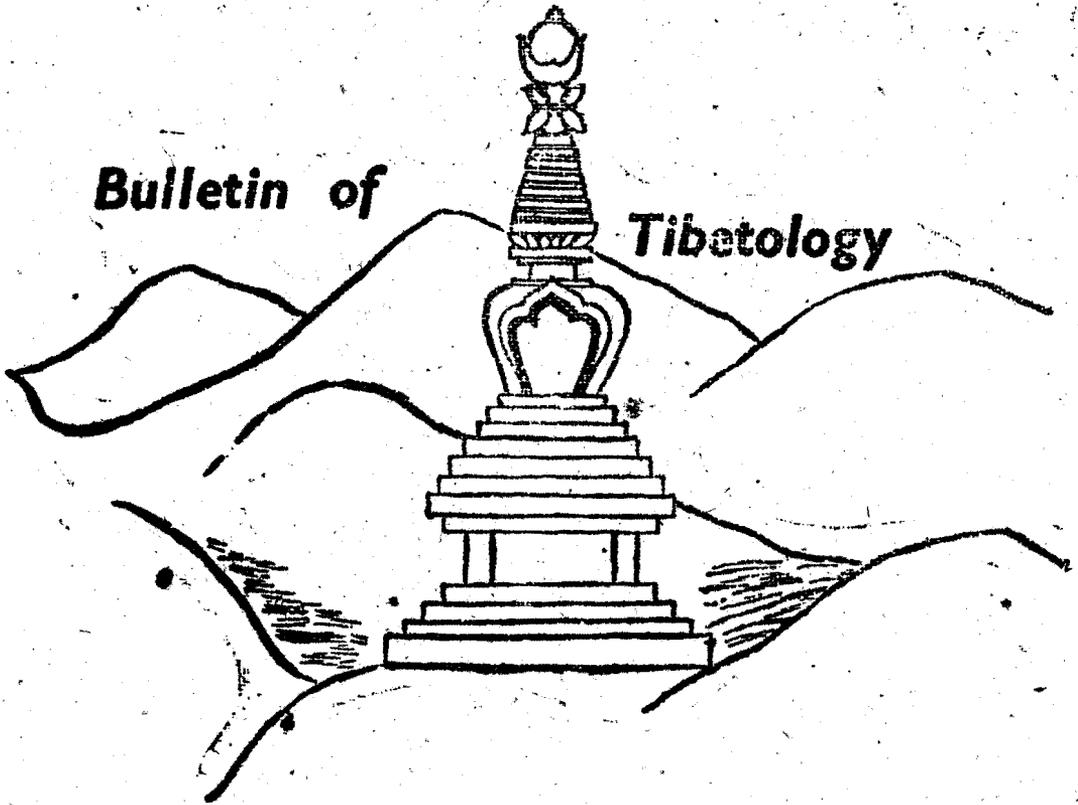


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GANGTOK, SIKKIM

—The Bulletin of Tibetology seeks to serve the specialist as well as the general reader with an interest in this field of study. The motif portraying the Stupa on the mountains suggests the dimensions of the field—

EDITORS

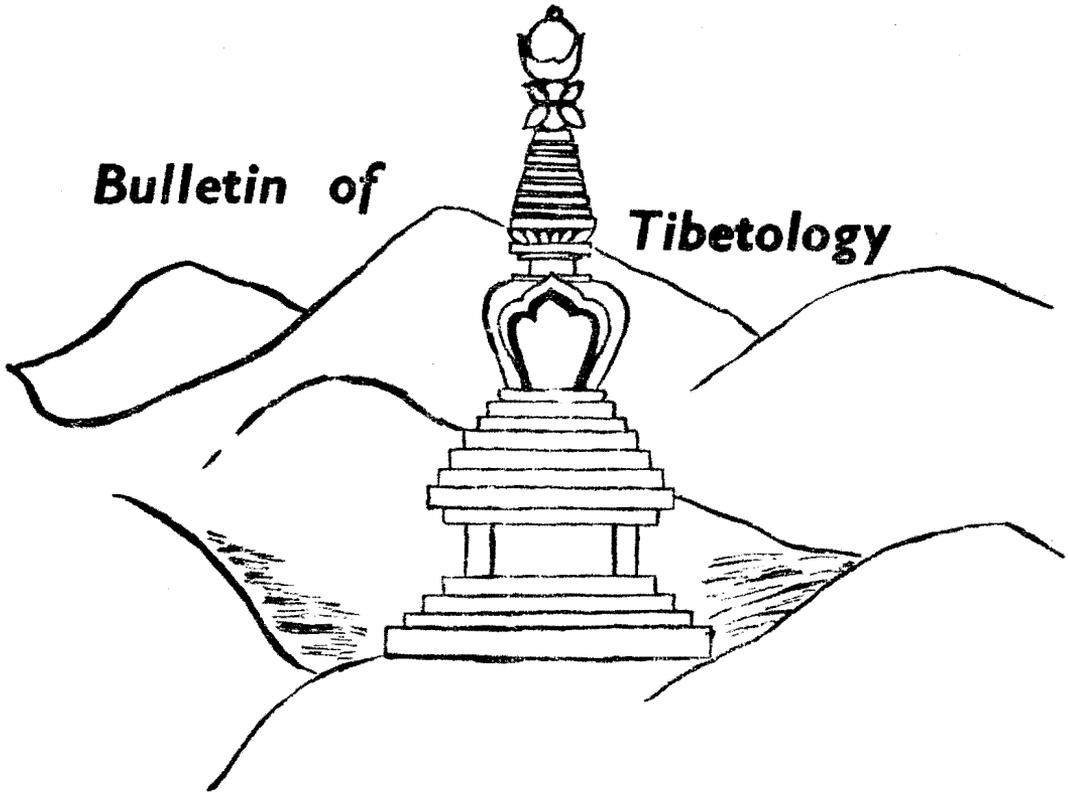
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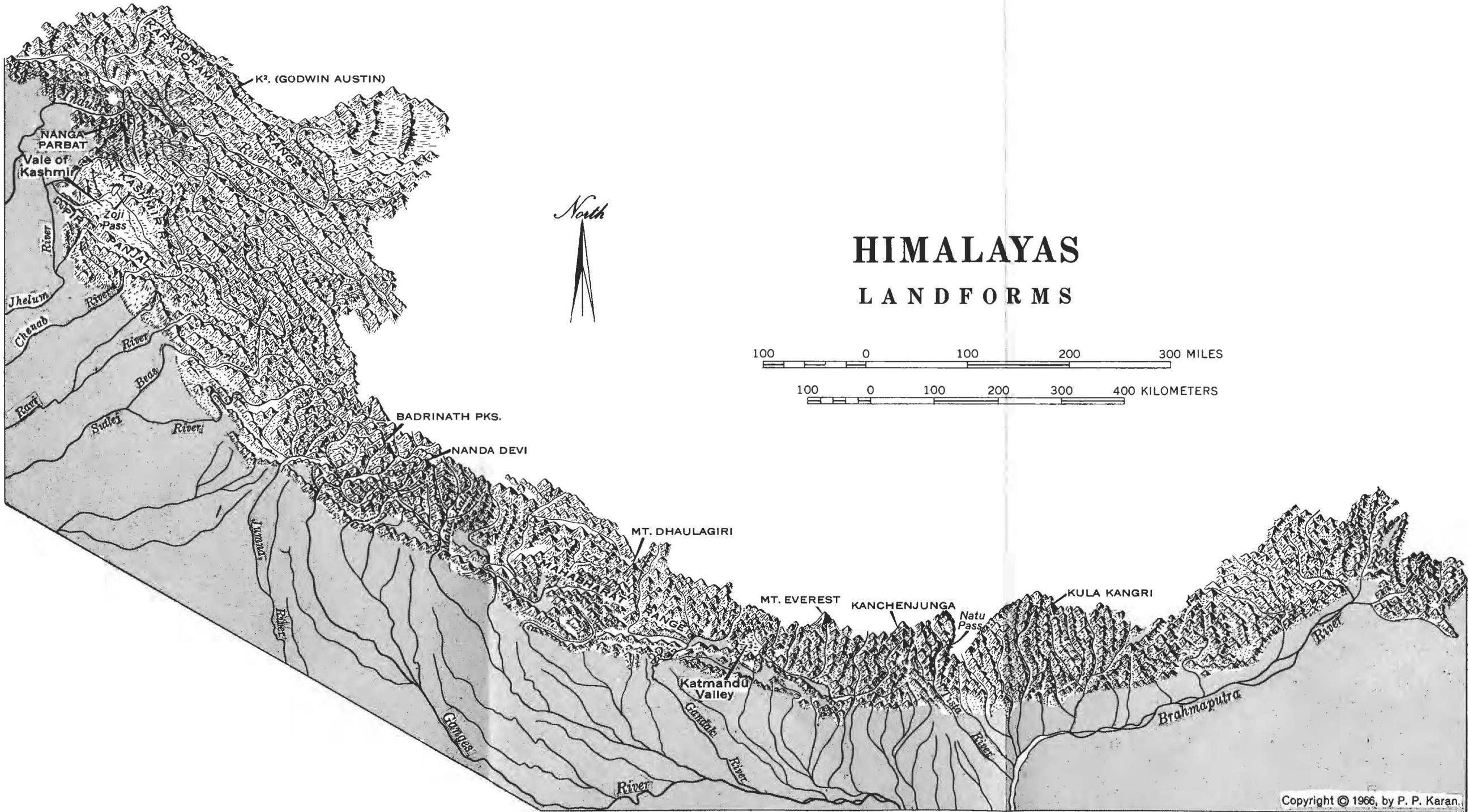
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GEOGRAPHIC REGIONS OF THE HIMALAYAS

—PRADYUMNA P. KARAN

From the Indus in the northwest to the Brahmaputra in the east the Himalayas form a broad continuous arc for nearly 1600 miles along the northern border of the India subcontinent. The mountain system, averaging 200 to 250 miles in width, rises sharply from the Indo-Gangetic plain. North of this mountain belt lies the plateau of Tibet, which extends northwards to the Kun Lun range (Map 1).

The Himalayas had their origin in a series of earthmovements or powerful lateral thrusts acting from the direction of Tibet towards the old stable crystalline block of the Indian Peninsula in the south. The earth movements raised the deposits laid down in the shallow Tethys Sea to form the mountain mass from Kashmir to Assam. The northwest-southeast trend of the Himalayas, the sharp bend in its axis on the west at Nanga Parbat, where the Indus has cut a deep gorge across the mountain, and the deep knee-bend at its eastern extremity, where the Brahmaputra has cut through the range, are due to resistance offered by the old stable block of the Indian Peninsula to the thrusting movements from the north.

Physically the Himalayas form three parallel zones: (1) the Great Himalaya, (2) the Inner Himalaya, also known as Middle or Lesser Himalaya, and (3) the Sub-Himalayan foothills and the adjacent Terai and Duar plain. Each of these lateral divisions exhibit certain homogeneous characteristics (Map 2).

The Great Himalaya, the highest zone, consists of a great line of snowy peaks with an average height exceeding 20,000 feet. The width of this zone, composed largely but not entirely of gneiss and granite, is about 15 miles. Spurs from the Great Himalaya project southwards into the Inner Himalaya in an irregular fashion. The Nepal and Sikkim portion of the Great Himalaya contain the greatest number of highest peaks. Next in general elevation is the Kumaon section, followed by the Punjab and Bhutan sections. Great Himalaya is least highest in Assam. The snow line on the southern slopes of the Great Himalaya varies from 14,700 feet in Nepal and Sikkim to 17,000 in Punjab. To the north of the Great Himalaya are several

ranges such as the Zaskar, Ladakh, and the Kailas. The Karakoram range also lies on the Tibetan side of the Great Himalaya.

The Great Himalayan region is one of the few remaining isolated and inaccessible areas in the world today. Some high valleys in the Great Himalaya are occupied by small clustered settlements. Extremely cold winters and a short growing season limit the farmers to one crop per year, potatoes and barley being the most common. More important than farming is yak and sheep herding. The formidable mountains have limited the development of large-scale trade and commerce. Only limited trade flowed through the high passes until the recent India-China border dispute, which led to a complete cessation of trade across most of the Great Himalayan range in India.

The Inner Himalayas, about 50 miles wide, border the Great Himalayan range on the south. It consists principally of high ranges issuing obliquely from the Great Himalayan range at points where the latter changes its direction, and several outer disconnected ranges. These comprise Nag Tibba given off from Dhaulagiri, the Dhauladhar range from the neighborhood of Badrinath, the Pir Panjal range (the largest of the Inner Himalayan ranges), and the North Kashmir range from the Zoji La, separating the Jhelum and Kishanganga Rivers. The three outer parallel ranges are the Mahabharat stretching through Nepal, the Mussoorie range between the Ganges and the Sutlej, and the Ratanpir in southern Kashmir separated from Pir Panjal by the Punch River. In the eastern Himalayas of Sikkim, Bhutan and Assam the Inner Himalayas have been deeply dissected into blocks of north-south ranges by rivers rising in the Great Himalayan area. The Inner Himalayas possess a remarkable uniformity of height, between 6,000 and 10,000 feet.

The Inner Himalayan area is a complex mosaic of forest-covered ranges and intervening fertile valleys. While it is not as forbidding as the Great Himalaya to the north, it has nonetheless served to isolate the fertile valleys of the Himalayas from the Gangetic plains. Except for major valley centers such as Srinagar, Kangra and Katmandu, and hill stations such as Simla, Mussoorie and Darjeeling, the region in general is moderately populated. Within the Inner Himalaya the intervening mountain ranges tend to compartmentalize the populated valleys. Although natural drainage lines are largely north-south, the numerous gorges and rugged mountains make travel difficult in any

direction. Lateral roadways and transport routes are generally lacking, and monumental engineering feats are required to establish east-west transportation links to the principal population centers. Lacking adequate means of easy communication it is not uncommon for dwellers in neighbouring Himalayan valleys to remain complete strangers. Only major population centers are linked with India by road.

The outermost and lowest zone, the Sub-Himalaya, including the Siwalik range of Tertiary rocks contiguous with the plains of India, is a result of the latest phase of elevatory movement responsible for the mountain system. Its width gradually narrows from about 30 miles in the west until it nearly disappears in Bhutan and Assam. With a gap of about 50 miles opposite the Tista and Raidak basins, the outcrop of the Siwalik zone is continuous from the Indus to Brahmaputra. A characteristic feature of the Sub-Himalaya is the large number of longitudinal, flat-bottomed valleys known as "duns," usually spindle-shaped and filled with gravelly alluvium.

South of the forested foothills lies the Sub-Himalayan piedmont plain known as Terai and Duars. The southern part of the Terai and Duar forms a densely cultivated belt along much of its length. The northern part contains jungles and malarial swamps, inhabited by wild animals, and constitutes negative areas which add to the isolation of the Inner Himalayan valleys, particularly in the central and eastern sections.

THE CULTURAL PATTERN

The population, settlement, and economic patterns within the Himalayas have been greatly influenced by the variations in relief and climate, which impose harsh living conditions and tend to restrict population movement and communications. People living in adjacent valleys have often preserved their cultural individualities, which could have dwindled or disappeared with easier access to the outside world. People belong to four major cultures, each distinguished by characteristic socio-economic features (Map 3).

First, the Indian and Afghan-Iranian cultures have penetrated the Himalayas from the south and west respectively. The principal features of the Indian culture such as Indo-Aryan languages, Hinduism, and settled agriculture have come from the Indo-Gangetic plains. The

major features of the Afghan-Iranian culture, non-Indic Aryan languages, Islam, and both settled agriculture and pastoralism, have penetrated the Himalayas from west. Both Indian and Afghan-Iranian cultures have common links and may be termed Indo-Iranian or Aryan.

Secondly, the Tibetan and Burman (sometime called South-east Asian) cultures have encroached upon the Himalayas from the north and east respectively. The distinctive features of Tibetan culture, the Tibetan language, lamaistic Buddhism, and a combination of pastoralism and settled agriculture, come from the north. Burman cultural features-Tibeto-Burman languages, indigenous religious systems (distinct from the major religions of Hinduism, Islam and Buddhism), and shifting agriculture-have made inroads into the Himalayas from the east.

Culturally, therefore, the Himalayas present a complex pattern with four major cultures encroaching upon the area from different directions. In general outline, people of Indian cultural extraction are dominant in the Sub-Himalaya and Inner Himalayan valleys from Kashmir to Nepal. To the north people of Tibetan culture inhabit the High Himalayas from Ladakh to North-eastern India. In central Nepal, in an area between 6,000-8,000 feet (in some areas up to 10,000), the Indian and Tibetan cultures have intermingled, producing a combination of Hindu and Tibetan traits. This intermediate area between Indian and Tibetan cultures in Nepal forms a distinct cultural region. Elsewhere in the Himalayas the Indian and Tibetan cultures meet each other directly without any intermediate zone. Eastern Bhutan and Assam Himalayas are inhabited by people whose culture is similar to those living in northern Burma and Yunan. People of western Kashmir have a culture similar to the inhabitants of Afghanistan and Iran.

A SUGGESTED SYSTEM OF HIMALAYAN GEOGRAPHIC REGIONS

A comprehensive regional georgaphic analysis of the Himalaya presents several problems. Aside from serious methodological difficulties in dividing the Himalayas into geographical regions, the lack of detailed geographical materials relating to variations in landform, climate, land use and occupance pattern for vast areas presents problems in the investigation and presentation of a system of geographic regions

based on areal differentiation of the entire content of human occupance which shows an association of inter-related natural and societal features. The physical and human geography of a large part of the Himalayas is known only in broad general outline. There are vast areas which have not yet been studied by geographers, anthropologists or other social scientists.

In many ways the entire Himalayan area provides a fascinating field for pioneering research by geographers. The book written by Burrard and Hayden, more than three decades ago, still remains the only published study of the geography and geology of the entire Himalayan range.¹ Although Burrard and Hayden deserve credit for a pioneer attempt to describe the geology and geography of the world's highest mountains, nevertheless they overlooked modern concepts of regional geography and geological overthrust structure in their interpretation of Himalayan geography and geology. In recent times the geological research of Wadia, West, Auden, Gansser, Heim, Pilgrim and Hagen have yielded much geographical literature on the Himalayan landforms.² Likewise, the anthropological and sociological work of Verrier Elwin, Pant, Furer-Haimendorf and Kawakita have provided us with knowledge of the Himalayan people and cultures in certain areas of the vast mountain system.³

Since the Himalayas have played such an important role in India's history and geography, it is surprising that Indian geographers have neglected serious research and study of the Himalayas. The relatively small number of published research papers on the various aspects of Himalayan geography attests to their lack of interest.⁴

In addition to the imperfect knowledge of the physical and human geography of vast areas, the attempt to divide the mountain system into geographic regions faces methodological difficulties. For instance, the Himalayan area exhibits a fine geographic variation in the pattern of human occupance from one section to another. In effect, the Himalayas contain a series of small geographic regions based on the distinctive cohesive association of features and the pattern and intensity of human occupance. If adequate geographic material were available, a comprehensive regional analysis of the minute geographic regions of the Himalayas could be made, filling an important gap in Indian geography. However, the detailed regional division and analysis on a small scale, undoubtedly a worthwhile and challenging task for the regional geographer, lies outside the scope of this short paper. Therefore a broad

regional classification is adopted here.

On the basis of general spatial differentiation of associated geographic elements and broad pattern of human occupation, the Himalayas are divided into three major realms: (1) Western Himalayas, (2) Central Himalayas, (3) Eastern Himalayas. Each of these three realms possess some unifying physical and cultural traits and have certain measure of geographic homogeneity. They possess enough similarity or mutual ties to be treated as a unit. However, the degree of similarity is not great because of the large portion of the area involved in each realm which causes many important spatial details to be disregarded (Map 4).

