

# **The British and the Chebu Lama Grant in Darjeeling**

A Dissertation Submitted

To

**Sikkim University**



In Partial Fulfilment of the Requirement for the

**Degree of Master of Philosophy**

By

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June, 2022

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**DECLARATION**

I, **Krishna Dahal**, hereby declare that the research work embodied in this dissertation titled "**The British and the Chebu Lama Grant in Darjeeling**" submitted to **Sikkim University** for the award of the degree of **Master of Philosophy**, is my original work. Any content or any part of this thesis has not been submitted to any other institutions or for any academic purposes.

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## CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the dissertation titled "The British and The Chebu Lama Grant in Darjeeling" submitted to Sikkim University for the partial fulfilment of the degree of Master of Philosophy in the Department of History, embodies the result of bonafide research work carried out by Miss Krishna Dahal under my guidance and supervision. No part of the dissertation has been submitted for any other Degree, Diploma, Association and fellowship.

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

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

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**“The British and The Chebu Lama Grant in Darjeeling”**

Submitted by **Miss Krishna Dahal** under the supervision of **Prof. Veenu Pant**,  
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# CHAPTER 1

## Introduction

Darjeeling after being exposed to the sway of the British rule in India got introduced to the world as ‘The Queen of Hills’ for the richness of natural beauty it carries but along that Darjeeling also started to become historically rich with the folds of variety of events and that no doubt was making Darjeeling also the ‘Queen of the Hills in the sense of History’, which has been gaining research attention of different kinds.

The historical research in Darjeeling particularly by the researchers from Darjeeling itself is a growing trend. It is mainly because of the penetration of education system among the common masses. This is where, a lot of history that have remained in oral form or the available sources that have not been adequately studied for reasons purely based on the status of developments in education, are being studied upon, which is positively contributing to the development of regional and local historiography in Darjeeling hills.

When Darjeeling as a piece of land became open to the exploration of the unknown people armed with the tools of civilization, it was its natural form that grasped their attention, at-least this is what one can understand from the open confession available in the colonial sources that carries the record of their opinion on how they felt about Darjeeling when they first met it. When this naturally healthy space was worked on with the sense of modernisation, Darjeeling took very little time to attract the outside world and from then on, Darjeeling started to be introduced as a space of scenic beauty and healthy resort. However, by the deconstruction of events related to Darjeeling, the same colonial sources throw enough light for one to understand how Darjeeling as a piece of land attracted the colonisers out of its

strategical and economic importance. If it is to be believed that Darjeeling had been laboured just as a space of recovering health then, the labour that made Darjeeling what today it is, is not identical to the labour needed just for the purpose of health space. This is not to deny the fact that Darjeeling was very much helpful to the Britishers to rescue themselves from the ‘heat of the plains’, but an attempt to understand how Darjeeling was required to be shaped for execution of British purposes particularly by exploring the British technique of using ‘native intelligence’ forsecuring their purposes and bringing into light the events connected to it and it’s space in the regional history of Darjeeling. Darjeeling is often understood from two perspectives, the perspective of how the British opened up access to the scenic sense of Darjeeling and their creation of brand Darjeeling Tea, which often attracts people outside Darjeeling, and the other perspective comes from within the people of Darjeeling which is about its political history that weaves around daily lives of the people of Darjeeling as an impact of British rule.

The expansion and consolidation of Darjeeling by the British is an important event in the history of Darjeeling. The process of expansion started in 1850s. Chebu Lama as a native had played an important role in this process.

Land as a property has received different meanings in the history everywhere in the world. It has served and influenced the course of history in various ways. Land as grants in the history of India has its own long history preceding the British colonisation of Indian lands. The known fact of how British were involved in annexation of Indian lands, using them to their best interest, and how their land policies impacted the Indian socio-economic and political structure is well documented. The British and their approach to lands after they brought Darjeeling into their control also has its own peculiarity. British in Darjeeling got themselves

involved in some cases in making land as medium of exchange to suit their interest and one of the such event was their decision to grant a tract of land to the native named as Chebu Lama, in whom they found the treasure of friendship worth the value of land. The grant made to Chebu Lama was for the service he provided to the British but was also to preserve the source of native service in difficult times.

The grant made to Chebu Lama by the British in Darjeeling is one of the occasional episodes in the history of British Darjeeling. The grant leaves a space for understanding British technique of maintaining colonialism in Darjeeling and at the same time, it also brings into focus the less discussed fragments of history particularly related to non-tea areas.

Darjeeling in the hands of British was in the transformation phase in some matters while, in others Darjeeling was completely experiencing many things for the first time. In that sense it becomes important to understand the process of changes in the hills and its role in shaping the history of Darjeeling. Thus, the work will explore more details about the person Chebu Lama and the historical episode of the Chebu Lama Grant and try to understand the person and the grant as a part of colonial history of Darjeeling.

India is a diverse country not just in the sense that it is a home to people of different caste, creed, religion, race or home to people with freedom to exercise differing views, opinions or ideologies. In the space of History too, India is a union of states with diverse history. This diverse history is accommodated in variety of historiography which are interpreted and debated from various approaches. History of areas like Darjeeling Hills, are often taken up in the fold of regional or local historiography. It would be unjust to the fact of multi-historical country like India to

expect regional history to qualify the criteria of being important from mainstream perspective to be an apt area of study for getting scholarly attention. Understanding its validity, research in the Regional history or Local History in India is today encouraged given the importance it bears in regional or local spaces. The study undertaken is an attempt to explore an episode of regional history in connection with Darjeeling particularly.

### **1.1 Statement of Problem**

Darjeeling was not consolidated with the Deed of Grant, 1835. Only certain part of Darjeeling was taken over by the British in 1835. With the takeover, Darjeeling was not limited to the function of sanatorium for the British. British started to use Darjeeling for their best commercial interest. By, 1850s, the potential that Darjeeling exhibited for commercial growth and the increase in possibility of extending commercial relation with Tibet and China, Darjeeling became strategically important hill station. It's enclave nature demanded security. In a move to secure Darjeeling, consolidation of Darjeeling became necessary.

The process of consolidation of Darjeeling was not an event of over-night. It took a- long exercise of diplomacy to consolidate Darjeeling. The effective policy that the British used for consolidating Darjeeling was the use of native intelligence. The exploitation of native intelligence by the British forms an important colonial technique executed in hills to secure their purposes.

The administration of Darjeeling particularly related to land administration was not a uniform system. There were various categories of administration which were introduced with the consolidation of Darjeeling. In exchange of service from native, the British had granted a tract of land. The administration of the grant

exchanged for the service, forms one distinct category of administration executed in colonial Darjeeling.

The availability of native intelligence in the hands of the British made the colonial expansion and its stability in Darjeeling and Sikkim possible. The role of native intelligence in colonial apparatus can be understood from the way British used natives in its different operations in this region of Himalaya. The grant so provided, also gives a way to understand the British interest regarding the creation of hill station in Darjeeling.

Consolidation of Darjeeling is a turning point in the history of Darjeeling. However, the process of consolidation of Darjeeling has not received much attention. At the same time, the role of Chebu Lama as a native intelligence in the consolidation of Darjeeling is also important area to focus on. Exploring about Chebu Lama can provide better understanding about the personality of Chebu Lama. It shall also bring in light about the way and circumstances under which British and Chebu Lama developed their relationship. Thus, it will altogether, bring in the attention to the role of native intelligence in consolidation of Darjeeling, which otherwise is limited just to the colonisers.

Chebu Lama Grant stands as a unique event in the colonial history of Darjeeling. There was no any other grant in the history of British Darjeeling which was similar to this, though small grants were made by the British to the natives in different occasion. Chebu Lama Grant stands unique for the size of the land granted, for the nature of the grant and the administration of the grant. In the shadow of tea and tourism, the Chebu Lama Grant also bears significance to the history of non-tea areas of Darjeeling.

Darjeeling having been through different historical experiences, do have segments of history waiting to be taken up. Therefore, this is an attempt to explore one of the historical events in relation to Darjeeling. Delving into the segments of scattered history in Darjeeling hills can add new findings in the already existing knowledge about the people and the place and as well as it helps in enriching the existing literatures dealing with this region, where paucity of secondary literary sources is often cited as a key problem in researching and understanding the history of Darjeeling.

## **1.2 Review of Literature**

The histories related to Darjeeling are mainly recorded in colonial sources. These sources are being used for producing different literatures engaging this region of the Eastern Himalayas. As this part lately started to get the scholarly attention, there are still many events in the colonial sources that are yet to come into light, or in other words, the available sources are yet to be exploited properly. The dearth of native sources engaging in the past events remain as a constant problem in providing alternative or the people centric view of this region. Chebu Lama and his Grant is one such segment of history of Darjeeling which has not gain appropriate place in the literatures discussing Darjeeling. The reviewed literatures here, therefore consist of those literatures that are found relevant in understanding the subject of the study.

John Beckett<sup>1</sup> discusses about widening of the trend of local history over the time covering various topics having local importance and the importance of the trend itself in the construction of History, both regional and national. It also attempts to provide inputs in making the concept and working of local history more academic,

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<sup>1</sup>JohnBeckett, 2007. *Writing Local History*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.



influential, contributory, so that to garner acceptance of it as no less than a general history as well as to provide amateur local historians, the guidance and other things that they need to understand as they work as local historian. In relation to methodology and sources for local history, the book highlights on the nature of sources that local historians get into touch with, nature of sources while studying times away from recent, sources relating to modern times and also about the hardships in procurement of sources especially of premodern times and benefits of technology and wider education in studying modern times. The boundary of local history is said to be not restricted to a particular subject of study but said to be flexible allowing researchers to explore multiple aspects of local history, nor the time and size of the study is strictly coded, highlighting regressive form of study mainly from recent times to as back as one can with consideration to sources and as big as from region itself to as small as family or still smaller. As the study is also local and regional in nature, the literature is thus found relevant in dealing with the study undertaken.

Dane Kennedy's<sup>2</sup> work is important in the sense that it gives the understanding of British colonialism in the hill stations of the British India. The author brings in the book the alternative perspective on understanding the British relationship with the hills. One can also put it in the sense that the literature stands on completely opposite direction then what most of the British official writers have wrote about the hills, it can also be considered as extension of explanation and interpretation of the events in rather different way. The author explains that how the hill stations were occupied more for political and military ambitions then for sanitary and health concerns. The idea of hill stations as author notes was one among possible measures to strengthen their hold in India. The author points out that stations were made as the centres for

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<sup>2</sup>Dane Kennedy, 1996. *The Magic Mountains: Hill Stations and the British Raj*. London: University of California Press.

reminding the British community in India as one family with one purpose: purpose of colonialism, which was necessary as the colonizers had diversity within them and hill was to act as a centre for creating the sense of commonness among them. The hills that were thought to provide them aloofness from everything that was Indian, ironically the author notes, did not work the way they thought as the life in hills was not possible without the natives and Indian elites did not allow them that exclusivity. The author also remarks that the history of Hill station is also equally the history of Indians. The work is well engaged in the discussion of the purposes of the British in creation of Hill Stations in India.

Alex McKay's <sup>3</sup>work is an important work in the history of Sikkim. The work with its nature of sources used, brings in the picture of the history of Sikkim from the viewpoint of Sikkim. The discovery of Sikkim by the British is pointed out as an important event in the historical process of Sikkim. He highlights the strategic importance of the Himalayan Kingdom of Sikkim in the past and present. The takeover of Darjeeling in 1835 by the British is also emphasised as a turning point in the political history of Sikkim as it is pointed out that since then official relation between Sikkim and the forces of colonialism had begun. The work also gives important space to the frontier histories related to Sikkim, and its role in shaping the identity of Sikkim. The work also discusses about Chebu Lama in the context of the then Sikkimese polity. He also agrees that Chebu Lama was a significant player in the events that occurred between Sikkim and the British at one point of time. The information however is not extensive as the topic is only the part of the book. However, the author has provided significant information about Chebu Lama from the perspective of Sikkim palace.

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<sup>3</sup>Alex McKay, 2021. *The Mandala Kingdom: A Political History of Sikkim*. Gangtok: Rachna Books and Publications.

Kumar Pradhan<sup>4</sup> in his very informative book explains about how the Gorkhas expanded their hold over Eastern Nepal and Sikkim. From the book, it can be understood as to how Gorkha forces entered Sikkim from Darjeeling regarding which the author has provided local information. It also brings into light the strategic importance of Darjeeling. The book details about the Gorkha's invasion of Sikkim and all political activities that happened between the Gorkhas, Sikkim and the British. Through this book, one can have the information about the connected histories of different regions of Eastern Himalayas. It also provides the information about the initial phase of expansion of British towards this region. Thus, it helps in understanding the two expanding forces namely the Gorkhas and the British towards Darjeeling and Sikkim and their motives and purposes behind their decision to come closer to this part of Himalayas.

Basant B. Lama<sup>5</sup> work is an important literature in the history of Darjeeling that has native perspective of the British annexation and colonial rule of Darjeeling. It helps to understand the changes that the British brought in Darjeeling through which one can explore about the British purpose in establishing Darjeeling as a hill station. It also deals briefly on the expansion of territory of Darjeeling under the British in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, however the work does not focus upon the role of native intelligence in consolidation of Darjeeling.

P. R Rao<sup>6</sup> in his work engages on detailing about the events that followed up while British started to develop its relationship with Sikkim. The cession of

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<sup>4</sup> Kumar Pradhan, 2009. *The Gorkha Conquests: The process and consequences of the unification of Nepal, with particular references to Eastern Nepal*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Kathmandu: Himal Books.

<sup>5</sup> Basant B. Lama, 2008. *Through the Mists of Time: The Story of Darjeeling, The land of Indian Gorkhas*. Kurseong: Nilima Yonzon Lama Publication.

<sup>6</sup> P.R. Rao, 1972. *India and Sikkim (1814-1970)*. New Delhi: Sterling Publishers Private Limited.

Darjeeling by Sikkim to the British is regarded as an important event that marked as a turning point in the British relationship with Sikkim. This event as author notes had allowed the British to come closer to almost all the region that lied in the Eastern Himalaya like Nepal, Bhutan, Sikkim and Tibet. At the same time, the very event is also regarded as the start point of disturbances of relationship between British and Sikkim. The result of which as author notes brought Darjeeling together with the rest of the British territory and it lost its very character of being positioned within the domain of Sikkim. The events of 1850s are pointed out by the author as another important phase of disturbance between the two parties and the growing influence of British over Sikkim, as by then Sikkim was treated as the protectorate of British Indian government. He places the importance of Sikkim on the commercial ground to the British only after the 1861 episode, and the years before that he considers it important to British from military and political grounds.

A.C Sinha<sup>7</sup> in his article discusses about the *Kazi* system in Sikkim as an important institution of the Kingdom of Sikkim. The paper highlights about how *Kazi* system came to be in use in the Kingdom of Sikkim, and how it as an organ functioned and what difference it brought to the political structure and culture of the then Sikkimese polity. It is also brought to the light that *Kazis* occupied important position in the administration of the Kingdom and commanded great respect and repute. *Kazis* were attached with land and had considerable influence over the Kingdom and its people. The rise of certain kind of feudalism in Sikkim is attributed by the author to such class of the Kingdom.

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<sup>7</sup>A.C Sinha,1975. "The Kazi Patricians in the Sikkimese Polity" *Indian Anthropologist* 5, no. 2: 7-11.

Hope Namgyal<sup>8</sup> in her article highlights about the land holding system of Sikkim during the time of Namgyal Dynasty. She points out clearly that the King was the only owner of the land in Sikkim. However, she informs that the system of land grants was not new to Sikkim but was integral part of Sikkim's way of administration. She mentions about *Kazis*, headman and officials who were allowed to engage in the management of lands in Sikkim, who had some rights like hereditary claim over the land but that it did not include proprietary right over the land. It is also highlighted that titleship over the land was flexible and assessment depended upon number of members in family and not over the quantity or quality of land. She mentions that the Darjeeling Grant to the British was given on the purpose of their use only but the ownership along with the final authority upon land of Sikkim rested with the King. She also points out that Sikkim assumed the grant to be handled by the British as any other people within their territory had always handled it. It becomes important in relation to understanding British's way of handling lands with the annexation of Darjeeling by them from the Kingdom of Sikkim.

Catherine Warner<sup>9</sup> in her thesis highlights upon British idea of 'sovereignty and subjectivity' in their project of colonisation of India. Referring to Ranajit Guha, she points out that to sustain colonialism in India, the British found important to create the class of people in India who had lands as their property so that they could use them as an apparatus for executing colonisation. The Permanent Settlement, 1793 was a step towards that, the intension behind which was to create a class of loyal

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<sup>8</sup>Hook Namgyal, 1966. "The Sikkimese Theory of Land-Holding and The Darjeeling Grant." *Bulletin of Tibetology*, III no. 2: 46-58.

<sup>9</sup> Catherine Warner, 2014. "Shifting States: Mobile Subjects, Markets, and Sovereignty in the India-Nepal Borderland, 1780-1930". *A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy*. University of Washington.

natives who was to serve them their purpose. The argument of the scholar is that the British success in colonisation of India rested much in their success in the policy of using the “political affiliation of Indian subjects” to suit their best interest. She gives little importance however not disagree totally to the reason that control over territory by the British was the sole cause of colonial success in India. She is of the opinion that, the control over lands that bordered Nepal in the north of India were established by the British by making considerable influence upon the issues related to the people like their “movements, affiliation and identities.” The author points out the how taking over of Darjeeling by the British and their attempt to create fixed boundaries, revenue system, labour market impacted upon the then existing system in the land and its people who were the shifting cultivators.

Catherine Warner<sup>10</sup> in her article highlights about how the people living in different regions of Eastern Himalayas including that of areas around Darjeeling and Southern part of Sikkim in the past particularly by 1800, played an important role in the making of state. The author points out that such people contributed to the expansion process initiated by different regional entity by providing them their ‘labor, military levies and revenue.’ The author is of the opinion that, in this part of region which formed frontier at different times and given the historical context of the time, it was not the land or territory that was important to hold for exercising sovereignty but to have the confidence of people and to be able to bring them under control was a deciding factor for sustaining the expansion undertaken. She remarks that the importance of such people who basically were shifting cultivators, who had the power to influence the making of state and its frontier, ceased to be the unit of such influencing factor by the expansion of colonialism in this region particularly from

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<sup>10</sup> Catherine Warner, 2014. “*Flighty Subjects: Sovereignty, Shifting Cultivators, and the State in Darjeeling, 1830-1856*” *Himalaya*, 34, no.1:23-35.

1835. She highlights that the way those people used to be governed previously and the way they were connected with their head and state did not remain same with the implementation of colonial technique of governance, as a result of which such people though remained as a source of labour but no longer remained the unit of sovereignty. She notes about how such people were misunderstood as fragile by the colonial set up which disturbed the process of state formation by shifting the unit of sovereignty from people to land as the British could never develop relationship of loyalty with the people, the only option of control being left as land. This understanding of the importance of shifting cultivators becomes relevant also in understanding the clue behind the grant of frontier land to the native like Chebu Lama, and therefore keeping such people still under the patron-client relationship so as to protect the frontier and maintain the sovereignty.

Alex McKay<sup>11</sup> in his article deals with exploring the events related to the Anglo-Sikkim War of 1861. He points out that the period surrounding 1861 lacks detail information both in royal archives of Sikkim and the History of Sikkim (1908) as a result of which the information about this period mainly depends upon British colonial sources. The author in the article has brought into light the importance of 1861 episode in determining the course of further events in Sikkim and Bhutan.

R.K Spring<sup>12</sup> in his article points out that the events of 1826 was turning point in the history of Sikkim in so many ways. One that the event brought disturbances in relationship among Lepchas and between Lepchas and Bhutias of Sikkim. Secondly, it also brought into conflict Nepal and Sikkim yet for another time involving

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<sup>11</sup>Alex McKay, 2010. "A Difficult Country, A Hostile Chief, and a still more Hostile Minister": The Anglo- Sikkim War of 1861. *Bulletin of Tibetology*. Special Issue, 45 and 46, no. 2 and 1: 31-48.

<sup>12</sup>R. K. Sprigg, 1995. "1826: The End of an Era in the Social and Political History of Sikkim." *Bulletin of Tibetology*.

boundary issues. Thirdly, the conflict, brought in the intervention of British in the matter, resulting in the discovery of Darjeeling by the British. Fourthly, the cession of Darjeeling by the Rajah of Sikkim to the British became a historical fact by the Deed of Grant, 1835. The author remarks that, Sikkim as a whole, could not escape the impact of the event of 1826 in its social and political space.

Though there are literatures that mentions about Chebu Lama and the grant yet none of them are extensive in nature. Chebu Lama, though was an important person in the kingdom of Sikkim and to the British too, is yet to gain attention of his role in shaping the fate of Sikkim, Darjeeling and the British. The study will try to focus on the available gaps and make the subject of the study more detailed than what it is already existing.

### **1.3 Objectives of the Study**

- I. To garner the information about Chebu Lama and his political life so as to understand the role of Chebu Lama in the colonial history of Darjeeling.
- II. To understand the background and significance of the grant given to Chebu Lama.
- III. To explore about the nature, composition, administration, and the fall of the Chebu Lama Grant.

### **1.4 Research Methodology**

The study depends upon both the primary and secondary sources. Information extracted through interview also forms the part of the source for the study. As the history of Darjeeling is mostly recorded in gazetteers and official documents or reports, therefore the gazetteers concerning to the study area, official reports and papers, are used extensively. Contemporary books written by various British officials



also form important source for the study. Papers available in National and State archives in relation to the subject of the study are analysed to explore and understand various events related to the study undertaken. Secondary sources like various books, articles, journals, that help in the meeting of the objectives of the study are also used. The news-articles published online also form the source for the study. Basically, the study is explorative in nature.

### **1.5 Chapter Structure**

The study is divided into four chapters including the chapters on introduction and the conclusion.

Chapter one is titled as “Introduction” which deals with the introduction of the topic. It contains the statement of problem to give an understanding for the study taken up. It also has information about the literatures that are reviewed in relation to the study. The chapter also contains objectives of the study and the methodology used in carrying out the study.

Chapter two which is titled as “Chebu Lama in the Colonial History of Darjeeling” gives the background of the area of the study in relation to British idea of extending colonialism to this part of Eastern Himalayas. In the process of expansion and consolidation of Hill station of Darjeeling, the British come across a native of Sikkim, Chebu Lama, with whom they were destined to create some histories. Thus, the chapter also garners basic information about Chebu Lama and also explores his political life both in the Kingdom of Sikkim and as an ally of the British. It also discusses about the events leading to the granting of a huge chunk of land to Chebu Lama by the British. The chapter as a whole is engaged in understanding the role of Chebu Lama in the expansion and consolidation of Darjeeling.

Chapter three titled as “Chebu Lama Grant” deals in understanding the grant made to Chebu Lama, which was known as the Chebu Lama Grant. The chapter thus focuses on nature of the grant highlighting the conditions of the grant, composition as to which areas were covered in the grant and administration as to how Chebu Lama and his descendents participated in the functioning of the grant. It also highlights upon the fall of the grant so to bring in light the changes and transitions that came through grant with the time. It also brings into light some interesting episodes which were found in the archive related to Chebu Lama and his grant. The chapter also adds information on some important relatives of Chebu Lama who continued to make significant presence in post Chebu Lama’s life. It will thus bring into light the segment of history connected to non-tea areas of Colonial Darjeeling

Chapter four which is titled as “Conclusion”, is engaged in summarising the chapters and bringing it to the conclusion.

## CHAPTER 2

### Chebu Lama in the Colonial History of Darjeeling

#### 2.1 Darjeeling: A Background

The British<sup>13</sup> intervention in the Eastern Himalayas resulted to be a significant event in the history of different regions that fall on this belt and especially Sikkim. Sikkim experienced the sway of British imperialism and like any other land under the domination of the British rule, it also could not save its course of history from the impact of imperial goals of the British rule. The history of Darjeeling<sup>14</sup> shares important linkage with the history of Sikkim given the fact that Darjeeling was once a part of the Himalayan Kingdom of Sikkim and it eventually not just became the member of British India but it was chosen by the British as the centre for exercising their activities related to this part of the Eastern Himalayas. The making of British's Darjeeling has different aspects of story but most of the well-known is the 'idea of hill station.'

The hill stations that came up in British India are regarded as "the most curious monuments" erected on the need of British colonialism.<sup>15</sup> The intension of making of hill stations was originally not guided by the idea of making them as a "holiday resorts and tourist attractions."<sup>16</sup> They were meant to act as "sanataria."<sup>17</sup>

These hill stations were mainly to serve not the wealthier class of imperial society in

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<sup>13</sup> The term 'British' here will signify the events of both the East India Company and the British Government in India, pre and post 1858.

<sup>14</sup> The term 'Darjeeling' here will indicate the sub-divisions of Darjeeling district that includes Darjeeling Sadar, Kurseong and Kalimpong, which at present is a separate district.

<sup>15</sup> Dane Kennedy, 1996. *The Magic Mountains: Hill Stations and the British Raj*. (London: University of California Press, 1996), 1.

<sup>16</sup> Fred Pinn, 1986. *The Road to Destiny: Darjeeling Letters 1839*. (Calcutta: Oxford University Press), 1.

<sup>17</sup> Pinn, *The Road to Destiny*, 1.

India but to those who could not afford to make holidays away to their homes or elsewhere out of their income and work status. It was mainly to make such workers recover from the fatigue of Indian summers by providing them an opportunity to have space to live in suitable weather. By the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, important hill stations like Simla, Landour, Moussoorie etc. were already established in different parts of India. Calcutta despite being an important centre of British administration in India, was not having nearby hill station and they were experimenting different places. The British were able to get a space for creating a hill station for Calcutta with access to Sikkim's Darjeeling in Eastern Himalayas by 1835.<sup>18</sup>

From Kumar Pradhan's work on expansion of Gorkhas, we understand about how the British after establishing their hold in Bengal came closer to Himalayan foothills by the second half of 18<sup>th</sup> century. At the same time, it is also noted that, the Gorkha expansion under King Prithivinarayan Shah gave them displeasure as their motives were similar in terms of establishing trade with Tibet and China. In later half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the British and the Gorkha came into different boundary disputes in relation to their areas of domination around foothills. For British, Nepal, Bhutan and Sikkim, the occupation of Morang in northern plains of Bengal was important, given its strategic terrain and productivity. The taking over of Kathmandu by the Gorkhas led the British look for new route to Tibet which was taken as a serious aim after 1770. This is why, the British under Governor General of Bengal, Warren Hastings, did not delay in taking up the call for intervention made by the ruler of Koch Bihar when it was attacked by Bhutan in 1772. The subjugation of Morang then by Gorkhas was important development. The British actively engaged themselves in developing relations with Tibet. On the other hand, the coming of Gorkhas to Sikkim

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<sup>18</sup>ibid., 1-2.

was a great concern for Tibet and at the same time, the death of Prithivinarayan, the king of Gorkhas in 1775, opened up new course for following up the matter, both to Tibet and British in relation to Sikkim. Tibet and Nepal signed treaty in 1775, through which Tibet was required to maintain good trade relation with Nepal. Gorkhas did not invade Sikkim from 1775 to 1788, but the invasion took place in 1788 as a result of Tibet's opening up of trade route to Sikkim through Chumbi. One route for invasion to Sikkim in 1788 by Nepal under Purna Ale, commander of Gorkha force, was through Choyabhanjyang from where in they advanced to Relling and Karmi (that later formed a part of the Chebu Lama Grant in Darjeeling), from where again they moved to Sikkim's Chyakhung. Another force under Johar Singh also advanced through Singalila range (which also later formed the part of Chebu Lama Grant), and attacked and captured Rapdantse, the then capital of Sikkim, near Pemiongchi monastery. Darjeeling and Nagari were the areas where the Gorkha troops were stationed given their strategic location as they made routes leading to Nepal and Bhutan accessible. The Nepal-Tibet relationship was disturbed again in 1791, where in Nepal moved its forces towards Tibet. As a result, Nepal had to sign a peace treaty with China in 1792. Nepal-Tibet boundary and Nepal-Sikkim boundary were re-located, reducing Sikkim with just small territory whereas territory of Nepal covered areas as far as Satlaj in the west and Tista in the east.<sup>19</sup>

The British, under the Marquis of Hastings did not delay in declaring war upon Nepal in 1814 considering growing influence of Nepal wherein Nepal was defeated and Sikkim could have its claim over its previous boundary dissatisfaction. The Treaty of Sugauli was signed between the British and Nepal in 4<sup>th</sup> of March, 1816, through which the possibility of Nepal's influence in Sikkim was reduced to un-

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<sup>19</sup> Kumar Pradhan, *The Gorkha Conquests: The Process and consequences of the unification of Nepal, with particular reference to Eastern Nepal*. 2009, 2nd ed. (Kathmandu: Himal Books), 115-53.

retainable extent. The most important follow up of this Treaty was the conclusion of another treaty known as Treaty of Titalia in 10<sup>th</sup> February, 1817, between Sikkim and the British. Through this treaty, Sikkim was given back the areas lying between Mechi and the Tista, that later formed Darjeeling, Kurseong and Siliguri sub-divisions of Darjeeling district.<sup>20</sup> The British idea of Hill station later was executed in among these areas. The Treaty of Titalia was followed up by other major events, through which Darjeeling as a ‘hill station’ had started to grow under the British rule.

