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*Political Relations
between
India and Nepal*

1877-1923

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by
Kanchanmoy Mojmudar

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*To the memory of
my father*
KANAILALL MOJUMDAR



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ABBREVIATIONS

<i>AJPH</i>	Australian Journal of Politics and History
<i>AP</i>	Accounts and Papers presented to Parliament
<i>BM Addl Mss</i>	British Museum Additional Manuscripts
<i>CMP</i>	Chelmsford Papers
<i>CP</i>	Cross Papers
<i>CPC</i>	Calender of Persian Correspondence
<i>CRP</i>	Curzon Papers
<i>Dept. Notes</i>	Departmental Notes
<i>DFP</i>	Dufferin Papers
<i>DO</i>	Demi Official
<i>DP</i>	Mortimer Durand Papers
<i>Enclo</i>	Enclosure
<i>EP</i>	Elgin Papers
<i>FM</i>	Foreign Miscellaneous Series
<i>FO</i>	Foreign Office
<i>FPA</i>	Foreign Political A Proceedings
<i>FPB</i>	Foreign Political B Proceedings
<i>FSA</i>	Foreign Secret A Proceedings
<i>GT Survey</i>	Great Trigonometrical Survey
<i>HBP</i>	Hobhouse Papers
<i>HC</i>	Political and Secret Home Correspondence
<i>HMP</i>	Hamilton Papers
<i>HP</i>	Hardinge Papers
<i>ICWA</i>	Indian Council of World Affairs
<i>IFP</i>	India Foreign and Political Proceedings
<i>IMP</i>	India Military Proceedings
<i>IPP</i>	India Political Proceedings (Confidential)
<i>JASB</i>	Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal
<i>JBORS</i>	Journal of the Bihar and Orissa Research Society
<i>JIH</i>	Journal of Indian History
<i>JRAS</i>	Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland
<i>JRCAS</i>	Journal of the Royal Central Asian Society

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JUSI	Journal of the United Service Institution of India
KP	Kitchener Papers
LNP	Lansdowne Papers
LP	Lytton Papers
MNP	Minto Papers
MP	Morley Papers
NP	Napier Papers
NR	Nepal Residency Records
OOT. Political	Ootacamund Political Proceedings
PC	Foreign Political Consultations
PEF	Political and Secret (Subject) Files
PF	Political and Secret Files
PIHC	Proceedings of the Indian History Congress
PIHRC	Proceedings of the Indian Historical Records Commission
PSI	Political and Secret Despatches to India
PSLI	Political and Secret Letters from India
PSM	Political and Secret Department Memoranda
Pt.	Part
RBP	Roberts Papers
Reg. No.	Register Number
RNA	Reports of the Nepalese Agent at Lhasa
RP	Ripon Papers
SC	Foreign Secret Consultations
Telgs	Telegrams
TP	Temple Papers
VS	Vikram Samvat
WO	War Office
WP	White Papers

PREFACE

THE British government of India recognised that in Nepal lay the fulcrum of India's north-east frontier, and that the security of this frontier necessitated the maintenance of good relations with the government at Kathmandu. Nepal's geographical position, giving her command of the most exposed section of the Indian frontier and the "financial heart" of British India, her military strength derived from the local population, the Gurkhas, among the world's best fighters, her tradition of military expansion and proud independence—all this made it clear to the British that the Nepalese were a force to reckon with; they could be a danger to India, if alienated, and a source of strength, if befriended.

By the second decade of the nineteenth century the British had succeeded in establishing regular diplomatic relations with the Nepalese government and in checking Nepalese military expansion which had jeopardised the economic and political interests of the East India Company. Thereafter these relations improved, mainly because of the friendly policy of the Rana regime at Kathmandu, which valued British support as an essential means of strength. By the year 1877, when the founder of this regime, Maharaja Jang Bahadur, died, the British government in India could look upon the Nepalese as good neighbours, if not as intimate friends. From 1877 the main trend in Anglo-Nepalese relations was towards greater understanding, closer cooperation and interdependence between the two governments, gradual coordination of their respective interests, adjustment of their attitudes and policies in order to promote these interests and assumption of reciprocal obligation to defend them from external threats. By the twenties of the present century the British in India could depend on the Rana government as trusted allies, as one of the main bastions of British rule in India. The Ranas, for their part, not only used their alliance with the British to consolidate their power, but by the "Treaty of Friendship", 1923 secured a great political object: a guarantee

that British alliance would not lead to the disappearance of Nepal's independence. In the following pages I have traced these developments in the political relations between the governments of British India and Nepal in 1877-1923, together with an analysis of the circumstances in which these developments took place and the factors influencing and at times determining their course.

The study is a revised version of my dissertation for a Ph.D. degree of the University of London. It is written on the basis of contemporary records and documents of the British government at various levels, some of which like those of the post 1914 period have only recently been made accessible to researchers. Full use has also been made of the private papers of the Viceroys, Residents and others, who were responsible both for the formulation of the British policy towards Nepal as well as for its implementation.

British policy towards the Nepalese government set off a reaction in the latter, and the success or failure of that policy was influenced to a large extent by the nature of that reaction. My attempt at projecting the Nepalese point of view would have been far more successful had I been able to use the contemporary documents of the Nepalese government at Kathmandu. However, I could utilise a few such documents of the pre-1877 period, which I collected at Kathmandu in 1961, while working in the Indian School of International Studies, New Delhi for my first doctoral dissertation on *Indo-Nepalese Relations 1837-1877*.

Political relations between British India and Nepal were not, until recently, a popular subject for historical research: the only published works, until a few years ago—of which a list has been given in the bibliography—were those written by British officers serving at Kathmandu, which although useful as contemporary accounts fail to present any objective view of these relations, free from personal and official bias. The several military handbooks on Nepal that exist were written for British recruiting officers with the specific object of acquainting them with the manners and customs of the Gurkhas, and thereby facilitating their official duties. Then there are histories of the various Gurkha regiments, which, as their titles suggest, were not meant to serve any purpose other than that of giving detailed accounts of the birth of the regiments and the military engagements they

went through. The very few private individuals lucky enough to have had a glimpse of Nepal, a forbidden land, as holiday makers or big game hunters have left us their accounts of what could at best be called first hand but sketchy impressions of a country, weird and yet charming. A comprehensive history of Nepal was a long-felt need, which was not met until 1908, when the famous orientalist, Sylvain Levi, brought out his monumental *Le Nepal*. But Levi did not attempt—nor under the existing circumstances was it possible for him—to write a critical narrative of Anglo-Nepalese political relations. We get a detailed narrative of these relations for the first time in Perceval Landon's two-volume *Nepal*, which for its range and reliability of information still holds the field as perhaps the best authority on the history of Nepal. But then, with all its merits, Landon's work lacks the main features of historical research: a critical analysis of events, a dispassionate assessment of personalities and an objective treatment of facts. It reads like an eulogy of the Rana rule and more obviously as a panegyric of his personal friend, Chandra Shamsheer, the then Rana Prime Minister, whose loyalty, goodwill and cooperation were much valued by the British government for several political and other reasons. A few other works, mostly on the Gurkhas, followed, their authors being ex-officers of the Gurkha regiments, and all extolling the Rana regime. Some reminiscences of British Envoys in Nepal appeared in the late thirties and forties, all fearing the rising tide of Indian nationalism as a certain threat to the basis of the existing relations between the governments of India and Nepal. Simultaneously anti-British elements in India and anti-Rana elements living in exile in India produced a few works which condemned the Rana alliance with the British.

Since the 1950s Nepal has attracted increasing international attention, and for two main reasons: the fall of the Rana regime with the consequent disappearance of the traditional isolation of the country; and the recent political developments in the Himalayan region following the rise of Communist China and its absorption of Tibet, with the resultant threat to Nepal's and India's territorial security and political stability. The recent interest in Nepal is a part of the wider interest in India's Himalayan frontier; it is intimately related to and, in fact, stems from the exigencies of international power politics, Nepal

is seen, like other such small states on the periphery of China, as a buffer to ward off the expansion of aggressive Communism in Asia, as a state in whose strength and stability the free world has a vital stake. Consequently, Nepal's geographical setting and vulnerability to influences and pressures from her northern and southern neighbours, her political experiments and economic aspirations, her slow social changes and cultural adaptations have, of late, been receiving wide attention. So have been Nepal's foreign relations in their recent phase, her attempts to balance India and China with a view to preventing domination by either, to ramify her external contact and play, as far as her means permit it, a role in the current South Asian politics. But then, it must be pointed out that no satisfactory account is yet available of the historical basis of Nepal's external relations and the factors influencing the evolution of her policy towards China and India, in particular. British officers with official duties on the north-east frontier of India knew of Nepal's links with China and Tibet and her relations with Bhutan and Sikkim and their implications, but political considerations and official restrictions dictated their reticence in these matters.

A welcome trend in modern Nepal is seen in the developing intellectual consciousness of her people, their growing awareness of their country's rich heritage and their keenness to identify and interpret its various facets. The need for historical research has been felt and the still limited facilities available have yielded encouraging results. However, scholars' interests are largely centred in illuminating the dark recesses of Nepalese history, in preserving, collecting and deciphering old inscriptions, in identifying the older place names and in establishing the historicity of the ancient kings of Nepal and their exploits by painstaking scanning through odd references in contemporary documents and a plethora of legends, myths and folklore. The few, who have written on the modern period of Nepalese history, have generally confined themselves to the pre-Rana period, their main themes being the deeds of Nepalese Kings and statesmen. Still fewer in studying the modern history of Nepal have specifically dealt with the history of British impact on Nepal; and their claim to originality lies not so much in the finding of new facts as in giving some important events a patently nationalistic interpretation.

This work owes much to many persons. It was in 1957 that I received the initial inspiration for working on Nepalese history from Professor K.K. Datta, now the Vice-Chancellor of Patna University. For my initiation into historical writings I am indebted to him as well as to Padmavibhusan Dr. Tara Chand, the official historian of the Government of India, who supervised my first doctoral dissertation at the Indian School of International Studies, New Delhi. Dr. L.S. Baral of the School taught me the Nepali language, and Dr. Satish Kumar, now in the Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, gave me friendly assistance.

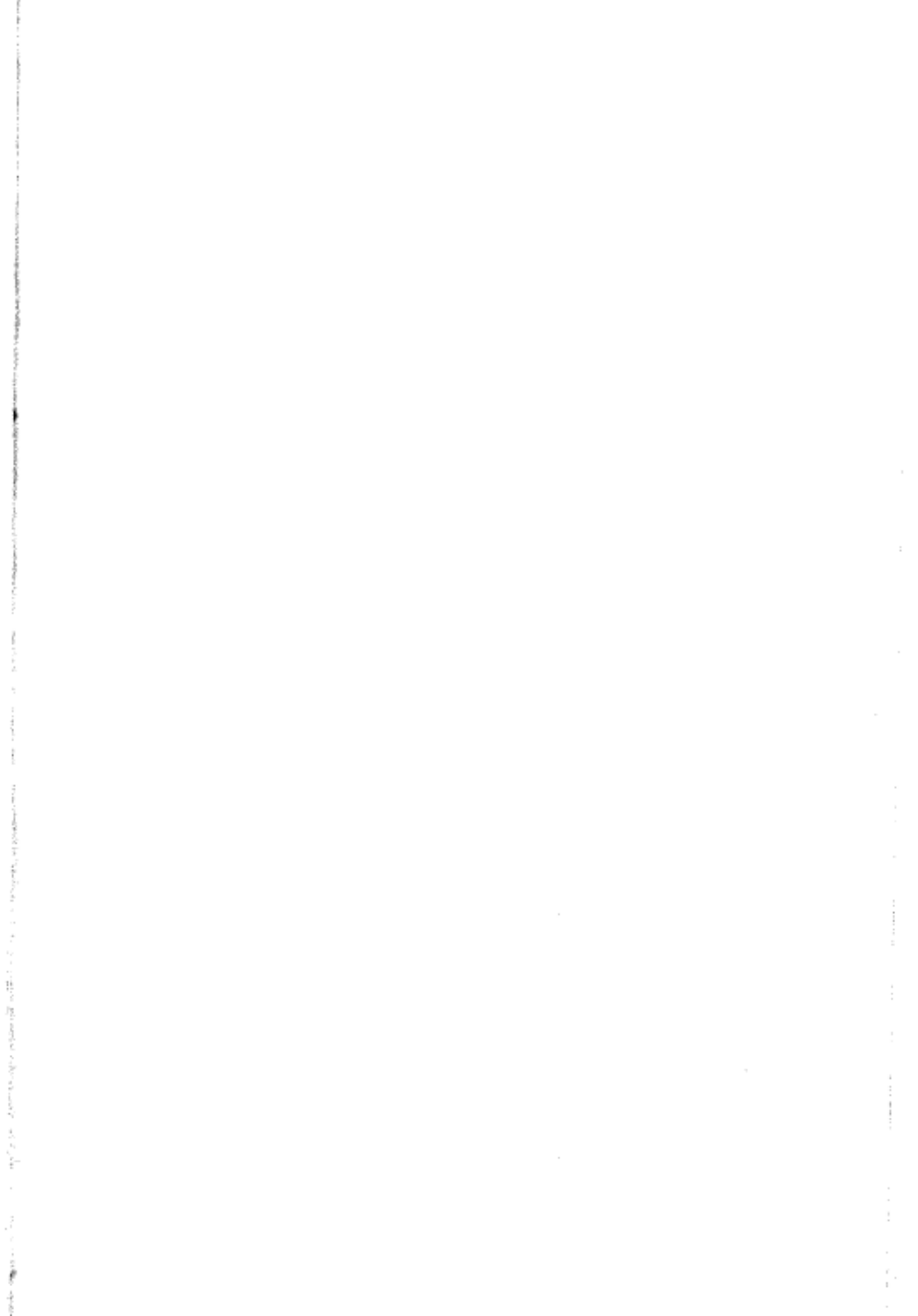
I am grateful to the Government of India and the Association of Commonwealth Universities in U.K. for selecting me as a Commonwealth Scholar in history and for financing my stay and study in U.K.

The work could not have been undertaken without the facilities extended to me by the authorities of the various libraries and record offices in U.K., India and Nepal, of which a full list has been provided in the bibliography.

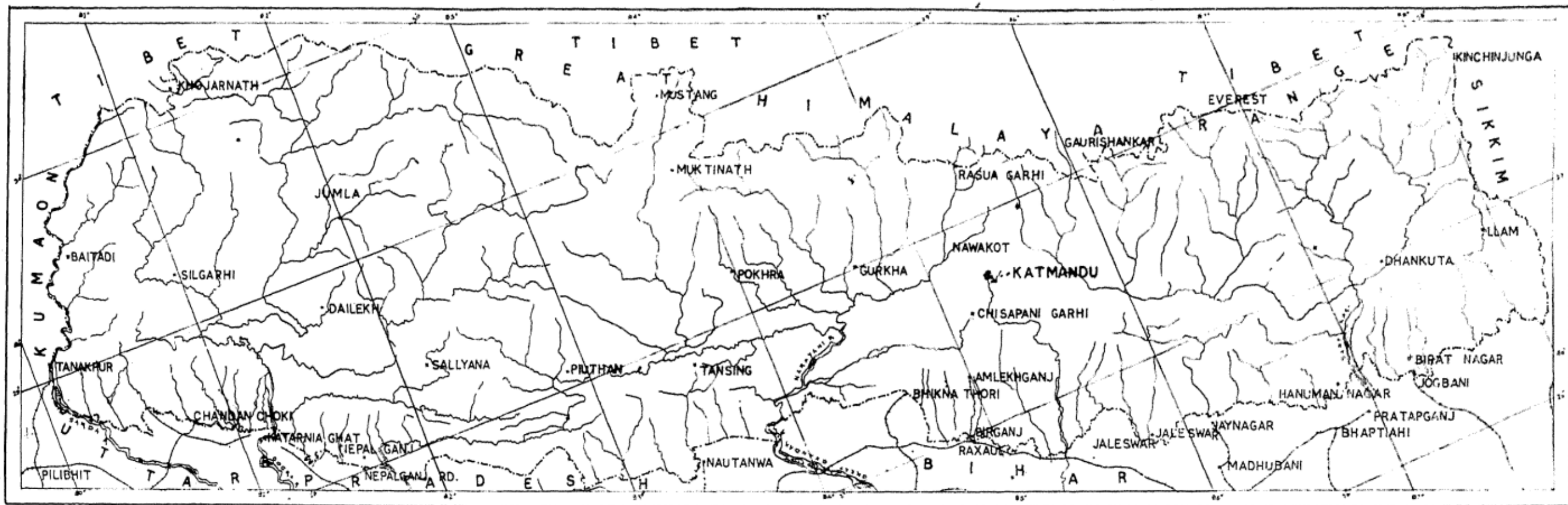
I thankfully recall the unfailing encouragement and kind attention of Professor A.L. Basham, who supervised this work until he left the school of Oriental and African Studies, London for Australia. I am also obliged to Professor K.A. Ballhatchet, Head of the Department of South Asian History in the School, with whom I worked after Professor Basham's departure.

K. MOJUMDAR

1 January, 1968



N E P A L .





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CHAPTER ONE

ANGLO-NEPALESE RELATIONS, 1767-1877

LESS than twenty years ago Nepal was one of the forbidden lands of the world. It was a closed country partly because its rulers wanted to keep it so and partly because of geographical factors limiting its intimate external contact. Nepal is completely landlocked; it lies ensconced in the southern slopes of the Himalayas between 80°-88° east longitude and 26°-30° north latitude. To its north lies Tibet, now a part of China, and to the south and west India; in the east Nepal's boundary marches with Sikkim. Nepal is a small country—about 55,000 square miles in extent; east to west the land is about 555 miles long, and north to south its breadth varies at places from 80 to 155 miles. The population by the latest reckoning (1961) is about ten million. Since it is conterminous with China, is in close proximity to Pakistan, and provides an easy access to the Indo-Gangetic plain, Nepal occupies an important place in India's political and strategic considerations.

Geographically Nepal has three zones; from north to south they are the Great Himalayas, the Inner Himalayas and the Terai. The Great Himalayan region is one of the world's most mountainous tracts, having some of the highest peaks of the world.¹

But for a few chinks in the form of passes this stupendous natural rampart would have kept the Nepalese shut off from their northern neighbours—the Tibetans. Of these passes, six—Taglakhar (Taglakot), Mustang, Kerung, Kuti, Hatia and Wallungchung—have been used for centuries as trade routes. None of these passes, however, because of their height, is free from ice-clogging for most of the year. The region has an extremely cold climate and a very sparse population.

Below this is the Inner Himalayan region, an intricate system of ranges, fifty miles wide, with peaks clad either in snow or

¹ Everest (29,028 ft.), Kanchanjangha (28,156 ft.), Dhaulgiri (26,826 ft.), Gosainthan (26,305 ft.) and Nanda Devi (25,700 ft.).

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forest depending on their altitude. Lower still, running parallel to the Himalayas, are the Churia hills, a standstone range, geologically an extension of the Siwalik range of India. Timber and Savana grass grow here. Cooped up between the hills are many valleys, the main centres of human habitation and intensive cultivation.

The Terai, which follows, is a twenty-mile broad lush green plainland skirting almost the entire southern boundary of Nepal. Its northern portion being swampy is one of the world's most malarious region. For long it was regarded by the Nepalese government as a natural defence from the Indian side. The southern portion of the Terai, parts of which were also once marshy and unhealthy, has been gradually reclaimed. It is now thoroughly cultivated and densely populated—258 men per square mile. 83 per cent of the total area of Nepal is hilly where live 71 per cent of its population, in the Terai live 29 per cent. Economically it is the most valuable region of the country.

Hill upon hill divide the country; the numerous rivers and streams intersect the land still more. From west to east the main rivers of Nepal are the Kali, Karnali, Rapti, Gandak, Bagmati, Kosi and Mechi. All swirl down the high mountain ridges towards the plains of India, and each has many tributaries. The numerous hills and rivers make intra-regional communication extremely difficult.¹

Geographically Nepal is a land of variety, no less so ethnically and culturally. Nepal has evolved through the centuries a complex racial and cultural pattern with two predominant strands in it, the Indo-Aryan and the Tibeto-Mongoloid. Generally speaking,

¹ For the geography of Nepal see P.P. Karan, *Nepal: A Cultural and Physical Geography*. P.P. Karan and W. M. Jenkins, *The Himalayan Kingdom : Bhutan, Sikkim and Nepal*, pp. 79-88. E. Vanistart, *Gurkhas*, pp. 1-6. Ministry of Defence (U.K.). *Nepal and the Gurkhas*, pp. 1-15. *Imperial Gazetteer of India* (1908 edn.): *Afghanistan and Nepal*, pp. 91-3. F. Toker, *Gorkha, The Story of the Gurkhas of Nepal*, pp. 1-9. H. A. Oldfield, *Sketches from Nipal*, I, pp. 1-17. Tek Bahadur Khattri, *Nepal: A Glimpse*. S. G. Burrard and H. H. Hayden, *Sketch of the Geography and Geology of the Himalayan Mountains and Tibet* (4 Vols.). W.B. Northey and C.J. Morris, *The Gurkhas*, pp. 3-5. W. B. Northey, *The Land of the Gurkhas*, pp. 17-30. O. H.K. Spate, *India and Pakistan : A General and Regional Geography*, pp. 405-13. B. H. Hodgson, "On the Physical Geography of the Himalaya", *JASB*, August 1849, pp. 761-88. K. Mason, "A Note on the Nepal Himalaya", *The Himalayan Journal*, 1934, pp. 81-90.

the former element is markedly seen in the peoples who live in the southern edge of the country abutting on India. The latter element is discernible in the inhabitants of the high Himalayas bordering on Tibet—the Sherpas and Bhotias, for instance. In between are the races who have both these strands—in varying proportion—in their physiognomy, social habits, customs and language. These people, who live in the western and central regions of the country are the martial tribes of Nepal, the Magars, Gurungs, Khas and Thakurs, known in Nepal by their generic name, the *Parbatiyas* (highlanders) and in India as the Gurkhas.¹ Then, there are the *Kirantis*, *Sunwars*, *Rais* and *Limbus*, tribal peoples with their own culture. In Nepal intra-regional isolation caused by geographical factors has prevented acculturation between the various tribal and ethnic groups and preserved the great diversity in its population.²

Kathmandu is the capital of Nepal; together with two adjacent towns—Patan and Bhatgaon—it lies in what is known as the Nepal valley. The valley, surrounded by mountains, with a varying altitude of five to eight thousand feet, has long been—and in every sense—the hub of the country. Originally Nepal meant this valley alone, other parts of the country having their local names.³

The Kingdom of Nepal as we know it today does not have a very long history : it is about two hundred years old. But then, the various political units, which were welded to compose this Kingdom, do have local histories dating back to remote antiquity.

¹ "Gurkha" is the generic name for all the Nepalese serving in the Indian army though, strictly speaking, it should apply to only those who belong to Gorkha, the ancestral home of the Gurkha Kings of Nepal, about fifty miles west of Kathmandu. In the British Indian army, too, all the Nepalese were called Gurkha. E. Vansittart, *Notes on Gurkhas*, p. 10. W. J. M. Spaight, "The Name 'Gurkha'" *JRCAS*, April 1941, pp. 200-3.

² For the races in Nepal see Karan, *op. cit.*, pp. 63-6. Vansittart, *Gurkhas* pp. 6-10, 46-143. "The Tribes, Clans and Castes of Nepal", *JASB*, 1894, pp. 213-49. B. Hodgson, "Origin and Classification of the Military Tribes of Nepal", *JASB*, May 1833, pp. 217-24. Northey and Morris, *op. cit.*, pp. 63-73, 90-104, 117-36, 156-202, 213-47, 256-60. C. von Furer-Haimendorf, *The Sherpas of Nepal*. Northey, *op. cit.*, pp. 92-114. G.S. Nepali, *The Newars*. H. Kihara, ed., *Peoples of Nepal, Himalaya*.

³ D. Wright, *History of Nepal* pp. 2-24. W. Kirkpatrick, *An Account of the Kingdom of Nepal*, pp. 147-65. F. Hamilton (Buchanan), *An Account of the Kingdom of Nepal*, pp. 205-10.

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These histories may be read in the Nepali *Vamsavalis* (genealogical chronicles) which, however, are a happy amalgam of fable, fiction and fact.¹

Modern Nepal is a late 18th century creation by a people who now rule the country—the Gurkhas. The ancestors of these people were Indian immigrants—mostly princes from Rajputana and their numerous followers who fled their country in the 13th-14th centuries to escape Muslim domination. The immigrants made the Nepalese hills their new home; they trained the fierce local population in arms and raised troops. Among the local womenfolk they raised families; they both influenced and adopted the local social habits, customs and practices; a mixed race with a mixed culture was born with militarism as its predominant trait. In course of time they established kingdoms of various size in central and western Nepal; they fell out with each other and fought. One of these new kingdoms was Gorkha, about fifty miles west of Kathmandu.²

In 1742 Prithvinarayan Shah ascended the throne of Gorkha and launched the state upon more than thirty years of unceasing war and expansion until he conquered the whole territory between Gorkha in the west and the river Tista in Sikkim in the east. In 1767 Prithvinarayan invaded and besieged the Nepal valley when he faced the opposition of a power for whom he had a feeling of mingled admiration, envy and fear—the British³.

The Nepal valley was then divided into three kingdoms, Kathmandu, Patan and Bhatgaon, ruled by three squabbling princes of the same family—the Mallas.⁴ The King of Kathmandu,

¹ Wright, *op. cit.*, pp. 77-284.

² For the history of the numerous petty kingdoms in Nepal prior to their conquest by the Gurkhas see D. R. Regmi, *Modern Nepal*, pp. 1-42. Hamilton, *op. cit.*, pp. 237-90.

For the early history of the Gurkhas see Regmi, *op. cit.*, pp. 13-26. Wright, *op. cit.*, pp. 273-81. Oldfield, *op. cit.*, 1, pp. 277-9. Hamilton, *op. cit.*, pp. 9-60. *Mss. Hodgson* (India Office Library), Vols. 17, 18. Sylvain Levi, *Le Nepal : Etude Historique D'un Royaume Hindon* (Type-written English translation, 2 vols., ICWA library, New Delhi), 1, pp. 320-56.

³ For the life of Prithvinarayan see L.S. Baral, *Life and Writings of Prithvinarayan Shah*, unpublished Ph. D. thesis, London, 1964. S.V. Jyenvali, *Prithvinarayan Shah*. Regmi, *op. cit.*, pp. 42-103.

⁴ For the history of the Mallas see Balchandra Sharma, *Nepal-ko-Atihasik Ruprekha*, pp. 128-96. P. Landon, *Nepal*, 1, pp. 35-58.

Jayprakash Malla, appealed to the East India Company for help against the besieging Gurkhas.

The Company responded to the appeal out of mainly commercial considerations. Through the Nepal valley lay the accustomed trade route between the Indo-Gangetic plain and Tibet ; the valley was an entrepôt of Himalayan and trans-Himalayan commerce where traders from Kashmir, northern and eastern India, Bhutan, Assam, Tibet and China brought their wares. Wool, borax, gold and gold dust, musk, sulphur and antimony from Tibet reached Bengal and northern India through the Nepalese route. Of the Nepalese exports to India rice, timber, hides and cardamom formed the main items. Cotton and silk manufactured goods, metals and utensils, tobacco, spices, sandalwood, coral and other semi-precious stones were sent from India to Nepal and Tibet. This trade, which had flourished under the fostering care of the Mallas, was disrupted by the Gurkha invasion of the Nepal valley¹.

The East India Company was interested not only in the development of Bengal's trade with Nepal but in its extension to western China through Kathmandu and Lhasa. Obstructions and harassment by the Canton authorities made the Company's trade with China by the sea route rather a difficult operation and, therefore, an alternative overland trade route to China was a very desirable object. Besides, the supply of gold from Tibet and Nepal was vital for the Company when Bengal was faced with a severe scarcity of specie which the Company needed for its China trade².

The Company sent an expedition in September 1767 under one Major George Kinloch, the object being to forestall the Gurkha conquest of the Nepal valley. Kinloch, however, was defeated by the Gurkhas and was obliged to return from the foothills.

¹ On Nepal and Tibet's trade with Bengal see Kirkpatrick, *op. cit.*, pp. 203-10. C. Markham, *Narratives of the Mission of George Bogle to Tibet and of the Journey of Thomas Manning to Lhasa*, pp. liv, xcix, cxxiii, 50, 53, 124-8, 148, 203-5. Alastair Lamb, *Britain and Chinese Central Asia : The Road to Lhasa, 1767 to 1905*, pp. 5-7, 336-42. S. Cammann, *Trade through the Himalayas*. S.C. Sarkar, "Some Notes on the Intercourse of Bengal with the Northern Countries in the second half of the 18th century", *PIHRC*, Calcutta, December 1930, Vol. XIII, pp. 99-109.

² K.C. Chaudhuri, *Anglo-Nepalese Relations*, pp. 15-6. Lamb, *op. cit.*, pp. 5-8.

Prithvinarayan conquered the valley in 1768-9, with his heart full of bitterness and ill-feelings towards the Company. The Indo-Tibetan trade route through Kathmandu was virtually closed, which obliged the Company to turn to an alternative route through Bhutan and to send missions to Tibet seeking trade facilities¹. Prithvinarayan, for his part, tried hard to dissuade the Tibetan and Bhutanese authorities from entertaining the Company's projects².

The Gurkhas went on with their military expansion. By the turn of the century they had conquered the entire hill country between the rivers Mahakali on the west and Tista on the east. Between 1788 and 1792 Tibet was attacked twice, resulting in the intervention of China as Tibet's protector. Fear of China led the Gurkhas to seek military assistance from the Company after signing with it a commercial treaty. Promotion of trade was the general object of the treaty and the levy of a reciprocal import duty of 2½ per cent its main provision³. The Tibetans, too, asked the British for military help. However, for fear of annoying the Chinese and thereby injuring the Company's China trade, Lord Cornwallis, the Governor-General, did not give military assistance to either the Gurkhas or the Tibetans, and instead deputed Captain William Kirkpatrick to Kathmandu. The ostensible object of the mission was mediation in Nepal's disputes with Tibet and China, but its real intention was obtaining further commercial concession from the Gurkha government and improving the Company's general relations with that government. However, before Kirkpatrick reached Kathmandu in March 1793, the Chinese army had defeated the Gurkhas and

¹ George Bogle was sent to the Tashi Lama in 1774, and Samuel Turner in 1783. C. Markham, *op. cit.*, S. Turner, *An account of an Embassy to the Court of the Teshoo Lama in Tibet*. Lamb, *op. cit.*, pp. 8-31.

² For Kinloch's expedition see Chaudhuri, *op. cit.*, pp. 13-32. N.L. Chatterjee, *Verelst's Rule in India*, pp. 21-39. S.C. Sarkar, "The Nepal Frontier in the second half of the 18th century", *PIHC*, Calcutta, 1939, pp. 1607-15.

For Prithvinarayan's conquest of the valley see Father Giuseppe, "An Account of the Kingdom of Nepal", *Asiatic Researches*, Vol. II, 1790, pp. 315-22. Regmi, *op. cit.*, pp. 80-89. Markham, *op. cit.*, pp. lxxvi, 144, 148-9, 157-8.

³ Aitchison, *Treaties, Engagements and Sanads* (edn. 1909), II, pp. 103-5. Chaudhuri, *op. cit.*, pp. 62-9.

made a settlement with them, which obliged Nepal to send hereafter quin-quennial tributary mission to Peking. The Nepalese government had now no need for the alliance of the Company with whose policy they were totally disappointed. Kirkpatrick got at Kathmandu a lukewarm reception and soon left, convinced that the Gurkhas had concluded the commercial treaty as a counsel of despair, and that when the crisis had passed off, it had become just a scrap of paper to them. The Chinese had a strong suspicion that the British had covertly backed the Gurkhas, which impression partly explained the failure of the British commercial mission to China led by Lord Macartney (1793). The Company's trade prospects in Tibet were further blighted when the Chinese practically sealed it off from external contact¹.

For a decade hereafter the Company kept trying to revive the Nepalese trade route by conciliating the Gurkha government; a commercial mission was sent to Kathmandu in 1795, but it returned unsuccessful.² This was followed some years later by the adoption of political measures under seemingly favourable circumstances.

At the beginning of the 19th century political conditions in the *darbar* or Court of Kathmandu were unstable. The powerful nobles first obliged the King, Ran Bahadur Shah, an extremely cruel and dissipated man, to abdicate and retire to Benaras, and then fought among themselves for power. Out of this scramble a party, called the Pandes, emerged strongest; its leader, Damodar Pande, became the *Mukhtiyar* (Minister).

¹ For the Gurkha-Tibetan war and its consequences see Regmi, *op. cit.*, pp. 167-230. D.B. Diskalkar, "Tibeto-Nepalese War, 1788-1793", *JBORS*, Vol. XIX, Pt IV, 1933, pp. 362-91. Turner, *op. cit.*, pp. 437-42. Cammann, *op. cit.*, pp. 102-43. *CPC*, X, Letter No. 745. B. Acharya, ed., *Nepal-Chin Yuddha Sambandhi Samsaran-Patra*, *Nepal Samskritik Parishad Patrika*, *Vara* 3, *Anka* 3, *Vaisakh*, 2011, pp. 1-28.

On Kirkpatrick's mission see his *Account*, *op. cit.* Chaudhuri, *op. cit.*, pp. 70-74. *PC*, 18 September 1837, Nos. 69-71, *Report on Political Transactions with Nepal* by Dr. A. Campbell. Cammann, *op. cit.*, pp. 134-9. Lamb, *op. cit.*, pp. 22-31.

² Chaudhuri, *op. cit.*, pp. 76-96. D.C. Ganguly, ed., *Select Documents of the British period of Indian history* (in the collection of the Victoria Memorial Hall, Calcutta), pp. 133-6. G.N. Saletore, "Indian Trade Delegation to Kathmandu", *PIHRC*, Vol. XXXII, part II, Patna, 1956, pp. 10-12.

The Company made full use of the opportunity. Ran Bahadur at Benaras was given large sums of money for his maintenance together with hints of support for regaining his power. To prevent this restoration the Pandes placated the British with a treaty in October 1801 the declared object of which was to establish cordial relations between the two governments.¹ In accordance with the treaty, Captain W.D. Knox was sent to Kathmandu as the first British Resident in the Court of Nepal. Knox had secret instruction to gradually establish British influence in the Nepalese *darbar* through the ruling party which valued the British alliance as a source of strength. However, Knox's arrival and his close relations with Damodar Pande and his men made them unpopular with all those in the *darbar* who feared that definite relations with the British as established by the treaty might lead to their domination and consequent loss of Nepal's independence. In early 1803 the eldest queen of Ran Bahadur returned to Kathmandu and took the leadership of anti-British elements in the *darbar*. The latter quickly gained ascendancy, made the latest treaty a dead letter and obliged Captain Knox to return to Calcutta in March 1803. The treaty was formally rescinded in January 1804, and Ran Bahadur soon got back to Kathmandu.² Ran Bahadur made one of his trusted followers, Bhimsen Thapa, the Minister, under whose able administration political stability was restored and, by progressive acquisition of territory, Nepal emerged as the most powerful Himalayan state, extending from the river Sutlej in the west to the Tista in the east.³ Nepalese territorial expansion posed a grave security problem for the Company. With the years the Nepalese menace to the Company's territory increased; disputes on the frontier tracts multiplied, leading to bloody incidents. The Nepalese made nibbling encroachments;

¹ Aitchison, *op. cit.*, pp. 105-08. Chaudhuri, *op. cit.*, pp. 106-17. Campbell's *Report*, *op. cit.*

² For Ran Bahadur's career and Knox's residency see Campbell's *Report*, *op. cit.* Chaudhuri, *op. cit.*, pp. 119-41. Chittaranjan Nepali, *General Bhimsen Thapa Ra Tarkalin Nepal*, pp. 1-23. Levi, *op. cit.*, II, pp. 315-21. Landon, *op. cit.*, I, pp. 70-75. Oldfield, *op. cit.*, pp. 289-91. Tucker, *op. cit.*, pp. 64-70. R.M. Martin, *The Despatches of the Marquess of Wellesley*, IV, p. 16. K. K. Datta, *Selections from Unpublished Correspondence of the Judge-Magistrate and the Judge of Patna 1790-1857*, pp. 113-5.

³ For Bhimsen's life see Chittaranjan Nepali, *op. cit.*

the Company made counter moves. Local officers of both the governments met and parleyed and invariably clashed over their irreconcilable differences. Remonstrances served only to accentuate mutual bitterness. By 1814 the British were convinced that a full-scale war and a smashing blow at the Gurkha power could alone check its expansion. Lord Moira, the Governor-General, hence, declared war on Nepal on November 1, 1814.¹

The Company won the war in 1816; it was, however, a pyrrhic victory. The first casualty of the war was the myth of the invincibility of British military power; 16,000 Nepalese with far inferior weapons dealt a serious blow at the Company's army more than three times larger in size, led by veteran generals and armed with the latest weapons. A contemporary British authority saw :

In some instances our troops, European and native have been repulsed by inferior numbers with sticks and stones. In others our troops have been charged by the enemy sword in hand, and driven for miles like a flock of sheep.. In this war, dreadful to say, we have had numbers on our side, and skill and bravery on the side of our enemy.²

The Company had another advantage : "the length of purse".³ The treaty of Sagouli (December 2, 1815) brought the war to

¹ For the background, course and results of the war see Chaudhuri, *op. cit.*, pp. 142-63. *Papers Relating to the Nepal War*, pp. 675-763, Moira to Secret Committee, 2 August 1815. H.T. Prinsep, *History of the Political and Military Transactions during the Administration of the Marquess of Hastings, 1813-1823*, I, pp. 54-206. Marchioness of Bute, ed., *The Private Journal of the Marquess of Hastings*, I, pp. 44-54. *Summary of the Administration of the Indian Government from October 1813 to January 1823 by the Marquess of Hastings*, pp. 10-19. *Military Sketches of the Goorka War in India in 1814, 1815, 1816*. B.P. Saksena, ed., *Historical Papers Relating to Kumaun, 1809-1842*, pp. 1-200. *Kumaun District Records, Political*, Vol. II, No. 47; Vol. IV, No. 49, Letters from Govt. to E. Gardner (1814-5).

² Quoted in E. Thompson, *The Making of the Indian Princes*, p. 192. see also J.W. Kaye, ed. *Selections from the Papers of Lord Metcalfe*, p. 186. Kaye, *Life and Correspondence of Charles, Lord Metcalfe*, I, p. 296. Morris, *op. cit.*, foreword by Bruce, pp. xviii-xix.

³ Quoted in E. Thompson, *Life of Charles Lord Metcalfe*, pp. 163-4. see also Vansittart, *op. cit.*, pp. 31-6. J.B. Fraser, *Journal of a tour through part of the snowy range of the Himala Mountains*, pp. 13-48. T. Smith, *Narrative of a Five years' Residence at Nepal from 1841 to 1845*, I, pp. 172-294; II, pp. 1-89.

an end.¹ A British Resident was sent to Kathmandu and a Nepalese *Vakil* to Calcutta; the arrangement was expected to have laid the basis of a definite and permanent political relation between the governments of British India and Nepal. The British object was to check Nepalese expansion and to restrain their martial instincts. One-third of its territory was taken from Nepal: the entire hill country between the Sutlej and Mahakali and nearly the whole of the Terai west of the Gandak. The hill lands east of the Mechi and part of the Terai between the Mechi and Tista wrested from Nepal were made over to the Raja of Sikkim in recognition of his services to the British in the war. The Raja was assured of British protection—thus sealing off the prospects of Nepalese expansion to the east. With the treaty of Sagouli ended the first phase of British relations with Nepal—a phase dominated by British anxiety to contain an expanding military power which threatened the Company's commercial interests and the security of its territory.²

The treaty established peace and stability in Nepalese relations with the British, but no cordiality. Bhimsen, who continued as Minister, was now convinced of the military superiority of the British, "a power", as he said, "that crushed thrones like potsherds"³. He also realised that peace with the British was essential for the consolidation of his regime which had been shaken by defeat in the late war. For fear of another and more disastrous war Bhimsen acquiesced in the treaty of Sagouli and the restraints it put on the military ambitions of Nepal. He was anxious to remove the sources of discord with the British; he would leave no boundary dispute unsettled and no fugitive criminal from British India unextradited; he would allow no further Nepalese encroachment on the British territory. In short, he would not give the British any excuse for quarreling with Nepal again. He kept strictly to the letter of the treaty

¹ Aitchison, *op. cit.*, pp. 110-12. The *darbar* delayed the ratification of the treaty, in consequence of which the war was resumed. It continued until March 1816, when the Nepalese finally submitted and accepted the treaty. Landon, *op. cit.*, I, pp. 79-80.

² *Papers Relating to Nepaul War*, pp. 764-5, Moira to Secret Committee, 5 August 1815. Prinsep, *op. cit.*, pp. 207-8. Aitchison, *op. cit.*, pp. 94, 322-3 (The Treaty of Titalia, 10 February, 1817).

³ Oldfield, *op. cit.*, I, p. 299.

and wanted the British to do so. He desired no favour from the latter nor would he concede any to them. He was always on guard, a watchful sentinel of Nepal's independence, keeping his government's relations with the British absolutely formal and never allowing them to be closer and more intimate; this policy of non-intercourse seemed to him Nepal's best defence against Britain's political ascendancy.

As an essential measure of security, he kept the Nepalese army strong and well prepared for any threat from the south. He was concerned over the gradual reduction of the Indian states by the British; he kept up relations with these states by secret emissaries and in some cases even by permanent agents. He intrigued with the states, particularly when they had hostile relations with the British government. Nothing, however, came of these intrigues, and the British power grew stronger. In a feeling of jealousy, fear and despair Bhimsen, then, resigned himself to the safest course left to him: peace with the British; singlehanded the Nepalese government would never again risk a collision with their southern neighbour.¹

The war with Nepal left some lessons for the British as well. They recognised that the Gurkhas were a great fighting people who, if befriended, could be as much a source of strength for the Indian government as they could be a cause of danger, if alienated. The British observed that "we have met with an enemy who shows decidedly greater bravery and greater steadiness than our troops possess", and that the "company's soldiers could never be brought to resist the shock of these energetic mountaineers on their own ground". No wonder, efforts were made to enrol these men in the Indian army.²

The British policy for two decades after the war was one of maintenance of peaceful relations with Nepal by conciliation,

¹ *Ibid.*, p. 298-9. *FM.*, Vol. 198, pp. 192-6, 206-17. Kanchanmoy Mojumdar, *Indo-Nepalese Relations, 1837-1877*, Unpublished Ph. D. thesis, Indian School of International Studies, New Delhi, 1962, pp. 37-42. C. Nepali, *op. cit.*, pp. 158-75.

² Thompson, *Indian Princes*, *op. cit.*, p. 192. E. Vansittart, *Notes on Gurkhas*, p. 20. Kanchanmoy Mojumdar, "Recruitment of the Gurkhas in the Indian Army, 1814-1877, *JUSI*, April-June 1963, pp. 143-53. Toker, *op. cit.*, pp. 86-7. L.H. Jenkins, *General Frederick Young, First Commandant of the Sirmur Battalion*, pp. 40-52.

non-intervention in its internal affairs, and reliance on Bhimsen to stabilise the governmental relations between the two countries. As the British were then preoccupied with wars against the Indian powers and administrative reforms they considered it politic to handle the Nepalese government gently, to show deference to their suspicious and sensitive nature and to acquiesce in their policy of haughty aloofness so long as it did not turn into active hostility. It was also wise to wink at Bhimsen's abortive intrigues with Indian powers, particularly the Marathas and the Sikhs. The Minister's administrative ability was an acknowledged fact; his regime was, therefore, regarded by the British as the safest insurance against political instability at Kathmandu.¹

Change came in the 1830's with signs of a domestic revolution in Nepal. The King, Rajendra Vikram Shah, having come of age,² was eager to assume power so long held by the Minister. He was backed by all those who were jealous of Bhimsen's long monopoly of power. The anti-Bhimsen elements in the *darbar*³ sought to defame the Minister, accusing him of having brought the British Resident to Kathmandu and lacking in both the desire and ability to recover from the British Nepal's lost territories.

The British were then having a difficult time: relations with Russia were cool, and a break with Afghanistan was imminent. The court of Ava was hostile, and in many Indian states restiveness and disaffection were evident; all about there was an air of crisis and high events. The government in Calcutta were naturally worried.

British India's difficulty was Nepal's opportunity. The Nepalese government resumed their intrigues with the Indian states and also with Ava, China, Tibet, Persia and Afghanistan⁴; the Nepalese army grew increasingly restless at the prospect of

¹ *PC*, 2 September 1820, No. 11; 29 April 1825, No. 30 *SC*, 14 October 1829, No. 23. *FM*, Vol. 198, pp. 17-23, 246, Resident to Govt., 16 December 1826.

² Rajendra Vikram ascended the throne in 1816 while a minor; his father, Girvanyuddha Vikram (son of Ran Bahadur) had died that year.

³ These elements were grouped under several families such as the Chautarias or the royal collaterals, Gurus who were spiritual advisers of the King and his family, Thapas, Pandes, Bashnaites, Bishtas and Bohras.

⁴ Kanchanmoy Mojumdar, "Nepal's Relations with Indian States, 1800-50", *JIH*, August 1965, pp. 415-60.

plundering the opulent British territories. The Resident, Brian Hodgson¹, apprehended that Nepal would be a serious problem for the British at such a difficult time. He sought to convince the Government that it was wise to anticipate Nepalese hostility in the near future and to take necessary preventive measures. In the strong Nepalese army² under the vigorous Minister, Bhimsen, Hodgson saw a thorn in the weakest side of British India; and, so, he advised the Government to spare no means to render the Nepalese government politically innocuous and militarily weak. The best means to achieve this object, it seemed to Hodgson, was to support the King in his bid for power, to help Bhimsen's rivals to effect his fall, to let loose all the centrifugal forces in the state—in short, to keep the Nepalese stewed in their own juice till the British government's troubles were over. Hodgson contended that Bhimsen had kept peace with the British in order just to consolidate his regime, to conserve its strength and then to use it against the British at their weakest moment; such a moment, he warned, had come now and soon the Nepalese army would descend to India.³

The anti-Bhimsen elements, strengthened by Hodgson's covert support, brought about Bhimsen's fall in July 1837. Thereafter the Court of Kathmandu was plunged into anarchy and violent contest for power. The army being the strongest element in the state, its warlike spirit was stimulated by the contending parties, who offered the troops all help in realising their cherished ambition : invasion of the British territory and conquest of the plain lands as far as the Ganges. In 1839, tortured by his sworn

¹ See W.W. Hunter, *Life of Brian Houghton Hodgson. Notes of the Services of B.H. Hodgson collected by a friend*

² In 1816 the regular army of Nepal numbered 10,000 men; in 1817, 8,333; in 1819, 12,000; in 1824, 12,690; in 1825, 11,710; in 1832, 14,530; in 1838, 16,195. The system of annual rotation in the army recruitment enabled the Nepalese government to treble the number of active soldiers in a few months' time. *FM*, Vol. 125, *Memorandum relative to the Gurkha Army*, 14 February 1825. *Oct. Political*, 24 October 1834, No. 13.

³ Hunter, *Life of Hodgson*, *op. cit.*, pp. 100 *et. seq.* Campbell's *Report*, *op. cit.* *SC*, 5 March 1833, No. 24; 28 June 1833, No. 11. *PC*, 12 June 1834, No. 140; 10 July 1834, No. 144; 9 October 1834, No. 17. *SC*, 18 September 1837, No. 69. *FM*, Vol. 151, Hodgson to Macnaghten, *Political Secy.*, 2 July 1833; Vol. 152, *Ibid.*, 13 August 1833; Vol. 154, *Ibid.*, 3 December 1833.

enemies, the Pandes, Bhimsen, in utter desperation, took his own life. In February 1840 Ranjang Pande became the Minister, vowing a war with the British; anti-British spirit at Kathmandu rose to fever heat.¹

The Indian government, sorely plagued with problems such as the Afghan war, hostile disposition of the King of Ava and the "uneasy neutrality" of the Court of Lahore, became seriously concerned over the Nepalese situation. The Governor-General, Lord Auckland's advisers in the Supreme Council urged him to send a punitive expedition to Nepal; but the Governor-General would not take the risk until his hands were freer, a war with Nepal, he feared, might be a signal for the disaffected and sullen Indian princes to rise against the British.² Instead, Auckland exerted strong political pressure on the King of Nepal and threatened him with invasion of his country. The King was eventually obliged to concede what Hodgson wanted: dissolution of the Pande Ministry and constitution of a "peace ministry" with nobles who had been bought over by the Resident by bribery and promises of support in their craving for power. The "peace ministry" lasted for three years from October 1840 in the face of bitter hostility of the Pandes.³ In the autumn of 1842 the Afghan war was over. Lord Ellenborough, who succeeded Auckland, rejected the latter's interventionist policy and recalled Hodgson in December 1843. Since this policy was found to have reinforced rather than removed the anti-British spirit in the *darbar*, Ellenborough thought it prudent to revert to the earlier policy of non-involvement in Nepal's internal affairs.⁴

¹ Campbell's *Report*, *op. cit.* SC, 18 January 1841, No. 74, *Excerpts from the letters of the Resident...to Govt. from 1830 to 1840* by J.R. Tickell, Asst. Resident. *The Friend of India*, 2, 16 May 1839, 22 August 1839, 11 February 1841.

² PC, 18 September 1837, No. 72, SC, 18 December 1839, Nos. 67-75. Governor-General to Secret Committee, No. 21, 10 September 1838, *Ibid.*, No. 3, 7 February 1839. *Private Letter Books of Auckland*, Vol. 4, p. 99, Auckland to Hobhouse, 19 September 1838, p. 62, Colvin to Hodgson, 28 August 1838, p. 225, Auckland to Hobhouse, 18, November 1838, *Br. Mus. Addl. Mss.*, No. 37694. PC, 11 November 1853, No. 23, *A Narrative of principal events in Nepal from 1840 to the end of 1851*, by Capt. Nicholetts, Asst. Resident.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Hodgson Mss.* (Bodleian Library), Vol. 9, p. 30, Hodgson to his father, 29 July 1842; Vol. 16, p. 5, Hodgson to his mother, 30 May 1842. Hunter,

For a year and a half after Hodgson's recall Nepal had a generally peaceful government under Matabar Singh Thapa, a nephew of Bhimsen and well-disposed to the British. In May 1845 Matabar was killed in a plot made by the King, his queen and some nobles who feared that the Minister was aspiring for absolute power like his uncle. Then followed a year of palace intrigues, assassinations and political chaos.¹

Out of the welter of confusion emerged a strong man, Jang Bahadur Rana, who clinched power by massacring about thirty influential nobles on the night of 14 September 1846. For one hundred and five years his family, the Ranas, ruled Nepal in a despotic sway. Jang Bahadur was known to both Hodgson and his successor, Henry Lawrence, as a promising young man, courageous, shrewd, ambitious and utterly unscrupulous; he was from the beginning friendly to the British; he had persuaded the Nepalese government to offer troops to the British in their war against the Sikhs in 1845-6. Peace and friendship with the British was the fundamental feature of Jang Bahadur's policy and gaining their favour his principal object.² During the second Anglo-Sikh war (1848-9) Jang Bahadur offered military assistance to the British government and was disappointed to find his offer declined. In 1850 he went to England where he was greeted by Queen Victoria, Lord Russell, the Prime Minister, and the Directors of the East India Company; he was treated as the representative of an independent state friendly to the British government. He returned home impressed by the power and resources of Britain and convinced of the wisdom of living in friendly relations with her and benefiting thereby. The trip broadened his mental outlook as reflected in his legal reforms which the Indian government, then under Lord Dalhousie, both suppor-

op. cit., pp. 204-34. A. Law, ed., *India Under Lord Ellenborough*, pp. 109, 195-200. A.H. Imlah, *Lord Ellenborough*, pp. 151-4. H.B. Edwardes and H. Merivale, *Life of Sir Henry Lawrence*, pp. 321-3. J.T. Wheeler, *Diary of Events in Nepal, 1841 to 1846*, p. 39.

¹ Nicholett's *Narrative*, *op. cit.* Tucker, *op. cit.*, pp. 112-8. Wheeler, *op. cit.*, pp. 55-70.

² Pudma Jang Bahadur Rana, *Life of Maharaja Sir Jang Bahadur Rana of Nepal*. Pratiman Thapa, *Life of Jang Bahadur*. Jagan Mohan Varma, *Rana Jang Bahadur*. SC, 31 October 1846, Nos. 151-60. Oldfield, *op. cit.*, I, pp. 356-68. Governor-General to Secret Committee, No. 44, 4 October 1846. P.V. Rana, *Nepali Rana Gharana-ko-Sankhipta Vamsavali*.

ted and appreciated.¹ In 1855 he made an extradition treaty with the British which defined the extraditable offences and regularised the procedure for surrendering criminals.² Steps were also taken to improve the police administration on the border. The Indian government, for their part, adhered to their policy of non-intervention in Nepal's internal affairs and were happy over the steady consolidation of the Rana regime. In 1851 they took charge of some conspirators against Jang Bahadur's life and kept them as state prisoners in India.³ The first decade of Jang Bahadur's rule saw mutual cooperation and the gradual growth of goodwill between the governments of India and Nepal.

A crucial test of this happy relation came in 1857-9 when the Indian Mutiny shook the British rule in its very foundation. Overruling his advisers who urged either siding with the rebels or waiting upon events, Jang Bahadur lent the fullest assistance to the British. In June 1857 he sent six thousand Nepali troops to restore British authority in the disturbed areas of the North-Western Provinces and Bihar. In December he personally came to India with nine thousand Nepali troops for the relief of Lucknow. The Mutiny strengthened the bond between Jang Bahadur and the British, who were grateful to him for his active support when his brothers and others in the *darbar* wanted him to take advantage of the British troubles. As a reward for his services, Jang Bahadur was made a G.C.B.; the entire low land between the rivers Kali and Rapti and that lying between the Rapti and the district of Gorakhpur, which had been wrested from Nepal in 1816, was restored to her. British prestige in Nepal considerably increased after the Mutiny; the Nepalese were impressed by the determination and the military skill with which the British overcame their gravest troubles. Jang

¹ P.J.B. Rana, *op. cit.*, pp. 100-152. Ganda Singh, ed. *Private Correspondence Relating to the Anglo-Sikh Wars*, p. 160. L. Oliphant, *Journey to Kathmandu*. O. Cavenagh, *Rough Notes on the State of Nepal, Its Government, Army and Resources; Reminiscences of an Indian Official*, pp. 106-90. K. Dixit, ed., *Jang Bahadur ko Vilayat Yatra*, SC, 24 June 1848, Nos. 64-5; 27 January 1849, Nos. 60-2. HBP, Br. Mus. Addl. Mss. 36476, p. 332, Dalhousie to Hobhouse, 22 January 1849. PC, 4 October 1850, Nos. 1-14.

² Aitchison, *op. cit.*, pp. 118-20. PC, 21 April 1854, Nos. 18-23; 28 July 1854, Nos. 27-8; 23 February 1855, Nos. 18-9.

³ P.J.B. Rana, *op. cit.*, pp. 155-62. SC, 28 March 1851, Nos. 12-20; 25 April 1851, Nos. 11-2; 30 May 1851, Nos. 25-31.

Bahadur's position was further strengthened : never before had he loomed so large as an ally of the British; he had shown the Nepalese that friendship with the British had earned Nepal territory while the earlier policy of enmity had brought her nothing but troubles and confusion.¹

The next two decades saw the two governments settling boundary disputes caused mainly by the changing course of rivers. A supplementary extradition treaty was concluded in 1866 for better control of crimes in the bordering territories.²

However, there were some flies in the ointment. Jang Bahadur was not content with the absolute power he had been enjoying since he became the Prime Minister, and so he tried to depose the powerless King and assume the "*de jure* sovereignty". In this attempt he met with consistent opposition of the British government, who believed that if he became the King he would be more presumptuous and difficult to manage. Besides, British experience with Ran Bahadur suggested that even a powerless King could prove a political asset. Jang Bahadur was disappointed and sometimes fell out with the Resident, George Ramsay, on this issue. In August 1856 he wrung from the King a *sanad* declaring the Ranas the hereditary Prime Ministers of Nepal with *de facto* sovereign power; it was also provided that Kaski and Lamjung, two principalities in central Nepal, would be the personal duchies of the Prime Ministers of Nepal, who were also given the title Maharaja; the Kings hereafter assumed the title Maharajadhiraja.³

Jang Bahadur never abandoned the traditionally exclusive policy of the Nepalese government; his distrust of the British

¹ Kanchanmoy Mojumdar, "Nepal and the Indian Mutiny, 1857-58", *Bengal : Past and Present*, January-June 1966, pp. 13-39; "Later Days of Nana Sahib", *Bengal : Past and Present*, July-December 1962, pp. 96-107. J.W. Kaye and G. Malleson, *History of the Indian Mutiny, 1857-8*, II, p. 311; IV, pp. 221-38; V, pp. 198-208. *NR*, Vol. 8, Letters From Officers Commanding Field Forces on the Nepal Frontier (1858-60). Aitchison, *op. cit.*, (edn. 1929), XIV, pp. 71-2. P.C. Gupta, *Nana Sahib and the Rising of Cawnpore*, pp. 171-203.

² Aitchison, p. 73. *FPA*, April 1960, Nos. 497-501; December 1863. Nos. 331-5; December 1864, Nos. 255-7; May 1870, Nos. 229-35; October 1871, Nos. 654-76; August, 1873, Nos. 29-44.

³ P.J.B. Rana. *op. cit.*, pp. 192-6. *SC*, 29 August 1856, Nos. 51-6, 63, Governor-General to Secret Committee, No. 24, 10 June 1858. *NR*, Vol. 12, Ramsay to Edmonstone, Foreign Secy., 7, 11 August 1856; Vol. 13. Resident to Govt., 5 January 1866. *FPA*, November 1864, No.53; May 1865, No. 181.

was deep, though never openly shown; so was his fear of them, though equally concealed. He could not get over his belief that intimacy with the British might lead to their ascendancy. The fate of Oudh and Sikkim seemed to him glaring examples of how militarily weak states, in spite of their allegiance to the British, could lose their independence and integrity at their suzerain's hands. Nepal's best defence, Jang Bahadur felt like his predecessors, lay in her isolation and non-intercourse with foreigners. The appurtenances of British civilisation were to him but means for the political enervation of Nepal. He wanted Nepal to develop her institutions in her own way and own time; she would have but a few trappings of modernism. Although absolute isolation from the British was neither politic nor possible, Jang Bahadur would have only that much relation with them as he considered essential for his own interests. That is why whenever the British government approached him for commercial facilities and unrestricted movement of the Resident they found Jang Bahadur consistently opposed to these proposals. He seemed to believe in the adage: "with the Bible comes the banner, and with the merchant comes the musket".¹

On the whole, however, British India's relations with Nepal were far more friendly in Jang Bahadur's time than ever before. The keystone of these relations was mutual confidence which was developing through understanding and adjustment on the part of both the governments. The Nepalese government gave up their earlier policy of military expansion which endangered the security of the British territory; there were no more intrigues and other hostile activities. The Indian government, for their part, valued Jang Bahadur's strong and friendly regime which had kept the turbulent military tribes of Nepal in leash. They acquiesced in the Nepalese policy of self-isolation and limited intercourse and kept their hands off the internal affairs of Nepal. Indeed, in Jang Bahadur's rule the foundation of stable relations between the governments of India and Nepal were laid. But then, whether these relations would improve or deteriorate depended as much on the Nepalese government's attitude as on that of the Indian government in the years following the death of Jang Bahadur.

¹ SC, 25 February 1859, No. 17. Ikbāl Ali Shah, *Nepal: the Home of the Gods*, p. 58. FPA, August 1864, No. 51; January 1874, No. 1. see also Chapter II, pp. 46-7.

CHAPTER TWO

RANUDDIP SINGH AND NEPAL'S POLICY OF EXCLUSION

JANG Bahadur died on 25 February 1877 peacefully, though rather suddenly. Almost immediately afterwards, there appeared signs of a domestic revolution at Kathmandu which the British government wanted to exploit with a view to increasing their influence in the Nepalese government.

Jang Bahadur was succeeded by his eldest surviving brother, Ranuddip Singh, whose old age and physical infirmity were matched by a slow and weak mind. Ranuddip had none of his brother's resolution and ruthlessness, his boldness and enterprise. Indolent, pleasure-loving and given to drift, with the years he became increasingly conservative and hide-bound. Fortunately for him he had the loyal support of his youngest brother, Dhir Shamsher, who, in the words of the contemporary Residency surgeon, Dr. G. Gimlette, was "active, resolute, able, absolutely fearless and unscrupulous".¹ Dhir was the strong man of Nepal, and real power soon passed into his hands while Ranuddip retained only nominal authority.

Jang Bahadur's sons, particularly the eldest, Jagat Jang, were ambitious and intriguing but incautious. Their popularity with the army and close relations with the royal family² made them formidable rivals of Ranuddip. But then, in Dhir they found more than their match.³

That a struggle for power would follow Jang Bahadur's death was anticipated by the British government who knew that political changes in Nepal were rarely accomplished peacefully,

¹ G.H.D. Gimlette, *Nepal and the Nepalese*, p. 168.

² Three of Jang Bahadur's daughters were married to the Heir-Apparent to the throne. Jagat Jang married a daughter of the King. Daniel Wright, *History of Nepal*, p. 68.

³ *FPA*, May 1877, Nos. 36-56, Dept. Notes, F. Henvey, Offg. Resident to T. Thornton, Offg. Foreign Secy., 1 March 1877. F.O., 766/1. *Nepal: Miscellaneous, 1880-1929*, Girdlestone's Note (1885).

and that these changes could bring about an undesirable change in the Nepalese government's attitude towards the British. Daniel Wright, the Residency surgeon, for instance, had predicted a succession of bloody coups.¹ So had Richard Temple, the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, who had visited Kathmandu less than a year before Jang Bahadur's death. Temple thought that Dhir would ultimately clinch power by killing Ranuddip. Temple also believed that an anti-British party existed at Kathmandu of which the principal members were Ranuddip, Dhir and three sons of Jang Bahadur. These men, Temple had reported to Lytton, the Viceroy, entertained no scheme of active hostility towards the British, but they did show

rather a dread of our political progress, a suspicious watching of all our actions, a distrust of our ultimate intentions, a desire to do without us and other like sentiments.

However, this feeling of mingled suspicion and fear, Temple conceded, was not unjustified from the Nepalese point of view, for there is, indeed, much in our inevitable career and destiny to cause such a feeling among Asiatics.²

For sometime after Jung Bahadur's death the situation at Kathmandu remained "grave"; Jang Bahadur's sons were likely to challenge their uncle. "A row is undoubtedly on the cards", the Officiating Resident, F. Henvey, reported, "and as the common saying is...Jung Bahadur's turban is too big for Ranuddip Singh; prolonged tenure of power by the latter is not to be looked for". Neither Jang Bahadur's brothers nor his sons, it appeared to Henvey, were friendly to the British. Not that he feared

"any open manifestation of hostility" on their part, but "only we must not assume that now Jang has gone, we have a stout and faithful friend at our backs in time of danger".³

The time of danger was not slow in coming and of this, it appears, Lytton himself had a premonition. Lytton was about to take a vigorous step towards Afghanistan and looked at the Nepalese situation very much in the same spirit as Auckland

¹ Wright, *op. cit.*, pp. 68-9.

² TP, A-3, Temple to Lytton, 23 May 1876. R.C. Temple, ed., *Journals kept in Hyderabad, Kashmir, Sikkim and Nepal by Sir Richard Temple*, II, pp. 249-62.

³ FPA, May 1877, No. 55, Henvey to Thornton, 1, 7, 11, 22 March 1877.

did during the first Anglo-Afghan war.¹ In Lytton's mind the situation at Kathmandu in 1877 resembled that in 1837-8: sudden replacement of a strong authority by a weak one, and the probability of a violent scramble for power. And the result could well be the same: political confusion, aggravation of Nepalese militarism and a threat to India's security when the British were engaged in Afghanistan. Lytton recalled that Jang Bahadur had not only appreciated his Afghan policy but had even offered to go to Kabul as the British government's emissary to mediate with Sher Ali.² But his reportedly anti-British successors, so it seemed to Lytton, might exploit the Indian government's difficulties with the Amir. As a precautionary measure, therefore, Lytton—very much like Auckland—sought to increase British influence at Kathmandu so that Nepal would not become "a sore on our backs in times of real danger".³ Lytton's idea—again like Auckland's—was to strengthen the position of the Resident and his influence in the Nepalese *darbar*. This, however, was not easy to accomplish in face of the Nepalese government's stubborn opposition.

The Nepalese government had accepted a British Resident in 1816, but only under duress—only after General David Ochterlony had sternly warned them: "either you have a Resident or a war". This broke Bhimsen's obduracy, but he also saw to it that this instrument of intrigue, interference and subversion remained absolutely ineffective. The Nepalese government, therefore, allowed the Resident a life no better than a prisoner's. He was suspected and constantly watched; his residence was closely guarded to prevent communication with anybody; his movements were rigidly restricted to a few miles inside the Nepal valley, and spies dogged his steps wherever he went. His relations with the Nepalese government were strictly formal; the officers were cold, aloof and even offensive. The Nepalese government spared no effort to convince the Resident that he was most unwelcome. The earlier Residents were exasperated

¹ See Chapter I, pp. 13-4.

