

Chapter-I

Indo-Sikkim Relation (1814-1947) : A
Historical Perspective.

British India's contact with Sikkim could be traced back to the first decade of the nineteenth century. Two very important factors contributed to the growth of this relationship at that time. The first of them was the sudden attempts made by the Gurkha King of Nepal to conquer the neighbouring countries, and the second factor was that Britain was willing, at that time, to open an alternate China-Tibet trade route. These two factors together led from all possible evidences, to the establishment of British contact with Sikkim and their future disagreement. Thereafter, a series of battles were fought between Sikkim and India and Sikkim having been defeated by the Company's forces, accepted in the long run, the British overlordship. So, Sikkim's first contact with British India in 1814 ended within half a century, i.e., by 1861, in virtual British domination over Sikkim.

About 1814, the Gurkha ruling junta of Nepal, which had ousted the Newars from Nepal, showed willingness to embark upon a plan of adventure. Their disagreement with the Company's government, with regard to trading rights and privileges, had already reached a breaking point. Further, the British effort to exploit China-Tibet trade, to which Nepal aspired to be a contender, seemed to the

Gurkhas rulers too serious a problem to be ignored any more. Thus a contest for hegemony on the northern front of India and seizure of the benefits of China-Tibet trade became all but unavoidable. The Gurkhas, in a sudden feat of expansionism, captured three police stations in Burtwal, annexed Western part of Sikkim and appeared to the British to pose a threat to the British possession of Gorakhpur. The Governor-General already exasperated with their *frivolity*, as a consequence, declared war against them in October of the same year. The English Government of India, initially hesitated to react sharply, since they were not sure if the Chinese reaction to such action would be favourable to the English, but, after having been informed that British moves against Nepal would not provoke any adverse Chinese reaction proceeded towards taking stringent measures. Moira wrote to Katmandu on March 11, 1814, demanding Nepal's recognition of British jurisdiction on Sheoraj and Burtwal. And the British Collector of Gorakhpur was issued an instruction to seize Sheoraj and Burtwal by force if the Katmandu government refused to withdraw its army from the besieged area within 25 days. On receiving no reply within the specified date British troops stormed into both the districts on April 22, 1814, and killed the Nepali officials in the operation.

In that operation, ^{the} British primarily intended to punish the Gurkhas and to protect British rights and hence all ideas to annex Nepal were abandoned because it might possibly raise suspicion in

China. Dr. Buchanan, however, was of the opinion that the Chinese would scarcely mind if Nepal was restored to the Newar Chiefs whom the Gurkhas have overthrown. The Chinese, he stated, were "fully as tired of the insolence of the Gurkha as the British government appears to be"¹. Thus considering all factors, it was resolved that Nepal would not be annexed, and since, no ~~descendants~~⁵ of the original rulers could be traced out, there was no choice but to leave Nepal with the Gurkhas again. Nepal, hence, survived as an independent country and was never formally annexed by the British government, though her territorial possessions in the Western Himalayas, Kumaon and Garwhal, which the Gurkhas had acquired since 1792, would have *been* reclaimed by the Company without, however, any objection. The above enclaves, ceased forever to form a part of Nepal as the terms of the Sino-Nepalese treaty of that year enjoined².

It was the general consensus at that time that the Company, in order to avoid any misunderstanding with the Chinese, as regards its aims and intentions, should state to the Chinese its case against the Gurkhas in clear terms. J. Adam, the Secretary to the Indian Government suggested that opening of contacts with Sikkim, would provide an excellent opportunity to achieve this; for "the Princes of Sikkim are closely connected with the Lamas of Lassa and Doctan, and their restoration of their former possessions would, no doubt, be highly acceptable to the authorities in those countries, and induce them to regard our proceedings with satisfaction"³. The war with Nepal offered a plea to establish such relation with Sikkim which

had been attacked by the Gurkhas since 1773. And the Company felt it necessary to step up its efforts to this effect for one more reason as the rumour spread that Nepal and Bhutan, only separated by this small state, were ~~not~~ the point of concluding an alliance (~~which would be the commencement of Nepal, January 6, 1800~~). Moreover, the help sought from the British at this time by the Sikkim King Tsugphud Namgyal offered them all the chances to make contrary opinions amenable to military intervention (History of Sikkim).

The Kingdom of Sikkim, which was inhabited mostly by the Lepchas during the late eighteenth century, was militarily weak. Its rulers though theoretically considered Tibet as the suzerain power over Sikkim in reality conducted the administration of Sikkim ever since the ruling house came to power in 1642. Sikkim was never a victim of aggressive designs from Nepal until the Sewars were out done and the Gurkhas came to power. The Gurkhas, around 1770, made a preparation to attack the western border of Sikkim, but the plan failed out at last, for the Tibetan government took a grave view of the matter. Besides, for death of the Gurkhas Chief, Prithvinarayan Shah in 1773 also weakened their organisation. However, some form of skirmish continued on the banks of Arun river till a border settlement was effected by Tibet between Sikkim and Nepal. A state of truce, which was thus brought to prevail, stayed hardly for a few years, when the Gurkhas again launched a more organised attack on Sikkim. The Sikkimese put up a stubborn fight and the battle, without having

shown any sign of being fought out either to the victory or defeat of the Sikkinese, dragged on till 1788. Finally, the Gurkhas, having received reinforcements, defeated the Raja of Sikkim and captured his kingdom. The Raja, who escaped into Tibet, organised a counter attack with the help of Tibet and Bhutan and succeeded, fairly speaking, in driving away the Gurkhas from his kingdom. Having failed, thus, in realising their ambition, the Gurkhas attacked Sikkim again in the Terai front and captured the portion west of Teeta river. The Raja on military considerations, withdrew from this area and having fortified Gangtok, the Capital, resorted to jungle warfare in order to harass the invaders. The British declaration of war against the Gurkhas, at this stage, offered him a golden opportunity to seek British assistance.

British assistance to Sikkim had, thus, both political and military objectives, politically, it would open up a line of communication through Sikkim and thwart all designs of Nepal and Bhutan coming to terms and militarily, it envisages the possibility of opening a diversion to outflank the Gurkhas force. It was for these reasons that David Scott, Collector at Rungpore, was instructed in December 1814 to try to establish contact with Lasha, either through Sikkim or through Bhutan and Captain Latter of the Bengal Army was ordered to take a force into Sikkim and help, in every possible way, the Maharaja of Sikkim fight against the Gurkhas⁴. Simultaneously, the Bhutan rulers also were warned very mildly, through a letter, not to oppose the British designs on that front⁵.

In the spring of 1815 Latter entered Morung with a force of over 2000 men and in no time came in contact with the Sikkim authorities. The Sikkim Government agreed, after having received some ammunition and an assurance of their lost territory to be restored to them, to co-operate with the British and to act as a link between Calcutta and Lasha⁶. In the mean while, the Board of Directors, being critical of the strategy employed in 1814-15 campaign, suggested, that the military transaction in this front must be carried through a single punitive expedition. The Company therefore changed its policy and instructed General Ochterlony to proceed towards Kathmandu with all strength. After some initial reverses Ochterlony succeeded in outflanking the principal Nepali defensive position at Malwanpur and thus circumvented the principal defence in the way to Kathmandu. With the fall of the main defence position the Nepal King quickly despatched Chandra Sekhar Upadhyaya to Ochterlony's camp with a copy of the Sugauli treaty bearing the seal of the Maharaja. Ochterlony, at first, though refused to accept the 1815 text, changed the decision, at last, in consideration of certain other factors and accepted on March 4, 1816, Nepal's ratification of the Sugauli treaty.

The treaty of Sugauli was quite different in nature from the other two treaties which Britain had signed with Nepal. The treaty of Sugauli had an over tone of politics and hence was given more attention than to any other⁷. The treaty, in all, consisted of nine articles. The first article stipulated that both the countries must live in peace. Article two to five dealt with the cession of terri-

teries by Nepal. Nepal ceded most of the Nepal's hill territories West of the river Kosi as well as all of the Terai land west of the Gandak river. Nepal also ceded the territories between Singalila range and Tista river to the Company. The British Government agreed to pay two lakhs of rupees per annum as pensions to the Nepali Chiefs as compensation for their ceded territories, but this section was annulled later in 1816, when the British Government returned the Terai land between Rapti and Koori to Nepal.

