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STUDIES IN LOCAL AND REGIONAL HISTORY

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Edited

by

J. S. Grewal

Ph.D., D. Lit. (London)



GURU NANAK UNIVERSITY
AMRITSAR

1974



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FOREWORD

An institution of higher learning, particularly a university, should concern itself not merely with the preservation but also the advancement of knowledge. This University from its very inception has encouraged the advancement and dissemination of knowledge through publication of the results of researches conducted by its faculty members. Possibilities have been created for each Department to bring out research articles, individually or collectively, as the best incentive for research.

The Department of History has by now quite a few publications to its credit. The present work is the result of research work done by its members who were teaching in the Department during 1973-74. It consists of articles on local and regional history, mostly on the Panjab but by no means confined to the Panjab. The other regions covered are Ladakh, Rajasthan and Mysore. The Department of History intends concentrating on local and regional history on the academically sound assumption that major advance in our knowledge of Indian history can be made through detailed studies of small areas over small periods of time. I wish the members of the Department great success in this laudable objective.

Bishan Singh Samundri
Vice-Chancellor

Amritsar,
November 15, 1974.

P R E F A C E

All the contributors to this volume of articles on local and regional history were teaching in the Department of History during the academic session of 1973-74. Towards the close of that session they thought of putting together some of their research work on local or regional history in the form of a small book. The proposal was discussed with Sardar Bishan Singh Samundri, the Vice-Chancellor of the University, and he welcomed the idea. The present volume is the result of his encouraging response.

Five of the eight articles published here relate largely to the Panjab. The first two relate apparently to small places, namely Batala and Jakhbar; but the evidence on these two places has wider implications, justifying interest in local history to add depth to our knowledge of the history of the country as a whole. The third article presents the broad framework of revenue administration in the former Mughal provinces of Lahore and Kashmir and parts of the former Mughal provinces of Multan and Kabul during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries in the context of continuity and change under Sikh rule. In the fourth article one of the four major 'traditions' regarding Guru Nanak is analysed to lay bare its nature and character, with implications for scholarly analyses of other 'traditions'. How far the modern historians of Guru Nanak have been able to uphold the primacy of 'historical' investigation when confronted with popular tradition and belief is the theme of the fifth article.

The remaining three articles relate to Rajasthan, Mysore and Ladakh. The first demonstrates the bearing of the Romantic Movement in England and the practical purposes of James Tod on his treatment of the Rajputs. In the second, the financial aspect

of the Second Mysore War is discussed on the basis of an important collection of papers. In the last article, the social structure in relation to the economic and religious life of the communities inhabiting the different regions of Ladakh during the late nineteenth century is analysed.

After the preliminary selection of articles, my task has been confined to extremely minor changes here and there, changing nowhere the sense of the original text. On behalf of the contributors I am happy to express our thankfulness to Sardar Bishan Singh Samundri for his foreword and his kind interest in the work of the Department of History.

J. S. Grewal

Guru Nanak University, Amritsar.
November 24, 1974.

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The Qazi In The Pargana

About forty years ago Ibn Hasan was keen to correct the general but wrong impression that *qāzis* were appointed only for the capital cities and other large towns of the Mughal Empire. On the basis of 'the scattered facts' of the period he felt certain that *qāzis* were appointed in smaller towns and *pargana* headquarters also. He assumed, however, that villages were excluded from the jurisdiction of the *qāzi*.¹

More recently discovered facts of the period show that even villages were covered by the *qāzi's* court. In the last decade of the seventeenth century a *shaikhzāda* gave his *madaḍ-i-ma'āsh* land in *ijāra* to a person named Ram Ratan through a deed executed in the court of Qazi Sayyid Hasan Muhammad. The land in question was in a village called Paighambarpur, situated in the *tappa* as well as the *pargana* of Batala in the upper *bāri doāb* of the Panjab.² Through a *bai'nāma*, or a deed of sale, executed in the court of Qazi Muhammad Wali Ulla in 1711, the Rajput *muqaddams* of Yādgārpur sold their entire landed property to Mohan Lal Puri, a *qānūngo* of Batala. Yādgārpur was a village situated in the *pargana* of Kahnuwān in the upper *bāri doāb*.³ In 1733 the *panchāyat* of a small town called Muhiyuddinpur wanted to donate one '*Ālamgiri tanka* a year for every shop in the

1. *Central Structure of the Mughal Empire*, Munshiram Manoharlal, New Delhi 1970 (reprint), 315.

2. B.N. Goswamy and J.S. Grewal, *The Mughal and Sikh Rulers and the Vaishnavas of Pindori*, Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Simla 1969, Document I.

3. *Ibid.*, Document II.

bāzār to Hira Nath, the *mahant* of the *jogī* establishment of Jakhbar near Pathan (kot); they signed a *yāddāsh*, as a memorandum of this donation, in the court of Qazi Sayyid Muinuddin.⁴ Through a *bai'nāma* executed in his court in January, 1738, the Gujjar *muqaddams* of a village sold 1900 *bighas* of land in the *pargana* of Kathua to Mirza Asdulla Beg, the Arab.⁵ In the month of March in his court the Brahman *muqaddams* of a village in the *pargana* of Pathan (kot) gave it as an offering (*bhet*) to Gosāin Ramdas of the Vaishnava establishment of Pindori on the river Beas.⁶ In October the *chaudharis* of Faridanagar in the same *pargana*, signed a solemn declaration that they would not meddle with the affairs of Ibrahimpur Saidhar, in the same *pargana*, which had been given by its proprietors to the Gosāin of Pindori.⁷ In the *pargana* of Paniyal, Shaikh Chhajju and Muizuddin mortgaged their *madad-i-ma'āsh* land in Rasulpur Ali by executing a *girvināma* in the court of Qazi Qutbuddin, son of Sayyid Muinuddin, in 1769. With that we have already entered the Sikh period.⁸

In theory all the subjects of the Mughal empire were more or less covered by the law of the state, the *shari'at*, and *qāzis* appointed to *parganas* were meant to cover both villages and towns falling within their jurisdiction. Sometimes a single *qāzi* was

4. B.N. Goswamy and J.S. Grewal, *The Mughals and the Jogis of Jakhbar*, Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Simla 1967, Document XIII.

5. B.N. Goswamy and J.S. Grewal, *The Mughal and Sikh Rulers and the Vaishnavas of Pindori*, Document IV.

6. *Ibid.*, Document V.

7. *Ibid.*, Document VIII.

8. *Ibid.*, Document XVII. By 1769, the upper *bāri doāb* had been conquered and occupied by Jai Singh Kanhiya, Jassa Singh Ramgarhia and their associates.

appointed for the villages and towns of more than one *pargana*.⁹ In any case, villages (*quriyāt*) are explicitly mentioned as falling within the jurisdiction of Mir Muhammad on his appointment as the *qāzi* of Batala in the sixteenth year of Muhammad Shah.¹⁰ The standardized diction of the orders of the *qāzi*'s appointment leaves no scope for treating Mir Muhammad as an exceptional case. In fact there is no reason to treat the upper *bāri doāb* or even the province of Lahore as exceptional.

In both villages and towns, non-Muslims in various situations resorted to the *qāzi*'s court. Baillie's surmise,¹¹ made more than a century ago that the *shari'at* was applied to Hindus 'in matters of contract', finds ample support in documentary evidence relating to Batala and some other towns and villages of the Mughal Panjab.¹² There are numerous instances of transactions not only between Muslim and Muslim, and between Muslim and non-Muslim, but also between non-Muslim and non-Muslim executed in the court of the *qāzi* of Batala. The contracting parties belonged to several social groupings : Sayyids, Shaikhs, Pathans, shopkeepers, printers, dyers and potters among the Muslims; Brahmans, Khatris, Bānias, printers, goldsmiths and carpenters among the Hindus.¹³

9. Qazi Muinuddin, for example, covered the *parganas* of Kathūa and Pathan(kot) in the upper *bāri doāb* : *ibid.*, Documents IV & V. See also, Zameeruddin Siddiqi, "The Institution of the Qazi Under the Mughals", *Medieval India: A Miscellany*, Vol. I, 10.

10. Document I, *infra*

11. *The Moohummudan Law of Sale*, London 1850, viii & ix.

12. Document of the *Bhandāri Collection* for instance. These documents have been studied by the author and a selection is being published by the Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Simla, as *In the By-Lanes of History*.

13. J.S. Grewal, "The *Shari'at* and the Non-Muslims of Batala", *Proceedings Punjab History Conference* (Sixth Session), Patiala 1972, 154.

Furthermore, the law administered by the *qāzī* of Batala was uniformly applied to all Muslims and non-Muslims. According to the *Fatāwā-i-Ālamgiri* when one of the parties to a transaction is a *zimmi* 'nothing is lawful between them that is not lawful between two Muslims'.¹⁴ As it may be expected, transactions between Muslims and non-Muslims correspond to transactions between Muslims and Muslims. At the same time it is absolutely clear that transactions between non-Muslims and non-Muslims also conform to that pattern. It may be pointed out that the legal practice of the times was much in conformity with the provisions of the *sharī'at* which was uniformly applied to all.¹⁵

This is not to say, however, that the law was universally applied. A person had the choice to go or not to go to the *qāzī's* court; but if he chose to go, he had to accept the terms which conformed to the legal practice of the times. In fact there are several unofficial documents also in the *Bhandārī Collection* and between these and the official documents there is no important difference so far as the terms of contracts are concerned. This may be taken as a measure of the acceptance of the *sharī'at* by Muslims and non-Muslims alike.

The willing acceptance of the *sharī'at* by a very considerable number of the non-Muslims of Batala, in matters of contract, is not difficult to understand. The uniform application of the law of the state gave them security regarding property. In fact, the *bai'nāmas* created individual right to property and enabled a

14. *The Moohummudan Law of Sale*, 160. See, J. S. Grewal, "The *Sharī'at* and the Non-Muslims of Batala", 153-54.

15. Some contrivance like *hiba bil'iwaz* and *bai' al-wafā* had been evolved during the medieval period to evade the spirit of the *sharī'at*. Much more striking, however, is the conformity of the legal practices to the legal provisions.

person to acquire more if he could. The *girvināma* too promised profit to the mortgagee.

It may now be added that Batala was by no means an exceptional town. Some of the documents in the *Bhandāri Collection* itself relate to Amritsar, Ferozepur and Ludhiana. It may be safely suggested that a considerable number of non-Muslims in every town of the Panjab accepted the *shari'at*, in matters of contract. Even in the countryside, the custom did not remain the king. In the urban centres of the Panjab, custom was subordinated to the *shari'at*, if not actually replaced by it. This may in fact be true of the majority of the Mughal towns in northern India.

The local *qāzi* worked in co-ordination with some other local officials and was assisted by some local functionaries in the performance of his duties. The most easily identifiable of these are the *krori* and the *mufti*. In some *chaknāmas* relating to the *pargana* of Batala in the early eighteenth century, the seals of the *qāzi* and the *krori* appear together.¹⁶ The *mufti* was more intimately connected with the *qāzi's* court. Their seals appear together on a large number of documents relating to Batala, though not on all. 'The assistance of the *mufti* does not appear to be compulsory'.¹⁷ In any case, his position as the expounder of the *shari'at* did not bestow upon him a superior authority. In fact, the *qāzi* could exercise his judicial discretion in accepting or rejecting the *mufti's* exposition in its application to a given case. According to the *Fatawā-i-'Ālamgiri*, the *qāzi* was entitled to accept any one of the conflicting interpretations made available to him, or even to 'decide as it appears just'.¹⁸ On all those documents which bear the seals

16. See, for example, I.0.4720 (32), (61) and (66), India Office Library, London.

17. Ibn Hasan, *Central Structure of the Mughal Empire*, 314.

18. Quoted, Zameeruddin Siddiqi, "The Institution of the Qazi Under the Mughals", *Medieval India : A Miscellany*, Vol. I, 14.

of the *qāzi* and the *mufti*, the seal of the latter is placed lower and it is smaller. Several documents bear the seals of functionaries other than the *qāzi* and the *mufti*. Their connection with the *qāzi*'s court is clearly indicated by the epithet *khādim-i-shar'* on their seals.¹⁹

The *qāzi-ul-quzāt*, notwithstanding the literal meaning of the term, had little to do with the local *qāzi*. According to the *Mirāt-i-Ahmadi*, the provincial and the *pargana qāzis* were appointed through the *sadr-us-sudūr* and took charge of their duties on the basis of a *sanad* received through the provincial *sadr*.²⁰ The original appointment was actually made by the emperor and orders were issued by the *sadr-us-sudūr*.²¹ But neither the *sadr-us-sudūr* nor the *qāzi-ul-quzāt* exercised any appellate jurisdiction over the local *qāzi*. 'There were no fixed rules and regulations for appeal nor were there different courts of various degrees to which cases would be taken against the judgements of the court of the first instance'.²² Indeed, the assumption that the *qāzi-ul-quzāt*, or the *sadr-us-sudūr*, headed a judicial hierarchy, formally subordinating to his office the provincial and the *pargana* courts of justice, is belied by the evidence of known chronicles and legal documents.²³

19. For some detail, the reader may be referred to the author's forthcoming *In the By-Lanes of History*, Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Appendix on seals.

It may be pointed out that some of the seals which appear on these documents are of laymen rather than law-men. This is equally true of the documents of the Sikh times and of the reign of Aurangzeb.

20. Quoted, Ibn Hasan, *Central Structure of the Mughal Empire* 316. See also, Zameeruddin Siddiqi, "The Institution of the Qazi under the Mughals", *Medieval India: A Miscellany*, Vol. 1, 8.

21. Zameeruddin Siddiqi, *ibid.*, 11.

22. Ibn Hasan, *Central Structure of the Mughal Empire*, 320. See also, Zameeruddin Siddiqi, *ibid.*, 5.

23. Zameeruddin Siddiqi's article, cited above, is based on documentary evidence as well as the evidence of the chronicles.

In the present state of our knowledge of the local *qāzi*, documentary evidence has its own peculiar importance. Here we present four documents of the first half of the eighteenth century relating to the *qāzi* of Batala.²⁴ These documents provide some very useful insights into the working of the local *qāzi's* court. In the sixteenth year of Muhammad Shah's reign, Mir Muhammad was appointed as the *qāzi* of Batala in place of Qazi Amānat Ulla who was transferred to some other place. Amānat Ulla had been appointed to that office eight years earlier. In all probability, Mir Muhammad's father, Muhammad Qāim, had at one time served as the *qāzi* of Batala.²⁵ The order of Mir Muhammad's appointment was issued by Shariat Ulla Khan Tarkhān who was the *sadr-us-sudūr* at that time.²⁶ Two years later, when Mir Abdul Khāliq was the *sadr-us-sudūr*, Mir Muhammad's appointment was re-affirmed.²⁷ However, he did not survive as the *qāzi* of Batala till the end of Muhammad Shah's reign : in 1745 his place was taken by one Khawaja Muhammad Siddiq.²⁸ On the accession of Ahmad Shah, Mir Muhammad was brought back into office through the orders of Ubaid Ulla Khan Tarkhān who was the *sadr-us-sudūr*. A year later, however, Mir Muhammad was replaced by Faiz Husain.³⁰

24. These four documents are in the India Office Library, London, and are numbered I.O.4720 (46), (62), (52) and (67) respectively.

25. In I.O. 4720 (64), one Muhammad Qāim is mentioned as Qazi Muhammad Qaim.

26. Document II, *infra*.

27. *Loc. cit.*

28. Document XI, *In the By-Lanes of History*. See also note 4, Document I, *infra*.

29. Document III, *infra*.

30. Document XII, *In the By-Lanes of History*.

The functions which Mir Muhammad was required to perform as the *qāzi* are clearly specified. It was his duty to pronounce decrees in lawsuits, record all cases of adjudication and put penal law into execution. He was to determine the distribution of inheritance, look after unclaimed property and the property of orphans. He had to appoint legatees. The people of the town and the *pargana* of Batala were ordered to treat all records bearing his seal as authentic. The seals of the *qāzi*'s of Batala appear not only on *bai'nāmas*, *girvināmas*, *'iwaznāmas* and *hibanāmas* but also on *chaknāmas* and *mahzars*.³¹ For the Muslim population, Mir Muhammad was expected to perform some other duties also. He was to ensure that congregations in general and the Friday prayer in particular were held properly; he was to induce men to piety; and he was to perform all marriages.

It may be safely assumed that Mir Muhammad was paid by the state through grant of *madad-i-ma'āsh* land.³² However, there is no mention of this fact in the order of appointment conveyed to him. Nor is there any mention of his tenure. But on this last point we know that the local *qāzi*, like all other *qāzis* in fact, enjoyed office according to the pleasure of the emperor. Besides learning and piety, heredity counted for appointment; but the office of the local *qāzi* never became hereditary. The counterpart of the *khānazād* among the *umarā* is found among the local *qāzis*. In theory, the local *qāzi* was expected to give fair and impartial justice, without any regard to monetary gain for himself. However it is generally believed that the *qāzis* were corrupt during the Mughal

31. *Bhandāri Collection* and the India Office Collection numbered 1.0.4720.

32. It is most likely that the *qāzi* of Batala was paid through *madad-i-ma'āsh* land. In Babur's *farmān* in 1.0.4720 (1), Qazi Jamal of Batala is confirmed in the enjoyment of his *madad-i-ma'āsh* land.

times.³³ What is not generally known is that the *qāzi* could not afford to be oppressive beyond a certain point.

In this context, the last document presented here is of exceptional interest and significance. It refers to a corrupt *qāzi* of Batala whose father too had been corrupt as a *qāzi* and had on that account been dismissed from service. The charge preferred against the son, Qazi Wali Muhammad, is that he did not decide any lawsuit without extorting heavy bribe, not sparing even the pious and the poor, that he forced people to yield up their old deeds of sale, that he confiscated property on false accusation and that he scourged innocent people.³⁴ The artisans and craftsmen, who are making this representation against the injustice and oppression of Wali Muhammad request for his removal from office. They request for the recall of his predecessor, Ghulam Muhammad, who had been just and honest as the *qāzi* of Batala before he was replaced by Wali Muhammad. Instead of making any appeals against the specific decisions of Wali Muhammad, the artisans and craftsmen hold out a threat in case their grievance is not redressed by his removal : they would themselves leave the town and the *pargana* of Batala and settle down elsewhere. It may only be added that this representation was made by both Hindus and Muslims.

All the four documents presented here reveal something of the position and functions of the *qāzi* of Batala during the first half of the eighteenth century. A comparison of these with similar documents from other times and places can establish the fact of uniformity or variation. In the case of Batala, we have a number of documents belonging to the Sikh times. It is possible to see that

33. See, for instance, Ibn Hasan, *Central Structure of the Mughal Empire*, 342.

34. The words used in the original are *biwajah zarb-o-shallāq minumāid*.

the office of the *qāzi* continued to function, now as before, without any appreciable difference.³⁵ The *shari'at*, was applied to Muslims and non-Muslims alike in matters of contract. Minor deviations from the letter of the law, which we notice during the Sikh period, had been there in the Mughal times as well. For instance, contrary to the provisions of the *shari'at* we do find Muslim witnesses to transactions between two non-Muslims.³⁶ In any case, not continuity but discontinuity should come to us as a surprise, though even continuity is not generally known in the present state of our knowledge of the local *qāzi* and his office.

35. For detail see, *In the By-Lanes of History*.

36. For instance, *ibid.*, Document I.



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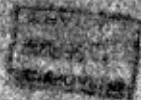
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بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
الحمد لله الذي هدانا لهذا
ما كنا لنهتدي لولا أن هدانا الله
والحمد لله رب العالمين
الحمد لله الذي هدانا لهذا
ما كنا لنهتدي لولا أن هدانا الله
والحمد لله رب العالمين
الحمد لله الذي هدانا لهذا
ما كنا لنهتدي لولا أن هدانا الله
والحمد لله رب العالمين



(Seal)

Tughrā ?

گماشته تہائے جاگیر داران و کروریان و جمہور سکتہ پر گنتہ بنالہ مضاف صوبہ پنجاب را اعلام اکلمہ
 (چون بموجب حکم جہانمطاع آنتاب شعاع گردون ارتفاع منصب قضای برگزینہ مزبور محسوسا و قصبہ و قریات متعلقہ آن از تفریقات اللہ
 بمیرنخبہ ولد میر محمد قائم مقرر و مفوض گشتہ فرمان و الا نشان درست میشود باید کہ بطریق حکم فیض شیشم عمل نموده مشار الہ را
 قاضی آنجا دانستہ دست تصدی ہی الہ در امور متعلقہ آن خدمت مستقل دانند و دیگر براسہیم و شریک اندانند و مملوک و مچلات را
 بمہر او متبرئ سازند کہ کماتیشی بوازم منصب مسطور قیام نمودہ و فیصل قضایا و خسومات و اجزای حدود و تعزیرات و اقامت ہجرت و جماعت
 و ترغیب مردم بطاعات و انکاح من لادنی لہ قسمت ترکات و حفظ اموال غیب و ایام تعیین اوصیا و نصب قوام لہائی موقوفہ بقیدیم و ملند
 درین باب قدغن تمام دانستہ حسب المسطور عمل آرند

بتاریخ چہارم شہر ذی الحجہ ۱۲۶۰ سنہ جلوس و الا تعلیمی شد بمیض

ENDORSEMENTS
 (on the reverse)

- (۱) بتاریخ چہارم شہر ذی الحجہ ۱۲۶۰ سنہ جلوس والا داخل سیاہر حضور شد بمیض
- (۲) بتاریخ پنجیم شہر ذی الحجہ ۱۲۶۰ سنہ جلوس والا نقل بدفتردیوان الصدراۃ العالمیہ رسید بمیض ط
- (۳) مطلع شد
- (۴) داخل
- (۵) داخل
- (۶) موافق

I

(*Tughrā* ?)¹

Be it known to the agents of the *jāgirdārs* and the *kroris* and to all the inhabitants of the *pargana* of Batala in the province of the Panjab² that :

Whereas in accordance with the world-subduing order (of His Majesty),³ resplendent as the rays of the sun and lofty as the sky, the *qazā* of the said *pargana*, including the town and the villages, has been bounteously entrusted to Mir Muhammad⁴ Qāim, on the transfer of Amānat Ulla.⁵ That august order stands confirmed⁶ and, acting according to this bounty-like order and regarding the aforementioned (Mir Muhammad) as the duly appointed *qāzi* of that place, they should understand that all the functions connected with that office are to be performed by him. None else is to be regarded as his equal or partner.⁷ All decrees and documents bearing his seal should be regarded as trustworthy.

Having taken over the responsibilities of that office, let him diligently perform them in the interest of equity and justice in respect of deciding lawsuits, execution of penal laws, holding of Friday prayer and other congregations, inducing people to be inclined toward piety, performing marriages, effecting division of inherited property, looking after unclaimed property and the property of orphans, and appointing testators, executors and legatees.⁸

Regarding this to be an important injunction, they should act in accordance with its stipulations.⁹

Inscribed on the 4th of Zihijja of the regnal year 16. *Baiz*¹⁰

ENDORSEMENTS (on the reverse)

1. Entered in the records of the imperial office ¹¹ on the 4th of Zihijja of the regnal year 16. *Baiz*
2. Copy received ¹² in the office of the *sadr-us-sudūr* on the 5th of Zihijja of the regnal year 16. *Baiz Tā*
3. Entered ...
4. Entered ...
5. In accordance with ...
6. Duly informed.

NOTES

1. The original document is partly torn and in its present condition does not show any mark of seal. A kind of *tughrā*, however, is there at its top. But it has not been possible to decipher it. The possibility of its being the *tughrā* of Shariat Ulla Khan Tarkhan, the *sadr-us-sudūr* at this time, is very much there.

2. The use of the term *sūbah-i Panjāb*, instead of *sūbah-i-Lāhaur* or *sarkār-i-Panjāb* of the early Mughal period, may be noted.

3. The epithets used for the *hukm* leave no doubt that the reference here is to an imperial order. There is a clear implication, therefore, that the appointment was made initially by the emperor.

4. Qazi Mir Muhammad's seals appear on two documents : 1.0.4720 (70) and (68). In the first, the date of the seal is A.H. 1146, the sixteenth year of Muhammad Shah's reign; in the second, A.H. 1161, the first regnal year of Ahmad Shah. It is evident, therefore, that Mir Muhammad got a fresh appointment in A.H. 1161. It has been pointed out already that he was replaced by Muhammad Siddiq before the end of Muhammad Shah's reign.

5. The seal of Qazi Amānat Ulla, dated A.H. 1138, appears on 1.0.4720(65). It may be safely assumed that he was appointed in 1727.

6. The original expression is rather unusual : *farmān-i-wālā-shān drust mishawadd*. This is being said by the *sadr-us-sudūr*.

7. The prerogative of the *qāzī* in legal matters appears to be underlined here. Within his specified jurisdiction he was the only officer administering the *sharī'at*.

8. The phrase used in the original is simply *ausiā*, which would cover testators, executors and legatees.

9. The phrase in the original is simply *hasb al-mastūr* : literally according as written.

10. The word *baiz* or *tā* or *baiz-tā* was very commonly used to mark the end of a statement, particularly a text, to obviate any later addition by an unauthorized person or an interested party.

11. The original words read like *siāhah-i-huzūr* which were used for

the secretariat of the provincial governor as well as the royal secretariat. The date of the entry, here, clearly indicates that the reference is to the royal secretariat.

12. A copy of the royal order appears to have been sent to the *sadr-us-sudūr*. Cf. Ibn Hasan, *Central Structure of the Mughal Empire*, 93-96, 265-66 & 316.

معلا

(Seal)

میر

عفی الدین موسوی
خدیو پادشاه غازی
محمد شاه

۱۱۳۸

گماشته است جایگزین و کرد و زبان و جمهور سکنه برگشته بتالا مضامین صوبه پنجاب بداند
چون بموجب پروانه حسب الحکم جهانمطالع آفتاب شعاع گردد از آغا خان بهر امارت و ایالت مرتبت صدور
نواب شریعت الدخان ترخان مرقوم بتاریخ چهارم ذی حجه سنه ۱۲۸۰ منسوب منصب قضای
برگشته مذکور معوض او قصیه و قریات متعلقه آن از تفریقات الدبیر محمد ولد میر محمد تائیم
مقرر و منقض است باید که بر طبق حکم فیض شیم عمل نموده مشارالیه را
قاضی آنجا دانسته دست تصدی موی اله در امور متعلقه آن خدمت مستعمل دانند
و دیگر میر اسبیم دشریک او ندانند و حکوک و سجلات را بهر او معتبر شمارند
که گمانی بی بوازم منصب مسطور قیام نموده در فیصل قضایا و خصوصیات و اجرای حدود
و تعزیرات و اقامت جمیع جماعات و ترغیب مردم بطاعات و انکاح من لادنی لا و قسمت ترکات
و حفظ اموال غیبی و نیام و عین ادویا و نصب قوامیای مرفوعه بتقدیم رسانند در باب تعیین آنست حسب المسطور لکن

محرری فی التاريخ بیت و چهارم شهر رباعی الاول سنه ۱۲۸۰ منسوب معنای مطابق سنه ۱۲۸۰ هجری مقدس
میش

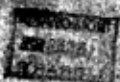
ENDORSEMENTS
(on the reverse)

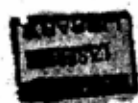
(۱) فی التاريخ ۲ جمادی الاول سنه ۱۲۸۰ منسوب معنای مطابق سنه ۱۲۸۰ هجری مقدس

(۲) بتاریخ بیت و چهارم جمادی الاول سنه ۱۲۸۰ منسوب معنای مطابق سنه ۱۲۸۰ هجری مقدس

صدقات العالمیه میر عبدالحق رسید میض

(۳) بموجب فرد حقیقت است میض

[illegible]



II

In the name of God, the Glorious. ¹

(Seal) ²

Mir Muhiyuddin Mūsawi
The Obedient Servant of the
Pādshāh-i-Ghāzi
Muhammad Shah

Be it known to the agents of the *jāgirdārs* and the *kroris* and to all the inhabitants of the *pargana* of Batala in the province of the Panjab that :

Whereas in accordance with the *parwāna* ³ issued under the seal of His Lordship, the *sadr-us-sudūr*, Nawab Shariat Ulla Khan Tarkhān, on the basis of the world-subduing order (of His Majesty), resplendent as the rays of the sun and lofty as the sky, inscribed on the 4th of Zihijja in the year 16 of the exalted ⁴ reign, the *qaza* of the said *pargana*, including the town and the villages, has been bounteously entrusted to Mir Muhammad, son of Mir Muhammad *Qāim*, on the transfer of *Amānat Ulla*. That august order stands confirmed and, acting according to that bounty-like order and regarding the aforementioned (Mir Muhammed) as the duly appointed *qāzi* of that place, they should understand that all functions connected with that office are to be performed by him. None else is to be regarded as his equal or partner. All decrees and documents bearing his seal should be regarded as trustworthy.

Having taken over the responsibilities of that office, let him diligently perform them in the interest of equity and justice in respect of deciding lawsuits, execution of penal laws, holding of Friday prayer and other congregations, inducing people to be

inclined toward piety, performing, marriages, effecting division of inherited property, looking after unclaimed property and the property of orphans, and appointing testators, executors and legatees.

Regarding this to be an important injunction, they should act in accordance with its stipulations.

Inscribed on the 24th of *Jamādi al-Awwal* in the year 18 of the exalted reign, corresponding to the year 1148 of the sacred *hijri* era. *Baiz*

ENDORSEMENTS (on the reverse)

1. Issued on the 24th of *Jamādi al-Awwal* of the regnal year 18 *Sād* ⁵

2. Copy received in the office of the *sadr-us-sudūr*, Mir Abdul Khāliq, on the 24th of *Jamādi al-Awwal* in the year 18 of the exalted reign. *Baiz* ⁶

3. It is in accordance with the record of facts. ⁷ *Baiz*

NOTES

1. *Sarnāmas*, like the present one, were often used at the top of documents in Mughal and Sikh times, with a considerable variety.
2. This is not the seal of the *sadr-us-sudūr*; in an endorsement on the reverse Mir Abdul Khāliq is mentioned as the holder of the office of *sadr-rah*. Therefore, Mir Muhiyuddin Mūsawi was probably either the provincial *sadr* or the *nāzim*.
3. The use of the phrase *hasb al-hukm* clearly indicates that this *parwāna* (or order) was issued by the *sadr-us-sudūr* on the basis of an order given by the emperor.
4. The word *mu'allā* is used at the top and not in the text. Some space is left blank to indicate where it was meant to be read. This was a common practice of the Mughal scribes in marked reverence to the emperors, their posthumous titles, their *farmāns* and their reigns.
5. The letter *sād*, generally used by the issuing authority to indicate the authenticity of the order, gave final assent to it.
6. The word *baiz* is being used here at the end of an endorsement. This too was a common practice in the early eighteenth century.
7. The words in the original are *fard-i-haqiqat*, which would refer to a register in which the actual positions were noted down; hence, the record of facts.

III

1

مبارک

(Seal)

سنة احمد

ششيه بيب خان

فان زاده شاه غازي

احمد شاه بهادر

(161)

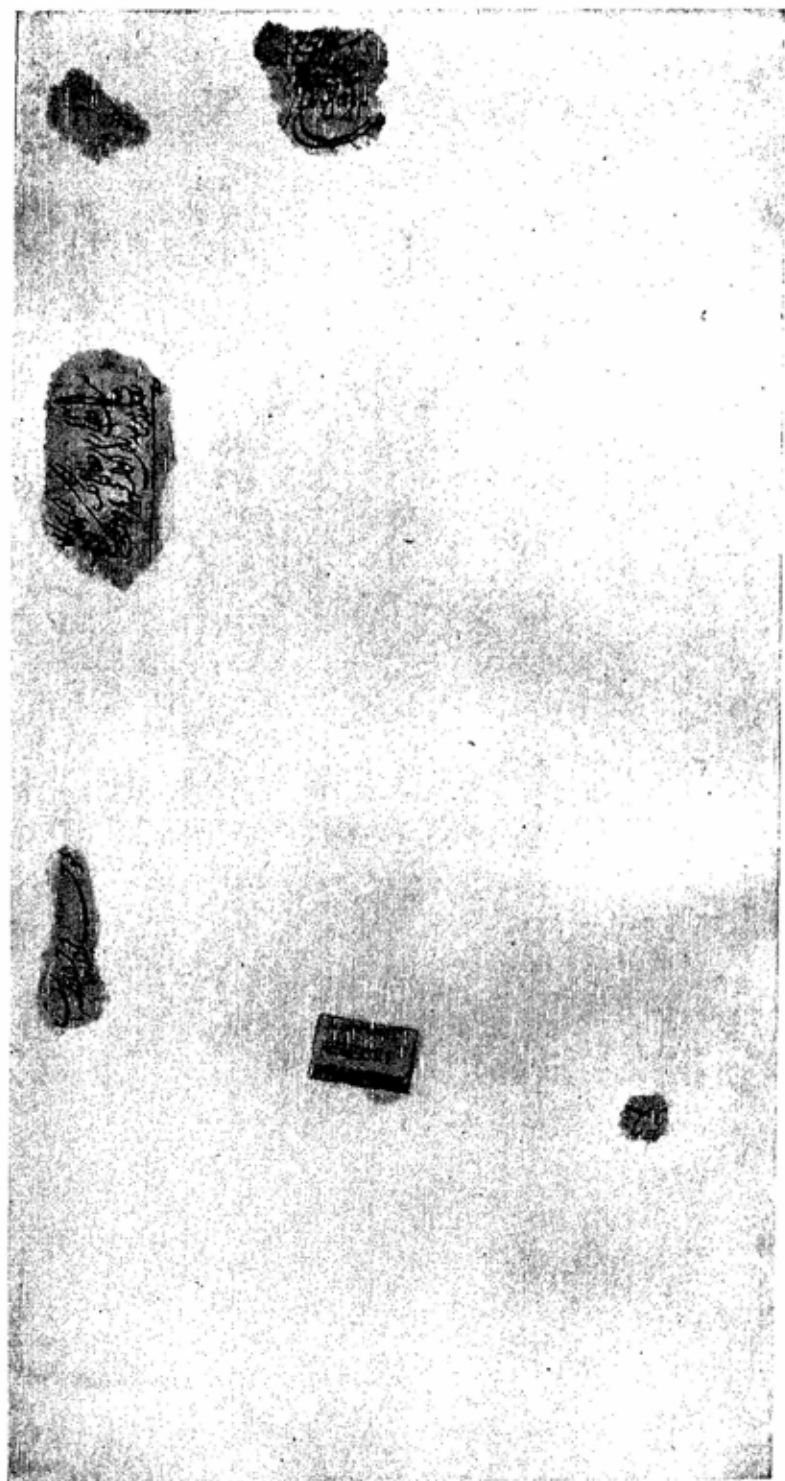
گماشته است جایگزاران و کردریان و جمود سکنه پرگنه بتالا مضاف صوبه پنجاب بدانند
چون موجب پرداخت حسب انکسیر چنانچه طاع آفتاب شعاع گردون ارتفع
بهر امارت و ایالت مرتبت نواب صدر الصدور عبید الله خان ترخان
مرفوق نهم ماه رمضان المبارک سنة احمد جلوس منصب قضای پرگنه مسطور
معه سواد قصبه و قریات متعلقه آن بنام میر محمد ولد محمد قایم مقرر و مفض است که
کتابینی بوازم منصب مقرر قیام نموده در فیصل قضایا و خصومات و اجرای حدود و تعزیرات
و اقامت جمعه و جماعات و ترغیب مردم بطاعات و انکسار من لادنی الکره قسمت ترکات و حفظ
اموال غیب و ایام و تعیین اوصیا و نصب قوام بسامعی موقوفه تقدیم رسانند باید که بر طبق
حکم فیض ششیم عمل نموده مشارالیه را ناضی آنجا بحال و برقرار دانسته دست تصدی مومی الهیه
در امور متعلقه آن خدمت مستحق دانند و دیگر بر اساس سیم و شریک اندانند و مکمل و سجلات را
بهر ادمعتر بشانند درین باب تدقن تمام دانسته حسب المسطور بعمل آرند

تحریر فی التاریخ بیست و چهارم ماه رمضان المبارک سنة دهم جلوس مطهر مطابق ۱۲۳۲ هجری مقدره بیض

ENDORSEMENTS
(on the reverse)

- (۱) فی التاریخ ۲۴ رمضان المبارک سنة ۲ جلوس والا ... شد ص
(۲) بتاریخ بیست و چهارم رمضان المبارک سنة ۲ جلوس مطهر نقل بقدرت العالیه ... محمد جمال رسید بیض
(۳) بموجب فرد حقیقت است

[illegible]



III

(Seal) ¹

One

Shamshir Beg Khan

The Khānazād of the Pādshāh-i-Ghāzi

Ahmad Shah Bahādur

1161

Be it known ² to the agents of the *jāgirdārs* and the *kroris* and to all the inhabitants of the *pargana* of Batala in the province of the Panjab that :

Whereas in accordance with the *parwāna* issued under the seal of His Lordship, the *sadr-us-sudūr*, Nawab Ubaid Ulla Khan Tarkhān, ³ on the basis of the world-subduing order (of His Majesty), resplendent as the rays of the sun and lofty as the sky, inscribed on the 29th of the auspicious ⁴ Ramzān in the first year of the auspicious reign (of Ahmad Shah), ⁵ the *qazā* of the said *pargana*, including the town and the villages, has been bounteously entrusted to Mir Muhammad, son of Muhammad Qāim.

Having taken over the responsibilities of that office, let him diligently perform them in the interest of equity and justice in respect of deciding lawsuits, execution of penal laws, holding of Friday prayer and other congregations, inducing people to be inclined toward piety, performing marriages, effecting division of inherited property, looking after unclaimed property and the property of orphans, and appointing testators, executors and legatees.

Regarding this to be an important injunction, they should act in accordance with its stipulations.

Inscribed on the 24th of the auspicious Ramzān in the 2nd year of the exalted reign, corresponding to the year 1162 of the sacred *hijri* era. *Baiz*

ENDORSEMENTS (on the reverse)

1. On the 24th of the sacred Ramzān in the 2nd regnal year. *Sād*

2. Copy received in the office of the *sadr - us - sudūr* ... Muhammad Jamāl. *Sād*

3. This is in accordance with the record of facts.

NOTES

1. This, again, is not the seal of the *sadr-us-sudūr*. The epithet *khānazād* used by Shamshīr Beg Khan for himself indicates his family's long service to the Mughal emperors.

2. Instead of the usual *i'lām*, the word used here is simply *b'dānand*. It does not change the import, however.

3. In the first year of Ahmad Shah's reign Ubaid Ulla Khan Tarkhān was the *sadr-us-sudūr* but now, in the second year, he is not.

4. The word *mubārak* is used at the top and not in the text. See note 4, Document II, *supra*.

5. The name of Ahmad Shah is not mentioned but it is a very safe inference.

IV

(Torn at the top) ¹

We, the craftsmen and artisans of the town and the *pargana* of Batala, were ² happy and contented with the praiseworthy conduct of the hereditary *qāzi* Ghulam Muhammad,³ who used to issue orders and decide lawsuits honestly in accordance with the provisions of the bright law.⁴ We are made miserable by the present *qāzi* Wali Muhammad,⁵ son of the dismissed *qāzi* Hibbat Ulla, who, like his father, usurps people's property through false and unjust accusation and through misapplication of the law,⁶ and thereby oppresses them with injustice. He pronounces decrees on the basis of half-and-half,⁷ and he does nothing without a bribe even in the case of the poor and the pious. He forcibly deprives people of their deeds of sale ⁸ executed formerly. ⁹ And he resorts to whipping, like the *faujdārs*, ¹⁰ without any reason. ¹¹ If, in his place, Qazi Ghulam Muhammad is entrusted with the office, it shall win back the confidence of us people to remain settled. Otherwise we shall be obliged by Wali Muhammad's tyranny to leave ¹² the town and the *pargana*. This is the true position.¹³

Written on the 21st of(torn). ¹⁴SEALS (below the text) ¹⁵

1. 'Muhammad Anwar, son of Abdul Latif, serving the Holy Law. 1102'.¹⁶
2. '40. Latif became the beloved of Anwar's heart. 1107'.¹⁷
3. '.....He is the Protector of all'.¹⁸
4. 'Muhammad ... serving...'.¹⁹

ATTESTATIONS

1. Al'abd ¹⁹ : Saha Chand Bhandāri
2. Al'abd : ... Berara ²⁰
3. Al'abd : Chhajjū Singh

IV

J

(torn)

این متنان و مختصر تصدیق و برگشتن از حسن سلوک غلام محمد قاضی مرودتی که اجرائی
 بکار شری و انفصال معاملات بر دقت شریعت عزرا و با دین و دیانت نمیکرد راضی
 و شاکر ایم و از دلی محمد قاضی منصوب پسر بزرگوار محمد قاضی مرودتی که مانند پدر خود
 درست خلق و تعدی بر ساکنان قصب و برگشتن دوازده و جهت و انفراد و بهستان
 و قید و غیر شرعی احکام و اموال مردم را غصب کرده میگرفت و انفصال معاملات
 بر نصف نصف قرار داده و به اخذ رشوت کار احمدی از صفا و عزایم نمیکند
 و قبال باستانه بیع و شرا سابق از دونه علم کشیده میگرفت و مثل فوجداران ...
 شریب و مشایق مینماید به سنگ آمده ایم اگر بجای او غلام محمد قاضی قدیم ...
 باعث آبادانی ما مردم است و الا از دست برستم و بی محمد بخلا وطن ...
 یکین صورت برین منوال است

تقریری التاریخ هیئت و یکم ...

(Seal)	(Seal)	(Seal)	(Seal)
محمد	... رنی	۳۰	محمد افور
... محمد	علی کل شے	عزیز در دله	بن عبداللطیف
... خادم	حقیقت	افور شد به لطیف	خادم شریع شریف
	III	II-4	II-3

ATTESTATIONS

- (۱) العبد ساجد به بنداری (۲) العبد ... برزوه (۳) العبد جوسنگ (۴) العبد محراب راسته ... (۵) العبد مرده رام ساجد
 (۶) العبد بنواری اردوره (۷) العبد بولا مہاجن (۸) العبد بهار کالیہ (۹) العبد قول راسته اوپل (۱۰) چودری وکتا متھاس بدین
 (۱۱) العبد بختی سیکری (۱۲) العبد سچانند وھیر (۱۳) گواہ شد خان محمد ولد ملک محمد بیض (۱۴) گواہ شد غلام محمد بیض

Note : There are four more attestations, in Landā.

SEALS (in the margin)

- (۱) حسین کترین بنگلان (۲) احمد محمد قاضی III ۹ (۳) محمد نیر مستند درگاه (۴) کین و بندہ حسن بن سید حسن
 (۵) برقت ... محی الدین (۶) محمد صوفی (۷) صادق خاک رده آل محمد ۲۸ (۸) فتح علی ... طغیل محمد (۹) محمد صدیق II ۲۲
 (۱۰) محمود افور ... لطف در دول (۱۱) دارو امید شفاعت ز محمد فنی II ۱۵ (۱۲) محمد عاقق خاک قدیم بی ۲۸ (۱۳) بیات اللہ ... احمد کوری
 (۱۴) محمد اکرم ... محی الدین ... تمت اللہ (۱۵) عیدہ محمد صدیق (above) کذا علت صحیح
 (۱۶) معصوم ... قطب عالم (above) کذا الامر

Note : Two seals are illegible.

4. Al'abd : Gulāb Rai ...
5. Al'abd : Hirdai Ram Sāhdan
6. Al'abd : Banwāri Arora ²¹
7. Al'abd : Bola Mahājan ²²
8. Al'abd : Pahāra Kālia ²³
(in the margin)
9. Al'abd : Nawal Rai Uppal
10. Al'abd : Chaudhari Lok Nath Sāhdan ²⁴
11. Al'abd : Bakht Mal Sikri
12. Al'abd : Suchcha Nand Dhīr
13. Witnessed by Khan Muhammad, son of Malik Muhammad ...
14. Witnessed by Ghulam Muhammad ...

SEALS ²⁵

1. 'The lowest of (God's) ²⁶ slaves, ... Husain'.
 2. 'One. Muhammad Fāzil. 1119'.
 3. 'The slave of His Court, Muhammad Munir'.
 4. 'The lowly slave, Hasan, son of Sayyid Muhsin'.
 5. Illegible
 6. 'Sādiq, the dust of the path of the family of Muhammad'. ²⁷
 7. 'Fateh Ali ... Muhammad Tufail'.
 8. 'Muhammad Siddiq. 1122'.
 9. 'Muhammad ...'.
 10. 'Ghani has the hope of Muhammad's intercession. 1115'. ²⁸
 11. 'Muhammad 'Āqil ...'.
 12. 'Hidāyat Ulla ... Ahmad Qādiri'. ²⁹
 13. 'Muhammad Akram ...'.
 14. 'Muhiyuddin ... Ni'amat Ulla'.
 15. 'The slave, Muhammad Siddiq'.
- (above) True to the best of knowledge. ³⁰
16. 'Ma'sūm ... Qutb-i-'Ālam'. ³¹
 17. Illegible.
 18. Illegible.

