Emergence of Feudal Mode of Production in Sikkim

(1642-1890)

A Thesis Submitted

To

Sikkim University

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Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

By

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Date: 13|12|2021

DECLARATION

I, **Samten Doma Bhutia**, hereby declare that the research work embodied in the thesis titled "**Emergence of Feudal Mode of Production (1642-1890)**" submitted to Sikkim University for the award degree of Doctor of Philosophy, is my original work. The thesis has not been submitted for any other degree of this University or any other University.

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All the assistance and help received during the course of the investigation have been duly acknowledged by her.

We recommend this thesis to be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

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Date: **Samten Doma Bhutia**

LIST OF MAPS

LIST OF IMAGES

GLOSSARY

Adhiadars/Adhiya	Contract between peasants and landlords
Bakkhu	Tibetan female costume
Bamphok	Iron piece to cut
Bari Khajana	Dry land tax
Blon	Ministers
Buze	Prior
Chandzot	Prime Minister
Cheothimpa	Discipline master
Chhoesid/ chossrid lugs gnyis	Political and religious authority
Chhos	Dharma
Chogyal	King (or Dharma Raja)
Choje	Landlords particularly monks in Bhutan
Chong or Tsong	Another name of Limboos
Chos	Dharma
Chuni-done	Land assigned to peasants in Bhutan
Denzong	Tibetan name for Sikkim
Denzongpas or Lhori	Bhutia call themselves Denzongpas
DhuriKhajana	Household tax
Dorjelopon	Spiritual head
Dpon	Lords
Drap and Zap	Serfs in Bhutan
Drognyer	Dewan
Dud-Chung	Serfs tied to religious or aristocratic estates in Tibet
Dzongpons	District governors
dzongs	Districts
G.yog	Servants
Gyalpo	Tibetan term for ruler
Gyapon and Youmi	Assistant of Village headman
Gyog	Servants
Je Khenpo	Dharma Raja in Bhutan
Jhara	Bounded labour system in Nepal
Jharlangi	The system of labour without wages
JhoomKalling	Chief Judge in Bhutan
Kalobhari	The literary meaning of the term Kalobhari in Nepali is Black load.
Kalons	Council of ministers
Kazis	During the time of king, the elites or landlords in Sikkim were called Kazis
Khapsey	Tibetan cookies or snacks
KhetKhajana	Wet land tax
Kuruwa	The literary meaning of Kuruwa in Nepali is long wait
Kut/kutdar/koot	Contractual system of taxation in Nepal and Sikkim
Lam Zimpon	Chief Secretary in Bhutan
Las dpon	Foremen responsible for supervising the lowest workers

Lhade Mede	Groups of elite who used to render advice to the king
LhadiMedi	Council of minister
Lho-Mon-Tsong	Bhutia-Lepcha-Limboo
Lhopo	Tibetan migrants in Sikkim
Madati and Gaddi	Direct tax to the king
Mandals	Village headman
Mchodgnas	Religious monks
Mgochings	Headmen
Mi-bo Dud-Chung	Human lease serfs in Tibet
Minap	Free peasants in Bhutan
Miser	Serfs in Tibet
Monpas	Refers to Lephas
Mukhtiyars and Karbaris	Village agents
Mun/Bong-thing	Sorcerers
Nag-zans and Zim-chungpas	Royal house servants
Nazr Janch	Method of measurement
Nieboos	Village Heads in Bhutan
Nyerchen	Grand Steward
Pakhurey and Chakurey	Landless peasants
Penlop	Provincial Governor in Bhutan
Rong	Lepchas called themselves as Rong
Sger pa	Landlords in Tibet
Singpo/Busiwallas	Landholding tenants
Theki-Bethi	Gifts taken by the elites of Sikkim from the masses
Thikadar	Contactors or Nepali landlords
Tre-pa/ Kharalpa	Tax-payer peasants in Tibet
Tre-tan	Tax-base land held by peasants in Tibet
Trungyig	Secretary
Tshong-skyeMonpas	People for carrying goods
Tshong-skyed	Duty on trade
Tumyang or Tassa	Village headman
UdorCheotsum	Monastery council
Ula	Free porterage system in Tibet
Vyim	Red dye
Woola and Shapto-lemi	Labour services in Bhutan
Yar-jal	Summer tax
Yon bdag	Royal patron or lay donor
ZaminKhajana	Land tax
Zolung	Tax

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The discourse on Feudalism has invariably been marked as the sharing of the power of sovereignty among the group of nobles and lords and the general accounts of abuses which was adopted by the elite class and lords. However, in general, Feudalism can be defined either as a political structure or as a social formation, based on the labour process, existed as the dominant system in medieval Europe and India. Similar situation prevailed in Sikkim, during the Namgyal dynasty. The feudal system was based on a self-sufficient economy, in which the production was limited to local use. It had a dominant group of landlords who involved in the extraction of surplus, products, and labour services from peasants. Based on the administrative arrangement, in which land and its economic nature rest in the institution of serfdom, as peasants attached to the soil held by the lords, to whom they pay rent in kind and labour services. These lords acted as intermediaries between the King and the peasants in the feudal system.

Hence, the thesis tries to explore the circumstances which led to the formation of the Namgyal dynasty and the changes in socio-economic and political situations, eventually resulting in the emergence of the feudal mode of production in Sikkim. At the same time, the study also broadly aims to look upon practices of the feudal system in Sikkim and tries to locate within the broader perspective of feudalism.

Statement of the Problem

The kingdom of Sikkim began with the consecration of Phuntshog Namgyal as the first ruler in the mid-seventeenth century by the three Tibetan monks, namely; Lhatsun Namkha Jigmed, KathogKuntu-zangpo and Nga-Dag Sempo Phuntshog Rinzing. The Namgyal dynasty[1] ruled over Sikkim for 333 years, until when Sikkim was merged into Indian Union in 1975 and became the 22nd State. The history of Sikkim before the formation of theNamgyal dynasty is obscure and has not been studied in depth. Only brief and comparatively unclear references to this section of the Himalayas are found. There were indications that the area was part of Tibet. The Sikkimese Chogyal (ruler) Thutob Namgyal (1874- 1914) in the *History of Sikkim* asserted that Sikkim was part of the great Tibetan empire whose border reached down to India.

During the early sixteenth century, when the Tibetan immigrants first encountered the native inhabitants of Sikkim, they practised a predominantly primitive economic system as food-gatherers, hunters and cultivators. They cultivated a certain amount of rice and millets on the lower slopes of the valley, probably selecting wild varieties that grow in the Himalayan forest, and kept some domestic animals, probably oxen. They very likely did not cultivate enough for all their needs and eked out the cultivated food with hunting and wild forest produce. Additionally, private ownership of land was unknown; clan chiefs used to determine which part of the common field to be used for cultivation and would appropriate the fields collectively. This periodic redistribution of land prevented great disparities in wealth

[1]The Sikkim kingdom was named after the first ruler of Sikkim, Phuntshog Namgyal. Namgyal dynasty was created in 1642 by consecrating Phuntshog Namgyal as the first ruler of Sikkim at Yuksom, West Sikkim by the three monks from Tibet. Twelve generations of the Namgyal dynasty ruled over Sikkim, who traced their decent from Guru Tashi, a prince of a Kham Minyak in eastern Tibet.

between clans and families, although the herds were private property. Among them, ranking and classification did not exist in society, and it could be said that there has never been any recognition of authority, except those of senior citizens in tribes. This rudimentary social structure and primitive character were soon modified by the arrival of Tibetan immigrants and with the beginning of the Namgyal dynasty. By the time of Phuntshog Namgyal as the first king of Sikkim,the influence of Buddhism could be noticed, which played a vital role in binding inhabitants within Buddhist religion and established monasteries, which played a major role in subjugating inhabitants.

Apparently, with the establishment of the Sikkim kingdom,its social structure was changed and was based on ethnic origin and kinship. There emerged a political system which was based on political theocracy similar to Tibet; the King head of both spiritual and secular and her social structure based on social status ascribed by or inherited through tribal/caste. The economic organization changed into a system that was similar to the practices that existed in feudalism. The king was regarded as the owner of the land, and to manage the administration there was a practice of granting lands along with political and judicial rights to the aristocracy class.All the laymen were serfs hereditarily linked by the ascription to estates and lords.

The land became the most significant means of production in Sikkim; the land system reveals the foundation of the social structure and was considered the most important source of the economy. As in other stratified agricultural societies, land rights are closely tied to all kinds of social functions. Various services rendered to the state or individuals are paid by land, while rights over land imply social duties, and often important social groups, from the family to the states, can be seen in the land system. A hereditary aristocracy with accumulated wealth composed a permanent

council that exercised strategic power in the tribe. A quasi-royal lineage was emerging, which provided elected chief. Above all leading men most closely in contact with the royal house inevitably showed the most advanced social and economic structures, and the leaving from the traditional way of life of the clans and were emerging as nobility, sustained by produce of lands allocated to them, and divorced from participation in agricultural production. They formed the centre for permanent class division and institutionalized strong authority within these primitive social formations.

The leadership of society was based on aristocrats, inheritance-based kinship, and incarnate lamas. The socio-political structure and the life of the kingdom centred on the monasteries which were ruled by a hierarchy of lamas, nobles and the royal family. Graced with special rights and privileges from the king, the aristocrats exploited and suppressed the masses by levying taxes and adjudicating cases. Such a process seems to be in line with a significant observation of R.S. Sharma on feudalism, who asserts an important factor that gave the grantee general control over land and exploitation of masses was the conferment of seigniorial rights on them. As a result, the economic organization became feudal.

Subsequently, by the late seventeenth century, the King subjected the native inhabitants and created an organized state with a royal rule. With the council of aristocrats in line with the Tibetan feudal system, exercised political authority over obedient villages. The aristocrats were a possessing class with estates, clearly demarcated from the rest of their people. There was a division of the population into two groups of *g.yog* (servants) and *blon* (ministers). All the high positions in the kingdom were hereditary with certain privileged families and monks. All land was

held by the king, a large number of lands were under the control of the monastic establishment. Apart from the land grant to these hierarchies of aristocrats and monasteries, the King held private estates. Thus, he had his villages and received payments in kind and labour services.

There was the introduction of a system similar to feudal bondage in which the vassal owed allegiance and military obligation to an overlord in return for land grants. This system may have been organized on ethnic lines, a hierarchical structure with the Bhutias at the top. But later on, there seems to have been the appointment of Lepcha and Limbu as regional officers or landlords responsible for the collection of taxes and administration. This system was likely introduced as a means of avoiding rebellions from local leaders by giving hereditary rights over land in exchange for their services.

Eventually, the adoption of the policy of granting lands in return for the services by the rulers of Sikkim led to the development of a political system that was characterized by the fragility and decentralization of the power of sovereignty. This was due to how Sikkim was organized into semi-independent fiefdoms, where large landholders were responsible for the implementation of the law, the organization of land holdings and localized hierarchies and could command his tenants to work his lands, provide labour services. As such ordinary people owed allegiance to local lords, and not to the monarch, much as European counterparts did during medieval times.

Accordingly, it can be assumed that in Sikkim, the dual predecessors of the feudal mode of production were the primitive mode of production on whose foundation the native inhabitants had once been constructed and the feudal mode of production of the Tibetan immigrants that survived in their new homeland. These two

radically distinct systems had undergone a slow disintegration, resulting in the supremacy of the feudal mode of production. Thus, the genesis of feudalism in Sikkim can be derived from a catastrophic convergent collapse of two distinct anterior modes of production, the combination of whose disintegrated elements released the feudal mode of production.

Review of the literature

The focus of the proposed work is to understand the emergence of the feudal mode of production in Sikkim. On a broader level, there are various available pieces of literature on the general understanding of feudalism and its practices. However, at a specific level, there is still a knowledge gap in constructing and presenting the emergence and practices of the feudal system in Sikkim.The difficulties in getting the sources have tended to dominate the energies of the scholars interested in the area and topics such as feudalism have generally been neglected. Hence, under the proposed study, several pieces of literature have been reviewed to find out the knowledge gap. The literature is divided into two parts: the first part will cover the general understanding of the concept of feudalism and its practices, which will be followed by the second part regarding Sikkim.

Henry Pirenne in his book '*Mohammed and Charlemagne'*(Pirenne, 2001), asserted that feudalism evolved in Europe due to the Islamic expansion in the Carolingian age but not due to the German invasion. He considered economic factors, i.e., trade and commerce, as the main forces of feudalism. The break of Mediterranean unity or trade during the Islamic invasion led toeconomic regression, making soil the main basis of the economy and the sole source of wealth. The growing importance of land led to the increase in the power of the aristocracy and which eventually led to the

emergence of feudalism in the middle ages. However, Pirenne failed to give a detailed definition and characteristics of feudalism.

March Bloch in his work '*Feudal Society'* (Bloch, 2015),stated that feudalism emerged in Europe due to a set of social conditions, that is, invasion, insecurity, and interdependence. Bloch said that this increasing tendency of society toward ties of dependency moved away from earlier ties of solidarity that existed among the kindred group. This bond based on personal relationships progressively tightened and developed into more complex with the further development of feudalism. Another, historian Carl Stephenson, in his work '*Medieval Feudalism'* (Stephenson, 1942), states that the feudalism in Europe was the result of the Germanic invasion, and points that the mixing of Germanic barbarian customs with the Romans, which later took the form of vassalage and fief, became the main form of the governmental policy of the Carolingian kings.

A significant contribution made by putting forward the theory of feudalism as a mode of production was done by Perry Anderson in his work '*Passage from Antiquity to Feudalism*' (Anderson, 2013). Anderson argued that feudalism emerged from the convergent collapse of two-mode of production, i.e., slave mode of production of Romans and Germanic primitive-communal mode of production, the recombination of whose disintegrated elements resulted in feudalism. He challenged the established description of feudalism as an economy of regression by assertingthat feudalism was a more developed system of increasing agricultural productivity in contrast to the slave mode of production.

In terms of Indian historiography regarding feudalism, there exist various literary sources. However, an essential point emerged from the work of D.D.Kosambi

‘*An Introduction to Indian History’*(Kosambi, 2014). Here, Kosambi talked about the two perspectives of feudalism: feudalism from above and feudalism from below. Kosambi said that the policy of land grants to the Brahmins or religious institutions and officials adopted by the King created a hierarchy of landed intermediariesthus forming feudalism from above. And the development of a class of landowners between the State and peasantry rose to the standard of the lords, and are obliged to provide military services to the King is feudalism from below. Kosambi asserted that the existence of feudal land tenure and intermediaries between the stateand the kings was the sole reason for the exploitation of peasants.

Another significant work on Indian feudalism was done by Sharma in his works; Indian Feudalism (Sharma, 2013), and The Kali Age (Sharma, The Kali Age: A Period of Social Crisis, 2016). According to him the practices of land grants to the Brahmans and secular parties during the Gupta and post-Gupta period led to the emergence of feudalism in India. Sharma linked the rise in land grants to the decline of India’s long-distance trade;therefore, the only solutionsfor payment of services were land grants. The widespread practice of land grants along with the administrative and judicial rightspaved the way for the rise of Brahmana feudatories, as some of them shedding their priestly duties gave more attention to the secular functions, resulting in the diminishing of the rights of rulers and decentralisation of power. Regarding the condition of peasants, Sharma asserts that as a result of land grants to intermediaries along with more rights over the cultivating peasants, there was increasing subjection and exploitation of the peasantry. The free peasants lost in status due to the several impositions of taxes now reduced to a servile position, their counterparts in medieval Europe.

Similarly,to Sharma, Yadava explained the emergence of feudalism in India, looking into the account of changes during the kali age. Kali age was characterised by all-round worsening including events such as foreign invasions leading to the emergence of ruling aristocracy on the cost of older ruling aristocracy and elites, natural calamities, the decline in trade and commerce leading to economic decline and decayof cities, disturbances in the varna system and exploitation by the newly emerging ruling class by extracting excessive taxes and imposing forced labour leading to peasant subjection (Yadava, 2016).

D.N. Jha explained the feudal system in connection with the process of state formation in early medieval Chamba. Jha asserted that the process of state formation in Chamba involved the suppression of independent chieftains called ranas, hence reducing them to the status of feudatories. To legitimise the rule of the newly formedstate, the kings took the help of theBrahmanical religious system. They acted as the protector and benefactor of Brahmanas, which resulted in the granting of lands to the Brahmanas (Jha, 2016). In addition to religious land grants, there was also a practice of granting land to the official. Subsequently, the practice of land grants led to the stratification of agrarian society along with the unequal distribution of land and the growth of the class of landed intermediaries.

An important regional work in this area of study comes from Saul Mullard's*Opening the Hidden Land: State Formation and the Construction of Sikkimese History* (Mullard, 2011). Here he talked about the number of Sikkimese historical sources that were written during the period of British expansion in Sikkim. Among these sources, he identified three important sources. First, the latest, the '*Bras ljongsrgyalrabs (BGR)*, written in 1908, attributed to Chogyal Thutob Namgyal and

GyalmoYeshe Dolma, another was *The Gazetteer of Sikkim (GoS*) written in 1894, and lastly the earliest sources, *Bla ma chemtshangsum 'bras ljongs sbas gnas tshul (BMS),* written in 1860. When comparing these sources, he came up with the suitable suggestion of which sources would be the most suitable sources for the study. Excluding the *Gazetteer of Sikkim*, the two other sources were written in the Tibetan language, and Mullard has translated them into English.

Another work was (Mullard & Hissey, Royal Records: A Catalogue of the Sikkimese Palace Archives, 2010). This work is the compilation of various agreements, treaties, personal letters, petitions, receipts and miscellaneous documents relating to the Sikkim kingdom (Mullard, Constructing the Mandala: The State Formation of Sikkim and the Rise of a National Historical Narratives, 2011), deals with the State formation by the first Chogyal Phuntsog Namgyal. He talked about the weakness of the king and the effect of the British which completely transfer the power in their hands and with the arrival of the British and their domination of Sikkim that national narratives began to be developed.

Another important work is *History of Sikkim:* unpublished typescript attributed to Chogyal Thutop Namgyal and Maharani Yeshe Dolma (Namgyal & Yeshay, 1908). It was originally written in the Tibetan language by the King and Queen, later it was translated into the English language by a monk named Kazi Dausandup. This work gives adetailed account of the Namgyal family and deals with land grants, taxes, and landlord rights, and how these landlords misuse these powers for their benefit. It talks about the Sikkim relationship with the British and how the British, using their advantageous position, tried to control the administration of Sikkim and vested power and land grants to the new landlords who were loyal to them.

The work of Geoffrey Gorer was titled *Himalayan Village: An Account of the Lepchas in Sikkim* (Gorer, 2005), gives a detailed account of the life of the Lepchas; religion, culture, rituals relating to marriage and funeral, lifestyle as hunter and gatherer, etc.

Sinha's work, *Sikkim Feudal and Democratic* (Sinha, 2008) deals with the history of Sikkim from its past to the present and reports on how Tibetans, Nepalese, and British dealt with Sikkim, leading to the eclipse of its autonomous entity. It provides the background and social history indicating the emergence of ethnic plurality and in determinate political status, Sinha delivers in detail into the feudal and democratic elite and describes the travails of Sikkim from a feudal set up to a democratic one. However, these works do not givethe detailed characteristics of feudalism and its emergence in Sikkim.

Leo Rose's work *Modernizing a Traditional Administrative System: Sikkim: 1817-1973* (Rose, 1978). The author talked about the process of modernization of the traditional administrative system in Sikkim and the advent of the British who sought to use the existing political structure and elite to the greatest extent possible in the transformation of the functions and objectives of the administration. Also asserted that even after the decades of recurrent administrative reorganization in Sikkim, there was the persistence of certain traditional features in the ethos and operation of the polity.

Melanie Vandenhelsten's *Secularism and the Buddhist Monastery of Pemayangtse in Sikkim* (Melanie, 2003), writes about the ancestor of the Namgyal rulers and the Bhutia clan. The author tried to show the importance of the monastery particular the Pemayangtse monastery, which wasconsidered as an important

monastery in connection with the conduct of royal ceremonies. Details of land grants along with the power vested to the monastery and how religion played a vital role during the time of the Namgyal dynasty have been taken.

Brigitte Steinmann's work *National Hegemonies, Local Allegiances: Historiography and Ethnography of a Buddhist Kingdom* (Steinmann, 2003-2004). The author tried to define feudalism as differing from European formulations and compared it with Tibet as a system of Government in which a ruler personally delegates limited sovereignty over a portion of his territory to vassal. Talked about forced labour and semi-slavery which helped to maintain the integrity of the kingdom, and land rights vested to the Kazis. The author tried to show the changes which occurred due to the advent of the British. Lastly, he asserted that due to the advent of the British, the Nepali population multiplied and there was a sign of national consciousness among people. This book mainly focuses on the advent of the British and how the administrative setup changed thereafter.

Anna Balikci's *Lamas, Shamans, and Ancestors: Village Religion in Sikkim* (Balikci, 2008), deals with the monastery estate and power vested to these monasteries by the royal charter. But with the advent of the British, these monasteries lost their estate and were deprived of their rights and powers. The author also did a detailed study of the slavery and forced labour prevalent in the Thingchim village, North Sikkim, where villagers were exploited by the landlords of Phodong monastery. Lastly, the author tried to show adetailed account of the land grant system concerning the monastery and with the arrival of the British how these monasteries did lose their land and privileges.

Hong Tran in his work *Chogyal's Sikkim: Tax, Land and Politics* (Tran, 2012), dealt with the land grants and various forms of taxes derived from land ownership were powerful instruments of the ruling class and gives the account of how Chogyal Phuntsog Namgyal selected officers for the administrative purposes. Gives details on the state revenue collection and state formation under the Namgyals and British Protectorate, and tried to show that the King was against the oppression of riots done by the landlords.

Concerning the process of feudalism in Sikkim, it becomes pertinent to mention the work on the Tibet region, as we know that during the said period the influence of Tibet on Sikkim was quite considerable and also the royal family descends from Tibet. Considerable work on Tibet was done by Goldstein (Glodstein, 1971) (Goldstein, Reexamining Choice, Dependency and Command in the Tibetan Social System: "Tax Appendages" & Other Landless Serfs, 1986)(Goldstein, Taxation and the Structure of a Tibetan Village, 1971), Carrasco (Pedro, 1959) andSurkhang (Gelek, 1984)on Tibet's social structure and taxation system. They talked about the grant of land to aristocrats and religious institutions who exercised administrative and judicial control over their landholdings, which is similar to the practice of granting land in Sikkim.Also, mentioned the serfdom, vassal bondage, and the names of an official which bears the resemblance with the Sikkim social set up.

All these literary sources have given useful insight for the current study, but an in-depth study has not been done yet. There is a gap relating to the details about the origin and roles of aristocrats and other petty officials, who played an important role when we talk about feudalism in Sikkim, these gaps may be due to the lack of sources and most of the sources are privately owned and in Tibetan scripts.

Objectives of the Study

Various studies have alreadybeen published on the history of Sikkim. However, these works were generally focused on the formation of the Namgyal kingdom, democratic political movements, and the British period. An in-depth study specifically in terms of the origin of feudalism and its features have not been done. Thus, concerning this,many grey areas have yet to be taken up by the researchers in Sikkim. Therefore, this thesis is an effort to fill this important gap when it comes to the questions of how, when, and why relating to the feudal mode of production and also its features.

The objectives thus set were:

- To draw attention to the emergence of the feudal mode of production in Sikkim.
- To shed light on how Tibetan immigrants changed the primitive economy of native people, which culminated in a feudal economy.
- To focus on the origin of the aristocracy class, and other intermediaries, and their role within the purview of feudal setup.
- To understand the taxation system, a form of labour services, types of landholdings.
- To compare Sikkim's feudal system within the broader perspective of feudalism.

Methodology

The methodology for the proposed research work is mainly the historical method, which involved the collection of relevant data from the various documents and the compilation of the database to analyse the material and arrive at a more complete understanding. It will have both primary and secondary sources.

Primary sources from; Sikkim State Archives, National Archives, New Delhi; National Library, Kolkata; West Bengal State Archives, Kolkata; Tshuglakhang Trust (Private Collection of Palace), Namgyal Institute of Tibetology, Sikkim. Gangtok.

Chapterisation

Chapter One: Introduction

- Introduction about the topic.

Chapter Two: Theoretical Debate on Feudalism

- It is a theoretical debate that deals with the European, Indian, Tibetan, Nepal and Bhutan Feudalism. To build an understanding regarding the system and features of feudalism

Chapter Three: The Early Inhabitants of Sikkim and the Coming of Tibetans

- Deals with the mode of production which existed among the inhabitants of Sikkim, before the formation of the Namgyal dynasty.
- Deals with the settlement of Tibetans and Phuntshog Namgyal's coronation as Sikkim's first ruler.
- Deals with the changes occurred in the primitive mode of production of inhabitants.

Chapter Four: State and Political Formation of Sikkim Kingdom

- Deals with the territorial expansion under the first king Phuntshog Namgyal.
- Deals with the initial introduction of administrative apparatus to rule by Phuntshog Namgyal.

- Deals with the religious monk’s role in the formation of the state in the initial period and Buddhism's influence.
- Deals with the introduction of a new socio-political structure and stratification based on the Tibetan style principle.
- Lastly, deals with the beginning of feudalism in Sikkim.

Chapter Five: The Transition from Primitive to Feudalism in Sikkim

- Deals with the practices of Land grants, Taxation and labour services.
- Deals with the origin of aristocrats and village intermediaries
- Deals with the conditions of peasants within the feudal system

Chapter Six: Locating Sikkim’s Feudalism within the Broader Feudal Narratives

- Deals with the origin and characteristics of the feudal system prevalent in Sikkim and compares it with the wider narratives.

Chapter Seven: Conclusions

CHAPTER TWO

THEORETICAL DEBATE ON FEUDALISM

Feudalism, as a system, covers a wide range of themes varying from the meaning of the term to its origins, nature, and consequences. The word 'Feudalism' was popularised by the works of eighteenth-century scholars. They used it to show the sharing of the power of sovereignty among the group of petty princes and lords during the medieval Europe. Later, with time, feudalism came to be used to show the general accounts of abuses which was adopted by the elite class and lords in Europe during the Ancient Regime. Subsequently, different meanings have been applied to the word 'feudalism' by historians with varying ideas. However, they are in broad agreement that Feudalism, either as a political structure or as a social formation, was the dominant system in Europe between the fifth and the fifteenth centuries A.D. (Sharma, Indian Feudalism, 2006, p. 1). This system had a dominant group of landlords, who were engaged in the extraction of surplus, products, and labour services from peasants. Thus, the European feudalism shows that the political spirit of feudalism lay in the production relations. Based on the administrative arrangement, in which land and its economic naturerest in the institution of serfdom, as peasants attached to the soil held by the lords, to whom they pay rent in kind and labour services. These lords acted as intermediaries between the King and the peasants. This system was based on a self-sufficient economy, in which production was limited to local use. Hence, in the light of certain features of feudalism in this sense, the views of various scholars on feudalism will be discussed in this chapter, whichalso deals with the practice of this system in Europe, India, Tibet, Nepal and Bhutan, and subsequently, the emergence of feudalism in Sikkim.

Feudalism in Europe

While discussing feudalism in Europe, we come across different viewsof historians regarding this system. Feudalism developed in Europe as a result of the failure of state administration, which failed to protect its people from the attack of the outsiders, and it gradually grew, not being precise to any particular time or event (Krader, 1958, p. 76). Scholars like Henry Pirenne, Marc Bloch, Perry Anderson, and Carl Stephenson have done remarkable work to see the origin of feudalism in Europe. It was perhaps due to the emergence of Henry Pirenne and Marc Bloch in the twentieth century, their argument served as the model of study for scholars regarding this system.

Pirenne asserted that feudalism evolved in Europe due to the Islamic expansion in the Carolingian age but not due tothe German invasion. He considered economic factors, i.e., trade and commerce, as the main forces of feudalism. The break of Mediterranean unity or trade during the Islamic invasion led to the emergence of the middle ages (Pirenne, 2001). He divided his study into two parts; firstly, he mentioned that there was continuity of Mediterranean civilisation even after the Germans invasion. According to him, the German invasion far from destroying the Mediterranean unity of antiquity; they settled themselves there, as he quotes,"the essential character of "Romania" remained the Mediterranean"[2](Pirenne, 2001, p. 140). The Germans settled in the country based on hospitality rules; their invasion did not result in any complete upheaval. There was neither the redistribution of soil nor the introduction of newagriculture methods; instead, the entire Roman tenure system

[2]The results of German invasion were their merging into the culture of Romans, as soon as Germans entered they adopted their language and religion, i.e., Christianity. This resulted in their gradual mixing with the population of the Roman Empire.

survived. Moreover, Pirenne said that although the society was predominantly agrarian, commerce and trade formed an essential part of general economic and social life during this period (Pirenne, 2001, p. 79).

To justify Mediterranean civilisation's continuity even after the German invasion, Pirenne focused on the trading system during the fifth to the eighth centuries. During the said period, Syrian merchants engaged in trade in the Mediterranean. The Syrian merchants exported spices from the East and industrial products such as luxury clothes from the oriental cities, wines exported from Gaza, the oil from Africa, the papyrus, and ivory from Egypt to the West. In the sixth century, large numbers of Orientals settled in the Gaul region as the result of trade. This trade with the East continued even after the invasion (Pirenne, 2001, pp. 80-88). The Roman Empire's royal revenue was concernedis derived from the market tolls[3] from the urban centres. There was continuous use of the Roman gold coin solidus,[4] which was the main instrument of economic unity before the invasion. It still existed after the attack, as the Barbarians continued to preserve them. The German kings continued to make coins that had the effigies of the emperors. Hence, Barbarians' invasion and settlement in the Roman Empire did not bring drastic changes inantiquity's Mediterranean character in the Merovingian period.[5]

In the second part of Pirenne's work, he talked about the Islamic invasion in the seventh and eighth centuries, which resulted in the break of the Roman Empire's traditional antiquity and finally led to the beginning of the middle ages. Compared

[3]The market tolls or tonlieux comprised all sorts of taxes.

[4]The Roman gold coin solidus, minted by Constantine, was the monetary unit throughout the Empire at the time of invasion.

[5] According to Pirenne, following the invasion, the Germans were tied to the Roman soil and settled with the Romans, instead of destroying or exploiting the empire, they admired it and which resulted in their settlement during the Merovingian period.

with the Germanic invasion, the effects of the Islamic attack upon the Roman Empire were extreme. Unlike Germans, Arabs did not assimilate themselves with the Romans due to their few faiths, which was completely different from the Romans. Instead, they substituted Roman laws with the Koran, as quotes by Pirenne, "The Germans became Romanised as soon as he entered ‘Romania’. The Roman, on the contrary, became Arabized as soon as Islam conquered him"(Pirenne, 2001, p. 152). The Islamic advance results were the collapse of Mediterranean unity, separating East from the West, and change in the trade direction; the economic activities were gravitating towards Baghdad.The countries who were previously the member of the Mediterranean now forced into this new trade routes and West compelled to live on its resources. According to Pirenne, by the beginning of the eighth century, the Mediterranean no longer functioned as the centre of commercial activities. There was the end of Africa's commercial activities. The disappearance of papyrus, spices, wine, and oil and the import of luxury items from the Orient had ceased; only local and small markets survived as the results of Islamic expansion. Therefore, there was an increasing rarity of gold as it stopped importing from Orient; this led to struck silver coins under the Charlemagne period. The consequences of the end of the Mediterranean as a commercial centre and extinction of Oriental trade were the disappearance of merchants and urban life in the country (Pirenne, 2001, p. 173). During the Merovingian period, merchants who used to loan at interest disappeared, which led to further economic worsening produced by the sea's closing.

Further, Pirenne stressed that due to the decline of trade and commerce, the taxes were unorganised. Standards of economic or weights no longer exist, and the importance of education also decreased, so, gradually, the soil became the basis of the economy and the sole source of wealth, and the most important institution was the

land estate. Eventually, the decline of commerce and the growing importance of land gave the aristocracy power, as they immediately strived to take advantage of the King's increasing weakness (Pirenne, 2001, p. 195).

Moreover, Pirenne further said that following the period of anarchy and decadence, due to war, there transformed the institution of vassalage, as the military character of aristocrats became more evident, the power of King essentially based on his military vassals. In return for vassals' service, King started giving them benefices, i.e., the estate in exchange for military service. Gradually these vassals played an active part in the politics, and Statebecame more dependent on the contractual bonds between the King and his vassals (Pirenne, 2001, pp. 271-272). Hence, it was the beginning of the feudal period, according to Pirenne, in which payments were made mainly in kind and each estate aimed at providing its own needs. Pirenne explained the emergence of feudalism following the Mediterranean's disappearance, an important trade and commerce centre due to the Islamic expansion in the Roman.

Thus, the thesis of Pirenne launched a closure enquiry of the economic factors on the emergence of feudalism in Europe and widened the scope of historical investigations and research in various directions. However, he was not very much concerned with the definition and characteristics of feudalism.

While Pirenne's thesis provided excellent information explaining the origin of feudalism in medieval Europe, it, however, failed to deliver the definition and characteristics of feudalism in details. It was the French historian Marc Bloch who mainly moving away from the economic and military concept of feudalism, who chooses to explain the occurrence of feudalism from a sociological perspective by looking into the various forms of what he called "The Growth of ties of dependence”

(Bloch, 2015). Regarding the origin of feudalism in Europe, Bloch explained it as a set of social conditions, i.e., invasion, insecurity and ties of interdependence, which resulted infeudal society. He mainly talks about three raids in Europe: in the South by Islam, Hungarians in the East and the North by the Scandinavians (Bloch, 2015, p. 3). He stressed on the theory of invasions, which resulted in insecurity among people resultingfrom the decline in trade from 861 AD[6]. The cultivated land suffered disastrously, which frequently reduced to desert. Following this, there was a decline in the ruler population, crafts destroyed, and peasantry suffered the most. Apart from the peasant, landlords also suffered by losing their lands and unable to collect taxes, invaders destroyed Churches and intellectual centres as well. Transport became difficultas roads and bridges were in worse conditions due to the Carolingian empire's collapse (Bloch, 2015, p. 61).

Subsequently, there was a general State of insecurity among the entire society since neither the State nor the family could provide sufficient protection. The village community was hardly strong enough to maintain order within its boundaries, and the urban community barely existed. Everywhere weakly felt the need for shelter by someone powerful. Similarly, a powerful man was unable to maintain his prestige or his wealth or safety except through securing for himself the support of subordinates bound to his service. Thus, the invasions further increased this insecurity and people started looking for protection from the powerful man who could support them, which resulted in a vast system of personal relationship which created a hierarchy in society; from one level of the social structure to another (Bloch, 2015, p. 148). Bloch said that

[6] Bloch mentioned about the incident which took place in 861 AD, he said that the two principle ports of the Carolingian empire on the northern seas, Duurstede on the Rhine delta and Quentovic at the mouth of the Canche, were reduced to the status of a village. Also, the trading centre along the river routes lost all its security, thus, the merchants of Paris escaped in their boats were captured by the Northmen. (Bloch, 2015, p. 30).

this increasing tendency of society towards ties of dependency moved away from earlier ties of solidarity that existed among the kindred group. This bond based on personal relationship progressively tightened and developed into more complex with the further development of feudalism.

Consequently, most people who sought protection simply became subordinates, thereby binding their descendants and themselves through the act of homage. As a result, it brought Lord and subordinate in close union. In this relationship, the superior party was called Lord and subordinate as a vassal, where the latter often required to take an oath of fealty. Hence, it was the act of homage that indeed established the relation of vassalage under its dual aspect of protection and dependence.The tie that formed lasted as long as both lives in theory, but it would dissolve automatically if one dies. However, gradually in practice, vassalage became hereditary, as the son of the departed vassal performed homage to the Lord of his father. Similarly, the deceased Lord's son accepts the homage of his father's vassals (Bloch, 2015, p. 147). Vassalage was relations of obligations; they provide services essentially military to the Lord in return forthe fief[7]; however, vassals should revert the land to Lord once the service ceased to be rendered by death, practices came to be in widespread use.

Further, Bloch pointed out that these ties of dependence spread throughout all ranks of society and was not only restricted among nobles. The vassalage, which was relatively involved in high social circles, also existed dependent among the lower levels of society in the form of the manor. However, Bloch did not consider manor as a feudalism product; hesaid that it had existed before feudalism and would continue

[7]Grant of land

afterwards. He described manors as an estate inhabited by the Lord's subjects, divided into two parts, i.e., demesne land all of its produce was taken by the Lord, and tenures of peasant holdings around the Lord's court. Lords had the right to impose taxes and demand services from peasants. The peasants were exploited by lords, who were to provide agricultural labour services on the demesne and the taxes in money and kind (Bloch, 2015, p. 241). He also talked about servitude, the most severe subjection on the dependent's part and the unlimited authority of the Lord. Within this extensive structure of widespread ties of dependence, Bloch stressed the changes that occurred within this structure during the middle of the eleventh century to show the study of feudalism.

Bloch's main idea here is that with the disintegration of state power due to the invasion followed by the economic collapse, it led to the increase in the tendency among people in society to look for protection and support; this eventually resulted in ties of dependency. Thus, there was a shift in the social organisation, which was a vertical one. This became so deeply rooted that it came to be the defining characteristic of the feudal system during the Middle Ages in Europe. So, by covering all aspects of social organisation such as kindred, vassalage, servitude and land organisation, Bloch studied the emergence and characteristics of feudalism in Europe.

Another historianto contribute to the study of feudalism in Europe was Carl Stephenson. His work named "Medieval Feudalism" gives a clear and concise account of the origin, growth, and feudal system decay (Stephenson, 1942). Interested only in what documents said, he severely opposed the easy theorising and generalisation and paid particular attention to the principles of the feudal tenure, chivalry, military life of the nobility, and the feudal government's working as shown

by the actual cases. By concentrating on tax, commune and seignorial, he points out that Feudalism was not peculiar to one area but was common to all Western Europe, as they developed in response to the basic social, economic and political necessities of the middle ages.Stephenson argued that the word “Feudalism” did not come into use until the later eighteenth century; it was after the Revolution of 1789, historians began to use “feudalism”as terminology.

Stephenson put forward his theory of invasion to explain the origin of feudalism. He pointed out that the Germanic invasion, which overran the Roman Empire's western province, had established several kingdoms that dominated the European scene. Germans had a warlike organisation called “Comitatus” (Stephenson, 1942, p. 2), in which a person can become a warrior by receiving a shield and a spear from his father or chief men. This institution of Comitatus later could be found in the early middle ages. Another institution of Germans thatextended widely was the precarium or precaria; a grant of land to be held by somebody during the pleasure of the donor. This system of precaria became prominent when Europe faced economic decline and societies dominated by agriculture. This German system later took the form of vassalage, when Carolingians, to preserve their strength and authority, depending on personal between the members of warrior class called as royal vassals. A result of traditional customs of Germans intermixing with the Romans resulted in the development of vassalage as the primary form of the governmental policy of the Carolingian kings. The duty of these vassals was to provide services such as military, aid and hospitality to the Lord; in return, they receiveda grant of land called fief. Later during the eighth century, due to Carolingian warfare's failure based on infantry, they, in order to enlarge their cavalry force, developed a feudal tenure by associating

vassalage with fief (Stephenson, 1942, p. 12), thus provided the ultimate root for the feudal economy.

