

SHEDDING SOME LIGHT ON THE HISTORY, LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE OF THE LEPCHAS

Handwritten Lepcha script on a piece of paper, partially obscured by the title. The text is written in a cursive style and includes some numbers like '11' and '12'.

Handwritten Lepcha script on a piece of paper, tilted to the right. The text is dense and appears to be a continuous passage.

Handwritten Lepcha script on a piece of paper, tilted to the left. It includes a small square stamp or logo in the upper right corner of the text area.

Printed text in Hindi/English, likely a preface or introduction. It mentions 'Lepcha' and 'Lepcha Language' and discusses the history and literature of the community.

Handwritten Lepcha script on a piece of paper, tilted to the left. The text is dense and appears to be a continuous passage.

Dr R K Sprigg

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OF THE LEPCHAS**

Dr. R.K. Sprigg

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I am indeed grateful to Major Lyangsong Tamsang for encouraging me to re-publish an archive of papers on the subject of several different aspects of Lepcha life and literature.

Three of the ten essays are about leading Lepcha kings and noblemen; the remaining seven are commentaries on documents in the Lepcha language and script, including the oldest document written in Lepcha and the oldest to have been printed in Lepcha.

INTRODUCTION:

One of the main purposes of this book is to show, in facsimile, Lepcha texts from earlier periods. From these documents it is possible to see what changes have taken place in the shape of letters and also to draw attention to the artistry with which some of the texts have been written. A particularly fine example is Kazi Gorok's appeal to Capt. Lloyd. Another fine example, though less decorative, is that written by Dr. Hooker's Lepcha treasurer.

Two printed texts in Lepcha have been included. One of these dates back to 1849, a translation by Start and Niebel of Genesis and part of Exodus, printed by the Baptist Mission Press, in Calcutta. The other, also a translation passage from the Bible, was made in 1899, for the Linguistic Survey of India, by David Macdonald, an Anglo-Lepcha (see 'An Anglo-Lepcha').

The oldest texts are hand-written: two rather roughly written reports on the murder of most of the members of the Prime Minister Bolot's family and the beautiful appeal from Ilam by Kazi Gorok. These were discovered in the National Archive in Delhi by the late Dr. M. Aris, and copied for me, in spite of his extreme ill health. The 'murder' texts are of considerable historical interest for the Lepchas of Sikkim: they led to the claim for the occupation of Darjeeling by the East India Company, through Colonel Lloyd (see the 'Lepcha Text' supported by a Hindustani translation and also the Lepcha proclamation with translation into three other languages).

The three remaining essays are my own: they deal with Lepcha personalities and heroes, especially the two Lepchas who are recognized as having heroic status: Thikung Men Salong, for the Sikkimese Lepchas, and Gebu Achok for the Tamsangmu Lepchas.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS:

Preparing the texts of the ten essays for printing brought me face to face with an unexpected difficulty: some five years ago I was afflicted with macular degeneration; this led to very weak eyesight, practically amounting to blindness in both eyes. It has, therefore, been impossible for me to do the proofreading or, indeed, any corrective reading myself, and so I have been dependent on my present wife, Elisabeth, assisted by the computer skills of my son, David, and my daughter, Maya.

Encouragement in preparing the ten essays for publication in book-form, came, in large measure, from Major Lyangsong Tamsang, who also wrote the Preface. The text was reprinted with skill and care by Mani Printing Press, Kalimpong, calling to mind the expertise of J. Thomas in printing the first printed Lepcha book, in Calcutta, in 1849.

R.K. Sprigg

20.10.05

Preface

While walking with his purposeful strides along the Rishi Road in Kalimpong, the local children, not knowing his real name, used to greet and address Dr. R.K. Sprigg, as 'Lepcha Saheb'. A local author and historian, Dr. Sonam Wangyal, aptly writes in one of his articles 'Dr. R.K. Sprigg is more 'Lepcha' than most Lepchas. In the 50 odd years of his association with Kalimpong, he has spent more time as a Lepcha, exposing Lepcha cause and culture through his creative writings than as an Englishman'. Unquote.

Who is this 'Lepcha Saheb? Richard Keith Sprigg was born on 31 March 1922 at Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire, England. Gifted, intelligent, and above all, a person with remarkable linguistic talent, he was awarded 1st Class Honours in the Classical Tripos (examination for an Honours Degree at Cambridge University, England) in 1942.

Three years after the outbreak of the Second World War, he joined the Royal Air Force and served in England, India, Ceylon (now Sri Lanka), Singapore, and Japan from 1943-47. In 1944 and 1947, through his hard work, he obtained the War Degrees of BA and MA respectively. Mr. R.K. Sprigg joined the staff of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, as a Lecturer in Phonetics (study of speech sounds, relating to the sound of a word or to the sound used in languages) in 1948. Probably, Mr. R.K. Sprigg was the last westerner to visit independent Tibet, in 1950, before the Chinese takeover of Tibet.

Mr. R.K. Sprigg met Ray Margaret Williams, a great-grand daughter of Apu Dolma Mutanchi, at the Himalayan Hotel, Kalimpong; and they were married in 1952 in England. K.P Tamsang, the Lepcha scholar, represented Kalimpong during their wedding. They were blessed with a son, David Edward Macdonald Sprigg born in 1957, and a daughter, Eirene Maya, the next year.

In 1968, he was promoted to the post of Reader in Phonetics in the University of London. R.K. Sprigg did his Ph D (London) in Phonetics and Phonology of Tibetan. (Phonology is the study of speech sound). Dr. R.K. Sprigg is, truly speaking, a renowned Tibetologist. His Balti-Tibetan-English Dictionary was published in England in 2002.

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Because of his wife's ill health, Dr. R.K. Sprigg resigned from this prestigious post in the University of London and both husband and wife moved to Kalimpong, India, in 1980.

In 1982 he was awarded the degree of Doctor of Letters (Litt.D.) by Cambridge University; and, in 1989, his colleagues in the field of linguistics throughout the world presented to him a 'festschrift' (book containing commemorative articles written by them).

Dr. R.K. Sprigg is a member, and associated with the following institutions:

- a) The Linguistic Society of Nepal.
- b) Kirat Yakthung Chumlung.
- c) The University of London.
- d) Deccan College.
- e) Central Institute of Indian Languages, Mysore.
- f) The North Bengal University.
- g) Central Institute of English and Foreign Languages.

Dr. R.K. Sprigg's first contact and association with the Lepchas of Mayel Lyang began with a visit to Git-Byaong, Kalimpong, in 1949 when he met a famous Pildon Mun, a Lepcha priestess, named Ladaam Moo, and recorded her invocations and old Lepcha folk songs.

A keen and enthusiastic linguist, he learned the four skills of the Lepcha language from K.P. Tamsang in the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, in 1951- 52. Thereafter, he did an extensive and exhaustive study of the Lepcha language and literature specializing in Lepcha phonetics and phonology, and the history of the Lepchas of Mayel Lyang. It is not far too wrong to state that Dr. R.K.Sprigg is the only living Englishman today who possesses an excellent skills and in-depth knowledge of the Lepcha language, literature and history.

Dr. R.K. Sprigg's interesting, creative, educative, and powerful articles on the Lepchas have been published in 'Aachuley' and 'King Gaeboo Achyok', two Lepcha bilingual magazines, and other magazines, periodicals, journals in India, Nepal, Europe and Australia. The oldest Lepcha texts and official documents he so painstakingly accumulated over the last five decades and, most importantly, disseminating them through this publication of his will

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certainly help and assist the readers in general and Lepchas in particular to understand and assimilate the evolution and development of the Lepcha language and literature.

For his dedication and outstanding service for the last 50 years or so for the conservation, preservation, maintenance, and development of the Lepcha language and literature, Dr. R.K. Sprigg has been recognised with the 'K.P. Tamsang Lepcha Language and Literary Award" on 20 December 1996. The next year, 1997, on the occasion of the 266th Birth Anniversary of the Lepcha King, Pano Gaeboo Achyok, he was made a 'Life Member" of the Indigenous Lepcha Tribal Association, Headquarters Kalimpong, an apex body of the Lepcha tribes of West Bengal, India.

The Indigenous Lepcha Tribal Association, Headquarters Kalimpong, is very grateful to Dr. R.K.Sprigg for his revealing book, "Shedding some light on the history, language, and literature of the Lepchas". I am confident that this book of his will certainly create and infuse much interest among the Lepchas in the awakening of the Lepcha language, literature, and history. I take my hat off to Dr. R.K.Sprigg, a champion of the Lepchas, for his outstanding work on the Lepcha language, literature, and history.

Aachuley!

Lyangsong Tamsang
General Secretary
Indigenous Lepcha Tribal Association
Headquarters Kalimpong

15 November, 2005

Shedding some light on the history, language and literature of the Lepchas

**1826 : THE END OF AN ERA
FOR
THE LEPCHAS OF SIKKIM**

I. 1826, a crucial year

1826 was notable for being the year in which Bolek (or Bholod) was murdered; not only was Bolek the Prime Minister of Sikkim but he was also maternal uncle of the (7th) Raja of Sikkim, Tsugphud Namgyal (1793-1851); and he was also a Lepcha.

The details of the murder are given in two eye-witness accounts, written in the Lepcha language and Lepcha script, ‘tsóng tsáng-thúng-sa shu-tsuk-gum’ and ‘gyá-mú-nun shu’, from the National Archive, New Delhi (Foreign Department, Persian, dated 14th April, 1828, No. 190, documents J and M); facsimiles of these two reports have been included in an article of mine in the 2nd issue of ‘Aachuley’, ‘The oldest dated document of the Lepchas’. (I am indebted to Dr. M. Aris, of Oxford University, for photocopies of these two important documents).

II. Status of the Lepchas in Sikkim before 1826.

A. The period of Lepcha Kings.

On the subject of earlier Kings who were of Lepcha race in the area that was later to be known as Sikkim, Prof. Roy Choudhary, of the University of North Bengal, writes, in an article ‘Source materials for Sikkim History’ contributed to ‘Sources of the history of India’: “‘The Sikkim History’ apart, a number of Lepcha chronicles that have been compiled from time to time, and whose some very rare manuscripts are preserved in the Library of the Sikkim Research Institute of Tibetology, are very useful as source material for Sikkim history. Legends of the Pauaus [sic] (kings) is one such manuscript which was written some time in the late eighteenth century describing the rule of different Lepcha Kings in Sikkim”. Possibly this Lepcha history referred to by Roy Choudhary was the source for Mainwaring’s list of kings in his book ‘Grammar of the Róng (Lepcha) language’ (1876), four Lepcha kings. First comes tur-ve pa-no; he was succeeded in turn by tur-sáng, tur-‘yeng, and tur-‘yek pa-no (page x). The first of these kings, tur-ve pa-no has also been referred to by the noted Himalayan historian Iman Sing Chemjong (whose mother, incidentally, was a Lepcha) in volume II of his book ‘History and culture of the Kirat people’ (1967, page

91): ‘ They conquered a Lepcha king of Kurseong. In the battle field of Gidde hill Tarbe Pano, the Lepcha chief was slain. But before his death, the Kirat chief Baja Hang Rai who had invited King Lo Hang Sen of Mokwanpur to invade Bijaypur town was also killed in the same battle field in 1608 A.D. (page 91).

B. The period of Sikkimese Tibetan Kings (1642-1975)

There is plenty of evidence, especially from ‘ The Gazetteer of Sikkim’ (1894/1972) and from the typescript ‘History of Sikkim’ (1908) by the 9th Maharaja, Thutob Namgyal (1874-1914), and Maharani Drolma, to support the claim that I have made above, in section (I), that the Lepcha component of the three races of Sikkim, the Lha-Mon-Tsong-sum (Bhutia-Lepcha-Limbu: three) had earlier played a leading part in the social and political life of Sikkim; for example (i) during the reign of the 1st Chogyal (Dharma-Raja) of Sikkim, Phuntsog Namgyal (1642-70), the most prominent of the Tibetan Buddhist missionaries to Sikkim, Lha-btsun Chen-po, initiated a Lepcha Yugthing Tishay, into the mystic rites of Rig-hzin Srog-hgrub, restricted to the three Lamas who had conducted the enthronement ceremony, the Raja, and twenty-one others (according to the ‘History’); (ii) the 1st Chogyal had not only appointed to his administration twelve Kazis from Bhutias but also an equal number of Jongpens from among the leading Lepcha families (‘History’); .

C. Unforeseen consequences of the murder

The murder of a leading Lepcha by another leading Lepcha set in train a succession of events that had most serious consequences not only for Sikkimese of Lepcha race but also for the future of Sikkim as a country; I will now consider each link in this chain of events in turn.

i. The murder of the Prime Minister was immediately followed by the flight of some of his relatives to Unthoo, on the border of Nepal (‘Gazetteer’, page 19). ‘When Bolot was assassinated by the Maharaja Tsugphud Namgyal’s orders, his nephews, the sons of Kotaba Kungha named Dathup and Jerung Denon and Kazi Gorok left Sikkim, taking

with them about 800 houses of Lepcha subjects from Chidam and Namthang and went towards Illam and settled down there' ('History').

ii. Instead of settling down peaceably these refugees began making incursions into Sikkim: 'they began the Kotapa insurrection and made several raids' ('History'); and they 'presumed to claim Darjeeling as their patrimonial land to make a voluntary gift of it to Major Lloyd' ('History').

iii. In 1828, because of this insurrection, together with a boundary dispute between Sikkim and Nepal affecting the Illam area, 'the Ontoo boundary dispute' described in Pinn's book 'The road of destiny: Darjeeling letters 1839' (1986), Capt. Lloyd, as an arbiter of disputes between the two countries, penetrated Sikkim as far as Rinchenpong, and was 'attracted by the position of Darjeeling' ('Gazetteer', page 20).

iv. When Capt. Herbert visited it a couple of years later, Darjeeling was represented as being 'devoid of inhabitants' (according to Pinn 1986, page 120, citing 'Consultations [of the Supreme Council of India]', No. 2, 1835). 'According to Capt. Herbert this was because about ten years previously 1,200 able-bodied Lepchas forming two thirds of the population of Sikkim, had been forced by the oppression of the Raja to fly from Darjeeling and its neighbourhood and take refuge in Nepal' (according to the 'Darjeeling' volume of the 'Bengal District Gazetteers' series, 1947, page 38).

v. The Governor General, Lord Bentinck, then wrote to the Raja proposing 'the cession of Darjeeling to the British Government offering to you such an equivalent as may seem to both parties to be reasonable' (Pinn, 1986, page 121, citing 'Consultations', No. 111, 1835).

vi. The Raja agreed to an exchange of territory: 'Also if from friendship Dabgong from Aham (?) Diggee north be given to me, then my Dewan will deliver to Major Lloyd the grant and agreement under my red seal of Durgeeling that he may erect houses there' (Pinn, Page 122, citing 'Consultations,' 1835, 6 April).

vii. 'In reply the Government refused the Rajah's request' (Pinn, page 124): 'Darjeeling is an uninhabited tract'; but "Dabgong is a fertile and populous district' (Pinn, page 125, citing 'Consultations', No. 104)

viii. Lloyd then wrote to Government as follows, implying that the Raja had agreed to cede the tract unconditionally:

'Sir

I beg leave to report that in August last the Sikkim Rajah's officers forwarded to me the grant of Darjeeling in the form which I had requested him to draw it out, in fact, the very paper I had forwarded to him was returned with his seal affixed as I had requested he would do'. (Pinn, Page 126, citing 'Consultations', 35). [I plan to publish a facsimile of the Lepcha text of this document in a forthcoming issue of 'Aachuley'].

ix. 'Thus the seeds of an ever-growing hostility had been sown. From that time on the Rajah was waiting for his present equivalent to the Darjeeling tract' (Pinn, page 129).

x. '— in 1849 Dr. Hooker and Dr. Campbell, while traveling in Sikkim with permission of Government and the Maharajah, were suddenly seized and made prisoners' ('Gazetteer' 1894, page 20); '— the serious punitive action taken was the annexation of the Terai and the portion of the Sikkim hills bounded by the Ramman and the great Ranjit on the North, by the Tista on the East and by Nepal frontier on the West' (Darjeeling' 1947, page 39). Thus, through conquest, the boundaries of Sikkim were reduced, in 1850, to those familiar to us today (formerly, at its greatest extent, 'the boundaries of the new kingdom were --- Dibda La in the north, Shingsa Dagpay, Walung, Yangmag Khangchen, Yarlung and Timur Chorten in the west, down along the Arun and Dud Kosi rivers, down to the Maha Nodi Nuxulbari, Titalia in the south. On the east Tagong La and Tang La on the north', according to the Maharajah's 'History'; compare also 'Gazetteer', pages 1-2).

IV. Conclusion

I offer this series of ten linked misfortunes as my justifications for claiming that the consequences of that political murder, within the Royal

Family, in 1826 were most grievous, especially for the Lepchas, who suffered of the other two races of Sikkim, the Bhutias and the Limbus.