NOTES

1. The first line of this document contained probably the names of those who initiated this representation.

2. In the original, present tense is used; but the reference is to a past situation.

3. The epithet used for Ghulam Muhammad is *qāzī-i-maurūsī* and probably refers to the fact of his ancestors having served as *qāzīs* in Batala. His seal appears on I.O. 4720(63) in the 49th year of Aurangzeb's reign.

4. The phrase *sharī'at-i-gharrā* was commonly used for Muslim Law.

5. No seal of Wali Muhammad appears on any document of the India Office Library or the Punjab State Archives, Patiala. However, Qazi Muhammad Wali Ulla in 1711 (vide Document II of the *Pindori Collection*) may be the same person as Wali Muhammad of this document.

6. The phrase used in the original is *qayūd - i - ghair - shar'i*. This insistence of both Muslims and Hindus of Batala on the application of the laws of the *sharī'at* is significant.

7. The import appears to be this : that 50% of any gain from a transaction executed in the *qāzī's* court was appropriated by Wali Muhammad.

8. The phrase used in the original is *qabālahā-i-bai'-o-sharā*; literally, deeds of sale and purchase.

9. The word *sābaq* suggests that the reference here is to the time when Wali Muhammad was not holding the office of the *qāzī*.

10. This interesting reference indicates that, in contrast with the *qāzī*, summary punishment was generally associated with the *faujdār*.

11. It is interesting to note that arbitrary action was expected from a *faujdār* but not from a *qāzī*.

12. One protest which the artisans and craftsmen could make was precisely this. Just as the peasants could leave their lands when oppressed beyond tolerance, so could the artisans and craftsmen migrate to other places.

13. This stock phrase was meant to suggest that the persons concerned made a solemn public statement in the presence of officials authorized to authenticate it.

14. The month and the year are torn. The latest date on a seal is A.H. 1122, which clearly indicates that this document belongs to the time after Aurangzeb's death. However, Muhammad Anwar's seal bears the date A.H. 1102. He is coming down from Aurangzeb's reign, like several others whose seals appear on this document. It may be safe to suggest that it belongs to the first decade after Aurangzeb's death.

15. These are probably the seals of officials connected with the *qāzi's* office. They appear to be authenticating the document and not necessarily subscribing to the representation made here. See also note 16 below.

16. Muhammad Anwar, without any doubt, was connected with the *qāzi's* office. His seal appears on some of the documents of the *Bhandāri Collection* also.

17. The use of a pun on a seal or the use of a statement containing proper names and yet giving some meaning, was not uncommon in the early eighteenth century.

18. The word in the original may be *muhīt*. In that case the meaning would be : 'God encompasses everything'.

19. *Al'abd*, literally 'the slave', was conventionally used before putting down one's name as signatures. For those who could not write and, therefore, put down merely a mark, the words used were '*alāmat al'abd*'.

20. Berara is a subcaste of the *khatrīs*. There was, and still is, a *muhalla* of the Beraras in Batala. Some of the other *khatrī* subcastes appearing on this document are Bhandāri, Sāhdan, Uppal, Sīkri and Dhīr. The ability of these *khatrīs* to write Persian script may be noted.

21. The Aroras too had their own subcastes but the epithet *arora* was generally used to distinguish a person from the *khatrīs*.

22. 'Mahajan' probably refers here to the fact of this person's profession of a *sāhūkār* or a businessman. It could also be his family name. Today it has become a surname, like *arora*.

23. Kalias were *brahmans*. They figure frequently in the documents of the *Bhandāri Collection*.

24. *Chaudharīs* were not confined to the countryside. In towns and

cities also there were *chaudharis* belonging to various social groupings, including artisans and craftsmen.

25. All these seals are probably put by those who wanted to subscribe to the representation made in the document.

26. This is implied in *kan'arīn'-bandgān*.

27. This *sunni* sentiment is expressed probably with the *shī'a* sentiment regarding the family of Ali in mind. At any rate, public expression of both *sunni* and *shī'a* sentiments was common in Batala during the eighteenth century. See, J.S. Grewal, "Inscriptions from Batala", *infra*.

28. Cf. note 17 above. The belief in Muhammad's intercession was almost universal among the *sunni* Muslims.

29. By the early eighteenth century Batala had come to have some Qādirī *shaiḥs* and their disciples as its inhabitants.

30. This legal expression, indicative of Muhammad Siddiq's familiarity with such matters, embodies an attitude of humility, in view of the belief that God alone knows the whole truth. Cf. note 31, below.

31. This expression is positively assertive, having a sense of finality in it.

Jakhbar Revisited

On October 15, 1571, a *jogi* named Udant Nath was given two hundred *bighas* of land by Akbar. With no obligation to pay anything to the state in return, he got this land in the upper *bāri doāb* in a village called Bhoa on the bank of the river Ravi. Ten years later he personally met the emperor to submit that fifty *bighas* of the land given to him were submerged by the Ravi. Within ten days of his visit an order was issued by Akbar that fifty *bighas* of land should be given to him. He chose the nearby village of Narot to get this piece of revenue-free land. The two hundred *bighas* given to Udant Nath were initially measured out by the hemp rope. By the bamboo measure, this number was reduced to one hundred and seventy. With the introduction of the *gaz-i-Ilāhi*, the area was further reduced to one hundred and fiftytwo *bighas* and one *biswa*. In the 1590s, the grant of 'Udant Nath and others' was reduced to one hundred *bighas* by the *gaz-i-Ilāhi*. In all probability, Udant Nath had died by this time.¹

Before the death of Akbar, a disciple of Udant Nath, named Surat Nath, ascended the *gaddi* and succeeded in getting the grant of revenue-free land restored to two hundred *bighas* and that too by the *gaz-i-Ilāhi*. In November 1606, Surat Nath presented himself before Jahangir to say that land in Bhoa had been completely submerged under water due to excessive floods.

1. Akbar knew Udant Nath personally and it is unlikely that his grant was reduced by Akbar during his lifetime. Akbar's *farmān* of 1597, which contains the order of reduction, refers to the grant as 'in the name of Udant Nath'. Cf. B.N. Goswamy and J.S. Grewal, *The Mughals and the Jogis of Jakhbar*, Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Simla 1967, 7.

The emperor ordered that revenue-free land should be given to him in the same area, or elsewhere if he so desired. Surat Nath chose to have the whole grant in Narot where fifty *bighas* had already been given to his predecessor. The *jogis* now moved to the place of the new grant and established themselves near a small *jakh* (*yaksha*) shrine.² Because of the *bar* (banyan) tree close to the *jakh*, the settlement eventually came to be known as Jakhbar. And because it was a place of the *jogis*, it was popularly called Jakhbar Jogiān, that is Jakhbar of the *jogis*. Under that name it has survived as a village to this day.

Except for some time in the reign of Aurangzeb the successors of Udant Nath continued to hold the grant given to Surat Nath in Jakhbar. After Surat Nath's death in the 9th year of Jahangir's reign, Than Nath ascended the *gaddi* at Jakhbar. In the 15th year of Shah Jahan's reign, we find the grant being confirmed in his name. Between 1642 and 1660, he was probably succeeded by Bhav Nath. By 1660, Anand Nath had become the *mahant* at Jakhbar. His relations with Anrangzeb were close and cordial.³ Also he received an additional grant of revenue-free land from the emperor in the early 1660s.⁴ In the early 1670s however, when revenue-free lands give to non-Muslims were being resumed through Aurangzeb's orders, the *jogis* of Jakhbar lost their concession. Anand Nath died at about this time. He was succeeded by Hira Nath who remained on the *gaddi* of Jakhbar for about sixtyfive years till his death around 1740.⁵

Mahant Hira Nath appears to have consolidated the

2. Cf. *ibid.*, 7-8

3. *Ibid.*, 32-33.

4. *Ibid.*, 33.

5. In a document of 1741, Hira Nath's death is mentioned as of recent occurrence : *ibid.*, Document XVI.

concessions received by the *jogis* of Jakhbar from time to time and received fresh concessions during his long pontificate. Withdrawal of *madad-i-ma'ash* by Aurangzeb in the early 1770s had not meant actual resumption of the land. The *jogis* were prepared to pay a fixed annual revenue and *parwānas* were issued to the *mutasaddis* of the *pargana* that they would pay one hundred and seventy rupees every year.⁶ This arrangement continued for the rest of Aurangzeb's reign. In the reign of Bahadur Shah, Hira Nath succeeded in getting the concession restored; no revenue was henceforth to be paid by the *jogis*.⁷ In the 14th year of Muhammad Shah's reign, the *panchāyat* of a town named Muhiyuddinpur (now called Madhīnpur) donated one *tanka* from every shop in the *bāzār* to Hira Nath by way of 'first fruit' (*faslāna*) at the time of every harvest. Outside Jakhbar, in the upper *bāri doāb* or even outside the *bāri doāb*,⁸ grants of revenue-free land received by the *jogis* connected with the establishment were confirmed in the name of Hira Nath. In the 17th year of Muhammad Shah's reign, Zakariya Khan, the then Governor of Lahore, issued a *parwāna* reiterating the continuance of concessions given to Hira Nath in the *pargana* of Pathan and elsewhere. This *parwāna* shows that the *jogis* of Jakhbar were holding revenue-free land in nearly a dozen villages, granted by the Rajput chiefs of the Panjab hills as well as by the Mughal rulers of the plains.⁹ They were patronized later by the Sikh rulers. All the *pattas* and *sanads* containing concessions for the establishment were preserved at Jakhbar.

6. *Ibid.*, Document IX.

7. *Ibid.*, Document XI.

8. For a grant in the Bist Jālandhar Doāb, for instance, *ibid.*, Document XIV.

9. This statement is based on Document XV of *The Mughals and the Jogis of Jakhbar*.

Only seventeen documents from the *Jakhbar Collection* have been published in *The Mughals and the Jogis of Jakhbar*. On a recent visit to Jakhbar a new document was brought to our notice by the genial and enlightened Mahant Shankar Nath who now adorns the *gaddi* at Jakhbar. This document was carefully preserved by the former *mahant*, Bābā Brahm Nath, on the assumption that it contains an important concession given by Shah Jahan. The document actually belongs to the reign of Muhammad Shah. But it does contain a very important concession : water of the Shāhnahr for the revenue-free land in Jakhbar and two other villages in the *pargana* of Pathan.¹⁰

The association of this document with Shah Jahan is understandable. The Shāhnahr which brought water to the fields of the *jogis* of Jakhbar was originally dug in the reign of Shah Jahan. It was the best known of the canals which were brought into existence in the upper *bāri doāb* under the direction of Ali Mardan Khan during Shah Jahan's reign. It carried water upto Lahore, covering a distance of about 100 miles, from near Shahpur on the Ravi. There were three other canals, according to Sujan Rai : one for the *pargana* of Pathan, another for the *pargana* of Batala and the third for Haibatpur Patti. Sujan Rai testifies to the fact that these canals were meant not merely to provide water to royal gardens or towns: 'benefit accrues from these canals to cultivated areas'.¹¹ Major Napier, an English engineer who surveyed the upper *bāri doāb* about a hundred and fifty years later, concluded on the basis of the existing canal and the traces and traditions of several other

10. During the Mughal times the present town of Pathankot was known simply as Pathan. The *pargana* also was called the *pargana* of Pathan. The full name Pathankot came into currency during the Sikh times.

11. *Khulāsāt-ut-Tawārīkh* (Khalsa College MS. 475), 71. See also Ganesh Das, *Chār Bāgh-i-Panjāb* (ed. Kirpal Singh), Khalsa College, Amritsar 1965, 208.

branches that 'the irrigation of that tract of country was fully appreciated' in former times. Such indeed was the value of irrigation and so great was the return from a naturally fertile soil that country bordering on the canal afforded 'a most delightful contrast to the bare and parched lands in the centre of the Dooab'.¹² The canal villages and their inhabitants bore an appearance of comfort and ease.

The government of the time also gained from the canals in terms of additional revenue. In 1848, the rate charged from the cultivators was one rupee a *bigha*. They had to pay *nazrs* also to the *munshis* and *chaukidars* connected with the superintendence of the canals. Also, they had to supply subsistence to 'all the Establishment when stopping at a village on canal business'. These perquisites had become a rule and, consequently, the rate per *bigha* had risen in actual practice to a rupee and a half. The additional half was kept by the functionaries as their perquisites. A part of the income from the canals was spent on maintenance and repairs. The rest of the collection was submitted to the state treasury.¹³ A considerable portion of the tax due to the government was remitted. 'Numerous grants of land', said Napier, 'have been made

12. Major Napier submitted his report to John Lawrence, who was officiating as Resident at Lahore in place of his brother Henry Lawrence, on 20 February, 1848. It can now be seen in the *Foreign/Secret Consultation*, dated 28 April, 1848 in the National Archives of India, New Delhi. A copy of the report has been seen through the courtesy of Dr Indu Banga, my colleague in the Department.

13. According to Major Napier the Shāhnahr could irrigate 70,000 *bighas* and therefore, 70,000 rupees should have been collected as tax. But the actual amount collected by the functionaries of the government was only 26,000 rupees. About 6,000 rupees were spent on maintenance and repair. The government received no more than 20,000 rupees. He explains this situation with reference to 'the dishonesty of the native managers'. That may be true, but Napier does not take into account concessions given to the grantees of revenue-free land.

on the borders of the canal to Fakeers and are always to be distinguished by their pretty groves of trees and gardens. These must be carefully respected'. These grantees of revenue-free land did not pay any tax for water.

The position in the Mughal times was not much different from what was observed by Major Napier towards the close of Sikh rule in the upper *bāri doāb*. An order of Zakariya Khan, issued in the 15th year of Muhammad Shah's reign, is addressed to the *dārogha* (Superintendent) of the Shāhnahr. It refers also to the *gumāshtās* (agents) of the *dārogha*.¹⁴ In another order, issued two years later, there is a reference to the *mutasaddīs* (officials) of the Shāhnahr.¹⁵ There is hardly any doubt about the existence of the Superintendent of the Shāhnahr and his establishment during the Mughal times. It is equally certain that a certain tax was charged for supplying water from the canal for irrigational purposes. It is referred to as *nahrāna*, that is tax for canal water.¹⁶ The primary function of the *dārogha* was to keep the canals in good repair and to collect *nahrāna*. His *gumāshtas* or *mutasaddīs* used to collect 'forbidden cesses' (*abwāb-i-mamnū'a*), besides the regular cess on water (*wajh-i-nahrāna*). Also, they used to oblige the villagers to perform unpaid duties in connection with the work of repair and maintenance. Furthermore, *nahrāna* was remitted in the case of certain individuals.

In 1732, Zakariya Khan ordered the *dārogha* of the Shāhnahr

14. B.N. Goswamy and J.S. Grewal, *The Mughal and Sikh Rulers and the Vaishnavas of Pindori*, Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Simla 1969, Document III.

15. *The Mughals and the Jogis of Jakhbar*, Document XV.

16. When we studied one single document of the *Pindori Collection* which relates to the Shāhnahr, the position regarding *nahrana* and *abwāb-i-mamnū'a* was not very clear. By now, it is. Cf. *The Mughal and Sikh Rulers and the Vaishnavas of Pindori*, 98n13.

not to collect any *nahrāna* from Gosāin Ram Das, the *Mahant* of the Vaishnava establishment at Pindori, for the village Talibabad which had been given in donation to the Gosāin by an *āmil* named Bhawani Das after purchasing it from its proprietors.¹⁷ According to an order issued two years later, the *mutasaddis* of the Shāhnahr were to continue releasing water for the orchards and the cultivated land of the village Chak Jogīān (Jakhbar) in accordance with the concessions given to the *jogīs* in former times.' The document presented here had been issued in the 8th year of Muhammad Shah's reign when Zakariya Khan was appointed as the Governor of Lahore. The *mutasaddis* are asked to continue releasing water for all the three channels meant for irrigating the revenue-free land of Mahant Hira Nath in three different villages. There is no explicit reference to the remission of *nahrāna* but it is almost certain that *nahrāna* was not to be levied. In fact it is clearly stated that the *mutasaddis* were not to trouble the grantee on account of *kār*, *begār* or the *abwāb-i-mamnū'a*. In other words, Mahant Hira Nath was not expected to supply any labour for work on the canal, or for catering to the needs of the functionaries of the *dārogha's* department, and he was not expected to pay any local cess.

It is not clear who issued this order to the *mutasaddis* of the Shāhnahr. The largest seal on the document is of one Abdul Ali, but there is no indication of his official position. Apparently the term *dārogha-i-shāhnahr* appears below one seal, the seal of Muhammad Sa'id. It is difficult to say, however, with any certainty that this person was the *dārogha*. Then there is the seal of one Mubarak who is called Mian Muhammad Mubarak by the scribe and who refers to himself in the seal as a servant of Zakariya Khan. The signatures of the *peshkār* of Mian Muhammad Mubarak also appear on the document. There are several other seals of Hindu

17. *The Mughal and Sikh Rulers and the Vaishnavas of Pindori*, Document III.

and Muslim functionaries, but without any indication of their position. One of these seals bears the date A.H. 1145, which would make it posterior to the document. A few *qānūngos*, a few *chaudharis* and a few prominent persons have signed the document as 'witnesses'. What appears to be clear from the character of this document is that it was not issued by an authority outside the upper *bāri doāb*. Remission of *nahrāna* was familiar to almost all the functionaries of the government who were connected with revenue administration.

Remission of *nahrāna* was a logical extension of concessions given to the grantees of revenue-free land. An average cultivator of the Mughal times paid various cesses and contributed towards unpaid labour, besides paying the regularly assessed revenue to the government. In the cases of land irrigated by canal water the cultivator paid additional revenue and the officials connected with the canal imposed their own cesses and impressed labour for their own purposes. The grantees of *madad-i-ma'āsh* land did not pay any revenue or they received the revenue due to the government, if the land assigned to them did not actually belong to them as proprietors. Also these grantees were not supposed to pay any cesses, whether legally imposed by the state or forced on the cultivators by the local officials as their perquisites. They were not supposed to contribute unpaid labour for any work of the officials. If a grantee was given the additional concession of free water from a canal, he did not pay *nahrāna* or any cess imposed by the functionaries of the canal department and he did not contribute to unpaid labour. In short, the grantee owed no formal and tangible obligation to the state. However, he was supposed to repay all the more in terms of good will for the state. His good will was valuable in proportion to his influence with the people. Concessions given to the *jogis* of Jakhbar are, among other things, an index of their influence with the people.

Let us now turn to the document.

- Alif* ¹
- Shadow of God ²
- (Seal) ⁴
Gurdit Mal
(regnal) year 5
(below) *sād*
- (Seal) ⁵
Ali Khan
became the slave
of the king of men
and struck the face
of the enemy with
the sword
- (Seal) ⁷
Khan Chand
16
- (Seal) ⁸
Nihal Chand
2
- (Seal) ⁹
1145
Murad
... of
Muhammad
Shah
- (Seal) ³
1139
From the core
of my heart I became
the slave of
Ali
- (Seal) ⁶
Mahmud
Khan son of
Qaim Khan
17
(below) *sād*
- (Seal) ¹⁴
1138
Mir
Muhammadi
became a slave
through God's
grace
- (Seal) ¹⁶
The
goblet they made
my confidant and
saviour
- (Seal) ¹³
Jaswant
son of Balak Ram
Who remains in peace in
the temple of
God
- (Seal) ¹²
Chhajju
son of ...
Jamal
- (Seal) ¹¹
Mubarak
the servant of
Zakriya Khan Bahadur
(above) *sād*
(below, beside a mark)
The mark of the signatures
of Muhammad Mubarak
- (Seal) ¹⁰
1136
Muhammad Sa'id
(below) Dārogha of the
Shāhnahr (?)
- (Seal) ¹⁵
Mir
Abdul Karim
son of
Abdul Rahim
One
- (Seal) ¹⁷
1135
Amar Singh
Sahni
(on the left) *sād*

Be it known to the present and the future *mutasaddis*¹⁸ of the affairs of the Shāhnahr which, under the jurisdiction of the capital of Lahore, is attached to the province of the Panjab¹⁹ that three pieces of *ā'imma* land²⁰ of the *jogis* in Jakhbar and other villages in the *pargana* of Pathan(kot)²¹ stand confirmed of old²² in the name of Jogī Hira Nath who gets the lands cultivated and feeds the *faqirs*.²³ On that account it is inscribed that this matter relates to royal charities.²⁴ They should allow free flow of water, without interference or negligence, to all the three pieces of *ā'imma* land which are served by three water-wheels²⁵ and which have been made revenue-free to bring good fortune to the Shadow of God²⁶ and the Nawābs.²⁷ Also, they should desist from troubling the grantee on account of *kār* and *begār*,²⁸ and all the *hubūbāt*²⁹ and *abwāb*³⁰ which have been declared forbidden by the court, the asylum of *sultāns*.³¹ Regarding this to be an important injunction, they should not do anything to the contrary.³²

Inscribed on the 22nd of Shawwāl, regnal year 8.³³

Baiz³⁴

ENDORSEMENTS (in the margin)

- | | |
|---|--------------------|
| 1. Witnessed by Tāli'mand, the <i>qānūngo</i> . ³⁵ | Baiz ³⁶ |
| 2. Witnessed by Tek Chand, the <i>qānūngo</i> . | Baiz |
| 3. Witnessed by Lakhpāt Rai, the <i>qānūngo</i> . | Baiz |
| 4. Witnessed by Maha Singh, the <i>chaudhari</i> . ³⁷ | Baiz |
| 5. Witnessed by Mustaqim, the <i>chaudhari</i> . | Baiz |
| 6. (Witnessed by) Dasaundhi Gujjar. ³⁸ | |
| 7. (In Landā) The evidence of ... ³⁹ | |
| 8. (Seal) ⁴⁰ 'Dulla, son of Jādā Sahni (?), the slave of the Court'. ⁴¹ | |

مقدمات و کلیات حالت استقبال و نهضت
 صفات صوبه پنجاب بر این در موازات
 زنی ای که جوکان در دفع حکیم و علم کیهان
 بر این راه جو که از تدریس معارف نورانی است
 به به غیران میوزانند سازان قلندر در این
 حرارت پخته است می باید در هر دو طرف
 در صدق و حق و لواجه جان است بلای
 است زشت و نه میدان باشند است
 کار و بکار و ملک صواب و ایوب ممنوعه یا کاه
 سانه فراخ و متوقن احوال مستند در باب
 مکتب اکبر و القلم مکتب نورانی و مکتب
 المکتب و المکتب

حسن سمانی

(Seal)

جسوست بن باکر ام
بر دست درین کرت سمام

(Seal)

چچ ولد

(Seal)

سبارک فدوی
زکریا خان سبادر

(Seal)

علامت دستخط میان محمد مبارک

above below

(Seal)

بهدق دل
شیر محمد اعلی

۱۱۳۹

(Seal)

گوردن
سنده

(below) مح

(Seal)

زند برزق دشمن
تیغ بران سمانان شد
علامت شاه مردان

(Seal)

خان چند
۱۶

(Seal)

محمود خان
ولد قاسم خان
۱۴

(Seal)

میر مهدی
بنده از لطف
ایزدی

(below)

(Seal)

محمد سید
۱۱۳۶

دار و در مشهور
عبدالله
بن عبدالرحیم
اند

(Seal)

۵
امر سحر شبنی
۱۱۳۵

(on the left) مح

مستند این مهمات حال و استقبال شاه به تعلقه دار السلطنت لایبور
مضامین صوبه پنجاب بداشتند که موازی سه قطعه اراضی
زمین آئید جوگیان که در موضع جکبیر و غیره علم پرگنه پتھان
پر میرا تپه جوگی از قدیم مقرر دارد و زراعت آنجا
را به فقیران میخواند بنا بران کسی میگرد که اینست در
خیرات بادشاهی است می باید که هر سه قطعه آئید دست آسیان
که تصدق فرقی و نوا اوصا جان است بلا مزاحمت
آب از شاه نبر میداد و باشند اجمال نکنند و از
ک. و بیگار و جوبات اواب ممنوعه بارگاه سلاطین
پناه مزاحم و متعرض احوال نشوند درین باب
تا کید آئید دانسته تخلف نورزند

تقریباً تاریخ بیت ۲ و دوم شوال سنه ۱۱۳۵

ENDORSEMENTS (in the margin)

۱) گواه شد طالعند قانوگری بیض

۲) گواه شد میک چند قانوگری بیض

۳) گواه شد گلبست راست قانوگری بیض

۴) گواه شد بهاسنگ چدربری بیض

۵) گواه شد مستقیم چدربری بیض

۶) دسودنی چچ

۷) گاهی ... کی in Landā.

۸) (Seal) ۱ : دول این جاود ثابنی

بنده درگاه

۹) (Seal) ۲ : غور بر این دول

بنده درگاه

دستخط محترم ... (below, in Landā)

۱۰) دستخط سپهرام پیشاکیان صاحب محمد مبارک ...

9. (Seal) 'Gujjar Mal, son of Dulla, the slave of the Court.
7', ⁴²

(below, in Landā) Signatures of Gujjar Mal ... ⁴³

10. Signatures of Sehaj Ram, the *peshkār* of Mian Sahib
Muhammad Mubarak ... ⁴⁴

Note : There is a cryptic entry in the top right corner of the document, in all probability added for the sake of convenience in identifying the document, to the effect that it relates to exemption from *kār* and *begār* in the case of the village Jakhbar Jogiān. It does not mean, however, that there were no other concessions given to the *jogis* of Jakhbar. This very document refers to other, more important, concessions.

NOTES

1. The letter *alif* on a document like the present one conventionally stood for Allahū Akbar (God is Great) and served as the *sarnāma*. To begin with the name of God was regarded as an appropriate expression of piety and humility.
2. This phrase refers to the Emperor and is taken out of the body of the text as a mark of respect. Some space is left blank where this phrase was meant to occur in the text. This too was a convention of the Mughal times. See also note 26, below.
3. This is the largest seal on the document and it contains a pun. The name of the person using this seal is Abdul Ali, literally 'the slave of Ali', who is playing upon the meaning of his name in order to indicate his reverence for the fourth Caliph, Ali. In another seal also, reverence for Ali is expressed : note 5, below. Reverence for Ali was not confined to the Shī'as, but Abdul Ali could be a Shī'a. In any case, the existence of the Shī'as in the upper *bārī dōāb* during the eighteenth century is known from other evidence. It has not been possible to identify the official position of Abdul Ali. He assumed office in 1727-28.
4. Gurdit Mal also appears to have been officially connected with matters relating to the Shāhnahr. He assumed office in 1724. The use of the letter *sād* below his seal indicates that he is affirming the authenticity of the order. The letter stood for *sādiq* or *sahī* and it was normally used by the highest authority connected with an order. In this document, however several officials are using the letter.
5. Ali Khan of this seal refers to the Caliph Ali as *shāh-i-mardān*, literally 'the king of men,' and regards himself as 'the slave' of Ali. On his behalf, Ali Khan professes to use his sword against the enemies of Ali. This is almost in reply to the anti-Shī'a sentiment of the Sunnīs.
6. Mahmud Khan also uses the letter *sād* below his seal. See note 4, above.
7. Khan Chand got his seal prepared in the 16th year of Muhammad Shah's reign, whereas the document was prepared in the 8th regnal year. Obviously, Khan Chand placed his seal on the document at a later stage, presumably to confirm the authenticity of the document after verification. He might have replaced some other official in the 16th regnal year.

8. Nihal Chand's seal was prepared in the 2nd regnal year, though it does not necessarily follow that he put his seal on the document in the 8th year itself when the order was issued.

9. This seal, like Khan Chand's, was placed on the document at a later stage. There is a clear reference here to the reign of Muhammad Shah, besides the year A.H. 1145. Murad came to office in the 15th year of Muhammad Shah's reign.

10. This seal was prepared in the 6th year of Muhammad Shah's reign and Muhammad Sa'id, in all probability, was the *dārogha* of the *Shāhnahr* at this time.

11. This seal of Mubarak does not bear any date but he calls himself the servant of Zakariya Khan, the Governor of Lahore from 1726 to 1745. Mubarak was illiterate and he put merely a mark beside his seal. Only the scribe has written that this mark stands for the signatures of Muhammad Mubarak. There are numerous documents in the *Bhandāri Collection* of the Punjab State Archives, Patiala, which bear such marks by illiterate witnesses and others, clearly showing that this was quite a common practice of the Mughal times. In fact the phrase '*alāmat al-'abā*' was meant strictly for such marks, indicating that the person concerned did not know how to sign.

12. It is not clear whether or not Chhajju was holding any official position. The use of seal was by no means confined to officials.

13. If our reading of the inscription on this seal is correct, Jaswant is anxious to present himself as a pious person.

14. The impression of this seal is rather faint but the inscription is easily decipherable. The seal was prepared in the 8th year of Muhammad Shah's reign. Mir Muhammadi refers to his humility as a mark of 'God's grace, a sentiment which was common among the *sūfis*. In the present case, however, it could also mean that the position enjoyed by Mir Muhammadi was a gift from God.

15. The inscription on this seal is easy to decipher but the epithet *mīr* might have been used for Abdul Rahim, the father. The seal was prepared in the first year of Muhammad Shah's reign, as the word *abā* clearly indicates.

16. The reading of this inscription may be incorrect. It is rather

faint. However, the line has a mystical dimension and reminds of Iraqi's verse in which he says that if the wine had been poured in the goblet in the first instance how was he to be blamed :

Nukhustīn bāda kāndar jān kardand
'Irāqī rā chirā badnām kardand

17. If our reading is correct, the epithet Sahni would make Amar Singh a *khatrī* of that subcaste. If the letter *sād* goes with his seal, it may be safe to assume that he was officially connected with the affairs of the Shāhnahr and came into office in the 5th year of Muhammad Shah's reign. The number of *khatrīs* in the administration of the Mughal Panjab, especially at the lower levels, was by no means inconsiderable.

18. The term *unlasaddī* was used for the officials in general during the Mughal times, though it was not confined to government officials. See also, B.N. Goswamy and J.S. Grewal, *The Mughals and the Jogis Of Jakhbar*, 135.

19. Whereas the Shāhnahr is under the jurisdiction of the governor of Lahore, the area served by that canal falls within the territory of the province of the Panjab. That appears to be the import of the sentence used here. It is not clear, however, why this distinction is sought to be made,

20. In the eighteenth century it was rather common to refer to *madad-i-ma'āsh* land as *ā'imma* land. Strictly speaking, the latter should have been given only to the '*ulamā*'. But, as it is obvious from the present and many other cases, grant of revenue-free land was not confined to the '*ulamā*'. It was not confined in fact to Muslims during the Mughal times.

21. The present name of the town after which the *pargana* was known in the Mughal times is Pathankot, but then it was known simply as *Pathan*.

22. By 1727, Hira Nath had acted as the *mahant* of the Jakhbar establishment for over half a century. Therefore, the use of the term *az qadīm* is appropriate even for himself. But perhaps the reference here is also to the predecessors of Hira Nath.

23. The term *fāqīr* in the present context refers to the *jogīs* of the Jakhbar establishment and to visiting *jogīs*.

24. The explicit reference to the grant of revenue-free land as an act of charity on the part of the ruler is rather interesting.

25. The word used in the original is *āsiya* which refers to paddles and the wheel meant for drawing water from the canal into a small channel.

26. The phrase *zill-i-subhānī*, literally the shadow of God, is not given in the text at this place. Some space is left blank and the phrase is given at the top. See note 2, above.

27. The equation of the governors of the province with the royalty in matters of *madaḍ-i-ma'āsh* grant is rather unusual. It is interesting to note in this connection that in 1732 Zakariya Khan would exempt the Gosāin of Pindori in the upper *bāri doāb* from *nahrāna* without reference to any order of the Emperor : B.N. Goswamy and J.S. Grewal, *The Mughal and Sikh Rulers and the Vaishnavas of Pindori*, Document IV.

28. *Kār* and *begār* refer to compulsory labour impressed by the government officials in various situations, particularly to carry their baggage. No compensation was paid for such labour by the government. It is very likely, however, that this service was generally performed by the village *hamīns* who were paid in kind by the cultivators or proprietors at fixed rates for their services for the whole year but not specifically for *kār* or *begār*. Cf. *The Mughals and the Jogis of Jakhbar*, 91 n. 20; Irfan Habib, *The Agrarian System of Mughal India*, Asia Publishing House, Bombay 1963, 150, 239 & 248.

29-30. According to Irfan Habib, *abwāb* and *hubūbāt* can be equated with *ikhrajāt* : *The Agrarian System of Mughal India*, 243. These terms refer to cesses imposed in addition to the regular revenue demand. See also, *The Mughals and the Jogis of Jakhbar*, 149-50; *The Mughal and Sikh Rulers and the Vaishnavas of Pindori*, 98.

31. The words used in the original are *bārgāh-i-salātīn panāh*. The imperial character of the Mughal state and the emperor's status as a suzerain over vassal chiefs make this phrase appropriate even for the reign of Muhammad Shah.

32. This is a stock sentence used in Mughal *farmāns* and *parwānas* to underline the obligation of obeying the order conveyed.

33. The name of the ruler is not given but there is hardly any doubt that it was the reign of Muhammad Shah.

34. The word *baiz* was generally written at the end of a document to indicate the end and to obviate any later unwarranted addition.

35. The signatures of a *qānūngo* on this document could be expected from the fact that his primary functions were related to land and its revenue. He was the permanent repository of information concerning revenue receipts, area statistics, local rates of revenue and local customs and practices. See also, *The Mughals and the Jogs of Jakhbar*, 170.

36. The word *haiṛ* at the end of signatures was not common but several instances of this kind are known. The purpose would be the same as in note 34, above.

37. The *chaudhārī* occupied a crucial position in the machinery for the collection of revenue. His signatures on the document, like those of the *qānūngos*, could be expected even *a priori*.

38. A considerable number of Gujjars lived in the upper *bārī doāb* in the 18th century and Dasaundhi appears to be one of their leading men or *chaudhārīs*.

39. It has not been possible to decipher the name of the witness but he is certainly a different person from the rest of the witnesses. *Landā* was the script commonly used by the business communities in the Panjab plains, though it was by no means confined to them.

40. The seal of Dulla, as also the seal of Gujjar Mal, appears to have been used by him not in any official capacity but merely as a witness. In the case of Gujjar Mal it is added in *Landā* that the seal impression stands for the signatures of Gujjar Mal. The use of a seal was not confined to officials. In fact many an influential but illiterate person found it convenient to make use of a seal for signatures. It was also respectable.

41. The phrase used in this seal, as in that of Gujjar Mal, is *banda-i-dargāh* which is suggestive of both the royal court and the Court of God.

42. Dulla and Gujjar Mal of these seals appear to be the father and the son.

43. This is added by Gujjar Mal himself who could write in *Landā*, but not in Persian.

44. No signatures of Sehaj Ram, the *peshkār* of Mian Muhammad Mubarak of note 11, appear on the document separately from this note.

Sikh Revenue Administration : The Framework

The formation of administrative units in the directly administered dominions of the Sikhs was intimately connected with the process of territorial occupation in the late eighteenth and the early nineteenth century. To take up the largest unit first, the only Mughal province to be conquered entirely at one time was the province of Kashmir, conquered by Ranjit Singh in 1819. And Kashmir was treated as a regular province of the kingdom of Lahore from its conquest to its conferment upon Gulab Singh by the British in 1846. The Mughal *sūba* of Multan was never entirely conquered by the Sikhs. Nevertheless, *nāzims* were appointed to Multan by Jhanda Singh and Ganda Singh Bhangi in the late eighteenth century¹ and by Ranjit Singh in the early nineteenth. Even in the case of Multan there was some resemblance to the Mughal position, as the core areas of the Mughal *sūba* constituted the Sikh province of Multan. There, however, any legitimate comparison with the Mughal times ends. We do not know of any other territorial unit in the Sikh dominions resembling a former Mughal province in terms of revenues and extent.

In spite of general belief to the contrary, no *nāzim* was ever appointed for the entire territory covered by the Mughal province of Lahore. The customary division of the kingdom of Ranjit Singh into the four *sūbas* of Lahore, Multan, Kashmir and Peshawar is not only misleading but also inaccurate. What was formerly the Mughal province of Lahore had been divided among

1. Ganesh Das, *Chār Bāgh-i-Panjāb*, (ed. Kirpal Singh) Khalsa College, Amritsar 1965, 132. Ganesh Das uses the term *nāzim* also for Dal Singh Gill who was the administrator of Ahmadabad on behalf of Charhat Singh : *loc. cit.*

a large number of independent Sikh chiefs during the late eighteenth century; it took Ranjit Singh nearly two decades to subjugate this area; and it was placed under several *nāzims*, each of whom administered only a part. Diwan Dina Nath is reported to have mentioned seven 'great districts' in the dominions of Ranjit Singh: Kashmir, Multan, Peshawar, Kangra, Jullundur Doab, Wazirabad and Pind Dadan Khan.² This by no means is a complete list of the administrative units placed under *nāzims* in the early nineteenth century.³

2. (From John Lawrence to H.M. Elliot) *Foreign/Secret Consultation*, 30 October 1847, No. 95 (National Archives of India, New Delhi). Cf. N.K. Sinha, *Ranjit Singh*, A. Mukherjee & Co., Calcutta 1968 (3rd ed), 140-41.

3. In the lower Rachna Doab, Arthur Cocks talks of the province of Jhang and its *nāzims* Mul Raj and Rulia Ram: (Report on the Summary Settlement of the Lower Rechna Doab) *Foreign/Secret Consultation*, 28 April 1848, Nos. 57-66, para 55. John Lawrence also refers to the province of Jhang and its *nāzims*: *Foreign/Political Proceedings*, 28 Dec., 1846, No. 1239. He adds the name of Misar Bhagwan Singh as one of the *nāzims*.

The *mājha* or the region covered by the districts of Lahore and Amritsar, has also been referred to as a primary administrative division: Sohan Lal, *Umdat-ut-Tawārikh*, Lahore 1887-89, Daftar III, Part 3, 326; *Foreign/Political Proceedings*, 31 Dec., 1847, Nos. 2470-75.

Similarly, in the upper Chaj Doab, the Punchh and Rajauri region is known to have been placed under Sardar Chatar Singh Atāriwāla and his son Sher Singh: *Parwānazāt-i-Sardār Chatar Singh-wa-Sardār Sher Singh Atāriwāla*, Sikh History Research Department (SHR), Khalsa College, Amritsar, MSS 1264 & 1265 (2 Parts).

In the upper Sindh Sagar Doab, the Hazara region was administered by Hukam Singh Chimni, Amar Singh Majithia, Hari Singh Nalwa, Mul Raj, Tej Singh and Amar Singh Sandhanwalia: E.G. Wace, *Report on the Land-Revenue Settlement of the Hazara District, 1868-74*, 28-29; Sohan Lal, *Umdat-ut-Tawārikh*, Daftar II, 160-61, 239 & 269-72; Daftar III, Part 4, 429 & 479. See also Ganesh Das, *Chār Bāgh-i-Panjāb*, 156. Cf. Muhammad Azam Beg, *Tārīkh-i-Hazāra*, Victoria Press, Lahore 1878, II, 688-693, 714, 717 & 721; N.K. Sinha, *Ranjit Singh*, 109-10.

It may be pointed out that Mul Raj, the *nāzim* of Hazara, was a different person from Diwan Mul Raj of Multan.

The Sikh province of Peshawar was in fact one of the several primary divisions, besides Kashmir and Multan. In terms of extent and resources it was much smaller than either Multan or Kashmir. It did not include all the Sikh territories even on the west of the river Indus. Dera Ghazi Khan, Dera Ismail Khan, Bannu and Tank and Kohat were not placed within the administrative jurisdiction of Peshawar.⁴ Nevertheless, Peshawar did form a separate administrative unit and it is legitimate to talk of General Avitabile and Sardar Tej Singh as the Sikh *nāzims* of Peshawar.⁵

Whatever the term used for the administrator of the primary unit and whatever the size of the unit itself, the administrator was directly responsible to the ruler. The term *nāzim*

4. Sardar Atar Singh was appointed to the administration of Kohat in 1834, and it was later given in *jāgīr* to Sultan Muhammad Khan Barakzai along with Hasht nagar, Tiri and Hangu, altogether worth 1,50,000 rupees : H.G. Tucker, *Report on the Settlement of the Kohat District, 1884*, 38-39; see also Munshi Gopal Das, *Tārīkh-i-Peshawar*, Kohinoor Press, Lahore (n.d.), II, 387, 388, 389, 390, 391 & 392.

In the early 1830s, for example, Dera Ghazi Khan was placed under the independent charge of General Ventura; it was attached to Multan later on : F.W.R. Fryer, *Final Report on the First Regular Settlement of the Dera Ghazi Khan District, 1869-74*, 37; see also Amar Nath, *Zafarnāma-i-Ranjit Singh*, (ed. Sita Ram Kohli), University of the Punjab, Lahore 1928, 195-96.

Likewise, in 1837, Diwan Hakim Rai had been appointed to administer Dera Ismail Khan : Sohan Lal, *Umdat-ut-Tawārīkh*, Daftar III, Part 4, 413.

5. Sohan Lal, *Umdat-ut-Tawārīkh*, Daftar III, Part 2, 253, 263, 274 & 277; Part 3, 283 & 286; Part 4, 446; Part 5, 19, 107 & 116; Daftar IV, Part 1, 22-23; see also Gopal Das, *Tārīkh-i-Peshawar*, II, 387-89.

It may be added that Amar Nath refers to the appointment of Jahan-dad Khan to the *nizāmat* of Peshawar in 1818 and to Yar Muhammad Khan as its *nāzim* in 1822 : *Zafarnāma*, II, 119 & 155.

may therefore be legitimately used for him.⁶ The *nāzim* held office in accordance with the pleasure of his master. There was no fixed tenure of his office and no regular pattern appears to emerge from the actual appointments of *nāzims* made by Ranjit Singh and his successors. In the Kangra hills, for example, Sardar Desa Singh Majithia and his son acted as *nāzims* for over thirty years.⁷ In the Jullundur Doab, Diwan Mohkam Chand was succeeded by several *nāzims* including his son Moti Ram, from 1814 to 1845: Avitabile, Nuruddin, Misar Rup Lal, Shaikh Ghulam Muhiyuddin, for example.⁸

It has been observed recently that the Mughal emperors did not approve of long terms for *nāzims* and generally transferred or recalled them after two or three years. There was nonetheless a large range of variation in the tenure of the Mughal *nāzims*; from less than a year to over twenty years.⁹ Under Ranjit Singh and his successors eleven *nāzims* were appointed to Kashmir between 1819 and 1845: Misar Diwan Chand, Diwan Moti Ram, Sardar Hari Singh Nalwa, Diwan Moti Ram (second term), Chuni Lal, Diwan Kirpa Ram, Bhamman Singh, Prince Sher Singh, Mihaan Singh the Colonel, Shaikh Ghulam Muhiyuddin and his son

6. The other terms used for the administrator of a primary division are *sūbadār*, *hākīm* and even *hārdār*. For the use of the term *sūbadār*, see, for example, Ganesh Das, *Chār Bāgh-i-Panjāb*, 151, 250, 262, 304, 309, 377 & 381. Sohan Lal refers to the office of Avitabile on his appointment in 1837 as the *hārdār-i-Peshawar*: *Umdat-ut-Tawārikh*, Daftar III, Part 4, 402.

7. *Foreign/Secret Consultation*, 26 Dec., 1846, 1325-27; *Gazetteer of the Kangra District, 1883-84*, 218.

8. Ganesh Das, *Chār Bāgh-i-Panjāb*; Amar Nath, *Zafarnāma*, 46 & 47; Lepel Griffin & C. F. Massy, *Chiefs and Families of Note in the Punjab*, 2 Vols., Lahore 1940, I, 161-63.