During this period major developments had taken place in the Palace of Sikkim. As early as 1793, Chogyal Tenzing Namgyal had died in Lhasa.<sup>21</sup> He was succeeded by his son Tsugphud Namgyal who was just a child then. It was during his reign in 1814 that the capital of Sikkim at Rapdentse which was in the West Sikkim was shifted to a place called Tumlong in North Sikkim, so that to avoid any troubles from nearby Nepal frontiers. Chogyal Tsugphud Namgyal reign was important in the sense that his reign witnessed the direct intervention of British in Sikkim.<sup>22</sup>

The Treaty of Titalia, 1817, was a significant event in the history of Sikkim. The treaty made it mandatory to bring in the intervention of British in any matter related to disputes between Sikkim and Nepal. The treaty also checked on who was to enter and settle in Sikkim, the deciding power of which rested upon the British. Importantly, the treaty also bounded Sikkim for providing protection and privilege to British for conducting trade with Sikkim.<sup>23</sup> The then Governor General of India, Lord Moira was successful in creating Sikkim as a buffer between Nepal and British India. This was technically done by providing Sikkim, the Lowlands of Morang, which was

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<sup>20</sup> Pradhan, *The Gorkha Conquests*, 153-56.

<sup>21</sup> Jigme N. Kazi, 2020. *Sons of Sikkim: The Rise and Fall of the Namgyal Dynasty of Sikkim*. (Gangtok: Hill Media Publications), 106.

<sup>22</sup> Kazi, *Sons of Sikkim*, 108.

<sup>23</sup> R. Moktan, 2004. *Sikkim: Darjeeling- Compendium of Documents*. (Kalimpong: R. Moktan “Sumaralaya”), 8-9.

a strategically important area. The treaty brought the British closer to Sikkim politically and Tibet commercially.<sup>24</sup>

Sikkim in the later days after the Treaty of Titalia, experienced internal conflicts. A Lepcha clan called Barfung, had good position in the *Durbar* of Sikkim. The matter of conflict arose when a person named Namgyal Phuntsog from Barfung clan, commonly known as Bholod who was found to be engaged in activities not good for the kingdom despite warnings.<sup>25</sup> He was killed along with his immediate family by the orders of the king in 1826.<sup>26</sup> This resulted in the fleeing away of more than 800 families from the Barfung clan to Ilam, Nepal.<sup>27</sup> After some time, the same Lepchas started to trouble Sikkim borders in intervals.<sup>28</sup> This led to the border dispute between Sikkim and Nepal known as Kotapa rebellion, ultimately creating a space for British intervention according to the earlier treaty of 1817. By 1828-29, the British deputed namely Captain George Lloyd of the Bengal army and the political agent J.W Grant, resident of Malda, to look into the matter. Dr. Archibald Campbell who was at Kathmandu during the period was also the part of the meeting. The matter was over but it opened up the door for another significant turn in the history of Sikkim and Darjeeling.

Captain Lloyd and Mr. J. W. Grant while travelling to solve the problem of Nepal-Sikkim dispute in 1828, were able to spot the location of Darjeeling. Being impressed from the location and expected opportunities, Lloyd visited the place again in 1829, in the month of February, and reported the use of this place could be as

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<sup>24</sup>Kazi, *Sons of Sikkim*, 111.

<sup>25</sup> Alex Mckay, 2021. *The Mandala Kingdom: A Political History of Sikkim*. (Gangtok: Rachna Books and Publications), 36.

<sup>26</sup> Mckay, *The Mandala Kingdom*, 37. The more information about the issue as suggested by Alex Mckay, can be found in Mullard 2015: 370-72.

<sup>27</sup>*Ibid.*, 37.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*

sanatorium, strategic position to check both Nepal and Bhutan, and also about trade possibilities through it. The similar thoughts about Darjeeling were also shared by Mr. Grant to the Governor-General, Lord William Bentinck. To check the validity of these information, Lord Bentinck asked Captain Herbert, then Deputy Surveyor General, to visit the place for verification. Court of Directors, approved the project to start negotiation with the King (*Chogyal*), of Sikkim. This task was given to General Lloyd who was able to conclude with the King of Sikkim, "the Deed of Grant" in 1<sup>st</sup> of February, 1835.<sup>29</sup>

The hill stations in India were not produced just for single purpose of "rest and recreation."<sup>30</sup> It came up with targeted "form and functions."<sup>31</sup> Their function was not just limited to serve as illusionary home to the servants of the British raj. Every hill station had their distinct roles. Darjeeling as a hill station is categorised as "official multifunctional hill station" by Mitchell among his five categories of hill stations.<sup>32</sup> The defeat of Nepal in 1815, made the sense of probability of opening up of Eastern Himalayas stronger to the British. The event also impacted in shaping the idea of hill station in the north-east and as a result Darjeeling was dragged into the process. Despite the other functions, Darjeeling was also to serve as "forward position in the strategic reconnaissance of neighbouring states and as launching pads for commercial probes into central Asia."<sup>33</sup> By 1857, *Calcutta Review* thought it right to point out that Darjeeling was "cast in our way for a higher purpose than that of securing health and recreation for the sick and the weary from the scorching plains of India."<sup>34</sup> The creation of new hill stations after 1850s started to decrease in number and in the

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<sup>29</sup> LSSO' Malley, *Bengal District Gazetteers: Darjeeling*. (New Delhi: Logos Press, 1907), 20-21.

<sup>30</sup> Kennedy, *The Magic Mountains*, 3.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

<sup>34</sup> Alastair Lamb, 1960. *Britain and Chinese Central Asia: The London Road to Lhasa-1767-1905*, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul), 112.



period after 1850, the British focused more on the consolidation of the hill stations. The formation of Municipal government<sup>35</sup> during this period in hill stations was also important development in making them politically important places. The 1857 developments in different parts of British India marked significant impact upon the hills. Now hills were perceived as places of safety both to the colonisers and to the sustainability of colonialism. This situation brought a lot of infrastructure and communication developments in the hill station like Darjeeling. However, at the other end, all these developments made the hill stations to stop remaining exclusive for the British affairs alone, which was one of the important objectives in creation of the hill station.<sup>36</sup>Regarding the fall of the colonial purpose with the passage of time and changes that came-forth, Kennedy points out that “it was not the hill stations themselves that collapsed, but rather the colonial purpose they served.”<sup>37</sup> However, it was not just about it ceasing to be exclusive for the colonizers but the struggle for the idea of ‘freedom’ by the natives was also an important factor that failed the colonial purposes in the hills.

Thus, many factors led to the making of Darjeeling. British colonial purposes resulted in between a lot of histories, and one such is the creation of hill station of Darjeeling. The un-becoming of Sikkim’s Darjeeling was never an easy task. The British’s Darjeeling was consolidated in phases and it employed native intelligence to complete the task. The exchange of intelligence with land grant was one way of British policy that they followed to full fill their motives. The consolidation of hill station of Darjeeling became important with the potential of growth and development that Darjeeling exhibited by 1850s. The disturbances in the plains in 1850s also

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<sup>35</sup> Darjeeling Municipality was established in 1850.

<sup>36</sup> Kennedy, *The Magic Mountains*, 13-14.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 15.

heightened the importance of hill stations in India. Thus, the matter of making Darjeeling, a secure station, became their priority. Darjeeling as a hill station was also consolidated in the period after 1850 and Chebu Lama, as a native, played an important role in this colonial purpose of expanding, consolidating and securing hill station of Darjeeling.

### *2.1.1 The British-Sikkim relationship following the Deed of the Grant, 1835*

The other area which becomes important to understand the background of Darjeeling is purely political. It is important to look into as to how Darjeeling was brought between British and Sikkim and how such arrangement impacted the further course of history.

The process for the matters concerning to the occupation of Darjeeling by the British was begun at the official level by Governor General, Lord William Bentinck through the Proceeding of 23<sup>rd</sup> of January, 1835. In the minute, he had proposed that “orders may be sent to Major Lloyd to open negotiations with the Sikkim’s King for the transfer of Darjeeling to the British Government.”<sup>38</sup> Major Lloyd was accordingly asked to request the King of Sikkim to make the grant either in exchange with land or cash and to make it clear to the King that it was just for the health reason. The information about this plan was also sent through letter to the King of Sikkim by Lord Bentinck on 11<sup>th</sup> of February, 1835.<sup>39</sup> Lloyd met the King on 12<sup>th</sup> of February, the same year, but the formal meeting took place on 19<sup>th</sup> February, when Lloyd handed over the request to the King. The King also in the next day placed some request before Lloyd relating to boundary, revenue, about seized Lepcha chiefs and the most

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<sup>38</sup> Consultations, 23 January 1835, No. 1 quoted in Pinn, *Road to Destiny*, 119.

<sup>39</sup>Pinn, *Road to Destiny*, 119-120.

important was his request to give him 'Dabgong.'<sup>40</sup> The later correspondence gives the information that the King was willing to give the British some areas to be used for their purpose if the British agreed on King's request especially related to Dabgong.<sup>41</sup> King through his officers had sent the document which was understood as the grant of Darjeeling to be given to Lloyd in which it was stated that the grant for the purpose of health was given by the King to the British out of friendship and it was dated 25<sup>th</sup> of February, 1835.<sup>42</sup> The members in Calcutta thought that it was a small strip of land. Even the King was said to have misunderstood the quantity of land, that Lloyd had proposed for the grant. The council in Calcutta also denied the request of the King that Lloyd had requested the Council for consideration on the ground that the strip of land called Darjeeling was not equivalent to fertile revenue yielding Dabgong. Lloyd in exchanges of letters cleared the confusion that the land was not just strip but large enough to be equivalent to the then sum of Rs. 1,20,000. Lloyd also wrote that, if not Dabgong, then there was an option through paying the king, the rent of Rs. 6000 per annum. Also, for extra land required for the construction of road, he suggested that king could be approached with costly gifts.<sup>43</sup> As a reply to the suggestion provided by Lloyd, the Council wrote on 15<sup>th</sup> of June, that no further communication be made on the demand of Darjeeling keeping in view the King's unwillingness.<sup>44</sup> Lloyd, as a reply to this order, wrote that the grant of Darjeeling was already made by the king by the end of the August, where his letter of request for the grant was returned back to him with the seal of the King confirming the grant.<sup>45</sup> On 5<sup>th</sup> January, 1836, the King not being able to get the reply for the deal, wrote to Lloyd that

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<sup>40</sup>Ibid., 121-122.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid., 122.

<sup>42</sup>Ibid., 122.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid., 123-25.

<sup>44</sup> Consultations, 15 June 1835, No. 150 (dated 25<sup>th</sup> May 1835), quoted in Pinn, *Road to Destiny*, 126.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid., Consultations, 9 November 1835, (dated 31<sup>st</sup> October 1835), 126.

he was honest with what has been sent to Lloyd.<sup>46</sup> This opportunity was used by Lloyd to manipulate the stand of the Council at Calcutta.<sup>47</sup> As a result of this, W.H Macnaghten, Secretary to Government of India, wrote to the King of Sikkim acknowledging the grant of Darjeeling and in-cooperating Lloyd's previous suggestion to provide precious gifts and explanation of reasons to the rejection of King's demand of the cession of Dabgoan to him.<sup>48</sup> The event of cession of Darjeeling can be better understood in the words of Alastair Lamb who points out that:

The cession of Darjeeling was an event of the greatest importance in the history of the northern frontier of India. Not only did it place the British in close contact with the hill states, their peoples and their politics, but also it provided a constant reminder of the possibilities of trade with Tibet.<sup>49</sup>

However, the relationship between the British and the King of Sikkim continued to be disturbed as the British thought that the cession was unconditional while the King felt that he was not well compensated. The problem aggravated when Lloyd who had the proper knowledge of the matter was replaced by Dr. A Campbell, as the Superintendent of Darjeeling.<sup>50</sup> King wrote to both Campbell and the Governor-General indicating their failure to full-fill what they had promised him for allowing them to use Darjeeling.<sup>51</sup> To create problem to the British, the King stopped his people from keeping any trade relation with Darjeeling. British, noticing such

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<sup>46</sup>Ibid., Consultations, 8 February, 1836, No. 85 (dated 5<sup>th</sup> January 1836), 127-28.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., Consultations, 8 February 1836, No. 85 (dated 5<sup>th</sup> January 1836), 128.

<sup>48</sup>Ibid., Consultations, 8 February 1836, No. 87-88, 128-29.

<sup>49</sup> Lamb, *Britain and Chinese Central Asia*, 90.

<sup>50</sup> P. R Rao, *India and Sikkim: 1814-1970*. (New Delhi: Sterling Publishing Pvt. Ltd, 1972), 15.

<sup>51</sup>Ibid., Foreign Political Consultations (F.P.C), 12 February 1840, *Letter of the Raja of Sikkim to Campbell*, November 1839 and F.P.C., 12 February 1840, *Letter of the Raja of Sikkim to the Governor-General*, 27 December 1839, 15-16.

changes, negotiated with the king through the *Vakeel*<sup>52</sup> or agent of the king in January 1841. The King was offered the annual payment of Rs.3000 which previously was decided to be given from the period of 1835, but it was later changed to the date of King's acceptance of the offer. The confusion arose here again as the King accepted the offer on the first criteria and the British understood it on the basis of amended criteria, as a result of which the King demanded his due from 1835 to 1842.<sup>53</sup>

The British-Sikkim relationship further disturbed as time passed. The King was not satisfied with the way of British treatment towards him. The changing scenario of progress in Darjeeling was something that started to evoke the disturbance more. Both the parties retaliated the dissatisfaction by not returning the people who passed into one another's territory. The favouring of Nepal by the British in the Ontoo Hill dispute was another area of discontentment.<sup>54</sup> The important developments took place with the warning of Campbell through letter of 8<sup>th</sup> June, 1846 wherein he pointed out eight mistakes of King with which the British government was not happy and if the king continued to follow similar activities, then it was made clear that "the Government would be compelled to attack his possessions in Morung."<sup>55</sup> Through the *Dewan* or Chief Minister, Ilam Singh, the King sent his reply to Campbell which reached on 2<sup>nd</sup> October 1846 where in almost all the allegations were explained to be untrue.<sup>56</sup> In 1846, the compensation (grace) was raised to Rs.6000 per annum, Rs. 3000 more than the earlier rent.<sup>57</sup> It was expected that the relationship should improve

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<sup>52</sup> Post created after the cession Darjeeling to British, for keeping correspondence between Sikkim and British Darjeeling.

<sup>53</sup> Rao, *India and Sikkim*, 17-18.

<sup>54</sup> *ibid.*, 19.

<sup>55</sup> *ibid.*, F.P.C., 22 August 1846, *Letter of Campbell to the Raja of Sikkim*, 8 June 1846, 20.

<sup>56</sup> Rao, *India and Sikkim*, 20-21.

<sup>57</sup> H.H Rishley, *Gazetteer of Sikkim*. 1894. (Gangtok: Sikkim Nature Conservation Foundation), 20. Originally published in 1894. Alastair Lamb (1960) uses the word "grace" to term the money that British used to provide to the king of Sikkim, 98.

between the British Government and the King of Sikkim but it did not happen as expected.<sup>58</sup>

At the backdrop of such background, British Darjeeling and Sikkim relationship, gets yet another important turn in their relationship with the advent of Chebu Lama in the scene, who despite being a native was also an influential personality in the *Durbar* of Sikkim.

## 2.2 Chebu Lama: An Introduction

Chebu Lama was the son of Lhacho. The actual name of Chebu Lama<sup>59</sup> was Tsee-Dron Adan and was also known as Tseepa Dronyer and Cheebu Lama. Chebu Lama had one brother. His brother's name was Solpon Dradul. Solpon Dradul was the father of Phurbu Dewan or Shew Dewan. Chebu Lama's son was Rechuk Dewan, who had no son. Chebu Lama's sister named as Aringma was married to the son of Barmoik Jongpon Phodar named as Yug-Dragtsal.<sup>60</sup>

Chebu Lama was educated at Mendooling. It was a famous sit of learning. It was located in the eastern side of Lhassa, Tibet. At Mendooling, he had studied for the duration of two years. He had joined there in course meant for priesthood (Lama), the duration of which was actually for three years. There were other subjects which were also taught there. Along that, vocational subjects like simple trades, carpentry, masonry, painting, shoemaking, tailoring were also offered at Mendooling.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>58</sup>Rao, *India and Sikkim*, 22.

<sup>59</sup> Chebu Lama or Cheboo Lama was taken by the British from Tib: rTsis-pu, the meaning of which was 'astrologer monk.' This information is taken from the foot note provided in Alex Mckay (2021), 57.

<sup>60</sup> Sir Thutob Namgyal & Yeshay Dolma, 1908. *History of Sikkim*. Trans. by Kazi Dousandup, (Gangtok: Sikkim Research Institute of Tibetology), 6.

<sup>61</sup> J. Forbes Watson and John William Kaye, 1868, (eds.). *The People of India: A Series of Photographic Illustrations with Descriptive Letterpress, The Races and Tribes of Hindustan*. (India Museum, London: W.H Allen and Co.), 1868.

Rishley informs that Chebu Lama belonged to the family of Tibetan origin, the group called as *A IDan.Pu-Tsha.Po*, (Adinpuso), a pure Lepcha group. This group had to pay high fee to get admission in the Pemiongchi monastery.<sup>62</sup> The title *A-den* as understood by General Mainwaring is that “the created, fashioned, formed.”<sup>63</sup> However, one explanation based upon the legendary information provided by the members of Adenpuso group shared by Rishley, give a different understanding. According to that information, Adinpuso group came from *Khams-A-IDan-Chhos-hKhor-gLing*, Tibethad entered Sikkim even before the coming of Rajah Penchoo to the throne.<sup>64</sup> The other explanation is that the group derives its history from a spiritual guide, a Lama who was granted provinces in Tibet by the emperor of China, Sa-chhen in 1251. During his return journey from Mongolia (China) in the year 1264, the Lama accompanied with him a man from a place called Kham-Aden whose name was *NatWang-Ton-Grub*. This native man of Kham-Aden was sent to Sikkim for earning his living, and was settled at Talung. His children and grand-children lived at different places in Sikkim.<sup>65</sup> They were said to be the ancestors of Chebu Lama and Raja Tenduk, nephew of Chebu Lama. His one ancestor named De-Chhen.kyab was said to be there during the coronation of King Penchoo at Yoksom in 1641.<sup>66</sup> In the areas around Talung river, the presence of many families of Lepchas are recorded to be found among whom were also the families related to Chebu Lama. Chebu Lama’s father was the *Jongpen* of places called Sidhi and Karmi (Karmi estate was a part of Chebu Lama Grant). Those places were first occupied by Nam-chhyo-mo and Chado

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<sup>62</sup> Rishley, *The Gazetteer of Sikkim*, 29.

<sup>63</sup>Ibid., 31.

<sup>64</sup>Ibid., 33.

<sup>65</sup>Ibid.

<sup>66</sup>Ibid., 34.

was the *Jongpen*, who was the father of Phodang Lama and only after him, Chebu Lama's father Lahoo was appointed as *Jongpen* of Sidhi and Karmi.<sup>67</sup>

Campbell adds more information about Chebu Lama. He informs that Chebu Lama's father was a Bootia (Tibetan) and his mother was a Lepcha and Chebu Lama's birth place was Sikkim.<sup>68</sup> Before Chebu Lama went to Mendooling in Tibet, he had learned reading when he was in Sikkim. He left his course at Mendooling incomplete, as a result of which he was not able to become a proper Lama. When he was twenty-four years of age, he was sent to Darjeeling for the purpose of training required to become a *Vakeel* or agent of Sikkim and later he was appointed for the same post in Darjeeling. There he was able to learn *Hindostani* and Campbell was impressed by his extraordinary intelligence. He knew and was very good at languages like Lepcha which was his own language, Tibetan, and other dialects too. He was with the permission of the king of Sikkim, appointed by Campbell as an interpreter in his office at Darjeeling. This was an opportunity for Chebu Lama to understand the British way of administration. His faithfulness had attracted the attention of Campbell. His way of working had brought him in good terms with both king and the British government. Chebu Lama is taken as an example by Campbell to illustrate as to how Lepchas after coming in contact with Europeans had developed themselves mentally and morally, indicating the Lepchas capability to make progressive changes in themselves. During his training at Darjeeling, Campbell informs about Chebu Lama that he taught that, the British-Sikkim relationship was to be worked out keeping in mind that "his master's best interests were always identified with ours."<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>67</sup>Ibid., 34-35.

<sup>68</sup> A. Campbell, 1869. "On the Lepchas." *The Journal of the Ethnological Society of London* (1869-1870), 1, no. 2:154. Also see footnote on p.145 of the same source.

<sup>69</sup> Campbell, *On the Lepchas*, 154-155.



Chebu Lama's son was initially educated at Pema-Yang-tse monastery in Sikkim. He was later admitted to the Tibetan Boarding School. The school was established by Mr. Edgar at Darjeeling.<sup>70</sup>

Hooker describes Chebu Lama as “little bare-headed rosy cheeked Lama.”<sup>71</sup> He also writes that Chebu Lama was a “devoted servant of the Rajah.”<sup>72</sup> Hooker is of the opinion that no other person except Chebu Lama was capable for the function of interpreter as he knew both Hindi and Tibetan. He also mentions that Chebu Lama wanted that good relation to be built between Rajah of Sikkim and British Darjeeling.<sup>73</sup> Hooker identifies Chebu Lama as a Lepcha and he again writes that Chebu Lama belonged to the family “among the oldest and most respectable of Tibetan origin in Sikkim.”<sup>74</sup> According to McKay, Chebu Lama's Lepcha identity was a created identity after Chebu Lama became an ally of British.<sup>75</sup> However he also informs that the intermarriage that took place for generations between clan of Chebu Lama and the Lepchas had given birth to Lepcha identity for themselves.<sup>76</sup>

The father of Chebu Lama was among the one who were ordered to kill Chagzod Bolod, who though was an important person in the kingdom was found to be a treason, the incident after which many Lepchas of this clan out of fear fled to Ilam, Nepal.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> S.C, Das, 1969. *Narratives of the Incidents of My Early Life*. Reprint. (Calcutta: R.D Press), 15. Quoted in Dick B. Dewan, 1991. *Education in the Darjeeling Hills: An Historical Survey (1835-1985)* (New Delhi: Indus Publishing House).

<sup>71</sup> Joseph Dalton Hooker, 1891. *Himalayan Journals or Notes of a Naturalist: In Bengal, The Sikkim and Nepal Himalayas, the Khasia Mountains, etc.* (London, New York, and Melbourne: Ward, Lock, Bowden and Co.), 212.

<sup>72</sup> Hooker, *Himalayan Journals*, 212.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., 427.

<sup>75</sup> McKay, *The Mandala Kingdom*, 76.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., 58.

<sup>77</sup> Namgyal & Dolma, *History of Sikkim*, 58.

In Darjeeling, Chebu Lama lived in a Lepcha Village at Lebong not so far away from Darjeeling town. The place was used from very long time by the traders of Tibet and Bhutan as their meeting place. Chebu Lama's house was similar to that of houses meant for British in Sikkim and Australia especially due to shingled roof of the house.<sup>78</sup> During the Doar War in 1864-65, two English-men Rennie and Dr. Simpson visited Chebu Lama's house. Rennie explains that:

Cheeboo's style of living is not strictly ambassadorial. The house, which is a small single storied one, built in the European style, was dirty and devoid of furniture, with the exception of a few shelves, a cupboard, and two old arm chairs...His appearance was particularly Mongolian... He wore a very dirty, greasy, yellow silk robe, without sleeves, over an inner robe of woollen material. On his head he had the yellow silk porkpie hat, turned up with velvet...as worn by the Mongolian Lepchas.<sup>79</sup>

Rennie also gives the information that Chebu Lama was a priest. However, with due regard to his job, he was permitted to have a wife. Chebu Lama was known for his intelligence and clear headedness.<sup>80</sup> After having the sight of Chebu Lama writing a letter, Rennie had described him as "thorough master of the pen."<sup>81</sup>In this segment of information about Chebu Lama, he is identified as Mongolian Lepcha.<sup>82</sup> Chebu Lama despite being close with British, was never influenced by their way of living.<sup>83</sup>

Hooker have described the house of Chebu Lama's family in Tumlong, Sikkim. He informs that it was a large house, near the King's residence. It was also storeyed house where the ground floor was kept for cattle, which had the walls of stone. The upper storied of the house was connected through stone stair. The house

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<sup>78</sup>David Field Rennie, 2005.*Bhotan and the Story of The Doar War*. New Edition. (Varanasi: Pilgrims Publishing), 278. Originally published in 1866.

<sup>79</sup>Rennie, *Bhotan and the Story of The Doar War*, 310-311.

<sup>80</sup>Ibid., 311.

<sup>81</sup>Ibid., 311-312.

<sup>82</sup>Ibid., 313.

<sup>83</sup>Ibid., 373.

had paintings which were made by the artists from Lhasa which were described as “brilliant and tasteful.”<sup>84</sup> Hooker further describes about the home that:

...Everywhere the lotus, the mani, and the chirki, were introduced; “Om Mani Padmi hom” in gilt letters adorned the projecting end of every beam; and the Chinese “cloud messenger,” or winged dragon, floted in azure and gold along the capitals and beams, amongst scrolls and groups of flowers. At one end was a sitting figure of Gorucknath in Lama robes, surrounded by a glory, with mitre and beads; the right and holding the Dorjee, and the forefinger raised in prayer. Around was a good library of books...<sup>85</sup>

Chebu Lama is also said to be the ancestor of Kazi Lhendup Dorji, who once became the Chief Minister of Sikkim.<sup>86</sup> He had played an important role in the rise of Democracy in Sikkim.<sup>87</sup>

Chebu Lama’s relation with the King deteriorated when he interfered in the succession issue. It was found by the King that the person behind fixing the marriage of his celibate son was Chebu Lama. He was proven guilty for creating misunderstanding between father-son relationship. As a result, it was made clear through the bond signed between king and his son that the prince would not be forgiven for mistakes that he may do on the influence of Chebu Lama. In the bond, Chebu Lama was addressed as “wicked Aden.”<sup>88</sup>

It has been pointed out that Chebu Lama, while he was appointed as *Vakeel* in Darjeeling had misused his position. The British government used to pay some amount of money annually to the king of Sikkim as a compensation for his grant of Darjeeling to them. From that sum of money, Chebu Lama used to keep some amount

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<sup>84</sup> Hooker, *Himalayan Journals*, 429.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

<sup>86</sup> A. C Sinha, “Once Upon a Time: The Eastern Himalayan Canvass.” *Sikkim Express*. May 18, 2021, <http://sikkimexpress.com/news-details/once-upon-a-time-the-eastern-himalayan-canvass-1> Accessed on 05/05/2022.

<sup>87</sup> A.C. Sinha, 2006. *Sikkim Feudal and Democratic*. (Indus Publishing House), 73.

<sup>88</sup> Namgyal & Dolma, *History of Sikkim*, 65.

of money for himself and only little part was submitted to the King of Sikkim. In one occasion, the British government had provided Rs. 20,000 to the King but only Rs. 9,508 was given to the King by Chebu Lama. With other corruption too, he had misused around Rs. 24,262.<sup>89</sup>

Chebu Lama along with others were asked by the King Tsugphud Namgyal to not allow people from Bhutan and Nepal to settle in Sikkim. He had expressed that in this way, “It will never do if you allow Bhutanese and Gurkhas to settle down in Sikkim. Kyabgon Sridkyong (Maharaja Sridkyong Namgyal) is too devoutly disposed and will not attend to State duties. So you all Lamas and Kazis will have to help him in the administration of the State.”<sup>90</sup> Following his father’s stand, the same order was also passed by King Sridkyong Namgyal in the year 1871. Chebu Lama is pointed out as someone who had disobeyed the order in the year 1875. He had allowed the *Paharias* or Nepalese to get settled at places like Chakung, Rishi and Ramam rivers in the year 1875. Following him, others like Lasso Kazi, Phodang Lama, Khanga Dewan had also allowed the settlement of Nepalese in different places of Sikkim. However, the action taken by Chebu Lama is dated as 1875<sup>91</sup>, but Chebu Lama had died a decade earlier in 1866<sup>92</sup> as per British records. Thus, to attach Chebu Lama with the incidents that took place in 1875 contradict with the fact that Chebu Lama died in the year 1866.

On similar note, AC Sinha gives more information about it. He informs that Chebu Lama was a Lepcha *Kazi*. He was from Chakhung (which should mean that he was the *Kazi* of Chakhung). He after knowing about the Newar businessmen at

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<sup>89</sup>Ibid., 67. The information about this corruption as pointed out by Namgyal & Dolma (1908), 67, can be found in the letter from India Government Secretary to the Secretary of the Bengal Government, letter no. 266, dated 19<sup>th</sup> March, 1862.

<sup>90</sup>Ibid., 67.

<sup>91</sup>Ibid., 72.

<sup>92</sup>Watson and Kaye, eds. *The People of India*.

