

INDIA AND SIKKIM

(1814—1970)

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P. R. RAO



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1814—1970

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Preface

Sikkim is very much in the news these days. Till recently it has excited very little curiosity among scholars as well as the public. The Chinese invasion of Indian territory in 1962 and their recent activities on the Sikkim - Tibet border have proved once for all, if proof is needed, that India cannot afford to neglect Sikkim without serious risk to its territorial integrity.

India's major interest in Sikkim is strategic. Lying in the Eastern Himalayan border at its most vulnerable point, Sikkim forms a vital point in India's defences. But unfortunately the study of the northern frontier of India continues to be very much neglected: that explains the lack of literature on this state too.

The present work is a revised and enlarged version of the thesis submitted by me to the Indian School of International Studies, New Delhi in July 1968, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Ph. D. Degree.

I had the good fortune of carrying on my research under the supervision of Dr. Bimal Prasad, Professor & Head of the Department of South Asian Studies, Indian School of International Studies, New Delhi. It was he who kindled in me interest in the subject and supervised the work at every stage of its preparation. I am greatly indebted to Dr. V. M. Reddi, Professor & Head of the Department of History, S. V. University, Tirupati (A. P.). He gave a great deal of his time and read the whole manuscript with great care and offered many valuable suggestions. I am also thankful to Prof. M. S. Rajan, Former Director of the Indian School of International Studies, for evincing keen interest in my work.

I express my gratitude to my wife, Sarada, who in spite of her own official duties found time to go through the manuscript and offer many valuable suggestions. My thanks are due to

Sri A. R. Ramachandra Reddy, my colleague in the department, for his help in the preparation of the index.

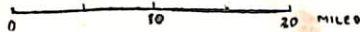
I have received unfailing cooperation from the authorities of the National Archives of India, New Delhi and staff of the Library of the Indian School of International Studies for which I shall always remain grateful to them.

Finally I thank Sri S. K. Ghai, Managing Director, Sterling Publishers (P) Limited, New Delhi, for the neat printing and prompt publication of the book.

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SIKKIM



Abbreviations

F. E. A.	Foreign Department Proceedings, External Branch, A category.
F. E. B.	Foreign Department Proceedings, External Branch, B category.
F. P. A.	Foreign Department Proceedings, Political Branch, A category.
F. P. B.	Foreign Department Proceedings, Political Branch, B category.
F. P. C.	Foreign Political Consultations.
F. P. P.	Foreign Political Proceedings.
F. S. C.	Foreign Secret Consultations.
F. S. E.	Foreign Department Proceedings, Secret E Branch.
F. S. P.	Foreign Secret Proceedings.

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Introduction

The Kingdom of Sikkim, situated in the Eastern Himalaya, is the protectorate of India. It has an area of 2,818 sq. miles¹. The name Sikkim is derived from two Limbu words meaning "New palace". The Tibetans called it Drend Zong, or the land of rice, while it was known to the Lepchas, the original inhabitants of the country as "Nye-ma-el" or heaven.²

It is located within 28° 07' 48" and 27° 04' 46" north latitude and 88° 00' 58" and 88° 55' 25" east longitude, and is bounded on the north by Tibet, on the east by Tibet and Bhutan and on the south by the Darjeeling district of West Bengal and on the west by Nepal³. It lies south of the main Himalayan range. Except on the south it is separated from its neighbours by a wall of great mountains ranging from 10,000 ft to 28,000 ft in height. However, these mountains contain certain important passes. The Chola range, which forms the eastern boundary of Sikkim with Tibet, contains the two important passes of Natu (15,512 ft) and Jelep (13,254 ft). Similarly, the Singalila range, which forms the boundary between Sikkim and Nepal, contains the important pass of Chiabhanjan (10,320 ft). The highest peaks are Kanchen Junga (28,140 ft). Kinchinjhan (22,700 ft), Siniolchu (22,620 ft) and Chomiomo (22,386 ft).⁴

The country can be divided into two geographical parts : northern and southern. Tangu can be taken as marking the dividing line between the two parts. The southern part consists

¹J. Datta Gupta, comp., *Census of India 1961*, vol. 16, West Bengal and Sikkim, pt 2a (Delhi, 1964), p. 86.

²Kamal Kumar Das and Swapan Kumar Banerjee, *The Lepchas of the Darjeeling District* (Calcutta, 1962), p. 10.

³J. Datta Gupta, comp., *Census of India 1961*, vol. 16, West Bengal and Sikkim, pt 1a, Book 2 (Delhi, 1967), p. 81.

⁴*Encyclopaedia Britannica* (London, 1957), vol. 20, pp. 650-1.

of dense forests and precipitous hills. It is sparsely populated and the villages are few and far between. The northern part is comparatively a more open and undulating country. In this region good pastures and pine forests are found.⁵

The climate has great variations and every variety, ranging from sub-tropical, temperate and arctic is encountered. The rainfall is heavy and averages 137" a year at Gangtok, the capital. The important river of Sikkim is the Tista, which is formed by the confluence of the Lachen and Lachung in the north of Sikkim.⁶

Sikkim is noted for its floral wealth and an estimated 4,000 varieties of flowering plants and shrubs are found.⁷ In the sub-tropical lower valleys, several varieties of bamboo, ferns and tree ferns, pandanus and orchids are found. In addition to these, valuable trees like sal are also found. In the temperate zone and in the northern valleys, forests of oak, chestnut, maple and pine are found.⁸

Abundant varieties of wild animals are found in different parts of the country. The Himalayan bear is generally found in the altitudes ranging from 4,000ft to 11,000ft. Above this altitude the brown bear has its habitat. Snow leopard is also found though it is fast vanishing. In addition to the wild animals, there are about 500 species of birds and nearly 600 species of butterflies.⁹

The geological survey of the country is not yet completed, but it is generally believed that copper, coal, graphite, gypsum are to be found in large quantities.¹⁰

⁵"North and North-Eastern Frontier Tribes" in *Frontier and Overseas Expeditions from India*. vol. 4, compiled in Intelligence Branch, Division of the Chief of the Staff, Army Headquarters, India (Simla, 1907), p. 39.

⁶*Encyclopaedia*, n. 4.

⁷*Sikkim—The land and its people* (published by the Publicity Department, Government of Sikkim (date and place of publication not given), p. 3.

⁸*Ibid.*

⁹*Ibid.*

¹⁰*Ibid.*, p. 4.

Mining and fruit preservation are the principal industries of Sikkim. Copper is mined at Rangpo by the Sikkim Mining Corporation, a joint venture of the Government of India and the Government of Sikkim. The fruit preservation factory at Singtam is run by the Sikkim Industrial Corporation.¹¹

The main exports of Sikkim are cardamom, oranges, potatoes and apples. The main imports are machinery, cotton piecegoods, consumer goods etc.¹²

The total population of Sikkim is about 162,189, which is composed mainly of the Lepchas, Bhutias and Nepalese.¹³ The Lepchas were the original inhabitants of the country, and number about 14,847.¹⁴ Their origin is doubtful but they are supposed to have come from the east along the foot of the hills from the direction of Assam and Upper Burma.¹⁵ There are two accounts regarding the origin of the name Lepcha. According to the first version, the name "Lepcha" had been derived from a Nepali word 'Lapcha' meaning 'vile speakers'. According to the second version, there is a type of fish in Nepal, known as Lapcha, which is very submissive in nature like the Lepcha people who are also noted for their submissiveness and as such the Nepalese termed them as Lepcha not in contempt but to give them credit for their submissive temperament. The word "Lapcha" was modified in English pronunciation as 'Lepcha'.¹⁶ The Lepchas were originally animists, but most of them now profess Buddhism. They are noted for their mild, quiet and indolent disposition.

The next group of people to enter Sikkim were the Khambas, popularly known as the Bhutias. They were immigrants from Tibet. They number about 14,000. They profess

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Ibid.

¹³A. Mitra, comp., *Census of India, 1961*, Paper No.1 of 1961 (Delhi, 1964), p. 49.

¹⁴A. Mitra, comp., *Census of India, 1961*, vol. 1, pt 2c (ii), Language Tables (Delhi, 1964), p. clviii.

¹⁵J. C. White, *Sikkim and Bhutan : Twenty years on the North-East Frontier 1887-1908* (London, 1909), p. 3.

¹⁶Das and Banerjee, n. 2, p. 3.

Buddhism and are generally very strong, hardy and good tempered.

The Nepalese immigrants now far outnumber the Lepchas or the Bhutias. They are almost all Hindus by religion. At present they number about 108,165.¹⁷ They are on the whole "a steady, industrious and thrifty people."¹⁸

Mahayana Buddhism is the state religion of Sikkim but the Sikkimese are allowed full freedom of worship. There are about 67 monasteries in the country and the most important among them are located at Pemayang-tse, Tashiding, Phodang, Ralang etc.¹⁹

The three numerically important languages are Nepali, Sikkim Bhutia and Lepcha, spoken respectively by 74,359, 36,577 and 14,847 people.²⁰ English is used extensively and officially for internal and external correspondences and communications.²¹

Sikkim is a hereditary monarchy. Under the 1953 Constitution a legislative body called the Sikkim State Council was formed. It consists of a president, 18 elected members and 6 nominated members. The president is nominated and appointed by the Ruler. Of the 18 elected members 7 seats are reserved for Bhutias and Lepchas, 7 seats for Nepalis, 1 seat each for the Sanga (Monks), the Chongs, and the Scheduled Castes. One seat is General.

The State Council enacts, with the assent of the Ruler, laws for the peace, order and good government of the state. It, however, cannot discuss or deal with matters relating to external relations and the appointment of the Principal Administrative Officer who is also ex-officio president of the Sikkim State Council.

¹⁷*Census of India, 1961*, n. 13, p. 49.

¹⁸White, n. 15, p. 9.

¹⁹*Sikkim—The land and its people*, n. 7, p. 5.

²⁰*Census of India, 1961* n. 14, p. clviii.

²¹*Sikkim—The land and its people*, n. 7, p. 6.

The Executive Council of the State consists of the Principal Administrative Officer and four elected members of the Council who are chosen from time to time and hold office during the pleasure of the Ruler. The Executive Councillors are in charge of Education, Public Health, Excise, Bazars, Forests, Public Works, Agriculture, Press and Publicity.²²

Very little is known about the early history of Sikkim. The Lepchas, as mentioned earlier, were the original inhabitants of Sikkim and they claim to be autochthones of Sikkim proper.²³ In the beginning of the seventeenth century A. D., three Lamas came from Tibet into Sikkim to convert the people to their doctrines. They found at Gangtok, one Penchu Namgyal, the great-grandson of Guru Tashe, a Tibetan noble.²⁴ The lamas selected and invested the young man as the Gyalpo or the King of Sikkim. This event took place in 1641 at a place called Yoksam. Penchu Namgyal thus became the first ruler of the present Namgyal dynasty. The Kingdom of Sikkim in those times was very extensive and included the Chumbi Valley of Tibet and the Darjeeling district of West Bengal.

For the next 150 years after the accession of Penchu Namgyal to the Sikkim throne in 1641, succession passed from father to son. During the reign of the third Gyalpo, Chador Namgyal, Sikkim was overrun by the Bhutanese in 1706. Tibet then came to the rescue of Sikkim and drove out the Bhutanese from the country. The Sikkim King in gratitude founded the great monastery at Pemiongchi. It is the largest in Sikkim and wholly Tibetan in character.²⁵

During the reign of Gyurma Namgyal, Sikkim lost the province of Limbuana to Nepal.²⁶ In the time of the sixth Gyalpo, Tenzing Namgyal, the Nepalese invaded Sikkim and overran the country as far eastward as the Tista river including

²²Ibid., pp. 7-8.

²³H. H. Riseley, ed., *The Sikkim Gazetteer* (Calcutta, 1894) p. 1.

²⁴J. A. H. Louis, *The Gates of Thibet* (Calcutta, 1894), p. 78.

²⁵White, n. 15, pp. 16-17.

²⁶Ibid., p. 17.

the Morung or the lowlands at the foot of the hills.²⁷ Tenzing Namgyal died in 1793 and was succeeded by his son Chugphui Namgyal. Shortly after his accession to the throne, war broke out between Nepal and Tibet, in the course of which the Nepalese established themselves firmly in Sikkim, south and west of the Tista.²⁸

According to a tradition, the Chinese after expelling the Nepalese from Tibet called on the Sikkimese to show their boundaries. Chugphui Namgyal, being a minor and a fugitive could not come forward to protect the interests of his kingdom. The Chinese thereupon gave the region west of the Tista to Nepal. The Chola-Jelap range was made the north and east boundary of Sikkim. The Chumbi Valley was given to Tibet.²⁹

British relations with Sikkim commenced in 1814-15, when the East India Company which had brought great parts of India under its control, was involved in a war with Nepal. The factors that had obliged the Company to establish contacts with Chugphui Namgyal, and the Company's subsequent relations with Sikkim are discussed in the following chapter.

²⁷C. U. Aitchison, comp., *A Collection of Treaties, Engagements and Sanads Relating to India and Neighbouring Countries* (Calcutta, 1909), vol. 12, p. 51.

²⁸Ibid. pp. 51-52.

²⁹C. U. Aitchison, *A Collection of Treaties, Engagements and Sanads Relating to India and Neighbouring Countries* (Calcutta, 1909), vol. 2, p. 311.

East India Company's Relations

1

with Sikkim 1814-1857

Sikkim did not attract the attention of the East India Company until the year 1814 when it was involved in a war with Nepal. The war arose out of the encroachments of the Gurkhas, the ruling class of Nepal, into Company's territory of Gorakhpur Terai, situated immediately south of the lower Himalayan slopes, in the province of Oudh. The campaign was an arduous one in which the Gurkhas fought bravely and with much success.¹ It was rumoured that Nepal and Bhutan, separated by the small kingdom of Sikkim, were about to conclude a military alliance against the Company. The Company therefore wanted to isolate Nepal and prevent it from getting assistance from any quarter, especially China, since the latter exercised suzerainty over Nepal from 1792 onwards. J. Adam, Secretary to the Government of India felt that the Company's objective could be achieved if it opened relations with Sikkim since the princes of that kingdom were closely connected by matrimonial relations as well as religious affinities with Tibet, a dependency of China.²

The opening of relations with Sikkim, thus became a political and military necessity. The alliance with Sikkim seemed to promise to the Company three advantages, namely (1) facilitate communication with China, via Tibet, (2) prevent Nepalese-Bhutanese intrigues against the Company, and (3) level an attack on the Gurkha flank. In view of these advantages the Company instructed Captain Barre Latter of the

¹C. U. Aitchison, comp., *A Collection of Treaties, Engagements and Sanads Relating to India and Neighbouring Countries* (Calcutta, 1909), vol. 2, p. 94.

²*Papers Relating to Nepal War* (London, 1824), p. 268.

Bengal Army to establish contacts with Chugphui Namgyal, the ruler of Sikkim³.