Appendix: the Lepcha population of Sikkim

The first to compare the relative strengths of the Lho-Mon-Tsongsum (Bhotiyas, Lepchas, Limbus: three) in population was Hamilton, in his 'An account of the Kingdom of Nepal' (1819): 'My informant thinks that of the whole population of Sikkim three tenths are Bhotiyas, five tenths Lepchas and two tenths Limbus' (page 118).

Seventy-two years later, in the 1891 census, out of a total population of 30,458 in Sikkim, 'The Gazetteer of Sikkim' (page 27) gives:

Lepcha	Bhutia	Limbu	Total
5,762 (41%)	4,894 (35%)	3,356 (24%)	14,012;

These figures roughly agree with the estimates cited by Hamilton in 1819, though the Lepcha total is somewhat lower than might have been expected; and the Bhutia and the Limbu figures are correspondingly higher.

In these very different times too, nearly a hundred years later, Lepcha-speakers continue to outnumber their two competitors; for the 'Sikkim' (1993) volume of the 'People of India' series gives the 1981 census figures as:

Lepcha –speakers	Bhutia –speakers	Limbu –speakers
23,234 (36%)	21,259 (33%)	19,731 (31%);

but the proportions of the three groups of speakers are now nearly equal, because of a rise in the proportion of Limbus. The increase may, of course, be due to a more polyphiloprogenitive approach to family life on the part of the Sikkimese Limbus, who have been there from time immemorial; but it seems to me more likely to have been the result of immigration by Nepalese Limbus, from Limbuan or by Indian Limbus

Shedding some light on the history, language and literature of the Lepchas from Darjeeling District during the last one hundred years or so (the total population of Sikkim is given by the 1981 census as 3,16,385).

Appreciation:

I am grateful to the Sikkim Research Institute of Tibetology for allowing me to use material that had already appeared in the paper '1826: the end of an era in the social and political life of Sikkim' that I read at its National Seminar on (1) Guru Padma Sambhava's contribution to Sikkim and (2) Cultural Aspects of Sikkim, at Gangtok, on the 29th and 30th March, 1995, the proceedings of which are to be published.

**THE OLDEST DATED
DOCUMENTS
OF THE LEPCHAS**

1. The source of the manuscripts

It was through the thoughtfulness of Dr. M. Aris, the distinguished historian of the Himalayas and author of Bhutan (1979), that the old Lepcha documents that I am introducing to you in this article came to light. While making a search on his own account in the National Archive in Delhi he happened on three strange-looking manuscripts; and, thinking that they looked like Lepcha, he sent photocopies to me. Two of them I at once recognized as Lepcha; the third I was soon able to identify as Manipuri. The Lepcha documents were pages 'J' and 'M' of item 190 of the archive in Foreign Department, Persian; the date of accession is given as 14th April, 1828; so, though there may be older Lepcha books and documents in existence, I would claim that these are the oldest Lepcha documents that can be given a date: some time between the 14th April, 1828, the date when they entered the Foreign Department archive, and some date earlier in the same year, when they were written in response to a request by J. W. Grant, Commercial Resident in Malda, and Capt. G.W.A. Lloyd for eye-witness accounts of the murder of the Prime Minister Bholod, a Lepcha.

II. The Gazetteer of Sikkim's account of the murder

My source for 1826 as the date of the murder is The Gazetteer of Sikkim (1894/1972), which gives the following background information: 'In 1819 a serious quarrel arose between the [7th] Raja [gtsugphud nam-rgyal, 1790-1861] and his minister, his own uncle Bho-Lod, but was patched up and an agreement made. Another agreement was made the following year, and a third in 1824, but about that time his wife and child (the former seems to have been friendly to the minister) died, and the Raja, freed from all restraint, seemed determined to make away with his relative: so finally in 1826 Bho-lod was treacherously murdered near Tumlong [the then capital of Sikkim] by Tung-yik Menchoo, father of Dunya Namgye, better known as the Pagla Dewan. Bho-lod's cousin, Yuk-Lhat Grup alias tkra-thup, fearing a similar fate, fled from Sikkim and took refuge at Unthoo in Nepal with some 800 of his Lepcha tribesmen' (19) (for the effect of this calamitous dispute on the fortunes of the Lepchas of Sikkim see my article '1826: the end of an era in the social and political history of Sikkim', 1997).

III. Facsimiles of documents ‘J’ and ‘M’

One if the two documents, ‘J’ bears the title ‘tsong tsang-thung sa shu-suk gum’, ‘It is Tsong Tsang-Thung’s testimony’, the other, ‘M’, is entitled ‘gya-mu-nun shu’, ‘submitted by Gyamu’ (in romanizing the Lepcha text I have followed the earliest of the various systems, Gen. G.B. Mainwaring in his book, A Grammar of the Rong (Lepchas) Language (Calcutta, 1876), but with minor modifications. They have been reproduced in facsimile below, after which I have given a translation of each of them into English.

An elegant translation of the two texts has been sent to me by Norden Sangdyanmoo, Textbook Officer, Lepcha Section, Education Department, Government of Sikkim; but the originals seem to me to be more like police reports in style, hastily written, and with no claim to literary merit; so I have attempted a translation that I feel to be more in keeping with the style of the originals. From the facsimiles readers will be able to see for themselves the evidence of haste in several corrections and crossings out.

A. Document J

I. Lepcha text

*

2. English translation

‘It is Tsong Tsang-thung’s testimony’

Testified that, the sahib having demanded ‘who are eye-witnesses to the killing of the Honorable Prime Minister’ the words submitted to the Sahib by Tsong-thung were: over there, from the King’s side, sending soldiers, three or four score soldiers commanded by an officer, Lhachoo, surrounded him for one day; but the Prime Minister, father and sons, four of them, getting out through the space under the house, staying for one day in the forest, coming back, after having reached the palace, even though there was the King’s order to them, the soldiers, ‘you who have come having been serving the king, do not kill me’ the Honorable Prime Minister having entreated the soldier who had come, clasping

their feet, giving them silver Rupees, bullocks, and rice, together with beer, they having said 'that being the case we shall not take out (our weapons)', having informed the Honorable Prime Minister 'we shall ourselves bear the responsibility', they, the soldiers that had come up, having deceived him, having made the request 'go into the presence of the king', the Honorable Prime Minister having been induced to go in front of them, as soon as the Palace was out of sight, the soldiers seized their muskets and fired them. Reported that, having hit the Prime Minister himself in the body with five musket shots, they killed him. Thereupon his wife having entreated the soldiers with folded hands 'there is no action whatever that we have taken; please do not you do work like this; but having said 'are you too looking for this', it is testified that having chopped at her with a sword she died in five days. Testified that the two male children, fleeing to the forest, entered, and were seated in, a pit; but having come and discovered them, after having pierced them with a wooden spear and pulled it out, with taunts, they killed them. Testified that the children said 'do not kill us too'; even though they spoke to the 'Lakmo', without any advantage the killing took place. Testified that, as for one of them, it is a fact that they followed him into the forest and kill him. As for the 'Lakmo', Tsharing Rukgye is one. Trhinle Zongbo is a second. Ruk Namgye is number three. Shangda Dorzhe's son Trhiten is number four. There are two or three more; but not knowing their personal names I have not submitted them. As for property, not having been able to calculate it I have not testified. I Tsangthung testify that these are my words.

B. Document M

I. Lepcha text

*

2. English translation

Testified by Gyamu

By the daughter Gyamu. I am submitting an account, an account of what I saw with my own eyes when they killed the Honorable Prime Minister, the Sahib having told me to. From the direction of the King, on the other side, four score soldiers commanded by an officer, the

Steward Lhachoo, coming in sufficient numbers, when the clear light of early morning was arriving, surrounding the Prime Minister's house fired their muskets; but the Prime Minister, uncovering the planks of the space beneath the house, getting out of the space beneath the house, fleeing to the forest, stayed there the whole day; after that, returning, after the Prime Minister had said to the soldiers 'do not kill us', he gave them, the soldiers, silver rupees, bullocks, together with food and drink. After that they, the soldiers, having said 'we shall not, now, kill you', having said 'go to the king's place, on the other side'. Speaking to the Prime Minister, taking him out with them, on reaching open ground they, the soldiers, fired their muskets. The five musket shots struck the Prime Minister's body. On this his wife was going to say 'do not do that'; but his wife too Saring Rukgye chopped right through her shoulder with a 'baan'. Afterwards the three male children fled to the forest; they, following, without making them return, Trhinle Zongbo together with Ruk Anggye, the soldiers killed three male children. After that, we, doing it gladly, cherished and looked after our mother; but, not being able to care for her, in five days she went and died. After that, for those now remaining two boys and three girls were left. One of the boys, acting as Phensong Lama, was there. I testify that three girls and a boy are with their grandmother. After that I too, a girl, having gone down, and not having known how things were being done, do not testify to anything further.

॥ १२६ ॥ १८०१ ॥ १८०१ ॥ १८०१ ॥

Handwritten Lepcha script, likely a historical record or document, consisting of approximately 25 lines of text. The script is dense and characteristic of the Lepcha language.

* Document J

**AN APPEAL TO CAPTAIN LLOYD
BY
KAZI GOROK OF ILAM (1828)**

I. The National Archive

The document to be found pasted at the back cover of this issue is from a photocopy of the third of the three documents discovered in the National Archive, Delhi, by the Oxford historian and Tibetologist Dr. M. Aris, and sent to me in Kalimpong – a generous gesture on his part; the other two have already been published: they first appeared in Number 2 of Volume 1 of ‘Aachuley’ (October, 1997) and were re-published in Sikkim by the Renjyong Mutanchi Rong Ong Shezum in its souvenir pamphlet ‘Tendong Hlo Rum Faat’ (Gangtok, 1998, pp.1-4). Those two are pages ‘J’ and ‘M’ of item 190 in the archive of the Foreign Department, Persian, and bear the date 14th April, 1828; this document is page ‘I’, and bears the same accession date as the other two; so it has an equal claim with them to the distinction of being one of the three oldest dated documents in Lepcha; all three are 171 years old.

II. Calligraphy

There is one important respect, though, in which Kazi Gorok’s appeal differs from its two companion documents in that archive, those two eye-witness accounts of the murder of Prime Minister Bholot: they have clearly been written clumsily and in haste; but the Kazi’s appeal is an elegant piece of work, reaching high standards of Lepcha penmanship. Indeed, if properly framed or mounted, it would, I feel, make an attractive, and distinctive, decoration on the wall of any Lepcha house, as clear proof, and a daily reminder, of ancestral skill and artistry.

III. Tibetan loan words

It cannot, however, be said that the sense of Kazi Gorok’s appeal is easy to follow: disguised by the Lepcha script quite a number of the words that it contains are, in fact, borrowed from Tibetan; so it is fortunate that Lepcha translators could be found who had the necessary expertise to overcome this difficulty. It is the contribution of Ren S.T. Tamsang and, especially, Ren P.T. Simick that I have to acknowledge for this aspect of the appeal text, translating difficult expressions in the Lepcha.

IV. Historical background

My own contribution is limited to a few observations on the historical background to the text and to a few remarks on some of the personalities mentioned in it. These remarks are taken for the most part, from ‘History of Sikkim’ (1908) by the (9th) Maharajah of Sikkim, Thutob Namgyal, and Maharani Drolma (translated into English by Kazi Dawa Samdrup) and from ‘The Gazetteer of Sikkim’ (1894/1972).

The persons whose names appear in the appeal are:

The Captain Sahib (Capt. G.W.A. Lloyd; lines 1,7,15,16, and, perhaps, 18), Tashi Tengkobo (Krá-shi te/âng – kó-bo; lines 1,3, and 8-9), the Maharajah, or Maharajah of Sikkim, Tsukphud Namgyal) (pa-no or sa-kyum pa-no; lines 2-6, 8-14, 16, and 18), Prime Minister Karwang (chang-zât kár-’óng; line 2), Densapa (den-sóp-bo; line 2), and the Kotabas (ko-kró-bo or kó-kró-bo; lines 7 and 10).

Since the writer of the appeal is Kazi Gorok, it might have seemed better to begin by whatever I have been able to find out about this Lepcha nobleman; but there are advantages in beginning with his grandfather Prime Minister Karwang, whom Gorok himself refers to in line 2 of the facsimile of his appeal, though with the phonetic spelling kár-’óng. This will make it possible to follow the three generations from Karwang to Gorok in chronological order.

A. Prime Minister Karwang

In ‘History of Sikkim’, referred to above, Karwang becomes prominent at the beginning of the reign of the 5th Maharajah, Namgyal Phuntso (1733-80), who ascended the throne in the year in which he was born: ‘At this time Shalngo Changzod Tamdring and his brothers refused to recognize the legitimacy of the young Rajah Namgyal Phuntso, and said that he should not be put on the throne.

Meanwhile Changzod Tamdring himself assumed all powers, and ruled Sikkim for the space of three years, viz. from 1738 to 1741 A.D.

Hence he came to be called Gyalpo Tamdring. But another party with Changzod Karwang at their head backed the young Rajah Namgyal Phuntso, and took him away to Sinchel, near Darjeeling, and after spending his own property in paying the men for fighting and for supplying them with food and arms, he carried on the strife for a number of years, and many lives were lost, during this internal broil.

The young Rajah was once taken over to Bhutan, until the Kazis or Jongpons of Lepcha extract (ion) obtained the upper hand in Sikkim. This was about the year 1740 A.D. Chu-Tel years, when the usurper Gyalpo Tamdring fled into Tibet, ——' (pp. 40-41).

From this account it seems clear that Karwang and the Lepcha kazis saved the Namgyal dynasty from being replaced by another of the Bhutia families, the Tse Chu-dar.

Karwang also seems to have saved the Dynasty from losing its western territories: 'The Paharia' or Tsong community too, under Shigrag-ghal etc., who had rebelled against the Sikkim Raja, were put down by force by the Changzod Karwang, and some were given grand presents and the privileges of having freedom of kettle drums beaten, and bearing banners and flags according to their rank and position, so as to gain their friendship and loyalty back, and thus for a time everything was quiet and the land enjoyed peace' (pp. 44-5).

B. Karwang's descendants

Some of the (numerous) descendants of Karwang are listed in an appendix in the Maharajah's 'History' as:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Den-sa Rangjun Silnon, | 2. Athing Bo or Po, |
| 3. Chagzot Chogthup, | 4. Athing Yongdra, |
| 5. Kotra Kungha, | 6. Yug Namcha, |
| 7. Chagzot Bolot (Tenzin Namgyal). | |

In 'The Gazetteer of Sikkim' (1898.1972), however, (1) Den-sa (or "Denchap") Rangjun appears under the name Namgyal Tshiring,

Shedding some light on the history, language and literature of the Lepchas

(3) Chogthup as Ka-bhi Changzed, (4) Yongdra as Dzomgel, and (7) Bolot (or Tenzin Namgyal) as Balu or Tateng Athing (pp. 32-3).

Some of these noblemen have, as their descendants, a sizable proportion of the nobility of Sikkim, namely the following Kazis:

<u>Son of Karwang</u>	<u>His Kazi descendants</u>
1. Den-sa	Barmiok
3. Chogthup	(by adoption) Rhenock, Phurba
4. Yogdra	Enchay (of Gangtok), Rumtek, Tathang, Majong, Norzang, Gyengjong
5. Kotra Kungha	Ilam, Dallam
7. Bolot	Tateng.

Four of the above-mentioned Sikkimese noblemen were especially distinguished: Den-sa, Chogthup, Bolot, and Kotra Kungha.

1. Den-sa

‘ Namgyal Tshiring was the ancestor of the present Barmiok Kazi Dorze Dadul: he was also called “Den-chap”, from having acted as Regent of Sikkim during the Raja’s absence and the title is said to be still continued in the family’ (‘Gazetteer’, p., 32). Namgyal Tshiring’s Regency was from 1790 to 1793; during these years the 6th Rajah, Tenzing Namgyal, was a refugee in Lhasa, together with his son Tsugphud Namgyal; when his father died, the latter returned to Sikkim and was installed as 7th Chogyal in 1793.

2. Chogthup

Equally distinguished, but in warfare rather than in administration, Namgyal Tshiring’s brother Chogthup, alias Satrajit, was successful in defending Sikkim during the Gorkha invasions of 1775-80 and 1788; a detailed account of his career is given in L.S. Tamsang’s article ‘ Aathang

Changzad Tshookthoop the Lepcha General of Sikkim' in the 1997 issue of 'King Gaeboo Aachyok' (pp. 52-3).

3. Bolot

Chogthup's brother Bolot (Tenzin Namgyal) is the subject of an article in the 2nd issue of Volume 1 of 'Aachuley' where two eye-witness accounts of his assassination have been given (pp. 9-11).

4. Kotra Kungha, Kazi Gorok, and the Ilam Lepchas

Another brother, Kotra Kungha, is important because he is the link with the third group of Lepchas to be commonly distinguished, the Ilammu, as opposed to the Renjongmu and the Tamsangmu:

'The son of Karwang called Kungha had got Ilam included in the Terai, over which he had been appointed Kotah Jongpon formerly. Since his time, his descendants had settled down there permanently. So when Bolot was assassinated by the Maharajah Tshugphud Namgyal's orders, his nephews, the son [s] of Kotaba Kungha named Dathup and Jerung Denon and Kazi Gorok, left Sikkim taking with them about 800 houses of Lepcha subjects from Chidam and Namthang, and went away towards Ilam and settled down there. Then asking the Nepal Government for a force to back them up, and with their aid they began the Kotapa insurrection and committed several raids' ('History', p. 60; according to the 'Gazetteer' (p.32) 'Kotah' is Ilam).

