

**British Attitude
to
Nepal's Relations
with
Tibet and China
(1814-1914)**

RAVURI DHANALAXMI



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Tibet and China – 1814-1914**

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FOREWORD

Dr. Ravuri Dhanalaxmi's work makes a major contribution to the history of the inter-relations of states on the Himalayan border of India. All the states, Tibet, Nepal, Bhutan and Sikkim (now an integral part of India) had relations with China with varying degrees of intimacy. No wonder, then the British government in India had to reckon with the traditional and complex state of relations between the Himalayan states and the Chinese attitude to these relations at different times.

In both the formulation and implementation of British India's Nepal policy, it had to take into account Tibet's and China's reaction to the policy and the use Kathmandu made of the reaction. Dr. Dhanalaxmi has ably brought out a significant-point in her study. Nepal's historical relations with Tibet and China enabled it to ward off close British contact and following that, British pressure, compromising its cherished independence. In other words, Nepal deftly played off China against British India and vice versa to promote its own interests.

The author rightly concludes that many present issues in Indo-Nepalese relations had their roots in the traditional pattern of relations between Kathmandu, Lhasa and Peking. Not until did the British influence these relations, they were certain of their hold on Nepal.

This interesting history of India's border tracts has been told in remarkably lucid language. Many complex diplomatic issues have been very clearly analysed in very clear English.

Although the period covered in the work is rather long—one hundred years—the author has been able to compress a mass of facts without in any way diminishing their import. The focus is really on *issues* rather than on *events* to the great mass of which the author has not let herself be bogged down.

Considering the importance of the theme dealt with in this excellent work, and the fine style in which the work has been executed, I have no doubt that it would be read with both pleasure and profit by the ever-growing fraternity of scholars specialising in the history of India's frontier.

28th August, 1980
Department of History
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K. Mojumdar

PREFACE

Nepal's relations with Tibet and China had a significant bearing on Britain's policy towards the Himalayan states. The course of the policy was influenced by Nepal's attitude towards Tibet and China at a particular time. For a time the attitude was a constraint on British policy; it affected British interests in Tibet, China, Sikkim and Bhutan. In course of time, however, both by arms and diplomacy the British succeeded in confirming their exclusive sway on Nepal Bhutan and Sikkim, and then they took control of Nepal's relations with Tibet and China. This control, it must be emphasised, was not the result of any definite treaty; it was the product of the circumstances created by three factors: political change in Nepal which gave the British a commanding influence in the country—the influence working through the anglo-phile Rana regime; the gradual decline of the Chinese power in the Himalayan tract; and the political turmoil in Tibet which threatened Nepal's traditional interests in the country; in the process of defending these interests, the British gradually assumed control of Nepal's relations with Tibet and China.

This important dimension of Indo-Nepalese relations in the period 1814-1914 is treated in seven chapters. In the first Chapter a short account has been given of the relations between Nepal, Tibet and China from the earliest times to the period immediately preceding the Gurkha conquest of Nepal.

Chapter two deals with two wars, one between Nepal and Tibet, which drew in China in support of the latter; the other between Nepal and the East India Company. Both the wars profoundly influenced the course of Himalayan politics and left lessons for all the powers involved in the two wars.

In Chapter three Nepal's foreign policy in the period 1816-46 has been described, identifying the main features of the policy and accounting for the change in it following the establishment of the pro-British regime in Nepal.

An analysis of the Rana's foreign policy in 1846-77 has been made in Chapter four, examining the reorientation in Nepal's relations with its Himalayan neighbours and with Tibet, China and British India.

In Chapter five the changing pattern in the Himalayan politics in the period 1877-1900 has been described with particular reference to the strained relations between Nepal and Tibet following the steady decline of the Chinese Imperial power.

The Nepalese reaction to the Tibetan crisis in 1900-04 caused by Anglo-Russian rivalry in the country has been studied in detail in Chapter six with a view to showing how Kathmandu and Calcutta had common fear of Russia, which accounted for their close cooperation in frustrating the Russian ambition in Tibet.

The attempts of China to convert Tibet into a regularly administered province of China and the strong Tibetan reaction to it forms the subject of the seventh and the last Chapter. In this chapter it has been shown how the British made full use of Nepal's fear of China in virtually taking over Kathmandu's relations with Lhasa and Peking.

The work is based mostly on unpublished Government documents and private papers of Viceroy's and Secretaries of State available on microfilm in the National Archives of India. Published Government documents, books and periodicals have also been studied. From the Library of the Indian Council of World Affairs, New Delhi, some published materials in the Nepali language have been collected and made use of in the work.

No full-length study of Nepal's relations with Tibet and China and British reaction to them has yet been made, although references to the subject have been made in the works of Leo E. Rose, K. Mojumdar and Ramakant. A few aspects of the theme have only been examined by Mojumdar in his

Anglo-Nepalese Relations in the 19th Century. As for Ramakant, he has dealt with Nepal's relations with Tibet and China in the context of independent India's Nepal policy. A close study of British attitude to Nepal's relations with its Himalayan neighbours and particularly with Tibet and China would be helpful in the understanding of present day Nepal's attitude to these countries : for in a country's foreign policy one finds both persistence of tradition and elements of change in its traditional outlook.

I owe a debt of gratitude to Dr. K. Mojumdar, Professor of History, Nagpur University for the keen interest he took in this work as my supervisor as also for writing a foreword to this book. I am grateful to the authorities of the National Archives of India, New Delhi, Indian Council of World Affairs, New Delhi and the National Library, Calcutta for the facilities accorded me in utilising the materials kept in these institutions.

17th August, 1980

Ravuri Dhanalaxmi

ABBREVIATIONS

- B.M.A.* : British Museum Additional Manuscripts.
B.P.C. : Bengal Government Political Consultations.
F.Ext-A. : Foreign Department Proceedings, External Branch, A Category.
F.Ext.B. : Foreign Department Proceedings, External Branch, B Category.
F.G-A. : Foreign Department Proceedings, General Branch, A Category.
F.M. : Foreign Miscellaneous Proceedings (Demi-Official Letters).
F.P-A. : Foreign Department Proceedings Political Branch, A Category.
F.P.B. : Foreign Department Proceedings Political Branch, B Category.
F.P.C. : Foreign Department Political Consultations.
F.P-E. : Foreign Department Proceedings Political Branch, E Category.
F.S.C. : Foreign Department Secret Consultations.
F.S-E. : Foreign Department Secret Branch, E Category.
F.S.E. Ext. : Foreign Department Secret and External Branch.
I.C.W.A.Library : Indian Council of world Affairs Library, New Delhi.
J.A.S.B. : *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal.*
J.B.O.R.S. : *The Journal of Bihar and Orissa Research Society.*
P.B. : Private Letter Book of Lord Auckland.
P.I.H.C. : Proceedings of the Indian History Congress.
S.C. : Foreign Secret Consultations.
S.P.C. : Foreign Secret Political Consultations.

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Early Relations of Nepal with Tibet and China

Nepal has had a long history of relations with Tibet and China. Since Nepal lies between India in the south and Tibet in the north, and China farther north, its history, culture and politics have naturally been influenced by the course of events in these states. Nepal's relations with Tibet and China can broadly be categorised into cultural, commercial and political.

Nepal had also long standing relations with Sikkim and Bhutan, the two Himalayan states to its east, both having intimate political and cultural links with Tibet¹ and, indirectly, with China; the latter claimed influence over all the Himalayan states on the north-east frontier of India. Modern Nepal's relations with its two eastern neighbours, in both political

1. The Sikkim Raja's wife was a Tibetan; so also was the Diwan. Both the Raja and Diwan frequently resided in the Chumbi valley, a part of Tibet. J.C. Gawler, *Sikkim with Hints on Mountain and Jungle Warfare*, (London, 1873), p. 8; Bhutan used to make an annual payment to Lhasa, "as acknowledgement of subjection". A. Eden, *Political Mission to Bhootan*, (Calcutta, 1865), p. 131.

and cultural aspects, were shaped in the middle of the 18th century when it came under the Gurkhas.²

Nepal's geographical contiguity to Tibet has much to do with the impact of Tibetan culture on the country. Tibetan ethnic influence is clearly marked on several Nepalese races.³ The Newars, for example, who inhabit the central valley of Nepal, have been markedly influenced by Tibetan culture⁴, as have been the Sherpas and the Bhotias, who live in the northern Nepalese tracts bordering on Tibet. In their language, religion and mode of living Tibetan influence is clearly discernible.⁵

In fact, the first migrants to Nepal were the Tibeto-Mongoloid people who now inhabit the northern parts of Nepal.

Tibetan cultural influence is seen most in Kathmandu itself, the capital of Nepal, where the Newars constitute an important ethnic element. The Newars have maintained through the ages their rich cultural heritage, despite the fact that the Gurkhas have, since 1767-68, been the rulers of the country.

In the 7th century A.D., the Tibetan military expansion was rapid which took them to the plains of India.⁶ They

2. The Gurkhas under Prithvinarayan Shah, the ruler of Gorkha, a small state to the west of Kathmandu, conquered the small principalities and united Nepal in 1768-69. The Gurkhas have since then been ruling the country. D.R. Regmi, *Medieval Nepal*, Part-II, (Calcutta, 1966) pp. 368, 369; Dor Bahadur Bista, *People of Nepal*, (Kathmandu, 1967), p. 1.
3. Pradyumna, P. Karan and M. Williams Jenkins, *The Himalayan Kingdoms, Bhutan, Sikkim and Nepal* (London, 1963), pp. 63-66; Bista, opcit, pp. 32-63; LeoE. Rose. *Nepal Strategy for Survival*, (Calcutta, 1971), pp. 7, 8.
4. Francis Buchanan Hamilton, *An Account of the Kingdom of Nepal*, (Delhi, 1971), p. 29; Christoph Von Furer-Haimendorf, *Caste and Kin in Nepal, India, Ceylon*, (Bombay, 1866), p. 76; Bista, opcit, pp. 13-29; Gopal Singh Nepali, *The Newars* (Bombay, 1965).
5. David Snellgrove and Hugh Richardson, *A Cultural History of Tibet*, (Delhi, 1968); p.'21, Furer-Haimendorf, opcit, p. 106.
6. Charles Bell, *Tibet, past and present*, (London, 1927), p. 28; H.E. Richardson, *Tibet and its History*, (London, 1962), pp. 29-30.

dominated Nepal for a time and penetrated the whole cis-Himalayan region. In the process, the Tibetans both adopted the culture of the tracts they traversed and influenced the local culture. Foreign contacts began to enlarge the mental horizon of the Tibetans and brought in the country diverse influences in its religion, literature, architecture and art.⁷

Tibetan cultural life was enriched by Nepalese contact. In Tibet, religion was the sole motive force of all "higher cultural" life, and all local literature had religious inspiration.⁸ Buddhism flourished in Tibet under Srong-btsan-Gampo, who married a Nepalese and a Chinese princess.⁹ Both the princesses brought Buddhist images to Tibet, and through their superior culture aroused interest of the Tibetan king and others in Buddhism. Contact with Nepal and China thus served Tibet a great cultural purpose.¹⁰

Between the 8th and 12th century A.D., many Tibetans visited Nepal and India for Buddhist texts, for instruction and initiation. Nepal was then ruled by three Malla Kings, and Nepal's cultural and commercial connection with Tibet was mainly in the hands of the Newars whose stronghold was the Buddhist city of Patan, three miles from Kathmandu. Some of the citizens of Patan married in the Tibetan families at Lhasa, and this further strengthened the link between the two countries.¹¹

The great Buddhist scholar, Atisha, introduced changes in the Mahayana form of Buddhism in Tibet. The Tantric form of Mahayana Buddhism in Tibet dates from his visit. The new religion called Lamaism soon became the predominant faith in Tibet. Tibet and Nepal had at this stage influenced

7. Snellgrove, *opcit*, pp. 199-202.

8. Snellgrove, *opcit*, p. 117.

9. Ernst and Rose Leonore Weldschmidt. *Nepal Art Treasures from the Himalayas*, (Calcutta, 1967), pp. 17, 18; Snellgrove, *opcit*, p. 50; Richardson *opcit*, p. 28; Regmi, *Ancient Nepal*, (Calcutta, 1969), p. 104; Bell, *opcit*, p. 23.

10. See my article "Relations of Nepal with China and Tibet", *Journal of the Berhampur University*, Vol. I, No. 1, (Dec., 1974), pp. 48-55.

11. Furer-Haimendorf, *opcit*, pp. 64-76, Snellgrove, *opcit*, p. 202.

each other in cultural matters, the Buddhist Newars being an important medium of this influence.¹²

Tibetan religious tradition was enriched by the visits of Buddhist preachers from India and Nepal, who carried to Lhasa Buddhist texts and sacred literature.¹³ Tibetan scholars travelled to Nepal and Bihar; they studied Sanskrit in Nepal and became the spiritual heads of the Sa-Sakya order in Tibet. The Tibetan King, Trisong Detsen, invited Indian preachers, Santarakshita and Padmasambhava, to preach Buddhism at Lhasa and enlighten the Tibetans both spiritually and culturally.¹⁴ Padmasambhava was well versed in magical arts and he subdued the traditional Bon religion of Tibet; ultimately due to his efforts Mahayana form of Buddhism became the sole religion of Tibet. The arrival of the Buddhist scholars led to the beginning of a religious renaissance in Tibet.¹⁵

Nepal was then an important seat of learning and a great centre of architecture, art, and metal and wood carving. The glory of the Newar Kings rested not so much on their conquests as in their patronage to architecture and art which were of a very high order indeed.¹⁶ The Nepalese cultural tradition had a deep impact on the cultural life of Tibet. For example, the temple architecture of Tibet, the two storey buildings around three sides of the courtyard with the main temples adorned with tiered roofs on the fourth side was a design borrowed from the Nepalese temples.¹⁷

Similar imitation was also seen in the wood carving and metal work, a well established Nepalese craft, applied to

12. W.D. Shakabpa, *Tibet—A Political History*. (New Haven, 1967), pp. 56-60; Richardson, *opcit*, p. 39.

13. Padmasambhava was a noted Buddhist preacher who was invited by the Tibetans to elevate the Tibetans spiritually and religiously. Shakabpa, *opcit*, pp. 36-65.

14. Regmi, *Ancient Nepal*, p. 340.

15. Shakabpa, *opcit*, p. 56.

16. Regmi, *Ancient Nepal*, *opcit*, p. 300.

17. Regmi, *Medieval Nepal*, Part I (Calcutta, 1965), pp. 596-602; Part II, pp. 870-880.

Buddhist buildings in Tibet.¹⁸ The images and ritual articles in the temple of western Tibet were Nepalese in design. Most of the cultured and wealthy Tibetans adopted the furnishing styles prevalent in Nepal. Newar craftsmen settled in Lhasa manufactured art specimens which were popular with Tibetan aristocratic families. In the reign of Ananta Malla, the king of Kathmandu, in the 13th century, a member of the royal family, named Aniko, an expert in bronze casting, entered the services of the Mongol Emperor of China in 1261 A.D. He went to Lhasa with the Emperor's command to erect a gold stupa there.¹⁹

The 13th century was a period of peace and prosperity in Nepal when the Malla rulers' patronage led to a great improvement in art, sculpture and architecture.²⁰ The Nepalese art now reached a high state of excellence. It inspired the Tibetan art as never before. The pagoda style of Tibetan art, the painting of roofs and decorative motifs were all modelled on the Indian and Nepalese pattern.²¹ The Indian and Nepalese temple architecture was a guide to Tibetan artistic style; the finishing decoration and equipping of the temples were influenced by the Indian and Nepalese style of the 11th century. The fame of the three Nepalese cities, Kathmandu, Patan and Bhatgaon, reached as far as China, and scholars from Tibet, China and other places visited Nepal to study Buddhist art, architecture and culture.²²

Nepalese architects helped to build stupas and temples in Tibet; they painted the walls of local monasteries and cast in bronze and stone various divine images. During the 15th century a new religious school came into being in Tibet as a result of fresh cultural contacts with India.

There were trade links between Nepal and Tibet, and between Tibet and India through Nepal, long before the Tibetans became politically powerful in the 7th century. The boundary

18. Snellgrove, *opcit*, pp. 201, 202.

19. Regmi, *Ancient Nepal*, *opcit*, pp. 337-338.

20. *Ibid.*, pp. 303-318.

21. Snellgrove, *opcit*, p. 201; Regmi, *Ancient Nepal*, *opcit*, pp. 337-338.

22. Furer-Haimendorf, *opcit*, pp. 64-76.

between Nepal and Tibet was marked by the snow covered mountains which made intimate contact between Nepal and Tibet difficult, but these snowy mountains in the north and west of Nepal, possessed important passes—Kerung, Kuti, Mustang, Taglakar, Hatia and Walloongchung—which served as trade routes between Nepal and Tibet and between Tibet and India through Nepal.²³

Important trade routes between Tibet and India through Nepal were Taglakar in the Annapoorna and Dhaulagiri range on the upper course of the Gandaki river. Through this Gandaki valley Indian goods reached Tibet. Another route was from Kalimpong in the Darjeeling district, which through eastern Sikkim entered the Chumbi valley by the Jelep pass. As a result Darjeeling and Kalimpong grew into important trade centres.²⁴

The main routes between Nepal and Tibet were the Kuti-Kathmandu-Hetaura-Bichhakhori-Garhparse. The city of Patan was a direct and easier outlet for trade with Tibet through the Kerung and Kutipasses.²⁵ The journey from Lhasa to Patan could be undertaken in forty five days. All merchandise to Tibet had to pass through Kathmandu and Bhatgaon. The Newars, the principal trading community who settled in the Kathmandu valley, acquired in course of time an important place in Tibetan commerce.²⁶

The main articles of trade between Nepal, Tibet and India which the Kashmiri merchants dealt in, were broad cloth, snuff boxes, knives, scissors, pearls, corals, tobacco and indigo.²⁷

Nepal was rich in specie, coarse cloth, rice, copper, manjeet, chillies, onions etc. The Nepalese bronze statues, brassware, silver and gold ornaments and manjeet were in great demand among the Tibetans, and the Newars bartered these articles for Tibetan borax and rocksalt.²⁸

23. D.J.F. Newell, *The Highlands of India*, (London, 1882), p. 94.

24. Furer-Haimendorf, *opcit*, pp. 140-42.

25. Regmi, *Medieval Nepal*, *opcit*, part II, p. 380-91.

26. Furer-Haimendorf, *opcit*, p. 76.

27. Colonel William Kirkpatrick, *An Account of the Kingdom of Nepal; A Mission to that country in 1793*, (Calcutta, 1969), p. 207.

28. *Ibid.*, pp. 205-212.

Tibet for ages had been an important commercial centre. Tibet was rich in wool, gold dust, silver, tincal, lead, rocksalt etc. The Tibetans were ignorant of agriculture but their wants were numerous and they had to depend upon Nepalese and Indian goods for their necessities. They exchanged their goods for procuring consumer goods. Tibetan exports and imports had to pass through the Nepalese routes, and the Newari merchants functioned as middlemen between Tibetan and Kashmiri merchants. In early days there was no restriction on exports and imports, and market rates were controlled by the forces of supply and demand.²⁹

Traders in Lhasa were considered quite high in society.³⁰ The monasteries of Lhasa obtained donations from China and Mongolia and had vested interests in trade; besides, they maintained good relations with the neighbouring countries for commercial reasons.

From the 14th century the Newar traders began to move east and west for trade and were anxious to open new trade routes. Trade and commerce now formed the most important element in Himalayan politics, particularly in Nepal's relations with Tibet.³¹ The Mallas encouraged trade and commerce to strengthen the economy of their kingdom.³²

Bhim Malla, the Kazi of Pratap Malla (1641-1674 A.D.), was responsible for furthering Nepal's trade with Tibet in 1645-50 A.D.³³ He annexed the Kerung and Kuti passes and captured the trade centre Dolka, on the Tam Kosi river. The occupation of Kerung and Kuti brought Nepal a number of economic gains. At these places Nepal established thirty two merchants to collect tolls on goods imported and exported. The Tibetans had no knowledge of smelting metals, and hence they had to depend on the Nepalese for minting their coins.³⁴

29, Shakabpa, *opcit*, p. 10.

30. Thubten Figme Norbu and Colin M. Turnbull, *Tibet*, (Calcutta, 1968), p. 108.

31, Bista, *opcit*. pp. 18-29.

32. Regmi. *Ancient Nepal*, *opcit*, pp. 260-63.

33. Rose, *Nepal Strategy for Survival*, *opcit*, pp. 13, 14.

34. Captain Samuel Turner, *Tibet, An Account of an Embassy to the Court of the Teshoo Lama in Tibet*, (New Delhi, 1971), p. 372.

The Lamas of Digarche and Lhasa sent large quantities of bullion to the mint at Kathmandu and made liberal allowances to the Nepalese for having it coined. No silver was allowed to pass to India. For trade and commerce, Tibet depended more upon the Sub-Himalayan states and India than China.³⁵

Mahendra Malla, who ruled Kathmandu in the 16th century, issued silver Mohars called "Mahendra Malli". This coin was circulated as legal tender throughout Nepal and the petty hill states. Through the influence of the Newar community these coins found their way to Tibet. The Nepal rulers earned much profit out of the minting of coins for Tibet. The circulation of Nepali coins in Tibet gave Nepal a strong position in the Tibetan economy.³⁶ The Newar traders were men of high economic status because of their intimate and long association with the Tibetan trade.³⁷

The prosperity of the Newar community was recorded by the Chinese pilgrims to India, who travelled through Tibet and Nepal; the pilgrims found the important role of the Newar merchants in Tibetan trade and the opulence of the Kathmandu valley.³⁸

Nepal since the earliest times had served as the entrepot of trade between the Indo-Gangetic plain and Tibet and China. Nepal's commercial prosperity had traditionally depended upon trade with Tibet. The valley of Kathmandu was the centre of all Nepalese activities, commercial and political;³⁹ events in Kathmandu set the pace for the life of the entire country.

By the middle of the 18th century certain developments affected the trans-Himalayan trade and the economic life of the local people. The emergence of the militant Gurkhas under their ruler, Prithvinarayan Shah, was a great event. Prithvinarayan in 1763 A.D., commenced the economic blockade of the

35. Kirkpatrick, *opcit*, p. 212.

36. Regmi, *Medieval Nepal*, *opcit*, Part II, pp. 43, 44; Rose, *opcit*, p. 14; Ramakant, *Nepal-China and India*, (New Delhi, 1976), p. 19.

37. Furer-Haimendorf, *opcit*, pp. 76-107.

38. Leo E. Rose, *Background to Modern Himalayan Politics*, (Ph. D. Thesis on Microfilm, 1960) p. 6,

39. Furer-Haimendorf, *opcit*, p. 76.

central valley of Nepal to secure the submission of the three Newar Kingdoms to him.⁴⁰ By the end of the 18th century the Gurkhas had occupied the whole Nepal valley⁴¹ and the entire sub-montane tract between the river Sutlej on the west and Sikkim on the east and had disrupted the trans-Himalayan trade conducted through Nepal.

The political relations between Nepal, Tibet and China seem to have been established in the 7th century. Nepal's relations with China were influenced by its relations with Tibet and at times by the latter's relations with China.

Politically, for Nepal and Tibet, the 7th century was an important period. Tibet was then ruled by Srong-btsan-Gampo (629-49 A.D.), and Nepal by Amsuvarma (576-619 A.D.). Srong-btsan-Gampo unified Tibet in the first half of the 7th century and concluded matrimonial alliances with China and Nepal. These alliances strengthened political relations between China, Tibet and Nepal.⁴²

The Tibetan ruler intervened in Nepalese politics after Amsuvarma's death (619 A.D.), when Druvadeva, the brother of Udayadeva, aspired for the throne challenging the succession of Narendradeva, son of Udayadeva.⁴³

Narendradeva escaped to Tibet and was restored to his throne in 642 A.D., with Chinese and Tibetan assistance. It was due to Narendradeva's exile in Tibet in 638-39 A.D., that the Nepalese might have accepted the suzerainty of Tibet. It is mentioned in the Tibetan records that Tibet exercised suzerainty over Nepal, and Tibetan rulers resided in Nepal in summer.⁴⁴ Nepalese scholars, however, reject the contention

40. Rose, *Background to Modern Himalayan Politics*, opcit, p. 17.

41. E.H. Parker, "Nepaul and China", *The Imperial and Asiatic Quarterly Review and Oriental and Colonial Record*, Vol. VII, Jan-Apr., 1899, pp. 64-82.

42. Snellgrove, opcit, p. 50; Richardson, opcit, p. 28; Regmi, *Ancient Nepal*, p. 104; Bell, opcit, p. 23.

43. E.H. Parker, "China, Nepaul, Bhutan and Sikkim, their mutual relations as set forth in Chinese official documents", *Journal of the Manchester Oriental Society*, (Manchester, 1911), p. 132; Regmi, *Ancient Nepal*, opcit, pp. 217-218.

44. Rose, *Nepal Strategy for Survival*, opcit, pp. 10-11.

that Nepal was under Tibetan domination, because Narendradeva, they say, was a powerful monarch, who exchanged missions with China as an independent King, his object being to strengthen his claim to the throne by an alliance with China.⁴⁵

Taking advantage of the newly established relations, the Chinese sent a political mission to Nepal in 644 A.D., which afterwards proceeded to Bodhgaya.⁴⁶ The Nepal Raja was pleased with the Chinese mission and as a mark of respect sent a mission to Peking in 647 A.D.⁴⁷

The Chinese sent a goodwill mission to the Indian Emperor Harsha (606-47 A.D.). The mission was commanded by Wang-Yuan-tse, who was accompanied by thirtymen.⁴⁸ The mission passed through Nepal where the local king regarded it as a great compliment; he showed the mission round his capital. According to Chinese sources, by the time the mission reached India, the Emperor Harsha had died. Arjuna, his minister, succeeded to the throne in disregard of the claim of a minor prince. The Nepal Raja helped the Chinese and Tibetan rulers in restoring the Magadhan prince against his rival.⁴⁹ After 647 A.D., no more missions passed between China and Nepal due to the aggressive policy of the Tibetan rulers in the Himalayan region. Sino-Nepalese relations were discontinued for about 550 years until Tibet and China were conquered by the Mongols in the 13th century.⁵⁰

Nepal's relations with China became intimate in the 14th century, when China recognised the Ramavardhan rulers, particularly Madanasimha and Saktisimha, the subordinate rulers of Bottedesa or Banepa, who assumed dictatorial powers as the real sovereigns of Nepal.⁵¹

45. Regmi; *Ancient Nepal*, opcit, pp. 190-97.

46. Rose, *Nepal Strategy for Survival*, opcit, p. 11.

47. Parker, "China, Nepaul, Bhutan and Sikkim", opcit, p. 133; Rose, *Nepal Strategy for Survival*, opcit, pp. 10-11.

48. Shakabpa, opcit, p. 28; Regmi, *Ancient Nepal*, opcit, p. 192.

49. Ibid.

50. Parker, "China. Nepaul, Bhutan and Sikkim", opcit, p. 133.

51. Regmi *Medieval Nepal*, opcit, part I, pp. 365-90.

The Chinese regarded the Ramas as the ruler of Nepal and the prince of Tiyyungta (Jayastiti Malla) as their vassal. The Ramas told the imperial envoys that they were the governors of Nepal and the Mallas were their vassals.⁵² Madanasimha Rama and Saktisimha Rama enjoyed Chinese recognition because they ruled over Banepa-palanchok-choutara area, which touched Tibet near about Khasa, connecting the high way between Lhasa and Kathmandu. The Chinese came to Palanchok and made their first contacts with the Rama rulers. The Chinese heard of the Nepalese in Tibet and were impressed with their activities.⁵³

Between 1384 and 1427 A.D., the Ramas received five Chinese missions and despatched seven Nepalese missions to Peking.⁵⁴ At this time the Ming rulers of China were facing troubles with the Mongols in the north and were eager to establish political relations with Nepal to strengthen their position.⁵⁵ The Ramas in their turn were the de facto rulers of Nepal and were eager to obtain Chinese recognition of their position.⁵⁶

But this exchange of missions between Nepal and China did not last long. In 1427 A.D., the Ramas were liquidated by Yaksha Malla, who achieved a victory over the king of Gorkha, a kingdom that lay to the west of the Bagmati valley. Yaksha Malla also occupied Sikarjong, a Tibetan tract that lay to the north.⁵⁷

Nepal's relations with China were resumed early in the 17th century, when the Ching dynasty came to power in China and obtained considerable influence in Tibet.⁵⁸ The Ching rulers, who were Manchus, strengthened relations with the Fifth Dalai Lama of Tibet who visited Peking.⁵⁹ The object of the Man-

52. Ibid., p. 401.

53. Regmi, *Medieval Nepal*, opcit, part I, pp. 400-07.

54. Ibid., pp. 365-405.

55. Rose, *Background to Modern Himalayan Politics*, opcit, p. 12.

56. Regmi, *Medieval Nepal*, opcit, part I, pp. 405-08.

57. Ibid., pp. 444-50.

58. Rose, *Nepal Strategy for Survival*, opcit, p. 15.

59. Shakabpa, opcit, p. 114; Tieh-Tseng Li, *A Historical Status of Tibet*, (New York, 1956), p. 37; Bell, opcit, p. 86; Richardson, opcit, p. 44.

chus was to use the Dalai Lama's influence on the Mongols to deter them from invading China. The Fifth Dalai Lama was a powerful figure who received envoys from Nepal too.⁶⁰

In the 1720s there were political disturbances in Tibet. The Dalai Lama sought Chinese help against the Dzungar Mongols, who killed both the spiritual and temporal ruler of the country in 1717 A.D. Taking advantage of the situation the Chinese wanted to impose their suzerainty over Tibet. The Emperor KangHsi despatched a military expedition to Tibet to drive the Mongols out of Tibet. The Chinese troops in 1728 A.D. restored peace, and the Sixth Dalai Lama was installed. Chinese political ascendancy in Tibet could be traced to this incident. The erstwhile patron-priest relationship between the Chinese Emperor and the Dalai Lama was now changed for the relationship between the overlord and the vassal.⁶¹ The Chinese installed two military governors, called the Ambans to watch and report the events in Lhasa and elsewhere in Tibet.⁶²

The stationing of Chinese Ambans at Lhasa had a far reaching impact on Sino-Nepalese relations. It was through these Ambans that the Chinese were kept informed of the internal developments in Nepal. In Nepal-Tibet relations, the Ambans took a lively interest with a view to securing control on them.

In the 1730s there was rivalry among the three Rajas of the central valley of Nepal.⁶³ This offered an opportunity to the Chinese for direct involvement in Nepal's internal affairs. The Manchus had first heard of Nepal as palpa, being ruled by a Rajput dynasty.⁶⁴ There were three Rajas of palpa being mentioned in Chinese chronicles as the three Khans.

In 1732 A.D., the Ambans at Lhasa reported to Peking the desire of the three Khans of Nepal to send tribute to Peking.⁶⁵ The Emperor discouraged the move in view of the great dis-

60. Snellgrove, *opcit*, p. 198.

61. Ramakant, *opcit*, p. 7.

62. Richardson, *opcit*, p. 52; Rose, *Nepal Strategy for Survival*, *opcit*, p. 15.

63. Parker, "Nepaul and China", *opcit*, p. 66.

64. *Ibid.*, p. 66.

65. *Ibid.*, p. 66; Rose, *Nepal Strategy for Survival*, *opcit*, p. 15.

tance between Nepal and Peking and the hazardous journey which was likely to take two years;⁶⁶ but after seven years, that is in 1729 A.D., the three Khans were fighting with one another which the Ambans were unsuccessful in putting an end to. The Chinese Emperor then issued a decree ordering the three Rajas to maintain peace and send tribute to Peking. The Rajas were delighted with the message and sent the Emperor specimens of local produce, gold pagoda, Buddhist sutras etc, as tribute to the Emperor.⁶⁷ In receiving the tribute the Chinese rulers mentioned Nepal as a tributary state just as they had done Siam, Java, Malacca and other south sea states in the Chinese annals.⁶⁸

In the middle of the 18th century, certain developments changed the power structure in the Nepal valley. The emergence of Gurkhas under Prithvinarayan Shah, threatened the Malla supremacy in the central valley. This emergence coincided with the consolidation of the British East India Company's political power in eastern India, and both the events had a far-reaching impact on the Himalayan politics.

Through the centuries Nepal had been at the centre of developments in the Himalayas, both politically and culturally. Nepalese rulers played an important role in the Himalayan politics as much as they had been instrumental in disseminating culture in the Himalayan region. Nepal had been a traditional link between India and Tibet. Nepalese political events excited the interests of both Tibetan and Chinese authorities, both having clearly recognised the cultural progress of the small state.

66. Parker, "Nepaul and China", *opcit*, p. 66.

67. Parker, "China, Nepaul, Bhutan and Sikkim", *opcit*, p. 136.

68. *Ibid.*, p. 135.

British Reaction to Gurkha Militarism, 1767-1816

Gurkha militarism during the period, 1767-1816, led to two wars between Nepal and Tibet in 1788-92, and another between Nepal and the East India Company in 1814-16. Gurkha militarism upset the political balance in the Himalayan region. Both China and British India were worried over the Gurkha military expansion which needed to be checked for the sake of peace and stability in the region. At the end of the period, this object had been achieved, Nepal's relations with China and British India having now been based on a different footing than heretofore.

The Gurkhas posed a political and military menace to Tibet, Sikkim and Bhutan—the two latter states being looked upon by Lhasa as its protectorate; Tibet itself was regarded by China as a protectorate. Gurkha military activities set off disquiet and fear in the entire Himalayan tract. Tibet's trade

with the Himalayan states and India was particularly affected;¹ its hegemony over Sikkim and Bhutan was threatened too. The Gurkha conquest of a large part of Sikkim spread concern in Bhutan, the neighbouring state. The threat to the security of these two states intensified Tibetan ill-feelings towards the Gurkhas.² As for China, it looked upon Tibet as the immediate buffer of Szechuan and Yunnan, and Sikkim and Bhutan as buffers of Tibet. No wonder, then, China, too, was soon sore with the Gurkhas and then involved in a war with them.

The knowledge that British India was interested in Tibet and the adjacent states for trade and commerce had a bearing on China's policy in the area.³ In China's Nepal policy Calcutta's attitude to Kathmandu was an important factor. Both British India's and China's interests were identical in as much as both sought to restrain Gurkha militarism in the Himalayan region. This was evident when war took place between Nepal and Tibet, the result of which was determined by the Chinese participation in it. Chinese attitude had an impact on the Anglo-Nepalese war too.

The period, 1780-88, was crucial in the Himalayan region. In Tibet the Fifth Panchen Lama died and was succeeded by a minor; in Lhasa the Dalai Lama came of age. In Nepal power passed into the hands of the Regent Bahadurshah, who launched the state upon a vigorous policy of war with the neighbouring states, Tibet being the most prized target.⁴

1. S. Cammann, *Trade Through the Himalayas*, (Princeton, 1951), pp. 107-8; Turner, *opcit*, p. 442; C. Markham, *Narratives of the Mission of George Bogle to Tibet and the Journey of Thomas Manning to Lhasa*, (London, 1879), pp. 127, 197; Report on Political Relations with Nepal, A. Campbell, officiating Assistant Resident in Nepal, 24 July, 1837, F.P.C., 18 Sept., 1837, Nos. 61, 92.
2. R.B. Pemberton, "Report on Bhutan, 1837" in A. Eden, *Political Missions to Bootan*, p. 90.
3. Warren Hastings sent two missions to Tibet to secure commercial concessions; one was led by George Bogle in 1774, and the other by Samuel Turner in 1783. Markham, *opcit*, pp. 148-197, 437-442.
4. Rose, *Background to Modern Himalayan Politics*, *opcit*, p. 31; Regmi, *Modern Nepal*, (Calcutta, 1961), pp. 167-71.

There were long standing disputes between Kathmandu and Lhasa over the Tibetan refusal to accept the debased Nepalese coins as legal tender in Tibet and Nepalese determination to force the Tibetans to accept the coins as legal tender. Bahadurshah was keen on establishing Nepal's political influence in Tibet, where internal dissensions and power struggles provided an opportunity for Nepalese intrigues.⁵ Besides Bahadurshah hoped to consolidate his power in the Darbar by a victory over Tibet. He did not apprehend any Chinese opposition to the scheme, Peking being far away and the intervening tract between it and Lhasa being extremely difficult for troop movements.

The Gurkhas demanded that the Tibetan government surrender strategic areas around the Kuti and Kerung passes. They also blamed the Tibetans for having exported inferior kind of salt to Nepal. The Tibetans would not meet the Nepalese demands; they closed the trade routes between Lhasa and Kathmandu and opened the routes through the Chumbivalley and Sikkim in violation of a treaty made in 1775 A.D., which had expressly provided for the closure of the routes.⁶

The Gurkhas then crossed the border in July 1788, seized the coveted tracts around Kuti and Kerung and made for Shigatse, the headquarters of the Panchen Lama. Simultaneously they attacked Sikkim and swept over the country,⁷ reaching the Bhutan frontier. The ruler of Sikkim escaped to Lhasa.

In sore straits the Panchen Lama appealed to British India for assistance, relying on the friendly relations established by

5. In 1780, the fifth Panchen Lama died of smallpox and his two brothers quarrelled over the property. One brother appealed to the Gurkhas for help. The Gurkhas gave him assistance and attacked Tibet in 1788. Parker, "China, Nepal, Bhutan and Sikkim", *opcit*, pp. 138, 139; Resident to Government, (Translation of a letter). 4 Sept. 1789, No. 380, S.P.C., 10 Apr. 1789.

6. See Chapter one, p. 7.

7. H.A. Risley, *Gazetteer of Sikkim*, (Calcutta, 1894), P.X.

Warren Hastings earlier.⁸ The Panchen Lama did not want the Chinese Emperor to know of his appeal to the British, nor did he desire Chinese intervention, for fear of threat to his existing position.

