

The
Himalaya
Borderland

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RAM RAHUL

THE HIMALAYA BORDERLAND

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P R E F A C E

The Himalaya Borderland is the first book to study in its totality the southern half of the Himalaya borderland, comprising the North-East Frontier Area (NEFA), Bhutan, Sikkim, Nepal, Uttarakhand (Uttar Pradesh), Kinnaur, Lahul and Spiti (Himachal Pradesh), and Ladakh (Jammu and Kashmir). Tibet, which constitutes the northern half of the Himalaya borderland, is beyond the framework of this study and I have dealt with it in detail in the companion volume, *The Government and Politics of Tibet*. This is entirely a general study, and hence I have deliberately dispensed with all such trappings as footnotes and references. I hope it will create the necessary awareness of the social, economic, and political situation in the Himalaya.

I have concluded this study with a few observations, but I have not advanced or refuted any geographical, anthropological, or historical theories. I have presented my facts in as simple and straightforward a manner as possible. The reader may consider them for what they are worth and form his own judgement.

The bibliography lists only select works of relevance to this study. The material collected from the literature on the Himalaya, which is enormous, has been supplemented by my own findings gathered as a result of my extensive geographical, anthropological, and historical researches in the entire Himalaya, culminating in my participation in the Mount Everest expedition in the spring of 1952.

I have used the collective name *Himalaya* (*Him*, snow, plus *alaya*, home) in place of the commonly used *Himalayas*, which is a double plural and a grammatical monstrosity. Indeed, to use the word *Himalayas* is as absurd as referring to

Englishmen as the Englishes or using the word *alphabets* for two or more letters and characters of an alphabet. Moreover, *Himalayas* jars on ears accustomed to the euphony of Sanskrit words and phrases. It is curious that it is only in English that the name suffers a corruption. In all the other languages of the world, including other Western languages like French and Russian, it is what we in India have called it from time immemorial.

Two more spellings that I have used may also call for an explanation. They are *Kumaun* and *Lahul*. I have preferred them because phonetically they are more approximate to the names they represent than the usual *Kumaon* and *Lahaul*, and much less misleading.

Much has gone into the making of this book. I wish to thank the officials of the Government of India who have been or are in the Himalaya. Several of my friends in the Himalaya border countries have given me valuable advice and assistance in my work there. I am especially beholden to F.C. Badhwar of the Himalayan Club (New Delhi) and Ranjit Rai of Rai & Sons (New Delhi) for their generous help in my programme of exploration and mountaineering in the Himalaya. Of course, for the blemishes as well as the point of view in the book, only I am responsible.

RAM RAHUL

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

THE HIMALAYA, especially the central ridge of that mountain system which marks the southern limit of Tibet, stands astride the landmass of Asia for 2,500 miles from Assam in the east to Jammu and Kashmir in the west, including the kingdoms of Bhutan, Sikkim, and Nepal. With its magnificent skyward sweep, peak rising above peak for over a hundred miles from the foothills in the south to the crest line in the north, it is easily the most dominating land feature of the world. It is inextricably woven with the life and legends of India. According to Hindu tradition, it is the "throne" of the gods. Kalidasa, the great Sanskrit poet, calls it *devatatma* or the divine-souled. The sages and thinkers of India have always derived their inspiration and spiritual strength from the Himalaya. The Buddhists, the Hindus, and the Jains have always looked upon the Himalaya with the greatest awe and veneration and have established there such sacred shrines and places of pilgrimage as Brahmakund in Assam, Pashupatinath in Nepal, and Amarnath in Kashmir. The holy Kailash and Manasarovar have been familiar to all the people of India from time immemorial. There were great cultures and kingdoms flourishing in ancient Assam, Nepal, and Kashmir when man in other parts of the world was yet to learn the rudiments of civilization. The Himalaya thus has been an abiding factor in the culture and heritage of India.

The Himalaya is the source of India's great rivers like

the Brahmaputra, the Ganga, and the Indus, which, apart from being intimately associated with the country's fascinating myths and mythology, vitally affect the life and economy of the people of its northern plains. It has lent the country the prominent features of its climate and seasons. It has, further, stood as a bulwark of our security. Its formidable, impassable central ridge has always protected us from invasions from the north. It has preserved our social life undisturbed and exerted an integrating influence on the social structure in India. It has also always served as the geographical, ethnological, and political divide between India on the one hand and Central Asia and China on the other. Of course, while the rugged character of the terrain checked the mass movement of people, the mountain passes and valleys always allowed slow penetration for purposes of pilgrimage and trade. During the heyday of Buddhism, monks from Assam, Nepal, and Kashmir crossed over the Himalaya to spread Buddhism in Central Asia, China, and Tibet.

The North-East Frontier Area (NEFA) from Burma in the east to Bhutan in the west, a vast territory of mountains and valleys between the plain of the Brahmaputra and the watershed of the Assam Himalaya, may well be called the great north-eastern marches of India. The land route from India to south-western China passes through here. Before the Chinese control of Tibet in the summer of 1951, there always was a flourishing trade between South-eastern Tibet and India over the Rima-Sadiya trail. Bhutan, which lies along the northern boundary of Assam and Bengal, occupies a most important part of the glacis of the Eastern Himalaya. Sikkim is a unique wedge between Bhutan, Nepal, and Tibet. Nepal is the biggest and most important State in the Himalaya. Unlike the other Native States of India, it never became a part of the British Empire in India. The Anglo-Nepalese Treaty of 21 December 1816 designated Nepal a sovereign State with very special relations with the British. The British had no formal commitment to defend Nepal against external aggression, but they main-

tained an unobtrusive tutelage over Nepal. Close bonds of geography and history have always drawn India and Nepal towards each other. Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, and Jammu and Kashmir, marked off by Nepal in the east and by Afghanistan in the west, a vast territory of mountains and valleys between the plains of Uttar Pradesh and the Punjab and the watershed of the Punjab Himalaya, may be described as constituting the great north-western marches of India. Ladakh borders China and the Pamir confines of Russia. The land route from India to Central Asia passes through here. Before the Chinese control of Sinkiang in the spring of 1950, there always was a flourishing trade between Central Asia and India over the Karakoram Pass.

All through history the Himalaya borderland held an irresistible fascination for men of adventure, explorers, missionaries, and administrators on account of its fantastic geographical, ethnic, and cultural diversity. Though the Asians, especially the Chinese and the Indians, had always taken an interest in the Himalaya, the British were the first to realize the vital role of the Himalaya in the politics of Central Asia. They used all their tact and diplomacy to wean the Himalaya border countries away from Central Asian influence either by annexing them or by extending their protection to them. It is only after they left the scene in the summer of 1947 and the Chinese occupied Tibet in the spring of 1951 that these countries became susceptible to territorial, political, and ideological encroachments from the north.

In India there was not much awareness and understanding of the importance of the Himalaya borderland. There was very little curiosity about its astonishing geographical and ethnic peculiarities. There was no serious study of its economic, political, and social situation either. It is only certain recent developments in Central Asia, especially the Chinese invasion of India in the winter of 1962 and the continuing Sino-Indian confrontation on the border, that have brought the Himalaya borderland into focus and have made it a subject of great interest.

The entire Himalaya borderland, including Bhutan, Sikkim,

and Nepal, has been the scene of an unprecedented advance in the fields of administration and socio-economic development since India achieved independence and Tibet came under the control of China. The Government of India has given up the old policy of leaving the Himalaya border countries unadministered and undeveloped—and, therefore, isolated—in favour of a programme of modernization which would bring about the advancement of the people without impairing their individuality.

Studies on the Himalaya have received considerable impetus in the country in the post-1947 period owing to important political, social, and economic changes in India and the neighbouring countries. In India in particular, because of the threat to its security from across the Himalaya, they have acquired an importance and an urgency never felt before. It is not only the universities and research institutions that are engaged in the task of opening up the Himalaya and enabling the world at large to see past the veil of mist and snow but also Government Departments and agencies like the Anthropological Survey of India (Calcutta) and the Survey of India (Dehra Dun). Much research of immense practical benefit to the country has already been done. But the Himalaya will never fully reveal itself. There is need to go to it again and again, to involve oneself more and more deeply in its mysteries, to engage in a constant, tireless endeavour to acquire greater and yet greater and more comprehensive knowledge. There is need for extensive and intensive field studies to understand the land and its people, their perils and their problems, their past and their present. Without such studies it is vain to draw up welfare and development programmes. Indeed there is an urgent need to set up an independent institute devoted exclusively to Himalayan studies, along with a museum of anthropological, botanical, and geological collections and a library of manuscripts of cultural and historical importance. This would not only keep up our interest and involvement in the Himalaya but also give them shape and direction.

CHAPTER TWO

THE LAND

THE HIMALAYA comprises a series of parallel ranges stretching curvilinearly between 74°E and 95°E. Its physiography is marked by ranges northwards and southwards of the main Himalaya range and the Brahmaputra, Ganga, and Indus river systems. The central ridge or the crest line of the Himalaya forms the principal watershed between the rivers draining southward into India and northward into Tibet. Owing to structural weakness at places where the curves are sharp, great rivers forge their way southward through the main range and then flow along the alignment of the spurs, making transverse valleys. These are the antecedent rivers, perhaps older than the Himalaya.

The Lesser Himalaya is the Himachal of the Sanskrit tradition. The term *Himachal* now applies not to the entire Himalaya from Assam to Kashmir but to a part of the Himalaya, i.e. the Union Territory of Himachal Pradesh in the Western Himalaya. The Outer Himalaya mountains in the eastern and central sectors rise abruptly from the foothills, known as the *Dooar/Duar* (from the Sanskrit *Dvara*, Gate) or the *Tarai* (marshy lowland) successively. The Duars, made up of sandy and gravel-like material and varying in width from ten to twenty miles, are covered by thick sal forests and are ideally suited for sport. The forests are full of wild elephants. The Duar climate is hot and moist, and so enervating that even those who are native to the soil generally avoid staying in this section of the

country. The Darranga of Northern Assam and the Darbhanga/Dvar Vanga of North Bihar (which borders upon Nepal) belong to a fascinating historical tradition. The Tarai belt, which extends from the Tista River in the east to the Ramganga River in the west, separates the foothills and the great plains of North India. The Darjeeling section of the Tarai is called *Morang*. People also often apply the term *Tarai* to the Western Duars. The narrow, dry, boulder-strewn tract, which lies immediately above the Tarai and below the foothills, is called *Bhabar*. In Nepal, the Bhabar is called *Char Kose Jhadi*, after the belief that the average width of this forest tract is *char kos* (eight miles). *Char Kose Jhadi* is well known for big game, especially the rhinoceros. A five-to-fifteen-mile-wide zone of low hills (made of young soft rocks, including sandstone, shale, and conglomerates) and valleys bordering upon the plains, known as the *Sivalik*, intervene between the foothills and the Outer Himalaya west of the Western Tarai of Uttar Pradesh.

The lesser Himalaya zone leads to the zone of the Middle Himalaya, varying in height from 6,000 feet to 15,000 feet and rising steeply to merge into the third zone, the Great Himalaya.

The Great Himalaya is the *Himadri*, the snowy *Uttarakhand* (Northern Zone) of the Sanskrit tradition. The term *Uttarakhand* now applies not only to the Uttarakhand of the entire Great Himalaya from Assam to Jammu and Kashmir but also to a part of it, i.e. the Uttarakhand Division of Uttar Pradesh. The Great Himalaya, consisting of glaciers and peaks perpetually covered with snow, culminates in the highlands or plateau of Tibet and has the shape of a magnificent arc. Almost all great peaks, from the 25,445-foot-high Namcha Barwa on the Tsangpo (Brahmaputra) bend in the east to the 26,660-foot-high Nanga Parbat on the Indus (Sindhu) bend in the west, belong to this zone. The two great pillars of Namcha Barwa and Nanga Parbat support the great column of Chomolungma or Mount Everest, the earth's highest peak.

There are three distinct types of drainage in the Himalaya:

(1) the major rivers of Assam, Bhutan, Sikkim, Nepal, and Uttarakhand, whether rising from the southern or the northern slopes of the Great Himalaya, have their basins parallel to the radial ridges and hence are transverse to the main range; (2) the rivers of the Punjab and of Jammu and Kashmir run parallel to each other on account of the direction of the Lesser Himalaya but at an oblique angle to the Great Himalaya; and (3) the rivers rising beyond the Great Himalaya have their basins parallel to it until suitable gorges in this barrier enable them to forge their way to the south. The Indus, the Satluj, the Karnali (a branch of the Ghagra), the Arun (a branch of the Kosi), the Manas, and the Tsangpo come in the last category.

Three major climatic zones have been recognized in the Himalaya: (1) the hot and humid zone of the Duar, the Tarai, and the Siwalik foothills; (2) the cooler zone of the Lesser Himalaya; and (3) the snowy cold of the Great Himalaya. Although each of the four elements of weather — temperature, pressure, precipitation, and wind — varies with altitude, temperature is the most important of them all. The relation between altitude and natural vegetation is clearly discernible. Tropical forests occur at low altitudes. These gradually merge into subtropical forests in the central zone. Temperate forests grow at high altitudes. Coniferous vegetation prevails in areas above 12,000 feet and below the line of snow.

NEFA

NEFA, the easternmost part of the Himalaya in India, borders upon Burma in the east, Bhutan in the west, and Tibet in the north. To its south lies the Brahmaputra Valley of Assam. The 21,450-foot-high Gori Chen is among the highest peaks in the territory. The two-mile-broad and seven-and-a-half-mile-long Apa Tani plateau in the Subansiri District, nearly 5,000 feet above the level of the sea and twenty square miles in area, is a unique feature in NEFA. Several great rivers rising in Tibet beyond the Himalaya, like

the Lohit, the Siang, the Subansiri, and the Kameng, pierce the central ridge into India, and several high passes cross it in other places. The land route from India to China passes through here. In the heyday of Buddhism, monks from India frequented this great highway in their mission to promote the culture of India in China: Sanskrit inscriptions in Yunnan so eloquently testify to this noble activity between India and China in those ancient days.

The Pemako Valley, north of Siang, is now a part of Tibet although it lies on the southern side of the central ridge of the Himalaya and is thus geographically an integral part of Siang. Till about a hundred and fifty years ago it was, so to speak, a no man's land, unexplored and uninhabited. Following its discovery by Bhutanese lamas who strayed into the area in the course of a pilgrimage, the first Monpa settlements came up. It became a part of Tibet with the Indo-Tibetan boundary agreement of 1914, which recognized the McMahon line as the boundary between India and Tibet.

The entire area of NEFA, with the exception of the small strip of the foothills, is constituted of a highly mountainous belt comprising spurs radiating southward from the crest line. The pattern is a little varied in Western NEFA, where ridges like the Bomdi La, Se La, and Thag La (*la* means "mountain pass" in the Tibetan language) run parallel to the Great Himalaya. In the Subansiri District spurs take a north-west-southeast turn and run parallel to each other, the intervening valleys being occupied by the tributaries of the Subansiri River. East of the Subansiri District, the spurs assume a north-south orientation and merge into the foothills. West of Longju (9,000 feet), immediately south of the Indo-Tibetan international boundary in Subansiri, the altitude of the peaks varies between 18,000 feet and 21,000 feet. The relief in the Lohit District varies between 2,000 feet and 17,000 feet. The crest line forms India's northern and north-eastern boundary with Tibet. Around the north-eastern curve, there is a gradual fall in altitude till the crest line dips to as low as 9,000 feet. Towards the east, along the Indo-Burmese border, it descends to 15,000 feet and even less

until it averages about 6,000 feet in the southern Patkoi hills.

Several great rivers along with their tributaries, like the Lohit and the Dibang of the Lohit District, the Dihang, the Siyom, and the Yamne of the Siang District, the Subansiri and the Kamla of the Subansiri District, and the Kameng and the Tawang Chu (from *chhu*, which means "river" in the Tibetan language) of the Kameng District closely cut up the entire NEFA territory. The Lohit, which flows westward from Zayul in Tibet, joins the Dibang and later the Brahmaputra north of Dibrugarh. The Dihang-Lohit basin is geologically a disturbed area and lies in a seismic zone. The Lohit and Siang areas were severely rocked during the great Assam earthquake of 1950. The Siang, known as the Tsangpo in Tibet and the Brahmaputra in Assam, after following for a time a latitudinal course, turns southward and enters the Siang District in a village called Gelling. The Siang is known as the Dihang in the lower parts of the Abor (now called Adi) hills. Both names mean "great river." The Siang Valley lies for the most part at a height of 4,000 feet or less, and the river has a number of streams, so that it is not navigable at all. One cannot negotiate it even on a bamboo raft. Its important tributaries in Siang are the beautiful Yang Sang Chu and the Yamne River (with their origin in the 13,000-foot-high Abroka Pass on the Lohit-Siang divide), which joins it from the east, and the Siyom, which joins it from the north-west. The Subansiri River (from Tibet) enters Subansiri at Longju. Its important tributaries in Subansiri are the Kamla, the Khru, and the Sipi. The Tawang Chu from the Mago mountain district joins the Nyam Jang Chu from Lhobrak (Tibet) at Bleting, near the border of Bhutan. The smaller streams swell during the rainy season and occupy low-lying channels.

NEFA experiences a variety of climatic conditions. On an average the territory receives every year about 200 inches of rainfall. The amount of rainfall decreases from east to west and varies on the windward and leeward slopes of the mountains. The hills facing the plains of Assam receive the

full force of the monsoon from the Bay of Bengal. The temperature is higher at lower altitudes in the south and lower at higher altitudes in the north. The climate of the foothills is similar to that of the plains of Assam. Tropical heat, together with heavy rainfall and high humidity in the valleys, makes the climate enervating and thus hard for human habitation. Evergreen forests, especially bamboo forests, cover the foothills. Cane is the most important item of the forest produce. Coniferous forests, especially pine forests, cover the ranges from about 8,000 feet to about 14,000 feet above the level of the sea.