The three realms can be further divided into a hierarchy of smaller regions of lower rank and size depending on the scale or degree of generalization. In Western Himalayas, where the mountains are wide, principal geographic regions are large enough to be easily identified on the scale of generalization used in this paper. In the Central and Eastern Himalayas, where the mountain mass is much narrower, it is difficult to distinguish small geographic regions within the limitations of this paper. These realms and their regional divisions are briefly described below. No attempt is made to present a comprehensive geographic analysis of each region.

A. WESTERN HIMALAYAN REALM

The Western Himalayan realm may be divided into the Sub-Himalayan Kashmir (Poonch and Jammu), Pir Panjal, Vale of Kashmir, Ladakh and Baltistan, and the Kohistan and Gilgit regions. The impact of Afghan-Iranian culture is dominant in the western part of this realm, and Hindustani and Lamaistic Tibetan cultures impinge from the south and north respectively. These cultural differences together with the physical variations and settlement pattern form the basis for delimiting geographic regions.

Sub-Himalayan Kashmir:—The Sub-Himalayan Kashmir comprises the outermost ranges, formed entirely of tertiary rocks, which rise from the Punjab plains, commencing with a gentle slope from Jammu, ending abruptly inwards in steep perpendicular escarpments. Within the parallel outer ridges are a series of wide longitudinal or strike valleys known as "duns." The extensive picturesque duns of Udhampur and Kotli in the Jammu hills are typical examples of the longitudinal valleys.

Between 30 and 35 inches of precipitation falls in the region. Agriculture is concentrated chiefly in the valleys. Wheat and barley are principal *rabi* crops (spring harvest) sown after the October and November rains and harvested in April or May. Maize and bajra, sown in late spring or early summer (April to June) and harvested in October or November, form the *kharif* crops (autumn harvest). Since irrigation is limited both the *rabi* and *kharif* crops are dependent on rainfall. The area is densely settled in the southeast with a density of 350 persons per square mile in Jammu. The population density in the northwest (Riasi and Poonch) decreases to 150 per square mile. Jammu, the principal regional focus of the Sub-Himalayan area, has been the home of Dogra rulers of Kashmir. It has excellent transportation links with India.

Pir Panjal: North of the Sub-Himalayan region the Pir Panjal mountains (12,500-15,000 feet) of the Inner Himalaya rise steeply.⁵ The steep southern slopes of the Pir Panjal are often barren, being too steep to maintain a soil-cap for the growth of forests. The long, gentle north and northeastern slopes toward the Kashmir Valley are covered with forests, succeeded higher up by snow-capped peaks. Southeast of Ravi, the Pir Panjal is continued as the Dhauladhar range, passing through Dalhousie, Dharmasala and Simla. The mountainous Pir Panjal region is very sparsely populated. The highway linking Srinagar with Jammu crosses the Pir Panjal at Bannihal Pass (9,300 feet).

Vale of Kashmir: Between the Inner Himalayan ranges (Pir Panjal and the North Kashmir range) lies the Vale of Kashmir with a southeast-northeast trend, some 84 miles long and 25 miles broad in its central portion. The total area of the Vale is about 1900 square miles, and its mean elevation is nearly 5200 feet. The ranges which surround the valley attain a high altitude with peaks rising above 18,000 feet, except in the northwest at Baramula where the Jhelum has cut a narrow gorge across the mountains. Girdled by high mountains the Vale has continental climate with seasonal extremes of temperature. Average January temperatures (30°F) are a little below freezing, while the July average is above 70°. The Vale gets about 35 inches of precipitation, part of which come during the winter months in the form of snow.

The Vale is intensively cultivated.⁶ Rice, maize and wheat are the principal crops. Rice is grown in the warmer and more humid lower parts, maize on the higher areas. On the higher Karewa terraces with its poor soils, dry crops are important. A large proportion of the cultivated

area in the Vale is irrigated by *kuls* (irrigation channels) led off from the streams. Pastoral occupation, particularly sheep raising, is important, and there is considerable transhumance. In summer the shepherds take their animals to high alpine pastures above the tree line, commonly known as *margs*, for grazing, returning to the Vale during the winter months when they subsist on feed. Pastoral activity supplies the raw wool which provides the basis for the important woolen industry.

Culturally the Vale is a region where the Afghan-Iranian and Indian cultures have blended. The influence of Islam became strong in the 14th century on an indigenous Hindu population. Most of the Kashmiri Muslims are descendants of Hindus converted to Islam. Society is organized on a hierarchial basis in the Hindu manner, and the practice of Islamic religion varies a great deal. Muslims with the highest traditional status are the Syyids and Shaikhs, who are supposed to be descendants of the early conquering Muslim nobility. The Rajput and Jat Muslims are descendants of high-caste converted Hindus. Other Muslim castes are occupational groups, derived mostly from the indigenous population. Among them are the Gujars, traditionally semi-nomadic herdsman, and the Hanjis, boatmen and fishermen, who provide house-boat transportation in the lakes and rivers around Srinagar. The Hindu Brahman (Kashmiri Pandits) are the best educated group in the Vale, reasonably prosperous and very closely knit.

Srinagar, the core of the Vale, is the principal focus of routes leading to other parts of Kashmir. As a geographic region the Vale is a distinctive area which stands out from the rest of Kashmir.

Ladakh and Baltistan : To the north and east of the Vale lies the Great Himalayan range. Beyond it lies the trans-Himalayan Zaskar range. Northeast of the Zaskar range the country is high-level arid plateau with the exception of the deep gorge of the Indus. The altitude steadily rises till the peak K2 (Godwin Austin) on the Karakoram range, attains a height of 28,265 feet-the second highest in the world.

Physically the desolate, dreary waste of Ladakh and Baltistan presents a very different landscape from the soft green of cultivated fields and forested mountains in the Vale and southern Kashmir. Ladakh is one of the loftiest (12,000-15,000 feet) inhabited regions of the world.⁷ Its short but warm summers enable a few grain (barley and buckwheat) and fruit (apricots) crops to ripen. At places there are extensive flat

lands of which the most conspicuous are the Deosai Plain (13,000 feet), Lingzhi Tang (16,000 feet), and Depsang, about the same altitude. Between the Ladakh and Zaskar ranges are the rugged districts of Rupshu and Lahaul.

Population is sparse in this barren, dry region. Settlements are chiefly located in the narrow ribbon-like alluvial plain bordering the Indus River, east of Leh. Both Ladakhis and Baltis are Mongolid in physical traits. In Ladakh Mahayana Buddhism is the dominant religion; Baltistan forms a transitional area between Islamic Gilgit and Buddhist Ladakh.⁸ Buddhist monasteries, prayer flags and chortens form significant elements of the cultural landscape in Ladakh and adjoining Baltistan. Leh, in the narrow valley of the Indus, is the chief transportation and trading center. It is connected with Srinagar via the Zoji-La Pass (11,580 feet) across the Great Himalaya. Skardu, also on the Indus, is the nodal point of Baltistan.

Kohistan and Gilgit : To the north of the Kishanganga lies the Nanga Parbat⁹ massif, marking the western extremity of the Himalayan chain. The rugged Kohistan¹⁰ lies to the west of Nanga Parbat massif. Isolated settlements are located in the valleys where wheat, barley, pulses and buckwheat are grown. Sparsely populated Gilgit and Hunza¹¹ lie beyond the Indus in the valley of the Gilgit River, which joins the Indus north of Bunji. Settlements are located on the irrigated terraces in the valleys. Rice, wheat, barley and fruit crops are grown. In addition to farming the raising of livestock is important.

Culturally, the region is a part of the Islamic world. The languages spoken in the area have close affinity with languages of Iran and Afghanistan to the West. Pashto, an Iranian language, is spoken in parts of Kohistan and Gilgit. Dardic, another language common in the area, has close affinity with Iranian languages but partakes heavily from the Aryan languages of India.

B. CENTRAL HIMALAYAN REALM

The Central Himalayan realm between Kashmir and Sikkim may be divided into three major geographic regions: Himachal and Punjab Himalayas, Garhwal and Kumaon Himalayas, and Nepal Himalayas. Although there are basic similarities in physical and cultural patterns throughout the major regions, each geographic region may be subdivided

into regions of lower hierarchy on the basis of local differences in physical and cultural factors.

Himachal and Punjab Himalayas: The characteristic northwest-southeast trend of the Himalayas consisting of the Siwalik, the Inner Himalayan ranges (Dhauladhar), and the Great Himalayas is continued in Himachal and Punjab.¹² A large portion of the region has remained economically backward for centuries. In recent times it has come under the impact of plans for economic development. Under the three Five-Year Plans over 1400 miles of motorable roads have been constructed. The new roads have considerably helped in linking secluded areas and bringing them in closer contact with the people on the plains.

The region contains two small but distinctive geographic areas of significance. These are the Kangra and Kulu Valleys, drained by the Beas River. Both are easily accessible from Pathankot and Amritsar. Kangra Valley lies between the Dhauladhar range and the irregular mass of outer Himalayan ranges. The Valley begins from Shahpur, 40 miles from Pathankot, and ends approximately 50 miles further to the east. It is a fertile area, interspersed with homesteads set in the midst of groves and fruit trees. The population of Kangra is remarkably dense, about 100 per square mile as against an average of 4 to 5 per square mile in dry Spiti and Lahaul.

Kulu Valley begins beyond the town of Jogindranagar and Mandi in Himchal Pradesh. The Valley forms a basin, about 50 miles long and 2 miles broad, drained by the River Beas, which rises at the crest of the Rohtang Pass, 15 miles north of Manali. Kulu, the principal commercial centre, lies at a height of 4,000 feet and is 176 miles from Pathankot. Manali is an important trade center for the people of Lahaul and Spiti.

With the exception of a few Buddhists, the region is peopled almost entirely by the Hindus. Because of their long isolation from the plains of India, the people have developed and preserved a distinct way of life and tradition.¹³ The tranquility of life in the mountains and the variegated beauty of the surrounding country have helped them evolve many valuable art forms in music, painting, dance and handicrafts. The Kangra School of Painting, noted for its harmony and delicacy of portraiture, was nurtured in this region.

Simla, Chamba, Narkanda and Solan are the chief urbancommercial centres. Jogindranagar is the site of the important hydroelectric works on the Beas. Bhakra-Nangal dam on the Sutlej is located near the Siwalik front.

Beyond Rohtang Pass in the middle of the Great Himalayan area lie Spiti and Lahaul. This region is surrounded by mountains with elevations ranging from 15,000 feet, to 20,000 feet. Lahaul, with an average altitude of 12,000 feet, lies in the watershed of the Chandra and Bhaga Rivers which join to form the Chenab. As compared to Spiti, the land is relatively fertile with facilities for irrigation in Lahaul.

Spiti is bordered by Ladakh, Tibet and Rampur. Arable land is scarce in dry Spiti. The only significant crops grown are barley and buckwheat. Pastoral activity is important. Both Lahaul and Spiti are culturally Tibetan, and distinct from the dominant Hindu culture in the Inner Himalayan area.

Garhwal and Kumaon Himalayas: The three-fold division of the Punjab Himalayas-Siwalik, Inner Himalaya and Great Himalaya-is continued eastwards in Kumaon, The terai region, bordering the Siwalik foothills, is quite extensive in this section.¹⁴ Malaria, once rampant in the terai, has been largely eradicated and the land is being brought under cultivation by the Uttar Pradesh Government Terai Development Board. The narrow belt of the gravelly Bhabar, to the north of the terai, is largely covered with tropical forests. Certain sections of the Bhabar area are being reclaimed for agriculture.

The Himalayan foothills rise steeply from the Bhabar. The Doon Valley, in Dehra Dun district, lies behind the foothills between the Ganges on the east and the Jamuna on the west.¹⁵ Dehra Dun, situated at an altitude of 2,282 feet, is a cosmopolitan town with a number of all-Indian institutions such as the National Defence Academy, Survey of India, and the Forest Research Institute.

The Inner Himalayan region¹⁶ contains several hill stations such as the famous Mussoorie and Nainital located at heights of about 6,580 feet and 6,350 feet respectively. In Almora and Nainital districts, potatoes, introduced in the mid-19th century, are now an important agricultural product.

Beyond the Inner Himalayas lies the Great Himalayan range with snow-capped peaks along the Tibetan border. Among the well-known peaks are the Kedarnath, Badrinath,¹⁷ and Nanda Devi. The Gomukh glacier in Tehri (now Uttar Kashi) and Milam and Pinpari in Almora are among the principal Glaciers in Kumaon Himalaya.¹⁸ Milan, which extends right up to Tibet, is 25 miles wide, the largest glacier in Kumaon Himalaya.

Pahari (meaning "of the mountains") culture, and adjunct to the Hindu culture of the northern plains of India, is found in the foothills and Inner Himalayan areas.¹⁹ The Pahari have numerous contacts with the people of the plains with whom they share origins and who have been coming to the Hindu shrines and hill retreats in the Pahari area. They are isolated from the Tibetan Bhotiyas by high mountains, but have trading contacts when the Bhotiyas come lower regions. As compared to the Hindus of the plains, the culture of the Pahari is less orthodox. There is more permissiveness or flexibility in the rules of interaction; they follow a number of rules pertaining to marriage which would be unacceptable to plains Hindus, especially those of high caste. For example, the bride price is prevalent instead of dowry; divorce is relatively easy; widow marriage is permitted; brothers can share a wife; and in Jaunsur-Bewar district polyandry is practiced. The Pahari have distinctive folklore, songs, dances and festivals. Animal sacrifice is important in religious ceremonies and there is great reliance on mediums and diviners.

Most of the pahari live below 7,000 feet in the valleys and on the slopes where water is available and terraced cultivation is possible. Millet, wheat and barley are the staples, but where irrigation is possible rice is grown. The villages are small and isolated with two-story houses of stone and timber.

The semi-nomadic Bhotiyas live in the northern regions.²⁰ The Bhotia villages are situated in the High Himalayan valleys. At the head of these valleys lie the passes through which the Bhotiyas used to enter Tibet for trade until 1959, when the India-China border dispute led to the closing of trade across the border. The Bhotiyas live in their villages only for short periods in the year. They go either to high altitudes with their herds during the summer months, or to the Bhabar near the plains for trade during the winter when the high valleys are severely cold.

Bhotiyas migrate with their families, herds of cattle, and their scanty belongings. Very often whole villages are on the move during seasonal migrations.

Nepal Himalaya: Nepal Himalaya comprises three distinct areas: Himalayas, Inner Terai and Terai.²¹ Each of these major divisions can be divided into three geographic regions on the basis of homogeneity of human activity which manifests the relationship between the cultural and physical landscape. Above 10,000 feet, Tibetan culture prevails. In the lower Terai and Inner Terai, mostly below 2,500 feet, Indian culture is dominant (except among the Tharus). Between these two cultural areas, from 2,500 to 10,000 feet, lies the intermediate mountains and valleys of Central Nepal, inhabited by people who exhibit a mixture of Tibetan and Indian cultures including some elements of early aboriginal culture.

The first physical division-Himalaya-may be divided into 3 distinct geographic regions: the eastern mountains, Katmandu Valley, and western mountains. A relatively humid climate, greater population density, and a more cultivated area distinguishes the eastern mountains from the drier, more sparsely populated western mountains. In both the eastern and western mountains the southern section of the river valleys-Kali, Karnali and Kosi-have a sub-tropical climate with considerable rice farming. In the higher northern sections potatoes and barley are dominant field crops. Yak and sheep raising are an important part of the economy at higher altitudes, with a good deal of seasonal herd migration.

Between the eastern and western mountains is the Katmandu Valley, the most distinctive geographic region of Nepal Himalaya. It is the heart of modern Nepal-the largest city and the chief cultural center. It has also the greatest contact with the outside world. Enclosed by the Mahabharat range, the inhabitants of the valley have developed a distinctive way of life. Few places on earth are more productive than the Katmandu Valley, and few support so many people on so little good land.

The complex forest-covered Churia Hills and their enclosed valleys form the second physical division of Nepal, the Inner Terai. These hills are not so forbidding as the mountains of the north. However, from time immemorial they have served as barriers between the fertile

Inner Himalayan valleys and the Ganges plain of India. The Inner Terai can be sub-divided into three geographic regions: east, central, and west Inner Terai on the basis of climate, land use, and human occupancy pattern. Generally speaking, the entire Inner Terai is relatively sparsely populated with no large settlements. The U.S.-aided Rapti Valley Development Scheme is designed to increase colonization in the central Inner Terai through resettlement of peasants from more crowded areas.

The third primary division-Terai-is economically the most valuable region of Nepal. Here rainfall varies between 80 inches in the east to 40 inches in the west. The average density of population per square mile increases from about 90 in far-western Terai to over 350 in eastern Terai. Humid eastern Terai, with its greater rainfall, has a larger arable area and grows a variety of crops including rice, jute, tobacco and sugar cane. The far-western Terai, with less rain, has a limited extent of arable land. Its dry, dusty landscape stands in contrast to the green of eastern Terai. These differences in rainfall, land use and population form the basis for the division of Terai into three geographic regions: the eastern Terai, midwestern Terai, and far-western Terai.

C. EASTERN HIMALAYAN REALM

The Eastern Himalayan realm may be divided into three geographic regions: Darjeeling and Sikkim Himalaya, Bhutan, and Assam Himalaya. This division is based partly on physical factors, and to a greater degree on differences in history and cultural features which are manifested in the landscape.

Darjeeling and Sikkim Himalaya: Facing the alluvial gap between the Rajmahal Hills (Bihar) and Shillong Plateau (Assam), Darjeeling and Sikkim Himalaya²² exhibit certain geographical characteristics resulting from the uninterrupted sweep of the moisture-laden southwest monsoon through the gap and its direct impingement upon the Himalayan slopes. The mountains get full blast of the monsoon and rainfall is heavy; even in central Sikkim further to the north it is in the neighbourhood of 200 inches during the year. The River Tista and its feeders have cut deeply into the gneissic rocks of central Sikkim, laying bare an underlying series of slates, phyllites and mica schists, which, being more easily denuded than the more resistant gneiss, have enabled the

rivers to cut still deeper. In this way, instead of a narrow gorge, a large basin over 40 miles wide has cut back through the central section of Sikkim between two north-south transverse ridges (Singalila and Donkhya), each of them 80 to 90 miles long. The western of these ridges, the remarkable Singalila range, includes the peak of Kanchenjunga (28,150 feet). East of Kanchenjunga the line of highest peaks curves in a broad arc convex towards the north.

Contained within the Tista basin, and isolated from India by forest-clad mountains and from Tibet by the Great Himalayan range, Sikkim has a distinct geographical personality which forms the basis for recognizing it as a separate region.²³ The Darjeeling hills, which was Sikkimese territory until 1835, is treated there together with Sikkim Himalaya for the sake of convenience. However, Darjeeling district has its own distinctive geographic features, and it can be recognized as a sub-region within this larger geographic region.

Culturally, Darjeeling and southern Sikkim is dominated by the large number of Nepali settlers of Hindu faith. The native Lepchas inhabit central Sikkim, and people of Tibetan culture are dominant in the northern part of the region. Rice farming is widespread in central and southern Sikkim. Barley, millet and maize cultivation extend to higher altitudes in the region of Tibetan culture. Gangtok is the nodal centre of Sikkim Himalaya. Darjeeling is the major commercial center serving the entire region. It is also one of the principal hill stations in the Himalayas.

Bhutan Himalaya: Both physically, and culturally, Bhutan Himalaya merits recognition as a separate geographic region within the Eastern Himalayan realm.²⁴ The northern part of Bhutan lies within the Great Himalaya; the snow-capped ranges attain a height of more than 24,000 feet in some places. High valleys at elevations of 12,000 feet are used for grazing in summer months. Spurs from the Great Himalayas radiate southward, forming the watershed between principal rivers of Bhutan. Of these, the Black Mountain range, forming the watershed between the Sankhso and Manas Rivers, divides Bhutan into two geographic subdivisions both administratively and ethnographically. To the east, in Tongsa, the people originally came from the hills of Assam, while to the west in Paro the population is predominantly Tibetan in origin. The several broad, fertile valleys of central Bhutan, formed by the erosive work of rivers and located at elevations varying from 5,000 to 9,000 feet, form the cultural and economic core of the kingdom. Among

them the Paro, Thimbu and Punakha Valleys are best known.

