The Adis are divided into clans

or families with endogamy strictly forbidden among them. The Mishmis are divided into septs rather than clans and are endogamous.¹⁰ Another striking feature of the social life is democracy, usually all disputes and community issues are settled in tribal council meetings. These tribes can be broadly divided into two religio-cultural divisions. The Mompas, Thonjis, Sherdukpas, the Khambas and Membas are Buddhist by religion and wood-carving and use of mask during festival are common among them; the rest of the population follow what is called their ancestral religion which believes in Almighty God and efficacy of worship and sacrifice. The latter group specialises in works of bamboo and cane but does not take to wood-carving.¹¹

III

The territory of the Eastern Himalayan frontier began to emerge as a separate political entity from 1875-76 when by the application of the Inner Line Regulation of 1873 a limit of the administrative districts of Assam on the northern valley of the Brahmaputra was specified. The Regulation for the peace and good government of certain districts on the Eastern frontier of Bengal which is the Inner Line Regulation of 1873¹² authorised the Local Government to prescribe and from time to time alter a line, with the previous sanction of the Governor-General-in-Council, to be called Inner Line in each and any of the districts of Assam. The Local Government was also authorised by the same Regulation to prohibit British subjects or any class of British subjects or any person residing in or passing through such districts, from going beyond the line, without a pass under the hand and seal of the executive officer of such district or such officer as might be authorised to grant such pass.

The Inner Line was thus a limit up to which the district officers' regular jurisdiction ran and up to which they were supposed to maintain law and order. The Government of Bengal while preparing the proposal for the Regulation made it clear that by drawing the line they would like to distinctly declare that the Government would not be responsible for the protec-

tion of life and property of subjects beyond that line.¹³ It should be clearly understood that the Government did not also acknowledge either the independence of the tribes living beyond the line nor did it recognise the suzerainty of any other power over the tribes living therein. It should be borne in mind that the tribes living beyond the Inner Line had free access to the plain districts under the regular jurisdiction of the British officers.

The territorial limit of the Commissionership of Assam and of the Chief Commissionership of Assam was never either specified nor was it ever demarcated. After the British authority was established over the country a series of engagements or agreements were executed with the hill tribes bordering the plain districts and thereby these tribes were to be provided with some payments by the Government but they were not allowed to come down to collect their *posa** from the plains people. A form of political control was thus established over them but the territorial limits of these hill tribes were also not known. Mr. Godfrey, the Deputy Commissioner of Assam wrote : "I don't know that the limits of the Chief Commissionership have ever been specified. . . . I have been inclined to think that the Inner Line marked the boundary of our regular jurisdiction, that is, courts of law. . . . The Chief Commissionership of Assam extends up to the borders of China, Tibet and Burma".¹⁴

In fact the British administrators in India were sceptical about the international boundary in the Eastern Himalayas till 1910 as the countries beyond were not regarded as potential ene-

* The Ahom Government had granted to the tribes the right to collect certain dues from its subjects of certain specific areas and a corresponding remission of their dues to Ahom Government was conceded to. See A Mackenzie's *A History of the Relations of the Government with Hill Tribes of the North East Frontier of Bengal*, Calcutta, 1884, Chapter I.

The British Government undertook to pay Rs. 5000 to Sat Rajas of Towang, Rs. 2526-7-0 to Sat Rajas of Kuria Para, Rs. 145-13-6 to Tibhenga Bhutias, Rs. 3631-2-6 to Akas and Rs. 700 to Daffa, Rs. 1124-11-0 to Abors. Besides some 203 bottles of wine, 18 maunds 13 seers of salt, 108 yards of broad cloth were also given to certain hillmen. A payment of Rs. 164-8-0 also was allowed for expenses in plains. See Capt. Nevill's *Annual Report, 1914-15*.

mies of the empire. Mr. Godfrey writing about the Inner Line held that "we have, of course, got an admitted political control over the border tribes which emanates from and is dependent upon, our being possessed of superior force, and so we command obedience to such orders as may be passed by our officers in their political capacity; it has accordingly been my opinion that the Deputy Commissioner has beyond the Inner Line a general political authority resting upon force, but that no law as such can be enforced upon the inhabitants of those tracts".¹⁵

The settlement of the international boundary became imperative after the assertion of the Chinese hegemony over Rina in 1910. The Chinese General Chao-Er Feng penetrated into Tibet through the south-west of China and occupied Tibet. The British lion was scared about the awakening Dragon and became conscious of the utterly neglected condition of defence and unsettled boundary, between the Chinese empire and the Indian territories.¹⁶ Luckily for the British the Manchu dynasty was toppled down and the Tibetans regained their independence. The Sino-Tibetan border problem that emerged there later provided an opportunity to the British to rectify their mistake in the east and in the Tripartite Simla Conference of 1913-14 the British plenipotentiary Henry McMahon succeeded in concluding a convention with the Tibetan representative Lonchen Shatra by which the Indo-Tibetan boundary along the Eastern Himalaya was settled.¹⁷

IV

For the administration of the frontiers beyond the regular jurisdiction of the district officers of the Assam Administration initially no separate agency was created. The Commissioner of Assam who also bore the title of Agent to the Governor-General maintained political relations with the tribes through his Principal Assistant or Senior Assistants of the districts and Political Agent of Upper Assam who had his headquarters first at Sadiya and then after assumption of Bar Senapati of Muttok's and Purandar Singh's territories of Upper Assam at Gauhati.¹⁸ The

Political Agent of Upper Assam, of course, had a little responsibility to manage the Singpho and Khamti tribes of the frontier. He was authorised to mediate in quarrels and maintain peace between rival clans and investigate into heinous crimes like murder, dacoity originating amongst these clans and complaint against them by other parties, whether British subjects or foreigners.¹⁹ The main responsibility of the Agent was, however, to keep a watchful eye on the frontier tribes of the Burma border and gain intelligence of all movements in Upper Burma.*

By the beginning of seventies of the last century economy of Assam had become promising and trade and industry made good starts. Tea, petroleum, coal, rubber, tapping, woodcrafts became flourishing industries and elephant-catching and ivory were engaging more attention. Besides, the land revenue of the Assam valley increased to provide good surplus and vast expanse of fallow land would yield more if tenants could be had to settle on that. All the districts of Assam bordered on frontier, hill tribes and unrestricted intercourse between the plains and hills people led to many disputes which sometimes took violent turns. But the prosperity of the economy depended on the capacity of the Administration to maintain law and order in the province. Under these considerations the Inner Line Regulation was passed in 1873.

By the specification of the Inner Line some territories which were previously under the Regular jurisdiction of the district officers were separated. Now it was necessary to provide for its administration. A necessity of administration of territories beyond the Inner Line inhabited by the tribal people was also

* To oversee the proceedings of the tribes some watchers who knew frontier languages were appointed along the frontiers. A Khampti Muharrier was employed at Sadiya and at Makum a Deonia was appointed. After the raid of 1849 on Darrang frontier one Jemadar with 10 chowkidars were posted near Charduars. Besides some seven Harkaras and a few Katokies well-versed in frontier tactics were distributed between Saikhowa and Charduar Frontiers. See A. J. M. Mills' *Report on Assam 1854* and *Foreign Political Proceedings to the Chief Commissioner of Assam, 1904*.

felt. The settlement of disputes between the tribal people and the plains people particularly posed many problems. To solve these problems when Assam became a Chief Commissionership in 1874, the Chief of the province was asked to draft a proposal for the Government of the Frontier Tracts. His proposal took the shape of Regulation II of 1880.²⁰

The British had already experienced difficulties of tribal administration in Chota Nagpur areas. After the rising of the Hos in 1831, the Khonds in 1846 and the Santals in 1855 the British Government passed an act known as the Scheduled District Act in 1874 to provide for simple rules for the administration of tribal areas in a rough and ready manner.²¹ In Assam Regulation for the administration of the Garo Hills, Naga Hills and Khasi-Jaintia Hills had been passed on similar lines and the results being satisfactory the same principle and form were followed now to propose Rules for the peace and good government of the Frontier Tracts inhabited by tribal people.²² The spirit of the Regulation was to utilise the tribal institutions and customs for the administration of the tribal people without the legal formalities followed usually in courts of justice.

The Frontier Tract Regulation of 1880 as amended in 1884 authorised the Local Administration under provision of the Scheduled District Act of 1874 to frame Rules for the administration of the Frontier Tracts.²³ Rules drawn up under provisions of this Regulation in 1886 vested in the Deputy Commissioner of Lakhimpur and Assistant Political Officer of Sadiya power to nominate village authorities and persons to deal with tribal disputes. Ordinary duties of police and the right to try petty criminal and civil suits were given to these local courts provided under the provisions of these Rules. Cases of greater magnitude were tried by the Deputy Commissioner or the Assistant Political Officer and the Chief Commissioner of Assam was the highest court of appeal. But no right to appeal was granted and the High Court had no jurisdiction over the Frontier Tracts.²⁴

Meanwhile the post of the Political Officer of Upper Assam had ceased to exist and the Deputy Commissioners of Darrang and Lakhimpur found it difficult to keep proper eye on the Frontier Administration. The Deputy Commissioners were

officers of the Bengal cadre and the new officers coming fresh from that province could not pursue any continued policy in Frontier Administration as they lacked knowledge of the Frontier problem. In view of the situation, the Chief Commissioner of Assam proposed to appoint an Assistant Political Officer at Sadiya.²⁵ He pointed out that an officer, if, intelligent in his instinct, quick in his sympathies, and a good linguist, might in course of two or three years obtain influence on the Frontier and might from that vantage position use any opportunity that might occur of opening friendly communication with the tribes and impress upon them the advantage of regular commerce between the plains and their country. In 1882 an Assistant Political Officer was posted on Sadiya Frontier in view of these considerations.²⁶

The first duty of the Assistant Political Officer was to acquaint himself thoroughly with the Frontier tribes and gain all information regarding them. He was expected to learn the tribal languages so as to enable himself to speak to the tribes without the aid of the interpreters and became a postmaster in border politics and provide sound opinion and right judgement on Frontier issues. But he was also saddled with much administrative work. He was required to take up criminal suits, look after the collection of revenue and maintain law and order. Moreover, he was responsible for the arrangement of frontier outposts, their locations, patrolling the border areas and supplies to the frontier guards.²⁷ But the position of the Assistant Political Officer was that of an assistant to the Deputy Commissioner of Lakhimpur district.

Significant changes, however, began to take place from 1912 onwards. In that year Sadiya Frontier Tract District was formed in substitution of Dibrugarh Frontier Tract and the Political Officer of the Tract became independent of the Deputy Commissioner of Lakhimpur and was placed directly under the Chief Commissioner of Assam and provision was made for three Assistant Political Officers under him.²⁸ In 1913 another Political Officer was posted at Charduar for the Frontier Tracts on the Darrang Frontier.²⁹

The immediate cause behind these changes was the Adi (Abor) expedition of 1911.³⁰ The officer commanding the expedition, General Bower, had recommended the division of the Frontier Tract into three charges of (i) Central and Eastern Section ; (ii) Lakhimpur Frontier Tract ; (iii) Western Section, as he held the frontier was too big a charge for one man. The Government of India agreed to the division. Meanwhile after the conclusion of the Simla Convention of 1914, C. A. Bell, the architect of the McMahon Line, also recommended similar measures.³¹ Though the Chief Commissioner of Assam was not informed of the recommendations of C.A. Bell, the Frontiers were divided into three charges for better administration under provisions of Scheduled District Act of 1874.³² In 1919 Central and Eastern Sections and Western Section were renamed Sadiya and Balipara Frontier Tracts respectively.³³

After the First World War when reforms in Indian Administration were proposed the tribal areas were excluded from their purview on the ground that in those areas there was no material on which to found political institutions.³⁴ The authors of the Montford Scheme held that the typically backward tracts (frontiers) should be excluded from jurisdiction of reformed provincial government and administered by the head of province.³⁵ When reforms were introduced in Assam in 1921 the Frontiers were placed under the reserved half of the Government and elected representatives had no jurisdiction over them.³⁶

The Government of India henceforward pursued a policy of bringing the Frontier territory under its direct political influence. The Simon Commission which was appointed to report on the progress of the Montford Reforms did not find it possible to recommend the incorporation of the Frontiers for administrative purpose into the province of Assam. They wrote : "To the economic self-sufficiency of the indigenous hill races the Nagas, Kukies, Mishmis, and the rest the tea-planter and the immigrant Bengali alike constitute a real danger."³⁷ The Commission recommended that the British Parliament should avow its special obligation for the tribal folk, educate them to stand on their own feet, give them protection against exploitation

and prevent their raids on the plains. The Frontiers were not be branded as "backward tracts" as they were termed after 1921, but to be called "Excluded Areas" and to be administered by the Governor-General-in-Council through the agency of the Governor of the province.³⁸ The same arguments were put forward by the Political Officers of the Frontier Tracts who wanted to serve directly under the authority of the Government of India.³⁹ The view was endorsed by the Governor of the province as well.⁴⁰

The Government of India Act, 1935, which was passed after taking into consideration these suggestions, provided in sections 91 and 92 that His Majesty in Council might declare some territory in India as "Excluded Area" or "Partially Excluded Area" and empower the Governor of a province to administer that area under the authority of the Governor-General.⁴¹ The Governor was empowered to prepare and approve drafts of Regulation for the peace and good government of the excluded areas with previous approval of the Governor-General and similarly could extend Acts or parts thereof passed by any provincial legislature or Federal Legislature in the excluded area for similar purpose.⁴²

In March 1936 the King in Council passed necessary order to declare North-East Frontier (Sadiya, Balipara and Lakhimpur) together with Naga, Lushai and North Cachar Hills as Excluded Areas of Assam.⁴³ In 1937 the affairs of the tribal areas were transferred to a newly created establishment called the Governor's Secretariat, and the Chief Secretary of Assam was relieved of the Tribal Affairs Department.⁴⁴ The Political Officers of the Eastern Frontier were thus placed under the immediate authority and direction of the Governor of Assam as delegate of the Governor-General of India. During the Second World War a necessity to bring the Frontier Areas under more direct control was felt and a new post of Advisor to the Governor for the speedy development of Hill Areas was created and placed under the Governor of Assam.⁴⁵ The Frontier Tract Regulation of 1880 as amended in 1884 and 1888 was revised

in 1945 to accommodate the changes that took place during the present century.⁴⁶

It may not be out of place here to look at the reaction of the tribal people to the extension of administration in their territory by the British. The Anglo-Indian Government had to send a number of punitive expeditions to different hills to chastise the tribal people and impress upon them the consequence of misdeeds in the regularly administered areas.⁴⁷ Many a time the tribes thus pursued fell upon the expeditionary force and sometimes the forces were completely routed. But the peaceful expeditionary forces were never attacked* and when administrative posts were opened or offices were set up or schools or dispensaries were opened, the tribal people welcomed the Government and in some areas even requested the authorities to open such agencies in their hills. The annual reports of the Political Officers and the exploration reports bear testimony to such gestures. It goes to the credit of European officers that they succeeded in befriending the simple folks of the virgin hills and the tribes did not exhibit any hostile attitude to the Government.

V

Before concluding the paper it may be proper to analyse the motives behind the activities of the British Government in the Eastern Himalayan Frontier. Prior to the Revolt of 1857, the East India Company's Government followed a policy of social and educational reforms in different territories of India but excluded the tribal tracts from their purview. We may refer to the commutation of tribal rights over plains. This policy is well explained in Mackenzie's *Memorandum on Eastern Frontier of Bengal*, where he wrote : "We are in no way responsible for their management." Till the close of the third quarter of the last century the same principle was followed as is evident from the

* The Khampti rebellion of 1839 had a different origin. See A. Mackenzie's *A History, etc.*, Chap. IX.

For exploration reports and reaction of tribes see Reid's *A History of the Frontier Areas Bordering on Assam*.

remark of the Secretary to Bengal Government who wrote that in course of time the tribes would be acculturated by their contact with the civilisation of the plains people but then the Government did not envisage any policy to hasten that process.⁴⁸

But from the beginning of the last quarter of the nineteenth century a change in British attitude is evident. Though the declared policy of the British Government was one of non-intervention in affairs of the "natives", in the Frontiers now the Government was forced to embark upon a policy of gradual extension of Government over the tribal people.

Under the Scheduled District Act of 1876, Rules for the Administration of hitherto neglected Frontier were drawn up in 1880 and an Assistant Political Officer's post was created in 1882 to administer the Frontier Tracts. The Government followed up a policy of forwarding the centres of Administration into the interior regions and after the Simla Convention of 1914 when the Frontier Tracts were sub-divided into smaller units—establishments of Political Officers were created to serve the tribal people. A policy of gradual exploration, setting up road links, opening medical treatment centres, schools, post-offices, etc., was systematically followed from now on.⁴⁹

It is interesting to note that when the Nationalist Movement in India began to gain momentum and the National Congress declared "Swaraj" or full independence as the goal of the National movement, the British officers initiated a policy of "protection" of the simple folks of the hills.⁵⁰ Following the same policy when the Government of India Act 1915, as amended by the Act of 1919 was promulgated in 1921 in Assam, North East Frontier was put under the Governor of Assam, distinct from the Government of Assam, as a deputy of the Governor-General in Council, to enable him to protect the tribal people.⁵¹ After the promulgation of Government of India Act of 1935, by an order in Council, His Majesty the King in Council vested the administration of Assam once again in the Governor of the province.

The last four decades of the British rule saw the conscious development of a philosophy, if one says so, for the administra-

tion of the Eastern Himalayan people. The Government Agencies set up in the region were trying to enlist the sympathy of the local people by saying "what was needed for future is a policy of development and unification on lines suited to the genius of the hill people".⁵² As early as 1921 Census the European officers had begun to emphasise the exploitation of the tribal people by the plain dwellers⁵³ and looked for safeguards of the simple tribes. And when the demand for full independence became vigorous towards the beginning of the third decade of the last century officers of the Frontier Administration submitted proposal before the Government wherein they emphasised the need to keep the Frontier Tribes under the immediate authority and control of the Governor-General and the Secretary of State for India to (i) help the development of the tribal people in their own way (according to their own genius and tradition); (ii) to train up a team of tribal administrators who would carry on the administration of their country without allowing them to be overwhelmed by the Indian plains people.⁵⁴ We know that the policy was devised with a view to retaining a foothold in north-east India in the form of a colony of the British Empire after the withdrawal from India and not for the well-being of the tribal people.

Nevertheless, it cannot be gainsaid that the "five principles" of tribal development which is said to be original scheme that emerged from late Prime Minister Nehru in 1952 is neither a policy initiated by Nehru nor was it a product of V. Elwin embodied in a philosophy of NEFA.

This policy of tribal development was, of necessity, drawn up by the Political Officers of North East Frontier Administration when they pleaded for not placing them under Indian authorities after power in the Centre was transferred to the latter and Elwin was not correct when he said that the British followed a policy of "leaving them alone".⁵⁵

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MINERAL PROSPECTING IN NORTH- EASTERN INDIA IN THE MID- NINETEENTH CENTURY

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BRITISH INTERESTS in North-Eastern India during the 20's of the nineteenth century were apparently political and military rather than economic in nature. Deep British commitment in the area became inevitable in order to check the marauding Burmese troops and ensure a stable North-Eastern Frontier and if possible, to establish a buffer between the British Indian Empire and Burma. But with the discovery of minerals and subsequent economic interests, British political control over the area which had been hitherto loose was tightened gradually. Driven by the motives of profit and exploitation of the minerals, the British economic penetration in the area in the face of great natural obstacles remains an interesting stage of the triumph of man over nature.

For the sake of mineral prospecting, the British divided the area into a number of sectors viz., Upper Assam (Sub-Himalayan strata), Khasi Hills, Jaintia Hills, Garo Hills, Naga Hills and Cachar.

History of mineral discoveries : The existence of coal in Upper Assam was known from the earliest period of British occupation of the province. The first recorded notice of its existence is credited to Lieutenant Wilcox, who, in April 1825, accompanied a party up the Disang river to Barhat. He stated that "coal is found at no great distance", but he gave no details as to its mode of occurrence, or the exact locality in which it had been discovered. In a subsequent expedition up the Dihing river, Lt. Wilcox

observed a seam of coal in the bed of the Buri Dihing at Sup Kong, near which petroleum rises to the surface. Far to the eastward the same explorer again observed "thin strata of coal" on the north bank of the Dihing near Tumong-Tikrang, or village south-south-west from the snowy peak of Daphla Bum.

One of the earliest discoveries of coal was in the Saffrai. As early as 1828, a considerable quantity was actually raised by Mr. Bruce, who had been sent there for the purpose by David Scott, Commissioner of the North-East Frontier. Mr. Bruce with a party of 100 men ascended the river in canoes during the rains and commenced operations. 5000 maunds were quarried and a large quantity loaded into the canoes. But the difficulties of the navigation were so great, owing to the swiftness of the current, the rapid and sharp turnings, that four canoes were lost going down-stream. The remainder of the coal was brought in safety to the Brahmaputra and a boat load despatched to Calcutta for trial, where it was declared to be equal to English coal and "the best ever found in India".

Mr. Bruce also visited low hills not far from the river, where iron-ore was at that time extracted and smelted by the Assamese, the produce being worked up into dhaus for exchange with the Nagas for cotton. He observed petroleum springs in more than one localities. Lower down the stream, Mr. Bruce observed no less than eight other outcrops of coal which were inferior in quality. Coal and clay-ironstone were also found at Tiru-Ghat—the Tiru being a stream which joins the Saffrai on the left bank.¹

The existence of coal in the 'Nambua' (Nambar) a stream which joins the Dhansiri some miles south of Golaghat, was pointed out in 1837 by Mr. Brodie, who picked up loose pieces "of good quality". In the same year, Lt. H. Bigge and Dr. Griffith, while exploring the banks of the Namrup, in the Singpho country discovered "extremely good coal". Some of the coal, in which the structure of the original wood was plainly visible, appeared to have been lignite, and was not improbably from fossil stems in the Sub-Himalayan rocks.²

Major White at the same time discovered several springs of petroleum close to the camp on the Namrup river, which had hitherto been unknown to Europeans, and apparently almost un-

used by the neighbouring Singphos.³ (*Journal, Asiatic Society, Bengal*, Vol. VI, p. 243).

The Jaipur coal appears to have been first examined by Captain Hannay in 1837-38. He reported having found several outcrops, and also noticed the occurrence of clay iron-ore, some of the masses of which required two men to lift them. He also observed petroleum rising from some of the coal outcrops. He commenced clearing a large seam and samples were sent to Calcutta for testing.

While Captain Hannay's excavations were in progress, more definite information was gained by Captain Jenkins respecting the coal in the Disang, the existence of which had been previously indicated by Lt. Wilcox. There were two beds near the village of Borhat which appeared to be of first quality and favourably situated for working as well as for transport, so far as the waters of the Disang permitted. Close to one of the beds, several springs of petroleum were observed, from which the oil flowed into the pools in the water course, and four or five seers were collected by Captain Jenkin's servants.

A Coal Committee submitted a report to the Govt. in which they expressed the opinion, that, in the existing state of communications between Upper Assam and other parts of India, its coal could not be supplied in Calcutta at a cheaper rate than that from Bengal. However, they considered that it might be advantageously used for the supply of the Ganges steamers, and furnished estimates to show that it could be delivered at the higher stations on the Ganges at lower rates than were ruling for Burdwan coal.

In their second notice of the Assam coal, the Committee recorded a fresh discovery of the mineral in the Disang river by Lt. Brodie in 1839. In 1840 the Assam Tea Company were about to establish a coal quarry in this situation with the intention of keeping a depot supplied from it at Dikhu Mukh on the Brahmaputra. The Company at this time apparently had a quarry actually at work at Jaipur.

Mr. Bruce, who examined the Saffrai in 1828 had received information of coal in Dikhu, but its existence seems to have

been first proved by Mr. Sanders, Special Assistant to the Commissioner, who in 1842, worked on one of the beds he found near the village of Namsang, on account of Government. A further trial was subsequently made by the Assam Tea Company, who raised 1,000 maunds of coal and tried it on board their steamer. Mr. Smith, the commander, pronounced it "the best he ever had on board a steamer, generating steam quicker without clinker and far superior to any coal in Calcutta."⁴ (*Coal Committee's Report for May 1845*).

The final report of the Coal Committee was published in 1845, in which, under the head of Assam, a digest was given of all the then existing information regarding the coal of that province. In their concluding remarks "on the carriage of upper Assam coal to Bengal", an estimate was furnished of the cost at which it could be delivered by native boats at the depots on the Ganges, the conclusion the Committee arrived at being, that about 8 annas a maund would cover all expenses.

In a letter to Major Jenkins written in 1845, Captain Hannay described his search in the neighbourhood of Jaipur for petroleum. He obtained some specimens of "earthy and indurated sandy asphalte" near a spot about two miles from Jaipur, called Nahor Dung. These specimens were no doubt of earth and sandstone impregnated with inspissated petroleum. Hannay also visited the Namchik river. He writes: "At Namchuk Pathar, near the north of the river, the petroleum excludes from the banks, and a bed of very fine cooking coal runs across the bed of the Namtchuk muddy pools, throwing out white mud mixed with petroleum".

In the latter part of 1847, Major Hannay had two quarries opened at Jaipur on opposite banks of the Dihing, and was of opinion that a supply of coal fully equal to the requirements of Government could be obtained from these if boats were forthcoming for its carriage. Unless, however, the requirements of Government at that time was very small, Major Hannay must have overestimated the producing capacity of such quarries.

The next important inspection was done by H. B. Medlicott in 1865. After examining the Jaipur and Makum fields, he

pointed out the advantages of the former with regard to position, in being actually on the river bank. But he was impressed by the superiority of the coal from field of Assam. In the Namchik river, Medlicott observed large reserves of coal, which he considered to be practically unlimited, but at the same time pointed out the difficulties of extraction owing to the high inclination of the seams.

The intimate connection of the Assam petroleum with the coal measures is too obvious to escape attention. Altogether, the oil was known to rise considerably in more than a dozen localities, everyone of which was either on, or close to, the outcrop of the coal-bearing group. Mallet has given a list of 17 localities in which oil was observed, with the exception of the Janji coal field, petroleum was found in every coalfield from Namrup to the Disai. The most abundant find was near Makum. The copious discharge of gas and non-discharge of water being both favourable symptoms, in 1865 Mr. Medlicott recommended that experimental borings should be sunk there to test the value of the oil accumulations.⁵ (*Memoirs, G.S.I., Vol. IV*).

About the same time an attempt was being made by Mr. Goodenough, a member of the firm of McKillop, Stewart and Company, to utilise the petroleum of Assam. He appears to have been granted certain rights over a large tract of land on both sides of the Buri Dihing, extending from Jaipur to the effluence of the Noa Dihing. The first of the systematic borings for oil was commenced at Nahor Pung in November 1866. But the operation was unsuccessful in tapping oil.

Simultaneously with the Nahor Pung operation drilling was started at Makum. Oil was struck in one hole on 26 March, 1867 at 118 ft. and it immediately rose to 74 ft. in the bore. As many as eight holes were put down in the Majum area and the yield varied in each.

Notwithstanding these results, however, Mr. Goodenough was not successful in establishing a petroleum industry. Difficulty of transport seems to have been the main cause of failure, raising the cost of Assam Petroleum in Calcutta to a figure at which it could not compete with that from Rangoon and America.

Khasia Hills : The occurrence of good coal in the Khasia

Hills was known as early as 1815, when specimens of it forwarded by Mr. Stark were tested at the Govt. Gun-Foundry at Cossipore, near Calcutta, and were favourably reported on.

In 1832, Mr. Cracroft brought to public notice the existence of beds of coal close to the station of Cherrapunji. This discovery was followed up by the finding of other beds of coal in various places in the adjoining district. Regarding this the most important information referring to the few succeeding years is to be found in the Reports of the Proceedings of the Coal and Mineral Committee in 1838-1846.

Between 1840 and 1844, a considerable amount of coal was sent down from Cherrapunji under the superintendence of Colonel (then Major) Lister, the Political Agent for the Khasia Hills, part of which was sent to Dinapore and the upper stations on the Ganges, but the larger proportion was sent to Calcutta. In 1842 Col. Lister despatched to Chatuc 44,350 maunds of coal. Of this 39,750 maunds were sent to Calcutta. Again in the same year 65,955 maunds were delivered at Calcutta, giving a total of 105,705 maunds for that year. In 1844, the amount despatched to Calcutta was 96,582 maunds. The reserves of coal in the area was estimated at about 6,000,000 tons by Thomas Oldham, Superintendent. GSI⁶ (*The "Coal Resources and Production of India"* By T. Oldham, 1867).

In September 1844, the Government right in the coal mines at Cherrapunji was transferred to Mr. Engledue, then the agent in Calcutta for the Peninsular and Oriental Company. Under Engeldue's management the production from the mines diminished considerably. The mines were therefore, transferred to the Sylhet Coal Company, or to their representatives, Messrs. Gisborne and Co. Still there was no improvement in production. This attracted the attention of the Government and measures were suggested to improve mining and conveyance of the Cherra coal. The most difficult and expensive part of the transport was conveying the coal from the mines at the top of the hills to water carriage. The mines occurred at an elevation of 4,000 ft. above the adjoining plains from which the hills rose with a nearly vertical sharp.

Lieutenant Yule of the Bengal Engineers, was ordered to report "on the means of transporting the coal found near Cherrapunji to the Plains". Yule submitted his report early in 1842. Yule's plan was rejected as impracticable by Oldham. But one thing emerged from the report: the construction of railed roads on the entire distance of nearly 16 miles would cost anything between Rs. 66,500 to Rs. 1½ lakhs. This estimate was without the cost of trucks proposed to be acquired for the conveyance of coal. This plan, being considered too expensive, was shelved for the time being.

Jaintia Hills—In these hills coal was discovered at Lakadong in 1843 and its quality after testing was thought to be equal to the Cherra coal. In May 1848, Mr. Darley (at that time acting superintendent at the Cherra Mines) was granted a lease to work the coal there for 3 years. But shortly after the lease was granted differences arose between Mr. Darley and his employees, the Sylhet Coal Company, or Messrs. Gisborne and Co., resulting in the transfer of the mining rights by Mr. Darley to the Company. Owing to the friction between them there was "absence of energy in working the mines". (*Selections from the Records of the Bengal Government No. XIII*) Oldham estimated the quantity at Lakadong at about 45,500,000 maunds, sufficient to meet the "demands of many years to come".

One of the most important explorations in the area was carried out by Oldham himself in the wet seasons of 1851 and 1852. During these visits he not only estimated the quantity of coal but also made a brief sketch of the geological structure of the Khasi Hills. He was assisted by Mr. Medlicott and Mr. St. George and further made a survey of the hills from Cherrapunji to Nungklow. The map of these combined labours was published in 1854. During the second visit in 1852, Oldham also crossed the hills to Nonkradem and thence to the plains at Lacat.⁷ (*Memoirs of the GSI, Vo. I, 1859*).

Quality and possible uses of coal: Regarding the quality of the Assam coal, Oldham remarked that the Lakadong and Cherrapunji coal was superior to other Indian coal in their gas producing and illuminating properties. Assays of the Assam coal showed a proportion of ash not exceeding 2% to 5%. For

domestic purposes "it is remarkably good, lively and cleanly coal", but "it is open to the serious objection of being very brittle and disintegrating readily". Hence there was a considerable waste in the amount of small coal produced by excavation. Moreover, the coal was produced in blocks of very irregular form, and consequently very ill-adapted for convenient storage. Such type of fragile coal can be used only for river steamers or for stationary engines. Rough carriage in sea-going steamers would break the coal. Considering all the factors, the Assam coal, it was suggested, could be used for producing gas which would light Calcutta. The gas light was a cheaper, safer and more effective mode of lighting than the existing oil lamps. With the introduction of this system of lighting in Calcutta the Assam coal, it was thought, would be much sought after.

Another possible use of Assam coal, particularly of Cherra coal, was as fuel for the manufacture of lime in Sylhet, which was monopolised by Messrs. Inglis and Co. and Messrs. Stark. Sarkies and Co. The two companies produced a total amount of nearly 14,71,000 tons of lime annually. The only fuel employed during those days was wood or reeds called *nal*, principally the latter, which were collected in immense quantities from the extensive jheels in the vicinity of the Khasi Hills. The manufacture of the lime would be improved and at the same time rendered more economical, by the adoption of the ordinary form of lime-kiln; from which the lime is drawn below, and the charge renewed from above, while the burning is a continuous process. The adoption of this method would require the use of coal as the greater portion of the fuel employed.

An analysis of the British attempts at mineral prospecting in the area during this period brings out certain facts clear.

That there were considerable reserves of coal in the area. This coal was superior in quality to the native coal then supplied to the Calcutta market especially as regards its illuminating properties. Its position and the nature of the associated rocks were as such that it could be extracted with economy and safety. But the coal was situated at such a distance and such an elevation that under the existing arrangements the cost of transport from

the pit mouth to the place of shipment was considerable. Hence the coal could not be delivered in Calcutta with profit, where it faced competition from native as well as English and Welsh coals. But it was certainly possible to improve the means of communication by the outlay of some capital. The improved communication would render the working of the mines profitable.

Besides, the suggestions to improve transport of coal around the mines, a most important plan at a general improvement of communication was put forward by F. R. Nallet, F.G.S., G.S.I.⁸ (*Memoirs of the GSI*, Vol. XII, 1876). His suggestion was to improve the existing means of navigating the Brahmaputra. This would not only open out the great alluvial valley of Brahmaputra but also parts of Upper Assam and the present Arunachal Pradesh where there are innumerable streams, some navigable throughout the year. As the British efforts progressed, it was discovered that mining and navigation were interdependent. In the absence of efficient navigation for transport of coal for profitable marketing, no brisk mining was possible. On the other hand, navigation by steamers on the river would be handicapped without coal.

Two factors gave an added importance to the fuel question in Assam. The first was the opening up of communication with Sylhet and Cachar by river-steamers and secondly the Northern Bengal Railway was about to extend a branch line to Goalpara. Therefore the coal of Cherrapunji was being considered as a likely source of supply both for steamers and rail. Even before this the demand for fuel had been continuously increasing at a rapid rate, until 1866, in consequence of the extension of the use of coal instead of wood to the upper sections of the railway in the Gangetic plain, which nearly doubled the demands of the previous year. By this time the East Indian Railway had become the largest single consumer of Indian coal. Efforts were therefore stepped up to tap fuel resources wherever available. But owing to the utter absence of roads and inaccessible nature of the country all efforts at profitable exploitation of the resources proved abortive.

One of the causes of initial British failure was rivalry among the Englishmen themselves. The competition of a

“Capitalist nature” is discernible in the differences between Mr. Darley, acting superintendent at the Cherra Mines and his employers, Sylhet Coal Company. As Oldham himself stated the “differences between them” resulted in the “absence of energy in working the mines”. Moreover, the three years’ lease granted to them was not a sufficient period in which to develop the mines.

Want of a trustworthy map of an area hitherto unknown and lack of equipments for testing the minerals also handicapped the British pioneers. It may be recalled that all the testing was done in Calcutta and in the existing state of communications the transport of the minerals up to Calcutta even for testing posed a lot of problems. Moreover, the British lacked political control over the interior parts of the area where some coal beds were known to exist. At the time of Mr. Medicott’s visit in 1864-65, the authorities of Sibsagar stated that they could not undertake to protect his camp in the interior of the Naga Hills. Again, the British could not lay their hands on the coal bed south of Nonkradem, lamenting the fact that the territories around it was under the control of the Kyrim Rajah who was then independent.

In spite of the initial British failure, the spadework for future economic exploitation of North-Eastern India was done during the period under discussion. Mapping of the mines and their surrounding areas, discovery of routes to far-flung strategic points, study of plans for the improvement of communications and acquaintance with the people of the area as well as its climatic conditions and most important of all, working out a feasible plan for profitable utilization of the resources of the area were all done during this period. In short, the whole British administrative machinery was geared to plan and build up the infrastructure of capitalist development of the area.

Even at this early stage the process of gradual strangulation of the indigenous native industries had already started. It was to prevent indiscriminate and unsystematic working by Khasi merchants which resulted in enormous waste of coal, that the British acquired the rights over the mines in the Khasi hills. There was, however, no compensation for the native merchants and

workers who were put out of work. Moreover, the native iron-workers who supplied "codalies" to the neighbouring markets were put out of competition by the British who supplied the same material of better quality at a cheaper rate.

Significantly, the British political expansion in the area synchronised with the discovery of minerals in the area. With whatever jargons moral or religious, the imperialists might have coated the extension of British political authority in North-Eastern India,⁹ (*E. Gait : A History of Assam* p. 342) at the root of all British efforts lay the twin motives of economic exploitations and profit. If it was a matter of only political and military expediency, the British drive would have been fully justified in the 20's of the last century when Burma was still independent and a source of menace to North-Eastern Frontier. But in the two or three decades following the Anglo-Burmese war (1824-26) a stable North-East Frontier was established and the process of annexation might have been completely halted with the incorporation of Burma to the British Empire (1852), thus stamping out the single most potent source of danger to the frontier. But the thirst for fresh fields of possible economic exploitation and source of revenue goaded the British on to further annexations the last of which took place in 1891 with that of Manipur. So long as Burma was independent, the British policy of keeping the Kingdom of Manipur as a convenient buffer between the Indian Empire and Burma was in perfect harmony with British political and military interests. But the annexation of Manipur and other hill territories long after Burma's subjugation lays bare the real and hidden motive of the British capitalists.

A brief examination of the history of British political extension in the area will bring out this proposition clear.

In 1823, the management of the Brahmaputra valley was entrusted to David Scott. He became Agent to the Governor-General for the eastern frontier from Cachar and Sylhet in the south to the Sikkim country in the north. (*Letter No. 1, dated 14th November 1823, from the Secretary of the Government of India to Mr. Scott.*) David Scott's energies and those of his assistants were, in the main, directed to the assessment and

collection of the revenue¹⁰ (*E. Gait : A History of Assam* p. 347), another important aspect of the British economic penetration. Taxation and capitalist development went hand in hand. The benefits of the latter were reaped by the capitalists and the taxes levied from the people were meant to sustain the system which supported the capitalist exploitation. The fertile Brahmaputra Valley not only supported a sizeable section of the population in the area but the river was also an excellent means of communication in an area lacking in rail-roads and wheeled traffic. Moreover, the existence of coal and petroleum had been proved at different localities in the newly annexed area, as discussed earlier. The chief of the Matak territory in Upper Assam was given a semi-independent status simply because the British stood to gain little from the possession of his territory which was surrounded by jungles and languished in "comparative poverty".¹¹ (*E. Gait : A History of Assam* p. 343).

In 1832, the whole of Upper Assam except Sadiya and Matak was made over to Purandar Singh who became a "protected prince" paying a yearly tribute of Rs. 50,000 to the British. He was deposed and pensioned off in October 1838 on the twin grounds of mismanagement and corruption—the episode reminding us of the hungry wolf devouring the pleading lamb on one pretext or another. It may be noted here that by this time the mineral potential of upper Assam had already come to public notice.

The defence of the Surma Valley, another important route for penetration to the area, was entrusted to Sylhet Light Infantry. This regiment also occupied Cherrapunji at a later date. Assam Light Infantry and Sebundy Regiment were created to guard important outposts. By 1827, the construction of road from Rani, via Numgklow to the Surma Valley was complete.

Cachar was annexed in August 1832 by a proclamation after the assassination of its ruler who left no descendants either lineal or adopted. In 1833 the Khasi chiefs surrendered to the British after stout resistance. It may be noted here that the Khasis were alarmed by the prospect of subjugation and taxation as soon as the road from Rani, via Nungklow to Surma Valley was completed.¹² (*E. Gait : A History of Assam* p. 354). In March 1835,

Jaintia Parganas was annexed to British territory by Captain Lister. In 1842, Sadiya and Matak in Upper Assam, spared earlier, became parts of British territory. In 1854, Tularam Senapati's country was added to the North Cachar sub-division.

Between 1835 and 1851, there were ten military expeditions into the Naga hills and finally in 1866, the British took possession of a part of the Naga Hills. Later on, country of the Lhota Nagas was annexed in 1875, of the Angami Nagas in 1878-80, and of the Ao Nagas in 1889. In 1869, the Garos were formed into a separate district with headquarters at Tura. The Garos were finally brought under control in 1873. Between 1871-89, the Lushais were subdued, but the formation of the Lushai Hills district took place only in 1898. (*A Guha : Planter-Raj to Swaraj*, p. 2). The process of annexation came to a halt with Manipur's incorporation to the British Empire in 1891 after dramatic events. Annexation being complete, what remained unfulfilled were the economic objectives.

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THE CHINESE CLAIMS AND THE BRITISH POLICY ON THE SIKKIM FRONTIER (1886-1890)

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THE HIMALAYAS have always dominated the Asian policy of Britain, China and Russia. The geographical factors determined the shape of policy adopted by these powers. During the closing decades of the nineteenth century, it was a triangular game since the controversial areas were on the fringes of the three empires. British diplomacy was functioning on these points in two different directions. With regard to Sikkim and Hunza China was a potential rival and in the case of Karakorum frontier it was a potential ally. The present paper seeks to examine, in particular, how China influenced the British frontier policy towards Sikkim during the years 1887-1890. During this period there was a gradual shift in Government of India's policy towards China as far as the Sikkim-Tibetan border was concerned. The initial British confidence in the China intentions cooled down and "to avert future trouble" it was decided "to discourage China from advancing shadowy but embarrassing claims" on the Himalayan frontier.¹

The British Government in India, however, realised the need of the hour somewhat belatedly in the 1880's. We find a detailed analysis of the problems of India's northern frontier in its memorandum of 1 October 1889 which spoke of the uncertainty that existed at that time about the exact frontier from Afghanistan to Tibet. It voiced concern in the following words: "We are unable to indicate with precision the line of demarcation, nor indeed are we yet in a position to exclude the assertion of

paramount or concurrent suzerainty put forward by China over certain Himalayan tracts." From this time onwards the Indian Government insisted that no foreign interference should be allowed on its frontiers. With regard to China's claims beyond the Himalayan ranges the memorandum was prompt and emphatic : "The Chinese claim is evanescent and moribund and only requires time to admit of complete evaporation."² That the fact of Chinese authority had given place to the fiction of Chinese control is patent enough and yet significantly the fiction itself was being hugged.³

The smallest of the Himalayan states, Sikkim had not been a buffer since the 1880's precisely because British influence extended right through it to its northern border. Even though Sikkim was by treaty defined as being under British protection in the treaty of 1861 it did not result in any clear demarcation of its northern borders. In 1886, however, the British found that they could not much longer delay a clear assertion of their hold over the region. It proposed to send a commercial mission to Tibet by way of Sikkim. The members of this party—the Colman Macaulay Mission—were provided with Chinese passports. This formality had been gone through even though from the very beginning the Government of India had serious misgivings of "soliciting the intervention of China."⁴ In any case this reflects the initial British policy of moving ahead on the Himalayan frontier with the support and friendly cooperation of China.

The Commercial Mission to Lhasa was not received with favour by the Tibetans. In July, 1886 the Tibetans crossed their frontier and constructed a fort at Lingtu, a place upon Darjeeling-Tibet road, twelve miles inside the Sikkim territory. The Tibetan force remained in occupation of the area for eighteen months and the influence of China on the Tibetan Government was insufficient to bring about their peaceful retirement. The Government of India could not tolerate the situation indefinitely and ultimately decided to expel the Tibetan force by swift military action at the Sikkim border. The Tibetans suffered heavily and by the end of September, 1888 the British force had

cleared Sikkim territory of the intruders.⁵

At the end of the military expedition, negotiations for a settlement of the Sikkim-Tibetan frontier and other related matters were started not with the Tibetan authorities but with the Chinese Resident posted at Lhasa and the Peking government. This unusual procedure was followed as the Home Government believed that "the Chinese officials may be of great assistance to us in coming to a satisfactory settlement of the question". The Secretary of State was convinced that the "presence of the Chinese Envoy may bring about a better understanding."⁶ The British Government's firm policy was to keep on the best of terms with China. It impressed upon the Viceroy that "it would never do to break off with China in the present critical state of our negotiations with France and Russia with respect to both of which the goodwill and cooperation of the Chinese Government is most important to us."⁷ It is, therefore, evident that the Government of India moved ahead keeping the global imperial interests in mind. When the negotiations opened up in December 1888 the Government of India was full of hope that the Chinese representative would help in the process of a suitable agreement.

The Chinese Resident posted at Lhasa reached Gangtok on 21 November 1888 as the sole representative of Tibet and none of the principal Tibetan officials accompanied him. The Indian side was represented by Special Political Officer and the Secretary, Foreign Department, H. M. Durand. The Sikkim-Tibetan boundary question was discussed at Gangtok up to 10 January, 1889 and came to an abrupt end without reaching any formal understanding. The discussions at Gangtok showed that in spite of the cordial relation between Britain and China the two sides held widely different views regarding the Himalayan frontier.

The British demanded the recognition of the long established frontier between Sikkim and Tibet, the acknowledgement of their supremacy within the Sikkim state and an engagement on the part of the Tibetans that for the future they would not interfere in Sikkim affairs.⁸ Much to British surprise the

Chinese representative denied all knowledge of the treaties of the Government of India with Sikkim. The Chinese Resident in Tibet took the line that "Tibet is a vassal of the Chinese Empire, Tibet has claims over Sikkim and that China as a suzerain of Tibet has, therefore, rights over Sikkim."⁹ It should be pointed out that such claims were being put forward by the Chinese representative only because he had been allowed to represent Tibet and such an effort was being made at a time when Chinese authority over Tibet was itself uncertain and doubtful. The Viceroy drew attention to such a situation saying : "It was not easy to determine what was the relationship of China with Tibet and through Tibet with Sikkim."¹⁰ During the negotiations the Chinese Resident's effort was to establish links with Sikkim. He claimed that there was a tradition of ceremonial exchanges between China and Sikkim which the latter should be allowed to maintain. The Viceroy did not raise the question of Chinese authority over Tibet and decided to concentrate on Sikkim regarding which it was realised that "it will be very serious mistake to give way to Chinese pretensions in the matter."¹¹ As the Chinese representative was not prepared to give way the negotiations broke down in January 1889.

It was at this point that the British Government in India decided to outline its policy towards the long Himalayan frontier. H. M. Durand, the Foreign Secretary, who had taken part in the Anglo-Chinese negotiations stressed the need of counteracting Chinese claims in the following words : "We ought to establish the principle that we recognise no foreign rights over the states lying upon our side of the Himalayan water parting and the present case forms a most important precedent". He firmly opposed the efforts of China to put forward indirect claims to receive homage from Sikkim and pointed out that, "If we give way in respect of Sikkim we must be prepared to do so at some future date, not only with regard to Bhutan and Nepal but with regard to Kashmir and her feudatories such as Hunza and Nagar and with regard to any of the smaller Himalayan states."¹² Such a forceful assertion of the implications of the Chinese claims had its impact on the Viceroy and from this period onwards the Govern-

ment of India stuck to its position.

In spite of such a stand the Home Government pressurised the Viceroy "to deal with the Chinese as tenderly as we can".¹³ It suggested, and later insisted, the re-opening of negotiations with China on the Sikkim frontier problem. The British Foreign Office was "very anxious to avoid the risk of disturbing relations with China."¹⁴ The Government of India was told that the disputes were "matters of form". In its anxiety to gain China's favour the Home Government was prepared to accept any claims being put forward by China. This was, of course, resisted by the India authorities who, being nearer the scene, could see the Chinese game. In a letter, written in August 1889, the Government of India explained its stand: "There can, in our opinion, be no doubt that the Chinese and Tibetan pretensions in regard to Sikkim are part of a system and unless they are steadily resisted we shall have much difficulty in dealing with the Himalayan states."¹⁵ It is evident that the Government of India was engaged in the assertion of their authority on the Himalayas from this period onwards and had realised the necessity of resisting the Chinese claims.

Deliberations between the Chinese representative and the Political Officer in Sikkim were resumed and continued for a long time during the closing months of 1889. The two officers remained in regular correspondence with their respective Governments and the terms of the proposed treaty were finalised before the Chinese Resident in Tibet moved to Calcutta to sign the treaty with the Government of India on 17 March, 1890.

The "Convention between Great Britain and China relating to Sikkim and Tibet" had two main clauses. By the first clause the traditional boundary between Sikkim and Tibet was redefined and decided upon. By the second clause the Chinese accepted that the British Government had "direct and exclusive control over the internal administration and foreign relations of that state"¹⁶ and further conceded that "the Ruler of that State could not continue relations with any foreign power." The firmness of the Government of India ultimately proved useful and its exclusive hold on Sikkim was recognised. It may be pointed out that

this was the only frontier line on the Himalayan frontier which was defined by a treaty signed by the Chinese.

This was one of the most confused periods of British Himalayan policy when moves and countermoves in London, St. Petersburg, Peking and Calcutta had the effect of postponing any well-defined policy regarding the Chinese claims. For the purpose of this study it would be sufficient to refer to Lansdowne's words who said in January 1893 : "It is the Chinese fashion to keep claims eternally alive."¹⁷

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THE EVOLUTION OF ARUNACHAL FROM A TRIBAL AREA TO A FULL STATE

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I

Introduction

THE ARUNACHAL PRADESH or former Nefa with its area of 18,426 sq. km. and population of 4,44,744 with at least 30 tribes and 70 sub-tribes is little known to the rest of the Indian people due to its rough physical conditions.

Geologically, it can be divided into two broad regions : (a) the Himalayan regions of Kameng, Suban Siri, Siang and Lohit Districts and (b) the Patkoi hills in the Tirap District. On the west is Bhutan, another mountainous region. On the south is formidable Brahmaputra river—which is not easy to cross. To reach various parts of the country and their chief towns, one has to travel through various areas and river routes of Assam valley in the south. Over short distance, there is great range of elevation from the hills which rises to 300 metres from the plains of Assam to the inner and greater Himalayas—varying from 4,900 to 700 metres along the Mac-Mohon Line. Due to rapid changes in topography, the climatic condition is not uniform. The valleys at the foothills get heavy rains, while the areas at higher altitude get moderate rainfall. There is contrast in temperature and rainfall between sheltered valleys, foothills and mountain tops. The other peculiarity is the prevalence of heavy rains for nearly 9 months a year, i.e., there are pre-monsoon, monsoon and post-monsoon rains—for which travelling, road-building and communication are practically impossible. Specially in the Lohit area in the extreme east, one has to cross three

rivers at least ; other areas like Chaukham area of the Khamtis is practically like an island surrounded on all sides by small rivers. The region is also under forest estimated at 60,000 sq. kms. including 500 sq. miles under bamboo trees. Many important minerals are also traced in these regions.

At present the area has been divided into five districts after the name of the tributaries falling on the great Brahmaputra river. These are Kameng, Subansiri, Siang, Lohit, Tirap.

People—from time immemorial the Austrics and the Mongoloid tribes used to enter India from north and north-eastern border lands of Tibet, Shan and Karen States of Burma through river valleys and mountain passes before the Ahoms who entered this region through Pangsung in Assam Pass in the thirteenth century.