The only other reference that I can find to the author of this appeal is to his rank as an army officer: From among Lepchas, tradition has handed down the following names:

1. Yugthing Te-she, descended from the Lepcha Chief Thekong Tek.

2. Magpon Si-bing, Gorok and Borton, thus we learn of both Bhutias and Lepchas having been Ministers, Magpons (leaders of fighting forces) Dingpons, Chupons ('History', Appedix, p. 1).

5. Captain G.W.A.Lloyd

It only remains to identify the sole foreigner to be mentioned in Kazi Gorok's appeal, the person to whom it is addressed. He is mentioned in lines 1,7,15, and 16 by his rank, as káp-ten sá-hep or merely as sá-hep or sá-hyep; but in line 18 it appears to me that Kazi Gorok has referred to Capt. Lloyd by name, as wa lyoá, an irregular combination of letters for Lepcha; sá-hyep-la added immediately below supports my reading. I do not know of any attempt by Lloyd to intervene in the civil war between the Kotabas and their ruler; but the 'History' records an offer to intervene by J.W.Grant at Rangpur three years later, in 1831 (p.60).

6. Nepalese Lepchas at the present time

The Ilam Kazis remained in Ilam with many of their followers; and the 1991 Nepal census records 4, 826 cited from T.R. Kansakar, 'Language planning and modernization in Nepal', 'Nepalese Linguistics', 1996, 13,p.8)

V. Concluding remarks

I have tried to show, in giving this background information to Kazi Gorok's appeal, that, contrary to common belief, in 1828 a sizable proportion of the Sikkim nobility was Lepcha; and quite possibly that proportion remains much the same to this day. I can illustrate the misconception about the place of Lepchas in the aristocracy of Sikkim from an anecdote in which, I have to admit, I myself do not appear to advantage: shortly after I arrived in Kalimpong on my first visit, in 1949, I was invited to a wedding at which I met Lingmo Kazi, the father of the bridegroom, and Rai Bahadur Barmiak Kazi, whose ancestor Densapa has been mentioned, as den-sóp-bo, in the Gorok appeal (line 2). As it happened, I had just been reading that the Sikkim nobility were tall powerfully built men from Kham; so, wishing to pay a compliment to Rai Bahadur Barmiak, who was so very much my senior in age, size, and social standing, I remarked that he seemed to me to be 'every inch a Khampa'; to my consternation he replied 'I am not a Khampa; I am a Lepcha'.

APPENDIX : REPRESENTATION

1. Today, the main reason in imprisoning Tashi Tengko is this.
2. Formerly he was in the service of the king and was a Minister himself
3. The eldest son named Changzed Karwang was the Minister in the King's court.
4. The second son, my grand father named DEN SAOP was a senior civil servant.
5. The third son was the king's secretary or writer.
6. The main reason in sending Tashi Tengko to prison was his misappropriation of the royal fund.
7. Later, during his elder brother's time, Tashi Tengko served as a minister of the king.
8. Tashi Tengko took undue advantage over the king.
9. Also he was unjust and cruel to his brothers.
10. He boasted of his wealth.
11. He also snatched, took away the money and wealth given by the king to us, his nephews.
12. Due to his unpleasant and bad behavior, he was sent to prison by the king.
13. There were no complaints made to the king because we were not in good terms among ourselves.
14. He did not care about his wife.
15. He has two sons and three daughters.
16. He used to conceal the truth.
17. Saheb has not seen it.
18. During his father's time, he didn't show courtesy and respect to the king's officials.
19. Today, during his time, he offered his wife and daughters to the king's court to meet his selfish ends.
20. After sending his wife and daughters to the king's court, he and his brother tried to assassinate us but the king ignored the matter.
21. Later he sent his fort-commander announcing his arrival with drums.
22. There was no objection from the cabinet ministers.
23. Mistreatment of me means mistreatment to the ministers.
24. During my father's time, I was the head of the cabinet.

25. That is why I was spared.
26. During my time, no unpleasant activities took place.
27. I'm very loyal to the king
28. The king has no bad feelings for the ministers.
29. He refused to take the right path.
30. Taking his men from Illam and arms and ammunition provided by the East India Company, he fought against us.
31. Probably for you, British "Badshah", there is no such thing as this.
32. For this kind of behavior, you have also some sort of provisions for punishment and sending to the prison.
33. In Sikkim, the King has arrangements to imprison such guilty persons.
34. We have nothing to say or report.
35. However, you great Saheb, whatever happens, I request you to mediate the affair.
36. Please materialise this matter between the Sikkim Raja and you.
37. Saheb, you over-looked it.
38. The disputes from the beginning to this day should be resolved by you.
39. They should not be punished. I take all the responsibility.
40. Whatever I say and request you, please grant it.
41. You, Wa Lyoa Saheb, are the Administrator. I was also one of the ministers in the Sikkim Raja's court.

Hog Year, 2nd Day of Karnyit Lavo (December). Gorok Kaji

**THE LEPCHA TEXT OF THE
DEED OF GRANT OF
DARJEELING**

I. The English version

Probably the ‘Grant of Darjeeling’ is most widely known from the version in English given in the ‘Darjeeling’ volume of the series of ‘Bengal District Gazetteers’ (A.J. Dash ed., 1947); certainly it was through this version that I first came to know of ‘the Grant’: “ The Governor General having expressed his desire for the possession of the hill of Darjeeling on account of its cool climate, for the purpose of enabling the servants of his Government, suffering from sickness, to avail themselves of its advantages, I, the Sikkimputtee Rajah, out of friendship for the said Governor General; hereby present Darjeeling to the East India Company, that is all the land South of the Great Rangit river, east of the Balasun, Kahail and Little Rangit rivers and west of Rungno (Tista) and Mahanadi rivers” (pp.37-8).

II. The Lepcha and Hindustani Versions

Later, F. Pinn, author of ‘The Road of Destiny: Darjeeling letters 1839’, published in 1986, sent me a version of that same text written in the Lepcha language followed by a version in Hindustani photographed from an original in the India Office Library, London; I have given below a facsimile of that crucial Lepcha-cum-Hindustani document, and have added a Romanization of both versions in an Appendix.

It is, of course, only right that the text of the Darjeeling Grant should be in Lepcha; for Lepcha was the language spoken by the majority of the people of Sikkim at that time (1835); but I was perplexed to find that the Lepcha text was accompanied by a version in Hindustani. I had expected to find a version of it in Tibetan; for at that time Tibetan was the language of the (seventh) Rajah of Sikkim and his Court.

These two mysteries, the presence of a Hindustani version and the absence of a Tibetan version, were solved for me when I read the chapter entitled ‘ The deed of Grant’ in ‘ The Road of Destiny’; so I will now quote from that chapter passages dealing with Major Lloyd’s reports to the Governor General, termed ‘Consultations’, [Fort William]:

‘On 25 February [1835] Lloyd was again sent for and was told by the Rajah “if his requests were complied with, he from friendship would give Darjeeling to the British Government, but that his country was a very small one, meaning, I suppose, that he could not afford to part with any of it”’ (“Consultations”, 6 April 1835). At the same time the Rajah in Durbar delivered a paper to Lloyd with a specific paragraph on Darjeeling:

‘Also if from friendship Dabgong from Ahma (?) Diggee north be given to me, then my Dewan will deliver to Major Lloyd the grant and agreement under my red seal of Darjeeling that he may erect houses there which I have given in charge of the said Dewan to be so delivered, dated 1891, 19th Maug, 5th February 1835’ [Ibid.]

On the 26 February Lloyd began his return to the plains. “The Rajah delivered to his officers whom he appointed to accompany me a paper purporting to be a grant of Darjeeling to be given to me as soon as his request should be complied with” [“Consultations”, 6 April, 1835].

This original or first deed must be one of the shortest in documentary history.

‘That health may be obtained by residing there I from friendship make an offering of Durgeeling to the Governor General Sahib. 1891, 19th Maug (25th February 1835)’.

True translation

G.W.A.Lloyd, Major

[‘Consultations, 6 April 1835, Translation marked “E”].

III. A Tibetan version

A long letter dated 26 February to the Governor-General followed Lloyd, this time written in Tibetan (which had to be translated in Calcutta by Csoma de Koros) which once more dealt at great length with the various problems discussed [namely handing over to the Rajah an absconding minister and some Lepcha chiefs, and extending the western boundary of Sikkim]. The subject of Darjeeling is referred to very briefly:

“I beg your acceptance of ground for building a house at Darjeeling [Ibid].” (Pinn 1986, pp.122-3). I regret that I am not able to supply the text of the Tibetan version of this brief reference to Darjeeling.

It is interesting to note, from the above excerpts, that the Rajah corresponded with the Governor General, through Lloyd, in both Lepcha and Tibetan, the former language Lloyd was able to have translated into English immediately, whence document ‘E’; but the Tibetan text had to be sent to Calcutta for translation.

IV. Lloyd’s texts (the Lepcha and Hindustani versions)

At this point I wish to return to the English version that I have given in section (I) above and the corresponding Lepcha and Hindustani versions given in facsimile. I had, naturally, presumed that the Lepcha and Hindustani versions had originally been written on the orders of the Rajah and then dispatched by him to Lloyd, who had in turn employed translators to translate them into the English version given in section (I); but I now realized, thanks to ‘The Road of Destiny’, that it was, in fact, not the Rajah but Lloyd who had had the Lepcha version written: ‘I wrote to the Rajah and enclosed him a copy of what I conceived he ought to write as a grant of the place, in which I stated the boundaries as well as I could ascertain, and requested him to substitute this or a similar paper for the one (he) had delivered to his officers which latter was too vague to be acceptable’ (Pinn, p. 289).

The Rajah later returned this important Lepcha document to Lloyd; and he reported to Government as follows: ‘I beg leave to report that in August last (1835) the Sikkim Rajah’s officers forwarded to me the grant of Darjeeling in the form in which I had requested him to draw it out, in fact, the very paper I had forwarded to him was returned with his seal affixed as I had requested he would do and is now in my possession ---(“Consultations”, 9 November 1835 (dated 31 October 1835)’ (Pinn, p.126).

Pinn takes up the story again after an interval of five months as follows: ‘Lloyd immediately forwarded the precious document with an accompanying letter: The Rajah’s letter in reply I have the honour to

enclose (together with a translation into Hindooee and thence into English)' (p.128), the English version given in section (I) above.

From this correspondence, then, I now realized that the original text must have been drafted in English, by Lloyd, and translated into the Lepcha language of the Lepcha version, reproduced above in facsimile, by a Lepcha translator employed by Lloyd, as a model for the Rajah to follow in making his gift; this document the Rajah then endorsed, with his red seal, and returned it to Lloyd without change. Lloyd then added the Hindustani translation, in the lower half of the facsimile above, which was then further translated to English.

V. Lepcha Translators

The role of the Lepcha translator in this rather complicated exchange of documents, in four different languages, English, Lepcha, Tibetan, and Hindustani, was, therefore, pivotal; so it is unfortunate that nothing is known about him. His style of handwriting has a conspicuous peculiarity: he writes the letter $\&$ in a single stroke, as $\&$ or, $\&$ not with two strokes, as it is usually written these days. The two-stroke form of the letter can be clearly seen in the calligrapher Dup Shuzong Tamsang's rendering of the first syllable of $\&(\text{འཕམ་)$ on the cover of this journal.

I have, however, found a reference to two early Lepcha translators in 'Gazetteer of Sikkim' (1894/1972): 'it may be interesting to note that Doobgye (Tendook's father), though Jongpen of Barmie, went to Nagri as captain in the Sikhimese army, fought there against the Nepalese [in 1814], and assisted Major Latter to lay down the present boundary between Sikkim and Nepal. He had two wives: by the elder, a daughter of the Pad-gLing Lama, he had two sons, Dawa Sring and Yit-tam Sring, now a Jongpen in Nepal; by the younger wife, who was the daughter of the hGu-ling Jongpen, a Barphongpuso by family, he had three sons who lived to grow up, viz., hBrug-brTan-hDsin, Bahadur, and Tendook Pulger. Doobgye had also two illegitimate sons, Rabden Tshering and Rinchen Long-dol, Jongpen of Pachim, both of them have served as interpreters to Government' (p.34). Since their father Dubgye was young enough to fight at Nagri, in 1814, one of other of these two

Government interpreters could have been of an age to translate Lloyd's 'model' Darjeeling Grant document from English (or, perhaps, from Hindustani) into Lepcha in 1835, twenty years after the battle.

The first official reference to an 'Interpreter, Lepcha Language', is to be found thirty years after the translating of Lloyd's Darjeeling-Grant document into Lepcha, in 'Thacker's Post Office Directory'. In the 'Darjeeling' section of the 'Directory' for the year 1865 this post was filled by one 'Galoony' (perhaps meant for Gelong); his salary is given as Rs. 25 a month.

It would have been pleasing to be able to conclude this account of the part played by the Lepcha language in the negotiations for exchanging Darjeeling by reporting that Government had responded to the Rajah's generosity in parting with such a large portion of his country, 'about thirty miles long, from north to south, and from six to ten broad' by Lloyd's own account, with at least equal generosity; but there was no such response. On the contrary Government rejected the Rajah's proposal:

'With these conditions it appears to the Governor-General-in-Council to be impracticable to comply. Darjeeling is an uninhabited tract and it would have been unobjectionable to make over to Sikkim in a similar tract in the plains in exchange for it, but Dabgong is a fertile and populous district which was settled with (?) inhabitants with the Rajah of Julpye Gooree in the year 1828——.' ('Ibid.no. 104') (Pinn, p.125).²

Notes

1. Hope Namgyal, the then Maharani of Sikkim, has also made use of this document of the year 1835 in her article 'The Sikkimese view of land-holding and the Darjeeling Grant' (1966, p. 50); but she has given as signature, 'A.A. Campbell, Superintendent'. Campbell did not become Superintendent, Darjeeling, until three or four years after Lloyd had received this document back from the Rajah, and forwarded it to Government ('Consultations', 8 February 1836, No. 85, dated 5 January 1836) (Pinn, p.128); so Campbell's signature in the Namgyal article seems to be at odds with the date of Lloyd's model of how he

conceived the deed of grant should be drafted: 29th Maugh, Sambat 1891. A.D. 1st February 1835 (Namgyal 1966, p.50).

2. The Darjeeling tract was not, however, entirely ‘ uninhabited’; while it is true that Col. Lloyd had failed in his efforts to persuade ‘the Lepcha refugee Cazeè (chief) [the Terring Cazeè] and his followers’ to return from Nepal to their former homes in the Darjeeling area, Lloyd dispatched to Fort William a list of Lepchas who had remained in the tract:

‘Name of place of residence: (4 names)

Name of settler: (23 names)——

Number of persons in the family: males 51, females 37’ [‘1 June-Consultations, Fort William 10 July 1839, No. 103’ Pinn 1986, p. 173].

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Thacker’s Post-Office Directory, 1865, ‘Darjeeling’

Appendix

1. Lepcha version

Shir-shir-shir lá-kró sá-hyep tím-bo-nun. dor-zi-ling rók sa-zóng sâ-tshóm-ká sá-hyep júng-sa sáp-shí dók-bám-bo-pang tá-bá thogang-na kró-sang ‘o-re-ká ‘úl-bám-pá ‘ân go shir-shir-shí-kyím panonun shir-shir-shir sá-hyep tím-bo-sa ‘yeng-zóng-lóm-ká. dor-zi-ling

rók-ká ríng-git ‘úng tim-bo-sa ‘á-mil. ‘ân bá-lá-sán úng-sa ke-hyel
‘ân ríng-git ‘úng-kup-sa ‘á-tsún. ‘âr má-há-no-dí ‘úng-sa ro-no-sa ‘á-
pín mí shir-shir-shir kom-pa-ní (‘o-re-na) bá-ha-dúr-ká phu-tho-ma ‘o.

(I am indeed fortunate in having Major L.S. Tamsang to consult on problems in connection with the Lepcha text of the Grant; and I am happy to acknowledge the help that I have received from him).

2. Hindustani version

Shrí-shrí-shrí bará lát sáheb báhádurne darjiling páhár áb háwá sardke sabab josarkárká naukarlog bimár honese usjagemo áwonese áram pánegá iswáste cáhete haim so hám mahárájá shrí shrí sikímpati shrí shrí shrí bará sáheb mausuphke sáth dostike sabab darjiling páhár jobará ringítká dakhin wo bálásan wo kahel wochotáringit nadiká púrb wo mahánandawí ranonadiká pachimsaihai shrí shrí shrí kampani imsne báhádurko caráyáiti san 1891 sál tárikh 29 mágh.

