

## CHAPTER-II

**The growth of the city of Gangtok as the capital of Sikkim: A study of Sikkim – Nepal relations in the later part of the 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries.**

### I

Sikkim has been quite unfortunate not to have its Todd to write its annals and antiquities. Barring a few records such as the law book ascribed to the foremost Maharaja of Sikkim, *History of Sikkim* compiled by Maharaja Thutob Namgyal and Maharani Yeshey Dolma, *Sikkim Chronicle*, *The Gazetteer of Sikkim* by H.H. Risley and a couple of travel records of the British Political Officers, Sikkim has not much records of its history.

In the absence of all authentic records relating clearly and authoritatively about the origin of the family of the rulers of Sikkim, brief allusions found in the preface to the law book ascribed to the foremost Maharaja of Sikkim must be given credit to, as they are moreover supported by the oral narratives of the oldest people living, who again ascribe their narrative to the annals of their parents whom they heard relating so. According to this account, the rulers of Sikkim were sprung from the pure stock of the ruling Minyak House of Tibet (Khri-Srong-Ideu-bTsan). This Khri-Srong-Ideu-bTsan was a Tibetan king born in 730 A.D that is the (*Chag-r'tu* (Iron-Horse) year of the Tibetan era. This seems to be more likely. It is also on record that Guru Padma Sambhawa had prophecised that a descendant from Khri-srong-Ideu-b Tsan would be ruling over Sikkim. Besides, the ancestor of the Sikkim Raja Gyad-bum-bSar obtained the hand of the lady of Sakya, related to the hierarchs. So far as better authorities showing otherwise cannot be obtained, it must be accepted as the most reliable.<sup>1</sup>

The *History of Sikkim* and various Tibetan and Indian sources talk of an invitation to Guru Padmasambhava from the Tibetan king in the Tibetan Sa-gLang year or 749 A.D and his visit to Tibet on this invitation. The great pundits (mken-chen) Shanta Bakhita, Maha Pundita, Vimala Mitra were also invited. In the (*Chag-Yos* (Iron-Hare) year, 751 A.D the great Sam-ye monastery was built. The Tibetans were

converted to Buddhism, some became priests. One hundred Lo-tsa-was, translators or interpreters were sent down to India to translate various portions of the Pitakas and other Buddhist scriptures into Tibetan.<sup>2</sup>

Risley<sup>3</sup> in the *Gazetteer of Sikkim* also traces the origin of the Namgyal dynasty to the ruling house of Tibet. According to him Khri-srong-Ideu-b Tsan was the most illustrious of all the rulers of Tibet. The Namgyals had been ruling over the Chumbi valley and the Tista valley for at least three centuries prior to the establishment of their dynasty in Sikkim. They were on pilgrimage in Central Tibet at the opening of the 13<sup>th</sup> century. It is further recorded that the emigrant Minyak chief was prophesied to go towards Sikkim (*Dema-Jong*), where his descendants would rule.<sup>4</sup> Impelled by the divine command; he started forth from his kingdom with his sons and passed through Sakya, to pay his homage to the hierarchs there. At Sakya, the eldest son of the emigrant chief helped in the construction of a monastery, after which he obtained the name Gyad-hBum-bSar, (Khye-Bumsa) equaling a lac of men in strength.<sup>5</sup> Several stories are told about the miraculous strength of Khye-Bumsa and his victory over Ngag-wang-ge-pu-pul-bar, a rival Bhutanese hero, which resulted in the present worship of Mt. Massong by the inhabitants of Chumbi and Hah in Bhutan.<sup>6</sup> Khye-Bumsa married the daughter of the Sakya hierarch and dwelt in the nearby Chumbi valley for sometime which was to become the nucleus of the later kingdom of Sikkim. Shortly after this he left Sakya and came down towards Sikkim where he came in contact with the Lepchas of Sikkim. A deep friendship grew between Khye-Bumsa and The-Kong-Tek, the Lepcha chief.<sup>7</sup> This friendship was cemented by a ceremony at which several animals, both domestic and wild were sacrificed and all the local deities invoked to bear witness to this solemn contract of friendship, binding the Lepchas and the Bhutias in an inseparable bond.<sup>8</sup> "They sat together on the raw hides of the animals, entwined the entrails around their persons, and put their feet together in a vessel filled with blood, thus swearing the blood brotherhood to each other."<sup>9</sup>

Mipon Rab or the leader of men (Rab means 'to excel', 'to surpass') the bravest of the three sons of Khye-Bumsa<sup>10</sup> succeeded to the chiefship on his father's death. He also married a lady from the Sakya heirarch's family,<sup>11</sup> named Gurumo.<sup>12</sup> He had four sons and were called Tong-du-ru-zi, meaning the four clans of a thousand

each, from whom the four principal clans of Sikkim, 'Tongdurushe' are said to have descended. It is interesting to note as to why the sons of Mipon Rab were called Tong-du-ru-zi. *The History* records that when Mipon Rab's wife had conceived and when the pregnancy had been pretty far advanced, she visited her parents at Sakya. A son was born there who having been born at his maternal uncle's place was called Shang-po-dar or he who would enhance the fortune of his uncle. The second son she gave birth to was born on the tenth day of the seventh month, a *pujah* and festival day in honour of Guru Rimpoche. So, this son was called Tse-chu-dar, meaning glorious or lucky tenth day. The third son was born on Sunday, so he was called Nyi-ma Gyalpo, meaning the Sun or solar king. The fourth son was born on a day when a consecration ceremony was being performed on the occasion of the completion of an image of Guru Rimpoche. So he was called Guru Tashi (Guru-bKra-shes). These four Tong-du-ru-zi brothers viz: Sangpdar, Tsechudar, Nima Gyalpo and Guru Tashi were all settled in Gangtok. Of these four brothers' family Guru Tashi's family became pre-eminent and inherited the princely dignity and name.<sup>13</sup> He became the first ruler of Sikkim and paved the way for a regular Monarchy.<sup>14</sup>

The Lepchas, after the death of their chief The-Kong-Tek started breaking up and turned to Guru Tashi for leadership and protection. The Lepchas came under his influence and power within a very short time. One Lepcha retainer (Nang-gzan) called Sambar became the favourite of the *Raja*, from among the Lepchas. From that time the Lepchas flocked to the service of the *Raja*, and those who proved themselves the most trustworthy were appointed in the household establishment of the *Raja* while others were entrusted with posts of responsibility and honours in the State. Those not so much in the *Raja's* confidence were employed as traders to carry goods and were employed in out door services, in building and handicrafts. Besides, they were to contribute the summer *Nazar* (*yar-jal*) in the form of newly gathered crops, grains and fruits, and they were also to carry grains etc. to any markets for trade or barter. Such rules began from the time of Guru Tashi.<sup>15</sup>

On the basis of the above account furnished by the *History of Sikkim* and supported by other sources, one can come to the conclusion that the first ruler of Sikkim was Guru Tashi and the seat of his Government, Gangtok, was the first capital

of Sikkim. It was in Gangtok that Guru Tashi settled and assumed princely dignity and name. Although Guru Tashi cannot be established as a consecrated monarch of Sikkim, yet his assumption of princely dignity and name laid the basis for the future monarchy in Sikkim. Certain rules of administration were established by Guru Tashi and Gangtok with some kind of trade and revenue system then would certainly mean that it had some traces of urban culture.

Guru Tashi's son was Jowo Nangpo whose great grandson was Phuntsog Namgyal who was born in Gangtok in the year 1604 A.D that is the *Shing-dug* (wood Dragon) year of the 10<sup>th</sup> century of Tibetan era.<sup>16</sup> He was consecrated as the first *Maharaja* of Sikkim, by the three Lamas at Yuksam. Earlier these three Lamas, namely Lha-tsun Namkha Jigme or Lhatsun Chenpo, Kathog Rikzin Kuntu Chenpo and Ngadak Sempa Rikzin Phuntsog Chenpo having come from Tibet with the aim of propogating Buddhism and establishing a consecrated monarchy as the protector of the faith, had consolidated Buddhism as the established Church in Sikkim, prior to 1642A.D. They entered Sikkim from different directions and met at Norbugang, which was then called by the Lepchas as 'Yuksam', meaning the three superior ones or literally meaning 'the three lamas'. Having assembled there, they sent for a search party to find for a person named Phuntso. After several adventures, the search party found one Phuntsog Namgyal in Gangtok. They presented to him the invitation from the Lamas assembled at Yuksam which was accepted by Phuntso Namgyal. "He saw that everything tended to a lucky development of events. So he started forth with his entire retinue of followers, officers and household establishment."<sup>17</sup> When the Lepchas of Rumtek saw the party starting forth on the journey, they all exclaimed, "*Along Kuyu-sa Rumtek non pa-o*" meaning now our God is going away. That place came to be called Rumtek. This shows how simple the Lepchas must have been, and how kind and helpful *Raja* Phuntso Namgyal must have been to them. After Phuntsog Namgyal's arrival at Yuksam, the learned Lamas performed all the necessary rites and ceremonies as prescribed in the installation of a royal dynasty, in the most impressive style. (Apocalyptical books of the sacred Guru of Urgyen contained the prophecies regarding the rulers of Sikkim). He was given the power, conferring rites of the eight auspicious objects and the eight auspicious or royal emblems. Phunsto Namgyal was

thus installed as the *Maharaja* and Yuksam established as the capital of Sikkim. The *History of Sikkim* talks of various sources and books like the guide book to the hidden stores of *Padma Linga*, *Rinzin-god-Idem-chen* and *Ratna Lingpa* all agreeing that. "if a descendent from the unbroken line of Khri-srong Ideu-bTsan be appointed ruler of this land, it will enjoy peace and prosperity for a while." Another source according to *The History*, is the *Gabpa-tsi-lung* (astrological revelation) which says, "a Buddhist Avatar king will settle in Sikkim as his capital, and in the time of the 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> descent from him, the middle one of these sons will be an Avatar of king Khri-srong Ideu-bTsan, his name will be *shawo-che* (big cap) who will be succeeded by seven Incarnate successors, during the middle one, in whose time the Faith will shine as bright as the Sun, because he is an incarnate of Manjusri."<sup>18</sup>

The *Maharaja* Phuntsog Namgyal's coronation or installation on the throne of Sikkim took place in the *Chu-ta* (Water horse) year as mentioned in the brief history compiled during his lifetime, while he was living at Lasso. This *Chu-Ta* year corresponds to the year 1642 A.D. He was installed on the *Gaddi* of Sikkim with the title of *Chos-rGyal* (*Dharmaraja*, king of righteousness) having two fold powers, spiritual and temporal. Next all the priests and the *Raja* combined in entreating Lha-bTsun to found a monastery on the spot. So, the Dubdi monastery was built by Lha-bTsun<sup>19</sup> and Sangachelling also commenced under his direction. He also pointed out Pemiongchi as a proper site for a monastery for pure monks (*Tasongs*). It is on record that Lama Jigmed Pao Gyatso came from Tibet and succeeded Lha-bTsun as his incarnate. With his assistance the monastery at Sangachelling was completed. That establishment was open to all alike no matter what their descent, so in accordance with the directions of Lha-bTsun a third monastery or building was erected near Pemiongchi for persons of pure descent (Tibetans only), during Tensung Namgyal's reign.<sup>20</sup> "Next year after the installation (*Chu-lug* or water sheep year), Ngadag Sempa built the Lhakang Marpo (red temple) and the Kathog lama built the Kathog monastery. The lamas also fixed upon Tashiding as being the central key of Sikkim, and agreed that it was a sacred spot. A monastery was built by Ngadag lama at Tashiding"<sup>21</sup> on top of a heart shaped hill with the backdrop of the sacred Mount

*Khang-chen-Dzongpa*. Tashiding is now famous for the most holy Chorten known as 'Thong-Wa-Rang-Dol', which literally means 'saviors, by mere sight'.

Phuntsog Namgyal instituted the first centralized administration in Sikkim. Having brought all the Lepchas and Bhutias under his direct power, he divided the kingdom into 12 *Dzongs* (districts), selected twelve *Kazis* from amongst the twelve chief Bhutia clans then existing and likewise he selected twelve Lepcha *Jongpens* (governors) from amongst the superior families of Lepchas to administer the twelve *Dzongs*. Proclamations were made promising due recognition and emoluments to those who distinguished themselves by loyal and faithful services, saying that the posts of ministers and Prime ministers (*Chagzod*) would be conferred on them. On the other hand those who did not serve well would be classed amongst the common people and required to contribute such services as demanded by the *Maharaja* and that they would remain master less. The boundaries of the new kingdom of Sikkim were also fixed. They were, Dibdala in the North, Shingsa Dag-pay, Walung, Yangmag Khangchen Yarlung and Timer Chorten in the West, down along the Arun and Dud Kosi Rivers, down to the Maha Lodi Nuxalbari, Titalia in the South, Tagong La on the East and Tang La on the North. These constituted the boundaries of Sikkim.<sup>22</sup> But the country was later on frequently invaded by foreign powers therefore reducing it to its present limits.

Thus, from 1642 A.D onwards Yuksam became the capital of Sikkim. In the *Chu-lug* or water sheep year, a year after his installation, the *Maharaja* built a Palace at Tashi Tengka.<sup>23</sup> Interesting is to note why the capital of Sikkim was shifted to Yuksam in 1642 A.D? Padmasambhava, who is highly revered and worshipped by Sikkimese Buddhists, is considered to have blessed Yuksam and the surrounding landscape of Demojong in the district of West Sikkim, by having placed within it a large number of hidden treasures (*ters*). It is also believed that many of the sacred treasures were also hidden by Lha-bTsun Namkha Jigme, in the Yuksam region. Therefore, Phuntsog Namgyal must have felt it important to shift the capital to Yuksam it being considered as the '*Lhakhang*' (alter), and the place of hidden treasures.<sup>24</sup> Yuksam remained the capital of Sikkim till 1686A.D after which it was moved to Rabdentse by *Maharaja* Tensung Namgyal. The distance between Yuksam

to Rabdentse is about 25 Kms. and is situated in the west district of Geyzing in Sikkim.

Tensung Namgyal succeeded his father and ascended the *Gaddi* in the *Chag-Khyi* (iron dog) year, 1670 A.D. he was born at a place called Lasso, situated about a mile to the north west of the Tashiding monastery or Brag-Kar-Tashiding, in the *Shing-tel* (wood monkey) year of the 11<sup>th</sup> century, Tibetan era, corresponding to the year 1644 A.D. It was Tensung Namgyal, who after becoming the ruler transferred the capital of Sikkim to Rabdentse in 1670 A.D. Phuntsog Namgyal, together with Lha-btsun Chenpo, had already made the proposal for the transfer. They selected the sites of the Rabdentse palace, the Pemiongchi monastery, besides building several other places of worship and furnishing them with sacred and precious relics, images, etc. they built 13 *Mani* wheels each containing 10,000,000 of *Mantras*, and provided those who would turn them with permanent maintenance funds. On every suitable and prominent place, they caused stupas to be built, and the *Lamas'* whole time was employed in the works of public good, and performing the rites of consecration. During Phuntso's reign and while Lha-bTsun was alive and sojourning at Tashiding, he had spoken to the *Raja* about constructing the Rabdentse Palace in the following prophetic tone "from Brag-kar Tashiding which is the most sacred of pilgrimages, looking westwards upon the second lotus petal, and upon the third rocky eminence along the spur of the ridge, there on the top of the head of the serpent spirit Ananta (Gao-Jogpo) is situated the noble unchanging and eternal peak. There should you erect your Palace, O, Protector of the Faith." So according to that prophetic injunction, which was implicitly obeyed Tensung Namgyal built the Rabdentse palace<sup>25</sup> about three hundred feet below the famous monastery of Pemionchi. The Lepcha name for this palace fortress is 'fyung gri'.<sup>26</sup> Till the Year 1814 A.D, the king of Sikkim ruled the country from this palace. Today, the ruins lie hidden from the main road at a walking distance from the Pemionchi monastery. It can be approached by following a footpath, which branches off from the main road just below the monastery. The scenic view from the top of the ruins scanning across the deep valley to the mystic heights of *Khang-chen-Dzonga* ranges is something to be cherished and etched in memory.