According to Burunjis, Kalika Puran and Jogini Tantra, the name of this region was known as Maha Kantara, Dharmaranya, Prag-Jyotishpur, Kamrupa. It is believed that the region comprises the present Assam Valley along with the northern regions above Brahmaputra together with Nagaland. Migration might have been mainly from north but there are evidences of intrusion of people from plains also. There are ruins of ancient temples and ramparts scattered all over the country—which bear witness to century-old relation between this region and the rest of India. Thus Bhalukpong in Kameng is claimed to be the capital of their forefather Jambaban of the Aka Tribes, Itanagar of Mayapore in Subansiri, where an Ahom king Ram Chandra was given protection while in exile by the Daflas, the Akasi Ganga and Malinthan in Siang, Bismark Nagar and Tamreswarī Temple (worshipped by the Deoris under Chutra kings) and Parasuram Kund, Shivalinga in Lohit and many other ruins are evidence of its connection with Aryan India during the past decades. In the ancient literature these people are described as 'Kirata' mentioned in the Atharva Veda and other old classics like Ramayana and the Mahabharata. From various descriptions the term Kirata may be taken as equivalent to Indo-Mongoloid tribes in the north-eastern region who had settled down within the eastern frontiers of India and contributed their share

to the making of Indian history and Indian culture. The Borohs, Kalitas, Merans, Motoks, Kochs, Chutias, Ahoms and their descendants settled down in the plains of Assam; while the Monpas, Sherdukpans and Akas of Kameng, Nishis, Dafla, Apa Tani of Subarnsiri, Adis, Gallong, Miuyong of Siang, Mishmis of Lohit belong to the same stock who settled down in the hills and became part and parcel of Indo-Mongoloid tribe within the Indian cultural unit. Many mythological stories like story of Rukmini, consort of Krishna and daughter of Bhisma, the love story of Aniruddha, grandson of Sreekrishna and Usha (daughter of Banaraja) of Jambavan in Bhalukpong—are some of them. The Chutias and Akas claim descent from them.

Historically, cultural contacts were regularly maintained during Ahom rule from the thirteenth century up to British occupation. Chronicles or Burunjis of the Ahom bear ample testimony to the different tribes of this north-eastern hills. They had contacts with these diverse tribes, created posts of officers like Khwo Gohain for the different outposts known as Duars (Charduar, Baraduar) and special officers for these contacts etc. In addition to these trade relations, inter-marriages and few cases of religious functions accelerated the process of contacts and good relations. Stories of intimate relation are alive in the traditions of the hill tribes apart from their references in the Burunjis. But one thing is clear that there was no political subjugation of these tribes by the Ahom rulers nor the tribals in spite of so many contacts lose their own identity.

These people or tribes probably entered India in small groups many years before the Ahoms and spread over the hills and plains and adjoining hills in different periods. The hills of the north with their difficult living conditions were certainly not an enviable place for the people to live in, so it can be surmised that they had been driven by necessity for more convenient places with better prospects of livelihood from the barren cold northern region. Some might have migrated from the tableland to the further south or from the plains to the hill at different times. So it is natural that people of the plains and neighbouring hills have many things in common in spite of their

different ways of life.

Arunachal Pradesh cannot be imagined as a separate entity apart from Assam—due to their geographical contiguity, common historical tradition, trade relations and cultural and religious affinity; so in discussing any aspect of Arunachal, Assam cannot be left out.

This Indo-Mongoloid fusion in the Indian body-politic certainly helped in shaping the political history of India. There are some trade routes leading from Sadiya into Tibet and China. They are the Pass of Dihang, the Mismi Route, the Patkoi Pass to Bhamo on the Irrawady. Such trade relations have helped to keep the sense of familiarity and brotherhood. Besides these routes, there were great 'annual markets in plains for buying and selling—which attracted the hillmen of north-eastern region. These marketing centres were in Sadiya (up to 1950), Udalgiri, Darranga, Joypur, Arjunguri near Sibsagar. According to V. Elwin hill tribes thus came into contact with outside world. The Mismis brought down Mismiteeta (a medicinal herb), ivory, skins, musks, the Apa Tanis brought large quantities of rubber, the Adis bartered skins, canes, cotton rug and wool for salt. Silk trade was also flourishing as hill people are expert in weaving silk. Khamti Daos, Singpho plough shares, Monpa woollen blankets were highly in demand by the plain people.

Language

The dialects used by these tribes are different in different areas—as they are separated from each other by hills and turbulent rivers. Most of the dialects belong to Tibeto-Burman and Austric Group except the Buddhists who have a written language. Assamese language though belonging to Indo-Aryan Group of languages according to our constitution—has a lot of words of Non-Aryan origin. In agricultural festivals like Bihu-dancing, singing etc. have a great amount of Mongoloid and Austric influence and closeness.

In the sphere of religion, influence of the surrounding regions had great impact on these hill tribes. Religion of these tribes

can be grouped under : 3 heads—(a) Buddhists and near ones, (b) Vaishnavas and the like, (c) Those who believe in one Supreme Being—offer prayers, perform ceremonies and make animal sacrifice. In the first group Khamptis who came from Burma mainly belong to Mahayana sect, the Sinphos to Vajra-yana sect, whereas Monpas, Sherdukpan of Kameng profess Mahayana form, some Tongsas of Tirap also practise Buddhism.

The great Vaisnava saint Sankara Deva of Assam has influence on the Noctes of Tirap, Daflas and Hill Miris of Subansiris. They follow Mahapurusia religion of Sankara Deva. Adis, Apatanis, Aka, Khowa, Mismi and the rest believe in one Supreme Being whose manifestations are seen in Dayni-Polo (sun-moon), Kangki-Koman (creator), Temi Jeming (all loving), Rune-Shane (The Great Architect), Milo Rabedo of Apatanis, (The Formless King), Ban Ranh (The Lord of Gods of Wanchoo), Homa Ngyam (The Great One of the Khowas). Their faith has a basic spiritual and religious aspect along with ceremonial, sacrificial and symbolic aspects. They have been accused in the past for encroachment in other areas of cultivation, stealing of others' property, taking away women folk. Some tribes had slaves also from the conquered tribes. Their past history is thoroughly described in *NEFA in the 19th century*, edited by Verrier Elwin. Yet they have some norms in their social lives which they follow strictly. Several books have been written on them by foreign and Indian anthropologists and research workers. Their way of living, co-operative spirit, unity against the common enemy, and struggle for existence amidst hostile environment, adaptation to it, capacity to fight with capricious nature, and to utilise and modify everything around them to their needs—deserve praise.

Agriculture

They depend mainly on agriculture and practise shifting cultivation. Each family of a tribe is allotted 5/6 hill area where they produce crops by turns. Lots of discussions have been held, lots of books have been written about the good and bad sides of this type of cultivation. It is to be admitted that in their

special environment, sudden change in this system of cultivation will be injurious to them. Terrace and wet cultivation are introduced in some areas on experimental basis—but this system of cultivation has very deep roots in the traditions of the people. Entire economic and social life thus revolves around various stages of cultivation. Shifting cultivation has very great disadvantages in the long run, but at present where land is in abundance, it has a number of advantages which are real to the cultivator. Along with this low productivity of terraced fields is also a deterrent factor in changing the form of cultivation. These areas are less developed and economically backward. As agriculture is bound up with their entire way of life, so any new introduction in agricultural technology in isolation to social and economic cultural needs is bound to disturb their lives and may have serious repercussions. So nothing is to be done in haste—such is the decision of the Government.

Self-Government

The democratic traditions are deep-rooted in the social and political life of the people of Arunachal. These traditional socio-political patterns signify certain basic values which the tribal population of Arunachal respect greatly. These democratic institutions are Kebang of Adi Tribes (Siang district) Baliang of Apa tanis, Ngothun of the Noctes (Tirap). The structure is very simple and effective. Every village is an independent unit by itself. Each of the villages has a Council of Elders—which exercises the highest legal and judicial powers. Kebang of the Adi Tribes is most efficient among all others. Women can not take part in the discussion—although they have nearly equal status as men in their social organisation and elsewhere.

The 1967 Regulation introducing Panchayet Raj in 1968 renamed the village authority as Grampanchayet thus tugging the village authority to the new system. But there is a special feature in Grampanchayet here. The village authority can wield judicial powers but the higher tiers of Anchal and Zilla did not enjoy them at first. This anomaly was ended in 1972. Now the village authority was separated from Grampanchayet and the

village authority or the gaon burah's role is to interpret customary laws on social matter. Thus supremacy of customary law is maintained, judicial system is separated from development and efforts are made to involve villagers or their representatives in their own development projects.

II

A whole picture of the people of Arunachal is presented here, rather in short space. Now, the main question of present day position in the background of national integration and political (defence) aspect is to be analysed.

For centuries this area was a neglected and isolated area. Nobody neither the Assamese nor British rulers gave any attention to this area. But after the India-China War of 1962 the importance of this area was realised. So more and more attention was being given to the development and well-being of the people here.

Condition in Assam (Ahom) Period

The Ahoms ruled in this region for 600 years from 1228 to 1827 A.D. Their relation with tribal people was friendly. During their wars with Chutias, Kacharis and even during Moa-Maria Revolt—this relation was not hampered. They encouraged inter-marriages, inter-tribal contacts in trade and social matters. They respected the independence of hill people—though they took punitive measures in times of raids and atrocities. The officers called Gohains administered the tribes on the frontier, established friendship and realised taxes. They practised four-fold policy of diplomacy, peace, conciliation and war. For closer relationship Ahom kings opened markets (hats) at Borhat, Namsang, Makun, Galeti, Ramani bazar. They had good relations with the Nagas also, who sold tapoica, arum, betel leaves, cotton, ginger and amber. The Naga chiefs supplied ivory, Mithun, dyed hair and salt. Careful watch on the frontier was kept by Special Officers; land grants and exchange of annual gifts for friendly

hill tribes call 'posa' were arranged so that normal life of both the people of the hills and plains was not disturbed.

After the Treaty of Yang-Daboo in 1827 and 1836 when Burma and Assam fell to the British power, set-back in the relations in existence in earlier days began. In the language of Verrier Elwin—"the policy of Govt. in the hill areas was to keep a skeleton administration, to send punitive expedition in case of serious raids, to impose a blockade and establish fortified posts at strategic points. But foreign missionaries were encouraged to preach their religion to tribals. Disaffection began in the tribal regions against the penetration of the British who then formed Non-Regulating Tracts to be administered directly by Deputy Commissioners to bring uniformity in administration in 1874. In 1914 by a further notification, Assam Frontier Tract Regulation of 1880 was extended to hills inhabited by the Abors, Miris, Mishmis, Shingpohs, Khamptis, Bhutias, Akas and Daflas and with it the North-East Frontier Tract with three administrative units : (a) Central & Eastern Section, (b) The Lakhimpore Frontier Tract, (c) the Western Section. In 1919 Central & Eastern were renamed as Sadiya Frontier Tract and Western Section as Balipara Frontier Tract. In 1965 these Frontier Divisions were renamed as Districts. These areas were under the Assam State but administered under the Governor as representative of the Centre through Deputy Commissioners, Asst. Commissioners etc., in place of Political Officers. In 1965 administrative responsibility of Nefa was transferred from External Affairs to the Home Ministry of Govt. of India. Practically all the District Headquarters were opened at their present locations during 1953-1955. The Subdivision Headquarters and Circles were a later development for better and intimate administration.

A complete change of outlook regarding this area began after 1951 of Post-Independence Period. Pandit Nehru said that "it is not possible or desirable to isolate the people of this area nor to allow them to function freely". They should be helped to develop themselves according to their own genius and Government should avoid imposing anything on them.

A new era thus began in this area regarding administration and development. Tribal rights in land and forests are respected. Customary laws are not disturbed, the shifting and *jhum* cultivation continue inspite of modern methods elsewhere. Various experts and officers are engaged to see about the development of agriculture, introduction of suitable new crops without disturbing their production and food habits. Outsiders are not allowed to have any property. Educational institutions and Health units, Cottage industry centres were opened in all the districts. The Govt. of India is moving cautiously while introducing any new projects. Tribal advisers like Haimendroff and Verrier Elwin were invited. Their self-government system for a period was retained, now it is changed under the 1967 Regulation introducing Panchayet Raj in 1968. The Govt. of India's policy through its administrators at various level is more or less successful. In 1978 a full-fledged assembly with 30 elected members and a Council of Ministers with Mr. P. K. Thungon as Chief Minister was introduced—thus fulfilling the pledge of democratising this area. North-Eastern Frontier Agency administrative unit was changed into State of Arunachal (land of the rising sun) in 1970 and on the way to being a full-fledged State like other ones. According to their wish a new bill 'Freedom of Indigenous Faith Bill', 1978, was passed to guard the tribals' religion and culture. A country-wide agitation, specially among the Christian community was raging against this, while the conscious tribal people in various parts of India supported it when introduced in Parliament this year. Plains people have some vague ideas about this Bill—as they do not know the tribal's sentiments, nor do they have an intimate knowledge about them. Views in support of this Bill are explained by their spokesmen at different times, so the Govt. of India cannot reject them outright.

The other States in North-Eastern Regions—Nagaland, Mizoram, Meghalaya were after 1947 under Assam administration. Of these about 90 p.c. people in Mizoram, 81 p.c. in Nagaland, 56 p.c. in Tripura, 51 p.c. in Khasi Hill are Christians and to some extent educated people. After Independence, the

Government of Assam did little for their development; moreover, the language policy of Assam was a great deterrent factor in the sphere of national integration and corruption in the administration was also responsible for dissatisfaction. Most of the tribal areas demanded separate States. The abuses of power in one Village Panchayet of Mizoram was responsible somewhat for Mizo Revolt of 1966. Even now after the recent victory of Brigadier Sailo—secession tendency can be traced from his statement where he declared his victory as victory of Christianity etc. Of the Naga people, some of them helped Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose during his struggle and stay in Manipur area.

This fact in other tribal States mark a contrast with the conditions of Arunachal. Due to establishment of well organised and integrated administration in Arunachal Pradesh, many-sided changes have set in almost all walks of life of the people. Many new ideas and practices are introduced in their life. They now adopt monetary economy in place of barter, modern treatment with medicines in health centres, pick up other languages like English, Hindi, Nepali besides their own, take to modern education seriously (now there are primary schools everywhere, 528 Junior Basic Schools, 45 Middle and 8 Higher Secondary, Schools and 1 College there), buy clothes from markets in addition to their hand-made clothings, use 'metalled ornaments in place of stone-beads and feathers, take the food of plains people—in one word, they have travelled far from the stage of excluded area of Assam to the present status of Union Territory. During last few years, many-sided changes have taken place. The national views are well understood—they are joining the main stream of Indian life—they are now politically conscious. It can be said that Arunachal Tribals are coming out of their age-old isolated position—thanks to the policy of Govt. of India and the efficient working of this policy by the various administrators. From the point of national integration—the experiment is quite successful in this strategic area.

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- Central Himalaya

ANCIENT GARHWAL IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

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IN MYTHOLOGY Himalaya has been divided into five divisions, namely, Kashmir, Jullundhar, Kurmanchal, Kedarkhand, and Nepal. Among these Kedarkhand is supposed to be situated in between Nepal and Kurmanchal and is widely spread ranging from Gangadwar (Hardwar) to 'Swaait Parvat' (greater Himalaya) and 'Tamsa' (Tons) to 'Budhachal' (Badhan Chamoli).¹

Modern Garhwal division is split into five districts that are to be seen under $28^{\circ} 26'$ and $31^{\circ} 28'$ northern latitude and $77^{\circ} 49'$ and $80^{\circ} 6'$ longitude. These districts to-day bear the names, respectively, Pauri, Dehradun, Tehri, Uttarkashi and Chamoli. These districts (Garhwal division) cover an area of 30,029 sq. km. inhabited by 20 lakhs 70 thousand people as per census of 1971. Garhwal division is widely spread from Changli to Nandaghunhati, 224 km. lengthwise and approximately the same in width, the northern border of which embraces Tibet and the southern meets Ruhelkhand Mandal.

This division is more densely populated in the sub-Himalayan region than in the greater Himalayas. The northern part of this division is famous for its high ranges and passes. About 100 peaks cover the height of more than 6000 metre, among which Nanda Devi (7816 metre)—the highest of all.

The Historicity of Garhwal

There are good reasons to suppose that the name given to this region to-day viz., Garhwal has been in vogue since sixteenth century A.D., as per the inscriptional findings of the seventeenth

century A.D. Many explanations are offered on the origin of the nomenclature of this division. According to Walton the name Garhwal has originated owing to the fact that this place abounds in several forts (Garhs)², but Raturi traces the origin of the name Garhwal to the 'Garhwar' and the political unification of this region by king Ajaipal in fifteenth century.³ A further modification to this is the name viz., 'Garh pul' followed as mentioned by Pati Ram.⁴

It is found that prior to all these, the region was named Kedara-Khanda, Sapadalaksa, Khasa-desa, Sivalika, Kedara-bhumi, Parvatakara and 'Srinagara Rajya.

During the Gupta period, through the writings of Banabhatta and Rajasekhara, we come across references to the conquest of Chandragupta II over Saka-Pati of 'Kartikayapura'.⁵ This Kartikayapura has been continuously referred to, in the copper-plates between the sixth A.D. and tenth centuries A.D.⁶ We have reason to assume that the place which acquired such important references during these centuries must have also been important in the Gupta period. Thus the conquest of Samudragupta of Katripura mentioned in *Prayaga-Prasasti* very clearly brings forth the fact that the name Kartipura actually refers to 'Kartikeya pura'. The Indian grammarian Panini too has mentioned about the city. Kartri which is supposed to be Kartripura seems to refer 'The Katya dynasty of Uttarakhanda according to Dr. Vasudev Saran Agrawal.⁷ Again in Mandsaur Inscription of Kumaragupta it is told that he ruled up to Kailasa and Sumeru. (Now it is Tibet, touching the Garhwal border). This suggests that the Garhwal division had been ruled by Gupta kings for a long time.

In fact, centuries before Gupta period it was known as 'Kuninda' which is mentioned by Ptolmey as Kulindae, ranging and covering the mountainous area alongside the rivers, Satluj, Ganges and Yamuna.⁸

Panini too has mentioned Kulu Janapada. The *Mahabharata* refers to king Subahu of Kuninda. Some of the Kuninda rulers reigned over Dehradun and Saharanpur areas, with Strughna as

their capital. The Chinese traveller, Hiuen Tsang has mentioned Strughnin in seventh century A.D. Dabral has divided Kuninda kingdom into six parts, namely 'Tamas' (Tons), Kalkot (Kalsi), Tangan (Chambi), Bhardwaj (southern part of Garhwal), Ranku (Pinder Valley) and Aatreya (Kashipur).⁹ Sanskrit and Pali texts mention Ushiradvaja and Banddhachala. Another name worth mentioning is Uttarakhanda, the use of which is in vogue even to-day. The prefix of Uttarapatha and the suffix of Kedarakhanda have perhaps given birth to the Uttarakhanda.

For various reasons, this region has been very famous right from the ancient times. The most characteristic feature of this region is perhaps its panoramic picturesque view of captivating snow-clad peaks, glaciers and the enchanting streams, flowing out of them. Sherring in his *Western Tibet and Borderland* writes that in such a small region like this there are at least eighty peaks higher than twenty thousand feet. Sir John Stratchey says —'I have seen various hills in Europe but nowhere did I come across the place that could compete with such a hilly range like this which combines vastness and greatness with such vegetation, grandeur and picturesqueness.' In the most ancient period of civilisation men inhabited this region. It has been proved by the findings of post-stone age implements in the spheres of Sivalik and stone and copper implements at Bahadurabad (Hardwar).

Earlier tribes inhabiting this region are said to be the Kolites, although the term is not free from ambiguity. However, even to this day the ruins of the monuments belonging to these primitive tribes seem to reflect their shadow on the various customs, conventions, religion and beliefs that prevail here.

In fact, in Garhwal the four-fold caste system does not seem to be very old. Here were basically two castes or classes, namely, 'Bith' and 'Dom'. The latter was entirely different from those residing in plains, they do not perform the various lowly tasks like those of the plains. According to Atkinson 'they were the original inhabitants of this region who were enslaved by the 'Khasas' (Bith). They are 'smaller in height, stout, square-built and less bearded'.

In Garhwal the very word 'Kol' has given birth to the names of various places and villages abundantly and both in Garhwal and 'Kunaor and Kulu' there is a tribe of similar occupation called 'Kohlis' by the people of lower hills.¹⁰ There is every reason to suppose that the Kiratas were the first to arrive and then the Khasas who came from the eastern side of Himalaya and settled on the western end. They suppressed the Kol race. This very fact has been indicated in literature and the reason that the river Bhagirathi as having another name Kirati and further more in Kumaun a tribe named Raj-Kirat as found even to-day, makes this fact very evident and significant to a great extent. Originally in Prakrit the name Kirat was in fact 'Kir'. With this very word have been associated various names like Kinnara, Kimpurusa, etc. There are so many villages in Garhwal deriving their nomenclature from *kir* as Kirkhoo, Kirdhar, Kirmana, Kirmoli, Kirsal, etc. The story of this name 'kir' does not cease here. It further gave birth to *tir*, *mir*, *ghir* in the Tarai area. Even to-day there are to be found races after the names *mihar*, *ghirat*, etc. Kyard, Kyar, Kidar, Kyark—village names are in fact 'kir' in disguise. The race Kirata thus spread all over the region. One of the subdivisions of this race became famous with the name Bhilda or Bhaira synonymous with Bhill, another synonym to Bhill-Kirat'. Therefore as river Bhagirathi acquired another name (Kirati), similarly its tributary came to be known as Bhillganga (Bhilangana). Numerous villages, temples, places derived their nomenclature from the word Bhill, e.g., Bhillkedar, Bhaldi, Bhaldiyana, Bhalli Bhel, Bhaligoun, Bhillkhet, etc.

This race 'Kash' in Kumaon and Garhwal division became 'Khash'. Like Kirata, the term Khasa has numerous derivatives. In the process of the nomadic movements of the Khasas several offshoots were yielded, famous among them being Tushar, Darad, Kash, Kush, Khosa, Khoga and Kushan, etc. In this connection Rahul Sankrityayana remarks: "Khasas were originally the forefathers of Sakas. The word Khas, if written vice versa, becomes Sakh(ka)".¹¹ Therefore as in plains the race of Saka offered names like *Kusa*, *Kusinara*, *Kusadvipa*, *Sakadvipa*, *Kosala*, etc. Similarly in this region it gave names like *kashani*, *kashmoli*, *kashoor*, *kashyali*, *khas shakan*, *shaknidhar siku*, *jaspur*,

kafald, kafol, kassoer, kashkhet, etc. The word 'Khasa' itself is present in various places like *khaspati, khasdhngri, khasaiti*, etc.

The race 'Khasa' was the worshipper of a god named 'Kashoo' which changed its name from Jaunsar to Kashmir as Mahasu, in Chambakangra as 'Mani Mahesh' and as 'Maheshwar' in rest of Garhwal¹². This race owing to their worship of 'Kashoo' has offered innumerable names to Garhwal in the past which are still in vogue, e.g., Nagra-su, Fara-su, Dhara-su, Jaha-su, Bamsu, Silsu, Langasu, Bhaya-su, Masu and Kula-su, etc.

The Vedic people emotionally identified this region as reminiscent of their parental abode Sumeru situated on the other side of the Himalayas, and thus preferred to establish and settle themselves down here. It again developed in them an emotional consolation and faith in the shrines, pilgrimages, the river sources (Gangotri, Yamunotri, etc.) regarding them pious and holy.

This religious zeal and sanctity resulted in a strong desire among the religious-minded persons to go back to their parental abode to relieve them of their physical existence, i.e., in order to die, thus deriving an emotional and spiritual gratification out of their practice. It perhaps almost became a custom long cherished among the most elderly lot. The *Mahabharata* refers to this custom where Yudhistira is mentioned as going alone to some derelict in order to relieve him of his body, in short, to be redeemed. This very custom became so popular that even the Buddhists came to believe in it. The fact is worth mentioning that in present times we happen to find places like Satopanth, Mahapanth and Bhrigupanth close to Gangotri, Kedarnath, and Badrinath. The very word Panth is 'path', that is, pass. Interesting it is to know that to-day we find the passes Viti (5068 m.), Mana and Jangla Nelong, near these Panths, as Mana near Satopanth and Swargarohan (4,402 m.) Mahapanth* near Trijugi Narain pass and Jangla-Nelong pass near Bhrigu Panth. Thus we may come to the conclusion that the ancients had come to know the various passes through which they could reach Tibet. The

* In 1829, Skinner visited Kedarnath and related the story that "nearly 15000 *yatris* went to heaven from Mahapanth this year". —*Uttarakhanda*, p. 79, K. S. Fonia.

journey to their religious resorts must have been very long, and in order to relax for a while, they established various *asramas* where there were hot springs and other halting amenities. Thus *Vyasa-asrama*, *Narayana-asrama*, *Badarikasrama*, *Tapovana*, *Uttarakasi* and *Markendeya*, *Saivasrama*. *Gangasrama* were established in the high altitude Himalayan region. The famous Tanganas and Pestanganas who are named as Tangnoi by Ptolemy traded with Tibet and made those pilgrimage routes famous. The means of transport for export and import were sheep named 'Ranku' and ambers named 'Tanghan'. From Tibet they used to import wool (*suhaga*) precious stones, salt gold dust, hides and herbs. From plains they exported rice, sugar, metals and domestic implements to Tibet. The various border areas of Garhwal division known as Taknor, Tangani, Pantra, etc. have possibly derived their nomenclature from this Tangan-Partangar race. This trading race quite naturally halted in various places, giving birth to a custom of leaving some parts which were plain enough for halts. These halting and resting places are to-day known as Marora, Chauras, Sain, Tapar, Bagar, Hat Gauchar, and Ghurduri, etc.¹³ In this connection the following is worth quoting: "The Bhotia of Laddakh, Labuli of Chamba, Siptyal of Spiti, Malani of Kulu, Kinnor from the upper region of *Satluj*, Jads of Nalang, Marcha and Toleha of Mana and Nite, respectively, Johaties of Milam, Rajis of Askot and the various subraces of Nepal are in fact originated from Kiratas".¹⁴

Atkinson writes that the native name 'Bod' of Tibet was corrupted by the people of India into Bhot and the name Bhotia for the border tribes between the two countries. Erstwhile Tibet is mentioned at many places in the Hindu scriptures, especially in relation with Kailasa-Manasa. The Puranas place 'Uttarakuru' in Tibet. The *Satapatha Brahmana* relates that Manu descended in his ark from its summit.

The main cause of inter-relation with Tibet was Kailasa-Manasa pilgrimage via the two main mountain passes Niti and Mana, both in Garhwal. Pilgrims have also made use of the Kumaun route via Milamupulekh. The Bhotia traders have served as guides and co-travellers to pilgrims via the Garhwal routes to Kailasa. They well understood the geography, transport system,

climate and security needs of this journey and were a great help to pilgrims. These Bhotia traders used to stay in Tibet for months together and some time overstayed the whole year (season) and also established temporary marital relationship with Tibetan women.

Buddhism made an entry into Tibet by these high mountain pass routes and also from Ladakh side. The *Jataka* texts mention Agogang (Hardwar) as the first contact point for Buddhism in the Himalayan region. The second centre in mid-Garhwal was Brahmapura mentioned in the travels of the famous Chinese traveller Hiuen Tsang : "the next centre on the frontier was Bodhachal (present day Budhan)". K. M. Munshi opines that if Badarikashrama was a centre of Buddhism, it would not be surprising. Beyond Mana pass, Tholig math was the frontier centre of Buddhism on the Tibetan side.

Skirmishes between Tibetans and the Garhwalis were frequent. Folk songs of Garhwal, songs of prince Surajkunwar of Garhwal who was advised not to go to Bhotanta (Tibet) for it was the land of fairies and witches. Owing to the visits and influence of Hun-lamas, many places where they stayed have been named after them, e.g., Hunia-gaon, Hungot-uni, Hunia-Udiyar, Lambgaon, Lam Bazar, Lamaling, etc. Again words from the Garhwali dialect have clearly Tibetan influence, e.g., *cheng*, *choeng*, *chwincha*, etc. This influence was due to the Bhotia traders.

Hiuen-Tsang records that beyond 'Brahmapura kingdom is the kingdom of Suvarnagotra' where women rule, which was known to the Chinese people as 'Purvi-Rajya'.¹⁵

Records from the period of Yasovarman state that he had been able to get an idol of Vaikuntha (Vishnu incarnation) from the king of 'Kir Kangra'. This idol originally belonged to Kailasa Bhotanatha.¹⁶

Rahul has associated the legend of the inscription on the Nagraj idol to be a record of a Tibetan invasion.

The *Rajatarangini* says that the king of Kashmir, Lalitaditya, advanced as far as the Garhwal frontier to chase away the intrud-

ing Bhauttas or Bhotantis. His success is recorded in poetical stanzas which say that the fair-skinned Tibetan faces would not display fear being 'white' and the beautiful Tibetan women enchanted his soldiers.¹⁷ There is a reference that at this site the queen established a market Kamalahat. The present place 'Kasmira-hat' was possibly this Kamalahat.

The Mahayana sect of Buddhism was prevalent in scattered forms in Garhwal and Kumaun in the twelfth century A.D. during the reign of Purshotam Samanta, a suzerain of Nepali overlord, Ashok Challa. This Purshotam Samanta established *gandhakuthi* at Bodh-Gaya and an inscription on the Buddha idol reveals that he also established a *bodhi-chaitya* at Chakrawang¹⁸, which may be identified with modern Chaprang.

A late sixteenth century record of Srinagar Raj (Garhwal) states that he defeated the king of Chaprang and brought away the golden 'Kalasa' and presented it to Gauri math¹⁹, i.e., Gauraja Devi Temple of Develgarh near Srinagar. His successor Sham Shah also invaded Chaprang but a blizzard routed the army.

In 1630 A.D. Mahipat Shah gained complete victory and possession of Chaprang but his governors could not survive the Alpine winters. Their successors were at Chaprang as late as 1920 A.D.²⁰

A great cultural impact of this invasion was the creation of the Sarola subdivision of Brahmins in Garhwal. The problem of this Alpine region forced Garhwali army to break their rules regarding food and eating habits and consequently the 'Sarola' was accepted as the solution and the subdivision has outlived its use.

Trade relations continued to exist even up to the times when Garhwal was subject to the British crown. Only after the Sino-Indian hostilities in 1962 the trade routes were closed.

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HENRY RAMSAY THE UNCROWNED KING OF KUMAON

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NO BRITISHER in Kumaon has achieved such popularity as Sir Henry Ramsay. Even today his name is remembered with reverence and awe by the Kumaonis. The Ramsay Hospital in Nainital and the Ramsay Inter College in Almora still speak of his popularity. He has been decorated with the title of "the uncrowned king of Kumaon" by the local people. George Smith has regarded Sir Henry Ramsay as one of the twelve politicians of India.¹ Ramsay's administrative career was launched in August 1840 when he was appointed as Junior Assistant Commissioner, Kumaon Division,² and it lasted up to 1884 when he retired from his post as Commissioner of Kumaon. He was made Commissioner of Kumaon on 10 February 1856.³ Before that he officiated as Assistant and Senior Assistant Commissioner of Kumaon in 1844-45.⁴

Thus he administered in Kumaon for 44 years. During the whole course of his service so great was his zeal for the welfare of the people that he seldom took leave and most of his furloughs were medical.⁵ It was Sir Henry Ramsay who introduced potato cultivation⁶ in Kumaon for the first time. (It has not been mentioned by researchers hitherto.) He was also a pioneer as regards forestry in Kumaon and the United Provinces. People are talking of aforestation and ecology today, but Sir Henry Ramsay as early as 1858 when he took over the management of the forests in Kumaon and Garhwal, felling of trees for the first time then was prohibited.⁷ In 1868, Major Pearson took over

charge of the working arrangements. About Ramsay's administration he writes in his report⁸ "when expressed in reference to an officer who is so much senior, and who bears so high a character as Col. Ramsay does, yet, I trust that it may not be considered that I am trespassing beyond the proper bounds of duty, if after the most minute and instructive examination of every part of these forests which has occupied me for the whole of two months I desire to place on record how strongly I have been impressed with the very perfect system of management that officer has instituted and carried out in them. I believe not too much to say that no officer who did possess the local knowledge and influence, which Col. Ramsay brought to bear on the work, could have effected so much in the same time..... I would desire to testify that perhaps in no forests in India has so much sound progress in forest conservancy been accomplished on so large a scale as has been effectually carried out in the sal forests of Kumaon and Garhwal".

One of his greatest works was the inhabitation of the Terai and Bhabhar area. Terai especially was infested with malarial fever and bowel troubles and so the people regarded it as a 'Kala Pani'. Today the Terai in Kumaon is known as the granary of U.P. and the credit goes to Henry Ramsay who first thought of settling people in this fertile tract. As soon as he came to office, he took precautions to check malaria and other diseases in this terrain. After that Terai was connected by well maintained roads and drinking wells were dug in most of the villages. The worst swamps were dried and channels for irrigation were cut out from the principal streams.⁹

Similarly Bhabhar was waterless¹⁰ and a serious impediment for inhabitation. Ramsay therefore constructed canals throughout Bhabhar by channelling water from the river Kosi.¹¹ Debi Das Kayasth in 1898 wrote, "... the canals, bridges, roads and bungalows which are seen to this day in the Bhabhar are his work".¹²

Road construction was also one of the many-facet development schemes undertaken by Sir Henry Ramsay. New roads to Almora to Nainital and Almora via Ranikhet from the plains

were constructed in 1872-73.¹³ All the rivers on the main roads were bridged to facilitate journey. Twentyseven suspension bridges were constructed and a new kind of a bridge called the 'wire-rope bridge' was introduced as this type was more suited to the hills.¹⁴

Ramsay adopted a peculiar system for the maintenance and repairing of roads. Within a reasonable distance roads were maintained by the villages. The Patwari was entrusted with the duty of seeing that repairs were being done. If they were not looked after then the cost of doing the repairs was taken from the villagers.¹⁵

He was a great builder also. The township of Haldwani was started by him. Ramsay writes in his report that there were only twenty-five Dak Bunglaows in the whole of Kumaon when he joined office. Few Inspection Bunglaows were added by him :¹⁶

- (1) At Ranikhet in 1866 ;
- (2) At Ramgarh in 1867 ;
- (3) At Khairna in 1864, reconstructed in 1866.
- (4) At Bhim Tal in 1884.
- (5) At Peora in 1884.

Further a leprosy hospital was constructed by him in Almora.¹⁷ The problem of potable water in Almora was also solved by him. In 1874 he initiated a scheme which remained the main source of Almora water supply.¹⁸ Nowadays again the people of Almora are suffering from an acute shortage of drinkable water and the U.P. Government with all its modern equipments and local support has been a total fiasco in this direction.

There was no drainage system in Nainital before 1880.¹⁹ After the famous landslide of 1880, it was felt necessary by Ramsay to start a drainage scheme, and by 1880's to 90's Nainital had a wonderful drainage system at a cost of 3 lakh rupees.²⁰ It should be remembered that Ramsay was not an engineer and what is more important that he did all this a hundred years ago in the absence of modern facilities. The drains are still existing in Nainital but the Municipal Board there is unable to maintain them owing to which tons of debris flow in the lake and it is one of the important causes for the organic pollution owing to which

90% of the local population in Nainital is suffering from stomach ailments. Webber writes²¹ that Ramsay constructed a bazar, a number of fine level roads and picturesque bunglaows in Nainital.

His contribution in the field of revenue is also important. For the first time when he settled the revenue in Kumaon village maps were prepared and actual field survey was made. To quote Atkinson²² : "The settlement department owes to him that it was able to achieve the great work accomplished."

During Ramsay's time enormous progress in tea cultivation took place. In 1859, the land for tea cultivation was only 166 acres,²³ while in 1880 the number of tea gardens were 43 and the total area was 3,977 acres in Kumaon and Garhwal.²⁴ Today there is only one tea garden in Kumaon and Garhwal. Small-scale industries such as making of blankets, wool, baskets²⁵ also flourished during Ramsay's period.

Ramsay completely changed the administration of justice in Kumaon. He made decisions keeping the local customs in mind wherever relevant. "In my opinion", he once remarked when on spot he was deciding a boundary dispute, the best administration is that which deals out justice on intelligible principles which never change."²⁶ Jim Corbett has also appreciated his sense-of justice.²⁷

There are several interesting anecdotes about Ramsay's administration of justice and his typical way of tackling problems. In the early period of Ramsay's tenure, Terai was infested with dacoits and the police was helpless in dealing with them. Ramsay came to know that there was a mail-runner who had acquaintance with all the dacoits. He called him immediately and appointed him as Sub-Inspector of Police, Terai. Automatically the dacoits were arrested.

Then there were five brothers in Patti Salem who were very rich and wicked. It was said that they had committed a murder but the police was unable to find any clue since the villagers were scared of those brothers. When Ramsay came to know about the state of affairs he went in disguise to that particular

village and spent a night in an old widow's house. While hobnobbing with the old woman he referred about the murder. The old woman thinking Ramsay to be a hillman told him everything. Soon the culprits were arrested.

There were certain factors which definitely helped Ramsay in achieving his remarkable success. Up to the time of Ramsay, administrative heads of the Divisions were more or less independent of the higher authorities in their routine methods of administration.²⁸ Ramsay was well versed in the local dialect and whenever on tour he shared the coarse and frugal meal with the villagers and asked them about their problems. He was very accessible to the local people and kind hearted. It is said that on every Tuesday he distributed change worth Rs. 8. On the eve of his retirement he gave one thousand rupees to his bearer and three hundred to his chaukidar. Even when he had left India, he extended financial help to his old servants.

But probably it was his love for Kumaon and his zeal to serve the people that made him so popular. As has been mentioned before, he never took leave unless necessary. Ramsay ceased to be Commissioner of Kumaon in 1884; but he was so attached to the people of Kumaon and their interests that he remained here for eight years more in unofficial capacity, serving the people. In 1892 his sons took him to England forcibly. When Ramsay left Kumaon he wept bitterly. His letters to Sri Badri Dutt Joshi inform us that he was not happy in England and always remembered Kumaon and her people.

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- **Western Himalaya**

LADAKH'S RELATIONS WITH THE SIKHS AND THE BRITISH IN THE FIRST HALF OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

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LADAKH, now the trans-Himalayan frontier district of Jammu and Kashmir State and the biggest in size in the Indian Union, was an important principality in the Western Himalayas in the first half of the nineteenth century. Thanks to the inquisitive and indefatigable travellers such as William Moorcroft, George Trebeck, G. T. Vigne, Mir Izzut Ullah and Alexander Csoma De Koros, that during this period Ladakh's commercial strategic and political importance was brought to public notice.

The object of this paper is to bring under focus and to discuss in detail relations of the Sikhs and the British Indian Government vis-a-vis Ladakh in the first half of the nineteenth century. Why did not the British, after acquiring control over the Simla Hill States in 1814-16, establish their suzerainty over the strategically and commercially important Kingdom of Ladakh? What policy did Maharaja Ranjit Singh, the powerful Sikh ruler, after his conquest of Kashmir in 1819, adopt towards Ladakh? Further, not being content with the titular status of Ladakh vis-a-vis the Lahore Durbar, why did Raja Gulab Singh of Jammu, a tributary of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, conquer Ladakh between 1834-40? In the following pages an attempt is made to discuss these questions.

The first quarter of the nineteenth century was marked by emergence of forces which worked for the integration of hill states in the Western Himalayas. The entire hilly region from Nepal

to Kashmir, including important states such as Kumaon, Garhwal, Bashahr, Kangra, Mandi, Kulu, Jammu and Kishtwar, was in turmoil and undergoing transformation. The three powers who consolidated their possessions in the Western Himalayas on the borders of Ladakh were Maharaja Ranjit Singh, the Hon'ble East India Company and the Dogra Raja Gulab Singh of Jammu. In order to understand the attitude and relations of these three powers vis-a-vis Ladakh, a brief description of the process of integration in this region would be relevant.

In the last quarter of the eighteenth century, the Gurkhas, an aggressive and militant tribe established its control over Nepal.¹ Their northward expansion having been checked in 1792, when they were defeated by the Sino-Tibetan forces, they turned their attention towards the West, and by 1804 conquered all the hill states situated between Nepal and the river Sutlej. In addition to other small hill states, their new acquisitions included Kumaon, Garhwal, Tehri and Bashahr. It is said that the Gurkhas were very ambitious and planned to conquer the hilly region up to Kashmir and even thought of establishing their power in the Panjab plains.² In pursuance of their expansionist policies, early in 1806, they crossed the river Sutlej and defeated Raja Sansar Chand Katoch at Mahl Mori who, during the last few years, after subduing many hill states, had become quite powerful in the Kangra region. The Gurkhas pressed on to Kangra where the Katoch ruler had entrenched himself. The siege of Kangra became a long drawn-out affair which exhausted Sansar Chand. In despair, the latter sought assistance from Maharaja Ranjit Singh, the powerful Sikh ruler. In May, 1809, the Maharaja sent a large army to Kangra and compelled the Gurkhas to retire across the Sutlej.³ True, Sansar Chand got rid of the Gurkha menace but the price which he had to pay to Ranjit Singh was quite heavy: the Sikh ruler became his suzerain and got possession of Kangra—the gateway to the hills.

After establishing his control over Kangra, the Maharaja conquered other hill states situated between the Sutlej and the Ravi. These included Guler, Jaswan, Nur Pur, Datar Pur and Kotlehr. Ranjit Singh appointed Desa Singh Majithia as Nazim

(Governor) of the Kangra hills and asked him to survey the country.⁴ Desa Singh realised tribute from all the Kangra hill states including Kulu, Suket and Mandi, and consolidated the Sikh rule in these hills. Thus, the Kangra hill states came under the control of Maharaja Ranjit Singh and his possessions from Kulu side extended right up to the boundary of Ladakh.

In addition to the Kangra hills, Ranjit Singh had simultaneously paid attention to the Jammu hills, where he had to reckon with the individual chiefs. Between the Jhelum and the Ravi, there were twenty-two states.⁵ The rulers of these states owed allegiance to the Durrani monarchs of Afghanistan. But when the Kabul monarchy became weak, the hill chiefs asserted their independence and kept quarrelling among themselves. In 1800-1801, Ranjit Singh realised tribute from Raja Jit Singh of Jammu and soon after subdued Basohli and Chamba.

However, it was after 1809, when his own expansion beyond the Sutlej had been checked by the British and he had expelled the Gurkhas from the Kangra hills that the Maharaja paid serious attention to the Jammu regions. He had now decided to conquer Kashmir, and for this it was necessary for him to subdue all the hill principalities situated to the south of the Pir Panjal Range. In 1812, the Sikh army defeated the Mohammeden chiefs of Akhnur, Rajouri and Bhimbar. Although Jammu had acknowledged Ranjit Singh's suzerainty in 1801, revolts against him continued. So, it was annexed and given in Jagir to Prince Kharak Singh.

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

Soon after the conquest of Kashmir Maharaja Ranjit Singh sent his emissaries to Ladakh demanding tribute and customary presents,⁶ which the Ladakhi rulers had been paying to the rulers of Kashmir since 1681-83.⁷ The king of Ladakh paid the tribute,⁸ and the emissaries of the Maharaja returned to

Srinagar. William Moorcroft, an English traveller who then happened to be in Leh, tells us that in October, 1820, the Maharaja's envoy again visited Ladakh, realized the tribute and advised the (Ladakhi) ruler to make the payment regularly.⁹ The Prime Minister of Ladakh also wrote to the Sikh Governor of Kashmir that at that time, he apprehended an attack from Ahmad Shah, King of Baltistan and if necessity arose, he would apply for assistance.¹⁰ It appears that Leh continued to pay this customary tribute to the Sikh Nazim of Kashmir till 1834, when Ladakh was invaded by the Dogras. The state of affairs in Ladakh before 1834 has been described in the *Chronicles of Ladakh*¹¹ as follows :

To say 'Salam' to the King of Ladakh, there came annually from Kashmir called Malig¹² and together with him about 100 assistant pony-men. In return to this, the King of Ladakh sent with a man from Kha-la-tse, called Drag-chos-don-grule, various products of Ladakh, for instance, a yak, a sheep, a goat, a dog and also more valuable things.

* * *

Another power which in the first quarter of the nineteenth century acquired possessions in the Western Himalayas was the Hon'ble East India Company. Founded in 1600, for about century and a half, it pursued its trade activities. However, after that it started acquiring territory and by the first decade of the nineteenth century, became a puissant power in India. Lord Wellesley, Governor-General (1798-1805), pursued a forward policy and pushed the Company's frontier up to the banks of the Jamuna in the north ; this included Delhi, the imperial city of India. By 1809, John Company further extended its frontier westward for about 200 miles and thus the Sutlej became its boundary with the Lahore Durbar.

The newly-acquired British territory lying between the rivers Jamuna and Sutlej was bounded in the east by the Gurkha possessions. After their defeat at Kangra in 1809, Gurkha encroachments on the Gangetic plains and the Company's territory increased. This resulted in the Anglo-Nepalese War of 1814-16

in which the Gurkhas were defeated. Under the treaty of Saugauli (March 1816), the Gurkhas ceded to the Company, all territory lying between the rivers Kali and Sutlej. This included Kumaon, Garhwal, Bashahr and many other hill states. Bashahr, situated on both sides of the Sutlej, is having common boundary with Ladakh and West Tibet.

Moorcroft's visit to Ladakh, alluded to earlier, furnishes some details which help in understanding the Company's attitude vis-a-vis Ladakh. It may thus be mentioned briefly.

William Moorcroft, one of the most enterprising English travellers, who was in the service of John Company and who styled himself as 'Superintendent of the Hon'ble Company's stud', on his way to visit some Central Asian countries reached Leh (capital of Ladakh) in September, 1820. The ostensible object of his mission was to procure horses to improve the breed within British provinces and to explore the possibilities of opening trans-Himalayan region for British commerce. However, it is also probable that another motive of his journey was to get intelligence about the policy and commercial penetration of Russia in this region. He was furnished with certificates of introduction in English, Russian, Persian and Chinese languages signed on sealing wax, with the Company's large seal.¹⁸ First, the Ladakhis put many obstacles in Moorcroft's entry into their country. But once in Leh, by his persuasive eloquence and prodigal distribution of presents, Moorcroft won the confidence of Ladakhi King and Leh officialdom.

During his stay of about two years in Ladakh, Moorcroft wrote detailed letters to the Governor-General in which he highlighted the strategic and commercial importance of Ladakh. He observed that British control over Ladakh would facilitate the project of tapping the shawl-wool trade of West Tibet, and in addition, Ladakh would act as key for opening the vast markets of Chinese Turkestan and other Central Asian countries for British goods. Militarily, Ladakh was invulnerable; its very high mountains, deep ravines and unfrequented narrow footpaths were its defences. The English traveller estimated that the Company's monthly expenditure for maintaining peace in this

area would not exceed rupees one thousand.¹⁴ Further, Ladakh would act as a base for operations against China, if the necessity ever arose and British presence in Ladakh, in addition to keeping in awe Maharaja Ranjit Singh, would forestall any Russian attempt to invade India from the north.

In May 1821, Moorcroft on behalf of English merchants signed a commercial engagement with the rulers of Ladakh. Under this agreement, British merchants were permitted to trade with Ladakh and through it with the Chinese and Western Turkestan. The Ladakhi authorities also allowed a reduction of nearly one-fourth of the amount of the duties which was levied on the merchandise of traders from the Punjab. Moorcroft's object in concluding this commercial agreement was to seek access to Ladakh and its environs for British trade.

The commercial agreement was followed by an offer of allegiance of Ladakh to the Company. Moorcroft's remarks that he simply acted as a medium for forwarding the memorial to the Governor-General are not convincing.¹⁵ In the Chronicles of Ladakh, we notice that William Moorcroft and his companion George Trebeck, sensing the danger of Ladakh being conquered by others, offered to build a 'tower' (fort) in Ladakh,¹⁶ but this offer was rejected by the Ladakhi authorities.¹⁷ It appears that the English traveller and his companions tried to convince the Ladakhi authorities that the best solution to save Ladakh from any invasion by the Sikhs or Russia or any other power was to accept the protection of John Company and place Ladakh under British guardianship. Important clauses in the memorial were that the Company's government was not to interfere in the internal administration of Ladakh, but if the latter suffered aggression from any other power, then, on application from the Ladakhi King, the Company was to send its forces to protect this Himalayan principality.¹⁸ Expenditure incurred on such an expedition was to be defrayed by the Company.¹⁹

Moorcroft's long stay in Ladakh had raised suspicions in the mind of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. The latter sent special messengers to Leh to enquire about Moorcroft's activities and objects there.²⁰ The English traveller's reply was that after sign-

ing a commercial treaty with the authorities of Ladakh, he was busy in settling the duties to be levied on English merchants at Yaqand.²¹ Moorcroft further remarked that there were rumours in Ladakh at that time that the Maharaja intended to send a force there. Any such action, Moorcroft impressed on the Sikh ruler would stifle the flow of shawl-wool into Kashmir, thereby seriously affecting its economy.²² In Moorcroft's own words, as he later wrote to a friend, his purpose in writing this letter was to alarm Ranjit Singh's ruling passion and avert any probable Sikh invasion of Ladakh until the Governor-General decided about Ladakh's tender of allegiance to the British.²³

Moorcroft's letter raised apprehensions in the Maharaja's mind and he perceived in it a hidden threat. The Sikh ruler's Agent in Delhi handed over this letter in original to Sir David Ochterlony, British Resident and desired to know British attitude vis-a-vis Ladakh. The Governor-general wrote to Ranjit Singh expressing regret and surprise that Moorcroft's letter excited apprehensions in the Lahore ruler's mind.²⁴ The Maharaja was told that Moorcroft had acted without any sanction, and that the offer of allegiance from Ladakh was received and rejected.²⁵ The Maharaja was further assured of British friendship. Moorcroft's recommendations about the acceptance of the allegiance of Ladakh were thus rejected by the British Indian Government. The latter also disapproved of Moorcroft's conduct and disowned him.²⁶

After Moorcroft's visit, Ladakh was no longer *terra incognita*. This leads to certain questions. If his observations about Ladakh's commercial, strategic and political importance were correct, then why did the British Indian Government refuse the allegiance of Ladakh? And if Russian overtures befriending the Chiefs of this area for the purpose of creating difficulties for the British in Indies,^{26a} were correct, then how would the Company's interests and possessions in India remain safe? Answers to these questions are not far to seek. First, the Company had recently fought expensive wars with the Gurkhas, the Pindaris and the Marathas and had just begun to digest the big slices of territories acquired during the Governor-Generalship of Lord Hastings.

Under these circumstances the Company was not prepared to commit itself to a remote territory. Secondly, the British were apprehensive lest any interference in Ladakh should provoke Chinese resentment, thus endangering their commerce with China by sea. Thirdly, the Company at that time did not want to give umbrage to Ranjit Singh. The British knew that after his conquest of Kashmir in 1819, the Maharaja had received tribute from Ladakh and it was under his sphere of influence. Finally, a Russian threat of the invasion of India from the north was not as real, as it was from the north-west.

* * *

Yet the third power which brought an end to Ladakhi ruler's pretensions for independence and annexed Ladakh with the Sikh state was the Dogra Raja Gulab Singh. True, Maharaja Ranjit Singh had annexed Jammu in 1811 and subdued many surrounding hill Chiefs, uprising against the Sikh ruler in this region continued, however. It was Gulab Singh, descendent of collateral branch of the ruling family of Jammu, who ultimately established order in the Jammu region.²⁷ About 1820, the Maharaja granted Jammu in jagir to Gulab Singh and asked him to subdue Kishtwar—a state in the interior of west Himalayas whose ruler, Raja Tegh Singh had offended Ranjit Singh by providing asylum to Shah Shujah, the ex-king of Kabul. The latter had escaped from the Maharaja's captivity in 1815. Gulab Singh defeated Tegh Singh, sent him to Lahore and annexed Kishtwar.²⁸ About 1822, the Maharaja entrusted the administration of the Jammu hills to Gulab Singh and granted him and his successors, the principality of Jammu with the hereditary title of Raja. Gulab Singh's younger brothers, Dhian Singh and Suchet Singh were also made Rajas and granted Jagirs of Bhimbar, Kussal, Ram Nagar and Sambha.