As the fief included manor worked by the peasants, therefore, vassals enjoyed significant privileges within his territory, includinga collection of taxes, administration of justice, raise military forces and execute service for the maintenance of roads, bridges and fortifications. Gradually these vassals assigned parts of the fief to his vassal, which resulted in sub-infeudation. So, under the Carolingian period, feudalism that developed as a result of vassalage in association with fief spread through Europe, and it became a basis of political organisation. Further, regarding vassalage's characteristic, Stephenson argued that only the fief could be hereditary, not vassalage, as it was based on the personal relationship between lord and vassal. Moreover, to become vassal, one had to render the Lordwith homage and oath of fealty. In return lord also had to be faithful toward his vassal, as the latter can desert his Lord under certain circumstances[8] (Stephenson, 1942, p. 20). To explain the inheritance of fief, Stephenson pointed out there existed the principle of primogeniture as practical regulation for the continuation of feudal tenure.[9] Later, throughout the ninth and tenth century, ignoring the fact that only vassal could acquire fief through military service, even Bishops, abbots, and other ecclesiastics started securing fief and perform homage and fought like laymen vassals.

[8]That a vassal can desert his lord if lord seeks to reduce him to servitude, plot against his life, commit adultery with his wife, attacks him or lord fails to protect him even when he is able to do so.

[9]However, in case when vassal dies leaving his infant son, in such cases lord keep the son and fief into his own hand and enjoys its revenue until the heir attained maturity, but if vassal had only daughter, who could not become vassal, this case the solution is marriage as the husband could render homage and become legal possession of the fief, however, such marriage requires lord’s consent even during the lifetime of girl’s father.

Subsequently, this created hierarchy in society, as the ruling class consisted of rulers of principalities, their vassals sometimes referred to as baron or seigneur[10] next comes knight vassals and lay vassals[11] and lastly vassals, who concerning his tenants had his vassal. Hence, Stephenson viewed Feudalism as an intermixture of Germanic and Roman customs and its extension in Europe. Formation of vassalage followed by sub-infeudation resulted from land grants by vassals to subordinates. Explains the Feudalism and pointed out that the organisation of vassalage and granting of the fief was the root cause of the feudal system in Europe.

Another scholar who made an essentialcontributionto the growing debate regarding the feudalism was Perry Anderson, who put forward his theory of feudalism as a mode of production dominated by land and a natural economy. Arguing that feudalism was a more developed system of increasing agricultural productivity than the slave mode of production (Anderson, 2013, p. 182), Anderson challenged the established description of feudalism as an economy of regression or a period of decline and disintegration. Regarding the emergence of feudalism, he explained it through the phenomenon of synthesis of two distinct modes of production which existed among the Germanic and Greco-Roman, i.e., Germanic primitive-communal mode of production and slave mode of production of ancient Greece and Roman. According to him in a society there existed two classes, i.e., thesis and anti-thesis,[12] who in some cases undergo against each other, thus resulting in the synthesis or new mode of production. Following this theory, Anderson quotes"the genesis of feudalism in Europe derived from a 'catastrophic', convergent collapse of two distinct anterior

[10] These titles were used to distinguish between superior vassal who holds baronies or seigneuries and had numerous vassals, whereas chevaliers vassal who holds only enough property to provide knightly services.

[11] Appointed by the church in return for fief.

[12] Anderson used the term thesis and anti-thesis to describe the general people and people who are against the existing rule.

modes of production, the recombination of whose disintegrated elements released the feudal synthesis" (Anderson, 2013, p. 18).

However, to see how this has materialised, Anderson gives details about the two modes of production.He gives the background of the classical world of Greco-Roman. During ancient times, Greco-Roman always constituted a universe centred on cities, and they had a philosophy, science, history, poetry, law, administrations, currency, taxation, however, amidst this urban culture and polity, there was the absence of urban economy or commercial activities. The material wealth which sustained its city life was drawn overwhelmingly from the countryside, as agriculture was the central area of production always providing the prominent fortunes of cities. In addition to this, Greco-Roman towns were never mainly dominated by communities of merchants, traders or craftsmen; instead, predominantly dominated by urban congeries of landowners. Municipal order of Greco-Roman was dominated by agriculture since their income derived from corn, oil and wines, produced on estates and farms outside the premises of the city. However, the urban commodities that existed were textiles, pottery, furniture and glassware but failed to extend beyond it, as it was due to the simple technique, less demand and transportation barriers which were exceedingly expensive (Anderson, 2013, p. 19). In the absence of the municipal industry or commercial activities, the possible way to sustain the grandeur of cities was due to the existence of slave labour in the countryside. Moreover, in Europe, the slaves were agriculturalists and were not free; therefore, they worked sluggishly and did not make any new inventions as there were no incentives for them, which resultedin technological stagnation along with commercial.

It was into this situation of Ancient Rome, the Germanic barbarian entered. Germans have settled agriculturalist with mainly pastoral, and land distribution based on communal basis though not permanent as after sometime land must rotate. However, this rudimentary social structure of Germans soon altered when they came in contact with the Romans. After Germans invaded Rome, they imposed the method of hospitalities on local Roman landowners for the distribution of land, in which only the clan chiefs held the land and became equal to the provincial aristocracy.Tribesmen became tenants who fell into economic dependence, and this gradually led to the emergence of hereditary aristocracy and class stratification among Germans. Slowly, Germans no longer depended on method of hospitalities, instead confiscated local estates on a large scale by annexing and distributing to their noble retinues. Also, there wasa massive number of German peasant migration who brought many agrarian traditions which resulted in the appearance of allodial peasant plots and communal lands and increasing to village communities. Politically also Germans reformed the civil and judicial system of the country in line with traditional German norms, which soon dominated Roman laws. However, with regards to religion, Germans adopted Catholicism, and with this, there started intermarriages and assimilation between landed classes of Roman and Germanic (Anderson, 2013, pp. 114-125).

Further, Anderson points out that due to the settlement of Germans in Roman land, there wasa synthesis of elements of both Germans and Romans during the transitional period in Europe. Firstly, the institution of vassalage came from the German Comitatus[13] and Roman clientele system; two forms of aristocratic retinue existed earlier. Secondly, the fief system traced to both Roman religious practices and

[13] Warlike organisations of Germans.

German tribal land distributions. Thirdly, the manor system traced to villa[14] system of Romans, cultivated by the dependent peasants who delivered products in kind. Finally, serfdom emerged from both the classical Roman tenant farmers and from the slow disintegration of free Germanic peasants (Anderson, 2013, p. 130). Thus, this fusion of elements of both Roman and Germans which existed earlier developed into a legal and constitutional system in the early middle Ages.

Anderson states that, with the Carolingian dynasty, feudalism as the dominant mode of production begins in Europe. Carolingians ruler started to appoint trusted noble as counts in the regions giving them military and judicial powers, and paid in grants of land in exchange for services; as a result, land ceased to be gifts which were in practice earlier. Thus, by eighth-century vassalage and fief slowly combined, and in the ninth century, fief became increasingly asimilated to honour (Anderson, 2013, p. 139). Apart from the royal vassals of the rulers, there were also other vassals with fief holders from princes who were themselves vassals of the supreme ruler. Eventually, this resulted in the emergence of fief as a grant of land entrusted with judicial and political power in return for military service (Anderson, 2013, p. 140).

Furthermore, this period also witnessed the changes in the bulk of the rural population. Earlier free warrior peasants of Germanic society practices shifting cultivation and warfare was local and seasonal. However, after the stabilisation of agrarian settlement, the military campaign became far-off and more extended. Thus, the significant basis of collective unity of fighting and tilling broke and peasantry was burden with providing supplies for royal armies, resulting in general worsening of mass agrarian population and emergence of the dependent peasantry. Manorial system

[14] Huge self-contained estates

developed further, as the Carolingian empire was a mostly landlocked area with marginal trade and inactive monetary circulation. Thus, the only economical solution was the development of the manorial system. A large share of the manor kept by the Lord and rest was cultivated by the dependent peasantry, which later came to be called serf [15](Anderson, 2013, p. 141). Hence, the institution of feudalism which already developed in Carolingian period became more potent as following the death of Charlemagne the internal unity of empire soon destroyed due to the civil conflicts and growing regionalisation of the baron class.

Moreover, there were external attacks by the Saracen, Vikings and Magyar invaders which accelerated the situation. Consequently, fief became heritable everywhere, nobles became regional hereditary lords and finally peasantry pushed downwards to widespread serfdom. The harsh conducts of local nobles and landlords in the provinces through fief system and the strengthening of their manorial estates and lordship over peasantry proved to be the core of feudalism which slowly toughened across Europe (Anderson, 2013, p. 142).

According to Anderson, the feudal mode of production which emerged in Europe was dominated by land and natural economy, in which peasants the immediate producer was joined to the means of production, i.e., soil. The land was controlled by a class of feudal lords, who extracted surplus from peasants in the form of extra-economic compulsions such as labour services, rents in kind and customary dues. The property rights of lords over land was in decree only, as they held land from the nobles in return for military service, feudal lords had the right to collect taxes and juridical. At the same time, feudal lords than in his turn would often carve out new

[15]Anderson states that along with serfs, there existed free peasant tenants owing dues and services but free from servile dependence.

and distinct tenures by sub-letting a part of their lands. The chain of dependent tenures linked to services would go up to the highest peak of the system, with the Kingat the top. The outcome of such a system was the regionalisation of political authority, as jurisdiction over regions mediated through numerous layers of subinfeudation (Anderson, 2013, p. 151). At the village level, the condition of peasants became worse due to the presence of smaller nobles and intermediaries who exerted pressure on land and labour. Peasants were given minimal space to increase yields at its disposal because they had to provide labour rents of three days a week on demesne land along with numerous dues. Besides, on the one hand, due to development of rural artisans more use of iron tools started and on the other, the standard size of peasant holdings gradually reduced due to increase in population in the thirteenth century. The typical outcome of this was increasing social differentiation in the villages,as the families who owned plough dominated the ones who did not and often tended to reduce poor peasants to the level of dependent labour working for them.The same period also witnessed a further wave of enserfment, because allodial holdings generally diminished with the further spread of fief which led to the deprivation of previously free peasant of their liberty and torn down to dependent tenants (Anderson, 2013, p. 189).

Nevertheless, Anderson points out that feudalism was more advance than Dark Ages, Europe witnessed technical advances such as the use of iron-plough, water-mill and three-field system of crops rotation which led to increasing in agricultural surplus. There was spread of viticulture during the twelfth century by lords as the wine was an elite beverage and profitable than crops. There was also spread of cereal cultivation along with the fine crops of wheat, resulting from peasantry work as bread was a staple food. There was also a noticeable transition in ploughing; a horse came to be

used instead of oxen as horses were faster and more efficient. Due to the development of rural artisans led to the increased use of iron tools, which resulted in the less demand of labour service in demesne land and allowing consistent peasants inputs on their plots (Anderson, 2013, p. 186).

Moreover, the reclamation and conversion of uncultivated land, which resulted due to the land disputes in the village, proved the more productive capacity of feudal agriculture. This era also witnessed the demographic boom, with it society multiplied resulting in the revival of trade and numerous towns sprang up acting as regional markets and centres for manufactures. However, the majority of towns were protected and promoted by the feudal lords for their benefits. Gradually mediaeval towns gained a relative autonomy, which was initially dominated by feudal lords, now controlled by a group of merchants and former feudal intermediaries. Growth in the productivity of agriculture backed to the survival of urbanisation, and fromthe early years of the fourteenth century a general crisis struck Europe and feudalism began to decline. Agricultural production could not meet the demands of the growing population, as the rural reclamation of land reached its limits because of deterioration of soil through misuse. There was a shortage in supply of manure; most of the grazing ground converted into cereal acreage leading tothe suffering of animal husbandry and supply of manure for arable farming itself.

Next, with the growth of international trade in order to expand the feudal economy had led to a decrease of corn production in some region as the importance given to other branches of agriculture such as vines, fax, wool or stock-breeding. Hence, there was an increased dependence on imports (Anderson, 2013, p. 198). The situation became worse as famine struck Europe in 1314-16, resulting in abandoning

of land and a decrease in the birth rate. At the same time, the urban economy was hit, as a scarcity of money affected banking and commerce.The silver mining to which whole of the urban economy was linked stopped to be profitable due to increase in ground-water levels and no ways for deeper shafts or refining ores, leading to the debasements of currency and increase inflation. In turn, it led to a widening gap in price between urban and agricultural prices. There was a decrease in demands of subsistence commodities due to the population decline; hence the price of grain fell; in contrast, luxury goods manufactured in urban centres became more expensive. This contradictory process affected the noble class as on the one hand they depended on luxury good manufactured in towns and on the other their income from demesne land and servile taxes decreased. Thus, resulted in the decline of feudal Lord's revenues, who, in turn started a wave of warfare to regain their fortune (Anderson, 2013, p. 200).

In 1348, there was an invasion of Black Death in Europe, already weakened demography, this disease took a tremendous toll ofthe population; as a result, the noble faced witha significant shortage of labour. In order to improve its surplus nobles immediately tried peasantry to the manor and battering down wages in both towns and countryside. However, this attempt of noble to reinforce servile conditions and making peasantry to pay for the crisis met with violent resistance by the peasants. Peasants denied to pay the dues, abandoned their fields and flee to other parts of the country these peasants revolt played a vital role in ending the hold of feudal lords over the serfs (Anderson, 2013, pp. 201-202). Anderson argued that reasons for this outcome were due to the dual articulation of feudal mode of production in urban and rural areas. As the urban sector now developed to a point where it can conclusively influence the course, character and results of the class struggle in the rural sector.

Presence of urban centres led to the spread of the market in the surrounding countryside, and most of the peasant revolts situated in urban centres, which led to the weakening of the traditional order of feudal lords. Also, many of urban centres supported or aided the peasant's resistances, by offering discontent peasants' flight from serfdom and taking them in as labour input for urban manufacture, which eventually led to the process of the termination of serfdom (Anderson, 2013, p. 205). Thus, Anderson states that the feudal mode of production deteriorated because it had begun to hamper the productive capacity of society the general crisis occurred in this period far from worsening the conditions of the peasants it improved and liberated it.

Finally, while summarising the views of scholars regarding the feudal system in Europe, they have put up various theory and analysed it in connection with the economic, political and social phenomenon. Henry Pirenne considered an economic factor as the main force of feudalism, the decline of trade due to Islamic invasion during the Carolingian period led to the emergence of the feudal system in Europe. He states the Islamic expansion in Europe resulted in the collapse of Mediterranean unity, end of commercial activities and disappearance of merchants and urban life. There was economic regression; thus, the soil became the basis of economy and sole source of wealth. This growing importance of land led to the increase in power of aristocracy who took advantage of the King's increasing weakness. Whereas, March Bloch moving away from the economic and military concept, choose to explain it from a sociological perspective, by looking into the various forms of ties of dependence. He states that feudalism emerged in Europe due to a set of social conditions, i.e., invasion, insecurity and interdependence. Carl Stephenson, states that the feudalism in Europe was the result of the Germanic invasion, and points that the mixing of Germanic barbarian customs with the Romans, which later took the form of vassalage

and fief, became the main form of the governmental policy of the Carolingian kings. Perry Anderson made a significant contribution by putting forward his theory of feudalism as a mode of production, stating that it was a more developed system of increasing agricultural productivity. According to him, feudalism emerged from the convergent collapse of two-mode of production, i.e., slave mode of production of Romans and Germanic primitive-communal mode of production, the recombination of whose disintegrated elements resulted in feudalism. Nevertheless, they all agree that the feudalism was the outcome of economic, social and political disorder resulting from the collapse of centralised government in Europe.

Indian Feudalism

The early mediaeval period in Indian history spans from 600 to 1200 AD and this period is to located between the early historical and the mediaeval. This period signifies changes in Indian history, changes recognisedthrough socio-economic, political, cultural conditions and as well as through dynastic upheavals. B.D Chattopadhyaya has talked about this period as a much-maligned period in Indian history because Marxist historians have regarded this period as a breakdown of the civilisational matrix of the society (Chattopadhyaya, The Making of Early Medieval Indian, 1998, p. 13). The most crucial debate in Indian history, i.e., feudalism debate,as well as the other kinds of formulations that were working within the framework of feudalism, was centred around this period.

The concepts of Indian feudalism came from the persistence of the ideas in the European historiography. R.S. Sharma and other historians borrowed the ideas of Henry Pirenne and Marc Bloch from the European concept of feudalism and then moulded into the Indian scenario. Looking at Indian feudalism in the context of the

lord-vassal relationship was first started in the historiography by Col. James Todd. While working in Rajasthan in the nineteenth century, he noticed the replication of the European lord-vassal relationship, where the vassals supply the Lord with enough army and other sorts of aids. In return, Lord gives him protection, and there was a sense of loyalty between them (Tod, 1880, pp. 116-156). However, an essential point in Indian feudalism emerged when D.D. Kosambi wrote his famous book "An Introduction to Indian History", where he tried to look feudalism from two perspectives: feudalism from above and feudalism from below. Feudalism from above means under which Kingcollects tribute from autonomous subordinates ruling in their territories, and grants an amount of land to a Brahmins or a religious institution and officials, thus creating a hierarchy of landed intermediary(Kosambi, 2014, p. 295). Later, within the village level, a class of landowners developed between the State and peasantry, rose to the standard of the lords, and are obliged to provide military services to the Kingis feudalism from below. Kosambi asserted that the existence of feudal land tenure and intermediaries between State and kings was the sole reason for the exploitation of peasants.

It was the work of Marxist historian R.S. Sharma, who by bringing together the earlier attempts gave a new context to feudalism in India. In Indian Feudalism, Sharma sought to see it in the whole process of the land grant economy.He traces the origin of feudalism to the practices of land grants to the Brahmans and secular parties during the Gupta and post-Gupta period (Sharma, Indian Feudalism, 2013, p. 3). Sharma linked the rise of land grants to the decline of India's long-distance trade after the fall of the Gupta Empire. The decline of trade resulted in the shortage of coins which also indicated the disappearance of urban life, and thisled to the ruralisation of economy (Sharma, Indian Feudalism, 2013, p. 50). Thus, the only solution devices for

payment of services were through land grants. Another factor which contributed to the practice of land grants, according to Sharma was a social crisis, also called Kali age.[16] During this period rural people were oppressed with taxes and forced labour, in addition to this stateof oppression there came natural calamities which caused chaos, and the Vaisyas and Sudras refused to perform their duties and in general peasants refused to pay taxes. As a result, it became difficult to collect taxes and to pay the administrators, priests, the army and officials, so the only solution was to take recourse to the practice of land grants (Sharma, The Kali Age: A Period of Social Crisis, 2016, pp. 66-67). Thus, the widespread practice of land grants along with the administrative and judicial rights paved the way for the rise of Brahmana feudatories, as some of them shedding their priestly duties gave more attention to the secular functions, resulting in the diminishing of the rights of rulers and decentralisationof power.[17]

Also, there was an emergence of landed intermediaries as a result of payments to officers in lands grants during the Gupta period. These officers eventually took the hereditary character and even granted lands without the permission of the overlord. Also in the village level, village headmen were appointed who were primarily concerned with their gains and lived upon the share of agricultural produce by the village people. Thus, the growing hereditary character of the officers from the Gupta period onwards tended to feudalise the administration further and undermined the central authority (Sharma, Indian Feudalism, 2013, p. 17). Another factor which contributed in great measure to the growth of feudal relation was the emergence of

[16]This crisis also known as Kaliyuga, which happened in and around fourth century AD.

[17]Sharma says that the unlike Europe, in India the decentralization of political power did not result from the granting of land to the military officers, but from the practice of land grants to the priests and temples.

feudatories called samantas.[18] Through the process of conquest, by which smaller chiefs were reduced to subordination and reinstated in their positions provided they paid regular tributes and homage. Gradually the term samantas was extended from defeated chiefs to royal officials. These Samanta feudatories were required to pay all tributes, carry royal orders and other social obligations; however, the primary duty of Samanta vassals was to provide military service during the time of war. This group of intermediaries formed an essential concomitant of feudal development on the political side, which further weakened the central authority as the practice of supplying troops by vassals made central to be more dependent on feudatories (Sharma, Indian Feudalism, 2013, p. 22).

Regarding the condition of peasants, Sharma asserts that as a result of land grants to intermediaries along with more rights over the cultivating peasants, there was increasing subjection and exploitation of the peasantry. The peasants were needed to pay taxes to the hierarchy of intermediaries, who also imposed forced labour upon them,[19] which led to a decline in independent peasants paying the land tax directly to the King. System of transferring land along with the peasants to the beneficiaries, which compelled peasants to stick to the soil. Thus, the free peasants lost in status due to the several impositions of taxes nowreduced to a servile position, their counterparts in medieval Europe (Sharma, Indian Feudalism, 2013, p. 38).

Furthermore, another aspect which contributed to the growth of the feudal system by undermining the central authority was the functioning of the corporate bodies. During this period, merchants engaged in trade had autonomous rights

[18]Term samanta was used in the sense of vassal.

[19]Sharma, see the resemblance of manor in the agraharas or village granted to Brahmanas, who enjoyed the right to imposed forced labour on tenants, and also the resemblance of manorial lord in village headmen who levy forced labour for their own services.

towards trade; they were exempted from dues and were free to deal with their labours by imposing taxes and forced labour on them. Later, with the grant of villages to the merchants, they became tied to the management of villages, rather than paying attention to their trade and commerce. Merchants enjoyed the same immunities and privileges as enjoyed by the Brahmanas and feudal lords (Sharma, Indian Feudalism, 2013, p. 51). So, there was feudalisation of merchants by turning them into landed intermediaries, which eventually resulted in abnegation of royal power in towns.

Sharma asserts that feudal order based on the self-sufficient agricultural and a closed economy in the medieval ages indicated through the shortage of coins, the prevalence of local weights and measures and decline of trade and production, which eventually led to the decay of urban sites. Artisans with less scope of the sale in the towns moved to the villages where they supplied to the needs of peasants who paid them in kind; thus, the handicrafts and artisanal activities confined to the countryside, (Sharma, Indian Feudalism, 2013, p. 327) which is a feature characteristic of a closed economy.According to Sharma, feudalism lasted until about the eleventh century when the trade revived, and decline of feudalism started, however, Sharma does not go much into this aspect.

Lastly, Sharma asserts that Indian feudalism was significant for several reasons. Land grants served as an essential means of bringing virgin soil under cultivation, along with the introduction of a new method of cultivation by Brahmanas, which led to the agricultural expansion.Progress among the tribal people due to the belief and ritual sponsored by the priests, slaughtering of a cow banned, which helped in the preservation of cattle essential for agriculture. Land grants provided the administrative mechanism for the maintenance of law and order in the donated areas,

donees taught among people to be loyal towards the established order. Further, there was acculturation of the people, as Sudras became increasingly engaged in the agriculture and tribal people were given a new way of higher life through art and literaturethus, in this way feudalism worked for the integration of the country (Sharma, Indian Feudalism, 2013, p. 328).

Another work which contributed to the feudalism thesis in India came from B.N.S Yadava, who in line with the Sharma's theory explained the emergence of feudalism in India, looking into the account of changes during kali age, which led to the transition from pre-feudal to feudal society in India. Kali age was characterised by all-round worsening including events such as foreign invasions leading tothe emergence of ruling aristocracy on the cost of older ruling aristocracy and elites, natural calamities, the decline in trade and commerce leading to economic decline and decay of cities, disturbances in the varna system and exploitation by the newly emerging ruling class by extracting excessive taxes and imposing forced labour leading to peasant subjection (Yadava, The Accounts of Kali Age and the Social Transition from Antiquity to the Middle Ages, 2016, p. 79). The significant socio-economic transition from ancient to middle Ages, according to Yadava, was that during this period Sudras status improved to Vaisyas and the degeneration of Vaisyas status, leading to disturbances in the Varna system.The improvement in the status of Sudras explained in connection with the transformation of a Sudra slave, which existed in ancient India.[20] The decline of the Mauryan Empire and foreign invasions led to the division of landed property and disturbances in political fields. Thus, the

[20]Yadava is of opinion that though slaves were into existence in ancient India, but compared to ancient Rome and Greece the extent and functional significant of slaves in India was not much. As slaves in India were mostly engaged in the domestic slavery, which shows that it was never a major factor in the production system in ancient India.

socio-political structure became such that it became difficult to control the slaves leading to the weakening of slavery. As a result of manumission of slaves, many of them resort to agricultural tenants, labourers and share-coppers and those unable to look for themselves depended on lords, thus forming dependent peasants (Yadava, The Accounts of Kali Age and the Social Transition from Antiquity to the Middle Ages, 2016, p. 83).

Similarly, degeneration of Vaisyas explained in connection with the foreign invasion, which led to the decline of trade and commerce, leading to decay of urban life and economy. As a result, Vaisyas compelled to give up trade and commerce. They took recourse to the occupations conditioned by local needs, thus becoming dependent labourers (Yadava, The Accounts of Kali Age and the Social Transition from Antiquity to the Middle Ages, 2016, p. 81).

Nevertheless, other factors also played a significant role in peasant subjection during the early medieval period. Under the circumstance of the shortage of money and closed agricultural economy, poor debtor unable to repay his loan made to do manual labour as debt-bondage. Along with this destitute people voluntarily surrendered to a master in return for means of livelihood and protection. These dependent labourers became attached to their lords and had an obligation to live near Lord, thus creating ties of dependence. Yadava, further asserts that these dependent labourers did not have freedom in mobility and were involved in a relationship of hereditary subjection, thus, resembling somewhat close to serfdom or semi-serfs (Yadava, The Accounts of Kali Age and the Social Transition from Antiquity to the Middle Ages, 2016, p. 89).

Also, another aspect of transition in middle ages was shown through the decline of urban life. Due to the decline in economic life, many cities dwindle into villages, the shortage of money compelled people to leave cities for rural areasleading to the emergence of the landed aristocracy, and petty landed estates. There was increasing predomination of rural set-up and a closed economy. Consequently, with the rise of landed aristocracy rose peasant subjection. Peasants, artisans and other labourers subjected to forced labour, non-economic coercion and overall exploitation of them, leading to the emergence of a section of dependent peasants who were in same respect close to serfdom (Yadava, The Accounts of Kali Age and the Social Transition from Antiquity to the Middle Ages, 2016, p. 100).

Further, based on the astrological works of ancient India, Yadava said that there existedfeudal elements in the political and economic institution of early India. During this time, the political organisation was characterised by the parcellization and localisation of authority downwards to the level of village lords, leading to the emergence of landed intermediaries and combination of economic exploitation with political authority. Newly emerged landed intermediaries resulting from religious and secular land grants, led to a superior kind of relationship of dependence, which involved loyalty to the overlord. Thus, creating hierarchically organised landed aristocracy (Yadava, The Problems of the Emergence of Feudal Relations in Early India, 2016, p. 253).

Therefore, based on the accounts of kali age and additional evidence from the astrological works, Yadava, asserts that due to foreign invasions and settlement in India, there emerged a class of ruling aristocracy.They were leading to internal disturbances and insecurity, social order based on varna shaken, the decline of trade

and economy,resulting in a closed agrarian economy. There emerged exploitative relations of domination and subjection, which is considered the trademark of feudal relations. Thus, all these circumstances appear to have been given zest to changes in economic, social and political sphere which eventually led to the rise of feudalism in India.

Taking forward these theories, D.N. Jha explained the feudal system in connection with the process of state formation in early medieval Chamba. Jha asserted that the process of state formation in Chamba involved the suppression of independent chieftains called ranas, hence reducing them to the status of feudatories. In order to legitimise the rule of newly form State; the kings took the help of Brahmanical religious system. They acted as the protector and benefactor of Brahmanas, which resulted in the granting of lands to the Brahmanas (Jha, The Feudal Order: State, Society and Ideology in Early Medieval India, 2016, p. 203). Apart from religious land grants, there was a practice of granting lands to the official as well.[21] Subsequently, the practice of land grants led to the stratification of agrarian society along with the unequal distribution of land and growth of the class of landed intermediaries. They derived their economic strength from their landholdings. These landlords enjoyed hereditary rights over land, and their rights could not be curtailed, remove and opposed. Beneficiaries started subletting their land leading to the economic depression of the occupants and peasants, as is evident from the fact that the inhabitants in the donated areas were required to pay the donees all taxes in kind or cash due to the King. Transfer of privileges of collecting taxes along with the land to the beneficiaries weakened the position of the peasantry and sharpened a gap

[21] However, in Chamba according to information provided by Jha, there was reference of grants only of the plot of land and not of villages.

between two. So, there emerged dependent peasantry, who were the actual tiller of soil attached to it, closely connected with the serfs (Jha, The Feudal Order: State, Society and Ideology in Early Medieval India, 2016, p. 206).

Naturally, this Marxist views on feudalism in India generated significant debate, as many scholars did not accept these theories. It was D.C. Sircar, who among the non-Marxist historians first opposed feudalism thesis, argued that the proponent of feudalism is confusing landlordism and tenancy with feudalism. Firstly, Sircar argued that Indian Feudalism theory based on the central principle of land grants in return for mainly military services seems to be erroneous as most of the land grants records do not mention any obligations on the religious or secular donees. Moreover, the priestly class was unsuitable for rendering military services. Land grants were made on religious merits and reputation of the donors, and donate land would automatically be passed to the donee's heirs. Secondly, regarding the concept of dependency and subordination of donees, Sircar informs that social position of Brahmans in India was considered high; so it was out of the question for him to be King's vassals (Sircar, 1969, p. 33).

Thirdly, regarding the shortage of coins leading to the payment through land grants, Sircar points out that there was certainly not any real shortage of coins in the market, the rulers of post-Gupta period issued coins and cowrie-shells were in extensive use as coined money. He gives information about the payment in cash made by the Rashtrakuta and Kashmir kings to their officers.Moreover, the wealth took by the early Muslim invaders from the country shows the prosperity of the country. However, admitting that some of the ruling families of the early and medieval period did not issue coins not due to the decline of trade, but the traders did not feel the

necessity for new coins as there were plenty of older coins and cowrie-shell was alternative in the market. In fact, during this period, India's internal and external trade was flourishing, as is evident by the existence of communal guilds all over the country (Sircar, 1969, p. 35). Thus, Sircar, based on epigraphic records contended that trade did not decline and no shortage of coins in India during the post-Gupta period. Referring to the donation of land and villages made by the ancient kings, argued that land grants as the central concept of feudalism are similar to landlordism which was prevalent throughout the ancient period no change could be noticed in the pattern of land grants.

Historians have criticised the concept of a decline of trade and de-urbanisations. Even D.N. Jha, who supported the concept of feudalism, questions the R.S. Sharma's view on long-distance trade and says that long-distance trade should not be taken as the maker of the decline of economic changes in early medieval India. Instead, internal social challenges should be looked into in connection with the decline of trade and the growth of a closed economy. By giving greater importance to external trade would indicate that ancient India did not hold any inherent potential for change- as implied by the concept of the Asiatic Mode of Production (Jha, Dimensions of Feudalism in Early Medieval India, 2008, pp. 323-324). Historians who took up the case against the de-urbanisations and decline of trade were B.D. Chattopadhyaya and Ranabir Chakravartty. Chattopadhyaya pointed out that the decline of trade and urbanisation should not be linked with a decline in foreign trade, as agricultural surplus was the economic basis of the urban centres. By examining the epigraphic source of regions such as- Indo-Gangetic, upper Ganga basin, Malwa and Rajasthan, he mentioned that some urban centres such as Pruthudaka (Haryana), Tattanandapura (Ahar near Bulandshar and situated on the western bank of the

Ganga), Siyodina (Jhansi) and Gopagiri (Gwalior) showed the continuance of trade and urbanisation and commercial activities during ninth and tenth centuries (Chattopadhyaya, The Making of Early Medieval India, 2012, pp. 138-143). Based on the epigraphic evidence, Chattopadhyaya pointed to the rise of numerous market places during this period. Inscriptions of the ninth century from Rajasthan show the use of two terms, i.e., hatta and mandapika, which denotes the centre of exchange. At Tattanandapura, thereis an epigraphic reference to hatta and hattamarga as roads leading to the market place (Chattopadhyaya, The Making of Early Medieval India, 2012, p. 139).

Similarly, Siyodina also shows the same urban characteristics, the existence of varieties of roads. There is mention of one road belonging to merchants and shops owned by merchants and manufacturers of different categories which constituted the centre of a hatta (Chattopadhyaya, The Making of Early Medieval India, 2012, p. 141). Though Chattopadhyaya pointed out that these urban centres not planned townships, but it acted as a nodal point in local commerce, eventually emerging as fully developed urban centres.Thus, Chattopadhyaya with his strong empirical models showed that rather than de-urbanisation, there was continued commercial activities during the ninth and tenth centuries and termed this period as a phase of third urbanisation.

Similarly, Ranabir Chakravarti also argued against the concept of a decline of trade in India, pointing towards the existence of trade during this period. Based on epigraphic records of eighth and twelfth centuries from different parts of north India, he studied on the importance of mandapika as a trade centre in the early medieval period. He asserted that mandapika acted as a centre for exchange and collection of

levies, tolls and customs duties. Manymajor and minor urban centres of the time had mandapika, where a range of commodities brought for sale. Thus, it acted as local-level exchange centres, closed associated with adjoining rural areas.

Further, he asserted that full-fledged commercial centre with several streets, centre for the market, professional quarters and settlement for various groups of professions have been noticed in Siyadoni (near Gwalior), which emerged as a centre for exchange and manufacturing centre under Pratiharas. Moreover, many references to shops point that this mandapika was also the centre of retail and wholesale trade. Thus, Chakravarti, informs that due to agricultural expansion there was agricultural surplus which helped in the formation of the city, as villages witnessed the greater intensity of population, which eventuallytransformed into smaller towns (Chakravarti, 2002, pp. 187-200).

However, the most significant criticism to Indian feudalism thesis came from Harbans Mukhia, who questions the Indian feudal concept by comparing Indian feudalism with European feudalism. The main element of comparison based on the conditions of labour, which is significant in determining the dominant characteristics of the social formation (Mukhia, 2014, p. 35). Talking about the conditions of labour, he argued that in India, the very concept of peasant dependence as marshalled by Sharma is doubtful. Firstly, in India, the nature of forced labour is different from that in Europe, forced labour not used on production in India, because of the high fertility of Indian soil and Indian peasantry subsisted on a low level of resources as compared to Europe. Secondly, also with soil fertility, he talks about the advanced agricultural implement in India and technological advancement in terms of irrigation and treating diseased plants, which led to high agricultural production in India.Thirdly, regarding

the peasant mobility, Mukhia asserted that economic, rather than the legal restriction imposed on peasant'smobility in India, which suggests the absence of complete peasant immobility, thus, peasant's rights over the land, means and the process of production remained intact (Mukhia, 2014, pp. 51-55). Consequently, based on this evidence, Mukhai questions the existing concept of serfdom as propounded by Sharma, and he goes on mentioning that since the post-Mauryan period the agrarian economy in ancient and medieval India was characterised by the free peasantry.

Further, Mukhia argued that the State was the chief instrument of exploitation, as it received agricultural surplus in the form of taxes. There was a kind of balance maintained, and rarely any active resistance of peasants was noticed. In combination with this factor, the independent control of peasant over production process reduced the possibility of severe social tension. Conflicts which could notice were limited solely over the redistribution of surplus, rather than on the means of production. Also asserts that in India, there was no persistent and severe scarcity of labour or production, as increased in demand was met by the extension of agriculture (Mukhia, 2014, p. 58). Thus, Mukhia challenged the notion of Indian feudalism, by comparing with European medieval feudal system.[22] Answering to Mukhia's criticism, Sharma explained that peasants during the early medieval period were subject to servility.They were compelled to pay heavy taxes in cash or kind to the landlords along with labour services, so, imposing labour service and hefty tax is a part of servility, which shows that peasants were not free (Sharma, How Feudal was Indian Feudalism, 2014, p. 85).

[22]Mukhia, mentioned that both Sharma and Yadava have ignored the fact that European feudalism emerged from the transition of ancient slave mode of production initiated by the stratified German invaders. As according to both no such case was noticed in India, hence the very concept is not applicable.

Further, regarding the claim of Mukhia that the peasant enjoyed the independence of production and complete control over means of production, Sharma said that compared to peasant's right landlords had superior rights over the land. All the charters of land grants conferred rights upon beneficiaries to collect all kinds of taxes, services, and fines beneficiaries can replace old peasants with new ones and could give lands to others (Sharma, How Feudal was Indian Feudalism, 2014, p. 86). Besides, beneficiaries were given seigniorial rights- rights to punish people and forced peasants to work on his fields. In fact, with the land grants, beneficiaries were given the mining rights, which inevitability shows that they controlled means of production (Sharma, How Feudal was Indian Feudalism, 2014, p. 92).

Despite flaws on theories regarding the Indian feudalism leading to the rise in later theories, Indian feudalism occupied a significant point of discussion among historians in recent times. This debate on feudal theories had led to a severe assessment of various vital aspects of Indian Medieval history. Nonetheless, it can be assumed that the general characteristics of early Medieval Indian feudalism were landlords and subject peasantry, dominated by the predominantly agrarian economy, evident through the decline of trade and urban centres and shortage of coins. It centred on the socio-political and economic aspects and the class stratification.

Feudalism in Nepal

While discussing the existence of feudal practice in Nepal, certain similar aspects can be noticed with Indian feudalism. Since the ancient period, Indian influence noticed in Nepal with regards to culture, social and political sphere. Cultural inroads from India accompanied by the political influence, which led to the formation of class in a community which previously was tribal and free from class domination (Regmi, 1952, p. iv). In Nepal, religious endowment by the kings and feudatories in the form of land grants was a widespread practice. These religious institutions[23] enjoying the donated land exempted from taxes and even the entry of state officials wasbanned in the donated areas; hence these religious institutions started to emerge as landed barons. Apart from this, secular land grants were also made by the kings, feudatories and individualsindependently to the officials as their remuneration, and nature of land grants was perpetuity (Narayan, 1986, p. 210). This trend of land grants and gradual rise in the landed magnates owing nominal allegiance to the King can be viewed as a sign of parcellization of the political power of the Kingand undermining the power of central authority. Titles such as samantas for the official or governor of the provinces was used, who had hereditary rights (Regmi, 1952, p. 110), which can be compared with the Samanta vassals in India.