Rabdentse faced difficult days during the period of *Maharaja* Chador Namgyal who succeeded his father Tensung Namgyal in the *Chag-Drug* (iron dragon) year of the 12<sup>th</sup> century, corresponding 1700 A.D. He was born in the *Me-tag* (fire tiger) year of the 11<sup>th</sup> century, corresponding to the year 1686 A.D. Being left an orphan while still very young, Chador's half sister Pande Wangmo jealous of this young brother becoming the ruler, entertained the idea of usurping the throne. Pede Wangmo's mother was a Bhutanese, so she along with a few other persons conspired together and invited a force from Bhutan to assassinate the boy king. The then Deb Raja of Bhutan, *bZhi-dar* sent one Tabar Ngawang Thinley and Don Phenley with a Bhutanese force to assassinate the *Raja*. But while he was in great danger, Yug-thing Tishey a loyal minister and few other men like Dagkar Chagzod karma Dargay and his brother and a Tatshang lama named Agay Popdig carried off the boy king and saved him. These persons carried off the young *Raja* by the Ellam road, via Wallung (area of the Tsongs) into Tibet. The Bhutanese force then captured Yugthing Aroop the son of Yugthing Tishe who was left in charge of the Rabdentse palace and sent him to Bhutan. The Bhutanese occupied the Rabdentse palace for about eight years within which time they had rebuilt the palace itself and the walls besides adding a new building, which was connected by a covered secret pathway with the palace. The Bhutanese force proceeded towards Ghar and Jongu, where also they built Namgyal Thonpoi Jong and Wangdu Phodong Jong near pakyong. They built a monastery near Pemionchi called Paro-gon, as well as another Jong on the top of the Tagtse ridge near Gangtok called Tagtse Jong.<sup>27</sup> They also constructed a flight or road of stone steps from the Rungeet up to Rabdentse. For Risle<sup>28</sup> the date of Bhutanese invasion varies from 1700 to 1706 and so the palace was actually kept under Bhutanese occupation for five or six years and they left it after intervention from Tibet. On the whole, the seeds of urbanisation in Sikkim were sown at Rabdantse. The settlement presumably was confined to the ruling families, the *Lamas* and their retainers. The cantonment was in fact an extension of the ruling authority's establishment.

Meanwhile the *Maharaja*, who was in Lhasa, married a lady of U, as well as a princess of the Lowo *Raja*. It is said that the Tibetan Government, sent a letter to the Bhutan Government to the effect that the Tibetan Government should be the father,

the Bhutanese the mother and Sikkim, the child and therefore, they should bear love and friendship for each other, as they are one nation. This intervention from Tibet had some effect on the Bhutanese who agreed to withdraw from Sikkim proper. The *Maharaja* Chador Namgyal and his followers were then sent back to Sikkim with a representative of the Tibetan Government. Upon his return, the Bhutanese left the palace and returned back to Bhutan but retained in their occupation, Damsong, Daling, Jongsa and all the places in between the east Teesta and *Tagong La hill*.<sup>29</sup> It was found that those forces, which had occupied the east Teesta portion of Sikkim had permanently settled down in these areas and so it was impossible to remove them. This reason seems likely for the cessation of the above-mentioned areas of Sikkim to Bhutan.

As soon as the *Maharaja* Chador Namgyal came back from Tibet, he reoccupied the Rabdentse palace and expelled the remainder of the Bhutanese forces that still loitered in Sikkim. But subsequently, another Bhutanese force under the leaders named Magpon Agyal and Rups invaded Sikkim and took formal possession of the lands lying between the Teesta and Rongpa. They were encouraged to come by one Shal-ngo Achhok, who was not in good terms with the *Raja*. So Achhok sought refuge under the Bhutan Government and it was thus that the Bhutanese forces were sent to invade Sikkim. But, Achhoki was treacherously assassinated by the Bhutanese at Ambiok near Daling Fort, who thenceforth took possession of all the lands and inhabitants thereof, between Teesta and Tagong La<sup>30</sup> i.e., the present Rhenock and the Kalimpong sub-division of the Darjeeling district. The British occupation of Kalimpong took place in the Doors war with Bhutan and in accordance with the terms of the Treaty of Sinchula in 1864.

During his asylum in Lhasa, Chador Namgyal had become very learned and acquired a great deal of the habits of the Lamas. At Lhasa the *Raja* took to attending the secular schools and distinguished himself by his attainments in Buddhist literature and astrology and even became the state astrologer to the Sixth Dalai Lama for sometime. He was kindly treated both by the Tibetan and the Chinese Governments, who conferred high honours and titles on the young king and gave him estates in Central Tibet with sovereign rights. These estates consisted of Padi-Jong, Nagartse

Jong, Tinke Jong as jagirs to be enjoyed by him.<sup>31</sup> After his return to Sikkim, the *Maharaja* devoted himself to the cause of religion and learning. Aided and encouraged by Lama Jigmed-Paw, he founded the present monastery of Pemionchi and richly endowed it. The establishment was to consist of 108 monks and the Raja himself shaved his head and became one of the first members. He also appointed 108 tGar-na-pa or lay officials to serve with the lamas and assist them in secular business. Among other works the *Raja* wrote a book on monastic discipline, called IChags-Yig, composed a religious dance, *Rong-Chham*, in honour of Takpoo or warlike demons, and designed an alphabet for the use of his Lepcha subjects.<sup>32</sup> The monastery, located on a hilltop at an altitude of 6840ft. commands a magnificent panoramic view of the Himalayan ranges and the surrounding hills and countryside.

The *History of Sikkim* also talks of a rumour of Bhutanese invasion, during the period of Maharaja Gyurmed Namgyal who ascended the throne on the 10<sup>th</sup> day of the 1<sup>st</sup> month of *Me-ja* year of the 12<sup>th</sup> century corresponding to 1717 A.D, on the auspicious occasion of a day sacred to the memory of Guru Padmasambhava. To repel the Bhutanese king Gyurmed sent one Shal-ngo Changzod and Nyerchen Bagyal to the frontier, while one Shal-ngo A-dZin was appointed *Jongpen* of a place called Sodah on the plain frontier. About this time a boundary question arose again between the Bhutanese and the Sikkim state. It is recorded in an old document that although the boundary had been fixed at Dhalla-gang, yet in the time of Deb Raja Khangchen of Bhutan the question was raised again just for the sake of picking a quarrel. At this, the Government of Tibet deputed one Tsang Depon (Tibetan official) named Chang-lo-Chen to try and effect an amicable settlement between the two states. He met with the representatives of the two states. One Gyal-Tshering represented Bhutan, and Dagkar Changzod Karmatargay represented Sikkim. At the conference the Sikkimi representative blamed the Bhutanese on the one hand for needless and unprovoked aggression and on the other asserted that the boundary had previously been fixed at Dhalla-gang and should be settled at that place. The Bhutanese of course persisted in their avaricious and aggressive demands. Thus the negotiation terminated without coming to any definite agreement. Next year the Tibetan official came again to Phari and summoned the two representatives from Bhutan and Sikkim. This time

Bhutan was represented by Don-nyer Tenpa Chopel, and Sikkim by Butsao Pongsang Dahlo. At the discussion that ensued the Sikkimi representative lacking the boldness of his predecessor and being unable to present a bold front, the boundary was fixed according to Bhutanese demand and that was at Rongchu and an almost compulsory agreement was imposed to that effect.<sup>33</sup>

Throughout his reign *Maharaja* Gyurmed Namgyal occupied himself mostly with building activities. His idea was to build a covered pathway between Dachen Ling and the Rabdentse palace, after the style of the Potala palace in Tibet, which he actually completed during his lifetime. He founded a monastery in the Dechen Ling palace and established about 60 *Trapas* there, whom he employed in performing the *Ka-gyat* ceremonies and executing the dances connected with the rituals. It was these various and constant building and fortification works in which the *Tsongs* (Limbus and Mangars) were always employed, which drove them in disgust to retire to a place, called the Limbuana land.<sup>34</sup> It is indeed intriguing as to why only the Limbus and Mangars were constantly employed in the building activities? Risley comments, "The *Raja* became inclined to the Lepchas and their form of worship. Throughout...the *Raja* harried, and distressed his Limbu subjects so much by calling them out unnecessarily to fight and again to build forts and walls, that in despair they threw off their allegiance to Nepal."<sup>35</sup> This argument seems to be likely in understanding why the king demanded the services of the Limbus and Mangars only and not of the Lepchas.

The Bhutanese invaded Sikkim again in 1740 because the ruler was a minor.<sup>36</sup> During the last days of Gyurmed Namgyal's reign Sikkim was in a state of uneasiness with regard to who should succeed to the throne, because Gyurmed did not as yet have an heir. In 1733, when the *Maharaja* was taken seriously ill, the ministers and attendants questioned him as to who should succeed him. The *Maharaja* in his last breath told them that a nun of Sangacholling monastery, daughter of one Bhutia named Kyer Gaden of the *Tagchungdar* caste, was carrying his child and that they should find out for her. After the king's death the attendants and *Kazis* on enquiry found this nun at a place called Onge-Kye-Sa. She had become pregnant by a connection with the late *Raja* and gave birth to a son in the *Chu-lang* (water bull) year

of the 12<sup>th</sup> century, corresponding to 1733 A.D. He was named Namgyal Phuntsog, who as desired by his father was put on the throne.<sup>37</sup> The royal treasurer, Tamding opposed the succession on plea of illegitimacy and declared himself king<sup>38</sup> and ruled for three years, viz., from 1738 to 1741 A.D. Hence he was called Gyalpo Tamding.<sup>39</sup> It was the internal political problems of Sikkim around this period which encouraged the Bhutanese to invade again in 1740.<sup>40</sup> Surprisingly, *The History* and also *The Gazetteer* contain no evidence of Bhutanese invasion taking place in 1740 A.D.

At this juncture, the case of the minor king was taken up by the Lepchas who backed the baby and fought the pretender (Tamding) under the leadership of Changzod Karwang. Tamding was defeated and he fled to Tibet. The Tibetan Government, in compliance with request from Sikkim, deputed one Rabden Sharpa to work as regent until the ruler came of age. On his coming to Sikkim, Rabden Sharpa at once restored the people to their homes and gave them a feeling of security. He built *Jongs* in Karmi and in Mangsher. To every subject who came to pay him respect he gave a present of a plateful of salt. As salt was a very rare thing then it induced every one to pay respect to Rabden Sharpa, so that they might secure the *Bakshis* of the plateful of salt. Thus it was a means to obtain a pretty correct census. He had all the names of the recipients of the salt *Bakshis* noted down in a roll and next year the first assessment of taxes was made according to the above roll. This was the beginning of the collection of annual rents from the people of Sikkim. The Regent convened a vast assembly of all the subjects of Sikkim at Mangsher and made a proclamation which came to be called the *Mangsher Duma*, (The Mangsher Convention) at which all lamas and laymen, headmen and raiyats signed down on the constitution then drawn up.<sup>41</sup> It defined the functions and responsibilities of the Government, and its constituent bodies. Some fixed system of revenue was also devised. They were (1) *h Bah-p*, a kind of land tax, (2) *b Zo-lung*, a tax on forest produce and (3) *Tshong-skyed*, a custom or income-tax.<sup>42</sup> A regular source of income to the Government was thus fixed.

It was during the time of this Regent that the Mangar chief having died his son wanted to have his installation ceremony performed or graced by the presence and authority of a representative of the Sikkim *Maharaja*. So he had thrice invited the

Regent to grace the occasion by sending some representatives. The elder officers of the state advised the Regent to accede to the request especially as it was the custom to depute representatives with congratulation letters and presents in former times. The Regent being ignorant of the prevailing customs and usages, and proudly thinking it to be below the dignity of Sikkim's ruler to honour a chief, he discourteously refused to do so. The Mangar chief being offended besought the patronage of the Deb Raja of Bhutan, who at once deputed four representatives to grace the occasion. The Magar allegiance was thus lost for a while. The relations further deteriorated in subsequent years and about 1852 a Tsong uprising took place, which was of course put down by Changzod Karwang but their loyalty was won back by tactful diplomacy.<sup>43</sup>

Just about this time Sikkim petitioned to the Tibetan Government for re-installation of the young *Raja* upon the *Gaddi* of Sikkim, which was satisfactorily complied with by Tibet. Upon this the Regent Rabden Sharpa returned back to Tibet. It was during his regency that the Sikkim Tibet boundary was fixed at Khumbu Ragkha as before.<sup>44</sup>

For a while Sikkim's anxiety was put at ease when the king *Maharaja* Namgyal Phuntsog was replaced on the throne and the administration set in order thereafter. But, the peaceful days of Sikkim did not continue for long for the Bhutanese launched another attack on her in the *Chag-Tag* (iron tiger) year, 1770 A.D. In about 1767 A.D one Deb Zhidar, a very adventurous ruler had assumed the political authority of Bhutan. Under his adventurous zeal he invaded Sikkim at the head of a vast force in 1770A.D. Their main body took possession of areas in the eastern portions of the river Teesta, while the scouts and advanced patrols and skirmishing parties came up as far as Mangbru and Barphung. One portion of the Bhutanese force penetrated as far as Ralag Samdong and lay encamped there. This party however was completely surrounded by the Sikkimi force consisting of lamas and laymen and being entirely cut off from their main body they were compelled to retreat but in trying to do so they were all entrapped at a place called Tama-byag (a precipitous rock) at the foot of the *Maphi La*, where the defenders of Sikkim had driven sharp bamboo stakes at the foot of the precipice, down which they had hung a rope made of twisted reeds, called the Pa-yum bamboo. The remainder, which escaped

that catastrophe, retreated to join the main body of the force and soon after they came to terms with the Sikkimese. The negotiations were carried on at Pob-chu, near Rhenock hill spur and Sikkim obtained possession up to that place which originally belonged to Bhutan.<sup>45</sup> The area was actually annexed by Bhutan from Sikkim in 1706.<sup>46</sup>

## II

Throughout the 18<sup>th</sup> century, Bhutanese invasions of Sikkim on her eastern side created a deep sense of anxiety as she had to lose vast tracts of land lying on the east of river Teesta. This sense of insecurity was further aggravated towards the last quarter of the 18<sup>th</sup> century when Nepal was rising as a new and aggressive power under Prithivinarayan Shah beyond Sikkim's western frontier. Prithivinarayan Shah, the ruler of a small principality of Gorkha in western Nepal had embarked upon a career of military exploits that was to result in the consolidation and unification of the numerous petty principalities scattered all over Nepal. The rise of the Gorkha power disturbed the balance of power in the hills.