(I have Sri. A.K. Pandey, M.A., B.Ed., Senior Hindi Master at Dr. Graham’s Homes, to thank for helping me with identifying letters in this text that are written in an unusual way and also for help with unusual spellings. For example, as regards letter shapes the first syllable of both cáhte and caráyáiti is written with the Newari letter for c (a) not the Devanagari, and the letter for the b – of báhádur and the -b of sáheb and áb are written with the Newari b and -b – the same shape as the Devanagari w- and -w while the w – of háwá and áwone are written with the Devanagari w – with a dot underneath. As regards mis-spellings bahádur and pahár, for example, have been mis-spelt báhádur and páhár, and hawá has been given the Nepali spelling háwá).

**COLONEL LLOYD'S
MISTREATMENT OF THE
DARJEELING LEPCHAS (1838)**

Introducing Major (later Colonel) Lloyd and his proclamation

Regular readers of *Aachuley* were introduced to Major Lloyd in its July 1998 issue (Vol.2, no.2) through the article 'The Lepcha text of the deed of Grant of Darjeeling .' The Lepcha who translated this important document, dated 29 Magh 1891 (25 Feb., 1835 A.D.), for Maj Lloyd had a rather distinctive style of handwriting; we find his handwriting again, three years later, in the Lepcha version of a proclamation by Lloyd, now promoted to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. By the 12th of October 1838 A.D., the date of this proclamation, the Colonel had begun to establish his authority over the Darjeeling Tract, which he described as about 30 miles long from north to south and from six to ten miles broad (the area concerned can be seen, like an island in the middle of southern Sikkim, in a map of the year 1848 reproduced on page 11 of that same July issue of *Aachuley*).

It is Mr. Arthur Foning, the well-known author of *Lepcha; my vanishing tribe* (1987), whom I have to thank for allowing me to photocopy the proclamation, which he told me he had been given in Darjeeling; it consists of a Lepcha version followed by versions in three other languages, Persian, the diplomatic language of the Mogul Empire (1526-1857), Hindustani, and Bengali (I have given all four versions in facsimile).

Lloyd's intentions

To his masters in Calcutta, the Governor General's Council, Lloyd has summarized the purpose of his proclamation as follows:

' As long as it appeared uncertain whether we should occupy the place permanently or not, I did not think it of material consequence to take any steps to inform persons who should come to inhabit and cultivate the hills which had become ours further than by casual mention in conversation that they must consider themselves subjects of the East India Company. But now that the measures and intentions of Government are quite decided as to the occupation of the grant, I have issued a proclamation to the people who settled themselves on various parts of

the same, informing them that they thereby become our subjects and are no longer under the orders or laws of Sikkim, directing them to pay their revenue to me, and in case of their requiring justice, it should be afforded them on their application to me at Dorjiling,.....’ (‘Consultations, Fort William, 16 January 1839, No. 61’, quoted by F. Pinn in his highly informative book The Road of Destiny: Darjeeling Letters 1839, 1986, p. 12).

The Darjeeling Lepchas and their reaction to the proclamation

Having stated Lloyd’s intentions I come now to a brief account of some aspects of the manner of life of the people who were at the receiving end of his new scheme, the Lepchas, and of their response to this sudden change of administration. For both these topics I am again able to draw on The Road of Destiny, the chapter entitled ‘Visit to a Lepcha Village.’ In this chapter Pinn has quoted in full a contribution by ‘A Wanderer’ to the Calcutta newspaper The Englishman dated 3 March 1839 (Pinn 1987, pages 82-91); but I have restricted myself to a few passages that I find especially revealing.

‘A few days after our arrival the Foujdar of the Lepchas, with a great number of followers, paid a visit to Colonel Lloyd; he was a short, stout man, with Tartar feature, and the Chinese costume; he appeared intelligent and lively, and his followers were fine, active men; many of them extremely well dressed, and all bearing long knives, some also carried bows and arrows; one of the latter gave us a specimen of his woodcraft by splitting a piece of wood, almost nine inches by three, that was lying on the side of the fort hill, at a distance of full three hundred yards from the verandah of Colonel Lloyd’s house from whence he discharged the arrow, and that without in the least resting on his aim.

Being desirous of seeing something of the domestic manners of these people, called there Lepchas, we engaged the services of one of the race who understood Hindoostani as interpreter, and left Darjeeling under his guidance. The descent towards their village was to the east, passing Sero’s hill, — and after a journey of about three hours duration [we] arrived at the Dingpun’s house at Pudumtam.

The houses of this village are few in number and scattered; those of the Dingpun, where we were, were a fair sample of the rest, which are of superior construction to those commonly met with in the plains. *****LINE***** The men always wear a short knife, varying from a foot and a half to two feet in length, and from one and a half to two inches broad, terminating in a point; this is made of very finely tempered metal brought from Nepal, and is used for all purposes from cutting up a chilly to felling an oak tree;

While resting there, we had a sample of the activity of the Lepchas in wood cutting. A young girl who had come down with our party for mere amusement, borrowed the knife from the Dingpun, and climbing a moderate sized tree overhanging a steep precipice, whence we were enjoying the prospect of the falls of the Rungeet, in an almost incredibly short space of time, lopped off every branch. We had also a specimen of their native music. While reclining on the sward to rest himself, the Dingpun took out a short flute or pipe of bamboo, having four holes as stops, called a pullit, with which he really discoursed most excellent music, and amused us for some time with a series of wild airs, bearing a striking resemblance to the Highland pibrochs-. *****LINE***** While at Pudumtam we witnessed a scene which strongly illustrated the independence and hospitable character of the Lepchas. Two official chuprasses, deputed by Colonel Lloyd, arrived at the Dingpun's house with a copy of the proclamation, announcing the taking possession by the British Government of all the territory between the Balasun and Mahananda, ceded by the Sikkim Rajah, but by some omission or mischance, this British proclamation was unaccompanied by corresponding announcement from the Rajah to the people of the portion ceded. The Dingpun received the men hospitably, and being unable, from our residence with him, to find them accommodation in his own house, he loaded them with rice, Indian corn, chillies, tobacco, etc. almost enough for a fortnight's supply, and sent them to a neighbour. But he positively refused to receive the proclamation, and on the following morning repeated the refusal, declining even to allow of its being posted against the wall of his house, although he read and explained it to his neighbours, whom he summoned for the purpose. His argument against receiving it was plainly and boldly set forth, grounded on the fact that he

Shedding some light on the history, language and literature of the Lepchas

and his father before him, had duly and faithfully served the Maharajah, from whom they have received favours, and that therefore he could receive no other master without the Rajah's orders. Besides, he added, "when I go to visit my Maharaj, he receives me gladly and feeds me well; but if ever I pay the Colonel sahib, he gives me nothing to put in my mouth; although, when the sahib log or their visitors come to my village, I give them what I can and pay them every attention." ***LINE*** I really, Mr. Editor, felt humbled at this simple declaration of the Dingpon. It grieved me that one of so open and hospitable a disposition, should not have been better understood than to have been so negligently received on his visits to the station, as to have grounds for making such an assertion. This will show you what might be expected from the Lepchas by a conciliatory and considerate mode of treatment, that they have even been carelessly regarded is, I well know, only from oversight, and so good is the disposition towards them expressed by the authorities at Darjeeling, that I have no doubt they will soon be brought in to offer us that aid and intercourse which is so necessary for the welfare of the station and the comfort of its visitors and residents' (Pinn 1986, pages 82-90)

References

Consultations, Fort William, January 1839, No. 61

LINE Foning, A.R., 1987. Lepcha: My vanishing tribe (New Delhi: Sterling)

LINE Pinn, F., 1986. The Road of Destiny: Darjeeling Letters 1839 (Calcutta: OUP)

LINE Sprigg, R.K., 1948 'The Lepcha text of the deed of Grant of Darjeeling', Aachuley 2, 2, 4-11.



Handwritten Lepcha script in multiple lines, appearing as a dense block of text. The script is highly stylized and difficult to decipher.

Handwritten text in a different script, likely Bengali or Urdu, located below the main block of Lepcha script.

Handwritten text in Bengali/Urdu script, possibly a signature or a specific title.

Handwritten text in Bengali/Urdu script, continuing the narrative or providing additional context.

Handwritten text in Bengali/Urdu script at the bottom of the page.

حکم در سبب نام کس که از رتبه قدیم مقام در جنگ
مطابق با عیال و بچه و هم به آن بگویند

مما حکم کس از راه دوستی ارباب و بچه و هم به آن بگویند

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कुमुदसहाय्यामः सुदुःख श्रीमिक्रौल शाहे सतिव महाद्वर प्रकाश
दरलेलिग मन्तः २५ साल देमि तारिष १२ अकतुव्र मतावेक सन १२५५

साल वन्धा तारिष २५ माहे असिन

श्रीमिस्तिकमपतिकारुजा आजराह दोस्तद्वारि सन १५९९ समवका

सुमासुवे सुकाम दुजिलिगका दानपत्रमे छोघरिगित प्रोकोहलो

वासासन नदिसेपाव प्रोत्रो प्रोक्तानदानदिसुपद्धिम् प्रोक्कारिगितः

सदिसेषिव जोसवः प्रयाप सुषुकरै श्रीमिस्तिकार कम्पनिवहाद्वारे

शिषदिरै इमवासेभव वलिसवमूलक सरकारमे जप्रकके सदिसेसुषु

जामा जगिकके वाकिफकीअप्यातारै यारिक्कि सराजाममडफेतर

जाप्रबानत यान कुषाववीकारपाका प्रोदिसा प्रोवाधरिगित

इहमयतान वीगैरै प्रोप्रसुकोदुसुअदाज नालेवे वलकेवलिसुवमूलकमे

जेमवाशु अदिआवो लेपचा प्रोमेवकोठेभाष वीगैरैप्रोदिसुवमूलक

अपक्रतारै जलोगकेप्र किसिवात्रमे उकुमसादेर प्रोउकोकापजता

सुसिवावारे कीसवासेकी सदिसेसुसारायाका तारिषसे जलोग

अकार कम्पनिवहाद्वारक सुषुकरै श्रीमिस्तिकारिकाविषके अकार

सवका देसुप्रोगको गारिक्कि अया २ पधापत्र दलिसदसाकिवो

गारह पुनर इसुजुका सुषुकरै अया २ पजावावीगैरै

इमरि मतावेकहमम प्रकाश दुजिलिगमे अदिबतने मे गारुवागे

THE EARLIEST PRINTED BOOKS IN LEPCHA

I. Start and Niebel : Bible translation (1845-74)

In two years' time Lepchas everywhere will be able to take pride in the distinction of having had their language in print for 150 years; and Christian Lepchas, in particular, will have the added satisfaction of knowing that it was some of the Books of The Bible that were the first to be printed in Lepcha; I am referring here to printing with movable types, first invented in the middle of the 15th century; but if we include lithography, printing from drawings on soft stone (invented about 1799), then the date for the 150th anniversary has already passed; for the first entry under the heading 'Lepcha' in the library catalogue of the British and Foreign Bible Society, London, is:

'[1845 (St. Matthew's Gospel Calcutta? 1845]. Some years before 1845 a mission had been begun by W. Start, formerly an Anglican Clergyman, a [t] Darjiling, in the hope of evangelizing the Lepchas, Bhutias, and Nepalese of the neighbourhood. W. Start translated a few books with the help of [C.G] Niebel, one of the original members of the Moravian Mission to Darjiling and had them printed at his own expense. The earliest publication was this lithographed edition of St. Matthew's Gospel. 6321'.

When I asked to see this remarkable book, the Library Assistant at Bible House (London) explained to me that the square brackets enclosing this first entry in the Lepcha section of the Catalogue meant that the Society did not possess a copy but knew that it had been published.

Since the library at Bible House is a highly comprehensive collection of religious books, we must fear that there are now no copies of this, the first Lepcha printed book, in existence. In that case we must return to 1999 as the year in which to commemorate the first book to be printed in Lepcha by using movable types; and this book is also probably the oldest Lepcha printed book to have survived to the present day. The entry in the Library's Catalogue reads:

'1849— The Book of Genesis and part of Exodus in Lepshá'. Baptist Mission Press: Calcutta. 1849——translated by [C.G] Niebel——6322.' ['Printed by J. Thomas at the Baptist Mission Press.

1849'] (we know from Surgeon D.F. Rennie's book "Bhotan and the story of the Dooar War' (1866/1970,367) that Niebel was, in fact, a Baptist; so the Bible House Library Catalogue was mistaken in referring to him as a Moravian). This book marks the beginning of an era in Lepcha book production; so I have thought it worthwhile to give the title page and the first page of the text in facsimile.

The corresponding English text of verses 1-7 of this page of Niebel's translation into Lepcha is as follows (I have given it as it appears in the 'Authorized Version of the Holy Bible', sometimes referred to as the 'King James Version', which dates from the reign of King James I of England (1603-25), because that was the only English translation that would have been available to Start and Niebel; 'A Revised Version' was not published until 1881, for the New Testament, and 1885, for the Old Testament, by which time Niebel had died):

Genesis Chapter 1

1. In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.
2. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.
3. And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.
4. And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness.
5. And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day.
6. And God said, let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters.
7. And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament: and it was so.'

Though it was Niebel alone who translated 'Genesis and part of Exodus' into Lepcha, he and Start co-operated in translating and publishing a second Gospel in that same year, 1849, namely 'St. John's Gospel'; and 1849 was also the year in which they printed a revised

འཇུག་ལཱ་

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THE BOOK
OF
GENESIS
AND
PART OF EXODUS
IN
LEPSHA.

CALCUTTA:

PRINTED BY J. THOMAS, AT THE BAPTIST MISSION PRESS.

1849.

edition of 'St. Matthew', probably in Calcutta, in which case it would have been printed at the Baptist Mission Press using J. Thomas's newly cast Lepcha fount.

The Rev. Mr. Start, who had first come to Darjeeling in 1841, and 'at once, with the view of forming a mission, started making a limited collection of Lepcha words', was forced by ill health to leave Tukvar, near Darjeeling, in 1852, and return to England; but his assistant Niebel remained in Darjeeling until his death, from dysentery, in 1865; and his tombstone is to be seen in the old cemetery in Darjeeling. He had been in the Darjeeling area since 1843.

Start and Niebel were, thus, the first foreigners to translate books from English into Lepcha, namely the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and John, two of which, as we have already seen, were published during the period 1845-9; two Bible Books were also re-printed after Niebel's death, 'The Gospel of John, in Lepcha', in 1872, and 'The Book of Genesis and part of Exodus in Lepshá', in 1874.

II. A weakness in the Baptist Mission Press's fount

Though, at first sight, the Lepcha fount gives the impression of being admirably clear and a credit to J. Thomas's skill as a type designer, there is one respect in which I feel that it is inferior to the traditional hand-written form of the Lepcha letters. My criticism has to do with the Lepcha letters for the two vowels o and á. In hand-written Lepcha the letters for these two vowels are different: the letter á is distinguished from the letter o by a little hook running down from the head of the letter to the right, or, for some writers, by a bent shape as against a slightly curved shape, by \wedge for á as against \lrcorner for o, or by $<$ for á as against $($ for o; so that 'á-bo 'father', for example, is written either $\mathcal{R}\wedge\text{10}$ or $\mathcal{R}<\text{10}$; but in the printed style devised for Lepcha by J. Thomas of the Baptist Mission Press, 1849, the letters for á and o have exactly the same shape, $($, with the result that á-bo is printed as $\mathcal{R}((\text{0}$. This means that in printing the only difference between the two is that for o the letter comes before its 'á-kup letter and for á it comes after its 'á-kup letter; the difference is purely a matter of position.

In words like $\mathcal{R}((\text{0}$ and $\mathcal{R}((\mathcal{F}$ ('á-bo, 'á-mo, 'father', 'mother'),

it is easy to see that the first ᳵ belongs to the first syllable, á , while the second ᳵ belongs to the second syllable, bo or mo ; but where the letter occurs only once, it is sometimes difficult to know whether it is á , belonging to the first syllable, or o belonging to the second syllable. For example the fifth word on line 2 of the ‘Genesis’ text above (verse 2), ᳵ᳚ could be read as either ‘ á-ta ’ or ‘ á-to ’; so unless you know enough Lepcha to be able to guess from the context which is the correct alternative, you are just as likely to read it wrong as to read it right.

Similarly, one might be tempted to read ᳵ᳚ as ‘ á-ko ’ rather than ‘ a-ka ’ ‘hand’; or, the other way round, one might, mistakenly, read ᳵ᳚ ‘five’ as fá-nga ; yet there is no need for this difficulty; J. Thomas could just as easily have followed the hand-written Lepcha letter shapes, and devised different shapes for á and o .

III. Mainwaring: Grammar and Dictionary (1876,1898)

A. The Grammar (1876)

Two years after the reprint of Niebel’s ‘The Book of Genesis and part of Exodus in Lepsha’ (1874) Col. G.B. Mainwaring’s ‘A Grammar of the Róng (Lepcha) Language’ (1876, printed by C.B. Lewis). Apart from the weakness in the Baptist Mission Press’s Lepcha fount and that I have criticized in section II above I consider that the scholarly Colonel was indeed fortunate in having a well designed fount of Lepcha letters ready for him to use, supported by 28 years’ experience of printing Lepcha at the Baptist Mission Press, Calcutta.