In the spring of 1815, Captain Barre Latter, succeeded in establishing contacts with the Sikkim authorities. Captain Latter, in order to induce Raja Chugphui Namgyal to bring a large number of troops against Nepal, promised to help him to recover his territories lost to Nepal.⁴ It may be mentioned here that in 1780 Nepal had invaded Sikkim and during the course of the following thirty years, overran its territory as far east as the River Tista and conquered and annexed the Terai or the low-lying area.⁵ Sikkim agreed to support the Company, and undertook to play the role of a faithful ally. It accorded useful assistance to the extent its resources permitted.⁶

The Nepal war came to an end with the signing of the Treaty of Segauli on 2 December 1815, by the Company and Nepal. Under Article Three of the Treaty, Nepal ceded to the Company the following tracts of territory :

- (1) The whole of the low-lands between the rivers Kali and Rapti.
- (2) The whole of the low-lands (with the exception of Bootwul and Khass) lying between the Rapti and Gunduck.
- (3) The whole of the low-lands between the Gunduck and Coosah, in which the authority of the British Government has been introduced, or is in actual course of introduction.
- (4) All the low-lands between the rivers Mitchee and the Teestah.

³Papers Relating to Nepal War (London 1824), p. 258

⁴Letter of Barre Latter to J. Adam, Secretary to the Government of India, dated 23 March 1816. Quoted in the Memorandum on "the connection of Sikkim Raja with the British Government" by P. Melville, *Under Secretary to the Government of India*. F. P. P., 14 November 1846, 29.

⁵Aitchison, n. 1, p. 311.

⁶Melville's Memo, n. 4.

- (5) All the territories within the hills eastward of the river Mitchee, including the fort and lands of Nagree and the pass of Nagarcote, leading from the Morung into the hills, together with the territory lying between that pass and Nagree.⁷

Lord Moira (afterwards Marquess of Hastings), the Governor-General of India, decided to restore to Sikkim a part of the territory wrested from Nepal. By this gesture he wanted to establish the Company's relations with that kingdom on a firmer footing with a view to checking the Gurkha expansion towards the east. He, therefore, authorized Barre Latter to hand over the territory lying between the rivers Mechi and Tista to Sikkim on certain conditions. The Raja accepted the conditions by signing a treaty with the Company at Titalia on 10 February 1817. The conditions were incorporated into Articles two to eight of the Treaty.⁸

The Treaty of Titalia and its significance

The Treaty of Titalia ran into ten Articles. Under Article one of the Treaty, the Company made over in full sovereignty to the Raja of Sikkim, Chugphui Namgyal, the territory lying between the rivers Mechi and the Tista. The Raja for his part agreed (1) not to commit aggression on the Gurkhas or any other state (Article two); (2) to submit to the arbitration of the Company his disputes with Nepal and other neighbouring states (Article three); (3) to render military assistance to the Company in case of need when they are engaged in war in the hills (Article four); (4) not to allow any European or American to reside in his kingdom without obtaining the permission of the Company (Article five); (5) to deliver up British-Indian dacoits who may take refuge in his kingdom (Article six); (6) not to afford protection to the British-Indian revenue defaulters or other delinquents (Article seven); and (7) not to levy transit duties on British merchandize and to afford protection to merchants and traders from Company's provinces (Article eight). In return for these

⁷Aitchison, n. 1, pp. 110—13.

⁸Melville's Memo, n. 4.

privileges, the Company under Article nine, guaranteed to the Raja and his successors the peaceable possession of the territory made over to him under Article one. The parties agreed to ratify the treaty within one month of its signing (Article ten).⁹

The political significance of the treaty of Titalia cannot be overemphasized. Firstly, it helped to check the Nepalese expansion towards the east. With the restoration of the territory between the rivers Mechi and the Tista to Sikkim, the latter became a strong buffer state between Nepal and Bhutan. In the words of H. T. Prinsep, Secretary to the Government of India, the effect of the Treaty of Titalia had been

to shut out the Nepalese from any ambitious views of aggrandizement to the east, and to circumscribe their territory on three sides while on the fourth, the stupendous range of the Heemalya and the Chinese frontier present an effectual barrier.¹⁰

Secondly, it brought Sikkim for the first time under the influence of the Company, as Articles two to eight had limited the freedom of action of Sikkim to a large extent. Thirdly, the Company gained many trade privileges, the most important of them being the right to trade up to the Tibetan frontier. For the first time the Company acquired a clearly defined right to trade up to the Tibetan frontier through the territory of a friendly kingdom. Moreover, Sikkim was found to "afford a more ready communication with Lassa and China than that through Bootan".¹¹ The Treaty of Titalia thus marked the beginning of British interest in Sikkim as a trade route to Tibet and as a factor in India's security. Lord Moira considered the establishment of relations with Sikkim as a diplomatic triumph "which we could never have imposed by force of arms from the extreme difficulty of the country".¹²

⁹Aitchison, n. 1, pp. 322-4.

¹⁰H. T. Prinsep, *History of the Political and Military Transactions During the Administration of Marquess of Hastings 1813—1823*, 2 vols. (London, 1825), vol. 1, p. 207.

¹¹*Ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 86.

¹²The Marchioness of Bute, ed., *The Private Journals of Marquess of Hastings*, 2 vols. (London, 1858), vol. 1, p. 146.

The cession of the Morung

Two months after the signing of the Treaty of Titalia, Lord Moira, on the recommendation of Barre Latter granted to Sikkim an additional territory of the Morung, that is, the low-lands lying between the rivers Mechi and the Mahanadi.¹³ The grant of the Morung was made as a matter of policy since the Company wanted to strengthen Sikkim as a buffer between Nepal and British India. Barre Latter maintained that the Company could execute that policy by ceding the Morung to the Raja of Sikkim as it would enable him to "subsist the garrisons he must maintain for the protection of the passes" between his country and Nepal.¹⁴

The Morung was granted to the Raja under certain conditions, namely, that (1) the Articles of the Treaty of Titalia were to be in force in the Morung also; (2) that Sikkim was to surrender to the Company all British Indian criminals and other public defaulters who may take refuge in the Morung, and to allow the police officers of the Company to pursue them into those lands so as to arrest them; and (3) that in times of emergency the Governor-General's orders to the local authorities were to be obeyed in the same manner, as those coming from the Raja of Sikkim.¹⁵

It is evident from the above conditions that the Company had lost nothing by making over the Morung to the Raja. On the contrary, it gained control over him since he was obliged, under the terms of the grant, to allow the Company to exercise suzerain rights over the Morung.¹⁶

¹³Melville Memo, n. 4.

¹⁴Letter of Barre Latter to J. Adam, Secretary, Government of India, dated 23 March 1816. Quoted in Melville's Memo, n. 4.

¹⁵Aitchison, n. 1, p. 324.

¹⁶The East India Company made the grant of the Morung to the Raja of Sikkim as a "feudatory of the British Government" under the 'Sanad' dated 7 April 1817. The use of the word "feudatory" might suggest overlord-vassal relationship between the Company and the Raja of Sikkim. But that was not the case as the word "feudatory" had only a limited connotation. In his letter to the Government of India, dated 25 March 1816, Barre Latter recommended that the 'Sanad' might be granted to the Raja of Sikkim "suitable to his situation as an ally to the British Government". Capt. Latter wanted the use of the word "feudatory" in the 'Sanad' simply to retain the proprietary rights of the Company over the ceded tract.

Quoted in Melville's Memo, n. 4.

Murder of Buljeet Karjee

From 1817 to 1826 no notable transactions were made between the Company and Raja Chugphui Namgyal.¹⁷ In 1819 a serious quarrel arose between the Raja and his Dewan or Chief Minister, Buljeet Karjee. The quarrel was patched up and an agreement was made. Another agreement was made in the following year and a third in 1824. But about this time, the Rani or the queen, who was on friendly terms with the Dewan died. Raja Chugphui Namgyal, freed from all restraint determined to settle accounts with Buljeet Karjee. Finally in 1826, Buljeet Karjee was murdered by Tungyik Menchoo, father of Dunya Namguay, better known as Dewan Namguay and Pagla Dewan or the mad Chief Minister.¹⁸ The second reason for the murder of Buljeet Karjee might have been the rivalry between the Lepcha and the Tibetan sections of the Sikkim population. Buljeet Karjee was the leader of the Lepchas, while the Raja supported the Tibetan faction due to his close matrimonial and religious ties with Tibet. As the Raja ordered the extirpation of Buljeet's relations, his cousin, Eklathoop fled to Nepal along with 800 of his Lepcha followers.¹⁹ Both Chugphui Namgyal and Eklathoop petitioned the Company for support. The Raja sought the intervention of the Company to obtain the extradition of his subjects from Nepal, while Eklathoop also begged for the support of the Company for justice and protection against the Raja. The Company ignored both the requests as it did not think it proper to intervene in the quarrels between the Raja and his subjects. However, in 1832, it informed the Raja through N. Smith, the Magistrate of Rungpur, that it would request the Government of Nepal to impose restrictions on the activities of the Lepcha refugees from Sikkim, but at the same time it advised the Raja to *adopt a conciliatory policy* towards his refugee subjects.²⁰

¹⁷Aitchison, n. 1, p. 312.

¹⁸H.H. Riseley, ed., *The Sikkim Gazetteer* (Calcutta, 1894), p. 19.

¹⁹Aitchison, n. 1, p. 312.

²⁰Letter of the Government of India to N. Smith, Magistrate, Rangpur, 20 February 1832. *F.P.C.*, 20 February 1832, 27.

This incident highlights the measure of the Company's hold over Sikkim. The Raja lost his power of independent action because under Article three of the Treaty of Titalia, he was prohibited from having any direct dealings with Nepal or any other state. Therefore even for the extradition of his subjects from Nepal, he had to seek the intervention of the Company. The Lepchas on their part looked to the Company as their saviour.

The cession of Darjeeling

While the Raja was involved in disputes with his Lepcha subjects, a boundary dispute occurred in 1827 between his kingdom and Nepal over the jurisdiction of a piece of hill-land called Ontoo, situated on the eastern side of the Mechi River. The Raja referred the dispute to the arbitration of the Governor-General of India as laid down in Article three of the Treaty of Titalia of 1817. The Governor-General, Lord William Bentinck, deputed in 1828 two officers of the Company, Captain G. W. Lloyd and G. W. Grant to investigate the dispute. During the course of their investigation, they came across a small hill village called Dorjeling. They realized that it was ideally located both for a sanatorium and a military station. Their observations were brought to the notice of the Governor-General, Lord Bentinck, who then deputed Captain Herbert, a surveyor, to examine the place along with Lloyd and Grant. Their findings suggested that the site would not only make an ideal health resort but also confer considerable political benefits on the Company.²¹

In view of these findings, Lord Bentinck proposed to his Council, in 1830 that they should open negotiations with Raja Chugphui Namgyal for the transfer of Darjeeling to the East India Company. Sir Charles Metcalfe, a member of the Council opposed the proposal on the grounds that it would not only rouse the suspicions of the Raja and eventually involve the British in disputes with him, but also the jealousy of the Nepalese who might consider the Company's possession of

²¹Arthur Jules Dash, Bengal District Gazetteers, *Darjeeling* (Alipore, 1947), p. 37.

Darjeeling, so near their frontier as a preliminary step to the British invasion of Nepal.²² These opinions prevailed and the subject was dropped for the time being. In 1833 it was again revived when the Lepcha refugees in Nepal who had fled from Sikkim in 1826, made an inroad into Sikkim. Bentinck wanted to exploit that situation to acquire Darjeeling. He, therefore, proposed to his Council that Lloyd should be deputed to negotiate with the Raja of Sikkim for the cession of Darjeeling in exchange for an equivalent either in land or money.²³ He further proposed to obtain the opinion of B. H. Hodgson, the British Resident at Kathmandu as to the likely reaction of the court of Nepal to the establishment of a British sanatorium at Darjeeling, so near their frontier. Hodgson replied that any attempt to sound and conciliate Nepal with reference to the Company's proposal for a sanatorium at Darjeeling would result in more "harm than good"²⁴. He therefore suggested that they should make a "casual and careless" intimation as soon as the matter was ripe for implementation and not before. Once again, the project was dropped due to the opposition of Sir Charles Metcalfe.²⁵

In January 1835, Lloyd, in a private letter to Captain T. H. Taylor at the Government House, enquired whether the Government intended to establish a sanatorium at Darjeeling. He felt that the suspicion of the Raja of Sikkim about the British intentions was the only obstacle to its establishment, but he was sure that it could be removed.²⁶ The enquiry of Lloyd revived the Company's interest in the project. On 8 January 1835, Lord Bentinck, proposed to his Council that Lloyd might be sent to Sikkim to negotiate with the Raja regarding the transfer of Darjeeling to the East India Company. The Governor-General was interested in the project so much that he

²²Melville's Memo, n. 4.

²³Quoted in Bentinck's Minute of 8 January 1835. *F.P.P.*, 23 January 1835, 1.

²⁴Letter of Hodgson to Government of India, 1 November 1833. Quoted in Melville's Memo, n. 4.

²⁵Melville's Memo, n. 4.

²⁶*Ibid.*

would not take a serious note of the possible feelings of Nepal. He 'confessed' that "the satisfaction of the Nepal Darbar (Court) weigh with me as nothing."²⁷ This time the Council, which did not include Sir Charles Metcalfe, approved of the proposal and decided to depute Lloyd to Sikkim to negotiate with the Raja for the transfer of Darjeeling to the Company in exchange for "such equivalent either in land or money". Further it wanted that Lloyd should explain to the Raja that the British interest in Darjeeling was only motivated by the idea of establishing a sanatorium there.²⁸

Lloyd left for Sikkim on 8 February 1835, and after journeying ten days reached Tumlong, the then capital of Sikkim. Immediately on reaching Tumlong, he paid a courtesy call on the Raja. The next day he again saw the Raja in full Darbar. Before he could request the Raja for the transfer of Darjeeling to the Company, the Raja himself made three requests to Lloyd. The requests were (1) that the boundary of his kingdom might be extended up to Konchi; (2) that Kummo Pradhan, the embezzler of the Morung revenues be arrested and delivered to him; and (3) that Debgong might be added to his kingdom.²⁹ Lloyd pleaded his inability to accede to the Raja's first request as it was beyond his power. Regarding the Raja's second request, Lloyd did not say anything except expressing the wish that he might mediate between the Raja and the Lepchas and their Kazis so as to settle their disputes. As to the third request of the Raja Lloyd did not make any comment except mentioning that the Governor-General desired

²⁷ Minute of Lord William Bentinck, 8 January 1835. *F.P.P.*, January 1835, 1.

²⁸ Letter of Macnaughton, Secretary, Government of India to Lloyd, 23 January 1835. *F.P.P.*, 23 January 1835, 3.

²⁹ Kummo Pradhan was the agent of the Raja in the Morung. He was appointed to that position, on the recommendation of Scott, Magistrate of Rangpur. He embezzled the revenues of the Morung and escaped into the British territory. He instigated the Lepchas and their Kazis or headmen to defy the Raja.

Debgong had once belonged to Sikkim. Nepal, which had occupied it, ceded to the Company in 1815. The Company in its turn ceded it to the Raja of Jalpaiguri in 1828.

to have Darjeeling in exchange for lands in the plains or for a sum of money.³⁰ On hearing this the Raja informed Lloyd that he would give the answer the next day.