The southern section of Bhutan comprises the sloping Duars plain. The mountains rise sharply from the narrow Duars. The rainfall is excessive, and hillsides are clothed with vegetation. The entire Duars tract is unhealthy. The narrow strip of Duars plain contains access to the 18 strategic passes through the Himalayan foothills leading into mountainous central Bhutan.

Most of the inhabitants of central and northern Bhutan adhere to Tibetan culture. Unlike Nepal, the people of southern Bhutan are less Hinduized. An exception is the large number of Nepali settlers in southwestern Bhutan. In eastern Bhutan Tibetan culture has been considerably modified by the intrusion of elements from the Indo-Mongoloid culture of Assam Himalaya.

Assam Himalaya: Assam Himalaya comprises the least known and largely unexplored part of the mountain system. Along the Tibetan border the Great Himalayan range rises to more than 23,000 feet. Inhabited by animist hill tribes of Indo-Mongoloid stock who practice shifting agriculture, this rugged area possesses a distinctive geographic personality which sets it apart from the rest of the Himalayas.²⁵ As a result of the dispute between India and China this hitherto isolated area is being opened up.

In the lower hills adjacent to the plains are Indo-Aryan Hindu farmers. Towards the north, at higher altitude, are Tibetan people such as Monpas, Membas and Khambas. Near Bomdi La are Sherdukpens²⁶—a group similar to the Tibetans.

The tribes of the Inner Himalayas in Assam have cultural affinities with the people of Burma and southern Yunnan to the east. Among the numerous tribal groups the most well known are the Akas, Daflas,²⁷ Apa Tanis, Miris, Galongs, Abors and Mishmis. In addition to their common Tibeto-Burman language, the people have a number of similar traits. They practice shifting agriculture, or jhuming, in which the land is cleared for farming by cutting large trees and burning over the area. The cleared land is then sown. No animals or plows are used in farming; hoes and digging sticks are the principal farming tools. After 3 or 4 years, when soil fertility declines, the land is abandoned. Principal crops are rice, millet and maize. Pigs, chickens and cattle

are the chief livestock.

Rural settlements consist of several long-houses inhabited by a number of patrilineally related families. Houses are located on raised piles and the chief building material is bamboo. People practice an indigenous variety of religion in which the followers propitiate a variety of deities.

The more developed western section of Assam Himalaya (Kamang Frontier district) stands out as a distinctive sub-region within this region. Its cultural pattern is similar to the eastern section, but shows more Buddhist influence. The houses are more substantial, made of stone and wood. The villages have monasteries, buildings strictly for religious purposes, prayer flags and prayer wheels. The staple crops are millet and maize rather than rice.

CONCLUSION

The distinctive geographical regions of the Himalayas have been identified and described in broad outline. The system of regional division presented in this paper recognizes three major realms; each realm in turn is divided into several geographic regions depending upon general physical and cultural similarities. This paper attempts to provide a framework for further detailed regional analysis, which would undoubtedly result in refinements in the regional division of the Himalayas.

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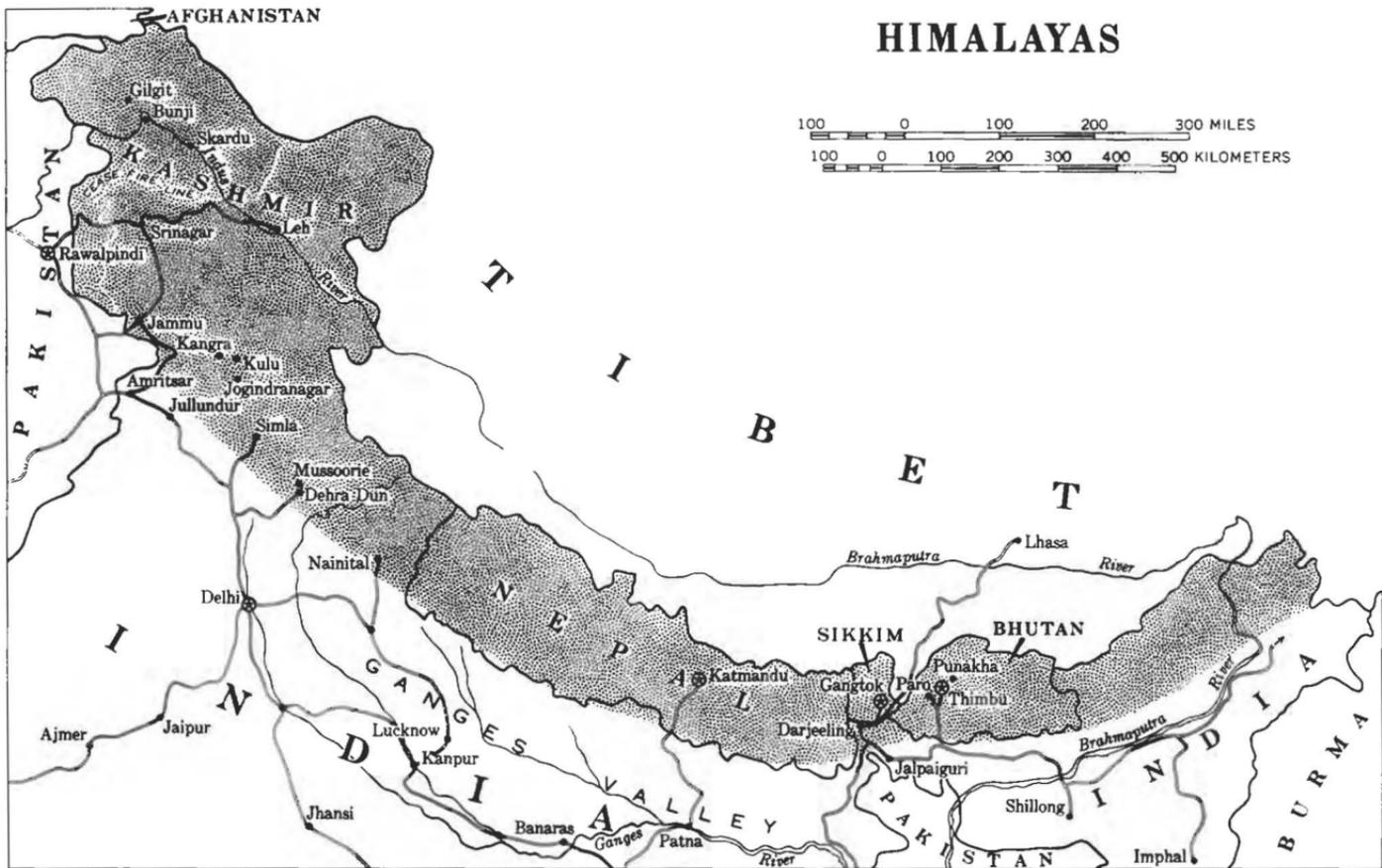
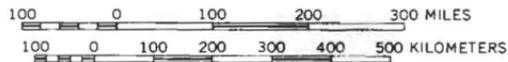
AN
ART BOOK
FROM
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ལྷན་པོ་འབྲེལ་བའི་རྒྱ་མཚོ་གྲོ་མོ་གྲོ་མོ་ལྷན་པོ་

RGYAN-DRUG MCHOG-GNYIS (Six Ornaments and Two Excellents) reproduces ancient scrolls (1670 A.C.) depicting Buddha, Nagarjuna, Aryadeva, Asanga, Vasubandhu, Dinnaga, Dharmakirti, Gunaprabha, and Sakyaprabha; reproductions are as per originals today after 300 years of display and worship with no attempt at restoration or retouching. The exposition in English presents the iconographical niceties and the theme of the paintings, namely, the Mahayana philosophy; the treatment is designed to meet also the needs of the general reader with an interest in Trans-Himalayan art or Mahayana. A glossary in Sanskrit-Tibetan, a key to place names and a note on source material are appended. Illustrated with five colour plates and thirteen monochromes.

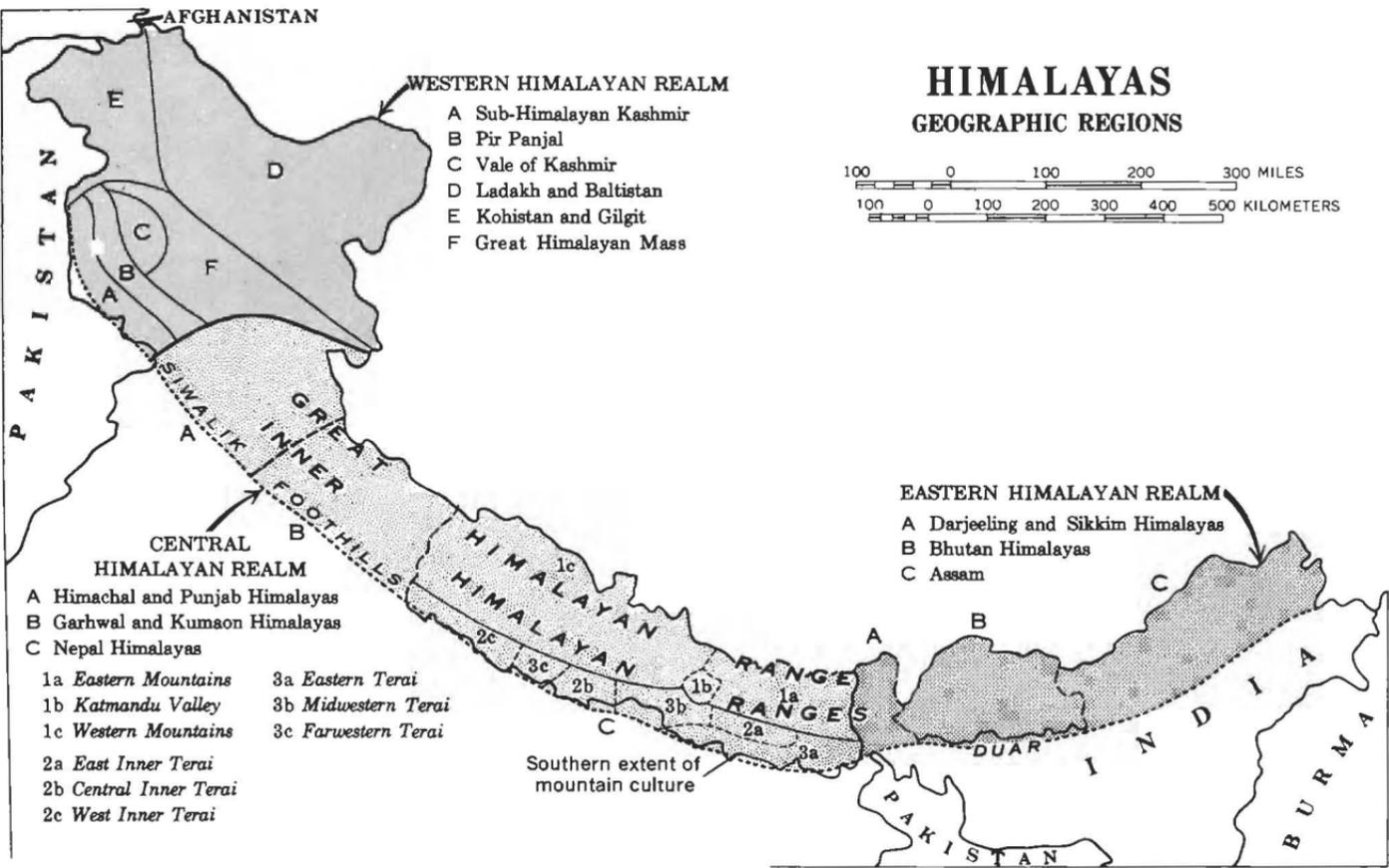
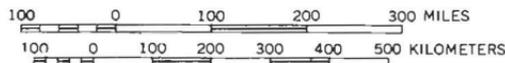
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HIMALAYAS



HIMALAYAS

GEOGRAPHIC REGIONS



WESTERN HIMALAYAN REALM

- A Sub-Himalayan Kashmir
- B Pir Panjal
- C Vale of Kashmir
- D Ladakh and Baltistan
- E Kohistan and Gilgit
- F Great Himalayan Mass

CENTRAL HIMALAYAN REALM

- A Himachal and Punjab Himalayas
- B Garhwal and Kumaon Himalayas
- C Nepal Himalayas

- 1a Eastern Mountains
- 1b Katmandu Valley
- 1c Western Mountains
- 2a East Inner Terai
- 2b Central Inner Terai
- 2c West Inner Terai
- 3a Eastern Terai
- 3b Midwestern Terai
- 3c Farwestern Terai

EASTERN HIMALAYAN REALM

- A Darjeeling and Sikkim Himalayas
- B Bhutan Himalayas
- C Assam

Southern extent of mountain culture

BUDDHISM IN NEPAL

—NALINAKSHA DUTT

The dictum of Gautama Buddha, soon after his enlightenment, "Wander forth, Ye O Monks, for the good of many, for the happiness of many" (चरथ भिक्खवे चरिक् बहुजनहिताय बहुजनसुखाय) seems to have inspired his disciples to propagate the religion so much that they went to the furthest length to spread the teachings of Buddhism throughout its long career. The teaching of Sakyamuni was meant for all men irrespective of caste, creed, sex, social status or state of civilisation. Within India, Buddhism could not obtain full scope on account of the hold of the Brahmanas on the common people, hide-bound, as they were, by the caste (*varna*) and ritualistic system of the Brahmanas. There were several erudite Brahmanas, with a spiritual and philosophical bent of mind, who could see through the artificiality of *varna*-system and ritualism, eschewed their inherited faith and religion and joined the Buddhist Sangha in order to derive the full benefit of the deep teachings of Gautama Buddha. The lay-society appreciated the self-sacrificing spirit of the Buddhist monks, and satisfied themselves by just making donations as much as they could afford to the Sangha, with or without the hope of earning merits. The Buddhist monk-preachers, not finding a very fruitful field for conversion among the masses of India, directed their attention to the peoples living in, and outside the borders of India, where Brahmanic caste-system and ritualism could not cast its influence.

The tribal people had a culture of their own with animistic beliefs, spirit-worship, etc. To them the missionaries despatched during the reign of Asoka directed their attention and proceeded to the frontiers of India or the countries beyond. One of the missionaries was Majjhima, who went to the Himalayan region along with Kassapagotha, relics of both of whom have been discovered in a relic-urn at Sanchi with the inscription of the names on the lid and described as "Hemavata-cariya". In the Nagarjunikonda inscription, there is a reference to the attempt for spreading the religion in Cina-Cilate, of which Cilata is identified with the Kiratas living in the eastern Himalayan region, that is the frontier of Nepal, the vast forest adjoining Lumbini. Spread of Buddhism took place in its very early stage during the times of Asoka and Kanishka in Ceylon on the south and in the N. W. Frontiers of India, including Afghanistan, Balkh and Bamiyan, Central Asia and Nepal in the north. The ancient Kiratas were the earliest people of Nepal to receive the teachings of Buddhism, evidently in its elementary

form, which was mixed in with their animistic and other beliefs. They were followed by the Licchavis and Newars, both of which tribes, particularly the Newars, became Buddhist but they did not eschew altogether their ancient religion, *Saivism*.

Throughout the history of Nepal up to the modern times, the people in general adored both Saiva and Buddhist deities, and hence, the form of Buddhism prevailed here all along was neither pure Hinayana nor Mahayana nor Tantrayana. The latest rulers of Nepal, the Gurkhas, though staunch Sivaite, were tolerant of Buddhism. All the earlier ruling dynasties and the people in general, were either Sivaite or Buddhists but worshipped the deities of both the religions, and extended their patronage to both of them, sometimes, identifying Siva with Buddha, and Brahma with Adibuddha, the Svayambhu, i.e. the self-existent, unborn and undecaying, the deified form of Dharmakaya, the universe or Sunyata (see *infra* p.43).

Nepal, however, is the only country, which preserved the most valuable treasures of Indian Buddhism, that is, the original manuscripts of Mahayana and Tantrayana literature, which became known to Indian and European scholars through the efforts of a great scholar B. B. Hodgson. Quite a number of these manuscripts or their copies were taken to Sa-skya and other monasteries of Tibet, and formed the bases of Tibetan Kanjur and Tanjur. The Banepa-kuti pass of Nepal leading to Tibet served as one of the routes for transmission of Indian Buddhism to Tibet, and the mutual contact of Indian and Tibetan savants. Both Indian and Nepalese monks of Odantapuri and Vikramasila, including the famous apostle Atisa, reached Tibet through Nepal.

The great Tibetan king Srong-btsan-sgam-po and his successors ruled not only over Tibet but also extended their dominion to some portions of Nepal and Central Asia. This political relation paved the way for the propagation of Buddhism in these two countries. The famous scholar Thon-mi-sambhota developed the Tibetan script out of the Gupta style of script prevailing in Kashmir and Nepal. Hence, Buddhism of Nepal was the product of both Indian and Tibetan missionaries. The contributions of Tibet to the Nepalese stupas of Svayambhunath and Budhnath were no less than those of the Nepalese rulers (see *infra* p. 43). From the stupas and divinities worshipped in Nepal, it may be inferred that the latest phase of Buddhism, Tantrism, became popular in Nepal as also in Tibet. This was also due to the efforts of the missionaries of Odantapuri and Vikramasila. Further, in the eastern sub-Himalayan region of Nepal, the original inhabitants belonged

to the Tibetan stock and they are still living in this area, adhering to both Bon-po and Buddhist faith.

In this article, it is proposed to reconstruct a history of Nepalese Buddhism, on the basis of the tribes and rulers, who patronised, and devoted themselves to, the religion, preceded by a topographical and tribal sketch of Nepal, and concluded with an account of the two stupas, Svayam-bhunath and Budhnath.

TOPOGRAPHY

Nepal is situated on the southern slopes of the Himalayas extending up to the Indo-Gangetic plains. At the earliest period the country of Nepal denoted only the valley of Kathmandu with its length and breadth about 100 miles on each direction and was about 60 miles north of the Indo-Gangetic plain. The valley of Nepal was later extended to the south by the inclusion of the large forests of the Terai reaching up to the border of India. On the east, it extended over the mountainous region up to the borders of Tibet and Sikkim. On the west, it extended up to Kumaun. Its present area is about 50,000 square miles with a population of about 8 millions.

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The original inhabitants of Nepal were many tribes of the Indo-Mongoloid stock. The main population consisted of the Kiratas, Licchavis and Newars, many of whom became intermingled and became known as Newars. They were surrounded by Magar, Gurungs, Sonwars, Kachars, Limbus, Lepchas, Kasundas and Murmis. The physiognomy of all these different tribal peoples shows a fairly close affinity. The ancient language was mainly that of the Newars who were the best cultured people of the country.

KIRATAS

The Kiratas were the earliest Himalayan tribe to come to Nepal and to settle down there. They included the clans of Khambus, Limbus, Tharus and a few others. The Kiratas are mentioned in as early as a Vedic Text: the White Yajurveda (Vajasaneyi samhita), in the two Epics, Manava-dharma-sastra, Bharavi's Kiratarjuniyam and Peri-plus.¹ In the Epics, they are mentioned along with Sakas, Yavanas and Pallavas. They fraternised with Cinas under Bhagadatta, the king of Kamarupa (Prag-jyotisa). In the Lalita-Vistara, one of the forms of writing mentioned is *Kirata-lipi*. In the Nagarjunikonda inscription referred to above, they are associated with Cina with the name Cilata. In the *Milindapanha* (p.322) is mentioned Cina-vilata of which "Vilata" seems to be a misreading for Cilata. Dr. Regmi says that the were

living in Balkh and Dardistan. Prof. Levi writes that Cilata was a part of Mahacina which included Nepal.²

There is the tradition that the Kiratas were originally Ksatriyas but for non-compliance with the prescribed duties—obligations of their caste, they were degraded to Sudras. Buddhism had already spread to Balkh and Dardistan³ and so they must have known of Buddhism before they entered into Nepal. They took possession of the eastern valley of Nepal 5 or 6 days journey from Bhatgaon and ruled there for 29 generations i.e. for about 725 years.⁴ While in the Buddhist territories they muttered Om Mani Padme Hum and gave presents to Lamas but while in Hindu area they worshipped Siva and Gauri and made gifts to Brahmanas.