Further, examining the condition of peasants can notice the essence of feudalism. Existence of various peasant services shows that they were subject to servility. Firstly, along with the payment of taxes in cash or kind; they were subject to forced labour or unpaid labour services. State and landlords exacted forced labour from everyone; those who failed to provide forced labour were subject to pay large

[23] Religious institutions included Buddhist, Saivite and Vaisnavite.

fines (Narayan, 1986, p. 211). Secondly, there existed a Kut tax system,[24] which was a contractual system of taxation. In this system, landlords allow tenants to cultivate land in return they were required to pay a fixed amount of his crops; however, amount of crop to be pay was subject to renegotiate from time to time. Those peasants who refuse to pay the increased rates were replaced by new tenants who accept to pay the new rates. Thus, landlords benefitted from kut tax system (Dahal, 1986, p. 164). Thirdly, another type of labour practice in Nepal was bounded labour system known as Jhara. Under this system, people belonging to certain classes were compelled to provide unpaid labour services to the State whenever required. They were required to give a day's labour annually, fines charged on those failed to contribute (Dahal, 1986, p. 201).

Moreover, indebtedness appeared to be a significant factor in peasant subjection. Poor peasants are unable to repay loan compelled to do manual labour for money-lender as debt-bondage.

Thus, examining the prevailing system in the early medieval period of Nepal, such as land grants along with the tax collection rights, contractual taxation, unpaid labour services and debt-bondage, led to the widespread exploitation of peasants by the State and individual officers. Consequently, it can assume that these factors have quite a resemblance to the Indian aspects of feudalism. Thus, based on these facts, there will be no hesitation to say that it created a feudal condition in Nepal in the early medieval period.

[24] Resemblance of this system can be seen in Sikkim

Feudal Practice in Bhutan

In 1557 A.D. with the coming of a politico-religious figure named Shabdrung Ngawang Namgyal from Tibet, Bhutan became a political entity, which was till then a border society without any occupational concentration. He established political and religious authority in Bhutan called the *Chhoesid* system (Coelho, 1971, p. 61). This system divided the function of the State into spiritual and temporal. Head of the spiritual was titled as *Je Khenpo* (Dharma Raja), whose duty was to look after the monastic establishment and religious affairs, and the head of temporal was titled as *Dug Desi* (Deb Raja) responsible for the administration, economic and foreign affairs of the State. Council created for the administrative purpose. It included Governors of the provinces (*Penlops*), chief secretary to the Dharma Raja and Deb Raja (*Lam Zimpon*), governors of three *dzongs*[25] (*dzongpens*), the chief judge (*Jhoom Kalling*), and *Nieboos* subordinate to the *dzongpens* supervisors of the scattered villages (Coelho, 1971, p. 63). Office of Dharma Raja based on the incarnation and that of Deb Raja through election by the council in theory, but led by the strongest *Penlops* in practice. Thus, making Deb Raja merely the nominee of the strongest *Penlops*. The political situation of Bhutan until the nineteenth century was overwhelmed with a series of civil war between *Penlops* of various territories contended for power and influence. The central authority weakened gradually, and local authorities strengthened their powers. The country split into numerous divisions along feudalistic lines; every seat of power was subject to an ongoing competition between chiefs who desire for power (Karan & Jenkins, 1963, p. 33).

[25]Fortresses in Bhutan were called Dzongs, the three important dzongz were- Tashi-cho-dzong, the Punakha and the Angduhodang dzongs.

The land was the primary source of power and income. Distribution of land was highly unequal; State, monasteries and aristocrats held most of the land.[26] Simultaneously they functioned as landlords, employees and lenders, which indicate the traditional association between the royal, clergy and landed aristocrats that dominated the Bhutan politics. The regional governors (*dzongpens*) and the other aristocrats at the regional level were very powerful. They had power in administration, controlled land and tax collection, keeping a large part of it and submitting rest to the King (Yetsho, 2010, p. 13). It shows the highly decentralised political administration, and socio-political and economic highly dependent on the conscripted labour, offerings and various forms of taxes paid in kind.

During the medieval period, Bhutan was dominantly agrarian with limited barter trade with its neighbouring country. Agrarian relation consisted of the group of aristocrats, tax-paying freemen and serfs. Aristocrats controlled the tax collection and labour services, and freemen landholding peasants were regular tax-payers they constituted the larger part of the population. Lastly, there existed the landless serfs. The existence of this variation of social structure shaped the division of labour which characterised the society based on dependence (Yetsho, 2010, p. 21).

While examining the conditions of peasants, it shows specificcharacteristics of servility. There existed two kinds of serfs; *Drap* and *Zap*. *Drap* serfs were attached to the hereditary *Choje*[27] landlords. They work as unpaid labour on tenancybasis on the master's land and in return, receive a piece of land for their use. *Draps* were only responsible for their master. *Zab* serfs live below the subsistence level and in a worse

[26]Besides, there was community land; grazing land and forest, which was collectively owned by village communities and pay taxes to the government.
[27] Those belonging to religious head

condition. They worked entirely for landlords as hereditary serfs, in return receives food and clothing. Besides, agricultural works, *Zab* serfs performs household works for their landlords and also does labour tax on behalf of their landlord besides their labour tax to the State (Wangchuk, 2000, p. 61). Men, women and children from both categories of serfs entered into this servile labour relationship.Apart from these, another category of free-peasants called *minap* existed; they had their land or cultivated land of monasteries or landed aristocrats (Aris, 1980, p. 13). This would indicate that though there existed servile status and relationships but found in a minority of the population. Therefore, it would be improper to describe the whole system built based on serfdom.

Further, free-peasants and serfs were responsible for various form of tax in kind[28] and labour services. There was no regular system and uniformity in taxation and collected at any time. The amount of tax to be collected was determined by animal count held by the household and members of the family (Wangchuk, 2000, p. 62). This variation in tax collection shows the oppressive nature of extraction towards the tax-payers. Besides taxes in kind, every household had to contribute compulsory unpaid labour services. Firstly, every household had to contribute to labour service for fifteen days in a year (*woola*) tax. This labour tax was levied by the State for all kind of construction purposes and carrying loads. Secondly, in another form of labour tax, there was no fixed number of days (*shapto-lemi*) tax. Thirdly, the peasants had to provide *corvee* labour, in which they carry official luggage from one region to another (Yetsho, 2010, pp. 25-26). Lastly, certain days of the week the peasants work in the landlord's land while the rest of the days they worked in their land assigned to them (*chunni-done*) (Coelho, 1971, p. 53).

[28]Wheat, rice, butter etc., were collected by landlords as tax.

An evaluation of medieval Bhutan shows that although the central government held by the King existed, in the regional levels political administration wasgreatly decentralised with local authorities having power. The regional aristocrats enjoyed power in their jurisdiction and owned most of the land. They were vital in running the administration of the State. Landed aristocrats controlled all the labour services, and collection of taxes. Bhutan was sparsely populated agrarian society; thus, control of labour production was vital in maintaining the power of aristocrats. The existence of interdependent between the peasants and landlord noticed in term of labour and productivity. The landlord did not have enough labour to work on their land due to low demography, and the peasants did not have land to work for their subsistence.

Though the agrarian structure dominated by the landed aristocrats, there was a vast majority of free-peasants who held private lands or working as share cropping for the religious landlords or other landlords. Only a marginal of the population were serfs in a real feudal sense. These serfs served landlords and monastic lands by working on their land and doing household works along with the unpaid labour services to the State. Serfs had liberty in deciding whether to keep working under particular landlords, and they always have the option of flight to a new landlord if mistreated by old one. Thus, in such a condition, it can be expected that landlords usually treat serfs well, provided the scarcity of labour (Yetsho, 2010, p. 22).

In conclusion, it can be assumed that although servility and dependent relationships found in Bhutan, it involved a minority of the population. So, it would be improper to illustrate the entire system based on serfdom. Understanding the condition of Bhutanese serfs, had the right to mobility, they can choose to stay with a

particular landlord and flight to another one if mistreated. Thus, it appeared relatively mild compared to European and other Asian feudalism.

Tibetan Feudalism

The political system of Tibet was based on a dual system of religious and secular, which is termed as *chos srid lugs gnyis*, in which King acted as head of both religious and political administration. Any position in the political administration shared between lay and a monk, in this dual system (Field, 2005, p. 24). King was the ultimate holder of the land. The land was the most important means of production and economy in Tibet. The land system shows the foundation of social structure, similar to other stratified agricultural societies; land rights closely tied to all kinds of social functions. Various services rendered to the State, or individuals were paid in land, while rights over land imply social responsibilities and essential political functions. Rights over the land derived from grants made by the ruler or his representatives (Carrasco, 1959, p. 28). There existed the practice of land grants along with people to the nobles, in return for rendering political services and taxes. Rights of nobles on land were hereditary and could be withdrawn only in case of lack of an heir. These nobles were local ruler of provinces and chiefs of small territories. Religious monasteries were also granted lands for its upkeep and conducting religious ceremonies; however, monks exempted from tax payments (Carrasco, 1959, p. 18). In Tibet, all laymen categorised into two hierarchical groups; aristocrat lords (*sger pa*) and serfs (*miser*).

The land was divided into the manorial estate and corporate village estate. The manorial estate consisted of land administered by the aristocrats and monasteries, whereas corporate village estate was under the control of officials directly appointed

by the central government. Lords hereditarily held the Manorial land, along withtied serfs. The manorial land was divided into a demesne and tenement area, demesne land held by the lord and tenement area held by the serfs'[29] family; however, the entire estate was under the control of the lord. Besides from working on tenement land for subsistence serfs were required to work on the demesne land as an obligation, from which lord received the total income (Carrasco, 1959, p. 101). In return for the grant of the section from tenement lands, serfs perform all the agricultural work in the manorial land they required to cultivateon demesne land almost entire year, without payments and food. Lords only provide the seeds and ploughing animals. Apart from the labour work on demesne land, serfs were required to provide other labour services; construction of the lord's house, lifetime service of soldier, monk and household works. They were also subject to the paymentof taxes in kind or money to the lord (Goldstein, Reexamining Choice, Dependency and Command in the Tibetan Social System: "Tax Appendages" & Other Landless Serfs, 1986, p. 87). The land serfs held from the manorial lords were hereditary, this land termed as *tre-ten* (tax-base) in Tibetan. They did not possess this land but had complete control over it, and they can keep the total harvest and even lease out their land. These serfs grouped as tax-payer or *tre-pa or khralpa* (Goldstein, Reexamining Choice, Dependency and Command in the Tibetan Social System: "Tax Appendages" & Other Landless Serfs, 1986, p. 87).

Corporate Village estate another type of land in Tibet administered by the central government through the provincial district (*dzong*) officials called *dzongpens*. Unlike, the manorial estate, there was no division of land into demesne and tenement sections. The lands divided among the tax-payer (*Khralpa*) serfs who held it as the

[29]Serfs in Tibet in termed as Miser

basis for fulfilling their obligations. Distinct to the manorial estate, the lord (*dzongpen*) levied the taxes on the village as a whole, instead of the individual serf families. The village headman was responsible for internal allocation of the land, collection of taxes and organising the *corvee* services (Carrasco, 1959, p. 43). Serfs had internal autonomy since there was no interference in the internal administration of the village by the government as long as the obligations were fulfilled. These serfs had hereditary right over land they held and were bound to the land. They were subject to payment of taxes in kind or money and*corvee* labour services. Besides, serfs were required to provide two most difficult *corvee* services; military soldiers' tax and animal transport tax (Goldstein, Serfdom & Mobility: An Examination of the Institution of "Human Lease" in Traditional Tibetan Society, 1971, p. 527).

Tax-payer serfs (*khralpa*) tied to land rather than the lord, and if the lord changes, they remained attached to it and comes under the authority of the new lord. Membership within serfs passed through the parallel descent. Serfs were compelled to provide taxes and free labour services to the lord and central government, in return for land, however, they did not own the land neither sells it. Lord had legal rights to command these services from serfs. A serf could not abandon their land and obligations, in case of serfs tries to run away, the lord had judicial rights to bring him back and punish forcibly; thus, the mobility was absent.[30] *Khralpa* serfs of corporate village estate had a legal right to take action against the lords, if the lord tries to violate his authority in case of land, taxes or settlement of disputes, serfs can plead to the central government. However, lords often tend to use their influence and resources over the central government's decision in such cases (Goldstein, Serfdom & Mobility:

[30]Vague chances of mobility could be notice among the serfs in case of becoming monks or nuns provided permission should be taken from lord. They remain free of obligations until remain in monastic order, if they leave will be revert back to the status of serfs.

An Examination of the Institution of "Human Lease" in Traditional Tibetan Society, 1971, pp. 522-23). Hence, it clearly shows the superior rights of lords over the serf's rights and that the lords abused their power in collecting too high taxes, personal use of labour services and extracting presents,

Along with the *khralp* tax-payer serfs there existed important sub-statuses serfs in Tibet; bound *Dud-Chung* and *Mi-bo Dud-Chung* (human lease). Bound *Dud-Chung* serfs were tied to the religious or aristocratic estates. Unlike tax-payer *khralpa, Dud-Chung* serfs held a small amount of non-heritable land on an individual basis and required to provide only human *corvee* labour for the cultivation on lord's demesne land. Their status of a serf transmitted to their children through parallel descent. Another type of *Mi-bo Dud-Chung* or human lease serfs not tied to the land. They leased their freedom from the lord, but, yet they were tied to the lord in the sense that they required to pay an annual fee and minimal *corvee* obligations to the lord (Goldstein M. C., Taxation and the Structure of a Tibetan Village, 1971, p. 5). Human lease serfs were free to decide regarding the use of themselves as a resource and could work wherever or whatever they liked on a contractual wage basis for the tax-payer land holding serfs. Compared to other serf types, a human lease serf had a certain degree of territorial mobility, provided he was required to pay his lord an annual fee and a *corvee* service for leasing his freedom. Moreover, the lord had a legal right to call him to provide labour service at any time. However, their status of serf remained unchanged and similar to bounded serfs it transmitted through parallel descent (Goldstein, Reexamining Choice, Dependency and Command in the Tibetan Social System: "Tax Appendages" & Other Landless Serfs, 1986, p. 98).

These human lease serfs formed the most significant labour force for *khralpa* tax-payer landholding serfs. Since a military taxand *corvee* labour service was the most challenging tax obligation for them, they hired human lease serf on a wage basis to fulfil these obligationson their behalf. Most of the bound *dud-chung* serfs tend to become human lease serfs because of the individual freedom of territorial mobility and to escape from the harsh lords and economic situation. However, under different conditions, human lease serf status can be acquired; firstly, running away from the estate and getting employment in another area. In this situation, the family of runaway serf convinced the lord to give him the status of human lease serf in return for annual fee payment. Secondly, a serf expresses a formal request to the lord for obtaining human lease in case of marriage, as resident after marriage was patrilocal (Goldstein, Serfdom & Mobility: An Examination of the Institution of "Human Lease" in Traditional Tibetan Society, 1971, pp. 528-29).

Thus, in Tibet, while examining the established system of stratification among serfs, there were noticeable characteristics of both rigidity and flexibility. The tax-payer serfs had legal rights, but landlords had superior rights; lord held control over the labour of all the serfs, whether land-bound or landless. Lords could summon serfs at any time and serfs could not alienate their land without the permission. Moreover, those serfs who leased their freedom from lord compelled to pay annual fee and *corvee* service whenever the lord required. The status of serfs, whether tied to land or landless, even after acquiring a certain degree of mobility, could not escape from their status. It was hereditary and transmitted through the parallel descent.

Consequently, in comparing with European feudalism, Tibet shows a remarkable similarity in a few fundamental traits; the importance of labour rents, land

grants in return of services, and the close connection of rights over land with political functions. The land estate of Tibet resembles the manor, and land grants in return for services are similar to the fief, and the labour services to that of European *corvee*. However, distinct from Europe, in Tibet land was granted as salary to officials of the central government, in return for unlimited obedience and government can resume the land at will, whereas in Europe the grant of land was part of personal contractual relations of vassalage. Rather than Europe, the closest similarity relating to the land grants and political system of Tibet can be found in India.Relationship between lord and serf in Tibet was not contractual instead based on hereditary; a serf could not break the relationship unilaterally evenif he is willing to return the land (Golstein, 1988, p. 64). Nevertheless, the situation of serfs in Tibet was not harsh or neglected by the lord. As serfs formed significant labour force for lords to ensure that he had enough labour available for cultivation, lords did not interfere in the daily life of the serfs, and only cared for the continuous flow of products and goods.

Conclusion

After examining through the various discussions regarding feudalism, it becomes apparently clear that the widespread practice of land grants due to the decline in trade and reduction in metal currency led to the emergence of feudalism in medieval period. Feudalism was the system of government, social and political structure of medieval period. It deeply affected society and economy, ranging from how a country was administered, to the rights and the responsibilities of the people from top to the bottom. The main characteristics of feudalism was social hierarchy, dominated by the class of landlords and subject peasantry, both living in a predominantly agrarian economy.The king was at the top of social hierarchy, who

granted the lands to the nobles, who in turn were responsible for the collection of rents and unpaid labour services from the peasants. The policy of issuing land grants loosened the control of the king over the donated areas, making the landlords more powerful and influential in their part, resulting in the exploitation of peasantry who were in the bottom of social ladder. However, it is pertinent to note that the widespread practice of land grants leading to the feudal system had one important benefit which was the agrarian expansion.

CHAPTER THREE

THE EARLY INHABITANTS OF SIKKIM AND THE COMING OF TIBETANS

Sikkim, although small compared to its neighbours, commands an important geographical position. Sikkim also includes a significant and ancient trade route between Tibet and India; it also lies between Nepal and Bhutan's two crucial countries. Historically, Sikkim's location has been both a blessing and a curse, as it profited from trade with all its neighbours and been a desirable prize for its more potent neighbours. As a result, Sikkim's history is not a peaceful one; instead, it is characterised by continual warfare with Nepal or Bhutan. The truncated shape of the present Sikkim is due to its powerful neighbours' pressure and conquests in the past. Formerly the territory of Sikkim was extended as far as Limbuan (presently the eastern part of Nepal) in the West, Chumbi Valley (now in China) in the North, parts of Western Bhutan in the East and whole of Darjeeling district, including Siliguri and Titaliya on the Bihar-Bengal border in the South (Namgyal & Dolma, 1908, p. 8).

Sikkim was under the influence of Tibet in terms of political and religious matters. Throughout the history of Sikkim, one can notice that Tibet had aided Sikkim, be it external invasions or internal disputes carried out by the aristocrats. More than the obvious religious and linguistic similarities, the political theories and practices, the concept of divine kingship, or the writing of legal and administrative documents are noticeably Tibetan. Thus, Sikkim has to be understood within the broader Tibetan context. Sikkim is home to numerous Himalayan people with different cultures and religions. This was due to the geographical location as a

meeting place for the people from Tibet and Himalayan regions and also due to the British occupation in Sikkim, which led to the settlement of Nepalese in Sikkim. As a result, Sikkim's current ethnic demographics consist of multi-ethnic groups such as Lepchas, Bhutia and Nepalese (including numerous sub-groups). This makes Sikkim distinct from Tibet, as the orientation and cultural legacies of the diverse ethnic group of Sikkim are different from Tibet.

Over the years, there have been controversies among the academicians regarding Sikkim's original inhabitants and lifestyle before establishing the Namgyal dynasty. However, the most accepted argument was that the Lepchas and Limboos were the original inhabitants of Sikkim, followed by Bhutia and Nepalese. These diverse opinions were because the broader aspects of Sikkim history have not been adequately studied than other areas. Several problems, including lack of historical sources and inadequate language training for the documentswritten in the Tibetan language, hindered the research on Sikkim history. Sikkim's history sources' delimitation had long been a conventional one for scholars or historians, particularly before establishingthe Namgyal[31] dynasty. Unfortunately, most recent Sikkim writings do not provide detailed information on the period before the establishment of the Namgyal dynasty. However, available sources for the period before the Namgyal dynasty are in Tibetan script written by Buddhist monks. Therefore, for the writing of Sikkim's early history, one has to depend on myths, folklore and legends, and Tibetan sources.

Considering this chapter will attempt to examine a good picture of the Sikkim state before the advent of the Tibetans. Firstly, it will deal with the broad background

[31]Namgyal is the surname of Sikkim's ruler, and they used the same to denote the name of their dynasty.

of the early inhabitants of Sikkim. Secondly, the arrival and origin ofthe Tibeto-Sikkimese people will be taken up because Sikkim as a kingdom started with their appearance. Lastly, it will deal with the settlement of Tibetans and Phuntshog Namgyal's coronation as Sikkim's first ruler.

Early Inhabitants of Sikkim

There are various opinions among historians regarding the original inhabitants of Sikkim.[32] However, the most accepted version was that the Lepchas and Limboos were the earliest inhabitants of Sikkim. The Lepchas and Limboos claim to be the autochthones (an original or indigenous inhabitant of a place). Thus, it is vital to give a background of early human inhabitation in Sikkim and their migration. Over the past many years, some archaeological discoveries have made in Sikkim. The first publication of archaeological findings was in 1969 by two Indian archaeologists, N.R. Banerjee and J.L. Sharma. According to their research, only one specimen belongs to the Neolithic was found in Sikkim, a slate chisel, near *Rumtek*[33] (Banerjee & Sharma, 1969, p. 53). They identified similarities among the tool found in Sikkim and Assam and the Brahmaputra basin. Later, many Neolithic tools have been found from the following sites in Sikkim: Majitar, Upper Samdur, Namcheybong, Aho Busty, Adampool, Ranka, Phaungma and many other places of East district Sikkim (Kharel & Wangchuk, 2013, p. 71).

In 2004, a team of Indian archaeologists led by P.K. Mishra visited Sikkim, and his team excavated twenty-nine Neolithic sites and found over a hundred stone tools. From these findings, Mishra noted a distinct technological development in the

[32](Banerjee & Sharma, 1969), (Mishra, 2008), (Driem, 1998), (Risley, 2010), (Geoffrey, 2005) and (Kutturan, 1983)

[33]Rumtek is a place in the east district of Sikkim, it is also considered as the exiled seat of the Karmapa

production of tools, from chipped tools to polished and ground tools of stone axes, a characteristics tool of the Neolithic period. Further, it noted that the earlier chipped tools shared characteristics with similar findings in South-Asia and dates these tools to around 10,000 BC and the later polished and ground tools, which are dated 8000-4000 BC, shared similarities to the Sichuan and South China cultural assemblage (Mishra, 2008, pp. 11-23). Thus, the findings of Mishra seem to verify the earlier opinions on the migration of ancient Tibeto-Burman presented by George Van Driem (1998 and 2006). Driem combines his extensive knowledge of the Tibeto-Burman language family's linguistic history with archaeological findings from Sichuan, Eastern Tibet, Sikkim, Assam and South-East Asia to propose a theoretical model of migration patterns of ancient Tibeto-Burmans. Comparing results from those places, he argued that the similarity of the technology and materials used to craft tools had been found in these sites. Furthermore, they suggested a cultural affinity between early Mesolithic and early Neolithic Sichuan culture and the South-East Asian and Indian Eastern Neolithic cultural assemblage (Driem, 1998, pp. 76-84).Therefore, he concludes that the Tibeto-Burmans migrated to the Brahmaputra basin and expanded to South-East Asia and the Assamese hills. These findings suggest that the earliest Sikkim inhabitants might have migrated from the Brahmaputra basin; their ancestors migrated to the Brahmaputra basin from Sichuan. Driem further estimates that the ancestors might have crossed the Himalayas in the third or fourth Millennia BC, corresponding roughly to the end of the later Neolithic findings dated 8000-4000 BC by Mishra. Thus, it seems clear that Sikkim had been inhabited since prehistoric times and that the Lepchas, along with the Limboos, have resided in the Sikkimese hills.

Most scholars support this view regarding the origin of early inhabitants. As opined by Risley, “though the Lepchas claim to be the indigenous inhabitants of

Sikkim, their physical characteristics stamp them as members of the Mongolian race, and certain peculiarities of language[34] and religion render it probable that the tribes are a very ancient colony from Southern Tibet." (Risley, 2010, p. i). Likewise, historians 'recent works[35] support this view that the Lepchas migrated from Assam and belonged to Tibeto-Burman tribal groups (Kutturan, 1983, p. 16). Various parts of Tibet and Mongolia have been suggested, and a certain similarity had been found between the Lepcha language and some dialects spoken in Indo-China. Gorer believes that the Lepchas are a Mongoloid people, slightly more prominent Mongolian features, fairer complexions and greater stature than their present neighbours (Geoffrey, 2005, p. 16).

On the other hand, Lepchas have no tradition of migration and believed that they came from *Mayel*[36], a high snow-filled valley beyond the holy Kanchenjunga where they say their ancestors lived. They call themselves *Rong* from the Lepcha words *Rongkup* meaning the children of snowy peak or God's children. According to their tradition, the Lepcha god, *Rom*, created their ancestors, a man named *Phadong Thing* and a woman named *Najyonguyu* from the pure virgin snows of Mt. Kanchenjunga. From the children of *Phadong Thing* and *Najyonguyu* that the Lepchas have come from (Kotturan, Folk Tales of Sikkim, 1976, pp. 17-20). Consequently, it

[34](Mainwaring, 1876), (Mainwaring, Dictionary of the Lepcha Language, 1896), (Tamsang, A Grammar of the Lepcha Language, 1978) and (Palisier, 2007). Among the mentioned sources, Mainwaring was the first work on the Lepcha language and publish it.

[35](Kotturan, The Himalayan Gateway: Culture and History of Sikkim, 1983), and (Geoffrey, 2005)

[36]Lepchas believes that their forefathers still live in Mayel. They say that Mayel is a valley high up on the mountains hidden by the great peak Mount Kanchenjunga.

is complicated to conclude the Lepchas' origin and their genuineness as Sikkim's early settlers.[37]

Along with the Lepchas, another community to settle down in the Sikkim before establishing the Namgyal dynasty was the Limboos, who concentrated in west Sikkim. There exist various theories among scholars regarding the origin and migration of Limboos. According to one group of scholar, Limboos traced their origin from the Tsang province of Tibet,[38] where yak is found in abundance; from there, they migrated to a place lying on the eastern side and extending towards Sikkim, referred to as the Limbuan country of Limboos. Migration from Tsang province is believed to have been due to Lamaism's increasing influence over their religious belief. On the other hand, another group of scholar believes that the ancestors of Limboos migrated from Sichuan Yunan Province of China and reached Burma. After arriving in Burma, there was a further increase in their number and spread out to East, West and South. Finally, a group that spread to the south-west settled in a place called Mokwan, and they began to be called Shan Mokwan. This Shan Mokwan group later migrated to Eastern Nepal via the Terai region of North Bengal, crossing river Teesta. It is here they established their rule by defeating existing rulers and thereby demarcated the boundaries as Tibet in the North, Jalalgarh Purnea in the South, river Teesta in the East and river Dubkosi in the West, and naming their new land as Limbuan.[39] Formerly Limbuan was within the Sikkim territory but was conquered and permanently annexed to Nepal by the descendants of Prithivi Narayan Shah of Nepal

[37]Nevertheless, the Government of Sikkim had officially recognised the Lephas as the primitive or indigenous tribe by resolving India's Government's concurrence in the State Legislative Assembly of Sikkim. Sikkim Government Gazette, Notification No. 3(54) PA/518/2006, Dated. 18th November 2006.

[38]Various works of scholars also support this view of Limboo's migration from Tibetan region, such as; (Balikci, 2008), (Sagant, 1996), (Subba, 1999) and (Northey & Morris, 1974).

[39](Chemjong, 1966),(Subba J. R., Yumaism, the Limboo Way of Life A philosophical Analysis, 2012) and (Vansittart, 1906)

(Gurung, 2011, p. 124). The Limboos were the *Yakthumbas* or the yak herders and were butchers and sellers of yak skins by profession. Due to this, the Lepchas and the Bhutias called them the Tsongs, which means a merchant (Sinha, 1975, p. 7).

The appellation Sikkim itself is the noticeable evidence of the Limboos as early inhabitants of Sikkim. As Risley writes that the word Sikkim is derived from two Limboo words, "*Su*" means new and "*Khim*" means a house or a place, and it is associated with a new palace built at *Rabdentse* by the second king Tensung Namgyal[40] (Risley, 2010, p. 40). Basnet had supported Risley's statement, who considered the word Sikkim originated from Limboo vocabulary "*Su-Khim*" (new house). The name was first got in vogue when a Lepcha chief married a Limboo girl. As when the Limboo girl entered her husband's house, she exclaimed in her tongue "*Su-Khim*", and thus with time, the word corrupted into *Sukhim*, *Sikhim* and then to Sikkim (Basnet, 1974, p. 5).

Similarly, the Limboos as one of the early inhabitants of Sikkim is evident from the Treaty of "*Lho-Mon-Tsong-Sum*", signed between the three communities; *Lho* (Bhutias), *Mon* (Lepchas) and *Tsong* (Limboos)[41]. Consequently, it can be said that there might exist various theories among the scholars regarding the origin and migration of Lepchas and Limboos. Still, without hesitation, one can say that the Limboos, together with the Lepchas, were early inhabitants of Sikkim.[42]

[40]TheSecond king Tensung Namgyal married three queens. The youngest queen was from Limboo, and her name was Queen Thungwa Mukma, daughter of the Limboo Chief Yangwarok, Yong Yong Hang. Later, Tensung Namgyal built a new Rabdentse palace and asked the new queen to name it. She named it "Song Khim" meaning New Home. (Namgyal & Dolma, 1908, p. 22)

[41]PD/1.2/001. Sikkim, Royal Palace Archive. Namgyal Institute of Tibetology. Gangtok, Sikkim

[42]However, in Sikkim, based on migration, Limboos were categorised into earlier and later migrants. Accordingly, the Limboos who came from Tibet's Tsang province to Sikkim were termed early settlers. Whereas, those who came as labourers or agriculturalists along with other Nepalese during the

Socio-Economic Life of the Early Inhabitants

There are less reliable means of knowing the early history and tribal organisation of the early inhabitants. However, a mass of literary sources suggests that a loose type of tribal organisation existed among them. Most scholars believe that chieftains ruled the Lepchasand Limboos[43]before the Namgyal rulers.Turve, who was given the title of *Panu* or *Punu,* was the Lepchas' first chieftain (Siiger, 1967, pp. 26-28). Other successive *Punus* followed Turve Punu. With the death of the last chief named Tubh Athak Punu, the title came to an end (Kotturan, The Himalayan Gateway: Culture and History of Sikkim, 1983, p. 19).[44] Lepchas' folklore also narrates an incident during these chieftains involving a Koche princess of Jolasi[45] with the Lepcha chief. At that time, Dhan Chand, the ruler of that country, gave his beautiful daughter in marriage to the Lepcha chief (Kotturan, Folk Tales of Sikkim, 1976, pp. 102-104). On the contrary, Fonning does not subscribe to this theory of Lepcha Panu. According to him, the Lepcha society was such that ranking and gradation wereutterlyabsent. There never existed any acknowledgement of authority except those of the seniors among the Lepchas (Fonning, 1987, p. 8).

Likewise, it is said the Limboos also had chieftains. The ancestors of Limboos who settled in Limbuan divided the area into ten districts and placed it under the jurisdiction of ten chiefs (Subba J. R., The Limboo of Eastern Himalayas: with Special reference to Sikkim, 1999, p. 84). Thus, after considering all the above

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Namgyal dynasty and were granted to settle in open fields in the Phodong estate of Mangshila in North Sikkim were termed as later settlers. (Balikci, 2008, p. 53)

[43]Similar to Lepchas, Limboos also had no kings, they were subordinate to individual group-leaders. (Hermanns, 1954, p. 10)

[44]Similarly, Kali Kumar Das also talks about the existence of chieftain named Turve Punu, who was followed by two successors. (Das, 1869, p. Appendix 1-5)

[45]Lepchas used to call the country corresponding to modern Jalpaiguri and Duars as Jolasi, which meant in their language ‘Plenty of rice’.

arguments, it can be asserted that initially, there seems to be a chieftain, but with time gradually, this system faded and followed by choosing seniority among the Lepchas.

The Lepchas are divided into many clans; *Renjyongmoo, Ilammoo, Tamsangmoo, Dalimmoo* etc. Lepchas of Sikkim belonged to the *Renjyongmoo* clan. As the origin of a clan is concerned, there are different versions of the story. Tamsang traces the clans' descent to the children of *Phadong Thing* and *Najyonguyu*[46] (Tamsang, 1983, p. 2); however, this statement is contested by the Lepchas. According to their folklore, it is believed that the couple threw the children because of their incestuous relationship. Another version of the clan's origin came after *Lasso Mung's* slaying- the evil spirit who tormented the Lepchas; it is believed that there were ten Lepchas involved in killing *Lasso Mung* using various methods, which gave way to ten different clan names (Kotturan, Folk Tales of Sikkim, 1976, pp. 21-25). Apart from these versions, each Lepcha clans have their version of stories on the clan's origin. Each clan name invariably ends with the word '*moo'* means 'dwellers of', showing that Lepchas have acquired the clan name from the locality or village originally, they came.

Similarly, the Limboos are also divided into three clans as Kasi, Lhasa and Bhuiphuta, based on their migration. Kasi gotras were the vegetarians and hinduized ones; they migrated to Kasi Benaras from Limbuan and came back. Lhasa gotras were the non-vegetarians; they migrated to Tibet from Limbuan and came back. The last one was the Bhuiphuta gotras; they neither migrated to Kasi nor Tibet but remained in their land of Limbuan (Risley, 2010, pp. 36-37). Hence, with certainty, it can be said

[46]The first man and women created out of pure snow by the Lepcha God, according to Lepcha folklore

that the two communities, the Lepchas and the Limboos, were the early settlers who inhabited Sikkim, though at different periods.

The inhabitants were the devoutworshippers ofnature, such as the mountains,[47] rocks,[48] rivers and forest, a natural outcome of their surroundings. Along with the worship of nature, they also believe in spirits, to which they worship; this form of prayer is referred to as Shamanism. It was the fusion of witchcraft and sorcery, along with the worship of spirits. These spirits existed everywhere and had to be worshipped and appeased with offerings such as animal sacrifices (Coelho, 1971, p. 3). Hermanns also gives details of Lepcha's concept of God and their spirits' surroundings favourable to man and who offer them protection (Hermanns, 1954, pp. 46-49). Sorcerers called *Mun* or *Bong-thing*[49]*;* could evoke good spirit instead of ill. Among priestly *Mun*, there was no particular caste or class, it was not even hereditary, and there was an absence of organised hierarchy. Anyone can become *Mun* irrespective of sex and status. On the origin of *Mun* or *Bong-thing*, Stocks quotes on illuminating the legend story of demon *Mung*, and how God created the *Bong-thing* to set right the order of things. The Mun or Bong-thing's prime characteristic is the heavenly calling to officiate as intermediaries between God and man (Stocks, 1925, pp. 325-505).

The early inhabitants, for their sustenance, depended on the forest for gathering and hunting, withscanty agricultural activities.The appropriate cultivation or settled agriculture was unknown to them, and the area used to be barren land filled

[47]In Sikkim State Government Calendar during the month of August "Tendong Lho Rum Faat" is declared holiday. It is the festival of Lepchas, they worship mountains on this day.

[48]One great evidence can be found in place named Kabi in North Sikkim, this is the historic place where the two protagonists of Lepchas and Bhutia swore a blood-brother pact in front of a big rock and even today people worship there.

[49]Bong-thing exists till this date among the Lepchas

with dense forest and jungle. A popular myth among the natives says that they remained hiding due to fear of demons and had nothing to eat, so they depended on animals they hunted and wild food such as tubers or yams or anything that could fulfil their hunger (Doma, 2010, pp. 40-46).Until the beginning of the seventeenth century, they lived in temporary huts and roamingin the forest, living on animals they could kill and wild plants (Geoffrey, 2005, p. 69).[50]Along with the hunting and gathering, the inhabitants were poor agriculturalist and used to practise shifting cultivation. They used to cut down the spot for their field, and after drying, it is burned down. Soil thus formed with the intermixture of ashes, they sow crops and as soon as it is reaped and harvest, they move to another spot (Boileau, 1831, p. 180).[51]They did not indulge in extensive cultivation, as the products were based on distribution based on needs. Plough was not familiar to the inhabitants; the essential implements they used for farming was a hoe and *bamphok*[52]. Generally, the male used to dig the ground with the bamboo stick's help, while the females followed them by putting seeds inside these holes (Roy, 2005, p. 147). Cultivation was confined to rice and millet, probably selecting the wild varieties which grew in the Himalayan forest. Due to shifting cultivation, they rarely remain more than three years in one place, as required to move into a new part of the forestto clear space for house and preparethe ground for crops. Consequently, they failed to form permanent villages (Campbell, 1840, p. 387).

[50]Information taken by Geoffrey Gorer in 2005 interviewing the ninety years old named Kahleyeu born in 1890, from Lingthem, Dzongu, North Sikkim. Kahleyeu's grandfather shared this information with him.

[51]This information about the inhabitants is also supported by the various other writings, which talks about the existence of shifting cultivation, however it was not extensive but was on subsistence level (Waddell, 1990, p. 100).

[52]Iron piece with which they cut down the forest

With regards to the land-holding, it is believed that there existed no private ownership of land.[53] The land was considered common property for all. Clan chiefs used to determine which part of the common field to be used for cultivation and would appropriate the areas collectively, or the people freely used it (Waddell, 1990, p. 105). Thus, it can be assumed that such periodic distribution of areas prevented significant wealth disparities among people. However, the inhabitants owned domesticated herds privately, not for economic gains but sacrifices and consumption purpose (Hermanns, 1954, p. 104). Money and the market based on price exchange seemed to be non-existent. Whatever trade existed was based on a barter system which also was limited to specific commodities. To obtain salt, wool and metal goods, the inhabitants used to get it from Tibet in exchange for red dye-wool called *vyim* (Nepali call it majita) and whatever crops they had. They would then take some salt to Darjeeling in exchange for thread and cloth (Geoffrey, 2005, p. 118). Thus, the primitive mode of acquiring food and the absence of extensive market or trade failed to developa proper economic structure among the inhabitants.

This primitive communal mode of production prevailed among the early inhabitants like Lepchas and Limboos. The reasons for the inhabitants adopting the primitive way of life were; firstly, implements and production techniques were rudimentary; they were unfamiliar with plough use. On the other hand, plough usage may not be suitable in mountainous regions. Secondly, agricultural production was on a subsistence level; they grew what was needed and supported by hunting and gathering. Thus, the distribution of products was based on a communal basis rather than maximising individual gains. Thirdly, the proper economic structure could not

[53]According to the native tradition, it is believed that the protected valley ground was divided into private property since beginning, but the higher ground was considered common property and was cleared and acquired as wanted.

make its way, as hunting and gathering, and shifting cultivation required the movement of the people from one place to another.Lastly, limited trade on the barter system, absence of centralised political authority and private ownership of land prevented wealth disparities. Hence, any community's economic activities and organisation play a decisive role in determining its socio-economic character. Therefore, whileanalysing the early inhabitants' socio-economic formation, they can be placed within the purview of primitive communism[54]or under-developed production mode.A simple type of society where communal ownership, work and living together attributed to the primitive way of production.