² *LP*, 519/1, Lytton to Salisbury, 22 July, 18 September 1876, Lytton to Girdlestone, the Resident, 27 August 1876, Lytton to Beaconsfield, 18 September 1876, Girdlestone to Lytton, 13 September 1876.

³ *FSA*, December 1877, Nos. 104-33, Dept. Notes, Henvey to Thornton, 26 August 1877. *LP*, 518/2, Lytton to Salisbury, 3 October 1877.

by this frustrating and humiliating treatment, but after a few ineffectual representations resigned themselves to it, considering that the paramount object of the British government then was to conciliate their extremely sensitive and suspicious neighbour. In time, the British hoped, the Nepalese would overcome their jealousy and fear of Britain.¹

However, it proved an illusory hope. Hodgson, having found the situation unchanged, made vigorous efforts to improve his position until it became an issue with the *darbar*. "Rather than suffer the continuance of the present system", Hodgson urged the Government,

"We had better withdraw, resume the Terai and stop all intercourse. This would bring the Nepalese to reason in six months. I dare stake my life and honour on this issue."²

Ultimately, however, he had to give up the attempt; the Government were in no doubt that only a full-scale war with Nepal and a complete victory could break her exclusive policy, but then, such a war had many risks. Hodgson's pressure only confirmed the Nepalese Government's fear of the Resident, which his involvement in Nepalese politics after Bhimsen's fall further reinforced.

During Jang Bahadur's rule, with the general improvement in the relations between the two governments, the Resident's position also improved to some extent. Greater courtesy was shown to him; at times even his advice was solicited by Jang Bahadur and acted upon. Some amount of informality grew up in the Prime Minister's dealings with the Resident. The latter and his staff were invited to social celebrations and hunting parties sent very often to the Terai. The Resident was allowed to go to the Terai to inspect the boundary pillars and settle issues like the extradition of criminals. Places immediately across the Nepal valley were also thrown open to him.³

But the generally exclusive policy was neither given up nor

¹ SC, 4 May 1816, Nos. 69-70; 11 May 1816, Nos. 32-3. PC, 10 July 1818, No. 87; 12 February 1833, No. 160. H. Oldfield, *Sketches From Nipal*, I, pp. 299-302. Chittaranjan Nepali, *General Bhimsen Thapa Ra Tatkalin Nepal*, pp. 319-21.

² FSA, December 1877, No. 119, Note on the position of Resident in Nepal.

³ *Ibid.* Wright, *op. cit.*, pp. 71-3.

relaxed. The Resident continued to be spied upon, though less openly and, hence, less offensively. Jang Bahadur's excuse was : the Resident's dignified position justified such security measures. The Resident's requests for free movement were turned down as before but with extreme politeness and always on grounds of supposed administrative difficulties. Jang Bahadur pleaded that prejudices against the British were still very strong in the Nepalese people and that he could not override them without imperilling his regime and life. In 1864, in justifying the exclusive policy, Jang Bahadur told Colonel George Ramsay thus :

We desire to preserve our independence. We attribute that independence solely to our own peculiar policy (You may call it selfish, if you like, but we cannot alter it to please you). We know that you are the stronger power...You can force us to change our policy. You can take our country if it pleases you to do so, but we will make no change in that policy, owing to the strict observance of which, we believe, that we have preserved our independence as a nation to the present time.¹

These pleas could not alter the Indian government's impression that "no former Prime Minister of Nepal has shown himself more intractable upon this point than the late Jang Bahadur." Of 55,000 square miles of territory, Henvey pointed out, only about 300 miles were open to the Resident.²

Little wonder, then, that as soon as Jang Bahadur died, Lytton should seize the "advantage of the present opportunity." Ranuddip was much worried over the insinuations in some Indian newspapers that he had caused the death of Jang Bahadur, a friend of the British government; he was anxious to convince Henvey that the Nepalese government under him would make no deviation from Jang Bahadur's policy. In such circumstances, hoping that a little pressure would bend Ranuddip, Lytton asked Henvey to raise the issue. Lytton's argument was : "if the Nepalese government is so friendly" as Ranuddip professed, "why treat our Resident as a pariah ?"; so long as the Resident suffered "an undignified position," he added, "it indirectly tends to keep at a lower level than we could wish our authority not only in Nepal but elsewhere."³

¹ *FPA*, August 1864, No. 51, Resident to Govt., 6 July 1864.

² *FSA*, December, 1877, No. 132, India Secret Letter to Secy. of State, 14 December 1877.

³ *Ibid*, Lytton's Note. *LP*, 518/2, Lytton to Queen (Victoria), 24 April 1877, Lytton to Salisbury, 3 October 1877; 518/3, Lytton to Salisbury, 1 March 1878.

The idea, it must be stated, was Lytton's own. The Foreign Secretary, Charles Aitchison, advised him against "irritating" the Nepalese when the Afghan issue kept the government busy. Henvey, too, before he received Lytton's instruction, had no intention to exploit Ranuddip's difficulties. Rather, he had asked the Government to show confidence in the new regime, and one of the ways to do this, he suggested, was to settle some pending boundary disputes with Nepal in her favour. Henvey had even wished he could gag the Indian newspapers writing "alarmist and mischievous" articles on Ranuddip.¹

On 23 April 1877 Henvey asked Ranuddip for permission to go to Taptapani, some marches north-east of Kathmandu. As anticipated, the request was turned down whereupon Henvey scathingly condemned the self-insulating policy of the Nepalese government. He vigorously argued for its abandonment while Ranuddip defended it as resolutely, contending that he could not guarantee the personal security of the Resident if he went to the interior of the country, where people were very unruly, uncivilised and hostile to foreigners. Henvey shrugged this off as but "imaginary terror"; he refused to believe that the Rana regime was so weak as not to be able to prevent the people from injuring the representative of the British government whose friendship and support were essential for the Ranas themselves. Even if there was any personal risk involved in the matter, Henvey insisted, "it was small and remote compared with the danger of a misunderstanding owing to measures whereby the Resident is guarded like a prisoner (*Kaidi*) and watched like a pickpocket." The more Ranuddip resisted, the greater became Henvey's pressure, he now insisted on going not only to Taptapani; which was a near by place but to Gorkha, Peuthana and Salleana"—the very heart of the state and the Gurkha power" and, necessarily, the most jealously guarded parts of Central Nepal.²

Henvey wanted Lytton himself to press the King of Nepal and, should that prove ineffectual, to adopt retaliatory measures such as preventing the Nepalese from going on pilgrimage to India. Excessive pressure was likely to goad the Nepalese government

¹ FSA, December 1877, Nos. 104-33, Dept. Note. FPA, May 1877, Nos. 36-56, Dept. Notes, Henvey to Thornton, 22 March 1877.

² FSA, December 1877, Nos. 106-11, Henvey to Thornton, 29 April 1877, Henvey to Ranuddip, 29 April 1877, Ranuddip's Memorandum, 6 May 1877.

to a war with the British, but even then, Henvey urged, "the question having been formally raised, it should be carried through to the bitter end."¹

Utterly bewildered, Ranuddip still tried to convince Henvey that loyalty to the British government was his firm policy and safeguarding the Resident's honour and dignity his constant concern; he was helpless if the minimum security measures galled the Resident. Above all, Ranuddip added, exclusion of the Resident from the interior of the country had been Nepal's traditional policy, that not even such a powerful ruler as Jang Bahadur had dared to change it, which every Nepali cherished as the very keystone of his country's independence and integrity, and, finally, that all the earlier Residents had respected the sentiments of the people of Nepal regarding this matter. Dhir joined in : the Nepalese Ministers, who had made concessions to the British, had done so at their own peril; Damodar Pande, for instance, was killed because of his treaty with the Company (1801) and his attachment to Captain Knox; Bhimsen was deposed and disgraced by Rajendra Vikram for agreeing to the permanent establishment of the British Residency at Kathmandu. The Ranas, Dhir pointed out, had gone to their limit in accommodating the British wishes, but if they contravened the national policy they would be ruined.

"We look to your government," Dhir entreated, "as the *Supreme government*. We shall do anything in our power to please it. We are ready with heart and soul to fight for you. We will give our blood (with effusion), our army, our whole resources, our lives...to serve you..This is not in our power to grant."

To show that he was sincere in his loyalty to the British, Ranuddip came out with an offer of military assistance if the British were engaged in a war with the Afghans.²

To Henvey all this was mere "moonshine"; he "absolutely refused to yield one jot or tittle of it". He warned Ranuddip that the Viceroy would doubt the Nepalese government's professed friendliness unless they relaxed the restrictions on the Resident. Henvey urged that the times had changed and so the *darbar* should change its policy however dear it might have been

¹ *Ibid.*, No. 106, Henvey to Thornton, 29 April 1877.

² *Ibid.*, Nos. 112-17, Henvey to Thornton, 22 June 1877, Ranuddip's Memorandum, 10 June 1877.

to the Nepalese people. The policy had created misunderstanding between the two governments in the past and could spark off an open hostility between them. Therefore, "I wish you," he said, "now in days of profound quiet to get rid of evils which may gravely embarrass you in days of storm". Ranuddip was still unmoved and the reason, as Henvey clearly saw, was his fear that if he yielded, his weakness would be exposed, and he would be "the laughing stock of the country". This weakness, Henvey pointed out to Government, "may be our opportunity". Hereafter Henvey's tone became more bellicose; he was for an immediate showdown with Ranuddip. He believed himself to be in the same situation as Hodgson had been on the eve of the first Afghan war; he showed the same distrust and fear of Nepal; there was also the same vigorous advocacy for bullying the Nepalese government. He warned the Government not to be taken in by Ranuddip's offer of military assistance because such assistance was

good for them [Nepalese government] and not intended to be good to us, and indeed it is compatible with the deadliest intrigues and most inveterate hostility.

The hope of some territorial reward and the need for releasing the pent up spirit of the Nepalese army, which otherwise would be difficult to control, Henvey explained, provided the impulse to such offers. In his opinion

there has never been any friendship in the Nepalese mind, but on the contrary hatred, jealousy and distrust. Yet they are very cunning, and knowing well that the time for action has not come, they feign cordiality and meanwhile let us have their soldiers if we are fools enough to take them.

Not even Jang Bahadur was "loyal" to the British "in our sense of the word", Henvey added; self-interest alone motivated his action during the Mutiny. Henvey was in no doubt that anti-British spirit was too deep-rooted in the Nepalese government to be "swept away even by an autocratic Minister, much less by a Resident; only one thing could do it and that is the *sic volo sic jubeo* of the Imperial government?" "I stake my life on it", Henvey urged in a tone reminiscent of Hodgson, and that "if a day of real danger comes, a day such as 1857, and there is not a long-headed man as Sir Jang Bahadur at the head of affairs here, Nepal will be a sore not only on our backs but in our vitals".¹

¹ *Ibid.*, Nos. 118-9, 133, Henvey to Thornton, 22 June, 26 August 1877.

Lytton appreciated Henvey's contention but it was patent that the Nepalese were not as pliable as the Viceroy had supposed. To Lytton it seemed that Ranuddip was sincerely afraid of making a sudden departure from the national policy, and so he needed time to consolidate his power before he could oblige the British. Therefore, instead of taking any precipitate action, Lytton just warned Ranuddip that he should gradually abandon the exclusive policy, or else the Resident would be withdrawn and the issue finally joined.¹

Henvey was thoroughly vexed; Lytton's warning, he thought, was too mild to have any effect on the Nepalese government to whom forbearance was sheer weakness. Henvey grumbled that having assured him of "cordial support" in the beginning, Lytton was being rather soft to Ranuddip and thereby compromising the Resident's position. However, Lytton's warning had some effect. Ranuddip became penitent, apologetic and conciliatory, which induced Henvey to change his tactics: instead of pressure he tried persuasion. He assured Ranuddip that the Viceroy realised his difficult position, and so he had made only a very moderate demand; he wanted "what every nation was entitled to expect, viz. the courteous, liberal and proper treatment of its diplomatic agents." Nepal need not be opened to the "general public"; only the Resident be allowed free movement. Henvey asked Ranuddip to withdraw the guards around the Residency and let him wander about freely. The Prime Minister and the Resident, Henvey went on, could by joint consultation devise a plan to regulate the Resident's travels beyond the existing limits; the limits should, of course, be gradually extended. All this could be done, Henvey assured, "if not in one step, by degrees". This placed Ranuddip in a dilemma. His desire to make the concession and thereby ingratiate himself with the British government was balanced by his fear that this would give a handle to his enemies in the *darbar*. With extreme hesitancy Ranuddip said in a "vague and enigmatical language and may have meant" that

his devotion being so unbounded, the British government ought to support him and engage to preserve him from ruin in the event of his acceding to our [British] wishes.

¹ *Ibid.*, No. 120, Thornton to Henvey, 18 July 1877.

Henvey replied :

If the Maharaja¹ will meet me half way, I will assuredly go not less far to meet him, and he may be confident that my efforts will be aimed not at embarrassing him to do something towards complying with the Viceroy's expectations with risk to himself or his country.

Ranuddip seemed to have been impressed. Henvey complimented himself with having almost won the point. To clinch the issue, he recommended to the Government that Ranuddip be made a G.C.S.I. which he much coveted. However, it turned out to be a false dawn. Two weeks later, Ranuddip denied having given Henvey any hope that the *darbar* would consider the British proposal favourably. Henvey flew into a rage for the Prime Minister's "contemptuous indifference to a grave international dispute". He argued vehemently; he reasoned, cajoled, thundered and, finally, gave up in despair.

"Thus", Henvey reported to Government, "I am constrained to admit the failure of my efforts to induce the Gurkha government to change its traditional policy in respect to the position of the British Resident at this court ...I believe that I have not succeeded because the Nepalese government and people distrust us as they have always done, and because they will not abandon a policy to which they think the preservation of their national independence is due, unless forced or at least heavily bribed to abandon it."²

The issue had obviously reached a dead end; a decisive action on the part of the Government was called for because Henvey had no doubt that "words unaccompanied by acts they [Nepalese] simply laugh at".

This placed Lytton in a difficult position; he had not anticipated such doggedness on the part of Ranuddip nor, in view of the Afghan affairs, could he risk a conflict with Nepal. In such a situation nothing more could be done than to shelve the matter for the time being with just a warning to Ranuddip. Accordingly, Henvey was asked to sternly tell the Prime Minister that "though discussion is discontinued, the views of the British government remain unchanged, and its demands unwithdrawn".³ Lytton also refused to use the G.C.S.I. as a bait

¹ The Prime Ministers of Nepal had the hereditary title of Maharaja; the Kings bore the title, Maharajadhiraj. see Chapter I, p. 17.

² *FSA*, December 1877, Nos. 121-33, Henvey to Thornton, 4, 6, 17, 22, 26, 29 September 1877.

³ *Ibid.*, No. 128, Thornton to Henvey, 17 October 1877; No. 132, India Secret Letter to Secy. of State, No. 44. 14 December 1877.

because, he noted, such honours were meant to recognise services actually rendered to the British government; they would be "cheapened" if used as "bribes to future good conduct" on the part of important persons.¹

The Home government disapproved of Lytton's irritating the Nepalese when his hands were full with the Afghan issue. Robert Montgomery, a Member of the India Council, strongly held that Lytton had blundered in raising the issue at all when it was evident from Henvey's reports that no persuasion could make the *darbar* change its policy. It was unfortunate, Montgomery regretted, that

the Viceroy, aware of this and with the knowledge of the feelings of the Nepal government on this point, should have made it an open question, leading as it has done to irritating discussions and ending in a failure. The result is a soreness and estrangement on both sides.

Henvey was condemned for exaggerating the issue which the Members of the Council did not consider as serious as Henvey represented it to be. Montgomery recalled his conversation with Col. Richard Lawrence, a former Resident who lived for seven years at Kathmandu,² and who "never suffered any inconvenience from the guards deputed to the Residency." Lawrence had told Montgomery that the "guards were ready to attend him, if he wished, otherwise they did not." Lawrence also had "a circle of from 20 to 30 miles to move in where he liked." Another Member of the Council, T.E. Perry, corroborated this, observing that during his month-long stay at Kathmandu "I certainly did not feel myself a prisoner." The Members of the Council urged Salisbury, the Secretary of State, to strongly censure Henvey; they wondered how he was sent to an independent court like Nepal when he had no experience of service even in a minor Indian feudatory state.³

Salisbury, however, had no strong words for Henvey, whose efforts he did not regard "with the same disfavour" as the Members of the Council did. In fact, Salisbury would have liked

¹ LP, 518/2, Lytton to Salisbury, 3 October 1877.

² 1865-72.

³ PSI, Vol. 4, No. 6, 31 January 1878, Minutes of Montgomery and Perry, Note by the Secy. Political and Secret Dept.
Before being posted to Kathmandu, Henvey served as Under Secy. in the Foreign Dept.

to settle the issue because like Lytton, he, too, believed that the Resident's position was "not honourable and must diminish our authority...as similar treatment used to diminish the authority of our representative in China and Japan." The only consideration was that "the time is not opportune," and so Salisbury advised Lytton to wait till "Kabul falls into a war of succession," when "our elbow room would be greater."¹

This advice had the desired effect on Lytton who agreed that it was, indeed, "very unwise" to "weary" the Nepalese *darbar* when "our relations with Nepal are substantially good" and "we have nothing to fear and very little to desire in that quarter." Henvey was soon recalled because, in Lytton's words, he had proved to be "rather overzealous and impatient in his struggle for freedom."²

Henvey's successor, so Lytton assured Salisbury, was instructed to "let the question sleep."³ In fact, however, Lytton's policy was "to avoid a rupture and at the same time to keep our demands steadily to the front."⁴ In February 1879 the matter was again raised by the Acting Resident, Col. E.C. Impey, who tried to persuade Dhir that the abandonment of the exclusive policy would be an act of singular liberalism on the part of the Ranas which would endear them to the British government as nothing else. Dhir, however, was not impressed.⁵

A few days later, the Resident, Charles Girdlestone, during his annual inspection tour of the frontier, made a detour into Deokhar and Dang Valleys⁶ where no European had set foot before. He was immediately involved in troubles with the local officials and asked the Government for support. He was determined to "contest the point," and to break the Nepalese isolation once and for all. He urged that the Viceroy deliver an ultimatum to Ranuddip, warning him that if he persisted in his policy, the British government would withdraw the Residency and impose

¹ *LP*, 518/3, Salisbury to Lytton, 1 February 1878.

² *Ibid.*, Lytton to Salisbury, 1 March 1878.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *PSLI*, Vol. 32, No. 28, 3 April 1882, Resident to Government, 24 May 1881.

⁵ *FPA*, October 1879, Nos. 49-54, Impey to Lyall, Foreign Secy., 14 February 1879.

⁶ These two valleys are about 140 miles south-west of Kathmandu.

an economic embargo on Nepal. Lytton, then stewing in the Afghan juice, was positively angry with Girdlestone's action which was at once unauthorised and provocative. The Resident had "got into the scrape himself," Lytton indignantly noted, "and must get out of it himself. We can give him no support nor can I compliment him on his discretion."¹ The Nepalese government, Lytton was happy to see, had not only refrained from exploiting his Afghan involvement, but had even made renewed offers of military assistance;² fear of political instability at Kathmandu had also been dispelled thanks to Dhir's firm control of the administration. Nepal, in short, was quiet—just as Lytton desired. In such circumstances, it was naturally very annoying for the Government that Girdlestone should try to "push a reconnaissance" into the forbidden parts of Nepal and thereby precipitate an issue which Lytton wanted to keep just "simmering". However important the matter might appear to the Resident from his personal prestige point of view, circumstances were such that, as A.C. Lyall, the Foreign Secretary, put it, "we must acquiesce in the existing state of affairs."³

Girdlestone's adventure roused strong feelings in the India Office, where the shock of the Kabul massacre had created a revulsion against what appeared as a forward policy in Nepal on the excuse of breaking down her exclusiveness. The Indian government, Perry minuted, must recognise that since Nepal was "a thoroughly independent state," the Resident's position there was bound to be different from that in the Indian feudatory states. The Secretary of State, then, made a definitive pronouncement on the matter. He said that the object in view, it may be hoped, with the exercise of tact and conciliation by the officers who may fill the position of Resident, be secured in course of time, but it cannot be regarded as of such urgent importance as to justify menaces or constant diplomatic remonstrances with the inevitable result of friction with a neighbour at present not ill-disposed.⁴

¹ *Ibid.*, Girdlestone to Lyall, 19, 22 February, 12 March 1879, Note by Lytton.

² *FSA*, May 1878, Nos. 76-9, Impey to Lyall, 30 April 1878, Note by Lytton. The offer was not accepted.

³ *FPA*, October 1879, Nos. 49-54, Lyall's Note, Lyall to Girdlestone, 6 June 1879.

⁴ *PSI*, Vol. 6, No. 16, 8 April 1880, Perry's Minute. *PSLI*, Vol. 32, No. 28, 3 April 1882, Note by Political Secy, Minutes of the Members of the Political Committee.

However, the matter did not rest there because Girdlestone kept pressing the Government that the issue involved British prestige in Nepal. Meanwhile, a fresh difficulty arose for Ranuddip, which Girdlestone urged the Government to exploit. In May 1881 the King, Surendra Vikram Shah, having died, Ranuddip quickly enthroned his own grand nephew, a child of six. He was very anxious to get early British recognition for the infant King; there was fear that Jang Bahadur's sons would challenge their uncle's action and support Prince Narendra Vikram's (the late King's brother) bid for power. Girdlestone strongly urged the Government to withhold the recognition or at least delay it until Ranuddip conceded free movement to the Resident. He also wanted to threaten the Prime Minister with breach of diplomatic relations and economic blockade. "That is to say," he explained,

"I would make isolation as thoroughly a reality to the *sardars* who support the policy of obstruction as it is now to the Resident...And in six months...our object would be gained."¹

Girdlestone's suggestion had a mixed reception in the Indian Foreign department, where opinion was divided on whether or not the Government should adopt a tough policy towards Nepal when the end of the Afghan war had removed what hitherto had been the main consideration against such policy. Mortimer Durand, the Under Secretary, was convinced, like Girdlestone, that the very purpose of the Residency was defeated if the Resident could not move freely and procure political and military intelligence. Durand, again like Girdlestone, had strong distrust of Nepal.

"I regard Nepal with its large and eager army", he noted, "as an element of greatest political danger. In the event—never a very improbable event—of serious disturbances in India, that army must be regarded as more likely to act against us than with us. It is true that Jang Bahadur's troops were with us in the Mutiny; but the temper of the Nepalese had not changed for the better since then...Against the danger of Nepalese hostility in such a case we have, I think, a right to guard ourselves by telling the *Darbar* plainly that we can no longer permit the continuance of its present policy and that the existing barrier of isolation and concealment must be broken down".

He urged that all measures short of war should be taken to

¹ *Ibid.*, Resident to Govt. 24 May 1881, 2 June 1881.

settle the vexed issue; even a war, he added, could have only one result : complete defeat of Nepal. He agreed with Girdlestone that non-recognition of the young King was a "useful lever" in British hands, and an ultimatum as suggested by Girdlestone would be "rapidly and entirely effectual".¹

Lyall, on the other hand, was wholly against Durand's policy which appeared to him imprudent, unwarranted and dangerous; morally, too, it was indefensible. He could find no ground to fall out with the Nepalese government, for

we have no commercial interests in that country, and our native subjects enter it at their own risk; nor does it seem to me humiliating that they should be let in as harmless while we are excluded as formidable visitors.

Nor was there anything "singular" in this exclusive policy when, like most of the frontier states, Nepal maintained

the same system and for the same reason—the universal and inveterate conviction that the admission of Europeans within a state is the signal for the gradual departure of its independence and integrity.

Nepal, in Lyall's view, was an independent state and had the right to adopt any policy to safeguard her interests. In fact, Lyall pointed out, it was in the British interest to keep Nepal "a half-shut door"; European merchants and travellers, if allowed free access to Nepal might create embarrassing problems for the Nepalese as well as the Indian governments. Ripon, Lytton's successor, who was against any forward policy, "generally agreed" with Lyall. While no demand was made to change his policy, Ranuddip was asked to treat the Resident "with strict courtesy and recognised etiquette." Girdlestone was also strongly required to be polite in his addresses to the Prime Minister. He was further told that

the Governor-General does not consider that there are at present sufficient reasons for demanding and insisting upon such a complete change in the actual position of the British Resident in Nepal as would be involved in the concession to the British Resident of unrestricted freedom of movement about the country.²

Shortly hereafter the new King of Nepal was given recognition. Girdlestone bitterly deplored Ripon's decision; he continued to

¹ *RP, BM. Addl. Mss.* 43576, Vol. LXXXVI, pp. 583-6, Durand's Note, 21 August 1881.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 586-9, Lyall and Ripon's Notes, 24 August 1881. *PSLI*, Vol. 32, No. 28, 3 April 1882, Govt. to Resident, 8 September 1881.

be "petulant" and even to "sneer at the Foreign Office" by the "splenetic wording" of his despatches. This earned him censure from Government, Girdlestone, thus, failed to "initiate a new go-ahead policy in Nepal".¹

In spite of his many qualities Girdlestone was not the sort of man to succeed in his diplomatic functions in a state like Nepal. He had intimate knowledge of Nepalese politics, the result of long stay.² He was gifted with keen political sense, ample courage and initiative. He had ideas and enough resolution to carry them through. But he lacked sympathy, patience and, above all, tact and moderation, the essential requisites to deal with a government, sensitive, suspicious and proud. Girdlestone hated gradualness as timidity and conciliation as weakness. He was, according to his colleague, the Residency surgeon, Dr. Gimlette, "exceedingly self-centred", irascible, quick to find faults and slow in forgetting them. He was unduly suspicious of the Nepalese. He refused to recognise that Nepal was practically an independent state and that his duty was more of an ambassador than of a political agent in an Indian "native state". Gimlette saw that Girdlestone

conceived a very much higher estimate of the importance of the Resident at the Court of Nepal than that held by the Government of India and the World at large.³

He would not concede that Nepal's fear of British influence was genuine, and that his own proceedings increased rather than removed that fear.

The Nepalese government's determination to keep the Resident's movements closely restricted and the British government's determination to remove the restriction created bitterness between the two. To Henvey and Girdlestone the improvement of their position was a necessity for several reasons. It was the first step, they held, to break down Nepal's policy of self-isolation and non-intercourse with foreigners, which was based upon exaggerated fear and distrust of the British; and so long as this policy lasted no normal relations could grow between Nepal and India. The Nepalese policy, so the Residents argued, was dangerous as well. Anti-British feeling was still latent in the

¹ RP, BM. Addl. Mss. 43576, Vol. LXXXVI, pp. 590-600, Dept. Notes.

² He was Resident for sixteen years, 1872 to 1888.

³ Gimlette, *op.cit.*, p. 245.

Nepalese *darbar* which might suddenly erupt in the form of active hostility. If so, the Indian government would find themselves seriously handicapped for want of adequate information; warlike preparations could be carried on in the interior of Nepal "without a whisper reaching the ear of the Resident". The latter could furnish no reliable intelligence regarding the country's topography, routes, army, military installations, economic resources and such other facts the knowledge of which was essential for military operations. The moral effect on the Indian feudatory states, the Residents continued, was still more dangerous. These states attributed Nepal's virtual independence and her immunity from the "innovating touch of the Feringhee" to the virtual imprisonment of the Resident and the total exclusion of the Europeans. The impression had been fostered that the British were afraid of Nepal's military power, and so they did not dare challenge her policy. Further, when the Nepalese freely went to all places in India, and their Ministers and other dignitaries were given all facilities during their pilgrimage in India, it was unjust to deny in Nepal at least like privileges to the Resident. Besides, both Henvey and Girdlestone averred, the exclusive policy of Nepal defeated one of the main objects of British rule : the spread of civilisation, the absence of which accounted for the continuance in Nepal of some horrid practices, *sati* and slavery for example. In short, from the British point of view Nepal's policy was anachronistic, artificial, politically dangerous and indefensible on every score. British interests needed a change in this policy at all cost.¹

However, not all these arguments are tenable. Both Henvey's and Girdlestone's fear of Nepalese hostility was certainly overdone. Nepal's policy over the last thirty years had definitely changed; for the Ranas, alienating the British was like snapping the tap root of their own power. The Nepalese army, badly trained and lacking in modern arms, had little offensive power—and this the British officers themselves, including the Residents, reported from time to time. Richard Lawrence, for instance, saw that the Nepalese artillery was "highly inefficient"; there

¹ *FSA*, December 1877, Nos. 104-33, Henvey's Letters to Govt. *op. cit.*, *PSLI*, Vol. 32, No. 28, 3 April, 1882, Girdlestone to Govt., 24 May 1881, 20 June 1881. *FPA*, October 1879, Nos. 49-54, Girdlestone to Govt., *op. cit.*, Gimlette, *op. cit.*, pp. 87-90.

was only one corps of cavalry of one hundred men, "poorly equipped and badly horsed"; of about one lakh guns and rifles in the magazine at Kathmandu which were of "all dates and every description" "many would be found to be useless;" the percussion caps and gun powder were locally manufactured, but "neither of good quality". This was in November 1870. About three years later, Captain J. Biddulph saw the Nepalese infantry armed with locally made Enfield rifles whose "locks are bad and liable to get easily out of order"; "the arms themselves were kept badly"; it was unlikely that the rifles "would make good shooting"; the troops were also badly trained. The two "small rifled guns" which Biddulph saw were "turned out more as an experiment than for service"; the cannon-manufacturing establishment was "very small...and its productive power extremely limited". The want of machinery for boring rifles and making cartridges was "an insuperable obstacle" to the production of good rifles and enough ammunition for target practice. As for the officers, their professional knowledge "generally is not worth commenting upon". Wright described the Nepalese rifles and cannon as "very useless" and the accoutrement of the troops "of the most miserable and dirty description". With "very poor" weapons and, particularly, "rusty and dirty-looking" rifles, the Nepalese army, he added, would prove to be of doubtful utility against European troops; the officers were "in general uneducated and ignorant young men"—all Ranas. Temple held that notwithstanding all their qualities, the Nepalese troops "would be quickly destroyed if opposed in the open field to a civilised enemy". Impey saw the same "badly equipped" artillery and no cavalry; the troops were "over-drilled, badly set up, look slovenly and slouching"; target practice was "neglected"; arms were "carelessly kept, rust-eaten, and the ammunition locally manufactured was bad"; in short, the "men though good material, are badly armed and badly trained in the use of their fire arms". The Army Organisation Commission (1879) regarded a war with Nepal as "a contingency to be kept in view", but only two divisions of all arms, it held, were sufficient for this war.

What is most interesting, Girdlestone himself, in a long report on the Nepalese army (December 1883), positively discounted any possibility of aggression on India; he had absolutely no

doubt that in a war with Nepal—"an unlikely contingency"—the British would have no difficulty in achieving a quick and complete victory. The Nepalese army, he pointed out, was maintained not for use against the British in India but for maintaining, "the integrity of the state and...the necessity of finding congenial occupation for that portion of the community which by birth and tradition affects a soldier's career"—and this community consisted of the Gurkhas—the rulers.

Girdlestone's report confirmed that the Nepalese government maintained less troops on the southern border than the British did on their side of the frontier. Girdlestone thought it "highly improbable" that the Nepalese would "*proprio motu*" take the initiative in declaring a war against the British; they knew "how small" their own economic resources were "as compared with ours and how weak for purposes of attack is an army which like theirs has but little transport and no cavalry"; their troops could not "bear the heat of the plains" and "make forced marches below the hills." Even in regard to the Resident's position, Girdlestone admitted in the above report, the Nepalese government's attitude,

though in accordance with its traditional policy, wanting in geniality, is rarely less than courteous and my experience is that a firm remonstrance suffices to obtain amends for any intentional incivility.

"There is no reason", he continued, "to fear any such insult as would call for more serious notice."

Strangest of all, Girdlestone himself now strongly urged the Government to give modern weapons to Nepal—and that even free of cost—in order to obtain in return Gurkha recruits.¹ A report on Nepal by Major E.R. Elles, the Deputy Assistant Quarter Master General, which was prepared in 1884 in consultation with Girdlestone, described the Nepalese army as "wholly unprepared for war"; the organisation of the army was not such "as to lead us to expect any very stubborn resistance" if the British army ever marched into Nepal. The Nepalese armaments, Girdlestone dismissed as "beneath contempt." Elles' report concluded with the very optimistic remark that another war with Nepal, if it took place, would never be difficult to win. Dr. Gimlette observed that the Nepalese government had a

¹ see Chapter III.

"very wholesome respect for its powerful neighbour," and that fear and suspicion of the British lay at the root of Nepal's exclusive policy which, he admitted, though "a mistaken one, of course," was "not without a show of reason." The fear that the British could occupy the Terai, economically the richest part of Nepal, was a powerful deterrent to Nepalese hostility towards the British, and this, too, was not unknown to the Residents who made much of this hostility.¹

Nor was Nepal an absolutely closed country, the military and other information about which were wholly unknown to the British. In fact, the British had quite a few means of probing into the interior of Nepal. Indian explorers-Pundits, as they were called—of the Great Trigonometrical Survey of India had been secretly sent to Nepal, and from their reports various information had been culled.² Besides, the Residents had their own means of obtaining intelligence. Even the strict vigilance of Bhimsen could not prevent the enterprising Hodgson from establishing contacts not only with the royal family and the aristocracy but with artisans, merchants, priests and other common men. The mass of information on varied aspects of Nepalese life, their government, society, religion and culture which Hodgson collected during his stay at Kathmandu could be mentioned in refutation of his own and his successors' argument that it was difficult to procure such information in Nepal.³ Even for those Residents

¹ NP, Vol. 5/31, Lawrence's Memo on the Gurkha Army, 1 November 1870. *The Nepal Army* by J. Biddulph, 6 March 1873. Wright, *op. cit.*, pp. 47-9. TP, A-3, Temple to Lytton, 23 May 1876. PSLI, Vol. 21, No. 101, 13 March 1879, Report on Army of Nepal by Impey, 3 December 1878. AP, 1884-5, Vol. LIX, *Report of the Army Organisation Commission*, pp. 20, 47, 55, 186. PEF, 505/1912, Pt. 3, Reg. No. 2067, *Girdlestone's Note on the possibility of improving our relations with Nepal*, 31 December 1883. W.O. 106/143. *Report on Nepal* by E.R. Elles 1884, pp. 123-4, 127. Gimlette, *op. cit.*, pp. 87-90.

² T.G. Montgomerie, *Report on the Trans-Himalayan Exploration...during 1865-67. General Report on the G.T. Survey of India, 1871-2 to 1873-4. General Report on the Survey of India, 1878-9 to 1887-8*. C. Wood, *Report on Explorations in Nepal and Tibet by Explorer M-H (1885-6)*. C.E.D. Black, *A Memoir on the Indian Surveys, 1875-90*. C.R. Markham, *Memoir on the Indian Surveys*.

³ These facts on Nepal in their compiled form are to be found in the many volumes of Hodgson Mss. in the India Office Library, Bodleian Library. Oxford, the Royal Asiatic Society (London and Calcutta) and libraries in

who did not cultivate wide contact with the Nepalese people, collection of information was not difficult. The Resident's escorts, Indian clerks of the Residency and Indian merchants at Kathmandu all freely mixed with the Nepalese people; many of them went regularly on pilgrimages to the hill districts of Nepal. Gurkhas in the Indian army on leave in Nepal were another channel of information about regions closed to the British Resident. Girdlestone supplied the military authorities with detailed information about the best routes through which a British army could move into Nepal, and Major E. Barrow prepared a confidential note on these routes in 1884.¹ It is, indeed, strange that the Residents complained about the dearth of knowledge concerning Nepalese government's military establishments when they were well aware that it was in the Nepal valley that there lay the centre of the governmental authority, to support which the bulk of the Nepalese army was stationed in the valley itself. Of the army in the valley the Residents had full information; they saw the troops being paraded. Both Jang Bahadur and Ranuddip permitted Lawrence, Biddulph, Girdlestone and Gimlette to visit the magazines and arsenals. The arms manufacturing plants believed to exist outside the valley were not seen by the Residents, but they knew their location, contents and production capacity.²

The Nepalese government's stubbornness stood them in good stead; never hereafter would the British press them to give up their traditional policy. Ripon's object was to repair the damage which Lytton's policy had done to the British government's relations with Ranuddip. Ripon observed an attitude of non-interference in Nepal's domestic affairs at a time when a contrary policy was advocated by men like Durand in the Foreign Department. Ripon's policy was not to give any overt support

Paris and elsewhere. For a list of the Mss. see W.W. Hunter, *Life of Brian Houghton Hodgson*, pp. 337-78.

¹ E.G. Barrow, *Memorandum on the Lines of Approach to the Nepal Valley*. See also Elles, *op. cit.*

² Impey's Report, *op. cit.*

to the existing regime in Nepal while at the same time to prevent its subversion from the British territory by elements hostile to the regime. This is why in 1881, for instance, Jagat Jang, who escaped from Kathmandu, was given asylum in India but kept under close surveillance. In that year a serious conspiracy was detected at Kathmandu, the object of which was to violently overthrow the regime. Ranuddip promptly executed twenty of the persons involved, and but for Girdlestone's intercession would have put out the eyes of Prince Narendra Vikram and Bam Vikram (son of Bam Bahadur, late brother of Ranuddip), the two suspected accomplices. Ripon agreed to take charge of these two men as state prisoners in India—"an unpleasant duty" undertaken on purely "humanitarian grounds". But at the same time he strongly censured Girdlestone for having suggested to Ranuddip that the British government would defend his regime, if needed, by armed assistance. Girdlestone was blamed by the Viceroy for "active intervention in the internal affairs of Nepal" and for committing the British government to an unwelcome responsibility. In the Foreign Department, however, the general desire was to let Girdlestone take an "active interest" in court politics if for no other reason than at least to prevent political assassinations.¹ In October 1884 Dhir died, leaving Ranuddip absolutely helpless. Girdlestone was in no doubt that the Prime Minister's days were numbered, and that a violent struggle for power, which was likely, might bring down the Rana regime altogether. Earlier he had reported to the Government thus :

It is not likely that Ranuddip will outlive him [Dhir] for he may die at any moment. But should he survive, his chances of dying a natural death would be lessened. Except his brother, Dhir Shamsher and the priests, whose creature he is, he has not a friend. By neglect of his duties he has alienated the people...he has incurred the animosity of every important *sardar* in the country...With the strong hand of Dhir Shamsher on his side, he lives in no small dread about his safety. Without his brother's protection, his enemies might be too much for him.²

These were prophetic words.

¹ *PSLI*, Vol. 31, No. 16, 13 February 1882. *RP*, I.S. 290/8, C. Grant, Foreign Secy. to Ripon, 11 January 1882, Ripon's reply, 28 January 1882. *RP*, *BM Addl. Mss.* 43576, Vol. LXXXVI, pp. 393-402, Notes by Ripon, Grant and others in the Foreign Dept, January 1882. *PSI*, Vol. 8, No. 17, 17 March 1882.

² *FPA*, February 1882, No. 285, Girdlestone to Lyall, 30 April 1881.

Immediately after Dhir's death, two parties were formed in the court—"rather accentuated"—one of Jang Bahadur's sons, popularly called Jang Ranas, the other of Dhir's sons, called Shamsher Ranas. Both held Ranuddip in scant regard and each aspired for power at the cost of the other. Jagat Jang returned from exile in April 1885 which set off rumours that Ranuddip, already old and senile, would abdicate in his favour. The Shamshers would never let that happen. On 22 November 1885 they killed Ranuddip, Jagat Jang and his son. Padma Jang and Ranbir Jang, two brothers of Jagat Jang, Dhojnarsing and Kedarnarsing, Ranuddip's nephews, took refuge in the Residency; they were followed by Ranuddip's widow and the sister of Jagat Jang. The eldest of the Shamshers, Bir, immediately declared himself the Prime Minister. His first act was to assure the Acting Resident, Dr. Gimlette, that he would be friendly and cooperative with the British government.¹

¹ *PSLI*, Vol. 46, No. 37, 23 February 1886, Enclo. 3-19, Gimlette, *op. cit.*, pp. 214-32. W. Digby, 1857, *A Friend in Need : 1887, Friendship Forgotten. An Episode in Indian Foreign Office Administration*. H. Ballantine, *On India's Frontier; or Nepal, The Gurkhas' Mysterious Land*, pp. 156-60. Sirdar Ikbāl Ali Shah, *Nepal, the Home of the Gods*, pp. 118-20. Lockwood de Forrest, "A Little-known country of Asia, A visit to Nepaul", *The Century*, May 1901, pp. 74-82.

CHAPTER THREE

GURKHA RECRUITMENT AND ARMS SUPPLY TO NEPAL

THE LAST two decades of the 19th century saw the British changing their attitude towards Nepal and adopting a new policy : winning Nepalese confidence by "liberal concessions". The period was one of gradual extension of the British sphere of influence over the border states whose defence became the Indian government's responsibility. It was also the time when the British government were trying to pool the military resources of the principal Indian states so as to use them for the defence of India.¹

The Nepalese government's internal and external troubles at this time made them take an accommodating attitude towards the British. The natural tendency of the period was towards an adjustment of British needs and Nepalese expectations resulting in inter-dependence between the two governments.

The main impulse behind the new British policy was their increasing need for Gurkhas to strengthen the Indian army and face the growing Russian menace.² To obtain Gurkhas the Viceroys, Ripon, Dufferin, Lansdowne and Elgin, were all prepared to pay the Nepalese government any reasonable price.

The Gurkhas were first enlisted in the Indian army during the Anglo-Nepalese war,³ which had convinced the British of the great fighting qualities of these men. With the years the demand for Gurkhas increased; by 1858 there were already five regiments; besides, in the three Assam regiments there were many Gurkhas. In December 1859, for reasons of economy, recruiting for all

¹ In 1889 the imperial Service Troops were formed with the armies of these states. Lord F. Roberts, *Forty-one Years in India*, II, pp. 426-8.

² On Russian advance towards India and Indian defence see G.N. Curzon, *Russia in Central Asia in 1889 and the Anglo-Russian Question*.

³ The men, in fact, were mostly Kumaonis and Garhwalis who surrendered to the British army. Kumaun and Garhwal had been conquered by the Gurkhas between 1790 and 1805. G.R.C. Williams, *Memoir of Dehradun*, pp. 98-140. David Bolt, *Gurkhas*, pp. 51, 53, 57-61.

Indian troops was strictly forbidden, but the Gurkha regiments were exempt from this ban.¹

Recruitment, however, was not an easy job. There was no regular arrangement with the Nepalese government for the supply of recruits. The Nepalese government, in fact never willingly allowed their men to take British service because it drained off Nepal's own strength and made the British proportionately strong. In such circumstances, recruitment had to be done *sub-rosa*, recruiting agents being sent surreptitiously into the Nepalese territory; oftener, at fairs in the border towns and villages quite a few men were obtained. Gurkhas of the Indian army on leave in Nepal also managed to smuggle out some men and were rewarded by the Government. British service was popular with the Gurkhas for its higher pay and other amenities as well as for the scope it offered for active service unavailable in the Nepalese army. The Nepalese government disliked the clandestine proceedings and put every obstacle to what they feared a devious scheme of the British to weaken Nepal. The situation did not improve during Jang Bahadur's rule. Jang Bahadur professed the fullest cooperation, disavowed any restriction and at times did, under pressure, even supply recruits, who, however, were mostly physically unfit. Jang Bahadur evaded British requests for a definite arrangement by which recruitment could be carried on in a regular, systematic and aboveboard manner; he would not let the British denude Nepal of her martial population—her best means of defence. In such circumstances, the British continued with irregular recruiting. In fact, the existing system, so the Commanding Officers reported, quite served the purpose when the demand was limited to filling up the vacancies caused by sickness, retirement and death.² But then, the situation was

¹ *Napier Papers*, Vol. 5/3, Memo by Col. H. Brooke, Asst. Adjutant General, 21 October 1874.

For the history of the Gurkha regiments see F. Loraine Petre, *The 1st., King George's Own Gurkha Rifles*. L.W. Shakespeare, *History of the 2nd., King Edward's Own Gurkha Rifles*, 2 Vols. N.G. Woodyatt, *Regimental History of the 3rd., Queen Alexandra's Own Gurkha Rifles*. Tucker, *Gurkha*, pp. 297-300.

² *NP*, Vol. 5/3, *India Military Proceedings*, November 1862, No. 726; Vol. 5/4, Notes by Lt. Col. R. Sale Hill, *Ethnic Elements of Native Army, the Gurkhas*. K. Mojumdar, "Recruitment of Gurkhas...1814-77", *JUSI*, April-June 1963, pp. 143-53.

bound to be different when an emergency like the Second Anglo-Afghan war caused a sudden increase in the demand.

Jang Bahadur's death was for the British government an opportunity, and the immediate need for at least one thousand Gurkhas for the Afghan war gave the military authorities a good excuse to exert "all legitimate pressure" on the Nepalese government.¹ Accordingly, Impey took up the matter with Dhir Shamsher and tried to persuade him that what the British government wanted was not the regular troops of the Nepalese government which Ranuddip had offered, but the withdrawal of all the existing Restrictions on the entry of Gurkhas into British service. The British government, Impey added would undertake to recruit only through the Nepalese government and to desist from all irregular recruiting. Dhir was not impressed; his argument was that the Gurkhas did not want to serve anywhere outside their country, leaving their family behind, and that those who had served in India had returned home with their "religion damaged". Dhir also strongly objected to the fact that the British recruiting agents had enticed men from the Nepalese army itself. The Resident was undeterred; after six months of persuasion he managed to get from Ranuddip only 559 men of whom as many as 393 were rejected, being mostly "the lame, the halt, the maimed and the blind". The whole proceeding cost the Government more than ten thousand rupees. This only confirmed the military authorities' impression that it was no use depending on the Nepalese government for the supply of recruits of the required standard.²

The Commanding Officers of the Gurkha regiments testified before the Army Organisation Commission (1879) that the Gurkha recruiting system was obsolete and uncertain of results. Although "ordinary vacancies" could be filled up, any expansion of the corps was "altogether impossible". Magars and Gurungs, the best military tribes of Nepal, were the most difficult to obtain, the Nepalese government's vigilance on them being the closest. This necessitated either the induction of other "inferior" tribes—Sunwars and Rais—into the Gurkha regiments or letting these regiments remain below their full strength.³ The problem was

¹ *FPA*, February 1879, Nos. 243-56, Dept. Notes.

² *Ibid.* March 1880, Nos. 95-110, Dept. Notes. *FPB*, April 1882, No. 69.

³ Each regiment had 937 men.

well expressed by Col. Sale Hill, a veteran officer of the First Gurkhas, thus :

If the Nepal *darbar* supplies us with recruits similar to those lately received we shall either have to reject them at an expense to the state or to flood our ranks with a class of men that will deteriorate Goorkha regiments.

The Commanding Officers were unanimous that no good recruits could be had unless the Nepalese government allowed recruiting agents inside the Nepalese hill districts or a recruiting depot at Kathmandu. Otherwise, the British government should themselves set up permanent recruiting depots at Kumaun and Darjiling in addition to the existing one at Gorakhpur.¹ Girdlestone, however, was certain that the Nepalese government would reject these proposals, and that if recruiting depots were set up at Kumaun and Darjiling, they might interfere with even the supply of Nepalese labourers in the local tea gardens. A better policy, in his opinion, was to offer the *darbar* "head money" for every good recruit. Girdlestone also suggested that instead of only the Magars and Gurungs, the Commanding Officers should enlist the Newars and other less martial tribes of Nepal, the peoples of Kumaun, Garhwal and the Punjab hills states as well. The military authorities, however, rejected this suggestion because the mixture of less martial tribes with the "pure Gurkhas" might affect the efficiency of the regiments. In such circumstances, it was decided to go on with the *sub rosa* operations until the Nepalese government officially objected to them. Then, Mortimer Durand hoped, the British would get a "good opportunity of putting the matter once for all on an acknowledged footing."²

Meanwhile, the Nepalese government were reported to have taken more stringent measures. A census was taken of the military tribes of the country, a house to house enquiry made and names of all male adults carefully noted. The village headmen were asked to prevent men leaving the country without the express permission of the *darbar*. People were warned against taking British service on pain of severe punishment and loss of property. Those who had earlier sneaked out were ordered to

¹ FPA, March 1880; Nos. 95-110, Dept. Notes. LP, 218/2, *Appendix to Report of the Army Organisation Commission*, II, pp. 629-37. 658-90 747.

² FPA, March 1880, Nos. 95-110.

return home to avoid punishment to their family. Retired Gurkha soldiers found it hard to draw their pensions ; those who had come home on leave were ordered not to return to their job ; some were "induced by a combination of persuasion and gentle pressure" to leave the British service ; some were even executed for defying the government orders. It was declared that recruiting agents found in the Nepalese territory would be executed ; there were reports of desertions from the recruiting camps on the border.¹

Girdlestone urged that clandestine operations be given up and the Nepalese government plainly asked to meet the British requirements. The military authorities, however, were against such a step although they agreed that the recruiting system was "neither dignified nor satisfactory" and, so, "even coercive measures" would readily suggest themselves to break down the *darbar's* "unfriendly obstructiveness." But then, too much pressure, it was feared, might spark off a war—a very undesirable happening when the Government had recently had the Afghan campaign. In fact, there were instances of recruits being still available in "reasonably sufficient numbers," and under circumstances of "no usual difficulty." For example, the Commissioner of Kumaun, Major Henry Ramsay, had "quietly procured" 230 Gurkhas of the best type from western Nepal in a period of only two months. The military department was reluctant to raise the recruitment issue with the *darbar* because it would "exaggerate the importance we attach to the Gurkha recruits and would probably result in more harm than good," therefore, "apparently the best course to pursue at the present time is to let things be."²

Girdlestone was very disappointed. He held that no good recruits could be obtained unless the Resident himself helped in the recruiting operations, which he could not do as long as the *darbar* maintained its restrictions on the Resident's movement and the Government tolerated the *darbar's* policy. Girdlestone was clearly making the recruitment issue "a peg on which to hang one of his periodical homilies on the generally unsatisfactory nature" of British relations with the Nepalese govern-

¹ Gimlette, *Nepal and the Nepalese*, p. 207. *FPA*, March 1880, No. 153. *FPB*, April 1882, No. 69.

² *Ibid.*, Girdlestone to Govt., 17 December 1881, Government to Girdlestone, 15 February 1882, Dept. Notes.

ment. It was evident to the Government that Girdlestone had taken this issue as an opportunity to avenge the humiliation he thought he had suffered at the hands of Ranuddip and Dhir and so it

seems as though he were desirous of precipitating hostilities with Nepal by asking the *darbar* to take measures which he knows as well as we do they will dislike and probably decline...The position is irksome for a man of Girdlestone's sentiments, but that cannot be helped. He is full of resentment for past slights and attempted isolation ¹

Ripon, as already observed, was opposed to a forward policy in Nepal, but he was not against an adjustment of attitude towards the Nepalese government in order to promote British interests. An occasion for such adjustment arose in 1884, when the Nepalese government asked for arms in preparation for what appeared like a war with Tibet. This incident synchronised with the Russian occupation of Merv, which lent urgency to the Indian government's problem of how to strengthen their defence without any large addition to the military expenditure. Ripon's solution to this problem was to increase the efficiency of the army without increasing its bulk; gradual replacement of the less martial peoples in the army² by more martial tribes was a means to this end. The Gurkhas being one of these tribes, naturally Ripon attached "great importance to obtaining increased facilities for their recruitment in Nepal."³ It had already been decided that while all other regiments should have 832 men, the Gurkha corps would have 912 men in each battalion.⁴ Ripon was prepared to give arms to the Nepalese government in exchange for Gurkha recruitment facilities.

The idea, Gurkhas for arms, it is interesting to note, was Girdlestone's brainchild, who maintained that a "policy of mutual concession" was

not merely called for by the circumstances of the time but it is the only one which can put our connection with Nepal on a firm and proper footing.

¹ *Ibid.*, Dept. Notes, *FPA*, September 1883, Nos. 343-8, Dept. Notes.

² The Hindusthani sepoy of the Bengal army and the Madrasis were categorised as such people. Roberts, *op. cit.*, pp. 441-2.

³ *RP*, I.S. 290/5, Ripon to Kimberley, Secy. of State, 5 June, 14 August 1844.

⁴ *IMP*, Vol. 1892, November 1882, Nos. 1592-3. *AP*, 1884-5. Vol. LIX, *East India: Army System*, pp. 543-9.

Girdlestone was concerned that despite all the restrictions of the Arms Act (1878)¹ the Nepalese government were piling up arms—and that mostly by smuggling from India which was easy thanks to the open border and inadequate police arrangements. The Nepalese dignitaries in their frequent pilgrimages to India managed to bring home arms and ammunition by hoodwinking, intimidating and bribing the border police. Even Ranuddip Singh was strongly suspected of having done so. Arms manufacturing machinery was also believed to have reached Nepal under cover of electrical equipment. This, together with the employment of skilled Indian mechanics,² Girdlestone suspected, had lately increased the output of the Nepalese arms factories. The Nepalese government had their agents in India and even England who actively helped them in procuring arms by illegal means. It also seemed to Girdlestone possible that the Nepalese government might turn to China for arms and mechanics—a development not in the political interests of the British government. In such circumstances, instead of maintaining the existing arms regulations which had proved to be virtually ineffective, Girdlestone would allow the Nepalese government to purchase from the British 14,000 rifles in instalments together with sufficient ammunition for target practice. By such “timely concession” he expected to secure four important desiderata: unrestricted movement of the Resident, facilities for trade, free entry of Europeans into Nepal and regular supply of Gurkhas. This policy, he believed, would remove all the existing sources of misunderstanding between the two governments, increase Nepal’s confidence in Britain’s friendliness and “transform her into a trustworthy and valuable ally.”³

¹ The Arms Act introduced licensing of fire arms throughout India, imposed a heavy import duty and made the penalties stringent. The ruling princes were exempted from the operation of the Act, they being allowed to import arms and ammunition—but no machinery—in “reasonable quantities” for their personal use. C.L. Tupper, *Indian Political Practice*, I, p. 145. S. Gopal, *The Viceroyalty of Lord Ripon*, 1880-1884, pp. 76-82.

² Rajkrishna Karmakar, a Bengali, was the chief mechanic who lived for thirty years in Nepal. He was also engaged by Amir Abdur Rahman to reorganise the Afghan arms factories. J.M. Das, *Banger Bahire Bangali*. *Uttar Bharat*, pp. 539-42.

³ PEF, 505/1912, Pt. 3, Reg. No. 2067, Girdlestone’s *Memorandum on the possibility of improving our relations with Nepal*, 31 December 1883. RP. BM. Addl. Mss., 43576, Vol. LXXXV, FSA., Nos. 525-36, Dept. Notes.

Girdlestone saw no danger in this policy. He was convinced that the Nepalese government knew about the superior power and resources of the British and would not risk any hostility; that the Nepalese army, despite its impressive size,¹ was by no means a formidable offensive force, and that in the "unlikely contingency of a war with Nepal", the British could easily defeat her by a combination of military operations, economic blockade and the occupation of the Terai. The Nepalese government's attitude during the Mutiny and the recent Afghan war made it seem unlikely that they would exploit British difficulties in future. Nepal believed, Girdlestone explained, that

the safety of her dominions is involved in the safety of ours; that whatever peril from abroad threatens us cannot be a matter of indifference to her.

Nepal would assist Britain in such emergencies because she was at heart convinced that were English supremacy to cease in India, she could not hope for the same toleration, forbearance and favour from any other power that took our place.

The people of Nepal, Girdlestone added, were "tractable, alive to the benefits of peace and law abiding"; all that they wanted was to be left to themselves. Considering all this, Girdlestone concluded, a "policy of considerate and friendly treatment" could safely be adopted which would turn Nepal into "a real source of strength to us instead of being the nominal ally which she now is".² Coming as they did from one who had hitherto urged only a policy of ceaseless pressure on the Nepalese, these remarks were very significant; and both the Indian and Home governments took them as such.

Ripon was impressed. Gurkha recruitment facility was so important an objective that he was "prepared to make considerable concession in order to attain it".³ Durand was

fully convinced of the principle...that it is desirable for us to try and win Nepalese confidence by throwing over our suspicions and strengthening Nepal instead of minutely watching and checking her imports of powder and percussion caps as we are now doing. The impending war with Tibet gave us a special opportunity as Nepal was very anxious for a supply of arms to meet the Tibetans, and I proposed, in short, that we should chuck

¹ At Kathmandu alone there were 30 to 35,000 regular troops. W.W. Hunter, *The Imperial Gazetteer of India*, 1881, VII, p. 108.

² PEF, 505/1912, pt. 3, Reg. No. 2067, Girdlestone's *Memo*, *op. cit.*

³ *Ibid.*, India Secret Letter to Secy. of State, No. 30, 30 May 1884.

over our present policy and give her good arms in return for an engagement which would for the future enable us to get Gurkha recruits.¹

This, Durand believed, was "rather a bold game" but still "worth playing just now".² Such, too, was Roberts' view who was anxious to raise immediately five new Gurkha regiments; 14,000 rifles for 5,000 Gurkhas and regular supply of recruits by the Nepalese government was, indeed, "a valuable exchange"³ The Home government were willing to make an immediate gift of 4,400 rifles. It was to them a "truism" that giving modern arms and ammunition to the "independent states" like Afghanistan⁴ and Nepal and obtaining in return "valuable concessions" was better than maintaining the

restrictions which are vexations and liable to be rendered nugatory as time goes on by the action of other powers.

In the case of Nepal the "other power" could be China. The Home government thought it "infinitely better" that Nepal should look to the Indian government for arms, the supply of which the latter could stop whenever they wanted, rather than set up arms factories of her own over which the British government could have no control.⁵

The Home government's decision reached Calcutta rather late. Meanwhile the dispute between Nepal and Tibet, which had given the Indian government, in Durand's words, "a golden opportunity,"⁶ had been settled.⁷ Anticipating this delay, C. Grant, the Foreign Secretary, had, in fact, urged Ripon to immediately give arms to Nepal, but the Viceroy did not want to make a "new departure of such importance in our dealings with Nepal without the sanction of the Secretary of State."⁸

¹ *DP, Letter Book, April 1884-July 1890*, Durand to General Chesney, 4 July 1884.

² *Ibid.*, Durand to the Editor, *the Pioneer* (Private), 7 September 1884.

³ *RBP*, X20923, R97/2, Roberts to Girdlestone, 29 February 1884, Same to General D. Stewart, 10 June 1884.

⁴ Between 1856 and 1881 the Amirs had been given 19,000 muskets and 24,000 rifles with enough ammunition. *AP*, 1882, Vol. XLVIII, p. 449.

⁵ *PSI*, Vol. 10, No. 15, 18 July 1884. *HC*, Vol. 54, N. 683; Vol. 65, No. 680, Dept. Notes.

⁶ *DP*, Durand's Private Letter to the Editor of *Pioneer*, 7 September 1884.

⁷ For Nepal's relations with Tibet see Chapter IV.

⁸ *RP*, I.S. 290/8, Grant to Ripon, 27 May 1884, Ripon's reply, 27 May 1884.

Dufferin's policy towards Nepal was much the same as Ripon's. There was also the same coincidence of British difficulty and Nepalese anxiety which promised an adjustment of their respective interests. There was on the Viceroy's part the same resistance to the hardliners—Durand, Roberts and Girdlestone—as shown by Ripon, and the same restraint when there were openings for interference in the Nepalese government's internal affairs.

Dufferin took up the recruitment issue where Ripon had left it. The Russian menace with its manifestation in the Panjdeh crisis (1885) necessitated a rapid expansion of the Indian military establishment.¹ A part of the military scheme was to raise the second battalion of the five existing Gurkha corps; altogether 5,600 Gurkhas were urgently required. Since the Gurkhas were thoroughly loyal and absolutely dependable, expansion of their ranks, Dufferin saw, was "the cheapest way of increasing our native army," because it involved no corresponding addition "to the British section" of the Indian army for maintaining the essential balance.²

Ranuddip was then having an anxious time; Dhir's death was followed by increasing pressure on the Prime Minister by his nephews; Ranuddip was keen on currying favour with the British government to strengthen his position. In March 1885 he offered the Viceroy 15,000 Nepali troops for immediate use against the Russians; another 15,000, he assured Dufferin, would be kept in "splendid reserve" in Nepal, provided the British bore their training expenses. A delegation was sent to the Viceroy's camp at Rawalpindi with this offer. Ranuddip declared that he was ready with his "life even for the services of the British government." Dufferin politely declined the offer but did not miss the opportunity to request Ranuddip to give facilities for Gurkha recruitment.³

Then followed a difficult course of negotiation between Girdlestone and Ranuddip. The Resident tried all means : persuasion,

¹ *IMP*, Vol. 2557, August 1885, Nos. 2822, 2829; Vol. 2755, January 1886, No. 1295. C.E.D. Black. *The Marquess of Dufferin and Ava*, pp. 275-6.

² *DFP*, (Microfilm No. 517), Vol. 19, Dufferin to Kimberley, 23 March 1885, Kimberley to Dufferin, 13, 23 March 1885. *PSLI*, Vol. 44, No 101, June 1885, Govt. to Resident, 17 April 1885.

³ *Ibid.*, Encl. 3, 6, 7. *DFP*, (Microfilm No. 517), Vol. 19, Dufferin to Kimberley, 13 April 1885.

temptation and veiled threat. In the end he did succeed, but he had to agree to make in return some concession to the Prime Minister. Girdlestone argued that the British government's eagerness for obtaining large number of Gurkhas was a recognition of their fighting qualities and, since this was a matter of pride for the Nepalese government, they should help the British in obtaining recruits. Girdlestone also stressed the economic and other benefits of the Gurkhas entering British service. The men while in service would send money to their families at home; in old age and retirement, pension would sustain them. Their training in modern weapons, the Resident pointed out, would be valuable for the Nepalese army itself in which, after retiring from British service, they could be employed as instructors. The regular troops of Nepal offered by Ranuddip had no such training and, therefore, could be of no use against the Russian troops. Girdlestone insisted that Ranuddip should not lose this opportunity to develop the martial qualities of the Gurkhas who could not possibly be absorbed in any large numbers in their country's army; whose talents as soldiers could not be adequately utilised in Nepal, where there was little scope for active service, and where poor economic conditions made living hard and insecure. Since past experience held out no hope of getting good recruits through the *darbar* the British wanted to obtain the men themselves by setting up a recruiting depot at Kathmandu and sending agents to the hill districts of Nepal. These agents, Girdlestone assured Ranuddip, would be veteran Gurkha non-commissioned officers. The *darbar* should give the widest possible publicity to the arrival of these agents so that prospective recruits could contact them; this much cooperation on the part of the *darbar*, the Resident was certain, would make recruiting operation a success. The issue was vital and urgent, Ranuddip was warned; it was the test of his professed loyalty to the British. Ranuddip, for his part, advanced the familiar excuses: he could not force the Gurkhas, "a stay-at-home people," to take service in a foreign country without imperilling his regime; military service in Nepal was gradually losing its erstwhile popularity, so much so that it was difficult to keep even the Nepalese army in full strength.¹ For the enraged Resi-

¹ *PSLI*, Vol. 44, No. 101, 19 June 1885, Encl. 9-11.

dent it was, indeed, hard to remove the Nepalese government's conviction that by syphoning off the Gurkhas, the British "wanted to draw the claw of a neighbour" whom they feared.

After prolonged wrangle Girdlestone felt that where arguments and warnings had failed, temptation might work; Ranuddip's mood confirmed this supposition. The Prime Minister was "fishing" for a G.C.B. and a 19-gun salute to show his detractors in the *darbar* that in the eyes of the British he was not a shade less important than Jang Bahadur had been. Like Jang Bahadur, again, he wanted some territorial reward from the British so as to earn popularity in the country. Kedarnarsing, Ranuddip's nephew, told Girdlestone thus :

here is an opportunity for you to strengthen the Minister's hands in carrying out for you the very difficult matter of enlisting recruits. With some assurance that the wish would be met, he would have something to show which would please the country at large and induce the people willingly to respond to the call for recruits. A Minister who can say that he has extended the national limits has unbounded influence.

In addition, Ranuddip wanted a gift of rifles and other arms as well as facility to freely import sulphur and lead to manufacture ammunition. This in his view would make up for the loss of Nepal's military strength following the loss of her fighting men.¹

Girdlestone had no difficulty in agreeing to Ranuddip's demand for arms, but as to the cession of territory, he was non-committal. The arrangement was then finalised. Ranuddip agreed to make the British government's need for recruits generally known throughout the country and to allow unrestricted enlistment; to facilitate the operations of the recruiting agents on the border areas who, however, should never cross into the Nepalese territory; to personally help in the procurement and despatch of recruits; to allow the Gurkha pensioners in Nepal to collect recruits under his supervision; to permit the Residency Surgeon to examine the physical fitness of the recruits; and to provide for their training either by the officers of the Nepalese army, who had served earlier in the British Gurkha regiments, or by the officers of the Residency escort.²

¹ *Ibid.*, Encl. 12, Resident to Government, 9 May 1885.

² *Ibid.*, Encl. 11. The escort consisted of Seventy-five sepoy under a *Subedar* and a *Jamadar*. R.D. Jackson, *India's Army*, pp. 23-6.

