THIS
BEAUTIFUL
INDIA
Sikkim
This Beautiful India
SIKKIM

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Sikkim is the youngest and smallest State of India. For a very long time this Himalayan State was ruled under the feudalist order. The dawn of twentieth century saw revolt after revolt against repression, misrule, subjugation and slavery perpetuated by autocratic, authoritarian, dictatorial and feudal systems of governance. The lead was taken by the Asiatic continent in this regard and it was followed by freedom loving and bold natives of many African countries. No doubt the uplift of foreign yoke resulted in untold miseries at many places where especially the divide and rule policy of the erstwhile alien rulers led to division. Consequently it was observed in many parts of the world that freedom and self rule are a great boon. In free countries not only the wishes, religious belief, and fundamental rights are honoured but even the social and economic development witnesses an unprecedented growth rate. Such trends had far reaching consequences in those areas and pockets where still the alien, or authoritarian and feudalistic order existed. The recent Parliamentary Elections in India have once again belied the view that economic as well as social progress can be brought in any land by snatching the civil liberties of the masses and governing the nation in an authoritarian
way. Sikkim had been under the feudalistic system since ages and finding the congenial and democratic atmosphere in India, the masses of Sikkim slowly and gradually started revolting against the Chogyal and his Lieutenants. Ultimately the people of Sikkim voted for the ouster of Chogyal’s regime and decided to throw their lot with India for speedy economic, social and cultural development. This way in May 1975 Sikkim became an integral State of Indian Union.

There is no dearth of literature on Sikkim, but it is only in the form of travelogues, gazetteer, political history, myth and adventure. So far no book has appeared in the market which besides narrating the historical background of the state also describes the physical environment, mineral resources, power, agriculture, handicrafts, people, cultural heritage, problems and prospects of the State. National Book Trust and Publications Division of the Government of India have also so far failed to bring out titles of general interest on Sikkim. To fill up this void the author has made a very humble attempt in the form of present volume. It was no easy task to collect material on the different aspects of the State as also the photographs depicting land, life and people in Sikkim. The author is highly indebted and grateful to Hon’ble Shri B.B. Lal, Governor of Sikkim for helping him in the procurement of literature and photographs, otherwise score of written requests to the concerned authorities remained unattended to. My sincere thanks are due to my better half Mrs. Shashi Kanta Chib, M.A. and our two children Pankaj Chib and Ritu Chib for under-going all the neglect because of my work in isolation.

The learned readers will excuse me for the lapses which might have crepted in the title because of the non-availability of data and many details about this land with awe inspiring heights, difficult terrain, un-accessibility and harsh climatic conditions. Any such lapses pointed out by the readers would be thankfully incorporated in the subsequent edition.

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Sukhdev Singh Chib
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The ancient history of Sikkim still lies in obscurity. Sikkim did not form a part of the complex constituting of the Himalayan border states until the forties of the seventeenth century. The remote past of Sikkim that is known today comes to us through legend and myth. The Lepcha and Limbu legends do throw light on the earliest chronicle of the state but the same have not yet been authenticated by the historians. One Lepcha legend tells that the Rong Pa (literally meaning ravine folk) or Lepcha who belong to the Mongolian tribe were the indigenous people of Sikkim. These shy people who lived in the forested green valleys considered themselves to have sprung from a sacred stone or a bamboo. These Lepchas lived quite close to the nature by way of leading a subsistence living. Hunting and collection of wild fruits and roots provided them sustenance. Some of them practised shifting cultivation and raised the grains like maize and millets. They led a tribal life at the beck and call of their tribal leader. Village was the important administrative as well as territorial unit. Lepchas of that time were polyandrous and negotiated marriages in the tribal clans of the Limbus, the Dukpas, the Bhotias, the Sherpas and the Magars living in the adjoining hill tracts. The
matrimonial alliances helped in maintaining good relations amongst these tribes and thus the inter tribal and inter clan feuds were avoided. The animistic priests worked as men of medicine and magic also. According to another legendary account the primitive Kirats then living in Nepal also lived in the area now known as Sikkim. Padmasambhava the ancient Tantric Buddhist leader of Tibet is said to have come here and got preached the Buddhism. It is suggested that in pursuance of his teachings the Kirats came out of the shackles of primitive living and slowly and gradually marched towards civilisation. A myth is also prevalent in Sikkim. According to this myth God created a couple beneath the slopes of the sacred mountain of Kanchanjunga. And all the Sikkimese have descended from that couple. These earliest people were Lepcha and their land was known as Mayel Nyang. These Lepchas led a very simple life. They sustained on the professions of collection and hunting. Since they lived in a cold land they could not go naked as many of the primitive communities. They wove cloth from the fibrous plants found in the forests. But now some scholars after having a deep probe into the ancient literature opine that the history of Sikkim began with the heirs of King Indrabodhi who then ruled the part now forming Himachal Pradesh. It is gathered that at the time Buddhism started waning in India, the Western Himalayan tribes started migrating towards the east under the adventurous zealot princes. The heirs of king Indrabodhi reached the high and distant mountains of Kham in eastern Tibet. A prince from these immigrants is said to have founded the Minyak Kingdom somewhere in the ninth century of the Christian era. It is from Minyak that the ruling house of Sikkim emerged.

In the first half of the fifteenth century a prince of Minyak dynasty, 25th in lineage went on a sojourn cum pilgrimage towards west alongwith his five sons. They visited the then under construction monastery of Sakya. They found the lamas struggling unsuccessfully to erect four giant pillars in the main chapel. One of the sons of the Minyak prince accomplished the Herculean task of lifting the pillars and setting them in proper place. This remarkable feat earned him the title of Khye Bumsa, the one who possesses the strength of one lakh persons. He was offered the hand of Sakya hierarch’s daughter in marriage and was insisted upon to settle down there. He accepted the offer and settled down with his wife at Phari in the Chumbi valley. This place became the nucleus of the later kingdom of Sikkim in the first decade of the 16th century. The other sons of the Minyak prince moved towards further south in the territory now known as
Bhutan. At that time the Lepchas were ruled by Thekong Tek, a Lepcha Chief. He had his seat at Be-Yul-Deunzang a place south of Phari.

For years Khye Bumsa did not get any issue. Various Lamas advised him to seek the blessings of Thekong Tek the Lepcha King who was said to have possessed prophetic powers. Khye Bumsa went to king Thekong Tek, prostrated before him, offered him the gifts and explained the reason of his visit. “What he heard astonished him. Childless until this day, he would be the father of three sons, and his descendants would one day reign overall Sikkim. In time the prophecy came true. Three sons were born to Khye Bumsa and then eventually came from Chumbi in Tibet to settle in the vicinity of Gangtok.” Khye Bumsa felt highly obliged to the Lepcha king. A great and deep friendship grew between the Lepchas and new-comers. Khye Bumsa and the Lepcha Chief Thekong Tek swore blood brotherhood and signed the same in blood at Khabe Longtsok.