The Advent of Tibetan Immigrants

There is little evidence to indicate the exact origin of the Tibetan population of Sikkim. However, we can say with some degree of certainty that there were probably various migrations to Sikkim, which occurred at different times. These waves of migrants into Greater-Sikkim[55]came from many locations both within Tibet and along with the Himalayan ranges and continued till the twentieth century. These variations of migrations from both Tibet and the Himalayas make it almost impossible to locate a particular region from where the Tibetans originated in Sikkim. Nonetheless, there exists diverse opinion among the people themselves regarding their origin in Sikkim. For instance, Lachung and Lachen's people in North Sikkim claim or trace their ancestry to the region of Bhutan, such as Ha. Similarly, several clans are associated with the noble families of the Sa Skya-Yuan period of Tibetan history (Mullard S. , 2011, p. 37).Thus, there is meagrely some narration regarding the origin of the

[54]Primitive communism according to Marxian ideology was the first and earliest form of mode of production. Under which, mode of production is based on communal ownership of land and distribution on the basis of need. There may exists private property in form of tools, weapons and herds, however it denied the presence of money, price exchange and market.

[55]It denotes the wider region of Sikkim which falls outside the present boundaries of the State.

Tibetans in Sikkim; however, the earliest available sources on account of their origin, namely- *History of Sikkim*(Namgyal & Dolma, 1908)[56], *Gazetteer of Sikkim* (Risley, 2010)[57] and other Tibetan sources.

The origin of Tibetans (from here onwards termed as Bhutias)[58] in Sikkim generally begins according to Sikkim's History(Namgyal & Dolma, 1908) with the eighth century Tibetan king *Khri srong Ide btsan*,[59] the most illustrious king of Tibet. He had three sons, among which two sons ruled the Tibetan empire at different times. The middle son *Murub-bTsan-po* migrated eastwards and became *Gyalpo*[60] of the Kham Minyak region, one of the eighteen quasi-Tibetan principalities. It is from this second son that the Sikkimese kings are said to have originated. Twenty-five generations later, a prince went with his three[61] sons on a pilgrimage to central Tibet. He next went to Lhasa, where the lord *Sakya Muni's* image foretold that he should proceed towards Sikkim, where his descendants would rule. He accordingly went to Sakya to pay his respect to the hierarch there. The hierarch was engaged in building a new monastery but faced a problem erecting the temples' primary columns. So, the prince's eldest son succeeded in erecting a pillar in its proper positions by his efforts. Therefore, he was given the nickname as *Gyad-hBhum-bSabs* (commonly known as

[56]Originally written in Tibetan script called "Bras ljongs rgyal rabs or BGR"

[57]It is one of the oldest sources, official publication of the Bengal Secretariat in 1894. It is generally believed that the majority of the information found in this historical book is taken from an earliest text of the "*Brag dkar pa*" (one of the leading families of Sikkim)

[58]Tibetans who ruled and settled in Sikkim used the surnameBhutia.It seems that they used this term to distinguished themselves from the people of Tibet, since, them being migrated from Tibet it became necessary to show themselves as distinct tribe.

[59]there is variation of name, as in *Gazetteer of Sikkim* its mentioned in different name as *Thi-Sron-De-Tsan*

[60]Tibetan term for ruler

[61]*Gazetteer of Sikkim* mentions five sons whereas in other Tibetan sources its mentioned four sons

Khye Bhumsa), which means strength equalling to a lakh of men. Later, he married the Sakya hierarch lady named *Jomo Guruma*[62].

Shortly after, the whole family left Sakya and arrived at Pakshi north of Khampajong in Tibet, where they built a monastery for 400 monks and made one of the brothers in charge as the abbot. Others went on to Phari, where they built another monastery; it is here that the prince (Khye Bhumsa's father) died. Khye Bhumsa[63] continued his move southwards and finally reached Chumbi,[64] where he built a house (Namgyal & Dolma, 1908, pp. 9-11). Khye Bhumsa settled in Chumbi valley,[65] an alienable part of Sikkim then but cannot have children. However, given Sikkim's proximity, he heard there lives a Lepcha priestnamed Teg Kong teg, who was also the chief in Gangtok, who can solve his infertility. So, he and his sixteen followers went to Sikkim and met Teg Kong teg (figure 3.1), who agreed to help him. Khye Bhumsa returned to Chumbi, where after some time, his wife gave birth to three sons. Upon his third son's birth, Khye Bhumsa decided to return to Sikkim to offer thanks to Teg khon teg. As a result, an eternal friendship was made between Khye Bhumsa and Teg Kong teg. They agreed that all the males would be considered related to the sons and females as the daughters. This friendship was strengthened by a ceremony at which several animals sacrificed. All the local deities summoned to bear witness to this solemn contract of friendship, binding the Lepchas and Bhutias in an inseparable bond. They sat together on the animals' rawhides, knotted the entrails around their folks, and placed their feet collectivelyin a vessel filled with blood. Thus, swearing

[62]In *Gazetteer of Sikkim* name is given as Guru-mo, whereas some of the oral versions refers as a lady from Sakya

[63]Approximately Khye Bhumsa belonged to the thirteenth century AD

[64]Until the late nineteenth century Chumbi was the summer residence of Sikkimese rulers

[65]According to a popular belief, during this time there occurred religious strife between the Glugpa (Yellow Hat) sect and the Nyingmapa (Red Hat) sect in Tibet, which forced many followers of Red Hat sect to flee Tibet along with the leader Khye Bhumsa, who settled in Chumbi valley

the blood pledge to each other, commonly called 'Blood-Brother pact'[66] at Kabi-Lungstok,[67]North Sikkim (Figure 3.2 and 3.3). They further reinforced the bond of friendship through a series of oaths, invoking the local spirits, and witness to this solemn contract, invoking blessings on those who observed these faithfully and cursed on those who broke this undying hereditary and a national agreement between the two races(Namgyal & Dolma, 1908, p. 13). Further, it is held that Teg Kong teg blessed Khye Bhumsa's lineages with regal duties within Sikkim's territories (Basnet, 1974, p. 13).

Subsequently, the Lepchas gradually came under the influence of the Khye Bhumsa, whichcan be seen as the beginning of Tibetan influence or settlement in Sikkim. Khye Bhumsa had three sons collectively known as *Pyak-Tsen-Tar-Pu-Pun-Sum*[68] (Risley, 2010, p. 28), settled in Sikkim; among them, the middle son, called Mi Pon rab, became the most influential. Mi Pon rab had four sons, from which the four main clans of Sikkim descend (for details, see appendix one). From the Mi Pon rab's youngest son, the kings of Sikkim descend in the following way: Guru Tashi was the youngest son of Mi Pon rab, his son was called Jowo Aphag. Jowo Aphag's son was Guru Tenzing, and Guru Tenzing's son was Phuntshog Namgyal, the first king of Sikkim.

[66]The original name of Blood-brother pact as native Lepcha calls it by "Kayusa-ve-lungchuk", which means "our-blood-promise". Informed by Miss Norbu Doma Lepcha resident of Phensang, North Sikkim

[67]This event is said to have occurred (according to local tradition) at Kabi, north Sikkim at a site of standing stones. This site still exists and people of Sikkim worship till date. This place of worship is protected under the Government of Sikkim notification No. 701/HOME/2001 dated 20-9-2001, and the provision of the place of worship (special provision) Act 1991, Government of India

[68]Pu-Pun-Sum means the three brothers

Figure 3.1: The Statue of Unity at Kabi-Lungstok, North Sikkim,built by the Government of Sikkim, 2001.The scholar took the photoin 2019.

Note: This statue commemorates the meeting between Khye Bhumsa and Teg Kong teg. From left to right: wife of Teg Kong teg, Teg Kong teg and Khye Bhumsa.

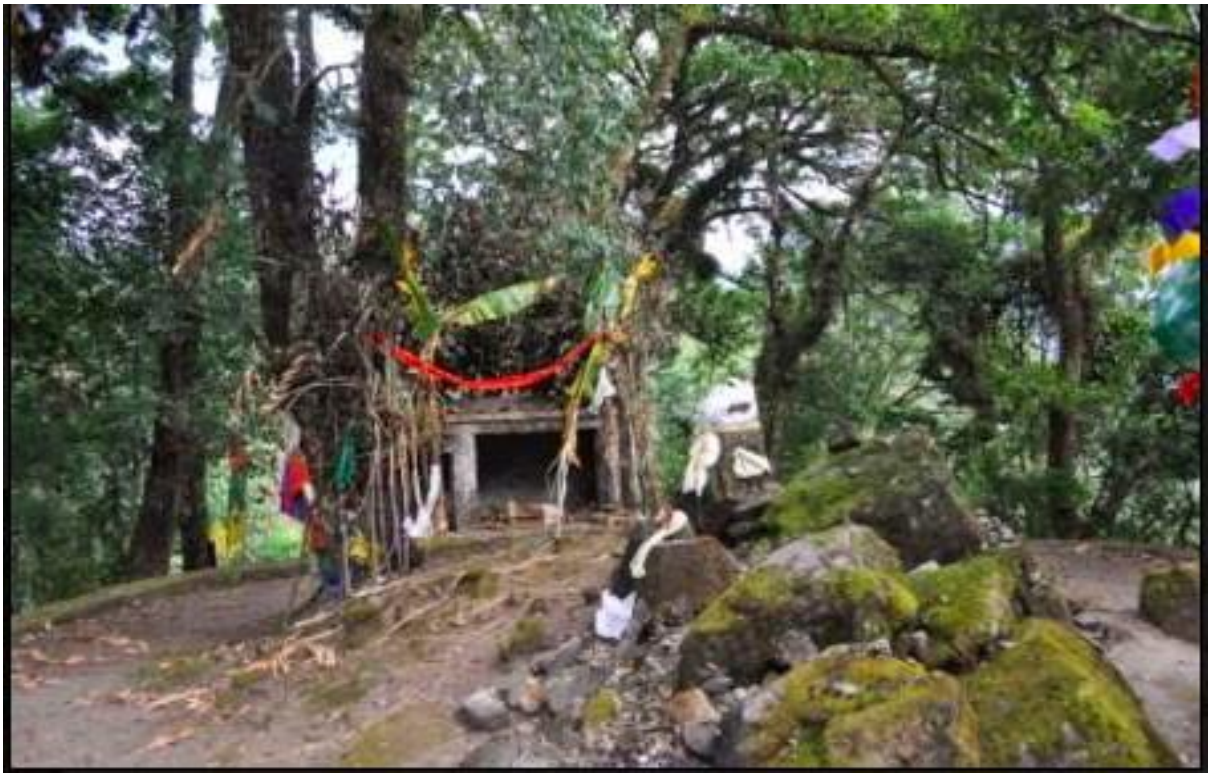

Figure 3.2: Standing stones at Kabi-Lungstok, North Sikkim. The historical place where the two main protagonists of Lepcha and Bhutia swore a Blood-Brother pact in front of these stones, and to date, people of Sikkim worship here.The scholar took the photoin 2019.

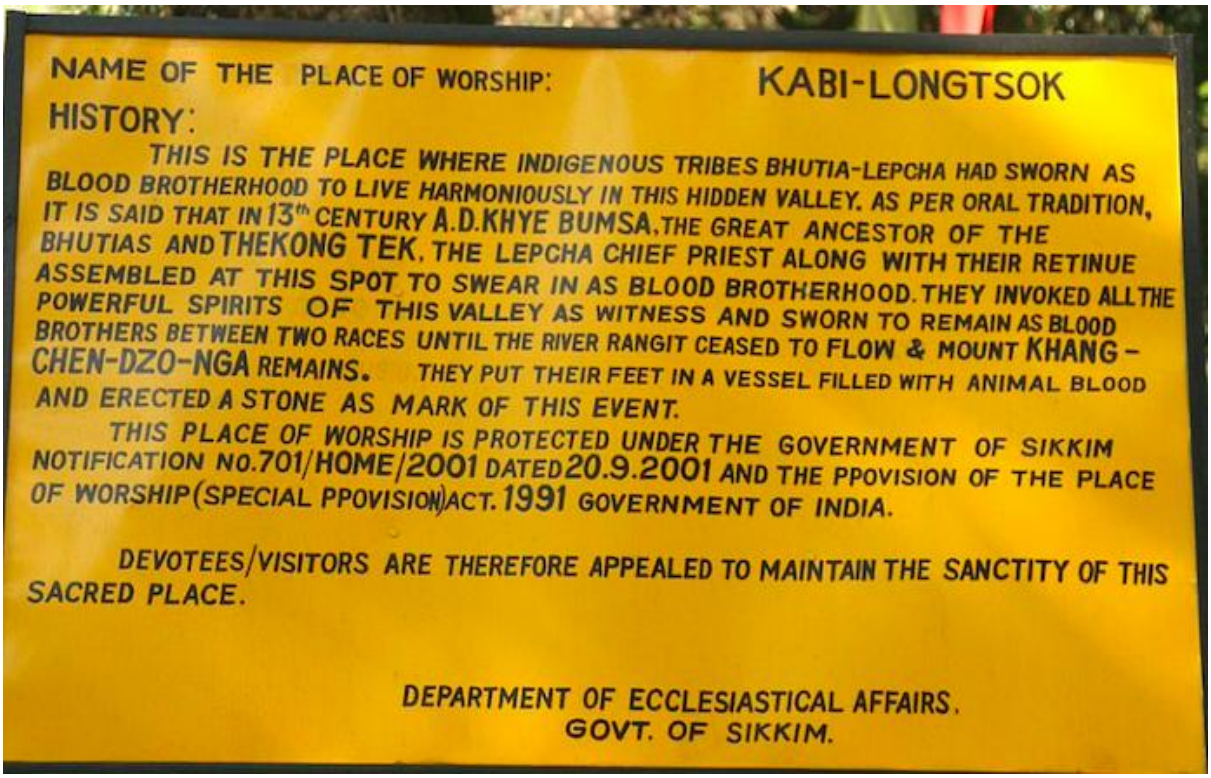

Figure 3.3: A plaque at Kabi-Lungstok, North Sikkim. The scholar took the photo in 2019.

According to the Gazetteer of Sikkim, Risley relates the origin of the Sikkimese ruler to the Indian origin by the descent through the first king of Tibet, Nah-Thi-Tsangpo. He quotes that this monarch was the fifth son of King Prasenjit of Kosala, born with obliquely drawn eyes, blue eyebrows, webbed fingers, and two fully developed pearly rowsof white teeth. In alarm at such a prodigy, his parents placed the infant in a copper vessel and floatedit on the Ganges. A poor farmer found the infant and brought him up as his own. On attaining maturity, the prince realised that he had been born to a higher status than a farmer, and in a spirit of restless ambition, set out northwards over the Himalayas in quest of some great exploit. Finally, he reached the lofty snowy mountains of Lhari near the modern town of Tsethang in Tibet, where he was met by the natives of the country, who, struck with the graceful looks of the stranger, asked him who and from where he came. Not familiar with their language, the prince replied by signs that he was a prince and, pointing up to the top of Lhari, wished them to understand that he had come from that direction. The Tibetans misunderstood and assumed he was a god descended from heaven and accordingly implored him to become their king, and his successors ruled over Tibet. Hence, by the eighth century, Tibetan king Khri srong Ide btsan, as mentioned by the History of Sikkim, the descendant of Sikkimese ruler, was the first king of Tibet's successor, Nah-Thi-Tsangpo (Risley, 2010, pp. 5-7).

Another recent version of the migration of Tibetans into Sikkim has come to light, according to which the Tibetans herdsmen must have come down the slopes of the country with their folk in search of pastures in earlier times. Possibly they avoided summer and rainy months and came down only during winter. They must have early contacts with the native people of Sikkim (Kotturan, The Himalayan Gateway: Culture and History of Sikkim, 1983, p. 24). This view is supported by Sinha, who

asserts that the Tibetan traders, farmers, and lamas were searching for new areas for colonisation long before. Sikkim at that time was very meagrely populated by the native tribes of Lepchas and Limboos. The Tibetan grazers and missionary lamas were possibly the earliest immigrants to Sikkim, searching for new pastures and potential converts to their religion. All these stocks found in Sikkim a broad scope of expansion (Sinha, 1975, p. 6).This information relating to the Tibetan herdsmen's migration has some degree of certainty if we connect it with the present nomadic Drokpas yak herders found in Lachung and Lachen of North Sikkim. Since earlier times, they practice transhumance, which is the seasonal movement of people with their livestock towards higher pastures in summer and lower valleys during the winter. Thus, it could be possible that the Tibetan herdsmen came down in earlier times and settled in Sikkim.

Consequently, there is no direct evidence linking the Sikkimese royal family with eastern Tibet while examining the available sources. Due to the variations of circumstantial evidence for the easterly migration of Tibetans to Sikkim, it is difficult to assume such narratives' accuracy regarding their origin. Also, the repeated reference of easterly migration and terminology related to eastern Tibetan lineage is puzzling. Although the context of Tibetological works, the only surviving earliest available source on the east-west migrations of Tibetans is well established, and this cannot be ignored, given the detailed story of Khye Bhumsa and Teg Kong teg, which is the most accepted version of the narration regarding the migration and origin of Tibetans in Sikkim.

While considering the Tibetan settlement accountin Sikkim, it is interesting to note how the two protagonists Khye Bhumsa and Teg kong teg, united.The “Blood-Brother pact” resulted in the eternal friendship not only between them but also among

the two clans, i.e., Tibetans and Lepchas. They agreed that all the males would be considered related to the sons and females as the daughters. By which it grouped two different clans into a single kinship network. This alliance was further strengthened through a series of animal sacrifices and oaths by invoking Buddhist and local deities to witness the ceremony.Here one can notice that in Buddhism, animals sacrifice is not performed, but within the native Lepcha ritual, it formed an integral part. Thus, it is apparent that this alliance was of crucial importance for the early Tibetan settlers. Further, Teg Kong teg, by blessing Khye Bhumsa's lineages with regal duties within Sikkim's territories, gave weightage to Tibetans, who eventually was to rule over the Sikkim.

This union's significance was Sikkim's settlement by Tibetans and their ascendency over the native population in due time. Gradually, the Lepcha people from the clan of Teg Kong teg and the Brag btsan dar[69] clan took control over the land and established a settlement. They together send a group of Lepchas to *Zil gnon*[70], where they initiated a settlement. Steadily, descendants of Teg kong teg and Khye Bhumsa grew along with the settlements in various areas.[71]

Thus, Khye Bhumsa and Teg Kong teg's unity ritual transformed Tibetan settlers from potential colonisers to blood brothers. It can also assume that the Lepchas and the Tibetans became a single group and associated the rule of one branch of kinship over another of the same kinship group. Taking control of the lands and settlement expansion by the Tibetan and Lepcha clans resulted in a pattern of small independent territories under the clan leaders' administration. Consequently, these

[69]The name given to the sons of Khye Bhumsa by Teg kong teg, it is also the collective term for the four main Sikkimese clans

[70]Modern name Sinon, Ten Kilometer away from Tashiding, West Sikkim

[71]Tibetan work of Karma tshang pa'am skal bzang blo Idan. Titled as *La sogs du 'brel ba' l rgyal rab (LSG)*. Found in the private collection of late T.D. Densapa (Barmoik Athing or Kazi), Gangtok. 1657

territories gradually formed as proto-states, which later fell under Phuntshog Namgyal's control, Sikkim's first ruler.

Coronation of the First Namgyal Ruler

As stated above, before the coronation of Phuntshog Namgyal as the first ruler of Sikkim and Sikkim's establishment as the kingdom, there were small independent territories under the control of clans Teg Kong teg and Khye Bhumsa. Gradually, these territories have been subjugated by Phuntshog Namgyal to establish a Sikkimese kingdom. Thus, it will be pertinent to narrate the event that led to Phuntshog Namgyal's coronation in 1642 as Sikkim's first ruler.

The coronation story of Phuntshog Namgyal begins with introducing the main character of the event, Lhatsun Namkha Jigmed, the founder of the *dzong chen*[72] sect in Sikkim. Lhatsun Namkha Jigmed was born in 1597 in the southern province of Tibet in a noble family. Along with his thirty-five followers, he marched towards Sikkim at the request of one of his principal teachers, Rinzing jatson-nyingpo.Who proclaimed that it was time to serve humanity and all sentient beings. However, the actual reasons for Lhatsun Namche Jigmed leaving Tibet was the prevailing political climate in Tibet and understanding these conditions as the signs predicted regarding the coming to the end of times (Mullard S. , 2011, p. 123). On his way to Sikkim, he met with another lama or monk named Kathog Kuntu-zangpo, the high priest of the Nyingma monastery of *Kathog Dorjeden*[73]. Having practised celibacy as a perfectly accomplished lama of the Vajrayana sect, he had come through western Singalia pass into Sikkim's interior and reached Yuksom Norbugang in 1642 AD. Another third

[72]It is central teaching of Nyingma School of Tibetan in Sikkim

[73]The Kathog monastery is located in Pakyong, East Sikkim. The lineage holders of lama Kathog Kuntu Zangpo founded it in 1840. Originally monastery was in the form of only one small shrine known as Kathog Lhakhang at Yuksom, West Sikkim in 1643 founded by saint himself. Later, due to the damage during the Gorkha war and frequent war tensions, his lineage holders moved their religious center to present location

lama, Nga-Dag Sempo Phuntshog Rinzing, who was of royal race in Tibet, was also making his way to Sikkim, leaving Shigatse in Tibet in 1642(Namgyal & Dolma, 1908, p. 15).

According to the *History of Sikkim*, these three lamas met in Yuksom Norbugang, West Sikkim. Lhatsun Namkha Jigmed informs the need for a fourth man, a layman, to rule the hidden land of Sikkim, as prophesized earlier in which it was said that "a man from the direction of *Sgang*[74], bearing the name Phuntshog would arise". After this, they sent a search party to seek out and invite the quartet's final member. The group arrived in Gangtok, where they found Phuntshog Namgyal milking his cows and informed him of the lamas' invitation to Yuksom. He then proceeds towards Yuksom; when he reached there, Phuntshog Namgyal was crowned as the first king of Sikkim by the three Tibetan lamas (figure 3.4) and gave the eight auspicious symbols[75] (figure 3.5) and the seven objects of the chakravartin.[76]The coronation site, marked by a stone throne in Yuksom, can still be seen today (figure 3.6). So, by giving the eight auspicious symbols and the seven objects of a Chakravartin to Phuntshog Namgyal, his status as a ruler was enhanced. Phuntshog Namgyal was thus elevated from being a petty ruler to being a universal monarch of temporal and spiritual realms.

[74]Possibly the modern Gangtok, East Sikkim

[75]The right auspicious symbols are: lotus, endless knot, golden fishes, parasol, victory banner, golden treasure vase, conch shell, and wheel. These symbols are still use by Government of Sikkim as eight lucky signs

[76]The seven possessions of the chakravartin were offered to universal kings as a part of ceremony involving the anointing of the individual with water taken from lakes of four directions of the monarch's realm

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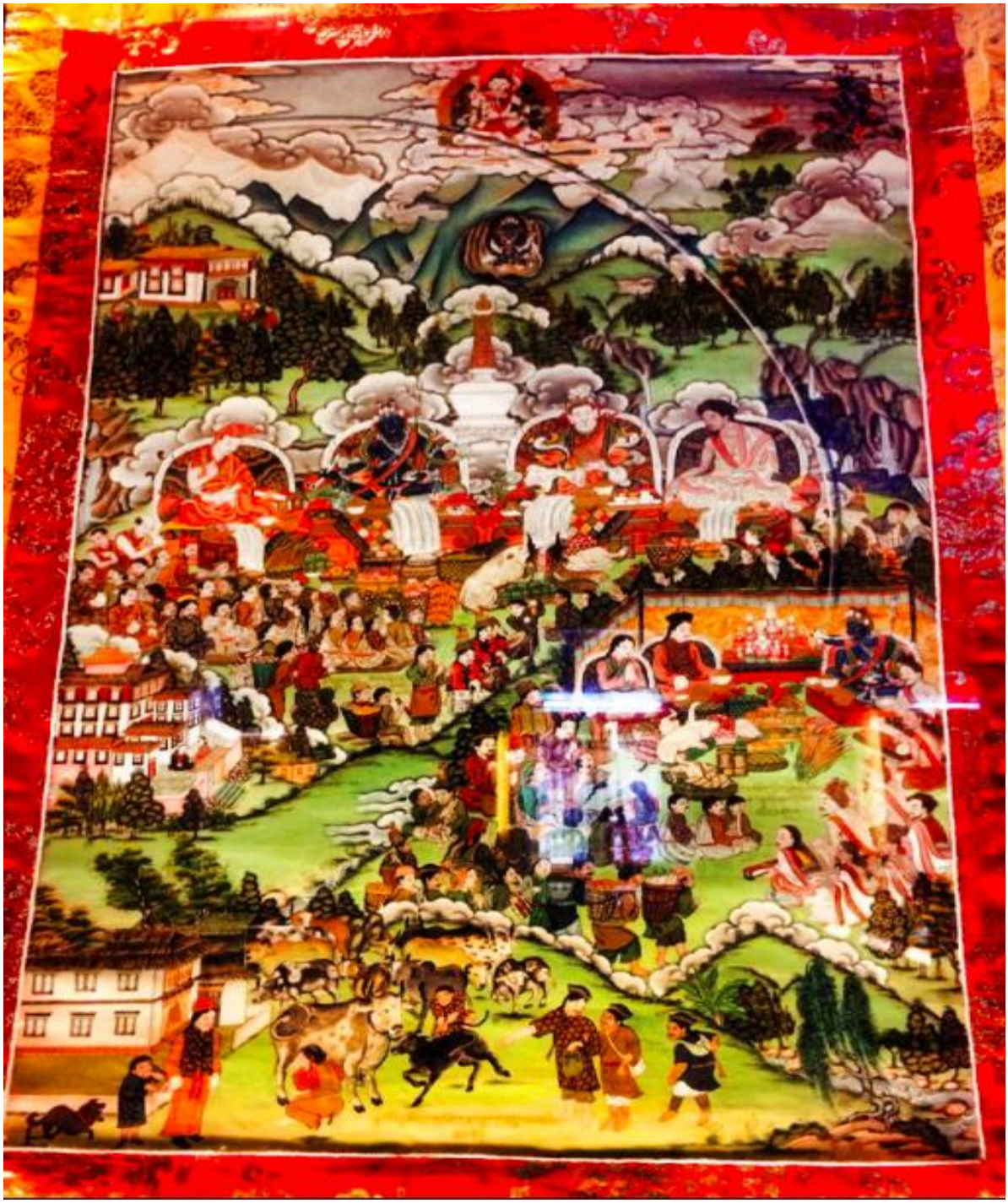

Figure 3.4: Thangka painting depicting the consecration of the first Chogyal (king) of Sikkim at Norbugang, West Sikkim.

Note: From left to right: Lhatsun Namkha Jigmed, Nga-Dag Sempa Phuntshog Rinzing, Kathog Kuntu-zangpo and Phuntshog Namgyal.

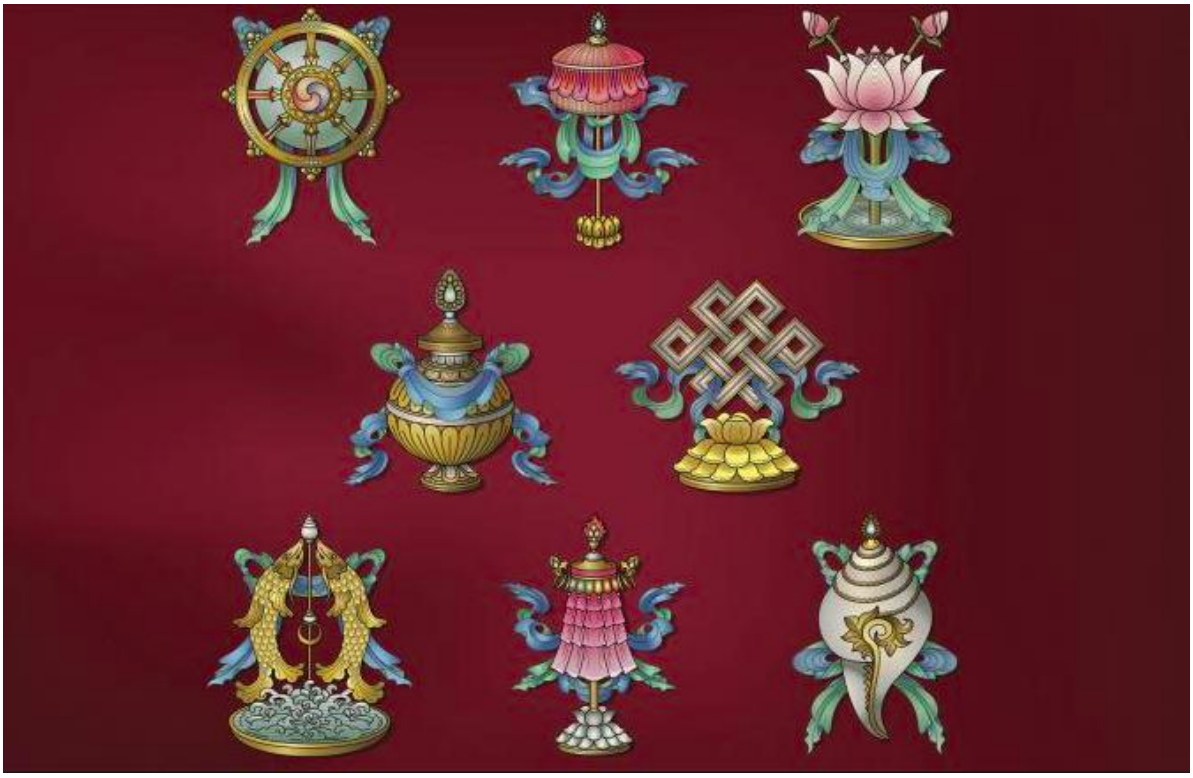

Figure 3.5: Eight auspicious symbols.

Figure 3.6: The coronation throne at Yuksom, West Sikkim.

Additionally, to commemorate the Sikkim kingdom's founding, Lhatsun Namkha Jigmed built the first monastery, *sgrub sde*monastery (modern name Dubdi monastery)[77] at Yuksom, West Sikkim, followed by *Lha Khang dmar po* monastery by Nga-Dag Sempa Phuntshog Rinzing and Kathog Kuntu Zangpo built *Kathog* monastery. Phuntshog Namgyal also built a fortress in the Yuksom region (Namgyal & Dolma, 1908, p. 19). These monks constructed a series of monasteries: Pemayangtse Monastery, Sanga Choeling Monastery, Phodong Monastery etc., all over the kingdom, which played a significant role in subjugating the native community within the Namgyal rule. These monasteries became an essential centre of the local community. The monasteries' function was to convert native Lepchas to Buddhism and weld them into a more comprehensive system. Monasteries were centralised as an integral part of Sikkim's political system and had close links with Tibet's religious system. Indigenous local communities were thus opened to the outside world, and a primitive society changed into a feudal society under the rules of Namgyal.

Next, the boundaries of the kingdom were fixed; they were Dibdala in the North to Naxalbari and Titalia in the South, while the western border stretched up to Walung and then followed the course of Arun River. The eastern border extended up to Thang la in the northeast. This was followed by the state administration, which consisted of twelve Bhutia ministers and twelve Lepcha dzongpens, giving rise to a two-tiered but bi-ethnic political class (Namgyal & Dolma, 1908, p. 18).

However, the initial years of Phuntshog Namgyal were not a peaceful one. It was marked by the rebellion brought by the indigenous population against his rule. Since there were small independent territories mentioned above, now the task before

[77]It is the only surviving monastery out of four built at that time.

Phuntshog Namgyal was to subjugate these territories and introduce a proper administration in line with the Tibetan feudal setup. Thus, it seems likely that the early years of Phuntshog Namgyal were defined by the expansion of his territory's borders through the subjugation of other smaller independent regions under the control of Tibetans Lepchas,[78] using military strength and subservient alliances. Thus, the next chapter will discuss in detail the territorial expansion of Phuntshog Namgyal. It will also deal with the changes in the pattern of lifestyle among the native people. The role played by the religious institutions and monks in the administration and the emergence of the feudal system.

[78]Descendants of Khye Bhumsa and Teg kong teg, who had established their settlements in various region of the country.

CHAPTER FOUR

STATE AND POLITICAL FORMATION OF SIKKIM KINGDOM

The account of Tibetan settlement in Sikkim is fascinating in how the two figures, KhyeBhumsa and Tegkongteg, are united through the "Blood-Brother" pact, as mentioned in the previous chapter. This union's result was the settlement of Sikkim by Tibetan and their ascendancy over the indigenous population. All the people, whether the descendants of Khye Bhumsa or Teg Kong teg, came to be associated in a single kinship. They started settling in a different region of the country. Furthermore, this unification was vital as it transformed the Tibetan settlers from the potential colonizers to blood brothers anointed through their unity with the indigenous population. The preface of this unity is also essential, as this indicated that the Lepchas and Tibetans became a single group. If Tibetan ascendency arose, it could not be constructed as a Tibetan hierarchy dominating a subservient ethnic group. In other words, it associated Tibetan rule as one branch of a kinship ruling over another branch of the same kinship group.

This was followed by the monks' installation of Phuntshog Namgyal as the first *Chogyal* (Dharma Raja) of Sikkim in 1642 in Yuksom, West Sikkim and in time came to be known as the *DenzongGyalpo,*[79] having two-fold powers; spiritual and temporal. However, it appears that the initial years of Phuntshog Namgyal was not a peaceful one. He spent his years conquering or winning over the various chieftains, such as the clans' leaders, who had established themselves throughout the region. In some cases, he had to use military strength and, in other instances, subservient

[79] In Tibetan term Gyalpo means ruler

alliances for the subjugation and occupation of new territories. After which, the task before Phuntshog Namgyal was to introduce the political and administrative setup to rule the people and legitimize the Namgyal dynasty's rule. As states by Weber, "State is a human community that successfully claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical forces within a given territory". And so, it is the government apparatus through which the legitimate use of force can be exercised (Weber, 1946, p. 77). It implies that an individual ruler's power must be seen as legitimate and having authority and so should be accepted by, if not the majority of the population, then at least by the powerful elites within a society. In such a case, when we look into the formation of a state or kingdom, it involved creating a system or tools to manage a population within a territory to govern and lead. It is crucial to be aware that the kingdom cannot appear suddenly but must result from a ruler's actions over time.

Thus, considering these concepts, this chapter will discuss in detail the territorial expansion and the introduction of administrative apparatus to rule under Phuntshog Namgyal. As before 1642, it appears that Sikkim was divided into small independent territories under the control of minor clan chiefs. It will also deal with the religious monks' role in the formation of the state in the initials period and Buddhism's influence, which led to the change in lifestyle patterns among the indigenous people. Moreover, the Tibetan influence is not limited to the religious world. It is still identifiable by introducing new socio-political structures and stratification based on the Tibetan style principle, unique to Sikkim's indigenous population. Thiseventually resulted in the feudal bureaucracy, which was probably modelled after the Tibetan feudal structure.

Territorial Expansion under Phuntshog Namgyal

Sikkim as a kingdom begins with Chogyal[80] Phuntshog Namgyal's coronationin 1642 at Yuksom, West Sikkim, by the three Tibetan monks, and his being proclaimed as the first Buddhist Gyalpo or king of Sikkim, having two-fold powers (spiritual and temporal). However, the initial years for the Namgyal kingdom were not a peaceful one; it was characterized by the conquest, alliance formation and subjugation of the population. It mainly engaged in subduing or winning over the chiefs of the petty clans inhabiting the region. Indeed, during this time, it appears that the Sikkim (including Darjeeling and Kalimpong)[81] consisted of a patchwork of minor proto-states ranging in size and influence. One of the most famous proto-states was *Damzang dzong*[82](figure 4.1) in the east (ten miles from the modern Kalimpong district). The Bhutanese, Sikkim kingdom and local chief named Mon-pa A-chogcompeted for the control of this region. Inpursuing their aggressive expansionism, the Bhutanese adopted the policy of sending the religious monks, who started asserting the villages in the eastern Sikkim, eventually built their outpost approximately fifteen miles southeast of *Damzang dzong*. On the other hand, *Damzang dzong* fell within the territory of Sikkim, and the Lepchas and Bhutia inhabited the villages there; thus, the villages were seen as the rightful property of Sikkim. Also, the Sikkim king had supported a monk named Dkon-mchog-rgyal-mtsan of Ba-ra-ba monastery in Tibet to build a monastery in *Damzang dzong*.

[80]Sikkimese title for the king

[81] Darjeeling and Kalimpong present in the district of West Bengal was the part of Sikkim and it was given to British India in 1835 by then king of Sikkim

[82]Damzang in Pedong, Kalimpong district, West Bengal

Meanwhile, a Lepcha chief called Mon-pa A-chog[83] rose to local prominence in this region andwas under his control.

Moreover, *Damzang dzong* occupied a vital point with a view of Rhenock (in modern East Sikkim,) which shares a border with Bhutan, Tibet and West Bengal. This place acted as an important crossroads during this time; the old trade route between Tibet, Bhutan, and Sikkim passed just below the dzong's point. Thus, this area was contested between Sikkim, Bhutan and Mon-pa A-chog, a petty chieftain.

During the 1660s, due to Bhutanese territorial pressure in this region, Mon-pa A-chog turned to Tibet for assistance. As a result, Tibet invaded Bhutan on his behalf. However, failing to capitalize on the military incursion, they signed a peace treaty with Bhutan in 1669 (Ardussi, 1977, pp. 316-318).After that, however, there occurred trouble between Mon-pa A-chog and Bhutan, and Tibet[84] launched a war against Bhutan. Mon-pa A-chog managed to capture the Bhutanese outpost but later, he was captured by the Bhutanese and was executed (Ardussi, 1977, pp. 316-318). Hence, after the defeat of Mon-pa A-chog, the area fell under the control of the Bhutanese.

Further, the Bhutanese extended their possessionat least as far as central Pendam, where they built a fort (figure 4.2), and SajongRumtek in East Sikkim (Mullarrd, 2011, p. 149). Bhutanese were also given the right tocollect taxes in Gangtokin 1734 due to their support in the second war of succession[85] (Ardussi, 1977,

[83]The local Lepcha chief, his name is spelt in various ways such as GyaboAchuk

[84]Reasons for the involvement of Tibetan government being that they considered Damzang territories fell within the Sikkim kingdom.

[85]In 1734, the fourth king GyurmedNamgyal died without an heir to the throne, this led to the second war of succession. However, he had illegitimate son named NamgyalPhuntso. This led to the division of royal court into two factions competing for the throne. One being the ChangzotTamding and his supporters and on other side was KarwangBarfungpa. Tamding, being Changzot and a member of the

p. 474). Thus, it is most likely that the eastern territories of Sikkim fell under the control of Bhutanese and people probably paid taxes both to the Bhutan government.Later, during the Gurkha invasion of Sikkim in 1788-1792,[86] Bhutan initially joined forces with the Gurkhas to keep her hold secure in the eastern region of Sikkim. However, she became aware of the Gurkhas' danger and, after cooperating with the Sikkimese General Changzot Chongthup[87], overcame the Gurkhas.[88]In return for his service, Changzot Chongthup was granted *Damzangdzong* and territories of eastern Sikkim by the Bhutanese. Hence, the eastern regions of Sikkim finally came under the control of the Sikkim kingdom.