In return, Dufferin agreed to give the Nepalese government one rifle for one recruit up to a total of 5,600: to allow Nepal to import materials for manufacturing ammunition, and to consider Ranuddip's desire for a G.C.B. provided he fulfilled his commitments regarding the supply of recruits, Ranuddip's request for territory was passed over in deliberate silence.¹

Ranuddip's violent death and the assumption of power by the Shamsher Ranas, supposedly anti-British, did not, however, disrupt the recruiting arrangement—and this for two reasons. The new Prime Minister, Bir Shamsher, was anxious to placate the British government; and Dufferin, for his part, refrained from exploiting the initial difficulties of the new regime despite the contrary advice of Roberts, Durand and Girdlestone. Durand was against "accepting the murderer as Minister", at any rate not until some material concession had been wrung from him.² Roberts, the Commander-in-Chief, was of the same view. Possibilities of a war with Russia in very near future made him impatient; "very anxious" to raise the five additional Gurkha battalions as soon as possible, he kept impressing on the Government "the risk we run if we delay forming them". The "only way" to get good recruits "in a reasonable time", Roberts maintained, was to establish a recruiting depot at Kathmandu itself and to put "adequate pressure" on the *darbar* to allow recruiting agents to operate in the Nepalese hills. Roberts wanted the Foreign Department "to hit upon some plan for making the Nepalese authorities more amenable"; to deal with Bir Shamsher "plainly and firmly", and even to threaten him that unless he promptly supplied good recruits the British would help his rivals to seize power; Roberts also suggested that economic sanctions be applied to reinforce political pressure.³ Dufferin, however, was not influenced. He reprimanded Bir for killing a "valuable ally of the British government for many

¹ *PSLI*, Vol. 44, No. 101. 19 June 1885, Enclo. 15-6.

² *DP, D.O. Letters, Vol. I, July 1885-7*, Durand to Col. I.C. Berkeley, Offg. Resident, 30 November 1885; *Letter Book, 1884-90*, Durand to Major E. Durand, Resident, 27 June 1888.

³ *RBP*, X20923, R96/1, *Notes...to secure a sufficiency of Gurkha recruits*, 27 September 1886; Roberts to the Duke of Cambridge, 20 February, 14. 20 April 1886. *IMP*, Vol. 2758, April 1886, Nos. 1301-8; Vol. 2760, June 1886, Nos. 1557-60.

years", but gave him recognition without much delay. However, he also gave a warning to the new Prime Minister that he should rule "peacefully and humanely" so as to "merit the confidence and respect of the British government". The Jang Ranas were given asylum in India but warned against subverting the new regime by intrigue or armed action.¹

The recruitment position, Dufferin saw, was "on the whole not unsatisfactory" and, therefore, pressure on Bir was unnecessary. By the end of 1886, that is within a year of his coming to power, Bir had supplied sufficient men to enable the British to raise three new battalions; and all the old ones were in full strength.² Next year another new battalion was complete, which led even Roberts to admit that "on the whole...the Gurkha regiments are better than they used to be".³ Besides, as the officiating Resident, Col. I.C. Berkeley, pointed out, Bir had some genuine difficulties. The British wanted none but the Magars and Gurungs, the best tribes; the recruiting depots on the border were too soon closed down when they ought to have been kept open for a longer period, considering the fact that lack of roads and communication facilities in Nepal made quick procurement and despatch of recruits by the Nepalese government difficult. Further, the recruiting officers showed little patience, imagination and initiative in dealing with the Nepalese officers on the border. Nor could it be overlooked that, in view of a possible Tibetan campaign,⁴ the Nepalese government themselves needed more men for their army. The British wanted Gurkhas to come with their families, and this the Nepalese government had just reasons to dislike: it would not only encourage large scale migration to India but deny the Nepalese government the economic and other benefits which the Gurkhas as mercenaries brought to their country. Finally, as Gimlette observed, the bitter relation of Girdlestone with Bir was partly responsible for the difficulties in matters of recruitment.⁵

¹ *DFP*, Vol. 19, Dufferin to Kimberley, 21 March 1886. *PSLI*, Vol. 46, No. 37, 23 February 1886, Dufferin to Raja of Nepal, 30 Jan. 1886. Gimlette, *op.cit.*, pp. 214-9, 225-30.

² *IMP*, Vol. 2766, December 1886, No. 985.

³ *RBP*, X20923, R100/5, Roberts to General White, 8 October 1887.

⁴ On this point see Chapter IV, pp. 142-3.

⁵ *IMP*, Vol. 2762, August 1886, No. 1584. Gimlette, *op. cit.*, p. 245.

Dufferin himself was not "altogether satisfied" with Girdlestone, whom he removed from Kathmandu in early 1888 to prevent further deterioration in his relations with the *darbar*. Girdlestone, so Gimlette informs, had strong prejudice against the Shamshers whom he "cordially disliked" and he made no secret of his sympathy for the Jang Ranas from whom he expected better dealings and perhaps some concessions. In September 1886 he had sent Gimlette to the Viceroy to persuade the latter to put pressure on Bir for Gurkha recruitment facilities. He even seemed to apprehend assassination by the Shamshers of which, however, as Gimlette testifies, "there was not the very smallest danger". Dufferin was very irritated by Girdlestone's representation and accused Gimlette of trying to persuade the Government to "annex Nepal" when they were busy with the Burmese affairs.¹

Bir strongly resented Girdlestone's sympathy for the Jang Ranas, whose subversive activities on the border,² he feared, had the covert support of the British. Durand wanted to take advantage of this fear.³ Anxious, Bir went to Calcutta in February 1888 and promised Dufferin that recruits would be regularly supplied. The Viceroy assured the Prime Minister that the British government would not interfere in the internal affairs of Nepal and stricter surveillance would be imposed on the Jang Ranas in India.⁴

¹ CP, Vol. 24, Dufferin to Cross, Secy. of State, 9 January 1888. Gimlette, *op. cit.*, pp. 245-9, 254. Burma was annexed by the British in 1886, and for some years afterwards pacification of the province and delimitation of its boundary with China kept the British engaged. Dorothy Woodman, *The Making of Burma*, pp. 222-539.

² In 1887 Ranbir Jang, one of Jang Bahadur's sons, led a march into the Nepalese Terai, was arrested by the British and kept in custody. The Maharaja of Darbhanga was implicated in a plot to murder Bir in October 1888. HC, Vol. 99, Viceroy to Secy. of State, Telgs. 16 December 1887, 7 January 1888. LNP, VII/II, p. 155, Ardagh's *Note on Nepal*, 17 September 1889. Gimlette, *op. cit.*, pp. 251, 255.

³ DP, Major Durand to Mortimer Durand, 30 March 1888, *Copies of D.O. Letters*, 1888, Mortimer Durand to Major Durand, 27 June 1888, *Letter Book*, 1884-90. Mortimer Durand was in favour of supporting the Jang Ranas. Letter to Dufferin, 3 May 1890, *Letter Book*, 1884-90.

⁴ CP, Vol. 24, Dufferin to Cross, 26 January 1888. Marchioness of Dufferin and Ava, *Our Viceregal Life in India*, I, pp. 289-90.

Dufferin's policy won the confidence of Bir Shamsher. This helped Lansdowne and Elgin to bring him closer to the British government with the result that Nepal's military resources definitely became an essential accessory to India's own military power. Politically, Nepal's importance increased with the developing British interests in Tibet and British uneasiness over what appeared to be Chinese interference with the Indian government's position in the frontier states having traditional links with China based on past history.¹

Lansdowne's object was to keep on well with the Nepalese government and to avoid misunderstanding with Bir. That is why he rejected the Resident, Major Durand's suggestion that as his "quasi-friendly" relations with the Prime Minister had not led the latter to remove the restrictions on the Resident's movement, the Government should put pressure on Bir. Lansdowne's policy paid off. Bir proved consistently cooperative in regard to extradition of criminals and boundary adjustments. The number of Gurkha recruits he supplied was, in Roberts' words, "ample" and "really astonishing"—all the recruits were of "excellent stamp".² Apart from about 11,000 Gurkhas in the thirteen battalions, there were Gurkhas in the Kashmir Imperial Service Infantry, Naga Hills Force, Surma Valley Military Police and Burma Police.³ The recruiting arrangement was "so admirably organised" by Roberts and with such success that in other regiments also the same arrangement was followed. The recruiting operations were systematised; a central depot was set up at Gorakhpur, and other depots were at Darjiling, Pilibhit, and Bahraich, the recruiting officers were men of long experience with the Gurkhas; their initiative and resourcefulness enabled them to cultivate personal and friendly relations with the Nepalese officials. It was also decided to recruit men from Eastern Nepal, Limbus and Rais, and a small proportion of men from tribes other than Magars and Gurungs—Thakurs and Khas, for

¹ See Chapter IV.

² *RBP*, X20923, R100/2, Roberts to Duke of Cambridge, 4 May 1891. *LNP*, Vol. XIII, p. 65, *Lansdowne's Minute on Nepal*, 18 September 1889. Altogether 7,662 recruits were supplied in 1886-92, mostly Magars and Gurungs. Vansittart, *op. cit.*, pp. 174-5.

³ *WP*, Vol. 24, *Minute on Native Troops*, 28 July, 1893. *IMP*, May 1893, Nos. B439, 1232-3. *IFP*, Vol. 3963, May 1891, No. 2.

instance.¹

Roberts, who had earlier advocated a strong policy towards Nepal, would now "do all in our power to keep on friendly terms with the state from which we get by far the best and most trustworthy of all our Asiatic Soldiers". He would adopt any measure which would result in "still more making the interest of Nepal identical with our own". For instance, if the Nepalese government offered military assistance during emergencies, he would gratefully accept the offer; he would send British officers to train the Nepalese troops at Kathmandu, and attach a Nepalese battalion to the Indian regiments serving on the North-West frontier; he would also give the Nepalese officers honorary commissions in the British Gurkha regiments. These measures, Roberts had no doubt, would be popular with the Gurkha troops in India and "stimulate recruiting" in Nepal.²

In March 1892 Roberts paid a visit to Kathmandu at the "pressing invitation of Bir" himself. This was the first visit to the Nepalese capital of a high British military officer. Roberts was impressed by Bir's "greatest civility" and his brothers' "quiet and easy manners and...entire absence of anything like awkwardness". Bir struck Roberts as "very intelligent"; his administration was both efficient and benevolent in character; the Prime Minister, Roberts found, had not only a passion for military affairs but had interest in hospitals, schools and sanitary arrangements for Kathmandu as well. Roberts had an audience with Bir's wife—the first European to be so complimented—which, in Lansdowne's words, was a "significant event."³

Roberts returned from Nepal with two convictions: first, the Nepalese government wanted nothing but peace and friendship with the British government, but they did have a lurking fear of the latter's designs on Nepal's independence; secondly, the Nepalese army was being strengthened. Roberts saw a

¹ *RBP*, X20923, R100/7, Roberts to General Browne, 23 May, 1891. Vansittart. *op. cit.*, pp. 144-57, 174-5. C.J. Morris, *The Gurkhas*, pp. 129-31. in F.G. Cardew, M.J. King-Harman, E.G. Barrow, "Our Recruiting grounds of the future for the Indian Army", *JUSI*, Vol. XX, 1891, No. 86, pp. 131-76.

² *RBP*, X20923, R96/2, Roberts' Minutes, 8 February 1890, 4 September 1891.

³ *LGP*, Vol. VII/VII, Roberts to Lansdowne, 30 March 1892, Lansdowne to Roberts, 9 April 1892. Roberts, *op. cit.*, II, pp. 449-52.

parade of 18,000 troops at Kathmandu, "who are quite as good as the men we enlist"; in the magazines he visited there were many guns and "any amount of ammunition". Reports submitted by the Resident, Col. H. Wylie, put the total strength of the Nepalese army at more than 44,000 of all ranks; many of them were armed with Martinis and Sniders; cables for "exploding mines" had been imported from India, also machinery for the production of rifled cannon.¹ Deb Shamsher, the Nepalese Commander-in-Chief, told Roberts that rifles and ammunition were being "extensively manufactured" in Nepal. Both Roberts and Wylie urged what Girdlestone had already emphasised: if the Nepalese government's fear and distrust of the British were dispelled, their military resources could be used to add greatly to the armed strength of the Indian government. The ideal policy, Roberts explained to the Duke of Cambridge, was:

If we were to interfere unnecessarily with Nepal, no doubt the fine army I saw would give us considerable trouble, but I sincerely trust that we shall always keep on good terms with it, and that if ever the Nepalese troops take the field in the direction of India, it will be as our allies not as our foes. We cannot afford to fall out with the state from which our best native soldiers are drawn.²

Both Roberts and Wylie wanted that Nepal should be allowed unrestricted purchase of arms from India so that it would "put an end to all attempts at local manufacture" and smuggling with the connivance of British firms. Although 'Arms for Gurkhas' had been accepted as a principle by both Ripon and Dufferin, the Government had not yet acted on it, which led Wylie to remark that

the present attitude of both our government and that of Nepal was wrong. We go on grumbling, but remain inactive while Nepal buys arms surreptitiously and imagines she is hoodwinking us because we do not interfere and because she imports them under false names. Thus, mutual suspicion and distrust are maintained and we are looked on as ogres who have to be cheated instead of as powerful friends who can be relied upon for help.³

Mortimer Durand, in fact, had held that the British should

¹ *Ibid.*, Roberts to Lansdowne, 30 March 1892, *PSLI*, Vol. 73, N. 4, 3 January 1894, Encl. 2, Resident to Govt. 2 June 1892.

² *RBP*, 20923, R100/2, Letter dt. 8 April 1892.

³ *PSLI*, Vol. 73, No. 4, 3 January 1894, Encl. 2, Resident to Govt. 9 June 1892. *RBP*, X20923, R100/2 Roberts' Minute, 6 July 1892.

avoid giving rifles to Bir unless it was impossible to do so. The military authorities required only 500 recruits in 1888 which, Durand observed, were "easily got without giving rifles."¹ Wylie now proposed that regarding arms supply to Nepal, the Government should adopt "much the same course" as they had done in regard to Afghanistan.² In fact, the Nepalese government had stronger claims to the trust of the British than the Afghans; Nepal had been consistently friendly while Afghanistan was "a troublesome and unsatisfactory ally" of the British.³ All that the Nepalese "require politically at our hands", Wylie-like Girdlestone earlier pointed out, was a guarantee of their independence. Roberts fully supported Wylie's proposals, which would show "our confidence in the Nepalese alliance"; he found no military objection to arms supply to Nepal because

under any circumstances I cannot believe that we should again enter the Nepal country as enemies, and if the Nepalese ventured on the plains of India, we ought to be able to dispose of them without any great difficulty, no matter how well they might be armed.

By making this concession Roberts expected to get from Bir 2,500 Gurkhas to replace an equal number of the less martial Madras and Bombay troops.⁴

In February 1893, Bir came to Calcutta as a state guest. Lansdowne found him "well-spoken and...very friendly". Bir acquiesced when the Viceroy suggested to him that since Magars and Gurungs were the tribes most prized by the British, the Nepalese government, who were reportedly enlisting a large number of these men in their army, had better "avoid poaching on our preserves." Bir also promised to accord the Resident better treatment. Lansdowne agreed to help the Nepalese govern-

¹ *DP, Letter Book, 1884-90*, Durand to Major Durand, 27 June 1888.

² *PSLI*, Vol. 73, No. 4, 3 January 1894, Encl. 2, Resident to Govt., 9 June 1892.

³ P. Sykes, *Mortimer Durand*, pp. 198-223. Amir Abdur Rahman was very jealous of his independence and suspicious of the British. He intrigued with the frontier Pathan Tribes. The railway construction on the frontier by the British added to his suspicion. The Durand Mission to Kabul, followed by an Agreement (November 1893), sought to improve Anglo-Afghan relations. By this Agreement the Amir was allowed unrestricted importation of arms and ammunition. Aitchison (1909 edn.), XI, pp. 361-2.

⁴ *RBP*, X20923, R96/2, Roberts' Minute, 4 September 1891. *LNP*, Vol. IX/V, Lansdowne to Kimberley, 26 April 1893.

ment in procuring arms and ammunition from India and England; Nepal would bear all cost including that of delivery, but no duty would be levied. The Nepalese government would undertake to stop all clandestine means of obtaining arms and to inform the Resident of all their requirements which should, of course, be "reasonable". The arms must not be passed on to Tibet—a provision which, in view of Nepal's hostile relations with Tibet, was, indeed, unnecessary.¹

Hardly a year had passed when Bir made a requisition for 8,000 Martini-Henry rifles with 300 cartridges per rifle, various kinds of field guns with adequate ammunition, and a complete set of machinery for manufacturing guns, cartridges and rifles. The Indian government had not expected what Wylie described as such "a preposterously large list."²

In fact, Lansdowne had not spelled out what a "reasonable indent" would be for Nepal and, therefore, Bir had been able to stretch the phrase as wide as he could.

Elgin, who in the meanwhile had taken over from Lansdowne, could hardly allow Nepal an unlimited supply of arms without thereby creating a problem for India's security. It was more objectionable to supply machinery because sufficient arms if locally manufactured might remove the Nepalese government's inducement to supply Gurkha recruits, to the British government. On the other hand, Elgin could not afford to leave the Nepalese with any doubts as to our intention loyally to adhere to the policy of removing suspicion and distrust by liberal concessions.

In an extremely conciliatory language the Viceroy informed the King of Nepal that for political and military reasons the British could not permit unrestricted supply of arms to Nepal, and that Lansdowne's assurance to Bir had an implied, though not explicit, reference to this effect. Since the Nepalese and British governments were allies, Elgin added, the former should consider this limitation from not only the Nepalese but British interest point of view. The Indian government avowed their "complete trust" in Nepal's friendliness, the Viceroy's "principal aim" being to employ every means in my power to guard against anything which might suggest or foster the idea that my government ever have entertained or will

¹ *Ibid.*, Lansdowne to Kimberley, 22 February 1893. *PSLI*, Vol. 73, No. 4, 3 January 1894, Enclo. 3-5.

² *Ibid.*, Vol. 77, No. 189, 17 October 1894, Resident to Govt., 13 June 1894.

entertain the intention or design of interfering with Nepalese autonomy.

Accordingly, 8,000 Martini-Henry rifles and six 7-pounder field-guns with adequate ammunition were given to Bir on payment but no machine guns for fear that the Nepalese would know their mechanism and make the guns themselves. The Nepalese government, then preparing for a war with Tibet, accepted the arms, dropping at the same time a feeler that a militarily strong Nepal would stand the British themselves in good stead during emergencies. Bir also agreed that in future the Indian government would fix "the quality and quantity of whatever warlike material Nepal might ask for."¹

The Indian government claimed that the arms arrangement was the most important "material proof" of their confidence in the Nepalese government, this claim, as later events clearly proved, was much too tall. Giving arms to Nepal was no doubt, as Durand stated, "a bold game". But, since distrust of Nepal was still very strong both in Calcutta and London, the British government did not play the game strictly according to rules. While the Nepalese government continued to supply adequate number of recruits to the satisfaction of the British military authorities, the latter invariably showed extreme reluctance to meet Nepalese requests for arms and machinery. The Nepalese government expected one rifle for one Gurkha recruit and were very sore to find their expectation belied. Both Ripon and Dufferin were willing to give rifles as gifts to the Nepalese *darbar*, but no such gift was made until twenty years later. In fact, as would be shown later,² the arms issue and Gurkha recruitment were by no means settled matters; a long time was to elapse before they became so.

Both Lansdowne and Elgin humoured Bir in other ways. It also seemed to them, as Wylie put it, not only "just" but "politic" to "strengthen the Minister's hands in every legitimate way."³ In May 1892, for example, Lansdowne secured a K.C.S.I. for Bir as a seal of appreciation of his policy towards the British. When

¹ *Ibid.*, Enclo. 1-6. *EP*, Vol. 65, Wylie to H. Babbington Smith, Private Secy. to the Viceroy, 6 August 1894, *PEF*, Vol. 505, 1912, Pt. 3, Reg. No. 2067, Secret Despatch to India, No. 8, 2 February 1894.

² See Chapter VII.

³ *IFP*, Vol. 4184, May 1892, Nos. 179-80.

the Home government raised objection on the ground that Bir had a bloody ascent to power. Lansdowne pleaded :

we must not be extreme to mark what is done amiss by such people. If we were, we should have to throw the Amir overboard at once.¹

Similarly, when, 1896, Bir wanted to go to England, Elgin not only supported the project but pressed the Home government for necessary approval. Otherwise, he feared, Bir would take offence with the consequent damaging effect upon the general relations between the two governments. The India Office, however, refused to meet Bir's strong claim that while in England he be treated just as Jang Bahadur had been : an ambassador of a foreign independent country with a 19-gun salute. To the Home government Nepal was "a most honoured but still a member of the semi-sovereign protected states of India," and, therefore, her delegation could not claim the rank or status given to the representatives of states like France, Germany, Russia, Japan and China. Besides, if Nepal were treated as an independent state, William Lee Warner, the Political Secretary at the India Office, noted, "we must not object if Russia deals with it as such."² In other words, recognition of Nepal's independent status might result in foreign contact with the state and thereafter foreign intrigue. But Bir Shamsheer was adamant; he would rather abandon the project than accept a treatment which, besides exposing him to an unfavourable comparison with Jang Bahadur, would, as he said to the Resident, lower the status of his country. Elgin reasoned with George Hamilton, the Secretary of State, that Nepalese friendship was too valuable an object to be sacrificed for the sake of strict observance of protocol and the rigid interpretation of the status of Nepal. Nepal, the Viceroy argued, was, in fact, not an Indian feudatory state. He was certain that politically Bir's trip to England would be as useful as Jang Bahadur's had been; there would be in the Nepalese *darbar* a firmer conviction regarding British power and

¹ LMP, Vol. IX/IV, Lansdowne to Cross, 24 May 1892, Cross to Lansdowne, 18 March 1892. Amir Abdur Rahman was notoriously cruel. W.K. Fraser-Tytler, *Afghansitan : A study of Political Developments in Central Asia*, pp. 172-3.

² HC, Vol. 163, No. 79, Dept. Notes, Hamilton to Elgin, 16 January 1896; Vol. 163, No. 80, Notes of Hamilton and Lee Warner, Vol. 167, No. 658, Note of Lee Warner, July 1896.

a proportionate increase in Nepal's desire to be on good terms with Britain; the Rana government would be strengthened, which would guarantee British influence in Nepal. On the other hand, if the trip did not come off, Bir's prestige would suffer; the conservative elements in the *darbar* who opposed such sea voyages on religious ground would be strengthened; in short, the ultimate result, so it appeared to Wylie,

would tell against the advancement and gradual opening up of Nepal in the interest of England.

Lansdowne, the ex-Viceroy, persuaded Hamilton to meet Bir's wishes who "by moving his little finger...could spoil our Gurkha recruiting." Besides, he warned, when all was not well in the North-West frontier where the tribes were soon to rise against the British,¹ if the Nepalese, too, "went wrong," it would be "very awkward for India." Ultimately, the India Office relented, but the visit did not take place because, so Bir explained to the Resident, the Nepalese government were preoccupied with Tibetan affairs.² As though to salve Bir's soreness, Elgin made him a G.C.S.I. in 1897.³ Both the Viceroy and the Resident kept guessing if the Tibetan crisis was not just an excuse for giving up the project⁴ when Bir sensed that the British, notwithstanding what they professed, did not really regard Nepal as an independent state. The status of Nepal was a vexed issue, which was not settled until many years later—and that only under pressure of the Nepalese government.⁵

¹ C.C. Davies, *The Problem of the North-West Frontier, 1890-1908*, pp. 89-98.

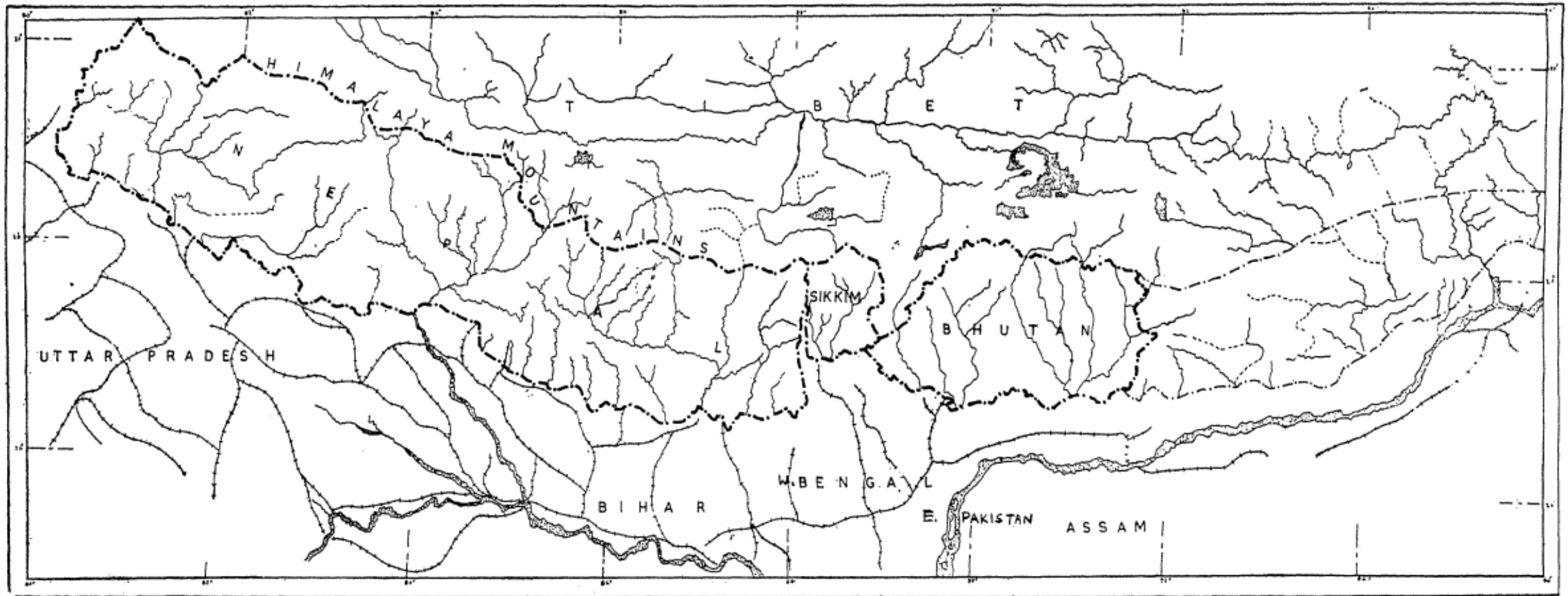
² On this point see Chapter IV.

³ P. Landon, *Nepal*, II, p. 78.

⁴ *EP*, Vol. 22, Babbington Smith to R. Ritchie, Private Secy. to Hamilton, 14 April 1896. *HMP*, Vol. 509/2, Elgin to Hamilton, 5 February 1896. *HC*, Vol. 162, No. 1253, Wylie to Lansdowne, 15 December 1895, Lansdowne to Hamilton, 8 January 1896; Vol. 167, No. 680, Lee Warner's Minute, *PSLI*, Vol. 87, Reg. No. 127, 30 June 1896.

⁵ See Chapter VII.

NEPAL AND HER NEIGHBOURS.



CHAPTER FOUR

BRITISH ATTITUDE TOWARDS NEPAL'S RELATIONS WITH CHINA AND TIBET

ONE of the important factors which influenced the British policy in Nepal was their recognition that Nepal's relations with Tibet and China had a considerable bearing on Britain's interests in the latter two countries. The development of these interests led to cautious British involvement in these relations and ultimate British control of them. This control, however, was indirect, but, nevertheless, quite effective. It was secured gradually, the Nepalese government resenting any interference with their external independence.

Nepal had long standing relations with Tibet, the results of geographical propinquity, shared history and cultural ties;¹ trade and commerce forged more tangible links. In Tibet's trade Nepal enjoyed an important position which commercial agreements between the two countries further strengthened.² These agreements provided for the closure of the easier Indo-Tibetan trade route through the Chumbi valley³ and Sikkim so as to prevent any diversion of this trade from the Nepalese

¹ It was largely from Nepal that Tibet received Buddhism. The Tibetan King, Song-tsen Gan-Po (8th century A.D.) married the Nepalese King, Amsuvarma's daughter, who took with her to Lhasa a large number of Buddhist scholars and Nepalese artisans. C. Bell, *Tibet Past and Present*, p. 231. Tsepon W.D. Shakabpa, *Tibet : A Political History*, pp. 13, 26-7, 58. D.R. Regmi, *Ancient Nepal*, pp. 125-31, 144, 150-51, 166-9, 175-82, 185, 194.

² The first authentic trade agreement was made during the rule of the Newar King of Kathmandu, Pratap Malla, in the seventeenth century, providing for the establishment of 32 Newar merchants at Lhasa under the headship of an officer, called *Naikay*, who was to look after their interests. In 1757 Prithvinarayan Shah made a compact with Jayprakash Malla which settled the export of coins and goods to Tibet from Gorkha and Kathmandu. Nepal imported from Tibet mainly wool, borax, salt and gold dust, and exported rice, European and Indian manufactured goods, especially cloth. *PSLI*, Vol. 246, Reg. No. 326.

³ The tongue of Tibetan territory interposed between Sikkim and Bhutan.

route and the resultant loss to the Nepalese government of income through duties on imports and exports. Nepalese coins were also introduced into Tibet¹, and the exchange rates of gold, silver and salt settled. The early Nepalese-Tibetan disputes had always a commercial element in them.²

Nepal had less frequent intercourse with China, the early evidence of which lay mainly in the periodical exchange of complimentary missions between Kathmandu and Peking.³ Not until the Chinese power had been firmly established in Tibet in the 18th century⁴ did Nepal assume importance in China's political thinking.

The emergence of Nepal in the latter half of the 18th century as a powerful expansionist force in the lower Himalayas affected both British and Chinese interests. The East India Company's policy in Nepal in its earliest phase was linked up with its commercial projects in Tibet and western China. The conquest of the Nepal valley by the Gurkhas and their jealousy and exclusive policy frustrated the Company's hope of developing an alternative overland trade route to China through Kathmandu and Lhasa.⁵

The Chinese found the Gurkhas a menace to Tibet, Sikkim and Bhutan, the last two countries, for their close relations with Tibet, being regarded as dependencies of the Lhasa government.⁶

¹ The coins were called *Mahendramalli mohar*, after the name of the Newar King, Mahendra Malla of the 16th century, who made a treaty with Tibet for the supply of these coins. Tibet provided silver bullion, and Kathmandu charged 12% commission on the transaction. E.H. Walsh, "The Coinage of Nepal", *JRAS*, July 1908, pp. 684-5, 691-2.

² *PSLI* Vol. 246, Reg. No. 326, *Memorandum of the early history of the relations between Nepal, Tibet and China compiled by the Nepal Darbar, 1909*.

³ On Nepal's relations with China in the 9th-12th centuries see L. Petech, *Medieval History of Nepal*, pp. 99-101, 152, 201-11. Rishikesh Shaha, *Heroes and Builders of Nepal*, pp. 33-42.

⁴ L. Petech, *China and Tibet in the early 18th century*. Tieh-Tseng Li, *The Historical Status of Tibet*, pp. 35-58. W.W. Rockhill, "Tibet, A Geographical, Ethnological and Historical Sketch derived from Chinese Sources", *JRAS*, New Series, 1891, p. 7; "The Dalai Lamas of Lhasa and their Relations with the Manchu Emperors of China, 1644-1908", *T'oung Pao*, Series 3, Vol. XI, 1910, pp. 1-105.

⁵ See Chapter I.

⁶ The Sikkimese royal family was Tibetan in origin; the Rajas of Sikkim held jagir in the Chumbi valley; they sent religious offerings to the Dalai

The need for defending Tibet and Sikkim impelled China to intervene in the Nepalese-Tibetan War (1788-92)¹, which was an expression both of the military ambition of the Gurkhas as well as of their determination to further Nepal's economic interests in Tibet which the Tibetan government had guaranteed afresh by an agreement in 1775. The agreement had confirmed all the earlier trade arrangements and had fixed the proportion of alloy and fine metal in the Nepalese currency which was to be the only legal tender in Tibet.²

China's victory in her war with Nepal had far-reaching results on the latter's foreign relations. Nepal came under the Chinese tributary system; quinquennial missions from Kathmandu to Peking, a result of the war, were looked upon by China as a token of Nepal's acknowledgement of China's political and cultural primacy.³ Like Burma, Annam, Korea and Siam,⁴ Nepal was regarded as a client state lying outside the administrative jurisdiction or direct political authority of the Chinese government but treated as having subordinate relations with the Celestial Emperor. China's prestige increased in the Himalayas as did her control on the Tibetan administration by the

Lamas and received subsidy from the Lhasa government for assisting them in the maintenance of trade routes. *History of Sikkim*, compiled by the Maharaja and Maharani of Sikkim, pp. 19,47,59, 72-4, 76, 96-8, 106,121, 124. J.C. Gawler, *Sikkim With Hints on Mountain and Jungle Warfare*, p.8. J.W. Edgar, *Report on a Visit to Sikkim and the Tibetan Frontier (in October, November and December 1873)*, p.72.

Bhutan paid tribute to the Tibetan government and sent embassies annually to Lhasa; the Amban, the Chinese Imperial High Commissioner in Tibet, issued every year an imperial mandate to the Deb and Dharmarajas of Bhutan advising them in matters of administration. *HC.*, Vol. 91, No. 69, Note by A. Eden, on the relations of China and Tibet with Bhutan, 17 January, 1887. *Political Missions to Bootan : Report by Captain R.B. Pemberton*, pp.87-9; *Report by A. Eden*, 1864, p.131; *Dr. W. Griffith's Journal*, p. 167. J.C. White, *Sikkim and Bhutan*, pp.285-90.

¹ Shakabpa, *op. cit.*, pp.156-69. See also Chapter I, Chapter VI,

² *Memorandum on Nepal's relations with Tibet and China*, *op. cit.*

³ In traditional Chinese theory relations with China implied recognition of Chinese supremacy. A. Lamb, "The Indo-Tibetan Border", *AJPH*, May 1960, pp. 28 *et seq*; *China-India Border*, pp.27-31.

⁴ Burma sent tribute to China once in ten years, Korea and Annam every four years and Siam every three years. H.B. Morse, *The International Relations of the Chinese Empire*, II, p. 341.

augmented powers of the Ambans, the Imperial High Commissioners in Tibet.¹ Preventing a future Nepalese attack on Tibet became the most important object of China's policy towards Nepal. Peace between Nepal and Tibet was essential for, among other things, the safe passage of the Nepalese tributary missions to Peking through the intervening Tibetan territory. The Nepalese-Tibetan frontier, so the Chinese annals claim, was demarcated at this time and boundary pillars set up.² Chinese troops manned the military posts on the frontier. Nepal had to give up the Tibetan territories occupied during the war. The recovery of these tracts, lying south of the main Himalayan watershed and commanding passes of strategic and commercial importance, remained henceforth the cherished ambition of Nepalese statesmen and consequently an abiding source of dispute with the Tibetan government.³

For the British the Gurkha government's war with Tibet and China was at once an opportunity and a cause for anxiety. The hope of military assistance against China prompted Nepal to make a commercial treaty with the Company. But the British had no desire for any military involvement with China for Nepal's sake; yet at the same time they could not overlook that "no event was more to be deprecated than the conquest of Nepal by the Chinese", because in the resultant contiguity of the British and Chinese frontiers lay the dangers of recurrent border

¹ Tieh-Tseng Li, *op. cit.*, pp.53-8. Rockhill, "*Tibet, A Geographical Sketch*", *op. cit.*, pp. 10-19. Tsakabpa, p.169.

² E.H. Parker, "China, Nepal, Bhutan and Sikkim", *Journal of the Manchester Oriental Society* 1911, p.146.

The Nepalese were far from satisfied with the frontier demarcation, as indicated by frequent border disputes with Tibet in later years.

³ On Nepal's northern frontier see Chapter VI p.223 fn72. Also H.H. Oldfield, *Sketches from Nepal*, I, p.414-5.

One of the passes, Kuti, called Nylam in Tibetan, lying about ninety miles north-east of Kathmandu, had been occupied by Pratap Malla. Ipolito Desideri, a Jesuit missionary, who returned from Lhasa to India via Kuti and Kathmandu in 1721, refers to the former place as having recently come under the Tibetan government who, however, granted the Newar merchants of Kathmandu, Patan and Bhatgaon special privileges regarding customs duty at Kuti. Prithvinarayan occupied Kuti sometime in 1750. F. de Filiepi, *An Account of Tibet, The Travels of Ipolito Desideri, 1712-1727*, pp.130, 310-11. L.S. Baral, *Life...of Prithvinarayan Shah*, p.322.

disputes.¹ In such circumstances, Cornwallis attempted a diplomatic solution of the problem, which attempt far from realising his objective damaged British relations with both Nepal and China.² To Nepal's fear that the British were an aggrandising power was added her distrust that they were unreliable allies. The Chinese suspected the British of having been hand in glove with the Nepalese; the known British interests in the Tibetan trade, the recent Anglo-Nepalese treaty and the Nepalese invasion of Tibet—all suggesting some causal relationship. Samuel Turner, who was sent by Warren Hastings to Tibet in 1733 for the promotion of Bengal's trade with Tibet, believed that the "similarity of dress and discipline" between the Gurkha troops and the Company's sepoys³ might have reinforced the Chinese suspicion. The Nepalese-Tibetan war provided the Chinese with sufficient excuse to take a cold attitude towards Lord Macartney's commercial mission to Peking in 1793.⁴

The increased Chinese prestige and influence in the Himalayan border states after the war, was for the British an undesirable political *développement*; commercially it proved ruinous: Tibet was closed to British trade by the Chinese, and remained so for almost a century. The Sino-Nepalese war and its results showed the British that Nepalese action could injure British interests in Tibet and China even if the British gave no support to this action.

The Company had no adequate knowledge of the "nature and extent" of China's relations with Nepal established by the peace of 1792, but it was recognised that this knowledge was necessary to ascertain how China would react if the British sought a closer connexion with Nepal for commercial reasons. Enquiries through Abdul Kadir and Captain Knox, the Company's emissaries to Nepal,⁵ established that there was no love lost between the Nepalese and the Chinese, and that the Amban's attempt to

¹ W. Kirkpatrick, *An Account...of Nepaul*, p.vii.

² See Chapter I.

³ Prithvinarayan remodelled the Nepalese army on the lines of the Company's troops, Baral, *op. cit.*, p.311 S. Turner, *An Account of an Embassy to the Court of the Teshoo Lama in Tibet*, p. 440.

⁴ On this mission see J. Barrow, *Some Account of the Public Life and a Selection of the Unpublished Writings of the Earl of Macartney*, II, 203-4. H.B. Morse, *The Chronicles of the East India Company Trading to China 1635-1834*, II, pp.213-54.

⁵ See Chapter I.

influence Nepal's internal politics had been foiled by a strong anti-Chinese element in the Court of Kathmandu.¹ Nevertheless, in dealing with Nepal the Company was wary. With all his eagerness to establish British influence in the Nepalese *darbar* through an alliance with the ruling party,² Wellesley, for instance, had to consider that this alliance did not give umbrage to China. On enquiry Wellesley knew that Nepal was "not in any degree dependent on the Chinese empire" and that "no connexion subsists" between the two countries of a nature "to limit the Raja of Nepal to contract engagements with Foreign Powers or to render the proposed alliance... a reasonable subject of complaint or jealousy to the Chinese government". Yet he took care to avoid any provision in his treaty with Nepal³ which would suggest "a defensive engagement against China" or prejudice Chinese position in Nepal "in the remotest degree."⁴ The British view of Sino-Nepalese relations at this time seems to have been this: it was unlikely that the Chinese connexion with Nepal would develop into Chinese predominance, but Nepal did belong to the Chinese sphere of interests. Consequently, the fear of provoking China and thereby injuring Britain's Canton trade had a sort of moderating influence on the Company's Nepal policy.

This was apparent during the Anglo-Nepalese war, when the risk of Chinese military intervention in favour of Nepal made Moira anxious. Lord Amherst's commercial embassy was then about to go to Peking and Moira did not want it to meet the same fate as Macartney's earlier mission.⁵ Therefore, he was at pains to convince the Chinese authorities at Lhasa that the war had been forced upon the Company by the Nepalese, and that nothing but punishing the aggressors was the British object. The Governor-General disavowed any intention or interest in extending the British authority beyond the natural limits of India marked by the mountain ranges. Clearly, the British at this time had no desire to compete with the Chinese position in the

¹ PC, 7 March 1796, No. 9.

² See Chapter I.

³ The Treaty of 1801. See Chapter I.

⁴ *Bengal Secret Letters to the Court*, Vol. 5, Letter to Secret Committee, 1, January, 1803.

⁵ On Amherst's Mission see H. Ellis, *Journal of the Proceedings of the late Embassy to China*.

Himalayan area far less to contest it.¹

The Nepalese, seeking to pit the Chinese against the British, had represented to the Amban that the British attack on Nepal was a prelude to their invasion of Tibet; the Chinese were entreated to attack Bengal in order to create a diversion in Nepal's favour. The Chinese Emperor sent a general with troops to Lhasa to ascertain if the British had really any design on Tibet and to oppose them if they had.²

Although by then the war had been over, Moira was troubled with the thought that China might resent the British establishing treaty relations with Nepal ignoring her suzerain. A British Residency at Kathmandu established by the treaty of Sagauli could also stimulate China's jealousy and suspicion, particularly as she herself had no such establishment in Nepal. The Nepalese sought to exploit this anxiety. They informed the Resident, Edward Gardner, that

China was deeply offended, considering Nepal as tributary to the Emperor as this government having entered into war and concluded peace with the English without his sanction and knowledge.³

To meet the supposed Chinese wrath the Nepalese government sought British protection, calculating that rather than risk a conflict with China, the British would withdraw the Residency and restore the Nepal Terai they had annexed.⁴ The stratagem had very nearly worked. Moira, who was having trouble with the Marathas and the Pindaris, could have hardly defended the British position in Nepal if openly challenged by China. He was, therefore, prepared, should the Chinese insist, to withdraw the

¹ *Papers Relating to the Nepal War*, p. 720, Moira to Secret Committee, 2 August 1815; also pp. 272, 996. Marchioness of Bute, ed., *The Private Journal*, II, pp. 144-5. H.T. Prinsep, *Political and Military Transactions*, I, pp. 209-13. Leo Rose, "China and the Anglo-Nepalese War, 1814-6", *PIHC*, Delhi, 1961, pp. 208-16. T. Smith, *Narratives*, II, pp. 82-8.

² *Papers Relating to the Nepal War*, p. 556, Moira to Secret Committee, 11 May 1815. J.B. Fraser, *Journal of a tour through part of the Himala Mountains*, pp. 526-7. Rose, *op. cit.*, pp. 210-11. A. Lamb, *Britain and Chinese Central Asia*, p. 41. Chittaranjan Nepali, *Bhimsen Thapa*, pp. 136-8, 145-6, 157, the Nepalese King's letters to the Chinese Emperor and the Amban, 1815.

³ *SC*, 14 September 1816, No. 41, Gardner to Govt., 28 August 1816.

⁴ *Ibid.*, Nos. 39, 41-2.

Residency and avert a misunderstanding with China for the sake of Britain's China trade.¹

Fortunately, however, the Chinese authorities in Tibet were apparently satisfied with Moira's explanation of the war and his assurance that the Company's relations with Nepal would leave the Chinese position there unaffected. What the British had done was "perfectly correct and proper", the Chinese general at Lhasa assured the Governor-General.² The Chinese Emperor had confidentially asked the Amban to keep the British away from Kathmandu,³ but the Amban made rather a mild request for the withdrawal of the Residency "out of kindness towards us [Chinese] and in consideration of the ties of friendship."⁴ Moira chose to ignore this, and the Chinese did not press it further. In May 1818 they declared that they were finally satisfied with the Company's settlement with Nepal.⁵ The Chinese also did not embarrass Amherst, as they did Macartney earlier, by raising the Nepalese issue with him.⁶

China's attitude during the war was clear evidence that she had little sympathy for Nepal and no desire whatsoever to be drawn into a conflict with the British for Nepal's sake. The Amban and the Chinese general strongly distrusted the Nepalese. Not to speak of military assistance, not even pecuniary help was given to Nepal because, as the Amban explained in his letter to the Nepalese King, "it is not customary to give treasures of China to other countries." The general had also no faith in the Nepalese; he wrote to Moira to explain the genesis of the war so that he could expose "the falsehood of the Goorkha raja". It seemed to the general "quite inconsistent with the usual wisdom of the English" that they should invade Tibet when they had such a heavy stake in the China trade. The Nepalese government were threatened with punishment if their allegation against the English proved false.⁷

¹ SC, 14 September 1816, No. 43, Government to Gardner, 14 September 1816. Lamb, *op. cit.*, p. 45. Rose, *op. cit.*, pp. 212-3.

² SC, 9 November 1816, No. 19.

³ E.H. Parker, "Nepaul and China", *Imperial and Asiatic Quarterly Review*, Vol. VII, 1899, p. 78. The sources used in this article are Chinese.

⁴ T. Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 88.

⁵ SC, 11 January 1817, No. 7; 15 May-1818, No. 69.

⁶ Morse, *Chronicles*, *op. cit.*, III, p. 258. Lamb, *op. cit.*, pp. 45-8.

⁷ *Foreign Office, Kathmandu*, Letter of Chinese Amban to King of Nepal,

China did not claim any monopoly of relations with Nepal; the Emperor, as E.H. Parker citing Chinese sources informs us, clearly disavowed any responsibility for the removal of the British Residency from Kathmandu and told the Nepalese King that since he and the British lived "in far distant countries" the "sovereign authority of the Emperor of China does not extend" over Nepal.¹ What China seems to have been concerned with was the continuance of Nepal's tributary relations with the Manchu Court. It is significant that while disclaiming any obligation for the protection of Nepal from the British, the Amban reminded the Nepalese government of their commitment to regularly send tributary missions to Peking.² Obviously, from the Chinese point of view Nepal's treaty relations with the British had made little change in her status as a Chinese tributary.

The Anglo-Nepalese war had some other results as well. The Residency henceforth served as an observation post in the Himalayan region whence the British could take a better view of the Chinese in Tibet. At Kumaun and Garhwal the British territory became directly coterminous with the Chinese territory in Tibet. The Raja of Sikkim, who had helped the British in the war, was assured of British protection against a future Nepalese invasion; and to this assurance there was no apparent Chinese opposition.³ The British appeared as a potential force in the Himalayan area where China had already established her influence.

Chachin Varsa 12, *Mahina* 3 *Ka Din* 8. Nepali, *op. cit.*, pp. 301-2, 312-4, Letters from Chinese authorities in Tibet to the King of Nepal, 1815-6. *SC*, 13 July 1816, No. 17; 27 July 1816, No. 12. Rose, *op. cit.*, pp. 210, 211-4.

¹ Parker, "China, Nepal, Bhutan and Sikkim", *op. cit.*, pp. 149-50; "China and Nepal", *op. cit.*, p. 78. Nepali, *op. cit.*, p. 305 *SC*, 22 June 1816, No. 31. Pemberton thought that the Chinese did not extend their direct authority beyond Tibet for fear of contact with the British. *Report on his mission to Bhutan*, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

² Parker, "China, Nepal, Bhutan and Sikkim", *op. cit.*, 149-50. See also Chapter, VI.

³ The Treaty of Sagauli obliged Nepal to accept British arbitration in her disputes with Sikkim. The Treaty of Titalya (1817) committed the Raja of Sikkim to assistance to the British in any hill campaign. Aitchison, *Treaties*, (1909 edn.), II, pp. 112, 322-3.

The Nepalese policy after the war was to balance China against British India as a measure of security against domination by the latter. Politically relations with China were now found more useful to the Nepalese government than ever before. Missions were sent to Peking with scrupulous care and regularity, bearing tributes of indigenous products and letters from the Nepalese Kings paying homage to the Chinese Emperors and invoking their blessings. The missions took normally a year and a half to cover the journey both ways. The distance between Kathmandu and Peking through Lhasa, Tachienlu and Chengtu¹ was about 2,530 miles. The missions stayed in Peking for forty-five days and then returned to Kathmandu, bringing valuable presents from the Emperor along with a letter to the King of Nepal advising him to govern well and to receive the Emperor's blessings. The members of the missions were provided with food, transport and accommodation by the Tibetan and Chinese authorities as soon as they crossed the Nepalese frontier. The goods carried by the missions on their outward and return journeys passed duty free.² On their return the missions were received a few miles away from Kathmandu by the King of Nepal under whose personal supervision purification ceremonies were held to restore the members of the missions to caste which they were supposed to have lost by going to foreign lands with strange customs and practices. Then, accompanied by the officers of the state and a large body of soldiers, the King escorted the missions into the capital where people stood in hundreds to welcome this impressive symbol of their country's relations with the most powerful oriental state. In the full *darbar* the Emperor's presents brought by the missions were displayed and his "decree" blessing his loyal and humble vassal read. And all this the British Resident noted together with the implied warning: keep off Nepal on pain of Chinese reprisal. The Nepalese government strongly believed, as Hodgson reported to the Government, that the British "should hesitate at any time to push to extremities an acknowledged dependent of the celestial

¹ Tachienlu on the Szechuan border was an important trade centre. Chengtu was the capital of Szechuan.

² B.H. Hodgson, "Route of Nepalese Mission to Peking with remarks on the watershed and plateau of Tibet" in *Miscellaneous Essays Relating to Indian Subjects*, II, pp. 167 *et seq.* Also in *JASB*, Vol. XXV, 1856, pp. 473-97.

empire."¹

For Nepal connexion with China was not merely an effective deterrent to British hegemony but a means of embarrassing them as well. No wonder, then, that the Anglo-Chinese war (1839-42) should be seized upon by the Nepalese Government, then dominated by the bitterly anti-British Pandes,² as their opportunity. Emissaries were sent to Lhasa and Peking offering assistance to the Chinese and seeking their support against the British who were represented as a common enemy of China, Tibet, Nepal, Bhutan and Sikkim.³ The King of Nepal, Rajendra Vikram, Hodgson reported, professed "extreme eagerness to throw off his allegiance to the British and to resume the old career of his ancestors" by strengthening relations with the Emperor. Throughout the China war, which coincided with the first Afghan war and other troubles,⁴ Hodgson was concerned that the Nepalese situation would turn even worse if China gave military aid or even moral encouragement to the Pandes.⁵

The situation became further complicated when the Dogras invaded western Tibet in May 1841.⁶ The Dogras under Raja Gulab Singh and Dhian Singh had brought Ladakh, which paid tribute to Lhasa, under their sway in 1834-5.⁷ Both the ruler of Ladakh and the Dogras—the latter possibly fearing Chinese intervention—asked for Nepalese assistance. Rajendra Vikram was willing to help the ruler of Ladakh and asked the Amban for authority to do so. As price he wanted the Tibetan territory adjoining the Kerung and Kuti passes. But the Chinese did not

¹ SC, 14 October 1829, No. 23. Oldfield, I, pp. 411-2. FM, Vol. 360, *Report on Nepal*, by O Cavenagh, 1851, pp. 54-9.

² See Chapter I.

³ Missions were also sent to Bhutan and Sikkim asking them to rise against the British and pledging Nepal's assistance for the recovery of Darjiling and the Assam Duars from the British.

⁴ See Chapter I.

⁵ SC, 26 December 1839, No. 139; 14 December 1842, No. 83; 10 August 1842, No. 126. Parker, "Nepaul and China", p. 80.

⁶ M.W. Fisher, Leo Rose, and R.A. Huttenback, *Himalayan Battle ground*, pp. 49-59, K.M. Panikkar, *The Founding of the Kashmir State*, pp. 74-89. Tsakabpa, *op. cit.*, pp. 176-80. Khuswant Singh, *A History of the Sikhs*, II, pp. 21-4. *Pre-Mutiny Records of the Kumaun District*, Political Letters Received, Series III, Vol. I, No. 117; Political Letters Issued, Vol. V, No. 50.

⁷ A. Cunningham, *Ladak : Physical, Statistical and Historical*, p. 333.

want any embroilment with the British on the Indian frontier when at home they were being defeated by the British. Therefore, to the Nepalese entreaties for assistance against the British the Emperor gave a "stern refusal" together with a strong warning to Rajendra Vikram against excessive restlessness; the latter was rebuked for his "silly requests" for Tibetan territory.¹ Rajendra Vikram was told, so Hodgson reported to Government, that the Chinese government "has little or no purpose to interfere with Ladakh politics", and so the Nepalese would do well to confine themselves to "the established circle of connection cherishing peace and good faith within that circle and to be less heedful of novelties beyond it".² A Nepalese-Ladakhi alliance so the Chinese will have thought, could lead to the intervention of the Lahore government where the Dogra rajas had commanding influence;³ and it might even bring in the British who had treaty relations with the Lahore government.

Rajendra Vikram then sounded Hodgson if the Nepalese government could help the Dogras against the Tibetans;⁴ the King perhaps expected that the British would welcome such a means of worrying the Chinese. Hodgson had no doubt that the real intention of the King and the Pandes was somehow to involve the British with the Chinese, and therefore he discouraged the King's intentions. "We had no desire", he told Rajendra Vikram, "to do injury to China in any quarter and should willingly desist from our compulsory operations in China proper as soon as justice had been rendered to us."⁵

In the autumn of 1841 the Dogras conquered Gartok and the neighbouring Tibetan territories. Hodgson was now apprehending the appearance of a Chinese army on the scene, counting on whose support the Pandes would goad the Nepalese troops to

¹ Parker, "Nepaul and China", p.80.

² SC, 31 May 1841, No. 154, Resident to Government, 20 May 1841.

³ Panikkar, *op. cit.*, pp. 19-41.

⁴ Raja Dhian Singh asked for Nepalese assistance in the Dogra difficulties with the ruler of Ladakh. This is mentioned in a secret report from Major Raghubir Singh and Jamadar Mannu Singh, Nepalese agents at the Lahore *darbar*, to the King of Nepal. The report, dated August 1838, is in the *Foreign Office, Kathmandu*. For its English translation with Notes see my article "A Note on Anglo-Nepalese Relations in 1838", *Bengal Past and Present*, Vol. LXXXVI, January-June 1967, pp.1-9.

⁵ SC, 3 January 1842, No. 128, Resident to Government, 20 December 1841.

invade the British territory. Further, since the Dogra rajas were subjects of the state of Lahore which was in alliance with the British, the Chinese might suspect the British having incited the Dogras to attack Tibet, and if so they "are very likely to resent it by letting loose Nepal upon us", so Hodgson warned the Government. And then, he added,

with Chinese, Sikhs and Gurkhas we shall ere long find ourselves of necessity involved in a labyrinth of trans-Himalayan politics the clue to which may be difficult to find and unprofitable to use when found.¹

Besides, the Dogra military activities in Ladakh and western Tibet had seriously affected trade in shawl wool, borax, salt and opium in which both the British and Chinese governments had interest.² This led the British government to make a strong representation to Maharaja Sher Singh, the ruler of the state of Lahore, that the Dogra activities must stop. Towards the end of 1841 a Sino-Tibetan army arrived and routed the Dogra troops, killing their general, Zorawar Singh. With the end of the war, Nepalese restlessness abated.³

Neither the Anglo-Chinese war nor the Dogra-Tibetan war could be exploited by Nepal because the Chinese refused to play into the hands of the Nepalese; the Chinese would not encourage Nepalese militarism in any way nor give them any excuse for realising their territorial ambitions in Tibet. Nepal's offer of assistance against the British might have appeared to China rather a ruse to serve her own interests than a token of sincere allegiance to her suzerain. Hodgson's reports suggest that the Nepalese King even tried to blackmail the Chinese. His letter to the Amban contained a threat that if the Chinese did not help Nepal against the British, the King "shall be necessitated" to seek British assistance against China "which he has only to ask for in order to get."⁴ The Amban coolly replied that the Emperor

¹ SC, 11 October 1841, No. 89, Resident to Government, 11 October 1841.

² *Ibid.*, 13 December 1841, No. 42. Cunningham, *op. cit.*, pp. 244, 248. Lamb, *op. cit.*, pp. 56-8, 64-71.

³ On Nepal's role in the Dogra campaign in western Tibet see my article, "Nepal and the Sikh-Tibetan War, 1841-2", *Bengal: Past and Present*, Vol. LXXXII, January-June 1963, pp. 12-25.

⁴ SC, 14 September 1842, No. 83, Translation of a Nepalese secret report enclosed in Resident's letter to Government, 2 September, 1842.

"never sends troops to protect the lands of foreign barbarians."¹ Once again the Nepalese had seen how difficult it was to embroil the Chinese with the British and to reap political harvest therefrom.

From the middle of the 19th century the pattern of Nepal's relations with China and Britain started changing as a result of two developments: the establishment of the Rana regime, with its settled policy of friendliness and cooperation with the British government; and the decline of the Chinese power. The Nepalese government were no longer eager to exploit the British troubles; rather they sought to make a profitable use of their alliance with the British. China's weakness was exposed in her successive discomfitures, both military and diplomatic, at the hands of Britain, France, Russia and Japan; revolts and insurrections in the outlying provinces and dependencies indicated the Chinese Imperial government's loosening grip over these regions.

The decline of China's power stimulated Nepal's military ambitions in Tibet and the hope of British support made Chinese retribution a less dangerous prospect in Nepalese eyes than it was before. Since the war in 1788-92 Nepal's relations with Tibet had been uneasy as indicated by the periodical disputes over border tracts and trade matters. The Amban mediated in these disputes but not always to Nepal's satisfaction.² There

¹ Leo Rose, "Sino-Indian Rivalry and the Himalayan border States", *Orbis*, Summer 1961, p. 202. Rose has drawn on Chinese sources. Hodgson also had earlier reported that "no importance is attached by the Chinese to their relations with Nepal, and they are maintained by Nepal chiefly or solely to be played off against us [British], if need be". Letter to Government, 9 November 1833, *PC*, 21 November 1833, No. 36.

² The Nepalese in Tibet sometimes complained of the overbearing conduct of the local Chinese officers, but the government at Kathmandu put up with it because, so Hodgson observed, "They were faced with the only alternative in the event of breach with China, that is closer alliance with the British which would have enabled them to set at defiance the resentment of the Chinese...They must know that any closer alliance with us for the purpose of their protection against China implies their political dependence upon the British government, but to this they will never submit, but as the last resort to save their government from extinction." *PC*, 27 August 1832, No. 18.

were also other causes of soreness. The Nepalese merchants at Lhasa complained of maltreatment and the Nepalese missions to Peking of their harassments by the Tibetan authorities. In fact, however, these were but pretexts for Jang Bahadur, who found in the Chinese preoccupation in the Taiping rebellion his opportunity to annex some Tibetan territory. This is why, perhaps, Jang Bahadur offered military assistance to the Emperor to crush the rebellion, and then in 1855 invaded Tibet when the Emperor declined his offer.¹

The British government's attitude to Nepal's war with Tibet was one of keen interest, sharp vigilance and non-interference in what they regarded as an internal crisis in the Chinese Empire.² Dalhousie, the Governor-General, saw that he had "no right to interfere and no interest in interfering in an issue which is wholly between Nepal and China", and "when it does not appear calculated in any way to injure the interests of the British government or unduly increase the power of Nepal". Nepal, he believed, was a Chinese tributary. Yet, since Chinese intervention, as in 1791-2, was not impossible nor also the involvement of Sikkim and Bhutan, the Indian government could not just be indifferent to the event; and Jang Bahadur was told accordingly.³

Jang Bahadur asked for British assistance when the Nepalese army suffered reverses and when the Amban stepped up pressure on him for peace. The British reply to Jang Bahadur was: "whatever emergency might occur and whatever disaster might happen to his troops", no help could be given to Nepal because,

besides involving a breach of treaty it would disturb mercantile transactions annually amounting to from thirty to forty times more than the gross revenues of this kingdom [Nepal].⁴

¹ Parker, "Nepaul and China", p.81.

² On Nepal's war with Tibet see my article "Nepal-Tibet War, 1855-6", *JUSI*, April-June 1964, pp. 175-94. A.C. Campbell, Supdt. of Darjiling, to Govt., 17, 25 May 1855, *NR*, Vol. 9. The military arrangements and the course of the war are given in great detail in a register in the *Madan Puraskar Pustakalaya*, Patan, Kathmandu. A similar register exists in the *Commandari Kitab Khana, Jangi Phant*, Kathmandu.

³ *SC*, 26 May 1854, No. 50, Resident to Govt., 6 May 1854; No. 51, Dalhousie's Minute, 12 May 1854; *Ibid.*, 25 August 1854, Nos. 52, 54, Dalhousie's Minutes, 16, 22 August 1854.

⁴ *SC*, 28 December 1855, No. 88, Resident to Govt., 8 November 1855.

The British policy of non-involvement was based on their interpretation of China's attitude to the war. Colonel Ramsay, the Resident, was confident that China would abstain from military intervention unless the Nepalese troops entered deeper into Tibet, and this appeared to him impossible for several reasons : the defeats lately sustained by the Nepalese army and the resultant damage to its morale; the enormous cost of the war;¹ and its general unpopularity in Nepal;² the Amban's insistence that Jang Bahadur end the war, and the latter's growing fear of Chinese military intervention in favour of Tibet.³

In March 1856 the war ended with a treaty very favourable to Nepal. It required the Tibetan government to pay Nepal an annual tribute of ten thousand rupees; allowed the Nepalese merchants the privilege of duty-free trade in Tibet and the Nepalese subjects extra-territorial rights; a Nepalese representative, called *Vakil*, would reside at Lhasa to safeguard his country's interests.⁴ Nepal undertook to assist Tibet in the event of external aggression. But under the Amban's pressure Jang Bahadur had to give up his demand for the bordering Tibetan territory which the Nepalese army had occupied—Kuti, Kerung, Taglakot, Chowur Gumba and Dhakling. Jang Bahadur, no doubt because the Chinese power was an obstacle to Nepalese ambitions, seemed trying to remove that power when as one of the conditions for peace he asked the Chinese to withdraw from Tibet and recognise Tibet's independence; China, he urged, should only retain a *Vakil* at Lhasa just as Nepal

¹ The war cost Jang Bahadur a sum of 2,683,568 rupees. *Suba Buddhiman Vamsavali*, p.251. The total annual revenue of the state in 1851 was supposed to be five million rupees. O'Cavenagh, *Rough Notes on the State of Nepal, its Government, Army and Resources*, pp. 70-71.

² "The war has been unpopular since its very commencement and all classes throughout the country have suffered by it in proportion to their means, or it would be more correct to say out of all proportion to their means...All trade has been severely interfered with, and in many parts of the country even the cultivation of the soil has been partially interrupted. In short, the prosperity of the State has been most injuriously, though perhaps temporarily, affected.", SC, 29 August 1856, No. 45, Resident to Government, 15 July 1856.

³ SC, 30 November 1855, No. 81; 28 December 1855, Nos. 82-8.

⁴ Previously a subordinate officer, called *Natkay*, was posted at Lhasa,

would have hers. The Amban not only flatly rejected this proposal but obliged both the Nepalese and Tibetan governments to "agree that the Emperor of China is to be obeyed by both states as before".¹ But this apparent political gain of China carried with it what proved to be an onerous responsibility for her. Nepal looked to China as the guarantor of her [Nepal's] Tibetan interests; it followed, then, that China's failure to protect these interests would compromise her relations with Nepal.

The confirmation of China's suzerainty over Nepal by the treaty of 1856 did not result in any strengthening of her actual position there, and, therefore, caused the British no concern at all. The British had no suspicion that Jang Bahadur would make political capital out of Nepal's relations with China. On the contrary, he seemed to dislike them. As Orfeur Cavenagh, the Political Officer attached to Jang Bahadur's mission to England in 1950-51, observed:

Jang Bahadur would have severed the connection between Nepal and China which he evidently considered derogatory to his own country.

But then, he dared not estrange the Chinese without an assurance of British support.² In Jang Bahadur's loyalty the British government had confidence, which his assistance during the Mutiny fully confirmed. This assistance was all the more significant when contrasted with the fact that in invading Tibet he had readily exploited China's preoccupation in the Taiping rebellion. It was also noteworthy that Jang Bahadur did not take advantage of the synchronism of the Mutiny and the second Anglo-Chinese war (1856-60). The defeat of China in that war tarnished her image in Nepal and proportionately enhanced the British prestige. In the words of Ramsay,

The late change in our political relations with China has caused great excitement here very favourable to our prestige, for although the Gurkhas admire our superiority as a nation to themselves, they had great doubts as to whether our power could in any way be compared with that of China—now the sardars are asking whether we have not lately conquered and taken possession of that country.³

¹ SC, 28 December 1855, No. 81. Aitchison, *Treaties*, (1909 edn.), II, pp. 97-100, fn. Article II of the treaty stated that Nepal and Tibet "have both borne allegiance to the Emperor of China up to the present time". See also Chapter VI.

² O' Cavenagh, *Reminiscences of an Indian Official*, p.169.

³ FPA, October 1861, No. 44, Resident to Government, 10 July 1861.