LICCHAVIS

The Licchavis of Vaisali, situated in close proximity to Nepal, after losing their independence in India entered into Nepal, conquered the Kiratas and settled down in the country. They ruled for about six centuries from the 1st century A.D. Jayadeva was their first ruler.⁵ These Licchavis were different from those, who live in the days of Sakyamuni, and perhaps belonged to the clan, with whom the Guptas rulers, Chandragupta I and Samudragupta had relations.⁶ Like the Gupta rulers, the Licchavis were worshippers of Siva and Visnu. Among the Licchavi rulers, Narendradeva, Sivadeva and Puspadeva became ardent supporters of Buddhism. Narendradeva's regard for Buddhism is shown in some of his inscriptions by the representation of the symbol of the Buddhist wheel of law (*Dharmacakra*) flanked by two deer.⁷ It is said that Narendradeva though Sivaite, always kept an image of Buddha with him as a magical charm.⁸ In his old age, he retired to a Buddhist monastery, and at the time of his death he gave to his son, his crown along with a copy of the Prajnaparamita.

In the *Manjusrimulakalpa* (p.621), appears the following passage "There will be in Nepal in the north in the Himalayan region a king of the Licchavi dynasty. He will be very prosperous on account of his attaining perfection in Mantras known as Bhogavarti. He will reign for 80 years in a kingdom bereft of thieves." Very likely the king referred to in this passage is Narendradeva. "There will be many other kings of this dynasty who will worship the famous Taradevi clad in white who renders untiringly and at all times help to all". It may be mentioned here that Vajra-yogini, Ugra-Tara and Nila-Tara were and are being worshipped by the Nepalese Buddhists.

In the Yagbahal inscription of Sivadeva II (8th Century A.D.) after mentioning the name of Licchavi-kulaketu Paramabhattacharaka Maharajadhirala Narendradeva, is recorded that a grant was made to the fraternity of monks of the four quarters. A monastery was built by king Sivadeva who named it as "Sivadeva-vihara-catur-dig-bhikhu-sanghasya."⁹ During the reign of Licchavi-kula-ketu Puspadeva further grants were made to the monks of Sivadeva-vihara. In this inscription are mentioned incidentally a few other monasteries viz. Manadeva-vihara Gupta-vihara, Kharjurika-vihara Abhayakavi-vihara Raja-vihara and Saciva-vihara.¹⁰ King Bhaskaradeva erected also a few monasteries viz., Hiranya vihara, Mahavihara and Pingala-vihara.¹¹ Besides the above, there were also many other monasteries, some of which were known as Varta-kalyana-vihara, Catur-bhalankasana-vihara and Sriraja-vihava.¹²

Most of these monasteries had extensive land-grants, known as Agraharas,¹³ which the donees enjoyed free of all taxes and revenues payable to the State. The object of such grants, as is described in the inscriptions was to encourage learning and spiritual practices of monks by keeping them above cares and anxieties for the bare necessities of life as also to see that the viharas grew into centres of education and cultural progress.

In spite of their Saiva faith, the later Licchavi rulers not only made lavish grants to Buddhist monasteries but also had great regard for Buddhism and Buddhist monks, e.g. king Jayadeva and his queen worshipped Avalokitesvara.¹⁴

The kings also encouraged the propagation of Buddhist literature as is proved by their affixing signatures to many manuscripts. Mention may be made of the signatures of Narendradeva in a copy of the Prajnaparamita in Sri-vihara, of Baladeva in a copy of the Saddharmapundarika and of Sankaradeva in Astasahasrika Prajnaparamita and Bodhicaryavatara.

It lies to the credit of Narendradeva, to establish closer contact with Tibet through the Banepa-kuti Pass (Bhotia in Tibetan) said to be the shortest route from China and Tibet to India. Mahayana Buddhism was introduced into Tibet some time before Santiraksita and Padmasambhava by Buddhist missionaries residing in Nepal, along with the Pagoda Style of architecture of temples. Both artists and missionaries of Nepal¹⁵ contributed much to the cultural advancement of Tibet in the first half of the 7th Century A.D.

MALLAS

11th to 14th Century A.D.

The Mallas, according to Prof. Tucci,¹⁶ were the Khasiyas of Simla and Garhwal. Their conquest and rulership of the area from Western Nepal to Western Tibet were discovered by Prof. Tucci in his latest expedition to Nepal, 1953. Nagadeva conquered Western Tibet in the 12th Century while Prthivi Malla was the last ruler of this dynasty, when Western Tibet regained its independence. These Malla rulers were perhaps tolerant of Buddhism, as one of its rulers bearing the name of Asoka made a donation to the temple of Bodh Gaya.¹⁷ The Mallas were originally Hindus, but on the top of the steles, discovered by Prof. Tucci at Dullu and in the neighbouring villages containing the genealogy of the Malla rulers, appears a Buddhist symbol with the inscription "Om Mani Padme Hum" The Mallas, while in Tibet, became Buddhist and built the magnificent temples of Tsaparang and Toling, discovered by Prof. Tucci in his expedition in 1931-33. They used Tibetan language in the north and Sanskrit in the south of their dominion.¹⁸ Prof. Petech utilising the colophons of Nepalese mss. in which the names of kings with their dates are usually given by the copyists, compiled a chronological history of the Malla rulers with Arimalla as the first to reign in Nepal in 1200 A.D. They were mainly Saivas and had no connection with Buddhism. There is no indication in this chronology how these Malla kings were related to the Malla rulers, whose genealogy was discovered by Prof. Tucci at Dullu. Prof. Tucci writes that the latest Malla rulers of Nepal were quite different from the Mallas whose genealogy, he had discovered at Dullu.

NEWARS

The Newars were a composite race of Indo-Mongoloid origin. Being the first settlers and the oldest inhabitants of the valley of Kathmandu, they absorbed many tribal peoples who came to live in the valley. They had close affinity to Magars, Gurungs, Lepchas, Sonwars, Kachars, Murmis, Limbus and Kiratas. Their language was Indo-Mongoloid and not Indo-Aryan, though they absorbed much of Indian culture. They might have some relations with the Vrji clan of Vaisali. They were the first people of Nepal among whom the Buddhist evangelists made their attempts to propagate the teachings of Buddhism. In China, there is a tradition that Bodhisattva Manjusri opened out a

passage for the water encompassed and locked in Nepal and converted it into a habitable country. His companions were the Newars, who first colonised the country. They ruled over the valley of Kathmandu for about 725 years up to the advent of the Gurkhas. They along with other tribes shared the territory with the changing ruling tribes including the Gurkhas who ruled over Nepal from 1768.

The Newars were excellent craftsmen, made beautiful bronze images and painted figures. They made graceful images of Buddha, Avalokitesvara or Padmapani, as also of the Divine Mercy but in various demoniac forms. They were not only artists but also architects. They introduced the Pagoda Style of architecture in temples of both Nepal and Tibet. There were among them learned men and the most learned among them were given the highest place in the caste distinction, which was later imposed on them by the Brahmanic influence.

Buddhism as is well known deprecated strongly the caste-system which made an artificial distinction of high and low among human beings. The various tribes absorbed in Indian population were generally relegated to a lower caste. The Buddhist evangelists preferred to work among the hill-people who were not obsessed with caste-distinctions. There were divisions among them according to professions and tribal origins. The Buddhist monks found the Newars of Nepal, a composite tribal people, suitable for propagating their religion and received good response from them. The Newars also adapted their habits, customs and practices to the teachings of Buddhism but with the advent of Brahmanic influence, particularly the Saivites, who became rulers of the land, the Newars had to submit themselves to a special caste-distinction on lines similar to those of the Brahmanic system. The Sivamargis were generally the ruling class, while the common people were Buddharmargis. The caste system in Nepal came into vogue both among the Hindus as well as the Buddhists in the reign of the Thakuris but was made more and more rigid during the reign of Jayasthiti Malla in the 14th century A.D. Inter-marriage between different castes became restricted and two sets of caste-distinction were introduced in the two religious groups: Sivamargi and Buddharmargi.

The monks who formerly led a celibate life claimed that they were descendants of India Brahmanas and Ksatriyas and as such they were of the highest castes. They took advantage of the Brahmanic form of married priesthood and started marrying and having families and, at the same time, earning their livelihood by officiating as priests of the Buddhists

and enjoying the yield of the monastic properties. The caste system of the Newars or the common people in general was made thus:—

- I Vajracarya or Gubhaju-learned monks
- II Sakya-bhiksu (Bandy-Banra)-monks without much learning and many taking up profession of goldsmith:
- III Sresthas: Kayastha (scribes), Nikhu (painter of images of deities), Lakhay (attendants)
- IV (a) Lower castes, corresponding to Sudras. They are Uday or Urag (merchants) Carpenters, Metal workers
(b) Jyapu (cultivators)
(c) All sorts of manual workers engaged in various trades and professions and
- V Untouchables.¹⁹

The above list indicates broadly the form of caste distinction of the Buddharmgis. Of these the Vajracarya-Sakyabhiksu replaced the Buddhist monks but retained the formalities of ordination in a strange manner.

ORDINATION OF A NEWARI BUDDHIST PRIEST

Prof. Levi ²⁰ has given an account of the whole procedure of ordination of a Newari Buddhist priest. Buddhism underwent a revolutionary change in Nepal along with the ceremony of ordination retaining just a few formalities of the ancient ceremony. The Bandyas (Banras) are only entitled to ordination, which, however, was not given to one who married and became the father of a family and took the profession of an artisan. The Bandyas could be given ordination before their marriage, and only the ordained Bandyas could be the officiating priests. The procedure of ordination is as follows:—

A candidate seeking ordination with a view to qualify himself for becoming officiating priest, approaches a spiritual preceptor (*Guru*) and requests him to give him ordination.

The *Guru*, before commencing the actual ceremony, draws a magical diagram and utters spells for giving protection to the candidate from three dangers, viz., from thunderbolt, iron and fire. The spells are known as *Vajraraksa*, *Loharaksa* and *Agniraksa*.

The candidate is then sprinkled with a jar of consecrated water. This ceremony is known as *Kalasa-abhiseka*.

Two days later the *Guru* who is usually the head (*Nayaka*) of a monastery and four senior priests of other monasteries, i.e. five priests in all, as was the ancient custom, confer the vow of renunciation from worldly life (*Pravrajya-vrata*) on the candidate along with the prescription for observance of five moral precepts (*Siksapadas*) viz., non-killing, non-stealing, celibacy, and abstention from falsehood and intoxicating drinks.

The next step is that the candidate is to get himself shaved of hair, moustache and beard. He is then given a religious name and is sprinkled with consecrated water. He is asked to observe five additional precepts i.e. ten *siksapadas* in all, viz, abstention from enjoying dances, from use of ornamental articles, from sleeping on high bed, from taking food beyond fixed time, and from touching gold and silver.

The candidate is then asked to put on the robes of a monk (*civare*) and under-garment (*nivasa*), and to take a begging bowl (*pindapatra*), a stick (*khikkhari*), a pair of wooden sandals, a jug or ewer, and an umbrella.

The orthodox form of ordination is thus completed. The candidate becomes a fully ordained monk.

This ceremony of ordination is supplemented by the worship of the deities: *Bhairava*, *Mahakala*, *Vasundhara* etc. with rituals and other paraphernalia, introduced later perhaps by the Tantric Buddhist monks.

The ordained monk observes the restrictions imposed on him for four days only, and then approaches his *Guru* again and tells him that he is unable to lead the life of a monk and requests him to relieve him of the *Pravrajyavrata* and the ten observances (*siksapadas*) and to permit him to take up the disciplinary practices of a *Bodhisattva*. The *Guru* readily assents to his request, admitting that it is difficult to observe the rules and restrictions of *Pravrajya-vrata*. Thereafter the ordained

monk becomes a house-holder but he gains the privilege of acting as officiating priests or Gubhajus.

GUBHAJUS, VAJRACARYAS AND BHIKSUS

The Gubhajus are to take the training of officiating priests. They learn the method of the ignition of daily fire with melted butter (*homa*), which is generally carried along with a deity. If they neglect to perform *homas*, they along with their descendants are degraded to the rank of *Bhiksus* or junior priests, who can act only as assistants of Gubhajus in rituals and ceremonies.

The Gubhajus are usually learned men (Pāṇḍit) and wear the sacred cord like the Brahmins. If he cultivates his Knowledge of *homa* and devotes himself to further studies of religious texts, he is raised to the rank of Vajracarya-arhat-bhiksu-buddha.

After attaining the status of a Vajracarya, he enjoys the highest rank of a priest and becomes entitled to perform ceremonies in connection with birth, marriage and death.²¹

DRESS OF A VAJRACARYA AND A BHIKSU

The Vajracaryas and the Bhiksus put on a special dress. A Vajracarya puts on his head a bishop's mitre (tall cap) and a copper crown richly embossed with two rows of escutcheon (coat of arms) on which are embossed the images of Buddha and Tara. On the top is a Vajra horizontally placed on an escutcheon. In his hands he carries a Vajra and a Bell; from his neck up to the girdle hangs a rosary. He wears a yellow (*kasaya*) costume, consisting of a tight jacket with a thick-set skirt in pleats up to the girdle.

His assistant, the Bhiksu has a similar costume but with a different insignia. He puts on a coloured cap and a piece of wrapping cloth joined by gilt buttons. His rosary is of the simple type hanging from his neck and he carries in his hands a stick (*khikkhari*) and a begging bowl (*pindapatra*).

POSITION OF BUDDHISM

From the historical survey made above, it is apparent that Buddhist evangelists reached Nepal sometime before the Christian era but they could not impregnate the people with the spirit of Buddhism and the monastic system of life. They made a superficial impression on the Kiratas and Newars, the earliest inhabitants of Nepal, by acquainting them with the bare moral precepts. About the 7th/8th centuries A.D., the ruling dynasties became interested in the religion, made substantial donations for erecting stupas and monasteries, but both the rulers and the common people did not give up their earlier faith in Saivism. They found in both Hinduism and Buddhism some common features, and tried to place Siva and Buddha on the same level. The fact that the Newars gave preference to Buddhism shows that the Buddhist evangelists were partially successful in winning over this community to their faith although they could not completely wean them from their animistic beliefs and Brahmanic rituals. The existence of ancient *stupas* indicates that Buddhism had many adherents in ancient Nepal.

The Newars, however, could not rise up to the ideal of orthodox monasticism and produce self-sacrificing monks to take up spiritual practices for the attainment of the goal. It is for this reason, they readily succumbed to the caste distinction on lines parallel to that of the Brahmanas. Their monks lost no time to give up their celibacy and get married and to become fathers of families. They imitated the life of the Brahmanic priests with a view to lead an easy-going life.

As a matter of fact, the monasteries became denuded of celibate monks and novices, and were filled up by house holders engaged in secular business. In Kashmir also, there is an instance of a similar monastery built by Yukadevi, wife of King Meghavahana, who was a great patron of Buddhism. Yukadevi built a magnificent monastery in one half of which, she placed those Bhiksus whose conduct conformed to the precepts, and in the other half those who were married and had children, cattle and property. The latter were being looked down for their life as a householder (*Rajatarangini*, iii. 12). In the 17th century, a king of Kathmandu and Bhatgaon built 25 Viharas naming them as *Nairvanikos* meant exclusively for celibate monks. Thus, it seems that there were, in Nepal as also in Kashmir, kings and queens who desired for celibate monks and not married priests, although the latter could not be denied residence in monasteries.

The Newars, however, adhered primarily to the Buddhist faith and secondarily to Saiva. They worshipped first the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas and then the Brahmanic deities, Siva and Visnu, while the Hindus reversed this sequence of worship. It seems that the Nepalese maintained a balance between the two religions e.g. there is a Svayambhu Purana along with a Pasupati Purana. There is also another Purana with the title Buddha Purana in which Buddha has been made an incarnation of Visnu. There were two magnificent temples, one of Svayambhunath dedicated to Adi Buddha and the other of Pasupatinath enshrining Siva. It may be observed in this connection, that the symbol of Svastika was adopted by both the religions, but the Buddhists made it right-handed while the Hindus left-handed. Both the cults prevailed in the country all along, the Buddhist cult among the common people while the Brahmanic cult among the ruling classes. In this connection the remarks of Hiuen Tsang may be quoted here. He writes that the Nepalese believed both in false and true religion. The Buddhist monasteries and Deva temples touched each other. There were above 2000 ecclesiastics who were attached to both vehicles²². The kings of Nepal were Ksatriya Licchavis, and they were eminent scholars, believing in Buddhism.

In Nepal-mahatmya, appears the line तत्र बुद्धः प्रभावति (There the Buddha predominates) while in a Buddhist manuscript appear the following lines:—

यद् भवतां बुद्धप्रसादाद् अभीष्टम् ।
तन् मया पशुपति प्रसादात् लब्धम् ॥

(What you desire out of the favour of Buddha was obtained by me through the grace of Pasupati.)²³.

The Newars developed a language of their own. They became excellent scribes and calligraphists. Their script was a development of the Gupta script of the 5th/6th Century A.D. One of the important features of their culture was the love for calligraphy and earnestness in copying the Buddhist manuscripts, which were taken to Nepal by the fugitive monks of Nalanda, Vikramasila and Odantapuri after the onslaught of the Moslems in Bihar.

Nepal came into a close contact with the monks of the three monasteries of Bihar in the 10th Century A.D. In these monasteries at that time, the study and practices of Tantrayana became predominant and so this form of Buddhism with its divinities was introduced in Nepal. It was also allied to Tantric Saivism.

Taranatha, the Tibetan historian, furnishes us with the names and particulars of few monks who went to Nepal. They are :

- (i) Vasubandhu, the famous author of the *Abhidharmakosa*, after sending this work of his to Sanghabhadra, went to Nepal on his way from Kashmir to Nalanda.
- (ii) Vajradeva, a great poet, a layman, went to Nepal and composed a poem criticising a heretical Yogini of Nepal, who cursed him with the disease of leprosy. For getting rid of the disease, he implored Avalokitesvara and composed in three months in Sragdhara metre 100 *stotras*, enlogising him. He then visualised him and got himself freed of leprosy. His *stotras* became famous all over India.
- (iii) Vagisivarakirti of Varanasi was the western *dvarapandita* of Vikramasila. He was a sthavira of the Mahasanghika School. He mastered both the *Sutras* and the *Tantras*. In the second half of his life he went to Nepal with a large number of female disciples, for which his sanctity was doubted by the people of Nepal but the king of Santapuri erected a Cakrasambara temple and requested him to invite a Ganacakra 24 to inaugurate the temple.

In chapters 37, 38 and 39, Taranatha relates the advent of the Moslems and as a result of which, the monks of Vikramasila and Odantapuri went to the different parts of India, evidently with their manuscript treasures. Two of them came to Nepal. They are :

- (i) Buddhasri, the head of Vikramasila after Sakyasri, was a native of Nepal. He returned to his homeland and taught the Paramitayana and the secret Mantrayana. He observed the Tantric form of conduct.

- (ii) Ratnaraksita of Vikramasila was vastly learned like Sakyasri but he specialised in Mantrayana, and thereby he acquired immense magical powers. He visualised Kalacakra, Cakrasambhara, Yamari etc. Two years ahead he foresaw the advance of Moslems, and so with a great number of his disciple, he left Vikramasila and reached Kashmir and Nepal. He went also for a short time to Tibet, where he wrote a commentary on *Samvarodaya* 25.