Lord Cornwallis, the Governor-General in Calcutta, saw in the Tibetan appeal both an opportunity and a risk. Aid to the Lama held the prospect of improvement in the Indo-Tibetan trade, besides checking the Gurkhas, whose military activities had jeopardised the Company's commercial interests in the Himalayan area. But then, British intervention was likely to anger China which might put further obstacles to the East India Company's trade with China. Besides, assistance to Tibet was likely to provoke the Gurkhas to attacking the Company's territory below. In such circumstances, Cornwallis thought it wise to politely inform the Lama that he had better expect no military assistance from the British.⁹

In June 1789, the Tibetans made peace with the Gurkhas, the latter agreeing to withdraw from the border districts of Tibet and undertaking to never again invade the country. Tibet agreed to pay an annual tribute of Rs. 50,000 to Nepal, which would maintain a *vakil* at Lhasa, to ensure the observance of the treaty. The trade routes through Sikkim were

8. Bogle reached Tashilhunpo in December 1774, and met the Tashi Lama on many occasions and established a firm friendship with him. Bogle realised that without the cooperation of Tashi Lama there was scant hope of any significant revival of the Indo-Tibetan trade which had been so severely damaged by the Gurkha conquest of the Nepal valley. Alastair Lamb, *Britain and Chinese Central Asia*, (London, 1960), p. 10; Markham, *opcit*, pp. 148-49; K.C. Chaudhuri, *Anglo-Nepalese Relations*, (Calcutta, 1960), p. 57.

9. Lord Cornwallis, the Governor-General, wrote to the Panchen Lama that armies could not be sent from Calcutta to such a distant place as Lhasa; besides the Emperor, the Suzerain of Tibet, would take umbrage if the Company interfered in China's tributary state, Tibet. Cornwallis also stated that the Gurkhas had not caused any injury to the Company's interests, and so the Company could not take arms against them. Cornwallis to Panchen Lama, 27 Feb., 1789, Nos. 371-74, S.P.C., 10 Apr., 1789; D.B. Diskalkar, "Tibeto-Nepalese war, 1788-93", *JBORS*, (Patna), Vol. XIX, Part IV, 1933, pp. 362-98; Lamb, *opcit*, pp. 23-24.

again closed with the result that Indo-Tibetan trade could be carried on through the Nepalese route alone.¹⁰

The Gurkhas had made peace for fear of Chinese intervention in favour of Tibet. To know the Chinese reaction to the war and the settlement that followed, Kathmandu sent a mission to Peking in September 1789 with valuable presents to the Emperor.¹¹ The latter bestowed titles on the Raja of Nepal and the Regent, hoping that Nepal would not be aggressive towards Tibet in future. However, the peace proved short lived. Within a year the Gurkhas resumed hostilities as the Tibetans stopped paying the stipulated tribute. In August 1791, the Gurkhas made an attack on Kuti and soon there-after occupied Shigatse where the rich Teshilhumpo monastery was plundered by them.¹²

The Chinese Ambans were alarmed: Shigatse had fallen; Lhasa too may fall soon. This made Chinese intervention unavoidable. Tibet was too important an area for China to be lost to Nepal. Anxious for the security of Tibet, the Emperor sent an army to Lhasa.¹³ Both Tibet and China were afraid that the British might side with the Gurkhas as they were interested in promoting Indo-Tibetan trade through Nepal. The Nepalese in the meanwhile had appealed to the British for assistance and followed it up with a commercial treaty which

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10. Parker, "China, Nepaul, Bhutan and Sikkim", *opcit*, p. 140; Rose *Nepal Strategy for Survival*, *opcit*, pp. 42-43; Shakabpa, *opcit*, p. 191.
 11. The Nepalese mission visited Peking in 1789-90. The Chinese Emperor rejected the Gurkha claim to the bordering Tibetan territory. Rose, *Background to Modern Himalayan Politics*, *opcit*, p. 31; Parker, "Nepaul and China", *opcit*, p. 70.
 12. "The valuable booty, which had for ages been accumulating at Teshoo Loomboo appears to have been the chief, if not the sole object of their inroad." Markham, *opcit*, p. 438; J. Mannersmith, Resident in Nepal, 26 Aug., 1909, "Memorandum of the early history of the relations between Nepal and Tibet and China compiled by the Nepal Darbar", Political and Secret letters from India to the Secretary of State, Vol. 246, Register No. 326; Shakabpa, *opcit*, p. 165; Bell, *opcit*, p. 41; Richardson, *opcit*, p. 69; Ramakant, *opcit*, p. 22; Parker, "Nepaul and China", *opcit*, p. 69; Rose, *Nepal Strategy for Survival*, *opcit*, pp. 52, 53; Lamb, *opcit*, p. 25.
 13. Parker, "Nepaul and China", *opcit*, pp. 73-74.

for the British had for long been a desideratum. Kathmandu hoped that the treaty and an alliance with the British, "might prove a powerful means of deterring the Chinese" from an invasion of Nepal.¹⁴ The Chinese General and the Dalai Lama then sent letters to the British urging them to punish the Gurkhas, the disturbers of peace in the Himalayan region.

All this put Cornwallis in a really difficult situation. He could neither afford to miss the opportunity for promoting the Company's commercial prospects nor incur the hostility of China which was certain to result if Nepal were given any military assistance. Nor could he let China occupy Nepal which was certain to be defeated in the war; the result of such occupation would make Chinese territory contiguous to the British territory with dangerous prospects of frequent border clashes.¹⁵ Besides, damage to the Company's China trade was another factor which influenced Cornwallis in not provoking the Chinese by coming out openly in favour of Nepal. But then, should Nepal win the war—a remote possibility—the Gurkhas would dominate the whole trans-Himalayan commerce to the detriment of British India's interests, while if aid were given to Nepal, Bhutan and Sikkim might join Tibet, resulting in a major Himalayan crisis.¹⁶ In such circumstances, Cornwallis decided that political mediation was the best course. He wrote in his minute:

It will be no less political than humane in us to interpose our good offices and endeavour to reestablish peace and tranquility in those quarters.¹⁷

Both Kathmandu and Lhasa were informed that since the British were on friendly terms with both Tibet and Nepal, no

14. H. A. Oldfield, *Sketches from Nepal*, Vol. II, (London, 1880), pp. 281-82; Chaudhuri, *opcit*, p. 69; Rose, *Nepal Strategy for Survival*, *opcit*, p. 57; Parker, "Nepal and China", *opcit*, p. 76; Lamb, *opcit*, p. 25.

15. Kirkpatrick, *opcit*, pp. VIII. IXV; Chaudhuri, *opcit*, p. 40.

16. That Bhutan and Sikkim, "are tributary directly to Lhasa and now indirectly to China, there can be no doubt, although the official people most strenuously denied it". Dr. W. Griffith's *Journal*, (1837-38), p. 167, in Eden, *opcit*.

17. Governor-General's Minute, B.P.C., 30 Oct., 1792, No. 17; Diskalkar, *opcit*, pp. 389-91.

military aid could be given to either, while friendly mediation would be made in their disputes. Cornwallis sent Captain William Kirkpatrick to Kathmandu on this mediatory mission.¹⁸

Meanwhile the Sino-Tibetan army had defeated the Gurkhas in a number of engagements,¹⁹ soon obliging the Nepalese Darbar to make peace in September 1792. The treaty that followed obliged Kathmandu to undertake to send five-yearly tributary missions to Peking and to submit its disputes with Lhasa for the arbitration of the Ambans;²⁰ it would forbear from any hostility with Tibet in future. The Gurkhas returned the articles they had looted at Shigatse.²¹

The Sino-Nepalese war affected the British interests in a way they had not anticipated. They lost credibility in the Nepalese Darbar which clearly saw that the British had no intention to help the Nepalese in any way, and that they just wanted to grind their own axe. Little wonder, Kirkpatrick on reaching Kathmandu had a cool reception; the Darbar, which had made the commercial treaty with the Company as a counsel of despair, saw no longer any need to honour it. Therefore, Kirkpatrick's main object was defeated;²² the Darbar was as hostile as ever.

The consolidation of Chinese authority in Tibet after the

18. Kirkpatrick early in 1792 reached Noakote and discovered that the Chinese had settled their own affairs with Nepal. Parker, "Nepal and China", *opcit*, p. 76; John Rowland, *A History of Sino-Indian Relations*, (Calcutta, 1967), p. 23; Lamb, *opcit*, p. 26.

19. Fuk'anggan, the Chinese General, advanced far into Gorkha territory and gained several successes. The Emperor, in summing up the reports of victories gained, said, "Our generals gained successes at Cham, Panghing, Chirong, Jeso, Shepru, Tungkio and Chimchi, and these places together with Niram, and therefore ours by right of conquest". Parker, "Nepal and China", *opcit*, pp. 73-74.

20. Shakabpa, *opcit*, p. 168; Ramakant, *opcit*, p. 10; Lamb *opcit*, p. 25.

21. Regmi, *Modern Nepal*, *opcit*, pp. 200-203.

22. Chaudhuri, *opcit*, pp. 70-74; Campbell's, "Report on Nepal", *opcit*, F.P.C., 18 Sept., 1837, No. 61.

war sealed all prospects of Indo-Tibetan trade.²³ The Chinese suspicion of secret British encouragement to the Gurkhas was an important factor why Lord Macartney's commercial mission to China in 1793 failed.²⁴

The role of Cornwallis and Gurkha war had lost him the respect of both victors and vanquished. Neither side appreciated his having avoided openly taking sides and then having offered to mediate when the war was already over.²⁵

Henceforth, British India had always to reckon with the increased Chinese influence and prestige in the entire Himalayan region, which was the result of the Sino-Nepalese war. The English learnt one more lesson: it was Nepalese jingoism which had damaged British interests; it was hence essential to restrain the jingoism to avoid further damage to the interests.

Nepal's relations with China would now have a new basis. Peking would view Kathmandu as a tributary state, which needed close watch for the sake of Tibetan security, but not close control, either in internal matters or in its foreign relations; Nepal's trade with Tibet was not affected, although China would no longer allow Nepalese coins to circulate as legal tender in Tibet.²⁶ The Newar merchants were obliged to get their names registered with the Tibetan Government which kept a close watch on their activities.²⁷

23. "We lost all the good results of the policy of Warren Hastings and the friendship of the Lamas, excited the jealous suspicion of the Chinese government, and the scorn of the Nepalese Darbar and were despised by all. The immediate consequence was that the Chinese closed all the passes with Tibet to the natives of India". Markham, *opcit*, p. LXXIX; T'ieh-Tsengli *opcit*, pp. 51-8.

24. The Macartney Embassy failed to bring about a significant improvement in Anglo-Chinese relations. The correspondence of 1795-96 was equally fruitless. Cammann, *opcit*, pp. 134-43; Lamb, *opcit*, pp. 27-30.

25. Cammann. *opcit*, p. 134.

26. Rose, *Background to Modern Himalayan Politics*, *opcit*, d. 31.

27. In October 1792, the Chinese government ordered that those Newars who wished to remain in Tibet should register their names in Tibetan records, while those who did not want to register would be sent back to Nepal. Rose, *Background to Modern Himalayan Politics*, *opcit*, p.31.

As for the Chinese, they, too, learnt a lesson: the war in the Himalayan region was indeed an expensive undertaking. The interrelation of the Himalayan states underwent a change after the war. Chinese predominance in the area restrained Nepalese bellicosity which ensured the security of Tibet, Bhutan and Sikkim.²⁸ An indirect result of the war was that, checked in the north, Gurkha militarism asserted itself in the south, threatening the British territory.

The pattern of British India's relations with Nepal was now determined by Calcutta's anxiety to maintain the security of its territory against Kathmandu's encroaching proclivities. Besides, the British had not yet given up hopes of furthering their commercial interests in Nepal, and this hope involved them in the power struggles in the court of Kathmandu. The earlier British attempts at preventing the Gurkha conquest of the Kathmandu valley had failed.²⁹ So had their attempts at conciliating the Gurkhas who opposed any commercial venture of the British. Undaunted, the British again sent to Kathmandu, a commercial mission in 1795, under Abdul Kadir Khan, whose report convinced the Governor-General that the Company's object could be realised only if political influence were established in the court of Kathmandu.³⁰ The

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28. "To invade Bhutan the Nepalese must either pass through Sikkim or through the British or Tibetan territory for there is no intermediate neutral country which could be traversed, and an act of aggression must be committed against one or the other. Tibet indeed regards Sikkim as a province of its own ... any invasion of Bootan by Nipal, a power which the Chinese regard as under vassalage to them would be followed by punishment from the latter, and that assistance would immediately be entreated from the authorities at Lhasa by both the Deb and Dharma Rajas". Pemberton's *Report on Bootan*, p. 92.
29. In September 1767, the East India Company sent, Captain Kinloch to Nepal to forestall the conquest of Nepal valley by Prithvinarayan Shah, Kinloch failed to achieve the purpose. Markham, *opcit*, p. LXXVI; Cammann, *opcit*, pp. 107-8; Chaudhuri, *opcit*, pp. 13-33; B.D. Sanwal, *Nepal and the East India Company*, (Bombay, 1965), pp. 69-73.
30. G.M. Saletore, "Indian Trade Delegation to Kathmandu, 1795", *P.I.H.R.C.*, (Patna), Vol. 32, (Feb. 1956), P. 10; Chaudhuri, *opcit*, pp. 76-96.

power struggles and the dissensions in the court made the situation favourable for British political intrigues.³¹

This new line of policy seemed to Lord Wellesley, the Governor-General, the best; he had already consolidated British influence in the Princely states of India by exploiting local dissensions. In 1801, the British concluded a treaty with the Nepalese Darbar by exploiting the keenness of the ruling party to gain the British support.³² A British Resident, named Captain W. Knox, was sent to the court of Kathmandu with the declared objective of gaining political influence there:³³

“It was Captain Knox’s desire to avail himself of the opportunities which then offered of our British, obtaining a considerable influence in the Nepal Darbar.”³⁴

But, then, in his attempts at establishing closer political connections with Kathmandu, Wellesley needed to ascertain that China, Nepal’s overlord, did not mind the British move.³⁵ Reports from Abdul Kadir and Captain Knox were reassur-

31. Raja Ran Bahadur of Nepal fled away to Benaras. The presence of Ran Bahadur was deemed convenient for the British for a renewal of attempts at forming a closer alliance with Nepal. *Narratives of the Political Relations of the Government of India with Native States*, (Calcutta, 1862), pp. 135-38.
32. The conflicting parties at the Nepalese Darbar, particularly, the Pandes, were afraid that the exiled King Ran Bahadur might be reinstated in Nepal with British support. In fear of this the ruling faction in the Darbar concluded a commercial treaty to form an alliance with the British Government in 1801. *Narratives*, opcit, pp. 104-16; C.U. Aitchison, *A Collection of Treaties Engagements and Sanads*, XIV, (Calcutta, 1929), pp. 57-61; Chaudhuri, opcit, p. 116; Rose, *Nepal Strategy for Survival*, opcit, p. 79; Ramakant, opcit, p. 23.
33. Knox sought to give some important Nepalese statesmen annual subsidy; hoping to “convert the rulers of Nepal into British dependents”. Chaudhuri, opcit, pp. 119-22; Rose, *Nepal Strategy for Survival*, opcit, p. 79; Ramakant, opcit, p. 23.
34. A. Campbell, officiating Assistant Resident in Nepal, 24 July 1837, “Cursory Notice of the Connection And Transaction between The British Indian Government and Nepal, 1793 to 1812” in *Naratives*, opcit, p. 105.
35. Chaudhuri, opcit, p. 120.

ing: China had no interest in preventing Nepalese connections with any other power nor in interfering in Kathmandu's internal affairs.³⁶

Although Wellesley learnt that, "the people of Nepal were perfectly independent"³⁷ of China, he thought it wise to observe, "a considerable degree of caution in contracting political engagements" with Nepal.³⁸ In 1804, Wellesley withdrew Captain Knox from Kathmandu partly for fear of causing annoyance to China.³⁹

However, the British policy was frustrated by a faction in the Darbar which was bitterly opposed to any connection with the British. This faction headed by Bhimsen Thapa restored political stability in the Darbar, increased the armed strength of the state and launched it upon a course of rapid military expansion. In the process Kathmandu was naturally involved in a war with Calcutta in November 1811.⁴⁰

The British fought the Nepalese with the apprehension that China, as Nepal's overlord, might intervene. Kathmandu's

36. The British wanted to ascertain whether their alliance with Nepal (the 1801 Treaty) would evoke Chinese jealousy and interfere with Company's commercial interests. After discussing with Gajraj Misru and two other Nepalese representatives in 1801, Wellesley was satisfied that Nepal "was not in any degree" dependent on China and that "no connexion subsists between those states [China and Nepal] of a nature to limit the right of the Raja of Nepal to contract engagements with foreign powers or to render the proposed alliance... a reasonable subject of compalin or jealousy to the Chinese government". Bengal letter to Secret Committee, 1 Jan 1803 Bengal Secret Letters, Vol. 5.

37. F.S.C., 2 May 1805, No. 350.

38. Lamb, *opcit*, p. 36.

39. Resident to government, 25 July 1837, F.P.C., 18 Sept. 1837, No. 69.

40. The Gurkhas encroached on the lowland possessions of the zamindars in the south of the Himalayas. The zamindars were under British protection. This enraged Moira, who declared war in November 1814 and stated, "that the war with the Gurkhas was unavoidable and forced upon their government by a series of unjust and unprovoked aggression." *Papers Relation to Nepal war*, (London, 1824), pp. 749-780; Ramakant, *Indo-Nepalese Relations: 1816 to 1877*, (Delhi, 1968), p. 28; Chaudhurt, *opcit*, p. 162; Ramakant, *Nepal-China and India*, (New Delhi, 1976), p. 24.

appeals to Peking for assistance aggravated the fear.⁴¹ Any Chinese aid to Nepal would make the British military problem graver, while even Chinese annoyance would damage Britain's China trade. In such circumstances Lord Moira, the Governor-General, took all pains to assure the Chinese that the Gurkhas had forced the British hands and that the latter had no object other than punishing the aggressive Gurkhas.⁴² Moira also informed the Secret Committee in London of the "moderation of our views", to convince the Committee that Calcutta's policy was "directed to no object of aggrandisement" in Nepal.⁴³

Moira wanted to make sure that Nepal's political subordination to China did not earn it Chinese assistance, either military or political. Happily, the opinion of Dr. Buchanan Hamilton and Captain Hearsay, who had some knowledge of the Himalayan area, soon led the Governor-General to abandon his fear of Chinese intervention. Buchanan, however, warned Moira :

It cannot at any rate be supposed that the Chinese government could view without the utmost jealousy the conquest of Nepal, nor do I think such an event likely

41. The Nepal Raja addressed a petition to the Emperor of China in March 1815, requesting assistance against the British in men and money, to drive out the enemy; otherwise, he warned, in a few years the British would become masters of Lhasa. Pemberton's *Report on Bootan*, opcit, pp. 91-92, Parker, "Nepaul and China", opcit, p. 78.
42. The Governor-General informed the Chinese general, "the British government had no views of aggrandisement and only seeks to remain at peace with other states, and no motives of ambition and interest prompt it to extend its influence and authority beyond these barriers which appears to have been placed by nature between the vast countries of India and China". Rose, "China and the Anglo-Nepalese war 1814-16", *Indian History Congress Proceedings of the Twenty-Fourth Session*, Delhi, 1961, p. 211.
43. Moira informed the Secret Committee, "that the extinction of the Gurkha power west of the Kali was an indispensable condition of any pacification holding out a prospect of permanency in itself and of security to our interests". Moira to Secret Committee, 2 Aug., 5 Aug., 1815, *Papers Relating to Nepal War*, opcit, p. 720.

to contribute to the friendship which is so necessary for the Company's existence.⁴⁴

The Governor-General was impressed by Buchanan's argument that the British had better avoid giving the Chinese "any just reason for suspicion by forming pretensions to any part of the mountaneous region" that separated the Chinese empire and the British territory in India.⁴⁵ The report of the Select Committee of the Super Cargoes confirmed this:⁴⁶ Moira was determined to win the war, but not annex Nepal.

Nepal sought to involve the Chinese in a war with the British by playing upon Peking's strong distrust of the British and its sensitivity to any threat to Tibet.⁴⁷ Kathmandu represented that the British invasion of Nepal was but the prelude to their attempt at the conquest of Tibet. The Ambans were informed that the British had offered bribe to Kathmandu to allow the unrestricted passage of their troops to invade Tibet.⁴⁸

However, the Chinese clearly saw through the Nepalese game: they refused to play into their hands. The Chinese were worried over the Anglo-Nepalese war having serious repercussions in Tibet. Hence, the Chinese policy was not only to respect Nepalese appeals for assistance but to exert political pressure on Kathmandu to bring the war to an end.⁴⁹

44. Buchanan to J. Adams, Political Secretary 19 Aug. 1814. p. 45, Ibid.

45. Ibid.

46. Peace with China being "an object of such vast consequence to the commercial interests of the company and indeed of the United Kingdom", Moira had to be very careful throughout the Nepal war. Super Cargoes in China (Macao), to Governor-General, 5 Oct. 1814, pp. 272-73, *Papers Relating to the Nepal war*, opcit; H. T. Prinsep, *History of The Political and Military Transactions in India During The Administration of The Marquess of Hastings*, (London 1825), I, p. 44.

47. Prinsep, opcit, pp. 209-13; Marchioness of Bute, Ed, *The Private Journal of The Marquess of Hastings*, (London, 1858), II, pp. 144-45.

48. Pemberton's, *Report on Bootan*, opcit, pp. 91-92; Rose, *Nepal Strategy for Survival*, opcit, p. 85.

49. The Emperor asked the Ambans at Lhasa to inform the Nepalese, "as a matter of fact they can join the Feringhi rule if they like, so long as they send us tribute and so long as the Feringhi do not cross the Tangut frontier. Parker, "Nepaul and China", opcit, p. 78.

The war ended in the defeat of Nepal, which was obliged to sign the Treaty of Segowli in December 1815. However, the Darbar did not ratify the treaty, which led to the resumption of the war.⁵⁰ The war finally ended in March 1816. The most important provisions of the treaty were the establishment of a British Resident at Kathmandu; all the territories west of the river Mahakali were wrested by the British. The hill tracts east of the river Mechi, and part of the eastern Terai between the Mechi and Tista were given to the Raja of Sikkim as reward for his services to the Company in the Nepal war. This territory had earlier been annexed by the Gurkhas from the Raja of Sikkim. The British policy was to circumvent Nepal with British territories as a security measure from any future Gurkha aggression.⁵¹

The treaty was signed under duress, the Nepalese particularly resenting the establishment of the British Residency at Kathmandu, which they feared as an instrument of intrigue and subversion. Unable to reject the treaty outright, the Nepalese sought to create in the British a fear that the treaty having been made without the approval of China, the latter would strongly disapprove it.⁵²

The arrival of the Chinese army at Lhasa in the meanwhile to watch the course of the war lent some substance to the Nepalese contention.⁵³ A Nepalese delegation met the Chinese

50. The treaty was not ratified by the Maharaja of Nepal because he thought once the British had known the weakness of Nepal, they would ultimately subjugate the entire country. Ramakant, *Indo-Nepalese Relations*, opcit, pp. 32-33.

51. *Ibid.*, pp. 34-54; Chaudhuri, opcit, pp. 162, 163; Ramakant, *Nepal-China and India*, opcit, p. 24.

52. The Nepali officials informed Edward Gardner, the British Resident at Kathmandu, "that the Chinese had assumed a threatening posture towards Nepal and thus indirectly towards the British, because of Peking's displeasure with Nepal's new political relationship with the British". Rose, "China and the Anglo-Nepalese war" opcit, p. 211.

53. With the arrival of the Chinese general at Lhasa, Kathmandu decided to send a deputation to the Chinese officers in Tibet. Kathmandu wanted to play upon Calcutta's apprehensions over the recent developments in Tibet, to effect the objectives of the withdrawal of the British Residency from Kathmandu and the restoration of a part or all of the territory ceded to the British in the peace treaty just concluded, *Ibid.* p. 211.

generals at Lhasa and urged their intervention to prevent the British from establishing political influence in Nepal, which they pointed out, was certain to damage the Chinese position in Nepal.⁵⁴

Moirra took all this seriously. Engaged as he then was in wars with the Marathas and the Pindaris, he would rather withdraw the Residency from Kathmandu than risk a war with China. However, the report that the Chinese had not been influenced by Nepalese entreaties soon relieved Moirra's anxiety. The Chinese severely reprimanded the Nepalese for their war with the British whose explanation of the origin of the war seemed convincing to Peking.⁵⁵

The Chinese commander in Tibet just politely wrote to Moirra to withdraw the Residency "in consideration of the ties of friendship" between China and India.⁵⁶ He further assured the Governor-General that he had rejected the Nepalese version of the war as absolutely false. Moirra thereupon assured the Chinese general that the British Residency would not interfere in the internal or foreign affairs of Nepal.⁵⁷ The Chinese thereupon did not press for the withdrawal of the Residency. Since Kumaon abutted on western Tibet, Moirra was for a time worried over possible Chinese reaction to this occupation. However, there was no unfavourable reaction.⁵⁸

The British did not impose a harsher treaty on Nepal in

54. The Nepali Deputies met the Chinese officials and informed them that the Foreigner will first enter under some pretext. After thus entering, he will conquer that territory. In this manner he has taken over Hindustan and suppressed the Delhi Emperor." Ibid. pp. 212-13.

55. Rose, "China and the Anglo-Nepalese War", opcit, p. 214.

56. The Chinese Commissioner wrote to the Governor-General, "You mention that you have stationed a vakeel in Lhasa, this is a matter of no consequence but as the Raja from his youth and inexperience and from the novelty of the circumstances has imbibed suspicion, if you would out of kindness towards us and in consideration of the ties of friendship, withdraw your vakeel. it would be better and we should feel inexpressibly grateful to you." Pemberton's, *Report on Bootan*, opcit, pp. 98-99; Lamb, opcit, pp. 45-46.

57. John Pemble, *The Invasion of Nepal*, (Oxford, 1971), p. 343.

58. Lamb, opcit, p. 43.

consideration of the latter being a tributary of China. Causing annoyance to China was the last thing which the British wanted at this time when they were seeking commercial concessions in China by despatching a mission there under Lord Amherst. Nor did the British desire annexation of Nepal fearing contiguity with Tibet, a Chinese protectorate, which would spark off border clashes. All that the British desired was to prevent Gurkha expansion which served the Chinese interests too.⁵⁹ The Gurkhas would no longer endanger the security of Sikkim and Bhutan. There was now better prospects for peace and stability in the entire Himalayan region.

After the Nepalese war, the British emerged as a political and military force in the Himalayan area; the force was not yet an overwhelming one, but over the years it tended to become so. British arms not only left a deep impression on the Nepalese, but on the latter's neighbours too. By the treaty of Titaliya (1817), the British secured considerable political influence over Sikkim, whose disputes with Nepal would now be subject to British mediation.⁶⁰ It must not have escaped the British notice that their new connexion with Sikkim caused no apparent reaction in Tibet, let alone China.⁶¹

British position in Nepal constituted the principal element in Britain's Himalayan policy in subsequent years. The Residency at Kathmandu served as a centre for transmitting intelligence from Tibet and the adjacent Himalayan tracts. British India became conterminous with western Tibet, when the

59. British India's primary object was to revive the Indo-Tibetan trade through the Nepalese passes; this led the British to check the Gurkha expansion, whose activities threatened British trade in the Himalayan region. China, on the other hand, was anxious of the security of its buffer, Tibet; Nepal, Tibet's neighbour, was aggressive; so China decided that the Gurkhas should remain quiet and should not be aggressive towards the Tibetans.

60. P.R. Rao, *India and Sikkim, (1814-1970)*, (New Delhi, 1972), pp. 2-4.

61. One of the reasons why Sikkim Raja was given the territory which the Gurkhas had earlier wrested from him was the consideration that it would please the Tibetan government to which Sikkim was closely allied by ties of religion; it would gladden the Chinese too. Ramakant, *Indo-Nepalese Relations*, opcit, p. 27.

former Nepalese territories in Kumaon and Garhwal came under the British occupation. The British could now watch the course of events in Tibet and Chinese activities in Lhasa far better than before.

The war had several lessons for the British. It was clear that China strongly disliked Nepalese militarism. Indeed Peking's suzerainty over Kathmandu did not oblige it to ignore Nepalese jingoism, far less encourage it. The Chinese Emperor clearly told the Nepalese king that the latter's entreaties for military or political assistance could not be entertained because,

The sovereign authority of the Emperor of China does not extend over Nepal.⁶²

It was evident that all that China was interested in was the maintenance of tributary relations with Nepal with a view to preventing the latter from resolving its disputes with Tibet by armed means. Significantly enough, while no assistance was given to Kathmandu, Peking reminded the latter of its obligation to despatch tributary missions regularly.

China had as yet no fear of the British competing with its position in Nepal or elsewhere in the Himalayan tract. Certainly, Chinese suzerainty over Nepal was not exclusive, it did not oppose its tributary from having political relations with a foreign power. Hereafter, China's tributary relations and British India's political relations with Nepal co-existed. For the present the limited British interests in Nepal caused China no apprehension, although China's position in Nepal did have a restraining effect on British ambitions in the country.

But with the years, when British interests increased and its position became stronger in Kathmandu, China did become apprehensive which led it to attempt at undermining the British position. The British naturally resisted this and realised that until British relations with Nepal were made exclusive in character, their interests in Kathmandu could not be promoted.

62. Quoted in K. M. Umdar, *Anglo-Nepalese Relations In The Nineteenth Century*, (Calcutta, 1973), p. 104.

Nepal's Foreign Policy, 1816-1846

The Nepalese policy after 1816 was to play up its tributary relations with China as a means of deterring what it feared as the aggressive tendencies of the British. Quite early, British officers having knowledge of the Sino-Nepalese relations had correctly understood the clever balancing game which Nepal played between China and British India. Thus, Captain M.Y. Hearsay pointed out to J. Adams, Political Secretary, that the Nepalese had so long

kept up a threatening countenance towards the Chinese government, pretending to be a part of our government, dressing their troops out in red uniforms, arming them with muskets and aping the name of the subordinate officers.¹

1. B.P. Saksena, Ed. *Historical Papers Relating to Kamaun, 1809-1842*, (Allahabad, 1956), P. 1. The Nepalese army was modelled on the pattern of the Company's army; Prithvinarayan Shah visited several military stations in India in disguise.

But during their war with the British, the Nepalese had acted with great reserve, imitating the Chinese dress and forms, and wishing to inculcate in their [British] minds, that they were tributaries to the Chinese.²

For sometime Nepal failed to reconcile itself to the political relations established by the treaty of Segowli, far less to the loss of one third of its territory to the British; Nepal hoped to free itself from the restraint which the treaty of Segowli imposed and to recover the lost territories.³ In such circumstances the Nepalese sought to exploit the First Anglo-Chinese war, 1838-1842, and the Dogra-Tibetan war, 1841-1842, with a view to pitting the Chinese against the British; the Nepalese object was to grind their own axe.⁴ China's policy being one of avoidance of a conflict with the British in the Himalayan region, it wanted Nepal to remain quiet and avoid troubles with the British, for such troubles might endanger the security of Tibet, a region in which, Peking knew, both Kathmandu and Calcutta had considerable interests.

China kept up its tributary relations with Nepal but never interfered in its internal affairs. The failure to obtain Chinese assistance in any way ultimately led to a change in Kathmandu's attitude to Peking in the second half of the 19th century when, under Jang Bahadur Rana, the Nepalese government assumed an accommodating attitude towards British India.⁵

2. Saksena, *opcit*, P. 1.

3. See Chapter, Two, p. 34.

4. Resident Hodgson informed the government, that the Nepalese embassy to China bore "tribute and acknowledgment of inferiority to the feet of the Chinese Emperor and was fixed upon. Nepal in 1792, in consequence of the utterly unprovoked irruption of the Nepalese into Tibet and their plundering the sacred city of Digarchee. No importance is attached by the Chinese to their relations with Nepal and they are maintained by Nepal chiefly or solely to be played off against us [British], if need be". Hodgson to Political Secretary, 9 Nov. 1833, F.P.C., 21 Nov. 1833, No. 36.

5. Ramakant, *Nepal-China and India*, *opcit*, p. 25.

Nepal was politically stable for about two decades after its war with the British. Prime Minister Bhimsen Thapa ruled with almost regal sway.⁶ The king Rajendra Vikram Shah, being a minor and the regent, Queen Tripurasundari, supporting Bhimsen, the latter monopolised all powers of the state. Bhimsen increased the military strength of the state and kept the army well prepared as much for a defensive war as for aggression on India.

Political relations with the British were galling to Bhimsen for the restraint they imposed on Nepal's militarism and expansion. Yet none knew better that Nepal could ill afford to fight with the British again. Hence, the best policy was to maintain a cold attitude to the British without provoking them. The British Resident in particular was treated as a virtual prisoner, for fear that any relaxation of this policy would enable him to intrigue with Bhimsen's enemies in the court and to subvert his regime.⁷ The British Resident's activities in native states of India were a lesson for the Nepalese Prime Minister and a constant warning. Bhimsen was determined to prevent British domination of Nepal.

Bhimsen even sought to enlist Chinese assistance to Nepalese scheme of creating troubles for the British when the latter's hands were full with the Marhatta and Pindari wars. The mission which he sent to Peking in 1818 had this specific purpose.⁸

However, there was no change in China's reaction to Kathmandu's prayers for assistance against the British; as before China did not want Nepal to be embroiled in a war with the British which could pose a threat to Tibet and other Himalayan states. The Nepalese mission was therefore advised to

6. Resident stated to the government that "so long the policy of Nepal is subject to the guidance of so sagacious and energetic a Minister as Bhimsen, we may reasonably expect the Nepal will not deliberately seek hostility with us". Resident to Government, 8 Mar. 1830, F.S.C., 13 Oct. 1830, No. 24; *Narratives*, opcit, p. 164.

7. W.W. Hunter, *Life of Brian Houghton Hodgson*, (London, 1896), pp. 62-63.

8. Parker, "Nepaul and China", opcit, p. 79.

urge the government at Kathmandu to maintain friendly relations with the neighbouring powers. Although the British policy after the war was to conciliate Kathmandu, Bhimsen's distrust of the British did not diminish. It is this distrust for which Bhimsen kept up relations with China hoping that the British.

should hesitate at any time to push to extremities an acknowledged dependent of the Celestial Emperor.⁹

The reports of B.H. Hodgson, the British Resident at Kathmandu, (1833-43), had it that, inspite of the high-handed and overbearing tone of the Chinese officers at Lhasa in their dealings with the Nepalese in Tibet,¹⁰ Kathmandu had to put up a good face while dealing with Peking.

Hodgson further reported that the Chinese imposed heavy duty on the salt which Nepal imported from Tibet, and for a time the Resident wondered if Kathmandu's embassy to China would be suspended.¹¹ But then, such suspension was certain to provoke the Chinese; and the defence against the Chinese lay in closer alliance with the British. But Bhimsen and his adherents thought it wise to avoid closer relations with the British, a more fearful power. Hodgson explained :

But soon they held that it is better to have relations (which is harmless) with China and to submit to a little influence without any injury to their pride than to draw closer to a power which has defeated them and humbled their military pride and which they fear for its extensive conquests.¹²

9. F.S.C., 14 Oct. 1829, No. 83.

10. Resident to Maddock, 20 June 1832, (D.O.), F.P.C., 27 Aug. 1832, No. 18.

11. The Nepalese were faced with the only alternative, "in the event of breach with China that is closer alliance with British government which would have enabled them to set at defiance the resentment of the Chinese". F.P.C., 27 Aug. 1832, No. 18.

12. Ibid.

Bhimsen strongly suspected that the real British object was to annex Nepal and hence decided that any closer alliance with the British

for the purpose of their (Nepal's) protection against China implies their political dependence upon the British government and to this they will never submit but as the last resort to save their government from extinction.¹³

This would account for the regular despatch of Nepalese missions to China. The embassy, which always consisted of twenty seven persons, was obliged to follow a definite route to Peking through Lhasa, Chengtu, Tachienlu and other tracts of eastern Tibet. The distance covered was roughly three thousand miles where lay more than a hundred mountains big and small. Usually the embassies started in the first half of June, when the melting of the snow made mountain passes on the way easy to negotiate. It used to reach Peking about the middle of next January; Chinese officers would escort the mission, providing it with all comforts; even gratification of the sensual desires of the members of the mission would be taken care of. Both the Chinese and the Tibetan officers were accountable for the safety and security of the mission. It stayed at Peking for forty-five days after a stopover at Lhasa for one and a half months. The mission took between eighteen months and two years to complete the journey both ways.¹⁴

No deviation from the prescribed route was permitted, no alteration either in the dates or stages fixed when the first mission to Peking had been sent in 1792:

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13. The Nepalese were faced with the only alternative, "in the event of breach with China that is closer alliance with British government which would have enabled them to set at defiance the resentment of the Chinese". F.P.C., 27 Aug 1832, No.18.
 14. Orfeur Cavenagh. *Rough Notes on the State of Nepal, Its Government Army And Resources*, (Calcutta, 1851), pp. 54-55; B.H. Hodgson, *Miscellaneous Essays Relating to Indian Subjects*, Vol. II, (London, 1880), pp. 167-173,

should one of the members be in a dying state, he would not be allowed to halt, but in the event of a palaquin not being available...he would be tied to his saddle and compelled to continue his journey.¹⁵

The mission took indigenous products as tribute to the Emperor and received in return rich presents and an Imperial letter of advice to the Nepalese king couched in a language used by an overlord for his vassal.¹⁶

Hodgson reported to the Government the impressive scene of the Nepalese embassy's return to Kathmandu:

The envoy had the Imperial epistle suspended round his neck in a large cylinder covered with brocade. When the Moharaja reached the spot where he stood, His Highness descended from his elephant and made three profound salams to the Emperor's letter. The envoy was then seated on a spare elephant and placed at the head of cortege which returned with all military pomp to the capital, a royal salute having been first fired.¹⁷

All the members of the mission were treated as outcaste until they underwent an elaborate purification ceremony whereafter they were readmitted to caste. The Raja of Nepal himself conducted the ceremony, presenting the members of the mission

with water out of his *Lotah* as an acknowledgement of their having been readmitted into the pale of the church.¹⁸

15. Cavenagh, *opcit*, pp. 54-55.

16. J.K. Fair Bank & S.Y. Teng, "On the Ching Tributary System", *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*. Vol. VI, June 1841, No. 2, pp. 138-39.