With regard to Sikkim, the Nepal Government agreed not to encroach upon the fronts of Sikkim, and in all differences between Nepal and Sikkim, promised to accept British arbitration⁸. By a treaty with the Raja of Sikkim signed on December 10, 1817, Titalia, a tract of Terai land ceded to Company by Nepal, was made over to Sikkim by the Company⁹. The transfer of this Terai Land was done obviously with the intent that a lasting friendship could be secured from Sikkim.

The treaty of Titalia, as was visualized by the British at the time of signing the treaty belied all British expectations and did not open up any more possibility of trade and political relations with Tibet through Sikkim route than what they had before that. Besides, it ~~was~~^{assigned} an era of political strife between India and Sikkim. The British could fulfil their designs only when, after a good deal of quarrel between Sikkim and India, military expeditions were led and finally Sikkim was defeated in 1861. Ever since the Treaty of 1861 was signed Sikkim was utilised as the main channel through

which the Indian Government tried to pursue its Tibetan policy.

II

Sikkim, from the mid-seventeenth century, possessed a complex ethnic character, the rulers being of Tibetan origin and hence, element outside of Sikkim, were never regarded by the Lephas and Bhutias as autochthonous. The rulers also, until very recently, consistently followed, in state matters, a policy that was very much prejudicial to the interest of the bulk of the Sikkimese. Hence inter group clashes were almost regular features in the history of Sikkim at that time. The friction between the rulers and the indigenous factions did sometimes lead to the involvement of the neighbours like Nepal and Bhutan. It was in one such friction that the Raja of Sikkim had one of the leaders of a Lepcha Party assassinated, and the followers, being leaderless, took shelter in Nepal and made occasional forays into the territory of the King of Sikkim. The Government of India, after having learnt of these incidents, sent promptly Capt. Lloyd and J. Grant to settle the dispute in accordance with the terms of the Treaty of Sugauli. While Lloyd and Grant were busy negotiating with the Raja of Sikkim Lloyd noticed a small village called 'Dorje-ling', which, he thought, if ceded by the Raja of Sikkim would offer an ideal place for constructing a sanatorium where the Bengal soldiers could go during the scorching heat of summer, to recover their health. Lord William Bentinck, who was thinking in terms of seating such a resort at Simla, approved of this

plan. Accordingly, Lloyd and Grant accompanied by a Surveyor Capt. Herbert were advised to visit Sikkim again to explore the feasibility of the project. Their findings contained the following recommendations : (I) that it was a site for an ideal health resort and (II) that it would confer political benefits on the British Government since it offered an excellent opportunity to observe closely the relations between the Lephas and Gurkhas and (III) that the Lephas in Eastern Nepal, estimated at about 1200 in number, would supply cheap labour for the construction of the proposed sanatorium. Grant noted that if any road link was forged with Darjeeling from the British territory, 'passable even for Cattle', the people of Sikkim would avail this opportunity to open a traffic, not only between themselves and the inhabitants of 'Darjeeling', but "between Bengal and Chinese Tartary"¹⁰.

The reason which led the British Government to seek from the ruler of Sikkim the grant of the territories comprised in the Darjeeling area thus seemed to be one i.e., it was an ideal site for a health resort and the Minute of the Governor General dated the 17th June, 1830, recorded it in clear terms. "The reports of Captain Lloyd, Captain Herbert and Mr. Grant unanimously concur in reporting that Darjeeling was peculiarly qualified for a Sanatorium for the Lower Provinces..... it is unnecessary to advance any other reason for carrying the measure into effect than the great many of human life and the consequent saving of expense that will accrue both to individuals and the state. The immediate outlay of money that this measure

might require would be the making of a convenient communication to the proposed site of the Sanatorium and the erecting of barracks for a certain number of European invalids¹¹. The Governor General was, therefore, of the opinion that the desire of British Government should be communicated to the Raja of Sikkim and, if the Raja was willing to give his assent, the terms of the grant should be ascertained. He also suggested "a compensation in money the most convenient to us in every respect"¹².

But the Governor General's proposal was very strongly opposed by some members of his Council, the most articulate of them was Sir Charles Metcalfe, who argued that the entire proposition would give rise to a lot of misgivings in the mind of the Gurkhas of Nepal. It would be liable to misinterpretation in the sense that Gurkhas would construe the proposition of seating a sanatorium as a ploy to secure to the ultimate British design of securing a strategic advantage over them. Sir Metcalfe, however, suggested "that in the overture to be made to the Raja of Sikkim, the gentlemen employed be instructed to apprise the Raja that he is perfectly at liberty to decline making these cession, if he does not consider his own interests promoted by acceding to it; or in other words that no attempt be made to awe the Raja into acquiescence or to overcome his reluctance otherwise than by offers of advantages equivalent in his mind to the importance of the cession". Mr. William Bayley, another member

of the Governor General's Council, argued almost in the same vein and said, "I think that cession should not be ultimately insisted upon unless terms offered as an equivalent to the Sikkim Rajah should be really satisfactory to him"¹³. Hodgson, however, opposed the entire idea of Metcalfe and Bailey and expressed his opinion very convincingly in favour of this cession¹⁴.

The idea thus, of setting up a Sanatorium in Darjeeling for the Europeans and subjects of the East India Company, was initially abandoned as a consequence of the opposition of Metcalfe and Bailey. However, finally it was revived by the Governor General in 1833. He suggested that an Officer would be sent to the Raja of Sikkim to arrange for the cession of Darjeeling in exchange of an equivalent piece of land or price it was worth. Ultimately this proposal was accepted and Major Lloyd, who was employed in adjusting some differences respecting the Sikkim boundary, was deputed to negotiate with the Raja of Sikkim for the cession of Darjeeling in return "for an equivalent in land or money"¹⁵.

In the letter of instruction handed over to Lloyd, the following points were made out for emphasis by the Secretary to the Government: (a) that the cession of Darjeeling was to be in return for "such equivalent either in land or money as you may desire reasonable"; and

(b) that the superiority of the climate of Darjeeling and its consequent fitness for a Sanatorium are the only reasons which induce the Company to wish for its possession¹⁶.

The letter of the Governor General sent to the Raja of Sikkim on 11th February, 1833, carried substantially the same points. The Governor General pleaded that he had deputed Major Lloyd, an Officer of much ability and experience and one in whom he had great confidence, to propose to the King of Sikkim the cession of Darjeeling to the British Government. He offered the ruler of Sikkim such an equivalent as may seem to both parties to be reasonable. The Governor General further contended that the above mentioned place, having yielded no revenue, might be parted with. To explain the objective of the British Government more convincingly he said that the object of the British Government was not to derive any pecuniary profit from its possession. "It is solely on account of the climate that the possession of the place is deemed to be desirable, the cold which is understood to prevail there being considered as peculiarly beneficial to the European constitution when debilitated by the heat of the plains"¹⁷.

After a detailed negotiation with the Raja of Sikkim for the cession of Darjeeling, Lloyd informed the Secretary to the Political Department on 9th March, 1833, that the King agreed to the cession provided the following conditions were met: (a) that Dabong was to be re-cessed to the Raja of Sikkim and (b) that Ranee Purdhan must be compelled to account for the revenue of the Morung for the last two years. The Raja of Sikkim made it explicitly clear that "if from friendship dabong from Alma Deggoo north be given to me, then my

Dewan will deliver to Major Lloyd the grant and agreement under my red seal of Darjeeling that he may erect houses there which I have given in charge of the said Dewan to be so delivered"¹⁸. In the mean while the first deed which the Raja of Sikkim proposed to sign, provided his requests were complied with, was not found by Lloyd to be sufficiently explicit and so he suggested a substitution with more clear terms. The draft of this deed was signed by the Raja and was returned to Lloyd¹⁹.