The Dogra brothers made a common cause. While Dhian Singh and Suchet Singh generally lived at Lahore, Gulab Singh spent most of the time in Jammu and looked after the *Jagirs* of his brothers also. Dhian Singh's first holding of the post of *Deodhiwala* and then his elevation to Prime Ministership in 1828,

which place he held till his death in 1843, further increased the influence of Dogra brothers in the Lahore Durbar. After becoming administrator of Jammu, Raja Gulab Singh took great pains to consolidate his position in the Jammu hills ; he conquered more places such as Behandrate, Chaneni and the fort of Samarth.²⁹ In addition, he held large tracts of territory in the Punjab plains and had acquired monopoly of the salt mines of Pinddad Khan.³⁰ By 1834, Raja Gulab Singh began to be considered after Maharaja Ranjit Singh 'the greatest Chief in the Punjab'. Hutchinson and Vogel observe that nominally he made these conquests and annexations in the name of the Sikhs and as 'extensions of the Kingdom of Lahore but in reality Gulab Singh was practically independent'.³¹

In order to administer large areas under his control, Raja Gulab Singh maintained a large and well-trained army. He was also having in his service, a most intrepid and faithful officer, namely Zorawar Singh Kahluria who, in the eighteen-twenties was appointed the Governor of Kishtwar. By the acquisition of Kishtwar, not only the boundaries of Gulab Singh's possessions had become conterminous with those of Ladakh, but he commanded two easy roads leading to Leh.

In the first quarter of the nineteenth century, Ladakh suffered from internal disorder. Tse-pal Nam-gyal (*ca.* 1790-1834, 1840-41), the last independent Ladakhi King was a weak and indolent ruler. Contrary to the Ladakhi traditions in matters of administration, he had seized the privy seal from the Prime Minister and had dismissed many old counsellors and governors. This alienated the Leh officialdom against the ruler. The former to blackmail the king frequently talked about the good old days of Tse-pal's predecessor and in 1820-21, warned the King that if he did not mend his ways, the reins of the administration were likely to be given to William Moorcroft and Trebeck, the English travellers who then happened to be in Leh.³² Again, about 1820, the Governor of Leh, in conjunction with an influential Lama made an attempt to depose the King.³³ Thus we find that internally administration of Ladakh was disintegrating and centrifugal forces were gaining momentum.

The state of affairs on the periphery of Ladakh was also no better and Tse-pal Nam-gyal had failed to defend the territorial integrity of his country. About 1825, Ratanu, the powerful Chamba Governor of Paddar, invaded Zanskar, one of the south-western districts of Ladakh and made it a tributary to Chamba.³⁴ Similarly about 1820, the people of Kulu, through the Lassar Valley, invaded Spiti and took away yaks, horses and other booty. In both the cases, despite supplications from his subjects to defend their motherland and retaliate, the indolent Leh ruler did not do anything and contrary to their expectations rebuked them.³⁵ The same dismal and sorry state of affairs prevailed on Ladakh's frontier with Baltistan. In 1821, a strong Balti force entered Ladakh, plundered the villages and escaped with loot.³⁶ Ahmad Shah, the shrewd Balti ruler, seeing Tse-Pal's incapacity to defend his country, frequently invaded Ladakh. The latter's relations with Bashahr, one of the important Simla Hill States situated to its south and since 1816 under the control of East India Company, were also far from friendly. The frontier between the two states was quite frequently the scene of much desultory warfare. Captain C. P. Kennedy, Assistant Deputy Superintendent, Sikh and Hill States, with headquarters at Subathu, wrote in 1824 that the aggressions between Ladakh and Bashahr "resembled those that formerly occurred in Scotland in feudal times, consisting of forays and assaults on the borders the seizure of cattle and firing of villages etc."³⁷

In addition to internal disorder in Ladakh and failure to defend its frontiers, another cause which invited Dogra invasions was the lucrative shawl-wool trade of this Himalayan principality. Raja Gulab Singh wanted that shawl-wool produced in Ladakh, as well as the produce of west Tibet which passed through that country,³⁸ should be exported to the Indian plains through his possessions around Jammu rather than being exported to and through Kashmir.³⁹

Yet another cause of Dogra invasions of Ladakh appears to have been that Raja Gulab Singh wanted to encircle the Kashmir Valley from the north-east. He already controlled the passes leading into the valley from the south. Thus his possession over

Ladakh would facilitate his conquest of Kashmir over which he had set his heart.

Zorawar Singh Kahluria, Raja Gulab Singh's Governor in Kishtwar, invaded Ladakh four times between 1834-1839. He followed both the Kishtwar-Zanskar Leh Road and the Kishtwar-Suru-Kargil-Leh road. The Ladakhis put strong opposition and fought many a pitched battle, but were ultimately defeated.⁴⁰ Even after conceding defeat and when Zorwar Singh returned to Kishtwar, they raised the standard of revolt again and again, but every time had to lick the dust. During these fateful five years, the Dogras became real rulers of Ladakh; Zorwar Singh dismissed and appointed the rulers in Leh as he wished. However in 1842, when Zorwar Singh's attempt to conquer and annex west Tibet failed and a Treaty was signed between the Dogras and the Tibetans on one hand, and their suzerains—the Sikhs and the Chinese on the other, the last nominal ruler of Ladakh was deposed and the Kingdom annexed to the Sikh State.

When Ladakh was invaded by the Dogras, the Leh rulers made many attempts to secure help from the British. First, the Ladakhi king and the heir-apparent made several representations to C. M. Wade, the Governor-General's Agent at Ludhiana requesting help against the invaders. Wade brought these requests to the notice of his Government as well as Maharaja Ranjit Singh, but did not press his point further as the affair "related to the other side of the Sutlej".⁴¹ In November 1838, the Ladakhi king sent a special emissary to Colonel Tapp, British Political Agent at Subathu and wrote :⁴¹

In consequence of the unprosperous and ruined condition of my country, I have not been able to pay nazarana. I am willing to show loyalty and obedience to the British Government, but I cannot on any account place myself in subjection to the Sikh authority.

Forwarding this letter to the Government, Colonel Tapp observed that if the British took Ladakh under its protection, it would considerably facilitate the commerce of the Company's territories with Chinese Tartary.⁴² However, Fort William did

not accept this proposal and advised Tapp 'not to encourage the [Ladakh] Raja to expect our protection'.⁴³ The hard-pressed ruler of Ladakh did not lose heart and sent yet another embassy of seven persons to Sir Henry Fane, the British Commander-in-Chief, then at Simla, requesting him to procure a *parwana* from his Government, as well as one from Maharaja Ranjit Singh restraining the Dogras from further depredations.⁴⁴ The British Commander-in-Chief, however replied that "as the country of Ladakh was beyond the limits of the Company's dominions" no aid could be given to the Ladakhi ruler.⁴⁵ In an earlier communication on the subject, the Governor-General had written to the Commander-in-Chief that "no hope of assistance can be held out to the Raja of Ladakh with whom the British Government" had no political connection.⁴⁶

However, within five years of signing of Sino-Sikh Treaty of Peace, 1842, Ladakh came under British control, albeit indirectly. In the First Sikh War (1845-46), Raja Gulab Singh did not help his suzerain, the Lahore Durbar. In March, 1846, the Raja signed the Treaty of Amritsar with the British. Under this treaty, *inter alia*, Gulab Singh was appointed the Maharaja of Jammu, Kashmir, Ladakh, Baltistan and Hazara ; he now recognized the supremacy of the British Government and agreed to allow the boundaries of his state with the Chinese empire to be determined by a joint frontier commission. He also agreed to pay small annual tribute to the British, who in return were to help and protect the Maharaja from external aggression.⁴⁷ Thus under the Treaty of Amritsar, the British Government became a paramount power vis-a-vis Maharaja Gulab Singh ; the latter was now freed from the control of Lahore Durbar.

In 1847-48 when the question of demarcating the boundaries of Maharaja Gulab Singh's State was taken up, the British realised that by giving Spiti, the boundaries of which were conterminous with Kulu, Bashahr and west Tibet, to the Maharaja, they had interposed a rival territory between their possessions on the Sutlej and the shawl-wool producing district of Chang Thang. This was likely to impede the flow of shawl-

wool and other commodities from west Tibet into territories directly controlled by the British. Therefore, after the Treaty of Amritsar, Lahul and Spiti, the two southern and fertile districts of Ladakh were detached and added to the British possessions of Kangra, Kulu and Mandi. That is why now Lahul and Spiti, unlike other parts of Ladakh, form a part of Himachal Pradesh and not that of Jammu and Kashmir State.

* * *

From the preceding pages, we conclude that the first quarter of the nineteenth century saw the establishment of strong rule of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, the East India Company and the Dogra Raja Gulab Singh in the western Himalayas and on the periphery of Ladakh. This led to the unification of a number of diverse principalities under three rulers. Maharaja Ranjit Singh, after his conquest of Kashmir in 1819, realised tribute from the Ladakhi Kings. However, Raja Gulab Singh did not like Ladakh's nominal political allegiance to the Lahore Durbar. The Raja's general, Zorawar Singh, after leading four expeditions annexed Ladakh in 1840, thereby extending the boundaries of Sikh State to the north and east to its true geographical limits. In 1846, Ladakh became a part of Maharaja Gulab Singh's state and in 1947, after the accession of Jammu and Kashmir state, it became a part of the Indian Union.

Ladakh's relations with the British Indian Government were determined by strategic and commercial considerations. British foreign policy in this region was influenced by the scare of Russian invasion over India. British authorities in Calcutta knew that Ladakh was contiguous not to the ever-sprawling dominions of the Czar as to the moribund Ch'ing dynasty. Moreover, it was fairly well-known to the British that between Ladakh and Russian possessions, Ili, Kokand and many other Central Asian Khanates intervened. Furthermore, the British sense of security was reinforced by the well-known historical fact that since early times, the course of foreign invaders lay not across the stupendous Karakoram and Pamir ranges but through the low-lying western Hindukush range, i.e., India's frontier with Afghanistan. Had it not been so, the British may

not have adopted policy of neutrality vis-a-vis Ladakh and Leh would have come under British protection much earlier before the Dogras moved into this area.

British policy towards Ladakh was also determined by economic considerations. After the Anglo-Nepalese War, 1814-16, when British India came into closer physical contact with Ladakh and west Tibet, the English merchants-cum-rulers became anxious to import highly remunerative shawl-wool into their possessions. For that very reason also they acquired the territory of Kangra, Kulu and Mandi in 1846. A little while after, when the British became a suzerain power vis-a-vis Maharaja Gulab Singh, they dismembered the southern districts of Lahul and Spiti from Ladakh and attached it with Kangra district of the Punjab.

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LORD LYTTON AND THE NORTHERN FRONTIER OF INDIA

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ALTHOUGH the long and sprawling northern frontier of India presents "the finest natural combination of boundary and barrier that exists in the world¹", the vulnerability of its western sector has made it a problem of prime concern in her external relations from the earliest times. This meeting place of some of the world's greatest mountain ranges², rivers³, and religious faiths⁴ from times immemorial came to have special significance as the probable junction of three huge territorial empires⁵ in the mid-nineteenth century. As such, during this period, it came to be intimately connected not only with the defence of India, but with Britain's imperial policy as well. Its value from this point of view was fully realised for the first time by Lord Lytton, who was also the first to lay down for India under the crown a coherent policy to meet the situation, which was followed by his successors at least in outline⁶.

Before we take up a study of the frontier policy of Lord Lytton, it will be proper to discuss the nature of the problem posed by India's frontier in the north and the north-west at the time.

The northern frontier of British India was, no doubt, a primary settlement frontier.⁷ As such, it naturally was "not a chosen line accepted after careful study and with far-seeing provision, but adopted because it represented, approximately, the points to which the Sikhs had at that time (under Ranjit Singh) pushed".⁸ However, this legacy of the annexation of Sindh and the conquest of Punjab was "not represented by any particular boundary line: it was a zone or belt of mountainous country of

varying width,"⁹ providing vast stretches of "no-man's land separating organised states from each other."¹⁰ It was in this situation that the real interest of the frontier in its physical and human aspects lay.

From the physical (geographical) point of view, the Indian frontier was a land of hills and deserts with cultivable valleys here and there. It comprised "that great range of mountains, which under various names, extends from Herat in the West, past Cabul, to the extreme northern boundary of Cashmere; and forms a watershed dividing the waters running south towards the Persian Gulf and the Indian seas and deserts."¹¹ This irregular belt of independent or semi-independent territory extending from the Himalaya and Tibet¹² to Baluchistan provided an almost impenetrable barrier to any invading foe except for the passes in its western sector like the Khyber, Kurram, Tochi, Gomal and Bolan, which had acted as gates of India from times immemorial, presenting "the easiest roads and those best adopted for military operations."¹³ Numerous other passes that exist in this region "can be placed outside the pale of strategical considerations."¹⁴ Nevertheless, geo-physically it remained a region of strategic importance, being contiguous to Central Asia, an area which could threaten India's security, especially in view of the Russian expansion there. Hence, the complete control of the frontier became incumbent on the British Government of India.

Added to the difficulties inherent in the geographical situation of this region, were the problems posed by the human aspect of the frontier, which presented "an ethnological jigsaw of frightening complexity".¹⁵ It was peopled by a large number of pastoral, wild hill tribes,¹⁶ mainly Pathans, with other considerable groups, such as the Ghilzais, the Turkomans, the Mongols, the Tajiks, the Afridis, the Baluchis, who held the passes and the contiguous terrain in their hands.¹⁷ These virile sons of the wilderness derived much of their national character from the environment of their country, which produced among them the most expert guerilla fighters in the world, and hardy mountaineers, possessed of great powers of endurance, a hatred of control and a patriotic spirit approximating to religion.¹⁸ Naturally, they

abhorred any government but that of their own chiefs. The Amir of Kabul claimed suzerainty over them, which was, nevertheless, ineffective. The poverty of the tribes was cause enough to make them invade British territories and to plunder caravans attempting the passes. However, political propaganda, particularly of the Afghans from Kabul or by local officials, from time to time, incited the tribes to rebel against the British Raj.¹⁹ Then there was the possibility of their falling under foreign influences. These reasons caused the British to attempt at controlling the frontier tribesmen to serve their purpose.

However, the British Government did not adopt a consistent or stereotyped policy towards these tribesmen. Not only did it vary from time to time, but owing to geographical, ethnological and political reasons a policy which was completely successful in one part of the frontier, was entirely unsuited to the other. It was, therefore, in the fitness of things that the administrators of these regions adopted different policies. Had they adopted a universal system of frontier policy, operating from the territories of the Mehtar of Chitral to the coast of Makran, it would have been a complete failure and the problem would have become more complicated and confused than before.

Since Punjab and Sindh were the two parts of the British dominions adjacent to the frontier, its administration prior to the formation of the North-Western Frontier Province, was entrusted to the authorities of these provinces. They adopted totally different frontier policies which resulted in the growth of two distinct schools of frontier administration, namely, the Punjab School and the Sindh School. The Punjab system depended "to a very large extent upon an efficient political management of the tribes,"²⁰ which, however, could not come fully in operation before the late eighteen seventies.²¹ The Punjab authorities aimed at protecting their subjects from the attacks of marauding bands, keeping the trade routes open and, as far as possible, keeping peace on the border.²² For this purpose, they, first, resorted to reprisals to give the Pathans an impression of their strength.²³ Next, they attempted at conciliation to show the tribesmen how they would benefit by becoming friendly neighbours.²⁴ However,

the Punjab authorities had adopted three methods of coercion to force the tribesmen to terms, namely, fines, blockades and expeditions.²⁵ The Sindh system, on the other hand, started with "an uncompromising repression of outrages by military force".²⁶ Charles Napier began by building forts, posting troops at certain points and leading occasional expeditions against the tribes, but could not create much effect. Then John Jacob adopted the methods of vigilant patrolling of the frontier.²⁷ Robert Sandemann, however, tried to introduce a policy of conciliation in Sindh. He introduced the system of granting allowances to tribesmen for maintaining peace, guarding trade routes, and passes, and meting out justice according to the tribal *jirga* (assembly), which worked very successfully among the Baluch tribes.²⁸ Thus it is clear that "British policy was one of conciliation backed by force."²⁹

Besides this administrative side of the frontier policy, there was another problem connected with the imperial aspect of the frontier. From this point of view also there arose two distinct policies in the two administrative sectors of the frontier during the British period. The policy of the Punjab Government was known as the 'Close Border Policy'. In the beginning, it advocated leaving the tribes along and giving their land to the Amir of Afghanistan. It desired the British Government to remain satisfied with the lands up to the right bank of the Indus.³⁰ This idea of 'Back to the Indus', vigorously emphasised by the Punjab authorities, was not accepted by the Government of India,³¹ which wanted to keep close to the frontier it had received from the Sikhs.³²

The Sindh administration, on the other hand, advocated the occupation of the tribal land in order to bring it under their direct control.³³ This policy, ultimately, came to the fore as the Forward Policy, which was necessitated by Russian being within the striking distance and in proximity and immediate contact with Afghanistan.³⁴ It would suffice here to say that this policy was meant to bring the frontier tribes under control, so that they might not be helpful to the Russians, and to secure against

absorption by Russia certain points necessary for the safety of India.³⁵

Lawrence was a great advocate of the 'Back to the Indus' policy and adhered to the 'Close Border' system. He did not allow the Sindh authorities to proceed further.³⁶ His two immediate successors, Lord Mayo and Lord Northbrook, followed this policy with slight changes and modifications as did five Secretaries of State for India between 1859 and 1874. Lord Lytton, on assumption of office, gave vent to his utter dissatisfaction with the policy of his predecessors, declaring it to be one of "costly impotence",³⁷ and noted with satisfaction that "it is encouraging to find that the do-nothing and know-nothing policy in regard to Afghanistan is not so popular on the frontier as it would seem to be at Calcutta."³⁸ Thus, as on foreign policy, so on frontier policy Lytton had definite ideas and was determined to pursue them steadily.³⁹

For Lytton the question of the frontier was an integral part of his foreign policy, which revolved round the great Central Asian problem of containing Russian ambitions there. Thus to him there was "no longer such a thing as a Khelat question, or an Afghan question; these are only departments of the great Russian question, and should be treated accordingly."⁴⁰ It was this idea of "treating all frontier questions as parts of a whole question, and not as separate questions having so relation to each other,"⁴¹ which led him to telegraph and to write to Northbrook, on his way to Calcutta, "urging him to suspend the mission of Major Sandemann who had not then entered Khelat territory".⁴² This emphatic unitarian approach to the frontier question was the result of Lytton's conviction that the end to be attained was "the military defence of our frontier."⁴³ Therefore, he adopted the policy "to cultivate our north-western borders as a strong bulwark, by aiding Afghanistan to become a powerful and prosperous state."⁴⁴ It was because of this vital link between the frontier and the defence of the country that Lytton wanted to place "purely political management of the whole frontier, from Peshawar to Kurrachee, in the hands of a single officer, invested with adequate

rank and importance, and acting directly under the orders of the Viceroy."⁴⁵

These principles Lytton derived from a thorough consideration of the various problems connected with the frontier in his time. This is clear from his letter to Cranbrook, August 3, 1878,⁴⁶ and the Minute of September 4, 1878,⁴⁷ in which he gave vent to his thoughts on the problem in view of the changed situation in his time, in the wake of the Russian moves in Central Asia and the changed attitude of the Amir of Kabul.⁴⁸ He did not find the frontier bounded by the hills, as inherited from the Sikhs, advantageous either as a boundary⁴⁹ or a strategic line, for "the value of an obstacle such as a great river, or a mountain range, depends upon the command on both sides of the obstacle."⁵⁰ Therefore, due to its weak frontier in India England was "urged forward by considerations of military and political expediency, and by the instinct of self-preservation, towards the Hindukush, the great natural boundary between India and Central Asia."⁵¹ From this followed the natural conclusion that "the wild country between the present Indian and Russian frontiers contains the key to both India and Turkestan."⁵² This was followed by a thorough examination of the position of this region in its eastern, central and western sectors⁵³ leading to the conclusion that "as a purely military line, the strongest frontier we could take up would be along the Hindukush from the Pamir to Bamian, holding the northern debouches of the principal passes; and thence southwards by the Helmund, Girishke, and Candahar to the Arabian Sea. Though political considerations of the moment may compel and justify an expansion of our line to the northern frontier of Afghanistan, this would weaken rather than strengthen our general position. But the political and strategical importance of Herat is so great that, though it lies beyond our natural frontier, it cannot be excluded from our line of defence. This line, therefore, should ultimately run from the Hindukush along the Paropanisus to Herat, and thence down the western frontier of Afghanistan and Beloochistan to the Arabian Sea."⁵⁴ In view of this the frontier problem at the time was that "there are certain points necessary to the safety of India, which we must secure against

absorption by Russia, in view of Russia and England steadily drawing nearer to one another in the East, and to do that with least danger, disturbance, responsibilities and expense."⁵⁵

This self-exposition of his ideas on the frontier problem may well smack of the influence of the 'Forward School' on Lytton. The security of the India empire, however, dominated Lytton's thinking and policy. He had "no desire to extend beyond India" and his was "essentially a defensive policy, confined to the defence of India; but theory and experience alike prove that a strategy purely defensive almost certainly ends in a disaster. Therefore, India must be defended by a vigorous offensive."⁵⁶ This provides the key to the policy of Lytton, which we may term as one of offensive defence, in which "while war must always be kept in view as a possible ultimate measure, it is one to be resorted to only when all others have failed."⁵⁷

Of this offensive defence-oriented policy, extension of the British influence and control to Afghanistan by all means, in order to prevent Russia from getting a foothold there, was the chief prop. Therefore, Lytton wanted to manage the frontier in such a way as to enable the predominance of British in Afghanistan either by itself or by compelling the Amir to accept it to ensure the security of India. Thus his Afghan and frontier policies were interdependent. It becomes obvious when we look at the basic principles of his frontier policy. Complete knowledge of the region by its thorough investigation and survey⁵⁸ was the first principle that Lytton adopted to replace the 'know-nothing' policy of his predecessors. Efficient administration of the frontier and its proper political management and military control was another thing dear to him as was the control and befriending of the frontier tribes to wean them away from Kabul. Occupation of places of strategic importance was another essential requirement of his frontier policy, as pointed out earlier. All these were intended to secure the frontier as a supreme means of Indian defence, which would act not only as a powerful deterrent to Russia but as a solid base of offensive in case of need as well.

Now let us turn to the execution of his frontier policy by Lytton. It can be studied in two parts, the first concerning

administration and the second related to the problems of defence and strategy.

Efficient administration of the frontier had been the aim of the British rulers. For this purpose proposals had been put forward for the creation of a new administrative unit, which, it was hoped, would usher in a new era of peace and order on the blood-stained frontier and would eradicate many of the evils to which it was subjected. In the days of Dalhousie, proposed changes were not sanctioned by the Court of Directors,⁵⁹ while his idea of separating the trans-Indus regions because of the ethnical difference of their inhabitants was abandoned due to the assassination of Col. Makeson, to whom he desired to entrust the new province, at Peshawar.⁶⁰ But from 1877 the idea of forming a separate frontier province had steadily gained ground under the inspiration of Lord Lytton, who in that year commented upon the 'overwhelming concurrence of opinion' on the need of adjustment of the frontier administration.⁶¹ This adjustment was to be, in the first place, the separation of the government of Sindh from that of Bombay.⁶² Secondly, "the line of demarcation between the Sindh or lower frontier and the Punjab or upper frontier should be readjusted according to the distribution of the races on the border; so that the Belooch tribes (might) all come within one district and administration, and the Pathan tribes within the other."⁶³

In this Minute of April 22, 1877,⁶⁴ Lytton "sketched in outline a scheme which embodied his own views as to the best policy to be pursued."⁶⁵ He sought to solve this problem by the creation of a new trans-Indus frontier province,⁶⁶ separate from Sindh and Punjab, under a Chief Commissioner or Governor-General's Agent, having "the management directly under the Government of India of all frontier business and trans-frontier relations."⁶⁷ Under him were to be two separate Commissioners for the Pathan and Baluch tribes respectively. "The Viceroy would, by means of this arrangement, command the services of his own specially selected agent, in whose hands the threads of all our border politics and tribal relations would be concentrated. The time of such an agent could be devoted almost entirely to purely frontier duties; and he would be better able than any Lieutenant-gover-

nor of the Punjab can possibly be to visit ... all parts of the frontier."⁶⁸ This would place the political and administrative control of the frontier in the same hands and make it pass through the same channels eliminating all division of responsibility and all antagonism of schools and systems.⁶⁹ The Punjab Frontier Force and the Sindh Frontier Force were to be merged into one 'Frontier Force' and placed under the orders of the Commander-in-chief.⁷⁰ Regarding the tribes, he emphasised the need 'to cultivate more direct and frequent intercourse than at present.' For this purpose he proposed the appointment of "a Chief Commissioner at Peshwar, invested with exceptionally high powers, who can represent to the native mind more directly and personally than either the Lieutenant-governor at Lahore, or the still more distant Viceroy at Calcutta, the embodied power and dignity of the British Government."⁷¹ The administrative staff of the divisions and districts was also to be increased.⁷² He criticised some practices of the local administration, specially the system of punitive expeditions 'because it perpetuates a system of semi-barbarous reprisal.'⁷³ "In dealing with barbarous tribes, our object should be either to support and enforce tribal responsibility to the utmost wherever it already exists, or reduce tribal cohesion to a minimum where no recognised authority can be found and used."⁷⁴ He also advocated the gradual disarmament of the population along the frontier and concluded this Minute by remarking that the proposed reorganisation of the frontier administration was "absolutely and urgently requisite for the efficient execution of the policy of the Government of India ... now or hereafter."⁷⁵

Lytton's scheme of the new frontier province was objected to on three grounds ; first, that some of these districts formed integral parts of Punjab ; secondly, that their internal administration would suffer by separation, and thirdly, that frontier relations were best conducted by the Punjab Government.⁷⁶ Lytton's reply was that these districts were separated from Punjab geographically, historically and racially. He also pointed out that "all unnecessary links in an administrative chain admittedly weaken the strength of it."⁷⁷ But due to objections to certain other pro-

posals of Lytton,⁷⁸ the Secretary of State could not accept the scheme as such and the compromise proposed by him was opposed by the then Foreign Secretary of the Government of India and the Lieutenant-governor of Punjab, although Lytton did try to give effect to the proposal.⁷⁹ However, due to the Second Afghan War (1878-1880) Lytton's policy could not be implemented. Thus his scheme for the reorganisation of the frontier administration could not be given effect to. Nevertheless, it shows the thoroughness with which Lytton was trying to conduct his foreign policy and he deserves credit for establishing political agencies in the frontier region.⁸⁰

The second aspect of Lytton's frontier policy in action was related to India's defence and matters concerning its strategy. He tried to tackle these problems in the two sectors of the frontier, which appeared to him vulnerable, in two different ways. So far as the western sector of the frontier was concerned, he tackled the problem directly. But the northern sector he attempted to tackle indirectly through the energy of the Maharaja of Kashmir.

In the western sector Lytton had to face a two-fold problem. In the first place, he had to tackle the frontier tribes so as to make them instruments of India's defence. Secondly, he had to secure the frontier strategically by the occupation of points of advantage along the frontier so as to assure safety against a possible aggressor and to secure sound bases for forward action, when needed, beyond the frontier.

Lytton emphasised the need of having direct contacts with the frontier tribes. For this purpose he suggested a number of administrative changes and criticised and insisted on abolishing certain measures like the appointment of the middlemen and the punitive expeditions of the Punjab system.⁸¹ He later favoured direct negotiations with the tribes in order to befriend them so as to secure them as allies.⁸² This he wanted to do with two objectives in view. First, he wanted to prevent the possibility of these tribesmen becoming allies of an aggressor, obviously Russia. Secondly, he desired to wean them away from the Amir of Kabul, thus weakening him thereby, and also to secure an appropriate basis for military action in Afghanistan⁸³ if and when

necessary, for these tribes held the passes, safe conduct through which would be most important requirement of any military action in the trans-frontier region. In this Lytton obviously appears to have taken a wise lesson from the disasters of the First Afghan War.

Lytton discussed with Cavagnari the advisability of openly befriending some of the more important of the tribes, whose territories lay between Afghanistan and the north-west frontier of India. Cavagnari, while pointing to the significance of realising the independence of these tribes, warned the Viceroy against any active steps "to secure their independence while there was still any chance of patching up differences with Sher Ali."⁸⁴ The Viceroy, however, pointed out that a complete change of policy with regard to these tribes had become necessary, as the old policy (of regarding the tribes as "the political property of the Amir of Kabul, with a view to making him responsible for the control of them")⁸⁵ had failed beyond repair. The Amir had never been "able to exercise authority over these intervening tribes in the sense contemplated by those who laid down the lines of the old policy." The influence he exercised over them "is distinctly prejudicial and permanently inconvenient" to the British cause and had resulted in the predominance of the Russian influence in Kabul, while the British could get at him with great difficulty "across a hedge of thorns." Thus the British relations with the Amir of Kabul had become the "cause of incessant anxiety." Therefore, "it is not, and cannot be, in our interests to promote the consolidation of a border power whose friendship we have no means of securing, and whose enmity we cannot punish save by a war in which success would not be free from embarrassment."⁸⁶ Cavagnari raised the objection that the British Government's direct settlement with the chiefs would render impossible a reconciliation with the Amir.⁸⁷ Lytton replied that "Sher Ali has irrevocably slipped out of our hands; and it is therefore inadvisable to neglect any opportunity of strengthening or improving our position by means independent of his goodwill for fear that by so doing we should provoke his resentment."⁸⁸ To Cavagnari's objection that an understanding with the tribal

chiefs on the part of the British Government would be equally resented by the Amir's successors, the Viceroy's reply was that so long as the British Government aimed at the disintegration of Afghanistan it did not matter.⁸⁹ The reason for this was that the help rendered to the rulers of Afghanistan would never satisfy them because many of their "natural objects are not compatible with our own interests. But they will always be more or less influenced by our practical power of hurting them ; and it is this which we should now endeavour to develop and confirm."⁹⁰

Thus it was in order to bring the Amir to book that Lytton had to resort to befriending the frontier tribes. But he did not overrule Cavagnari's objections altogether, as is clear from his instruction that "direct negotiations with the various semi-independent tribes along the border, with a view to detaching them from the Amir's cause" should be opened "on the failure of our mission"⁹¹ in 1878. The appointment of Cavagnari (as Assistant Commissioner of Peshawar) to wean the frontier tribes from the Amir's influence, securing them under British control, opening the routes into Afghanistan and effecting Khanates in the vicinity of the British frontier under chiefs whose welfare depended largely on the recognition and support they could receive from the British Government⁹² also proves this. These measures aimed at gaining the allegiance of Swat, Bajaur and Dir, over which the Amir had influence and with whom he had intimate relations.⁹³ The Afridis and the Mohmands were approached with a measure of success and their loyalty to the Amir was sufficiently weakened.⁹⁴ The Khyberis were brought into alliance and their full support was acquired and utilised during the Second Afghan War.

Lytton, however, had to sanction a military expedition against the Jowaki tribes, within a few months of writing his famous Minute of April 22, 1877. They had "perpetrated incessant raids upon the Peshawar border."⁹⁵ The original causes for their outbreak were "dissatisfaction at the anticipated redistribution of the Kohat Pass allowances, intrigues on the part of the middlemen through whom communications were carried on with the tribes and the change of district officers at Kohat, at a time when specially

delicate management was required."⁹⁶ A blockade having failed,⁹⁷ an expedition was sanctioned, which proved "ludicrously ineffective" and did "more harm than good."⁹⁸

The Viceroy had to face great difficulties owing to the multiplicity of authorities with whom he had to deal.⁹⁹ Despaired of coming to a satisfactory understanding with the frontier officers, he sent his Military Secretary, Col. Colley, unofficially to Peshawar, where a conference of the frontier officers¹⁰⁰ laid down the three principles of action : " 1st. : To avoid as far as possible operations necessitating the ultimate retirement of the British troops under pursuit and fire of the enemy. 2nd. : To hold all positions once taken until the absolute submission of the tribe had been secured. 3rd. : To make the loss and suffering fall as heavily as possible on the enemy's fighting men, and as lightly as possible on the non-combatants."¹⁰¹

Under the new system advocated by the Viceroy, operations started against the Jowaki tribes under General Keyes.¹⁰² He advanced into their country on November 9, 1877, with a force of about 2000 strong.¹⁰³ The recalcitrant tribe was isolated,¹⁰⁴ and by a succession of combined movements the whole Jowaki country was overrun.¹⁰⁵ The Jowakis were thus bewildered and cowed by the new tactics,¹⁰⁶ which the Viceroy at last succeeded in getting the frontier authorities to adopt. The terms suggested, namely, the surrender of arms, and, if possible the ringleaders, and the opening up of the country by roads,¹⁰⁷ were unconditionally accepted early in 1878 and the expedition came to a satisfactory conclusion.¹⁰⁸

The results of this expeditions were very important. It resulted in the control of the Jowakis and a thorough survey of their country.¹⁰⁹ It proved that "the cohesion among several sections and sub-sections of the Afridi tribes is less complete than has hitherto been believed,"¹¹⁰ for "not another tribe, or section of a tribe, has ventured to stir hand or foot in support of them."¹¹¹ It also became established that no Afridi tribe could resist the action of the British troops (with their traditional arms) if these troops were employed according to rational principles. It also established the practicability of properly organised night surprises

as preferable to the old system of cumbrous and protracted military operations. Finally, it established throughout the border tribes "such a salutary fear of our power, will and patience that I think I can safely predict that, during my tenure of office at least, the peace of the Punjab frontier will not again be troubled by any more tribal attacks."¹¹²

Along with this management of the tribes in the western sector, Lytton had to settle certain territorial questions before he could secure the frontier there. From this point of view the most important work done during this period was a treaty with the Khan of Kalat, which secured for the Government of India, among other advantages, the occupation of Quetta, which had been put forward constantly by the adherents of the Forward School.

Kalat was a mountainous state west of Jacodabad and south of Quetta, ruled over by a Khan, who claimed authority over dominions which "embraced the whole province of Baluchistan."¹¹³ It was one of the buffer states¹¹⁴ which had entered into definite treaty relations with the British, first in 1842¹¹⁵ and then in 1854. The second treaty concluded on May 14, 1854 regulated the relations between Kalat and the Government of India. It bound the Khan to conduct his foreign policy with the consent of the Indian Government. He agreed to the stationing of British troops in Kalat or occupation by troops of portions of his territories whenever that step should be thought necessary and to accord protection to merchants passing through his territories. He was to prevent raids into India. In return he received an annual subsidy of rupees 50,000¹¹⁶. Thus Kalat came firmly within the British influence. In fact, its position was not unlike that of the Indian princely states under the subsidiary alliance. It was, as a matter of fact, even less independent than the Cis-Sutlaj Sikh States of Patiala, Jind and Nabha, because the British Government was its paramount and could under engagement, at any time, occupy the country.¹¹⁷

The authorities in Sindh tried to manage the trans-border Baluch tribes through Kalat, because they (the Baluch tribes), though constantly opposing the supremacy of the Khan, nevertheless generally acknowledged it.¹¹⁸ The Khan was, in reality,

little more than head of a loose, confederacy of tribal chiefs, who were his quasi-feudal vassals.¹¹⁹ Therefore, when the Khan, Khudad Khan, attempted about the year 1869 to increase his power at the expense of the Sardars, there were disturbances, from which it was obvious that Kalat would become the scene of internecine struggles, if British support were withdrawn. Captain Sandemann, thereupon recommended to the Government of India to intervene and reconcile the contending factions.¹²⁰ By the end of 1871, the Sardars were in open revolt against the Khan. By 1873 the climax was reached when Major Harrison, the British Agent, was recalled and the subsidy of the Khan withdrawn, for the Khan had failed to observe his treaty obligations. There arose some differences among the frontier officers as to the course of action to be taken in the matter at this juncture.¹²¹ It led to the conference of Col. Phayre, Political Superintendent of Kalat, Capt. Sandemann, Official Representative of the Punjab Government, and Sir William Merewether, Commissioner of Sindh, at Jacobabad to investigate the complaints of the Sardars. To this conference Lytton traced all subsequent difficulties in Kalat.¹²² It resulted in the dismissal of Phayre and the recall of Sandemann. Thus Merewether was left to conclude the mediation alone. His decision in spite of being in the main against the Sardars deeply incensed and offended the Khan; for it had admitted his rebellious Sardars to be heard and treated as his equals.¹²³

Conditions further deteriorated in Kalat. Merewether then recommended an armed intervention there and deposition of the Khan.¹²⁴ The Government of India did not approve of it and decided to give a trial to Sandemann's epoch-making suggestion that before resorting to military coercion, an effort should be made to effect an amicable settlement between the Khan and the Sardars through a mission of the Sindh and Punjab officers, with powers to settle disputes and grievances.¹²⁵ Accordingly, Sandemann was appointed as the arbitrator¹²⁶ and leader of the mission. He crossed the border on November 22, 1875. In spite of his friendly conferences with the tribal chiefs and the Khan himself¹²⁷ he did not succeed in settling disputes among the tribes or between them and the Khan.¹²⁸ Yet he could secure a very

big advantage for the British Government insofar as the Khan and his chiefs agreed settle their grievances through the mediation of the British officers.

The situation in Kalat became grave after Sandemann's departure and signs were "not wanting that all parties really desired the intervention of the British Government", while merchants, collected at Shikarpur, clamoured for assistance through the Bolan Pass.¹²⁹ Sandemann, however, suggested that "there was no cause whatever to prevent his again visiting Kalat with a good promise of effecting settlement of all disputes."¹³⁰ He was supported by Col. Munro, the Commissioner of Derajat, to whom the management of Kalat affairs had been temporarily assigned.¹³¹ Consequently, Northbrook's Government decided, in its resolution of March 14, 1876,¹³² to send Sandemann who had become a Major by now, on a second mission, at a time when change of Government in England had already taken place and the new Viceroy was on his way to India.

Major Sandemann started on his second mission on April 4, 1876, three days before Lytton landed in India. This mission entirely upset Lytton's original intention, approved by the Home Government, of sending a confidential mission first to Kalat and thence after the satisfactory settlement of relations with the Khan, to Kabul via Qandahar.¹³³ At the same time this mission did not fit in with Lytton's principle "of, treating all frontier questions as parts of a whole question and not as separate questions having no relation to each other."¹³⁴ Therefore, on being informed of the mission, he telegraphed to Northbrook requesting him to suspend the mission until his assumption of office, so that "he might have an opportunity of reconsidering, and, if necessary, revising, Major Sandemann's instructions" in connection with his views and plans of the whole frontier policy and of associating his mission, if possible, more directly with the attainment of the object he had in view.¹³⁵ This suggestion, however, was not acceptable to Northbrook and therefore Lytton had to recast "the arrangements he had contemplated in a form, he thought, less favourable to their success."¹³⁶ Nevertheless, he resolved to aid and support the Agent to the Khan, selected by his predecessor.¹³⁷

The mission of Sandemann soon began to show its fruits in the restoration of peace in Kalat with the cooperation of the Sardars and the Khan.¹³⁸ By June 5, he was able to telegraph that "both the Khan and his Sardars look to the British Government as the paramount power to settle all quarrels and difficulties that from time to time may arise between them, and consider themselves entirely subordinate to it,"¹³⁹ and were willing to meet Sandemann at Mastung.¹⁴⁰ These efforts won the approbation of the Viceroy. This "support and sympathy lightened his (Sandemann's) task considerably, and all his negotiations progressed smoothly until they culminated in the crowning success of his (Sandemann's) grand settlement at Mastung."¹⁴¹ This Agreement effected on July 13, 1876 formally reconciled the Khan and his Brahui Sardars.¹⁴² "The document embodying the terms of the agreement may be said to be the Magna Charta of the Brahoë chiefs and people."¹⁴³

But the battle was as yet only half won. A definite treaty had to be arrived at to round off the issue. In accomplishing this, Lytton himself played an active part in suggesting guidelines, through his Military Secretary and himself offering to proceed to Jacobabad to sign the treaty.¹⁴⁴ The Khan having accepted the invitation of the Viceroy, arrangements for the meeting were set afoot.¹⁴⁵ Finally, on December 8, 1876 the Treaty of Jacobabad was signed between the Khan of Kalat and the Viceroy.¹⁴⁶

The Treaty¹⁴⁷ renewed and supplemented that of 1854. It pledged the British Government to assist the Khan against both internal and external foes. It provided for the presence of the British Agents within the Khan's dominions. It bound the Khan and his Sardars to accept the arbitration of the British Government in any serious dispute between them and made them agree to the stationing of a detachment of British troops in Kalat "in such positions as that Government may deem expedient" at its will. The subsidy of the Khan was greatly increased. Freedom of trade between the two states was pledged and contributions were promised for the development of telegraph and railway lines throughout Kalat.¹⁴⁸ The treaty, at the moment was kept

secret.¹⁴⁹ The Viceroy addressed the Khan and his Sardars in "explanation of their mutual obligations to each other and to us, under the terms of it."¹⁵⁰ "Both the Khan and the Sirdars appeared to understand every clause of the Treaty thoroughly, and to be equally delighted with it."¹⁵¹ They accepted the Viceroy's invitation to the Delhi Darbar and started for it soon after.¹⁵²

Thus the Second Mission of Sandemann succeeded in accomplishing the work for which it was sent. Naturally, Sandemann won the appreciation of the Viceroy for "the services rendered to my Government, and to India, by enabling to effect a satisfactory reorganisation of our relations with Khelat."¹⁵³ Lytton's happiness at the outcome of the whole transaction found expression even before the treaty was signed. He hoped the terms were bound to "make us virtually the masters of Khelat, not by annexing the country, but by reestablishing the Khan's authority on conditions which secure his allegiance,"¹⁵⁴ besides putting an end to civil war in Kalat and providing "adequate guarantees against its recurrence."¹⁵⁵

This was finally accomplished by the creation of the Baluchistan Agency, with Quetta as its headquarters, according to the Treaty of Jacobabad, by a resolution of the Government of India on February 21, 1877.¹⁵⁶ Sandemann was, most appropriately, appointed the first Agent to the Governor-General in Kalat.¹⁵⁷ It was a very significant step in the development of the frontier administration.

Thus this long cherished hope of the adherents of the Forward School was realised with the peaceful¹⁵⁸ occupation of Quetta in March 1877. Besides being the headquarters of the British Agency, it was to be the station of the main British army. A force comprising a regiment of infantry, a squadron of cavalry and a mountain battery was stationed there, while supporting troops were located at Kalat, Dadar and Mithri.¹⁵⁹ It was soon to develop, under the fostering care of R. I. Bruce,¹⁶⁰ as "another Peshawar, but with better and lovelier surroundings."¹⁶¹ In fact, its significance as a strong military position was great, for "any adversary trying to enter India from this direction would first be

obliged to besiege and capture Quetta, giving us ample time to prepare for his reception, and then to force the long gorges of the Bolan Pass."¹⁶² It was because of this that the Viceroy came to "look upon our frontier from Multan to the sea as now so well guarded that it leaves almost nothing to be desired."¹⁶³

The Government of India justified the occupation of Quetta as a measure desired by the Khan and his Sardars and the people.¹⁶⁴ Lytton regarded it as indispensable to the success of his policy towards Kalat, "for the Khan could not be adequately supported without it."¹⁶⁵ However, political advantages, on which ground Lord Napier justified its occupation,¹⁶⁶ of the hold on Quetta were not lost sight of, as is clear from what Lytton himself wrote to Sandemann: "I anticipate that Quetta will henceforth be the seat of our most important Intelligence Department in regard to trans-frontier politics; and indeed ... the main work of your diplomacy in the Khanate will be to extend our influence quietly, peacefully, but if possible, rapidly from Quetta in the direction of Kandahar."¹⁶⁷ In view of this the occupation of Quetta may well be regarded as "a move in the game which Lord Lytton was playing against Sher Ali."¹⁶⁸

These measures, naturally, caused dissatisfaction to Amir Sher Ali.¹⁶⁹ But to Lytton "the propriety of a policy which was intended to rescue, and which actually did rescue, Beloochistan from horrible anarchy, and restore it not only to peace but prosperity, was a matter to be conducted on its own merits without reference to the light in which it might be viewed by Sher Ali."¹⁷⁰ This was, in fact, in accordance with Lytton's idea to make 'the security of the frontier independent of Sher Ali,' "in case he did not adequately respond to friendly overtures."¹⁷¹

Thus the understanding with the Khan of Kalat served a very useful purpose. On the one hand, it secured the Sindh frontier from the disturbances of feudal anarchy. On the other, it enhanced India's powers of resistance and her capability for offensive in the trans-frontier region in case of need by putting the Bolan Pass in her orbit of influence. The value of the Baluchistan Agency and of the British station at Quetta was

proved during the trying period of the Second Afghan War (1878-80) when the Sardars of Baluchistan "behaved most loyally and rendered excellent service to the Government."¹⁷²

Let us now turn to the eastern sector of the northern frontier of India, forming the actual northern frontier. Its extreme point guarded by the Himalaya and reaching up to Tibet did not pose any problem from the point of view of defence, being securely guarded by the mountain wall.¹⁷³ As such, Lytton's Government instructed its officers in Kashmir "whilst endeavouring to extend our influence over the petty chieftoms along the southern slopes of this ridge, to avoid most carefully the least appearance of interference with the tribes and races beyond it."¹⁷⁴

The real worry of Lytton was the central sector of the frontier, "the boundary from Quetta to Chitral,"¹⁷⁵ wherein he wanted to secure the inner line from the military point of view.¹⁷⁶ This inner line ran through the land of Kafristan, which contained "a small loose group of independent chieftoms, very weak and destined to be absorbed ere long by one or other of their more powerful neighbours."¹⁷⁷ Among these was the Amir of Kabul, who "greatly coveted"¹⁷⁸ the chieftoms and their absorption by him would "weaken the security of our frontier by strengthening a frontier state which already commands some of the most important passes of it."¹⁷⁹ Another reason why Lytton wanted to secure control of the chieftoms in the region was that it commanded the external debouches of the frontier and without control of these "our mountain frontier is simply a fortress with no glacis, in other words, a military mousetrap."¹⁸⁰ Moreover, "the absorption of the Mirs of Kafristan by any Power holding Kashgar would probably make them appendages of the Russian or the Chinese empire (to one of which it seems probable that Kashgar must eventually belong), thus bringing either of these empires into direct contact with our own."¹⁸¹ Thus the active frontier policy that Lytton adopted in this region also was a defensive move against Russia. However, it was, at the same time, to be used offensively against Afghanistan as well. This change was due to the changed attitude of the Amir, proved by the failure of the Peshawar Conference;¹⁸² for in the beginning

Lytton was not opposed to the Amir's influence in this region and was even prepared to allow the Afghan absorption of Chitral.¹⁸³

Among the chiefdoms in this region, the two northern-most, namely, Chitral and Yasin, were considered to be the most desirable for control. The reason for this was that they possessed two passes, the Baroghil and the Iskoman, and "if either of these passes be practicable for troops, it would enable an invading force, with a fine base at Yarkand, to reach our frontier (at its weakest point) by a route quicker than any other."¹⁸⁴

Here, however, Lytton did not act directly, but through the Maharaja of Kashmir. But it cannot be said that the Viceroy was acting through a 'proxy champion' regarding the northern frontier as of 'secondary importance',¹⁸⁵ for, as we have explained in the preceding paragraph, to Lytton this region was very important. To the question why the India Government did not act directly, Lytton answered that "the British public has vetoed annexation,"¹⁸⁶ and "so long as we can prevent them (the chiefdoms) from being annexed by Kabul or the future Kashgar Power, it would certainly not be worth our own while to annex these poor and barren territories."¹⁸⁷ Moreover, his predecessor, Northbrook, has strongly recommended the extension of Kashmir's control over Chitral and Yasin up to the southern side of the passes.¹⁸⁸

Till May 1876 Lytton believed that the extension of Kashmir's influence over Yasin should be postponed till the result of the Afghan negotiations was known.¹⁸⁹ However, by July he was convinced that it would be needed in any case, because in view of the absorption of Kokand by Russia "it would be suicidal, in our present uncertain and menaced position to leave to the mercy of chance, in the hands of any weak Chief surrounded by powerful and aggressive neighbours, that strip of territory containing the Baroghil and Iskoman passes."¹⁹⁰ Therefore, he decided to support Kashmir, in case of need, to occupy Chitral and Yasin and secure the passes and in return to obtain a permanent Resident in Kashmir and an Agent at Gilgit.¹⁹¹ In November 1876, he advised the Maharaja, at Madhopur, to "enter into treaty

relations with these neighbouring Chiefs, with a view to obtaining their recognition of his suzerainty in return for a small subsidy" without the use of force.¹⁹² At the same time "support and assistance"¹⁹³ was promised him "in the event of his action ever involving him in military operations."¹⁹⁴ The Maharaja eagerly accepted this because "if there be one thing more than another which every Indian Prince is ambitious of, it is extension of territory or rule."¹⁹⁵ But he 'kicked long and strenuously' against the appointment of a British Agent at Gilgit.¹⁹⁶ Probably, he was afraid of the sort of high-handed interference in the domestic matters "like what was done by Dr. Cayley at Ladakh,"¹⁹⁷ and at one stage the negotiations appeared to break down over this issue. However, Lytton could get his policy through by dropping the plan to keep the British Resident in Kashmir throughout the year, and by assuring in writing that Gilgit Agent would not interfere in domestic affairs of Kashmir.¹⁹⁸

The accomplishment of this work became easy because Amanul Mulk, the Mehtar of Chitral, being afraid of Sher Ali, had approached the Maharaja of Kashmir with the request that he was prepared to accept the suzerainty of Kashmir along with his relative, the Chief of Dir, and Raja Pahlwan, the ruler of Yasin and Mastung.¹⁹⁹ In fact, in early 1877, while Sher Ali's representative was negotiating at Peshawar, the Amir had asked the tribal chiefs of the region to come under his influence and all the chiefs, except the Mehtar of Chitral, had agreed.²⁰⁰ Thus left isolated, Amanul Mulk, finding himself unable to resist the pressure of the Kabul Agent, then on his way to Chitral, sought the help of Kashmir.²⁰¹

The Maharaja consulted the Government of India, which, on the one hand, warned the Amir to keep clear of Bajaur, Dir, Swat and Chitral,²⁰² and, on the other, hastily organised an intelligence system from Peshwar, through which British secret agents were filtered into this region to report on the situation.²⁰³ The Maharaja, at the same time authorised to instruct the Chief of Chitral to resist the claims of Kabul, and to furnish him with the means of doing so, relying, if necessary, on British support.²⁰⁴ However, Amanul Mulk could not be led to sign a treaty with

the Maharaja of Kashmir before 1878, although representatives of Chitral and Yasin were taken to the Delhi Darbar to be impressed by the resources of British India and to be acquainted with the British Government's agreement with Kashmir.²⁰⁵ Eventually, at the end of 1878 a treaty²⁰⁶ was signed between the Mir of Chitral and the Maharaja of Kashmir and the next year a Chitrali envoy visited Kashmir to confirm it.²⁰⁷

Amanul Mulk, however, could not be contained within the influence of Kashmir and maintained his relations with the Amir of Kabul, as is clear from the reports of the British Agent at Gilgit during the Second Afghan War.²⁰⁸ Lytton, realising the weakness of Kashmir, had to resort to negotiations with the tribes to bring under his influence Bajaur, Dir and Swat, as pointed out earlier.