17. Hodgson to Political Secretary, 9 Nov. 1833, F.P.C., 21 Nov. 1833, No. 36.

18. Cavenagh, *opcit*, pp. 58-59.

Hodgson was of opinion that no importance was attached by the Chinese to their relations with Nepal, and that they were maintained by the latter "chiefly or solely" to be played off against the British, whenever necessary.¹⁹

The propensity of the Nepalese Darbar to involve itself in the affairs of Sikkim was clearly noted by Hodgson, who, curiously enough, hoped that to realise its ambition of gaining political influence in the neighbouring Himalayan states, Kathmandu would even risk Chinese retaliation.²⁰ It was indeed a tribute to Hodgson's imagination, if not anything else, when he reported to the Government, in 1831, that Nepal would welcome even British assistance to realise its ambition.

Hodgson reported that some warlike Lepcha chiefs of Sikkim, whom the Raja of Sikkim sought to apprehend, escaped to Nepal, where they were given political asylum. Hodgson expected Nepal to refuse China's and Tibet's demand for their extradition. Should China then attack Nepal, Hodgson would back the latter up to the hilt. He was confident of achieving success in a war against China and Tibet.

I dare promise you such success against those pigtailed insolence as should astound them and rejoice us. All Tibet has not 1000 regulars in it and such regulars leather guns and matchlocks, which a common Hindustani Shikari would scorn to use. Give me but one hand-

19. Hodgson to Political Secretary, 9 Nov. 1833, F.P.C., 21 Nov. 1833, No. 36.

20. Lloyd wrote: "Sikkim Raja may either be a traitor to British or a helpless one between the threats of the Tibetans and the urging of the Nepalese. He is certainly in correspondence with Nepal, who have missions in Sikkim and in Bhutan, with a view to form a confederacy against British. 'They have excited the jealousy of the Chinese authorities in Tibet as to our [British] position here [Sikkim]'. The Sikkim Raja has courted the ire of the Chinese, his presents have been refused and he had been asked why he allowed the English to annex Darjeeling, whence they ask Sikkim Raja to expel the English. At this time Nepalese sent a mission to intrigue with Sikkim Raja." Lieutenant Colonel Lloyd, on Special Duty on North-East Frontier to Government, 10 July 1838, F.S.C., 20 July 1838, No. 3.

some brigade and a good supply of 6 pounders, and with my Gurkhas to aid me I would seize Digarche and Lhasa, if I might strike the first blow: or if I must wait for the enemy in Nepal, I would annihilate as many 100000 as he chose to bring against me.²¹

The fact that the Nepalese Darbar dropped a hint soliciting Hodgson's advice on whether or not to comply with Chinese demands for the surrender of the Lepcha refugees made him hopeful that Kathmandu would welcome a British alliance to fight the Chinese ²²

Needless to say, Hodgson's views had little weight with the Government which had received from the Resident himself reports on how much Kathmandu valued its relations with China and how much it dreaded the British. The Government did not take Hodgson seriously; they had no intention to forge a link with Nepal to fight China. Interestingly enough it was not long before Hodgson himself realised the deep-seated enmity towards the British which led Kathmandu to seek Peking's assistance against Calcutta.²³ Never hereafter would Hodgson dream of an alliance with Kathmandu.

Three years later Nepal again took up the cause of the warlike Lepchas whose chief resided in Nepal with an annual stipend. This time Hodgson would advise the government to try to effect a reconciliation between the Lepcha refugees and the Sikkim Raja with a view to preventing Nepalese embroilment in the dispute which was certain to strain relations between Nepal and Sikkim.

When Bhimsen's long monopoly of power was assailed by

21. Hodgson to H.T. Prinsep, Political Secretary, 12 Sep. 1831, (D.O.), F.M.P., Vol. 149.

22. Ibid.

23. Resident informed the government that "the Nepalese mission to Peking returned to Nepal. The reception to the Emperor's mission was less than the usual ceremony. The reason might be either Darbar's chagrin against the Emperor for non-concurrence with its restless news". Resident to Government, 3 Oct. 1838, F.S.C., 26 Dec. 1839, No. 139.

his rivals in the years following the death of the Regent Tripurasundari Devi in 1832, he sought to activate the foreign policy of Nepal by ceaseless intrigues with Indian states where restiveness and disaffection towards the British government were clearly noticeable.²⁴ Bhimsen sought to play upon the Nepalese fear of the British and keep the army in good humour by pandering to its ambition to conquer British territories. In 1834, he sent a tribute mission to Peking seeking Chinese assistance in his projected war with the British, only to elicit from Peking a stern warning against any warlike activity; Peking urged that Kathmandu submit its disputes with Tibet to the Chinese Ambans at Lhasa. Even China's inactivity during the British war with Burma (which had tributary relations with Peking) in 1824-26, failed to dampen Kathmandu's hope of enlisting Chinese support²⁵ when it toyed with the scheme of wresting its lost territory from the British.

The British reaction to Nepal's relations with China during the period 1816-1837 was one of mere watchful interest; but this attitude changed when Anglo-Chinese relations deteriorated and Nepalese intrigues with Tibet, Sikkim, Bhutan and Indian states intensified.²⁶ The situation became worse still when Bhimsen fell from power in 1837 and a bitterly anti-British party, the Pandes, took over.²⁷

Kathmandu sought to forge a union of Sikkim and Bhutan under its leadership with a view to a war with the British. The Raja of Sikkim was promised the restoration of Darjeeling which it had lost to the British in 1835. The Deb Raja of Bhutan was warned that the mission of Captain Pemberton

24. Extract from letters from the Resident at Kathmandu to Government, by J.R. Tickell Assistant Resident, 1830 to 1840, in *Narratives*, opcit, pp. 170, 176, 179, 186.

25. Colvin wrote to Hodgson on 2 July 1838, "that the hope of any aid from other quarter than Ava and China has become very faint in Kathmandu... China is not won't to commit herself in such distinct and unprovoked enterprises." Auckland's Private Book, Vol. 3, 1/2 p. 67, BMA, No. 37693.

26. *Narratives*, opcit, p, 180.

27. Ramakant, *Indo-Nepalese Relations*, opcit, pp. 131-35.

had a political object. At the same time, Nepal sought to exploit the power struggle in Sikkim and Bhutan to gain influence in the two states.²⁸

All this caused Lord Auckland, the Governor-General, great concern. Nepalese intrigues with Sikkim and Bhutan were an extremely undesirable development; isolation of Nepal from its Himalayan neighbours was the settled British policy. However, the Governor-General was relieved to get the report, that China strongly disliked Nepalese intrigues with Sikkim and Bhutan in which any Nepalese influence would be a threat to the traditional position of Tibet.²⁹

The coincidence of the Anglo-Chinese war (1838-42) with the first Anglo-Afghan war and strained British relations with Burma and several Indian princely states provided Kathmandu with a welcome opportunity. Anti-British tone of the Nepalese Darbar became more strident; the Resident was threatened with expulsion; the jingoism of the Nepalese army was apparent as never before. Nepalese secret missions were seen in almost all important Indian courts engaged in forging a grand alliance against the British.³⁰ Kathmandu sent embassies to

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28. Resident informed the Government ; "Nepal sent emissary to Bhutan expressing the wish of Gurkhas to revive the age old friendship between Nepal and Bhutan and Nepal's society about the insurrection in Bhutan against the old Deb Raja, that their rebellion was instigated by the Company, that Nepal was ready to assist the old Deb with soldiers and arms and the Deb was invited to form a league with Nepal against the Company." Hodgson to Government, 5 Aug. 1839, No. 140, F.S.C., 26 Dec. 1839.
29. Sikkim Raja was "tributary to China through the viceroyalty at Lhasa"; he used to receive from Lhasa an annual allowance of "Rupee 1 to Rs. 2000". Brief Report on the political relations between British Government and the Sikkim state, by A. Campbell, Superintendent, Darjeeling, 15 Oct. 1861, in *Narratives*, opcit, p. 907.
30. "Emissaries have been diligently employed throughout the length and breadth of Hindustan in sowing the seeds of disaffection among our own subjects, in rousing to hostility the minds of our subordinate allies and in turning the eyes of India to the grand expedition which was represented as coming down from the west to put an end to our empire." *The Friend of India* (Serampore), 2 May 1839,

Peking soliciting its aid, financial or military, against the British.³¹ The British were represented as a common enemy of China, Tibet, Nepal, Bhutan and Sikkim. As during the Nepal war, Kathmandu represented to Peking that the British would march to Tibet for whose defence Nepal needed to be strengthened with Chinese assistance. Rajendra Vikram, the King of Nepal, professed

extreme eagerness to throw off his allegiance to the British and resume the old career of his ancestors,³²

by strengthening relations with the Emperor. Hodgson took fright; he warned the government:

if China gives the least sanction, open rupture will be begun by Nepal.³³

Hodgson's reports left Auckland with no doubt that Kathmandu meant mischief when British hands were full with many problems. Yet, despite the strong demand of his advisers for a war with Nepal, the Governor-General, chose to softpedal the Nepalese and to temporise; the fear of Chinese reaction to a war with Nepal did weigh with Auckland in adopting what his critics condemned as an unduly soft policy towards Nepal. Auckland minuted:

The Nepal Darbar may be supposed to have calculated upon war between the Burmese, upon a breach of Sikh and British alliance, upon the advance of the persians or Russians, upon Chinese support... The policy of

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31. Hodgson informed the Government that Pushkar Shah, the envoy to Peking, met with a stern refusal to his petition for aid and countenance by the Emperor. Hodgson to Government, 26 May 1838, F.S.C., 10 June 1838, No. 10; Rose, *Nepal Strategy for Survival*, opcit. p. 100.
 32. Hodgson to Government, Translation of a paper of Intelligence, 26 May 1838, F.S.C., 14 Sept. 1842, No. 83.
 33. Records of Cleveland Public Library, Reel No. 8, (on Microfilm in National Archives of India), "Tickell's Narratives of Principal events, Nepal, Summary of Events, 20 Feb. - 4 Mar. 1840".

China will have been changed since 1814, if encouragement should be given to Nepalese aggression.³⁴

Calcutta's fear of Chinese involvement in British troubles with Nepal further increased when Kathmandu sought to exploit the Dogra-Tibetan war (1841-42).³⁵ The war saw the Dogra conquest of Ladakh and parts of Tibet, which brought Lhasa upon the scene; Ladakh was a tributary to Tibet. It was a place of considerable commercial importance on account of

its central situation, by which it becomes the thoroughfare for an active commercial intercourse between Tibet, Turkestan, China and even Russia on one hand and Kashmir, the Punjab and the plains of Hindustan on the other.³⁶

Nepal was eager to exploit the situation to annex the adjacent Tibetan territories; but the fear of China's assistance to the Tibetans served as a deterrent to the Nepalese ambition.

Soon after the Dogra conquest of Ladakh, its ruler appealed to Kathmandu for succour, which Kathmandu was eager to render provided the Chinese Amban at Lhasa allowed it. The Amban, however, reprimanded Nepalese interest in Ladakh's dispute with the Dogras and warned the Nepalese king against "excessive restlessness".³⁷ The Amban particularly disliked Kathmandu's condition for assistance to Ladakh: occu-

34. Minute of Governor-General, 28 Aug. 1838, Auckland's Private Book, Vol. 4, p. 36, BMA, 37694.

35. "The encroachment of Sikhs upon the territories under the control of the Chinese empire in Tibet have provoked the jealousy of the Nepalese and our mediation between the states will probably be invited or tendered without invitation". *The Asiatic Journal and Monthly Register for British and Foreign India, China and Australia*, Vol. XXXVI, Sep.-Dec. 1841, p. 193; Auckland's to Hobhouse, 20 Aug. 1841, p. 47, Auckland's Private Book, Vol. 16, BMA, 37705; Bell, *opcit.*, p. 40; Shakabpa, *opcit.*, pp. 176-77.

36. H.H. Wilson, Ed, *Travels in the Himalayan Provinces of Hindustan and The Punjab, By William Moorcroft and George Trebeck, 1819-1825*, Vol. 1, (London, 1841), p. 346.

37. Hodgson to Government, 14 Feb. 1840, F.S.C., 2 Mar. 1840, No. 110.

pation of the Tibetan tracts adjoining the Kerung and Kuti passes. In rejecting Nepal's "silly requests", the Amban informed king Rajendra Vikram that Peking had

little or no purpose to interfere with Ladakh politics and so he had better take no interest in it.³⁸

Presumably, the Chinese feared that Nepal's assistance to Ladakh might bring in the British as an ally of the Dogras, the subjects of the Lahore government, with which the British had friendly relations. The Lhasa government also viewed with disapproval the Nepalese eagerness to interfere in Ladakh affairs.

The Nepalese king then asked Hodgson if the British desired the Nepal Darbar to assist the Dogras fighting the Tibetans.³⁹ The Raja's calculation was, that since the British had been fighting the Chinese, they would let Nepal occupy a part of western Tibet as a means of weakening the Chinese hold over Tibet.⁴⁰ Hodgson clearly saw through the game; he was determined to prevent any Nepalese involvement in the Dogra-Tibetan war. Apart from the risk of Sikkim and Bhutan being involved at the instance of Tibet, there was the fear of the Chinese appearing on the scene which was certain to complicate the issue further. Such an appearance was also certain to be exploited by the anti-British elements in Kathmandu, who were trying for long to involve China in the war with the British in the Himalayan region. The British could ill afford such a crisis, when the Afghan war was on and when relations with Burma and several Indian states were very strained.⁴¹

38. Resident to Government, 20 May 1841, F.S.C., 25 May 1841, No. 154.

39. Hodgson to Government, 20 Dec. 1841, F.S.C., 3 Jan. 1842, No. 122.

40. The Resident informed the Government that the Nepal Raja, "asks for a large sum of coins or for the cession to him of the district of Taglakote opposite to Jumla where he believes there exists a rich gold mine". Hodgson to Government, (Translation of a paper), 2 Sept. 1842, F.S.C., 14 Sept. 1842, No. 82.

41. Hodgson suggested to the Government "it is most desirable that the change from our existing policy towards Nepal to another should, if possible, be quiet and gradual and be deferred until our affairs are adjusted with Afghanistan and China, but especially the latter where if we be finally and effectively victorious." Resident to Government, 22 June 1842, F.S.C., 6 July 1842, No. 88.

In such circumstances, the British policy was not only to strongly discourage the Raja's move but warn him against overweening ambitions. The British would prevent any Nepalese exploitation of the Dogra-Tibetan war. At the same time, the British needed to restrain the Dogras by pressurising the Lahore Darbar. Hodgson was worried, that unless the Dogras were checked:

With Chinese, Sikhs and Gurkhas, we shall ere long find ourselves, of necessity, involved in a labyrinth of trans-Himalayan politics, the clue to which may be difficult to find and impracticable to use when found.⁴²

Hodgson feared that although China had so long refused to be drawn into Nepal's unfriendly relations with the British, it was very likely to oppose with arms any Nepalese occupation of Tibetan territory.⁴³

The Dogra activity affected British and Chinese commercial interests in the western Himalayas when the Dogras monopolised the local shawl wool trade; their activities threatened the economic life of the people⁴⁴ of the Punjab hill states which served as the traditional arteries of trade with Tibet and Chinese Turkestan.

In such circumstances it was both in the Chinese and the British interests to put a stop to the Dogra-Tibetan war. Hodgson made it plain to the Raja of Nepal that the British would never assist in his project of occupation of bordering Tibetan tracts, because

we had no desire to do injury to China in any quarter and should willingly desist from our compulsory opera-

42. Hodgson to Government, 2 Oct. 1841, F.S.C., 11 Oct. 1841, No. 89.

43. Hodgson to Government, 30 July 1841, F.S.C., 16 Aug. 1841, No. 41.

44. The Commissioner of Kumaun informed the Government, "the Sikh forces had pushed beyond Bushair and cut off and intercepted the trade of that country, and they wanted to monopolise the Pishin trade and prevent shawl wool from entering into Bushair from Chinese Tartary and force the article to the Kashmir markets causing economic loss in the region". G. Lusington, Commissioner of Kumaun to Government, 15 July 1841, F.S.C., 16 Aug. 1841, Nos. 34-36.

tions in China proper, so soon as justice had been rendered to us.⁴⁵

In the meanwhile, as a precautionary measure, Auckland had sent two companies of the Nassere battalions to Kotegarh to keep watch on the affairs in the neighbour hodd.⁴⁶ Alongside, Auckland strongly insisted that the Lahore Darbar restrain the Dogra army under Zorawar Singh, whose activities, it was made clear to Maharaja Sher Singh, the ruler of the state of Lahore, had compromised British political and commercial interests.⁴⁷

The need for restraining the Nepalese increased further when Chinese troops came to the defence of the Tibetans towards the end of 1841.⁴⁸ The Sino-Tibelans defeated the Dogras in a number of battles; Zorawar Singh was killed and peace was concluded in August, 1842. But for Hodgson's sharp vigilance and effective influence in the Darbar through a band of pro-British nobles, Nepal would have joined the fray.

The Chinese also maintained their erstwhile disapproval of Nepalese propensity to exploit crises in the Himalayan region; and this was made clear to the Nepalese missions to Peking between 1838 and 1842. Neither during the Anglo-Chinese war nor during the Dogra-Tibetan war did China want to be embroiled in a war with the British on the Indian frontier, although on both occasions Nepalese intrigues made such involvement very likely.⁴⁹

45. Resident to Government, 20 Oct. 1841, F.S.C., 3 Jan. 1842, No. 128.

46. J. Thomson, Secretary North-West Provinces to Government, 5 Oct. 1840. F.S.C., 9 Oct. 1840, No. 55.

47. Maddock to George Clerk, 20 Sept. 1841, Auckland's Private Book, Vol. 17, P. 89, BMA, 37706.

48. Cunningham informed the Government that a large body of Chinese troops had assembled in Yarkund district to drive out the Sikhs to the south of the Himalayas. Lieutenant J.D. Cunningham, Assistant Agent, North-West Frontier to George Clerk, Agent, 2 May 1842, F.S.C., 6 July 1842, No. 41.

49. Resident informed the Government that in 1842 Jagat Bampande was sent to Peking with instructions to beg monetary aid to an attack on British territory; the aid was not given by the Emperor. Resident to Government, 2 July 1842, F.S.C., 10 Aug. 1842, No. 126; Rose, *Nepal Strategy for Survival*, opcit, p. 100; Ramakant, *Nepal-China and India*, opcit, p. 24.

The Chinese Ambans at Lhasa would not forward to the Emperor Nepalese entreaties for assistance against the British nor entertain the Nepalese scheme of interference in the affairs of Sikkim and Bhutan. The Chinese and the British policy was identical in as much as both wanted the Dogra-Tibetan war to end quickly; both the powers wanted to prevent Nepalese involvement in the war; commercial interests of both had been affected by the Dogra activities.

An important reason why the British had to restrain the Nepalese from involvement in the Dogra-Tibetan war was their fear that peace negotiations with China were likely to be affected,⁵⁰ if China got the impression that the British had instigated the Dogra attack on western Tibetan territories. The war convinced the British that in the larger interests of Anglo-Chinese relations, greater control on Nepal was needed, and such control was effected for a period of about three years when the masterful Resident, Hodgson, succeeded in establishing his influence in the Darbar by exploiting party rivalry and scramble for power.⁵¹

Auckland's resignation and Lord Ellenborough's assumption of authority as Governor-General occasioned a change in British India's Nepal policy. The new Governor-General abandoned Auckland's policy of active involvement in Nepal's internal affairs. Hodgson, the architect of the policy, was recalled when the new policy of non-interference in Nepal's internal affairs was embarked upon.⁵² The result was intensified

50. The Treaty of Nanking, bringing the Anglo-Chinese war to an end, was signed on 29 Aug. 1842.

51. Auckland informed Bayley, "Mr. Hodgson had carried his points with the Nepalese Darbar, and if dependence can be placed on pen, ink and paper, we should have peace in that quarter and improved relations. But we have a weak and wayward court to deal with." Governor-General to Bayley, 17 Jan. 1841, Auckland's private Book, Vol. 14, p. 110, BMA, 37703; Hunter, *opcit*, pp. 191-92.

52. Hodgson's policy was to interfere in local politics, support the more peaceful party and temporise until the time of strain was over. J.L. Morison, *Lawrence of Lucknow*, (London, 1934). p. 136; Hunter, *opcit*, pp. 180-220.

party struggles, changes in power structure, bloodbaths and political instability.⁵³

In September 1846, the state of affairs registered a change. After massacring his political rivals, Jang Bahadur Rana ascended power as Prime Minister. The Rana rule began.⁵⁴

During the first Sikh war (1844-46), some elements in the Nepalese Darbar were excited, seeing in this fresh crisis of the British government an opportunity to wreak vengeance on the latter. Chinese assistance in Nepal's scheme was once again sought on the familiar excuse that such assistance was essential to foil the British intention to conquer Tibet.⁵⁵ The Chinese also replied to the Nepalese appeal in the familiar vein; Nepal was asked

to maintain as much as possible good relations with them [British], and have no misunderstanding with them.⁵⁶

The Chinese refused to be taken in by the Nepalese allegation that the British intended to conquer Tibet. However, nothing untoward happened, for the most powerful members of the coalition ministry ruling Nepal, such as Jang Bahadur and Kazi Gagan Singh, realised the dangers of a clash with the powerful British; their influence in the Darbar helped in the maintenance of peace between Calcutta and Kathmandu.

The Rana regime brought about a change in Nepal's traditional attitude to China and British India. Jang Bahadur veered closer to the British, regarding them as the main prop

53. Nepal after Bhimsen was still a bad neighbour. The feud between Pandes and Thapas left Nepal in a ferment for a decade. Prime Minister succeeded Prime Minister in such rapidity that none rose to real power, and palace intrigue was the only way to advancement. C.J. Morris, *Gurkhas*, (Delhi. 1933), p. 21, Sanwal, opcit. pp. 269-73.

54. Ramakant, *Nepal-China and India*, opcit, p. 25; *Narratives*, opcit, p. 212; Rose, *Nepal Strategy for Survival*, opcit, pp. 105-106; Morris, opcit, p. 27.

55. Rose, *Nepal Strategy for Survival*, opcit, p. 102.

56. Ibid,

of his power. Relations with China were, of course, maintained but they were viewed not in the same way as before. With increasing dependence on British support for its strength,⁵⁷ the Rana regime embarked on a new policy towards China at a time when both internal and external factors tended to make the latter progressively weak.

The period 1816-1846, saw no change in Nepal's attitude to British India and China and the reaction of the two latter powers to Nepalese attempts at exploiting periodical strains in Anglo-Chinese relations. Despite stability in Anglo-Nepalese relations during Bhimsen's Prime Ministership, Calcutta had to be watchful to prevent Nepalese intrigues with Lhasa and Peking from endangering British interests. But then, no punitive action could be taken against Kathmandu for the British hands were full with many problems.

It was indeed a great relief for the British that Nepalese intrigues failed to change China's deepseated distrust of Nepal, the restlessness of which was very undesirable in Peking's own interests. For a time, however, Hodgson's alarming reports made Auckland apprehensive of a change in the policy of China; Auckland wondered if China would encourage a Nepalese aggression on British territories at a time when anti-British feelings at Kathmandu were very acute. Auckland was worried that

An absolute break with China might have an unfortunate effect upon Nepal and upon Burmese politics and that we should be prepared accordingly.⁵⁸

The Chinese reaction to Nepalese entreaties for assistance established that both Hodgson's and Auckland's fear was unfounded. Nepalese jingoism was as much disliked by China as by the British.

57. The Raja congratulated the Governor-General, "Hitherto the Emperor of China has never been conquered, but the British government nothing can withstand and may success always attend its forces." Raja of Nepal to Governor-General, 16 Nov. 1842, F.S.C., 25 Nov. 1842, No. 34.

58. Governor-Generals' Minute, 28 Aug. 1838, *Auckland's Private Book*, Vol. 4, p. 36, BMA, 37694.

Reorientation in Nepal's Foreign Policy, 1846-1877

The establishment of the Rana regime in Nepal saw the beginning of a new era in Nepal's relations with British India and China. Jang Bahadur, the first Rana Prime Minister, clearly recognised that the relative power of British India and China tended to change with the result that a change in Kathmandu's attitude to the two powers was essential in its own interests. Thus, the reorientation in Nepal's policy towards Peking and Calcutta was a recognition of the need for adjustment of Nepal's relations with the two countries in the changing situation.

Jang Bahadur had a feeling of mingled admiration and fear for the British Government in India, whose power had been consolidated and whose authority extended to all parts of India. In such circumstances the old policy of expansion and confrontation with the British had to be abandoned, for fear that such a policy might endanger Nepal's very survival as a political entity. A friendly policy towards the British would ensure Nepal's security besides giving Jang Bahadur the sup-

port he needed for the consolidation of his power.¹ The enemies of Jang Bahadur had only been suppressed; many had escaped to the bordering British tracts below from where they created troubles for the new Rana government. British government alienated, might use these anti-Rana elements to undermine the Rana government.² In such circumstances the pursuance of Nepal's traditionally hostile policy towards the British was fraught with dangerous possibilities for the new government while a friendly policy would help it being strong.

While the British power kept increasing, the Chinese power progressively declined from the second half of the 19th century. Intermittent internal disturbances exposed the weakness of the Imperial authority over provincial administration; pressure of western imperialistic powers and the division of China into spheres of influence by these powers accelerated the process of decadance of the Chinese imperial authority.³ China lost its erstwhile prestige in its tributary states who would no longer fear Peking as before. In consequence, these tributary states increasingly defied the authority of Peking which was hard put to adjust relations between tributary states themselves. The erosion of Chinese authority at the centre⁴ affected Peking's relations with these tributary states too.

A weak China could hardly be pitted against a strong British India, much less when the Nepalese knew that China had been worsted, both militarily and diplomatically, by Great Britain. China's consistently apathetic attitude to Nepal's entreaties for assistance against the British convinced Jang Bahadur of the futility of seeking such assistance any more. On the other hand, friendship with the British seemed to Jang

1. Padma Jang Bahadur Rana, *The Life of Maharaja Sir Jang Bahadur Rana*. (Allahabad, 1909); Ramakant, *Nepal-China and India*, opcit, p. 25; Rose, *Nepal Strategy for Survival*, opcit, p. 106.
2. Jang Bahadur's enemies rallied behind the King and Queen of Nepal who had been forced to flee the country. F.S.C., 26 June 1847, Nos. 179, 185-86, 180-82, 193; Padma Jang Bahadur Rana, opcit, pp. 90-94.
3. Paul H. Clyde and Burton F. Beers, *The Far East*, (New Delhi, 1966), pp. 190-92.
4. Ibid., p. 82.

Bahadur to offer prospects for their assistance to realise Nepalese ambitions in the Himalayan region.⁵

But then, Jang Bahadur would not abruptly snap Kathmandu's traditional tributary relations with Peking.⁶ For such relations were politically useful in preventing what he, as all Nepalese rulers before, feared, as British ambition to dominate Nepal. Besides, tributary relations were a means to promote Nepal's commercial interests, for along with these missions large quantities of local products, particularly opium, used to be taken to Tibet and China for sale; the sale proceeds were very large, indeed, for all these goods were carried duty free. Further, these missions served as a means of collecting news about the happenings in interior regions of Tibet and China.⁷

In 1852, Jang Bahadur sent a mission to Peking under Gambir Singh which carried a large quantity of opium in spite of the "legal ban on the entry of the commodity into China".⁸ Jang Bahadur expected that the resumption of tributary relations with Peking would assuage the wrath of his enemies in the Darbar who were critical of his visit to London in 1850. The visit was undertaken with a view to seeing at first hand the power and resources of the British government and demo-

5. Jang Bahadur realised that distant Peking was neither willing nor able to challenge the British in the Himalayan area. The repeated appeals made to China, since Rana Bahadur were turned down by Peking, although traditional tributary relations were maintained. He thought it best to earn the goodwill of the British for his position and power at Kathmandu. Rose, *Nepal Strategy for Survival*, opcit, pp. 106-107.

6. Ibid., p. 107.

7. Sir Richard Temple, the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal, visited Kathmandu in May 1876. R.C. Temple, Ed, *Journals kept in Hyderabad, Kashmir, Sikkim and Nepal*, Vol. II, (London, 1887), p. 262.

8. Rose. *Nepal Strategy for Survival*, opcit, p. 108; George Ramsay, the Resident to Government. 6 May 1854, F.S.C., 26 May 1854, No. 50.

nstrating the new regime's friendliness with the British government.⁹

Jang Bahadur could hardly ignore Nepal's unrealised ambitions in Tibet; Kathmandu could scarcely reconcile itself to the loss to Tibet of tracts near the Kerung and Kutu passes in particular,¹⁰ the humiliation of defeat in the 1792-93 war had also to be avenged.¹¹ In Tibet, too, Jang Bahadur could identify signs of discontent against the Chinese authority.¹² All this suggested the possibility of Nepal's realising its long-cherished ambitions in Tibet. Jang Bahadur hoped that in the event of Peking's resistance he could count upon British support.

All that he needed was an excuse to launch an invasion on Tibet, and that he found in the ill-treatment meted out to the 1852 Nepalese embassy to Peking on its way through Tibet. The time was propitious indeed. China was torn by the Taiping rebellion;¹³ with the death of the Sixth Panchen Lama,

9. "but although never publicly acknowledged, there was another great inducement, viz., the hope that in firmly uniting the bonds of friendship between the states [Nepal and England], he would also materially strengthen his own position, which, notwithstanding the policy of non-interference professed by the Indian government, would pervade all classes in Nepal that the minister, who had been honoured by an audience with the king of England, would never be in want of assistance in the hour of need." Cavanagh, *opcit*, pp. 202-203.

10. The tracts had been occupied by the Gurkhas in the 1792 war but lost under pressure of China when peace was concluded.

11. See Chapter Two, p. 26.

12. When the Nepalese mission was on its return journey to Kathmandu, the leader of the mission, Lieutenant Bhimsen Rana, was informed by the Tibetan Kazis. "if the present dynasty of China being subverted, which they considered certain to happen, they intended to assert their independence of the new government". Resident to Government, (conversation with Jang Bahadur), 25 May 1854, F.S.C., 30 June 1854, Nos. 42-43.

13. The Taiping Rebellion or civil war broke out in China in 1853-54 and lasted for one and a half decades. The cause of the unrest lay in the fact that in China, "economic change had outrun the growth of social theory". Population had increased out of proportion to the land under cultivation. As a result of this, of the growth of internal and foreign trade and of the inequalities of an antiquated tax system the peasant was degraded virtually to serfdom. Thus a permanent floating "population of paupers" provided the new material for rebellion. Clyde and Beers, *opcit*, p. 82.

the government in Tibet had shown some instability; Britain was engaged in the Crimean war. Hence, it was unlikely that either China or British India could interfere in the Nepalese scheme against Tibet.¹⁴

A successful war against Tibet was certain to strengthen Jang Bahadur's position in the Darbar, where he still had enemies. He apprised both Peking and Lhasa of the Darbar's grievances: ill-treatment of the Nepalese embassy in Tibet, the heavy exactions on the Nepalese imports and exports, and the expulsion of the Nepalese representative from Lhasa. Non-receipt of a reply from either the Chinese or the Tibetans to his charges made Jang Bahadur bolder. He only needed assurance of British non-interference with his plans.¹⁵

He informed the Resident that since Nepal was tributary to China, it was bound to render military assistance to Peking to suppress the Taiping rebellion; in that eventuality, the British should not take umbrage.¹⁶ The Resident, Colonel George Ramsay, got the impression that Jang Bahadur had already made up his mind to invade Tibet, and that the alleged ill-treatment of the Nepalese embassy was just a pretext. Ramsay had in the meanwhile interviewed Lt. Bhimsen Rana, the leader of the mission, and learnt from him, that the latter had been well treated by the Tibetans and the Chinese.¹⁷

Jang Bahadur sought to justify his projected invasion of Tibet by blaming the Chinese for having taken exception

14. Resident to Government, 5 Aug. 1854, F.S.C., 25 Aug. 1854, No. 50.

15. Jang Bahadur informed the Resident that the Nepalese mission to China was seized and insulted by the authorities in Tibet, the Nepalese *vakil* was insulted and expelled from Lhasa. Jang Bahadur requested the Resident to obtain permission from the British government to purchase military stores and ammunition through the merchants of Calcutta and Patna. Resident to Government, 5 Aug. 1854, F.S.C., 25 Aug. 1854; No. 50.

16. Resident wrote to the Government that, in fact, Jang Bahadur did make the offer of assistance to the Emperor on condition that he could be given some Tibetan territory. Resident to Government, 6 May 1854, F.S.C., 26 May 1854, No. 17.

17. Resident to Government, 6 May 1854, F.S.C., 26 May, 1854, No. 50.

to his visit to England in 1850; the Emperor, he informed Ramsay, expected the Nepalese Prime Minister to visit Peking instead. The Resident was also informed of the Darbar's representation to Peking and Lhasa embodying Nepalese grievances.¹⁸

Ramsay was not impressed by Jang Bahadur's arguments; he was convinced that the Rana government was determined to exploit the civil war in China to realise territorial ambitions in Tibet.¹⁹ Bhimsen Rana had brought Jang Bahadur the news that Tibet too was determined to declare its independence of China.²⁰

The British watched the course of events with great interest. In March 1855, Jang Bahadur sent his brother, General Ram Bahadur, with a large force to Kerung; another force under Prithwi Dhoj Rana marched towards Kuti.²¹ This brought a Tibetan peace mission to Kathmandu. However, Jang Bahadur kept rejecting the peace overture, demanding the cession of Kuti, Kerung and Taglakot with one crore of rupees as war indemnity.²² Soon hereafter Nepalese troops penetrated deeper into Tibet, occupying Sona Gumpa and forcing the Tibetans to retreat to Tingri.

In August 1855, another peace mission came to Kathmandu. Jang Bahadur repeated his demands to which was added another: China should withdraw the Ambans and troops from Tibet; it would keep only a *vakil* at Lhasa just as Kathmandu had done. The demands were not met. Then came the news of several Nepalese defeats by the Tibetans. Jang Bahadur

18. Jang Bahadur told Ramsay that he had repeatedly remonstrated with the Chinese Amban at the improper treatment of the Nepalese subjects in Tibet, but the Amban refused to forward the letters to the Emperor. Resident to Government, 5 Aug. 1854, F.S.C., 25 Aug. 1824, No. 50.

19. Jang Bahadur's son, Padma Jang Bahadur, corroborated this when he wrote, "the object of Nepalese was not merely to have their grievances redressed or to facilitate trade, but also to make conquest." Padma Jang Bahadur Rana, *opcit*, p. 174.

20. Resident to Government, 25 May 1854, F.S.C., 30 June 1854, Nos. 42-43.

21. Resident to Government, 6 Mar. 1855, F.S.C., 27 Apr. 1855, No. 27.

22. *Ibid*: Ramakant, *Indo-Nepalese Relations*, *opcit*, p. 259.

now realised that the war would not be an easy affair; he sent a mission under Kazi Tilbikram Thapa to Shikarjung on condition that Kerung, Kuti and Taglakot were ceded to Nepal and the war indemnity paid. The Tibetans were agreeable to the payment of the indemnity but not to the cessation of any territory. So the negotiations for peace dragged on for several days, neither side willing to accommodate the other.

Meanwhile, the scarcity of provisions, successive defeats by the Tibetans, inclement weather conditions and the recovery of Kuti by the Tibetans caused demoralisation in the Nepalese troops. In the Darbar, too, Jang Bahadur saw signs of opposition to his determination to go on with the war despite difficulties.²³ For a time he succeeded in browbeating the opponents to his scheme and restoring the morale of his troops. The war was resumed and his brother, Dhir Shamsher, reoccupied Kuti.

In January 1856, another Tibetan delegation came to the border for peace negotiations. By now Jang Bahadur had realised that the war had been a very expensive undertaking for him, in terms of men, money and morale. In the face of growing opposition to the continuance of the war, Jang Bahadur thought it wise to accept the Tibetan peace overture. Ultimately a treaty was concluded between Nepal and Tibet which was ratified in 1856.²⁴

By the terms of the treaty, Tibet agreed to pay Rs. 10,000 annually as tribute to Nepal. Nepalese merchants in Tibet would trade in the country free of duty and enjoy extra territorial rights; a Nepalese *vakil* would be stationed at Lhasa. Nepal would assist Tibet in the event of the latter being attacked by any foreign power.²⁵

The Ambans played an important role in the peace nego-

23. Resident to Government, 10 Aug. 1855, F.S.C., 28 Dec. 1855, No. 82.

24. Resident to Government, 25 Mar. 1856, F.S.C., 5 May 1856, No. 25; Shakabpa, *opcit*, p. 182; Rose, *Nepal Strategy for Survival*, *opcit*, pp.114-17; Ramakant, *Indo-Nepalese Relations*, *opcit*, p. 259.

25. Padma Jang Bahadur Rana, *opcit*, pp. 189-90; Bell, *opcit*, pp. 279-80.

tiations and in the finalisation of the treaty terms.²⁶ The Resident's reports clearly established that it was the fear of China which led Jang Bahadur to lower his sights; he had to give up his demands for the cessation of Kuti, Kerung, Taglakot and adjacent regions of strategic and commercial importance; he could not get the Chinese Ambans and Chinese troops leave Lhasa either. China's special relations with Tibet and Nepal were re-emphasised when both Kathmandu and Lhasa agreed

that the Emperor of China has to be obeyed by both states as before;²⁷

as though it were not enough, the treaty further had it that Nepal and Tibet,

had both owed allegiance to the Emperor of China to the present time.²⁸

Chinese attitude to the war convinced Nepal of Peking's determination to maintain its position in Tibet, and this Kathmandu could never ignore. As before, China was keen on restraining Nepalese militarism; the probability of China's military intervention did dampen Jang Bahadur's enthusiasm to continue the war despite difficulties. Ramsay informed the government:

The dread of eventually coming in contact with the Chinese army now appears, by His Excellency's own account, to be upper most in his mind.²⁹

China's political intervention in the war had an important result: in future Nepal-Tibet disputes China had to assume a

26. W.W. Rockhill, "The Dalai Lamas of Lhasa and their Relations with the Manchu Emperors of China, 1644-1908", *T'Oung Pao*, Vol. XI, (1910), p. 69.