We do not find evidence of a Gorkha attack on Sikkim actually taking place during the lifetime of Prithivinarayan Shah. On their move against eastern Nepal, his commanders were given instructions not to wage war of offence against Sikkim. Action was called for only if Sikkim moved first. "Do not go beyond Islimba and Chyangthapu to occupy territory. In case of Sikkimese attack choose a vantage point to give battle and defeat them. If you go to the old territory of Sikkim, the relation with Lhasa may turn bad. Therefore, do not advance to the north and see that not even four-finger breadth of the Lhasa territory is encroached upon. You must not give trouble to the people there and also you must not go to the old territory of Sikkim".<sup>47</sup> Such were the orders given by Prithivinarayan Shah to his commander Abhimanshing Basnet in a letter dated October 1774. A similar assurance had been sent to Tibet. Much perturbed by the Gorkha move in the east, the Panchen or Tashi Lama met George Bogle (Warren Hasting's emissary to Tashilumpo) on 23 December 1774. Bogle had been sent in an attempt to open up Tibet, he was told that Prithivinarayan 'had promised again and again to him and to the Government of Lhasa, that he would never encroach a finger's breadth on their territories, 'but now he had attacked Demo

Jong's (Denzong or Sikkim) country, which was a subject to Lhasa'.<sup>48</sup> A few days after, on 11 January 1775, Prithivinarayan died.<sup>49</sup> Immediately after his death, his successor Sinha Pratap Shah had planned to attack Sikkim. According to *The History*, "they had actually intended invading Sikkim, but as the Tibetan under Depon Patsal had already approached the Nepal-Tibet frontiers, the Gurkhas could not send the invading force to Sikkim."<sup>50</sup> Risley had also presented an identical argument, "in 1775-76 Raja Sinha Protapa, son and successor of Raja Prithi Narayan Sah, threatened the invasion of Sikkim; but the Tibetan general, Deba Patza alias Depon tPal-rTsal, was sent to make a diversion, and the Goorkha Raja at that time failed in his attempt."<sup>51</sup>

On the basis of what Bogle wrote and the Sikkim version it may be accepted that Tibet had taken steps to preempt the move of the Gorkhas against Sikkim. According to Tashi Lama 18,000 strong army had been sent under *Depon* Petsal. However they had returned 'as they were unable to proceed on account of the great quantities of snow which rendered the road impassable'.<sup>52</sup> However, the Tibetan Government was angry with *Depon*. *Depon* told Bogle when they met a few days after his return in April 1775 that he was 'expecting soon to be again sent towards Nepal.' *Depon* might have retreated on his own when he heard about the Gorkha King's death. Tashi Lama also received a 'letter from the commander of the Gorkha troops mentioning that he intended to desist from war on account of his master's death, and proposing a truce for three years'.<sup>53</sup>

*The History of Sikkim* records a graphic description of the different stages of Gorkha invasions in Sikkim and the flights the Sikkimese had been put through on that account. Beginning from the *Shing-Ta* (wood horse) year, 1774 A.D, the Sikkimitese and the Gurkhas maintained a continual fight on the banks of Arun River. The Sikkimese being unable to resist retired to a place called Tob-Jong situated higher up in the hills. On their retirement the Gorkhas advanced and at once occupied the place, which they had left, viz, Bichapur. Then they kept up a continual attack on Tob-Jong also for several years. Once they surprised the Sikkimi army by coming along a secret path, but they were repelled with fearful losses by the Sikkim troops under their leaders Changzod Chogthup, a Lepcha (son of Changzod Karwang) and Jomgyal. The

Gorkhas however returned with vast reinforcements to attack, and in the encounter, which took place, Chogthup was wounded by a musket ball, which nearly killed him.<sup>54</sup>

Upon this the Gurkhas and Sikkimese came to terms. The Gurkha *Raja* deputed his representative; Yongzin Tulku, Shalu Khanbu, *Depon* Patsal and the State Secretary Tung Jatsag represented the Tibetan Government and the Sikkim representatives were Jomgyal, Tobjong Wangchen and a lama from Pemionchi named Gelong Kun-Sal who went to the frontier with various documents and proofs of the former possession and the boundaries of the territories with the histories of how they came to be obtained and with petitiones to the Tibetan Government praying that they should not be allowed to suffer any diminution. After a good deal of discussion and negotiation the Gurkhas urged that they must have indemnities for the slaughter of four Brahmins who had been deputed as messengers from the Government to Sikkim.<sup>55</sup>

The Tibetan Government kindly acted the part of a friendly and most sincere mediator and well wisher by paying Rs.4000 in cash to the Gurkha as blood money for the slaughter of the four Brahmin upon which the Gurkhas undertook to refrain from future raids and annoyances. The present rupture having been due to the Bhutanese, (but it is not very clear in 'The History' how the blame for the 'present rupture' could have been put on Bhutan) they promised to abstain from all connections with the Bhutanese at least in the matter of armed assistance. They fixed the boundary too, from Shango-chu, in the higher hills, Shangdi-Jong, Malliayan, Lha-chu called in Tibetan and Kanika River in Hindi. East of these was fixed and settled as Sikkim territory. Any breach of the above treaty would entail the party who broke it the forfeiture of an indemnity fine of hundred *dharnis* (250 seers) of gold.<sup>56</sup>

This treaty was made on the 13<sup>th</sup> day of the 6<sup>th</sup> month of the *Shing-Lug* (wood sheep) year of the 13<sup>th</sup> century, 1775 A.D at Walung.<sup>57</sup>

Immediately after this settlement was made the Gurkhas again poured down through the two passes. One of these being the pass by Tob-Jong above, and the other being the Illam road below. They took possession of these places, viz, Tob-Jong and Illam.<sup>58</sup>

Again the Tibetan Government was solicited for a protecting force. Accordingly the Tibetan Government sent down *Kyilingpa* as the representative Resident in Sikkim. Upon his arrival in Sikkim one *Nyerpa* was sent to Top-Jong to demand the stipulated indemnity from the Gurkhas, but they disregarded him, and he finally died there.<sup>59</sup>

Again in the same year the Gorkhas under Purna Ali burst forth once more and penetrated as far as Relling, Karmi and Chakung. In the encounter which ensued, the Sikkimi Bhutia force was led by the Tagkarpa Deba Tsang Rinzing who fought a battle at Namchi, in 1779 A.D and defeated the Gorkha forces. In *Cha-Ji* year, 1780 A.D another encounter took place in which the Gurkhas lost their leader and about a hundred men. They took back eight Jongs or forts, beginning from Kota Jong and got as far as the banks of the Arun River, where they continued fighting for many days at Bolmeg Jong. At last their ammunition gave out. And the Lepcha force under Chogthup's sons and brothers could not effect the junction with the Bhutia force. The Lepcha force encountered the Gurkhas and drove them back steadily till they came to a fortified place of the Gurkhas, called Dhawagiri. Here a fierce encounter took place and both sides lost heavily, but the Lepchas continued fighting till they entered the Terai country called Morang, where the Gurkhas were thoroughly routed.<sup>60</sup>

But meanwhile the Bhutia force fighting up had sustained an irreparable loss by the death of their leader, Deba Tsang Rinzing. This incident disheartened the men so much that they got dispersed and all of them tried to get back to their homes as fast as they could. For a time till 1788 there was no fighting.<sup>61</sup>

Risley has given a brief account of the struggle between Sikkim and Nepal taking place after the termination of the Gorkha attempt in 1775, during which Changzod Karwang's son, Changzed Chothup, alias Athingpoi, alias Satrajeet, greatly distinguished himself. This Lepcha leader obtained the name 'Satrajeet' because of seventeen successful opposition and heroic defence against the Gorkhas. His military colleague was Deba Takarpo alias Sang Rinzin. This officer carried on the war successfully for a time and drove back the Goorkhas from Illam and the hills and his forces actually penetrated as far as Chainpur. Here, near Bilungjong the Sikkimese general was defeated and slain, and his army dispersed, and in consequence of his

defeat Satrajeet had also to retire from the Morung.<sup>62</sup> Risley gives the date of Deba's death and defeat as 1787, whereas *The History* records the dates of this struggle as 1779 and 1780 and the dispersal of the Sikkimite force after Deba Tsang's death. So, how is it possible to say that both the sources are talking of the same event? What can be safely presumed here is that perhaps the rivalry that took place in 1779-80 must have continued up to 1787 A.D.

The event of 1779 and 1780 however does not appear in any of the Nepali sources recording the event of the Gorkha expansion in the east. Even in Kumar Pradhan's construction of the Gurkha expansion in the east of Nepal and Sikkim in his work *The Gorkha Conquest*,<sup>63</sup> the event does not find mention. His account on Sikkim section is primarily based on Markham's and Hamilton's records which relates the 1779 and 1780 to persons and events of a later date i.e. 1788 and 89. For Dr. Pradhan the 1779 and 1780 events as mentioned in the *Maharaja's* work *The History of Sikkim* is a mere repetition of the 1788-89 invasion of the Gurkhas as it talks of the same commander, Purna Ali, invading Sikkim and penetrating into the same areas of Sikkim i.e., Reling, Karmi and Chakung in both the attacks, i.e., of 1779 and later in 1788. In view of this fact, Dr. Kumar's argument does not seem illogical till further sources on the 1779-80 events are traced. However, the year mentioned in *Sikkim History* i.e., *Chag-ji* (Iron-mouse year) 1780 is a definite year and it is unlikely to be confused with *Sa-ji* i.e., earth bird/ mouse year, 1789 A.D as suggested by Dr. Pradhan.

What comes out clear from the above arguments is that, a treaty was concluded in 1775 between Sikkim and Nepal. Though no Nepali version of any treaty made between Sikkim and Nepal in 1775 has come to light, *The History* claims that an old record of the treaty was extant when the manuscript was compiled. The Nepali sources only refer to a treaty (Dharmapatra) between Nepal and Tibet written in *Newari* made on *Newari Samvat* (the Newari era started from 20<sup>th</sup> October A.D 879, a Thursday) 895 Sraavan Sukla 13 Wednesday at Khasa.<sup>64</sup> The Sikkim version of the treaty claims 13<sup>th</sup> day of the 6<sup>th</sup> month of the *Shing-lug* (Tree-ship) year i.e., 1775 A.D as the date of the treaty and Walung as the place where it was concluded.<sup>65</sup> What can be safely presumed here is that when Bogle met Tashi Lama, it was the 26<sup>th</sup> day of

January 1775.A.D therefore even a rough calculation indicates that both the sources are referring to a treaty made in July-August, 1775 A.D. <sup>66</sup>

Active hostilities seemed to have then died out for a time, and Sikkim was lulled into a state of false security, when suddenly in the Sa-Tel (earthen ape) 1778 year A.D, the Gurkhas invaded Sikkim again.<sup>67</sup> A two-pronged attack on Sikkim took place in 1788. Purna Ali, a Magar commander of the Gorkhali force came from Illam, probably after crossing Choyabhanjyang. (Bhanjyang means a pass in Nepali).<sup>68</sup> Then he advanced up to the Reling and Karmi, (now in Darjeeling), and Chakung. Another force moved from Bijapur under one commander called Johar Singh.<sup>69</sup> In Risley's account he was 'general Jor Singh.'<sup>70</sup> Hamilton called him Tiurar Singh, Subah of Morang.<sup>71</sup> He was probably Jahar Singh, son of renowned Gorkhali commander Kehar Singh Basnet.<sup>72</sup>

Advancing steadily on the Singalila route Johar Singh crossed the Khaletchu (the Tibetan name for Kulhait), an affluent of the Great Rangit to the north of Darjeeling. Proceeding quickly on its banks, he made a surprise attack on the palace of Rabdentse and captured it. The Raja Tenzing Namgyal and his son had scarcely any time to dress, when they had to take to flight. The Rani barely succeeded in hastily snatching and carrying away a painted mask of the local Deities of the Kenchenjunga, which they used to regard with special veneration. The prince Tsugphud Namgyal was borne off on the back of the grand father of the Khangsa Dewan, who was then Sapon (chief cook), and who subsequently came to be appointed a Dewan and was called *Don-nyer* Chagdor. Thus the entire family fled; crossing the Kathong River they proceeded up the bank of the Am-Mochu. Being hard pressed by the sudden attack of the Gorkhas they had no time to obtain any provisions. For several days they sustained on the roots from the jungle such as yams and other edible roots.<sup>73</sup>

Another Gurkha force more numerous and powerful than the former ones under one Damodar Pande, subsequently re-inforced the Gurkhas, which took possession of the country beyond Teesta. Then they proceeded to take possession of every *Jong* and monasteries. Thus the Gurkhas remained masters of Sikkim, beyond the Teesta, while the *Raja* took to flight and all the Sikkimese were compelled to have refuge in the valleys of the rivers, hills and caves, suffering great hardships.<sup>74</sup> Risley

comments, "more troops were sent by the Goorkha General Damodar Pande, which overran and held possession of all Sikkim south and west of the Tista."<sup>75</sup> According to the Nepali version,<sup>76</sup> Damodar Pande, one of Nepal's generals, was in charge of the western part of the country and was in overall command of the Gorkhali army when the Chinese intervened on behalf of Tibet immediately after.<sup>77</sup> Describing his visit to Pemionchi in January 1849, Hooker<sup>78</sup> noted that 'the Gorkhas plundered Tassiding, Pemionchi, Changchelling, and all the other temples and convents to the west' of the Tista. It was then, he says, the famous history of Sikkim, compiled by the lamas of Pemionchi, and kept at this temple, was destroyed. The Bhutanese Government then under the newly elected Deb Raja, Deba Seshing, who was friendly with the Tibetan Government, generously sent some stores of provisions, viz, 180,000 or 84,000 Bhutia *pathis* of rice, bales of dye and tea, with about Rs.1000, of Bhutia silver coins, which proved a very welcome gift, in the straitened circumstances, Tibet too send in gifts of tea and silks and other items of provisions.<sup>79</sup> Hamilton<sup>80</sup> states that it was with the help of Bhutan that Sikkim forced the Gorkhals to lift the siege. However the Bhutanese retired soon because they were allowed no pay as the country was too poor.

The Sikkimese however, continued to resist the Gorkhas under the leadership of a Lepcha leader, Chogthup. The son of an old Lepcha minister, Karwang, Chogthup could have defeated the Gorkhas in skirmishes here and there after retiring to a stronghold situated between the two branches of the Tista.<sup>81</sup> 'This place,' observed Hamilton<sup>82</sup> in 1802-03, 'called Gandhauk (Gangtok), has annexed to it a territory of considerable extent, and affords the *Rajah* a revenue of about 7000 rupees a year, which is all that he possesses. While Chogthup led troops and annoyed the Gorkhas, his brother Namgyal looked after the administration.