The Raja did not give his promised answer the next day, but sent his officers to discuss with Lloyd the different points connected with his requests. It is not known what had transpired at these discussions. On the sixth day of his stay at Tumlong, Lloyd met the Raja for the last time and requested him to give a definite answer regarding the cession of Darjeeling to the Company. On hearing that, the Raja gave to Lloyd a paper containing a statement of what he (the Raja) wanted in exchange for Darjeeling. The statement contained two requests, namely that (1) Kummo Pradhan should be made to account for the embezzlement, and restore his plunder and (2) that Debgong should be ceded. The Raja further informed Lloyd that if his requests are complied with, he would give Darjeeling to the Company "out of friendship".³¹

The Raja gave to his officers, escorting Lloyd, on his way back from Sikkim to Darjeeling, the Deed of the Darjeeling Grant. The officers were instructed to hand over that document to Lloyd as soon as the Raja's requests are complied with.³² Lloyd, who happened to see the document, found it to be imperfectly drafted. He, therefore, drafted a new deed and sent it to the Raja with a request that he should "substitute this or similar paper" for the one he had delivered to his officers.

When Lloyd sent the new draft to the Raja, he was perfectly aware that the Company could get Darjeeling only by acceding to the Raja's requests. This is evident from his letter to the Government wherein he stated that it could obtain Darjeeling by ceding Debgong to Sikkim and by compelling Kummo Pradhan to make good the Morung revenues to the Raja.³³ Lloyd considered it important to obtain the possession of Darjeeling for reasons other than its cold climate

³⁰Letter of Lloyd to Government of India, 9 March 1835. *F.P.P.*, 6 April 1835, 100,

³¹*Ibid.*

³²*Ibid.*

³³Letter of Lloyd to Macnaughton, Secretary, Government of India, 23 March 1835. *F.P.P.*, 6 April 1835, 103.

because "as a military post that must stand pre-eminent". He further informed the Government that Darjeeling would be cheaply got in exchange for Debgong.³⁴

The Government considered the Raja's conditions for the cession of Darjeeling as impracticable since Debgong was already given to the Jalpaiguri Raja in 1828 and regarding the other condition it doubted whether it would be justified in compelling a settlement of accounts between the Raja and his subjects.³⁵

Here one must pause and consider whether the Government was justified in rejecting the Raja's request for the surrender of Kummo Pradhan. Under Article Seven of the Treaty of Titalia, the Raja of Sikkim was bound "not to afford protection to any defaulters of revenue or other delinquents when demanded by the British Government through their accredited agents". The desire of the Raja of Sikkim to make that article binding was natural enough, especially when Kummo Pradhan was charged with serious offence like the criminal misappropriation of revenue. The Company neither arrested Kummo Pradhan nor compelled him to render account of the default. The plea of the Governor-General to the Raja that "it is not consistent with our practice to call people to account for money transactions which have taken place in foreign territories" was not convincing to the Raja, especially when he suspected that Kummo Pradhan had treasonable intentions of giving away Morung to Nepal.³⁶

The Government, after rejecting the Raja's conditions for the transfer of Darjeeling, asked Lloyd to point out any waste land in the neighbourhood of Sikkim which could be transferred to the Raja in exchange for Darjeeling. If there was no such waste land, Lloyd was asked to give his opinion regarding the amount of pecuniary compensation which the Raja may

³⁴Letter of Lloyd to Macnaughton, Secretary, Government of India, 23 March 1835, *F.P.P.* 6 April 1835, 103.

³⁵*F.P.P.*, 6 April 1835, 104.

³⁶Letter of the Governor-General to the Raja of Sikkim, 8 February 1836. *F.P.P.*, 8 February 1836, 88.

consider sufficient in exchange for Darjeeling.³⁷ Lloyd was unable to point out any waste land, which could be given to the Raja in exchange for Darjeeling. Regarding pecuniary compensation he valued Darjeeling at Rs. 120,000 but doubted its acceptance by the Raja since he attached little value to money.³⁸ On hearing this, Sir Charles Metcalfe, the Officiating Governor-General of India, ordered Lloyd to abstain from further negotiations with the Raja as he was not "cordially disposed to cede it".³⁹

On receiving that order, Lloyd informed the Government that the Deed of the Darjeeling Grant was already in his hands. He did not inform the Government of this very important fact as soon as he received the Deed, for reasons best known to him.

Here it must again be pointed out that Lloyd, while on his way back from Sikkim to Darjeeling, sent to the Raja a new draft of the Darjeeling Deed requesting him to "substitute this or similar paper" for the one he had delivered to his officers. The Raja on receiving that new draft, which was back-dated 1 February 1835, affixed his red seal and returned it to Lloyd. That was the Deed of the Grant of Darjeeling. It is important to note that the new Deed was the substitute for the original one which the Raja gave to his officers with instructions that it should be delivered to Lloyd as soon as his (Raja's) requests are complied with.

When Lloyd received the Deed of the Darjeeling Grant, he was aware that the Government was not going to comply with the Raja's conditions. In fact he was asked by the Government to refrain from further negotiations with the Raja. The plain course left for him was to return the Deed to the Raja, but instead of doing that he wrote a letter to the Raja asking him to mention whether he desired to give Darjeeling to the

³⁷Letter of Macnaughton to Lloyd, 4 May 1835. *F.P.P.*, 4 May 1835, 104.

³⁸Quoted in the Minute of T. H. Maddock, Member, Governor-General's Council, dated 29 September 1846. *F.P.P.*, 14 November 1846, 30.

³⁹Letter of Macnaughton to Lloyd, 15 June 1835, quoted in Melville's Memo, n. 4.

British Government out of friendship. This action of Lloyd not only violated the orders of the Government of 15 June, 1835, wherein he was asked to refrain from further negotiations with the Raja, but also went against the clear mandate of Lord Bentinck who in his minute of 17 June 1830 cautioned his officers that "the cession (of Darjeeling) should not be ultimately insisted on, unless the terms offered as an equivalent to the Sikkim Raja should be really satisfactory to him."⁴⁰ Further, Lloyd did not send to the Government a copy of the letter he had addressed to the Raja. The Raja's reply is on record. It is an important document since it was on receiving it that Lloyd considered himself at liberty to make use of the Grant, and forwarded it to the Government who thereupon took possession of Darjeeling.

The Raja's reply was as follows:

Your letter and present of a box has reached me and having been understood (sic) afforded me much pleasure. You write that vakeels from Nepaul have arrived, and having been waiting a long time, but that my vakeels have not come and you wish to know the reasons for their delay and request that on receipt of your letter I would despatch them in order that the boundary of Siddikola may be ascertained and fixed. You have thus written to me but I am now sending you both the vakeels and have the goodness to settle firmly the boundary for me—and you have also many times written about Darjeeling, but last year the grant of Darjeeling under my red seal was delivered to you through my vakeels and there can never be any departure from that by my Government—if you have understood that differently I cannot help it—continue to gratify me with your welfare. I send three yards of Cochin as present.⁴¹

The Raja's letter looks as if it was a reply to more than one letter and on different subjects. The main theme of the letter

⁴⁰Quoted in Melville's Memo, n. 4.

⁴¹Letter of Raja of Sikkim to Lloyd received on 1 January 1836. *F.P.P.*, 8 February 1836, 86.

was in relation to the boundary dispute with Nepal and the non-arrival of the vakeels or agents from Sikkim to Lloyd. Darjeeling was mentioned casually and all that the Raja said about it was that having given the Grant in 1835 he could not depart from it. From this reply one can well infer the tone and language of Lloyd's letter to the Raja. It is quite possible that the letter might have touched the matter concerning the boundary dispute between Sikkim and Nepal which was pending since 1827 and which was under Lloyd's investigation.

From the Raja's reply Lloyd concluded that the cession of Darjeeling was unconditional and informed the Government that the Raja "makes the grant freely, mentions no conditions whatsoever and seems to regret that he has been misunderstood".⁴² The Government replied to Lloyd in the following notable terms :

As it now appears that the transfer has been unconditionally made by the Raja, it only remains to consider the best means of turning it to the advantage of the British Government.⁴³

The claim of Lloyd that the transfer of Darjeeling had been made unconditionally by the Raja looks strange in view of the above stated facts.

Whatever might have been the methods by which the cession of Darjeeling was secured, there is no doubt that it was an important event in the history of East India Company's relations with Sikkim. Darjeeling became the observation post of the British in the Himalaya and placed them in close touch with all the hill states of the Eastern Himalaya and also constantly reminded them of the possibilities of trade with Tibet.

Compensation for Darjeeling

While deputing Lloyd to open negotiations with Chugphui Namgyal, the Raja of Sikkim, for the cession of Darjeeling,

⁴²Letter of Lloyd to Macnaughton, 5 January 1836. *F.P.P.*, 8 February 1836, 85.

⁴³Letter of Macnaughton to Lloyd, 8 February 1836. *F.P.P.*, 8 February 1836, 87.

Lord Bentinck, the Governor-General of India, as noted earlier, authorized Lloyd to offer to the Raja "such equivalent either in land or money". However, the Government, relying on Lloyd's letter of 5 January 1836, believed that the cession of Darjeeling was an "unconditional transfer" and issued orders for its occupation and conversion into a sanatorium. Lloyd, in forwarding the grant deed to the Government, expressed the hope that it might consider sending to the Raja of Sikkim a letter of acknowledgement and a "handsome present" in return for his ready compliance with the Governor-General's request, for he begged to say that the Raja's gift "is no small one considering the limited extent of his country".⁴⁴ Accordingly the Government sent to Raja a letter of acknowledgement and some presents. The presents — one double barrelled gun, one rifle, one 20 yards of red-broad cloth, two pairs of shawls, one of superior variety and the other of inferior variety—can scarcely be called "handsome". They were not despatched until the following month of June.⁴⁵

The relations between the Raja and the East India Company became strained as the latter failed to compensate the former adequately for his cession of Darjeeling. He persisted in his requests for compensation to Lloyd who however took no notice of them. In 1839 Dr. A. Campbell of the Indian Medical Service and the British Resident in Nepal was transferred to Darjeeling as Superintendent. In that capacity he was in charge not only of the civil, criminal and fiscal administration of the district, but also of the political relations with Sikkim.⁴⁶ Campbell soon after his appointment as Superintendent of Darjeeling received a letter from the Raja of Sikkim complaining that though he had ceded Darjeeling, he received "nothing in return".⁴⁷ To the Governor-General also the Raja addressed a letter mentioning that Lloyd had promised to give him "whatever land or money I required", and requested that

⁴⁴Letter of Lloyd to Macnaughton, 5 January 1836. *F.P.P.*, 8 February 1836, 85.

⁴⁵Letter of the Governor-General to the Raja, n. 36.

⁴⁶Jules Dash, n. 21, p. 37.

⁴⁷Letter of the Raja of Sikkim to Campbell, November 1839. *F.P.C.*, 12 February 1840, 102.

the small tract of land east of the Mahanandi and west of the Tista may be given to him in exchange for Darjeeling.⁴⁸

Campbell expressed surprise at the Raja's request for compensation as he felt that the latter desired nothing in return for the cession of Darjeeling except the "satisfaction" of having met the wishes of the British Government.⁴⁹ Campbell believed that the Raja was mistaken in asserting that Lloyd had promised him to procure land or money in exchange for Darjeeling. He thought that Lloyd was authorized to offer to the Raja "any suitable piece of available Terai land" in the neighbourhood of Darjeeling, and that he could not point out to the Government any such available land.⁵⁰

Campbell here apparently pretended ignorance of the transaction by which the cession of Darjeeling was brought about. Lloyd was not authorized at the time of his meeting with the Raja to offer "any suitable piece of waste Terai" in exchange for Darjeeling. He was simply asked to procure the cession of Darjeeling either for land in the plains or money. The Government, while declining to accept the two conditions of the Raja for the cession of Darjeeling, asked Lloyd to suggest any waste land which the Raja would accept and further to state his opinion regarding the pecuniary compensation. Lloyd was unable to point out any waste land which could be offered to the Raja. As to the pecuniary compensation he said that the Raja attached little value to money and suggested that he (Raja) might be given a valuable present like a pearl necklace.⁵¹ Lloyd valued Darjeeling at Rs. 120,000 or Rs. 6,000 a year and said "could I as an individual purchase

⁴⁸Letter of the Raja of Sikkim to the Governor-General, 27 December 1839. *F.P.C.*, 12 February 1840, 103.

⁴⁹Letter of Campbell to the Raja of Sikkim, 19 December 1839. *F.P.C.*, 12 February 1840, 104.

⁵⁰Letter of Campbell to Government of India, 11 January 1840. *F.P.C.*, 7 September 1840, 98.

⁵¹Letter of Lloyd to Government of India, 25 May 1835. Quoted in Meelville's Memo, n. 4.

the land and had I the money I should be glad to give Rs. 100,000 for it!"⁵²

The Raja was embittered with the Company for not receiving adequate compensation for the cession of Darjeeling. He prevented his people from visiting that place for purposes of trade and commerce, which retarded the progress of the settlement. Campbell, therefore, informed the Government that it must show to the Raja that it was not insensible to the benefits derived through his gift.⁵³ The Government of India thereupon asked Campbell in March 1840 to inform the Raja that it was not possible to make any territorial grant to him, but that it was anxious to make yearly payments which will exceed the value of Darjeeling under his Government. The Government felt that Rs. 1,000 a year would be an adequate compensation for the Raja, but at the same time it informed Campbell that it was willing to enhance that amount provided the Raja allows "free intercourse between Darjeeling and the interior of Sikkim".⁵⁴

It was only in January 1841 that negotiations were opened with the Raja. Campbell told the Raja's vakeel (agent) that an annual compensation of Rs. 3,000 will be paid to the Raja from the date of cession to up-to-date and regularly for the future.⁵⁵ The Government, meanwhile, informed Campbell that the enhanced allowance may increase the Raja's "spirit of discontent" since he had again applied to the Governor-General for the cession of Debgong.⁵⁶ Thereupon Campbell suggested to the Government that the Raja's compensation need not have retrospective effect from the date of cession. The Government accepted that suggestion and informed the Raja that he would

⁵²Letter of Lloyd to Government of India, 25 May 1835. Quoted in Melville's Memo, n. 4.

⁵³Letter of Campbell to Government, 11 January 1840. Quoted in the Minute of F. Millet, Member Governor-General's Council, dated 20 October 1846. *F.P.P.*, 14 November 1846, 31.

⁵⁴Letter of the Government of India to Campbell, 2 March 1840. *F.P.C.*, 2 March 1840, 101.

⁵⁵Quoted in the Minute of Millet, n. 53.