Mipon Rab the third son of Khye Bumsa assumed the Chiefship after the death of his father. He had four sons and the four principal clans of Sikkim are said to have sprung from these four sons. The fourth son Guru Tashi succeeded Mipon Rab and shifted to Gangtok. On the other hand after the death of Thekong Tek the Lepchas broke into minor clans. They also gradually turned to Guru Tashi for protection and leadership. Guru Tashi appointed a Lepcha, Sambre as his chief adviser and Lieutenant. Guru Tashi’s rule marked the absorption of the foreign ruling house into the native soil and also paved a way for a regular monarchy. This way Guru Tashi became the first ruler of Sikkim and was crowned as such. He was followed by Jowo Nagpo, Jowo Apha and Guru Tenzing who pursued the policy of creating progressively amicable relations with Lepchas.

Phuntsog (or Penchu) Namgyal was the next ruler. He was Guru Tenzing’s son and was born in 1604. “Phuntsog Namgyal’s crowning was charged with all the vivid fantasy and miraculous phenomenon that is befitting to so important an occasion.” Three venerable lamas are said to have entered Sikkim from three different directions at the same time. They met at Yoksam (meaning three wise men) and began a debate on the desirability of having a temporal and religious head to rule over pagan Sikkim. Two of the lamas furthered their own claims but the third lama reminded them of the prophecy of Guru Padamsambhava that a

2 Ibid., p. 6.
man coming from east and Phuntsog by name would rule Sikkim. It was also told that none of them came from east and hence the real man must be looked for. Messengers were sent to seek Phuntsog. Near Gangtok the desired young man was found and lamas lost no time in crowning him the King. They seated him on a nearby rock slab and sprinkled water on him from the sacred urn. He was given one of Lhatsum Chenpo’s (the Lama who told about prophecy) names, Namgyal, and the title of Chogyal or religious king. It happened in the year 1642.

The Namgyal dynasty ruled over Sikkim as hereditary kings for about 332 years. But some historians challenge this fact and assert that Gyurmed Namgyal a descendant of Phuntsog Namgyal died issueless at the age of 26 and this way the Phuntsog Namgyal dynasty came to an end. “The situation, however, was saved by a local lama by discovering a pregnant nun and declaring that she was carrying the child of the late king in her womb.” The nun delivered a male child who was accepted heir to the throne and Namgyal dynasty saved from extinction. The child was named Phuntsog Namgyal after the name of first Chogyal.

Phuntsog Namgyal the first consecrated ruler ruled over a vast territory, many times the size of present Sikkim. His kingdom touched Thang La in Tibet in the north, Tagong La near Paro in Bhutan in the east and to Titalia on the borders of West Bengal and Bihar in the South. The western border touched Timar Chorten on the Timar river in Nepal. Phuntsog though a distant descendant of Indrabodhi was now a Bhotia by his domicile. He was purused by the lamas enthroning him as Chogyal (Heavenly king or king who rules with righteousness) to seek recognition from Dalai Lama of Tibet. “The Dalai Lama recognised Phuntsog Namgyal as the ruler of the southern slopes of the Himalayas (Sikkim) and is also credited to have sent ceremonial presents such as the silken scarf bearing Dalai Lama’s seal, the mitre (hat) of the Guru Rimpoche, the devil dagger (phurpa), and the most precious sand image of the Guru. Consequently, the newly established Bhotia principality of Namgyal dynasty was tied to Tibetan theocracy. Since then upto 19th century, the Bhotia rulers of Sikkim looked upto Tibet for protection against political foes.”

Phuntsog Namgyal proved to be an efficient and capable administrator. He divided his kingdom into twelve dzongs i.e. districts and appointed Dzongpona i.e. Governor for each. He also declared Mahayana Buddhism as the State religion which continued to be the State

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religion under all the Namgyal rulers. He very tactfully kept the Lepchas, Bhotias and Limbus together. The Governors were appointed from the Lepchas who were then in majority. Since Yatung the greatest commercial Tibetan centre being nearer to Gangtok posed some danger he shifted his capital to Yoksam. He also had a council of a dozen Ministers. He got the first monastery, Sangla Choling built in Sikkim under the direction of Lhatsun Chenpo. "An image of this famed lama is enshrined in the monastery of Enchay above Gangtok and portrays him in horrific aspect, almost naked, blue in colour, seated on a leopard skin and crowned with a diadem of skulls. In his left hand he holds a human skull filled with blood, and in his right a trident on which human heads are impaled."5

Phuntsog Namgyal was succeeded by Tensung Namgyal in 1644. He shifted the capital from Yoksam to Rabdentse. He had three queens each from Tibet, Bhutan and Sikkim. The offsprings of these queens picked up quarrels and strifes among themselves and it led to restlessness and feuds. The turmoil invited foreign intrusion and interference. Though Tensung Namgyal had set up a popular government with the representatives of the eight clans and councillors yet he could not curb the palace feuds. He died in 1700.

Chador Namgyal a minor son from Tensung’s second wife succeeded on the death of his father. Pedi the daughter from the first wife who came from Bhutan challenged the succession and invited Bhutanese intervention. Having come to know about this secret move Yugthing Yeshe a loyal minister took the minor king to Lhasa. During his asylum in Lhasa, Chador Namgyal distinguished himself in Buddhist learning and Tibetan literature. By dint of his acumen and scholarship he rose to the position of State Astrologer to the Sixth Dalai Lama. The Dalai Lama was so much pleased with the erudition of this young scholar that he bestowed high honours and titles on the young king. The young king also received an estate in central Tibet with sovereign rights. On the other hand Bhutanese forces had captured the Rabdentse palace and imprisoned the son of Yugthing Yeshe. But on the intervention of Tibet, King Deb of Bhutan withdrew. Chador Namgyal staged a come back and drove out the rest of Bhutanese forces. The south-eastern tract was, however, lost to Sikkim as it had been heavily colonized by then. The Bhutanese after a short while made a second attempt to capture Sikkim territory. Chador Namgyal gave a tough resistance but the areas now called as

Kalimpong and Rhenock were lost for ever. Chador was himself religious and took steps for the propagation of Buddhist religion in his territory. "He commanded that the second of every three sons of a Bhutia family must be ordained a monk of the Pemion-gchi Monastery which was also open to the Tsongs. He not only built the Guru Lhakhang Tashiding (1715) and patronized the sacred places but also adapted the religious dances (mystery plays) to keep alive the martial and native traditions and invented an alphabet for the Lepchas." However, Pedi the half sister of the ruler did not reconcile. She conspired with a Tibetan man of medicine and caused Chador Namgyal’s death by way of blood-letting from a main artery while the king was holidaying at Ralong hot water spring in 1716. A force was sent to Namchi, the doctor was executed and Pedi was strangled to death by a silk scarf.

Gyurmmed Namgyal succeeded his father Chador. Consequent upon a Mongol (Dzungar) invasion on Tibet to persecute Nyingma sect, the Mindoling abbot’s family sought refuge in Sikkim. Gyurmmed who was a wandering mendicant till then was married to Mindoling abbot’s sister. In his times the people were forced to work on the fortification of Rabdentse in the fear of Gurkha and Bhutanese raids. Many Tsongs who were not prepared to yield to forced labour fled to Limbuana which became a rebel district and broke away from Sikkim even earlier to Gurkha expansion. A boundary dispute with Bhutan also arose. The Magar Chieftain Tashi Bidur also revolted, though he was subdued. Limbuana was, however, lost to Nepal. Gyurmmed had no issue but while on his death bed at the age of 26 (1733) gave out that a nun in Sangana Choling was carrying his child. But some people do not believe it. “It is said, he was impotent and generally shunned his wife. Therefore, the story goes, that in order to keep the Namgyal dynasty going, the Lama priests of Sikkim, concocted a story that a nun was carrying the child of the king.” Fortunately the nun delivered a male child and he was accepted as heir to Gyurmmed. He was named as Phuntsog after Phuntsog the first temporal and the spiritual head of Sikkim.

