

Landscape in Chitral in north-west Pakistan

H I M A L A Y A

MOUNTAINS OF DESTINY

WALTER LEIFER

TRANSLATED BY

URSULA PRIDEAUX

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FOREWORD TO THE ENGLISH EDITION

IT GIVES the author the greatest of pleasure to write his foreword to the English version of a work concerned with the historical and philosophical background of the political scene in the region centring on the Himalayas, for no European power has had so many contacts with the area as Great Britain. It is worth drawing attention to one such contact at a surprisingly early date, during the reign, in fact, of Alfred the Great of Wessex. This Anglo-Saxon ruler sent a delegation of pilgrims to India, or vowed to do so, to offer alms at the shrine of St Thomas at Mylapore. We read under the date 883 in the Laud version of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*: ‘. . . and in the same year Sighelm and Aethelstan conveyed to Rome, and also to India to St Thomas and St Bartholomew, the alms which the King had vowed to send thither. . . .’ This was in fact a thank-offering for the recapture of the city of London from the heathen Danes, against whom Alfred had invoked the intercession of the two saints.

From then onwards the wheel of history begins to spin a thread, tenuous but traceable in song and story and in the annals of pilgrimage, at first deeply imbued with the medieval dye of faith. These pilgrims to India are a silent but explicit demonstration of history. Not for six or seven centuries were they followed by merchants from England. But in the steps of the merchants pressed soldiers, administrators, adventurers and at last scholars. And how vastly was the literature of Europe enriched when Charles Wilkins translated the *Bhagavadgita*, the noble Song of God, and William Jones first presented to the West the enchanting story of Shakuntala which Goethe loved so much, and Colnebrooke, Wilson, Woodroffe, Cunningham, Farquhar, Fergusson and so many others devoted themselves to the new, exciting study of Indian letters! The climax of this European science of Indology is symbolized in the unique figure of Max Mueller, an Anglo-German in the field of linguistics just as Handel is in the field of music, and as eminent. Max Mueller laid the foundations, both in literature and in pedagogy, of the present age of Indo-European co-operation in all the arts and sciences. It was a long journey

from pilgrimage to partnership, and along the route lay adventure as well as humdrum administrative toil, commercial enterprise in widely dispersed trading factories despite all the blind alleys of ignorance and prejudice on either side.

Since my book first appeared in Germany, time has added a few more exciting scenes, set in the Himalayas, to the cosmic drama of history.

In March of 1959 the fourteen-year-old Dalai Lama fled from his palace at Lhasa, in order to escape on to Indian soil from the shame of being a crowned puppet and presiding over the mortal tragedy of his people. On the 17th of that month the population of Lhasa, followed by the rest of the Tibetan people, had risen, after the Dalai Lama had been summoned before the Chinese commandant and one of his palaces had been shelled. He followed the advice of his people to flee rather than be held as a pledge in pawn at the hands of the Chinese. Indian feeling was aroused and there was deep concern there about the temporal and spiritual head of Tibet and his people. Ever since the Dalai Lama had passed the Indian frontier post of Chutangmu in the North East Frontier Agency, on 31st March, he has been living in exile on the south-eastern slopes of the Himalayas, the fourteenth of the living incarnations of the Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara—and the silent, *patient smile* of a youth made wise by adversity still gives a glimmer of hope to the thousands of refugees from the high plateaux of the lamaseries. But in Tibet itself the too rapid destruction of the ancient social culture has plunged the people into confusion.

India, too, has suffered a shock from the flight of the Dalai Lama and the measures taken by the People's Republic of China against the Tibetan population, for the bonds between India and Tibet have been very close for untold ages through myth and religious usage, and now Tibet has been offered up on the altar of Indo-Chinese friendship. It was during the negotiations over Tibet that the five principles—the *Panch-Shila*—were first coined. Despite all the lip-service paid to them from Peking, those who sit in the seats of power in the Tien An Men, the political centre of Chinese Communism, have flagrantly violated the five principles and rendered them ineffective. The greatest political manifesto to come from the non-European world of our time has been treated by one of the contracting parties as nothing but a temporary demonstration. Something new has been added also, from the moment when

Delhi was forced to announce to the world that the Chinese had attacked areas long looked on as Indian territory. The border regions of Ladakh, Spiti, Gahrwal and great sectors of the North East Frontier Agency were among the Himalayan areas occupied by China. White Papers and an uninterrupted exchange of Notes are the documentary evidence that the clouds over the Himalayas are a long way from dispersing yet. Chinese claims to the leadership of south-east Asia have been announced once before, in the era when Manchu China was dying, when K'ang-Yu-Wei published in his *Ta T'ung Shu* the future plans of Chinese world policy. This Chinese *Utopia* first saw the light in Darjeeling, the summer residence of the British rulers of Bengal; a Briton, Laurence G. Thompson, has quite recently published it in English. On 15th December 1939 Mao Tse-tung claimed back certain territories of south-east Asia for China in an article that has become notorious. K'ang's *Utopia* and Mao's demand still have their influence.

In the south, in the south-east and in the east of Asia, Chinese Marxism claims the lead in such a way as one day will brook no compromise. An event that roused echoes all over the world was the Indian action over Goa. Treaty relations between Portugal and Britain, derived from the Anglo-Portuguese alliance of 1373, soon began to affect the Commonwealth relationship between Britain and India. And this was the moment that Pakistan chose to raise the question of Kashmir anew. But for India the wound along the MacMahon Line was more sensitive than ever. Before the forum of the United Nations dramatic events were played out. Their course is not nearly run yet, but they forced western statesmen and politicians to take more thought for the future of the world organization. It is rewarding to read in retrospect what Lord Home, then Foreign Secretary, said on 28th December 1961, and Harold Macmillan, Prime Minister, said on 5th February 1962, by way of careful analysis and admonitory, constructive criticism of the development of the United Nations, as they counted up the balance of the changes in the Himalayan region.

North of the Himalayas, above all, there is a perceptible disharmony between the two greatest Communist powers that almost rivals the world-wide conflict between East and West. On 9th September 1959 the Soviets announced through their press agency, *Tass*, that they deplored the Indo-Chinese 'incident', and two

years later to the day they took the opportunity, in the course of the 'abandonment of the personality cult', to alter the name of Mount Stalin, but, at the same time, they renamed another peak 'Mount Nehru'. This peak stands in their part of the Tien Shan range along the Chinese border. However, despite such demonstrations, the Soviets cannot overcome Indian mistrust aroused by the interpretation of the frontiers on Russian atlases.

Other recent events in the landscape of the gods and those who seek them are dwarfed by the accumulated facts of history, but even these few show that the political present with its sometimes subtle, sometimes crude ramifications in all corners of the earth is still preparing for us some surprises in the region of the Himalayas, as elsewhere.

W. L.

April 1962.

1

Mythological Prologue

HOW GODS WERE FOSSILIZED IN THE MAJESTY OF THE MOUNTAINS

IT MAY be symbolic that the mountains, the highest and most powerful on our earth, which have become political and philosophical frontiers, are regarded by the people of their region as a unique creation. And furthermore, they themselves are, in the popular belief, holy and divine.