⁵⁶*Ibid*

be paid the annual compensation of Rs. 3,000 and that the payment would commence from "the date of your closing with the offer".⁵⁷

It is clear from the above that, at first the Raja was offered a compensation of Rs. 3,000 a year from the date of the cession of Darjeeling, and that it was subsequently modified at the instance of Campbell to the effect that the payment was to commence from the date the Raja accepted the Company's offer. The Raja accepted the first and not the second offer. That was clear from the Raja's letter to Campbell. That letter significantly states :

the offer of rupees in exchange for Darjeeling has vexed me but out of friendship which I bear to the British Government, and which is important to me I agree to take rupees 3,000 annually in exchange for Darjeeling tract from the time Darjeeling was made over to the British Government to this time.⁵⁸

Campbell, however, thought that the Raja had accepted the second offer.⁵⁹ The Government also took no notice of this material misrepresentation. In 1842, the Raja demanded the arrears for seven years since Darjeeling was ceded to the Company in 1835.⁶⁰ The Government however paid no heed to that demand. From the above it is clear that the attitude of the Company towards the Raja, in connexion with the payment of compensation for Darjeeling, was anything but graceful.

Campbell's first visit to Sikkim

Ever since the establishment of the Darjeeling settlement the relations between the Company and Sikkim were unfriendly. This was due to many reasons. Firstly, Raja Chugphui

⁵⁷Letter of Government of India to Raja of Sikkim, 12 April 1841 *F.P.P.*, 12 April 1841, 88.

⁵⁸Letter of Raja to Campbell dated 9 September 1841. *F.P.P.*, 27 September 1841, 101 (emphasis added).

⁵⁹Melville's Memo, n. 4.

⁶⁰*F.P.P.*, 17 January 1842, 98.

Namgyal was dissatisfied with the treatment he had received from the Company after the cession of Darjeeling. Secondly, the growth of Darjeeling from an uninhabited place in 1835 to a flourishing settlement of 10,000 people within a decade, had roused the jealousy of the Sikkimese. Moreover, the presence of a British enclave in the midst of the Sikkim territory created troubles. The troubles started over the question of the extradition of slaves and criminals who used to escape to Darjeeling or Sikkim as the case may be. The Sikkim authorities resented the refusal of the British to surrender the slaves who took refuge in Darjeeling. Similarly, the British frowned upon the non-cooperation of the Sikkimese in apprehending British Indian criminals who took refuge in Sikkim.⁶¹ Added to these there was one more cause of discontent and complaint associated with Campbell. It was the loss of Ontoo Hill by Sikkim.⁶² The loss of that area was made a subject of complaint by the Raja which evidently added to his discontent.⁶³

Campbell, on his part, was unable to pull on well with the Raja. On 8 June 1846 he addressed a letter to the Raja charging him on eight different counts: (1) causing "vexatious delays and exactions" upon traders and labourers passing through

⁶¹Sir R. Temple, *Journals Kept in Hyderabad, Cashmir, Sikkim and Nepal*, 2 vols (London, 1887), vol. 1, p. 168.

⁶²In 1827 a dispute occurred between Sikkim and Nepal regarding a piece of hilly land on the eastern side of the Mechi River. The dispute was commonly referred to as the Ontoo hill dispute. The Raja of Sikkim referred it to the arbitration of the Governor-General of India since he was obliged under Article Three of the Treaty of Titalia to refer all his disputes with Nepal and other states to the arbitration of the Government of India and to abide by its decision. The Government of India deputed Lloyd to investigate the dispute. On his findings the Government of India decided the dispute in favour of Sikkim. Nepal appealed against that decision. The Government of India admitted that appeal and in 1838 deputed Campbell to re-examine the case. On Campbell's findings, the Government of India reversed its earlier decision in favour of Sikkim and gave verdict in favour of Nepal.

⁶³Letter of Campbell to Bushby, Secretary, Government of India, 23 November 1846. *F.P.C.*, 20 March 1847, 87.

Sikkim, to and from Darjeeling; (2) non-cooperating with the British power in the apprehension and surrender of the British Indian criminals; (3) delaying the settlement of the southern boundary of Darjeeling territory; (4) "preventing and obstructing" his subjects from visiting Darjeeling for purposes of trade and labour; (5) "prohibiting" the people of Bhutan from passing through his territory to Darjeeling for purposes of trade and labour; (6) preventing the British the use of the lime deposits in his country; (7) causing "obstructions and vexatious exactions" on Tibetan traders coming to Darjeeling; (8) demanding the surrender of slaves and others who had settled in Darjeeling and against whom there were no criminal charge.⁶⁴ The Raja was warned that if he persisted in his "unfriendly course" the Government would be compelled to attach his possessions in Morung.⁶⁵

It is evident from the above letter that the charges against the Raja were baseless since none of his actions except the one mentioned under the head seven relating to the obstructions in the way of the Tibetan traders can be regarded as an actual breach of the Treaty of Titalia. The intention of Campbell seemed to be to force the Raja to accept the Government's demands under the threat of resuming the Morung. Campbell's bullying tactics paid dividends, for in August 1846 the Raja sent his Dewan or Chief Minister, Ilam Sing to Darjeeling to reply to the charges of Campbell. Ilam Sing met Campbell on 17 August 1846 and afterwards he had two more meetings with him on 3 October and 3 December 1846.

With reference to Campbell's first charge, namely, that the Raja was causing "vexatious delays and exactions" upon traders passing through Sikkim to and from Darjeeling, the Raja in his letter to Campbell received on 2 October 1846, denied the charge, but agreed to attend to any future complaints of the Superintendent in that regard. Regarding the second charge relating to the non-co-operation of the Raja's officials in

⁶⁴Letter of Campbell to the Raja of Sikkim, 8 June 1846. *F.P.C.*, 22 August 1846, 21.

⁶⁵*Ibid.*

the arrest and surrender of the British Indian criminals who had taken refuge in the Sikkim Hills and the Morung, the Dewan denied the charge and stated that strict orders have been issued to all Sikkim officials to attend to the British requisitions under that head. As to the settlement of the southern boundary of Darjeeling, Campbell and Ilam Sing agreed that the matter should lie over until the Raja had received the letter of the Governor-General dated 3 November 1846, regarding that affair. The Dewan denied the fourth charge of Campbell, namely, that obstructions were placed in the way of the Sikkimese visiting Darjeeling for purposes of trade and labour and said that many Sikkimese were already employed at Darjeeling. Campbell agreed that it was so. Similarly the fifth charge relating to the obstruction in the way of the Bhutanese passing through Sikkim to Darjeeling was denied. The Dewan however explained that the Bhutanese could use only the southern route by way of Dalimkote and Ranjit river since there was risk of collision with the local inhabitants if the Bhutanese use the Chadam-Dakiling route. As to the sixth charge, the Dewan agreed to allow the British the use of Sikkim lime deposits. As to the seventh charge relating to the "obstructions and vexatious exactions" from the Tibetan traders passing through Sikkim to and from Darjeeling, the Raja in his letter of 2 October 1846 explained to Campbell that the duties levied on the Tibetan traders were very light and that they were levied with moderation. Regarding Campbell's last charge relating to the Raja's demands for the surrender of slaves who had settled down at Darjeeling, it was agreed that in future the Raja would not demand their surrender, but write to the Superintendent if his household slaves take refuge in Darjeeling.

Campbell informed the Government that with the exception of the matter relating to the southern boundary of Darjeeling, the Raja had agreed to what was asked in a "proper and becoming manner" and that the matters under discussion were settled.⁶⁶

⁶⁶Letter of Campbell to Bushby, Secretary, Government of India, 7 December 1846. *F.P.C.*, 26 December 1846, 193.

While Ilam Sing was offering explanations to Campbell's charges against the Raja of Sikkim, the Government of India reviewed all its proceedings with the latter in connexion with and subsequent to the Grant of Darjeeling. It found in Campbell's correspondence with the Raja "a tone of rebuke and superiority". He was therefore enjoined to avoid in future all proceedings and correspondence of a "harsh and irritating nature". Further he was asked to treat the Raja "not as a dependent, but as a prince who though possessed of little power, is regarded by the British Government as one of its allies".⁶⁷ Apart from these instructions to Campbell, the Government of India decided to increase the amount of the Raja's annual compensation from Rs. 3,000 to Rs. 6,000 with effect from 1846, since it found that it had not adequately compensated the Raja for the cession of Darjeeling.

Even after the enhancement of the compensation, the relations between Sikkim and the British Government did not improve. On the other hand they deteriorated further. This was due to many reasons. The first was the death of Ilam Sing in 1847. Campbell considered Ilam Sing, as the only individual in Sikkim who could be trusted in word of deed.⁶⁸ The second was the confused state of Sikkim politics. After the death of Ilam Sing, Tokhang Donyer Namguay became the Dewan of Sikkim. Namguay was a Tibetan who had married the Raja's illegitimate daughter. He used that influence in his rise to power. His ascendancy was not unchallenged. He was opposed by the Lepchas. The opposing faction was led by Aden Chebu Lama. The two factions led by Namguay and Chebu Lama were involved in an intense rivalry over the question of succession to the throne. The Raja's only surviving son Sidkeong Namgyal was a celibate Lama. As such he was considered ineligible to succeed his father Raja Chugphui Namgyal. The only other candidate was the Raja's illegitimate son, whose sister married

⁶⁷ Letter of Bushby to Campbell, 3 November 1846. *F.P.C.*, 14 November 1846, 32.

⁶⁸ Campbell, *Journal of Trip to Sikkim in 1848*. *F.P.C.*, 15 December 1849, 140.

Dewan Namguay. Naturally the Dewan supported the candidature of his brother-in-law, the illegitimate son of the Raja. The faction led by Aden Chebu Lama was opposed to this. It wanted the succession of the Raja's Lama son, Sidkeong Namgyal. To remove the difficulties in the way of succession of Sidkeong Namgyal, Chebu Lama in 1848, persuaded the Dalai Lama to dispense with the vows of celibacy of the former and also arranged his marriage.⁶⁹

In 1848, the British were involved in the internal conflict of Sikkim. In that year, Dr. Joseph Hooker, the distinguished English naturalist, came to Darjeeling to explore Sikkim and the Himalayas. Campbell, with the permission of the Governor-General, Lord Dalhousie, wrote to the Raja to permit Hooker to travel through Sikkim. The Raja declined the permission on the ground that the foreigners were prohibited to travel in his kingdom.⁷⁰ But after further correspondence Hooker was allowed to visit Sikkim.

The correspondence of the Government of India with Sikkim was carried through the latter's vakeel or Agent at Darjeeling. Campbell suspected that his letters had never reached the Raja, but handed over to the Dewan Namguay who was opposed to the free travel of Europeans into Sikkim and whose policy was to enter "as little as possible with an active alliance with us".⁷¹ Campbell felt that he could not satisfactorily carry on the business with the Raja unless he had access to him. He therefore obtained the permission of the Governor-General to visit the Raja of Sikkim as it was the only means of "ascertaining his real sentiments and feelings to our Government".⁷² The Government gave the permission, but enjoined on Campbell not to transact any business with the Raja during the visit. The Dewan Namguay met him on the way and tried to prevent him from meeting the Raja by

⁶⁹Campbell, *Journal of Trip to Sikkim in 1848*. F.P.C., 15 December 1849, 140.

⁷⁰Letter of the Raja of Sikkim to Campbell, received on 7 October 1848. F.P.C., 15 December 1849, 139.

⁷¹Letter of Campbell to Government of India, F.P.C., 15 December 1849, 138.

⁷²Journal of Campbell, n. 68.

giving all sorts of excuses.⁷³ Campbell brushed aside all those objections and met the Raja. The meeting was purely a formal affair as Campbell was instructed by the Government not to transact any business with the Raja during the visit. Campbell during his short stay in Sikkim, gained sufficient insight into its politics. He realized that the Sikkimese were "woefully ignorant" and "misinformed" regarding the real nature of the British power in India.⁷⁴

Campbell's second visit to Sikkim

Campbell made his second trip to Sikkim in 1849. It came about like this. Dr. Hooker, who was then touring Sikkim, complained to Campbell that the Sikkim officials are causing him "excessive annoyances and obstructions". On receiving that complaint, Campbell addressed a letter to the Raja of Sikkim asking him to punish the concerned officials. Meanwhile he learnt from Hooker that the Sikkim officials who had caused him annoyances in the Lachen Valley did not fully acknowledge the authority of the Raja and were in some degree subordinate to Tibet. To understand the causes of obstruction to Hooker's travel in the Lachen valley, Campbell considered it necessary to proceed to that quarter.⁷⁵

Campbell, with the permission of the Raja entered Sikkim in September 1849. He was accompanied by Chebu Lama, Sikkim's vakeel at Darjeeling. On 2 October 1849 he visited Tumlong and sent a letter to the Raja asking him to punish the officials who were responsible for causing "annoyances and obstructions" to Hooker. While at Tumlong, he was met by

⁷³"First there was religious exercises, second his extreme old age, he is seventy, third the road is not fit for 'Doolie' travelling, fourth the time for preparation was so short, fifth the Lassa people might be jealous and prevent his going to Teshoo Lemboo next year, sixth when he met Col. Lloyd twelve years ago, the meeting took two years to arrange and lastly yes I think it was the last reason the Bootanese may be jealous and annoyed at his friendship with me."

⁷⁵*Journal of Campbell*, n. 68.

⁷⁴*Ibid.*

⁷⁵Letter of Campbell to Government of India, 19 January 1850, F.P.C., 14 June 1850, 422.

Hooker. After a short stay he along with Hooker proceeded to the Kangralama pass and entered into Tibet despite the protests from the Sikkim officials and the Tibetan frontier guards. They returned to Sikkim *via* Donkya pass. The entry of Campbell and Hooker into Tibet was a clear violation of the regulations of that country which had prohibited the entry of Europeans. Campbell's entry into Tibet was brought to the notice of the Raja of Sikkim. The Raja, who was believed to be in some degree subordinate to Tibet, sent a letter to Campbell when he visited Tumlong again in November 1849, requesting him to return to Darjeeling.⁷⁶

The arrest and imprisonment of Campbell November—December 1849

Campbell decided to ignore the letter as he felt that by returning to Darjeeling he would be abandoning his demand on the Raja for the punishment of his officials responsible for 'obstructions' in the way of Hooker's travels.⁷⁷ He wanted to meet the Raja but failed to get an audience. He then left Tumlong, along with Hooker, and proceeded to the Chola pass and crossed into the Chumbi valley of Tibet which he wanted to investigate as the possible route for Indian trade for Tibet. As soon as they entered Tibet for the second time, they were met by Tibetan soldiers who refused to allow them to proceed further and escorted them back to Sikkim frontier. On reaching the Sikkim territory on 7 November 1849, they were arrested by the Raja's officials. They were then taken to Tumlong.

Here one must pause and note the cause of Campbell's arrest. The Raja in his letter to the Governor-General gave his own version of the arrest of Campbell. In that letter he stated that he allowed Hooker to travel freely in Sikkim, but he did not allow him to cross the Tibetan and Bhutan frontiers. Regarding Campbell he said that he could not receive him as his health was bad but sent him a message that he would be able to see him in two days. As Campbell paid no attention

⁷⁶Letter of Campbell to Government of India, 19 January 1850, *F.P.C.*, 14 June 1850, 422.