B. The Dictionary (Berlin, 1898)

In the manuscript of his other book too, ‘Dictionary of the Lepcha-language’, Mainwaring had written the Lepcha entries in the Lepcha script as well as transcribing them into Roman letters; but its editor, A. Grunwedel, was not permitted to print the Lepcha script. In the Preface he has written: ‘When the manuscripts of the late General Mainwaring were entrusted to the editor it was desired by the British Government, that the type used should be Roman. “The so-called Lepcha alphabet used by General Maninwaring in his Grammar is a

pure fiction. The language has properly speaking no written character, though it is possible that on a few occasions a debased variety of the Tibetan character may have been resorted to. There is however no necessity whatever and no real justification for incurring the expense of starting Lepcha type nor as a matter of fact can a complete fount of such type be constructed” (ix). In view of this ill-informed prohibition by the British Government the most that Grunwedel could do to follow the author’s wishes was to illustrate the 55 letters of the Lepcha script, in both their printed and their written type (x; with corresponding Tibetan letters, for comparison, in both the U-med and the U-can styles), followed by two pages of hand-written Lepcha in facsimile from the Berlin manuscript of the ta-she sung.

IV. Dyongshi Sada: a catechism and a Gospel (1903, 1908)

Early in the next century there came an addition to the two Gospels that had already been published, Matthew and John. The reference to this third Gospel translation in the Bible House library catalogue reads as follows:

‘1908 The Gospel of Luke in Lepcha----- Translated by Dyongshi, a Lepcha pastor, and other Lepchas, under the supervision of J.A. Graham and D. Macdonald’ (It was re-printed in Bangalore in 1953).

Although his name is not mentioned in the references to it in the Bible House library catalogue, it seems to me very probable that róng-sa á-vyet á-dun (the Rong Lepcha catechism), published by the Baptist Mission Press, Calcutta, for the Church of Scotland Eastern Himalayan Mission (1903), was also the work of Dyongshi Sada.

In any case the Rev. Mr. Dyongshi Sada is the first Lepcha to be recognized as a translator into Lepcha. I personally take pride in the knowledge that my grandfather-in-law David Macdonald was associated with him in that work.

**DR. HOOKER'S LEPCHA
TREASURER (1848-49)**

When Dr. Joseph Hooker, the world-famous botanist, made his plant-collecting expedition to Sikkim in 1848-49, a hundred and fifty years ago, it was only to be expected that he should take Lepchas with him as collectors; for he knew that Lepchas had an incomparable knowledge of local plants and trees; but it is also important to note that it was a Lepcha whom he choose to keep his accounts. Unfortunately there is no record of this Lepcha's name in Hooker's narrative of the expedition, 'Himalayan Journals' (1854/1909); we know only that he wrote Lepcha in a fine clear hand, in which he recorded the details of Hooker's daily expenses from the 15th December, 1848, to the 19th January, 1849 (Hooker 1905, pp.196-264), a financial document in Lepcha. The clarity, consistency, and beauty of his handwriting can be seen in the 42 lines of Lepcha script reproduced, in facsimile, in the appendix.

The expedition entered Sikkim from Nepal, and included among its members a handful of Gorkha soldiers under the command of a havildar as an escort for Hooker's safety; perhaps it was the presence of these troops from Nepal that was responsible for the sprinkling of Nepali words to be found in the text, but written in Lepcha script phonetically. These foreign troops were not, however, allowed to spend much time in Sikkim: at Lingdam, Hooker received a message of protest from the Rajah, and promptly dismissed them.

Hooker too, though not anonymous, was not as well known, in 1848-49, as he was to become later: in 1865 he was appointed for the post of Director of Kew Gardens, a position that he held until 1885, having been knighted in 1877 as Sir Joseph D. Hooker, Knight Commander of the Star of India. It was among his papers at Kew Gardens that this early Lepcha text came to light; about 25 years ago.

During his expedition Hooker formed a very high opinion of his Lepcha companions; he has given powerful expression to this favourable impression in the following passage from 'Himalayan Journals':

'It is always interesting to roam with an aboriginal, and especially a mountain people, through their thinly inhabited valleys, over their grand

mountains, and to dwell alone with them in their gloomy and forbidding forests, and no thinking man can do so without learning much, however slender be the means at his command for communion. A more interesting and attractive companion than the Lepcha I never lived with: cheerful, kind, and patient with a master to whom he is attached; rude but not savage, ignorant and yet intelligent; with a simple resource of a plain knife he makes his house and furnishes yours, with a speed, alacrity, and ingenuity that wile away that well-known long hour when the weary pilgrim frets for his couch. In all my dealings with these people, they proved scrupulously honest. Except for drunkenness and carelessness, I never had to complain of any of the merry troop; some of whom, bareheaded and barelegged, possessing little or nothing save a cotton garment and a long knife, followed me for many months on subsequent occasions, from the scorching plains to the everlasting snows. Ever foremost in the forest or on the bleak mountain, and ever ready to help, to carry, to encamp, collect, or cook, they cheer on the traveller by their unostentitious zeal in his service, and are spurs to his progress (p.123).

Reference

Hooker, Sir J.D., 1854. Himalayan Journals (London: Ward, Lock, and Co.) (2nd edition, 1905)

Shedding some light on the history, language and literature of the Lepchas

THE LEPCHA RAJA

At the 1996 Gaeboo Achok Birthday celebration I spoke briefly about K.P. Tamsang, who compiled 'Lepcha-English Encyclopedic Dictionary', as a hero of the Lepcha race; in my address at the meeting the following year, 1997, I recalled another distinguished Lepcha, Raja Tenduk Pulger. The title of Raja was conferred on Tenduk Pulger by the British Raj for services rendered during the brief Anglo-Tibet war of 1888, when the Derbyshire Regiment passed through Kalimpong on its way to the Jelep La. To the best of my knowledge the only other persons to be honoured with this British-Indian title were Raja Ugyen Dorji, for the crucial part he played in the negotiations leading to the Bhutan Treaty of 1910, and his son Raja Sonam Tobgay Dorji, whom we in Kalimpong recall each Saturday and Wednesday, because of the Raja Dorji Market, with its two impressive entrances.

The Reverend Mr. J.A. Graham, better known by his later title as Dr. Graham of Dr. Graham's Homes, has included a photograph of Raja Tenduk in his book 'On the threshold of three closed lands (1897).

Graham comments: 'His characteristics are those of his people, the Lepcha race — a gentle, kindly man, who gives us a polite and hearty welcome. As we enter the little reception room we notice the walls covered with photographs. His loyalty to the Maharani or Empress and the Royal Family is evident, and we see tokens for the esteem in which he has been held by many of the rulers of India. Tenduk's wife—the youngest of three, all of whom were alive till a few years ago, but resident at different seats — is a strong, modest-looking Sikkim Bhutia' (pp.49-50).

At about the time that this photograph was taken, just over a hundred years ago, Tenduk Raja was living in Kalimpong, and had been entrusted with the care of the young Crown Prince of Sikkim, who was later to become the 10th Chogyal, Sikyong Trulku, in 1914.

It was proper that Raja Tenduk should be in charge of the heir to the throne of Sikkim because the Raja was himself Sikkimese. 'The Gazetteer of Sikkim' (1894/1972) tells us that 'Doobgye (Tendook's father), though Jongpen of Barmie, went to Nagri as captain in the Sikhimese army, fought there against the Nepalese, and assisted Major

Latter to lay down the present boundary between Sikkhim and Nepal. He had two wives: by the younger wife, who was the daughter of the hGu-ling Jongpen, a Barphungpuso by family, he had three sons who lived to grow up, viz., hBrug-br Tan-h Dsin, Bahadur and Tendook Pulger' (p.34).

Tenduk Pulger had the good fortune to be born the nephew of another distinguished Lepcha, the Chebu Lama (Astrologer Lama); when the Chebu Lama died, in 1866, Tenduk Pulger inherited from him one third of his property, fifteen and a half square miles of land in the north-western part of Darjeeling District known as the Karmi Estate.

Tenduk Pulger's career in Government service began in 1875, when, according to the Bengal postal directories, he was appointed one of two Tehsildars under the Deputy Commissioner, Darjeeling. Three years later he became one of the Municipal Commissioners of Darjeeling; and he was appointed to the new post of Manager of Khas Mehals in 1885. His final appointment, in 1899, was to another new post, that of Manager of Government Estates, Kalimpong.

In 1891, as Manager of Khas Mehals, Raja Tenduk organized an agricultural show, Kalimpong's first, jointly with the Rev.Mr. Graham. So successful was it that, by 1893, it had expanded to include a beauty ompetition, not the beauty of the female form, though, but the beauty of national costumes, Lepcha, Bhutia and Nepalese.

Raja Tenduk died in 1902.

I well remember that when I met Dr. Paras Mani Pradhan in Kalimpong in 1980, he was preparing to write a book on famous men of Kalimpong; and he wished to include Raja Tenduk in the book as representative of the Lepcha race.

In three years' time we shall have got over the excitement of beginning a new millennium; and it will be a hundred years since the death of this outstanding Lepcha. I should like to think that his distinguished career would not go unremembered.

**AN ANGLO-LEPCHA AND
'LINGUISTIC SURVEY OF INDIA'
(1899)**

Early childhood: Ging, Margaret's Hope, Mungwa

‘In a thatch-roofed building perched on a steep Darjeeling hillside, facing the ever-glorious wonder of the Himalayan snow-peaks—and in company with other urchins – I received my first introduction to the arts of reading and writing in the language and script, and later in the tenets, of Sikkimese, and in the form of Buddhism, known as Lamaism, which is practised in the Eastern Himalayas. Not till I was nine years old did I receive any tuition in English. My first teacher was a Lepcha pundit, and from him I learnt the rudiments of Lepcha, Sikkimese, Nepali, and Hindi’ (David Macdonald, ‘Twenty years in Tibet’, 1932, p.11). The Lepcha pundit whom David Macdonald has referred to here was Namthak Rongong (1851-1921); and the school that he has referred to in such lyrical terms was Mungwa, one of the Hindi-medium schools recently founded by the Rev. Mr. Macfarlane (1840-87), who had moved from Gaya to Darjeeling in 1870.

David Macdonald’s place of birth was at some distance from Mungwa, at Ging Tea Estate, on the far side of Darjeeling; and 1873 is the year that he himself has given as the year of his birth (though ‘The Bengal Directory’ gives the year 1870 as the year in which his father, D. Macdonald, was on Ging, as an Assistant in the Darjeeling Tea Company). After a short spell at the Company’s neighbouring garden, Poobsering, in 1872, still as an Assistant, D. Macdonald left that Company in 1873, and moved to the J. Taylor Company as Manager of Margaret’s Hope T.E., near Kurseong. No doubt it was because of the proprietor’s surname that David Macdonald’s younger brother was christened Taylor.

In a handwritten account of his life David Macdonald has recorded that ‘then it so happened that my father was transferred to Margaret’s Hope Tea Estate where we were very happy. My mother had plenty of cows and one day when she had a large vessel with boiling milk, I fell down and burnt my hand.

One day my father got a telegram to go to Calcutta. So he got his pony ready and held a whip in his hand. I ran out to him and held it tightly not allowing him to go. But he turned round and said to me “Sonny,

I am coming back”. This was told to me by my aunt in later days when I had grown bigger. The servant who accompanied my father returned alone and reported to my mother that the Sahib sailed away in a ship.’

The last entry for ‘D. Macdonald’ in ‘The Bengal Directory’ is for 1875; but it may be that he did not abandon his little family completely: he is said to have made a monthly payment of perhaps as much as Rs.25 to his wife through a Darjeeling bank until 1920.

‘Then my mother removed herself to Home (Hum) khas mahals where my maternal grandfather lived and had a large piece of land. My mother lived with her father and she took me to Mungwa Mission School and put me in charge Namthak a Lepcha Prachin, who was afterwards ordained to the Ministry, (and) looked after me very well in 1879.’

At school in Darjeeling

It was not without good reason that David MacDonald’s mother’s name was Apu Dolma – Apu, our Editor tells me, means ‘resolve’, ‘determination’, even ‘obstinacy’ – for she had made up her mind that the two boys should have the best education available. Macdonald’s life story continues: ‘In 1880 my mother took me and my brother to Darjeeling. Here I attended the Mission School at Lochnagar for a few months. Then one day my mother told me to take my brother and attend school where we could learn English. Next day someone took us to the Government Bhutia Boarding School.

The Headmaster, Babu Troilokya Nath Chakravarti, wrote down my name and that of my brother. [T.N. Chakravarti acted as Headmaster (at a salary of Rs. 150 a month) while Sarat Chandra Das, the renowned Bengali Tibetan scholar was away on a visit to Tashilhunpo and Lhasa, from November 1881 to December 1882]. This School was amalgamated with the Zillah School and was transferred to the Ferndale Road school where it is now known as Darjeeling High School. I read up to the Matriculation class and became a Pupil Teacher for about two years.’

To make her son less conspicuous in a Tibetan school Apu Dolma dressed him up as a Tibetan; and he told me himself that he was known at that time as Dorje. He received an allowance of Rs. 3 a month, which was enough for him to live on in those days.

Macdonald and General Mainwaring

In his recollections Macdonald has described his acquaintance with Gen. Mainwaring as follows: 'I have met General Mainwaring in 1889-1890. After teaching in the Government High School I used to run up to the Woodlands Hotel. — I was about 16 years of age'. His purpose was to help the General to complete his Lepcha-English dictionary. Macdonald continues: 'During this period I met General Mainwaring, who viewed the Lepcha people with great interest. Lebong belonged to him and he greatly desired to transform it into an institution or college for the Lepcha population. He took a Lepcha boy to England who graduated in the Oxford University, and returned to India as the Headmaster of the Lepcha School. Unfortunately for the Lepchas, he suddenly took ill, and died at the Eden Sanitarium. His name was Thamboo Sahib.

The General approached the Headmaster of the B.B.School, and suggested that I be sent to England on the similar motives of Thamboo Sahib, but the latter highly objected to such suggestions, seeing he planned for me to work in India. Through sheer disappointment, he sold Lebong for the price of Rs. 26,000 to the Government of Bengal, and retired to England broken hearted (but died at Serampur, where he is buried). In 'Lieutenant General G.B. Mainwaring, Bengal Staff Corps', the first chapter of his book 'Sahebs and a collection of tales about Sikkim and Nepal Himalayas (1993)' Maj. L.S. Tamsang has given the date of Mainwaring's death as 16th January, 1893.

So both Mainwaring and the Headmaster had made plans for Macdonald; but, in the end, it was his own plans that he chose to follow; and these were amorous rather than academic: on the 14th December, 1894, at Ghoom, he married Alice Curtis (1878-1935), daughter of Thomas Billington Curtis (1839-92), Manager, Tukvar Tea Estate, and Rachel Palmu (Lama), a Sherpa.

Macdonald and 'Linguistic Survey of India'

Such was the family background, and the schooling, that prepared and qualified Macdonald for the task of contributing the specimen of Lepcha; part of his contribution I have included at the end of this article. It contains a passage from the Bible. 'The Parable of the Prodigal Son', translated from English into Lepcha, in 1899. As regards the accuracy of the Lepcha text, when I read through it with K.P. Tamsang in 1952, during the year that he spent in London as Research Assistant in Lepcha at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, he was satisfied with the quality of the translation into Lepcha except for the spelling of the three words ལོ་མོ་མོ་ , ལོ་མོ་མོ་ and ལོ་མོ་མོ་ these, he insisted, ought to be corrected to ལོ་ , ལོ་ and ལོ་ respectively, which are the spellings that he has given in his 'Lepcha-English Encyclopaedic dictionary'. Possibly Macdonald's spellings represent pronunciations that he heard in the area in which he grew up, Rangli Rangliot.

Macdonald also contributed specimens of two other languages to the Survey, jointly with Colonel Waddell: Tibetan (Central dialect), Tibetan (Sikkimese). All three are to be found in Part I of Volume III of 'Linguistic Survey of India' published in 1909, containing (i) a census of the number of speakers, (ii) a bibliography, (iii) a grammatical analysis, and, usually, (iv) a specimen of the language, if possible, the well-known passage 'The Parable of the Prodigal Son' from the Bible ('The Gospel according to St. Luke', chapter 15, verse 11-32).