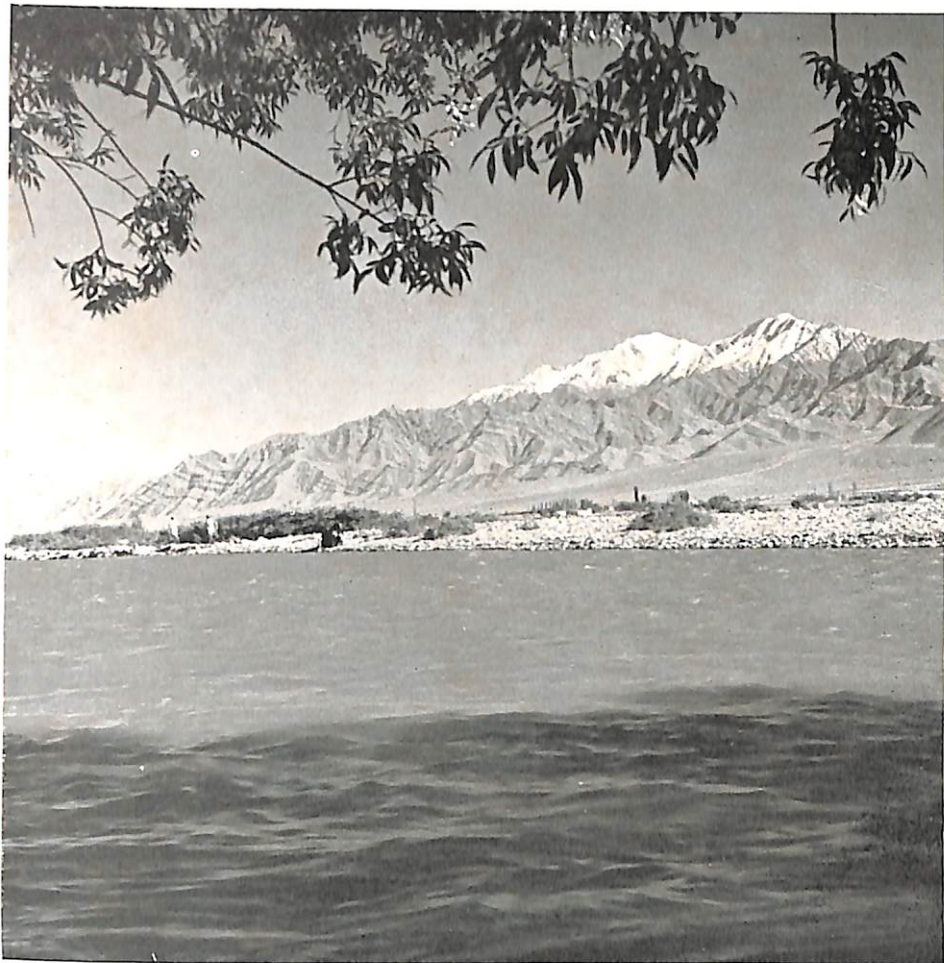
Those mountains which are gods, or in which the Divine is so powerfully and majestically demonstrated, this chain of ice-laden and snow-covered Himalayan heights, are thus stamped with the mark of the exceptional in the thoughts of their own sons and daughters.

The whole spiritual world of Hinduism is intent upon those hills and mountains of the Himalayas, which from time immemorial—who knows for how many thousands of years—have been the goal of pious pilgrimages and the scene of hard asceticism and ardent exercises.

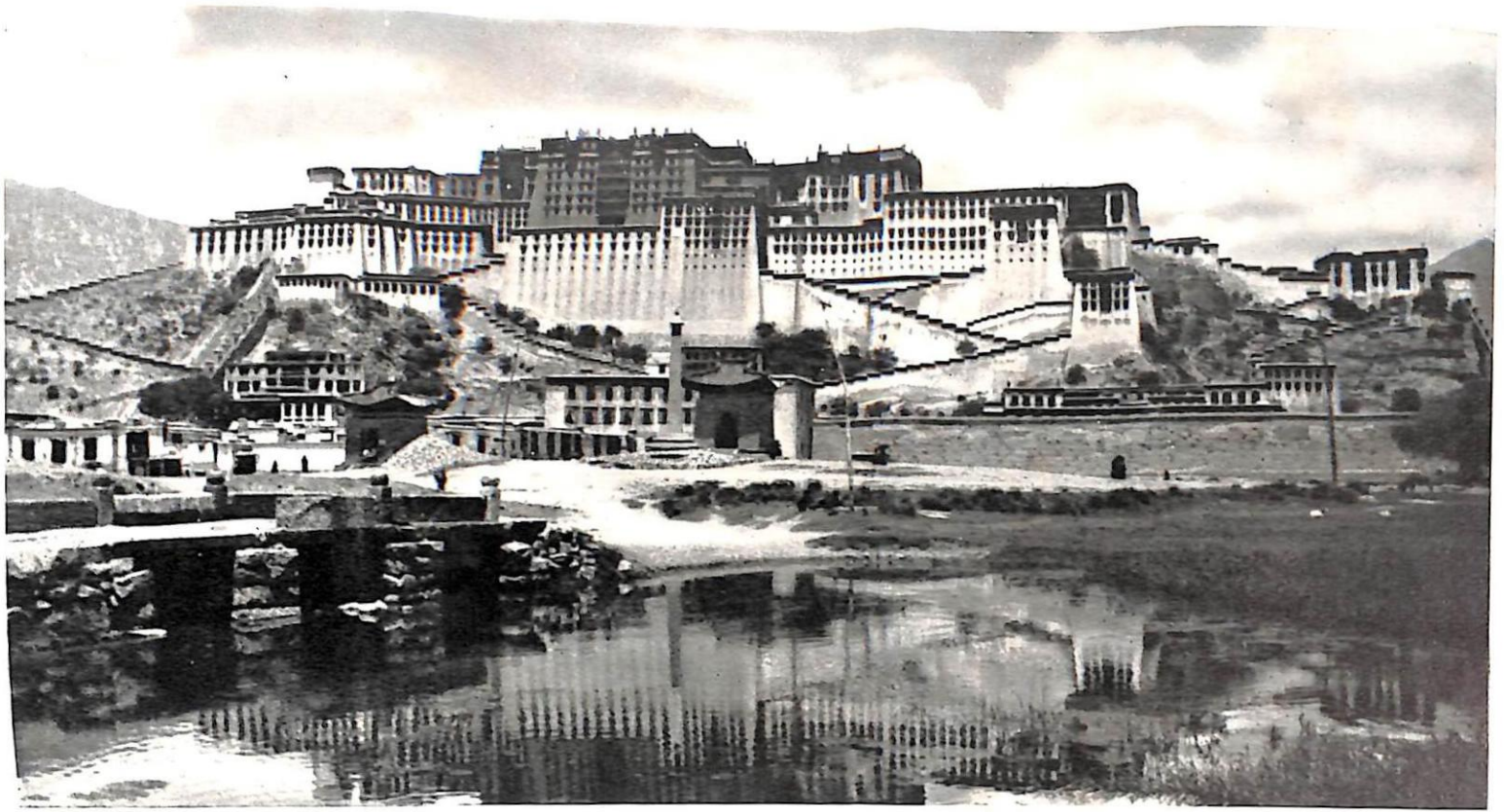
In this region lies the holiest of all holy mountains, Kailas. How much inspiration has this mountain, by the sacred lake Mansarovar, given to Indian artists! How many known and unknown pilgrims were drawn through the Himalayan valleys to this place of pilgrimage on Tibetan soil, which, for men of the Sino-Tibetan and Indian culture, represents the geographical and spiritual heart of the Himalayas, where pious pilgrims at prayer are so near to the pulse of the Divine itself.

that they spread a gay-coloured carpet of legends before the listener or the reader. But then the messenger of the clouds comes near to the River Ganges, reverently called *Ganga* by Indian lips, into that Himalayan landscape which in the writings of Kalidasa is often called *Devatatma* ('Home of the Gods').