The eastern mountainous region of Nepal, touching the border of Tibet was inhabited mostly by Lepchas and other tribes using Tibetan dialects and having a close affinity to the Tibetans. They became the followers of the Bon-po religion and erected Bon-po temples, e.g. in Chakra village, and inherited some Buddhist articles of faith. King Srongbtsan-sgam-po and his successors (9th Century) made inroads into Nepal, conquered and ruled over the north-eastern region of Nepal. This Tibetan conquest, led to further extension of Mahayana and Tantrayana Buddhism in Nepal and introduced some Mahayanic and Tantrayanic principles and divinities as a veneer on Saivism. These could, however, neither supersede Saivism nor superimpose Buddhism on Saiva religion and divinities.

Both from Bihar and Tibet the Buddhist evangelists, imbued with Tantricism, propagated the Tantric phase of Buddhism in Nepal with its Mantras, Mandalas and other secret practices.

It is therefore not at all surprising that the form of Buddhism in Nepal was Mahayanic and Tantric, and the Nepalese worshipped their divinities, the Dhyanis Buddhas, Bodhisattvas, goddess Tara in her different forms as also the Yoginis, placing Sakyamuni in the background. Prof. Levi paid a visit to a Vihara, Tyekam-bahal, where he noticed in the chapel an image of Sakyamuni flanked by the images of Lokeshvara and Maitreya. On the top of the image there was a superb wood-panel depicting Mahavairocana, having in his hands a rosary, a sword, a club and a book. There were in the courtyard images of Amoghasiddhi, Aksoobya, Ratnasambhava and Padmapani 26. He came across also a copy of Sakyamuni-stotra composed by Indra with a local commentary 27.

In the Buddha Purana, there is a fantastic account of the life of Sakyamuni. The Nepalese adore the footmarks of Sakyamuni Buddha. In the footmarks, there are carving or painting of the auspicious signs, viz. *Srivatsa*, *Padma*, *Dhvaja*, *Kalasa*, *Chattra*, *Matsya*, *Sankha* and *Cakra* [curl of hair on the breast, lotus, flag, jar, umbrella, whisk or fly-flap fish, conch-shell and concentric circles]. These auspicious signs are more Brhmanic than Buddhist. Hence, it is apparent that worship of Sakyamuni did not form an integral part of Nepalese Buddhism.

The chief Buddhist divinity was Adi Buddha and the emanations out of Him.

STUPAS

There are five ancient Caityas attributed to Emperor Asoka. These are on the model of the stupas at Sanchi and Taxila, but these do not enshrine any relics. The five Caityas are in Patan, a suburb of Kathmandu on its south-east. Of these, one Caitya is in the centre of the town and four in the four corners around the town. Caityas are just hemispherical mounds of bricks on a brick platform. Against the sides of the Caitya there are inset vaults enshrining in each of them one of the four Buddhas. ²⁸

There are several stupas of this type of a late date scattered over Kathmandu and its neighbourhood.

Usually at the top of a stupa, there is a chapel dedicated to Vairocana. On its four sides there are also chapels in the innermost recesses, containing images of the four Dhyani-Buddhas, viz. Amitabha, (or Padmapani), Ratna-sambhava, Aksobhya and Amoghasiddhi²⁹.

The glory of Nepalese Buddhism, is the Caitya of Svayambhunath standing on a 400ft. high hillock on the western end of Kathmandu. The Caitya is of immense dimension and proportion. Its style of architecture is the same as that of the ancient stupas. Its decorative features, however, are Lamaistic. On each of its four sides are painted wide open eyes in red, white and black colour. On its eastern side at the end of the stairs is placed a gilt Vajra locally called Dorje guarded by two lions of stone placed on a stone disc called Vajradhatu-mandala. An oil lamp is always kept burning there.

The name Svayambhu is derived according to the tradition given in the Svayambhu Purana from Adi Buddha (ཨ་དཱ་བླ་མ་ལྷ་མོ་) who manifested himself at the spot in the form of a flame of fire regarded as self-existent, eternal and undecaying.

The credit of creating a temple for its preservation is given to Manjusri Bodhisattva. Adi Buddha is self-born and so the Nepalese worship him as Svayambhu. He is always in Nirvana and is issued out of Sunyata. Through his meditation appeared the five Dhyani Buddhas representing Pravrtti (manifestation), viz. Vairocana, Aksobhya, Ratnasambhava, Amitabha and Amoghasiddhi, Symbolising the five elements (Skandhas) viz, Rupa, Vedana, Samjna, Sanskara and Vijnana. They in turn by their knowledge and contemplation brought into being five Dhyani Bodhisattvas, viz. Samantabhadra, Vajrapani, Ratnapani, Avalokitesvara of Padmapani and Visvapani respectively. The Bodhisattvas are believed to be creators of the Changing Universe. The present world is a creation of Avalokitesvara, who is protected by Buddha Amitabha. As his instructor appeared the human Buddha, Sakyamuni.

The appearance of Avalokitesvara out of Svaymbhu or the self-existent, the Adi Buddha (the Primordial Buddha), also called Adinatha, is related in the later metrical version of the *Karandavyuha*. In *Mahayana-Sutralankara* (ix, 77) Asanga denies the possibility of the conception of one beginningless (anaditah) Buddha or several Buddhas on account of the Mahayanic conception of Dharmakaya. Hence he comments saying "na can kascid adi-buddho'sti vina sambharena". On the basis of this comment of Asanga, Prof. Winternitz (*A History of India Literature*, II, p.306) inferred that Asanga referred to the Tantric conception of Adibuddha. The conception of Avalokitesvara, as found in the *Karandavyuha* may be regarded as prior to that of Adibuddha. As a matter of fact the conception of Adibuddha was given currency in the *Kalacakra Tantra* at a much later date i.e. about the 10th Century.

According to the Svayambhu-purana, the Caitya of Svayambhunath of Kathmandu was erected first by Pracandadeva, king of Gauda, who abdicated his throne to enter into the order of monks and was given the religious name of Santikara-bhiksu. This however lacks corroboration by any inscription. The Caitya was repaired by Sivadeva Malla in 1593 and since then it was maintained by the Tibetans. About a century later, a Lama of Lhasa fixed gilt copper plates to the bell-tower and put up a gilt parasol. Lama Karmapa came to Nepal to bless the king and

the people in 1751, when he took up the repair work of the Caitya and spent a large amount of gold and copper for 7 years for completing the work of renovation. Thereafter, for over a century, repairs and additions were made and these altered the original structure by putting up in a chaotic order caityas, steles, images of Dhyani Buddhas and images of Vajrayana deities, colossal images of Buddha in black, white or red colour. These haphazard additions spoiled the grandeur of the Caitya. There are even steles on which is inscribed a *stotra* recounting the history of the Mallas, from Pratapamalla, and another containing a bilingual inscription in Sanskrit and Tibetan of the 18th century.

BUDHNATH

The stupa of Budhnath is the second Buddhist stupa, next in importance to Svayambhunath. It stands on the river Bagmati between Gokarna and the temple of Pasupatinath. The Caitya is an edifice of unusual proportions, consisting of three symmetrical parts, the base, the hemisphere and the crown³⁰.

There are two traditions about its erection. One is that King Manadeva who committed parricide involuntarily prayed to Vajrayogini³¹, the Trantric goddess of *Vajrayoga* for expiation of his sin. He was directed by the goddess to build the sanctuary of Budhnath, which he did in due course³². He composed also *stotra*., very popular in Nepal, eulogising the Triratna.

The other tradition current in Tibet is given by Waddell in his *Lamajism* (pp.315-7). According to this tradition, a girl of pig-herd's family of Magute village in Nepal after marriage had four sons. She took up the profession of herding and rearing geese for the wealthy. She amassed much wealth and begged of the king of Nepal for a piece of land. She with her four sons, a servant, an ass and an elephant collected earth and bricks and started the construction of the Stupa. She died four years after commencing the work and her sons carried on the construction and completed it in due course. After completion, the sons received miraculously from heaven the relics of Tathagata Kasyapa and enshrined them in the Stupa. This stupa is worshipped by the Newars and Murmis as also by the Tibetan pilgrims.

Apart from these two magnificent stupas, there are hundreds of small stupas in the towns and villages of Nepal. There are clusters of

stupas and temples in the cities of Kathmandu, Patan and Bhatgaon. The existence of these stupas and temples in Nepal from the ancient times proves beyond doubt that Buddhism had a firm footing there in the ancient and medieval periods of Nepalese history. The religion lost its hold upon the people after the reign of Thakuris and Gurkhas who revived Brahmanism. The Gurkhas, however, at first, divided their patronage between Hinduism and Buddhism. In a temple of Tundi Khal, the Gurkhas worshipped the deity as Mahakala while the Buddhists worshipped the same deity as Padmapani. The image, however, has in its tiara the figure of Amitabha. The Gurkhas allowed the Tibetan pilgrims freely to worship Svayambhunath and Budhnath³³. In both these stupas appears the mantra "Om Mani Padma Hum" The revival of Brahmanism led to the degeneration of Buddhist monks, who became house-holders, engaging themselves in different vocations, leaving the superficial maintenance of the religious beliefs to the Newars of higher castes, the Vajracaryas and Bhiksus, who also led a family life and converted the monasteries into dwellings of families of the priesthood.

The Buddhist divinities worshipped in various temples are Manjusri, Avalokitesvara including his manifestation as Matsyendranath, Ak-sobhya, Amoghasiddhi, the Yoginis and the Taras in different colours. Sakyamuni Buddha is also worshipped in some temples but more importance is given to the worship of Manjusri and Avalokitesvara. In Nepal, Manjusri has in some cases been treated as a female deity while the Hindus looked upon it as Sarasvati, the goddess of learning. Much may be written on these divinities, but at present this account has been left out. In his *Indian Buddhist Iconography*, Dr. B. Bhattacharyya has described in detail the images of many of these divinities of Nepal.

N O T E S

1. Sylvain Levi, *Le Nepal*, I, p. 75. See for detailed references.
2. *Ibid.*, I, p. 220.
3. Regmi, *Ancient Nepal*, p. 19.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 62.
5. *Ibid.*, pp. 65, 69.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 71.
7. *Ibid.*, pp. 100-1.

8. Levi., op. cit., II, p. 166.
9. Ibid., p. 169.
10. Ibid.,
11. Ibid., pp. 169, 174.
12. Levi., op. cit., III, pp. 139-145.
13. Regmi, *Ancient Nepal*, pp.184-5.
14. Levi, op. cit., II, p. 171.
15. Regmi op. cit., pp.181-2.
16. G. Tucci, *Nepal* (The discovery of the Malla) translated from Italian into English by Lovett Edwards, 1962.
17. Ibid., p. 62.
18. Ibid., p. 64.
19. Petech, *Medieval History of Nepal*, p.184; Levi, op. cit., I, pp. 239-244.
20. Levi, op. cit., II p. 30-32.
21. Ibid., pp. 226, 228, 240.
22. Watters, *Yuan Chwang*, II. opp.83-84.
23. Levi, op. cit., I p. 318.
24. Taranatha (Schiefner) pp.125, 214, 238.
25. Ibid., pp. 253-54.
26. Levi, op. cit., II. p. 238.
27. Ibid., p. 342.
28. Ibid., p. lf.
29. Regmi, *Ancient Nepal*, p.43; Levi, op. cit., II, p. 328.
30. Levi, op cit., I. 69; II. 8-9 Cf. Bhattacharyya, *Buddhist Iconography*.
31. Levi II, p.6.
32. Levi I, p. 98.
33. Levi, I, p.329.

**THE SIKKIMESE THEORY OF LAND-HOLDING
AND
THE DARJEELING GRANT**

—Hope Namgyal

Many legal and lay opinions have been expressed on the subject of the grant of Darjeeling by the Sikkim King to the East India Company. The questionableness of the transaction has been remarked on many grounds but none of the opinions have taken cognizance of the Sikkimese theory of land-holding.

The British, both the East India Company's Government and the Crown Government, while negotiating with the Sikkim Government mentioned only their interest in using the land of Darjeeling as a health resort and sanatorium of Europeans. Even in intramural letters the British chiefly emphasized the benefits that the climate there would bestow on members of the European race residing in the Indian lowlands. Only later and secondly did the British conjecture even between themselves of other advantages that would accrue from their residency in Darjeeling. The Sikkimese on their part spoke to the British only of giving Darjeeling for its use as a health resort. In the conversations between the Sikkim King and the British and in the deeds to Darjeeling only the use of Darjeeling is offered. The British themselves remarked on the ambiguity of the deeds and transactions vis-a-vis Darjeeling. But the deeds and the intent of the Sikkim King are not ambiguous when they are examined in the light of the Sikkimese land-holding law, which maintains that all land belongs to the King, and only usufructage, not outright ownership, devolves on the residents of the land. It was customary in Sikkim for the King to give land for its use. Would it not be probable then that the Sikkimese gift of Darjeeling was given in the traditional context of a grant for usufructage only; ultimate jurisdiction, authority and the right to resume the land being implicitly retained. As this sentiment of land-holding was all pervasive in Sikkim and indeed in most Tibeto-Burman culture areas there would have been no necessity in Sikkimese reasoning to stipulate the limitations of the gift. By presenting the positive reasons for which Darjeeling was being gifted, the conditionality of the gift was understood by the Sikkimese to be without question. They had no previous experiences involving land ownership with others than of their own culture group and had no reason to realize that the British would not know the Sikkimese land

laws, and could and would not understand the unwritten limitations of the gift.

Traditionally the land in Sikkim belongs to the King. All the farmer's land in Sikkim was held from the King. Edgar wrote in the last century "The cultivators have no title to the soil and man may settle down and cultivate any land he may find unoccupied without going through any formality whatever, and when once he has occupied the land no one but the Rajah can turn him out. But the Rajah can eject him at any time and if he should cease to occupy the land he would not retain any lien upon it There is a kind of tenant-right however, under which cultivators are enabled to dispose of unexhausted improvements. Thus as it was explained to me, a man who has terraced a piece of hillside could not sell the land but is allowed to sell the right of using the terraces. This custom is acknowledged not to be absolutely a right, but more of the nature of an indulgence on the part of the Rajah, by whom it was allowed to grow up for the sake of convenience." Also there were Kazis and headmen and various other officials who exercised jurisdiction over specific tracts of lands. The Kazis and officials enjoyed some authority but the final authority was the King in all matters of import; for example major legal disputes that might arise on the territory held by an official would be referred to the King. Aside from exercising some authority, judiciating minor disputes, and referring to the Ruler things of moment, the official also assessed the revenue payable by all the peoples settled on the lands within his jurisdiction; paid over to the Ruler a certain fixed contribution and kept the greater portion for himself. The Kazis had no proprietary right in the lands although they did have a kind of hereditary title to their office.

The land was not assessed and paid no revenue. The assessment was on the payer of revenue personally, and in theory he was permitted the use of the King's land so that he could prosper and be able to give to the King services which he was bound to do as the Kings "live chattel." If the system had been extended to theoretical perfection he would have been obliged to have given over to the King all the produce of the land. Actually the subject was only obliged to give a small share of his labour, or the result of his labour to the State. When he did no actual service the amount of his property was roughly assessed, and his contribution to the State was fixed accordingly. But such assessment was made without reference to the amount of land occupied by the subject. The value of his wives, children, cattle, furniture, etc were

all accounted for but not the extent of his fields. The land under a person in Sikkim could be transferred by the King to another party. Dzongu was once given by the King to the Lasso Kazi but was later taken back and became part of the Queen's Private Estate. As such it was administered once by the Mali Kazi, and later by the Rhenock Kazi. Lachen and Lachung valleys were assigned to the Queen in the time of Superintendent Campbell's visit. Later they became under the Prime Minister, and still later under the Heir Apparent to the Throne. Today there have been sweeping reforms in land-holding in Sikkim, but even at the present day all land in Sikkim technically is held from the King.

The purpose of an interstate transaction whether a contract or unilateral act, consists in the ascertainment of its meaning; i.e. the intention of the contracting party or parties concerned. The Ruler of Sikkim who met the British representative in 1835 to negotiate the grant of Darjeeling had been brought up in the facts and mystique of land-holding as practiced and known in his country. The granting of land for usage only was a fact of Sikkimese life. A review of the Sikkim-British exchanges in this context is interesting.

“Translation marked E” “That Health may be obtained by residing there, I from friendship make an offering of Darjeeling to the (Governor General) Sahib 1891, 19 Maugh

‘True Translations’

—G. W. K. Lloyd Major

This was the first “deed” of Darjeeling made by the Sikkim Ruler. Major Lloyd did not consider the deed to be clear enough, and prepared a new one to be approved by the Ruler. The new deed had a tone of capitulation, and also roughly defined the boundaries of Darjeeling but the deeded purpose and use for which Darjeeling was to be given was as precisely limited as in the Ruler's original Deed. Translation of the second, and accepted deed of grant making over Darjeeling to the East India Company. Dated 29th Maugh, Sambat 1891. A.D. 1st Feb. 1835. “The Governor General having expressed his desire for the possession of the hill of Darjeeling on account of its cool climate for the purpose of enabling the servants of his Government, suffering from sickness, to avail themselves of its advantages; I the Sikkimputti Raja, out of friendship to the said Governor General hereby present

Darjeeling of the East Indian Company that is all the lands south of the Great Rungeet river east of the Balasun, Kabail, and Little Rungeet rivers and west of the Rungon and Mahanadi rivers.

“Translated”

Seal of the Rajah
prefixed to the
Agreement.

Sd- Campbell.
Superintendent of Darjeeling and in
charge of political relations with
Sikkim.

Sd/- A.A. Campbell
Superintendent.

Major Lloyd reported to Fort William his initial discussions with the Ruler of Sikkim after his visit to Sikkim where he had met the Ruler in Council, and in private. Political Consultation, 6 April 1953, No. 100. “Respecting Darjeeling I was told that it was a small matter and that the Rajah would give it to the Company from friendship and build houses there for the sick people who might resort there.” Major Lloyd included in his report the translation of a paper delivered by the Ruler in Council. “It from friendship Dabgang from Ahma Dige North be given to me, then my Dewan will deliver to Major Lloyd the grant and agreement under my red seal of Darjeeling that he may erect houses there”. Dabgang was never subsequently given to the Sikkim Ruler and provides an important point of argument that the Darjeeling transaction is illegal as the British did not fulfill the conditions required by the Sikkim Ruler in making the gift. This point has been written on before however, and this paper will not elaborate the different conditions that the East India Company and the British Crown pledged to fulfill and failed to comply with. The intent of this paper is to suggest that the grant of Darjeeling was inherently conditional aside from other conditions such as the Sikkimese request for Dabgang.

No. 101—Close of a letter from the Ruler of Sikkim. 29th lunar day of 12th month of Wood Horse year. (about 26 February 1834) “But I beg your acceptance of ground for building a house at Darjeeling.” Translated letter of the Sikkim Ruler dated 29th Kartik Sambat 1896, November 1839. “Some years ago the Government of Calcutta

addressed me saying that the European servants of Government and others suffered much from the heat of the plains and asked me to give Darjeeling for sanatory purpose. With this requisition I complied." Political Consultation 12 February 1840 No. 103 letter from Sikkim Ruler to the Governor General—"I received your Lordship's letter and by the hands of Colonel Lloyd which greatly gratified me. You informed me that the malaria of the plains was prejudicial to Europeans and desired me as an act of friendship to allow houses to be built for them at Darjeeling, at the same stating that it was not the intention of Government to derive a cowrie of Revenue from the land. This was always the strain in which the subject was treated." In another letter to the Governor General of India, the Sikkim King continues this theme. The King acknowledges the receipt of a letter through Colonel Lloyd and expresses his satisfaction. But writes "In that letter you request that I will give up Darjeeling as a place of residence for gentlemen who fall sick for the benefit of the Air, that it was a place not likely to yield a cowree of revenue, and that he [i.e. the writer] had from his friendship to the Company before given a place at Darjeeling for the British Agent in the year 1890 [i.e. 1835] at the request of the Colonel Sahib."