9. M. Athar Ali, "Provincial Governors under Aurangzeb—An Analysis", *Medieval India—A Miscellany*, I, 24.

Imamuddin.¹⁰ Of these *nāzims*, Mihan Singh enjoyed the longest term of about seven years till his death in 1841. Diwan Chand and Bhamman Singh held office for less than a year. On the average, the tenure of the Sikh *nāzims* of Kashmir was from two to three years. In Multan, six *nāzims* were appointed by Ranjit Singh and his successors : Sukh Dayal, Sham Singh Peshawaria, Jawahar Mal, Hazari Badan Singh, Sawan Mal and Mul Raj.¹¹ Of these *nāzims*, Sawan Mal enjoyed the longest tenure of about fifteen years.¹²

10. For the Sikh *nāzims* of Kashmir, see Kirpa Ram, *Gulzār-i-Kashmīr*, Kohinoor Press, Lahore 1870, 251-63; Mir Ahmad, *Dasht al-Amal-i-Kashmīr*, MS, M/829, Punjab State Archives, Patiala, ff. 3 b & 4 a; *Tārīkh-i-Kashmīr*, (photostat from Cambridge), M/1004, Punjab State Archives, Patiala (anon), ff. 202 a & b, 204 a & 206 a & b; Ganeshi Lal, *Siyahat-i-Kashmīr* (tr. V.S. Suri), Simla 1955, 22 & 26; Kirpa Ram, *Gulāb-nāma*, MS, M/358, Punjab State Archives, Patiala, 326; *News of the Court of Ranjit Singh* (Persian Misc. 65), National Archives of India, New Delhi, 15; Sohan Lal, *Umdat-ut-Tawārīkh*, Daftar II, 221, 261-62, 290, 377 & 380; Daftar III, Part I, 111 & Part 2, 201; Daftar IV, Part 2, 28-29; Amar Nath, *Zafarnāma*, 117, 141, 162-63, 176 & 226-27; Ahmad Shah, *Tārīkh-i-Hind*, MS, SHR 1291, Khalsa College, Amritsar, 122, 123, 478 & 481; Shahamat Ali, *The Sikhs and Afghans*, (first published, 1847) Languages Department, Punjab, 1970 (reprint), 53; Muhammadudin Fauq, *Muqammat Tārīkh Kashmīr*, Lahore 1912, Part 3, 9, 54, 58, 61-65, 66-72 & 79-89.

11. For the *nāzims* of Multan, see Sohan Lal, *Umdat-ut-Tawārīkh*, Daftar II, 263; Munshi Hukam Chand, *Tārīkh-i-Zila'-i-Multān*, New Imperial Press, Lahore 1884, 470. After Hazari Badan Singh and before the appointment of Sawan Mal, several *nāzims* remained in office each for a month or two, for example, Tulsidhar, Dhian Singh, Babu Baj Singh and Kharak Singh : *loc. cit.* Ahmad Shah, *Tārīkh-i-Hind*, 478; Ganesh Das, *Chār Bāgh-i-Panjāb*, 381; *News of the Court of Ranjit Singh* (Persian Misc. 65) 23-24 & 277.

12. According to Munshi Hukam Chand, Extra Assistant Commissioner, Multan, Sawan Mal remained the *nāzim* of Multan from 1826 to 1844 : *Tārīkh-i-Zila'-i-Multān*, 470. According to G.L. Chopra, Sawan Mal became the *nāzim* of Multan in 1828 : *The Panjab as a Sovereign State*, 87. However,

The *nāzim* was allowed to wield considerable powers in the territory under his jurisdiction.¹³ His primary duty was to maintain peace and order in his territory and to submit regular instalments of revenue to the royal treasury.¹⁴ Some of the British administrators were of the opinion that there was little enquiry made into the methods used by a *nāzim* so long as he sent enough money to Lahore.¹⁵ This may be true of the 1840s, but Ranjit Singh was extremely vigilant and exercised strict control over the *nāzims* appointed by him. For example, Jamadar Khushal Singh submitted to the Maharaja in 1825 that Chuni Lal, the *nāzim* of Kashmir, had not paid the *rasūm* assigned by the Maharaja to Jamadar Khushal Singh in the province of Kashmir. An order was immediately issued to the *nāzim* to make prompt

Sohan Lal refers to him as the *nāzim* of Multan for the first time in 1830 : *Umdat-us-Tawārikh*, Daftar II, 407. Earlier, he is mentioned among the *hārdārs* of Multan : *ibid.*, 349, 355, 378 & 382. In fact, Sawan Mal got his first independent charge in this region as the *ijāradār* of Shujabad after having worked with Badan Hazari Singh for three years : cf. Munshi Hukam Chand, *ibid.*, 470. It may be interesting to note that from the *News of the Court of Ranjit Singh*, it is clear that Jawahar Mal was replaced by Badan Hazari Singh as the *nāzim* of Multan in the early part of 1825 : (Persian Misc. 65), 49.

13. For example, with reference to the *nāzims* of Kangra, a British settlement officer observed that all fiscal, military and miscellaneous charges relating to receipts and disbursements fell under their authority : Barnes' Settlement Report of Kangra, quoted, J.M. Douie, *The Punjab Settlement Manual*, Lahore 1930 (4th ed.), 20. Probably, the *nāzims* of outlying provinces like Avitabile in Peshawar and Hari Singh Nalwa in Hazara enjoyed still greater powers.

14. According to John Lawrence, the *nāzim* was required to punctually send the revenues collected from the territory under his charge : *Foreign/Secret Consultation*, 26 Dec., 1846, No. 1325-27.

15. For example, J.M. Douie, *Punjab Settlement Manual*, 19.

payments.¹⁶ It may not be a sheer coincidence that Chuni Lal was removed from office soon afterwards. In any case, Jawahar Mal was removed from the *nizāmat* of Multan on a report that he had wantonly killed an innocent person.¹⁷ Sham Singh Peshawaria had been removed from the *nizāmat* of Multan because he proved to be oppressive.¹⁸ Ranjit Singh's frequent instructions to his *nāzims* and other officials that the subject peoples were to be regarded as a 'trust from God' become all the more significant for his alacrity in taking action against all those who disregarded his instructions.¹⁹

The Sikh *nāzims* who enjoyed long terms of office were also some of the best *nāzims* : Desa Singh Majithia in Kangra, Lehna Singh Majithia in Kangra and the *mājha*, Misar Rup Lal in the Jullundur Doab, Mihaan Singh in Kashmir, Hari Singh

16. *News of the Court of Ranjit Singh* (Persian Misc. 65), 67-68.

17. *Ibid.*, 23-24.

It may be added that Ranjit Singh's intelligence service was extremely efficient and he was keen to know from all sorts of sources what was happening in the different parts of his empire.

18. Amar Nath, *Zafarnāma*, 134.

19. For example, in 1833, the year of famine in Kashmir, Ranjit Singh wrote a sarcastic letter to Kanwar Sher Singh, who was the *nāzim* of Kashmir at this time, in order to make him realize that he had been neglecting his duties : Sohan Lal, *Umdat-ut-Tawārikh*, Daftar III, Part 2, 180. Soon afterwards Sher Singh was removed from the *nizāmat* and Mihaan Singh was appointed in his place with very strict injunctions to restore Kashmir to its former prosperity : *ibid.*, 201; Amar Nath, *Zafarnāma*, 226-27.

For some other examples of Ranjit Singh's keenness to investigate into reports and complaints against the functionaries of the state, see Sohan Lal, *Umdat-ut-Tawārikh*, Daftar III, Part 1, 9, 12-13, 129; Part 2, 133, 134, 139, 145, 179, 180 & 268; *Events at the Court of Ranjit Singh, 1810-1817*, (tr. H.L.O. Garrett & G.L. Chopra), Languages Department, Punjab, 1970 (reprint), 38, 86, 87, 254 & 271.

Nalwa in Hazara and Diwan Sawan Mal in Multan. Kirpa Ram praises Mihaan Singh for remitting the *muhalatāna* of two annas in a rupee and two *traks* in a *kharwār* which had been imposed in the days of Sukhjiwan, the first Afghan governor of Kashmir, because of the arrears on account of a *taqāvi*.²⁰ Several other measures of public welfare are attributed to Mihaan Singh.²¹ Misar Rup Lal had a keen interest in the prosperity of the Jullundur Doab and his assessment was 'light and equitable'.²² In the words of Ganesh Das, Diwan Sawan Mal 'handled the revenue affairs of Multan with commendable ability, brought the country under cultivation, made the people contented and happy and submitted larger revenues to the royal treasury than any of the former functionaries'.²³ James Douie describes Sawan Mal as 'an oriental ruler of the best type'. He did much to restore the prosperity of a country which had been desolated by 'a century

20. *Gulzār-i-Kashmīr*, 256-257.

Traks and *kharwārs* were the units of weight used in Kashmir. One *trak* was equal to about $4\frac{1}{2}$ Lahore seers (a seer being equal to about 21 *chhatāks*) and 16 *traks* made 1 *kharwār* ('ass load'): Diary of R.G. Taylor, *Punjab Government Records*, Lahore 1915, VI, 31.

21. Kirpa Ram: *Gulzār-i-Kashmīr*, 255-57; Amar Nath, *Zafarnāma*, 226-27; Sohan Lal, *Umdat-ul-Tawārikh*, Daftar III, Part 2, 201. The monumental *Dastur al-'Amal-i-Kashmīr* compiled under Mihaan Singh's patronage is a testimony to his interest in even the remotest hamlets in Kashmir.

22. Lepel Griffin, *Chiefs and Families of Note*, I, 356.

23. *Chār Bāgh-i-Panjāb*, 381. According to Munshi Hukam Chand, Diwan Sawan Mal 'was a wise administrator and the people of Multan mention his name with great respect'. He was regular in attending to the affairs of his office and used to sit there daily for several hours. Besides administering justice personally, he paid very careful attention to revenue papers: *Tārīkh-i-Zila'-i-Mullān*, 470 & 471.

of anarchy'.²⁴ Lehna Singh Majithia in the hills also enjoyed a good reputation as 'a mild and lenient governor'.²⁵ It may now be added that short terms of office did not necessarily imply bad administration. Shahamat Ali refers to Avitabile's 'good system of police and revenue', in Wazirabad.²⁶ R. G. Taylor, who visited Wazirabad in May 1847 as Assistant to the Resident in Lahore, praises Avitabile's 'wise and vigorous management'.²⁷ General Ventura in Dera Ghazi Khan and Amar Singh Majithia in Hazara present two more examples of good administrators who did not enjoy long terms of office.²⁸

Sometimes, the *nāzims* were allowed to administer their territories through a deputy or a *mukhtār-i-kār*. Ghulam Muhiyuddin, for example, is believed to have acted as the governor of Kashmir on behalf of Prince Sher Singh.²⁹ Kirpa Ram acted as the *nāzim* of the Jullundur Doab on behalf of his

24. *Punjab Settlement Manual*, 20. For a near contemporary report on Sawan Mal's administration, see *General Report on the Administration of the Punjab Proper, 1849-50 & 1850-51*, 89-90.

25. *Gazetteer of the Kangra District, 1883-84*, 218.

26. *The Sikhs and Afghans*, 57. See also Ganesh Das, *Chār Bāgh-i-Panjāb*, 250.

27. *Punjab Government Records*, VI, 2.

28. For reference to Ventura's good administration, see F.W.R. Fryer, *Final Report on the First Regular Settlement of the Dera Ghazi Khan District*, 37.

For Amar Singh Majithia's 'good administration' in Hazara, see Muhammad Azam Beg, *Tārīkh-i-Hazāra*, II, 691.

29. Kirpa Ram, *Gulābnāma*, 314: *Tārīkh-i-Kashmīr* (M/1004), f. 205 b. Wasakha Singh, who was the 'sāhib-i-kār' of Prince Sher Singh before the coming of Ghulam Muhiyuddin, had been arrested and charged with misleading the Prince and mismanaging the affairs of Kashmir: Muhammad-din Fauq, *Muqammal Tārīkh Kashmīr*, Part 3, 32; cf. *Tārīkh-i-Kashmīr*, f.204.

father Diwan Moti Ram who was holding Kashmir as well as the Jullundur Doab in *nizāmat*.³⁰ Mahan Singh acted as the deputy of Sardar Hari Singh Nalwa in Hazara.³¹ In 1845, Sardar Chatar Singh Atariwala appointed Chaudhari Shahbaz Khan as his *mukhtār-i-kār* in the Rājauri region.³² The *parwānas* of Sardar Chatar Singh and his son Sher Singh addressed to Chaudhri Shahbaz Khan provide interesting insights into the functions performed by the *mukhtār-i-kār*.³³ He was authorized to scrutinize *parwānas* relating to *jāgīrs* and to release them after such verification. He was expected to collect revenues, with the help of additional troops if necessary. The collected revenues were to be sent by the *mukhtār-i-kār* either directly to the state treasury, or to some one authorized by the *nāzim* to receive them. The *mukhtār-i-kār* was expected to deal with the vassal chiefs of the area under his jurisdiction on behalf of the *nāzim*. Various other duties were performed by the *mukhtār-i-kār*. He was paid

30. Syed Muhammad Latif, *History of the Punjab*, Eurasia Publishing House, New Delhi 1964 (reprint), 432. This arrangement was only a repetition of an earlier situation in which Moti Ram himself had deputed in the Jullundur Doab for his father Mohkam Chand who was conducting the Kashmir campaign in 1812.

31. Muhammad Azam Beg, *Tārīkh-i-Hazāra*, 699.

32. *Parwānājāt-i-Atāriwāla*, Part I, 7 & 8.

It may be pointed out that the *zamīndārs* were ordered by the Lahore Darbar to submit revenues to him and the commandants were ordered to obey him and to open the forts to his *thānadārs* and his troops : *ibid.*, 7, 9, 11 & 13.

33. *Ibid.*, 57, 63, 67, 71, 91, 97, 119, 121, 129 & 135.

In 1847, Sardar Sher Singh Atariwala acted in place of his father Sardar Chatar Singh and Chaudhari Shahbaz Khan continued to be the *kār-mukhtār*. He is asked to supply grain to the troops (*ibid.*, Part II, 67 & 101), to send the troops of the *jāgīrdārs* (*ibid.*, Part II, 67), to give the salt *mandīs* of Pind Dadan Khan in *ijāra* regularly (*ibid.*, Part II, 11).

by the *nāzim* in cash as well as in *jāgir*.³⁴ It may only be added that the *nāzims* generally had their *diwāns*; and their accounts were checked from time to time by the central *diwāns* on the basis of records kept in the *daftar-i-mu'allā* at Lahore.³⁵

The administrative unit next to the province in the Sikh dominions was the *pargana*. It is, therefore, rightly emphasized that every *sūba* was divided into *parganas*. There are frequent references to the *pargana* as a territorial unit in contemporary sources. Ahmad Shah, for example, uses the term *pargana* interchangeably with the term *mahal*. With reference to Kashmir he follows the Mughal nomenclature quite consciously.³⁶ In the *Dastūr al-'Amal-i-Kashmir* thirty-six *parganas* are enumerated.³⁷ The majority of these names are the same as given in the *Ā'in-i-Akbarī*. Ganesh Das generally uses the term *pargana* for the administrative units into which the *doābs* of the Panjab were divided.³⁸ In some of the early settlement reports also the term is used for the administrative unit next to the province.³⁹ In the

34. *Ibid.*, Part II, 35.

35. For some detail regarding the functioning of the office of the *Diwān* at Lahore, see Sita Ram Kohli, *Catalogue of Khalsa Darbar Records*, 2 Vols., Lahore 1919 & 1927, II, 9-11.

36. *Tārīkh-i-Hind*, 86-87, 142, 146, 147, 162, 288, 293, for example. Ahmad Shah enumerates 36 *parganas* of Kashmir pointing out that the total number given in the *Ā'in-i-Akbarī* is 38.

37. Ff. 26 a - 57 b.

38. *Chār Bāgh-i-Panjāb*, 161, 162, 170, 172, 221, 295, 296, 298, 299, 300, 301, 304-05, for example.

39. Arthur Cocks, for example, speaks of Jhang and its fifteen adjoining *parganas*: (Report on the Summary Settlement of the lower Rechna and lower Bari Doabs) *Foreign/Secret Consultation*, 28 April 1848, Nos. 57-66, para 34. At another place, however, he refers to the 'sixteen different *pargunnahs* attached to Jhung': *Punjab Government Records*, Lahore 1915, VI, 436 & 438; (Mackeson's Report on the Summary Settlement of the Cis-Sutlej Territories of the Lahore Darbar and the Ahluwalia Chief) *Foreign/Political Consultation*, 31 Dec., 1847, No. 1830.

orders issued by the Chiefs like Hakumat Singh, Sada Kaur and Tara Singh, the term used for the territorial units of Kāhnuwān, Pathānkot, Biānpur and Batāla is *pargana*.⁴⁰

The term *ta'alluqa* which came into wide currency during the Sikh times was only another name for the unit called *pargana*. In the orders of Sada Kaur, Prince Kharak Singh, Moti Ram and Maharaja Ranjit Singh, the term *ta'alluqa* is used for Talibpur, Manāwar, Awānkh, Gharo-Batāla and Biānpur.⁴¹ In the case of Biānpur both the terms *pargana* and *ta'alluqa* are used by the same ruler. It is interesting to note, indeed, that Bute Shah shows his preference for the term *ta'alluqa* and Ahmad Shah for the term *pargana*.⁴² Edward Lake uses the term *ta'alluqa* for Kāhnuwān, Batāla and Pathānkot for which the term *pargana* is used in some of the contemporary *parwānas*.⁴³ Abbott uses the term *ta'alluqa* for administrative units in Hoshiarpur for which the term *pargana* is used by Montgomery.⁴⁴ The *Khālsa Darbār Records* leave no doubt about the interchangeability of

40. B.N. Goswamy and J.S. Grewal, *The Mughal and Sikh Rulers and the Vaishnavas of Pindori*, Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Simla 1969, Documents XIX, XXIX, XXXI, XXXIV & XLIV.

41. *Ibid.*, Documents XXX, XXXII, XXXIII, XXXVIII, XLI, & XLII.

42. *Tārīkh-i-Panjāb*, MS, SHR 1288 & 2289, Khalsa College, Amritsar, 495-500, for example; *Tārīkh-i-Hind*, 142, 146, 147, 162, 283, 293, for example.

43. (Report on the Settlement of the upper Bari Doab), *Foreign/Secret Consultation*, 28 April 1848, Nos. 57-66, Para 1.

44. *Selections from the Public Correspondence of the Punjab Administration*, No. IV, Vol. III, 291 & 297; J.A.L. Montgomery, *Final Report on Revised Settlement of the Hoshiarpur District, 1879-84, 1825*.

the *pargana* and the *ta'alluqa*.⁴⁵

Baden Powell observed that though the Mughal *pargana* was still remembered in some parts of the Panjab the *parganas* had become 'confused' under the Sikh *ta'alluqa* or '*ilāqa*'.⁴⁶ In other words, the Mughal *parganas* were replaced by Sikh *ta'alluqas* or '*ilāqas*'. This indeed, is precisely what may be expected from the nature of the territorial occupation effected by the Sikhs.

There are numerous instances of old administrative units being parcelled among several participants in a conjoint conquest. For example, Khamanon which consisted of 55 villages was divided into three parts, each becoming an independent unit.⁴⁷ It is said of Gujranwala that the district was broken up into *ta'alluqas* 'called after a township or village in which some powerful Sikh chief established his authority and extended his conquests'.⁴⁸ Consequently, whereas there had been three or

45. It must be pointed out that the use of the term *pargana* and *ta'alluqa* is very much there in the *Khālśa Darbār Records*. To take up just one folio (Bundle 5, Vol. I, f. 562), the term *pargana* is used for Hajipur, Daska, Sujampur, Kangra, Wazirabad, Sialkot and Hallowāl. The term *ta'alluqa* is used for Rajpura, Sohian Shahpur and Wainki. However, there also appear the terms like *pargana-i-ta'alluqa-i-Qila-i-Kolla*. Also, for Hallowāl both *pargana* and *ta'alluqa* are used; for Sohian and Shahpur *zila'* and *ta'alluqa* are used.

The preponderance of the term *ta'alluqa* in the *Khālśa Darbār Records* appears to have been the reason for its uniform use by Sita Ram Kohli to the exclusion of the term *pargana* altogether : see Sita Ram Kohli, *Catalogue of Khālśa Darbār Records*, II, 13-14, 21-22, 27-28, 34-35, 42, 47-48, *et passim*.

46. *The Land Systems of British India*, 3 Vols., Oxford 1892, II, 730.

47. Bute Shah, *Tārīkh-i-Panjāb*, f. 258 b. Cf. H.R. Gupta, *A History of the Sikhs*, The Minerva Bookshop, Simla 1952 (2nd ed.), I, 207-08.

48. R.P. Nisbet, *Report on the Revised Land Revenue Settlement of the Gujranwala District, 1836-67*, 8.

four *parganas* during the Mughal times in the area covered by the Gujranwala district,⁴⁹ there were 26 *ta'alluqas* during the Sikh times.⁵⁰ It is not surprising therefore that the number of *ta'alluqas* in the Sikh dominions was much larger than the number of *parganas* during the Mughal times in those very areas. The size of the average *ta'alluqa* was, naturally, much smaller than the size of the average *pargana* during the Mughal times. It is probably this fact that gave rise to the confusion that the *ta'alluqa* was a subdivision of the *pargana*.⁵¹

The subdivision of the '*pargana*' during the Sikh times was in fact the *tappa*. In the *Chār Bāgh-i-Panjāb*, for example, it is stated that the '*pargana*' of Pharwāla had four *tappas* and Dānglī had eight; Rohtās had four *tappas*; Gujrāt and Shāhjahānpur had eight each; Herāt and Bahlolpur had seven each; Shaikhupura had

49. Ganesh Das, *Chār Bāgh-i-Panjāb*, 249-50, 255 & 272.

50. R.P. Nisbet, ('Statement exhibiting original usurpation and distribution of territories by the Sikh Confederacy') *Report on the Revised Land Revenue Settlement of the Gujranwala District, 1866-67*.

In the *ta'alluqas* of Gujranwala appear not only the old *pargana* names like Sodhran, Eminabad, Wazirabad, Shaikhupura, Pindi Bhattian but also Nangal Duna Singh, Qila Didār Singh, Qila Mihaan Singh, Qila Bathawala, Akālgarh and Gujranwala itself.

It may be added that in a similar way the area covered by the Amritsar district came to have 18 *ta'alluqas*: A. MacFarquhar, *Gazetteer of the Amritsar District, 1947*, 27-28,

Likewise, the area covered by the British district of Muzaffargarh had been divided into 24 *ta'alluqas*: Edward O' Brien, *Report on the Revenue Settlement of the Muzaffargarh District of the Panjab, 1873-80*, 52.

51. See, for example, Sita Ram Kohli, "Land Revenue Administration under Maharajah Ranjit Singh", *Journal of the Panjab Historical Society*, VII, No. 1, 76; G.L. Chopra, *The Panjab as a Sovereign State*, 84. G.L. Chopra equates *pargana* with a district and *ta'alluqa* with a *tahsīl* of the British times.

eight *tappas*; and Batāla had four.⁵² According to some early settlement reports, Chhachh and Pothuhār in the Sindh Sagar Doab were divided, respectively, into four and eight *tappas*.⁵³ According to another report, Peshawar was divided into five *tappas*;⁵⁴ Bannu had 20 *tappas*.⁵⁵ There are references to *tappas* also in the Kangra hills⁵⁶ and, across the river Satlej, in the 'pargana' of Baddowāl.⁵⁷ *Tappa* as a fiscal unit had existed during the Mughal times.⁵⁸ Its survival in many a *pargana* or *ta'alluqa* of the Sikh times is easily understandable.

52. Ganesh Das, *Chār Bāgh-i-Panjāb*, 162, 163, 168, 170, 172, 256, 257, 272 & 298.

The *parganas* mentioned here together cover four *doābs* : Sind Sagar, Chaj, Rachna and Bari.

53. (Report on the Summary Settlement of the upper Sind Sagar Doab) *Foreign/Secret Consultation*, 28 April 1848, Nos. 57-66 (paras not numbered).

54. *Foreign/Secret Consultation*, 18 November 1843, No. 26.

55. Diary of H.B. Edwardes, *Punjab Government Records*, Lahore 1915, V, 224. Shahamat Ali mentions several *tappas* in the trans-Indus area : *The Sikhs and Afghans*, 277.

56. *Foreign/Political Consultation*, 31 Dec., 1847. No. 2470-75.

57. (Report on the Summary Settlement of the Cis-Sutlej Territories of the Lahore Darbar and the Ahluwalia Chief) *Foreign/Political Consultation*, 31 Dec., 1847, No. 1830, para 11.

58. Irfan Habib does not mention *tappa* as a fiscal unit in the Mughal times but he does notice the use of the word *tappa* in a *jarmān* of Jahangir : *The Agrarian System of Mughal India, 1526-1707*, Asia Publishing House, Bombay 1963, 219 n 107. It may be added that the word *tappa* is used for Parol in the *pargana* Kathua in the upper Bari Doab in a *farmān* of Jahangir issued in 1606 : B.N. Goswamy and J.S. Grewal, *The Mughals and the Jogs of Jakhbar*, Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Simla 1967, Document III.

Just as the term *pargana* remained in currency during the Sikh times so the term *āmil* for the official in charge of a *pargana* or a *ta'alluqa* remained in use even in the early 18th century.⁵⁹ More frequently, however, the term *kārdār* was used for the officials appointed to administer the *ta'alluqa*.⁶⁰ It is true that the term *kārdār* was not confined to the *ta'alluqa* official. It was used for the officials employed by the *nāzims*, the princes and the *jāgirdārs*.⁶¹ It was used by the contemporaries also for the administrators of towns and even *katras*;⁶² for the managers of

Noman Ahmad Siddiqi has noticed the existence of *tappas*, *tappadārs* and even *tappadāri* as a perquisite : *Land Revenue Administration Under the Mughals; 1700-1750*, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh 1970, 39, 42, 81, 82 & 159.

According to B.R. Grover, *tappa* as a fiscal unit existed even in pre-Mughal times and during Akbar's reign it was made a uniform feature of revenue administration : "Raḡba-Bandi Documents of Akbar's Reign", *Indian Historical Records Commission*, XXXVI, Part 2, 59-60 & nn 21, 22 & 23.

59. See, for example B.N. Goswamy and J.S. Grewal, *The Mughal and Sikh Rulers and the Vaishnavas of Pindori*, Documents XVIII, XXI, XXV, XXIX, XXXV, XLII & XLIV.

60. For an example of the use of the term *kārdār* for the official of the *ta'alluqa* in a contemporary *parwāna*, see *ibid.*, Document XXXVIII. For examples of the use of this term in the *Umdat-ut-Tawārikh* for the *kārdārs* of Adinanager, Pathānkot, Nurpur, Jandiāla and Gujrat see, Daftar II, 306; Daftar V, 22 & 125.

61. Munshi Bakhtawar Lal, *Tārīkh-i-Zila'-i-Montgomery*, 19, 21, 23 & 35; Lepal Griffin, *Chiefs and Families of Note*, II, 121, 182 & 302, respectively.

62. See, for example, Amar Nath, *Zafarnāma*, 140; Ahmad Shah, *Tārīkh-Hind*, 481; Lepel Griffin, *Chiefs and Families of Note*, I. 292.

salt markets;⁶³ and for the officials of customs.⁶⁴ Nevertheless, it was used most frequently for the persons appointed to look after the administration of *ta'alluqas* or *parganas*.

The *kārdār* was generally appointed by the ruler and normally had to submit a formal deed of acceptance before he was appointed.⁶⁵ There was no fixed tenure of the *kārdār*. What was expected from him is indicated by an order of the Maharaja issued to Chaudhari Kanhiya who was appointed to the *kārdārī* of the *ta'alluqa* of Bhimbar with effect from the *kharif* crop of 1837. His first task was to take accounts of the *kharif* crop of 1836 and the *rabi'* crop of 1837 from the former *kārdār* of that *ta'alluqa* and to keep with him the sums thus realized. He was asked to collect the revenues of the *kharif* crop of 1837 and to assess the revenues for the *rabi'* crop of 1838. He was instructed to keep in view the increase in revenues and in agriculture and to be upright and sympathetic in dealing with the people, keeping their well-being at heart. He was also instructed not to decide any important suits without getting the Maharaja's approval.⁶⁶

63. See, for example, Sohan Lal, *Umdat-ut-Tawārikh*, Daftar II, 394 & 401.

64. *Foreign/Political Consultation*, 21 May 1852, No. 142.

65. For example, Sayyid Mehar Shah, the *kārdār* of Bhera was confirmed in office only after he had sent his *razā-nāma*: Sohan Lal, *Umdat-ut-Tawārikh*, Daftar V, 37.

66. Transcription of this order is given by Sita Ram Kohli in the "Land Revenue Administration under Maharaja Ranjit Singh". Cf. Barnes (Settlement Report of Kangra), quoted J.M. Douie, *Punjab Settlement Manual*, 20: 'His daily routine of duty was to provide for the proper cultivation of the land to encourage the flagging husbandman, and replace if possible the deserter. His energies were entirely directed towards extending the agricultural resources of the district, and the problem of his life was to maintain cultivation at the highest possible level, and at the same time to keep the cultivator at the lowest point of depression.'

Instructions issued to *kārdār*s by Diwan Sawan Mal clarify the duties which every *kārdār* in Multan was expected to perform.⁶⁷ He was to let cultivation and the revenues increase, to see that canals were cleared and excavated in time, to appraise or divide crops, and to assess the revenue in consultation with the village headmen. He was instructed to send a list of the current prices signed by the village headmen and the '*zamindār*s' on the first of Hār every year. And in the month of Bhādon every year he was expected to go to Multan in order to settle his accounts. He was asked to send the revenue punctually in six instalments, three each for the *kharif* and the *rabi*⁶⁸. He was expected to protect the people of the *ta'alluqa* against thieves and other criminals. The culprits were to be put under detention by the *kārdār*s and orders of imprisonment and fine were to be given in due course by the *nāzim*. The *kārdār* was instructed to pay the soldiers personally and in accordance with the fixed scales.⁶⁸

The *kārdār* was primarily a fiscal officer and his most important duty was to collect revenue. He used to keep proper record of the collections made and the expenditure incurred. All orders relating to payment of cash or alienation of revenues in favour of individuals were preserved by the *kārdār* and receipts, or acknowledgments, of the payments made by him were also

67. Munshi Hukam Chand, *Tārīkh-i-Zila'-i-Multān*, 471-72. Though this work was published later, there is every possibility that Edward O'Brien in his settlement report had relied on Munshi Hukam Chand for this information: *Report on the Land Revenue Settlement of the Muzaffargarh District*, 1873, 52.

68. Edward O'Brien, *Report on the Land Revenue Settlement of the Muzaffargarh District*, 53. See also, Munshi Hukam Chand, *Tārīkh-i-Zila'-i-Multān*, 472.

maintained.⁶⁹ In the case of orders of revenue-free grants in which places were left unspecified, the *kārdār* used his discretion to specify a suitable area.⁷⁰ He was sometimes asked to remit stipulated amounts to commandants and *thānadārs* for disbursement among the troops.⁷¹ The accounts of the *kārdār* were regularly audited. A defaulting *kārdār* was liable to fine, imprisonment, confiscation of property, transfer or dismissal, depending upon the seriousness of the case.⁷²

69. For alienation of revenues through the *kārdārs*, see *Foreign/Political Consultation*, 16 April 1852, No. 99 (through the *kārdār* of Dera Ismail Khan); *ibid.*, 7 May, 1852, Nos. 40-43 (through the *kārdār* of Shahdara); *Foreign/Political Proceedings*, 30 April 1852, Nos. 99-102 (through the *kārdār* of Khangarh); *ibid.*, 14 Nov., 1851, No. 55 (through the *kārdār* of Ramnagar); *ibid.*, 18 June 1852, Nos. 181-85 (through the *kārdārs* of Shaikhupura, Ramnagar and Gujranwala); *ibid.*, 7 Jan., 1853, Nos. 238-42 (through the *kārdār* of Rawalpindi); *ibid.*, 24 June 1854, Nos. 204-5 (through the *kārdār* of Dipalpur).

There are numerous references in the *Umdat-ut-Tawārīkh* to individuals receiving cash from *kārdārs* in accordance with the orders of the Maharaja, while the *kārdārs* are asked to keep the receipts so that their accounts may accordingly be credited.

For the preservation of *parwānas* by the *kārdārs* in their records see, for example, *Foreign/Political Consultation*, 29 Dec., 1849, No. 49 A.

70. In the *is'allaqa* of Qadian the *kārdār* gave 1000 rupees in cash for the *rāb'ī* of 1847 but promised to give a village worth 2000 rupees a year, the amount of the *jāgīr* of Sardar Bhur Singh. Before the *kharīf* crop, however, the grantee obtained *jāgīr* worth 3000 rupees. The *kārdār* gave him the village of Thikri worth 3100 rupees. Sardar Bhur Singh submitted the additional 100 rupees to the treasury: *ibid.*, 29 Dec., 1849, No. 49 A. See also *Foreign/Political Proceedings*, 15 Oct., 1852, No. 122; *ibid.*, 10 June 1853, No. 217.

71. See, for example, *News of the Court of Ranjit Singh* (Persian Misc. 65), 50-51; *Events at the Court of Ranjit Singh, 1810-1817*, 206.

72. See, for example, Sohan Lal, *Umdat-ut-Tawārīkh*, Daftar II, 403; Daftar IV, Part 1, 62; Part 3, 23; Daftar V, 23, 38 *et passim*. See also, Munshi Hukam Chand, *Tārīkh-i-Zila'-i-Mulān*, 472; *Events at the Court of Ranjit Singh, 1810-1817*, 40, 83, 89, 162, 170 & 221.

No *kārdār* as a rule was allowed to serve at one place for a long time. Several cases of the transfer of *kārdārs* are given in the *Khālśa Darbār Records*.⁷³ Occasionally a *kārdār* was transferred on a complaint from the 'zamindārs'. For example, the 'āmil of Jhang was ordered in 1825 to repair to the court because of such a complaint.⁷⁴ Much more frequently, however, the *kārdārs* were transferred from one place to another as a matter of policy. Five persons served as *kārdārs* in Dipalpur between 1806 and 1827.⁷⁵ Similarly, in the *ta'alluqa* of Malka Hans four persons served as *kārdārs* between 1813 and 1821.⁷⁶ Conversely, a single person served as a *kārdār* in several different places at different times.⁷⁷ Ganesh Das gives a very interesting list of the administrators of Gujrat and, on the basis of this information, the average stay of the *kārdār* of Lahore Darbar comes to nearly two and a half years.⁷⁸

The salary of the *kārdār* was broadly in proportion to the

To mention a typical situation, in 1832 the accounts of Ram Chand, the *kārdār* of Amritsar, were checked and it was found that he had paid only Rs. 86,000 to the government from a total assessment of 101,000 rupees. Jamadar Khushal Singh was ordered to realise the balance of 15,000 rupees from Ram Chand : Sohan Lal, *Umdat-ut-Tawārikh*, Daftar III, Part 2, 145.

73. See, for example, Bundle 4, Vol. IV, 1, 8 & 19.

74. *News of the Court of Ranjit Singh* (Persian Misc. 65), 325.

75. Munshi Bakhtawar Lal, *Tārikh-i-Zila'-i-Montgomery*, 30-40.

76. *Ibid.*, 45-46.

77. This was Kanhiya Lal, a grandson of Diwan Moti Ram : Lepel Griffin, *Chiefs and Families of Note*, II, 164.

78. *Chār Bāgh-i-Panjāb*, 200-03.

It may be interesting to note that according to Barnes also, a *kārdār* seldom stayed at one place for more than three years : Settlement Report of Kangra, quoted, J.M. Douie, *Punjab Settlement Manual*, 20.

annual net value of the area under his charge.⁷⁹ Gauhar Mal, who was getting 2,400 rupees a year at one time, was holding ten *ta'alluqas*.⁸⁰ Ganda Mal, who was getting 360 rupees a year, was holding only nine villages.⁸¹ Though the salary of the *kārdār* ranged from 150 to 2500 rupees, the majority of the *kārdārs* received something between 500 and 1,000 rupees a year.⁸² It may be added that some of the *kārdārs* were paid through *jāgirs* which were resumed on their transfer, presumably because they were given fresh *jāgirs* in the *ta'alluqas* to which they were sent.⁸³

Mere pay was not the only inducement for a person to accept the *kārdār's* office. There were certain recognized perquisites which could amount sometimes to the equivalent of the fixed salary.⁸⁴ According to one report, the *kārdārs* were allowed to receive subsistence allowance on a fixed scale when they went on government duty. They were also expected to get

79. This is evident from the figures given in the Statistical Notes on the Punjab prepared by John Lawrence.

This report contains among other things, the name of the *kārdār*, the annual collection from the area and the salary of the *kārdār* : (Statement of the Acting Commissioner and Superintendent Trans-Satlaj), *Foreign/Secret Consultation*, 26 Dec., 1846, Nos. 1325-27.

80. Diary of J. Nicholson, *Punjab Government Records*, VI, 304 & 358-59.

81. Diary of L. Bowring, *ibid.*, VI, 421.

82. (Statement of the Acting Commissioner and Superintendent Trans-Satlaj) *Foreign/Secret Consultation*, 26 Dec., 1846, Nos. 1325-57. Cf. Barnes (Settlement Report of Kangra) quoted J.M. Douie, *Punjab Settlement Manual*, 20.

83. *Khālśa Darbār Records*, Bundle 4, Vol. IV, 1, 8, 19, for example.

84. Barnes (Settlement Report of Kangra), quoted, J.M. Douie, *Punjab Settlement Manual*, 20.

nazrāna which they had to pay into government treasury.⁸⁵ The *rasūm* of the government in some areas amounted to 4.5% of the revenue, while the *kārdārs* received 4 rupees per village, per annum.⁸⁶ The *kārdārs* in Kashmir generally received one *trak* on every *kharwār* of grain collected.⁸⁷ There was a standing custom in the Panjab by which the 'zamindārs' gratuitously provided the *kārdārs* with wood and their horses and cattle with fodder. At certain seasons of the year, the *kārdārs* used to get the green blades of corn and other crops from the cultivators.⁸⁸ In their own turn, the *kārdārs* paid to the ruler *nazars* and *rasūm* in accordance with his orders.

Unlike the *kārdār*, the *qānūngo* performed his functions in the *ta'alluqa* more or less permanently. During the Mughal times originally there used to be one *qānūngo* for a *pargana*, but in the reign of Aurangzeb the number of *qānūngos* had considerably increased and more than one *qānūngo* could be appointed

85. Edward O' Brien, *Report on the Land Revenue Settlement of the Muzaffargarh District*, 53.

O' Brien gives the following scale of the daily subsistence allowance :

floor	3 seers
ghee	1/4 seer
dāl	1/4 seer
gram for horse	3 seers
spices	1 anna.

86. (John Nicholson's Report on the Summary Settlement of the upper Sind Sagar Doab) *Foreign/Secret Consultation*, 28 April 1848, Nos. 57-66 (para not numbered).

87. Diary of P.S. Melvill, *Punjab Government Records*, VI, 204, 206 & 217.

88. (Edward Lake's Report on the Summary Settlement of the upper Bari and upper Rechna Doabs) *Foreign Secret Consultation*, 28 April 1848, Nos. 56, para 12.

in a *pargana*.⁸⁹ Many of the old families of *qānūngos* continued to hold that office during the Sikh times. Ganesh Das, for example, mentions old families of *khatris*, including his own, which held the office of the *qānūngo* in Rohtās, Bahlolpur, Takht Hazāra, Gujrat, Herat, Sialkot, Pathānkot, Batāla and Kalānaur.⁹⁰ Also, more than one *qānūngo* was in many cases appointed to a *pargana* or a *ta'alluqa*. For example, Bedi and Mehta *khatris* were the *qānūngos* of Haibatpur Patti, and the *qānūngoi* of Jullundur belonged to Sehgal and Thapars.⁹¹ In Wazirabad, a *brahman* named Jai Singh was appointed a *qānūngo* by Jodh Singh, while the Sahni *khatris* continued to hold *qānūngoi* as of old.⁹² In the *News of the Court of Ranjit Singh of the Year 1825*, there are references to *qānūngos* in the plural in a single *ta'alluqa* or a town.⁹³ In the documents of the *Bhandari Collection* in the Punjab State Archives there is ample evidence that four or five *qānūngos* held office at one and the same time in the '*pargana*' of Batāla during the Sikh times. The number of Muslim

89. For the position of the *qānūngo* during the Mughal times, see Irfan Habib, *The Agrarian System of Mughal India*, 127, 131 n, 186, 203n 231, 235, 252, 262, 282-92 & 297; Noman Ahmad Siddiqi, *Land Revenue Administration Under the Mughals*, 88 & 90; B.N. Goswamy and J.S. Grewal, *The Mughals and the Jogis of Jakhbar*, 90 n 16 & *The Mughal and Sikh Rulers and the Vaishnavas of Pindori*, 91 n 6.

90. *Chār Bāgh-i-Panjāb*, 163, 168, 175, 209, 211, 221, 295-96 & 298.

It is possible that the office of the *qānūngo* was not maintained in the tribal areas in the upper Sindh Sagar Doab particularly where the tribal chiefs and other locally influential men undertook to collect the share of the government : see, for example, Diary of J. Nicholson, *Punjab Government Records*, VI, 314.

91. Ganesh Das, *Chār Bāgh-i-Panjāb*, 301-03.

92. *Ibid.*, 250. The *qānūngoi* of Zafarwal was held by an old *brahman* family : *ibid.*, 219.

93. (Persian Misc. 65), 1 & 104.

qānūngos had increased during the reign of Aurangzeb. It is difficult to know their proportion in the Sikh times, but their existence is beyond any doubt.⁹⁴

The *qānūngo* was indispensable for the revenue administration at the *pargana* or the *ta'alluqa* level. He was the chief source of reliable information relating to area statistics, local revenue rates, revenue receipts, and practices of the *ta'alluqa* or the *pargana*. As a survival from the Mughal times, his office provided probably the strongest link between the old and the new.⁹⁵ In the Mughal times, the *qānūngo* was generally paid 2% of the collection made from the area under his jurisdiction. In the Sikh times, he was paid either a certain percentage of the produce or in cash at 30 rupees a month.⁹⁶ In the *Khālśa Darbār Records* there are references also to the grants of revenue-free land to *qānūngos*.⁹⁷ In an order of Maharaja Ranjit Singh there is reference to the customary dues

94. For example, Ganesh Das refers to Ismatullah as one of the *qānūngos* of Gujrat in the time of Gujjar Singh Bhangi : *Chār Bāgh-i-Panjāb*, 176. Murad Ali Kakezai is mentioned as the *qānūngo* of Pasrur in the *Khālśa Darbār Records*, Bundle 5, Vol. XIII, Part 3, 275. The Documents of the *Bhandārī Collection*, Punjab State Archives, Patiala, show the existence of several Muslim *qānūngos* in Batāla during the Sikh times.

For the continuance of the office of *qānūngo* in Kashmir under the Sikhs see, for example, Mir Ahmad, *Dastūr al-'Amal-i-Kashmīr*, Section 2, f. 59 a.

95. For a discussion of the function of the *qānūngo* in the Mughal times, see Irfan Habib, *The Agrarian System of Mughal India*, 287-92.

96. Sita Ram Kohli, "Land Revenue Administration under Maharajah Ranjit Singh", *Journal of the Panjab Historical Society*, VII, No. 1, 88.

97. See, for example, Bundle 5, Vol. XIII, 79, 113, 127 & 247, respectively for Jawahar Mal, the *qānūngo* of Shadiwal, who got 35 *ghumāons*; sons of Ratan Chand, the *qānūngo* of Wainki who got 'wells'; Devi Sahai and Dhanpat Rai, the *qānūngos* of Sanktara, who got 78 *ghumāons*.

of *qānūngōi* and also to *sawāi* and one seer per maund of the produce. ⁹⁸

Like the *qānūngo*, the *chaudhari* and the *muqaddam* occupied an extremely important position in the machinery of revenue collection. According to one *Dastūr al-'Amal*, whereas in the Mughal times *chaudharāi* had been generally hereditary, in the Sikh times preference was given to competent nephews over incompetent sons of a deceased *chaudhari*. ⁹⁹ Each *pargana* or *ta'alluqa* was divided into a number of *tappas* and in each *tappa* a *chaudhari* was appointed for the purpose of revenue collection. ¹⁰⁰ The hereditary heads of *tappas* in the Bannu region were called *maliks* and the term generally used for them in the Peshawar area was *arbāb*. ¹⁰¹ The *muqaddam* on the other hand, was generally appointed for a single village. In fact, more than one *muqaddam* (or *lambardār* or

98. Lepel Griffin, *Chiefs and Families of Note*, II, 136.

The *rasūm-i-qānūngōi* in Kashmir consisted of about 16 *manwatta* of grains from every *kharwār*: Mir Ahmad, *Dastūr al-'Amal-i-Kashmīr*, Section 2, f. 57 a. See also, Diary of P.S. Melville, *Punjab Government Records* VI, 217.

99. Ghulam Muhammad, *Dastūr al-'Amal*, M/933, Punjab State Archives, Patiala, f. 15 a:

For the position of the *chaudhari* during the Mughal period, see Irfan Habib, *The Agrarian System of Mughal India*, 126-27, 131 n 10, 174, 231, 232, 235, 242, 246 n 23, 252, 254, 256, 259 n 8, 289-90, 291, 292, 293, 294 & 297; Noman Ahmad Siddiqi, *Land Revenue Administration Under the Mughals*, 90 & 91. See also B.R. Grover, "Nature of *Dehat-i-Taaluqa* (Zamindari Villages) and the Evolution of the *Taluqdari* System during the the Mughal Age", *The Indian Economic and Social History Review*, II, No. 2, 171-72.