The Governor General, however, could not accept these terms for the grant of Darjeeling. In his letter of the 6th April, 1835, the Secretary to the Government wrote as follows to Major Lloyd: "It appears that the Sikkim Raja has annexed two conditions to the cession of Darjeeling, first one granting to him Dabong in exchange for it and, secondly, on making Ramoo Pordhan account for the revenue of the Morung for the last two years; with those conditions it appears to the Governor General in Council to be impracticable to comply"²⁰. Lloyd wrote in reply, that as the Sikkim Raja was told to cede Darjeeling in lieu of land in the plains or sufficient pecuniary compensation, he should be instructed how much of land or money he should offer. The Governor General's instructions ran as follows: (I) the Sikkim Raja might be offered any land belonging to the British Government and adjacent to Sikkim, and (II) any pecuniary compensation that would be deemed as sufficient by the Raja of Sikkim might be suggested by Lloyd²¹. In his reply Lloyd, pointed out that he did not know of any land adjacent to Sikkim that could be offered to the Raja and regarding pecuniary compensation he

suggested that Rs. 120,000 might be a reasonable price to be offered²².

But it is very surprising to note that when Lloyd, on the plea that the Governor General refused to agree to the two conditions annexed to the deed, ~~he~~ returned the deed of grant to the Raja²³, the Raja reacted very abruptly saying that, having given the grant in 1835, he could not depart from it²⁴. Major Lloyd understood this to mean "that the Raja made the grant freely since he mentions no conditions whatsoever and seems to regret that he had been misunderstood". The British Government took possession of Darjeeling and the Governor General, having been advised by Lloyd, sent a letter of acknowledgement to the Raja of Sikkim. He wrote, "Major Lloyd has informed me that out of friendship to the British Government, you have made an unconditional grant of Darjeeling with a small tract about it for the purpose of being used as sanatorium for the servants and subjects of the Company and the Major has forwarded to me the deed of gift executed by you in the name of the Company. I am much obliged to you for this proof of your friendship and accept the land on behalf of the Company for the purpose mentioned in the grant"²⁵.

But the Raja of Sikkim protested against this action of the British Government, pointing out in all the communications to the British Government, that the grant was conditional and that the Company Government did not comply with his requests. In November 1839, the Raja wrote as follows to the British Superintendent at Darjeeling:

"I beg to inform you that in giving Darjeeling for a sanatorium, I did not define its boundaries. Colonel Lloyd asked me to define its limits and promised that whatever money I should desire in return should be granted, that my territory should be extended west to the Tambar River; that Ramnoo Pordhan and his brothers should be delivered over to me and that the defect in my revenues in their hands should be made good. He also promised that whatever other matters of business I might have with him should be satisfactorily performed. On this account I ceded Darjeeling and a portion of the Junikahar country but as yet I have received nothing in return for Darjeeling nor have my other affairs been well arranged"²⁶.

As a result of these protests, the British Government authorised their representative at Darjeeling to make to the Raja of Sikkim an offer of Rs. 3000 per annum as compensation. At the same time the Governor General wrote as follows to the Raja: I am very anxious to promote your welfare and have therefore authorised Dr. Campbell to arrange for paying you annually a sum far exceeding any profit which you could ever have expected from Darjeeling". The Raja accepted the offer with great reluctance. He, however, wrote to the British representative, "The Company's territory is very extensive and it should not be difficult to give me some land in exchange for Darjeeling. I agree to take Rs. 3000 annually in exchange for Darjeeling tract from the time Darjeeling was made over to the British Government to this time"²⁷. The Raja at the same time suggested that the annual payment might be increased. In November 1846 the annual

payment was raised to Rs. 6000 and the Secretary to the Government wrote as follows to the Superintendent at Darjeeling: "The compensation of Rs. 3000 per annum regarded as compensation for loss sustained by the Raja in ceding Darjeeling was most liberal but it cannot be regarded as an equivalent of the value of the place to the British Government". The President in Council was, therefore, prepared to raise the amount of the annual payment to the Raja on account of the cession to Rs. 500 per mensem i.e., Rs. 6000 per annum. This compensation was raised to Rs. 9000 per annum in 1863 and to Rs. 12000 in 1874.

It was taken to believing in general that the grant of Darjeeling was unconditional; but the foregoing study revealed that far from it, the grant was saddled with two conditions. That the grant was not unconditional was also well known to the authorities of the British Government at that time; for instance, the Under Secretary to the Government in his memorandum of September 1846, wrote as follows "It is proper to pause for an instant and consider the importance of this conversation. What was the impression likely to be left on the Raja's mind, he had made a request which was not by a request of similar kind on the part of the British Agent; he had asked for a tract of country which had once belonged to him and the Agent replied by asking for a tract which his Government desired to have. Could the impression on the Rajah's mind be otherwise than that if he conceded the agent would concede and that if he would give Darjeeling he should get Dabong?" The contention of the Raja that the grant was

conditional was also evident from the repeated complaints made by him in respect of the non-compliance of his requests. The British Government's agreement to pay an annual rent for the ceded tract was clearly a belated recognition of the fact that the grant was conditional. The following extract from letter No. 902, dated, the 3rd of Nov. 1946, from the Secretary to the Government to the British Resident at Darjeeling, ^{had} clearly ~~borne~~ ^{borne} out this contention. "Now however that the Rajah has declared his disappointment at not having any substantial mark of our favour a clue is found to his past conduct nor was the Rajah's disappointment otherwise than natural, the tenor of Major Lloyd's conversation with him at the interview reported in a letter from that Officer dated 9 March 1835, having been such as to raise expectations in the Rajah's mind that if Darjeeling were ceded some equivalent or other would be granted in change".

The deed, apparently, does not purport to grant to the British Government the rights of sovereignty in respect of the area. The words "I present Darjeeling" must be read in conjunction with the word possession and this could have had no other meaning than that the Raja merely gave the possession of the area to the British Government to construct houses for the use of European subjects and servants of the British Government. This intention of the Raja was clear from his subsequent conduct. In several of his letters addressed to the British representatives at Darjeeling, the Raja vehemently argued that, when he gave Darjeeling, he had no intention of transferring the population to the authority and control of the British Government. This point was also equally clear from the draft proclamation

which the Raja sent to the British Government for approval. The relevant clause of the draft reads as follows: "we therefore ceded to the Hon'ble Company Darjeeling to afford change of air to sick gentlemen; they and their servants will reside there in quiet and solely for change of air (without claiming the exercise of authority)"²⁶. This is also substantiated beyond doubt by Major Lloyd when he spoke of the trust in relation to the Darjeeling area. This interpretation is fully confirmed by the view taken by the British Government after the execution of the deed. In his letter of the 7th December, 1840, the Secretary to the Government wrote as follows to the British Superintendent at Darjeeling: "His Lordship in Council would not be disinclined to the renewal, only however when a fitting opportunity present itself, of negotiations having for their object a complete surrender of every kind of claim of jurisdiction and interference with persons and property within the ceded tract, receiving in lieu a fixed annual payment and relying on the justice of the British government for its punishing all criminals proved deserving of it". In his memorandum of Sept. 1846, the Under Secretary to the Government wrote as follows: "whatever the circumstances under which it was obtained, the deed of cession granted by the Rajah gives to the British Government a title to Darjeeling but it is important to observe that this deed which is untranslated, and its purport only generally known, is the sole title and as we have no other title to the place than this deed, so we can have no other rights in the place but what are expressly stated in the deed. The Government, it is equally certain, has no rights in Darjeeling except what are

expressed in the deed of cession. Lord W. Bentinck saw the importance of having a property expressed grant, a grant which should in fact transfer Darjeeling to British authority and British laws. Is the paper in the Foreign Office such a grant, or does ^{it} merely cede as a gift a certain roughly defined tract in the Sikkim territory? This ought to be ascertained because the Rajah has more than once declared to Dr. Campbell that when he ceded the land to build houses on, he did not at the same time give away his jurisdiction over the inhabitants". Besides, it is argued by a recent writer that Sikkim land-holding law stipulates that only "usufructage not outright ownership devolves on the resident of the land". "It was customary in Sikkim for the King to give land for its use. Would it not be probable then that the Sikkimese gift of Darjeeling was given in the traditional context of a grant for usufructage only; ultimate jurisdiction, authority and the right to resume the land being implicitly retained"²⁹.