We may stop for a while at the Ganges because the thoughts and feelings of more than 300 million Hindus centre upon it. The Ganges, so runs an ancient legend, was the stream of heaven. Whoever speaks of it, of the event when the stream left the heavenly pastures, must begin with the story of King Sagara of Ayodhya. The latter once wanted to hold a horse sacrifice called *Asvanedha*, so as to become by this means lord of the countries, Chakravarti ('universal ruler'). But the god Indra jealously stole the sacrificial beast and sixty thousand descendants and relatives of Prince Ayodhya now sought the sacred horse all over the world. But when it seemed that they would soon discover it, Indra and his heavenly friends, who seemingly possessed many earthly vices, gave the alarm. They used their power to turn the sixty thousand suddenly to ashes. Then there was mourning in the royal house of Ayodhya. Wise Garuda, uncle of the slain, now announced that they would have to summon the heavenly stream of the Ganges down to earth, so as to carry away the ashes of the dead into the ocean of eternal peace. In the original tale two spiritual worlds clash: the more realistic Indoeuropean world, and the mentality of the oriental seekers after God, which is inclined to asceticism. As regards the *Indoeuropean share in the story*, let us recall that amongst one western branch, the Germanic tribes, a reminder of the old Aryan horse-worship is still kept alive in the coats of arms of Westphalia, Lower Saxony and Kent. But to return to the tale of the Ganges. Nobody was found able to perform the impossible task of fetching the Ganges down from Heaven except Bhagaritha, one of the blood relations of the slain. He tormented himself by self-martyrdom and asceticism so much that the God Brahma himself had pity and promised the Ganges to the ascetic. In order to modify the downward rush of the river from Heaven, Shiva allowed it to be caught up by his eyebrow. Whereas we would speak of the labours of Hercules, in India people still speak today of a 'labour of Bhagaritha'. The story of the ascetic who brought the river of Heaven down to earth has much in common with the Hellenic tale of Sisyphus. But the Western encounter, born in constraint,



The Indus Valley



The Dalai Lama normally resides in this monastic palace, the Potala at Lhasa, capital of Tibet

has no success. In the oriental sphere, however, the stromer of Heaven, by prayer and voluntary self-torment, succeeds in converting the gods. Somewhere in the neighbourhood of Naini Tal in the Himalayas, when I heard of the Bhagaritha myth for the first time, the Brahmin interpreter of ancient Indian wisdom smiled at me and said: 'Is that not similar to the bidding of Christ to ask and to knock again and again until God's door is opened to the human suppliant?'

Swami Sivananda, of the Yoga-Vedanta-Wood University of Rishikesh on the River Ganges, the creator of the Hindu Divine Life Society, founded in 1936, and one of the most frequently sketched personalities of spiritual India, today carries the religious message of the Himalayas beyond the boundaries of his native land. In a pilgrim's book which Swami Sivananda published, we find the interpretation of a pilgrimage to the most sacred piece of earth in our world, as a Hindu sees it:

If you have happily survived an arduous pilgrimage, you are not to forget that the fruit of such a pilgrimage is not by any means the pleasure of having seen the heights of Kailas or having bathed in Mansarovar or Gauri Kund, or of having encountered unforgettable scenery on the journey. Nothing of the kind! Here in the holy region of Kailas and Mansarovar you are surrounded by a holy atmosphere. Seize the golden opportunity. In the morning and the evening, if not all day long, seek out for yourselves a place in silent contemplation of the divinity which lies there before you in the form of holy Kailas and Lake Mansarovar. Then surrender yourselves there to meditation, in order to rise to the highest peaks of spirituality and to make your hearts as pure as the snow which covers the peak of Kailas and your mind as crystal clear and transparent as the waters of Mansarovar. Then all the impurities in your hearts and spirits will fall from you.

At this point I may perhaps indicate that in the whole Western world—largely thanks to the Indian Divine Life Society, which has a strong influence abroad—there are great numbers of people who also pay homage to the myth of the Himalayas. In our own time there has spread an orientalism which attracts certain Western circles more and more strongly, and so it is not surprising that such ideas are today presented by a Swiss woman, Margarete Schneider, in various journals such as *Voice of the Himalayas* or *Synthèse Universelle* published from Geneva. For this European woman Swami Sivananda is 'the Towering Saint of the Himalayas'.

faith in the gods and of the teaching of Buddha which is unfavourable to everything metaphysical and divine, names Demchhok as the divine protector of Kailas. His other name is Pavo. This god Demchhok is wrapped in a tiger skin and round his neck he wears a sinister chain of human skulls. In addition he carries *damaru*, the trumpet, and *bhatam*, the trident. The divine emblems show the relationship of Demchhok to the pair of Hindu gods Shiva—Parvati. Amongst the Hindus, when the destructive feminine power in her is seen, the divine wife Parvati bears, however, the name Durga or Kali. The spouse of the god Demchhok is Dorje-Phangmo. In the Indian sphere her name is Vajra-Varahi. Demchhok was, of course, not on Kailas but on the peak of Tijing. Kailas, reserved, according to the Hindus, for Shiva and his spouse is, in the Tibetan view, inhabited by Buddha and five hundred *Bodhisattvas*. These *Bodhisattvas* are beings who were on the way to the state of Buddha, but have renounced it in order to redeem other men.

It will cause no surprise that the Tibetans make pilgrimages to and around their most sacred mountain just as the Hindus do. A day's pilgrimage of this kind is called *parikrama* by the Indians and *ningkor* by Tibetans. Just as the Tibetans, in their lamaistic teaching, often show a road to salvation in the plainest and simplest manner—namely, in the recitation of magic formulæ and in the turning of holy words by means of prayer mills—so there is too for the wealthy people of the country a convenient way of relieving oneself from an arduous pilgrimage. The journeys around Kailas or a pilgrimage around Mansarovar—Tso Mapham or Tso Mavang as they are called by the sons of the country—one can have carried out by servants or beggars, in exchange for an adequate payment and provisioning. When he can show 108 pilgrimages, the pious Hindu is certain of *Mukhta*, the highest grace of god, and the Tibetan is certain of *Nirvana*, release from all suffering.

It may cause surprise that not only do the Tibetan lamaistic books honour the lake and the mountain as the sacred centres of the land of Buddha, but that even the Buddhist writings in Pali and Sanskrit mention them. In this literature Mansarovar bears a significant second name: *Anotatta*, or *Anavatapta-lake*, without heat or unrest. This Anavatapta is paradise upon earth. Here lotus flowers bloom and royal swans—*rajahansas*—sail along

majestically between them. Kailas and Mansarovar in the divine garden of Shiva are accessible only to the person who is meditating. The sceptical son of the West will find a gloomy Tibetan inland lake and behind it one of the many mountains of the roof of the world, which to be sure tower up much higher and more regally in the actual Himalayas.

It should also be mentioned here that in Persia, Afghanistan, China and Burma, the Himalayas and their most holy places penetrated into the literature, that they inspired the peoples of south-east Asia in exactly the same way and that, from Laos and Cambodia to Indonesian Bali, they are buried as deeply in the consciousness of the people as in parts of the Himalayan region itself. The Himalayan myth has transformed Buddhism in these territories, and lamaistic Buddhism, which is predominant amongst Tibetans, Mongolians and Kalmuks, is also called *Vajrayana*—the diamantine vehicle. The two other large groups of world Buddhism are 'the large vehicle', *Mahayana*, the Chinese-East Asiatic species, and 'the small vehicle', *Hinayana*, the branch of the belief found in Ceylon, Burma, Laos, Thailand and Cambodia.

Even the Jains, that Indian religious community which seeks salvation without the help of priests or of the Brahmin gods, did not free itself from the spiritual pressure of the Himalayas. In their works they call Kailas *Ashtapada* and Mansarovar *Padma Hrada*. Those great saints of Jainism, the *Tirthankaras* or preparers of fords, begin with Adinatha Vrishabhadeva, who attained his *Nirvana*, his final release from the suffering of wandering from rebirth to rebirth.

The myth of the Himalayas is an endless coil. Thousands of years have helped to wind it, and Sadhus and Swamis are still meditating in the icy deserts—men who always wear the pilgrim's garment of the priestly beggars of Hinduism.

These wise men stand meditating in the Himalayas as frontier guards of spiritual India. No record shows what low temperatures they endure there and how high they climb—and, goodness knows, it is as well that Western sensationalism still pauses before these silent men. One of these Hindu pilgrims once told me that in the Himalayas, in the midst of a nature which is completely deified, one can only draw near to what is 'placeless', the really divine spot, if one thinks away beyond all that which is too deeply rooted in mythology and tries only to trace the original divinity. One

must throw the gods overboard. I interposed to ask whether Buddha had not done that and whether Buddhism, and what is known as Buddhism today, did not just show that certain limits might not be crossed.

My contemplative friend replied that those who were drawing near to the deity did not just cross that frontier because they were bidding farewell to thousands and thousands of gods but not to the great nameless deity. 'And those men over there'—he pointed to the Himalayan peaks—'go even further, and even want to banish from our minds that nameless thing which we worship in silence. Yet the soul and the faith of the Himalayas are stronger. . . .'