A drafted Proclamation was included in this letter to be signed by the Governor General. The Governor General sent it on to Superintendent Campbell to be "examined". The Draft is a bit confusing as it initially presents the Sikkimese case and demands in the first person plural and from the writers orientation. From a grammatical stand point if from no other it would have been difficult for the Governor General of India to have signed. The gist and intent of the Proclamation drafted by the Sikkimese is however quite clear. "We before ceded to the Honorable Company Darjeeling to afford change of air to sick gentlemen, they and their servants will reside there in quiet and solely for the change of air (without claiming the exercise of authority). The gentlemen at Darjeeling are not to entertain any Gorkha Sepoys in their service or other than subject of the Raja. The Bhoues, servsnts, Bomchiris will not be allowed to create any disturbance."

In about 1846 a deputation from the Ruler of Sikkim visited the Superintendent of Darjeeling with renewed complaints of unfulfilled promises of Major Lloyd. They requested that he would remove himself from Darjeeling and take the hill of Nagu instead, or keeping Darjeeling that he would surrender the slaves of the Ruler, and other of his subjects who came to Darjeeling. They intimated their desire to appoint Subahs.

and Sirdars on behalf of the Ruler over all the Lepchas, Bhotias, Limboos, etc. who were at or may have been at Darjeeling. On the Superintendent's remonstrance they withdrew their demands and made a written apology. However after that occasion the demand was reiterated several times again. Much of the correspondence of the East India Company and the Crown Government with the Sikkim King and his Government was in a vein that could easily have borne out an underlying intent and belief of the Sikkim King that he had been asked to give, and had given Darjeeling for its usage only. A case in point is the British drafted deed of Darjeeling that stipulated only that the land was to be used as a health resort. Other correspondence is of the same ilk. In the political consultation 6 April 1853 No 100 addressed to the Secretary to Government Political Department, Fort William, Major Lloyd recounts what he had spoken to the Sikkim Ruler in his audience with the Ruler. "By saying I had received orders from the Governor General to request the Raja to cede Darjeeling to the British Government in exchange for land in the plains or for a sum of money, explaining at the same time that it was on account of the climate that Government wishes to have the place as a resort for sick persons who could not recover in the hot climate of the plains, instancing the necessity to us natives of a cold climate of cool place to resort to by their own custom of flying from the plains from fear of or when attacked by the Auwl."

A letter from Fort William to the Ruler of Sikkim Political Consultation 11 February 1835 No.III reads "I am informed that the above-named place yields you no revenue nor it is any part of the object of the British Government to derive pecuniary profit from its possession. It is solely on account of the climate that the possession of the place is deemed desirable, the cold which is understood to prevail there being considered a peculiarly beneficial to the European constitution when debilitated by the heat of the plains." Another letter from Fort William Political Consultation 8 No 88 followed in February 1836 "Major Lloyd has informed me that out of friendship to the British Government you have made an unconditional grant of Darjeeling with a small tract about it for the purpose of being used as a sanatorium by the servants and subjects of the Company and the Major has forwarded to me the deed of the gift executed by you in the name of the Company. I am much obliged to you for this proof of your friendship and accept of the land in behalf of the Company for the purpose mentioned in the grant."

A letter from Superintendent Campbell dated December 19/1839 Darjeeling ironically confirms that Darjeeling was given to the British

only for its use as a health resort but goes on to chastize the Ruler of Sikkim for seeking to maintain his authority and jurisdiction in the Darjeeling area. By this time the conflicting interpretations of the grant had become more rudely apparent. "It is true that you considerably ceded Darjeeling to my Government to enable its servants and others to avail themselves of the benefits of its healthy climate, this was duly appreciated by the Government as a proper mark to your gratitude and goodwill and I feel quite sure that I may be the means of procuring the sanction of Government of making you full compensation for your former revenue receipts from the Ryots of that territory. I do not however quite understand the part of your letter which says that in giving over Darjeeling you did not make over any of the Mech and Dimal population with the land. It is not usual to claim a proprietary right in human beings as it is in land, the latter may be transferred from one ruler to another, no note is taken of the people in the transfer, but if they choose to remain on the land transferred they by so doing become the subjects of the person holding the land and all now comes after the transfer are alike the subjects of the New Ruler, so it was when the Governor General made over the choosing to you, and I consider and treat as British subjects all persons now residing on the Darjeeling territory as well as those who resided on it at the period of the transfer as those since located there, and I feel assured that a little consideration will satisfy you of the justice of the view of the case." This letter is particularly interesting because in it Campbell attempts to explain a British theory of land-holding. It is doubtful however that even European law would have supported his view that the grant of Darjeeling for its use as a sanatorium also gave the East India Company or Britain the rights to the population, the jurisdiction, the authority and the revenue raising in the territory. Several of Campbell's superiors at the time doubted it. More important however, Campbell's letter reveals how ignorant he was of the Sikkimese theory of land-holding or even of the existence of a Sikkimese theory of landholding; a theory which we have seen at the beginning of this paper to be quite at variance with Campbell's unilateral discourse on the subject.

Initially the different British personalities involved with Darjeeling stressed in their notes to each other that the cool climate of Darjeeling beneficial to health was the *raison d'être* for seeking to obtain the use of the territory. There is no reason to doubt their good faith as these papers were entirely intra-mural. The British did worry however that Sikkim and Nepal would doubt their good faith, and gave instructions

that their agents were to take particular pains to set both Sikkim and Nepal at rest on the reasons that led them to seek Darjeeling.

Political Consultation 17 October 1833 No.1. "The reports of Captain Lloyd, Captain Herbert and Mr Grant unanimously concurring in representing Darjeeling to be peculiarly qualified for a sanatorium for the lower provinces as originally suggested by Mr. Grant the commercial resident at Maldah it seems unnecessary to advance any other reason for carrying the measure into effect, than the great many of European life, and the consequent saving of expence, that will accrue health to the individuals and to the State."

Mr. MacNaughten, Secretary to the Government of India on behalf of the Governor General of India in his letter to Major Lloyd dated 23-1-1835 ordered that "you will of course take particular pains to make the Raja understand that the superiority of the climate of Darjeeling and its consequent fitness for a sanatorium are the only reasons which induce us to wish for its possession." Sir Charles Metcalfe in the Political Consultation 17 October 1833, No.2 disagreed strongly with the plan to obtain Darjeeling as a sanatorium put of deference to the complications that could arise if Sikkim and Nepal misunderstood British motivations, and imputed other reasons for Britain wanting Darjeeling. He added that even if the "Rajah's consent can be purchased, the sore of our presence in his country will rankle hereafter." Metcalfe's wording "in his country" is interesting as it implies that he did not regard the imminent British acquisition of Darjeeling as a sanatorium to be an acquisition that would deny Sikkim's sovereignty over the Darjeeling area. Nepal's sentiments about a British presence in an area on their borders were also taken into account, and anxiety expressed that the Nepalese would not understand the *real* cause of Britain's desire for Darjeeling.

Political Consultations 17 October 1833 No.3. "Altho the whole course of our policy since the conclusion of the Goorkha war has been such as ought to satisfy the Government of Nepal that we are not actuated by any spirit of encroachment, it is probable that they would ascribe our occupation of Darjeeling to other than the real cause."

Perhaps the strongest case for the sincerity of the British aims concerning Darjeeling is to be found in the day by day weather records kept by Assistant Surgeon H. Chapman and Major Lloyd during the months of December 1836, and January, February, March, April,

May, June, July, September, October and November 1837 (August was discretely left out the report). The purpose of the report was to prove to the Governor General and Court of Directors of the East India Company that Darjeeling did have a beneficial climate. At best it must have been trying for the two men to sit immutable on a ridge in Darjeeling day after day, sometimes in inclement weather, observing cloud cumuli. A typical daily report runs "May 20th 1837 Daybreak—generally overcast, light rain—falling usual S. and S.S.W.—7 a.m. clearing. 10 a.m. calm and foggy—noon calm and fog—4 p.m. overcast, light showers at intervals since noon—5 p.m. a thunderstorm gone off to N. 9 p.m. calm and cloudy—frequent showers during the day—weather pleasant." Such a heart-breaking report would not have been necessary if the British really had sought Darjeeling not as a health resort but only or chiefly as a strategic and profitable stronghold. Many papers passed hands on the difficulties and possibilities of creating a sanatorium in Darjeeling. The pervasive theme of all the papers was of the buildings to be erected for the use of the invalids expected to report there. One note contains the offer of the Sikkim Ruler to assist in this effort. No. 103 to the Secretary to Government Political Department Fort William "With respect to houses the Raja, who has little idea what a European house is, offers to bulid house for the sick gentlemen, this I consider quite out of the question, but I think a range of comortable barracks might be constructed, either of stone, or matwork at little expence...."

Reflections on jurisdiction, authority etc. held no place in these papers. The bulk of the papers are accounts of the effort to fashion the rugged hill country of Darjeeling into a place suitable for convalescents; the purpose for which Darjeelin was originally sought. Several years later, when the British assumed more and more powers in the Darjeeling territory and clashes had grown in intensity between the Sikkimese and British authorities, the British had more casuse to reflect on the wider aspects of the Darjeeling grant, and to wish that the grant was clear and definitive (and translated!).

After several demands by the Sikkim Government for control over the Bhutias and other tribes resident in the Darjeeling area, the British Government took occasion to remark: "that to avoid any unpleasant feeling on the part of the Sikkim Raja in future in matters of this mature His Lordship in Council would not be disinclined to the rencwal, only however when a fitting opportunity may present itself of negotiations having for their object a complete surrender of every kind of claim of

jurisdiction and interference with all persons and property within the ceded tract, receiving in lieu a fixed annual payment and relying on the justice of the British Government for its punishing all criminals proving deserving of it."

A following letter to Superintendent Campbell from the Secretary to the Government of India runs. "Doubtless it is the Rajah's dissatisfaction arising from the several causes which have been explained, that has induced him to claim jurisdiction over native settlers at Darjeeling. There is no ground to believe that he intended to retain the jurisdiction when he made over the tract, but if the grant is found to contain anything opposes to this view of the case then some arrangement must be made with the Rajah in order to put an end to his claim. It was the wish of the Government that all differences should be settled by written agreement at the time the compensation was fixed, but this was not accomplished. You seem not to have understood the object of the instructions communicated to you in the letter from this office dated 1st March 1841, in replying to which you said 'it appeared to me unnecessary to ask the Rajah to enter into any specific engagements on this occasion. The sort of assistance we require from him here is not such as can be readily defined or stipulated for such a favourable disposition as may prevent his using his influence with his subjects to deter them from resorting to Darjeeling is really all that can be essentially useful to us.'" This letter is interesting for several reasons. 1. It shows that Campbell could not quite understand the broader thinking of his superiors, and did not attempt to implement it; 2. That the British rather obsessively were keen on clearing up the case for all time; 3. That the British did want to see justice done in a sense. They presumed that the Ruler of Sikkim had intended to give away his jurisdiction over settlers in Darjeeling when he gave the grant. However they were anxious to conclude some new terms agreeable to the Rajah if they discovered the adverse. If the British then had taken cognizance of the Sikkim land-holding laws they would have had an insight that would have perhaps reversed their interpretation of the Sikkim Ruler's intent when he gave the grant. The grant in question was at the time of this letter to Campbell still untranslated, and the British Government was earnestly trying to obtain a translation of this vital document.

The British for their own security wanted to clarify and settle the dispute about the extent of power that the grant of Darjeeling did or

did not transfer from Sikkim to the British Government. Also however there were men in the British Council in Calcutta who were anxious to the heart of the matter in order that justice for its own sake could be done. Mr. P. Melville, officiating Under Secretary of the Government of India, was one of these men. In 1846 he made an exhaustive review of the whole Darjeeling case in a long Memo. The Memo is quoted extensively below as it gives many insights into the history of the Darjeeling grant, and also it is splendid in revealing Melville's baffled but honorable attempt to take into account the psychology and sentiment of the Sikkimese as well as the legality of the Sikkimese case vis-a-vis jurisdiction in Darjeeling. The Memo is particularly remarkable in that it was written not as a detached point of view many years after, but in the very vortex of the dispute between Sikkim and the British Government.

“Here it is right to pause again and consider what the transaction really was which is called the unconditional transfer of Darjeeling. Did the Rajah when Major Lloyd met him show any disposition whatever to cede Darjeeling unconditionally? On the contrary he was earnest in making two requisitions and he made them the conditions of the grant. Major Lloyd fully understood this and accepted the grant conditionally.” Here Melville refers to the Sikkim Ruler's demand for the extradition of some Sikkimese Landlords who owing a great deal of revenue money to the Sikkim Government had fled into British territory, and also for the Sikkim Ruler's demand for Debgang. Neither of these conditions was subsequently fulfilled. “Whatever the circumstances under which it was obtained, the deed of cession granted by the Rajah gives to the British Government a title to Darjeeling. But it is important to observe that this deed which is untranslated and its purport only generally known, is the sole title and as we have no other title to the place than this deed; so we can have no other rights in the place but what are expressly stated in the deed. It is only because we are so powerful and Sikkim so insignificant in comparison that this fact has been overlooked. Sikkim it is easily seen has no rights in the Morang, except what are expressly stated in the sunnad which the Rajah holds from the British Government. The Government it is equally certain has no rights in Darjeeling except what are expressed in the deed of cession. Lord W. Bentinck saw the importance of having a properly expressed grant. A grant which should in fact transfer Darjeeling to British authority and British laws. Is the paper in the Foreign Office such a grant or does it merely cede as a gift. (a

gift of certain tract for a certain purpose does not imply the transfer of Sovereign rights. Such rights can only be given by express stipulation) a certain roughly defined tract in the Sikkim territory. This ought to be ascertained because the Rajah has more than once declared to Dr. Campbell that when he ceded the land 'to build houses on' he did not at the same time give away his jurisdiction over the inhabitants." This declaration of the Sikkim Ruler is quite clear when read in the context of the Sikkimese view of land-holding. About Superintendent Campbell Melville wrote. "He seems from the first to have found fault with the Rajah and never to have considered how natural it was of the Rajah to be jealous of our position in his country—a most extraordinary and novel position acquired in a very questionable and unsatisfactory manner." Melville's wording "jealous of our position in his country" is interesting as it implies that he accepted Darjeeling as yet an integral part of the Kingdom of Sikkim.

The Memo continues at length to review a case presented by Superintendent Campbell of a refugee Dacoit, and to explore the broader jurisdictional aspects of the case. "That of a dacoit who committed an assault near Darjeeling and then fled to Sikkim territory where the Sikkim Rajah's people prevented his being arrested is a violation of the Treaty with Sikkim if the territory from which the Dacoit fled is territory properly subject of the Regulations of Government. Whether it is so must depend on the terms in which the deed of cession is expressed." A footnote adds. "Still Vattel would perhaps have said had he been asked the question whether this was a breach of Treaty. That the provisions of the original treaty could not be considered to apply to lands which might subsequently be ceded by one party to the the other. For that every such session should be made on separate stipulations. Thus if the Rajah of Sikkim were to refuse to deliver up criminals who had fled from Rangpore into the Morung lands this would not be a breach of the original Treaty with Sikkim; but of the stipulations of the Sunnad in which it is made incumbent on the Rajah to deliver up criminals and to allow the Police Officers of the British Government to persue into their lands and apprehend all such persons.

It is indeed pretty evident that the Rajah could defend himself against the charge of breach of Treaty (in the case referred to by Dr. Champbell) by an argument not easily answerable and which may be put as follows. The British Government charges the Rajah with a

violation of the 6th article of the Treaty in that he prevents the seizure of a Dacoit who has taken refuge in the Sikkim territory, but says the Rajah, I consider the Dacoit as my subject to be dealt with by me, the territory where the assault was committed being territory which by the 1st article of Treaty was given over to me and my heirs in full sovereignty. True replies the Government the territory was given over to you in full sovereignty, but you afterwards ceded a portion of it to us—and it was in this portion that the assault was committed. To which the Rajah might reply—you asked me for a spot in my territory to which your servants might resort for their health; I gave you such a spot, but in giving it, I did not yield up any sovereign rights to it—now as I promise these rights by treaty I still possess them unless you can show me that I have transferred them to you. To this there is no reply, except what may be afforded by the terms of the Rajah's grant." The Hon' ble Sir T.H. Maddock and the Hon'ble Mr. Millet agreed emphatically with the Memo.

Since the time that Melville wrote, the grant has been translated, and the terms of the grant are well known. Darjeeling was given for its particular usage as a health resort. In Sikkim where all land is believed to be held from the King and usage of the land is extended freely but on technical sufferance from the King, the gift of Darjeeling for a certain purpose without transferring the donor's right of authority and jurisdiction and sovereignty would be according to strictest Sikkimese tradition. In this context the limitations and conditionality inherent in the grant of Darjeeling would seem unquestionable.

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RED ANNALS (Hu-lan-Deb/ther-Deb-ther dMar-po) as composed by Kun-dga Dorje in 1346 A.C. underwent a reduction in 1558 A.C. While this revised version has been available in xylograph, hand-made copies of the original have been very rare. Three authenticated copies were available in Lhasa a few years ago. A copy of the original was located with help of Athing Tashi Dahadul Densapa of Barmiok with a Tibetan family now migrated to south of the Himalayas. This copy in Umed contained a number of obvious calligraphic mistakes and all care has been taken to rectify these errors.

1961.

NEPAL—AN INTRODUCTION

—B. D. SANWAL

I

Nepal is situated in the Central Himalayas with India on one side and Tibet on the other. The natural streams of exports and imports are from India or through Indian territory. There is, however, a sizeable trade with Tibet also. Because of this primary geographical fact, Nepal has had very intimate relations with India throughout her history.

Nepal can be sub-divided into three regions—each being the drainage area of a large river. These rivers are the Karnali in the west, the Gandaki in the middle and the Kosi in the east. Between the Gandaki and the Kosi there is a large fertile valley from which the country derives its name and which is drained by the river Baghmati.

The rivers have fertile valleys throughout their lengths. The villages in the countryside are mostly situated at the basins of the rivers or nearabout the basins. The higher ridges of mountains are covered with thick forest lands and excellent pasturage ending in snowy Himalayas. At the other end where the rivers come down from the hills there are thick forest lands bordered by fertile rice-producing areas. These "Tarai" lands lie on the borders towards the Indian sub-continent.

There are very few lateral roads inside the country. There is a good motor road from Raxaul to Kathmandu and from there to the Tibet border. The Nepal Government is now very keen to develop means of communication from different important towns to the capital at Kathmandu. A number of air-services are, however, being run in Nepal which connect the more important townships.

The races of Nepal have in them an admixture of Indian and Tibetan elements. Towards the West and the South, the races are predominantly Indian in origin whereas in the North-East there are several groups who originally came from Tibet. In the Nepal valley and in the city of Kathmandu one can see both the Hindu and the Buddhist temples. To the east there is a preponderance of Buddhist monas-

teries and to the west of Hindu temples.

The language of the people is primarily Nepali or Parbatia. It can be easily understood by the Kumaonis and the Garhwalis but the dialects as they proceed to the east have more and more of Tibetan words and in some areas the language is basically a derivative of Tibetan.

II

Throughout her history Nepal has had close cultural relations with the Indian kingdoms to her south. The influence of Kasi or Varanasi has been immense. There is no record of an Indian king invading Nepal although there are several instances of people coming from different parts of India to Nepal and staying there permanently. Asoka is said to have visited Kathmandu valley and erected some Buddhist Stupas there. He sent a large number of Buddhist monks and nuns to the valley to give the message of the Buddha to the local inhabitants. Ever since there has been consistent communion between Buddhist priests in Nepal and in India. This must have been very intimate when a sizeable portion of Northern India was Buddhist in religion.

With Tibet, Nepal has fought several wars. Sometimes the Tibetans have had an upper hand and sometimes the Nepalese. The East India Company also sent a couple of military expeditions into Nepal and fought a long war with her from 1814 to 1816. The Chinese have also invaded Nepal in the past.