The author^s further contended that "in Sikkim where all land is believed to be held from the King and usage of the land is extended freely but on technical sufferance from the King, the right of Darjeeling for a certain purpose without transferring the donor's right of authority and jurisdiction and sovereignty would be according to strictest Sikkimese tradition. In this context the limitations and conditionality inherent in the grant of Darjeeling would seem unquestionable"³⁰.

III

Ever since Darjeeling was ceded, the relation between Sikkim and British India appeared to be anything but friendly, probably the prime reason being that the Raja of Sikkim was full of misgivings about British designs towards Sikkim. The trouble started over British misreading of the Sikkim stand. Their endeavour to protect British rights against the Sikkim Raja precipitated the crisis. One of the clearest examples of this divergence of view was Captain Lloyd's note in journal of 1837, that "I hear that it is the Raja's intention to throw every obstacle he can in our way, he might as well have refused to give us the place in the first instance"³¹, a view which unfortunately could not be substantiated with reference to any document of any authentic value. Dr. Chapman, Lloyd's assistant, in fact, harped on the same tune. But the Sikkim attitude towards the entire problem of the British enclave within Sikkim vis-a-vis Sikkim's relationship with Bhutan and Tibet was very clearly made out in the official History of Sikkim. That the Sikkim were very much displeased with the English for occupying Darjeeling without fulfilling the conditions and for interfering with their trade, was one of the reasons why Sikkim Raja was not seeing eye to eye with the English. Besides, the neighbouring powers i.e., Bhutan and Tibet were so much displeased with the Sikkim Raja for ceding Darjeeling to the British that the Tibetan Government considerably curtailed Sikkim's pasturage rights in Tibet. The Bhutanese also

attempted to assassinate the Raja in 1844, while he was going to Lasha in annual pilgrimage³².

The very presence of a British pocket inside Sikkim, besides, gave birth to a number of difficulties, the most pressing one at that time, was the safe and unrestricted movement of criminals from Sikkim to Darjeeling or vice-versa and the asylum that was granted to these convicts. Letters were exchanged between the two governments without any sign of abatement in the practice. Some British officials were accused by the Sikkim government of corrupt practice and following this incident, some British officers were maltreated by the Sikkim government people³³.

The crisis deepened in later days, because of the following two incidents, the appointment of Mr. Campbell as Superintendent of Darjeeling in 1839 was the first; the other being the death of the Dewan, Ilan Singh, who, according to Mr. Campbell, was in the Raja's Council, "the only man of any honesty, or to be trusted in word or deed" and his succession by Tekhang Donyer Mungyal³⁴. In spite of Mungyal's unflinching quality as an administrator he suffered from one serious limitation i.e., in his estimation of the British power. Moreover, since he was benefiting from the Darjeeling trade, he himself considered the Englishmen as rivals and was inclined to bear suspicion about British moves. The English attitude towards the Dewan has been candidly recorded in the following order: "the Raja allowed the Dewan, a corrupt and ambitious officer to administer the state and enrich himself at its expense. The increased importance of Darjeeling under free institutions was a source of early

and constant jealousy and annoyance to the Dewan, who was himself the monopolist of all trade in Sikkim; and it was shared in by the Lamas and other nobilities, who lost their rights over slaves settling as British subjects in ~~own~~^{British} territory. The plan pursued was to frighten ~~own~~^{the} new subjects by spreading reports and sending secret emissaries, by declaring that they should be delivered up as escaped slaves to their former masters, and by discouraging in every way the resort of the people of Sikkim to Darjeeling. Besides, this, British subjects were constantly being kidnapped to be sold into slavery, and there were frequent denials of aid in capturing and surrendering criminals³⁵. Sir Joseph Hooker, also subscribing to this view of the matter, wrote, "Every obstacle was thrown in the way of a good understanding between Sikkim and the British government. British subjects were rigorously excluded from Sikkim; every liberal offer for free trade and intercourse was rejected generally with insolence; merchandise was taxed, and notorious offenders, refugees from the British territories, were harboured, despatches were detained, and the vakeels, or Raja's representatives, were chosen for their insolence and incapacity. The conduct of the Dewan throughout was Indo-Chinese, cunning, insolent, aggressive, never perpetrating open violence, but by petty insults effectually preventing all good understanding³⁶".

Though Mangyal exercised considerable influence in Sikkim, his near monopoly business on certain items in Sikkim was thus as much resented by the Sikkim traders as his political influence by

the monasteries. Chebu Lama, who only could match T. Namgyal and was friendly to the British, was spear heading the opposition then.

The trouble in Sikkim started when the two factions quarrelled over the question of succession to the throne and the British got caught up in this politics in 1843. The British, for obvious political reasons, sided with the anti-Namgyal faction. The quarrel between T. Namgyal and the British Government was climaxed by the arrest of Sir J. Hooker and Dr. Campbell while they were busy in making some exploration in Sikkim, of course, with the permission of the British Government and the Raja of Sikkim. "The object of the Dewan was to force Dr. Campbell to relinquish the claims for the surrender of criminals; to make him, while in duress, agree to the dictation of the Dewan regarding the giving up of escaped slaves; and to detain him until these enforced conditions should be sanctioned by government". The Governor-General, while informed about these incidents, sent a very strong note to the Raja of Sikkim which, in fact, resulted in the release of the two prisoners. When the Dewan realised that the coup had failed he immediately denied any involvement in the affair and tried to win the sympathy of Dr. Campbell and Sir Hooker by offering them to sell ponies at a reduced price, etc.

The British, having been very much outraged at this behaviour of the Dewan, T. Namgyal, stopped in 1846 payment of the grant of Rs. 6000 and punished the Raja by annexing the Sikkim Torai "which was the only lucrative or fertile estate he possessed". "The seizure was quietly effected by four policemen taking possession of the

treasury, which, it was said, contained exactly six rupees, and by announcing to the villagers the confiscation of the territory to the British Government. At the same time, there was annexed to it the portion of the Sikkim Hills bounded by the Raman on the north, the Great Ranjit and the Sista on the east, and by the Nepal frontier on the West, a tract of country containing about 5000 souls. The result was to confine the Raja to the mountainous hinterland, and to cut off all access to the plains except through British territory. The change was welcomed by the inhabitants, for it only involved the payment of a small fixed tax in money to the treasury at Darjeeling, instead of a fluctuating one in kind, with service to the Raja and liability to further an annoyance from the Downa³⁷.

After this incident, the ruler of Sikkim received an annual subsidy in kind from China and Tibet, since they argued, it was because, on their insistence of not allowing Englishmen to travel freely in the border areas that Sikkim suffered such territorial loss and indignity³⁸.

A few years elapsed after this trouble without any further incident; but the trouble started again when the old King came back to power and started to rule Sikkim again through the Downa, E. Wangyal. In the meanwhile Dr. Campbell, who not fully satisfied with the previous actions, was looking for a chance to seek vengeance upon the Raja of Sikkim and in 1860, on the ground of demanding release of some English prisoners, made by Sikkim, ^{to} invaded Sikkim with a meagre force. But this attack was successfully repulsed by the Sikkim force. Subsequently Colonel Cowaler, at the head of a force

of 2600 men, including 2 mountain howitzers and a detachment of artillery, with Sir Ashley Eden as envoy and Special Commissioner, attacked Sikkim in 1861. The Dewan having been fled, the British force dismantled the forts; the old Raja abdicated in favour of his son, and on March 23, 1861, Sir A. Eden effected a treaty with the new Raja³⁹.