At that time the *Raja* Tenzing Namgyal lived in Kabi. Having lost their properties, the *Raja's* family was supported by his loyal followers who took to cultivate the fields for several years, and had to live in most precarious circumstances regarding their food. Such was the dire circumstances that *Don-nyer* Chagdor son of *Solpon* Tsang Namgyal used to collect the Magenta dye, and carrying a load of it on his own back used to dispose it of at Phari with the price of which he used to buy salt for the *Raja's* kitchen. Going down to the plains in the Terai to buy rice he used to

carry it up on his own back. He thus supplied the *Raja's* kitchen stores. He was rewarded with the post and title of Dewan afterwards. He was also called the aged *Kazi* (Lon Depo). Khangsa Dewan Lhundup, the Phodong Lama Karma Tenkyong and Tunyik Ngodup gyaltsen were his sons, all of whom were at once given high posts and honours after him.<sup>83</sup>

In the *Chag-khyi* (Iron-dog) year, 1890 A.D the Sikkim Raja went to Tibet to seek aid. The Tibetan Government was about to dispatch a Tibetan force towards Kyidong and was making preparations, when Chogthup and Zomgyal sent up news to apprise the *Raja* of having succeeded in expelling the Gurkhas from Sikkim, and on account of this information the Tibetan force was not sent.<sup>84</sup>

In 1791 A.D. the Tibetan Government deputed the Phari *Shar Jong*, named Phodang Goma to Sikkim to reside there as a representative officer of the Tibetan Government so as to afford protection, at the same time Bhutan deputed one Lama named Thinly Dugyal and one *Zimpon* named Phurpa to Sikkim. They came to Song Bolgyong situated on the left bank of the Teesta River.<sup>85</sup>

There a meeting of lamas and laymen was convened. They presented a representation about the harassing raids and invasions of the Gurkhas to the representatives of the Tibet and Bhutan Governments. These representatives preceded as far as Namchi and Chakung, and they summoned the Gurkha leader Johar Singh from Rabdentse, and told him that as long as they did not get a communication from Nepal, he must vacate Rabdentse and retire to Bijapur. Johar Singh did so, and for a while the Gorkha pressure relaxed somewhat due to Nepal's involvement in Tibet.<sup>86</sup>

In 1791 Nepal renewed its war with Tibet. The Gorkhas advanced to take Shingte and plundered the rich monastery of Tashilumpo. On the strength of promises of friendship offered by the British emissaries, Bogle and then Turner, Tibet had previously appealed to the British. However Lord Cornwallis could not intervene for various reasons.<sup>87</sup> Tibet then turned to China, and Chien Lung, the Manchu Emperor, sent a vast army to drive the Gorkhas out of Tibet.<sup>88</sup> The Chinese Resident (*Amban*) at Lhasa wishing to guard all the passes and routes into Tibet set about despatching troops to all the likely points where attacks might be expected.<sup>89</sup>

At this juncture it was considered that as the Gurkha and Sikkim lands are adjoining each other Gurkha forces might attack Tibet through Sikkim. It was thought advisable to despatch Chogthup and Yug Namcha with all the available Sikkim forces to the points most likely to be assailed on the frontiers. The Chinese Amban in Tibet required 'the most zealous co-operation and active service' of Sikkim and promised Chogthup that in exchange of their services he would get suitable recognition and 'the grant of buttons and peacock feathers' with reward and titles and after having marched their forces to the various points on the frontiers, they should report to him about their arrival and also the number of men each had under him. The Chinese Amban in Tibet intimated this to Sikkim through a letter. The *History of Sikkim* informs us that the original letter of the Chinese Amban to Chogthup was extant at the time of its compilation.<sup>90</sup>

When the Gurkha invading army penetrated as far as Tashi Lhunpo in Tibet, the Chinese Imperial forces Under Hosi Thungthang and Dha Changzin came to Tibet and then carried war into Nepal. The Chinese circulated an order which said, 'as we intend to proceed to the Gorkha Raj and lay it in ruins, so you (the Sikkimites) must also render every assistance to the best of your abilities. You will have to come to the Gorkha country to join the troops under the Tungthangs. Vast tracts of territories will be conquered, and foes shall be slain in countless and their countries ravaged. You will retain possession of as much land as you have conquered... small though your forces be, you must do your utmost for your future good and peace'.<sup>91</sup>

The Chinese officer wrote to Chogthup as well as to the Tsongs (Limbus) saying that though the *Tsong* had reported to him about their advance and the encounter with the Gorkhas, they had been compelled to retreat when their ammunition was exhausted. 'To the *Tsong* force, he sent a supply, 100 measures of gunpowder, and 500 of lead'.<sup>92</sup> The magnitude of the rebellion is described in Nepali documents and this tallies with the Sikkimese account. The Chinese faced hard resistance but they had vastly superior numbers and, when in September 1792, they were only a few miles away from Kathmandu, Nepal sued for peace.<sup>93</sup>

Tibet got an assurance that the Tashilumpo property would be restored and an agreement was made for demarcating the Nepal-Tibet boundary. Sikkim was not

represented at the negotiation, and Tibet refused to listen to its pleas 'on the ground that though Bhutan had helped Tibet, the Sikkimese had not.'<sup>94</sup> The Nepal-Sikkim boundary was drawn further back to the left bank of the Tista. This according to 'The History',<sup>95</sup> was due to the absence of Sikkim, the indifference of Tibet and misrepresentations made by Nepal. "The Gurkhas falsely reported to the Tungthang, who did not know the former boundaries of Sikkim that Sikkim's boundary comprised of Teesta below and Singlila above, and they made it appear as if they had restored the Pemionchi and lower parts of Sikkim, where they had once been masters for a time, but from which the Sikkimites had expelled them."<sup>96</sup> The Chinese general had assured Sikkim that "it had been arranged and settled that his original territories would be restored to him' but that 'the details had not been entered into'.<sup>97</sup> Sikkim made two representations to Tibet (the copies of which were reported to be extant) that in spite of the assurances of the restoration of the original boundaries of Sikkim, 'the Gorkhas' has 'again sent raiding parties into Sikkim' and not fixed boundary anew as ordered'.<sup>98</sup> As a matter of fact, Sikkim not only lost most of its territory to Nepal, but Tibet also swallowed up Chumbi valley and the *Raja's* fiefs at Piahte Jong and Samye granted to Chador Namgyal by the Sixth Dalai Lama, and pushed its own boundary up to the Chola-Jelep range.<sup>99</sup>

Nepal's ambition to establish any sort of political or economic hegemony over Tibet was checked in 1792. On the contrary, the action of Nepal greatly augmented the Chinese power in Tibet. It was a decisive blow to the policy so earnestly followed by Prithivinarayan; and at the same time it was blow to the policy of the British, pursued with equal eagerness since Warren Hastings' governorship. The English Company, when approached both by Nepal and Tibet, had tried to mediate by sending Colonel Kirkpatrick in 1792, but the move came too late. The commercial treaty made that year between Nepal and the Company was the only access for Indian traders and British goods to Tibet. When Abdul Kadir Khan, a merchant sent by the Company to examine the prospects of trade with Tibet through Nepal, came to the conclusion that it was bright, John Shore, the Governor, wondered whether it would have been better for the Company if the Chinese had occupied the whole of Nepal in 1792 and driven out the Gorkhas. The Company took advantage of

the political change resulting from the exile of Ranabahadur Shah (the ruler) in Benaras, and induced the rulers of Nepal to accept a British resident at Kathmandu. The Treaty of 1801 was not welcome to many in Nepal and was regarded as an imposition. Captain Knox, therefore, achieved nothing during his stay at Kathmandu from 1801-1803. On the contrary Anglo-Nepalese relations became strained and the treaty of 1801 was dissolved. Lord Wellesley hoped that the Company could in future avoid having anything to do with Nepal.<sup>100</sup>

*Raja Tenzing Nangyal* died in Lhasa in the *Chu-lang* (water bull) year, 1793 A.D., and the prince Tsugphud Namgyal came down enriched with rich presents from the Lhasa Government and became the ruler of a country, much truncated in size. For sometime he lived in the *Yul-gyal* (victorious in flight) palace of Kabi.<sup>101</sup>

A column of the Gorkha army had penetrated as far as Chongtong. Its commander was probably Subedar Jayanta Khatri. In *The History of Sikkim* he is recorded as Jang Khater.<sup>102</sup> Hamilton<sup>103</sup> records that the Gorkhas in Sikkim were stationed at Darjeeling and Nagari and here they had established their own administrative system. As a British document<sup>104</sup> of 1846 relates, the orders passed then 'invariably had the joint seal of the Sikkim Rajah's Dewan and the Gorkha Subah at Nagree'. The boundary of Nepal in the east remained extended up to the Tista both in the hills and the plains. Risley says "For some years, Pemionchi and all the South Tista tract paid rent to Nepal, until in 1815 the Nepalese were compelled by the British Government."<sup>105</sup>

Checked in the north by China, the directions in which Nepal could expand were the west, south and east. Having reached the Sutlaj in the west it could not go beyond because of the rise of the Sikh power under Ranjit Singh. In the south the dominions of Nepal and the British were coterminous along the plains to an extent of thirteen hundred miles, and quarrels concerning boundaries were inevitable. There were charges and counter-charges of encroachments. Not only was the border between the two dominions ill defined, but in some cases the hill *Rajas*, ousted by the Gorkhals regarded themselves as tenants of the Nawabs of Bengal and Oudh. But the terai was of vital importance for Nepal as its revenue formed the major share of land income. Bhimsen Thapa, who had risen as the Prime Minister and wielded de facto power, was

trying to combine different Indian rulers by sending envoys to them.<sup>106</sup> Hence Lord Hastings' policy was motivated principally by a sincere fear that unless the British acted first, the native states would combine and drive the Company from India. This way of thinking made it impossible for Hastings to treat the Nepalese encroachments as mere isolated border incidents.<sup>107</sup> Consequently, the Marquis of Hastings declared war on Nepal in 1814.

Sikkim in the east, much reduced in size, was looking for ways to regain its lost prestige. Much perturbed by the expansion of British colonialism in India and the fear of its possible entry into Sikkim, the Chinese Amban sent three or four letters to the Sikkim Durbar, dated the 5<sup>th</sup> month of the Chah-Chui (Chinese year) and another in the 6<sup>th</sup> month of the same year.<sup>108</sup> The former said that "although a Tibetan force had always been stationed at Phari since a long time, yet it was now thought, after due consultation between the minister and Changjun, that it was desirable to depute Kao-Tsong-yer hitherto at Gyantseto Phari, and to place troops inboth these places, with no other new innovations or alterations in view, but that of the convenience of making enquiries into the movements of the *ferangis* (Europeans) and that the Sikkim Durbar need not entertain any fears etc on that score." The second letter acknowledges receipt of a letter from the people of Sikkim and the minister, and advises despatch of an answer, wherein detailed instructions had been sent, and enjoining compliances with those. It goes on to say "that letter from the Durbar, you say that you have delivered the letter we addressed to the Official head saheb of the ferangs, and sent special messenger again to remind him of the reply due. Your readiness and expedition are commandable. But no reply has been yet received; so as soon as you obtain the reply by dint of reminders, you will transmit it to us by mounted runner without delay." A fourth letter dated the 8<sup>th</sup> month of the 21<sup>st</sup> Chah-Chui, says, "your letter dated the 1<sup>st</sup> day of the 8<sup>th</sup> month has been received in which you inform us about the safe return of the 2<sup>nd</sup> special messenger, who went to remind the *Ferang* head *saheb* and also forwarding the reply letter from the *Ferang saheb*, which has been received. We are very much pleased." These are the extracts from four of the official letters as recorded in *The History of Sikkim*.

The war between the British and Nepal was imminent. When the war broke out, the King of Nepal, Girvanayuddha appealed to Tibet for help. No material help came, but Tibet offered prayers for Nepal's success in the war.<sup>109</sup> Sikkim, a sufferer at Nepalese hands, was completely at variance in its attitude. After some friendly communication with the British the Sikkim court applied to the British for a force to help it in driving out the Gorkhas. The Khambu chiefs, Yakhas and Ashogrambus also entreated the Government for the same.<sup>110</sup>

At this juncture, in its search for trade, the Company was thinking about the option that Sikkim could offer because of the matrimonial and religious affinities it had with Tibet and that it could also be a bulwark against the possible Nepal-Bhutan alliance against the British.<sup>111</sup> Accordingly, Captain Barre Latter of the Rangpur Local Battalion, stationed at Titalia to the south of Siliguri, was instructed to establish contacts with Sikkim. Latter succeeded in his endeavour.<sup>112</sup> The Government at last sent a large force against the Gurkhas. Changzod Chogthup and his sons and brothers accompanied Major of Titalia, with whom he had four or five conferences during which he made a clear and detailed representation of the state of affairs. Sikkim thus became involved in the Anglo-British war. They jointly attacked the Nagri Jong, which for some time withstood the joint assault, but by means of Strategem, the Gorkhas under Jayanta Khatri were dislodged.<sup>113</sup> But Jayanta Khatri and his men could not be dislodged until 1816 as one of the terms of the Sugauli treaty signed by the British and Nepal after the war clearly indicates this.<sup>114</sup>

The withdrawal of the Gorkhas from Malaun sealed their fate in the war and broke their power of resistance against the British. Nepal started negotiations for peace in May 1815, at different places and at the fall of Kathmandu in 1816, a peace negotiation was concluded between the British and Nepal at Sugauli.<sup>115</sup>

The Sikkim ruler thanked the British and requested 'that the boundary between Sikkim and the Gorkha territory be laid at Timar Chorten (the Tamar River) if possible, but the best would be Arun River, and the least of all Milighu, Dhankote as middle, Shadijong, down to the Kanika Terai rivers.<sup>116</sup> "All the country east of these are Sikkim territory, and I pray these may be restored to Sikkim, after taking oaths, or written bonds, or sealed and signed documents from the Gurkha Maharaja.

As long as the boundary is not laid down definitely, I pray that the Major Saheb, who represents the British Government may not be removed or transferred elsewhere. If this is not done, then your Excellency is aware of the various subterfuges that the Gurkhas might employ to defraud us. I pray therefore that your Excellency will be pleased to regard my prayers about the above three boundaries with favour and cause it to bear fruit." This was the appeal made by the Sikkim Maharaja to the British Government, which was dated 1816, just on the eve of the Sugauli agreement.<sup>117</sup>

The British felt that the richest part of Nepal, and the part which furnished it with sinews of war, was the lush Terai, hence its cessation was made the first condition of truce. By the treaty of Sugauli, accepted on March 24, 1816.<sup>118</sup> Nepal ceded most of the Terai it possessed. In accordance with the British policy 'to restore the ancient chiefs in all cases in which special reasons did not exist against it', the annexed hill states west of the Mahakali River, except Kumaon were restored. All the territories within the hills eastward of the river Mechi, 'including the lands of Nagree and the Pass of Nagarcote leading from Morung into the hills, together with the territory lying between that pass and Nagree' were ceded to the Company 'in perpetuity'. The treaty laid down that 'the aforesaid territory shall be evacuated by the Gorkha troops within forty days.' Jayanta Khatri had to move out of Nagari; he went to Illam.<sup>119</sup>

On February 10, 1817, the British Government made a treaty at Titalia with Sikkim, and restored the territories situated to the eastward of the Mechi River and the westward of the Teesta River, "formerly possessed and occupied by the Rajah of Nepal, but ceded to the Honourable East India Company by the Treaty of peace signed at Sugauli."<sup>120</sup>(These were the territories which now forms Darjeeling, Kurseong and Siliguri sub-division of the Darjeeling district.) Sikkim was thus given its old territories east of the Mechi River. The size of Nepal was reduced but Sikkim did not get all it had asked for. The treaty also stipulated that Sikkim would submit to the arbitration of the Company any dispute with Nepal and other neighbouring countries.<sup>121</sup>The treaty thus established a complete British influence in Sikkim. For the first time the British acquired the right to trade up to the Tibetan frontier.