BHUTAN

Bhutan, situated in the Eastern Himalaya, borders upon Assam and NEFA in the east, the plains of Assam and Bengal in the south, Bengal and Sikkim in the west, and Tsang (Southern Tibet) and the Chumbi Valley of Tibet in the north. The 24,600-foot-high Gangkarpunzum is the highest peak in the Bhutan Himalaya. The superb cone of the 23,930-foot-high Chomolhari, a mountain considered sacred both in Bhutan and in Tibet, dominates Bhutan. According to legend and tradition, Tibet's first king, Nyathi Tsanpo, went up from India along the Manas Valley route, the historical highway between Eastern India and Central Tibet. Pilgrims from Tibet to the Hajo shrine near Gauhati in Assam have also always trudged along it.

The name *Bhutan* is derived from the Sanskrit *Bhotanta*, i.e. the end (*anta*) of Tibet (*Bhot*) or the borderland of Tibet. The Bhutanese, however, call their country *Drukyl*, land of thunder. They call themselves *Drukpas* (people of the Druk country). This is because the Bhutanese belong to the Druk Sect of Lamaism, which has been the State religion of Bhutan since 1616, when it was established there by Shabdung Nawang Namgyal.

The Pele La range, which runs from the north to the south through the middle of Bhutan between the Punakha Valley and the Tongsa Valley, divides the country into two, almost

equal parts, the eastern part and the western part. It also divides Bhutan ethnically and linguistically. The people of Eastern Bhutan, their dialects, and their customs are different from those of Western Bhutan. The 12,000-foot-high Pele La is right in the centre of the range.

There are three distinct physiographic zones in Bhutan. Southern Bhutan consists of a close network of low hills. The strip of the Bhutan Duars is a flat, level strip of country, averaging twenty-two miles in width, running along the foot of the hills of Bhutan from the east to the west. Its chief characteristics are the numerous rivers and streams which intersect it in every direction, and the large tracts of sal forests and heavy grass and reed jungles, in places impenetrable by man. The scenery in the north of the Duars, along the foot of the hills, where the large rivers debouch upon the plains, is very grand and beautiful, especially at the point where the Sankosh River leaves the hills. For five to ten miles before reaching the hills of Bhutan, the land rises gradually. In this tract the soil is only three to four feet deep, with a substratum of gravel and shingle; and in the summer the beds of the streams for some miles beyond the hills of Bhutan are dry, the water reappearing farther down. Owing to the difficulty of procuring water, there are no villages in this tract.

Central Bhutan has beautiful valleys and gentle slopes. The Tashigang, Bumthang, Punakha, Thimphu, and Ha valleys are comparatively broad and flat. The rivers have a general slope from the north to the south, where they eventually join the Brahmaputra River. The Punakha Valley is the least elevated of all the valleys of Bhutan. Rice is the principal crop of this valley.

The general direction of the ranges which separate the valley of Central Bhutan is from the north-west to the south-west in Western Bhutan and from the north-east to the south-east in Eastern Bhutan. North Bhutan consists of high snow-clad mountains which separate Bhutan from Tibet.

The rivers Manas, Sankosh, Raidak, and Torsa drain

Bhutan. The union of the Lhobrak Chu, the Tashi Yangtse, the Bumthang, and the Tongsa forms the Manas, Bhutan's largest river. The Lhobrak Chu, the main tributary of the Manas, rises in Tibet beyond the Great Himalaya. The Sankosh, the Raidak, and the Torsa, known in their upper courses in Bhutan as the Sankosh, the Wang Chu, and the Amo Chu respectively, start either from the Great Himalaya or beyond and flow to the plains of Bengal transversely to the ranges. The Sankosh and its various tributaries drain the Great Himalaya zone between the 24,784-foot-high Kullha Kangri and the 23,000-foot-high Masakang, including the Punakha Valley. The Sankosh is the dividing line between the Eastern and Western Duars as well as between Assam and Bengal. Along with its tributaries, the Wang Chu, which rises on the south-western slopes of the 23,930-foot-high Chomolhari, drains the valleys of Thimphu, Paro, and Ha. It joins the Brahmaputra at Kurigram. The Amo Chu, which rises in the 15,219-foot-high Tang La, drains Western Bhutan and the entire Chumbi Valley of Tibet. The natural avenue for those who would travel from India to Tibet is the one that goes up the Amo Chu Valley. The Amo Chu, known as the Torsa in its lower course, joins the Brahmaputra south of the Alipur Duar. The Dhansiri River forms the boundary between the lower parts of Bhutan and NEFA. The Jaldhaka River, called De Chu in the upper part of its course in the hills, separates Bhutan from the Darjeeling and Jalpaiguri districts of North Bengal.

Bhutan experiences a variety of climatic conditions. The Duars have a tropical climate, and the vegetation consists of bamboo, fern, and palm. Different varieties of flora, pine, and rhododendron cover the higher Bhutan Himalaya. Farther north the temperature is cold. Indeed it is severely so during winter. Most of the Bhutanese peasants have two sets of farms and pastures, one set at higher altitudes and the other at lower altitudes. In the winter they move down to the farms and pastures at lower altitudes; and in the summer they move up to the farms and pastures at higher altitudes.

SIKKIM

Sikkim, situated in the Eastern Himalaya, borders upon Bhutan in the east, the Darjeeling District in the south, Nepal in the west, and the Chumbi Valley and the Tsang region of Tibet in the north. Geographically the catchment area of the Tista River and all its affluents as far down as the northern plain of Bengal, including the entire area of the Darjeeling hills, is a unique wedge between Bhutan, Nepal, and Tibet.

The Chumbi Valley, which is now a part of Tibet, lies on the southern side of the central ridge of the Himalaya. It was a part of Sikkim till almost the end of the nineteenth century. The people and the language of the area are more or less the same as those of North-Eastern Sikkim and North-Western Bhutan and differ widely from those of Lhasa or any other part of Tibet. The Valley is thus very much like the Pemako Valley in Siang in NEFA, which also is a part of Tibet today in spite of its location on the southern side of the Himalayan watershed.

The 28,216-foot-high Kangchenjunga (Treasury of Five Snows) on the natural border between Nepal and Sikkim is the third highest mountain of the world. It is also the most beautiful and dominating feature of Sikkim. Siniolchu and Pandim are among the other beautiful peaks of the Sikkim Himalaya. Kangchenjunga is essentially a Sikkimese mountain. For centuries it has been worshipped both by Sikkimese Buddhists and by Nepalese Hindus. It blocks the heavy monsoon (from the Bay of Bengal), which unburdens itself almost completely in Sikkim. Hence Sikkim is the wettest country in the entire Eastern Himalaya.

The entire country, including the Darjeeling hills, is a closed basin between two parallel and deeply intersected transverse ridges, Donkya La and Singali La, about ninety miles long. The general trend of the mountain system is from the east to the west, but the chief ridges, Donkya La and Singali La, run from the north to the south. The hills rise from the plains of North Bengal. The altitude of the coun-

try varies from 5,700 feet at Gangtok in Eastern Sikkim to 12,300 feet at Gnatong in the north. The permanent snow-line is approximately at 16,000 feet. The Donkya La range, which stretches southward from the culminating point of the extensive mountain mass of the immense 23,190-foot-high Donkya Peak and on which are situated the 14,390-foot-high Jelep La, the 14,140-foot-high Nathu La, and the 16,000-foot-high Tangkar La, is the main feature of Eastern Sikkim. It separates Sikkim from Bhutan and Tibet in the east, forms the boundary between Bhutan and Sikkim for the greater part, and separates the basins of the Amo Chu in the east from that of the Tista River in the west. At Gyemo Chen, the trijunction point of the Bhutan-Sikkim-Tibet boundary, it bifurcates into two great spurs: one runs south-east; and the other, south-west. In the west, the Singali La range, which stretches south from the Kangchenjunga group of peaks, forms the boundary between Sikkim and Nepal.

The Donkya La range is much more lofty than the Singali La range. The drainage from the eastern flank of the Donkya La range is into the Amo Chu, the upper part of the course of which is in Tibet and the lower part in Bhutan. The drainage from its western flank is into the Rangpo, one of the eastern feeders of the Tista. The drainage from the eastern flank of the Singali La range is into the great Rangit River, which feeds the Tista from the west. The drainage from its western flank is into the Tamar River in Eastern Nepal.

The mountain-girdled basin of Sikkim is the catchment area of the headwaters of the Tista River and its affluents, like the Lachung Chu, the Lachen Chu, the Zemu Chu, the Talung Chu, the Rangpo, and the Rangit. The Tista basin, occupying the axis of an overfold, is structurally "inverted," the five peaks of Kangchenjunga representing the core. The Tista drains all of Sikkim, and, after travelling through the Darjeeling District, joins the Brahmaputra River in the Rangpur District. The Rangit, chiefly fed by the rainfall of the outer ranges of the Senchal and Singali hills, is the most important tributary of the Tista.

Sikkim has the typical mountain climate: an increase by a few feet in altitude affects temperature and rainfall conditions. Up to an altitude of 3,500 feet above the level of the sea, rainfall is heavy and temperature relatively high. The climate is tropical, and there are thick tropical forests with bamboo and sal as the dominant species. The temperate zone extends between 3,500 feet and 12,000 feet. The higher Himalaya zone stretches from 12,000 feet to 16,000 feet. Beyond that it is perpetual snow. The onset of the monsoon in the month of May coincides with the southward shift of the Inter-Tropical Convergence. Moisture-laden winds from the Bay of Bengal, after discharging moisture in the Assam Himalaya, travel westward and become the main source of precipitation in Sikkim.

NEPAL

Nepal lies in the Central Himalaya. Historically, before Prithvi Narayan Shah started in 1769 the process of the integration of the entire country between Sikkim in the east, the great plains of India in the south, Kumaun in the west, and the plateau of Tibet in the north, the name *Nepal* denoted only the area where the present capital, Kathmandu, is situated. This process culminated in the integration of the principality of Bajhang in the summer of 1959.

Sagarmatha (known outside as Mount Everest), Makalu, Cho Oyu, Gauri Shankar, Gosainkund, Manaslu, Dhaulagiri, and Annapurna, all over 26,000 feet above the level of the sea, are among the highest peaks of the Nepal Himalaya as well as the world.

Several rivers rising in Tibet beyond the Great Himalaya, like the Arun in the east and the Karnali in the west, pierce the central ridge into Nepal, and high passes like the 19,050-foot Nangpa La cross it in other places. The Kosi, with its great tributaries like the Arun, is the most important river of Eastern Nepal. The Tamar, the Arun, and the Sun join at Tribeni and form the great Saptakosi, known as the Kosi in Bihar, the third largest river in the river system in the

Himalaya. It drains the Himalaya between the great peaks of Kangchenjunga and Gosainthan. It leaves its mountain home at Chhatra, pierces through the Eastern Tarai of Nepal, and joins the Ganga south of Kursela in Bihar. The Kosi has been changing its course, and consequently there is a heavy charge of silt and detritus in its bed. The Gandaki, with its great tributaries like the Krishna and the Seti, drains Central Nepal. From the junction of the Gandaki with the Trisuli at Devghat, a little north of the Indo-Nepalese international boundary, the Gandaki is known as the Narayani. The great Saptagandaki, with its tributaries, is the most important river of Central-Western Nepal. *Sapta* (seven) in the case of the Gandaki is a mystical number. The Karnali and its tributaries like the Bheri and the Seti drain Western Nepal. The Karnali and the Kali join each other and flow as Sharada, called Ghagra or Sarayu, lower down. The Sarayu joins the Ganga at Chapra. Of the three main rivers flowing from the Nepal Himalaya, the Karnali is the most navigable in its lower parts in the hills of Nepal.

There are four distinct physical zones in Nepal. The dense forest zone of the Tarai leads to the foothills. The Lesser Himalaya rises gently from the Tarai to about 2,000 feet and then abruptly in steep and almost perpendicular escarpments of the Churia and Mahabharat ranges. The altitude of the Middle Himalaya ranges from 9,000 feet to 15,000 feet.

Temperature conditions in Nepal are of an extremely complex pattern. There is a general decrease in temperature as the altitude increases. Fogs and forests are common in the valleys, and night temperature is below the freezing-point. The south-west monsoon winds are the primary source of precipitation. The average annual rainfall in the Tarai region is fifty inches; in the foothills it is seventy inches. In the higher valleys local variations occur in proportion to exposure. The rain-bearing monsoon winds in the months of June-September also make a difference. The climate of the Tarai region is hot and humid; that of the Lesser Himalaya, cool and humid; and that of the Great Himalaya, cold and

dry. The Northern Nepalese are organized in groups, each in a village, and to every such village there are a number of subsidiary villages to which the members of the group concerned resort in the different seasons, according to the location of their summer and winter pastures.

The natural vegetation zones of Nepal coincide with the physiographic divisions of the country. Dense swampy forests of sal and sisaun cover the Tarai. The southern part of the Middle Himalaya encloses several fertile valleys, including the Bagmati Valley, which is over 200 square miles. The southern part of the Great Himalaya, except for the protected valleys, is bare and devoid of any vegetation owing to the thinness of the layer of the soil and the steep gradients. Rugged, inter-stream divides separate the deep valleys, some of which have, in their lower reaches, broad flood plains which are important for agricultural purposes. Conifers like birch, fir, larch, pine, and spruce are the dominant species in these forests.

UTTARAKHAND

Uttarakhand, which lies in the Central Himalaya between the Kali and Satluj rivers, borders upon Nepal in the east, the plains of Uttar Pradesh in the south, the Mahasu and Kinnaur districts of Himachal Pradesh in the west, and the Ngari region of Tibet in the north. The border areas, which constitute one-third of Uttarakhand, generally consist of wild gorges, barren rocks, and snow. Byans, Chaudans, Darma, Johar, Niti, Mana and Nelang are the only valleys where human habitation is possible.

The border of Uttar Pradesh with Tibet is a range of great altitude. There are several high passes, such as the 16,390-foot Lipu Lek (*Lek* means "mountain pass" in the Nepali language), the 18,510-foot Darma, the 18,300-foot Kungri Bingri, the 16,390-foot Shalshal, the 16,628-foot Niti, the 18,400-foot Mana (Dungri La), and the 17,480-foot Jelu Khaga, which provide passage from Uttarakhand through the Great Himalaya to Tibet. There are several high peaks, such

as the 25,645-foot Nanda Devi, the 25,447-foot Kamet, the 23,360-foot Trisuli, the 23,213-foot Satopanth, the 23,184-foot Dunagiri, the 22,650-foot Panchchuli, the 22,510-foot Nanda Kot, and the 21,640-foot Nilkantha. The slopes and defiles of the lofty snowy ranges abound in ice-fields and glaciers such as the Milam, the Pindari, the Bhagirathi, and the Gangotri, which stretch for miles and miles. The layers of ice, several hundred feet in thickness, bear witness to immemorial centuries. The Bhyundar Ganga, the great valley of flowers, and the Nanda Devi Sanctuary are scenic spots of great beauty in Uttarakhand.

Several great rivers like the Kali, the Bhagirathi, and their tributaries drain Uttarakhand. The Kali, which rises near the India-Nepal-Tibet trijunction, follows a south-westerly course and runs almost at a right angle to the central range. The principal source of the Kali is the glacier, Milam. In its upper course the Kali and its two affluents, the Darma and the Lissar, flow in long parallel beds five miles apart. The Dhaulī and Gaurī rivers from Darma and Johar join it later. The Alakananda and the Bhagirathi are the most important headstreams of the Ganga. The two unite at Devprayag. The source of the Bhagirathi is the glacier Gangotri in the Gangotri group of peaks. The Ganga enters the plains at Hardwar.

Uttarakhand experiences every grade of climate. The first, the outermost zone, has a tropical climate marked by the sultry heat of the dry summer months and followed by a season of rains and low temperature. The second zone has mild and wet summers and long and severe winters. The third zone comprises high snowy peaks, characterized by long cold winters and short cool summers. Precipitation is in the form of snow. The annual rainfall decreases from east to west. The distribution of climate is also longitudinal. The people of northern fringes have two sets of houses, one for permanent residence and the other for temporary settlement.

Uttarakhand has various types of vegetation. There is a profuse growth of sal trees in the Tarai region. There is a

luxuriant growth of bamboos, *chirs*, *kails* (a kind of cedar), oaks, and silver firs between 5,000 feet and 11,000 feet, where the climate is temperate. The coniferous forests occur at higher altitudes. One can see birch and rhododendron following deodar, pine, and spruce, important coniferous trees, as one moves up.

KINNAUR, LAHUL, AND SPITI

Kinnaur, Lahul, and Spiti, which lie in the Western Himalaya, rugged and mountainous in an extraordinary degree, border upon Garhwal in the east, Jammu and Kashmir in the west, and the Ngari region of Tibet in the north. The highest mountain ridges in Kinnaur run almost south-east and north-west or parallel to the outer range of the Himalaya. The rugged character of the area is conspicuous in every part of the district except in the portion adjoining the Mahasu District. The holy 22,038-foot-high Kailash is the most dominant feature of Kinnaur, even though the 22,280-foot-high Rio Purgyal is Kinnaur's highest peak. There are several passes leading from Kinnaur through the Great Himalaya into Tibet, with an average height of 14,000 feet.

The face of the country is marked by deep river valleys. The Satluj Valley, cutting across the whole district from north-east to south-west, is the longest of these valleys. The right bank of the Satluj River is generally higher than the other, the villages are to be found at a height of 7,000 feet to 8,000 feet. Arable land extends to 11,000 feet. Oaks and pines cover this region. Beyond this are the pastures where the shepherds tend their flocks during the summer months. The broad Baspa Valley, like the Bhyundar Glen in North Garhwal, is the most beautiful valley of Kinnaur. The Tudong, Darbung, and Hangrang valleys are arid and mountainous.