The major problem of Nepalese diplomacy during the nineteenth century was how to escape the over-riding influence of the British presence in India. The efforts of the rulers of Nepal throughout were to keep the minimum intercourse with the British in India and at the same time not to antagonise them in any manner. This policy had two aspects. First, the Nepalese did not want the influence of the British to increase in their kingdom. Secondly, they did not want their own people to come under the influence of the officers of the British Government in India. Further they, accepted the military preponderance of the British in India and wanted to keep themselves in the good books of that immense power. This continued till the departure of the British from India,

III

When India achieved independence, a new policy had to be evolved. The Prime Minister of Nepal who was wielding real authority in the country gave way to Royal Authority because the people felt that the only way to overthrow the regime of the Rana Prime Minister was to go to the King. A bloodless revolution took place in Nepal in the early fifties, when the King represented new forces as against the traditional regime of the Prime Minister. The new regime had the backing of the majority of the people. All offices in the State had been the monopoly of the Ranas earlier. Now these were thrown open to the general public. Opportunities were also opened for the people to establish large businesses and industries. The King of Nepal had also a very difficult task on his hand of modernising his country. Stability in Nepal was only possible when there were prospects of development and better times to come before the population.

For this purpose the King had first experimented with parliamentary democracy but because of mutual conflicts the political parties could not deliver the goods. The King had to take over administration of the country himself to expedite and guarantee maximum development. In this he is helped by several foreign Governments at the same time. They include India, the U.S.A., the U.K. and the People's Republic of China. The country is very backward and the process of development cannot be charted with precision. The country has immense natural resources in water power, forests and minerals, but the basic requirements of development, namely communications and significant hydro electric projects are conspicuous by their absence. There is also great dearth of entrepreneurs in Nepal. The officers of the Nepal Government have also had very little experience of organising industrial complexes. Apart from the problems of development, Nepal is also faced with the problem of planning her relationship with the two great States on either side of her, namely the People's Republic of China in the autonomous region of Tibet and the Union of India. Because of her geographical position, Nepal wants to keep friendly ties

with both the countries. As the Chinese are the greater military power, Nepal's natural leanings should be towards India in which country Nepal has close ties of race, language and religion. Healthy friendship between Nepal and India will be to the mutual benefit of both the countries and will also be a guarantee for peace in the neighbourhood. For this it is essential that the economy of Nepal should grow from year to year and the common man should get a larger and larger share of the national wealth and improve his general standard of living. There is every hope for this consummation.

BHUTAN TODAY

—N. K. RUSTOMJI

I

It is difficult to speak with any precision of "Bhutan today," as Bhutan is a country where yesterday, today and tomorrow are so strangely and elusively mingled together. Our idea of a country and its people is often based on what we know or hear of its capital and more important cities. The country's image is the image presented to the traveller who has time to visit the more accessible areas, which need not, and often do not, fairly represent the land as a whole. Until recent years, the outside world has known little of Bhutan, and most maps show as its capital not Thimphu, but the ancient historical centre of Punakha. And then, as of a sudden, we hear of Five Year Plans and the paraphernalia of a modern bureaucracy. What has happened, we may ask what is this change that seems to be coming over the country, how deeply is its impact felt by the people, and what do they think about it all?

It was just ten years ago that I was invited to pay my first visit to Bhutan. I remember well the excitement of preparations for what was, at that time, something of an adventure into a new and little known world. Our bustling caravan of ponies and mules trailing over the seemingly unending succession of mountain passes brought us, on our tenth day, to Thimphu, the 8000 feet high capital. Here we were graciously received by the King, hospitably entertained and after being duly revived, trekked eastwards for a further seven arduous days before reaching our destination in Central Bhutan. That was ten years ago. Last month, a doctor set off from Calcutta on a Monday to see a patient in Thimphu, and was back in his consulting room in Calcutta the following Wednesday after jeeping his way up the new road to the capital. Communications are, of course, being developed at a phenomenal pace in most countries. But there is, in the case of Bhutan, a significant difference, arising from the circumstances of her history. Elsewhere, people have

Script of two talks broadcast on All India Radio in August 1965.

wanted roads, but have not been able to afford the expenditure of building them. Bhutan, on the contrary, has, throughout her history, preferred to keep herself isolated from her neighbours. Yesterday's isolation is seen reflected in the character and attitudes of her people today. The Bhutanese rarely feels throughly at home outside his own country. In former days, he left Bhutan only when he must, and then too, for as short a period as possible. The reasons for his travelling outside his country were usually trade or pilgrimage, and, when his business was done, he was glad to return and settle down once more in his old familiar haunts. He was similarly shy of visitors from foreign lands, and if visitors came to Bhutan, it was not to see the sights but on some special mission, very often connected with land disputes along her frontiers. With this background, it becomes easier to understand what might otherwise appear to seem a certain aloofness in the Bhutanese character. The Bhutanese is, at heart, a friendly and hospitable person, but he is, naturally a child of his past, and tends to remain within his shell.

The Radio, newspaper, books, travel, all have combined to standardise to such a degree a particular way of life that many of us forget that there can be another way, many other ways, that are equally valid. We tend to evaluate the educational level of a country by the number of graduates and matriculates that are churned up every year. The casual visitor to Bhutan will find very few people in the interior with knowledge of English or any language other than Bhutanese. In the reports of early political missions to Bhutan, there are disparaging references to illiteracy in the country. Illiteracy in English, yes, illiteracy in Hindi, Nepalese and Bengali, but not so in Bhutanese. The early Kings of Bhutan were both religious and secular heads, who attached considerable importance to education. Among the most renowned of them was Nawang Namgyal, who, nearly four hundred years ago, succeeded in controlling the numerous warring factions within the country and imposing a strong centralised rule. His main interest was in the organising and disciplining of the religious order. Himself a reincarnate lama of the Kagyupa sect, he enforced a rigid observance not only by the monks, but by the general public, of the precepts of the faith. Much of the revenue of the country was ordered to be expended on the maintenance of the monasteries, which became centres of general education as well as of religious instruction. Monks in Bhutan are admitted to the monastery at a very early age, and, if they are found to be talented, are given special instruction in painting, carving and ceremonial dancing. Although, therefore, the conventional type of school with which we are familiar has been introduced in comparatively

recent times, the monasteries have for centuries provided, through their monks, a machinery for making the fundamentals of education available to the people—instruction in reading and writing, general knowledge, moral and religious teaching, ceremonial dancing, painting and wood-carving.

The inhabitant of Central Bhutan, who form the bulk of the country's population and whose villages are situated at an elevation ranging from 4,000 to 10,000 feet, are Buddhists of the Nyingmapa and Kagyupa sects. The Bhutanese in the plains and foothills of the Southern frontier, however, are mainly Hindus of Nepalese origin. Their contacts with the outside world have been closer and it is mainly from the nearby India bazaars that they obtain their requirements of food, clothing and other necessities. The prevailing pattern of communications has largely dictated the pattern of their social life, economy and language. Communications to the North have, in the past, been far more difficult than communications to the South. The people of the Southern frontier have, therefore, had less contact with Central Bhutan; they still speak Nepalese and few of them can either understand or make themselves understood in Dzongkha, the State language of Bhutan. Communications, language and religion have been the main barrier in the way of the people of Central and Southern Bhutan coming closer together in their way of life, inter-marrying and developing more intimate social and other ties.

I have spoken to you today of Bhutan as she reflects her past. When I speak to you again, it will be of the Bhutan that is looking forward to the future. It will be the same Bhutan, but we shall see something of the processes by which her past heritage is being re-shaped to meet the challenges of a world which is becoming smaller day by day, a world in which the impact of larger, compelling forces is being felt increasingly by the people of all countries, however remotely situated.

II

When I spoke to you last week of Bhutan, it was to give an idea of some of the historical processes that have played their part in shaping the attitudes and emotions of her people today. Bhutan's past isolation from her neighbours was shown to have generated a certain reserve and sense of aloofness in the Bhutanese character. The absence of easy internal communications, we saw, had come in the way of people from different regions of the country developing intimate social ties or a uniform cultural pattern. And the predominant influence of religions was seen in the concentration of the country's revenue in the maintenance of monasteries, which were centres of both religious and general education.

If we turn for a while from the past, we see that the single, most significant development in Bhutan in recent years has been in the field of communications. Bhutan will soon be drawing to the close of her first Five Year Plan for economic development. The plan provides for the extension of medical and educational services, the development of forests, the setting up of hydro-electric projects, the survey and exploitation of mineral resources, the building up of cottage and large-scale industries—the usual ingredients of a plan for any developing country. What is significant, however, in view of Bhutan's traditional isolation, is her decision to give communications the main priority in all her plans and not only internal communications but communications that will link her more closely with the world outside. The Five Year Plan is largely an extension, though on a much wider scale, of ideas that had been fermenting in the minds of the Bhutanese authorities over a long period, but were not capable of effective implementation upto now, mainly for reasons of finance. The Bhutanese had, quite early in the century, realised that the world was fast changing, and that Bhutan must also prepare herself for change. And so batches of young students were sent down periodically from Bhutan to study in schools in India and equip themselves for service in their own country as teachers, administrators, forest officers and doctors. Most of these are now holding positions of high responsibility as Heads of Departments in the Centre and District Offices in the interior. We see, therefore, that it is mainly in the field of communications that Bhutan is making a departure from previous policy. The Bhutanese have now come to feel more keenly the need for good internal communications to enable the Central Government to remain in effective control of outlying areas

of the country and exercise closer supervision over its long-extended frontiers. They have felt equally the need for access roads from the plains to keep themselves in more regular touch with the world outside and facilitate the transport of materials required for implementation of the Five Year Plan. This new emphasis on the development of roads is indication of a re-shaping of the peoples' attitude towards their neighbours as well as a recognition of the impracticability of continuing isolation in a world where communications everywhere are so fast developing that distance no longer has any meaning and no longer forms a barrier.

It is the genius of the Bhutanese that they have been able to undertake an extensive Plan for development without disturbing overmuch their traditional pattern of administration. This has been achieved through the imaginative insight of the King himself, who, while initiating the Development Plan, decided at the same time to rebuild the Dzong at his capital in Thimphu. For the Bhutanese, the Dzong is the symbol of their country's history, culture and religion. The Dzong consists not only of the main administrative offices, but is the headquarters of the monks and houses the most venerated chapels of the country. Thimphu and Punakha were the historic summer and winter capitals of Bhutan, and it was at their ancient Dzongs that the highest monastic bodies redised and discharged their solemn functions. In rebuilding the Thimphu Dzong, the King has made it clear in a language that his people will best understand that, while the Development Plan has its importance, so too have the ancient institutions of the land. The building of the Dzong is organised along traditional lines, with Bhutanese villagers coming in from the remotest corners of the country to make their contribution in labour to the raising of what is, in effect, a symbol of Bhutan's reverence for her traditional institutions, her faith and her cultural heritage.

Less than three miles from the new Dzong Bhutanese workers are busy constructing Bhutan's first Public School. The emerging of these two institutions almost side by side at the capital is a pointer to the carefully thought out blending and balancing of old and new that is so much the Government's concern in shaping Bhutan's future. The new School will constitute the main source for the flow of doctors engineers and technical personnel required to man the new services initiated under Bhutan's Five Year Plan. The school will also afford opportunities to the students to learn about and take pride in their

country's history and culture. They will play foot-ball like boys all over the world; but archery, Bhutan's national sport, will be given a special place in the life of the school. And so also will religion, the bedrock of Bhutan's history. The new Dzong and the new School will be, in many ways, complementary institutions the former a symbol of Bhutan's variegated history, the latter of her hopes for the future, both interacting upon and influencing each other, as much as to say, "Remember, I too have my part to play".

With improvement in communications is following, gradually, the setting up of new industries. Apart from the forests along her southern frontiers, Bhutan's rich and extensive forests in the interior have upto now remained largely untapped. Forest surveys have indicated the possibility of establishing, amongst other ventures, a paper and pulp industry, match-factory and ply-wood plant. Geological surveys have also pointed to extensive deposits of limestone, dolomite and gypsum. Bhutan's major asset lies, however, in her waterpower resources. The great gorges formed by the succession of rivers flowing South through the labyrinth of Bhutan's mountain ranges are a natural invitation to build dams for the generation of power, and investigations for a large-scale hydro-electric project are already nearing completion. The setting-up of industries and hydro-electric projects, however, demands a reserve of technical know-how which it will take some time yet for Bhutanese themselves to acquire. The concentration of effort for the present is therefore mainly of the improvement of Bhutan's agricultural economy. The Bhutanese are skilful cultivators, and their systematically-irrigated and neatly-terraced rice-fields present a happy contrast to the shifting cultivation practised so widely in the Himalayan hills. Rainfall in Central Bhutan is moderate and soil conditions here favour the growing of apples, pears, peaches, plums, almond, walnut and other temperate plants. There are already extensive orange-groves in the southern plains areas and a canning unit has for some years now been processing orange and pine-apple juice for export outside the country. Bhutan will have her hands full for many years to come in developing her very promising potential in horticulture and industry.

There can be few countries that have been faced so suddenly with such a variety of new and unusual problems. I have spoken of the Government's concern to ensure a just balance between the old and the new. Bhutan's strategic position also poses problems and she is

fully alive to the need for maintaining her army in a state of efficiency and preparedness. Bhutan has a treaty of perpetual peace and friendship with the Government of India, which guarantees that there shall be no interference in Bhutan's internal administration, and provides that she will be guided by the advice of the Government of India in regard to her external relations. The greater part of aid received by Bhutan comes from India, and it is mainly from India that Bhutan has been requisitioning personnel for assistance in the implementation of her Five Year Plan. Bhutan is, however, also a member of the Colombo Plan, to whose meetings she has been sending her delegates since the last two years and from whom she has received assistance in various fields. Bhutan has achieved much in recent years, and no small part of her achievement has been in so successfully adapting her traditional administrative machinery, evolved to fulfil the needs of a more leisurely age, to the accelerated tempo of today's mad world. There are few countries that have mastered so precisely the delicate art of hastening slowly.

ལྷོ་གཞི་དབྱེད་རྒྱལ་པོ་འི་དཀོན་མཆོད། །

Socha Gyalpo Korzod (གཞི་དབྱེད་རྒྱལ་པོ་འི་དཀོན་མཆོད) is found in the last volume (5) of Sakya Kabum (ས་སྐུ་བཀའ་འབྲུག་མ་). In the present state of affairs copies of Sakya Kabum are hard to come by; even stray portions and extracts are not easily available. Three complete sets are known to have been brought by Tibetan monks and scholars who came out of Tibet in the years following His Holiness The Dalai Lama's flight. One such set in xylograph was located by the Sakya scholars associated with the Namgyal Institute of Tibetology. A copy of the set was made in Uchen (འུ་ཅན་) under the supervision of Khanpo Lhodo Zangpo (མཎན་པོ་ལྷོ་མ་བཟང་པོ་). This offset print of Socha Gyalpo Korzod is made from the set preserved in the Namgyal Institute of Tibetology.

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NEFA—AN INTRODUCTION

R. N. HALDIPUR

The North East Frontier Agency of India, which nestles in the extreme north-eastern part of the country, on the lap of the Himalayas, attracted the notice of the rest of the sub-continent and of the world, with a sudden impact, after the Chinese aggression of 1962. This territory, consisting of rugged hills stretching endlessly from one end to the other, and insulated by the vast expanse of the once unfordable Brahamaputra, has provoked and excited the interest and the curiosity of explorers, travellers, anthropologists, as early as the 19th century. It, however, remained a close preserve of the scholar and the adventurer and very little was known to the outside world. While everyone knew about the North West Frontier through Rudyard Kipling who wrote of Pathans and Gangadin, conjured up romantic images of proud, warlike tribes and of sudden death, it was only in the wake of the later half of this century that the North East Frontier which is equally wild, romantic and mysterious caused so much concern, interest and sympathy and was brought into focus largely due to the challenging and lucid writings of the late Dr. Verrier Elwin. The Chinese attack of 1962 evoked the attention of the common man and stimulated interest among anthropologists as well as political and social thinkers. The main points of argument and discussion were the methods and the policy for administering this mass of territory.

Talking about tribal people of India, especially with reference to NEFA, the late Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru had said, "I am not at all sure which is the better way of living, the tribal or our own. In some respects I am quite certain their's is better. Therefore, it is grossly presumptuous on our part to approach them with an air of superiority to tell them how to behave or what to do or not to do. There is no point in trying to make of them a second rate copy of ourselves." This was the basis of the policy he advocated—of functioning between two extreme positions of isolation of these tribes on the one hand and total, unscientific assimilation on the other. This was the corner stone of the policy adopted by the N.E.F.A. administration since 1954, but there were many who did not agree with it earlier and their protests grew louder after the Chinese aggression of 1962.

In the popular mind, there has been some ignorance and confusion regarding NEFA—What it denotes? Where exactly it is?—Whether and how far it is different from Nagaland? NEFA extends over 30,000 square miles, hardly any of it flat. Its jagged ridges, deep gorges, steep valleys restless with landslides, constant rain and primordial and dense forests had always been a challenge to those who wanted out of life a little more than mere living. This strip—a gaint horse-shoe fringing the north-east corner of India—is bounded by Bhutan on the West, Tibet and China on the North, Burma on the East, the plains of Assam and the Tuensang District of Nagaland on the South. NEFA is divided into five administrative units previously called Divisions and now Districts; they are Kameng, Subansiri, Siang, Lohit and Tirap named after the principal rivers flowing through them. The Tuensang District of Nagaland also formed a part of NEFA till 1957 when it was joined to what was then known as Naga Hills-Tuensang-Area and the present day Nagaland. The population is a little over half a million and consists of a rich conglomeration of tribes which in the not too distant past had been wild people practising headhunting, witchcraft, blood-feuds sorcery, abduction, slavery, opium and ritual poisoning and now the the same group of people have boldly stepped into the 20th century—a phenomenon which baffles the students of social change. The main concentration of population is in villages usually situated on the tops or spurs of hills though the size and configuration may vary from tribe to tribe. One is struck by the rich variety of life and culture, customs and habits, dialects and social institutions. Their songs and dances are no less captivating than their colourful apparel and flamboyant head-dresses. One wonders at the excellence of their artistic taste exhibited in the execution of little details in the hand-woven cloth, head-dresses and their weapons, making them merge with their environment as if nature and man were pieced inextricably together.

The history of this tract stretches backwards for several centuries into the mists of tradition and mythology. There are some accounts of the vast hinterland, based mainly on the written historical records of Assam. The presence of a number of archaeological ruins, at some places along the foothills and along other places in the interior, suggests a great deal of contact between the ancient rulers of Assam and the tribesmen of NEFA hills. The ruins of Ita in the Dafla country are identified with those of ancient Mayapur founded by a Kalit King named Ramchandra. The runis of a fort at Bhalukpung in the Kameng Frontier District are acclaimed by the Akas, as the original home of their ancestor Bhaluka, the grandson of Raja Bana who was defeated by

Krishna at Tejpur. The temple of Tamreshwari, in the present day Lohit District, stands testimony to the existence of Shakti cult, and the ruins of Bhismakanagar are associated with King Bhismak. Legends have it that Akashaganga and Ghograsthan were the favourite resorts of Rukmani who visited these places for worship. A detailed study of the archaeological ruins may help to remove the veil of mystery and help the historian to fill in some of the gaps. There are very few old records of the tribes and their way of life though their stream of life converged at various points with that of people from the plain. One of the earliest specific references occurs in an account written by the by the chronicler Shahabuddin who accompanied Mir Jumla when he invaded Assam in 1662. He says, "that the Dafla tribe did not place its feet in the skirt of obedience" to the Ahom Raja but occasionally encroached on his Kingdom.

The aim of the Ahom Kings was to contain the tribal people in their own hills and forests and to protect their own subjects from them. Their policy, on the whole, was that of conciliation. Expeditions were sent out only when there were raids of unusual audacity.