Beyond the Himalayas new gospels are being proclaimed. In the greatest of the Slav empires and in the most powerful of the Sino-Asiatic realms, these new prophets are at work. And the patriarch of a new generation of materialistic prophets is a German Jew from Trier, the ancient city on the Moselle. But this gospel teaches that Paradise can be found in a different way, in fact already here on earth, and not through meditation, prayer and asceticism.

To its children the mountains of the Himalayas are gods. Was that why the Soviet Russians changed the name of Pamir's Mount Everest, Kauffmann Peak (formerly named after a German governor of tsarist Turkestan) to Lenin Peak and Garmo to Stalin Peak? In many places in the *Rig-Veda* one can read this sentence: 'Kasyeme himavanto mahitva sam no adri sam no parvatah.' ('These great Himalayan mountains are a most significant omen for us.')

This sentence, which thousands of years ago had a religious meaning, today suddenly receives a burning political reality.

2

Historical Prelude

HOW PROPHETS AND CONQUERORS WERE ATTRACTED TO THE HIMALAYAS

NOT only devout pilgrims, enraptured poets and philosophers were drawn to the mountainous land of the gods. Leaders of different expeditions gazed towards the lands around 'Devabhumi'. Their aims were more 'realistic', and changed from century to century.

From the sterile plains of the north, peoples were always attracted to districts which promised riches and well-being. Bold tribes won empires and thrones for themselves. Thus there arose, to the south of the Himalayas, kingdom after kingdom, founded by wave after wave of new conquerors.

Over and above that, the Central Asian area—known to professional historians as *vagina gentium*, 'the womb of the nations'—has given to the world an unheard-of political task. The Central Asian nomad began the attack upon the city civilizations in the river regions of Europe and Asia. The world to the north of the Himalayas was constantly in a state of disintegration. For hundreds of years this world was 'Asia' to Europeans. But the real Asia consists of the old civilizations: from Arabia, the Iranian bridge to India, and from there stretching to Indo-China, where the Indian and Chinese cultural spheres meet; from there the paths lead to Indonesia and to the spiritual kingdom of the Far East.

All these ancient cultures contrast with the parched steppes of Central Asia, where hunger and poverty always shadowed the mounted tribes.

For his part the Dalai Lama expounded the plight of his people in courageous and determined fashion from his successive places of refuge at Mussoorie and Dharamsala. On 7th August 1960 the International Commission of Jurists at Geneva had published a report running to 343 pages under the title *Tibet and the Chinese People's Republic*, in which this acknowledged aggression by the Chinese in Tibet was characterized as genocide, and further proved that Peking was trying to break down the social and religious structure of Tibet, that it had outraged most of the human rights formulated in U.N.O. declarations and that finally Tibet had been an independent state, *de facto*, previous to 1951. The Panchen Lama found himself forced to play a degrading part in the tragedy of Tibet by declaring, on 24th October 1960, that he condemned the inclusion of Tibetan affairs in the agenda of the United Nations Organization, since it interfered in the internal affairs of China. But still the misery of Tibet remains unrelieved, an immediate fact about a country that once seemed to us dim with the mists of legend.

In the meantime the battle for a 'progressive' development goes on in Tibet. The case of Tibet does not concern China alone. That is what the Chinese Tieh-Tseng Li expressed in his book, *The Historical Status of Tibet*, which appeared in 1956:

Whatever the world situation may be, the author believes that an understanding between India and China such as exists between the United States and Canada, with an agreement on the demilitarization of the Himalayas, which are the decisive element of both Indian and Chinese geography, offers not only a guarantee of the autonomous state of Tibet, but is also a stabilizing factor for world peace.

4

Medieval Epic

IN NEPAL, BHUTAN AND SIKKIM TIME STANDS STILL

THE King of Nepal may be addressed five times with the title *Shri*: 'Shri Shri Shri Shri Shri'. That is the highest form of respect, for five is a sacred number. It is the due of the king, the sole Hindu monarch still reigning, for he is a reincarnation of the god Vishnu. Tibet is not far away with its reincarnations of the lamas. But the living embodiment of Vishnu reminds us rather of those Pharaohs in whom Amon-Râ, the supreme god of the country of the Nile, was reborn. In Asia the present can even today still be so far removed from us. And yet it is also close, for the young king, Mahendra Bir Bikram Shah, wishes to lead his country from the Middle Ages into the Modern Age. Therefore he is honestly trying to introduce democratic reforms. This is by no means easy, for not only are the methods of mountain cultivation in this clearly agricultural state those which we like to call medieval, but also the mentality of the people belongs to the twelfth rather than to the twentieth century.

The position of the kingdom of Nepal is of great geopolitical significance, lying as a barrier between India and the territory of the People's Republic of China, which claims Tibet as a part of its territory. Just as the new Communist Government in Peking was preparing to order its troops to the Himalayas, New Delhi issued a declaration that the territory of Nepal belonged to the Indian sphere of interest. This declaration showed the Chinese

how far they might go. It must not be forgotten that Nepal was formerly a Chinese vassal state, just as Bhutan and Sikkim as subordinate lands had been subject to Tibet. Just at this time an internal revolution broke out in Nepal.

Since the sixth century Nepal had seen numerous ruling houses, which across the valleys of the Himalayan foothills ruled over a race of peasants, breeders of cattle and collectors of berries. These were the Kiratsidi, the Lichchau, the Thakuri, the Malla and the Tirhut. When the Malla once again placed themselves in command in Nepal, they gave the country the most outstanding king who had ruled over them for centuries: Yakshamalla, who occupied the throne from 1426 to 1476. In 1767 the Gurkhas became rulers of Nepal. The first of the dynasty was Prithvi Narayan Shah, from the village of Gurkha, some four days' march from Katmandu, the capital of the country. Attacks from the Tibetan direction, from Kashmiri traders, the Gosains and finally from the British, were to be in store for the new ruling house. Yet Prithvi Narayan's successors knew how to build a solid state stretching from the eastern frontiers of Sikkim to the River Sutlej. A few years later the Nepalese Army, incited by the brother of the deceased Panchen Lama, Dza-Marpa, attacked Tibet. But in the two-year Sino-Nepalese war, which lasted from 1790 to 1792, the aggressors were defeated and had to accept hard terms. Nepal became a vassal state of the Middle Kingdom, like Korea, Annam, Siam and Burma. They were compelled to send a mission to Peking every five years to pay tribute. These terms were carried out until 1908. It was not until the Chinese revolution that the position was changed.

The Nepalese had scarcely forgotten the defeat of the Sino-Nepalese war when they attacked three police posts in Butwal, a contested area. That was in 1814; but the British Governor-General made a rapid decision and marched his troops into Nepal. He defeated the Nepalese, and on 2nd December 1815 dictated to them the Treaty of Sagauli, in which they were compelled to give up Sikkim and surrender the regions of Kumaon and Garhwal to the British. As a matter of fact it was a long time before the Nepalese accepted the treaty, but at the same time a change was taking place in the political life of the state.

In 1816, just as the war was ended, General Bhimsena Thapa seized power in the country without deposing the weak king, whose

dynasty had suffered many losses in two wasteful wars. Bhimsena was in fact driven out in 1839, but a relation, Jung Bahadur, who, like the exiled lord of the country, came from the Rana family, managed to become hereditary prime minister with the title of Maharajah. The proud title of *Maharajah-dhiraj*'—'Almighty King'—was left for the nominal ruler. Thus there arose in Nepal a state system reminiscent of the Frankish Mayors of the Palace at the time of the Merovingians, or of the Japanese Shoguns. This rule of the Rana family as hereditary occupants of the post of prime minister ended on 18th February 1951. After various attempts by different politicians to form a government, the king, father of the present ruler, took the reins firmly in his hand. It was the policy of the Rana to allow no wind of change to blow into the country. On the other hand the young king endeavoured slowly to open all doors to the modern era with its political demands. To do this, not only is a gradual internal development necessary, but also contact with the outside world. Until the British withdrawal from India there had been since 1934 only one diplomatic representative in Nepal's capital Katmandu, namely, the British, and down to 1958 no one except India and Britain had diplomatic representation actually in Katmandu.