The Satluj, which rises in Tibet beyond the Great Himalaya, enters India by the 11,000-foot-high Shipki La and flows from one end of the district to the other in a south-westerly direction. This river and its upper tributaries drain

Kinnaur. It has different names in different places. The name *Samandar* (from the Sanskrit *samudra*, sea) is popularly used by the southern Kinnauras. The northern Kinnauras call it Langshing, Muksung, or Shungti. The Baspa and the Spiti are the main tributaries of the Satluj. The Baspa flows from the south-east and joins the Satluj at Karchham near the centre of the valley. The Spiti, the longest tributary, flows from the north-west through Spiti and the Hangrang area of Kinnaur and joins the Satluj at Khabo near Namgya. The Satluj issues from the hills at Rugar.

Kinnaur has two climatic zones — the wet and the arid. In Lower Kinnaur summer is longer; and in Upper Kinnaur, winter. During the long winter months, there is frequent snowfall. Owing to the parallel trend of the lofty mountain ranges, only the lower southern parts like Nichar and Sang La receive heavy rainfall. On the higher slopes, precipitation is in the form of snow.

Spiti lies beyond the Great Himalaya. The mean elevation of Spiti is 12,000 feet above the level of the sea. All along its eastern and north-eastern boundary run mountains which are a continuation of the Ladakh range. The 20,108-foot-high Shila peak is the most dominating feature of Spiti. Passes like the 16,000-foot-high Bhaba, the 17,000-foot-high Mana, the 21,000-foot-high Manirang, the 15,754-foot-high Soma La (between the Parbati Valley of Kulu and the Pin Valley of Spiti), the 13,500-foot-high Rohtang, the 18,300-foot-high Parang La, and the 17,470-foot-high Tagalang La provide access to Lahul and Spiti from Kinnaur, Kulu, Chamba, Kishtwar, Zangskar, and Ladakh.

The Spiti Chu, the main river of Spiti, rises in the glaciers of the 15,300-foot-high Kunzum Pass on the Lahul-Spiti divide and runs for seventy miles through Spiti proper in east-south-east direction, for it flows through Tibet, enters Kinnaur at Sanjham, and ultimately pours its waters into the Satluj at Namgya, south of the Shipki La. The Pin River, the main tributary of the Spiti, rises in the Bhaba Pass on the Kinnaur-Spiti divide. Spiti and Pin are the main valleys of Spiti.

Spiti is in the arid zone and experiences extremes of cold, snow, and desiccation. Summer is short and mild owing to the height; winter is long and severe. During the summer months a thin atmospheric insolation in the day and rapid fall of temperature at night cause disintegration of rocks. Most of the winter precipitation is in the form of snow.

Spiti is barren for the most part. What little vegetation there is, is thin and patchy. Owing to the severe climate, scanty precipitation, and intense cold, there are hardly any forest tracts. All that one can see is a stunted growth of birch, poplar, and willow along the rivers and streams. There are meadows and pastures here and there high up on the slopes. Shepherds from Chamba and Kangra go up to Spiti along with their flocks of sheep and goats during the summer months.

LADAKH

Ladakh, the northernmost part of the Himalaya in India, is more than half of the total area of the State of Jammu and Kashmir. Ladakh is also India's largest district. The Karakoram and Kunlun ranges in the north and the Zangskar range in the south provide Ladakh with natural boundaries. The Karakoram range constitutes Ladakh's northern boundary with Central Asia. There are no such formidable barriers in the east and the west.

The south-east and north-west mountain ranges run parallel to each other. This is the most striking feature of Ladakh. The Karakoram range has the largest number of giant peaks in the world. This great massif has several high cols, which connect India and Central Asia. The great caravan route from Leh to Yarkand lies over the 18,290-foot-high Karakoram Pass and the 17,480-foot-high Sasser La. The eastern end of the Karakoram range is connected with the western end of the Kunlun range, which skirts the Lingzi Thang-Aksai Chin plateau on the northern side. The Ladakh range, starting from the Indus-Shayok confluence and extending beyond the eastern frontiers of Ladakh, divides the

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district into two parts. This unbroken chain traverses through Zangskar and Rupshu and through Chumurti in Western Tibet.

The direction of the mountain ranges determines the course of the rivers. The Indus, the longest river in the Himalaya, rises near Manasarovar in Western Tibet and flows westward, entering Ladakh near the frontier village of Demchok. The Shayok River, the principal tributary of the Indus, rises in the glaciers of the Eastern Karakoram. From the point where it issues till it reaches the village Shayok, it runs west-south-west. Then, after going with the Nubra River, it flows almost parallel to the Indus until their confluence west of Khapalu. The Zangskar River, which rises in the vicinity of the 16,047-foot-high Baralacha La, meets the Indus at Nyemo. The Waka, Suru, and Dras rivers, which rise in the north-western glaciers of Zangskar, are also important tributaries of the Indus.

Climatically Ladakh is located entirely in the Great Himalaya zone and is known for its extreme aridity. Great extremes of heat and cold and excessive dryness, chiefly because of the height of the landmass, characterize Ladakh. Its general aspect is extreme barrenness. The dryness of climate increases with height. Rainfall is scanty. Winter is long and severe. Most of the precipitation is in the form of snow and varies from place to place. At Leh it is only a few feet, but at Kargil and especially at Machoi in the Dras Valley but close to the 11,570-foot-high Zoji La, it is up to twenty feet a year.

Natural vegetation is scanty. The birch, the poplar, and the willow are found along the water courses. The poplar is the most valuable source of wood in the country, especially in the construction of bridges and houses.

The entire Himalaya borderland from NEFA in the east to Ladakh in the west comprises a mountain complex with parallel ranges both in the east-west and in the north-south direction. There are three distinct climatic zones according

to the altitude zones. NEFA, Bhutan, and Sikkim are in the wet zone. The Singali La range between Sikkim and Nepal works as the great barrier for winds from the Bay of Bengal. Hence the maximum precipitation on Mount Kangchenjunga on the Singali La ridge. Nepal and Uttarakhand are in the middle zone, neither too wet nor too dry. Kinnaur, Lahul and Spiti, and Ladakh are in the dry arid zone. Summer is short; winter, long and severe. The severe cold and the heavy snow cause hardship to animals and people alike. Climatic and physiographic conditions determine the economy of the people, the types of animals on which they live, their migration and settlement patterns, and many other aspects of life. The rivers in the Himalaya facilitate, rather than inhibit, the movement of the people during their summer and winter migrations. They determine not only the areas where the people may live, but also the routes of communication between India and Central Asia.

CHAPTER THREE

THE PEOPLE

THE HIMALAYA has been the homeland of various peoples from before the dawn of history. According to Sanskrit epics like the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata*, as well as the *Puranas*, which are a storehouse of the values that sustain India's life and culture, the Kulind, Kirat, Kinnar, Khas, Dard, and other tribes inhabited the Himalaya in ancient times. There have been migrations of people from time to time for a number of reasons. The most important of these reasons is the location of holy places in and around the Himalaya, so that people from both India and Central Asia have always felt drawn to the Himalaya. Other important reasons are trade and politics.

If we consider the matter from the point of view of the ethnic complexion of the Himalaya, there have been migrations within the Himalaya itself. The Khampti, Singpho, and Mishmi groups of Lohit migrated from Upper Burma. The Monpas of Siang migrated from North-East Bhutan in the nineteenth century. The ethnic admixture that obtains in Bhutan was originally due to Tibetan rule in Bhutan in the ninth century. Excessiveness of the land tax impelled the Lepchas of Sikkim to migrate to the adjoining parts of Western Bhutan and Eastern Nepal during the early period of the present dynasty of Sikkim. The Limbus and the Rais migrated from the west to Sikkim during the Gorkha occupation of South-West Sikkim during 1778-88. High-caste Hindus migrated to the southern parts of the present West-

ern Nepal, Uttarakhand, and Himachal Pradesh during the Muslim invasions of North India in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The Bhotiyas in the northern part of Uttarakhand perhaps migrated from Tibet before the seventh century. The Mongoloid tribes of Kinnaur and Lahul migrated there during the eighth and ninth centuries with Tibet's expansion southwards and westwards. The Dard and Mon people of Ladakh migrated from Gilgit and Kashmir in early times.

NEFA

NEFA is the homeland of several tribes, Indo-Mongoloid ethnically and Tibeto-Burman linguistically. The origin of most of the ethnic groups of NEFA lies beyond the natural confines of India in the east and the north. The Khamptis of Lohit migrated from the region between the north-eastern tip of Assam and the Irrawady Valley of Burma (called Hkampti Long by the Upper Burmese) towards the end of the eighteenth century and belong to the same stock as the Ahoms of Assam. The Singphos, who migrated to neighbouring areas on the break-up of the Northern Shans, first appeared in the upper Brahmaputra Valley during the rebellion of the Mattak tribe against Raja Gourinath Singh (r. 1780-95) of Assam about 1790. The Mishmis, the main bulk of the people in Lohit, also migrated from Burma: they have legends which refer to their migration from Burma. The Zakhrings migrated from Zayul in Tibet. The Monpas of the northernmost part of Siang migrated from Bhutan to the Pemako Valley via the Dhakpo and Kongpo regions of Tibet in the nineteenth century. According to tradition, Guru Padmasambhava meditated in the caves of the Pemako Valley. The Tibetans still go there as hermits and pilgrims. The Monpas of the Valley, being originally the inhabitants of Eastern Bhutan, used to acknowledge the Maharaja of Bhutan as their lord and sovereign till in 1914 the Valley officially became a part of Tibet. The folklore of the Abors of Siang (including the minor groups) points

to their origin in the north beyond the Himalaya, but their occupations and religious beliefs and practices betray their connexion with the Mishmi and other southern NEFA groups rather than with the northern NEFA groups. The Nishangs (Nisis), the Apa Tanis, and the Bangnis of Subansiri also claim to have come from Tibet, but the memories of their "history men" seem to relate only to the last stage of a population movement which may have changed its course more than once. The Mikirs of the foothills of South-West Subansiri have been settled there by the administration for developing permanent agriculture during the last fifty years. The Sherdukpas of Southern Kameng even now migrate along with their livestock to the foothills in the cold months every year.

The origin of the term *Mishmi* is obscure. Since 1947, the Abors have been known officially as *Adis*. The term *Memba*, by which the Monpas of Siang are known among the Adi groups, approximates to the actual term *Monpa* (Lowlander). The Mishings are popularly known as *Miris*. The Nishangs are popularly and officially known as *Daflas*. The Bangni, incorrectly called the *Dafla*, means "the men." The term *Sherdukpa* (People of Eastern Bhutan) is Bhutanese/Tibetan. The Monpas, the Khambas, and the Sherdukpas are popularly known as *Bhotiyas*. All the popular terms for the tribes are Assamese.

It is, however, important to note here that the name *Bhotiya* is used to describe not only the NEFA tribes mentioned above but also all people of Tibetan origin in the entire Himalaya borderland. It is derived from *Bhot*, the Sanskrit name for Tibet.

Agriculture is the primary occupation of the people of NEFA. The Mishmis, the Adis, the Daflas, the Akas, the Buguns, and the Mijis practise *jhum* or a slash-and-burn type of cultivation. In the *jhum* type of cultivation, ploughing is not possible as the surface is uneven. The Khamptis, the Singphos, and the Apa Tanis practise a permanent type of cultivation. They use the plough and animal power for tilling the soil. The Sherdukpas and the Monpas practise both

jhum and permanent cultivation. The Sherdukpas use the ox to draw the plough, whereas the Monpas use the *dzo* (male hybrid of cow and yak) for this purpose. Except the Sherdukpas and the Monpas nobody uses any manure. Of course, the ashes and unburnt leaves in the jhum type of cultivation (which get mixed with the soil after a couple of rains) serve the purpose of manure.

Besides agriculture, the people also have other, secondary occupations like animal husbandry, fishing, hunting, and trade. The Khamptis, the Zakhrings, and the Monpas do not, however, fish and hunt because of Buddhist influence. Alone among these various tribes, the Khamptis capture wild elephants and sell them for a good price. The Taroas excel in the arts of boatmanship and fishing. The Mishmis, the Adis, the Daffas, and the Miris raise mithuns, which play a great role in their socio-economic life. There is community hunting among the Adis, who are born hunters.

The people carry on both inter-village and inter-area trade. Formerly all transactions used to be generally by barter, but now cash transactions are becoming popular. Traditionally the people have had trade relations with the people in the south and the north. The Khamptis get from the plains salt, ornaments, and household goods in exchange for rough, cotton clothes and wild elephants. The Singphos and the Miris get from the plains salt, cotton, and household goods in exchange for vegetables, chillis, and spices. The Taroas have always traded with the Zakhrings to get Tibetan woollen cloth, salt, ornaments, swords, and other tools and implements from the plains. *Tita* (a medicinal, poisonous herb) has always been an important item in the Mishmi trade with the plains. Formerly the Monpas had close trade connexions with Tibet. They used to get from there wool, salt, and ornaments in exchange for maize, millet, and rice. They used to supply large quantities of rice to Tibet. Tawang then was very important in the trade between Assam and Tibet. The Monpas now go to Kalimpong to buy the things they used to get from Tibet in the past. From Bhutan, they bring mainly cloth. The tribes

in between like the Apa Tanis have always traded with their respective neighbours in the south and the north. Formerly the Adis also had indirect trade relations with Tibet, through the Monpas, their northern neighbours, from whom they used to get Tibetan woollen cloth, salt, swords, ornaments, etc. The Apa Tanis exchange rice for mithuns from the Daffas. They also buy buffaloes and cows from the people of the plains. They sacrifice them occasionally to their gods. They also eat the meat of these cattle on festive occasions.

To venture out of the hills on a trading mission has always been a dangerous enterprise. There was danger in crossing the Brahmaputra and its tributaries; there was the risk of being buried alive in a landslide; there was the dread possibility of an earth tremor; and there was the near certainty of being shot with poisoned arrows by hostile tribes while in transit through their domains. In former times particularly, the journeys to Assam and to Tibet to barter hides, musk, and herbs for salt, cotton yarn or wool, metal, and similar other necessities of life were so perilous that even now some tribesmen use the phrase "going to fetch salt" as a euphemism for death.

Except the Daffas and the Mishmis, every tribe has its own village council of elders for settling all disputes according to its own usages. (Now the Administration recognizes an influential man of a Daffa/Mislimi village with the present of a red coat as a token of authority and distinction.) Besides the *Kebang* (Village Council), the Adis have two other higher-level councils, known as *Bango* and *Bogum Bokam*. The *Bango* is the inter-village council, whereas the *Bogum Bokam* is the all-tribe-level council. The *Sherdukpas* hold a council of their village headmen every two or three years under the presidentship of the *Thik Akhao* (Village Headman) to settle all disputes. The jurisdiction of the council does not generally extend beyond the tribe concerned. In the identification of culprits the councils take recourse to oaths and ordeals. Criminal cases are now dealt with by the District and Subdivisional Magistrates them-

selves, but in giving their judgements these officers do not fail to take into account the customs of the tribes concerned.

There is much diversity in the religious beliefs and practices of the tribes. The Khamptis follow the Burmese form of Buddhism. The Singphos have been influenced by Khampti Buddhism. The Monpas follow the Tibetan form of Buddhism, popularly known as Lamaism. While the Monpas of Siang are adherents of the Nyingmapa, Red Hat Order, one form of Lamaism, those of Kameng are adherents of the *Gelukpa*, Yellow Hat Order, another form of Lamaism. Both the Nyingmapa and Gelukpa orders have adherents among the Sherdukpas. There is an element of animism in the Buddhism of the Khamptis and the Singphos as well as of the Monpas and the Sherdukpas. The Adi tribes of upper Siang have been influenced by the Buddhist culture of the neighbouring Khambas and Monpas. The Akas and the Buguns of Kameng have been influenced by the Buddhist culture of the neighbouring Sherdukpas and the Monpas. The Mishmis, the Adis, the Miris, the Daffas, and the Apa Tanis are animists. The Mikirs of Subansiri follow Hinduism of the Mikirs of the Mikir Hills of Assam.

BHUTAN

The people of Bhutan are quite like the people of Eastern Tibet and have many common features like a robust build, fair complexion, a prominent chin, a sharp nose, and slit eyes with epicanthic fold. Ethnically the people of Eastern Bhutan are different from those of Western Bhutan; the Pele La range is the dividing line. The Bhutanese who live in the area east of the Pele La range have more similarities with the people of Western NEFA. Along the greater part of the northern border live the Tibetans.

According to Bhutanese tradition, the first Bhutanese descended from heaven. According to Sanskrit tradition, it was the Koch tribe that originally inhabited Bhutan. The people of Tibetan origin arrived in Bhutan in the time of King Ralpachan (r. 816-35) of Tibet. The Nepalese of

Southern Bhutan and the Lepchas of Western Bhutan came later. The origin and history of minor tribes like the Brokpas spreading all over the country, the Dakpas and the Sherchokpas of North-Eastern Bhutan along the border between Bhutan and Tawang, and the Doyas of South-Western Bhutan in the Dorokha Subdivision of Samchi are obscure. According to legend, the Doya kings ruled there for several hundred years. There are ruins of the Doya royal court at Denchuka, north-east of Dorokha, across the Torsa River.

Agriculture is the main occupation of those who live in Southern Bhutan. They use the plough, which is drawn by the dzo, in tilling the soil. Those who live in Northern Bhutan are both agriculturists and pastoralists. They especially raise yaks, which play an important role in their economy.

Formerly there was a flourishing trade between India and Tibet through Bhutan, with the Bhutanese as carrying agents. The three trade routes through Bhutan, which connected Assam and Bengal on the one hand and Tibet on the other, were (1) the Manas River Valley, (2) the Kariapara Duar, and (3) the Paro Valley. From Bengal and Cooch Bihar the Bhutanese used to collect dyes, *endi* or *eri* (coarse silk made of the produce of silk-worms fed on the castor-oil plant, called *eri* locally) cloth, *supari* (arecanut), tea, and tobacco, and exchange them with the Tibetans for wool, salt, and musk. Though Bhutan has plenty of goats and sheep, the Bhutanese buy their requirements of woollen cloth from Bengal.

Every Bhutanese village has its own organization, headed by the *Gup* (Village Headman), for settling all disputes. The *Gup* refers unsettled disputes to the authorities of the *dzong* (district). The Bhutanese do not usually make any complaints for assaults and adultery. If a man fails to prove his claim, he is fined.