Phuntsog Namgyal II was opposed by many people including some Bhutias on the plea of illegitimacy. Tamdang a close confidant and treasurer of Gyurmmed not only opposed the succession but assumed the powers of the ruler and continued to rule Sikkim for three years in spite of the opposition by pro King faction. The Lepchas backed the baby king and fought the pretender.

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7 Shukla, R.S., op. cit., p. 17.
under the leadership of Chandzod Karwang. Tamdang was defeated and fled to Tibet to seek guidance and help. But to keep Sikkim under their tutelage the Tibetan authorities favoured the infant king. Tibet also sent Rabden Sherpa as a Regent during the minority of the king. A convention representing all shades of Sikkimese population was held which defined the functions, powers and responsibilities of the Government. The system of annual taxation was also introduced to augment the State treasury. The Magar tribe lost its Chieftain during this time and asked the Regent to appoint the deceased’s son as Chieftain. But the Regent expressed his inability to comply with their demand. This act enraged the Magars who sought the help and protection from Bhutan. This way Sikkim lost Magar allegiance for ever. In the year 1752 the Tsongs rose in arms, but were subdued and won over tactfully by Chandzok Karwang. The rise of Gurkhas also posed a threat for Sikkim. The later years of Phuntsog II witnessed Gurkha inroads in Sikkim under the leadership of Raja Prithvi Narayan Shah of Nepal who fomented the rebellious elements in Sikkim. Bhutan also invaded Sikkim and captured all area east of Tista, but withdrew to present frontiers after negotiations at Rhenock. The Gurkha inroads were beaten back seventeen times. A peace treaty with Nepal was signed in 1775, and Gurkhas promised to abstain from further attacks and collaboration with Bhutanese. But the Gurkhas at a later stage violated the treaty and occupied the land in western Sikkim. Phuntsog II had three queens but had a son Tenzing Namgyal from his second queen in 1769.

Tenzing Namgyal succeeded after his father’s death in 1780. He got married to the daughter of Chandzok Karwang. He regrouped the Sikkimese to expel all the Nepali influence. Two columns of Sikkimese forces constituted a pincer movement. The Bhutia force reached as far as Arun river but could not achieve its aim because of their leader’s death and shortage of ammunition. The second force also defeated the Gurkhas at Morang but there was, however, no decisive victory. In 1788 Gurkhas again occupied southern Sikkim and also took Rabdentse by surprise. Tenzing retreated to Kahbe and ultimately Lhasa. In 1790 some of the Nepalese pressure was expelled but it relaxed only when Nepal got involved in Tibet. The three forces of Tsong, Lepcha and Bhutia combined against Gurkhas and succeeded to expel the aggression to a considerable limit. Tenzing Namgyal died at Lhasa in 1793.

Tsugphud Namgyal succeeded in 1793 and had the longest span of rule till 1864. He was a very brilliant lad and many believed him to be the incarnation of Manjushri, i.e. Bodhisattva of Wisdom.
During his regime the British power succeeded in penetrating into the Himalaya and British trade reached Tibet across the Himalaya. Sikkim fell a prey to the British diplomacy and the king Tsugphud Namgyal was in a way sandwiched in between the Britishers on the one hand and Sino-Tibetan authorities on the other hand. Sikkim became involved in Anglo Nepalese war and Sikkim came to be known as a British ally. British helped to drive out Gurkhas from south-western Sikkim. In 1814 the capital was shifted from Rabdentse to Tumlong as the former was considered too close to the Nepalese frontier. In 1817 the Treaty of Titalia was signed. This treaty fixed the Nepalo-Sikkimese boundary along the Mahanadi and Michi rivers and the Singalila range. But this did not conform to the Sikkimese wishes who wanted the territories around Titalia also. The British, however, acquired this area from the Gurkhas but kept the same with them.

One of the queens of Tsugphud belonged to the Panchen Lama family of Tibet. The relations with Tibet became cold consequent upon the strained relations between Panchen Lama and the then Regent of Tibet, Tsomoiling. Chandzok Bolek the uncle of the Namgyal became the Prime Minister. His rise to eminence paved the way to many jealousies leading to the assassination of entire Bolek family. His relations fled to Elam and sought Nepal’s protection. This finalized the loss of Elam. Bolek’s relations i.e. Kotpas had constant clashes with Sikkimese forces. All tactics and threats to win back the Kotpas failed, and they continued to be a problem.

In the year 1828 when British Officer came to enquire into a boundary dispute between Sikkim and Nepal his eye fell on the panoramic and charming hill resort of Darjeeling. “Tsugphud Namgyal gave Capt. Lloyd a deed giving the hill of Darjeeling for a sanatorium to the East India Company out of friendship to the Governor General but at the same time on the consideration that the boundary dispute would be favourably concluded and that an equivalent land would be given in exchange. The company, however, forced a rent on the ruler which he was constantly refusing.” On the issue of extricating slaves, criminals and tax collection in Sikkim-Morang (Terai) by Chambell the then Deputy Commissioner of Darjeeling the relations between Sikkim and British started deteriorating. The worsening of these relations culminated in the detention of Chambell and Hooker while they were on an unauthorized exploration inside Sikkim in the year 1859. Enraged by this act of Sikkimese authorities a punitive expedition was sent on the return of Chambell and Hooker. This led to the
annexation of whole of the Darjeeling tract and Morang in 1860. Next year a treaty was forced on Sikkim and the annexation of Darjeeling confirmed. The treaty in fact was got signed by the heir prince Sidkeong Namgyal while Tsugphud was still in Chumbi. On the other hand Tibet had never liked the Namgyal's act of gifting away the Darjeeling hill. This caused strained relations between Tibet and Sikkim. Tibet forbade the entry of Sikkimese rulers to the sacred soil of Lhasa except once in eight years. Tsugphud Namgyal breathed his last in 1863.

Sidkeong Namgyal succeeded to the throne after the death of his father at the mature age of 44. He was thought to be the incarnation of Karampa Lama of Khama and was venerated as such. He had already looked after the administration in the last days of his father when he had become quite old and infirm. He spent his time in resolving long standing disputes with his neighbours as also with the British. An age old grazing dispute and two other disputes with Bhutan were quite amicably settled. In 1873 an year before his death he visited Darjeeling and met the Governor of Bengal in a bid to resolve the strained Anglo Sikkimese relations. He succeeded in his aim. He was still negotiating with British authorities on the question of modernising Sikkimese army when the icy hands of death snatched a diplomatic and capable ruler from Sikkim.