Darjeeling and their contribution in creating wealth there, was impressed and thus had decided to settle such people in Sikkim with a view to develop Sikkim, which had natural resources but was devoid of own currency. As Newars were engaged in minting of coins in Nepal, it has been pointed out that Chebu Lama thought it good to import them to Sikkim, to give Sikkim its own currency. Sinha also informs that the process was carried forward by his close relatives, Khangsa Dewan and Phodang Lama.<sup>93</sup>

The other angle of understanding and knowing more about Chebu Lama comes from what the British wrote about Chebu Lama. In the compilation made by the British that includes the information about the tribes of India, they had also included Chebu Lama in it. The compilation, gives the following information about Chebu Lama:

It may be said of Chebu, that he was one of the few natives in Hindoostan who gave the British Government credit for integrity and impartiality in their government of that vast dependency; and it is much to be regretted that his death last winter prevented his becoming aware that he had been selected for the honour of the Companionship of the Star of India, he being the only native of Tibet who had hitherto been considered worthy of such a distinction.<sup>94</sup>

Campbell informs that he had brought to the notice of Governor-General about Chebu Lama's "excellent qualities."<sup>95</sup> His nomination for "Companionship of the Star of India" (CSI), was an acknowledgement to the contribution of Chebu Lama to the

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<sup>93</sup> Sinha, *Sikkim: Feudal and Democratic*, 73. However, the absent of source for this information in the cited source makes it doubtful whether actually Chebu Lama himself was responsible for bringing Nepali settlers in Sikkim.

<sup>94</sup> Watson and Kaye, ed., *The People of India*, 51.

<sup>95</sup> Campbell, *On the Lepchas*, 155. Also see p.153.

British government. Campbell also thinks that Chebu Lama was the first “Aryan” to have such honour from Her Majesty.<sup>96</sup>

In a route guide book meant for Darjeeling published in 1913, mentions about a road named after Chebu Lama called as “Chebu Lama Road.” The road is discussed in the context of providing the idea of short-cut route from Chowrasta to Lebong Cantonment and road was at Bhutia Busty.<sup>97</sup> It is also mentioned again while discussing upon “Circular route from Chowrasta round Lebong Spur.”<sup>98</sup>

After Darjeeling was taken by the British in 1835, the post of *Vakil* was created. When Chebu Lama was appointed as the *Vakil* of Darjeeling, he was to act as a Sikkimese representative in Darjeeling. His function was to be an intermediary between Darjeeling and Sikkim and also to collect the annual payment that British had to provide to the king of Sikkim. The first *Vakil* to Darjeeling was Lasso *Kazi* who was appointed in 1835. When Chebu Lama was appointed in 1841, he had replaced Tangten Kurtok. Later in 1849, he was replaced by Lasso *Kazi* Lha Tenzing as the relationship between new Dewan Namgyal and Chebu Lama was not good.<sup>99</sup> Later in 1850 again he was chosen as the *Vakil* of Darjeeling, after the Hooker-Campbell episode.

### **2.3: The Conflict among the King makers in Sikkim Durbar: Tokhang Donyer Namgyal and Chebu Lama**

Ilam Singh had died in 1847 during the period when Sikkim was disturbed internally. The death of the *Dewan* to whom the British Government could rely on, created a

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<sup>96</sup>Ibid.

<sup>97</sup>Geo. P. Robertson, 1913. *Darjeeling Route Guide with Directions, Plans, a Map and a Complete Index for the Instruction and Guidance of Visitors to the Town Darjeeling*. (Darjeeling, Jail Road: Bose Press), 104.

<sup>98</sup>Robertson, *Darjeeling Route Guide*, 108. Also see p. 106 of the same.

<sup>99</sup> Mckay, *The Mandala Kingdom*, 58.

confused state of situation for the British in Darjeeling. At the other hand, there was internal problem going on in the Sikkim Palace.<sup>100</sup>

The internal problem rose with the 7<sup>th</sup> King of Sikkim, *Chogyal* Tsugphud Namgyal's growing old-age. The Tibet Government was worried about the situation of succession as the king was left with only one living legitimate son who was also a celibate lama. The Tibetan government with consultations with important priestly groups decided to hold prayers both in Tibet and Sikkim seeking blessings to have the son born to the *Chogyal* so that to have the lineage of the King continued.<sup>101</sup>

As such the Lama son of the King was not eligible to come in the throne. So, the only option was the King's illegitimate son named Tenzing Namgyal or Chagzod Karpo who was born from King's affair with the helpmate of his second wife. This matter attracted dispute among the elite faction in the *Durbar* mainly between groups led by Tokhang Namgyal and Chebu Lama. As the sister of Tokhang Namgyal had married with the illegitimate son of the King, he therefore was in opposition to the candidature of Sridkyong Namgyal, the celibate Lama son of the King. On the other side, Chebu Lama was in the support of the Lama son of the King. The only way to make Sidkyong, the king was by ending his vows of celibacy. Chebu Lama, therefore is said to have taken the matter to the Dalai Lama. It is also said that he had requested the Dalai Lama to dispense Sridkyong from the status of celibacy and also had arranged marriage for the Lama prince.<sup>102</sup> The activities of Chebu Lama had created disturbance between the King and his son as well as between him and the King. The Lama son was asked to retire to monastic life again and Chebu Lama's life was said to have excused out of the intervention made by the Lama son of the King, who

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<sup>100</sup>Ibid., 22.

<sup>101</sup> Namgyal & Dolma, *History of Sikkim*, 64.

<sup>102</sup> Rao, *India and Sikkim*, 22-23. Also see p. 511 of Campbell (1849), pp. 64-65 of Namgyal & Dolma (1908) pp. 59-61, McKay (2021).

otherwise was decided to be executed for his involvement in the process of making Sidkeong Namgyal, the next King of Sikkim. However, a son was born from the 7<sup>th</sup> Chogyal lately in 1860 who later became the 9<sup>th</sup> Chogyal, but out of age factors, the Lama son of king, Sidkeong Namgyal had taken over the power.<sup>103</sup>

Out of disturbed relationship between the King and Chebu Lama, Tokhang Donyer Namgyal successfully became the *Dewan* of Sikkim, which further opened a space for disturbances between the *Dewan* and Chebu Lama too. However, Chebu Lama, became successful in his mission when in 1861 during Sikkim-British conflict, he secretly sent message to the old King of Sikkim, who was then at Chombi, to send his son Sridkyong to Tumlong, the then capital of Sikkim, for negotiation with the British. As a result of which, Sridkyong got an opportunity to act as a successor to the King. On the other hand, the British demanded the banishment of *Dewan* Namgyal from the post of *Dewan* as well as from the country, which formed the part of the Treaty of Tumlong, 1861. The fruits went into the head of Chebu Lama, he was now not just the *Vakil* of Darjeeling but also the *Dewan* of Sikkim<sup>104</sup>, the crown he had been waiting for long. Thus, this conflict rose as a significant event in moulding the further course of three relationships namely, King-Chebu relationship, British-Sikkim relationship and British-Chebu relationship.

#### **2.4 Chebu Lama Grant: A Background**

The British government and the Kingdom of Sikkim was not having good relationship since the Deed of the Grant, 1835. The same Deed of Darjeeling Grant also had affected the Sikkim- Tibet relationship. No foreigners were to be allowed through

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<sup>103</sup> Mckay, *The Mandala Kingdom*, 60-61.

<sup>104</sup> Namgyal & Dolma, *History of Sikkim*, 66-67.



Sikkim beyond Tibetan borders. Even the King of Sikkim was to visit only once in eight long years.<sup>105</sup>

At such difficult phase of relationship, Dr. Campbell, the Superintendent of Darjeeling, as instructed by the Governor General, Lord Dalhousie, wrote to the King of Sikkim in 1848, for the visit of Dr. Joseph D. Hooker, a noted British botanist, to Sikkim for the purpose of “Scientific researches.”<sup>106</sup> However, the response from Sikkim was not positive.<sup>107</sup> Campbell thus once again decided to enter Sikkim to meet the King generally with the permission of the Governor-General for which he received the permission.<sup>108</sup> He met the King finally after many days from his departure from Darjeeling where Chebu Lama became an interpreter for him during the meet.<sup>109</sup> Hooker also entered Sikkim and both met the King.<sup>110</sup> They spent together around ten days visiting different places in Sikkim and after which Campbell decided to leave for Darjeeling while Hooker was left in Sikkim to explore more of Sikkim.<sup>111</sup> The first attempt failed as Hooker wrote to Campbell who was back to Darjeeling that he was troubled by the Sikkim officials. Campbell with permission from the King entered Sikkim again. It was his second visit.<sup>112</sup>

During the second attempt, while Hooker had reached around Tendong, the information was brought by Chebu Lama who had come there with around twenty to thirty Lepcha men, who had carried with them “bows, quivers, long knives.”<sup>113</sup> The scene had scared them but recognising that the people were led by Chebu Lama had

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<sup>105</sup> Ibid., 66.

<sup>106</sup> Campbell, *On the Lepchas*, 482

<sup>107</sup> Ibid.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid., 484.

<sup>109</sup> Campbell, *On the Lepchas*, 519-520.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid., 525.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid., 538.

<sup>112</sup> Rao, *India and Sikkim*, 24-25

<sup>113</sup> Hooker. *Himalayan Journals*, 291.

brought them relief. Chebu Lama then informed that Lasso Kazi had given orders for stopping Hooker from further progressing. However, he asked Hooker to carry on the progress. He also sent men to the king to inform him about Hooker's journey to Sikkim. Through the messengers, he also requested king to provide Hooker, a guide and to look after the need of Hooker. From then, Chebu Lama returned to Darjeeling again.<sup>114</sup> When Hooker reached Lachen and the head of Lachen was instructed through Chebu Lama by the King to help Hooker to reach the pass, however not indicating the exact location.<sup>115</sup> Spending some time exploring there, he received letters carrying positive messages from Chebu Lama and others.<sup>116</sup> Hooker later was informed that Chebu Lama and Campbell had started their journey from Darjeeling.<sup>117</sup> Hooker, Campbell and Chebu Lama decided to start journey beyond the Tibet frontier.<sup>118</sup> While they returned back, they planned a meeting with the King for which Campbell and Chebu Lama were excited.<sup>119</sup> Chebu Lama was sent with the letters of their arrival to Sikkim *Durbar*, for which he had to take leave before Campbell and Hooker.<sup>120</sup> After reaching, Tumlong, they stayed near Chebu Lama's family house which was some hundred feet away from the residence of the King.<sup>121</sup> Again they went to Chola pass and while returning from there, at Chumanako, they met with huge number of Bhutias gathered together. While in the evening, Campbell and Hooker were captured by them. After some time, the Soubah of Singtam and Chebu Lama had arrived at the spot. Chebu Lama had given the impression that he was under pressure and worried. However, Hooker was set free and it was informed to him that Campbell

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<sup>114</sup>Ibid.

<sup>115</sup>Ibid., 332.

<sup>116</sup>Ibid., 346.

<sup>117</sup>Ibid., 392.

<sup>118</sup>Ibid., 394.

<sup>119</sup>Ibid., 423.

<sup>120</sup>Ibid., 426.

<sup>121</sup>Ibid., 427.

was captured with the orders of the King who was un-happy with his activities as the British officer. Chebu Lama was helpless as he was also treated like a captured person. Later when they were decided to be taken to the *Durbar*, Chebu Lama had advised Hooker to ask Campbell that he should do everything that the King ask for and denial would prove a threat to his life. He had also shared that even his own life was at great risk, that he hardly had any other way then to allow his throat to be cut by the *Dewan* Namgyal's faction who were then in the power. Hooker had found Chebu Lama nervous and with tears, when he decided to move from there.<sup>122</sup> Families of Chebu Lama were also not allowed to keep any communication with Hooker and Campbell.<sup>123</sup> When finally, a meeting was called for the discussion about the capturing of Campbell and Hooker, Chebu Lama had acted as an interpreter. Chebu Lama's brother was also present there from the king's side. However, meeting could not come into conclusion.<sup>124</sup> Chebu Lama, himself was unable to help them much, he being marked for his support to the English men. He was put in much trouble for his stand which was against the *Dewan's* wishes. He was not allowed to meet the King too.<sup>125</sup> When, things were settled, they were allowed to proceed for Darjeeling. Chebu Lama was allowed to come with them however, he was asked to not have any conversation with them.<sup>126</sup> The King was directed from Calcutta to hand over the people who were involved in ill-treatment of Hooker and Campbell. King, having failed to do that had to face the consequences. A large area of land comprising Sikkim's terai and land falling in the Sikkim's Southern part, were annexed to the

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<sup>122</sup>Ibid., 434-438.

<sup>123</sup>Ibid., 448.

<sup>124</sup>Ibid., 449-450.

<sup>125</sup>Ibid., 451.

<sup>126</sup>Ibid., 454.

British territory. Chebu Lama was then rewarded for the service he had provided during this episode. With other gifts, he had also received a land on lease.<sup>127</sup>

For his residence, he may have been provided with house at that particular time as it has been already discussed that Chebu Lama lived at Lebung near Darjeeling. The large part of land which he got in 1850 was on lease and the grant as such, with rights was given to him only in 1861. The land captured during this time was also temporarily captured which was permanently annexed after 1861 episode.

Tokhang Namgyal was the then *Dewan* of Sikkim during the reign of Tsugphud Namgyal. He was made the *Dewan* for his impressive diplomatic ties with Tibet in regard to Sikkim-Tibet relationship.<sup>128</sup> On the other side, after the death of Ilam Singh, the *Vakil* for Darjeeling, Dewan Namgyal had chosen Lasso Kazi in the post of *Vakil* for Darjeeling, who was very close to Dewan Namgyal. In the arrest of Campbell and Hooker, *Dewan* Namgyal was a prominent person. Campbell was therefore uncomfortable with the *Vakil* of Namgyal's choice.<sup>129</sup>

Campbell and Hooker were released on 24<sup>th</sup> December, 1849.<sup>130</sup> This arrest turned out to be an important matter in already deteriorating relationship between Sikkim and British government.

The treatment meted by these two people became important news to the British empire. As pointed out by McKay, it was reported in Australia's *Perth Gazette an Independent Journal of Politics and News* dating 12<sup>th</sup> of April, 1850. The matter was then just not limited to how British Government would react to it, but had

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<sup>127</sup>Ibid., 461-463.

<sup>128</sup> Namgyal & Dolma, *History of Sikkim*, 64.

<sup>129</sup>Rao, *India and Sikkim*, 26. Also see, McKay (2021), pp. 55-57, for understanding more about Tokyang Namgyal where McKay also writes about how British constructed Tokyang Namgyal as "villain" and manipulated the historiography of the period.

<sup>130</sup> Rishley, *Gazeteer of Sikkim*, 21.

become a matter of prestige. Thus, the British government planned to send force to Sikkim as a response, the task of which was laid to General Young who however, was not successful giving the reason that the terrain was too difficult to carry out the plan of invasion.<sup>131</sup>

Campbell who was not willing to forget the confinement in Sikkim, was successful in getting the permission to occupy a portion of Sikkim territory. Here too, Chebu Lama was a prominent person to provide man, material and intelligence to Campbell. However, they were sent back by the forces of Sikkim. This blow brought by Campbell was taken by the British government as the “grave error.”<sup>132</sup>

It is also to be remembered that Chebu Lama was with Hooker and Campbell in their tour as an interpreter. He was also arrested along with these two people.<sup>133</sup> Chebu Lama was called as “great ally” by Hooker for his contribution in helping the British government meet their objectives. As Campbell was already aware of Lasso Kazi’s closeness to *Dewan* Namgyal, he was not comfortable working with Lasso Kazi. As the situation also turned in British favour, he was able to replace Lasso Kazi by Chebu Lama as the *Vakil* of Darjeeling.<sup>134</sup> Recognising, his contribution, he was also granted the huge piece of land, which is known as Chebu Lama Grant, which will be the part of the next chapter.

## **2.5 Chebu Lama in the Gawler Expedition to Sikkim,1860-61**

The British had found the opportunity to further encroach upon Sikkim after the Campbell-Hooker episode. It was the established tradition for the British in India to use the petty fights as a reason, platform and legitimacy to make it a bigger issue to

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<sup>131</sup> Mckay, *The Mandala Kingdom*, 64.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*, 70.

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*, 67.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*, 68.

bring glory to the British empire from all such situations. It was no different with Sikkim too.

Colonel J.C. Gawler was instructed to take the command of the force to move from Darjeeling to take up the task to move into Sikkim. The instruction stating the same reached Gawler on 12<sup>th</sup> of December, 1860.<sup>135</sup> The reason as Gawler provides for such reaction from the British Government was that “To punish the State of Sikkim for its original aggression and subsequent treachery...as shall vindicate our honour, and counteract the political effect with such a string of plunder, as appears in the margin, will have upon Thibet and Bhotan.”<sup>136</sup>

The piece of territory that the British government was trying to occupy also had security reasons. As not all and only areas around Darjeeling and Kurseong was under British control by the Deed of 1835, and therefore there were still lands in the side of British territory which was under Sikkim. As rivers have always been significant while demarcating the boundary, the land around river Rummum, Little Rangit in the side of South-West Darjeeling was having Sikkim control. This territory had a possible access to Sikkim, even to the then capital of Sikkim, Tumlong. In the changed scenario of late 1850s, the occupation of this land became significant for the British government. The idea of the same can be understood from what Gawler writes:

The mere re-occupation of the original piece of territory taken by us, and perhaps an additional piece, would entail two or more standing camps, whose communication with Darjeeling would require to be kept up by smaller posts and continued escorts...it is therefore with the conviction that it would ensure the future comfort and security of the troops and

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<sup>135</sup> Colonel J.C. Gawler, 1873. *Sikkim with hints on Mountain and Jungle Warfare: Exhibiting also the Facilities for opening Commercial Relations through the State of Sikkim with Central Asia, Thibet and Western China*. (London: Edward Stanford, 6&7, Charing Cross, S.W.), 1.

<sup>136</sup> Gawler, *Sikkim with hints on Mountain and Jungle Warfare*, 10.

country...instruction from the government will be to give the enemy his first lesson in Tumlong, his capital, if necessary to destroy it, previous to occupying or reoccupying any portion of his territory.<sup>137</sup>

The British target was Namchi (South Sikkim), as they found that enemy were positioned out there.<sup>138</sup> Two ways were decided, one from Great Rungeet and other from Goke (that later forms the part of Chebu Lama Grant).<sup>139</sup> However, the planned route through Goke was not used due to transport problems.<sup>140</sup>

The expedition was not easy from the both factors- terrain and enemy.<sup>141</sup> As already the previous attempt had remained unsuccessful out of such difficulties. Coolies were an important and unavoidable medium of transportation.<sup>142</sup> But to avail the services of coolies was another trouble to them. To have the services from coolies, the British government were required to proclaim them that the expedition would result positive and the territory from where the coolies were taken would be permanently occupied by the British Government.<sup>143</sup> The coolies were to be assured to avoid the possible punishment for themselves from the king of Sikkim.<sup>144</sup>

Gawler met Chebu Lama along with Mr. Ashley Eden on his way to Timi.<sup>145</sup> Mr. Eden provided information and guidance as to how should he proceeded and Chebu Lama was the one behind Mr. Eden quipping him with information. Chebu Lama also gave the idea of road leading to the capital of Sikkim, Tumlong.<sup>146</sup>

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<sup>137</sup>Ibid., 11.

<sup>138</sup>Ibid., 21.

<sup>139</sup>Ibid., 18.

<sup>140</sup>Ibid., 18.

<sup>141</sup>Ibid., 33.

<sup>142</sup>Ibid., 13.

<sup>143</sup>Ibid., 21.

<sup>144</sup>Ibid., 27.

<sup>145</sup>Ibid., 51.

<sup>146</sup>Ibid., 57.

As the king was not there, his son arrived from Choombi.<sup>147</sup> The matter was expected to be solved within two weeks. The way to return back to Darjeeling was also decided. They were to come down to Teesta, then proceed to Yongong, further to Pemionchi, Rincheningpoong then to Goke (later under Chebu Lama Grant), from where they were to move towards Darjeeling.<sup>148</sup>

The negotiation reached to the signing of Treaty between the British government and Sikkim on 29<sup>th</sup> February, 1861. Gawler quotes from the final report submitted by Mr. Eden in relation to the Treaty:

On the 29<sup>th</sup> February, the Treaty was signed in a monastery near the Rajah's house, in the presence of all the officers of the force. The Treaty was read out by Colonel Gawler in English to the European troops; in Hindu by my moonshee to the native troops; and by the Chotah Dewan, in Bootiah to the natives of the country, a large assemblage of whom crowded round to listen to it...<sup>149</sup>

Regarding Chebu Lama's role in the 1860-61 Sikkim expedition by the British, it is written that he was given the responsibility to look after the transport means required for the mission about which the Special Commissioner had wrote that:

His influence with his Countrymen is such that if he were to leave us, the greater portion of the coolies would refuse to advance. His knowledge of the country is very valuable. All the scouts are under him.<sup>150</sup>

Chebu Lama was gifted with gold watch, chain, and good amount of cash. Along that, he was also granted land, that came to be known as Chebu Lama Grant, from the hill tract which was annexed from Sikkim.<sup>151</sup> Though Chebu Lama was given the land on

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<sup>147</sup>Ibid., 65.

<sup>148</sup>Ibid., 66.

<sup>149</sup>Ibid., 73.

<sup>150</sup> Watson and Kaye ed., *The People of India*, 51.

<sup>151</sup>Ibid.



lease early in 1850 itself yet it was only after 1861 episode, that he was granted land with proprietary rights and for forever.

The Sikkim expedition was understood by the British government as difficult one. As such, the well informed and politically active person like Chebu Lama, as a native to be assisting to the British government shares important place in the success of the expedition. Without the help of Chebu Lama, many things would have been difficult for the British. The idea of occupying the small portion of Sikkimese territory post the Campbell-Hooker incident also indicates the hints towards Chebu Lama's involvement in the idea, given the fact that the very portion of land formed later what is called as Chebu Lama Grant. The Treaty of Tumlong, 1861 can also be regarded as the turning point for the British expansion in the Eastern Himalayas. British were able to gain considerable domination over Sikkim through the provisions of the Treaty, 1861.<sup>152</sup>

## **2.6 Chebu Lama in the Mr. Eden's Mission to Bhutan, 1863-64**

The Deed of Grant of Darjeeling impacted the frontier relations in many ways, and one of those was also the British and Bhutan engagement concerning the Bengal Doars region. Chebu Lama played an important role regarding this frontier politics. The battle of Plassey followed by the Battle of Buxar, strengthened the British hold particularly in Bengal which had potential possibilities to have frontier developments. As Bengal had Sikkim, Tibet and Bhutan on its frontier, the British and these territories got engaged in several of occasion with each other.

David Field Rennie writes that the information provided about how the government of Bhutan came to be founded in his book was derived from Chebu Lama

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<sup>152</sup>R. Moktan. *Sikkim: Darjeeling*, 22-25.

through Mr. Eden. Chebu Lama was said to have derived those information from the books available in the Tibetan Monasteries. However, the author also mentions that the information related to local history and philology that Chebu Lama had provided, the matter on which he was expected to be the reliable source was found by David Field Rennie to be incorrect while comparing with other sources where the same things were discussed differently.<sup>153</sup>

The then Bhutan was bounded on the North by Tibet, on the West by Sikkim, on the South by British Territory.<sup>154</sup> Rennie provides detailed information about the start of British-Bhutan relationship. Bhutan, had invaded Cooch Behar in 1772. Cooch Behar was then the part of north eastern frontier between Bengal and Assam. It was ruled by its own *Rajah* but was under the supervision of British resident. The invasion had brought the British and Bhutan to confrontation. In-fact, this was the beginning of British-Bhutan intercourse. The *Rajah* of Cooch Bihar along with his brother were captured by the Bhutanese subsequently intending to take the control over Cooch Bihar. The British were informed about such situation by the family of the *Rajah* of Cooch Bihar, who asked for the help from the British. The opportunity was not missed by the British who under the Command of Captain Jones sent back the Bhutanese. During this course, the British were able to enter hills and also had taken possession of Bhutanese forts of Passaakha and Dhalimkote. They had also taken control of stockade of Chichacotta in the Buxa Doer. The Bhutanese appealed to the Tibetan government for the help in restoring what they lost to the British. Teeshoo Lama, who was acting on behalf of Grand Lama of Tibet, took the matter into

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<sup>153</sup> Rennie, *Bhotan and the Story of The Doar War*, 10-12.

<sup>154</sup> Report on the State of Bhootan and on the Progress of the Mission of 1863-64. In *Political Missions to Bhootan, Comprising the Reports of The Hon'ble Ashley Eden-1864; Capt. R.B. Pemberton with Dr. W. Griffiths's and The Account by Baboo Kishan Kant Bose*, 1865. (Calcutta: The Bengal Secretariat Office), 131.

consideration and therefore sent letter to the then Governor-General of India, Warren Hastings, requesting to bring the matter into normalcy and thus to maintain peace in the region. He also informed the Governor-General that the Deb-Raja of Bhutan would not trouble the British government in the future. As a result of this intervention from Teeshoo Lama of Tibet, a treaty of peace was concluded between the British and Bhutan in 25<sup>th</sup> April 1774.<sup>155</sup> After this confrontation and the events that followed, the British government came across to know more about this frontier and then their interest in the Doer region of Bengal gradually started to grow.

This event also resulted in the growth of interest within British Government for developing relationship with Tibet especially the commercial relationship. The British government without delay decided to send mission to the court of Teeshoo Lama under the charge of Mr. George Bogle, in 1774. The mission returned back successfully opening the possible way of communication in the future.<sup>156</sup> The move from the side of Nepal to plunder the rich monastery of Lassa in 1791<sup>157</sup>, impacted the possibility of opening of Tibet through Bhutan for the British government.<sup>158</sup>

The Bijnee dispute of 1792 was another event when again the British and the Bhutan Government came into confrontation. There were no any major developments in the relationship of the British and Bhutan government in the period after this dispute till 1815.<sup>159</sup>

The disturbances between the government of Bhutan and British started to occur again by 1860s. The British government was planning to send yet another mission to Bhutan. Many correspondences took place in between finally taking up the

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<sup>155</sup> Rennie, *Bhotan and The Story of the Doar War*, 27-29.

<sup>156</sup> *Ibid.*, 29-30.

<sup>157</sup> *Ibid.*, 37.

<sup>158</sup> *Ibid.*, 39.

<sup>159</sup> *Ibid.*, 39-40.

decision of the Mission to Bhutan. In the meantime, Bhutan too continued to engage itself continuing small scale disturbances in frontier areas.<sup>160</sup> Darjeeling's safety was at risk. The probability of Darjeeling to be attacked by Bhutan was confirmed to the British government from the four sources. Bhutan forces had arrived at Rungpore Frontier who were supposed to cross Teesta to attack Darjeeling.<sup>161</sup> Like in Sikkim, Mr. Ashley Eden was yet again believed to be able to do the task of bringing Bhutan into treaty with the British government. Among other instructions that Mr. Eden received, the most important one was to open up Bhutan for British for the purpose of trade and exploration.<sup>162</sup> He was also instructed that if the Mission proves unsatisfactory then, the Bhutan government was to be made aware of the possibility of permanent annexation of Ambaree Fallacottah (frontier to Darjeeling) and similar response in matters concerning to British territories, Sikkim territory or Cooch Behar during any disturbances.<sup>163</sup>

Darjeeling being the growing hill station, the purpose was also to secure the other important frontier after having its one frontier secured in 1861. Here too, Mr. Eden having the experience of working with Chebu Lama in 1861 episode, thought it necessary to have Chebu Lama in the mission.

The reports like this brought the British in face-to-face exchanges with Bhutan. Thus, many factors aggravated the Doar War to happen.

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<sup>160</sup>See Report on the State of Bhootan and on the Progress of the Mission of 1863-64. In *Political Missions to Bhootan*, 1865.

<sup>161</sup>*Ibid.*, 43.

<sup>162</sup>*Ibid.*, 52.

<sup>163</sup>*Ibid.*, 54.

These Dooars form, as has been already observed, the most valuable portion of the Bootan Territory; through them and from them are procured, either directly or indirectly almost every article of consumption or luxury which the inhabitants of the Hills possess...<sup>164</sup>

The Mission was decided extensively. The messenger was sent to the court of Bhutan to have the reply on which route to be taken by the mission as well as informing the Bhutan government on what the mission was about and how should they be treated. However, the messenger was notable to be of help, and as a result, Chebu Lama had showed a way forward to such situation by informing the Lieutenant-Governor of India, stating that “to send a letter to Poonakh and procure a reply in twenty-four days, and he thought that the offer should be accepted.”<sup>165</sup>

As it was decided to take the route from Darjeeling, Mr. Eden also arrived at Darjeeling. Before the mission started for Bhutan, the *Jungpen/Jongpen* of Dalimcote informed Mr. Eden about his plan to have interview with Chebu Lama. The matter that he wanted to discuss were about the frontier and the status of matter at the Bhutan *Durbar*. The venue for the meeting was set at Teesta, where Chebu Lama was sent. The meeting went for some days. It was found that the *Jungpen* wanted the British government to come into negotiation with him.<sup>166</sup> As a result of this meeting, the mission was set to start.