In the Western region of Sikkim, there were other proto-states such as *bKrashisdzom*,[89]*Lasso*[90] (in Geyzing, West Sikkim) and *bKrashisIding*,[91] Yugmthing's[92] State around Yuksom and *Seng deng* (around Pelling, West Sikkim) (figure 4.3). The political domain grew and expanded in these areas under the control of *Monpas* (Lepchas). But, there was a decisive shift in the balance of power in these

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clan, same as Sikkim king, refused to recognised the legitimacy of NamgyalPhuntso and claimed the throne for himself. Karwangsupported NamgyalPhuntso, he with the aid of Bhutan and Tibet took him into exile and fought against Tamding successfully.

[86]Actually, Gurkha invasion of Sikkim during this time was linked to the concerns which sparked the Gurkha-Tibet wars of 1788-1792. Reasons being that the Gurkha desire to control and monopolize trans-Himalayan trade, started imposing high trade taxes and tariffs on Tibetan traders in Nepal. In response, the Tibet and Sikkim government made an agreement which diverted trade from Nepalese routes to the Chumbi valley thus avoiding Nepalese taxes and tariffs, this weakened Nepal's attempts to monopolize Himalayan trade. As a result, Gurkha force attacked on Sikkim and in 1788 captured Rabdentse palace (Mullard, 2010, p. 15).

[87]ChangzotChongthup is referred as Satrajit because of his seventeen victories over the Gurkha army(Namgyal & Dolma, 1908).

[88]PD/9.5/005. Royal Palace Archives. Namgyal Institute of Tibetology. Gangtok, Sikkim. This document mentions the Nepali invasion of Sikkim and cooperation between the ChangzotChongthup, Bhutanese officials stationed in DamzangDzong and Tibet against the Gurkha invasion.

[89] It is also called Tashi-teng-kha

[90] Modern name Laso in West Sikkim

[91] Modern name Tashiding, West Sikkim

[92] Name of the local Lepcha leader

regions. The Tibetan groups *Lhadbangbkrsshsis* and *bstandzin*,[93] who attempted to settle in *Zilgnon*[94] in West Sikkim, led to Lepchas' subdue *bKrashisdzom* and occupied the region and ruled in this territory for some years. Later, they met Phuntshog Namgyal at Lasso and entered into an alliance with him; the second Chogyal Tensung Namgyal was born in 1644 (Namgyal & Dolma, 1908, p. 21). With the joined force, they defeated the Lepcha state in Yuksom and its subjugation by Phuntshog Namgyal.[95] Later, *Lhadbangbkrashis* expanded the territory under Phuntshog Namgyal's administration and, with Yugmthing, built Rabdentse Palace (figure 4.4) (Mullarrd, 2011, p. 82).

The western region of Sikkim shared its border with the Limbuan region. Limbuan region, at present, falls within eastern Nepal was inhabited by the Limboos and was divided into ten districts and placed under the control of ten Limboo leaders (Chemjong, 1966). However, due to internal strife, there was no harmony among these Limboo chiefs.[96] In the meantime, four Limboo chiefs of Tambar, Yangwarok, Panthar and Ilam region allied with the Sikkim king Phuntshog Namgyal and accepted him as their overlord. Later, the marriage of the second king Tensung Namgyal with the daughter of Limboo chief Yong Yong Hang of Yangwarok further strengthen the relationship with the Limboos (Namgyal & Dolma, 1908, p. 22). Subsequently, in due course of time, through the diplomatic steps and matrimonial relations brought the fluid territories of the Limboo chiefs under the domination of the

[93] They were other Tibetan migrants settled in the area around Tashiding in West Sikkim and had established a Centre of local power

[94] Modern name Sinon, ten kilometers from Tashiding, West Sikkim

[95] Karma tshangbsambzangbloldan, 1657. La sogs du 'brelbas' l rgyalrab (LSG). Private Collection of BarmoikAthing. Gangtok

[96] Limbuan was straddled between Nepal and Sikkim(Campbell, 1869), leading to the fluidity of the border and encroachment of their territories by both Nepal and Sikkim kingdom.

Namgyal dynastyand placed them in their subject rule. Thus, while examining the situation in the western region of Sikkim, it can be asserted that the king adopted the policy of both force and matrimonial alliance in order to subjugate the petty chief ruling over their respective areas under the domination of the Namgyal dynasty.

Figure 4.1: Ruins of *Damzangdzong*, situated at SilleryGaon, Pedong in Kalimpong district of West Bengal.
Source: Portal of North Bengal Development Department. https://www.trawell.in/west-bengal/pedong/damsung-fort

Figure 4.2: Bhutanese fortification at Pendam, East Sikkim
Source: (Mullarrd, 2011, p. 150)

Even after establishing himself as the dominant power in Sikkim, manifested by the construction of Rabdentse Palace, Phuntshog Namgyal faced the rebellion created by the *Monpas*[97] of Yuksom against his rule. The main protagonist of this rebellion was one petty Mangar chief named Santusati Sen of *Mansari*, West Sikkim. He fought against Phuntshog Namgyal but was defeated, and then he fled to *Lungchok*, West Sikkim, where he sought the help of Limboo chief Mabohang. They jointly fought against Phuntshog Namgyal. However, the Mangar chief met with defeat and eventually, the Limboo chief accepted the supremacy of Namgyal (Subba, 2011, p. 17). This incident had been mentioned in an important document named the "*Lho-Mon-Tsong Sum"* Agreement, which was signed in 1663, in which it is said as the *Monpa* war[98] (for details, see appendix two).[99] In *Gazetteer of Sikkim*, Risleyhas also mentioned,

> Very little is known of Phuntshog Namgyal's reign: but he was chiefly engaged in subduing in all probability or winning over the chiefs of the petty clans inhabiting the country east of the Arun. WithLhatsun Chempolama's[100] aid, he overcame one ShintuSatichen[101] or MangalGyelpa; this tribe occupied the valleys to the South of the Kanchinjinga[102] Everest range. The chief disappeared, leaving no trace; after vowing, he would petition the sun and moon for the injuries done to him (Risley, 2010, p. 10).

[97] Refers to Lepcha people and also to other clans of early Sikkim

[98] PD/1.2/001. Sikkim Royal Archive. Namgyal Institute of Tibetology. Gangtok, Sikkim

[99] RinguTulku has published a translation of this document in R. Moktan's Sikkim: Darjeeling Compendium of Document (Moktan, 2004). RinguTulku has reproduced a significant error in dating this document; he has given the date as 1641. But, according to Saul Mullard who worked on Palace archive and compiled a catalogue, found the date to be 1663.

[100] one of the three monks who held the enthronement of Phuntshog Namgyal in Yuksom as mentioned in Chapter three

[101] Variation of spelling, however, it appears as same person, Santusati Sen or Satichen

[102] Mount Kanchenjunga, as name varies in different sources.

Following this rebellion, Phuntshog Namgyal called for the royal council to form an agreement. This council introduceda new law thatrestricted the role and position of lords (*dpon*) and servants (*gyog*), based on broader Tibetan concepts of parallel descent. This law indicated a substantial shift in Sikkimese society's organizationand the beginning of social structure based on the Tibetan political hierarchy model.[103]As Mullard mentions, this law reads as follows:

> If your *Mon pa*[104] (i.e., a *Mon pa* under your administrative authority) is male, his sons will belong to you (i.e., they will belong to you as servants). If the male *Mon pa* has only one son, he will be retained by his family. Your wife will obtain whatever female *Mon pa* descendants that may exist, but if there is only one, she will be retained by the *Mon pa* family (Mullarrd, 2011, p. 84).

This population division is almost identical to Goldstein's comment, which noted similar Tibetan political and economic structures. Tibetan *miser*s (serfs) were tied to their lord through parallel descent, i.e., sons were associated with their father's lord and daughters to their mother's lord (Goldstein, 1971, pp. 521-534).

[103]Tibetan work of Karma tshangpa'amskalbzangbloldan. Titled as La sogs du 'brelba' l rgyalrab (LSG). Private collection of late T.D. Densapa (BarmoikAthing/Kazi)

[104]Mon pa term refers to the people in general, but sometimes it refers to the Lepcha people particularly

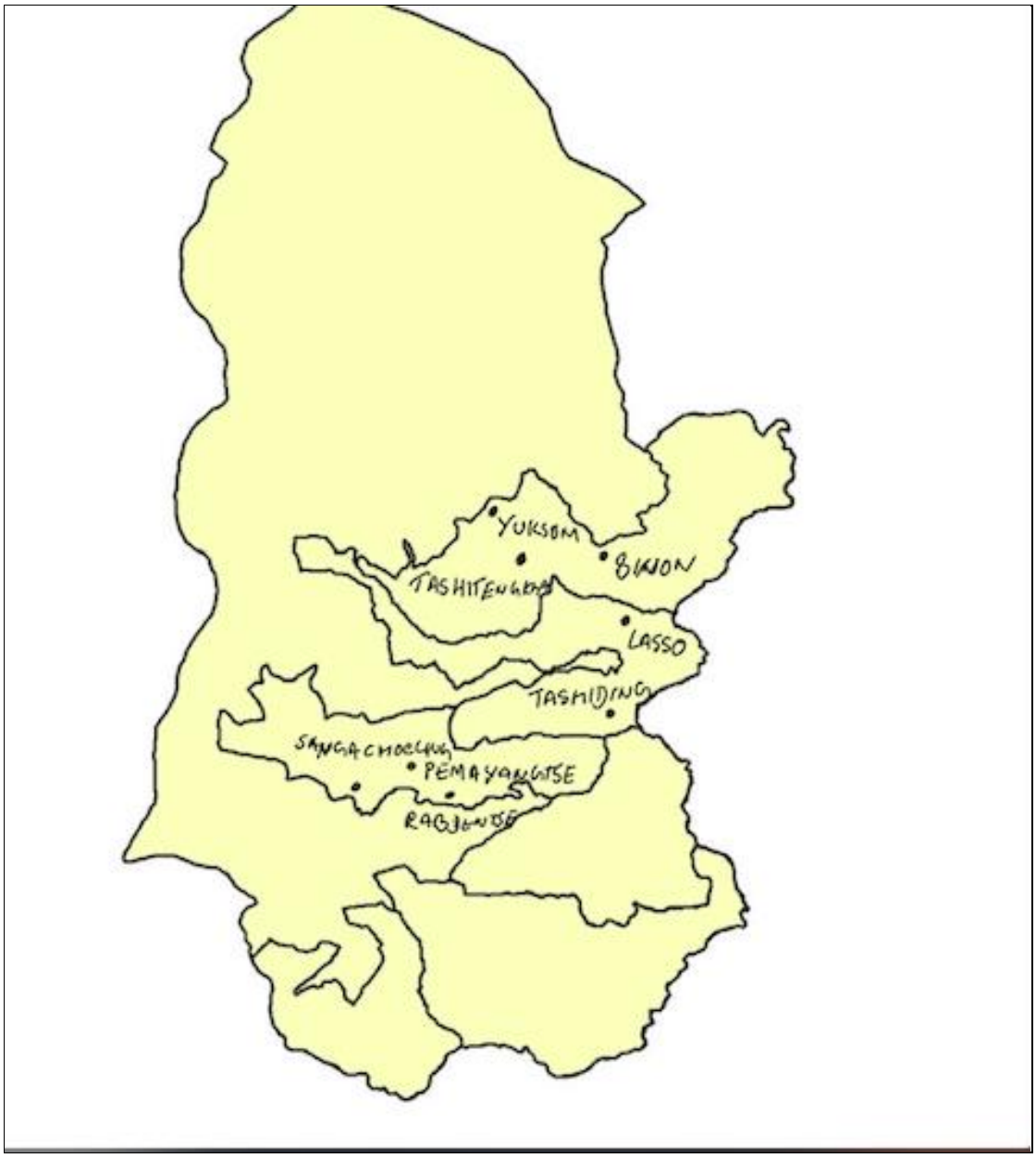

Figure 4.3: Sketch map of places in Western Sikkim under the control of Phuntshog Namgyal (c. the 1660s)

Figure 4.4: Ruins of Rabdentse Palace, located in West Sikkim. The photowas taken in 2019

Subsequently, in 1663, Phuntshog Namgyal invited all the clan leaders of three communities, Bhutia, Lepchas, and Limboos, to sign the Tripartite Treaty *Lho-Mon-Tsong-Sum*[105] agreement (see appendix two). This agreement was signed by twenty-four people, among whom eight were Bhutialeaders, twelve were Tsong/Limboo leaders, and four were Lepcha leaders, who took an oath of allegiance to the Sikkim's first king Phuntshog Namgyal. It also legitimated the establishment of the Namgyaldynasty and marked the acceptance of Phuntshog Namgyal's reign by all communities. All the three communities took an oath of allegiance, which reads as follows:

> Hereafter, in according to the command of his majesty, the humble ministers of Lho, Mon and Tshong, have met here with the desire for unification and solidarity and herby make the statement that there shall not be a separate government of Lho, Mon or Tsong. During the

[105] PD/1.2/001. Sikkim Royal Archive. Namgyal Institute of Tibetology. Gangtok, Sikkim.

> previous Mon pa war, people from all the different groups intentionally rebelled, and this has been remembered. Henceforth from (this) year of the Water Hare, take hold of this order (Mullard, Constructing the Mandala: The State Formation of Sikkim and the Rise of a National Narratives, 2011, p. 55)

This document shows several significant points. Firstly, it explains the integration of all three ethnic communities into a single rule of Namgyal. To add to the oath's gravity, lists of penalties for disobeying this oath had been mentioned ranging from fines to physical torture or death. It clearly showed that various clan leaders ruled different regions in Sikkim during the seventeenth century. There were twenty-four signatories to this agreement, who represented different regions to name some: Tharthim the Lepcha leader of Barpung,[106] TsongSubba the Limboo leader of Namphang,[107]Tencho the Lepcha leader of Lingdam,[108] Tapa AgodLimboo leader of Rathang, Tapa ShupandLimboo leader of Ringi (see appendix two). While speculating, it appears that these leaders might have jointly fought against the Phuntshog Namgyal and were offhaving autonomous proto-states. Secondly, Buddhism's supremacy was noticed therehad been references to various Tibetan tradition deities. The belief in these deities' supernatural power was strong enough to hold the signatories to account; as this belief comes with the fear that if they break their oath. Lastly, as this document shows, some of the signatories were not Buddhist; thus, references were made to local deities. The inclusion of these local deities shows the existence of ethnic diversity and, at the same time, respecting the importance of religious practices of these local chiefs (Mullard, Constructing the Mandala: The State Formation of Sikkim and the Rise of a National Narratives, 2011, pp. 55-56).

[106]Modern name Barfung, situated near Ravangla, South Sikkim

[107]Probably Namthang in South Sikkim

[108]Modern name Lingtham, East Sikkim

This document which is in spirit a record of an oath of loyalty to the first King of Sikkim shows the importance of Buddhist terminology and its supremacy. Indeed, one can notice the use of religious ideas for political benefits. Local leaders' inclusion recognizes signatories' regional importance, which classifies them either ministers or leaders under Phuntshog Namgyal's rule (will be dealt with later)—bringing them under the fold of a single authority, which resulted in the territorial and ethnic unity under one government. Thus, it can be said that the initial years of Phuntshog Namgyal was involved in the subjugation of the petty chiefs of various clans through subservient alliances and in some instance through conflicts. Phuntshog Namgyal subjected native people and created an organized state with royal rule by the seventeenth century. However, in this territorial expansion path and legitimizing Namgyal's authority over the native people, monks' religion and religious activities have played a vital role in Sikkim.

Role of Religious Figure during the Formative Period

The collaboration of religion and politics has always been there since the time of inception. Religion has always been used as one of the most vital and effective statecraft instruments in Asia and the entire world since the state's birth (Bhattacharya, 1992, p. 6). Religions have greatly influenced the socio-political patterns; it is not only religion but also states significantly influence it, which the rulers and the ruled follow as the highest righteousness. For example, Christianity in Europe, Islam in the Mughal period, and Hinduism in the Gupta period have played a significant role in state politics.Likewise, in Sikkim, Buddhism has influenced and played a dominant role in the socio-political life of the state during this time. However, before looking into the aspects of religion's influence in body politics, it is

pertinent to look into the process that led to Buddhism's assimilation in Sikkim and the monks and religious institutions' role.

Legitimacy was the essential aspect throughout the formation of the Sikkim kingdom, and it was considereda Tibetan political theory. As already mentioned, Phuntshog Namgyal's coronation was attributed to the monks who came from Tibet, which later led to the development of Buddhism in Sikkim; in this sense, it appears essential to look into Sikkim's religio-politics in the context of Tibetan political theory.

In the Tibetan theory of state and governance, one can notice the ideas of the invitation of kings to rule, Indian models of the *Chakravartin* (the universal monarch) and the dharma raja (*Chogyal*) and the extension of these ideas into the religio-political theory of state and governance: *chossrid lugs gnyis*.[109]This theory of *chossrid lugs gnjis* is centred on the concept of governance, which should include the secular world and the spiritual (Ramble, 2006, pp. 129-149). Unlike modern societies where there is a separation of the spiritual orders and political realm, these two systems' unification is considered ideal for the Tibetan government. Religion influences and shapes the political and political impacts on religions. Hence the ruler is obliged to preserve and promote the particular religion. This practice is shown by using the term such as *mchod yon*, the traditional relation between a religious preceptor or lama (*mchodgnas*) and a royal patron or lay donor (*yon bdag*) (Ruegg, 1991, p. 443). According to Ruegg, this practice was primarily based on religion and personal rather than on official concept. However, in the context of religio-political, *mchod yon* also implicates the two realms of the religious order and the temporal order: in the domain

[109]Tibetan term literally means both Dharma and Temporal head, but may also be translated as dual system of religion and politics

of political power and the lay community, who acts as a sponsor (Ruegg, 1991). Thus, from this relation between spiritual and temporal spheres of social life, we can understand the formation of a unified religio-political concept such as *chossrid lugs gnyis*.

This system's actual practice in Tibet was characterized by the changing of political power among different groups, leading to unstable government and rebellion. It was particularly the case when various religious groups struggle for influence and sponsorship from influential leaders. Therefore, during the seventeenth century, central Tibet was characterized by this practice of obtaining political support, which certainly impacted the Sikkim kingdom formation. Nevertheless, Ramble points out that kingship in Tibet were contractual between the king and ministers, and it was not a prize sought but a burden shouldered at others' request to benefit pitiful subjects. He further adds that a Tibetan king's failure to uphold this side of the contract could result in rebellion, thus precluding absolute monarchy (Ramble, 2006, p. 444), but this does not refuse Chakravartin's theoretical model as the epitome of *chossridgnyis*. Therefore, the state and kingship in Tibetan society need to be understood as a political organization system, which emerges from a ruler's legitimacy, not only as Dharma raja or Chakravartin but also through the social contract between the ruler and the ruled.

Taking this theory of Tibetan political organization into consideration, one can notice that similarly in Sikkim, by giving Chakravartin's status, it elevated Phuntshog Namgyal's statusfrom petty ruler to a universal monarch having both temporal and spiritual realms.Moreover, by signing the *Lho-Mon-Tsong-Sum*[110] agreement,

[110]PD/1.2/001. Sikkim Royal Archive, Gangtok. Namgyal Institute of Tibetology

installed the social contract between the ruler and the ruled in Sikkim. Thus, the themes of the Tibetan theoretical models of kingship, governance and State in Tibetan society can be found in Sikkim during the seventeenth century.

As we look into the advent of Buddhism in Sikkim, it is essential to look into the period before the three monks' coming for the coronation. Even before their arrival, Buddhism was already in practice in Sikkim; however, it was not in full swing, which eventually materialized after Phuntshog Namgyal's coronation. As already mentioned, Khye Bhumsa, the ancestor of Sikkim's first ruler, who came to Sikkim during the early Bhutia migration, developed a blood-brother pact with the Lepcha chief Teg Kong teg. This alliance marked the beginning of converting the natives to Buddhism under the Tibetans' influence and increasedTibetans' migration. Moreover, apart from permanent friendship, the Bhutias established matrimonial relations with the native people, which gradually brought them under the domination of Bhutias. Thus, Buddhism was already in practice; however, after Phuntshog Namgyal's coronation by the three Tibetan monks, Buddhism became a dominant religion in Sikkim.

In this connection, it is pertinent to analyse the circumstances that led to the coming of the three monks from Tibet and these monks' roles in forming the Sikkim kingdom. The events that led to Phuntshog Namgyal's coronation can be traced back to the roots in the religio-political conflict between the third Dalai Lama and Zhigpogling pa's[111] pursuit of hegemony in central Tibet. Later, the fifth Dalai lama attempted to refute the teachings of Zhispogling pa, and with the help of Mongol

[111]Zhigpogling pa was born into the noble family of Snangrste who were dominant in the Lhasa region during the rule of RinSpungs. Zhigpogling pa received religious and political support from the Bri gung pa and the Brug pa and was also closely allied to the SdesridGtsang then ruling power in Tibet. His teaching led to the establishment of Gelugpa in Tibet

allies, he was able to suppress the *Dge lugs pa*[112] linage and established himself as the master of Tibet in 1640 (Mullarrd, 2011, p. 107). J. Ware Edgar, Deputy Commissioner of Darjeeling, who visited Tibet in 1873,[113] gives information that Buddhism was introduced in Tibet in the middle of the Seventh century AD. The religion at that stage was probably based on the teachings of the Buddha. In the middle of the eighth century *Guru Padmasambhava,* better known as *Guru Rimpoche,* visited Tibet from India and introduced many Brahmanical elements, such as idol worship and ritualistic observances, which were absent in the earlier form of Buddhism and worshipping of Buddha in different forms. The people of Tibet accepted these modifications for more than two centuries, even after his departure. However, in the eleventh century, *Attisa*, a native of Bengal and his disciple *Domton* protested against these modifications and advocated the earlier form of Buddhism in Tibet. As a result, there was a rift among Tibetan Buddhism, and it lasted for many years. Ultimately the people were divided into two groups, namely- the *Gelugpas* and the *Nyingmapas*. The followers of *Attisa* came to be known as the *Gelugpas*, followed the teachings, spiritual importance of celibacy and purity of Buddha, and wore the yellow head-dress as their distinctive badge; hencethey were also called Yellow Hat. Eventually, the Gelugpa doctrine spread throughout all the Tartar tribes of Central Asia and Tibet in the fifteenth century. The teachers of the *Gelugpas* founded the succession of priest-kings known as the Dalai Lama. The successors of the Dalai Lama used their influence overother tribes of Central Asia and Tibet. In 1640, the fifth Dalai Lama made himself master of Tibet, and the *Gelugpa* sect got patronage as a principal sect of Buddhism in Tibet (Edgar, 1874).

[112] Modern term Gelugpa sect of Buddhism

[113] Letter from J. Ware Edgar, Deputy Commissioner of Darjeeling to the Commissioner of Cooch Behar. Dated 20th January, 1874. (Edgar, 1874)

Guru Rimpoche's followers came to be known as *Nyingmapa* or Red Hat; they wanted to continue with the modifications introduced in Tibet. By the end of the sixteenth and the beginning of the seventeenth century, the *Nyingmapas* degraded their popularity and reduced to a submissive position among the people, so much so that the sect was on the verge of extinction. Under such circumstances and the ascendency of the opposition of the *Gelugpas,* some of the leaders of the *Nyingmapas* started moving towards the southern region viz. Bhutan, Sikkim and East Nepal. They brought the idea of installing the Dalai Lama by the *Gelugpas* as the priest-kings of Tibet. They wanted to start a new kingship system in Sikkim on the Tibetan model saving their sect from extinction.As a result, in the first half of the seventeenth century, three Buddhist monks viz. Lhatsun Namcha Jigmed, Kathog Kuntu-zangpo and Nga-Dag Sempa Phuntsog Ringzing, belonging to the *Nyingmapa* sect (Red Hat sect), entered Sikkim by different routes and met at Yuksom (Temple, 1887, pp. 150-193). They consecrated Phuntshog Namgyal as the first ruler of Sikkim in 1642 and gave the title *Chogyal* (*Dharmaraja* or religious king) with both temporal and spiritual power. Hence, they were able to fulfil their mission of saving their sect from extinction and became the king-makers of Sikkim; they also manipulated and motivated Phuntshog Namgyal to protect and patronize the *Nyingmapa* sect of Buddhism. Phuntshog Namgyal took them under his protection and helped them convert the natives to the *Nyingmapa* form of Buddhist faithand promised to respect*Lhatsun NamchaJigmed* or *Lhatsun Chenpo* and his creed in Sikkim (Temple, 1887). Later, Dalai Lama recognized Phuntshog, the first ruler, as a canonized Buddhist saint and honoured him with a complimentary letter, along with the ceremonial gift of silken scarf bearing Dalai Lama's seal, the mitre (hat) of the Guru Rimpoche, the devil dagger (*Phurpa*), and the precious sand image of Guru (Sinha,

1975, p. 13). Since then, the newly established Namgyal Kingdom got tied to Tibetan theocracy and permanently sought the protection and aid of Tibet in case of aggression and laid the foundation for State patronage's tradition throughout the next three centuries.

Further, these monks started monastery building to influence the native people and propagate Buddhism in Sikkim. There are instances that these monks were also involved in the political sphere of early Sikkim. According to Risley, since entering the country about two and half centuries ago, the monks were involved in politics and retained power in their hands. (Risley, 2010, p. 241).So, after Phuntshog Namgyal's enthronement as the first king of Sikkim, these monks, along with the king, was engaged in monastery building and sacred places to form Sikkimese religious structures and the organization of State-sponsored religious patronage. During this time, monasteries played a significant role in legitimizing Phuntshog Namgyal's rule. It helped convert the native population into the Buddhist fold and weld them into a more comprehensive system. These monasteries were taken as an essential centre of the local community. Monasteries were centralized as an integral part of the political system of Sikkim. Moreover, the Buddhist population of Sikkim regard their country as a holy place. The joining together of the political and religious domains is made manifest in Sikkim's Tibetan name, Denzong, which means at the same time kingdom and the holy place.

During this time, the importance of constructing sacred places in Sikkim showed political change and organization and institutionalized religious practices and linages. By establishing monasteries and the rest of Sikkim as pure land provided further and conferred religious legitimacy to political changes. While considering the

connection of religious institutions with the politico-religious dimension, they have a social and cultural dimension, as, by nature, they are a focus point for religious practice on an individual as well as a communal level, and also used for social meetings and activities (Mullard, Brag dkar shis sdings kyi bum: The Text, the Author, the Stupa and its Importance in the Formation of Religious Politics in Sikkim, 2003, p. 21). Therefore, monasteries and sacred places were established to unite individuals and groups and a politico-religious ideology. In connection to this, while analysing the founding of the Sikkim kingdom, Chie Nakane said that the establishment of monasteries had been a part central government's political scheme from the beginning of Sikkim history. All monasteries in Sikkim have been centralized under the king's secular power and are not religious organizationsindependent of the political system (Chie, 1966, p. 219).Thus, the religious institutions played a role in centralizing Lhopo's[114] political power in Sikkim, converting the native populations to Buddhism and dominating them. These conversions were simultaneous to establishing political power and probably even served it (Vandenhelsken, 2003, pp. 55-73).

The influence of these Tibetan lamas in Sikkim's politicscan be understood from the role played by Lhatsun Jigmedpabo[115] in the war of succession, which occurred following the death of the second king Tensung Namgyal. Chagdor Namgyal, Tensung Namgyal's son, succeeded his father in about 1700, but shortly after his accession, the quarrel broke out. Pande Ongmu, his half-sister, contended for the throne. She invited Bhutanese to invade Sikkim and attack her brother; they overran Sikkim, seized the Rabdentse palace, and compelled the young king to flee to

[114]The name Lhopo is often referred to Tibetan groups migrated from Tibet

[115]He is considered as the third incarnation of Lhatsun NamkhaJigmed, one of the three monks who enthroned Phuntshog Namgyal as the first ruler of Sikkim

Tibet. There were two factions; one group was PendeOngmu, who had the support of Mngadbag[116] lineage and Bhutanese; on the other hand, king Chagdor Namgyal who had the support of Lhatsun Namkha Jigmed lineage and Tibet (Namgyal & Dolma, 1908, pp. 22-26). Eventually, the Bhutanese force was defeated with the Tibetan government's help, and Chogyal Chagdor Namgyal returned from Tibet around 1708 with Jigmedpa bo; they jointly administered Sikkim and set the reorganization of the Sikkimese land system and also builtPemayangtse[117] monastery (Risley, 2010, pp. 12-13). With this event, Lhatsun Namkha Jigmed lineage was firmly established in Sikkim. It became dominant in terms of royal patronage, with the lamas of Pemayangtse becoming the most important on account of their role in Sikkim's kings' coronation. Unfortunately, the king did not live long as Pende Ongmu assassinated him in 1717. In response, PendeOngmu was executed in her residence at Gnamrtsedzong (modern name Namchi, South Sikkim). Later this place was converted into Ngadak monastery in 1836[118] (see figure 4.5 and 4.6).

Thus, it can be assumed that these Tibetan monks and Phuntshog Namgyal formed a relationship of *mchod yon*, the traditional relation between a religious preceptor or lama (*mchodgnas*) and a royal patron or lay donor (*yon bdag*), which involved the establishment of the dual system of religion and politics called *chossrid lugs gnyis.* Also, the king was to patronize the later incarnation of these Tibetan lamas. *Chossrid Lugs gnyis* is best understood as a religio-political theory of state and society. The united territories of the political and religious worlds play a complementary, although not always an equal role in the formation and direction of

[116]Lineage of Mnga dag Sempa Phuntshog Rinzing, one of the three religious monks who enthroned Phuntshog Namgyal as the first ruler of Sikkim

[117]One of the important monasteries in Sikkim till date located in West Sikkim

[118]Tibetan script 'Bras ljongsgyimngabdagrgyalrabs'. 1656. Published by SherabGyaltsen Lama in 1985. The original manuscript still survives in Ngadak monastery in Namchi, South Sikkim

policy. Thus, certain guarantees and concessions are set in place, theoretically at least, to maintain both social orders balance and stability. Hence, the establishment of this religio-political system is associated with the arrival and the influence of Tibetan lamas in Sikkim and creating a religious-historical royal lineage to legitimizethe Namgyal dynasty's rule.

Figure 4.5: Old Ngadak Monastery, Namchi, South Sikkim. The photo was taken in 2018

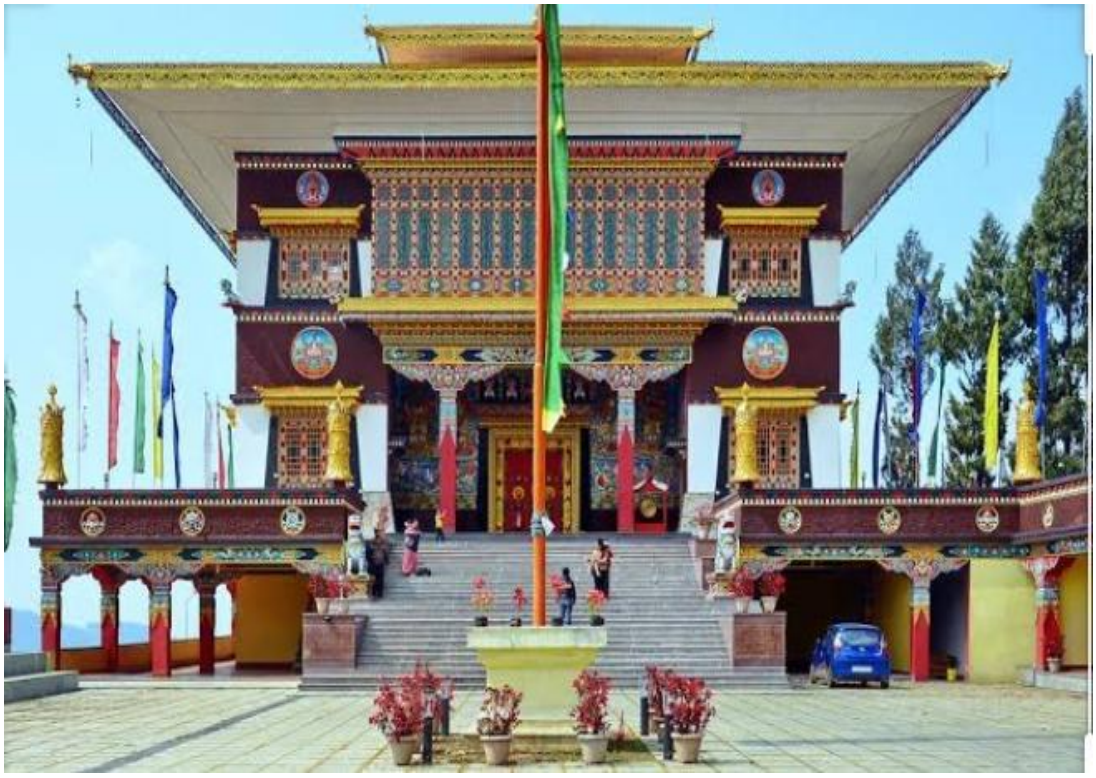

Figure 4.6: Present Ngadak Monastery, Namchi South Sikkim. The photo was taken in 2018

Influence of Buddhism on the Native People

With the official introduction of Buddhism in Sikkim from the seventeenth century by the three-important religious figure who was instrumental in installing the Namgyal dynasty, there began a gradual process of influencing the native population to the Buddhist fold. The most esteemed priest Lhatsun Chempo, now Sikkim's patron saint and his confreres, built Sikkim's first monastery, the Dubde monastery in+ West Sikkim, followed by Tashiding and Pemayangtse monasteries. The establishment of monasteries had been a part of Sikkim's political scheme. All monasteries in Sikkim have been centralized under the king's secular power and are not religious organizations independent of the political system. These early monasteries of Sikkim formed branches of significant monasteries in Tibet to which belonged the monks

who first migrated into Sikkim and contributed a great deal to the establishment of Sikkim Buddhism (Chie, 1966, p. 220).

Accordingly, the domination of Buddhism over the natives began. Initially, the natives were hesitant about accepting the new faith, and there was resistance by them (Nebesky-Wojkowitz, 1955, p. 121). However, Lhatsun Chempo established a Buddhist Tholung monastery inside the Dzongu reserve[119] and promoted mount Kanchenjunga, the Lepcha source of origin, as a Buddhist god and incorporated Buddhist ideas into their traditional religion.Later, the third Namgyal king, Chagdor Namgyal, worked extensively to strengthenthe Buddhism roots in Sikkim. He invented alphabets for the Lepcha language, which was intended to translate Buddhist literature from Tibetan, which helped in the religious conversion of many natives (Namgyal & Dolma, 1908, p. 26). This facilitated Buddhism's diffusion among the Lepchas by translating the various Buddhist works into the Lepcha language, which helped bring Lepchas under the Buddhist fold (Nebesky-Wojkowitz, 1955, p. 121). To strengthen Buddhism's hold, the king promulgated a law to send the second son of every three sons to the Pemayangtse monastery. He wanted to make the Bhutia race superior in society (Bhattacharya, 1992, p. 56). Moreover, the king augmented the annual autumn offering to Sikkim's mountain deities by the great masked dance of lamas,[120] which is still performed to date (see figure 4.7). By the introduction of this tradition, on the one hand, the king showed respect to the Lepcha's tradition of

[119]Dzongu in North Sikkim, an area reserved for the Lepchas since the time of Namgyal dynasty

[120]This ceremony is called Pang Lhagsol, Sikkim's most important indigenous celebration, consists of a series of rituals a monastic dance held in honour of Sikkim's chief mountain deity, Kanchenjunga, and all the guardian deities. Considered the true custodian of the land, its people and resources, Kanchenjunga is also revered as the defender of the Buddha Dharma and the land's peace and prosperity. Since, over three centuries, the monks of Pemayangtse and other monasteries in Sikkim have celebrated Pang Lhabsol at the end of monsoon; the 15th day of the 7th lunar month marks the final day of the Pang Lhabsol celebrations, and this day is declared as government holiday in the State.

worshipping nature and mountains for their well-being and, on the other, was successful in incorporating the Lepchas into the Buddhist fold.

Figure 4.7: Monks with a mask. Source: Palace Archive, Gangtok Sikkim.

The influence of Buddhism on the natives can be related to the incident which occurred at Tholung monastery.[121] On Chagdor Namgyal's death, Lepchas brought the corpse to Tholung to give him a proper Lepcha burial. They followed tradition and buried the dead king, and also slaughter a pig. The lamas opposed this slaughter, as one of the vital moral obligations for a Buddhist is not to destroy life (Gordon, 1972, p. 80). About three years later, people spoke of different kinds of animals emerging out of the dead body and attacking the people. They realized that they had wronged the funeral rites and decided to cremate the buried body. When they pulled out the

[121]Tholung monastery is considered the most sacred monastery of Sikkim by the State Government. Administrative Report of Sikkim State for the Year 1926-27. Calcutta, Government of India Press, 1928. During the Nepalese invasion in 1816, many of objects were brought from other monasteries for safety and have remained here ever since (White, 2000, p. 66).

corpse, they noticed that the blood in the body felt alive, and if it were delayed by even a few days, perhaps the corpse would have raised itself from the dead. So, they finally cremated their king, and ashes have been placed inside the monastery ever since. Consequently, this event in history symbolizes the Buddhist tradition's victory over the Lepchas way of life. Traditionally, Lepchas buried their dead, but the Buddhist tradition is to cremate the dead.

Accordingly, the Lepchas began practisingBuddhism and also incorporated some of the elements of their traditional religion. Geoffrey Gorer has observed,

> On some subjects, there is an agreement between the two religions. Notably, on the ambivalent nature of supernatural beings, in both religions, the supernatural is divided into three categories, mostly benevolent, neutral and most malevolent, and both Lama and Lepcha priests are also agreed on the meaningful and prophetic character of dreams (Gorer, 2005, p. 183).

True enough, the parallel practice of Buddhism and the traditional religion of Lepchas is present to date, as one can notice the Buddhist prayer flags right outside the house of Lepchas.

With the acceptance of Buddhism, there was a gradual change in the cultural life of the native population. Buddhist chants were written in Lepcha Language, and they started sending their children to a monastery. Also, people began speaking both Bhutia and Lepcha language. During the funeral, they would stop eating meat for a few days, which was in contrast to the traditional ways of slaughtering an ox and feeding the village. Instead, the native people made Tibetan cookies known as *Khapsey* as snacks with tea in a very Tibetan presentation. Their death rituals also changed, as their ancestors used to be buried. Still, now they adopted the Buddhist

practice of cremating the corpse, and in the absence of *Mun* or priest, the lamas took over the funeral ceremony.