⁷⁷*Ibid.*

to that message and went to Chola, he sent his Dewan with presents to meet him. The Dewan met Campbell on the second day and offered him presents and informed him that it would be dangerous to cross the "Chinese and Bhotia territories" and implored him not to bring trouble to their country. The Raja further informed the Governor-General that Campbell thrashed "most severely" his (Raja's) servants. From that conduct of Campbell the Raja was "greatly distressed". He therefore out of "necessity" detained Campbell.⁷⁸

From that letter it is evident that Campbell's trespass to Tibet was the cause of his arrest. Campbell on the other hand maintained that his entry into Tibet had nothing to do with his arrest for before he went to Tibet he had fully satisfied himself through Chebu Lama that the Raja had no treaty with Tibet and was not bound by any engagement to be the "guardian of that country's limits". He insisted that he was arrested as the Raja wanted to force him to accept Lasso Kazi as his vakeel at Darjeeling, and to surrender the Sikkim slaves settled at Darjeeling.⁷⁹ Here it may be pointed out that in April 1849 Lasso Kazi, an adherent of Dewan Namguay, was appointed as Sikkim's vakeel at Darjeeling. Campbell refused to receive him and successfully insisted upon the appointment of the pro-British, Aden Chebu Lama in his place.

According to Captain Byng, officiating Superintendent of Darjeeling, Campbell brought the mischief upon himself by repeated defiance of the Raja's wishes and authority "such as no sovereign however insignificant so ever could be expected to endure".⁸⁰ In the light of the above facts it is clear that Campbell's arrest did not result from a sundry official matter alien to his Tibetan visit. Campbell's argument that Sikkim was not the guardian of the Tibetan frontier was not tenable when we consider the position of Sikkim *vis-a-vis* Tibet and China.

⁷⁸Letter of the Raja of Sikkim to the Governor-General, 11 November 1849, *F.P.C.*, 29 December 1849, 197.

⁷⁹Letter of Campbell to Government of India, 19 January 1850, n. 75.

⁸⁰Letter of Byng to Government of India, 29 November 1849. *F.P.C.*, 29 December 1849, 232.

Capt. Byng felt that Sikkim ought not to be subjected to the "wrath of China" unless they are prepared to "protect and compensate" Sikkim.⁸¹ In London, the Political and Military Committee of the East India Company regarded "the infringement of Dr. Campbell of the Chinese regulations prohibiting the entry of strangers to their territory was an act of grave indiscretion".⁸² In the light of these views it is difficult to resist the conclusion that the Tibetan trespass had precipitated Campbell's arrest.

Annexation of the Morung

The news of Campbell's arrest caused considerable panic at Darjeeling. All the attempts to secure his release had failed. The Raja, Chugphui Namgyal, refused to comply with the demand of the Governor-General Lord Dalhousie for the release of Campbell and Hooker on the plea that the Governor-General's letters did not bear proper seals. To retrieve its prestige the Government felt it "indispensably necessary" that the "savage insolence" of the Sikkim Raja "should be severely chastized" and that he should be made to "feel the power of the Government" with which he had to deal.⁸³

C. H. Lushington was appointed to act as the Superintendent of Darjeeling and was instructed to procure the immediate release of the prisoners, failing which he was asked to advance on Sikkim capital Tumlong and occupy the country.⁸⁴ Lushington addressed a letter to the Raja demanding the release of the prisoners. Even before the letter reached the Raja, the prisoners were released on 9 December 1849, as the Raja, or more properly speaking the Dewan, was afraid of the serious

⁸¹Letter of Byng to Government of India, 23 November 1849. *F.P.C.*, 29 December 1849, 230.

⁸²Political letter from the Secretary of State to the Governor-General, 30 July 1851, No. 28.

⁸³Letter of Halliday, Secretary, Government of India, to Lushington, Acting Superintendent of Darjeeling, 4 December 1849. *F.P.C.*, 29 December 1849, 243.

⁸⁴*Ibid.*

consequences when the British demonstrated their strength by moving their troops to the Ranjit river.

On 27 December 1849 Lushington, demanded from the Raja, the surrender of all the persons responsible for the arrest and imprisonment of Campbell and Hooker. The Raja was asked to make his personal appearance at Darjeeling by 10 January 1850, failing which he was threatened with the occupation of his country. The Raja ignored Lushington's demands. The Government, on its part, failed to enforce its threat of occupation of Sikkim as General Young, the Commander of the British forces, expressed doubts as to the feasibility of occupying Sikkim. He felt that the terrain of the country was an obstacle to their advance. He was supported by Sir Charles Napier who, in his military report, spoke of the difficulties to be encountered in a jungle country like Sikkim.⁸⁵ Under these circumstances, Lushington doubted the advisability of advancing to Tumlong. He was afraid that Tibet and Bhutan may come to the aid of Sikkim and felt that the British success depended on a "succession of fortuitous circumstances which require to be combined to ensure it".⁸⁶

Lushington felt that by conquering Sikkim all that they would obtain was a "country which is almost worthless and which it would be useless to ourselves to hold."⁸⁷ Therefore, he suggested that the idea of the occupation of the whole of Sikkim should be given up; instead the country to the west of Tista up to the junction of the Great Ranjit with that river, and from thence all the country to the west and south of the Ranjit and Rummam rivers be annexed. The Government accepted the suggestion and annexed that area, and also the Morung. The Raja's annual compensation of Rs. 6,000 for Darjeeling was also stopped. These annexations brought about significant changes in the relations between Sikkim and British India. Previously

⁸⁵"North and North-Eastern Frontier Tribes" in *Frontier and Overseas Expeditions from India*, vol. 4, compiled in the Intelligence Branch Division of the Chief of the Staff, Army Headquarters, India (Simla, 1907), pp. 45-46.

⁸⁶*Letter of Lushington to Government of India*, 22 January 1850. F.P.C., 14 June 1850, 405.

⁸⁷*Ibid.*

Darjeeling was an enclave in the Sikkim territory. After the above annexations it became contiguous with the British districts of Purnea and Rangpur in the plains. At the same time the Sikkim Raja was cut off from access to the plains except through the British territory.

After effecting the annexations mentioned above, the Government of India was faced with the problem of whether or not to withdraw the guarantee of security given to the Sikkim Raja under the Treaty of Titalia. Lushington was firmly against withdrawing the British guarantee, for, in that event Nepal might take possession of Sikkim and Bhutan and would be in a position to render itself "very powerful and disagreeable neighbour in the event of any misunderstanding with our Government."⁸⁸ Campbell was also opposed to the withdrawal of the British guarantee for "to cancel this engagement (i. e. the Treaty of Titalia) is virtually an invitation to all these (Tibet, Nepal, and Bhutan) to possess the remainder of Sikkim. Nepal and Bootan would be at once in the field for the spoil and as the former is the most powerful in arms, she would have it, and after having it a short time would enable her to extend her domination over Bootan". Nepal in that case would be within ten miles of Darjeeling. It would be then necessary for the British to maintain a huge army to prevent Darjeeling from becoming "an insular speck in the immense mountain kingdom of Nepal."⁸⁹ The Government of India influenced by these arguments, thought it expedient to continue its connexion with Sikkim.

Rejection of Raja's mercy petitions

The Raja was reduced to a state of extreme poverty as a result of the annexation of the Morung and the stoppage of his yearly compensation for Darjeeling. He dismissed the Dewan Namguay and sent mercy petitions to the Government of India

⁸⁸Letter of Lushington to Government of India, 1 February 1850. *F.P.C.*, 14 June 1850, 426.

⁸⁹Campbell's Memorandum to Government of India, 1 February 1850. *F.P.C.*, 14 June 1850, 433.

The British Expedition to Sikkim and the treaty of 1861

2

The crisis of 1849, as noted in the preceding chapter had resulted in the loss to Sikkim of its fertile territory to the extent of 640 sq. miles. That loss, together with the refusal of the Government of India to renew the annual allowance of Rs. 6,000, embittered Raja Chugphui Namgyal very much towards the British. Taking advantage of the Raja's strained relations with the British, ex-Dewan Namguay, who was reported to have been banished from the country on account of his involvement in the 1849 crisis, staged a comeback and began to take a prominent part in Sikkim politics. The Raja, as he became too old to govern the country himself, retired to Chumbi in Tibet leaving the administration in the hands of Namguay.¹

In March 1859, Namguay, in the name and with the knowledge of the Raja, sent a deputation to the Government of Bengal, demanding the payment of the enhanced annual allowance of Rs. 12,000 or as an alternative the restoration of Sikkim's territory confiscated in 1850.² The Government of Bengal viewed this as an affront to its prestige and demanded an apology from the Raja. The latter not only ignored the demand, but also prevented his subjects from travelling to the British territories for purposes of trade or labour.³ This was followed by raids on British territory of Darjeeling. British Indian subjects were carried off and sold as slaves or detained in Sikkim.⁴ On 19 March 1860 a grave case of kidnapping was

¹Arthur Jules Dash, *Bengal District Gazetteers, Darjeeling* (Alipore, 1947), p. 40.

²From 1858 to 1906 the Government of Bengal acted as the Agent of the Government of India in its dealings with Sikkim.

reported to the Government of Bengal. Some 13 Sikkimese raided a British Indian village called Tukdah and kidnapped two women. The raiders eventually turned out to be the relations of Dewan Namguay. In April and May 1860 two more cases of kidnapping were reported to the Bengal Government.⁵

Sir J. P. Grant, the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal, suggested to Government of India to take retaliatory measures, such as the destruction of the Raja's property or the arrest of his subjects.⁶ The Government of India rejected the suggestion to arrest the subjects of the Raja as it felt that innocent third parties should not be subjected to coercion.⁷

On the suggestion of the Government of India, Dr. Campbell, the Superintendent of Darjeeling, opened negotiations with the Raja. While the negotiations were in progress, on 1 October 1860, Campbell sent an ultimatum to the Raja, demanding (1) the restoration of the kidnapped persons, (2) compensation to those who have been plundered and (3) the arrest and surrender of the kidnapers and plunderers. The Raja was warned that if within one month of the receipt of the letter the demands were not complied with, his territory lying to the west of the river Great Ranjit and north of the river Rammam would be occupied.⁸

On the receipt of that ultimatum, Kabi Kaji, a Sikkim official, informed Campbell that the Sikkim Government had decided to depute Chebu Lama, the Raja's vakeel at Darjeeling, to meet him. He therefore requested Campbell not to be displeased till he met Chebu Lama.⁹ On 23 October 1860 Campbell received a letter from Raja Chugphui Namgyal himself

⁵C.U. Aitchison, comp., *A Collection of Treaties, Engagements and Sanads Relating to India and Neighbouring Countries* (Calcutta, 1909), vol. 2, p. 313.

⁶Letter of the Government of Bengal to Government of India, 27 April 1860. *F.P.P.*, May 1860, 339.

⁷Letter of the Government of India to the Government of Bengal, 30 April 1860. *F.P.P.*, May 1860, 341.

⁸Letter of Campbell to the Raja of Sikkim, 1 October 1860. *F.P.P.*, November 1860, 393—416.

⁹Letter of Kabi Kaji to Campbell, 12 October 1860. *F.P.P.*, November 1860, 393—416.

stating that he would not be "playing fool with the British Government".¹⁰ Two days after the receipt of the Raja's letter i.e. on 25 October 1860, Chebu Lama met Campbell and informed him that he failed to get the criminals or kidnapped persons even though the Raja had directed him to call upon his defiant officers to arrest the criminals and hand them over to Campbell. From that conversation Campbell concluded that the Raja or his advisers had "wilfully and deliberately" ignored the demands of the Government of India.¹¹ He therefore decided to execute the threat of the occupation of the Sikkim territory lying to the west of the river Great Ranjit and to the north of the river Ramman.

The advance and the retreat of Campbell 1860

On 1 November 1860, Campbell crossed the Ramman river and entered the Sikkim territory with a small force under the command of Captain Murray and advanced as far as Rinchipung. The difficulties presented by the physical features of the country were immense.¹² In spite of these difficulties the occupation was effected without encountering any resistance. Campbell reported to the Bengal Government that he had received the "cordial assistance and support" of all classes of population including the officers of the Raja in all grades.¹³

Everything seemed to be progressing most favourably up to the morning of 27 November 1860. But during the afternoon Chebu Lama's spies brought the information that the Dewa intended to attack the British position. Here it may be mentioned that the pro-British Chebu Lama was with Campbell since 25 October 1860. The intelligence brought by the Chebu

¹⁰Letter of the Raja to Campbell dated 12 September 1860, received by Campbell on 23 October 1860. *F.P.P.*, November 1860, 393—416.

¹¹Letter of Campbell to Chebu Lama, 25 October 1860, *F.P.P.* November 1860, 393—416.

¹²Campbell felt that no country in the world could exceed Sikkim mountains in the difficulty of moving troops and carrying stores and luggage. Letter of Campbell to Government of Bengal, 23 November 1860. *F.P.P.*, December 1860, 86.

¹³*Ibid.*

Lama's spies proved to be correct for, on the very night of 27 November 1860, the Dewan attacked the British position. The next morning i.e., on 28 November 1860, the Dewan's son-in-law addressed a letter to Campbell asking him to withdraw to Darjeeling. The letter ended with a warning that if Campbell decided to fight, he would see whether the Sikkimese were "men or women".¹⁴

Campbell ignored that letter. The next day, i.e. on 29 November 1860, the Sikkimese made another attack with a large force and tried to carry the British stockade. The attack lasted for about sixteen hours. When the fighting stopped on the morning of 30 November 1860, the pro-British Head Lama of the Rinchinpong monastery came and informed Campbell of the rumour that Darjeeling was attacked. That information tallied with the earlier information Campbell received that Lasso Kazi, one of the adherents of Dewan Namguay, was intending to attack Darjeeling.

Thereupon, Captain Murray, the commander of the British forces, checked the stock of ammunition available with him and realized the "impossibility of standing another attack". A Council of War was held and after considering three points, namely (1) the non-receipt of the Government reply to their earlier appeal for additional troops and ammunition, (2) the impossibility of holding the position with knives only, and (3) the impossibility of receiving support from Darjeeling should that place be attacked, which they had every reason to believe was the case, it was decided to retreat to the British territory.¹⁵

The retreat which commenced on 30 November 1860 was nearly a rout. The Sikkimese waylaid the British forces and captured a large quantity of their ammunition including seventy rifles.¹⁶ Campbell while crossing the trees was thrown down the

¹⁴Letter of Dewan's son-in-law to Campbell, 28 November 1860. *F.P.P.*, December 1860, 59—127.

¹⁵Letter of Murray to Maitland, Commander at Darjeeling, 10 December 1860. *F.P.P.*, January 1861, 30.