27. Resident to Government, 15 July 1856, F.S.C., 4 Aug. 1856 No. 45; Rose, *Nepal Strategy for Survival*, opcit, p. 117.

28. Resident to Government, 24 Feb. 1856, F.S.C., 28 Feb. 1856, No. 40.

29. Quoted in K. Mojumdar, opcit, p. 144.

mediatory role, the effectiveness of which depended on China's own political and military strength. It is this strength which determined the nature of Tibet's and Nepal's reaction to Chinese mediatory role. With China growing weaker, it found the maintenance of peaceful relations between Nepal and Tibet a heavy responsibility, indeed.

The British attitude to the war was one of watchful interest and non-interference. The war was certain to spread panic in the entire sub-Himalayan region; but since the British had no control on Nepal's foreign relations, they could hardly pressurise Jang Bahadur to give up his project. The Resident, however, advised Jang Bahadur that he settle the dispute peaceably. Jang Bahadur paid no heed to this advice; all that he needed to be sure of was British non-intervention.³⁰ The Resident reported to the government:

The Minister seems fully to understand that the British government will not permit itself to be mixed up in any quarrels that may occur between the Nepalese and their northern neighbours...I cannot help thinking that the real object of his visit (to the Residency) was to find out whether my own government will view with dissatisfaction the circumstances of the Darbar embroiling itself with the Tibetans, or in other words, with China, our relations with that government being on a friendly footing.³¹

Jang Bahadur sought to convince Ramsay that he had many grievances against the Tibetans; the ill-treatment of the Nepalese embassy on its way to China through Tibet, and the killing of a Nepalese subject by the Khampas in eastern Tibet were the immediate *casus Belli*. Ramsay, however, was not impressed, he was certain that Jang Bahadur's real object was to recover the tracts around Kuti and Kerung when the Tibe-

30. Resident informed Jang Bahadur that, "my own Government has remained strictly neutral with reference to the present state of affairs in China." Resident to Government, 6 May 1854, F.S.C., 26 May 1854, Nos. 50-53.

31. Quoted in K. Mojumdar, *opcit*, p. 149.

tans seemed discontented with the Chinese rule, the Chinese preoccupied with the Taiping rebellion and the British engaged in the Crimean war.³²

It seemed to Ramsay not improbable that Jang Bahadur might exploit Anglo-Russian rivalry to realise Nepal's ambitions to annex some bordering Indian tracts. Already at Kathmandu a rumour was rife that a combined army of Russia, Persia and Afghanistan was about to invade India. Hence it was not unnatural for Ramsay to find a causal connection between the reported Russian advance towards India and the military preparations at Kathmandu. The Nepalese rated the Russians higher than the British as a military power.³³ This was Lord Dalhousie's suspicion, too. On August 26 1854, he noted:

...our friend Jang Bahadur is arming Nepal. He has officially explained that the object of it is to exact reparations from the Chinese authorities in Tibet for injuries done to Nepalese subjects. This is probably true, for he is repairing the roads into Tibet, making snow shoes and has always had designs on the provinces he is about to attack. But it is to be noted that Nepal is armed in the same manner as on the last occasion on which it was thought we were going to war with Russia; and the feeling in Nepal is strong that Russia seriously menaces us, that we are no match to her. So we keep an eye on our friend Jang.³⁴

Since Jang Bahadur was a close ally of the British, a Nepalese attack on Tibet might appear to the Russians as British inspired; hence any Nepalese gain in Tibet might encourage Russia to pressurise China for territorial concessions; at this

32. F.S.C., 29 Dec. 1854, No. 28.

33. F.S.C., 25 Aug. 1854, No. 50.

34. J.G.A. Baird; Ed, *Private Letters of the Marquess of Dalhousie* (London, 1911), p. 316.

time Russia was pressurising China for such concessions on the Amur river.³⁵

Nevertheless, the Indian government under Lord Dalhousie chose to maintain neutrality, for the war did not

appear in any way to injure the interests of the British government or unduly increase the power of Nepal.³⁶

Dalhousie regarded the Raja of Nepal, "as a tributary to the Emperor of China"; hence, if Jang Bahadur marched on Tibet "for purposes of national advantage or personal aggrandisement", the Governor-General saw no reason why he should interfere.³⁷

All that the British required of Jang Bahadur was the supply of information regarding the progress of the war. As a precautionary measure, the earlier decision to reduce troops on economic grounds was not acted upon.

When Jang Bahadur asked for British assistance for the dreaded Chinese retaliation, Calcutta made it clear to him that such assistance would not only involve a breach of British treaties with China but disturb their

mercantile transactions annually amounting to from thirty to forty times more than the gross revenues of Nepal.³⁸

Nor was Jang Bahadur allowed to buy arms and military stores from the Government arsenals. Dalhousie made the Government policy clear :

The Government of India being in amicable alliance with China cannot either directly or indirectly en-

35. Bowring informed Dalhousie, "large concessions have been made to the Russians by the Chinese government on the left bank of the Sagalien or Amur river and that a large body of Russian soldiery is moving towards its mouth". John Bowring, Governor of Hongkong to Dalhousie, 6 July 1854, F.S.C., 6 Sept. 1854, No. 58.

36. Minute of Dalhousie, F.S.C., 25 Aug. 1854, No. 52.

37. Minute of Dalhousie, F.S.C., 26 May 1854, No. 52.

38. F.S.C., 30 Nov. 1855, No. 58.

courage or assist the state of Nepal in attacking a province subject to that empire.³⁹

The British were apprehensive of the effect of the war on Sikkim and Bhutan, both having intimate relations with Tibet.⁴⁰ There were reports from Darjeeling about excitement in Sikkim and Bhutan and Jang Bahadur's attempts either to involve the two states into the war or to attack them should they refuse to join him against Tibet. Jang Bahadur requested the British government to let his troops pass through Sikkim, the easiest route to Tibet. This drew a stern warning from Ramsay :

The British government can never permit Nepal to possess itself of Sikkim, whether permanently or temporarily. It is resolved to act upto the treaties which were long ago framed to that effect.⁴¹

The British keenly watched the Chinese reaction to the war. From Jang Bahadur Ramsay collected information about China's attempts at peacefully resolving Kathmandu's disputes with Lhasa. China's attitude led Ramsay to discount the possibility of its military presence in the area, and this was no small relief for the British; the latter could never afford to let China defeat Nepal the same way as it had done in 1792.⁴²

The Nepal-Tibet war could not escalate into a major Himalayan crisis on account of the British and Chinese attitude to the war. Both were opposed to Nepalese bellicosity, and both sought to restrain the Nepalese jingoism. The war provided lessons to both Peking and Calcutta. China realised that Nepalese ambitions needed to be restrained by diplomatic means only, for British connections with Nepal would prevent any Chinese military intervention in Nepal-Tibet dispute; and

39. F.S.C., 29 Sept. 1854, No. 25.

40. Gawler, *opcit*, p. 8; Eden, *opcit*, p. 131; J.W. Edgar, *Report on A Visit to Sikkim and The Tibetan Frontier*, (Calcutta, 1874), p. 72.

41. F.S.C., 20 Oct. 1854. No. 55.

42. See Chapter Two, p. 16.

all the more so when the British had established their military superiority over the Chinese.

As for the British, they too realised that unrestrained Nepalese ambitions in Tibet were likely to involve the British in Nepal-Tibet disputes to counter Chinese involvement in them. The British in later years faced a dilemma : it was necessary in British interests to control Nepal's relations with Tibet; but then, any such control was certain to ruffle Nepalese susceptibility and damage Anglo-Nepalese relations, Nepal being very sensitive to any impairment of its independence.

Nepal, too, learnt a lesson. A war with Tibet could never be just a cakewalk affair, even without Chinese assistance to Tibet. Ramsay correctly reported that the main reason why Jang Bahadur came to terms with Tibet was his realisation that the war, if continued, would have affected his position itself. In fact, as Ramsay explained:

The war has been unpopular since its very commencement and all classes throughout the country have suffered by it in proportion to their means, or it would be more correct to say, out of all proportion to their means... All trade has been severely interfered with and in many parts of the country even the cultivation of soil has been partially interrupted. In short, the prosperity of the state has been most injuriously, though perhaps temporarily affected.⁴³

Kathmandu would never forget this while making in later years show of force to realise its ends in Tibet.

That Jang Bahadur's attitude to the British was in sharp contrast to his attitude towards the Chinese was further emphasised by his eager and whole-hearted assistance to the British during the Revolt of 1857-58, and his neutrality during the second Anglo-Chinese war (1856-60). A new era of understanding and cooperation began in Anglo-Nepalese relations after the Revolt of 1857-58, when the British clearly

43. Resident to Government, 15 July 1856, F.S.C., 8 Aug. 1856, No. 45.

recognised the worth of supporting the friendly Rana regime. Jang Bahadur was made a G.C.B., an honour which he much coveted. The British never forgot that the Rana regime had assisted them in their worst crisis.⁴⁴

By contrast, Nepal's tributary relations with China imposed on it no obligation whatever to render any kind of assistance to Peking when it was involved in a war with London. Rather British victory in the second Anglo-Chinese war confirmed Kathmandu's impression that militarily the Chinese were no match for the British. British prestige rose high in Nepal and proportionately China's prestige dwindled. Ramsay was glad to report to the government :

The late changes in our political relations with China have caused great excitement here very favourable to our prestige, for although the Gurkhas admire our superiority as a nation to themselves, they had great doubts as to whether our power could in any way be compared with that of China—now the Sardars are asking whether we have not lately conquered and taken possession of that country.⁴⁵

No wonder, then, the Rana regime could find little use in pursuing the traditional Nepalese policy of balancing China with British India; relations with the latter became naturally closer hereafter, the Rana government being eager to ingratiate itself with Calcutta as a means of meeting internal threats and external dangers.

It seems this reorientation in Kathmandu's policy caused Peking some worry and concern; for it suggested Nepal being turned into a vassal of Britain. Fearful as the Chinese were of the British, Nepalese vassalage to Britain was potentially harmful to Chinese interests; a British-Nepalese combination

44. Padma Jang Bahadur Rana, *opcit*, pp. 197-214; Ramakant, *Indo-Nepalese Relations*, *opcit*, pp. 285-303; C. Ball, *History of the Indian Mutiny*, (London, n.d.), II. pp. 271-73.

45. Resident to Government, 10 July 1861, F.P.A.; 3 Oct. 1861, No, 44.

to realise their interests in Tibet was a bogey which haunted the Chinese authorities in Tibet.

In such circumstances China kept Nepal in good humour, so that the latter remained a tributary state. On learning that Jang Bahadur had received a title from the British, the Chinese Emperor, in 1857-58, gave presents and buttons of rank to Jang Bahadur and Surendra Vikram, the king of Nepal.⁴⁶ In 1862, China sent architects to Kathmandu to repair some local holy shrines. The following year several Chinese officials visited Nepal to enquire about the British policy in the Himalayan area.⁴⁷ The Emperor was anxious to ascertain the real nature of Jang Bahadur's attachment to the British and, hence, he was asked to give an account of his services to the British government to quell the revolt of 1857-58.

From the 1860s, the British showed greater interest in opening up Tibet for commerce. For this they pressurised Peking as well as Sikkim and Bhutan through which lay the easiest routes to Lhasa. But the weakening Chinese hold on Lhasa and the latter's studied opposition to British commercial schemes were factors which the British had to reckon with. Thus, the British attempt at sending an exploratory mission to Tibet in 1861 with Peking's permission did not materialise, on account of the Tibetan opposition.⁴⁸ The same year a war was launched against Sikkim⁴⁹ and three years later another

46. Parker, "Nepaul and China", *opcit*, p. 81.

47. Rose, *Background to Modern Himalayan Politics*, *opcit*, p. 373.

48. Ramsay informed the Government that a Tibetan officer came to Kathmandu and told Jang Bahadur that there had been a recent fighting between Britain and China in which the former defeated the latter, and they did not know anything about the treaty relating to permission to English officers to move freely in Tibet. They would go to war with China than admit the Europeans into Lhasa. Ramsay to Government, 7 Dec. 1861, F.P.A., 15 Dec. 1861, No. 115.

49. "The state of Sikkim affords special facility for opening commercial relations with Tibet, Central Asia and Western China... because it is the shortest and most direct route to Lhasa from British territory and there is already a road from Darjeeling to the Tibetan frontier". Gawler, *opcit*, p. 104; Lamb, *opcit*, pp. 102-3; Rose, *Nepal Strategy for Survival*, *opcit*, pp. 134-35; H. Bower to Colonel Wood Sharpe, 12 Feb. 1892, F. Fr. B., 2 June 1892, Nos. 173-75.

with Bhutan.⁵⁰ The war with Sikkim confirmed British protectorate over the country, and British control over Bhutan's foreign relations was the result of their war with Bhutan. Then followed British road building activities in Sikkim for the promotion of British trade with Tibet.⁵¹

In 1873, J.W. Edgar, the Deputy Commissioner of Darjeeling, led a survey party to the Chola range on the Sikkim-Tibet border to explore commercial possibilities. The same year the British government increased the Sikkim ruler's annual subsidy from Rs. 9000 to 12000. By 1877, a road had been constructed through the Jelep pass connecting the Chumbi valley, which lay between Sikkim and Bhutan.⁵²

All this Nepal watched with unconcealed disapproval. British position strengthened in Sikkim and Bhutan was a security risk for Nepal while British commercial activity in Tibet was certain to affect Nepal's privileged position in the Tibetan trade.⁵³ Jang Bahadur encouraged the Tibetans to resist the exploration only to provoke the British. Ramsay gave him a stern warning:

As the British government is always desirous to see the peaceful and civilising influence of commerce and mutual intercourse between nations as widely as possible extended, it did not fail to view with disfavour

50. D.F. Rennie, *Bootan and the Story of the Dooar War* (New Delhi, 1970); Rose, *Nepal Strategy for Survival*, opcit, pp. 134-35; Lamb, opcit, pp. 109-10.

51. Edgar, the officiating commissioner of Darjeeling, proposed that "no time be lost in bridging the Teesa and making a road through Sikkim to the Chola range". The Sikkim Darbar had made many promises of assistance in the construction of the road. Edgar, opcit, pp. 50, 82; Lamb, opcit, p. 103.

52. Rose, *Nepal Strategy for Survival*, opcit, p. 137.

53. The Resident informed the Government that, "for our opening trade with Lhasa would be a serious blow to its (Nepal's), own commerce there [Lhasa] of which it has now a complete and lucrative monopoly." Resident to Government, 17 Apr. 1862, F.P.A., 24 Apr. 1862, No. 302.

any attempt on His Excellency's part to perpetuate the policy of the exclusion of the Europeans from Tibet.⁵⁴

T.J. Cooper, a British explorer, who met the Nepalese embassy to China at Batang in Eastern Tibet in February 1868, also noted Jang Bahadur's great dislike of British interests in Tibet. Jang Bahadur was against

introducing an Englishman into the Tibetan nest where he, in conjunction with the Chinese, finds so many golden eggs.⁵⁵

During its war with the British, Bhutan appealed to Nepal for assistance which Jang Bahadur could hardly afford to render. He asked the Bhutanese authorities to make up with the British government.

With British influence increasing, it was not unnatural for Jang Bahadur to be fearful of their intentions. In such circumstances it seemed to him politic to revive Nepal's traditional relations with China and to keep the latter in good humour. Accordingly in August 1866, he sent a mission to Peking which, however, had to return to Kathmandu, for at that time western China was in a disturbed state due to Muslim rebellion. However, Jang Bahadur failed to realise either his political or the economic objective in resuming the Nepalese mission to Peking. The "extreme discourtesy" meted out by the Chinese officers at Chengtu to the mission and the death of several members of the mission in Eastern Tibet clearly suggested that China no longer viewed Nepal in the same way as before.⁵⁶ Jang Bahadur was so angry that for a time he

54. Foreign Secretary to Resident, 5 Sept, 15 Sept. 1862. F.P.A., No 36; Durand Papers, Letter Book 1882-83, Durand to George Chesney, 26 Jan. 1862.

55. Cooper was travelling in disguise from China to India via eastern Tibet. T.J. Cooper, *Travels of a Pioneer of Commerce*, (London, 1871), pp. 398-99; Cooper had really joined the Nepalese mission at the Tibet-China border. F.P.A., 3 Dec. 1868, Nos. 1-4.

56. The Nepalese embassy left for Peking in August 1866 and was held up at Ta-Tsin-Deo, awaiting orders from the Emperor. The Emperor refused to receive the mission, which according to custom should have been despatched seven years before, and again in 1865. Resident to Government, 29 July 1867, F.P.A., 8 Aug. 1867, No. 53; Rose, *Nepal Strategy for Survival*. opcit, p. 135; Lamb, opcit p. 119.

seemed to the Resident to have decided against sending any mission to China at all in future.

Cooper, the English explorer, heard at Batang of a rumour of a war between Nepal and Tibet, Jang Bahadur being determined to avenge the insult meted out to the Nepalese embassy at Chengtu. To Cooper it seemed Jang Bahadur needed only a pretext to launch a war against Tibet, for Cooper was sure that the Tibetan Lamas,

“have nothing to do with the insult.”

In fact, Jagat Shere, the leader of the Nepalese embassy, himself had told Cooper

that nothing could exceed the civility of the Tibetans to him; he did not lose a single case while in Tibet.⁵⁷

No mission was sent to Peking in 1872. whereafter, however, Jang Bahadur seemed to have had a second thought on the issue. British commercial ambitions in Sikkim, Bhutan and Tibet which had worried him, suggested the wisdom of resuming relations with Peking; besides the economic gains derived from the despatch of the missions could not be overlooked. While the Nepalese tribute to the Emperor was of “trifling value”, the Emperor’s presents to the Darbar were of “great intrinsic value”. They consisted of

bales of silk and satin, Chinese embroidered bukksos or cloaks, porcelain, ivory, jade, tortoise shell and other ornaments, pictures and sorts of artificial curiosities.⁵⁸

The opium carried by the mission to Tibet and China and sold there earned the Ranas huge profit. In such circumstances, Jang Bahadur chose to send a mission to Peking in 1877.

57. T.J. Cooper, *Journal of An Overland Journey from China To India*, (Calcutta, 1869), p. 122.

58. Quoted in Mojumdar, *opcit*, p. 111.

However, this did not cause the Indian Government any worry, convinced as it was of Jang Bahadur's loyalty. Calcutta had as yet no fear that Kathmandu would turn its traditional relations with Peking to political account with a view to harming British interests.

This was the burden of Calcutta's reply to Sir Thomas Wade, the British Minister at Peking, who wondered if the Nepalese embassy to Peking had any political object. Explaining the motive of China in receiving the mission, Wade reported:

As a tributary state, Nepal might be classed with Burma... in the habit of sending complementary tribute at intervals in token of amity and deference to a powerful neighbour, but the Chinese allow tribute missions to be made the opportunity of profitable transactions for the states which send them, otherwise the custom at present day would soon come to an end and it would be impossible now for the Chinese to enforce it afresh. The custom dates from time immemorial and has the effect of keeping an artificial importance for the Chinese throne which its military could never have gained for it.⁵⁹

However, the Indian government had full reliance on Jang Bahadur's loyalty and had

no reason to apprehend that this periodical interchange of presents with China will lead to complications.⁶⁰

Wade was informed that Calcutta had no control on Kathmandu's foreign relations, the latter being free to make treaties and wars, and to send embassies wherever it liked. The Indian Government had clearly no "locus standi" in

59. Departmental Notes, F.S.C., 8 Oct. 1877, Nos. 149-50.

60. T.H. Thornton, Officiating Secretary, Government of India to T.F. Wade, British Minister at Peking, 25 July 1876, F.S.C., 2 Sept. 1876, No. 131.

asking Kathmandu to stop despatching missions to Peking.⁶¹ Calcutta made its stand clear:

We have no reason to question the loyalty of Sir Jang Bahadur, but rather the contrary, and it appears... in the highest degree improbable that this periodical interchange of presents will lead to a rapprochement with China in a sense hostile to us. The fact is that Sir Jang Bahadur's cupidity is the motive spring. He sends Yak's tails and gets back gifts, *Pictai Vestis et auti*. He gives a trout and catches a salmon. Any attempt on our part to interfere would be unwise.⁶²

By now the British government had enough information suggesting a change in the Chinese attitude to Nepal. Not only did Peking resent Nepalese ambitions in Tibet but it even feared that Kathmandu sought to realise these ambitions with British help. The Chinese had clearly recognised Nepal as a vassal of Britain. In fact, during the second Anglo-Chinese war Peking had refused to instigate a Nepalese attack on British India although instigated to do so by Russia. The Chinese Emperor had informed the Russians:

Nepal is subject to the English barbarians. Were we to propose that it should place its resources at our disposal for an attack upon India, it would be certain to decline giving offence to the English, and the only result would be to open the door to their demands and reclamations.⁶³

Periodical despatch of missions provided the only link between Peking and Kathmandu, and even these missions, the Chinese strongly suspected, were serving British commercial interests. E.C. Baber, the British Consular Officer at Chungking, reported:

61. Minute on Nepal. 18 Sept. 1889, Lansdowne Papers, Vol. XIII, No. 66.

62. Thornton to Wade, 25 July 1876, F.S.C., 3 Sept. 1876, Nos. 129-33.

63. Ibid, Departmental Notes.

as the tribute missions are little more than disguised trade ventures, the Chinese fear that they will sooner or later develop into a commercial establishment in western China.⁶⁴

This fear seemed to be genuine in view of the sustained British pressure on Peking for commercial concessions in western China and Tibet.⁶⁵

Chinese Officers took care to prevent any British going along with the Nepalese mission in disguise to explore the inner regions of China. China suspected the Nepalese missions as transmitting intelligence to the British authorities. All this would perhaps explain the bad treatment meted out to these missions in Tibet and China. The 1877 mission, for example, was so much harassed on its way to Peking that even an attack by Nepal on Tibet was apprehended by the Indian Government.⁶⁶ The Emperor refused to receive the mission, giving it a clear impression of his strong disapproval of Kathmandu's close relations with Calcutta. This led some British officers to infer that China was no longer eager to maintain any close relations with Nepal, for the latter had become almost a vassal of the British against whom Peking had many grievances.

The pro-British policy of Jang Bahadur made Nepal a safe neighbour of British India. It was indeed welcome to the British that Nepal's links with China were no longer harmful to Britain's political interests as they were in the pre-Rana days. It was certain that Rana Nepal would never again pit the Chinese against the British to realise its own ends. The

64. Cited in Mojumdar, *opcit*, p. 113.

65. The British government, after their victory over China in 1860, pressed Peking for permission for a British Commercial mission to Tibet. Accordingly, on 14 September 1876, by the Cheefoo convention, the Chinese government issued passports for a commercial, political and scientific mission from British India to Tibet. Lamb, *opcit*, pp. 145-46.

66. Viceroy Lytton informed Salisbury, the Secretary of State, that the Nepalese embassy to China had been stopped and turned back by the Chinese authorities some where beyond Lhasa. Lytton to Salisbury, 8 Mar. 1878, p. 164, Lytton Papers, Letters Despatched to Secretary of State, 1878.

weakening of Sino-Nepalese relations would now have two consequences. First, no longer would the British policy towards Nepal be affected by consideration of Chinese reaction; the British would have a freer hand in Nepal; secondly, the deterioration in Nepal's relations with Tibet from the 70s of the 19th century would oblige the British to attempt to assume greater control on these relations. Such attempts, however, carried the risk of deterioration in Anglo-Nepalese relations, on account of Kathmandu's extreme sensitivity to any impairment of its freedom in dealing with Tibet.

The Himalayan Politics, 1877-1900

The last three decades of the 19th century saw the Himalayan politics taking some new turns. This was the result of several developments: frequent disputes between Nepal and Tibet; China's weakening hold on Tibet and its difficulty in managing the relations between its tributaries; increased British interest in Tibet for which their activities in that country were stepped up; pressure on Sikkim and Bhutan by Calcutta to secure the latter's interest in Tibet;¹ and last, but not the least, China's strong disapproval of Britain's policy towards the Himalayan states and the consequent British problem of how to realise their objectives in the states without compromising their greater political and commercial interest in China itself.

Both the Nepalese and the British were out to exploit the growing weakness of Imperial China and its loosening hold on Tibet. A spirit of defiance of the Chinese suzerainty gradually

1, F.P.A., Oct. 1873, Nos. 491-99.

reared its head in Tibet,² which tended to be a cockpit of rivalry among international powers—Britain and Russia in particular.

Nepalese ambitions in Tibet and British interests in Tibet seemed to conflict with the result that distrust and suspicion clouded their relations. The British needed to control Nepal's relations with Tibet for fear that without such control British interests in Tibet would be compromised. Besides, Nepal-Tibet unfriendly relations³ were likely to affect Britain's relations with China, the latter suspecting British encouragement to Nepalese bellicosity.

On the other hand, for Nepal the problem was how to maintain its traditional privileged position in Tibet.⁴ Such a position needed Nepal's maintaining a free hand in dealing with Tibet, bullying it often and making threatening gestures. This the British would resent, for the repercussions it set off in the neighbouring Himalayan states, where the British had both political and commercial interests.⁵

For about a decade after Jang Bahadur's death in 1877, Calcutta's relations with Kathmandu suffered a strain when Jang Bahadur's successor, his brother, Ranudip Singh, refused

2. Bolton informed the Government, "an important change has occurred at Lhasa, in the assumption of the young Dalai Lama of the administration of the country. This, combined with the resentment of the Tibetans at the recent annexation of a Tibetan district by China, has greatly weakened the Chinese position in Tibet." C.W. Bolton, Chief Secretary to the Government of Bengal to W.J. Cunningham, Secretary to Government of India, Foreign Department, 21 June 1897, F.S.E., Oct. 1897, Nos. 127-130.
3. Edgar wrote to the Government, for the last fifteen years very many "offences have been given to Nepalese traders by Tibetans near Tingri Maidan, people there are rude and barbarious. Several fights had taken place there, and that in one Nepalese were heavily defeated; that in 1869-70, Nepalese expected an attack and Jang Bahadur had arranged to proceed in person to the frontier". J.W. Edgar, Officiating Commissioner of Cooch Behar, to Government, 24 April 1873, F.P.A., June 1873, No. 474.
4. The position was based on the 1856 treaty between the two countries, see Chapter Four, p. 70.
5. Departmental Notes, F.P.A., Feb. 1875, Nos. 24-37.

to allow the British Resident free movement in Nepal;⁶ nor would he change the existing Rana policy of opposing unlimited recruitment of the Gurkhas by the British Government. But then, with the Russian threat to India looming larger, the British had to take an accommodating attitude towards Kathmandu. The latter, too, had to adopt a similar attitude to the British, expecting military assistance in Nepal's disputes with Tibet.⁷

The main cause of the dispute was the growing Tibetan resistance to Nepal's privileged position in Tibet based on the 1856 treaty between the two countries.⁸ What affected their relations further was Kathmandu's ambition to annex the Tibetan territories on the border, which China had wrested from Nepal in 1792, and which Nepal had not been able to recover during the 1854-56 war.⁹

Nepal's commercial interests necessitated the occupation of these border tracts. Nepalese traders at Tingri Maidan suffered ill-treatment by the local Tibetans and so did the Newar merchants at Lhasa.¹⁰ The Tibetans would not accept the Chinese Amban's mediation in their dispute with the Nepalese; instead they would challenge Nepalese interests by arms. The Tibetans even suspected the Chinese being hand in glove with the Nepalese; the Nepalese missions to Peking

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6. The Resident was virtually treated as a state prisoner. He was feared as an instrument of intrigue and subversion of the regime. Despite all his friendliness, Jang Bahadur, too, did not change this traditional policy of the Nepalese government. H. Wylie, Resident to Government, 24 July 1891, F.S.E., Oct. 1891, No. 160.
 7. Sir Ranudip Singh, Prime Minister of Nepal to C. Girdlestone, Resident, 6 Jan. 1884, (D.O.), F.S.E., June 1884, No. 439.
 8. See Chapter Four, p. 70.
 9. See Chapter Four, p. 70.
 10. D. Wright, Ed. *History of Nepal*, (Cambridge, 1877), p. 46, In 1876-77, there were at Lhasa 3000 Nepalese, mostly merchants, S.C. Das, *The Commerce of Tibet*, (Calcutta, n.d.), pp. 2, 5.

were looked upon by the Tibetans as a manifestation of Kathmandu's alliance with Peking.¹¹

The increasing British activities in Sikkim and Bhutan was another reason why Nepal needed to strengthen its position in Tibet.

Matters took a bad turn in 1872-73, when the Nepalese *vakil* was withdrawn from Lhasa, and both Kathmandu and Lhasa made military preparations.¹²

In 1883, it seemed another showdown would take place between Nepal and Tibet. A Tibetan woman was charged by a Newar shopkeeper with theft of a piece of coral; the woman denied the charge and called in the local Lamas who attacked the Newar merchants and looted their property. The Lamas were already sore with the haughtiness of the Newar merchants whose general behaviour left much to be desired. The Nepalese *vakil* having reported the matter to Kathmandu, the latter demanded a compensation of three lakh taels. The Chinese Amban thereupon intervened and a commission of enquiry was set up with the Ambans, the Nepalese *vakil* and a few Tibetan officers as its members. On enquiry the Tibetan Lama's guilt was proved;¹³ the monks' outrageous act was severely condemned by the commission which requested the Nepalese *vakil* to settle for a smaller amount of money as compensation. The Nepalese Darbar spurned the offer and moved troops to the frontier tracts. This worried Peking which

11. O'conor wrote to the Secretary of State, Foreign Affairs, that the Nepalese mission despatched in 1877, reached Chinese territory in February 1878. It was the first instance that the mission was not allowed to go to Peking and was detained near the Tibetan border. N.R. O'conor, Her Majesty's Minister, Peking to Secretary of State, 27 April 1883, F.S.E., June 1885, No. 310; Lytton to Salisbury, 8 Mar. 1878. Lytton Papers, Letters to Secretary of State, No. 164.
12. Girdlstone to Government, 29 July 1872, F.P.B. Dec. 1872, Nos. 18-24.
13. The Tibetan Commission promised to repay the full amount of the plundered property to the Newar merchants. Resident to Government, (Telg), 27 May 1884, F.S.E., July 1814, No. 61; Rose *Nepal Strategy for Survival*, opcit, pp. 124-26.

hurriedly despatched a high ranking Lama to settle the matter amicably.¹⁴

After a good deal of persuasion, an arrangement was finally made whereby the amount of compensation was fixed at 90,000 taels. About two years later Peking paid 80,000 taels to Kathmandu as compensation for the damage done to the Newar merchants.¹⁵ Those responsible for the affray were punished by the Tibetan government.¹⁶ As a gesture of goodwill, Peking bestowed on Bir Shamsheer, the Nepalese Prime Minister, the usual Chinese title.¹⁷

Bir Shamsheer, who had only recently come to power by assassinating his uncle Ranudip Singh, had strained relations with the Resident.¹⁸ At such a time he chose to send a mission to Peking to get his position recognised by the Emperor.

In 1892, a fresh dispute arose between Nepal and Tibet on trade matters. Traditionally Nepalese traders exchanged one *mana* of rice for two *manas* of good Tibetan salt, the Tibetans

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14. The Chinese Resident met the Tibetan commission who were engaged on the settlement of the indemnity to be paid to the Newar traders, H.S. Parkes, British Minister at Peking to Viceroy, 4 Feb. 1884. F.P.E., April 1884, No. 241.
 15. F.S.A. Bourne, British Consular Officer, Chungking to O'conor, 13 Oct. 1885. F. Ext. A., Jan. 1886, No. 96, Rose, *Nepal Strategy for Survival*, opcit, p. 127.
 16. The Tibetan Government agreed to pay the plundered property with interest and the ring leaders in the riot were punished. Resident to Government, (Translation of a letter from Prime Minister to Viceroy), 27 May 1884, F.S.E., July 1884, No. 64.
 17. The title was Thong-Lin-Pimma-Kokang-Vang-Syan. Resident to Government, 18 Oct. 1886, F.S.E., Nov. 1886, No. 228; Rose, *Nepal Strategy for Survival*, opcit, p. 143.
 18. Bir Shamsheer was the son of Ranudip's youngest brother, Dhir Shamsheer. Bir came to power in 1885' Jang Bahadur's sons made good their escape to India. The Prime Ministers after Bir Shamsheer came to be known as the Shamsheer Ranas to distinguish them from the sons and grandsons of Jang Bahadur, called Jang Ranas. Girdlestone, the Resident, wanted the Government to support the Jang Ranas. This affected his relations with Bir. Viceroy to Secretary of State, (Teleg), 16 Mar 1892, F.S.E., June 1892, No. 289; Dufferin to Kimberley, 21 Mar. 1886, Dufferin Papers, Vol. 19, Letter No. 12.

refusing to take money or any other article in lieu of their salt. But in 1892, the Tibetan merchants demanded two *manas* of Nepalese rice for one *mana* of Tibetan salt;¹⁹ the salt itself was very dirty and unsuitable for consumption. Kathmandu therefore decided to stop the barter trade with Tibet and buy salt from India instead. Bir Shamsher informed the Resident about it.²⁰

Bir Shamsher then received the distressing news of Nepalese customs officers on the border being killed by the Tibetans who sought to smuggle salt into the bordering Nepalese tracts. Enraged, Kathmandu sent troops to the environs of Taglakot on the border.²¹ In 1894, the Resident strongly suspected that Nepal was out to attack Tibet by taking advantage of the Sino-Japanese war. He informed the Government;

the "gup" in the bazar here is that, the Nepalese would take the opportunity of the present state of affairs in China, to attack the Tibetans and capture Lhasa, were it not for the fear of our interference.²²

Alarmed, the Tibetan government sought to make up with the Nepalese government by tendering apologies. Happily, however, the Chinese Ambans intervened, with the result that in 1896, the festering problem of barter trade²³ and undemarcated boundary was solved by a political settlement.²⁴

The continued harassment of the Nepalese missions to Peking by the Tibetans further strained the relations of the

19. Resident to Government, 18 Aug. 1891, F. Ext. B., Feb. 1892, No. 11.

20. Ibid.

21. Lieutenant Manbir and his men were caught by the Tibetans on their way to Lhasa, roughly treated and turned back. The Nepal Government issued orders for launching an expedition against Tibet. Confidential Diary, District Superintendent of Police, Darjeeling, 6 June 1896. F.S.E., July 1896, No. 127.

22. Resident to Government, 9 Oct. 1894, (D.O.), F.S.E., Mar. 1895, No. 69.

23. Resident to Government, 2 May 1896, F.S.E., July 1896, No. 115.

24. Political Officer, Sikkim to the Commissioner of Rajshahi, 9 June 1896, F.S.E., July 1896, No. 129.

two countries. The steady deterioration of Nepal-Tibet relations and the aggressiveness of Nepal worried China, which apprehended the violation of the integrity of the buffer state Tibet. But China could follow only a persuasive policy; it was conscious of its increasing weakness, political, military and economic; it could neither pressurise the restive Tibetans nor threaten Nepal with military action—much less when Nepal under the Ranas had friendly relations with the British. Hence, in such circumstances, Peking sought to keep Nepal in good humour²⁵ while impressing upon the Tibetans the need to avoid any open rupture with the Nepalese.

Peking thought it politic to be on good terms with Kathmandu, when British ambitions in Tibet worried it considerably. The importance of Nepal was pointed out by the Szechuan Government.

Tibet is the first buffer for Szechuan and Nepal is the immediate buffer for Tibet. China was fortunate in having Bhutan and Nepal borders on Tibet and could become Chinese buffers, if China strengthens her ties with Nepal and Bhutan. If not Tibet was exposed to the British, who were active in Nepal and Bhutan. Ultimately Szechuan would be opened to the British threatening China in the rear.²⁶

Hence, the Chinese Emperor gave Ranudip Singh the title which Jang Bahadur had received earlier. A Chinese officer brought Ranudip in 1883, a dress of honour given by the Emperor.²⁷ The usual Chinese title was also given to Bir Shamsher, Ranudip's successor, in 1889.

25. To humour the Nepalese Prime Minister the Emperor sent an embassy to Kathmandu, which left Lhasa in May 1889 bearing a dress of honour for the Maharaja. E.L. Durand, Resident to Government, 4 June 1889, (D.O.), F.S.E., Aug. 1889, No. 27; Lansdowne to Cross, 6 Sept. 1889, Lansdowne Papers, Vol. 1, IX, No. 151.

26. Rose, *Background to Modern Himalayan Politics*, opcit, p. 408.

27. Sir John Walsh, Her Majesty's Minister, Peking to Viceroy, 23 Mar. 1888, F.S.E., May 1888, Nos. 284-85.

The fear of British intervention in favour of Nepal was the additional reason why China was keen on solving Nepal-Tibet disputes by mediation.

British attitude to this frequent hostility between Nepal and Tibet was influenced by three considerations. First, the dispute could escalate into a war involving China. Such involvement the British could hardly ignore, for in the security of Nepal the British had a vital stake. Secondly, British relations with China were certain to be compromised following the Chinese impression that Nepalese militarism had covert British support. Finally, Britain's own commercial interests in Tibet were certain to be jeopardised if unfriendly relations between Nepal and Tibet persisted; all the more so when the Tibetans were likely to see British hands behind Nepalese activities. Even if the British could convince Peking that they discouraged Nepalese jingoism, the Tibetans were unlikely to be convinced by this argument, for they were aware of the close ties between Kathmandu and Calcutta.

The British did not want a full scale war between Nepal and Tibet for fear of its effect on Bengal's trade with the Himalayan states. That is why, Lord Mayo, the Viceroy and Governor-General, asked Jang Bahadur to make up with Tibet rather than expect British assistance in any form. Jang Bahadur was also asked to recall the Nepalese *vakil* at Lhasa, who had incurred the displeasure of the Tibetans.²⁸ Jang Bahadur did not accept Calcutta's offer of mediation in Nepal's dispute with Tibet.²⁹

The immediate problem for the British Government was to prevent the Nepal-Tibet dispute from damaging British relations with Nepal. Such damage was indeed likely when

28. Tibetans fell out with the Nepalese envoy, who was withdrawn from Lhasa. There were misunderstandings between Lhasa and Peking, Chinese Ambans and Tibetan Lamas. The Resident stated, "the general belief in Nepal is that during the rebellion of the Taipings and the subsequent insurrections in the western provinces, of which the resings of the Pentheys was the most noteworthy, Chinese influence decreased in Tibet." Resident to Government, 29 Apr. 1874, F.P.A., May 1874, No. 243.