Jang Bahadur's attachment to the British seems to have made the Chinese a trifle uneasy. In 1871 Jang Bahadur told Colonel Richard Lawrence, the Resident, that in 1860 the Emperor had asked him to furnish an account of his services to the British during the Mutiny and the honours he had received from them; the Emperor had also wanted to bestow some equally high honour on Jang Bahadur.¹ The Chinese accounts also say that earlier, in 1857-58, the Emperor had given presents and buttons of rank to Jang Bahadur and Surendra Vikram, the King of Nepal.² The Chinese accounts also say that the Emperor wanted the resumption of Nepalese tributary mission which the Taiping disturbances had interrupted. In May 1870 a Chinese mission visited Kathmandu; in the following year Jang Bahadur received the title, *Thong-Ling-Ping-Ma-Kuo-Kan-Wang* which, as translated by his son, meant "Leader of the Army, the Most Brave in Every Enterprise, Perfect in everything, Master of the Brave People, Mighty Maharaja".³

The Indian government viewed the Nepalese missions to Peking as of mere symbolic importance to both Nepal and China; and so from the British interests point of view they were unobjectionable. When Jang Bahadur sent a mission to Peking in 1866 the British did not suspect any political motivation. The Resident saw "cupidity" as the impulse; Jang Bahadur seemed to Ramsay eager to receive from the Emperor presents which were of "great intrinsic value", since they consisted of

bales of silk and satin, Chinese embroidered bukkos or cloaks, porcelain, ivory, jade, tortoise shell and other ornaments, pictures and sorts of artificial curiosities.

¹ *IFP*, Vol. 760, July 1871, No. 100, Lawrence to Government, 22 May 1871.

² Parker, "Nepaul and China", p.81.

³ *IFP*, Vol. 760, July 1871, No. 100, Lawrence to Govt., 22 May 1871. P.J.B. Rana, *Life of Jang Bahadur*, pp.281, 285. The author, however, says that the title was given to his father in April 1872. In *Hemraj Vamsavali*, p.198, the date is given as 1928 *Vikram Samvat*, corresponding to 1871 A.D. Lawrence translated the title as "The Highly honoured (the Most Noble) Commander and Controller of Military and Political Affairs, the Augmentor and Instructor (Disciplinarian) of the Army, the Aggrandiser of the Country, the Satisfier of the Low and High by increasing the Prosperity and Revenue of the Country, the Great Inheritor of Fidelity and Faithfulness to the Salt". Landon, *Nepal*, I, pp. 246-7 says that the title signified "Truly valiant prince, Commander-in-Chief of the army". See also Chapter VI.

The Nepalese tribute to the Emperor, on the other hand, was of "trifling value".¹ The mission's inability to go to Peking and return from Chengtu in 1869² led J.W.S. Wyllie, the Acting Foreign Secretary, to comment that the "last links" between Nepal and China "are broken, and that Nepal had been drawn into somewhat closer union with the British Empire of India". This, he added, "matters little for England" but for China it was of great significance, "for the final loss of all connexion with China distinctly marks a further stage in the decadence of the Empire".³ It proved, however, a false prophecy. In 1876 the British Minister in Peking, Thomas Wade, reported that the Nepalese government had asked for the Amban's sanction to send a tribute mission to Peking. The Indian Foreign Department's reaction was expressed thus :

We have no reason to question the loyalty of Sir Jang Bahadur but rather the contrary, and it appears...in the highest degree improbable that this periodical interchange of presents will lead to a rapprochement with China in a sense hostile to us. The fact is that Sir Jang Bahadur's cupidity is the motive spring. He sends yak's tails and gets back gifts...He gives a trout and catches a salmon. Any attempt on our part to interfere would be unwise.⁴

Although it was recognised that "these missions kept up an artificial importance for the Chinese throne which its military power could never have gained for it", the Indian government disclaimed any "*locus standi*" in the matter. Wade was informed accordingly. "The Government of Nepal", ran the Indian government's despatch,

"is not, in fact, in the position of the feudatories of the Indian Empire. It enjoys an independent national life, and possesses the power of making war, entering into treaties and sending embassies without let or hindrance from the British government. But apart from these considerations, the relations at present subsisting between the British government and the Government of Nepal, as represented by H.E. Sri Jang Bahadur, are of so cordial a character that the Governor-General in Council has no reason to apprehend that this periodical interchange of presents with China will lead to complications."⁵

¹ FPA, June 1866, No. 163, Resident to Government, 9 June 1866.

² See Chapter IV.

³ W.W. Hunter, ed., *Essays on the External Policy of India*, by J.W.S. Wyllie, p. 197. J.T. Wheeler, *Summary of Affairs*, pp. 217-8.

⁴ FSA, September 1876, Nos. 129-33, Dept. Notes.

⁵ FSA, September 1876, No. 131, T.H. Thornton, Offg. Foreign Secy., to Wade, 25 July 1876.

In fact, these missions were for the Rana government means of profitable commercial transaction; a large variety of commodities, opium being the main, was sent along with the missions for disposal in China, and all the commodities passed duty free.¹ For the British government also these missions served as useful means of obtaining information about inner regions of Tibet and China; besides, when British explorers in China found themselves in difficulty with the local people, they sought the help of these missions.²

In fact, the British government had no reason to be anxious about the Sino-Nepalese relations, which seemed to indicate coolness rather than cordiality. Chinese distrust of the Rana government increased commensurate with the latter's intimacy with the British. The Nepalese missions to China were suspected of doing espionage work for the British and were closely examined while entering and leaving the Tibetan territory to prevent any Englishman travelling in disguise. The 1866 mission was not allowed to go to Peking and was asked to deliver the tribute at Tachienlu where it was kept waiting for several months before, at the repeated requests of the head of the mission, it was permitted to proceed to Chengtu. There the mission was accommodated in a "dirty hovel" outside the town where the local Chinese officers treated it with "extreme discourtesy", hoping thereby to effect its return to Kathmandu. In May 1869 the Resident reported that the death of several members of the mission, allegedly caused by Chinese harassments, had angered Jang Bahadur so much that it was unlikely that any more mission would be sent to Peking in future. The situation seemed to the Resident to resemble that in 1854, when maltreatment of a Nepalese mission had afforded Jang Bahadur a pretext to invade Tibet. At Chengtu the Nepalese mission received the Emperor's final order to return to Kathmandu because the road to Peking was unsafe owing to disturbances. Jang Bahadur, however, suspected that this was a mere plea; possibly, he thought, the Emperor was annoyed that the mission had been

¹ See also Chapter VI.

² T.J. Cooper, one such explorer, sought the help of the Nepalese mission at Chengtu and Bathang in eastern Tibet; the Nepalese, however, refused to take him along with them to Lhasa for fear of Chinese disapproval. Cooper, *Journal of an Overland Journey from China towards India*; pp. 53, 68, 74.

sent four years later than its due date. Opium worth four and a half lakhs of rupees carried by the mission could not be disposed of in China and had to be brought back and stored in the Nepalese warehouses at Lhasa before it could be sold at a much lower price to the Indian government.¹

The 1877 mission was also subjected to much inconvenience before it could reach Tachienlu, and this led Lytton to apprehend a Nepalese attack on Tibet. The mission after great difficulty succeeded in reaching Peking in late December 1877 and was lodged in "dirty buildings". Wade saw the leader of the mission much to the dislike of the Chinese officer in charge. The mission returned to Kathmandu in June 1882; instead of the normal period of about eighteen months it had taken almost five years to complete the journey. E.C. Baber, the British Consular officer at Chungking, believed that

the reasons why the Chinese government keeps the Nepalese at a distance is probably that it is by no means anxious to maintain close relations with a country so nearly connected with India.

Besides, he added, "as the tribute missions were little more than disguised trade ventures, the Chinese fear that they will sooner or later develop into a commercial establishment in Western China".² And this establishment might serve the economic and political interests of the British, Jang Bahadur's allies. The steadily deteriorating relations between Nepal and Tibet in the later decades of the century and the former's bellicose attitude³ was an additional worry for the Chinese, who seemed to Baber to be "apprehensive not for the integrity of their frontier but for the security of its bulwark or rather buffer, Tibet."⁴

The Chinese, so it seemed to the British, came to treat Nepal as Britain's vassal. During the second Anglo-Chinese war,

¹ *FPA*, October 1867, No. 127; August 1867, Nos. 53-4; July 1868, No. 203; June 1873, Nos. 462-75. *FSI*, 1870, Nos. 400-04. *NR*, Vol. 13, Lawrence to Col. Houghton, 13 April 1869. Also *FPA*, May 1875, No. 104A. *Foreign Revenue B Proceedings*, April 1872, Nos. 4-7. T.J. Cooper, *Travels of a Pioneer of Commerce*, pp. 158-9, 398.

² *PSLI*, Vol. 20, No. 140 of 1878, Baber to H. Fraser, *Charge d'Affaires* in Peking, 2 August 1878. Also *Ibid.*, No. 65, 14 July 1882.

³ See Chapter 2.

⁴ Baber to Fraser, *op.cit.*

for instance, the Russians were believed to have been trying to instigate the Chinese to goad the Nepalese against the British in India. But the Chinese Emperor in rejecting this suggestion was reported to have pointed out to the Russians that

Nepal is subject to the English barbarians. Were we to propose that it should place its resources at our disposal for an attack upon India, it would be certain to decline giving offence to the English, and the only result would be to open the door to their demands and reclamations.

From this the Indian Foreign department deduced this conclusion:

...the Chinese not only look upon Nepal as a feudatory of England, but that they regard the tie binding her to us as much stronger than that by which she is bound to them, and which latter probably consists of nothing more than the so-called embassy.¹

From the mid-1870's the British were seen taking increasing interest in Nepal's relations with China and Tibet, the result of which was the gradual establishment of indirect British influence over these relations. Britain's general attitude and policy towards China and Tibet, in which Nepal came to figure larger and larger, influenced this development.

The period saw the intensification of the international scramble for concessions in China and for spheres of influence in her dependencies some of which bordered on the Indian Empire. France, for instance, established her sway over Annam and Tongkin, threatening British interests in Burma and Siam. Russia strengthened her position in Chinese Turkestan, the Pamirs and the Upper Oxus, and was able to put pressure on the northern frontier of British India. The Indian government, as a measure of security, made counter moves, stepping up their activities in Chinese Turkestan, the Pamirs, Hunza and Nagar.²

¹ FSA, September 1876, Nos. 129-33, Dept. Notes.

² These were two small chiefships situated to the extreme north-west of Kashmir and extending towards the north into the mountains adjoining the junction of the Hindukush and Mustagh ranges; to their south lies Gilgit. The two chiefs acknowledged the suzerainty of the ruler of Kashmir. In 1890's the states assumed considerable strategic importance in view of the Russian advance to the Pamirs and Kashgar, both the places having easy

Burma and Siam. Such activities created ill-feelings in the Chinese government, which for the British government in England was a matter of serious consideration. The Home government's policy on the Indian frontier was generally cautious. They considered Indian frontier problems from the wider standpoint of their bearing upon Britain's relations with other European powers. The Indian government were, therefore, repeatedly asked to avoid any precipitate action on the frontier which would damage Britain's imperial interests in the wider sense. Misunderstanding with China on the Indian frontier had the possibility of compromising Britain's general relations with China, and this, the Home government feared, France and Russia, Britain's rivals in Asia, might exploit. Britain's global conflict with these two powers thus found a reflection on the Indian frontier, and for the sake of this conflict the Home government considered it worthwhile to be on good terms with China and, if possible, to use her as an ally.¹

The second half of the 19th century was an "era of commercial optimism", when the British were actively interested in developing trade with Tibet. Explorers, adventurers missionaries and officials stimulated this interest, their reports and accounts convincing the British trading community that Tibet was a veritable traders' paradise. Nepal, Bhutan and Sikkim being the direct and easy approaches to Tibet, it was natural that the British should be active in these areas. In 1861 an expedition was sent into Sikkim followed by a treaty confirming British overlordship. In 1889 its administration was taken over by the British, the administering authority being a Political Officer

approaches to Hunza. They were brought under British control in 1891-2. The 'Mir' of Hunza paid a small amount of gold dust as tribute to the Chinese authorities at Kashgar as a price for retaining his claim to Raksam and Tagdumbash districts situated to the north of the Hindukush watershed—and thus in Chinese territory. G. Alder, *British India's Northern Frontier, 1865-1895*, pp.236-7. Lamb, *China-India Border*, pp.94-8. Aitchison, *Treaties* (1909 edn.), XI, pp.257-9.

¹ G.N. Curzon, *Problems of the Far East*, pp. 276-80. S.H. Roberts, *History of French Colonial Policy*, II, pp.419-98. D.H. Dallin, *The Rise of Russia in Asia*, pp.15-41. Lamb, *Britain and Chinese Central Asia*, pp. 54-238. Alder, *op.cit.*, pp. 72-299. Morse, *International Relations*, II, pp. 239-415. Dorothy Woodman, *The Making of Burma*, pp.205-331. E.V.G. Kiernon, *British Diplomacy in China, 1880-85*, pp. 205-331.

resident at Gangtok. Alongside, trade routes were developed in Sikkim. A campaign against Bhutan in 1865 resulted in the annexation of the Duars in return for an annual subsidy to Bhutanese authorities.¹

Incessant pressure by international powers increased the anxiety of the Chinese government who resented the British activities in the outlying Chinese dependencies, particularly Tibet, as detrimental to Chinese interests in these regions where the Imperial government's hold had already weakened. The Chinese would not easily concede commercial facilities to the British in Tibet in view of the known opposition of the Tibetan government as well as China's own distrust of the British intentions. As Nepal, Bhutan and Sikkim were looked upon by China as constituting the outer defence of Tibet, the increasing British influence in these states was from the Chinese point of view a threat not only to the security of Tibet but to China's traditional position in her satellite states. Tributary relations with these states had for the later Manchu rulers of China considerable prestige value, and so they would not acquiesce in the loss of these relations.²

The Indian government, on the other hand, viewed Chinese suzerainty over the Himalayan border states as only a myth and having no practical validity. They had not interfered with the traditional relations of these states with China and Tibet because these relations had not yet affected British interests in these states, but should they do so the Indian government would not hesitate to contest the Chinese suzerainty. This became increasingly apparent from the last decades of the 19th century. In such circumstances Nepal's relations with China and Tibet assumed considerable significance in the eyes of the British, the more so because their relations with the Nepal *darbar*

¹ Lamb, *op.cit.*, pp.87 *et seq.* AP, 1862, Vol.XL: *East India (Sikkim Expedition)*. AP, 1865, Vol. XXXIX: *Papers Relating to Bhutan. Political Missions to Bhutan, Report of Ashley Eden. History of Sikkim*, by the Maharaja and Maharani, pp. 134, 175-207. White, *op.cit.*, pp.19-32, 275 *et seq.* Gawler, *op.cit.* Edgar, *op.cit.* Colman Macaulay, *Report of a Mission to Sikkim and the Tibetan frontier with a Memorandum on our Relations with Tibet*, pp. 72 *et seq.* Aitchison, *Treaties* (1909 edn.), II, pp. 298-306, 325-30.

² J.K. Fairbank, and S.Y. Teng, "On the Ch'ing Tributary System", *Harvard Journal of Asiatic Studies*, June 1941. See also, Chapter VI, pp. 242-5.

after Jang Bahadur's death took a bad turn over the Gurkha recruitment issue and the question of restrictions on the Resident's movement.¹

One of the first acts of Ranuddip was to despatch a mission to Peking, presumably to inform the Emperor of his assumption of power. In the following year he received the Chinese title given earlier to Jang Bahadur by the Emperor.² In 1883 a Chinese delegation came to Kathmandu to present Ranuddip with a dress of honour appertaining to the title. Bir Shamsher was also reported to have sent a mission in August 1886 to obtain the Emperor's recognition of his accession. In 1889 a Chinese delegation came to Kathmandu to confer on Bir the usual Chinese title. Bir's reception of the delegation in customary pomp and ceremony was interpreted by the Resident as his "open subservience" to China; he wanted the Viceroy, Lansdowne, to make a representation to the Prime Minister.³ Lansdowne, however, was cautious. He could not let China undermine the British position in Nepal any more than he could damage Britain's general relations with China by openly challenging her traditional relations with Nepal.

The Indian government had by now had several diplomatic bouts with China regarding the Pamirs, Hunza and Nagar, Burma, Siam and the Tibetan Trade. China had made it clear to the British that she would not abandon her claim to suzerainty over states having historical relations with her. What made the Indian government more uneasy were the reports of China being active in Sikkim and Bhutan. In 1873, for example, the Amban had in a letter to the Sikkim Raja asked him to prevent the British from constructing trade routes in Sikkim; else, the Raja would be punished.⁴ In 1876 a Chinese and a Tibetan officer were reported to have arrived in Bhutan; the Deb raja promised to oppose any road building activity by the British and received

¹ See Chapters II and III.

² *IFP*, Vol. 1216, February 1878, Nos. 178-83; Vol. 1217, India Political Letter to Secy. of State, No. 33, 1 February 1878, and No. 52, 15 February 1878.

³ *HC*, Vol. 92, No. 282, J. Walsham, British Minister in Peking, to Foreign Office, London, 4 January 1887. *LNP*, Vol. XIII, *Note on Nepal Affairs* by Lansdowne, 18 September 1889.

⁴ Edgar, *op. cit.*, pp.15-7.

the assurance of Chinese support. This appeared to J.W. Edgar, the Deputy Commissioner of Darjiling, as "a sort of offensive and defensive alliance" between China and Bhutan.¹ In 1888 the Amban was reported to have sent another mission to Bhutan with the suspected intention of exploiting its political instability and strengthening Chinese influence there. Mortimer Durand, the Foreign Secretary, warned the Viceroy that the incident deserved "careful watching". The next year, during negotiations with China on the determination of Sikkim's boundary with Tibet, China vigorously asserted her suzerainty over Sikkim.² Lansdowne, while privately admitting to Cross, the Secretary of State, that China's claim was not altogether baseless,³ could not publicly entertain it for fear of strengthening similar Chinese claim on Bhutan and Nepal. Durand, who was the British representative in the Sikkim negotiations, advised Lansdowne not to "look with complacency" what appeared like China's attempts to establish her authority on the Himalayan border states. He warned that grave difficulties would arise if these states were not brought under exclusive British influence. It was in his view clearly anomalous that Nepal, Bhutan and Sikkim

¹ *JFP*, Vol. 1216, February 1878, Nos.166-76, Edgar to Lord H. Ulick Browne, Commissioner of Rajshahi and Cooch-Behar, 27 November 1877.

² In July 1886 Tibetan troops intruded into Sikkimese territory at Lingtu on the Darjiling road. A small British expedition was sent to expel the Tibetans in March 1888. It was followed by negotiations between the British and the Chinese for the delimitation of Sikkim's frontier with Tibet. During the negotiations the Chinese claimed that Sikkim was their vassal state; the Raja of Sikkim held a Chinese title and a coral button, paid homage to the Tibetan government, and the "Tibetans being vassals of the Chinese, such homage would in effect have been rendered to China". The Amban insisted that the Raja continue to wear the button and pay homage even if he was a British-protected potentate. The British rejected the claim; ultimately, the Chinese accepted that Sikkim was under the direct and exclusive influence of the British. This acceptance was embodied in the Anglo-Chinese Convention of 1890, which was followed three years later by a Trade Regulations governing Indo-Tibetan trade. Aitchison, *Treaties*, II, pp. 330-4, 338-9. F. Younghusband, *India and Tibet*, pp.47-52. *DP*, *Sikkim Commission*, contains many letters, all private, written by Durand to D. Mackenzie Wallace, Private Secy. to the Viceroy, A.C. Lyall and others. See also India Secret Despatch to Secy. of State, No. 32, January, No. 28, 12 February; No. 86, 7 June; No. 128, 23 August; No. 156, 21 October 1889. *LNP*, IX, Vol. I, Lansdowne to Cross, 29 January, 22 April, 24 May 1889.

³ *Ibid.*, Letters dt. 22, 29 January 1889.

should continue to have dual relations with Britain and China. Earlier Durand had expressed his belief in the "untold strength latent in China", and had seen "nothing wildly impossible" in China's "innumerable slowly moving armies quietly overflowing Nepal which has seen them before and pays tribute" to the Chinese Emperor.¹

All this, it appeared to Lansdowne, deserved "serious attention" of the British government. He had no doubt that "all along the slopes of the Himalayas the Chinese are endeavouring to set up the exercise of some kind of authority beyond their own frontier". Upon Nepal, the Viceroy saw, China was "clearly endeavouring to increase her hold". It was a "source of great danger to us", he informed Cross, especially when he considered that Bir Shamsheer's relations with the Indian government were "still very ill-defined and likely to lead to complications". The Chinese mission to Nepal, seen in the context of China's activities in Sikkim and Bhutan, suggested to Lansdowne that she had "deliberately adopted as a part of a general policy" the subversion of the relations of these states with the British government. Nor could the latter overlook a report published in a Chinese official document and sent to A.W. Paul, an officer with considerable experience of North-East frontier affairs,² by Father Desgodins, a French missionary in China. The report stated that the Amban had informed the Emperor that Nepal contained rich gold mines, coveted by the British and Russians; that "an Englishman could, in fact, already have opened up a mine in Nepal"; in order not to be outdone, the Emperor should send some great mandarin to "protect this friendly country" and other mandarins versed in European learning to "live there permanently". Desgodins commented that "to anyone knowing

¹ DP, *Letter Book*, 1882-3. Durand to George Chesney, 26 June 1882; *D.O. Letters, Book No. 2*, Durand to Dufferin, 28 November 1888, to Lansdowne, 23 December 1888. *Sikkim Commission*, 1889, Durand to Mackenzie Wallace, 3 January 1889, to W. Cunningham, Offg. Foreign Secy., 14 January 1889, to A.C. Lyall, 29 January, 12 May 1889. India Secret Letter to Secy. of State, No. 3, 8 January 1889, Durand's Memorandum, 1 Jan., 1889. *Ibid.*, No. 28, 12 February 1889, Durand's Memorandum, Sykes, *Mortimer Durand*, pp. 163-6.

² Paul was formerly the Deputy Commissioner of Darjiling, later Political Officer in Sikkim and one of the British delegates in the Anglo-Chinese Convention regarding Sikkim.

the Chinese, who have not opened up the rich gold mines in Tachienlu, Batang, Yunnan etc., it is clear that opening up mines in Nepal is only an excuse to establish themselves firmly before the English, just as the Tibetans wanted to do in Sikkim.”¹ The exiled *Badi Maharani*² had also written to the Viceroy, pointing out that Bir Shamsher had some political object in entertaining the Chinese mission when it was not unknown to him that over the Sikkim issue the British were having troubles with China. In such circumstances, Lansdowne could not “help being afraid that we may have trouble with the Nepalese and through them with China before long.”³ But then, however disquieting the incident might be was the ground strong enough for immediate intervention? The Viceroy on sober reflection thought not. “The Chinese and the Nepalese”, he admitted, “were both strictly within their rights in sending and receiving the mission now at Kathmandu”, and the occurrence was “more or less an usual one”. Besides, Nepal was not an Indian feudatory state, and on her foreign relations, Lansdowne noted, the British government could claim no control. Above all, when the Indian government’s general policy then was to keep on good terms with Bir for the sake of Gurkha recruits, Lansdowne thought it politic to wink at this incident until some other and stronger evidence was found regarding a Sino-Nepalese intrigue against the British.⁴

Lansdowne’s decision was influenced by the Home government’s unwillingness to rub China hard on the Indian frontier and thereby give a handle to Russia and France. Cross reminded Lansdowne that the Foreign Office wished for “many and, I daresay, good reasons to keep on the best of terms” with the Chinese who, he added, should, therefore, be given “no reasonable ground for offence”. Salisbury, Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary, while generally agreeing with Lans-

¹ India Secret Letter to Secy. of State, No. 141, 18 August 1888, A. Desgodins to A.W. Paul, 19 July 1888.

² Wife of the late Prime Minister, Ranuddip Singh, and a refugee in India since 1885, when she fled from Kathmandu. See Chapter II.

³ *LNP*, IX, Vol. I, Lansdowne to Cross, 6 August 1889.

⁴ *LNP*, Vol. XIII, Lansdowne’s *Note on Nepal Affairs*, 18 September 1889. *Ardagh Papers*, Vol. 10, *Lansdowne’s Administration in the Foreign Dept.*, pp. 13, 83-4.

downe that in Sikkim British influence should be exclusive, advised the Viceroy to show the "utmost forbearance towards the Chinese", because John Walsham, the British Minister in Peking, had warned the Foreign Office that China would be very annoyed if the Indian government repudiated her symbolic suzerainty over Sikkim. Lansdowne himself held that although in Sikkim his government would establish "exclusive and undivided" supremacy¹, his general policy was to deal with the Chinese "as tenderly as we can in order to remain on good terms with them in other parts of the continent." Lansdowne wanted to persuade the Chinese government that since Britain and China's interests in Central Asia were "Identical", they should join hands to oppose Russia; the Viceroy also hoped to use China as a bulwark against the French in Siam and the Russians in the Pamirs. In regard to Kashgar, Hunza and Nagar,² the Burmese tributary mission to China³, and the British frontier with China in Burma⁴, the Home government urged the Indian government to give due consideration to China's susceptibilities and as far as possible to accommodate her interests.⁵

¹ *LNP*, IX, Vol. I, Lansdowne to Cross, 29 April 1889. Durand wrote thus : "If we give way in respect to Sikkim, we must be prepared to do so at some future time, not only in regard to Bhutan and Nepal, but with regard to Kashmir and her feudatories, such as Hunza and Nagar, and with regard to any of the smaller Himalayan states which may have committed themselves. We might even have China claiming suzerain rights over Darjeeling and the Bhutan Dooars, which we acquired from her so-called feudatories." *Memorandum* by Durand in India Secret Letter to Secy. of State, No. 28, 12 February 1889.

² Although Hunza was brought under British influence during Lansdowne's period, the British recognised China's symbolic suzerainty over the state by allowing the tribute from the "Mir" of Hunza to the Kashgar authorities to continue. *PSM*, A. 170 (1911). *HC*, Vol. 138, Nos. 493, 529, Foreign Office, to India Office, 14 April 1893, India Office to Foreign Office, 2 May 1893. Lamb, *China-India Border*, pp. 94-8. Alder, *op. cit.*, pp. 236-7. Aitchison, *Treaties*, (1909 edn.), XI, pp. 257-9.

³ After the annexation of Burma in 1886, the British, after much reluctance, agreed that the customary decennial mission from Burma to China would not be interfered with. However, no mission actually went; in 1896 the British formally declared its discontinuance. *HC*, Vol. 84, No. 308, Memo on Burmese Mission to China, 1886. Woodman, *op. cit.*, pp. 247-67.

⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 284-95.

⁵ *LNP*, IX, Vol. I, Lansdowne to Cross, 15 January, 22 January, 27 February, 22, 29 April, 24 May, 28 June, 26 July, 9, 16 August, 26 November,

In such circumstances, the Indian government had to be careful in regard to the suspected Chinese moves towards Nepal. They recognised how embarrassing Nepal's relations with China could be for India, but the time was not yet ripe for interference with these relations, especially when it was certain to anger the Nepalese. Lansdowne disposed of the issue with the remark :

that if an opportunity for placing our relations with China and Nepal on a less precarious footing were to offer itself, such an opportunity should not be allowed to go by.

In regard to Nepal's relations with Tibet the British attitude was more than one of watchful interest; it was one of anxiety and disapproval. The main object of Nepal's policy in Tibet was to defend the rights and privileges secured by the treaty of 1856 and, when this proved difficult because of the growing opposition of the Tibetan government, to seek territorial compensation in the bordering Tibetan tracts by threatening military action. For several years the Nepalese traders at Tingri Maidan had been complaining of ill-treatment at the hands of the local Tibetans. In the 1870's the Nepalese merchants at Lhasa made similar complaints. The Nepalese *vakil* at Lhasa observed military spirit increasing among the Tibetans and their mounting hostility to Nepalese interests in Tibet. In 1871 the Chinese delegation, which came to Kathmandu to confer the Imperial title on Jang Bahadur, failed to bring about any improvement in the strained relations between Nepal and Tibet. In 1872-3, following the Nepalese *vakil's* withdrawal from Lhasa, both the governments made military preparations. At Kathmandu rumours spread that the Amban had toured along the southern Tibetan frontier presumably to ascertain the strength of the Nepalese forces on the border. The Resident privately informed the Foreign Secretary that Jang Bahadur was ready to attack Tibet if assured of British aid.¹ In 1883 Nepalese shops at Lhasa were looted by Tibetan monks who refused to put up with the swaggering behaviour of the local Nepalese traders. Kathmandu demanded compensation of three lakh taels. Following orders from Peking, an enquiry was made by the Amban, who found

10 December 1889; Cross to Lansdowne, 18, 30 January, 24 April, 6 June, 3 October, 12 December 1889. *Ibid.*, IX, Vol II, Lansdowne to Cross, 14 July 1890. *Ibid.*, IX, Vol. III, Cross to Lansdowne, 2 December 1891.

¹ *Ibid.*, Vol. XIII, Lansdowne's *Note on Nepal Affairs*, 18 September 1889.

the Tibetan monks guilty and fixed the indemnity at one lakh taels. Rejecting the sum as inadequate the Nepalese government made warlike preparations and despatched four regiments to the frontier. Soon after, a high ranking lama was reported to have been sent from Peking who managed to coax the disputants into a settlement. Towards the end of 1885 Kathmandu received one lakh taels as compensation, the Chinese government having paid on behalf of the Tibetans as much as 80,000 taels. Some years after troubles recrudesced, this time over the barter rate of exchange between Nepalese rice and Tibetan salt. The Nepalese traders refused to take salt at the rate demanded by the Tibetans, whereupon the latter tried to smuggle it at times by even killing the Nepalese customs officers on the border. The Commissioner of Kumaun reported the Nepalese troops having been sighted on the border near Taglakot. The Lhasa government had to tender apologies before the Nepalese troops pulled out. In November 1895 on the Amban's persuasion the two governments held a joint commission for the settlement of the barter question as well as certain boundary disputes. In the following year an agreed settlement was made which the Nepalese government hailed as their diplomatic victory.¹

The Indian government in the 1870's disliked this "almost yearly appearance of hostilities" between Nepal and Tibet because of their injurious effect on Bengal's frontier trade. Jang Bahadur's request for military and financial assistance was turned down, which damped the Prime Minister's zeal for war;

¹ *FPA*, July 1871, No. 100; June 1873, Nos. 462-75; August 1874, Nos. 1-9; October 1874, No. 97, Keep with, Dept. Notes. *IFP, External*, May 1883, No. 302; June 1883, No. 427; September 1883, No. 89; April 1884, Nos. 239-42; January 1886, No. 90. *HC*, Vol. 58, No. 581, Foreign Office to India Office, 3 September 1883; Vol. 64, No. 487, Viceroy to Secy. of State, Telg. 31 May 1884; Vol. 65, No. 702, Political Letter to Secy. of State, No. 41, 27 June 1884; Vol. 81, No. 1812, Foreign Office to India Office, 29 December 1885. *PSI*, Vol. 20, 2 February 1894, No. 8, Note of S.C. Das, 31 December 1883 enclosed. *IFP, External*, Vol. 3740, September 1890, No. 14; November 1890, Nos. 74-5. *PSLI*, Vol. 85, D.O. letter from the Resident to Govt., 14 April 1896, Govt's reply, 22 April 1896; Vol. 86 No. 101, 19 May 1896; Vol. 87, No. 118, 16 June 1896; Vol. 89, No. 184, 21 October 1896. *EP*, Vol. 19, Elgin to Lord Hamilton, Secy. of State, Telgs. 25 February, 17 April 1896, Hamilton to Elgin, Telg. 4 March 1896. P.J.B. Rana, *op.cit.*, p. 305. Edgar, *op.cit.*, p.20. Shakabpa, *op.cit.*, pp. 193-4. Lamb, *op.cit.*, pp.153-5.

but his brother, Dhir Shamsher, was undeterred. The *darbar* was divided into two parties, one in favour and the other against a Tibetan campaign. Girdlestone urged the Government to advise Jang Bahadur to peacefully settle the dispute, and to strengthen his hands in dealing with the "war party". He requested Jang Bahadur to replace his *Vakil* by another more agreeable to the Tibetans. The Indian government were willing to mediate in the dispute but Jang Bahadur showed no inclination to avail himself of the offer.¹ This however, was hardly surprising in view of the extreme jealousy with which the Nepalese government viewed the commercial aspirations of the British in Tibet which conflicted with Nepal's own commercial interests in that Country. As early as 1862, for instance, when the Bengal government were trying to develop their trade with Tibet through Sikkim, the Resident noted Jang Bahadur's concern because

our opening trade with Lhasa would be a serious blow to its [Nepal's] own commerce there of which it has now a complete and lucrative monopoly.

Jang Bahadur was suspected of exerting "secret influence" on some parties at Lhasa to foil the British objective; his argument was that the British were engaged in road building activities in Sikkim with some ulterior political motive, and that if they were not totally excluded from Tibet, Tibetan religion and society would be endangered. Jang Bahadur was also reported to have tried to increase his influence at Lhasa by backing a party contending for power; he was believed to have promised the party his support if it kept the British away from Tibet and promoted Nepalese interests there. Ramsay, on being instructed by the Government, lodged a strong protest with Jang Bahadur, warning him that

as the British government is always desirous to see the peaceful and civilising influence of commerce and mutual intercourse between nations as widely as possible extended, it did not fail to view with disfavour any attempt on His Excellency's part to perpetuate the policy of the exclusion of Europeans from Tibet.²

¹ *FPA*, June 1873, Nos. 462-75; October 1874, No. 97, Dept. Notes.

² *FPA*, April 1862, No. 302. Resident to Govt., 17 April 1862; August 1862, Same to same, 24 July 1862; September 1862, Same to same, 9 August, 5 September 1862. Sarat Chandra Das, the Indian government's secret agent to Lhasa, reported in 1883 that the local Nepalese traders bitterly

This conflict between the British and Nepalese interests in Tibet became in later years an important issue between the two governments.

There was another reason why the British discouraged Nepalese hostility towards Tibet: possibility of international complications and rift with China following the impression that the British were using Nepal as a tool to further their own objectives in Tibet. The risk of misunderstanding with China increased further when the Indian government decided to supply arms to Nepal in return for Gurkha recruits. Even before such supply had actually been made Mortimer Durand thought of asking Bir Shamsher to forcibly eject the Tibetan intruders from Lingtu. He privately asked the Resident, Major Durand, about "the practicability and expediency of getting the Nepalese to try their new weapons¹ as our allies or substitutes." The idea, he confessed, had "some objection", and was "doubtless immoral", but still "seems worth considering". Durand wanted to know from the Resident what the Nepalese wanted in Tibet and whether they were afraid of China.²

Lansdowne's arms arrangement³ coincided with a fresh round of disputes between Nepal and Tibet, and Elgin's decision not to meet Bir Shamsher's "preposterously large" requisition for arms was influenced by the Home government's apprehension of adverse Chinese reaction. For "imperial reasons," the Home government wanted "specially to be on good terms with China" at this time, when Britain's difficulties with Russia and France regarding the Pamirs and Siam respectively and the negotiations with China for the delimitation of the Burmo-Chinese frontier had entered upon their final and most delicate stage. In such circumstances, it appeared to the Political and Secret Committee of the India Office that

resented the opening of the Darjiling-Siliguri rail line and the development of the Sikkim trade route, for they had led to the introduction of Indian products into Tibet to the detriment of Nepal's trade with Tibet. *Journey to Lhasa and Central Tibet* (ed. by W.W. Rockhill), p. 91, The Nepalese pressed the Tibetans to close the Sikkim route, Macaulay, *op.cit.*, pp. 74, 12.

¹ The weapons were those which the Nepalese had smuggled from India. See Chapter III.

² *DP, D.O. Letter Book*, No. 2, p. 169. Private Telg. 9 November 1888.

³ See Chapter III.

the Government of India in providing for the importation of arms to a country over whose foreign relations they had no control were taking a new departure and undergoing a new responsibility.¹

Consequently, before agreeing to give arms, Elgin had to make it clear to the Nepalese King that in view of their many international obligations the British government could not permit

the importation of warlike material into Nepal in quantities which Your Highness's other neighbours might consider excessive or as constituting a menace to them and would expose the Government of India to the risk of imputation which might possibly involve very undesirable complications.²

The Nepalese government had, therefore, to undertake not to use the British arms against Tibet. This undertaking, as it applied to all subsequent delivery of arms to Nepal, could be said to have given the British a measure of indirect control on Nepal's relations with Tibet to the extent, at least, of lessening the risk of a Nepalese attack on Tibet.

Nepal's disputes with Tibet reached an acute stage in 1895-6. Elgin hoped he could persuade Bir Shamsheer to rely upon the British government's influence with the Chinese who could be requested to make the Tibetans agree to an immediate settlement of the dispute. Elgin's real object, as he disclosed to George Hamilton, the Secretary of State, was just to "use the name" of China more with the object of humouring her than of actually bringing her up as an active mediator and thereby strengthening her influence on Nepal and Tibet. It was necessary to humour China because Elgin saw her "oscillating towards Russia and France whose influence is on the wax in China while ours is on the wane."³

The India Office, however, objected to this policy. It appeared to William Lee Warner, the Political Secretary, as "a marked departure in the history of our relations with Nepal," because, he said, on all earlier occasions when Nepal had quarrelled with Tibet the Indian government had refrained from involvement.⁴

¹ *PSI*, Vol. 20, No. 8, 2 February 1894, Minutes of S.C. Bayley and A. Lyall.

² *PSLI*, Vol. 77, No. 189, 17 October 1894, Encl. 2, Viceroy to the King of Nepal, 15 May 1894.

³ *EP*, Vol. 14, To Hamilton, 18 March, 30 July 1896. *HC*, Vol. 164, No. 183, Viceroy to Secy. of State, Telg. 25 February 1896.

⁴ Lee Warner had obviously overlooked that in 1791-2, when there was war between Nepal and Tibet, Cornwallis had tried mediation. See Chapter I.

Chinese mediation on British sponsorship, S.C. Bayley, a member of the Political and Secret Committee, noted, might anger the Nepalese who were not yet known to have approached China for mediation. Nepal and Tibet had both relations with China and could, if they so liked, make such appeal themselves. Therefore, in Bayley's opinion, "if China does not interfere spontaneously or at the instance of either party," the Indian government had better not "take the initiative, at all events at the present stage" nor urge Nepal to do so. Besides, if China intervened at the British instance and Nepal rejected the Chinese advice, China would naturally expect British support to enforce her decision. If then, the British supported China, Nepal would be annoyed, while if they did not, misunderstanding with China could not be averted. Besides, Hamilton observed that China was so weak and "so discredited that we can hardly believe her capable of any assertive authority over her quasi-vassal states." Elgin was, therefore, advised against any "undue use of China's name and authority," for if the British asked China to intervene in Nepal's disputes with Tibet on the present occasion, it would be interpreted by China as British acknowledgement of China's suzerainty over Nepal, and this was against the political interests of the Indian government. It was also significant that although arms had been supplied to Nepal, China had as yet made no protests, either because she was ignorant of the matter or had regarded it as the natural manifestation of Britain's special interests in Nepal. If, however, the Chinese did protest now on the ground that it exacerbated Nepalese militarism, Lee Warner would tell them that Nepal had purchased all arms "fairly", and so the British government saw no reason to interfere with such purchases. This, however, was not Hamilton's view. The Secretary of State did not want any rift with China on account of Nepal, and so, while approving of Elgin's policy of giving arms to Bir Shamsher, he impressed upon the Viceroy the risk of such rift. It also seemed to the India Office from the Resident's reports that the dispute with Tibet was but an excuse for Bir Shamsher to increase the armed strength of Nepal with British assistance. Therefore, the best policy seemed to the Secretary of State was to wait and watch the course of the dispute without making any attempt to influence it. China, it was seen, was too occupied in her war with Japan to desire a military interven-

tion in the dispute. But if she did intervene or if Tibet defeated Nepal—an equally unlikely event—the British could not avoid intervention because “India could never allow a foreign power to occupy Nepal.” However, soon the dispute was settled thanks to China’s mediation.¹ The reaction of the India Office was one of relief, for it was apprehended that a war between Nepal and Tibet “must have produced” for the British “embarrassments and complications with China.”²

The recurring disputes between Nepal and Tibet were obvious pointers to China’s difficulty in managing her satellite states. Since British interests required prevention of these disputes, they had to seek to assume control of Nepal’s relations with Tibet. Circumstances in the first decade of the 20th century were such that it seemed the British might attain their object. From the traditional Nepalese point of view the decline of Chinese power proved of dubious advantage. Nepal continued to look to China as a power “too distant to constitute a real threat” to her, but China was no longer “too close enough to serve as a potential source of support against aggression from the south.”³ The inevitable trend in Nepal’s foreign relations, therefore, was towards an increasing accommodation with the British.

¹ See p. 105.

² *EP*, Vol. 14, Hamilton to Elgin, 28 February, 17 April 1896; Vol. 19, Same to same Telg. 4 March 1896. *HC*, Vol. 164, No. 183, Minutes of Lee Warner and Bayley, March 1896; Vol. 165, No. 332, Viceroy to Secy. of State, Telg. 17 April 1896. *PSLI*, Vol. 86, No. 101, 19 May 1896, Enclō. Resident to Govt., 2 May 1896.

³ Rose, *op. cit.*, p. 215.

CHAPTER FIVE

NEPAL AND THE YOUNGHUSBAND MISSION TO TIBET, 1903-04

BIR Shamsher died on 5 March 1901. His brother, Deb Shamsher, succeeded him, but before three months had elapsed was deposed and exiled by his younger brother, Chandra Shamsher.¹ The coup was significant because, first, it was bloodless—a rare event in Nepalese politics—and secondly, an ex-Resident, Col. H. Wylie, knew from Chandra Shamsher's letters to him that he was not happy over Deb's succession and "did not mean to sit down quietly if opportunity should occur to better his position." Chandra Shamsher had assured Wylie that the coup would involve "no loss of life and that everything should be done in such a way that nobody could be shocked or annoyed." From the British interests point of view, Wylie privately wrote to Lee Warner, the change was a "good one." Chandra Shamsher was "clever, sharp and quite ready to be loyal" whereas Deb Shamsher was "much addicted to drink, conceited and overbearing"; worse still, he was "the Nepal nationalist, averse to the English."² In fact, however, this was a prejudiced view. As Colonel T.C. Pears, the Resident at the time of the coup, tells us, Deb was deposed because he was considered by his rivals as not anti-but pro-British and too progressive in his views. Deb had allowed Curzon to make a hunting trip to the Terai—the first Viceroy to be given such permission.³ Deb had taken bold steps towards

¹ *PSLI*, Vol. 130, Reg No. 447; Vol. 135, Reg. Nos. 949, 957. *CRP*, Vol. 160, Curzon to Hamilton, 3 July 1901. Deb was removed to Dhankuta in Eastern Nepal whence he escaped to Darjiling. He failed to get British support to regain power. He died at Mussoorie in 1914. *PSLI*, Vol. 139, Reg. No. 1446A; Vol. 140, Reg. Nos. 1479A, 1538A, 1557A.

² *PSLI*, Vol. 134, Reg. No. 772, Wylie to Lee Warner, 2 July 1901.

³ Earl of Ronaldshay, *The Life of Lord Curzon*, II, pp. 166-9. Curzon's earlier proposal to Bir Shamsher to visit Kathmandu had "taken the breath away" from the Prime Minister. *CRP*, Vol. 158, Curzon to Hamilton, 2 February 1899; Vol. 160, Curzon to Hamilton, 17 April 1901.

the abolition of slavery and had also encouraged the spread of education in Nepal which alarmed the powerful obscurantist elements in the *darbar*.¹ However, Wylie's estimate of Chandra Shamsher proved correct ; no Prime Minister of Nepal served the British government better than he.

Chandra Shamsher's accession coincided with a crisis in Tibet which stemmed from two developments : the Tibetan government's assertion against the steadily weakening Chinese control ; and the Indian government's determination to bring Tibet under their sphere of influence so that it did not pass under the Russian fold. Chinese power and prestige in Tibet, which was already in decline, reached a very low ebb in the closing years of the 19th century. The disastrous defeat by Japan, the rebellion in Kansu and North-West China, the growing Russian pressure on Manchuria and Mongolia, the tribal uprisings in Eastern Tibet—all strengthened the Tibetan government's impression that China was too weak to protect them from foreigners, particularly the British, whom the Tibetans feared as an aggressive and annexationist power. What the Tibetans particularly resented was China's acquiescence in the loss of Sikkim to the British. They repudiated the Anglo-Chinese Conventions regarding British protectorate over Sikkim (1890) and their commercial rights in Tibet (1893). They uprooted the boundary pillars demarcating the frontier between Sikkim and Tibet, intruded into the Sikkimese territory at Giagong and refused to vacate it ; their contention was : the Anglo-Chinese agreements concerning Tibet were not binding on her because she had not signed them.²

The spirit of independence from Chinese control intensified with the coming of age of the 13th Dalai Lama, an extremely energetic and ambitious personality. The Dalai Lama, determined to reign as well as rule, had frequent conflicts with the Amban regarding administration. Considering the fact that Britain and China feared Russia and the Czar had many Buddhist subjects living in Siberia and Mongolia who venerated the Dalai Lama, it was not unnatural for the latter to calculate that close relation with the Russians was the best insurance against Chinese

¹ *PSLI*, Vol. 135, Reg. No. 957, Secret Letter to Secy. of State, No. 125, 1 August 1901 ; Vol. 139, Reg. No. 1446A, Pears to Govt. 7 November 1901.

² Francis Younghusband, *India and Tibet*, pp. 50-65.

and British pressure. The many Mongolian Buriats—Russian subjects—who studied in the Lhasa monasteries could serve as the medium of communication between the Dalai Lama and the Czar. The Czar, Nicholas II, himself was keenly interested in Tibet possibly viewing it as another place on the Indian frontier whence he could put pressure on the British.¹ The Chinese, for their part, were anxious to hold on to their position in Tibet.

As for the British, they had no intention to give up their treaty rights in Tibet which assumed considerable political significance under Curzon's Viceroyalty. Curzon was convinced that the Tibetan problem could not be settled through Chinese mediation; China was not only unable to make the Tibetans honour her agreements with Britain, but unwilling to do so because the exclusion of foreign influence from Tibet, which served as a buffer between British India and the Chinese province of Szechuan, was China's settled policy. Curzon in several despatches to Hamilton pointed out that the existing policy of dealing with Tibet through the Chinese government was at once "unproductive and inglorious,"² and therefore the Viceroy wanted to establish direct relations with the Dalai Lama. He would use Britain's commercial rights in Tibet as a convenient instrument of pressure on the Dalai Lama with the ultimate object of bringing Tibet under exclusive British influence, which influence in his opinion was the only safe guarantee against Russia's filling up the political vacuum in Tibet caused by the breakdown of Chinese power there.³

Of the Russian government's interests in Tibet Curzon was for long aware. On their intrigues with the Dalai Lama he had received between 1899 and 1901 many reports from a variety of sources, official and non-official. These reports spoke of the exchange of delegations by the Dalai Lama and the Czar. One

¹ D.J. Dallin, *The Rise of Russia in Asia*, pp. 42-3. For the life of the 13th Dalai Lama see C. Bell, *The Portrait of the Dalai Lama*. Tokai Toda, *The Thirteenth Dalai Lama*. Toda was at Lhasa in 1913-23 as a student of Lamaism, and later as the Dalai Lama's unofficial adviser in foreign affairs.

² *PSLI*, Vol. 112, Reg. No. 415, Secret Letter to Secy. of State, No. 60, 30 March 1899. *CRP*, Vol. 158, Curzon to Hamilton, 23 March 1899.

³ For Curzon's Tibetan policy see A. Lamb, *Britain and Chinese Central Asia*, pp. 237-317. Peter Fleming, *Bayonets to Lhasa*. Shakabpa, *Tibet*, pp. 205-23. P. Mehra, *The Younghusband Expedition*, pp. 113-24.

Mongolian Buriat, Dorjief by name, was strongly suspected to be the key figure in the Russo-Tibetan secret intercourse. Between 1899 and 1901 Curzon had made three attempts to open epistolary communication with the Dalai Lama, and their failure considerably enraged him.¹ By the autumn of 1901 Curzon was convinced of the Russian intrigues at Lhasa, but as to the extent of these intrigues and whether or not the Dalai Lama had actually been won over by the Czar he needed some more and authentic information in order to adopt a strong Tibetan policy. Curzon was determined to nip the Russian menace in the bud, and the only way to forestall Russian predominance in Lhasa, he maintained, was by "being in advance ourselves."² His plan, which he sketched out in a private letter to Hamilton dated 11 June 1901, was to step up pressure on the Tibetan frontier adjoining Sikkim, to drive the Tibetans from Giagong and, if opposed, to occupy the Chumbi Valley and then, finally, to compel the Tibetan government to negotiate for a settlement at Lhasa. The object of the settlement, he added, was to convert Tibet into a buffer between the Russian and Indian Empires and thereby prevent Russian influence seeping through Tibet into Nepal, Bhutan and Sikkim and disturbing their relations with the Indian government.³

But it proved hard to convince the Home government who were against any forward movement in Tibet which would be resented by China and create international complications for Britain. The Home government were quite aware of Curzon's Russophobia and his views as to how to tackle the Russian threat to India. When Curzon's appointment as Viceroy was first announced, Hamilton was a trifle uneasy because Curzon, through his writings, had "somewhat committed himself" to "a more advanced policy" than the Secretary of State approved of. Hamilton, in his own words, "never believed" that Russia had any serious intention of invading India although he did recognise that she used her position in Central Asia as a lever to worry the British.⁴

¹ Lamb, *op. cit.*, pp. 242-52. *AP*, 1904, Vol. LXVII; *East India (Tibet): Papers Relating to Tibet*, pp. 102-20. India Secret Letter to Secy. of State, 26 October 1899.

² *CRP*, Vol. 160, Curzon to Hamilton, 11 June, 11 July, 31 July 1901.

³ *Ibid.*, Vol. 160, Curzon to Hamilton, 11 June 1901.

⁴ *HMP*, C125/3, Hamilton to Elgin, 4 October 1898.

As for safeguarding the Indian government's commercial interests in Tibet, the game, in the India Office's opinion, was not worth the candle; the Tibetan trade was not only small in value¹ but showed not much promise of future expansion either.² Curzon's "somewhat aggressive" Tibetan policy, Hamilton feared, would enrage China--and this for several reasons the Home government wanted to avoid. Negotiations which were in progress for a commercial treaty with China³ would be affected; Russia might take advantage of the Anglo-Chinese rift and also use Britain's pressure on Tibet as an excuse for her own pressure on Chinese Turkestan, Manchuria and Mongolia. Besides, the Home government's hands were otherwise full: the Boer War, the Boxer indemnity issue, the Anglo-French rivalry in Egypt and North Africa, checking Russian advances towards Persia and the Gulf, the uneasy relations with Habibullah, the Amir of Afghanistan, and the Pathan tribes on the North-Western frontier. Any addition to this load of problems was considered most undesirable. Besides, pending more authentic and definite information regarding the precise nature and object of the Dalai Lama's intrigues with the Czar, Hamilton thought it unwise to put pressure on the Dalai Lama lest, instead of detaching him from the Russians, it goaded him into a firmer alliance with them.⁴

There was yet another consideration: misunderstanding with Nepal whose jealousy and suspicion of British activities in Tibet was well known to the Home government. The Nepalese government, who were extremely sensitive about their independence and very anxious to keep the British influence as far away as possible, might be alarmed if this influence were established so close to their territory. It seemed to Lee Warner and Lyall⁵ not unlikely that the Nepalese might even join the

¹ The total value of this trade in 1898-99 was Rupees 3,450,810. With Nepal the trade was valued at Rupees 37,473,310. *AP*, 1910, Vol. CIV, *Statistical Tables, East India*, pp. 248-9.

² *PSLI*, Vol. 112, Reg. No. 415, Note by C. Bernard, 17 April 1899. The annual value of this trade was Rupees 188,996 in 1893-4; Rupees 218,907 in 1894-5; Rupees 208,011 in 1895-6; Rupees 209,862 in 1896-7; Rupees 225,246 in 1897-8. *AP*, 1910, Vol. CIV, pp. 248-9.

³ The Treaty of Shanghai was signed on 5 September 1902.

⁴ *CRP*, Vol. 160, Hamilton to Curzon, 4, 11 July 1901.

⁵ A.C. Lyall was Member, India Council.

Tibetans and Chinese to oppose Curzon's moves. The Viceroy; it appeared to Lee Warner, had overlooked this, and so the latter regretted that "the importance of Nepal in the political system of India is too often minimised." It was most impolitic, he warned, to get behind Nepal;¹ Curzon, it seemed, was doing just that—and because he distrusted the Nepalese. The Viceroy, for instance, while trying to contact the Dalai Lama, had thought of sending an emissary to Lhasa via Nepal but later dropped the idea because the Resident informed him that it was impossible to carry out the project without the Nepalese government's knowledge, and Curzon for himself did not want that the *darbar* should know about a "matter of such delicacy."² No wonder, then, that nothing was said to Chandra Shamsher about the Tibetan situation until the Prime Minister himself raised the issue with the Resident.

Chandra Shamsher, so he told Pears, learnt about the Czar's receiving a Tibetan mission from *the Pioneer*, an Indian newspaper, but his initial reaction was rather one of curiosity than anxiety. The Nepalese agent at Lhasa, Captain Jit Bahadur, was asked to enquire and was assured by the Tibetan authorities that the reports were baseless and they had been designedly got up by the British to sow dissension between Nepal and Tibet. Chandra Shamsher was not quite convinced; the reports could be mere "myth", but still it was worth ascertaining whether the British knew about them. Accordingly, the Prime Minister asked Pears.³

Chandra Shamsher's query opened out for Curzon an important possibility : using the Nepalese agency at Lhasa as an observation post and intelligence transmitting centre, a means to keep close watch on the Dalai Lama and Dorjjeff. Information from this source was likely to have more effect on the Home government

¹ HC, Vol. 196, No. 2166, Lee Warner's Note, July 1901, Captain Peach's Note on Tibet; No. 2151, Lyall's Note, 17 July 1901; Vol. 197, No. 2175, Secret Despatch to India, No. 26, 16 August 1901. CRP, Vol. 160. Hamilton to Curzon, 25 July 1901.

² PSLI, Vol. 135, Reg. No. 930, India Secret Letter to Secy. Of State, No. 123, 25 July 1901.

³ HC, Vol. 198, No. 2429, Chandra Shamsher to Pears, 13 July 1901. PSLI Vol. 143, Reg. No. 571; Vol. 142; Reg. No. 448, Chandra to Pears, 23 January 1902.

than those supplied by others—British officers at Darjiling, Kalimpong, Sikkim and Peking. Information about Dorjjeff being still “somewhat scanty”, Curzon wanted more details about him and his activities. Besides, it appeared to the Viceroy, rather a “curious fact” that a mission, possibly headed by Dorjjeff, had reportedly passed through Kathmandu to India on its way to Russia by sea, but the Nepalese government seemed to have had no knowledge about it.¹

On request, Chandra Shamsher agreed to keep the Resident informed of the developments in Tibet as reported by Jit Bahadur from Lhasa. For the Prime Minister, who had recently come to power, this was an opportunity to ingratiate himself with the British government—a spirit perhaps fostered by the additional consideration that if he did not cooperate with the British, he might be misunderstood by the Viceroy who could even make political use of Deb Shamsher, who in the meanwhile had fled to Darjiling. Jit Bahadur set up a secret service at Lhasa and roped in some Tibetan and junior Chinese officers as paid informers; members of the Dalai Lama’s household—his gardener, cook and personal physician—also served him in like capacity. At Kathmandu Nepalese police shadowed Tibetan pilgrims and interrogated them about affairs at Lhasa.²

Reports from Lhasa and Kathmandu, sent regularly by the Resident to Government, corroborated some facts and confirmed many more. Curzon relied upon the reports of Jit Bahadur whom he described as “a sagacious and accurate informant,” as “our main authority” for the events at Lhasa. The weakness of the Amban, so Jit Bahadur reported to Chandra Shamsher, had, indeed, made the Dalai Lama swollen-headed. In the Lhasa monasteries, he added, there were many Mongolian monks, the most important of them being one Khendechagga whom the British promptly identified as Dorjjeff; he was the Dalai Lama’s tutor in metaphysics and his confidant; he had gone to Russia only recently and had returned with some Russians disguised as Mongolian monks. He was believed to have made the Dalai

¹ *HC*, Vol. 198, No. 2429, H. Daly, Deputy Secy. Foreign Dept. to Pears, 1 August 1901. *PSLI*, Vol. 143, Reg. No. 480, C.E. Buckland, Chief Secy. Bengal, to Secy. Foreign Dept, 17 October 1901.

² *Ibid.*, Reg. No. 571, Chandra to Pears, 25 December 1901, Chandra to Dr. Armstrong, Actg. Resident, 26 February 1902.

Lama a gift of Russian rifles and the Tibetan monasteries large sums of money obtained presumably from the Russian government. His proceedings were suspicious, Jit Bahadur's informers reported; he rarely came out of the Dalai Lama's private apartments where he lived. All these were not unimpeachably true facts, but they were not just baseless rumours either; Jit Bahadur warned Chandra Shamsheer : "there is no smoke without a fire." More news followed : Colonel Indra Vikram, the leader of the Nepalese tributary mission to Peking, while returning by way of Lhasa saw caravans bringing to Tibet what he believed Russian arms from Mongolia. Russian mechanics were reported to be turning out rifles in the Tibetan arms factories. Speculations were rife in Lhasa bazars about how soon Russian troops would arrive to fight the British army believed to be preparing for a march into Tibet.¹

Jit Bahadur had several meetings with the Amban and the 'Kajis',² from whom he tried to find out the authenticity of a strongly-rumoured agreement between Russia and Tibet, guaranteeing Russian protection to Tibet. The Amban as well as the Kajis repeatedly denied the existence of such an agreement but failed to allay Jit Bahadur's suspicion. Jit Bahadur kept arguing that if the British had smelt a rat in the Dalai Lama's activities, they had reasons to do so : after all, "a dog never barks unless something is up."³

In January 1902 Chandra Shamsheer held a conversation with a high ranking Tibetan lama who had come to Kathmandu on religious business. The lama stated that sometime ago a Tibetan delegation had passed through Nepal for India, but he could not confirm if that was the one which had visited Russia. He also disclosed that strong anti-British feelings in China, Tibet

¹ *RNA* and Chandra's letters to the Resident, 1901-2. *PSLI*, Vol. 140, P. 8g. No. 1535A; Vol. 142, Reg. No. 412; Vol. 143, Reg. No. 571; Vol. 144, Reg. No. 644; Vol. 145, Reg. Nos. 807, 899; Vol. 146, Reg. No. 977; Vol. 149, Reg. Nos. 1169, 1396; Vol. 150, Reg. No. 1658A.

² The Kajis, called in Tibetan *Shap-pe*—three laymen and one monk—constituted the Tibetan Council or the *Ka-Shag*, the principal executive body of the Tibetan government with general controlling power over the internal administration of the country. Bell, *Portrait, op. cit.*, p. 142. H.E. Richardson, *Tibet and its History*, p. 21.

³ *PSLI*, Vol. 146, Reg. No. 977, Chandra to Col. Revenshaw, Offg. Resident, 5 June 1902.

and Ladakh had led them to form an alliance which had the backing of Russia, and that an attack on the British would be launched in 1904. The lama added that if Chandra Shamsher joined the alliance he could expect the extension of Nepal as far as Calutta.¹ Chandra Shamsher did not take the lama's statement very seriously but his suspicion was confirmed: the Dalai Lama did have some bee in his bonnet and the Russians were encouraging him. This suspicion was further strengthened by the remarks of Kawaguchi² who told Chandra Shamsher that Russia had influence with the Dalai Lama and his closest associates. Chandra Shamsher had good reasons to be disturbed over the Tibetan situation. Russian alliance would make the Dalai Lama powerful which the Nepalese government could not but view with disfavour because it might undermine the main plank of Nepal's prestige and influence in Tibet—her military superiority. The Dalai Lama might also repudiate the 1856 treaty and invoke Russian assistance to meet Nepalese reprisal. Further, Russian protection of Tibet would mean the end of Nepal's long-cherished territorial aspirations in Tibet.

Jit Bahadur's reports and Chandra Shamsher's uneasiness were used by Curzon to justify his strong Tibetan policy which the Home government were in no mood to sanction. Hamilton in emphasising the political, military and financial objections to this policy had warned the Viceroy that the

Tibetans are but the smallest pawns on the political chessboard, but castles, knights and bishops may all be involved in trying to take that pawn.

This was in August 1901.³

By the end of 1902, however, the Home government seemed to have had a far better appreciation of the Russian intrigue at Lhasa and the damage it might do to Britain's relations with Nepal. What influenced the Home government's thinking most was the year-round report from the Indian government and the British diplomats in China and Russia that a secret agreement had been concluded between Russia and China which had given

¹ *Ibid.*, Vol. 142, Reg. No. 309, Chandra to Pears, 13 January 1902.

² Kawaguchi was a Japanese Buddhist scholar who went to Tibet via Nepal in 1899-1904. His book: *Three Years in Tibet*, pp. 526-9, 685-713.

³ *CRP*, Vol. 160, Hamilton to Curzon, 22 August 1901.

the former a special position in Tibet.¹ The Home government, who were already exercised over the predominant position of Russia in North China, became doubly so for what appeared to them a fresh instance of Russia's outrunning Britain in the race for obtaining concessions and spheres of influence in China. "We cannot tolerate this", Lee Warner declared. Nor could Curzon who considered it his "duty to frustrate this little game while there is yet time."²

Russian influence in Tibet was rather a political than a military problem and, therefore, the Home government were for a political solution in which Nepal figured prominently. A Russian invasion of India from the side of Tibet, according to the highest military authorities, was impracticable in view of the formidable geographical obstacles. "A full dress Russian invasion of India through Tibet, no responsible person ever dreamed possible," wrote Younghusband.³ Tibet could hardly afford the same facilities for a Russian military operation against India as Turkestan did in regard to Russia's advance towards Afghanistan. Hundreds of miles of difficult terrain separated Central Tibet, where lay Lhasa, and the Russian boundary beyond Mongolia. The intervening country was too poor to support a large army. Besides, the high passes between Nepal and Tibet remained closed by snow for most of the year, making troop movements through them extremely difficult. Russia could not place across the northern Nepalese frontier as large number of troops as she could across the Afghan border, connected by railways with the Russian military bases in Central Asia. But, then, there were strong political objections to Russia's presence in Tibet. Russian secret agents and a small Russian army in Tibet could oblige the Indian government to lock up troops in the north-east frontier, thus enabling the Russians to foment further trouble in Persia and Afghanistan. Russia in Tibet could threaten the

¹ *HC*, Vol. 207, Nos. 2710, 2820; Vol. 208, No. 2963. *PSLI*, Vol. 145, Reg. No. 807; Vol. 150. Reg. No. 1590A. Notes by S.C. Bayley, Lyall, D. Fitzpatrick, J. Edge and Lee Warner, December 1902, January 1903. FO 800/119, *Lansdowne Private Papers*, E. Satow to Lansdowne, 11 September, 19 November, 11 December 1902. *CRP*, Vol. 172, Hamilton to Curzon, Telgs. 11 August, 16, 26 November 1902. Lamb, *op.cit.*, pp. 267-76.

² *PSLI*, Vol. 150, Reg. No. 1590A. Curzon to Hamilton, 13 November 1902. *HC*, Vol. 205, No. 2435, Lee Warner's Note. Lamb, *op.cit.*, p. 275.

³ Younghusband, *op.cit.*, p. 75.

security of Nepal, Sikkim and Bhutan which formed an important link in India's defence structure. Russia could subject Nepal, in particular, to pressure and undermine her loyalty to Britain. Nepal between British India and Russia could play one off against the other and follow a more independent policy than the British could safely allow her. Further, a scramble between Russia and Britain for exclusive political influence in Nepal could lead to political confusion at Kathmandu. In short, Russian ascendancy over Tibet would create those very problems in the north-east frontier of India which still baffled the British in the north-west. Besides, Russia could enlist Gurkhas in her army, delivering a blow to Britain's military interests in Nepal, which interests formed the most important link between the Indian and Nepalese governments. Lord Roberts, now the Commander-in-Chief of the British army, noted thus:

Russia's predominance in Tibet would not be a direct military danger to India, but it would be a serious military disadvantage. It would certainly unsettle Nepal and would in all probability interfere with our Gurkha recruiting which could of itself be a real misfortune. I consider it out of the question Russia being permitted to obtain a footing in Tibet. We have had and shall still have quite enough trouble owing to Russia being near us on the north-west frontier of India—that we cannot avoid; but we can and ought to prevent her getting a position which would inevitably cause unrest all along the north-east frontier.¹

As to the Russian menace, then, there was no doubt, but as to how it should be dealt with, there was no agreement between the Indian and Home governments. Curzon's ready solution was to despatch a mission to Lhasa, pacific in declaration, military in composition and political in intention. He declared:

I am a firm believer in the existence of a secret understanding if not a secret treaty between Russia and China...I would not on any ground withdraw the mission. I would inform China and Tibet that it was going and go it should. It would be a pacific mission intended to conclude a treaty of friendship and trade with the Tibetan government. But it would be accompanied by a sufficient force to ensure its safety.²

It would fight if opposed, and then "Lhasa would be in our hands within 2-3 months."³

¹ *HC*, Vol. 206, No. 2651, Roberts' Minute, 30 September 1902. *Memo on Tibet*, by Col. Robertson, War Office, 25 September 1902.