Regarding their traditional dress, the original Lepcha outside dress was a thick piece of home-woven striped material. It fastened over one shoulder with a brooch, belted at the waist with a sash, and reached the knees. But, slowly, Lepcha women have entirely given up the indigenous type of dress favouring the Tibetan costume, called *Bakkhu*. Though the original Lepcha head-dress- a woven bamboo surmounted by a feather has been almost completely abandoned in favour of the biretta-like Tibetan decorate with coral beads (Gorer, 2005, pp. 52-53). Hence, the gradual incorporation of Buddhism into the Lepcha lifestyle permeated beyond the religious sphere. As the dominant Buddhist Bhutia culture and religion became a part of their everyday lives, the arrival of alien faith and culture was not seen as a threat but accepted by the native population. Besides, the bond between the Bhutia and the Lepchas became more substantial due to the rapid growth of Nepali migration in Sikkim. It was seen as a threat to the Lepcha-Bhutia population. They felt insecure in their land as they were easily outnumbered, so they started searching for the similarity between themselves and intermarriages between the two communities were entertained. In this case, the only common and uniting element for the Lepchas and Bhutia was religion. Buddhism proved to be the main factor in the kindled friendship between the two (Oommen, 2009, p. 4).

The introduction of Buddhism and its incorporation into the Lepcha land was the key to accepting Namgyal rule in Sikkim.[122] The activitiesof monks who

[122]Unlike the Lepcha population, it seems that the Limboos were not converted into the Buddhist fold, and they continued to follow their faith called Yumaism, according to which they believe in mother goddess of mother earth. This could be because the subjugation of Limboo was based on

established monasteries accompanied by Bhutia peasants had great significance in developing the native community. The monasteries became the vital centre of the local community. Themonastery's function was to convert pagan Lepchas to Buddhism and weld them into a more comprehensive system. Closed primitive communities were thus opened to the outside world. A primitive society changed into a peasant society under a centralized political system similar to the Tibetan feudal system (Chie, 1966, p. 220). Since then, the Lepchas practised both Buddhism and their traditional religion. Thus, Bhutias and Lepchas' assimilation started in the early days of their contact and grew over time through conversion to Buddhism and unrestricted matrimonial relations. Most Lepchas started speaking the Bhutia language, wearing a Bhutia dress, following Bhutia culture and tradition. However, assimilation was not a one-way process; some of the Lepcha customs and traditions were also incorporated and became the acknowledged part of Sikkim's most essential festive ceremonies. Moreover, Buddhism was the common factor for the Lepchas and Bhutias to ally against the rapid growth of the Nepali migrant population.

Primary Introduction of Socio-Political Organization

Before the coronation of Phuntshog Namgyal, the basic social system existed, which resulted from the blood-brother pact between Khye Bhumsa and Teg Kong teg. It was the introduction of a pattern of dual or parallel inheritance, according to which all the males would be considered to be related to the sons and all females to the daughters.[123] However, this pact does not show the relation between lords and tenants;

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alliance and matrimonial policy, or probably due to the proximity of the majority of the Limbuan region towards Nepal and hence, there was a significant influence of Hinduism compared to Buddhism.

[123]Tibetan work of Karma tshangpa'amskalbzangbloldan. Titled *La sogs du 'brelba' l rgyalrab (LSG).* Private collection of late T.D. Densapa (BarmoikAthing/Kazi), Gangtok, 1657

it was instrumental in building friendship and unification of Bhutia and Lepcha into a single kinship network and settlement of Sikkim by Tibetans. Though, this basic social organization was later transformed into the appropriate socio-political system with the installation of the first Chogyal Phuntshog Namgyal.

Subsequently, during the 1650s, as a result of Lepcha and Limboo rebellion against Phuntshog Namgyal's rule, the king established a royal council, which introduceda new law that defined the relationship between *dpon* (lord) and *g.yog* (servants). This law reads as follows:

> If your Mon pa[124] (i.e., a Mon pa under your administrative authority) is male, his sons will belong to you as servants. If the male Mon pa has only one son, he will be retained by his family. Whatever daughters your Mnagsmo[125] has, you will obtain them. But if there is only one daughter, she must remain as the replacement mother. Suppose the Mon pa and the Mnagsmo have only one daughter. In that case, they can obtain another child through adoption.[126]

This law was identical to Goldstein's comment on Tibetan society, in which he said:

> All laymen in Tibet were separated into two hierarchical strata referred to as lords (*sger pa*) and serfs (*mi ser*). Membership in these strata was hereditary; the linkage of serf to lord being transmitted through parallel descent, i.e., daughters was ascribed to the lord of their mother and sons to the lord of their father (Goldstein, 1971, pp. 521-534).

[124] Refers to male tenants or servants, at the same time it denotes Lepchas generally
[125] Refers to female tenants or servants
[126] Op.cit LSG

Thus, apparently, with the introduction of a new law, Phuntshog Namgyal laid the foundation of the basic structure of a socio-political organization.

By 1657, Phuntshog Namgyal laid a basic foundation of a socio-political organization in Sikkim. He divided the population into two groups: *g.yog* (servants) and *blon* (ministers). Below this *blon* were the headmen (*mgochings*) and *las dpon* (foremen responsible for supervising the lowest workers). The ministerial was organized according to the reliability and trustworthiness of the people. Those not trusted were employed as traders to carry goods and were called *tshong-skyeMonpas*, used in outdoor services and building or other handicrafts. They were also expected to strike or kill anyone if necessary; besides, they contributed the summer tax (*Yar-jal*) in the shape of newly gathered crops, grains and fruits. And those within the confidence or trusted were engaged in the official high ranks (Namgyal & Dolma, 1908). Further, to maintain the hereditary rights over land, there was a practice of adoption of children, as a family without a male heir may adopt a son who marries the family's daughter to maintain hereditary rights over land (in the tradition of the *mag pa*, i.e., son-in-law).[127]

Moreover, in 1663, with the signing of the *Lho-Mon-Tsong* agreement[128] between the three communities, i.e., Bhutia, Lepcha and Limboo, it recognizes the local importance of the signatories by classifying them as *blon* or ministers or leaders with territories of their own. In return, these ministers recognized the supremacy of Chogyal as a single structure of authority and the subordination of the three ethnic communities under this political order (for details, see appendix two). This agreement

[127]Tibetan manuscripts, *Mon pa'lmthobyang zin bris subkodpa'o*. private collection of late T.D. Densapa (BarmoikAthing/Kazi), Gangtok. The tradition of mag pa is still in practice today

[128]PD/1.2/001. Sikkim Royal Archive. Namgyal Institute of Tibetology. Gangtok, Sikkim

between three ethnic communities further strengthened the stratification of socio-politicalorganization in Sikkim. It also marked a crucial point in Sikkim history, as it initiated the birth of aristocracy and maintaining the balance of power among various ethnic communities.

Like this, the first Namgyal ruler successfully organised the kingdom with royal rule by the seventeenth century. He introduced a law that was similar to the Tibetan social customs regarding inheritance and property ownership.The practice of parallel descent whereby the son of *g.yog* (servants) was linked to the *blon* (ministers) of their father and the daughter of a *g.yog* (servants) were related to the lord of their mother. This gave the effect of introducing a system similar to feudal bondage in which vassals owe allegiance and military obligation to an overlord in return for land grants. This land was worked by people subservient to and bonded vassal, who also paid other taxes in products and services in exchange for their right to use land. This system might have been organized on ethnic lines, a hierarchical structure with theBhutias at the top. But later on, there seems to have been the appointment of Lepcha and Limbu as regional officers or landlords responsible for the collection of taxes.[129] This was most likely introduced to avoidlocal leaders' rebellions by giving hereditary rights over land in exchange for their services. Various services rendered to the state or individuals are paid for in land, while rights over land imply social duties, and often important social groups, from the family to thestates, can be seen in the land system. As a result, the economic organization became feudal, which will be discussed in the following chapter.

[129]PD/1.1/002. Sikkim Royal Archive. Gangtok. This document is the notification issued to all the lords and officials of Sikkim and states that a Limboo was given the authority to collect taxes

CHAPTER FIVE

THE TRANSITION FROM PRIMITIVE TO FEUDALISM IN SIKKIM

By the seventeenth century, Phuntshog Namgyal subjected native people and created an organised state with royal rule. With Phuntshog Namgyal'srecognition as Sikkim's first ruler by the Dalai Lama, the newly established Sikkim kingdom got tied to Tibetan theocracy. It permanently sought the protection and aid of Tibet, which eventually led to adoptingthe administration similar to the Tibetan system of government.Thus, this chapter will discuss the introduction of administrative apparatus and socio-political structures and stratification based on the Tibetan style principle, unique to Sikkim'sindigenous population, which eventually resulted in the emergence of feudal mode of production.

Political and AdministrativeOrganisation

Phuntshog Namgyal, after getting the hold of the native population under his rule and formation of Sikkim as a kingdom, then turned towards organising the administrative system of the newly formed kingdom. In order to assist him in the royal courtor durbar, the king appointed twelve *Kalons*[130] from *Lho-rig-ru-chen-chu-ngi* (twelve original Lhopo clans)[131]; they together formed the council of ministers. The post within the council consisted of various officials such as *Chandzot* (Prime Minister), *Drognyer* (Dewan), *Trungyig* (Secretary), *and Nyerchen* (Grand Steward). The most high-ranking position within the council was *Chadzot* (Prime Minister) and

[130] Sometimes refers called Blonpo, is basically Council of ministers

[131]The term 'Lhopo' referred to the ethnic group that migrated from Tibet to Sikkim, from thirteenth century onwards. Generally, Lhopo were also called Bhutia

Drongyer (Dewan) (Namgyal & Dolma, 1908, p. Appendix I). The council was a mixture of landed aristocracy and clergy and were responsible for looking after the kingdom's requirements. They were directly responsible to the king and functioned under direct supervision (Rose, Modernizing a Traditional Administrative System: Sikkim 1890-1973, 1978, p. 206).

For regional administration, Phuntshog Namgyal divided the territory of the kingdom into twelve *dzongs* or districts.[132] Each *dzong* was placed under the twelve Lepcha chiefs who belonged to the superior Lepcha families, and theseofficers were called *Dzongpons* or district governors (Namgyal & Dolma, 1908, p. 18). These *dzongpons* formed the lower aristocracy and were below the rank of *Kalons*. The *dzongpons* were generally responsible for collecting taxes, providing labour services, accommodation for the king during the royal tour, maintaining paths, bridges, forts within their estates, and providing military support during war or conflict. *Dzongpons* also maintained the law order at the regional level.[133] Besides these twelve *Dzongpons*, the king appointed other local Lepcha chiefs as ministers, regional governors and in other high position due to their contributionsto the formation of the kingdom (Nakane, 1966, p. 218).

Furthermore, the overall population was divided into servants (*g.yog*) and ministers (*blon or kalons*) (Mullard, Opening the Hidden Land: State Formation and the Construction of Sikkimese History, 2011, p. 81). To define the relationship between the servants and lords, the king introduced a law according to which the son of *g.yog* (servants) was linked to the *blon* (ministers) of their father, and the daughters

[132]Twelve dzongs were: Lasso, Dallam, Yangthang, Gangtok, Rhenock, Barmoik, Tashiding, Song, Libing, Malling, Simik and Pandom

[133] Document No. PD/9.5/027. Royal Palace Archive. Namgyal Institute of Tibetology. Gangtok, Sikkim. However, in this document it is also stated that in some cases justice was administered centrally by the king or at a lower level of organization

of a *g.yog* (servants) were linked to the lord of their mother (Mullard, Opening the Hidden Land: State Formation and the Construction of Sikkimese History, 2011, p. 84). This law used the language of generalised Tibetan social customs regarding inheritance and property ownership, i.e., parallel descent. It was closely related to the term *sgerpa* (lord) and *miser* (serfs) noted by Goldstein in Tibet (Glodstein, 1971, pp. 521-534). As a result, this law created dual ownership of servants, both male and female, which implies the total ownership of all descendants of a family and their responsibilities towards the overlord. Thus, the demarcation of the position and role of lord and servants indicated a substantial shift in Sikkim'ssociety from minor chiefdom to a hierarchy of social stratification, which had a hereditary system associated with land, obligations or official posts passing from father to son. It also gave the effect of introducing a system similar to feudal bondage in which vassals owe allegiance and military obligation to an overlord in return for land grants.

Within the administration, the king was head and had two-fold duties- spiritual and temporal. The ruler was not only the secular head but was an incarnate monk with the responsibility to rule the subjects following the tenets of *chhos* (dharma).A ccordingly, the political structure of the kingdom was divided into three categories- aristocracy, clergyand commoner elements (Sinha, Frontier Feudalism and State Formation in Sikkim, 1987, p. 338). The aristocrats included personnel holding a high position in the durbar, regional chiefs (*dzongpons*) and landlords. The clergy also held a high position in the administration; they were engaged in the religious establishment and influential in the political sphere, within commoners comprised of various categories of peasants and petty slaves, who were invariably tied to their lay lords or lamas. Therefore, the council members included the representatives from both lay and

clerical and traditionally, it was called *LhadiMedi*[134] (Rose, Modernizing a Traditional Administrative System: Sikkim 1890-1973, 1978, p. 205).

King being the head of both secular and religious, exercised absolute authority. King had full power in the appointment or dismissal of clergy and aristocrats and authority to decide rules and discipline related to monastics establishment. He introduced a law according to which ministerial groups were organised based on their loyalty and credibility. Those who did not serve the king and State loyally would be degraded and place at par with the commoners, and they were required to pay taxes and render services to the State without any payments (Namgyal & Dolma, 1908, p. 20). These state functionaries were supposed to have two establishments; the main one was their seat, controlling the land and settlers. Another was at the seat of the royal court, accompanying the king as one of the functionaries (Sinha, Frontier Feudalism and State Formation in Sikkim, 1987, p. 355). Accordingly, these state functionaries got themselves glued into an institution of aristocracy, a much-needed apparatus for the new regime to survive.

Various services rendered to the State or individuals were paid for their services in the form of land, while rights over land imply social duties and often important social groups, from the family to the states, can be seen in the land system, thus, with this land became crucial in terms of economy and social power. All these resulted in the formation of ethnic-economic stratification. The king was at the top,

[134]The term LhadiMedi emerged as a result of two sets of law: one for the domain of church (Lhadi) and the other for the domain of the state (Medi)

followed by the aristocrats (composed of notables from Bhutias and Lepchas, later Limboos). The landed aristocrats were commonly referred to as *Kazis*.[135]

Hereafter, the Sikkimese political system revolved around the royal family, dominant aristocrats, the bureaucracy and the sangha (monks). With the council of aristocrats, the king exercised political authority over the villages. The aristocrats were a possessing class with estates, clearly demarcated from the rest of the people. All the high positions in the kingdom became hereditary with certain privileged families and monks—a hereditary aristocracy with accumulated wealth composed a permanent council that exercised strategic power in the tribe. Quasi-royal lineage was emerging. Above all, leading men in the tribe, monks, and people most closely in contact with the royal house inevitably revealed the most advanced social and economic structures and the departures from the traditional way of life of the tribes. They were emerging as nobility, maintained by produce of lands allocated to them, and divorced from participation in agricultural production. They formed the nucleus for permanent class division and institutionalized coercive authority within these primitive social formations.Consequently, it can be noticed that there started a central authority over the people who once lived as free dwellers of this vast kingdom.

Although the *Kazis* (landlords) did not have proprietary rights over the granted lands, in due course of time, the tendency grew among the landlords to keep the lands among their families hereditarily and even exercised complete control over their jurisdictions. The *Kazis* enjoyed significant privileges within his territory, including collecting taxes, administering justice, and executing service to maintain roads, bridges, and fortifications.Some powerful *Kazis* even practised matrimonial alliance

[135]The term Kazi might have come in to vogue after the coming of Nepali settlers in Sikkim

with the various Tibetan and Bhutanese aristocracy and the Sikkim royal family, thus becoming relatives of the ruler and more influential in their part (Sinha, The Kazi Patricians in the Sikkimese Polity, 1975, p. 8). Though the Sikkim kingdom had no regular military force during this time, *Kazis* and monasteries maintained contingents against the enemies. In the time of need, monasteries and *Kazis* provided men from their jurisdictions to the king (Boileau, 1831, p. 180). As a result, the king became dependent on landlords in terms of administration and economics. The practice of supplying troops by *Kazis* and monasteries made the kingmore dependent, which resulted in the weakening ofthe central authority.

Indeed, since the time of death of the second king, the central administration of the kingdom was characterised by fragility and failure. *Kazis* (both lay and clergy) became so powerful and influential that there were incidents in which different aristocracy factions sought to assert their power and control over the kingdom by challenging the king and his authority. These incidents were: the first war of succession and Bhutanese invasion following the death of the second Chogyal Tensung Namgyal in 1649, the second war of succession after the death of the fourth Chogyal Gyurmed Namgyal in 1734 and Kotapo rebellion in 1826 against the seventh king Tsugphud Namgyal (Mullard & Wongchuk, Royal Records: A Catalogus of the Sikkimese Palace Archives, 2010, p. 8). The first war of succession occurred between the second Chogyal's son Chakdor Namgyal and daughter Pande Ongmu. Chakdor Namgyal was the son of the second Chogyal's Tibetan wife, and Pande Ongmu was the daughter of the Bhutanese wife. The royal court was divided into two factions- Tibetan and Bhutanese factions, each supporting their candidate for the throne. However, Bhutanese were defeated, resulting in the victory of the Tibetan faction and the enthronement of Chakdor Namgyal. The lands of Sikkimese aristocrats who

supported the Bhutanese faction were taken away by giving it to the Pemayangtse monasteries, aristocrats who supported the king[136] and newly ennobled family[137] (Namgyal & Dolma, 1908, p. 25).

Again in 1734, the fourth king Gyurmed Namgyal died without leaving an heir to the throne; however, he had an illegitimate son named Namgyal Phuntso from a nun of Sang-Nga Choling[138] in West Sikkim (Namgyal & Dolma, 1908, p. 36). This led to the second war of succession crisis, dividing the aristocrats into two rival groups: Tamding the then Changzot (Prime minister) and Karwang Barpungpa.[139] Tamding, being Changzot and a member of the clan, same as Sikkim king, refused to recognised the legitimacy of Namgyal Phuntso and claimed the throne for himself and took control of a kingdom and took the title of Gyalpo[140] Tamding ruled Sikkim well into the 1740s. He was supported by other leading Bhutia aristocrats such as Gelong Rinzing (Mullard, Negotiating Power in 19th Century Sikkim: The 1830 Covenant on tax Exiles and Sikkimese Border Regions, 2013, p. 179). On the other hand, Lepcha aristocrats Karwang[141] supported Namgyal Phuntso, took him into exile and fought against Tamding successfully. As a result, the Tibetan government sent an official

[136] Aristocrat who supported the king was YugthingAroop (also spelled as Arub) from a LepchaBarphung clan. In return for his service, the king added to his estates by giving land grants taken away from the rival aristocrats and his grandson Gyamtso was appointed Dzongpon of the Rinchentse (Rinchenpong, West Sikkim). This led to the rise of a LepchaBarpung family, which later challenged the authority of king.

[137] During the first war of succession and Bhutanese invasion, Tibetan government appointed Karma-dargay of Brag dKar pa family in support of the King ChagdorNamgyal. He acted as general of Sikkimese force against the Bhutanese and managed to defeat Bhutanese force. In return for his service, he was granted pasture lands in West Sikkim and appointed as Changzot (Prime Minister) (Namgyal & Dolma, 1908, P. 25).

[138] Present SanghakChoeling Monastery in West Sikkim

[139] KarwangBarpungapa was a grandson of a LepchaYugthingAroop of Barpungpa clan, who supported third Chogyal in the first war of succession and was rewarded. As a result, this LepchaBarpungpa family became influential in Sikkimese politics

[140] Gyalpo Tibetan term of King

[141] PD/9.5/003. Sikkim Royal Archive. Namgyal Institute of Tibetology. Gangtok, Sikkim. This document is the about the life of Karwang and his ancestor, written by Karwang himself in 1759 shortly before his death

named RabdenSarpa to act as regent during the minority of King Namgyal Phuntso (Sikkim- A Concise Chronicle, 1963, p. 6). The kingdom's administration fell into the hands of Karwang and his family as the head of lay council by reducing the king as a mere puppet ruler. Barfungpa family became the dominant aristocratic family in Sikkim; they stripped Tamding and his allies' estates and redistributed the lands among themselves. Further, Karwang, by marrying his daughter to the sixth king TenzingNamgyal solidified the Barfungpa family position in the kingdom (see appendix three). Thus, it can be asserted that the reign of the fifth and sixth king in Sikkim was limited by the power and control exerted upon them by successive members of the Barfungpa family.

Later, the seventh king Tsughud Namgyal attempted to reassert his power and curb the Barfungpa influences by assassinating the Changzot Bholod (son of Chnagzot Karwang) (Namgyal & Dolma, 1908, p. 53). This led to the Kotapa rebellion in 1826 against the king. To take revenge Yug Drathub, nephew of Bholod, raised an armed insurrection in Western Sikkim against the king and later fled to Unthoo in Ilam Nepal along with tax-paying subjects, where Kota Kunga,[142] the elder brother of Bholod, used to have estates (Risley, 2010, p. 19). The Kotapa intended to bloody revenge began several raids in Sikkim[143] with the aid of Nepal and even stopped sending the tax revenue to the king.[144] However, later with the intervention of

[142]Kota Kunga or YugKunga was the elder brother of Bholod, had his estates in Ilam, including the Nagri in Darjeeling and the North Bengal plains. These estates were under the administration of Kota Kunga, he was responsible for territory and tax collection to both Sikkim and Nepal. These plain territories provided the majority of tax revenue to Sikkim

[143]PD/4.2/013. Royal Palace Archive. Namgyal Institute of Tibetology. Gangtok, Sikkim. This document includes a copy of letter from the king TsughudNamgyal to the Tibet government in which informs that in 1826 the Kotapa started a rebellion with the support of Gorkhas (Nepal). Kotapa burnt the land of around 3000 Sikkimese subjects.

[144]Majority of tax revenue to Sikkim kingdom came from plain territories, which was under the jurisdiction of Kota Kunga

the Tibet government,[145] the king made peace with the Kotapas and have them returned to Sikkim and allowed them to return to their estates, having made them take an oath of loyalty.

From the above events, it can be assumed that the central authority of the Sikkim kingdom became fragile, and there was a failure of state organisations. This was due to how the kingdom was organised into semi-independent fiefdoms. Landholder aristocrats were responsible for law and administration, the organisation of landholdings resulting in the local hierarchies. In the case of the Barfungpa family, who became powerful after their successful involvement in the second war of succession, they started taking away the lands of defeated aristocrats by distributing them among themselves without the king's approval. These landlords could command their tenants to work on their lands, provide services or even fight for him at will. The people showed allegiance to the local lords instead of the monarch, similar to their European counterparts. Thus, it can be asserted that, in theory, the king had the right to issue or remove land grants from individuals. However, in practice, the king was also dependent on the local lords for tax collection and raising armies in time of need. Indeed, it shows that the king remains as long as landlords agreed, and it would benefit them.

Thus, by the late eighteenth century, it became noticeable that the central institution of feudalism was already present. The centralised administration of the Namgyal dynasty tended to undermine due to the rapid spread of benefices and their increasing heritability. Also, the internal unity of the kingdom foundered amidst the

[145]PD/4.2/007. Royal Palace Archive. Namgyal Institute of Tibetology. Gangtok, Sikkim. This document is a letter from Tibet government to the king of Sikkim insisting to make decision to either declare war against the insurgents or sue for a peace.

civil wars and growing regionalism of the elite class that once held it together.[146] External attacks by Bhutan and Nepal led to the further weakening of the kingdom, as there was no permanent army and the king had to depend on the aristocrats for it. The various factions of aristocrats used this opportunity for their benefits. Finally, it can be assumed that the entrenchments of landlords in the regions through the nascent fief system and consolidation of their estates and lordships over the peasantry led to the decentralisation of political authority of the king and proved to be the bedrock of the feudalism that gradually solidified over Sikkim in the coming years.

The pattern of Land distribution and Ownership

Traditionally, the king held all lands in the kingdom and only usufruct, not absolute ownership, entrusted to the kingdom's people (Namgyal H. C., 1966, p. 46). The land was the most important means of production; everyone from the poor peasant to the highest aristocrats and the ruler had to depend on the land. The land tenure system reveals the foundation of the socio-economic system; the rights on land closely tied to the various kinds of social functions. The activities of the government were financed by the taxes of various kinds from the land. The officials were compensated with land grants for their services to the royal court. In theory, the leased-out land to the officials was for the period of service or prescribed number of years. The king retained ownership right, and he could resume the land at his discretion (Rose, Modern Sikkim in an Historical Prospective, 1990, p. 64). However, the officials had a hereditary title to their offices (Pedro, 1959, p. 186). Eventually,

[146]Throughout this period of Sikkim's history varying political situation developed in which it was seen that the advantages were taken by the Sikkimese aristocracy, leading to both the rise of new aristocratic families and decline of other, so much so that the original aristocrats' signatories of Lho-Mon-Tsong Sum no longer existed.

one general term, *Kazis*, came to use to denote these officials, along with the name of the place they had control over, and they became the landlord of that particular place.

The practice of land grants initiated by the ruler of Sikkim could be related to the paucity of coins and theabsence of commercial markets and trade. Only limited barter trade could be noticed between the different sections of the communities (Bhattacharya, 1984, p. 25). Additionally, due to the signing of the *Lho-Mon-Tsong Sum* agreement,[147] local tribal chiefs who seem to maintain their lands with administrative and judiciary rightswere incorporated into the social and political system in return to accept Phuntshog Namgyal as the king. They were allowed to collect taxeson their respective lands. Thus, incorporating these signatories of the *Lho-Mon-Tsong Sum* agreement into the social and political system and continuing them to be responsible for collecting taxes and administration led to the adoption of land grants thatcame into vogue. Gradually it became an essentialand convenient system for the administration and revenue collection of the entire kingdom.It can be noticed that since the reign of the first king Phuntshog Namgyal, the practice of land grants was implemented by his successors not only to the Bhutia and Lepcha landlords but also to the Limbooin the kingdom.[148] This system was most likely introduced to avoid rebellions from the local leaders by giving hereditary rights over land in exchange for their services.

Along with the land grants, the grantees were given responsibilities to collect taxes, rights over administrative and judiciary in their respective areas.It, therefore, seems probable that the lands were appropriated by clan chiefs, who then settled and

[147]PD/1.2/001. Sikkim Royal Archive. Namgyal Institute of Tibetology. Gangtok, Sikkim

[148]PD/1.1/002. Sikkim Royal Archive. Namgyal Institute of Tibetology. Gangtok, Sikkim. This document is the notification issued in 1779, states that a Limboo was given authority to collect taxes by ChogyalTensungNamgyal

made tribes people their tenants or possibly poor small-holders. Hence, at one stroke, the former became aristocrats, while the latter fell directly or indirectly into economic dependence on them. Class stratification increased as once free tribal people became territorially fixed within the boundaries created by the newly established kingdom.

The land distribution of the kingdom reveals that the king owned a large part of the land as private estates. Next were the lands held by the individual *Kazis*. Apart from these, the land was granted to the religious institutions for their upkeep and conducting religious ceremonies. These religious institutions were exempted from taxes (Sikkim, 1928),[149] and even the entry of state officials was banned in the donated areas. These religious institutions emerged as a landed aristocracy (Pedro, 1959, p. 193).

The land under the direct control of the king was called private estates.These lands were administered by the Kazis landlords appointed directly by the king.[150] Kazis were responsible for the collection of taxes and the administrative system within the private estates. Since the Kazis used to visit the estate on infrequent occasions, therefore to assist in their duties, they appointed a subordinate class of agents called Tumyang or Tassa, who was assigned with each village within the estates. These Tumyang or Tassa acted as village headman responsible for collecting taxes and looked after the internal administration of the villages for the Kazis (Geoffrey, 2005, p. 123). Within these lands, though the cultivators held land hereditarily but had no title to the land, they only had usufruct right. They cannot sell the land but could sell the right to usethe terraces (Edgar, Report on a Visit to Sikkim

[149]They have to pay to the State only the household taxes realized from the peasants under them. The land taxes realized from peasants is spent on the maintenance of the monasteries.

[150]Dzongu, North Sikkim was once given to the Lasso kazi and later it was replaced by the MalliKazi and RhenockKazi. This shows the administrative responsibility of the Private Estate land could be transferred by the king (Namgyal H. C., 1966, P. 48)

and the Thibetan Frontier in October, November and December in 1873, 1969, p. 62). The transaction of land use right needed the consent of the village headman and, if necessary, confirmation from the royal court. This shows that the existing custom was not rigid, although there was a state's superior right.

The peasants of private estates were required to pay taxes[151] in kind and other labour services (Temple, 1887, p. 164).Taxes in kind included local produce, and the rate was half of the produce of the fields.[152] Due to the absence of any rational land revenue in Sikkim, revenue was levied not on the product but the quantity of seed used, the number of cattle head, and the working member's size in the individual families (Sinha, Politics of Sikkim: A Sociological Study, 1975, p. 45). Later, regular taxes were collected annually, and cultivators were required to pay *Zolung* tax (grains, wine and forest produce) and *tshong-skyed* (duty on trade) to the king (Namgyal & Dolma, 1908, p. 37).[153] However, during the time of war, the extortion from the cultivators was as much as they could give (Boileau, 1831, p. 181). Besides these general taxes, there was revenue for cattle grazing in Sikkim, realised from the herdsmen who, during the summer months, lived in Tibet and winter in Sikkim. They were expected to contribute butter and cheese (Jha, 1985, p. 69). There was a practice according to which the king used to give tea and salt[154] to the villagers; in return, they

[151]InMost of the earlier works on Sikkim, author have used the word tax, but after examining the situation of peasants in Sikkim, the land they held did not own the land but only had a usufruct right. hence it will be more rational to say that the peasants paid rents in return for the use of land.

[152]It is believed that the initially, taxes were not collected on regular basis. It was collected wherever required by the king

[153]In the year 1747, due to a second war of succession, Tibet government appointed a Tibetan RabdenSarpa to act as regent in Sikkim on behalf of young king NamgyalPhunshog. In order to obtain an accurate population census, he gave a *bakshi* (a plateful of salt), which was very precious at the time, to every subject who came to pay respect to him, and thus cleverly incentivized all the households to show up. He noted down all the *bakshi* recipients in a roll and based on this roll, carried out the assessment of tax (Namgyal & Dolma, 1908, P. 37)

[154]During this period, these two items; tea and salt was considered quite valuable for the settlers of Sikkim

were required to pay the value in agricultural produce equal to these items. If they failed to pay interest was charged on them (Namgyal & Dolma, 1908, pp. Appendix, P 22).

The peasants of private estates were also subject to provide the labour services without any payments to the royal house.For labour services to the royal house,the peasants were divided into two categories; the Nag-zans and Zim-chungpas. Nag-zans were required to serve in the king's household, one member from individual families in villages compelled for this unpaid labour service. Similarly, one member from each family was required to serve the king as a messenger while he was on tour or other works as necessity demands were called Zim-chungpas. At times, other than the king, Nag-zans and Zim-chungpaswere also required to serve Kazis and other officials (Tran, 2012, p. 17). In addition to this, in general, the peasants were subjected to various forms of unpaid labour services[155]. Moving of both people and goods from one village to another, to carry the king's effect during his visit to Chumbi and had an obligation to supply boys as servants in the king's palace and be trained as state carpenters (Pedro, 1959, p. 190). Because of these compulsory unpaid labour services, there was a tradition of the widespread adoption of children by individual families in Sikkim.[156] Large families were essential for the economic system as certain taxes fell on the family rather than individuals, making it easier to have a large household population carry out corvee labour duties. Also, there was a widespread system of fraternal polyandry[157] practised by the villagers of Lachung and Lachen in North

[155]Sikkim State Archives. File No. 37, Land Revenue, Complaints of peasants of Sikkim. Dated: 21/1/1911

[156] There was also a practice of adopting a son who marries a family's daughter and becomes a *Mag-pa* (son-in-law).

[157]This polyandry system can still be seen among some families in Lachung and Lachen, North Sikkim

Sikkim, which can be assumed to keep common property within the family and for the family corvee labour services.

Next to the private estates' monasteries in Sikkim also held a large estate through the grants by the king for its upkeep and ceremonial purposes.[158] Out of numerous monasteries in Sikkim, five were regarded as essential and had a large tract of land; these were Phodong and Phensang, in the North, Rumtek in the East Pemayangtse[159] in West Sikkim and Ralong in South Sikkim (Sikkim, 1928). These religious institutions and monks, either living within the monastery estates or not, were exempted from taxes or labour services. However, monasteries did not own lands in perpetuity granted by the king but were authorised to collect taxes and labour contributions for their sustenance (Namgyal & Dolma, 1908, p. 74). Monasteries were also authorised to administer villages and maintained law and order by solving petty cases. They used to collect household tax (*Dhuri Khajana*) and land tax (*zamin Khajana*) in kind from the tenants living within the estates. They were required to pay only the household tax to the king, and the land taxes from the tenants were spent maintaining the monasteries and religious ceremonies.

Lands under the control of the monastery were divided into demesne and tenement area; the monastery held demesne land and tenement area held by the tenants within the entire estates of the monastery. Monastery had a council called *Udor Cheotsum*, which included three heads; Dorje*lopon* (spiritual head), *Buze* (prior) and *Cheothimpa* (discipline master) (Tran, 2012, p. 15). In consultation with

[158]PD/1.1/003. Royal Palace Archive. Namgyal Institute of Tibetology. Gangtok, Sikkim. This document mentioned the list of tax payer who falls under the jurisdiction of Pemayangste monastery through land granted by the king

[159]Pemayangtse was considered most important. Initially, only descendants of original Lhopo clans were allowed admission here. Monks of this monastery were highly respected, they had the customary right for forming the religious ceremonies of the palace. The head monk of Pemayangtse was officiate as the high priest for performing the coronation ceremony of the king.

the king, this council appointed a monk who acts as an agent responsible for collecting taxes and administering the entire estates. There was also the appointment of a village headman called *Tumyang* within each village responsible for collecting taxes from villages and taking care of the village's relationship with the agent of a monastery.

Peasants living within the monastery estates were categorised into two; landholding peasants and landless peasants. Like the peasants of private estates, landholding peasants held land hereditarily, but they could not sell it can only sell the usufruct right. They were required to pay house and land taxes and contribute to the monastery for the annual rituals. Besides, from working on the tenement land, they were required to send one member of their family for compulsory daily unpaid labour or, as required to the monastery along with tilling the demesne land in return for a tenement land section (Subba, 1988, p. 325). On the contrary, landless peasants[160] within the monastery estates did not hold land hereditarily; they were required to provide services to the monastery or individual monks such as; cooking, bringing firewood and water for the monks, and cultivatingmonasteries land in exchange for a percentage of harvest (Balikci, 2008, p. 83). Steadily with the growth in the number of landless peasants, it seems that they received a plot of land within the estates in return for their labour services.

Likewise, individual Kazis or landlord in Sikkim also held land from the king in place of their services to the kingdom. These Kazis were given authority to collect

[160]It can be assumed that initially, the number of landless peasants were less within the estates of all monasteries in Sikkim. It was only after the migration of Nepalese that landless peasants widely spread in Sikkim, and they used to be found almost within entire kingdom. Since then they were called as *Pakhureys* in Nepali term

taxes within the granted land, maintained law and order and administration.[161] These Kazis did not have perpetuity right over the granted land.[162] They enjoyed authority over it as long as they remained loyal and supportive to the king; however, they had a hereditary title to their office. Like the estates of a monastery, the manorial land of a Kaziswas divided into demesne and tenement area. Lords held the Demesne land, and the peasants' families held tenement areas; though, the entire estate was under the lord's control. The land tenants held from the Kazis were hereditary; they did not possess this land but could sell the right of using the terraces (Edgar, Report on a Visit to Sikkim and the Thibetan Frontier in October, November and December in 1873, 1969, p. 62). Kazis, to assist them used to appoint village headmen, who were assigned a village or group of the village to administer and collect revenues on behalf of the Kazis. Village headman could also lease land to individual peasant families (Sinha, Sikkim Feudal and Democratic, 2008, p. 136). In return for land grants, the Kazis were required to pay a specific fixed annual contribution to the king on account of the house and land rent they collected from the peasants (Temple, 1887, p. 164).

The peasants were required to pay land and house taxes to landlords in return for the tenement area within the 30th of November every year. If anyone failed to fulfil these, the same would be realized by mortgaging his property, both movable and immovable, at least for two months. Even after that, peasants fail to pay by the end of January next year, and lordswould confiscate his property.[163]Additionally, landlords used to levy a separate tax on fishing or collected wild honey on peasants by a tax of

[161]PD/1.1/023 and PD/1.1/024. Royal Palace Archives. Namgyal Institute of Tibetology. Gangtok, Sikkim. This two documents mentions the order issued by the king to the dzonpons authorizing them to collect taxes within their jurisdiction

[162]Though Kazis did not have property right, but in due course of time, the tendency grew among the landlords to keep the lands among their families hereditarily and even exercised complete control over their jurisdictions

[163]Council Order, Sl. No. 3, File No. 1 of 1906. Land Revenue Department. Government of Sikkim, 1906

baskets of dried, smoked fish or seer of wax every half a year (Tran, 2012, p. 11). Peasants also had an obligation to perform all the agricultural works in the manorial land they required to cultivate on demesne land, without payments. Apart from working on demesne land, they were required to provide other labour services such as construction work of buildings, fortification, and roads, sometimes as soldiers[164] and household works (Sinha, Sikkim Feudal and Democratic, 2008, p. 51).[165] Moreover, most of the influential Kazis, apart from their household establishment in their estates, had their residential in the kingdom's capital. Peasants were forced to come to the capital and serve their landlords without payments, for which peasants had to take a journey of two to three days from the village.

There existed a system according to which individual peasant family could ask for permission from the landlord to open up new forest area for cultivation. Such a request happened to be profitable to the landlords as they would multiply their income by levying taxes on newly created cultivable land by the peasants. However, compared to the taxes paid by the peasants of created cultivated land, these newly created cultivated land peasants paid half the tax (Mullard & Wongchuk, Royal Records: A Catalogus of the Sikkimese Palace Archives, 2010, p. 12). By permitting to create new cultivable land to peasants by landlords, it shows the power of feudal lords within his jurisdiction, going against the king's power who held the right to grant land or eject anyone. Furthermore, the landlords were also engaged in trade, and they used to force peasants to provide labour service for carrying loads without paymentsfor their benefits (Sinha, Sikkim Feudal and Democratic, 2008, p. 135).

[164]During this period, Sikkim did not have a permanent army and king had depend on the kazis for it.It was the duty of landlords to provide army to the king when demanded

[165]It is believed that because of this, some of the aggrieved Limboos left their habitation and migrated to Nepal

Indeed, the very existence of custom according to which landlords were allowed to maintain tenants on their demesne land as compulsory unpaid labour led to the miserable condition of the peasants (Steinmann, 2003-2004, p. 162). In fact, unpaid labour[166]provided by the peasants included not only the state and landlords butalso the subordinates' official within the village levels. However, it is recorded that all villagers had to furnish eighteen days a year of free labour to the State, the landlords and village headman,[167] but in practice, this system was open to abuse by the landlords and subordinate officials to the extent that the villagers had little time left to look after their fields (Balikci, 2008, p. 51).