29. Departmental Notes, F.P.A. June 1873, Nos. 462-75; Oct. 1874, No. 97.

Kathmandu asked the British for large supply of arms for use against Tibet.³⁰ This placed Calcutta on the horns of a dilemma; meeting Nepalese requests for arms and making it militarily strong constituted a security risk for British India, while not doing so might anger Kathmandu which would restrict the supply of Gurkhas for the Indian army as a measure of retaliation.

Viceroy, Lytton,³¹ Ripon, Dufferin and Lansdowne all faced this dilemma. The British could ill-afford to alienate Nepal at a time when to meet the increasing Russian threat to the security of India's northeast frontier, a large supply of Gurkhas to the Indian army was essential. Military experts were all unanimous that the Gurkhas constituted the best and the most dependable element in the Indian army, and that the Nepalese government should either be coerced or coaxed to enable the Indian army to get large supplies of the best martial tribes of Nepal—the Magars and the Gurungs.³²

Lytton, tried the first course—coercion. Ranudip Singh was subjected to great pressure to give up the Darbar's settled policy of preventing free recruitment of Gurkhas by British recruiting agents. He put various obstacles in the way of the men desirous of enlistment in the British ranks; whenever he was compelled to supply recruits, the latter were found to be not of the required standard; this put the British government to considerable wasteful expenditure.

30. The Government of India wanted to improve arrangements for preventing the smuggling of arms into Nepal and not to make concessions to readily to the obstructive minister, and also be careful not to allow Nepal, under the pretence of a war with Tibet, to arm itself against India. Departmental Notes, F.S.E., June 1884, Nos. 438-462.

31. Lytton to Cranbrook, 3 Jan. 1879, Lytton Papers, Letters to Secretary of State, 1979, p. 7.

32. Lansdowne informed Kimberley that, "it is most important that we should keep the Nepalese in good humour as it would be easy for them to raise difficulties in the way of the recruitment of the Gurkhas for our army. I find that they have lately been taking men for their own army from the two tribes (Magars and Gurungs) which we have hitherto monopolised". Lansdowne to Kimberley, 22 Feb. 1893, Lansdowne Papers, Vol. V. IX, pp. 24-25.

The Army Organisation Commission (1879) strongly criticised the recruitment procedure³³ and urged the Government the adoption of a stronger policy to oblige the Darbar to meet British requirements. Some Gurkha army officers with experience of dealing with Gurkha regiments warned the government that if a definite arrangement were not made with the Nepalese Darbar, the latter was unlikely to supply recruits of the required standard, with the result that the Gurkha regiments would be flooded with an inferior class of men to the detriment of the efficiency of the regiments. Such was the view of the Under Secretary of the Foreign Department, H.M. Durand, too.³⁴

However, Lytton's policy of pressure on Ranudip Singh did not yield any result, save that relations with the Darbar worsened. With the assumption of office by Ripon, a new policy was adopted by the Indian government—"the policy of mutual concessions".³⁵ Calcutta wondered if a bargain could be struck with Kathmandu—giving it arms in exchange for a definite commitment to regularly supply Gurkha recruits to the Indian army. Nepal needed arms on account of its likely conflicts with Tibet, while the British needed regular supply of Gurkhas to meet the Russian threat on the north-west frontier of India. Ripon was "prepared to make considerable concession" to Nepal in order to facilitate Gurkha recruitment. By making "timely concessions" to Nepal, Ripon hoped to "secure the adhesion of a loyal and valuable ally."³⁶ The Viceroy hoped that arms supply to Nepal would bind the latter by a tie of obligation to the British with the result that in a

time of difficulty the Nepalese might be a source of strength to the British instead of danger.³⁷

33. *Accounts and Papers Presented to Parliament*, Vol. LIX, 1884-85, *East India Army System*, pp. 20, 47, 552.

34. Durand Papers, Letter Book, April 1884-July 1890.

35. Ripon to Kimberley, 30 May 1884, F.S.E., June 1884, No. 460.

36. *Ibid.*

37. *Ibid.*

Durand was all for winning Nepalese confidence “by throwing our suspicions and strengthening Nepal”.^{37a} He saw that the impending war with Tibet “gave us a special opportunity” as Nepal was very anxious for a supply of arms to meet the Tibetans.³⁸

Durand suggested that Nepal be supplied with “good arms in return for an engagement which would for the future enable us to get Gurkha recruits”. He urged that 14,000 rifles be supplied to the Nepalese Darbar in exchange for 5,000 Gurkhas.³⁹ Such was the Resident, Charles Girdlestone’s view too. He would let Nepal fight Tibet expecting the British to reap two political dividends: diversion of Nepalese martial energy elsewhere would be a relief for British India from the security point of view; secondly, Nepal’s dependence on British arms would increase British hold on the country.

While Ripon did not differ from Durand and Girdlestone in their advocacy for cementing relations with Nepal, he gave a serious thought to an important political issue: Nepal-Tibet dispute and China’s reaction to arms supply to Nepal. Ripon was aware that Nepal was “nominally tributary to China”, but the latter regarded Kathmandu “as lying outside the limits of the Empire”.⁴⁰ The Viceroy was also aware of the fact that although Tibet acknowledged the supremacy of China, the latter regarded Lhasa, “rather as an independent state than as a portion of the Chinese dominion.”⁴¹

In such circumstances, when China seemed very unlikely to make military intervention in the Nepal-Tibet dispute, the wisest course that suggested to Ripon was to wait and watch the course of events. He would let the Nepalese use their own arms against Tibet to redress their wrongs. Should China

37a. Ripon to Kimberley, 30 May 1884, F.S.E., June 1884, No. 460.

38. Besides, it was not unknown to the British government that the Nepalese government had for some years been smuggling arms and ammunition from India with the connivance of some Parsee merchants in Bombay. Wright. *opcit*, p. 48.

39. Durand to Editor, *The Pioneer*, 7 Sep. 1884, Durand Papers. Letter Book, April 1884-July 1890.

40. Ripon to Kimberley, 30 May 1884, F.S.E., June 1884, No. 460.

41. *Ibid*.

ask Calcutta for an explanation for Nepalese conduct, the British would point out that they had no control on Kathmandu's foreign relations and had never interfered with its right "to declare war and peace on her own account."⁴²

Ripon would avoid giving umbrage to Kathmandu by asking it to forbear from fighting Lhasa; any such demand would be resented by Nepal as a gross interference with its independence. As for Durand's strong plea to give arms to Kathmandu, Ripon thought it rather a risky step to take until he got an authorisation from the Home Government to do so. He asked Lord Kimberley, the Secretary of State for India, if the Home Government could raise the Nepal-Tibet issue with Peking and settle the dispute diplomatically.⁴³ However, the dispute between Nepal and Tibet having been settled in the meanwhile, no arms were immediately given to Nepal—the Indian government, Durand regretted, thus lost a "golden opportunity" to put the matter regarding recruitment on a definite footing.⁴⁴

The recruitment question was finally settled by Lord Lansdowne in 1893 when an agreement was made with Bir Shamsher, whose cooperative policy enabled the British government to raise new Gurkha battalions.⁴⁵ The British supplied arms to Bir Shamsher, but neither in the same quantity nor of the same kind as desired by him. This made Bir Shamsher unhappy, but he could not alienate the latter for he had come to power by a coup d'état,⁴⁶ and he feared that his political

42. Ibid.

43. Ripon informed Kimberley, "If the Nepalese press for arms, we shall reply that the matter has been referred to Her Majesty's Government, though we should prefer to avoid discussing the subject at present." Ripon to Kimberley, 30 May 1884, F.S.E., June 1884, No. 460.

44. Durand to Chesney, 4 July 1884, Durand Papers, Letter Book, April 1884—July 1890.

45. Resident to Government, (Translation of a letter from Bir Shamsher to Viceroy), 22 Oct. 1893, F.S.E., Nov. 1894, Nos. 127, 128.

46. Viceroy to Secretary of State, 16 Mar. 1892, F.S.E., June 1892, No. 289; Rose, *Nepal Strategy for Survival*, opcit, p. 140.

rivals, now in exile in India, could be used by the British against him.⁴⁷

In giving arms to Nepal, the British had to consider two very important points: first, unrestricted arms supply could make Nepal militarily strong enough to create problems for India's security; secondly, a militarily strong Nepal would be more ambitious in regard to Tibet. A Nepal-Tibet war was undesirable in British interests. Not only would it damage British commercial interests in Tibet, but affect British relations with China, for the latter knew that Nepal was a close ally of the British. At this time British difficulties with Russia and France suggested the wisdom of keeping on well with China.⁴⁸

In such circumstances, at the Home Government's instruction, Lord Elgin, who succeeded Lansdowne as the Viceroy and Governor-General, pointedly told the Nepalese king that while supplying arms to Nepal, the British government would have to consider whether such supply might cause fear in Nepal's neighbours; such fear would create for the British government undesirable political complications. Hence, it was made clear to Nepal that British arms should not be used against Tibet,⁴⁹ and that the British themselves would determine how much arms should be supplied to Nepal at a time. Such a warning to Nepal was essential at this time, when it

47. See foot note 16.

48. Kimberley warned Lansdowne, "It would never do to break off with China in the present critical state of our negotiations with France and Russia, with respect to both of which the goodwill and cooperation of the Chinese government is most important to us." Kimberley to Lansdowne, 28 Sept. 1893, Lansdowne Papers, Vol. V, IX, No. 62.

49. Elgin wrote to Bir Shamsheer, "that to permit the importation of warlike materials into Nepal in quantities which your Highness's other neighbours might consider excessive or as constituting a menace to them would expose the Government of India to the risk of imputation which might possibly involve very undesirable complications... that your Highness's Government have no wish or design to enter on aggressive operations against your northern neighbour." Viceroy to Bir Shamsheer, 15 May 1894, F.S.E., Nov. 1894, No. 146.

was keen on attacking Tibet, when China was engaged in a war with Japan.

Since Nepal had no other means of obtaining arms, their exclusive dependence on the British for arms gave the latter an indirect control on Nepal's relations with Tibet. Whatever Nepal may do, it could not go to war with Tibet, for the use of British arms, imperative for the war, was disallowed by the British government.

The last two decades saw British activities in Tibet, Bhutan and Sikkim accelerated and their pressure on China intensified. This to Kathmandu was an extremely undesirable development, but one which it could neither prevent nor ignore. British influence in Tibet and the neighbouring Himalayan states would pose a threat to Nepal's commercial position in the region.⁵⁰ Hence, the Nepalese reaction to British activities was of strong but concealed disapproval.

In 1862, the Resident reported that British attempts at opening Tibet up for trade were viewed by Jang Bahadur, as a threat to Nepal's own commercial interests in the Himalayan trade; "the complete and lucrative monopoly" which Nepal had for long established in Tibetan trade was certain to be affected by the opening of the Sikkimese route to Tibet.⁵¹ The closure of these routes by treaty with Tibet had been for ages an important feature in Nepal's relations with Tibet.⁵²

50. "British treaties with Sikkim and Bhutan (1861, 1865), worried Nepal. There was little Kathmandu could do to thwart the British in Bhutan, but it may not have been coincidental that it was at this point that Nepal decided to revive the periodic missions to China, discontinued after the 1855-56, war with Tibet." Rose, *Nepal Strategy for Survival*, opcit, p. 135.

51. The Viceroy wrote to the Secretary of State, "on the one hand our Resident in Nepal does not anticipate any substantial advantages from the opening up of a route to Tibet via Nepal rather from the fact of the poverty of the Nepalese than from any fear of obstacles which might be raised by the Nepalese government, but Lieutenant Governor opined that a trade route be established if good road is made through Sikkim. "Government of India to Secretary of State, 29 Jan. 1875, F.P.A., Feb. 1875, No. 36; Ramakant, *Nepal-China and India*, opcit, p. 27.

52. See Chapter Two, p. 21.

It was reported that Jang Bahadur sought to influence a section of the Tibetan elite against their country's relations with the British, who were represented as a threat to Tibet's religion and culture. Jang Bahadur wanted to further Nepalese commercial interests in Tibet and frustrate British commercial objects there by playing upon the Tibetan fear of contact with foreigners.⁵³

Bir Shamsheer's policy was much the same as Jang Bahadur's. He sought to impress upon Lord Dufferin, the Viceroy, that the British should abandon the Macaulay Mission to Tibet, because the Tibetans were certain to resist it.⁵⁴

But then, Nepal did not want any war between Britain and Tibet on account of the latter's resistance to British activities in Tibet; for an Anglo-Tibetan war was likely to prove injurious to Nepal's interests in Tibet. Nepalese traders in Tibet were likely to be the targets of Tibetan attack, for the Tibetans knew that Nepal had intimate relations with British India. This would explain Bir Shamsheer's worry in 1888-89, when the British had a short skirmish with the Tibetans at Lingtu in Sikkim,⁵⁵ following the latter's refusal to vacate the territory. Nepal wanted to prevent a full scale war, for a

53. Secretary to Resident, 5 Sept. 1862, F.P.A.; Sept. 1862, No. 36; Durand to George Chesney, 26 Jan. 1882, Durand Papers. Letter Book, 1882-83.

54. It was also clear to Dufferin "that the Tibetans were prepared to keep Macaulay back to us over the hill, which would have been a very embarrassing circumstance." It was intended to send Colman Macaulay, Secretary to the Bengal government on a commercial mission to Tibet in 1885. Dufferin to Kimberley, 24 Aug., 1886 Dufferin Papers, Vol. 19, Letter No. 36.

55. Durand reported that the Nepalese Representative met the Bara Monks at Lhasa, who told him that Lingtu did not belong to the British, but to Tibet; so they resolved on a war, that this was no aggression on their part, but on the contrary was on the part of the English. Durand to Government, 30 Apr. 1888, F.S.E., May 1888, Nos. 374, 375; Dufferin to Cross, 4 Mar., 25 Mar., 15 June 1888, Cross Papers, Vol. 4, Letter Nos. 5, 83, 95, 98; Bell, *opcit*, p.60; Rose, *Nepal Strategy for Survival*. *opcit*, p. 147; Lamb, *opcit*, pp. 175-187; Parshotam Mehra, *The Young husband Expedition, An Interpretation*, (London, 1968), pp. 70-75.

British victory, which was certain, would result in British hegemony over Lhasa and consequent impairment of Nepal's monopolistic position in the trade of Tibet. Besides, Anglo-Tibetan war on the Nepalese border would be a security risk for Kathmandu.⁵⁶

Hence, Bir Shamsheer assumed a mediatory role. He wrote to the Kazis of Lhasa, impressing on them the need for making up with the British. He pointed out:

The British Government is great and enlightened, such a government, I do not apprehend, will do injustice to anyone...I wrote this to remove your doubts, that we have been dealing with the British for the last hundred years and during which time we have always found them just, kind and straight-forward in all their dealings.⁵⁷

The consolidation of British position in Sikkim by the Anglo-Chinese convention in 1890 and the commercial concessions in Tibet obtained by the Trade Treaty three years later increased the Nepalese worry. The diversion of Anglo-Tibetan trade from the customary Nepalese route to the new Sikkimese route did affect Nepalese commercial interests.⁵⁸

No less worried were the Chinese who strongly disliked the consolidation of the British position in the Himalayan states. Peking viewed these states as outer buffers of Tibet, having historical relations with China—Sikkim and Bhutan had close relations with Tibet, while Nepal had tributary relations with China. The inter-relations of the Himalayan states and their connections with China was a potential political problem and

56. Bir Shamsheer wrote to the Lhasa Kazis, "that it is proper to make reconciliation and cultivate friendship with the great power". The Kazis later came to the conclusion that it was better to come to terms with the British. *Ibid*, No. 364.

57. Quoted in Asad Husain, *British India's Relations with the Kingdom of Nepal*, (London, 1970), p. 134.

58. T. Arthur Duncan, President of the Bradford Chamber of Commerce to Government, 21 Nov. 1895, F.S.E., Mar., 1896, No. 259.

to this Ashley Eden, who led a mission to Sikkim in 1861, drew attention of the Government:

Nepal is tributary to China, Tibet is tributary to China, and Sikkim and Bhutan are tributary to Tibet and, therefore, secondarily to China.⁵⁹

Sikkim was not annexed in 1861, because Eden feared that all its neighbours would have joined the fray and "the result would have been a long, tedious and most expensive war." Bhutan was not annexed in 1865 for the same reason.⁶⁰

As the Chinese hold on Tibet became weaker with the years, Peking showed an increasing determination to assert its suzerainty over the Himalayan states south of Tibet.⁶¹ In consequence, the British faced a political problem; India's security interests needed frustrating what seemed to the Indian government the Chinese bid to undermine the British position in the Himalayan area. The Ambans were also reported to have attempted at stopping the Tibetan trade with British India. In the Indian Foreign Office the general view was that China's historical claims on the Himalayan states needed to be contested. The Foreign Office also strongly disapproved what it interpreted as the desire of the Himalayan states to continue their tributary relations with Peking and Lhasa with a view to withstanding British pressure.

Thus, in 1876, the Deb Raja of Bhutan was reported to have secured Chinese assurance of help in opposing British road building activities; "a sort of offensive and defensive alliance" between China and Bhutan was a possibility, so reported J.W. Edgar, Deputy Commissioner of Darjeeling. Edgar also informed the Government of the Amban's having asked the Raja of Sikkim to oppose the British road building

59. Quoted in C.E. Buckland, *Bengal under the Lieutenant Governors*, I, (Calcutta, 1901), p. 224.

60. Lamb, *opcit*, pp. 102. 126-27.

61. W.B. Oldham, Deputy Commissioner of Darjeeling to Commissioner of Rajshahi, 26 Dec. 1885, F.S.E., Jan. 1886, No. 711; Edgars note on British Relations with Sikkim, 24 Sep. 1887, Cross Papers, Vol. 3.

activities in his territory.⁶² In 1885-88, China and Tibet were active in Bhutan to exploit the local political instability.

In 1889, in course of negotiations with the British Government regarding the Sikkim-Tibet boundary issue, China strongly asserted its suzerainty over Sikkim. The Chinese Ambans at Lhasa conferred a button of rank on the Sikkim Raja. The Indian Foreign Office strongly disliked Chinese interference in a state which had been treated by Calcutta, as its feudatory since 1861.⁶³ Durand, now the Foreign Secretary, in particular, urged Lansdowne the urgency of frustrating the Chinese game in Sikkim in order to avoid undesirable political repercussions on the neighbouring states of Bhutan and Nepal. Durand noted:

If we stand firm now, we shall, I believe, do much to avert future trouble and to discourage China from advancing shadowy but embarrassing claims to suzerainty over the states lying on our side of the Himalayan water parting.⁶⁴

The Indian Government was firm in its stand: China must acknowledge Sikkim's status as a British protectorate, being

62. The Amban wrote to the Sikkim Raja in August 1873: "...your state of Sikkim borders on Tibet. You know what is in our minds and what our policy is. You are bound to prevent the Peling Sahibs from crossing the frontier, yet it is entirely through your action in making roads for the Sahibs through Sikkim that they are going to make the projected attempt. If you continue to behave in this manner, it will not be well with you..." Edger, *opcit.*, pp. 15-17.

63. The Chinese Amban demanded that the Raja should be permitted to retain his Chinese dress and to wear the hat and button conferred upon him by the Chinese Government. "But the homage rendered to the Tibetans and Chinese is obviously inconsistent with the Raja's position as a British feudatory. . . it is quite certain that if we gave way to the Chinese Amban's demand the effect would be very bad not only in Sikkim but also in the states of Bhutan and Nepal", so wrote Lansdowne. Memorandum by Durand 1 Jan., 1889, Lansdowne Papers, 13, Vol. I, Selection of Despatches to Secretary of State, Enclosure 5, 8 Jan 1889.

64. *Ibid.*

under its exclusive influence. Accordingly, an agreement was reached with China in 1890,⁶⁵ which not only confirmed British position in Sikkim but demarcated its boundary with Tibet.

That the Chinese were worried about the increasing British activities in the Himalayan states was clear from a communication to Peking by the Governor of Szechuan. The Governor wrote:

Now fortunately we still have Bhutan and Nepal which both border on Tibet and could become our buffer states. The whole land of Bhutan is still not subjugated to India. With regard to Nepal, because of the strength of their armed forces, the British, at the time they conquered India, could not occupy this land and are still worried about them. Now, if the British wished to penetrate into Tibet, they must take the route through these two countries which could be troublesome to them. If we endeavoured to establish ties with those two countries and frustrated the British intention of establishing connections with them, then Tibet would not lose its strategic passes and we should be covered by a strong screen. At a former time, when the British had annexed Kashmir from the Sikhs in northern India, they already intended to trade in Tibet, which proves that they have had such an intention for a long time. If now we do not associate with Bhutan and Nepal the British surely would try to establish connections with them, and thus Tibet would be exposed and even Szechuan province would have its door opened.⁶⁶

No wonder, then, the British were watchful to prevent any strengthening of Chinese position in Nepal. In 1889, the

65. Durand to Dufferin, 20 Feb 1889; Durand to Wallace, Private Secretary to Dufferin, 1 Jan, 3 Jan, 3 Jan., 17 Jan., 1889, Durand Papers, Letter Book, 1886-1890; Bell, *opcit*, p. 61; Rose, *Nepal Strategy for Survival*, *opcit*, p. 147.

66. Quoted in Rose, *Nepal Strategy for Survival*. *opcit*, p. 138.

exiled Badi Maharani of Nepal⁶⁷ reported to Calcutta that the Chinese delegation, which had come to Kathmandu to confer on Bir Shamsher the customary Chinese title, had concluded a secret treaty with Nepal favourable to Bir Shamsher's personal interests but prejudicial to Anglo-Nepalese relations. She explained:

that the cherished policy of the Nepalese had been beyond owing a nominal allegiance to China to avoid cultivating any close political relations with that power, so that it might not by any possible means obtain the slightest foot-hold in Nepal, and hence the new departure is regarded with the gravest apprehension by the people.⁶⁸

It seemed to the Resident, too, that Bir Shamsher's uneasy relations with the British at this time⁶⁹ had led him to cultivate closer relations with China with the result that Nepal seemed to have been "openly subservient to China". Durand asserted that

Nepal was in a position "quasi-subordinate to us"; hence, "if the Chinese really attempt to establish their influence in Nepal we must object".⁷⁰

The Foreign Secretary would even use the Jang Rana emigres in India who were hostile to the ruling Shamsher Ranas,⁷¹ as a lever to frustrate the suspected Sino-Nepalese alliance. In view of the Chinese claims over the Pamirs, Hunza, Negar, Siam and Burma, the Indian Government had to take a serious view of Chinese designs on the Himalayan states. Durand was all for ending the anomalous relations

67. She was the wife of Ranudip Singh who had been murdered by Bir Shamsher. She lived in India as a political emigre.

68. Senior Dowager Maharani of Nepal to Lansdowne, 10 Dec. 1889, F.S.E., Nov. 1889, Nos. 84-87.

69. Bir feared British support to the Jang Ranas in India.

70. Quoted in Rose *Background to Modern Himalayan Politics*, opcit, p. 408.

71. See foot note, 16.

of the Himalayan states with Britain and China. While the states were viewed as tributaries by China, they were also treated by the British as being in their exclusive sphere of influence. Lansdowne admitted,

no doubt—that all along the slopes of the Himalayas the Chinese are endeavouring to set up the exercise of some kind of authority beyond their own frontier.⁷²

It was indeed, “a source of great danger”, that while Bir Shamsheer’s relations with the Indian government were “still very ill defined and likely to lead to complications”,⁷³ China should endeavour to strengthen her hold on Nepal. The Viceroy even feared that

we may have troubles with the Nepalese and through them with China before long.⁷⁴

But then, a strong reprimand to Bir Shamsheer was impolitic for Lansdowne could not but admit, that

the Chinese and Nepalese were both strictly within their rights in sending and receiving the missions now at Kathmandu.⁷⁵

Asking Nepal to terminate its customary relations with China was certain to further impair Anglo-Nepalese relations on account of Kathmandu’s strong disapproval of British interference with Nepal’s independence. Besides, Lansdowne could hardly ignore the fact that the British had no formal control on Nepal’s foreign relations and that Kathmandu had earlier made war and peace with Tibet and China without British intervention.⁷⁶ Besides, any pressure on China

72. Lansdowne to Cross, 2 Aug. 1889, Lansdowne Papers, Vol. I, No. 134.

73. Lansdowne to Cross, 6 Sep 1889, Lansdowne Papers, Vol. I, No. 151.

74. *Ibid.*

75. Minute on Nepal, 18 Sept 1889, *Ibid.*, Vol. XIII, p. 66, Noted and Minutes (Jan 1889 - Jan 1894).

76. “The Government of Nepal enjoys an independent national life and possesses the power of making or entering into treaties and sending embassies without let or hindrance from the British Government. Ardagh’s note on Nepal, 17 Aug 1889, p. 156, *Ibid.*, Vol. II, No. 169.

for its activity on the Indian frontier was likely to damage London's general relations with Peking; London frequently warned Calcutta against any policy on the Indian frontier which was likely to offend China and provide an opportunity to Russia and France to exploit British difficulties with China. Lord Kimberley, the Secretary of State, wrote to Lansdowne in rather a reproachful tone:

The coincident action of Russia on the Pamirs and France in Siam is (to say the least) significant...I think, however, you hardly attach weight enough to the importance of a friendly understanding with China. If we had a quarrel with Russia where else can we look for an ally ?⁷⁷

Nepal's tributary relations with China were admittedly inconvenient for the British; but then, since it was necessary to keep well with both Peking and Kathmandu, Calcutta chose to wink at the Resident's report on the Sino-Nepalese relations. Lansdowne minuted :

Non-interference in Sino-Nepalese relations was desirable at the moment,

while admitting that there were strong political reasons for placing our relations with Nepal and China on a less precarious footing.⁷⁸

The last years of the 19th century saw the accentuation of Nepal-Tibet dispute which led the British government to seriously consider whether or not to be involved in the dispute. It was deemed necessary to convince China that the British had nothing to do with Nepal's pressure on Tibet. Besides, the Resident's reports that Bir Shamsheer sought to extract more arms from the British by making a bogey of the Tibetans considerably embarrassed Lord Elgin, the Viceroy.

77. Kimberley to Lansdowne; 1 Sept 1893, *Ibid*, Vol. V, No. 55.

78. Minute on Nepal, 18 Sept. 1889, *Ibid*, Vol. XIII, p. 67.

Elgin could neither oblige Bir Shamsheer nor flatly turn down his requests and strain Anglo-Nepalese relations. The relations had, in fact, been showing marked improvement following the visit of Lord Roberts, the Commander-in-Chief, to Nepal in 1892. Bir Shamsheer had been made a K.C.S.I. in 1892, as a recognition of his friendliness towards the British.⁷⁹

In such circumstances, Elgin wanted to impress on Nepal that the British would ask China to restrain Tibet; the Home Government, however, considered the step impolitic, for it did not want any Chinese involvement in the dispute. The Secretary to State, Lord George Hamilton, pointed out to Elgin :

There is a somewhat uneasy feeling amongst the older members of the political committee that any attempt to mediate in the differences between Nepal and Tibet through the intervention of China may annoy Nepal.⁸⁰

China was so weak then that it was hardly likely that its involvement would have any impact on the disputants.⁸¹ Besides, in view of the Sino-Japanese war Chinese military intervention in the Nepal-Tibet dispute was very unlikely. Considering all this the Home Government asked Elgin that he had better refrain from making "any undue use of China's name and authority",⁸² to resolve the dispute between Nepal and Tibet. Such use would be interpreted by China as British acknowledgement of Peking's suzerainty over not only Tibet but Nepal as well. The Indian government had already faced considerable problems created by the claims of Chinese suzerainty on states on the Indian frontier. Hence the wisest

79. After Robert's visit, Bir Shamsheer supplied plenty of good Gurkha recruits. The Gurkha force was more than doubled in a few years. Viceroy to Secretary of State, (Telg), 14 Mar. 1892, F.S.E., June 1892, No. 287; Lansdowne to Cross, 20 Apr. 1892 Lansdowne Papers, Vol. IV, No. 19; Rose, *Nepal Strategy for Survival*, opcit, p. 148.

80. Hamilton to Elgin, 28 Feb. 1896, Elgin Papers, Correspondence with Secretary of State.

81. Ibid.

82. Hamilton to Elgin, 10 Apr. 1896, Ibid. p. 42.

course for the Indian government was to watch the developments in Nepal-Tibet relations, while discouraging Nepal from using arms to settle scores with Tibet.

However, on one point the British were firm: they would prevent any external threat to Nepal – “India could never allow a foreign power to occupy Nepal.” Ultimately, thanks to Chinese mediation, the Nepal-Tibet dispute was solved – a news that relieved the Home Government which feared that a war between Nepal and Tibet would certainly have created for the British “embarrassments and complications with China”.⁸³ The lesson drawn by the British from the recurrent dispute between Nepal and Tibet was that Calcutta needed to assume effective control of Kathmandu’s relations with Lhasa to maintain peace between the two countries.

To the Resident, however, dispute between Nepal and Tibet was not a very bad development; rather it seemed to him an opportunity for the British to step up trade with Tibet. The Resident hoped that if the Tibetans did not get rice from Nepal, they would turn to British India, while the Nepalese, deprived of the supply of Tibetan salt, would also turn to India for salt; in fact, Bir Shamsheer had already sounded the Resident about this. Hence, the Resident hopefully informed the Government:

If the unfriendly relation between Nepal and Tibet Governments is strained by this innovation, it ought to benefit our general trade with Tibet, and we should be ready to turn the circumstance to our own advantage. In the meanwhile we can make it worthwhile to Tibet to deal with us for her rice, we may hope that trade, once diverted from Nepal to Darjeeling may remain with us.⁸⁴

However, the hope proved illusory; the Tibetan distrust of the British was no less than their hostility towards the

83. Hamilton to Elgin, 17 Apr. 1896, *Ibid*, p. 17.

84. Resident to Government, 26 Aug. 1891, *F. Ext.*, Feb. 1892, Nos. 17-19.

Nepalese; there was no sign of the Tibetans wishing to encourage British trade with their country even when they could not get essential supplies from Nepal. In such circumstances the British were obliged to conclude a Trade Agreement with China in 1893, to secure their commercial interests in Tibet. This only worsened British relations with Tibet for the latter refused to recognise the validity of the agreement, thus challenging the traditional Chinese position as the suzerain authority of Tibet having the power to conclude agreements on behalf of Lhasa.⁸⁵

At the end of the 19th century, consequent on China's weakening position in Tibet, the British had to assume a more forceful role in the Himalayan states, where Chinese military power and political prestige had so far maintained peace and stability. Such a role became all the more essential in view of Russian ambitions in Tibet, which if not frustrated, was certain to impair British relations with Nepal, Bhutan and Sikkim.

With the Tibetans under the 13th Dalai Lama restive under Chinese control, Chinese relations with Tibet entered on a new phase. Not only was Peking unable to effectively control the Tibetan administration,⁸⁶ but unable to manage Lhasa's relations with Kathmandu either. Since the British had stakes in both Nepal and Tibet, the responsibility of managing Nepal-Tibet relations naturally devolved on them. The British had to be very careful while managing Nepal-Tibet relations; they could offend neither.

Nepal's attitude to China had by the end of the 19th century undergone a definite change. China was too weak to be a military counterpoise to the British, and its policy of avoidance of involvement in Anglo-Nepalese relations made it an ineffective political counterpoise too. Naturally therefore,

85. See Chapter Six, p. 126.

86. The Lieutenant Governor of Bengal, Sir Charles Elliot, informed Lord Elgin on 24 June 1895, that Chinese suzerainty over Tibet was a "fiction", and that "the Great Lamas do not care a button for the Amban and go their own way". Elgin Papers, Correspondence with Persons in India, Jan-June 1896, p. 401.

Kathmandu got closer to Calcutta, which gave the latter a greater influence on Nepal's foreign policy. The influence was no doubt indirect, but nevertheless quite effective. Kathmandu could no longer bully Lhasa as effectively as before, far less launch war against it. The consideration of British reaction was a compelling factor for Kathmandu's policy makers.

The increasing British influence on Nepal did not materially affect Chinese political interests; Nepal had always been regarded as just an outer buffer to Tibet; neither in Kathmandu's internal affair nor in its external relations Peking had any interest. All that it wanted was to prevent the realisation of Nepalese ambitions in Tibet by arms. Nepal's extreme sensitivity to its independence was for the Chinese an insurance against British preponderance in Nepal—a territory from which the British could intensify their pressure on Tibet. The Nepalese policy of restraining British ambitions in Tibet thus served China a good purpose. But then, with political changes in Tibet in the beginning of the present century, China's position in Lhasa further deteriorated. It was a temptation to foreign powers. China's problem was how to maintain its traditional position in Tibet in the face of the determination of foreign powers to challenge it.

Nepal and the Tibetan Crisis 1900-1904

The period 1900-04 saw British India adopting a forward policy in Tibet which led to the Nepalese involvement in the policy. This involvement was the result of considerable identity of interests between Calcutta and Kathmandu; concerted action by Nepal and British India to safeguard their respective interests in Tibet was the natural consequence of the developments in Tibet during the period.

Politically, Tibet was in a state of flux on account of three factors: the breakdown of the Chinese power in Lhasa; the 13th Dalai Lama's determination to make Tibetan administration independent of China's authority; and the desire of foreign powers to gain political influence in Lhasa by exploiting the decline of Chinese power there.

The closing years of the 19th century saw both internal and external troubles for the government in Peking which found it impossible to maintain its hold on the outlying parts of the empire. There were rebellions against the central power which the Imperial army found difficult to quell; China's defeat by Japan exposed the Imperial government's military weakness: Russia, France and Great Britain scored many a

diplomatic victory over Peking with the result that the Chinese melon was divided by foreign powers.¹

What worried China most was the intensified spirit of defiance in Tibet where the 13th Dalai Lama, who had come of age, seemed to have taken the leadership of an anti-Chinese movement. A powerful section of the Tibetan nobility, which enjoyed the Dalai Lama's confidence, sought to forge close links with Russia to foil the Chinese bid to rehabilitate their waning power in Lhasa.² Russia saw in this an opportunity to gain political ascendancy in Tibet and encouraged the pro-Russian elements in the Tibetan administration. The Mongolian Buriat Lamas who inhabited Siberia and Mongolia were all Russian subjects; they regarded the Dalai Lama as their preceptor; they formed the most important link between St. Petersburg and Lhasa.³

1. Clyde and Beers, *op.cit.*, pp. 185-195.

2. According to Russian newspapers, the senior Tsanite Khamba, Axharamba Agvan Dorieff, attached to the Dalai of Tibet, a mission from the Dalai Lama had arrived in Russia. There were rumours that some sort of a mission reached Lhasa in the spring of 1899 under Badmaeff, composed of Mongolian and with political significance. Buckland to Government, 23 Jan., 1901, F.S.E., July, 1901, No. 81; "There is little doubt that unless the Indian Government takes immediate action, we shall find a Russian consulate established shortly in the Tibetan capital. Perhaps even the Dalai Lama may have been persuaded to substitute Russia in place of the vanishing Chinese protectorship." Memorandum regarding possibility of political and diplomatic mission to Tibet, By Graham Sandberg, 6 July, 1901, Curzon Papers, Vol. 340; Curzon to Hamilton, 24 May 1899, Curzon Papers, Vol. 158, p. 95; Richardson, *op.cit.*, pp. 81-82; Lamb, *op.cit.*, pp. 254-59; Bell, *op.cit.*, pp. 62-64; Mehra, *The Younghusband Expedition, An Interpretation*, *op.cit.*, pp. 141-44; Francis Younghusband, *India and Tibet*, (Indian Edition, Delhi, 1971), pp. 67-69.

3. Hardinge informed Salisbury that Dr. Badmaeff came on a mission to settle some religious questions. "Since it must be remembered that in Siberia there were at least 5000 Lamas of minor degree who proselytise with great success amongst the Kalmucks and Buryats. Whatever may be the object of the Lama mission, the Russian Government were quite certain to make what capital they can out of it." C. Hardinge to Marquess of Salisbury, 31 Oct., 1900. F.S.E., Jan., 1901 No. 95; F. Ext. B., Aug., 1901, Nos. 172-175; F.S.E., Jan., 1902, Nos. 56-58; F.S.E., Sept., 1902, Nos. 22-62.

Russian designs on Tibet and the reported Russian intrigues with the Dalai Lama were viewed with the greatest concern by the British government, to whom it appeared as a part of the grand Russian scheme of establishing political ascendancy on the border tracts of India.¹ It seemed to the British that Russia sought to step up pressure on the Indian frontier and keep the British too occupied in countering that pressure to enable them to frustrate Russian ambitions in the Balkan Peninsula in Europe. Hence, it was natural that the British would strongly resist Russian activities in Tibet as they had done in Afghanistan and the Pamirs earlier.

Tibet was vital to India's security, for through it lay access to Nepal, Bhutan and Sikkim—the three states constituting an important element in India's defence structure. Tibet under Chinese suzerainty created no security problem for the British, but Russia strongly based in Lhasa would unsettle the British position in the three Himalayan states. Russia would intrigue with Nepal, Bhutan and Sikkim and try to detach them from British connection. Lord Curzon, the Viceroy, warned Lord George Hamilton, the Secretary of State, that although a Russian ascendancy over Tibet would constitute no immediate military danger to India,

“it would constitute a political danger for the effect upon Nepal, Bhutan and Sikkim would be most unsettling and might be positively dangerous.”⁵

4. “Russian territory is vast but unproductive. Much of her land is desert and her population is scanty. So like the whale she tries to swallow all the prey she can and she fattens on the wealth of other lands. She has acquired Manchuria and obtained a footing in Korea but Japan bars the way to her progress and she cannot glut her appetite. Therefore she casts envious glances on India, but unfortunately *Tibet bars the way*. So she has been scheming for more than thirty years to find some ground for annexing Tibet with a view to march on India. The present disagreement with Japan by Russia in the Far East has been taken advantage of by Russia to send a so-called scientific expedition into Tibet.” Ernest Satow, British Legation. Peking to Government of India, 18 Feb., 1904, Translation of an Article on the present situation in Tibet from the Chinese Newspaper, 4 Feb. 1904, F.S.E., July 1904, No. 55.