² *CRP*, Vol. 161, Curzon to Hamilton, 13 November 1902.

³ *Ibid.*, Curzon to Hamilton, 20 August 1902,

To the Home government Curzon's scheme seemed rather to aggravate than resolve the problem: Russia might send a counter mission to Lhasa, thereby creating a situation like that on the eve of the second Afghan war. Tibetan resistance to the British mission, so Jit Bahadur's report said, was certain, and the full-scale war that would inevitably follow would create the impression abroad that Britain had invaded Tibet, a part of the Chinese empire. Besides, the Cabinet was unwilling to incur public criticism for undertaking a Tibetan campaign when elsewhere the British government had already had what Hamilton described later as a "surfeit of fighting."¹ Curzon's plan was rejected and the India office hit upon a novel scheme, instead: using Nepal as a cat's paw.

It was *The Times* which had first suggested that since Nepalese interests would be endangered by Russian predominance in Tibet, Nepal should be allowed to take any action she liked for the defence of her trade and other interests guaranteed by the treaty of 1856. Nepal's eagerness to fight the Tibetans was well known to the Government,² and so, *The Times* pointed out :

we need utter only one word of encouragement at Kathmandu and there will be an end to Tibetan seclusion within a very few hours, possibly without a single Indian regiment being sent beyond the frontier.³

The idea caught on and Lee Warner shaped it into a plan. He and the Members of the India Council strongly held that not only should the Nepalese government know the British concern over Russian designs on Tibet but they should be taken into complete confidence before Curzon took any action to frustrate those designs. Curzon had no doubt utilised the Nepalese agency at Lhasa as a look-out post but it did not appear to Earl Percy, the Parliamentary Under Secretary, that the "idea of using Nepalese rights over Tibet as a weapon" against the Dalai Lama had crossed the Viceroy's mind.⁴ In other words, Curzon had overlooked that "to punish Tibet we might let Nepal do our work."⁵ Curzon, in fact, had not yet informed the Secretary of State what he thought would be Chandra Shamsher's reaction if

¹ *Ibid.*, Vol. 162, Hamilton to Curzon, 14 January 1903.

² See Chapter IV.

³ *The Times*, 24 October 1900.

⁴ CRP, Vol. 161, Percy to Curzon, 3 September 1902.

⁵ HC, Vol. 196, No. 2166, Lee Warner's Note, July 1901.

a British mission went to Lhasa. Lee Warner feared that if the British were involved in a military action in Tibet, the Nepalese government might be embarrassed because their treaty (1856) with Tibet obliged them to come to her assistance in the event of foreign aggression.¹ Lee Warner wanted Curzon to have "an immediate exchange of ideas with Nepal on the whole question of Tibet" so that any step that the Viceroy took against the Dalai Lama did not create misunderstanding with the Nepalese government; "we cannot afford to be indifferent or to run the slightest risk of a quarrel with Nepal," Lee Warner added. He suggested that the Viceroy urge Chandra Shamsher to exert diplomatic pressure on the Dalai Lama and ascertain if the latter had concluded a written agreement with Russia and if so to what effect. If it were established that such an agreement existed, Chandra Shamsher should demand its revocation, pointing out its injurious effect on Nepalese interests in Tibet. If political pressure failed, Lee Warner suggested, "might not Nepal be urged to send a force to Lhasa" and demand from the Dalai Lama an undertaking that Russian troops would not be let into Tibet? The British representatives in Peking and St. Petersburg, Lee Warner continued, would ask the Chinese and Russian governments not to meddle in the dispute between Nepal and Tibet and to let them settle it themselves. It was very likely that the Dalai Lama, who feared Nepal's military power, would quail under Chandra Shamsher's admonition, but if he did not and if a war followed, the latter would certainly come out the winner. At any rate "putting Nepal forward instead of our marching to Lhasa" was a far less risky expedient than Curzon's so called "pacific mission." If, however, such a mission ultimately proved unavoidable, the India Office would first ensure Nepalese cooperation because, so Hamilton pointed out to Curzon,

In addition to the material assistance we should thus gain, if we come to overt acts, the political effect outside India could be great, for it would be a demonstration to the world at large that not only the British government but the peoples of India were equally determined to withstand and combat any Russian advance into territories which command an outlet to India.²

The plan had the additional advantage that whereas China would

¹ Aitchison, *Treaties and Engagements* (edn. 1909), II, p. 97. f.n., Article II of the treaty.

² CRP, Vol. 161, Letter dated 11 September 1902.

certainly protest if a British mission entered Lhasa, she would probably see no objection to Nepal—a Chinese tributary—doing what the Amban had so far failed to achieve : restraining the ambitious Dalai Lama from a rash policy. Lee Warner's plan was accepted by the Home government as the "final solution to the Tibetan problem;" Lansdowne, the Foreign Secretary, was impressed; "the Nipalese," he noted, "are friendly and would fight." Hamilton asked Curzon to sound the Nepalese government "how far their cooperation could be relied upon assuming we had to move."¹

Curzon was annoyed with what seemed to him the India Office's obsession with Nepalese susceptibilities. It appeared to him strange that Lee Warner should suspect that the Indian government had not taken Chandra Shamsher into confidence when Jit Bahadur's reports together with the Prime Minister's comments thereon had been regularly sent to the India Office. Curzon also rejected Lee Warner's plan; he had two major considerations against setting Nepal on Tibet. First, if Nepal were involved in a war with Tibet the supply of Gurkha recruits for the Indian army might be restricted by the *darbar* because the Nepalese army itself would require more men. Secondly, Chandra Shamsher would demand large supply of arms to which, for security reasons, the Indian government could not agree. In fact, Chandra Shamsher had been urging a review of the arms question on the ground that as Russia was supplying arms to the Dalai Lama, Britain should make Nepal militarily stronger so that she could not only defend her own interests but serve as an effective buffer state. The Prime Minister grumbled that "a well-armed and powerful Tibet and an ill-armed Nepal would be a very depressing sight and an unequal match;" he expected that the Indian government would not like Nepal "to remain in a completely unprepared state" when a sudden Russian thrust towards India was not impossible. The contrast between what Chandra Shamsher termed "free and generous supply of arms" to the Amir of Afghanistan and the restrictions on this supply to Nepal

¹ PSM, B 138, *Note on Tibet*, by Lee Warner, 5 September 1902. PSLI, Vol. 150, Reg. No. 1590A, Notes by Hamilton and Members of the India Council, December 1902. HC, Vol. 205, No. 2559, Lee Warner's Note. CRP, Vol. 161, Hamilton to Curzon, 17 September 1902, Lamb, *op. cit.*, pp. 278-9.

annoyed the Nepalese government most. The Durand Agreement (1893) committed the British to both allowing the Amir unrestricted importation of arms and munitions as well as assisting him in their procurement.¹ But the arms arrangement made with Bir Shamsheer at the same time had restrictions, and some conditions had to be fulfilled by the Nepalese government before the British permitted them to import arms.²

This to Chandra Shamsheer was gross discrimination. Curzon, however, refused to entertain this grievance. He strongly believed that British influence on the border states decreased in proportion as they became militarily strong ; and this belief had been confirmed by his cool relations with the Amir whose extensive acquisition of arms Curzon viewed with great suspicion and utter disapproval.³ Curzon strongly suspected that the Nepalese were going the Afghan way. Lansdowne's arms arrangement with Bir Shamsheer, in Curzon's opinion, was "somewhat similar" to the Durand Agreement with Abdur Rahman and equally regrettable. The Viceroy wanted to put more stringent restrictions on arms supply to Nepal. He took strong exception to the fact that the Nepalese government had set up an arms manufacturing factory in 1894 which had been kept from the Resident's knowledge until 1900. This he took as a clear breach of Bir Shamsheer's assurance to Lansdowne and Elgin that the Nepalese government would keep the Resident informed of their military establishments and their outturn in order to justify the periodical procurement of arms through the British government. Curzon also knew about Deb Shamsheer's claim of having established a new gun powder factory which had increased the production of gun powder ten-fold. Deb had also taken measures to manufacture 8000 rifles in imitation of Martini Henry rifles and six batteries of 7-pounder guns. Lansdowne and Elgin in permitting Nepal to import arms had expected that she would not manufacture them locally but get them through the Indian government alone—this expectation had been belied.

As a further instance of Nepalese "deception", it was reported

¹ Aitchison, *op. cit.*, XI, p. 362, Article VII.

² See Chapter III.

³ Ronaldshay, *op. cit.*, pp. 265-71. Lovat Fraser, *India under Curzon and After*, p. 66.

that large quantities of brass sheets recently imported by the Nepalese government ostensibly for roofing temples had actually been used for manufacturing cartridges. All this indicated that the Nepalese government were "clearly engaged in a surreptitious attempt to convert Nepal into a second Afghanistan," their idea presumably being "to hold the scales between the Russians and the English and to prevent the entry to their country by either."

Curzon was aware of the Nepalese sensitivity about their independence but himself looked upon Nepal as nothing but an Indian protectorate, the defence of which was the British government's responsibility. He would not, in short, let Chandra Shamsher exploit the Russian intrigues with the Dalai Lama as an excuse to make Nepal militarily strong and proportionately independent of British influence. The Prime Minister had accordingly been warned : "We are not going to wink at another Afghanistan."¹ Hamilton saw the force in Curzon's arguments but did not quite like that the Viceroy should make arms an issue with the Nepalese and Afghans and antagonise both at the same time. He advised Curzon thus :

The keenness of oriental rulers to obtain arms necessitates gentle handling where restrictions upon the imports of arms have to be imposed. It is quite true that Nepal cannot advance any plea that she is in danger from external aggression, and although that may be a conclusive reason from our point of view for stopping the accumulation of arms in Nepal, the Nepalese will not look at the matter in the same light.²

In December 1902 Chandra Shamsher, while in Calcutta on his way to Delhi to attend the *Darbar*, assured Curzon that he regarded the interests of Nepal as "entirely bound up with the British government in India," and so he would heartily co-operate with the British in any measure they took against the Dalai Lama. Nepal, Chandra Shamsher added, could not allow Russian ascendancy in Tibet, for that would mean "good-bye to her [Nepal's] independence."³ Chandra Shamsher's frankness

¹ CRP, Vol. 161, Curzon to Hamilton, 9 July, 1 October 1902, Curzon to A. Godley, Permanent Under Secretary, 30 October 1902. FO, 766/5. Deb Shamsher to Chandra, 2 December 1901. PSLI, Vol. 150, Reg. No. 1551A, Chandra to Ravenshaw, 6 October 1902.

² CRP, Vol. 161, Hamilton to Curzon, 31 July 1902.

³ PSLI, Vol. 151, Reg. No. 182. CRP; Vol. 162, Curzon to Hamilton, 28 December 1902.

was "almost a surprise" for Curzon, who, however, did not disclose his own Tibetan policy to the Prime Minister except in "a general and non-committal manner."¹ The main object of the meeting, so far as Curzon was concerned, was to test the genuineness of the Nepalese government's reported concern over the Tibetan situation.

Chandra Shamsher's assurance of cooperation strengthened Curzon's hands *vis-a-vis* the India Office whose fear of misunderstanding with the *darbar* regarding the Tibetan issue proved baseless. Curzon now maintained that the Nepalese were not only anxious about Russian threat to their interests but looked to the British government to remove that threat ; therefore, if the latter did not take necessary measures to allay the Nepalese anxiety, British prestige in Nepal would be seriously compromised. This constituted an important argument in Curzon's secret despatch to Hamilton, dated 8 January 1903, where after giving a masterly account of how British policy in Tibet had failed, the Viceroy established that the only solution to the Tibetan problem lay in an Anglo-Tibetan treaty negotiated at Lhasa and the posting of a permanent British representative there to ensure the observance of the treaty by the Tibetan government.²

Hamilton was impressed by these arguments but not Lee Warner who contended that if military use of Nepal was considered risky, Curzon could at least make political use of "the card which we have in our hands"—that is, he should "take advantage of our relations with Nepal and Nepal's treaty relations with Tibet."³ Instead of sending a mission to Lhasa, Curzon, Lee Warner suggested, should warn the Dalai Lama through Jit Bahadur. It was likely that Anglo-Nepalese diplomatic pressure might oblige the Dalai Lama to agree soon to negotiate with the British government sooner, if the number of Jit Bahadur's escorts⁴ were increased, suggesting possible military action by Nepal. However, if all this proved unavailing and if a mission were at all sent, Lee Warner would prefer a Nepalese mission. He was in no doubt that Nepal had strong grounds to

¹ *Ibid.*

² *PSLI*, Vol. 151, Reg. No. 182.

³ *Ibid.*, Vol. 150, Reg. No. 1590A, Lee Warner's Note.

⁴ Jit Bahadur had thirty-one escorts.

intervene in the matter while the British had "no right to force down the throats of the Tibetans a mission to which they object." A British mission to Lhasa would appear as an invasion of Chinese territory, while Nepalese intervention would appear as an unavoidable step taken by Chandra Shamsher for no other reason than the protection of Nepal's interests based on treaty and recognised by both Tibet and China for about fifty years. John Edge, a Member of the India Council, agreed with Lee Warner and noted :

- In fact, our object might be better, more surely and more easily effected by turning Nepal on to the Government of Tibet than by the hazardous expedient of a so called pacific mission which, if necessary, should be converted into a mission by force.¹

In other words, British hands had better not be openly shown when they could work quite effectively inside Nepalese gloves. However, if China and Russia opposed the Nepalese mission the British would have to come to Nepal's assistance. And then,

if the worst comes to the worst, we or the Nepalese are in possession of Lhasa without having been the first to break our own declarations of the integrity of China.²

Hamilton, on the other hand, was inclined to support Curzon and to persuade the Cabinet to approve of the Viceroy's plan. The Secretary of State was "really pleased" that the Nepalese *darbar* had taken "so sensible and wholehearted a view of a Russian eruption into Tibet" and thereby had served to "simplify the situation." One of Hamilton's arguments with his Cabinet colleagues was that Russian influence in Tibet would make greater British control over Nepal's foreign relations a compelling necessity, but then, any attempt to secure that control would irritate the Nepalese government. The War Office, too, had already drawn attention to this risk.³

But the Cabinet "almost spontaneously and unanimously" rejected Hamilton's contention and stuck to its opposition to

¹ *PSLI*, Vol. 150, Reg. No. 1590A, Note on Tibet, by J. Edge, 7 January 1903.

² *Ibid.*, Private Notes addressed by Lee Warner to Godley, Lee Warner's Notes; Vol. 151, Reg. No. 182, Lee Warner's Note, 16 February 1903.

³ *CRP*, Vol. 162, Hamilton to Curzon, 23 January, 28 January 1903. *PSLI*, Vol. 154, Reg. No. 861. *HC*, Vol. 206, No. 2651, Col. Robertson's *Memo on Tibet*, 25 September 1902.

any local solution of the Tibetan problem as desired by Curzon; it would not allow a mission to Lhasa. It preferred instead to exert diplomatic pressure on the Russian government and ask them to keep off Tibet. The Chinese government also were warned against giving Russia any special position in Tibet. In reply, the Russian government disclaimed any intention to meddle in Tibet and warned the British not to disturb the political *status-quo* of Tibet.¹ This disclaimer and warning, the Cabinet held, made the despatch of a British mission to Lhasa at once unnecessary and inexpedient. And Hamilton informed Curzon accordingly. The Cabinet, however, approved of Curzon's proposal of conducting negotiations on trade matters with Chinese and Tibetan representatives at Khambajong, about twelve miles inside the Tibetan territory. The declared object of the negotiations was to obtain commercial facilities of a nature which Nepalese traders in Tibet enjoyed.² Lamb points out that

the chief significance of the mission to Khambajong must have been that the Home government had accepted the necessity for some form of British mission on to Tibetan soil; if Khambajong failed, the only direction that mission could possibly move was forward.³

The mission headed by Colonel Francis Younghusband reached Khambajong in July 1903. There it impatiently waited for four months for duly accredited Tibetan negotiators to arrive and then marched to the Chumbi valley when they did not.⁴

The entry of the British mission into Tibet raised Chandra Shamsher's hope that in the likely event of an Anglo-Tibetan war, he would assist the British government and obtain in return some Tibetan territory. Earlier Deb Shamsher had told the Viceroy that the Indian government were just to "wink an eye in his direction" and in no time the Nepalese army would march into Tibet. Chandra Shamsher, so Colonel C.W. Ravenshaw, the Resident, informed Younghusband, was "thirsting for a fight

¹ The British government also disclaimed any intention of annexing Tibetan territory. Younghusband, *op. cit.*, pp. 79-83.

² *HC*, Vol. 210, No. 2403; Vol. 212, Nos. 2580, 2663. *PSLI*, Vol. 151, Reg. No. 182, Secret Despatch to India, No. 5, 27 February 1903; Vol. 158, Reg. No. 1504, Minutes of the Members of the India Council. *CRP*, Vol. 162, Hamilton to Curzon, 19 February, 28 May 1903.

³ Lamb, *op. cit.*, p. 290.

⁴ Younghusband, *op. cit.*, pp. 116-61. G. Seaver, *Francis Younghusband*, pp. 201-15.

with Tibet" and was "quite prepared." Chandra Shamsher hinted that he wanted "rectification" of Nepal's boundary with Tibet and kept his troops ready at four days' march from Kham-bajong. Younghusband, although against engaging Chandra Shamsher's troops in a Tibetan campaign, would let the Prime Minister occupy the strategic area around the Kerung pass and realise the cherished desire of successive Nepalese statesmen; Younghusband would also post a Nepalese contingent at Kham-bajong to protect north Sikkim when the mission would move forward to Phari. Curzon, however, was opposed to any military involvement by Chandra Shamsher, but he accepted the latter's offer of yaks and transport to show the Tibetans that Nepal was on the British side.¹

Curzon's attitude must have disappointed Chandra Shamsher. From the Nepalese point of view some form of active involvement in the Tibetan crisis was very necessary if for no other reason than to impress on the British that Nepal was vitally interested in the matter and, therefore, the British while making a settlement with the Tibetans must not overlook Nepal's interests. The only way now left for Chandra Shamsher to put himself forward was to assume the role of a mediator in the Anglo-Tibetan dispute and to resolve it through pressure on the Dalai Lama. Curzon, for his part, had no ground for objection, considering especially the Home government's feelings about Nepal.

Jit Bahadur kept reasoning with the Kajis that the Tibetan government should forthwith start negotiations with the British for a settlement; the Kajis replied that the fault lay squarely with the British who were "by nature always aggressive, just like a drop of oil on a sheet of paper which gradually spreads itself;" that any concession to them whetted their ambition for more and induced other powers to press similar claims; the fate of China was, indeed, a warning for Tibet, and the Kajis repeatedly stressed this point.² Chandra Shamsher accused the

¹ FO, 766/7, Younghusband to Ravenshaw, 28 July, 19 August, 12 September 1903, Ravenshaw to Younghusband, 8 August, 30 August 1903, Chandra Shamsher to Ravenshaw, 29 August 1903. *CRP*, Vol. 160, Curzon to Hamilton, 14 August 1901. *PSLI*, Vol. 159, Reg. No. 1592A, Younghusband to Govt., Telg. 3 October 1903, Reg. No. 1605, Govt. to Resident, Telg. 28 October 1903.

² *PSLI*, Vol. 159, Reg. No. 1639, *RNA*, August 1903.

Dalai Lama of having made a "serious mistake" in not sending delegates to confer with Younghusband who was still at Kham-bajong. This intransigent attitude, the Prime Minister warned the Kajis, would compel the British to adopt tougher measures which might lead to even destruction of Tibet. The British, he assured, had no territorial ambitions in Tibet; they only wanted to safeguard their treaty rights in Tibet which China, Tibet's suzerain, had recognised. They would never interfere with Tibetan religion; in fact, Chandra Shamsher pointed out, the British had genuine interest in Buddhism as evidenced by their careful preservation of Buddhist monuments in India. The Prime Minister cited the friendly relations between Nepal and British India to prove that contact with the British was not so dangerous as the Tibetans imagined. The British, Chandra Shamsher added, had not only scrupulously abstained from interfering with Nepal's "religious and social prejudices" but had "actually helped us to maintain the autonomy of our country" instead of tampering with it. Nepal had also obtained from them territorial reward.¹

Chandra Shamsher kept Curzon posted with his diplomatic efforts at Lhasa which, however, so it appeared from Jit Bahadur's reports, were not proving successful. These reports spoke of the Dalai Lama's many meetings with Dorjjeff, the fresh arrival of Russian arms at Lhasa, the sight of Russian-looking troops on the Tibetan-Mongolian border, mobilisation orders to the Lhasa troops and the Amban's futile efforts to persuade the Dalai Lama to send delegates to Younghusband's camp at Kham-bajong. It was obvious to Jit Bahadur that

these Tibetans do not listen to what the Amban says and considering circumstances it does not seem that they pay much heed to us also.²

Such, too, was the impression of Curzon and Younghusband both of whom, after reading Jit Bahadur's "accounts", became convinced that

Dorjjeff is now at Lhasa, that he has promised Tibetans Russian support;

¹ *Ibid.*, Reg. No. 1592A, Resident to Govt., 4 September 1903, enclosing Chandra Shamsher's letter to Kajis.

² *Ibid.*, Reg. Nos. 1605, 1639, 1659, 1660; Vol. 161, Reg. Nos. 329, 344, 373, 407, 1214; Vol. 162, Reg. No. 528, *RNA*, 21 November 1903; Vol. 165, Reg. No. 1180; Vol. 166, Reg. No. 1282, *RNA*, 18 October 1903.

that Tibetans believe Russian support will be given to them and that Russian arms have already been given.¹

In such circumstances Curzon saw no reason to regard the Russian government's disclaimers as having any "canonical sanctity." The only explanation of the Dalai Lama's continued obduracy in the face of Anglo-Nepalese diplomatic pressure lay, Curzon argued, in his expectation of Russian support. So felt Chandra Shamsheer also who, as he told Ravenshaw, saw no prospect of the Dalai Lama's agreeing to open negotiations at Khambajong; therefore, if the mission advanced further, Tibetan resistance and a full-scale war could not be averted. Curzon, who had been insisting on such advance, claimed that he had been completely vindicated. Younghusband, he asserted, must press on to Gyantse to avoid "needless sacrifice" of British prestige in Nepal, Bhutan and Sikkim, where Britain's forbearance might appear as her fear of China and Russia.²

Curzon's insistence worked. The Home government's patience had now run out. Apart from Younghusband's prolonged but fruitless stay, a few other incidents led the Cabinet to reluctantly sanction the advance of the mission to Gyantse. In July 1903 two Sikkimese, who were British intelligence agents, were arrested by the Tibetans while going to Shigatse. In August the Tibetans were alleged to have caused the death of several Nepalese yaks carrying provision for the mission. The closure of the British trade mart at Yatung³ by the Tibetans was another incident. Then there were reports from Jit Bahadur about military preparations at Lhasa. Curzon made much of these incidents, citing them as proof that the Tibetans preferred hostility to any peaceful settlement of the dispute.⁴

¹ HC, Vol. 216, No. 3357, Viceroy to Secy. of State, Telg. 13 December 1903.

² PSLI, Vol. 161, Reg. No. 347, Viceroy to Secy. of State, 4 February 1904. HC, Vol. 219, No. 2547, Viceroy to Secy. of State, Telg. 4 November 1903.

³ This mart was obtained by the British according to the Anglo-Chinese Convention regarding Tibetan trade (1893). Aitchison, II, *op. cit.*, p. 332, Article I.

⁴ Balfour Papers, PRO 30/60-49, Viceroy to Secy. of State, Telg. 4 November 1903. PSLI, Vol. 159, Reg. No. 1592A, Secret Letter to Secy. of State, No. 183, 5 November 1903; Vol. 161, Reg. No. 373, Chandra to Resident, 31 December 1903. Lamb, *op. cit.*, pp. 290-6.

Younghusband moved on to Chumbi valley in December 1903; a few days later, in January 1904, he reached Phari and then Tuna. By the end of March the mission was at Guru where the first engagement with the ill-equipped Tibetan army ended in its complete massacre. Next month Younghusband arrived at Gyantse. In May the Tibetan troops attacked the mission and were again routed.¹

Meanwhile Chandra Shamsher increased his pressure on the Dalai Lama. His object was to create and strengthen an opposition to the Dalai Lama in the Tibetan administration and to force him to come to terms with the British. The Amban being the principal opponent of the Dalai Lama, the Nepalese aim was to bolster his waning power and influence. Chandra Shamsher reprimanded the Kajis for having repudiated the Anglo-Chinese agreements regarding Tibet. Indeed, he said, it had been a serious mistake on the part of your government born and brought up under the fostering care of China to say that the arrangement made by her, your constant protector and benefactor, on your behalf is not at all binding on you.²

In his frequent meetings with the Amban Jit Bahadur urged him to assert his authority and advised the Kajis to listen to the "nectar like words of the parental Amban;"³ he also upbraided the Kajis for having insulted the Amban; the Tibetan government, he said, had provoked the British by attacking the mission. Russia's war with Japan and her reverses were strong points in Jit Bahadur's argument that it was foolish on the Dalai Lama's part to expect assistance from the Czar. Jit Bahadur had also several meetings with the Ti Rimpoche of the Gnaden monastery, who was an influential lama and who disapproved of the Dalai Lama's adventurous policy.

Jit Bahadur's pressure, it appeared, had some effect. By the summer of 1904, so he reported to Chandra Shamsher, every

¹ Younghusband, *op. cit.*, pp. 162-222. P. Landon, *Lhasa*, I, pp. 46-346. E. Candler, *The Unveiling of Lhasa*, pp. 22-243. L.A. Waddell, *Lhasa and its Mysteries*, pp. 78-329. W.F.O'Connor, *On the Frontier and Beyond*, pp. 35-66. *AP*, 1904. LXVII, pp. 5-6.

² *PSLI*, Vol. 163, Reg. No. 687, Ravenshaw to Govt., 6 March 1904, enclosing Chandra's letter to Kajis. The reference in this letter is to Tibetan refusal to accept Anglo-Chinese Conventions concerning Tibet, 1890 and 1893.

³ *PSLI*, Vol. 166, Reg. No. 1282, *RNA*, 15 October 1903.

one save the Dalai Lama and his closest followers had been "completely tired and exhausted," and the general desire at Lhasa was for a settlement with the British for which Jit Bahadur's assistance was repeatedly sought. The Kajis declared their absolute want of faith in the Amban and expected Chandra Shamsher's help to obtain from the British an honourable peace. The Amban also wanted Jit Bahadur to negotiate with the British on behalf of the Tibetan government. But Jit Bahadur was careful; he would not agree to the Amban's proposal until the mission had advanced within two-three days' march from Lhasa or unless "the pride of the Dalai Lama has a fall" and he personally begged Nepalese intercession. In a letter to the Dalai Lama, Chandra Shamsher strongly urged him to immediately make a settlement with the British.¹

On 5 July 1904 the Tibetan army met with another disaster when the fort of Gyantse fell to the mission. Thoroughly alarmed, the Kajis, this time, reportedly at the Dalai Lama's instance, made urgent requests to Chandra Shamsher to send a diplomat from Kathmandu to help the Tibetan government in their negotiations with the mission. Jit Bahadur reported that the Dalai Lama was repentant for not heeding to Chandra Shamsher's advice earlier. Chandra Shamsher was willing to accede to the Dalai Lama's request but the Resident would not let him do so. The Indian government did not want any Nepalese finger in the Tibetan pie; if the Nepalese were now allowed to be a party in Anglo-Tibetan negotiations, they would claim such participation in future, which, considering Nepalese distrust of British policy in Tibet, might prove at once inconvenient and embarrassing for the Indian government. Therefore, the Resident allowed Chandra Shamsher to do no more than offer general advice to the Dalai Lama on how he should conduct negotiations with the British mission. The Prime Minister drafted a letter to the Dalai Lama asking him to realise "the necessity of promptness of action, caution and forbearance" in dealing with the British. The latter, Chandra Shamsher assured, would not be unreasonable in their terms provided the Dalai Lama did not "insist

¹ *Ibid.*, Reg. No. 1302, Chandra to Dalai Lama, 9 June 1904, *RNA*, 2 May 1904: Vol. 168, Reg. No. 1356, 1627; Vol. 169, Reg. No. 1675, *RNA*, 30 June 1904; No. 1716, *RNA*, 21 July 1904; Vol. 163, Reg. No. 725; Vol. 165, Reg. No. 1180, *RNA*, 13 April 1904.

upon untenable points" and showed a "just desire to give and take, foresight and true patriotism."¹

The Gyantse incident seemed the incontrovertible proof of Tibetan intransigence; an advance to Lhasa was now not only imperative, but the only course left. So at any rate Younghusband thought; he had by now been thoroughly put out by "this playing about at Khambajong, at Tuna and at Gyantse," by the hesitancy of the Acting Viceroy, Lord Amphill,² and above all by the timidity of the Home government who sought to cover up their failure to settle this "trumpet affair of trade and boundary with a semi-barbarous people" on the Indian frontier by specious excuses of wider international implications.³

Amphill's really was an unenviable position of a man whose lack of enthusiasm for a personally disagreeable job did not absolve him from the ultimate responsibility for its successful execution. He was naturally cautious, picking his steps and temporising. Younghusband's impatience worried him, and his attempts to calm it by repeated reminders of the Home government's policy of restraint served only to aggravate the impatience.⁴

The Home government's position was no less difficult, the more so because of Curzon's constant prodding for vigorous action under the thinly-veiled accusation that the Cabinet had been a prisoner of its own indecision and pusillanimity. The Home government intensely disliked being virtually forced to adopt a course with full knowledge of its risks. Incidents at Tuna and Guru had dimmed the prospects of a negotiated settlement with the Tibetans, and in May, St. John Brodrick, who had taken over from Hamilton,⁵ had most reluctantly sanctioned the Mission's advance to Lhasa with a still lingering hope that ultimately reason would prevail with the Dalai Lama.

¹ *Ibid.*, Vol. 169. Reg. No. 1675, Resident to Govt., 8 August 1904, enclosing Chandra's draft letter to Dalai Lama.

² Curzon was in England on furlough between May and December 1904.

³ Younghusband, *op. cit.*, pp. 184, 191-2, 198, 200-01. Fleming, *op. cit.*, pp. 162-3.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 187-93, 196-9. *Amphill Papers*, Vol. 37, Amphill to Brodrick, the Secy. of State, 5, 12, 19, 27 May, 16, 27 June, 7, 20 July 1904; Curzon to Amphill, 26 May, 1, 8 July 1904, Amphill to Curzon, 16 June, 5 July 1904.

⁵ Hamilton resigned from the Cabinet in October 1903. Earl of Middleton, (St. John Brodrick), *Records and Reactions, 1856-1939*, p. 186.

The Gyantse incident dashed this hope; there was now nothing to restrain Younghusband from pressing on to the Tibetan capital.¹

But while sanctioning the Mission's advance to Lhasa, the Home government had also confirmed their earlier pledge to the Russian government that Britain had no intention to annex Tibet or to interfere in its internal administration, such confirmation being necessary to allay Russian misgivings and to obtain their adherence to the Khedivial Decree whereby Britain wanted to strengthen her position in Egypt.²

The Dalai Lama fled from Lhasa on 2 August 1904; next day Younghusband reached the Tibetan capital, and then started negotiations for a treaty. It was now that Jit Bahadur was at his best. He played the role of an honest broker admirably well; he had the confidence of all the parties involved in the issue—the Tibetans, the British and the Chinese. His long stay in Tibet, intimate knowledge of its politics and personal and friendly relations with the Amban and principal Tibetan officers made him ideal for a delicate diplomatic job. To the Tibetan government he appeared as the only friend to turn to—a friend who understood them well and who promised to help them get a moderate treaty. To Younghusband his services proved invaluable. He was the most effective channel of communication with the Tibetan government, the best person to allay their fear and soften their obstinacy. Younghusband found Jit Bahadur “a man of ability...a person of dignity and good breeding” who had received “the most emphatic orders from his government to assist me in every possible way.” Jit Bahadur visited Younghusband “daily”, gave him “most valuable information” and was “instrumental” in getting him in touch with important Tibetan officers. Jit Bahadur explained Younghusband's terms

¹ Fleming, *op. cit.*, p. 174. Younghusband, *op. cit.*, pp. 191-2, 197-201. AP, 1905, Vol. LVIII, pp. 6-7, Secy. of State to Viceroy, Telg. 12 May 1904, Viceroy to Secy. of State, Telg. 12 May 1904.

² Younghusband, *op. cit.*, pp. 201-3. Fleming, *op. cit.*, pp. 154-5. *PSLI*, Vol. 166, Reg. No. 1282a, Private Letter from Salisbury, Lord Privy Seal, to Brodrick, 26 July 1904. *Ampthill Papers*, Vol. 37, Brodrick to Ampthill, 6, 10, 13, 27 May, 10 June, 1 July 1904. *HC*, Vol. 220, No. 2661, Lansdowne to C. Spring Rice, British Charge d' Affaires, St. Petersburg, 4, 10 May 1904. AP, 1905, Vol. LVIII, p. 15, Lansdowne to C. Hardinge, British Ambassador at St. Petersburg, Telg. 2 June 1904.

to the Tibetans, arguing that between the prolonged stay of the mission and the prompt acceptance of its terms, the latter was the lesser of the two evils; he added, that if the terms were rejected the British would raze Lhasa to the ground. Jit Bahadur also impressed upon Younghusband the need for caution in dealing with the Tibetans, who, he assured, did want to come to terms with the British provided the latter showed consideration to their defeated foes, and did not insist upon a harsh settlement. It is, however, noteworthy that on Jit Bahadur's advice only an indemnity of seventy-five lakhs of rupees was imposed upon the Tibetan government, although Younghusband himself had considered the amount rather too heavy.¹

The Anglo-Tibetan dispute and the British expedition to Lhasa was an event which had considerable bearing on Nepal's future relations with Tibet, British India and China. Nepalese prestige already high at Lhasa increased still further, and so did their influence. True, the Nepalese government had not helped the Tibetans by arms—as required by the 1856 treaty—but the latter had reasons to be grateful to Chandra Shamsher for not having taken advantage of the crisis to occupy the bordering Tibetan territory. Throughout the crisis Chandra Shamsher had acted in such a manner as to leave the Tibetans with the impression that his concern over the Dalai Lama's flirtations with the Russians was genuine, that his efforts to resolve the Anglo-Tibetan conflict sincere, and that personally he had no axe to grind. The Lhasa Convention (September 1904) did not have anything to suggest that Nepal had benefited at Tibet's cost.² When the mission left Tibet after concluding the Convention,

¹ *Ibid.*, Younghusband to Govt., 4,6,9 August 1904; Reg. No. 1716, Younghusband to Govt., 31 August, 3 September 1904. *CRP*, Vol. 345, Note by L. Dane, Foreign Secy., 10 September 1904 on *Secret External Proceedings, February 1905*, No. 817. Younghusband, *op.cit.*, pp. 267-88. Waddell, *op.cit.*, pp. 356-8.

² The Convention recognised the Sikkim-Tibet frontier as laid down by the 1890 Convention; opened two new trade marts at Gartok and Gyantse where two British agents would reside; imposed an indemnity of seventy-five lakhs of rupees to be paid in annual instalment of one lakh, and until the whole amount had been paid the British would occupy the Chumbi valley; the Tibetans would have no dealings with any foreign power without British consent. A Separate Article appended to the Convention provided that the British agent at Gyantse could, if necessary, visit Lhasa. Aitchison, *op.cit.*, pp. 344-7. Younghusband, *op.cit.*, pp. 289-306.

the Tibetans were left with the belief that but for Chandra Shamsher's pleading on their behalf, the British would have imposed a more rigorous treaty on Tibet. Needless to say, this feeling was sedulously fostered by Jit Bahadur. In future the Tibetan government would turn to Chandra Shamsher for advice and guidance, and Jit Bahadur became a lively force in Tibetan politics.¹

To say that the Nepalese and Indian governments were drawn closer hereafter is to emphasise the obvious. It was the first important political event in Chandra Shamsher's career showing him as an ally of the British government. It enhanced his stock with them; Curzon was converted from a cynic to an admirer of the Prime Minister.² The Viceroy was impressed by Chandra Shamsher's attitude which "was characterised by a friendliness and freedom from suspicion uncommon in the previous relation of India and Nepal."³ Lord Ampthill, who had all along kept a watchful eye on Chandra Shamsher's attitude, believed that without the "invaluable assistance" of the Nepalese government the "whole affair would have been a lamentable fiasco."⁴ Therefore, as a "tangible recognition" of his services and with the express object of attaching him firmly to the British government Chandra Shamsher was made a G.C.S.I. "straight off."⁵ This honour met with the Prime Minister's "highest ambitions":

¹ see Chapter VI.

² Curzon at first had doubts if Chandra Shamsher could remain in power for long. *CRP*, Vol. 160. Curzon to Hamilton, 3 July 1901. In 1902 Curzon agreed to see Chandra (who was going to Delhi to attend the *Darbar*) for only ten minutes—and that in deference to the repeated requests of L. Dane, the Foreign Secy. But, as Dane recalled the incident 37 years later, Chandra "came, saw and conquered, the ten minutes expanded into an interview of an hour and a half", when "our relations with Nepal were put upon a very satisfactory basis." Dane's address to the East India Association, 7 February 1939, *Asiatic Review*, April 1939, p. 258.

³ *CRP*, Vol. 342, Curzon's *Memorandum on Tibet* to the Cabinet, 25 June 1904.

⁴ *Ampthill Papers*, Vol. 37, Ampthill to Brodrick, Secy. of State, 14 September 1904.

⁵ *Ibid.*, Vol. 34/2, Ampthill to Ravenshaw, 3 October 1904, Ravenshaw to Ampthill, 9 October 1904. None of Chandra's predecessors was made a G.C.S.I. straightaway. Jang Bahadur received the title in 1875 after he had become a K.C.S.I. (1852) and a G.C.B. (1860). Ranuddip was made a K.C.S.I. in 1875. Bir received this honour in 1892 and G.C.S.I. in 1897.

he desired, as Ravenshaw informed Amptill, "to strengthen his position by showing that he can go one better than his predecessor."¹ He was also given 56,000 rounds of ammunition, 2,000 time fuses, 90 Martini Henry and 25 Lee Metford rifles together with 5,000 rounds of ammunition.²

The Tibetan crisis had some effect on Nepal's commercial interests. In the existing panic and uncertainty at Lhasa the Nepalese shops had to close down for a time, and Jit Bahadur had to warn the Tibetan authorities that Nepal would retaliate if her interests were injured in any way. The Dalai Lama put an embargo on Tibet's trade with Nepal partly to prevent the Nepalese merchants exporting the Tibetan goods to British India but mainly in retaliation to Chandra Shamsher's helping the British with yaks and transport. People of eastern Nepal suffered from a scarcity of salt a Tibetan import, and the Chinese in Tibet experienced hardship for want of Nepalese rice. The price of rice at Wallong in eastern Nepal fell from six seers a rupee to thirteen, hitting the Nepalese rice dealers hard. Nepal's trade with Tibet decreased for a time when the most important channel of this trade—the Kerung and Kuti passes—were closed to commercial traffic by the Dalai Lama's orders. The Dalai Lama also warned all the foreign traders in Tibet against taking their goods for sale to any place outside Lhasa. However, on Jit Bahadur's strong representation the ban was lifted from the Nepalese traders, and since it continued to operate so far as other (particularly, the Kashmiris, the main competitors of the Nepalese merchants) traders were concerned, the Nepalese merchants, so Jit Bahadur reported to Chandra Shamsher, enjoyed a favourable position. The opening of the British trade marts at Gyantse and Yatung—they being on easier route to Lhasa and, hence, more convenient for trade than the Nepalese route—was resented by the Nepalese merchants who feared injury to their interests resulting from the diversion of Indo-Tibetan trade from the customary Nepalese

¹ *Amptill Papers*, Vol. 34/2, Ravenshaw to Amptill, 9 October 1904. *PSLI*, Vol. 178, Reg. No. 1022, Resident to Govt., 27 April 1905.

² *PEF*, 505/1912, Pt. 3, Reg. No. 2067, *Statement showing Arms and Ammunition given or sold to Nepal Durbar*. Curzon, however, rejected Chandra Shamsher's request for a still larger supply of ammunition. *PSLI*, Vol. 183, Reg. No. 1807, Frontier Memoranda, October 1905.

route.¹ The Nepalese government were at first reluctant to open trade establishments at Yatung and Gyantse considering the fact that the Tibetans might look upon them—as they did the British marts—as centres of espionage. Soon, however, with the permission of the Tibetan government, Nepalese trade agencies were opened at the two places. Communication between Kathmandu and Lhasa became hereafter much easier when the Nepalese government were allowed to use the British telegraph and postal establishments at Gyantse and Yatung.²

The Chinese government were pleased with Chandra Shamsher who received the usual Imperial title in April 1904.³ The Amban was obliged to the Nepalese government for their support with which he tried to strengthen his own position. He had made repeated requests to Jit Bahadur for two-three thousand Gurkha troops ostensibly to force the Dalai Lama to accept his (Amban's) and Chandra Shamsher's advice. The Prime Minister, being equally interested in curbing the Dalai Lama's power and increasing Nepalese influence at Lhasa, was inclined to oblige the Amban, but the Resident restrained him, advising caution and asking him to avoid unnecessary complications with the Tibetans—such complications being certain to arise if a large number of Gurkhas were used by the Amban against the Dalai Lama.⁴

¹ The closure of the Sikkim route had been the traditional policy of Nepal so that the trade between India and Tibet would pass through the Nepalese route alone and the Nepalese government would impose import and export duties on this trade. See Chapter IV.

² *PSLI*, Vol. 159, Reg. No. 1688, C. Bell, Offg. Depy. Commissioner, Darjiling, to Govt. of Bengal, 17 November 1903 ; Vol. 162, Reg. No. 528, *RNA*, 21 November 1903 ; Vol. 163, Reg. Nos. 725, 991, *RNA*, 12 February 1904 ; Vol. 166, Reg. No. 1282 ; Vol. 182, Reg. No. 1709, Diary of O'Connor, British trade agent, Gyantse, 24 September 1905 ; Reg. No. 1746, *RNA*, 25 July 1905 ; Vol. 183, Reg. No. 1901, *RNA*, 10 September 1905 ; Vol. 190, Reg. No. 1274, Gyantse Weekly Diary, 9 June 1906.

³ *PEF*, 505/1912, Pt. 7, Reg. No. 947/1910, Resident to Govt., 20 April 1904. Landon, however, says that this title was conferred on Chandra shortly after he assumed power. *Nepal*, II, pp. 113-4.

⁴ *PSLI*, Vol. 165, Reg. No. 1180 ; Vol. 166, Reg. No. 1302 ; Vol. 167, Reg. No. 1445, *RNA*, 24 May 1904, Resident to Govt., 7 July 1904.

CHAPTER SIX

NEPAL, CHINA, TIBET, 1904-14

I

CHANDRA Shamsher wanted to retain and, if possible, augment the prestige which the Tibetan crisis had earned him. He was happy that the Dalai Lama had fled whereafter the Chinese government had "denounced" him.¹ Jit Bahadur's friendship with the Ti-Rimpoche, whom the Amban recognised as the Regent, and his high stock with the Tibetan officials made Nepalese position at Lhasa secure. Hardly a week had passed after Younghusband had left Tibet when the Kajis appealed to Chandra Shamsher to request the British for a revision of the Convention. The indemnity, they said, was too heavy; the provision for the visit of British officers to Lhasa would encourage other powers to demand similar concessions; the opening of new trade marts in Tibet would also create complications. The Kajis contemplated sending a deputation to the Viceroy with Jit Bahadur as one of its members, and should the representation fail the deputation would go to London to lay the Tibetan grievances before the Home government. Holding a brief for the Tibetans was for Chandra Shamsher both a temptation and a risk: success would increase his prestige and influence with the Tibetan government while failure would tarnish both. He himself had doubts regarding his ability to influence the British in the matter. The British might wonder why Chandra Shamsher was now interceding for the Tibetans when he had for so long himself pressed the Tibetan government to submit to the British terms. It was particularly odd to request the British to reduce the indemnity which had been fixed on the express advice of Jit Bahadur. In such circumstances Chandra Shamsher, with the

¹ *PSLI*, Vol. 169, No. 1762, Younghusband to Govt., 15 August 1904; Vol. 173, Reg. No. 359. *HC*, Vol. 222, No. 3047, S. Satow, British Minister in Peking, to Lansdowne, Foreign Secy., Telg. 28 August 1904.

Resident's advice, merely forwarded the Kajis' appeal to the Viceroy. He did not want the Tibetans to "evade" or "nullify" the Convention and so give the British an excuse for a fresh expedition which might result in greater British influence in Tibet—a development not in the Nepalese interests.¹

The Convention was amended at the instance of the Home government who found some of its provisions² incompatible with the assurance earlier given to the Russian government that Britain had no intention to annex or even to occupy for long any Tibetan territory. The indemnity was reduced to twenty-five lakhs of rupees payable in three annual instalments whereafter—that is in 1908—the Chumbi valley would be vacated by the British. It was also decided that no British agent would go to Lhasa for any reason whatsoever.³ Jit Bahadur sought to impress on the Kajis that the revision of the Convention was the result of Chandra Shamsher's successful pleading with the British on behalf of the Tibetans.⁴

The Tibetan crisis had clearly demonstrated the Nepalese government's sensitivity regarding their position in Tibet and their determination to maintain it. Chinese activity in Tibet after the British mission had left Lhasa and the Tibetan opposition to this activity led to a fresh crisis which profoundly affected the pattern of Nepal's relations with India and China.

The Chinese policy in Tibet after 1904 was to reorganise the Tibetan administration by a series of reforms; to remove from the administration the elements supporting the Dalai Lama and opposing them; to increase the Amban's power; and to improve the military defences of Tibet. The ultimate object was to convert Tibet from its existing status of an autonomous, self-governing protectorate into a directly administered Chinese

¹ *PSLI*, Vol. 172, Reg. No. 2223A, Kajis to Chandra Shamsher, 30 September 1904; No. 2384A, Chandra to Kajis, 20 November 1904.

² Article VI and the Separate Article, for instance. Fleming, *Bayonets*, *op. cit.*, pp. 268-75.

³ *AP*, 1905, Vol. LVIII, *East India: Further Papers Relating to Tibet*, pp. 77, 84, Secy. of State to Viceroy, Telg. 7 November 1904, Secret Despatch to India, 2 December 1904. Lamb, *Britain and Chinese Central Asia*, pp. 303-5. Younghusband, *India and Tibet*, pp. 337-41. Fleming, *op. cit.*, pp. 263-93.

⁴ *PSLI*, Vol. 177, Reg. No. 832. *RNA*, 27 December 1904, Chandra to Kajis, 27 January 1905.

province.¹ Alarmed by the British advance to Lhasa, the Chinese were now determined not to let that happen again. The Amban declared that it was the Dalai Lama's impolicy and the resultant complications with the foreign powers which had obliged the Chinese Emperor to take greater control of Tibetan affairs.

In the autumn of 1906 Chang Yin-Tang, one of the most efficient Chinese officers, came to Lhasa with elaborate plans for reorganising the Tibetan administration. Administrative boards would be set up to deal with matters like the development of Tibet's economic resources, foreign relations and defence. Polyandry would be made illegal; new schools would be opened where students would learn Chinese as a compulsory language. Factories would be set up with Chinese mechanics to train the Tibetan workers. Elaborate instructions were issued to the Tibetan people dealing with their day to day life. In short, Chang declared that he wanted to make the Tibetans a new people, enlightened, forward-looking, free from the fetters of time-worn traditions and socio-religious practices. In 1907 a new Amban, Lien Yu, arrived at Lhasa; also came some new Chinese officers and soldiers with rifles of the latest design.

The Chinese reforms, so Jit Bahadur reported to Chandra Shamsher, were too grandiose and too expensive to be willingly accepted by the Tibetan government, and Lien's insistence in implementing them embittered his relations with the Tibetan officials.²

Far in eastern Tibet and the semi-independent tribal marches between the upper reaches of the river Salween and the Chinese provinces of Szechuan and Yunnan serious disturbances flared up following local, particularly monastic, opposition to the Chinese efforts to bring these territories under the direct Imperial administration.³ In 1906 Chao Erh Feng, one of the ablest Chinese generals and a brilliant frontier administrator, was appointed the Warden of the Marches. Both by tactful diplomacy and ruthless military operations Chao subjugated a number of marches and

¹ Alastair Lamb, *The McMahon Line*, I, pp. 117-22. C. Bell, *Tibet: Past and Present*, pp. 88-94.

² *PSLI*, Vol. 173, Reg. No. 359; Vol. 177, Reg. No. 832; Vol. 199, Reg. No. 578; Vol. 202, Reg. No. 1050; Vol. 205, Reg. No. 1613; Vol. 207, Reg. No. 1916, *RNA*, (1904-07). Bell, *op. cit.*, pp. 88-94.

³ Eric Teichman, *Travels of a Consular Officer in Eastern Tibet together with a history of the relations between Tibet and India*, pp. 2-8.

established Chinese rule over some adjacent Tibetan territories.¹

Simultaneously the Chinese pursued what appeared to be the policy of restoring their influence in Nepal, Bhutan and Sikkim. From the Chinese point of view an essential element of Tibetan defence had been destroyed when their influence in these border states had weakened. Nepal and Bhutan had helped the Young-husband mission,² and through Sikkim the British troops had moved into Tibet. In May 1908 the Amban sent messages to the Bhutanese government to the effect that since Bhutan was traditionally a Chinese territory China would henceforth take far more interest in its politics than had been possible for many years.³ Chang made overtures to the Raja of Sikkim as well, who had "deep respect" for China.⁴

Nepal occupied an important place in Chinese policy. A hostile Nepal was a threat to Tibet, and so a matter of anxiety for China, while a friendly Nepal, Chang considered, would strengthen Tibetan security. It was felt by the Chinese that peaceful relations between Nepal and Tibet could not be guaranteed unless both were kept under effective influence of China. Chang and Lien tried to humour the Nepalese and convince them that they had better establish closer relations with China than with Britain. In 1906-7 Chang in several meetings with Jit Bahadur praised Chandra Shamsher's able rule which, he added, could serve as a model for the Tibetans. He also repeatedly stressed Nepal's historical relations with China. He pointed out to Jit Bahadur and Shankardas, the Nepalese government's trade agent at Gyantse, that friendship with the British had proved detrimental to Nepal's interest. The opening of the Kalimpong-Phari route and the establishment of British

¹ *Bell Papers*, F. 80.5.1.22, *Military Report on Tibet*, by India General Staff, pp. 112-3. Lamb, *McMahon Line*, 1, pp. 181-95.

² The Tongsa Penlop, the most powerful feudal chief of Bhutan, allowed the Mission to make a road through Bhutan to the Chumbi valley and assisted Younghusband during negotiations for the Lhasa Convention. The British government rewarded him with a K.C.S.I. and recognised him as the hereditary Maharaja of Bhutan, Younghusband, *op. cit.*, pp. 203-4, 209-22, 279-80, 285-9, 336. J.C. White, *Sikkim and Bhutan*, pp. 105-236, 281-4.

³ *PEF*, 505/1912, Pt. 1, Reg. No. 1921, Bell to Govt., 1, 12, May, 1908. Bell, *Tibet*, *op. cit.*, pp. 100-1.

⁴ *PEF*, 505/1912, Pt. 1, Reg. No. 1921, Notes on India's North East Frontier Relations, by E.C. Wilton, 9 March 1908.

trade marts at Gyantse and Yatung, for instance, had diverted Tibetan trade from its traditional Nepalese route with injurious effect on Nepalese merchants' commercial interests. The number of these merchants had also fallen from two thousand to about seven hundred in the past few years.¹ Chang would, as he said, frustrate the British ambitions in Tibet and therefore sought Nepal's cooperation. He intended opening a Chinese trade centre at Gyantse to compete with the British mart there. Nepalese merchants were persuaded to boycott the British and make use of the Chinese trade centre. Chang promised that the revenue realised through customs would be divided between the Tibetan and Nepalese governments. As Lien, owing to the Tibetan government's opposition was finding it difficult to get money to make payments to the Chinese troops at Lhasa, he requested Jit Bahadur for a loan.²

Chang enquired about Nepal's military and economic resources, giving several hints of his desire to employ Gurkhas in the reorganised Tibetan army. His immediate idea, so he told Jit Bahadur, was to bring the Nepalese and Tibetans closer to their mutual benefit. Chang would also send Tibetan military officers to Kathmandu for military training and forge a defensive alliance between Nepal and Tibet. This alliance would serve as the cornerstone of his project: the formation of a Himalayan confederacy—with Nepal, Bhutan, Sikkim and Tibet—under China's tutelage. The geographical position of the states—"side by side like the molar teeth in a man's mouth"—promised the feasibility of the project; the more so because they had a common cultural link and were all "subjects of China." Indeed, Chang pointed out to Jit Bahadur :

China, Nepal, Tibet, Bhutan and Sikkim might be compared to the five principal colours, viz. yellow, red, blue, black and green. A skilful painter may so arrange the colours as to produce a number of beautiful designs or effects. In the same way if we could cooperate with one another, we may presumably promote the interests of all.³

¹ Jit Bahadur told the *Daily Mail* correspondent in 1904 that in Tibet there were eight hundred Nepalese, mostly merchants. E. Candler, *The Unveiling of Lhasa*, p. 346.

² *PSLI*, Vol. 198, Reg. No. 358, *RNA*, 30 November 1906, 13 December 1906; Vol. 204, Reg. No. 1346, *RNA*, 28 March 1907.

³ *Ibid.*, Vol. 198, Reg. No. 446, *RNA*, 13 December 1906; Vol. 201, Reg. No. 820, *RNA*, 14 December 1906. *PSLI*, Vol. 206, Reg. No. 1694, *RNA*, June-July 1907. *Bell Papers*, 5.1.16 : *Nepal Note Book*, p. 9.

The Himalayan states, Chang urged, should unite and drive away their common enemy, the British, and China would support them. Chang wondered why the Nepalese had an exaggerated fear of the military strength of the British and why they had helped the Younghusband mission with pack animals and transport. He warned Jit Bahadur that Nepal should be careful of the British who were "quarrelsome, selfish, faithless and are first class in deceiving or betraying others."¹ The leader of the Nepalese embassy to Peking,² Kaji Bhairab Bahadur, was told in like terms; he confirmed that the "Chinese appeared to be very suspicious of us for being on intimate terms with the British." Chang proposed to go to Kathmandu himself to talk these matters over with Chandra Shamsher and, in appreciation of his able administration, to invest him with a new Chinese title.³

The Nepalese government for a time found in the Chinese activities in Tibet nothing to which they could take any exception. Restoration of Chinese authority and the Amban's power was but the reestablishment of the old, normal order in Tibet; the ambitious Dalai Lama's policy had not only upset this order but posed a threat to Nepal's interests. Besides, there were at Lhasa still some lingering hopes that the Dalai Lama would return—and with a Russian army. Jit Bahadur reported that the Dalai Lama had left but his influence still worked among certain officers of the Tibetan administration; delegations had, in fact, been sent to bring him back, and his followers at Lhasa corresponded with him and sought his advice.⁴ The removal of the Dalai Lama's influence from the Tibetan administration was what Chandra Shamsher wanted, and since this seemed to be the Amban's object as well the Nepalese government had good reasons to support him.

This support, however, was given not at the cost of good relations with the Tibetan government; Chandra Shamsher's policy

¹ *PSLI*, Vol. 195, Reg. No. 2112, *RNA*, 10 October 1906.

² The embassy left Kathmandu in August 1906 and returned in March 1910.

³ *PSLI*, Vol. 198, Reg. No. 446, *RNA*, 13 December 1906; Vol. 204, Reg. No. 1346, *RNA*, 5 April 1907. *PEF*, 505/1912, Pt. 7, Reg. No. 947, Bhairab to Chandra, 11 February 1908. Lamb, *McMahon Line*, I, pp. 158-9.

⁴ *PSLI*, Vol. 172, Reg. No. 2223A; Vol. 173, Reg. No. 359; Vol. 177, Reg. No. 832; Vol. 180, Reg. No. 1440, *RNA*, May-August 1905. *PEF*, 2750/1908, Pt. 6, Reg. Nos. 996-8, *RNA*, 13 March 1906. Bell, *Tibet, op. cit.*, p. 56.

was to assure the Tibetans that Nepal wanted nothing but peace in Tibet and so was anxious to resolve her dispute with the representative of the Chinese government. Jit Bahadur during his frequent meetings with the Kajis dissuaded them from opposing the Amban and incurring the Emperor's wrath; China, he pointed out, was the traditional protector of Tibet, and the Amban's reforms would benefit the Tibetans themselves. The Nepalese government made it quite clear to the Kajis that they disliked the continuing uncertainty in the Tibetan administration. The Amban, for his part, was requested not to hustle his projects through because the Tibetans, as Jit Bahadur pleaded, were a conservative people who feared innovations and hasty measures.¹

From about the middle of 1908 the Nepalese government began to show uneasiness over the Chinese activity in Tibet. Jit Bahadur's several meetings with the Amban, the Regent and other high officers strengthened his impression that China's objective was not merely the restoration of her traditional authority in Tibet but taking over the Tibetan administration and that by force, if necessary. More than a thousand well-armed Chinese troops were reported to be coming from Szechuan to Lhasa under the command of the formidable Chao Erh Feng who in March 1908 was appointed the new Amban of Tibet. The news excited the Tibetans; the Kajis represented to Jit Bahadur that Chao had massacred the Tibetan people in the marches, destroyed the monasteries and committed great cruelty, and that there was no need for Chinese troops to come to Tibet with the ostensible object of strengthening the police forces of Lhasa. The Tibetans raised an army of five thousand, indicating their resolve to resist further pressure by the Amban. The Chinese troops, who were already at Lhasa, clashed with the Tibetan troops. The Kajis fervently requested Jit Bahadur for Nepalese government's intervention because

one thousand words from us cannot have the same weight with the Amban as a single word of the Gurkha government.²

¹ *PSLI*, Vol. 190, Reg. No. 1242; Vol. 198, Reg. No. 358, *RNA*, 31 Oct. 1906; Vol. 201, Reg. No. 820, *RNA*, 18 January 1907.

² *PSLI*, Vol. 223, Reg. No. 2105; Vol. 224, Reg. No. 2210; Vol. 226, Reg. No. 492; Vol. 229, Reg. No. 1056. Also, *PSLI*, Vol. 215, Reg. No. 785; Vol. 217, Reg. No. 1202; Vol. 218, Reg. No. 1410; Vol. 220, Reg. No. 1709, *RNA*, 1908-09.

They also urged Jit Bahadur to get Gurkha military officers from Kathmandu to train the Tibetan troops at Lhasa.

Jit Bahadur himself was now feeling that much of the brewing discontent at Lhasa was due to Lien's arrogance and tactlessness. Jit Bahadur was anxious for the safety of the Nepalese merchants who were afraid of widespread disturbance in Tibet if the Szechuan troops entered Lhasa—the more so if Chao came with them. The reported intention of the Amban to monopolise trade in wool, yak tail and musk and then farm it out to the highest bidders was another disturbing news for the Nepalese merchants who had a large share in this trade. The Chinese officers at Gyantse even tried to browbeat the local Nepalese trade agent but without success. Nepalese traders were asked to use the Chinese currency, newly introduced in Tibet : as this currency was unacceptable to the Indian traders with whom the Nepalese had business transactions, the latter suffered.¹

Bhairab Bahadur, while at Peking, sent similar reports to Chandra Shamsher about the Chinese intention to make Tibet a province of their Empire where ten thousand well-armed Chinese troops would be stationed.² Chang's military projects, Bhairab Bahadur had already pointed out, were "not a healthy sign"—Chang was planning to raise forty thousand troops trained by Chinese military experts. On his way from and to Peking through eastern Tibet and the tribal marches, Bhairab Bahadur saw Chinese Colonies and Chinese troops at Batang, Litang and other places between Lhasa and Chengtu. Bhairab Bahadur heard, like Jit Bahadur, about Chao Erh Feng's going to Lhasa at the head of a crack Chinese regiment from Szechuan.³ The Amban, so Jit Bahadur informed his government, contemplated bringing immediately five thousand Chinese troops to Tibet, three thousand of whom to be posted at and near Shigatse and the rest at Lhasa. Jit Bahadur saw the Chinese troops already

¹ *PSLI*, Vol. 226, Reg. No. 492, *RNA*, 17 November 1908; Vol. 229, Reg. No. 1082, *RNA*, 30 April 1909; Vol. 230, Reg. No. 1284. Also, *PSLI*, Vol. 215, Reg. No. 785; Vol. 225, Reg. No. 210.

² *PEF*, 505/1912, Pt. 7, Reg. No. 1979, Bhairab to Chandra, 7 June 1908. *PSLI*, Vol. 201, Reg. No. 820.

³ *PEF*, 505/1912, Pt. 7, Reg. Nos. 746, 905, Bhairab to Chandra, 8 December 1907, 11 February 1908. *PSLI*, Vol. 201, Reg. No. 820, Bhairab to Chandra, 9 December 1906; Vol. 206, Reg. No. 1691, Bhairab to Chandra, 12 June 1907.

at Lhasa being regularly drilled. The situation at the Tibetan capital appeared to him "very critical" necessitating Chandra Shamsher's intervention. It also seemed to Jit Bahadur that the Kajis' grievances against the Amban were genuine and therefore, they deserved full moral support of the Nepalese government. This support would sustain the Tibetan government and earn Nepal not only "great religious merit",

but the undying gratitude and entire devotion of the whole people both high and low of Tibet, and great advantage would accrue to us [Nepalese] besides.

Chandra Shamsher was requested to oppose the "novel demand" of the Amban "for extra or sole authority" in Tibet; else, Jit Bahadur warned, if the Chinese took over the Tibetan administration, they being

men of no belief in god, who never do any act of charity or virtue, who are void of all sense of shame or decency, pity or kindness, faith or honesty, who disregard or are unmindful of all rules or relations and who are extremely selfish when opportunity occurs—I describe them just as I find them now a days—they might not hesitate to do us injury in the end.¹

The Amban, Jit Bahadur advised, should be asked "to act with greater caution and foresight" and not to bring in more Chinese troops; if the Nepalese government did not help the Tibetans now, the Nepalese merchants at Lhasa might suffer "rough handling." In Jit Bahadur's view Tibet was changing fast, and so Chandra Shamsher should act with an eye to the future."²

These reports set Chandra Shamsher thinking. The Tibetan government's discontent was coming to a head, and Nepal, because of her heavy stakes in Tibet, could not be indifferent. If Tibet became a Chinese province what would happen to Nepal's treaty relations with it, which relations formed the basis of the Nepalese rights and privileges in Tibet? Besides, would not Nepal's security be endangered if Tibet had a large well-equipped army with a sizeable proportion of Chinese in it? Would not then China show an undesirable interest in the Nepalese affairs and back up that interest, if necessary, by a show of force? Further, where was the guarantee, when Lien had strained relations with the Tibetan government, that the large Tibetan army would not break away from his control, and

¹ *PSLI*, Vol. 223, Reg. No. 2105, *RNA*, 21 August 1908.

² *Ibid.*, Vol. 198, Reg. No. 358, *RNA*, 31 October 1906; Vol. 225, Reg. No. 333, 24 November 1908.

what if that army then turned upon Nepal, Tibet's traditional enemy? Moreover, if Tibet became a Chinese province, would not Nepal lose all hope of realising her territorial aspirations there? In short, politically the presence of China on her immediate border was for Nepal an extremely undesirable development, and a large Sino-Tibetan army a potential threat to her security.

Chandra Shamsher was little flattered by Chang's attention and eulogies, and he had learnt too much about Chinese intentions in Tibet to feel any desire for closer relations with them. In fact, he was considering how to defend the Nepalese frontier against a future Chinese violation. So long as the approaches to Kuti, Kerung and Taglakot passes lay on the Tibetan side of the border, Nepal's frontier was vulnerable to a Chinese attack from Tibet, and therefore Chandra Shamsher—like Jang Bahadur¹—was keen on occupying them. As the Chinese were certain to oppose this, Chandra Shamsher tried to obtain assurances of British assistance or atleast their protection. With his keen political sense Chandra Shamsher must have seen that in view of the Chinese activities in Tibet and their overtures to Nepal, the British would want to remain on good terms with him and perhaps wink at his occupation of the strategic Tibetan territories both as a measure of strengthening Nepal's border defence and as a compensation for the likely loss of Nepalese interests in Tibet if it became a Chinese province. The Prime Minister had, therefore, been dropping hints to conclude a definite agreement with the Indian government regarding Nepal's "political subordination in dealing with China;" he stated that the Nepalese preferred more intimate relations with the British to those with the Chinese because "China is nothing to us." To Perceval Landon, *The Times* correspondent, who visited Nepal in 1908, Chandra Shamsher confided that if the Indian government raised no objection, he could annex some bordering Tibetan territory. He spoke in similar terms to the Acting Resident, Colonel F.W.P. Macdonald, as well. In August 1909 he sent a survey party to map the frontier.²

¹ See Chapter IV.

² *PEF*, 2750/1908, Pt. 6, Reg. No. 3377, J. Manners Smith, Resident, to Govt., 6 April 1910; 505/1912, Pt. 3, Reg. No. 632, H. Butler, Foreign Secy. to Manners Smith, 8 April 1909.