100. Munshi Bakhtawar Lal, *Tārīkh-i-Zila'-Montgomery*, 1-2.

101. See, for examsle; Diary of H.B. Edwardes, *Punjab Government Records*, V, 225; Diary of G. Lawrence, *ibid.*, IV, 415 & 434.

panch) could be found at places in a single village for each of its major subdivisions generally known as *tarafs* and *pattis*.¹⁰²

Murray's description of the *panch* in the Ambala district appears to possess wider validity, though not his assumption that every village had only one *panch*:¹⁰³

Each village forms a distinct community within itself, and has its Panch or Chowdree who holds lands in inam and being the hereditary head of the place all affairs are referred to him for his advice and decision. He looks jealously to the preservation of the boundaries, settles the sum each Asamee has to pay, and may be considered the mutual agent of the cultivator and the government. In fact, the maintenance of good order, the promotion of the cultivation and the suppression of crime rests with the Panch, upon whose virtue, or vice the fair name of the village must stand or fall in the estimation of the neighbours.

Chaudharis and *muqaddams* were generally given revenue-free lands for the purpose of extending cultivation either directly or through the '*zamindārs*' of the village. Such grants of revenue-free land in Gurdaspur were given not only in the time of Ranjit Singh but also earlier by Jai Singh Kanhiya, Gurbakhsh Singh, Fateh Singh, Hakumat Singh and Nidhan Singh Randhawa.¹⁰⁴ There are frequent references in the early British records to *in'āms* 'formerly

102. See, for example, *Final Report on the Revised Settlement of the Gurdaspur District*, 1892, 57; *Report on Regular Settlement of the Lahore District*, 1886-89, 66.

103. *Punjab Government Records*, Lahore 1915, I, 234-35.

104. (R. Temple's Statement on Inam Zamindaris held by Chaudharis and Lambardars in pargunnah Gurdaspur) *Foreign/Political Consultation*, 5 Sept., 1856, Nos. 109-15.

held' by *panchas* and *lambardars*.¹⁰⁵ This finds ample confirmation from the *Khālśa Darbār Records*. The *chaudharis* of Merowāl, for example, held revenue-free lands in four villages, and one of these grants had been originally given by the chief named Dal Singh to Jaffar Khan of Merowāl in 1780.¹⁰⁶ Ranjit Singh confirmed several such grants : to Chaudhari Khudāyar in Jalalpur, Chaudhari Tek Chand Hundal in Hallowāl, Chaudhari Qadir Bakhsh Kahlon in Zafarwāl, Chaudhari Shadi Khan in Malikpur, Chaudhari Suba Khan in Qila Suba Singh, Chaudhari Ghulam Qadir in Wazirabad, Chaudhari Fattu in Zafarwāl, for example.¹⁰⁷ The *in'āms* given to *chaudharis* and *muqaddams* were not collected by the grantee from the village in excess of the government demand, but were deducted from it so that the claim was upon the government and not upon the peasant proprietors.¹⁰⁸

Chaudharis and *muqaddams* generally received certain percentage of the revenues collected. There are references in the *Khālśa Darbār Records* to *pachotra*, or 5% (commission), received by the *chaudharis* and others.¹⁰⁹ A British settlement officer mentions the commission of 50% at places.¹¹⁰ This may refer to

105. For example (Report on the Summary Settlement of the Cis-Satlaj Territories of the Lahore Darbar and the Ahluwalia Chief) *Foreign/Political Consultation*, 31 Dec., 1847, No. 1829, para 14; No. 1830, para 17 and No. 1832, para 5.

106. Bundle 5, Vol. XIV, 127-36.

107. *Ibid.*, Vol. XIII, Part 3, 59, 187, 209, 211, 217 & 219; Vol. XIV, 191. See also, *ibid.*, Vol. XIII, Part 3, 231, 243, 287 & 291.

108. *Foreign/Political Consultation*, 20 August 1852, Nos. 135-36.

109. *Khālśa Darbār Records*, Vol. III, Part 3, 63-64; Bundle 4, Vol. V, 201-02. In the former, the grantee is Chaudhari Jan Muhammad Khokhar and the term used is *wajah-i-in'ām-wā-pachotra*; in the latter the term used is *in'ām-i-bachotra-i-zamindārān*.

110. (Mackeson's Report on the Summary Settlement of the Territories newly acquired from the Lahore Darbar and the Ahluwalia Chief) *Foreign/Political Consultation*, 31 Dec., 1847, 1331, para 53.

those situations in which the *chaudharis* and *muqaddams* received *chahāram* or one-fourth from the Sikh rulers. In Hasan Abdāl, on the conquest of that area the Sikhs found that each headman had become virtually the master of his village due to the weakness of the Afghan rule and, in many cases, the Sikhs gave up one-fourth of the government share of the proceeds in order to get the remainder.¹¹¹ The headman of Pindi Gheb 'long enjoyed 1/4 of the revenues on account of his local influence'.¹¹² This would mean a 'commission' of 25%. In fact, there were 'several hundreds' of these 'Chaharum Khors' in the Pindi Gheb area alone.¹¹³ The British settlement officers raised or lowered the rates prevalent in some areas to the uniform rate of 5% which, in any case, was the norm during the Sikh times as well.¹¹⁴ In some cases, however, the *chaudharis* and the *muqaddams* used to receive much indeed.

Cf. Satish Chandra, "Some Aspects of Indian Village Society in Northern India during the 18th Century", *The Indian Historical Review*, I, No. 1, 577 n. According to Satish Chandra, the percentage of *in'ām* allowed to the *zamīndārs* varied from region to region from five to 25 percent'. See also Irfan Habib, *The Agrarian System of Mughal India*, 82.

111. (Report on the Inam Zamindaris in the Rawalpindi District) *Foreign/Political Consultations*, 9 Jan., 1857, Nos. 229-30.

112. *Foreign/Political Proceedings*, 7 Jan., 1853, No. 228.

The reference here probably is to Malik Allayar, the 'principal of the *zamīndārs* of Pindi Gheb' who received one-fourth of the share of the government from the *ṭappa* of Sil which comprised nearly half of the Gheba area : Diary of J. Nicholson, *Punjab Government Records*, VI, 312.

113. Diary of J. Nicholson, *loc. cit.*

114. *Foreign/Political Consultation*, 31 Dec., 1847, No. 1829, para 14.

It may be pointed out that those who suffered diminution in their commission were generally dissatisfied with the new arrangements which minimised their former importance and advantages.

An order of Jai Singh Kanhiya shows that a *chaudhari* named Mian Khan used to get not only 5% commission and 2 seers per maund and one hundred rupees in cash but also revenue-free land measuring 160 *ghumāons*.¹¹⁵

As old as the *chaudhari* and the *muqaddam* was the *patwāri* whose primary duty was to maintain revenue records for every village under his jurisdiction. It is generally believed, probably on the basis of Abul Fazl's statement in the *Ā'in-i-Akbārī*, that every village had a *patwāri* to record its expenditure and income. What Abul Fazl says, however, is that there was no village without a *patwāri*, which leaves the possibility of one *patwāri* keeping the records of more than one village.¹¹⁶ During the Sikh times in any case, there was hardly a village which had a *patwāri* entirely for itself. In the *mājha*, for example, clusters of three to six or eight villages were formed into *tappas* and a single *patwāri* looked after the records of each of these *tappas*.¹¹⁷ In Gujranwala, on the average, nearly five villages were covered by a single *patwāri*.¹¹⁸ According to Murray, 'the *patwāri* keeps the records and attends the Kunneea or appraiser of the fields, noting down the asamee's name and making out the dues from each to government in his *Khet Khusrah* or field book, which serves as a check to the Tehseeldars' *Khusrah* and *Jammabundee* accounts'.¹¹⁹ The customary

115. (Statement of Inam Zamindaris in purgunnah Gurdaspur) *ibid.*, 5 Sept., 1856, Nos. 109-15.

116. For the position of the *patwāri* during the Mughal period, see Irfan Habib, *The Agrarian Ssystem of Mughal India*, 134-35; Noman Ahmad Siddiqi, *Land Revenue Administration Under the Mughals*, 19-20.

117. L.S. Saunders, *Report on the Land Revenue Settlement of Lahore, 1865-69*, 69.

118. R.P. Nisbet, *Report on Revised Land Revenue Settlement of the Gujranwala District, 1866-67*, 49.

119. *Punjab Government Records*, I, 325.

remuneration of the *patwāri* ranged from 1% to 2% of the collection made from the villages under his jurisdiction.¹²⁰

There is a possibility that one *patwāri* looked after the unit called *chakla* or *tope* during the Sikh times. At any rate, we have the solid evidence of Ganesh Das for the existence of *topes* during the Mughal times as well. Just as the number of *tappas* in a *pargana* varied from *pargana* to *pargana*, so did the number of *topes* or *chaklas* in a *tappa* vary from *tappa* to *tappa*. In the *tappa* of *Ākya* in the *pargana* of Gujrat, for instance, there were five *topes*; in *Bāla* there were three; in *Kandū* there were six; and in *Hāndū* there were three. In the *tappa* of *Jiv Waraich* in the *pargana* of Herat, there were eighteen *topes* and in the *tappa* of *Helān* only eight. The *tappa-i-Akbari* in the *pargana* of Eminabad had five *topes*; *Waraich* and *Cheema* had eight; *Khanpur Chautra* had six; and *tappa-i-Alamgiri* had two *topes*. The number of villages in a *tope* varied from place to place. In a few cases a single village constituted a *tope*, or even a *tappa*. It may be added that during Mughal times the *pargana* of *Sialkot* consisted of sixty *topes*. In any case, according to Ganesh Das, *tope* as an administrative and fiscal unit existed in the Mughal Panjab as much as in the Sikh.¹²¹

The smallest unit of area in revenue administration was of course the village (*mauza*). Its boundaries were usually marked and entered in revenue records. Its lands consisted of two main parts : habitational and agricultural. This is not to suggest,

120. Cf. Ghulam Muhammad, *Dastūr al-‘Amal*, f. 14 b.

According to the author, a quarter seer in a maund was received by the *patwāri* at some places and half a seer at others. Where paid in cash, the *haqq-i-khidmāt-i-patwāri* was 1/2 anna in a rupee. According to this statement the *patwāri*'s commission ranged from over ½ to over 3 percent.

121. J.S. Grewal & Indu Banga (ed.), *Early Nineteenth-Century Panjab*, Guru Nanak University, Amritsar 1974, 18.

however, that no waste-lands or pastures were attached to the village. Even agricultural land was classified into various categories. This description of the village appears to hold good for the majority of villages in the Sikh dominions. It must be pointed out, however that in some areas wells as small units were grouped together to form one fiscal unit. Also, in the mountainous areas single hamlets were treated as separate units.

In retrospect it is easy to see that the framework of revenue administration did not undergo any substantial change during the period of Sikh rule. The units of revenue administration remained the same : the province, the *pargana*, the *tappa* and the village are as much in evidence during the Sikh times as in the Mughal. The administrators also were the same : the *nāzim* or the *sūbadār*, the *kārdār* as the counterpart of the Mughal *āmil*, the *qānūngo*, the *chaudhari*, the *muqaddam* and the *patwāri* provided the machinery of administration now as before. However, the number of primary divisions and, consequently, the number of *nāzims*, the number of '*parganas*' and, consequently, the number of *kārdārs* increased during the Sikh times. Obviously, the size of these units and the importance of those who administered them decreased. These changes did introduce a difference, but a difference only of degree. It is the continuum, essentially, that is more important than change during this period of a 'political revolution'.

The Mehrban *Janam-Sākhī*

In 1962 the Sikh History Research Department, Khalsa College, Amritsar, published the *Janam-Sākhī Shri Gurū Nānak Dev Ji* on the assumption that this work is extremely important to the students of Sikhism and the Sikhs in general.¹ This work is attributed to Sodhi Manohar Dās Mehrbān (1591-1640), the only son of Prithi Chand and the grandson of Gurū Rām Dās. Its importance is obvious from the fact that it represents one of the four major 'traditions' about Gurū Nānak.² The *Janam Sākhī Shri Gurū Nānak Dev Ji* is largely based on a manuscript copy of 1828.³

1. The editor thinks that the *Janam-Sākhī* is historically important because (1) it is the only *Janam-Sākhī* whose author is known and is a renowned personality, (2) the author uses the *bānī* of Gurū Nānak for the reconstruction of his life, (3) it is the only *Janam-Sākhī* which gives the dates of the events of Gurū Nānak's life, (4) the author gives a reasonable itinerary of Gurū Nānak's *Udāsīs* and his mode of travel: Introduction, 86-88.

2. The other three being: *Purātan Janam-Sākhī* with its variants of the Colebrooke or *Valāitvālī Janam-Sākhī* and *Hafizabād Janam-Sākhī*; the *Bālā Janam-Sākhī*; the *Gyānratānvalī* or *Mani Singh Janam-Sākhī*. For more detail see W.H. McLeod, *Gurū Nānak and the Sikh Religion*, Oxford University Press 1968, 15-28.

3. The published version is based on a manuscript found at Damdamā Sāhib, Talwandi Sābo. Pages 82 to 84, covering a few lines of *goshṭī* 51, the whole of *goshṭī* 52 and a few pages of *goshṭī* 53, were missing. So were pages 121 to 125, covering *goshṭīs* 68 and 69. In 1960 the Sikh History Research Department was lucky to find another copy of the manuscript going upto *goshṭī* 72. Thus, the editors were able to incorporate parts of this manuscript in the missing places of the Talwandi Sābo manuscript to have the complete *Janam-Sākhī Shri Gurū Nānak Dev Ji*: Preface, v & x. The work is hereafter referred to simply as *Mehrbān*.

However the editors, Kirpal Singh and Shamsher Singh Ashok, have not merely reproduced the text. They have corrected Mehrbān's quotations from the *bāni* of Gurū Nānak, giving the actual text of Mehrbān in footnotes. They have also pointed out the verses of the successors of Gurū Nānak wrongly attributed to him by Mehrbān. They have indicated the verses which are not to be found in the *Ādi Granth* but are presumed by Mehrbān to be the *bāni* of Gurū Nānak. The editors have clearly separated *gurbāni* proper from the verses of Mehrbān which were regarded as *gurbāni* by the followers of Prithi Chand,⁴ the rival *gurū* to Gurū Arjan. Difficult words are explained in the footnotes. The editors have changed the *scripta continua* of the manuscript according to modern prose writing. They have supplied the nasal *bindis*, *tipptis* and punctuation marks, divided the texts into paragraphs and provided headings and sub-headings to the *goshtis*. The editors suspect that some of the changes in the text were introduced by the copyist.⁵

The historians have tended to look upon the *janam-sākhi* 'traditions' as the most important source of Gurū Nānak's life. W.H. McLeod, for example, thinks that the *janam-sākhis* are hagiographic accounts of the life of Gurū Nānak, each consisting of series of separate incidents or chapters, entitled *sākhis* or *goshtis*.⁶ His problem is how much of *janam-sākhi* material can be accepted as historical. His inference is that, in some cases, there is an evident possibility of some historical fact lying beneath a super-structure of legend. Notwithstanding this manifest shortcoming in the *janam-sākhi* 'traditions' they are almost the only source of our

4. They were contemptuously called *Mīnās* by the orthodox Sikhs.

5. Cf. *Mehrbān*, Preface, ix & x.

6. W.H. McLeod, *Gurū Nānak and the Sikh Religion*, 8-9.

information concerning the events of Gurū Nānak's life 'for there is nothing to replace them and little to supplement them'.

According to Harbans Singh *janam-sākhis* are the 'life stories of Gurū Nānak, which began to be compiled soon after his passing away and have multiplied since'. For a critical study of Gurū Nānak's life 'this testimony will remain inadequate', but only because of the historians' fault. 'Dates and events and other facts are important, but they do not provide the basis for understanding the true nature' of Gurū Nānak's greatness and his impact on others. In other words, Harbans Singh is concerned not with the life but with the personality of Gurū Nānak. The historian's picture of Gurū Nānak, according to Harbans Singh, will remain essentially scanty and much short of the reality he was.⁷ Paradoxically, Harbans Singh is in agreement with W.H. McLeod regarding the value of *janam-sākhī* 'traditions' to the historian of Gurū Nānak. Harbans Singh thinks, however, that the *janam-sākhis* tell us much about the personality of Gurū Nānak.

The ordinary Sikh believer does not make the sort of distinction between the life and the personality of Gurū Nānak postulated by Harbans Singh. He is inclined to accept the *janam-sākhis* as literally true. Any challenge to the veracity of *janam-sākhis* stirs his piously regressive feelings. Consequently, an average Sikh scholar regards W.H. McLeod's critical attitude as a challenge and an ordinary educated Sikh can refer to him as the 'mad scholar of New Zealand'.⁸

Neither the critical historian nor the Sikh believer, sophis-

7. Harbans Singh, *Gurū Nānak and the Origins of Sikh Faith*, Asia Publishing House 1969, 24.

8. Letter to Guru Nanak Studies Department, Dr. No. 1877, of 31-12-1973.

ticated or otherwise, has paid any serious attention to the nature and character of *janam-sākhi* 'traditions'. Our present purpose is to have a closer look at the Mehrbān *Janam-Sākhi* with a view to understand the nature of, at least, one of the four major 'traditions'.

Mehrbān's professed purpose in writing the *Janam-Sākhi* is explicitly stated :

He, who listens, reads, sings this book, will achieve emancipation. This is pledged by the kind *sat gurū*; he who reads the *pothi sach khand* will be redeemed. ⁹

Mehrbān is not alone in believing that the *sāhkis* of Gurū Nānak are the means of redemption. 'If one listens to the lives of the saints, says Mahipati, the author of *Bhaktalilāmrit*, 'his greatest sins are burnt away; the giver of salvation is pleased with him, and keeps him in the world of *vaikunth*'.¹⁰ Harbans Singh is justified in maintaining that *janam-sākhis* 'were written by men of faith. They wrote for the faithful of a theme which had grown into their lives through the years as real vivid truth'.¹¹ Mehrbān's *Janam-Sākhi* is primarily a work of religion.

It may be noted at the outset that Mehrbān does not use the term *sākhi* in his work. He talks of Gurū Nānak through *goshtis*, literally 'discussions'. The *goshtis* are 153 in number and they have the following order.

Goshtis 1-3 speak of Rāja Janak's devotion, his concern

9. "ਏਸ ਪੋਥੀ ਨੂੰ ਸੁਣੇ ਪੜ੍ਹੇ, ਗਾਵੇ ਤਿਸ ਕੀ ਪਰਮਗਤਿ ਹੋਵੇ", ਵਚਨ ਹੈ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੂ ਮਿਹਰਵਾਨ ਜੀ ਕਾ, "ਜੋ ਕਈ ਸਚਖੰਡ ਪੋਥੀ ਪੜ੍ਹੇ ਸੋ ਮੁਕਤਾ ਹੋਇ": *Meharbān*, 1

10. Quoted, W.H. McLeod, *Gurū Nānak and the Sikh Religion*, 9. The *Bhaktalilāmrit* was written in 1774.

11. Harbans Singh, *Gurū Nānak and the Origins of Sikh Faith*, 20.

for the inhabitants of hell, his descent into the *kaliyug* as Gurū Nānak.

Goshtis 4–23 speak of Gurū Nānak's incarnation, childhood, precocity at school, marriage, miracles of the unmoving shadow of a tree and the regrowth of crop after being grazed by cattle looked after by Gurū Nānak.

Goshtis 24–32 cover Gurū Nānak's arrival at Sultanpur, enlightenment, service in Daulat Khan Lodhi's store (*modikhānā*), dip in the Vein and his realization that he was to follow neither Islam nor Hinduism but the path shown by God.

Goshtis 33–116 cover the first *udāsi* of Gurū Nānak i.e. his visit to Banaras, Patna, Ayodhia, Jagannath, Rameshwar, river Narbada, Ujjain, Bikaner, Mathura, Kurukshetra and return to Sultanpur.

Goshtis 117–146 cover Gurū Nānak's second *udāsi* i.e. his visit to Pakpattan, Dipalpur, Khokhowal, and the founding of Kartarpur.

The arrangement of the *goshtis* might give the impression that they are presented in a strict chronological order. It is important to point out, therefore, that this temporal arrangement is not in historical time. The first three *goshtis* make it absolutely plain that the incidents related belong to meta-history. Similarly Gurū Nānak's meetings with God, the *bhagats* and the *siddhs* do not take place in historical time. Furthermore, the *goshtis* infringe the commonplace canons of history by invoking the supernatural.¹² There is hardly any doubt that Mehrbān is using the metaphor of time rather than historical chronology to let the reader into the

12. 'In religion, for example, it is God who is the subject of historical process. It is God who holds the initiative and man is in the state of dependence': David McLellan, *Marx Before Marxism*, Penguin 1972, 218.

meaning of transcendental reality. His work is essentially comparable here to quasi-history called myth :

When a myth is couched in what seems a temporal shape, because it relates events one of which follows another in a definite time order the shape is not strictly speaking temporal ; the narrator is using the language of time succession as a metaphor in which to express relations which he does not conceive really as temporal. ¹³

Meharbān's basic concern is with the nature of Gurū Nānak's *gurūship*. In his mind the question of redemption is closely connected with (a) how did Nānak become the Gurū without a *gurū* (b) how were the succeeding *Gurūs* related to him. Needless to add that the quarrels of claimants to succession provided a spur to the discussion of the problem. At any rate, Mehrbān answers both these questions in a 'metaphysical mode of reasoning'. Gurū Nānak established Lehnā as the Gurū during his lifetime and conducted himself as a Sikh. Thus he came to have a *gurū* not before but after his enlightenment. At the same time what has passed on to Lehnā as Angad is the position which Gurū Nānak had acquired in the eyes of God. Mehrbān leaves no doubt about the divine sanction behind Gurū Nānak's position :

God called Bābā Nānak into his court and made him sit by Him. Gurū Nānak ate *nām* – *amrit* from a plate. He had enough, ate to his fill. He will always be happy and comfortable in body. God dressed him in the garb of His praise. God said, "As I am perfect God, you are a perfect *gurū*". ¹⁴ God said, "O Nānak, you are crying *Gurū*, *Gurū*

13. R.G. Collingwood, *The Idea of History*, Oxford 1963, 15.

14. ਅੰਦਰਿ ਹਜ਼ੂਰਿ ਆਪਣੈ ਬਾਬੇ ਨਾਨਕ ਕੰਉ...ਆਪਣੈ ਹਜ਼ੂਰਿ ਬੈਠਾਇਆ...ਗੁਰੂ ਬਾਬੇ ਅੰਬ੍ਰਿਤ ਨਾਮ ਕੀ ਬਾਲੀ ਭਰੀ ਹੋਈ ਰਜਿਆ, ਅਘਾਇ ਕਰ ਖਾਇਆ...ਸਰਬਦਾ ਤਨ ਕੇ ਬਿਖੇ ਖੁਸੀ ਅਰ ਸੁਖੁ ਹੀ ਸੁਖੁ ਹੋਇ...ਸਿਫਤਿ ਅਰੁ ਸਾਲਾਹ ਕਾ ਕਪੜਾ... ਗਲ ਮਹਿ ਪੈਰਨਾਇਆ । ਸ੍ਰੀ ਪਾਰਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਕਿਹਾ ਜਿ... "ਹਉ ਪੂਰਾ ਪਰਮੇਸਰ ਹਾਂ, ਤੂ ਪੂਰਾ ਗੁਰੂ ਹੁਆ" : *Mehrbān*, 173.

all the time. Is *Gurū* greater than I? Then *Gurū Nānak* replied, "Your *huḱam* (order) is greater. You yourself have ordained that none can attain to You without the *Gurū*". 15

Gurū Nānak's gurūship belongs to the 'immutable order' of the universe. Indeed, *Nānak* the *Gurū* is indispensable precisely because God made emancipation possible only through the service of the *Gurū*.

If anybody repeats like the worldlings (tell him) "No, it is not so. God is everlasting. None knows how to serve Him. Only the service of the *Gurū* leads to emancipation". 16

The legitimacy of *Gurū Nānak's* apostleship is underlined by *Mehrbān* in another way also. In his meeting with *Kaliyuga*

Gurū Nānak said, "I do not have a *gurū*, if I may look for one with your permission"? *Kaliyuga* said, "I do not let any one keep *gurū*-disciple relationship in *kaliyuga*. If there be your *gurū* he will be from you. Only he will be your *gurū*". 17

Kaliyuga's reply that his *gurū* will be his own successor is more pregnant than the original question. In the meeting with *Kaliyuga*, *Gurū Angad's* succession acquires as much 'metaphysical

15. ਸ੍ਰੀ ਪਾਰਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਕਹਿਆ ਜੇ, "ਏ ਨਾਨਕ ! ਤੂੰ ਜਿ ਗੁਰੂ ਗੁਰੂ ਪੁਕਾਰਤਾ ਹੈ ਗੁਰੂ ਮੁਝ ਤੀ ਬਡਾ ਹੈ ?" ਤਬ ਗੁਰੂ ਬਾਬੇ ਨਾਨਕ ਕਹਿਆ ਜਿ "ਜੀ ਤੇਰਾ ਹੁਕਮ ਬਡਾ ਹੈ, ਜਾਂ ਤੇ ਹੁਕਮੁ ਕਿਆ 'ਬਿਨਾ ਗੁਰੂ ਤੇ ਮੁਝ ਕੰਉ ਕੋਈ ਨਾ ਪਾਵੇਗਾ..." : *Mehrbān*, 171.

16. ਜੇ ਕੋਈ ਇਉ ਕਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਇਹੁ ਨਾਹੀ ਸਿਸ (ਜੈਸਾ : ਸੰਪ.) ਸੈਸਾਰ ਕਹਿਤਾ ਹੈ, ਨਾ, ਓਹੁ ਅਬਨਾਸੀ ਹੈ ਉਸ ਕੀ ਸੇਵਾ ਕੋਈ ਨਾਹੀ ਜਾਣਤਾ ਸੇਵਾ ਗੁਰੂ ਕੀ ਕੀਨੀ ਮੁਕਤਿ ਹੈ : *Mehrbān*, 181.

17. "ਜੀ, ਮੈ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਹੀ ਕੀਆ, ਗੁਰੂ ਕਉ ਚੂਢਉ ਜੇ ਆਗਿਆ ਹੋਇ"। ਤਬ ਕਲਿਜੁਗ ਕਹਿਆ ਜੇ, "ਏ ਨਾਨਕ ! ਮੈ ਰਹਣ ਕਿਸੀ ਕੀ ਨਾਹੀ ਦਈ ਕਲਜੁਗ ਕੇ ਬਿਖੈ । ਜੇ ਤੇਰਾ ਗੁਰੂ ਹੋਇ ਜਿ ਕੋਈ ਤੁਮ ਹੀ ਤੇ ਹੋਗੁ" : *Mehrbān*, 225.

certainty' and 'legitimacy' as the *gurūship* of Gurū Nānak in his meeting with God.

The pre-eminence of Gurū Nānak as a *bhagat*, too, is vouched by God himself :

Then all the *bhagats* were ordered by God, "Nānak, the continent, is my great *bhagat* . . .". All the *bhagats* met at His command. They collectively came to see (Nānak) : Nāmā, Jai Deo, Kanbīr, Tilochan, Ravī Dās, Sain, Sadhna, Dhannā, Benī. 18

Then Dhruv, Prehlād, Anbrīk, Nārda, Bhabhīkhana were ordered, "you my *bhagats*, go and fetch Nānak". 19 Mehrbān is not only glorifying Gurū Nānak in the eyes of the Sikhs but also asserting the supremacy of Sikhism over the cults of the *bhagats*. Mehrbān's writing in this vein represents an effort to convert the followers of the *bhagats* to Sikhism in a spirit of friendly exhortation. It is a clear sign of the evangelical posture of early Sikhism.

The superiority of Sikhism over all other dispensations is clearly sought to be demonstrated in the *goshtis* of Mehrbān. Kings, magnates, religious leaders, *pirs* and *fakirs* as well as *bhagats* accept the 'spiritual suzerainty' of Gurū Nānak. It is best exemplified in the statement of Shaikh Ibrāhīm :

18. ਤਬ ਭਗਤਾਂ ਕਉ ਆਗਿਆ ਆਈ ਪਾਰਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਜੀ ਕੀ ਜਿ, "ਨਾਨਕ ਜੁਹਦੀ ਮੇਰਾ ਬਡਾ ਭਗਤੁ ਹੈ" ... ਤਬ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਪਾਰਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਕੀ ਆਗਿਆ ਸਾਥਿ ਸਭਿ ਭਗਤ ਮਿਲੈ; ਮਿਲੀ ਕਰਿ ਮਿਲਨੈ ਆਏ - ਨਾਮਾ, ਜੈ ਦਿਉ, ਕੰਬੀਰੁ, ਤਿਲੋਚਨੁ, ਰਵੀ ਦਾਸੁ, ਸੈਨੁ, ਸਧਨਾ, ਧੰਨਾ, ਬੇਣੀ : *Mehrbān*, 190.

19. ਤਬ ਧਰ੍ਵ, ਪ੍ਰਹਿਲਾਦੁ, ਅੰਬਰੀਕੁ, ਨਾਰਦੁ, ਭਭੀਖਨੁ ਇੰਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਭਗਤਾਂ ਕਉ ਆਗਿਆ ਭਈ ਜਿ "ਤੁਮ ਸਮਸਤ ਭਗਤ ਮੇਰੇ ਜਿ ਹਰੁ ਸੁ ਤੁਮ ਜਾਹੁ, ਜਾਇ ਕਰਿ ਨਾਨਕ ਕਉ ਬੁਲਾਇ ਲੈ ਆਵਹੁ" : *Mehrbān*, 485.

Then Shaikh Ibrāhīm stood up in deference to Gurū Nānak and said, "You have met God. Make me meet God and remember Him".²⁰

The uniqueness of Sikhism is emphasized by Mehrbān by attributing exclusive validity to the *Panth* of Gurū Nānak. The other *pīrs* and *bhagats* did have their followers but they did not have the universality of Sikh *Panth* :

Then all the *bhagats* came to bless Gurū Nānak with the words, "Your devotion would be stable. No other *bhagat* could found a *Panth* in *kalīyuga*, which you would do. You will be hailed in the three worlds. Your *Panth* would be great. We bless you".²¹

God's grace is practically granted to the followers of Gurū Nānak :

20. ਤਾਂ ਸੇਖ ਬਿਰਾਹਮ ਗੁਰੂ ਬਾਬੇ ਨਾਨਕ ਨੋ ਖੜਿਆਂ ਹੋਇ ਕਹ ਤਜੀਮ ਕੀਤੀ ਜਿ, "ਤੂੰ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਨੂੰ ਮਿਲਿਆ ਹੈਂ. ਪਣੁ ਜੀ ਅਸਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਭੀ ਤੂੰ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਨਾਲਿ ਮੇਲਿ ਜੇ ਅਸਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਭੀ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਯਾਦਿ ਆਵੈ" : *Mehrbān*, 495.

This kind of *Janam-Sākhi* imagination is historically significant. About a hundred years after this *Janam-Sākhi*, Koer Singh would be writing in 1743 that the Mughal empire owed its establishment to the blessings of Gurū Nānak. The Sikhs have started becoming victorious in imagination which is but a prelude to future events. Here, probably for the first time a Hindu *bhagat* has made a Muslim spiritual leader accept his superiority. The idea is inherently subversive of the Muslim Rule. The oppressed are asserting their manhood in imagination. During the period of oppression 'the native never stops achieving his freedom from nine in the evening until six in the morning', that is in his imagination : cf. Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, Penguin 1967, 40.

21. ਤਬ ਭਗਤੁ ਮਿਲਿ ਕਰਿ ਗੁਰੂ ਬਾਬੇ ਨਾਨਕ ਕੰਉ ਅਸੀਰਬਾਦੁ ਦੀਆ ਜਿ "ਜੀ ਤੇਰੀ ਭਗਤਿ ਅਖੰਡ ਹੋਇਗੀ। ਅਰੁ ਜਾਂਹਿ ਕਿਸੀ ਭਗਤ ਕਾ ਪੰਥ ਨਾਹੀ ਚਲਿਆ ਕਲਿ ਕੈ ਬਿਖੈ ਤੇਰਾ ਪੰਥੁ ਚਲੇਗਾ। ਤ੍ਰਿਹੁ ਲੋਆਂ ਮਹਿ ਨਾਨਕੁ ਹੀ ਨਾਨਕੁ ਹੋਇ ਜਾਇਗਾ। ਤੇਰਾ ਪੰਥ ਬਡਾ ਹੋਇਗਾ. ਹਮਾਰਾ ਇਹੀ ਅਸੀਰਬਾਦੁ ਹੈ" : *Mehrbān*, 195.

Then God said, "Nānak, whosoever remembers your name shall be made happy and shall be redeemed".²²

"Nānak, whosoever remembers your name shall suffer no pain here and hereafter. I have made you *jīvan-muktā*. Whosoever follows you shall be emancipated".²³

Even *Kaliyuga* has entered into a covenant with Gurū Nānak to refrain from extending his evil influence on the followers of Nānak. The covenant reinforces the point that Nānak's *Panth* is the religion *par excellence* of the 'debased age'. The claim that this *Panth* is the only one to be universally valid is explicitly made :

Then Gurū Bābā Nānak said to *Kaliyuga*, "Give me the promise that you will not trouble a *Nānak-panthī*, devoted to the name of God. Let him remember the Name".

Then *Kaliyuga* said, "I do commit myself to this that I will not condemn a *Nānak-panthī*. I will make him remember the Name even amidst his wife, son, relation and wealth. I will not touch a *Nānak-panthī*", *Kaliyuga* promised.²⁴

22. ਤਬ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਪਾਰਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਜੀ ਕਹਿਆ ਜਿ, "ਏ ਨਾਨਕ ! ਤੇਰਾ ਜੋ ਕੋਈ ਨਾਮੁ ਲੇਗਾ, ਮੈਂ ਤਿਸੁ ਕੰਉ ਭੀ ਨਿਹਾਲੁ ਕਰਉਗਾ, ਦੀਨ ਦੁਨੀਆਂ ਮਹਿ ਮੈਂ ਬਕਸਸੰਉਗਾ" : *Mehrbān*, 312

23. ਨਾਨਕ ! ਜਿ ਕੋਈ ਤੇਰਾ ਨਾਮੁ ਲੇਗਾ ਮੈਂ ਤਿਸੁ ਕਾ ਦੁਖੁ ਗਵਾਇਆ, ਅਗੈ ਕਾ ਭੀ ਅਰੁ ਈਹਾਂ ਕਾ ਭੀ, ਤੂ ਮੈ ਜੀਵਨ ਮੁਕਤਿ ਕੀਆ ਹੈ...ਤੇਰੇ ਪੀਛੈ ਜਿ ਲਗੇਗਾ ਤਿਸੁ ਕੰਉ ਭੀ ਮੈਂ ਮੁਕਤਿ ਕਰਉਗਾ" : *Mehrbān*, 461.

24. ਤਬ ਗੁਰੂ ਬਾਬੈ ਨਾਨਕ ਜੀ ਕਹਿਆ ਜਿ, "ਜੀ, ਏਕ ਦਾਨ ਤੂੰ ਮੁਝ ਕਉ ਦੇਹਿ। ਜਿ ਜੀ ਕੋਈ ਨਾਨਕ ਪੰਥੀ ਹੋਇਗਾ ਅਰੁ ਪਰਮੇਸਰ ਕੇ ਨਾਮ ਲਗੇਗਾ ਤਿਸ ਕਉ ਤੂ ਬਿਆਪੀਆਹੁ ਨਾਹੀ, ਉਸ ਕਉ ਨਾਮੁ ਸਿਮਰਣ ਦੇਣਾ" ਤਬ ਕਲਜੁਗ ਕਹਿਆ ਜਿ "ਨਾਨਕ ! ਜਾਹਿ ਮੇਰਾ ਬਚਨੁ ਹੈ ਜਿ ਕੋਈ ਨਾਨਕ ਪੰਥੀ ਹੈ ਤਿਸ ਕਉ ਮੈਂ ਸਰਾਪਉਗਾ ਨਾਹੀ। ਉਸ ਕਉ ਗ੍ਰਿਹਸਤ ਮਹਿ ਧਨ, ਸੁਤ, ਬੰਧ, ਸੰਪਤਿ ਮਹਿ ਨਾਮ ਸਿਮਰਾਵੁਗਾ, ਜੁ ਕੋਈ ਨਾਨਕ ਪੰਥੀ ਹੋਇਗਾ ਤਿਸ ਕੇ ਮੈਂ ਨਿਕਣਿ ਨਾ ਆਵਉਗਾ" ਕਲਿਜੁਗ ਬਚਨੁ ਕੀਆ : *Mehrbān*, 225.

It may be pointed out that Mehrbān uses his language with a seeming simplicity but utmost finesse. Not only is the *Panth* of Nānak made immune from the influence of *Kaliyuga* but also the cause of the *Panth* is supported by him. Mehrbān can make use of the mental code of his reader to lead him unawares into a new conviction. He is a far more subtle propagandist of his cause than would appear from his rude materials.

We may now turn to another major concern of Mehrbān : his own position in relation to Gurū Nānak. He uses the pen-name Nānak for himself. Only a successor of Gurū Nānak was entitled to that. Indeed in the *Janam - Sākhi Shri Gurū Nānak Dev Ji* Mehrbān traces his succession to the *gaddi* of Gurū Nānak :

Glory to Nānak, Gurū Angad and the true Gurū Amar Dās,
To Gurū Rām Dās and Gurū Arjan, and to Gurū Sāhib who
would safeguard your honour. ²⁵

The words Gurū Sāhib or Sāhib Gurū refer to his father Prithī Chand as the sixth Gurū. Mehrbān's successor, Gurū Harji, includes his name among the successors of Gurū Nānak after the name of Prithī Chand :

God is my Gurū Nānak
Who is ever in transcendental Meditation
Gurū Angad is true and eternal
Gurū Amar Dās is in every heart
Gurū Rām Dās is God, the creator
Gurū Arjan is the perfect *avatār*
Gurū Sāhib is Perfect like the Formless One, kind to the wretched,
guardian of their refuge
Gurū Mehrbān earned a true devotion to God. ²⁶

25. ਪੈਨ ਨਾਨਕ ਅੰਗਦ ਗੁਰੂ ਅਮਰਦਾਸੁ ਗੁਰੂ ਸਤਿ
ਰਾਮ ਦਾਸ ਅਰਜਨ ਗੁਰੂ ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਬ ਰਖਗੁ ਪਤਿ : *Mehrbān*, 286.

26. ਪਾਰਬ੍ਰਹਮੁ ਗੁਰੂ ਬਾਬਾ ਨਾਨਕੁ ਮੇਰਾ
ਚਉਥੇ ਪਦ ਮਹਿ ਸਦਾ ਬਸੇਰਾ

By ingeniously placing Mehrbān (ਮਿਹਰਬਾਨ) along with Gurū Nānak in the *Janam-Sākhi Shri Gurū Nānak Dev Ji* Mehrbān is able to induce in the mind of the reader that he is 'homologous' to Gurū Nānak. His finesse lies in the manner of 'homologizing' which confers 'legitimacy' on his claim while he appears to be doing something altogether different. Mehrbān (ਮਿਹਰਬਾਨ) is a loaded word; it starts its career as an adjective but is soon transformed into a substantive.²⁷

As it may be expected, on the very first page of the *Janam-Sākhi*, Mehrbān promises redemption to his reader as a *satgurū* in line with Gurū Nānak's succession. 'He who listens, reads and sings this book, will achieve emancipation. This is pledged by Mehrbān, the *Satgurū*'.²⁸

Mehrbān's claim to equality with Gurū Nānak is beyond any doubt. The following lines, for instance,

ਗੁਰੂ ਅੰਗਦੁ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੂ ਹੈ ਅਥਿਨਾਸੀ
ਗੁਰੂ ਅਮਰਦਾਸੁ ਘਟਿ ਘਟਿ ਕਾ ਵਾਸੀ
ਗੁਰੂ ਰਾਮ ਦਾਸੁ ਪ੍ਰਭੁ ਕਰਨੇ ਹਾਰਾ
ਗੁਰੂ ਅਰਜਨ ਪੂਰਨੁ ਅਵਤਾਰਾ
ਨਿਰੰਕਾਰ ਸਾਹਿਬੁ ਗੁਰੂ ਪੂਰਾ
ਦੀਨ ਦਯਾਲੁ ਸਰਨਿ ਕਾ ਸੂਰਾ
ਗੁਰੂ ਮਿਹਰਵਾਨੁ ਸਚੁ ਭਗਤਿ ਕਮਾਈ...

27. It is used in this manner once on page 282, twice on page 283 and five times in *sākhī* no. 87. It is invoked twice on page 413, four times on page 415, twice on page 443, once on page 444 and four times on page 445.

28. Cf. note 9, above.

ਵਚਨੁ ਹੈ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੁ ਮਿਹਰਵਾਨ ਜੀ ਕਾ
The two readings are compatibly inclusive.

ਜਾ ਤੂੰ ਤਾ ਮੇ ਸਭੁ ਕੋ
ਤੁ ਸਾਹਿਬੁ ਮੇਰੀ ਰਾਸਿ ਜੀਉ ॥

are paraphrased as

ਯਾ ਮਿਹਰਵਾਨੁ ! ਜਾ ਤੂੰ ਤਾ ਮੇਨੋ ਸਭ ਕਿਛੁ ਹੈ; ਮੇਰੇ ਧਨੁ ਸੰਪਉ ਜੀਵਨਿ ਰਾਸਿ
ਤੂੰਹੇ ਹੈ...ਤੁਧੁ ਭਾਵੈ ਤਾ ਮਿਹਰਵਾਨ ! ਤੂੰ ਕਿਆ ਨ ਕਰਹੀ ? ²⁹

In the following line Mehrbān is the Lord :

ਮਿਹਰਵਾਨੁ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਹੈ, ਹੋਰ ਬੰਦੇ ਦੀ ਮਿਹਰ ਕਿਆ ਹੈ...

A *fakir* is addressing Gurū Nānak as if he were Mehrbān :

...ਬਾਬਾ ਮਿਹਰਵਾਨ ਜੀ ! ਇਹੁ ਅਰਜੁ ਹੈ ਜਿ ਦਿਖਾ ਜੀ ਹਕੁ ਜਹਾਨੁ ³⁰

Mehrbān leaves one in no doubt that 'Mehrbān' is a case in apposition to Gurū Nānak :

ਬਾਬਾ ਨਾਨਕੁ ਮਿਹਰਵਾਨੁ ਪਰਾਇਆ ਦੁਖੁ ਸਹਿ ਨ ਸਕੈ ³¹

And again, Bābā Nānak is requested to redeem in the form of Mehrbān :

ਏ ਬਾਬਾ ਨਾਨਕ ! ਤੂੰ ਅਬ ਮਿਹਰਵਾਨੁ ਹੋਹਿ ਬਖਸਿ ³²

29. 'When you are mine, I got everything. You are my treasure, my Lord'.

means

'O Mehrbān ! I got everything when you are there. My money and belongings are you ... If you like Mehrbān ! There is nothing beyond you" : *Mehrbān*, 283.

30. Mehrbān is the Lord. Man's kindness is of no avail ... Bābā Mehrbān jī ! my request is to show me the reality of the world : *Mehrbān*, 446.

31. Bābā Nānak, Mehrbān, could not bear to see others suffer : *Mehrbān*, 471.

32. Bābā Nānak ! forgive us in the form of Mehrbān : 517.

Notwithstanding his subtlety and finesse his claims are unambiguous, even extravagant. There is sufficient evidence to suggest that he regards his own position as interchangeable with that of Gurū Nānak. Having established his equality with Gurū Nānak, he does not hesitate to suggest his own superiority. It can no longer be said that the following verse of Gurū Nānak

ਮਿਹਰਵਾਨ ਮਧੂਸੂਦਨ ਮਾਧੋ
ਐਸੀ ਸਕਤਿ ਤੁਮਾਰੀਆ

has not been 'helpfully' used and 'suitably' interpreted as

ਮਿਹਰਵਾਨ ! ਤੇਰਾ ਨਾਮ ਮਧੂਸੂਦਨ ਮਾਧੋ ਥਾ ਅਰੁ ਅਬ ਤੇਰਾ ਨਾਮੁ ਅਲਹੁ ਹੂਆ³³

In fact, Mehrbān can write on his own that one should remember the name of Mehrbān :

ਨਾਨਕ ਦਾਸ ਏਹ ਵੇਲ ਹੀ
ਜਿਮਰਿ ਸਦਾ ਮਿਹਰਵਾਨੁ³⁴

This rises to a climax when Mehrbān is transformed into a servant of Daulat Khān Lodhī :

ਜਦਿ ਬਾਬਾ ਮਿਹਰਵਾਨੁ ਦਵਲਤ ਖਾਨ ਪਾਸਿ ਰਹਤਾ ਥਾ ਤਦਿ ਕਾ ਉਹੁ ਮੇਲੀ ਥਾ³⁵

33. 'Mehrbān, the killer of giant Madhu, Lord of *Maya*, such is your power'

is interpreted as

'Mehrbān ! you were called Madhusudan, Lord of *Maya*. Now you are called Allah : *Mehrbān*, 454.