5. Curzon to Hamilton, 11 June 1901, Curzon Papers, Vol. 160, p. 162.

Russian intrigues with Nepal in particular would cause the greatest worry to Calcutta. Through Nepal lay the easiest routes to the prosperous Gangetic Valley; Russia might recruit Gurkhas, thus severely weakening the British Indian army.⁶ Nepal, which now lay definitely within British sphere of influence, would no longer be so; it could play off Russia against Britain the same way as Afghanistan had done for years. Captain WFO'Conor, the British Trade Agent at Gyantse, warned the Indian Government :

a hostile Nepal could in fact be very unpleasant thorn in our side and the advance of a force upon India through Nepal would be equally difficult either to prevent or checkmate.⁷

Thus Russian activity in Tibet would create for the British the same problem in the north-east frontier as similar activity in Afghanistan had already done for the British in the north-west frontier. Consequently one finds a close parallel between the British policy in Afghanistan on the eve of the First and Second Afghan wars and British policy in Tibet in 1900-04.

Lord Curzon was determined to establish British influence in Tibet as an essential measure of security for British India's political, strategic and commercial interests; in his plan of action Nepal constituted a vital element.⁸ That the Dalai Lama had embarked on a new policy was evident from his refusal to recognise the validity of the Anglo-Chinese conventions regarding Sikkim (1890) and Indo-Tibetan Trade (1893). The Dalai Lama challenged Peking's traditional authority to conclude treaties with foreign powers on behalf of Tibet. Not only was the trade between India and Tibet gravely affected by the new Tibetan policy, Lhasa's refusal

6. *Ibid.*, Vol. 340, *The Civil And Military Gazette*, Lahore, 4 Jan., 1901.

7. O'Conor in a note to Curzon highlighted the impact on Nepal of Russian activities in Tibet. He held that, with Russia in Tibet, Nepal would be able to play it off against British India and then the "supply of Gurkha recruits would be abruptly stopped". O'Conor's Note on Policy in Tibet, 10 June, 1901, Curzon Papers, Vol. 340.

8. The maintenance of friendly relations with Nepal was a matter of vital importance to the interests of India. Hamilton to Curzon, 27 Feb., 1903, F.S.E., Apr., 1903, No. 142; Secretary of State to Viceroy, 29 Aug., 1903, F.S.E., Oct., 1903, No. 129; Lamb, *op.cit.*, pp. 196, 201.

to recognise the Sikkim-Tibet boundary demarcated by the 1890 convention posed a political problem for Calcutta.⁹ The Tibetans uprooted the boundary pillars and occupied Giagong, a tract well within Sikkim. The Tibetans were sore that China had given away to Britain Sikkim which Lhasa regarded as its protectorate.

The changed Sino-Tibetan relations and Russian designs on Tibet had a profound effect on Curzon's mind.¹⁰ The Viceroy was determined to maintain Britain's commercial interests in Tibet by establishing direct political relations with Lhasa. He would abandon the erstwhile British policy of dealing with Tibet through China for the latter held no power at Lhasa at all.¹¹ Besides a demonstration of British determination was essential to keep the Dalai Lama away from being a Russian tool, and to this end Curzon would apply pressure on the Dalai Lama, if the latter proved intractable.

Between 1899 and 1902, Curzon spelt out his Tibetan policy to Hamilton. He urged the Secretary of State :

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9. "The inconsistency of the Lhasa Government was also remarkable. While professing to disavow the authority of the Chinese Government to conclude agreements with us regarding their affairs, they still appeared to inscribe stone pillars set up by order of His Majesty the Emperor of China as evidence of their right to the territory which they claim in the neighbourhood of Giagong and they also think it worth while to refer to an understanding which they allege to exist between the Governments of Great Britain and China and Tibet, and they say precluded us from sending our mission with a small escort to Khambajong as we violated their territory by going to this place [Khambajong]." Departmental Notes, F.S.E., July, 1904, Nos. 403-411; Curzon's original idea was "that as China had failed to secure fulfilment of the convention of 1890 or of the Regulations of 1894, we should in the present negotiations ignore her and deal direct with the Tibetans". Departmental Notes, F.S.E., Feb., 1905, Nos., 809-880; Young-husband, *op.cit.*, p. 51.
10. Curzon informed Hamilton, "the attempt to come to terms with Tibet through the agency of China was invariably proved a failure in the past, because of the intervention of this third party, between Tibet and ourselves. We regard Chinese suzerainty over Tibet as a constitutional fiction". Curzon to Hamilton, 8 Jan., 1903, *F.S.E./EXT.*, Feb., 1903, No. 82.
11. *Ibid.*

that the Chinese Government should be informed plainly that while we have no designs on Tibet ourselves, we cannot tolerate the presence there of another European power, and that any attempt to transfer Chinese interests there to Russia will be followed by the immediate occupation of Lhasa by British Indian troops. In adopting this policy we should be cordially supported by Nepal.¹²

The Viceroy sought to convince the Secretary of State that Tibet must be converted into a virtual British protectorate, or at least a British influenced state, for in no other way could Russian intrigues in Tibet be foiled, Curzon also emphasised that British position in Nepal, Bhutan and Sikkim would be gravely impaired if their influence in Tibet were not confirmed. Curzon was determined to send a mission to Lhasa with a view to concluding a convention with the Tibetan government and making Tibet a virtual protectorate of British India. He would not occupy Tibet, for

it would be madness for us to cross the Himalayas and to occupy it, but it is important that no one else should sieze it, and that it should be turned into a sort of buffer state between the Russian and Indian empires. Such a buffer was essential because, Curzon explained, if Russia were to come down to the big mountains, she would at once begin intriguing with Nepal and we should have second Afghanistan on the north.¹³

However, the Home Government at first did not see eye to eye with Curzon; the Viceroy's "somewhat aggressive", Tibetan policy was likely to damage London's general relations with Peking at a time when Britain wanted to avoid an open rupture with China for both commercial and political reasons. The Treaty of Shanghai (Sept., 1902), which was on the anvil, was expected to earn Britain's commercial conces-

12. Viceroy to Secretary of State, 20 Aug., 1902, F.S.E., Oct., 1902, No. 96.

13. Curzon to Hamilton, 11 June 1901, Curzon Papers, Vol. 160, p. 163.

sions. while pressure on China for Britain's Tibetan interests was certain to give Russia a handle to exert more pressure on Peking for concessions in Sinkiang, Mongolia and Manchuria.

The general policy of the Home Government was to soft-pedal China on the Indian frontier with a view to avoiding international complications. Hence, when Curzon urged the Home Government to allow him to pressurise the Dalai Lama, ostensibly to safeguard India's trade with Tibet, London made it clear to him that the trade was not of much consequence and that Calcutta had better rely on London's diplomatic negotiations with St. Petersburg to keep the latter away from Lhasa.¹⁴

This would certainly have frustrated Curzon's scheme but for the emergence of a new issue: Nepalese reaction to the developments in Tibet. The reaction was one of growing alarm at the Russian intrigues with the Dalai Lama; Kathmandu feared that Russian alliance with Tibet would make the latter militarily strong enough to repudiate the 1856 treaty which had obliged Lhasa to pay tribute to Kathmandu and give it political and commercial concessions.¹⁵ But for its military inferiority and Chinese pressure on it, Lhasa would have abrogated the treaty long ago.

Nepal was now under a vigorous Prime Minister Chandra Shamsher Jang Bahadur Rana,¹⁶ whose policy was to safeguard Nepalese interests at all costs. Chandra Shamsher had become the Prime Minister by ousting his brother, Deb

14. At the Foreign Office Lord Lansdowne held discussions with Russian Ambassador, Count Benckendorff and told him that "we had no idea of annexing the country, but that we had treaties with Tibet and a right to trade facilities. If these were denied and treaty obligations were not fulfilled, it would be absolutely necessary for us to insist on our rights". Secretary of State to Viceroy, 11 Apr., 1903, F.S.E., Apr., 1903, Nos. 142, 164; St. John Brodrick to Curzon, 13 Nov., 1903, Curzon Papers, Vol. 162, p. 296.

15. See Chapter Four, p. 70.

16. Chandra Shamsher, younger brother of Bir Shamsher, ruled Nepal as Prime Minister, from 1901 to 1929. For his life see Percival Landon, *Nepal*, Vol. II, (London, 1929).

Shamsher, from power.¹⁷ Chandra Shamsher would befriend the British as a means of consolidating his power particularly when he had reports of Deb Shamsher invoking British aid for the restoration of his power.

Chandra Shamsher had full knowledge of the fact that Calcutta would never permit him to take any unilateral action to safeguard Nepal's interests in Tibet—much less when the Viceroy was Lord Curzon, a man of strong determination. Besides, if the reports of Russian assistance to the Dalai Lama were true, it was risky to take any unilateral action against the latter. In such circumstances Chandra Shamsher thought it wiser to coordinate his policy with Curzon's. He told the Resident, Colonel C.W. Ravenshaw, that,

Russia as a neighbour would be a serious danger [to Nepal] as well as an intolerable nuisance and that at all hazards she must be kept out¹⁸

Curzon made full use of this attitude of the Nepalese Prime Minister. Through the Nepalese political representative at Lhasa Curzon gathered information on the activities of the Dalai Lama. The reports of the representative, Jit Bahadur, confirmed those obtained from elsewhere. Curzon was convinced of Russian agents operating at Lhasa, Russian arms

17. Resident wrote to the Foreign Secretary that the Maharaja of Nepal informed him that "the Raja had deprived General Deb Shamsher of Office of Prime Minister, as he was unable to perform his duties and would probably have caused a rebellion if he was allowed to remain. The Office of Prime Minister had been given to General Chandra Shamsher, and Deb Shamsher was sent to reside at Dhankuta near Darjeeling frontier". Deb Shamsher, an elder brother of Chandra Shamsher, ruled only for three months (March-June 1901), before he was ousted from power. Later Deb Shamsher fled to India to live there as an emigre. Resident to Government, 28 June 1901, F.S.E., Aug. 1901, No. 231.

18. Curzon to Hamilton, 10 Oct. 1902, Curzon Papers, Vol. 161, pp. 343, 344.

being both imported and manufactured at Lhasa,¹⁹ and a treaty having been concluded between Russia and China, giving the former a virtual protectorate over Tibet.²⁰

Chandra Shamsher also informed the British Resident that he had met a Tibetan Lama at Kathmandu who apprised him of a deep seated intrigue between China and Russia. Both the powers had projected an invasion of British India.²¹ The Lama sought to enlist Nepalese support to the project, and as a temptation offered Chandra Shamsher the prospect of territorial acquisition in India. That Russia had gained influence over the Dalai Lama was further corroborated by Ekaikawaguchi, a Japanese traveller, in his meeting with Chandra Shamsher in 1902.²²

Nepalese reaction to the Tibetan situation enabled Curzon to adopt the strong Tibetan policy which the Home Government had for long been unwilling to sanction. At the India Office, William Lee Warner, Alfred Lyall, Sir Denis Fitzpatrick, S.C. Bailey and others feared that Curzon's policy would

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19. The Nepalese envoy to Peking, Lieutenant Colonel Indra Bikram, on his return journey saw the arsenals at Lhasa. E.H.C. Walsh, Deputy Commissioner of Darjeeling to Government of Bengal, 7 Jan., 1902, F.S.E., Apr., 1902, No. 40; Departmental Notes, F.S.E., March, 1904, Nos. 1-2.
 20. A Chinese informer at Darjeeling reported that the Emperor and Yunglu had handed over Tibet to Russia in return for protection and an agreement permitting to mine, construct railways and build forts in Tibet. Viceroy to Secretary of State, 20 Aug., 1902, F.S.E., Oct., 1902, No. 96; Private Telegram from Secretary of State to Viceroy, 11 Aug., 16 Nov., 1902, Curzon Papers, Vol. 172, pp. 93, 129, 137; Curzon to Hamilton, 28 May 1902, Curzon Papers Vol. 161, pp. 170-71; Rowland, *op.cit.*, p. 32; Bell, *op.cit.*, p. 64; Lamb, *op.cit.*, p. 292.
 21. The Lama informed Chandra Shamsher that there was frequent intercourse between China and Russia. That Tibet, Bhutan and Ladakh had made representations to China setting forth their grievances against the British, and China had "resolved to fight to crush the British or be crushed herself". Lieutenant Colonel T.C. Pears, Resident to Government, 19 Jan., 1902, (Note of conversation between Prime Minister Chandra Shamsher and a Lama), F.S.E., Mar, 1902, No. 117.
 22. Extract from the Frontier Confidential Report from Walsh to Government, 30 June 1902, F.S.E., Sep., 1902, No. 44.

provoke Nepal. Nepalese susceptibilities to Britain policy was well known; Nepal was sensitive to its Tibetan interests which were bound to suffer if Curzon succeeded in establishing Britain's exclusive influence at Lhasa. Besides, the 1856 treaty obliged Kathmandu to assist Lhasa during external danger. Hence the India Office feared that Nepal might come to the assistance of Lhasa when the latter was threatened by the British.²³

The Home Government was thus clearly averse to compromising British relations with Nepal for the sake of improving British position in Tibet. Lee Warner in particular, regretted that, "the importance of Nepal in the political system of India is too often minimised". It seemed to the India Office that Curzon was needlessly distrustful of Nepal and even sought to ignore Nepal's sensitivity to the developments in Tibet. In fact, as is clear from Curzon's letter to the Home Government, he did not want Chandra Shamsheer to know that the Indian government sought to establish direct contact with the Dalai Lama. The Viceroy at first did not have a good impression of Chandra Shamsheer, of whose tenure as Prime Minister he had grave doubts. Hamilton warned Curzon:

before we do anything likely to bring us into collision with the Tibetans, it is better to ascertain the feelings of the Nepalese who are closely watching your action.²⁴

However, it was not long before Curzon could convince the Home Government that not only had he kept Kathmandu informed of his Tibetan policy, but that Kathmandu itself

23. Hamilton warned Curzon, "the Darbar is in regular treaty relations with Tibet. The only states with which Nepal could make war are Sikkim and Tibet. In case of Tibet we have not hitherto considered it necessary or desirable to interfere as Tibet was so entirely excluded from all outside influence or interference that it was clearly preferable to leave Nepal to settle its own differences with the Lama Government." Secretary of State to Viceroy, 11 June, 1903, F.S.E., July, 1903, No. 21.

24. Hamilton to Curzon, 19 June, 1902, Curzon Papers, Vol. 161, p. 234.

wanted Calcutta to adopt a strong Tibetan policy. In December 1902, Chandra met Curzon in Calcutta. The meeting resulted in the development of mutual admiration between Curzon and Chandra and coordination of their policy towards Tibet. The Nepalese Prime Minister assured the Viceroy that he and his people would be with the British in every thing, that

Russia in Tibet would bid goodbye to the independence of Nepal,

and that Curzon had

only to speak to him to secure his cooperation in any mission or even expedition that the British might think fit to send into Tibet.²⁵

Henceforward the main burden of Curzon's despatches to the Secretary of State, both official and private, was that for the sake of Britain's interests in Nepal a forward policy in Tibet was unavoidable. Such a policy, Curzon argued, Nepal itself wanted the British to adopt without any further delay. The Viceroy assured the Secretary of State that,

we should contemplate acting in complete unison with the Darbar throughout our proceedings, and we should even invite them, if thought advisable to take part in our mission. . . The possible ascendancy of Russia in Tibet and the ultimate declaration of a Russian protectorate are viewed with as much suspicion and dislike by Nepal as are by ourselves.²⁶

Chandra Shamsher's cooperation with Curzon relieved the Home Government as it also roused London's hope that

25. Curzon to Hamilton, 28 Dec., 1902, *Ibid.*, Vol. 162.

26. Curzon wrote to Hamilton that... "the policy of frank discussion and cooperation with the Nepalese Darbar would find them prepared most cordially to assist our plans." Curzon to Hamilton, 8 Jan., 1903, *F.S.E.*, Feb., 1903, No. 82.

Calcutta could make use of Kathmandu in solving the Tibetan problem. While Curzon urged that a mission should go to Lhasa, the India Office would prefer a Nepalese mission to the Tibetan capital.²⁷ A British mission, so the India Office feared, would provoke Tibetan resistance and lead to a bloody battle. This would create the impression of an armed attack by Britain on a part of the Chinese empire — an impression which Russia was certain to exploit. China too would take umbrage, resulting in serious loss to Britain both politically and economically. But then, neither Russia nor China could take exception to a Nepalese mission even if it had to force its way to Lhasa.

The India Office's suggestion was that Curzon take the fullest advantage of Nepal's alliance with British India. The India Office believed that even the moral support of Calcutta to Nepal would goad it to pressurise the Dalai Lama to desist from coquetting with Russia; if pressure proved of no avail, a Nepalese armed mission would go to Lhasa. All this would be justified by Kathmandu on the plea that since China had been unable to safeguard Nepalese interests in Tibet, Kathmandu had been compelled to safeguard them by its own means.²⁸ Kathmandu could make it clear that any Russian alliance with the Dalai Lama would change Tibet's political status to the detriment of Nepal's traditional position in that country. The Home Government still feared an impairment of Anglo-Nepalese relations if Curzon were allowed a free

27. Hamilton advised Curzon, that "strong measures on the part of the Government of India would be viewed with much disquietude and suspicion by the Government of Nepal... we think that they might be encouraged to send a separate column accompanied by British officers by an independent route into Tibet". Hamilton to Curzon, 8 Jan., 1903, F.S.E., Feb., 1903, No. 82.

28. The Secretary of State informed Curzon that "Nepal has hitherto held its own without difficulty against Tibet... for this reason Nepal is rightly sensitive as to any alteration in the political position of Tibet which would be likely to disturb the relations at present existing between the two countries." Secretary of State to Viceroy, 27 Feb., 1903, F.S.E., Oct., 1903, No. 129.

hand in Tibet, while it was sure of strengthening the relations if Nepalese cooperation were fully utilised. This was the view of the *Times* too.²⁹ Hamilton once again impressed on Curzon the importance of keeping on well with Nepal :

The maintenance of friendly relations with Nepal is a matter of vital importance to the interests of India, having regard not only to the circumstances that Nepal is conterminous with Bengal and the United Provinces, but it is the recruiting ground from which we draw the Gurkha regiments which add so greatly to the strength of the Indian army.³⁰

Curzon's reaction to this "idea of using Nepalese rights over Tibet as a weapon" to pressurise the Dalai Lama was one of strong disapproval. He was totally against the suggestion of Lee Warner that "to punish Tibet we might let Nepal do our work". Not only did the Viceroy strongly distrust Nepal, he also strongly resented Kathmandu's eagerness to acquire arms.³¹ In countering the India Office's argument, Curzon pointed out that if Nepal were set against Tibet, the supply of the Gurkha recruits to the Indian army would

29. Quoted in K. Mojumdar, *Political Relations Between India And Nepal, 1877-1923*, (New Delhi, 1973), p. 112. *The Times* pointed out, "We need utter only one word of encouragement at Kathmandu and there will be an end to Tibetan seclusion within a very few hours, possibly without a single Indian regiment being sent beyond the frontier."

30. Hamilton suggested to Curzon, "that the establishment of a powerful foreign influence in Tibet would disturb Nepal's relations with Tibet and might even in exposing Nepal to a pressure which it would be difficult to resist affect those which at present exist on so cordial a basis between India and Nepal". Secretary of State to Viceroy, 27 Feb., 1903, F.S.E., Oct., 1903, No. 129.

31. Chandra Shamsher told Ravenshaw, "A well armed and powerful Tibet and ill armed Nepal would be a very depressing sight and unequal match... the improvement of the country's armament depends entirely upon the continued good-will and support of the British Government. I assure you that the increased military efficiency of Nepal represents so much addition to the military resources of the Government of India". Chandra Shamsher to Ravenshaw, 6 Oct., 1902, F.S.E., Nov., 1902, No. 233.

certainly be affected,³² besides giving Kathmandu an excuse to make demands on Calcutta for large supply of arms. More arms would make Nepal unmanageably strong for India. It was also likely that Chandra Shamsheer sought to acquire arms with a view to occupying bordering Tibetan territory.³³

In fact, Curzon's general policy was to prevent the frontier states from getting large supplies of arms; hence he had objected to Amir Habibullah's requisition for arms,³⁴ as he had done Chandra Shamsheer's similar requisition. Chandra Shamsheer's plea that Russian arms would make Tibet a security problem for Nepal failed to influence Curzon who contended that the defence of Nepal was the British responsibility. The main argument of Curzon was that if Nepal were pitted against Tibet, the British would have no ground left to refuse large supplies of arms to Nepal. Thus, to solve the Tibetan problem the British would create a Nepalese problem. Curzon explained to Hamilton that Nepal sought to be militarily stronger with a view to becoming more independent of British influence :

The policy of the Darbar is evidently to place themselves in a position should Russia at any time come down into Tibet, to hold the scales between the Russians and the English and to prevent the entry of their country by either.³⁵

The Nepalese believed, Curzon added, that

the more powerful they become in this respect the less likely are we ever to attack them.³⁶

32. Curzon Papers, *The Civil And Military Gazette*, Lahore, 4 Jan., 1901.

33. *Ibid.*, Vol. 161, Curzon to Hamilton, 9 July, 1902, pp. 343, 344; Ravenshaw informed the Government that the Prime Minister asked, "whether in case of war with Tibet, the Government of India would supply Nepal with arms." Ravenshaw to Government, 10 July, 1904, F.S.E., Aug. 1904, No. 161.

34. Earl of Ronaldshay, *The Life of Lord Curzon*, II, (London, 1928), pp. 265-271.

35. Curzon to Hamilton, 9 July, 1902, Curzon Papers, Vol. 161, p. 216.

36. *Ibid.*, Same to same, pp. 343, 344.

Hamilton was impressed with Curzon's arguments ; intervention in Tibet was essential if for no other reason than allaying Nepal's anxiety. It seemed to him that Nepal was justified in being "sensitive to any alteration in the political position of Tibet," which was certain to disturb its existing relations with that country. Hamilton assured Curzon that he understood that Russian influence in Tibet would make Nepal uneasy and

might even by exposing Nepal to a pressure, which it would be difficult to resist, affect

the relations between Calcutta and Kathmandu "which at present exist on so cordial a basis".³⁷

Hamilton's advisers, however, rejected Curzon's strong plea for a mission to Lhasa,³⁸ with a view to concluding a treaty at the Tibetan capital and the posting of a British representative there to ensure the Tibetan observance of the treaty. Instead, London put diplomatic pressure on Peking and St. Petersburg³⁹ and elicited from them a denial of any agreement by China and Russia, giving the latter a special position in Tibet. The Russian Ambassador in London assured Lord Lansdowne, the British Foreign Secretary, that :

37. Hamilton to Curzon, 29 Aug. 1903, F.S.E., Oct. 1903, No. 129.

38. Mehra, *The Younghusband Expedition, An Interpretation*, opcit., pp. 165, 168-71; Hamilton to Curzon, 19 Feb. 1903, Curzon Papers, Vol. 162, pp. 37-38.

39. St. John Brodrick, the Secretary of State, wrote to the Acting Viceroy, Lord Amphill, "the difference between us and Curzon is that we think the battle can be better fought out in London than Lhasa". Brodrick to Amphill, 10 May 1904, Amphill Papers, Vol. 37. p. 15.

Russia had no agreement, alliance or treaty of any kind or sort with Tibet.⁴⁰

With Russia insisting, Britain also gave it an assurance against any activity in Tibet to change its political status.⁴¹ However, the Home Government allowed Curzon to conduct negotiations with the Tibetan government at Khambajong about twelve miles inside the Tibetan territory to settle all outstanding disputes regarding trade and boundary.

The mission was led by Colonel Francis Younghusband who reached khambajong in July 1903.⁴² When the Tibetan Government sent no representatives for negotiations, the mission moved on to the Chumbi Valley, the strip of territory between Sikkim and Bhutan. It was a place of considerable strategic significance.

The despatch of the Younghusband mission created for Chandra Shamsher at once a problem and an opportunity. He knew that the Tibetans would resist the mission which would give the British an excuse to demand more concessions from Lhasa. If Tibet became a British protectorate, Nepal would lose its existing free hand in dealing with Lhasa;⁴³ besides, British preponderance would certainly impair Nepal's traditionally privileged position in Tibet. But then, Chandra Shamsher could hardly deter the British from pushing on to

40. Hamilton wrote to Curzon that the "Russian Ambassador gave official assurance that there was no convention about Tibet with Tibet, China or any one else, that the Russian Government had no designs whatever on Tibet, they could not remain indifferent to any serious disturbance of statusquo which might make it necessary for them to safeguard their interests in Asia, they would not desire to interfere in the affairs of Tibet." Secretary of State to Viceroy, II Apr 1903, F.S.E., Apr 1903, No. 164; Same to same, 8 Apr 1903, Curzon Papers, Vol. 162, P. 90.

41. Departmental Notes, F.S.E., Feb. 1905, Nos. 1' 21, 1061.

42. *The Times*, (London), supported Curzon in despatching the mission. It said "the close proximity of the cis-Himalayan state of Nepal to Tibet alone suffices to warrant the action that has been taken". Curzon Papers, Vol. 340, 4 Apr 1904.

43. J. H. E. Garret, Deputy Commissioner of Darjeeling to Government, 29 Aug. 1904, F.S.E., Feb. 1905, No. 94.

Lhasa, much less when he knew that Deb Shamsher, a refugee in India, could be used by the British as a lever to worry him.⁴⁴

Thus, while resistance to the British mission was impossible, cooperation with it could be gainful. Nepal could ask for some Tibetan territory as a price for its cooperation. In fact, it was with this intention that Chandra Shamsher dropped several feelers suggesting his readiness to despatch troops as an auxiliary to the British contingent. He was keen on occupying the tracts around the Kerung pass which had been the traditional bone of contention between Lhasa and Kathmandu.⁴⁵ Curzon, however would not allow any Nepalese involvement, he could just permit Chandra to provide pack animals to the Mission for carrying supplies and provisions.⁴⁶

44. Walsh informed the Government that Deb Shamsher, the late Prime Minister who was residing at Darjeeling, informed him that his predecessor, Bir Shamsher Jang, called a conference of himself (Deb Shamsher) and Chandra Shamsher and told them that it was in the interest of Nepal that Russia should obtain influence in Tibet, as Nepal would then occupy the position of a buffer state, similar to that occupied by Afghanistan and would probably receive a subsidy from the Indian Government to maintain an army and be allowed to maintain arms and ammunition as in the case of Afghanistan. Hence it was against the interest of Nepal to give any information to the Indian Government regarding Tibet. Deb concluded that Chandra Shamsher would do his best to favour Russian influence in Tibet for these reasons. Walsh to Government, 19 Feb. 1902, F. EXT. B., Mar. 1902, No. 199.

45. The Prime Minister asked "Whether in case of war with Tibet, the Government of India would supply him with arms". Ravenshaw informed the Government: "the right to occupy Tibet territory would necessarily be on the same understanding. The Kirong district never belonged to Nepal, but was merely occupied pending settlement of the Nepal claims, nor would the contingency occur unless there was some interruption of the annual payment of Rupees 10000 by Tibet." Ravenshaw to Government, 10 July 1904, F. S. E., Aug. 1904, No. 161.

46. Ravenshaw stated that the Prime Minister sent his Private Secretary to make arrangements to collect 3,841 yaks to assist the British mission to Lhasa. Besides, the Prime Minister informed him, that he had dismissed four senior officials in the army for questioning the policy of assisting the Tibet mission. Ravenshaw to Government, 18 Dec. 1903, F. EXT. B., Mar. 1904, No. 23; Younghusband, *opcit.* pp. 132-34; Lamb, *opcit.* p. 292.

Hereafter the main feature of Chandra Shamsher's policy was to put pressure on the Dalai Lama, with a view to forcing him to come to terms with the British.⁴⁷ A quick termination of the Anglo-Tibetan dispute was very much in the Nepalese interest, especially when Nepal could obtain no gains from the dispute. Should the dispute be a protracted one and should the British be obliged to proceed to Lhasa, they would insist on such a settlement with the Tibetan government as would result in the British ascendancy in the country; and this was most likely to affect Nepalese position in Tibet.

Therefore, from the day Younghusband reached Kham-bajong, Nepalese diplomatic activity in Lhasa was stepped up, Jit Bahadur pressing the Lhasa authorities to make up with the British. Chandra, too, wrote several letters to the Dalai Lama and his officers, upbraiding them for their intransigence and warning them against giving any further provocation to the British.⁴⁸ He also pointed out to the Dalai Lama that the good relations with the British had stood Nepal in good stead an example which Tibet may well emulate. He wrote to the four Kazis, urging them to make up with the British Government. He pointed out :

47. The Prime Minister advised the Kazis "that the British Government have any evil designs upon Tibet does not appear from any source. It is well known that the sun never sets upon the British dominions. Tibet is a great home of Buddhism. There should not be the least suspicion of the English meddling with that religion, for it is not their rule to interfere with other people's religion." Ravenshaw to Government, 4 Sept. 1903, (Translation of a letter from Prime Minister to the four Kazis of Lhasa), F. S. E., Nov. 1903, No. 147.

48. Garret wrote to the Government that his agent met Jit Bahadur who informed the agent that the Prime Minister had recently sent a "strongly worded despatch to the Tibetan Government remonstrating with them for the attitude which they were adopting in dealing with the British; that the Nepalese troops had been warned to be in readiness throughout the country so as to be able to come to British assistance whenever called upon." Garret to Government, 6 Jan. 1904, F. S. E., July 1904, No. 155.

that to bring about unnecessary complications with the British Government is like producing headache by twisting a rope round one's head when it is not aching.⁴⁹

When the Dalai Lama showed no signs of heeding to such advice, Jit Bahadur, on instruction from Chandra Shamsheer, sought to weaken the Dalai Lama's position at Lhasa by encouraging the elements opposed to him. He particularly urged the Chinese Ambans to assert their position and warned the anti-Chinese elements at Lhasa against the impolicy of annoying China any more. Kathmandu hoped that by strengthening the elements opposed to the Dalai Lama's rash policy and by bolstering the weak Ambans, the Dalai Lama's influence could be curbed.

While Curzon did not discourage Nepalese diplomatic activity at Lhasa, he did not forbear from urging the Home Government that the Tibetans would not see reason and so the Younghusband mission must press on to Lhasa. By ceaseless pressure on the Home Government, Curzon managed to get its sanction for the advance of the mission deeper into Tibet. By May 1904, the Younghusband mission had reached Gyantse. It had encountered Tibetan resistance at Phari, Guru and Gyantse. Tibetan obduracy⁵⁰ had confirmed Curzon's contention, while ultimately obliging the Home Government to reluctantly sanction the mission's advance to Lhasa.⁵¹ Japan's resounding victory over Russia exposed the

49. F. S. C. Nov. 1909, No. S-143 Raven to Govt.

50. The Tibetan obduracy was explained by Younghusband by their hope of Russian assistance. He informed Curzon: "Dorjjeff had made the Dalai Lama promises of Russian support and the Dalai Lama had trusted in them so much that on the strength of them he has defied us and ignored the Chinese". Younghusband to Curzon, 3 Feb. 1904, Curzon Papers, Vol. 209, p. 47

51. The Home Government had been resisting Curzon's pressure for allowing the mission to go forward. Brodrick to Curzon, 29 Oct., 13 Nov. 1903, Curzon Papers, Vol. 162, pp. 283, 296; Political Diary of the Frontier Commission, 28 Mar—17 July 1904, E. S. E., Aug. 1904, No. 232, Mehra., *The Young husband Expedition, An Interpretation*, opcit, pp. 229-31.

military weakness of the latter and influenced the Home Government's decision to permit the mission's advance to Lhasa.

The mission reached the Tibetan capital on 3 August 1904 ; a day earlier, the Dalai Lama had fled from Lhasa.⁵² Jit Bahadur's reports created the impression in Younghusband that Nepalese diplomatic pressure on the Lhasa government had borne fruit. Immediately before the Dalai Lama's exit from Lhasa, Jit Bahadur had succeeded in creating a strong opposition to the Dalai Lama ; the Kazis and the Ambans repeatedly asked Jit Bahadur to help them negotiate peace with the British. In his last days at Lhasa the Dalai Lama, too, implored Chandra Shamsher to help the Tibetan government to obtain from the British a settlement which would not be harsh to Tibet. It was clear, therefore, that Nepal's prestige at Lhasa reached a new high⁵³ when the Younghusband mission reached the Tibetan capital.

This prestige the mission made full use of, although Nepal did not gain anything from the Lhasa convention which the Younghusband mission concluded with the Tibetan Government in 7 September 1904.⁵⁴ The main articles of the convention were—it recognised the Sikkim-Tibet frontier settlement of 1890; it opened two new trade marts at Gyantse and Gartok. A British Trade Agent would reside at the trade marts, and the Agent at Gyantse would visit Lhasa if necessary. The convention obliged the Tibetans to keep open the roads to the marts and to transmit letters from the British Trade Agents to the Chinese and Tibetan authorities. It imposed on the Tibetans an indemnity of seventy five Lakhs of rupees payable in seventy five annual instalments ; to secure the payment and to operate the trade marts, the Chumbi Valley

52. The Amban informed Younghusband, "that the Dalai Lama without any doubt fled the country, he was evidently not flying to China but to the north possibly to join the great Lama at Uрга." Younghusband to Government, 21 Aug. 1904, F. S. E., Feb. 1905, No. 815 : Younghusband, *opcit*, p. 279; Richardson, *opcit*, p. 87.

was to be occupied by the British Government until the indemnity had been paid in full.⁵⁵

However, the Home Government strongly objected to the occupation of the Chumbi Valley because of the promises given to Russia earlier. So it urged the Indian Government to modify the Lhasa convention so that no portion of the Tibetan territory was wrested; no British Representative or Agent was admitted to Tibet; the indemnity was reduced to twenty five lakhs, to be paid in three annual instalments.⁵⁶

The Home Government strongly disapproved the Lhasa convention which Younghusband had clamped on the Tibetans; but then, as Peter Fleming rightly observes :

The ultimate motive of Younghusband Mission was the fear that Russian intrigue would, from a base at Lhasa, disaffect Nepai, Bhutan and Sikkim which like a barbed

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53. Ravenshaw wrote to the Government : the Nepalese Representative met the Tibetan Bharadars, who expressed that "formerly some of our Tibetan fools had created a bad impression on the people here regarding the Gurkhas, but now all have come to fully realise how and what the Gurkhas are, and having been convinced that the Gurkha Government has nothing but good to work for Tibet, repent for their past conduct. So far the treaty between the British and the Tibetan Governments has simply been signed but to put it in practice when the time comes many things might crop up which would require solution and His Highness (Chandra Shamsheer) would continue to show the same kindness as before". Ravenshaw to Government, 10 Feb. 1905, (Translation of a letter from Nepalese Representative at Lhasa), F.S.E., June 1905, No. 351.
54. Amphill to Brodrick, 14 Sept. 1904, Amphill papers, Vol. 37, p. 208; J.R.L. Macdonald, Commanding Tibetan Force to Adjut. General of India, 9 Oct. 1904, F. EXT., Mar. 1905, No. 57. Younghusband, *opcit*, pp. 296—306; Richardson, *opcit*, p. 87; Mehra, *The Younghusband Expedition, An Interpretation*, *opcit*, pp. 322-29; Tieh-Tsengli, *opcit*, pp. 95-97.
55. Lamb, *opcit*, p. 302.
56. Lamb, *opcit*, pp. 308, 309; Mehra, *The Younghusband Expedition, An Interpretation*, *opcit*, pp. 322-44; Younghusband, *opcit*, pp. 337-41; Tieh-Tsengli, *opcit*, pp. 97-99.

wire entanglement insulated India's manned defences from the no-man's land of Tibet.⁵⁷

Jit Bahadur played an effective role during the negotiations for the Lhasa convention. Younghusband acknowledged the services he received from Jit Bahadur. The latter met the officers of the Tibetan government frequently, urging them to come readily to terms with the British. Younghusband discussed several terms of the convention with Jit Bahadur and used his influence in the Tibetan government to oblige the latter to accept the convention. Jit Bahadur played the role of a mediator, impressing on the Tibetans that Nepal was a true friend of Tibet. Younghusband reported to Louis Dane, the Secretary to the Foreign Department :

Now far from our present action being resented by Nepal, I find that the Nepal representative here has received the most emphatic orders from his Government to assist me in every possible way. He visits me daily. He brings me valuable information and he has been instrumental in bringing me into personal touch with the most highly respected after the Dalai Lama, of all the Lamas of this part of Tibet.⁵⁸

Chandra Shamsher, too, exported the Lhasa Government to accept the convention without demur, pointing out that political relations with the British would never be harmful to Tibet. He wrote to the four Kazis:

I have no doubt that the British Government had been moved to enter into definite and closer relations with you by motives of mutual well being and averting a common danger.⁵⁹

57. Peter Fleming, *Bayonets To Lhasa*, (London, 1961), p. 308.

58. Younghusband to Louis Dane, 17 Aug 1904, F.S.E., Feb 1905, No. 667.

59. Chandra Shamsher to Four Kazis of Lhasa, F.S.E., Feb 1905, Nos. 974, 1237.

Nepalese diplomatic activity during the negotiations for Lhasa convention elicited warm acknowledgement by Younghusband. The Indian Government made Chandra Shamsher a G.C.S.I.,⁶⁰ and Jit Bahadur a C.I.E.⁶¹ as recognition of their services. Lord Amphill, the acting Viceroy and Governor-General, admitted that without the "invaluable assistance" of the Nepalese Government, the "whole affair would have been a lamentable fiasco". Kathmandu was also given a supply of ammunition which it valued very much. Curzon was convinced of Chandra Shamsher's ability as a ruler whose role during the Tibetan crisis was "characterised by a friendliness and freedom from suspicion uncommon in the previous relations between India and Nepal."