The treaty of 1861, as it was signed when the Sikkim Raja was smarting under defeat, gave the British Government all the privileges which the English wanted to be conferred upon them in Sikkim both for their designs on China and Tibet and in Sikkim route. The entire Sikkim, which was at that time under the English, was restituted to the Raja on conditions of peace and amity between the two states. The Dewan Rangyal, or any of his relatives was debarred from holding any office in Sikkim and the Sikkim Raja was treaty bound not to allow any Sikkim subject to kidnap any British subject, or extradit criminals who escape into Sikkim from India on production of authentic warrant. All restrictions on the free movement of travellers in Sikkim were lifted and full liberty for duty free trade and commerce between the subjects of both the countries were granted. Besides, the Sikkim Government would not cede, or lease out any part of Sikkim territory to any foreign power without the previous permission of the British Government, nor would the Raja put any hindrance to the passage of English troops in time of any military operation. Sikkim, the treaty expressly stipulated, must abstain from any act of aggression, or hostility against any neighbouring power friendly to the British Government. In case of any

dispute arisen between them the matter was to be referred to the British Government and any decision thereof must be binding on Sikkim⁴⁰. No armed force of any other country could be allowed to pass through Sikkim without the previous permission of the British Government.

The Treaty of 1861 on a close look was bound to suffer from a serious draw back, i.e., it did not define in clear terms the nature of relation between Sikkim and the British Government. In view of Sikkim's ancient relation with Tibet and Tibet's claim of suzerainty over Sikkim, it proved difficult to assume in precise terms if Sikkim's relation with the British government could be defined in accordance with the de facto or de jure forms. ^{^ However,} even in the presence of such ambiguous relationship, no sense of loss did actually prevail in India after the treaty was executed for not annexing Sikkim permanently. But in course of time it transpired that Sikkim's relation with British India, in view of her former relation either with Tibet or with China, turned out to be too elusive to define properly and consequently, both the three powers chose to keep alive their claim of suzerainty, or sovereignty over Sikkim. Sir A. Eden, however, subscribed to the view that the treaty₂ with Sikkim, without annexing it permanently, had saved British India from such involvement in a long and fruitless border quarrel with the neighbouring power⁴¹.

IV

The importance of Sikkim was widely appreciated, almost

immediately before the campaign of 1861, as a trade route between India and Tibet. The advantages of Kathmandu, as trade link between Tibet and India, was formerly advocated by Hodgson but later, he changed his opinion and counselled development of the road through Sikkim. Dr. Campbell was already insisting on improving the conditions of India-Tibet trade, "which would greatly improve the resources of Darjeeling and add to its attractions as Sanatorium"⁴². Basing on the opinions of Hodgson and Campbell, it might be presumed, that Jackson formulated his report emphasising on the commercial significance of the Tibet-Darjeeling route. Besides, the following considerations as they were expressed by Risely in a later date, also appeared to be as much true at that time also. The English Government was sure of the fact that the Sikkim State, in case of withdrawal or indifference of Britain, would not be able to stand of its own and would ultimately fall either in the hand of Tibet or Nepal. The tea industry, that had taken to developing in Darjeeling, also opened up new avenues of trade between India and Tibet. And finally, for the proper administration of Darjeeling, it was considered necessary that Britain should tighten its grip on Sikkim, since it was believed that "Tibetan Sikkim would lack the stability, the common sense, and the capacity for gradual advance towards civilisation."⁴³

"An ex-tradition treaty would be hardly workable, and every absconding criminal would become the subject of an irritating diplomatic wrangle"⁴³.

Because of the factors related above the English Government stepped up its efforts to establish links with Tibet and, later on, with China through the Sikkim route, and the Sikkim government consequently became very displeased with these English intrusions. It was in 1874 that a sense of disbeliefs again surfaced against England and Tokhang Donyer Mangyal started conspiring against the English on behalf of Tingo Mangyal, half-brother of the deceased ruler, Sidk-yong Mangyal. He started giving out that certain measures by the English i.e., provision in the treaty relating to roads, large scale infiltration of the Nepalese within Sikkim's territory and giving away of the Sikkim copper mines to the Nepalese merchants from Darjeeling were detrimental to the interest of Sikkim. The Sikkim Government, moreover, received an instruction from the Chinese Amban at that time that it should not, if possible, go ahead with the road construction work as was agreed upon in article thirteen of 1861 treaty and stop the English Officers from crossing over to the Tibet border. I.W. Edgar, while he was deputed to explore the possibility of re-establishing Indo-Tibet trade, came to know about this Chinese note and [^] took it to the notice of the Bengal administration. While visiting all the passes of the Chola range, the eastern wing of Sikkim amphitheatre, meeting Raja and his Chief Officials and some Officials of the Tibetan district of Phari, Edgar discovered that Tibetans were very jealous of English attempts to use the Sikkim Government and country in the British efforts to open up trade with Tibet. He further noticed that the Chinese Amba,

or Resident of Lasha, had written to the Raja in the name of the Emperor of China, reminding him that he was bound to prevent the "Peling Sahib's" (Europeans) from crossing the frontier of Tibet, and warning him that if he continued to make roads for the Sahibs through Sikkim, "it would not be well with him".

The British Government, thus, in view of this changed circumstance, ignored the protest of the Sikkim Government. Edger also made out some very congenial points which had contributed to the formulation of British policy then. A road through Sikkim to Jelep La was constructed.

In the mean time, Thutob Namgyal, inspite of the fact that he came to power with the British support, drifted away from the British influence and yielded to pressure from the anti-British Bhotiyas and Tibetans. He, in early 1886, abruptly disavowed his subordination to the Government of India as enjoined by the 1861 treaty. "When called upon to visit Darjeeling for the purpose of conferring with the Lieutenant Governor concerning the affairs of the State, the R^{ja} of Sikkim, after exhausting the standard of oriental excuses, replied in so many words that he and his people had in 1866, signed a treaty declaring that Sikkim was subject only to China and Tibet. He was therefore unable to come to Darjeeling without the express permission of the Tibetan Government". This was the essence of the English complaint against the Raja. Negotiation, however, with both Tibet and China continued.

The inside story as regards the volte face in Sikkim's attitude towards the British Government was revealed later. In 1880 one of the Tibetan Secretaries of State, accompanied by a Chinese military officer, went to Paro, in Bhutan, for the purpose of settling some local disturbance. On their return to Phari in Tibet, an attempt, at that time unsuccessful, was made to exact an agreement from Sikkim. Six years later, when British influence in Sikkim began to wane, the subject was reopened, and a formal treaty was signed at Galing, in Tibet, by the Raja on behalf of the people of Sikkim, priests and laymen. The treaty, which ~~is~~^{was} couched in the form of a petition to the two Chinese residents at Lhasa, set forth that some Europeans, after petitioning the great officers of China, had, to the detriment of religion, got an order to enter Tibet for trade. "From the time of Chogyal Penchoo Mangyal (the first Raja of Sikkim) all our Rajas and other subjects have obeyed the orders of China. You have ordered us by strategy or force to stop the passage of the Rishi river between Sikkim and British territory; but we are small and the Sarkar (British Government) is great, and we may not succeed, and may then fall into the mouth of the tiger-lion. In such a crisis, if you, as our old friends, can make some arrangements, even then in good and evil we will not leave the shelter of the feet of China and Tibet.... We all, King and subjects, priests and laymen, honestly promise to prevent persons from crossing the boundary"⁴⁴.