The reason why the same passage has, for the most part, been used for the language specimens is so that they can be easily compared with each other. This is especially important for Lepcha, because it is something of a mystery language: although even a cursory glance at the languages in Part I of Volume III of 'Survey' will show quite a number of words that correspond quite well with Lepcha in both sound and meaning, none of those languages seems to resemble Lepcha as closely as, for example, the way in which Limbu closely resembles Bantawa, Khaling, Sunwar, and the other Rai (or Khambu) languages, or the way in which Gurung resembles Tamang and Thakali. The language that most nearly resembles Lepcha according to Professor Bodman, of Cornell

TIBETO-BURMAN FAMILY. TIBETO-HIMALAYAN GROUP
LEPCHA OR RÓNG
SPECIMEN I
TRANSLITERATION AND TRANSLATION

(*Mr. David Macdonald, 1899.*)

Ma-ró kát-sa ä-kup nyet nyi. Ha-nyí nóng-kä ä-kup tek-nun
Man one-of sons two were. Both among son small-by
 ä-bo-rem shu, 'e ä-bo-wa, gyü-gi-cho-nun sa-tet ka-su ka-kä
father-to said, 'O father, substance-wealth-from how-much my share
 thüp-shyet nyi-wung-re ka-sum nóng-wa' O-thä hu-nun ha-yüm ha-do-sa
getting-for being-that me-to give' Then him-by them-to his
 gyü-gi-cho rit-bi-fät-te. Sa-'ayäk ä-gyöp ma-bäm ä-kup tek-nun
property divided-give-finished. Days many not-going son small-by
 gyü-gi-cho tyäng 'gyom-bu-bän lyäng ä-rum kät-kä nóng-lung
property all gathered-carried-having country far one-to going
 o-bä ä-jen-sa 'ayük-kä ha-do-sa gyü-gi-cho-pang shang-fät-te. Hu-nun
there evil-of work-in his-own goods to-scatter-finished. Him-by
 tyäng shang-lel-lung-sa ä-lün o-thä lyäng o-re-kä krit-näm
all to-scatter-completing-finishing-of after then country that-in famine
 ngün-nón-ne. Un hu zóm-shet ma-nyin ngün-nón. Un hu
to-happen-went. And he food without became. And he
 nóng-lung lyäng o-re-sa ma-ró kät-sa chhó-lung bäm. Un hu-nun
going country that-of man one-of joining lived. And him-by
 ha-düm ha-do-sa nyót-kä món bro-shang klóng. Un hu món zo
him his-own field-in swine feeding-for sent. And he swine food
 la zo-bän ha-do ta-bók blen-shang säk-ching. Un to-na-la
even eaten-having own belly filling-for intended. And anyone
 ha-düm shü-la ma bin-ne. O-thä ha-do tem-bo lät-lung hu-nun
him-to anything not gave. Then own consciousness coming him-by
 lí, 'ka-su ä-bo-sä chpäp-chhu-sang-sa zóm-shet nyi-wung-kä thóm-shet-la
said, 'my father-of servants-of eating-for being-in spare-to-even
 nyi-pä. Shen-la go-na krit-dók-lung mäk-det-pä. Go lük-lung ka-su
is. But I hungering die. I arising my
 ä-bo lyäng nóng-bän shu-sho, "e ä-bo-wa, go-nun ta-lyäng-kä jü-bü
father near gone-having say-will, "O father, me-by heaven-in living

rum-sa un ä-do-sa dun-kä lä-yo zük-fät-te. Go ä-do-sa ä-kup
God-of and you-of presence-in sin to-make-finished. I your son
 ngün-shang la ma-wa-ne. Ka-sum ä-do-sa chäp-chhu-sang nóng-kä kät
be-to even not-worthy. Me your servants among one
 zang ngün-kön-na." ' O-thä hu lük-lung ha-do ä-bo lyäng löt-di-pä
like be-let." ' Then he arising own father near back-came.
 Shen-la ha-do bo-nun ha-düm ä-rum-do-kä shi-bän kyón-dyít
But his father-by him distance-at seen-having compassion
 mät-lung däng-nón-bän ha-do pa-tóp-kä kä-bän chük-mät.
making run-gone-having his neck-on embraced-having kiss-made.
 Ä-kup-ren-nun shu, 'e ä-bo-wa, go-nun ta-lyäng-kä jü-bü rum-sa un
Son-the-by said, 'O father, me-by Heaven-in living God of and
 ä-do-sa dun-kä läyo zük-fät-te. Ä-lang-nun-pel ä-do-sa ä-kup
you-of presence-in sin to-do-finished. Henceforth your son
 ngün-shang la ma-wa-ne.' Shen-la ä-bo-re-nun chäp-chhu-sang-rem lí,
be-to even not-worthy.' But father-the-by servants-to said,
 'tyang lyen ryüm-bü dum dü-t-bän ha-düm dem-bi. Un ä-kä-kä
'all then good cloth brought-having him put-on. And hand-on
 ka-kyup, ä-thüng-kä lhóm chók-bi-wa. Un ka-yü zo-bän ä-gó-ä-nyí
ring, feet-on shoes to-put-give. And we eating merriment
 mät-kä. Shü-go-yo-gang, ka-su kup ä-re mäk-nón-bü-re, löt-zü-bäm-pä;
make-let. What-is-so-if, my son this dead-gone-the, again-living-is;
 fät-nón-bü-re, löt-thüb-ma.' O-thä ha-yü ä-gó-ä-nyí mät-ma-o.
lost-gone-the, again-found-is.' Then they merriment made.
 O-thä ha-do-sa ä-kup num-fren-re nyót-kä bäm-nyí. Un hu
Then his son elder-the field-in was. And he
 löt-di-lung li-sa ä-zut-kä khyá-shen pa-lit tung-dyü-sa lók-tsüt
back-coming house-of nearness-in arriving flute harp-of dance
 bäm-mung-sa ä-süt thyo-lung chäp-chhu kät-rem lik-bän vet, 'ä-re
going-one-of sound hearing servant one called-having asked, 'this
 shü ngün-bäm-mung go?' Hu-nun ha-düm lí-bi, 'ä-do-sa 'aying
what going-on is?' Him-by him-to said, 'your younger-brother
 löt-thi-ma, un ä-do bo-nun dun kät klóng-ma. Shü-go-yo-gang,
back-arrived, and your father-by feast one bestowed. Because,
 ha-düm ä-ryüm-ä-ryäm-sa tsum-thüp-pä.' Shen-la hu säk-lyäk-lung li-sa
him-to safe-and-sound met-got-is'. But he angry-being house-of
 góng-kä ma nóng-ne. Ä-sa tun-dók-kä ä-bo-re lyäng-kä plá-lung
inside not went. This-of account-on father-the outside coming

ha-düm yák-ma. Hu-nun ä-bo-rem shu, 'go-nun ä-tet nām ä-do-sa
him entreated. Him-by father-to said, 'me-by so-many years your
 chäp-chhu shu-pä, un sa-thä-la ä-do-sa kó ma hyók-ne.
service do, and ever-even your word not broke.
 O-lo-go-rüng ho-nun ka-sum sa-thä-la ka-su tyól-sang-sa dep-ka
Thus-was-though thee-by me-to ever my friends-of company-in
 ä-gó-ä-nyí mät-shang-sa tun-dók-ka sa-är-kup kät la ma nóng-ne.
merriment making-of account-on goat-young one even not gavest.
 Shen-la ä-do-sa ä-kup ä-re chhe-mü-sang-sa dep-kä ä-do-sa gyü-gi-cho
But your son this harlots-of company-in your goods
 zo-fät-bü-re, lót-thi-wung-sa-do, ho-nun ha-do tun-dók-kä dun
to-devour-finisher-the, back-coming-on, thee-by his sake-for feast
 klóng-ma.' Ä-bo-re-nun süng, 'e ä-kup-pa, ho-ta shükna ka-su-sa
bestowedest.' Father-the-by said, 'O son, thou always me-of
 dep-kä bām-nyi-de. Un sa-re-gun-na ka-su-sa nyi-wung-re, tyáng
company-in art. And whatever mine being-the, all
 ä-do-sa nyim-bä. Shen-la ka-yü ä-gó-ä-nyí mät-gät, un sum-gó
thine is. But we merriment make-should, and to-be-glad
 gät-pä. Shü-go-yo-gang, ä-do-sa 'aying ä-re mäk-nón-bü-re,
necessary-is. Because, your younger-brother this dead-gone-the,
 lót-zü-bäm-ma; fät-nón-bü-re, lót-thüb-ma-o.'
again-lived; lost-gone-the, again-found-is.'

TIBETO-BURMAN FAMILY. TIBETO-HIMALAYAN GROUP
LEPCHA OR RÓNG
SPECIMEN II

TRANSLITERATION AND TRANSLATION

(Mr. David Macdonald, 1899.)

'Ayä lyäng kät-kä phyuk-bü ma-ro-num-vóm nyet-kä ä-zóm
Formerly country one-in rich man-married-couple two-to food
ä-thyen gyü-gi-chó nyem-bü-kä ta-gri kup kät nyi-pä. Ä-bo ä-mü
drink riches being-in male child one was. Father mother
phyuk-bü-sa ä-kup ngün-bän 'ayük shü-la zük ma thüp-ne
rich-of son become-having work any to-do not being-got
bäm-nyi-shen, ä-lün-nun ä-bo-sa ä-mü-re mäk-nón-ne. Hu
living, afterwards father-and mother-the to-die-went. He
phyuk-bü kup ngün-bän ä-bo ä-mü-nun zük-thóm-bü gi-chó-pang
rich-man's son become-having father mother-by made-laid-by riches
zóm-lel-nun, gi-chó-pang mók-nón-ne, ä-zóm ä-thyen-pang gun-la
to-eat-finishing, riches exhausted-became, food drink altogether
mók-nón-ne. Wü-du-lung ma-ró lyäng khyóm-bräm-lung äzóm-zo-sa
exhausted-became. Hungering men with roaming-straying food-eating
ma nyin-bän mäk-nón-ne.
not being died.

'Ayük-thä lyäng o-re-kä bo mü ma-nyin-nung-sa ryót
At-the same-time country that-in father mother not being orphan
kup ä-jen kät nyi. O-re hu-re sa-nyi-so-näp yang, li-sa ma-nyin-ne,
child poor one was. That he day-night so, saying not-is,
'ayük zük, nyót zük, rip-shing sa-re nyi-wung-pang-la ryü-la
work did, field cultivated, flower-gardens which being-ever well
zük; gyü-gi-chó-lä thik-lyäng o-bä-sa ma-ró-pang-kä-la ä-zóm bi,
did; property authority there-of men-to-also food gave,
gi-chó ma-nyin-bü-kä-la gi-chó bi-ma. Un o-re-nun ta-lyäng-kä jübü
property not-being-to-also property gave. And therefore heaven-in living
rum-sa thü-ji-gun-rän-nun lyäng o-re-sa pa-no ngün-bän
God-of benignity-favour-from place that-of king become-having
bäm-nyi-ma.
lived.

Shedding some light on the history, language and literature of the Lepchas

University, U.S.A., is the Adi (or Abor-Miri) language of Arunachal Pradesh, the next nearest being Rawang and Jingpaw (or Kachin), of northern Burma, after which comes the Chungli dialect of Ao Naga; he has given several columns of Lepcha and Adi words for comparison to support his opinion in an article entitled 'On the place of Lepcha in Sino-Tibetan' in the international journal 'Linguistics of the Tibeto-Burman area' (11.1, 1988, pages 1-26).

Part I of volume III of "Linguistic Survey of India" contains specimens of languages of the Tibet-Burman Family such as Tibetan, Lepcha, Limbu, Tamang, and Abor-Miri to a total of about 40 languages and dialects; Part II contains Bodo, Naga, and Kachin, and Part III the Kuki-chin and Burma groups. The whole series comprises eleven volumes, bound in nineteen books, covering all the languages and dialects spoken in British India a hundred years ago, at the turn of the century, a prodigious piece of work.

Macdonald's later career

It was no mean feat for the twenty- six year old from Ging, Mungwa, and Darjeeling to have got himself invited to contribute to 'Linguistic Survey of India', in 1899, but his career did not end there:

- i) Five years later, in 1904, he went to Lhasa with the Younghusband Expedition as Interpreter to the Chief Medical Officer, Lt. Col. Waddell;
- ii) In 1909 he took up the post of British Trade Agent, Yatung, and used his authority there in 1910 to help the 13th Dalai Lama to escape from the Chinese troops pursuing him and take refuge in India.
- iii) In Yatung in 1912 he welcomed the Dalai Lama on his return to Tibet.
- iv) In 1921, at the peak of his career, he was Acting Political Officer, Sikkim, for the four-month period between the departure of Lt. Col. O' Connor and the arrival of Maj. F.M. Bailey;
- v) In 1929 and 1932 his two books 'The Land of the Lama' and 'Twenty years in Tibet' were published, in London.

The year of David Macdonald's death was 1962.

It was Major L.S. Tamsang who noticed that exactly 100 years had passed since David Macdonald contributed the two specimens of Lepcha to 'Linguistic Survey of India', and, believing this coincidence to be auspicious, invited me to write an account of the contributions and their contributor; I, for my part, was only too pleased to draw the attention of readers of 'Aachuley' to the remarkable life and career of my wife's grandfather.

**A FOREIGNER STUDIES
HEROES OF THE LEPCHA
RACE**

I. Renjongmu Lepchas and Tamsangmu Lepchas

The Lepchas believe themselves to be of common stock, descended from Fodong Thing and Nazong Nyu; K.P. Tamsang's entry for 'fa-grongthing' in his 'The Lepcha-English Encyclopedic Dictionary' (1980) reads: 'name of the first man and the husband of Nazong Nyu, whom God had created from the untrodden snows of Mt. Kanchanjunga and later became the progenitor of Lepcha race', but, about three hundred years ago history divided the Lepchas into an eastern and a western group.

A. Tamsangmu

The historical event that was responsible for dividing the Lepchas at that time was the expansion westward of the newly established state of Bhutan, founded by the Shabdrung ngag-dbang nam-rgyal (1554-? 1651). I will try to be more exact about the date of the Bhutanese conquest when I describe the Lepcha resistance to it, in section (III) below ('Geboo Achok'); what is certain is that towards the end of the 17th Century the Bhutan Government extended its rule right up to rivers Rongnyo, or Teesta, and Rongpo, with the result that the Lepchas living to the east of those rivers were to have a different history from those living to the west of them. The eastern Lepchas take their name Tamsangmu from the Tamsang, or Damsang fort, near Pedong, in what is now the Kalimpong Sub-Divisions of Darjeeling District of West Bengal. In Bhutanese times it was from this fort that they were administered, by a 'Soubah', subject to the 'Jongpen' of Dalimkot, a day's walk further to the east, as described by Surgeon Rennie in his fascinating book 'Bhutan and the story of the Doar War' (1866).

In an equally fascinating book, 'Lepcha, my vanishing tribe' (1987), Arthur Foning has thrown some light, from a personal point of view, on the significance of the Bhutanese conquest for his family. He points out that they owe their family name to it: 'Foning' is derived from the nickname **fo-nyung** 'deep-fanged', which was given to them because they had the unenviable duty of collecting taxes from their fellow Lepchas for the Bhutanese authorities in Damsang fort. By 1865, when

the Bhutan Government ceded the Tamsangmu Lepchas' territory to the Government of British India under the terms of the Sinchula treaty, their position had fizzled out.

This historical division of the Lepchas was supported by a geographical division: the swift-flowing river Rongnyo, or Teesta, and Rongpo were a formidable natural boundary. We can easily understand what an obstacle to free movement the river Teesta used to be at that time from a description by Surgeon Rennie in the book that I have just referred to, published in 1866: it took Rennie and his two companions on their way from Darjeeling to Kalimpong one and a half hours to cross the Teesta, one at a time, pulled over from one side to the other on a raft on each side of which had been attached a three-hundred-foot creeper. Their legs dangled dangerously in the water during this precarious crossing.

B. Renjongmu

Lepchas in the western part of Lepcha land, to the west of the rivers Rongpo and Teesta, take their name from Renjong, the Lepcha form of Denjong ('bras-ljongs), the Tibetan name for Sikkim. In the 17th Century the capital of this new kingdom was at Tashi Tengkha in the time of the first Chogyal, Phuntso Namgyal, but his son Tensung Namgyal moved it to Rabdentse, just below Pemionchi, or Pemayangtse. The Lepcha name for this palace fortress, fyúng gri, is more practical and nearer to nature than the Tibetan; Mainwaring's entry for it in his 'Dictionary of the Lepcha language' (1898, edited by Grunwedel) is: 'name of a house near Pemionchi, named from the abundance of the fyung bamboo growing there, built by one of the kings of Sikkim'.

It is doubtful whether one or two families of Renjongmu Lepchas are properly considered to be Lepcha: 'Sangmi-po, though sometimes styled Lepchas, are really Limbus' according to 'The Gazetteer of Sikkim' (1894), which also had 'Luksom-mo or Yoksom-mo, from the place of that name' listed as Lepchas, though I have met several Luksoms or Luxoms who said they were Limbus; and Vansittart, in his book 'Gurkhas' (1906), a guide for British recruiting officers of the Brigade

of Gurkhas, lists 'Loksom' as a Limbu 'tribe' name, from the Charkhola area (he also gives the Imehang tribe as 'descended from Lepchas').

This uncertainty should not be surprising; for the Limbus have been the western neighbours of the Lepchas from time immemorial; and both races are recognized as the indigenous tribes of present-day Sikkim State. Indeed, Foning writes: I remember our elders saying that if a boy does not get or like a Lepcha girl for a wife, it was all right to bring in a Limboo, or a Chong girl into the house, and, alongside, used to instruct the girls, and say that if they married anyone from outside the tribe, then they should pick a Limboo for a husband'.

