

## P R E F A C E

Sikkim, a tiny mountain State with a small population, situated in the lap of the Eastern Himalaya, had, infact, been beyond the notice and curiosity of many of the outside world. But such a State, all on a sudden, acquired the front page head-lines in all the prestigious news papers of our country in April, 1973. A feudal State, under the hereditary rule of the Namgyal Kings, was passing through cross currents of political change for a long time, which might have been known to a few outside Sikkim. But in 1973, it was made known that a great majority of the people of Sikkim launched a massive agitation, paralysed the Government, breached the normal life, all for the irresistible demand for democracy. A tripartite agreement was signed between the Chogyal, the then ruler of Sikkim, the political parties and the Government of India. Principles of democracy were adopted. But the currents of politics did not stop there; in 1974 Sikkim was granted Associate Statehood by India, and in 1975, it was completely merged with India and became the 22nd constituent State of the Indian Union.

How did all these happen? The question actually had drawn the author to the Sikkimese arena. The object of his study is not only to trace the political history of Sikkim, and the interpenetration of the different ethnic, cultural, social and religious forces in the domain of politics, but also to identify the nature of the political system and the political process, and a comparative study of the nature and working of the governmental structures, before and after 1973.

Many a book has been written on Sikkim in the distant

and immediate past. But none of the recent books can be said to have made an exhaustive study of the contemporary political dynamics and the governmental process. Moreover, this work covers the political development of the State upto July, 1980, which no book, at least to the author's knowledge, has so far dealt with.

In the process of conducting this research, the author has made extensive use of the Central Library of the University of North Bengal, National Library, Calcutta, Ananda Bazar Patrika Library, Calcutta, Siliguri College Library, Darjeeling District Library, Central Library, Gangtok, and the Institute of Tibetology, Gangtok.

The author was acquainted with the affairs of Sikkim since 1970-71, when a few of his Sikkimese students (of Kalimpong College) invited him to Gangtok. Later, with the passing of time, the acquaintance kept growing. Many of his students like Shri N. B. Khatiwada, Sm. Hemlata Chettri, etc. were involved and played a leading role in the politics of Sikkim since 1973. In 1977, when a Degree College was opened at Gangtok, the author served the College on deputation for a few months. Since then, he had been travelling in different parts of Sikkim meeting different people in different walks of life.

A number of persons have rendered invaluable help to the author in the process of his researches. The author is particularly grateful and takes this opportunity of recording his deep sense of gratitude to his supervisor, Dr. Samarendra Nath Ray, Professor and Head of the Department of Political Science, University of North Bengal, whose guidance and supervision have

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