Nepal's improved relations with Tibet and China was an important consequence of the Tibetan crisis. Once Tibet had looked to Nepal for diplomatic assistance, it would do so in future too. True, Nepal had not rendered armed assistance to Tibet during the crisis as it was obliged to do under the terms of the treaty of 1856, but Lhasa was grateful to Kathmandu for having interceded with the British for its sake: it was this intercession, Lhasa fondly believed, which influenced the British Government to impose on Tibet not a very harsh treaty. Thus, although Nepal violated the 1856 treaty terms, its position in Tibet did not suffer any decline. In future

60. Amphill wrote to Brodrick, "the Prime Minister of Nepal... has supported us from the very beginning not only by giving us regular and invaluable information but also by using his personal influence on the Tibetans and on the Dalai Lama himself." Amphill Papers, Vol.37, p.211, 14 Sept. 1904; Assistant Secretary, Foreign Department to Ravenshaw, 20, Oct., 1904, F.S.E., Feb. 1905, No. 999; *Ibid*, Ravenshaw to Chandra Shamsher, 25 Oct. 1904, No. 1056.

61. "Jit Bahadur has been extremely useful in obtaining and furnishing us with information and also in advising me as to the method of delay with the Tibetans and in disposing them finally towards us that, I think, he has fully reserved the distinction of a C.I.E." Younghusband to Dane, 3 Nov. 1904, F. Ext., June 1905, Nos. 132-143.

Tibetan crises Kathmandu would play as important a role as it had played during the period 1900-04. The Chinese were convinced that but for Kathmandu's consistent pressure, the Dalai Lama's power could not have been broken. Naturally, therefore, Chandra was rewarded with the customary Chinese Imperial title.⁶²

Chandra's position was considerably strengthened on account of his high stock with the British government. He could now compare himself favourably with all the earlier Rana Prime Ministers, not excepting even Jang Bahadur. He could hope similar British favours in future. Anglo-Nepalese relations definitely improved as a consequence of Nepal's role in the Tibetan crisis.

But then, it could hardly be ignored that Nepal had lost its freedom of action in Tibet; with increasing British interests in Tibet, there was the proportionate diminution in Nepal's role in the country. The British would not allow Nepal a freehand in Tibet. In later years this caused soreness in Nepal and for a time misunderstanding between Kathmandu and Calcutta (and later New Delhi).

Even Nepal's commercial interests in Tibet suffered, though for a time; on orders from the Dalai Lama, a ban was imposed on Tibetan trade with Nepal; not until Kathmandu strongly reprimanded was the ban lifted. During the Tibetan crisis Tibet was in short supply of Nepalese rice and Nepal felt the want of Tibetan salt. The opening of the Chumbi Valley as a trade route and the development of Gyantse and Yatung as trade marts caused a diversion of Indo-Tibetan trade from the customary Nepalese route. This gravely affec-

62. The Chinese title, Thong—Lin Pim Ma Ko Kang-Wang Sian (meaning the Valiant Prince), had earlier been conferred by the Emperor on Jang Bahadur, Ranudip Singh and Bir Shamsher. Ravenshaw to Government, 20 June 1902, F.S.E., Aug 1902, No. 107.

ted Nepal's commercial interests;⁶³ it lost its erstwhile monopolistic position in the Indo-Tibetan trade. But although Nepal gravely minded this development, it could do nothing to reverse the process of accelerated British activity in Tibet.

63. Garret wrote to the Government, that the people of Nepal were not in favour of the policy of the British Government, they were averse to the opening and improvement of the trade routes between Tibet and India, for such action would seriously impair the trade between Tibet and Nepal in which large number of Nepalese were interested. Garret to Government, 29 Aug 1904, F.S.E., Feb 1905, No. 94,

Tibet in Turmoil, 1905-1914

The decade following the despatch of the Younghusband Mission to Lhasa saw unprecedented political disturbance in Tibet caused by the determination of China to strengthen its position in Tibet by transforming it from a protectorate to a regularly administered province of the Chinese Empire. Chinese activity released great concern in Nepal which wanted the British Government to defend its interests in Tibet. This provided for the British with an opportunity to control Nepal's relations with Tibet and China. The Tibetan situation in 1905-14, resulted in a change in China's traditional position not only in Tibet but also in Nepal. At the end of the period both the countries ceased to be tributary states of China, and this loss of China proved to be the gain of Britain.

After the departure of the Younghusband mission from Lhasa in September 1904, China embarked upon a forward policy in Tibet, the object of which was to repair the damage done to the traditional Chinese position in the country by the ambitious and rash policy of the 13th Dalai Lama.¹ Eastern Tibet and the neighbouring tribal tracts, which for long had caused troubles to the Imperial Government, demanded the Chinese attention first. China restored its authority in Eastern Tibet by a vigorous display of arms under the celebra-

1. Ravenshaw to Government, 22 Dec. 1904, F.S.E., Mar 1905, Nos. 470--473.

ted general and administrator of frontier tracts, Chao-Erh-Feng. Chinese troops broke down the many centres of opposition to Chinese rule in the vast territories of Eastern Tibet.²

China then took vigorous measures to thoroughly reorganise the Tibetan administration. The Amban's powers were increased; also increased was the number of Chinese troops at Lhasa; economic reforms were put through with a view to increasing the revenue of the government. Instructions were issued to reorganise the social life of the Tibetans. China's object was to change the political status of Tibet; it would be governed as any other province of China and no longer as an autonomous tract.³ China sought to secure a firm control on Tibetan administration, it being essential to prevent the sort of external crisis which the Dalai Lama's policy had caused. China would never again let Tibet pass away from its fold.

The Tibetan reaction to this new Chinese policy was one of intense annoyance which was manifested in resistance to the policy. The overbearing conduct of the Ambans and the haughtiness of the Chinese soldiers further worsened the Sino-Tibetan relations.⁴

The political instability in Tibet that was caused by the new Chinese policy was a very unwelcome development for Nepal. True, immediately after the conclusion of the Lhasa convention the Nepalese policy had been to strengthen the

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2. "At the close of the British expedition to Lhasa, China had quite resigned itself to the prospect of losing its protection, feeble though it was, over western Tibet—i.e. Lhasa and the country lying within its jurisdiction—and determined therefore to strengthen its hold over the eastern region, adjoining China, as far west as Chiamdo." Departmental Notes, F.S.E., Dec 1908, Nos. 41-68; Yonngusband, *opcit*, pp. 368-74; Parshotam Mehra. *The McMahon Line and After*, (Delhi, 1974), pp. 70-74; Rose *Nepal Strategy for Survival*, *opcit*, p. 161; Richardson, *opcit*, p. 95.
 3. B. Tyyman, Acting Consul General, Chengtu to Government, 23 July 1908, F.S.E., Dec 1908, Nos. 41-48.
 4. *Ibid*, No. 58.

Chinese position in Tibet⁵ with a view to preventing the assertion of independence by Tibet. For, an independent Tibet under such a masterful personality as the 13th Dalai Lama was detrimental to Nepalese interests. Hence Nepal wanted the restoration of the traditional political status of Tibet: a militarily weak country under Chinese suzerainty—a country which could be periodically pressurised to adhere to treaties concluded with Nepal. This is why Kathmandu had welcomed the restoration of China's traditional position in Tibet.

But then, Nepal did not want any Sino-Tibetan rift, for it affected Nepal's trade with Tibet. Hence for about four years after 1904, Jit Bahadur sought to mediate between the Tibetans and the Chinese, urging the former to obey the Ambans and persuading the latter to adopt a go-slow policy⁶. During these years the rumours of the Dalai Lama's return with Russian troops along with him kept Kathmandu worried.⁷ This was the additional reason why Nepal wanted the restoration of China's position in Lhasa.

But Nepal never wanted Tibetan autonomy to end, a possibility of which Bhairab Bahadur, the head of the Nepalese

5. Chandra Shamsher told the Resident that his representative at Lhasa informed him that for the interests of Nepal, Tibet should retain its authority to itself. The Amban also gave instruction to the Tibetan Government saying, "that the Tibetan and Nepalese Governments being as close as the teeth were to the cheeks or being closely connected, Tibet should be on the best friendly terms with Nepal. So that in any extremity both acting in concert might derive the great advantage for each other". Chandra Shamsher to F. Macdonald, 28 Sept 1908, F.S.E., Dec 1908, No. 58; Viceroy to Secretary of State, 23 Mar 1907, F.S.E. May, 1907. No. 220.
6. Chandra Shamsher to Macdonald, 28 Sep 1908. F.S.E., Dec 1908, No. 58.
7. White informed the Government that the Dalai Lama with 20,000 Russian troops was coming along the northern border. J.C. White, Political Officer, Sikkim, to Government. 6 June 1907, F.S.E., Aug 1907, No. 349.

mission to Peking, repeatedly warned Chandra Shamsher.⁸

The posting of well-armed Chinese troops at Lhasa reported by Jit Bahadur⁹ aggravated the Nepalese worry, for it sealed the prospect of Nepal pressurising Tibet. Nepal-Tibet boundary was still undemarcated at places; and this could well be an excuse for the Chinese army's encroachment into Nepalese territory.

In 1908- , Jit Bahadur reported that Nepalese merchants in Tibet were being harassed by the Chinese authorities. These merchants were forced to accept the Chinese currency recently introduced into Tibet, the intension caused by the rough dealings of the Chinese soldiers in Tibet had brought uncertainty to the commercial life of the country.¹⁰

All this Chandra Shamsher noted with great concern. The Prime Minister was confronted with a serious problem: whether or not to intervene in the Tibetan politics. Jit Bahadur had been urging him for an immediate intervention both in deference to the repeated requests of the Tibetan Kazis¹¹ and

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8. Bhairab Bahadur wrote to Chandra Shamsher, "that the Government of China has some ulterior object in view in thinking of hurrying him (Chao-Erh-Feng). back to Lhasa; their interest is to include Tibet in China proper and make it one of the provinces of China which step they appear to have also decided upon and selected their officers for the purpose". Bhairab Bahadur to Chandra Shamsher, 7 June 1908 F.S.E., Dec 1908. No. 48.
 9. Manners Smith wrote to the Government, that the Chief Military Officer, Lin Yan Khon. informed Jit Bahadur that he was proceeding to Lhasa as soon as matters were satisfactorily settled in Batang and Lithang and the intention of China was to make vast improvements in the military organisation and mines of Tibet. J. Manners Smith to Government, 28 Aug 1907, (Translation of a letter from Jit Bahadur to Chandra Shamsher). F.S.E., Oct 1907, No. 366.
 10. Extract from the *North China Herald and Supreme Court and Consular Gazette*, 26 Sep 1908, F.S.E., Dec 1908. Nos. 41-68.
 11. Chandra informed the Resident that the Tibetan Kazis requested Jit Bahadur at Lhasa, that "a thousand words from us cannot have the same weight with the Ambans as a single word from the Gurkha Government, should the Gurkha Government be pleased to deliver us, our religion in this way we should feel greatly indebted to it". Chandra Shamsher to Macdonald, 28 Sept 1908, F.S.E., Dec 1908. No. 58.

for the sake of safeguarding Nepal's interests in Tibet. Chandra Shamsher clearly saw that, "the novel demand of the Amban for extra or sole authority in Tibet", would, in changing the political status of Tibet, make the Chinese too strong there. He was sure that the Tibetan authorities would welcome his intervention on their behalf. This would certainly consolidate the Nepalese position in Tibet. But then, Nepal could hardly afford to risk Chinese annoyance unless it would obtain British guarantee of protection.¹² By 1909, therefore, Nepalese anxiety over the worsening Sino-Tibetan relation posed a problem for the British Government.

The British were rather slow in formulating an effective policy to deal with the crisis in Tibet. The Home Government and the Indian Government viewed the Tibetan problem differently. The problem was of a twofold character—first, China seemed to repudiate its obligation of honouring its treaties with the British regarding Tibetan trade, the latest treaty being the Lhasa convention.¹³ Secondly, China seemed to assert its suzerainty over Nepal, Sikkim and Bhutan with a view to undermining the British position in the three frontier states.¹⁴ Thus the British had to evolve such a policy as would not only safeguard their treaty rights in Tibet, but strengthen their position in the frontier states, too.

That the Home Government approached the Tibetan problem differently from the Indian Government had been evident

12. Manners Smith wrote to the Government that the Government of India need not fear that the Nepalese Darbar entertained any ambitious designs in the direction of Tibet. "The Prime Minister feels that it was quite sufficient a task to employ his energies in putting the Nepal house in order. He would not embark in any enterprise beyond the border unless he had full assurance of support from the Government of India." Manners Smith to Government, 3 Jan 1910, F.S.E., Mar 1910, No. 413.

13. J. N. Jordan, British Legation, Peking to Secretary of State, 7 Aug 1907, F.S.E., Nov, 1907, No. 67.

14. Bell informed the Government that China while attempting to claim suzerainty over Nepal had classed Bhutan and Sikkim as outside British suzerainty. C.A. Bell, Political Officer, Sikkim. to Government, 10 Sep 1910, F.S.E., Jan 1911, No. 125.

since 1901, when Curzon had submitted his plan of despatching a mission to Lhasa. The mission had been very reluctantly sanctioned by the Home Government, which had strongly resented Curzon's policy of forcing London's hands¹⁵ The Lhasa convention was amended by the Home Government which had no intention to establish a virtual British protectorate over Tibet as Curzon intended to do.¹⁶

Instead, the Home Government sought a diplomatic solution of the Tibetan problem by an understanding with both China and Russia. London wanted the restoration of the political status of Tibet as it existed before the Dalai Lama had broken with China, setting in motion the chain of events which had culminated in the British invasion of Tibet. Accordingly, London helped Peking get back its lost position in Tibet. A convention was signed with China in April 1906, recognising the latter's special position in Tibet and committing it to the protection of Britain's interests in Tibet based on treaties.¹⁷

London's policy was to keep off from Tibet and this was evident from its treaty with Russia in August 1907. By the Anglo-Russian convention both the powers undertook to refrain from any action prejudicial to Tibet's territorial integrity and its internal administration ; neither Russia nor Britain would seek any concession from the Lhasa government

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15. See Chapter, Six, p. 141; Mehra, *The Younghusband Expedition, An Interpretation*, opcit, pp. 363-65.
 16. See Chapter. Six, p. 141; Mehra, *The Younghusband Expedition, An Interpretation*, opcit, pp. 322-44; Younghusband, opcit, 337-141.
 17. O'conor wrote to the Government that by the convention of April 1906, both China and Britain agreed to observe the terms of the Lhasa convention and the British Government pledged itself not to interfere in the administration of Tibet nor to annex any Tibetan territory. W.F. O'Conor, British Trade Agent, Gyantse to Government, 26 Mar 1907. F.S.E., May 1907, No. 252; Alastair Lamb, *The McMahon Line*, I. (London, 1965). pp. 49-54. 72-85. Rose, *Nepal Strategy for Survival*, opcit, pp. 159, 160.

except through its suzerain authority, China.¹⁸ The British object was to secure "the practical sterilization of Tibet", so as to make it free from international rivalry: it would be an ideal buffer for the Indian empire ;

an effective barrier between the conflicting interests of three great empires in Asia, Britain, Russia and China.¹⁹

Thus, being assured of Russian non-intervention in Tibetan affairs, the Home Government could breathe a sigh of relief. From now on it would take only a "passive interest in Tibetan affairs" ; it would have, "as little as possible to do with" the country.²⁰ Little wonder, then, the net effect of this policy was to give China a completely free hand in Tibet.²¹

However, this unrestricted Chinese authority in Tibet seriously damaged British India's interests. Reports of British officers in Sikkim, Bhutan, Nepal and the Tibetan marts, Gyantse and Yatung²² convinced Lord Minto, the Governor-General, of the Chinese determination to foil all the British hopes of promoting Indo-Tibetan trade. Since this was in clear violation of the Anglo-Chinese convention, whereby Peking had recognised the Lhasa convention, Minto urged the Secretary of State, Lord Morley, to reprimand the Chinese

18. Curzon deplored the convention: "to me it becomes one despair of public life, the efforts of a century sacrificed and nothing or next to nothing in return". Curzon to Lord Percy, 25 Sep 1907, Curzon Papers, Vol. 232; Departmental Notes, F.S.E., Oct 1912, Nos. 12-45; Tich-Tseng Li, *opcit.* pp. 122-24; Mehra, *The McMahon Line and After*, *opcit.* pp. 45, 50; Bell, *opcit.* p. 90; Rowland, *opcit.* pp. 37, 38.

19. Quoted in K. Mojumdar, *Political Relations Between India and Nepal, 1877-1923*, *opcit.* p. 142.

20. Departmental Notes, F.S.E., Dec 1910, Nos. 749-768.

21. Spring Rice informed Edward Grey, the British Foreign Secretary, that "it seems that China had a very cogent reason for insisting on its suzerainty. The whole of Mongolia was under the direct influence of the Lamas of Tibet. It would be really impossible to hold Mongolia without possessing control at Lhasa." G. Spring Rice to Edward Grey, 1 Jan 1909, F.S.E., June 1909, No. 486.

22. O'Connor to Government, 26 Mar 1907. F.S.E., May 1907, No. 252.

Government.²³ However, Morley was a strong critic of Curzon's Tibetan policy; he would not let Minto adopt a strong Tibetan policy on the excuse of what seemed to him but an exaggerated apprehension of China's anti-British policy. Morley pointedly told Minto that he was against the

policy from Simla, of expeditions, explorations and all the other provocative things.²⁴

As for the Tibetan trade secured by the Lhasa convention, Morley dismissed it as "mere moonshine".

The other facet of China's forward policy was its attempt at restoring its position in the Himalayan states, which had been seriously compromised on account of British India's strong position in the states. China seemed determined to wean Nepal, Sikkim and Bhutan from the British fold, impressing on them the need for reinforcing their historical relations with Peking.

Between 1904 and 1909, China made several moves to strengthen relations with Nepal, Bhutan and Sikkim. The Amban likened

the union of China, Tibet, Nepal, Sikkim and Bhutan to the blending of the five colours and compared the position of Tibet, Nepal and Bhutan to that of molar teeth side by side in a man's mouth.²⁵

The defence of Tibet against any foreign aggression in future necessitated the consolidation of Chinese position in the three states. Bhutan²⁶ and Nepal had assisted the Younghusband

23. Mary Countess of Minto, *India, Minto and Morley*, (London, 1934). pp. 387-88; Minto to Morley, 10 Mar 1910, Morley Papers, Vol. 23.

24. Morley to Minto, 7 June 1906, Morley Papers. Vol. 1, p. 126.

25. Quoted in Lamb, *The McMahon Line*, I, Opcit, p. 166.

26. The Tongsapenlop, Ugyen Wangchuck, became a figure of considerable importance in the politics of the Himalayan frontier. During the Younghusband Mission he had much helped the British, acting at times as an intermediary between the Indian Government and the Lhasa authorities, *Ibid*, pp. 162—163; Bell, *opcit*, p. 67.

mission, while the latter had taken the Sikkimese route to reach Lhasa. All this was a clear evidence of the lost position of China in the three states.

The Ambans sought to drive a wedge between Kathmandu and Calcutta by playing on the former's traditional fear of the British intentions. The British were represented as "quarrelsome, selfish, faithless", who were very good at "deceiving or betraying others". Both Jit Bahadur and Bhairab Bahadur reported to Kathmandu their impression that China strongly disliked the intimate relations between Nepal and British India.²⁷ At the same time the Ambans drew Chandra Shamsher's attention to the damage caused to Nepal's commercial interests following the Younghusband mission. Nepal was urged to take advantage of the marts which the Ambans contemplated to set up in several Tibetan towns. The Ambans also asked for a large number of Gurkhas to be employed in Tibet and a large amount of money as loan.²⁸

It was clear from Jit Bahadur's report that China sought to form a Himalayan confederacy with Nepal, Bhutan, Sikkim and Tibet, all to be under China's tutelage. They were all "subjects of China", having long standing links with Peking. The Amban explained his scheme to Jit Bahadur :

China, Nepal, Tibet, Bhutan and Sikkim might be compared to the five principal colours, viz, yellow, red, blue, black and green—A skillful painter may so arrange the colours as to produce a number of beautiful designs or effects. In the same way if we could cooperate with one

27. Resident informed the Government, "that the relations between Nepal and Great Britain were so entirely different from those between Nepal and China, that a comparison of the two would only tend to complicate matters and lead to no good results." Manners Smith to Government, 29 Nov, 1910, F.S.E., July 1911, No. 693.

28. Chandra Shamsher to Macdonald, 11 Sep 1908, F.S.E., Dec 1908, No. 49.

another we may presumably promote the interests of all.²⁹

Obviously, the security of Tibet was the paramount consideration for China, and hence it drew up the Himalayan confederation scheme. All the four Himalayan states had felt the weight of British arms and, hence, China fondly hoped that it could fan up the anti-British feelings in these states. The Amban professed great cordiality with Nepal, and for Chandra Shamsheer's able administration he had nothing but fulsome praise. The Amban offered to go to Kathmandu to confer on Chandra a new Chinese title.

The Government of India had always been extremely sensitive to any impairment of its position in the Himalayan states; it would not allow any foreign influence in these states. Chinese suzerainty had so long posed no threat to the effective British influence in the Himalayan tracts. Now that China was no longer content with mere suzerainty and was determined to tamper with the allegiance of the Himalayan states to the British Government, the latter felt obliged to make their influence in these states exclusive in character. For this Calcutta was even prepared to risk Peking's opposition. In several despatches to Morley, Minto drew the Secretary of State's attention to the "clear sign of a forward policy by China" on the north-east frontier of India.³⁰

Nepal's attitude to what it feared as the end of the traditional political status of Tibet constituted an important strand in Minto's argument, that a firm guarantee of protection to Nepal's interests in Tibet was essential to prevent the certain deterioration in Anglo-Nepalese relations. The two years, 1909, 1910 saw an aggravation of Nepalese anxiety over the

29. Quoted in Mojumdar, *Political Relations Between India and Nepal, 1877-1923*, opcit, P. 135.

30. In 1908, Minto informed the Home Government of the overtures of Amban Chang-Yintang to Nepal, Sikkim and Bhutan. Minto stated that China had embarked on the second stage of her Tibetan policy, "the first stage being the consolidation of Chinese control over Tibet itself. The new development might be to create a Chinese-dominated 'Greater Tibet', a consideration of Tibet and the Himalayan states of Nepal, Sikkim and Bhutan". Lamb, *The McMahon Line*, I opcit, P. 166; Minto Morley, 17 Mar, 14 Apr, 21 July 1910, Minto Papers, Vol. 23.

Chinese proceedings in Tibet.³¹ Chandra Shamsher found it hard to convince his advisers that Nepal had better rely on Britain for the protection of its interests in Tibet instead of taking armed measures to safeguard these interests.

Chandra Shamsher knew it well that the British would not allow him any armed intervention in Tibetan affairs and without the British acquiescence and assurance of assistance, such intervention was risky; for that would entail Chinese reprisal. In fact, in September 1908, Chandra had clearly expressed to the Resident his fear of China and his expectation of British assistance.³² Some months later he again raised the issue. He also wanted the British to obtain Chinese assurance of non-interference with Nepalese rights in Tibet.³³

Thus the Indian government had to do something to allay Nepal's fear and anxiety over "the advance of Chinese influence in Tibet". For a time it seemed to the Resident, J. Manners Smith, worthwhile taking over control of Kathmandu's relations with Lhasa and Peking—still a desideratum.³⁴ In fact, Chandra himself had dropped some hints to this effect. Chandra also provided Manners Smith with copies of letters carried by the Nepalese mission to the Chinese Emperor. The

31. Manners Smith wrote to the Government that the course of affairs in Tibet caused a good deal of anxiety to the Nepal Government. The Nepal Government hoped for the good offices of the British Government to prevent China from over-running Tibet and overthrowing the power of the Tibetans to an extent that would prejudice the rights of Nepal in that country. Manners Smith to Government, 3 Jan 1910, F.S.E., Mar 1910, No. 413.

32. *Ibid.*

33. Resident informed the Government that Chandra Shamsher had told him that if Tibet became a Chinese province, the Chinese Government might repudiate the tribute which Tibet paid to Nepal on the ground that it was impossible for China to pay tribute to Nepal. So he requested that Great Britain should take up the matter with China to ensure the continuation of Nepal's rights in Tibet. Manners Smith to Government, 14 May 1909, F.S.E., June 1909, No. 900.

34. Resident wrote to the Government that any claim which China might make of the subordination of Nepal to China, "could be judged doubtless on the real position and actual history of the relations between Nepal and China and between Nepal and Great Britain respectively." Resident to Government, 11 Aug 1910, F.S.E., Nov. 1910, No. 15.

submissive language of the letters, Chandra assured the Resident, was just in keeping with the Oriental style of writing letters; it was, he asserted not at all suggestive of Nepal's vassalage to China.³⁵

However, both Minto and Morley were opposed to taking over Nepal's relations with China and Tibet³⁶—and that notwithstanding the many advantages in the scheme. True, in the past Nepal's free hand in Tibet and its bellicosity had created for Calcutta not a little difficulty.³⁷ Calcutta had secured only an indirect control of Nepal's foreign relations in the sense that Kathmandu could not go to war against Lhasa.³⁸ Hence, if Nepal's foreign relations could now be brought under British control by a definite treaty, it could be expected that British interests in Tibet and China would no longer be affected by any rash action of Nepal in future.³⁹

But then, the scheme had its risks as well. It was very unlikely that Kathmandu would not demand a price for giving this concession to Calcutta. It might expect the British to wink at its occupation of the bordering Tibetan tracts which Nepal had so long held as an unredeemed territory. In fact, Chandra

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35. Resident informed the Government that the Prime Minister stated that "the submissive expressions in the letters usually sent from Nepal to China in connection with the quinquennial missions are not regarded by His Majesty's Government as an acknowledgement of vassalage or as anything more than a purely and formal and complementary style of address." Resident to Government, 11 Aug 1910, F.S.E., Nov. 1910, No. 15.
36. Morley suspected Chandra's anxiety being a make-belief and wondered if Minto had failed to diagnose Chandra's "craftiness". Morley to Minto, 9 Mar 1910, Morley Papers, Vol. 5, p. 36; Same to same, 7 Apr. 1909, Vol. 20.
37. See Chapter Six, p. 137.
38. Ibid.
39. Resident suggested that the Government conclude a treaty with Nepal to obtain control over Nepal's foreign relations. To this the Government advised the Resident: "that it is better to await overtures from the Nepal Darbar, that these overtures will not be made unless and until Nepal requires our support either to preserve her rights in Tibet, to check any inconvenient claim put forward by China on the ground of the feudatory position of Nepal towards her." Resident to Government, 11 Aug. 1910, F.S.E., Nov 1910, No. 15.

had been giving Manners Smith the clear impression that he wished to secure a "rectification" of Nepal's boundary with Tibet. There were many in the Nepalese Darbar who wished Chandra to take advantage of the situation in Tibet to realise Nepal's long cherished territorial ambitions.⁴⁰

To Minto's advisers, Chandra seemed exaggerating his anxiety over the Tibetan situation with a view to military intervention in Tibet to occupy the long-coveted Tibetan tracts on the border.⁴¹ Such was Morley's view too. The India Office had full knowledge of Nepal's eagerness to fight Tibet on any pretext. Manners Smith's reports seemed to convey the impression that Chandra feared the complete sinification of Tibet and the consequent loss of Nepal's treaty rights in the country. Hence, Chandra seemed keen on acquiring the bordering Tibetan territory as compensation for the loss of Nepalese rights in Tibet before the latter became a regularly administered Chinese province.⁴² Both Minto and Morley feared that Chandra's scheme was certain to result in a Sino-Nepalese war⁴³ which the British could never allow to take place.

Besides, any "hasty action in Tibet" by Nepal was certain to compromise the British relations with Russia, for Russia could see the British hands beneath the Nepalese action. But then, if Nepalese anxiety over their Tibetan interests were not allayed, Minto clearly warned Morley, Anglo-Nepalese relations would certainly be damaged.⁴⁴ Hence the British pro-

40. Ibid.

41. Manners Smith to Government, 12 May 1909, F.S.E., June 1909, No. 900.

42. See Foot Note 32.

43. Manners Smith to Government, 12 May 1909, F.S.E., June 1909, No. 900.

44. Minto remarked that the British would be in a terrible difficulty, if the Nepalese took any 'hasty action in Tibet, for we should at once become compromised in respect to the Anglo-Russian convention, whilst the last thing we wish to do is to bring force to bear on Nepal with the risk of a serious fight and the loss of Nepalese friendship'. Lamb, *The McMahon Line*, I, opcit, P. 161; Minto to Morley, 17 Mar, 14 Apr, 9 July 1910, Morley Papers, Vol. 23.

blem around 1910 was how to restrain Nepal from intervening in the Tibetan crisis; the only solution to the problem lay in giving Nepal a guarantee of protection to its interests in Tibet. While giving this guarantee the British government also made it clear to Chandra that :

So long as the Darbar continues to consult the Government of India before taking a line of action which would involve Nepal in armed conflict with China or Tibet and follow advice when it is given. His Majesty's Government will not allow the interests and rights of Nepal to be affected or prejudiced by any administrative change in Tibet.⁴⁵

Such a guarantee could be given only after the British changed their policy of soft-peddalling China. For the maintenance of Britain's interests in Nepal and Tibet, Britain had to adopt a firmer policy towards China.

Another reason why Minto was not willing to conclude a treaty with Nepal and take over its external relations was the likelihood of the latter's demand for a large supply of arms as a *quid pro quo*. Any further accession to Nepal's military strength was objectionable; in this regard Minto held the same view as Curzon had earlier.⁴⁶ Calcutta would not allow Kathmandu to exploit the Tibetan situation to become militarily so strong as to compromise the existing happy state of Indo-Nepalese relations.

The India Office did realise the importance of keeping on well with Nepal, whose cooperation was essential for the supply of Gurkha recruits. But then, Morley and his colleagues were not as upset over the Nepalese reaction to the Tibetan crisis, as Minto and his colleagues were in Calcutta. In fact, the Secretary of State wondered why the Indian Government was so panicky, for Manners Smith's reports were ample proof that Chandra would never taken any action in Tibet to which

45. Manners Smith to Government, 11 Aug 1910, F.S.E., Nov. 1910, No. 15.

46. See Chapter Six.

the Indian Government could take exception.⁴⁷ The Nepalese Prime Minister had clearly assured the Resident that he would, "never dare to incur the serious displeasure of the Indian Government", by either responding to the Amban's overtures for a closer alliance with Peking or by a military intervention in Tibet to safeguard Nepalese rights.⁴⁸

Morley knew from Minto's reports that there were many in the Nepalese Darbar—and Jit Bahadur in particular—who urged Chandra to exploit the Tibetan situation; and all this had made Chandra "certainly restless". But the India Office did not apprehend any untoward situation developing out of this restlessness. Morley repeatedly urged Minto to ascertain if the Nepalese Darbar's restlessness was not deliberately played up for some ulterior political motive.⁴⁹

Not only Morley, but Sir Edward Grey, the British Foreign Secretary, too, looked at the Nepalese restlessness differently from Minto and his advisers. Grey would not allow Calcutta to adopt too stiff an attitude towards Peking even if that was necessary to allay Nepal's fear.

In view of the growing rift between Britain and Germany, strengthening relations with Russia was now an imperative necessity for Britain. Hence, Grey would not let anything happen on the Indian frontier which would be misinterpreted by Russia. Such misinterpretation was most likely to result from any action in Tibet by Kathmandu which, the Russians knew, was a close ally of the British.

However, at the beginning of 1910, when the Tibetan situation worsened both the India Office and the Foreign Office in London had to veer round to the policy which Calcutta had

47. Manners Smith to Government, 3 Jan. 1910, F.S.E., Mar 1910, No. 413.

48. Ibid.

49. Minto noted; "Any change in the political situation in Tibet was grist to their (Nepalese) mill. Thus, on the eve of the Younghusband Mission the Darbar had expressed great anxiety at the increase of Russian influence in Lhasa; and there can be no doubt that one of the main reasons why a British army was sent to Tibet in 1903-4, was to remove the excuse for the Nepalese to send any army of their own." Lamb, *The MeMahon Line*, I, opcit, P. 160; Morley to Minto, 24 Feb, 3 Mar. 17 Mar, 23 Mar, 30 June, 19 July 1910, Morley Papers, Vol. 5.

been urging for quite sometime; there was no escape from repeatedly reprimanding Peking to keep off from the Himalayan states, which the British claimed as being within their exclusive sphere of influence notwithstanding their historical links with China. In December 1909, the Dalai Lama returned to Lhasa after being away for more than five years.⁵⁰ The Chinese foiled all attempts of Dalai Lama to regain control of the Tibetan administration by bringing to Lhasa well armed troops from Szechuan.⁵¹ After vainly appealing to India, Britain, Nepal, France and Russia for military assistance the Dalai Lama escaped to India as a political refugee in February 1910.⁵²

Minto, already exercised over the Tibetan situation was convinced after his meetings with the Dalai Lama, that not only the sinification of Tibet but even the absorption of Nepal, Bhutan and Sikkim was the Chinese object. To the Indian Government it was definitely "disagreeable having this great increase in Chinese strength in close proximity to our frontier native states".

Minto wrote to S.H. Butler, the Indian Foreign Secretary, then in England :

China is becoming so aggressive on our frontier that I am convinced we are much more likely to avoid actual war in the future by putting our foot down now than by shilly-shallying while she steals frontier position from us.⁵³

50. Lamb, *The McMahon Line*, I, opcit, P. 180; Younghusband, opcit, p. 386; Mehra, *The McMahon Line and After*, opcit, p. 29; Rose, *Nepal Strategy for Survival*, opcit, p. 162.

51. Manners Smith wrote to the Government, that the Nepalese representative had informed the Nepal Government that the Amban had issued notice and 1000 Chinese soldiers from the Sithan side had been posted at different places all along the route from eastwards to the Kham country. Manners Smith to Government. 15 Nov. 1909, F.S.E., Feb. 1910, No. 756.

52. Bell, opcit, pp. 96-98; Rose, *Nepal Strategy for Survival*, opcit, p. 162.

53. Minto to S.H. Butler, 29 June 1910, Minto Papers, M. 996, p. 251.

Minto had no faith in Peking's disavowals of any scheme to change the political status of Tibet; Chinese activities looked like their occupation of Tibet.

Nepalese restlessness increased greatly in 1910, which proportionately increased the Indian Government's problem, too. Minto wrote to Morley :

I do not like seeing a friendly state on our frontier swamped by a great power, even though it is the suzerain power.⁵⁴

Minto on getting Manners Smith's reports of his many meetings with Chandra Shamsheer, was now left with no doubt whatever that Nepal wanted the British government to take a tough line with the Chinese to compel them to maintain an effective Tibetan government at Lhasa, "without prejudice to the principle of existing suzerain rights of China", in Tibet. The destruction of the autonomous government in Tibet was for Nepal an extremely undesirable development; so was the prolonged instability in Tibet. As Manners Smith pointed out :

it would certainly be to the advantage of Nepal to have a self-governed Tibet for a neighbour rather than one dominated by China.⁵⁵

Chandra Shamsheer also explained :

An angry turbulent distracted Tibet and a coterminous Chinese frontier would aggravate Nepal's responsibilities, and emphasise anxious watchfulness on her part.⁵⁶

Nepal's commercial interests had already been affected, Nepalese merchants in Tibet complaining to Jit Bahadur that

54. Minto to Morley, 24 Feb 1910, Morley Papers, Vol. 23, p. 56.

55. Departmental Notes, F.S.E., Oct. 1912, Nos. 12-45,

56. Quoted in Mojumdar, *Political Relations Between India And Nepal, 1877-1923*, opcit, p. 148.

the political instability in Tibet had seriously compromised their activities. What was most worrying for the Indian government was Chandra's demand that since the British had so far taken no action to restrain the Chinese, they should no longer object to Nepalese involvement in the Tibetan situation for the sake of safeguarding their interests in the country. This was the burden of a memorandum which Chandra submitted to Manners Smith in early 1910.⁵⁷ He warned the Resident that the "novel policy initiated by China in Tibet" and the Tibetan resistance to it would lead to "probable complications" for both Nepal and India. The hint was clear: Nepal and India had identical interests in frustrating the Chinese ambitions in Tibet.

Chandra had in the meanwhile apprised Manners Smith of Peking's renewed attempts to draw Nepal closer to itself by fanning up Nepal's innate fear of the British.

The Amban said :

We China, Tibet and Gurkha are like members of the same family. If any one of them is injured in any way the others too become affected.⁵⁸

The Ambans had also clearly told Bhairab Bahadur that China and Nepal had common interests in defending themselves against British ambitions.⁵⁹

All this strengthened Minto's hands like Curzon's before; he could now use Nepal's anxiety as a justification for the adoption of a stronger policy towards China in Tibet.⁶⁰ There was now no doubt that "the best solution" to the Tibetan problem lay in the restoration of the "former Tibetan Government under the Dalai Lama". Minto repeated Curzon's

57. Manners Smith to Government, 3 Jan. 1910, F.S.E., Mar 1910, No. 413.
58. Manners Smith to Government, 2 Feb. 1910, (Translation of a letter from Jit Bahadur), F.S.E., Mar. 1910, No. 431.
59. Ibid.
60. Minto to Morley, 14 Apr, 23 June, 30 June, 7 July 1910; Morley Papers, Vol. 24, pp. 16, 87, 98, 104.

argument before, that British inaction would create in Bhutan, Sikkim and Nepal the impression of British weakness vis-a-vis China. The maintenance of the British prestige in the Himalayan states made decisive British intervention in Tibet an urgent necessity.⁶¹

The situation had now come to such a pass that even the Home Government could no longer escape admitting the cogency of Calcutta's argument. The British Minister in Peking, Sir John Jordan, had in the meanwhile sent many reports to Grey which led the latter to view the Tibetan situation in a graver light; Grey now realised that British interests in Tibet would certainly be jeopardised if China was not restrained in Tibet. By the middle of 1910, therefore, the British Foreign Office had decided to take a stronger line with China.⁶²

Morley now had not much ground to reject Minto's contention; he too clearly saw that Anglo-Nepalese relations would be irretrievably damaged if China was not restrained effectively.⁶³ Even Edward VII, the King of Britain, made no secret of his anxiety about Nepal's concern over the Tibetan situation; he also shared the opinion of both the Foreign office and India Office that a firmer stand on the situation was urgently called for.⁶⁴

Accordingly, a two-fold policy was now adopted: pressurising China and assuring Nepal of British determination to defend its interests. In February 1910, Jordan, on instruction from the Foreign Office, represented to the Chinese Foreign Office, demanding desistance from abolishing the traditional

61. Minto to Morley, 17 Mar; 14 Apr, 9 July 1910, Morley Papers, Vol. 23; Francis Younghusband, "Our position in Tibet", *Proceedings of the Central Asian Society*, (London, 2 Nov. 1910).