The Tibetan form of Buddhism is the State religion of Bhutan. Formerly only the lamas held high official posts; even now they constitute the privileged class. A small section

of people still practise the pre-Buddhist folk religion, Bon. They sacrifice animals to avoid the evil influence of spirits. The Doyas are animists. They offer monkey flesh to the spirits in order to propitiate them.

SIKKIM

The people of Sikkim consist of three different ethnic groups, namely the Lepchas, the Bhotiyas, and the Nepalese. The Lepchas are the original inhabitants, while the Bhotiyas and the Nepalese are immigrants. The hills, mountains, and streams have Lepcha names, which indicates that the Lepchas are the original inhabitants of the country. The Lepchas have a unique knowledge of Sikkimese jungles, wild life, and vegetation, especially herbs. According to folklore, the original homeland of the Lepchas was in the neighbourhood of Kangchenjunga; and they sprang from a monkey father and a human mother. Not much is known about their history prior to their conversion to Buddhism and the enthronement of Phuntsok Namgyal as the first ruler of Sikkim in 1642. With Buddhism there came several waves of Tibetan and Bhutanese immigrants. The religion of the Bhotiyas and the Lepchas being the same, hardly anything stood in the way of the two tribes intermingling. The Bhotiyas influenced the Lepchas deeply with their superior culture. The Bhutanese made incursions into Sikkim in the eighteenth century, and this led to their intermingling with the Lepchas. The Bhotiyas of the Lachen and Lachung valleys in Northern Sikkim, like the people of the Chumbi Valley of Tibet, claim descent from the early immigrants from Ha in Western Bhutan.

Most of the present Bhotiyas of Sikkim are thus descendants of Tibetan and Bhutanese immigrants of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The immigrants played an important role in establishing the kingdom of Sikkim and in introducing cultural and political changes there. The Chogyal of Sikkim is of the Bhotiya tribe.

The bulk of the Nepalese in South-Western Sikkim

mainly consists of the Limbu and Rai immigrants from Eastern Nepal. The Nepalese, who started migrating to Sikkim in the second quarter of the nineteenth century in search of agricultural land, influenced the Lepchas with their better agricultural methods, especially with their superior method of rice cultivation. Migration from Nepal was so large that the Lepchas ultimately became a minority in their own native land. Since 1880, the Nepalese have been prohibited by the Sikkim State Government to settle in Central and Northern Sikkim.

The terms *Bhotiya* and *Lepcha* are used only by the non-Tibetan-speaking peoples of India and Nepal. The Lepchas call themselves *Rongs*.

Agriculture is the main occupation of the Sikkimese. The Sikkimese of the north are both agriculturists and pastoralists. The Lepchas were originally food-gatherers: forest produce like herbs and roots were the main items of their food. Bows, arrows, and knives were their only weapons for hunting; the bamboo scabbard always dangled on one side. They also caught fish. They practised shifting cultivation until the late nineteenth century.

The Sikkimese had trade relations with the Tibetans. The old trade route from Gangtok, the capital of Sikkim, to Phari in Tibet was via the Nathu La. The other trade routes were via the Jelep La in the north-east and via the La Chen in the north. Important among the items imported from Tibet were wool and salt. The articles of export to Tibet were cardamom, rice, and spices. Trade was generally by barter.

Every Sikkimese village has its own organization, headed by the village headman, to maintain law and order and to settle disputes. The punishment varies according to the nature and gravity of the offence. Violence is rare among the Lepchas. There is no word for murder or killing in the Lepcha language. If the village council fails to settle a dispute or to detect a crime even with the help of oaths and ordeals, it refers it to the higher judicial authorities of the country.

The Nyingmapa-Kargyaupa form of Lamaism is the State religion of Sikkim. The Sikkimese are animists as well as Buddhists. The Buddhist Sikkimese annually worship the god of Mount Kangchenjunga in their monasteries. They perform a war-dance in honour of this god and invoke his blessings for the welfare of the people and the country. Participants in the war-dance observe taboo regarding food etc. The Lepchas, who still practise the pre-Buddhist folk religion Bon, believe in spirits and sacrifice animals to avert their evil influence. They have their own exorcists and priests, the *Bontings* and the *Muns*. The difference between a Bonting and a Mun is that only a man can become a Bonting, whereas even a woman can become a Mun. The Bontings do not have any ceremonial dress: any dress is all right. They are the custodians of Lepcha history. ✓

NEPAL

Nepal is the homeland of several ethnic groups. According to Nepalese history and tradition, the Kirats are the earliest inhabitants of the country. References in the *Mahabharata* connect them with the central region of Nepal and the Brahmaputra Valley of Assam. The Limbus and the Rais of Eastern Nepal, collectively known as the Kirati people, now represent the ancient Kirat race in Nepal. The Kirats ruled Nepal for centuries. Many inscriptions of the Lichchavis have Kirati place names in the Bagmati Valley and thus testify to their early settlement there. Driven away from Central Nepal, they settled in the eastern parts of the country. When the Gorkhas conquered Eastern Nepal in 1772, they conferred the title *Rai* (Nobleman) on the chiefs serving in the Sena kingdom of Vijayapur in the eastern Tarai, and the title *Suba* (Chief) on the chiefs of the Limbus. Later, the Government of Nepal started conferring the title *Suba* on its high-ranking officials. The Lepchas (in the Dhankuta and Ilam areas) of Eastern Nepal have lived there for as long as the Limbus. The Bajhangi and Dotiyal ethnic groups of Western Nepal, who closely resemble the

ethnic groups of Kumaun, migrated there from the plains via Kumaun. Minor tribes like the Yolmos fall within the pale of the neighbouring major tribes. The Chepangs, a nomadic forest tribe living near the confluence of the Kali, Seti, and Trisuli rivers, are an indigenous group.

The Tharus, who live in the swampy and malarious Tarai strip between India and Nepal, claim to have come from Rajasthan. Perhaps they are the original inhabitants of the Tarai. They have Mongoloid features. The Limbus, who live in Limbuan, the Limbu country east of the Arun River (there are no Limbus west of the Arun), consist of a number of clans. The Rais also consist of a number of clans. The Tamangs and their cognates inhabit Eastern Nepal between the southern and northern groups. The Newars of the Bagmati Valley, also early settlers, claim that they first came to Nepal as soldiers under Nanyadeva from South India towards the end of the eleventh century.

The Magars, who live in Magrat, the Magar country west of the Kali Gandaki River, have fewer and less pronounced Mongoloid features. The Gurungs, who live north of the Magars, claim to have come from Tibet. They have marked Mongoloid features. Colonies of the Gurungs and the Magars are found all over Eastern Nepal. There are several clans of the Gurungs and the Magars, but the Ghailes can be both Gurungs and Magars. Owing to the geographical position of Magrat, the Magars have had closer and longer contacts than the Gurungs with the Rajputs who came and settled down in Nepal in the wake of the Muslim invasions of North India. The ethnic groups of Nepal's northern borderland are strongly Mongoloid and look almost like the Tibetans. The Sherpas, who live in the uplands of Eastern Nepal, are Tibetan immigrants.

The term *Sherpa* (Easterner) is Tibetan. The non-Tibetan-speaking Nepalese in the country refer to the Tamangs, the Thakalis, the Sherpas, and other northern groups as Bhotas. The Thakalis call themselves Tamang. Of course, they have no connexion with the Tamangs of Central and Eastern Nepal.

Agriculture, supplemented by animal husbandry, is the main occupation of the people of Nepal. For tilling the soil the Nepalese use an iron-tipped wooden plough drawn by a pair of oxen. The Tharus raise large herds of cattle for their milk. They also raise bullocks. They preserve dried fish for the rainy season. They also hunt wild elephants. The Magars are mainly agricultural, and the Gurungs mainly pastoral. The Gurungs, the Sherpas, and the Thakalis raise goats, sheep, and yaks, which are also their beasts of burden. They supplement their income by trade. The sale of seed potatoes is one of the main sources of the income of the Sherpas.

Nepal has had trade relations with India and Tibet since long and has always acted as a carrying agent between India and Tibet. The principal imports from Tibet are wool, salt, and borax; and the principal exports are household goods, grains, and dyes. The Newars and the Thakalis have always played a great part in the trade between Nepal and Tibet. The Newars have their business houses in Calcutta, Kalimpong, and Lhasa.

Every Nepalese village has its own organization, headed by the village headman, for the maintenance of law and order and the settlement of all disputes. The village headman also collects land revenue and deposits it in the nearest *Mal Adda* (Revenue Office). The post of headman is hereditary. The Sherpas, however, have a different type of organization where a number of elected men maintain law and order in the village. The *Pembu* (Village Headman) mainly functions as an agent in the collection of land revenue. Succession to this office depends partly on heredity and partly on personal ability. If a *gram panchayat* (Village Council) fails to settle a dispute or matter, the people go to the nearest *Amin Adda* (Judicial Office).

Hinduism is now the State religion of Nepal. Buddhism, which had a stronghold in the Bagmati Valley prior to the twelfth century, is so deeply mixed up with Hinduism that it is difficult to draw a line between the two religions. The Newars follow both Buddhism and Hinduism. The

Tamangs, who live in the lower valleys, are Hindus; those who live in the higher valleys are Buddhists. The Sherpas are Buddhists, and follow the Nyingma form of Lamaism. The Tharus, who have completely forgotten their tribal culture, observe all Hindu ceremonies, feasts, and festivals. In 1948, an order of the Government of Nepal recognized the Tharus as high-caste Hindus. The Magars are mainly Hindus. The Gurungs are mainly Buddhists, and follow the Nyingma form of Lamaism. Such of them as are not Buddhists follow Hinduism. The old folk religion, animism, still prevails among certain groups. Their folklore contains their early beliefs and superstitions. The Thakalis, who, until about two generations ago, were firmly rooted in the Buddhist tradition of the Nyingma form of Lamaism, are now adopting Hinduism to achieve better social status. They are also reverting to the pre-Buddhist folk religion Bon, which has survived side by side with Buddhism.

UTTARAKHAND

The people of Uttarakhand, commonly known as Khasas, are mentioned in the *Mahabharata*. There are two major strains which are believed to have contributed to the present Khasa complex, descendants of the original Khasas and the immigrant Rajputs and the Khasas whom they married. The Doms, perhaps the earliest indigenous group, represent the first, whereas the Rajputs represent the second. The Khasas, originally a nomadic tribe of Central Asia, entered India through the north-west in ancient times and settled on the northern fringes of Kashmir. Now they are spread from Kashmir to Nepal. The Kanets of the Kumaun-Kangra hills are allied with the Khasas ethnically and linguistically.

The Bhotiyas of Uttarakhand claim descent from those Rajputs who came from Kumaun or Garhwal and settled in the upper valleys. The Jadhs of the Bhagirathi Valley claim to have come from Kinnaur in the west. The small group of the Khampas living along with the Jadhs also came from the west. The Shokas living on the southern fringe of the

eastern Bhotiya country claim connexion with the Joharis, from whom they broke away some time ago. The Bhotiyas of the Pithoragarh District are known as Byansis, Chaudansis, and Darmawals after the names of the subdivisions they live in. Those of the Chamoli and Uttarakashi districts are known as Joharis, Tolchas, Marchas, and Jadh's. The Bhotiyas of Pithoragarh in Kumaun are collectively known as the eastern Bhotiyas, and those of Chamoli and Uttarakashi in Garhwal as the western Bhotiyas.

Since early times, the highlanders of Kumaun had migrated along with their livestock to the Bhabar and Tarai lands in the cold months every year. The rajas of Kumaun, who also used to migrate there and encourage the people to cultivate the lands there, always defended the Bhabar and Tarai lands against invasions from the south. Bajpur and Rudrapur, named after the rajas of Kumaun, were military centres. The practice of migration of the people from the Kumaun hills to the lowlands stopped after 1947 without any alternative arrangement.

The Bhotiyas have always migrated along with their livestock to the central parts of Kumaun and Garhwal in the cold months. They have their own winter villages there. There they make their fine woollen *gudmas* (carpets), *pankhis* (wrappers), and *thulmas* (blankets).

Agriculture, supplemented by animal husbandry, is the main occupation of the people of Uttarakhand. The Chaudansi Bhotiyas, who get two crops a year (owing to their low geographical location), have always been agriculturists. Other clans of the Bhotiyas are not agriculture-minded. Some of the former Bhotiya traders, however, have now taken to agriculture, although sheep-raising is still the occupation they prefer.

All along in history, till the stoppage of trade with Western Tibet in 1962, the Bhotiyas occupied a key position in the commercial intercourse between North India and Western Tibet. Trade played a vital role in their economy. There were specified trade marts in Western Tibet for the different Bhotiya groups. The principal exports used to be grains,

household goods, cotton, *gur* (jaggery), sugar, and hardware. These used to be exchanged for wool, salt, ponies, borax, and yak-tails. The Bhotiyas used to move upwards to Western Tibet with their merchandise during the summer months, and downwards to the lowlands during the winter months. Their trade relations with their neighbours in the plains are still flourishing; Tanakpur, Haldwani, and Ramnagar are the most important among the markets where they buy and sell. Consequently, the people of Garhwal and Kumaun always refer to the Bhotiya traders as *mit* (from the Sanskrit *mitra*, friend).

Formerly, every village in Uttarakhand had its own organization. The Padhan (from the Sanskrit *Pradhan*, Village Headman) maintained law and order in the village. He collected land revenue as well. Disputes, especially those which related to land, are mostly settled in the *Gram Panchayat* (Village Council). Now, however, with the introduction of the Panchayat Raj system in the 1950s, the people can go in appeal before a *Nyaya Panchayat* (Council of Justice), which has jurisdiction over a *patti* (a territorial unit comprising anywhere from ten to thirty villages), or to the district court. The post of Padhan used to be hereditary, but is now elective.

The Bhotiya religion is a mixture of animism, Buddhism, and Hinduism. The eastern Bhotiyas still follow their traditional folk religion based on belief in, and worship of, spirits. They offer sacrifice to ward off the evil influence of spirits. The present trend among the western Bhotiyas, who are partly Hinduized, is to become Hindu to achieve better social status.

KINNAUR, LAHUL, AND SPITI

The Khasa people of the Western Himalaya are the same as the Khasa people of Garhwal, Kumaun, and Nepal. In Himachal Pradesh, they are generally known as Kanets or Rajputs. The Kanets or Rajputs of Southern Kinnaur, the dominant group, are immigrants from the plains. The

Khampas of the Bhaba Valley and the Betas of the Hangrang Valley migrated from Tibet long ago. The Chamangs, including the Domangs, are perhaps the indigenous people.

The people of Spiti, locally known as the Spitipas, are akin to the people of Tibet but are usually short-statured. They are perhaps the descendants of those who immigrated from Tibet in the eighth and ninth centuries. There is also evidence of the migration of people from Zangskar and other parts of Ladakh to Spiti.

The people of Kinnaur, Lahul, and Spiti used to migrate along with their livestock to Sirmur, Mandi, and Suket, as well as to the upper parts of Kulu, in the cold months every year. The people of Lahul used to take with them their cattle as well, especially their flocks of sheep and goats, to the hills of Kangra. This practice is now almost dead. Actually, with the change in the times, the people of Kinnaur, Lahul, and Spiti have turned sedentary in nature.

Agriculture, supplemented by animal husbandry and trade, is the main occupation of the people of Kinnaur, Lahul, and Spiti. While the southern Kinnauras are mainly agriculturists, the northern Kinnauras are mainly pastoralists and traders. For tilling the soil the Kinnauras use a crude type of plough drawn by animal power. The Spitipas raise one crop a year. The pastoral Kinnauras raise goats, sheep, and yaks. The goats and sheep supply them with abundant wool. They also serve as beasts of burden. From the milk of yaks, the Kinnauras prepare many milk products which supplement their food. The people of Lahul and Spiti are mainly pastoralists and traders. They raise goats, sheep, and yaks, chiefly to provide themselves with food and clothing. They exchange their goats, sheep, and wool for household goods, grains, and cotton textiles. They transport grains to Ladakh.

Formerly the people of Kinnaur, Lahul, and Spiti used to visit Western Tibet along with their flocks of goats and sheep during the summer months to get salt, wool, borax, and yak-tails in exchange for grains, sugar, and cotton textiles. They used to come down even to Amritsar during the winter months to sell Tibetan goods and buy whatever they felt

had a market back in Tibet and elsewhere.

All disputes in a Kinnaur village used to be settled either by the elders of the village or by the officers appointed for the purpose by the Maharaja of Bushahr, and ultimately by the Maharaja himself. Lahul and Spiti had their own village organizations in the form of village councils for the maintenance of law and order. Formerly there were two kinds of headmen in every village of Spiti, *Nono* and *Gadpon*. The *Nono* was responsible for the collection of land tax. The *Gadpon* held charge of labour. The office of *Nono* is hereditary. A council of five village elders, two elected and three nominated, advise the *Nono*.

Now, with the introduction of the Panchayati Raj system, each Gram Panchayat settles all disputes over land, etc. as well as development activities. If it cannot settle any dispute, it forwards it to the Nyaya Panchayat for disposal. The Nyaya Panchayat is also the court of appeal. The post of Pradhan, which was formerly hereditary, is now elective. However, the proliferation of administrative personnel in recent times has heavily eroded the functions of the village councils.

The southern Kinnauras are Hindus. The entire land is regarded as belonging to the *deotas* (deities). The northern Kinnauras follow the Tibetan form of Buddhism. The people of Lahul and Spiti also follow the Tibetan form of Buddhism. The old folk religion based on belief in, and worship of, spirits still exists in Kinnaur, Lahul, and Spiti.