A word may now be added about the remaining part of the 1876 agreement between Lytton and the Maharaja of Kashmir, that concerning the British Agency at Gilgit. At the end of 1877 its charge was assumed by Biddulph as Officer on Special Duty, to "watch the frontier at that point."²⁰⁹ But his main work was "to furnish reliable intelligence of the progress of events beyond Kashmir frontier . . . and . . . in consultation with the Kashmir authorities, to cultivate friendly relations with the tribes beyond the border in view to bringing them gradually under control and influence of Kashmir."²¹⁰ This makes it clear that the purpose of the Gilgit Agency was political. In spite of his efforts, however, this Agency could not serve its purpose well as is clear from Lytton's remark towards the end of his Viceroyalty that he was "not cognizant of any practical advantage yet obtained by Major Biddulph's residence at Gilgit."²¹¹ This should not be surprising in view of Lytton's decision, in December 1879, to give up his policy in this region and to adopt a new drastic one proposing the Maharaja of Kashmir to be relieved of his role in securing that part of the frontier and withdrawal of the Gilgit Agency.²¹² Kashmir's double-dealing unearthed at Kabul by Roberts,²¹³ hostility of the Maharaja to Biddulph's appointment, inaccessibility of Gilgit both from the British territory direct and along the route from Kashmir, gross maladministration and strategical weakness²¹⁴ had been responsible for that.

Thus Lytton adopted an active frontier policy. It was devised, on the one hand, as a necessary defensive move against Russia. But, at the same time, it was worked out as a base for offensive against Afghanistan. In this way securing the frontier, he prepared himself for the final move of winning over the Amir of Afghanistan through friendship, if possible, or overpowering him through coercion so that he (the Amir) might not fall under the influence of Russia.

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- ¹ T. Holdich, *Political Frontier and Boundary Making* (Calcutta, 1916), p. 280.
- ² The Himalaya, the Safed Koh, the Sulaiman, the Kuenlun, the Karakoram, the Mustagh and the Hindukush, which formed the real frontier between India and Central Asia.
- ³ The Indus, the Kabul, the Oxus, the Yarkand, the Tarim, for example.
- ⁴ Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam.
- ⁵ The British in India, the Russian and the Chinese.
- ⁶ In this connection it may be pointed out that Lord Ripon, who according to his implicit instructions started withdrawing from the points of vantage acquired by Lytton, had, in the end, not only to give up but also to undertake extension of the line to Chaman. Lord Elgin and Lord Lansdowne adopted an increasingly forward policy.
- ⁷ Such a frontier represents an historical feature and makes the de facto limit of a state's political authority. [Cf. J. R. V. Prescott, *The Geography of Frontiers and Boundaries* (London, 1967), p. 35].
- ⁸ Lytton's Minute, Sept. 4, 1878—*Foreign, Secret Supplementary, December 1878*, No. 43.
- ⁹ C. C. Davies, *The Problem of the North-West Frontier* (Cambridge, 1932), p. 185.
- ¹⁰ P. C. Chakravarti, *The Evolution of India's Northern Borders* (Bombay, 1971), p. 3.
- ¹¹ Lytton's Minute, Sept. 4, 1878—*For., Sec. Supp., Dec. 1878*, No. 43.
- ¹² Lytton to Cranbrook, Aug. 3, 1878—*Lytton Papers* (Microfilm at the National Archives of India).

- 13 Lytton's Minute, Sept. 4, 1878—*For, Sec. Supp., Dec. 1878*, No. 43.
- 14 Davies, p. 185.
- 15 A. Swinson, *North-west Frontier* (London, 1967), p. 21.
- 16 For an account of the frontier tribes see Davies, pp. 37-70 & Apps. C & D.
- 17 Lytton's Minute, Sept. 4, 1878—*For., Sec., Supp., 1878*, No. 43.
- 18 Davies, p. 179.
- 19 *Ibid.*, p. 180.
- 20 *Ibid.*, p. 19.
- 21 *Ibid.*, p. 24.
- 22 *Ibid.*, p. 22.
- 23 *Ibid.*
- 24 *Ibid.*, p. 23.
- 25 *Ibid.*, pp. 24-28.
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- 28 *Ibid.*, p. 33.
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- 30 *For Political, Jan. 1868*, No. 154.
- 31 J. L. Morison, *From Alexander Burns to Frederick Roberts* (London, 1936), p. 13.
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- 34 Lord Roberts' speech in the House of Lords in 1890—*Ibid.*, LXIII, 1897-98 (8713).
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- 36 Government of India to Bombay Government, Jan. 17, 1867—*Parlt. Papers*, 1879 (73).
- 37 Lytton to Salisbury, April 1, 1876—*Lytton Papers*.
- 38 *Ibid.*
- 39 Lytton to Temple, May 25, 1876 ; Lytton to Cranbrook, Aug. 3, 1878—*Ibid.*
- 40 Lytton to Rawlinson, Aug. 5, 1876—*Ibid.*
- 41 B. Balfour, *History of Lord Lytton's Indian Administration, 1876-1880* (London, 1899), p. 97.
- 42 *Ibid.*, p. 98.
- 43 Lytton to Frere, March 26, 1876—*Lytton Papers*.
- 44 Lytton to Salisbury, Feb. 26, 1876 ; Lytton to Girdlestone, Aug. 27, 1876—*Ibid.*
- 45 Lytton to Salisbury, April 1, 1876—*Ibid.* Lytton, in fact, had a whole scheme for the reorganisation of the entire frontier administration, which shall be discussed later.
- 46 *Lytton Papers*.
- 47 *For., Sec. Supp., Dec. 1878*, No. 43.

- 48 "A rapid change is taking place in Indian public opinion on the subject"—*Ibid.*
- 49 "It was not a strong line, except in the sense that a prison wall is strong to the prisoner, and it was not a favourable line, as it left our boundary peculiarly exposed to inroads and insult, while limiting our power of external influence or chastisement."—*Ibid.*, also Lytton to Cranbrook, Aug. 3, 1878, *Lytton Papers*.
- 50 *Ibid.*; *For. Sec. Supp.*, Dec. 1878, No. 43.
- 51 *Ibid.*; Lytton to Cranbrook, Aug. 3, 1878—*Lytton Papers*.
- 52 *For Sec. Supp.*, Dec. 1878, No. 43.
- 53 *Ibid.*; Lytton to Cranbrook, Aug. 3, 1878—*Lytton Papers*.
- 54 *For Sec. Supp.*, Dec. 1878, No. 43.
- 55 *Ibid.*
- 56 *Ibid.*
- 57 *Ibid.*
- 58 Lytton's own successful efforts to know about the frontier and the external relations of India, and encouragement to his political agents and officers to survey the region* may be stated as proofs of this principle. This is the point that Lytton emphasised in his Minute on Frontier Administration, dated April 22, 1877 [*Cf. Part. Papers*, 1878, LVIII (1898) and Balfour, pp. 167-168].

* After the successful conclusion of the Jowaki expedition, for example, Lytton wrote to Grant Duff: "When I came to India I found that our officials on the Punjab frontier were profoundly ignorant of the country five miles beyond their border. No map of it existed. Within our border raids were constantly perpetrated with perfect impunity by the same tribes. The raiders, though a mere handful of men, invariably found our frontier authorities unprepared for their visitations and invariably escaped unharmed, after cutting the throats, and plundering the property of the Queen's subjects . . . Now, at least, the whole Jowaki country has been accurately surveyed and mapped from end to end, practicable roads have been made through in all directions. Lytton to Grant Duff, Feb. 24, 1878, *Lytton Papers*."

- 59 *Parlt. Papers*, 1878, LVIII (1898).
- 60 L. Fraser, *India Under Curzon and Afterwards* (London, 1911), p. 58.
- 61 Balfour, p. 166.
- 62 *Ibid.*, p. 167.
- 63 *Ibid.*
- 64 *Parlt. Paper*, 1878, LVIII (1898).
- 65 Balfour, p. 167.
- 66 This was to consist of six frontier districts of Panjab, viz., Hazara, Peshawar, Kohat, Bannu (except the Cis-Indus tracts), Dera Ismail Khan (with the same exception), Dera Ghazi Khan, and trans-Indus Sindh with the exception of Karachi).

- 67 Lytton's Minute, April 22, 1877—*Parlt. Papers, 1878*, LVIII (1898).
- 68 *Ibid.*
- 69 *Ibid.*
- 70 *Ibid.*
- 71 *Ibid.*
- 72 *Ibid.*
- 73 *Ibid.* This remark was roundly attacked by E. C. Bayley, a member of the Viceroy's Council, which was adequately replied by Lytton [Cf. Swinson, p. 150].
- 74 Lytton's Minute, April 22, 1877—*Parlt. Papers, 1878*, LVIII (1898).
- 75 *Ibid.*
- 76 Balfour, p. 168.
- 77 *Ibid.*, p. 169.
- 78 Davies, p. 106.
- 79 *Ibid.*
- 80 *Ibid.*, p. 24.
- 81 Lytton's Minute, April 22, 1877—*Parlt. Papers, 1878*, LVIII (1898).
- 82 Lytton's Minute, Sept. 4, 1878—*For. Sec. Supp., Dec. 1878*, No. 43.
- 83 B. Prasad, *The Foundations of India's Foreign Policy*, Vol. I (Bombay, 1955) p. 184.
- 84 *Balfour*, pp. 164-165 ; *For., Sec. Oct. 1877*, Nos. 30-160.
- 85 Lytton to Cavagnari, June 9, 1877—*Ibid.*
- 86 *Ibid.*
- 87 *Ibid.*
- 88 *Ibid.*
- 89 *Ibid.*
- 90 *Ibid.*
- 91 Lytton's Minute, Sept. 4, 1878—*For. Sec. Supp., Dec. 1878*, No. 43.
- 92 Cavagnari to Lytton, Oct. 13, 1877—*For Sec., Oct., 1877*, Nos. 272-277.
- 93 Prasad, p. 186.
- 94 *For Sec., Oct. 1877*, Nos. 34-160.
- 95 Balfour, p. 179.
- 96 The Punjab Government to Government of India, April 22, 1878 and G.O.I. to Secretary of State for India, July 1, 1878—*For Sec. July, 1878*, Nos. 36 & 40 respectively.
- 97 *Ibid.*, No. 40.
- 98 Lytton to S.O.S.I., Oct. 4, 1877—*Lytton Papers*.
- 99 Balfour, p. 180.
- 100 For discussions at this Conference see G.O.I. to S.O.S.I., July 1, 1878—*For Sec., July 1878*, No. 40.
- 101 Lytton to S.O.S.I., Nov. 23, 1877—*Lytton Papers*.
- 102 Balfour, p. 180.
- 103 *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁵ G.O.I. to S.O.S.I., July 1, 1878—*For. Sec. July, 1878*, No. 40.

¹⁰⁶ Lytton to Salisbury, Dec. 7, 1878—*Lytton Papers*.

The new tactics was expressed thus by the Viceroy in his letter to Salisbury of Nov. 23, 1877 : "I have made every effort to keep the present operations (which in some form or other were absolutely unavoidable) within the narrowest possible bounds ; first, by confining them to the Jowakis and taking every security for the isolation of the tribe before we attacked it ; secondly, by rejecting every plan of operations which was not so devised as to enable us to employ the minimum of force with the maximum of effect ; and thirdly, by steadily resisting the pressure put upon me by the Punjab authorities, both civil and military, as well as by the Commander-in-Chief, for permission to employ a force greatly in excess of what is admitted to be necessary for the purposes to which the present expedition is confined."—*Lytton Papers*.

¹⁰⁷ Balfour, p. 182.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁹ Lytton to Grant Duff, Feb. 24, 1878—*Lytton Papers*.

¹¹⁰ G.O.I. to S.O.S.I., July 1, 1878—*For. Sec., July, 1878*, No. 40.

¹¹¹ Lytton to Grant Duff, Feb. 24, 1878—*Lytton Papers*.

¹¹² *Ibid.*

¹¹³ Balfour, p. 94.

¹¹⁴ Prasad, p. 43.

¹¹⁵ G.O.I. to S.O.S.I., Sept. 2, 1869—*For. Sec., Oct., 1869*, No. 8.

¹¹⁶ C. U. Aitchison, *A Collection of Treaties, Engagements and Sanads*, Vol. XI (Calcutta, 1909), pp. 212-214, for the text of the Treaty.

¹¹⁷ Memorandum by B. Frere, March 22, 1878, Sindh and Punjab Frontier Schemes, by B. Frere & L. Griffin—*Baluchistan Blue Book, No. 1*.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁹ Davies, p. 32.

¹²⁰ *Parlt. Papers, 1877, LXIV (C 1807)*, p. 6.

¹²¹ *For. Political A, May 1871*, No. 259.

¹²² *For. Pol. A, March 1877*, No. 60.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, Nos. 219-560, K.W. No. 60.

¹²⁴ Balfour, p. 96.

¹²⁵ T. H. Thornton, *Life of Sandemann* (London, 1895), p. 63.

¹²⁶ S.O.S.I. to G.O.I., Dec. 13, 1877—*For. Pol. A, Feb. 1878*, No. 288, also *For. Pol. A, March 1876* No. 38.

¹²⁷ *For. Pol. A, Feb. 1878*, No. 288.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*

¹³¹ *Ibid.*

- 132 *For. Pol. A, March 1876, No. 463.*
- 133 S.O.S.I. to G.O.I., Feb., 28, 1876—*Lytton Papers.*
- 134 Lytton to Rawlinson, Aug. 5, 1876—*Ibid.* ; Balfour, p. 97.
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- 138 *Ibid.*
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- 141 R. I. Bruce, *The Forward Policy* (London, 900), p. 63.
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- 150 *Ibid.*
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- Tibet

PEAKS, LAMAS AND THE WAY

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I ought perhaps to warn you, that if you ever really enter into this other world, you may not wish to return : you may never again be contented with what you have been accustomed to think of as "progress" and "civilization".

ANANDA K. COOMARASWAMY,
'The Philosophy of Mediaeval and Oriental Art',
Zalmoxis (Paris), I, 20

THE HISTORY AND CULTURE of Tibet and the Himalayan states have formed the theme of numerous scholarly works. Tibetology reminds one of such names as Alexandra David Neel, Evans Wentz, Austine Waddell and R. A. Stein. In marked contrast to the many well-known works on Tibetology are two not-so-well known works on the subject : *Peaks and Lamas*¹ and *The Way and the Mountain*,² both by a Greek, London-born mountaineer and musician, Marco Pallis (b. 1895). My purpose here is to review the contributions of Marco Pallis to the study of the culture of Tibet from the traditional point of view and hence the quotation from Ananda Coomaraswamy at the head of this essay.

A few words about the history of the two books. In April 1933, Marco Pallis led a Himalayan mountaineering expedition. With Richard Nicholson, E. F. Hicks, C. F. Kirkus and Dr. Charles Warren the group climbed the Riwo-Pargyul, a peak of 22,210 feet.³ Before returning, the group made plans for another visit. Pallis particularly had come under the Himalayan spell. He says, the "Himalayan germ, once caught, works inside one like a relapsing fever ; it is ever bidding its time before breaking out again with renewed virulence".⁴

"The summit beckoned"⁵ and in 1936, Pallis led another expedition to the Himalayas with Richard Nicholson, J. K. Cooke, F. S. Chapman and Dr. Roaf. Pallis' aim this time had another dimension. In addition to mountaineering, he intended to participate and study Tibetan life and spend time in Lhasa. The group could not successfully climb the Mt. Simvu and Pallis was refused permission to visit Lhasa.⁶ While in this sense the expedition was a failure, it was a success in the sense that the group except F. S. Chapman visited several places in the Himalayas and for quite some time they were in every sense Tibetans.⁷ *Peaks and Lamas*, is the result of these two expeditions. They contain Pallis' experience and comprehension of Tibetan culture.

After the Second World War, Pallis and Richard Nicholson returned to the Himalayas in 1947, went to Tibet and pursued studies under Lama teachers. Pallis recorded these experiences in *the Way and the Mountain*. While *Peaks and Lamas* is an essay largely on the mountaineering experiences of Pallis and the externals of Tibetan culture, *The Way and the Mountain* is an essay on the metaphysical import of the Tibetan tradition. The second part of the first book also deals with certain points treated at a different level in the second book.

After the unsuccessful attempt at climbing Mt. Simvu in 1936, Pallis settled down in another capacity. The mountaineer was transformed into a pilgrim of the Spirit.⁸ There were no more mountain peaks for him to climb. The two books are thus the two stages in *the way* pursued by their author.

The meaning of Tradition and the Traditional Culture of Tibet

According to Pallis :

Tibet is the last stronghold where Tradition reigns intact, one might almost say the last authentic civilization governed by some sort of principle resulting in the observance of due precedence in the hierarchy in all its parts. Sheltered behind the ramparts of the Himalayas, Tibet has looked on unscathed, while some of the greatest traditions of the world have reeled under the attacks of the all-devouring monster of 'modernism'.⁹

Following the French thinker, Rene Guenon, (1886-1951), Pallis uses the term *tradition* in a metaphysical sense in addition to its now forgotten etymological connotation.¹⁰ Such usage becomes highly significant when we note the general debasement of our modern-day language. Words have lost their intrinsic meaning, and tendentious usages are legion. And this is not merely a question of changes due to the passage of time but of a general lowering of the intellectual level.¹¹ Pallis defines tradition in a brilliant passage :

Tradition, because of its universal character, defies definition; but a few indications may make this clear. It embraces the whole of a civilization in all its modes and departments, so that it cannot be said of any element that it exists independently of the traditional influence; there is no place for a 'profane' point of view. A traditional civilization has its roots set in a doctrine of the purely metaphysical order, from which all other constituents of the tradition, whether ethical, social or artistic down to the most petty activities of daily life, derive their sanction. Metaphysical ideas are the cement that binds every part together. The whole body of thought and action must be viewed as a hierarchy, with pure metaphysics at the head.

The essential mean whereby truth is made to circulate among men is the tradition from Master to pupil which stretches back into the past and reaches forward to the future. By the Doctrine so handed down, all parts are related to one another, they derive from it both stability and elasticity. No boundaries can be recognised by Tradition as such; it can only be taken as the mobile vehicle of graces in fact unchanging.¹²

Etymologically, *tradition* embraces of those principles, methods and techniques which have been handed down from one generation to the next, principles which are timeless and perennial. *Tradition* is also equated to *Philosophis Perennis*, *Sanatana Dharma*; it includes the expression of that wisdom which was never made and was always and everywhere fundamentally the same. That

wisdom uncreated is *informed* by the *Logos*, the principle that governs and develops the world, the divine Word incarnate in God. In this sense, the Mahayana Buddhist doctrine *informs* the Tibetan civilization, and in fact the culture of the entire Himalayan area.

Peaks, Lamas and the Way

Tibet, the land of mountains has attracted men of various sorts, and among them mountaineers. Pallis himself went there initially as a mountaineer. After the successful ascent of the Riwo-Pargyul, with 22,210 feet under his feet, Pallis saw the illusory nature of the conquest. The mountain, the climber and his effort were all illusory in the Buddhist sense. In spiritual terminology, the mountain and the effort of climbing are symbolic of wayfaring towards the Almighty.¹³ The unsuccessful attempt on the Mt. Simvu in 1936 was also symbolic. They "climbed no more peaks of ice and snow on ... travels"¹⁴ Led into a different world they became pilgrims of the Buddhist tradition of Tibet. And we may add that, in the spiritual life, defeat and victory are the same, or defeat is victory and victory is defeat.

Tradition is that which is handed down through a succession of Masters and Pupils and in the Tibetan tradition, the Lama plays the role of the Guru. The Tibetan every day chants the four Great Principles of Refuge and the first of these is, 'I seek refuge in the Lama'. More, every man has *his own Lama* to whom devotion, reverence and obedience of the highest possible order are enjoined; the disciple shall take no step without his formal authorisation.¹⁵ As a popular Tibetan proverb goes, "without the Lama no man will be delivered".¹⁶ This preponderant position accorded to the teacher is an effective safeguard against bookish information.

Much has been written and much nonsense has also been made of the religious practices of Tibet. In the course of its growth, Tibetan Buddhism has incorporated into itself many elements of the Hindu doctrine. European scholars have sounded a note of reproach at this. But as Pallis puts it, borrowing from the Hindu doctrine does not invalidate the Mahayana teachings.

Rather :

The power of drawing on any and every source for illustration of the doctrine and of pressing the most unlikely tools into service, constitutes the note of catholicity which unites all authentic Traditions. However widely separated may be their view points, there resides under what at a superficial glance may seem irreconcilable difference, the one and the same metaphysical knowledge, which is allowed to clothe itself at will in whatever guise best suits its immediate purposes without yielding up one jot of its reality or one tittle of authority.¹⁷

This leads us to another important aspect of the religious life of Tibet, that of religious toleration. Religious toleration often takes the shape of a patronising attitude of just allowing another religion to live without persecuting or prohibiting it yet latently, disapproving it through showing a positive leniency. This attitude is nothing short of blasphemy.

Real religious toleration means the comprehension of the unity of God-head and religion. Truth is one, however, there are many modes of expressing it. Or, the summit is one, though there are many paths leading to it. New doctrines have never been unpopular in Tibet for they believe that even to speak derogatorily of other religions or to treat their ministers in an unfriendly fashion, is a sin.¹⁸

Traditional Art

Mahayana Buddhism which forms the basis of Tibetan civilization, supplies themes, points and inspiration to the arts of Tibet. Tibetan art is sacred in the sense that its subjects and its formal language bear witness to having originated in a spiritual truth.¹⁹ In the traditional sense art is defined as the proper making of human utilities. Every article of human use, be it an icon, a teapot or a rug, is a piece of art so long as it is useful. All human possession should be on the basis of the utility of the object intended for possession. The Tibetan household consists of only useful articles and knick-knacks are properly absent.²⁰

The end of all traditional works of art is to serve as supports

of contemplation, to be an effective means of communication of the Divine Principle. According to all traditions the function of works of art is gnosis, to enable man to attain metaphysical knowledge.²¹ Thus :

Whether a painting is chosen, or the casting of images, or the written word, or the gesture, or the science of sound *Mantra* or the public mystery plays, or even the most extraordinary dramas performed by the initiates into the *Tantra* the end is the same namely the attainment of metaphysical knowledge.²²

Thus, the Tibetan traditional artist like all traditional artists, is an "inventor of glosses upon the Doctrine",²³ an alchemist, who transmutes the Divinity, portraying it in a visible yet symbolical language. Again since the purpose of all the arts is the same, they are useable interchangeably. The traditional artist merely imitates archetypal models and no acclaim is accorded to individuality or genius so-called. Properly speaking, he does not even create. He imitates divine models governed by iconographic principles carried forward from Master to Pupil. Any deviation from this principle is sin.

* * *

Although only a few important aspects of the two works have been considered, enough has been said, I hope, to bring out the principles subsumed in the interpretations of Pallis. Pallis interprets Tibetan culture as traditional, and tradition as he and others have it, does not suggest any mediaevalist outlook. Tradition implies principles of more than human origin, principles which are timeless and perennial. In simpler terms, tradition can be equated with any authentic religion. And that civilization is traditional in which the principles of a doctrine are all-permeating. Every human activity in a traditional civilization validates itself not upon any human logic but, on the basis of the doctrine. Secondly, the principle of hierarchy (*adhikarabheda*) operates in a traditional civilization. Thus, the Mahayana Buddhist doctrine permeates the entire Tibetan civilization. As for the principle of

hierarchy, Pallis has found that it operates even in the language of the people.

The mountain peaks of Tibet symbolise the goal common to all religions. The Lama is the guide to the wayfarer attempting to climb the mountain. Religion is so much the basis of Tibetan culture that one of the commonest formulas of Mahayanaism, the *Mani Mantra*, is written on the *mendongs* leading in and out of every village, on monasteries, prayer flags and prayer wheels. Of this Pallis writes that,

every person travelling in Tibet is continually in touch with the idea, bathed in its influence, whether he responds consciously or not. It is wafted to him by all breezes, in which also the birds are flying. The same words are repeated to him by the emphatic voice of the hurricane. The water he drinks may have passed over it, and fishes swim within the range of its message. His eyes, and also those of passing wolves and wild asses, are constantly lighting upon its beautifully shaped script So the whole country, from end to end, is pervaded with a devotional atmosphere; only the wilfully blind can altogether avoid responding to it, while wandering across the austere landscape of the sacred tableland.²⁴

Traditional Tibet is an example for other nations to follow. One of the solutions, nay, *the solution* to all the strife of every sort in the modern world, is a proper understanding of its faiths. It is useless to merely study any tradition from the purely research point of view; it should inform every aspect of our daily life as in Tibet. Any study of the authentic traditional cultures such as that of Tibet would serve its purpose if it leads to the understanding that, the rapid progress of communications has brought men physically nearer to each other but, spiritually speaking, he is yet to outgrow his basic animality. If this conference and its deliberations on the history and culture of the Himalayan frontier leads to such an understanding then this brief study would have served a proper and urgent purpose.

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- ² Pallis, M., *The Way and the Mountain*, London, 1960.
- ³ Riwo Pargyul is situated between, lat. 78°—80° and almost on long. 32°.
- ⁴ *Peaks and Lamas op. cit.*, p. 93.
- ⁵ Adapted from Sir Edmund Hillary's statement in Shirakawe, Y., *Himalayas*, New Delhi, 1976, p. 9.
- ⁶ Mt. Simvu is situated between, lat. 76°—79° and 34°—33° long.
- ⁷ After the failure of the mountaineering effort, the three donned Tibetan clothes and externally so much resembled Tibetans that, the local people often asked them whether they came from Lhasa.
- ⁸ *The Way and the Mountain, op. cit.*, p. 13.
- ⁹ *Peaks and Lamas, op. cit.*, p. 358.
- ¹⁰ Rene Guenon was the first modern expositor on the subject of Tradition. For his views see, Guenon, R., *Introduction to the Study of the Hindu Doctrines*, London, 1945.
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ASPECTS OF INDO-TIBETAN CONTACTS AND COLLABORATION THROUGH THE AGES

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IN THE COURSE OF his visit to the Bihar Research Society a couple of months back His Holiness the Dalai Lama was greatly impressed by the unique collection of Tibetan manuscripts there. No doubt some attempts¹ have been made in the past to decipher and print the contents of a part of this treasure of knowledge, but much remains to be done. This paper attempts to focus attention on the main facets of Indo-Tibetan collaboration in certain fields as gleaned from these manuscripts.

Mahapandit Rahul Sankrityana (1893-1963)² a great Buddhist scholar of India, after a sojourn of fifteen months in Tibet in the early 1930's brought from the Sa-mye and other Tibetan monasteries the originals and photo-copies of valuable Sanskrit and Tibetan manuscripts to Patna. The vastness of the collection may be realised from the fact that twenty-two sturdy mules were used for transporting the treasure through the Himalayan regions. Later Rahulji edited the following texts : (a) *Vadanyaya*,³ (b) *Pramana-Varttika*,⁴ (c) *Adyardha Shataka*,⁵ (d) *Vigraha-Vyavartini*,⁶ (e) *Pramana-Varttika with Manorathanandin commentary*,⁷ and (f) *Pramana-Varttika Vritti*.⁸ Rahulji also wrote *teekas* (translations and commentaries) on the following : *Abhidharmakosha*, *Vijnapti-matrata-siddhi*, *Hetu-bindu*, *Sambandha-pareeksha*, and *Pramanavarttika*.

At the persuasion of his friend, K. P. Jayaswal, the great Indologist, Rahulji agreed to hand over the manuscripts and the *Thankas* (Tibetan banner paintings) to the Patna Museum. Later

in 1936 the entire collection was put under the custody of the Bihar Research Society.⁹

These manuscripts symbolise the intense Indo-Tibetan intellectual collaboration in the ancient and medieval times. There are the xylographed books printed through the crudely carved wooden blocks on the hand-made tough and rough paper ; some hand-written manuscripts on rough paper and Sanskrit photographed texts on palm-leaves in the old Maithili script, and translations of many Sanskrit books into Tibetan.

We learn from the manuscripts that Naresh aa-thi-Chan-po (Nya-Khri-Tsan-Po), the son of an Indian king, visited Tibet in the second century B.C. One of his descendants, Emperor Sron-Tson-gam-Po ruled in Tibet in the seventh century A.D. It was a time when the Tibetan language had no script. To acquire such a script the Emperor sent one of his ministers with a retinue of Tibetan attendants to India. After studying some Indian languages, Panini's grammar,¹⁰ the tantra¹¹ and other branches of Indian learning they formulated the Tibetan script and grammar.

Buddhism probably travelled to Tibet in the fifth century B.C., but it was only when this religion began to decline in India as a result of the onslaughts of Brahmanism and later Islam that it came in a big way to the land of the snow. From A.D. 600 to 1300 there was a good intercourse between Northern India and Tibet. Hundreds of Indian monks went to Tibet and translated Sanskrit Buddhist works in Tibetan. A new class of *guru*, the *Lama* (the superior one) was now created. The Tibetan monks who visited India studied at Nalanda, Vikramshila and other centres of learning in Bihar.¹²

It was in the early ninth century A.D. that Acharya Padma-sambhava (called Lo-Pon or guru in Tibet) arrived in Tibet and a golden period of Indo-Tibetan scholarly collaboration began. Some of the marvellous fruits of this contact and cooperation can be found in the Patna collection.

The Sanskrit works translated into the Tibetan language can be grouped into (a) the Kang-gyur (canon) or the sayings of

Gautama, the Buddha, and (b) the Teng-gyur (commentaries), a collection of the writings of Indian scholars on philosophy, religion, grammar and history. These two sections are divided into Vinay¹³ (Dulva), Sutra (Do) and Abhidharma (chhos-non-pa).

The Kang-gyur has the following sub-sections : Vinay—7 books, Prajnaparamita¹⁴ 36, Javadasak—1, Ratnakuta—49, Suttanta—266, Tantra¹⁵ (r Gyud)—468, Older Tantra—17, Kalachakra Tantra—1, Mantra-sangrah—263.

Under the Tang-gyur there are again many sub-sections : Sutra—71, Tantra—2, 606, Prajnaparamita¹⁶—34, Madhyamika¹⁷—157, Sutra-teeka—36, Yogachara—66, Abhidharma—18, Vinay—46, Jataka—8, Lekh (patra)—45, Pramana-shastra—66, Shabda-sutra (grammar)—37, Medicine—7, Shilpa-vidya—15, Samanya-shastra—18, Vishwa-shastra—119, Atisha-kritagrantha—103.

Both the Kang-gyur and the Tang-gyur sections in the Patna collections are of the Lhasa edition known for its accuracy and fine printing.

The works of Acharya Padmasambhava, Upadhyay Shantirakshit and Mahapandit Vimalamitra in the eighth-ninth century A.D. and the new school of Buddhism started on the basis of their ideas are collectively called Ing-ma-pa. Shantirakshit was the son of a king in Eastern India. He worked in Tibet for about four decades and died in the Samya Vihar. Since he was a pioneer of Indian teaching in Tibet the Tibetans called him Bodhisattva. Padmasambhava is said to have controlled all the devils, ghosts and spirits of Tibet through his tantric powers. He wrote about one hundred books on tantra, built the Samya (Sam-Yas) monastery in A.D. 749 and through his erudition and high morals impressed the Tibetan king and his subjects alike. Since he preached Vajrayana his followers were called Vajracharyas. The mystic insights in the Tibetan texts is classified as the *Chir dub* (external), the *Non-dub* (internal) and the *Son-dub* (esoteric) corresponding to the body, speech and thought. The Patna collection has texts on Kritya-tantra, Yoga-tantra as well as Charya-tantra. There are tantrik diagrams and yantras¹⁸ and texts on charms, magic-spells, etc.

It was in the Samye monastery that Yogacharya and Shanti-

garbha, two leading India scholars, worshipped in the ninth century A.D. Kamalsheel defeated a Tibetan *guru* (teacher), Hans Mahayan, in a *shastrartha* (public debate) and wrote several books on the Madhyamika school. Altogether nine Indian scholars of this century were rated as *Acharyas* (Professors).

In the tenth century A.D. Dharmakeerti who had studied at Nalanda, translated many Sanskrit works into Tibetan.¹⁹ Jinamitra, Surendrabodhi, Leelendrabodhi, Dansheel, Bodhi-mitra, Munevarma, Sarwajnadeva, Vidyaprabha, Shreekarma and many others went over from India to Tibet and taught, preached and wrote there. Acharya Budhajana preached in the time of two Tibetan kings, Rala-pa-chan and Ta-shi-chug. Yet another Indian scholar Smritijnanakeerti lost his Tibetan interpreter on his way to Tibet and had to tend cattle at Ta-nap for some time. Eventually he went to Dan-loka-thame and studied *Abhidharmakosha*. He translated *Arya-Satya-Manjushree*, *Guhya-tantra*, etc., into the Tibetan language. The fifth Dalai Lama says that Ri-Sam, a great translator, met Shraddhakarvarma at Tamal-santar (?) in India, learnt tantra at his feet and translated some tantric treatises.

It was during this period that the monasteries of Radeng, Sa-sakya and Koncho-yalp were built for the initiation of groups of Tibetan into monkhood. The text Rnam-Par-Httg-Pa-Bstus-Pa by Stg-Zlog-Pa discusses the religious discussions between the old and the new sects of Tibetan Buddhism. The *Tshot-Mchod-Bcah-Sqrit* by Sde-Srit mentions the rules for holding religious discussions and processions, and the Dkyans-yig gives the methods of singing religious songs.

The pace of the exodus of Indian Buddhist scholars taking refuge in Tibet and other Himalayan regions got accelerated with the continued Muslim invasions of North-Eastern India. In the eleventh century A.D. Dharmashreebhadra and others came to Tibet and translated with the help of a couple of Tibetan interpreters a number of books and commentaries.

Between A.D. 982 and 1054 Deepankar-Shreejnan (Atisha) of the Vikramshila University established a sect in Tibet called Kadam-pa. He wrote many books and translated many

Buddhist texts into Tibetan. His biographer Hbron-Ston (A.D. 1003-1064) was his chief disciple.

Acharya Krishna of India was the teacher of Gosa and Naga-cho. Krishna preached on Prajnaparmita. Manjushreevarma and six other *acharyas* like Diwakarchandra translated the books on tantra in collaboration with certain Tibetan scholars. Janshreejnan, Upayashreemitra, Buddhakarbhadra, Parmeshwar and Amoghavajra taught Parmita and other *sutras* to the Tibetans and translated the relevant books on the subject. In the field of tantra they translated Guhya, Hevajra and Guhyasamaj.

Pandit Alankar, in collaboration with a Tibetan scholar, translated the three parts of *Mahavyuktipatikosh*. Pandit Deepankar Rakshit taught Yoga-tantra to some Tibetan scholars and translated the book Yoga-mahavriti into the Tibetan language. Vidyasumati translated *Mula-paramati* with the help of a Tibetan interpreter. In the same way Vasundhar-rakshit translated Nyaya-samuchchaya. We also hear of Indian Upasakas living in Tibet—Paropad Gayadhar, Maitripad and other great scholars. These Upasakas changed their names and surnames frequently. Thus Gayadhar was also known as Acharya Lal.

One Kambajra Pandit came to Tibet towards the end of the eleventh century at the invitation of some Tibetan scholars and taught and preached there for some time. Virochan went to China for a while but remained busy in teaching and research in Tibet most of the time.

Ratnakarshanti was an expert in the art of *Rupantara* (change of form) : he could assume any form at his sweet will. He acquired fame both in Tibet and China. But Shantighosh, Suryakeerti, Gangadhar and some others worked in Tibet alone. Sunyashree preached the religious tenets of Jnanapada and translated some old works. Kashmir Jnanashree translated several Indian books into Tibetan. It is noteworthy that most of these Indian scholars were invited by the Tibetan rulers and were aided by the local interpreters.

Thus Chandra Rahul translated the works on *Guhyayatantra*, *Shambhar-Vajra*, *Charanya-Satya*, *Hevajra*, etc. Other

Indians who were active in this field were Sthirapal, Sumati-keerti, Amarachandra, Tilakalash, Kanakavarma, Samanta-shree, Niskalankadeva, Darpanacharya, Jayananda, Jagawalitrananda, Buddhashreejnana,²⁰ Shakyashreebhadra, Vibhutichandra and others.

Sugatamashree had specialised in Madhyamika and Abhidharma alankar in the twelfth century, while Jayadatta was a scholar of tantra and Vinaya. A few like Dansheel Nayalankar came, stayed and died in Tibet. Shanghashree had specialised in grammar and Abhidharmakosh, Sumatisagar was an expert in pre and post-Abhidharma, and Jinagupta had mastered Maitriyadharmas. Each of them contributed to the religious and philosophical development of Tibet through discourses, preaching and translations.

Mahacharya Ratnarakshit went to work in Tibet in the thirteenth century A.D. followed by Ratnashree, Kumar and others.

In the field of literature Lna-pa's commentaries on Dandin's Kavyadarsha may be rated high and the Tibetan versions of the *Kalpalata* and Panini's *Dhatu-patha* are commendable.

Buddhism brought to Tibet Indian art, architecture, sculpture and paintings as well, bringing about a revolution in the Tibetan way of life. Also, Indian astrology (Tasi-pa) inspired some Tibetan works on calculations, forecasts, etc. There is a text in the Patna collection on the Kailash mountain as well.

The photostat copy of the manuscript of Dharmasvamin's biography²¹ of the early thirteenth century A.D. refers to the unsettled state of Bihar following the Muslim invasions during which the Buddhists were the special targets of attack. At times this pilgrim had to hide himself to save his life from the Muslim soldiers and highway robbers. Moreover, he fell a prey to occasional sickness. Even so, he studied at Rajagriha and Nalanda for a couple of years. With the help of his teacher Rahula-Shreebhadra he translated the *Kalachakravartika* into Tibetan. In spite of a few factual errors his biography is a fairly reliable account of contemporary Bihar, Nepal and Tibet and there are interesting accounts of Tirhut (Mithila).

Altekar says about Tibetan Buddhism of this time: "The practice of Tantric processes and mystic mandalas, the worship of deities like Aparajita, Khasarpana Avalokitesvara, Remata and Blue Achala and the study of Paramita works like Ashtasahasrikas and Panchavimsati-sahasrikas had become very popular."²²

The Bdag-chen-Blo-Gros-Rgyal-Mtshan-Gyi-Rnam-Thar, a biography of Klon-Chen Pa (A.D. 1308-1363) who had studied Nyaya (Logic) from Maitreya, proves beyond doubt that the Indo-Tibetan intellectual collaboration continued even after the pressure of Muslim invasion on India subsided. The *History of Buddhism in India and Tibet* by Buston (Rin-Chen-Grub, A.D. 1290-1364) is known the world over. The life-story of Tsoh-Kha-pa who reorganised the Kadam-pa sect and re-named it Gelug-pa (the virtuous order)²³ built a new monastery at Gab-dan in 1409 A.D.

There are also texts on the life and works of other Tibetan scholars, Dalai-Lamas and Lamas who visited India and wrote on Buddhism. The first memoir of Klon-rdol-Lama provides the names and activities of some Indian scholars who came to Tibet to propagate Buddhism, while his second memoir mentions the names of many Tibetan scholars who were closely associated with some Indian scholars. His third one describes some important religious names and place-names in Tibet and India.

The *Deb-Thel-Rjot-Ldan-Gshon-Nuhi-Dgah-Ston* by Lna-pa discusses the clash of Jayamitra with the Nalanda monks, shedding side-light on Buddhist philosophers like Nagarjuna, and Dignaga.

A *si-tu* Pandit of India was helped much by some Maithili pandits like Bachchu Ojha (Vishnupati) during his first journey to Tibet in 1722-23 A.D.²⁴ One can imagine that streams of Maithili pandits from north Bihar and the Nepal Tarai took refuge in Tibet in the unsettled condition of the eighteenth century. Since the original name, home, etc., of these residents are not mentioned, it becomes difficult to locate their ancestry or genealogy. All the same, their works in the spiritual upliftment of the Tibetans cannot be minimised.

The Patna Collection has got 1,619 volumes of the miscella-

neous works of many scholars dealing with matters of varied interests, for example, the contemporary political and cultural milieu, the events and problems connected with religion and philosophy, the theory and practice of tantra, art, architecture, literature, medicine, astrology, etc.

The texts may be divided into five sections. The one on history, biography and memoirs has such texts as the works of Lama Taranatha, Buston and others.²⁵ Some of the texts of this section throw some light on the geographical position of some important kingdoms of ancient India. They describe the events connected with the Muslim invasion of Magadha like the destruction of Udantpuri and Vikramshila, and other ancient seats of learning of Bihar. The author of *Shambhala-Lama-yig* happened to be the grand-Lama of the Tashi-lhunpo monastery, called the third Panchen Lama.²⁶ He performed his pilgrimage to Kashi, Prayag, Gangasagar and Jagannathapuri in India by proxy.²⁷ The Raja of Banaras, Chet Singh, extended all courtesy to the pilgrims and at Bodh-Gaya (Dorje-dan) where they performed divine services to the Maha Bodhisattava; the local people showed them great warmth and hospitality.

The *Shambhala* refers to the chaotic condition of Bengal in the latter part of the eighteenth century when a struggle for supremacy was going on in India. It also throws some light on the relations of Bhutan, Sikkim, Tibet and Nepal with the newly created British dominion in India. Even though Bodh-Gaya continued to attract pilgrims Buddhism in India was almost submerged by Hinduism.

Perhaps with a deeper study of the Tibetan manuscripts of Patna as well as those which might have survived in the monasteries of Tibet, a clearer picture of the Indo-Tibetan scholarly collaboration through the ages may emerge. However, the present article tries to highlight some of the strands of this Indo-Tibetan relationship which may eventually help further studies in this direction.

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- ¹ Roerich, G., *Biography of Dharmasvamin*, K. P. J. R. Institute, Patna, 1959. Upasaka Chos rje-dpal was the biographer of Dharmasvamin. The latter dictated his reminiscences to the former.
Jha, A. (ed.), *The Catalogue of the Tibetan Texts in the Bihar Research Society*, Patna. Vol. I, 1965.
Jha, A., (ed.), *Sambhala-Lam-Yig* (Journey to Shambhala and the Land of Saints and the History of Aryadesa) of Blo-bzam-dpal-Idam-yo-s's, Bihar Research Society, Patna, 1966.
- ² Rahulji was already well-known as a great scholar of Sanskrit, Pali and Hindi. He had studied in Sri Lanka and obtained the title of Tripitakacharya. It was through his vast learning, amiable nature and profession of Buddhism that he could persuade the Tibetan monks to let him examine the vast treasure of manuscripts stored in the monasteries. He was even allowed to copy out and photograph some of them. See his autobiography (*Meree Jeevan-Yatra* as well as his *Tibet Yatra*, both in Hindi). Also, the Journal of Bihar Research Society (henceforth referred to as *JBRS*), Rahula Memorial Vol. p. 2. Through his researches Rahulji had pushed back the beginnings of Hindi literature by about four centuries by pinpointing the value of the early Apabhramsha works of the Siddha Acharyas (perfected teachers with attainments in tantric or other fields). In Tibet Rahulji mastered the Tibetan language and got initiated as a monk by Mahapandit Dharmananda Kosambi. See J. D. Sahgal, *Rahulji Ka Jeevan-Yatra Sahitya*. New Delhi, 1973.
- ³ *JBORS*, XXI, part IV and Vol. XXII, part I.
- ⁴ *Ibid.*, Vol. XXIV, parts I and II.
- ⁵ *Ibid.*, Vol. XXIII, part IV.
- ⁶ *Ibid.*, Vol. XXIII, part II.
- ⁷ *Ibid.*, Vol. XXIV, parts III, IV and Vol. XXVI, part III.
- ⁸ Issued by the K. P. J. Research Institute, Patna.
- ⁹ Jha, A. (ed.), *The Catalogue*, *op. cit.*, p. iii.
- ¹⁰ Panini was a famous grammarian in ancient India whose *Ashtadhyayi* (eight chapters) is a masterpiece.
- ¹¹ The tantra reached its culmination in eastern India. The *Manjushri Mulkalpa* of the eighth century A.D. is a famous text of Buddhist origin.
- ¹² Altekar, A S., *Biography of Dharmasvamin*, *op. cit.*, Introduction.
- ¹³ The Pali canonical works are of three parts collectively known as the tripitaka (tipitaka)-Vinaya, Sutra (sutta) and Abhidharma (Abhidhamma). The first frees from *raga* (lust), the second from *dhvesha* (ill-will) and the third from *moha* (stupidity). Gene-

- nally the Hinayansists follow the tripitaka, hold no theory of God, worship no deity and revere but do not worship the Buddha. The *Mahayana* doctrine regarded the Buddha as eternal, giving his teachings an esoteric interpretation. Its main exponents were Nagarjuna, Ashvaghosha, Assang and Vasubandhu. This was taken to Tibet and other parts of Asia.
- ¹⁴ Of the hundreds of sutra works Prajna-paramita, a class name for some sutras deals especially with the notion of *shunya* (nothingness) : "all composite things are like a dream, a dewdrop, a bubble, a shadow, a phantasm or a flash of lightning". Beyond this illusory and impermanent world there is a new world of freedom which could be attained with the help of *prajna* (intuitive and transcendental wisdom). [See B. Walker, *Hindu World*, Allen & Unwin, London, Vol. I, pp. 187-194]
- ¹⁵ By the seventh century a new branch of Buddhism, *Vajrayana* (the Vehicle of the Thunderbolt) arose. This new magical Buddhism, like its counterpart in Hinduism, is sometimes called tantricism, from the tantras describing the prescribed spells, formulas and rites. It had two branches—*Bama marg*, and *Dakshina marg* (the left hand path and right hand path). The former known chiefly as Vajrayana postulated feminine counterparts or consorts to the Budhas, Bodhisattvas and other divines, later known as Tara (Saviouress). Among the main features of the ritual of Vajrayana was the repetition of mystical syllables and phrases such as *Aum Mani Padme Hum* (Ah ! the Jewel is indeed in the lotus). Initially influenced by the Yogachar school of Mahayana, the Vajrayana developed its own system of philosophy by adapting the doctrines of the Vijnanavadins and Madhyamikas to its own world view. [See W. I. de Bary (ed.), *Sources of Indian Tradition*, Columbia University Press, New York, London, 1958, Vol. I, pp. 189-191.]
- ¹⁶ It means the perfection of wisdom. Later it became a goddess worshipped in the form of an icon, specially cultivated in the Vajrayana : *Ibid.*, p. 180.
- ¹⁷ Nagarjuna was the founder of this school of the Middle Way which dissolved every problem into thesis and anti-thesis. He based his teachings on Prajnaparmita.
- ¹⁸ Walker, *op. cit.*, II, p. 21. *The mandala* (circle is a symbolical diagram bounded by a circle within which squares, triangles and other designs are engraved. But in tantricism it is a more specialised figure referred to as *yantra* (instrument or engine) widely used in worship.
- ¹⁹ *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 190.
- ²⁰ Also known as Sams-Ragyas-ye-ses, he had studied at Taksha-

shila, Nalanda, Udantapuri and Vikramshila and had mastered *kriya* as well as *yoga*.

²¹ Roerich, *op. cit.*

²² *Ibid.*, p. iii.

²³ Jha, *Catalogue, op. cit.*, p. ix.

²⁴ Singh, B. P., *Mathilak EK Ajnat Vidwan : Shree Vishnupati* ; Jha, J. C. (ed.), *Mithila Bharati* (in Maithili), Vol. 4, parts I-IV, Jan-Dec. 1977, Maithili Sahitya Samsthan, Patna, pp. 101-104.

²⁵ Taranatha, *Taranathahi-Chos-Hbyunby* ; Buston, *History of Buddhism in India*.

²⁶ *Shambhala-Lama-Yig, op. cit.*, P. V. He learnt Hindi from his mother who hailed from Ladakh. The Patna collection contains many texts on tantra, philosophy, history, etc., written by him.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. vi.

THE SIKKIM CONVENTION, 1890

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BRITISH RELATIONS with Sikkim commenced in 1814-15 when the East India Company, which had brought great parts of India under its control, was involved in a war with Nepal. The opening of relations with Sikkim became a political and military necessity. The alliance with Sikkim seemed to promise to the Company three advantages : viz., (1) to facilitate communications with China *via* Tibet, (2) to prevent Nepalese-Bhutanese intrigues against the Company, and (3) to level an attack on the Gurkha flank. In view of these advantages, the Company induced the Sikkim Raja to bring a large number of troops against Nepal and promised him help to recover his territories lost to Nepal in 1780.

The Nepal War came to an end in 1815 when the Company and Nepal signed the Treaty of Segauli. Lord Moira (afterwards Marquess of Hastings), the Governor-General of India, decided to restore to Sikkim a part of the territory wrested from Nepal. By this gesture he wanted to establish the Company's relations with Sikkim on a firmer footing with a view to checking the Gurkha expansion towards the east. The Company agreed to hand over the territory between the rivers Mechi and Tista to Sikkim on certain conditions. The Raja accepted the conditions and signed a treaty with the Company at Titalia on 10 February, 1817.

The Treaty of Titalia marked the beginning of the end of Sikkim's independence. Under Article 3 of the Treaty, Sikkim lost its right of independent action in its disputes with Nepal and other neighbouring states. Further, it began to lose territory bit by bit. In 1835 it was forced to give Darjeeling to the

Company as a 'gift'. By this cession, though the Company gained a bit of territory, it lost the goodwill of Sikkim. Consequently, the relations between the Company and Sikkim worsened. In December 1849, the Raja arrested Campbell, a Company's servant, when he wanted to cross into Tibet. Taking advantage of the incident, the Company launched a military expedition against Sikkim in 1849 and gained additional territory of Sikkim to the extent of 640 sq. miles. The Company did not annex the whole of Sikkim because of the political expediency of maintaining the kingdom as a separate entity. Sikkim was not wiped out of the map because of its strategic situation between Nepal, Bhutan, Tibet and British dominion in India. But, interestingly enough, the non-annexation of the whole of Sikkim did not result in the increase of British influence there. This was due to the strength of the Tibetan faction in Sikkim. Though Tibet did not actually intervene on behalf of Sikkim during the crisis, it granted the Raja an allowance when the Company stopped his Darjeeling grant. It may be mentioned here that the Company granted the Raja a yearly grant of Rs. 6,000 after the cession of Darjeeling. The gesture increased the Tibetan influence so much that in the next decade the Government of India was forced to undertake another military expedition into Sikkim to re-establish its position.

The Government of India, in order to assert its position, sent a military expedition to Sikkim towards the end of 1860. The expedition was an unqualified success. The power of the Maharaja was completely reduced and he submitted himself to the mercy of the Government of India. The latter decided not to annex Sikkim on various political, military and economic considerations.

The Government of India was aware that the annexation of Sikkim would result in a "long, tedious and most expensive war" with the Himalayan States like Bhutan and Nepal, since they were likely to make a common cause with Sikkim due to their dread of the "proverbial acquisitiveness" of the British. Secondly, the Government of India was afraid that by annexing Sikkim outright, it might find itself in a quarrel with Tibet or China, since all the

Himalayan States were found to have close connections with them. Thirdly, trade considerations weighed heavily with the Government of India in its policy towards Sikkim. From the early fifties of the nineteenth century the importance of Sikkim, as an easy trade route to Tibet and lands beyond, was recognized. The rapid development of the Tea industry in the neighbourhood of Darjeeling convinced the Indian Government of the need to tap the great tea markets of Tibet. Therefore, it took care not to spoil its trade prospects with Tibet by antagonizing China by annexing Sikkim. Lastly, the non-annexation of Sikkim was dictated by internal considerations. The memory of the Indian Revolt of 1857 was still fresh in the mind of the Government of India. It was afraid that the annexation of Sikkim might have adverse political repercussions elsewhere in India.