34. Nānak, this is the time, always to remember Mehrbān: *Mehrbān*, 448.

35. Bābā Mehrbān was with Daulat Khān Lodhī. He was his friend from those times : *Mehrbān*, 315.

And still further, Mehrbān is equated with God Himself. In the following passage Mehrbān's exegesis is so counter-pointed with a verse of Gurū Nānak that it gives the impression as if Gurū Nānak is appealing to God in the form of Mehrbān :

ਤਬ ਫੇਰਿ ਗੁਰੂ ਬਾਬੇ ਨਾਨਕ ਜੀ ਸਚੇ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਪਾਸਿ ਬੇਨਤੀ ਕਰੀ ਜਿ, "ਏ ਸਚੇ ਸਾਹਿਬ
ਮਿਹਰਵਾਨ ਜੀ !

ਪੰਖੀ ਹੋਇ ਕੈ ਜੇ ਭਵਾ

ਸੈ ਅਸਮਾਨੀ ਜਾਉ (ਨਾਨਕ) ³⁶

It will be seen that Mehrbān has consolidated his 'spiritual position' with the same subtle 'metaphysical' artistry as he used to establish Gurū Nānak's position. ³⁷

Given the religious purpose of Mehrbān's work, the element of miracles in his *Janam-Sākhī* begins to make sense. One characteristic dimension of Indian spirituality is fully shared by Mehrbān with his contemporaries. Yoga in India has structured the experience of spirituality on the facticity of miracles. They are the stuff of nature. The *gunas* impregnate the whole universe and establish an organic sympathy between man and cosmos, these two entities being pervaded by the same pain of existence and both serving the absolute Self, which is foreign to the world and driven by unintelligible destiny. ³⁸ From this standpoint the historical context of revelation has only a limited importance. The

36. Then Gurū Bāba Nānak requested the true Lord, "My True Lord, Mehrbān !

... Were I a bird
to soar in thousand skies (Nānak) : *Mehrbān*, 489.

37. It is interesting to note that Mehrbān has already clearly anticipated the later Sikh theological identification of Gurū with God. This is clearly stated so far as his own case is concerned.

38. Mircea Eliade (Tr. Willard R. Tarsk) *Yoga - Immortality and Freedom*, Routledge and Kegan Paul 1969, 24.

appearance and disappearance of a soteriological formula on the plane of history tells us nothing about its 'origin'.³⁹ Mehrbān is writing about Gurū Nānak from the point of view of 'origin'. He is writing a metaphysical account of Gurū Nānak and, consequently, the historical context is not his concern. Facts of the empirical world do not exist from his metaphysical standpoint. For him it is impossible to be inaccurate about them precisely because they do not exist.

Mehrbān subscribes to a peculiar view of two kinds of time, one governing 'this world' and the other, 'the world above'. He gives Gurū Nānak's date of birth : 'the third moon day of the month of Baisākh, *sammat* 1526'. This is immediately placed in the context of supramundane time : 'incarnated in *kaliyuga*'.⁴⁰ The distinction between the mundane and the supramundane time is made explicit by Mehrbān when he says that a day at God's abode is equal to three days of this world.⁴¹

The idea of two times is basic to religious thought because of its cosmogonic needs. It is familiar to Indian philosophical mind. 'Jaina writers sometimes distinguished between real time (*paramārthika kāla*) and empirical or conventional time (*vyavahārika kāla*) also called *samaya*. Continuity or duration (*vartana*) is the work of real time, whereas changes of all kinds are the marks of empirical time. It is this latter (*samaya*) which is conventionally divided into moments, hours etc., and is limited by a beginning and an end. But real time is formless and eternal. By imposing

39. Mircea Eliade, *Yoga - Immortality and Freedom*, 154.

40. ਸੰਮਤ 1526 ਵੈਸਾਖ ਮਾਸਿ ਬਿਤਿ ਤਿਤੀਏ ਚਾਨਣੀ ... ਕਲਿ ਕੈ ਬਿਖੇ ਆਏ ਅਵਤਰੇ : *Mehrbān*, 9.

41. ਉਹਾ ਕਾ ਏਕੁ ਦਿਨੁ ਈਹਾ ਸੈਸਾਰ ਮਹਿ ਤੀਨਿ ਦਿਨਿ ਵਰਤੇ : *Mehrbān*, 89.

conventional limitations and distinctions on real time, empirical time is produced'.⁴²

The Yogic idea of *pratiloman* that is returning to one's self by travelling backwards presupposes the existence of two times. 'One arrives at the beginning of time and one finds non-time, the eternal present that preceded the temporal experience begun by the first fallen human life. In other words, one "touches" the non-conditioned state that preceded man's fall into time and the wheel of existences. This is as much to say that, setting out from any moment of temporal duration, one can succeed in exhausting that duration by travelling through it in the reverse direction, and will finally reach non-time, eternity'.⁴³

Mehrbān's indifference to mundane time is reflected in his chronology. In fact, his idea of two times runs against the very conception of temporal sequence. Thus, the following anachronisms are inconsequential to Mehrbān :

- (i) Gurū Nānak meets the grandson of Bahā-ud-dīn (*circa* 1309).⁴⁴
- (ii) Gurū Nānak converses with Salīm Shāh, the King of Delhi (1545–1553).⁴⁵
- (iii) Gurū Nānak speaks collectively to Nāmā, Jai Deo, Kabir, Trilochan, Ravi Das, Sain, Sadhnā, Dhannā and Beni (spanning the period from 13th to 16th century).⁴⁶

42. S. Chatterjee and D. Datta, *An Introduction to Indian Philosophy*, University of Calcutta 1968, 98.

43. Mircea Eliade, *Yoga-Immortality and Freedom*, 185.

44. *Mehrbān*, 434.

45. *Mehrbān*, 114.

46. *Mehrbān*, 190.

(iv) Gurū Nānak meets Hindāl (1573–1648).⁴⁷

Here the question is not merely of wrong chronology. The question is whether or not Mehrbān possessed any sense of chronology at all.

Collingwood makes the point that the supramundane outlook is inimical to sense of fact. Mehrbān does not come to grips with the world precisely because of his supramundane outlook. The lack of empirical awareness and curiosity to know what actually happened is not peculiar to Mehrbān. It was a trait which he shared with contemporary Sikhs, in fact, with the majority of his contemporaries. Consequently *bhagats* flit the stage not as persons but as epiphanies of God. Legendary *siddhs* and kings are not men of the past but types of spirituality. Mardānā is 'worldly foil' to Gurū Nānak's 'transcendental reality'.

Mehrbān's poor sense of geography should be seen in relation to his lack of empirical interest. For instance, Benaras is vaguely located in the Land of the East.⁴⁸ Mehrbān does not think that Gurū Nānak was physically covering the distances from place to place. It did not matter, therefore, if the distances became too long or too short. In Mehrbān's opinion the distance between Lahore and Hardwar was 1800 *kos*.⁴⁹ Mehrbān's idea of the geography of the western parts of India is rather vague. Of the countries of Asia Minor he does not appear to have any idea at all.⁵⁰

If the *Janam-Sākhi* of Mehrbān is a work of religion inspired by supramundane outlook with a notion of two times and informed by belief in the irrelevance of man and empirical reality, it should not come to us as a surprise that Mehrbān has no sense of

47. *Mehrbān*, 365.

48. *Mehrbān*, 132.

49. *Mehrbān*, 118.

50. *Mehrbān*, 463.

geography and chronology. Indeed his inaccuracies, inattention to detail, the element of miracles and his improvisations fall into a coherent pattern, which is not without intellectual depth and subtlety once we discard the idea that Mehrbān's *Janam-Sākhī* is a work of history. To the extent Mehrbān is attached to the idea of two times he cannot be a historian. 'History begins when men begin to think of the passage of time not in terms of natural processes (or supernatural process for that matter) but of a series of specific events in which men are consciously involved and which they can consciously influence'.⁵¹ The historian has to think of time in terms of man-made events. Mehrbān is twice removed from the idea of time to be a historian.

Nevertheless Mehrbān does present to the reader certain reconstructions of the past and we now turn to the question how he does that. Let us see how Mehrbān reconstructs the sack of Saidpur. Innumerable marriages were being celebrated. There was hardly a family without a marriage to arrange. Whatever house Bābā and Mardānā begged for food, they were coldly neglected. Bābā asked Mardānā to play on the *rabāb*. He began playing *rāg tilang* in *Pathāna* mode. Bābā Nānak said, 'I am telling you what will happen here. Mīr Bābar will start from Khurasān to invade India. Devil would solemnize the marriages in place of *qāzīs* and *brāhmīns*. The bloody havoc would be remembered in India for ages'. Mīr Bābar razed Saidpur to the ground. The town was without its usual liveliness. Wealth had passed on to those who had not earned it. He witnessed the scene of fighting. Then Gurū Bābā Nānak went to Tillā Bāl Gundaī of the *Jogīs*. They challenged him to a display of miraculous powers. He dared them show their supernatural powers to Bābar. Mīr Bābar began

51. E.H. Carr, *What is History*, Penguin 1965, 134.

a massacre of the *Jogis* the next day. Thus did the word of Bābā kill them. ⁵²

The first part of the reconstruction is based on

ਜੇਸੀ ਮੈ ਆਵੈ ਖਸਮ ਕੀ ਬਾਣੀ
ਤੈਸੜਾ ਕਰੀ ਗਿਆਨੁ ਵੇ ਲਾਲੋ

rāg tilang composition of Gurū Nānak. Mehrbān has changed the 'marriage' symbolism of the composition into a vast concourse of marriages. It is particularized in the interest of vulgar conviction as if there was an auspicious constellation or *sahā*. Mehrbān has introduced the story of a repentant *brāhmin* for the sake of effect. The out-of-character detail of Gurū Nānak's curse has no basis in the composition. Mehrbān has no compunction in

52. ਸੈਦ ਪੁਰਿ ਘਰਿ ਘਰਿ ਵੀਵਾਹ ਸੇ, ਜੇ ਕੋਈ ਖਾਲੀ ਹੋਵੇ ਤਾ ਹੋਵੇ, ਨਾਹੀ ਤਾਂ ਘਰਿ ਘਰਿ ਵੀਵਾਹ ਬੇ...ਜਿਸੁ ਘਰਿ ਬਾਬਾ ਅਰੁ ਮਰਦਾਨਾ ਜਾਇ ਖੜੇ ਹੋਨਿ...ਸੋਈ ਸੁਆਲੁ ਰਦੁ ਕਰੇ, ਸੁਣੈ ਕੋਈ ਨਾਹੀ... ਬਾਬਾ ਨਾਨਕ ਜੀ... ਕਹੈ ਮਰਦਾਨਿਆ ! ... ਵਜਾਇ ਤਿਲੰਗੁ...ਲਾਗਾ ਪਠਾਣਾ ਵਜਾਵਣੈ...ਗੁਰੂ ਬਾਬੇ ਨਾਨਕ ਜੀ ਕਹਿਆ...ਜਿ ਕਿਛੁ ਈਹਾਂ ਹੋਇ ਵਾਪਰੇਆ ਸੋਈ ਹਉ ਜਿ ਕਿਛੁ ਹਉ ਕਹਤਾ ਹਉ...ਖੁਰਾਸਾਨ ਤੇ ਮੀਰੁ ਬਾਬਰੁ ਚੜੇਗਾ...ਹਿੰਦੁਸਤਾਨ ਉਪਰਿ ਚੜਿ ਧਾਈ ਕਰੇਗਾ...ਜਹਾਂ ਕਾਜੀ ਬਾਮਣ ਅਗਦੁ ਪੜ੍ਹਤੇ ਹੈ... ਅਗਦੁ ਸੈਤਾਨੁ ਪੜੇਗਾ...ਇਜੇਹੀ ਲੜਾਈ ਪੜੇਗੀ...ਕਈ ਜੁਗਾਂ ਤੀਕੁ ਹਿੰਦੁਸਤਾਨੁ ਇਨਾਂ ਬਾਤਾਂ ਕਉ ਸਮਾਲੇਗਾ (ਮੀਰ ਬਾਬਰੁ ਮਾਰ ਨਿਕਲਿਆ ਸੈਦਪੁਰ)...ਏਹ ਨਗਰ ਫਕੀਫਾਂ ਮਾਰਿਆ ਹੈ...ਤਬ ਗੁਰੂ ਬਾਬੇ ਦੇ ਖਿਆਲ ਦੇ ਮੁਹਿ ਜਿ ਆਏ ਸੁ ਸੈਦਪੁਰਿ ਸਲੋਇ ਮਾਰੇ ਗਏ...ਤਬ ਗੁਰੂ ਬਾਬਾ ਭਲਕੇ ਫੇਰਿ ਸੈਦਪੁਰਿ ਸਲੋਈ ਆਇਆ...ਓਥੇ ਕਿਛੁ ਨਾਹੀ...(ਮਾਇਆ) ਖਟੀ ਹੋਰਨੀ, ਵੇਡਿ ਹੋਰਨਾਂ ਨੋ ਦਿਤੀ...ਦੇਖੈ ਗੁਰੂ ਬਾਬਾ ਨਾਨਕੁ ਜੀ, ਤਬ ਅਗੈ ਝੂਝੁ ਪੜਿਆ ਹੈ, ਲੋਕ ਲੜਦੇ ਹੋਨਿ...ਤਬ ਗੁਰੂ ਬਾਬਾ ਨਾਨਕੁ ਜੀ ਉਸੀ ਵਖਤਿ ਟਿਲੇ ਬਾਲ ਗੁਦਾਈ ਦੇ ਗਇਆ... ਜੋਗੀਅਹੁ ਕਿਆਹੁ...ਕਰਾਮਾਤਿ ਵੇਖਾਲਹਿ ਤਾਂ ਅਸੀਂ ਪਤੀਜਾ ਹਾਂ...ਤਬ ਗੁਰੂ ਬਾਬੇ ਨਾਨਕ ਦਿਆਹੁ ਮੁਹਹੁ ਨਿਕਲਿ ਗਇਆ...ਪਰਸੁਹਿ ਏਥੇ ਮੀਰੁ ਬਾਬਰੁ ਆਵੈਗਾ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਉਸ ਨੋ ਵੇਖਾਲਿਅਹੁ...ਮੀਰੁ ਬਾਬਰੁ ਜੋਗੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਬਾਨਿ ਆਇ ਪਇਆ, ਲਗੈ ਜੋਗੀਆਂ ਨੋ ਮਾਰਣੇ। ਬਾਬੇ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇ ਸਬਦ ਨਾਲਿ ਮਾਰੇ ਗਏ : *Mehrbān*, 465-69.

changing the tenses of his exegesis from the ones in the original : ਛਪਿ ਖਲੋਏ is ਛਪਿ ਜਾਹਿਗੇ; the past is rendered in the future. The composition says that Bābar attacked from Kabul. Mehrbān's exegesis says that he invaded from Khurasān. He probably has *rāg āsā* composition in mind

ਖੁਰਾਸਾਨ ਖਸਮਾਨਾ ਕੀਆ
ਹਿੰਦੁਸਤਾਨੁ ਡਰਾਇਆ

through a misunderstanding. Mehrbān has significantly dropped the only historical detail in his quotation :

ਪਾਪ ਕੀ ਜੰਝ ਲੈ ਕਾਬਲਹੁ ਧਾਇਆ
ਜੋਰੀ ਮੰਗੈ ਦਾਨੁ ਵੇ ਲਾਲੋ

Mehrbān is not even using the historical information in his source, that is Gurū Nānak's composition. The second half of the reconstruction is based on *rāg āsā ashtpadī* composition :

ਕਹਾ ਸੁ ਖੇਲ ਤਬੇਲਾ ਘੋੜੇ
ਕਹਾ ਭੋਰੀ ਸਹਨਾਈ

Mehrbān has already explained the earlier *tilang* composition in the future tense in defiance of its tense structure to enable him to say that Gurū Nānak had cursed Saidpur and prophesied its destruction. In *āsā* composition Gurū Nānak is made to visit Saidpur to witness the battle scene. The stanza about the *Jogis* ineffectively working miracles against Bābar has been transposed from its place at no. 4 to no. 6 so that the battle scene and the classes of the bereaved could be enumerated. It was inconvenient for Mehrbān that Bābar should finish off with the *Jogis* before the sack of Saidpur (a very logical thing to do if Bābar wanted to overrun the enemy's 'spiritual' defences). Thus the transposition of the stanza and the introduction of the *brāhmin* begin to make sense. The point required to be emphasized is that

Mehrbān is not making a historical use of Gurū Nānak's compositions even when something could be made out of them.

It is not difficult to see how Mehrbān has connected *tilang* composition with the sack of Saidpur. The word '*lalo*' of the *tilang* is a Pathan word for 'yes'. Saidpur is supposed to be a town of Pathans. The connection of the composition with Saidpur is further emphasized by the statement that *rāg tilang* was played in the *Pathāna* mode.⁵³

Two things stand out in Mehrbān's reconstruction. The historical omission is not accidental. It is the outcome of his anti-historical outlook. Mehrbān has the authority of personal belief only to supply plausible details in his narrative. He always assumes this kind of authority without ever suspecting any questioning from his listeners or readers. Weaving a story round a 'symbol' in Gurū Nānak, changing the order of the stanzas, breaking the time sequence in paraphrases and changing the tenses of verbs are a few of the symptoms of stretching the *bāni* of Gurū Nānak on the rack of improvised history.

Mehrbān gives the impression as if there was no oral tradition concerning the this-worldly life of Gurū Nānak. His only source for reconstructing the life of Gurū Nānak is his *bāni*. Unfortunately Mehrbān is not very scrupulous in changing Gurū Nānak's verses. It must be taken into consideration that Mehrbān is both entitled and not entitled to introduce such changes. As an ordinary historian he is bound to honour 'historical accuracy' and the 'sanctity of the word'. As a spiritual successor of Nānak he is sovereignly qualified to make any changes he likes. In fact, he is not 'really' making any changes in the one, true, permanent reality of transcendental message. Mehrbān is not a historian;

53. Mehrbān, 465.

he is a religious 'enlightener'. This *Janam-Sākhi* is not a work of history; it is a very clever and convincing exercise in religious persuasion.

Failure to treat the *Janam-Sākhi*, not as a work of history but as a work of religion, not as illusory history but as a description of 'elements of reality' leads to crass distortions and mis-expenditure of scholarly energy simply to further the tradition of illusory history. In their frantic search for history historians have failed to perceive the religious purpose of the work. In this regard the Sikh tradition was surely more wide-awake.⁵⁴ Those who have searched for history in the Mehrbān *Janam-Sākhi* have missed his 'faith' without getting anything possessing historical validity.

54. Cf. W.H. McLeod, *Gurū Nānak and the Sikh Religion*, 19.

Modern Historical Scholarship And Sikh Religious Tradition : Some Exploratory Remarks

Historical scholarship has for the past two centuries posed one of the most serious challenges which Christianity in the West has had to face. The challenge appeared in its most dramatic form in the nineteenth century when the newly developed methods of historical criticism were first applied to the Bible in general and to the gospel records of the life of Jesus in particular with results that seriously challenged some of the basic tenets of orthodox belief. The initial response of the Church to which I belong was to convict several of its theological professors, who used the new methods on the Bible, of heresy. The issue, as defined at the Briggs trial in 1893, was whether the Old and New Testaments 'being immediately inspired of God were without error'.¹ Even though the issue has been redefined over and over again and the Church has shifted its position since that time in ways that need not detain us here, the challenge of historical scholarship to Christian faith has not disappeared. A very lucid statement of the problem has recently been presented by Van A. Harvey in a book entitled *The Historian and the Believer*.² Since Harvey's analysis of what is called on the cover of his book the 'confrontation between the modern historian's principles of judgment and the Christian's will-to-believe' is generally applicable to religious traditions other than the Christian, it makes a useful starting point for this essay.

1. Lefferts A. Loetscher, *The Broadening Church: A Study of Theological Issues in the Presbyterian Church Since 1869*, University of Pennsylvania Press, Philadelphia 1954, 61.

2. The Macmillan Company, Toronto 1969.

I

The issue which the historian has with the believer, according to Harvey, is that orthodox belief corrodes the delicate machinery of sound historical judgment;³ that the demand for belief exercises a falsifying influence upon critical judgment.⁴ Harvey analyses the process by which historical judgments are made in considerable detail and points out the places where religious belief exercises its corrupting influence upon them and in what ways. Most of the points relevant for our purpose may be grouped into two categories: the evaluation of evidence and the development of the historian's argument. Let us examine each of these in turn.

The goal of the historian is to understand what happened in the past. To do this he cannot simply compile and synthesize the testimony of so-called authorities or eye-witnesses; instead, he must take an independent, critical attitude towards them and cross-question them carefully.⁵ Source criticism is necessary because the testimony of the historian's sources does not consist of 'complete photograph-like descriptions' of past events but is full of judgments and inferences about the events being described.⁶ If the historian were simply to accept his sources, with all their judgment and inferences, as authorities without criticizing them, he would cease to be a historian – a seeker after knowledge, a thinker – and become merely a 'mediator of past belief', a 'transmitter of tradition'.⁷ The corrupting influence of belief comes into play when the historian accepts some or all of the sources of his religious tradition as authorities without examining them critically or when he appeals to belief to justify the authority which he confers upon them.

3. *The Historian and the Believer*, 119.

4. *Ibid.*, 111.

5. *Ibid.*, 40.

6. *Ibid.*, 41.

7. *Ibid.*, 42.

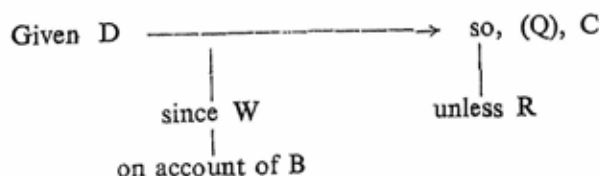
After critically evaluating his evidence, the historian must then develop his argument. The process by which he comes to a conclusion about the past has been summarized by Harvey as follows :

- (i) formulating a question,
- (ii) marshalling the various likely candidates for a solution to the question,
- (iii) searching for a particular candidate that seems indicated by the evidence, and
- (iv) eliminating the alternatives incompatible with the evidence.⁸

In going through this process the historian must justify the conclusions he has come to; he must give reasons for the judgments he has made concerning the past. The soundness of his judgments will be determined by the quality of the reasons he provides. In order to show what makes some historical assertions more acceptable than others, Harvey uses the following model of historical argument. The historian arrives at a conclusion (C) about the past on the basis of certain data (D) by using a warrant (W) which is generally an implicit and unstated bridge that legitimizes the movement between data (D) and conclusion (C). This warrant (W) may be such as to force the historian to place a qualifier (Q) before his conclusion (C). The words 'probably', 'possibly', 'necessarily' are examples of qualifiers which indicate how much force may be given to the conclusion. If his warrant (W) is challenged the historian will have to justify it by giving it a backing (B). If it is argued that while his warrant (W) generally holds but does

8. *The Historian and the Believer*, 50. Harvey borrows this from Stephen Toulmin, *The Uses of Argument*, Cambridge University Press, New York 1958.

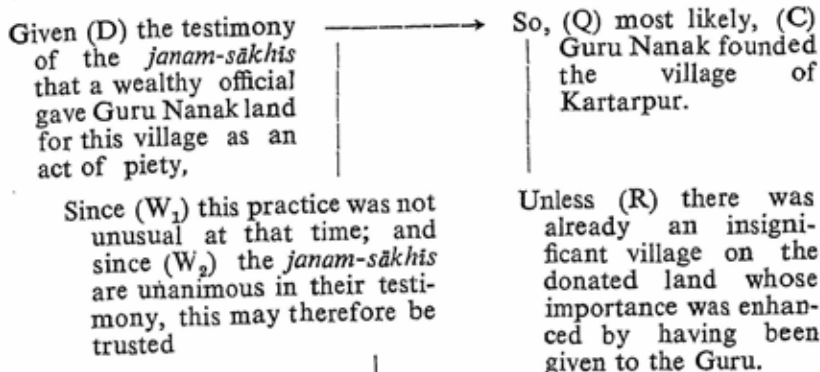
not do so in this particular case, then the historian may have to enter a rebuttal (R) to allow for the possibility of an exception. A diagram of the model in its complete form would look like this :⁹



A concrete example taken from the life of Guru Nanak may make this model somewhat clearer. A historian concludes that Guru Nanak most likely (Q) founded the village of Kartarpur (C) on the basis of the testimony of the *janam-sākhis* that the land for this purpose was donated by a wealthy official as an act of piety (D). His warrants (W) are two : first, (W₁) it was not unusual for Panjabi villages to be founded on land donated to holy men by their devotees; and second, (W₂) the *janam-sākhis* are unanimous on this point and therefore their testimony may be trusted. The first warrant (W₁) might be challenged by pointing out that in this particular instance there may already have been a village on the donated land, in which case this possibility must be taken into consideration in the form of a rebuttal (R). The second warrant (W₂) might be challenged by saying that the *janam-sākhis* are full of miracle and legend and therefore cannot be trusted. The backing (B) used to justify this warrant (W₂) would therefore be, first, (B₁) the facts that the setting of this story was in the Panjab and near the end of the Guru's life suggest that this tradition, on which the sources all agree, was based on authentic memory and is therefore more reliable than it would otherwise be. However, this point does reduce the force of the argument somewhat and therefore the

9. *The Historian and the Believer*, 50-54.

conclusion (C) has been slightly modified by using the qualifier (Q) 'most likely'. The second backing (B_2) for this warrant (W_2) is that the miraculous elements in the *janam-sākhī* accounts of this event in no way detract from its essential point. The diagram would thus be as follows :¹⁰



On account of (B_1) the event taking place in the Panjab towards the end of the Guru's life, thus making the tradition more reliable; and

on account of (B_2) the miraculous elements in the story in no way affecting its basic import.

This model helps us to locate with some precision the points at which the will-to-believe of the religious is most likely to come into conflict with the will-to-know of the historian. The first point comes at the initial stage of the historian's argument when he is considering alternate answers to the question at hand. Here the historian is under obligation to consider *all* the possible alternatives not just those which are compatible with his religious belief or

10. This example is taken from W.H. McLeod, *Gurū Nānak and the Sikh Religion*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 1968, 138-39.

are easily refuted. He must face and consider fearlessly even those alternatives which are most threatening to his religious beliefs or tradition. The second point of possible conflict is the use of warrants and backing to justify conclusions. The warrants and backing used by historians are related either to the historical context of the data or to the various areas of currently accepted knowledge about how and why things happen. The temptation posed by the will-to-believe is that of setting aside these warrants in an appeal to the authority of religious tradition, to divine intervention, or to miracle. The third point of possible conflict is the use of qualifiers which can modify considerably the force of the conclusion arrived at. Here the temptation is to give a conclusion greater force than the warrants can carry when considering matters of crucial importance to religious faith.

II

As indicated at the outset, this analysis of the confrontation of historical scholarship with religious belief and tradition was developed within a western and Christian context. The purpose of this essay is to assess the relevance of this issue for Sikhism by applying the foregoing analysis to several recent histories of the life of Guru Nanak with the following questions in mind : What is the stated purpose of this work ? Is it written from a perspective which raises the issue of scholarship and tradition and, if so, in what way is the issue raised ? What is the writer's view of his sources ? How does the writer develop his arguments; what kinds of warrants and backings does he use and how much force does he give to his conclusions ? We shall begin this analysis with an examination of the sections on Guru Nanak in two important histories of the Sikhs, those of Teja Singh and Ganda Singh on the one hand and Khushwant Singh on the other. From this starting point we shall move on to consider three full-length historical

studies of Guru Nanak : those of W. H. McLeod, Harbans Singh and J. S. Grewal. Time and space do not permit an exhaustive examination of each of these five works. It is hoped, however that the following analysis is thorough enough to suggest an answer to the central question of the essay; where, if anywhere, does the issue lie between historical scholarship and Sikh religious tradition at the present time ?

Teja Singh and Ganda Singh set out to make what they considered to be 'the first attempt to write a history of Sikhs from a secular stand-point.'¹¹ The history, they felt, 'reveals the gradual making and development of a nation in the hands of ten successive leaders, called *Gurus*'.¹² The authors therefore set the life and work of Guru Nanak within the context of this 'gradual making and development of a nation' and assigned him the role of the one who perceived 'the true principles of reform' and laid 'those foundations which enabled his successor Gobind to fire the minds with a new nationality, and to give practical effect to the doctrine that the lowest is equal to the highest, in race and creed, in political rights as in religious hopes'.¹³ Whether they were able to establish the basic continuity between Guru Nanak and Guru Gobind Singh needed to bear out this contention is what we must examine now.

Teja Singh and Ganda Singh say very little about the sources of the life of Guru Nanak except when seeking to establish certain base-points with reference to his birth or to the extent of his travels. Many of the incidents they describe are not foot-noted at all, on the apparent assumption that these can be taken

11. Teja Singh and Ganda Singh, *A Short History of the Sikhs*, Orient Longmans Ltd., Bombay 1950, iii.

12. *Ibid.*, 1.

13. *Loc. cit.*

as generally accepted knowledge. However, they do indicate that many of the stories about Guru Nanak appear to be 'only settings provided for the word-pictures drawn by him in his verses'.¹⁴ Moreover, they record in their history only one story with an element of the miraculous in it.¹⁵ By removing the miracle stories and by seeking to justify the base-points in the life of the Guru on the basis of an examination of evidence, the authors give their life story of Guru Nanak considerable plausibility. We may therefore conclude that they have tended to accept the tradition about Guru Nanak where it stands except when confronted with miracles, impossible happenings, or controversies about key points in his career; their position vis-a-vis their sources is one of partial autonomy.

The argument about the role of Guru Nanak in the development of a new nation comes into focus at the point where Guru Nanak returns from his travels to witness the sack of Saidpur by Babar. One of the 'hymns of blood' is quoted and the Guru's anguish over the suffering noted. The question is then asked, 'What would he have done, this master of the herd, had he been in the position of Guru Gobind Singh... if he had a nation at his back'? The answer implied is that Guru Nanak too would have fought such oppression and injustice. The authors go on to point out 'he did not sit down in impotent rage and utter idle jeremiads. He did as much as was possible under the circumstances'.¹⁶ With this statement we are led to an estimate of Guru Nanak's work. Verses from the *Ādi Granth* are cited to show Nanak's concern for 'the social and political disabilities of his

14. *A Short History of the Sikhs*, 4.

15. The blood and the milk from the food of Malik Bhago and Lalo : *ibid.*, 6.

16. *Ibid.*, 13.

people'.¹⁷ The authors state that Nanak's assessment of the situation was that moral degeneration – ignorance and corruption – was at the heart of the people's problem. He therefore sought through his preaching to set people free from bondage to numerous gods and goddesses and to place a higher value on man himself (and women as well); he instituted interdining to give practical effect to the ideal of equality; he used the Punjabi language to spread his message; and he set a personal example of his ideals in his own life.¹⁸

But do these data lead us to the conclusion that Guru Nanak would have taken up the sword against tyranny and injustice had this been a viable option at the time? I think not. For one thing, this interpretation places a very heavy load of meaning upon Guru Nanak's reaction to the sack of Saidpur; in fact this event becomes Teja Singh's and Ganda Singh's key to understanding Guru Nanak's life. Other possible explanations of the central aim of his life are neither considered nor explored. Secondly, the warrant used to move from these data to the conclusion, namely that Guru Nanak's work was later put to the use for which he had originally intended it, is a highly dubious one. It could be challenged by asking whether the uses to which Guru Nanak's work was later put were not *read back* into his intentions for it. No backing for continuity is provided, although it might be the implicit one of faith, namely a doctrine of the Guru which implies a clear continuity of intent from one Guru to the next.¹⁹

17. *A Short History of the Sikhs*, 14.

18. *Ibid.*, 14-15.

19. The whole movement was gradual and at no stage was there a sudden or uncalled for departure from the original aim: *ibid.*, iii. This doctrine may also account for the failure to consider other explanations of the central aim of the Guru's life.

The history of the Sikhs, according to Khushwant Singh, is the story of 'the rise, fulfilment, and collapse of Punjabi nationalism'. This story begins with Guru Nanak 'initiating a religious movement emphasising what was common between Hinduism and Islam and preaching the unity of these two faiths practised in the Punjab'.²⁰ Specifically, Guru Nanak founded a new religion, started a new pattern of living, and 'set in motion an agrarian movement whose impact was felt all over the country'.²¹ In addition, he was 'the first popular leader of the Punjab in recorded history'.²² Even though in this study Guru Nanak is placed more within the context of the social and political history of the Punjab than within the religious history of the Sikhs, the issue of faith and scholarship still has to be faced because the Guru's significance is being assessed.

Khushwant Singh devotes a four page appendix to an analysis of the sources of the life of Guru Nanak. He is of the view that there was an original, but no longer extant, biography of Guru Nanak that provided the basis of the *janam-sākhi* accounts which in turn added or deleted details from it and from each other. These *janam-sākhis* were 'written by semi-literate scribes for the benefit of an wholly illiterate people' and thus are full of miracle, of contradictions, and of special pleading for one or another branch of the Guru's family. Their value for the historian lies in the fact that they embody early tradition about the Guru, including memories of those who knew him personally, and that they 'furnish useful material to augment the bare but proven

20. Khushwant Singh, *A History of the Sikhs*, Princeton University Press, Princeton 1963, I, vii.

21. *Ibid.*, 30.

22. *Ibid.*, 48.

facts, of his life'.²³ Yet Khushwant Singh felt that their contents must be tested against other evidence. He concludes on a cautious but positive note about these sources that 'when we put together all the material listed above, check one with another, discard the miraculous, delete the accretions of the credulous, we are still left with enough to recreate a life story with a fair degree of authenticity'.²⁴ This cautious optimism is reflected in the twenty pages on the life of Guru Nanak. The miraculous element is eliminated²⁵ and the *janam-sākhī* accounts are accepted where plausible.²⁶ His appendix indicates that Khushwant Singh has established his autonomy vis-a-vis his sources as well as his willingness to give them the benefit of the doubt, while his language suggests a decision to trust those traditions which he has used.

Khushwant Singh does not state his argument on the development of Punjabi nationalism or on the role of Guru Nanak within that development directly; it must be inferred from a number of references to Punjabi nationalism. His line of reasoning seems to be that, socially, Punjabi nationalism was a scene of common Punjabi identity and, politically, it was the effort to establish an independent Punjab state.²⁷ Guru Nanak attempted, on the one hand, to destroy the old identities which were essentially religious ('there is no Hindu; there is no Mussalman') and, on the

23. *A History of the Sikhs*, I, 299. It is for the first of these reasons that Khushwant Singh considers Bhai Gurdas's references to the Guru in his Vārs as authentic: *ibid.*, 301.

24. *Ibid.*, 303.

25. Except in the story of the Guru's death, but there it is qualified: *ibid.*, 37.

26. Khushwant Singh questions whether the Guru actually visited Ceylon: *ibid.*, 33.

27. *Ibid.*, vii-ix.

other, to capitalize on the new spirit of toleration between the two communities by working out a new religious synthesis combining elements of both creeds and by establishing new traditions which were neither Hindu nor Muslim but appropriate to uniting them on the basis of common elements. In the process Guru Nanak created a new community which was to embody increasingly this Punjabi nationalism and at the same time won for himself and for his ideal some admirers who remained outside his community.²⁸

Two points are of central importance in the development of this argument. The first is that Guru Nanak effected a synthesis between Hinduism and Islam that later took on a personality of its own.²⁹ The alternative is that Sikhism had a distinct personality of its own from the very start, i.e., with Guru Nanak himself. This possibility is not considered and the teachings and institutions of Guru Nanak are not measured against these two alternative possibilities to see which provides the more adequate explanation. The second and even more crucial point in Khushwant Singh's argument is that Sikhism is *the* Punjabi ethnic religion, the religious expression of 'Punjabi-ness', and that therefore the Sikh is the Punjabi *par excellence* and not simply a member of yet another Punjabi religious community. Perhaps the history of the Sikhs is not the history of Punjabi nationalism but of Punjabi communalism and that Guru Nanak simply made a bad situation worse by starting yet another religious community in the Punjab. The alternative is not faced and the issue not dealt with directly. Khushwant Singh's argument is soft at these two very important points and therefore highly vulnerable from the point of view of historical scholarship. But is this vulnerability due to the 'corrupting influence of faith'? Perhaps in part this is true. It could be

28. *A History of the Sikhs*, I, 14, 17, 39, 46 & 48.

29. *Ibid.*, 17.

due to an unquestioned theological assumption that Sikhism is the religious expression of 'Punjabi-ness', that it is the ethnic religion of the Punjab. It is more clearly derived from the view that the periods of Ranjit Singh, when the Sikhs achieved an independent Punjab state, and of the recent Punjabi Suba agitation carried on by the Sikhs, with which this history ends, are the two definitive periods in the history of the Sikhs and of the Punjab towards which all earlier periods were pointing. This choice of definitive periods is probably rooted more in social and political commitments of the writer than in his religious beliefs.

1969 marked the 500th birth anniversary of Guru Nanak. The celebrations brought forth a large number of works on various aspects of the Guru's life, work and teachings. But before they appeared, a very significant work by a non-Sikh caused quite a stir within the Sikh community, a stir which is reflected in some of the anniversary volumes. This work was W.H. McLeod's *Gurū Nānak and the Sikh Religion*, which was, in McLeod's own words, 'a quest for creative understanding'.³⁰ McLeod was painfully aware of the possibility of offending Sikh sensitivities, but sought to minimize this danger by stating explicitly just what he was trying to do.

This study is intended to discharge a three-fold task. In the first place it seeks to apply rigorous historical methodology to the traditions concerning the life of Guru Nanak; secondly, it attempts to provide a systematic statement of his teachings; and thirdly, it endeavours to fuse the glimpses provided by the traditional biographies with the personality emerging from the teachings.³¹

In short, McLeod's 'quest for the historical Nānak' had as its goal an understanding of the person, Nanak, which was to be achieved through the use of the methods of historical scholarship. McLeod's

30. *Gurū Nānak and the Sikh Religion*, viii.

31. *Ibid.*, vii.

work has raised the issue of faith and scholarship in a very acute form because he has called into question all the traditions about Guru Nanak.

McLeod devotes two-thirds of his study to a critical examination of the sources of the life of Guru Nanak. Early in his work, McLeod states his view concerning the *janam-sākhis* which are the main sources of information concerning the Guru's life. The *janam-sākhis* trace the origin to three sources: remembered facts about Guru Nanak and embellishments upon those facts; stories centered around certain references in Guru Nanak's written works; the needs and beliefs of the later Sikh community which either created stories or shaped existing memories of the Guru's life. From these sources came a stock of *sākhis* or isolated incidents which were in due time arranged in chronological order, later written down, and then copied, altered or added to until they reached the form in which we now find them.³² This view of multiple origins, unlike Khushwant Singh's original biography view, tends to produce a cautious pessimism rather than a cautious optimism concerning the received tradition. McLeod relates and then analyzes 124 *sākhis* from the various traditions and places the information they contain (as well as the information derived from other sources) about Guru Nanak into five categories: the established, the probable, the possible, the improbable, and the impossible. What emerges at the end of this lengthy analysis is a one page statement of all that McLeod believes can be said about the life of Guru Nanak. What is disturbing to religious faith here is that McLeod has questioned even the most plausible traditions concerning the Guru's life and has, in many instances, found them wanting.

32. *Gurū Nānak and the Sikh Religion*, 10-13.

The development of McLeod's arguments is as thorough as his source criticism. He tests alternate hypotheses concerning each of the 124 traditions (except those 26 miracle stories 'without any features which suggest a substratum of truth')³³ and accepts only those which he feels he can support. One of the great merits of his work is that he is very explicit about his qualifiers (established, probable, etc.), his warrants and their backings, as the example of the founding of Kartarpur used earlier illustrates. McLeod lists his seven general warrants or criteria of judgment at the outset of his attempt to reconstruct Guru Nanak's life. He dismisses miraculous or plainly fantastic incidents while recognizing that there may be a substratum of truth underlying them; he uses the testimony of external sources to test the validity of a tradition where possible; he makes similar use of Guru Nanak's works in the *Ādi Granth*; he allows his judgment to be influenced by the measure of agreement or disagreement in the *janam-sākhi* accounts; he considers the older *janam-sākhis* to be generally more reliable than the later ones: he believes that genealogical references are generally reliable; he places greater confidence in details relating to events in Guru Nanak's life set inside rather than outside the Punjab.³⁴ These are given appropriate backings when considered necessary, especially when considering the 37 *sākhis* which might qualify as probable or established. After examining the life and teachings of Guru Nanak McLeod comes to this conclusion about the person, Guru Nanak, in the Kartarpur period of his life :

The impression which emerges is that of a deeply devout believer absorbed in meditation and rejoicing in the manifestations of the divine presence, but refusing to renounce his family or his worldly occupation. Discipline there certainly was, but not renunciation and total withdrawal. The impression is also that of a revered teacher

33. *Gurū Nānak and the Sikh Religion*, 77.

34. *Ibid.*, 68-70.

giving expression to his experience in simple direct hymns of superb poetic quality. Around him would be gathered a group of regular disciples, and many more would come for occasional *darshan*, or audience, with the master. And the impression is that of a man, gentle and yet capable of sternness, a man of humour and mild irony who experienced the inexpressible and yet who maintained an essentially practical participation in the everyday affairs of his community and of the world beyond it.³⁵

The historical Nanak who emerges at the end of McLeod's quest has met the general demand of historical scholarship as defined by Harvey. Perhaps other scholars who use similar methods in studying Guru Nanak's life may find that McLeod's sympathy for his subject or his desire to 'tread softly' has warped his historical judgment at a number of points, but they could hardly declare that he had not adhered to the basic rules of historical scholarship. Whether the Sikh community finds McLeod's picture of Guru Nanak adequate to meet the demands of faith is another question and one which this writer is not equipped to answer. It does seem to me, however, that there are three lines of advance open to those who are dissatisfied with it and yet want to remain faithful to the demands of historical scholarship. The first is either to refute or to supplement McLeod on enough points of detail to substantially alter the picture of Guru Nanak which emerges from them. The second is to successfully undermine McLeod's theory of the development of the *janam-sākhi* tradition and replace it with one which can give the historian greater confidence in the received tradition. The third is to revise or supplement McLeod's list of warrants in such a way as to enable the historian to put the *janam-sākhis* to different and yet equally acceptable uses.

It is this third alternative which has been adopted by Professor Harbans Singh in his *Guru Nanak and the Origins of*

35. *Gurū Nānak and the Sikh Religion*, 231.

Sikh Faith, the goal of which was 'realizing an image of the Guru'.³⁶ His work bears the marks of fruitful inter-change with Christian scholars during his stay at Harvard's Center for the Study of World Religions, for he adopts the perspective used by some Christian scholars in dealing with problems in the quest for the historical Jesus similar to those McLeod has shown make the quest for the historical Nanak so difficult. Two important aspects of this perspective were pointed out by Harbans Singh's associate at Harvard, Donald Dawe, in a paper entitled "The Historian, the Guru and the Christ" presented at the Punjabi University in 1969. The first consists of a re-evaluation of myth, legend and miracle for the historian. They are not to be dismissed outright; they are the means by which early writers with a world-view different from the modern one sought to communicate not the externals of past men and events, but their inner meaning and significance. Thus Dawe says with reference to Guru Nanak

Myth expresses the fact that through him the believer passes into a new possibility of existence that radically transcends the expectations of life up to that time. Myth is witness to a discontinuity in the life of a community that points beyond itself and its historical setting to the transcendent. The myths about Nanak witness to the fact that the transition to new possibilities of life was intimately (ultimately) grounded in the concrete work of "Nanak himself".³⁷

Closely related to this is the merging of the past and the present or 'interpenetration of time' as the community of faith experiences 'a continuous purposive direction from the leader'.³⁸ This

36. Asia Publishing House, Bombay 1969, 24.

37. Donald G. Dawe, "The Historian, the Guru and the Christ", *Journal of Religious Studies* (September 1969), I, 22-23.

38. *Ibid.*, 23.

interpenetration of time is experienced most intensively in the early years of the community, the very period during which the *janam-sākhis* were written. It is reflected in myths set within the context of the Guru's lifetime which actually refer to present realities within the later Sikh community that are attributed to the presence of the Guru within the community.³⁹ 'So for example, when the *Janamsakhis* tell of the remarkable conversions of Shaikh Sajjan or Malik Bhago, the reference is not simply to a past event but to a present one, the experience of conversions that were going on in the community "through the grace of the Guru",'.⁴⁰

Harbans Singh begins his biography of Guru Nanak with a discussion of his sources, especially the *janam-sākhis* which he considers to be 'far and away the only means of information about the life of Guru Nanak'.⁴¹ He notes that they contain embellishments, interpolations, and deliberate distortions. He points out that their form is episodic, the accounts being made up of a series of short disjointed narratives, and that they tell the story of Guru Nanak in the language of faith.