LADAKH

Ethnically Ladakh consists of different groups. According to the folklore of the Dards, the whole of Ladakh was originally inhabited by the Dards. The skulls unearthed during excavations of ancient sites show that Ladakh was inhabited in the distant past by people of the Dardic stock and not by people of the Mongoloid stock. The Mons migrated to Ladakh from the west in early times. Later, there were repeated invasions from Tibet, Baltistan, and

Central Asia. Then came the Mughals, who held sway for a long period. Leh became the *entrepot* of Central Asian trade and the meeting-place of caravans. The events of history and the contacts built up for the purposes of trade brought about racial admixture in Ladakh.

The Ladakhis of the Indus Valley around Leh depend mainly on agriculture. For tilling the soil they use a heavy wooden plough drawn by dzos. The iron share is flat and broad, suitable for rocky soil. The Ladakhis manure their fields with *luth* (animal and human refuse). The Changpa nomads are mainly pastoralists. The Baltis and the Dards depend both on agriculture and on animal husbandry.

Formerly trade played an important role in the life of the Ladakhis both economically and culturally. Prior to 1949-50, the Ladakhis enjoyed almost a monopoly in the carrying trade with Central Asia and Tibet. The main items of export were wool, pashmina, felt, and borax to the Punjab and Kashmir, grains and dry fruit to Tibet, and sugar and spices to Sinkiang. The main items of import were wool, salt, tea, and borax from Tibet and sugar, hardware, cotton textiles, and household goods from the Punjab and Kashmir.

Every Ladakhi village has its own organization, headed by an officer designated *Gopa* (Village Headman) who maintains law and order in the village. The office of *Gopa* used to be hereditary in the past, but is now elective. If the *Gopa* is not able to settle a dispute, the people go to the higher judicial authorities.

Buddhism is the prevailing religion of Ladakh. Formerly the lamas never involved themselves in political affairs. Kushok Bakula, who was formerly Minister for Ladakh Affairs in the Government of Jammu and Kashmir, is now a member of the Lok Sabha for Ladakh. The Brokpa tribesmen of Western Ladakh have been deeply influenced by the Buddhism of the neighbouring Ladakhis.

The people of the Himalaya have distinct economic, political, and social systems and practices. Their occupations,

economic relations, ethnic characteristics, and religious beliefs are akin to those of the people who live in the areas both north and south of them. The process of migration in the Himalaya is still going on. The Nepalese began migrating to Sikkim and to the neighbouring Darjeeling District about a hundred years ago. Indeed they constitute about 70 per cent of the population of Sikkim today. Recently they have begun to migrate to Bhutan. Since the flight of the Dalai Lama in 1959, there has been a steady migration of Tibetans (from all parts of Tibet) in large numbers to the Himalaya border countries south of Tibet. Agriculture is the principal occupation of the people in the lower parts of the Himalaya borderland. Animal husbandry is the principal occupation of the people in the upper parts. The agricultural groups in the lower parts supplement their income by subsidiary occupations such as fishing and hunting. The pastoral groups in the upper parts do so by trade. Land is, of course, most important to the agricultural groups, but they find cattle also a useful source of income. Livestock like sheep, goats, yaks, and ponies, which provide milk, meat, hide, wool, and transportation, play the most important role in their economy. Land is not all important to the pastoral groups. Among the agrarians, the extent of cultivable land owned by a man determines his socio-economic status; among the pastoro-traders, it is the number of livestock. The concept of property and its value varies from people to people according to their occupations.

Most of the southern groups are Hindus. Hence the influence of Indian culture is more pronounced there. Most of the northern groups are Buddhists. Hence the influence of Tibetan culture is more pronounced there. However, a dynamic synthesis of diverse influences, ranging from pre-Buddhist and pre-Hindu Bon culture to the cultures of India and Tibet, characterizes the contemporary Himalayan society.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE HISTORY

THE HIMALAYA border countries have always been an inseparable part of India geographically and culturally. They have been inseparable from India historically and politically as well. Assam, Nepal, Kumaun, Garhwal, Kulu, and Kashmir, for instance, find frequent mention in the epigraphs and literature of the early dynasties of North India (320 B.C.—A.D. 550). After the death of Harshavardhana (c. A.D. 605-47) of Kannauj in 647, however, a greater part of the upper Himalaya borderland from Assam to Kashmir came under the influence of Tibet. In his struggle to establish his supremacy in Central Asia, Songtsen Gampo (r. 630-49) of Tibet not only invaded China (in 635) but also a good many other neighbouring countries and made Tibet the supreme Power in Central Asia for nearly two centuries. During this ascendancy of Tibet in Central Asia Buddhist scholar-monks from India went to Tibet and laid the foundations of Buddhism in Tibet. Also, during this time, Tibetan influence set its unmistakable stamp on the lands in the entire upper Himalaya, and brought about a transformation of their cultural and ethnic structure.

During the eleventh and twelfth centuries the Muslims invaded North India and changed the political set-up there. All major States yielded under their pressure and collapsed one after another. Muhammad bin Bakhtiar Khalji, one of the commanders of the first Muslim dynasty founded by Qutubuddin Aibak in 1206, even attempted an invasion of

the Eastern Himalaya, especially Bhutan. Muhammad Shah Tughlak (r. 1325-51) made an invasion of the Western Himalaya, but he could not advance beyond the foothills, and the Himalaya maintained its frontier character. The Rajput princes, who migrated to the Central Himalaya after being deprived of their power in the plains, founded there a large number of independent principalities like the principality of Gorkha in the central-western hills of Nepal, fifty miles west of Kathmandu. Inevitably mediaeval Hindu culture and ethnic traditions swept the entire lower Central Himalaya, absorbing or transforming the cultural and ethnic complexion of the area. Most of the newly founded principalities in the Central Himalaya recognized the supremacy of the Sultans and Emperors of Delhi. The Mughals sought to freeze the Himalaya frontier, and established a feudatory relationship with most of the principalities in the Himalaya from Assam to Kashmir. Akbar (r. 1556-1605) brought Kashmir under his control in 1586. Jahangir (r. 1605-27) and Shah Jahan (r. 1627-58) tried to extend the frontier of the Mughal Empire up to Baltistan and Ladakh in order not to allow any invasion of Kashmir from Central Asia. Aurangzeb (r. 1658-1707) authorized the *subadars* (Governors) of the Province of Bengal to invade Assam repeatedly. One of these *subadars*, Mir Jumla, marched on Assam early in 1662. The peace treaty concluded in 1663 gave all territory west of the Bharali River to the Mughals. Ladakh was subdued and turned into a vassal State in 1665.

The apogee of Mughal power in India coincided with the re-emergence of Tibet under the spiritual and temporal leadership of Dalai Lama V (Ngawang Lobsang Gyatso, 1617-82) in 1642. Ladakh, which feared that it might be absorbed by Tibet, thought it expedient to forge closer links with Mughal power through the Mughal governor of Kashmir with a view to deterring Tibet, during the Ladakh-Tibet War of 1681-83. Tibet, however, had better success in Bhutan, where there was no Mughal power to deter it. It successfully intervened in the affairs of Bhutan in 1728-30, and

established its influence there.

The British sought to establish commercial relations in the countries beyond the Himalaya as soon as their conquests in India touched the foothills of the Eastern Himalaya in 1767. They did not, however, achieve much success till the Anglo-Nepalese War of 1814-15. This war was their first major breakthrough in the Himalaya, for it made the frontier of the British territories in Kumaun and Garhwal contiguous to that of Tibet. They opened trade channels through the Himalaya progressively for increased intercourse between India and the countries beyond the Himalaya. The special treaty relations which they established with the Punjab and Jammu and Kashmir between 1816 and 1870 enabled them to consolidate their position in the Western Himalaya and extend their influence to Central Asia. The need to check the growth of Russian influence in Central Asia and the isolationist nature of the policies of Tibet largely moulded British policy in the Himalaya. The British fought Tibet in 1888-89 (on Sikkimese territory) and 1903-04, and secured a buffer position for Tibet between India and Central Asia by three consecutive agreements with Tibet, China, and Russia on 7 September 1904, 27 April 1906, and 31 August 1907 respectively.

This situation in the Himalaya continued until the British withdrawal from India on 15 August 1947. Independent India entered into fresh treaty relations with Bhutan, Sikkim, and Nepal. It formulated a frontier policy based on both political and strategical considerations and consistent with the needs of planning and development in the Himalaya. Tibet came under the control of the People's Republic of China in the spring of 1951. This lent an element of urgency to India's need to understand the problems of its Himalaya frontier. China's aggressive activities along the entire Himalaya border after the summer of 1959 and its invasion of India in the winter of 1962 had a far-reaching impact on the course of history in the Himalaya.

NEFA

What is now called NEFA has been a part of Assam from time immemorial. According to tradition, ancient Assam touched the confines of South-West China. From the account by Yuan Chwang of his travels in the area we know that the northern limits of Kamarupa (ancient Assam, including Bhutan) extended much beyond the frontiers of modern Assam. The political instability in north-eastern India which followed the death of Bhaskaravarman (r. 605-50) of Kamarupa in 650 reduced ancient Assam to its present size.

With the decline of the Pala dynasty (770-942), Kamarupa suffered several invasions from the east and from the west. Sukapha (r. 1228-68) of the Tai kingdom of Mogaung/Mong Mao in North Burma conquered Upper Kamarupa in 1228 and thus became the founder and first ruler of the Ahom dynasty in Assam. It took his successors several centuries to establish their power over all the tribes of Eastern India like the Nagas, the Kacharis, and the Chutiyas. The relations of the Ahoms with these tribes started only after the conquest of the Chutiya country around Sadiya in the plains below in 1523-24 during the reign of Raja Suhungmung (r. 1497-1539). An officer, known as the *Sadiya Khowa Gohain* (Administrator of Sadiya), looked after the relations between the Ahoms and the tribes around Sadiya. The Darrang Raja, first installed during the Ahom-Mughal conflict in 1616, was appointed warden of the Ahom marches with Bhutan. He always took counsel from the Bar Phukan, Governor of Gauhati, in all important matters connected with the relations of the Ahoms with Bhutan.

The Ahoms, however, did not always have an easy time. The tribes strongly resented the loss of their traditional rights and privileges in the foothill villages and made frequent raids. The Ahoms found it no easy matter to punish them. Though equipped only with primitive arms like bows and arrows the tribes had the advantage of the wildness of the terrain of their hills. Often the Ahoms ignored these

disadvantages and marched on the northern hills. In spite of their superior forces and weapons they had to suffer heavy casualties and even defeat. They, therefore, developed a policy of conciliation by assigning to each tribe a certain number of *paiks* (tax-paying settlements) and giving it the right to realize from them a certain quantity of cereals, cloth, iron, and salt, called *posa*, as well as manual labour. They confirmed the rights of the Mishmis over the hills near the Dibang River and accepted in return a tribute including *tita* (a medicinal, poisonous herb) by an official deed of grant in the time of Raja Suhungmung. The Abor tribes, which did not receive any *posa*, received regular presents from the gold washers employed by the Ahom Government to extract gold from the riverine sands of the Abor hills. Peace in the foothill region was also ensured by specifying the passes by which the tribesmen could come down to the plains, and by erecting embankments along the foothills. The Ahoms also took armed action against refractory tribes whenever circumstances permitted. They received tribute from all frontier hill tribes as a token of their acknowledgment of Ahom sovereignty. The Bhotiya tribes, especially the Monpas, owed no allegiance to the Ahoms. The Monpas, with their stronghold at Tawang, were under the control of the abbot of the Tawang Monastery. The Sherdukpas, the people who lived in the hills between the two, were dependent on both the Ahoms and the Monpas.

Towards the end of the eighteenth century, there was a civil strife among the feudal chiefs. The Matakas, who were followers of the Moamaria Sect of Hinduism and who had been persecuted since 1750, also rose in rebellion. Taking advantage of the consequent instability in the area, the Burmese pressed westward under their king, Bodawpaya (r. 1781-1819), and conquered Assam. The British intervened, and this led to the First Anglo-Burmese War of 1824-26 and the eradication of all Burmese influence from Assam. By the peace treaty signed at Yandabo on 24 February 1826, the British annexed the whole of Lower Assam and parts of Upper Assam (like the strategic Matak and Sadiya areas

occupied by the Matak, the Khamptis, and the Singphos). They appointed a Political Agent to control the affairs of Upper Assam, and especially those of the tribes inhabiting the Sadiya frontier.

The British felt greatly handicapped in their dealings with the Khamptis and the Singphos in the east and with the Bhutanese in the west owing to the inadequacy of their knowledge of the northern tribes and of the topography of the region. It became clear to them that any military action that they might take against them would be not only futile but also disastrous. They, therefore, refrained from extending their jurisdiction over all the tribes around the northern districts of Assam, and maintained the *status quo* as regards the claims of the tribes and their own political relations with them. However, to promote close relations with the tribes, they developed a few trade marts along the administrative frontier at Sadiya, Mazbat (the present Charduar), and Udalgiri (Kariapara Duar). The free entry thus afforded to the tribesmen into the plains led to complications. For instance, the Dafla tribe claimed all the Miri posa-paying settlements that had sprung up in the adjacent British territory as a result of the security and stability ensured there.

Local British officers strongly advocated the permanent occupation and control of all frontier hill tracts. But both the Government of Bengal and the Government of India ruled it out. In their view, the problem before them was not so much one of effecting the permanent occupation of those frontier tracts as one of determining how and where the British advance was to be stopped. They preferred the path of conciliation and persuasion to that of coercion in their effort to bring the northern hill tribes within the framework of the British administration in Assam. The Government of Bengal was able to persuade the Dafla, Aka, and Bhotiya tribes (including the Monpas of the Dirang and Tawang tracts) in 1844 and 1853 to surrender their right to deal directly with the paiks and realize the posa due to them and made them accept lump-sum payments from the Government in lieu of posa. Further it promised annual subsi-

dies in kind to the Abor tribes by concluding three agreements with them in 1862, 1863, and 1866. It also encouraged the tribesmen to join the military and the police. It resorted to economic or military blockades only when absolutely necessary. John Lawrence, Governor-General of India (1864-69), warned in 1865 that if at any time it was found necessary to deploy troops in the hill areas beyond the administrative border, the troops would stay there only so long as they would be necessary for the attainment of the objective in view at the time and no longer.

There were many hostile confrontations between the Government and the tribes till 1873. In 1873, for the first time, the Government imposed a restriction on the free intercourse between the people of the hills and those of the plains by an administrative measure, the Eastern Frontier of Bengal Regulation I of 1873. An administrative line, called the Inner Line, marked off the northern areas from those under the effective control of the Government, and regulated the intercourse between the people of the hills and those of the plains for purposes of trade, collection of forest produce, and so on. Something had to be done to ensure the security of the British officers deputed to carry out explorations and surveys in the northern frontier tracts. In view of the hostile attitude of the Abor tribesmen towards the Survey parties in 1876-77, their interference with the trade route to Sadiya, and the Mishmi (Bebejiya/Chulikata) raids on the settlements in the plains in 1878-79, the Government established three advance outposts—at Nizamghat, Bomjur, and Bhisemnagar—in the Abor and Mishmi hills. It also prohibited the Padam tribesmen from coming down to Sadiya with arms on their persons.

The Assam administration created the post of a special officer in 1882 to deal with the tribes bordering Sadiya. This special officer, designated Assistant Political Officer, was given several important assignments, such as the locating of frontier outposts, the provision of supplies to these outposts, the superintendence of the arrangements for patrolling between them, and the regulation of the political relations

of the Government with the Abors and the Mishmis.

In 1906-07, the Assam administration advocated a forward policy in the region of the north-east frontier. The Government of India, however, permitted the Assistant Political Officer only to tour the frontier areas in the Abor and Mishmi hills. In 1911, the Government was faced with two major issues on this frontier: (1) the murder of Noel Williamson, Assistant Political Officer, and the slaughter of his party at Komsing by the Minyong tribesmen; and (2) sporadic Chinese incursions at some points on the northern border and the threat posed by them. It, therefore, adopted the forward policy which it had rejected in 1906-07.

The murder of Williamson reflected the persistently defiant attitude of the Abor tribes towards British authority. The Chinese had been sighted well within the borders of the Abor and Mishmi areas with Tibet. Although there was no doubt in the mind of the administration about the northern limits of the frontier hills, which also constituted the extent of the territory of India in that direction, lack of proper exploration and survey in the remote northern parts of those hills had so far prevented the Government from defining India's external frontier there in exact and explicit terms. In July 1909, the Political Officer in Sikkim cautioned the Government of India regarding the dangers inherent in leaving this frontier undefined and unascertained, and said that Tibet (or China from behind Tibet) might advance a claim to the whole or part of the areas beyond the Inner Line. The Government dispatched a strong punitive force called the Abor Expedition in 1911 both to punish the persons involved in Williamson's murder and to utilize the opportunity to survey, explore, and map as much of the north-eastern frontier country as possible.

Seized of the dangers of an undefined, unsurveyed frontier, the Government took up an intensive programme of survey and exploration in the Assam borderland with Tibet in 1911-13. Towards the close of this programme in 1913, Captains F. M. Bailey of the Foreign and Political Department of the Government of India and H. T. Morshead of

the Survey of India crossed the Dibang watershed into the Po region in the south-eastern part of Tibet and mapped the entire southern catchment area of the Tsangpo River up to Tsona Dzong of Tibet near the trijunction of Assam, Bhutan, and Tibet. The anxiety of the Government of India to mark off the areas under its jurisdiction from those under the jurisdiction of Tibet was not of recent origin. Ever since the British set foot in Assam in 1824, they had constantly made efforts to explore the frontiers of Assam and prepare topographical surveys of the frontier areas. Exploration in the Abor and the Mishmi country in the middle of the nineteenth century had greatly increased the geographical knowledge then available of the north-east frontier. The Survey of India had also started systematically collecting information on the topography of the areas on the frontier between Assam and Tibet.