The Treaty of 1861 was very significant. It brought Sikkim under the control of British India. Sikkim lost all freedom of action and became a *de facto* protectorate of the Government of India. The British had gained substantial advantages without annexing Sikkim. In spite of all this the Treaty suffered from two weaknesses. The first was the non-definition of the *de jure* status of Sikkim, and the second was the privilege, granted to the Maharaja under Article 22, of staying in Chumbi for three months in a year. These two weaknesses manifested themselves within three decades and were mainly responsible for the subsequent difficulties of the Government of India with Tibet and China.

Under Article 8 of the Treaty free trade between Sikkim and British India was assured. The British expected some opposition from the Sikkim Maharaja for this privilege. But it was most readily conceded.¹ The trade privileges were such that Ashley Eden, the Political Officer attached to the military expedition to Sikkim, hoped that within a short time "a very considerable trade will spring up between Lassa and Darjeeling. The Tibetans will be only too glad to exchange gold dust, musk, borax, wool and salt for English cloth, tobacco, drill, etc., and the people of Sikkim will gain carriers of this trade and their government will raise considerable revenue from the transit duties."²

After the receipt of Eden's optimistic report on the pros-

pects of the Tibetan trade, the Government of India revived its interest to open Tibet for trade. The opening of Tibet, however, was intimately connected with the problem of opening communications within government.

In October 1873, the Government of India deputed J. Ware Edgar, Dy. Commissioner of Darjeeling, to visit Sikkim. He was instructed to make himself thoroughly acquainted with "the present state of things there (Sikkim-Tibet frontier)—the actual condition, extent and prospects of trade with Tibet—the best line for the road to take and the advisability of opening one—and all other matters likely to enable the Government of India to act with certainty on this important question."³

Edgar after his return to Darjeeling from Sikkim in December 1873 made a number of proposals to the Government of India to improve its relations with Tibet. First he suggested that the British Ambassador at Peking should make an attempt to get from the Chinese Foreign Office a declaration to the effect that the exclusion of the British subjects from Tibet was not authorised by the Chinese Government. He felt that such a declaration would be as effective as an order for their admittance. Among his other suggestions was the opening of a trade mart on the Sikkim-Tibet frontier.⁴

The Government of India did not accept the proposals of Edgar as it felt that the time was not ripe for their implementation, since the main obstacle for the development of the Tibetan trade, namely, the Chinese and Tibetan opposition, was not removed.⁵

The attempts of the Government of India to open Tibet for trade increased anti-British feeling in Tibet. The Government of India, in order to counteract the anti-British feeling in Tibet and also to get correct information from Tibet, deputed in 1881 Sarat Chandra Das, Head Master of Bhutia School at Darjeeling, to visit Tibet and establish contacts with the Panchen Lama. Here it may be stated that Sarat Das visited Tashi Lumpo, the head quarters of the Panchen Lama in 1879 and developed friendly contacts with the Minister of Panchen Lama for whom he procured certain European goods like lithographic press, photographic goods, etc.⁶

During his second visit to Tashi Lampo in 1881, Sarat Das stayed with the Minister of the Panchen Lama. He visited Lhasa and other important places of Southern Tibet. He gathered valuable information and compiled reports on important geographical features of Tibet. He constructed new maps of Lake Yardok Yusto. The activities of Sarat Das roused the suspicions of the Tibetan Government that he was a British agent. It, therefore, ordered his arrest, but he escaped.

Soon after the return of Sarat Das to Darjeeling in 1883 trade on Sikkim-Tibet frontier was stopped. The Government of India which was keen in developing trade with Tibet was intrigued at this stoppage. So it deputed Colman Macaulay, Secretary of Finance, Government of Bengal, to visit Sikkim in October 1884.

Macaulay arrived in Sikkim in October 1884, but could not get any information from the Maharaja Thothab Namgyal regarding the causes of the stoppage of trade. He was, however, able to talk to the Tibetan frontier officials like the Jongpen of Khamba (Khamba is a small town north of Sikkim-Tibet border, on the way to Shigatse).

Macaulay Proposals

Macaulay on his return from Sikkim proposed to the Government of India that it should obtain the permission of the Chinese Government to the despatch of a mission to Lhasa, so that it might confer with the 'Amban' and the officials of the Tibetan Government to open Tibet for trade with India.⁷

The Government of India did not accept the proposals of Macaulay. The Viceroy, Lord Dufferin, felt that attempts to open Tibet would complicate the British relations with China. Moreover, his hands were full with the affairs in Afghanistan and Burma. He, therefore, decided to ignore the proposals of Macaulay.

In the summer of 1885 Macaulay returned home on leave. He took the opportunity to see the Secretary of State for India, Lord Randolph Churchill, and convinced him about the need to send a mission to Tibet to secure political and commercial advantages. Churchill was convinced by the arguments of Macaulay. He

agreed to send Macaulay first to Peking to arrange with the Chinese Foreign Office for passports and then as the head of the Mission to Tibet. The Government of India had no alternative but to allow Macaulay to "try his luck" especially when it was pointed out that the Chinese Government was well disposed towards the British and that the Chinese embassy in London was favourable to the proposal.⁸

Macaulay arrived in Peking on 9 October 1885. By that time the subject of the mission was already discussed by the Chinese Government. N.O'Connor, the British Charge d'Affairs in China, learnt that the Chinese Government was not favourably disposed to the British proposals for a Mission to Tibet. From the very beginning the Tsungli Yamen, the Chinese Foreign Office, raised objections to issue of passports. Finally, in November 1885 the passports were granted.

Early in 1886 the Mission was organised and assembled at Darjeeling under the leadership of Macaulay. Though O'Connor and Dufferin agreed that it should be small it grew larger. The Mission, soon after the British usurpation of Upper Burma, caused alarm in Tibet. The Mission did not start immediately since in February 1886 the Amban at Lhasa was recalled and the new Amban was not expected to join his post until after a few months. Meanwhile the news came that the Tibetans had decided to oppose it and assembled their army on the frontier.

While the Mission stayed idly at Darjeeling other developments took place. As noted earlier, Dufferin had annexed in the latter part of 1885, Upper Burma, a country with traditional ties to China. He was, therefore, anxious to obtain the Chinese recognition of this annexation. China, taking advantage of the British anxiety, secured the countermand of the Mission. In return, it agreed to recognise British rule and supremacy in Burma, to enter into a trade convention and take steps to promote and stimulate trade between India and Tibet.⁹ On 26 July 1886 the Secretary of State for India asked the Government of India to countermand the Mission.

Tibetan Occupation of Lingtu in Sikkim

Soon after the Macaulay Mission was abandoned the Govern-

ment of India received the news that the Tibetans had advanced thirteen miles into Northern Sikkim across the Jelep pass and occupied a place called Lingtu on the Darjeeling road. The Government of India thought that the Tibetans had resorted to that action due to their fear of the Macaulay Mission, and felt that the Tibetans would withdraw from the place, since the Mission was abandoned. At the same time it was afraid that the Tibetan aggression would adversely affect that British prestige in the Himalayan states of Nepal, Bhutan and Sikkim. It therefore, wanted to get the aggression vacated but was not prepared to achieve that with the help of China as it might lead to embarrassing results. H. M. Durand, Secretary to the Government of India, summed up the situation thus :

There remains the unpleasant fact that the Tibetans are holding a piece of Sikkim. They might go back when they know that our Mission has broken up that they may not, and if not, the political effect would be decidedly bad. Tibet and China do undoubtedly exercise a certain influence on Bhutan, Sikkim and Nepal, but we don't want that influence increased or solidified. Sikkim stands in a very peculiar position. It is by treaty practically an Indian feudatory State... Nevertheless, the Maharaja is much in the hands of the Tibetans. It will, I fear, be difficult to get them out of the country, if they take a fancy of staying there and assert claims to suzerainty. Any discussion on these points with China might have very embarrassing results.¹⁰

The Tibetans did not withdraw from Lingtu. On the other hand they consolidated their position by building a fort at that place. The Maharaja of Sikkim Thothab Namgyal (1874-1914) who was then staying in the Chumbi Valley of Tibet, supported the Tibetan action and declared that the land in occupation really belonged to Tibet.

To prevent further mischief, the Government of India reminded the Maharaja that his support of Tibet was violation of articles 19 and 20 of the 1861 Sikkim Treaty with the Government of India.¹¹ He was asked to return to his capital at once.

The Maharaja paid no heed to that advice.

Meanwhile the Tibetans showed their intention to annex Lingtu permanently by "consecrating" the spot. The Government of India realised that the impasse cannot be resolved without the intervention of Sir John Walsham, the British Minister at Peking. On 20 January 1887, the Government of India requested Walsham to seek the Chinese intervention for the withdrawal of the Tibetans from Lingtu provided that 'any request for the withdrawal of the Tibetans should not be based on their being within the limits of Sikkim nor even that Your Excellency should mention the fact that their position is in Sikkim; because any mention of the boundary might give rise to a specific assertion of China's suzerainty over Sikkim which it is very desirable to avoid.'¹²

Meanwhile the Government of Bengal, which was looking after the Sikkim affairs on behalf of the Government of India, made many attempts to persuade the Sikkim Maharaja to meet the Governor of Bengal at Darjeeling. The Maharaja declined the invitation. The Tibetans showed further indications of making their annexation of Lingtu permanent by levying taxes. Sir Steuart Bayley, the Lt. Governor of Bengal, informed the Government of India that its policy of 'non-interference can only be interpreted by them (the Sikkimese), by the Tibetans and by our own people as a sign of weakness and the end is likely to be further aggression on the part of the Tibetans, while the people of Sikkim finding we don't stir a finger to help them will gravitate towards Tibet and accept the policy imposed on them from there.'¹³

To avoid such a contingency he advocated the use of force rather than acquiesce permanently in the Tibetan usurpation. But he felt that problem could be solved by making reference to China acknowledging its paramount position in Tibet.¹⁴

Meanwhile the Maharaja of Sikkim informed the Lt. Governor of Bengal of his inability to visit Darjeeling since he had been ordered by the Chinese and the Tibetan authorities not to cross into the British territory.¹⁵

The letter of the Maharaja is very important as it contained a definite statement of his submission to the Governments of Tibet and China. Further it amounted to a repudiation of all his

engagements with the Government of India by which he was bound to stay only for three months in a year in the Chumbi Valley of Tibet. After staying in Tibet continuously for more than two years, he declared himself unable to meet the Lt. Governor of Bengal at Darjeeling on the ground that he had been forbidden to do so by the Tibetan Government and the Chinese Amban at Lhasa.

The letter of the Maharaja convinced Sir Steuart Bayley of the dangers involved in the policy of inaction of the Government of India. He was convinced that 'the occupation of Lingtu is not an isolated measure of aggression taken by the local authorities on their own motion, but a part of the general policy adopted by Tibet of controlling the affairs of Sikkim in a spirit hostile to the British Government.'¹⁶

The inaction of the Government of India was criticised both in England and India. In England, the Chamber of Commerce of Manchester and Leeds began to press the Government to open Tibet for trade immediately, lest they might be forestalled by some other power.¹⁷ In India, the Tea planters were disturbed by the presence of the Tibetans in Sikkim and feared for their considerable investment in territory the title to which might soon be in dispute.¹⁸ In view of the above fears Dufferin decided to expel the Tibetans without further delay. He conveyed his decision to Walsham.

When Walsham informed the Chinese Foreign Office the decision of the Government of India to expel the Tibetans by force, he was requested to persuade the Government of India, pending amicable settlement, to postpone its decision to expel the Tibetans by force since that "might affect friendly relations".¹⁹

On 21 March 1888 a force of about 2000 men under the command of Gen. Graham expelled the Tibetans from Lingtu. After their expulsion from Lingtu, the Tibetans made a surprise attack on the British position at a place called Gnatong in Sikkim and nearly succeeded in capturing Sir Steuart Bayley who happened to be there at that time. The defeat of the Tibetans caused considerable alarm in China. The Chinese embassy in London made enquiries with the British Foreign office whether

Dufferin had ordered the Indian army to cross the Tibetan frontier as was alleged in *The Times* of 24 May 1888.²⁰ The Chinese were assured that the Indian army would not enter Tibet, unless attacked by the Tibetans, in which case it would enter their territory to make the victory complete.²¹

In September 1888, the Tibetans entered Gnatong in Sikkim. Thereupon, the Indian army pushed them across the border and entered into the Chumbi valley of Tibet on 26 September 1888, but it withdrew the very next day.²²

Negotiations

The defeat of the Tibetans convinced the Chinese, that they must come to terms with the British, otherwise they might lose their importance in Tibet. They therefore announced that their Amban Lhasa, Shen Tai, would proceed to the frontier to open negotiations with the British. On 21 December 1888, the Amban arrived at Gnatong and the talks began. The Government of India was represented by its Foreign Secretary H. M. Durand.

Durand was instructed not to enter into any discussion with the Chinese regarding Sikkim since it was "feudatory of the British Empire and its position as such was defined by the Treaty". As to the Sikkim-Tibet boundary, the Government of India felt that there was no need to define it as that was already established.²³

From the very beginning the talks headed towards a failure. The Amban, Shen Tai, refused to recognise the dispute as one between the British and the Tibetans. He took the stand that Tibet was a part of the Chinese empire and the rights and interests of Tibet were the rights and interests of China. He tried to prevent any direct dealings between the British and Tibet. He, however, engaged to obtain the formal assent of the Lhasa Government to any agreement he might make. He made it clear that 'shaffes' or Tibetan Councillors then in Chumbi were wholly incompetent to affix their signatures on that agreement.²⁴

As regards Sikkim, the Amban agreed to acknowledge the *de facto* supremacy of the British provided the Maharaja continued to pay tribute to the Grand Lama and to the Government of Tibet and pay homage to the Amban. Further he demanded that the Maharaja should be allowed to retain the dress and wear the hat

and button conferred upon him by the Chinese Government.²⁵

The Chinese terms were not acceptable to Durand as he felt that the question of homage was not a mere point of ceremonial, but an important one underlying the British position as a suzerain power. He refused to yield on their point and observed :

“If we give away in respect of Sikkim, we must be prepared to do so, at some future time, not only with regard to Kashmir and her feudatories, such as Hunza and Nagar and with regard to any of the smaller Himalayan states which many have committed themselves. We might have even China claiming suzerain rights over Darjeeling and the Bhutan Dooars, which we acquired from her so called feudatories.”²⁶

The Government of India informed the Amban that the talks had ended. This made the Chinese uneasy, for they felt that unless they came to an agreement with the British, their influence in Tibet would be threatened. They, therefore, announced that James Hart, brother of Sir Richard Hart, Inspector-General of Chinese Maritime Customs, would resume the negotiations.

In April 1889 talks were reopened. A.W. Paul was the British delegate and James Hart represented the Chinese. The talks ended in a stalemate over the question of “letters and presents.” The Viceroy, Lord Lansdowne was determined not to yield on this point. Lord Salisbury, the British Foreign Secretary, also felt that the discussion between Hart and Paul should terminate if there was no prospect of agreement or formula to represent the future position of Sikkim.²⁷

In August 1889, Hart came with another proposal which also insisted that “the Raja of Sikkim shall continue to send letters and presents to the Chinese and Tibetan authorities as formerly.”²⁸

The Government of India rejected Hart's August proposals. This made the Chinese Government once again uneasy. China felt that the Sikkim affair ought not to end thus, and that a specific agreement was essential for the future good understanding on all sides.²⁹ Therefore, in November 1889, Hart submitted to Paul the revised Chinese proposals which tried to meet the Government of India's objections regarding letters and presents.

The revised proposals offered to recognise India's sole protectorate over Sikkim. The Chinese Government assured Walsham that 'the external relations of the protected State will be solely conducted by India and consequently the practice of presents and letters to the Tibetan Government would virtually cease.'⁸⁰

Signing of the Convention

Thereupon Lansdowne agreed to reopen negotiations with the Chinese as the new proposals recognised Government of India's supremacy over Sikkim. In December 1889, the Government of India submitted draft proposals to Hart and to Amban. They accepted the proposals with slight modifications, and on 17 March 1890 the Sikkim-Tibet Convention was signed at Calcutta by Lord Lansdowne and the Amban Shen Tai.

Provisions of the Convention

Article I defined the boundary between Sikkim and Tibet. It was defined as follows :

The boundary of Sikkim and Tibet shall be the crest of the mountain range separating the water flowing into the Sikkim Teesta and its affluents from the waters flowing into the Tibetan Mochu and northwards into other rivers of Tibet. The line commences at Mount Gipmochi on the Bhutan frontier and follows the above mentioned parting to the point where it meets Nepal territory.

Article II admitted the Government of India's control over the internal and external affairs of Sikkim, in the following words :

It is admitted that the British Government, whose protectorate over Sikkim State is hereby recognised, has direct and exclusive control over internal administration and foreign relations of that State, and except through and with the permission of British Government, neither the Ruler of the State nor any of its officers shall have official relations of any kind formal or informal with any other country.

Article III provided for the joint Anglo-Chinese guarantee of the Sikkim-Tibet frontier. Articles IV to VI dealt with the question of trade, pasturage and the method by which official communication between the Government of India and the Tibetan Government was to be conducted. Article VII stipulated that within six months of the ratification a joint Anglo-Chinese Commission should be constituted to discuss these outstanding questions.³¹

The Convention settled once and for all the status of Sikkim which for all practical purposes became a part and parcel of British India and lost its separate identity. Durand in unmistakable terms emphasized this point when he stated that 'Sikkim is part of the British Empire ... It can have no dealings with foreign powers to whose eyes India should be all red from Himalayas to Cape Comerin.'³²

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CHINESE CASE ON THE TIBET-CHINA FRONTIER AS PRESENTED TO THE SIMLA CONFERENCE 1913-14

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APART ENTIRELY from the political acumen of the 13th Dalai Lama (b. 1876, r. 1895-1933) and his plenipotentiary at the Simla Conference in 1913-14 and aside also from the vexed question of the status of Tibet vis-a-vis China in 1914 as well as the meaning and content of suzerainty at international law, the question of the line of control that separated the area of Tibetan jurisdiction from the area of Chinese jurisdiction may perhaps bear another attempt to review the evidence on which the Tibetan and the Chinese plenipotentiaries based their claims in 1913-14. This question has received rather less attention in researches than the more celebrated and more eventful frontier between Tibet/China and the British Indian provinces of Assam and Burma. On the present occasion we shall take a look at the evidence on which the Chinese plenipotentiary had based his claims on behalf of his government. As we know, his principal evidence and case was comprised in Fu Sung-mu's *History of the Creation of Hsi-kang Province* (in Chinese, published at Chengtu, November 1912) of which an English translation was furnished by the British Minister in Peking to the British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs in April 1913 and Ivan Chen's "Chinese Statement in the Limits of Tibet" (January 1914) which included his comments in reply to Lonchen Shatra's "Tibetan Statement on the Limits of Tibet" (January 1914). These should be read with Shatra's earlier "Statement of Tibetan Claims" (10 October 1913) presented at the conference and Chen's reply (30 October 1913) contained in

his letter to Sir Henry McMahon. We shall now examine seriatim the statements and arguments offered by Fu and Chen.

I Fu Sung-mu, 1912

After the execution of Chao Erh-feng, his successor Fu Sung-mu attempted to continue his work but before long he was swept away by a tide of insurgency in these parts and he barely survived to retire and write an account of Chao's campaigns and to make a plea for the creation of Hsi-kang as a new frontier province with several objectives. We shall now summarize and examine Fu's arguments.

He called Hsi-kang one of the three divisions of Tibet which extended eastward from Tachienlu to the Danda mountains on the west, i.e., some 3,000 li, and from Wei Hsi in Yunnan on the south to the Oloseta, savage tribes on the north, where they adjoin [ed] Kansu, i.e., some 4,000 li'. Its south-west boundary was only separated from the British dependency of Assam by a few days' march *via* Tsayu or Zayul. The north-western corner adjoined Hsining. Ruling dynasties of China earlier than the Manchu were claimed to have made presents of territory to chiefs of the tribes. Fu wrote, 'Perhaps 50 per cent. has been made autonomous under these native chiefs, 10 per cent. given to the Living Buddhas, 30 per cent. belonging to savage tribes and some 10 per cent. being given by the Manchus to Tibet.' After Chao Erh-feng's appointment as Boundary Commissioner in 1906, the land under the native chiefs and Hutuktus was said to have been placed under Chinese administration. 'The territory in possession of savage tribes was won, backed by conquest, and the land given to Tibet, Sangang, Tsayu, &c., was also recovered.' Chinese officials were appointed in those areas and when Shobando and other places were conquered, Fu noted with satisfaction, 'the new province was complete with its boundary fixed as the Danda Range'.

Fu described the land mass west of Szechuan as Kham, Anterior Tibet and Ulterior Tibet. Tibet had concluded a treaty with the British and, in Fu's view only Kham remained in its

entirety. He asserted that 'the Government of China and the people of Szechuan and Yunnan can assuredly not afford to ignore Tibet : Kham, however, is of incomparably more importance to them'.

Fu continued, 'In the autumn of 1908 the Tibetans asked the then Resident in Lhasa, Lien Yu, to forward a memorial to Peking which wantonly claimed that Tibetan territory extended up to Ch'iung Chou in Szechuan. Lien Yu, in conjunction with the Boundary Commissioner, Chao Erh-feng, and the Viceroy of Szechuan, Chao Erh-hsun, forwarded the text of the Tibetan memorial to the Government and expatiated upon the treasonable designs harboured by the Tibetans.' In consequence Chao Erh-feng organized vigorous measures regarding the Kham territory after his arrival. In pursuit of his policy of introducing provincial administration he recovered from the Tibetans the lands said to have been presented to them. In this Chao was spurred on by the Anglo-Tibetan treaty of 1904, 'in which Britain practically treated Tibet as a separate nation and not as a Chinese Dependency'. Fu went on to add, 'Formerly, the Government authority in Tibet was vested in the Resident ; to-day, the Tibetans are practically independent.'

Fu said that the natives east of the Danda Range called themselves men of Kham while those west of it called themselves Tibetans. According to him, Chinese travellers in Kham and Tibet called the Chinging Range the boundary, which in his view was the boundary between Batang and Kiangchia (Yangtze valley), the latter place having been presented by the Manchus to the Tibetans. Chiamdo and Basu, he said, were not Tibetan territory though on the other side of Kiangchia. Chao's campaigns, however, had resulted in Chinese occupation, for a time, of almost the entire territory of Kham.

In the immense area of Kham, apart from a magistrate at Tachienlu, there were military officials at Batang, Chiamdo etc. Fu said, 'There was no civil administration and without proper civil administration Szechuan could secure no benefits. Thus, the position of Szechuan vis-a-vis Tibet was one of perpetual danger. The operations of 1905 and 1906 in suppressing rebellions at Batang and Litang proved conclusively that the only

way to secure the safety of Szechuan and to provide reinforcements for Tibet was to have ample commissariat supplies and an efficient force in Kham.'

Batang had two hereditary native chiefs and officials under them. As the Manchus had frequent operations in Tibet and stationed troops in the country, a commissariat officer was placed at Batang whose appointment was for three years and who was selected from Szechuan. In addition, two officers were stationed there and petty officers and men were drafted out of the Szechuan army for three years' service.

The highest ecclesiastical officials in Batang were an abbot and a Tieh pang or lictor : 'the former was chosen out of priestly graduates who had been examined in divinity and ordained by the Dalai Lama, thus becoming eligible for nomination by the clerical body at their native place for vacant abbacies on application to the Viceroy of Szechuan for his sanction through the local commissariat officers. The lictor or Tieh pang was chosen by the clergy themselves from lamas of blameless life. The abbot was in charge of theological matters and spiritual research : the lictor was responsible for the discipline of the priesthood and inflicted punishment upon erring clergy. The laity were subject to the discipline of the native chiefs and the Chinese officials had not right of interference.'

The next event on this part of the frontier was the visit of the Vice-Resident to Lhasa, Feng Ch'uan. This officer was impressed by the fertility of the region and brought in Chinese to reclaim it. The natives objected to and opposed this proceeding. Feng Ch'uan ignored the protest, opened an area for cultivation and placed the local commissariat officer in charge. 'In vain did the native chiefs and the abbot implore Feng to hasten his departure for Tibet lest worse should befall him : he reviled them but the more and infuriated the people. In consequence, they rose, retook possession of the reclaimed area and slew the Chinese cultivators. Feng's troops were overpowered and his chief officer died fighting. The Catholic church was burned, two native acolytes were massacred and Feng tried to make terms. The natives offered to spare his life if he

would return to Szechuan : he agreed and started with his force. They were ambushed at a place called Parrot's Beak and only a few escaped through the good offices of friendly natives.'

On Chao's appointment in 1906 as Boundary Commissioner, he returned to Chengtu for the purpose of conferring with Hsi Liang, then Viceroy of Szechuan. The two then recommended that civil administration be introduced in Batang, which was first created a hsien. Afterwards, on Chao's appointment in 1908 as Resident to Tibet in addition to his functions as Boundary Commissioner, the Throne was asked to raise it to a fu, to be called Baanfu, with Yenching and Sanpa subordinate to it. In addition a Taotai was to reside there and the intendency was named Kangan-tao. These suggestions were given effect to in the spring of 1911.

At one time Litang formed part of Kokonor : under the Manchus it was governed by native chiefs, but a commissariat officer and a captain were stationed there with a garrison furnished by Szechuan. In 1905, the native chief was said to have refused *ula* or corvee service to Chao's expedition : 'it was not till Chao had put to death two of the headmen that the required transport was provided'. The abbot of the Hsiang Cheng monastery had risen against the Chinese in 1894 and had caused the murder of a captain and his son. This abbot was now to be attacked by Chao, 'as repeated outrages including the flaying alive of an officer, named Shih, had all been unavenged'.

Of the native tribes in Kham, Deko was the largest and extended from the upper waters of the Chinsha Chiang (Yangtze) in the north in the vicinity of Hsining down to Batang in the south, with Chiamdo as its western and Chamdui as its eastern boundary. In 1894, on the introduction of Chinese administration on Chamdui by Lu Chuan-lin, the commander of that force made a tour of investigation in Deko. The Chinese commander took advantage of a domestic quarrel of the tribe to play a trick on the chief : he promised to expel his wife and her illegitimate son, and on this pretext he brought in troops. On their arrival he seized the chief, his wife and both the sons and sent them to Chengtu. The Viceroy Lu Chuan-lin asked the Throne to adopt Chinese administration in Deko and Chamdui.

At this point Chao Erh-feng reached Tachienlu : Dorje, son of the late Deko chief, applied to him for help in recovering his position. In May 1908, Chao advanced himself, routed them at Samu and drove them into the desert wilds. The illegitimate son fled into Tibet. The remnant of his following was pursued by Chao's men and finally surrendered. Deko was now quiet and Dorje asked Chao to introduce Chinese administration. Chao eventually yielded to his request and 'obtained the Throne's sanction to confer a hereditary second button on the chief and allowance of 3,000 taels'. With regard to administrative disposition, Fu wrote, 'The territory was divided into five districts : the central was called Tehuachou ; the southern Paiyuchou ; the northern Tengkofu and Shih ch'u hsien ; the eastern, Jungpa tsa, was placed under the jurisdiction of Tehua ; and the western was henceforth known as Tungpu Hsien. An intendency was also created in Tengkofu in the event of other savage tribes to the north coming under Chinese citizenship and other departments or districts being formed.'

Chamudi, which till the 1860s had been a pentarchy, became united under a single chief named Gongbu Langchien. In 1863, a Tibetan caravan bringing tea from Tachienlu was plundered by Gongbu's orders : the Tibetans demanded that the Resident should ask for a punitive expedition to be sent by Tibet and Szechuan jointly. Szechuan, however, was in the throes of the Taiping rebellion and powerless to attend to Kham. The Tibetans advanced and were everywhere joined by native chiefs. The Viceroy of Szechuan, Lo Ping-chang, fearing lest Chamdui should submit to Tibet, sent couriers to stop the advance. On the Tibetans paying no heed, Lo despatched troops under a Taotai, Shih, who halted timorously at Tachienlu. When the Tibetans had taken Chambui and executed Gongbu and his son, Shih felt encouraged to proceed to take over the territory. The Tibetans declined to withdraw unless an indemnity of taels 200,000 was paid. Lo was unable to comply with this demand because the Szechuan treasury was exhausted. The Tibetans then demanded cession of the territory. The Throne gave its consent to this arrangement and Chamdui was administered by

a lay official and a lama both appointed from Lhasa, with a force of troops. These troops served for three years and the officials were chosen by the Dalai Lama in conjunction with the Tibetan treasury. The two officials, according to Fu, exacted heavy taxes, appropriated the whole of the territory as Gongbu had done and demanded payment of the expenses of the garrison. For 30 years the people groaned under the burden. At last in 1894 they slew the Tibetan officers and declared independence.

Lu Chuan lin, Viceroy of Szechuan, sent troops to reduce Chamdui and proceeded to take over the administration. The time was opportune : Tibet had lost the territory and Szechuan had gained it. Fu wrote, 'Tibet had no ground to object and in any case would have been bound to indemnify Szechuan for her expenses.' However, the Resident in Lhasa and the Ching-chun of Chengtu were on bad terms with Lu and did not cooperate with him. Chamdui was restored to Tibet and opinion was that it was lost to Kham.

In 1908, Chao Erh-feng passed through the country and the chiefs and people informed him of the arbitrary acts of the Tibetan officials. They had seized their land and compelled payment of their troops' expenses. The latter numbering over a thousand engaged in trade, forced the natives to provide transport for their merchandise, accused them of damaging their goods and exacted indemnities on false pretexts. The natives were intolerably oppressed and besought protection. Chao pitied their plight and ordered the Tibetan officials to administer the country without oppressing the chiefs or natives.' The Tibetans returned a bellicose reply and Fu was sent by Chao to stop their advance. His object was to oust the Tibetans and to take over the country. However, Government advocated delay.

In 1909, Chao repeated his advice and the Government suggested giving an indemnity of taels 100,000, or more, to Tibet in exchange. Lien Yu and Wen Tsung-yao [respectively Amban and Deputy Amban] were told to notify the Tibetan Government, which refused to agree and tried to intimidate the Government by using foreigners [apparently the British] as a lever. The fact was that they wished to lay the foundations of a future

annexation of the whole of Kham by their possession of Chamdui. In 1911, Chao again urged the question on the Government, but the latter, blind to the true position and alarmed at possible foreign complications resulting, still could not make up its mind. Meantime, the chiefs, smarting under the wrongs done to them by the Tibetans kept importuning Chao. On the latter's appointment in the ensuing summer to the Szechuan viceroyalty, he came to the conclusion that the continued possession of Chamdui by Tibet placed Kham in jeopardy and was far from being advantageous to Szechuan. Accordingly, on his way to Szechuan he proceeded to Chamdui in the company of his successor Fu and a force of troops. In July he expelled the officials from Tibet, pacified the natives and took over the territory. The people were summoned to a council and the arrangements for reforming the collection of the land tax were discussed and the new administration duly formed.'

Sanyen. The sanyen savage tribes occupied the region west of Batang and south of Deko, an area not more than 400 li by 200. They had no native chiefs and feuds between their various villages were quite deadly. They had a calendar of their own differing not only from the Tibetan or Chinese but from their tribes of the region. They subsisted mainly by plundering travellers. Under the Manchus, Chinese troops proceeding to Tibet would make a long detour to avoid them. Fu continued, 'As they persisted in highway robbery, Lu Chuan-lin sent troops under the provincial commander-in-chief, with native auxiliaries from Batang and Chaingchia, to invade them; the Sanyens hemmed them in on every side and they were fain to sue for peace. Only by offering packages of tea were they permitted to retire. 'Portion of the Batang territory was also ceded to them and in order to keep them quiet two of the subsidies of were granted rank as lieutenant and sergeant with subsidies of some hundred taels per annum.' However, their plundering career continued and many Tibetan merchants became their victims. In 1908, the Tibetans invaded the country but after a year's operations only reduced one village, which was ceded to them. The tribes now became more ferocious than ever and in

1910 waylaid a force of Chinese troops, whose rifles they seized besides taking captive several officers and men. Chao Erh-feng spent six months collecting topographical information of their territories. The Chiangchia and other tribes also requested Chao to reduce Sanyen. Eventually Chao sent Fu to invade them. In November 1910 Chinese troops entered the country from five directions and the tribes, lacking homogeneity, could make no stand against the invaders, who penetrated their lairs and forced them to surrender. By the spring of 1911 provincial administration was introduced in the region.

Chiangchia, Sangang and Tsayu (Zayul). Chiangchia was inhabited by tribes of Mongolian descent which, Fu said, preserved official patents of the Yuan (Mongol) dynasty. Sangang lay on the main road into Tibet along which Chinese troops marched from Szechuan during the campaigns of the last dynasty, and Chinese petty officers were appointed at the post stations. Zayul was separated from Assam by intervening savage tribes. Fu claimed that the Manchus made a present of this territory to Tibet, only maintaining a captain at Chiangchia and occupying the post road. He added, 'Tibet sent officials to all three tribes for the purpose of collecting taxes from the inhabitants.'

In 1909, on the occasion of the Chinese invasion of Tibet, the Tibetans massed thousands of the tribesmen at Chiangchia and stopped the Chinese advance. Chao tried to induce their withdrawal without success and the expedition made a detour *via* Deko and Chiamdo to avoid them. Scarcely had the force proceeded northward when the Tibetans, taking advantage of the rear being unprotected, undauntedly endeavoured to invade Batang and for a time the position was critical. Chao, however, hurried reinforcements up and routed the Tibetans. In 1910, he suggested that Kangta should be the boundary between Kham and Tibet. Tibet raised objections and requested restoration of Chiangchia and Zayul. Significantly, Fu added, 'Chao then sent to ask the tribes concerned under which rule they preferred to come. The unanimous reply was that they were oppressed by Tibet and that they longed for Chinese citizenship. In the spring of 1911 the Throne signified approval and Chinese

officials were duly appointed.'

Chiamdo. Chiamado was bounded on the west by the Danda Range which Fu called a natural frontier between Kham and Tibet. The Manchus, he said, had presented the region to two Hutuktus who governed the tribes and acquired the land taxes for their own use, contributed nothing to Peking and sent only a triennial tribute mission. The succession was by transmigration.

Under the Manchu regime two officers and troops were stationed at Chiamdo as well as a commissariat officer whose duty it was to transport provisions etc. to the Resident and troops at Lhasa. "With the civil administration they not concern themselves.' In the spring of 1909 Chao Erh-feng obtained cancellation of his appointment as Resident in Tibet to occupy himself exclusively with frontier affairs. Iien Yu then handed over the Chiamdo region to Chao's charge. In the preceding winter the Tibetans had interfered with the advance of the Szechuan troops into Tibet, so Chao provided them with an escort from his own force which saw them safely to Kangta. Basu and Bomed submitted and Shobando and other tribes asked to enjoy Chinese citizenship. Accordingly, in 1910, Chao suggested to the Throne that Kangta should be made the boundary between the new frontier region and Tibet. Owing to the uncertainty of the situation in Tibet Chao's request to introduce Chinese administration in Chiamdo and Jaya was not considered for the time being. Despite the refusals, Chao visited Jaya and ordered the Hutuktu to reform his method of taxation and to abandon extortionate practices. The tribes urged him to place Chinese officials in charge of the administration of justice. To this he agreed. All this was done as a preliminary to introducing Chinese administration in Jaya and Chiamdo. In 1911 the Government in Peking decided to introduce Chinese administration in these areas and by the following summer all native chiefs in Kham were reduced. The Hutuktus were allowed to keep their seals as the authority therein implied was purely religious. In future they were allowed to retain half the proceeds of the land taxes and were excused the triennial tribute

mission to Peking.

Shobando. Shobando and the adjoining tribes lay on the east side of the Danda Range and thus formed part of Kham. Fu said that the Manchus had made a present of the country to the Tibetans, while retaining commissariat and other officers at Shobando in connection with the post road service into Tibet. These tribes impeded the advance of the Szechuan troops into Tibet in 1909, so Chao sent an expedition which fought their way through and inflicted terrible defeats on the natives who surrendered. Chao then recommended, as for other areas, that the Danda Range should be the future frontier and he later on took over Shobando.

Bomed. The inhabitants of Bomed claimed Chinese descent, asserting that they owed their origin to Chinese troops which had been reduced to destitution from non-receipt of pay and had consequently married and settled down there. In 1908 Chao invited them to furnish contingents for his army in view of their descent but they declined; so the Tibetan expedition was made up of Szechuan troops. In 1909 the tribe was said to have informed Chao at Chiamdo that it would like to receive Chinese citizenship. Lien Yu, however, raised objections on the ground that Tibet would be suspicious and might solicit foreign protection which could cause diplomatic complications. In 1910 the Bomed tribe again came to Chao with specimens of their produce, which, they claimed, proved Chinese origin. They also discussed the geographical position of their tribe, which adjoined Paimakang and was separated from British territory by some savage tribes. They urged the necessity of taking over their territory as a protective measure and pleaded unwillingness to come under Tibet. In view of Lien Yu's expressed dread of Tibetans' suspicions, Chao advised the Bomed people to await instructions from the Throne. In the winter of 1910 Lien Yu, who had heard of their loyal dispositions, sent an expedition to take over the region: Bomed refused to acquiesce. More troops were despatched in the following spring under Chung Ying, who was defeated and compelled to retire. Tibet was intensely excited, and Lien Yu telegraphed to the Government and to the Viceroy

of Szechuan asking that the Boundary Commissioner might send a relief force. Accordingly, under Chao's orders, Fu despatched Feng Shan with 2,000 men from Batang. Lien Yu also sent a force under Lo which was to cooperate. Bomed was reduced and Paimakang was also occupied. Both Tibet and Kham claimed the territory and Lien Yu memorialized the Throne that the determination of the future of the territory should be postponed until after Chinese administration had been introduced in the region.

This frontier region, by its location midway between Tibet and Szechuan, formed both a portal to the latter and a postern to Tibet. It extended from Kokonor to Yunnan and, being a high tableland, occupied a position of vantage in every direction, besides being contiguous to Szechuan and Yunnan. Owing to its remoteness and the savage nature of its inhabitants, Manchu authority contented itself with forming ties of allegiance through giving official rank to its chiefs and making their office hereditary. Thus a territory of several thousand li was divided among 20 or 30 tribes which were practically feudatories, i.e., nominally paying tribute to China but in reality not constituting themselves Chinese subjects. In the reigns of Yung Cheng and Khen Lung, Gongbu absorbed in his dominion five native chiefdoms. Gongbu, Fu said, combined overweening, though ineffectual, arrogance with an insensate ferocity, until in the end Tibet became master of the country. Naturally the native chiefs and lamas ignored Chinese authority in consequence and recognized Tibet alone. Hsiang Cheng was annexed by Tibet and Chinese officers were massacred. Jaya joined Tibet and besieged the imperial envoy. Taining repulsed and slew Chinese officers in connection with a mine dispute. Batang slew an imperial commissioner owing to land reclamation. Rebellions against Chinese authority were incessant and punitive expeditions had again and again been necessary.

After Chao won back Batang and Litang in 1906 and the Throne showed its concern by appointing him Boundary Commissioner, Fu observed, 'To assign civil powers to a military administration was obviously a departure from established usage, but the measure was in the nature of a temporary expedient

owing to fact that this wild territory had only just been opened up and that Litang and Batang comprised hardly any properly constituted Hsiens. The vast extent of the territory, however, divided as it was among native chiefs under Chinese suzerainty or a medley of savage races whose constant feuds and struggles for supremacy were a source of danger to the Chinese communities, showed Chao Frh-feng that a change was necessary.'

On his appointment as Acting Viceroy of Szechuan,, Chao took over nine more native chiefdoms, and the few remaining tribes and the savages who had not yet tendered submission were dealt with by Fu after Chao's departure. There still remained ten or more places where officials had been appointed but prefectures and districts had not yet been formed.

Fu made some additional points in recommending creation of a new frontier province. The March region adjoined Tibet, and Tibet was pressed close by a powerful neighbour. Those foreigners in his view were watching the moment to extend their dominions and did not regard Tibet as a Chinese dependency, owing perhaps to the fact that provincial administration had not been introduced in Tibet. He added, 'Now the March region is Kham : Kham was formerly quite distinct from Tibet and the original boundary between the two should be restored. The creation of Kham as a province will thus secure territorial annexation as well as supplying a distinguishing name.' Fu elaborated thus. Prior to the settlement of the March region, the remoteness of Tibet from Szechuan resulted in frequent rebellions on the part of the Tibetans. In 1903 Tibet contemplated the massacre of the Chinese : in the following year Jaya tribes sent troops to Tibet and bombarded the Resident. At the time of British expedition to Tibet, Chinese officials had to submit to foreign coercion and the Tibetans more than ever regarded China with contempt. On learning in 1908 that Chao was taking an expedition to Tibet, the Tibetans forthwith raised objections and presented a memorial claiming that Tibetan territory extended as far as Ch'iung Chou. On the Szechuan force invading Tibet in 1909, the Tibetans cut off supplies from the Imperial Resident and hampered the advance of the expedition. Had not timely preparations been made on the boundary region

and troops despatched the situation might have been fraught with peril. During the summer of 1912, Bomed burst into rebellion and the Chinese force sent from Tibet was repulsed. The presence of the boundary troops in the vicinity provided reinforcements and prevented Tibet from joining Bomed. Conversion of the March region into a province and the gathering of a substantial force of troops would bring a triple benefit, 'namely, a garrison for Kham, a safeguard for Szechuan, and reinforcement for Tibet'.

New official system. It had been the practice in the past in view of the remote and savage character of the tribes to bind them to allegiance by giving their chiefs official rank. The rank was made hereditary or, in the case of Living Buddhas, descended from one incarnation to another. Some of the tribes were really quite independent of China. 'The country was practically split up among a number of feudal chiefs, but, while the feebler ones showed no loyalty to China, the powerful ones were openly rebellious and rendered constant punitive expeditions inevitable.' Chao deemed it essential to introduce a system of prefectures and district magistracies in place of the former tribal divisions.

Native officials. The natives of Kham knew nothing of the Chinese designations for their chiefs, such as Hsuanwei Ssu and Anfu Ssu. They called their headman Jen Puchi (Rimpochi) which was a high honorific title. Under the Tussu or native chiefs were the Nangtzu who were the highest officials; besides the Nangtzu there were four Kusao and four Yehba who collected taxes and conducted trials. There were also village headmen called by the tribes Benben: each tribe had nomenclature of its own, such as Hsichao, Oba and the like. The Hutuktus were locally known as Folangtu and also Jenpuchi (evidently the Tibetan Rimpochi): the chief officer under the Hutuktu was the Shodjiba: plenipotentiary commissioners sent by the Hutuktu on special duty were known as Tishen or substitutes. Many other titles were formerly in vogue, but since the introduction of Chinese administration the native officials were called village headmen.

In writing as Fu had done in 1912, his principal objective and method was to plead a case for the creation of a new frontier province in view of and as a solution to the problems and difficul-

ties which the Chinese had faced in the March territory during 1906-12. He was not arguing, as Chen argued more explicitly later, on, that the March territory as far west as the Danda Range was already Chinese territory. On the contrary, he had pleaded for 'annexation' of the March territory which the Tibetans called Kham and which Fu proposed to call Hsi-kang.

II Ivan Chen, 1913-14

Chen said on behalf of his government, 'The Chinese Government claim to have Giamda and all the places east of it, viz., Jyade, Dam, Zayul, Chiamdo, Enta, Markham, Poyul, Pema-koi-chen, Darge, Lhojong, Shobando, and Tenk'e....The Chinese Government derive their rights from the historic connections of all these places with China and from what is called in International Law "effective occupation", evidences of which are given below.' We shall examine Chen's evidence.

Giamda, Lhojong and Shobando. Giamda 'returned to its allegiance towards China', together with Rivoudze, Lhojong and Shobando, as late as 1909. During that year, Chao Erh-feng led a punitive expedition sent from Szechuan to Tibet for the murder of the Chinese Amban Feng Ch'uan. As soon as the Chinese army arrived, 'the native chiefs of all these places tendered their submission'. And 'in 1910 it was settled between him and the Tibetan authorities that Giamda should be the boundary line between China and Tibet'. But Chen did not mention any instrument by which it could be understood that 'the Tibetan Authorities' accepted Giamda as their eastern 'boundary line'. Besides, Giamda was just one spot and not an extended territory or a range which could be called a 'boundary line'.

Jyade and Dam. 'Jyade lies in the valley of the Kara Ussou and is called the thirty nine "tutze" of Nak Tehou. It is under the control of the Chinese Deputy Amban of Lhasa, called Yeeching Chang-king. Dam is in the same position. A tax called Kung Ma Nin, or horse tax, is levied and collected every year by the Yeeching Chang-king, and its total amount is only about 391 \$ odd. Under the Yeeching Chang-king, there are Chinese

officials, such as Kushanta, Tilling and Yaokeyao and five hundred soldiers in time of peace. The latter are all recruited locally. Chen did not mention the authority for these assertions. However, he offered a specious example, 'When Colonel Younghusband stopped at Kampajong with his expedition in 1903-04, the Chinese Amban at Lhasa wished to meet him on the frontier, but he was prevented from carrying out his wishes by the Tibetans refusing to supply him with necessary transport. And when he turned to the authorities of Jyade and Dam for transport, they were quite ready to supply it because they were at liberty to do so.

'When Tibetans are travelling about, they have to pay a certain toll, in crossing a river, but the people of Jyade and Dam are exempted from paying such a toll and others, if they can produce certificates from the Yeeching Chang-king certifying that the holders of the certificates are natives of Jyade or Dam.

'This shows [that] Jyade and Dam have nothing to do with Tibet at all and are absolutely beyond the jurisdiction of Tibet.' Chen's capacity to convince himself about Chinese jurisdiction on the basis of such evidence may be admired but not perhaps shared. He added, 'Furthermore, all Tibetans can only receive their official appointments from the Chinese Amban on the recommendation of the Tibetan Kab-ion, but the official appointments in Jyade and Dam are made by the Amban on the recommendation of the Yeeching Chang-king.

'It is also well-known that Tibetans are not at liberty to settle anywhere they like in Jyade and Dam, and that the people of Jyade and Dam call themselves by the name of Gya-shokpa, or, in other words, that they claim that they are of Chinese race and do not belong to the Tangut stock.

'By what is stated in the above it is incontestably established that Jyade and Dam have been long administered by China as a Chinese province and Tibet has not the least claim to them.' The argument about the jurisdiction of the Amban and the Deputy Amban was not known to refer to all official appointments in Tibet. Nor was ethnology really at all favourable to Chinese claims.

Zayul. Zayul was said to be inhabited by independent and

barbarous tribes called Miris, Abors and Mishmis. On the approach of the Chinese army under Chao in 1911, 'the chiefs of Zayul tendered their submission' and Chao then 'took effective occupation of it, as evidence of which he caused seals of office to be issued to the chiefs'. Some Chinese hobnobbing with the tribes of latter-day NEFA is known to have taken place in about 1910-11 but no evidence of the submission of these tribes to China was put forward. However, there could have been no such evidence. But it is known that some chiefs were given letters or orders which confirmed them in chiefship, but which, perhaps, did not add up to occupation or jurisdiction.

Chiamdo, Gartok, Markham and Draya. Chen said that these places were 'directly under the Chinese control'. The commander-in-chief of Yunnan, he said, was formerly stationed at Chiamdo, and in the beginning of the reign of Yung Cheng the administration of this place was transferred to the authorities of Szechuan. There were said to be 'Chinese civil and military officials in charge of the local revenue and the Chinese garrison'. The same, he said, was the case with En-ta.

Poyul and Pema-koi-chen. These areas were 'a country inhabited by lawless herdsmen'. In the southern part of it there was a large number of Chinese settled there, resulting in a thriving trade in blankets, baskets, silver and iron works, red pepper, and remarkably fine flour. Chen said, 'Poyul is practically independent and Tibet has never been able to exercise any influence over the place. It surrendered its submission to China in 1909, and in the winter of that year Chinese officials were appointed to govern the place.' As usual, though, Chen cited no evidence of the submission of Poyul to China in 1909 or the appointment of Chinese officials to administer the place.

Darge, to the north-east of Chiamdo, was said to be under a "tutzi" with headquarters in Kenching which had been instituted as a Chinese district. Once again, no evidence was cited or any other details given.

Batang, Litang, Nyarong, etc., which were claimed by the Tibetan plenipotentiary, were said by Chen to be east of the range of Ning Tsin Shan and under Chinese administration since early

period of the reign of Yung Cheng. For once, however, Chen appeared to offer evidence when he asserted, 'About one hundred miles west from Batang there is a boundary pillar bearing Chinese inscriptions which state that east of this range it is Chinese territory while west of it is Tibetan. This was however the demarcation of the boundaries between China and Tibet for that time only, for after the death of Emperor Yung Cheng [r. 1723-35], the Emperor Kien Lung [r. 1736-95], successor of Yung Cheng, formally annexed Tibet in 1720 and since then Tibet has been under Chinese sovereignty and the whole of Tibet cannot be otherwise considered than Chinese territory.' The Tibetan plenipotentiary denied the existence of this boundary pillar or its character as a boundary marker. One wonders too whether the enthronement of the 7th Dalai Lama (b. 1708, r. 1720-57) under Chinese auspices was considered by the Chinese synonymous with annexation of Tibet. This apparently was Chen's main argument in 1913-14.

Kokonor or Ching-hai. Chen said that 'Kokonor regions were taken by Chinese, in the time of Yung Cheng (in about 1700) from Lopotsangdantsin [Lozang Tenzin], the great grandson of Gushi Khan, on account of his intrigues with the Zungarians for compassing a conquest of Tibet'. Chen had forgotten Chinese history because Kokonor was conquered from Lozang Tenzin in 1724 and not 'in about 1700'. Generally, however, he was right. Chen continued, quite accurately, 'Since this conquest the Kokonor regions have been under Chinese administration, at the head of which is the Chinese Amban whose headquarters are at Siningfu.' For our information we may note that Chen added, 'The Kokonor regions are divided into twenty-nine banners under the leadership of Khoshoit, Choros, Khoit, Turgut, Khalkha and Tsahannomen. Under Khoshoit there are twenty-one banners; under Choros and Khoit, one banner each; under Turgut, four banners; under Khalkha, one banner; and under Tsahannomen, one banner. The leader of each banner is either a prince of the second class or a duke, and they are all under the control of the Chinese Amban at Siningfu who in addition to these banners has the following tribes under his

administration.

- (1) The Gyakp tribe and the Kongpo tribe in the region between U and Kham.
- (2) The Gyaldo tribe in the region between Chien Tsang and Hou Tsang.
- (3) The Djak tribe in the south-west of Tsang.
- (4) The Koshot tribe in the region between Hou Tsang and Lhari.
- (5) Gyppo tribe, the Guldin tribe, in the north of Lhari.