Moreover, if a peasant failed to provide a labour service, they had to face punishment. Therefore, to escape from the punishment and hardship of unpaid labour, they used to hire a labourer to fulfil these obligations on their behalf (Upadhyay, 2017, p. 149). As all the peasants in the villages were engaged to provide unpaid labour services, it was challenging to find a substitution.These hired labours were termed as Pakhurey,[168] usually fed by the peasants, and sometimes they were granted a small plot of land in return for their labour (Sikkim, Report of the Committee of Land Reform, 1975, pp. 13-14). Likewise, the miserable condition of peasants can also be seen from the practice of debt-bondage. Poor peasants unable to repay his loan were compelled to do manual labour for the lord as security for paying some debt or

[166]The free labour service was common system in Tibet, where the tenants of each district had to contribute labour services for agriculture, transportation and soldier. This Tibetan system, it seems was transplanted by the Namgyal rulers in Sikkim and was made mandatory.

[167]Villagers were expected to provide seven days of free labour in a year to the state, one day in the year for road repairing, six days in the year to the landlord and four days to the Mandal (Balikci, 2008, p 51). Note from BarmiokKazi Dated: 30th Oct 1911. Sikkim State Archives, File 37, Land Revenue, Complaints of raiyots of Sikkim, 21/1/1911.

[168]Apart from working for the peasants they could be found working for landlords and monasteries when required

were sometimes imprisoned as a penalty.[169] Indebtedness appeared to be a significant factor in peasant subjection. Unpaid labour services and debt-bondage led to the widespread exploitation of peasants by the landlords and subordinate officers (Waddell, 1990, p. 103).Thus, the pitiable condition of peasants of Sikkim can be seen from the incidents which took place between the 1840s and 1850s. Due to taxes, debts, unpaid labour services,and widespread exploitation of landlords, many peasantsused to take refuge in Darjeeling under the British government (Mckay, 2010, p. 33).

Consolidation of the Institution of Landlords

With the occupation of Darjeeling by the British government in 1835 led to the settlement of Nepali migrants, there as a labourer (Moktan, 2004, p. 11). Owing to the proximity of Darjeeling, there started a tendency among Nepalese to migrate towards Sikkim, which became a concern for the king of Sikkim.Later in 1861, with the signing of the Treaty of Tumlong[170] (See appendix four), the British government began to encourage the settlement of Nepalese in Sikkim.[171]A group of Sikkimese aristocrats did not welcome the decision of agreeing to settlement to Nepali immigrants.[172] Owing to the issue of the agreement among the aristocrats, the king requested the British government to settle Nepali immigrants only on unoccupied and wastelands (Lepcha, 2002, p. 68).Subsequently, in 1867, the Sikkim king granted a

[169]In the year 1913, the tenth ChogyalSidkeongTulkuNamgyal abolished the imprisonment as a penalty for non-payment of debts (Sikkim, Administrative Report of the Sikkim State for 1913-14, 1915).

[170]Sikkim State Archives. Treaty of Tumlong, 1861. Sikkimarchives.gov.in. Accessed on 9/10/2020.

[171]It can be assumed the for thefor the purpose of trade to Tibet British needed a labour to carry loads. As there was a shortage of labour force in Sikkim, thus, British encouraged the settlement of Nepalese in Sikkim

[172]PD/1.7.002. Sikkim Royal Archive. Namgyal Institute of Tibetology. Gangtok Sikkim. This document mentions the conflict arose between Khangsaroa (a lepcha aristocrat, supporter of Nepali settlement in Sikkim) and the Pemayangtse lama (anti-migration) regarding the settlement of Newars in Sikkim.

formal land lease to two Newar[173] brothers, Laxmi Das Pradhan and Chandra Bir Maskey (Basnet, 1974, p. 44). For cultivation in their leased land, these Newar brothers started settling a large number of Nepali peasants. Later, they even secured the rights to carry out the mining activities and minting Sikkimese coins with the inception of copper coins[174] (Sikkim, Report of the Committee of Land Reform, 1975). Shortly, Sikkimese aristocrats too began to follow the process of settling Nepalese within their territories as it was found profitable to them.[175] Eventually, this resulted in a widespread settlement of Nepali peasants in Sikkim.[176]

Further, with the beginning of British administration and an appointment of the first British Political Officer John Claude White in Sikkim, there was a noticeable increase in the Nepalese settlement, leading to substantial demographic changes. British initiated a new land reform known as the lessee system. According to the new system, former hereditary land grants were replaced by the lessee system. Except forthe king's private estates, Kazi's private estates, monastic lands and few reserved areas, the whole of Sikkim came under the lessee system. The land was distributed to

[173]Newar is a Nepali sub-caste. Commonly they use title as Pradhan

[174]Lamaist aristocrats of Sikkim considered mining as taboo. They believe that the ores and veins of metals are the store treasure of the earth spirits and that the removal of this treasure enrages these malignant spirits, who caused all sorts of ill-lucks, plague of sickness on men and cattle, and failure of crops (Waddell, Among the Himalayas, 1990, p. 101).

[175]However, following the death of ChogyalSidkeongTulkuNamgyal and accession of ThutobNamgyal, he opposed to the settlement of Nepalese and nullified the agreement signed between the British and SidkeongTulku. He passed a decree forbidding the Nepalese in Sikkim. Legal Code of Government of Sikkim Year 1876: originally in Tibetan, translator: Saul Mullard and HisseyWangchuk.
(PD/9.5/027. Clause No 15, Palace Royal Archive. Namgyal Institute of Tibetology. Gangtok, Sikkim).
This decision of ThutobNamgyal led to the division of Sikkim aristocrats into anti-migration and pro-migration factions. Pro-migration aristocrats started settling a large number of Nepalese in Sikkim.

[176]PD/9.5.041. Palace Royal Archive. Namgyal Institute of Tibetology. Gangtok, Sikkim. Document related to the Nepali settlement in Sikkim, originally in Tibetan, translator: Saul Mullard and HisseyWangchuk.
PD/9.5/075. Palace Royal Archive. Namgyal Institute of Tibetology. Letter of a Sikkimese ministers to the king Year 1880. Originally in Tibetan, translator: Saul Mullard and HisseyWangchuk. Regarding the dispute arose between the natives and Nepalese peasants

the pro-British Kazi family and new Sikkimese landlords[177]on a fifteen-year term and Nepali Newar on a ten-year term for which they had to pay a fixed rent to the government (Rose, Modernizing a Traditional Administrative System: Sikkim 1890-1973, 1978, pp. 214-215). Thus, makingNewar the Nepalese counterpart of the Lepcha-Bhutia Kazi landlords in Sikkim, they were given the title of Thikadars. Likewise, several landed estates were created in south, west, and east Sikkim and distributed to the local landlords (Kazis and Thikadars). They were encouraged to bring in and filled their estates with the Nepalese peasants. According to the British, the primary purpose behind encouraging such a large scale of Nepalese was to bring more land under cultivation (White, 1909, p. 25). However, while analysing the situation, it can be assumed that the British government was interested in trade with Tibet during this time. For that purpose, they needed manual labour, which was in shortage in Sikkim, so they encouraged the Nepalese to settle in Sikkim and use them as manual labourers.

The taxes now began to be collected in cash[178] based on the productivity of land (Sikkim, Administration Report of the Sikkim State for the Year 1930-31, 1932). Still, there was an absence of scientific survey of the land for revenue and preparing records. Thus, a traditional method called *Nazr Janch*[179] was adopted to assess the land and fix the amount of revenue levied on the peasants, which was always biased (Upadhyay, 2017, p. 88). Kazis and Thikadars, along with the existing land and housetax of Rupees six, started levying various taxes such as*KhetKhajana,*[180] *Bari*

[177]By confiscating the land holdings of erstwhile Kazis owing to their allegiance to the king ThutobNamgyal, who opposed to the settlement of Nepalese in Sikkim (Balikci, 2008, p. 49)

[178]Along with the British administrationthere started the circulation of Indian currency in Sikkim

[179]Method of measurement according to which a village headman, Mandal, used to climb on a tallest tree of the locality to make an assessment of the land and to fix the amount of revenue to be levy.

[180]Tax paid by a peasant for the cultivation of wet lands

Khajana[181], *Madati*,[182] and *Gaddi*.[183]Landlords also introduced some extraordinary taxes without the king's consent (Upadhyay, 2017, p. 101). Due to the British trade in Tibet, they required labourers for the carrying loads, and it was the responsibility of Kazis and Thikadars to manage such labourers. Thus, in addition to the already existing form of forced labour, the peasants were made to provide various forms of forced labour, becoming deeper with extensive and exploitative.Alongside the increase in the migration of Nepali settlers, there emerged numerous forms of tenants within the land held by the Kazis and Thikadars.

Furthermore, there can be noticed the emergence of numerous intermediaries within the village levels. Before the infiltration of Nepalese in the kingdom, the landlords appointed village headman called Tumyang or Tassa, primarily from among the Lepchas and Bhutias (Namgyal & Dolma, 1908, p. 24). With the introduction of a new lessee system, new leaseholders such as Kazis and Thikadars and the coming of Nepalese, a new term came to be used in vogue to donate the existing village headman called Mandals. Apart from this, there started the appointment of other intermediaries within the village level by the Kazis and Thikadars. These village agents were called Mukhtiyars, and Karbaris, not only from among the Lepchas and Bhutias but also from Nepali groups.These subordinate officers had different functions, but in general, they were required to collect taxes and manage labour services within their jurisdiction on behalf of the superior landlords. In return for their services, they enjoyed certain privileges and were exempted from paying taxes and manual labour to the landlords or the kingdom. They used to keep a certain percentage of the taxes collected from peasants as their salary, with due course of

[181]Tax paid by a peasant according to the area possessed for the cultivation of dry lands

[182]Tax paid by a peasant as support tax to the State.

[183]This tax was collected on behalf of the king

time, took a hereditary character and even leased out land to the tenants without the permission of the overload (Sikkim, Administration Report of the Sikkim State for the Year 1930-31, 1932). Consequently, the emergence and inclusion of more intermediaries within the already existing hierarchical society resultedinthe further exploitation of peasants in the kingdom.

Growth of Feudal Intermediaries

Reiterating, in the Sikkim kingdom, the king was regarded as the absolute owner of all the lands. He was at the top of the administration, and he appointed various officials to look after the regional administration. Land grants were given to these officials for their services, along with the judicial right and right to collect revenues. This eventually resulted in the rise of a class of Bhutia-Lepcha aristocrats with landed estates called Blon in Tibetan term. Later, with the advent of the British and Nepalese settlements in Sikkim, within the already existing aristocracy, added more with the lease of grants to the Nepali Thikadars. Also, there witnessed the development and addition of more intermediaries within the already existing village intermediaries leading to the further decentralisation in the king's power.Overall, the peasants fell under the exploitation done by the hierarchy of officials such as Kazis, Thikadars, Mukhtiyar, Mandals and Karbaris.

Kazis

While looking into how the Kazi landlords came into being, one can relate to the initial phase of the kingdom, when the first king Phuntshog Namgyal appointed the officials to look after the kingdom's administration. To reiterate, initially, the king appointed Kalons or Blonpo (council of ministers) and Dzongpons (district

governors) to assist him in administering the kingdom. Kalons or Blonpo belonged to the fourteen leading families descending from the first Tibetan settlers and rulers of Sikkim and Dzongpons from within the Lepchas clan. Later, these Kalons and Dzongpons, which were the Tibetan terms, were replaced by the word Kazi. They were collectively started being called the Kazis of the particular estates under their control, with the arrival of British and Nepalese settlers within the kingdom. Gradually, the title Kazi was used by Nepalese to address the descendants of the Kalons and Dzongpons and the Bhutias and Lepchas also used this term which later became a general official title.

Regarding the origin word Kazi employed for the aristocratic official in Sikkim, there are various opinions among the scholars. According to Waddell, the Kazi word is derived from the Arabic word "Qadi", which means a magistrate. The hypothesis he has given is linked to the title of officers of Muslim rulers in Bengal. He asserted that during the Muslim supremacy in Bengal, the Sikkim's king possession extended down to Titaliya and Siliguri in the Purnea district, here the king used to send his officers and landlords of his hill territories to administer justice. These Sikkimese officers were addressed as Kazis by the Muslim officers of Purnea and Dinajpur. Afterwards, the Sikkimese officers came to be known by the title of Kazi (Waddell, The Buddhist of Tibet and Lamaism, 1895, pp. 55-56). Sinha also supports this view of Waddell; however, he has added another hypothesis, according to which he linked the origin of the word Kazi with the neighbouring kingdom of Nepal. He asserted that the institution of the Kazi was introduced in Nepal during the rule of King BijayNarain Rai (1584-1609). Thus, due to the transactions between the feudal lords of Sikkim and the officers of Nepal led to the recognition of the term Kazi in Sikkim (Sinha, The Kazi Patricians in the Sikkimese Polity, 1975, p. 8).

The Kaziswere granted lands by the king for their services, making them regional landlords. They had the authority to look after the administration, judicial, and revenue collection within the granted lands (Edgar, Report on a Visit to Sikkim and the Thibetan Frontier in October, November and December in 1873, 1969, p. 62). Out of the revenue collected, they used to pay a specific fixed contribution to the king and kept the more significant portion for themselves. Kazis formed the pillars on which the king depended for the administration of the kingdom. With the status of landlords and being in close proximity with the ruling house, the Kazis even practised matrimonial alliance with various Tibetan and Bhutanese aristocrats' houses and the Sikkimese ruling family; as a result, they emerged as the patrician of the land (Sinha, The Kazi Patricians in the Sikkimese Polity, 1975, p. 7). Moreover, Kazis used to provide contingents to the king against the enemy, which led to the king becoming more dependent on them. Over time, the Kazis became even more influential than the ruler.

Besides being landed aristocracy and influential in a political sphere, the Kazis were also engaged in trade with Tibet and India, which were immensely helped by the then existing system of unpaid labour. They also derived their income from the fines imposed in crimes cases as these cases and amount rarely reached the king (Bell, 1992, p. 106). Whenever they visit villages, their presence was informed by beating kettle drums and handbells, which shows their power within the realm. With the arrival of the British and their proximity with them, the Kazis became even more influential. By promoting forced labours such as kalobhari, jharlangi, kuruwa and theki-bethi, the Kazis exploited the peasants extensively. Conditions of the peasants became miserable under the Kazis, that the many peasants unable to bear the suppression fled and took refuge in the neighbouring areas (Mckay, 2010, p. 33).

Hence, the power and influence of the Kazis became so extensive that the peasants within their estates showed allegiance to them rather than to the ruler. The advent of the British further enhanced their power, resulting in the decentralisation of the administration in the kingdom.

Thikadars

The word Thikadar means a contract system. The commencement of Thikadars in Sikkim can be traced back to the British influence and settlement of Nepalese in Sikkim. To reiterate, initially, the Thikadari contract was granted to the two Newar brothers in 1867 for twenty years in Sikkim (Basnet, 1974, p. 44). These new Thikadars, with commercial motives, started bringing in Nepalese settlers in their estates and made them clear the forest areas for cultivation. Since the Nepalese seemed to be champion in agriculture, these forest areas cleared for cultivation led to the boom in agriculture. They turned out to be an excellent profit for the Thikadars. Soon, Bhutia and Lepcha Kazis also followed the process of taking in Nepali cultivators. Later, the further encouragement of the British for the settlement of Nepalese and interest shown by the Kazis[184] for the migration resulted in the widespread settlement of Nepalese in Sikkim. Consequently, with the increase in the Nepali population, the Thikadari system had also deepened its roots in Sikkim.

Within the social hierarchy, Thikadars status was just below the Kazis. However, due to their proximity with the Kazis started acting like them and monopolised their estates. Forming a vital pillar of the feudal structure, they led a luxurious life at the cost of peasant exploitation. Thikadars primary responsibility was to collect revenue from their respective estates and deposit it to the State. Other than

[184]PD/9.5.041. Palace Royal Archive. Namgyal Institute of Tibetology. Gangtok, Sikkim.

that, additional duties were to provide unpaid labour supply to construct the roads and buildings and carry loads of the British officials and trade items. Thikadars misusing their position forced the peasants to perform unpaid labour services such as Kalobhari, Jharlangi and kuruwa for the British trade purpose. Although the British used to pay Thikadars wages for providing the labourer, they did not pay or paid a nominal amount to the peasants and made a considerable profit. In addition to such exploitation, the Thikadars started keeping unpaid servants called Chakhurey. They were compelled to provide labour services such as working in the fields and household works for Thikadars (Edgar, Report on a Visit to Sikkim and the Thibetan Frontier in October, November and December in 1873, 1969, p. 104). Thus, similar to the Kazis, Thikadars also became wealthy and influential in the kingdom.

Mukhtiyar

Next to the Thikadars in the social hierarchy was Mukhtiyar. The origin of Mukhtiyar in Sikkim started with the British occupation and Nepalese settlements. Mukhtiyar was appointed by both the State and landlords.[185]Kazis/Thikadars rarely visited the estate, which was in far-flung villages, so they appointed Mukhtiyars[186] because they were the local of the estates and had detailed knowledge about the settlers. Mukhtiyars acted as a link between the peasants and their landlords. Their duties were to make necessary arrangements in the villages during the king's visit, landlords and the British officials and maintain land records of the peasants of their respective estates. Similar to his superior landlords, Mukhtiyars also leased out his

[185]Appointment letter of a Mukhtiyar by Lal=ndlord Rai SahebDurgaShamsher Pradhan of Rhenock, East Sikkim. Document housed in RamgauriSangrahalaya. Private Archive. Rhenock, East Sikkim

[186]There was absence ofMukhtiyar officials in those estates proximity to the capital of the kingdom. The reason behind this might be that the landlords apart from having their landed estates, also had residential house in the capital and it was not necessary for them to appoint official as they might have administered themselves.

land to the landless cultivators, who were extensively exploited in return. The peasants were required to provide free labour services; during the festive time, they even had to visit the Mukhtiyar's house with gifts, and every household was expected to be present (Upadhyay, 2017, p. 104). Thus, it can be asserted that being a key official of Kazis and Thikadars, the Mukhtiyar, too, had a very comfortable life in the kingdom.

Mandals

Since the beginning, the Bhutia-Lepcha landlords of Sikkim appointed village headman primarily from Bhutia-Lepcha to assist them in the village's administration under their jurisdiction. A native term such as Tumyang or Tassa was used to denote these villages headman (Namgyal & Dolma, 1908, p. 24). With the rise of the Thikadari system and the coming of Nepalese, a new term called Mandalscame to be used in vogue to denote the existing village headman. The office of Mandal was hereditary; in the event of the Mandal dying without an heir, Youmi[187] could act as a substitute until the householders choose one of the members from the dead Mandal's clan to become a new Mandal. After choosing the new Mandal, the name is submitted to the Kazi. For two years, the candidate will have to be in office temporarily. Only after he had shown himself to be satisfactory he will be confirmed as the Mandal by the king and Kazi (Geoffrey, 2005, p. 130).

Mandals used to keep assistant to help him in the village administration and was called Gyapon.Most of the administrative hard works in the village were Gyapon's responsibility. He does the actual collection of taxes, summoning peasants for the ceremonies and constructing bridges, roads repairing, carrying loads and

[187]Youmi was selected from among the former Gyapon, they had no privileges as such.

collecting grains from the peasants for the communal ceremonies and acts to prevent crimes and quarrelling. Hence, a great deal of Gyapon's time was spent conducting these works on behalf of the Mandal, and consequently, their work and cultivation may have been neglected. It was the duty of each household, in turn, to work as Gyapon for three years, which was a kind of arduous and unrewarding work (Pedro, 1959, p. 60).

Mandal was considered as the landlord of the village and the villagers as his tenants. He held the land from the king, Kazis and Thikadars. Functions of Mandal included maintenance of law and order and the collectionof taxes from the village under his jurisdiction. If a peasant wanted to transfer land outside their family, they had to obtain the consent of a Mandal, and for land to be transferred to a stranger from outside the village also required the permission of Mandal. The latter, in turn, confirm with the higher authority. Mandal used to be slightly more prosperous than his tenants, and it was his responsibility to entertain the king and superior landlords during their visits to the villages. As a headman of the village, Mandal enjoyed the privileges of free labour services from the peasants (Balikci, 2008, p. 51).[188] Moreover, the Mandals, due to their proximity with the superior landlords, also exploited the peasants in the same manner as the superior landlords. During the special occasion in the palace, the Mandals collected gifts from the peasants would further present to the superior landlords after keeping a portion out of the collected gifts. Again, those gifts were deducted by the Kazis and Mukhtiyars, leaving hardly twenty-five per cent for the palace. Besides, the peasants were also required to gift

[188]Mandals had right to the four days of free labour services from the peasants, however a careful tally was not maintained and Mandal used free labour more than what was authorized.

rice, maize, butter, curd, wine and meats to the Mandals annually (Upadhyay, 2017, p. 108).

Like any other feudal society, the peasants in Sikkim too had to depend on Mandals for debts to fulfil the social obligations such as marriage, death, sickness. Mandals used to levy a high-interest rate, which unable to return by the peasants, fell into the debt-bondage. Thus, considering the power of Mandals at the village level, it can be assumed that the Mandals entitled themselves as landlords among the peasants. They were directly responsible for the exploitation of the peasants.

Karbari

On the recommendation of Mandals, the Kazis and Thikadars used to appoint Karbari to act as a dealer between the peasants and the higher authority.[189] The duty of Karbari was to deliver messages of higher authority to the peasants regarding the schedule of tax payments and to pre-inform them about the visit of landlords or other officers of the palace to their respective villages. Karbaris, in return for their services, were exempted from performing any sort of unpaid labour services. Karbaris, too being the nucleus of feudal set-up, harassed the peasants with the demand of free labour and gifts.

Thus, it can be assumed that in Sikkim, like in any other feudal society, there existed the chain of intermediaries. There was no limit in the exploitation of peasants, be it from the superior landlords such as Kazis and Thikadars to their subordinated such as Mandals and Karbaris. Thus, the already miserable condition of the peasants became more depressed within this chain of feudal command.

[189]Appointment letter of a Karbari by Rai SahebDurgaSumsherPradahn of Rhenock. Document housed in Ram Gauri Sangrahalaya. Private Archive. Rhenock. East Sikkim

Types of Tenancy System

The land distribution pattern ofSikkim, in which the landlords and religious institutions controlled the lands, did not cultivate the land themselves and let out the land to the cultivators, who then became the tenant on terms defined by the contract or by custom. Hence, the various types of tenancy emerged, in which tenants were at the mercy of the landlords, characterised by the illicit extractions and eviction of tenants without any valid reasons.The various types of tenancy both before and after the appearance of Nepalese is as follows:

Landholding Tenants

This type of tenants was found in the entire kingdom's land; Private estates, monasteries and Kazi's land. Tenants held land hereditarily and had control over it in terms of usufruct rights only (Edgar, Report on a Visit to Sikkim and the Thibetan Frontier in October, November and December in 1873, 1969, p. 62). They cannot sell the land itself but had the right to lease the use of land to others. No one but only the king had the power to eject them from land. These landholding tenants were required to pay land tax and house tax, and the labour services to the State and respective landlords, sometimes to the village headman. Besides, they were compelled to do forced labour by the landlords for transporting goods and people from one place to another. This corvee tax was based on the individual family, not on a person, which means one member from each family. It seems that these landholding tenants were tied to land rather than the lord, and if the lord changes, they remained on the same land and comes under the authority of a lord (Namgyal H. C., 1966, p. 48). However, they being tied to land does not project it to be rigid because there has been an instance in which a tenant from a different village has acquired permission to settle in

a new village provided with the permission of the village headman and the royal court (Pedro, 1959, p. 55).

While analysing its probable that these landholding tenants had the rights to make complaints to the king against the exploitation done by the landlords and intermediaries (Balikci, 2008, p. 51).[190] However, owing to the geographically remote kingdom, they had to travel a long way from their village to the palace. Therefore, very few of such grievances had made their way to the king's table. The native people used the term Singpo to denote these landholding tenants. However, later with the settlement of Nepalese, singpos started to be referred to as bustiwallas or raitis in Nepali term. Whereas, due to their similarity with the tax-payer *Kharalpa* serf found in Tibet and Tibetan influence on the Sikkim kingdom in many respects, it will be acceptable to use the same term concerning the landholding tenants.

Chakhureys and Pakhureys

Unlike the landholding tenants, the Chakureys and Pakhureysdid not hold lands and were landless peasants. Pakhureysexisted in the monastery estates and used to do manual labour for the monastery and landlords as and when required. Landholding tenants within monastery estates also hired Pakhureys since they had an obligation to provide unpaid labour services; it was an extra burden. Thus, to help them in agricultural works, household works, and labour services, they hired Pakhureys to substitute. In return, Pakhureys were provided food and shelter by the monastery and landholding tenants. Sometimes, they were even granted a small plot

[190]The villagers of Thingchim, North Sikkim filed complaint against KungaGyalsten a monk of Phodong monastery and the agent of monastery, who abused his rights to free labour and falsified the number of houses under his jurisdiction in order to pocket some of the house tax which should normally have been handed over to the King. Thingchim villagers were forced by agent to work on his personal fields. (Balikci, 2008, p. 51)

of area and production of which was considered Pakhurey's personal property (Sikkim, Report of the Committee of Land Reform, 1975, pp. 13-14).

Likewise, later Thikadars and landholding tenants other than monastery also started keeping unpaid servants called Chakhurey. They were required to provide labour services such as working in the fields and household works for Thikadars and tenants. Like the Pakhureys, they also acted as a substitute on behalf of tenants for labour services and received food and a small portion of land (Edgar, Report on a Visit to Sikkim and the Thibetan Frontier in October, November and December in 1873, 1969, p. 104). They both were labourers and porters who belonged to the Nepali community.

Adhiadars or Adhiya

This system was an equal partnership; a labourer enters into a contract with the landowners. A labourer worked on the landowner's land and was required to give fifty per cent of the harvest after the seed required for the following year's crop have been set aside. A labourerwas also required to give fifty per cent of paddy straw gathered during the harvest for cattle. A contract was given only to those who accept his total subordination to the landlord. Further, they were required to take permission of the landlord for tilling up of land and for raising the next crop andin case of crop failure, there was no remission of the landlord's share. Possibly in most cases, adhiadars were also allowed to raise subsidiary crops. Landholding tenants could also enter into a contract with an adhiadar if he had a large extent of lands (Sikkim, Report of the Committee of Land Reform, 1975, pp. 13-14).

Adhiya system seems to be convenient for the landowners who held a large extent of land. This contract made it easier for the landowners to hand over all the responsibilities on a fifty-fifty contract basis to a trusted cultivator who will take care of everything, from hiring and looking after the harvest to drying and packing the final products (Balikci, 2008, p. 176). Nevertheless, basic principles universally accepted in any tenancy practices such as fixity of tenure, fair rent and transfer of rights were not followed. Therefore, the adhiayar were not getting adequate returns from their inputs and labour. Thus, in the absence of specific rules, they suffered at the hands of the landowners.

Kutdar/Kut/ Koot

It is believed that this form of tenancy was adopted with the settlement of Nepalese in Sikkim (Balikci, 2008, p. 50).[191] This system varies from village to village and landlord to landlord. According to this system, a specific amount of harvest is pre-fixedbefore the contract is settled, to be paid by the kutdar every year, regardless of fluctuation in production orcrop failure; in return, kutdar were allowed to live on the landowner's land (Subba, 1988, p. 325). Mainly his contract is made between the landholding tenants and kutdars. Kutdars were also required to pay tribute as gifts to the landlords and the king in milk and its products, meat, eggs, fruits, and grains. This system was much more frequent as it was considered a better deal for the landowners as his share is ensured but presented more risks for the kutdars. Also, there were no definite lease terms and was made verbally, so the

[191]AnnaBalikci, in the book mentioned that according to the BarmoikKazi the Koot system was in vogue in Sikkim from the very beginning when terraced rice fields were started which coincide with the settlement of the first Nepalese tenants in the South-western region of Sikkim in the 1870s. (Sikkim State Archives, File No. 37. Land Revenue. Complaints of raiyots of Sikkim. Dated 21/1/1911)

agreements could be and were often arbitrarily determined by the landowner anytime at his will.

Consequently, various forms of tenancy existed in Sikkim, which can be categorised into two classes; tenants with the landholdings and tenants without permanent landholdings. Tenants with no permanent landholdings could be classed as sub-tenants. Regarding the dealing and functioning of tenancy, they differed from one another. However, they all were in some way, or the other was at the mercy of the landlords and was subjected to coercive exploitation and the domination of landlords. Additional, in the absence of specific written rules for the tenancy, the tillers suffered in the hands of the landlords.

Types of Forced Labour

The peasants of Sikkim, along with the payment of taxes, were also subject to provide the forced labour or unpaid services to the kingdom, landlords and multiple layers of intermediaries. The various kinds of forced labour such as Kalobhari, Jharlangi, Kuruwa, and Theki-bethi were realised from the tenants and sub-tenants by the feudal lords are as follows:

Kalobhari

Kalobhari is a Nepali word literary meaning of which is black load and considered one of the most repressive labour taxes of all. Regarding the origin of Kalobhari, it can be assumed that it started with the settlement of Nepalese in Sikkim and the beginning of the British trade in Tibet.The British used to send several items to Tibet, including arms and ammunitions. Since most of the time, the path between Tibet and Sikkim was frozen with snow, and for the protection of the consignment

from rain and snow, it was wrapped in cardboard and put inside gunny bags bedaubed with tar. In all possibilities, the black colour of tar applied to seal the bag gave the consignment its local name Kalobhari or black load (Gaunley, 2002, p. 7). The British used to direct the Kazis and Thikadars to arrange labourers to carry these loads, which in turn asked the village officials, mandals and karbaris for the supply of porters from their villages.Thus, peasants were sent forcefully to provide this manual labour service. After the delivery of British goods, the bags were filled with other items that were to be brought to Sikkim on their way back (Rajalim, 1993, p. 10). Sometimes, the load would come in a large quantity, and the peasants of more than one village were required to carry them.

The peasants from the entire kingdom were compelled for these labour services, except north Sikkim. This must be probably that the north Sikkim was considered a reserved area within the kingdom.[192] The British contracted with the Kazis and Thikadarsto provide labourers for Kalobhari and fixed the porter rate for Rupees two per day. Apparently, Kazis and Thikadar used to pay only six Annas per day to the labourer keeping all other amounts they obtained from the British or sometimes not paying (Subba J. R., 2008, pp. 64-65). Consequently, it cannot be wrong to assert that out of the institution of Kalobhari, the Kazis and Thikadars earned a good profit and served as the best apparatus of peasant exploitation and for their miserable condition.

All the peasants belonging to different ethnic communities were subjected to Kalobhari; no specific ethnic community was intentionally targeted. The Kazis and

[192]However according to Balikci the peasants of Thingchim, Namok and Seyam was not entirely free from the clutches of forced labour. Peasants to get rid of exploitation from Muktiyar of Phodong Monastery had made a written complaint to the Durbar (Balikci, 2008, p. 50).

Thikadar used to execute Kalobhari in the name of durbar, and for them, only profit mattered, not the community to which peasant belonged. Demographic was the vital factor for the greater involvement of the Nepalese peasants in the Kalobhari.

Jharlangi

The main reason behind the British cordial relation with the Sikkim kingdom was the Tibetan trade. Sikkim provided an easy and shortest route to the Tibetan plateau. After securing easy access to Tibet via Sikkim, the British started to build roads and trade routes to Tibet. However, for the construction of roads and routes and for timely reparation, they needed labourers, and for this, they ordered the Sikkimese Kazis, Thikadars and Mukhtiyars to provide the same. Greedy as they were, the feudal lords asked their mandals to supply labour from the villages. The British provided wages for the labourers to the local feudal lords, but presumably, they appropriated the money themselves and forced the peasants to work without any wages (Gaunley, 2002, p. 18). This kind of forced labour services done by the peasant is known as Jharlangi in Nepali term. For the Jharlangi labour, the peasants were required to leave their home at least for a couple of weeks, and they have to arrange warm clothing and food and other necessary items for themselves. If the peasants refused to render Jharlangi, they were severely punished. Instead, greedy landlords to pocket more profit least bothered with the miserable conditions of the peasants and were kept only few peasants despite the double the number of men actually required to do that particular work (Basnet, 1974, p. 74).

Another objective of the Jharlangi system was that the labourers were also utilised for carrying beddings and luggage of government officials and English sahib during their transfers. Apart from this, Kazis and Thikadars sometimes called the

peasants to render free Jharlangiservice for their private construction and carryan item for their children who used to study in Darjeeling and Kalimpong (Gaunley, 2002, p. 18). While analysing, it can be asserted that the Jharlangi system was practised in the kingdom long before the opening of the British trade in Tibet, as the traditional Tibetan "free porterage" system called ula.[193] Jharlangi and ula were similar, but only the terms differed. It would appear that Nepalese were under the Jharlangi while the Bhutia-Lepcha obligations were those imposed under the ula system (Rose, Modernizing a Traditional Administrative System: Sikkim 1890-1973, 1978, p. 216). Lastly, it is interesting to note that the peasants at the same time were required to provide both Jharlangi and Kalobhari. Thus, due to this burden of free labour services, peasants' hiredsub-tenants called Pakhureysand Chakhureysto substitute labour on their behalf.

Theki-bethi

Another form of unpaid labour services existed during the feudal Sikkim. Compared to the above mentioned forced labour, this type is different as it is concerned with agriculture, and during cultivation, the peasants were required to provide free labour services. Kazis and Thikadars used to appoint many subordinate officials called Mukhtiyar, Mandals and Karbaris within the village levels. They were the trusted men of the Kazis and Thikadars and helped in the collection of taxes on their behalf. These officials, as middle men exploited the peasants to the fullest. During festive occasions, the peasants were supposed to welcome village officials

[193]This service was used in moving both people and goods from village to village by the unpaid labour. The yearly trip of the king to Chumbi was another occasion of this service (Pedro, 1959, p. 190)

with gifts packed in a particular receptacle called Theki.[194] The Theki was filled with meat, curd, rice, local beer (chang) and other items. Besides the festive occasion, on the king's birthdays, the birth of princes, and marriages, these village officials would ask the peasants for such gifts in a Theki (Tran, 2012, p. 11).

Along with the Theki offer, the peasants were also required to work in the field of the Mandals and the Kazi-Thikadars whenever they required. This offering of free labour was known as Bethi, which included ploughing, terracing of lands and other field works. The noteworthy feature of this form of labour was that even women were involved in this. Thus, these two free labour services clubbed together is called Theki-Bethi.

Kuruwa

Similarly, peasants were supposed to provide another type of manual services known as Kuruwa, which literally means a long wait. While rendering the Kalobhari services, the peasants had to wait for several days for cargoes to arrive due to the road condition and natural issues. During this wait, they had to survive on their resources. Thus, the long wait is known as Kuruwa, which was not a tax by itself, but indirectly increased the peasants' burden of little means. Similar to the Jharlangi and Kalobhari, the process of serving as a Kuruwa was the same. The British used to make a contract with the Kazis and Thikadars for the supply of the porters and paid them handsomely (Tran, 2012, p. 11).

While examining the prevalence and practice of forced labour in Sikkim, it can be said that before the arrival of the British, unpaid labour services existed, and

[194]Theki is a Nepali term, it is a wooden utensil used by the peasants to keep and preserve curd

peasants were compelled for it. However, it was not so widespread and tougher. With the coming of the British and their trade relation in Tibet, the system of forced labour became more deep-rooted, widespread and hardier.The condition of the peasants became miserable due to the uncertainty of demands for taxes and production and, more particularly, for forced labour by the king, landlords and hierarchy of intermediaries. The existence of a multitier overlord system whereby each peasant was subject to a hierarchy of authorities facilitated the proliferation of multiple forms of taxation, in which authorities at any level extract taxes, produce and labour out of their subjects. The majority of taxes collected were not related to the agricultural output from the land itself but were merely innovation schemes adopted by the authorities to exploit the peasants.

Consequently, an evaluation of the Sikkim kingdom shows that although the central government held by the king existed at the regional level, the situation was highly decentralised, with the local authority having immense power. The real power seems to rest in the hands of Sikkimese aristocrats standing behind the king. In due course of time, the sovereign privileges of the Namgyal rulers and his power to implement his decisions were severely withered. The result was progressive decentralisation of the administration. Furthermore, a continuous struggle for power and influence among the Kazis and the royal family and a lack of determination and unity led to the interference of external power in Sikkim, the British. Lastly, the coming of the British resulted in the further deepening of the feudal system in Sikkim, with the introduction of new agrarian policy, landlords and many more free labour services.

CHAPTER SIX

LOCATING SIKKIM'S FEUDALISM WITHIN THE BROADER FEUDAL NARRATIVES

The emergence of feudalism in Sikkim cannot be perceived as precipitous, but rather as a gradual process. As already mentioned in the previous chapters, before the establishment of the Namgyal kingdom, there existed a primitive communal mode of production in Sikkim. It was only after the formation of the Namgyal kingdom, a feudal system commenced in Sikkim. Keeping this in view, it turns out to be pertinent to builda theory regarding the emergence of the feudal system in Sikkim and its practices locating within the broader feudal narratives.

Sikkim has witnessed the various Tibetan migrations, which occurred at different times. The first wave of Tibetan migration appeared when missionary monks with the purpose of religious propagation and herdsmen in search of pasture came down to the northern parts of Sikkim (Sinha, 1975, p. 6). Later, a significant wave of Tibetan migration occurred when KhyeBhumsa, along with his followers, entered Sikkim and wasfollowed by a blood-brother pact between himself and Teg Khon teg, a Lepcha chief. This resulted in the settlement of Tibetans in Sikkim.Gradually clans of Khye Bhumsa and Teg Khon teg took control of the lands and settlement resulted in a pattern of small independent territories under the clan leaders' administration. Since then, Tibetans have been living in Sikkim; indeed, the first king Phuntshog Namgyal was living as a mere farmer (Namgyal & Dolma, 1908, p. 15). Regardless of the settlement of the Tibetans, it can be seen that there were no substantial changes in

the socio-economic life of the native people; in fact, there was continuity of the primitive communal mode of production in Sikkim.

It was only during the first half of the seventeenth century with the coming of the three Tibetan monks who, due to the religio-political conflicts in Tibet, fled to Sikkim intending to start a new kingship system in Sikkim on the Tibetan model and to save their sect from extinction. This eventually resulted in the coronation of Phuntshog Namgyal as the first ruler of Sikkim and helped to start an administration changing the socio-economic life of the native people into a feudal mode of production (Temple, 1887). However, even after Phuntshog Namgyalwasproclaimed the first king of Sikkim, it was not an easy task for him to take control of the region, as there existed numerous petty clan chiefs ruling independently over their respective territories. So he was involved in the subduing of independent chieftains of the region within his control. This created a sort of insecurity among the people, more importantly among the clan chiefs. Therefore, on one hand, out of fear of losing their power and influence within their respective territories, the clan chiefs choose to take the tutelage of Phuntshog Namgyal and accepted him as their king. On the other hand, Phuntshog Namgyal needed an alliance or support to administer or rule over his newly formed kingdom, which he could obtain from the native clan chiefs. Due to this very feeling of insecurity of native clans and at the same time corporation needed to run the administration of newly formed kingdom resulted in the signing of "*Lho-Mon-Tsong Sum*" agreement (Mullard, 2011). According to this agreement, the petty clan chiefs took an oath of allegiance to Phuntshog Namgyal. These clan chiefs were classified as ministers or regional heads acting under the rule of the Namgyal dynasty, hence reducing them to the status of feudatories. The signing of this agreement resulted in the integration of all ethnic communities in the region into a single

Namgyalrule and showed the regional importance of local clan chiefs, which gradually led to the beginning of the feudal mode of production in Sikkim.