Thutob Namgyal became the nineth consecrated ruler or Chogyal of Sikkim in 1874. He had two wives. The first wife who died in birth pangs in 1880 belonged to the Tashi Lhumpo family of Tibet. The second wife hailing from the Lhading house of Lhasa became the queen in 1888. The latter was a woman of much ability and wisdom and heroically shared her husband's ordeals and vicissitudes. At the time Thutob became Chogyal the British paramountcy had spread over Asia and Sikkim had fallen prey to the British diplomacy. Thutob was of a very tender age whereas he had to deal with the Britishers, the men of age and experience who would spare no efforts in instigating the vested interests in Sikkim to work on unpatriotic and treasonable lines. "Gurkha Chauvinism from the days of Raja Prithivinarayan worked first for conquests of land from neighbouring countries and second for colonization in other countries. Sikkim was not immune from the second process also. The seventh ruler Tsugphud Namgyal had therefore prohibited the settlement of Nepalese in Sikkim." In Thutob's earlier year some local magnates including brothers Khangsa Dewan and Phodong Lama violated the ban and got some

9 Ibid., p. 15.
Nepalese families settled in the Sikkim territory for their personal gains. The natives, however, strongly reacted to this unlawful settlement. The Nepalese settled along the Tista were thrice ejected. The Khangsa borthers on the other hand worked their way to the young ruler and became virtual rulers. The British Deputy Commissioner of Darjeeling favoured the Khangsa policy of settling the immigrants. Sensing the mischief monging attitude of the British Deputy Commissioner, Chogyal approached the British Governor of Bengal, Ashley Eden. A meeting between the Chogyal and Governor was held at Kalimpong. Eden agreed to the policy of prohibiting the settlement of immigrants on the soil of Sikkim. He added that even if for the settlement of barren lands some immigrants had to be brought in, they be never allowed to hold any office or village headship. The Sikkim Assembly drew up the document of prohibiting the Nepalese immigrants to settle in Sikkim. This document had to be signed by the Chogyal as well as the Darjeeling Deputy Commissioner. Khangsa brothers obtained the consent of the Chogyal with the outer seal and added in Tibetan, “according to the Governor’s desire I promised to abide by the policy of allowing the Gurkhales to settle in uninhabited and waste lands of Sikkim.” Consequently the Khangsa brothers in connivance with the Darjeeling Deputy Commissioner started settling Nepalese in Rhenock. A body of Sikkimese on the other hand started turning out the new settlers. This led to a clash between pro and anti settlers. But the Khangsa brothers got the dispute settled by the Darjeeling Deputy Commissioner in favour of pro settlers. This led to increased settlement of Nepalese.

Frustrated by such moves Thutob retreated to Chumbi in summer. British were not happy by this act. They instead wanted the ruler not to retreat to Chumbi and hand over the administration to Khangsa brothers and Sheo Dewan. In 1885-86 the British got involved with Tibet. The ruler knew that in this clash Sikkim might become the battle ground. He worked to mediate between the British and Tibet but all in vain. British wanted to open trade relations with Tibet even much earlier. They failed to achieve their aim and Tibetan authorities even did not permit the British to have their military posts near their border. Since the Sikkim ruler could not pacify both the parties he became a persona non grata for both the sides. The Tibetans stopped the annual gift to the Chogyal and the British not only stopped the Darjeeling subvention but also demanded Chogyal’s return from Chumbi on pain of annexation of Sikkim. The Chogyal returned from Chumbi. British brought reinforcement in Sikkim while Tibetans
fortified Chumbi till then the part of Sikkim. Armed clashes took place but no party scored a decisive point.

The British made a convention with Chinese. Chinese accepted the Sikkim as British Protectorate and British accepted the Sino-Sikkimese boundary on the crest of the mountain range on the watershed. Sikkim’s claims to Chumbi were thus given away. This treaty was forced upon the Sikkim and Claude White was appointed as the first Political Officer in Sikkim. This reduced the Chogyal from a de facto ruler to a de jure ruler. The ruler or any officer of Sikkim was prohibited to negotiate with any foreign nation on any matter without the prior permission of the British authorities.

When Claude White arrived in Sikkim, Thutob retreated to Chumbi. White formed a council of three persons including besides himself, the Khangsa brothers. Chogyal’s income was frozen and he was directed to come back from Chumbi. Shortly the King and his wife were arrested and sent to Kalimpong. Thutob was asked to get his sons back from Chumbi. The King agreed to this demand but the sons were held back by their maternal grand-mother when she heard of the treatment meted out to the king and the queen. The Sikkim-Tibet barter trade was stopped by the British as they wanted to open up their own trade. White also embarked upon a plan to destroy the traditional economy of Sikkim. After several months the royal couple was freed. The king and the queen went to Nabey because at that time Gangtok was ravaged by an epidemic. On hearing the news of elder son’s ailment the queen rushed to Chumbi without British permission. This annoyed the British overlords and they arrested the Chogyal once again. This time the king was given many hardships. He was kept in solitary confinement for 13 days and even food and water were supplied only after repeated requests. On being freed even, the king was forced to do odd jobs. Meanwhile the queen and the elder son came back from Chumbi. Frustrated by the usurpation of governmental authority and impoverished by the stoppage of income the king and the queen went on a pilgrimage in Sikkim.

Tired of the maltreatment Thutob sought British Governor’s intervention and also planned a retreat to Dobtah, a Sikkim enclave near Khampazong in Tibet. But to his misfortune the Nepalese intercepted him in Walong valley and handed him over to the British. Chogyal and Maharani were interned at Ging and later on in Kurseong. In 1894, however, the British learnt that White’s excesses were contrary to the policy of British and even expressed displeasure at the usurpation of the Sikkim Ruler’s authority. In 1895 the Chogyal and Maharani were released. On
their arrival at Gangtok White met the couple with open arms, offered them gifts and asked them to forget the past treatment and also assured his assistance. But Claude White was not so simple a man. He kept the entire administration with him and transferred only the judiciary to the Chogyal. The British on the other hand were impatient to open trade relations with Tibet. For this purpose they wanted the Queen to mediate. While Queen was devising ways and means the British lost patience and sent an expedition to Tibet under Francis Younghusband in 1904. Naturally a large number of Sikkimese were forced to road construction and transport for the expedition.

In 1905 when Panchen Lama and King Deb of Bhutan met Prince of Wales at Calcutta they requested him to restore their administrative power. By this time Claude White and Khangsa brothers had fallen out. The Political officer now handed over the administration to Chogyal but retained the power to review any transaction. Thutob in his turn allocated the responsibility of administration among several ministers and established a secretariat. In 1908 Chogyal went to Nepal on a pilgrimage and signed a blood brotherhood with the Nepalese Prime Minister Chandra Shamsher. The heir apparent Sidkeong Tulku who had gone to Oxford for higher studies came back in 1908 and helped his father in administration. Chogyal’s wife died in 1910 and Chogyal himself passed away four years later.

Sidkeong Tulku who succeeded to the throne in 1914 was thought to be the incarnate of Sidkeong Namgyal the eighth ruler of Sikkim who himself was considered to be the incarnate of Karamapa Lama of Kham. Indeed Tulku was a man with extraordinary qualities. He developed a high degree of intelligence and forceful personality at a very young age. Even during his father’s last years he looked after the portfolios of forests, monasteries and schools. He was a kind hearted ruler and took two very bold reforms. He abolished imprisonment as a penalty to non-payment of debts. He also removed ban on settlement of plains men. He tried his best to remove vested interests from religious places and worked for the unity of all Buddhists. He made the monasteries to live up to their social obligations. He proposed to liquidate landlords and this act on his part enraged many high ups. Since he was assertive and independant in his decision, his relations with Charles Bell the Political Officer became strained. “In December, 1914, while somewhat indisposed, a British physician from Bengal administered a heavy transfusion of brandy and put him under a number of blankets; at the same time a fire was kept beneath the bed. Death came in an
hour."\(^{10}\) Thus ended prematurely a promising and progressive career in most suspicious circumstances. Had he lived for some years he would have brought many reforms in this remote corner. It is suspected that he was got killed with the connivance of British Political Officer.