III Summing up

Fu and Chen did not succeed in saying much more than most scholars are now prepared to accept, namely, that Chao's conquests and subsequent occupation of several of the areas claimed by China at the Simla Conference constituted the principal argument and evidence of such claims. Combining what Fu and Chen had to say with what we know of the history of the expansion of Chinese influence in Tibet from the time of the 7th Dalai Lama and the Manchu Emperor Yung Cheng, it is possible to concede that Kokonor had indeed been incorporated in the Manchu empire in 1724 and remained its part afterwards. But both Fu and Chen failed to adduce evidence to establish the nature of Chinese jurisdiction in the region which Fu chose to call Hsi-kang province (but which as a province did not come into actual existence). Considering the area referred to in Fu's book or pamphlet it cannot be said that Chinese occupation or administration in these areas had been effective, to the extent it was effective, for more than two or three years after Chao's campaigns.

Admissible evidence in support of exercise of jurisdiction is generally said to be records relating to the appointment of officials and collection of taxes or revenue in those areas by the government which prefers a claim to those areas. Chen did not mention, much less produce, such evidence in relation to the areas from Giamda to Tachienlu. All that Chen had to say regarding Giamda, Lhojong and Shobando, Jyade and Dam, Zayul, Chiamdo, Gartok, Markham and Draya, Poyul and Pema-koi-

chen, Darge, and Batang, Litang and Nyarong was merely a statement that these areas were included in Chinese territory, without citing evidence in support. In the absence of such evidence the assumption should perhaps be that there was none. Besides, the submissions made by Chen related almost entirely to the period 1906-12, more specially 1910-12. Such recent conquest or occupation could not have been said in 1913-14 to constitute an admissible claim to those areas by right of prescription as recognized in international law.

CHINA AS A FACTOR IN DETERMINING SIKKIM-TIBET FRONTIER

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SIKKIM lying on the southern slopes of the Himalayas enjoys great strategic importance. If its frontiers are common with Nepal and Bhutan on its west and east respectively, they are co-terminous with Tibet in the north and in the east. Although settled as far back as the thirteenth century by the Lepchas who had migrated to Sikkim from the Assam Hills in the south, it had little contact with Tibet until the first quarter of the seventeenth century, when the Tibetan Lamas came to this bountiful valley to convert its people to Buddhism. Political relations with Tibet, however, developed in the middle of the seventeenth century when the Lamas selected Penchu Namgyal, the great-grandson of Guru Tashe, a Tibetan noble, as the first king or Gyalpo of Sikkim. This politico-spiritual link with Tibet became more pronounced when the Sikkimese princes entered into matrimonial relations with Tibet, and gave a pro-Tibetan bias to their policies. They even often looked towards Tibet, and its suzerain power, China, for assistance in times of difficulty.¹

The northward expansion of the territories of the East India Company, and the keen desire of the Gurkhas to acquire the Terai or the low lying area, which led to the Anglo-Nepalese War in 1814, made the British keenly interested in the security and stability of Sikkim. They wished it to act as a buffer state between Nepal and Bhutan, as also to check Nepalese plans to secure Bhutanese assistance against the British. Besides, they hoped to utilise Sikkim's close relations with Tibet and China in neutralising any Nepalese attempt at securing assistance from

them against the British.² British success in isolating Nepal at that juncture, which was followed by a treaty with Sikkim in 1817, opened up new vistas of British interest in Sikkim. They henceforth looked at Sikkim as offering a safe trade route to Tibet and worked assiduously to trade up to the Tibetan frontier, a right they had laboured to acquire under this Treaty of 1817.³

China was no doubt known to the British as being a suzerain power in Tibet, which received tribute from Sikkim,⁴ yet the Government of India carefully worked to overlook this situation and tried to strengthen its own hold over Sikkim without any reference to the third power. The net result of this cautious policy was the establishment of the *de facto* suzerainty of the British over Sikkim in 1861, without even raising of an eyebrow by the Tibetans,⁵ while the Chinese had preferred to remain unconcerned over this development. As the basic objective of the Government of India in securing control over Sikkim was to open up Tibet and the removal of barriers to free trade with that country, it soon abandoned its policy of isolation towards Tibet, with formal approval from the Secretary of State for India, the Duke of Argyll,⁶ and tried to establish contact with the Tibetan authorities at Lhasa. It even wished to seek assistance from the T'sungli Yamen, the Chinese Foreign Office in this respect. But, as Sir Thomas Wade, the British Minister at Peking, reported that the Yamen was not in favour of European travellers or traders entering Tibet,⁷ no formal communication was sent to it. However, pressure from the mercantile community in England⁸ to open up trade with Tibet, combined with report about good prospects of trade with Tibet from Sir John Edgar,⁹ the Deputy Commissioner of Darjeeling, who had been deputed to Sikkim in October 1873, made the Home Government in England and the Government of India enthusiastic for taking urgent steps for securing Chinese permission to open Tibet, and the requisite permission for the British Mission to visit Tibet, was secured from China under the Cheefoo Convention of 13 September 1876. Thus the Government of India and the Home Government, in their zeal to open up Tibet with Chinese help implicitly recognised Chinese suzerainty over Tibet—a fact which they had so far tried to overlook.

An opportunity to put the Chinese claim to suzerainty in Tibet to a test came in 1885 when Colman Macaulay, the Financial Secretary, Government of Bengal, was deputed to Peking under instructions from the Secretary of State for India, Lord Randolph Churchill, to secure passports for a combined commercial and scientific mission to Lhasa.¹⁰ But the Chinese were not favourably disposed towards this proposal, and they opposed it on grounds of Tibetan opposition and that their word did not carry much weight in Tibet. Macaulay was, however, not convinced by these arguments and he pressed for the issue of the desired passports, which he ultimately succeeded in securing after much difficulty.¹¹ But when the Tibetans learnt that a British Mission was expected in Tibet, they gathered together to oppose it, by force if necessary, and assembled their army on the frontier. Though the proposed Mission to Tibet was abandoned under Article IV of the Anglo-Chinese Convention of 1886,¹² yet the Tibetans kept up their pressure and even advanced 13 miles or 22 kilometers into Sikkim across the Jelap Pass and occupied a place called Lingtu on the Darjeeling Road.

Initially the Government of India believed that the Tibetan advance into Sikkim and their occupation of Lingtu was only a 'temporary outburst', and that they would withdraw as soon as they learnt that Macaulay's Mission to Tibet had been abandoned. Besides, 'stress of cold and starvation' would be a great hazard and would persuade them to withdraw soon. It was at the same time quite conscious that delay in Tibetan withdrawal was likely to be misconstrued in the other Himalayan States. It was thus in a great dilemma. Although Macaulay offered to go to the Sikkim-Tibet frontier and discuss that issue with the Amban and the Tibetan officials, yet the Government of India was not prepared to take any chances and instructed Macaulay to break up his Mission 'completely and expeditiously'.¹³

The breaking up of the Mission, however, did not produce the desired results; on the contrary, the Tibetans strengthened their position and constructed a fort at Lingtu. The Maharaja of Sikkim, who was expected at least to protest against the Tibetan action justified it. His assertion that the Tibetans had a right to it and that they had only reclaimed it after the people

of Sikkim had exposed their country to the Englishman¹⁴ was quite meaningful, especially after he had clearly violated Articles 19 and 20 of the Treaty of 1861, and had declared that he and his people had signed a Treaty, declaring Sikkim as subject to Tibet and China, at Galing in Tibet in 1886. The Government of India, therefore, could not set aside British suzerainty over Sikkim and jeopardise the security of the British Empire in that sector. Besides, there was a need to settle Sikkim's frontier with Tibet, which the Tibetans had violated and the Maharaja had condescended to it.

The Government of India, which was then deeply involved in settling the outstanding issues with China over the newly acquired territory in Burma, did not wish to do anything unpleasant for the Chinese. It, therefore, ruled out use of force in getting Tibetan aggression vacated; on the contrary, it requested Sir John Walsham, the British Minister at Peking, to seek Chinese intervention for the withdrawal of the Tibetans from Lingtu without mentioning the place of aggression 'because any mention of the boundary might give rise to a specific assertion of China's suzerainty over Sikkim'.¹⁵ 'Wheels of machinery' moved slowly at Peking, and nothing seemed to be coming out of Walsham's effort, while the British influence was fast getting eroded in Sikkim and the neighbouring States. The Government of India, therefore, decided to use force and repulse the Tibetans from Sikkim. But now the Yamen became nervous and pleaded for inaction, as it had already asked for a report of the situation from Lhasa. It also threatened that any unilateral action by the British 'might affect friendly relations' between the two countries.¹⁶

Throughout the winter of 1887-88 the Yamen and the Chinese Legation at London fought hard to abort British attempt at expelling the Tibetans. But this delay was adversely affecting British prestige in that sensitive area. The Government of India, therefore, finally settled not to brook any delay and sent advance notices directing the Tibetans to retire into their territory by 15 March 1888. Though these notices were received back unopened yet the Government of India had reason to believe that the message had been made known to the commandant at Lingtu

and the Tibetans at Phari in Tibet. As the Tibetans showed no sign of withdrawal, the British occupied Lingtu on 21 March 1888 after a brief clash with the Tibetans. However, in the following September the Tibetans were again noticed to be concentrating their forces at Gnatong, and in the attack, that followed, the British found a map of Sikkim in a house at Rinchiongong in the Chumbi valley. It clearly indicated that the Tibetans claimed that Tibet's frontier extended up to the Rishi river which was 50 kilometres inside the traditionally recognised frontier. Thus it became apparent that the Tibetans had adopted the modern method of extending their territories through cartographic aggression and were only endeavouring to make their claims real.¹⁷

The defeat of the Tibetans convinced the Chinese that any delay in settling this question with the British was likely to undermine their authority. The Chinese, therefore, announced that their Ambans at Lhasa had been instructed to visit Tibet-Sikkim frontier and enquire into 'the whole issue'.

Viscount Cross, the Secretary of State for India, was well aware that the Tibetan Lamas were obstinate and that 'the Chinese at the headquarters and the Chinese Ampa (Amban) in Tibet are not quite the same'. Nevertheless, he had full faith in Chinese pretensions to hold back the Tibetans. He believed that the Chinese were most anxious to resolve this tangle peacefully. Consequently, he advised the Viceroy, Lord Lansdowne, to depend upon the Amban in that matter. Impediments thrown by the Tibetans in the way of the Amban were ignored and delay in the arrival of the latter was so explained: "you will find the Chinese Ampa slow in his movements, but if slow, I hope at all events that he may be sure."¹⁸ On the other hand, the Government of India, at the suggestion of the Lt. Governor of Bengal, agreed to improve the road to Rinchiongong, through the Jelap La, as that would induce the Amban to reach Gnatong early, and also remove the Tibetan opposition to the Amban's march to the Sikkim-Tibet border.¹⁹

The Amban met Alfred Wallis Paul²⁰ on 21 December 1888 at Gnatong. The former wished to uphold the Chinese Imperial authority in Tibet and assumed 'the position of the main party

in the dispute'. He asserted that 'Tibet's claims are China's claims and that Tibetans are completely under control'. He further emphasised that he could obtain the formal consent of the Tibetan Chiefs at Lhasa without any loss of time.²¹ Acceptance of this position provided the Government of India with an advantage of conferring with only one individual, who claimed to be all powerful, instead of many persons, who might work at cross purposes. Besides, this procedure satisfied the *amour pro pre* of the Chinese Government. But it gave rise to the contention that as Tibet, a vassal of the Chinese Empire, had claims over Sikkim, the latter had certain obligations towards China too.

Paul, on the other hand, had a different opinion. He believed that this dispute could be satisfactorily settled only if negotiations were conducted with the Tibetan leaders themselves, and the Amban acted as a witness to the agreement. If, however, that was not feasible, he desired that the Tibetans should be associated with the Amban in resolving this issue. Besides, he suggested that the Government of India should insist on recognition of its absolute supremacy over Sikkim, and the boundary of the latter being fixed at 'the water-parting'.²² In the ensuing talks perhaps the Government of India only wished to press for a formal recognition of the British rights in Sikkim and a promise that the Tibetans would abstain from further aggression. And, as for the Sikkim-Tibet frontier, it considered that its actual demarcation was 'probably unnecessary' as that was well-known.²³

The attitude of the Amban was initially quite 'civil'. But soon it became 'threatening and deprecatory' and even hinted at a war breaking out between the two countries if the Government of India did not accept his demand about the Maharaja of Sikkim submitting presents to the Grand Lama and the Tibetan officials and letters of homage to the Amban. But, when Sir Mortimar Durand, the Indian Foreign Secretary, who had moved to the scene of discussion, reminded the Amban of the consequences of such a step, he immediately recoiled back and termed his threat as 'simply a joke'.²⁴ He as well asserted that as he was 'only a guest' in Lhasa and not a master, 'he could not put aside the real master'.²⁵

Amban's zeal to secure extra-territorial rights in Sikkim and the certainty that the granting of any concession would adversely affect the British prestige among the southern Himalayan states, led Lansdowne to favour withdrawal from any further parleys. But in order to prevent the negotiations proving abortive, and from a sincere desire to come to an amicable settlement in which the Chinese had a role to play, Lansdowne agreed with his Foreign Secretary to permit their continuation, provided the Amban accepted the Sikkim-Tibet boundary and accepted that the British alone had the suzerain rights over Sikkim. Lansdowne hoped that "when the Amban sees that we are in earnest, he will accept our arrangement rather than return to his country empty-handed, with the prospect of forfeiting the concessions to Chinese *amour pro pre*... and of seeing us come to terms with the Tibetans without his mediation after his departure."²⁶ But his hopes were belied when the Amban did not accept the British offer. He was consequently informed that the negotiations were at an end and the hands of the Government of India were free to repulse any future thrust of the Tibetan troops. Besides, it was at liberty to take 'material guarantees' for their future good conduct.²⁷ Further, Chinese failure to exert any pressure over the Tibetans had given it freedom to deal with the latter directly.²⁸

Difference between the two standpoints might at first sight appear to be very little. But Chinese pretensions hit at the root of the British policy "to uphold the very principle that we cannot permit the exercise of any foreign influence upon these natural (the Himalayan) limits." The Government of India, in making the conditional offer, had gone 'quite far'. But now it believed that it was better off without an agreement. The Tibetans had been driven away and an assurance to their non-interference in the affairs of Sikkim had been secured from the Amban. Besides, the latter, at the farewell interview with Mortimer Durand, had practically recognised exclusive British supremacy over Sikkim and, by suggesting mutual exchange of letters at the crest of the Jelap La, had tacitly accepted it as the Sikkim-Tibet frontier.²⁹ In England, reaction of the government to the news of failure of the negotiations was sharp. Salisbury thought that "we shall be obliged after all to dictate our own terms of peace at Lhasa".

And, Cross felt that 'after all the Ampa has done more harm than good'.³⁰

The Chinese Government, however, in its anxiety to avoid direct British contact with Tibet and to maintain its traditional policy of having buffer States under its exclusive influence,³¹ desired the talks to continue. Finding that negotiations were not proceeding smoothly, Hart was sent to Calcutta to facilitate matters even before the news of the failure of the talks had reached Peking. Alastair Lamb, however, believes that the Chinese realised their mistake after the negotiations had broken down and they hurriedly sent Hart to Calcutta to resume the negotiations.³²

Lansdowne appreciated the importance of treating China most tenderly and informed Cross on 22 January 1889, "now that the T'sungli Yamen has taken the very strong step of virtually superseding their own Agent, I do not think it would do to snub them by refusing to negotiate."³³ But Lansdowne, later probably under Mortimer Durand's influence, revised his opinion and treated the negotiations as 'absolutely terminated' and was not anxious to reopen them unless there was a definite change in the Chinese stand. He insisted that negotiations could now only start if China accepted exclusive and undivided British supremacy over Sikkim and recognised watershed as the limit of that State.³⁴ Cross agreed with Lansdowne and observed, "I . . . think your mode of coming to a conclusion of the whole matter wise and politic. I shall press this view strongly upon Foreign Office".³⁵ In another letter he further mentioned that he was 'entirely against having anything to do with Peking and so I have told the Foreign Office'.³⁶

But when the British Foreign Office heard of Hart's arrival, it was very anxious to resume the talks, lest friendly relations between England and China should be disturbed. To it, the points of dispute were more of form 'than substance' and since the Chinese attached greater importance to the former, it felt that these could be settled easily. If, however, the Government of India apprehended any difficulty, the Home Government could come to its rescue.³⁷ Breaking down of the talks was as well adversely commented upon by Walsham. He considered that the

Amban had rendered positive assistance to the Government of India in attaining its twin objects, viz. withdrawal of Tibetans and restoration of *status quo ante*. He, therefore, suggested, "whatever tends to lessen the dignity of China should be avoided when possible".³⁸ But if the Government of India insisted upon the acceptance of its preliminary conditions, he could not be held "responsible for the consequences of what would be regarded here as an act of bad faith on the part of Her Majesty's Government".³⁹

These arguments, however, hardly convinced the Government of India. It considered that the Chinese intervention had been so far 'fruitless and on the whole embarrassing'. Besides, the Chinese had proved 'a broken reed to lean upon', and withdrawal of the Tibetans was due to their fear of bad weather and want of supplies than to anything else. It was, therefore, fair for it to demand acceptance of its basic conditions, which had already been insisted upon as a *sine qua non* during the talks, and was much relieved when it learnt that Salisbury had dropped the idea of resuming negotiations at Peking.⁴⁰

In deference to the strong wishes of Salisbury that utmost forbearance should be shown to the Chinese, the Government of India instructed Paul to meet Hart for a "comparison of views". But when the latter learnt that the Government of India was firm in its stand, he offered on 2 August 1889, to explicitly recognise watershed as the frontier between Sikkim and Tibet. But as he was still not prepared to accept England's exclusive suzerainty over Sikkim, it did not offer 'any prospect of an acceptable solution'.

These unsuccessful attempts at arriving at a settlement created dismay at Peking. The Yamen realised that it could not hoodwink the Government of India and secure some control over Sikkim, on the contrary, it apprehended direct British contact with Tibet. The Emperor was also annoyed at the delay and so were the Tibetans who blamed the Resident for not settling the question satisfactorily. The Yamen was therefore, anxious for a compromise, which 'avoided a public humiliation'. As the Government of India did not wish it either, it agreed to conclude a treaty as soon as the Yamen accepted *de jure*

suzerainty of Great Britain over Sikkim. The Convention which was concluded between Lansdowne and the Amban, Sheng Tai at Calcutta on 17 March 1890, clearly laid down the Sikkim-Tibet boundary. It settled that it would be the crest of the mountain range, which separated the waters that flow into the Tista and its affluents in Sikkim from those into the Mochu and other rivers in its north in Tibet. Besides, it laid down that this boundary started from Mount Gipmochi on the Bhutan frontier and following the above said water-parting met the Nepalese territory.

Thus to the great satisfaction of the Government of India and the Home Government in England, the Anglo-Chinese Convention secured recognition of Sikkim-Tibet boundary from China, which had claimed suzerainty over Tibet. But "this effort to yoke resurgent Tibet behind the decaying Manchu power annoyed the Tibetans and they refused to accept the Convention".⁴¹

The ink on the Trade Regulations, signed in 1893, for promoting trade between India and Tibet had hardly dried when the Tibetan recalcitrance to abide by the terms of the Anglo-Chinese Convention of 1890 first came to notice. J. C. White, the British Political Officer for Sikkim, wished 'to open up this question' with the local Chinese officials at Yatung and get the places occupied by the Tibetans vacated. But the Government of India did not wish to raise a controversy over this issue, for that could have adversely affected its plan for promoting trade with Tibet. Nevertheless, Lord Elgin, the Viceroy, thought it prudent to apprise the Chinese Amban of this development, and suggested that the officials of the two governments should 'travel together' along the frontier and get acquainted with the actual boundary line.⁴² The Tibetan action was quite embarrassing for the Amban. But as his authority was quite limited, he could not over-rule the Tibetan Council's decision to refuse permission to British officials travelling inside Tibet for the purpose. He, therefore, tacitly tried to secure the Tibetan adhesion to the Convention of 1890 by suggesting to the Council to depute its representative to inspect the border, as laid down in the Convention, along with the Chinese delegate. And at the border they

would make a careful examination of the boundary along with the Indian officials for facilitating erection of boundary pillars 'which shall for ever be respected by either side'.⁴³

Though the Convention of 1890 had not laid down that the boundary between Tibet and Sikkim was to be delimited and the Government of India had preferred to deal with the Chinese authorities than the Tibetan, yet it did not raise any objection to the Amban's proposal of bringing Tibetan officials alongwith the Chinese for the settlement of that issue.⁴⁴ In the following preliminary discussion, which took place at Yatung on 5 April 1895, it was decided that the representatives of the three governments would meet at the Pemirango Pass on 7 May 1895 to commence the demarcation work at Gipmochi. However, to the great surprise of White, he could see neither the Chinese nor the Tibetan officials at the Pemirango Pass on the settled date. And, when Major Tu Hsi-hsun, the Chinese delegate, met White at the Jelap Pass on 18 May 1895 he only offered lame excuses for his delay and requested for the postponement of the demarcation work so as to facilitate Tibetan participation in that task. But as that proposal was not acceptable to White, the boundary pillar was erected at the Jelap Pass in the presence of Major Tu. It was then as well settled they would next meet at Doka Pass on 1 June. Meanwhile, the Amban as well pleaded unsuccessfully for deferring that task for some time more, as the Lamas of the three Tibetan monasteries of Sera, Drepung and Gaden were 'full of suspicion'.⁴⁵ As White had already settled with Major Tu that the next pillar would be erected at the Doka Pass, he reached there on 1 June. The latter, however, again failed to keep up his appointment and the boundary pillar at the Doka Pass was erected by White alone. The Tibetan representative had agreed to associate himself with the demarcation work and had preferred not to keep up the appointment, but the Tibetan action in destroying the pillars, erected at the Jelap Pass and the Donchuck Pass, greatly surprised White. He, therefore, favoured strong action being taken against them for these 'outrages'. But the Government of India was not prepared to follow it up in view of the friendly disposition of the Amban.⁴⁶

The Amban, finding that his fiat carried little weight with the Tibetans, who favoured retention of the 'ancient boundary' came forth with a proposal to defer this demarcation work by 5 years.⁴⁷ But that would have meant loss of prestige for the British and encouraged 'high handed acts and demands and possibly outrages'. Elgin, therefore, disagreeing with Amban's suggestion, proposed that the talks might commence in the summer of 1895.⁴⁸ In the talks that followed the Chinese delegate informed the British representative that the Dalai Lama had been requested to send his nominee for this work and that even if the latter failed to turn up, the Chinese would be prepared to carry on the work alongwith the Indian officials.⁴⁹ The Tibetan delegate, however, asserted that Tibet could not part with any land simply because it lay on the Sikkim side of the line indicated in the Convention of 1890.⁵⁰ It thus now became very apparent that the Tibetans had serious differences with the Chinese and that they were likely to attempt the reopening of the entire Sikkim-Tibet question.

Rapid southward advance of Russia and its friendly overtures towards the Tibetan authorities made the Government of India reassess the situation. It thought it prudent to concede the Tibetan demand for Giagong, provided it got in return trade facilities at Phari.⁵¹ But Amban's helplessness in getting the Tibetans agree to this proposal, as also the past obduracy of the Tibetans led Curzon to conclude that the Government of India had committed a mistake in ignoring the Tibetans and treating China instead as "the *de facto* suzerain power" in Tibet. He, therefore, wished to ignore 'the preposterous Amban' and open direct communications with the Dalai Lama, which also had the approval of the Home Government.⁵²

Thus all the effort that the Government of India had put in to secure the Sikkim-Tibet boundary with Chinese help appeared to have gone waste and required its settlement with Tibet afresh. The Government of India tried to open up direct negotiation with the Dalai Lama through Ugen Kazi, the Bhutanese Vakeel at Darjeeling, and Captain R. L. Kennion, Assistant British Resident in Kashmir. But that having failed, Curzon decided to depute White to tour the Sikkim-Tibet boundary as laid down

in the Convention of 1890, and erect boundary pillars, wherever it was necessary. White was also asked to occupy Giagong and other places that the Tibetans might have occupied on the Sikkim's side of the border.⁵³

Expulsion of the Tibetan from the Sikkimese side of the territory was a very tame affair, but it was apparent that the British must maintain constant pressure, lest the Tibetans cross the boundary and occupy places of their choice. Curzon, therefore, thought of securing Tibetan adhesion to the Convention and Trade Regulations of 1890 and 1893 respectively with Chinese assistance. He wished that the negotiations with the Dalai Lama should cover not only Sikkim-Tibet frontier question, but also the entire gamut of political and commercial relations with Tibet and should conclude with the stationing of the British representative at Lhasa permanently.⁵⁴

Over the turn of the century, when Russia and China had got deeply involved in other affairs, the Government of India considered it opportune to effectively intervene in the middle of 1903 and force the Tibetans to look to the British for protection and support.⁵⁵ An expedition, under Colonel Francis Younghusband, the British Resident at Indore, was consequently despatched, which ultimately led to the signing of the Convention between Great Britain and Tibet or the Lhasa Convention on 7 September 1904 and the reaffirmation of the boundary, as laid down in 1890, and the erection of pillars. Great Britain had, however, still not thrown away the cloak of Chinese suzerainty over Tibet. It was, therefore, thought proper also to secure Chinese confirmation to the terms of the Lhasa Convention and the same was done through the Peking Convention that was signed between Great Britain and China on 27 April 1906. The boundary between Sikkim and Tibet was, however, left undemarcated even though Lord Minto, the Viceroy had pressed for it on ground of both difficult terrain, as also the problems of securing guarantee from the Tibetans that they would not remove the boundary pillars.⁵⁶

China in its expanding role assumed suzerainty over Tibet in the first quarter of the seventeenth century and has jealously guarded these rights since then. However, the effectiveness of its

fiat much depended upon the pressure it could exert over the Tibetans. Whenever the central authority at Peking was weak and the Dalai Lama was a major and an independent minded person, the extent of Chinese authority was always at a heavy discount. Nevertheless, the Chinese tried to keep up the posture and assumed the position of the main party in the disputes between its dependent states as in Tibet and the foreign powers. It even did not hesitate asserting its power to secure their adhesion to the settlements made by it. And, whenever it found that its authority over the dependent states was likely to be challenged by a foreign power, it threatened that in pursuing that course, its friendly relations with that power would be adversely affected. More often than not, it succeeded in keeping up its position. In fact, the foreign nationals in its service served the Chinese masters faithfully, even though the central authority was weak.

The Tibetans in the last quarter of the last century were in a restive mood and wished to keep up Tibet's isolation. This became more pronounced after 1895, when the thirteenth Dalai Lama attained majority. They not only disobeyed Chinese instructions, but even did not hesitate creating embarrassing situation for the Chinese. They tried to undo Chinese attempt at settling their affairs with the foreign powers. They tried to fend for themselves and negotiated settlements with other powers like Russia and Great Britain. As the Chinese could wield little authority in those circumstances, they quickly watched that situation and when pressed, affixed their seal of confirmation to the agreements made by the Tibetans. The Tibetans were undoubtedly less concerned with the temporal affairs, yet their technique of launching cartographic aggressions which was followed by military pressure, was most modern.

The Government of India was quite aware of the weakening Chinese hold over Tibet, yet it preferred to deal with China only in the hope that its friendship with China would yield all-round commercial and political benefits. It even closed its eyes to the resurgent trends in Tibet. And, when it found that the maintenance of 'constitutional fiction' of Chinese suzerainty over Tibet was untenable, it resorted to direct action and secured Tibet's adhesion to the watershed principle, which had determined

the Sikkim-Tibet boundary in the Anglo Chinese Convention in 1890. Thus the Government of India had secured boundary between Sikkim and Tibet which was easily determinable and was quite safe to defend, in case its security was threatened.

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- Tibet came to the rescue of Sikkim when the Bhutanese attacked it in 1706 and helped it in driving them away. Later, when the Nepalese established themselves firmly in the region south-west of the river Tista in Sikkim in the course of the Nepal-Tibet War in the last quarter of the eighteenth century, China came to the assistance of Sikkim. According to tradition it expelled the Nepalese both from Tibet and Sikkim and while restoring peace in the area it gave the region west of the river Tista to Nepal. It also settled that the Chola-Jelap range would be the north-east boundary of Sikkim with Tibet. Besides, it gave away the Chumbi valley, which then belonged to Sikkim, to Tibet.
- ² *Papers respecting the Nepaul War* (London, 1824), pp. 258-59.
- ³ This object was achieved when the British restored the territories lying between the rivers Tista and the Mechi, earlier taken away by Nepal from Sikkim under Article 1 of the Treaty signed between the East India Company and the Raja of Sikkim at Titalia on 10 February 1817.
- ⁴ *From Ashley Eden, Envoy and Special Commissioner to Sikkim to Secretary, Govt. of Bengal, 8 April, 1861, Foreign Department, Political Proceedings, May 1861, No. 17.*
- ⁵ *Ibid.*
- ⁶ *Despatch from the Secretary of State for India, No. 102, dated 5 May 1870*
- ⁷ *T. F. Wade to Foreign Secretary, 10 November 1870, Foreign Department, Political 'A', February 1871, No. 110.*
- ⁸ *Memorandum from the Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce to the Secretary of State for India, Foreign Department, Political 'A', October 1873, No. 134.*
- ⁹ J. W. Edgar, *Report on a Visit to the Sikkim and Thibetan Frontier*, (Calcutta, 1874), pp. 48-50.
- ¹⁰ Colman Macaulay had been deputed to Sikkim in 1884 to enquire into the causes of sudden stoppage of trade on the Sikkim-Tibet frontier. Taking this opportunity, he broached the subject of British

trade with Tibet with the Jongpen of Khamba. The Jongpen, who wished to avoid any unpleasantness and thereby create any complications, treated Macaulay courteously and presented prospects for a lucrative trade between England and Tibet. He even offered to transmit letters and presents of the Government of India to the Minister of Panchen Lama at Tashi Lumpo. But he blamed the Chinese whose influence had lately increased, for the non-existence of British trade. He even did not spare the monks of Sera, Drepung, Gaden and Mulu, who were apprehensive of losing their trade monopoly. While the Government of Bengal was carried away by Macaulay's proposal to despatch a mission to Lhasa for conferring with the Amban and the Tibetan officials to secure free flow of trade on the Sikkim-Darjeeling route, the Government of India was quite reticent. The latter was still not free from its deep involvement in Afghan and Burmese affairs and was against taking any step which might create difficulties on its northern frontiers. However, when Macaulay went to England on furlough in the summer of 1885, he successfully sold his idea to Randolph Churchill. *Macaulay's Memorandum to the Government of India on British Relations with Tibet, Foreign Department, Secret/Frontier May 1885, No. 752, and Macaulay's Memorandum for Lord Randolph Churchill, dated 1 July 1885, Foreign Department, Secret/External October 1885, Nos. 1-23 KW 1 & 3.*

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- 12 Burma had traditional ties with China and when the British annexed Upper Burma on 1 January 1886, they wished to secure Chinese recognition to this fact. China agreed to the British proposal, but in return got the British Mission to Tibet countermanded. [*Treaties and Conventions, etc. between China and Foreign States, (Shanghai, 1917), Vol. I, pp. 498-9.*]
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- 17 H. H. Risley, *Gazetteer of Sikkim, (Calcutta, 1894), p. IX.*
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THE STATUS OF TIBET IN THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

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WITH the establishment of the People's Republic of China (PRC) on 1 October 1949 as the most effective Government known in her history, China became a unitary multi-national State proclaiming equality for all the nationalities inhabiting the land. Abjuring 'big-nationality chauvinism and local-nationality chauvinism', the Constitution of the PRC stated: 'Regional autonomy applies in an area where a minority nationality lives in a compact community. All the national autonomous areas are inalienable parts of the People's Republic of China'. The country came to be divided into provinces, autonomous regions, and municipalities directly under the Central Government. It was explained that autonomous regions, autonomous prefectures and autonomous counties would all be regarded as national autonomous areas. It was duty incumbent on these autonomous areas to exercise their autonomy 'within the limits of their authority as prescribed by law', and, while making regulations 'on the exercise of autonomy', the organs of self-government of national autonomous areas were required to submit all such regulations for approval by the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress.¹ It may be noted that the National People's Congress is the highest organ of state power in the PRC while the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress (NPC) is the permanent organ of the NPC. Tibet had to traverse through a series of ups and downs in the course of its stormy history with China over a long historical period dating back to the days of China's Tang Dynasty (618-907 A.D.). As for the PRC, it took interest in Tibet in January 1950 and succeeded in officially setting up the Tibet Autonomous Region within the meaning of the PRC Constitution about fifteen years thereafter, i.e., on 9 September 1965.²

An attempt will be made in this paper to examine the background to this position with a view to analysing the existing situation.

China's nominal suzerainty over Tibet began during the reign of the Yuan Dynasty (1279-1368) and despite the weaknesses of the imperial dynasties down to the period of the Ching (Manchu) Dynasty (1644-1911), it never ceased to consider Tibet as a part of China. The Tibetans often rebelled, whether during the time of the Manchus or after they were overthrown in 1911 when China became a nominal republic. The Tibetans' occasional bid for independence never succeeded and no foreign power seriously questioned China's suzerainty or sovereignty over Tibet ever since the thirteenth century. But the seeds of discontent in Tibet found fertile soil more than once because both during the period of imperial China and that of the Kuomintang regime, national oppression marked the relationship between the Han, Tibetan and other nationalities of China. And in the absence of an effective central government in China and local discontent in Tibet steeped in serfdom, colonial imperialism entered the field and tried to establish its effective control over Tibet, although continuing to recognise China's suzerainty.

Britain became the greatest colonial power in the second half of the eighteenth century and it succeeded in dictating to China through the Opium War the Sino-British Treaty of Nanking (29 August 1842), the first unequal treaty signed by China with a foreign power.³ Having established a foothold in China, the British imperialists began penetrating into the region and eventually brought Tibet into its orbit of imperial expansion. All this was made possible by the Chefoo Convention of 1876 whereby Britain secured the right of extending its sphere of activities in Yunnan, Szechuan, Tibet, Kansu and Chinghai.⁴ In fact, Britain sent a party to Tibet in 1873 to study trade conditions. After the Chefoo Convention, Britain demanded entry for an English party to explore the mineral resources of the area. However, the Tibetan local authorities were firmly opposed to British penetration and they backed their opposition with preparations for armed resistance. Although the weak Manchu Government yielded to the British demand, Britain at that time

refrained from entering the region due to the 'determination and militancy of the Tibetans'.⁵ But the politics of Britain's Indian Empire was soon to goad the British to pursue a 'forward policy' leading up to the Tibetan expedition of Lord Curzon. Herein lay the origins of independent India's British legacy in Tibet and it was in 1954 that India gave up her extra-territorial rights in Tibet. As events showed, association with Tibet or interest in her affairs was to lend character to the entire gamut of India-China relations in the subsequent years.

At the official level, India came into the picture *vis-a-vis* the Tibetan affairs because of the British connection. The British India Government set about carrying out a so-called 'proxy buffer policy'⁶ by creating round the Indian empire a belt of buffer states with the avowed purpose of protecting India from the felt dangers presented by expanding Russian imperialism close to the Himalayan border. A sort of 'Russo-phobia' had marked British foreign policy attitudes throughout the nineteenth century and this led to the evolution of a policy of establishing British influence in Afghanistan and Persia. Thus came the 'forward policy' of Lord Lytton,⁷ the wars with Persia, Afghanistan, and the Tibetan expedition of Lord Curzon. Ultimately British frontier policy led to the occupation of Burma, imposition of a submissive status on Nepal, establishment of protectorates over Sikkim and Bhutan, and the exercise of extra-territorial rights in Tibet, although recognizing Chinese suzerainty.⁸

The Anglo-Russian Convention of 31 August 1907 was designed to settle the differences between the two powers relating to Persia, Tibet and Afghanistan.⁹ As far as Tibet was concerned, both powers acknowledged the suzerain rights of China in Tibet, agreed not to send agents to Lhasa, not to conduct their political relations with Tibet except through the intermediary of the Chinese government, and not to seek or obtain concessions in Tibetan territory; but exceptions were made in favour of British trading privileges at the trade marts of Gyantse, Gartok and Yatung and laying down of telegraph lines connecting them with India under the relevant provisions of the Anglo-

Tibetan Convention of 1904 and the Anglo-Chinese Convention of 1906.¹⁰

When the Ching (Manchu) dynasty tottered to its fall in 1911, Tibetan local authorities with British encouragement attempted a coup and proclaimed the independence of Tibet. But Chinese troops succeeded in suppressing the rebellion and no power recognized Tibet as an independent state. But since Britain had already the advantage of being in the field with trading posts in three places in Tibet, she took the initiative of negotiating a tripartite convention with the Chinese and Tibetan representatives at Simla in 1913-14. The Simla Convention conceded China's suzerainty over all Tibet, but, then, it sought to establish the 'autonomy' of Outer (western) Tibet. Peking regarded this as an infringement on her claims to Tibet as a 'part of China' and hence, refused to ratify the Simla Convention. However, the traditional boundary line between India and Tibet, popularly called the McMahon Line after the British representative A. Henry McMahon, came to be confirmed when the Simla Convention was finally concluded between Great Britain and Tibet on 3 July 1914. According to one opinion, 'the agreement would also have settled the Indo-Tibetan border on the basis of the so-called McMahon line but its rejection left areas of the lofty frontier still undetermined'.¹¹ Evidently refusal of the Chinese signature on the Simla Convention left a problematic legacy in the matter of India-China border issues in the 1950's. The difficulties arose due to the refusal of any Chinese Government to accept formally the delimitation of the border.

The question of China's suzerainty over Tibet again came to be discussed between Britain, China and the United States at the time of the Second World War. An *aide-memoire* issued by the British Embassy in Washington in 1943 duly recognized 'formal Chinese suzerainty' over Tibet and, yet, called for 'full enjoyment of local autonomy' by the Lhasa Government with the right to 'exchange diplomatic representatives with other powers'.¹² But the United States State Department categorically rejected the British suggestion for according the rights of an independent status to Tibet. The State Department replied as follows : 'The Government of the United States has borne in mind

the fact that the Chinese Government has long claimed suzerainty over Tibet and that the Chinese constitution lists Tibet among areas constituting the territory of the Republic of China. This Government has at no times raised a question regarding either of those claims'.¹³ The result was that the powers continued to recognize Chinese suzerainty over Tibet.

Independent India inherited from the British certain extra-territorial privileges which the latter used to enjoy in Tibet. The Kuomintang Government of China enquired of the Government of India in November 1947 whether India had assumed, after the transfer of power, 'the treaty rights and obligations existing till then between India and Tibet'. In February 1948, the Government of India informed the Chinese Government that they had assumed those rights and obligations.¹⁴ As for India's attitude towards Tibet, Prime Minister Nehru said : 'Our attitude and the position of all previous Governments in India and elsewhere has historically been the recognition of some kind of suzerainty or sovereignty of China over Tibet, and Tibetan autonomy'.¹⁵ While Nehru was right insofar as the attitude of free India to China's position in Tibet was concerned, it is a fair comment to make that the British India Government tried more than once to challenge that position, although unsuccessfully.

When the PRC was established on 1 October 1949 after the overthrow of the Kuomintang regime of Chiang Kaishek, the Central People's Government of China issued a declaration expressing its desire to establish diplomatic relations with foreign governments on the basis of the principles of equality, mutual benefit and mutual respect for territorial integrity and sovereignty.¹⁶ The Government of India recognised the PRC on 30 December 1949. The official announcement on recognition said that the decision was taken after considering the Chinese communication¹⁷ and taking note of 'subsequent developments'.¹⁸ India took some time to recognise China's new regime possibly for more reasons than one. As a member of the Commonwealth, she wanted to be apprised of the views of other members of the Commonwealth before making her individual choice on the basis of her own principles of foreign policy and interests. But, more importantly, inheriting as she did special rights and privileges in

Tibet, India possibly had reasons to consult Britain on the issue which was bound to have an important bearing on the future relations of India and PRC *vis-a-vis* Tibet.¹⁹ Anyway, India was among the first countries and the first Commonwealth country to accord recognition to the PRC.

Independent India could not be expected to continue the remnants of the British imperialistic policy of the days of Colonel Younghusband's military expedition to Tibet in 1904. As Nehru said, 'being entirely opposed to any such extra-territorial rights in another country',²⁰ India did not wish to retain them. There could be no question of India having any territorial or political ambitions in Tibet.

Soon after its formation, the PRC Government set itself to what it called completion of the 'great cause of liberating the Chinese mainland' and hence, the People's Liberation Army (PLA) decided to enter Tibet to 'free the Tibetan people from the enslavement and oppression of the imperialists and reactionaries'.²¹ The Tibetan government was frightened at the prospect of such armed liberation when PLA's advanced troops reached the Kantse area, east of the Kingsha river, and, therefore, it was reported to have decided to despatch a 'goodwill mission' to the United States, Britain, India, Nepal and China respectively with a view to declaring Tibet's independence.²²

The PRC Government reacted sharply to this stance of the Tibetan government. According to a statement released by the Hsinhua News Agency on 20 January 1950, the PRC Ministry of Foreign Affairs challenged the right of the Lhasa government to send out any mission and blamed it upon 'American imperialism and its accomplices who are invading Tibet'.²³ On 21 January, PRC Government invited a Tibetan delegation to Peking to negotiate a 'peaceful solution of the question' and on 30 January it demanded the withdrawal of the 'goodwill mission' sent to foreign countries.²⁴ The Tibetan negotiating mission arrived in Delhi *en route* to Peking. But this Lhasa mission actually left for Peking only on 25 October 1950, i.e., six days after the PRC PLA had claimed to have given a 'smashing blow' to the main force of the Tibetan army.²⁵

In view of the repeated assurances by the PRC Government to the Government of India concerning China's desire to settle the Tibetan problem by 'peaceful means and negotiations', India deplored the 'invasion by Chinese troops of Tibet' and considered this to be contrary to the interest of China herself and peace. The Government of India repudiated the suggestion that 'any foreign influences hostile to China' had been responsible for the delay in the Lhasa delegation's departure for Peking. India also rejected the Chinese allegation that the Indian stand had been coloured by 'foreign influences hostile to China in Tibet'. India did not think that her repeated suggestions about reconciling Chinese suzerainty over Tibet with Tibetan autonomy constituted in any manner any unwarranted interference in China's internal affairs. India did not seek any political or territorial advantages, or for that matter, 'any novel privileged position for themselves or for their nationals in Tibet'. While reminding China of the need for avoiding a solution 'under duress and by force', the Government of India reiterated its basic policy of working for friendly relations with China on the basis of recognition of 'each other's sovereignty, territorial integrity, and mutual interests'.²⁶ One could see herein the germs of India's acknowledgment of China's sovereignty over Tibet, as distinct from suzerainty.

After the PRC substantially completed her 'liberation of Tibet', the Tibetan delegation arrived in Peking in the latter part of April 1951 for negotiations. These resulted in the seventeen-article 'Agreement of the Central People's Government and the Local Government of Tibet on Measures for the Peaceful Liberation of Tibet' on 23 May 1951.²⁷ Article 1 of the Agreement said: 'The Tibetan people shall unite and drive out imperialist aggressive forces from Tibet; the Tibetan people shall return to the big family of the motherland—the People's Republic of China'. Under Article 2, the local government of Tibet was obliged to 'actively assist the People's Liberation Army to enter Tibet and consolidate the national defence'. Article 3 of the Agreement recognized the right of the Tibetan people 'of exercising national regional autonomy under the unified leadership of the Central People's Government'. Under Article 14 of the

Agreement, China successfully asserted her sovereignty over Tibet. This Article reads as follows : 'The Central People's Government shall conduct the centralized handling of all external affairs of the area of Tibet ; and there will be peaceful co-existence with neighbouring countries and establishment and development of fair commercial and trading relations with them on the basis of equality, mutual benefit and mutual respect for territory and integrity'.

Better equipped with the Sino-Tibetan Agreement of 1951 the PRC Government conducted negotiations with the Government of India and this resulted in the India-China Agreement on Trade and Intercourse between Tibet Region of China and India on 29 April 1954.²⁸ Thus, independent India's relations with Tibet came to be governed under this India-China Agreement whereby Tibet was recognized as the 'Tibet region of China'. This was a clear acknowledgment of Chinese sovereignty over that area, as distinct from suzerainty. And significant measures were taken following from such recognition. India gave up her extra-territorial rights in Tibet, withdrew her military escort stationed at Yatung and Gyantse, and handed over the postal and telegraph installations and the rest-houses. Thus, India's relations with Tibet came to be wholly cultural and commercial.

The India-China Agreement of 1954 meant more than the recognition of Tibet's status in the PRC. Speaking on the Agreement in the Lok Sabha, Nehru observed : 'By this agreement, we ensure peace to a very large extent in a certain area of Asia. I would earnestly wish that this area of peace could be spread over the rest of Asia and indeed over the rest of the world'.²⁹ The Agreement provided the foundation-stone of friendship between India and China in view of the five principles of peaceful co-existence (*Panch Sheela*) enunciated in the preamble to the Agreement. But as events were to show later on, the Agreement could not prevent violent controversies from arising over the so-called McMahon Line. The McMahon Line was inherited as an asset of Britain's Indian Empire. But this proved to be a very problematic legacy to independent India due to the changed attitude of the PRC Government particularly after 1959, although questions of frontier disputes did arise

between India and China as early as July-August 1954, i.e., within less than three months of the enforcement of the Agreement of 1954.³⁰ With the hindsight of history certain people in India did not appreciate the abandonment of extra-territorial rights in Tibet. They considered *Panch Sheela* as the product of India's policy of surrender in Tibet and they advocated, in the post-1959 period, the restoration to Tibet of her 'independence' as an objective of India's foreign policy.³¹ Needless to say, these views did not find favour with the Government of India at any point of its relations with the PRC.

It was via Tibet that the sun of India-China relations reached its full meridian splendour in 1954. It was again events in Tibet that brought the relationship to its nadir in 1959 and for decades thereafter in the context of the Sino-Indian border issues.

Evidently the status of Tibet within the meaning of the Sino-Tibetan Agreement of 1951 was not accepted by the Tibetan local government in the same spirit in which it was drawn up. Certain sections of the people of Tibet, no matter what was their number, resented the presence of the Chinese Army in Tibet. According to estimates reflecting PRC's official views 'only a handful of Tibet's population of 1.2 million people rebelled, and the majority of those were in fact tricked or intimidated into joining the rebels'.³² Again, on PRC's own admission, the Tibetan local government and the 'people's conference' composed of what they called 'reactionaries of the upper social strata' continued their resistance in various forms from March 1952 until the climax was reached in the rebellion in Lhasa on 10 March 1959.³³ The Tibetan rebellion, China's vituperative propaganda rather against India in the wake of India's granting refuge and asylum to the Dalai Lama and about 13,000 of his followers, and the PRC allegation about 'the Indian expansionists' who were referred to as having 'inherited the shameful legacy of the British imperialists' aggression against Tibet', coupled with Prime Minister Nehru's replies that China ought not to use 'their great strength against the Tibetans' but try to win them 'to friendly co-operation in accordance with the assurances they have themselves given about the autonomy of the Tibet region'—all these

led to intensely bitter feelings between India and China which were tantamount to hostility.³⁴

The PRC government asserted with undoubted asperity that 'although the Indian government has no desire to occupy Tibet or make Tibet formally independent, it really strives to prevent China from exercising full sovereignty over its own territory of Tibet'.³⁵ Additionally, newspapers in Peking raked up the past and alleged that the memoranda which India sent to China in 1950 at the time of PLA entry into Tibet were written 'after consultation with the British Government'. Nehru emphatically repudiated it as 'completely untruthful. There was no question of our consulting the British government. Our view on Tibet was different from that of the British government'.³⁶

It took the PLA forces of the Tibet Military Area Command just about two days to crush the rebellion in Lhasa city after 20 March 1959 while rebel activities in other areas were also quickly suppressed. But as a fall-out of the suppression of the Tibetan rebellion, the 'practically life-less' India-China frontier appeared to become suddenly a live one, it being noted that frontier incidents occurred much before 1959. A most important reason for India to welcome the 1954 Agreement with China on Tibet was that it would mean permanent peace to more than 3520 km. of the boundary between India and China.³⁷ The Agreement 'purported to deal with all outstanding issues between India and Tibet region of China inherited from the British days', and, at no time, 'during the long and detailed discussions preceding the agreement itself' did China make any mention of their claim to large areas of Indian territory.³⁸ In his letter to the Prime Minister of China on 26 September 1959, Nehru wrote: 'When our two countries signed the 1954 agreement in regard to the Tibet region I hoped that the main problem which history had bequeathed to us in the relations between India and China had been peacefully and finally settled'.³⁹ But this proved to be pure moonshine because, following the rebellion in Tibet, the PRC made extensive claims to Indian territory transforming the much-lauded frontier of peace into a subject of a first-rate boundary dispute between the two countries.

While Tibet's status as a part of China remained undisturbed through all these convulsions, the Tibetans could proceed at a snail's pace only towards realisation of the promised fruits of regional autonomy. The Preparatory Committee for the Tibet Autonomous Region was set up in April 1956. This was five years after the 1951 Sino-Tibetan Agreement. Chinese authorities blamed the 'reactionary clique of the upper strata in Tibet with the Dalai Lama as its head' for obstructions caused both in the path of effecting integration and 'reorganization of Tibetan troops and reform of the social system'.⁴⁰ It was explained that all this slowed down the process of fulfilling the terms of the 1951 Agreement. The rebellion of 1959 further meant a setback to the overall relationship between the central government and the local authorities. However, after the quick suppression of the rebellion, resolutions were adopted for carrying out reforms at the meeting of the second plenary session of the Preparatory Committee for Tibet Autonomous Region held in July 1959. And the Autonomous Region was declared to have been established officially on 9 September 1965.

The sharp twists and turns in Chinese politics had their inevitable impact on Tibetan affairs. The Dalai Lama sought asylum in India in 1959 of his own volition. The Bainquen Erdini (the Panchen Lama) and the Dalai Lama are the two top leaders of Tibetan Buddhism. The Bainquen has been closest to the cause of the PRC in Tibet. In 1954, he was elected a Vice-Chairman of the Standing Committee of the NPC and a Vice-Chairman of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference. Yet he had to lead the life of an exile in Beijing (Peking) from 1964 till 1982 because of 'mistreatment' during the 'Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution' (1966-76).⁴¹ In the post-Mao period, he was fully 'rehabilitated' by 1979 and then re-elected to his former positions.

During the period when the 'cultural revolution' was the official line, every difficulty in Tibet was blamed upon the 'revisionist line of Liu Shao-chi and Lin Piao' and the 'crimes committed against socialism, the people and the motherland by the

traitorous Dalai Clique'.⁴⁴ After the post-Mao leadership came to consider the 'cultural revolution' as a great disaster and chaos for all China,⁴⁵ all mistakes of the decade of the cultural revolution have been blamed upon Lin Biao and the 'gang of four'. The mistakes relative to Tibet during the 'cultural revolution' centred round Han-Tibetan conflicts at the cadre level, restricted autonomy, predominant position for the Hans over Tibetans, relegation of the status of the Tibetan language, and violation of religious freedom, etc.⁴⁴ According to a press release by the Xinhua (Hsinhua) News Agency on 26 May 1980, a recently-issued circular by the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China set new principles and tasks to speed up construction in Tibet. The main tasks for the Tibet Autonomous Region, as formulated in the circular, are 'to heal the wounds caused by Lin Biao and the gang of four during the Cultural Revolution, develop the economy, raise the people's living standards and cultural and scientific level, build up the border area and consolidate national defence, and systematically transform Tibet into a flourishing and prosperous area'.⁴⁵

The circular in a way highlights the absence of proper functioning of regional autonomy in Tibet in the preceding period. Post-Mao China appears to have taken certain concrete steps to make Tibetan regional autonomy more meaningful. Thus, the Tibetan People's Congress were allowed to amend three national laws of China as applied to Tibet in the matter of trial procedure law, marriage law, and law governing the election of deputies to local people's congresses.⁴⁶

Beijing has also taken a more liberal view towards all those who left Tibet in the wake of the rebellion of 1959. Urging all Tibetan compatriots abroad to come back, the new policy of the Chinese Communist Party as announced in early October 1981 stated that 'all patriots are the same whether they come back early or late, and their past misdeeds can be forgiven'.⁴⁷ According to the rehabilitated Panchen Lama, even the Dalai Lama and other Tibetans living abroad are welcome to return to Tibet because of the new policy of letting bygones be bygones.⁴⁸ This

is an open invitation to the Dalai Lama who, along with the Panchen Lama, are successors to the mantle of Zongkeba (Tsongkhapa), initiator of the Yellow Sect of Tibetan Buddhism. Despite modernisation, Buddhism is still a dominant way of life in Tibet and hence, the olive branch is an obvious attempt at reconciliation at the level of traditional leadership.