As coolies formed important part of the mission in the Himalayan region as pointed out by Gawler, Asley Eden was also in need of coolies. The procurement of coolies was difficult in this case, as the people from the hills did not share good bonding with the people from Bhutan and as a result, they were not ready for the mission. Chebu Lama was appointed as a member to the mission. He took the

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<sup>164</sup>Ibid., 17.

<sup>165</sup>Ibid., 46-48.

<sup>166</sup>Ibid., 55-56.

responsibility of providing coolies to the mission. However, many coolies fled away after reaching to Teesta. They were scared of crossing the frontier. At such difficult moment, Chebu Lama, called his own ryots for the purpose.<sup>167</sup>

With much difficulty, the mission managed to reach Paro. They were asked to halt there for some time so that the *Penlow* could arrange for their reception. After entering Paro, Chebu Lama was sent a message by the ex-Paro *Penlow* and the present *Penlow*. He was threatened for his support to the mission. They were not happy with Chebu Lama for bringing Englishman to their territory. Mr. Ashley Eden wanted to come into negotiation with none other than the supreme head of Bhutan. He even went as far as to say that either his mission should be allowed to reach Poonakh or he should return to Darjeeling which was to be followed by another course of action in dealing with Bhutan.<sup>168</sup> During their stay at Paro, Chebu Lama was happy for being allowed to visit important monasteries at Paro. During this time, the *Penlow* had received instructions to capture Chebu Lama. The order was rejected by the *Penlow* on the ground that he would stop the Mission only if he was instructed to do it through the written order from the *Durbar*.<sup>169</sup> On the way towards *Durbar*, they came across the Fort of Simtoka, around the Buxa Doar Road, where the ex-Deb was found to be residing. Chebu Lama was asked to have a talk with him. The ex-Deb did not agree to the talk and declined to offer any assistance. As they reached Poonakh, Chebu Lama was once again targeted and an attempt was made to “seize and detain” him.<sup>170</sup>

The Council at Poonakha too “abused him in unmeasured terms for bringing the mission into the country, accusing him also of having planned it for his own good,

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<sup>167</sup> Ibid., 57.

<sup>168</sup> Ibid., 83-84.

<sup>169</sup> Ibid., 93-94.

<sup>170</sup> Ibid., 96-97.

and telling him that whatever resulted from it would be on his head.”<sup>171</sup> After that a meeting was arranged by Bhutan. In the meeting, the Council from Bhutan side had put their views that “as the Mission did not understand Bhoteah, and that as the Council did not understand Hindoostanee, the best way of conducting negotiations would be by Cheebo Lama...”<sup>172</sup> They had pointed out that Chebu Lama was required to bring in the views of Mr. Eden and he was also required to deliver the views of Bhutan government. It was also made clear that Chebu Lama was required to visit the Council every-day and brief about all things discussed to Mr. Eden. Chebu Lama was to be trusted from both the sides and understand the message passing through him as something directly put forth by each party. The meeting ended as Mr. Eden agreed with the arrangement made. The draft treaty came under discussion on 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> of March. Chebu Lama represented the British government and Tongso Penlow represented the Bhutan government. When the Bhutan government talked about the return to Assam Dooars, then Chebu Lama had made a point that the matter was of such a nature that it was not under the objectives of the present mission.<sup>173</sup> However, the matter relating to the return of Assam Dooars became an important topic in the progress of their settlement. When Mr. Eden was planning to return without conclusion, Chebu Lama had received a message from Tongso Penlow that the return of the mission was to be prepared to face the force of the Bhutan government. Mr. Eden then had sent a letter stating the reasons for his decision to return, among which one was about Tongso Penlow’s demand for return of Assam Dooars which the envoy had no right to discuss in the current mission. The communication through letter caught the notice of Penlow who in return reminded Mr. Eden about the agreement made between the two parties earlier to proceed the negotiation through Chebu Lama

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<sup>171</sup>Ibid., 111.

<sup>172</sup>Ibid., 113.

<sup>173</sup> Rennie, *Bhotan and the Story of The Doar War*, 113.

verbally. Around this time, Chebu Lama was yet again abused. This time it was by *Jungpen* named Angdu Forung. Chebu Lama was abused for same reason as earlier and was made responsible for everything the mission would result on.<sup>174</sup>

Having known the stand of Mr. Eden on the matter, both Togso Penlow and Angdu Forung *Jungpen* ill-treated Mr. Eden and Dr. Simpson who had accompanied the mission. Chebu Lama also faced similar treatment. His watch, which was given to him by the Governor-General was snatched away along with his watch-ribbon from his neck by Angdu Forung *Jungpen*. However, after some time the watch was returned back to Chebu Lama.<sup>175</sup> Chebu Lama was restricted from having communication with anyone other than the *Penlow's* son-in-law, named Tassishujung *Jungpen*. The settlement was thought to be impossible and the return was decided.<sup>176</sup> After all these developments, Chebu Lama was once again, called in by Tassishujung *Jungpen*. In the council he was handed with a paper with a message that “the Government of India should readjust the whole boundary between the two countries, return the Assam Dooars, pay compensation at the rate of three lacs of rupees for each year since the resumption and deliver up all runaway slaves and political offenders who had taken refuge within British territory.”<sup>177</sup> The paper was taken by Chebu Lama to Mr. Eden. He then had sent a reply through Chebu Lama that the letter would be delivered to Governor General and also asked *Penlow's* help to assist the mission for its return journey. Chebu Lama, once again was not-well received by Tongso *Penlow* for bringing such message. He was in return again asked to get the paper sealed with the signature of Mr. Eden.<sup>178</sup> Looking into the matter, Chebu Lama had

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<sup>174</sup>Ibid., 119-120.

<sup>175</sup>Ibid., 124-125.

<sup>176</sup>Ibid., 126.

<sup>177</sup>Ibid., 127.

<sup>178</sup>Ibid., 127.



advised Mr. Eden that the mission could hardly be successful and there was the high chance that violence could take over, and thus, they were required to be alert. Tongso *Penlow* had made the point to Chebu Lama that Chebu Lama was responsible for bringing trouble into Bhutan and therefore he rightfully deserved punishment. He also stated that the disagreement to sign the paper would lead to the capture of Mr. Eden along with Chebu Lama. In front of Chebu Lama, Angdu Forung *Jungpen* had made the statement that the war was unavoidable and it was to be the good start by killing every member of the mission.<sup>179</sup> Chebu Lama was made aware that the statements of threats were of serious nature this time.<sup>180</sup> Before passing out the information that Mr. Eden was ready to sign the paper, Chebu Lama was sent for the last time with the message of request to allow their return on the ground that it was out of Mr. Eden's power to sign any such document. However, the request was declined and instead the paper was also asked to be signed by Chebu Lama, as Tongso *Penlow* considered him as a representative of Sikkim. Chebu Lama having communicated him that Mr. Eden considers Chebu Lama not as representative of Sikkim but a friend of British, bore no result except abuse and order to get the papers signed.<sup>181</sup> With no other options working, after few days, Mr. Asley Eden and Chebu Lama had to sign the papers. Mr. Eden however, was able to write in the signed paper "under compulsion."<sup>182</sup> However, the return journey was delayed with the delay in the order required to take leave. Chebu Lama went to the fort to request to allow the mission to leave. But Chebu Lama was again made captive. To the relief on the side of Mr. Eden, Joom Kulling was able to release Chebu Lama tactically.<sup>183</sup> Chebu Lama was once again demanded by Bhotanese officers to be given to them until Mr. Eden take a leave from

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<sup>179</sup>Ibid., 128.

<sup>180</sup>Ibid., 129.

<sup>181</sup>Ibid., 131.

<sup>182</sup>Ibid., 135.

<sup>183</sup>Ibid., 136-137.

Angdu Forung *Jungpen*. Mr. Eden disagreed to do so and continued the journey back to British Darjeeling.<sup>184</sup>

The matter did not come to the halt. Mr. Eden suggested a thorough plan to carry out to protect the frontier from the Bhotanese invasion soon after reaching Darjeeling. He also suggested that it was necessary to occupy the Bhutan area between Darjeeling and Dalimkote, for that would keep Sikkim and Darjeeling frontier open to possible disturbances from the Bhutan side.<sup>185</sup> Accordingly the preparation for the annexation was made, the news of which reached Bhutan and following the news correspondence were made from the side of Bhutan to rethink upon the decision.<sup>186</sup>

The Proclamation was issued from Fort William on 12th November, 1864 through which the British government informed much about what they shall do and most importantly they pointed out that it was going to annex permanently, the Bengal Doars of Bhutan, areas from hill territory, including important forts like Dallingkote, Passakha and Dewangiri.<sup>187</sup> The preparation for the execution of plan was completed by November, 1864.<sup>188</sup> Before the occupation of Dhalimkote, the *Jungpen* had asked Colonel Haughton, who was the political agent with the force, that if he could arrange his meeting with Chebu Lama for discussion in this matter but this request was of no use as the capture of the fort was determined.<sup>189</sup>

The British were determined in their motives and therefore did not come into any negotiations despite the requests made from the Bhutan government.

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<sup>184</sup>Ibid., 139.

<sup>185</sup>Ibid., 155-156.

<sup>186</sup>Ibid., 157.

<sup>187</sup>Ibid., 160-162.

<sup>188</sup>Ibid., 166.

<sup>189</sup>Ibid., 170

Finally, the Dooars of Bengal and Assam and the hill posts were successfully annexed to the British territory.<sup>190</sup> It was done under well carved plan and supervision. In the hill post, Kalimpong was also included. Hence, taking over of Kalimpong, placed British in plus position in yet another important frontier.

Chebu Lama, who was already influential person in the Kingdom of Sikkim was able to retain that status for himself even after coming in contact with the British. His own personal knowledge and expertise in the Eastern Himalayas had helped him in obtaining and enjoying the privilege of being an unavoidable person in different transactions taken forth by the British in this region, particularly Sikkim and Bhutan.

### **2.7 Chebu Lama: An Interpreter and a Diplomat**

Chebu Lama is always introduced as an interpreter by the British sources. Interpreter was no-doubt necessary in dealing with places like Sikkim, Bhutan and Tibet. They hardly could understand Hindostane and English. The British had serious objectives relating to this part of Himalaya and they were looking for all possible means to extend their policy of colonialism. Their knowledge of the Indian plains could hardly help them in realising their objectives. This part of Himalaya was different for them not just in terrain of land, but the people, their culture, language, traditions, political set up and their way of governance too. Chebu Lama, was someone who was comfortable with Hindostane. But, did the British used Chebu Lama just because he had the knowledge of language, they could be comfortable with? Looking into their history in India, they had in their policy to use the natives to the best of their potential. The way, Chebu Lama could help the British, indicates that he was a diplomat of the time and not just a mere interpreter as in many occasions defined by the British sources.

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<sup>190</sup>Ibid., 193.

Chebu Lama despite being a Lama was allowed to be married considering his space of function as diplomatic person.<sup>191</sup> Chebu Lama himself belonged to the aristocratic family in Sikkim. He, himself was active in the politics of *Durbar*. The environment he was living in was a diplomatic environment. However, his role as a diplomatic person as an ally of the British started with his role as the interpreter serving the British.

For what has been already discussed, Chebu Lama's role as an interpreter started with the taking away of Darjeeling by the British, as there was the need of interpreter to maintain British-Sikkim transactions. Hooker's and Campbell's journey to Sikkim in late 1840s turned to be another such space. During the occasion he was placed as an interpreter between the *Durbar* of Sikkim and the British officials. The trip of these two English-men to Sikkim was already a matter of great concern. Chebu Lama had accompanied them and during the period the British got a good chance to explore Chebu Lama's potential. Soon after, he was appointed as the *Vakil* of Darjeeling, a representative of Sikkim. This was the turning point of his life, as from then on, he became more closer to the British government. In response to the treatment met by Hooker and Campbell, the British government decided to take over a part of Sikkim territory temporarily, so that to have apology from Sikkim. As the events occurred in a way which has been already discussed in the earlier part of the chapter, British started to use Chebu Lama openly as an interpreter but internally, he was started to be consulted on different matters relating to this part of Himalaya. He received a land on lease from the British in Darjeeling from within the temporarily captured territory in the south-west of Darjeeling in 1850. It is on the record that that land was given to him on lease for his help during 1850 British-Sikkim conflict. He

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<sup>191</sup>Ibid., 311.

did not just act as an interpreter, but provided the British different help during the conflict, including the passing of messages through spies, transport and communication help, supplying coolies etc. Most of all, the immediate help the British received was from his post at Darjeeling. The post served the British more than the one way for which it was created. As it was the beginning phase of the British mission in Sikkim, a native person of benefits like that of Chebu Lama had to be the source of immense help to the political motive of British in India. Chebu Lama's role as an interpreter further became more important in the British mission to Bhutan under Mr. Ashley Eden, where he in times acted more than as a mere interpreter.

Chebu Lama was asked to accompany the British Mission to Bhutan under Mr. Ashley Eden as an interpreter. His times in Bhutan has been already discussed above. For several times, he has been summoned by the officials of Bhutan for discussion. Though he carried messages to Mr. Eden, along the messages, he had also been found giving his inputs on the matter. His role as an interpreter has been doubted by the Bhutan officials. He was accused by them for several times and in different occasions for they believed that Chebu Lama was the one who helped the British in successfully entering to their land. They also doubted in their transactions of messages that if Chebu Lama was honest with the job he was placed in. He was threatened for the position he was in and even he was warned that Sikkim shall be held accountable for his support to the English men. However, the Bhutan officials also intended to take help from Chebu Lama. Letters were directed to him where he was made aware of what Chebu Lama was expected to do. Chebu Lama, himself also had sent letters to the British officials and others in a way different then as an interpreter.

The appointment of Chebu Lama as the *Dewan* of Sikkim soon after the conclusion of the Treaty of Tumlong, 1861 was again an important space where, Chebu Lama was to work for the British more than just as an interpreter. His appointment is reported by the British envoy as “the best security we could possibly have for future good government and friendly disposition of the country. So long as he remains in that post, there is no fear of any policy being adopted hostile to British interest. He is the most enlightened and intelligent native I ever met.”<sup>192</sup>

During the Mission in Bhutan, when the things were not working in the way they had planned, Mr. Eden found it important to call a meeting involving Chebu Lama, “Mr. Eden assembled all the members of the mission, including Cheeboo Lama, and held a long consultation as to the best course to adopt under the circumstances.”<sup>193</sup> Such were the times, where Chebu Lama’s role was not limited to the post of interpreter.

At another time, when the British government was preparing again after the failed mission under, Mr. Ashley Eden, the Bhutan government sent a letter for Chebu Lama. The translation of which is quoted by David Field Rennie as:

The British say you were interpreter to the mission, we do not know what you said and Eden did not know what we said, but you know whether the treaty was not agreed to...you should not have afterwards allowed Eden on his return to deceive the Governor-General and lead him to write to the Dhurma Raja that we had used violence...Make them do right.<sup>194</sup>

Mr. Asley Eden also in his report of Mission to Bhutan summarises the contribution of Chebu Lama in following ways:

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<sup>192</sup> Watson and Kaye ed., *The People of India*, 51.

<sup>193</sup> Rennie, *Bhotan and the Story of The Doar War*, 129.

<sup>194</sup> *Ibid.*, 157-158.

I cannot speak in too high terms of the services rendered by Cheebo Lama, Dewan of Sikkim. He furnished us with some 200 coolies from his own private estate, who remained with us faithfully from first to last: without his orders not a man would have crossed the frontier under such discouraging circumstances as those under which we entered the country. He kept all the accounts of the pay and rations of the whole of the camp followers, obtained supplies for us from the villages, and, though subjected to gross insult and ill-treatment, he was unceasing in his attempts, by counsel and explanation to the suspicious and ignorant Bootanese, to secure the objects of the mission. His knowledge of the habits and language of the people were of the greatest service to us, and his widely-spread reputation as an honest and scrupulous administrator in his own country secured for us a welcome in all the villages of West Bhootan. He supplied us with guides from the Sikkim monasteries, and nothing but the cheerful and confident manner in which he faced all difficulties induced our desponding and alarmed camp followers to persevere. This is the second occasion on which I have been associated with the Lama in a duty of this nature, and I know no native gentleman for whom I have a higher esteem, or whom I believe to be more thoroughly and unselfishly devoted to the interests of our Government, though not in reality a British subject.<sup>195</sup>

Many letters were addressed directly to Chebu Lama. He was referred as “Lama Sahib” by Dalimgcote Soubah in his letter addressing to Lieutenant Governor. Dalimgcote Soubah also addressed a direct letter to Chebu Lama in issues of fear and friendship. The presence of Chebu Lama also had to affect the political relationship between Bhutan and Sikkim. He was threatened several times by the Bhutan officials that his activities would result in problem with Sikkim. Regarding the same matter, Gangtok Kajee, who was relative of Chebu Lama and the head of North-East Frontier of Sikkim, had sent a letter to Chebu Lama. The Kazee, in the letter had explained that how Bhutan was continuously communicating with Tibet regarding their plan to

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<sup>195</sup> From the Honourable A. Eden, late Envoy to Bootan, to Colonel H.M Durand, C.B., Secretary to Government of India, Foreign Department, with the Governor General (No. 71); dated Darjeeling, 25 July 1864. In *Accounts and Papers: Twenty-Nine Volumes, East India- Bullion; Gold Currency; Sovereigns; Bootan; Burmah; Canals; Civil Service; Dhar; Engineers' Establishment*. 1865, (Session 7 February-6 July 1865), 172-173.

attack Darjeeling. He being in the frontier post also had expressed his fear in-case the plan was to be successful. Another letter dated 17<sup>th</sup> August, from the acting *Dewan* of Sikkim also was addressed to Chebu Lama. In this letter, it was brought into the notice of Chebu Lama as to how Bhutan was troubling the King of Sikkim and their authorities at Choombi and about their raid inside the territory of Sikkim. Importantly, he was also asked to come to the *Durbar* and discuss about preparations. It was also pointed out that the King and the British government were also to be asked to think of the response together. In one letter directly from the Council of Bhutan to Chebu Lama dating 24<sup>th</sup> July 1864, regarding the disturbances between the two governments and seeking for re-establishment of peace, it is mentioned that "...You are the go-between with the Dhurma Rajah and the Feringhees; why let there be war...?"<sup>196</sup> Chebu Lama used to provide information of great importance like that of how things were going on at Lhasa to the British government and according to his suggestion, the Lieutenant Governor at one occasion had directed the Deputed Commissioner of Darjeeling to do as suggested by Chebu Lama.<sup>197</sup> More correspondences addressed to Chebu Lama are in the record.<sup>198</sup> As Mr. Ashley Eden had to sign the treaty with Bhutan on their condition during their Mission to Bhutan, it attracted a lot of opinions. As a result, Dr. Simpson, who was with the Mission under medical charge, wrote in the *Englishman* that Mr. Eden had to sign the treaty because if he had not done it then the life of Chebu Lama would have been taken.<sup>199</sup> Chebu Lama's role was as an

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<sup>196</sup>Ibid., From the Honourable A. Eden, Secretary to the Government of Bengal, to the Secretary to the Government of India, Foreign Department (Political-No. 2629T.), 279-281. The letters were translated into English.

<sup>197</sup>Ibid., From the Secretary to Government of Bengal to the Secretary to Government of India, Foreign Department, with the Governor General (No. 3904T); dated Darjeeling, the 5<sup>th</sup> October 1864, 317.

<sup>198</sup> See Papers Relating to Bootan in *Accounts and Papers: Twenty-Nine Volumes*, (Session 7 February-6 July 1865), 1865.

<sup>199</sup> Bengal, Allen's Indian Mail-Jan.20,1866, "Bengal: Why Mr. Eden Signed the Treaty", in *Allen's Indian Mail and Official Gazette from British and Foreign India, China, and all parts of the East*. (London: Wm. H. Allen and Co.,13, Waterloo-Place, S. W., 1866), Vol. XXIV.



important role in the then “regional power politics.”<sup>200</sup> He has also been called by Lamb as “unofficial adviser to the British on the affairs of Sikkim, Bhutan and Tibet.”<sup>201</sup> Through all these correspondences, one can have the idea that, along with Chebu Lama performing the role of interpreter, he was also believed to perform diplomatic function in the then British relation with Sikkim and Bhutan.

Chebu Lama also acted as the medium of producing knowledge about the people, language, culture, traditions and religion related to Bhutan, China, Tibet and Sikkim. Hooker came to know about the war between two important sects of Lamas called as Red Hat sect and Yellow Hat sect through Chebu Lama.<sup>202</sup> Chebu Lama also worked for the British as translator of information they came through. He had translated the seal of Dhurma *Rajah* of Bhutan for Hooker.<sup>203</sup> Chebu Lama was called by Hooker as “man of intelligence about Rajah’s court and the one whose services as Vakeel were particularly wanted at Darjeeling.”<sup>204</sup> He had called Chebu Lama as his friend.<sup>205</sup> Hooker writes that a lot of Tibetan information was collected from Chebu Lama and the Lachen Phipun.<sup>206</sup> When Chebu Lama was asked by Hooker about the idea of ‘cleaniness’ and ‘chastity’ among the Tibetan women, he had remarked that “the Tibetan women are not so different from women of other countries as to wish to conceal what charms they possess.”<sup>207</sup> Chebu Lama on one occasion had said that his countrymen were “credulous” enough to believe anything that the Lama say them, like even if Lama say, them that “blankets grew on the elephants’ back”, the people

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<sup>200</sup> Sinha, *Feudal and Democratic*, 73.

<sup>201</sup> Lamb, *Britain and Chinese Central Asia*, 99.

<sup>202</sup> Hooker, *Himalayan Journals*, 257.

<sup>203</sup> *Ibid.*, 262.

<sup>204</sup> *Ibid.*, 291.

<sup>205</sup> *Ibid.*, 346.

<sup>206</sup> *Ibid.*, 397.

<sup>207</sup> *Ibid.*, 411.

would undoubtedly believe it.<sup>208</sup> Chebu Lama's interpretation of the term 'Lassa' when asked by Campbell was that 'L'ha' denoted 'God', and 'Sa' denoted 'abode or resting place', altogether meaning that "it is the city of God, or the Eternal city."<sup>209</sup> David Field Rennie informs that Chebu Lama provided him the information that Sikkim was called by the people of Sikkim as "De-jong, from *de* rice and *jong* producing".<sup>210</sup> His opinion on the origin of Mongolian Lepchas was that they were the people belonging to Sikkim itself, but Sikkim of the period when its territories were not taken by other neighbouring powers. He also had informed that such Lepchas were more in numbers during that time at Donkia Pass through which Tibet could be communicated. He had also mentioned that, Mongolian Lepchas had their own language and their own way of writing it, which was not very similar to Tibetan and he even had given example by writing in his hand so as to prove the purity of Lepcha language. He had given the credit of creation of such a language to one the previous King of Sikkim. Chebu Lama's opinion on similarity of Lama Bhuddist that he was and that of Peking was that the differences between them were very negligible as they were almost closely similar.<sup>211</sup> An incident that Rennie shares from what he saw while in his visit to Chebu Lama's house is quite interesting. A Lepcha similar to Chebu Lama while entering to the room where Chebu was, had "prostrated" in front of Chebu and bowed down which was found by Rennie as similar to Chinese tradition of "Kowtow."<sup>212</sup> He was also a good predictor of weather. He did it through the help of the moon.<sup>213</sup> Chebu Lama's belief that one of the kings of Sikkim had created Lepcha language was refuted by Mr. Niebel, who was a

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<sup>208</sup>Ibid., 412.

<sup>209</sup> Campbell, 1871. "Notes on Eastern Thibet." *The Phoenix*, no. 7: 84.

<sup>210</sup> Rennie, *Bhotan and the Story of the Doar War*, 368.

<sup>211</sup>Ibid., 312.

<sup>212</sup>Ibid., 313.

<sup>213</sup>Ibid., 311-313.

German Baptist Missionary and had spent long years in Darjeeling and was close to Lepchas, on the ground that any Lepcha hardly had any reliable knowledge about the times before his own. Chebu Lama's information that the Lepcha language which was spoken in Darjeeling was purely Lepcha and had no relation with Tibetan, was also not accepted by Mr. Niebel. However, it was assumed by Niebal that, Chebu Lama might have referred to the pure Mongolian language which to an extent of purity was spoken in Darjeeling which was started to be identified as Lepcha language as free from Tibetan influence.<sup>214</sup> Thus, Chebu Lama in different ways had helped the British in production of knowledge about this region.

Making sense of Darjeeling depends upon various attributes of the past. The journey of hill station, Darjeeling, had a complex set of events in between. Its geography had influenced the course of its history. Securing it, in the hands of British was necessary owing to its position in the Eastern Himalayas. As the hills had started to act as a new epicentre for sustaining and functioning colonialism, there existed the issues of its protection for reasons beyond commercial purposes. Therefore, it could hardly avoid interference with the frontier territories. In between 1850-1865, British were able to secure their important frontiers, one at South Sikkim and Terai and other at Doars and Kalimpong. In the course, Darjeeling stopped to function as colonial hub, but the frontier histories still continue to shape the course of the history of Darjeeling and Chebu Lama, as a British ally and a Sikkim official, do share the responsibility in mapping the boundary and history of Darjeeling. He, as a native played an important role in shaping the British course of action in the Eastern Himalayas, especially with Sikkim and Bhutan, and indirectly to Tibet too. The

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<sup>214</sup>Ibid., 367-369.

British were successful in their attempt through the native intelligence in creating histories in the Eastern Himalayas.

## Chapter 3

### The Chebu Lama Grant

#### 3.1 Chebu Lama and Sikkim Durbar

*Kazi* system in Sikkim polity during the Namgyal rule is considered as an ‘institution’ which was an integral part of the Namgyal dynasty. The coming up of feudal system in Sikkim is also attributed to this institution. The origin of the idea of *Kazi* system in Sikkim is explained from two points, one as a system born in Sikkim itself and the other as a system that was of Tibetan origin.<sup>215</sup> Hooker considers the title *Kajee* as a Mohamedan title.<sup>216</sup> The *Kazis* in Sikkim had a significant position. They were in the position to influence people and even the King in some cases. Belonging to such elite class, holding huge landed estates, commanding over matters of importance, they were in the position to influence the political status of the Kingdom too.<sup>217</sup>

As already discussed in previous chapter, Chebu Lama belonged to the family who were serving the Sikkim *Durbar* from many generations. He was himself, an influential person in the *Durbar*. Being an elite member, he was also associated with the *Kazi* institution in Sikkim. It is quite surprising that he preferred to be an ally of the foreign power despite his close affinity with the King and the Kingdom. The sources that discuss upon him about which it has been already discussed, highlights that his differences with the other influential person in the *Durbar* of Sikkim, named Tokhang Namgyal for the post of *Dewan* of Sikkim, as one important reason for

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<sup>215</sup> A. C Sinha, 1975. “The Kazi Patricians in the Sikkimese Polity,” *Indian Anthropologist* 5, no. 2: 7. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41919285>

<sup>216</sup> Hooker, *Himalayan Journals*, 127.

<sup>217</sup> A.C Sinha, *Sikkim: Feudal and Democratic*, 56-58. Also see Sinha (1975), p. 7.

giving rise to two attitudes in the Kingdom generally understood as- 'Pro-Tibetan' in case of 'Tokhang Namgyal' and 'Pro-British' in case of 'Chebu Lama.'

Understanding the importance of 'disputes' among the elite members in a government from the perspective of Aristotle can help in understanding the context as to why Chebu Lama decided to be the ally of the British. Aristotle in his *Politics* discusses on the role of disputes among the elite members and its consequences in a government. He also adds on how those disputes must be taken care of before they take care of the further course of events. Aristotle writes that:

...seditions in government do not arise for little things, but from them; for their immediate cause is something of moment. Now, trifling quarrels are attended with the greatest consequences when they arise between persons of the first distinction in the state...therefore everyone at the beginning of such disputes ought to take care to avoid the consequences...therefore everyone at the beginning of such disputes ought to take care to avoid the consequences...disputes between man of note involve the whole city in their consequences...<sup>218</sup>

Thus, Chebu Lama allying with the British was possible despite he being close to the Kingdom. Be it be his differences with the King of Sikkim on succession issue or with Tokhang Namgyal for the post of *Dewan*, the very fact that the then political and administrative situation created the space for dispute, and letting the dispute to take its own course may be understood as probable reason for Chebu Lama rising as an ally of the British.

Alex Mckay notes that allying with foreign power in Sikkim during its pre-modern phase meant that "it was a refusal to ritually acknowledge the ruler's authority and or/demonstration of rebellion through the refusal to remit taxation and

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<sup>218</sup> Aristotle, 2021. *The Politics*, trans. A.M William Ellis (New Delhi: FingerPrint Classics), 185.

traditional offerings that placed an individual in rebellion.”<sup>219</sup> For such case he has given the examples of Shew Dewan and Khangsarpa brothers, who were from elite family in the *Durbar*, despite working for and under the British continued to provide the King, the due “political loyalty.”<sup>220</sup> He also informs that a good number from the aristocracy class in Sikkim had supported the British for various benefits but despite their ties with them, they were said to have maintained their identity intact by preserving their loyalty to the King of Sikkim.<sup>221</sup> Land was also an important factor to influence the loyalty of elite members in the then Sikkim with existing *Kazi* system. In case of Chebu Lama, it can be understood that he became more closer with the British as he developed land relationship with the British in the form of land grant which fell within British territory. Himself, serving in the posts like *Vakil* and *Dewan* also brought British and Chebu together. His ties with *Durbar* also no doubt weakened as the post of *Dewan* slipped to his opponent Tokyang Namgyal for some years. Had the dispute been settled considering his services to the *Durbar* and the qualities he had, his relationship with the *Durbar* may not have been worsened, but it is a matter of history.