62. Lamb, *The McMahon Line*, I, opcit, pp. 159;62.

63. On 31 March 1910, the India Office noted: "the establishment of a powerful foreign influence in Tibet would also have a most unsettling effect on the Bhutan and Sikkim states. Besides all three states have special rights and privileges in Tibet which we have pledged ourselves to defend but which would undoubtedly be prejudiced by the inclusion of Tibet in China proper". Departmental Notes, F.S.E., Oct. 1912, Nos. 12-45.

64. S.H. Butler to Minto, 20 July 1910, Minto Papers, M. 996, p. 202.

autonomous government at Lhasa and interfering with British interests in Tibet guaranteed by treaties. It was made clear to China that Nepal was justly worried over the Tibetan situation, and that the British should not be held responsible if Kathmandu took armed measures for the defence of its interests in Tibet. Jordan warned the Chinese Foreign Office that the British would very seriously view any war on the north-east frontier of India following Nepal's military activity.⁶⁵ In short, the British stand was that China must not let the situation in Tibet further deteriorate, for that might result in a Sino-Nepalese war—a war in which the British would have to be involved.

Simultaneously the British made a vigorous assertion of their exclusive relations with Nepal, Sikkim and Bhutan. In January 1910, Calcutta made a treaty with Bhutan taking over its external relations.⁶⁶ For sometime past the Bhutanese authorities had been urging the local British Officers to take strong measures for the maintenance of the traditional political status of Tibet.⁶⁷ Jordan and W.G. Muller, the British Charge D' Affaires at Peking, made several representations to China to keep away from the Himalayan states. In September 1910, Max Muller warned the Chinese Foreign Office :

His Majesty's Government cannot allow any administrative changes in Tibet to affect or prejudice the integrity of Nepal or of the two smaller states of Bhutan and Sikkim and they are prepared if necessary to protect the interests and rights of these three states.⁶⁸

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65. Jordan informed Grey that "the consolidation of Chinese position in Tibet where Nepal has considerable trading interests which require benevolent treatment, has doubtless given some reality to her shadowy pretensions with regard to Nepal and her activities along her western frontier line have recently been in marked contrast to the role of enforced effacement which she played on her eastern borders in Manchuria". Jordan to Grey, 1 Apr 1911, F.S.E., July 1911, No. 265.
66. Government to W.G. Max Muller, His Britanic Majesty's Charge D' Affaires, 27 Apr 1910, F.S.E., Feb 1911, No. 555; Bell, *opcit*, pp. 99-106.
67. Departmental Notes, F.S.E., Oct. 1912, Nos. 12-45.
68. Max Muller to Prince Ching, 11 Apr 1910, cited in Mojumdar, *Political Relations Between India and Nepal, 1877-1923*, *opcit*, p. 155; C.A. Bell to Government, 10 Sept. 1910, F.S.E., Jan 1911, No. 125.

The British Government insisted that China maintain "an effective Tibetan Government", this being essential for the maintenance of British interests in Tibet as provided by the Lhasa convention of 1904, and as confirmed by the Anglo-Chinese convention of 1906. Both the India Office and the Foreign Office took now a common stand to meet any Russian objection to London's warnings to Peking. The stand was that although the British government did not question China's "sovereign rights" in Tibet, they could not allow the political instability in Tibet to persist nor the traditional political status of the country to disappear, for both had caused alarm to the Himalayan states having intimate relations with and vital stakes in Tibet.⁶⁹

A firm assurance was again given to Kathmandu that the British would protect its interests in Tibet provided it took no action without a reference to the British government.⁷⁰ The Prime Minister agreed to consult the Government of India

before committing himself to any new action and keeping the British informed regarding all intercourse of importance.⁷¹

No formal treaty taking over Nepal's relations with Tibet and China was concluded with it, but the latter would no longer be able to take any unilateral action in Tibet. Obviously, therefore, Nepal's anxiety over the Chinese action in Tibet gave the British an amount of indirect control on Kathmandu's relations with Tibet and China.

At the same time Nepal was urged to snap its tributary relations with Peking. Manners Smith obtained from Chandra Shamsher information on the circumstances in which the relations had originated, the nature of the relations and the reasons for the maintenance of the relations. The Resident drew pointed attention to the fact that China viewed Nepal as no more than

69. Departmental Notes, F.S.E., Oct. 1912, No. 12-45.

70. Manners Smith to Government, 11 Aug. 1910, F.S.E., Nov 1910, No. 15.

71. Same to Same, 29 Nov. 1910, F.S.E., July 1911, No. 693.

a vassal state, which was indeed an affront to Nepal's dignity and prestige.⁷² The Chinese interpretation of the tributary relations was made clear to Chandra Shamsher by Manners Smith:

the quinquennial mission may be looked upon by the Nepalese as a mere compensation for privileges allowed them in Tibet, but it is certainly regarded by the Chinese as the offering of a subject state.⁷³

Chandra Shamsher was given to understand that the British did not like the Chinese assertion of their suzerainty over Nepal, and hence Kathmandu had better maintain that sort of relations with Peking which would neither be derogatory to Nepal's independent status nor cause any worry to the British government.⁷⁴

Making British relations with Nepal exclusive in character became a matter of urgent necessity when, on British warnings to China to keep off from the Himalayan states, Peking repeatedly asserted its suzerainty over the states, declaring in particular China's determination to hold on to its traditional position in Nepal.⁷⁵ In contesting the Chinese claim, the British affirmed:

the submissive expressions in the letters usually sent from Nepal to China in connection with the quinquennial mission are not regarded by His Majesty's Govern-

72. Jordan informed China that the British Government viewed Nepal not as "a vassal but wholly independent of China in intimate relations with the British Government in accordance with the treaties and mutual understanding agreed upon between them". Jordan to Prince Ching, 17 Jan 1911, F.S.E., July 1911, No. 258.

73. Manners Smith to Government, 11 Aug 1910, F.S.E., Nov 1910, No. 15.

74. Ibid.

75. Manners Smith wrote to the Government, when the British warned China that "we did not consider that Nepal came under her suzerainty". To this China replied, that "as for the Nepalese they are properly (or originally) feudatories of China, but His Majesty's Government have ignored the statement". Resident to Government, 11 Aug 1910, F.S.E., Nov. 1910, No. 15.

ment as an acknowledgement of vassalage or as anything more than purely formal and complementary style of address.⁷⁶

British pressure on China was also accompanied by Nepal's definite repudiation of its tributary status vis-a-vis China. On the Resident's promptings, therefore, though not without some reluctance on the part of his advisers, Chandra Shamsher gave Manners Smith a clear undertaking that Nepal no longer considered it necessary to send tributary missions to China.⁷⁷ Chandra also provided Manners Smith with copies of letters carried by the Nepalese mission to the Chinese Emperor⁷⁸.

Chandra affirmed that Nepal had never viewed itself as a vassal of China and that the tribute missions had so long been sent to Peking only for the commercial benefits they brought to Nepal.⁷⁹ But over the years the situation in Tibet had been such that Nepal gravely doubted if these missions would any longer yield those benefits at all. Besides, the missions gave Nepal an access to China for acquiring first hand information of the great changes that were going on in the country: it enabled Kathmandu to

gain a better insight into the conditions of Chinese life.⁸⁰

The British also knew that for some time past Nepalese opium sent along with the mission could not be sold in Tibet and China with the result that the Rana government, which had a

76. Ibid.

77. Jordan presented a Note to the Wai-Wu-Pu, on 10 May 1911, regarding the status of Nepal, and Jordan wrote to the Government "to advise the Nepal Darbar simply to discontinue the sending of quinquennial missions to Peking". Departmental Notes, F.S.E., Oct. 1912, No. 70; Rose, *Nepal Strategy for Survival*, opcit, p. 167.

78. Manners Smith to Butler, 11 May 1909, F.S.E., June 1909, No. 900.

79. See Chapter Four. p. 84.

80. Jordan to Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 5 June 1908, F.S.E., Oct. 1908, No. 709.

stake in the opium trade, sustained heavy loss.⁸¹ Besides, Chandra had been receiving many complaints of harrassments suffered by the missions at the hands of the Tibetans and the Chinese. The security of the mission was in doubt when Peking could no longer guarantee its safe passage through the vast tracts of Tibet, where Chinese hold had been weakening. All this made Chandra realise that it was very impolitic to strain relations with the British for the dubious advantage of maintaining Nepal's historical relations with China—the more so when Chinese activity in Tibet seemed to threaten Nepal's own interests there.⁸²

However, it was with some difficulty that Chandra snapped Nepal's customary relations with China. His advisers, for whom the relations still served as a potential restraint on British ambitions in Nepal, were not quite happy over the new policy of Chandra Shamsher. As Manners Smith clearly saw :

there is also still a feeling in Nepal that the vague connections with China is valuable to the Darbar as being a bar to British Government obtaining too close a political hold over Nepal.⁸³

Hence, on Chandra Shamsher's insistance, the British government had to give him an assurance that it would not interfere with the independence of Nepal. Such an assurance, the Resident convinced the government, was essential for Chandra's own position, for his advisers feared that :

if the prop which their outside connections with China has given them in the past is to be withdrawn it is all

81. The importation of opium had greatly diminished in China due to the cultivation of poppy in western China. Manners Smith to Government, 7 Aug. 1907, F.S.E., Sept. 1907, No. 98; See Chapter Four.

82. Manners Smith to Government, 11 Aug. 1910. F.S.E., Nov. 1910, No. 15.

83. Ibid.

the more necessary to obtain a guarantee from the British Government that the independent status of Nepal will be scrupulously respected.⁸⁴

Chandra undertook not to receive a Chinese title without prior approval of the British.⁸⁵ Thus without a formal treaty, for which Manners Smith and Jordan were for long insisting, the British Government had secured effective control on Nepal's relations with China.

In January 1911, the Chinese Foreign Office was again warned that the British would resist any Chinese move in Nepal, Bhutan and Sikkim, the defence of whose interests was the British responsibility. In April, Jordan pointed out that the Chinese claims to suzerainty over the Himalayan states were of the same nature as those on Korea, Siam, Annam, Burma and other states on the periphery of the Chinese Empire.⁸⁶

It was also made clear to China that the British treated Nepal as a country completely independent of China, and that it had intimate relations with the British government based on treaties.⁸⁷ Britain had now openly proclaimed its exclusive influence in Nepal, which really had for long been an accomplished fact, notwithstanding the co-existence of China's symbolic connections with the country. Unlike earlier, Peking this time did not challenge the British assertion; this fact was interpreted by the British government as Chinese acquiescence in the British position in the Himalayan states.

It proved however an illusory hope, for in 1913, when the Manchu rule was overthrown in China and a Republic established, China again sought to win over Nepal. The new Chinese President, Yuan-Shih-Kai, and General Chung, Officer Commanding the Chinese troops in Tibet, exchanged communications, clearly suggesting to the British that notwithstanding the changed political situation in China, it continued to view

84. Cited in Mojumdar, *Political Relations Between India and Nepal, 1877-1923*. opcit, p. 173.

85. Resident to Government, 17 Nov. 1911, F.S.E., Feb. 1912, No. 62.

86. Jordan to Grey, 1 Apr. 1911, F.S.E., July 1911, No. 265.

87. Jordan to Prince Ching, 17 Jan. 1911, F.S.E., July 1911, No. 258.

Nepal as a tributary state which was essential for the maintenance of Chinese interests in Tibet. A report also appeared in the *Chinese Review*, where the Nepalese were described as one of the "Five Affiliated Races" constituting the Republic of China.⁸⁸

However, Chandra Shamsher's reaction to the new Chinese overture for close relations was by no means encouraging to Peking. Kathmandu had no wish to change its recent posture and cause annoyance to the British government: it would never again be a tributary state of China. This was undoubtedly a great relief for the British government.

What caused the Indian government the greatest concern throughout 1910-11, was China's attempt at establishing its authority over the tracts bordering Assam and inhabited by wild aboriginal tribes. Reports came thick and fast of Chinese intrigues with tribal chiefs, which, if not frustrated, seemed to the British to create the same kind of problems as Russian intrigues with the Pathan tribes had done for years on India's north-west frontier. The British had to take a closer look at the situation in the Assam Himalayas which was still only nominally under British administrative control. Lord Hardinge, the Governor-General, impressed on Lord Crewe, the Secretary of State, the need for clearly demarcating the Indo-Tibetan boundary on the Assam Himalayas.^{88a}

He said,

as soon as the boundary has been roughly decided, a formal intimation should be made to China of the limits of the country under our control.⁸⁹

88. General Chung, Chinese Resident in Tibet to Maharaja of Nepal, Feb. 1913, F.S.E./Ext. Aug. 1913, No. 240; Mehra, *The McMahon Line and After*, opcit, pp. 103, 105; Lamb, *The McMahon Line*, 11, opcit, p. 390; Rose, *Nepal Strategy for Survival*, opcit, p. 167.

88a. *Summary of the Administration of Hardinge of Peshhurst*, (Delhi, 1916), Situation on the North-East Frontier-1912-14, Vol. 131, pp. 95, 103-105.

89. Mehra, *The McMahon Line and After*, opcit, p. 97.

The years 1912-14, were very important for the adoption of a new policy by the British government towards Tibet.⁹⁰ The policy was designed to meet the situation created by the Chinese revolution which led to the fall of the Manchu power in China and the establishment of a Republic there. The immediate impact of the revolution on Tibet was very unfavourable for the Chinese authority in Lhasa. The local Chinese troops mutined, killed their generals and repudiated the authority of the Ambans. Tibet then declared its independence of China. Tibetan troops engaged the Chinese soldiers in many a fight. There was complete breakdown of the Chinese power in Tibet, and the administration became chaotic.⁹¹

The new republican government in China sought to restore its authority in Tibet by bringing to Lhasa crack Chinese regiments from Szechuan. It was certain that with the arrival of these troops the whole of Tibet would be plunged into a state of instability as never before. Already in eastern Tibet, the Khampas, fierce military tribes, had engaged the local Chinese troops in bitter fights.⁹²

The new Tibetan situation proved opportune for the consolidation of British authority in the country. The British decided to support the newly asserted Tibetan independence and prevent the restoration of Chinese authority. They were determined to convert Tibet into a buffer state, politically under the effective influence of the British—a buffer to ward off any other foreign influence.⁹³

As before, the British made full use of Nepalese anxiety over the new situation created in Tibet. Nepalese merchants were in great panic at Lhasa and Lal Bahadur, who had succe-

90. Lamb, *The McMahon Line*, 1, opcit, p. 223.

91. Departmental Notes, F.S.E., July 1912, Nos. 70-386; Bell, opcit, pp. 118-121.

92. Bell informed the Government, that about 200 Tibetans were killed in Lhasa and the Tibetans did not approach the Amban and General Chung with peace overtures. Bell to Government, 30 Apr. 1912, F.S.E., July 1912, No. 108; Mehra, *The McMahon Line and After*, opcit, pp. 76-78; Bell, opcit, pp. 147-150.

93. Viceroy to Secretary of State, 21 June 1912, F.S.E., July 1912, No. 348.

eded Jit Bahadur, reported several deaths of Nepalese subjects following the unstable situation in Lhasa.⁹⁴ Like before, again, Chandra Shamsher expressed to the Resident his eagerness for involvement in the Tibetan situation. The Tibetan Kazis had also been asking him for Gurkha troops to assist them against the Chinese. Chandra sought to convince the Resident that his involvement was justified when, with the breakdown of the Chinese power at Lhasa, there remained no guarantee whatever that Nepalese interests would remain unimpaired in Tibet.⁹⁵ It was well known to the British Government as well that, but for the fear of China, Tibet, which had no love lost for Nepal, would have long ago repudiated the 1856 treaty, the basis of Nepal's manifold interests in Tibet.

In 1912, the British Government had to consider whether or not to allow the entry of Gurkha troops into Tibet to strengthen the latter against China. The 1856 treaty obliged Kathmandu to render military assistance to Tibet in meeting external emergency, but then, as Manners Smith clearly saw, Nepal would not "dare burning its fingers to pull the Tibetan chestnut out of the fire", without British assurance that they would take a stronger line of action with China regarding Tibet than they had done hitherto.⁹⁶

Chandra Shamsher's mood convinced the British that he sought to exploit the Sino-Tibetan conflict to occupy the long-coveted bordering Tibetan tracts. He knew that an independent Tibet would abrogate the 1856 treaty with Nepal; and hence he had better seize some Tibetan territory as compensation for the loss of the political and commercial position which the treaty had guaranteed to Nepal.

94. Chandra Shamsher stated, "that Nepalese subjects and interests in Tibet were seriously endangered by the present anarchy. That Nepal Government must at once make the strongest representation to the Chinese and Tibetan authorities as well as to the Dalai Lama—and if these fail must have recourse to military force". Departmental Notes, F.S.E., July 1912, Nos. 70-386; H.L. Showers, Officiating Resident to Government, 11 July 1913, F.S.E., Aug. 1912, No. 23.

95. Departmental Notes, F.S.E., July 1912, Nos. 70-386.

96. Resident to A.H. McMahon, Foreign Secretary, 22 Mar. 1912, F.S.E., Oct. 1912, Nos. 12-45.

Consistent with its settled policy, the British would never allow Nepalese military intervention in Tibet; nor would they let the Nepalese interests suffer there. In such circumstances the British sought a political solution of the problem : preventing the restoration of Chinese position in Tibet by withholding recognition of the new Chinese Republic. The Republic was in a very bad financial condition and hence, needed recognition of international powers and their financial support. After a good deal of sustained pressure, the British obliged China to withdraw all its troops from Tibet, such withdrawal being deemed essential for peace and stability in Tibet.⁹⁷

The Nepalese agent in Lhasa kept the British posted with the situation there. He also served as the most important instrument of the new British policy in Tibet. On Chandra Shamsher's instruction, Lal Bahadur mediated between the Tibetans and the Chinese. After prolonged negotiations, which many a time seemed to breakdown, he succeeded in drawing up a settlement which obliged the Chinese troops to leave Tibet for good in December 1912.⁹⁸ Lal Bahadur showed both perseverance and great diplomatic skill in effecting a settlement which restored peace in the Tibetan capital.

Evidently, the British had used Nepal as a catspaw. This was necessary to convince Russia that, but for Nepal's genuine anxiety, the British would not have put pressure on the new Chinese Republic. To the Russian Ambassador in London it was made clear that without a definite commitment of China to maintain an autonomous Tibet, British interests in the country and British relations with the Himalayan states bordering on Tibet could never be retained.⁹⁹ As before, the British made much of Nepalese susceptibilities and the need to restrain Nepalese action in Tibet.

There were two reasons why Russia chose to wink at the new British policy towards Tibet. First, the exigencies of the

97. Showers to Government, 11 June 1912, (Translation of a letter from Lhasa), F.S.E., July 1912, No. 318.

98. Showers to Government, 11 June 1912, (Translation of a letter from Lhasa), F.S.E., July 1912, No. 318; Mehra *The McMahon Line and After*, opcit, p. 124; Rose, *Nepal Strategy for Survival*, opcit, p. 167.

99. Departmental Notes, F.S.E., Oct. 1912, Nos. 12-45.

European situation which made British friendship essential for Russia. Secondly, Russia itself had exploited the Chinese Revolution to confirm its position in Mongolia.¹⁰⁰ That London's policy towards Tibet was an imitation of St. Petersburg's policy towards Mongolia was a matter which Russian diplomats could scarcely ignore.

Accordingly, ceaseless pressure on China obliged it to acquiesce in the British demand for a convention which would guarantee an autonomous Tibet with but a symbolic presence of China in the country. China would only retain its Ambans at Lhasa with a small number of escorts. Another object of the convention was to demarcate the boundary between Tibet and north-east India.¹⁰¹ In July 1914, the Chinese representative, Ivan Chen, met the Tibetan representative Lochen Shatra, and the British representative, Sir Arthur Henry McMahon, at Simla. A convention was signed by Lochen Shatra and McMahon; it was only initialed by Ivan Chinese Chen. The Government later repudiated the convention, consistently refusing to recognise the Tibetan independence guaranteed by the British Government.¹⁰²

The Tibetan situation in 1905-14, was such as to provide Nepal with an opportunity to realise its ambition in the country. Until 1912, when Lhasa became virtually independent of China, Nepal's position in Tibet had been quite strong indeed. In the Tibetan government the Nepalese representative at Lhasa commanded considerable influence; this influence increased in proportion to the deterioration in Tibet's relations with China. But the emergence of a de facto independent Tibet was not to Nepal's interest. Hence, throughout the period 1910-14, the Nepalese stand was that Tibet should remain a self-governing

100. Ibid; Bell, *opcit*, pp. 150-52; Richardson, *opcit*, p. 106, Tieh-Tseng Li, *opcit*, p. 132.

101. Lamb, *The McMahon Line*, 11, *opcit*, pp. 464-77; Mehra, *The McMahon Line and After*, *opcit*, pp. 147-167.

102. Neville Maxwell, *India's China War*, (Bombay, 1970), pp. 45-64; Rowland, *opcit*, p. 47; Tieh-Tseng Li, *opcit*, p. 140; *The Boundary Question Between China and Tibet, A Valuable Record of the Tripartite Conference between China, Britain and Tibet held in India, 1913-14*. (Peking, 1940).

militarily weak country under nominal Chinese suzerainty. Chinese hold on Tibet, even nominal, had so long been an insurance against Tibetan repudiation of Nepal's privileges in Tibet, particularly when the British would not let Nepal take any armed measures to safeguard privileges.

The British knew it well that Nepal's reaction to British policy in Tibet was one of concealed jealousy and fear. Chandra Shamsheer many a time grudged that while concluding the convention with Russia regarding the maintenance of Tibet's territorial integrity, the British government had not taken into consideration the fact that for the defence of its interests in Tibet, Nepal should be allowed to take armed action against Tibet. But then, such an action was prevented by Britain for fear that Russia would see British hands behind Nepalese action. The Resident had clearly pointed out :

Russia would certainly protest that by permitting Nepalese domination in Tibet we were really securing our own domination in contravention of the Anglo-Russian convention.¹⁰³

In fact, the British did not want any Nepalese domination or even suzerainty in Tibet, for that would make it much too strong a neighbour of British India and "upset the whole status of north-east frontier"; this would be a "far worse problem" for British India than the one created by the Chinese in Tibet.¹⁰⁴

With great mortification the Nepalese Darbar had so long watched the course of British policy in Tibet, which did affect Nepal's interests in Tibet. The Simla convention strengthened the British position in Tibet; became a British protectorate, sure of British military assistance against China. The new Anglo-Tibetan friendly relations during the Simla convention and after certainly impaired the traditional Nepalese position in Tibet to the extent that Kathmandu could no longer bully

103. Departmental Notes, F.S.E., July 1912, Nos. 70-386.

104. *Ibid.*

Lhasa as before. The British were certain to intervene in any dispute between Nepal and Tibet.¹⁰⁵

The British gave Nepal no place in the Simla conference, which Chandra Shamsheer very much grudged.¹⁰⁶ The reason why Nepal was excluded was the British apprehension that Nepal, which was jealous of British relations with Tibet, would seek to prevent their overlordship of the country. Of course, the British took care not to impair Nepal's rights in Tibet.

The result of the Tibetan crisis in the first decade of the present century was to enable the British to take the same position in disputes between Kathmandu and Lhasa which China had assumed earlier. Henceforth, both the countries would reckon with British reaction to their disputes in much the same way as they had done with Chinese reaction in earlier years when Peking was a strong power. The British policy henceforth was to keep peace between Nepal and Tibet by a policy of mingled persuasion and pressure.

105. Bell, *opcit.*, pp. 234-41.

106. Mojumdar, *Political Relations Between India and Nepal, 1877-1923*, *opcit.* 207-208.

Conclusion

Nepal's relations with Tibet and China formed an important element in British India's policy towards Nepal. Kathmandu's relations with Lhasa and Peking were not the same always: they depended on several factors : the political conditions in Nepal, Tibet, and China, the existence or otherwise of military ambitions in the rulers of these states, and the activities of foreign powers in the three states. The British had to take into account all these factors in adopting measures to protect and promote their interests not only in Nepal but in the entire Himalayan region.

British attitude to Nepal's relations with Tibet and China was determined by several factors as well—the nature of Nepal's relations with British India at a particular time, the object of British policy in Nepal and the time, the state of relations between Britain and China at the former's interests in Peking, the nature of relations between China and Tibet, and Britain's relations with other international powers having a variety of interests in China, Tibet and Nepal.

Nepal's relations with Tibet and China antedated its relations with British India. Age-old ties, commercial, political and cultural, bound Nepal and Tibet together and, to a lesser extent, Nepal and China. These traditional ties had a bearing on British relations with Nepal; they caused the British both an embarrassment and a problem. Generally speaking, British policy in Nepal aimed not at the destruction of these ties but preventing them from becoming politically dangerous to Briti-

sh interests. British influence on Nepal naturally meant British control of Nepal's relations with Tibet and China, for such relations constituted an important element in Nepal's foreign policy.

However, this control was not easy to obtain, for the extreme resentment it caused to Nepal which cherished its independence, the British would avoid causing such resentment in Kathmandu from which the Indian army drew its most prized and dependable element—the Gurkhas. Yet, without securing a control on Kathmandu's relations with Lhasa and Peking, the British could hardly promote their own interests in all the three countries. The course of events between 1814 and 1914 would suggest that the British control of Nepal's relations with Tibet and China was a result partly of circumstances and partly of policy consciously adopted.

Tibet was the main focus of the Himalayan politics, the activities of China, Nepal and Britain being the reaction of the events in Tibet. Curiously enough, both China and Britain had common interests in curbing Nepalese ambitions in Tibet. Nepalese militarism in the second half of the 18th century was for both Calcutta and Peking a very unwelcome development in the Himalayas. The dislocation of the Himalayan trade and the fear created in Tibet, Bhutan and Sikkim, the result of Gurkha militarism, affected both the commercial and security interests of British India and China. Throughout the period under review Britain and China seemed to have an identical interest—preventing Tibet from being a prey to Nepalese invasion. Both recognised Kathmandu's interests in Tibet, yet neither would allow it to protect or promote these interests by arms. At first China would assume responsibility for the defence of these interests; later the responsibility had to be undertaken wily nilly by the British.

Early British relations with Nepal coincided with the strengthening of Peking's position in Lhasa and Kathmandu in the last decades of the 18th century. China's policy towards Tibet and Nepal at this period and later could be viewed as a reaction to Britain's commercial ambitions in the Himalayan region. These ambitions were suspect in Chinese eyes, and hence their determination to seal Tibet hermitically from all foreign contact. The Gurkha wars with Tibet in 1788-1793

resulted in the reinforcement of Chinese position in the Himalayan region and the establishment of Peking's tributary relations with Kathmandu.

For long hereafter British India's Nepal policy would be influenced by its fear of provoking China, Nepal's suzerain power. This would explain Calcutta's general policy of avoiding too close relations with Kathmandu and even suffering for long its nibbling encroachments on the border tracts. While obliged to fight the Nepalese and making a treaty with them, the British had to reckon with the risk of causing umbrage to China and damaging Britain's commercial interests there. Nepal was not annexed by the Company partly for fear of exciting the Chinese wrath and obliging it to defend its vassal.

For more than three decades after the Anglo-Nepalese war, one finds the existence of a correlation between Britain's Nepal policy and its China policy; Calcutta put up with Kathmandu's provocative postures so as not to give Peking an excuse to complicate the situation in the Himalayan region, when the British had enough troubles in Afghanistan and Burma. It was at this time that the British realised the political implications of Nepal's tributary relations with China. The British Residents at this time had to take all measures to foil Kathmandu's scheme of pitting the Chinese against the British.

Chinese reaction to Nepalese entreaties for assistance against the British left an important lesson for the British. The latter learnt that not only did China have no desire to play into the Nepalese hands, but it wanted Kathmandu to give up all its warlike schemes. China wanted Nepal to remain peaceful for the consideration that militarism in Nepal would not only threaten Sikkim and Bhutan, viewed as its protectorates by Tibet, but lead to another Anglo-Nepalese war with its inevitable impact on Tibet and the adjacent Himalayan tracts. Just as Britain feared complications with China on account of Nepal's activities, China too feared complications with Britain on account of the same reason. To both it was clear that peace in the Himalayan region made restraining Nepalese jingoism an imperative necessity.

China's refusal to either defend Nepal against the British or assist in the furtherance of its anti-British schemes had a lesson

for Nepal as well. This was evident in the changed approach to China which Kathmandu's policy makers took after the establishment of the Rana regime in Nepal. The Ranas abandoned the erstwhile policy of pitting the Chinese against the British; anti-British measures, they realised, were futile when Britain had become a world power and China was perceptibly weakening.

The new orientation thus given to Nepal's foreign policy by the Ranas had two features—strengthening relations with the British as an essential measure of consolidation and growth for the new regime, and exploiting British friendship to further Nepal's ambition in Tibet by even taking on China, should that be unavoidable. There was thus a causal relationship between the growing amity in Rana relationship with the government of India and successive crises in Nepal-Tibet relations. The decline of China caused by internal tension and external pressure was for Nepal a welcome opportunity to realise its ambitions in Tibet.

In such circumstances it was not unnatural that the British would take a new look at Kathmandu's relations with Lhasa and Peking. With China unable to browbeat Nepal as effectively as before and with Chinese hold on Tibet loosening, the British had to assume a greater responsibility in restraining Nepal.

This restraint constituted the predominant strand in British policy towards Nepal from the middle of the 19th century; there were three reasons for it. First, Nepal's disputes with Tibet set off disquiet and alarm in neighbouring Himalayan states having intimate relations with Tibet. Such disquiet and tension was politically extremely undesirable. Secondly, these recurrent disputes damaged Britain's own commercial interests in Tibet. The Tibetans, extremely distrustful of the Europeans and averse to commercial contact with the British, were likely to see the British hands behind Nepalese ambitions; Lhasa well knew how close Kathmandu was to Calcutta. Britain's interests in China, both political and commercial, were likely to be jeopardised following the Chinese impression that Nepalese bellicosity had secret British encouragement. This impression, the British well knew, Russia and France, Britain's rivals in China, were certain to foster. At a time when Britain was

pressing China for commercial concessions in Tibet, Peking was very likely to construe Nepalese pressure on Tibet as having British inspiration. For these reasons the British could hardly afford damaging their own interests by letting Nepal have a free hand in Tibet.

However, restraining Nepal was not quite an easy job, for the British had no treaty giving them control of Kathmandu's foreign relations; besides, the extreme sensitivity with which Nepal viewed any British attempt at influencing Kathmandu's foreign relations was for the British an inhibiting factor as well. In such circumstances all that Calcutta could do to prevent the escalation of Nepal-Tibet conflicts was to discourage Kathmandu's military ambitions and urging it to peacefully settle the disputes.

But then, for Nepal an open war with Tibet was not without risks. Chinese reaction had to be reckoned with if not Chinese military retaliation. British assistance could not be hoped for, while arms and ammunition needed for the war could be obtained from British India alone. All this was clearly noted by the British, who made the most of Nepal's dependence on British India for arms. A bargain was struck with Nepal: arms were given to Nepal for regular supply of Gurkha recruits. But the British took care to warn Kathmandu that the arms were not to be used against Tibet. Thus the need for arms obliged the Rana government to avoid alienating the British by carrying its disputes with Tibet too far. The result was the British assumption of a measure of indirect control on Nepal's relations with Tibet. In Nepal-Tibet disputes China often played a mediatory role which the British found helpful.

Curiously enough, Nepal did not snap its traditional relations with China although its warlike policy towards Tibet strained the relations. For Rana Nepal customary relations with Peking were of no military consequence, for China's military weakness was quite obvious. The relations however continued to have political and commercial import. Despite its anglophile policy the Rana regime saw the wisdom in avoiding a very intimate contact with the British for fear of their domination; it continued the policy of keeping well with both China and India as an essential measure of survival. Jang Bahadur and his successors never deviated from the line of

policy set out by Prithvinarayan Shah, the father of modern Nepal:

This kingdom is like a Tarul [a root vegetable] between two stones. Great friendship should be maintained with the Chinese Emperor. Friendship should also be maintained with the Emperor of the southern sea [The British] but he is very clever. He has kept India suppressed. He is encouraging himself in the plains. . . do not engage in an offensive attack; fighting should be done on a defensive basis. . .¹

The Ranas veered close to the British while retaining Nepal's historical relations with China—thus maintaining Nepal's tradition of "aligning itself with the more powerful of the two and yet not alienating the weaker"². This would account for the despatch of embassies to Peking until 1908, despite the insulting treatment meted out to their members and gradual loss of commercial gains which the embassies had earlier brought to Nepal.

Since the British were convinced of the dependence of the Rana regime for long, they saw in Nepal's tributary relations with Peking no political danger, although from time to time it was somewhat politically embarrassing. Lansdowne, in particular, admitted it when China's moves towards the Himalayan states seemed to the Viceroy as part of its grand scheme to give political substance to what until then had been but shadowy influence on these states. Things changed after 1905, when the north-east frontier of India became a live frontier. This was the result of intensified British activities in the Himalayan frontier tracts and in Tibet from the last decades of the 19th century. It appeared to the Indian government that China, fearful of British activities, was determined to undermine the British position in the Himalayan states having historical relations with Peking. It was from now that the British were resolved to challenge the traditional Chinese

1. Ramakant, *Nepal-China and India*, opcit p. 20.

2. Ibid.

position in the area and make their own influence in the Himalayan states exclusive in character. British position in Sikkim and Bhutan were strengthened and all means were taken to retain Nepal under British influence.

So long one peculiar aspect of the Himalayan politics had been the juxtaposition of China's tributary relations with Nepal and Britain's effective influence in the country. With the Chinese embarking on what seemed to London and Calcutta forward policy on the frontier, Britain thought it imperative to end this obviously anomalous position. China seemed determined to strengthen its position in Tibet and the neighbouring states, and in this the British saw a grave political danger. The British government took full advantage of the crises in Tibet in 1900-1914 to bring to an end China's traditional position in Nepal and the neighbouring states and make its own position exclusive in the region.

The result of the developments in Tibet during this period was that not only did the British frustrate Nepalese ambitions in Tibet but they also made full use of Nepal's connection with Tibet to defend and further their own interests in Tibet. Nepalese Agency at Lhasa provided the British with information which Viceroy Curzon, Minto and Hardinge found indispensable for implementing their Tibetan policy. The Indian government convinced the Home government that a strong Tibetan policy was unavoidable, if British interests in Nepal were to be retained. Throughout the period, 1900-1914, Nepal was the key element in Britain's Tibetan policy. The British argument with Russia was that since Nepal was an independent country, they could not but let it adopt any course it liked for the defence of its interests in Tibet when activities of foreign powers threatened them. The Chinese in 1910-12 were also pressurised by the same argument.

The result of the Tibetan crisis in 1900-1914 was effective British control of Nepal's relations with Tibet and China. Nepal could not realise its ambitions in Tibet by exploiting the situation there. The British guaranteed protection to Kathmandu's political and commercial interests in Tibet on the distinct understanding on the part of Kathmandu that it would not have a free hand in the country and that it would seek British advice in any step it took in Tibet. Nepal's erstwhile

commercial monopoly in Tibet was gone when an easier commercial route through the Sikkim-Chumbi Valley was opened by the British.

Thus, the situation in Tibet created by the ambitions of Russia and China ultimately served the British a good purpose and proved deleterious to Nepal's interests in Tibet. The Simla convention 1914 brought Tibet, freed from Chinese control, closer to British India whose policy was to strengthen Lhasa. Nepal could no longer bully Tibet at will, far less "rectify" its border with the country by annexing territories around the Kerung and Kuti passes. Henceforth the British would mediate in disputes between Nepal and Tibet.

Thus, at the end of the period under review the British had established unchallengeable sway in the entire Himalayan area, with Nepal, Sikkim, and Bhutan, being under their exclusive influence and Tibet converted into a protectorate. Nepal could only take comfort in the fact that unlike the native states of India and the two Himalayan states to its east, it had not surrendered its foreign relations to the British by any treaty. As for the British, they showed due deference to Nepal's sensitivity to its independence; they were content to control Nepal's foreign relations with Tibet and China without any formal declaration to that effect.

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ERRATA

- Page 6, Para 3, Line 2—For Garhparse read Garhparsa.
Page 20, Para 3, Line 1—For humanein read humane in
Page 24, Quotation read our (British)
Page 25, FN. 40, Line 6—for relation read relating
Page 33, Para 1, Line 6—For M.Y. Hearsay read
H.Y. Hearsay
Page 42, FN. 28, Line 3—for Nepal's Society read Nepal's
anxiety
Page 63, Para 2, Line 2—for cakewalk read canewalk
Page 63, Quotation, Line 2— for have suffered read has
suffered
Page 66, Para 2, Line 5—read to resist the British attempts at
commercial exploration
Page 68, Quotation 2, Line 2—for single case read single cash
Page 76, FN II, Line 5—for Aer read Her
Page 80, FN. 28, Line 6—for Penthey read Pantheys
Page 90, Quotation, Line 5—for waterparting read
water party
Page 90, last para, line 6—Hunza Negar read Hunza Nagar
Page 120, para 3, Line 1— for exported read exhorted
Page 125. FN. 3—for B. Tyyman read B. Tuyman
Page 153, para 2, Line 1—for acquiesce read acquiescene
Page 153, para 2, Line 11 — for inialled read initialled
Page 157, para 1, Line 5—for he Gurkha read the Gurkhas