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- Nepal

NEPAL AND THE FIRST WAR OF INDEPENDENCE OF 1857

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Policy of Mutual Co-operation

THE YEARS 1846-1857 were a period of mutual co-operation and understanding between the Governments of Nepal and India. Jang Bahadur realised that the British Resident in Nepal was a political force and the British Government in India a formidable political power. Hence he tried to secure their recognition for his regime and cultivated friendly relations with them. In the beginning, the attitude of the British Government to him was a blend of abhorrence, distrust and hesitancy but very soon this was replaced by admission of his ability as a stern ruler.¹ Lord Dalhousie himself looked on him as a "very intelligent man" and an able ruler, peaceful and friendly to the British Government, though wily and ambitious, deserving careful vigilance.²

Both the British Government and Jang Bahadur understood each other. A strong peaceful Government in Nepal was a comforting political need of the British after the troublesome decade preceding 1846. This mutual understanding was put to a severe test in the years 1857-59, the years of the Indian Revolt.

Nepal And The Revolt of 1857

Nepal's interest in Indian events was always suspected by the Britishers. But Nepal's active co-operation and military aid to the British during the Indian Revolt of 1857 laid the firm foundation of the Anglo-Nepalese friendship which continued uninterrupted since then. An attempt was made to overthrow the British yoke in India under the leadership of Nana Sahib, Tantia Topi, Lakshmi Bai, the Rani of Jhansi, the Begum of Oudh, Kunwar Singh of Jagdishpur and Mughal Emperor Bahadur Shah. The national revolt widely spread throughout the

upper Gangetic Provinces. Delhi, Kanpur, Lucknow and Gorakhpur became its storm-centres. The British power was on the verge of collapse but in May, 1857, firm as a rock in his friendship with Britain, Jang Bahadur offered 6,000 troops under his own command. In fact, Jang Bahadur had fully determined to help the British whole-heartedly. But Lord Canning the then Governor-General, refused the offer on the ground that the entry of Nepalese troops might encourage the rebels in thinking either that the British could not handle the situation or that Nepal was advancing to their aid. Yet only 10 days after, Canning gratefully accepted Gurkha help and asked that the first contingent should be sent to Lucknow. Jang Bahadur despatched Dhir Shamsher with 3,000 Nepali troops to Lucknow, Benaras, and Patna and another 200 to Gorakhpur.⁸ The help of Nepal was a "last necessity" and "last resource".⁴ Jang Bahadur's farewell speech before leaving Kathmandu on December 10, 1857, testified to all his motives. He declared: "I have three motives for acting as I am now doing. First, to show that the Gurkhas possess fidelity and will pour out their blood in defence of those who treat them with honour and repose confidence in them. Secondly, that I knew the power of the British Government and were I to take part against, although I might have temporary success for a time, my country would afterwards have been ruined and the Gurkha Dynasty annihilated. Thirdly, that I knew that on the success of British arms and re-establishment of British power in India, his Government would be stronger than ever, and that I and my brother and my country would all then benefit by our alliance with you as your remembrance of our past sacrifices will render our present friendship lasting and will prevent you ever molesting us."⁵ The forces under Jang Bahadur restored British authority over Gorakhpur and Lucknow.⁶ The success of the Gurkhas in Bihar, Gorakhpur, Azampur, Jaunpur, Allahabad and Oudh justified the trust reposed in them by the British.⁷

But Jang Bahadur's attitude after his return from Lucknow in March, 1858, and his march to home created much unpleasantness among the British officers. A cloud of misunderstanding could hardly be concealed beneath an appearance of cordiality. Jang Bahadur's own haughtiness and overweening presumption

were a subject of annoyance and criticism in the British camps. Yet due to emergency the British had to put up a fair face and a show of friendship.⁸ On the whole, the presence of Gurkha Army "had a fine moral effect" on the British as it helped in breaking the morale of the rebels.⁹ As for the Nepalese, it offered an opportunity for a large body of soldiers to witness the British strength and their scientific methods of fighting, as a result of which the British prestige was greatly enhanced throughout Nepal. The British were also now convinced of the fidelity of Jang Bahadur and the Gurkhas and thus the foundation of Anglo-Nepalese friendship, which was to last for nearly a century, was firmly laid. In future whenever an occasion arose the Nepalese Government promptly came forward with an offer of help to the British. In turn the British also supported the Ranas and helped in preserving their rule in Nepal for over a century.

From the military point of view the aid was not so substantial. There is no doubt that the Indian Revolt could have been crushed even without the Nepalese military aid. But had the Gurkhas joined the rebels the British would have been placed in a predicament.

The Rebels In Nepal

The restoration of British authority in the regions affected by the tumult drove swarms of "rebels" to the Nepal Terai which became a political Alsatia, a safe sanctuary of malcontents of all types. The British repeatedly requested Jang Bahadur to prevent the "rebels" from getting asylum in his State, but without much effect. Begum Hazrat Mahal, her son Prince Brijis Qadir, Peshwa Nana Sahib Dhondu Pant, his brother Bala Rao, Devi-Bux, Beni Madho, Jwala Prashad, Devi Din of Nasserabad Brigade, Khan Bahadur Khan of Bareilly, Mohammed Hussain—the Nazim of Gorakhpur, Raja Dig Vijay Singh, Maulvee Mohammed Surffaraz Ali and numerous others took shelter in the Terai to reunite their dispirited followers and also made desperate attempts to win over the support of Jang Bahadur.¹⁰ The "rebels" attempted to organize an army with the help of Jang Bahadur.¹¹ Raja Ganga Dhar Rao and Bala Rao gave him temptations of a large

amount of money if he helped them in recovering their lost ground.¹³

The British attitude towards the "rebels" and Nepal was quite clear.¹³ Lord Canning did not like the British troops to cross the Nepalese frontier but hoped that the "rebels" taking shelter therein would be prevented by the Nepalese Government from making any aggression on the Indian territory. If the British troops were to cross the frontier without Nepalese permission it would have created a dangerous precedent, because the Nepalese political refugees often took shelter in India. Nor did the Governor-General desire that every rebel should be delivered over to the British authorities. Moreover, the Governor-General was aware that the sympathy of the Nepalese living on the border lay with the "rebels". As such, in spite of all the precautions, the operations of the British troops across the border would have created irritation and alarm and would have given rise to all sorts of complaints and misunderstandings, except in the case of action against the intruders across the frontier. In this way the responsibility of clearing the "rebels" was shifted over to Nepal. Jang Bahadur told Dr. Oldfield, Residency Surgeon, that he was not certain whether his troops would obey him were he to order them to "expel rebels".¹⁴ This was undoubtedly an exaggeration, but the Nepalese certainly did not like to deal with the "rebels" in a manner as the British did.¹⁵ Nor was it possible for Jang Bahadur to expel all the "rebels" outright, since they had entered Nepal suddenly in large numbers and could have retaliated by plundering the Nepalese villages. In the beginning when the rebel leaders urged him to espouse their cause, Jang Bahadur asked them to surrender to the British.¹⁶ To Lord Canning he frankly conveyed that it was beyond his power to prevent the "rebels" from intruding into the British territory and that he would consequently have no objection to the British forces entering Nepal in pursuit of the rebel forces.¹⁷ He offered to defend the northern routes and passes if the British were to press them from the remaining three sides. However, following the good old Gurkha policy, he wanted that the British forces should not cross the inner range of hills. He also wished that in course of such operations the Nepalese subjects should not be harassed

and that the cows and the Brahmins should not be killed in the Nepalese territory.¹⁸

In accordance with Jang Bahadur's wishes, the Governor-General ordered the British forces to enter Nepal and clear it of the rebels.¹⁹ The British troops pushed the rebels back but Jang Bahadur's own plans to co-operate in expelling them could not be carried out successfully. Jang Bahadur had an interest in detaining the "rebels" in the Terai. He had heard them. It is alleged that Jang Bahadur also got immense wealth from them. The Resident wrote on March 21, 1859, about Jang Bahadur's visit to the Terai: "I have strong grounds to believe that the real motive of the trip was some business (connected with the "rebels" from whom he is said to have received some 5,000 muskets, spears, shields, talwars). I have known that he is supplying them Rasad which they are buying at an enormous price."²⁰ In this way time passed till the bad season commenced and operations from the Nepalese side had to be postponed.

The British operations across the frontier continued for many months but gave rise to frequent complaints and misunderstandings. In the beginning there were certain reports that General Kelly's troops had plundered the Nepalese subjects. These were exaggerated but the Prime Minister was impelled to listen to them. The border authorities and a large number of Chiefs in Nepal had sympathies with the "rebels". Moreover, encouraged by the liberal monetary reward given by the Indian Government in lieu of the Gurkha military help, Jang Bahadur wanted to make these reports a basis of his future demand for compensation. "I have several times expressed the view", remarked Ramsay, "that these charges have been encouraged with the view of some future preposterous claims for compensation from the Indian Government and I am convinced that it is the chief motive of the Prime Minister for his repeated urges."²¹ Reports of plunder and outrages committed by the British troops on the Nepalese subjects continued to reach Jang Bahadur to his extreme annoyance.²² He even declared that he would never again allow the British troops to cross the frontier. On September 23, 1859, however, he formally requested the Indian Government to prohibit the troops from crossing the frontier.

The Resident reminded Jang Bahadur that it was at his request that the British troops had been ordered to enter the Nepalese territory. He stated that his Government would comply with his wishes, but would not relinquish its right of pursuing the aggressors even into the Nepalese territory and expected Nepal to prevent the "rebels" from committing aggression on the Indian territory.²⁴ Thereupon, the Prime Minister withdrew his objections but, requested that the complaints must be enquired into.²⁵

Jang Bahadur himself went to the Terai with his troops in December, 1859, to expel the "rebels".²⁶ The real motive behind it was to claim the cost of expedition from the Indian Government.²⁷ Earlier, in October, 1859, he had proposed to pay a visit to the Governor-General with the intention of consulting him on the measures against the "rebels" and to open the issue of compensation for the alleged outrages committed by the British troops on the Nepalese population. The proposal, however, could not be accepted by Lord Canning on account of his other engagements.²⁸ The Indian Government expected him to clear Nepal of the rebels with his own men and measures.²⁹ The Resident was afraid that interference on the part of the British Government would be resented and might be made a pretext for evading the responsibility by the Durbar. In the fourth week of November, 1859, the Gurkha troops under Jang Bahadur and from the British side Brigadier E. A. Holdich took field in the Butwal Terai and cleared the areas of the "rebels" within a fortnight. Most of them surrendered, either they were handed over to British authorities or had already perished.³⁰ Jang Bahadur informed Lord Canning that Nana Sahib had died and the Indian Government accepted this information. Begum Hazrat Mahal, her son Birijs Quadir, families of Nana Sahib, his wife, Kashi Bai, and Bala Rao got permanent asylum in Nepal and were allowed to come from them on April 7, 1860, that they would neither indulge in intrigues nor engage any servant without the Durbar's permission³¹, otherwise they were liable to punishment. By January 10, 1860, orders were issued to the British troops against crossing the Nepalese frontier, and thus ended a very tedious problem, which had

given rise to serious misunderstandings between the two Governments.

Throughout the eventful period of 1857-59 Jang Bahadur's main aim was to impress the British with his personal cordiality and loyalty to them. The Mutiny came to Jang Bahadur as a veritable boon when he could play upon the fears of the British and bargain for his neutrality or alternatively demand a heavy price for his help. Lord Dalhousie clearly wrote : "... If the Government suppose that Jang Bahadur is doing all for love, they are mightily mistaken. Jang is drawing a bill upon them—at long date, perhaps—but one which they will be called upon to pay, in return for value received some day or other, as sure as fate."³²

The Fruits of Friendship

Maharaja Jang Bahadur's meritorious services were not allowed by Lord Canning to go without recognition or reward. A blue book was presented as a "substantial proof of its gratitude" and "confiding friendship", the British Government and Lord Canning himself personally expressed acknowledgements to Jang Bahadur. He made him a Grand Cross of the Bath (Military Division). The collar and the badge appendant of a Knight Grand Cross (Military Division) of the Most Hon'ble Order of the Bath and the investment badge and star, a copy of the statutes of the Order and a sealed packet containing Her Majesty's Grant and Warrant or dispensation of investiture and a letter from His Royal Highness Prince Albert were delivered to Maharaja Jang Bahadur.³³ As a "lasting memorial" the British Government retroceded to Nepal the whole of the low lands between the Kali and the Rapti and the whole of the low lands lying between the Rapti and the district of Gorakhpur which was formerly wrested by the Treaty of Sagauli in 1816. The territory was 200 miles in length and of varying breadth.³⁴ But Jang Bahadur was dissatisfied as he wanted the Elaka of Khyreegarh to be added to the present restoration.³⁵ But the Resident characterized the Gurkha policy as "whatever you may give, please give us a little more".³⁶ Therefore, he adopted a

firm attitude not to give Khyreegarh as it never belonged to Nepal.

As soon as the operations against the rebels were over the Indian Government appointed surveyors to demarcate a new frontier. In February, 1860, the Boundary Commissioners of the two Governments met in Northern Oudh at Bhagaura Tal to start their work. The whole survey and demarcation was conducted amicably except for few other disputes and the Gurkha representatives declared themselves satisfied.³⁷ The survey and demarcation being completed, on November 1, 1860, a formal treaty was signed by the Maharajadhiraj and the Resident.³⁸ It confirmed all the former treaties, defined the limits of the territory restored to Nepal and the newly demarcated boundary line was accepted by both the countries.

If the Revolt of 1857 was an "unfortunate occurrence" for the British in India, it was a fortunate one for Indo-Nepalese relations, in general and for Jang Bahadur and his rule in particular. The event provided a test to the British policy of "let alone" in Nepal followed since 1842. Jang Bahadur showed his countrymen that his friendship with the British had earned them territory, wealth and honour without causing any impairment of their much cherished national independence while his predecessors' policy of hospitality towards the British had earned them nothing but chaos. The "bad neighbour" (Nepal) was turned into a faithful ally. The Revolt of 1857 was thus a landmark in the history of Indo-Nepalese relations.

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ROLE OF GURKHAS IN THE BRITISH ARMY

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“...the more Gurkhas we have in our service, the safer we should be.”¹

Nepal is the home of the sturdy Gurkhas who have made themselves famous on a hundred battle fields of the world. This gallant race “has stood like a pillar almost wherever there has been a theatre of fighting.”² The Britishers had firm opinion that “it was politically wise to recruit the Gurkhas in large numbers.”³ Due to this feeling, they became a conspicuous element in the British Indian army. The physical feature of their country, the hilly rugged terrain, combined with their national characteristics and tradition have bred in them the admirable qualities of hard character, love of enterprise and endurance. The Anglo-Nepalese War (1814-16) drove home to the British that “we have met with an enemy who shows decidedly greater bravery and greater steadiness than our troops possess,⁴ and the Company’s soldiers could never be brought to resist the shock of these energetic mountaineers on their own ground.”⁵ After this war, those Gurkha prisoners who surrendered during the capitulation of the Malaun fort on the Kumaon frontier were enlisted in the British Indian army. Four rifle regiments were raised—called the Malaun Battalion, the Sirmur Battalion, the Nussiri Battalion and the Kumaun Battalion, the latter being Provincial Corps for Civil duties in Kumaon.⁶ The first and the fourth battalion in the Simla Hills and the Sirmur battalion was established at Dehradun. Most of these Gurkhas came with their families and so grew the Gurkha colonies in these places. From the very outset the Gurkhas displayed along with their martial qualities, a spirit

of unswerving fidelity to their new masters whom they had fought. In 1825-26 in the siege of Bharatpur all the Gurkhas were employed in active service as part of the British Indian troops.⁷ When Hodgson was appointed as British Resident in Nepal, he strongly urged the British Government to adopt as a policy the drafting of the surplus soldiery of Nepal in British ranks. By introducing this new element in Indian army they will be able to provide a safety valve in times of emergency.⁸

The deep seated scorn of the Gurkhas for the Indian 'Sepoys' and the jealousy of the latter would prevent a combination of the two, and in the disaffection in one the British could count on the support of the other. The martial population of Nepal was like a heap of explosives awaiting the slightest ignition to be aflame. It was feared that the policy of the Nepalese government under Bhim Sen was to keep warm the martial zeal of the people, and then release them at an opportune time against the British in India when the British were assailed with various problems. It was hence politically wiser to employ them in the British army before they, as seemed certain to Hodgson, turned against the British in India.⁹ The more these martial people were drained away, the greater was the chance of Nepal being a weak and peaceful nation and neighbour.

The Gurkha Battalions were reorganised on a permanent and regular regimental basis in 1861. Upto 1879, there were five Gurkha Regiments with 16 Gurkha officers and 825 sepoy in each thus totalling 4,685 men in all.¹⁰ They were encamped at Dharamshala, Bakloh, Dehradun, Almora and Abbotabad respectively, their regimental headquarters being at Dharamshala, Dehradun and Abbotabad.¹¹ Besides a large number of Nepalese served in 42nd, 43rd and 44th infantry regiments, later comprising the 8th and 10th Gurkha Rifles.¹²

Recruiting was very difficult. Very often four or five months elapsed before 34 recruits of the required class and standard could be obtained. From Kumaon, Bettiah, Gorakhpur and Darjeeling small recruiting parties were sent sometimes with the requisite authority of the Durbar but very often without it.¹³ Recruits with families were mostly prized. They were

encouraged to settle in large numbers in the hills of Kumaon, Sikkim and the adjacent places so that they provided ready supply of men for Gurkha Regiments.¹⁴ The British services offered them not only better pay amenities, but far greater scope for active services.¹⁵ Gurkhas of various clans were recruited in the British Indian army. The Magars, the Gurungs, the Chattris, Thakurs and the Khas were obtained from the western Districts of Nepal and the Limbus, Rais, Sunwars, Famangs and the Lamas from eastern regions or from the Kosi basin.¹⁶ The Nepal Durbar strongly opposed to their enlisting Nepalese subjects. In 1891, Captain E. Vansittart, 2nd Battalion, 5th Gurkhas was appointed as Military Assistant to the Resident in Nepal.¹⁷ A general recruiting depot¹⁸ was established at Purneah for the enlistment of Gurkha recruits.

The Gurkhas formed no inconsiderable part of the British army—to be exact, there were ten Regiments of two battalions each.¹⁹ The gallantry of these hill people so favourably impressed the British at the time of the Nepal War that soon after friendly relations were restored they took into their service such of the Gurkhas as were willing to enlist thereby creating a nucleus for the Gurkha battalions.

After the outbreak of the First World War in 1914 the Government of India intimated that the demand for recruits was expected to be high and Maharaja Chandra Shamsher took immediate steps to cope with the situation. The people were encouraged in every way to seek enlistment in the British army, they were at the same time repeatedly given to understand that in serving the British Government they would be considered to have rendered equal service to their own. The number of men taken out of the country had exceeded 2,00,000 and 55,000 of these were enlisted in the Regular Gurkha Battalions of the Indian Army. In consequence of the strenuous efforts made by the Maharaja of Nepal the British Government were not only able to make good the heavy losses in the regular Gurkha Regiments, but were also able to raise many new battalions. Gurkhas fought in almost every theatre of war.

Attitude of Nepalese Government

From the very beginning, the Nepalese Government's attitude to the enlistment of the Gurkhas was one of consistent opposition. An injunction²⁰ against the Nepalese taking service under the British Government was always extant though not enforced with equal efficacy at all times. The prohibition was more rigorous in regard to the recruits intending to take their family with them to India. The British Government always faced great difficulty in getting from Nepal even the limited number of men required for the maintenance of the Gurkha Corps. Till 1885, there was no other way than to carry on the recruiting operation *Sub-rosa*.²¹ The Durbar issued an order that any person who was detected in an attempt to leave the country for this purpose would be imprisoned, and that the goods, house and lands of any person so enlisting be confiscated. If British agents were found engaged in recruiting "they are now to be cut in two."²² The recruitment operations were carried on with greater caution.²³

The situation was more difficult when Nepal passed under the absolute sway of a powerful despotic ruler, Jang Bahadur Rana. His attitude in this regard was not of friendliness and cooperation but of covert discouragement, if not open opposition. The Gurkhas in the British army meant permanent stay away from home. Jang Bahadur when pressed by the Resident to relax these prohibitive measures, pleaded that as the British Government opposed his employing Europeans in the Nepalese army, they should not grudge the steps he took in his national interest.²⁴ The British Government made a strong remonstrance against this restrictive policy; Jang Bahadur gave way partially. Strong political pressure alone earned the British a "not very graceful concession".²⁵

Captain Byers, the Acting Resident, indignantly wrote to the Government :

"The records of this office during the last few years show the unavailing efforts made to obtain recruits for the British service with the assistance of the Durbar, but they will not

assist us, and although they say, they throw no obstacles in the way of our obtaining recruits, the rule relative to those who do enter the service not being allowed to return to Nepal, no doubt, prevents great numbers from enlisting.”²⁶

During the outbreak of 1857, the news released a frenzy of excitement in Nepal. Jang Bahadur decided to participate in the stirring event as an ally of the British. He offered the services of the Gurkha troops and found Major Ramsay, the Resident too eager to accept the overture.²⁷ The British were now convinced of the fidelity of Jang Bahadur and the Gurkhas and thus the foundation of the Anglo-Nepalese friendship, which was to last for nearly a century was laid down. It was only in the time of Prime Minister Bir Shamsheer that the Nepalese Government freely allowed the enlistment of its subjects and Nepal came to be termed as the “recruiting ground for the British Army”. In 1863, they fought in Amlryla on the North-west frontier. In 1864, they fought in Bhutan, in 1868 suppressed the Pathan incursions, in 1871 they were in Assam mountains and forests. In the mid-eighties when the king of Burma was intriguing with the French Government, the Gurkha soldiers marched with the British army into Upper Burma and took Mandalay. In 1876 they were campaigning in Perak, in 1878-80 they led the army into Afghanistan and in 1888 campaign against the Tibetans, participated in Anglo-Afghan war and assured the British to help if Russia advanced. During the First and Second World Wars the Gurkha army rendered very useful service to the Allied powers. One day before the war of 1914 was in fact declared, Maharaja Chandra Shamsheer had written to the Resident :

“I have come to request you to inform His Excellency the Viceroy and through him the King Emperor, that the whole military resources of Nepal are at Majesty’s disposal. We shall be proud if we can be of any service, however little that may be. Though far from the scene of actual conflict we yield to none in our devotion and friendship to His Majesty’s person and Empire. We have spoken of our friendship on many occasions ; should time allow, we speak in deeds. May

I say I am speaking to you in double capacity : firstly, as Marshal of the Gurkhas and, secondly, as Major-General in the Majesty's Army."²⁸

The British Government at once accepted with gratitude Nepal's offer. The first step was a request for a loan of six thousand troops from Nepal for general service within the borders of India. Maharaja's second son General Babar Shamsheer was appointed Inspector-General of the Nepalese Contingent and was attached to army head-quarters in India. Four Regiments proceeded to India under the command of Commanding General Padma Shamsheer, the Maharaja's nephew and two other battalions which constituted the personal body-guards of the Maharaja were sent under General Tej Shamsheer. This great loan of finest troops in Nepal was increased. Nepal had been asked for four thousand and she sent four thousand seven hundred and fifty-seven. From time to time new drafts were despatched from Kathmandu. The British were able to crush the widespread and dangerous Mahsud rising on the borders of Afghanistan with the help of these Gurkhas. They fought in France, Neuve Chapelle, Ypres, Gallipoli, Palestine, Baluchistan, Suez, Egypt and Mesopotamia. General Sir James Willcocks, commanding the Indian Corps, wrote :

"...I have now come to the conclusion that the best of my troops in France were the Gurkhas;" and "Taciturn by nature, brave and loyal to a degree the Gurkhas proved, as I knew they would, second to none."

Mr. Candler's following words in his book '*The Sepoy*' are a just recognition of the sturdy gallantry of these hill-fighters :

"The hillmen of Nepal have stood the test as well as the best."²⁹

"Almost wherever was a theatre of war, Gurkhas were to be found everywhere. ... And to those who know, when they see the map of that country of Nepal then must always recur the thought of what the people of that country have done for us."³⁰

The Gurkhas were regarded always as the most dependable, the very cream, the 'nulli secundus' of the Indian army.

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FOREIGN POLICY OF NEPAL : PERSISTENCE OF TRADITION

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FOREIGN policy involves a process of adjustment between compulsions of tradition and inexorable forces of change. Not rarely does the efficacy of the policy depend upon how smoothly the adjustment had been made. But then, tradition can be as much a stimulant while framing and implementing foreign policy as its constraint. For a people presently in a bad shape, the memory of a glorious past serves as an incentive to determined action to build up a better future. Conversely, past tradition could be a deadweight on the present policy, the decision makers being either unable or unwilling to realise the irrelevance of historical experiences to present circumstances.

A country's tradition is its accumulated experience of ages, an analysis of which could sometimes be a pointer to its present behaviour. This is particularly so in respect of small states having had no significant change in their geographical extent for a long time, and being away from cross currents of international power politics during the period.

Nepal is a perfect example of such a state whose view of the world is influenced not only by its political and economic considerations but also by its social, ethnic, cultural and psychological heritage. Nepal's political structure, social development and economic growth are in a process of change, the pace, however, being often halting and hesitating. For it, exposure to international forces has been but a recent experience. For its policy makers the country's historical experiences and heritage constitute an indispensable element in the decision-making process. Consequently, the Nepalese foreign policy has a remarkable tradition of continuity, consistency and coher-

ence which have survived the many changes in the internal power structure of the country.

Due to its landlocked position, small territorial extent and very limited resources, Nepal's foreign policy could have very little manoeuvrability and few options in dealing with states—even the neighbouring ones. The policy is essentially reactive in nature ; it could hardly be generative of forces to influence, let alone determine, the course of events at even the regional level. Nepal either adapts itself to, or resists the impact of, the policy of other states in the area, depending upon which of the two courses serves its interests best at a given time.

Like most small states, Nepal's foreign policy has three objectives : "security, stability and status"¹—security in regard to territorial integrity, and external aggression ; stability in terms of the existing power structure in the country on which depends its economic growth ; and status as an independent political entity, capable of pursuing a policy best suited to its own interests.

II

Though created by arms and populated by martial tribes, aggressive militarism has long ceased to be the dominant feature of Nepal's foreign policy. This is the result of the restraining effect of the British-Indian and Chinese policy on Nepal in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, both Calcutta and Peking being determined to put a definite limit to Nepal's expansion. This expansion threatened the political and economic interests of British India and China whose relations in the Himalayan region was one of competitive co-existence. The two powers would avoid an armed confrontation on the Indian frontier and seek to sustain their influence on the Himalayan states by a policy of mingled persuasion and pressure. The relative strength of the two powers at a particular time determined the efficacy of the policy.²

Hemmed in by two great powers, India and China, on either side, Nepal soon developed an instinct for the maintenance of the *status quo* which was essential for its self-

preservation and survival. This instinct, developed in the early nineteenth century, continues to be the main motivation of Kathmandu's present foreign policy.

Basically, as also traditionally, Nepalese foreign policy has had one predominant object : lessening the Indian influence, the pervasiveness of which in the country's social, economic and cultural life is viewed as a threat to its political and psychological identity. For Nepal, India's policy has often had the suggestion of its hegemonic aspirations. To India, on the other hand, Nepal seems to have always exaggerated its imaginary fear of Indian intentions with a view to obtaining concessions from powers either actually unfriendly to India or potentially so. The Indian policy seeks to foster in the Nepalese government a sense of community of interests which would make it a dependable ally. Nepal gets suspicious and fearful of this policy, for it intensifies Indian influences ; this suspicion and fear embarrasses New Delhi and acts as a constraint on its Nepal policy.

This basic trait in Indo-Nepalese relations has deep historical roots. Politically, Nepal's fear of India is coeval with its emergence as a unified state in the period 1767-1815 and the consolidation of the British rule in India at the same time. With superior military power British India frustrated the main aim of the Nepalese foreign policy at this time : military expansion to the Indian plains. Such expansion had posed a great security problem for British India. Nepalese policy makers chafed under the restraint caused by their country's political connexion with British India, but could do little to shake off the restraint, fearing British retaliation ; not until the middle of the nineteenth century when Nepal passed under the Rana rule, could it reconcile itself to the abandonment of its cherished military ambitions.

Modern Nepal's fear of India and India's distrust of Nepal are the result of the peculiar nature of the Indo-Nepalese relations before 1947. Kathmandu's obsessive sensitivity to Indian designs and its charge that India takes Nepal for granted are a carry-over from the time when British India's policy was to pander to the Ranas' fond belief that Nepal was

an independent state, although, in fact, it was but a client state, though not declaredly so. The Ranas and the British had the common interest in restricting the Indo-Nepalese relations to only the governmental level and in fostering the spirit of insularity in the Nepalese people. The Rana policy was to befriend the Indian government but rigidly limit the scope of its activity in Nepal.³ This continues to be the main feature of Kathmandu's present attitude to New Delhi.

The identical security and defence interests of the two countries provide the best example of the persistence of the traditional relations between them. Since the time of Prithvinarayan Shah, the first king of modern Nepal, (1768-75), the Indian army has been the model for the army of Nepal; Indian military colleges have had Nepali officers as trainees; Nepal has always been dependent on India for arms; there have been Indian military advisers to the Nepal government;⁴ Gurkhas have for long been an indispensable element in the Indian army; Nepal has helped the Indian government in meeting both the external and internal emergencies.⁵

The common security interests of the two countries received emphasis in the treaty of 1950 which underscored their mutual obligation in meeting external crises.⁶ India continues to regard Nepal as being within its outer strategic frontier. Nehru's forthright declaration in 1959 that any invasion of Nepal would be viewed by India as an invasion of its own territory⁷ appeared to the Nepalese as having a clear ring of the British Indian policy decades ago.⁸ But this, in its own long-term interest, Kathmandu could hardly grudge, although it does need to avoid any overt display of its dependence on Indian arms for self-protection. The establishment and subsequent removal of the Indian military mission in Kathmandu and the Indian military check posts on the Nepal-Tibet frontier should be viewed in this light. In India's strategic and defence calculations Nepal has always figured as a buffer state whose amenability to New Delhi's political influence had for long been a guarantee against its administrative integration with India.⁹ The degree of this amenability has depended on the strength of China in Tibet which Kath-

mandu could use as a counter to India. In fact, the treaty of 1950 resembles the earlier treaty of 1923 in that both emphasise the interdependence of the two countries in meeting their common security and defence needs.

These needs explain New Delhi's periodical assertion of its special position in Nepal in much the same way as the British government did earlier and with identical reaction in Kathmandu then and now : strong resentment at what confirms its fear of Indian ambition. In 1950 Nehru declared :

Frankly, we do not like, and shall not brook, any foreign interference in Nepal... no other country can have as intimate a relationship with Nepal as ours... Therefore, much as we appreciate the independence of Nepal, we cannot allow anything to go wrong in Nepal or permit that barrier to be crossed or weakened, because that would be a risk to our security.¹⁰

This to many Nepalese sounded typically Curzonian.¹¹ Really, however, it could not be otherwise, for geopolitical compulsions would persist despite changes in internal power structures.

Kathmandu well knows that its own defence is underwritten by its special relationship with India, although its policy is not to admit it openly, for doing so would tarnish the image it wants to project as a country free from the tutelage of its great neighbour. It is reminiscent of the attitude of the Rana of Nepal which resented any overt paternalistic posture of British India while being certain of its security under the penumbra of British influence. In 1954 Nepal rejected Nehru's plan of formally coordinating the foreign policy of the two countries in much the same way as Kathmandu had done in the early decades of the present century when Chinese activity in Tibet caused India and Nepal a common worry.¹² Nepal knows that its defence is as much its own responsibility as it is the concern of India itself, for a threat to Nepal would endanger India's own security.

III

Traditionally, relations with India have been a major determinant of the internal power structure in Nepal. Aspirants for power have always carefully calculated the posture they would take while dealing with India, for the posture has invariably turned out to be the decisive factor in the formation, duration and dissolution of governments in Nepal. This was evident in the course of the power struggle which characterised Nepal's internal history in the first half of the nineteenth century. Ascension to power or fall from it were both accountable to the attitude the squabbling parties took to the Indian government.¹³ The Rana government's long tenure was mainly due to the careful adjustment of its own needs to the expectations of the Indian government.

In more recent years pro-Indian or anti-Indian attitude has been the clinching factor in regard to such events as King Tribhuban's rise to power, the reorientation of Nepal's policy towards China during the rule of King Mahendra, and the formation of the democratic government by the Nepali Congress and later its dissolution.¹⁴ Nepali policy makers' attitude towards India at particular times not only shapes the configuration of the internal power structure of the country but even determines the duration of political stability in it. This is clearly borne out by the endemic intra-party and inter-party dissensions in Nepal between the period 1951-60. An anti-Indian posture is not only psychologically satisfying but politically necessary as well, it being displayed as a badge of nationalism which is the indispensable credential for all who seek political power in Nepal.

The pace of political events in Nepal has often been set by the Indian reaction to them. New Delhi's policy towards Nepali political dissenters at different times would prove this point. The policy had at all times been fairly consistent : providing asylum to the men while restraining them from political activities prejudicial to the existing regime at Kathmandu. Kathmandu's reaction to this policy is the same as it had been in the past : fear that India would use the political

emigres to subvert the existing regime or pressurise it to wrest concessions. This would explain much of the intermittent strain in Indo-Nepalese relations since the end of 1960 when following the Koirala ministry's dismissal by King Mahendra Nepali Congress activists took refuge in India. Nehru condemned the King's action as "a complete reversal of democracy, the democratic process".¹⁵ A prominent member of the Nepali Congress, Suvarna Shamsher, tried to organise a resistance movement in India and collected the local Nepalis in Calcutta for an operation¹⁶ which to Mahendra appeared as the India-based movement against the Ranas in 1950.

The King made much political capital out of the impression created in Nepal that India had some vested interest in the Koirala government; he urged that all who cherished the country's independence should rally behind him and his regime.¹⁷ It was not long before the steady deterioration in the relations between the two countries led to a rethinking in New Delhi; the latter's mood, especially after the Sino-Indian War in 1962, became markedly sober. Ever since, New Delhi is hard put to convince Kathmandu that it had no intention to use Koirala and his men as means to gain its political gains in Nepal.

The Terai has always been the base of operation for Nepali political dissenters. It is a tract on the open Indo-Nepalese frontier where the local people's close ethnic, social, economic and cultural ties with the Indians on the other side of the open frontier make the former's emotional integration with the main stream of Nepali national life a difficult problem for the elites who shape the country's policy. A determined drive to "Nepalise" the inhabitants of the Terai all too rapidly might appear as the deculturisation of a people whose many links with the Indians could make the issue a complicated one. What makes the situation all the more difficult for Kathmandu is the fact that from the Terai the Nepal government receives about seventy five percent of the national revenue; and it is here that the Indian political influence is the most apparent.

IV

Nepal's policy of balancing China with India to avert pressure from either and obtain concessions from both has also a traditional basis. In fact, the survival of the state as a political entity has depended on the deft exploitation of Sino-Indian relations. The worse the relations, the more is the importance of Kathmandu in the eyes of New Delhi and Peking, and this accounts for whatever little manoeuvrability that the Nepalese foreign policy has. Chinese connexion with Nepal and the use the latter makes of it has been an abiding concern for the makers of India's Nepal policy, and often a constraint on the policy.

Historically speaking, political relations with China have been useful to Nepal in the context of its relations with India. Nepal needed to retain and even exaggerate its connexion with China to assert that it was not just an appanage of India. Hence, even after the end of its tributary relations with Peking three years before a republican Government was established there, Kathmandu received periodical Chinese missions with effusive cordiality and fanfare.¹⁸ The period of strained relations with India have often been the period of demonstrative intimacy between Nepal and China. To Nepal, China is politically useful as a counterweight to India, as a foil to India's policy, and as a scarecrow to deter India from a more forceful action. Nepal has to play up its relations with China in order to play down the impact of India on Nepal's national life. For Kathmandu it is indeed a "national necessity to create some power or the bogey of power in the north"¹⁹ to avert what it fears as Indian designs.

Consequently, Sino-Nepalese relations have always been the dominant element in India's Nepal policy. Until the middle of the nineteenth century, Britain's political and economic interests in China obliged it to soft-pedal Nepal even when Kathmandu's provocative policy seemed to justify military action against it. Even during the Rana rule, when Nepal was virtually an Indian protectorate, Kathmandu's relations with Peking caused India considerable political embarrassment which was aggravated by

the periodical Chinese assertion of suzerainty over the Himalayan states.²⁰ Kathmandu's tribute missions to Peking kept up the illusion of Chinese suzerainty over Nepal. The Rana explanation that the missions were economically gainful to Nepal²¹ and had no political object did not always convince the British.

With similar worry the present Indian government views Kathmandu's economic relations with Peking whose road building projects in Nepal seem to have some ulterior political object. New Delhi can hardly overlook the fact that the Kathmandu-Kodari road²² has been built not only along the customary trade route between Nepal and Tibet but also along the route having considerable military significance. Nor can it be ignored that, historically speaking, China has hardly ever made much effort at developing the Tibeto-Nepalese trade ; rather it has suspected the trade as having the ulterior object of reinforcing Nepalese influence at Lhasa—an influence which British India could make use of.²³ The very little trade that goes on along the Kathmandu-Kodari road²⁴ would seem to confirm India's worry which is grist to Kathmandu's mill : it is put up as proof of India's aversion to Nepal's economic development through the assistance of any country other than that of India itself.

Peking has asserted suzerainty over the Himalayan states in recent times too,²⁵ emphasising their historical links with China. Indeed, in so far as the tracts on India's Himalayan border are concerned, China's historical experiences have often served as both an inspiration and incentive to its action.

Nepal's attitude to China and India in the present times reflects its past experience in dealing with them. Kathmandu's very familiarity with India accounts for its fear of it. For Nepal, its vulnerability to pressures from India is a far greater danger than from China, the former having far more stakes in a friendly and obliging government at Kathmandu.

By contrast, historically, Nepal's relations with China had been but "intermittent",²⁶ "fitful" and symbolic : China lay too far to pose any immediate political or military problem to Nepal while its connection through the tributary missions was econo-

mically profitable to Nepal. Politically, Nepal's relations with China prevented the Indian government from obtaining too close a political hold on Kathmandu, while the tributary missions to Peking were a means of profitable commercial transactions. Nepalese goods, particularly opium, used to be carried to Tibet and China duty free, and the missions brought from the Chinese emperor rich presents for the king of Nepal and the Rana prime minister.²⁷

In fact, Nepal's attitude to India has always been a reaction to not only what India actually does, but what Nepal thinks India may or intends to do. Thus, Nepal's policy towards India is both reactive and defensive in nature, while China is important to Kathmandu as a corrective to New Delhi's policy. This "dichotomy" in Nepal's view of China and India could be explained by the historical fact that Kathmandu had never to reckon with the presence of China in its immediate neighbourhood while it had always to guard against the overwhelming Indian influence in close proximity.²⁸

V

Himalayan politics through the ages have had one focus : Tibet, whose history has been dominated by the inter-relations of the powers in its neighbourhood—India, Nepal and China. The persistence of tradition in Nepal's foreign policy is evident in Kathmandu's abiding sensitiveness to the events in Tibet, although with the change in the political status of the latter following its "liberation" by the Chinese communists, the scope of Nepalese activity in Tibet is now extremely limited. Maintenance of Tibet's status as a militarily weak, self-governing state and as a buffer to ward off an intimate and potentially dangerous political contact with China had been Kathmandu's traditional policy. Tibet's tributary relations with Nepal²⁹ had given the latter political prestige, and duty-free trade with Lhasa had earned Nepal economic benefit. Both have been lost after the Chinese took over Tibet.³⁰

In the past China's Nepal policy had been influenced by its interests in Tibet and its strength to defend the interests ; poli-

tically Nepal was important to China in the Tibetan context. China when weak in Tibet, or confronted by local opposition, needed to be watchful towards Nepal and keep it in good humour lest it became a base from which the British in India could promote their objectives in Tibet. And Tibet was valued by China as a buffer for the provinces of Szechuan and Yunnan, in particular.

This tradition influences China's Nepal policy even today. One is likely to find a causal relationship between increasing Chinese attention to Nepal, troubles in Tibet and closer dealings between Kathmandu and New Delhi. China's Nepal policy is often in the nature of a reaction to India's attitude to Nepal at a particular time. The history of Sino-Nepalese relations from the earliest times point to the fact that in contrast to India's attitude to Nepal, Peking never wanted its relations with Kathmandu or its neighbouring Himalayan states to be exclusive in character. In the past it had acquiesced in the effective though not overt, Indian overlordship of Nepal while retaining its symbolic historical relations with it which comforted its pride. Even now China does not seem to want to dominate Nepal politically as long as it keeps itself free from overt Indian tutelage.

As for the Indian activity in Nepal, it, too, has a direct relation with the Chinese activity in Tibet. India's concern with both the internal developments in Nepal and its external policy stems from its anxiety to prevent the Chinese influence in Tibet from seeping into Indian border tracts through Nepal and the adjacent areas. The main content of India's Nepal policy today remains much the same as it was during the British rule : it wants a politically stable government at Kathmandu closely allied to India and free from foreign intrigues, actually or potentially subversive of Indian interests in the Himalayan region.

Indian interest in Tibet has always caused Nepal worry and indignation except when its own interests necessitated Indian involvement in Tibetan affairs. It was in Tibet that the Nepalese and British Indian interests had clashed. Britain's Tibetan policy had two results in so far as it affected Nepal : the latter was no longer able to bully Tibet at will for the maintenance of its privileges in that country ; and it also lost its erstwhile mono-

politic position in the Indo-Tibetan trade following the development of the alternative and easier Sikkim-Tibet route. An indirect, though nonetheless effective, result was the British control of Nepal's relations with Tibet to the extent such control was needed to further India's own interests in Tibet. But in 1900-1912, Rana Nepal fully cooperated with British India in keeping Tibet free from Russian and, later, Chinese ambition ; at this time both Kathmandu and Calcutta (later New Delhi) had identical interests in preventing foreign domination of Tibet.³¹ In keeping with this policy, Kathmandu adopted a cooperative attitude towards New Delhi in 1950 when the Communist rule was established in Tibet. And its best proof lay in the treaty of 1950 which coordinated their security objectives.³²

The close proximity of China to Nepal today gives the latter a leverage in dealing with India, but it could also pose a political problem for Nepal. Maoism is a force in a section of the Nepali elite, the stridency of whose anti-Indian tone often embarrasses the government of Nepal. Not a few of these elites are Newars, traditionally a community of merchants and artisans who now figure prominently in the higher echelons of the administration and who want closer ties with China.³³ It is the Newars who had suffered most in the past on account of British India's Tibetan policy, resulting in the loss of their dominant position in the Tibetan trade. The Newars' rivalry with Indian businessmen, who control the export trade of Nepal, gives an economic explanation to Nepali nationalism. Assertion against India finds both a form and focus in this community from which the Nepali Communist Party recruits a large number of followers.

Traditionally for Nepal, too, Tibet had been the crux of its China policy. China had foiled Nepal's territorial ambitions in Tibet³⁴ arbitrated in its disputes with Lhasa, and managed with varying degree of success the relations between the two countries. Despite the suggestion of political vassalage, Nepal maintained its tributary relations with China for fear of loss of its political and economic privileges in Tibet which China recognised. In such circumstances it was natural for the Rana government, then in its last legs, to be worried over the Chinese

“liberation” of Tibet in 1950. The Chinese policy in Tibet in 1959, culminating in the escape of the Dalai Lama to India, strained Sino-Nepalese relations for a time as did the activities of the Khampa refugees on the northern Nepalese border.³⁵ Political disturbances damaged Kathmandu’s commercial interests in Tibet,³⁶ the Newar merchants being suspect in Chinese eyes. The Buddhist population of Nepal were sore with the Chinese treatment of the Dalai Lama.³⁷

Nepal’s policy since the Dalai Lama’s escape from Tibet has been one of scrupulous avoidance of any measure which would give Peking an excuse to create tension in the northern tracts of Nepal. The age-old relations of the Nepalis in these tracts with the Tibetans on the other side of the border often create political problems for Kathmandu. The removal of the Indian military check posts on the Nepal-Tibet border was a concession to China.³⁸ Kathmandu’s reaction to the activities of the Tibetan refugees on the Nepal border was proof that it sought to reassure China that it would not let its territory be used as a base of operation against the Chinese rule in Tibet.³⁹ The delimitation of the Nepal-Tibet border shows Nepal’s accommodating attitude to China and the latter’s deference to Kathmandu’s susceptibilities.⁴⁰ Neither China nor Tibet wants the Nepal-Tibet border to be a disturbed area.

Nepal has drawn three lessons from its past relations with India and China : first, both Peking and New Delhi would seek to bring Nepal into their respective sphere of influence if they are worried over the situation in Tibet ; secondly, Nepal must avoid exclusive relations with either for fear of domination by them ; thirdly, Nepal’s security lies in neither of its two big neighbours being so weak as to be completely ignored by the other while dealing with Kathmandu. The overriding concern of the Nepali policy makers is to guard against the unwarranted influence of India and China.⁴¹ King Mahendra’s declaration that in the Sino-Indian war Nepal “cannot afford to be a calf standing between the two fighting bulls”,⁴² is but an echo of the policy pronouncement of Prithvinarayan Shah, his ancestor, some two hundred years ago. Prithvinarayan had prescribed the policy of equal friendship with Nepal’s two big neighbours.

Nepal steers clear of any direct involvement in the Sino-Indian rivalry while exploiting the rivalry itself to promote its own interests. In the past Nepal had followed this subtle policy with great dexterity ; even in the period of closest relations with India, a link, however, tenuous, had been maintained with China. More recently, in 1955-58, the years of demonstrative coquetry with China, Nepal did not revoke either the agreement regarding the supply of Gurkhas to the Indian army⁴³ nor the treaty of 1950, both of which had given India a special position in Nepal.

The recent Nepali wish to get the Himalayan region recognised as a zone of peace is a clear manifestation of its concern for avoidance of involvement in regional quarrels ; and for Nepal regional quarrels assume the greatest significance when India and China become involved in them. The Praja Parishad leader, Tanka Prasad Acharya's demand in 1952 that "Nepal's neutrality should be made effective by procuring a guarantee from both India and China" was but a reiteration of Nepal's traditional policy of maintaining an equal political distance from New Delhi and Peking. While such an explicit guarantee would restrain Indian initiative in Nepal, it would mean no great loss for China which has far greater stake in Kathmandu's friendship now when its position in Tibet is unassailable .

VI

For a time a major irritant in Indo-Nepalese relations had been New Delhi's policy towards Sikkim and Bhutan ; it too has an historical explanation. But for British India's overlordship of the two Himalayan states, they would have been absorbed in Nepal when, between 1767 and 1816, it was in its most expansive state. Nepal has an unflagging interest in the developments in Sikkim and Bhutan. The large concentration of the Nepali population in the two areas gives Kathmandu a justification for the interest. Indian policy in Sikkim and Bhutan makes Nepal uneasy to which could perhaps be attributed its periodical encouragement of anti-Indian feelings in the two areas. The acquisition of most of the arable lands in Sikkim by the fast-breed-

ing and industrious Nepali immigrants has reinforced the grievances of the local Lepcha population of their being economically exploited.

The problem has assumed greater complexity owing to the Indian sensitivity to Kathmandu's reaction to any measure that might affect the interests of the majority Nepali population in the country. This reaction was evident in the political events in Sikkim in the last decade which culminated in the establishment of a popular government and later its complete administrative integration with India. Politics in Sikkim has largely been a reflection of its ethnic diversity and discordance which would explain the tradition of close Indian guidance of the political affairs of the country. Sikkim's administrative integration with India was the admission of a political necessity. Chinese presence in the close neighbourhood, increasing Nepali interest in Sikkim's political affairs and the growth of political awareness in the little state created a situation which the Indian government could hardly ignore.

Nepal closely watches the developments in Bhutan as well—a state which not a few Nepalese regard as but an Indian protectorate despite all the trappings of an independent country. Even Indian sponsorship of Bhutan's membership of the U.N.O. has not quite convinced these Nepalese of New Delhi's wish that Bhutan develop an international personality. Some anti-Indian elements in Nepal had for a time toyed with the project of a Himalayan federation against India. The federation, to be composed of Kashmir, "Azad Kashmir", Nagaland, Sikkim, Bhutan and Nepal, would function under the guidance of Kathmandu.⁴⁴ The anti-British Pandes in Nepal had cherished such a dream in the first half of the nineteenth century when Kathmandu's relations with Calcutta were very strained.⁴⁵

For those in Sikkim and Bhutan who were averse to close Indian connexion, Nepal has for long been a model to follow. Viewed in this perspective, New Delhi's problem today is much the same as was faced by the British Indian government in the past: retention of influence in Nepal's bordering areas, and defence of India's political and strategic interests there without

impairing the general relations with Kathmandu by aggravating its jealousy and fear.

VII

The continued employment of a large number of Gurkhas in the Indian army forms another important strand in Indo-Nepalese relations. For the Nepalese government such employment has always had definite economic justification, for the resources of the country are too inadequate to support the military tribes of Nepal⁴⁶ for whom the scarcity of arable lands in the hills makes service in India an absolute necessity. For these men earning military glory while being in the Indian army is a tradition which successive generations have fondly treasured and very jealously guarded. This psychological factor is no less compulsive than the economic one in preventing the politicisation of the recruitment issue by any Nepalese government.

Nepal under the Ranas had wrung political concessions from British India by exploiting its fear of the loss of Gurkhas, the most dependable element in the Indian army when it was exposed to the influence of nationalism.⁴⁷ For the Ranas, the supply of Gurkhas to the Indian army was a concession to the paramount power : in the last years of their rule they gave the recruitment issue the formal and definite basis of a treaty. While the treaty now robs Kathmandu of the advantage of a political lever which it had gainfully used in the past, for India it has been a great gain. For inspite of the application of science and technology to modernise the Indian army, its dependence on the Gurkhas has not decreased, particularly when, following the Sino-Indian war in 1962, mountain warfare has assumed great importance.

It needs to be added however, that a great many of the Gurkhas serving in the Indian army were either born in India or are domiciled in India for years. Military authorities in British India would not have had these men in the army, fearing impairment of the efficiency of the Gurkha regiments.⁴⁸ But the professional record of these Indian-born Gurkhas in the post-1947 period is proof of the fact that the efficiency of a modern

army depends more on factors like the training of the men and their equipment than on the place of their birth and "ethnic purity".