Thus, considering the circumstancesin Sikkim, it will be rational to compare with the theory put forward by Henry Pirenne on the origin of feudalism in Europe, where he asserted that feudalism evolved in Europe due to the Islamic expansion in the Carolingian age but not due to the German invasion. The German invasion, far from destroying the Mediterranean antiquity, settled themselves there as he quotes, "the essential character of "Romania" remained the Mediterranean" (Pirenne, 2001). The Germans settled in the country based on hospitality rules; their invasion did not result in any complete upheaval. There was neither the redistribution of soil nor the introduction of new agriculture methods; instead, the entire Roman tenure system survived.Similarly, in Sikkim the earlier wave of migration of Tibetans did not bring any noticeable changes, there was neither the introduction of a new agricultural method nor the substantial change in the land distribution pattern the existing primitive communal mode continued even after the settlement of the Tibetans. Only after the coronation of Phuntshog Namgyal by the three Tibetan monks did noticeable changes gradually begin to occur in Sikkim, which was heading towards the period of feudalism.

Moreover, with the formation of the Namgyal dynasty trends of insecurity came tothe surface among the petty clan chiefs and at the same time, there was a need for an hour of support to run the administration. This led to the acceptance of Phuntshog Namgyal as their tutelage by clan chiefs on one hand and making them as regional head Phuntshog was successful on the other. As a consequence, these feelings of insecurity and dependence led to the network of dependenceties in society

from top to bottom different from the kinship ties. This could be related to the idea of Marc Blochon European feudalism, where he opined that the disintegration of state power due to the invasion followed by the economic collapse led to the increase in the tendency among people in society to look for protection and support; this eventually resulted in ties of dependency. Thus, there was a shift in social organisation, which was vertical. This became so deeply rooted that it came to be the defining characteristic of the feudal system during the middle ages in Europe (Bloch, 2015).

Furthermore, to legitimise the rule of the newly formed Namgyal dynasty, the king took the help of the Buddhist religion and acted as the protector and benefactor of monks, which eventually resulted in the establishment of various Buddhist monasteries and land grants to them.These monasteries were given judicial and administrative powers within the granted lands along with the right to collect rents and labour services. In addition,these religious institutions enjoying the donated landwere exempted from rents or labour services due to the king and were only required to maintain contingents as needed by the king.Hence, in due course of time, they started to emerge as landed barons, as some of them shedding their priestly duties gave more attention to the secular functions, resulting in the diminishing the power of rulers and decentralisation of power.Similar characteristics of land grants to religious institutions in Sikkim can be found in India.Regarding the origin of feudalism in India R.S Sharma opined that land grants made to the Brahman along with the administrative and judicial rights became widespread in the Gupta period which paved the way for the rise of Brahman feudatories, who executed administrative duties independently (Sharma, 2013). Similarly, D.N.Jha in connection with the process of state formation in early medieval Chamba asserted that the kings took the help of Brahmanical religion to legitimise the rule of the newly established

state, which resulted in the granting of lands to the Brahmanas along with the fiscal, administrative, and judicial rights and with the exemption of interference from royal officials (Jha, 2016).

Likewise, landgrants to religious institutions can be found in medieval Europe. The use of the word 'benefit' in European feudalism meant land grants to nobles, bishops, or monasteries, along withjudicial and administrative powers similar to the lay landlords (Bloch, 2015).Accordingly, it becomes clear that the similar characteristics of the land grants to the religious institution along with the judicial and administrative rights existed not only in Sikkim but also both in Europe and the Indian feudalism.

Apart from the land grants to the religious institutions, in Sikkim similar to the European and Indian feudalism, there began secular land grants to the individuals. The king adopted a policy of granting lands to his officials in return for the various services rendered. These officials were given the authority to maintain law and order and collectrevenues within the given land. Although they did not have proprietary rights over the granted lands, in due course of time, the tendency grew among the landlords to keep the lands among their families hereditarily and even exercised complete control over their jurisdictions. Thus, the widespread practice of land grants along with administrative and judicial rights paved the way for the rise of feudatories called Kazis and Thikadars in Sikkim. During this time, the Sikkim kingdom had no regular military force, so landlords were required to maintain contingents and provide men from their jurisdictions to the king. As a result, the king became dependent on landlords in terms of administration and economics. The practice of supplying troops by lay landlords and monasteries made the king more dependent, which resulted in

the weakening of the central authority.Therefore,this dependence of the Sikkim king was somewhat similar to the Indian context of dependence of the centre on the feudatories according to Sharma's understanding (Sharma, 2013).

Nevertheless, the granting of land as compared to Europe is slightly different; here, the land is granted as a salary to the officer of an absolute ruler who demands general obedience and who can resume the land at will, which are close parallels to the precise type of land grants found in India. While in Europe the grants of land are part of personal contractual relations of vassalage. Rather than Europe, the closest similarity relating to the land grants and political system of Sikkim can be found in India. The relationship between the kingand thelandlords in Sikkim was not contractual but based on hereditary.

Furthermore, these Landlords; Kazis and Thikadars, started appointing subordinates within the village level. These village subordinates were called Mandals, Mukhtiyars, and Karbaris, their responsibilities were the revenue collection and managing labour services within their jurisdiction on the behalf of the superior landlords. In return for their services, they were exempted from taxes and labour services to the landlords or the king. Additionally, these subordinates used to keep a certain percentage of the taxes collected from peasants as their salary, and in due course of time, they took a hereditary character and even leased out land to the tenants. Consequently, the emergence and inclusion of subordinates within the already existing ranked society resulted in a numerous layer of intermediaries in the kingdom, which eventually led to the parcellization and localization of authority down to the level of village lords in combination with economic exploitation of the peasantry in Sikkim.Hence, while examining the above statement, it is noticeable that

the development of a hierarchy of landed intermediaries in Sikkim showed a feature of feudalism from below, as propounded in the work of D.D Kosambi(Kosambi, 2014). Wherein, he asserted that the development of a class of intermediaries within a village level between the state and peasantry is feudalism from below. This class were involved in the collection of taxes who passed on a portion to the feudal hierarchy, in contrast, to direct collection by a royal agent. The existence of feudal land tenure and intermediaries between the stateand the kings was the sole reason for the exploitation of peasants (Kosambi, 2014).

Next, while examining the condition of the peasantry in Sikkim, one can notice the essence of feudalism. In general, concerning theexistence of various labour services andtaxes, the peasants of Sikkim showed similar traitsto the Indian and European feudalism. The worse condition of peasants can be seen due to the presence of smaller nobles and intermediaries which led to the increasing subjection and exploitation of the peasantry (Sharma, 2013). The peasants were needed to pay taxes to the hierarchy of intermediaries, who also imposed forced labour upon them, which led to a decline in independent peasants paying the land tax directly to the King.Nonetheless, unlike the European and Indian system, serfdom did not exist in Sikkim, it appears that the peasants were not tied to the land, a peasant may settle down on and cultivate any unoccupied land, and only the king had the right to turn him out at any time and there existed a kind of tenant-right (Edgar, Report on a Visit to Sikkim and the Thibetan Frontier in October, November and December in 1873, 1969, p. 62). The Sikkimpeasants can be categorised into land-holding peasants similar to the kharal-pa peasants of Tibet. These landholding peasants had the tenant rights to make complaints to the king against the exploitation done by the landlords and intermediaries. However, lords often tend to use their influence and resources

over the king’s decision in such cases (Glodstein, 1971, pp. 522-23). Therefore, it clearly shows the superior rights of the lords over therights of the serfs and that the lords abused their power by collecting too high taxes, personal use of labour services and extracting presents, therefore, in this sense it can be observed that the peasants of Sikkim, in contrast to the serfdom, were free, as the peasants possessed land from the king who had absolute authority over the land and feudal lords could not tie the peasants to the land or evict them.

However, the absence of serfdom does not mean that the peasants in Sikkim were free from servility. They were subjected to various forms of labour services such as kalobhari, jharlangi, kuruwa and theki-bethi apart from the payments of numerous taxes. To fulfil these obligations, the peasants used to hire labour on their behalf. These hired labourers were landless peasants called chakhurey and pakhurey found throughoutthe kingdom. They not only used to carry out the labour obligations on behalf of landholding peasantsbut also worked for the landlords and intermediaries in return for food and shelter and sometimes for small plots of land. These landless peasants found in Sikkim can be compared with the dud-chung serfs ofTibet, who were required to provide only human corvee labour for cultivation on the lord's demesne land and also with the draps serfs found in Bhutan, who entirely worked for landlords in return for food and clothing.

In conclusion, while interpreting the formations of feudalism in Sikkim, it can be noticed that with the establishment of the Namgyal dynasty with an effort of Tibetan monks, there began a political system greatly influenced by the Tibetan Lamaist pattern. In the land where there was an absence of any kind of gradation and ranking in society which was primitive began a superimposition of a Tibetan type

feudal society with a monarch at the top acting both as secular as well as religious head on the kingdom. Followed by the granting of lands resulted in the emergence of a landed aristocracy, which indicated a substantial shift in the organisation of society from kinship ties to the hierarchical society from top to bottom. This concept could be relatable to the theory put forward by Perry Anderson where he asserts that feudalism in Europe resulted from the catastrophic convergent collapse of the slave mode of production and Germanic primitive mode of production (Anderson, 2013). Likewise, in Sikkim, with the arrival of Tibetans, they brought the Tibetan feudal system, which collapsed with the primitive system of native people and resulted in the domination of the feudal mode of production. Regarding the characteristics of the feudal system in Sikkim, in general, one can observe the similar features of both Indian and European feudalism such as unpaid manual labour services, taxes, land grants to a religious institution, etc. But, more specifically, concerning the features of peasants could be more relatable with Tibet, in terms of tenant rights and presence of sub status of peasants.

Lastly, it becomes pertinent to note that feudalism in Sikkim was emerged from the primitive communal mode of production. Sikkim witnessed advances in the field of agriculture such as the transition from the shifting to terrace cultivation with the use of ploughs unfamiliar before, leadingto an increase in agricultural surplus. Moreover, the feudal system revealed more advancesthan the primitive system, as it enhanced agricultural surplus by bringing more land under cultivation by the reclamation and conversion of uncultivated land.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSION

The history of Sikkim spanning from 1642 to 1890, can be recognised as a phase in a transition in the social formation, identified by the formation of the monarchy with the change in socio-economic, political and cultural conditions, ultimately resulting ina system based on the feudal mode of production.

As has been discussed in the preceding chapters, it can be noticed that before the establishment of Sikkim as a kingdom, a primitive communal mode of production prevailed among the native inhabitants. Based on a loose type of tribal organisation with the absence of ranking and gradation, except for those of seniors among the native people. The country was divided into numerous groups of clans with no group powerful enough to hold mastery over the rest. There was the absence of machinery for making new laws, thus were primitive and unsuited to a progressive society. The native inhabitants lived as free rulers of vast forests, were a race of hunters and gatherers living on such animals they could kill, and wild plants of which they had considerable knowledge.

In addition to being hunters and gatherers, the natives also engaged in farming, through the practice of shifting cultivation, the availability of plentiful forest provided sufficient scope for such a simple economic formation to maintain, however, they did not indulge in extensive cultivation, as the distribution of the products was based on needs. As shifting cultivation required movement from one place to another, as a consequence, they failed to form a permanent village.Additionally, private ownership of land was unknown; clan chiefs used to determine which part of the

common field to be used for cultivation and would appropriate the fields collectively.This periodic redistribution of land prevented great disparities of wealth among clans and families, although the herds were private property.

While talking about a change in the socio-economic situations among the inhabitants there wasa consensus in most of the writing on the history of Sikkim, that due to the migration of Tibetans there came a change. But, that was not entirely appropriate; Sikkim has witnessed various migrations of the Tibetans, which occurred at different times. Due to the earlier migration of Tibetans, Sikkim did not witness any drastic changes; instead, there was continuity of the primitive communal mode of production in Sikkim. It was only with the arrival of Tibetan religious monks during the mid-seventeenth century, which was followed by the installation of Phuntshog Namgyalas the first king of Sikkim, that a change in this rudimentary socio-economic system of native inhabitants in Sikkim came.

After the coronations of Phuntshog Namgyal as the first ruler of Sikkim, he established a political system based on the dual system of religious and secular, in which the King acted as head of both religious and political administration. In this dual system, any position in the administration was shared between the lay and the monk, which summoned the traditional association between the royal, clergy, and landed aristocracy, who dominated the political field in Sikkim. King, with the council of aristocrats in line with the Tibetan political system, exercised authority over the villagers. The aristocrats were a possessing class with estates granted by King, clearly demarcated from the rest of the population. There was the division of a population into two groups of *g.yog* (servant) and *blon* (ministers), based on the comprehensive Tibetan concept of parallel descent, which indicated a substantial shift

in the organisation of Sikkimese society from minor chiefdom to a proto-state based on the Tibetan model of the political hierarchy.

Then there was a substantial change in the landholding system. King was regarded as the ultimate owner of the land.Land grants policy was adopted by the King in return for the services to aristocrats and religious establishments; as a result, the land was no longer allocated by clans and was distributed directly to individuals. The land became the most important means of production, power, and wealth, and the social structure was based on the land system. Subsequently, this led to the emergence of hereditary aristocracy and class differences in the society different from the ties based on kinship. The king granted the aristocrats land for which they were responsible for the collection of taxes and maintenance of administration in their respective regions. Also, they had to provide military obligations whenever the king demanded. This directed towards the introduction of a system similar to feudal bondage in which the vassal owed allegiance and military obligation to an overlord in return for land grants. Initially, the system of granting land to aristocrats was based on ethnic lines, with the Tibeto-Sikkimese at the top. However, later land grants were given to other ethnic communities appointing them as regional landlords. The land system reveals that the various services rendered to the king were paid through land grants and rights over land indicate social duties and essential social groups. Eventually, this led to the emergence of a hereditary aristocracy with amassed wealth composed of a permanent council that exercised dominating power in the tribe.

Furthermore, the aristocrats, monks, and individuals most closely in contact with the king revealed the most advanced social and economic structures and the departure from traditional ways of life. They were emerging as nobility, maintained

by the produce of lands granted to them, and formed the nucleus for permanent class division and institutionalised coercive authority within the primitive formation. As a result, both economically and politically, there began an acceleration of social differentiation and the disintegration of the primitive communal mode of production and the domination of the feudal mode of production in Sikkim.

Moreover, Sikkim witnessed the strong essence of the feudal system, when the power of the king soon foundered, amidst dynastic civil war, external invasions and growing regionalism of the aristocrats.Unexpected external attacks from Nepal and Bhutan pulverised the centralised hold over the aristocrats. Since, due to the absence of a regular army, the king depended on the aristocrats, which made his power weak. The various factions of aristocrats used this opportunity and started intriguing against the king for their vested interests. Finally, it can be assumed that the entrenchments of landlords in the regions through the nascent fief system and consolidation of their estates and lordships over the peasantry led to the decentralisation of political authority of the king and proved to be the bedrock of the feudalism that gradually solidified over Sikkim in the coming years.

Furthermore, Sikkim witnessed a strong consolidation of the feudal system with the arrival of the British. The British encouraged the settlement of Nepalese in Sikkim and the King of Sikkim under the pressure of the Political Officer granted land to the two Newar brothers, which led to the emergence and inclusion of new landlords within the already existing stratified society. This led to more foundering of the power of the King. Moreover, with the settlement of Nepalese Sikkim witnessed a demographic change, entire villages were filled with landless peasants in addition to the existing ones. These landless peasants for subsistence became dependent on the

landholding peasants and landlords and were subjected to exploitation. Moreover, it can be noticed that those landlords who were pro-British started levying various taxes without the knowledge of the King, also they appointed intermediaries within the villages level, who was responsible for the collection of taxes and managing labour services on behalf of the superior landlords. These intermediaries in due course of time took a hereditary character and even leased out land without the permission of the overload and were indulged in the exploitation of peasants by making them work in their fields and carry personal loads without payments.

Furthermore, with the arrival of the British, the situation of peasants became even more miserable. The British government was interested in trade with Tibet during this time. For that purpose, they needed manual labourto carry loadsand it was the responsibility of landlords to manage such workers. Thus, in addition to the already existing form of forced labour, the peasants were made to provide various forms of forced labour, becoming deeper with extensive and exploitative. Alongside the increase in the migration of Nepali settlers, numerous forms of tenants emerged within the land held by the feudal landlords.

Therefore, while interpreting the formation of feudalism in Sikkim, it will be rational to say that, akin to all others, Sikkimese feudalism also had its root in the process of land grants by the rulers, which eventually resulted in the birth of numerous aristocratic families influential within their areas and exploiting the peasants. Concerning the emergence of a class of aristocracy in Sikkim, initially, it is realized that the importance given to ethnicity with Tibeto-Sikkimese at the top. However, later, the granting of lands to other ethnicities led to the emergence of other communities as landlords. It can be assumed that native people due to insecurity

accepted the rule of the Namgyal dynasty and in return Namgyal acquire their support and to bring them into the ambit of his rule granted lands. It resulted in ahierarchy in society from top to bottom that differed from the earlier ties of kinship, which progressively tightened with the development of feudalism.

In conclusion, it can be assumed that in Sikkim with the establishment of the Namgyal dynasty, there starteda Tibetan feudal system, which collapsed with the primitive system of native people and resulted in the domination of the feudal mode of production. Later, with the arrival of the British, Sikkim witnessed a further consolidation of the feudal system. However, compared to the primitive mode of production of the inhabitants, the feudal system revealed a greater advance in Sikkim, as it improved agricultural surplus by bringing more land under cultivation with the introduction of terrace cultivation.

Thus, in comparison with European feudalism, Sikkim offers remarkable similarity in a few fundamental traits such as the importance of labour rent, the granting of land in return for services, and the close association of rights over land with political functions. It is clear that the Sikkimese landed estates as units of production resemble the manor, and as rewards for services are comparable to the fief- Since the question of salary in Sikkim, in the overwhelmingly agrarian economy with limited money exchange, fiefs tenements for the vassals were in widespread use. The labour services of the Sikkimese peasants to the European unpaid labour. The limited mercantile economy in both Sikkim and Europe resulted in the fact that most exchanges are not made in money but in kind or labour, and large payments are made mostly by the government by granting the land. Nevertheless, the granting of land as compared to Europe is slightly different; here, the land is granted as a salary to the

officer of an absolute ruler who demands general obedience and who can resume the land at will, which are close parallels to the precise type of land grants found in India. While in Europe the grants of land are part of personal contractual relations of vassalage.

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APPENDIX ONE

THE TIBETO-SIKKIMESE CLANS OF SIKKIM

In Sikkim, the Tibeto-Sikkimeseor Bhutiaclans are divided based on their relationship to the figure of the Sikkimese origin *Khye Bhumsa and* subsequent migration patterns or social standing. The first division is the ***Tong-du-ru-Zi/Stongsderusbzhi***, or the four families of 1000 collections. In addition to this term, the clans making up the first division are sometimes referred to as ***Pyak-Tsen-Tar-Pu-Pun-Sum.*** The descendants of Khye Bhumsa are divided into six families, as follows:

1. Yul-tenpa or Yul-thon-pa
2. Lingzerpa or Glinggsar pa
3. Zhan-tar-pa or Zhan-po-tar
4. Tshe-Gyu-Tarpa or Tshesbcudar
5. Nyim-Gye-pa
6. Guru-tashe-pa

With Khye Bhumsa came other Tibetans, or Khampas, who are considered pure descent, i.e., descent from the first migration into Sikkim under KhyeBhumsa. They founded the eight clans known as the ***Beps-mTshan-bGyad.*** The eight clans are as follows:

1. Bonpo or Pon-pa
2. rGan-sTag-Pu-Tshogs or tGon-gSang-pa
3. nam-gTsang-sKho-pa or sKorpa
4. sTag-Chhung-Tar-pa
5. tKar-Tshogs-pa

6. Grong-sTod-pa
7. bTshun-rGyal-pa or rGyas-pa
8. mDo-Khang-pa or Kham-pa

In all, there are fourteen original prominent families of Tibetan origin in Sikkim. These fourteen main clans have the right to be admitted to the Tasong monastery at Pemayangtse without payment of tax or entrance fee.

The Bonpo or Pon-pa is again subdivided into five, as follows:

a. Nag-lDig
b. Lha-bSungs
c. Yos-lChags
d. Na-pon
e. Pon-Chhung-pa

In addition to these, several other clans in Sikkim came to Sikkim at various times and are divided into groups named after the place or manner of origin. The chief and most important are the:

I. Pu-Tsho-po-pa or Bu-tshog-pa
II. Lag-lDingpa
III. rGod-Rong-pa
IV. Gyeng-pa
V. Stod pa
VI. Shar-pa
VII. Barphungpuso (actually a Lepcha clan)
VIII. Adinpuso (Lepcha clan)

The above clans are admitted into the Pemayangtse monastery only on payment of heavy taxes.

Then there is a group of clans, which are considered to have migrated to Sikkim from Chumbi:

A. Lham-tar or Lha ma dar
B. Gue-ne-pu-Tshogs or Dgebsnyan pa
C. Agon or Angdgon
D. Athub-pu-Tshogs
E. Do-Shoi-pa or Rdogzhod pa
F. Khimbarpa or Khyim bar pa

Then there are other clans whose names are in many cases derived from local features or unknown:

i. Mang spod pa
ii. Na mang
iii. Shag tshang pa
iv. Rdo-hRob-pa
v. Shag tshang pa
vi. La-hog-pa
vii. Mang tshang pa
viii. Spa thing pa
ix. Bengri pa
x. Kagye pa
xi. Dobta-pa

This is a brief overview of Tibeto-Sikkimese clans; however, there seems no certainty about some clans' names and origins.

APPENDIX TWO

THE LHO MON TSONG AGREEMENT

OR

TRIPARTITE AGREEMENT

"HI! Please observe, please behold, please listen, Name. from the KumtuZangpo the foremost Buddha, to the root Guru of our time and their ocean like guardian deities of Dharma may please appear in their wrathful for and behold (at this occasion) without your body, speech and mind distracted elsewhere. All the ocean like guardian deities; the male Dharma Palas, Female protectors of the Chogyal of this country and the Dharma, may also appear in their fiercely wrathful forms and behold at this occasion without distractions of their body, speech and mind. Pla Yeshe-Kyl Gompo mahakala Manning Nangpo, Gompos of body, speech, mind, quality and action Za-Yi Gehen Ta-hla and light division of gods and Demi-Gods may please listen without being distracted. Chogyal Chempo, his all consorts, Ministers and followers to whom the Guru Rimpoche gave his commands, his followers, Demons, Nagas and Tsen (Dud, Tsen, Lu) Baishramana, Dorjee Shugden, Dorjee Dadul, Pehar Gyalpo and Gualpos of recent and ancient with eight divisions of wrathful spirits may also appear in their wrathful form and behold his occasion not having their body, speech and mind distracted elsewhere. Moreover, Zad-nga Taktse the great treasure holder of this valley, Thang Lhe, Gabur Gangstsan, Twelve Tonmas, Y-dud Cham-dral the guardian deities of the lower valley. Sride Rongtsen Ekazati and all the female guardians, the guardians of middle valley Pawa hunger and hundred thousand of millions of armies of Lha Tsen, Dud and Lu-may also appear in their wrathful from

and behold at this occasion not having their body, speech and mind distracted elsewhere. In this hidden valley of Guru Rimpoche, the guardian deities of the retreats centres holding the lineage of Zongpo Chempo; the armies of Dud, Ten, Lu and treasure holders residing in mountains, valleys, trees, rocks and lands and lawns, the guardian deities of Thek-Chek Yangtse, Pema Yangtse, Rabdenatse, Tashiding and other places may appear in their wrathful form and behold at this occasion. All the deities and guardians worshipped by us the people of four parts of Ti-Ting Hkapa Barpung. Linguam, Dangs zongs, Tsong and Monpos may please behold undistracted.

We the leaders and ministers have met here according to the wishes of the Lord of Men and we hereby pledge and put our seals to the agreement that the people "Lho-Mon-Tsong-Sum" will hereafter integrate our wishes and will not have separate self-government of Lho (Bhutia), Mon (Lepcha), and Tsong (Limboo) but will abide by order only. During the last Monpa war some people's action were noted and let them be beware of now from this year of water hare onwards we will abide by the commands of the King, the Guru and his sons and will never let arise a bad thought against Sikkim.

We the ministers and leaders of Sikkim including those of the eight communities of Lhopos hereby pledge that. "Lho-Mon-Tsong-Sum" will have one destiny and one government. They will fight together with their foes and they will feast together with their friends. They will bring in the intelligence of others but they will never take out the secret of inside. If there be any not abiding by this pledge and mischief and disturb the peace and harmony of "Lho-Mon-Tsong-Sum", whoever he may be, the above-mentioned guardian deities will see the truth. In such a case, the afore mentioned deities are beseeched to appear in their wrathful forms and with their

fierceful sound of Hung! Phat! And they are beseeched to make the criminals go amd and devour their flesh, blood and heart without delaying for years, months, days and even for a moment. KharamKha Hi! Those who abide by this pledge, respect the above-mentioned deities abide by the agreement signed by us, the ministers and leaders, wish only good for the Chogyal, his Guru and his sons, and serve the nation both physically and peace (Mak, Lag, Jung, Sum), may they be seen by the afore said guardian deities and may their life, fortune, glory and wealth be made to increase like the waxing moon. If any among "Lho-Mon-Tsong-Sum", would not abide by this pledge will be made to pay three ounces of gold as pledge breach fee and there after he will be punished according to the degree of crime he has committed from slight physical punishment to the extent of death penalty. No hesitation will be made in execution of this punishment so that all may keep this in their minds.

The seal of followings was put:

1. The minster of Sikkim-DakShar
2. DechenNamgyal of TritongKhampa (Tshongkor Lak-Kor)
3. Thar Thim of Barpung
4. TamchinDorleg
5. Tencho of Lingdam
6. Chope Drop
7. Gu-Ju of Drang Tod
8. Nangpo of Bodrongpa
9. Tsongsubba, Namphang
10. TsongYug Shug
11. Mo Zang (or Morang) Migtshep
12. Tsa Tai

13. Poshing

14. Matsi To

15. MabungThopaKui

16. Deshe Hang

17. Mig Yom Ajamta

18. Modenpa

19. Peghapa

20. Bolobir

21. Tapa Agod of Rathang Chun Gupa

22. Tapa Shuphang of Ringi Ching Gupa

23. Tapa GeaKyab of Galed Chung Gupa

24. Pelo.

Thus, created on Water Hare Year at Denzong Phuntso Khngsar.

The King Phunchung/Phuntshog Namgyal gave full autonomy to the Limboos with the following Royal Proclamation:

The Tsong or Subba or Limboo Chiefs are hereby authorised to rule their districts under the title of "Subbas" with all the facilities of enjoying their traibal rites in social and religious functions by beating the royal band called Negara (Perlge) or cattle-dum.

By order of the King of Sikkim
From Yarsa Palace
Dated: Earth and Sheep Years
Sa Luk Dawa Dun Chhe 27
Yarsa)

Translated from Original Text by Professor RinguTulku
Government Degree College
Gangtok, Sikkim
On 31st August, 1984.

APPENDIX THREE

PEDIGREE OF BARFUNGPA FAMILY

The lineage of the Barfungpa family begins with the Yugthing Tishay, also spelt as Yugthing Te-tse. He was descended from the Lepcha chief Teg Kong teg. During the reign of the first king Phuntshog Namgyal, he was head of the Lepchas in Sikkim. He held the same office during the rule of the second king Tensung Namgyal. It happened that while Yugthing Tishay had been sent towards Dobtra in Tibet, on some service, the king Tensung Namgyal begot a natural son, on Yuthing's wife, Nambong. This son was called Yugthing Arup or Yugthing Aroop. The king acknowledged and favoured him, gradually entrusted him with a high post of Changzot (Prime Minister) in the kingdom. During the Bhutanese invasion in Sikkim, Yugthing Arup was captured by the Bhutanese and brought as a prisoner to Dzomthang in Bhutan, where he begot a son, who came to be known as Dzom Tashi. Later, after their restoration to Sikkim, Dzom Tashi had a son called Gyamtso, who held the post of Changzot (Prime Minister) of Sikkim. Gyamtso's son was Changzot Karwang, who went in for polygamy, and had several wives, some of Limboo caste, some of Mangars and Bhutia. From the Bhutia wife, he had seven sons, namely:

1. Densa-Rangjung Silnon,
2. Athing Bo or Athing Po,
3. Changzot Chogthup,
4. Athing Youngdra,
5. Kotra Kunga or Kota Kunga,
6. Yug-namcha and
7. Changzot Bolod (real name was Tenzing Namgyal).

Densa-Rangjung Silnon held the post of Changzot, he had three sons namely;

1. Lama Karma Tenzing Thinlay Rabgay,
2. Ralang Lama Karma Tenzin and
3. Tsangdak

From Lama Karma Tenzing Thinlay Rabgay had son name Wangyal Tenzin who was the Kazi of Barmiok, West Sikkim.

From Changzot Chogthup had no male issues, so he adopted a son who had four sons, out of whichthe third son named Chos-Khor had a son named Khochung, the Rhenock Kaz. Changzot Chogthup had acquired the estate of Rhenock as a reward for his service during the Nepal invasion in Sikkim.

From Kota Kunga comes the lineage of Illam Kazi and Dallam Kazi in West Sikkim.

From Changzot Bolod comes the lineage of the head of Phensong lama.

Since the reign of the first king Phuntshog Namgyal to the sixth king Tenzing Namgyal, the Barfungpa clan held the position of Changzot (Prime Minister) in Sikkim. Owing to their position, they even challenged the power and authority of the king.

APPENDIX FOUR

TREATY OF TUMLONG

28/03/1861

TREAT, COVENANT, or AGREEMENT entered into by the HONOURABLE ASHLEY EDEN, ENVOY and SPECIAL COMMISSIONER on the Part of the BRITISH GOVERNMENR, in virtue of full powers vested in him by the RIGHT HONOURABLE CHARLES, EARL CANNING, GOVERNOR-GENERAL in COUNCIL, and by HIS HIGHNESS SEKONG KUZOO, MAHARAJA OF SIKKIM on his own Part, - 1861

Whereas the continued depredations and misconduct of the officers and subjects of the Maharajah of Sikkim, and the neglect ofthe Maharajah to afford satisfaction for the misdeeds ofhis people have resulted in an interruption for many years past of the harmony which previously existed betweenthe British Government andthe Government of Sikkim, and have led ultimately to the invasion and conquest of Sikkim by a British force; and whereas the Maharajah of Sikkim has now expressed his sincere regret for the misconduct of his servants and subjects, his determination to do all in his power to obviate future misunderstanding, and his desire to be again admitted into friendship and alliance with the British Government, it is hereby agreed as follows :-

1. All previous treaties made between the British Government and the Sikkim Government are hereby formally cancelled.

2. The whole of Sikkim territory now in the occupation of the British forces is restored to the Maharajah of Sikkim, and there shall henceforth be peace and amity between the two states.
3. The Maharajah of Sikkim undertakes, so far as is within his power, to restore within one month from the date of signing this Treaty all public property which was abandoned by the detachment of British Troops at Rinchinpoong.
4. In indemnification of the expenses incurred in 1860 by the British Government in occupying a portion ofthe territory of Sikkim as a means of enforcing just claims which had been evaded by the Government of Sikkim and as a compensation to the British subjects who were pillaged and kidnapped by the Subjects ofSikkim the Sikkim Government agrees to pay to the British authorities at Darjeeling the sum of Rs. 7.000 (Seven thousand) rupees in the following instalments, that is to say:-

May 1st, 1861	1,000
November 1st, 1861	3,000
May 1st, 1862	3,000

As security for the due payment of this amount, it is further agreed that, in the event of any of these instalments not being duly paid on the date appointed, the Government of Sikkim shall make over the British Government that portion of its territory bounded on the South of the River Rummam, on the east by Great Runjeet River, to the Singaleelah Range, including the monasteries of Tassiding, Pemonci, and the British Government shall retain possession of this territories and collect the revenue thereof, until the full amount, with all expenses of occupation and collection and interest at 6 per cent per annum, are realized.

5. The government of Sikkim engages that its subjects shall never again commit depredations on British territory, or kidnap or otherwise molest British subjects. In the event of any such depredation or kidnapping taking place, the Government of Sikkim undertakes to deliver up all the persons engaged in such malpractice, as well as the Sirdars or other Chiefs conniving at or benefitting thereby.
6. The Government of Sikkim will at all times seize and deliver up any criminals, defaulters, or other delinquents who may have taken refuge within its territory, on demand being duly made in writing by the British Government through their accredited agents. Should any delay occur in complying with such demand, the police of the British government may follow the person whose surrender has been demanded into any part of Sikkim territory, and shall, on showing a warrant, duly signed by the British Agent, receive every assistance and protection in the prosecution of their object from the Sikkim officers.
7. In as much as the late misunderstandings between the two Governments have been mainly tormented by the acts of the ex-Dewan Namguay, the Government of Sikkim engages that neither the said Namguay, nor any of his blood-relations shall ever again be allowed to set foot in Sikkim or to take part in the Council of, or hold any office under, the Maharaja or any of the Maharaja's family at Choombi.
8. The Government of Sikkim from this date abolishes all restrictions on travellers and monopolies in trade between the British territories and Sikkim. There shall henceforth be a free reciprocal intercourse, and full liberty of commerce between subjects of both countries; it shall be lawful for British

subjects to go into any part of Sikkim for the purpose of travel or trade, and the subjects of all countries shall be permitted to reside in and pass through Sikkim, and to expose their goods for sale at any place and in any manner that may best suit their purpose, without any interference whatever, except as is hereinafter provided.

9. The Government of Sikkim engages to afford protection to all travellers, merchants or traders of all countries, whether residing in, trading in, or passing through Sikkim. If any merchants, traveller or trader, being a European British subject, shall commit any offence contrary to the laws of Sikkim, and such person shall be punished by the representative of the British Government residing at Darjeeling, and the Sikkim Government will at once deliver such offender over to the British authorities for this purpose, and will, on no account, detain other British subjects residing in the country to be liable to the laws of Sikkim; but such persons shall, on no account, be punished with loss of limb, or maiming, or torture, and every case of punishment of a British subject shall at once be reported to Darjeeling.
10. No duties or fees of any sort shall be demanded by the Sikkim Government of any person or persons on account of goods exported into the British territories from Sikkim, or imported into Sikkim from the British Territories.
11. On all goods passing into or out of Tibet, Bhootan or Nepaul, the Government of Sikkim any levy a duty of customs according to such a scale as may, from time to time, be determined and published without reference to the destination of the goods, provided, however, that such duty shall, on no account, exceed 5 per cent on the value of goods at the time and place of the levy of duty. On the

payment of the duty aforesaid a pass shall be given exempting such goods from liability to further payment on any account whatever.

12. With the view to protect the government of Sikkim from fraud on account of undervaluation for assessment of duty, it is agreed that their custom officers shall have the option of taking over for the Government any goods at the value affixed on them by the owner.
13. In the event of the British Government desiring to open out a road through Sikkim, with the view of encouraging trade, the Sikkim Government will raise no objection thereto, and will afford every protection and aid to the party engaged in the work. If a road is constructed, the Government of Sikkim undertakes to keep it in repair, and to erect and maintain suitable travellers' rest houses throughout its routes.
14. If the British Government desires to make either a topographical or geological survey of Sikkim, the Sikkim Government will raise no objection to this being done, and will afford protection and assistance to the officers employed in this duty.
15. In as much as many of the late misunderstandings have had their foundation in the custom which exists in Sikkim of dealing in slaves, the Government of Sikkim binds itself, from this date, to punish severely any person trafficking in human beings, or seizing persons for the purpose of using them as slaves.
16. Henceforth the subjects of Sikkim may transport themselves without let or hindrance to any country to which they may wish to remove. In the same way, the Government of Sikkim had authority to permit the subjects of other countries, not being criminals or defaulters, to take refuge in Sikkim.

17. The government of Sikkim engages to abstain any acts of aggression or hostility against any of the neighbouring states which are allies of the British Government. If any disputes or questions arise between the people of Sikkim and those of the neighbouring states such disputes or questions shall be referred to the arbitration of the British Government, and Sikkim Government agrees to abide by the decision of the British Government.
18. The whole military forces of Sikkim shall join and afford every aid and facility to British Troops when employed in the Hills.
19. The Government of Sikkim will not cede or lease any portion of its territory to another State without the permission of the British Government.
20. The Government of Sikkim engages that no armed force belonging to any other country shall pass through Sikkim without the sanction of the British Government.
21. Seven of the criminals, whose surrender was demanded by the British Government, having fled from Sikkim and taken refuge in Bhootan, the Government of Sikkim engages to do all in its power to obtain the delivery of those persons from the Bhootan Government, and in the event of any of these men again returning to Sikkim, the Sikkim government binds itself to seize them, and to make them over to the British Authorities at Darjeeling without delay.
22. With the view to the establishment of an efficient Government in Sikkim, and to the better maintenance of friendly relations with the British Government, the Maharaja of Sikkim agrees to remove the seat of his Government from Tibet to Sikkim and to reside there for nine months in the years. It is further

agreed that a Vakeel shall be accredited by the Sikkim Government, who shall reside permanently at Darjeeling.

23. This treaty consisting of twenty-four Articles, being settled and concluded by the Honourable Ashley Eden, British Envoy and His Highness SekeongKuzooSikkimputtee Maharaja, at Tumlong, this 28th day of March, 1861 corresponding with 17th Dao Neepoo, 61, Mr. Eden has delivered to the Maharajah a copy of the same in English with translation on Nagri and Bhootiah, under the seal and signature of the said Honourable Ashley Eden and His Highness the Sikkimputtee Maharaja and the SikkimputteeMaharajahas in like manner delivered to the said Honourable Ashley Eden another copy also in English with translation in Nagri and Bhootian, bearing the seal of His Highness and the said Honourable Ashley Eden. The Envoy engages to procure the delivery to His highness within six weeks from this date of copy of this Treaty, duly ratified by His Excellency, the Viceroy and Governor-General of India in Council and this treaty shall in the meantime ne in fill force.

24. (Seal) Sd/- **SekeongKuzoo**Sikkimputte,
Sd/-**Ashley Eden** ENVOY (seal)
Sd/- **Canning** (seal)

Ratified by His Excellency, the Viceroy and Governor-General of India in Council at Calcutta on the Sixteenth day of April, 1861.

Sd/- **G.U. Aitchison,**

Under Secretary to the Government of India.