All such factors may have contributed in shaping Chebu Lama in becoming the British agent in executing British purposes in the Eastern Himalayas. The British also did not delay in recognising the potential of benefits that Chebu Lama could provide to the British government. The British officials who were already acquainted with the idea of using the petty internal troubles between natives to their benefits grasped the internal disturbance of Sikkim and earned Chebu Lama to their credit.

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<sup>219</sup> McKay, *The Mandala Kingdom*, 132.

<sup>220</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>221</sup> *Ibid.*, 133.

Chebu Lama, became an important tool in the hands of British in securing their position in one of the important hill station-Darjeeling.

As already discussed, Campbell was reluctant in taking revenge for the treatment he and Hooker met in Sikkim, became successful in acquiring the permission from the British government to take over some portion of Sikkim's territory. It was however, temporary in nature, with the intension that the King of Sikkim was to provide apology for the treatment they meted during their visit to Sikkim. However, the negotiation did not turn as expected and a decade after the incident, the Treaty of Tumlong, 1861 was signed between the British and Sikkim, which yet again became one turning point in the history of Darjeeling and Sikkim. Here after, Chebu Lama was also able to bring important changes in the lease that was given to him a decade ago.

Chebu Lama did not live long after 1861 episode. As a result of which, it is quite difficult to understand Chebu Lama's loyalty to the King of Sikkim during his affiliation to the British. However, he was not completely disconnected to the *Durbar*. Even as ally of the British, he served as the Sikkim representative at Darjeeling. He was also appointed as the *Dewan* of Sikkim in place of Tokhang Namgyal. However, it also cannot be ignored that his friendship with the British had helped the annexation of Sikkim's territory by the British which had threatened the integrity and security of the Kingdom.

Out of his diplomacy, the King of his choice sat at the throne and the crown of *Dewan* fell upon his head. As Aristotle have noted, the beginning phase of any dispute is important where attention should be provided to settle it so that to avoid future



impacts and here, the beginning was already a decade back and thus the consequences were already on the way.

### **3.2 Nature of the Chebu Lama Grant**

The system of land grant as well-known was not a product of modern society. Granting of land was also something common to the Namgyal Dynasty of Sikkim. Deed of Grant, Darjeeling through which Darjeeling was taken over by the British in 1835, was also a type of grant. Chebu Lama grant also has its own peculiar nature that makes it uncommon event in the history of Darjeeling and Sikkim.

The basic nature of the Chebu Lama Grant can be understood from LSSO' Malley's *Darjeeling District Gazetteers*, where a paragraph of information is provided:

The tract known as Chebu Lama's grant comprises an area of 49 square miles in the north-west of the district between the Nepal and Sikkim boundaries and the Little Rangit river. It forms part of the tract measuring 115 square miles, which was annexed in 1850 in consequence to the treatment received by Dr. Campbell and Sir Joseph Hooker at the hands of Dewan of Sikkim. After the annexation, Chebu Lama received a lease of the whole tract for the term of 3 years at an annual rental of Rs.20, in recognition of the services he had rendered during the troubles with Sikkim. This lease was subsequently renewed, and in 1862 Chebu Lama asked that, in consideration of his services, the land held by him should be granted in fee-simple or in perpetuity at a nominal rent. Government acceded to his request by making a grant of land to him and his heirs for ever, in proprietary right, subject to the payment of land revenue to Government of Rs. 500 during his lifetime and of Rs. 1,000 after his death.<sup>222</sup>

This information has been summarily adjusted in the gazetteer. There are others information that help us to know about the nature of the grant in more detail.

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<sup>222</sup> LSSO' Malley, 1999. *Bengal District Gazetteers: Darjeeling*. (Reprinted, New Delhi: Logos Press), 148. First published in 1907.

W.W Hunter adds more details on the grant. He informs that when Chebu Lama received the lease for the first time for three years in 1850, the boundaries that demarcated the area which he received were fixed. The villages which fell under the grant were also fixed. Those villages were sixteen in numbers. Before he requested for changes in the lease in 1862, the grant was brought into 1860-61 settlement. Through that settlement, the grant was leased for the tenure of ten years where he was required to pay Rs. 1000 per year. The difference brought this settlement was that the boundary of the areas was not fixed and only the total quantity of land was fixed which was 4,000 acres. Also, that if there existed land more than the amount of land leased when setting the boundary then the extra amount of Rs. Eight *annas* had to be paid per acre of land. However, in the year 1862, when Chebu Lama asked for changes in the nature of lease, it was Dr. Campbell who thought it right to act accordingly and proceeded the request further. It was also consulted whether the revenue fixed for the heirs of Chebu Lama after his death, which was half more than the rent that he was to pay during his life, would be a fair amount of revenue. The problem arose when Mr. Wake replaced Dr. Campbell. Mr. Wake wrote to the Bengal government informing that the 4,000 acres of land which was leased to Chebu Lama previously was larger than Dr. Campbell had expected. To the opposite of what Mr. Wake had expected, the Government stated that they had no problem for they thought the settlement fair considering the service provided to them by Chebu Lama. Further, Mr. Wake was instructed to inform Chebu Lama about the new settlement properly, that the lands would continue to be under him, and his heirs, that too for 'for ever', with 'proprietary right', with the payment of Rs. 500 during his life and additional Rs. 500 after his life as revenue of the grant made to him. It was assumed that the information about the settlement was communicated to Chebu Lama but at the same

time it was also assumed that “title-deed defining the land”<sup>223</sup> was not made available to Chebu Lama. The settlement that the rent was to increase after the death of Chebu Lama was not brought to the effect when Chebu Lama died in 1866. It was decided that the lease was to be accommodated with the 1860 settlement and therefore the increase of rent was decided to be brought in force only after the end of ten years, i.e in 1870.<sup>224</sup> When the land was surveyed later, the total quantity of land was found to be 74,560 acres instead of 4,000 acres.<sup>225</sup>

Thus, from the information that Hunter provides, we understand that Campbell was important person in negotiating the grant for Chebu Lama. Even the lease that Chebu Lama received in 1850 was a huge area. The change in the policy brought in 1860 indicates that the British wanted Chebu Lama to take 4,000 acres from uncultivated lands as boundaries were not fixed so that the uncultivated lands could be brought under cultivation. However, if Chebu Lama opted for lands other than what he had in lease previously is difficult to ascertain. The British acceptance of the demand was itself an indicator of how Chebu Lama could be used in their broader aim concerning to this region. The land that formed the grant was previously the territory of Sikkim. Therefore, Chebu Lama, being involved in the *Durbar* affairs could have had better knowledge of this portion of the land. The British through the events of 1850 and 1860 were also aware of the position of the land and its strategic importance. In-fact, Gawler had in his plan, a route, through the land forming the part of the grant during the British march towards Sikkim in 1861. The grant as bounded by important rivers in this part of Sikkim-British boundary, and also on the side of Nepal, was strategically located. Handling over of strategically important land to

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<sup>223</sup>W.W Hunter, 1974. *A Statistical Account of Bengal* (Reprinted, Delhi: D.K Publishing House), X:113. Originally published in 1876.

<sup>224</sup>*Ibid.*, 112-113.

<sup>225</sup>*Ibid.*, 114.

Chebu Lama also indicates British worries about probability of invasion from Sikkim, and thus proved beneficial in securing one important frontier of the British territory. By 1860s, Darjeeling had already become socially lively and economically productive, giving the sense of secure future to colonialism, and thus its frontiers had become important enough to be guarded in a way without attracting any troubles. The grant, thus in a sense was win-win situation to both the parties. However, the function of the grant was not limited to the contribution of Chebu Lama in pre-grant period but the grant played an important role in having the service of Chebu Lama in the post-grant period too. One such important event in the history of Eastern Himalayas where Chebu Lama and his grant proved significant was in the Mission of Mr. Ashley Eden to Bhutan in 1863-64 which has already been discussed. The nature of British and Chebu Lama Grant's relationship can thus be called as the relation of symbiosis.

### **3.3 Composition of the Chebu Lama Grant**

The composition of the Chebu Lama Grant during the time of its lease is not properly known. It has only come to the light that it was the tract that was within the boundaries which was finalised in 1850 and 1853 when the leases were made. 74,560 acres were found to be under Chebu Lama when the survey was done after completion of 1860 settlement. However, most part of the land was not found to be of good use given their location in high altitude of about 10,000 to 13,000 feet high. Even the cattle grazing there was thought to be hardly possible. The good portion of land became the part of the grant when the settlement was made in 1862. It was also assumed that Chebu Lama was also owning the lands at high altitude from where

Chebu Lama was expected to earn some revenues from cattle grazing especially in the warmer months.<sup>226</sup>

As due to the dearth of information from the time when the grant was made, an important source to look for the composition of the grant is the District Handbook of the year 1951, meant for Darjeeling. It contains a table with the title Chebu Lama Grant where the areas which formed the Chebu Lama Grant are put together. Though the details provided about the places that composed Chebu Lama Grant are from the later days of the Grant and not from the earlier days of the grant, yet for knowing the composition of the grant, the source is effective. The earlier history and the progress of the grant will be dealt in another segment. Thus, from this source, it is known that, Chebu Lama Grant consisted of many villages. Those villages after the end of the British rule, 1947 were put under Pulbazar Police Station.<sup>227</sup> The list of villages which once formed the part of Chebu Lama Grant and the information about them will be discussed below.

With the changes in the administration in post-Independent period, the areas which were once under Chebu Lama Grant had come under different categories. The categories mentioned below are the changes that followed in the administration of the grant and not the ones which was effective at the time of the grant made. From it, composition of the Chebu Lama Grant can be established.

- a) Under Bijanbari Estate the following places were included namely-  
Poolbazar, Bijanbari, Nore, Lungchakro, Samalbong, Ananden, Lingten, and  
Sirishay.

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<sup>226</sup> Ibid., 113-114.

<sup>227</sup> A. Mitra, 1954. *Census 1951, West Bengal District Handbooks: Darjeeling* (Alipore, West Bengal: Superintendent, Governemnt Printing West Bengal Government Press), 158-162.

- b) Under Karmi Estate, the following places were included namely- Naya Busty, Kijum, Singla, Goke, Takbia, and Nezi.
- c) Under D.I Fund, the following areas were included- Lodhoma, and Rimbick.
- d) Khasmahal areas included places like Majua, Singbung Dara, Dangia, Dangia Bazar, Relling, Lamagoan, Kainjalia, Jhepi, Jhepi Bazar, Kangkibong, Hatta, Lodhoma, Namla, Rimbick I and Rimbick II.<sup>228</sup>

Thus, the Chebu Lama Grant consisted of the above-mentioned places. However, it is difficult to establish that whether all villages with same names existed during the time of the grant or they sprang with the passage of time. Along with these, there were also forest tract which was the part of the grant. However, more details about the grant will be discussed in the following segment of the chapter.

### **3.4 Administration of the Chebu Lama Grant**

As the grant is concerned with land, the administration thus required to be discussed will be related to the land revenue administration. Chebu Lama did not live long to be actively engaged in the administration of the tract granted to him. The grant was more properly made in 1862 and he died in 1866. From 1850, as discussed above, it was on lease whose tenure was to end every three years. During the life of Chebu Lama, he was mainly engaged in assisting the British in their projects. However, it can be said that, the grant was the sole property of him alone as he has been described as one of the largest land owners in Darjeeling.<sup>229</sup> Therefore, he may have looked into the matters related to the grant through the help of some people held responsible for carrying out different tasks related to the grant. The information about the history of the administration of the grant after the death of Chebu Lama is more documented.

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<sup>228</sup> Mitra, *Census 1951, West Bengal District Handbooks*, 158-162.

<sup>229</sup> See Mckay, *The Mandala Kingdom*, 74 for situating Chebu Lama as one of the largest land-owner in Darjeeling.

This could be also because, the major developments in the administration of land in Darjeeling took place in the later-half of 19<sup>th</sup> century, as by then all the important frontiers were secured and Darjeeling as a hill station was also consolidated with the Treaty of Sinchula, 1865.

For the administration of land revenue in Darjeeling, the British had divided the district into five different categories. Those categories were:

- a. The Old Hill Territory: This comprised the areas which were brought under British control with the Deed of Grant, 1835.
- b. Chebu Lama Grant: It dealt with the part of tract which was seized from Sikkim in 1850 and was given on lease previously and later as grant to Chebu Lama.
- c. Two Strips of Hill Land: It also dealt with the part of tract which was seized from Sikkim in 1850, which lied in east and west of old hill territory extending one side of border to Nepal and the other Teesta.
- d. The Tarai: It dealt with the area which was also seized in 1850 from Sikkim. It comprised the terai portion.
- e. Daling Subdivision or Kalimpong: It comprised the tract of Bhutan that came under British control in 1864-65 following Treaty of Sinchula.<sup>230</sup>

The Land Revenue Administration in Darjeeling was not uniform. Land in Darjeeling were administered by different bodies. Some lands were under the direct control of the Government, some were given by the government to private persons whereas some were under public bodies. Different conditions were set for as to how the administration of such lands should be done. On other hand, the assession of land,

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<sup>230</sup>Hunter, *A Statistical Account of Bengal*, 104.

management of revenue and the collection of it were done by total six agencies. Among those agencies, three of them are relevant to the present study.

- a. The *Tauzi* Department of the Deputy Commissioner's office: Under it were total 269 estates. It was to look after their tenure issues. The area altogether was of 150 square miles. The matters related to lands which were leased for tea in the district were also looked after by this department. The duty of collection of revenue and cess from the areas under Chebu Lama Grant was also under this department. It was also to look after the matters relating to non-agricultural land grants.
- b. The Sadar Kurseong *KhasMahal* Department: It had the task to look after the rural estates of Government in subdivisions of Sadar and Kurseong, Darjeeling Municipality Grants and roadsides lands of the Darjeeling-Siliguri Cart Road.
- c. The Darjeeling Improvement Fund: This was to look after almost all bazaars and hats which were in the district, as such lands belonging to the government.<sup>231</sup>

The Tauzi department, The Sadar Kurseong Khas Mahal, Darjeeling Improvement Fund are related to administration of areas which were under Chebu Lama Grant. However, they are relevant only after the passing away of Chebu Lama and taking over of the grant by his descendants.

As understood from Malley's and Hunter's sources which has been discussed above, the land was first given to Chebu Lama in lease for 3 years for his role in the occupation of Sikkim's territory. He had to pay Rs. 20 annually for the lease given to him. The lease was given to him in the year 1850 itself. After the completion of 3

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<sup>231</sup> Arthur J. Dash, 1947. *Bengal District Gazetteers, Darjeeling* (Alipore, Bengal: Superintendent, Government Printing Bengal Government Press), 205.



years of lease tenure, it was renewed again. It is difficult to ascertain, whether the land was renewed for another 3 years or more but it continued until 1860 when it was brought into new settlement in 1860, which was for ten years. After the 1861 episode, the right of the British over the land was more legitimised. The administration of the lease that Chebu received in 1850 was similar to any other lease that British in Darjeeling provided. It was only after 1862, when the lease was promoted to a grant after which actual power of handling the grant with proprietary rights went into the hands of Chebu Lama and his descendants.

#### *3.4.1 The Passing away of Chebu Lama and the Fortune of the Grant*

The colonisation of Darjeeling had a marked historical impact upon the matters related to land, be it on idea of land related custom or land use pattern. Mostly, the natives were the ones who had experienced the trauma of the new colonial set up in Darjeeling. The condition of such natives in Darjeeling is said have felt by some people who had land in their possession.<sup>232</sup> David Field Rennie informs that Chebu Lama being a huge land owner in Darjeeling, was also the one who reacted to this condition which is stated as:

Cheeboo Lama, for instance, who has refused lucrative offers made him for the purchase of the land given him by the British Government as a reward for his services-Cheeboo preferring going on cultivating it after the fashion of his forefathers, and getting his little tribute from his tenants.<sup>233</sup>

Chebu Lama died in March, 1866. As a result, and as per the condition of the grant, the grant went to his heirs. It was divided among his three heirs. He had only one son, named Rechuk also known as Rechuk Dewan who was given some part of the grant.

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<sup>232</sup> Rennie, *Bhotan and the Story of The Doer War*, 369.

<sup>233</sup> *Ibid.*, 370.

The other part was given to Chebu Lama's brother's son. His name was Phurboo Dewan, nephew of Chebu Lama. Tenduk Pulger who was the Manager of Chebu Lama. He was also nephew of Chebu Lama who was also given the share from the grant.<sup>234</sup>

The discussion for purchasing the land from within Chebu Lama's Grant was initiated by the British government at the official level in 1881. There was confusion in the government offices, as to from where the money for the purchase of the tract must be deducted from. It was purchased with the total sum of Rs. 15,000. The confusion was cleared with the logic that the land which was being purchased was for the forest purposes, therefore, the money was decided to be deducted from the Forest Department.<sup>235</sup>

The problem arose again when it was found by 1884 that the land acquired by the government was more than what they had paid for. The government had decided to purchase the half of the grant, assuming it to be around 60 square miles but when it was surveyed later, the total land was 115.650 square miles, the half of which accordingly was 57.825 square miles. Also, the land they had acquired with Rs. 15,000 when surveyed was 66 square miles, which was 8 and 2/5 square miles more than half of the estate and 6.222 square miles more than what they had assumed which was 60 square miles. Thus, discussion on official level rose regarding the matter. Mr. Wace, the then Deputy Commissioner of Darjeeling, placed that government was required to pay Rs. 18,690 more for the excess land found during the survey. The rate of land was fixed on Rs. 2,225 per square mile. The confusion arose on different grounds among the officials. One confusion was that whether the excess land was

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<sup>234</sup> Dash, *Bengal District Gazetteers*, 207.

<sup>235</sup> Proceedings for April, No. 110/111, Part B, Forests: Department of Revenue and Agriculture. In *Purchase from Tendook Pulger, Tahsildar of Darjeeling of an estate known as Cheboo Lama's grant*, 1-10, National Archives of India.

6.222 square miles or 8 and 2/5 square miles. Another confusion was that on what basis, the rate of the value of the excess land was fixed. There was also the confusion that whether the annual revenue that was fixed upon the grant should be reduced or not as there was reduction in the total land which comprised the grant with the purchase of half of it by the government. Along that there was another issue that Raja Tenduk Pulger already had a debt of Rs.21,133 which he was to pay to the government. On this matter, there was the confusion on how to adjust the debt which both the parties had for each other. Mr. Rivers Thompson, the then Lieutenant-Governor, was of the opinion that Government had to pay for the excess land according to the valuation properly made and the remaining amount of Rs. 2,443 after the reduction from the debt that Raja Tenduk had to provide to the government was to be waived off considering his political services to the government. However, the excess land was accepted by the government as 6.222 square miles placing their argument that they had paid previously for 60 square miles. The valuation of the land as suggested by Mr. Wace was also considered high and instead valuation of Rs.1000 per square mile was found to be proper, but it was not to be implemented, considering the recommendations made by the Lieutenant Governor. Regarding the question about the change in the annual payment by Raja Tenduk for the remaining land was decided that there was to have no change and Rs. 500 was to be paid annually by him. Thus, the recommendations made by Lieutenant Governor was accepted and the debt of Raja Tenduk Pulger was adjusted with the amount of money that government was to pay for excess land to Tenduk and the remaining debt that Tenduk still had for the government was waived off.<sup>236</sup>

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<sup>236</sup> Pros. October 1884, Nos. 120-121, Foreign Department, Internal A. Simla Records. In *Debt due to Government by Tendook Pulger, Tehsildar of Darjeeling, and his co-sharers in the estate of Cheboo Lama*, 1-9, National Archives of India.

According to Colonel Tanner's survey, an area of 42,382 acres were sold to the Forest Department, in 1882-83. It consisted of the forest of Singalila Range. In the year, 1883, an area of 1,645 acres or 2½ square miles were transferred from the part of Raja Tenduk Pulger to his nephew called as Sonam Sring. Again in 1889, Chebu Lama's nephew Phurboo Dewan transferred 1/3 from his share of the grant to Chebu Lama's son Rechuk Dewan. As a result of addition of land in the share of Rechuk Dewan, his total share increased to 2/3 and Raja Tenduk Pulger had in his share 1/3. With the time, the shares among them were privately partitioned. Separate leases were issued according to the fresh shares in the year 1893. The share of Rechuk Dewan which comprised of 19,993 acres was put under Tauzi number 26. This was the old Tauzi number which was again given to his share. The revenue that Rechuk Dewan had to pay was Rs. 632, which was the deducted amount. Tenduk Pulger was assigned the Tauzi number 951, for his own share of 9,996 acres, and the revenue was fixed to Rs. 316. For the share of Sonam Sring, who had 1,645 acres, he had to pay as revenue Rs. 52. His Tauzi number was 952.<sup>237</sup>

Rechuk Dewan had no son. So, after his death, his share of Tauzi number 26, which comprised Relling estate was passed onto his widow wife and daughters. With due regard to Sikkim Law, they were not allowed to claim on the share, keeping on the view that Sikkim Law had no provision for the inheritance of land by females. Thus, Rechuk Dewan's share, was taken over by the government. The government turned Rechuk Dewan's share into government Khas Mahal. Sonam Sring's share with the Tauzi number 952, comprised of area called as Samabong or Kolbong Estate. He failed to pay the revenue in 1909 and therefore his share was also taken over by the government. It was also brought under Khas Mahal. The due revenue for the estate

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<sup>237</sup> Dash, *Bengal District Gazetteers*, 207.

was cleared by the government itself when it was resumed again. The widow (it is exactly not known whether, widow here means the wife of Rechuk Dewan or the wife of Sonam Sring but as it dealt with Tauzi number 952, she probably must be wife of Sonam Sring), was given pension, along with 60 acres of land. She was also provided two houses whose rents she was not required to pay. The grants given to this widow had hereditary rights, that they were to be retained by the son of the widow and again by the heirs of her son.<sup>238</sup>

The lands which were under the family of Chebu Lama had a different system of revenue collection. They collected on the basis of number of able-bodied men present in each household. The numbers of cattle each household kept was also another basis that determined as to how much a family had to pay as revenue. The quantity of land which was under each family's cultivation was yet another factor for revenue determination. Normally, the amount of collection varied between Rs. 1 to Rs. 10, annually.<sup>239</sup> The way Chebu Lama used to use his tenants for the services of the British is used a window by Catherine Warner to understand Chebu Lama's relationship with his tenants. She thinks that the tenants of Chebu Lama whom she calls as "shifting agriculturalists" were under strong control of Chebu Lama as they used to provide their service as immediately as Chebu Lama commanded.<sup>240</sup>

This was how the passing away of Chebu Lama had carved the fortune of the grant. The good amount of the grant had come under the control of the government within a short span of time. It is unknown as to why some share-holders of Chebu Lama were not able to pay the annual revenue to the government. The reason

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<sup>238</sup> Dash, *Bengal District Gazetteers*, 208.

<sup>239</sup> Hunter, *Statistical Account of Bengal*, 123-124.

<sup>240</sup> Catherine Warner, 2014. "Flighty Subjects: Sovereignty, Shifting Cultivators, and the State in Darjeeling, 1830-1856" *Himalaya*, 34, no.1: 33.

according to which Raja Tenduk Pulger decided to agree to sell half of the grant to the government also could not be exactly known. A similar set up of land administration that of Sikkim's *Kazi* system can be assumed to be replicated in Chebu Lama Grant too given the way they shared relationship with their tenants. A simple owner-tenant relationship can be imagined in the functioning of the grant when it was under Chebu Lama and his family. The case that women should not be allowed to claim the share of her husband, father or brother, as heirs with regard to Sikkim law in a British territory is quite confusing. A large tract of land that was in the share of Rechuk Dewan, son of Chebu Lama, occupied by the government on account of his death without a son, just because Sikkim law was very important to observe in the case is something that attracts multiple assumptions. It could be that British wanted to take a hold of it and therefore made the passing away of Rechuk as an opportunity to grab it. It would be a weak assumption to assume that the wife and daughters of Rechuk Dewan were not interested to continue with the grant and therefore they agreed to the reason. It is quite unknown, if by giving up the share, the family of Rechuk Dewan wanted to leave everything that was in Darjeeling and settle in Sikkim by reviving the old relationship. The information about the family of Rechuk Dewan also could not be found which could have helped us understand this assumption. When Chebu Lama Grant was shared after his death in 1866, the members who were given the claim was not just Chebu Lama's direct son, but others too, which means that Rechuk's share could also be claimed by indirect heirs. But it did not happen that way. This also indicates the change in British attitude towards the elite natives with the strengthening of their hold in Darjeeling and Sikkim. If it was a true event that the family of Rechuk Dewan abided themselves with Sikkim law even when they could have escaped it,

then it can indicate that they were loyal to the Kingdom of Sikkim despite the differences they had.

#### *3.4.2 Permanently Settled Estate in Darjeeling: The Share of Raja Tenduk Pulger from the Chebu Lama Grant*

As already discussed, the Chebu Lama Grant was divided among three heirs of Chebu Lama after he passed away in 1866. Raja Tenduk Pulger was one among them.

The share of Raja Tenduk Pulger was given the Tauzi number 951. The total land in his share was 9,996 acres or 15½ square miles. His estate was known as Karmi or Kurmi Estate. After the death of Raja Tenduk Pulger, it was inherited by his five sons. They had divided the land among themselves. Accordingly, for the administration of the divided property, four new Tauzis were formed. The new Tauzi numbers formed were 951, 1116, 1117 and 1118. Tauzi number 951 and 1117 belonged to the share of first two sons of Raja Tenduk Pulger. Later as time passed, these two shares went to the possession of the wife of the fourth son of the Tenduk Pulger. Her name was Mrs. R.S Pulger. She further leased it to Mr. N.C Goenka who was from Darjeeling. It was leased for the tenure of 20 years. The rent was fixed for Rs. 2300 annually. The two Tauzi 951 and 1117 that came under Mrs. R.S Pulger, had within it two important small bazars known as *hats*. Those were the *hats* of Pulbazar and Bijanbari. Mr. Goenka was further given the lease of these two *hats* separately by Mrs. R.S Pulger. This lease was for the tenure of 18 years and four months. It was given effect from 1<sup>st</sup> of September, 1940. The annual rent was fixed as Rs. 6,500. The next share with the Tauzi number 1118 was given to the widow of the third son of Raja Tenduk Pulger and to her sons. The last share with the Tauzi number 1116 belonged to last two sons of Raja Tenduk Pulger. They together were responsible for

looking after this Tauzi. It was the largest share among all. The revenue from this Tauzi was also double then other shares. The shares that went to the five sons in the form of four Tauzi numbers were the only estates which were permanently settled in the District of Darjeeling. The only Permanently settled estates in Darjeeling with an area of 9,996 acres were required to pay Rs.316 as revenue.<sup>241</sup> The Cess Demand for this permanently settled estates was Rs. 706. Revenue collected from Karmi estate was credited to the Province Land Revenue department.<sup>242</sup> The cesses collected were submitted to District Board. It was collected by Deputy Commissioner. The cesses collected were in terms of Cess Act of 1880.<sup>243</sup>

Thus, the share of Tenduk Pulger also went through changes in administration after his death, like the whole Chebu Lama Grant had gone through changes after the passing away of Chebu Lama. It was only after the death of Tenduk Pulger that the share was brought into permanently settled. Before that it was under what was settled in 1862 and revised after 1866. The nature of the grant also changed with time as cesses were also added in the revenue collection. Previously it was just a certain amount of revenue annually which was to be paid to the government.

#### *3.4.3 Chebu Lama Grant: Change of British Stand from Perpetuity to Khas Mahals*

It is clear from the above discussion itself that the Chebu Lama Grant was of the nature which was granted with proprietary rights and for the tenure of perpetuity. However, the British could not stand with their commitments. They took the best use of opportunity of situations which came after Chebu Lama passed away. On different grounds, the part of Chebu Lama Grant was turned into Government Khas Mahals.

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<sup>241</sup> Dash, *Bengal District Gazetteers*, 207-208.

<sup>242</sup> *Ibid.*, 206.

<sup>243</sup> *Ibid.*, 209.