On the basis of the maps prepared with the help of the topographical information thus gathered, the Government of India sought, in 1913-14, to negotiate the delimitation of the boundary between Assam and Tibet in the tripartite conference between India, Tibet, and China convened primarily to discuss the political status of Tibet *vis-a-vis* China. In February 1914, Henry McMahon, the British Plenipotentiary, sent to Lonchen Shatra, his Tibetan counterpart, two maps showing the common, traditional boundary between India and Tibet, extending from the Isu Razi Pass in Burma in the east to the trijunction of Assam, Bhutan, and Tibet in the west, along with an explanatory note. On 25 March, Shatra informed McMahon, in reply to his letter of the previous day, that the Government of Tibet had, after a careful study, agreed to "the boundary as marked in red in the two copies of the maps." This boundary was also accepted by the Chinese delegate, Ivan Chen, on 27 April. On 3 June, the British and Tibetan representatives signed the Convention along with the two maps attached to it, showing in red and blue respectively the external position of Tibet and the boundary between the inner and outer zones of Tibet. The boundary between India and Tibet was shown in red.

In 1935, in the context of the reappraisal made of the British administration in India on the occasion of the enactment of the Government of India Act of 1935, the Sadiya and Balipara Frontier Tracts were classified as Excluded Areas in view of their special conditions. The Political Officer of the Balipara Frontier Tract found, on a visit to Tawang in 1938, that in spite of Tawang's location south of the 1914 boundary line (and hence within India), officials of the Tsona Dzong of Tibet claimed the authority to collect taxes from the Monpas of the area and to exercise judicial control over them. When he told them that they had no such authority, the Tibetans first pleaded ignorance of the 1914 boundary agreement. Later they sought to explain their activities away by pointing out that they had been allowed to maintain estates like Mago south of the 1914 line. The frontier and political officers of the Government of India were hard put to it to explain to the Tibetans the true import of the 1914 agreement and to bring home to them that they had in fact been trespassing on the territory of India all those years. In October 1944, the Foreign Office of the Government of Tibet informed the Political Officer in Sikkim that much against the Chinese wish Tibet fully accepted the validity of the 1914 line.

Since Independence several changes have been effected in the administrative set-up of NEFA, both to facilitate welfare activities and to enable the people to have a greater voice in their affairs. Especially, the tribes inhabiting the area have received much greater attention, and this is partly manifested in the numerous anthropological studies made in recent years. In order to end the isolation of the area as well as to facilitate movement within it, a massive road-building programme is in progress.

The border between NEFA and Tibet is a part of the Sino-Indian border, which is under dispute. China has declared that it does not recognize the McMahon Line defined in the Simla Convention of 1914. In 1962 it dramatized its rejection of the line by ordering its army to march across it. In fact, the Chinese troops came right

down to the foothills, which mark the administrative boundary between Assam and NEFA. The cease-fire and the unilateral withdrawal of Chinese troops have not brought any nearer a settlement of the Sino-Indian dispute over the border alignment here.

BHUTAN

Bhutan did not have a separate status outside the political framework of India or Tibet in the early periods. According to both Bhutanese and Indian traditions, a line of Indian chiefs under the tutelege of Kamarupa ruled Bhutan up to the middle of the seventh century. Bhutan separated from Kamarupa after the death of Bhaskaravarman in 650, and thus exposed itself to incursions from Tibet. This began the process of the disintegration of Kamarupa and disturbed the political arrangement in the Eastern Himalaya.

The lamas who came to Bhutan from Tibet for missionary work from 1200 onwards exercised a measure of temporal control in Western Bhutan. Gyalwa Lhanangpa of the Nyo lineage, who was a student of Drikung Jigten Gonpo's, was perhaps the first to do so. It was from him that the Lhapa Kargyupa, a subsect of the Drikung Kargyupa, originated. The Lhapa Kargyupa applied the dzong system of Tibet to Bhutan, and became the chief rival of the Drukpa Kargyupa of Ralung.

When Phajo Dugom Shipgo and his five companions of the Drukpa Kargyupa came to Bhutan in the thirteenth century to claim the support of the Bhutanese chiefs for their sect, they found themselves pitted against the powerful adherents of the Lhapa Kargyupa. Phajo Dugom Shipgo was a student of Wonre Darma Sengge's (1177-1237). By his drive and energy he made the Drukpa Kargyupa the dominant sect of Bhutan. Towards the end of the thirteenth century, he built a small dzong on the right side of the upper Wang Chu and named it Dongon Dzong (Blue Stone Dzong). The majority of the aristocracy of Western Bhutan today claim descent from him. Pema Lingpa of

the fifteenth century, to whom the present royal dynasty traces its ancestry, was a member of his line.

Bhutan in the thirteenth century meant only Western Bhutan, and the rivalry between the various sects of the Buddhism of Tibet for supremacy there was the most significant aspect of its history of the time.

The Lhapa Kargyupa was still strong when Ngawang Namgyal (1594-1651), a scion of the house of Gya of Druk and Ralung and the head of the Drukpa Kargyupa, came to Bhutan in 1616. He destroyed what little authority the Lhapa Kargyupa and other sects still wielded, and established himself as the theocratic ruler of Bhutan with the title of *Shabdung Rimpoche* (or, as he is known in India, *Dharma Raja*).

When Ngawang Namgyal visited Thimphu, the people of the valley presented to him the Dongon Dzong in token of their acknowledgement of his supremacy. In 1641, he constructed another, larger dzong on the same site, and renamed it Tashi Cho Dzong (Good Luck Dzong). The Tashi Cho Dzong was repaired and renovated from time to time by the later rulers of the country, as parts of the Dzong were destroyed by fire several times. In 1960, Jigmi Dorji Wangchuk, the present king of Bhutan, conceived the idea of constructing a new dzong on the foundation of the old Tashi Cho Dzong, as the old structure had been damaged by a series of earthquakes. This new dzong is today the seat of the Government of Bhutan.

In his struggle for supremacy, Ngawang Namgyal faced opposition both from the hierarch of the Ralung Monastery, Pagsam Wangpo (1593-1641), a bastard brother of Dalai Lama V, and from the ruler of Tsang, Depa Tsangpa Phuntsok Namgyal. His success against all his internal rivals and the Tibetans greatly impressed his neighbours, and he received many friendly missions from the rulers of Cooch Bihar and Gorkha. The king of Ladakh granted him a number of villages in Western Tibet (such as Darchhen, Nyanri Gomba, and Zuthulphu Gomba around the holy Mount Kailas; Dengmar, Rimpung, Doba, Khorchag, and Ge

Dzong near Gartok and Itse Gompa; and a few other places) for purposes of meditation and worship there. Up to 1959, a Bhutanese monk officer, with the assistance of a layman, administered those villages from his summer headquarters at Darchhen and winter headquarters at Khorchag.

To attend to the general administration of the country, Shabdung Rimpoche Ngawang Namgyal created the office of *Desi* (Regent), known as *Deb Raja* in India. He introduced the dzong system in Bhutan, and appointed *Pon lops* (Chiefs) of Provinces and *Dzongpons* (Chiefs of Districts) to administer the country.

The investing of the supreme authority in two persons and the elective nature of the post of *Desi* greatly influenced the subsequent course of the history of Bhutan. Frequently, there were civil wars over the issue of succession to the office of Shabdung Rimpoche or over the question of the election or promotion of officers to higher posts, so that Bhutan hardly knew any internal peace until the creation of the hereditary monarchy in 1907.

During this period, there was trouble between Bhutan and Tibet. Dalai Lama V wanted to impose his will on the Bhutanese, who refused to recognize his authority over their remote valleys. In 1644, Gushri Khan sent his Mongol-Tibetan troops to Bhutan, but these troops had to retreat without achieving their objective. There was a Mongol-Tibetan expedition in 1648-49, and being pressed hard, Bhutan chose to negotiate and accepted a position of subordination in its relations with Tibet. The peace, however, did not last long; and in 1657 the Mongol-Tibetan troops came again and reached as far as Paro via Phari. But this time they suffered a really disgraceful defeat. According to legend, the invading Tibetans were set upon by bees hiving in the nearby wood. As the bee-stung Tibetans ran in pain and panic, their long hair became hopelessly entangled in the brambles of the undergrowth, where they fell easy prey to the counter-attacking Bhutanese. The armour and weapons captured from the Tibetans are still preserved in the old dzong at Paro, just above the present dzong. The historic

wood has now disappeared from the scene of this beautiful valley: the Bhutanese utilized it to build Bhutan's first air-field in 1968.

In 1728-30, there was a civil war over the question of succession to the office of Shabdung Rimpoche. The Tibetans seized this opportunity to intervene in Bhutanese affairs. Defying the wishes of important members of the Bhutanese clergy, the eighth Desi of Bhutan, Wang Paljor, installed his own chief councillor, Lama Chhole Namgyal, as Shabdung Rimpoche II. The high Bhutanese lamas retaliated by an appeal to arms. From his refuge in Lhuntse Dzong in North Bhutan, Desi Wang Paljor sought military support from Miwang Pholhane of Tibet. But he was hunted down and slain by the man who succeeded him. The high lamas thereupon reinstated their nominee and also appointed a new Desi. The two rival Bhutanese factions again clashed at a point north of Pangri Sampa near Thimphu. They were led respectively by the new Desi and by Dondub Gyalpo of Kabi. This time Pholhane intervened, and the frontier forces of Tibet crossed into Bhutan towards the end of 1730 and forced the Bhutanese to recognize Jigmi Dakpa as Shabdung Rimpoche II (1724-61). Panchen Lama II (Lobsang Yishi, 1663-1737), Karmapa Changchub Dorji, and the abbot of Sakya interceded with Pholhane and persuaded him to consent to an armistice. The terms of the armistice were negotiated at Paro, but the peace agreement was signed at Thimphu. The Bhutanese also undertook to station a representative in Lhasa to guarantee their fulfilling their obligations under the agreement. This custom, known as *Lochak*, lasted till the Chinese take-over of Tibet in the summer of 1951.

Not being able to expand in the east and the north, Bhutan tried to expand in the south and the west. It often made inroads upon Cooch Bihar, a buffer between Bengal and Bhutan, and occupied large tracts of territory along the foothills, especially after the death of the powerful Raja Nar Narayan (r. 1555-87) in 1587, the second and the most powerful among the rulers of Cooch Bihar. Raja Nar

Narayan had extended his sway over all Lower Assam and occupied the Bhutanese territory between the Hindola and Sankosh rivers. In the factional feuds in Cooch Bihar, Bhutan frequently supported the *Raiyat* (also called Raja) of Baikunthapur, hereditary chief minister of Cooch Bihar, against the *Nazir Dev* of Balrampur, hereditary commander-in-chief of Cooch Bihar. The Bhutanese established firm influence in the affairs of Cooch Bihar in 1711 after an uneasy compromise between Nazir Dev Shant Narayan and his ally, the Mughal subadar of Bengal, on the one hand, and Raiyat Darpa Dev and the Bhutanese on the other. The decline of the Mughal power in the early part of the eighteenth century enabled the Bhutanese to strengthen their position further in the affairs of Cooch Bihar. The Government of Bhutan even stationed an agent, *Gya Chila*, along with an escort in Cooch Bihar. It also struck the *Ngutam* (a silver coin of the value of a half-rupee) for circulation in Cooch Bihar. In 1766, Nazir Dev Rudra Narayan contrived the murder of the infant Raja Debendra Narayan (1764-66), then under Bhutanese protection. When the question of succession to the throne of Cooch Bihar came up, the Bhutanese not only put up a candidate, a step-brother of the late Raja's, but also compelled the Nazir Dev, who was intending to raise to the throne his own nephew Khagendra Narayan, to leave Cooch Bihar. The Nazir Dev thereupon sought the assistance of the Government of the East India Company against the Bhutanese.

The confusion in the south proved calamitous to Tenzin, Desi of Bhutan since 1765. In 1768, Shidar, who had served in high offices of State, became Desi. In 1770, he invaded Sikkim and occupied all the land east of the Tista River. The Bhutanese force, however, withdrew after a severe reverse at Phodong. In order to strengthen his position, Shidar forged alliances with Panchen Lama III (Palden Yishi, 1738-80) and Raja Prithvi Narayan Shah of Nepal (r. 1742-75). The alliances were forged largely to counter the growing threat from the East India Company to the security of the northern countries. The extensive

reconnaissance made by British surveyors on the frontiers of Bengal with Bhutan and Nepal and the frequent dispatch of British troops to the frontier regions in Assam had created uneasiness all round.

Under the leadership of Desi Shidar, the Bhutanese kept up their pressure upon Cooch Bihar. The Crown Prince of Cooch Bihar and the Queen of Raja Dhairjendra Narayan were kidnapped in 1771. The Raja himself was abducted in 1772. The Nazir Dev, therefore, approached the British for the second time for help against the Bhutanese. On 5 April 1773, he signed an agreement with the Company and undertook to pay immediately Rs 50,000 to the British Collector of Rangpur to defray the expenses of the troops sent to assist him, and subsequently to pay one half of the State revenues to the Company. Cooch Bihar thus entered into feudatory relations with the British for the first time. Warren Hastings, Governor-General of the Company (1772-85), who had already been convinced of the need to possess Cooch Bihar as it was within the natural boundaries of Bengal, accorded protection to Cooch Bihar at once by sending an expedition to drive away the Bhutanese. He thought that he could make certain other gains too at the expense of Bhutan in the event of the expedition being successful. The British drove the Bhutanese out of Cooch Bihar in the spring of 1773 and occupied their forts of Chicha, Daling, and Passakh.

While Desi Shidar was thus confronted by British troops on the border between Bhutan and Cooch Bihar, his ally Prithvi Narayan Shah, a foe of the British, called the attention of Panchen Lama III to the plight of Shidar and persuaded him to intercede with the British on behalf of the Bhutanese. In the meantime, taking advantage of his absence at Baxa Duar, which is one of the principal passes into Bhutan, for conducting operations against the British troops, the rival faction in Bhutan brought off a *coup d'etat*. Neither Prithvi Narayan Shah nor the Panchen Lama recognized the new regime in Bhutan. To relieve the dethroned Shidar from his unhappy engagement with the

British and to enable him to fight against the rebel regime, the Panchen Lama interceded on Shidar's behalf with Warren Hastings. The Panchen Lama's letter reached Calcutta on 29 March 1774. Hastings had then already received a communication from the new Bhutanese rulers soliciting peace, offering to give up the whole open country, and limiting their claim just to the woods and the lowlands below the foothills and to the freedom to trade duty-free as formerly with Rangpur. Hastings had made up his mind to cease his military operations against Bhutan on receiving this communication, but he now tried to make political capital out of the whole affair by announcing that his decision was due entirely to his regard for the Panchen Lama. He obviously calculated that to offer easy peace terms to Bhutan, ostensibly at the request of the Panchen Lama, was the best way to establish friendly relations with Tibet. Moreover, there was a report that Raja Chet Singh of Varanasi was in correspondence with the Panchen Lama. Hastings naturally thought that any unresponsive attitude on his part might make the Panchen Lama continue his diplomatic exchanges with the various rajas in India.

Thus, in anticipation of friendly relations with Tibet, Hastings concluded peace with Bhutan on 25 April 1774 at Fort William in Calcutta. The Bhutanese agreed to surrender the Raja of Cooch Bihar. In order to make a good impression upon Bhutan, Hastings returned to Bhutan a part of the disputed Duar territory on the border between Bhutan and Bengal. As he now had access to Bhutan and Tibet, he deputed two of his men, George Bogle and Alexander Hamilton, to visit both Bhutan and Tibet and explore the possibilities of trade in that direction as well as to obtain political intelligence. Another British mission went to Bhutan, under Samuel Turner, in 1783-84.

There was no further clash between Bhutan and the East India Company for nearly half a century. In 1826, the Bhutanese and the British again clashed on the question of the Duars. There were seven Duars on the border between

Assam and Bhutan. These Duars had once been the property of the Ahom rulers of Assam, and the Bhutanese had acquired them in the eighteenth century by undertaking to pay them in return an annual tribute consisting of a fixed number of yak-tails, ponies, and blankets, as well as a fixed quantity of musk and gold-dust.

In 1837-38, the Company sent a mission to Bhutan under Captain R. B. Pamberton to settle the disputes over the Assam Duars, but the effort came to nothing. In 1841, the Company decided to annex permanently all the Assam Duars and pay a sum of Rs 10,000 to Bhutan annually by way of compensation. The British felt annoyed with Bhutan for its sympathetic attitude towards the general uprising in India against British rule in 1857. To express their displeasure, they alleged that the Bhutanese had demanded an increase in the amount of the subsidy in 1854, but that they had turned down the demand peremptorily. There were frequent disturbances in the Assam and Bengal Duars on account of this strain in the relations between them. In 1863 the British sent Ashley Eden, who was then Secretary to the Government of Bengal, as their emissary to persuade the Bhutanese to enter into a relationship more acceptable from the British point of view. The Bhutanese were so angry with the British that they tried to prevent his coming. When he forced himself upon them, they not only dealt with him with discourtesy but also forced him to sign an agreement obligating the British to return all the Duars to Bhutan as well as all runaway slaves and political offenders. On Eden's return to Calcutta, the Government of India repudiated the agreement. On 22 November 1864, it also declared war on Bhutan. The Bhutanese fought hard, but were forced to make peace in the end. On 11 November 1865, they signed a treaty in Calcutta agreeing to free trade and conceding the right of the Government of India to arbitrate in all disputes that might arise between Bhutan on the one hand and Cooch Bihar and Sikkim on the other. They also allowed the Daleng/Kalimpong area to be attached to the British possessions in India. The Government of

India on its part agreed to pay Bhutan a subsidy of Rs 25,000 in the first year, Rs 35,000 in the second, Rs 45,000 in the third, and Rs 50,000 every year thereafter.

The British retained possession of the entire strip of the low, fertile country below the Bhutanese hills as well as the hilly tract of Daling or Damsang, which was co-extensive with the Western Duars, to the east of the Tista River. The country so annexed was formed into two districts: the Eastern Duars and the Western Duars. The Eastern Duars were later incorporated into the co-extensive Goalpara District of Assam. On 1 January 1867, the Daling tract was transferred to the Darjeeling District. On 1 January 1869, the Western Duars, together with the Morang strip below the Darjeeling hills, were made into a new district, the district of Jalpaiguri, which, until then, had no separate entity: it had been a part of the district of Rangpur.