II

The Indian government, too, were uneasy over the Chinese activity in Tibet. Communications from the Nepalese officers at Lhasa, Shigatse and Gyantse which were regularly forwarded by Chandra Shamsher to the Resident confirmed the Indian government's impression that the Chinese were digging themselves firmly in Tibet and that Sino-Tibetan relations had developed strains. Jit Bahadur's reports corroborated those of the British officers at Gyantse, Yatung and Kathmandu that China had no intention to observe her treaties with Britain regarding Tibetan trade. Captain W.F.O'Connor,¹ J.C. White,² and Charles Bell made many allegations that the Chinese in preventing direct communications between the British trade agents and the Tibetan authorities at Gyantse, Yatung and Chumbi were robbing the British of one of the main gains out of the Lhasa Convention. The Chinese were alleged to have interfered with British trade in Tibet and their administration of the Chumbi valley. The Chinese reinforced their troops at Gyantse, Yatung and Chumbi which led the local British officers to ask for more escorts for personal security. The Indian government, then under Lord Minto, from time to time urged the Home government that China be strongly asked to desist from interfering with Britain's treaty rights in Tibet.³

The Home government, however, were unwilling to take a tough line with the Chinese. They were opposed to an active

¹ O'Connor was British trade agent at Gyantse. He went to Lhasa with the Younghusband mission. He was the most active supporter of the policy of bringing Tibet under Britain's political influence. He had strong distrust of China. O'Connor became Resident in Nepal in 1918.

² White was the Political Officer in Sikkim and simultaneously held charge of British relations with Bhutan as well. He, too, was in favour of an active policy in regard to the Himalayan border states and Tibet to prevent their domination by China. He retired in 1908, when Bell took over.

³ *PSLI*, Vol. 178, Reg. No. 1126; Vol. 200, Reg. Nos. 625-7; Vol. 203, Reg. No. 1258; Vol. 204, Reg. No. 1311, India Secret Letter to Secy. of State, No. 123, 18 July 1907; Vol. 210, Reg. No. 302, Viceroy to Secy. of State, Telg. 15 January 1908; Vol. 216, Reg. No. 1024, *Note on Tibet*, by O'Connor, 13 March 1908; Reg. No. 1288; Vol. 219, Reg. No. 1490; Vol. 220, Reg. No. 1624; Vol. 224, Reg. No. 2236. *PEF*, 2750/1908, Pts. 3,4, Reg. Nos. 654, 901, Viceroy to Secy. of State, 3 February 1907. Lamb, *McMahon Line*, I, pp. 16-67.

policy in Tibet because it would create international complications and add to the already heavy political and military responsibilities of the Indian government. There was in London no ambition to establish political influence in Tibet nor any desire to interfere in its internal administration. The best safeguard against a future political vacuum in Tibet and a fresh Anglo-Russian competition to fill it up, it seemed to the Liberal government, was to restore the *status quo* in Tibet which the Dalai Lama's adventurous policy had disturbed; the restoration of this *status quo* meant the restoration of Chinese position in Tibet. The Liberal government secured China's adherence to the Lhasa Convention by another Convention signed in Peking (April 1906) which recognised China's special position in Tibet and her responsibility for the maintenance of British treaty rights and privileges there.¹ The main object of the Liberal foreign policy was to compose Britain's long-standing differences with Russia. In August 1907 Britain and Russia signed a self-abnegatory Convention by which they engaged to respect the territorial integrity of Tibet, to desist from interference in its internal administration, to enter into no negotiations with its government for any industrial and commercial concessions except through the good offices of China, and not to send any agent to Lhasa.²

"With the conclusion of this Convention, the practical sterilisation of Tibet was rendered complete...and for a moment it seemed possible that the country must be left to its own devices, ineffective and dormant; an effective barrier between the conflicting interests of three great empires in Asia, Britain, Russia and China."³

The effect of Britain's new Conventions with China and Russia was to give the Chinese a virtually free hand in Tibet, precluding any possibility of foreign interference with their policy. The Home government would now take no "more than a passive interest in Tibetan affairs"; their policy in Tibet from now on was "to have as little as possible to do with it."⁴

¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 32-55. Aitchison, *Treaties and Engagements*, (edn. 1929), XIV, pp. 27-8. CRP, Vol. 345, *Secret E Proceedings*, October 1905, Nos. 575-613.

² Lamb, *op. cit.*, pp. 71-114. J. Morley, *Recollections*, II, pp. 177-9.

³ PF, Vol. 11, 1914, Reg. No. 2964, *Tibet Conference, Final Memorandum*, by A.H. McMahon, 8 July 1914.

⁴ PSM, B. 191, *Tibet*, by A. Hirtzel, 27 January 1913; B. 201, *Tibet, The Simla Conference*, by J.E. Shuckburgh, 17 October 1913. PSLI, Vol. 171,

In such circumstances, when the Indian government wanted to strongly assert their position in Tibet, no wonder the Home government—particularly, Lord Morley, the Secretary of State—saw in it the spectre of Curzon's forward policy which they had both discredited and repudiated. Morley was totally against any more Tibetan adventures on the plea of a supposed threat to British interests in Tibet—and this he repeatedly pointed out to Minto.

The Indian government took a serious view of what seemed to them China's attempt to "tamper" with the "allegiance" of Nepal, Bhutan and Sikkim to the British government. Minto saw a "clear sign of a forward policy by China" on the north-east frontier of India, and China's "open attempt" to establish influence in Bhutan, in particular, led him to suggest to Morley that a treaty be made with Bhutan securing British control of its foreign relations.¹ Minto had no fear of Chandra Shamsher's being weaned away by the Chinese, but he could not ignore the political effect of Chinese overtures to Nepal for closer alliance. The Amban's desire to enlist Gurkhas and Chang's eagerness to go to Kathmandu were, so Minto had already warned Morley, "an innovation in policy which from Indian point of view is open to serious objection."² It was true that Chandra Shamsher had assured Colonel J. Manners Smith, the Resident, that he had no wish to exploit the Sino-Tibetan dispute, far less to act as a Chinese cat's paw; he would not act upon Chang's proposal either to lend money or troops to help strengthen Chinese position in Tibet; he promised to keep Manners Smith informed of any further communication from the Amban. The Prime Minister said he knew that the British did not want any Nepalese intervention in Tibet, and "the Nepal durbar would never dare to incur the serious displeasure of the Indian government."³ Never-

Reg. No. 2002, Secret Despatch to India, No. 58, 2 December 1904. *PEF*, 2750/1908, Pt. 3, Reg. No. 901, Secy. of State to Viceroy, 19 February 1909. *Diaries of A. Hirtzel* (Private Secy. to Morley), p.3. *MP*, Vol. 1, Morley to Minto, 16 January, 23 March, 7 June 1906; Vol. 2, Same to same, 2 May, 26 September 1907; Vol. 3 Same to same, 3, January 1908.

¹ *PEF*, 505/1912, Pt. 1, Reg. No. 1921, India Secret Letter to Secy. of State, No. 174, 1 October 1908.

² *Ibid.*, Reg. No. 1048, Viceroy to Secy. of State, Telg. 23 March 1907; Reg. No. 1921, Wilton and Bell's *Notes on the Indian North-East Frontier*, 9 March, 24 July 1908.

³ *PSLI*, Vol. 201, Reg. No. 901, Resident to Govt., 23 April 1907.

theless, Minto could not overlook that some of Chandra Shamsher's advisers were inclined to take advantage of the Tibetan situation. Jit Bahadur, for instance, wanted Nepalese troops to be brought into Lhasa ostensibly to safeguard Nepalese interests but really to increase Nepal's influence in Tibet. Nepal, being an ally of British India, the British, Jit Bahadur argued, would rather welcome this influence than oppose it. Jit Bahadur would even meet the Amban's request for a loan provided Nepal was allowed to hold some bordering Tibetan territory until the loan was paid off.¹ Chandra Shamsher rejected all this as "curious suggestions", but he did not fail to tell Manners Smith that Chinese overtures had both embarrassed and worried him. The Prime Minister "professed personally to set little value" on Nepal's connexion with China,² but he would not antagonise the Amban lest the latter banned the Nepalese trade in Tibet and expelled the Nepalese agent from Lhasa. For the same reason he dared not openly oppose the Amban's intended visit to Kathmandu although, as he confided to Manners Smith, such a visit was "an innovation"—no Amban having ever come to the Nepalese capital to confer imperial titles on the Nepalese Ministers.³ On the other hand, it was certain that any assistance to the Amban, either pecuniary or military, to strengthen his position at Lhasa would damage Nepal's relations with the Tibetan government. In such circumstances Chandra Shamsher, as he disclosed to Manners Smith, could think of only one way to wriggle out of the dilemma. He would continue to advise the Kajis to settle their disputes with the Amban and to remain loyal to the Emperor of China. Then he would offer the Amban four/five thousand Gurkha troops instead of a smaller number of them as asked by the Amban. The latter was very unlikely to accept such a large number of Gurkhas at Lhasa who might fall out with the local Tibetan troops and aggravate the Chinese problem, but he could not blame Chandra Shamsher for not assisting him in his difficulties. Manners Smith discouraged the plan, suspecting it to be a ruse; he knew that a section in the *darbar* urged Chandra Shamsher to intervene in Tibetan politics at what appeared to them a very favourable time. Manners Smith pointed out to

¹ *PSLI*, Vol. 201, Reg. No. 820, *RNA*, 18 January 1907.

² *Ibid.*, Reg. No. 901, Resident to Govt., 23 April 1907.

³ *Ibid.*

Chandra Shamsher that the British government disapproved of China's policy towards Nepal and the neighbouring states and "persistence in such a policy would presumably entail diplomatic action to prevent its success."¹ Manners Smith's warning that the Chinese in Tibet might create future troubles for the British as well as the Nepalese governments suggested possible action by both against China, and this raised Chandra Shamsher's hope that if he made a treaty with the British giving them control of Nepal's relations with China—a highly-prized object for the Indian government—they might not object to his annexation of some Tibetan territory.

In September 1908 Chandra Shamsher stated that if the Chinese were to attack Nepal, he would expect British help.² In January 1909 Minto found Chandra Shamsher "evidently nervous about the advance of Chinese influence in Tibet" and considered that "some rearrangement of our relations with Nepal, Bhutan and Sikkim" was necessary,³ meaning, presumably, guaranteeing these states British protection against Chinese pressure. Kitchener, who had firsthand knowledge of Nepal,⁴ however, suspected that Chandra Shamsher was "spoiling for a fight" with the Chinese with the intention of annexing Tibetan territory and was perhaps trying to commit the British to his support. But Minto was not sure what the Prime Minister was up to : was he trying to exploit the Tibetan situation, or was he really anxious about Nepal's territorial security and, therefore, "drawing us into some treaty arrangement with him in response to Chinese aggression?" Whatever be his real intention, Chandra Shamsher was "certainly restless" which made Minto anxious that if the Prime Minister took any "hasty action in Tibet", the Indian government would be "in a terrible difficulty",

for we should at once become compromised in respect to the Anglo-Russian Convention, whilst the last thing we wish to do is to bring force to bear upon Nepal with the risk of a serious fight and the loss of Nepalese friendship.⁵

¹ *PSLI*, Vol. 233, Reg. No. 1597, Manners Smith to Chandra, 30 September 1909.

² Lamb, *op. cit.*, p. 161.

³ *MP*, Vol. 20, Minto to Morley, 21 January 1909.

⁴ He visited Kathmandu in 1906.

⁵ *MP*, Vol. 20, Minto to Morley, 7 April 1909.

Minto also considered whether to accept Chandra Shamsher's hints of a treaty which would make the British responsible for the Nepal's security and allay Chandra Shamsher's anxiety; the treaty would be an insurance against Chinese intrigues, and in return for the treaty the Indian government would ask Chandra Shamsher to abandon Nepal's exclusive policy. But there were risks; before agreeing to the treaty, the Prime Minister might demand some *quid pro quo*—possibly a free hand in Tibet or a large supply of arms to strengthen the Nepalese army. But to the Indian government both the concessions were objectionable; a free hand to Nepal in Tibet was very likely to lead to a Sino-Nepalese war, while increasing Nepal's military strength was against India's security interests. Minto, therefore, saw "nothing at present to gain by a treaty", which might raise "difficult and troublesome issues." Manners Smith was accordingly instructed to discourage Chandra Shamsher's hints and to remind him of British commitments to Russia and China regarding the territorial integrity of Tibet.¹

The India Office supported Minto's opposition to a Nepalese treaty, agreeing that "our policy in Nepal is to maintain the status quo."² The Nepalese restlessness, it appeared to the Home government, was due not so much to any fear of China as to their own unrealised ambition in Tibet. The problem, therefore, was not how to protect Nepal from China but how to restrain her from falling out with China in Tibet. Besides, as the Resident had not even the "slightest doubt" as to Chandra Shamsher's loyalty to the British and his readiness to accept British advice in dealing with the Chinese overtures,³ the Home government saw no reason to be alarmed over the Chinese intrigues. However, this attitude changed a few months later when Nepalese reaction to the Chinese proceedings in Tibet created a far greater impact at Whitehall.

¹ PEF, 505/1912, Pt. 3, Reg. No. 632, Butler to Manners Smith, 8 April 1909.

² *Ibid.*, F M. Gerard to Butler, 28 May 1909, F. Campbell to R. Ritchie, 24 May 1909.

³ PSFI, Vol. 231, Reg. No. 1412, Resident to Govt., 22 August 1909.

Towards the end of 1909 the Tibetan situation took a graver turn. The Dalai Lama returned to Lhasa having been in exile for more than five years;¹ opposition to the Amban increased in the Tibetan government. The Dalai Lama and his followers were totally against the Amban's bringing Chinese troops from Szechuan, but Lien was adamant. The Kajis kept making vain requests to Jit Bahadur to get Gurkha officers to train the Tibetan army; they wanted Chandra Shamsher to dissuade the Amban from bringing any more Chinese troops to Lhasa.² On 12 February 1910 an advance body of Szechuan troops entered the Tibetan capital and were immediately involved in trouble with the Tibetans. Within sight of these troops the Dalai Lama escaped—this time to India.³

Chandra Shamsher, as Manners Smith saw him, was now in "great anxiety"—and not unreasonably. The return of the Dalai Lama had revived the Nepalese fear of renewed Russian intrigue, violation of the Lhasa Convention and another British expedition to enforce it. Jit Bahadur reported that the Tibetan troops escorting the Dalai Lama home wore Russian caps and uniforms, and that influential Tibetan officials still believed in Russia's backing the Dalai Lama.⁴ Disturbances at Lhasa had alarmed the Nepalese merchants who sought Jit Bahadur's protection; the impression had already been created among the *Bharadars* (Members of the State Advisory Council composed of the Ranas and other leading families of Nepal whom the Prime Minister consulted in his administrative duties) that the Prime Minister had done nothing to protect Nepalese interests in Tibet. The ill-treatment of the Nepalese embassy to Peking was another disturbing news for the *Bharadars*.⁵ Chandra Shamsher's main object now was to obtain from the British an undertaking that if they did not let him take adequate mea-

¹ C. Bell, *The Portrait of the Dalai Lama*, p. 97. Lamb, *op. cit.*, pp. 172-80.

² PEF, 2750/1908, Pt. 1, Reg. No. 286/1910. PSLI, Vol. 237, Reg. No. 547, RNA, 14 February 1910, Resident to Govt. 10 March 1910.

³ PEF, 2750/1908, Pt. 1, Reg. No. 3011, Viceroy to Secy. of State, Telg. 22 February 1910. Teichman, *op. cit.*, p. 28. Bell, *Portrait*, *op. cit.*, pp. 82-9. Shakabpa, *Tibet*, pp. 227-9.

⁴ PEF, 2750/1908, Pt. 1, Reg. No. 286, RNA, 6 December 1909, Manners Smith to Butler, 3 January 1910.

⁵ See *Supra*.

asures to defend the Nepalese interests in Tibet, they should themselves take such measures. In December 1909 Chandra Shamsher told Manners Smith how worried the Nepalese government were at the prospect of the reduction of Tibet by China in her "old orthodox fashion." "An angry, turbulent, distracted Tibet and a coterminous Chinese frontier", the Prime Minister added, would "aggravate Nepal's responsibilities" and "emphasise anxious watchfulness on her part." Continuance of a peaceful and orderly Tibetan government was vital for Nepal. Chandra Shamsher would give moral support to the Tibetans, although their requests for military assistance he dismissed as "quite quixotic." The Tibetans, Chandra Shamsher continued, were "in a way justified" in their fight "for the preservation of their legitimate rights". He warned Manners Smith that the "novel policy initiated by China in Tibet" and the Tibetan government's resistance to it would create "probable complications" for both Nepal and India.

In several interviews with Manners Smith early next year, Chandra Shamsher repeated his concern. He wanted the British to exert political pressure on the Chinese government for the maintenance of an effective Tibetan government at Lhasa "without prejudice to the principle of the existing suzerain rights of China" in Tibet. Otherwise, he told the Resident, he would not be able to withstand the *Bharadars'* pressure on him to despatch troops to Lhasa in order to safeguard the Nepalese interests there. Eight thousand troops, he added were ready to march, and but for his consideration of British reaction, they would have been already at Lhasa.¹ In March 1910 Chandra Shamsher submitted a memorandum to Manners Smith demanding either a definite commitment by the British to protect Nepal's interests in Tibet or else freedom to take his own measures. He grumbled that when the British, by the Anglo-Russian Convention, pledged themselves to defend Tibet's territorial integrity, they had overlooked Nepal's treaty rights in Tibet for the defence of which the Nepalese government had the right to take any measure they deemed necessary. Even if no military action was actually taken,

¹ PEF, 2750/1908, Pt. 1, Reg. No. 286, RNA, 15 November, 1909, Chandra to Manners Smith, 29 December 1909, Manners Smith to Butler, 3 January 1910. PSJI, Vol. 237, Reg. No. 511, Resident to Govt., Telgs. 4, 7 March 1910.

by threatening such action, Nepal could put pressure on Tibet and redress her grievances and ensure the maintenance of her treaty rights. This pressure, much to Chandra Shamsher's regret, was unlikely to work any more because the Tibetans knew that the British, in view of their international undertakings would check Nepalese jingoism.¹ Manners Smith appreciated Chandra Shamsher's arguments and sounded him if he would agree to a treaty giving the British control over Nepal's relations with China and Tibet and obtaining in return British guarantee of Nepal's territorial security. Chandra Shamsher was "not indisposed to consider the question", and to the evident surprise of Manners Smith, he did not hint at any expectation of arms as a price for the treaty. However, Manners Smith saw as yet no "urgency" for such a treaty because the Chinese intrigues were certain to fail in winning over the Nepalese Prime Minister who "looks entirely to British government and will do nothing to risk his present good relations" with them.²

But Manners Smith was in no doubt that Chandra Shamsher's anxiety over the Tibetan situation was genuine, which anxiety provided Minto with a powerful argument to convince the India Office that a strong Tibetan policy could no longer be avoided. The Chinese, so Minto represented to Morley, were violently overthrowing the Tibetan government whose existence was essential to the operation of the Lhasa Convention which China had herself recognised by her own Convention (1906) with Britain. The disappearance of a "real Tibetan government" at Lhasa, Minto pointed out, would alarm Nepal, Bhutan and Sikkim—all having intimate relations with and considerable stake in that government. Minto's main contention was much the same as Curzon's earlier—China in Tibet, as Russia there, would subvert British relations with the Himalayan border states whose allegiance to the Indian government was essential for the latter's political, economic and military interests.

Minto in the meanwhile had received fresh reports of Chinese intrigues with Nepal. Bhairab Bahadur, while at Lhasa on his

¹ *Ibid.*, Reg. No. 547, Chandra Shamsher's Memorandum, 11 March 1910, Resident to Govt., 8, 10, 12, March 1910. *PEF*, 505/1912, Pt. 3, Reg. No. 324, Chandra to Manners Smith, 11 March 1910.

² *PSLI*, Vol. 237, Reg. No. 511, Resident to Govt., Telg. 4 March 1910; Reg. No. 547, Same to same, Telg. 10 March 1910.

return journey from Peking, was told by the Amban that :

We, China, Tibet and Gorkha are like members of the same family. If any one of them is injured in any way, the other two become afflicted.¹

The Amban also stressed the importance of Nepal as a "wall or barrier on the British side of the frontier"; he sent presents for Chandra Shamsher as well, which in Bhairab Bahadur's opinion was an unprecedented gesture. It was, however, a relief to Minto that Chandra Shamsher's attitude was "still friendly and correct" inspite of his "reasonable apprehension" regarding the Chinese activities in Tibet. "Shumshere is very sensible, and so far there is no indication of his increasing our difficulties," Morley was informed.² But then, in view of the growing feeling among the *Bharadars* that he should take some positive action, the Prime Minister's position was becoming increasingly difficult. "The best solution" of the Tibetan problem, according to the Indian government, was to restore "the former Tibetan government under the Dalai Lama." British prestige in Nepal and the two other neighbouring states, Minto argued, would be seriously compromised if the course suggested by him were not adopted, for British inaction would appear to the Himalayan states as their fear of China.³

From all this the Home government drew one conclusion ; China in Tibet could create tension and uncertainty in the north-east frontier of India in the same manner as Russia did for a century in the north-west, putting the Indian government to an enormous expense for maintaining their territorial security. Of the three border states, Sikkim had been recognised by China in 1890 as a British protectorate. In regard to Bhutan, however, the British position was less secure. No doubt the treaty of 1865 and the subsidy provided for therein had given the Indian government a measure of influence in that state,⁴ and the Maharaja, Ugyen Wangchuk, was a dependable ally. But then, Bhutan, which had practically no army worth the name, was

¹ *PSLI*, Vol. 236, Reg. No. 360, Bhairab to Chandra, 3 January 1910.

² *MP*, Vol. 23, Minto to Morley, 24 February, 10 March 1910.

³ *PSLI*, Vol. 235, Reg. No. 190, Viceroy to Secy. of State, Telg. 31 January 1910; Vol. 237, Reg. No. 511, Viceroy to Secy. of State, Telg. 5 March 1910; Reg. No. 547, Same to same Telg, 12 March 1910.

⁴ See Chapter IV.

vulnerable to Chinese pressure; and therefore Minto had for some time been urging the Home government that Bhutan be assured of British protection. Morley agreed to this in June 1909, and in the following January a treaty was signed which increased the Maharaja's subsidy from fifty thousand to one hundred thousand rupees per annum and gave the British control over Bhutan's external relations.¹

What troubled the Home government most was their fear that the Tibetan situation might spark off a Sino-Nepalese armed conflict which would compromise Britain's relations with China and Russia. Morley, with all his opposition to an active Tibetan policy, could scarcely ignore Minto's warning that if Chandra Shamsher's anxiety over the Nepalese interests in Tibet were not allayed, Anglo-Nepalese relations would be strained with damaging effect on, particularly, Gurkha recruitment—and as for the Gurkhas, Morley well knew that their "quality as soldiers is not more essential to the native army than their detachment from Indian politics and religious disputes."² He had now no doubt that some move on the part of the British government was unavoidable, and Edward Grey, the Foreign Secretary, agreed with this. Accordingly, on 26 February 1910 the British Minister at Peking, John Jordan, made a representation to the Chinese government about the situation in Tibet. The British government demanded that China refrain from abolishing "an effective Tibetan government" whose existence was essential to the maintenance of British treaty rights in Tibet which China herself had recognised. The British disclaimed any intention to meddle in the internal affairs of Tibet and any responsibility if Nepal, which was an independent state and, so, beyond British control, took armed measures to protect her interests in Tibet.³ It was pointed out to the Russian government that if Chinese policy in Tibet led to a Sino-Nepalese war, the British government could not remain indifferent to it because of the resultant disturbance

¹ PEF, 505/1912, Pt. 1, Reg. No. 1423, Secret despatch to India, 25 June 1909; Reg. No. 530, Bell to Govt., 25 January 1910. Aitchison, *op. cit.*, (1929 edn.), Vol. XIV, pp. 100-01. Bell, *Tibet, op. cit.*, pp. 99-106.

² PSLI, Vol. 235, Reg. No. 190; India Office to Foreign Office, 9 February 1910.

³ PEF, 2750/1908, Pt. 1, Reg. No. 3198, Jordan to Prince Ch'ing, 26 February 1910.

and tension in the entire north-east frontier of India. The British, as Manners Smith later described, were, thus, clearly making use of Nepal's ostensibly independent position as a lever to press for the enforcement of Tibetan autonomy.¹

Jordan's representation elicited from the Chinese Foreign Ministry a categorical denial of any intention of China either to repudiate the Anglo-Chinese treaties concerning Tibet or to abolish the government of Tibet. The Chinese troops from Szechuan, Jordan was told, had gone to Lhasa purely for police duties and to protect British trade interests in Tibet.²

Morley would have been content with this but not Minto. Morley strongly believed that the Indian government were in fact, prejudiced against China; that they showed "speculative apprehensions" regarding Chinese designs, and were inclined to support the Dalai Lama; and, therefore, unless the Home government held a tighter rein on them, they might drive the matter to an issue with China despite the Cabinet's declared disapproval. It would be a "disastrous error", Morley warned Minto, if China were made—as Russia had been for a century—"a standing bogey" to justify a forward policy on the north-east frontier. The exigencies of European politics would not allow the British government any longer to play the "Great Game" in Asia. "So there must be no sort nor shadow of committal" by the Indian government for the Dalai Lama—a "pestilent animal", as Morley described him, who should be "left to stew in his own juice." Morley even wondered whether Minto had correctly interpreted the Nepalese anxiety. "Nepal is important no doubt", Morley pointed out, "but the Prime Minister is not without craft, and it won't be the first time that he tries to use the fears of the Indian foreign office for a game of his own."³ Morley's impression was that Chandra Shamsher's supposed anxiety was a means of wringing some concessions from the British; he had tried this trick during the Tibetan crisis in 1903-4.⁴ It could not have esca-

¹ PEF, 505/1912, Pt. 3, Reg. No. 324, Manners Smith to Govt., 12 March 1910; Vol. 2750/1908, Pt. 1, Reg. No. 374, Foreign Office Memo to the Russian Ambassador, 24 February 1910.

² *Ibid.*, Reg. No. 3198, Prince Ch'ing to Jordan, 27 February 1910.

³ MP, Vol. 5, Morley to Minto, 24 February, 3, 9, 17, 23 March, 30 June, 18 July 1910. S. Wolpert, *Morley and India, 1906-1910*, p. 93.

⁴ See Chapter V.

ped Morley's notice that it was Manners Smith who, contrary to the Government's instruction, had discussed the question of a treaty with Chandra Shamsher—and this, presumably, had encouraged the latter's hope that if he allowed the British to control Nepal's relations with Tibet and China, he could commit them to the protection of Nepalese interests in Tibet as well as secure their acquiescence in his territorial aspirations in Tibet.¹ Besides, Morley could see no reason why Minto should worry about Nepal when Manners Smith, who knew Chandra Shamsher well, was "confident"

that there is no present fear of the Nepal Durbar carrying on secret negotiations with China or of desiring a closer connection with that power.²

Nevertheless, lest Chandra Shamsher should intervene in Tibetan politics, Morley considered it wise to ask Minto to advise the Prime Minister that he should not take any action without prior consultation with the Indian government.³

Minto, on the other hand, had no faith in China's disclaimers; "notwithstanding official declarations in Peking," he privately informed Morley, "it looks like a Chinese occupation of Tibet"⁴ the Chinese newspapers at Lhasa justifying this occupation as a necessary precaution against foreign aggression on Tibet, strengthened the Viceroy's argument. Minto, in fact, had little doubt about China's "aggressive intentions."⁵ After his interview with the Dalai Lama and the latter's warnings that after Tibet, China would absorb Nepal, Bhutan and Sikkim, Minto became very keen on taking firmer steps. Not that he had any immediate apprehension of China's detaching Nepal, Bhutan and Sikkim from the British government, but

still it is disagreeable having this great increase in Chinese strength in close proximity to our frontier native states.⁶

¹ See *Supra PSLI*, Vol. 237, Reg. Nos. 511, 547, Minutes by Hirtzel, March 1910.

² *Ibid.*, Reg. No. 547, Manners Smith to Govt., 12 March 1910.

³ *PEF*, 2750/1908, Pt. 4, Reg. No. 415, Secy. of State to Viceroy, Telg. 23 March 1910.

⁴ *MP*, Vol. 23, Minto to Morley, 10 March 1910.

⁵ *PEF*, 2750/1908, Pt. 1, Reg. Nos. 382-4, Viceroy to Secy. of State, Telg. 5 March 1910.

⁶ *MP*, Vol. 23, Minto to Morley, 17 March, 14 April, 30 June, 9, 21 July 1910. *PSLI*, Vol. 237, Reg. No. 451. *A.P.*, 1910, LXVIII: *East India (Tibet, Further Papers)*, p.207. Mary, Countess of Minto, *India, Minto and Morley*, pp.387-8.

The boundary of Nepal and Bhutan with Tibet being neither well-defined nor demarcated¹ was a potential source of complications with China and was certain to involve the Indian government; the latter, who had not forgotten their troubles with Russia regarding the Afghan boundary,² did not naturally want that experience to be repeated in the north-east frontier. The Chinese, so it appeared to Minto, were out to challenge British position in Nepal and Bhutan in all possible ways. In March and April 1910 came the news of Chinese troops having been sighted on the Bhutan border. Jit Bahadur reported that the Amban wanted to write to the King of Nepal, asking him not to lend any assistance to the Dalai Lama. Jit Bahadur was again requested for Gurkha troops—"even 10, 20 or 40 will do", the Amban told him—primarily to show the Tibetan government that "the interests of China and Gorkha are indissolubly tied together."³ All this Minto held up as a vindication of his stand, which was that if China had not yet become a grave menace to the political interests of the Indian government, she might well become so soon.

Minto's persistence had some effect on the Home government. The Foreign office, which had by April 1910 received several reports from the British diplomats in China, had "no longer any doubt that China is actively making her suzerainty over Tibet effective."⁴ The Maharaja of Bhutan and the Raja of Sikkim had, in the meanwhile, repeatedly requested the Indian government to ask the Chinese to desist from taking over the Tibetan

¹ Nepal's boundary with Tibet, Manners Smith wrote to Dunlop Smith, Minto's Private Secretary, was "curiously irregular". Letter dt. 10 July 1907, *MNP*, No. 981. This boundary had been generally agreed upon by the settlement made by China in 1792. For the most part it was supposed to run along the main Himalayan ranges except for certain places—as near the Kuti and Kerung passes—where there were indentations of Tibetan tracts into the southern and, therefore, Nepalese side of the watershed. The occupation of these tracts was the abiding object of Nepalese policy. Landon, *Nepal*, I, pp. xv-xvii. See also Chapter IV.

² On the two issues—the determination of the Upper Oxus frontier of Afghanistan and the settlement of British India's northern frontier at the Pamirs see G. Alders, *British India's Northern Frontier, 1865-1895*, pp. 165-287.

³ *PEF*, 2750/1908, Pt. 6, Reg. No. 3377/1910; 2750/1908, Pt. 1, Reg. No. 889/1910. *PSLI*, Vol. 243, Reg. No. 1436.

⁴ *Ibid.*, Vol. 238, Reg. No. 609, Grey to Max Muller, Teig. 8 April 1910.

Government.¹ Another representation was, therefore, made with the Chinese Government demanding that they maintain an "effective Tibetan government" and keep off the border states. In April 1910 W. Max Muller, who was holding charge of the British embassy at Peking, warned the Chinese Foreign office

"that we cannot allow any administrative changes in Tibet to affect or prejudice the integrity of either of Nepal or of the two smaller states" and "we are prepared, if necessary, to protect the interests and rights of these three states"²

The Chinese were also asked not to keep many troops in Tibet which would set off uneasiness in Nepal, Bhutan and Sikkim. The India office declared that the British government had only an "indirect interest" in the Tibetan affairs; all that they wanted the Chinese to realise was, as Arthur Hirtzel, the Political Secretary at the India office, put it, that the form of Tibetan government must continue "if only because it was recognised by treaties and because its disappearance would still further alarm the border states."³

The Chinese government denied that their administrative reforms in Tibet would in any way affect the interests either of the British government or of the three border states. Prince Ch'ing of the Chinese Foreign office told Max Muller that the British had no reason to question the "sovereign rights" of China in Tibet, the feudatory status of Nepal vis-a-vis China and the latter's "friendly relations" with Bhutan and Sikkim. China thus made it clear that she would not surrender her traditional suzerainty over the three border states.⁴

With the Chinese claims of suzerainty over Nepal, Bhutan and Sikkim, the British government were, in fact, quite familiar. But they had as yet taken no step to challenge these claims mainly

¹ *Ibid.*, Vol. 237, Reg. No. 582. PEF, 2750/1908, Pts. 5, 6, Reg. Nos. 794, 3377/1910.

² *Ibid.*, 2750/1908, Pt. 8, Reg. No. 3429, Max Muller to Prince Ch'ing. 11 April 1910.

³ PEF, 2750/1908, Pt. 4, Reg. No. 415.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 2750/1908, Pt. 8, Reg. No. 3429, Ch'ing to Max Muller, 18 April 1910.

for two reasons : the Home government's unwillingness to make an issue with China on the Indian frontier;¹ and the Indian government's knowledge that Nepal valued her relations with China and resented any British interference with them. Towards the end of the 19th century the Home government's attitude showed some change. In 1895, for instance, the British Minister at Peking, N. O'Connor, drew the attention of the Foreign Office to the fact that in the Chinese Emperor's reply to the Nepalese King's address for permission to send a mission to Peking, Nepal had been referred to as a vassal of China. O'Connor warned that the juxtaposition of effective British influence and shadowy Chinese suzerainty in Nepal was a political anomaly which should be removed. It would be wise, he suggested, to have the Sino-Nepalese relations clearly defined, removing any suggestion of Nepal's allegiance to China and all doubt about Britain's exclusive position in Nepal. China's suzerainty, O'Connor added, had only a symbolic significance; it should never be admitted by the British as constituting a real state of subordination on the part of Nepal because

the transference of such suzerainty into other hands might possibly someday prove embarrassing to the interests of our Indian Empire.²

By "other hands", O'Connor meant, particularly, Russia and France who had already secured spheres of influence in China proper as well as in some Chinese tributary states. O'Connor well knew that Chinese claims to suzerainty over Korea and Tongkin had created complications for Japan and France respectively. Britain herself had the experience of such claims over Burma, Hunza and Sikkim.³ The Chinese Foreign Office was accordingly informed by O'Connor that the British government regarded the submissive expressions in the Nepalese King's "petition" to the Emperor as "purely formal and complimentary style of address" rather than as an explicit acknowledgement of Chinese overlordship. The Chinese government replied that they would maintain their traditional relations with Nepal. The matter was not pursu-

¹ See Chapter IV.

² *PEF*, 505/1912, Pt. 7, Reg. No. 947, O'Connor to Kimberley, Foreign Secy. 30 April 1895.

³ See Chapter IV.

ed thereafter.¹ Curzon, who regarded Nepal as a British protectorate, dismissed the Chinese claim as a fiction, and was prepared to resist any attempt by China to assert the claim.² But when in April 1904 a Chinese delegation visited Kathmandu and bestowed on Chandra Shamsher the usual Imperial title (*Thong-ling-ping-ma-kuo-kan-wang*), it was not thought necessary to make any representation to the Prime Minister presumably because there was no doubt about his loyalty to the British nor any novelty in the incident. However, after the Tibetan crisis leading to the Young-husband mission, when the Indian government became increasingly suspicious of China, they viewed the Sino-Nepalese relations with some uneasiness. In 1906, for example, when Chandra Shamsher despatched the customary embassy to China, Manners Smith drew the Prime Minister's attention to the Amban's memorial to the Emperor in which Nepal was described as "a dependency beyond the borders of China" and whose "tribes have always displayed loyal devotion to the throne."³ The Indian government, then challenging Chinese claim of sovereignty over Tibet,⁴ naturally disliked the Chinese claiming overlordship of Nepal as well. However, Chandra Shamsher explained that the language of the Amban's memorial represented not the actual but "rather vague and undefined relations between Nepal and China," and that the Nepalese King's "petitions", which always preceded the despatch of Nepalese embassies to Peking, were

¹ *HC*, Vol. 159, No. 727; Vol. 162, No. 1802, India Secret Letter to Secy. of State, No. 179, 10 September 1895; Vol. 163, No. 114. *PSI*, Vol. 21, No. 20, 12 July 1895.

² *PEF*, 505/1912, Pt. 6, Reg. No. 1755/1910, India Secret Letter to Secy. of State, No. 79, 11 June 1903.

³ *PEF*, 505/1912, Pt. 7, Reg. No. 1037/1910, Manners Smith to Chandra, 16 April 1906.

⁴ The Indian government maintained that Tibet was an autonomous, self-governing state where China had suzerainty—China was responsible for Tibet's foreign relations and defence; in the internal administration she had no right to interfere. The Chinese government's contention was that over Tibet China had sovereignty—Tibet was as much a part of the Empire as the regular Chinese provinces; and that although China had normally abstained from interfering with the internal administration of Tibet, she had the authority to do so, if necessary. *CRP*, Vol. 345, *Foreign Secret Proceedings*, February 1905, Nos. 892-955, Dept. Notes; October 1905, Nos. 575-613, Dept. Notes. Lamb, *op. cit.*, I, pp. 42-9. Tieh-Tseng Li, *The Historical Status of Tibet*, pp. 101-14.

written "in the truly oriental style of exuberant but meaningless formality." So far as the Nepalese government were concerned, the Prime Minister added, the quinquennial embassies had no political motivation; they had a purely commercial value; Nepal had maintained "this harmless and friendly practice" for ages as nothing but a sort of price paid to China for the privileges the Nepalese had been enjoying in Tibet since 1856.¹ This put the matter to rest for the present. However, the Foreign Office had the feeling that although the Nepalese government regarded their missions as "purely formal and complimentary," the Chinese attached more political significance to them; this was subsequently borne out by both the Chinese declarations and a thorough study of Sino-Nepalese relations by the India Office.²

The 1906 mission was treated with such "studied contempt and rudeness" by the Szechuan authorities that the leader of the mission, Bhairab Bahadur, doubted if any such mission should be sent in future at all. Bhairab Bahadur complained to the British Acting Consul-General at Chengtu about the misbehaviour of the local Chinese officers and inadequate supply of provisions by them. He seemed extremely reluctant to continue the long and hazardous journey. While at Peking the mission was given, so Jordan reported, "somewhat inadequate accommodation" in a corner of the city. Bhairab Bahadur saw Jordan and confided to him that the Chinese suspected that the Nepalese mission was doing espionage work for the British. Commercially, he said, the mission had proved of doubtful utility for Nepal; Nepalese goods brought by the mission for sale in China did not earn much profit; besides, the Chinese government's restriction on the sale of opium had affected the principal source of earning for the mission. The only utility of the mission, so far as the Nepalese government were concerned, was that it was a means of obtaining first hand information about events in Tibet and China which was otherwise not easily available. Bhairab Bahadur grumbled that the Chinese government insisted on the observance of the rigid formalities concerning the mission without recognising the fact that the times had changed as had the actual relations between Nepal and China. He wondered why the

¹ See Chapter IV.

² See *Supra*. PEF, 2750/1908, pt. 8, Reg. No. 3429, Max Muller to Grey, 22 April 1910.

Chinese government turned down Nepal's proposal of sending the mission by the easier sea route. The Chinese especially disliked, Bhairab Bahadur told Jordan, Nepal's extra-territorial rights in Tibet, and this Jit Bahadur later confirmed.¹ In Bhairab Bahadur's opinion "the mission was a relic of the past which might be discontinued although the process should be a gradual one." Jordan noted "scant ceremony" in the Chinese government's reception and farewell to the mission.² All this, together with Chandra Shamsher's uneasiness over the Chinese policy in Tibet, indicated a change in Sino-Nepalese relations—a development which correspondingly strengthened British hands to contest the Chinese claim on Nepal.

The Best answer to this claim, it was now being increasingly felt at the Indian Foreign Department, was to take over Nepal's external relations by a treaty. The Secretary of the Department, S.H. Butler, Jordan and B. Alston, the Foreign Office (London) expert on China, all shared this view. Even Minto was not unwilling although he would wait until Chandra Shamsher himself pressed for such a treaty in which case the Indian government would not have to give him any *quid pro quo*—most likely arms. King Edward VII was also "much interested in Tibet" and the British position there; he thought that the British government "ought to clinch" their relations with Nepal; he entirely agreed, Butler informed Minto from London, that the Indian government should feel concern over China's policy in Tibet and the frontier states; the king was particularly "anxious about Nepal."³ But Morley would not favour such a treaty until China asserted her suzerainty by some positive action. For the present he considered it sufficient to assure Chandra Shamsher that he should have no fear from China. The Prime Minister was accordingly told that the British government would defend Nepal against external aggression and that

so long as he preserved his present correct and friendly attitude, consulted the British government before committing himself and followed the advice

¹ See *Supra*.

² *PEF*, 505/1912, Pt. 7, Reg. Nos. 510, 3468, 3561, 3658, 3772, 4100, Jordan to Grey, 29 April, 25 May, 5 June, 7 July, 14 September 1908. *PSLI*, Vol. 205, Reg. No. 1571, Manners Smith to R. Holland, 7 August 1907, enclosing Chandra Shamsher's Memorandum to the Resident.

³ *MNP*, No. 996, Butler to Minto, 20, 28 July 1910.

when given, the British government would not allow Nepalese interests to be prejudiced by any administrative change in Tibet.¹

He was also assured that the British government fully recognised the Nepalese rights in Tibet and appreciated the Prime Minister's concern for them, and that the Anglo-Russian Convention would not affect these rights in any way. But at the same time it was also made clear to him that British obligation regarding Tibet's territorial integrity would not let them acquiesce in Nepal's taking armed measures to defend her interests in Tibet. At any rate Chandra Shamsher should consult the British before taking such measures. Manners Smith explained the point thus :

the British government desired from Nepal a continuance of the present confidential relations in regard to external affairs, and a readiness to seek advice in matters which might lead to a conflict with China and Tibet, and that the Nepal government may expect the maintenance of their existing rights and interests by the British government.²

Chandra Shamsher agreed to this arrangement³ and he had his own reasons. The arrangement, in fact, did not place him on the losing side of the bargain. On the contrary, he prided himself of having realised what he considered an important political object : committing the British to defend Nepal's position in Tibet without giving them any general control on Nepal's foreign relations. Nepal was still perfectly free to deal with Tibet and China in all manner short of force. In fact, his undertaking not to seek armed solution of Nepal's disputes with Tibet and China did not amount to anything more than what the Nepalese government were already committed to *in practice*, although there was no written obligation to that effect.

Manners Smith himself regarded the arrangement as inadequate. True, now Nepal could not fall out with China and Tibet on the pretext of safeguarding her interests, and this, he conceded, was, indeed, "a distinct change in the political situation."⁴ But then, in view of the consolidation of Chinese rule

¹ PEF, 505/1912, Pt. 3, Reg. No. 324, Manners Smith to Chandra, 5 June 1910.

² PEF, 505/1912, Pt. 3, Reg. No. 324, Manners Smith to Chandra, 15 June 1910.

³ *Ibid.*, Chandra to Manners Smith, 19 June 1910.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 2750/1908, Pt. 4, Reg. No. 974, Manners Smith to J.B. Wood, Deputy Secy., Foreign Dept., 19 June 1910.

in Tibet, the presence of a strong Chinese army at Lhasa and China's continuing intrigues with Nepal, a treaty—like the one made with Bhutan—would have been the most desirable British object. Nepal was friendly now, but with a strong China in her immediate neighbourhood, it was not impossible for her to play in future the game which Afghanistan played between Russia and British India. Manners Smith, in fact, wanted to detach Nepal from her Chinese connexion, and was encouraged to see certain favourable indications in Chandra Shamsher's policy which suggested that it would not be difficult to persuade the Prime Minister. The latter, for instance, had replied to the Imperial "decree" brought by the Nepalese mission in March 1910 in a deliberately "less humble and submissive tone" to suit, as he explained to the Resident, "Nepal's independent status." The idea was to see how the Amban reacted to this departure from the traditional form of such replies. Should the Amban object, Chandra Shamsher had one ready explanation: official correspondence in Nepal was being purged of unnecessary verbosity.¹ Manners Smith welcomed this step as a cautious beginning of a change in Nepal's attitude towards China undertaken at the Prime Minister's own initiative. The Nepalese reply, he told Chandra Shamsher, would of course "be useful as a test of the temper of the Chinese towards Nepal"; but then, it was doubtful if a "mere verbal change in the *Kharita*, even if the alteration evoked no comment [on the part of the Amban], would in itself be held to affect the relations between Nepal and China."² The hint was: Chandra Shamsher should do something more which would clearly prove that Nepal was not in subordinate relations with China. Nepal's extra-territorial rights in Tibet were then being challenged by the Chinese police at Lhasa,³ and in October-November 1910 the matter came to a head when Chandra Shamsher asked Manners Smith how to defend these rights. For the Resident this, too, was an opportunity. In such circumstances, "with a view to future eventualities", Manners Smith wanted Sino-Nepalese relations to be clearly defined, leaving no suggestion of Nepal's vassalage to China—and this should be done

¹ PEF, 505/1912, pt. 6, Reg. No. 4123, Manners Smith to Govt. 11 August 1910.

² *Ibid.*

³ PSLI, Vol. 242, Reg. No. 1247, RNA, 22 June, 8 July 1910.

during the rule of Chandra Shamsher, for his successors might not have "the same personal influence in Nepal to carry a debated policy through."¹

The Government, however, were not impressed. Minto, who wanted Chandra Shamsher himself to take the initiative for a treaty, had so far found no sufficient indication in the Prime Minister's attitude. On the contrary, by Manners Smith's own account, Chandra Shamsher's

inclination at present is to do nothing and to wait and see what attitude the Chinese may adopt... in future... he would prefer to let the question of quinquennial mission and the relations of Nepal towards China remain as at present.²

Chandra Shamsher seemed to have been content with what he had got : a confidential assurance from the British to protect Nepal's interests in Tibet. A treaty, he believed, would give only unnecessary publicity to Nepal's subservience to Britain in regard to foreign relations and provide a handle to his detractors in the *darbar* where, as Manners Smith saw, there was

still a feeling... that the vague connection with China is valuable... as being a bar to the British government obtaining too close a political hold over Nepal.

Chandra Shamsher had to consider this feeling before he could sever relations with China in favour of closer political relations with Britain.³

At the India Office Hirtzel opposed the idea of a treaty on two grounds : if Nepal violated the treaty, the British could not enforce it without a serious conflict with her; and an "unqualified assurance of protection" against China might encourage Nepal to attack Tibet in future. Moreover, there was much diplomatic advantage in keeping up the impression that Nepal was an independent state, and as such could take any action she liked for the defence of her interests in Tibet, for which action the British could not be held responsible. Hirtzel had already explained the point thus :

So long as Nepal is willing to act with us it is very much better that she should in the last resort be free; we have then power without responsibility.

¹ *PEF*, 505/1912, pt. 6, Reg. No. 4123, Manners Smith to Govt., 11 August 1910.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*

If we take over the control of her foreign relations, we have no more power, but we have a responsibility which we should be as impotent to discharge as we are in the case of Afghanistan.¹

Hirtzel admitted that "the traditional form of reply from Nepal to China certainly goes far in admitting Chinese claims—at all events in theory", but until China tried to "translate theory into practice",² the Indian government had better wait and watch the course of events. There was, in fact, no reason to press Chandra Shamsher for a treaty when Manners Smith himself had testified that the Prime Minister

fully realises that in practice his policy must be guided by the wishes and advice of the British government but he would be glad if the Nepal durbar could avoid making a formal stipulation on that point, so that he may not be thought by his country to have lowered the independent status of Nepal.³

The idea of a Nepalese treaty was then dropped only to be revived some years later when it was Hirtzel who, of all, was most eager for it.⁴

British representation to Peking in April 1910 had little effect on Chinese activity in the border states. Bell and Jit Bahadur reported on the movement of Chinese troops on the Bhutan border and the Amban's communication with the Bhutanese authorities.⁵ W.H. Wilkinson, the British Consul-General at Chengtu had an interview with Chao Erh Feng, now the Governor of Szechuan, which led him to believe that China might more vigorously assert her suzerainty over Nepal and Bhutan. Chao regretted that the British should have intimate relations with Nepal, a Chinese "tributary state", while China's own influence in Nepal was "retrograde."⁶ Other and more alarming news followed: the Chinese were establishing colonies on the river valleys north of Assam and Burma and intriguing with the tribal

¹ PEF, 2750/1908, pt. 8, Reg. No. 660, Hirtzel's Minute, India Office to Foreign Office, 11 May 1910. MNP, No. 210, Butler to Minto, 12 August 1910.

² PEF, 505/1912, pt. 3, Reg. No. 4123/1910, Hirtzel's Minute, October 1910.

³ PSLI, Vol. 242, Reg. No. 1203, *Annual Report on Nepal*. Resident to Govt., 8 July 1910.

⁴ See Chapter VII.

⁵ PEF, 505/1912, pt. 1, Reg. No. 1019/1910; 505/1912, pt. 6, Reg. No. 1440/1910. PSLI, Vol. 245, Reg. No. 1706, *Report on North-East Frontier*, October 1910.

⁶ *Ibid.*, Reg. No. 1823, Wilkinson to Max-Müller, 9 August 1910.

people of the Assam hills. The Indian government were worried over China's presence so near a region where much British capital had been invested in the tea gardens. The north-east frontier from Bhutan to Burma was, besides, still virtually a *terra incognita*, and of the many local tribes very little was known. There was as yet no provision for the defence of this still undemarcated frontier against a possible Chinese breakthrough.¹ Minto was convinced that

Looking at the whole position from a broad point of view China is becoming so aggressive on our frontiers...that...we are much more likely to avoid actual war in the future by putting our foot down now, than by shilly-shallying while she steals frontier position from us.²

In the context of such developments, the Home government whom, in Butler's words, it was difficult to "move", had to take the Chinese activities more seriously than ever before. Accordingly, in October 1910, Jordan was asked to remind the Chinese government of Britain's relations with Nepal and Bhutan which the Chinese proceedings in Tibet tended to disturb. This drew from the Chinese Foreign Office what seemed to the British a "direct claim" over Nepal and Bhutan—and that made in an unconciliatory and aggressive" tone.³ It was also reported that the Amban had made similar claim and had expressed his desire to send a special delegation to Kathmandu to confer a new Chinese title on Chandra Shamsher.⁴ The British, then, had to take a still harder line with the Chinese government. But before doing so, the India Office considered it wise to make a thorough study of the history of Nepal's relations with China. No such detailed enquiry had been made before to assess the validity of China's claim on Nepal.

¹ PSM, B. 177, *Chinese Forward Policy in the North-East Frontier of India*, 2 November 1910; B. 180, *North-East Frontier of India*, 3 December 1910. *Political and Secret Dep. Library*, D 174. *Report on the Chinese Frontiers of India*, by A. Rose, 30 September 1911. PEF, 1918/1910, pt. I, Reg. Nos. 1648, 1918/1911; 2750/1908, Pt. 5, Reg. Nos. 4049, 4050/1910, Lamb, *op. cit.*, I, pp. 196-225; II, pp. 271-91.

² MNP, No. 996. Letter Dt. 29 June 1910.

³ PEF, 505/1912, Pt. 6, Reg. No. 4294/1910. F. Younghusband, "Our position in Tibet", *Proceedings of the Central Asian Society*, November 2, 1910.

⁴ PSLI, Vol. 243, Reg. No. 1485, RNA, 28 August, 2 September 1910; PEF, 505/1912, Pt. 6, Reg. 1908, RNA, 5 October 1910.

The result of the enquiry¹ confirmed that the Chinese claim did have an historical basis. From time to time Nepalese Kings received from the Chinese Emperors letters patent denoting subordinate status. Nepalese Kings could not address the Emperors direct ; their addresses had to pass through the Ambans who could refuse their transmission if they were not in conformity with the set form and style. The addresses were always worded like "prayerful petitions", while the Emperors' replies conveyed through the Ambans were in the nature of "decrees" and prescription for a course of conduct ; they were patronising in tone as though written by an overlord to a feudatory. The Nepalese government in their troubles with the British had supplicated China's assistance just as a vassal would do. China mediated in Nepal's disputes with Tibet, and Nepal accepted, willy-nilly, settlements made by the Amban. China, in short, had always looked upon Nepal as a tributary, and Nepal had never disputed it. Both Jordan and Max Müller confirmed that the Chinese title to the Nepalese Kings (*Ertini Wang*) and Ministers (*Thong-ling-ping-ma-kuo-kan-wang*) did denote feudatory status of their recipients.² The tributary mission of 1906 was the latest confirmation of the Chinese claim.

Jordan, when consulted, also held that historically China did have a strong claim on Nepal. The first letter patent of Emperor Ch'ien Lung to Ran Bahadur, the Nepalese King, in 1789 stated that the Emperor regarded the Nepalese mission "as a token of a desire on the part of Nepal to be included among the tributaries of his empire." The then Amban's translation of the Nepalese King's "petition" in 1792 ran as follows : "Now that we have become a subject dependency of the Celestial dynasty..." Ch'ien Lung's "decree" of 15 September 1793 declared Nepal as "having now been included in the number of our feudatories."³ The unchanged language and form of Chinese "decrees" and Nepalese "petitions" since 1792 suggested, from the Chinese point of view, the continuity of the suzerain-tributary relations of the two states. It was also significant that the

¹ *Ibid.*, Reg. No. 4546/1911, *Historical Note on Relations between Nepal and China*, by A. Hirtzel, 4 November 1910.

² *PEF*, 505/1912, Pt. 6, Reg. Nos. 1752, 3704, Max Müller to Grey, Telg. 24 November 1910, Jordan to Viceroy, 7 March 1911.

³ *Ibid.*, Landon, *op. cit.*, II, p. 114.

Rana Prime Ministers had maintained this relation, although they were extremely sensitive about Nepal's independent status *vis à vis* the Indian government. Besides, their eagerness for Chinese titles was no less than that for British honours.

E.H. Parker, a high authority on China, quoted Chinese sources to show that Ch'ien Lung treated Nepalese embassies to his court in the same manner as those from other tributary states, Annam, Siam, Ava and Korea. In 1799, Parker pointed out, Ran Bahadur asked for and received "royal rank" for his son, Girvan Yuddha Vikram. In 1842 Rajendra Vikram, Girvan's son, drew the attention of the then Emperor to Ch'ien Lung's decree (of 1793), promising Chinese government's assistance to Nepal either "in men, money or horses" to meet foreign aggression. Rajendra Vikram, then having strained relations with the British government, wanted the Emperor to redeem the pledge of his forbear. All this went in favour of China's claim.¹ But then, there was another aspect of the matter. Chinese suzerainty involved no control of or interference with the Nepalese administration in any way. It is noteworthy that in 1796 Ch'ien Lung himself advised his son and successor against such interference unless it was absolutely unavoidable.² In fact, as Parker maintained, China's attitude to Nepal had always been rather one of "indifference" than active and sustained interest. No assistance, diplomatic, military or financial, had ever been given to the Nepalese in their troubles with the British. The Chinese government while claiming suzerainty over Nepal had clearly disowned any responsibility which a suzerain owed to a vassal. Thus, as seen already,³ both during the Nepal war (1814-6) and in the 1840's the Chinese had declared that Nepal was outside their sphere of active interest, and so the Emperor had no obligation to defend Nepal from foreign aggression. Far from preventing Nepal from entering into relations with the British in India, the Emperor, during the Nepal war, was reported to have asked the Amban to tell the Nepalese that "as a matter of fact they can join the *Feringhi* rule if they like so

¹ *Historical Note*, by Hirtzel, *op. cit.*, Parker, "Nepaul and China", *The Imperial and Asiatic Quarterly Review and Oriental and Colonial Record*, 1899, Vol. VII, Nos. 13 and 14. See also Chapter IV.

² Parker, *op. cit.*, p. 77.

³ See Chapter IV.

long as they send us tribute."¹

Further, the claims of China did not always correspond to actual facts; indeed, as Hirtzel pointed out, "there was no limit to Chinese claims." For example, Jordan cited the Imperial decree of Ch'ien Lung of 4 February 1796. In this decree the Emperor acknowledged the gift of the English King, George III, brought by his emissary, Lord Macartney. Ch'ien Lung disclaimed any regard for the English "tribute" though valuing "the humble spirit which offers it." The decree then stated that the English had sent an agent to Tibet with a "petition," and that they had advised the Nepalese to submit to the Chinese Emperor. Since the Sino-Nepalese war had then been already won by the Chinese, the decree went on, there was no need for the English mediation. Yet, "commending your humble loyalty to Our Celestial Dynasty", Ch'ien Lung said in his letter to George III, "we now present you with further gifts and command you to display energy and dutiful loyalty so as to deserve our perpetual favour." As a matter of fact, however, the British had sent no agent to Tibet nor advised Nepal to submit to China; Cornwallis had sent Captain Kirkpatrick to Kathmandu as a mediator, but he only reached his destination after the war had ended—and in Chinese victory.²

The Sino-Nepalese war itself had been described differently in the Nepalese and Chinese accounts. The former maintained that the Gurkhas put up a plucky fight, and the Chinese, then utterly exhausted and anxious to return home before snow blocked the passes, were eager for a peace. On the other hand, the Chinese account, as engraved on a stone slab below the Potala palace at Lhasa, claims that the Gurkhas were thoroughly defeated and had begged for peace which the Chinese general deigned to grant out of sheer mercy.³ It was also significant for Hirtzel that the first Nepalese mission went to Peking in 1789 after the Gurkhas had achieved victory in their war with

¹ Parker, *op. cit.*, p. 78 *Historical Note*, by Hirtzel, *op. cit.*, Parker to Hirtzel, Private letter, 6 November 1910.

² *Historical Note*, by Hirtzel, *PEF*, 505/1912, Pt. 6, Reg. No. 3704, Jordan to Viceroy, 7 March 1911. See Chapter I.

³ For the account of the war see D. Regmi, *Modern Nepal*, pp. 167-230. Bell, *Tibet*, *op. cit.*, pp. 41-5, 275-8. Landon, *op. cit.*, II, pp. 272-82. Mayur Jang Kunwar, "China and the War in the Himalayas, 1792-93", *The English Historical Review*, Vol. LXXVII, April 1962, pp. 283-97.

the Tibetans—and not after they had suffered defeat by the Chinese in 1792.¹ The Gurkas agreed to the “tributary” relations with China in 1789 not so much for political reasons as to safeguard Nepal’s commercial interests in Tibet by securing Chinese recognition of them. In view of these facts, Jordan warned that the claim made out in Chinese Imperial decrees

must be read strictly in the light of ascertained facts before it can be accepted as proof of the existence of any state of affairs which it may purport to describe.²

In the Imperial Dynastic Chronicles a large number of European, Asian and African countries were listed as “tributaries” of China, but about most of them the Chinese government had no adequate knowledge let alone any regular intercourse with them. These states were “tributaries” of China in the sense that from the Chinese point of view any foreign state having any relation or intercourse with China was a tributary. The Chinese regarded themselves as a superior people and all others as barbarians. Trade with China was a highly prized object for the foreign states whom the Chinese government granted commercial facilities on their acceptance of China’s cultural superiority. The tributary relations were from the traditional Chinese point of view but means of foreign relations and commercial transactions.³ It is indeed difficult to interpret the Chinese tributary system from the western point of view and in terms taken from the western political vocabulary. There was, for example, no analogy between, say, Britain’s feudatory relations with Indian princely states and China’s tributary relations with Burma, Korea and Nepal. Suzerainty from the western point of view has primarily a political connotation; a suzerain not only claims but exercises exclusive political influence

¹ In 1788-9 the Gurkhas invaded Tibet and imposed a treaty by which Tibet was required to send an annual sum of fifty thousand rupees to Kathmandu and to give the Newar merchants or Nepal trade facilities. This treaty was concluded with the mediation of the Amban who also persuaded the Gurkhas to send a mission to Peking. When the Tibetans discontinued payment of the stipulated sum after one year, the Gurkhas again attacked Tibet in 1791. The Gurkhas, after their defeat by the Chinese, sent a mission in 1792, which was, thus, the second Nepalese mission to Peking.

² PEF, 505/1912, Pt. 6, Reg. No. 3704, Jordan to Viceroy, 7 March 1911.

³ J.K. Fairbank, *Trade and Diplomacy on the China Coast*, 1, pp. 24-33.

on the feudatory, and has the corresponding obligation for the latter's defence against external threat. China's tributary system, as it existed in the 19th century, on the other hand, involved neither exclusive political influence nor any specific responsibility to defend the tributaries from foreign attack.

Hirtzel also examined the 1856 treaty between Nepal and Tibet, the most important documentary basis of Chinese claim on Nepal. The treaty, as translated by Colonel Ramsay, the then Resident, and as printed in the 1909 edition of Aitchison's *Collection of Treaties* was found to differ in important respects from the translation of the Tibetan text of the treaty made by Captain O'Connor in 1905; O'Connor had obtained the text from Chandra Shamsher, Ramsay's version represented Nepal and Tibet as having "obeyed" the Emperor of China "as before" and "borne allegiance" to him "up to the present time." But in O'Connor's rendering the two states had paid only "respect" to the Emperor. The former version laid stress on the subordination of Nepal and Tibet to China while the latter contained no such explicit declaration.¹

Above all, whatever influence China might have had in Nepal in the pre-Rana period, this influence had decreased when the Ranas veered close to the British. That relation with China on traditional lines was still maintained by the Ranas was due less to its political value than to commercial considerations, and even these were of diminishing importance.² The Chinese, as already seen,³ were aware that Nepal had gravitated to Britain, but they had taken no step to prevent the development; on the contrary, they had, in fact, looked upon Nepal as a British protectorate. In 1896, for example, the Chinese Embassy in London enquired from the Foreign Office if the Nepalese were really preparing for war against Tibet,⁴ which fact Curzon interpreted later as an

¹ Aitchison (1909 edn.), II, p. 97, f.n. *PSLI*, Vol. 238, Reg. No. 637, Butler to Hirtzel, 14 April 1910. O'Connor's version is given in the 1929 edn. of Aitchison's *Collection*, XIV, pp. 49-50, f.n. See also Bell, *Tibet*, *op. cit.*, pp. 278-80, Landon, *op. cit.*, II, pp. 282-5. Lamb, *op. cit.*, I, p. 197, f.n.

² See Chapter IV.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ See *Ibid.*, for Nepal's relations with Tibet in the 1890's.

indication that the theory of our responsibility for the doings of the Nepalese is, to some extent at any rate, shared by the Chinese government.¹

However, it was not surprising that China should still hold on to her claim on Nepal because, as the British fully knew, she had been as tenacious in regard to Korea, Annam, Siam and Burma even after these tributaries had been lost to other powers. Resentment towards foreign powers was very much in evidence in China in the last decade of the 19th and the first decade of the present century, and with it was seen a strong tendency to assert Chinese claims on the outlying dependencies and tributaries. When Max Müller made representations with the Chinese Foreign Office regarding their claims on Tibet, Nepal and Bhutan, the Chinese asserted their "sovereign authority" on these territories which, so Max Müller informed Grey, was "now the stock phrase of every Chinese officer no matter what the subject of discussion with the foreigner may be."² China refused to accept that because she had been robbed of her tributaries, her traditional relations with them had also ended. In regard to Sikkim, Hunza and Burma, for instance, the Chinese had insisted on the retention of the traditional symbols of their suzerainty while acquiescing in British absorption of these states.³ The conclusion which Hirtzel arrived at from his study of Nepal's relations with China was "satisfactory to our position."

"It is clear", he saw, "that at no time since 1792 have they [Chinese] attempted to make their theoretical suzerainty an effective reality," while the facts—(1) that the mission to Peking began before the Gurkha defeat of 1792, (2) that the defeat was not so overwhelming as has been supposed—go to weaken⁴ the inference of an even theoretical suzerainty."

However strong the Chinese claim might theoretically be and whatever its historical basis, its lack of any practical validity provided the British with sufficient ammunition to challenge it. The British argument, as succinctly put by Hirtzel, was : Chinese claim on Nepal

possesses no better foundation than similar claims over other neighbouring

¹ *PEF*, 505/1912, Pt. 6, Reg. No. 1755/1910, India Secret Letter to Secy. of State, No. 79, 11 June 1903.

² *Ibid.*, 2750/1908, Pt. 8, Reg. No. 3429, Letter Dt. 22 April 1910, FO 405/171, *Annual Reports on China*, 1906, para 1.

³ See Chapter IV.