Sidkeong Tulku died on 5 December 1914 while he was a bachelor. He was succeeded by his half brother, Tashi Namgyal who was born in 1893 at Kurseong while his parents were in captivity there. He was for some time under the tutelage of Charles Bell, the then Political Officer of Sikkim. Only after three and a half years he was restored all governmental authority in 1918. Tashi Namgyal was made the ruler after ignoring the claim of senior prince Tchoda Namgyal. The British this way proved that they were the real king-makers in Sikkim but Tashi Namgyal proved to be an enlightened ruler who ruled over Sikkim for about five decades. He initiated and brought about many social and economic reforms.

He took measures to eradicate many social evils and inequities. Public gambling was banned in 1921 and in the year 1924 unpaid forced labour was made a penal offence. In those days Government also used to force people for an unpaid labour. Such a practice was known as ‘Jharlangi’ in Sikkim. This practice had assumed inaccessible postures due to the British expeditions in these Himalayas. Tashi slowly and gradually succeeded in wiping out this stigmatic evil. The personnel of landlords were also banned from functioning as police. On the Land reforms front a trigonometrical survey of the land was accomplished for the first time in the history of Sikkim. Landlords as usual were not prepared to relinquish their estates but the ruler clipped their powers and functions. The Landlord courts were abolished. The Lessee system was dropped and peasants were asked to make direct payments of the tax to the State.

In the second world war the Chogyal placed the resources of the state at the disposal of the Allies. More than six thousand young Sikkimese joined the British armed forces. Even the heir apparent, Prince Paljor Namgyal took commission in the Air Force and was killed in active service in 1941. After the second world war the king had a detailed plan aimed at economic development of Sikkim but it could not be put to practice because of lack of funds. It was after Pandit Nehru’s assurance during his Sikkim visit in 1952 that Sikkim started slowly and gradually on the path of planned progress.

\(^{10}\) *Ibid.*, p. 24,
In the year 1953-54 Indian Penal Code and Civil Code were adopted in Sikkim. The Indian Marriages Act was also adopted with certain modifications suiting local conditions. In 1955 High Court was established in the state. In the year 1950 the treaty with British arrived at 1861 was modified and a treaty for mutual friendship, peace and economic cooperation was signed with India. This way Sikkim became an Indian protectorate now onwards. The loan advanced by the Nehru Government in the initial years was later on converted into an economic aid. This aid brought about socio-economic reforms in the State. But the delayed implementation had already led to resentment among the people. The vested interests took this as a golden opportunity and political parties started emerging up. The Sikkim State Congress started agitating for the complete abolition of landlordism, full responsible government and accession to India. The last demand led to the creation of Sikkim National Party opposing accession but desiring a Treaty relationship.

Tashi Namgyal who had enlarged his council by inducting representatives of all shades of people was prepared for better administrative set up leading to public welfare. A new Cabinet was formed under the State Congress, but the Chogyal dismissed the cabinet on the charges of inefficiency and constitution opposing elements. He instead asked India to send a trained administrator in the form of a Dewan. Till the arrival of Dewan the State administration was looked after by the Political Officer. The Dewan arrived in 1949. He started the campaign for tax collection so that the State funds could be augmented. He got the landlordism completely abolished and also reduced the house tax. The Dewan and Political Officer brought about a reapproachment in between the Political parties to pave a way for the establishment of State Council. The first general elections in Sikkim were held on 23 March 1953. The State Council consisted of seventeen members with six members each from Bhotia, Lepcha and Nepalese whereas five members were nominated by the Chogyal at his discretion. The Executive Council was set up to run the administration.

Chogyal Tashi Namgyal had an eventful and busy career but he did snatch some leisure moments for the cultivation of letters and arts, a taste he inherited from his mother. He extended his patronage to scholars engaged in Buddhist studies as well as scholars engaged in the exploration of nature’s bounty in Sikkim. Chogyal himself followed Mahayana cult but always shunned bigotry and intolerance. He was also many times seen painting landscapes. But his reign came to an end on 2 December 1963 when he passed away. The reforms brought about during his times were
not all and always of his liking. In fact by this time political awakening had dawned in the state and reforms were initiated to quell the disturbances and atmosphere of unrest likely to prevail in the state.

Tashi Namgyal was succeeded by Palden Thondup Namgyal as Chogyal. Since the heir apparent Prince Paljore was killed in second world war, Palden Thondup was sent to get civil service training in the Indian Public Administration Academy, Mussorie by his father. In 1944, he was selected President of Sikkims State Council and remained in this coveted office till 1949. He in fact became Chogyal’s principal adviser in judicial and executive matters. He advised his father on External affair also and led the delegation which negotiated treaty with India in 1949-50.

Dawn of New Era

As has been with many of the feudal governments the Sikkim Government also started facing simmering and seeping opposition especially after the abolition of feudal system in about 565 princely states of India. During the current century enlightened and freedom loving people gave a sort of clarion call to their co-suffering brothers to rise against the feudal system, autocracy and dictatorship. The attainment of Indian independence, much of the credit of which goes to Mahatma Gandhi’s novel methods of non-violent agitation, civil disobedience, protests and strikes gave new hope to the millions of innocent and un-armed masses living in various parts of the globe. It was witnessed that with the fall of British regime in India, the foreign yoke started loosening day by day in different parts of the world. The sleeping giant, Asia awoke from its slumber and saw many organs on its body becoming mobile after a long paralysed life. It seemed that people everywhere were responding to the mighty call of Swami Vivekananda the Intellectual Giant of India, “Arise, awake and stop not till the goals reached.” With the lapse of British paramountcy in India, and singing of Indo-Sikkim treaty of 1950 Sikkim became an Indian protectorate. But as elsewhere the enlightened elite of the state wanted a democratic rule and no longer wanted the continuation of theocratic monarchy. But such goals are not achieved by a handful of intellectsia only. Unless it becomes a mass movement and unless torch bearers are prepared to make sacrifices, to be imprisoned, tortured and exiled the freedom movements do not bear fruits.