The evident protective wing of the British was not enough to drive away the fear of the Gorkhas from the mind of the *Maharaja*, Tsugphud Namgyal, who right from his infancy had been a victim of the Gorkha conquests of Sikkim. So the *Maharaja* thought it prudent to shift the capital from Rabdentse in the west to Tumlong in the north of Sikkim. In the *Shing-khyi* (wood dog) year of the 14<sup>th</sup> century, 1814 A.D he commenced building a palace named Wangdutse, at Tumlong and shifted the capital there.<sup>122</sup> The palace was built exactly between the two famous monasteries i.e., the Phodong and Labrang monasteries. The Phodong monastery located above the North Sikkim Highway about forty kilo meters away from Gangtok was built by Chogyal Gyurmed Namgyal sometime in the first quarter of the eighteenth-century. A kilometer further from Phodang, the Labrang monastery was built about 100 years later. This monastery belongs to the Nyingmapa Sect of Tibetan Buddhism, the same as that of Pemayangtse monastery in west Sikkim. Between the two monasteries are the Tumlong Palace ruins. Thus from 1814 Tumlong became the seat of the Chogyals' Government, much away from the Gorkha kingdom's eastern boundary. Tumlong remained the capital for about ninety years.

Nepal was presented with an opportunity to exploit the internal feuds in Sikkim and serve its design once more immediately after the treaty of Titalia.<sup>123</sup> Since 1850s Sikkim had been suffering from chronic internal feuds. The rebellion of the Limbus or the Tsong community in the middle of the eighteenth-century (1852) had been put down by Chogthup's father, Karwang, the Lepcha minister. The rebellion was the result of discontentment of the Mangars who were being deprived of their traditional privileges. Through tactful diplomacy Changzod Karwang later won back the loyalty of the Tsongs and for a while the land enjoyed peace.

More serious in nature was the recurrent conflicts between the Lepchas and Bhutias. When the powerful Bhutia or Tibetan minister had refused to recognize the posthumous infant of Gyurmed and captured power, the Lepcha faction under Karwang opposed him. The '*Mangsher Duma*' had apportioned powers to the Lepchas and Bhutias and established peace. But the amity was not destined to last forever. The Bhutia camp, jealous of the achievements and the rising power of the Lepcha Karwang family, procured the murder of Bolod, a scion of the family, under the king's

instruction in 1826. (Tung-yik Menchoo, father of Dongyer Namgyal treacherously murdered Bolod near Tumlong). The Lepcha chiefs 'left Sikkim taking with them about eight hundred houses of Lepcha subjects' and went to Illam seeking Nepalese help.<sup>124</sup> Thus began the 'Kotapa insurrection', which sorely troubled Sikkim for a long time.

The Kotapa insurrection was not a brief affair. Jayanta Khatri, who had by then retired to Illam, wrote in 1826 about a delegation of the Kotapas that went to meet him seeking help. The British had withdrawn to the plains in turmoil and were stationed at Phasidewa with two cannons, the Lepchas were insisting that it was the time to take action in Sikkim. Moreover, a border dispute arose between Sikkim and Nepal, and Sikkim referred the matter, in accordance with the treaty of Titalia, to the Company, the two issues were intricately related.<sup>125</sup>

It was to investigate this dispute that William Bentinck deputed G.W.Lloyd and J.W Grant in 1828. They penetrated into the hills and came as far as Rinchingpung. These gentlemen, attracted by the position of Darjeeling, brought it to the notice of the Governor-General, and it was resolved by Government to open negotiations with the *Maharaja* of Sikkim on the first convenient occasion for the cession of Darjeeling to the British Government in return for an equivalent in lands or money. This opportunity occurred in 1834-35, when the Lepcha refugees in Nepal made an inroad into the Sikkim Terai, and Colonel Lloyd was deputed to enquire into the causes of the disturbance. The refugees were obliged to return to Nepal, and the negotiation ended in the cession by the *Maharaja* of the Darjeeling tract under a Deed of grant, dated February 1835. In 1841 the Government granted an allowance of Rs.3,000 per annum to the Maharaja as compensation for the cession of Darjeeling.<sup>126</sup>

Ever since the inception of monarchy in Sikkim, the question of the seat of its Government had been of great concern for the monarch. Factors such as religious, political and geographical, played their role jointly or singularly in choosing a location as the capital. When the capital was shifted from Gangtok to Yuksam, the idea was to administer the country from a place regarded very sacred by the Namgyals. The need for the transfer of capital from Yuksam to Rabdentse also occurred out of religious factor. Lat-bTsun had once uttered to Phuntso Namgyal that he should build a palace



at Rabdentse. This showed Lat-bTsun's concern for propagating Buddhism (Nyngmepa sect) in the country. For over hundred years Rabdantse remained the capital and during this period numerous religious monuments were being established. In 1814 the capital was shifted from Rabdentse to Tumlong, the need this time arising out of geographical and political factors. Throughout its period as the seat of the Government, Rabdantse faced constant harassment from foreign powers, so the Chogyal shifted the capital to Tumlong away from the Gorkha Kingdom's eastern boundary and close to Lhasa. It should also be remembered that from time to time the ruler's summer residence was in the valley of Chumbi in Tibet. From about 1889 the residence of the *Maharaja* was transferred to Gangtok. Our studies in the following sections shall reveal why Gangtok became the capital around 1889-90.

### III

Though aware of the great commercial possibilities of Tibetan trade since their arrival in India, the British had not taken any step to develop it until they occupied Bengal, where the northern frontier was contiguous with the Himalayan foothills. The British considered trans-Himalayan trade vital for their commercial interests. But by the time the officials of the East India Company in Bengal had begun to consider opening trade relations with Tibet, the political events within the country and on its southern border, in Nepal had already combined to make it virtually a closed land, shut off from its previous connections with Bengal and Northern India. Tibet did not begin to become a "forbidden land"-except for the natural obstacles to entry offered by the terrain- until the Manchu Emperors of China took steps to add it to their domains, after an army sent from China had conquered it in 1720. After 1750, circumstances had tended more and more to make Tibet a closed land. (Previously, Tibet had at times been a nominal tributary of China, but the Chinese had never had any direct control over it). The conquest of Nepal by the Gurkhas, (completed in 1769) and their replacement of the Semi-Tibetan Buddhist culture of the former Newari rulers by a new Hinduised one, tended to shut off the age-old cultural contacts between Nepal and Tibet, as well as the accustomed avenues of trans-Himalayan trade between Northern India and Tashilungpo by way of Nepal passes. Furthermore, the intrigues of the English, in their efforts to help the old rulers of Nepal against the

Gurkhas, thoroughly annoyed the latter. In 1767, for example, the English sent an expedition under Captain Kinlock into Nepal against the Gurkhas, and this proved almost totally disastrous to the Company's troops. It succeeded only in arousing the wrath of the Gurkhas at the interference. Two years later, in 1769, Surgeon James Logan was sent on a mission to Nepal in an effort to encourage or support the *Newari Rajah* of Kathmandu, partly because the latter was believed to be closely connected with the 'Pontiff' (Dalai Lama) of Lhasa, and it was hoped that he might be useful in furthering the expansion of trade to Tibet. But this too, was a failure, for in that year Kathmandu fell to the Gurkhas, who thus completed their conquest of Nepal proper. Around 1772, Bengal itself was shut off from Tibet when troubles in Cooch Behar to the north, and a subsequent border war between the Company and Bhutan blocked any chance of trade with Tashilunpo and Lhasa by way of the eastern passes.<sup>127</sup>

With the coming of Warren Hastings to India, the Company again became interested in trying to arrange an extension of its trade in Bengal with the countries to the north, in order to revive a strained economy in their possession in Bengal. They also hoped to find some means of introducing British goods to China through her back door, so they could extend the Company's sale of manufactured goods from overseas. These economic reasons were the direct stimulus in the search for new markets and new channels of trade in the North.<sup>128</sup> In May 1774 a mission under George Bogle was sent to "open a mutual and equal communication of trade".<sup>129</sup> But this mission did little to open up the trade route through Bhutan. In 1783 a second mission was sent under Samuel Turner.<sup>130</sup> But the little promise, which was secured by Turner's diplomacy, could not be utilized due to departure of Hastings for England and Lord Cornwallis's policy of non-involvement in the trans-Himalayan trade. Thus Bhutan being closed to Indian merchants, attention was again directed towards Nepal. But, in spite of placing a British Resident at Kathmandu in 1800, no trade was opened.<sup>131</sup> This was partly due to the events of 1792 and their sequels, and partly because the ruler could not be forced to cooperate even after several punitive expeditions against Nepal.<sup>132</sup>

The trade routes to Tibet through Nepal and Bhutan thus remained shut throughout the nineteenth century. The only solution would have been to add these

Border States to the already unwieldy Indian Empire, but that the British could not afford to. Therefore they concentrated on Sikkim, which was small and weak, gradually absorbing it.<sup>133</sup>

Sikkim's involvement in the Anglo-Nepalese war and her newly developed friendship with the British proved rather unlucky for her as it gave the British a chance to establish a complete influence in Sikkim. The treaty was also a blow to the Nepalese ambition in the east. But Sikkim *Maharaja's* freedom of action was drastically curtailed. The Company got the right to trade upto the Tibetan frontier under the protection of the Sikkim authorities with whom Tibet had political, commercial and ecclesiastical relations and whose princes were closely connected with Tibet by matrimonial relations. On 7 April 1817, the Governor-General Lord Moira formally granted to the Sikkim ruler by a *Sunnud* "all that portions of lowland situated Eastward of the Meitchie River, and westward of the Maha Nudee, formerly possessed by the Rajah of Napaul, but ceded to the Honourable East India Company by the Treaty of Segoulee, to be held by the Sikkimputee Rajah as a feudatory, or as acknowledging the supremacy of the British Government over the said lands",<sup>134</sup> on condition that the provisions of the Treaty of Titalya would be in force in the Morung also with the addition that the Company's police would be allowed to arrest the criminals and all public defaulters even inside Morung.<sup>135</sup> Thus the Company's grip in Sikkim was further strengthened and the *Raja* of Sikkim who was feeling unsafe being sandwiched between Nepal and Bhutan had his territories restored, but under the British control.

Darjeeling was ceded to the Company in 1835, but the Sikkim *Maharaja* did not consider the cession to be unconditional. In November 1839, he wrote a letter to Campbell, the Superintendent of Darjeeling: "Llyod promised that whatever money I should desire in return should be granted; that my territory should be extended west to the Tambar River; that Rommoo Pradhan and his brothers should be delivered over to me; and that deficit in my revenue in their hands should be made good".<sup>136</sup> Campbell replied: "I did not know that you desired more in return for it than the satisfaction of having not the wishes of my Government".<sup>137</sup> Campbell expressed that the Raja had mistaken because Lloyd was not authorised to offer any land.<sup>138</sup> Government of India

instructed Campbell to inform the Raja that he would be compensated by Rs.1,000 annually if he did agree to “free intercourse between Darjeeling and interior of Sikkim”.<sup>139</sup> In 1843 the Maharaja again wrote a letter to the Superintendent: “we received a letter from the India Government at Calcutta saying that the Government wanted a piece of land in Darjeeling for a Sanatory station for invalid British Officers and that either a suitable piece of land in exchange or some rent in money would be given. Accordingly I offered a piece of land in Darjeeling for the purpose. The proposed exchange in land was not given, but you persisted in offering as annual rent in money. And you know already, whether we sent any one to ask for rent money or not. Now you write to say that you will not send up the annual rent for the Darjeeling land. Now if you do not live in Darjeeling, we do not want any money either. The original boundary of Sikkim as demarcated by the Major... Saheb was from the Mechi river. But since you have come, you have cut the boundary ...and given it to the Gurkhas. In the letter from the great Saheb I am informed that Campbell Saheb has been sent to further my interest and you wrote to me, informing me of my arrival and assuring me of your wish to further my interests and to work agreeably to my wishes. But in real fact ever since your arrival in Darjeeling you have not only done nothing to help me, but giving ears to all the talks of evil minded people endless disputes have arisen. The neighbouring States are perpetually bothering me. It will not do if Darjeeling falls into another State’s hands, or if any of the raiyats of Darjeeling get scattered. As you have asked me to send down an authorized person in your letter, I have sent Donyer Phodar, who has been instructed minutely as regards my wishes etc.” The dispute between the East India Company and the ruler of Sikkim regarding compensation was finally settled by the Company agreeing to pay annually a sum of Rs. 3,000.<sup>141</sup> In 1846, the Indian Government had granted an increment of the rent of the Darjeeling land from Rs.3,000 to Rs.6,000. But the *Raja* had to wait till June 1847 to get the arrears of compensation since 1835.<sup>142</sup>

In 1839 Darjeeling contained about a hundred bustiwallas, but within ten years, viz from 1839-1849 more than 10,000 houses had settled there. People from all parts of the country flocked there, it having become a great market the slaves and menial classes from Sikkim, Bhutan and Nepal all took refuge there. But an ill feeling

was created when the Sikkimese not being used to the usages of the powerful Government, used to pursue their slaves and kidnap them back from Darjeeling. Criminals from Darjeeling also use to take refuge in Sikkim. In view of these developments the Sikkim Durbar wrote several times to Campbell and tried to obtain the extradition of the runaway slaves from Darjeeling but Campbell turned deaf ears to this proposal.<sup>143</sup> Risley's position was, "there was free trade in labour and all other commodities, with forest land enough for all comers to settle in, and every encouragement given to new arrivals. The increased importance of Darjeeling, under free institutions, was a source of early and constant jealousy and annoyance to the Dewan of the Maharaja, who was himself the monopolist of all trade in Sikkim, and this jealousy was shared in by the Lamas and other principal people in the country, who lost their rights over slaves settling as British subjects in our country. The plan pursued was through reports and secret emissaries to frighten our slaves to their former masters, and by discouraging the resort in every way of the Sikkim people to Darjeeling; added to which some British subjects were occasionally kidnapped to be sold into slavery, and there were frequent senials of aid in capturing and surrendering criminals. There has always been an arrangement for a mutual exchange of slaves between Sikkim and Bhutan, and Dr.Campbell, the Superintendent of Darjeeling, was constantly importuned by the Maharaja of Sikkim and his Dewan to get the British Government to follow a similar course with Sikkim, which was of necessity steadily refused."<sup>144</sup>

It seems that there existed a serious communication gap between the Sikkim Maharaja, his officials and Dr.Campbell, the successor of Capt.Lloyd who always seemed to be annoyed with the former. Dr.Campbell not only gave vent to his annoyance but even thought that the Raja owed his existence as a Ruler to the British as he wrote, "...that it (Government) will agree with me in thinking that it is time to show him (Rajah) that the Government to which he owes his country and his existence as a Ruler is not indifferent to his persevering continuance in careless acts of obstruction to our progress here and bad feelings towards us whenever he can manifest it."<sup>145</sup> The Government of India in reply asked Campbell to warn the *Rajah* of serious measures if he persisted in his unfriendly ways.<sup>146</sup> Campbell acted

accordingly.<sup>147</sup> The *Maharaja's* faith in the British Government shattered. How could the *Maharaja* of a country take such insults, after all he was a sovereign ruler. And rightly so why should 'the *Maharaja* give in to demands made by the Colonial Government in India.