Relling estate with the Tauzi number 26 which was the share of Chebu Lama's son Rechuk Dewan, and the share of Sonam Sring, known as Samabong (Kolbong) estate with the Tauzi number 952 were converted into Khas Mahals. They were put into the administration of Sadar Kurseong Khas Mahals, which was one of the agencies of British Land Revenue Administration in Darjeeling, about which it has been already discussed. The Sadar Kurseong Khas Mahal was in charge of nine estates among which two were from Chebu Lama Grant.<sup>244</sup>

The Relling Estates consisted of 12 blocks. They were Majua, Dangia, Lamagoan, Jhepi, Hatta, Namla, Singbungdera, Relling or Laringaon, Kanjalia, Kankibong, Lodhoma, and Rimbick. There were two small bazars at Dangia and Jhepi. Rimbick also had a bazar. There was one larger *hat* known as Lodhoma *hat* in Kankibong. Rimbick and Lodhoma *hats* were under the administration of Darjeeling Improvement Fund. They were known for the markets for potatoes. Relling estate was taken over by the government in the year 1924. The settlement of the Relling Estate which had Tauzi No. 26 was done for the first time in the year 1925-28. The report found that the estate had 19,500 acres of land. From this, 13,223 acres were cultivated. Remaining 775 acres were put under the administration of the Forest Department. The 1925-28 settlement was effective till the year 1948. The demand of the estate during the time of author's enquiry was Rs. 14,742. There were no any settlements made prior to the settlement of 1925-28.<sup>245</sup>

The Samalbong or Kolbong estate had only two blocks. They were Kolbong and Murmidong. This estate was taken over by the government in the year 1909. There was no any settlement done before 1914. The settlement of this estate was done

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<sup>244</sup>Ibid., 209.

<sup>245</sup> Ibid., 213.

in the year 1914. The settlement report found that it had 1,845 acres of land. From this, 1,219 acres were under cultivation. Rs. 1,532 was fixed as the revenue demand. This settlement was effective till 1925-28. Another settlement that replaced the settlement of 1914 was the settlement of 1925-28. This settlement was in effect till 1948. The revenue demand was increased by Rs. 242 in the year 1944. The amount of the demand was for the area of 1,772 acres.<sup>246</sup>

#### *3.4.3.1 Administration of Relling and Samabong or Kolbong: Grant turned into Khas Mahal Estates*

There were many areas in Darjeeling district, that were brought under Khas Mahals during the time of British rule. Therefore, areas from different places of Darjeeling under Khas Mahals had similar administration. The administration of areas which were similar were of Relling Estate, Samabong or Kolbong estate, West Tista Khas Mahals and the Kalimpong Government Estate.<sup>247</sup>

Two things that were important to determine the “rights and obligations” of the “tenants” of Relling and Samabong or Kolbong Khas Mahals were the Act X of 1859 and the condition placed during the time of the lease made to the tenant. Bengal Tenancy Act was not applicable in Darjeeling and so the land revenue settlements in these two Khas Mahals were based upon Act VIII of 1879.<sup>248</sup>

According to Act X of 1859:

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<sup>246</sup>Ibid.

<sup>247</sup>Ibid., 221.

<sup>248</sup> Ibid., 221.

...a tenant gets a heritable right of occupancy in any land held by him for 12 years. Tenants have no right to transfer or sublet lands held by them without the permission of the Deputy Commissioner under pain of fine or cancellation of their lease.<sup>249</sup>

The tenants of the hills including those of Relling and Samabong or Kolbong estate were mostly not allowed by the Deputy Superintendent to transfer or re-lease lands to any person from the plain. Even the transfer of land by the Lepchas and Bhutias to co-hill men if he was Nepali then, it was not allowed in most cases. The confiscation of the land given to the tenants by the government was also possible. The land leased to the raiyat was to be confiscated on different reasons. One was that if the tenant failed to pay the revenue in the due time provided to him, his land was liable to be confiscated by the government. Secondly, if he used the stones and trees of the land given to him then too his lands could be legally confiscated. Thirdly, if he was to cut the trees from the lands leased to him, then he was to produce royalty, or permission from the government to do so, violation of which would result in his confiscation of the land. In addition to it, he was also required to plant five saplings in replacement of permission to cut one tree.<sup>250</sup>

The adults from the tenant's family were also required to give two days of labour free of cost annually for the renovation of mandal's road, failing of which confiscation of the land was possible. Regarding the cultivation of crops, the tenants were not allowed to cultivate crops that required water like Cardamom. The tenants were also obliged to provide paid labours as well as provisions for labours during the time when asked by the officials who were authorised to do so. The coolies or labours

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<sup>249</sup>Ibid.

<sup>250</sup>Ibid., 222.

were paid as per market price. The tenants in Khas Mahals estates were allowed to use unreserved forest present in the Khas Mahals.<sup>251</sup>

In the Kalimpong Khas Mahals, there were absentee land lords too, under whom group of sub tenants were found. They were Pakhurias, Kuthdars and Adhiars. These groups of cultivators had to pay much more than what was fixed by the government as the revenue. It was found in the year 1921 that Kuthdars were required to pay 12 times more than what was fixed by the government, and Adhiars were required to pay more times higher than what Kuthdars had to pay. There were the cases of confiscation too, but Pakhurias in most cases were said to have won their cases.<sup>252</sup>

The similar information about Relling and Samabong Khas Mahal could not be tracked, but given the same administration in hill Khas Mahal and being the non-plantation area, similar pattern of information can be assumed for these two Khas Mahals too.

Lands were allowed to mortgage. It was done in two ways. One was called *Mashikata* and the other one was called *Biyaz*. In the first one, the control over the land was given for fixed tenure. It included both the principal and the interest. In the second case, the control over the land was exchanged for the interest alone.<sup>253</sup>

In the Khas Mahals in Darjeeling including Khas Mahals of Relling and Samabong or Kolbong, the proprietary rights were solely with the government. There was no space for private land-lords between the government and the *raiyyat*. The *raiyyat* in most cases himself used to be the tiller of the soil. The Khas Mahal estates were

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<sup>251</sup>Ibid.

<sup>252</sup>Ibid.

<sup>253</sup>Ibid.

divided into blocks. Each block was under *mandal*, who was the headman. The *mandals* were the people with government authority. The main function of the *mandal* was to collect revenues from the raiyats who were engaged in cultivation in the block they were assigned by the government. They were also required to deposit what they had collected from the *raiya*ts to the government Treasury. They also had other functions to perform. They were required to make government aware of the cases of transfers of land in the blocks through reports to the government. They were also expected to report the crimes of all types which were taken place in the block to the police. The duty of keeping the roads in good condition and to look into the new construction of road in their block also laid upon the mandals. They were also required to keep the records of new births and deaths, which was to be provided to the government. They were to make sure that the raiyats do provide labours and provisions when the authority required them. *Mandals* were also to be vigilant upon protecting trees from natural falling or cutting down by people. Prevention of grazing and matters related to wasteland were also under their list of duties. The *mandal* was paid by giving him the 10 percent of what he had collected from his block. With all these powers, he commanded loyalty and respect from the people in the block. He acted as the head in the society and looked into matters relating to different disputes. The *mandals* used to get lands of whose they were not required to pay any rent. They were also allowed to have the privilege of grazing free of cost. But this privilege was discontinued in Khas Mahals under Sadar administration, in which Relling and Samabong or Kolbong Khas Mahal also fell. The whole system was known as *mandali* system. This system was effective on the ground that people were able to

understand it. With minor cases of dishonesty, all most all *mandals* were engaged in their duties seriously.<sup>254</sup>

Though it is recorded that the raiyats did not have any serious problem with the system of administration in the Khas Mahals areas of Darjeeling, yet it is only one version of story. The opinion from raiyats who were uneducated and innocent could not exist in literatures. In-fact, written history of Darjeeling is almost all confined within British sources. As a result, it is difficult to understand the impact of the system among the raiyats. However, looking into the nature of rules set by the British in the Khas Mahal areas like Relling and Samabong or Kolbong estate indicates that they were not simple rules. The strict rules for actions like cutting down of tress for which raiyats had to face eviction is undoubtedly a harsh rule. The people or raiyats being tribals, who depend upon forest resources for daily living must have not found themselves comfortable in the rules that kept them away from accessing the forest resources. For even simple reason like using stones from the land where one is cultivating, the raiyats had to face eviction from the land, indicates that the raiyats were kept under strict terms. The power that was vested to *mandal* through different duties, had the probability of him suppressing the simple *raiya*s. The duty of *mandal* to collect revenue or rents from the *raiya*s also leaves a space where he could misuse his duty to extract more then what was required. The types of mortgages also similarly indicates that *raiya*s had to lose much from engaging in mortgage if in case at difficult situation he ever had to involve himself in such practice. The selection of crop for cultivation according to the British order must have been a difficult situation for the *raiya*s. The high rates that the sub-tenants had to pay brings in the picture of situation that the *raiya*s were in, where paying high rents was a better option for them

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<sup>254</sup>Ibid., 222-223.

then facing eviction. The record that all most all *mandals* were honest and loyal to the British also can be understood in other way, that their loyalty to the British could also mean that they were following the terms set for *raiya*s strictly and bringing good amount of revenue to the treasury, which further means that *raiya*s hardly had any excuse from abiding themselves with the terms set for them. Such condition of the peasants can be understood in comparison with condition of peasants in the other areas of British India which are documented. The tribal and peasant movements in British India could be taken as a mirror for all the peasants of the British India whose sufferings lacks proper documentation. This portion of Chebu Lama Grant after coming into the control of the British, got its native way of administration transformed into colonial system of administration.

#### *3.4.3.2 Rent in Khas Mahals: Relling and Samabong/Kolbong*

Relling estate was transformed into Khas Mahal in the year 1924. The new settlement was completed by 1928. Samabong or Kolbong Estate was transformed into Khas Mahal and brought into settlement by 1928.

While fixing the rents in Relling and Samabong or Kolbong estate, information from two neighbouring places or estates of Sikkim were also collected. Those two estates were Daramdin estate and Chakung estate. A letter dated 9<sup>th</sup> July 1925, sent by the Deputy Commissioner of Darjeeling to the Political Officer in Sikkim informs about the three requests made by Deputy Commissioner of Darjeeling of which one was seeking information about the rate or rates of rent for different classes of land in Daramdin and Chakung which were the bordering areas of Kolbong Khas Mehal, secondly, information was also requested about the total outturn of both grains and straw from every type or classes of land there, thirdly, it was also enquired

about as to what proportion of the gross produce of the land is fixed as payment of rent. All these, information as letter suggests, was requested in relation to the settlement proceedings for Kolbong and Relling Estates.<sup>255</sup>

The reply for the same was sent by the manager of Chakung estate to the General Secretary to the Maharaja of Sikkim dated 7<sup>th</sup> August, 1925. He had informed that the rent in Chakung estate was based on the quantity of seed sown on the land and not on the area of the land. It was informed that the lands were of two kinds- *Pani kheti* and *Sukha kheti* which were further divided into three classes on the basis of which rent were assessed. 1<sup>st</sup> class *Pani kheti* was assessed for Rs. 2 per *pathi*, 2<sup>nd</sup> class was assessed for Rs. 1/8 per *pathi*, and third class was assessed for Rs. 1 per *pathi*. *Sukha kheti* was generally assessed at 14 paise per *pathi* but for second and third class *sukhakheti*, the rent was assessed for only  $\frac{3}{4}$  *pathi* for second class land which could hold 1 *pathi* and  $\frac{1}{2}$  *pathi* for third class which could hold 1 *pathi*, so that to lower the hardship of tenant given the differences in the fertility level of lands. However, it was also mentioned that the assessment was not accurately correct as the then assessment was in the crude form. Regarding the out turn from different classes of land, it was mentioned that 1<sup>st</sup> class *Pani kheti* used to yield 3 mounds of paddy and same mound of straw per *pathi* of seed sown in the field, 2<sup>nd</sup> class used to yield 2 mounds of both paddy and straw per *pathi* and 3<sup>rd</sup> class used to yield 1 and  $\frac{1}{2}$  mound of both paddy and straw. For *sukha kheti*, it was 2 mounds of straw for first class per *pathi*, 1 and  $\frac{1}{2}$  mounds for second class and 1 mound for third class. For the third

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<sup>255</sup> File no. 5/35(I)1925, Serial no. 228. From Government of Bengal, Office of The Deputy Commissioner to The Political Officer in Sikkim, Gangtok, No. 7226G, dated 9<sup>th</sup> July, 1925. In *Information furnished to the Deputy Commissioner, Darjeeling about rents of different classes of lands in Daramdin and Chakung estates*, Sikkim State Archives.



enquiry, it was mentioned that the rent was assessed on the average at 1/5<sup>th</sup> and 1/6<sup>th</sup> for *Pani kheti* and *Sukha kheti* respectively for all classes of land.<sup>256</sup>

W. Polden also similarly provided the details about the queries made by the Deputy Commissioner of Darjeeling through a letter to the General Secretary to the Maharaja of Sikkim, dated 14<sup>th</sup> August, 1925. It is known from his report that there were two categories of lands namely Paddy fields and Dry fields which were like in Chakung, were further divided into three classes. First, second and third class of paddy fields were assessed to Rs. 2, Rs. 1 and 8 paise, Rs.1 per *pathi* of seed sown respectively. For Dry fields it was assessed to annas 14 per one *pathi* of seed sown irrespective of the classes of land cultivated. Outturn from paddy fields was 3 mounds average and 6 mounds average was straw from first class, 2 mounds with 4 mounds average straw was from second class and 1 and ½ mounds and 3 mounds average straw was from 3<sup>rd</sup> class paddy fields, as the outturn for each *pathi* of seed sown. For dry fields, it was 2 mounds for every one *pathi* of seed sown. Regarding the third enquiry i.e about the rent, it was mentioned that 1/6<sup>th</sup> and 1/8<sup>th</sup> of the gross produce as rents for both category of fields respectively, were collected.<sup>257</sup>

All the above information were forwarded to Deputy Commissioner, Darjeeling. Though, exactly same system was not replicated yet the information provided by Sikkim can be seen helpful in the finalisation of 1925-28 Settlement.

The rates were fixed in Tauzi number 26, i.e Relling estate by 1925-28 Settlement. There were nine different categories for which the rates were fixed. The rates were fixed per acre. Those categories were Cardamom, *Panikhet I*, *Panikhet II*,

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<sup>256</sup>Ibid., File no. 5/35(I)1925, Serial no. 228. From Manager, Chakung Estate to The General Secretary to His Highness the Maharaja of Sikkim, Gangtok, No. 3819-G, Dated 7<sup>th</sup> August, 1925. Sikkim State Archives.

<sup>257</sup>Ibid., From W. Polden to The General Secretary to His Highness the Maharaja of Sikkim, No. 3883/G or 914/D, Dated 14<sup>th</sup> August 1925. Sikkim State Archives.

*Sukhakhhet*, Homestead, Orchard, Bamboo, New Fallow and Old Fallow. The rate per acre for Cardamoms was Rs. 10. For *Panikhhet*, it was Rs 1 and 4 *annaper* acre. For *Sukhakhhet*, Homestead, Orchard, Bamboo, Current fallow and Old fallow, it was Rs. 1 per acre if they were grown in *Panikhhet* I and if they were grown in *Panikhhet* II, it was 12*anna* per acre. For old fallow, it was 6 *annaper* acre. In the year 1935, the categories were re-arranged and through it, the category of *Panikhhet* II was removed, and the rates of *Sukhakhhet* and Old Fallow were also reduced but in small amount.<sup>258</sup>

The previous rates when the grant was still in force, the rates were similar to the one settled in 1928 in case of cardamoms. For cardamoms, per acre, it was Rs. 10. For rest of the types of land, there were two rates according to the block. In two blocks it was 9*anna* per acre. In the rest of the blocks, it was 12*anna* per acre.<sup>259</sup>

The rates in the Samabong or Kolbong estates with Tauzi number 952, were also brought into settlement through the Settlement of 1925-28. The categories were same for this estate as like that of Relling estate. For Cardamom, it was Rs. 10 per acre. For *Panikhhet*, it was Rs. 1 and 4 *annaper* acre. For *Sukhakhhet*, Homestead, Orchard, Bamboo, Current fallow, it was Rs. 1 per acre. For Old fallow and Culturable waste, it was 6 *anna* per acre.<sup>260</sup>

The average size of a holding was based on the rules meant for regulation of transfers of holdings. The average size of holding on Relling and Samabong or Kolbong Khas mahal estates was 7.5 acres.<sup>261</sup>

In the government Khas mahals, each house had to pay Rs. 3 annually and 6*annas* for each bullock. If a house had three to four male who were adult and

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<sup>258</sup> Dash, *Bengal District Gazetteers*, 224.

<sup>259</sup> *Ibid.*, 224.

<sup>260</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>261</sup> *Ibid.*, 225-226.

engaged in cultivation then the house in an average had to pay Rs. 5 annually. For cattle, they had to pay 12 annas for each category of cattle.<sup>262</sup>

Before the land was resumed by the government that means when it was still a grant in the hands of heirs of Chebu Lama, the categories were five in numbers and those were, Cardamoms, *Panikhet*, *Sukhakhet*, etc., Culturable waste and Unculturable waste. The rates were almost similar in both the systems. For Cardamoms, it was Rs. 10 per acre. For *Panikhet*, it was Rs. 1 and 4 *anna* per acre. For *Sukhakhet*, etc., it was Rs. 1 and 4 *anna* per acre. For Culturable waste, it was 8 *anna* per acre. For Unculturable waste, it was 2 *anna* per acre.<sup>263</sup>

It however, could not be known from when such rates prior to the settlement was brought into effect by the proprietors of Chebu Lama Grant. It is however in the record which has been already discussed above too, that family of Chebu Lama collected revenue as per the number of members in family. It must be that the family of Chebu Lama later were influenced by the British Land Revenue system which was also used in nearby Kalimpong agricultural lands.

### **3.5 General information about People and Places in Chebu Lama Grant**

As discussed, Chebu Lama Grant went through different changes as time passed. The taking over of areas of Chebu Lama by the British gave a new way of life in those areas. The people and their works, and places were brought under certain defined rules and administration of various types, which no doubt was a very new thing, which became a part socio-economic evolution of people and places of Chebu Lama Grant.

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<sup>262</sup> Hunter, *Statistical Account of Bengal*, 124.

<sup>263</sup> Dash, *Bengal District Gazetteers*, 224.

Regarding the practice of agriculture, jhum system of agricultural practice in the hills was present during British occupation of Darjeeling. It was mainly done in the places which were located in interior region of Darjeeling. The jhum system naturally came to an end with the coming of British administration and their policies. The introduction of ploughing system is also regarded as the reason for the growth of new pattern of agricultural system in Darjeeling.<sup>264</sup> Non-Plantation crops were practiced in areas included in the Chebu Lama Grant.<sup>265</sup> Generally in the Khas Mahals of Darjeeling, cultivation of orange was very profitable out of its very good yields and with very less chance of crop failure. Orange cultivation was better than cardamom and potato cultivation, the profitability of which were depended upon price fluctuation and weather unpredictability respectively. Regarding potato, it was that in four regular years of cultivation, only one of the years would give better results.<sup>266</sup>

The location of the estates played important role in determining the economic condition of the people of the estates. One of the determining factors was the nearness of trade centre from the estate. The Relling estate having access to Bijanbari alone as a trade centre that too which was long distance away, did not favour much in creating good economic condition of the estate. The transport was also not good. People had to depend upon coolies and horse pack, which was also another hindrance. Subsidiary occupations were also not profitable in such estates. Some of the subsidiary occupations of the people were to engage themselves as coolie and milk sellers. But it was of hardly any help to them as the demand of coolie was not available in villages as in market places, towns, or in tea gardens. The condition was similar to the milk sellers too. Comparatively, the West Teesta Khas Mahals had better economic

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<sup>264</sup> Dash, *Bengal District Gazetteers*, 102.

<sup>265</sup> *Ibid.*, 100.

<sup>266</sup> *Ibid.*, 226.

condition given their facility of good connectivity to trade centres like Darjeeling, Jorebunglow, Sukhia and Teesta. The poor transport and communication system was the reason for deprivation all of the Khas Mahals of Darjeeling from the penetration and development of education system in such villages.<sup>267</sup>

The main crops of the Relling Estate as per the Settlement Report of 1925-28 were Rice which covered 528 acres of land with 3.3 percentage share of total cropped area of Relling Estate, wheat which covered 375 acres of land with 2.3 percentage share, Barley which covered 275 acres of land with 1.8 percentage share, Millet covered 814 acres of land with 5.1 percentage share, Maize which covered 12,025 acres of land with 75.2 percentage share, cardamom and spices covered 602 acres of land with 3.8 percent share and Potato occupied 1,341 acres of land with 8.4 percentage share. Maize was the highly cultivated crop covering 75.2 percent of the total area of the land. Thus, in total 15,960 acres of land were under cultivation.<sup>268</sup>

The two bazars within Chebu Lama Grant, called as Bijanbari and Pulbazar had with the time grown as trans-frontier trade centres. From Bijanbari and Pulbazar, goods were sent to Sikkim through Namchi. Another center of trade was Singla. From here the goods were sent to Sikkim through Naya bazar. Bijanbari and Pulbazar also had trade relation with Nepal. It used to export rice, mustard, oil, cloth, salt, pulses, kerosene oil, copper and brass sheets, cotton yarn along with wheat products, and sugar. It used to import potatoes, cardamoms, chirata, ghee, along with butter, vegetables, poultry, eggs. Slaughter animals, maize, millets, black dal etc. were also imported. The total amount of export value used to be around Rs. 3,15,000 annually. Singla bazar was active in trade with Sikkim. It used to export food crops like rice,

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<sup>267</sup>Ibid., 226-227.

<sup>268</sup>Ibid., 101.

pulses, wheat foodstuffs, and other necessities like mustard oil, cloth, salt, kerosene oil etc. whereas it imported fruits, potatoes, cardamoms, and other products like chirata, ghee, maize, millet and black dal from Sikkim. The amount of import was of worth Rs 75,000. The coming up of Naya Bazar in Sikkim as the trade centre had impacted the importance of Singla Bazar. The trade routes that linked Darjeeling and Nepal were via Srikhola, Lodhoma, Rimbick to Bijanbari and Pulbazar. Transport from Pulbazar to Bijanbari was done through the help of collie and from Bijanbari to Darjeeling was taken through rope way.<sup>269</sup> Through local trade, Pulbazar and Bijanbari used to bring about 4-15 lakhs rupees annually. Singla's annual turnover was less than Rs. 4 lakhs. Rimbick and Lodhama used to create revenue less than Rs. 4 lakhs annually.<sup>270</sup> The most important bridges that were maintained by District Board, Darjeeling that fell upon the old Lama tract were Gok suspension bridge 236 feet span and Rammam suspension bridge span 206 feet, Rongbong bridge with 68 feet span, and Jhepi khola suspension bridge span 175 feet.<sup>271</sup> Under Darjeeling District Board Road department, roads of different places were connected. Relating to Chebu Lama Grant areas, some of the roads constructed by District board where wheeled vehicles could move were Tukvar-Singla road, Darjeeling-Pulbazar road and Singla Bazar-Rammam road. The roads constructed by the same department but of bridle type roads were Darjeeling-Little Rangit road, Pulbazar-Kolbong road, Goke Bridge – Pulbazar and Kolbong, and Pulbazar and Singla were also connected to other villages through such roads.<sup>272</sup>

Generally, the raiyats of Khas Mahal used to be under huge debt. The reasons provided are that their mis-management in selling and buying the products, taking loans for socio-religious activities like marriage, funerals etc., engagement in alcohol,

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<sup>269</sup>Ibid., 169.

<sup>270</sup>Ibid., 172.

<sup>271</sup>Ibid., 185.

<sup>272</sup>Ibid., 188-189.

gambling etc., which all caused them to indebtedness. However, the good natural condition for crops, the amount of rent which was considerably not high and holdings of land under each tenant which used to be considerably large were some of the reasons given that were helpful for the raiyats.<sup>273</sup>

A good amount of land was taken by the government in around 1882 from Chebu Lama Grant, about which it is already discussed. It was taken mainly for the forest purpose. Separate information about the forest areas taken from Chebu Lama could not be tracked but the information of forest that fell within the district of Darjeeling help us provide the glimpse of the forest taken from Chebu Lama Grant.

The forest that was within Darjeeling division was “bounded by the Tista river to the east, the Nepal boundary to the west, the Sikkim boundary to the north and Kurseong Forest Division to the south.”<sup>274</sup> This forest had the lowest elevation of 600 feet at the valley of Teesta and highest elevation at Sandakphu with 12,000 feet. Two important watersheds that this forest formed and can be relevant to areas under Chebu Lama are the Rammam river, that combines above Singla bazar with the Great Rangit and the Little Rangit that combines below Singla Bazar with the Great Rangit.<sup>275</sup> Darjeeling division forest were divided into seven ranges. Those ranges were Tista valley, Takdah, Senchel, Ghum-Simana, Tanglu, Singalila and Darjeeling. Forest that was within Chebu Lama Grant must be containing the ranges of Tanglu and Singalila. Gazetted officers, forest rangers, deputy rangers, foresters, clerks, and forest guards were used for the administration of the forest.<sup>276</sup> The forest lying in Darjeeling division before the year 1892 was mainly used for timber and firewood and there was no any proper forest plan. But with time many plans of forest use and management

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<sup>273</sup> Ibid., 226.

<sup>274</sup> Ibid., 126.

<sup>275</sup> Ibid.

<sup>276</sup> Ibid., 125-126.

were brought by the British officials.<sup>277</sup> As a whole the forest of Sadar division had yielded revenue of Rs 11,86,276 in 1925-26. The revenue from the same forest was increased to Rs. 23,94,777 in 1942-43.<sup>278</sup>

Thus, with the administrative changes, the former areas which were once under Chebu Lama was gone through various transformation. The growth of tea gardens nearby, brought areas of Chebu Lama in the contact with different people. Consequently, with the use of ploughing system, agriculture was also improved. Bazars and hats also sprang up. With the organised administration, trade and commerce also flourished. Transport and communication system also improved. The forest products were also capitalised. At the same time, people were also brought into strict administrative set up. The land revenue system, forest laws, laws of crime and punishment etc. impacted the people in its own capacity. With all above given information, it can be assumed that the people and places of Chebu Lama Grant entered into the phase of modernisation under the British administration.

### **3.6 An Episode of History from Chebu Lama Grant: A Dispute between Karmi estate of Chebu Lama Grant and Chakhung estate of Sikkim**

As already discussed, Karmi estate was only the permanently settled estate among the shares from Chebu Lama Grant. Such administrative change was brought in only after the passing away of Raja Tenduk Pulger. Karmi estate was strategically located as it shared the boundary with Sikkim in the South. Within the Karmi estate, Singla was an important trade centre, the details of which are already discussed above. As Singla mostly dealt with the trans-frontier trade with Sikkim, owing to its close boundary with the southern part of Sikkim, it was a centre of trade for both the sides, Sikkim

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<sup>277</sup>Ibid., 133.

<sup>278</sup>Ibid., 132.



and Darjeeling. The coming up of new bazar called as ‘Naya Bazar’ in the nearby area of Singla, in an estate called Chakung of Sikkim became a reason of dispute between the Karmi estate and Chakung estate. The dispute had become so grave that interference of higher authorities from both the sides became necessary.

A letter from P.H Waddell, Deputy Commissioner of Darjeeling to the Political Officer in Sikkim, Gangtok dated 1<sup>st</sup> December, 1926 gives the insights of the disputes between the two estates:

...Sir, I have the honour to send copy of a letter from Mr. D.L Pulger, Zemindar of Karmi Estate, together with the copy of a report from the Sadar Inspector of police who was deputed to enquire into the matter. It appears that the Manager of the Chakung Estate is interfering with trade between Sikkim and British territory in order to stimulate the so-called “Naya Bazar” opposite Singla. This is against the treaty and I would request that a proclamation be made locally that persons and goods may pass to and from the Singla Bazar without let or hindrance...<sup>279</sup>

The letter was received by the Political Officer in Sikkim on 13<sup>th</sup> of December, 1926. The same was also forwarded to the General Secretary to the Maharaja of Sikkim asking for their interference and conclusion.<sup>280</sup>

The letter of complaint drawing the attention of the Deputy Commissioner of Darjeeling was sent by D.L Pulger on 26<sup>th</sup> of November 1926. It stated that the administrators of Naya Bazar were creating problems in the free passage of goods between Sikkim and British India. The matter had started around five-six months from the day of the complaint sent to the Deputy Commissioner, Darjeeling. The *bustiwallas* (villagers), from Sikkim who wanted to come to Singla to buy their

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<sup>279</sup> File no. 19/22/1926, Serial no. 353. From P.H Waddell, Deputy Commissioner of Darjeeling to The Political Officer in Sikkim, Gangtok. No. 10875/G, Dated 1<sup>st</sup> December, 1926. In *Reg. Police report against the manager, Chakung estate for interfering with trade between Sikkim and British territory*, Sikkim State Archives.

<sup>280</sup> *Ibid.*, No. 1882/G. Sikkim State Archives.

requirements and also to sell their products were not allowed to do so as before. The guards were stationed at different places so that the villagers could not cross Great Rangit and enter Singla. In case of their failure to stop them from entering Singla then those villagers were asked to pay tax to them. The letter also informed about the attachment of the toll tickets which were paid by the Sikkimese villagers to enter Singla, as a proof. The Manager of the Chakung Estate was Rai Sahib Hari Prasad. Naya Bazar was under his administration. He had started living there because of which it was not possible for the villagers to take their products for sale at Singla bazar. The small ways or short cuts from which people used to enter Singla were also closed by Chakung estate. The reason given for their stopping of people from using such ways was that those small ways had led to landslide, but at the same time the people coming to Nayabazar were allowed to use the same way. Mr. Pulger, also had mentioned to the Deputy Commissioner to consult the matter with the Sub-Inspector of Police in charge of the Singla Patrol Post, also with Mr. S. Christison and Mr. George Dominey, for understanding the truth of the matter raised by him. He had called the activities of Chakung estate as “illegal” and had requested the authority for helping in continuity of free trade between British India and Sikkim. Mr. Pulger had also informed the Deputy Commissioner about his loss of Rs.100 per week as a revenue from Singla Bazar because of such actions by Chakung estate authorities, for which he also had requested that his loss should be recovered from the one who had caused the loss.<sup>281</sup>

The report prepared by the Sadar Inspector of Police, Darjeeling, dated 30<sup>th</sup> of November, 1926, gives the background of the disputes chronologically. After receiving the complaint from Mr. D.L Pulger, Sadar Inspector of Police had visited

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<sup>281</sup>Ibid., From D.L Pulger to the Deputy Commissioner, Darjeeling. Dated 26<sup>th</sup> November, 1926, Sikkim State Archives.