¹⁶"North and North-Eastern Frontier Tribes" in *Frontier and Overseas Expeditions from India*, vol. 4, compiled in Intelligence Branch Division of the Chief of the Staff, Army Headquarters, India (Simla, 1907), p. 40.

khud but providentially escaped unhurt.¹⁷ After marching fifty miles during the night Campbell reached on 1 December 1860 a place called Goke in the British territory. Murray tried to justify the decision to retreat on the ground that it had prevented the death or capture of every one in the stockade. He felt that the capture of Campbell would have placed the Government of India in a "most unpleasant position".¹⁸ Campbell also justified the retreat on the same ground.¹⁹

Whatever the justification for the retreat—it is hard to justify Campbell's expedition on any ground. The alleged provocation for it was the Raja's non-compliance with the British demand for the surrender of the kidnapped persons. But the facts do not fully warrant the allegation, for seven of the kidnapped persons were restored at different times.²⁰ Of course the Raja failed to hand over the criminals, but that was due to no other reason than his inability to apprehend them since some of them had escaped to Bhutan. All the persons from the Raja down to the officials tried their best to meet the demands of the Government of India. That was evident from the letters of Kabi Kaji and the Raja to Campbell. The Raja's letter of 12 September 1860 clearly indicated that he realized the necessity of keeping on good terms with the British. Campbell ignored that letter and proceeded with his plan of occupation of the Raja's territories lying to the west of the river Great Ranjit and north of the river Rammam. Had Campbell given the Raja some more time to comply with the demands of the Government of India, perhaps the need for the expedition would not have arisen. The expedition of Campbell in spite of the Raja's letter and his partial compliance with the demands of the Government of India gives support to the belief

¹⁷Letter of Murray, n. 15.

¹⁸*Ibid.*

¹⁹Letter of Campbell to Government of Bengal, 15 December 1860. *F.P.P., December 1860, 59—127.*

²⁰Letter of Campbell to Government of Bengal, 4 November 1860. *F.P.P., November 1860, 393—416.*

that Campbell wanted to avenge himself for his arrest and imprisonment in Sikkim in 1849.

The second reason for Campbell's expedition was his belief that the rule of Dewan Namguay was so unpopular that he would not meet with any opposition to this advance. As a matter of fact he expected warm welcome in Sikkim.²¹ Sir J. P. Grant was convinced that Campbell's opinion as to the alleged grinding rule of the Dewan and the eagerness of the many people to overthrow it were not well-founded.²² How thoroughly Campbell was mistaken in his belief was proved by the events of 27-30 November 1860 when the Sikkimese very nearly annihilated the British position at Rinchinpong.

Campbell considered the Sikkimese attack as "terribly treacherous". The allegation is entirely baseless. As already noted, on 29 November 1860, i.e. one day before the Sikkimese renewed attack on the British position at Rinchinpong, the Dewan's son-in-law asked Campbell by letter to withdraw to Darjeeling. Campbell ignored the letter and prepared to fight. It looked as though to justify his retreat Campbell characterized the Sikkimese attack as "treacherous". If any one had reason to complain of treachery it was the Sikkimese for it was Chebu Lama who gave Campbell the intelligence of Dewan's attack. Campbell confessed that it was entirely due to the timely intelligence of Chebu Lama that they had escaped the onslaught of Sikkim.²³ The Governor-General, Lord Canning, saw no proof of treachery in Campbell's reports and did not accept that allegation.²⁴ In a word, Campbell's expedition to Sikkim was uncalled for and it had not solved any of the British problems with that kingdom. On the contrary, it had complicated

²¹Letter of Campbell to Government of Bengal, 1 November 1860. *F.P.P.*, November 1863, 393—416.

²²Letter of Government of Bengal to Government of India, 30 January 1861. *F.P.P.*, February 1861, 208.

²³Letter of Campbell to Government of Bengal, 16 December 1860. *F.P.P.*, January 1961, 28—55.

²⁴Instructions of the Government of India, to Ashley Eden, Political Officer, attached to Sikkim expeditionary force, 28 December 1860. *F.P.P.*, December 1860, 148.

them further and forced the Government of India to undertake a military expedition into that kingdom.

The Expedition of Colonel Gawler

The retreat of Campbell from Sikkim was a great blow to the British prestige. The Government of India, therefore, thought it necessary to take immediate steps not only to demonstrate its power and rehabilitate its prestige in Sikkim but also to counteract the likely adverse political effects upon Tibet and Bhutan. Campbell felt that the immediate objectives of the Government of India in Sikkim should be (1) the release of prisoners captured by the Sikkimese in their recent attack; (2) enforcement of its earlier demand for the restoration of the kidnapped British Indian subjects; (3) infliction of punishment on the Raja; and (4) security against future aggression and "treachery".²⁵

He, therefore, informed the Bengal Government that the above objectives could be achieved by following one of the three alternative policies he had thought of. The first was the permanent annexation of the territory lately occupied i.e. the territory lying to the west of the river Great Ranjit and north of the river Rammam with suitable guarantee against future aggression. He, however, felt that this would be an "inadequate" compensation, since the area to be annexed is very small. He, therefore, as a second alternative suggested that in addition to the territory mentioned in the first alternative, the territory lying between the rivers Great Ranjit and the Tista, should be annexed permanently. Even these annexations, he felt to be "barely adequate". He, therefore, as a third alternative, suggested the annexation of the entire kingdom of Sikkim as it would "secure us all our objects".²⁶

Campbell wanted that the Government of India should consider his second suggestion in case it did not want to annex the entire kingdom of Sikkim, on the ground that it would bring the British Indian Empire into direct territorial contact

²⁵Letter of Campbell to Seton Karr, Secretary, Government of Bengal, 24 December 1860. *F.P.P.*, February 1861, 209.

²⁶*Ibid.*

with Tibet. He informed the Government that his second suggestion had the approval of Chebu Lama, Sikkim's vakeel at Darjeeling, who felt that the Government of India by annexing only a portion of Sikkim would be keeping the door open for reconciliation in some form or other with the Raja.²⁷

The suggestions of Campbell for the partial or full annexation of Sikkim did not find favour with the Bengal Government. Sir J. P. Grant felt that by partial annexation of Sikkim they would not be solving their difficulties with that kingdom. At the same time he was not in favour of the complete annexation of Sikkim, as it was likely to bring them into difficulties with Tibet. He, therefore, suggested to the Government of India that it should enter into a treaty with the Raja under which Sikkim was to (1) keep a vakeel at Darjeeling; (2) permit the Government of India to make a road through its territory up to the Tibetan frontier; (3) grant waste lands to British subjects; (4) deliver up criminals and (5) restore all kidnapped subjects.²⁸

The Government of India accepted the suggestion of Sir J. P. Grant and decided "not to annex any portion of Sikkim to British dominions". But to remove the discredit it had suffered on account of Campbell's retreat and to punish the Raja it considered two things as indispensable. They are: (1) the threatened occupation of the Raja's lands adjoining the British territory was to be made good and (2) a blow should be struck in the interior of Sikkim by advancing the British forces up to Tum-long. To attain these objectives, it decided to send a Military Expedition into Sikkim under the command of J. C. Gawler, with Ashley Eden as the Political Officer attached to it.²⁹

Instructions to Ashley Eden

The Government of India wanted that the punishment of the Sikkim Raja Chugphui Namgyal should be manifest to all.

²⁷Letter of Campbell to Seton Karr, Secretary, Government of Bengal, 24 December 1860. *F.P.P.*, February 1861, 209.

²⁸Letter of the Government of Bengal to Government of India, 30 January 1861. *F.P.P.*, February 1861, 208.

²⁹Instructions to Ashley Eden, n. 24.

To attain this, Ashley Eden was instructed to secure the surrender or the dismissal and banishment from Sikkim of Dewan Namguay together with the substitution of a minister in his place who should be "peaceable and justly disposed" towards the British. Secondly, the Raja was to enter into a treaty of friendship and alliance with the Government of India in the presence of his officers and British forces and proclaim it in his capital. In the event of both the Raja and the Dewan escaping from the capital, Eden was asked to destroy their residences. However, Eden was specially cautioned not to say or do anything "which shall give ground for the supposition that the British rule is to be planted permanently in any part of Sikkim".³⁰

It may be pointed out here that many considerations had weighed with the Government of India in its policy of non-annexation of Sikkim. The first was the awareness that the annexation of Sikkim would result in a "long, tedious and most expensive war" with the Himalayan states like Bhutan and Nepal, since they were likely to make a common cause with Sikkim due to their dread of the "proverbial acquisitiveness" of the British. In order to keep them aloof from the British quarrel with Sikkim, Eden had to assure them that the Government of India had no intention to annex Sikkim. In his letter to the Government of Bengal, Eden stated thus :

I attribute it entirely to the confidence which was placed in these assurances (i.e. of non-annexation of Sikkim) that the surrounding states held aloof altogether from the quarrel. . . . Had these states not distinctly understood that we were not advancing with any intention of annexation it is impossible to believe that with such a combination of interests, they would have joined to oppose us, if not avowedly at least secretly.³¹

Secondly, the Government of India was afraid that by annexing Sikkim outright it might find itself in a quarrel with Tibet or China, since all the Himalayan states had close

³⁰Instructions to Ashley Eder, n. 24.

³¹Letter of Eden to Government of Bengal, 8 April 1861. *F.P.P.*, May 1861, 17.

connexions with them. Eden explained that inter-relation thus : "Nepal is a tributary to China, Tibet is tributary to China, and Sikkim and Bhutan are tributary to Tibet and therefore secondarily to China.³² Therefore, the Government of India did not want to injure the susceptibilities of China by its activities in Sikkim. It may be mentioned here that the Government of India had always proceeded cautiously in its dealings with the Himalayan states. As already hinted, the Company in its war with Nepal in 1814 took care to explain its case against Nepal to China, through Sikkim. Apart from the Chinese susceptibilities, the Government of India long ago realized the importance of maintaining Sikkim as a buffer state between Nepal, Bhutan, Tibet and British India. The Viceroy, Lord Canning, followed that policy and instructed Ashley Eden that the Government of India "does not wish that an independent state (of Sikkim) should cease to intervene—between the British dominions and the vast and intractable people and Government of the Chinese Tartary".³³

Thirdly, trade considerations weighed heavily with the Government of India in its policy towards Sikkim. From the early fifties of the nineteenth century the importance of Sikkim as an easy trade route to Tibet and the lands beyond was recognized. In 1854 W.B. Jackson of the Bengal Civil Service in his report on trade argued that the Sikkim route could be of considerable commercial importance. Similarly, Hodgson, the former British Resident at Kathmandu, and Campbell became the ardent champions of the Tibetan trade via Sikkim. Besides, the rapid development of the tea industry in the neighbourhood of Darjeeling convinced the Government of the need to tap the great tea market of Tibet. Therefore it took care not to spoil its trade prospects with Tibet by antagonizing China by annexing Sikkim.

Lastly, the non-annexation of Sikkim was dictated by the internal political considerations. The memory of the Indian revolt of 1857 was still fresh in the mind of the Government of

³²Letter of Eden to Government of Bengal, 8 April 1861. *F.P.P.*, May 1861, 17.

³³Instructions to Ashley Eden, n. 24.

India. It was afraid that the annexation of Sikkim might have adverse political repercussions elsewhere in India.

Signing of the Treaty

The British Expeditionary Force left Darjeeling on 1 February 1861 and met with little or no opposition. Dewan Namguay fled to Tibet the moment the British troops approached the Tista. The Raja agreed to enter into a treaty with the British. On 28 March 1861, at Tumlong the treaty was signed on behalf of the Government of India by Ashley Eden, and by Sidkeong Namgyal, the son of the Raja Chugphui Namgyal.³⁴ With the conclusion of the treaty, British relations with Sikkim were once again normalized.

Articles of the Treaty

The Treaty consisted of 23 Articles. Article one cancelled all the former treaties between the British Government and Sikkim. Under Article two, the Government of India restored the territory under its occupation to the Raja. (Hereafter the Raja will be referred to as the Maharaja, since he was mentioned as such in the Treaty.) The Maharaja undertook to restore to the Government of India, all its property lost during Campbell's retreat (Article three); to pay an indemnity of Rs. 7,000 (Article four); to prevent depredations on British territory (Article five); and to surrender all British criminals and other delinquents who may take refuge in Sikkim (Article six). Under Article seven, the Sikkim Government agreed not to allow Dewan Namguay or his blood relations to enter into Sikkim or hold any office under the Maharaja or his family either at Sikkim or in Chumbi. Articles eight to twelve dealt with matters relating to trade. Under these Articles, the Government of Sikkim agreed to abolish all restrictions on travellers or monopolies in trade (Article eight); to afford protection to merchants or traders of all countries (Article nine);

³⁴Sidkeong Namgyal signed the Treaty on behalf of his father Raja Chugphui Namgyal since the latter was too old and afraid to come over to his capital, Tumlong, from Chumbi where he was then staying.

not to levy import or export duties on British goods (Article ten); to levy only 5 per cent *ad valorem* duties on goods imported from or exported to Tibet, Bhutan and Nepal (Article eleven); to prevent fraud, the Sikkim Government got the right to purchase goods on their face value, from the traders (Article twelve). The Government of India got the right to construct a road through Sikkim (Article thirteen); to conduct topographical or geological surveys of Sikkim (Article fourteen). The Government of Sikkim agreed to abolish slave trade (Article fifteen); grant freedom of movement to its subjects (Article sixteen); to refer to the British arbitration all its disputes with the neighbouring states (Article seventeen); to assist the British with its army when they are engaged in the hills (Article eighteen); not to cede or lease any portion of its territory without the British permission (Article nineteen); or allow the armed forces of other countries to pass through its territory without the prior British permission (Article twenty); to secure for the British, the seven criminals escaped to Bhutan (Article twenty-one). Under Article twenty-two the Maharaja agreed not to stay in the Chumbi valley of Tibet for more than three months in a year. The last Article twenty-three provided for the ratification of the treaty by the Viceroy of India within six weeks from the date of its signing.³⁵

The significance of the 1861 Treaty

The Treaty of 1861 was very significant in the Indo-Sikkim relations in that it brought Sikkim under the control of British India. Sikkim lost all freedom of action and became a *de facto* protectorate of the Government of India. All the demands of the Government of India were realized by that Treaty. Firstly, Dewan Namguay who was mainly responsible for Sikkim's anti-British activities was banished from that state. Secondly, the Maharaja agreed not to stay for more than three months in a year in the Chumbi valley of Tibet. These two measures seemed to secure the British interests in Sikkim. Thirdly, the British gained many trade privileges. Under Article eight free trade between Sikkim and British India was assured. The British expected

³⁵*F.P.P.*, May 1861, 279.

some opposition from the Sikkim Maharaja for this privilege but contrary to the general expectation it was most readily conceded.³⁶ The trade privileges were such that Eden hoped that within a short time

a very considerable trade will spring up between Lassa ... Darjeeling. The Tibetans will be only too glad to exchange gold dust, musk, borax, wool, and salt for English cloth, tobacco, drill, etc. and the people of Sikkim will gain as carriers of this trade, and their Government will raise considerable revenue from the transit duties.³⁷

Apart from the trade privileges, the British gained many other important concessions like the right to lay roads, and conduct topographical and geological surveys of Sikkim. The Governor-General Lord Elgin confessed that the readiness with which Sikkim accepted the British demands regarding right of transit, roads, transit duties was beyond his "expectation".³⁸

Eden claimed that the treaty aroused no ill-feeling between the British and the Sikkimese or the Tibetans. He maintained that he obtained from the Sikkimese all the concessions "freely and voluntarily".³⁹ So far as Tibet was concerned, Eden believed that their proceedings in Sikkim were viewed by it with "thorough satisfaction."⁴⁰

Although the British had gained substantial advantages, without having the need to annex Sikkim, still the treaty suffered from two weaknesses. One was the non-definition of the *de jure* status of Sikkim, and the other was the privilege granted to the Maharaja, under Article twenty-two, to stay in Chumbi for three months in a year. These two weaknesses manifested themselves

³⁶Letter of Eden to Government of Bengal, 29 March 1861. *F.P.P.* May 1861, 270—86.