But after the proclamation of Indian independence an Indian Embassy was set up, and thereafter more and more diplomatic missions were added. While in 1958 only a few states had simultaneously accredited their representation also to the court of the King of Nepal—the U.S.A., Switzerland, the Soviet Union, France, the People's Republic of China, Japan, Burma and the Federal Republic of Germany—today there are some thirty countries having diplomatic relations with Nepal. Actually in the capital five powers maintain embassies, Britain, India, the U.S.A., the Soviet Union and China. The postal monopoly bequeathed by the British to the Indians was now transferred to the Nepalese. Nepal has for some time been a member of the World Postal Union, and the stamp catalogues of the world are already recording the history of its small and valuable stamps.

British-Nepalese relations began with a trade agreement made with the Gurkhas on 1st March 1792. But the motive was not so much a desire to carry on trade as the necessity caused by the Sino-Nepalese war. It was not until the Treaty of Sagauli that a close relationship was brought about between Nepalese and British.

The mountainous country was of the greatest importance for the rulers of India, because here the Gurkhas, the last true mercenaries in the world, were recruited for the Indian Army.

The Nepalese had often attempted by means of armed force to create for themselves a right of consultation in Tibetan affairs. In 1856 they therefore attacked Tibet once more, in order to establish a representative of their country in Lhasa and to protect Nepalese trade with Tibet. The warlike enterprise was successful, and in the same year on the 'eighteenth day of the second month in the year of the Fire Dragon' the Nepalese dictated a mild treaty to the Tibetans. The substance of the first three of the ten paragraphs was as follows:

1. The Tibetan Government shall pay each year to the Gurkha Government the sum of ten thousand rupees as a gift.
2. Gurkha (that is, Nepal) and Tibet have always shown respect to the Great Emperor. Tibet, as the country of monasteries, hermits and lamas, has dedicated itself completely to religion. For that reason the Gurkha Government declares itself prepared in the future to provide for Tibet, as far as possible, help and protection in case a foreign state should attack it.
3. In future Tibet will not demand any customs duty or road charge or taxes of any kind from the merchants or other subjects of the Gurkha Government.

For exactly one hundred years ten thousand rupees were collected every year in Lhasa for the royal treasury in Katmandu. The last 'gift' was delivered in 1956. After the visit to Peking of the Nepalese Premier of that time the treaty between Tibet and Nepal was so altered that 'terms degrading' to Tibet were struck out of it.

The pact of perpetual friendship with the British had been signed on 21st December 1923. In it Nepal's independence was recognized, but the word 'sovereignty' was not used. On 9th November 1947 an agreement had been reached between Great Britain, the Indian Union and Nepal upon the future of the Gurkha regiments in the Indian Army. In 1950 the status of the country changed, because for the first time the sovereignty of Nepal was attested in a diplomatic document. This was the pact of peace and friendship of 31st July 1950 between India and Nepal, which *inter alia* laid upon both parties the duty of 'recognizing and respecting the full sovereignty, territorial integrity and

independence of each other'. On the same day a trade and economic treaty valid for ten years was signed between Katmandu and New Delhi.

The pact of peace and perpetual friendship with the British was renewed on 30th October 1950. The Government of Nepal announced on 14th July 1953 that the British Government was empowered for five years to recruit from Nepalese territory Gurkha soldiers for the British Army overseas.

Of the three Himalayan principalities, Nepal is by far the most open to new ideas. That is partly because of its status: it is a sovereign state. Conditions in the interior are as they were hundreds of years ago; but a small class is enlightened and seeks to gain for Nepal a stronger voice in the concert of the nations.

When therefore, in February 1958, at a Geneva conference of delegates from inland countries, the position of these states with regard to their access to the sea was discussed, Nepal became the spokesman of a group. This group wanted to have replaced by an international law the behaviour of the maritime nations towards the inland countries in questions of commerce, whereby they had been in the habit, until then, of allowing a certain international politeness to prevail.

Use was also made in Nepal of the possibility of improving the country's economy by means of loans. American, Indian and Chinese currency are to give help here. Nepal has been glad to be discovered by politicians bringing offers of help.

After the proclamation of King Tribhuvana on 18th February 1951 Nepal once more had a monarch willing to live up to his responsibilities. A romantic young German lady named Erika Leuchtag played her part in the royal drama of those days shortly before the fall of the Ranas, for she was the link between the hermetically imprisoned king and the Indian ambassador. There now began a miniature exercise in royal politics. After the death of the first Nepalese monarch of the post-Rana era, King Tribhuvana having died at Zürich in the year 1955, King Mahendra Bir Bikram took over the government. While the Ranas had persistently pursued a pro-British policy and had stood firm by Great Britain even at the time of the Mutiny in 1857, it seemed after the events of 1951 that the royal house of Nepal would insist on a strong pro-Indian line.

But international politics in the country had not yet crystallized.

The first Cabinet appointed by the king, of ten ministers, contained about half members of the Rana family, while the other half were drawn from the Nepalese Congress Party. But in November the Congress minister declared that such a Cabinet was not viable. Therefore, on 16th November 1951, a new Cabinet excluding the Ranas was formed. The last representatives of the old oligarchy therefore disappeared.

Development, however, was not steady, but frequently interrupted. Thus it came about that on 10th August 1952 the Prime Minister, Matrika Prasad Koirala, after severe criticism by his own brother, Bishewar Prasad Koirala, resigned from the sixty-one-strong Advisory Assembly, leaving the king to take over the administration personally. It was not until 15th June 1953 that a new Cabinet was appointed. The Prime Minister was the same Matrika Prasad Koirala as before, and again his own brother reproached him for leading an undemocratic government.

On 2nd March 1955 the young prince, Mahendra Bir Bikram, whose father on his deathbed had conferred full powers on him, reintroduced direct rule. His first act was to take over the actual sovereignty from his dead father after a regency lasting eleven days. Not until 27th January 1956 did Tanka Prasad Acharya form a coalition government at the wish of the king, and he led it until his resignation on 9th July 1957. Then the government was entrusted to K. I. Singh, but as popular protest against the Left Wing United Democratic Party of the latter was too strong, the Cabinet was dismissed on 14th November 1957, and once more the king resorted to direct rule. A Royal Proclamation issued from the Hanuman Dhoka Palace on 12th February was meant to put an end to the ups and downs on the way to a certain kind of democracy. The king proclaimed a Constitution of seventy-seven Articles which promised a bicameral system consisting of a Lower House (Pratinidhi Sabha) and an Upper House (Maha Sabha); also there was to be a Privy Council (Rashtriya Sabha) and a Supreme Court. It seemed that the last lap towards a more or less functional and constitutionally guaranteed administration was assured. Country-wide elections began on 18th February and were concluded in the most outlying corners of the mountain kingdom by 3rd April. The majority of votes were won by the Moderate Socialist Congress Party, whose president was B. P. Koirala. The king entrusted him with the office of Prime Minister on 27th May 1959. For the first

time in the history of Nepal the voters had spoken. In his capacity as Prime Minister, Koirala visited India and China, the two great powers who control Nepalese destiny. But the king travelled to the United States and Great Britain (and also incognito to West Germany and other places). In Washington King Mahendra called the prime aim of his foreign policy 'non-alignment and non-entanglement'. But the same year 1960 which had seen in these state visits a hitherto unknown burst of diplomatic activity on the part of Nepal was also to see the end of the Koirala Government. Nepal was in for another spell of royal direct rule. On 15th December the king dismissed the first parliamentary government of the country under B. P. Koirala and had all the ministers arrested. He declared by proclamation that the members of the government had let themselves be influenced by personal interests and had not prepared the economic reconstruction of the country by scientific analysis. This action on the part of the king aroused strong criticism in India. Partisans based on India later tried to overthrow the royal government, which caused severe tension between Katmandu and New Delhi. Furthermore, the rapid construction of a motor road from the capital of Nepal to the capital of Tibet aroused the strongest misgivings in India.