In the days of Tashi Namgyal the ‘political parties’ had niched their place on the body politic of Sikkim. The Sikkim State Congress in its historic resolution of 7 December 1974 among other things demanded a popular Government and merger of Sikkim
with India. Naturally such demands were not palatable for the autocratic rulers. On the behest of autocratic rulers and other vested interests ‘The Sikkim National Party’ had come into existence in April 1948. The manifesto of this reactionary party was just the anti-thesis of Sikkim State Congress. Just around this time a third party under the name of Rajya Praja Sammelan emerged on the political scene of the State. It gave out a call for complete union with India and closer associations with the Nepali population of Darjeeling and North Bengal. This way Gangtok was fast developing into an arena of party politics with autocratic government machinery fully supporting the Sikkim National Party. The Sikkim State Congress stalwarts were branded as ‘Indian agents out to sell their motherland’. On the other hand the Sikkim State Congress increased the tempo of its movement. The Government in all panic arrested the Sikkim State Congress leaders. This act of Government apprehended widespread disorder and breach of peace. Still in another panic the authorities imposed a curfew in Gangtok. Despite it a mammoth procession condemning the Government action was taken out on 9 February 1949 and the demonstrations continued for another two days. The Indian Political Officer advised the government on right lines and government released all the arrested leaders on 12 February 1949. This proved in a way the first victory of the Sikkim State Congress. When May day was celebrated by the labouring class in many parts of the world, thousands of Sikkimese toiling peasants demonstrated in a Gandhian way in front of the palace with the shouts of ‘Prajatantra Zindabad’ (Long Live Democracy) and ‘Inqilab Zindabad’ (Long Live Revolution). The situation became so tense that the Maharaja fled for his life and took shelter with the Indian Political Officer. The satyagrahis (agitators) barred the entry of Maharaj Kumar to the palace. Again, the Indian Political Officer persuaded upon the Maharaja to form a popular ministry. On Maharaja’s assurance to do so the satyagrahis withdrew. Consequently the first popular ministry with three representatives from the Sikkim State Congress and from official group was formed with Tashi Tshering (Sikkim State Congress) as Chief Minister on 9 May 1949. No doubt this was another feather in the cap of Sikkim State Congress but the Maharaja did not allow the ministry to function properly. The state officials who were on the mercy of the Maharaja did not comply with the orders of the ministry. This led to many quarrels, feuds and strained relations between the Chief Minister and Maharaja. Consequently on 2 June 1949 the ministry had to be dismissed and administration taken over by the Indian Political Officer,
Harishwar Dyal the then Political Officer became very unpopular with the Sikkim State Congress. Therefore, shortly he was replaced by J.S. Lall, I.C.S. as Dewan of Sikkim. He saw to reason and found that the Sikkim State Congress had its hold with the masses. He gave a very sympathetic hearing to the demands of this party and acceded to two of their major demands. Forced labour was abolished and house tax reduced. An advisory council was also constituted to advise the Dewan on administrative matters. But this system could not last long because of the conglomeration of diverse interests. Then came the Indo-Sikkim Treaty of 5 December 1950. But this treaty did not satisfy the Sikkim State Congress. The pro-palace National Party on the other hand started a wilfull campaign of maligning the Sikkim State Congress leadership and the party succeeded in causing a confusion among the Bhutia and Lepcha supporters of Sikkim State Congress. The Maharaja and his supporters created such a condition that Sikkim State Congress was caught in the political web and it could find no time to work for its ideals and goals.

In 1963 the Maharaj Kumar Palden Thondup a widower for six years got married to Miss Hope Cook of the U.S.A. and a Buddhist scholar who entered Sikkim for her so-called field studies the same year. "In certain quarters it was openly suggested that Cook was a C.I.A. plan and was sent there to fish out information for logistic and diplomatic importance and send the same to her masters. Her duties perhaps also included to wean the Maharaj Kumar—who was shortly to be the new Maharaja—away from India and help as far as possible the establishment of an Independent State, where U.S. might build up some sort of defence structures against China."¹¹ Seven months after his second marriage Palden Namgyal succeeded to the throne. About a year and a half later the new Chogyal was formally crowned on 4 April 1965 and Hope Namgyal became the Gyalmo (the consort of Deities) of Sikkim. An official delegation from India also was in Sikkim on this occasion. The delegation noted some changes in the attitude of the Chogyal. Earlier they had been playing upon Indian National Anthem on all such occasions but this time they played upon a separate Sikkimese National Anthem. The strength of guards had also been increased from 60 to two companies. Thereafter the Gyalmo, i.e., the Queen in an article challenged the Indo-Sikkim Treaty of 1950 as 'unjust' and asked for the merger of Darjeeling with Sikkim. The same year an anti India organisation was also formed under the name of Study Forum.

On its own political front the Sikkim National Congress which represents the masses, a new party led by Lhendup Dorji although swept the polls was not allowed to have any say in the administrative affairs. The pro-palace people also continued their conspiracies and moves to sow the seeds of discontentment among various political parties. The Chogyal always foiled those attempts which worked for the existence of an active opposition group in the executive council. "It was a very peculiar feature of Sikkim politics that all parties were keen to be in the Executive Council and there remained no party to function as the opposition party to pinpoint the mistakes of the administration. Just by throwing crumbs of office the Chogyal was in a position to buy off their loyalties."  

The Sikkim National Congress though a party to the Executive Council got disgusted from the misrule, corruption and nepotism being perpetuated by the Chogyal and his favourites. Some leaders including Lhendup Dorji issued a strongly worded bulletin listing the acts of omission and commission by the Chogyal administration. The matter was taken to the Council and censure motions passed against Dorji and his colleagues. Government issued warrants of arrest against Dorji and his colleagues. But by this time Kazi Lhendup Dorji had left for Europe with his wife Kazini Elisa Maria. D.B. Gurung against whom also arrest warrants had been issued appeared in the court and pleaded innocence by throwing all fault on Kazini Sahiba and Nar Bahadur Khaliwada, the stormy petal of the organisation.

On the eve of 1973 elections, on the intervention of some Indian diplomat, charges of sedition against Kazi Lhendup Dorji were dropped and he was permitted to file his nomination papers. On reaching Gangtok, Kazi found that his party had almost reached near extinction. Some party leaders had joined National Party or had joined the newly formed Janta Congress. The Sikkim State Congress which had raised the question of complete merger with the Indian Union had completely disappeared from the scene and now only three parties i.e. Sikkim National Congress, Sikkim National Party and Sikkim Janata Congress were in the field. The only party with a secular base was Sikkim National Congress whereas the Sikkim Janata Congress and Sikkim National Party had pro-Nepalese and pro-Bhutia-Lepcha bases respectively. The atmosphere seemed to be charged with communal tension and under such an atmosp here 'rigged elections' were conducted in Sikkim. The elections as usual were not based on 'one man one vote' formula but on the 'parity formula'.
which suited only the Sikkim National Party. Consequently in a house of 18 members the Sikkim National Party won eleven seats whereas the remaining 7 seats were shared by Sikkim National Congress and the Sikkim Janata Congress in the ratio of 5:2. Both these parties demanded 'one man one vote' formula and charged the Chogyal for rigging the elections. K.C. Pradhan, President of Sikkim Janata Congress was arrested. This led to protests and hunger strike on palace lawns. The Chogyal on the other hand cared little for such protests and busied himself in the preparation of his golden jubilee year to be celebrated on 4 April 1973 on his 50th birthday.

The Sikkim National Congress and Sikkim Janata Congress formed a Joint Action Committee under the Chairmanship of Kazi Lhendup Dorji. The Committee issued an ultimatum for the acceptance of their demands failing which agitation would be started and Golden Jubilee Year celebrations prevented. The Chogyal still did not pay any attention. Therefore people from all corners of the State started converging at Gangtok on April 3. Police raised barriers but people managed to reach the palace. For some time the attrition war between the police and people continued but two fire shots by a police official escalated the situation. The Bhutia dominated police used tear gas shells also. Many were wounded in the melee that followed. The agitators withdrew to Ranipul at a distance of about 12 kms. from Gangtok. Here the elder prince Tenzing fired revolver shots wounding two women and one man. This further aggravated the situation. Of all the wounded persons six succumbed to their injuries. Demonstrators who were driven away from Gangtok now reached the rural areas and roused the masses against the Chogyal. Finding himself unable to administer his territory Chogyal passed on the administration to Indian Political Officer on April 8. After one month when normalcy returned a Tripartite Agreement between the Chogyal, major political parties and Government of India was signed on 8 May 1973. The agreement envisaged the establishment of a fully responsible government with a more democratic constitution, guarantee of fundamental rights, rule of law, an independent judiciary and greater legislative and executive powers to the elected representatives of the people and adult-suffrage based on one man one vote.