Further, the disagreement between Sikkim and India regarding Nepali settlement in Sikkim pestered their relations. As regards

the dispute the Sikkim version, though not much seriously considered by the English writers, was as follows, While Thutob Namgyal ascended the throne of Sikkim (1874), a powerful local magnate Tseepa Lama, by name, defied order of Tsugphad Namgyal prohibiting Nepali settlement and settled Nepalese in Chakang, obviously for personal gain. And a host of others viz. Lasse Athing, the brothers of Khangsa Dewan and Phedong Lama also followed suit. In the mean while, a group of Sikkimese led by Dalma Athing Densapa and Pemionghi Tarching Lamas, reacting sharply against this policy of settling Nepalese in Sikkim, drove the migrants along Tista at least thrice. Thutob, though partly, yielded to the machination of the Kangsapa brothers, however, succeeded to withstand the pressure of the Darjeeling Commissioner in favour of Nepali Settlement. But being vexed with the complicity of the Kangsapa brother and the Darjeeling Commissioner, the Sikkim ruler approached A. Eden, the Lt. Governor of Bengal. Eden accepted the policy of prohibiting settlement of immigrants and even counselled that if, in case, immigrants were allowed to settle in wasteland, they should not be allowed to enjoy the privileges of holding any office or village headship. The Sikkim Assembly (Lahdi Medi) met at Kalimpong and a document was drawn up prohibiting such settlement, and this was to be exchanged between the Sikkim Raja and the Deputy Commissioner on appropriate seals and signatures. Obtaining the consent of Thutob with the outer seal, the Kangsapa brothers, by way of interpolating, were alleged to have added the lines in Tibetan, that

"according to the Governor's desire I promised to abide by the policy of allowing the Gurkhaese to settle in uninhabited and waste lands of Sikkim" (1878). By virtue of their close understanding with the Deputy Commissioner of Darjeeling and benefiting from the fraud in the document, the Kangsa brothers launched a project of settling Nepalese in Rhenock. This, as a consequence, led to a riot between Nepali and non-Nepali people in Rhenock led by Dhodong Lama and Trachang Lamas respectively. The Kangsa brothers, at last, in collusion with the British administrator of Darjeeling, had had the dispute settled in favour of Phodong Lama and opened, as a consequence, flood gate of migration into Sikkim from across Nepal border⁴⁵.

In 1878 A.Eden, Lt. Governor of Bengal, proposed to the ruler of Sikkim, Thutob Namgyal, for an arrangement limiting the Nepalese settlement in Sikkim to the South of a line drawn east-west a few miles north of Gangtok. But the Bhutias of Sikkim opposed this proposal tooth and nail; riots broke out again between the Bhutias and Nepalese at Rhenok in 1880 as a consequence. However, it was because of the combined efforts of Dorje Lopen, Abbot of the Phodong monastery, and A.W. Paul, Deputy Commissioner of Darjeeling, a rapprochement was brought about and some slight modifications in 1878 proposal was inserted.

In the meanwhile, having been frustrated, Thutob chose Chumbi as the place for his summer retreat to avoid further encounter with the British. But the British made him an offer that if Thutob abandoned his idea to go out of Sikkim in the summer and hand over the charge of administration to the Kangsa brothers and Sheo Dewan, then the subsidy would be increased by 50%. This offer of the British coupled with their increased manoeuvring to open a route through Sikkim for Indo-Tibet trade made Thutob feel absolutely insecure.

Finding no other allies to help him retain his kingship, he switched over to the Tibetans for strength and sustenance and had probably signed the Treaty with Tibet in 1836, which the English writers so much condemned. In 1836, it was presumed, in compliance with the terms of the treaty that he condoned the Tibetan occupation of the territory of Sikkim up to Lingtu south of the Jelep La. This Tibetan occupation of Sikkim, which took place after the withdrawal of the mission of Colman Macaulay, was an indication that Tibet, while watching developments in Sikkim, was anxious to perpetuate her suzerainty without further delay. As regards the involvement of Thutob Mangyal in the Indo-Tibetan affray, the Sikkimese official explanation was that Thutob always considered the Indo-Tibetan wrangle from the stand point of Sikkim's interest. "If it led to war Sikkim would suffer as the battle ground and therefore Thutob, while at Chumbi, made all efforts, though in vain, to mediate.... Thutob became persona non grata with both parties. The Tibetans stopped the yearly presents for the Sikkim Raja. The British not only discontinued payment of Darjeeling subvention but also demanded return of Thutob from Chumbi on pain of annexation of Sikkim"⁴⁶. Thutob, at last, came back to his capital.

The Indian Government, while engaged with Tibet as regards its rights over Sikkim, was visibly displeased with the Raja of Sikkim on this account. Besides, he, from all evidences, was found to be in complicity with Tibet against the British. So, in 1837, when G. White at the head of the British expedition team entered Sikkim, Thutob,

on his arrival, bit a retreat to Logyap enroute to Chumbi. White stormed the palace, humbled the faithful officials and formed a Council composed of the Kangsa brothers and himself to administer the country. By threats and punitive measures, i.e., freezing all his income, Thutob was persuaded to come back to Gangtok to subsist on a paltry pension. He was asked to act according to the advice of the Kangsa brothers and disengage himself from the loyalists. To disarm him further, the King and the Queen were arrested and brought down to Kalimpong to be told that, if they did not bring back their elder sons from Chumbi, they would be removed to Calcutta. Further, the Indian Government wanted Thutob to explain why did he receive the Tibetan presents and Chinese button. The Tibetan presents, according to Sikkim's official explanation, did not consist of any tribute or homage, it was in the nature of barter of Sikkim product against tea, butter and salt from Tibet. Speaking on the Chinese button, it may be mentioned that on the occasion of Thutob's betrothal the Chinese button of First Rank was presented by the Chinese Ambans to the Sikkim delegation who had gone to Lasha to bring the bride. The British thus, while they found it impossible to invoke the Treaty of 1861 in view of Thutob's attitude towards them, at last decided to resort to arms to secure their rights.

The Sikkim-Tibetan relation which eluded all efforts towards definition also deepened the crisis. Tibet, in all her relations with Sikkim, harboured the idea that Sikkim was her tributary; and even after 1861 Tibet continued to exercise considerable influence in the

domestic politics of Sikkim. It was through ex Dewan Sangyal, who had a number of followers left in Sikkim, that the Tibetan influence was exerted. The Maharaja who, preferred to stay in his Chumbi state, himself also aided in this matter. It was reported that Thutob Sangyal came under the influence of his Tibetan bride in 1881; who in course of time became the powerful exponent of Tibetan views in Sikkim in Darbar. In early 1886, as stated previously, the Maharaja affirmed his loyalty to the Chinese and Tibetans and was reported to have promised to his utmost to prevent the entry of Englishmen into his dominions⁴⁷. Tibetans on the other hand considered Macaulay mission (1884) as the first British attempt to invade Tibet.

The Tibetans, who had already taken possession of certain territory within Sikkim even in May 1887, were at Lingtu; they were busy collecting taxes from the local population and showed no sign of departure. In the face of these moves of the Tibetan Government the Indian Government resolved to secure a new treaty from the Maharaja of Sikkim which, they expected, would determine the status of Sikkim vis-a-vis India more precisely. It was for this purpose that the Maharaja was called at Darjeeling, but it became quite clear in no time that he was not willing to comply with the request of the Indian Government and that even a mild punitive measure, i.e., suspension of his subsidy, would not frighten him to accept the British terms. It was also realised that the Maharaja was sympathising the Tibetan cause, and in his absence the administration of Sikkim was likely to be placed in the hand of an official of Tibetan affiliation⁴⁸. The

British Government, then with a view to preventing the assumption of power in Sikkim by a pro-Tibetan collaborator of the Maharaja, appointed Kangpa Dewan and Phodong Lama as the responsible administrators of Sikkim and announced that all correspondence with British Government must be channelised through them. The Maharaja, cited this action of the British Government as a clear case of encroachment on his rights, which had prevented him from meeting the Lt. Governor, and stated that according to the terms of the Treaty of 1836, the Tibetan and Chinese Governments ordered him not to enter into British territory⁴⁹.

This letter of the Maharaja of Sikkim convinced the Lt. Governor of Bengal in his belief that Sikkim, in view of the dilatory policy of the British Government, might have taken it for British India's weakness. Besides, the Tibetan occupation of Lingtu without evoking any response from India would demoralise the pro-British Lepcha community which, in course of time, might embark upon a plan of submission to Tibet to save their honour. Sir S. Bayley closely argued that the occupation of Lingtu rather than being an isolated case of aggression, was probably, a partial implementation of a grand Tibetan design to control the affairs of Sikkim⁵⁰.