In the year 1849, Dr.Campbell and Hooker visited Sikkim, and were touring the Tsola side. The Tibetan Government had issued stringent orders forbidding foreigners to be allowed beyond the boundaries. The *Maharaja* of Sikkim was also forbidden to visit Tibet often than once in 8 years. Such complications and suspicions had been aroused in the Tibet Government by the representation from a resident of Tromowa village, named Yulsar Aphur with regard to the leasing of the Darjeeling land to the British, and protesting against the Tromowa's being compelled to supply transports etc free to the Sikkim *Maharaja*. The complications were later settled but the Sikkim Durbar no longer could afford to incur the displeasure of the Tibet and Chinese Governments and allow these Englishmen to go beyond Tsola range.<sup>148</sup> Campbell presumed that the refusal was due to the influence of Donyar Namgyal who had become a very influential minister in the *Raja's* court and had monopoly of Sikkim's trade with Tibet.<sup>149</sup> The *Maharaja* Tsugphup Namgyal was too aged and infirm and the Tokhang Donyer Namgyal and other ministers of Sikkim asked the two English gentlemen not to go beyond the Tsola range but as they did not mind these, the ministers, not foreseeing the consequences which might happen from the British side, thought themselves compelled to restrain these two gentlemen and detained them for sometime. But when a letter came from the Indian Government both the gentlemen were released.<sup>150</sup>

In 1850, British Indian Government sent up an "avenging force"<sup>151</sup> under the Darjeeling Superintendent and attached all the Terai, and all the land lying below Raman in the North, and the Rangeet and Teesta in the East, and the Nepal Sikkim Frontier in the west, besides stopping annual rent of Rs.6000, from Darjeeling. The lands thus attached at one swoop by the British Government meant a loss of 6 Jongkhags, or Kazis'elakas in the hills, besides Rs.6, 000 and an income estimated at Rs.46, 000 annually coming in cash or in kind from the *raiya*t in these plains.<sup>152</sup>

Sikkim lost its Terai region (Morung) and became a hill-locked Kingdom.<sup>153</sup> This new territory was put under the management of the Secretary of Darjeeling.<sup>154</sup>

It is thus noticeable that disguised as a friend, British colonialism influenced Sikkim since the time of Anglo-Nepal war. The *Maharaja* was put at the Company's mercy. The Dewan who so long stood as a protestor of evil English desires was ridiculed as '*pagla*', working for safeguarding his monopoly over Sikkim's trade. The Company asked for his dismissal, which they procured by the treaty of 1861.

In 1861 Sikkim was bound to sign a treaty with the British. A force was dispatched in 1860 under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel Gawler, accompanied by Ashley Eden, (who was the Political officer as far as Teesta) as Envoy and Special Commissioner. The force advanced to the Teesta and Sikkim was bound to accede to, a new treaty in 1861, consisting of twenty-three articles. It was concluded by the Envoy with *Maharaja* Sridkyong Namgyal and the Political officer impressed the necessity of its faithful observance upon the Sikkimese.<sup>155</sup> Donyar Namgyal was banished from Sikkim.<sup>156</sup>

#### IV

By 1861, Sikkim was completely transformed into a British protectorate and the annexation of Darjeeling was confirmed. Colonial diplomacy however did not afford the British to annex Sikkim completely. For the British the acquisition of Darjeeling was the realization of their long cherished desire to get a foothold within the territory of Sikkim to influence it with their commerce and culture and further use it, as a bridge to Lhasa. Now they needed a proper location 'as a base' for their trade and a 'pass' closer to this base to satisfy their ambition. They therefore undertook serious explorations of Sikkim route through various trade missions.

While forwarding the treaty of 1861 to the Viceroy for ratification, Eden commented that the only concession, which could be obtained from Sikkim, was the opening out of the country to traders and travelers from India as easy means of transit for the trade between India and Tibet. Sikkim as a highroad for trade there would spring up an excellent trade, Tibetans exchanging their gold dust, musk, borax, wool and salt for English cloth, tobacco, drill etc. The Sikkim people would gain from this trade, as carriers of the goods and Sikkim Government would raise considerable

transit duties from these traders.<sup>157</sup> But until the trade was fairly established, Eden proposed to hold an annual fair in Darjeeling in November or April with idea to enable the merchants of both countries to meet and trade there.<sup>158</sup> During the British occupation of Sikkim in 1861 two roads were constructed from Tumlong and they joined the Teesta. Of these two roads, the road starting from the bridge across the Rumman river was the shortest and the bridge erected on it in 1860 was good even in February 1863.<sup>159</sup> The President in council directed the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal to arrange for a preliminary survey of Sikkim to ascertain the cost of road construction. It was decided to adopt the line along the Teesta valley and H.C Wake, the Superintendent of Darjeeling suggested that the road should enter Sikkim at or near the bridge over the Great Rungeet River because Chebu Lama, had offered the land at Goke to Wake's disposal as a place suitable for fair. Wake had felt the need of an annual fair as proposed by Eden.<sup>160</sup> But the survey discontinued due to trouble with Bhutan.

Sir J.D. Hooker<sup>161</sup> in his journal gives an optimistic remark on the prospects of India-Tibet trade through Sikkim. He commented, "there is a considerable trade in musk, salt, gold dust, borax, soda, woolen clothes and especially in ponies." W.B. Jackson<sup>162</sup> of the Bengal Civil Service submitted an encouraging report on the trade between Darjeeling and Tibet. In spite of many restrictions and duties the trade with Tibet on Sikkim route had a value of Rs. 50,000 annually. The report suggested that British manufactures could be exchanged for Tibetan gold, salt and wool. The Calcutta Review<sup>163</sup> furnished a descriptive account in 1857 of the value import from Lhasa by Sikkim route, which was estimated at Rs. 50,000 annually. The imports consisted of salt, gold, silver, precious stones and coarse woolen stuffs. The principal import was wool. 'The flocks of Tibet are very numerous, and the wool is of finest quality'. The Calcutta Review expressed hope that Darjeeling was the gateway through which commerce and culture of the west could reach Central Asia.

By 1856 the tea industry in Darjeeling advanced from the experimental to a more extensive and commercial stage.<sup>164</sup> From 1860 commercial interests in Tibet were diverted from western Tibet to the road to Lhasa through Sikkim. It was the shortest route between Calcutta and Lhasa with Darjeeling as an entrepot for central

Asian trade.<sup>165</sup> In October 1869 Colonel Haughton, Commissioner of Cooch Behar, strongly recommended cultivation of friendship with the Lamas of Tibet. He submitted a report on the commercial relations with Tibet and China. He suggested that Peking should be asked to remove all restrictions on the free passage of merchants and travelers. In a separate report, Haughton enumerated the routes through which markets of Central Asia could be reached. Importance of Sikkim route was also reiterated.<sup>166</sup>

On the request made by the Government of Bengal, the superintendent of Darjeeling prepared a report on trade with Tibet, Nepal, Bhutan and Sikkim, details of which were supplied by Cheebo Lama.<sup>167</sup> The report was, to quote the Superintendent, 'tolerably accurate'. The merchandise imported from Sikkim consisted of horses, cattle including sheep and goats, blankets, salt, musk, wax, ghee, oranges, millet, rice, lime and copper. There was steady annual increase of trade. The imports in 1863 were nearly double of those in 1860. The money earned during the four years under notice amounted to Rs.89, 535 out of which the sum of Rs.19, 450 was returned to Sikkim in the shape of goods. The articles of exports to Sikkim included English cloth, metal utensils, tobacco and coral. Among the items of export, only tobacco was grown in the Terai and others were not of local manufacture. With the improvement of communications, the Superintendent expressed hope; great quantities of tea would be exported to Sikkim and Tibet replacing brick tea imported from Lhasa and China. The trade with Tibet consisted of the importation of horses, blankets, tea, turquoise, wool, musk, ox-tails, musical instruments and shoes. Horses found a market in the plains. The imports increased greatly during 1860-63. The total price of goods sold amounted to Rs.64, 005. Out of this amount Rs.43, 700 was spent in Darjeeling for the purchase of goods for exports. The balance of Rs.20, 305 was taken away as cash. Both in Sikkim and Tibet there was steady demand for English cotton goods, cloth and foreign luxuries. There was a suggestion that completion of a direct road through Sikkim and railway communication with Calcutta would further the cause of trade and make Darjeeling 'important as a trade depot'.

Trade with Sikkim was conducted in four routes: two via Namchee and Chadam to the Great Rangit, and two via zeeme to Gok and Tramduc to Colbong. The

Tibetan merchants entered Darjeeling by routes starting from Chola, Yekla, Nathey, Cumra and Dangsa. All these met in Sikkim through which they entered Darjeeling via Gangtok and Dikeeling.

This was the first comprehensive report on the Trans-frontier trade.<sup>168</sup> The report was thoroughly examined by the Bengal Government and it was convinced that the trade was capable of considerable expansion in the direction of Sikkim and Tibet. The Deputy Commissioner of Darjeeling was instructed to facilitate the establishment of *serai* and *bazaar* on the Lebong spur. There were other instructions too. The Deputy Commissioner of Darjeeling was instructed to call upon the *Maharaja* of Sikkim, through the Dewan Cheebo Lama, to see that the road made to the Teesta by the British Force in Sikkim in 1861 is kept in good repair.<sup>169</sup>

The problem of communication was also taken into account. "A road along the Teesta Valley and then via Rhinock to the Nethai Pass would near the frontier join an excellent road through the great mart of Jagartchi to Lhasa, and the whole distance would probably not occupy traders more than six weeks, though ordinarily the trade would be rather with Jigartchi and Phari than with Lhasa itself. This was considered a subject of great importance and the public works department was asked to arrange for survey of the road."<sup>170</sup>

In spite of these efforts, trade between Sikkim and Bengal remained insignificant.<sup>171</sup> In 1876 the following approximate estimate of the value of trade through Sikkim with Tibet was available from the returns supplied by the Deputy Commissioner of Darjeeling.<sup>172</sup>

<u>Items</u>	<u>Imports (Rs)</u>
Ponies	51,440
Cows	6,320
Sheep	7,536
Blanket	18,750
Salt	11,960
Yak-tails	6,640
Miscellaneous	<u>7,980</u>
Total	1,10,626

The exports were approximately estimated as follows:

<u>Items</u>	<u>Exports (Rs)</u>
Cloths (including broad cloth, all kinds of cotton goods, mixed silk and cotton, and country cloths)	1,25,000
Indigo	43,000
Tobacco	7,140
Miscellaneous	<u>10,400</u>
Total	<u>1,85,540</u>

In April 1873 a deputation from the Society of Arts, London, led by A. Campbell, Lt. Col. Gawler, J.D. Hooker and B.H. Hodgson submitted a memorandum to the Secretary of State for India. They advocated a more dynamic commercial policy in Central Asia on strategic and commercial grounds. They laid stress on the improvement of existing communications in Sikkim by extending roads to the Tibetan frontier and also by completing railway connection between Darjeeling and Calcutta. In the same year the *Raja* of Sikkim had an interview with Sir John Campbell. One of the results of the interview was the visit, on deputation of J.W. Edgar, Deputy Commissioner of Darjeeling to Sikkim and Tibetan frontier 'to enquire into the conditions and prospects of trade with Tibet and advisability of making a road through Sikkim to the Tibet frontier.'<sup>173</sup>

The visit took place in October, November and December 1873. Edgar failed to cross the Sikkim-Tibet boundary. The Jungpens of Phari sensed the 'ulterior motives for the visit' but he 'tactfully' explained to the Jongpen of Phari that the object of his visit was to enquire into the question relating to promotion of trade between India and Tibet and to recommend the construction of roads and bridges through Sikkim and establishing marts. On 28 October 1873 Edgar met some Tibetan traders who were on their way to Darjeeling where they wanted to exchange coarse blanket for Tobacco. At Keu Laka he met a family of herdsmen from whom he learnt that they had supplied butter and cream cheese to the markets of Darjeeling and Lhasa. These markets were mainly dependent for beef, butter and cheese on the herds of cow of the Phari valley. It was not uncommon for a family in this area to keep a

flock of four or five thousand sheep.<sup>174</sup> Edgar mentions of a typical case of trade, "while we were at the Pass, (Guntui) a man from Guntuck, with his wife, came up with murwa of their growing to the value of about six rupees, which they were taking to Choombi for sale. They said that they meant to take the proceeds to Phari, where they would buy salt, which they might probably lay out the proceeds of its sale in an investment for the Thibet market, if they found time to do so before next year's sowing season...these murwa-sellers expected to get six rupees for their murwa at Choombi, and with this sum to be able to buy at Phari four maunds of salt, which they could sell in Darjeeling for Rs.32, while the value of their murwa at Guntuck was only Rs.4-8."<sup>175</sup> During his stay in East Sikkim, Edgar although met peoples either coming from, or on their way to Darjeeling with goods. Edgar noticed that the chief articles of import from Bhutan and Darjeeling into Tibet were rice, goor, sugar, dried fruits, tobacco, sticlac, madder, indigo, sandalwood, ivory, rhinoceros-horns, peacocks' tails, and red and white endi cloth. Exports from Tibet to Darjeeling and Bhutan were tea, salt, blankets, silk piece goods, ponies, mules, cows, sheep, yaks' tails, musk, turquise, coral and gold. Edgar suggested that he had no doubt if tea were freely admitted to Tibet, Darjeeling growers could easily produce a tea of better quality than now commonly consumed, and deliver it even at Lassa at a lower price than 'is now paid for the market, and break away from ideas formed under the influence of brokers catering for English tastes'. Edgar reported that market for Tibetan salt was exclusively local. The Tibetan salt was sold at Darjeeling for rupees eight a maund against sea borne salt for rupees ten only. With transport cheapened by the opening of the railway salt from Calcutta would replace that of Tibet and would possibly find its way beyond Tibet. There was no doubt that the prohibition of the importation of Darjeeling tea was due to Chinese influence. The Chinese tea was imported through Tibet into Darjeeling for consumption of the local inhabitants of the district, who were practically unable to obtain the tea grown on the spot. 'The trade has not to be created, it exists.' So to promote it Edgar recommended the construction of a bridge across the Teesta and making a good road through Sikkim to Tibetan frontier and establishment of a mart somewhere close to the Tibetan boundary.<sup>176</sup> Edgar explored few options about the question of the most convenient route and the most suitable location for

market. He comments, "I was inclined to recommend the construction of a road over Jeyluk to the Jeylep, but that I should not make up my mind until I had explored the remaining passes."<sup>177</sup> Within the country, "in my opinion, the road from Guntuck to Sharab is one that follows, on the whole, a good line, and could with very little difficulty be made into an excellent road suitable for all purposes except wheeled traffic."<sup>178</sup> Exploring the Guntuck to Teesta routes via Rumtek to Sang, which joined Martam, and then to Teesta which joined Darjeeling, Edgar thought of it to be of much value. During his stay in East Sikkim and his meeting with the Changzod of Sikkim he learnt about the importance of having a mart at Gangtok close to the Yatung valley and the Tibetan capital at Lhasa. In his report Edgar talks of some valuable suggestions given by the Changzod about establishing a mart at Gangtok, "he (Changzod) urged strongly the advantages of Guntuck, where he said the Rajah had long contemplated building a house, and where there was much level land, with plenty of water, in a perfect climate, neither too cold nor too hot."<sup>179</sup> He further says, "In one place were heaps of building materials and the foundation of a house begun by the Rajah's father. But the work was interrupted by his death, and has not been since resumed, though; the idea of removing the residence of the Rajah to this place from Toomlong has not been abandoned. Below this is the house of the kazi of Guntuck, a very unornamental building, of wattle and daub, raised on stout posts. The slopes of the hill on either side are very gentle, and there is much ground suitable for buildings situated at elevations varying between 5,000 and 6,000 feet. There are six springs of water near the top of the ridge. On the whole, the place itself would be suited for a mart; but it is more than questionable whether the best route from Darjeeling to the Chola range lies through it."<sup>180</sup>