On the other hand, mercenaries in the pay of Great Britain and India provide what is almost the only source of foreign currency for Nepal. After all, there are still twelve Gurkha battalions in the Indian Army and eight Gurkha battalions in the British Army, where they are highly valued as mountain troops. Indeed, their place in British military history can never be usurped, for the Gurkha infantryman with his *kukri* is something for which there is no substitute. In the eyes of the world they are the most obvious representative of the last Hindu monarchy of our times, reigning in the Himalayas under the patronage of Shiva in his aspect 'Pashupatinath'.

Sikkim and Bhutan are monarchies headed by maharajahs, whose political status is, however, different. Whilst Sikkim is an Indian protectorate, Bhutan has the rights of a semi-sovereign state. India exercises suzerainty here: that is to say, she has no sort of influence on internal policy, but represents Bhutan in foreign affairs. As Tibet was for a long period, so today Bhutan is a closed region of Asia.

Bhutan and Sikkim, being two countries in which lamaistic

Buddhism is the state religion, and being neighbours of the Dalai Lama's country, naturally had very close relations with it. Thus even in Sikkim the ruling family, which has reigned there since 1641 and is still reigning today, is descended from the Gyalpos or chiefs of eastern Tibet. For a long time Bhutan was subjected to a double rule, that of a spiritual sovereign, the Shab-tung Rim-po-che or Dharma Rajah, and a temporal lord, the Deb-Rajah. This double rule came to an end after the death in 1904 of the last Dharma Rajah Nga-Wang-Yigmat-Koegyul. The Tongsa Penlop—that was the name for the prime minister—Sir Ugyen Wangchuk, was installed in 1907 as hereditary Maharajah.

Relations between Sikkim and Great Britain were regulated by treaties which brought about the gradual transition of the small maharajah state into a British protectorate. The first treaty with the Rajah of Sikkim was concluded on 10th February 1817. In this agreement the British gave a region which they had taken from the Nepalese, a strip of country between the rivers Mechi and Tista, to the ruler of Sikkim, whom they had just selected to be their protégé in this area. In a decree, called *Sanad*, of 7th April 1817, addressed to the rajah, the new acquisitions finally became the possession of Sikkim. Later the Rajah of Sikkim showed gratitude for these territorial gifts by a return gift: at the request of the British, in a decree published on 1st February 1835, he gave the territory of Darjeeling to the East India Company. The British had selected this lovely spot of God's earth in the midst of the Himalayas as a future 'hill station' for themselves, and it was a foregone conclusion that the rajah should give them the territory. It is true that these gifts of friendship were not always given with a very glad heart, as is shown by the inconsistencies which soon arose. In a treaty dated 28th March 1861, it was therefore laid down how good relations between Gantok, the capital of Sikkim, and Calcutta, the seat of the Governor-General of the East India Company, were to be developed.

On 17th March 1890 Great Britain and China defined in a convention their relationship to Sikkim. In Article 2 of this convention the terms of the British protectorate were clearly laid down:

It is recognized that the British Government, whose protectorate over the state of Sikkim is hereby accepted, possesses direct and exclusive control over the internal administration and the external relations of this state, and that except through and with the consent

of the British Government, neither the ruler of the state nor any of its officials may maintain official relations of any kind whatsoever, formal or informal, with any other country.

On 5th December 1950 free India made a treaty with Sikkim by which the relationship of the protectorate to New Delhi was allowed to continue exactly as in the era of the British.

On 11th November 1865, at Sinchula, a treaty had been made with the government of Punakha, the capital of Bhutan. The inhabitants of Bhutan call the document of Sinchula the ten-article treaty of Rawa Pani. According to its conditions Bhutan had to hand over Athara Duras in the foothills of the Himalayas, to the British, who also retain the territories of Assam and Bengali Duras. At the same time Bhutan had to recognize the British as arbitrators if it should have a dispute with the princes of Cooch Behar or Sikkim. For as long as Bhutan kept the treaty, it should receive an annual sum of twenty-five thousand rupees as compensation for the loss of income from the Duras territories. This sum was later to be increased to fifty thousand rupees. At the beginning of this century the relations between Great Britain and Bhutan were once again redefined. On 8th January 1910 the Government of King Edward VII concluded with the *Druk Gyalpo* (the 'King of Thunder') the treaty in which Great Britain undertook not to interfere in the internal administration of Bhutan. In return the foreign policy of Punakha was left entirely to the British. From the British point of view this treaty has been considered rather as an agreement supplementing the arrangements of the Sinchula treaty. On 8th August 1949 the Indian Union concluded the Treaty of Darjeeling with Bhutan, which determined the retention of the old relationship between Punakha and New Delhi which had meanwhile become completely independent.

The Himalayan principalities survive into our own times as a piece of the Asian Middle Ages. Whilst it is very simple to meet these Middle Ages in Nepal, because the Government in Katmandu is friendly to tourists, one cannot unreservedly say the same of the other two countries. It is particularly difficult to reach Bhutan. This is the case not only for Western visitors but also for Indians, whose country has nevertheless the closest relationship with the Himalayan kingdoms. Perhaps the attitude of an Indian journalist, Harish Chandola, may be mentioned here. The statements were

made (on 9th February 1958) in an article in the *Times of India* headed (something of a shock to Indian readers): 'Sikkim and Bhutan drift away from India'. Chandola wrote, amongst other things:

My last journey to this state [Sikkim] made me realize what a great influence the changes in Tibet had upon the people of Sikkim. Everywhere along the Indian state road, which runs through Sikkim, everybody was smoking Chinese cigarettes, which were either sold or given to the donkey drivers in Tibet. They showed excitement and curiosity over the changes in Tibet and were full of stories about the results of these changes. In short, their gaze was fixed on Tibet.

Nobody knows what is going on in Bhutan. For India it is a closed country. In spite of our treaty there is no Indian representative in Bhutan. As things are, I do not know whether we can send anybody there at all. No Indian can enter Bhutan without previous written permission from the Bhutanese Government. And nobody receives written permission. In fact, no Indian can ever enter Bhutan.

On the frontiers of this state guards have been posted, who are to seize those who want to force an entry, and throw them out. No Indian representative, even during his official visit, has reached Punakha, the capital of Bhutan. They always met the Maharajah and others in Pharo, half way to Punakha, and then came back. Bhutan's frontiers are its own. We do not know them.

From certain signs outside this state it is clear that we can never really make friends with it. We are as effectively cut off from its people as this mountain race is from us. Officials of Bhutan whom I have met say that the fate of Nepal has taught them a lesson. The attempt to introduce democracy in feudal Nepal has led, according to these Bhutanese officials, to a collapse of its ancient tried and tested form of government.

The old administration has broken down. A new one cannot really take over the task yet, because conditions are not yet ripe for it. The Bhutanese say that they do not wish to repeat this tragedy in their own country. They say they would soon notice it, if one day their people should show themselves open to the revolutionary ideas of democracy.

In Bhutan, too, the Nepalese predominate. There too they form the backbone of the peasant economy of the country. There too discontent is noticeable amongst them. There too we are helpless and must watch whilst our good friends turn to our enemies.

Such articles caused alarm in India. In the course of 1958, Prime Minister Nehru visited Bhutan from 21st to 27th September. But in order to reach this Himalayan country, with its close ties

with India, the head of the Indian Government had to take a route over Tibetan territory. After his return there was strong pressure for the construction of a direct motor road from India to Bhutan, which in fact has been built since then. Further ones are planned. In the Himalayas roads are a matter of politics! But politics are not merely a matter of introducing civil engineers to these remote lamaistic kingdoms; all sorts of economic means must contribute to wrench these countries from their seclusion, whether or not there is antagonism between the parties concerned.

In the Himalayas hundreds of races and small nations meet. In them have survived remnants of all the many Tibetan and Mongolian peoples who ever passed through the Himalayan region. To them are added the Indo-Aryan races, who like the Gurkhas later formed the ruling caste. The old races, mostly of Mongolian descent, consist of small communities which are again divided into an endless number of minor races.