³⁷*Ibid*

³⁸Minute by Lord Elgin, Governor-General, 8 March 1862. *F.P.P.* March 1862, 223A.

³⁹Letter of Eden to Government of Bengal, 29 March 1861, n. 36.

⁴⁰Letter of Eden to Government of Bengal, 8 April 1861, n. 31.

within three decades, and were mainly responsible for the subsequent difficulties of the Government of India with Tibet and China.

Succession of the Maharaja Sidkeong Namgyal, 1862

In 1862 again, Maharaja Chugphui Namgyal abdicated the throne in favour of his legitimate eldest son Sidkeong Namgyal.⁴¹ The twelve-year rule of Sidkeong was the most happy period in the British-Sikkim relations. Soon after his accession to the throne in 1862, the Government of India restored "as a matter of grace" to the Maharaja Sidkeong Namgyal the annual allowance of Rs. 6,000 forfeited in 1850.⁴² It was increased to Rs. 9,000 in 1868.⁴³ In March 1873 the Maharaja Sidkeong visited Darjeeling to meet Sir George Campbell, the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal. That was the first time the Sikkim Maharaja had visited the British territory although he was invited to do so many times before. The main object of the Maharaja's visit was to request the Government to increase his annual allowance from Rs. 9,000 to Rs. 12,000.⁴⁴

Sir George Campbell recommended to the Government of India to increase the Maharaja's allowance on condition that (1) he should give assistance to British officers like Edgar, Deputy Commissioner of Darjeeling, and others when they visit Sikkim; (2) he should help the Government of India in the opening and development of trade with Tibet; and (3) he should keep the Government of India informed of all the happenings beyond his northern frontier. While recommending the increase of the Maharaja's allowances, Sir George Campbell reminded the Government of India that the territories taken from Sikkim were becoming yearly of greater value. From Darjeeling and the Morung alone the Government was deriving annually rents

⁴¹Sidkeong Namgyal's succession, as already noted in Chapter one, was supported by the pro-British faction led by Chebu Lama.

⁴²Minute of the Governor-General, 8 March 1862, n. 38.

⁴³Aitchison, n. 5, p. 314.

⁴⁴*F.P.P.*, October 1873, 491.

to the tune of Rs. 17,946 and Rs. 59,747 respectively. More over the development of the tea industry and the growing importance of Darjeeling as a sanatorium made it a tract of great value to the Government.⁴⁵

The Government of India accepted the proposal of the Lieutenant-Governor and increased the Maharaja's allowance from Rs. 9,000 to Rs. 12,000 a year with effect from the year 1873. But in increasing the allowance the Government of India made it clear that the grant was made without any reference to the increased value of Darjeeling but purely as a mark of consideration for the Maharaja and as an indication of the desire of the Government to assist him in improving his country and developing trade.

To conclude, the British Military Expedition to Sikkim was an unqualified success. The power of the Maharaja was completely reduced and he submitted himself to the mercy of the Government of India. The latter decided not to annex Sikkim on various political, military and economic considerations. By this policy it did not lose anything since all its demands were accepted by the Maharaja. Moreover under Articles 8 to 12 of the 1861 Treaty, the Government of India gained from Sikkim many trade privileges. Eden expressed the hope that a great trade would develop between Bengal and Tibet via Sikkim. In the next chapter it will be seen how the Government of India tried to exploit its privileges to develop Sikkim as the trade route to Tibet.

⁴⁵Letter of the Government of Bengal to the Government of India, 17 June 1873. *F.P.P.*, October 1873, 492.

The Mission of John Edgar

It was seen in the last chapter that Ashley Eden, who had brought the British military expedition to Sikkim to a successful conclusion by forcing the Maharaja to enter into a treaty with the Government of India on 28 March 1861, expressed the hope that within a few years a very considerable trade would spring up between Lhasa, the capital of Tibet, and Darjeeling by the Sikkim route and that the Tibetans would be only too glad to exchange gold dust, musk, borax, wool and salt for English cloth, tobacco and drill.

The optimistic tone of Eden's report and the stupendous development of the tea industry at Darjeeling increased the interest of the Government of India in the Tibetan trade *via* Sikkim.¹ It may be noted that the British interest in the Tibetan trade was not a new development. As early as 1772, Warren Hastings, the Governor-General of Bengal, had sent George Bogle, an officer of the East India Company, to Shigatse, the headquarters of the Panchen Lama, to make an attempt to open Tibet for the British trade. Bogle could not achieve any success during that visit due to the suspicion of the Tibetan Government at Lhasa. He, therefore, planned to visit Shigatse for the second time in 1779 but that plan could not materialize as the Panchen Lama had left for Peking where he later died.² In 1782 Hastings made yet another attempt by sending another officer, Captain Samuel Turner, to Shigatse on the occasion of the re-incarnation

¹By the end of 1866, about 10,000 acres of land around Darjeeling was brought under tea cultivation. The annual outturn was over 433,000 lbs. Arthur Jules Dash, *Bengal District Gazetteer: Darjeeling* (Alipore, 1947), p. 113.

²Clements R. Markhan, comp., *The Diary of George Bogle* (London, 1876), p. 136.

of the Panchen Lama. Turner, though he was received favourably, was unable to forge any trade relations with Tibet.³

In the beginning of the last century the Governor-General of India, Lord Minto, resumed Warren Hastings' unfinished task of opening Tibet for the British trade, by sending Thomas Manning, an English scholar and a traveller to Lhasa in 1811.⁴ Manning also failed to achieve any success due to the suspicions of the Tibetans and opposition of the Chinese.

After these repeated failures, the Government of India changed its policy. Instead of attempting to open Tibet directly, it adopted the policy of indirect approach to spread its influence in the Tibetan border states of Nepal, Sikkim and Bhutan. First of all its attention was turned towards Nepal, the strongest of these states. In 1815 the East India Company defeated Nepal and forced on it the Treaty of Sagauli dated 2 December 1815 by which the Company gained much influence in Nepal.

Very soon after the defeat of Nepal, as noted in Chapter One, Sikkim also came under the influence of the Company and granted to it, under the Treaty of Titalia of 1817, many concessions including the privilege to trade up to the Tibetan borders. However, the Company failed to exploit that privilege. But ever since the Company came in possession of Darjeeling in 1835, it was constantly reminded of the great possibilities of trade with the lands beyond the Himalaya through Sikkim. Campbell, the Superintendent of Darjeeling, tried to impress upon the Government of India, the need to extend the trade of Bengal to Tibet through the Sikkim route, which had amounted to Rs. 50,000 a year despite many restrictions imposed and obstructions caused by the Sikkimese. It was not for that small amount of trade alone that Campbell advocated the development of the Sikkim route but for the "prospective and sure increase of it". He was confident that the Sikkim route would become in course of time the principal route for the trade of Bengal

³Samuel Turner, *An Account of an Embassy to the Court of Teshoo Lama in Tibet* (London, 1806), pp. 306-26.

⁴Spencer Chapman, *Lhasa: The Holy City* (London, 1938), p. 129.

with Lhasa instead of the "circuitous and more difficult route of Nepal".⁵

The Government of India did not receive the proposal favourably. Lord Dalhousie, the Governor-General, considered that if a trade of any real importance with Sikkim or with any country beyond Sikkim through the Sikkim route, existed it was "the immediate pecuniary interest of the Raja to promote it".⁶

It was only after the 1861 expedition when Sikkim became a *de facto* protectorate of the British and after the receipt of Eden's optimistic report on the prospects of the Tibetan trade that the Government of India revived its interest to open Tibet for the British trade. The opening of Tibet, however, was intimately connected with the problem of opening communications with its Government.

Attempts to open communications with Tibet

To open communications with Tibet, the Government of India sent in 1863, Captain E. Smyth of the Bengal Army, to western Tibet. He was authorized to cross into the very remote regions opposite to Kumaon, but he was stopped on the border by the Tibetan frontier officials who told him that he should not proceed further without passports issued in Peking.⁷

While the Government of India was endeavouring to open communication with Tibet, T. T. Cooper, an English traveller tried, with the knowledge and support of the British merchant community at Shanghai, to enter Tibet from the side of China. In 1867 he obtained a passport from the Viceroy of Szechuan to go to India *via* Lhasa, but on the Tibet frontier he was stopped by the frontier guards who refused him to proceed further. In 1869 he tried to enter Tibet from India, but again he was stopped by the Tibetan frontier guards.⁸

⁵Letter of Campbell to Government of Bengal, 5 October 1853. *F.P.C.*, 21 October 1853, 39.

⁶Minute of Lord Dalhousie, 14 October 1853. *F.P.C.*, 21 October 1853, 40.

⁷*F.P.A.*, April 1864, 133-34.

⁸*F.P.A.*, February 1871, 110.

Cooper, though he had failed to reach Tibet, was able to give much publicity to the prospect of developing Indian trade with that country which consumed annually six to eight million pounds of Chinese brick tea. His advocacy of this point had a profound effect on the subsequent Anglo-Tibetan relations.⁹

Haughton's proposals

In October 1869, Colonel J. C. Haughton, Commissioner of Cooch-Bihar and officer in charge of British relations with Bhutan, in his letter to the Bengal Government expressed the opinion that it was desirable that the Government of India should cultivate the friendship of Tibet and asked for permission to open communications with the Tibetan authorities. He felt that the Government of India should have friends beyond its northern frontier as it had none at that moment and as during its war with Bhutan in 1864-65 it had no means of obtaining information from the interior.¹⁰

The Bengal Government did not share the views of Haughton and felt that any attempt to open communication with Tibet "might excite suspicions as to our motives and do more harm than good".¹¹ Sir William Grey, the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal, thought it undesirable to disturb the existing satisfactory relations between India and Tibet. In his letter to the Government of India he stated thus :

These relations (between India and Tibet) are at present so satisfactory that the Government of that country (Tibet) have always, it is believed, declined to take any action in matters relating to frontier politics when applied to for its interference by its two quasi-feudatories, Sikkim and Bhutan, for the fear by so doing, it should be brought into collision with the British Government. Their rep

⁹T. T. Cooper, *The Mishmee Hills* (London, 1873), p. 2.

¹⁰Letter of Haughton to Government of Bengal, 23 October 1869. *F.P.A.*, January 1870, 124.

¹¹Letter of Government of Bengal to Government of India, 15 November 1869. *F.P.A.*, January 1870, 123.

to application from these frontier states has always been that so long as the British Government does not attempt to interfere with the frontiers of Tibet proper they have no desire to intervene.¹²

Further, Sir William Grey believed that the Government of India was able to invade Sikkim and Bhutan in 1861 and 1865 respectively as it had acted without making any reference to the Government of Tibet. He, therefore, wanted that Tibet should not be brought into any future discussion about the British frontier, for the Government of India may find itself in the critical position of "choosing either to let the offending states go unpunished, or of refusing a request of a friendly power".¹³

The Government of India, however, thought that no danger would arise from opening communications with Tibet. Therefore it did not object to Haughton's proposal of sending a verbal or written communication of a friendly kind to the Lamas of Tibet through the Maharaja of Sikkim, Sidkeong Namgyal, or other suitable channel.¹⁴

The Duke of Argyll, Secretary of State for India, concurred with the views of the Government of India that benefit might be expected by abandoning its recent policy of isolation towards Tibet and resuming the former friendly relations with its rulers which were originally opened by Warren Hastings and which had "unfortunately been so long in abeyance".¹⁵

Haughton, thus encouraged, examined the whole question of British commercial and frontier relations with Lhasa and submitted his proposals for the removal of the barriers to free trade with Tibet. He proposed that (1) the Court of Peking should be moved to take effectual steps in the spirit of existing

¹²Letter of the Government of Bengal to the Government of India, 19 January 1870. *F.P.A.*, March 1870, 92.

¹³*Ibid*

¹⁴Letter of the Government of India to Government of Bengal, 10 March 1870. *F.P.A.*, March 1870, 95.

¹⁵Despatch of the Secretary of State for India to Government of India, 5 May 1870. *F.P.A.*, June 1870, 102.

treaties to remove all restrictions on the free passage of British and Indian merchants and travellers to Tibet, (2) the Maharaja of Sikkim should be asked to obtain from the Tibetan authorities information as to the duties levied on their frontiers and prohibition if any, to the import of particular articles with a view if necessary for further communication. He felt that if the barriers were removed "a very important increase to commerce by way of Sikkim and Bhutan would take place . . . and a branch of traffic (viz. in tea) of much importance to Darjeeling might be developed".¹⁶

The Government of India asked for the opinion and suggestions of Sir Thomas Wade, the British Minister at Peking also regarding the opening of Tibet for Indian trade. Wade's reply to the Government of India was not at all encouraging. He was of the view that no useful purpose would be served by banking on the co-operation of the Chinese. The only suggestion he gave was to bribe the 'Amban' or Chinese Resident, at Lhasa because

he is always a Manchu or a Mongol, never a Chinese and is nowadays certainly a needy man to whom a sum of money in our eyes of no great amount would be an important consideration. All that he receives from his own government is the pay of his proper office probably from £ 500 to £ 1000 a year, which in these times he most probably does not draw !¹⁷

Letter to the Tibetan authorities

The Government of India, however, acting on the suggestion of Haughton, sent a letter to the Jongpen of Phari, a Tibetan frontier official, through Sidkeong Namgyal, the Maharaja of Sikkim, asking the Jongpen to transmit the letter to his superior in Lhasa. The Jongpen refused to receive the letter on the ground that it was contrary to the policy of his government.

¹⁶Letter of Haughton to Government of Bengal, 22 July 1870. *F.P.* October 1870, 70.

¹⁷Letter of Wade to Government of India, 16 November 1870. *F.P.* February 1871, 110.

which had prohibited all communications with the rulers of India.

Haughton regarded Jongpen's refusal to receive the letter of the Government of India as an affront to its prestige and wanted that Tibet should be warned of the dangers involved in refusing the friendly British overtures.¹⁸ The Government of India was, however, opposed to such a policy and preferred to wait for a more favourable opportunity of opening communications with Tibet.¹⁹ The Government of India once again asked Wade to make representations to the Chinese Government and secure the removal of Tibetan trade restrictions. Wade did not expect any help from the Chinese in the opening of Tibet for British trade. In 1872 he was able to feel the pulse of the Ministers of the 'Tsunli Yamen' or Chinese Foreign Office, while discussing with them the ill-treatment of an English traveller, T. T. Cooper, in Yunan and near Tibet. He realized that the Chinese were not prepared to allow European travellers or traders to enter Tibet at any point. He was sure that the Chinese "instead of moving the Tibetans in the right direction of improved intercourse will use their influence in the opposite sense". Accordingly, he informed the Government of India that any representations to the Chinese Foreign office would be of no avail; "unless our proposition be of such a nature as to make it impossible for the Chinese to decline to entertain it, we are certain to be met '*in limine*' by the rejection of it". All that he assured to do was that he would not hesitate to exploit any unexpected opportunity that might present itself in future.²⁰ In August 1872 he again assured the Government of India that he was "not indifferent to the consideration of any scheme by which the trade of Her Majesty's subjects or dependents in any part of the world may be extended". But he cautioned that it would be vain to

¹⁸Letter of Haughton to Government of Bengal, 31 July 1871. *F.P.A.*, October 1871, 619.