On his return to Darjeeling in December 1873, Edgar made some proposals to the Government to adopt and improve to the utmost one of the existing routes through Sikkim even though they would entail many ascents and descents, because the Tibetans preferred a road over the hills to one along the valleys. In his suggestion the question of a mart in Sikkim was also emphasised upon.<sup>181</sup> In 1879 a cart road to Jelep La was completed, and in 1880 railway was laid in greater part of the way between Siliguri and Kurseong.<sup>182</sup>

In August 1875 Bengal Government sanctioned certain proposals mooted by the Deputy Commissioner of Darjeeling for the registration of the frontier traffic.<sup>183</sup> For Sikkim and Tibet trade two frontier stations, one at Pedong and the other at Rangit were sanctioned in the same year.<sup>184</sup> But in June 1885 Rhenock and Kalimpong were substituted for Pedong on the Sikkim frontier. The purpose behind these steps was the registration of the trade between Darjeeling and Tibet through Sikkim and with Sikkim as complete as possible. Again, by September 1889 some changes in the arrangement of stations for registration of traffic with Sikkim and Tibet became necessary. A road was opened direct from Pakyong to Pedong by which traffic from Sikkim to Damdin could be carried without passing the registration stations at Rhenock and Kalimpong. The Deputy Commissioner of Darjeeling proposed to remove the registration station from Kalimpong to Labah and that at Rhenock back to Pedong. The arrangement was approved by the Government. On 4 November a new station was started tentatively at Singala (which was permanently sanctioned in August 1895) for registering Sikkim trade that passed over a newly constructed bridge across the Ramman River. 'The increase in the traffic passing through the part of Sikkim owing to the construction of a bridge over the Raman river warranted the establishment of this registration station...'<sup>185</sup> In 1896 the Commissioner of Rajshahi Division after consultations with the Political Officer of Sikkim and the Deputy Commissioner of Darjeeling made recommendations to the Government of Bengal regarding some new arrangement for the registration stations for trade with Tibet. It recommended that trade with Tibet be registered at Gangtok and Yatung instead of the existing stations under the control of the Deputy Commissioner of of Darjeeling. The Government of Bengal accepted this proposal. It is interesting to note that soon after this the Commissioner of Rajshahi Division was asked to establish a registration post at Gangtok. He was further asked to obtain and furnish the Government with statistics of trade from January 1898.as registered at Yatung by the Chinese customs Department.<sup>186</sup>

## V

After the Tumlong agreement the deputy Commissioner of Darjeeling had been supervising the affairs of Sikkim. This arrangement of supervision continued till

1889. But the British attempt to extend commerce and culture in Sikkim and to use her as a bridge for Indo-Tibetan trade did not flourish much till the last decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. British position was that their attempt was hampered much by the Tibetan claim of suzerainty over Sikkim and the Maharaja's inability to keep a balance between the pro-Tibetan and Pro-British factions in his country. After much investigations and correspondences between the Bengal officials and the Government of India about Sikkim issue, it was felt necessary to manage the administration of Sikkim from within. A post of Political Officer for Sikkim was therefore created in 1889.

On 20 January, 1889, Edgar (who was then holding the post of the Chief Secretary, Government of Bengal) sent a telegram to the Government of India, which says, "After some communication with Tibetans, Ampa has evidently made up his mind to refuse any terms which do not compromise of unchanged official relations between Tibet and Sikkim. This includes presents and caused in humble language of chief civil authorities at Lhasa in other words it homage to Tibet...I think that it is necessary, if we are to avoid complete relapse that should for the present be administered by British officer with the help of Deputy Commissioner. He should be paid from the suspended subsidy. If the Lieutenant Governor agrees, I would get sanction to retain White, who has very special qualifications and would settle whole thing on way down. Raja was at Pedong and should I think be kept out of Sikkim for sometime".<sup>187</sup> This proposal indicates that unless and until the administration of Sikkim is carried out from within, the British objectives will not gain much success.

The reaction of the Government of Bengal to Edgar's proposal was positive. On February 14, 1889 the Chief Secretary, on behalf of the Government of Bengal, submitted some proposal about the Sikkim affairs to the Government of India:<sup>188</sup> It is proposed that for some time to come a Political Officer should remain at Gangtok, to advise the Raja and his Council, and aid them in restoring orderly administration. The Bengal Government would select for the duty Mr. White, a Civil Engineer of the Public Works Department, who has been some time in Sikkim and has throughout the campaign acted an an Assistant Political Officer. He would be under the orders of the Deputy Commissioner of Darjeeling, and would receive a salary of Rs. 1,000 a month;

with traveling allowance. This would be paid at present from the suspended Sikkim subsidy.

I have no doubt this is the proper course, and Mr. White is the best man to choose. He knows the country well, and his energy in road making and the like will be of special value. He is a man of conciliatory manners and patient disposition, and gets on well with Raja and officials. He tells me he wants no definite powers, as the Raja and Council will his advice. I would therefore merely appoint him Political Agent, and tell the Raja that no important measures must be taken without consulting him.

I may remark that the Council consists practically of two brothers, a priest and a layman, the Phodong Lama and Kangsa Diwan. These old men are the leaders of the Anti-Tibetan party, and are thoroughly in our interest. The Raja and Rani will not speak to them in consequence. Mr. White will have to bring about a reconciliation if possible, but it will be difficult. The Raja is neither able nor willing to rule the country himself, but he detests the brothers, through whom it has been ruled for him.

In a few years the population and revenues of the state ought to be largely increased and cultivation extended. In British Sikkim the advance made in the last few years is surprising.

The Sikkim subsidy is only Rs. 12,000 a year. The Government of India sanctioned an increase to Rs. 18,000 on certain conditions, but this was never given. I cannot therefore say that there will be no expense to Government. But Mr. White wants a very small establishment. He told me one clerk would be enough. If we regard the subsidy as Rs. 18,000 a year, I believe the whole expense of the Agency will come within it. Hereafter I hope the revenue of the State will be so much increased that when we remove the Agency we can let the subsidy drop for good.

In any case the Agency is necessary. The want of control of late years has done much harm, and if the Raja is left to himself now he will at once return to his former courses.

It is proposed that the political relations of the Government of India with Sikkim and Bhutan should be controlled by one authority. At least the Lieutenant-Governor is inclined to think so. This is only a question of Deputy Commissioners. The Bengal Government manages our relations with both States, but through different frontier

officers. It would certainly be better to let the Deputy Commissioner of Darjeeling have both charges.

I have told the Bengal Government that there is no objection to Mr. Paul, who has been on special duty, resuming charge of the Darjeeling district. He need not now remain at Gnatong. But they wish him to retain his special allowances of Rs. 300 a month. This is right, as he will still have charge of any correspondence with the Chinese and Tibetans, and the supervision of all political arrangements connected with the troops in Sikkim, including the collection of intelligence. This gives him a good deal of extra work. The Political Officer with a force is expected to perform all sorts of miscellaneous duties, from watching the front to supplementing the transport and commissariat.

After going through the Proposal, the Secretary of State for India wrote to the Government of India. The letter says: "you support the recommendation of the Government of Bengal that for some time to come a Political Officer should remain at Gangtok, the Raja's residence to advise the Raja and his Council, and then in restoring an orderly administration. Mr. J.C. White, C.E., Public Works Department, who during the Campaign acted as Assistant Political Officer, and is mentioned as having rendered extremely good service, is named for the appointment, and is suggested that his pay, which will be met from the Sikkim subsidy, should be fixed at Rs. 1,000 a month, and that he be allowed one Clerk on a salary of Rs. 50 a month. The grounds on which these proposals are based appear to me to be well founded, and I accordingly sanction your recommendations. I observed that the expenditure involved by the adoption of these measures will be almost completely covered by the Sikkim subsidy of Rs. 12,000 a year. I also accord my sanction to the proposal that Mr. Paul, Deputy Commissioner of Darjeeling, who was on special duty with the Sikkim Field force, may retain, after reversion to his appointment, temporarily, in view of the possibility of his services being still required in connection with the duties on which he was engaged".<sup>189</sup>

On 17 April, 1889, Edgar sent a telegram to the Finance Department, Government of Bengal, which says, "Mr. White proposes to build a house at Gantok; asking for Rs. 9,000, and asks whether this office can provide money as he has none

available.”<sup>190</sup> The Finance Department replied, “money may be sanctioned for White’s house, if you apply officially. Finance Department has agreed.”<sup>191</sup> The Chief Secretary accordingly submitted on 24 April, 1889 “the plan and estimate for a house to be built by Mr. White at Gantok, requesting the sanction to the building and a grant of Rs.9,319.”<sup>192</sup> The Finance Department’s reply, which came on 27 April 1889, was, “an expenditure of Rs. 10,000 has already been sanctioned. The Bengal Government has been informed. No orders are required on this. The house when finished will be the Taj of Sikkim.”<sup>193</sup>

Thus, after much correspondence, the Government of India informed the Government of Bengal in June 1889, that the post of Political Officer had been created. Edgar wrote to A.J. Paul, the Deputy Commissioner of Darjeeling on 12 June 1889, “the Lieutenant-Governor has now considered all the information recently collected concerning the internal affairs of Sikkim, and taken the opinions of the members of the Council at Gantok and other natives of the country whose opinion is of weight. He has had the advantage of consulting you and Mr. White on the subject, and has directed me to communicate to you the following instructions.

As you have been already informed, the Government of India have recommended to the Secretary of State the appointment of a Political Officer to reside in Sikkim and to assist the Raja in Council with his advice in the administration of affairs. Mr. White, who has been selected for this appointment, will act under your general supervision. A sum of Rs.10,000 has been sanctioned by the Government of India for a house and furniture for the Political Officer. This house is now being built in Gantok.

Arrangements are being made to build quarters for the detachment at present posted at Gantok; and the house originally built for the Raja, and now occupied by the Sepoys, will be then made available for the Raja’s occupation. It is understood that he will go into it as soon as it is available, and he should be encouraged in every way to continue at Gantok and take an active part in the administration. For the present, affairs will be conducted by the Council of the leading monks and laymen in Sikkim... It (Council) should meet at Gantok, and will conduct all the civil, criminal, and revenue administration, subject to the provisions above indicated about its relation with the Raja.”<sup>194</sup>

What comes out clear from the above is that the British were bent on having a foothold at Gangtok. They created a situation, which facilitated them to establish themselves firmly at Gangtok by 1889. The creation of the post of a Political Officer for Sikkim and the appointment of J.C White as the first British Political Officer with his headquarter at Gangtok reveals their motive of establishing Gangtok as a market for their trade with Tibet. They had also clearly understood the strategic importance of Gangtok as a place from where they could apply themselves effectively against the Tibetans in the frontier. The strategic importance of Gangtok was experienced by the British in the mission of Colman Macaulay. "A British detachment was then posted at Gangtok and the house originally built for the Raja, was occupied by the Sepoys".<sup>195</sup> Geographical situation of Gangtok, its location on gentle slopes which could be easily made accessible for communication with the Indian plain also played its role in the British mind for choosing it as a base of administration. Other than these, one hidden motive comes out clear as we minutely scrutinise the above facts, that is the transformation of Gangtok as a prototype of a neighbouring hill-station namely Darjeeling. This motive is amply exhibited when Gangtok was chosen as the head quarter of the British Political Agency and J.C. White, an engineer in the Public Works Department as the first Political Officer. As a rule, White was not entitled to act as a Political Officer because he hailed from the engineering services. So his parent Department (Public Works Department) questioned the placement of White as a Political Officer. The Secretary to the Foreign Department defended the appointment by saying, "the appointment of Political Agent in Sikkim is only a temporary one, and possibly we may be ready to return Mr. White to his own Department before five years are past. But it would be much better; I think not to lay down any hard and fast rule for the Political Department, and his appointment in Sikkim was only sanctioned as a special case."<sup>196</sup> Edgar's proposal on behalf of the Government of Bengal to the Government of India as seen earlier says, "...for sometime to come a Political Officer should remain at Gantok. I have no doubt that; this is a proper course, and Mr. White is the best man to choose. He knows the country well, and his energy in road-making and the like will be of special value..."<sup>197</sup> Immediately when Edgar placed his proposal before the Government, A.J Paul the Deputy Commissioner of Bengal, wrote

to Edgar defending the proposal, "if the above proposal is approved, I would venture to suggest that Mr. J.C. White would make an excellent officer for the work. He has already obtained full insight into the intrigues carried on in Sikkim, and thoroughly understands the relations in which the various Sikkimese and Tibetan Officers stand to one another, and has inspected a considerable part of Sikkim, while his experience as a road-maker in the hills cannot fail to produce most satisfactory results. He is already known to and trusted by many of the most influential Kazis, and has made very fair progress in colloquial Tibetan."<sup>198</sup> Between 1888 and 1889, "a road was made from Pedong through Rhenock and Gangtok to Tumlong which was felt to be undoubtedly very useful, and it was hoped that in time the resources of the country will allow of other equally valuable roads being opened up."<sup>199</sup> Edgar expressed this view in a letter dated 16 May 1889 to A.J. Paul, the Deputy Commissioner of Darjeeling. The hidden motive is amply exhibited in the above correspondences. As per British version, the main objective to create the post of a Political Officer was to advise the *Maharaja* and his Council, and to aid him in restoring orderly administration which had been disbalanced due to *Maharaja's* inefficiency as a ruler. And so, for the British, Political Agency was the need of the hour.

From the above argument, it also becomes clear that by the year 1889 when a British Political Agency was established at Gangtok, with administrative powers in the hands of the British political Officer and road construction taken up at the earnest, Gangtok had begun to emerge out as the Capital of Sikkim. The Raja's new residence had already been built at Gangtok at around 1888. The pro-British officials of the *Raja's* court such as, Phodang Lama and Khangsa Dewan had advised the Macaulay Mission to persuade the *Maharaja* to reside in Sikkim permanently and not to go to Choombi as they hoped that this would promote the British views regarding developments of trade and friendly relations with Tibet. They wanted Macaulay to make assistance to construction of *Raja's* new house and increase the allowance conditional on his agreeing not to leave Sikkim.<sup>200</sup> In a letter to the Government of Bengal, S.C Bailey, (Lieutenant Governor of Bengal) wrote in 1887, "he is a perfect nonentity, but his people set great store by his family, and if we could once get him out of Choombi and safely surrounded by his own people at Tumlong or still better at

Guntuk, where he has built a house, we should have no difficulty in keeping the present administrators not only in safety but in power. At least, this is my present view.<sup>201</sup> In view of Bailey's remark it is also understood that the *Maharaja* had shifted a part of administration to Gangtok. The *Maharaja* Sidkeong Namgyal who succeeded to the throne of Sikkim as the Eighth Consecrated Chogyal in 1863<sup>202</sup> had begun the foundation of a house at Gangtok for shifting his capital there, but the work was interrupted by his death. Yet the idea of shifting the residence of the *Raja* was not abandoned. This is pointed out by Edgar in his report.<sup>203</sup> What can be said here is that Sidkeong's idea of construction arose out of his own interest to shift the seat of his Government somewhere closer to Tibet. It also becomes clear that the construction was completed around 1888 by Thudop Namgyal, successor of Sidkeong Namgyal under the pressure of the pro-British factions in his court. The palace stood ready but for the British force to occupy.