⁴ *PEF*, 505/1912, Pt. 6, Reg. No. 1584, Hirtzel's Minute, November 1910.

states which have been advanced by the Chinese but have succumbed to the logic of facts and lapse of time.¹

But before joining the issue the British wanted to be certain about Chandra Shamsher's own feelings regarding Nepal's relations with China, "as much will depend upon his attitude."² Manners Smith had already obtained from the Prime Minister an historical account of these relations prepared on the basis of Nepalese official documents.³ Chandra Shamsher, on being asked, told Manners Smith that Nepal's relations with China should be "rectified" so as to conform to what he termed the "real state of affairs." He favoured O'Connor's version of the 1856 treaty and denied that the Chinese titles to the Nepalese Kings and Ministers in any way indicated Nepal's feudatory status *vis-a-vis* China. Chandra Shamsher "emphatically repudiated" the Chinese overlordship, expressing "grave concern and astonishment" that China should misrepresent the "simple, friendly and innocent nature" of her connexion with Nepal. He denied that the despatch of quinquennial "present"-bearing missions by Nepal to Peking had any political motivation. They were, he explained,

merely the channels by which we keep up our friendly connection with distant China, express our high regard and respect for the Emperor and cultivate goodwill for the Chinese government especially on account of our heavy stake in Tibet.⁴

Nepal, Chandra Shamsher assured the Resident, had long realised that her security lay in friendliness with the British government rather than in continuing the past policy of "balancing Chinese suzerainty against political connection with the British."⁵

Chandra Shamsher agreed to be guided by British advice in dealing with China. Knowing the *Bharadars'* feeling about Nepal's link with China and how they resented a break in it, the British

¹ *Historical Note*, by Hirtzel, *op. cit.*

² PEF, 505/1912, Pt. 6, Reg. No. 1584, Viceroy to Secy. of State, Telg. 2 November 1910.

³ PSLI, Vol. 246, Reg. No. 326, *Memorandum of the...history...Nepal, Tibet and China*, 1909, See Chapter IV.

⁴ PEF, 505/1912, Pt. 6, Reg. No. 1809, Chandra to Manners Smith, 19 November 1910. Reg. No. 1781, Manners Smith to Govt., 1 November 1910. Reg. No. 1867, Chandra to Manners Smith, 29 November 1910. Reg. No. 1763, Manners Smith to Wood, 17 November 1910.

⁵ *Ibid.*, Reg. No. 1781, Manners Smith to Govt., 1 November 1910.

regarded the Prime Minister's assurance and explanation as enough. Chandra Shamsher was advised to let any Chinese mission from Tibet come to Kathmandu, if he liked, but he should consult Manners Smith before accepting any new Chinese title or replying to any Chinese letter conferring such title, and if either the title or the letter implied Chinese suzerainty, he should not entertain it.¹

The British were now in a very strong position. In January 1911 they warned Peking that any attempt by China to exercise influence over Nepal and Bhutan, which were "so remote from the sphere of direct Chinese interests", would not be tolerated by Britain. The British disclaimed any intention of interrupting the friendly and complimentary relations of China with Nepal, but

they must act and advise the Nepalese government to act upon the assumption that Nepal is not a vassal but wholly independent of China and in intimate relations with the British government in accordance with the treaties and the mutual understanding agreed upon between them.²

The Chinese government answered this clear declaration of Britain's exclusive relations with Nepal by another spirited affirmation of their own claim.³ A sterner warning was then given to the Chinese government that if they tried to impose their authority on Nepal and Bhutan, or in any way interfered with them, Britain would strongly resist such action.⁴

The Revolution in 1911 provided the *coup de grâce* to the Chinese position in Nepal. In that year a tributary mission fell due, and the Amban duly reminded the Nepalese government about it.⁵ Chandra Shamsher was willing to send the mission—rather a strange decision in view of his recent "emphatic repudiation" of Chinese suzerainty and his knowledge of the earlier mission having been ill-treated by the Chinese. The possible explanation could be that he thought it wise not to suddenly terminate this long established practice of the Nepalese government and thereby give the Chinese an open provocation. The

¹ PEF, 505/1912, Pt. 6, Reg. No. 1781, Manners Smith to Govt., 1 November 1910.

² *Ibid.*, Reg. No. 4546, Jordan to Prince Ch'ing, 17 January 1911.

³ *Ibid.*, Reg. No. 3404, Ch'ing to Jordan, 31 March 1911.

⁴ *Ibid.*, Reg. No. 3704, Jordan to Ch'ing, 10 May 1911.

⁵ *Ibid.*, Reg. No. 1771, Manners Smith to Govt., 25 September 1911.

dispute over Nepal's extra-territorial rights in Tibet had not yet been settled which was another reason why the Prime Minister was cautious. Above all, the feelings of the *Bharadars* could not be ignored; although personally Chandra Shamsher had no great apprehension of British intentions in Nepal, he had to show deference to the impression among his advisers that

if the prop which their outside connection with China has given them in the past is to be withdrawn, it is all the more necessary [for the Nepalese government] to obtain a guarantee from the British government that the independent status of Nepal will be scrupulously respected.¹

Chandra Shamsher had, in fact, asked for and obtained this guarantee from the British who had assured him that they had

no desire whatever to interfere with the independent position which the state of Nepal has hitherto enjoyed.²

Whether the "position" which Nepal had "hitherto enjoyed" was really "independent" in the full sense of the term was itself a point not free from doubts. The status of Nepal was a complicated issue which the British had deliberately kept unsettled.³ However, Chandra Shamsher, for himself, seemed to be satisfied with the British assurance which he later put forward as the definite undertaking by Britain to respect Nepal's independence.

In November 1911 with the news of the Chinese Revolution having reached London, the Foreign Office enquired at the India Office whether the Indian government could persuade Chandra Shamsher to discontinue the mission in view of the sudden change in the political situation in China. Both the Foreign Office and the India Office wanted the permanent abandonment of the practice and supporting Chandra Shamsher if the Chinese retaliated.⁴ The Indian government were also no less eager. But then, since it was a delicate issue, Lord Hardinge, who in the meanwhile had taken over from Minto, chose to pick his way. Instead of asking Chandra Shamsher to abandon the mission for good, Hardinge preferred suggesting its postponement until

¹ *Ibid.*, Reg. No. 1809, Manners Smith to Govt., 22 November 1910.

² *Ibid.*, 505/1912, pt. 3, Reg. No. 935, Manners Smith to Chandra, 1 May 1911.

³ See Chapter VII.

⁴ *HP*, Vol. 95, Part I, Crewe, Secy. of State, Hardinge, Telg. 14 November 1911. *PEF*, 505/1912, Pt. 7, Reg. No. 4546, Foreign Office to India Office, Political and Secret Dept. Minutes, November 1911; Reg. No. 4733, Secy. of State to Viceroy, Telg. 5 December 1911.

the final result of the Revolution became clear. Accordingly, in December 1911, Manners Smith drew Chandra Shamsher's attention to the "peculiar political significance" which the Chinese attached to the Nepalese mission, and also to the "changed situation and general position of affairs in China." Manners Smith then added that the British government had already made it clear to the Chinese government in 1910-11 that they would protect Nepal's independence if China challenged it. The obvious hint was : the Prime Minister could, if he wanted, take advantage of the unsettled political state in China without any fear of Chinese reprisals.¹ The fall of the Manchus, it could be argued, had freed the Nepalese government from their obligation to send these missions; indeed, the main plank of vassal-suzerain relationship between Nepal and China as existing during the Manchu rule could be said to have been removed by the fall of that dynasty.

But Chandra Shamsher was discreet. He, too, wanted to await the final result of the Revolution before permanently abandoning the mission at the British instance. He thought it prudent to only delay the mission and see the Amban's reaction; the disturbances in Tibet and China were for him quite a convenient excuse. But to avoid any misunderstanding with the British, Chandra Shamsher hastened to assure the Resident that the Nepalese government repudiated the Chinese suzerainty "with all the emphasis" at their command, because it was based on "mistaken grounds and misconstrued view" of the real basis of Nepal's relations with China; the *darbar*, he added, regarded the Chinese claim as a slur on the Nepalese who were a "free people", and who were "startled to hear of the surprise so unexpectedly sprung" upon their country. The Prime Minister declared that his government strongly objected to the "false interpretation" given by China to the Nepalese missions, and that he would not accept any title or other obligation from China nor send any mission to Peking without giving prior intimation to the British government; for Nepal's territorial security, in case China threatened it, Nepal would look to the British.¹

¹ *Ibid.*, Reg. Nos. 2057 1674, Manners Smith to Chandra, 10 December 1911, 31 March 1912. *PEF*, 1918/1910, Pts. 1-7, Reg. Nos. 1918/1910, 1822/1911. *HP*, Vol. 95, Part I, Hardinge to Crewe, Telg. 25 November 1911.

² *REF*, 505/1912, Pt. 7, Reg. No. 1475. Chandra to Manners Smith, 17 December 1912. Reg. No. 1674, Same to same, 4 April 1912.

Chandra Shamsheer's astonishment at the Chinese view of the Nepalese mission was, in fact, "a little over acted" and "slightly disingenuous" because, as Manners Smith clearly saw,

it is impossible that he should not be aware that in the eyes of the Chinese government the mission is a sign of vassalage and that the presents which accompany the mission are a tribute.¹

However, the Prime Minister kept his word : no Nepalese tributary mission went to Peking hereafter.

The Chinese Revolution gave a sudden turn to the Tibetan situation. The Chinese troops at Lhasa and Shigatse mutinied, deposed the Amban, Lien, and set up their own Commander, General Chung, as the new Amban. Bitter fighting broke out between the Chinese and Tibetan troops; Lhasa was plunged in utter anarchy and confusion. The Tibetan government declared themselves independent and threatened to exterminate the Amban, the Chinese officers and troops if they did not forthwith leave Tibet. The Chinese rejected this demand and desperately fought on. By the end of 1912 Chinese authority in Tibet had collapsed.²

The situation caused much anxiety to the Nepalese government for whom an independent Tibet with all her tradition of hostility to Nepal was as disagreeable as the conversion of Tibet into a Chinese province. What suited the Nepalese interests most was Tibet as a self-governing, militarily weak dependency of China. But their immediate worry was the chaotic situation at Lhasa and the damage it had already done to the Nepalese trade. In the disturbances many Nepalese shops had been looted and several Nepalese lives lost despite Jit Bahadur's earnest efforts to restore peace and order. The Chinese troops suspected him to be pro-Tibetan, while the Tibetans would not listen to his advice either; Nepalese influence in Tibet had suffered a blow.

¹ PEF, 505/1912, Pt. 7, Reg. No. 1475, Manners Smith to A. McMahon, Foreign Secy., 7 March 1912.

² Lamb, *op.cit.*, II, pp. 371-85. Teichmen, *op.cit.*, pp. 36-9. PF, Vol. 2, 1912, Reg. No. 218, RNA, 18 November 1911; Vol. 19, 1913, Reg. No. 3520, *Annual Report on China* (1912).

The *darbar* at Kathmandu was excited. Chandra Shamsher told Manners Smith that Nepal's intervention had now become "imperatively necessary." The Prime Minister wanted to send an "urgent, definite and strong" representation to the Chinese and Tibetans at Lhasa and to the Dalai Lama in India, demanding suitable indemnity for the loss of Nepalese life and property; and if it were not paid, he added, "we may even be driven by sheer necessity to push our northern frontier in lieu of compensation."¹ Chandra Shamsher became more restless after receiving Jit Bahadur's report that the President of the new Chinese Republic had declared Tibet a province of the Republic, and that a strong Chinese force from Szechuan was moving towards Lhasa with the object of crushing the Tibetan revolt and restoring Chinese authority. This restoration Chandra Shamsher would oppose by arms with the ostensible object of preserving Tibet's "proper status of practical independence," but more probably to occupy the long-coveted Tibetan territory on the border before the Chinese regained their power in Tibet.²

The situation was similar to that in the early months of 1910, and Nepalese anxiety, as then, had now a considerable effect on British policy. The British policy towards the new situation in Tibet, in its more urgent aspect, was to prevent the reestablishment of Chinese authority in Tibet by arms and the conversion of the country into a province of the Chinese Republic. The ultimate aim was to secure by an agreement with China an autonomous Tibet under nominal Chinese suzerainty but effective British influence. The collapse of the Chinese authority had made the Tibetans independent, in fact. This *de facto* independence the British would support. Their argument was that it was the ambitious policy of China, her attempt to take over the Tibetan administration by force, and her intrigues with Nepal, Bhutan and Sikkim which had kept Tibet and the border states in suspense, uncertainty, anxiety and tension; it was this policy which, in short, had activated the normally dormant north-east frontier of India; it had

¹ FO, 766/8, Chandra Shamsher's Memorandum to the Resident, 30 April 1912. PF, Vol. 17, 1912, Reg. Nos. 2102-3; Vol. 21, 1912, Reg. Nos. 2163, 2216, Chandra to Offg. Resident (H.L. Showers), 6 May 1912; Vol. 24, 1912, Reg. No. 2865, Chandra to Dalai Lama, 8 May 1912.

² *Ibid.*, Vol. 21, 1912, Reg. No. 1910, Showers to McMahon, 1 May 1912.

threatened to cancel all the advantages of our previous arrangements in regard to Tibet and to involve great political responsibilities and a heavy military expenditure" on that frontier.¹

Therefore, the British would not let this situation be repeated. They decided that Tibet must be kept free from any influence which might be hostile either to the Indian government or to Nepal, Bhutan and Sikkim, and that it must remain an ideal buffer state. Since Chinese intervention in Tibet had proved "disastrous" to British interests, Hirtzel noted, "the only alternative was to exclude it. If we can do that we have got all we want."² However, the British would allow China to retain the symbols of her traditional links with Tibet: the Amban and his escorts; but no active interference with the internal administration of Tibet by China would be permitted nor the posting of a large number of Chinese soldiers in Tibet. This policy, so Hirtzel explained, was in effect no more than a "reversion to the *status quo* before the Chinese expedition to Lhasa" in early 1910, which had led to the Dalai Lama's escape to India and the collapse of his government. For the British it was essential to "stereotype" that *status quo* "by an international instrument" to which both Tibet and China would be signatories. Without such a binding agreement China could not be trusted to retain the traditional autonomous political status of Tibet. The recognition of the new Chinese Republic was withheld until it signed the agreement for which a conference would be called.³ In both the development and application of this policy the British made use of their Nepalese ally.

The first natural step in this policy was to secure the departure of the Chinese who were in Tibet. But since the British themselves could not drive the Chinese out without violating their pledge of non-intervention in Tibet, they thought Nepal might be asked to do the job; the Nepalese government, already res-

¹ PF, Vol. 11, 1914, Reg. No. 2964, *Final Memorandum on Tibet Conference*, by McMahon, 8 July 1914. Teichman, *op. cit.*, pp. 43-6.

² PSM, B. 191, *Tibet* by Hirtzel, 27 January 1913.

³ PSM, B. 201, *Tibet, the Simla Conference*, by J.E. Shuckburgh, 17 October 1913; B. 204, *Tibet*, by W.F.O. Connor, 17 April 1912. PF, Vol. 36, 1912, Reg. No. 4347, 4440. Also, PF, Vol. 30, 1912, Reg. No. 3669, *Memorandum on the North-East Frontier of India*, by R.T. Nugent, 26 August 1912, Minute by J.D. Gregory, 1 September 1912. Lamb, *op. cit.*, II, pp. 412-56. Bell, *Tibet, op. cit.*, pp. 148-59. Richardson, *op. cit.*, pp. 96-106.

tive, could be encouraged to intervene and ease the Chinese out. Lord Crewe, the Secretary of State, believed that this policy would "pave the way to a satisfactory settlement locally of the Tibetan question."¹ Crewe's advisers in the Political and Secret Department, however, were against any Nepalese involvement. Lee Warner, for example, who had earlier shown keenness to use Nepal for securing British objectives in Tibet,² was now much opposed to such use, which he considered both impolitic and unjustified. Chinese proceedings in Tibet and the consequent Nepalese concern, he argued, had served to give the British some control over Nepal's relations with China and Tibet to the extent, at least, of restraining Nepal's military ambitions in Tibet. If now the British encouraged Nepal to take independent action in Tibet, it would weaken that control.

"...If we use terms", Lee Warner pointed out, "which convey the impression that Nepal has any inherent rights of war or negotiation with China, we shall prejudice what might in due course become a policy that places Nepal in the same position as Afghanistan in regard to foreign relations."³

Besides, it was rather odd for the British now to say that Nepal was an independent state over whose action they had no control, and at the same time maintain that a Chinese attack on Nepal or injury to her interests in Tibet would not be tolerated by Britain—which would suggest that Nepal was, in fact, a British protectorate. Hirtzel, who also knew the Nepalese well, held that they were a double-edged weapon and, therefore, should be very carefully handled. To give Nepal a "mandate" in Tibet, Hirtzel pointed out, was like giving her "*carte blanche*"; once unleashed, she could not be controlled easily. Moreover, it might "lead to a collision with Russia without diminishing the risk of eventual collision with China." It would add to Chandra Shamsher's sense of self-importance; the swollen-headed Nepalese Prime Minister would then be as difficult to manage as the presumptuous Afghan Amir. Besides, Hirtzel added, the Gurkhas were "savages"; to let them loose uncontrollable in Tibet, would not be justifiable for a power making any pretension to civilisation."⁴

¹ *HP*, Vol. 96, Crewe to Hardinge, Telg. 16 May 1912.

² See Chapter V.

³ *PF*, Vol. 21, 1912, Reg. No. 2035, Lee Warner's Note, 5 June 1912.

⁴ *PSM*, B. 191, *Tibet*, by Hirtzel, 27 January 1913.

The Indian government were also unwilling to use Nepal in the manner Crewe suggested. The Officiating Resident, H.L. Showers, warned that such a measure would "hardly further the object of securing an autonomous Tibet"; on the contrary, it would be seized upon by the Chinese government as an excuse to despatch troops to Lhasa. Hardinge hoped that very soon the beleaguered Chinese would either surrender and depart from Tibet or be annihilated by the Tibetans—thus obviating the need for Nepalese intervention. However, both Hardinge and Showers regarded Nepalese intervention as politically a "useful card"; they would exert "extreme pressure" on China, warning her that an attempt at reconquering Tibet would lead to a Sino-Nepalese war.¹ These were weighty arguments, and Crewe took note of them. On 14 June 1912 he wrote to Hardinge that it was, indeed, a "cynical alternative" to set Nepal on the Chinese in order to evade our own intervention." But then, Crewe added, the plan "does not appeal to me not because I am more particular than other people but because the course appears to me very risky."² However, later that month Nepalese intervention was again seriously considered by Hardinge and Crewe after it was reported that Chinese troops had actually started from Szechuan for Lhasa, and this news had increased Chandra Shamsher's anxiety. The Prime Minister saw that Nepalese interests at Lhasa had suffered in spite of the British assurance of their protection; and so he repeated to the Resident his "earnest desire" to see Tibet "restored to its proper status of practical independence," and his determination to assist the Tibetans with Nepalese troops. It seemed to him that the British would not prevent China from restoring her authority; but before China could do so, he wanted the border between Nepal and Tibet "rectified",³ giving the former control of strategic passes. Hardinge pointed out to Crewe that unless the Home government, by diplomatic pressure at Peking, barred the entry of Chinese troops into Tibet, Nepalese intervention could not be avoided. Crewe, for himself, would not mind this intervention, for though it would be "awkward", "I cannot see why it should have the tremendous consequences attributed

¹ *PF*, Vol. 121, 1912, Reg. No. 1968, Offg. Resident to Govt., 1 May 1912, Viceroy to Secy. of State, Telg. 24 May 1912.

² *HP*, Vol. 118.

³ *PEF*, 2750/1908, Pt. 6, Reg. No. 2936, Resident to Govt., 22 April 1912.

to it in some quarters."¹ But it was the Foreign Office where opposition to this policy was the strongest. Grey did not want to give Russia any cause for annoyance nor agree to anything other than a diplomatic solution of the Tibetan problem—and that only at Peking. However, he quite saw, as he had done in 1910, the urgent need for allaying the Nepalese anxiety and using this anxiety to convince Russia that the British government could no longer avoid strong pressure on the Chinese Republic. Grey was persuaded by the India Office's argument that

we are...not on firm ground for advising Nepal to abstain from taking action on her own account while the effect of such action might at any moment confront His Majesty's Government with the alternatives—either of which would be equally disagreeable—of having to justify it to the Russian government or to disavow it.²

Nepalese discontent, as Hirtzel pointed out, would not merely affect Gurkha recruitment but have a powerful effect on "the Hindu disaffected elements in India." Indeed, the circumstances had come to such a pass that "from the Indian point of view Nepal has become really the crux of the Tibetan question."³

The Tibetan policy ultimately decided in London was to put strong pressure on the Chinese government at Peking and to encourage Nepal to get the Chinese out of Tibet by mediation with the Tibetan and Chinese authorities at Lhasa. The Chinese government were warned that if the Szechuan troops entered Tibet, the British would take decisive action. They would actively assist the Tibetans to maintain their independence and prevent Chinese aggression. In July 1912 the Dalai Lama returned to Tibet, which intensified the anti-Chinese movement there. On 17 August 1912 the British government delivered a memorandum to the Chinese government asking them to undertake by a written engagement that Tibet would remain an autonomous region under, as before, nominal Chinese suzerainty.⁴ In September Grey and Crewe had interviews with the Russian Foreign

¹ *HP*, Vol. 118. Crewe to Hardinge, 28 June 1912. *PEF*, 1349/1912, Reg. No. 2406, Viceroy to Secy. of State, Telg. 21 June 1912.

² *PF*, Vol. 30, 1912, Reg. No. 3669, India Office to Foreign Office, 15 August 1912.

³ *PSM*, B. 191, *op. cit.*

⁴ *PEF*, 494/1913, Pt. 1, Reg. No. 1472/1912. *PEF*, 1349/1912, Reg. Nos. 1116, 1120, 1528, 2416-7, 2607, 2765/1912. *PF*, Vol. 35, 1912, Reg. No. 40924. C. Bell, *Tibet, op. cit.*, p. 149. Lamb, *op. cit.*, II, pp. 412-56.

Minister, Sazanov, in London when the British policy regarding Tibet was explained to him.¹ In May 1913 the governments of China and Tibet were invited to a Tripartite Conference in India to settle the Tibetan question.²

The latter half of 1912 saw intense diplomatic activity at Lhasa by the Nepalese agent. Jit Bahadur, who had lost confidence of the Chinese, had been replaced by Captain Lal Bahadur, formerly the Nepalese trade agent at Shigatse. Lal Bahadur fared better than his predecessor. In August he made the Chinese and Tibetans agree to a settlement whereby the former undertook to leave their arms with Lal Bahadur and depart to India whence by the sea route they would go home. General Chung, however, procrastinated which led to renewed fighting at Lhasa. At the end of 1912 his position became "perilous in the extreme"; he had no hope of being relieved by the Szechuan troops whose entry into Tibet had been successfully prevented by the British pressure on the Chinese government. Chung left Lhasa on 18 December. He made one last effort to hold out at Chumbi until in April 1913 he was obliged to leave Tibet for good.³

There still remained one problem which the Indian government wanted to have solved—China's claim on Nepal and Bhutan. Hardinge wanted the Chinese Republic formally to abandon this claim before the British government recognised it.⁴ Jordan supported the idea, but the India Office regarded it rather unnecessary. In its view Britain's exclusive relation with the two states had been made already amply clear to China in 1910-11 and the matter finally closed when the then Chinese government did not reply to Jordan's note of 10 May 1911;⁵ this silence, Crewe

¹ PEF, 1349/1912, Reg. No. 1349/1912. PEF, 494/1913, Pts. 1-2, Reg. Nos. 3, 3058/1913.

² PF, Vol. 11, 1914, Reg. No. 2964, *Tibet Conference, Final Memorandum*, by A. McMahon, 8 July 1914. Lamb, *op. cit.*, II, pp. 459-76. Bell, *Tibet, op. cit.*, pp. 148-59.

³ PF, Vol. 14, 1912, Reg. No. 4317; Vol. 21, 1912, Reg. Nos. 2235, 2548, 2967; Vol. 22, 1912, Reg. No. 4052; Vol. 24, 1912, Reg. No. 2906; Vol. 30, 1912, Reg. No. 3778; Vol. 32, 1912, Reg. No. 3180; Vol. 39, 1912, Reg. Nos. 4801-2; Vol. 3, 1913, Reg. Nos. 312-3, 411-2; Vol. 13, 1913, Reg. Nos. 1913, 1875. Lamb, *op. cit.*, II, pp. 378-85.

⁴ PEF, 1349/1912, Reg. No. 1590, Viceroy to Secy. of State, 29, April 1912. Jordan to Grey, Telg. 24 May 1912, India Office to Foreign Office, 13 June 1912.

⁵ See p. 172.

interpreted as China's acquiescence in the fact that Britain had exclusive influence in Nepal and Bhutan. Besides, the issue involved no "question of our treaty rights in China", which rights alone—in so far as they concerned Tibet—would be considered in the Tibet conference. Further, Nepal could not be left out of the conference if any question that concerned her were to be discussed, but then, Nepalese participation was disliked because, as McMahon, the British delegate to the Tibet Conference, explained to Manners Smith, it would only add to the complexity of the Tibetan problem, making its solution doubly difficult.¹

However, it was not long before Hardinge and Jordan turned out to be true prophets. Republican China's attitude towards Nepal was the same as that of the previous regime, and it made similar efforts to forge closer links with Nepal. In February 1913 General Chung, then at Chumbi, wrote to Chandra Shamsher proposing Nepal's alliance with the new Republic. Chandra Shamsher was asked to send a special delegation to Peking congratulating the new regime in China and seeking its "orders and advice." Chung was obviously trying to revive the suggestion that Nepal was a Chinese satellite state. In a secret telegram to President Yuan Shi Kai, which was intercepted by the British intelligence in Calcutta, Chung described Nepal as "practically the last of our tributary states" which the republican government of China could not afford to lose to the British. If the Nepalese could be persuaded to send a delegation for "orders and advice" to Peking, Chung explained in his telegram, "there would be proof positive that Nepal is subject to the Republic." The Nepalese alliance would strengthen the Republic, militarily. Chung suspected that Chandra Shamsher had already made an offensive and defensive alliance with the British, but he was not certain if it had made him a "mere puppet of the British."² Yuan Shi Kai welcomed Chung's proposal, but he was not unaware of its risks. True, if Nepal "could be drawn into alliance with China", it would be the "most fitting consequence of her loyalty" to the new Republic; Chandra Shamsher as an ally of China might be an effective set off to the pro-British Dalai Lama. But it was certain that the British

¹ PEF, 1349/1912, Reg. No. 1590/1912, Political and Secret Dept. Minute. FO, 766/8, McMahon to Manners Smith, 8 November 1913.

² PEF, 505/1912, Pt. 6, Reg. No. 1406/1913.

would strongly oppose this new Chinese intrigue, and British annoyance, so Yuan cautioned Chung, would make the more important Tibetan issue harder to settle. Therefore, Yuan asked Chung to be very careful in trying to win over Chandra Shamsher.¹

However, Chung failed as Chang and Lien had done earlier. Chandra Shamsher turned down Chung's suggestion, explaining his desire to preserve Nepal's "independence and her separate existence."² But, it did not escape Shower's notice that the Prime Minister made this communication in a language "as courteous and conciliatory as possible."³ Chandra Shamsher was not yet certain what shape the Tibetan situation would ultimately take and whether Tibet would be able to sustain her "practical independence" for any length of time in the face of Chinese determination to restore their authority. As has already been seen,⁴ the Nepalese government did not want China's connexion with Tibet to end; in fact, Lal Bahadur had tried to persuade the Tibetan authorities that they should agree to the retention of the Amban with his escorts at Lhasa. This, too, was the line Chandra Shamsher took whenever he discussed the Tibetan situation with Manners Smith and Showers. In such circumstances, it was hardly surprising that the Prime Minister should be courteous in his reply to Chung and would not "wish his relation with the Chinese Representative to be otherwise than amicable."⁵ Showers then explained to Chandra Shamsher the British government's new Tibetan policy⁶ in order to convince him that independent Tibet under only nominal Chinese suzerainty was in the interests of both Britain and Nepal. However, as events were to prove, Tibet was not to be independent in the full sense of the term; it became a British protectorate—a development which made the Nepalese government none too happy. Tension between Nepal and Tibet recrudesced, posing for the British the problem: how to maintain their own interests in Tibet without thereby antagonising the Nepalese.⁷

¹ *Ibid.*

² *Ibid.*, Reg. No. 3120, Chandra to Chung, 16 March 1913.

³ *Ibid.*, Offg. Resident to Govt., 11 March 1913.

⁴ See Chapter VI and VII.

⁵ PEF, 505/1912, Pt. 6, Reg. No. 3120, Offg. Resident to Govt., 11 March, 1913.

⁶ *Ibid.*, Govt. to Offg. Resident. 11 June 1913.

⁷ See Chapter VII.

CHAPTER SEVEN

ANGLO-NEPALESE "TREATY OF FRIENDSHIP", 1923

Politically, there were two most important developments during Chandra Shamsher's rule: the *de facto*, though not *de jure*, subordination of Nepal's external relations to the British government; and Nepal's involvement in Britain's imperial problems, both in India and elsewhere. During this rule the Nepalese and the British government's interests tended to be closely identified, resulting in an increasing degree of interdependence.

The British were happy over this development but not the Nepalese to whom it seemed to accelerate the danger of eventual British domination. Independence being a cherished object in Nepal, feelings against too close relations with the British were still strong in the *darbar*, and this Chandra Shamsher could not ignore. Lord Kitchener's visit to Kathmandu in 1906, for example, had been misinterpreted and the result was an abortive conspiracy against the Prime Minister.¹ Nothing, indeed, could damage the Prime Minister's reputation more than the impression that Nepal's independence and integrity were being compromised for the promotion of his personal interests, and that concessions were being made to the British without adequate returns for the country.

To many in the *darbar* Jang Bahadur was the model Prime Minister of Nepal, who got on well with the British but kept them at a safe distance; who rendered services to Britain but never without a price; who exacted from the British the treatment of a *de facto* ruler of an independent state; who was a friend of Britain, not a feudatory. Chandra Shamsher was expected to live up to this standard which, in the changed circumstances of his time, was rather exacting. The British impact on Nepal in the twentieth century was an irresistible phenomenon; it was, indeed, hard to counter the force of events which tended

¹ *PSLI*, Vol. 205, 1907, Reg. No. 1572. *PEF*, 505/1912. Pt. 3, Reg. No. 183.

to draw Nepal definitely within Britain's sphere of influence.

Chandra Shamsher with his understanding of the world situation clearly saw this. But there was another phenomenon which he could not overlook either—Britain also needed Nepal's friendship and assistance. There was, then, some scope for the Prime Minister to get Nepalese interests promoted by his British allies as a price for Nepal's undertaking more and more obligation for Britain, Chandra Shamsher would be proud to play the role of Britain's partner in her imperial tasks, but he expected Britain to treat Nepal as an *ally* having common interests with her and not as one who stood in subordinate relation to her and, therefore, whose assistance could just be taken for granted.

It was repugnant to the Nepalese government that Nepal should sink to the position of an appanage of British India. Nepal under Chandra Shamsher strove to maintain and even assert her distinct political individuality; this was in tune with her tradition and past history. It was in tune, too, with Chandra Shamsher's times when self-government and self-determination were the watchwords in Asia. In India, particularly, the struggle for self-rule was gaining momentum and articulation, and this had some indirect influence on Nepal's relations with Britain as well.

For some time Chandra Shamsher was uneasy to find the British government in India showing far less deference to Nepal's sensitiveness regarding her independence than they did formerly; the British, to his annoyance, very often equated Nepal with Indian feudatory states. The British gave the Nepalese Prime Ministers while in India only a 15-gun salute, while earlier they used to give them 19 guns. Bir Shamsher, in fact, had to drop the idea of going to England, for the British appeared to him reluctant to give him the honour of an ambassador from a foreign independent country—an honour they had accorded to Jang Bahadur in 1850.¹ Chandra Shamsher himself had taken strong exception to the fact that in the Delhi *Darbar* Curzon had expected him to sit at the head of the Indian princes.² In the 1908 edition of the *Imperial Gazetteer of India* Nepal was described as "a native state on the northern frontier of Innia", with its political status "intermediate between

¹ See Chapter I, and Chapter III.

² PEF, 3955/1908, Reg. No. 2210, Chandra to Ravenshaw, 7 June 1902, Chandra to Manners Smith, 15 December 1907.

Afghanistan and native states of India"; like Afghanistan its foreign relations were controlled by the Indian government although internally it was independent.¹ In the 1881 edition of the same work, however, Nepal had been listed as an "independent state."² In a book, *England's work in India* (by N. N. Ghosh),³ which was prescribed by the Calcutta University for Schools in Nepal, Nepal was described in the same way as in the 1908 edition of the *Imperial Gazetteer*. In November 1910 Chandra Shamsher had represented to Manners Smith that Nepal's friendly relations with Britain had led to a "tightening of political control and various restrictions on her old rights and privileges." He pressed then and again, in 1916, for a definite assurance that the British government would not interfere with Nepal's independent status in any way.⁴

Chandra Shamsher had another grievance: the Nepalese government had over the years liberally supplied Gurkha recruits to the Indian government,⁵ but the latter did not fully meet Nepal's requisitions for arms, and her requests for machinery to manufacture arms and ammunition had been invariably turned down. This he resented as a violation of the principle which the British had earlier accepted: giving Nepal arms to make up for the loss of her martial population.⁶

The Nepalese government were bitter over the existing arrangement, which made the Resident's approval essential before arms could be procured through the Indian government.⁷ The Nepalese government, so the Resident testified, maintained a large army not for use against the British—the latter's power was too well known in Nepal—but for maintaining internal order and the authority of the government, defending the northern border, and providing occupation to a large number of hereditary

¹ Vol. XIX, pp. 25, 38. *Afghanistan and Nepal*, pp. 91, 105-06.

² Vol. I, p. xiv; Vol. VII, p. 103.

³ p. 166.

⁴ *PEF*, 505/1912, Pt. 3, Reg. No. 324 Chandra to Manners Smith, 19, 25 November 1910, Manners Smith to Government, 29 November 1910. *FO*, 766/2, Chandra to Manners Smith, 1 April 1916. See also Chapter VI.

⁵ Between 1901 and 1913, 24,469 recruits were supplied. Vansittart, *Gurkhas*, pp. 175-7.

⁶ See Chapter III.

⁷ *Ibid.*

soldiers and keeping them contented.¹ Nepal was, besides, a military state, and a strong army was prestigious for the rulers. Chandra Shamsher had made several representations to the British against their arms policy, but in vain.

There was much substance in Chandra Shamsher's allegations. In fact, the British government both in India and England did not regard Nepal as an independent state in the fullest sense of the term. Nepal, in their view, had, of course, many attributes of independence, but treaties and, what was more important, actual practices did put some limitation on this independence. Indeed, in some important respects like external affairs, Nepal was free to the extent that the British allowed her to exercise freedom. True, Nepal was not looked upon as just one of the many Indian feudatory states, but she did suffer from some disabilities which were applicable to these states as well. The position of Nepal, in consequence, was anomalous and, as the British themselves admitted, it was very difficult to frame an exact definition of Nepal's political status.

British treaties with Nepal did not contain any definite description of her status. The Treaty of Sagauli, for instance, provided for the exchange of "accredited Ministers" between the two governments²—a unique provision in view of its absence in British treaties with Indian states. But then, the same treaty put a ban on Nepal's employing Europeans³ just as treaties with Indian states did on them. Further, there were some legal provisions in India which applied to Nepal as well, which fact suggested that from the legal point of view Nepal was not regarded as a foreign state. For example, by a notification, dated 23 September 1874, Nepal was included among the "States of India in alliance with Her Majesty" where the High Court of Calcutta had jurisdiction over European British subjects. Nepal, besides, was included in "dominions of princes and States in India in alliance with Her Majesty" for the purposes of notification under the Income-tax Act of 1886 and the Births, Deaths and Marriages Registration Act of the same year. It was ruled in 1894 that an inhabitant of Nepal would be regarded as an

¹ PEF, 505/1912, Pt. 3, Reg. No. 2067, Manners Smith to Government, 1 July 1906.

² Article VIII. Aitchison, *Treaties, Engagements* (1909 edn.), II, p. 112.

³ Article VII, *Ibid.*, p. 112.

inhabitant of India within the meaning of the Emigration Act of 1883. In contrast to this, one could cite the Extradition Treaty of 1855 between Nepal and British India concluded, as between two independent states, on the basis of complete reciprocity.¹

In regard to foreign relations, both treaties and actual practices indicated that Nepal was not an absolutely independent state although, on occasions, the British did treat her as such for their own interests. The Treaty of Sagouli, for instance, obliged Nepal to submit her disputes with Sikkim to British arbitration and to abide by it.² Again, by an engagement in 1839, the King of Nepal undertook not to have any intercourse with the Indian feudatory states "beyond the Ganges."³ On the other hand, Nepal had fought wars and concluded treaties with China and Tibet quite independently of the British government; Nepal had an accredited agent at Lhasa; she received an annual tribute from Tibet and sent tribute missions to China—and all this with the full knowledge of the British. But then, it was also true that the British had ultimately secured indirect, but nonetheless effective, influence on Nepal's external relations; the Nepalese government had to reckon with Britain's reaction to Nepal's policy towards Tibet and China. True, in Nepal's disputes with Tibet in the 19th century the British had not interfered directly and had, in fact, let Nepal accept the settlement made by China, but consideration of British disapproval did serve as an effective restraint on Nepal's military ambitions in Tibet. British policy in Tibet in the first decade of the present century put further limitation on Nepal's ability to take independent action in Tibet; and the Chinese forward policy in Tibet at this time enabled the British to influence Nepal's relations with China.⁴ Consequently, although unlike Afghanistan Nepal had no treaty formally subordinating her foreign relations to the British,⁵ in practice this subordination

¹ Aitchison, *op.cit.*, pp. 118-20. The supplementary Extradition Treaty of 1866 had the same character. *Ibid.*, pp. 120-21.

² Article VI, *Ibid.*, p. 112.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 116-7. *Ahadnama*, 1896, *Bhadra Vadi 9, Roj, 2, Foreign Office*, Kathmandu.

⁴ See Chapters IV, V and VI.

⁵ Abdur Rahman accepted British control of Afghan foreign relations in 1880, when he was recognised as the Amir by the British, and again in 1893, when he signed the Durand Agreement. Habibullah, Abdur Rahman's son and successor, confirmed the undertakings of his father in his treaty with the

did exist. In fact, the British found that they could control the foreign relations of Nepal far more effectively than those of Afghanistan. The Rana rulers of Nepal had to adjust their interests to those of the British government, with the result that although Nepal did enjoy good deal of independence, there were some practical restrictions on it. These restrictions were applied by the British Government whenever they felt it necessary or expedient to do so. The result was that whatever the status of Nepal might have been in theory it was the attitude adopted by the British government to Nepal from time to time that mattered, and this attitude, which became increasingly apparent after Jang Bahadur's death,¹ was one of treating, though not openly declaring, Nepal as a frontier protectorate.

A masterful Viceroy like Lytton, for example, in challenging Nepal's exclusive policy did try to undermine what the Nepalese government cherished as the very key stone of their integrity and independence. From the Nepalese point of view Lytton's action was a wanton interference with their state policy. Similar was the Nepalese reaction to Lytton's pressure on Ranuddip for Gurkha recruitment.² Ripon, on the other hand, was more tactful; he did not mind treating Nepal as an independent state if thereby British interests could be furthered. As an example of this attitude his reaction to Nepal's dispute with Tibet in 1883-4 could be cited. While holding that Nepal did not possess unrestricted right of waging war with a foreign country, Ripon saw that it had not been "our duty or our interest to interfere actively" in these disputes. It was, he pointed out to the Home government,

unnecessary to discuss at length the exact footing upon which we stand in regard to Nepal or the relations between Nepal, Tibet and China...Nepal is not absolutely independent in the fullest sense of the word, but in most respects we have treated her as an independent state, having power to declare war and to make treaties.³

This non-interference policy, was, in fact, justified to enable the

British in March 1905. Aitchison, *op cit.*, (190) edn), XI, pp. 323, 363, 392-3. P. Sykes, *A History of Afghanistan*, II, pp. 218-24.

¹ The Indian government had in 1876 clearly declared that with Nepal's foreign relations they had nothing to do. See Chapter IV.

² Chapter II, and Chapter III.

³ PEF, 505/1912, Pt. 3, Reg. No. 2067, India Secret Letter to Secy. of State, No. 30, 30 May 1884.

Indian government to supply arms to Nepal and obtain in return Gurkha recruits.¹

Dufferin treated Nepal as an independent state and refrained from interference in her internal affairs even when circumstances seemed favourable.² It was in Lansdowne's and Elgin's vice-royalties that the British secured indirect influence on Nepal's relations with Tibet through the arms deal.³ It was now, too, that in the Indian Foreign department there grew a tendency to regard Nepal on par with Indian feudatory states, although for political reasons Nepal was not openly treated as such. In 1894, for instance, the Foreign department, then headed by W.J. Cunningham, declared that the use of the word "ambassador" for Nepalese missions was incorrect both "conventionally and diplomatically", because the term could be used to designate only the representatives from countries like France, Russia and Germany.⁴ However, Elgin, in order not to offend Bir Shamsher, did not want to act on this principle.⁵ Curzon, of all the Viceroy, had the least respect for Nepalese feelings; he considered it absurd that Nepal, a frontier state and having long-standing relations with the British, should remain a closed country. Hence, his keenness to visit Kathmandu with full knowledge of Nepalese dislike of the idea.⁶ In a despatch, dated 27 February 1903, the Secretary of State referred to Nepal as "an independent state not in subordinate alliance with the British government". Curzon wrote a lengthy reply to this despatch, urging Hamilton to expunge the statement. The Viceroy pointed out that although there was some ambiguity regarding Nepal's political status, "we consider that it must be regarded as under the suzerainty of the British crown." Curzon explained the political status of Nepal thus :

It does not seem to be necessary to define the precise nature of our protectorate. It is less stringent than our relations with other native states; it is more stringent than our treaty protectorate over Afghanistan. It approximates perhaps more closely to our connection with Bhutan than with any

¹ See Chapter III.

² *Ibid.*

³ See Chapter IV.

⁴ *PEF*, 505/1912. Pt. 3, Reg. No. 334, Cunningham to H. Wylie, Resident, 8 January 1894.

⁵ See Chapter III.

⁶ See Chapter V.

other native state...Nepal should be regarded as falling under our exclusive political influence and control.

The definition of Nepal as an independent state, Curzon warned, was not only at variance with the general attitude of the Indian government but it could be in future politically "extremely embarrassing."¹

This set off a lively discussion at the India Office regarding whether or not Nepal was *really* independent. Hamilton opined that Curzon's contention was "arguable", and that "argumentatively" the case for independence was stronger than that against. But Lee Warner and Godley, the two very experienced members of the Political and Secret Committee, differed, holding that since Nepal was politically a part of India, it was under the British paramountcy, its "sovereignty" having been "clipped" by treaties and actual practices. Lee Warner elaborated the point thus :

I have never regarded Nepal as "independent" except in certain attributes of sovereignty. Its internal sovereignty is more complete than that of any other protected state of India. But it has no real international life. The argument based upon the wars and treaties with Tibet does not invalidate the statement just made. For it is certain that the Government of India tolerated the exercise of independence on these occasions and therefore gave a tacit assent to the action of Nepal. The argument based upon a profession of allegiance to China is weakened by the fact that Ava, Bhutan and other kingdoms of China professed such allegiance but it was a profession or a fiction and not a fact. The fact is that Nepal habitually defers to the British will and relies upon British protection. It is, therefore, in my opinion a glorified member of the protectorate.

Godley wholly agreed : the term 'Independent' was "clearly inapplicable" to Nepal, to which Denis Fitzpatrick, another member of the Committee, added—"I dare say Nepal would be willing to be considered under our 'protection' if the word were properly explained to it." The last word was Ritchmond Ritchie's, the Secretary to the political and Secret department, who advised that although much could be said for and against Nepalese independence, politically, it was "clearly inexpedient to make a statement as to the status of Nepal", because it might, as Curzon rightly held, embarrass the government of India. Ritchie added one word more : Nepalese susceptibilities must be respected and

¹ PEF, 505/1912, Pt. 6, Reg. No. 1755, India Secret Letter to Secy. of State, No. 79, 11 June 1903.

reckoned with.¹

The Chinese activities in Tibet and intrigues with Nepal after the Younghusband Mission's return from Lhasa made the British government more careful in dealing with Nepal. The Resident from time to time strongly advised the Government against hurting the Nepalese government's sentiments about their status. The reference to Nepal as a native state in the *Imperial Gazetteer*, according to Manners Smith, was deliberate and not a slip, and considering the fact that the references to Nepal and other frontier states were closely reviewed by Curzon and the Foreign department, the Resident's remark would seem not unjustified. Such unfortunate statements, Manners Smith warned, would make dealings with the *darbar* all the more difficult,

as it will give a handle to those who already urge the Minister to take the line that it is not safe to make concessions of any kind to the Government of India or its Representative for fear of diminution of Independence.²

During Chandra Shamsher's trip to England in 1908 Minto, then anxious to keep Chandra Shamsher in good humour on account of the Tibetan situation, urged the Home government that he should be given a 19-gun salute, and that he should also have an audience with the King. The Home government refused to treat Chandra Shamsher on par with the ambassadors of France and Russia but agreed, on political grounds, to receive him as a "19-gun feudatory prince", and in view of Nepal's "peculiar status", an audience with the King was also arranged.³

In 1910 Manners Smith again pointed out to the Government that the British attitude regarding salutes and arms was regarded by the *darbar* as derogatory to Nepal's status. The Resident fully appreciated Chandra Shamsher's position which was indeed "a difficult one" because

in the eyes of those whose opinions in Nepal affect him most, the successful Administrator is not that Prime Minister whose tenure of office is marked by the best government or by real improvement and progress to the country and its people, but he who can succeed best in keeping Nepal's position as a free and autonomous country in tact.

¹ *HC*, Vol. 210, No. 2265, Minutes of Hamilton, Lee Warner, Fitzpatrick, March 1903. *PSLI*, Vol. 154, Reg. No. 861, Minutes of Hamilton, Lee Warner, Godley, Ritchie, August and November 1903.

² *PEF*, 505/1912, Pt. 3, Reg. No. 334, Resident to Govt., 29 November 1910; also extract from same to same, 5 September 1907.

³ *PEF*, 3955/1908, Reg. Nos. 872, 1394, 1621, 1870, 2117, 2160, 2210, 169.

Therefore, Manners Smith strongly recommended "frankly conceding to Nepal the fullest measure of freedom compatible with her duty to us as an ally."¹ To this the Government replied that the independence, which Nepal had "hitherto enjoyed", would not be interfered with. This was clearly an ambiguous statement, since the Government well know that this independence was not absolute. The Home government deliberately avoided an "ex-cathedra pronouncement" on the status of Nepal on the ground that it was "unnecessary and undesirable." Indeed, they noted :

it is a very difficult question, rendered somewhat academic by the essential fact in the situation which is that whatever the status may be on paper it is difficult to the point of impracticability to enforce anything on Nepal which we cannot persuade her to accept willingly. And as our claims should not outrun our means of enforcing them, the less said the better.²

The British government, as already seen,³ made full use of Nepal's uncertain status; sometimes they found it politically convenient to put her forward as an independent state and some times as a satellite state, whose security and interests were guaranteed by the British government.

There were two main reasons why the British would not admit that Nepal was a fully independent state. First, such admission would strengthen the Nepalese claim to unrestricted acquisition of arms and machinery, secondly, it might encourage Nepal to establish relations with other foreign powers, thereby weakening Britain's position in that country. The British policy was to give arms to Nepal but not in an unlimited quantity, and as for machinery requests for them were not entertained because the British did not want Nepal to manufacture arms and be too powerful to manage.⁴ Restrictions on Nepal's armed strength

¹ *Ibid.*, 505/1912, Pt.3, Reg. No.324, Resident to Govt., 29 November 1910.

² *PEF*, 505/1912, Pt. 3, Reg. No. 324, Political Secretary's Minute, March 1911.

³ See Chapter VI.

⁴ In 1894 8,000 rifles were given together with six mountain guns and ammunition; in 1896 some more cartridges were given; two years later 100 tons of lead were given for the manufacture of bullets; in 1902 permission was given to import material for such manufacture. In 1904 permission was given to import material for such manufacture. In 1904 560,000 cartridges were given. However, for all these arms and ammunition Nepal paid both to cover their purchase and transportation costs. The first gift of arms made to Nepal was 25 Lee Metford rifles and 90 Martini Henry rifles in 1904.

were essential for the additional reason that otherwise Nepal's military ambitions in Tibet would increase, exposing the British to the risk of involvement in international complications.

It was Manners Smith, again, who pointed out that this was an erroneous policy. Nepalese grievances appeared to him genuine : the British had, indeed, not matched Nepal's liberal supply of Gurkhas¹ by an equally liberal supply of arms. The British government, the Resident pointed out, while setting out their new policy in 1884—Gurkhas in return for arms²—had recommended the free gift of rifles with an annual supply of ammunition for target practice. Yet it was not until 1904 that Nepal was given any gift at all—a fact obviously illustrative of the "slow progress of mutual confidence." Manners Smith regarded the Nepalese army as a reserve for the Indian army and, therefore, unless the former were made acquainted with the use of modern weapons, it would prove useless when the British government wanted its services in an emergency. In July 1906 Manners Smith recommended the immediate presentation of 5,000 rifles to Nepal. This, he said, should be followed by the training of some Nepalese officers in the Indian Staff College.³ The Resident asserted that

we shall have nothing to fear from Nepal and that by assisting her to raise her army to a higher level of efficiency we shall not only give her the best possible proof of our faith in her as an ally but enable her to do her duty towards the Empire.⁴

In September 1907 he fully supported Chandra Shamsher's request to buy from the British 20,000 rifles and machinery to manufacture rifles.⁵

The Resident's proposals were too bold for the Government's acceptance. However, Minto's attitude towards the arms issue was more liberal than Curzon's. In October 1906 Chandra Shamsher was given a present of 2,500 rifles with ammunition. In 1907 followed another 2,500 rifles. Next year a further gift

PEF, 505/1912, Pt. 3, Reg. No. 2067, See Chapter V.

¹ For the number of Gurkhas supplied between 1901 and 1913 see *Infra*.

² See Chapter III.

³ PEF, 505/1912, Pt. 3, Reg. No. 2067, Resident to Govt., 1 July 1906.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Ibid.*, Reg. No. 624, Resident to Govt., 26 September 1907, India Secret Letter to Secy. of State, No. 51, 5 March 1908.

of 7,500 rifles was made,¹ but only on the strong recommendation of the Military department of the India Office. The Secretary of the department, General O'Moore Creagh, agreed with Manners Smith that by increasing the efficiency of the Nepalese army the British government would really "sharpen a magnificent weapon which we may one day wish to use." Creagh wondered why the Indian government should "higgle" about such "a trifling matter" as giving some rifles to Nepal when "larger issues" like Gurkha recruitment were involved. The Gurkhas were an "offensive asset", and at a time when the Punjab was a centre of anti-British agitation, the Gurkhas were looked upon by Creagh as a counterweight to the Sikh and Punjabi muslim elements in the Indian army. In such circumstances, it seemed to Creagh

extremely impolitic to appear to behave ungenerously and with suspicions towards an independent state which in time of an emergency may be a factor in our salvation.

Creagh, in fact, would "go further and dub as dangerously shortsighted a policy which permits us to trifle with Nepal's goodwill."² In 1911 Chandra Shamsher again asked for arms and machinery for Nepalese arms factories, and once more Manners Smith lent his full support. The Government gave 10,000 rifles but no machinery on the plea that it was a "difficult issue." The British policy was summed up thus:

On the one hand we don't want to see Nepal too well-armed. On the other hand her friendship is too valuable to be endangered for the sake of a few rifles more or less. We should never offer arms spontaneously and the Resident should understand that requests for them from Nepal should as far as possible be discouraged but should a point be reached at which the refusal of arms would result in strained relations, the demand for arms should to some extent be met.³

There were, then, two main questions in Anglo-Nepalese relations which awaited satisfactory answer—first, whether or not Nepal was independent in the fullest sense of the term; secondly, whether she, like all independent states, had the right to freely

¹ PEF, 505/1912, Pt. 3, Reg. No. 624, India Secret Letter to Secy. of State, No. 51, 5 March 1908; Reg. No. 906, Viceroy to Chandra, 5 April 1908.

² *Ibid.*, Reg. No. 624, Minute of O'Moore Creagh, March 1908.

³ PEF, 505/1912, Pt. 3, Reg. No. 324/1911, Minute of Beauchamp Duff, Military Secy., India Office. 24 February 1911.

procure arms and machinery. The British answer to both the questions was in the negative, although they would not openly say this to Nepal. Chandra Shamsher had, therefore, reasons to be irritated. He kept on pressing the British for a clear answer until he managed to get it after the first world war. By his services in the war Chandra Shamsher put the British under heavy obligation. And in view of the difficult internal and external situation both during and after the war, the British government, for their part, could no longer afford to let the Nepalese discontent fester.

The war was the biggest event in Chandra Shamsher's career. On 3 August 1914, one day before Britain joined the war, the Prime Minister placed the entire resources of Nepal at the disposal of the British government. In 1915-6 twelve thousand Nepali troops went to India to do garrison duty on the North-West Frontier and to maintain internal security, thereby freeing the British and Indian troops for service overseas. In 1917 the Nepalese contingents did valuable service in the campaign against the Mahsud tribes of the frontier.¹ Most important of all, in the four years of the war 56,580 Gurkha recruits were supplied to the Indian army as against an annual average of 1,500 in the pre-war years.² Altogether more than two lakhs or 25 per cent of the total male population of the martial class served in the war in both combatant and non-combatant capacities. The financial assistance in cash and kind amounted to about a crore of rupees.³

No sooner had the war ended than Chandra Shamsher asked for his reward: the Kings of Nepal and the Prime Ministers should hereafter be addressed "His Majesty" and "His Highness" respectively instead of, as hitherto, "His Highness" and "His Excel-

¹ For this campaign see *PEF*, 1364/1913, Pt. 6.

² See Vansittart, *op. cit.*, pp. 174-77 for figures.

³ The Nepalese government's annual revenue was one and a half crores of rupees. For Nepal's role in the war see M. O'Dwyer, "India's Man Power in the War", *The Army Quarterly*, July 1921, p. 253. W.F.O'Connor, *On the Frontier and Beyond*, pp. 286-9. Landon, *Nepal*, II, pp. 138-45. *CMP*, Vol. 22, Chelmsford to Chandra. 19 February, 18, 28 June 1919; *Ibid.*, Vol. 23, Same to same, 27 December 1919. *Ibid.*, Vol. 18, Chandra to Chelmsford, 12 January 1917. *HP*, Vol. 121, Hardinge to Crewe, 22 January 1915. *PEF*, 3525/1914, Pt. 11, Memo on India's contribution to the War, p. 11.

lency." This, he contended, would clearly establish the distinction between Nepal and Indian feudatory states. In April 1919 E. Holland, the Officiating Foreign Secretary of the Government of India, visited Kathmandu and found Chandra Shamsher sore, anxious, grumbling. The Prime Minister reiterated his earlier allegations against the British attitude towards Nepalese independence and urged that the question be settled once and for all. He claimed to have gone out of his way to serve the British at times even at the cost of his country's interests. As an example, Chandra Shamsher raised the Gurkha recruitment issue. Heavy recruitment, particularly in the war years, had drained Nepal's population so much that agriculture in the hill districts had considerably suffered. Scarcity had been seen in some areas and grain had to be brought up from the Terai at an enormous cost to the government. The Nepalese government, the Prime Minister pointed out, were faced with another problem: they found it difficult to keep their army in full strength. The Nepalese hill men found service in the British Indian army more attractive with its better pay, pension and other amenities unavailable in the Nepalese army. The Prime Minister had, therefore, been obliged to increase the pay scale of the Nepalese troops which had put a strain on the government's limited resources.¹ The British recruiting officers enlisted men without even ascertaining whether they actually belonged to the martial tribes or had given false names to pass themselves off as genuine Gurkhas. Such "indiscriminate recruiting", Chandra Shamsher warned, would affect the standard of the Gurkha regiments. Besides, lately the Jharwas, a hill tribe of Assam, had been taken into these regiments. This was dangerous because the mixture of any Indian element with the Gurkha ranks might result in the infiltration of anti-British spirit among the Gurkhas, and this the British themselves would deplore. Railways had been built bordering the Nepalese territory,² which in facilitating large scale emigration of Nepalese to India³ and to

¹ *PF*, 1920, Vol. 6, Reg. No. 8149, *Annual Report on Nepal, 1920-1*.

² The Bengal and North Western Rly. passed along the entire southern border of Nepal. There was, besides, the Darjiling Himalayan Rly. on the south-eastern border of Nepal.

³ The number of Nepalese immigrants to India in 1901 was 243,037; in 1911, 280,241; and in 1921, 273,932. These included 21,635 Gurkhas in

Sikkim as labourers in tea gardens, porters and watchmen had affected Nepalese agriculture; trade and the labour market had been hit as well. Many Gurkhas after retirement did not return home but settled down in India in the hope of better opportunities of employment. Of the 10,932 Gurkhas discharged after the war, only 3,838 returned home in 1919.¹

All this was intended to convince Holland that unless the British gave some substantial reward to the Prime Minister he would no longer be able to oblige them as generously as he had hitherto. The impression, he added, had already been created in the *darbar* that the Prime Minister had failed to bring the country an adequate return for its services and sacrifices for the British.

Chandra Shamsher then raised the arms issue, contending that the existing restrictions regarding arms¹ were both unwarranted and unnecessary. The fear, he argued, that once the restrictions were lifted Nepal would pile up arms and threaten India was baseless, because Nepal's limited means would not permit either heavy importation or extensive manufacture of arms. Lack of technical skill was another handicap in manufacturing sophisticated weapons. Besides, when Nepalese interests were so "welded" with British interests, and the "very existence of Nepal is bound up with that of the British Empire", a break with the British government was "impossible", "unthinkable" and, indeed, "suicidal" for Nepal. There was, in fact, no Nepalese village in the hills from which men had not gone to British India for employment; there were, besides, hundreds of Gurkha pensioners in Nepal. Indeed, the Prime Minister asserted, "the people of Nepal had become anglicised" to such an extent that even if some successors of his were mad enough to attempt to fight the British government, his people would not follow him.

The right to obtain arms and machinery freely was from the Indian army. In 1891, nearly two-thirds of the total population of Darjiling were born in Nepal, and about the same proportion was recorded in the population of Sikkim in 1901. J.T. Marten, *Census of India*, 1921, Vol. I, Pt. I, pp. 95-6. J.H. Hutton, *Census of India*, 1931, Vol. I, Pt. I, p. 76.

¹ FO, 766/10, Chandra to W. O'Connor, Resident, 7 December 1919. PEF, 3085/1912, Pt. 1, Reg. No. 2920. Notes of discussion between Holland and Chandra, 13, 15 April 1919. E. Candler, *The Sepoy*, p. 21. Also IFP, Vol. 9264, November 1913, No. 8, Chandra's Memorandum.

² See Chapter III.

Nepalese point of view just "a question of izzut" (honour).¹

In view of the existing internal and external situation the Indian government took a serious view of Chandra Shamsher's demands. Unrest against British rule in Bengal, Bombay and the Punjab had given Minto and Hardinge many anxious moments.² After the war this unrest increased apace. The terrorists of Bengal had an eye on Nepal. In 1907, one Prithiman Thapa, a dismissed Gurkha soldier and a suspected agent of the terrorists, tried to tamper with the Gurkha troops. Prithiman addressed meetings in Calcutta and raised subscriptions to start a Nepali newspaper, *Gurkha Sathi*, his ostensible object being to foster an understanding between the Bengalis and Nepalis. Prithiman wrote to Chandra Shamsher for financial assistance. The Prime Minister however, ignored the letter and assured the Resident of his "strong aversion against the very name of Gurkha being associated with anything disloyal towards the British government." In the same year Chandra Shamsher banned a number of Indian newspapers which wrote anti-British articles; the names of some more such papers were furnished by the British government and a strict watch was kept on their subscribers in Nepal. The Bengalis in the Nepalese government's employ³ were warned against having any truck with the Bengal terrorists. In 1909 Chandra Shamsher agreed to let four detectives from India track down some Bengali revolutionaries suspected to be hiding in some remote areas of Nepal. In the same year he issued a notice to control the ingress of aliens into the Nepal valley.⁴

¹ Notes of discussion between Holland and Chandra, *op. cit.*

² Hardinge of Penshurst, *My Indian Years*, pp. 116-7. Mary Countess of Minto, *India Under Minto and Morley*, pp. 122-34, 144-54, 230-61, 300-08. V. Lovett, *A History of Indian Nationalist Movement*, pp. 70-124. *AP*, 1920, XXXIV, *East India : Progress and Condition*, pp. 6-12, 21-4, 30-48. *HP*, Vol. 120, Hardinge to Crewe, 17 February, 10, 26 March, 22 April, 9 December 1914. J. Buchan, *Lord Minto : A Memoir*, pp. 255-6, 274-81, 289-94. S.R. Wasti, *Lord Minto and the Indian Nationalist Movement*. M.N. Das, *India Under Morley and Minto* pp. 88 *et. seq.*

³ The Bengalis were mostly doctors, engineers and teachers. See also Chapter VIII.

⁴ *PSLI*, Vol. 205, Reg. No. 1651, Chandra to Manners Smith, 13, 14 June, 17 July 1907, Government to Resident, 4 September 1907. *Ibid.*, Vol. 231, Reg. No. 1372, Resident to Government, 10 August 1909. *Ibid.*, Vol. 242, Reg. No. 1203, Resident to Government, 8 July 1910.

During the war, the Germans had tried to intrigue with Nepal through Raja Mehendra Pratap, the noted Indian revolutionary. The German Chancellor, Bethmann Hollweg, wrote a personal letter to the King of Nepal addressing him as "Your Majesty" and promising to recognise Nepal as a fully independent state, if she rose against the British. Mahendra Pratap, who carried the letter to Kabul whence it was transmitted to Kathmandu, incited the Prime Minister to take advantage of the British involvement in the war, their anxiety over the attitude of the Court of Kabul, where German agents were active,¹ and the discontent in the tribal territory. Nepal, Mahendra Pratap pointed out in his letter to the Prime Minister, was the most powerful state on the Indian border and could act as the leader of the Indian states which looked to Nepal for inspiration and lead. Mahendra Pratap offered to act as a liaison between the Courts of Kathmandu and Kabul. In another letter he urged Chandra Shamsheer that Nepal being the only independent Hindu state in the world, it was her sacred obligation to support the Hindu revolutionary movements in India. If these movements succeeded Chandra Shamsheer would be made the Premier of independent India.² These intrigues and conspiracies failed because of Chandra Shamsheer's loyalty. The British were convinced that disaffected Nepal with her large army could make the problem of India's internal and external security very grave. After the war the Indian Home Rule and *Satyagraha* movements, agitations against the Rowlatt Act and the Jallianwalla-bagh massacre were indications of the worsening political state,³ which led the Indian government to observe that the

recent internal troubles have moreover emphasised that Nepal is next to British garrison our sheet anchor in times of grave trouble in India.

In regard to the military position of the British after the war,

¹ Sykes, *op. cit.*, pp. 246-63.

² PEF, 4353/1920, Pt. 1; 3443/1914, Pt. 6. These files deal with Mahendra Pratap's activities during the war and after, which are recorded also in his autobiography, *My Life story of Fifty-five years* (Dehra Dun, 1947), pp. 41, 56.

³ S.D. Waley, *Edwin Montagu*, pp. 205-22. Rupert Furneaux, *Massacre at Amritsar*. Lovett, *op. cit.*, pp. 125-257. The Publications Division, Government of India, *The Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*. XV, pp. 192-280; XVI, pp. 378-81, 393-4. R. Coupland, *The Indian Problem, 1833-1935*, pp. 44-81.

the Indian government felt "grave uncertainty" as to the future. Reports of disaffection and desertion in the army—the result of political unrest—had already been received.¹ Events like the dismemberment of Turkey and the Khilafat agitation in India,² the Indian government feared, would unsettle the large Muslim elements in the army. In such circumstances, the Government felt that

it was prudent to estimate our resources in worst contingencies on sole basis of British Gurkha and (if we can secure them) Nepalese units.³

Externally, the Indian government's main problem was the attitude of Afghanistan and the frontier Pathan tribes. The anti-British elements in Kabul, headed by Prince Nasrullah, were suspected of having engineered the assassination of Amir Habibullah, who had kept peace with the British during the war. The third Anglo-Afghan war, which broke out in May 1919, sparked off serious disturbances in the neighbouring tribal territory, resulting in the British loss of almost the whole of Waziristan.⁴ Both during and after the Afghan war the British viewed Nepal as a valuable counterpoise to Afghanistan and the Pan-Islamic movement. On British request Chandra Shamsar sent 2,356 troops for use against the Afghans, but since the war ended within four weeks, there was no occasion for the employment of the Nepalese contingent.⁵

Nepal was regarded as the very lynch-pin of the North-East frontier where affairs were far from stable. The uncertain situation in Tibet was an abiding worry for the Indian government. China had rejected the Simla Convention⁶ mainly because the

¹ *KP*, Vol. 30, H. Butler to Kitchener, 20 October 1915. Hardinge, *op. cit.*, pp. 117-8. Mary Countess of Minto, *op. cit.*, p. 151. *PEF*, 3085/1912, Pt. 1, Reg. No. 2612, Viceroy to Secretary of State, Telg. 8 May 1919.

² *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, *op. cit.*, XVI, pp. 307-12, 320-24.

³ *PEF*, 3085/1912, Pt. 1, Reg. No. 2612, Viceroy to Secretary of State, Telg. 18 April 1919. *IPP (Confidential)*, Vol. 64, February 1921, No. 345. *KP*, Vol. 70, Butler to Kitchener, 20 October 1915.