The situation in Sikkim took such a turn that a clash between India and Tibet became all but inevitable. However, Walshan made a last minute effort to convince the Chinese about the grim outcome of Tibet's policy towards Sikkim and wanted Chinese influence to be exerted on Lasha to stay Tibet⁵¹. The Chinese foreign office (Zoungli Yamen), failed to grasp the magnitude of the problem at first, but in

view of the British resolve to eject the Tibetans, it finally became apprised of the situation and requested Welshan to persuade the Indian Government to postpone the decision to use force till an amicable settlement was arrived at⁵². Further drive from the Chinese legation in London, Sir Halliday Macartney, for postponing the operation at last bore fruit and the Indian Government deferred the operation till 15th March, 1893. But the Indian Government, in the meanwhile, served a warning to the Tibetan garrison at Lingtu to the effect that their failure to evacuate by 15th March, 1893, would consequently lead to their expulsion by force. In the midst of this development Maharaja Thutob Mangyal, who was so long absent from the Kingdom, came back to his capital. The Chinese Government strived hard, after this ultimatum was served, to delay the use of force for a few months more, but Dufferin did not see any reason why the operation should be delayed any further. So, the preparation for a military operation was set on foot.

A force of two thousand soldiers under the command of General Graham set out, by the middle of March, 1893, to eject the Tibetan from the Lingtu. After having had to face minor opposition from the Tibetans the British force took possession of Lingtu on 21 March, 1893. Tibetans, because of their ineffective military intelligence, could not accurately guess the British night. However, they gathered force, and some two months later, discomforted the Indian force at an abortive surprise attack at Gnatong. The British soldiers, of course, repulsed the attack inflicting heavy casualty upon the

Tibetans. And finally, in September 1888, Graham, having learnt that the Tibetans were digging around Gantong, attacked them and pushed them across the border⁵³.

When the silence of the guns sank upon the Sikkim-Tibetan border a diplomatic manoeuvre, to elench the maximum benefit out of this skirmish, was triggered off. To meet in a conference with the Chinese Amban the British team was led by Sir H.M. Durand and A.W. Paul assisted by Ney Elias and Desgodins as interpreter and adviser on Tibetan affairs. In order to help them conduct the negotiation Lord Dufferin offered them a guide line embodying the following suggestions that British supremacy in Sikkim was to be secured and no right of, or interference by any foreign power in Sikkim would be recognised by the British Government. With regard to the status of Sikkim, which in fact was determined by the treaty and the Sikkim-Tibet border, the Governor General cautioned them to be non-committal.⁵⁴

But they could not go ahead towards a successful end on the negotiation table, for the Amban, Shou Tai, who represented the Chinese Government at first refused the British Government any deal with Tibet unless through China which he claimed to be the susorain power, and then contended that the defacto supremacy of the British in Sikkim might be accepted, provided de jure rights of Tibet and China on Sikkim, were being considered. The Amban further insisted on the point that the Maharaja would put the hat and button, obviously status symbol, conferred upon him by the Chinese Government⁵⁵. Since Durand refused to accept the terms of the Chinese Amban the negotiation broke

down until, when in April 1889, on the basis of a compromise formula the talk resumed between Paul, the British representative and James Hart representing China. Hart's first proposal having been detrimental to British interest was not accepted by Paul. In August 1889, he proposed again with some minor emendations of the first draft but the British response was equally cold. Hart in November 1889, submitted a revised Chinese proposal. The Yamen, meanwhile, informed that recognition of India's sole protectorate..... (over Sikkim)... was accepted. This recognition was accompanied by a formal assurance that the external relations of the protected state would be solely conducted by India and consequently the practice of presents and letters to the Tibetan Government would virtually cease⁵⁶. When, thus, the impasse was removed, Ladowne agreed to reopen the negotiation and on 17th March, 1890, the Sikkim Tibet Convention was signed in Calcutta. Thus the British obduracy, which though confounded both China and Tibet, was at last rewarded with a crop of success.

The treaty, inter alia, contained the following clauses: "It is admitted that the British Government, whose protectorate over the Sikkim state is hereby recognised, has and exclusive control over the internal administration and foreign relations of that state and except through and with the permission of the British Government, neither the Ruler of the State nor any of its officers shall have official relations of any.... formal or informal with any other country". The Sikkim-Tibet boundary was delimited along the upper water of the Tista river. In order to establish effectively the British

trading rights in Tibet another supplementary agreement was signed on 5th December, 1893. Britain gave away Chumbi valley to China without having made any reference to Sikkim.

Besides, when in 1888, the military operation came to a satisfactory end, the British could effectively establish their claim in the administration of Sikkim by appointing a Political Officer at Gangtok in 1889 initially as a British observer of Indo-Tibetan trade and finally as the British diplomatic agent for Bhutan and Tibet.

The Maharaja Thutob Namgyal, who during the Anglo-Tibetan conflict was interned at Kalimpong, was released in 1891 to proceed towards Sikkim. He was asked to stay in any of the three specified places viz., Tumblong, Gangtok and Raddanchi. The Maharaja preferred to stay at Raddanchi in order to avoid I.C. White. But the Sikkim Council, which got down to work in 1890 to help the political officer, had great doubts about the conduct of the Maharaja. Moreover, his oldest son, the crownprince, was in Tibet at that time and was widely believed to have exposed himself to Tibetan influence. So, in order to cut on their contact with Tibet the Council decided that the Maharaja must come back to Gangtok and the Lt. Governor of Bengal Sir S. Bayley issued an order to that effect. Tshada Namgyal, the oldest son was also asked to ~~be~~ ^{come} back to Sikkim. But the Maharaja ignored the orders⁸⁷.

On the wake of this issue J.C. White visited Raddanchi in 1892 and explained to the Maharaja the importance of the Government's

order. Having failed to impress upon the Maharaja the urgency of the matter, White returned to Gangtok and suggested to the Government that Maharaja's allowance be stopped and that his second son, Sidkeong Wangyal, be brought to Darjeeling for education, so that, if it be needed, he might be nominated as the successor⁵⁸. In March 1892, while on a pilgrimage, the Maharaja with the Maharani and nine other followers made an attempt to escape into Tibet. At Wallang pass on the Nepal-Tibet border, the party was arrested by the Nepali authorities and then handed over to the English authorities at Darjeeling⁵⁹. Considering this as an act of defiance and conspiracy, the British Government at first interned him at a monastery at Darjeeling. Sidkeong, the second son, was brought to Darjeeling to be imparted education in English and Hindi. As it was considered in the British official circle that Tchoda Wangyal's stay in Tibet should not be prolonged, Nolan, Commissioner, Rajshahi Division was sent to negotiate with the Maharaja on this issue. But, since Maharaja's response was negative Nolan suggested that the Maharaja should be temporarily deposed and kept under arrest. Sir Charles Elliot concurred with this view of Nolan and the Government of India deposed the Maharaja for three years in 1892 to give effect to Elliot's suggestion⁶⁰.

After Thutob Wangyal was deposed, the Sikkim Council addressed a letter to his oldest son imploring him to come back home but Tchoda refused to comply with this request on the plea that his education was yet to be completed. In 1895 Thutob Wangyal was restored to his throne with the conditions that (1) he should accept

the new constitution and (II) that he should write to his eldest son to bring him back. Council's opposition to his restoration was however ignored⁶¹. Tchoda was again requested to come to Sikkim and the matter, having been deferred till 1899 on Thutob Mangyal's request, was reopened in 1899⁶². In February 1899 Sidkeong Mangyal was nominated as the ruler designate of Sikkim and Tchoda was forbidden to enter into Sikkim⁶³. After Sidkeong was educated in Darjeeling, he was sent to England in 1906 for higher studies in Oxford. On his father's death in 1914, he ascended the throne of Sikkim on 5th December, 1914.

VI

Claude White, when he went to Yatung in 1894 to open the Trade mart, noticed that some boundary posts were removed from the delineated border. Suspecting that the Tibetans might have done it, he wrote to the Government of India about that. White wanted to open negotiation with the local Chinese officials at Yatung should the Government of India authorise him⁶⁴. The Government of India refused to accept White's proposal lest it should brew any quarrel with Tibet. But the Governor-General, Lord Elgin, sent a note to the Chinese Amban at Lasha drawing his attention to the reported occupation of certain places and suggested that the officials of both the Governments should 'travel together' along the frontier to assess the actual nature of encroachment⁶⁵.