Subsequent Bhutanese history is characterized by internal feuds, with group alignments changing frequently. The Tongsa Ponlop and the Paro Ponlop were major figures in the wrangles. Jigmi Namgyal (1825-81) became Tongsa Ponlop in 1853 and Desi in 1870. When he retired as Desi in 1873, he appointed his brother Kyitsalpa in his place. Kyitsalpa ruled till 1879. In the civil war in 1876, the Paro Ponlop, whose name was Tsewang Norbu, and the Punakha Dzongpon sought asylum at Kalimpong. The Government of India not merely gave them asylum and an allowance but also protected them by refusing to deliver them up on demand to Jigmi Namgyal on behalf of the *Lhengye Tso* (State Council of Bhutan). Jigmi Namgyal defeated Dzongpon Darlung Topgye, the strong man of Wangdi Phodang, and thus laid the foundations of the political power of the present royal dynasty.

Ugyen Wangchuk, who was Tongsa Ponlop from 1881 to 1907, was the son of Jigmi Wangchuk. Along with the Paro Ponlop (to whom he was related), he rebelled against the Desi, who was supported by Phuntsok Dorji and Alu Dorji, the Dzongpons of Punakha and Thimphu respectively. In the battle of Chang Limitang, fought immediately below

Thimphu on the right bank of the river in the summer of 1885, Phuntsok Dorji was killed. Alu Dorji fled to Tibet. Ugyen Wangchuk established himself so firmly that no significant civil or internecine strife occurred in Bhutan thereafter. Ngodub again came to fight in Ugyen Wangchuk's time but escaped to Baxa Duar, where the British had set up a military outpost. Thus, completely humiliated, Alu Dorji appealed to Dalai Lama XIII (Thubten Gyatso, 1876-1933) for help. Even this came to nothing. He died in Yatung after some time. There is a rumour that he committed suicide.

During the Anglo-Tibetan War of 1888-89, Bhutan did not give any assistance to Tibet. On the restoration of peace in 1890, the Chinese again began to take an interest in Bhutan, and, on the recommendation of Kwang Hsu, Assistant *Amban* (Resident) in Lhasa, the Emperor of China (1875-98) conferred upon the Tongsa Ponlop and the Paro Ponlop the titles of Chief and Deputy Chief of Bhutan respectively. In 1891 the *Amban* visited Paro and carried with him a letter, with the seal of the Emperor, for the Tongsa Ponlop.

The frontier officials of the Government of India viewed with great concern the steady growth of China's influence in Bhutan. Alleging that the Bhutanese had committed certain outrages in certain villages on the Goalpara border, the Government of India suspended the payment of its annual subsidy to Bhutan. Soon, however, the two Governments resumed friendly relations, and in 1894 the Government of India paid the subsidy in full. This was largely due to the good offices of Ugyen of Ha, the Bhutanese Agent at Kalimpong in India. The British military expedition to Tibet in 1903-04 under Colonel F. E. Younghusband received considerable support from Bhutan. Ugyen Wangchuk, the Tongsa Ponlop, assured full co-operation to the British and allowed a part of Western Bhutan to be surveyed for a road up the Amo Chu. Later, along with Lama Kunsang, a relative of his, he accompanied the British expedition to Lhasa. The great respect in which these Bhutanese leaders

were held there helped Younghusband in getting a convention signed by the high monks and senior officials of the Government of Tibet on 7 September 1904. The Government of India conferred the insignia of the Knight Commander of the Indian Empire on Ugyen Wangchuk in recognition of his services to the British mission of 1903-04.

In contrast, Dao Paljor, the Paro Ponlop, exhibited a hostile attitude. He is reported to have instructed his frontier officers: "If the Sahibs come with but few soldiers, you must beat them, and turn them out, and do whatever is necessary. If they come with many soldiers, I will send a high officer from here with soldiers to oppose them."

The Shabdung Rimpoche and the Desi died in 1903 and 1904 respectively. Yishi Ngodub (1851-1917), who was then *Je Khempo* (Lord Abbot), briefly held both offices (1904-7). However, in practice, Ugyen Wangchuk managed all temporal affairs with the help of the State Council. The Bhutanese dignitaries, high lamas and lay chiefs, deliberated together and elected Ugyen Wangchuk, the most influential chief among the contenders for the office of Desi, as the hereditary *Druk Gyalpo* (King of Bhutan), called the *Maharaja* of Bhutan in India. For some time, a few local chiefs, who owed allegiance to Dao Paljor, the Paro Ponlop (who was Ugyen Wangchuk's erstwhile adversary), remained practically independent. *Druk Gyalpo* Ugyen Wangchuk (r. 1907-28) won the loyalty of all the chiefs after the death of Dao Paljor. *Je Khempo* Yishi Ngodub died in 1917.

From the first *Druk Desi*, who was appointed by the first Shabdung Rimpoche himself, down to 1904, a long line of fifty-six ecclesiastical and lay regents ruled Bhutan. Up to the time of *Desi Shidar*, the regents were all ecclesiastics. The first regent was a lama of the hierarchical rank of *umze*.

What happened in Tibet in the post-1904 period affected Bhutan as well, for no sooner had Chao Erh-feng, Warden of the Szechwan Marches with Tibet, occupied Lhasa early in February 1910 and compelled Dalai Lama XIII to seek refuge in India than he laid claim to Bhutan along with

Nepal and Sikkim. He even tried to lure the Bhutanese with the promise of Chinese aid against the "wicked, aggressive" foreigners. In view of this Chinese effort to bring Bhutan within its sphere of influence the Government of India thought it expedient to persuade Bhutan to revise the 1865 treaty. The revised treaty, which was signed on 8 January 1910, enjoined the Government of India to abstain from interference in the internal affairs of Bhutan. Further, Bhutan was obligated to abide by the advice of the Government of India in the conduct of its external relations. The Government of India raised its annual subsidy to Bhutan from Rs 50,000 to Rs 100,000. It also paid Rs 200,000 annually to Bhutan in lieu of the excise collected on the goods traded between Assam/Bengal and Bhutan.

When the British left India in 1947, Bhutan was autonomous. The British control over it had been tighter than over Nepal and lighter than over Sikkim. Towards the end of 1948 a Bhutanese delegation visited India to discuss Bhutan's relations with the Government of India. India agreed to respect Bhutan's internal autonomy on condition that Bhutan maintained the same relationship with independent India as it had maintained with British India. Druk Gyalpo Jigmi Wangchuk (r. 1928-52), second in the line, renewed Bhutanese connexion with India by signing a 10-Article treaty on 8 August 1949, and agreed "to be guided by the advice of the Government of India" in the conduct of its external affairs in return for India's pledge not to interfere in Bhutan's internal affairs. India also agreed to pay Bhutan a subsidy of Rs 500,000 a year, and returned to it the 32-square-mile Dewangiri area, which now forms the south-eastern tip of Bhutan. The other Articles of the treaty related to free import by Bhutan, with the approval of the Government of India, from or through India, arms, ammunition, and machinery required for the development of Bhutan. The Government of Bhutan also undertook neither to export those items nor to allow any private individual to do so. The 1949 treaty, however, had no clause relating to Bhutan's defence; nor did it make India's advice in the

matter of foreign affairs binding on Bhutan.

Cordial and friendly relations have subsisted between Bhutan and India since the 1949 treaty. Druk Gyalpo Jigme Dorji Wangchuk (r. 1952—), third in the line, visited India in the summer of 1954. Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru of India visited Bhutan in September 1958. In September 1959, a Bhutanese delegation headed by Jigmi Dorji of Ha visited New Delhi to discuss with the Government of India the development needs of Bhutan. After much discussion on the subject of aid, India paid Bhutan a sum of Rs 150,000,000 by way of aid. King Jigme Dorji Wangchuk again visited New Delhi, in February 1961, especially to discuss Indo-Bhutanese relations and Bhutan's defence and economic development.

Indo-Bhutanese relations have been put to a great strain in recent years, especially after the Sino-Indian border conflict exposed Chinese designs in the Himalaya, including Bhutan. Whereas, in a public address in Bhutan on 23 September 1958, Prime Minister Nehru ruled out any pressure from India's side on Bhutan which might impair the independent status of Bhutan, China published maps showing an area of at least 300 square miles of Bhutanese territory as China's. When India protested to China against this cartographic aggression, China replied that it respected the proper relations between India and Bhutan. However, Nehru, realizing the implications of the Chinese stand, stated categorically in the Lok Sabha on 28 August 1959 that the protection of the territorial integrity and borders of Bhutan was the responsibility of the Government of India and that India would regard any aggression on Bhutan as an aggression on India.

The internal situation of Bhutan, peaceful since King Jigme Dorji Wangchuk's accession on 28 October 1952, was disturbed with the assassination of Jigmi Dorji of Ha on 5 April 1964 by an agent of the Deputy Chief of the Army Staff, Da Tsap (Lieutenant-Colonel) Namgyal, an uncle of the King. Da Tsap Namgyal had shared the responsibility of administering the country in the King's absence in Swit-

zerland. A number of Bhutanese officers attempted a *coup d'état* in December 1964. They later escaped to Nepal and are endeavouring to return to power in Bhutan. There is no doubt that the King is exceedingly loved and respected by the people, but there will be no durable peace so long as the feudatories, who largely control the political situation of Bhutan, continue their intrigues. In the summer of 1963 the Druk Gyalpo assumed full regal dignity and permitted his being referred to as His Majesty the King of Bhutan.

SIKKIM

✓ Sikkim does not appear in the historical complex of the Himalaya border countries until the early 1640s. The history of Sikkim before 1642 is the history of the Lepcha people. Phuntsok Namgyal (1604-70), the first to be consecrated ruler of Sikkim with the title of *Chogyal* (Religious King) by the three lamas of the three Nyingma sub-sects in 1642, brought all Lepchas under one authority. He organized the first centralized administration in the country and created twelve dzongs — namely Lassu, Dallom, Yangthang, Gangtok, Rhenok, Barmiak, Tashiding, Song, Libing, Maling, Simik, and Pandom — each under a Lepcha dzongpon belonging to one of the leading Lepcha families of the country. ✓

In the time of Chagdor Namgyal (1686-1716), the third ruler of Sikkim, there were fratricidal wars between members of the royal family which resulted in loss of territory for the kingdom. In 1700 Pedit Wangmo, the elder half-sister of Chagdor Namgyal, fell out with him and sought the help of Bhutan in her scheme to dethrone him and if possible to murder him. The Bhutanese invaded and occupied Sikkim as far west as Rabdantse. Chagdor Namgyal, who was a minor, fled to Tibet and lived as an exile there for eight years — that is till 1708. The Government of Tibet evinced great interest in Chagdor Namgyal, and even granted him estates near Shigatse and Lake Yamdok in Southern Tibet; but it did not show any special inclination to help Chagdor Namgyal immediately, and contented itself by ask-

ing Bhutan to leave Sikkim alone. In 1708 the Bhutanese decided to evacuate the part of Sikkim which lies to the west of the Tista River, except certain south-east areas near and extending up to the Tagona La. Thus Sikkim lost the bulk of an area called *Mon lung kha zi*, which now forms part of the subdivision of Kalimpong.

To secure the eastern border of the country against the increasing Bhutanese raids across it, Gyurmi Namgyal (1707-33) built extensive fortifications there. He conscripted a large number of the Lepchas to work on these fortifications. The Lepchas revolted against the conscription policy. The Lepcha revolt continued during the reign of Namgyal Phuntsok (1733-80) as well.

After Gyurmi Namgyal's death, a dispute arose regarding the succession between the Bhotiyas and the Lepchas, with the latter supporting the title of Namgyal Phuntsok. It continued for five years. At last Rabden Sherpa, a Tibetan who held charge of the administration during the interregnum, reached an agreement with the Lepchas which confirmed Namgyal Phuntsok on the throne of Sikkim and gave the Lepchas a greater share in the administration of the country. He also took in hand the codification of the laws of Sikkim and levied land tax on all the homesteads in the country. There was a Lepcha uprising in 1752 against the policies of the administration, but it was quickly put down. The loyalty of the Lepchas was won gradually, but steadily in subsequent years.

The internal instability in Sikkim coincided with the rise of Desi Shidar in Bhutan and Raja Prithvi Narayan Shah in Nepal in the late 1760s. Bhutan invaded Sikkim in 1770 and occupied all territory east of the Tista River. In 1773-74 Nepal occupied Sikkimese territory west of the Tista. A treaty concluded in 1775 fixed the boundary between Sikkim and Nepal at the Sango Chu, Sangdi Dzong, Malliyang, and the Lha Chu (the sacred Kankai River), a western tributary of the Mechi River, and also settled all outstanding issues relating to trade and commerce between Sikkim and Nepal. Notwithstanding the treaty of 1775, the Gorkhas again

occupied Ilam on the Kankai River and Taple Dzong on the left bank of the Tamar River in 1788. Damodar Pande, the Gorkha General, also occupied the whole lower Tista basin, including the Morang along the foothills of the Sikkim Himalaya, in 1788-89. Tenzin Namgyal (1769-93), the sixth ruler of Sikkim, escaped to North Sikkim to reassemble his troops and to solicit aid from Tibet. Tibet, which was already involved in a conflict with Nepal, could render no assistance. Eventually, the Chinese, who came to the rescue of Tibet, imposed a harsh treaty on Nepal in 1792. They annexed the Chumbi Valley to Tibet, making the Chola-Jelep range the northern and eastern boundary of Sikkim. On the western side they let the Gorkhas keep all of the Sikkimese area between the Tamar River and the Singali La ridge. Tenzin Namgyal's successors blamed Bhutan for the trouble between Sikkim and Nepal. According to Bhutanese tradition, Bhutan offered to help Sikkim, but Sikkim did not accept the offer. After the rupture between Nepal and Tibet in 1788, the Swayambhunath Temple in Kathmandu came under the protection of the Shabdung Rimpoche of Bhutan, who was then most friendly with Nepal.

Sikkim finally turned to the British for help against the Gorkhas. Owing to Sikkim's strategic importance, the British sought its co-operation in their war with Nepal in 1814-15. By a treaty signed at the end of the war, Nepal surrendered to the British the Morang lowland, which had originally been a part of Sikkim but which had been annexed by Nepal in 1788-90. The British Political Agent on the Purnia frontier, by an agreement with the representative of Sikkim at Titaliya on 10 February 1817, restored to Tsugphu Namgyal (1800-83) the southern part of Sikkim which had been under the occupation of Nepal. The British, however, reserved to themselves the right to arbitrate in any dispute that might arise between Sikkim and Nepal.

Sikkim now had security against external aggression, but it had no respite yet from its old internal feuds. The Lepchas, who had been in the vanguard of the struggle against the Gorkha invaders, were opposed to the domina-

tion of the Bhotiyas. The ruler and his group went so far as to accomplish the assassination of a Lepcha minister in 1827. Thereupon, feeling insecure, hundreds of Lepchas migrated to the Ilam area of Eastern Nepal. With the connivance of the Gorkhas, they frequently raided Western Sikkim and caused several border disputes between Nepal and Sikkim. In pursuance of the terms of the 1817 treaty, Sikkim referred the matter for arbitration to the Governor-General of the East India Company, who deputed J. W. Grant, who was Commercial Resident at Malda, and Captain George William Aylmer Lloyd, who commanded the British frontier force at Titaliya, to look into the matter and make an award. As a result of their intervention, the Lepcha invaders of Eastern Nepal were compelled to return to Nepal. A small community of Lepchas, descendants of those emigrants, is still there in Eastern Nepal.

Grant and Lloyd availed themselves of this tour in the southern hills of Sikkim to select a suitable site for a sanatorium for British troops as well as a base for the pursuit of British commercial and political interests in the Eastern Himalaya. Their choice fell on the Darjeeling hill. The British Government offered to buy the site or to exchange some other area for it, but Sikkim appeared reluctant to part with it. However, having regard to the constant need for British help and protection in putting down the Lepchas and the uncertain attitude of Tibet, Tsugphu Namgyal changed his mind. He presented to the British Government on 1 February 1835, in the language of the grant deed, "all the land south of the Great Rangeet River, east of the Balasun, Kahel, and Little Rangeet rivers, and west of the Rungno and Mahanadi rivers." Instead of an equivalent tract in exchange, the British Government sanctioned an annual subsidy of Rs 3,000 as compensation to Sikkim in 1841. It increased it to Rs 6,000 in 1846.

The territory thus ceded to the British later became the nucleus of the district of Darjeeling. The British Government first placed it under a Superintendent who, besides the administration and development of Darjeeling, held charge

of British political relations with Sikkim.

In 1850, the British annexed the Sikkim Morang and the portion of the Sikkim hills bounded by the Ramman River on the north, by the Great Rangit and the Tista on the east, and by Nepal on the west. The designation of the Superintendent was changed to that of Deputy Commissioner in 1850.

During 1839-61, when A. Campbell, who was earlier Assistant Resident in Kathmandu, was Superintendent of Darjeeling, the relations between the British and Sikkim deteriorated. Darjeeling provided numerous facilities for free trade both in mercantile commodities and in labour; its extensive forest lands, which could be reclaimed for cultivation, attracted large numbers of the Lepchas and the Nepalese to migrate and settle there. Such developments not only threatened the privileges traditionally enjoyed by certain Bhotiya families of Sikkim—for instance, their monopoly of trade in this part of the Himalaya—but also disturbed the age-old population balance and intertribal relations in Sikkim. The presence of the British so close to Sikkim also became a source of embarrassment in Sikkim's relations with Bhutan, Nepal, and Tibet. In 1844 the ruler of Sikkim and the Paro Ponlop of Bhutan clashed at Phari in Tibet. The Government of Tibet gave vent to its displeasure by restricting the Sikkim ruler's visits to Lhasa to one in eight years, as also by curtailing the grazing rights that the Sikkimese on the border had always enjoyed in Tibet. In 1847, therefore, the ruler of Sikkim appointed as his Chief Minister one Tokhang Namgyal, a Tibetan of strong anti-British convictions. Tokhang Namgyal was also a relative—the husband of an illegitimate daughter—of the ruler. On account of his advancing age, Tsugphu Namgyal left all State affairs to the management of Tokhang Namgyal.