Different political parties prepared themselves for the coming elections in accordance with the Tripartite agreement. The turmoil and upheaval had brought two parties of Sikkim National Congress and Sikkim Janata Congress very close to each other. So, both the parties joined each other and gave birth to the new
political party under the name of Sikkim Congress. Sikkim Congress swept the polls by capturing 29 seats in a house of thirty-two. Party Chief Lhendup Dorji and two others were elected unopposed. All these events should have been enough for the Chogyal to realise his precarious condition but he was adamant and continued to consider himself as the living symbol of Sikkimese identity. He was very ambitious and wished to continue as national monarch similar to the monarchs of Nepal and Bhutan in his neighbourhood. His American wife and other well wishers at home and abroad were trying to push his case in the international forums. But his opponents and especially the newly victorious Sikkim Congress also seemed to have taken a vow to teach the correct lesson to the erring and adamant Chogyal. Chogyal on his way was not sitting idle. He wanted to regain his political hold. As in the past he too got a new political party emerged with the help of his political mercenaries. Chogyal's brother-in-law Dr. Sonam Gyatso organised Sikkim Prajatantra Party as an antidote to Sikkim Congress. Tenzing Namgyal, the Chogyal’s eldest son also organised Lepcha Association with the help of young educated Lamaists. “The Chogyal was also charged with plotting to get popular among the leaders of the Sikkim Congress murdered. These efforts could also win some educated Nepalese over their side, who had been eager to work for a price.”

In an atmosphere surcharged with tension, commotion and mistrust the Chogyal inaugurated the Sikkim Assembly as head of the State on 10 May 1974. Next day the assembly after passing the vote of thanks to the Chogyal in a solemn way passed a resolution reaffirming its faith in ‘the principles, purposes and provisions of the 8 May 1973 agreement signed by the Chogyal, Government of India and leaders of the political parties of the State’. The members of the legislative assembly who were seething with rage were not satisfied merely by such resolutions. They wanted the establishment of the “people’s rule” and constitution at the earliest. Therefore on their request Government of India placed the services of Mr. G. R. Rajgopalan, a constitutional expert with the Sikkim assembly for the desired purpose. “The members made it very plain to the expert that they were not satisfied with the existing arrangement and would like a constitution where all powers would vest in the hands of the representatives of the people, and not in the hands of Chogyal.”

13 Sinha, A.C; op. cit., p. 163.
14 Shukla, S.R., op. cit., p. 89.
The events yet took another grave turn on 20 June 1973 when some members of Chogyal's private Guard tried unsuccessfully to enter the MLA's to the Assembly Hall the day assembly had to pass a resolution reducing the Chogyal to mere head of the State and vesting more powers in the legislature and cabinet of ministers. This had an adverse impact on the MLA's not hailing from ruling party designate. The bill was passed unanimously and it was proved that Chogyal's writ no longer ran in his 'kingdom'. But the palace-henchmen reacted by way of organising demonstration against the bill. This provocation was sufficient for the ruling party designate which resented by way of organising demonstrations all over the length and breadth of the State. This way a direct struggle to gain power initiated between the anti-Chogyal and pro-Chogyal forces. These swiftly moving developments totally unnerved the Chogyal and he flew to New Delhi on an unscheduled visit without assigning his assent to the bill. The majority party appealed to the Government of India to "take necessary steps under the provisions of May 1973 agreement if the Chogyal does not give his consent to Government of Sikkim Bill within 48 hours" which envisaged that in "any difference of opinion between the Chief Executive and the Chogyal shall be referred to the Political Officer in Sikkim who shall obtain the advice of the Government of India which shall be binding." Simultaneously Kazi wrote to the Chief Executive Shri B.S. Das (in his capacity as President of the Assembly) to convene an emergent meeting of the assembly to finalise the Government of Sikkim Bill. The emergent meeting of the assembly was called on June 28, 1974. The assembly adopted the bill for the second time and thereby exhibited its strong determination to go ahead with the avowed reforms no matter how the Government of India and Chogyal reacted. The Government of India, however, advised the Chogyal to work in accordance with the wishes of the people.

Chogyal was hesitant to give his assent to the Bill and instead started interpreting the Tripartite agreement in a way suited only to him. He also tried to keep the political controversies alive contrary to the advice he received from New Delhi. This way he came into a sharp conflict with New Delhi also, which argued with him to give a fair trial to the new political arrangements. Ultimately after much haggling the Chogyal gave his assent to the Bill in the afternoon of 4 July 1974. Soon after the assent while Chogyal was still nursing his injured pride and wounded prestige Kazi Lhendup Dorji addressed himself to the task of Cabinet formation. He along with his all the MLAs visited Delhi and met the higher Indian authorities. After a very successful dialogue with the Indian
leaders the Sikkim legislators returned home to build a strong economic and political base for their fabled Himalayan kingdom. On July 23, 1974 a five member Cabinet was given the oath of office and secrecy by the Chogyal Palden Lhendup Namgyal under the Chief Minister'ship of Kazi Lhendup Dorji Khangsarpa. Thus ended the three century old feudal rule in the Himalayan State of Sikkim. Except China, Nepal and Pakistan no country opposed the initiation of popular government in Sikkim. China compared it with the 'Soviet troops marching into Czechoslovakia in 1968 and labelled it as bullying of small countries by big ones'. China, who was not on good terms with India was not expected to give any other comment except if the majority party happened to be of the Communists and that too of the Chinese bloc. The murmur in the neighbouring feudal state of Nepal is understandable "because the people there also had been agitating for long for a change in the feudal order and the pro-Dubair elements naturally got apprehensive of the possibility of catching the contagion."15 Like China nothing better could have been expected from Pakistan, which too had very strained relations at that time. Favourable comments poured in from many countries including the United Kingdom, the U.S.A., the U.A.R., Iran, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Japan, the U.S.S.R and many African countries.