But in Nepal there are, of the larger tribes, the Kirat-Rai, Limbu, Magar, Gurung, Tharu, Newar, Sunwar, Dhamang, and finally the 'Eastern people', the Sherpas. In Sikkim one finds the Lepchas, the Mun, Bong-Thing, Rong, Yak-tamba (Limbu), and the Bhodja. Bhutan's tribes include the following: aBrugpa-Bhodja, Meche, Kachari, Moran and Chutiya.

All these inhabitants of the Himalayas, of whom only a small number in one part of the gigantic range of the Himalayas and their approaches have been mentioned, are people with a view of the world and religious and intellectual ideas which often reach back into the primitive way of thinking of the most distant past. These people live on frontiers which are amongst the most 'sensitive' on earth. It must not be forgotten that the splinter populations inhabiting Soviet Asia, which often spring from the same racial group, were torn out of the past and introduced to the modern age.

Therefore it is worth giving one's whole attention to the problem of the primitive Himalayan peoples and tribes. That can be done only by means of good anthropological groundwork. From this point one can then advance into all the other historical, ethnographical and philosophical fields, as well as those concerning the history of religion and the psychology of race, so as to work out the future treatment of these races. Here I can draw attention to the activity of a new kind of institute, the results of whose

labours cannot be overlooked by Himalayan research workers. It is the Anthropos Institute in Bandra, near Bombay, a foundation of the Salesian fathers of the Society of the Divine Word. One of the leading scholars of this project is P. Professor Hermanns, who has written on Chinese and Tibetan subjects in German, Chinese and English, and in 1954 produced a book upon the Indo-Tibetans on the occasion of the one hundred and fifteenth anniversary of the foundation of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society. This unique Anthropos Institute has the following objects: To foster the ethnological and theological investigation of the primitive cultures of India and further the investigation of Indian civilization, with particular reference to its anthropological, ethnological and prehistoric aspects. Previous fields of research have been the racial areas of Nepal, Bhutan, Sikkim, Tibet and Assam. In St Xavier's College instruction in anthropology and ethnology is given by the fathers of the Anthropos Institute. The fact that in addition numerous publications appear, and that suitable Indian collaborators are drawn in, proves how widely felt is the influence of the institute, which is attached to the German religious order.

The three Himalayan principalities are at three different *political stages* and thus have three different kinds of relationships with their neighbours. Somehow they form vacuums, they are borderlands in their many different levels of associations to the north and to the south. Borderlands can unite, separate or ward off. Nepal's gaze turns towards India and the south, the two other principalities look south in politics and north in their religious concerns. Out of the knowledge of such tensions arises the interest which is bestowed on the last Hindu and lamaistic monarchies.

Mr Nehru, Prime Minister of India, with U Nu, then Prime Minister of Burma, at a reception of Buddhists from all over south-east Asia at Sanchi in Central India, 1952.





The Dalai Lama, right, garlanded, and the High Lama of Ladakh, centre, behind plant at a Tree Planting Ceremony.
Left, the author

5

Disharmony in Assam

MOUNTAIN TRIBES IN THE OIL COUNTRY DISCOVER THEMSELVES

THE most eastern member state of the Indian Union lies hemmed in between Burma, East Pakistan, China, Tibet and Bhutan. Only a narrow corridor forms its link with the rest of India, with the neighbouring state of West Bengal. Even this brief geographical indication of Assam's position shows how exceptional its situation is. There is something else exceptional about the region of Assam as compared with other Indian lands—if I may be allowed, for the sake of simplicity, to apply this idea geographically and not politically, and extend it to include the states of Manipur and Tripura and also the border territories of the race not subject to the government of Assam: Assam was directly acquainted with the events of the Second World War.

When the Japanese proclaimed their gospel of *Dai To-a Kyo-eiken* ('Greater East Asian Sphere of Prosperity'), and, in the course of the hostilities, the 'provisional government of Free India', formed in Singapore by supporters of the circle around Subhas Chandra Bose on 21st October 1943, addressed itself to the Indian provinces and states, India had become one of the great prizes of the war in Asia. The Indian National Army—*Azad Hind Fauj*—formed in Malaya and Burma followed in the wake of the Japanese attack as far as Imphal in the state of Manipur. Assam had already been abandoned and the British headquarters, which were in

Ranchi, were already expecting an attack on Bengal, the home of Bose.

In the end matters did not get so far, but the fact that the Japanese occupied Burma and the adjoining Indian zone was for long enough to be quoted as the reason for the unrest which seized individual tribes in India and Burma just at the time when both these states had become masters of their own destiny.

The Indians were accustomed to look again and again to the north-west of their country, where conquerors could make a way into the plain of the Ganges. But the Second World War pointed out the other gateway to India in the north-eastern corner. Today the keys of the north-west lie in the hand of Pakistan, but security of the north-east is an Indian task.

Assam, the country on the Brahmaputra, or upper Assam, and on the River Surma (lower Assam), is India in miniature. In upper Assam live the Assamiya-speaking inhabitants of the country, from whom it takes its name. Lower Assam is like a second Bengal. In the past there were many frictions between the Assamiya- and Bengali-speaking inhabitants. Amongst the former the fear prevailed that the cultural predominance of the language of Tagore might be too strong. On the other hand they pleaded strongly for their own province, Purvachal. Today these aims have by no means been abandoned.

The geographical area 'Assam' is the home of many tribes. The very history of this country is the chronicle of tribal rule, the most famous of which was Pragjyotisa, with its capital Pragjyotisapura near Gauhati. Somewhere in the seventh century there flourished the kingdom of Kamarupa, which was known even in China as Kamolupo, and amongst Iranian and Arab writers as Kamru or Kamrat. When the Shans had set out in the thirteenth century from the central areas of lower India to conquer what was later to become Assam, they perhaps gave the country its present name at the same time. In the Thai language *cham* means 'conquered' and, in conjunction with the Aryan prefix *a-*, *acham* would mean the 'unconquered'. Now whether the Shans brought a Thai name with them, or whether the Boro name for 'low country', *hacom*, is the root of the word Assam, may be of no consequence. However, the philological explanation can often throw light on psychological connections between the former conquerors and the conquered. The kingdom of the Shans, then known as Ahom, which had

defended itself so successfully against the Moghuls, had to yield to the British in 1826. By the Peace of Jandabu, which opened the road to Burma to the British, Assam was added to the mighty realm of the East India Company.

Here in the valleys Aryan civilization once clashed with more Eastern non-Aryan cultures. This can be traced not only in many Tantrian rites and in the belief in magic, but also even in the vocabulary.

To mention only one example: there are almost always in the Assamese language two words for groups of people, according to whether younger or older ones are meant. Thus the elder brother is called *Kakai* and the younger *Bhai*. The former word is not Indoeuropean, but the latter is. This kind of double designation, typical of a region of cultural synthesis, runs through the whole language.

In Assam, where the Indoeuropean, Austrish and Tibetan-Burmese worlds touch, there was also a meeting of religious movements. There is scarcely one religious sentiment, ranging from the animistic, the cult of fertility or the Hindu longing for God, to that of an Islamic or Christian faith, which could not be traced in Assam, the Land of Transit and at the same time the place of assembly.

Assam is the centre of a silk industry which has been worked for centuries and which has brought much money into the country. In the last century it was developed into the tea garden of India. And finally it is today the oil country of the Indian subcontinent. About four hundred and fifty thousand barrels of crude oil are obtained every year near Digboi and Nahorkatiya. However, the whole of India needs more than five million barrels annually. The great oil centres of the Near East and Caucasia, Rumania, Venezuela and the United States can naturally supply many times this amount, which in India is still a dream of the economists. But the stimulus has been supplied to carry out further research in different parts of the country, in order to discover new sources. The eastern state of the republic is an important factor in the plan for Indian industrialization.

All these plans are made for the river valleys. In the hill country, where the tribes live, the preoccupation is not with the industrial future but with political problems.

Tribal cultures always take precedence over other questions,

as the regions of civilization which find their expression in cities. In the case of the former everything is embedded in a traditional order, whilst in the cities people attain intellectual and political individuality, different points of view and attitudes. Thus there arose a clash between the tribal village in the hills and the seats of government on the rivers which linked the towns. The Nagas were the first of the tribes to discover themselves and to be seized by unrest.