The life to which they responded in wonder and faith had a unique sanctity and meaning for them and was essentialized in the idiom of legend, myth and miracle ... The mythological, the traditional and the historical were mingled together to resurrect the meaning of past facts extracted from their terrestrial context. The time-and-space setting was considered unimportant. The *Janamsakhi* accounts thus became interpretations of events rather than literal and orderly transcriptions of them.⁴²

39. Donald G. Dawe, "The Historian, the Guru and the Christ", 24-25.

40. *Ibid.*, 25.

41. *Guru Nanak and the Origins of the Sikh Faith*, 19.

42. *Ibid.*, 20-21.

Myth-stories, legend-stories and miracle-stories about Guru Nanak become relevant material for the historian not because they are *literally* true, but because they are symbolic bearers of *meaning*. 'Each one bears within it testimony to the depth and charity of Guru Nanak's life, which revealed to his followers the presence of God in him. This is the abiding truth underneath the Janamsakhi stories'.⁴³

After giving his theory on the value of myth, legend and miracle for the historian, Harbans Singh then states how he proposes to make this theory operational. He intends neither to rewrite nor to rationalize the *janam-sākhi* stories nor even to analyze the various levels of symbolism and meaning underlying them, but to 'construct from the details in different versions of the Janamsakhis and in some of the later sources a positive picture of the Guru's deeds and preachings'.⁴⁴ In this task his criteria are conformity to 'Guru Nanak's compositions and the manifestations of teachings in the life of the community which was the outcome of it'⁴⁵ or, in other words, holy scripture and sacred tradition.⁴⁶ What happens in the biographical section of the book therefore is that, for all intents and purposes, Harbans Singh adopts the world-view of the *janam-sākhis* as his own. Historical fact, myth, miracle and legend are all mixed together in his synthesis of the *janam-sākhi* accounts and little is done

43. Harbans Singh, *Guru Nanak and the Origins of the Sikh Faith*, 24.

44. *Ibid.*, 24-25.

45. *Ibid.*, 25.

46. The latter criterion is justified on the ground that the rich interplay of a religious leader and the faith which emerges from his message, of what he is and what he becomes to his followers is also of significance in understanding him and his work : *loc.cit.*

to separate out these varying elements for the reader. What emerges therefore is not a *biography* of Guru Nanak but an *image* of Guru Nanak derived from a harmony of varying early Sikh traditions as no systematic attempt has been made to get behind the *janam-sākhi* image to Guru Nanak himself. In the conclusion of the book the *janam-sākhi* image is blended with rather than measured against the image reflected in the Guru's own writings.⁴⁷

One may account for Harbans Singh's failure in his appointed task of writing a 'life' or biography of Guru Nanak in three possible ways. The first is that Harbans Singh, in deciding against an analysis of the different levels of meaning and symbolism embodied in the legend and myth and miracle surrounding Guru Nanak, failed to use the techniques which his theory called for. The second is that Harbans Singh, in seeking to make his theory operational, granted to the *janam-sākhi* accounts of the external events of the Guru's life a greater degree of historical reliability than the theory permits. According to the theory, it is the *meanings* – the inner realities symbolized in myth or legend or miracle – which are historically significant, while their settings – their outer shells – are historically unimportant. Consequently the meanings abstracted out of myths, legends or miracles are useful data for the historian, but their accurate, particular details must first be subjected to the same kind of analysis to which McLeod has put them before the historian can use them as external history. However, Harbans Singh states that the *janam-sākhis* become 'interpretations of

47. Miracle is a case in point. The *janam-sākhis* portray Guru Nanak as a miracle-worker, but Nanak in his writings rejects miracle. The contradiction is passed over : *ibid.*, 221.

events rather than literal and orderly transcriptions of them'⁴⁸ and uses the accounts as at least interpretations in his biographical section. But the accounts are not even interpretations – let alone transcriptions – of events until the facticity of those events has first been established by the methods of historical criticism and argument; as they stand they contain only disembodied symbols or meanings. As a biographer Harbans Singh needs reliable outer shells to be the vehicles of the inner meanings he has found, but his theory, at best, provides a general covering warrant only for inner meanings and not for external details.

The other and, to my mind, the basic reason for failure lies not in Harbans Singh's work but in the theory which he has attempted to use. Attractive and persuasive as this theory is when presented in a theological statement with only a few illustrative examples (as in Dawe's paper or Harbans Singh's Introduction), it proves impossible to put into operation for the purpose of a biography. Even if one concedes the point that 'Myth expresses the fact, that through him [Guru Nanak] the believer passes into a new possibility of existence that radically transcends the expectations of life up to that time',⁴⁹ how do we move from there to some conclusions useful for a biography of the Guru? This use of myth can get us no farther back than the image of the Guru in the Sikh community of the late sixteenth or early seventeenth century at the earliest. The same is true of the theory of the 'interpenetration of time' since what are being described are events within the later community of faith and not during the Guru's lifetime. Perhaps, it may be argued, Harbans Singh did not use the techniques these theories demanded of him; but even if he had, would he come up with

48. *Guru Nanak and the Origins of the Sikh Faith*, 21.

49. D.G. Dawe, "The Historian, the Guru and the Chirst", 22-23.

any more useful material for his biography? The attempt to analyze myth and legend and miracle at various levels of meaning should by all means be made, but I think that it will force the researcher to give up an attempt to write a biography of the Guru because he won't be able to get back behind the image of the Guru held by the early Sikh community to some additional biographical information about the Guru himself. In short, Harbans Singh's failure to make the theory operational was probably due to the fact that it could not be done anyway. The theory shows far more promise, as it turns out, for the development of Sikh theology than for historical research on Guru Nanak – which could explain why it was tried in the first place.

The final work we shall consider is J. S. Grewal's *Guru Nanak in History*. This, like Harbans Singh's study, is a very original work – although for different reasons. Its significance lies not in the application of a new theory to the life of Guru Nanak, but in the way in which the author delimits his purpose, organizes his work, and uses his sources to achieve the end he has in view. *Guru Nanak in History* is 'a study of the role which Guru Nanak assumed for himself and the legacy which he left to his successors'.⁵⁰ In other words, it is a study of Guru Nanak as Guru. Grewal divides his work into two main parts and then adds an epilogue which deals with Guru Nanak's legacy to his successors. The first part is devoted to an examination of the Guru's political, social and religious milieu, a predominantly Punjabi and somewhat more broadly North Indian milieu. This portion is based on contemporary Persian and later secondary sources. The Guru's own writings on his milieu are deliberately excluded from this section. The second part of the study is an

50. J.S. Grewal, *Guru Nanak in History*, Panjab University, Chandigarh 1969, I.

analysis of Guru Nanak's response or reaction to his milieu. For this section only the Guru's compositions are used. This procedure is justified on the grounds that

A study of Guru Nanak's work in terms of his response to his milieu is likely to be more fruitful than a discussion of his teachings in terms of 'parallels' and 'influences'. This approach may bring out the distinctive quality of Guru Nanak's message in the context of his times as well as the originality of his response.⁵¹

Grewal's choice of sources has been influenced by a desire to bring Nanak's response to the conditions of his times into sharp relief.⁵²

Grewal's procedure has some very important implications. In the first place, this is a study of 'the role Guru Nanak assumed for himself' and not a life of Guru Nanak. Hence Grewal's only descriptions of the course of the Guru's life are to be found in a two page summary statement in the preface and in a three page description of the Kartarpur period of the Guru's life.⁵³ A close comparison of these sections with McLeod's conclusions on the life of Guru Nanak reveals no discrepancies at all, save that Grewal is more certain than McLeod that Guru Nanak's travels took him outside India.⁵⁴ Secondly, Grewal discusses Guru Nanak's response to his milieu solely in terms of the Guru's teachings and not in terms of his 'life'. Grewal's only source is therefore the Guru's writings in the *Ādi Granth*. Since these are universally accepted as the Guru's own, Grewal manages to avoid all of the critical problems which McLeod and Harbans Singh have had to face with the *janam-sākhis*. Thirdly, Grewal uses the

51. *Guru Nanak in History*, xi.

52. *Loc. cit.*

53. *Ibid.*, viii-ix & 283-86.

54. *Ibid.*, ix; W.H. McLeod, *Gurū Nānak and the Sikh Religion*, 146.

janam-sākhis as evidence only when describing the response of Nanak's successors and followers to the work which he had done. They are thus used as evidence only for the period in which they were written and not for the period of the Guru's lifetime. In these ways Grewal has placed himself on very safe ground from the point of view of historical scholarship, while at the same time satisfying the demands of faith by using a method which highlights the Guru's moral fervour, the depth and scope of his experience, 'the distinctive quality of (his) message in the context of his times as well as the originality of his response.'⁵⁵

Grewal's attitude toward his sources and the nature of his argument can best be seen through an examination of one of his chapters on Guru Nanak's response to his milieu. The chapter on 'Contemporary Politics and Guru Nanak' has the advantage of being both relevant to some of the issues raised by writers considered earlier in this essay and representative of the method used in other chapters as well. Grewal begins by stating the conclusions of other scholars who have written about Guru Nanak's political concerns and views, thus demonstrating his awareness of the alternative explanations before him. In considering some of the terms in the Guru's writings which clearly indicate a familiarity with contemporary politics, government and administration, Grewal distinguishes between the literal and the metaphorical uses to which those words are put. The latter group, most of which centre around the theme 'God as King', give us an idea of Guru Nanak's general political outlook. Then when examining the Guru's response to contemporary events and particularly to the invasions of Babar (where presumably political terminology is used in a literal sense), Grewal says about his sources that,

55. J.S. Grewal, *Guru Nanak in History*, xi.

Guru Nanak did not set to 'describe' the age for the benefit of posterity. To confuse his response to the political condition of his time with the political condition itself is the surest way to misunderstand both.⁵⁶

In his conclusions Grewal points out that the place of the 'political concern' passages within the entire corpus of the Guru's writings is a small 'but by no means negligible' one.⁵⁷ Grewal's conclusions are, first,

Guru Nanak expects certain norms of behaviour, both from the ruler and the ruled. The foremost duty of the ruler was to be just, both legally and morally. The foremost duty of the ruled was to meet the valid demands of the ruler. Guru Nanak is totally unconcerned about any constitutional questions. If anything, he wholeheartedly accepts the monarchical frame-work.⁵⁸

And secondly,

Guru Nanak's denunciation of contemporary politics was frank but general. . . . His observations on some of the contemporary events are more in the nature of a general judgment on the age, a sermon on morality, rather than a specific condemnation of Babar or the Lodhis. This judgment springs directly from Guru Nanak's absolute faith in God's omnipotence and justice.⁵⁹

This is hardly a full summary of this important chapter of Grewal's work, but several important points emerge from it nonetheless. First, Grewal clearly adopts a critical attitude towards his sources not only by deliberately distinguishing between the literal, the metaphorical and the judgmental but also by placing terms and passages within their context in the Guru's compositions; he

56. *Guru Nanak in History*, 155.

57. *Ibid.*, 165.

58. *Ibid.*, 166.

59. *Ibid.*, 166-67.

does not simply take everything literally.⁶⁰ Second, he uses as data all the passages from the Guru's writings with political content, and events of the Guru's life are omitted as data. The warrants for Grewal's arguments are usually embodied in his critical warnings: the distinctions between the literal and the metaphorical, the descriptive and the judgmental, the general and the specific as well as the weightage of testimony within the Guru's writings as a whole. It is interesting to note that the material provided in the first part of the book is not brought in here either as data or as warrants for justifying the conclusions arrived at.⁶¹ Third, Grewal does not refute alternate explanations directly but only by implication. Clearly his conclusions undermine confidence in the central theses of both Teja Singh and Ganda Singh on the one hand and Khushwant Singh on the other, yet Grewal chooses not to 'do battle' with them.

It is difficult to find fault with Grewal's general method of research, although it is possible to question him on points of detail. The 'corrupting influence of faith' is not immediately apparent, unless it is in Grewal's studious avoidance of the 'life' or 'practice' of Guru Nanak.⁶² But even here it might be asked whether much of significance (beyond added thoroughness) would have been gained by seeking out data of that kind.

60. Grewal specifically warns against this again in his chapter on "Contemporary Society and Guru Nanak": *ibid.*, 175.

61. Grewal's description of Guru Nanak's political milieu would not justify the view that the Guru was living in a particularly degenerate or unjust age.

62. In his chapter on "Contemporary Society and Guru Nanak", Grewal acknowledges the importance of the evidence of the Guru's practice, but limits himself to the Guru's teaching nonetheless: *ibid.*, 168 & 171.

III

Historical scholarship in its modern critical form is a comparatively new thing in the history of the world. It is basically a western invention and initially was treated by the Church in the West as a serious threat to religious belief. It is interesting to note that virtually all of the early missionaries who came to India, at least from the Church to which I belong, treated it in that fashion. Only in the 1890's do we find a Presbyterian missionary, Harvey DeWitt Griswold, welcoming it and using it on both Christian and Hindu religious traditions. I know neither when modern historical scholarship actually began to make an impact upon Sikhism nor what the initial reaction of the Sikhs to it was. However, it is quite clear that by the time we come to the works considered in this essay, it has been accepted and put to use by Sikhs to increase understanding of Guru Nanak and Sikh religious tradition. Whatever the particular weaknesses of these works may be, it is plain that their authors have moved a long way from the historical writing of the *janam-sākhis*. The very fact that their work "makes sense" to the modern non-Sikh reader is testimony to their basic modernity.

Historical scholarship, like other intellectual disciplines, continues to develop and change. In the past two decades there has been among historians a pronounced preoccupation with and self-consciousness about methodology. This has given the discipline a maturity which it lacked when "common sense" was the researcher's guide. As historians have become more sensitive to their own methods of research, they have examined and questioned more radically the methods and assumptions of those who wrote their sources. Yet this essay suggests a general reluctance, even among the best Sikh historians, to question *radically* their received religious tradition—specifically, in this case, the *janam-sākhī* tradition. In two works we noted a tendency to accept the

historically plausible, in one the application of a theory which had the effect of keeping the *janam-sākhī* tradition pretty much intact, and in another a general avoidance of the critical problems raised by the *janam-sākhīs*. Only one writer – and he a non-Sikh – has faced the issue head-on by asking radical questions of the tradition and seeking to answer them with the techniques of historical scholarship.

Why is this? It could of course be argued that to date Sikh historians, like all too many Indian historians, have not yet developed the methodological self-consciousness and sophistication of their counter-parts in other parts of the world and that this development is simply a matter of time. Another possibility is that historical scholarship is perceived by Sikhs, as it was and still is by many Christians, as a threat to religious faith.⁶³

The question needs to be raised as to whether this threat to Sikh faith from historical scholarship is real or only imagined. One thing which the work of these scholars strongly suggests is that anything like a full biography of Guru Nanak which meets the conditions of modern historical scholarship is probably an impossibility; neither McLeod nor Harbans Singh, using very different techniques, could come up with much. Whatever knowledge of Guru Nanak we get, beyond the broad outlines of his career, will probably not be biographical knowledge. That knowledge may be important and considerable – Grewal's work has certainly made a considerable contribution by examining the Guru's response to his milieu – but that knowledge is not biographical knowledge. Are not McLeod's and Grewal's pictures

63. McLeod was of the view that scholarship did not pose a threat to the truth of the Sikh faith, although Sikh piety would be affected. See John C.B. Webster (ed.), *History and Contemporary India*, Asia Publishing House, Bombay 1971, 4.

of the person of Guru Nanak more than adequate for the needs of faith ? And if not, why not ? Does faith need a lot more biographical information in order to flourish or even survive ? What difference does Guru Nanak's having visited Ceylon or Mecca make to faith and what is lost to faith if these events must be regarded by historians as highly improbable ? In short, how real is the threat of modern critical historical scholarship to faith ? If the threat is serious then it will be necessary to follow the lead taken by Harbans Singh in attacking the warrants and backings historians normally use as being either too narrow or inappropriate when covering certain religious phenomena.

There is the very real possibility that historical scholarship, even as it now stands, may be an aid rather than a threat to faith. This point is plain enough when scholarship is used to defend the received religious tradition. What is perhaps less obvious is that it is also true, and perhaps especially true, when scholarship asks very radical questions of the received tradition. Such questioning does run the risk of undermining public confidence in the Guru and this is a serious matter. On the other hand, there is always the very serious danger to Sikh faith that the Guru may become so imprisoned in the traditions about him as to render him impotent in the lives of his followers. It is he, Nanak, who is the Guru; the tradition is not the Guru. Therefore the tradition should not be simply allowed to define the Guru for us. And it is the task of historical scholarship to put traditional pictures of the Guru in their place and enable us to get back behind them to the Guru himself. After all, it is he, not the writers of the traditions, who is normative for Sikh faith and life.

The Rajputs of James Tod

James Tod (1782-1835) had a wide and pleasant experience of Rajasthan and its people.¹ After coming to India in 1799 as a cadet, being commissioned lieutenant the year following and being posted to Delhi in 1801, he was attached in 1806 to the embassy sent to Sindhia's court then in Mewar, and moved with it until 1812 when the court became stationary. He was promoted captain in 1813 and, within two years, he became second assistant to the Resident. In 1818, he was appointed political agent to western Rajputana states, a post which he held for over four years. Thus for twelve years he had lived, as he said, in the vicinity of the Rajputs before he came to live 'familiarily among these people'. He could converse in Rajasthani with ease and fluency : 'its tropes and metaphors were matter of colloquial commonplace'; and he liked to think that he could feel like the Rajputs.²

Tod took great interest in the geography, history, antiquities and the art of Rajasthan. In 1806, when he had escorted the embassy to Sindhia's court, the geography of Rajasthan was very imperfectly known to the British Indian Government; Tod was encouraged by the Resident-envoy to work on geographical surveys, a work which he continued until 1822. By 1810-11, he had despatched survey parties to the Indus and to the Rajputana desert; by 1815 'the geography of Rajasthan was put into combined form'; and the maps he presented to Lord Hastings on the eve of British

1. For Tod's life, see *Dictionary of National Biography*, "M memoir of the Author" prefixed to *Tod's Travels in Western India*, London 1839; the first chapter of his *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan*, 2 Vols., London 1829 & 1832; and his "Personal Narrative" in Vols. I & II.

2. James Tod, *Travels in Western India*, "Memoir of the Author", xxxiii, n.

operations in central India became 'in part the foundation of that illustrious commander's plan of the campaign' against the Marathas.³ Tod's information on Rajput history too was sent to Hastings, so as to make his work sufficiently accurate for 'every political and military purpose'.⁴ After 1818, he paid as much attention to materials for Rajput history and sociology as to detailed geographical surveys. Easy access to Rajput territories provided ample opportunities for collecting coins, inscriptions, manuscripts and social statistics like customs, beliefs and manners of the Rajputs.⁵

Tod's interest in Rajput society was 'consequent and subordinate' to his practical interest in geography, but the publication of Hallam's history of the Middle Ages in 1818 heightened his interest in the Rajputs. Already, his observations in Rajasthan had suggested similarities between its institutions and some of the institutions described by Montesquieu, Hume, Millar and Gibbon. On the appearance of Hallam's *Middle Ages* Tod felt convinced that the general resemblances between European society as Hallam described it and Rajput society as he observed it were too strong to be mere coincidences.⁶ Rajasthan now became all the more interesting for its resemblance with medieval Europe. In rediscovering the Rajput past he was in a sense rediscovering his own past.

The seven years between 1822, when he resigned his political appointment on grounds of ill health, and 1829, when the *Annals*

3. *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan*, I, 3.

4. *Ibid.*, 7; also, II, 346, n 1. The account of Jaipur state was 'nearly what I communicated to the Marquess of Hastings in 1814-15'.

5. Tod's coins and manuscripts were deposited with the Royal Asiatic Society: "Memoir of the Author", *Travels in Western India*, xlv; Introduction, *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan*, I, viii, n 2.

6. *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan*, I, 29-30.

and *Antiquities of Rajasthan* appeared, were spent in acquiring the reputation of an authority on Rajasthan. Tod had travelled through western India in search of still more materials; and reaching England in 1823, he became a member of the Royal Asiatic Society founded in the same year; subsequently, he was appointed its librarian.⁷ Tod read his first paper in 1824, on an inscription relating to the last Hindu king of Delhi. The year following, he gave his account of Greek, Parthian and Hindu coins, twenty thousand in number, collected in Rajasthan.⁸ Having contributed an essay on the origin of ancient Asian and European nations to the *Journal Asiatique*, he read two more papers to the Royal Asiatic Society in 1828: an account of religion in Mewar, and remarks on the Ellora sculpture.⁹ Two of the eleven Books of the *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan* are devoted to geography, two more to the origin of Rajput 'nations' and their socio-political organization, and seven to the annals of the seven states of the Rajputs: Mewar, Bikaner, Jaisalmer, Jaipur, the Shaikhawati Federation and the Haravati states. By 1920, the *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan* had been re-published as 'a classic'.¹⁰

Tod's discussion of the origin of Rajput 'nations' had an important bearing on his elucidation of their socio-political system. He examined the Puranic genealogies of the solar and lunar races, and tried to bring out the connection between the Rajput states of medieval India and the thritysix royal races of Rajasthan. From his discussion of Rajput ethnology, he drew 'the inference of a

7. "Memoir of the Author", *Travels in Western India*, xlvii.

8. *Ibid.*, xlviii. It was reviewed by A.W. Von Schelegal in the *Journal Asiatique* (1828).

9. *Ibid.*, xlix.

10. Edited by William Crooke, Oxford University Press 1920. Tod's work had been 'several times reprinted in India and once in this country'.

common origin between the Rajput and early races of Europe': the Cymbrians, Celts, Gauls, for example. For him the Goths, Huns, Swedes, Vandals and the Franks were 'swarms of the same hive'. He adduced the evidence of mythology, martial manners and poetry, language and even music and architectural ornaments in support of his inference. His Rajput was thus a member of the 'Scythian' societies of ancient Europe and Asia.¹¹

Tod's discussion of the origin of Rajputs prepared the ground for his hypothesis that a feudal society, similar to the feudal society of Europe, had existed in Rajasthan. When he compared the essential features of Rajput society with 'the finished picture' of medieval Europe in Hallam's *Middle Ages*, he was satisfied that he could substantiate 'the claim of these tribes to participation in a system, hitherto deemed to belong exclusively to Europe'.¹² The incontestable proofs of his hypothesis were: the tribal system of Rajasthan, its 'feuds', the estates of chiefs and fiscal lands, the revenues and rights of the crown, the Rajput pride in noble ancestry, the rivalries and rights of the clans, the armorial bearings, the tribal palladium and banners, the feudal militia, the feudal incidents and the principle of *rakhwāli*.¹³

Tod's appreciation of the Rajputs thus became the obverse of his appreciation for medieval European society. The forts and temples of Rajasthan kindled his imagination, and induced in him the 'indescribable emotion' which the castles and cathedrals of Europe, he believed, were sure to generate in the heart of every imaginative person. The 'Gothic' gloom and silence of Rajasthan

11. *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan*, I, 59-60.

12. *Ibid.*, I, 130.

13. *Ibid.*, I, 130-75.

architecture heightened its beauties for Tod.¹⁴ The rich tracery of a temple 'might be transferred, not inappropriately, to the Gothic cathedrals of Europe'.¹⁵ He was 'fully impressed' with the beauty of Rajasthani sculpture :¹⁶ the graven images were 'the joint conceptions of the poet and the sculptor' who had elegantly used Rajput mythology as a source of inspiration.¹⁷ Tod had a hearty admiration for 'these masterpieces of sculpture and architecture' in Rajasthan.¹⁸ Sir James Mackintosh, reviewing Tod's *Rajasthan* in the *Edinburgh Review*, conceded greater perfection to Indian architecture than ever before the publication of this work.¹⁹

Tod adopted an indulgent attitude towards Rajput superstition, mythology and religion, and had a positive appreciation for Rajput morals. Priestcraft in Rajasthan and 'the lavish endowments and extensive immunities of the various religious establishments' did prove the sway of superstition and low state of morals.²⁰ 'But the evil was not always so extensive; abuse is of modern use'.²¹ The Jains, who shared with the Brahmans their ascendancy in Rajput society, were the ancient 'theists' of Rajasthan;²² the modern cult of the worshippers of Krishna, 'the mildest of the gods of Hindus', was 'doubtless beneficial to Rajput society'.²³ For the refined Hindus, Krishna in

14. *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan*, II, 472.

15. *Ibid.*, II, 780.

16. *Ibid.*, II, 704.

17. *Ibid.*, II, 784.

18. *Ibid.*, II, 734.

19. *The Edinburgh Review*, III, Art. V, 106.

20. *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan*, I, 507.

21. *Ibid.*, I, 508.

22. *Ibid.*, I, 520.

23. *Ibid.*, I, 522 & 531.

Jayadeva's mystical poetry was a lovely personification of the object of 'pure spiritual love'; Vindraban on the Jumna, the original abode of this Appollo of the Rajputs, was still 'the holy land of the pilgrim, the dercas Jordan of his fancy, on whose banks he may weep, as did the banished Israelite of old, the glories of Mathura, his Jarusalem'.²⁴ It was Tod's pride and duty to declare that he had 'known men of both sects, Vaishnava and Jain, whose integrity was spotless, and whose philanthropy was unbounded'.²⁵

Indeed for Tod, 'the grand features of morality' in Hinduism, as in all religions, and the manners of the Rajputs, which reflected their morals, were highly commendable.

The Koran we know to have been founded on the Mosaic Law; the Sastras of Manu, unconsciously, approaches still more to the Jewish Scriptures in spirit and intention; and from its pages might be formed a manual of moral instruction, which, if followed by the disciples of the framer, might put more favoured societies to the blush.²⁶

These excellent maxims of morality had been the product of a high state of refinement visible in ancient Indian philosophy, astronomy, architecture, sculpture and music; and, though Tod could see a marked deterioration among the Rajputs of his day, 'the homage paid by Asiatics to precedent has preserved many relics of ancient customs, which have survived the causes that produced them'.²⁷ For example, the Rajputs treated the fair sex with deference and respect, which was not incompatible with the 'seclusion' of women in Rajput society.²⁸ *Sati* and female infanti-

24. *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan*, I, 522.

25. *Ibid.*, I, 532.

26. *Ibid.*, I, 608.

27. *Ibid.*, I, 609.

28. *Ibid.*, I, 609-10.

cide were no proof of a degraded state of women in Rajasthan, for really 'the women are nearly everything with the Rajput'.²⁹ Indeed, the monogamy, the mutual fidelity and the marked influence of women in Rajput history and society proved beyond doubt that 'the age of chivalry is not fled'.³⁰

The chivalrous character of the Rajputs appealed most to Tod. The age of chivalry in Europe held a great fascination for one whose family motto commemorated the courage and honour of his ancestors: the Tods of Scotland had been permitted to use *Vigilantia* as their motto after their ancestor John Tod rescued Robert Bruce's children from captivity in England.³¹ 'The Rajput chieftain was imbued with all the kindred virtues of the Western cavalier'.³² The most prominent traits of Rajput character were courage, honour, loyalty, hospitality and devotion to the fair sex.³³ 'Rājputī' was synonymous with chivalry.³⁴

Rajput history displayed the struggles of a brave people for their national independence. For many centuries and in spite of many temptations, the Rajputs clung to 'their rights and national liberty' with an unparalleled tenacity.³⁵ 'Rajasthan exhibits the sole example in the history of mankind of a people withstanding every outrage barbarity can inflict, or human nature sustain'.³⁶ Political calamities were whetstone to the Rajput's courage who

29. *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan*, I, 611.

30. *Ibid.*, I, 631-42 & 609.

31. *Travels in Western India*, "Memoir of the Author", xvii, n.

32. *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan*, I, 119.

33. *Ibid.*, I, 642.

34. *Ibid.*, I, 601.

35. *Ibid.*, I, xvii.

36. *Ibid.*, I, 259.

valued his own way of life above everything else. There was not a petty state in Rajasthan that had not had its Thermopylae, and scarcely a city that had not produced its Leonidas.³⁷ Tod could not view a Prithvi Raj or a Rana Partap dispassionately.

Tod excelled in narrating the tales of Rajput chivalry, the most glorious aspect of Rajput history. Love and war were the favourite themes of Rajput bards,³⁸ and Tod related their tales with animation and gusto. 'The annals of no nation on earth record a more enobling or more magnanimous instance of female loyalty than exemplified by Dewaldai'.³⁹ Sanjugta was the Helen of Rajasthan;⁴⁰ the queen of Ganor, its Lucretia.⁴¹ Examples of 'the romantic chivalry' of Rajputs could be 'multiplied *ad infinitum*'⁴² and Tod never lost the opportunity of citing them.

Mewar above all the other states of the Rajput Heptarchy represented the quintessence of Rajput chivalry.

Some of their States have been expunged from the map of dominion; and as a punishment of national infidelity, the pride of the Rathor, and the glory of the Chalukya, the overgrown Kanauj and gorgeous Anhilwara, are forgotten names ! Mewar alone, the sacred bulwark of religion, never compromised her honour for her safety, and still survives her ancient limits; and since the brave Samarsi gave up his life, the blood of her princes has flowed in copious streams for the maintenance of this honour, religion, and independence.⁴³

The romantic tale of Bhim Singh and Padmini, the gallant defence

37. *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan*, I, xvi.

38. *Ibid.*, I, xii.

39. *Ibid.*, I, 614.

40. *Ibid.*, I, 623.

41. *Ibid.*, I, 625.

42. *Ibid.*, I, 627.

43. *Ibid.*, I, 259.

of Chitor against Alauddin Khalji, the exploits of Hamir Singh and Rana Kumbha, the wars of Rana Sanga, the resistance of Jai Mal and Fatta to Akbar's arms, all these formed the golden chain of Sesodia chivalry which led to the career of Rana Partap.⁴⁴

Had Mewar possessed her Thucydides or her Xenophon, neither the wars of the Peloponessus nor the retreat of the 'ten thousand' would have yielded more diversified incidents for the historic muse, than the deed of this brilliant reign amid the many vicissitudes of Mewar.⁴⁵

Undaunted heroism, inflexible fortitude, perseverance, national fidelity, and 'unconquerable mind' of the Rajputs of Mewar were the essence of its history.⁴⁶

There is not a pass in the Alpine Aravalli that is not sanctified by some deed of Partap, some brilliant victory or, oftener, more glorious defeat. Haldighat is the Thermopylae of Mewar; the field of Dawer her Marathon.

Tod was an inspired bard when he wrote of Mewar. Among the ruins of ancient cities in Rajasthan, with 'enthusiastic delight' he listened to the traditions of their fall; he heard the exploits of their illustrious defenders related by their descendants near the altars erected to their memory; and he was transported to the age of chivalry.⁴⁷ He felt like a Rajput for the fair land of Mewar.⁴⁸ Reaching its borders, he could not look upon its alienated lands without the deepest regret or without a kindling of the spirit towards the heroes of past days. He looked upon Mewar indeed 'as the

44. *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan*, I, 262-66, 268-73, 286-89, 299-306 & 326-28.

45. *Ibid.*, I, 349.

46. *Ibid.*, I, 350.

47. *Ibid.*, I, xvii.

48. *Ibid.*, II, 627.

land of my adoption'; and of this region and noble race, he might say, as Byron does of Greece, ⁴⁹

'Tis Greece – but living Greece no more.

Tod candidly avowed himself to be an advocate and apologist of the Rajput race. ⁵⁰ Though he was not blind to the miseries of the Rajput society of his day, he loved to celebrate its past virtues. Even at their worst, the Rajputs of his day were 'not worthless'. Tod denied to the Rajputs the vices of deceit and falsehood, 'which the delineators of national character attach to the Asiatic without distinction'. ⁵¹ He was prepared to forget any unpleasant personal experiences of the Rajputs, for there was 'something magical in absence; it throws a deceitful medium between us and the objects we have quitted, which exaggerates their amiable qualities, and curtails the proportion of their vices'. ⁵² Thinking of Mewar, with her unmanageable children, Tod exclaimed: 'Mewar, with all thy faults, I love thee still'. ⁵³

Tod's feeling for Rajput society was inseparable from his desire to influence British policy towards the Rajputs. For all his 'idolatrous affection' for the subject, he thought of his *Rajasthan* as a work of practical value. ⁵⁴ If he did not treat the subject in 'the severe style of history', it was because of his desire to exclude nothing which could be 'useful to the politician as well as to the curious student'. ⁵⁵ When Tod claimed for his work 'a higher title than a mass of mere archaeological data', he had the practical

49. *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan*, II, 635.

50. *Ibid.*, II, 743.

51. *Ibid.*, II, 642.

52. *Ibid.*, II, 601.

53. *Ibid.*, II, 602.

54. *Travels in Rajasthan*, vii.

55. *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan*, I, xix.

usefulness of his work in mind; his copious collection of materials in the *Rajasthan* was meant as much for the statesman of his day as for 'the future historian' of India; he was anxious to give 'too much' rather than to risk the suppression of 'what might possibly be useful'.⁵⁶

Indeed, Tod was impatient to 'apply history to its proper use' : imperial policies in India must be founded on a knowledge of India's past.⁵⁷ Though Tod admired the 'prophetic views' of Wellesley and criticized 'the timid, temporizing policy' of Cornwallis, the peace and stability of British empire was more important to him than merely the extension of British influence in India.⁵⁸ He feared that 'our strides have been rapid from Calcutta to Rajputana'; and he was anxious to safeguard this 'over-grown rule'.⁵⁹

Indian history taught 'a political lesson of great value' : the highest order of talent; either for government or for war, though aided by unlimited resources, would not suffice for the maintenance of power 'unsupported by the affections of the governed'.⁶⁰ Akbar, the greatest of Indian emperors, knew how to conciliate the governed, particularly the Rajputs : he knew 'that a constant exhibition of authority would not only be ineffectual but dangerous, and that the surest hold on their fealty and esteem would be the giving them a personal interest in the support of the monarchy'.⁶¹ Consequently, the most brilliant conquests of Jahangir, Shah Jahan and Aurangzeb as well as of Akbar were made by 'their Rajput

56. *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan*, I, xx.

57. *Ibid.*, I, 196.

58. *Ibid.*, II, 378.

59. *Ibid.*, I, 766.

60. *Ibid.*, I, 396.

61. *Ibid.*, I, 152.

allies'.⁶² When Aurangzeb neglected 'the indigenous Rajputs', he damaged 'the keystone' of his power; long before his death the grand edifice of Mughal empire was tottering to its foundation.⁶³ Yet Aurangzeb 'had less reason to distrust the stability of his dominion than we have'.⁶⁴

In Tod's judgment, the best allies the British could have in India were the Rajputs.

We have nothing to apprehend from the Rajput States if raised to their ancient prosperity. The closest attention to their history proved beyond contradiction that they were never capable of uniting, even for their own preservation.⁶⁵

The Rajputs, as their history again revealed, were even less likely to unite with others once they had been befriended by the British. 'Gratitude, honour, and fidelity, are terms which at one time were the foundation of all the virtues of a Rajput'.⁶⁶ Protected by the British Indian Government, the Rajputs would recover from the wounds inflicted on their body-politic by the mean Marathas and the ruthless Afghans. 'Our friendship has rescued them from exterior foes, and time will restore the rest'.⁶⁷ Then, if a Tartar or a Russian invasion threatened the British Indian empire, 'fifty thousand Rajputs would be no despicable allies'.⁶⁸ Sound policy dictated Rajput independence under British protection. Non-interference in the internal affairs of the Rajput

62. *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan*, I, 195.

63. *Ibid.*, I, 396.

64. *Ibid.*, II, viii.

65. *Ibid.*, I, 193.

66. *Loc. cit.*

67. *Ibid.*, I, 192.

68. *Ibid.*, I, 193.

states was the requisite of 'well-cemented friendship' between the Rajputs and the British, a policy which Tod had tried to follow during his political appointment and which, he believed, he was highly competent to pursue.

Justice, no less than policy, demanded that 'the most ancient relics of civilization on the face of the earth' should be preserved.⁶⁹ Tod's Rajputs, like the Scythians of his favourite Herodotus, possessed the supreme virtue of self-preservation. The Arabs, the Ghaznavides, the Ghurides, the Khaljis and the Mughals had been more or less successful in their wars with the Rajputs; but they had failed to annihilate the Rajput 'nations' and states. Mewar and Jaisalmer survived the rise and fall of the Turkish and Mughal domination in India; other Rajput states arose during that period itself to outlive the Mughal empire. Whatever the differences of detail in their annals, the undercurrent of Rajput history was 'the mental similarity' which enabled the Rajputs to preserve 'as nations, the enjoyment of their ancient habits to this distant period'.⁷⁰

Tod believed that Rajput society had survived largely because of its feudalism and chivalry. The martial system which he discovered in the Rajput states was 'so extensive in its operation as to embrace every object of society'⁷¹ and 'must have attained a certain degree of perfection' in the past. And, whatever its defects, it was based on 'loyalty and patriotism, which combine a love of the institutions, religion, and manners of the country'.⁷² Even the imperfect government in Rajasthan

69. *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan*, I, 127 *passim*.

70. *Ibid.*, I, 122.

71. *Ibid.*, I, 129.

72. *Ibid.*, I, 148.

was redeemed by the impulse it gave under perilous conditions to 'rivalry of heroism'.⁷³ That their socio-political organization was the best suited to the genius of the people could be presumed from its durability which war, famine and anarchy had failed to destroy.⁷⁴

It was not for the British to undermine the foundations of a society that had braved the storms of over ten centuries. The desire of 'every liberal mind' in Great Britain was, or ought to have been, the renovation of Rajputs whose noblest virtues were unimaginable without the feudal character of their society.⁷⁵ A 'great moral change' was effected by British alliance with the Rajputs;⁷⁶ but 'the ill-defined principles which guide all our treaties with the Rajputs, and which, if not early remedied, will rapidly progress to a state of things full of misery for them, and of inevitable danger to ourselves'.⁷⁷ A wise, humane and liberal policy demanded understanding of Rajput society. It was better not to meddle 'with what we but imperfectly understand'.⁷⁸ Justice, policy and humanity obliged the British to desist from applying their own 'monarchical, nay, despotic principles to this feudal society'.⁷⁹

Tod, with his appreciation for 'human varieties',⁸⁰ presents a contrast with the Utilitarians and the Evangelicals; he lived and moved in a world totally alien to them. Like

73. *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan*, I, 149.

74. *Ibid.*, 'Dedication' of the second volume.

75. *Ibid.*, II, 602, *passim*.

76. *Ibid.*, II, 657.

77. *Ibid.*, I, 160.

78. *Ibid.*, I, 193.

79. *Ibid.*, II, 161.

80. *Ibid.*, II, vii.

many another contemporary Anglo-Indian, he showed a keen sense of imperial responsibility and emphasized the need of larger evidence on Indian society. Even mythology, on which the Evangelicals and the Utilitarians poured their indignation, was for Tod 'the parent of all history'. With his sympathy for arts, his indulgent attitude towards myth and superstition, his positive appreciation for the beneficent social and moral influence of some non-Christian creeds, and his admiration for the heroic virtues of the Rajputs, Tod was indifferent to moral imperialism in India. Whereas the Evangelicals and the Utilitarians made it their business to judge and largely to condemn Indian society,⁸¹ his professed purpose was to describe 'all the peculiar features of Hindu society' in order to awaken sympathy for the people of Rajasthan.⁸² Sympathetic treatment of the subject, if anything, lends the quality of a classic to Tod's *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan*.

81. For detail, see J.S. Grewal, *Muslim Rule in India : The Assessments of British Historians*, Oxford University Press 1970.

82. *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan*, II, vii.

Financing of the Second Mysore War *

A historian studying almost any aspect of modern Indian history from original sources has to face the fact that his source materials are scattered throughout India and in libraries overseas. Consequently, it is very difficult for one historian to consult all the original sources relevant to the particular historical problem which interests him. When the necessary travel money is not forthcoming, one must view historical research as a collective rather than as an individual enterprise in which one is to do research on those problems for which there is original source material close at hand and then trust that others, closer to other relevant original sources, will supplement what he has done.

This essay on the financing of the Second Mysore War is based on the portion of the papers of Lord Macartney, Governor of Madras from 1781 to 1785, located at the Library of the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia. Most of these papers are financial records. The bulk of the Macartney papers, some of which have been edited by C.C. Davies and published by the Royal Historical Society,¹ are in the Bodleian Library at Oxford and some are in the British Museum. Most of what has already been written on the period of Macartney's governorship has been based on those sources, not on the ones at the University of Pennsylvania. What is in the Pennsylvania collection may therefore either confirm, contradict or supplement what has already been written

*The author would like to thank Professor Holden Furber of the University of Pennsylvania who suggested this particular topic and guided research on it. This paper is based on the Macartney Papers at the University of Pennsylvania Library.

1. C.C. Davies (ed.), *The Private Correspondence of Lord Macartney, Governor of Madras (1781-85)*, The Royal Historical Society, London 1950.

from the other collections. The purpose of this essay, therefore, is to bring to light what the Pennsylvania collection has to offer, to compare what these sources have to say about the financing of the Second Mysore War with what has already been written about it from other source materials, and to suggest some lines along which further research on this subject might advance. To place the problem of the financing of this war in its historical setting, a few words should be said at the outset about the nature of the Second Mysore War as well as about the relations between the Madras Government and the Nawab of Arcot on the one hand and the Bengal Government on the other. Fortunately there is a general consensus on these three matters in the secondary sources, which vary only slightly on minor details.²

The war, begun by Haidar Ali of Mysore in 1780 for reasons which need not concern us here, was clearly fought on his terms. His army of 80,000 to 100,000, about half of which was cavalry, was large and fast. He fought a war of attrition, controlling and devastating the Carnatic countryside virtually at will. With only a few exceptions, he avoided set battles with the much smaller but better armed and better disciplined army of the British. His control of the Carnatic, even after being defeated in battle, created not only a supply problem but also famine and refugee problems for the British in Madras. Sir Eyre Coote, the British general, had about 26,000 European and Sepoy troops under his command plus

2. Those consulted include Davies' introduction to the above; H.H. Dodwell, "The Carnatic 1761-68", *Cambridge History of India*, V, 273-94 and "Warren Hastings and the Assignment of the Carnatic", *English Historical Review*, XL, 375-96; Mohibul Hasan Khan, *History of Tipu Sultan*, The Bibliophile Ltd., Calcutta 1951; Helen H. Robbins, *Our First Ambassador to China*, John Murray, London 1908; and B. Sheikh Ali, *British Relations with Haidar Ali*, Rao and Raghavan, Mysore 1963. Of these, that by B. Sheikh Ali provides by far the largest amount of detail on all aspects of this war.

about 15,000 soldiers of the Nawab of Arcot. He had good artillery but virtually no cavalry to speak of. He was also saddled with large baggage trains and many camp followers, all of which helped to slow his army down to such an extent that it could never protect an area much broader than it occupied. Land connections between Bengal and Madras were severed and it was therefore necessary to supply the army by sea, something which made it impossible for Coote to leave the seacoast and press the war into Haidar Ali's territories. Haidar Ali therefore dominated the scene with his army, and his finances were stable; the British on the other hand were cut off from many of their sources of revenue, had famine and refugees to deal with and a very expensive army to supply. This kept the Madras Government in constant financial difficulty, always seeking additional sources of revenue in order to pay their bills.

The relationship of the Madras Government to its ally in this war, the Nawab of Arcot, was a very complex one. On the one hand, both were mutually independent governments, each with its own army. At the end of the third Carnatic war, the Madras Government had chosen neither to annex nor to take over the administration of the territories which their armies won; they were kept and administered by the Nawab of Arcot in whose name the British had fought the war. The Nawab ceded to the British only the district immediately surrounding Madras but administered it for them at their request. It was in financial and military matters that the affairs of the two governments became intertwined. The Nawab paid to the Madras Government 400,000 pagodas a year for ten of the Company's twentyone battalions; the *jāgirs* which he had ceded to the Company but continued to administer for them yielded just over another 400,000 pagodas a year. The result was that forty percent of the Madras Government's income depended upon the Nawab. He was

dependent upon the Company for military assistance but the Company was dependent upon him for money and supplies. Finally the Nawab had incurred large debts, which by 1780 amounted to 3,340,000 pounds, to the Company and to individuals including some Company servants.³ Consequently a number of Company men came to have a large financial stake in the well-being of the Nawab's regime and some of them did not hesitate to use their influence with the Court of Directors or even the British Parliament to prevent the Madras Government from pursuing policies opposed to the interests of the Nawab.