Chogyal was no doubt made to eat a humble pie but he still was busy in getting the issue internationalized and thereby succeed in staging a come back to the helm of affairs. His American consort, sisters and friends in European countries, sympathisers in Nepal and some anti Indian countries had been espousing the cause of an international status for Sikkim. In such circumstances it was wiser for the Chogyal to remain reticent, unruffled and composed but it seemed that he was in a look for an opportunity to give vent to his pent up feelings. In the meanwhile in February 1975 Chogyal was invited to the investiture ceremony of the king of Nepal. The Sikkim cabinet could not appreciate the idea of Chogyal attending this ceremony especially when the ruling elite in Nepal opposed the welfare political innovations made in Sikkim. But the Chogyal stuck to his guns and included in his entourage some of the bureaucrats loyal to him but flaunting the authority of the Chief Minister. In Kathmandu the Chogyal met many foreign dignitaries and tried to convince them about the justness of his cause of sovereignty for Sikkim. He told them that there was no democracy in Sikkim. He pictured himself as the martyr for freedom and democracy. Asked about presenting his case to the

15 Ibid., p. 118.
United Nations he categorically announced that he would leave no stone unturned to keep separate identity of Sikkim and preserve international status. On his arrival back at Gangtok he was mobbed by thousands of Sikkim Congress volunteers who demanded his abdication. In the melee that followed Chogyal’s personal guard opened fire on the people injuring many demonstrators including R. C. Pondyol a member of the State Legislative Assembly. Above all he dragged the political battle to the legal arena. He sought an injunction on the issue of electing two members to the Indian Parliament by the Sikkim Legislative Assembly which was granted. The Assembly in its turn passed a resolution upholding the Sikkim Act 1974 as the highest law of the State and that its validity could not be challenged in any Court of Law. It seems that even in the legal tug of war Chogyal lost his case. What he forgot to keep in mind was that revolutionary political changes evolve their own constitutionality. The Chogyal proved the worst enemy of himself. With the exception of a handful of sycophants revolving round him in the palace he lost the sympathies of the Sikkim Government as well as people. The emergency session of the State Legislative Assembly was called on April 10, 1975 which passed a resolution abolishing the institution of Chogyal and declaring Sikkim henceforth a constituent unit of India. To strengthen their case the Government called a special referendum on this resolution on April 14, 1975. The referendum showed that more than 97 per cent of the voters were in favour of this resolution. The State Chief Minister along with his Cabinet colleagues visited Delhi and apprised the Indian Government about the latest developments. The Delegation further urged upon the Government of India to merge the State of Sikkim in the Indian Union at the earliest. The Delegation returned to Gangtok only when assured by no less than a person than the Prime Minister of India that the demand of the Sikkimese masses for merger of Sikkim with India would be fulfilled soon. This led to the 38th amendment of the Indian Constitution on April 26, 1975 and Sikkim was merged as the 22nd State of India. The act stipulated a separate Governor, a high court, an elected State assembly and a Cabinet led by the Chief Minister for Sikkim. As in the case of Andhra Pradesh and Nagaland, however, some special powers were extended for the Sikkim Governor keeping in view the strategic location of Sikkim on the international frontier and its ethnic complexity. After the bill was endorsed by State Assemblies the President of India gave his assent on May 15, 1975. The same day he also appointed Mr. B.B. Lal who had been till then functioning as Chief Executive, as the Governor of this new and youngest State of India. Mr. Rajin-
dra Sachar was appointed the acting Chief Justice of Sikkim High Court and was flown to Sikkim to administer oath of office and secrecy to Mr. B.B. Lal the Governor designate. At present Mr. Manmohan Singh Gujral is the Chief Justice of Sikkim. After the initiation of people’s rule in the State the Himalayan State has taken big strides in the field of development which find suitable mention in the following pages.

In the recent Lok Sabha elections the erstwhile ruling party Indian National Congress faced disastrous debacles in the States of Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, West Bengal and Rajasthan. In Sikkim with the exception of Congress candidate the nomination papers of all other Candidates were found incomplete and irregular. This resulted in the automatic election of the Congress candidate to the Lok Sabha. The events that have followed the landslide victory of Janata Party and its Constituents have led to many far reaching results in the political atmosphere of our country. Nine State assemblies were dissolved and elections to these assemblies were conducted in mid June, 1977. After mid June the political scene in India has been cleared of the clouds of suspicion, speculation and uncertainty. On the other hand clear cut dissentions and cleavages have emerged upon the glorious Congress edifice built and nurtured by persons like Mahatma Gandhi, Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru, Lal Bahadur Shastri, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, Maulana Abdul Kalam Azad and many other luminaries. Charges and counter charges are being levelled by the so-called once stalwarts of the former ruling party. The recent elections to the Congress Working Committee have also annoyed those honest congressmen who served this once the greatest political party for decades of our land. Many persons, members of Lok Sabha, Rajya Sabha, Legislative assemblies and Councils and members of the State and district level Congress Working Committees have resigned from even the primary membership of Congress party. Many of such persons, majority of whom are merely opportunists have sought entry to the Janata party. In the wake of such a political hectic activity many Congress run governments which were not dissolved had started facing difficulties. Governments of Goa, Daman and Diu and Mizoram were such examples. On the other hand by a large number of defections in the State legislature of Tripura the ruling party was reduced to minority and ultimately it had to go.

Kazi Lhendup Dorji who himself has been a freedom fighter and who fought the feudalistic-order with a dogged determination seems to be much more shrewed and wiser a politician than he looks to be from his appearance. Once a staunch supporter of Mrs. Indira
Gandhi and her much propagated policy Kazi seems to have felt the pulse of the Sikkimese people who do not want to be away from the national mainstream. In consultation with his Legislative Colleagues, Central Cabinet and Janata Party High Command he alongwith all his Legislative colleagues has resigned from the Congress party and joined Janata party. This way at present we have a Janata party government in Sikkim.

It is not known whether excesses were committed in the Himalayan State of Sikkim also as in the states of Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh etc. but if at all some administrative lapses have been committed in this tiny State the same must be insignificant and smaller in dimensions than the ones witnessed by the people during feudalistic order of government. The attainment of freedom and liberty in this land locked mountainous State is just couple of years old and it is too early to comment or say anything on the abuses and disadvantages automatically accruing from the democratic set up. Sikkim is one of our least developed states in spite of the potentialities she is endowed with. It is rather in the interest of the Sikkimese and the nation at large that the Chief Minister, Kazi Lhendup Dorji has taken a timely and correct decision. Although all the Union Governments have been categorically proclaiming that they would not give stepmotherly treatments to the states where the governments are not headed by their parties yet we have a sufficient experience from the events of last three decades which proves contrary to these statements. Many non-Congress governments were toppled down at the instance of the then Union Government. Many such Congress governments even in the states whose Chief Minister did not toe the line of Central leadership had to be reshuffled with a new head. The Orissa Ministry headed by Mrs. Nadini Satpathi an Uttar Pradesh ministry headed by Shri Hemwati Nandan Bahuguna met the similar fate. In such turmoilsome and uncertain atmosphere neither the State nor the Union Government have any time to be devoted towards the development of that state. In this horse trading and chaos created by the politicians the general masses are the worst sufferers. Therefore the Chief Minister of Sikkim took a timely decision especially when the youngest and the smallest state of Sikkim requires socio-economic development at a fast and rapid rate. Otherwise the life of the Legislative assembly is yet of three years and this duration might have witnessed lot of horse trading and defection leading to chaos and confusion to the utter disgustment of common masses. Now it is hoped that with the mutual understanding of the State and Central leadership the much needed economic development would be initiated and gone through at a fast speed. For a common
man it does not matter that who rules or which party governs for him whosoever provides him at least with the comfortable basic needs of the life is the best administrator. Kazi Lhendup Dorji has nched a very respectable place among his fellow countrymen and it is hoped that by dint of his laborious and honest efforts, tactfulness and the capability of rising to the occasion he would soon bring out his State out of despondency and wipe out poverty, disease, want and hunger from this charming and panoramic Himalayan State.