After the treaty of Yandaboo, in 1826, when the British took over the control of Assam from Purender Singh, they found that the tribes of the frontier were more aggressive as a result of the breakdown of Governmental authority. After an interlude of six years from 1832 to 1838, when the experiments of handing over the civil administration back to Purendra Singh proved a failure, his territories were placed directly under the management of British officers. The British attitude towards this region was one of non-interference. It was not rewarding enough to undertake the administration of territory so volatile and wild. They were satisfied with staying the raids on the plains of Assam and taking periodic columns into the territory right up to the Indo-Tibetan border in the North to keep peace and exercise some control. More active interest in the administration of this area was taken after the first world war. The entire region was properly divided into districts and their administration undertaken from 1942 onwards. It was only after the Indian Independence that planned welfare projects were undertaken to meet the needs of the tribes living here.

It is difficult, within the scope of this article, to do full justice to the history of each tribe and give a full description of their lives, but a reference to the various tribes according to Districts and salient features of their life and history would not be out of place.

(1) Karmeng Frontier District.—This is the western-most District of the highest administrative centres in India. The other well-known palce, Tawang, a sub-divisional headquarters, is situated on a plateau of 10,000 feet. Here stands the great monastery founded some 350 years back and possesses unforgettable majesty and beauty of construction. In the olden days, the Tawang Raja was very influential and controlled the Bhutias of the Koriapara Duars which touches the eastern boundary of Bhutan and extends from the Doisham to the Rota River.

Among the tribes of this District—Monpas are quiet, gentle friendly, artistic and dignified. The influence of Buddhism in their life is marked in every aspect of their lives. A certain gravity and order in their manners, modesty, a consciousness of protocol and the ceremonial of daily life impress one. They follow the Nyingmapa school of Buddhism and hold in veneration Guru Padma Sambhava. The great Monastery at Tawang is the heart of Monpa life and culture. The sixth Dalai Lama is reported to have come from this region.

They are very fond of music, dance, drama and have great reverence for literature. Ever since early days, they had intimate contacts with the plains of Assam. Today their large and continued attendance at Udalgiri Fairs is one of the many avenues of communication of ideas and goods. They had barter trade with Tibet also.

Another Buddhist tribe, to the south of Kameng are the Sherdukpens. They migrate to the low country every year to trade with the plains and avoid cold. In the eastern part of the District are the Khowas and the Akas and the Mijis in the North. They are not Buddhists but have been influenced by their neighbours. There are number of references to the Akas in the history books. The Akas occupy the region as far east as the source of Khari Dikari river. Their Raja, Tagi led a number of raids against the plains people of Assam in the early years of the last century. These tribes have adopted some elements of Monpa dress but the influence of Assam is evident in their love of Assamese silk. They have large houses, are keen traders and had the institution of slavery which has now almost disappeared. We have already made a reference to the remains of the fort at Bhalukpung-claimed by the Akas as the original home of Bhaluk.

The Daflas inhabit the eastern part of this District and are also found in Subansiri. They have had the reputation of being unruly and turbulent. They have long houses occupied by a number of related families. There are several such houses in each settlement but are not united into a village community. A few of them weave and do some work in bark-fibre. Aggressive by temperament they have long-standing blood-feuds among themselves. Not very far from Doimukh, in the Dafla area, are the ruins on the Ita Hills. These have been indentified as ruins of N Mayapur, the capital of a Kalita King, Ramchandra, who had to fly from his Kingdom to the Dafla area. They have a well-established trade link at Kimin with the Assam plains and are conversant with the Assamese language.

(2) Subansiri Frontier District.—This is the second District to the east of Kameng. The headquarters Ziro is situated on the Apa Tani Plateau. This is connected by a hill-road to Kimin in North Lakhimpur District. The plateau is inhabited by the Apa Tanis who are an industrial people with a well organised society of their own. Their extensive agricultural system of well irrigated fields has evoked the admiration of many a visitor. They have succeeded in raising two annual crops and are good at weaving also. The second tribe in the region are the Daflas similar to those in Kameng.

The Tagins, the tribe which lives in a very difficult terrain having tracks that are well-high impossible are on the right bank of the Subansiri river. They find it very difficult to eke out subsistencs from the land, as a result they were under-nourished. The struggle for existence leaves them very little time and energy for the cultural aspects of life. Still, they have a little weaving, song and dance. Their poverty seems to have been the main cause of their being carried away as slaves.

Hill-Miris occupy the eastern and the southern portion of the District. They resemble the Daflas and most of them tie their hair in a knot above their foreheads. The hats of men are attractive and the dress of women elaborate and peculiar. The Hill Miris have mild and pleasant temperament and are very co-operative to outsiders.

(3) Siang Frontier District.—Siang Frontier District is to the east of Subansiri and through it flows the Siang—the main river which later becomes the Brahmaputra. The people, now called “Adis” were once known as Abors—a derogatory word meaning unruly and disobedient. The term Adi covers a large number of tribal groups united by one language, though there are variations in their dialect. There are two main divisions—the Gallongs and the Minyongs. Tribes such as the Ramos, the Pailibos and the Bokars of the far North are also associated with the former category, whereas the latter have common characteristics with the Padams, the Pasis, the Panghis, the Shimongs, the Boris, the Ashings, and the Tangams,—each one having its own distinctive characteristics. The headquarters of the Districts are Along situated on the banks of Siyoum and Sipu rivers and the other at Pasighat on the bank of Siang.

Adis are interesting people. They love dancing and music and their Ponungs—as the dances are known—are captivating. They are good weavers and their canework, especially the canehat is very attractive. Good orators with an unusual memorising power, they are strongly democratic and all decisions pertaining to the village or individuals are taken in the village council known as ‘Kebang.’ An important feature of Adi life is the youth dormitories. Among Minyongs there are girls’ dormitories also. The Gallong group has a polyandry and polygamy of a type unknown elsewhere, except amongst the Buddhists of the North. The institution of slavery did have a place but is rapidly going out of vogue. The Adis had close trade links with Assam and the popular markets used to be Sisi Borgaon and Dibrugarh. The people in the foothills and round about the headquarters use the Assamese language.

Along the border are the Buddhist tribes known as Membas and Khambas. They resemble the Monpa and follow the Nyingmapa sect of Buddhism. Their music and other religious dances resemble those in Sikkim. They had their trade links with Tibet in the past.

(4) Lohit Frontier District. This tract was formerly known as Mishmi Hills and spreads along the bend of the horse-shoe. The terrain though formidable attracted many early explorers,—surveyor Wilcox, botanist Griffith Roulatt and others. Father Kirk, an early missionary, and a Hindu Sadhu Parmanand Acharya, several decades

later were murdered while trying to make their way from Assam into Tibet through this District. The headquarter of the District is Teju and another important place is New Sadiya. Old Sadiya used to be a famous trading centre where Mishmi used to barter goods with their Assamese neighbours.

The main tribe is the Mishmis among whom there are three different groups: (i) Digaru or Taraon, (ii) Miju or Kaman, and (iii) Chulikata or Idu. The main difference between these tribes is the way they do their hair. The Mongoloid characteristics in their appearance are strongly marked. Their language has some affinity with the Lepcha language.

As among's the Daffas, the village community is unimportant. Villagers sometimes have only one house or scattered buildings half a mile from one another. Dresses of all the three tribes are picturesque. The Mishmis have an extraordinary sense of colour and pattern. Men and women are devoted to tobacco. Digarus and Mijus are addicted to opium also. Besides Mishmis, there are Padams—allied to the Adis of the same name—living in the same District. There are two Buddhist tribes—Singphos and Khamptis in this District. They were aggressive and warlike initially, but the influence of Buddhism has changed their outlook on life and they are now peaceful cultivators. Each village has a Buddhist temple. They are very enterprising and progressive and do rice-husking with the help of water mills. The Khamptis are supposed to have come originally from Thailand and the Singphos from Upper Burma. The Lohoit Frontier District has a lot of places of mythological significance as mentioned above.

(5) Tirap Frontier District.—This is the southern-most District, smallest and compact in area. Khonsa is the headquarters. Amongst the tribes which inhabit this District, Noctes are a virile and picturesque tribe who have adopted a very elementary form of Vaishnavism and have had an intimate contact with the plains. Their society is organised under their great Chiefs, each controlling a number of villages from which he collects a tribute.

The other tribe is the Wanchoos. Their society, like that of the Noctes, is organised under great Chiefs, each controlling a number of villages. There are three classes—the families of the Chiefs, the proletariat and an intermediate class of the descendants of the sons of

Chiefs who have married commoners. The Chief's houses are often very large—probably the largest in the whole of NEFA. They use massive blocks and pillars of wood with some of them carved with fantastic designs. There are Morungs (dormitories) for boys and young men in all the villages and in some palaces there are also dormitories for girls. Their social organisation and head-hunting practices are similar to those of the Konyak Nagas of the adjoining Mon Sub-division of Nagaland.

The Tangsas is the third tribe of the District. Very near to the Burma border, they are opium addicts, but are slowly getting over their addiction. They tie their hair in top-knots and wear an apparel similar to a Sarong.

There are a few Singphos also in this District.

This bird's eye view of the tribes, though very sketchy at its best, can show us what great variety of tradition, custom, dress and dialect is compressed within a small region. The variegated pattern ranges from the near dictatorship and chieftainship of the Wanchoos and Noctes to the extreme democracy of the Adis—the ferocity and aggressiveness of the Daflas to the gentleness and modesty of the Monpas, the Membas and the Khambas—from the industry and hard work of the Apa Tanis to the lethargy and callousness of the Tangsas and the Tagins. One, however, finds a common thread running through all the differences and is struck by the unity in diversity. Each tribe can be broadly called endogamous and is divided into clans which are exogamous. Inter-tribal marriages are usually not frowned upon but a breach of the clan-rule means a strong disapproval and is penalised. Society is patrilineal and polygamy is common. Marriages are usually arranged by parents with certain kin or on the basis of exchange, though love marriages are not infrequent. There is a good deal of premarital freedom among the younger people but there is a high standard of fidelity within the marriage bond though divorce is permitted. There are social distinctions in many tribes but no caste differences. They all, however, eat together and take part in tribal councils, festivals and dances. There is also a certain amount of flexibility in these distinctions. A released slave can be a headman of his village and headman's sons and daughters can be married into other families. People are surprisingly business like and before they learnt the use of money they had developed an elaborate system of barter which still holds away

in some of the remotest regions. Their hardheaded, almost commercial outlook, especially in certain matters like marriage, bride-price, stands in juxtaposition to a sense of abandonment and a zets for life. Their generosity and spirit of hospitality are unparalleled. Their honesty and integrity is something which on rarely sees in a very sophisticated society.

The people of NEFA are distinguished by what the late Dr. Elwing called the "psychological imponderables." The first is their exceptionally co-operative character. The village works as a whole in agriculture, ceremonials and war. "There are no heretics in religion and a few dissidents in village society." The clan system acts as a unifying influence so far as the members of the various exogamous groups are concerned and the tends to balance, to some extent, the separateness caused by the great distances and the memories of war and feud. Their self-reliance has been exemplary and that has been the quality which has sustained them in their struggle for existence in a country which has been hard and terrain inhospitable. In the past, they did everything for themselves—constructed their village paths—planned and built bridges—helped one another in sickness and distress. Ingenious machines to husk or grind rice—contraptions for fishing and hunting have been devised by some. They are the manufacturers of their own cloth, hats and rain-coats. They have made their own cooking utensils, ornament and some of them have their own cosmetics.

They have made and administered their own laws with a machinery that is both intriguing and unique. Village government varies considerably from tribe to tribe. There are some, like the Noctes and the Wangchhos, amongst whom the powerful Chiefs rule but they in turn consult the village elders and priests on important matters. The Idu Mishmis have their council known as "Abbala." The Monpas who have a strong sense of protocol elect the "Chorgins" or elders of their Lengui who hold office for life and are carefully graded. The Sherdukpens have what is known as the "Jang" which is led by the senior "Thik Akshas" (headmen). Among the well-organised councils which have great authority and influence are the Apa Tani "Buliang" the Kaman Mishmi "Pharal" and Adi "Kebang." The most highly developed of all these is the Adi "Kebang" which works on the principle of equal votes for everyone. Every man, reaching the age of reason, is by right an active member of any assembly. Each village is ruled by five or six headmen elected for life by the people. They control all affairs of greater importance.

Looking at the above picture of the tribal life in NEFA, one wonders whether they would not have been happier to be left alone. Perhaps they might have been. But how could it have been possible? They had links with the outside world and they had a glimpse of life outside their area. It was but fair and just that the Government should evolve a policy by which they could take their place alongside their other countrymen without sacrificing any of the aspects of their lives which are so beautiful. In the words of the late Pandit Nehru "the problem of tribal areas is to make the people feel that they have perfect freedom to live their own lives and to develop according to their wishes and genius. India to them should signify not only a protecting force but a liberating one." In other words, the main problem was to encourage the people to come to terms with their past and develop from it by a natural evolution. There should never be an idea of freezing the people's culture "as it was" or romanticize primitiveness as such. The passage to modernity had to be one that would not sweep them off their feet.

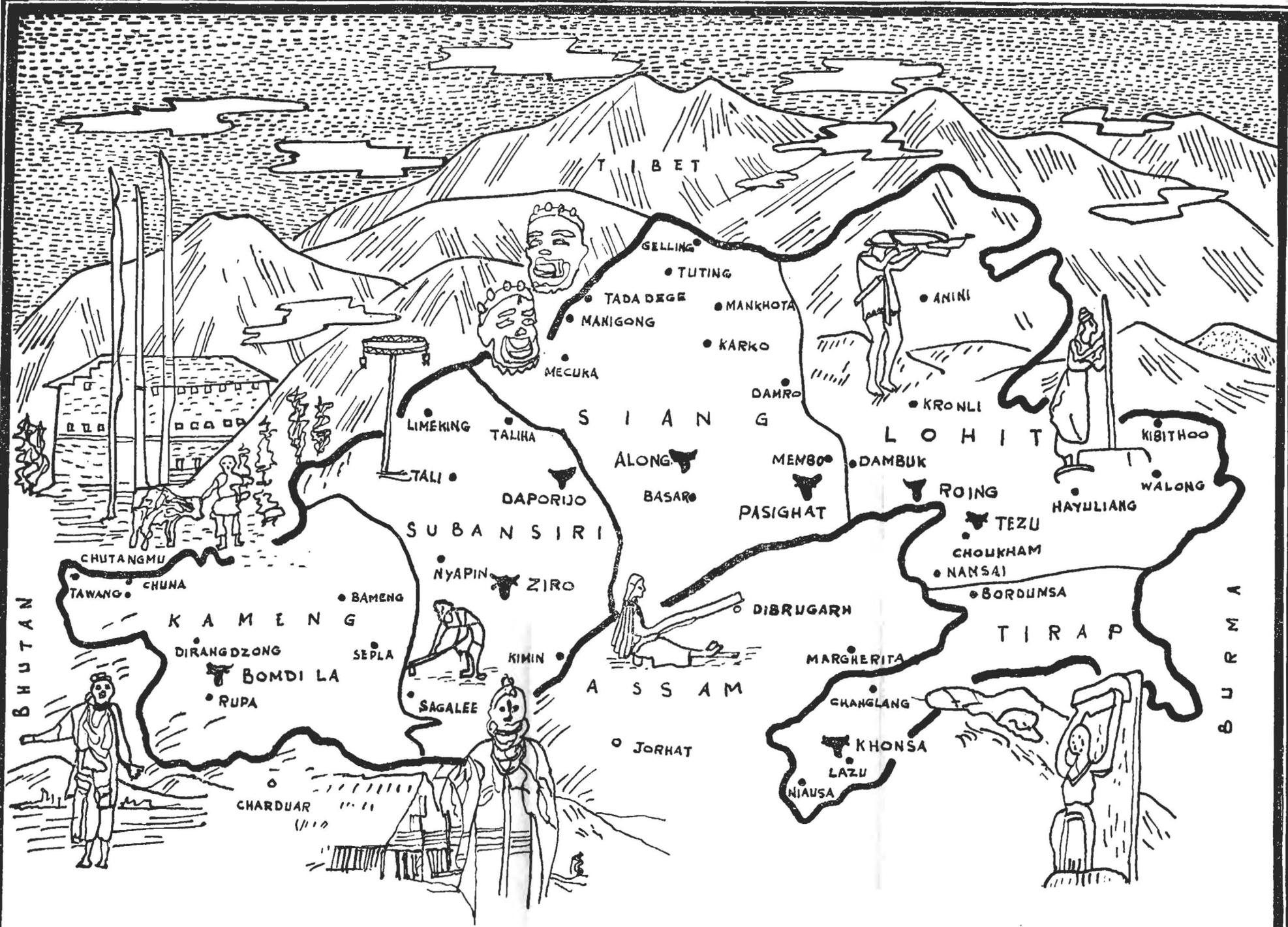
Though the task is one of material development—like food, clothing, housing and schools, the real problem is a psychological one. The great test has been in the transformation to modernity of a society where some sections of the population were still living in the near stone-age era. The passage has to be smooth and care has to be taken to guard against the development of inferiority complexes which may destroy their pride in their institutions. The vitality of the indigenous culture has to be preserved so that it does not disappear altogether along with the anchorage it offers.

Thus an attempt had to be made to give the NEFA people some of the technical blessings of the modern world, without making them break away from the past. In fact, the various schemes for helping them to step into modernity had to be made acceptable and put into execution through their indigenous institutions and machinery. The various activities the Government undertook could be broadly divided into two groups—one negative and the other positive. Under the former head, amongst other things, could be mentioned the removal of the could of anxiety due to the existence of inter-tribal feuds and bloodshed, abolition of slavery and removal of the curse of opium. Under the latter, the activities were varied; the introduction of water supply schemes which formed the basis of health and hygiene, the improvement of village paths and motorable roads, the provision of medical facilities

and the prevention of disease, especially eradication of malaria; the encouragement of tribal dialect and the promotion of their arts and crafts, the supply of educational facilities so that they take over the task of administering themselves and also be one with the fabric of a larger society. The various changes and activities had to be introduced according to the preparedness and receptivity of the particular people. One had to bear in mind the fact that social change does not take place in a straight line, perhaps it is along a parabolic curve,—probably more of a zig zag,—with the acceptance of innovations and resistance to change, both pulling in diametrically opposite directions. The methodology of obtaining the assent and cooperation of a particular people was important. The approach to the mind of the tribal people had to be through an audio-visual and perceptual medium rather than doctrinaire ideological confabulations,—through a collective appeal rather than through individual deliberations, through the channel of indigenous leadership rather than through a pattern unknown to them, and in a language which is meaningful to them rather than a jargon to which one is used in a more sophisticated society. Depending upon the impending facets of life, the leadership may throw up new patterns of life and loyalty, which have to be observed and their assistance taken. No cultural phenomena is intelligible apart from their relation to psycho-biological imperatives. In the words of Malinowski, “culture is an organic integrated whole and that any attempt to study its parts in isolation or abstraction is bound to give a distorted view of culture.”

Until recently, the NEFA people have been living in an age of almost uninterrupted continuity with the past. They then made a leap, into the glare of the present century. A fundamental change has come in the shifting of the gear of life from war to peace, the cessation of blood-feud, the gradual disappearance of some of the prestige symbols associated with head-hunting and slaves. The main task now is the proper harnessing of the energies, thus released, to fill the vacuum created by the disappearance of something that had to go to give a positive direction to the urge for adventure. NEFA which is in the extreme north-east of India and lies on the lap of the Himalayas, once figured prominently in mythology— and later passed through a period of loose contact. Now it has prepared on the stage. It is a delicate but an imperative task to assign to it the part that it has to play in the great drama— to apportion to it its share in the common endeavour. A beginning has been made—some work has been achieved but a tremendous task still lies ahead. The main problem,

however, remains the same and one cannot but help remember the words of Shri Jairamdas Daulatram, a former Governor of Assam. "Each section of the large population contributes to the making of the Nation in the same manner as each flower has the right to develop its own colour and form and to spread its own fragrance to make up the cumulative beauty and splendour of the garden. I would not like to change my roses into lilies, nor my lilies into roses. Nor do I want to sacrifice my lovely orchids and rhododendrons of the hills."



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