The relationship of the Madras Government to the Bengal Government, while 'clarified' by the Regulating Act of 1773, was almost as muddled as its relationship with the Nawab. Prior to the Regulating Act, Calcutta and Bombay and Madras were three autonomous branches of the East India Company, each responsible to London. The Regulating Act changed this relationship.

Calcutta was given powers of superintending and controlling the subordinate governments (i. e., Bombay and Madras) so far that the latter were not to commence hostilities or make treaties without its consent, but then followed two exceptions of disastrous latitude; namely, unless the case were one of such imminent necessity as would make it dangerous to await the arrival of orders, or unless the local government has received orders direct from home.⁴

In all other matters the subordinate governments were autonomous. The ambiguity of this relationship led to a number of misunderstandings and opportunities for intrigue. Apart from the legal relationship, the *de facto* situation in Madras had degene-

3. B. Sheikh Ali, *British Relations with Haidar Ali*, is the source for the financial arrangements.

4. P.E. Roberts, "The East India Company and the State", *Cambridge History of India*, V, 190.

rated to the point where Bengal could exercise complete domination over it. Shortly after the war broke out and the Company forces there had suffered severe initial defeats at Haidar Ali's hands, Sir Eyre Coote was sent down to Madras with full military powers for the conduct of the war; the Madras government added to this powers over all matters in Madras as well. When Lord Macartney came and brought new vigour and integrity to the Madras Government, a new pattern of relationships had to be worked out.

In these circumstances the financing of the war was both a political and an economic problem. While others have described its political aspects, this essay shall concentrate on its economic aspects by seeking first from the printed sources available and then from the Macartney papers in the University of Pennsylvania Library answers to the following questions: What sources of income were available to the Madras Government and how much did each of them yield? What additional sources of income or increases in the above sources were sought and how much realized from them? What were the military and other expenses of the war and how much did they amount to? What specific measures were taken by the Madras Government to increase its revenues and decrease its expenses? What can the answers to all these questions tell us about the history of the Carnatic and of the British in India during this period?

I

Information on the sources of income available to the Madras Government and the yield of each is rather sketchy and unclear. Dodwell says that its annual income was eighteen or nineteen lakhs of pagodas, seven and a half of which came from the Nawab's treasury. The portion coming from the Nawab included, one would presume, payment for his ten battalions of Company troops, the revenue from the Company's *jāgirs* he administered,

and any interest or principal on his debts to the Company he might be able to pay. It is unclear from Dodwell's account whether, when in 1779 the Nawab informed the Madras Government that he could not continue his payments, they lost all their seven and a half lakhs or just the portion that used to cover the Nawab's debts.⁵ What Madras's other sources of income were is also not clear. According to Sheikh Ali, the Madras Government's net income in 1779 was 941,711 pounds or just over 19½ lakhs of pagodas⁶ and its net surplus that year 51,061 pounds or just over 1¼ lakh of pagodas. This surplus, however, quickly disappeared to pay for a number of military expenditures with the result that in February 1780 there were only 1110 pagodas left in the Madras treasury.⁷ The Macartney correspondence edited by Davies adds little to this except to say that the Northern Circars were a source of income and that during the war the investment was not. In July 1781, shortly after he arrived in Madras, Macartney informed Hastings that the army was three months in arrears and that there was only 50,000 pagodas in the treasury.⁸ In March 1782 he reported that while there was the same amount in the treasury, the army was ten lakhs in arrears.⁹

The Macartney papers in the University of Pennsylvania Library do not fill in all the gaps left by the secondary sources but they do fill in some. The only complete set of accounts available is

5. Dodwell, "Warren Hastings and the Assignment of the Carnatic", 377.

6. The pagoda, according to Dodwell, was worth eight shillings or three and a half Arcot rūpees : *loc. cit.*

7. Sheikh Ali, *British Relations with Haidar Ali.*, 229 & 225.

8. Macartney to Hastings, July 11, 1781 in Davies, *The Private Correspondence of Lord Macartney*,

9. Macartney to Staunton, March 20, 1782, *ibid.*, 192.

for the year ending April 30, 1785 - the year when the war ended. These tell us that the Madras Government's regular sources of income were from the Carnatic and from the Circars; they included land revenues, income from their own farms, customs, licenses for toddy and arrack, and subsidies from both the Nawab of Arcot and the Rajah of Tanjore. Interestingly enough, the Company's investment is not mentioned in these accounts on either the income or the debit side of the ledger. Most of the revenue came from the Circars rather than from the Carnatic (11, 95, 254 pagodas as opposed to 2,36,148 in 1785).¹⁰

While it may safely be assumed that Madras's sources of income were the same in 1785 as they were when the war began, it cannot be assumed that the amounts from each source were the same. For one thing the 1785 statement included subsidies of 4000,000 pagodas from both the Nawab of Arcot and the Rajah of Tanjore, while we know from Macartney's correspondence that neither was giving a pagoda at the outset of the war.¹¹ For another, the 1785 income from the Carnatic was put at 2, 36, 148 pagodas while in 1782, 2148 of the 2265 villages in the 18 parganahs belonging to the Company were classified as 'ruined, Destroyed and no Inhabitants', something that would have reduced income from that source to virtually nothing.¹² The scraps of data on revenue from the Circars,

10. Sketch of the Revenues of Fort. St. George to 30th April 1785 for the Current Year.

11. Macartney to Macpherson, January 3, 1792; and Macartney to Hastings, July 11, 1781: Davies, *The Private Correspondence of Lord Macartney*.

12. An Account of the Present Situation of, the Villages of the Following Parganahs Belonging to the Honable Company's aiguer. Dated December 6, 1782.

the area least molested by Haidar Ali's army during the war, are very inconclusive. On the one hand, in February 1781 the annual revenues of Vizagapatam were put at about 2.43 lakhs, of pagodas only 6,000 less than the amount listed in 1785.¹³ On the other hand, a treasury note dated September 1782 indicates that the monthly receipts from the frams belonging to the Presidency were 6,000 pagodas per month, or only slightly less than half of what the 1785 accounts show.¹⁴ It is difficult therefore to draw conclusions from this kind of data; one might suggest that the Company got virtually nothing from the Carnatic and less than usual from the Circars. What it got from its other sources of revenue cannot be ascertained from the data available.

II

Because of the task of increasing revenues from existing sources and finding new ones was a most urgent one for the Madras Government, information on this question is fuller than on the previous one. The first place to which Madras turned for aid was the Bengal Government who between September 1780 and February 1781 sent them just under eight lakhs of pagodas, but then said that they were unable to send them any more. They therefore advised Madras to secure 'the complete assignment of the Carnatic revenues from the Nawab for the expenses of the war'.¹⁵ This the Nawab used every diplomatic device at his disposal to avoid, but according to Dodwell (who has dealt with this in considerable detail) between the end of 1781 when Macartney received the assignment and September 1784 the

13. Casamajor to Macartney, August 2, 1781.

14. Treasury Note, September 19, 1782.

15. Sheikh Ali, *British Relations with Haidar Ali*, 253.

assigned revenue was over 33 lakhs of pagodas.¹⁶ The potential of this and the other alternate sources of income open to him Macartney had described in a letter to Macpherson in Bengal in January 1782.

Let us examine our funds : The Circars ought to pay a considerable Sum; but they do not; and tho' I have repeatedly written in the most urgent terms, I receive little but plausible excuses and promises of exertion . . . The farms, Sea Customs etc bring in almost nothing. The Jaghire is waste. The Nabob will not produce a Pagoda ... The Rajah of Tanjore sends us no supplies. His arrears are great, and his Resources, as he says, dried up by the Enemy. His country is however now pretty well cleared; I hope that John Sullivan, our new Resident, will be able when he gets there, by his Prudence and Address to accomplish what has been vainly attempted by others . . . (We) have opened our Treasury to receive Money for Bills on England; but a very small Sum has yet been paid in; and I am disposed to think that there is not a great deal in the Settlement to pay. I have now mentioned all the expectations to be derived from our own Resources which you see amount to almost nothing. We must therefore turn our eyes towards Bengal whose exertions only can save us.¹⁷

That same month Macartney wrote to John Sullivan, the Resident at Tanjore, to 'get hold of the Raja's revenue in the same manner that we have that of the Nabab's'.¹⁸ Two other sources of additional income and supplies for the war effort not then anticipated by Macartney but mentioned by Sheikh Ali were military victory and a secret agreement with the ex-Rani of Mysore. The capture of the Dutch fort at Nagapatam not only removed any threat from the Dutch but also produced '537

16. Dodwell, "The Carnatic 1761-84", 292.

17. Macartney to Macpherson, January 3, 1782 in Davies, *The Private Correspondence of Lord Macartney*, 13-14.

18. Macartney to John Sullivan, January 12, 1783 : *ibid.*, 179.

bars of silver, 14,000 pagodas, 5,000 stand of arms, 200 pieces of artillery and 1,000 horse'.¹⁹ The ex-Rani of Mysore, agreed to pay five lakhs of pagodas, which were secretly hidden away within Mysore, to be put on the throne again and then two lakhs a month for troops afterwards. This scheme was discovered by Tipu and seems to have fallen through before the British could reap any financial benefit from it.²⁰

Among the Macartney papers at the University of Pennsylvania library is a statement prepared in 1785 on 'Amount of Extra Funds provided since the late War which commenced July 1780 to 30th April 1785'. This gives a very clear picture of the extra sources of revenue and the amount of revenue from each source during the entire war (The statement has been rounded off to the nearest pagoda) :

Supplies from Europe (Drafts on England)	22,13,889
Supplies from Bengal	75,64,395
Treasure	18,74,392
Cash advanced to Coote	4,40,066
Drafts on that settlement	30,38,046
Remitted hither by bills on soucars etc	7,31,110
Provisions received from thence	12,08,537
Military stores received from thence	2,72,244
Provisions from Bombay	21,462
Borrowed upon Bond	12,38,652
Total Extra Fund to 30.4.85	110,38,398

From this it is clear that Bengal was Madras's major source of financial aid. They provided cash, gold and silver which the Madras mint converted into coin, food and military supplies for

19. Sheikh Ali, *British Relations with Haidar Ali*, 269.

20. *Ibid.*, 305.

the army, and credit. Bombay, which had the Marathas to deal with, contributed very little while the Company in England proved to be a major source of credit.

Increased income from the Madras territories is not so clearly stated. Some idea of sources and amounts can be gathered from a statement of supplies covering the period from July 1, 1781 to January 31, 1783. The major source was the three factories in the Northern Circars – Masulipatam, Vizagapatam, and Ganjam – which provided treasure, bills and, in the former two instances, provisions as well. The Raja of Tanjore contributed cash and grain while some individuals and two British firms in Tanjore provided loans. Nothing is recorded for the Carnatic. A comparison of these supplies over one and a half year period with the revenues for the year ending April 30, 1785 from the same sources help to explain why Macartney complained of inadequate income from these areas.²¹

	Supplies 1.7.81 to 31.1.83	Revenues for the year ending 30.4.85
Masulipatam	pag. 4, 30, 253	pag. 7, 57, 317
Vizagapatam	2, 40, 344	2, 49, 937
Ganjam	69, 159	1, 88, 000
Raja of Tanjore	63, 432	4, 00, 000
Others in Tanjore	64, 013	

What is not made clear in this table is whether these supplies were over and above or in lieu of regular revenues; one is inclined to think it is the latter but this cannot be proven. James Daniell,

21. Statement of Supplies from 1st July 1781 to 31st January 1783. This would not be included in the list of 'Extra Funds' in 1785 because it was not part of the war debt which Madras would have to pay off, unless it was subsumed under the category of 'Borrowed Upon Bond',

the Agent at Masulipatam wrote to Macartney that the *zamindārs* were being very irregular in their payments because they were convinced that the British were too hard pressed to compel payment. Daniell asked for permission to make a show of force.²² It would therefore seem that the British ability to collect was related to their success against Haidar Ali.

Two other sources of income were considered but whether or not they were tried and with what success is not known. One was a lottery²³ and the other was to increase the investment in the Circars so that the Madras Government could draw more heavily upon drafts from England. Labour, it was urged, was plentiful and therefore cheap; consequently the profit might be unusually high.²⁴

III

On the debit side of the ledger, the military and other expenses of the war were immense. Troops, whether with Coote in the field or stationed in any of the forts in the Carnatic, had to be paid, fed and supplied with military stores. In addition, camp followers, who outnumbered the troops by about three to one, had to be fed; bullocks had to be found to haul the artillery and baggage of the army and, when found, fed. Coote's army cost about two lakhs of pagodas per month plus another lakh for bullocks, as is indicated by a letter from Macartney to Macpherson.

22. Daniell to Macartney, October 27, 1781.

23. Extract of the Minutes of Consultation 5th October 1781 and Reasons why the present plan of a lottery for 100,000 pagodas is not well fitted for the present times and circumstances.

24. Oram to Macartney, October 13, 1781.

The expenses of Sir Eyre Coote's Army alone exclusive of our troops in other places and on other Services, considerably exceeds two Lacks of Pagodas P. month; and if supplied with the number of Bullocks which the General thinks necessary to undertake the Siege of Arcot, or any expedition of 30 days continuance, It would require near a Lack more.²⁵

These expenses would have been less had there not been considerable corruption in the supply of bullocks and provisions to the army. This was carried out by private contractors who could pad their accounts greatly. Add to this the difficulties and losses involved in trying to get provisions past Haidar Ali's cavalry and the bill becomes very high indeed. The result was that the army faced constant shortages. Coote wrote shortly after Macartney arrived :

To be candid and fair with your Lordship upon the present occasion, I must declare that if something is not immediately done by Government, to supply those pressing Wants, I cannot any longer sacrifice my Military Character by remaining at the head of this Army. We have now about ten days Provisions left; when those are out I know not where to get more; and the consequence must be fatal. Add to this that two months Pay is due to the Black Troops exclusive of several other demands absolutely necessary to be cleared off immediately. It therefore behooves Government to remove these difficulties, since I have not the Means of doing it.²⁶

That was not the only time Coote threatened to resign unless his army was properly supplied.²⁷ Later in the following year Macartney complained to Macpherson that 'the wants or demands of the Army outrun the most extravagant calculation'.²⁸

25. Macartney to Macpherson, January 3, 1782 in Davies, *The Private Correspondence of Lord Macartney*, 13.

26. Coote to Macartney, July 4, 1781 : *ibid.*, 160-61.

27. Coote to Macartney, October 10, 1781 : *ibid.*, 167.

28. Macartney to Macpherson, April 21, 1782 : *ibid.*, 38.

The Macartney papers at the University of Pennsylvania give us a number of indications of the extent and expense of the Madras Government's military commitments, but not a complete picture of this aspect of their financial problem. As pointed out earlier, the major expenses were pay, provisions and bullocks. In February 1783, the military paymaster required 136, 338 pagodas per month to meet his obligations.²⁹ This figure is considerably less than Coote's demands and yet is intended to cover not only the army in the field but also those portions of it garrisoned at a number of forts throughout the Carnatic. This discrepancy could be explained in a number of ways - Coote was dead, there was a lull in the fighting in 1783, the figures do not cover the cost of the Bengal detachments, Coote's figures covered both pay and provisions - but no clear answer can be given from the evidence available.

With regard to provisions, the basic ration was one measure of rice per man per day (other provisions were given but rice was the staple).³⁰ At this rate it was estimated that 6, 820 bags per month were required for fighting men plus 6, 148 and 2, 231 bags per month for public and private followers respectively.³¹ Thus camp followers consumed almost sixty percent of the total rice ration ! (Whether they actually did so in periods of severe shortage cannot be ascertained; they might have got more as they

29. Estimate of Cash Wanted by Military Paymaster for one month (Dated February 2, 1783).

30. A Return of Garrison Stores with an Estimate of the Quantities required for a Garrison of 2000 Europeans and 8000 Natives for six months (Ft. St. George, September 16, 1782).

31. Computation of the Rice Wanted for the fighting Men, public and private Followers also of Grain for the Cavalry and Field Staff officers for one month taken from the last Indents with the copy of Mr. Denworthy's Indent of Provisions wanted for the Europeans for 3 months.

could probably pilfer the baggage more easily than combat troops). European troops required only 764 bags of rice per month but their meat quota was high.³²

There are no sound figures for bullocks for the entire war period, but a rough idea of their numbers and cost to the Company (exclusive of the food they ate) can be acquired from partial figures. Between January 12, 1782 and August 30, 1784 27144 bullocks were delivered, but to prove useless.³³ They were rented to the Company probably at the rate of Pag. 1.50 per month, but every two bullocks had to have one driver (at pag. 1.25 per month) and every fifty had a master driver (at pag. 2.6 per month).³⁴ Since no totals are available and we know neither the length of time for which each bullock was rented nor the cost of what they and their drivers ate, we cannot estimate their total cost to the Company.

Some indication of the economic distress of Coote's army which had to be supplied from Madras has already been given. Less familiar is the plight of the troops garrisoning the many forts the Madras Government sought to hold. In the Carnatic there were seventeen forts, all but two of which were manned at least in part by Company troops; all but one of the twelve in the Circars were manned by Company troops; and Haidar Ali had twentyfive in his possession.³⁵ The problem of pay and supply for these forts, especially in the Carnatic which had been so

32. See note 30, above.

33. Report of the Accounts of the Agent Victualler from the 12th January 1782 to the 30th April 1784.

34. Proposed Regulations respecting Cart, Hire, Draught and Carriage Bullocks and Victualling of the Troops (1780).

35. Forts in the Carnatic and Circars describing those taken by the Enemy and now in their possession (No date).

thoroughly laid waste, was as serious as that for Coote's army, as some correspondence in the spring of 1782 between Captain Cuppage at Vellore and Macartney indicates. Cuppage wrote in March that he had provisions to last forty days and needed help. 'There is two months Grain around the Fort which will be ready to cut about the beginning of next month, but there can be no certain dependence put upon it, as some of it is at such a distance that the Enemy may destroy it without my being able to prevent them'. There were no cattle around to eat and so they had been slaughtering draft and carriage bullocks. Finally, a number of sepoys, especially those with families, were deserting because they were unable to live on the food allowance they received.³⁶ Macartney sent him one thousand pagodas and received in return along with a word of thanks, another report of the situation. Cuppage estimated that the monthly expense of the garrison was at least 3500 pagodas and that the sepoys needed regular pay if they were to exist; 'as it is great numbers are deserting'. He added that they had begun to cut the dry grain around the fort but that the paddy would not be ready until the end of the month.³⁷ Macartney sent him five more payments of 1000 pagodas each through June,³⁸ thus forcing Cuppage, in effect, to live off the land. Faced as he was with great demands and limited quantities of money and provisions, Macartney seems to have adopted the practice of sending something but not enough.

One additional expense should be mentioned here : expense incurred because of various forms of cheating in supplying the military. Precise receipts were not always obtained when goods

36. Cuppage to Macartney, March 13, 1782.

37. Cuppage to Macartney, April 5, 1782.

38. Remittances to Vellore (these cover March 20 to June 4, 1782).

were delivered;³⁹ there were deficiencies in the amounts of rice delivered attributed to the coolies keeping their batta with their families and living off the loads they carried to the troops;⁴⁰ storehouses were pilfered or broken into in times of famine.⁴¹ In auditing the accounts of Ross, the Agent Victualler from January 12, 1782 to April 30, 1784, the auditor noted three areas where he was unsatisfied. The main one was the supply of bullocks. These were brought to Madras and trained for draught or carriage work and then taken by maistries on security to the army. Often these men would substitute their own run-down bullocks for the good ones supplied by the Company. These poor bullocks were then returned to Madras as unserviceable and Ross declared that they were not the ones which he had supplied. 1834 bullocks fell into this category, 1404 were unaccounted for by Ross, and 180 were charged to two accounts at the same time. The auditor found the transport of rice by land, given the conditions prevailing, satisfactory but pointed out that when it was delivered by sea, very often sea captains gave no receipt for it. Those receipts given were usually just for bags received rather than for rice received, thus allowing for adulteration. Finally he found Ross overcharging for gunny bags, five pagodas per hundred rather than four; also these bags were rarely treated as Company property and hence not returned for further use.⁴²

IV

The Madras Government dealt with its financial problems

39. Hippiisley to Jackson, December 3, 1784.

40. Crawford to Macartney, September 5, 1782; Ross to Macartney, September 8, 1782; Ross to Tanner, September 8, 1782.

41. Turing to Macartney, November 10, 1782.

42. Report of the Accounts of the Agent Victualler from the 12th January 1782 to the 30th April 1784.

by seeking to increase its income rather than by decreasing its expenditures. The demands of the army for pay and provisions were too great to be met in full and so it was undersupplied and its pay fell into arrears. It had far too many camp followers to feed and there was considerable corruption involved in the supply of bullocks and provisions on contract, but the Madras Government sought to supply what it could by traditional means rather than to insist upon economies or a change in methods, the only exception found being the reduction of the number of servants allowed to a field officer from 100 to 50.⁴³ The process by which the Madras Government obtained the revenues to carry on must therefore be examined if its efforts to overcome its financial problems are to be understood.

The 'Extra Funds' Madras received from England and Bengal came through appeals and standard financial transactions, the exact details of which our sources do little to illumine; not so the assignment of the revenues of the Nawab of Arcot, as the process by which they were obtained was the cause of a great deal of political wrangling between the Nawab and Macartney, the Bengal Council, Sir Eyre Coote, and the Company's Court of Directors. From the very outset of the war the Madras Government sought financial aid from the Nawab but did not get any. Finally the Nawab assigned his revenues to the Supreme Government in Calcutta in April 1781. When Macartney arrived in Madras two months later, he took exception to this procedure and on December 2, 1781 signed a new agreement with the Nawab based on the Bengal treaty, according to which the British agreed to bear the financial burden of the war while the Nawab agreed to assign his revenues over to them. The basic provisions of the December agreement which Macartney negotiated were : (1) the Nawab's

43. Sheikh Ali, *British Relations with Haidar Ali*, 319.

revenues were assigned to Macartney in person for a period of five years; (2) all revenue officials were to be appointed by Macartney and subject to the Nawab's approval; (3) all orders on revenue matters were to be issued by Macartney and communicated to the Nawab; (4) all the revenues were to be delivered to Macartney alone who would then give one-sixth of them to the Nawab for his maintenance. This agreement ran into difficulty almost as soon as it was signed. Macartney retained the Nawab's revenue officials but sought to appoint inspectors for the collection of revenue. The Nawab, however, refused to sanction. In the meantime Macartney got what he – and Dodwell feels Hastings too – considered convincing evidence that the Nawab's officials were obstructing Madras's efforts to raise revenue, were sending secret remittances to the Nawab, and were receiving orders to this effect from the Nawab. He therefore took matters into his own hands, by-passed the Nawab completely, leased out the revenues, and worked through his own Committee on Assigned Revenue which finally got the money coming in. The Nawab complained loudly about this violation of the terms of their agreement and considered it nullified by Macartney's actions. He first sought to assign his revenues to Coote and then sought to negotiate a new treaty with Bengal by which he could get back control of his revenues but pay the British one-third more than heretofore. Initially Macartney was supported by his superiors, but when finally the Court of Directors decided against him, he resigned and returned to England. By that time, however, the war was over and Macartney had received over 33,00,000 pagodas for the war effort.⁴⁴

The Nawab won very little sympathy for his efforts. He is generally portrayed as a very devious and decadent man who

44. This summary follows Dodwell's "Warren Hastings and the Assignment of the Carnatic".

sought to keep his money, contrary to the agreements he had signed, by playing Bengal off against Madras and Coote off against Macartney. This may well be true and his reputation may be well deserved. But because the literature has been so preoccupied with the Nawab's motives and tactics, it has tended to ignore his arguments or to dismiss them as irrelevant to the real issues. In the Macartney papers at the University of Pennsylvania are a number of the Nawab's letters, including those he wrote in October 1782 to His Majesty the King of Great Britain, Her Majesty the Queen of Great Britain, Lord Rockingham, Charles James Fox, Robert Gregory, Sir Henry Fletcher, and Henry Strachey calling attention to his forty year friendship with England as well as to the ruthless violation of agreements by Lord Macartney and appealing for help). Earlier he had written a similar letter to Lord North, when he was in power).⁴⁵ Of importance for our purposes, however, are two lengthy letters he wrote to Macartney in which he described the terrible effects which Macartney's measures were having on his subjects and asked for the return of control over the collection of revenue. Whether the Nawab actually cared about his subjects' welfare is beside the point here; what is important is the nature of his complaints.

Initially the Nawab's complaints were fairly minor : bullocks were being taken forcibly from his peasants by sepoys, the British were interfering in matters unrelated to revenue collection and therefore outside the area of agreement, and Company sepoys in Trichinopoly had looted the *bāzārs* because their pay was in arrears.⁴⁶ When, however, Macartney leased out the Nawab's

45. He wrote to Lord North on August 17, 1782 and to all the others on October 13, 1782. It is quite possible that all of these letters were written for the Nawab by 'interested Europeans'. We have no proof one way or the other.

46. The Nabob to the Governor, March 7, 1782.

lands to renters without the Nawab's approval, then the Nawab's complaints dealt with far more basic matters.

Has not your Lordship of your own Authority, in your own name, without my Confirmation, or Seal, granted sunnads to Aumildars and Renters, for my Provinces, and has not your Lordship, of your own authority dismissed all my people of every description in the Towns, and Villages, without even giving them their Pay due, as well as those who under the Office of Aumeen were Superintending the Collections and were possessed of all the Accounts of the Countries from ancient times, as those under the same office, exercising the Functions of Government in the different branches of Judicature and Police, and were possessed of all the Records of the Provinces, whose Charge has descended chiefly from their ancestors, and who had no Power whatever over the Revenues, leaving the Cities, Towns, and Villages in a state of anarchy ? By these violences, my Lord, has not my Government been totally subverted, my powers assumed by your self, the Collection of my Revenues concealed from me without any account but such as you choose to give, exposed to all manner of Dissipation and Embezzlement, and your own conduct in the Countries thereby obscured ? 47

As the above indicates, the Nawab was very critical of the appointments made by the British, of the rapacious activities of the appointees, but most of all of the undermining of his own authority among his own people. This he felt was being done in a number of ways : by putting his provinces up for public auction (i.e., leasing them to new renters); by collecting rents from those formerly exempt, such as family members and endowments for the support of 'Mosques, Churches and places of Religious worship'; by refusing to pay and therefore dismissing a number of the Nawab's servants; and by refusing to sanction a number of small expenses (charitable gifts, etc.) which were expected of any true Nawab.⁴⁸

47. Translation of a Persian letter from His Highness Nabob Wallajah to Lord Macartney dated 7th Ramasam (*Ramzān*) 1196 or 17th August 1782.

48. *Ibid.*

In short, not only was Macartney taking over the Carnatic and causing serious dislocations in the process, but he was also seeking to economize not within his own domain but within that of the Nawab !

It is not possible to examine the justice of the Nawab's charges here, but they should not be dismissed as totally unfounded. If his complaints were investigated, much might be learned about the history of what is now Tamil Nadu during this period. The same would be true if British efforts to get aid from the Raja of Tanjore as well as from their factories in the Circars were examined in detail. Such letters from John Sullivan, Resident at Tanjore, and from James Daniell, Agent in Masulipatam, to Macartney as are available would be of help in such an investigation.

As stated at the outset, the purpose of this essay has been to test the usefulness of the Macartney papers in the Library of the University of Pennsylvania as primary sources for the history of the Carnatic and of the British in India by comparing what they have to say about one particular problem of Lord Macartney's Governorship, the financing of the second Mysore war, with what is found in readily available printed sources. Four aspects of that problem have been dealt with by using first the printed sources and then the Macartney papers. In each case the Macartney papers supplied more detailed evidence than we were able to obtain from the other sources. In one case, the extra funds Madras received from outside to carry on the war, the Macartney papers have provided some conclusive evidence. For the rest, however, the kind of evidence provided has been partial and incomplete with the result that any conclusions drawn from them must be considered as more suggestive than definitive in nature. We can say that we know where the Madras Government received its income from, but not how much it received from each of its sources. We know where the Madras Government got its outside help from as well as

the form and quantity of the financial assistance it received from each quarter; the same cannot be said about increases in income from within the Madras Presidency. With regard to their military expenses, we have a number of indicators of both how serious their problems were and where their money went, but again nothing that is conclusive. Illustrations abound but the total picture remains uncertain. In the discussion of the steps taken by the Madras Government to increase its income and reduce its expenditures, areas for further investigation have been pointed out because the evidence challenges some of the assumptions and preoccupations of those who have already written on this question.

Our evidence is therefore incomplete. In addition some of it suffers from special defects : there are important pieces of evidence without dates,⁴⁹ proposals whose authors and passage are unknown to us,⁵⁰ and estimates whose accuracy cannot be vouched for.⁵¹ What then can be concluded about the history of the Carnatic and of the British in India during the four years that Lord Macartney was Governor of Madras ? Not much. Because the expenses of the war were greater than they alone could bear, the Madras Government became heavily dependent upon outside funds. They tended to try to increase their income rather than reduce their expenditures and what economizing they did seemed to be at the Nawab's expense rather than at their own.

More important than these conclusions are the lines for further inquiry which this investigation has opened up. Mention

49. The list of forts in the Carnatic and Circars including those taken by Haidar Ali has no date. See note 35, above.

50. The proposed rates and regulations for the hire of bullocks is an obvious case in point here. See note 34, above.

51. The estimates of the military paymaster is an example. See note 29, above.

has already been made of the importance of examining the activities of the British and their agents when they took over the assignment of the Nawab's revenues. The consequences of these actions may have been very important. For the same reason, the details of military supply and revenue collection as areas of Indo-British collaboration also bear investigation. Here one would venture the hypothesis that the British ties with Indian business interests were at this time much closer than their ties with Indian landed interests. Such business matters as military supply led to mutually beneficial collaboration whereas the collection of taxes on landed property encouraged a *zamindār* to break loose from the British connection when he considered his chances of making a clean break good. The readjustments following the dislocations caused by the war (e.g., the resettlement of destroyed villages and the fate of the New renters Macartney appointed after his complete take-over of the revenue administration of the Carnatic was finally reversed by the Court of Directors) also bear examination. These matters will tell us as much about the history of Englishmen in India and more about the history of the people of the Carnatic than will the quarrels between rulers in Bengal, Madras, Mysore, Arcot and London which seem to have interested the majority of historians of this period.

Society in the Late Nineteenth-Century Ladakh

The people and the territories of Ladakh¹ are best approached through the river Indus which enters these territories near Demchok on the Tibet frontier and leaves them at 'the craggy defile' of Astor, after traversing more than 500 miles.² In the first 90 miles or so of its course, upto the gorge of Rong, it forms a narrow valley, with an average height of 14,000 feet, flanked by the plateau of Rupshu on the left and the plateaus of Leh Range, Dipsang and Lingzhithang on the right. The plateau of Rupshu covers an area of 5500 square miles, with an average elevation of over 15,500 feet; and the latter plateaus cover about 9000 square miles, with an elevation of 15,000 to 17,000 feet on the average.

In the next 250 miles or so of its course the Indus forms a valley of an average width of 33 miles and an average elevation of 11,500 feet. Two other valleys join it from the south, namely the valley of Zaskar covering an area of about 3000 square miles with an average elevation of over 13,000 feet, and the valley of Dras including its tributaries of Suru, Wakha and Phugal covering an area of over 4000 square miles with an elevation of over 11,000 feet.³ On the right, the Indus valley in this part is connected with the valley of the rivers Shayok and Nubra through the Khardong Pass (17,500 ft.). These valleys are situated at an elevation of 12,500 feet and cover an area of 9000 square miles.

1. Ladakh as we know it today was formed into a province under the government of Kashmir in 1901. During the late nineteenth century it did not include the regions known as Baltistan and Zaskar.

2. For geographical information on Ladakh, see Alexander Cunningham, *Ladak*, London 1854, 16-195; Frederic Drew, *The Jummoo and Kashmir Territories*, London 1875, 260-380; O.H.K. Spate and A.T.A. Learmonth, *India and Pakistan*, Suffolk Richard Clay Ltd. 1967, 440-52.

3. The valley of Dras is separated from Baltistan by the gorge, called Wolf's Leap, before it joins the Indus at Mural. Communication between the valley of Dras and Suru is through the pass Namikala (13,000 ft.) and between the valley of Suru and the Indus through the Fotula (13,400 ft.).

The plateaus and valleys described so far belonged to Ladakh proper during the late nineteenth century.

Ladakh proper is separated from Baltistan by three gorges ; one in the valley of the Indus, another in the valley of the Shayok and the third in the valley of the Dras. The core area of Baltistan is formed by the valley of the Indus more than 200 miles in length covering an area of over 6700 square miles with an average elevation of 7000 feet. It is joined on the right by the lower valley of the Shayok covering about 2200 square miles with an average elevation of 8000 feet, and the valley of the Shigar covering about 2600 square miles at the same average elevation. On the left of the main valley of the Indus in Baltistan is the Deotsai plateau covering about 2000 square miles with an average height of over 12,000 feet.

Bounded by high mountains on all sides, the territories of Ladakh and Baltistan were linked with the outside world only at six points : with Tibet through the valley of the Indus and the Tsaka pass (15,200 ft.), with China (Chinese Turkistan) through the Mustagh and Karakoram passes (18,300 ft.), with Kashmir through the Zoji pass (11,300 ft.), and with British India (Lahoul and Spiti) through the Baralacha pass (16,200 ft.).

The number of people living in the territories of Ladakh around 1850 appears to have been over one lac.⁴ By the end of the century this population increased to 2.25 lacs. Nearly 86.5% of this total population in 1901 was Muslim. The others were all Buddhist.⁵ On the plateaus of Rupshu, Dipsang and Lingzhithang

4. The population figures for Ladakh and Baltistan as given in the census reports of the Kashmir State for the years 1891, 1901 and 1911 are roundly 1,40,000 and 1,60,000 and 1,86,000 respectively. These figures give the rate of annual increase of population : 1.2%. If we work backwards we get the round figure of 1,25,000 for 1851.

5. *Census of Kashmir State 1901*, II, Table VII. The Muslims numbered 1,94,330 against 30,216 Buddhists.

only about 1400 persons were living in 1891.⁶ This was by no means an exceptional situation. The plateaus remained very sparsely populated throughout the late 19th century. In the middle region 54,000 persons were living in 1901.⁷ Out of these 30,000 were Buddhist by faith and Mongol by racial origin. The remaining 24,000 were Muslim largely of Aryan stock. In Ladakh proper the annual rate of increase in population appears to have been as low as 1.2%, which can be explained largely in terms of celibacy among the Buddhist monks and polyandry among the Buddhist population.⁸ In Baltistan there were nearly 1.7 lac persons in 1901.⁹ They were all Muslim of Aryan stock, both Baltis and Dards.¹⁰ The annual rate of increase in population in Baltistan was nearly 2.2%.¹¹ In Baltistan there was no celibacy among the priests, and the people were polygamous.

The distribution of population varied from area to area in each region. The Lingzhithang and Dipsang plateaus, in spite of their larger area but because of their higher elevation supported a smaller number of persons than the plateau of Rupshu.¹² In Ladakh proper, the valley of the Indus and the valley of the Nubra appear to have been more thickly populated than any of its other parts. The valley of the Dras was moderately populated and the valley of Zaskar was thinly populated. The upper portions of the tributary valleys remained almost uninhabited. In Baltistan the plateau of Deotsai and the upper valleys of Shigar-Shingo were sparsely populated. The valleys of Shayok and Shigar had moderate population. The most thickly populated part of Baltistan was the

6. *Census of Kashmir State 1891*, Table XVIIIB, clxxiii.

7. Hashmat Ullah Khan, *Tārīkh-i-Jammu*, Lucknow 1939, 478 & 752.

8. *Census of Kashmir 1901*, I, Introduction, xiv.

9. *Ibid.*, II, Table VII.

10. J. W. Talbot, *Review of the Assessment Report of Shardu*, Jammu 1914, 6 (Jammu State Archives, *Old English Records*, Political, File No. 169/H-42 of 1914).

11. *Census of Kashmir 1901*, I, Introduction, xiv.

12. Frederic Drew, *The Jummoo and Kashmir Territories*, 322-33.

valley of the Indus. On the whole, the main valley of the Indus and its major tributaries accounted for the bulk of the population of the territories of Ladakh.

The population of Ladakh could be classified conveniently into the landed class, nomads, artisans and craftsmen, shopkeepers, priests and the ruling class, besides the menials. The landed class, consisting of landlords, peasant-proprietors and tenants, was the most numerous, constituting over 90% of the total population of the country.¹³

The number of landlords, called *gyazhingpas* in Ladakh proper and *zamindārs* in Baltistan, was not very large. At the end of the nineteenth century in Ladakh proper the number of holdings of 17 acres of land on the average was less than 800.¹⁴ The petty Rajas of Baltistan too had big chunks of land but their number could not have been very large.¹⁵ Prime Ministers, Ministers, Generals and *Kārdārs* must have been among those who owned large fields, and heads of religious institutions also owned large pieces of land. The Dogra rulers of Jammu and Kashmir allowed the landlords, with certain exceptions, enjoyment of their proprietary rights in land according to old custom.¹⁶ The landlords did not cultivate their own lands; they rented these to tenants on temporary or permanent leases; and rents were fixed either in cash or kind, or both. The tenants were liable to pay certain cesses (*nazrs*) also in addition to the fixed rent. The liability of the

13. *Census of India 1911*, XX, pt. 1, 229. The agricultural population of Baltistan in 1891 was 1,05,743 ; among these were 1,03,522 landholders and their dependents.

14. Jammu State Archives, *Old English Records, Political*, File No. H-49 of 1904.

15. These petty Rajas were the rulers of Skardu, Tolti, Khapalu, Kharmang, Kiris, Rondu, etc.

16. Jammu State Archives, *Old English Records, Political*, File No. 169/H-16 of 1909, 31; Hashmat Ullah Khan, *Tārikh-i-Jammu*, 650.

17. *Ibid.*, File No. H-49 of 1904, 1,6; *Ibid.*, File No. 85/H-49 of 1904, 17; *Ibid.*, File No. 98/H-61 of 1901, I, 49; Peter, *A Study of Polyandry*, The Hague 1963, 342; J.L. Kaye, *Note on the Skardu Tahsil*, Lahore 1898, 13.

landlords was the payment of revenue to the rulers. The demand on the landlords was much lighter than that payable by the peasants.¹⁸

The tenants, who cultivated nearly 6% of the total area under cultivation, formed only 1.5% of the landed classes.¹⁹ Their small number can be explained in terms of the preponderance of self-cultivating proprietors and the small proportion of lands held by the landlords.²⁰ The tenants were of several categories depending upon the length of their tenures and their obligations under the contract. Some of them might be continuing to cultivate the same piece of land for generations together without any break; others might be doing so for a few generations only, still others for a few years only, and lastly those who would cultivate for one season only.²¹ Their obligations to the landholder also varied. Some paid the assessed revenue demand and a *nazr* to his landlord; others paid a fixed rent either in cash or kind; still others paid a *nazr* and rendered personal service to the landlord in

18. Alexander Cunningham, *Ladakh*, 269.

19. Jammu State Archives, *Old English Records, Political*, File No. 98/H-61 of 1901, I, 7; File No. H-49 of 1904, I, 6; *Census of Kashmir State 1891*, Table XVII B, clxxiii & clxxvii. The total number of tenants in Ladakh was 1874 in the peasant population of 1,28,694 in 1891.

20. Jammu State Archives, *Old English Records, Political*, File No. H-49 of 1904.

21. Jammu State Archives, *Old English Records, Political*, File No. 169/H-16 of 1909, 123-33; also File No. 85/H-49 of 1904, I, 17. In 1903 these tenants were reduced to two categories only. Those who had cultivated a piece of land for twelve years or more were regarded as occupancy-tenants and their rights in the piece of land cultivated by them were recognized by the government. Others, whose tenure had been less than 12 years, were rendered as tenants-at-will.

lieu of the land rent.²²

Much more numerous than both landlords and tenants were the peasant proprietors called *zhindaks* in Ladakh and *zamindārs* in Baltistan. In 1891 there were more than 19,000 *zamindārs* in Baltistan, with 84,538 dependents. The number of *zhindaks* in Ladakh was about 4,800 with 18,432 dependents in all.²³ In the territories of Ladakh and Baltistan female proprietors are much in evidence. Their number in Ladakh was larger than in Baltistan : 581 against 273 in 1891, for example. The holdings of Buddhist peasants of Ladakh proper, ranging from three to seven acres, were larger than those of the Muslim peasants of Baltistan where the average holding of a *zamindār* was three acres.²⁴ However, the Balti peasant could grow two crops in a year, while his Ladakhi counterpart could grow only one.²⁵ Whether in Baltistan or in Ladakh a peasant family, down to women and children and even aged persons, had to lend a helping hand at the sowing and harvesting seasons : in one-crop-fields to prepare the land for sowing so that every seed sown in the soil may germinate and

22. *Ibid.*, File No. H-49 of 1904, I, 6; *ibid.*, File No. 85/H-49 of 1904, I, 17; *ibid.*, File No. 169/H-16 of 1909, 123-33; Peter, *A Study of Polyandry*, 342; Khushi Muhammad, *Assessment Report of Zaskar Ilaga*, Allahabad Pioneer Press 1909, 10.

23. *Census of Kashmir State, 1891*, Table XVII B, clxxiii & clxxvii.

24. *Loc. cit.*; Alexander Cunningham, *Ladak*, 225; National Archives of India, *Foreign Department Political Proceedings*, 12 September 1851, Vol. 1186, No. 154 & 471. There were 2963 holdings of less than 1.9 hectare, and 1339 of 4.7 hectare in Ladakh proper.

25. Jammu State Archives, *Old English Records, Political*, File No. 98/H-61 of 1901, I, 19; *ibid.*, File No. H-49 of 1904, II, 1. For *rabi* they raised wheat, *giram*, barley, peas, lentils, *sharshaf*, tobacco, and vegetables; and for *khari* they raised buckwheat, *chīnā*, *hangani*, turnips, melons, *sharshaf* and pepper.

bear the crop and at the harvesting time to garner the entire crop without any possible loss; in two-crop-fields, to curtail the loss of time between harvesting of the first and sowing of the second crop.²⁶ The peasant proprietors had to pay to government land revenue in cash and kind. For the small, middling and large holdings in Ladakh proper they paid respectively, Rs. 1.75, Rs. 3.5 and Rs. 7.0 in 1846.²⁷ In 1880, this demand was raised by 25%²⁸ or they paid one-third of the gross produce of the land.²⁹ Information on Baltistan is available in kind: 40 lbs. of grain, one sheep and some butter was the demand on each holding.³⁰ Failure to pay revenue made the peasants liable to eviction from their lands. The peasants had also to pay cesses like *dāman*, *gadāi* and *ghami-wa-shādī* to the rulers,³¹ and perquisites (*rasūm*) to headmen of villages and store-keepers (*zakhīra-wālas*).³² They were forced to provide labour without any wages (*begār*) whenever it was required by the officials of the government for any purpose.³³ In case of failure to render *begār*,

26. J. N. Ganhar and R.N. Ganhar, *Buddhism in Kashmir and Ladakh*, The Tribune Press, Ambala 1956, 172.

27. Alexander Cunningham, *Ladak*, 270.

28. Hashmat Ullah Khan, *Tārīkh-i-Jammu*, 656.

29. *Loc. cit.*

30. William Moorcroft and George Trebeck, *Travels* (prepared and edited by H.H. Wilson), London 1837, II, 70-71.

31. Jammu State Archives, *Old English Records, Political*, File No. 170/H-14 of 1898. *Dāman* seems to be a cess levied to meet the personal requirements of the chiefs and their families. *Gadāi* was to meet the expenses of installing a new incumbent to the *gaddi*. *Ghami-wa-shādī* was levied on festive or mournful occasions in the royal household.