Singla Bazar and collected information from among those who were in authority to give proper information about the dispute. From there, he was able to understand the crux of the matter. The matter had its beginning in the year 1921 or 1922. During that time, the *Durbar* of Sikkim had prevented the villagers of Sikkim to enter Singla for any trade purposes. As a result, the proprietor of Singla Bazar had brought the matter into the attention of the authorities at Darjeeling. The communication of matter from Darjeeling to *Durbar*, resulted in the dismissing of the order that stopped the villagers of Sikkim to enter Singla Bazaar. That was done through the beating of drum by the Sikkim *Durbar*. Again, in the year 1926, during Durga Puja, the sellers from Sikkim were not allowed to come to Singla Bazar on the *hat* day. However, the sellers were not able to sell at Naya Bazar as nobody from the side of Darjeeling went to purchase them at Naya Bazar, as a result, those sellers were then allowed to enter Singla to sell their products at around 10 in the morning. Further on 26<sup>th</sup> of November, the same year, the grain sellers were stopped from entering Singla, whereas only people engaged with business of vegetables were allowed. They were stopped at junction of Chakung and Naya Bazar road by the Sikkim guards. Who-so-ever managed to enter Singla, were asked to pay tax in Naya Bazar. The matter aggravated when on 28<sup>th</sup> November, 1926, which was on Sunday, that nobody was allowed to enter Singla. The Sikkim police and a Gorkha had guarded the bridge over the Ramam river on the other side. The police from the Singla side had saw those guards on other side asking people to go back to Naya Bazar. The Sadar Inspector of Police, thus, made the conclusion that such activities had the potential to harm the growth and sustainability of Singla as a bazar. The stoppage of free trade also had already shown the harm in the government revenue.<sup>282</sup>

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<sup>282</sup>Ibid., Report of the Sadar Inspector of Police, Darjeeling. Dated 30<sup>th</sup> November, 1926. Sikkim State

The matter regarding bazars of Singla and Naya-Bazar was connected with the construction of bridge between Singla and Nayabazar/Jorthang. The letter dating 4<sup>th</sup> December, 1926 sent by Manager of Chakung Estate Hari Prasad Pradhan to Mr. Bucker gives the information that the people engaged with business and contractors from Nayabazar were not happy with the construction of *Fadkeyat* Jorthang by the people of Singla. The letter also informs that the Sikkim *Durbar* had previously closed the connection between Jorthang and Singla to divert the traffic to Nayabazar. It has also been mentioned that the action taken by the *Durbar* had positive impact upon the growth of Nayabazar. However, the re-construction of same bridge, as he mentioned, would have given negative result to all what have been achieved so far. The boundary of the river Rangit was its mid-stream and therefore, he suggested that the construction of the bridge can be stopped by the *Durbar* after it reaches to their territorial jurisdiction. He had also suggested that the letter should be written to the Deputy Commissioner of Darjeeling objecting the construction of the bridge.<sup>283</sup>

The other letter addressed to Manager of Chakung Estate Hari Prasad Pradhan by group of thirteen businessmen through Muktiyar Bhardhoj Gurung dated 4<sup>th</sup> December, 1926 also gives similar information about cutting of bamboos for the construction of bridge by Singla people which was requested to be stooped and the process of construction to be discontinued so that to protect business and bazar of Nayabazar.<sup>284</sup>

The Deputy Commissioner of Darjeeling through a reply dated 8<sup>th</sup> of January 1927, informs The Political Officer in Sikkim that though the permission from the

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Archives.

<sup>283</sup>Ibid., From H.P Pradhan, Manager of Chakung estate to Mr. Bucker. Dated 4<sup>th</sup> December 1926, Camp Rateypani. Sikkim State Archives.

<sup>284</sup>Ibid., From group of businessmen through Muktiyar Bhardhoj Gurung to Rai Sahib Hari Prasad Pradhan, Manager of Chakung Estate. Dated 4<sup>th</sup> December, 1926. Sikkim State Archives.

*Durbar* had to be taken before any such undertaking yet the construction of concerned bridge was of temporary nature and which was being constructed from many years back which had never received the attention of *Durbar* until the present time when some group of people with their interest had instigated the matter. He had also mentioned that if the bridge was dismantled then it would be the harsh and unfair action from the *Durbar*. He also requested the authority to take the matter in broad and generous terms and not in technical way as informed by Hari Prasad Pradhan.<sup>285</sup>

The letter dated 4<sup>th</sup> of February, 1927 from Lieut. Colonel F.M. Bailey, Political Officer in Sikkim to the General Secretary to the Maharaja of Sikkim informs of the enquiry he made about the truth of the construction of the concerned bridge since 1897, whether it was constructed regularly or was stopped in between for any reason. He also suggests that the no hindrance should be put upon the construction of the bridge and the free communication was important to be beneficial for both Sikkim and Darjeeling district. He had also called such forceful attempt to divert the trade as an artificial means.<sup>286</sup>

From the letter by Sd/- S.C. Ghosh, Sub Dy. Collector to Deputy Commissioner Darjeeling, dated 5<sup>th</sup> January, 1927, it is known that he had done a field visit to the area on 27.12.1926 where the bridge was constructed. From his letter it is found that the bamboo bridge was constructed every year on that spot since 1897 as the previous suspension bridge was carried away and the Sikkim *Durbar* never had problem for that previously. He was also of the opinion that the problem came with the idea of the diversion of the trade to Nayabazar. He through sketch of bridge (see

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<sup>285</sup>Ibid., From Deputy Commissioner, Darjeeling to the Political Officer in Sikkim. Dated 8<sup>th</sup> January, 1927, No. 520-G. Sikkim State Archives.

<sup>286</sup>Ibid., From Lieut. Colonel F.M Bailey, Political Officer in Sikkim to the General Secretary to His Highness the Maharaja of Sikkim, Gangtok. Dated 4<sup>th</sup> February, 1927, No. 2103/G.Sikkim State Archives.

map section) also had explained that as to how the temporary bridge was helpful for people of Sikkim to access Singla Bazar. He had also expressed that the impact of the discontinuation of the bridge was be very harmful economically as well as could be the threat for very existence of Singla Bazar. He also mentioned that the matter was also to impact upon the people living in tea gardens of Darjeeling like Tukvar, Barnesberg, Sum/Soom, Patabong etc. From the letter it can also be known that the permission for the construction of the said bridge was applied by Mr. D.L Pulger, the proprietor of the Karmi Estate of which Singla bazar was also a part, to the Chairman, District Board, which was sanctioned on 29.11.26. Ghosh also informs that the Vice Chairman of the District Board was the Manager of Chakung estate himself who had objected to the construction of the bridge.<sup>287</sup>

In a yet another letter addressed to the General Secretary to H.H. the Maharaja of Sikkim, dated 7<sup>th</sup> March, 1927, the communication from the said bridge was about 30 years old. The letter informs that the bridge was used as a means to escape by the dacoits as known from investigation of Singla-Karmatar dacoity cases, a means to escape Naya bazar tax too as a result of which the said bridge was discontinued, which was just a temporary arrangement. However, referring to the point made by Deputy Commissioner of Darjeeling, the letter also suggests that the communication should be allowed.<sup>288</sup>

The correspondence made in the year 1933 also give a similar scenario regarding the construction of the bridge. By the time new Deputy Commissioner had took the office in Darjeeling. His letter to the F. Williamson, Political Officer in Sikkim dated 21<sup>st</sup> November, 1933 informs that he was someone who had no problem

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<sup>287</sup>Ibid., From Sd/- S.C Ghosh, Sub Dy. Collector to Deputy Commissioner, Darjeeling. Dated 5<sup>th</sup> January, 1927.Sikkim State Archives.

<sup>288</sup> Ibid., From Camp Gangtok to the General Secretary to H.H. the Maharaja of Sikkim, Gangtok. Dated 7<sup>th</sup> March, 1927, No. 117/C-27.Sikkim State Archives.

in demolition of bridge. But he had received petition from Karmi estate for continuation of communication, according to the previous settlement reached in 18<sup>th</sup> April, 1927 where it was agreed that the bridge would be constructed annually with the permission from the Sikkim *Durbar*. The letter also states that in 1933 the bridge was constructed by the liquor vendor from the side of Sikkim and the zamindars of Karmi were also interested to renew the bridge. However, the letter suggests that fresh enquiries to be made for further course of action.<sup>289</sup>

The matter went to C.E Dudley, General Secretary to Maharaja of Sikkim through a notice titled “Proposed erection of bridge at Singla” dated 27<sup>th</sup> November, 1933, seeking the stand of the *Durbar*.<sup>290</sup>

The *Durbar* finally decided that there was no good reason for them for the continuation of the bridge. As a result, they also made clear that there was no need of enquiry to be taken.

The order was accordingly passed which can be known from correspondence of the Judicial Secretary to the Maharaja of Sikkim, to the Political Officer in Sikkim dated 25<sup>th</sup> December, 1933.<sup>291</sup>

This was a segment of history connected to the part of Chebu Lama Grant. The Singla-Jorthang bridge at present is also of temporary condition despite it being one of the key bridges to connect Sikkim and Darjeeling.

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<sup>289</sup>Ibid., From Deputy Commissioner’s Office Sd/- L.G. Pinnell, Darjeeling to F. Williamson, Political Officer in Sikkim. Dated 21<sup>st</sup> November, 1933, D/O No. 10043G.Sikkim State Archives.

<sup>290</sup>Ibid., From the Residency, Gangtok to C.E. Dudley, General Secretary to His Highness the Maharaja of Sikkim. Dated 27<sup>th</sup> November, 1933, D.O.No. 20(3)-G/33/8.Sikkim State Archives.

<sup>291</sup> Ibid., Letter of Approval. Dated 20<sup>th</sup> December, 1933. No. 5763/(Could not be identified).Sikkim State Archives.

### 3.7 On the Foot-steps of Chebu Lama: Raja Tenduk Pulger and his Grant

Tenduk Pulger is said to be the first hill man along with person called Gellong to be appointed as the government officer as *Tehsildar* under British government. The duty of *Tehsildar* was to collect revenue of the area allotted. The other works that he could do was to issue caste, income and residence certificate sometimes.<sup>292</sup>

Raja Tenduk Pulger was also of Adenphuso clan who had the history of serving in the Namgyal dynasty in good positions. As already known, he was also one among three to have the share in the Chebu Lama grant. In the reign of King Tsugphud Namgyal, Tenduk Pulger was the *Dzongpon* of Karmi. He was given the title of ‘Raja’ by the British in the year 1899. Kumar Wangchuk Palden Pulger was his first son, who was born in 1881 and lived till 1928. He was appointed as Judicial Secretary to the Chogyal Sir Tashi Namgyal in the year 1918. Despite being a loyal friend of the British, he was successful in maintaining a good relationship with the King of Sikkim too, by balancing himself properly between the British and the King of Sikkim.<sup>293</sup>

From the official letter dated 4<sup>th</sup> of December, 1891, Darjeeling, sent by J.G. Ritchie, Esq., who was the then Deputy Commissioner of Darjeeling to P. Nolan, Esq., who was the then Commissioner of the Rajshahi Division, we come to know about personal information about Raja Tenduk Pulger and also it provides information related to the request put forth by Raja Tenduk Pulger to the British Government. From there, it is known that Raja Tenduk Pulger was born in 1832. He had joined as *Tahsildar* of Darjeeling in the year 1874. The same post was renamed as Manager of Government Estates in 1883. He was paid Rs. 150 per mensem as a salary. He was

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<sup>292</sup> Sonam B. Wangel, 2019. *Darjeeling Stories: Sahibs, Natives and Oddballs*. (Siliguri: Dr. Diki Wangyal, The Monarch #301), 119.

<sup>293</sup> Mckay, *The Mandala Kingdom*, 84. See the footnote.



around 60 years of age at the time when he requested for the grant. His effective services to the government from 1860 to 1874 was made a valid reason for securing him special pension every month.<sup>294</sup> Pulger was decided to be given the special pension of Rs.75 per mensem, the recommendation for which had come through Mr. Stevens' letter dated 14<sup>th</sup> of August, 1890 to Foreign Department which was not granted till 30<sup>th</sup> of July, 1891. The pension was due as Pulger was yet to retire.<sup>295</sup> Considering his services to the government from 1860-1874, his application for the pension was accepted by the government.<sup>296</sup> Also, he was given an allowance of Rs. 100 per month for his political services to the British.<sup>297</sup>

Later, Raja Tenduk Pulger had placed a request with explanation before the government in the later months of 1891. He informed and explained that the amount decided for his pension was not adequate enough to provide Pulger, the life of comfort after his retirement. As a result of which he had decided to apply for a grant for him comprising the Khas Mahal area named Sidyong (Hum Lingding and Magwa areas) which was between Pashok and Gielle, within the district of Darjeeling. He informed that he wanted the grant in similar condition as that of his uncle Chebu Lama's Grant. He also remarked that he was hopeful of the grant from the government, and when government decides to agree upon the request, he pointed out that grant should be made completely "inalienable, void, incapable of hypothecation." He had also highlighted that the grant should have the succession right only by his own descendants. No other people, who were not directly related to him should be

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<sup>294</sup> Pros. July 1892, Nos. 300-305, Foreign Department, External A. From J.G. Ritchie, Esq., Deputy Commissioner of Darjeeling to The Commissioner of the Rajshahi Division, No. 1081E, Dated 4<sup>th</sup> December 1891. In *Grant of certain concessions in land to Raja Tendook Pulger, Manager of the Government Estates in Darjeeling*, p.9, National Archives of India.

<sup>295</sup> Pros. July 1892, Nos. 300-305, Foreign Department, External A. In *Grant of certain concessions in land to Raja Tendook Pulger*, p.7, National Archives of India.

<sup>296</sup> Ibid., 9, National Archives of India.

<sup>297</sup> Ibid., 14, National Archives of India.

given the right to take part in succession issues. It was also stated by him that in case of succession issues out of absence of legal descendant to claim the grant, the right should lie upon government to take it back. He had also asked in addition, a grant of a house and a garden at Kalimpong for his own life only, which he pointed out that they shall go back to the Government after his life. For the house and garden at Kalimpong, he was ready to take care of bungalow of Deputy Commissioner of Darjeeling. Along with that he was also ready to take care of Deputy Commissioner's Garden, his orchards, plantations of mulberry and everything that was around. In the same request, he had also brought in the matters of himself and the son of Chebu Lama named Rechuk Dewan (which informs us that they had disputes between them in relation to Chebu Lama Grant, where both of them were co-share-holders of the grant after the passing away of Chebu Lama). He wanted the Deputy Commissioner to intervene in the disputes that he and Rechuk had in between. He wanted the dispute to be settled with regard to agreement between them, and also that the issuance of new leases for both of them was suggested, on the ground that clauses meant for 'alienation' and 'hypothecation' was to be given due regard. He also requested that grant especially relating to Sidyong Khas Mahal be granted to him before his retirement and old age. His objective in relation to it was to "preserve and strengthen the Lepcha population, to file up Pharia vacancies (as they occur) with Lepchas, and generally to restore it to its former position of a Lepcha settlement." He had also put in that the grant would help in solving the problem of scarcity of dandywalla whose demand in Darjeeling was growing.<sup>298</sup>

From the above noted letter from Deputy Commissioner of Darjeeling to the Commissioner of Rajshahi, dated 4<sup>th</sup> December, 1891, it is understood that the land

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<sup>298</sup>Ibid., 11, National Archives of India.

for which the request was made belonged to the tract of land annexed in 1850 from Sikkim, in the west of Teesta. The area till 1884 was not brought under any settlement and the raiyats were required to pay only poll-tax. It was only after 1884, that it was brought under joint *raiayatwari* settlement which was for 10 years, where people with similar nationality, class and alike living status were grouped in blocks accordingly with natural boundaries. Rates were fixed generally which the raiyats had to pay. There was *mandal* to look after who was paid 10 per cent who was also required to pay his share of rent to the government. There were 10 blocks in those Khas Mahals. There were 275 raiyats in total in Hom-Lingding and Mangwa of which 82 were Lepchas and the rest Paharia. The previous *mandal* was Lepcha. There were his six helpmates who were called as Karbaries, among whom three were Lepcha and rest were Paharia. Each block had own rates of assessment, 6 annas, 9 annas, 12 annas per acre. The previous settlement in the requested Khas Mahal was active till 1<sup>st</sup> of April, 1894.<sup>299</sup>

The letter also carried the information that the land which Raja Tenduk Pulger had asked for the grant was of 5,060 acres. The annual revenue of the that land was Rs.1,418. The settlement in the said land was concluded with the raiyats themselves. However, *mandal* was appointed there to collect revenue from each one of them from which he was allowed to keep 10 per cent for himself. The *mandal* responsible to look after the said area had died soon after the settlement was made. His heirs were too small to take the responsibility. Therefore, the function of *mandal* was being performed there by helpmates of the *mandal*. It is also brought in light in the letter that the then Deputy Commissioner of Darjeeling also had a strong support to the request made, in-fact, he had recommended for making the grant rent-free for Raja

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<sup>299</sup>Ibid., 9, National Archives of India.

Tenduk Pulger. He had also recommended that the grant should not be of the nature as that of Chebu Lama Grant which was for perpetuity. He further had made some inputs in the demand that the rights that Pulger shall get over the grant was to be “absolutely inalienable”, the raiyats were to continue having the rights that they were provided through different previous settlements, Pulger was then to take up all the responsibilities which was till then performed by the *mandal*, and accordingly the post of the *mandal* was to cease to exist and the matters related to the transfers of raiyats were also to be handled by Pulger which was previously with the Deputy Collector. He also had pointed out advantages of the grant among which was that the area under Pulger was expected to act as a place for settling Lepchas and Pulger was expected to act as a person for protection of Lepchas who were decreasing in numbers in the hills.<sup>300</sup>

H. J. S. Cotton, Esq., who was Officiating Secretary to the Government of Bengal was made aware of the matter through Memorandum from the Commissioner of Rajshahi, No. 1236R which was dated 14<sup>th</sup> December 1891 and Memorandum from Commissioner of Rajshahi, No. 1069Rct., which was dated 8<sup>th</sup> of March 1892. The proposal for the same was forwarded by him to the higher authorities through the letter No. 17P, which was dated the 6<sup>th</sup> May, 1892. From this letter it is known that Deputy Commissioner’s recommendation for making the grant rent-free, was found to be “unnecessarily liberal” by Lieutenant Governor. The Lieutenant-Governor had also made a point that the heirs of the *mandal* who had died were also to be compensated. He had also highlighted that the grant despite being well deserved by Pulger for his “loyalty and good services”, it was expected to benefit the people and place under the new head. It is also understood from the same letter that Charles Elliot had also

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<sup>300</sup>Ibid., 9-10, National Archives of India.

similarly recommended the grant but with the additional input that it must be given to heirs of Pulger after his death in full rates and that too with regard to local headmen belief upon the capability of the heirs of Pulger to take the responsibility properly.<sup>301</sup>

When the then Secretary of State for India was asked to put his remarks upon the proposal for the grant on the ground that he knew Raja Tenduk Pulger personally, he had on 4<sup>th</sup> June 1892, stated that “Tenduk is a very exceptional man, undoubtedly with us, and carrying great weight. I should always be disposed to consider favourably a recommendation on his behalf.”<sup>302</sup>

After much discussion and careful watch over the clauses on which the grant was made, Pulger’s request was finally accepted by the Governor General in Council. The proposal was finally sanctioned on 15<sup>th</sup> July, 1892.<sup>303</sup>

As, the request had gone through various departments for their opinions and suggestions, the contribution and usefulness of Raja Tenduk Pulger to the British government was also one important point which was brought into consultations. Thus, finally it was decided that Raja Tenduk Pulger should be given the places called Hom Lingding and Mangwa. The half of the assessed revenue was to be paid to the government. It was also decided that the heirs of Pulger would inherit the land in the form of *mandals*, who would keep for themselves the 10 per cent of what has been collected.<sup>304</sup>

The influence of Chebu Lama and his grant was not limited to only his time period. Having witnessed the lived experience of Chebu Lama as an associate of the British, Raja Tenduk Pulger was also able to come in the footings of Chebu Lama. It

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<sup>301</sup>Ibid., 7-8, National Archives of India.

<sup>302</sup>Ibid., 5, National Archives of India.

<sup>303</sup>Ibid., 15, National Archives of India.

<sup>304</sup>Ibid.

can be said that more than Chebu Lama's own son Rechuk Dewan, it was his nephew Tenduk Pulger who earned for himself a position of important native whom the British were not able to ignore. His role became more important with the passing away of Chebu Lama. He was able to fulfill the requirement of native intelligence which previously was extracted by the British from Chebu Lama, which was a part of British colonial technique to deal with the events of Darjeeling, Sikkim and neighbouring areas. The experience of working with Chebu Lama had given the British, a practical idea about usefulness of keeping a good relationship with influential natives. Raja Tenduk, like Chebu Lama was also well treated by the British. The mention about the loyalty and friendship between the British and Raja Tenduk Pulger, in above discussed letters gives a well-formed idea about how Chebu Lama and his Grant, had influenced the further course of British-Native relationship in their colonial experience in Eastern Himalayas, particularly in Darjeeling and Sikkim.

### **3.8 The Fall of the Grant**

As we have already discussed about the fate of the grant post Chebu Lama, the fall of the grant was a gradual process. It started during the colonial period itself but with the end of the colonial rule, the grant came under the new form of government and administration. As Darjeeling continued to be separated from Sikkim like that in colonial period, post-Independence era too, it was placed under West Bengal Government, and accordingly it came under the West Bengal government's arrangement after Independence. More than Chebu Lama's own heir i.e Rechuk Dewan and his family, the descendants of Tenduk Pulger, nephew of Chebu Lama, retained control over some amount of land from within the Chebu Lama Grant. Two families related to Raja Tenduk Pulger will be discussed as follows:

Raja Tenduk Pulger had five sons. Two families who are in Darjeeling are the family of fourth and fifth son, who were commonly known as Kaila Kumar and Kancha Kumar. Three of his sons had their *koti* in different places within the once known territory Chebu Lama Grant and one was in Sikkim. Some of the Kotis were Daramdin koti (Sikkim) was of first son or second son (could not be established), Bibarey Koti was of third son, Kizom koti was of fourth son and Karmi koti was of youngest son.

S. Pulger was the fourth son of Raja Tenduk Pulger. He was commonly known as Kaila Kumar. Lhawang Tenduk Pulger was the son of S. Pulger and the grandson of Raja Tenduk Pulger. He was born in 1926. Lhawang T. Pulger was associated with Gymkhana Club activities at Darjeeling. He was awarded Governor's Medal for Exemplary Service in Calcutta, in late 1970s. He was the one who initiated to establish Tibetan Refugee Schools in Darjeeling and Kalimpong in 1960s on the vision of His Holiness the Dalai Lama. He also had helped to set up similar schools at Shimla and Mossoorie. He was also the founding member of Tibetan Refugee Self Help Centre, Darjeeling, which was founded in 1959 and Tibetan Freedom Press of Toong Soong, Darjeeling that published newspaper called 'Tibetan Freedom', which is considered as one of the first newspapers that focused on Tibetans who were in exile. At Buddhagaya Temple Management Committee, he was the Tibetan representative. Lawang Pulger was also awarded by the Government of India with a Medal for Distinguished Service. He was also associated with Rehabilitation Committee for Tibetan refugees initiated by the government. He died in 10<sup>th</sup> of July, 2007 aged 80 at his house near Bellevue Hotel, Chowrasta, Darjeeling.<sup>305</sup> He was the founder as well as the director of Bellevue Hotel, Darjeeling, which is located at

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<sup>305</sup> Sonam Dorjee, "Founder of 'Tibetan Freedom' newspaper passes away in Darjeeling", *Phayul*, July 19<sup>th</sup>, 2007, <https://www.phayul.com/2007/07/19/17239/> Accessed on 02/02/2022.

Chowrasta, Darjeeling.<sup>306</sup> This does not include everything about his life as it does not fall in the objectives of the study, but only few things to highlight the legacy of the family attached with the history of Darjeeling.

The youngest son of Raja Tenduk Pulger named as Namgay Pulger lived at Karmi Koti, once a part of Chebu Lama Grant. He was commonly known as Kancha Hajur and his wife as Kanchi Hajur. His daughter Deki Pulger was married to Ronald Frame. Their son Sir Andrew Pulger ran homestay at Karmi in the same historical house for about 25 years and at present has taken retire from that occupation. The old house is still in good condition and is take care by Sir Andrew Pulger. As informed by Sir Andrew, some descendants of Raja Tenduk Pulger are settled in Sikkim.<sup>307</sup>

From the photos and information shared by Sir Andrew Pulger, it is also known that the family of Karmi estate used to spent holidays and go for picnics in large groups. Hunting used to be their pastime. They used to ride in horses and used to have guards.<sup>308</sup>

Koti in Sikkim were called to the houses where Kazis lived. It shows that, however, small fragment the grant had become, the proprietors had maintained their legacy. Their way of living and the respect they commanded indicates that they were the influential members in the then society.

The post Independent new set up thus can be considered as the point of the complete fall of Chebu Lama Grant, the process of which had already begun with the taking over of half of land as early as 1880s and turning most of land into Khas Mahals by 1920s.

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<sup>306</sup><http://www.bellevuehotel-darjeeling.com/family.html> Accessed on 05/05/2022.

<sup>307</sup> Andrew Pulger, *Interview*, Dated 15<sup>th</sup> May, 2022.

<sup>308</sup> *Ibid*.



## CHAPTER 4

### Conclusion

Tea is the first thing that comes to mind, when we talk about Darjeeling. The plantation areas have always got the academic and non-academic attentions. It is not without the range of obvious reasons. The large area of Darjeeling is covered by green short bushes of tea, that thrive on the labour of large section of the population of Darjeeling. The large number of tea gardens and its people, no doubt are the sources of variety of histories related to Darjeeling. However, the land which did not grow tea bushes has its own history in the making of Darjeeling. Chebu Lama and his Grant, thus forms important segment of the regional history of Darjeeling.

Darjeeling as a part of Eastern Himalayas, proved to be an important gateway in the penetration of British in this part of the region. The way the British reached Darjeeling was not without efforts. They had to face expanding Gorkha forces who were parallelly coming towards hills. Challenges from Bhutan and Sikkim were also equally important matters that they had to come in settlement. China and Tibet were also not silent spectators for the expanding British colonialism. By the time, the British managed to bring Darjeeling under its occupation, they had already established their influence over all these regional powers through treaties or missions or negotiations. In such environment, they started their colonial mission establishing themselves in Darjeeling town.

Darjeeling was turned into a healthy space for launching the colonial objectives of the British like bringing Sikkim under their control thereby to establish trade relation via Sikkim with Tibet and China, which was clear from their initial footsteps towards Himalayas from Bengal. After they got the permission to settle in

Darjeeling, other objectives were also added to the previously framed mission. Darjeeling was turned into the commercial hub. Tea and Cinchona became the pyramid of their income sources from Darjeeling. The scenic pleasure that Darjeeling naturally provided was also commercialized by introducing Darjeeling as the 'Queen of the Hills,' which also added to another income means for the colonizers. The urbanization of Darjeeling, coming up of elite white and non-white society, their needs like good schools and hospitals, past-time means etc., increased the value of Darjeeling economically. Darjeeling, therefore did-not just limit itself to healthy hill-station, or strategic and militarily important position but in course of time, it also became the means of source of income, that helped British financially to launch their objectives and also added sufficiently to the British treasury. However, the growth of Darjeeling as an important hill station also brought in the question of securing its fragile frontier as Darjeeling was open to Sikkim, Bhutan and Nepal as per 1835 settlement.

The potential that Darjeeling exhibited by 1850s caught the attention of the British to think about the security of Darjeeling. The matters in other parts of colonial India in 1850s had also heightened the importance of hill stations in India. To bring political stability of Darjeeling, the British government strengthened the administrative set up in Darjeeling. The important initiative was the setting up of municipality for Darjeeling in 1850. The events that were occurring in 1850s colonial India, was sending message to the colonisers regarding the security of their stability of rule in India. Hill stations thus were important place for them to secure themselves. Darjeeling being one of the nearest hill-station from Calcutta, the security of Darjeeling was a matter of their concern.