¹⁹Letter of Government of India to Government of Bengal, 21 October 1871. *F.P.A.*, October 1871, 621.

²⁰Letter of Wade to Lord Northbrook, Viceroy of India, 17 June 1872. *F.P.A.*, August 1872, 403.

look for aid until the minority of the Chinese Emperor came to an end which event "may be nearer than we think".²¹

Traders' Memorandum, April 1873

While the Government of India was trying its best to open Tibet for British trade, in England itself a similar movement was started by the mercantile community. Fascinated by the immense possibilities of trade in the Himalayan and trans-Himalayan regions, the traders began to press the British Government to secure the early opening of Tibet for trade. On 25 April 1873 the "Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce" presented a Memorandum to the Duke of Argyll, Secretary of State for India. The Memorandum pointed out the desirability of gaining access to Tibet not only through the Nepal and Bhutan routes, but also from the side of Sikkim. To improve trade by the Sikkim route various measures were suggested, namely, (1) the early completion of the Calcutta-Darjeeling railway, (2) the establishment of a mart on the Sikkim-Tibet frontier after the example of Kiatchta on the Russo-Chinese frontier, and (3) the opening of consular agencies at Lhasa and Shigatse. Further it pointed out that the British Minister at Peking should exert pressure on the Chinese Government to "grant full permission to trade along the whole frontier of Tibet".²²

There was nothing new in the Memorandum. All its suggestions were more or less in tune with the aims of the Government of India. The importance of the Memorandum, however, lies in the fact that it had concentrated its attention on the Sikkim route to the exclusion of all other routes across the Himalaya.

Stoppage of trade on Sikkim-Tibet Frontier

Apart from the Tibetan and Chinese opposition, the chief obstacles for the development of Indo-Tibetan commerce were the frequent stoppages of trade by the Tibetan officials on the

²¹Letter of Wade to Northbrook, 17 August 1872. *F.P.A.*, November 1872, 11.

²²*F.P.A.*, October 1873, 134.

Sikkim-Tibet frontier and the lack of good roads on the Sikkim route.

In 1873 the trade on the Sikkim-Tibet frontier was stopped by the Tibetan authorities. This the Government of India could ill-afford at a time when it was actively interested in developing Himalayan and trans-Himalayan trade. It was afraid that its hope of developing commercial ventures with Tibet would be doomed, unless something was done to prevent the stoppage on the Sikkim-Tibet frontier. The Bengal Government, therefore, felt it desirable to send a British official to the Sikkim-Tibetan border to enquire into the causes and significance of the frequent stoppages of trade. It took advantage of the visit of Sidkeong Namgyal, Maharaja of Sikkim, to Darjeeling in March 1873, to secure his consent for the visit of J. W. Edgar, Deputy Commissioner of Darjeeling to Sikkim. The main object of the Maharaja's visit to Darjeeling was, as noted in the preceding chapter, to request the Government to increase his annual allowance from Rs. 9,000 to Rs. 12,000.

Sir George Campbell, the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, wanted to use the Maharaja as an instrument in the opening of Tibet. He, therefore, recommended to the Government of India, that the Maharaja's annual allowance might be increased on certain conditions namely that (1) he should give assistance to British officers like Edgar and others when they visit Sikkim, (2) he should help the British in the opening and development of trade with Tibet, and (3) he should keep the Government of India informed of all the happenings beyond his northern frontier.²³

The Government of Bengal justified Edgar's Mission to Sikkim on the ground that it was its policy

to seize every opportunity of opening up and developing trade with Central Asia, and to secure by increased frequency of communication more full and accurate knowledge of what goes on in the hills.²⁴

²³Letter of the Government of Bengal to the Government of India. 17 June 1873. *F.P.A.*, October 1873, 492.

²⁴*Ibid*

Added reason was provided by the statement of the Dewan of Sikkim that the Tibetans were anxious to open relations with British India but that they were prevented from doing so by the fear of the Chinese. It seemed that Edgar might achieve much from friendly talks with the Tibetan officials on the Sikkim-Tibet frontier.²⁵

Edgar's visit to Sikkim

The Government of India accepted the proposal of the Bengal Government and deputed Edgar to visit Sikkim in October 1873. He was instructed to make himself thoroughly acquainted with "the present state of things there (Sikkim-Tibet frontier)—the actual condition, extent and prospects of trade with Tibet—the best line for the road to take, and the advisability of opening one—and all other matters likely to enable the Government to act with certainty on this important question."²⁶

In October 1873 Edgar entered Sikkim and visited the passes into the Chumbi valley of Tibet and talked with the Tibetan officials like the Jongpen of Phari and also ex-Dewan Namguay.²⁷ As soon as Edgar reached the Tibetan frontier of the Chumbi valley, messengers of ex-Dewan Namguay came and enquired from the former whether he would like to receive the latter. Edgar decided to receive ex-Dewan Namguay even though he was prohibited from entering Sikkim under Article Seven of the Treaty of 1861. Edgar felt that by meeting Namguay, he would be able to find out the latter's "exact position and influence as well as his present sentiments towards our

²⁵*Bengal Administrative Report 1872-73* (Calcutta, 1873), pt. 2, pp. 46-47.

²⁶J. Ware Edgar, *Report on a visit to the Sikkim and Tibetan Frontier* (Calcutta, 1874), p. 7.

²⁷Namguay after his expulsion from Sikkim in 1861 received a grant of land from the Dalai Lama and a decoration of "a high class button" from the Amban. In consideration of these favours, he was to give his advice on Sikkim affairs to the Jongpen of Phari, whenever required, *Ibid.*

Government". Moreover, he felt that he would be able to obtain more information regarding Tibet from Namguay than from any one else.

Edgar was not disappointed in his hope of getting valuable information from Namguay. He, in fact, obtained more information regarding Tibet from the ex-Dewan than from all other sources. He found Namguay to be a man of "great mental and bodily ability and unusually quick intelligence". From his interview, Edgar felt that Namguay was very anxious to gain the favour of the Government of India.²⁸

Interview with the Sikkim Dewan

After his interview with the ex-Dewan Namguay, Edgar met the Dewan of Sikkim and told him that he wanted to enter into the Chumbi valley of Tibet to meet the Maharaja of Sikkim who was then staying there.²⁹ On learning this, the Tibetan frontier official, the Jongpen of Phari, informed Edgar that the crossing of the Tibetan frontier by the Europeans was forbidden under an agreement between Tibet and China. He further explained that the direct management of the Tibetan frontier affairs had been entrusted to the 'Amban',³⁰

Ex-Dewan Namguay informed Edgar that there had been in Tibet a move in favour of abandoning the policy of isolation. He, however, cautioned Edgar that it would take a long time to witness any change of policy in Tibet and advised him to move to Peking to get the obstacles removed.³¹

Letter of the Amban to the Maharaja of Sikkim

The Amban, on learning about the proposed visit of Edgar to Sikkim and the Tibetan frontier, wrote a letter to the Maharaja of Sikkim, ordering him that "the Peling Sahibs (the

²⁸ *Ibid*

²⁹ Under Article 22 of the 1861 treaty the Government of India allowed the Maharaja of Sikkim to stay for three months in a year in Chumbi valley of Tibet.

³⁰ Edgar's Report, n. 26, pp. 11—12.

³¹ *Ibid*, pp. 13—14.

Britishers) should not be allowed to cross the frontier" (of Tibet).³² The Maharaja was asked to do all that was in his power to prevent the British officers from entering Tibet. The Maharaja was informed that in case he failed to stop the British officers from entering Tibet, the Jongpen of Phari would explain to them that the crossing of the Tibetan frontier by the Europeans was contrary to custom. He was, however, cautioned not to do anything "which could possibly give rise to complications in the future". Finally, the Maharaja was warned in the following strong terms

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 the 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.³³

The letter of the Amban to the Maharaja indicated a change in the Tibetan policy towards Sikkim. Prior to 1861 it took for granted its suzerainty over Sikkim and did not take a serious note of the latter's affairs. This indifference cost Tibet a great deal, as the British had extended their control and established *de facto* protectorate over Sikkim in 1861. It was only then that Tibet realized the necessity of re-asserting its suzerainty over Sikkim to forestall further British expansion towards the north. The news of Edgar's proposed visit to Sikkim came as an excellent opportunity for Tibet to warn the Maharaja and thereby the British that the latter cannot claim any suzerain rights over the former kingdom. The subsequent British relations with Tibet revolved around the *de jure* status of Sikkim.

Edgar's conversation with the Jongpen

Edgar, on learning about the contents of the Amban's letter to the Maharaja of Sikkim, gave up the idea of entering

³²Letter of the Amban to the Maharaja of Sikkim, August 1878.
Quoted in Edgar's Report, n. 26.

³³*Ibid*

into Tibet. He, however, took the opportunity to explain to the 'Jongpen' the British policy towards the Himalayan states which he stated as one of "encouragement of trade to the utmost of our power and the maintenance of strong friendly states along the frontier".³⁴ He pointed out that Tibet was the only country on the frontier which was not maintaining friendly relations with the British by following a policy of isolation in contradistinction to the policy of friendship pursued by Nepal.

When the 'Jongpen' requested Edgar to use the British influence to restrain the "aggressive designs" of Nepal on Tibet, Edgar told him that the British would not choose to interfere "unasked between a friendly state (Nepal) and one (Tibet) that refuses to have any friendly relations with us".³⁵

Edgar's proposals

After his return to Darjeeling from Sikkim in December 1873, Edgar made a number of proposals to the Government of India to improve its relations with Tibet. First, he suggested that the British Minister at Peking should make an effort to get from the Tsungli Yamen a declaration that the exclusion of the British subjects from Tibet was not authorised by the Chinese Government. He felt that such a declaration would be as effective as an order for their admittance. Secondly, he suggested that the British officers should lose no opportunity of cultivating friendly relations with the Tibetan frontier officials, but he cautioned that they should not show any eagerness to enter into Tibet. Thirdly, he advocated the establishment of a trade mart on the Sikkim-Tibet frontier.³⁶ Lastly, he recommended

³⁴Edgar's Report, n. 26., p. 19.

³⁵*Ibid*, pp. 20—21.

³⁶Edgar at first wanted that the trade mart should be established at a place called Gnatong in the uplands of Sikkim. He felt that place would be convenient to the Tibetans, since they dreaded visiting the lower valleys which were supposed to be unhealthy. The Sikkimese, however, disliked Gnatong as it was situated very near to the Bhutan border; instead, they suggested another place called Gangtok. Edgar was not in favour of that place as its climate was too hot for the people of Tibet. As a compromise, he suggested another place called Dumsong which was at a higher elevation than Gangtok and "quite well-suited to be the site of a mart". *Ibid*, pp. 77—79.

the construction of a road to the Tibetan frontier through Sikkim. He felt that with the construction of such a road "friendly relations with Tibet and a trade singularly advantageous to both countries would follow almost of themselves". He was surprised as to why steps were not taken to construct a road after the Treaty of 1861.³⁷

Wade's suggestion

Acting on the suggestion of Edgar, the British Foreign Office, which was also evincing keen interest in the opening of Tibet, asked Thomas Wade, the British Minister at Peking, to contact the Tsungli Yamen to get Tibet opened for British trade.³⁸ But Wade did not expect any help from the Tsungli Yamen as it had previously told Mayers, an official of the British Legation in Peking that the Tibetans would not open their country to Europeans as they felt that it would be a threat to their religion. He, therefore, informed the Earl of Derby, the British Foreign Secretary that

If trade be worth the effort, I think that it might possibly be opened were a mixed official and commercial mission pushed forward without reference to the Court of Peking which is always careful to declare that in this, or any other matter, Tibet may act as she pleases, and if the mission were authorized at the first instance to spend money rather freely.³⁹

Bengal Government's support for Edgar's proposals for a road through Sikkim

Sir Richard Temple, the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, believed that trade with Tibet could be developed simply by improving the communications between India and the Tibet frontier through Sikkim. He, therefore, endorsed Edgar's proposal for the construction of a road to the Tibetan frontier through

³⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 79-80.

³⁸ Letter of Earl of Derby to Thomas Wade, 8 April 1874. Despatch No. 32 of 8 April 1874.

³⁹ Letter of Wade to Earl of Derby, 14 July 1874. *F.P.A.*, February 1875, 25.

Sikkim and wanted that it should be completed within three or four years.⁴⁰

The reaction of the Government of India

The Government of India, unlike the Bengal Government did not react favourably to Edgar's proposal for the construction of a road to the Tibetan frontier through Sikkim. It felt that the time was not ripe for its implementation since the main obstacle for the development of the Tibetan trade, namely, the Chinese and Tibetan opposition, was not removed.⁴¹

Even though the Government of India did not accept the proposals of Edgar, the latter's visit to Sikkim was not in vain. It had, in fact, resulted in the increase of the British influence in that kingdom. Edgar was able to repair the damage done to the British prestige by the Amban's letter to the Maharaja remonstrating his (Edgar's) visit to Sikkim. The Maharaja supported Edgar's proposals for the establishment of a trade mart on the Sikkim-Tibet frontier and for the construction of a road up to the Tibet frontier. He, in fact, agreed to assist the Government of India in the construction of the road.

From the above survey it is evident that the Government of India had deputed Edgar to Sikkim because it wanted to use the Maharaja as an instrument in the opening of Tibet for British trade. The suggestion to open Tibet for British trade came from Haughton. The reasons for that were two-fold. First, he felt that with the coming of hill states bordering on the Tibet under British influence, and the weakening of China, the time was ripe to open Tibet. Secondly, since he worked near the tea growing areas, he was anxious to tap the large Tibetan market for that product.

Haughton, in his anxiety to open Tibet, failed to perceive the probable extent of trade and the real obstacles in its way. He, like Edgar, failed to realize that Tibet was opposed to British entry into its territory. The fact of the matter was

⁴⁰Letter of Government of Bengal to Government of India, 24 August 1874, *F.P.A.*, January 1875, 31.

⁴¹*F.P.A.*, February 1875, 24-37 (K.W.).

that Tibet, alarmed at the British expansion towards its frontier took steps to halt that process. The letter of the Amban to the Maharaja of Sikkim remonstrating the visit of Edgar to the Sikkim-Tibet frontier indicated a change in the Tibetan policy towards Sikkim. Edgar failed to perceive the full implications of that change when he suggested that Tibet should be opened with the help of China. That line of action became the pet theme of the succeeding British Indian officers like Colman Macaulay. By advocating such action they unwittingly acknowledged the suzerainty of China over Tibet and made the former a factor in the opening of Tibet. In the succeeding chapter it will be seen how Tibet for its part tried to frustrate the British attempts to develop trade with it by raising the question of the *de jure* status of Sikkim.