32. *Loc. cit.*

33. Moorcroft and Trebeck, *Travels*, II, 70-71; National Archives of India, *Foreign Department Secret External Proceedings*, December 1904, No. 43, enclosure 3.

they were fined.³⁴ *Taqāvi* loans were given to needy peasants but the officials defrauded them by underweighing the seed loaned and by overcharging at the time of collection.³⁵ Grain was purchased from them at rates lower than the market rates, when demand in cash was commuted to demand in kind.³⁶

The condition of the peasant proprietor during the late nineteenth century was anything but prosperous. We find them borrowing seed and grain, either from the monasteries or from government stores, paying 25% as the rate of annual interest. They had at times to alienate their lands to monasteries to square up their debts.³⁷ In times of financial crises they were forced to mortgage or even to sell their lands. In such circumstances the condition of the peasants, particularly of those who cultivated poor lands, was indeed miserable.³⁸ To check this deteriorating condition of the peasantry caused by land-grabbing tendencies of monasteries and rich merchant-money-lenders, the government as a long range policy passed the Land Act of 1903, prohibiting the sale and mortgage of their land rights by the peasantry.³⁹

34. Jammu State Archives, *Old English Records, Political*, File No. 85/H-49 of 1904, 17; *ibid.*, File No. 34, of 1891; National Archives of India, *Foreign Department Secret External Proceedings*, December 1904. No. 43, enclosure 3.

35. Jammu State Archives, *Persian Records*, File No. 1180 of 1874 A.D.

36. Jammu State Archives, *Old English Records, Political*, 170/H-14 of 1898. The officials purchased grain from the peasants at the rate of 45 seers or 90 lbs. a rupee, which they themselves sold at 18 seers or 36 lbs. a rupee.

37. Jammu State Archives, *Vernacular Records*, File No. 576/23 of Sammat 1969; Henry Ramsay, *Western Tibet*, Lahore 1889, 165.

38. R. T. Clarke, *Assessment Report of Kargil*, Lahore, 1901, 8 & 28-30.

39. R.T. Clarke, *Report on Ladakh*, Lahore 1897, 19.

To supplement income from agriculture, the peasants of Ladakh and Baltistan practised horticulture and reared animals. Among the fruits raised were apricots, peaches, pears, apples, walnuts, plums, mulberries, grapes and figs. For horticulture too the Balti peasant was placed in a better position than his Ladakhi counterpart: his fruit crops used to be much better and larger.⁴⁰ Among the animals bred by the peasants were zhos (a hybrid of yak and mule), cows, yaks, horses, ponies, sheep and goats.⁴¹ The peasants derived income from the sale of animal products, after meeting their own needs, as well as from horticulture and agriculture. The peasants who lived along the trade route used to make some money by giving their animals on hire for transporting merchandise.⁴² Some of the other sources of supplementing their income were gold-washing, sericulture and handicrafts.⁴³

Habitations of the peasants were scattered throughout the length and breadth of the cultivated lands. In the upper parts of the valleys they used to remain deserted during the winter when there occupants moved to the lower parts of the valleys and

40. Thomas Thomson, *Western Himalaya and Tibet*, London 1852, 185-86 & 199; G.T. Vigne, *Travels in Kashmir, Ladakh, Iskardo etc.*, London 1844, II, 262-64; E.F. Knight, *Where Three Empires Meet*, London 1895, 253-54; Moorcroft and Trebeck, *Travels*, II, 176-79; Jammu State Archives, *Old English Records, Political*, File No. H-49 of 1904, II, 15; J.L. Kaye, *Note on Skardu*, 13.

41. The Frederic Drew, *The Jummoo and Kashmir Territories*, 363-64, 366 & 373; *Census of Kashmir State 1891*, Table XVII B, clxxiii & clxxvii; Alexander Cunningham, *Ladakh*, 208-18; Jammu State Archives, *Old English Records, Political*, File No. 98/H-61 of 1901, I, 2; Khushi Muhammad, *Assessment Report of Zanskar Ilaga*, 13; *Transactions of the Royal Asiatic Society*, I, 49.

42. Antonia Deacock, *No Purdah in Padam*, London 1960, 79.

43. Hashmat Ullah Khan, *Tārīkh-i-Jammu*, 656; *Census Report of Kashmir*, I, 13; *Historical Records of the Survey of India*, VII, Introduction, xxxii.

resided in dwellings close to one another for easier social intercourse in the absence of any outdoor economic activity.⁴⁴ Their dwellings, built of stones, unburnt bricks and mud, met their occupational requirements. The ground floors were reserved for animals and stores, while the residential quarters of the family were located above them. A well furnished room was used as a family chapel, with images of the tutelary deities of the household. Cooking was done in the centre of the residential room, which had a hole above to serve as a chimney.⁴⁵

No agriculture being possible on the plateaus, the people living in those areas took to pastoral pursuits. The nomads of the plateaus of Rupshu, Leh Range and Lingzhithang were known as *changpās*. Those living on the Deotsai plateau in Baltistan were called *brukās*. Altogether they formed only 1.3% of the people.⁴⁶ Their small number was due largely to the absence of the requisites of agriculture⁴⁷ and lack of adequate market for the produce from animal rearing.⁴⁸

44. Frederic Drew, *The Jummoo and Kashmir Territories*, 246; Thomas Thomson, *Western Himalaya and Tibet*, 202.

45. Marco Pallis, *Peaks and Lamas*, London 1946, 236-37; Frederic Drew, *The Jummoo and Kashmir Territories*, 333. Frederic Drew, *The Northern Barrier of India*, London 1877, 209., J.E. Duncun, *A Summer Ride through Western Tibet*, London 1906, 276; Bayard Talyor, *Central Asia* (compiled and arranged and revised by Thomas Stevens), New York 1893, 87; Moorcroft and Trebeck, *Travels*, I, 137-38 & II, 188-90.

46. *Census Report of Kashmir 1891*, Table XVII B, clxxiii & clxxvii. The nomads numbered only 1732 in 1891 against the total agricultural population of 1,28,967.

47. Frederic Drew, *The Jummoo and Kashmir Territories*, 287.

48. *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, VII, 285; Moorcroft and Trebeck, *Travels*, I, 364; Frederic Drew, *The Jummoo and Kashmir Territories*, 245-67.

Not permanent homes but the tent called *rebo* served for the habitation of the nomads. It was made of a coarse chestnut coloured home-spun stuff of hair of yak or goat and oval in shape. It was raised up with upright poles and pitched with cords. There was an opening at the top for the exit of smoke and an entrance at the side. Inside the tent in a row was the fire-place, the store of goat's dung, and a simple altar with a statuette of the Buddha. On either side of these were sleeping places and household goods. To the poles were fastened little flags and yak's tail for ornamentation. This entire house when packed could be carried on the back of a single yak.⁴⁹ For sheltering their cattle at night, they all built low walled spaces.⁵⁰ When these nomads used to settle permanently at a place, as at Tanktse, Man, Karkfe etc., they lived like the agriculturists in houses built of stones and mud.⁵¹ The chiefs of the nomad tribes lived in low walled houses washed over with a glittering micaceans mud and roofed with sticks covered with turf.⁵²

The number of artisans and craftsmen in the territories of Ladakh was rather small. They included weavers, tailors, darners, washermen, dyers, goldsmiths, braziers, stone-cutters, potters, oilmen, blacksmiths, carpenters, leather workers, shoe-makers, barbers and butchers. The weavers manufactured *pattūs* and *pashminas* from goat's wool and blankets, ropes and coarse sacks from the hair of animals other than goat and sheep. They used to weave cloth of various description : the strongest and thickest, and which

49. Filippo de Filippi, *Himalaya, Karakoram and Eastern Turkistan (1913-1914)*, London 1932, 264-65; Frederic Drew, *ibid.*, 287.

50. Frederic Drew, *The Jummoo and Kashmir Territories*, 287 & 315.

51. Filippo de Filippi, *Himalaya, Karakoram and Eastern Turkistan*, 264.

52. Frederic Drew, *The Jummoo and Kashmir Territories*, 287.

was very durable and wonderfully cheap, was of narrow lengths either furred or plushed on one side. The cloth of finer quality and costlier in price had grey or deep brown plaids with running bars of variegated tints, or it was in checks of black and white.⁵³ Thus we find that the manufacture of these articles was done both from functional as well as from decorative points of view. The number of handweavers was very small: only 0.5% of the total population of Ladakh in 1891.⁵⁴ This low proportion can be explained in terms of the people, particularly the agriculturists, weaving the cloth themselves.⁵⁵

Like the handweavers, the number of tailors and darners was also very small: below .02% of the total population.⁵⁶ From their small number, it may be inferred that most of the people sewed and darned their clothes themselves. Similar was the case with washing and dyeing trades in which only .025% of the total population was engaged for their living.⁵⁷ It seems that these washermen and dyers mostly served the foreigners there. The arts of goldsmith, silversmith and coppersmith remained specialized because of the skill and technology involved. Nevertheless the number of goldsmiths, silversmiths and coppersmiths was small: only .014% of the total population.⁵⁸ The ornaments

53. Filippo de Filippi, *Himalaya, Karakoram and Eastern Turkistan*, 77; Alexander Cunningham, *Ladak*, 208; A.F.P. Harcourt, *The Himalayan Districts of Kooloo, Lahoul and Spiti*, London 1871, 77.

54. *Census of Kashmir 1891*, Table XVII B, clxxvi & clxxx. The handweavers numbered 708 in a total population of 1,38,599.

55. Jammu State Archives, *Old English Records, Political*, File No. 98/H-61 of 1901, pt. 1, 3; Filippo de Filippi, *Himalaya, Karakoram and Eastern Turkistan*, 77.

56. *Census of Kashmir 1891*, Table XVII B, clxxiv.

57. *Ibid.*, clxxvii.

58. *Ibid.*, clxxiv & clxxviii.

prepared by them were bangles, ear-rings, finger-rings, necklaces, hair-pins etc. of gold, silver and copper. These were sometimes studded with turquoises, amber, rough stones, and sometimes glass beads and crystals were added to these.⁵⁹

The braziers of Chiling and Khapalu were famous in their trade. They manufactured beautifully ornamented copper tea pots, having fretwork of brass. Each of these fetched them ten rupees.⁶⁰ The number of braziers, as of other trades, was rather small, for they catered to the needs of only the wealthy classes who could afford costly products.

The stonecutters worked extensively in the valley of Shigar, where jade (*zehr mohrā*) was found in abundance. They worked the stone into pipes, cups, dishes, knives, spoons and other cooking utensils.⁶¹ Other types of stone were chiselled into mill-stone for grinding corn. These were in great demand because of the large number of flour-mills run by water-currents.⁶² Majority of these flour-mills were owned by individual families, the result of which was that the number of persons engaged in the management of flour-mills to earn their living was very small : .04% only of the total population.⁶³

The potter made clay vessels for cooking and storage purposes. He also made smoking pipes (*hookas*). The Parkutta potters were famous for the designs of their pottery all over

59. A.F.P. Harcourt, *Kooloo, Lahoul and Spiti*, 45 & 76.

60. J. E. Duncun, *A Summer Ride Through Western Tibet*, 228; Ganhar and Ganhar, *Buddhism in Kashmir and Ladakh*, 172-73.

61. J. E. Duncun, *ibid.*, 290-91.

62. R. T. Clarke, *Assessment Report of Kargil*, 10; *Report on Ladakh*, 7.

63. *Census of Kashmir State 1891*, Table XVII B, clxxviii & clxxiv.

Baltistan.⁶⁴ The total number of potters however was small, just .04% of the total population.⁶⁵

The oilmen were in no better position; their proportion in the population was even lower than that of the potters', about .03% only.⁶⁶ Their small number was due to the fact that people themselves extracted oil for their own needs. They extracted oil from rapes, mustard seeds and apricot-kernels.⁶⁷

The blacksmiths numbered 356, forming .2% of the total population of Ladakh.⁶⁸ A blacksmith in the middle region was serving five villages on the average and in Baltistan, eight.⁶⁹ Besides making and repairing agricultural implements, such as ploughs, spades and sickles, he made iron-shoes for draught animals. He manufactured steel bits, buckles, stirrups, steel flutes, the strike-light mechanism called *chakmāk*, bows and arrows, and the matchlock called *tūmak*. At the harvest time, he beat the drum.⁷⁰ In lieu of this and other services to the peasant,

64. J. E. Duncun, *A Summer Ride Through Western Tibet*, 272 & 280; E. F. Knight, *Where Three Empires Meet*, 249 & 265.

65. *Census of Kashmir 1891*, Table XVI. The number of potters in lower Ladakh was 8, and in Baltistan 28, with 23 dependants.

66. *Loc. cit.* The number of oilmen in Baltistan was 6, with 13 dependants and in lower Ladakh only 5, with 11 dependants.

67. Moorcroft and Trebeck, *Travels*, II, 5, 176-77.

68. *Census of Kashmir 1891*, Table XVI.

69. *Loc. cit.* There were 21 blacksmiths with 44 dependants who served lower Ladakh's 110 villages, and 30 blacksmiths with 135 dependants serving Baltistan's 243 villages.

70. A. F. P. Harcourt, *Kooloo, Lahoul and Spiti*, 43 & 76; Filippo de Filippi, *Himalaya, Karakoram and Eastern Turkistan*, 66; G. W. Leitner, "Legends, Songs, Customs and History of Dardistan", *Asiatic Quarterly Review* (1893), v, 143-45.

he obtained from nine to twentyfour seers of grain varying with the size and fertility of holdings.⁷¹

Whereas the blacksmith mostly catered to the outdoor economic activity of the peasants, the carpenter (*shānkhan*) met mostly their indoor needs. He would prepare doors and windows of houses, monasteries and mosques, sometimes making beautiful engravings on them. He manufactured household furniture such as tables and tripods, and cups from chestnut wood for the common people; he mounted these with silver for the upper classes. In lieu of his services, he received grain from the agriculturists, like the blacksmith.⁷² The number of carpenters was half the number of blacksmiths, forming .1% of the population.⁷³

Allied to carpentry was the trade of basket-making and wicker work carried by employing the branches of willow, poplar and euclyptus.⁷⁴ The lesser type of artisans and craftsmen were the leather workers, shoe-makers and barbers. Their percentage in the population was .1, .03 and .1 respectively.⁷⁵ The unusually low percentage of shoe-makers suggests that the people in general improvised shoes for themselves. The leather workers made boats

71. Henry Ramsay, *Western Tibet*, 44; Jammu State Archives, *Old English Records, Political*, File No. 85/H-49 of 1904, pt. 1, 21; *ibid.*, File No. 98/H-61 of 1901, I, 6; *ibid.*, File No. 169/H-16 of 1909, 21; M.H. Duncun, *Harvest Festival Dramas of Tibet*, Hong Kong 1955, 10.

72. J. E. Duncun, *A Summer Ride Through Western Tibet*, 228; Henry Ramsay, *Western Tibet*, 26-27; Moorcroft and Trebeck, *Travels*, II, 139; Jammu State Archives, *Old English Records, Political*, File No. 169/H-16 of 1909, 21.

73. *Census of Kashmir 1891*, Table XVI.

74. Thomas Thomson, *Western Himalaya and Tibet*, 185-86; E. F. Knight, *Where Three Empires Meet*, 253-54; Moorcroft and Trebeck, *Travels*, II, 183.

75. *Census of Kashmir 1891*, Table XVI.

from animal skins, which were needed very much by the people to cross the swift and swollen streams in summer. Sometimes they worked as bargemen too to help travellers in crossing the rivers, particularly at points where there was 'heavy' traffic, and received from them either cash or grain for their job.⁷⁶ The barber shaved men's beards and made their hair-cuts and at times also carried circumcision operations on Muslim boys.⁷⁷ He received his remuneration either in grain or cash. The butcher prepared meat for the Muslim population by slaughtering the animals (*zabab*), and for the Buddhists by suffocating them to death.⁷⁸ The number of butchers was very small: .02% of the population.⁷⁹ People in general themselves prepared meat for their own use.

The number of persons engaged in business or trade was very small. Shopkeepers formed merely .01% of the population.⁸⁰ Most of them had migrated from Kashmir or the Panjab.⁸¹ In large villages and small towns they had regular shops; elsewhere, hawkers and pedlars catered to the needs of the people. They carried their business by barter or cash. Their merchandise consisted of grain, rice, apricots, tea, butter, salt, wool, *pattūs*, *pashminas*, crockery of stone, china and claymould, of metals such as steel, copper and bronze, of wood such as

76. *Loc. cit.* The census records 65 persons as bargemen and those engaged in making boats.

77. *Census of India 1911*, XX, pt. 1, 145.

78. Hey's Report on Spiti, 31 (National Archives of India, *Foreign Department Political Consultations*, 29 November 1850, Nos. 70-76).

79. *Census of Kashmir 1891*, Table XVIIB, clxxxix & clxxvii.

80. *Ibid.*, clxxiv & clxxix.

81. *Ibid.*, Table XVI. In 1891 there lived 21 Baniyas, and 447 Khatriś doing shopkeeping in Baltistan, while in lower Ladakh there were 2 Aroras and 31 Khatriś.

cups and tea-pots, haberdashery, woollen garments and trinkets.⁸²

Landless labourers, porters and coolies, domestic servants and menials, altogether, formed nearly 1% of the population. Farm labourers, both men and women, lived in the farm of their masters who provided them pieces of land on their fields for raising dwelling quarters. They were called *la-pa* and *deotul*. If their meals were not provided by their masters, they received grain in lieu of meals and a little cash. Even if they stopped working for the land-holder, he could not evict them from their dwelling quarters immediately.⁸³ Domestic servants were employed only by the rich but formed .6% of the total population.⁸⁴ Besides these, there were the general workers (*chhopas*) who received their wages in either cash or grain, butter and salt.⁸⁵ The chances of employment being limited, some of the labourers worked as porters and coolies to carry the goods of traders or the baggage of travellers who passed through the territories of Ladakh. Some others went to Kashmir, India or China in search of work.⁸⁶

The professional entertainers, known as the *mon*, the *beda*

82. Frederic Drew, *The Jummoo and Kashmir Territories*, 363; J. L. Kaye, *Note on Skardu*, 13; Jammu State Archives, *Old English Records, Political*, File No. 149/H-16 of 1909, 15.

83. *Gazetteer of the Kangra District 1883-84*, II, 189-90; National Archives of India, *Foreign Department Political Proceedings*, 12 September 1851, Vol. 1186, No. 154, p. 469.

84. *Census of Kashmir 1891*, Table XVIIB, clxxiii & clxxvii.

85. Frederic Drew, *The Jummoo and Kashmir Territories*, 358-59.

86. Jammu State Archives, *Old English Records, Political*, File No. 169/H-42 of 1914, 3-4. In 1921, as many as 684 Baltis went abroad to do labour-work: *Census of India 1931*, XXIV, pt. 1, 75; Frederic Drew, *The Jummoo and Kashmir Territories*, 358-60; Luigi Amedeo, *Karakoram and Western Himalaya*, 102. Luigi Amedeo, a European traveller, described these Baltis as 'the best road-builders in the world'.

and the *doom*, constituted .1% of the total population.⁸⁷ The *mons* and *bedas* sang the saga of Gesar, a legendary hero of Buddhism, with brass trumpets, fifes and drums. In the middle region of Ladakh, they used to be invited to festivals. The *dooms* in Baltistan gave night-performances in torch-lights, twice or thrice a week at one place, to suit the agricultural population who were busy at their farms during the day time. At such performances they used to sing and dance in the guise of girls. At times, a swordsman would bewitch the lookers-on with his sword-tricks.⁸⁸

Only a small number of persons depended on alms for subsistence, begging from door to door in the name of *Allah* or the Buddha. Their percentage, however, was not negligible in view of the small size of the population of Ladakh. The mendicants formed .4% of the population.⁸⁹

The priestly class, which formed 2.2% of the total population of the country,⁹⁰ controlled the religious and, to some extent, the social life of the people. On the plateaus and in the valleys of Ladakh proper this class was formed by Buddhist priests and in

87. *Census of Kashmir 1891*, Table XVI; *ibid.*, XVIIIB, clxxix & clxxv.

88. *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal* (1891), LX, 111 & 116; Filippo de Filippi, *Himalaya, Karakoram and Eastern Turkistan*, 53; Hashmat Ullah Khan, *Tārikh-i-Jammu*, 436; Henry Ramsay, *Western Tibet*, 43; A. F. P. Harcourt, *Kooloo, Lahoul and Spiti*, 42; J. E. Duncun, *A Summer Ride Through Western Tibet*, 237-38; Frederic Drew, *The Jummoo and Kashmir Territories*, 427.

89. *Census of Kashmir 1891*, Table XVIIIB, clxxv & clxxix.

90. *Ibid.*, The number of Buddhist monks was 519 and of nuns 63, and they supported 483 males and 234 females. Among the Muslims, there were 148 *maulavis*, with 123 female dependents; 663 *sayyids*, 665 female dependants; 82 *sāfis*, with 62 female dependents.

Baltistan by Muslim theologians.⁹¹ The former lived in monasteries located at some distance from the villages.⁹² Each monastery was headed by the chief *Lama* or *Kushak* and consisted of two sections: the secular and the spiritual. The former looked after the temporal affairs of the monastery, and the latter to the spiritual uplift of its inmates.⁹³ The temporal affairs included supervision of the monastic properties and cultivation of lands attached to the monasteries, making arrangement of supplies at religious festivals, providing daily meals to the inmates of these institutions and raising funds by begging alms from the people.⁹⁴ The spiritual teachers guided and trained the monks.⁹⁵ For the laity, they conducted religious festivals to acquaint them with the Buddhist doctrine by dramatising stories from Buddhist lore.⁹⁶ Among the Muslims of Baltistan, *imāms*, *maulavis* and *shaikhs* formed the 'priestly' class and catered to the religious and spiritual needs of the Shī'a population.⁹⁷

The financial sources of the priestly class were various.

91. In lower Ladakh, there were living a good many Muslims, who looked to the Muhammadan 'priests' for religious direction.

92. Filippo de Filippi, *Himalaya, Karakoram and Eastern Turkistan*, 111; National Archives of India, *Foreign Department Political Proceedings*, 12 September 1851, No. 154, Vol. 1186, pp. 461-62.

93. Henry Ramsay, *Western Tibet*, 83; Hashmat Ullah Khan, *Tārīkh-i-Jammu*, 468-69.

94. *Loc. cit.*

95. *Loc. cit.*

96. *Loc. cit.*; S. C. Das, *Journey to Lhasa and Central Tibet* (edited by W. W. Rockhill), London 1904, 155; A. H. Francke, *The Antiquities of Indian Tibet*, Calcutta 1914, I, 66. The religious dramas were played at the Hemis monastery in the month of June, and in others during the winter months.

97. Moorcroft and Trebeck, II, 23-24 & 25; *Census of India 1911*, XX, pt. 1, 103-5; *Census of Kashmir 1891*, Table XVI.

Nearly all monasteries and many mosques and *khānqāhs* possessed lands donated to them by royal patrons and lay devotees on which they paid no revenue to the government but they lent their co-operation in administration of the territories, for they had considerable influence over the laity.⁹⁸ Both the Muslim and the Buddhist 'clergy' received something in return for services rendered to members of their communities on social occasions like birth, marriage and death.⁹⁹ They prepared charms and amulets which they 'sold' to the laity, 'insuring' them against sickness, disease and accident.¹⁰⁰ They received presents and gifts from their clients or devotees on festive occasions.¹⁰¹ It was mostly from the 'priestly' classes that teachers, doctors, painters, sculptors and calligraphists came, sometimes one person combining more than one profession.¹⁰²

The ruling class, .76% of the population,¹⁰³ consisted of *kārdārs*, *thānadārs* and Governors and their establishments. The

98. David Fraser, *The Marches of Hindostan*, London 1907, 114; E. F. Knight, *Where Three Empires Meet*, 128-29.

99. *Census of India 1911*, XX, pt. 1, 129 & 144-45; Peter, *A Study of Polyandry*, 329 & 383; G. W. Leitner, "Legends, Songs, Customs and History of Dardistan", *Asiatic Quarterly Review* (1893), v, 156-57; Filippo de Filippi, *Himalaya, Karakoram and Eastern Turkistan*, 111; Gompertz, *Road to Lamaland*, London n. d., 99.

100. Sven Hedin, *Trans-Himalaya*, London 1910, I, 358; *Census of India 1911*, XX, pt. 1, 103.

101. Filippo de Filippi, *Himalaya, Karakoram and Eastern Turkistan*, 111; Henry Ramsay, *Western Tibet*, 44; Earl of Dunmore, *The Pamirs*, London 1894, I, 111.

102. Marco Pallis, *Peaks and Lamas*, London 1946, 266; George Roerich, *Tibetan Paintings*, Paris 1925, 17; Emil Schlagintweit, *Buddhism in Tibet*, London 1863, 156, 161 & 166; Beyard Taylor, *Central Asia*, 81.

103. *Census of Kashmir 1891*, Table XVIIB, clxxiii & clxxvii.

kārdārs collected land-revenue and deposited it in the government treasury.¹⁰⁴ The *thānadārs* maintained law and order in the territories.¹⁰⁵ Military contingents were maintained to defend the frontier.¹⁰⁶ Government officials derived their income largely from salaries and allowances.¹⁰⁷ Some high ranking civil officials were in the habit of making mercantile transactions through their agents.¹⁰⁸ The officials used to receive *nazr* (graft) from persons seeking favours from them.¹⁰⁹ Their financial liabilities to the government were the presents that they were required to pay on occasions like their own recruitment or promotion as well as *Dusehra*, *Diwālī*, *Basant Panchmi*, *‘Id* and *Naurūz*.¹¹⁰ The upper ruling class lived in big mansions which were well-furnished and well-decorated.¹¹¹ For domestic affairs they used to engage male and female servants.¹¹² They enjoyed great influence in society on account of the power

104. Jammu State Archives, *Persian Records*, File No. 202 of Sammat 1916; File No. 1180 of 1874 A.D.

105. *Ibid.*, File No. 811 of Sammat 1936.

106. National Archives of India, *Foreign Department Secret Frontier Proceedings*, August 1889, No. 142; Henry Ramsay, *Western Tibet*, 78; Earl of Dunmore, *The Pamirs*, I, 83.

107. Jammu State Archives, *Persian Records*, File No. 394 of Sammat 1925; File No. 1268 of Sammat 1941.

108. J. C. Bose, *Cashmere and Its Prince*, Calcutta 1889, 14-22.

109. Jammu State Archives, *Persian Records*, File No. 1880 of 1874 A.D.; File No. 1272 of Sammat 1941.

110. Saif-ud-din, *Roznāmcha*, Persian MS. Accession No. 1430, Persian Department, Directorate of Archives and Libraries of Kashmir State, Srinagar, X, 162; Frederic Drew, *The Northern Barrier of India*, 51-52; Roero di Cortoze, *Ricordi Dei Viaggi al Cashemir, Piccolo E Medio Tibet & Turchistan*, Torino 1881, I, 110-11.

111. Moorcroft and Trebeck, *Travels*, II, 188-89; Frederic Drew, *The Northern Barrier of India*, 209.

112. *Census of Kashmir 1891*, Table XVIIIB, clxxiii & clxxvii.

they wielded, and they received preferential treatment in social gatherings.¹¹³

In the social hierarchy of Ladakh in the late 19th century the ruling class came first, followed by the priestly classes. The artisans and craftsmen, shopkeepers, labourers, singers and dancers belonged to the lowest strata. The peasants and nomads belonged to the middling stratum.¹¹⁴

It is easier to know the formal belief and practice of the Buddhists and the Muslims of Ladakh than to know the extent to which the various social groupings were influenced by that belief and practice in their daily lives. The Buddhist doctrine as preached and practised by the clergy gave primacy to Salvation (*Nirvāna*) from the unending cycle of birth-and-death caused by man's *karma* and his attachment to worldly things. To neutralise the effect of *karma* and to control his worldly desires, a Buddhist was instructed to do good deeds and to seek refuge in the *Tri-ratna* : the Buddha, the *Dhamma*, and the *Sangha*. The Buddha signified not only the historical Gautam, son of the ruler of Kapilvastu, but also his incarnations. The *Dhamma* implied his word, together with the commentaries by his illustrious disciples and Buddhist scholars, contained in the Buddhist scriptures called the *Tānjūr* and the *Kāhgyūr* and in the mantra : *Om māni padme hūm*. The *Sangha* represented the Buddhist hierarchy.¹¹⁵ The lay Buddhists

113. Filippo de Filippi, *Himalaya, Karakoram and Eastern Turkistan*, 78; *Census of Kashmir 1901*, I, 85; Frederic Drew, *The Northern Barrier of India*, 171; Henry Ramsay, *Western Tibet*, 7-8.

114. George Grimm, *The Doctrine of the Buddha* (edited by Keller Grimm and Max. Hoppe), Delhi 1965, 61.

115. *Census of India 1911*, XX, pt. 1, 211-12; Alexander Cunningham, *Ladak*, 374.

believed in animism,¹¹⁶ *shamanism*¹¹⁷ and *bonism*¹¹⁸ - the ancient beliefs of the people of Central Asia. However, the work of the *shaman* and the *bonpo* was now taken up by the Buddhist monk.¹¹⁹ The lay Muslims too cherished their old beliefs of animism and *shamanism*. They went to *shaikhs* and *pirs* for charms and amulets, for themselves and their animals to avert evil in its multifarious form.¹²¹ It is difficult to say even of the 'priests' that they were familiar with the classics of *tafsir* and *hadis* or even jurisprudence.

The Buddhists of Ladakh performed several rituals and ceremonies either to obtain the blessings of gods and goddesses or to scare away malignant 'spirits'.¹²² They used to imprint the first letter of their alphabet at the baby's mouth before giving it milk.¹²³ They always got prepared from an astrologer the horoscope of the child to be consulted for his betrothal, marriage, journey, any business transaction, construction of a building and the like.¹²⁴ A soot-mark on the child's face meant to make the child immune from the effect of 'evil eye' and to scare malignant 'spirits'; used to be made the child was made to wear iron-bangles

116. F. Sierksma, *Tibet's Terrifying Deities*, Tokyo 1966, 71; Alexander Cunningham, *Ladak*, 360-62.

117. *Loc. cit.*

118. A. F. P. Harcourt, *Kooloo, Lahoul and Spiti*, 65; Alexander Cunningham, *Ladak*, 358-59.

119. Peter, *A Study of Polyandry*, The Hague 1963, 329.

120. Thakur Singh, *Assessment Report of Shardu*, Jammu 1914, 21 (Jammu State Archives, *Old English Records, Political*, File No. 169/H-42 of 1914); *Census of India, 1911*, XX, pt. 1, 103.

121. *Census of India 1911*, XX, pt. 1, 103.

122. Earl of Dunmore, *The Pamirs*, I, 111.

123. Peter, *A Study of Polyandry*, 383.

124. *Loc. cit.*

till his fifth year.¹²⁵ The birth ceremony of the child used to be celebrated one week after its birth.¹²⁶ No name was given to the child for three years, during which period they called it by the generic term of *digpo* and *digmo* in case of a boy and a girl respectively.¹²⁷ The Buddhists sought the blessing of Mother Goddess on the New Year Day, carrying the child to her shrine and making offerings of the country beer (*chhang*) and barley flour (*tsampā*). The Muslims used to utter *Allāhū Akbar* (God is great) in the ear of a newly-born baby.¹²⁸ They celebrated his birth ceremony one week after his birth; on this occasion they gave it a name also.¹²⁹ Muslim boys used to be circumcised between their fifth and seventh years.¹³¹

The Buddhist males usually got married in their late teens or early twenties.¹³² They seldom married girls who were below

125. *Ibid.*, 383-84.

126. *Loc. cit.*

127. *Census of India 1911*, XX, pt. 1, 143.

128. Peter, *A Study of Polyandry*, 329.

129. *Census of India 1911*, XX, pt. 1, 144-45.

130. *Loc. cit.*; G. W. Leitner, "Legends, Songs, Customs and History of Dardistan" *Asiatic Quarterly Review* (1893), v, 149 & 152. To assign a name to the child, his hand was allowed to rest on some word of the *Qurān*, or the *mullā* drew a name out of a lot of several.

131. *Census of India 1911*, XX, pt. I, 145. The circumcision operation was usually done by a barber with his sharp razor, but at places where no barber lived it used to be done by the local *mullā*.

132. Antonia Deacock, *No Purdah in Padum*, London 1960, 142-43; Peter, *A Study of Polyandry*, 347; Hashmat Ullah Khan, *Tārīkh-i-Jammu*, 439. In 1901 among the Buddhists there were 91 boys and an equal number of girls who had been married by the age of ten. *Census of Kashmir 1901*, II, Table VII.

The marriage of minors with grown-up women was sometimes deemed necessary to run the house when his parents were incapable of doing so either due to old age or infirmness: *Census of India 1911*, XX, pt. 1, 142.

their own age, and preferred an efficient, rich and good-natured girl to one endowed with only physical beauty.¹³³ The betrothal was contracted without any intermediary. On such occasions horoscopes of prospective candidates were consulted. The parents or guardian of the candidate selected offered presents to the parents of the girl.¹³⁴ To celebrate the marriage the bridegroom's party (*nyopās*) had to go to the bride's house. Before their entry, a ceremony was performed to scare evil spirits. Marriage was solemnised by the priests. The ceremony for scaring the evil spirits was performed also for the bride before her entry into the bridegroom's house.¹³⁵ Muslim males usually contracted their marriage in the early teens and sometimes even earlier.¹³⁶ Betrothal used to be arranged through a third party. In case of difficulty in securing a bride for his son, the father often promised to give in return his daughter in marriage to the intermediary.¹³⁷ The marriage was performed by *niqāh* by the *mullā* at the bride's

133. Antonia Deacock, *No Purdah in Padum*, 142-43; Peter, *A Study of Polyandry*, 347.

134. Earl of Dunmore, *The Pamirs*, I, 113.

135. Peter, *A Study of Polyandry*, 347; Hashmat Ullah Khan, *Tārīkh-i-Jammu*, 439; A. H. Francke, *Lamaistic Pre-Buddhist Marriage Ritual*, Bombay 1901, 18.

136. G. W. Leitner, "Legends, Songs, Customs and History of Dardistan", *Asiatic Quarterly Review* (1893), v, 154; Filippo de Filippi, *Himalaya, Karakoram and Eastern Turkistan*, 53; Henry Ramsay, *Western Tibet*, 57. *Census of Kashmir 1901*, II, Table VII. In 1901 there were 480 males and 520 females among Balti Muslims who had been married before their tenth year.

137. *Census of India 1911*, XX, pt. 1, 143-45; G. W. Leitner, "Legends, Songs, Customs and History of Dardistan", *Asiatic Quarterly Review* (1893), v, 153-57.

138. T. G. Vigne, *Travels*, II, 259; G. W. Leitner, "Legends, Songs, Customs and History of Dardistan", *Asiatic Quarterly Review* (1893), v, 153.

house.¹³⁸ *Muta'*, that is marriage for limited period, was also known among Ladakhi Muslims.¹³⁹

At the time of death Muslims used to offer prayers (*salatal-janāiz*) over the dead body before interning it.¹⁴⁰ Also after its internment, the *mullā* recited the *Fātih*, and prayed to *Allāh* to preserve the departed soul from the fire of hell.¹⁴¹ To honour the remains of their dead, the rich families used to raise tombs over their graves.¹⁴² The personal belongings of the deceased, such as clothes, used to be given away to the *maulavi* who conducted the funeral rites. For the peace of the departed soul, they gave alms and arranged recitation of the *Qurān* at the grave, a mosque or the house of the deceased. The period of mourning lasted for three or ten or forty days among various groups. Cooked food was distributed on the last day, marking the end of mourning.¹⁴³

The Buddhists of the valleys before cremating their dead, performed death rites for a few days.¹⁴⁴ For fear of the necromant getting hold of the departed soul, the relatives used to take a bone from the pyre of the dead to pound and mould it into a figure and

139. *Census of Kashmir 1911*, XX, pt. 1, 143-45.

140. G. W. Leitner, "Legends, Songs, Customs and History of Dardistan," *Asiatic Quarterly Review* (1893), v, 156-57; Filippo de Filippi, *Himalaya, Karakoram and Eastern Turkistan*, 203.

141. G. W. Leitner, "Legends, Songs, Customs, and History of Dardistan," *Asiatic Quarterly Review* (1893), v, 156-57.

142. Filippo de Filippi, *Himalaya, Karakoram and Eastern Turkistan*, 203.

143. G. W. Leitner, "Legends, Songs, Customs and History of Dardistan," *Asiatic Quarterly Review* (1893), v, 157.

144. Henry Ramsay, *Western Tibet*, 49; S.C. Das, *Journey to Lhasa and Central Tibet*, 327-28; W.Y. Evans-Wentz, *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*, London 1957, 18-24.

keep it in a sepulchre (*chhorten*).¹⁴⁵ The remains used to be poured into a nearby stream. On the plateaus, where there was no wood for the purpose of cremation, the *changpās* used to dismember the bodies of the dead and exposed them on rocks to the birds of prey.¹⁴⁶ Personal belongings of the deceased were distributed among the priests who conducted the rites. For the peace of the departed soul, his relatives invited the monks to read and recite Buddhist scriptures at the latter's home, gave alms and offered food at the cremation grounds annually at the festival of *Losar*.¹⁴⁷ The period of mourning lasted from one week to one month and was terminated by a ceremony called *Lhā-bsang*.¹⁴⁸

The most important social institution of Ladakh during the late nineteenth century was the family in which the ceremonies of birth, marriage and death were performed. The family in both Ladakh and Baltistan normally consisted of three generations living together as one economic and social unit : father or fathers and mother, sons and daughters and the wife or wives of the sons, and grandchildren. Among the Muslims of Baltistan the father remained the head of the family throughout his life. After his death, all the sons inherited his property in equal shares; if he left behind a widow, or widows, she could enjoy a certain share of the

145. Henry Ramsay, *Western Tibet*, 49 - 50 ; Filippo de Filippi, *Himalaya, Karakoram and Eastern Turkistan*, 201.

146. Filippo de Filippi, *Himalaya, Karakoram and Eastern Turkistan*, 197; Guiseppi Tucci and E. Ghersi, *Secrets of Tibet* (translated by Mary A. Johnstone), London 1935, 99.

147. Hashmat Ullah Khan, *Tārīkh-i-Jammu*, 451; Filippo de Filippi, *Himalaya, Karakoram and Eastern Turkistan*, 197.

148. Peter, *A Study of Polyandry*, 383; Frederic Drew, *The Jummoo and Kashmir Territories*, 382; A. H. Francke, *Antiquities of Indian Tibet*, Calcutta 1926, II, 142.

property during her life.¹⁴⁹ Among the Buddhists, when the eldest brother succeeded to the headship and the property of the family at the time of his marriage, the younger brothers were entitled to a common enjoyment of the property with the eldest brother; they shared his wife with him and had common children; but they had no distinct individual rights. If a younger brother chose to marry another woman, he could do so but only at the cost of his membership of the joint family. When the eldest son succeeded to the headship of the family on his marriage, the older generation of mother and father or fathers had the option to live with the family as its subordinate members or to establish a separate household on a part of the same estate.¹⁵⁰ In the absence of a male heir, the eldest daughter succeeded to the estate and remained head of the family during her life.¹⁵¹

In the absence of a natural son, the head of the family among both Balti Muslims and Ladakhi Buddhists had the right to adopt an heir.¹⁵² Among the Buddhists at the same time a female child could also be adopted by the same parents, generally belonging to the side of the parent other than the one who had nominated the heir.¹⁵² The adopted children in most cases got married to rear a family of their own. The foster parents generally lived as members of the family of the adopted children or adopted heir. Adoption was regarded as legal and the adopted child or children acquired the same rights as that of the natural child.¹⁵³

149. Hashmat Ullah Khan, *Tārīkh-i-Jammu*, 361-62; Henry Ramsay, *Western Tibet*, 42 & 64; Peter, *A Study of Polyandry*, 354; Frederic Drew, *The Jummoo and Kashmir Territories*, 252.

150. Peter, *ibid.*, 346; Hashmat Ullah Khan, *ibid.*, 437; Earl of Dunmore, *The Pamirs*, I, 117.

151. Peter, *A Study of Polyandry*, 346.

152. *Ibid.*, 347; Henry Ramsay, *Western Tibet*, 53 & 78.

153. Peter, *A Study of Polyandry*, 347.

The Balti Muslims generally married one wife but those who could afford to marry more than one woman were polygamous in accordance with the provision of the *Shari'at*.¹⁵⁴ Matrimonial ties with foster-relations were allowed among Balti Muslims but not with persons falling within the prohibited limits (*mahram*) : mother, daughter, sister, paternal or maternal aunt, nieces, foster-mother, mother-in-law, step-daughter, and daughter-in-law.¹⁵⁵ Divorce was permissible on grounds prescribed by the *Shari'at*.¹⁵⁶ The position of the Muslim woman remained inferior and subordinate to that of man.¹⁵⁷ The prevalence of polygamy sometimes resulted in adultery by a co-wife.¹⁵⁸ Among the upper class Muslims, the ladies were generally maintained in a *harem* and remained segregated from men. Among the lower classes also the possibility of women observing *pardah* cannot be ruled out, but strict isolation of women was made nearly impossible by the economic condition.¹⁵⁹

Among the Ladakhi Buddhists plurality of husbands was socially acceptable and commonly practised, although plurality of wives too was not unknown. Economic consideration played an important part in the adoption of polyandry in which the younger

154. *Census of Kashmir 1901*, VI, 87; Filippo de Filippi, *Himalaya, Karakoram and Eastern Turkistan*, 90, & 553; Frederic Drew, *The Northern Barrier of India*, 173-75; Henry Ramsay, *Western Tibet*, 57; J. E. Duncun, *A Summer Ride Through Western Tibet*, 195.

155. *Census of Kashmir, 1901*, VI, 87; Filippo de Filippi, *Himalaya, Karakoram and Eastern Turkistan*, 53.

156. Henry Ramsay, *Western Tibet*, 32-33; *Census of India 1911*, XX, pt. 1, 142.

157. *Census of India 1911*, XX, pt. 1, 142-45.

158. *Loc. cit.*

159. E. F. Knight, *Where Three Empires Meet*, 249.

brothers shared with the eldest brother his wife and children.¹⁶⁰ In fact, even when a male from outside the family was asked permanently to lend a helping hand in agriculture he was allowed to cohabit with the lady of the house and was treated as a member of the family like the younger brothers.¹⁶¹ The practice of polyandry acquired an interesting dimension when the eldest daughter succeeded to the property of her father in the absence of any brother. She could marry more than one man at the same time and could divorce any of them at will by paying a small compensation.¹⁶² Divorce was permissible among the Ladakhi Buddhists and there were various grounds on which the husband or the wife could seek divorce.¹⁶³ Re-marriage of the widow was also permissible among them.¹⁶⁴ Their women moved freely among themselves and among men without observing any *pardah*.¹⁶⁵ Adultery, though uncommon, was not unknown among the Ladakhi Buddhists.¹⁶⁶

Among certain sections of the Ladakhi Buddhists some peculiar customs had survived from olden times. For example if the husband of a *maqpa* woman, that is the woman who inherited the property of her father in the absence of any brother, cohabited with the sisters of his wife, he was entitled to keep any children born out of that cohabitation.¹⁶⁷ In the neighbourhood of

160. Hashmat Ullah Khan, *Tārīkh-i-Jammu*, 437; Henry Ramsay, *Western Tibet*, 37 & 24.

161. *Census of Kashmir, 1901*, I, 88; Earl of Dunmore, *The Pamirs*, I, 118.

162. *Census of India 1911*, XX, pt. I. 142.

163. Peter, *A Study of Polyandry*, 356.

164. W. Y. Evans-Wentz, *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*, 24.

165. Frederic Drew, *The Jummoo and Kashmir Territories*, 250; Moorcroft and Trebeck, *Travels*, I, 322.

166. Peter, *A Study of Polyandry*, 356.

167. *Ibid.*, 334.

Pangkong Lake two male friends could share each others's wife or even temporarily exchange their wives. These *changpās* used to offer their wives to important guests as a form of hospitality.¹⁶⁹

Given their social code and values, people in Baltistan as well as in Ladakh were extremely conservative and tradition-bound. During the late 19th century attempts were made by the rulers of Kashmir under the influence of British advisors to introduce literacy and secular education in these territories but only with negligible success.¹⁷⁰ Medical facilities were accepted by the people on a more appreciable scale but not without a good deal of resistance. In due course, however, even the monks started administering new medicine in order to maintain their traditional influence with the people.¹⁷¹ Nevertheless society in Ladakh did experience a little thaw during the late 19th century, having remained more or less congealed for several centuries.

168. *Ibid.*, 388.

169. *Loc. cit.*; Jammu State Archives, *Persian Records*, File No. 215/33 Sammat 1916; File No. 616 and 646 of Sammat 1930-1931; File No. 833 of Sammat 1931,

170. Hashmat Ullah Khan, *Tārīkh-i-Jammu*, 423; A. H. Francke, *The Antiquities of Indian Tibet*, II, 76 & 139.

171. National Archives of India, *Foreign Department Political Proceedings*, July 1874, Nos. 214-15; Gurpal Singh Dahiya, "Lamaism in Ladakh," *Proceedings Punjab History Conference March 1971*, Punjabi University Patiala 1972, 257-60.



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