This unrest of the Nagas, which ended in a bitter and bloody battle, was concerned with the preservation of their ancient tribal culture, including language, customs and traditions and religious practices. The Nagas regard the institution of the *Morung* as the greatest achievement of their social order. This is the bachelors' hall, where the unmarried male Nagas have their living and sleeping quarters. Amongst a section of the Nagas, the Ao and the Lotha, this institution is tending to disappear. On the other hand it can be observed amongst the other sections that the *Morung* is exercising an increased attraction, and that a great deal is done in it for the education of the Nagas in their old tribal customs. Just because the *Morung* are of the greatest significance in the life of the Nagas, it might be permissible to quote here an authority on the Nagas, S. Wati Aonok. Excerpts from his articles which appeared on 10th June 1956 in the *Hindustan Standard* give an idea of the significance of the *Morung* as one of the pillars of the Naga culture and its organization built upon the tradition of communal work.

The word 'Morung' is not a Naga name. The Ao-Nagas call it *Arejo*, the Lotha-Nagas *Champo*, the Rengma-Nagas *Rensi*, the Angami-Nagas *Kitchuki*, the Chang-Nagas *Haghe* and the Nokte-Nagas *Poh*. The *Morung* has no meaning at all in the village of the Angami, and it is practically unknown amongst the Sema-Nagas. In the first case some private house or other, and in the second the chief's house, fulfil the purpose of a *Morung*. A close investigation reveals the striking similarity between the *Morung* organizations amongst the Konyak-Nagas, the Chang-Nagas and the Nokte-Nagas. Amongst the Ao-Nagas the *Morung* was once the most remarkable institution and played the most important part in the social life of the village. I should also like to point out that amongst the Ao-Nagas the *Morung* surpassed all others in its structure, organization and in its strict laws.

The *Morung* is the most remarkable part of the life of the Nokte-Nagas. It is in the *Morung* that the old men tell of the great deeds of

the past, and that the coming generation is taught to live in the future in the way of the old tradition. It is a place of instruction for youth. Leadership is in the hands of two or three of the young men, who are exempt from fetching water and fuel. Here a boy learns to grow up healthy in body and mind, he learns to become a member of his tribe, and here he is best accustomed to discipline. His judgment is sharpened and his abilities reach their height. He is no longer a child who must be supervised by his parents—he assumes the obligations and the virtues of a hunter. If it is not so there is no place for him in the Morung.

The Morung is a guard-house. In the good old days when head-hunting was still the custom, the Morung served as the village guard-house. . . . It is at the same time the place where the skulls are kept. Attacks were planned and discussed here and all skulls won were brought here. . . . A Morung is at the same time a sanctuary. Even a criminal, whether he belongs to the village or is a fugitive from another one, cannot be seized while he is seeking refuge in the Morung. . . . It is a club for men, which no woman may enter. . . . Moreover the Morung is a place where working songs, love, dance, ritual, hunting and war songs are taught and learnt. In this way the tradition in the songs is preserved. . . .

Nagaland was divided into three administrative districts: the Naga mountain district, as a part of Assam, the Tuensang-Tirap region and a small strip in the state of Manipur. In addition there are also numerous Nagas living across the Burmese frontier.

The territory of the Nagas and of many other tribes had formerly been closed to the British in comparison with the rest of India. It was impossible to enter the territory without special permission. It was the home of an ancient tribal culture, whose fortified settlements reflected the warlike character of the inhabitants. In the middle of the last century many regions of Nagaland were considered very dangerous because the dreaded head-hunters lived there.

There was constant unrest here. In 1839 the British sent out the first punitive expedition to bring the Nagas under control. In the mid sixties the dissatisfaction of the Nagas reached its peak. Conditions were chaotic and the British decided to take a step which was to give the Nagas the feeling that they could manage their own tribal affairs, and at the same time make it possible to control them. In 1866 they created a district of the 'Naga Hills'. The seat of this administrative region of the Naga mountain territory was in Samaguting, and in 1874, after Assam

had become a Chief Commissioner's Province, it was moved to Kohima, the centre of the Angami-Nagas. Nevertheless peace and order did not come even after the establishment of administrative unity for Nagaland. Rather there were violent risings against the British, and in 1879 and 1880 the rebellion started with one of the Naga tribes, the Angami. The village of Khonoma was the centre of the movement against the British. After these disturbances the territory of the Nagas was increased still more by the addition of strips of land inhabited by Nagas but so far not subject to control—as, for example, the area of the Ao-Nagas, who in 1890 were able to enjoy the blessings of modern administration. Finally, after 1947, there was created the so-called Tuen-sang Frontier Division in the North-East Frontier Agency, the frontier territory under the direct control of Delhi.

The disruption of Nagaland has been partly responsible for the present unrest. But of course there was something else. After the departure of the British, some of the Naga leaders felt a vacuum. They had been treated by the British just like tribes who are condemned as savages.

However, there had also been many changes in Nagaland. Christian missionaries had not only brought their faith to the members of the Naga and other mountain and frontier tribes of Assam, but had also taught them to write their own language in Roman letters. In addition, it happened that because of the collapse of the Japanese Great East Asian Empire, many weapons from the remnants of the Japanese forces fell suddenly into the hands of the border tribes.

Khonoma had already once played a part in the history of the Naga people, and it regained its importance in the first decade of India's freedom. From this village comes Zapu Phizo, who made himself spokesman for the discontented amongst the Nagas. The claims of these extremists went so far that they demanded an independent and sovereign Nagaland. For years battles flared up and died down again. Finally, in the summer of 1957, there came the famous Kohima Convention, which was attended by 1,735 delegates from the different tribes of the Konyak, Chang, Phom, Sangtam, Yimchungurr, Sema and Khiemyungam, the Angami, Chakasang, Lotha, Ao, Zeliang, Rengma, Kuki, Kachari and Mikir. At this conference, which was attended especially by the supporters of the moderate line, the desire of the Nagas to

live in a Naga district of their own was expressed. In the Indian Parliament, Lok Sabha, the law uniting the Nagas hills district and the Naga territory of Tuensang was quickly passed and the new Naga Region came into existence on 1st December 1957.

This measure, which to be sure did not immediately make moderate Nagas out of extremists, had shown what great importance was attached to Assam. When the sixty-third annual assembly of the Indian National Congress (the movement which had led the struggle for Indian freedom) took place at the beginning of 1958 near Gauhati—the meeting-place was given the name of Pragjyotishpur in memory of the old capital—the main subject for discussion was suddenly the question of the national language. This subject depends upon the structure of the state just as does every tendency towards greater political self-sufficiency.

The events in the region of Kohima-Mokokchung, which in August 1957 led to the formation of the Naga People's Convention, were due to the initiative of a Dr Inkongliba Ao, an opponent of A. Z. Phizo, the later president of the Naga 'Interim' Council. His efforts were crowned with success when on 1st August 1960 Prime Minister Nehru announced the formation of a new administrative unit, the State of Nagaland, in the Indian House of Commons. But Dr Inkongliba Ao himself was to suffer for the insecurity of his fellow-tribesmen and their shuttlecock attitude, alternating between radicalism and conservatism. He fell victim to an assassin. He was attacked on 22nd August 1961 and died two days later, a great loss to the Moderate Party among Nagas, as well as to New Delhi, which has not devoted sufficient care to the problem of the North-East Frontier region.

The problem, which also made the solution of the Naga question more difficult, is the possible effect on the other tribes. There are so many of them. They are settled in strategically important parts of the country, where the Japanese attacks during the Second World War robbed the Assamese jungle of its reputation for impenetrability.

But on the other hand the Russians and the government of the Chinese People's Republic carry on skilful propaganda. They spread the view that they have solved the problem of introducing tribes to a modern civilization in such a way that tribal culture, tradition and language are preserved. This was the second reason which gave the disturbances amongst a small people numbering

scarcely four hundred thousand a world-wide political significance. And when one reads the commentaries in the publications of the Indian Communists, every politically interested person in the West can only hope that India will soon overcome the difficulties in her problem state of Assam.