The Hooker-Campbell episode in late 1840s was an important event that made British think seriously about expansion and consolidation of Darjeeling. The British had to face strong humiliation as the news of the capture of two English men had reached far and wide. In-fact, the Hooker-Campbell episode of 1849 can be regarded as an immediate cause for the events that unfolded in 1850s and 60s. The already disturbed relationship between the British-Sikkim further worsened after this episode. Thus, Campbell put-forth the idea of invading and annexing the territories of Sikkim as a part of their revenge, but it also indicates the fear that British had from Sikkim and an urgent need of securing Darjeeling.

Soon after the British occupied Darjeeling, an agent of Sikkim Palace was stationed at Darjeeling to handle transaction between the British government and Sikkim. This was a space where British could come closer to political personalities of Sikkim from whom they had an opportunity to know about regional issues. They were in-fact through whom British were able to produce knowledge about this portion of Himalaya. It was not possible for the British alone to take any initiatives in this region. They depended much upon natives to execute their plans. The terrain, language barriers, transport and communication problems etc. made the necessity of natives unavoidable. Chebu Lama, who was a native of Sikkim, was made the agent of Sikkim palace in Darjeeling. He was trained by Campbell for the post, where he was also made aware of British system of functioning. He was also able to learn Hindi and therefore was fit was the post of interpreter. However, the relationship between Chebu Lama and the British strengthened after the Hooker-Campbell episode.

Chebu Lama was appointed as an interpreter to Hooker-Campbell in their visit to Sikkim in 1849. The events that took place during their visit proved an opportunity for the British to know more about Chebu Lama as he had accompanied them in their

tour. The knowledge that they gained about Chebu Lama no doubt influenced their future plans regarding Sikkim.

However, it was not just that episode which brought British and Chebu together. The disturbed relationship of Chebu Lama with the king of Sikkim was also an important factor that helped in the construction of alliance between Chebu and the British. As noted by Aristotle, any dispute between the elite members in the Kingdom, if not settled in time, does have potential to impact the Kingdom. The matter was similar in the case of Chebu Lama too. There were two king-makers who had different candidates. Chebu Lama was found guilty by the King for what he did to bring the king of his choice to the throne while his counter-part was appointed *Dewan*. The event certainly had impacted in the loyalty of Chebu Lama towards his king. In such environment, Hooker-Campbell episode had occurred and they were with Chebu Lama during such phase of his life. Sikkim under the *Dewan* who was against the British was matter of another great concern for British in Darjeeling. Thus, securing frontiers of Darjeeling by 1850s was a major project in the hands of the British.

The British had different annexation policies like Doctrine of Lapse, Subsidiary Alliance and others through which different areas of India were brought under their control. Those policies were implemented and were successful too. However, the case was not same with Sikkim. They wanted to keep considerable influence upon Sikkim yet were not with plan to annex Sikkim at-least in their early phase of Himalayan penetration. In such scenario, British had to look for a different policy. They picked up the policy of utilizing native intelligence to guide themselves in dealing with Sikkim and neighbouring regions. This policy was applicable more in the beginning phase of British interaction with this region. Chebu Lama belonged to

this phase of British intervention in Sikkim. However, it was not just Chebu Lama, who was exploited by the British for their use. There were other native people whose influence and intelligence were used by the British in meeting their objectives. Anyway, it was Chebu Lama, who could be very much helpful to the British in securing their objectives.

Chebu Lama was an elite member in the Sikkim *Durbar* with the history of his family having served the Kingdom. He had good relationship with the king of Sikkim till the succession issue in late 1840s. His educational background and his knowledge about Himalayan politics and his capabilities were striking features that had grabbed the attention of his king as well as the British.

The political life of Chebu Lama had started in Sikkim itself. He during his tenure-ship as *Vakil* of Sikkim at Darjeeling developed interest to become *Dewan* of Sikkim for which he engaged himself in diplomatic undertakings that did not result positive. However, his political career got expanded after his alliance with the British. British were in need of native personality like Chebu Lama for their important task of expanding and consolidating Darjeeling while Chebu Lama being upset with the developments in the Palace was looking for better opportunity to fulfil his political interest. Thus, their alliance resulted in two important events in the colonial history of Darjeeling, namely 1861 Sikkim episode and 1864 Bhutan episode.

As the British were wanting to secure the frontiers of Darjeeling, the opportunity came when British on the request of Dr. Campbell decided to temporarily capture some areas of Sikkim as a revenge for their humiliation, which however was not just the reason. The secure Darjeeling was the need of the hour and the British had to utilise any such opportunity to fulfil their objective. Having explored the

personality that Chebu Lama was, he was made alliance in their project to temporarily annex some part of Sikkim's territory in 1850. Chebu helped the British in this project with men, material and intelligence. He was given the land on lease in 1850 for three years which was extended further, from the land that was captured temporarily. However, they were not able to grab much land as the Sikkim forces had provided strong resistance. As discussed in the chapter, the lands that was given to Chebu Lama in lease was from the area which previously was under the control of his father. This may have been done so as to prevent any problem towards the security of Darjeeling. Handing over of such frontier lands to native person like Chebu Lama was a colonial technique of indirect rule so as to avoid resistance as they could never win the trust of common people. As the people were shifting cultivators in this region and attached to the king strongly then the land they cultivate, the placing of Chebu Lama was to work well in the existing system.

The matter of securing Darjeeling was not over-night task. They attempted to invade Sikkim in 1860. The attempt failed on the ground that it was called 'impractical' for any such mission to success given the harsh terrain and other problems.

After failed attempt in 1860, the next force under Colonel Gawler was dispatched to Sikkim. Mr. Ashely Eden was also sent as an envoy to bring Sikkim under a treaty with them. In this mission, Chebu Lama was also included where his contribution helped the British in achieving what they were trying since a decade long. Thus, their continuous attempts itself indicate about the importance of consolidating Darjeeling during that phase of their expansion.

The difficult terrain, the shortage of labours, language perform etc, were some areas where the British required Chebu. But, importantly, his previous position in the kingdom, his influence and diplomatic capability, and knowledge about Sikkim and its polity, administration, boundaries were some sources of advantages that British were to benefit from their association with Chebu Lama in the mission. The mission became successful as Sikkim was brought under treaty and the territory of Darjeeling was expanded enough to strengthen the frontiers. Previously temporarily occupied areas were permanently occupied and the British no more had to come through Sikkim's territory to enter Darjeeling. Thus, Darjeeling had become more secure than what it was before the treaty. The advantages that British got from this mission are well documented in the clauses of the Treaty of Tumlong, 1861. Though the British from their initial days wanted to open up trade route to Tibet through Sikkim, at the same time, the necessity of consolidation of Darjeeling was unavoidable task. Thus, the treaty fulfilled both of their objectives. The British grew stronger on this foundation, in their future undertakings in Sikkim as well as in Darjeeling.

Chebu Lama was well compensated for his contribution in 1861 episode. The lease previously given to him was turned as grant, which came to be historically known as Chebu Lama Grant. Chebu Lama was offered other things instead of land as gifts for his support in 1861 episode but his decision to stick to land can be an important window to understand Chebu Lama. The people who were living in Darjeeling in the pre-British era or even after the British occupation, practiced jhum cultivation. The taking over of Darjeeling by the British, turned almost all of Darjeeling into tea gardens, a sole commercial crop. The way of practising such type of cash crop was no doubt very different then what people there were practising since long time. Previously people were living on their own terms and life in plantation

areas was one of master-slave type. As suggested by source, Chebu Lama, who was no-doubt aware of the changing scenario in Darjeeling and its impact in people who were living there, had asked the land as grant, the one objective of which was to accommodate such people. The lands that fell upon Chebu Lama was totally non-tea areas. It can be also that, Chebu Lama wanted to turn it into an income source for himself as he was not enjoying the benefits of *Durbar* as previously. Also, that owning lands has always been the mark of elite class, the demand of grant then can be also understood as Chebu Lama's desire to retain his previous elite position. It is however, exactly unknown as to why he asked for the land as a grant. The grant however, became an important part of colonial history of Darjeeling.

Through the grant which Chebu Lama was provided, it became more easier for the British to access Chebu Lama. After bringing Sikkim under Treaty in 1861, much of frontier problems were kept under their control. However, the presence of Bhutan near Darjeeling was another frontier problem that required attention.

The British started to establish diplomatic relationship with Bhutan by later phase of 18<sup>th</sup> century, by sending different missions at different intervals of time to Bhutan. However, Sir Ashley Eden Mission in 1863-64 was of a serious nature and impactful mission. For, Chebu Lama this was his yet another political investment.

As Sir Ashley Eden knew Chebu Lama since 1861 Sikkim mission, he decided to make Chebu Lama too, a member in his mission. Beside the task of arranging men and materials for the mission, Chebu Lama was taken as an interpreter but his role in the mission was not limited to act just as an interpreter. The job of interpreter during those times was a job, full of doubts. Chebu Lama also could not escape from the doubts of Bhutan. It was unknown to both the sides as to how and what Chebu Lama



delivered their messages to each other. Still, the British were quite convinced that Chebu Lama was honest to them. But the case was different with Bhutan. During their stay at Penlow, many times, Chebu Lama was threatened by Bhutan officials for bringing British people into their territory. All the transactions were made through Chebu Lama, and it was an agreed decision from both the sides. Chebu Lama did not just translate the messages, but also gave inputs to the British in confusing matters as to how should they act. He was even captured there. His life was saved by an official who brought him out from his captivity. His presence in Bhutan as a member in British mission also dragged Sikkim into problem as Chebu Lama was understood by Bhutan as a representative of Sikkim, a *Dewan* of Sikkim.

The negotiation ended up bringing British into the conditions that Bhutan placed. Mr. Ashley Eden signed the Treaty. Chebu Lama was also asked to sign in the papers. Though, Sir Ashley Eden and Chebu Lama managed to return back to Darjeeling, the mission did not achieve all its objectives. But this mission influenced the future undertakings with Bhutan for which the plan was executed soon and British were able to bring Bhutan under their condition. The Treaty of Sinchula was signed in 1865 between British and Bhutan, through which many frontier areas were brought within the control of British. The most important thing that secured the Hill station of Darjeeling was their success in bringing nearby Kalimpong areas under their control through the treaty.

With this mission, the frontiers of Darjeeling were secured and Darjeeling was finally consolidated. The consolidation helped the British in securing themselves at Darjeeling and executing their colonial purposes.

Thus, Chebu Lama as a native was best utilised by the British in meeting their objectives. It was in his presence that Sikkim and Bhutan were brought into considerable influence by the British and the frontiers of Darjeeling were secured. However, it was not the end. What British achieved through Chebu Lama was a means to an end. The future politics and policies of the British concerning to this region was based upon this foundation and the native intelligence continued to have space in British policy even after the passing away of Chebu Lama. Raja Tenduk Pulger, the relative of Chebu Lama, was able to receive similar attention from the British as like Chebu Lama who closely worked with the British for a long time.

The Chebu Lama Grant was a unique episode in the history of Darjeeling. It was only Chebu Lama who received such a huge tract of land as a grant from the British. Though the land was in the control of Sikkim and even father of Chebu Lama, was once the head of some part of areas that fell upon the grant, the occupation of it by the British had changed the previous arrangement. Chebu Lama though under the British, retained the power to control the huge portion of land that was annexed from Sikkim as he was given proprietary rights and the grant was also for ever. The administration of the land changed from how it used to be administered as a Sikkimese territory.

The land before it was occupied by the British was under Sikkim way of administration according to which it had direct control of Kazis and indirect control of the king and proprietary rights rested with him alone. The revenue was fixed depending upon the number of members in a family. It did not matter, how much they produced, or what they produced or what unit of land they cultivated. The inhabitants were required to give some service yearly to the king. The people were not fixed people. As they practiced shifting cultivation, they always moved when they felt that

a certain area was not suitable for any production. The idea about such people is discussed in Fred Pinn's *The Road to Destiny*, while discussing about how Lepchas reacted to Campbell's order for regularisation of revenue in a small Lepcha village near Darjeeling. The similar set up can be assumed in the areas which later came to be known as Chebu Lama Grant.

Chebu Lama had to pay certain nominal amount to the British for the grant that was given to him. But he was able to retain the kazi system that was in Sikkim within the British domination. Like in Sikkim, Kazis were responsible to King, here in Darjeeling, Chebu Lama was responsible to the British in relation to the payment of revenue. During the time of Chebu Lama, it is in the record that he had in several occasions helped British with the people who are called as his ryots who were settled in his land (Chebu Lama Grant). This hints that the tradition of providing some days of years as free labour to the king that was practiced in Sikkim was very much active in the administrative policy of Chebu Lama too. Chebu Lama did not collect high amounts of revenue from his peasants is also clear from the already discussed statement that he was not willing to exchange the land for any luxurious item and instead he was satisfied with the little income that he received from his peasants. However, this understanding should confine only to the tenure of Chebu Lama which was from 1850(the lease year)-1866 (the year he passed away).

However, the scene changed with the passing away of Chebu Lama. According to the condition of the grant, the descendant of Chebu Lama had the legitimate right over the grant. The grant consequently was divided into three members related to Chebu Lama. The British whose policy otherwise were very strict on matters of true heirs, the same was very relaxed when it came to Chebu Lama Grant. It is interesting to note that Chebu had only one heir, named Rechuk, who was

directly eligible to claim upon his share. The other two members were relatives of Chebu Lama though they were very close to Chebu Lama yet not direct heirs. This differential attitude of the British indicates that the British wanted to keep this influential family close to them which also hints upon the British colonial technique of handling issues according to the terrain of land.

The Chebu Lama Grant went through tremendous administrative transformation in the post Chebu Lama's death. Almost half of the land was taken over by the government by 1882. The shares which were between relatives of Chebu Lama were taken over by the government in on the grounds that they were unable to pay the stipulated revenue to the government. Those lands were put under settlements of 1914 and 1925. For the settlement of 1925, Sikkim was consulted to fix the revenue of the lands taken from the descendants of Chebu Lama. Much of them were converted as Khas Mahal and brought under the rules of Khas Mahal. Strict administration was introduced regarding land revenue system, use of forest lands and products, laws and punishments were implemented and such other changes were brought in with the colonial administration. The revenue however, was kept similar to what was being collected previously. The share of Raja Tenduk Pulger which was known as Karmi estate was permanently settled after the death of Raja Tenduk Pulger. It was only the permanently settled land in entire Darjeeling. Some small areas were returned back to the members from whom the government had previously taken over their lands. The large part however continued to remain under the control of the British. This indicates how the policy of British changed with changing scenario of the time. In the later phase, there was hardly any need of native intelligence in a stable and secured position that British were able to create for themselves. Also, the descendants of Chebu Lama except Raja Tenduk Pulger, did not prove useful to the

requirement of the British. This must be the reason why all other lands were confiscated and turned into government estates.

Agriculture was the main occupation of the people living in the Chebu Lama tract. Their economic status depended upon the distance the village had from the hat/bazar and the condition of transport and communication. Any protest or revolt against the landowners, zamindars, or the British revenue system in these villages could not be found for the present.

The creation of colonial frontier provided the space for disassociation, from where the history of Darjeeling and Sikkim started to have its own course. The episode of Singla-Chakung conflict on trade diversion gives a space to understand such changes that came in with the time.

The land that fell within the Chebu Lama Grant was an important tract especially from the eye of the time it was granted. It shared a very close and accessible boundary with Sikkim. Even Col. Gawler had in his plan to march towards Sikkim through Goke, an area that fell within Chebu Lama Grant particularly in Karmi estate which later came under Raja Tenduk Pulger. The forces from Nepal had also once penetrated through the areas granted to Chebu Lama while expanding towards Sikkim. Granting such land to Chebu Lama, which was strategically important was a significant step by the British. As Chebu Lama was well connected with Sikkim, placing such boundary in the hands of Chebu Lama, had reduced the chance of any attempts from Sikkim at least from that frontier. Nepal was already slowed down by 1815, yet placing Chebu Lama in the area that shared a space for Nepal's entry to Darjeeling, gave the benefit of man power to the British as Chebu Lama had a good control over his people. Economically too, making the land more productive was something that the British of

that period were striving into. Chebu Lama was a good option for that too. As Darjeeling was full of plantation and food crops were important in two ways that transport of food items from plains to Darjeeling was time consuming and the rise of famines in other parts of India was an important issue. For any emergency cases, the nearby agricultural production would have been a better alternative. With the rise of plantation industry, people started to have access to less cultivated areas that was within Chebu Lama Grant. It is on record that the people who found it difficult to live and work in tea gardens flew to villages of Chebu Lama. Thus, the grant was to function for the security of growing hill station of Darjeeling.

However, from the eye of Chebu Lama, things were different. Firstly, Chebu Lama's dispute with Sikkim, had no doubt harmed in his previous privilege. He had to look for something that could help him retain that status. No doubt, to have huge tract of land in the British annexed territory for him was a matter of pride and revenge. The request for land grant to provide the home for home-less driven out by growing plantation gardens in different areas of Darjeeling is another important aspect that is recorded in relation to what the Grant meant to Chebu Lama. The matter of settlement could be fairly true as it is in the record that when areas in Takdah was granted to Raja Tenduk Pulger, he was expected to protect the Lepchas and help them grow their numbers in the areas which was given to him though on a different condition than that of Chebu Lama. There are anyway, no major events related to Chebu Lama's tenure as the holder of the grant. With the development, that Darjeeling went through, the areas under Chebu Lama Grant also started to develop consequently.

Bellevue Hotel which is in Darjeeling, nearby Chowrasta, has shared in its website, the picture of Chebu Lama along with other members of the family through generation. The hotel belongs to Pulger family, the family of Raja Tendook Pulger,

the nephew of Chebu Lama who was also the share-holder in the Chebu Lama Grant, after the death of Chebu Lama. Sir Andrew Pulger is taking care of in his ancestral house at Karmi, which is in midst of villages. The family remained influential even after British left India.

With the Independence of India and end of British rule in India, Darjeeling was attached to the state of West Bengal. As almost every-thing within the Chebu Lama Grant was brought into the control of the British gradually post Chebu Lama life, not much was left with the descendents of Chebu Lama. The Pulger family do retain some acres of lands in Karmi. The fall of the grant was not sudden but was gradual. The new set up in the post Independent India can thus be regarded as a phase of complete fall of the grant and a new transition.

Chebu Lama is well praised in British accounts. His selection to honour like CSI is a window to understand British idea of Chebu Lama. However, the same award is also the window to assume that the role of Chebu Lama was not over and the award was the platform to access him in further course. His death soon in 1866, did not allow Chebu Lama to experience the moment of appreciation. His death also devoid us from understanding the plan if there was any, where Chebu Lama was to be used for the British service and the results that it would bring.

The association of Chebu Lama with the British made him the agents of multiple episodes of history connected to Darjeeling, Sikkim and Bhutan. The grant given to him served the British purpose of gaining access to native intelligence. By the time, Chebu Lama passed away, British were able to consolidate and secure the hill station of Darjeeling. No further annexation took place. They were able to expand and strengthen their control over Sikkim from then on. Thus, this unique episode of

history functions as a root to understand the making of Darjeeling. This episode of history also provides light upon the British colonial technology implemented in expansion and consolidation of Darjeeling. It also helps in understanding the history related to segment of non-tea areas of Darjeeling.



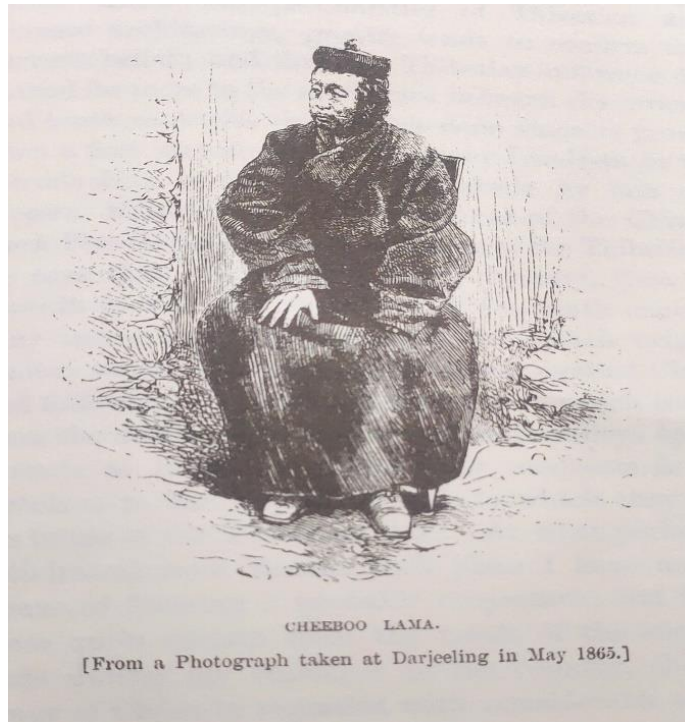


Figure 1: *Cheebo Lama, From a Photograph taken at Darjeeling in May, 1865.* Rennie, *Bhotan and the Story of The Doar War*, New Edition, 2005.



Figure 2: *Portrait of Aden Tchebu Lama.* Sketched by Lieut. H. Maxwell Hooker, *Himalayan Journals*, 1891.



Figure 3: *Chebu Lama with two Sikkimese guards taken probably in 1864 after Eden Mission to Bhutan.*

Royal Geographical Society, quoted in Michall Aris's *The Raven Crown: The Origins of Buddhist Monarchy in Bhutan.*



Figure 4: *Photo of Raja Tenduk Pulger.* Accessed from Sir Andrew Pulger.



Figure 5: *Pulger family from Karmi estate during vacation.* Photo accessed from Sir Andrew Pulger.



Figure 6: *Late Mr. & Mrs. Namgay Pulger, Karmi Estate.* Photo accessed from Sir Andrew Pulger.

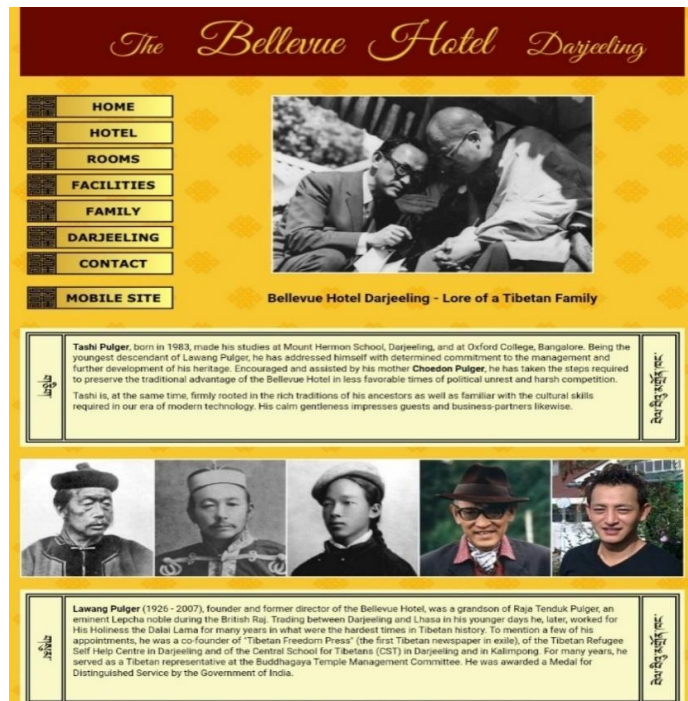


Figure 7: *Chebu Lama in the frame of Pulger family*. Accessed from website of Bellevue Hotel, Darjeeling. <http://www.bellevuehotel-darjeeling.com/family.html>



Figure 8: *Karmi Koti*. <https://www.tripadvisor.in/ShowUserReviews-g304557-d550906-r155005161-Karmi-Farm-Darjeeling-West-Bengal.html>

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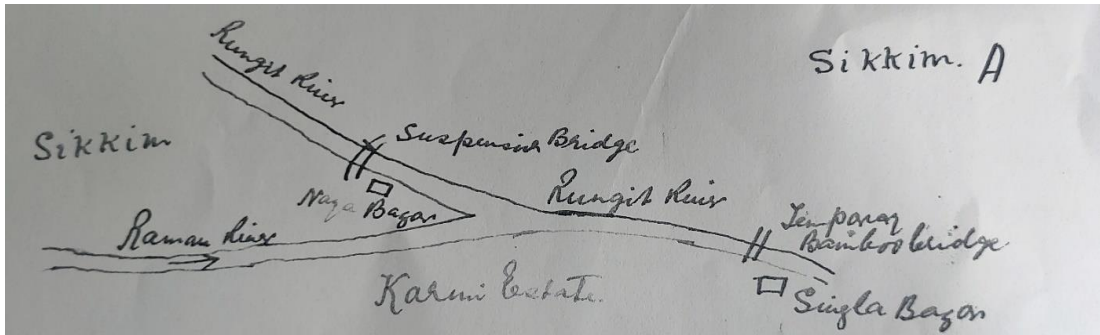
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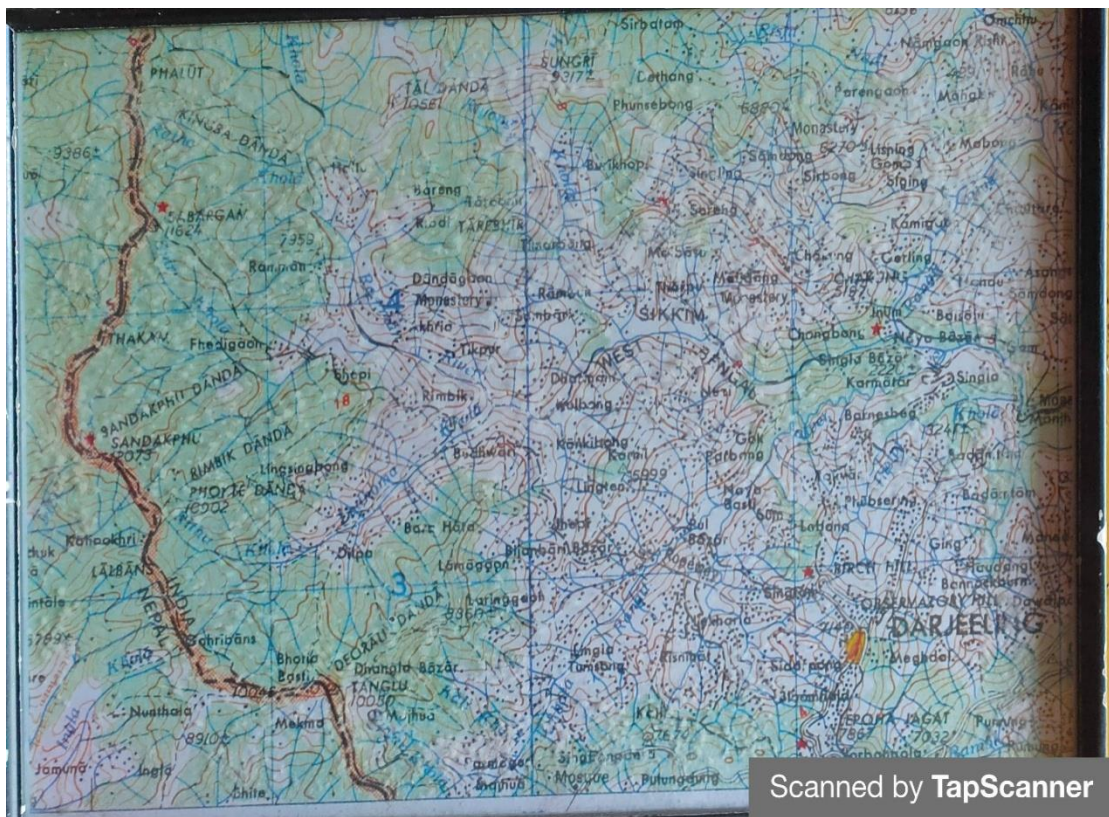
## **Glossary**

Anna	1 anna is equal to 6.25 paise.
Bustiwallas	Villagers.
Chebu	Also spelt as Cheboo, Cheebo, Tchebu.
Chogyal	Term used for the kings of Sikkim.
Dewan Sikkim.	An administrative post in the Kingdom of Sikkim.
Doer	Also spelt as Doars, Doors, Duars.
Dronyer/Dewan	Post equivalent to Chief Minister in the Kingdom of Sikkim.
Durbar	Palace or Royal Court.
Dzongpon/Jongpons/Kazi	Official post equivalent to Governor or Officer of District, belonging to class of aristocracy in Kingdom of Sikkim.
Fadkey	Small temporary bridge.
Hat	Market held once a week or not held every-day.
Jhum	Cultivation by burning forest and planting crops in the burnt areas.
Karmi	Also spelt as Karmie. Commonly believed as name of place derived from white or fair Lama.

Khas Mahal directly.	Private Estate, Estate managed by Government
Mandal	Village headmen.
Paharia	People living in hills.
Panikheti water	Fields where cultivation is done with the help of water
Pathi	A unit of capacity which is equal to 4.5 litres.
Penlow	Administrator of a region in Bhutan.
Raiyats or Ryots	Agricultural tenants or cultivators or peasants.
Raja/Rajah	King.
Sadar	Headquarters.
Sukhakhethi	Dry Fields.
Tauzi	Deputy Commissioner's List of Estates.
Tenduk	Also spelt as Tendook.
Vakil	Agent or similar to Ambassador of Sikkim at Darjeeling, post created after Darjeeling was occupied by British.



Source: File no. 19/22/1926, Serial no. 353. Reg. Police report against the manager, Chakung estate for interfering with trade between Sikkim and British territory, Sikkim State Archives.



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