By the beginning of the last quarter of the nineteenth century, Gangtok thus began to gain in importance as a base for Indo-Tibetan trade, it being close to the Tibetan frontier through the *Nathu-La*. The importance of Gangtok as a place with sufficient water, much level land and a perfect climate, which would cater to preserve British exclusiveness and let them live a quarantined life of their choice, had long been felt by the British officials in Bengal. It gained ground since the time of Edgar's visit to Sikkim. This he talks of in his report. Therefore, in 1889 when the need was felt by the British to administer Sikkim from within, they selected Gangtok as their administrative headquarter for this would provide them ambiance for exclusive living on the top most regions of the ridge with exclusive down town facility and the availability of the domestics who would be settled at a safer distance at the foot of the ridges. This sense of British exclusiveness a product of racial prejudice was amply exhibited in the settlement policy followed by the British administration in Gangtok which was in tune to the policy followed in the hill-stations of British India.

## ***Notes and References***

1. Namgyal Thudop and Dolma Yeshey, *History of Sikkim. (Mimeographed)*, Gangtok, 1908.p.6.
2. *Ibid*, p.15.
3. Risley, H.H, *The Gazetteer of Sikkim*, Calcutta, 1894;rep. Delhi, 1974.p15.
4. *Sikkim Coronation*. Gangtok, Sikkim.p.1.
5. *History of Sikkim, op.cit* p.17.
6. *The Gazetteer of Sikkim, op.cit* p.8.
7. *Sikkim Coronation, op.cit* p1.
8. *History of Sikkim, op.cit* p.21.
9. *Ibid*, p.21.
10. *The Gazetteer of Sikkim, op.cit* p.9.
11. *History of Sikkim, op.cit* Pp.21, 22.
12. *The Gazetteer of Sikkim, op.cit* p.8.
13. *History of Sikkim, op.cit* p.22.
14. *Sikkim Coronation, op.cit* p1.
15. *History of Sikkim, op.cit* Pp.22, 23.
16. *Ibid*, p.22.
17. *Ibid*, p.27.
18. *Ibid*, Pp.27, 28.
19. *Ibid*, p.29.
20. *The Gazetteer of Sikkim, op.cit* p.11.
21. *History of Sikkim, op.cit* Pp.29-32.
22. *Ibid*, p.30.
23. *Ibid*, p.29.
24. *Nature, Journal on Nature and Natural Resources, (UNESCO), Paris 1996.p.16.*  
Yuksam being considered as the 'altar' by the Sikkimese where offerings are made to protective deities, it is believed that this landscape and its surroundings should not be disturbed. Any large-scale human induced perturbation in this holy land of Yuksam region would destroy the hidden sacred treasures.*Ibid, Nature.p.16.*
25. *History of Sikkim, op.cit* Pp.34, 35.

26. *King Gaeboo Achyok Birth Anniversary 1996*, Kalimpong, 1996.p7.
27. *History of Sikkim, op.cit* Pp.37-39.
28. *The Gazetteer of Sikkim, op.cit* p.12.
29. *History of Sikkim, op.cit* p.39.
30. *Ibid*, Pp.39, 40.
31. *Ibid*, Pp.37, 38.
32. *The Gazetteer of Sikkim, op.cit* p.13.
33. *History of Sikkim, op.cit* Pp.49, 51, 55, 56.
34. *Ibid*, p.52. The land mass lying in between the Arun River in the west and the Teesta River in the east, prior to the establishment of the Namgyal Dynasty in Sikkim was known as Limbuan (the land of Limboos). In 1641-42 most of the petty chiefs of Limbuan accepted the supremacy of the first consecrated ruler of the Namgyal dynasty, Phuntsog Namgyal along with the Bhutias and Lepchas that led to a historical tripartite agreement of Lho-Men-Tsong-Sum at Kabi Longtsok. This followed the formation of a Himalayan Kingdom, the area of which extended from the Chumbi Valley in the north to the Arun River in the west and they named this landmass a kingdom as Songkhim meaning, a new house in Limbu language or *Singkhim* meaning wood house in Limbu. The word later on seems to have corrupted to Sikhim and then to Sikkim. Chemjong, I.S, *Kirat Itihas*, Darjeeling, 1948, Vol. II. P 108.
35. *The Gazetteer of Sikkim, op.cit* p.15.
36. *LCANG-SKYA; BRAS-LJONGS. LCANG-SKYA* (A biography of the 7<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama. Bskal-bzang) *BRAS-LJONGS* (Chronicles of Sikkim).
37. *History of Sikkim, op.cit* p.57.
38. *Sikkim, A Consise Chronicle. Ganktok. 1963.*p.6.
39. *History of Sikkim, op.cit* p.58.
40. *LCANG-SKYA; BRAS-LJONGS.*
41. *History of Sikkim, op.cit* Pp.58, 60.
42. *The Gazetteer of Sikkim, op.cit* p.20.
43. *History of Sikkim, op.cit* Pp.60, 63.
44. *Ibid*, p.62.

45. *Ibid*, Pp.65, 66.
46. Pradhan,K. *The Gorkha Conquests*. Calcutta 1991.p.111. There is a Pass' called Islimba in Pachthar on the Nepal side. A little further up joining Sikkim and Nepal in the Choyabhanjyang pass, to the West of which a place called Chyangthapu. Bhanjyang means a pass in Nepali.
47. *Prithivinarayan to Abhimanshing*. Partha Bhandari, Kirtisingh Khawas, Bali Baniya, Asvinbadi 30 roj 4 (5 October 1774), *Itihas Prakash*, 1, p.13; *Upadesh*, III, pp.1193-95, Letter No.
48. Markham Clements, *Narratives of the Mission of George Bogle to Tibet and the Journey of Thomas Manning to Lasha*. London, 1876. p149.
49. Baburam Acharya, 'Sri Panch Prithivinarayan Shah Ka Antim Din or The Last Days of Prithivinarayan Shah (AD 1174-75)' *Sri Badama- harajadhiraj*, 3, p.629 ff.
50. *History of Sikkim*, *op.cit* p.66.
51. *The Gazetteer of Sikkim*, *op.cit* p.17.
52. Markham, *Narratives*, *op.cit*, pp157, 164.
53. *Ibid*, p.164.
54. *History of Sikkim*, *op.cit*. Pp. 66, 67.
55. *Ibid*, p.67.
56. *Ibid*, Pp.56, 68.
57. *Ibid*, Pp.67, 68.
58. *Ibid*, p.68.
59. *Ibid*, p.68.
60. *Ibid*, p.69.
61. *Ibid*, p.69.
62. *The Gazetteer of Sikkim*, *op.cit*, Pp.17, 18.
63. *The Gorkha Conquests*, *op.cit*, Pp 111-121.
64. The Dharmapatra in Newari gives the date of its (Treaty) signing as Newar Samvat 895 Sravan Sukla 13 Wednesday. The agreement signed at Khasha in the Kuti Region was mostly a trade transaction and does not mention Sikkim at all though it gives the names of the Sikkim delegates. *Ibid*. Pp.111-121.
65. *History of Sikkim*, *op.cit* p.68.

66. *The Gorkha Conquests op.cit*, p.127.
67. *History of Sikkim, op.cit* p.69.
68. *The Gorkha Conquests, op.cit* p.132.
69. *History of Sikkim, op.cit* p.69.
70. *The Gazetteer of Sikkim, op.cit*, p.18.
71. Hamilton F.B, *An Account of the Kingdom of Nepal and the Territories Annexed to this Dominion by the House of Gorkha* , Edinburge,1819.p120.
72. *The Gorkha Conquests, op.cit* p.132.
73. *History of Sikkim, op.cit*. Pp. 69, 70.
74. *History of Sikkim, op.cit* p.70.
75. *The Gazetteer of Sikkim, op.cit*, p.18.
76. Shaha, Rishikesh, *Modern Nepal, A Political History,1769-1955* Vol.I. New Delhi, 1996.p. 133.
77. *Ibid,p*
78. Hooker, J.D, *Himalayan Journal*, London, 1855.Pp.309,10.
79. *History of Sikkim, op.cit* p.70.
80. Hamilton, *An Account, op.cit*. p. 120.
81. *Ibid*, Pp.120, 121.
82. *Ibid*, Pp.122.
83. *History of Sikkim, op.cit*. Pp.70,71.
84. *Ibid*, p.71.
85. *Ibid*, p.71.
86. *Ibid*, Pp.71,72.
87. Lamb, Alastair, *British and Chinese Central Asia: the Road to Lhasa 1776-1905*, London, 1960. p. 23.
88. *The Gorkha Conquests, op.cit*. p.135.
89. *History of Sikkim, op.cit* p.72.
90. *Ibid*, p.72.
91. *Ibid*, p.72.
92. *Ibid*, p.72.
93. *The Gorkha Conquests, op.cit* p.136.

94. *The Gazetteer of Sikkim, op.cit, p.18.*
95. *History of Sikkim, op.cit. Pp.73,74.*
96. *Ibid, p.74.*
97. *Ibid, p.74.*
98. *Ibid, p.74.*
99. *The Gazetteer of Sikkim, op.cit, p.19.*
100. *The Gorkha Conquests, op.cit p.139.*
101. *History of Sikkim, op.cit p.76.*
102. *Ibid, p.79.*
103. Hamilton, *An Account,op.cit, p.122.* Chungthang is now a tea garden in Darjeeling.
104. Capt.Salter's Report in the Political Quoted by P.Melville, Offg. Under Secretary to the Government of India, September 1846, in the *letter's memorandum on the connection of the Sikkim Rajah with the British Government, Melville, Bengal Political Consultations,14 November 1846,No.29.* The name Nagri is said to have been derived from Lepcha words, nak meaning straight and gri meaning high stokade. Hamilton, *An Account, op.cit, p.122.* Nagri is now a sprawling tea estate in Darjeeling District of West Bengal.
105. *The Gazetteer of Sikkim, op.cit, p.18.*
106. Pemble, J, *The Invasion of Nepal, Oxford, 1971.p.49.*
107. *Ibid,p.49*
108. *History of Sikkim, op.cit. Pp.78,79.*
109. *The Gorkha Conquests, op.cit p.139.*
110. *History of Sikkim, op.cit p.79.*
111. *Papers Relating to the Nepal War, London 1824,p.268.*
112. *The Gorkha Conquests, op.cit p.140.*
113. *History of Sikkim, op.cit. Pp.78, 79.*
114. *The Gorkha Conquests, op.cit p.141.*
115. Shaha, Rishikesh, *Modern Nepal, op.cit. p,133.*
116. *History of Sikkim, op.cit. Pp.80,81.*
117. *Ibid, p.74.*

118. Aitchison, C.U, *A Collection of Treaties, Engagements and Sanads Relating to India and the Neighbouring Countries*. Vol.XIV, Calcutta 1929-31.pp.50-55.
119. *The Gorkha Conquests*, *op.cit* p.141.
120. Aitchison, C.U, *op.cit*.p.58.
121. *Ibid*, p.60.
122. *History of Sikkim*, *op.cit*. P.80.
123. *The Gorkha Conquests*, *op.cit* p.143.
124. *The Gazetteer of Sikkim*, *op.cit*, p.19.
125. *Ibid*, Pp.143, 144.
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128. *Ibid*, p145.
129. Markham, *Narratives*, *op.cit*.p.202.
130. Turner, Samuel, *An Account of an Embassy to the Court of the Tesoo Lama in Tibet*. Pp.419-33.
131. Northey, W.B, *The Land of the Gurkhas*, Cambridge, 1937. Pp.43, 44
132. *Trade Through the Himalays*, *op.cit*, and p.149.
133. *Ibid*, p.149.
134. *A Collection of Treaties, Engagements and Sanad.*, *op.cit*,p.60
135. *Ibid*, p.60.
136. *Foreign Political Consultation*, 12 Febuary, 1840,No.102.
137. *Ibid*, No.104.
138. *Ibid*, 7 September 1840,No.98.
139. *Ibid*, 2 March 1840,No.101.
140. *History of Sikkim*, *op.cit*. Pp.89, 90.
141. *F.P.C.* 27 September 1831,No.100.
142. *Ibid*, 26 June 1847,No.102.
143. *History of Sikkim*, *op.cit*. P.94.
144. *The Gazetteer of Sikkim*, *op.cit*, p.20.

145. *Letter to G.A Bushby, Officiating Secretary to the Government, From Campbell, F.P.No.23-24, March 1846, (Letter No.22 of.) January 1846,25<sup>th</sup> February, Darjeeling.*
146. Letter No.23, March 7, Fort William.
147. *Letter from the Superintendent of Darjeeling to the Rajah of Sikkim, May 11<sup>th</sup> 1846, No.97, Consultations, May 30,1846, Nos.104-107.*
148. *History of Sikkim, op.cit. Pp.80,81.*
149. *F.P.C., 15 December 1849, No.138.*
150. *History of Sikkim, op.cit. p.96.*
151. *The Gazetteer of Sikkim, op.cit, p.21.*
152. *History of Sikkim, op.cit. p.96.*
153. *F.P.C., 13 December 1850, No.140.*
154. *The Gazetteer of Sikkim, op.cit, p.21.*
155. *Ibid, p.21.*
156. *History of Sikkim, op.cit. P.97.*
157. *L.G.P.P (G) A., April 1861, No.30.*
158. *Ibid, No.48.*
159. *Ibid, March 1863, No.25.*
160. *Ibid, March 1865, No.5.* Chebu Lama was a Sikkimese Lepcha. Though a priest by profession, he stayed at Darjeeling as the political representative accredited by the Sikkim Raja according to a provision of the Anglo-Sikkimese Treaty of 1861. He accompanied in 1864 Eden Mission to Bhutan as Tibetan interpreter. As a reward for his pro-British services he was granted a tract of land comprising 115 square miles situated in the northwest of the Darjeeling district. *Ibid, March 1865, No.5.*
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180. *Ibid*.Pp.60,61.
181. *Ibid*.p.80.
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183. *DDR, Collection XXXII.*,File No.48 of 1885-86.No.242G, 25 May,1886.
184. *Report on the External Trade of Bengal*, 1881-82,p.1.
185. *Proc. Of Bengal Government.*,General,mis.October 1894.
186. *Report on the External Trade of Bengal*, 1897-98,p.11.
187. *Telegram of J.Edgar to the Government of Bengal*, 20, January 1889, G.B.P.C.F 8 of 1889, Notes and Orders, p.1.
188. *Foreign Department Proceedings*, Secret-E, June 1880. (K.W) Nos. 127-139.

189. *Letter from the Secretary of the State to the Government of India* 6 May, 1889, F.D.P.(S).
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192. *Ibid, F.D.P, June 1889.Nos.127-139.*
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196. *F.D.P Secret-E, (K.W) December 1889. Nos.253-257.*
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198. *F.D.P, Secret-E, (K.W) June 1889.Nos.127-139.Letter No.128.*
199. *F.D.P, Secret-E, (K.W) June 1889.Nos.127-139.Letter No.159.*
200. *Macaulay, Colman, Report of a Mission to Sikkim and the Tibetan Frontier with a memorandum on relations with Tibet, Calcutta, 1895.p.1.*
201. *Foreign Department Secret-E. January1888, Nos.1-40.*
202. *Sikkim Coronation. Gangtok, Sikkim.p.3.*
203. *Edgar,A Report,op.cit.p.61. In 1876 Edgar noticed that the valuable forest property were being destroyed indiscriminately by the contractors earning Rs. 60,000 anually and the State earned only Rs.200 from it and some labours expanded on the Gangtok Palace. C.P.F 8 of 1889, Notes and Orders, No.1.*