In 1848 Tokhang Namgyal refused permission to J. D. Hooker, a noted British botanist, to explore Sikkim. When, however, Campbell, the Superintendent, threatened to report the matter to the Governor-General, he gave in. In November 1849 he ordered the arrest of Campbell and Hooker who had been travelling in Sikkim with the permission of

Tsugphu Namgyal. This arrest, which occurred near the border between Sikkim and Tibet, was meant to show his resentment of the British rejection of the Sikkimese demand that they should stop collecting tax in the Sikkim Morang. He was also unhappy with them for settling a number of Nepalese on the Sikkimese side of the border between Darjeeling and Sikkim, for allowing the entry of merchandise from Sikkim into Darjeeling, and for refusing to surrender certain fugitives from Sikkim. However, finding no support for his action from either Tsugphu Namgyal or the Tibetans, he released Campbell and Hooker on 24 December 1849, six weeks after their seizure. The British Government retaliated by annexing the Sikkim Morang and the hill tract around Darjeeling bounded by the Ramman River on the north, by the Great Rangit and the Tista on the east, and by Nepal on the west, and by suspending the payment of its annual subsidy of Rs 6,000. Thus Darjeeling ceased to be an enclave in Sikkimese territory.

In 1860, in retaliation for the kidnapping of British subjects in violation of the 1817 treaty, Campbell laid siege to the Sikkimese area between the Ramman and the Rangit. He suffered unexpectedly heavy casualties, and was obliged to retreat from Rinchingpong in Sikkim and fall back on Darjeeling. To avenge the disgrace, the British Government dispatched a strong military force under Colonel J. C. Gawler, accompanied by Ashley Eden as Envoy and Special Commissioner, early in 1861. Tokhang Namgyal fled Tumlang, then capital of Sikkim. Tsugphu Namgyal abdicated in favour of his son, Sidkyong Namgyal (r. 1861-74), who accepted peace on British terms. These terms included recognition by Sikkim of the British protectorate over Sikkim and of the right of the Government of India to construct roads through Sikkim to the Tibetan border, the banishment of Tokhang Namgyal and his relations to Tibet, and the transfer of the seat of Government from Chumbi in Tibet to Sikkim for at least nine months in a year. Matters relating to trade and extradition were also settled to the satisfaction of the British. The peace treaty, signed in Tum-

lang on 28 March 1861, embodied all these provisions.

The Government of India was now in a position to annex Sikkim, but did not do so as it did not wish to involve itself in any conflict with Tibet, which had a claim to Sikkim. The 1861 treaty checked Tibetan influence in Sikkim for a time. Sidkyong Namgyal visited Darjeeling in March 1873 and met George Campbell, Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal (1871-74). He was also able to settle Sikkim's disputes with Bhutan over grazing rights to mutual satisfaction.

In 1874, Sidkyong Namgyal passed away. Tokhang Namgyal thereupon decided to install Thinle Namgyal, half-brother of the deceased ruler, on the throne. He denounced the treaty provisions, especially those relating to the right of the Government of India to construct roads, the large-scale influx of Nepalese settlers, and the farming out of Sikkimese copper mines to Nepalese merchants from Darjeeling. Meanwhile John Ware Edgar, Deputy Commissioner of Darjeeling, who had been deputed to investigate the possibility of re-establishing British trade with Tibet, brought to the notice of the Bengal administration, on his return from a visit to the border between Tibet and Sikkim in 1873, a communication addressed by the Chinese Amban in Lhasa to the ruler of Sikkim, calling upon him not to encourage road-building in his territory and to prevent British officers from crossing the border into Tibet. Although these were grave provocations, the British overlooked them in view of Edgar's other favourable observations and the conclusion of a Sino-British convention at Chefoo (in China) on 13 September 1876. A road was constructed through Sikkim to the Jelep La on the Tibetan border. In 1878, Ashley Eden, Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, proposed to Thutob Namgyal (r. 1874-1914), the tenth ruler of Sikkim, an arrangement limiting Nepalese settlement to the south of a line drawn across Sikkim from the east to the west just a few miles to the north of Gangtok, the capital of Sikkim. An influential section of the Bhotiyas of Sikkim vehemently opposed this arrangement; there were riots at Rhenok between the Bhotiyas and the Nepalese in 1880.

However, Dorji Lupon, Abbot of the Phodong Monastery, and A. W. Paul, Deputy Commissioner of Darjeeling, were able to restore peace by their joint efforts. The proposal was also slightly modified to make it acceptable to all concerned.

Thutob Namgyal, who had risen to power with British support, could not stand up to the pressure of the anti-British Bhotiyas and Tibetans. Early in 1886, he abruptly disavowed his subordination to the Government of India, as enjoined by the 1861 treaty. In the same year the British sent a mission to Tibet under one Colman Macaulay, who was Secretary to the Government of Bengal at that time, to explore the possibilities of trade with that country. The mission, however, withdrew from Tibet without completing its work in deference to the wishes of the Chinese. No sooner had the mission withdrawn than the Tibetans occupied a strip of the territory of Sikkim south of the Jelep La, nearly twenty miles deep. Thutob Namgyal, in tune with the anti-British sentiment then obtaining, condoned the Tibetan action instead of protesting against it.

Unable to invoke the 1861 treaty in the face of this attitude of Thutob Namgyal, the Government of India opted for a military solution of the situation. It commenced its operations early in March 1888, and drove the Tibetans out of Lingtu by September. It appointed a Political Officer at Gangtok in June 1889, to serve at first as its observer on the Tibetan frontier and eventually as its representative in Bhutan and Tibet.

The first Political Officer, J. C. White of the Public Works Department of the Government of Bengal, reorganized the entire system of administration in Sikkim. He created a three-member State Council to advise Thutob Namgyal in the administration of the State. He also conducted land and mineral surveys, settled unoccupied waste land and the land occupied by the monasteries, and made forests the exclusive property of the State Government. Thutob Namgyal, however, continued to defy the Government of India and tried to flee to Tibet through East Nepal

in the spring of 1892. But before he could reach Walung, close to the Nepalese-Tibetan border, the Nepalese authorities, who were friendly to the British, were able to intercept him. The Government of India relieved him of his administrative functions as a punishment, and kept him under surveillance at Kurseong in the Darjeeling District till November 1895. It asked White to administer Sikkim with the assistance of the State Council. It was not until 1918 that Sikkim was able to regain its autonomy.

In order to settle certain issues between Sikkim and Tibet, the Government of India entered into negotiations with the Chinese Amban in Tibet. The Amban insisted that Sikkim should recognize its *de jure* dependence on Tibet and China. This was totally unacceptable to the Government of India. The Chinese finally recognized the British protectorate over Sikkim, and consented to the discontinuance by Sikkim of the practice of sending presents to Tibet. On 7 March 1890, the Viceroy, Lord Lansdowne, and the Amban, Sheng Tai, signed at Darjeeling a convention which made the Government of India solely responsible for the internal and external affairs of Sikkim and recognized the upper waters of the Tista River system as marking the boundary between Sikkim and Tibet. The British also secured on 5 December 1893 a supplementary agreement—Trade Regulations, 1893—concerning Indo-Tibetan trade.

As Tibet was not a party to these agreements, it violated the border agreed upon in them just to show that it was not bound by them. The British, therefore, decided in the summer of 1894 to appoint, in consultation with the Chinese, a joint boundary commission to demarcate the boundary on the ground. In April 1895, a British party led by White reached the border to start the work of demarcation, but as the Chinese and the Tibetans did not turn up, it returned disappointed. The relations between Tibet and the British went on worsening. Finally, in 1903, the British sent a military expedition to Tibet under Colonel F. E. Younghusband. The expedition went as far as Lhasa and got Tibet to sign a convention on 7 September 1904 which embodied,

among other things, the Tibetan endorsement of the boundary between Sikkim and Tibet as defined in the Anglo-Chinese convention of 1890 as also of the commercial rights that the British had secured in Tibet through the Trade Regulations, 1893.

There occurred no important event until the British withdrawal from India and the consequent lapse of British paramountcy over Sikkim in the summer of 1947. Pending negotiations for a fresh or modified treaty spelling out precisely the nature and extent of its relations with independent India, Sikkim signed a standstill agreement which continued the same old relations between Sikkim and the Government of India.

The British had always classed Sikkim as a princely State like many other States of India such as Bashahr, Manipur, and Patiala. Owing, however, to its strategic position on the Indo-Tibetan frontier, they had made it the charge of the External Affairs Department of the Government of India. This was in contrast to the status they had accorded to Manipur: they had made Manipur, though also a frontier State, the charge of the Political Department of the Government of India in view of the fact that the country across the border was Burma, then a British possession. On 5 December 1950, India's Political Officer in Sikkim and the Maharaja of Sikkim signed a treaty at Gangtok. This treaty, which seems to have taken due account of Sikkim's geographical and strategic border position, re-established Sikkim as a protectorate of the Government of India with autonomy in internal affairs "subject to the provisions of the Treaty." It put Sikkim's external relations, defence, and strategic communications under the control of the Government of India and entitled Sikkim to receive from India a subsidy of Rs 300,000 a year "so long as the terms of this Treaty are duly observed by the Government of Sikkim." It accorded to Sikkim the same status in relation to independent India as that it had had in relation to the British authorities in pre-Independence India.

As a princely State of India, Sikkim had been under the

paramountcy of the British Crown. The Government of India would have been within its rights if it had insisted that Sikkim, like other princely States of India, should accede to the Indian Union. In fact, in the early years of India's Independence, the more vocal among the democratic elements in Sikkim, led by the Sikkim State Congress, wanted Sikkim to merge with the Indian Union. They had also campaigned for a gradual extension of the Indian Constitution to the State, as well as for a representation to the State in India's Parliament on the pattern of Jammu and Kashmir.

Since 1947 Sikkim has witnessed the growth of a strong movement for the democratization of the State. The socio-political set-up of the country is such that, despite being a minority, the Bhotiyas control the Government and own large landholdings. This is naturally disliked by the people of Nepalese origin, who constitute the major part of Sikkim's population. They are, therefore, in the vanguard of the movement for the democratization of the country. The movement, initially inspired by the Indian struggle for freedom, has slowly gathered momentum. In May 1949, under its aegis, there was a major demonstration against the Maharaja at Gangtok. The objective was to persuade him to concede a democratic set-up for the country. India also intervened in the matter, and a popular Ministry was formed. The Ministry was dismissed not long after for various reasons, and a senior Indian official appointed to act as *Diwan* (Chief Minister) in the State. In 1962, consequent of the trouble on the Sikkimese-Tibetan border, a State of Emergency was declared, and all powers were vested in the Maharaja, the Chogyal of Sikkim.

The British at first made it a practice to refer to the ruler of Sikkim as *Sikkimpati* (Lord of Sikkim). It is possible that they had in mind the Nepalese practice, initiated by Raja Prithvi Narayan Shah and continued by his successors. Later they started using the title *Maharaja* as for the other rulers of princely States in India.

NEPAL

Tradition reserves the name *Nepal* to the towns of Kathmandu, Bhatgaon, and Patan in the Bagmati Valley. The whole area known today as Nepal acquired that name only after it was conquered by the Gorkhas in the second half of the eighteenth century.

The *Vamshavilas*, which give genealogical accounts of the royal houses of Nepal, speak of a time when the central valley was totally submerged in water. A more or less systematic history starts only with the establishment of political authority by the first Kirat King of Nepal about 600 B.C. The Kirats ruled over the Bagmati Valley till some time in the first century A.D., and they were followed by the Lichchhavis, who initiated the Nepal era in A.D. 100. The first phase of Lichchhavi rule did not last long, owing perhaps to the rise of the imperial Gupta dynasty in Magadh (South Bihar, south of the Ganga) in the beginning of the fourth century. Initially, the Guptas sought support from the Lichchhavis. That they did so is evident from the prominence given to the marriage of the Lichchhavi Princess Kumaradevi to Chandragupta (-320), founder of the Gupta Empire. Indeed there are representations of that event on the gold coins struck during the reign of Chandragupta. Gradually, however, the Lichchhavis lost their importance. And in the time of Samudragupta (320-75), they were just vassals allowed to enjoy a measure of internal autonomy.

Manadeva (462-505) took advantage of the decline in the Gupta power and overthrew the Gupta yoke. His dominions extended even beyond the Bagmati Valley. Even though his kingdom did not extend south of the Tarai, his strong position in Nepal seems to have contained the expansionism of the later Gupta and Maukhari kings of the Ganga basin. His achievements in various spheres are found recorded in an inscription on a pillar at Changunarayan near Kathmandu. His successors, however, were weaklings, and power passed into the hands of their *Mahasamanta* (High

Feudatory). Mahasamanta Amshuvarman (593-609) went so far as to install a puppet ruler, Manadeva II. He gradually concentrated all power in himself, and in 609 openly assumed the royal title.

Amshuvarman's reign (609-36) constitutes one of the brightest periods in the history and culture of ancient Nepal. His own numerous coins and inscriptions and the account of his rule left by Yuan Chwang, the famous Chinese traveller who spent many years at Vaishali in North Bihar, speak highly of his military and administrative genius. He subdued the chieftains in the eastern and southern parts of the kingdom and commanded their loyalty. The borders of his kingdom touched the Tarai.

The nature of his relations with Tibet, which had just entered upon an empire-building phase under King Songtsen Gampo, is rather obscure. It may, however, be stated that in spite of attempts by Tibet to expand southwards, there is no evidence to suggest Amshuvarman's acceptance of any kind of subordination to Tibet.

After Amshuvarman's death, the Lichchhavis recovered control over Nepal, but they could not resist the Tibetan thrust from the north. With the growth of close relations between Nepal and Tibet, Nepal became well known to China as well. In 647-48, the combined forces of Nepal and Tibet avenged an insult offered by the chief of Tirabhukti/Tirhut (who, according to certain exaggerated Chinese accounts, had usurped Harsha's throne) to a Chinese embassy under Wang Hiuen-tse to Harsha's court. There were, however, certain exceptions to the general cordiality in the relations between Nepal and Tibet. In 703-05, Tibet made an attempt to absorb certain districts bordering Nepal; Nepal frustrated it. The Tibetan ruler was killed in an encounter by the Nepalese ruler Shivadeva II (640-705), who was related by marriage to the Maukhari King as well as King Harsha of Assam.

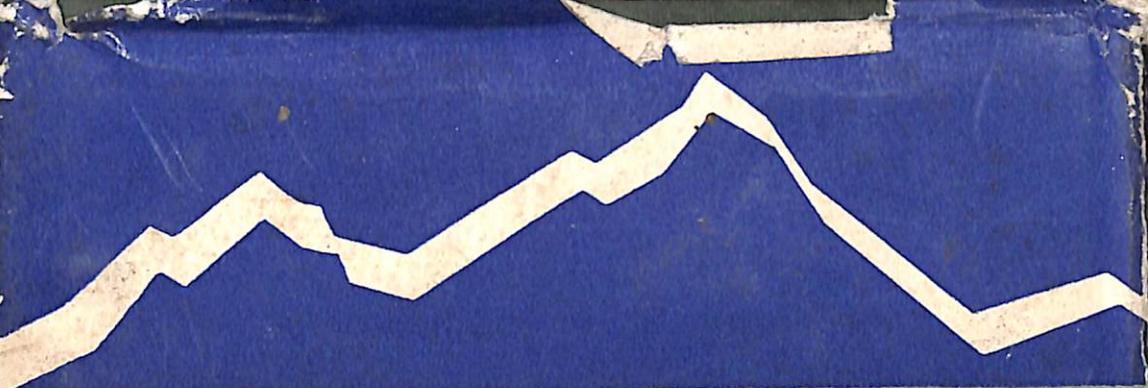
The second phase of the Lichchhavi ascendancy in Nepal ended towards the close of the twelfth century, when a series of convulsions shook the kingdom. The Mallas

succeeded in establishing their rule. Arideva (r. 1207-16) was the first of them to ascend the throne of Nepal. The Mallas were shaken by Raja Harisimhadeva of the illustrious Karnata dynasty of Simraun (Mithila), who was easily the greatest of the line founded by Nanyadeva in the beginning of the twelfth century in the East Tarai. Harisimhadeva invaded Nepal in 1324. Hardly had the kingdom recovered from this invasion when in 1346 it was overrun by Sultan Shamsuddin Ilyas Shah of Bengal (1342-57). The Muslims plundered, looted, and ransacked the towns and temples of the Bagmati Valley.

The period of trouble and lawlessness in the wake of the Muslim raid of the 1340s enabled Raja Jayasthitimalla (1380-1422) of Bhatgaon to establish his superiority over all the chiefs of the Bagmati Valley. His position became stronger after the death of Raja Arjunamalla (1361-82), another influential chief of the Bagmati Valley. The Nepalese historical tradition remembers Jayasthitimalla as a patron of literature and as the initiator of many social and economic reforms. Yakshamalla (1428-82), grandson of Jayasthitimalla, conquered all territories around the Bagmati Valley, including Mithila in the south and Gorkha in the west. His reign is a landmark in the history of the Bagmati Valley. After his death the Bagmati Valley was divided into four principalities. Bhatgaon was taken over by his eldest son, Rayamalla; Banepa by the second son, Ranamalla; Kathmandu by the third son, Ratnamalla; and Patan by the daughter. Later, Banepa was absorbed into Bhatgaon. Kathmandu came under the rule of two separate houses in the sixteenth century.

The Malla kings of the Bagmati Valley claimed that they were descended from the Mallas of Kusinagar and Pawa of ancient times. This claim, which still has its advocates in Nepal, seems to have no basis in the evidence available.

The Bagmati Valley is but a portion of what Nepal constitutes today. There were other centres of power too, and they occupied an equally important place in the history of Nepal. On the eve of the rise of the house of Gorkha, the



The Government and Politics of Tibet

RAM RAHUL

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