The Amban, on 4 October, 1894, sent a reply to the Viceroy informing him that the Tibetans were unwilling to accept Indians inside their country. However, he assured that the Chinese and Tibetan officers would meet the British officers and demarcate the boundary in accordance with the terms of the Convention of 1890⁶⁶. On the Viceroy's concurrence, the Amban arranged a preliminary meeting of the envoys of the three countries at Peking. It was agreed upon there that the representatives of the three Governments should meet on 7 May, 1895, at Penarings Pass and commence the demarcation of Sino-Tibet. In 1895, in the presence of the Chinese Amban, the Tibetan representative having failed to turn up, White set the demarcation on foot and erected some pillars. But a few days later it was discovered that the pillars were broken and so White sent a telegram⁶⁷ imploring the Indian Government to demand apology from Tibet. But the Government of India's attitude towards China at that time was definitely passive and besides, the Amban was very genial in his communication with the Indian Government⁶⁸.

In the meanwhile the Chinese Amban moved the Government of India for postponing the demarcation work for at least five years⁶⁹. The Viceroy Elgin, though refused to accept Amban's proposal, however suggested that the Chinese and Tibetans might start the work next year. The Amban agreed to that and Nolan, the Commissioner of Rajshahi Division, was deputed by the Government of India in 1895 to visit Yatung and hold discussion with the representatives of Tibet and China. Nolan heard the representatives of both China and Tibet

and having observed their frivolity at last suggested to the Indian Government to take a stiff line of action. But as Elgin refused to put everything on a strong key nothing actually emerged out of the wrangles of proposals and counterproposals except the fact that India must adopt a cautious policy towards China to promote her own trade interest. White's proposal to the Government bore this fact in aptly couched language⁷⁰.

With the arrival of Curzon in India as Viceroy at this juncture, the Indo-Tibetan relation became strained to a breaking point. Inclined to adopt a hardline, Curzon took up the matter and sent a note to the Chinese Amban proposing to exchange Gyangang for trade facilities with Phari⁷¹. Wen Hai, having refused to accept the suggestion⁷², Curzon's attitude stiffened considerably and he preferred now to negotiate straight away with the Dalai Lama rather than through China. The de facto suzerainty of China over Tibet, according to Curzon, was nothing but a constitutional fiction⁷³. But since, communication with Dalai Lama was not a very easy affair, an agent called Ugyen Kasi to deliver the letters of Curzon to the Dalai Lama, was appointed. Unfortunately, this effort of the Indian Government did not bear any fruit and all the two letters of Curzon sent to Dalai Lama were returned to him undelivered. Ugyen informed that Dalai Lama refused to open them, far less communicating with the Viceroy. Following upon these incidents Curzon suggested to the Secretary of State that White should expel the Tibetans from Gyangang and raise pillars along the demarcated boundary⁷⁴. Hamilton concurred with this proposal⁷⁵.

Curson, after White's operation in Singang, sent a dispatch to Hamilton detailing the nature of Sino-Tibetan relation and India's policy towards Tibet. It was his desire, that besides settling once for all the issue of Sikkim, the question of Indo-Tibetan trade should feature in all negotiations with the Dalai Lama and ultimately to establish an agency of consular nature in Lhasa to conduct the trade⁷⁶. While thus Curson was trying to shape the Tibetan policy, the situation became grave all of a sudden with the disclosure that the Dalai Lama was in close contact with Russia. Without letting it further time to ripe, Curson drew up a plan to send a military expedition to Tibet in no time. The expedition that was sent to Tibet in 1903 was led by Col. Younghusband. The Chinese, thereupon, consented to negotiate with the British team. On September 7, 1904, the Convention between Great Britain and Tibet was signed and the nine articles of the treaty guaranteed protection of Sikkim-Tibet border, trade facilities in Gyantse and Gartok, payment of indemnity to the extent of 7.5 million rupees and not to have any dealings with foreign powers without the British consent⁷⁷. With the Peking Convention in 1906, the entire course of negotiation on Indo-Tibet relation came to a halt. China was sure of her sovereign rights over Tibet in as much as India was secured in her privileges of trade in Tibet⁷⁸.

Consequent upon these political developments across the Sikkim-Tibet border, the Government of India felt it necessary to establish direct contact with Sikkim rather than through the Bengal government. Lord Curson was of opinion that, while internal administration

of Sikkim could be left with ^{the} Bengal Government, on the Political and commercial questions the Government of India should deal directly with the Political Officer⁷⁹. But Fraser, the Governor of Bengal, in his letter to the Government of India pleaded that since Sikkim's problem being more than that of a provincial nature deserved more attention than ever and should be directly administered by the Indian Government⁸⁰. The Government of India, considering the sound logic of his argument, took over the political and administrative charge of Sikkim from 1 April, 1906⁸¹.

Ever since the Sikkim affair was taken up by the Indian Government to be conducted directly, there was very little between Sikkim and India that could threaten to impair their relation. Except that Thondup Wangyal died in 1914 and the British nominated Sidkeong Wangyal succeeded to the throne there was in fact no incident which was significant enough to be mentioned. Sidkeong unfortunately could not rule long, a benevolent rule for eleven months that dawned upon Sikkim was eclipsed by the premature death of Sidkeong in December, 1914, in a mysterious condition. Though no inquiry commission was set up, a practice probably unknown in those days, to prove his death the Sikkimese, by and large, grievously mourned this loss. Tashi, the younger brother of Sidkeong, then stepped in and enjoyed a fairly long rule until he died in 1963. Genial, sympathetic and of sound diplomatic temperament, Tashi Wangyal launched a programme of internal reforms and tried to keep in peace with the powerful

protector to avoid unnecessary wrangles over lost prestige. This policy of Tashi bore him fruit. He was taken to confidence, so much so by the Government of India, that a good deal of administrative power that was appropriated by it was retroceded to him. Sir Tashi Namgyal was in the throne of Sikkim till the British left India, and continued his policy of benevolent despotism till he died in 1963.

Thus, the British contact with Sikkim, which started with the intention of containing the Nepalese and forging trade and communication links with Tibet ended in the complete subjugation of Sikkim. The British Indian administrators did not annex Sikkim just as they did other native states, but the British control over Sikkim was virtually complete. In this transfer of power, from the Sikkim Raja to the British paramountcy, one factor, which had emerged to influence the future course of politics on the Himalayan front, deserved our comment. While communicating with Sikkim, during the first three decades of the nineteenth century, British politics was attuned to the realisation of a dream to get an alternate trade route, the attempts to get one either through Nepal or Bhutan⁸² appeared to them to be futile. They could not possibly foresee at that time that their endeavour to achieve such modest end would throw them into the vortex of a big power politics. The claims of China over both Tibet and the other three Himalayan Kingdoms could not have been surmised by them to be so effective at that time. However, in course of time, they could realise the Chinese intents when first Bhutan and then

Sikkim were brought in line of communication with the British India. Ever since Britain became aware of the designs of Imperial China, her attitude towards Central Asian Politics, appeared to be conducted as much by strategic considerations as by considerations of trade and commerce. This new shift in British politics clinaxed during the Governor-Generalship of Curzon who, while conducting the Tibetan operation, moved entirely by consideration of defence for British India. So the Young Husband expedition and later taking over the administration of Sikkim in 1906, although manifestations of the multiple designs of the British administration, ~~was~~^{were} primarily organized under the behest of defence needs. The question of China trade, under the pressure of the London merchants, continued to enjoy topmost priority only upto the last decades of the nineteenth century; but with the dawn of the twentieth century, the entire gamut of Indo-Sikkim relation, in view of Imperial China's veiled designs to ~~the~~ threaten English aspirations and Russian expansionism⁸³, was hamstrung with problems regarding India's defence. The interest that was shown in promoting trade initially lost much of its keenness then, and instead, both White Hall and the Indian administration were found to be urged upon by necessities of stratagem.

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