This division into Tamsangmu and Renjongmu is reflected in the attitude of the Lepchas towards their two chief heroes, Geboo Achok and Thikung Men Salong. Drs. Plaisier, of Leiden University, has brought home to me the difference in esteem that these two heroes enjoy among Renjongmu and Tamsangmu Lepchas. It ought to have been clear to me that this was likely to be so; for the simple reason that these two are associated with opposite sides of Lepcha land, Men Salong with the north west of what is these days the State of Sikkim--he was able to guide Lhatsun Chenpo from Khangla to Jongri--, and Geboo Achok with Longshol and Dalimkot, near Gorubathan, in what is now the Kalimpong Sub-Division of Darjeeling District.

Of the two heroes I will report first on what I have been able to find out about Thikung Men Salong. My reason for giving an account of him first is that Renjong is felt to be the heart land of the Lepchas, or, to use Foning's word, 'mainland' of the Lepchas. There are several reasons why this area should be the more prominent of the two; these reasons include (i) the heroic part that the Changzed, or Prime Minister, Chothup played, as commander for the southern, or Lepcha army in resisting the Gorkha invasions (1775-89), which won him the nickname 'Satrajit'; (ii) his sister Anyo Gyelyum's having married the (6th) Rajah of Sikkim, Tenzing Namgyal (1780-90), and so having become the Rani of Sikkim, the only Lepcha Rani; (iii) her brother Bolek or Bholod's having become Prime Minister of Sikkim, until he, and most of his family, were murdered (1826; cf, also, for a fuller account, my '1826: the end of an era in the

social and political history of Sikkim'; to be published shortly by the Sikkim Research Institute of Tibetology); (iv) the setting up of a Lepcha reservation, at Zongu; (v) the Lepcha language's having been recognized as a State language in Sikkim, taught in the State's schools in accordance with its own syllabus and with its own printed textbooks.

II. Thinkung Men Salong or Thikung Salong

A. The Maharajah's version

Arthur Foning, in the book of his that I have referred to in section (I) above, writes of Thikung Men Salong as having been a contemporary of Lhatsun Chenpo (1597-1654). Lhatsun Chenpo is famous in Sikkim State as being the most prominent of the three missionaries who brought each his own school of Buddhist doctrine, Dzonkchen, Kartokpa, and Ngadakpa, from Tibet into Sikkim or, rather, into the land that was about to become the Kingdom of Sikkim. As his authority for this statement Foning refers to the (9th) Manarajah of Sikkim's 'History of Sikkim' (1908), in which the royal historian describes Thinkung Men Salong's meeting with Lhatsun Chenpo as follows: 'one Thekong Sa-lang, a Lepcha wizard by divine direction went to meet Lha-b Tsun and he met him at Chukar Pang-shong the first time. Next when Lha-b Tsun had opened the pass and was coming down, he met him again, and acting as a guide brought him over Khrag-thung-rong, Phag-mo Rong, Lhari-nying-phung and Yangsang phub, then down to Dechen-phub, which are known as the great caves, besides showing him several others of smaller note.- Thekong Sa-lang is believed to have lived about 300 years and to have possessed supernatural powers, though of a benignant kind. Hence Thekong Sa-lang's miraculous traces at Lha-ro nying-phub, the dent made by the lower end of his bow on the bolder, his foot print at Kharag-thung Rong, the clump of bamboos planted by him, and the tobacco plant, as well as his own grave, are still pointed out, and visited with reverential interest.'

B. Tamsang's version

This reference to three hundred years' experience is perhaps meant to link this Thikung Men Salong of the 17th Century to an earlier incarnation of the same wizard in the 15th century. It is to this earlier

century that the Danish scholar Siiger refers in his two-volume book, 'The Lepchas' (1967) in which he cites K.P. Tamsang: 'different traditions are current regarding the earliest Lepcha kings or chieftains. According to Tamsang, who represents an ancient Kalimpong tradition, the earliest known Lepcha king, called Turve pa no, reigned about A.D. 1400. His minister, Thikung Men Salong, invented the present Lepcha alphabet contrary to the general supposition that Lepcha script was invented by the third Maharajah 4 (4 ['Gazetteer of Sikkim '] p.42; Dict. IX; the Chronicles'.)

The passage in 'The Gazetteer' that Siiger has referred to here reads as follows; ' Among other works the Rajah [Chador Namgyal, (1700-17)] wrote a book on monastic discipline, called 'lchags-yig' composed a religious dance, Rong-cham, in honour of Takpoo or warlike demons, and designed an alphabet for his Lepcha subjects'.

As regards the date that K.P. Tamsang gave Siiger for Turve Pano (and therefore also for Thikung Men Salong), it seems to me likely that Tamsang may have taken the date from Mainwaring's 'A Grammar of the Róng (Lepcha) language' (1876). I remember well how closely Tamsang studied this grammar while teaching me Lepcha in London in 1952; so he is unlikely not to have noticed the passage in which Mainwaring writes: 'The earliest veritable information of their history commences from the time of their king Turve tur-ve pa-no, who, apparently, reigned about 450 years ago [1425]'.

C. A compromise version

In an article of my own, 'Hooker's expenses in Sikkim', in 'Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies' (1983) I tried to reconcile these two earlier accounts of the origin of the Lepcha script by suggesting that the 3rd Rajah, Chador Namgyal (1700-17), might have had a Lepcha assistant, and furthermore, that assistant might conceivably have been Thikung Men Salong; 'These two traditions are not necessarily incompatible: the 3rd Maharajah might have delegated the responsibility for the script to a native speaker of the language, possibly even Thikung Men Salong, who loyally gave the credit for his work to his royel master'.

I feel sure that if I had been the Rajah at that time, and therefore

also Sikkimese Tibetan (or Sikkim Bhutia), and had a strong desire to spread Buddhist beliefs among my Lepcha subjects, teaching them to write their own language, and to translate Tibetan religious books into Lepcha, the first thing I should have done would have been to try and find a competent native speaker of the language to advise me. I still think that is most probably how the script was devised, with most of the work being done by the Lepcha assistant and all the credit for it being given to Chador Namgyal.

I realize that my hypothetical Lepcha language assistant could not have been Men Salong if Men Salong had lived in the 15th century, as Mainwaring supposed, about three hundred years too early for Chador Namgyal, who was born in 1685 and reigned from 1700 to 1717, though he was a refugee in Lhasa from 1700 to 1707; but if Thikung Men Salong was a contemporary of Lhatsun Chenpo (1597-1654), in the 17th century, as recorded in the Maharajah's history, and accepted by Foning, it is just possible that he might have been alive during both Lhatsun Chenpo's lifetime and Chador Namgyal's lifetime. If we suppose, for purposes of discussion, that Men Salong was a young man of 21 when he guided Lhatsun Chenpo via Jongri to Yuksam for the enthronement of Phuntok Namgyal as Ist Chogyal, in the chu-rta, or Water-Horse, year, 1642 (according to the Maharajah's 'History', though the 'Gazetteer' gives 1641 as the year of his accession), he would have been born in 1621, would have been aged 65 in 1686, the year in which Chador Namgyal, the 3rd Maharajah, was born, and 79 in 1700 the year in which Chador fled from the Bhutanese invasion of Sikkim and took refuge in Lhasa with the 6th Dalai Lama (1683-1706); so it would be possible, though not probable, for Thikung Men Salong's life to have bridged the gap between Lhatsun Chenpo's lifetime and Chador Namgyal's lifetime.

D. Turve Pano and the Lepcha kings

This speculative attempt of mine to give Thikung Men Salong the credit for both (i) the religious inclination to help Sikkim's most famous Buddhist missionary, and (ii) the linguistic expertise to devise a form of writing, perhaps in order to promote Buddhism, depends entirely on the Maharajah's 'History', endorsed by Foning; in this 'History' Men

Salong appears as a contemporary of Lhatsun Chenpo, and is therefore datable to the 17th century; he could not have been of help to Lhatsun Chenpo if he had lived in the 15th century, the period when Mainwaring believed Turve Pano to have reigned. At this point it is necessary to point out that there are difficulties with the dates of the Lepcha kings too. Mainwaring's account of the kings runs as follows: 'The earliest variable information I can acquire of [the Lepchas'] history, commences from the time of their King Turve (tur-ve-pa-no Tur-ve pano, who apparently reigned about 450 years ago (i.e. 1426 A.D.). -----After the death of King Turve, three successive Lepchas, sons of their Royal Fathers, ruled the land. (Their several names were tur-sáng pa-no, Tur-sáng pa-no, tur-'yeng pa-no, Tur-ageng pa-no, and tur-'yek pa-no Tur-agek pa-no). ---- On the demise of King Tur-ayek, the throne was usurped by a Tibetan ----(His name and title were phun-tshogs nam-rgyas (Phún-tsho Nam-gye)' (1876). (Dorje Temba Rongkup, in sák-nón 'Souvenir' gives the names of six more kings, predecessors of tur-ve pa-no: rung-zóng, tur-tsi, tur-yeng, túr-dít, túr-sheng, and túr-cok).

An obvious weakness in Mainwaring's dating is that his four kings have to share between them the period from 1426 A.D. to 1642, the year in which Phuntsok Namgyal ascended the gaddi, a period of 217 years; so each king would have had to reign, on average, for 54 years approximately. Fifty-four years seems much too long if we compare it with an average reign of approximately 28 years for the twelve Chogyals of Sikkim between 1642 and 1975. Besides, a more plausible date than 1426 had been given for Turve Pano, this time by the well-known Limbu historian Iman Sing Chemjong, author of 'History and Culture of the Kirat people' (1967). While giving an account of a campaign against Bijaypur by Lo Hang Sen, King of Makwanpur, with the help of Baja Hang Rai, King of Phedap (formerly known as Murey Hang Khebang Limbu), he writes: 'They conquered Lepcha Kirat King of Kurseong hill. In the battle field of Gidde hill, Tarbe Pano, the Lepcha chief was slain. But before his death, the Kirat chief Baja Hang Rai who had invited King Lo Hang Sen of Markwanpur to invade Bijaypur town was also killed in the battle field in 1608 A.D. The 34-year period between this battle and Phuntsok Namgyal's ascending the throne in 1642 at Yaksam in what is now western Sikkim would be divided into

Shedding some light on the history, language and literature of the Lepchas a reign of approximately eleven years each for the three Lepcha kings whom Mainwaring believed to have succeeded Turve Pano.

Kurseong, on the other hand, on the southern fringe of Lepcha territory, seems an unlikely place for the capital of a large kingdom; how large was the fort, or palace, of this kingdom one might well ask. Were the 'Kings' merely the local hangs, or chieftains, of the village of Kurseong?

Much uncertainty, therefore, surrounds the man who devised the Lepcha script, and the date, and the place, where he did it: was it Thikung Men Salong; was it the 3rd Chogyal; was it the work of some unknown Lepcha scholar; or was this invention the work of more than one man, a joint labour?

E. Remarkable features of the Lepcha script

It is very likely that we shall always remain uncertain of the answer to this problem; but it is certain that Men Salong, or whoever it was that devised the Lepcha script, was a linguist of genius and originality.

There are three features of the script that should arouse our curiosity and admiration.

1. The order of the syllabary

a. On the model of Tibetan

I should guess that all those who learn the Lepcha script these days learn the syllabary in the same order as that in which it was printed in Mainwaring's 'Grammar' in 1876; clearly this order is modelled on that of Tibetan, the gsal-byed sum-cu, or thirty 'radicals'; the first 18 symbols, from ka to tsha, are the same except that in Lepcha ja is pronounced slightly differently from Tibetan, and that Lepcha has added a symbol, between pha and ba, namely fa, a slight modification of pha, with an extra stroke on the upper left hand side; the 24th to the 26th symbols of the Tibetan, ya, ra, and la, correspond to the 21st to the 23rd in Lepcha; and the 27th and 28th symbols of the Tibetan, sha and sa, correspond to the 26th and 27th of the Lepcha, but in reverse

order. The only major difference between the two syllabaries is that Lepcha ends the series with a remarkable set of seven symbols, kla, gla, fla, bla, m̄la, and hla, for which there is nothing comparable in Tibetan, which uses conjunct symbols, the la btags drug, for kla, gla and bla, and also for zla, ral, and sla, together with lha from the la-mgo series.

b. Original Lepcha

If, however, we consult older books than the Mainwaring ‘Grammar’, such as the two hand-written writing books included in the Hodgson Collection at the India Office Library, in London, which Hodgson collected in the 1840s, after he had settled in Darjeeling on retirement, we find that Lepcha has an order of letter of its own, quite different from the Tibetan order. These two books are bound together in volume 79 of the Collection; one of them, which I will call no. 1, forms pages 1-56 of that volume, while the other, which I will call no. 2, comprises 60-94. Book no. 1 is dated 1903 (1847 A.D.) and has the title róng-kup sa hláp-sho bo-sho-mú gum; book no. 2 has neither title nor date.

These two books, which are not in the same hand, agree with each other only up to a point; for one thing book no. 1 has 35 symbols, tsha being missing as compared with Mainwaring’s ‘Grammar’, while no 2 has only 34, both tsha and bla being missing, though, unlike the ‘Grammar’, both books include ‘á’ in the ‘á-mo’ series, as the first symbol; but more importantly, the order of symbols is not identical in the two books. To show how far the 36 symbols of book no 1. agree with the 34 of book no. 2, I will plot them against each other, with the book no 1 Series above those of book no. 2:

1: ‘a ka ga pa fa ba ma ha ra kha ta tha da la kla pla fla bla

2: ‘a ka ga pa fa ba ma

1: gla va mla hla nga ca nya na pha tsa wa ja za ya sha

2: gla mla hla nga nya pha ca na tsa wa ja za ya sha

1: sa cha

2: cha ha ra kha ta tha da la kla pla fla va sa.

It is not completely clear to me why Thikung Men Salong, or whoever it was that devised the Lepcha script, should have chosen to put the symbols in either of these two orders; but, to some extent, phonetic principles can be seen to be at work:

i. two of the symbols that have a velor plosive initial sound, ka and ga, are grouped together, as the 2nd and 3rd members of the syllabary, in both books;

ii. four of the labial-initial symbols, pa, fa, ba and ma, are grouped together, as the 4th, 5th, 6th, and 7th symbols, in both books;

iii. three of the dental-initial symbols, ta, tha, and da, are grouped together, as the 11th, 12th, and 13th symbols of the syllabary as it has been given in books no. 1 and as the 25th, 26th, and 27th symbols in book no. 2;

iv. the lateral-initial symbol, la, all six of the symbols that have a lateral-cluster as their initial sound, and the voiceless-lateral-initial symbols, kla, pla, fla, bla, gla, m_la, and h_la are grouped together, as symbols 14 to 19, and symbols 21 to 22, in book no. 1 (va had been inserted between gla and m_la, as the 20th symbol); and in book no. 2 gla, m_la and h_la have been grouped together, as the 8th, 9th, and 10th symbols, while la, kla, pla and fla have been grouped, as the 29th, 30th, 31st, and 32nd symbols (as has already been noted above, bla is missing from the syllabary in the form in which it appears in book 2; it should have come after fla);

v. if the members of the syllabary are looked at from the point of view of blocks of symbols, then the seven symbols a to ma form the first block in both books; from that point onward the two books diverge, because the second block in book no. 1, comprising the eleven symbols ha to bla, forms the third block in book no. 2, (with the exception of bla, which is missing); the third block of book no 1, comprising the fifteen symbols gla to cha (an extra symbol, va has been inserted, in book no. 1, between gla and m_la) is the second block of book no. 2:

book no. 1: block 1; block 2 (+va); block 3:

book no 2; block 1; block 3; block 2;

in book no. 2 the order of blocks nos. 2 and 3 is the reverse of what is to be found in book no. 1.

2. The (9) syllable-final symbols ('á-kup)

It is mysterious, and quite remarkable, that the Lepcha script should have a set of diacritics to symbolize its (eight) syllable-final consonants: -k, -m, -l, -n, -p, -r, -t, and -ng (kâng), which is in complementary distribution with -ang, written with nyín-dó 'sun-moon'. All of these diacritics are superscript, that is to say they are written above the radical symbol ('á-mo), except for two the kâng and 'níyn dó' which are prescript (written before the 'á mo) (c.f. K.P. Tamsang's róng cho-míng 'án lâ-zóng, p. 5; 1982). Diringer refers to these diacritics in his authoritative two-volume study of writing systems of the world, 'The Alphabet' (1948/1968) in the following terms; 'peculiar features of the Lepcha character are the vowel signs and the final marks of eight consonants (k, ng, t, n, p, m, r, l) which consist of dashes, dots and small circles and are placed above or before the preceding letter'.

These nine superscript and prescript diacritics for the syllable-final consonants are a truly remarkable feature of Lepcha writing; in fact they are almost unique in the writing systems of the world. It is only in one of the Tibetan styles of writing, the cursive style ('khyug-yig), that I can find a parallel: in 'khyug yig Tibetan writing too the syllable-final -m, as in lam 'road', is written above the radical ('gsal-byed), by a bar and a loop.