That the Gurkhas would still be used as mercenaries by a foreign government offends the sense of national pride in a section of the Nepalese elite who also fear political complications created by such use. In fact, both China and Pakistan objected to the involvement of Gurkha troops in Sino-Indian and Indo-Pakistan wars. However, Nepal did not take up the issue with the Indian government, although the agreement on the Gurkha recruitment forbids the use of Gurkhas by India against any country friendly to Nepal. Rather, Nepal reportedly offered India facilities to raise additional Gurkha regiments when the Indian army was badly mauled by the Chinese.⁴⁹ China as a diplomatic counter to India is indeed a political relief for Nepal ; but a thumping military victory of China against India is an undesirable happening for Nepal. For it would weaken the defence structure in the sub-Himalayan arch—the structure which is vital for Nepal's own security. In fact, in the context of the strong Chinese position in Tibet, a militarily confident India is welcome for Kathmandu, provided, of course, India avoids a strong posture to grind some overtly political axe in Nepal.

VIII

For a developing country the nature and quantum of foreign aid it receives is often viewed as a measure of the success of its foreign policy. But then, an important aspect of such aid is the risk of foreign economic domination. The awareness of this risk dominated Rana-ruled Nepal's economic policy, the rulers preferring political security to economic development with British support.⁵⁰ The fear persists in Kathmandu's foreign policy even today, as is apparent from its reaction to the economic agreements it seeks to contract with foreign countries. It is the very indispensability of its economic relations with India which makes Nepal acutely sensitive to the hazards of the relations. Trade with India has always been a lively issue with Kathmandu.⁵¹ New Delhi's eagerness to strengthen economic

relations with Kathmandu is as much suspect in the Nepali eyes as similar effect of Brian Hodgson, the British Resident, had been in the early decades of the nineteenth century.⁵² The traditional fear that economic means could be used by India to promote its political ends still influences Kathmandu's economic relations with New Delhi.

However, thanks to the changed circumstances today, when India has no longer exclusive relations with Nepal, the latter has been able to achieve economic diversification. What galls Kathmandu most is New Delhi's unwillingness to accommodate Nepal's demands for all those economic privileges and concessions which it regards as its due as a land-locked country. For Nepal it is often hard to adjust its economic needs to India's political expectations.

IX

Nepal's attitude to India has three main features which are common to all small states when they are to deal with a powerful neighbour : determination to emphasise distinctiveness as a means of asserting identity ; propensity to exploit the big neighbour's difficulties and make common cause with its actual or potential enemies ; and desire to internationalise the bilateral issues with a view to gaining international sympathy and restricting the scope of the big neighbour's activity. That India needs to keep Nepal in good humour enables the latter to adopt at times a posture of defiance. It knows that India's annoyance has limits.

Indo-Nepalese friendship requires the recognition of two basic facts by New Delhi : one, that Nepal as independent state has the right to develop its institution in the way best suited to its interest ; Nepal's polity need not conform to India's ; secondly, that Nepalese susceptibility, sensitivity and even prejudices are essentially manifestations of its fear of loss of identity ; and the fear is genuine ; it is but the reflection of the small power complex, of claustrophobia. The lesson of History for India is : for forms of government in Nepal, let New Delhi not contest ; what matters most for India is the attitude the government at

Kathmandu adopts ; and the attitude is often a reaction to India's own attitude to Nepal.

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- ² Kanchanmoy Mojumdar, *Political Relations between India and Nepal (1877-1923)* (New Delhi, 1973), pp. 65-100.
- ³ *Ibid.*, pp. 270-71, 276-77.
- ⁴ S. D. Muni, *Foreign Policy of Nepal* (Delhi, 1973), pp. 82-85 ; R. S. Chauhan, "Smaller Powers and Neutrality : Nepal—A Case Study" in S. P. Verma and K. P. Mishra, eds., *Foreign Policies in South Asia* (Bombay, 1969), p. 272.
- ⁵ Jang Bahadur, the first Rana Prime Minister of Nepal, assisted the British in suppressing the Revolt of 1857, During the two World Wars the Rana government lent troops to the British Indian government to strengthen the internal security arrangements. Mohan Shamsher, the last Rana Prime Minister, offered military help to the Indian government during the Kashmir and Hyderabad operations in 1948-49. Ramakant, *Nepal-China and India (Nepal-China Relations)*, (New Delhi, 1976), p. 69.
- ⁶ Article 11 of the treaty provided—"that the two governments undertake to inform each other of any serious friction or misunderstanding with any neighbouring state likely to cause any breach in the friendly relations existing between the two governments". In the letters of exchange accompanying the treaty, it was added : "Neither government shall tolerate any threat to the security of the other by a foreign aggressor. To deal with any such threat the two governments shall consult with each other and devise effective counter measures." Speech of Jawaharlal Nehru in the Rajya Sabha, 8 December 1959, *Rajya Sabha Debates*, Vol. XXVII (12), 8 Dec. 1959, Cols. 1716-18.
- ⁷ *Parliamentary Debates (Lok Sabha)*, II Series, Vol. XXXV, 1959, 16-27 Nov. 1959, Col. 2211.
- ⁸ The defence of Nepal against external aggression was a declared British policy, although no formal treaty gave them this responsibility. This policy was clearly asserted by both London and Calcutta during 1900-12 when Russian and Chinese activities in Tibet worried Nepal. Mojumdar, *op. cit.*, 100-80.
- ⁹ In 1950-51, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and others in the Indian government wanted the integration of Nepal, Bhutan and Sikkim with the Indian union. Rose, *op. cit.*, p. 195.

- ¹⁰ Speech in the Lok Sabha, 6 Dec. 1950 in Jawaharlal Nehru, *India's Foreign Policy : Selected Speeches* (New Delhi, 1961), pp. 435-36.
- ¹¹ Curzon regarded Nepal as but a glorified Indian protectorate. In implementing his policy of keeping Russia away from Tibet, the Viceroy made the fullest use of Nepal government's cooperation. He emphasised the interdependence of India's and Nepal's security objectives. Mojumdar, *op. cit.*, pp. 101-30.
- ¹² D. R. Regmi, "Nepal's Foreign Policy in Relation to India and China" in Varma and Mishra, *op. cit.*, p. 259.

In order to secure overt Indian involvement in the anti-Rana movement launched by the Nepali Congress in 1950, B. P. Koirala, a prominent leader of the Congress who later became Nepal's Prime Minister, "proposed common Indian-Nepali defence and foreign policies." This was later exploited by his detractors as proof of his intention to "sell" Nepal to India. Rose, *op. cit.*, pp. 184-85.

After the Younghusband Mission returned from Tibet in 1904, China sought to end Tibet's political status as an autonomous territory and turn it into a regular Chinese province. This led to a great upheaval in Tibet, worrying Nepal and British India; they then coordinated their policies to end the Chinese authority in Tibet. However, Nepal did not formally surrender its external relations to the control of the Indian government by any treaty, although it was assured of British protection to deal with external emergencies.

- ¹³ Kanchanmoy Mojumdar, *Anglo-Nepalese Relations in the Nineteenth Century* (Calcutta, 1973), pp. 24-58.
- ¹⁴ Muni, *op. cit.*, pp. 22-32; Ramakant, *op. cit.*, pp. 90-100, 118-28.
- ¹⁵ A. S. Bhasin, ed., *Documents on Nepal's Relations with India and China, 1949-66* (New Delhi, 1970), p. 53.
- ¹⁶ Regmi, *op. cit.*, p. 261.
- ¹⁷ Koirala's supposedly pro-Indian leanings gave Mahendra a handle to effect his ouster. Rose, *op. cit.*, pp. 231-32.

Mahendra declared: "I notice a growing apprehension among the Nepalese that these anti-national elements themselves might jeopardise the traditional relations with India. For the people are aware of the numerous offensives mounted by these elements from the Indian border areas; of the military training being imparted to the so-called volunteers who make loud claims that they have the support of India; of the publicity being given to baseless reports in the name of freedom of the press, of the open acts of loot, arson and murder committed by them and of their recent raids into our country and attempts to disturb the peaceful life of the Nepalese." Bhasin, *op. cit.*, p. 59.

- ¹⁸ The last Nepalese mission to Peking was sent in 1908. The British urged Nepal to snap its tributary relations with China. Chiang Kai-Shek despatched missions to Kathmandu in 1930, 1934 and 1946. Rose, *op. cit.*, p. 179. fn.
- ¹⁹ Ramakant, *op. cit.*, p. 49.
- ²⁰ Mojumdar, *Anglo-Nepalese Relations, op. cit.*, pp. 116-18.
- ²¹ The Nepalese mission to China carried with them local products for sale; opium was the main item; all the items were taken to China duty free. In return Chinese rulers made the Nepalese Kings and Rana Prime Ministers gifts of many expensive items.
- ²² Ramakant, *op. cit.*, pp. 184-93.
- ²³ In 1903-04, when the British foiled the Russian ambition in Tibet, and in 1910-14, when by ousting the Chinese from Tibet, the British made it a virtual protectorate, they fully exploited the Nepalese fear of the Russian and Chinese ambition in Tibet. The British in India and the Nepalese government acted in full cooperation to safeguard their respective interests in Tibet. Mojumdar, *Political Relations, op. cit.*, pp. 112-30, 138-40, 145-55, 159-83.
- ²⁴ Ramakant, *op. cit.*, p. 244.
- ²⁵ Shree Krishna Jha, *Uneasy Patrons: India and Nepal in the post-colonial era* (New Delhi, 1975), p. 58.
- ²⁶ Leo E. Rose, "Regional Developments in South Asia: Nepal's Role and Attitude", in Varma and Mishra, *op. cit.*, p. 361.
- ²⁷ J. K. Fairbank, and S. Y. Teng, "On the Ching Tributary System", *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, Vol. VI, 1941; J. K. Fairbank, "Trade and Diplomacy on the China Coast". I (Cambridge, Mass), pp. 24-33. Mojumdar, *Political Relations, op. cit.*, pp. 155-75.
- ²⁸ Rose, "Regional Developments", *op. cit.*, p. 361.
- ²⁹ After the Tibeto-Nepalese War, 1854-56, Tibet undertook to pay Nepal an annual tribute of Rupees Ten Thousand besides extraterritorial privileges to the Nepali residents in Tibet, mostly Newar merchants.
- ³⁰ In September 1856 an agreement was signed by Nepal and China which formally abrogated all the past treaties between them and those between Nepal and Tibet. Bhasin, *op. cit.*, 185-91.
- ³¹ Mojumdar, *Political Relations, op. cit.*, pp. 101-83.
- ³² *Foreign Policy of India: Texts of Documents, 1947-59* (New Delhi, 1959), pp. 31-33. Ramakant, *op. cit.*, pp. 73-74.
- ³³ Shriman Narayan, *India and Nepal: An Exercise in Open Diplomacy* (Delhi, 1971), p. 117.
- ³⁴ But for China's support to Tibet, the latter would have lost to Tibet tracts around the strategic Kerung and Kuti passes which

- Bhutan

PORTRAYAL OF BHUTAN IN THE BRITISH HIMALAYAN POLICY—CURZON YEARS

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THE Himalaya in Indian history has been more a subject of worship and awe than that of any kind of objective study from the point of view of either history or politics, economics or sociology. For centuries these mighty ranges have been inviting the attention of mystics and *Yogis* who occasionally explored the region for spiritual purposes. Yet the eastern Himalayan frontier, despite its geo-political significance, has, however, remained a 'forgotten frontier'.¹ Jawaharlal Nehru described this frontier as a "magnificent frontier".² With some of its highest peaks in the world it no doubt remained till very recently the most impenetrable barrier on the north of India ensuring security to the people of India. But a complacency which the Indian leadership adopted towards the Himalayan frontier even after independence got shattered by the events of 1949-51 leading to the occupation of Tibet by China, followed almost a decade later by the Sino-Indian conflict of 1962. The Himalaya was no longer impassable ; it naturally awakened the Indian masses as well as the leaders to new security considerations demanding a new and a fresh look at the defence and foreign policies.

In this eastern Himalayan frontier lies a small, independent and almost a sovereign Buddhistic kingdom—Bhutan. A glance at the eastern Himalaya will show that Bhutan, geographically and even culturally speaking, is a part of the entire region inclusive of a large slice of Indian territory, comprising Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh and parts of Assam and West Bengal and also Nepal as well as Tibet and through Tibet, that of China. That a study of Bhutan can, therefore, not be isolated from this region, of which it is the most natural part and with the history of which its own history is intermingled, is thus very evident.

The British also, when eventually came to evolve a coherent and 'a forward looking' Himalayan policy, realized this and acted most determinedly on this basis as far as Bhutan was concerned. This happened towards the close of the nineteenth century.

Curzon, more than any other British ruler in India, grasped this fact and laid the foundations of a realistic Himalayan policy which, had it been understood by Nehru, could perhaps help India from committing Himalayan blunder in the post-independence era of Indian history. "It is a pity that Nehru paid no heed to Curzon whose frontiers in the Himalaya he inherited, and it is to this fact that we would attribute the fall of Tibet, our Himalayan citadel in 1951, and the debacle in the Himalaya in 1962."³ It is true that Curzon's total foreign policy was conceived in imperialistic terms and his dealings with Tibet had "a considerable bearing of both the Persian and the Afghan problems"⁴ which the British were faced with at that time. But since the basic consideration before Curzon at that time was how to keep off another Great Power—it was Russia at that time—from the frontiers of India, the same consideration, namely, how to keep China off these frontiers, weighs on the minds of Indian leadership today. This strategy of a buffer zone which Curzon had so successfully followed in Himalaya towards the beginning of the present century was ignored by Nehru and which eventually brought India into a bloody clash with China in 1962.

Be that as it may, the present article is not concerned so much with the adequacy or rationality of the Tibetan policy of Curzon as with how the British perceived the likely role that Bhutan could play in the pursuit of their Himalayan policy during the Viceroyalty of Curzon and its bearing on Indo-Bhutanese relations.

As a matter of fact right from the days of Warren Hastings the English did not ignore the critical role which the Himalayan kingdoms of Nepal, Bhutan and Sikkim were to play in establishing their contact with the distant Himalayan people of Tibet.⁵ But the Anglo-Sikkim treaty of 1861 and Anglo-Bhutan treaty of 1865 gave some decisive advantages to the British which definitely strengthened the British position in the Himalayan region.

With Sikkim, as all but a British protectorate and Bhutan under a subsidized relationship with the British Indian Government, the time seemed to have arrived when an approach towards the opening up of Tibet to British and European trade and commerce, could safely be made. A proposal to that effect was made in October 1869 by the local British officers.⁶ The Secretary of State also favoured the proposal of abandoning his Government's recent policy of isolation⁷ towards Tibet. Nevertheless the proposal at that time did not materialize. In 1886 another mission led by Macaulay was proposed to be sent to Sikkim in a bid to open a land route to Tibet. But the mission, it was thought, would also boost the British image in the region which the British could use as a lever in promoting an atmosphere in "our favour".⁸

One may, therefore, say that towards the close of the decade of 1880s there was a clear line of thinking in the British circles to make use of their strong position in Bhutan and Sikkim in getting some opening in Tibet also. The Anglo-Chinese Convention of 1890 was a recognition by China of the British rights in Sikkim. This was followed by the Tibet Trade Regulations of 1893 permitting Britain to have a trade route opened into Tibet. The stage was, therefore, set by the middle of the decade of 1890s for the British to open up Tibet.

But what was new about Curzon was that he looked upon this factor mainly from the political angle and in terms of imperial rivalries of Britain with other European Great Powers : in Tibet it was Anglo-Russian rivalry. Without being eager "to push forward the limits of empire", Curzon "was determined that other powers should not gain ascendancy in these areas bordering on India. So it was necessary both to prevent rival encroachments and to establish the predominance of British influence".⁹ For this purpose it was necessary to have Tibet and the Himalayan region as outside the sphere of interest of any other Great Power.

How did Curzon and others concerned with the conduct of British Indian relationships with the Himalayan kingdoms perceive Bhutan in the pursuit of this policy in Tibet and Himalayan region? Needless to say, that while on the one hand it

was certain that a successful Tibetan policy will have a strong bearing on British India's relations with all the Himalayan kingdoms it was also very realistically felt that friendly Bhutan as well as Sikkim and Nepal could be used as a lever for putting pressure on Tibet. As such, while on the one hand the British prestige and position in the eastern Himalaya was tied up with her successes or failures in Tibet at the same time it was viewed with concern and anxiety that all the Himalayan kingdoms should not assume a joint anti-British posture as that would mean a serious set back to the British position in the whole of the Himalayan region.

The suggestions to brighten up the British image in the Himalayan region had, therefore, been coming ever since the abandoning of the Macaulay Mission which, according to the Deputy Commissioner of Jalpaiguri, amounted to the lowering of the prestige of the British Indian Government in the eyes of Bhutan.¹⁰ It was, therefore, being proposed to have "more intimate and cordial relations with the Penlops and others in Bhutan."¹¹ Apart from brightening up the British image, this, it was contended, could also help increase the bargaining capacity of the British against China on the question of opening up of trade communication with Tibet.¹²

The British, therefore, were not in a mood to give any chance to Bhutan and its rulers to get alienated from them. An incident can be cited in evidence. In 1891-92 on account of raids having been conducted from the side of Bhutan on Kamrup-Bhutan border some losses in property had been found to have been suffered by the British subjects. The Assam Government proposed that the amount should be deducted out of the subsidy.¹³ The Lt. Governor of Bengal commenting on this proposal wrote :

... that any such deduction will lead to considerable political friction with Bhutan, there can be no doubt... in His Honour's opinion, a question for consideration whether, looking to the political relations of Bhutan with Sikkim and Tibet, it is advisable to take any action which may give occasion to irritation to the Tongso Penlop if it can reasonably be avoided.¹⁴

In view of this no deductions were made out of the subsidy.¹⁵ Even before Curzon took over and launched upon his what is called a 'forward looking' policy in Tibet the policy of bringing Bhutan into closer relationship with India had been initiated. Nevertheless, as the subsequent analysis will show it was during the pursuit of Curzon's policy and more particularly in the course of Younghusband's mission to Lhasa that very strong foundations of Indo-Bhutanese friendship were laid.

When Curzon took over as Viceroy and initiated efforts towards the opening of a direct line of communication¹⁶ it was decided to make use of the Bhutan envoy, Ugyen Kazi, who had during the last two or three years paid a couple of visits to the Dalai Lama and gave the impression of having established some liason with him.¹⁷ But the effort turned out to be abortive since Ugyen Kazi returned from Tibet in 1901 bringing back with him the letter of the Viceroy unopened with its seals intact.¹⁸ Although it raised a controversy whether Ugyen Kazi delivered the letter to the Dalai Lama at all¹⁹ but these visits of the Bhutan Agent and his pleading the cause of the British made Lhasa suspicious of Ugyen Kazi who was taken as a British representative or spy and, therefore, refused him permission to visit Phari on his next proposal.²⁰ From now onwards Curzon and the other British Indian officers grew cautious in making use of Bhutan in the achievement of their policy ends in Tibet; they tried to be more covert rather than overt.

On top of everything else the reports that Tibet was hobnobbing with Russia with the connivance of China was most disturbing for Curzon.²¹ In 1902 there was a strong rumour that a secret treaty had been signed between Russia and Tibet.²² Curzon felt convinced, now more than ever, that some kind of action must be taken to stem the advances of Russia towards Tibet. He wrote towards the close of December 1902 that this was a "challenge to our power and position, wholly unprovoked, entirely unwarrantable, fraught, in my opinion, with the most serious danger and demanding the most prompt and strenuous resistance."²³ An "active policy being carried out with the least possible delay" had also been suggested by J. C. White, the Political Officer in Sikkim, in August 1902.²⁴ The Home Gov-

ernment in England also grew conscious of the fact "that British influence should be recognised in such a manner as to render it impossible for any other power to exercise a pressure on the Tibetan Government inconsistent with the interests of British India."²⁵ The establishment of a foreign power so near the northern boundaries of British India was indeed very disturbing since this was considered to have an adverse effect on the British interests in the entire Himalayan region both western and eastern. Because of ethnic and religious ties with Tibet the people of Nepal, Bhutan and Sikkim would not be difficult, it was argued, to be brought under some kind of political influence of the power to which Tibet was subject.²⁶

Whether Russia or China was trying to blackmail Tibet or not seems to have been a secondary consideration with Curzon; what was more important for him was that the British interests in the Himalayan region had to be recognised by all the major powers, whether Asian or European. Hence Curzon proposed sending a mission to Tibet with an armed escort.²⁷ A commercial mission, as it was then described, was finally approved by the British Govt. with certain conditions.²⁸ Francis Younghusband was appointed the leader of this historic mission.²⁹

That the despatch of the Younghusband's mission to Tibet had a very strong bearing on Indo-Bhutanese relations, cannot be denied. But the active assistance of Bhutan was enlisted and procured only during the second phase of the mission i.e., Nov. 1903 when the mission proceeded towards Gyantse and then to Lhasa.

Obviously what might have induced the British to seek that collaboration was the unconfirmed reports received during September 1903 that "Bhutanese were suspected of an inclination to join Tibet."³⁰ This made the Govt. of Bengal realize "the necessity of closer communication with the Bhutan authorities, in order to ascertain their intentions, and to detach them from the Tibetans if it is true that they have any leaning in that direction."³¹

Both Younghusband and the Govt. of Bengal supported the proposal to arrange a meeting between the represen-

tatives of Bhutan and the Commissioner of Rajshahi with a view to discussing the question of enlisting Bhutanese collaboration with Younghusband's mission. It was considered particularly important that Bhutan's consent should be taken on the question of opening up of a road through Bhutan which would have connected Bengal with the Chumbi Valley.³²

The Chief Secretary, Bengal, wrote to the Tongsa Penlop³³ under dateline Oct. 9, 1903, requesting the latter to come to Buxa or Kalimpong sometime in November to meet the Commissioner of Rajshahi. The letter did not mention about the proposed construction of route through Bhutan but stated that the aim of the meeting was to bring the negotiations with Tibet to a happy conclusion and to obtain "the good offices of the Government of Bhutan in securing a satisfactory solution of all difficulties in the same way in which the Government of Nepal is acting in concert with the British Government".³⁴ In the instructions which were sent to the Commissioner, Rajshahi, on the subject it was clearly held desirable that he should try to bring Bhutan to agree to the survey of Amo Chu or Di Chu Valleys of Bhutan by the British Indian surveyors with a view to opening up a road through any of these valleys connecting Bhutan with the Chumbi Valley.³⁵ However, if he found that the construction of such a road would arouse suspicion of Bhutan or alarm them, he was instructed to avoid this topic altogether, or confine his talks to the survey of the Di Chu Valley alone where the road was to pass through a small corner of the Bhutan territory.³⁶

In reply to the above mentioned communication to the Tongsa Penlop he avoided the subject of the meeting though he referred to his having written to Lhasa, presumably requesting them to come to an understanding with the British.³⁷ The Commissioner in his next communication not only reminded the Tongsa Penlop of his proposed meeting but also mentioned of the "reports that preparations are being made by the officials in Bhutan to collect arms", etc. The Commissioner now threatened that if some definite date of the

meeting was not sent by the Penlop the payment of subsidy which was due in about a month's time would be withheld.³⁸ This time the Penlop's reply was prompt, direct and definite. He characterized the reports of military preparations as 'false' and 'wicked', calculated to cause ill feelings between Bhutan and the British. He wrote :

... if you still entertain any doubts as to the veracity of statement, you may depute some persons to examine our castles, I am quite willing to clear up your doubts on that head. I would therefore, request you not to listen to such falsely wicked and caluminous reports.

Indeed Tongsa Penlop expressed his willingness to act as a mediator between the British and Dalai Lama. He gave January 20 or around as the date for the proposed meeting.³⁹

Two factors might have induced the Tongsa Penlop to have a meeting with the Commissioner, Rajshahi. First, Bhutan was largely dependent upon the British Indian annual subsidy which was being paid to Bhutan ever since 1866. Any threat of withholding the amount naturally made Bhutan very nervous. Secondly, the events and progress of Younghusband's mission in Tibet would also have made Bhutan submit to the proposal of the Rajshahi Commissioner. By now Chumbi Valley had already been occupied and the advance of the mission to Gyantse was a certainty, the proposal having been approved by the Foreign Secretary. This perhaps convinced the Tongsa Penlop and others in Bhutan that the British meant business and were strong and powerful enough to see that the business was carried out. Bhutan saw writing on the wall and decided to side with the British.

The meeting finally took place on February 15, 1904. Though not attended by the Tongsa Penlop himself, but as a consequence of several sittings between the representatives of the British and Bhutan the latter finally gave his consent to the construction of a road either through Amu Chu or Di Chu Valleys of Bhutan.⁴⁰ Subsequently a permit was also received to make a survey of the relevant part of the Bhutan territories through which the road was to pass.⁴¹

After the survey had been made the proposal to construct the road was finally dropped in view of the heavy expenditure which the project involved.⁴²

In the course of survey some interesting facts came to light. In the Amo Chu Valley there was an area of 70 to 80 square miles which, it was found, had been wrongfully included in Bhutan. If it had been in the British Indian territory the British would not have had to seek the permission of Bhutan for the construction of road. Yet in view of the fact that the area had been under the occupation of Bhutan and, more, since Bhutan had given its unstinted help in the course of Younghusband's mission to Tibet the British claim to the area was decided to be dropped.⁴³

Towards the beginning of the year 1904 when Younghusband and others got assured of Bhutan's attitude and support in the British stand on Tibet they had no misgivings whatsoever left in their minds. Indeed Younghusband believed that the support of Bhutan would strengthen the bargaining capacity of the British vis-a-vis Tibet. More than that he thought :

... it ought at any rate to impress the border people and be one more step towards establishing that prestige in which we are so sadly lacking at present.⁴⁴

Younghusband did also perceive of the desirable consequences of his mission to Tibet on Indo-Bhutanese relations in the foreseeable future. He wrote :

... in any case I hope to be able to increase the intimacy of our relations with Bhutan and lay a solid foundation for our future intercourse.⁴⁵

Curzon himself felt secure from the side of Bhutan as far as his policy in Tibet and Himalaya was concerned. In his communication with Brodrick, the then Secretary of State for India, he not only wrote of "all fear of hostility from Bhutan" to be at an end but also commended of the "good temper and friendliness, of Bhutan at which we have been agreedly surprised".⁴⁶

Evidently with the help of Bhutan and Nepal the British could well afford to be stiff and tough with the Tibetans.

Decidedly Ugyen Wangchuk did also make use of this opportunity in getting some of his personal grievances avenged against Tibet.⁴⁷

Be that as it may, on June 3, 1904 Ugyen Wangchuk, the Tongsa Penlop along with Kazi Ugyen and a retinue of two hundred officers came to Phari to have talks with the British Indian officials with a view to assisting the latter towards reaching some kind of settlement with Tibet. A meeting between the military commander of the expedition and Ugyen Wangchuk took place in the first week of June.⁴⁸ Both Ugyen Wangchuk and Kazi Ugyen joined the expedition at Gyantse and followed it upto Lhasa.

J. C. White, the Political Officer in Sikkim, and who had very realistically realized the crucial role that Bhutan was to play in the opening up of Tibet to the British for commercial or political purposes considered this as the turning point in the Indo-Bhutanese relations.⁴⁹ Apart from having accompanied the expedition the Tongsa Penlop was helpful in assisting Younghusband in establishing communication with the Tibetan officials both in the course of the march of the expedition to Lhasa and during the period of negotiations which led eventually to the conclusion of the Anglo-Tibetan Convention of 1904.⁵⁰ Acknowledging the role of Bhutan in his Tibetan mission Younghusband wrote :

... A year ago the Bhutanese were strangers, today they are our enthusiastic allies.⁵¹

As a consequence of the Tibetan mission in 1903-04 the Government of India was left with "no doubt that the Tongsa Penlop's sound advice and exhortation to the Tibetan Government have been promoted by an earnest desire to establish feelings of friendship and good understanding between the parties to the recent agreement."⁵²

The services rendered by Ugyen Wangchuk in 1903-04 in the context of Tibet mission of Younghusband did not go unrecognized. The British India Government decided to confer upon him the title of the Knight Commander of the Indian Empire.⁵³

Whatever therefore might have been the general consequences of Younghusband's mission on Tibet as far as the Himalayan region and Bhutan, in particular, was concerned, it was responsible for laying the foundations of the future pattern of relationship between India and Bhutan. The relations shorn of their imperialistic overtones subsist even after the independence of India. The conviction of the British Indian Government on the one hand that in the pursuit of Himalayan policy Bhutan was an important factor which must not be ignored at any cost and the decision of Bhutan under the leadership of Sir Ugyen Wangchuk to side with India on the other helped together in cementing friendship and co-operation between the two.

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- ³ Ram Rahul, *The Himalaya Borderland* (Delhi, 1970), p. 143.
- ⁴ P. Mehra, *The Younghusband Expedition: An Interpretation* (Bombay, 1968), p. 359.
- ⁵ It was during Warren Hastings' time that the first ever English Mission led by George Bogle was sent to Bhutan and Tibet in 1774 to explore possibilities of establishing trade markets in these lands. While Bogle was partially successful with regard to Bhutan, nothing substantial was achieved so far as Tibet was concerned. Another important mission was that of Samuel Turner in 1783 during the Governor-Generalship of Hastings.
- ⁶ The Commissioner of Cooch Behar had given this proposal to the Govt. of Bengal (*Foreign Deptt. Pol. A Progs.*, Jan. 1870, No. 124).
- ⁷ *Foreign Deptt. Pol. A Progs.*, June 1870; No. 102.
- ⁸ *Foreign Deptt. Sec. E. Progs.*, July 1886, No. 744.
- ⁹ S. Gopal, *British Policy in India, 1885-1905* (Cambridge, 1965), p. 228.
- ¹⁰ *Foreign Deptt. Extl. A Progs.*, Feb. 1887, no. 78.

- 11 The suggestion came from A. W. Paul, the then Deputy Commissioner of Jalpaiguri towards the close of the year 1891 (*Foreign Deptt. Sec. E. Progs.*, Feb. 1892, no. 3).
- 12 *Foreign Deptt. Sec. E. Progs.*, Feb. 1892 nos. 3 & 8.
- 13 Under the terms of the treaty concluded in 1865 Bhutan received an annual subsidy of Rs. 50,000.00 in lieu of the Duars area which had come under the occupation of British India.
- 14 *Foreign Deptt. Extl A Progs.*, Dec. 1893, no. 56.
- 15 *Foreign Deptt. Extl A Progs.*, January 1894, nos. 148-149.
- 16 Curzon's first such effort was through Captain Kennion, the British Political Officer in Kashmir. The letter which Curzon sent through Kennion was refused to be accepted by the Dalai Lama.
- 17 Ugyen Kazi was appointed as the Bhutan Agent at Kalimpong in 1889. He went on private visits to Lhasa in 1898 and 1899. During these visits he met Dalai Lama and also, it appears, pleaded with the Dalai Lama to have some kind of understanding with the British, especially on the question of opening of a trade mart at Phari. (*Foreign Deptt. Extl. A Progs.*, June 1898, nos. 100-106 ; *Sec. E. Progs.*, Aug. 1899 no. 56 & Sept. 1900, nos. 80, 84 & 94).
- 18 *Foreign Deptt. Sec. E. Progs.*, Aug. 1901 no 60.
- 19 The Political Officer in Sikkim had a report that not only Ugyen Kazi did not hand over the letter to the Dalai Lama, but he had not even mentioned its existence to him (*Foreign Deptt. Sec. E. Progs.*, Sept. 1902, no. 50). Curzon himself disbelieved Ugyen Kazi for he wrote to Hamilton: "I do not believe that the man ever saw the Dalai Lama or handed the letter to him. On the contrary I believe him to be a liar, and, in all probability, a paid Tibetan spy." (*Curzon Papers, Curzon to Hamilton*, Nov. 5, 1901).
- 20 *Foreign Deptt. Sec. E. Progs.*, Oct. 1902, nos. 117-118 ; Sept. 1903, no. 98.
- 21 It was being heard that a Tibetan mission had gone to Russia in 1900 and that these visits were being returned by some Russians. Among these was the visit of one Lama Dorjief (*Foreign Deptt. Sec. E. Progs.*, Jan. 1901, nos. 80-85 & Sept. 1901, nos. 76-81).
- 22 *Foreign Deptt. Sec. E Progs.*, April 1902, no. 24.
- 23 *Foreign Deptt. Sec. E Progs.*, Feb. 1903, no. 70., notes of Curzon dated 25.12.1902.
- 24 *Foreign Deptt. Sec. E Progs.*, Feb. 1903 no. 26.
- 25 *Foreign Deptt. Sec. E. Progs.*, April 1903 no. 142.
- 26 Charles A. Bell, *Tibet Past and Present* (London 1924), p. 65.
- 27 *Foreign Deptt. Sec. E Progs.*, Feb. 1903, no. 82.

- ²⁸ The Home Govt. had clearly specified that the mission should not go beyond Khambajong, a place not very far from Sikkim and easily accessible.
- ²⁹ Francis Younghusband at that time was Resident at Indore but had earned some reputation for his travels and explorations in Central Asia and in the Himalayan region.
- ³⁰ *Foreign Deptt. Sec. E. Progs.*, Nov. 1903, nos. 198, 206.
- ³¹ *Ibid.* nos. 204 & 206.
- ³² *Ibid.* nos. 198-206.
- ³³ Ugyen Wangchuk as the Tongsa Penlop of Bhutan was considered at that time the 'strong man' of Bhutan. Although legally the ultimate authority vested in the office of the Deb Raja, Ugyen Wangchuk was virtually the ruler of Bhutan at that time.
- ³⁴ *Foreign Deptt. Extl. A Progs.*, March 1904, no. 66.
- ³⁵ *Foreign Deptt. Sec. E. Progs.*, January 1904 no. 51 & *Extl. A Progs.*, March 1904, no. 66.
- ³⁶ *Foreign Deptt. Extl. A Progs.*, March 1904, no. 67.
- ³⁷ *Ibid.* no. 74.
- ³⁸ *Ibid.* no. 82.
- ³⁹ *Ibid.* no. 99.
- ⁴⁰ *Ibid.* nos. 113-115, 118; July 1804, no. 34.
- ⁴¹ *Foreign Deptt. Extl. A Progs.*, March 1904, nos. 113-115, 118; *Sec. E. Progs.*, March 1905 nos. 101 & 108.
- ⁴² *Foreign Deptt. Extl. A Progs.*, March 1904, nos. 121-125; Oct. 1906, nos. 78-99.
- ⁴³ *Foreign Deptt. Extl. A Progs.*, March 1904, nos. 47-50, *Extl. B. Progs.*, Sept. 1904 nos. 152-154; *Extl. A Progs.*, March 1905, no. 55.
- ⁴⁴ *Foreign Deptt. Sec. E. Progs.*, July 1904, no. 34.
- ⁴⁵ *Ibid.*
- ⁴⁶ *Curzon Papers*, Curzon to Brodrick, March 10, 1904.
- ⁴⁷ In the first half of 1880s when Ugyen Wangchuk was involved in some factional fighting in Bhutan some Tibetan leaders ostensibly assisted the rival faction. As a consequence of Tibetan intervention in the disputes the Tongsa Penlop was also subjected to some losses of revenues from a couple of districts which actually fell under his jurisdiction as the Penlop of Tongsa (*Foreign Deptt. Sec. E. Progs.*, July 1904, no. 548).
- ⁴⁸ *Foreign Deptt. Sec. E. Progs.*, July 1904, no. 442.
- ⁴⁹ *Foreign Deptt. Extl. B. Progs.*, June 1905, nos. 107-109.
- ⁵⁰ *Foreign Deptt. Sec. E. Progs.*, Feb. 1905, no. 1024.
- ⁵¹ *Ibid.*
- ⁵² *Foreign Deptt. Extl. A Progs.*, March 1905, no. 60.
- ⁵³ *Curzon Papers*, Curzon to Ugyen Wangchuk, Jan. 1, 1905.

THE HIMALAYA FRONTIER : A CASE STUDY OF THE BHUTANESE PART OF THE FRONTIER*

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IN November 1959 the Historical Division of External Ministry of our country published a note on the historical background of the Himalayan frontier. The Historical Division wrote :

India's northern frontier has been lain where it runs for nearly three thousand years. The areas along this frontier which is nearly 2,500 miles long from the Kuenlun mountains in the far north to the junction with Burma in the east, have always been a part of India.¹

We may trace the history of the northern frontier of our country to a remote past, and show that the southern slope of the Himalaya was within the geographical limits of India, but the existing frontiers of our country are, by and large, a heritage from British rule in India. Today there are, besides India, the sovereign states of Nepal and Bhutan which are situated on the southern side of the Himalaya. This is so because there was a deliberate policy of the British authorities in India to maintain the Himalayan

* There is a difference between the frontier and the boundary or border. While the frontier signifies a zone, a boundary usually indicated as a line on a map, represents the edge of the zone. In this paper I have used both the terms since both are related and the knowledge of one is necessary to understand the other.

kingdoms as buffers between India and China. Similarly, our frontier dispute with China is to a large extent attributable to colonial legacy. If the British rulers in India had reached an explicit understanding with China regarding the Himalaya frontier, possibly our current relations with China would not have been bedevilled over the frontier issue. In this paper an attempt has been made to study British policy towards the Himalaya frontier in general and the Bhutanese frontier in particular.

Search for buffer-states between India and Tibet

The policy of the East India Company towards the Himalaya frontier was based on its commercial and strategic considerations. It did not aim at a reckless expansion. In the initial phase of relations with the Himalayan kingdoms, it was the Company's concern for trade which primarily influenced its policy. As early as 1772 when the Company fought war against Bhutan as a protector of Cooch Behar, and captured the Bhutanese forts of Daling, Chichacotta and Buxa, Warren Hastings decided to treat the Bhutanese "with much leniency and forbearance" with a view to promoting the Company's trans-Himalayan trade, and he restored the territories which belonged to Bhutan before the commencement of the war with Cooch Behar'.² Moreover, towards the end of the eighteenth century, China appeared to be in the ascendant in the Himalayan kingdoms. Hence the Company authorities in India were not prepared to be embroiled in any dispute with the Chinese over the frontier question when the Company needed their goodwill for promotion of its trade and was engaged in French revolutionary and Napoleonic wars. Chinese influence increased in the wake of Sino-Nepalese War of 1789-92. Nepal had suffered defeats and concluded a humiliating agreement with China on September 30, 1792. According to the terms of this agreement, Nepal undertook to submit her disputes with Tibet to the Amban at Lhasa for settlement; she agreed to send a mission to Peking every five years with gifts for the Chinese Emperor.

China in return agreed to come to Nepal's assistance in the event of an attack by a foreign power.³ The Sino-Nepalese War had strong impact not only on the Himalayan kingdoms but also on the Company's policy. The authorities at Fort William realised that China treated Nepal as her vassal state and that any interference from the Company in the affairs of Nepal would have an unfortunate effect on their commercial relations with the Chinese Government. This was one of the reasons why Nepal was not absorbed into the British Indian empire. A very favourable opportunity for the Company authorities in India to bring Nepal under their control presented itself in 1800-1801 when Nepal was badly involved in her internal political crisis. Rana Bahadur Shah was forced to retire to Banaras in May 1800 because of his conflict with the Nepalese Durbar. But even so ardent an expansionist as Lord Wellesley did not think it expedient to interfere in Nepalese affairs because of China's possible reactions. He thought that the "transactions" which had passed between China and Nepal in the year 1791-92 "had placed the Dominions of Nepal in a state of partial dependence on the Government of China."⁴ He considered it necessary to observe a considerable degree of caution in dealing with Nepal in view of "the interest of the Honourable Company in China". Nepal was considered tributary to China, and Sikkim and Bhutan being tributary to Tibet, were also regarded as subject to Chinese overlordship.⁵ Besides, there were other reasons why the Himalayan countries were not incorporated into India. The economic potentiality of these countries minus Nepal's *Terai* and Bhutan's *Duars* was then negligible and the administration of these countries would not have been easy because of lack of communication and difficult terrain. That is why the British authorities in India did not annex the Himalayan kingdoms. They thought that these kingdoms would serve their interest more as buffer-states between India and Tibet than as a part of their Indian dominion. However, the security consideration of their Indian empire led the British authorities in India to extend their dominion to the natural frontier of India.

Quest for the Natural Frontier

Although Lord Hastings wrote to the Secret Committee on 2 August 1815 that "the war with the Goorkhas was unavoidable, and forced upon this Government by series of unjust and unprovoked aggressions"⁶ he was in fact influenced by strategic and economic considerations in launching hostilities against Nepal. As the northern frontier of the Company's territory was then in exposed situation with no natural barrier, Lord Hastings desired to extend the Company's frontier to the hills by annexing "all the low lands from the Kali eastward to the Teesta, rendering either the foot or the ridge of the lowest range of hills the common boundary throughout line".⁷ Besides he was actuated by the economic potentialities of Kumaon, Garhwal and Terai areas. In addition to revenue of these areas, he expected to open up communication with Tibet through Kumaon which provided "the easiest road across the snowy range of mountains into Chinese Tartary" and promised "a most encouraging prospect of improved commercial resources".

While the British were engaged in hostilities with Nepal, they adopted conciliatory policy towards other Himalayan countries. Soon after the commencement of the war, they decided to establish contacts with the authorities of Tibet, Sikkim and Bhutan in order to explain the causes of war, and to clarify to them that the British did not aim aggrandizement in that quarter.⁸ In a letter dated August 3, 1816 the British Governor-General explained it to the Chinese Amban of Lhasa. He wrote :

The British Government has no views of aggrandizement and only seeks to remain at peace with other states, and no motives of ambition and interest prompt it to extend its influence and authority beyond those barriers which appear to have been placed by nature between the vast countries of India and China.⁹

Subsequent to the Nepal War the Company authorities in India became preoccupied with the Maratha War, the Pin-

dari War and other problems relating to the consolidation of acquired territories. In due course they, however, took possession of such Bhutanese and Sikkimese territories as they considered valuable economically and strategically.

The annexation of Assam in the first Burmese War of 1824-26 resulted in the extension of common frontier between Bhutan and the Company's territories in India. Since then frequent disputes took place between the Bhutanese and the Company authorities on the issue of the tribute due from the Bhutanese in return for their possession of what were known as the Duars. The Duars (literally doors) were strips of land through which access was gained to various passes leading into the hills. They were eighteen in number, eleven of them were situated along the northern border of Bengal, between the Teesta and Manas, and were called the Bengal Duars. The remaining seven were on the northern border of the districts of Kamrup and Darrang, between the Manas and Dhansiri, and were called Assam Duars.¹⁰

In 1837 the British Government of India sent Captain Pemberton to Punakha to settle differences with Bhutan, but his mission failed. In 1841 the Company annexed Assam Duars.

In 1835 Sikkim ceded Darjeeling to the Company as a "gift". In 1849 the Company annexed from Sikkim Morung and other fertile areas measuring 640 sq. miles.

In 1864 Sir John Lawrence, known for his "masterly inactivity", launched the offensive against Bhutan to avenge the ill-treatment meted out to Ashley Eden at Punakha. Although he turned down the request of the tea-planters for annexing the whole of Bhutan, he resolved "upon administrative and military considerations" to secure the effectual control of the Bhutanese Duars from Dewangiri in the east to Dalimkote in the west.¹¹ In annexing the Bhutanese Duars the British authorities in India, however, were influenced by two factors. First, the Duars had valuable and fertile lands. Secondly, the Company took possession of the

Duars to ensure the security of its territory. To guard the plains with the help of regular troops would have been not only costly but also difficult on account of the extremely bad climate in the area.

Boundary between India and Bhutan

During the war in 1865 the British Government of India invited the opinions of three of its Commissioners, General Tytler, Colonel Bruce and Colonel Agnew. The three had stated on 5 October 1865 in a joint memorandum :

We would recommend that the boundary line be drawn so as to include within British territory the mountain tract which lies between the Rivers Teesta and Jhaldaka, and extends north-ward as far as the frontiers of Sikkim and Tibet. We are of opinion that, besides this, no part of the hill territory of Bootan should be annexed, except so much as is requisite for the establishment of our military frontier posts.¹²

The British Government of India agreed to this boundary in its letter dated 8 November 1865, with the proviso that sufficient post should be included at Buxa and Dewangiri. Article 2 of the Treaty of 1865 contained the following provision :

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

The work of surveying the boundary was taken up in 1867-68. The boundary between Bhutan and Jalpaiguri was laid down by J. H. O'Donel of the Revenue Survey Department, under instructions from Colonel Haughton, who was then chief Civil and Political Officer of the Division. In his letter dated 1867 to O'Donel, Colonel Haughton listed the

following as the considerations to be kept in view while carrying out this work :

- (i) A strict adherence to the spirit of Government instruction not to include any territory that could be called a hill tract ;
- (ii) the obtainment of clear and easily recognizable lines ;
- (iii) the inclusion of all lands in the plains so far as practicable ; and (iv) the instruction of all Mech, the tribal people of Duars, and the exclusion of all Bhutanese cultivators.¹³

The Indo-Bhutanese boundary was, however, not demarcated in its entirety in 1867-68. Although the boundary between Bhutan and Cooch Behar was demarcated, the boundary between Bhutan and Assam was left undemarcated. In 1870 the Deb Raja pressed Colonel Haughton that the boundary between Bhutan and Assam should be clearly laid down. Sir Willsam Grey, Lieut. Governor of Bengal, directed the Commissioner of Assam to take steps to this end. Colonel Agnew, as officiating Commissioner of Assam, strongly opposed such demarcation. He stated that the boundary had been settled and explained to the Bhutanese authorities in 1866, and maintained that the demarcation of boundary would be unnecessary and would only cause irritation to the Bhutanese authorities. He was, however, mistaken, for the undemarcated boundary soon gave rise to misunderstanding and friction between the authorities of the two countries. The Bhutanese authorities collected taxes from the wood-cutters who worked in the forests on their border with Kamrup. Colonel Hopkinson, Commissioner of Assam, forbade the local Bhutanese authorities to collect such taxes in view of the British claim to the outer slopes of the hills on which the forests stood. Colonel Haughton, however, differed with him. He pointed out that in 1865 the foot of the hills had been prescribed as the limit of British and Bhutanese territories except at Buxa and Dewangiri. There was thus no unanimity of opinion among the local British authorities as to the actual line of boundary. Colonel Hopkinson contended that the Assam Duars had been British territory since 1841. The Government of Bengal agreed with him and

maintained a distinction between the Duars of Assam annexed in 1841 and those of Cooch Behar ceded in 1865. To the Bengal Government, the expression, "a direction along the foot of hills", in the correspondence of 1866 seemed to have been loosely used to express the boundary.¹⁴

The Government of India, however, stated in its letter dated June 22, 1872 that no distinction had been made between the eighteen Duars at the time of conclusion of the treaty of 1865. It lent no weight at all to the contention of the Government of Bengal that the Government of India had obtained some of these Duars in 1841. It made it clear to the Government of Bengal that the definition of the Indo-Bhutanese boundary should follow the line explained to the Bhutanese representatives at the time of concluding the Treaty of 1865 and deplored the attempt to adhere to a stringent and one-sided interpretation of it. Although it advised the Government of Bengal to take enough of the lower part of the Bhutanese hills for the security and permanence of the frontier, it was opposed to impoverishing the Bhutanese people by depriving them of all the valuable forests on the southern slopes of the hills. It felt that the pursuance of a hard line policy towards Bhutan would lead to frequent quarrels with the Bhutanese authorities. It, therefore, directed the Government of Bengal to survey and demarcate the boundary as early as possible.¹⁵ In September 1872 Major J. M. Graham, Deputy Commissioner of Darrang, was appointed Boundary Commissioner. Graham settled the boundary between Assam and Bhutan during the cold session of 1872-73.¹⁶

Himalayan Kingdoms, Tibet and India

During British rule in India the boundary between Bhutan and Tibet had not been delineated by treaty. The boundary was known by tradition and usually followed the crest of the Himalayan range. No major boundary dispute between the two countries is known to have occurred during the period under study. As a matter of fact, the British

authorities in India were little concerned with the boundaries of the Himalayan States with Tibet. However, by the 1890s they were determined to "recognize no foreign rights over states lying upon our side of the Himalayan waterparting."¹⁷ This is obvious from the Lingtu episode which took place in 1886-88. In 1886 the Tibetans who were against the Macaulay Mission, decided to oppose it by force and sent troops to Lingtu, well within the Sikkimese territory. The presence of the Tibetan force on the territory of Sikkim was likely to prove detrimental to the relations of the British not only with Sikkim but also with Bhutan. In the beginning of 1887 Lord Dufferin referred the issue to the Chinese and requested them to procure the withdrawal of the Tibetans from Lingtu. He gave them ample time to bring their influence to bear on the Tibetan authorities, but the latter turned a deaf ear to their representations. When all peaceful methods failed, a British force commanded by Brigadier Graham drove the Tibetans out of Lingtu.¹⁸ In 1890 the British Government of India signed a convention with China which defined the Sikkim-Tibet frontier as the watershed between the Teesta river system in Sikkim and the Tibetan Mochu and the rivers flowing northwards into Tibet.¹⁹

Although Chinese power had declined in the second half of the 19th century and Tibet was virtually free in its affairs, the British authorities in India still acknowledged China as the suzerain of Tibet. Some scholars hold that "Tibet had traditionally been a buffer between India and China".²⁰ But this was not the case during the greater period of British rule in India. In the first half of the 19th century the British authorities in India considered Tibet virtually as part of China and were disinclined to antagonise China on account of Tibet. They became concerned when the Dogras under Raja Gulab Singh invaded Western Tibet in 1841. They expressed "strong objection" to the endeavours of the Jammu Raja to acquire territories in "Chinese Tibet" and advised the Jammu Raja to give up "the erroneous ambition of possessing territories beyond the Himalaya".²¹ In the 1860s the British in India revived their attempts to open up Tibet for trade. But their

attempts to communicate with the Tibetan authorities failed. In the 1880s they became deeply involved in their imperial rivalries with Russia and France in Central Asia and the Far East, and gave up their attempts to open up Tibet. It was Lord Curzon who wanted to put an end to the "fiction" of Chinese suzerainty over Tibet by despatching the Younghusband Expedition to Lhasa in 1903. But his policy was not endorsed by the Home Government. Hence the British Government reaffirmed Chinese control over Tibet in 1906 as the price for Chinese adhesion to the Lhasa Convention. Again by the Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907 China was declared as Tibet's suzerain and the British bound themselves to communicate with Tibet through China. After Chinese Revolution of 1911-12 Tibet became virtually independent. Nevertheless the British Government of India endorsed the Chinese suzerainty over Tibet at the Simla conference in 1913-14. The first of the Notes which were an appendage to the text of Convention reads :

It is understood by the High Contracting Parties that Tibet forms part of Chinese Territory.²²

Thus the British Government of India made a distinction between trans-Himalayan and Cis-Himalayan States. While they refrained from interfering in trans-Himalayan region, they were not prepared to brook foreign influences in Cis-Himalayan States. In 1909-1910 when the Chinese invaded Tibet, the British Government of India granted asylum to the Dalai Lama, but it took no measure to restore Tibetan autonomy. But in October 1910 when China asserted its claim to the suzerainty over Nepal and Bhutan, the British Government made it clear to China "that they will be bound to resist any attempt on the part of the Chinese Government to impose their authority or in any way to intervene in either of these two states."²³

The British did not attach strategic importance to Tibet because China was then in moribund conditions. But by the mid-20th century Red China emerged as vigorous and

resurgent power. Our Government should have taken this change into consideration while formulating its policy towards Tibet in 1950-54.

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