Some of the syllable-final consonant sounds, the sounds for -k, -p, and -t, are slightly different from the consonant sounds that are used in syllable-initial position for ka, pa, and ta: the syllable-final sounds are, in phonetic terminology, stops - they have no audible release -, while the syllable-initial sounds are termed plosive - they have plosion, an audible release into a following vowel; so, because of this phonetic difference, slight though it is, one might agree that -k, -p, and -t should be written differently from the k-, p-, and t- sounds of ka, pa and ta; but there is no such difference between syllable-final consonant sounds

for -ng, -m, -n, -r and -l and the syllable-initial-consonant sounds to be heard when one pronounces nga, ma, na, ra and la - for these five the sounds are the same in both positions; so it might seem strange that whoever it was that devised the Lepcha script should have chosen not to write them with the same symbols.

In answer to this questions some linguists, or students of language, at the present time would give the answer 'yes', and would say that the inventor of the Lepcha script had introduced nine unnecessary symbols, the 'á-kup ka-kyót'; but during the last sixty years another school of linguists has come forward that would give the answer 'no' to that question.

This more recent school of linguistics, to which I myself belong, would point out that since only eight consonant sounds are distinguished in Lepcha in syllable-final position while some 35 consonants and consonant clusters like kl- and pl- are distinguished in syllable-initial position, such as the consonant sounds at the beginning of the syllables ka, ga, kla, and gla the distinctive value, or power of making a distinction in the meaning of words, of -k, -ng, etc. in a set of only eight possible consonants must be quite different from the distinctive value of the initial consonants symbolized in the syllables ka, nga, and all the other 33 consonants and consonant clusters that need to be distinguished in pronouncing the syllable-initial set. If I compare the Lepcha script with players in football teams, it is as though the Lepchas had invented two different kinds of football game, one game for teams of eight players and the other game for team of thirty-five players. The value of a member of the eight-member team to his team is quite high, one to eight, one eighth of the total; his value is different from the comparatively low value of a member of the thirty-five-member team to his team, on average one to thirty five, one thirty fifth of the total. If a member of the eight-member team is sent off by the referee, or has to leave the field because of injury, it very much reduces his team's chances of winning, but the thirty-five-member team might hardly notice losing one of its members.

This theory that distinguishes separate sets of sound units for different places in the syllable and the word, such as I have just illustrated

from Lepcha through the 35 ‘á-mo in syllable-initial position and the nine ‘á-kup in syllable-final position (though the number of final consonants is only eight because the kâng and the nyín-dó symbols are in complementary distribution for -ng) was first put forward by Prof J.R. Firth, in 1935, while writing about the Marathi language. Palmer, in his book ‘Prosodic analysis’ (1970) has described how ‘for the nasals in Marathi he noted a two-term alternance initially, a three-term alternance finally, but, though phonetically there were eight different sounds, one “unique” homorganic nasal before medial consonants, he comments “I should not wish to identify all these n sounds”.

The term ‘polysystemic approach’ has been given to an analysis such as Firth’s; so the inventor of the Lepcha script, astonishing though it may seem, was applying the ‘polysystemic approach’ to devising the Lepcha writing system more than two-hundred years, perhaps, before Firth had developed his theory and before the term ‘polysystemic approach’ had been introduced.

I find myself wondering whether K.P. Tamsang ever discussed this ‘polysystemic’ aspect of Lepcha spelling with Firth when the two met, in 1952, during the year that Tamsang spent in the University of London as Research Assistant in Lepcha; for Firth was, at that time, Head of the Department in which Tamsang was working, the Department of Phonetics and Linguistics (I feel sure that it was during his year in that Department that the inspiration came to Tamsang to compile the dictionary for which he has since become famous, ‘The Lepcha-English Encyclopedic Dictionary’, finally published in 1994.

3. The seven la-thyu symbols

The third remarkable feature of the Lepcha script, for which the credit, according to K.P. Tamsang, should be given to Thikung Men Salong, is the set of seven symbols kla, pla, fla, bla, m̄la, gl̄a, and h̄la, termed la-thyu because each symbolizes, in addition to the vowels, a cluster of two consonant sounds the second of which is a lateral sound, or ‘l’ sound (cf. K.P. Tamsang’s ‘róng cho-míng ‘án la -zóng, 1982, p.p. 5-6). except that h̄la symbolizes a single consonant sound, a voiceless lateral sound, or voiceless ‘l’ sound. As far as the consonant

component of the syllables symbolized by the first six of the la-thyu, kla, pla, etc. is concerned, these symbols can be termed ‘diphonic’, because a single symbol is used to symbolize not one but two consonant sounds linked together in a cluster. Diphonic symbols such as these are not to be found in the Tibetan script, indeed they are rarely to be found in the languages of the world. The only such symbols that occur to me are the letters zeta, xi and psi in Greek, which symbolize, respectively, the clusters of consonants ‘zd’ (or, perhaps, ‘dz’), ‘ks’ and ‘ps’, which W.S. Allen refers to, in his book ‘Vox Graeca’, as ‘consonant groups represented by a single symbol’ (1968).

I think that the three original, and sophisticated, aspects of the Lepcha script that I have mentioned above, in sections (1)-(3), amply justify my claim that the man who devised the Lepcha script, Thikung Men Salong perhaps, either alone or with the help of others, was a cultural hero of the Lepcha people and an outstanding, and forward looking, linguist.

III. Geboo Achok

I now come to the part of this brief study that more nearly concerns the Tamsangmu Lepchas, the various accounts of the life and heroism of Geboo Achok (gye-bu ‘a-chok).

A. The ‘Gazetteer’ version

No account of this heroic but mysterious figure would be complete without mentioning the earliest reference in time, to ‘Gyel-pa-Achoo’; this account is to be found in ‘The Gazetteer of Sikkim’ (1894). While giving the history of the descendants of the Tibetan strong man ‘Khye-Bumsa’, the first Tibetan to visit the country of the Lepchas, and also great great great grandfather of the first Chogyal of Sikkim, Phun-tshogs rNam-rGyal (1604-circa 1670), who ascended the throne, according to ‘The Gazetteer’, in 1641, H.H. Risley writes as follows: ‘Khye-Bumsa called the first (son) sKya-bo-rab, or the swindler; the third son gLang-mo rab, or the ploughman; and the second Mi-tpon-rab, or the leader of men. --- Mi-tpon-rab --- had four sons, --- the second Tshes-bchu-tar, --- and the fourth Guru tashe, --- Tshes-bchu-tar had

five sons and a daughter; the latter had a liaison with her father's orderly and bore a son. This disgrace so incensed the family of Kya-bo-rab that they murdered the guilty pair ---. This outrage led to a long series of internecine strife, more particularly between the sons of Kya-bo-rab and Mi-tpon-rab and their descendents. Gyelpa Achoo, the son of the former, succeeded by treachery in slaying Guru Tashe near Sonamse, but some nine years later was defeated by Gyelpa Apha, Tashe's son, -- and he was forced successively to retreat to Patheng Ding and then to Dumsong and Daling. Gyelpa Apha was still not content and wrote to Bhutan for assistance, whereupon the Bhutanese General "Ari Sethe" attacked Gyelpa Achoo and his son Tshadoon Raja and killed them both near Ambiokh.

--- Guru Tashe's eldest son is called in full Zhal-nga A-phag: his son was Guru Tenzing, who was the father of Phun-tsho-Nangyel (Punchoo Namgay) who became the first Raja of Sikkim or Dejong Gyalpo.'

According to this account, then Gyelpa Achoo was a Sikkimese Tibetan, or Sikkim Bhutia, the son of an immigrant from Tibet; he was also first cousin once removed to Gyelpa Apha, grandfather of the first Chogyal of Sikkim, Phuntsho Namgyal (1642-70, but 1641 according to 'The Gazetteer').

There are two weaknesses in this account that a historian should not overlook. One of these is the reference to Dumsong and Daling: according to the Hasrat's 'History of Bhutan' (1980) it was not until the time of Gyalse Tenzin Rabgye as fourth Deb of Bhutan (1680-94) that Damsang fort was built, during the reign of the second Chogyal of Sikkim, Tensung Namgyal (circa 1670-1700); if that is so, Damsang would not have been available to Gyelpa Achoo as a place of refuge during the lifetime of that Chogyal's great grandfather, Gyalpa Apha, three generations, or nearly a hundred years, earlier.

The second weakness in this account is the reference to a Bhutanese general as having killed Gyalpa Achoo: Bhutan did not come into existence until Ngawang Namgyal became Shabdrung, in 1639 ,

three years before the first Chogyal ascended the throne of Sikkim; so it is unlikely that the Chogyal's grandfather Gyalpa Apha, would still have been alive in 1639: he would have had to be about 85 years old at the time that the state of Bhutan came into being.

B. Hermanns's Pedong version in 'The Indo-Tibetans' (1954)

In a Tamsangmu version collected in Pedong 'Geb-a dyak was the name of the first Lepcha king, who had his seat near the Himalayas. His wife, who was a famous sorceress, bore him two sons, the eldest of whom was called Geb-gun-gra, and the second Geb-a-djok.--- the youngest came to Pedong. A-djok---settled down in the land where he built two fortresses, Da-len-am-at, at the entrance to the plain, and Damsang Pedong.

The king of Bhutan once sent two of his men to clear A-djok away from the spot----They tried to do so for two years, but their efforts were unsuccessful. In a moment of frustration they decided to bribe the king's cook to murder the king. One morning the cook came to the king and said, "Wake up and eat your breakfast". While the king attempted to rise, the cook stabbed him under the shoulder blade. The king fell to the ground and the two Bhutanese rushed in and hacked off the king's head----The head rolled into the river Tchil-go-la (Chel Khola). This is how the Lepcha king was destroyed and his kingdom passed on into the hands of the Bhutanese.'

C. A.R. Foning's detailed account (1987)

The two versions of the Achok legend that I have given above may have escaped the notice of Arthur Foning, or he may have found them too slight to be worth repeating; for they are not mentioned in 'Lepcha, my vanishing tribe', though he gives a whole chapter to the exploits of the Lepcha hero: 'A living legend or the Legend of Gaybu A-chyuk': it contains a detailed discussion of the two better known legends.

With regard, first, to the name A-chyuk Foning explains the second part of it, '-chyuk', as meaning 'which is permissible' but my

Tibetan friends prefer mchog. For mchog Jaschke, in his 'A Tibetan-English dictionary' (1881\1934), has the entry 'the best, the most excellent in its kind'; and, indeed, 'Mon Amchhog' is the way the name is spelt in Hasrat's 'History of Bhutan' (1980). The essence of Foning's story is that A-chyuk was born 'near Longshyol, a small village in the south-east part of the Mayel country' to 'a woman who had long passed the child-bearing stage'. He 'grew to be a veritable gentle young Hercules'. The fame of this extraordinary young man reached the ears of the Bhutanese, further to the east. They took him to their own country and tried to destroy him. 'On his return, his friends, neighbours, and everybody were happy; and they all started calling him Gaybu A-chyuk, or A-chyuk the victor. Now, building a palace at Dalim or Dolling--he started living there as a guardian to his plain and simple folk.---- the wily "pru" or Bhutanese people tried to get things done through him, but he refused to oblige them; so on one unforgettable day when he was dead drunk, someone chopped off his head. 'It is said that his severed head flew down to the river Chya-ale.'

1. A seventeenth-century hero

Foning comments that 'according to the Tibetan chronicles, A-chyuk was assassinated by the Bhutanese at Doling Amdothang, known this side as Dalim Fort or Dalimcote, in the year 1676, the date according to the Gregorian calendar'; he probably had in mind a passage referring to the 3rd Dep Raja in Aris's 'Bhutan' (1979)

a. A Bhutanese account (Aris's 'Bhutan', 1979)

'Mi-'gyur brTan-pa had been responsible for pushing the boundaries of Bhutan to their eastern limits, and after acceding to the sde-srid's throne (1667) he turned his attention to the western border. The Lepcha people who inhabited the area south of Sikkim were the first to feel the effect of the 'Brug-pa expansion in this direction and in 1668 their chief, A-lcog, turned to the dGe-lugs-pa government of Tibet for military support 11 (11 See Shakabpa 1976: 447-8). In the 11th month a Tibetan force invaded Bhutan again,--- trouble again flared up between the Bhutanese and the Lepchas in 1675. The following year the Bhutanese invaded the Chumbi valley, Sikkim, and the area south of Sikkim. The Lepcha chief was then killed, and in retaliation the Tibetan

government arranged yet another invasion of Bhutan, perhaps the largest undertaken during the reign of the 5th Dalai Lama [1642-82; at this time the 2nd Chogyal, Tensung Namgyal (circa 1670-1700), was on the throne of Sikkim],-----In the Tibetan source used by Shakabpa (loc. cit.), however, it is said that the Lepcha chief had been their subject (mi-rtsa),---The area south of Sikkim remained in Bhutanese hands until it was annexed to India during the Anglo-Bhutanese war of 1865.

b. Another Bhutanese account (Hasrat's 'History of Bhutan' (1980))

These events are, however, attributed not to the 3rd Deb but to his successor, the 4th, Gyalse Tenzin Rabgye (1680-94), in Hasrat's 'History'; 'While he was constructing Damsang Dzong, Kirati Amchhog opposed him and challenged his authority. Mon Amchhog sought help from Tibet and Sikkim, started intrigue, and rose in rebellion in Bhutan against him; but Tenzin Rabgye drove him out of the country, and the Bhutanese armies overran Sikkim, and took possession of Rinag (Rhenock), and but for the interdict imposed upon them by Gyalse Tenzin Rabgye not to proceed further, Bhutan would have occupied Sikkim.

Tenzin Rabgye built the Jangsar Dzong in Kalimpong. He dominated the entire region up to the river Teesta, which was placed under the Dali Dzongpon in the west.'

2. An 18th Century Shal-ngo Achhok (Sikkim version)

From the point of view of the neighbouring kingdom of Sikkim the events described from the Bhutanese point of view in section (1) above look rather different; unfortunately this third source, the Maharaja of Sikkim and Maharani Drolma's 'History of Sikkim' (1908), does not give them a date: 'As soon as Raja Chagdor Namgyal (3rd Chogyal, 1700-17) came back from Tibet (?1707), he expelled the remainder of the Bhutanese forces that still lingered in Sikkim. But subsequently another Bhutanese force under the leaders named Magpon Agyal and Rups again invaded Sikkim and took formal possession of the lands lying between the Teesta and the Rongpa. They were encouraged to come

by one Shal-ngo Achhok, who was not on good terms with the Raja. So Achhok sought refuge under the Bhutan Government and it was thus that the Bhutanese forces were sent to invade Sikkim. But subsequently he was treacherously assassinated by the Bhutanese at Ambiok near Daling fort, who thenceforth took possession of all the lands and inhabitants thereof between Teesta and Tagong La (nowadays, in western Bhutan)'. These events are, it seems, considered to have happened after the Raja had returned to Sikkim from his refuge in Tibet, in 1707.

It is important to note that this Sikkim source has distinguished Achok by giving him the title zhal-ngo, which like sku-ngo and sku-zhabs in Tibet, denotes a Sikkimese of rank; so this source regards him as a subject of Sikkim.

Foning comes to the conclusion that there may have been some confusion between Gebu Achok and another prominent Sikkimese. Yukthing Arup, who is also reported to have been held captive by the Bhutanese, to whom he became attached, so much so that he handed over to them territory east of the Teesta, 'such as Damsong, Daling, Jongsa, Sangbey and all the places this side of the Tagong La hill', according to the Maharajah's 'History'. Foning further concludes that there may have been a mistake over dates, which would have been calculated according to the lo- 'khor, the Tibetan calendar comprising a 60-year cycle; so the date when Geboo Achok was reported to have been murdered, 1676, might have been 60 years in advance of the true date, 1736.

It is not difficult to agree with Foning that the Tibetan calendar leaves room for misunderstanding, because a particular year name is repeated in only 60 years, within a human lifetime of three score years and ten (and the Lepcha, calendar, with its twelve-year cycle, as described in Mainwaring's 'Grammar', from the Rat year, ka-lók nám, to the Hog year, món-nám, gives even more scope for error, because each year name repeats five times within that 70-year life span); but the year 1736, during the reign of the 5th Chogyal, Namgyal Phuntso (1733-80), seems at least as controversial as 1676.

D. Today's view

Today's view of the lifetime of Gebu Achok is quite different from all five of the versions given above; according to them Gebu Achok died in 1676, or 1736, or at some date in between those two years; but the modern view is that he was not even born until 1731. The 20th December, 1731, is the date that the Pum Mutanchi Rong Shezum recognizes as the date of his birth. This means that the Bhutanese invasion of Sikkim in which he was concerned must have been that by Zhidar (Sonam Lhundup), the 16th Deb Raja (1768-73): '--in the Chag-tag (Iron Tiger) year, 1770 A.D., a vast invading force from Bhutan came up as far as the eastern bank of the river Tista, and their main body took possession of those portions of Sikkim, while the scouts and advanced patrols and skirmishing parties came up as far as Mangbru and Barphung in Sikkim', the Marajah's 'History' tells us. After the Bhutanese had suffered defeat at Ralag Samdong, they came to terms with the Sikkimese in negotiations carried on at Pob-chu near Rhenock.

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