⁴ W.K. Fraser-Tytler, *Afghanistan*, pp. 177, 192-201, 258-9, Sykes, *op. cit.*, pp. 256-66, 268, 270-82. Adamec, *op. cit.*, pp. 108-23.

⁵ Landon, II, pp. 146-7.

⁶ The Tibetan and British delegates signed the Simla Convention (1914) and undertook in a declaration to abide by its terms. New trade regulations followed, replacing the old ones of 1893 and 1908 and confirming the British right of direct dealings with the Tibetan government and their control of trade agencies in Tibet. In March 1914 the British and Tibetan plenipoten-

Sino-Tibetan frontier as determined by the Tibetan and British delegates to the Convention and the British plan of dividing Tibet into Inner and Outer Tibet with the latter enjoying full autonomy was totally unacceptable to her. Chinese attempts to reconquer eastern Tibet led to bitter fighting with the Tibetans until in August 1918 British mediation led to an armistice at Rongbatsa and Sino-Tibetan frontier provisionally settled.¹ The Dalai Lama made pressing requests for arms much to the embarrassment of the Home government, whose acceptance of the League Covenant banning arms race between nations and active engagement in the easing of world tension by international disarmament made compliance with the Lama's requests difficult. Japanese interest in Tibet was another cause of uneasiness for the Indian government who were determined to keep the country free from any foreign influence. Japanese rifles had reportedly been procured by the Dalai Lama through Mongolia; the National Assembly at Lhasa² was contemplating the despatch of a delegation to Japan to get arms; there were Japanese spies in the monasteries at Lhasa masquerading as students of Lamaism. The Japanese press was critical of Britain having made Tibet an Indian protectorate; it was the Japanese incitement again that was strongly suspected to have influenced the Chinese determination not to accept the Simla Convention and settle the Tibetan issue on terms acceptable to the British.³

tiaries, by an exchange of secret notes, settled the 850-mile long Indo-Tibetan frontier from the north-east corner of Bhutan to the Isue Razi pass north of Burma. The frontier so determined came to be known as the McMahon line after Henry McMahon, the British Plenipotentiary, *PF*, 1914, Vol. 11, File No. 2964, *Tibet Conference : Final Memorandum*, by McMahon, 8 July 1914. A. Lamb, *The McMahon Line*, 11, pp. 459-566, 620-30, H. Richardson, *Tibet and its History*, pp. 107-20.

¹ E. Teichman, *Travels of a Consular Officer*, pp. 47-58.

² Composed of three hundred and fifty ecclesiastical and secular officials of the Tibetan government, the Assembly wielded great power, especially in foreign affairs. C. Bell, *Portrait*, pp. 144-7. *Tibet, Past and Present*, p. 55.

³ In 1919-20 British diplomats in China, Jordan and B. Alston, made great efforts to settle the Tibetan issue by persuading the Chinese government, but in vain, *PEF*, 3764/1913, Reg. Nos. 2640/1915. 4684/1917; 3260/1917, Pt. 3, Reg. No. 5191/1919. *PF*, 1919, Vol. 5, Reg. No. 1362/1919. *PSM*, B. 224 : *Japanese Policy in its bearing on India*, 16 May 1916. Tokai Toda, a Japanese, was the Dalai Lama's adviser on foreign affairs, *The Thirteenth*

Japanese influence, if strongly established in Tibet, could not but have a disturbing effect on Nepal, especially should the latter be disaffected towards the British. The Nepalese had a high regard for Japan's military efficiency which had been confirmed by her resounding victory over Russia in 1904-5. It was also significant that Chandra Shamsher had sent in 1902 six students to Japan for technical training instead of sending them to England. Japanese interest in Nepal seemed growing, indicated by the expressed desire of several Japanese scholars to visit Nepal for study and travel; and behind this desire the Indian government saw some sinister political object. Ekai Kawaguchi, the greatest Japanese expert on Tibet and Nepal, who had visited Nepal earlier in 1899 and 1902,¹ again went to Kathmandu with a Japanese scholar of Buddhism. Kawaguchi had sympathy for the anti-British movements in India and was known to the Indian revolutionaries in Japan, Taraknath Das, Ras Behari Bose and others. He was reported to have sounded the Nepalese authorities whether they would help India to free herself from the British rule and was disappointed to learn that they would not.²

These incidents gave a new political complexion to the British attitude towards Nepal. So much so that Chandra Shamsher's friendliness now became a matter of vital necessity for the Indian government. Chelmsford, the Viceroy, was, therefore, in favour of immediate conferment of the title of His Majesty upon the King of Nepal;³ but the Home government had a mixed feeling about the matter. Thomas Holderness, the Under Secretary of State, for instance, wondered if this concession might not increase Chandra Shamsher's "already sufficient sense of self-

Dalai Lama, pp. 87-97.

On the Tibetan situation in 1914-21 and the British policy see *PEF*, 876/1920, Pts. 1-3; 3260/1917, Pts. 1-5, *PSM*, B, 324. Bell, *Tibet, op. cit.*, pp. 158-77; 244-70. Great Britain Foreign Office, *Tibet*, pp. 43-4. Z. Ahmad, *China and Tibet, 1703-1959, A Resume of Facts*, p. 19. E. Teichman, *Affairs of China*, pp. 225-7.

¹ See Chapter V.

² *PSLI*, Vol. 229, Reg. No. 921, Resident to Govt., 4 May 1909. *PEF*, 3764/1913, Reg. Nos. 2802, 4855/1912, 392/1913, 1183, 2174, 2378, 2669, 2992, 3341/1914, 4749/1915, 4684/1917, 4814/1918. *PSM*, B, 268, *Draft of a Memo on the Employment of Japanese troops in Mesopotamia*, 1917.

³ *CMP*, Vol. 9, Chelmsford to Montagu, the Secy. of State, Telg, 22 November 1918.

importance", making him "a little less easy to deal with once the gratification has worn off." It could, besides, make the Nizam—who too had set his heart on this title—jealous. The Amir of Afghanistan, who had been given this title in 1905, might also resent the loss of his distinction and ask for some compensatory favour—possibly the Garter. But the arguments in favour of the concession were weightier. It was very likely, as Hirtzel pointed out, that if Chandra Shamsher's demand were rejected, he would take it

as not so much a personal rebuff as a confirmation of his worst suspicions of our good faith as regards the independence of Nepal.

To Godley it seemed hardly any favour at all,

for after all Nepal is independent and we are giving nothing but admitting it in the gracious manner proposed.

The final decision of the India Office was : "It is not worthwhile to risk the loss of so valuable an asset for the sake of a title";¹ and the Viceroy was informed accordingly.

The British government tried to placate Chandra Shamsher in other ways as well. He was made a G.C.M.G., and an Honorary General of the British army. Neither, however, could quite satisfy the Prime Minister who seemed "hankering" after still higher honours—the Garter and a Field Marshalship.²

However, it soon became apparent that what Chandra Shamsher wanted most was not "a mere redundancy of British honours", which, as he said, was "of little practical value to him", but a recognition of his services in some tangible, substantial form. This, Chelmsford could not but admit, was a perfectly legitimate claim; the Indian government were, indeed, "honour-bound to offer a substantial reward, especially in view of the Mutiny precedent." But since the Nepalese expected some territory and the Indian government could offer none, as a substitute Nepal was given a subsidy of ten lakhs of rupees to be paid annually as long as she maintained her existing friendliness

¹ *PEF*, 3085/1912, Pt. 1, Reg. No. 386, Hirtzel's Memorandum on Nepal, 6 December 1918; Reg. No. 5180/1918, Minutes of Holderness, Godley and others of the political department. Also Reg. No. 2371/1919. *CMP*, Vol. 9, Montagu to Chelmsford, Telg. 24 December 1918.

² *Ibid.*, Vol. 11, Chelmsford to Montagu, Telg. 9 October 1919, Montagu's reply, 20 December 1919; Vol. 13, Chelmsford to Montagu, Telgs. 20 August, 28 November 1920, Montagu's reply, Telgs. 6 August, 8 December 1920.

with the British¹.

In January 1920 Chandra Shamsher submitted another demand: the British representative in Nepal should be designated Envoy so as to confirm Nepal's distinction from the Indian feudatory states, where the British representatives were called Residents or Political Agents. The Government relented, hoping that Chandra Shamsher would drop his most embarrassing demand—the demand for arms and machinery.²

The difficulty about the arms issue was that it was mixed up with another issue: the deterioration of Nepal's relations with Tibet on account of the new British policy towards Tibet—the policy of cultivating the Dalai Lama's friendship and strengthening him with arms to frustrate the Chinese attempts at recovering their lost control over Tibet both by political pressure and military campaigns. Chandra Shamsher was intensely jealous of the Dalai Lama's friendship with the British during and after the Simla Conference; and he repeatedly complained to the Resident that the British by giving arms³ to the Tibetans had undermined Nepal's position in Tibet, which had hitherto rested on Nepal's military superiority and the Tibetans' fear of Nepal. Chandra Shamsher was vexed that he had not been invited to the Simla Conference although his assistance to the British during the Tibetan crises⁴ entitled him to such invitation. The Prime Minister, who knew that the British had concluded a Convention with Russia⁵ regarding Afghanistan without consulting the Amir, was anxious that the Simla Conference might result in an Anglo-Tibetan settlement prejudicial to Nepal's rights and interests in Tibet. He asked, therefore, for a specific

¹ PEF, 3085/1912, Pt. 1, Reg. No. 2612, Viceroy to Secy. of State, Telg. 8 May 1919, Reply of the Secy. of State, Telg. 11 June 1919; Reg. No. 5596, Resident to Govt., 30 June 1919. Also Reg. No. 990/1920, CMP, Vol. 10, Chelmsford to Montagu, Telg. 9 May 1919.

² PEF, 3085/1912 Pt. 1, Reg. No. 3765, India External Letter to Secy. of State, No. 27, 8 April 1920; Reg. No. 8364, Govt. to Envoy, 6 September 1920.

³ Shortly after the Simla Conference the British supplied arms to the Dalai Lama to enable him to resist Chinese pressure from eastern Tibet. PSM, B. 324. Tibet.

⁴ See Chapters V and VI.

⁵ Fraser-Tytler. *op.cit.*, pp. 179-80. G.P. Gooch. and H. Temperley, ed., *British Documents on the Origins of the War 1898-1914*, IV, pp. 237-8.

guarantee that the 1856 treaty, on which these rights and interests were based, would in no case be tampered with. British alliance with the Dalai Lama had strengthened him and, as Chandra Shamsher frankly told Manners Smith, the Nepalese could no longer bully the Tibetans as before. The Dalai Lama did not comply with the Prime Minister's demand for compensation for the loss of Nepalese life and property in the disturbances at Lhasa in 1912-3,¹ and the Lama's proposal for British arbitration in the matter was rejected by Chandra Shamsher as an "absurd suggestion", obviously because it would set an undesirable precedent and would restrict Nepal's freedom of action in Tibet. In 1915 Chandra Shamsher complained that the Tibetans "betrayed their arrogance beyond words" and intended "to flout Nepal by all means to override the rights and privileges sanctioned by treaty and long usages of centuries." Nepalese traders, Manners Smith was told, had been looted at Phari; supply of fuel to the Nepalese legation at Lhasa had been stopped and pastoral lands on the border violated. The Nepalese Agent's remonstrances had brought forth the warning from the Tibetans that the Nepalese in Tibet would meet with the same fate as the Chinese had suffered—expulsion lock, stock and barrel. To impress upon the Resident that Nepal would not put up with these insults, Chandra Shamsher made some "quasi-military preparations" at Kathmandu. The Dalai Lama, on the other hand, complained to the British that the Nepalese government were trying to take advantage of his preoccupation with the Chinese troubles in eastern Tibet.²

What made the situation all the more awkward for the British government was the conflicting views of their own Tibetan and

¹ See Chapter VI.

² PEF, 3085/1912, Pt. Reg. No. 1111, Chandra to Manners Smith, 4 December 1914, Reg. No. 1789, Same to same, 28 February 1915; Reg. No. 5188, Same to same, 26 September 1916, Minute of Hirtzel; Reg. No. 640, Bell to Govt., 18 December 1916.

It was also believed in the Tibetan official circles that Nepal wanted China to be strong in Tibet so as to act as a counterweight to Britain, Bell, *Tibet, op. cit.*, p. 236. The Nepalese at any rate did not want the complete disappearance of China from Tibet, for an appeal to the Amban and the latter's pressure on the Tibetan government often ensured the latter's compliance with Nepalese demands. See also Chapter IV, and Chapter VI, Bell, *Tibet, op. cit.*, p. 237.

Nepalese experts; Charles Bell, for instance, argued the Dalai Lama's case as vigorously as Manners Smith did Chandra Shamsher's. Bell blamed the Nepalese for their generally overbearing behaviour and disregard for the religious sentiments of the Tibetans.¹ The Nepalese Agent, Lal Bahadur, he said, was tactless and sent exaggerated and even false reports to Kathmandu; he was accused of abusing the extra-territorial rights, of his government; he was, as the Tibetans told Bell, as unpopular with the official circles at Lhasa as his predecessor, Jit Bahadur, had been popular. Bell warned the Government that

if we should support Nepal in an unjust cause against Tibet or in a cause which Tibet for serious reasons regards as unjust, we run the risk of driving Tibet into the arms of China.

And with the restoration of Chinese power in Tibet might recrudescence the same problem in the North-East frontier as the British had faced in 1910² together with similar danger to Nepal's own security and her Tibetan interests.³

Manners Smith, on the other hand, maintained that Nepal had just reasons not only to worry about the Tibetan situation but to blame the British for it. It had been, in his view, a mistake not to anticipate Nepalese reactions before Dalai Lama was given arms, because Nepal was "decidedly an interested party in any measure which made Tibet militarily strong."⁴ The Resident had full sympathy for Chandra Shamsher's uneasiness about the Simla Conference. He had even suggested to McMahon that the Tibetans be persuaded to cede the border tracts which the Nepalese had coveted for long. Apart from increasing the Prime Minister's prestige, it would strengthen Nepal's border defence and consequently add to India's security. McMahon had rejected this suggestion; and the Nepalese participation in the Conference, he had dismissed, as "out of the question and

¹ The Nepalese shot birds, caught fish and smoked in public in defiance of the Tibetan laws against such practices. *Ibid.*, pp. 234-5.

² See Chapter VI. *et seq.*

³ *PEF*, 3085/1912, Pt. 1, Reg. No. 640, Bell to Govt., 18 December 1916, W.L. Campbell, British Trade Agent, Gyantse, and D. Macdonald, British Trade Agent, Yatung, to Bell, 4 December 1916, Bell, *Tibet*, *op.cit.*, pp. 197-8, 233-43. Also *PEF*, 876/1920, Pt. 1 Reg. No. 2470, Bell to Govt., 22 April 1921.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 3085/1912, Pt. 1, Reg. No. 1111, Manners Smith to A.H. Grant, Foreign Secy., 19 November 1914.

unnecessary.¹ Manners Smith advised the Government against straining relations with Nepal for the sake of Tibet because

there is no question in my mind as to the comparative value of Nepal *versus* Tibet as a friend and ally and I feel sure that the military authorities in India might have the same opinion.²

It was patent to these authorities that Nepalese discontent during the world war would seriously affect Gurkha recruitment, while meeting Nepalese demands for arms involved the risk of aggravating her disputes with Tibet. In such circumstances the Government were "practically compelled to placate the Nepal *darbar*" as best as they could. In 1915 Chandra Shamsher was given two assurances: first, that after the war the Nepalese troops in India would take home with them 3,000 modern rifles; secondly, that the Indian government would "never for a moment" allow their arms to be used by the Dalai Lama against the "legitimate interests of Nepal."³ This quietened Chandra Shamsher — but not for long.

What Chandra Shamsher really wanted was not gifts of rifles but the *right* to obtain arms and machinery whenever he felt their need. He refused to be content with titles and honours for himself, nor would the subsidy make him change his mind. He even showed apparent disinterestedness in the "repeated openings" made for him by Holland for some personal gratification in the form of regular pecuniary grants.⁴

Chandra Shamsher in applying this pressure tactics was clearly exploiting the war-weariness of the British and their post-war problems in India. Two more events made the British position further vulnerable. In 1920 a British mission led by Bell visited

¹ FO, 766/8, Manners Smith to Wood, Offg. Secy., 2 November 1913, McMahon to Manners Smith, 8 November 1913. In fact, Crewe had asked Sazanov in September 1912 what he felt about the "rectification" of Nepal's border with Tibet. Sazanov's reaction left Crewe with the impression that Russia might in return ask for some compensation in Afghanistan, and this the British did not want to give. PF, Vol. 12, 1912, Reg. No. 4092A. PEF, 494/1913, Pt. 1, Reg. No. 1472, Hirtzel's Note, 27 Jan. 1913. Lamb, II, p. 469.

² *Ibid.*, 3085/1912, Pt. 1, Reg. No. 1111, Manners Smith to Grant, 19 November 1914.

³ *Ibid.*, Note of the Military Secretary, Govt. to Resident, 25 November 1914, 19 February 1915.

⁴ Notes of discussion between Holland and Chandra, April 1919, *op.cit.*

Lhasa which was followed, although not without considerable hesitation on the part of the Home government, by a fresh supply of arms to the Dalai Lama. The British took this step to keep up their influence with the Tibetan government who had been greatly exhausted by prolonged fighting with the Chinese in eastern Tibet; a section in the National Assembly even urged the Dalai Lama for a *rapprochement* with the Chinese to end the fighting; a Chinese mission from Kansu was also reported to have arrived at Lhasa to make a settlement with the Tibetan government. Such a settlement without the British voice in it was wholly distasteful to the Indian government, who, therefore, had to strengthen the Dalai Lama as best as they could against the pro-Chinese elements in the Assembly.¹

The other event was the Anglo-Afghan Treaty of November 1921,² by which the British recognised Afghanistan's independence, both internal and external, with the right to keep a diplomatic representative in London, and to freely import arms and machinery.³

The Bell mission and the supply of arms to the Dalai Lama aggravated Chandra Shamsher's jealousy and suspicion, while the Afghan treaty and the concessions obtained by Amir Amanullah made the Prime Minister's demand for similar concession irresistible. Chandra Shamsher constantly harped on one point—if Afghanistan could be allowed unrestricted importation of arms and machinery after her war with and defeat by the British, why should the concession be refused to Nepal with her long record of service and loyalty to Britain? The Indian government could, indeed, have no answer when the Prime Minister asked: was it not strange that the British government should accept Nepal's assistance to fight the hostile Tibetans⁴ and Afghans, but then, it was they who were favoured by Britain while Nepal was ignored? If then, the Nepalese charged the British with distrust and discrimination, they were justified.

¹ PEF, 3260/1917, Pt. 6 Reg. No. 1460, India Secret Letter to Secy. of State, No. 3, 23 March 1922, enclosing Bell's *Report* on his Mission. PEF, 3260/1917, Pt. 5 also deals with this mission. See also Bell, "The Dalai Lama; Lhasa 1921", *JRCAS*, Vol. XI, 1924, pp. 36-50. *Portrait*, *op. cit.*, pp. 216-53. *Tibet*, *op. cit.*, pp. 178-207. Richardson, *op. cit.*, pp. 121-5.

² Aitchison, *Treaties* (1933 edn.), XIII, pp. 288-96.

³ Sykes, *op. cit.*, pp. 283-94, 364-9.

⁴ See Chapter V.

This was the view of the British Envoy, Colonel R.L. Kennion,¹ who criticised the British policy regarding giving arms to Nepal both on moral and political grounds. Morally, Kennion argued, Nepal's claim to arms was far stronger than either Afghanistan's or Tibet's; the "record of Nepal's dealings with the Government of India has been as white as that of Afghanistan has been black." Politically, it was extremely inexpedient to treat Nepal unfavourably with Afghanistan because it would foster the impression in the Nepalese government that to obtain concessions from Britain, they should abandon their erstwhile policy of loyalty and cooperation and adopt instead the Afghan course of hostility and war. There could be no comparison, Kennion pointed out, between Chandra Shamsher and the Dalai Lama. While the former was a tested ally of long standing, the latter had chosen to be friendly with the British only recently and just as a measure of defence against the Chinese. Kennion, like Manners Smith, urged that the Nepalese army should be strengthened as "an additional Indian reserve for purposes of internal and external security." A "well and even exceedingly well armed Nepal" would serve as a set-off to a well-armed Afghanistan.²

Kennion, like Manners Smith again, wanted to convince Chandra Shamsher that the British government fully trusted Nepal. One way of doing this, he saw, was to abrogate the seventh article of the Treaty of Sagauli, which banned the employment of Europeans by the Nepalese government without the consent of the British. The restriction was originally intended to prevent foreign intrigues in Nepal, but now, when the Rana government were firmly attached to the British, this restriction seemed to Kennion "unimportant", "superfluous" and even "useless." For Chandra Shamsher it had been a source of inconvenience and irritation because even for employing doctors and engineers³ for a short time, he had to obtain the British representative's sanction. The Prime Minister had not formally represented against this, but he had brought the matter "indirectly" to the Envoy's notice. Kennion had, therefore, no doubt that the removal of this res-

¹ Kennion was British Envoy in Nepal from January 1920 to October 1921.

² *PEF*, 3085/1912, Pt. 2, Reg. No. 520, Kennion to Govt., 29 September 1921; Reg. No. 3317, Same to same, 26 April 1921; 3085/1912, Pt. 1, Reg. No. 4200, Same to same, 26 April, 27 June 1921.

³ See Chapter VIII.

triction would be welcomed by Chandra Shamsher

as a mark of trust and a sign that the independence about which so many assurances have been given by Britain is not to be a mere figure of speech.¹

The Indian government were impressed by these arguments. Reading, the Viceroy, agreed that Nepal should be allowed to import arms and machinery without restrictions provided Chandra Shamsher undertook to use the arms for defensive purposes alone and not to export them any where. The Government had now seen what, in fact, was quite obvious all the while : that the concession would not "make much practical difference" in the situation because not only was Nepal too poor to buy vast quantities of arms, but the British could whenever they wanted stop the supply; and Nepal, being a wholly landlocked country, had no means of obtaining arms from any where other than through British India. In such circumstances Reading recommended to the Secretary of State that Chandra Shamsher be given the arms concession. The Prince of Wales was at this time (1921) scheduled to make a tiger shooting trip to the Nepal Terai,² and the need for avoiding an embarrassing situation was another factor which influenced the Indian government's decision. If the arms concession coincided with the Prince's trip, Reading believed, it could appear to the Nepalese as a mark of "royal favour."³ Reading also recommended the annulment of the seventh article of the Treaty of Sagauli. Since the ban would continue to apply to Indian states, the British gesture would be all the more gratifying to the Nepalese. The Indian government's policy, as they explained to the Home government, was to meet the "legitimate requests" of the Nepalese, if it could be done "at little or no risk to ourselves."⁴

Reading's proposals created mixed reaction at the India Office.

¹ PEF, 3085/1912, Pt. 2, Reg. No. 1860, Kennion to Govt., 11 January, 18 February 1921. Also *Ibid.*, Reg. No. 520, Sams to same, 29 September 1921.

² O'Connor, *op. cit.*, pp. 294-307. O'Connor was the British representative in Nepal from December 1918 to December 1919 and again from October 1921 to April 1924.

³ Arms were also given to Nepal in 1911 when King George V went to the Nepal Terai for tiger hunting. Landon, *op. cit.*, pp. 131-6. PF, 1912, Vol. 27, Reg. No. 3136, *Annual Report on Nepal, 1911-2*.

⁴ PEF, 3085/1912, Pt. 2, Reg. No. 2673, India Secret Letter to Secy. of State, No. 49, 26 May 1921; Reg. No. 4957A, Viceroy to Secy. of State, Telg. 8 November 1921.

It was admitted that the Nepalese claim was irrefutable and that political wisdom dictated the acceptance of the Viceroy's proposals, but then, there were still lingering prejudices against Nepal in the Home government. Here the general feeling was that enough had been given to Chandra Shamsher, and so he should stop asking for more. The Home government did not like the Indian government to succumb to Chandra Shamsher's pressure. The Political and Secret Committee of the India Office decided against the abrogation of the seventh article of the Sagauli treaty. The article, if interpreted literally, as Hirtzel admitted, was, indeed, an anomaly and did constitute a limitation on Nepal's independence, but it should remain as it was, for it gave a "useful power" in British hands. The India Office had, in fact, not given up its ambiguous attitude towards Nepal's political status. As Hirtzel explained, the Home government did not consider it

"necessary to go into the status of Nepal", for "we have not conferred any new independence on Nepal. Nepal was all along independent (unlike the native states in this respect) though the fact had become somewhat obscured by usage. This particular derogation from complete independence was, however, part of the treaty on which all our relations with Nepal are based, and the independence which we have recognised has always been subject to that qualification."

Above all, if Chandra Shamsher had not formally raised the issue, the Indian government had better leave the matter alone.¹

Arms were a more difficult issue. The India Office found itself swayed by the conflicting considerations of political expediency and risk involved in the matter. On the one hand, as Hirtzel clearly saw,

It is not possible to refuse Nepal which has served us so well what we have conceded—long ago—to Afghanistan, which has served us so badly.

On the other, it was "most objectionable" to let Nepal import machinery and build up arms factories.²

Before the India Office took a final decision on the matter, it was referred to Lord Curzon. Curzon, now the Foreign Secretary,

¹ PEF, 3085/1912, Pt. 2, Reg. No. 2673, Minute of Hirtzel, Secy. of State's Secret Despatch to the Governor-General, No. 18, 18 August 1921. Also *Ibid.*, Reg. No. 1860/1921 Minute of Hirtzel, August 1921.

² PEF, 3085/1912, Pts. 1, 2, Reg. Nos. 4957, 4957A, Minutes of Hirtzel and Members of the Political Committee, November 1921.

had the same distrust of Nepal as Curzon, the Viceroy, more than fifteen years ago.¹ He had no doubt that the Nepalese were friendly less by choice than by compulsion of circumstances; not genuine goodwill and gratitude but their own self-interest had bound them to the British. He was as before strongly opposed to giving arms to Nepal² let alone allowing her unrestricted importation of them; and the recognition of Nepalese independence was to him an equally disagreeable idea. The Nepalese, he warned, were just making a bogey of the growing Tibetan power to get arms from the British. Their policy, he explained,

is a tale of ceaseless pressure relentlessly applied and enforced by the immense weight of the assistance so opportunely and handsomely extended to us...in a series of wars.

British influence seemed to Curzon to have decreased lately in proportion as the Indian government had succumbed to the Nepalese blackmail. He was, therefore, both sad and surprised that the Indian government had not yet realised this. In a spirit of mingled wrath, despair and anxiety, the ex-Viceroy noted :

When I was in India, I still held the fortress. I see to my distress that the outworks have been abandoned one after the other. Titles of Majesty and Highness have been granted and all sorts of concessions made: Now is the flag to be hauled down from the donjon keep and the hand that is to tear it down is apparently to be that of the Prince of Wales in the midst of a tiger shoot.

Curzon was "quite out of sympathy" with Reading's proposals, which appeared to him to be the last stage "in the progressive abandonment of the conditions which had hitherto regulated British relations with Nepal."³

These strong views had considerable influence on Montagu, who was convinced that the Nepalese issue was quite complex and so it needed very careful and thorough examination. Reading's proposals, so they seemed to Montagu, had been put forth rather in haste and without adequate consideration of all their implications. They were not rejected "in principle", but the Secretary of State wanted to consider them "with appropriate safeguards in the perspective of our whole relations with Nepal

¹ See Chapter V.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 169-72, 189, fn. 77.

³ *PEF*, 3085/1912. Pt. 1, Reg. No. 4957A, Minute of Curzon, 24 November 1921.

and other neighbouring states." However, to save the Indian government from embarrassment during the Prince's trip to the Terai, Reading was authorised to make Chandra Shamsher a gift of arms and, if necessary, to announce the British government's intention to review the general relations of the two governments. It was becoming clear to the Home government

that there will be no end to concessions to Nepal until we put our relations with it on a true basis suited to its independence ;

and that basis, it was soon obvious, could only be a new Anglo-Nepalese treaty.¹

Meanwhile, Chandra Shamsher intensified his pressure, contending that the arms concession was by no means a special favour he was asking for, but that it was Nepal's indefeasible right. In January 1922 the Prime Minister asked for a new treaty, obviously hoping for the same terms as the Amir had got. The treaty, he explained to Captain W.F. O'Connor, the Envoy, would place Anglo-Nepalese relations on a new footing; without it, he was sure, the uncertainty regarding Nepal's status could never be cleared up.²

O'Connor saw that Chandra Shamsher's grievances were genuine. He shared Manners Smith's and Kennion's admiration for the Prime Minister and, like them, wanted to treat him with complete trust and confidence. He recommended to the Government that the seventh article of the Sagauli treaty be abrogated on condition that the Nepalese government undertook to inform the Envoy whenever any European were to be employed by them—this was, in O'Connor's view, a very necessary precaution "in these revolutionary and Bolshevik times." O'Connor also proposed some concessions to Nepal regarding the customs duty levied on Nepalese goods at Raxaul on the border.

As for a new treaty, O'Connor, so he claimed later, showed at first only a "tepid interest", for "I always prefer letting well alone and not raising any thorny questions unnecessarily." But

¹ *Ibid.*, Pt. 2, Reg. No. 520, Montagu to Reading, Private Telg. 6 December 1921.

² *PEF*, 3085/1912, Pt. 1, Reg. No. 4199, Envoy to Govt., 4 January 1922.

Chandra Shamsher's mood and repeated representations soon convinced him that the arms concession had to be made to Nepal, and that being so it seemed to him

much better that we should take the opportunity of thrashing out any other doubtful points which may exist and of getting anything we can in exchange.¹

Accordingly, he urged that a new treaty with Nepal be "taken seriously in hand." He then drew up a tentative outline for a treaty—"a brief business-like document", as he called it. The treaty would have five articles, its main feature being an unequivocal declaration of Nepal's independence.² It would provide for the importation of arms and machinery by Nepal under "reasonable safeguard."³ O'Connor, like Manners Smith and Kennion, did not view a well armed Nepal as a "very real or a very formidable menace" to India, nor did he fear that the increased strength of Nepal would accentuate the tension between Nepal and Tibet, because the British government could exert "direct and indirect pressure" on both. The customs facilities, which O'Connor wanted the Government to give Nepal, were provided for in the treaty he drafted⁴ together with the annual subsidy already given to Nepal.⁵

The Indian government gave a frosty reception to O'Connor's suggestion for a new Nepalese treaty, which in their view was neither necessary nor desirable; it would cause them only embarrassment and earn no advantage at all. True, obtaining a definite control of Nepal's foreign relations *by treaty* was still a desideratum, but any such hope was "illusory" in view of Nepal's strong feelings against the idea. It was certain that Nepal would never surrender her relations with Tibet to the British; and as for British control of Nepal's relations with China, although Chandra Shamsher's mood was earlier favourable,⁶ it was no longer so now, because the disappearance of Chinese

¹ PEF, 3085/1912, Pt. 2, Reg. No. 1578, O'Connor to Denys Bray, Foreign Secy., 11 December 1922, 15 January 1923.

² *Ibid.*, Reg. No. 977, O'Connor to Govt., 8 February 1922. Article I of O'Connor's draft treaty provided for the confirmation of Nepal's independence, and Article II stated that all earlier treaties and engagements with Nepal were also confirmed by the new treaty.

³ Article III of O'Connor's draft.

⁴ Article IV of O'Connor's draft.

⁵ Article V of O'Connor's draft.

⁶ See Chapter VI.

power from Tibet had removed the Chinese threat to Nepal's security and her privileges in Tibet, and so there was no need for British protection of Nepal's interests. In fact, the removal of China from Tibet had also removed the main British argument for controlling Nepal's relations with China; it would have been enough for them to get the "awkward" provision in the Nepalese-Tibetan treaty (1856) regarding Nepal's allegiance to China¹ annulled. But then, Chandra Shamsher's views were quite clear on this point. He had pointedly told Holland in 1919 that

if attempts were made to embody in a new treaty the mention of the fact that Nepal had thrown off allegiance to China, it would be regarded by his people as implying to outer world that Nepal had abandoned to the British government the control of her foreign relations.²

Reading could hardly take any exception to this attitude on the part of Chandra Shamsher, for it was perfectly understandable why he should not agree "publicly" to any "fettering" of Nepal's independence when he saw that the British had explicitly recognised Afghanistan's external independence; and it was the Afghan treaty which would set the model for the Nepalese treaty. Reading was also certain that Chandra Shamsher expected at least as much—if not more—as the Amir had got from the British, and so he might raise another important question which the Indian government wanted to keep "dormant": Nepal's diplomatic representation in London. Chandra Shamsher had already given hints, and during negotiations for the treaty might press for this right perhaps for no other reason than just to satisfy himself that the British admitted that Nepal had the same international status as Afghanistan. And once the admission had been made, Reading informed Lord Peel, who in the meanwhile had taken over from Montagu, it would be hard to prevent Chandra Shamsher from establishing diplomatic relations with foreign countries—most probably Japan. Again, if the subsidy were included in the treaty, as O'Connor had suggested, the Amir, who had not been given such a subsidy, might demand it. Any new treaty was unnecessary in the Indian government's view because Chandra Shamsher, they believed, could be satisfied by other means. In fact, Reading was confident that the only reason why Chandra Shamsher wanted a treaty was that he expected it to be the only

¹ See Chapter IV.

² Notes of discussion between Holland and Chandra, April 1919, *op. cit.*

means of getting the arms concession. It was significant that not before the Afghan treaty did the Prime Minister raise the question of a new treaty at all. Only two years ago, in 1919, he had expressly told Holland that he was perfectly satisfied with the existing treaties and engagements which, he added, did not impugn Nepal's independent status. Obviously, the Afghan treaty had acted now as a powerful stimulant on Chandra Shamsher. In such circumstances, Reading hoped that if the arms concession were immediately given, the Prime Minister's "new found desire for a fresh treaty" would disappear. The Viceroy, therefore, urged the Secretary of State to give the concession to Nepal and on the same terms as it had been given to Afghanistan; else, relations with Nepal would be seriously strained. Some other concessions in "minor matters" like the annulment of the seventh article of the Sagauli treaty and the abolition of the customs duties on the Raxaul route would, so Reading hoped, further placate the Prime Minister. If inspite of all this, Chandra Shamsher continued to clamour for a new treaty the Indian government would most reluctantly, consider O'Connor's draft, but not without some modifications.¹

The India Office saw the cogency of these arguments, but its final decision was just the reverse of the Viceroy's: a new Treaty was not only desirable but essential in the interests of Britain herself. The British government, as Hirtzel admitted, had no excuse to reject Chandra Shamsher's demand for the arms concession when even the military experts at the India Office adjudged it "quite safe" to meet the demand. However, there was only one consideration preventing an immediate decision in Nepal's favour: the Home government, who viewed Nepalese hostility to Tibet far more seriously—for its international implication—than the Indian government, wanted a definite guarantee that arms supply to Nepal would not aggravate that hostility.²

Chandra Shamsher himself gave grounds for the Home government's fear. In May 1922, for instance, he came out with fresh allegations against the Dalai Lama and the "marked change" in Tibetan attitude towards Nepalese interests in Tibet. He charged

¹ PEF, 3085/1912, Pt. 2, Reg. No. 3317. India Secret Letter to Secy. of State, No. 5A, 27 July 1922.

² *Ibid.*, 3085/1912, Pts. 1, 2, Reg. Nos. 4957, 4957A/1921, Political Dept. Minutes, November 1921.

the Tibetans with "uppishness", "growing pride, inordinate self-importance and callous disregard for the honour of Nepal." Nepalese merchants had been assaulted at Gyantse; at Lhasa military preparations were afoot, so reported Lal Bahadur. The Dalai Lama, Chandra Shamsher informed O'Connor, had procured fresh supplies of Japanese rifles from Mongolia. The Prime Minister grumbled that the British were taking advantage of the landlocked position of Nepal and her exclusive dependence on India for arms.¹ These allegations, as Bell pointed out, expressed Chandra Shamsher's jealousy that the Dalai Lama was stealing a march over him in obtaining British favours. But they also conveyed Chandra Shamsher's feeling of uncertainty about Nepal's privileged position in Tibet and perhaps his desire to make good the loss of the position by occupying the bordering Tibetan territory where Nepalese people could be settled; this settlement would relieve the pressure on Nepal's land caused by her fast-growing population.² Possibly he was seeking some excuse.³ The Prime Minister's own statements strengthened this supposition. In 1919, for instance, he had admitted to Holland that the treaty of 1856 did bear "too hardly" on the Tibetans and, so, he would not be surprised if in future the Tibetans revoked the treaty. The Nepalese government themselves, he added, found the maintenance of their extra-territorial rights in Tibet⁴ both difficult and inconvenient in practice; the determination of nationality of persons born of Nepalese fathers and Tibetan mothers was a vexed issue, which had for long been a cause of much bitterness between the two governments. In June 1921 the Prime Minister had hinted to Kennion that but for the fear of British opposition the Nepalese would have already annexed the coveted territories on the border.⁵

Clearly, it was very uncomfortable for the British that their

¹ PEF, 3085/1912, Pt. 2, Reg. No. 3232, Chandra to O'Connor, 15 May 1922, O'Connor to Govt., 26 June 1922; Reg. No. 2551, O'Connor to Bray, 16 May 1922; Reg. No. 3340, Same to same, 10 July 1922.

² The population of Nepal in 1920 was 55,73,791. Landon, I, pp. 256-7. No reliable figures are available before this date.

³ PEF, 876/1920, Pt. 1, Reg. No. 2470, Bell to Govt., 22 April 1921. Bell, *Tibet*, *op. cit.*, pp. 233-40. "The North-Eastern Frontier of India", *JRCAS*, XVII, 1930, pp. 221-5; "Tibet's Position in Asia Today", *Foreign Affairs*, October 1931, pp. 138-9, 144.

⁴ Articles VII, VIII, IX of the treaty, Aitchison, (1909 edn.), pp. 99-100.

⁵ PEF, 3085/1912, Pt. 3, Reg. No. 4200, Kennion to Govt., 27 June 1921.

policy of strengthening Tibet against China conflicted with their equally important policy of cultivating Nepalese friendship. The crux of the problem was how to let Nepal obtain arms without restriction but at the same time insure Tibet's security as well as British interests in Tibet. The only solution which the India Office could think of was to conclude a new treaty with Nepal which would give her the right to import arms and machinery and at the same time enable the British to control Nepal's relations with Tibet.

The new treaty would explicitly recognise Nepal's independence and set at rest Chandra Shamsher's long-standing doubts about the British sincerity. Much as the India Office still desired, it was, as Hirtzel admitted, "no longer possible to keep the issue of Nepal's status "safely in an indeterminate condition." The new treaty

"would put an end once for all to the long series of representations and claims on the part of Nepal during the last twelve years" in the course of which, "we have yielded point after point in a manner satisfactory to neither party. The Nepalese could have got away with the impression that they had wrung these concessions while the British felt that their hands had been forced by the Nepalese government."

Matters had, indeed, reached such a pass that a treaty was "unavoidable."

The Secretary of State did not agree with the Viceroy that Chandra Shamsher would drop the idea of a treaty if he were given the arms concession. Indeed, it was difficult to imagine that the Prime Minister would not raise the issue again and embarrass the Government. Therefore, Peel argued :

If there is to be a treaty at all I can imagine no more unsatisfactory method of approach than to be driven to it, after having made in the vain efforts to avoid it, the concessions that are most valuable to the other side.

The great merit of a treaty was that during negotiations the British government could ask for some *quid pro quo* before meeting the Nepalese wishes. The treaty would thus be of mutual advantage to the two governments : it would spell out Nepal's rights and at the same time bind her to some obligations as well. It would be a "comprehensive settlement" of all that Nepal expected of Britain and all that Britain required of Nepal. This alone would, in the India Office's view, place Anglo-Nepalese

relations on a "permanently satisfactory footing."¹

A draft treaty was accordingly prepared by Hirtzel and sent for the Indian government's consideration; O'Connor's draft, in Hirtzel's view, did not "go far enough", because it would earn nothing for the British. The draft treaty had eight articles. Its general objects were to confirm the existing treaties and engagements between the two governments; to make their respective commitments as far as possible reciprocal in character; and to give the earlier pledges and assurances of the Nepalese government a *de jure* form. The third article,² for example, obliged the two governments to mutual support and assistance in the event of an unprovoked external attack. Earlier, in 1910, the British had committed themselves to support Nepal in case of external aggression³ without committing Nepal to a corresponding obligation to assist the British in their external emergencies. This, it was now realised had been rather a one-sided arrangement. Besides, if assisting the British were made a treaty obligation for Nepal, Chandra Shamsher or his successors would not be able to embarrass the British with claims for reward every time they rendered such assistance. The British government's pledge, also given in 1910,¹ to safeguard Nepalese interests in Tibet was embodied in the fourth article of Hirtzel's draft treaty in a modified form. The idea was to make it clear to Chandra Shamsher that the British would defend Nepal's treaty rights in Tibet provided Nepal accepted their advice in her disputes with Tibet. The fifth article of the draft provided for mutual security against intrigues and subversive activities by elements hostile to the existing governments in India and Nepal. The British knew that Nepal was "a very tempting objective for the disaffected" Indians, and they had no desire to see Nepal being turned into a political Alsatia as the French establishments in India had already been. It was hoped that Chandra Shamsher would agree to this provision as a measure of defence against not only the Rana emigres

¹ PEF, 3085/1912, Pt. 2, Reg. No. 3340, Minute of Hirtzel, 25 August 1922, and other minutes of the Political department, Secretary of State's draft reply to the Viceroy, 27 July 1922.

² The First Article recognised Nepal's independence, external and internal, and the Second confirmed all the earlier treaties and engagements.

³ See Chapter VI

⁴ *Ibid.*

in India, bearing deep grudges against him and conspiring to take his life,¹ but also against a band of Nepalis in India who criticised the autocratic Rana regime for purposefully keeping the Nepalese people in utter ignorance, poverty and backwardness and denying them any freedom at all.

These Nepalis, some of them ex-soldiers, who were influenced by the current political movements in India, were active among the Nepalese population at Benaras, Darjiling and Dehra Dun. After the war they brought out a weekly, called *Gorkhali*, from Benaras in which several articles condemnatory of Chandra Shamsher and his regime were written. To Chandra Shamsher these activities appeared to be as dangerous as those of the Indian 'seditionists' did to the British, and he thought that they required stringent measures for their suppression. The publication of *Gorkhali* was stopped in 1922 by the British at the Prime Minister's request who also launched a counter propaganda among the Nepalese at Benaras, asking them not to entertain the opponents of the Rana regime and to stand solidly behind it.² In 1922 a Bengali employee at Kathmandu was expelled from Nepal for his suspected anti-Rana leanings. The British authorities at Darjiling kept strict watch on the local Nepali population to check activities prejudicial to the Rana regime.³

The sixth article of the draft treaty allowed the Nepalese government the freedom to import arms and machinery so long as other provisions of the treaty were faithfully observed by Nepal, and provided that the British government were satisfied that the importation of arms by Nepal was for the "actual requirements of the state", and that it did not endanger India's own security. The seventh article provided for the uninterrupted supply of Gurkha recruits. Since "it is after all mainly because

¹ The exiled brother of Chandra Shamsher, Deb Shamsher, plotted against the Prime Minister's life in 1903, when the latter was returning from the Delhi *darbar*. D.R. Regmi, *A Century of Family Autocracy in Nepal* (1950 edn.), pp. 172-3. Khadga Shamsher, another exiled brother, made a similar attempt.

² Ramprasad Satpal, *Sri Chandra Darsan: Nepalma Ramrajya*. Santinandana, *Nepalma Chandrodaya*.

³ On the growth of the anti-Rana movement see Aniruddha Gupta, *Politics in Nepal*, pp. 19-30. Regmi, *op. cit.* (1958 edn.), p. 119. B.L. Joshi, and Leo Rose, *Democratic Innovations in Nepal*, pp. 50-56. FO, 766/1, Note of Envoy, 7 May 1925.

of the Gurkha element in the army that we value the friendship of Nepal", it was considered wise to give this important matter a definite statutory foundation instead of letting it remain just a matter of understanding with the Nepalese government. Until the war the British had no complaints about the supply of Gurkhas, but the post-war years saw some misunderstanding on the issue. While Chandra Shamsher grumbled that the British did not realise his difficulties and the feelings of the *darbar* in this matter, the Indian government suspected that the Prime Minister was trying to use the Gurkhas as a lever to extract political concessions. There were some other considerations as well. A change in the regime at Kathmandu might lead to a change in Nepal's erstwhile cooperative policy. Anti-British elements in India and foreign powers like Soviet Russia and Japan might, with a view to weakening Britain, try to influence a future Nepalese government against supplying Gurkhas. The eighth article of the draft treaty dealt with customs facilities on the Raxaul route.¹

The question of Nepal's diplomatic representation in London was a delicate one, and considerable discussion took place on the issue at the India Office and Foreign Office. L.D. Wakely, the acting Political Secretary at the India Office, believed that a Nepalese representative in London would be "useless and perhaps occasionally something of a nuisance", while Curzon held it "most undesirable" to let foreign powers being represented at Kathmandu. Afghanistan's recent flirtations with Soviet Russia,² the Foreign Secretary pointed out, was a strong warning against allowing the Indian frontier states any opportunity to develop their international personality. If Chandra Shamsher raised the issue Curzon would silence him by a "courteous and absolutely firm refusal." The India Office, however, would not

¹ PEF, 3085/1912, pt. 2, Reg. No. 3340/1922, Hirtzel's draft treaty. The draft, like O'Connor's draft, did not elaborate the eighth article.

² Amanullah exchanged missions with the Russians in 1919 and concluded a treaty with them in 1921, establishing diplomatic relations between the two countries. An Afghan mission went to Europe in 1920-1, whereafter political and economic agreements were made with Germany, Italy and France to the annoyance of the British government. Sykes, *op. cit.*, pp. 283-94. Adamec, *op. cit.*, pp. 142-8, 162-3, 188-91. Also PSM, A 190, *Afghanistan*, 14 February 1921; A 194, *Report on the Kabul Mission*, by H. R.C. Dobbs, 9 January 1922.

adopt such a firm tone, for it would stiffen Chandra Shamsher's attitude and wreck the negotiations at the start. In view of the Afghan precedent, refusal of this right to Nepal was "impossible", especially when Chandra Shamsher regarded it as a "visible recognition" of Nepal's independence. Whether the Nepalese exercised this right or not depended entirely on their own discretion, for as Wakely admitted, the British had "no right or at any rate no clearly established right to any voice at all in the matter", because Nepal was still—theoretically at least—independent in her external relations. The British control of Nepal's foreign relations was still *de facto* and not *de jure*—in fact it amounted to nothing "except usage, that is the practice of the Nepalese to turn to the British government for advice." Ultimately the India Office got round this difficult issue thus: O'Connor would not raise the issue at all during the negotiations. If Chandra Shamsher himself raised it, O'Connor should try to "ride him off" on "practical grounds." If the Prime Minister still insisted, pointing to the Afghan treaty, the concession would be made to him but only "in principle;" its practical application should be strongly resisted by the Envoy, who would warn Chandra Shamsher that the British viewed with "extreme disfavour" the admission of foreign government's representatives in Nepal or Nepalese representatives being posted abroad. If necessary, in a note appended to the treaty—if not in the treaty itself—Chandra Shamsher would undertake to accept British advice "before embarking on any new developments" in Nepal's external contact. In the face of this warning it was very unlikely, so the India Office believed, that the Prime Minister would exercise this right.¹ The Indian government were also asked if Chandra Shamsher could be persuaded to make one more concession to the British: providing facilities for the exploration of Nepal.²

Between the despatch of Hirtzel's draft to the Indian government in October 1922 and the conclusion of the treaty more than a year passed—a year full of numerous exchanges of notes bet-

¹ PEF, 3085/1912, pt. 2, Reg. No. 4059, Note of Wakely, 12 October 1922, Foreign Office to India Office, 6 October 1922, India Office to Foreign Office, 9 November 1922. Also Reg. No. 3340, Secretary of State's draft reply to Viceroy, 27 July 1922.

² *Ibid.*, Reg. No. 4059, Wakely to Bray, 9 November 1922.

ween London and New Delhi, New Delhi and Kathmandu, and the British Legation at Kathmandu and the *Simha Darbar* (Chandra Shamsher's official residence and now the Nepalese government's secretariat). Every article of the draft treaty was subjected to threadbare examination at all levels ; there was much disagreement between the governments concerned, much persuasion and pressure to arrive at a consensus. The Indian government, who were against the treaty, expressed "serious doubts" about Hirtzel's draft which, Reading pointed out, would never be accepted by Chandra Shamsher and might even "scare" him.

The Viceroy saw "practically no prospect" of the Nepalese government's accepting British control over Nepal's relations with Tibet, or undertaking any statutory obligation to supply Gurkhas to the British. Was it not odd, Reading asked Peel, that the Home government would seek take over Nepal's external relations when the declared object of the treaty, as set out in the first article of the draft¹, was to recognise Nepal's internal as well as external independence? Besides, how could the Indian government overlook that any open British commitment to protect Nepalese rights in Tibet would give umbrage to the Tibetan government who resented these rights? As for Gurkha recruitment, Reading saw no hope of Chandra Shamsher's accepting "any hard and fast agreement", because the existing informal arrangement was advantageous to the Rana government, for it gave the impression that the British obtained Gurkhas not as a matter of right but as a special favour of the Ranas, who could claim in return special consideration for themselves and concessions for their government. Further, it was also quite possible for Chandra Shamsher to ask the extremely embarrassing question: why the British now wanted to include the Gurkha recruitment issue in a treaty when without any statutory agreement they had obtained sufficient number of recruits all these years?

The fifth article, too, seemed to the Indian government rather difficult to enforce. There was no weapon in the legal armoury of the Government—save the Regulation III of 1818²—to

¹ *Infra*, p. 220, f.n. 2 and Appendix IV.

² The Regulation empowered the Govt. to place individuals under "personal restraint" for "reasons of state embracing the due maintenance of the alliances formed by the British Govt. with foreign powers."

suppress political or other propaganda or agitation in the Indian territory against a foreign government. And the Indian government, as they themselves made it clear later,¹ did not want to use the Regulation too frequently to repress "journalistic scurrility" and thereby provoke adverse comments in Indian press and legislatures. The subsidy was another difficult issue; although Hirtzel had excluded it from the draft, Chandra Shamsher might insist on its inclusion in the treaty in order to convert "a purely Indian obligation" to an "Imperial one"—in other words, to ensure its payment even if there were any changes in the Indian administration. Such changes in future, so Chandra Shamsher believed, were not unlikely: political reforms and the gradual assumption of power by the Indians were indications. Indians in power, he thought, might not treat Nepal with the same consideration as the British had done; they could "urge the removal of the annual drain to their exchequer" which the subsidy involved. Already in the Indian press had appeared what Chandra Shamsher condemned as "obnoxious" and "vitriolic" comments on the subsidy.² Reading also knew it for certain that it was "practically impossible" to reject Nepal's right to diplomatic representation in London in principle, although Chandra Shamsher might not exercise the right immediately. The Indian government were thus clearly unwilling to make a treaty, rejecting particularly the form in which the India Office would like to have it. Articles regarding Nepal's relations with Tibet and Gurkha recruitment, Reading concluded, had to be "whittled down" or even "jettisoned" before Chandra Shamsher could be asked to start negotiations at all.³

To reinforce their arguments the Indian government sent O'Connor's views about Hirtzel's draft contained in a Memorandum he submitted to the Foreign department. The main point in the

¹ PEF, 3085/1912, Pt. 2, Reg. No. 2516, Govt. to Envoy, 11 June 1923.

² PEF, 3085/1912, Pt. 3, Reg. No. 4199, Chandra to O'Connor, 3 August 1922, Envoy to Govt., 18 August 1922. "The policy of subsidies as sops to political Cerberusses must once for all be knocked on the head. We must learn to swim—or sink. Indians must be prepared to guard the frontier." Letter to the Editor, *The Englishman*, 10 February 1922. Earlier (14 August 1920) the same paper reported a speech by B.C. Pal, the noted Bengali nationalist, criticising the subsidy.

³ PEF, 3085/1912, Pt. 2, Reg. No. 4059, Viceroy to Secy. of State, Private Telg. 23 November 1922; Reg. No. 619, Same to same, 26 January 1923.

memorandum was that Chandra Shamsher's "reasonable wishes" regarding the arms concession should be forthwith met without the British government's waiting to writing from him some *quid pro quo*.

"Our attitude", O'Connor pleaded, "in the present juncture should be one of generosity and friendliness as from a great power to a small one which had stood by its big neighbour stoutly in time of trouble, and...we should endeavour to bring the matter to a conclusion suitable to our own dignity and symptomatic of our gesture, indicating rather our gratitude to Nepal than any desire to secure advantages for ourselves."

It was but natural, in O'Connor's opinion, that Chandra Shamsher should grumble that he had received far less rewards for his services than Jang Bahadur had; and so he had been exposed to an unfavourable comparison with his grand-uncle. In fact, O'Connor explained,

a recurring money grant liable in certain circumstances to cancellation or termination cannot be compared with large grants of land as a material security, and it certainly carries with it none of the moral prestige which accompanies an accession of territory.

Nor could it be held, O'Connor argued, that by recognising Nepal as an independent state, the British government were doing her a very great favour, because it was

in reality no more than the recognition of a state of affairs which had always existed in reality but which we had always hesitated to admit openly and unequivocally and which had been limited by certain rather petty restrictions.

From Hirtzel's draft O'Connor would drop the third, fourth, fifth and seventh articles. "Rationally" and from the British government's point of view, they were "useful", but "actually" they, in his opinion, were "unnecessary" and "would do more harm than good" to the Government. It seemed to O'Connor rather unfair to impose on Nepal "a small and very poor state an immense and indefinite obligation" as provided for in the third article of Hirtzel's draft; Chandra Shamsher was certain to point out that the Amir had no such obligation. Personally, O'Connor did not consider it "either necessary or even expedient" to bind Nepal "explicitly or formally" to help the British in times of need, when in the past such help had been rendered by the Rana government without any treaty provision, and when in future their own interests would prompt them to continue to render such assistance.

It also seemed to O'Connor equally unnecessary to prescribe a "set formula" to control Nepal's relations with Tibet when the British had already secured a *de facto* influence over them. All that was necessary was to obtain from Chandra Shamsheer a private undertaking not to use arms against Tibet, which undertaking, even if not embodied in the treaty, could be sufficiently binding on the Nepalese government for all practical purposes; and O'Connor did not think that it would be difficult to get such an undertaking from the Prime Minister. Yet, knowing the Home government's keenness about the matter, O'Connor suggested a formula, which would not require Nepal to *formally* subordinate her relations with Tibet to the British but which, nevertheless, would ensure British voice in these relations and thereby a measure of control over them. O'Connor's formula ran thus: the fourth article of the treaty would provide that as Tibet was limitrophe to both India and Nepal, they should inform each other of any possible source of misunderstanding with Tibet, and each should exert its good offices to resolve the misunderstanding; each should also prevent any damage to the other's existing interests in Tibet.

As for the fifth article of Hirtzel's draft, O'Connor, like the Indian government, held that it would be difficult to enforce. He also knew that on the face of it, the article regarding Gurkha recruitment seemed "reasonable", but the *Bharadars* might object to it; and, hence, O'Connor suggested a revised draft of the article which ran thus:

The British government, recognising complete independence of Nepal, internal as well as external, hereby agrees to conduct all its recruiting operations in Nepal in consultation with Nepal government and undertakes also not to increase the present strengths of Gurkha recruitment cadres of Indian army without consent of that government. The Nepal government will, on its part, as at present, place no difficulties in their recruitment for Indian army in such numbers and in such manner as agreed upon by the two governments.

Between O'Connor's and Hirtzel's draft of the article¹ the only difference lay in that the former made—and the latter did not—a specific mention of Nepalese independence. This difference, in fact, was hardly substantial because, in O'Connor's own words,

¹ Hirtzel's draft provided that Nepal would place no obstacles to Gurkha recruitment and that the British would undertake to conduct the recruiting operations in consultation with the Nepalese government and their officers. Reg. No. 3340/1922, *op. cit.*

The additional matter is all camouflage. We really bind ourselves to nothing more than we are bound already¹, but it reads better, I think, and might tend to save Nepalese *amour propre*.

During negotiations O'Connor, as he assured the Government, would make it clear to Chandra Shamsher that he should not expect to obtain the arms concession without making the British concession regarding Gurkha recruitment, for "it must be a mutual obligation." As for asking Chandra Shamsher to give facilities for exploration, O'Connor did not consider it necessary because, thanks to the explorers of the Survey department, "we know the country pretty well."² O'Connor's conclusion was that the treaty should consist of only four articles of Hirtzel's draft—the 1st, 2nd, 6th and 8th—and the rest either dropped altogether or amended and embodied in secret *Kharitas* to avoid publicity and the consequent exposition of Chandra Shamsher to the *Bharadars'* criticism.³

Meanwhile Chandra Shamsher stepped up his pressure, warning O'Connor that every day's delay in giving him the arms concession cost the Prime Minister's prestige heavily. Reading hereupon strongly urged Peel to let O'Connor immediately give Chandra Shamsher at least a verbal assurance that his demand would be met; any more delay in making this clear to Chandra Shamsher was most "dangerous." From O'Connor's despatches Reading was led to believe that Chandra Shamsher, if given the arms concession, might make in return some concessions to the British, if not in a treaty, at least in secret *Kharitas*. The Indian government themselves would prefer *Kharitas*, for the treaty, apart from involving protracted negotiations and delay, had to be registered with the League of Nations⁴ and made public, while political considerations dictated that matters like the British control of Nepal's relations with Tibet and Gurkha recruitment should as far as possible be kept secret.⁵

¹ That is, not to recruit Gurkhas without the consent and cooperation of the Nepalese government. See Chapter III.

² See Chapter II.

³ PEF, 3085/1912, Pt. 2, Reg. No. 1578, O'Connor to Bray, 11 December 1922, 15 January 1923, 23 February 1923, O'Connor's Memorandum, 25 February 1923.

⁴ The League Covenant forbade secret agreements between nations.

⁵ PEF, 3085/1912, Pt. 2, Reg. No. 1094, Viceroy to Secy. of State, Telg. 23 March 1923, Reg. No. 1313, O'Connor to Bray, 6 March 1923, Viceroy to Secy. of State, Private Telg. 9 March 1923.

O'Connor's and Reading's arguments made the India Office indignant, and Hirtzel, in particular, was positively angry. Hirtzel strongly suspected that the Indian Foreign department had a deep seated prejudice against a Nepalese treaty and that O'Connor had been "talked over" by Denis Bray, the Secretary to the department. O'Connor's memorandum was dismissed as a "political cant;" he seemed to Hirtzel over-generous to the Nepalese, being all for "much giving and little or no taking." His revised draft of the fourth article was rejected as being "of little value and possibly embarrassing;" the political department regarded it a "nuisance" to be under an obligation to inform Nepal about any British disputes with Tibet in future and to "accept with gratitude whatever turned out to be the Nepalese conception of good offices." O'Connor's revised draft regarding Gurkha recruitment was also rejected as "very doubtful politically" and as "impossible;" it was quite unnecessary, in Hirtzel's opinion, to emphasise Nepalese independence in "such strong terms" as in O'Connor's draft. Hirtzel was both surprised and angry that the Indian government, instead of standing up to Chandra Shamsher, "an artist in blackmail", were yielding to him.

The Indian government's suggestion that *Kharitas* were preferable to a treaty also failed to impress the India Office where it was believed that, since secret engagements of any form had been banned by the League Covenant, even *Kharitas* had to be registered with the League and made public. But Curzon, when consulted, thought otherwise: *Kharitas*, he held, were "in essence" private letters and so need not be submitted to the League. The Foreign Secretary had not the "slightest objection" to the use of *Kharitas* which, in fact, seemed to him a far better means of settling "thorny and in some cases undesirable questions" than a "full-blown treaty." What Curzon was most anxious to avoid was any explicit recognition of the international status of Nepal, which status would be established if the Nepalese treaty were registered with the League.¹

The India Office was now thoroughly put out; but it was still against abandoning the treaty which, as Wakely put it, was "the readiest and most satisfactory means .. of obtaining some *quid pro quo*" from Nepal. The India Office's final decision was that if

¹ PEF,3085/1912, Pt. 2, Reg. No. 1313. Minute of Curzon, 25 March 1923.

there was to be any treaty at all, it must be on the lines of Hirtzel's draft, and not a "lacerated treaty", as proposed by O'Connor "from which everything we want has been omitted while everything Nepal wants remains." Accordingly, Peel informed Reading that

While I still see advantage of treaty definitely regulating our relations with Nepal and securing *de jure* satisfaction of the legitimate desiderata of both parties, it seems clear that we have nothing to gain from one from which in the process of negotiation our own desiderata have entirely disappeared.¹

But to relieve the Indian government of their anxiety, the India Office, with utmost reluctance, decided to concede to Chandra Shamsher the right to import arms, but not machinery. If, however, the Prime Minister pressed for machinery, he would be given the concession, but in that event the ban on the employment of Europeans would continue as the only means of checking the local production of sophisticated weapons. No other issue in the draft treaty, Peel advised Reading, should be raised at all by O'Connor. The India Office wanted to drive home to Chandra Shamsher that the British were not interested in an entirely one-sided treaty, and therefore he must be prepared to accommodate the British government's requirements into his own demands. Otherwise, the British would not have a new treaty at all. This firm attitude, it was expected, would work with Chandra Shamsher.²

It did. On 2 April 1923 O'Connor informed Chandra Shamsher that he could import arms freely, provided he used them for only defensive purposes and for the maintenance of internal order; besides, he should see to it that Nepal's military strength or her policy did not create troubles for the Indian government.³ Chandra Shamsher was much exercised to find machinery excluded from the concession, but O'Connor remained firm until the Prime Minister caved in; he agreed to have a treaty and, in return for the right to import machinery, expressed his willingness to "generally meet" the British demands regarding control of Nepal's relations with Tibet, Gurkha recruitment and mutual

¹ *Ibid.*, Secy. of State to Viceroy, Telg. 27 March 1923.

² PEF, 3085/1912, Pt. 2, Reg. No. 619/1923, Minute of the Political Committee, 5 March 1923, Wakely to Private Secy. to the Under Secy. of State, 12 March 1923, Draft Telg. from Secy. of State to Viceroy, Reg. No. 1313, Minute of Hirtzel, 26 March 1923, Wakely to Private Secy. to under Secy. of State, 13 March 1923; Reg. No. 1578, Political department's Notes and Hirtzel's minute, March 1923.

³ *Ibid.*, Reg. No. 1710, O'Connor's Note to Chandra, 2 April 1923.

security through mutual assistance; the "exact form" in which the British demands would be met, he added, would, of course, be "a matter of negotiation." True to the Indian government's belief, Chandra Shamsher did not press for Nepal's diplomatic representation in London, although he made no secret of the fact that Nepalese did regard this right as a denominator of their country's external independence. He accepted the fifth article of Hirtzel's draft, but his reaction to the third and fourth articles was the same as O'Connor had anticipated: the former, he said, would put an "undefined and undefinable obligation" on Nepal: it would be an unbearable strain on her to undertake to help Britain in every war and campaign for the defence of her worldwide imperial interests with many of which Nepal had no concern at all. The Prime Minister agreed to sign a confidential *Kharita* embodying Nepal's acceptance of British advice in settling her disputes with Tibet, but he refused to give this undertaking in a treaty. As for Gurkha recruitment, Chandra Shamsher saw no need for its inclusion in the treaty because both Ranuddip and Bir Shamsher had earlier given "formal declaration of the most binding character" to supply recruits, and since then the Nepalese government had not defaulted in their obligation. At the most, the Prime Minister told O'Connor, he would in a *Kharita* give a guarantee that Ranuddip's and Bir's declarations would be honoured by the Nepalese government. Chandra Shamsher urged that the seventh article of the Sagauli treaty and the engagement of November 1839—"a petty and unnecessary restriction"—be forthwith rescinded.¹

O'Connor was fully satisfied that Chandra Shamsher had taken quite a "reasonable view" of the British demands; he urged the Government to conclude the treaty without any more delay, dropping the terms unacceptable to the Prime Minister.²

Chandra Shamsher's having agreed to discuss the British demands caused a welcome surprise to the Indian government, and it considerably influenced their subsequent attitude to the treaty. The Prime Minister's acceptance of the main British demands "in principle" and his preference for *Kharitas* to a treaty suggested that his real problem was not the "substance" of the

¹ PEF, 3085/1912, Pt. 2, Reg. No. 1710, O'Connor to Govt., Telgs. 12, 13 April 1923.

² *Ibid.*, Reg. No. 1722, same to same, 14 April 1923.

concessions in question but the "form" in which to make them to the British without irritating the many "ignorant, suspicious and conservative" *Bharadars*. It was patent to the Indian government that Chandra Shamsher had sufficiently come down, and by a little more pressure they could clinch the issue. The Indian government's tone was now similar to that of the India Office; they rejected O'Connor's "truncated treaty" because it was

so one-sided as to raise dangerous comment both in India and abroad; it would contain nothing to compensate us for the disadvantages inherent in a public declaration of Nepal's independence.

The Indian government, unlike before, would now make "no substantial modification" in Hirtzel's draft, but just rephrase the articles to accommodate the Nepalese *amour propre*. Thus the third article was so reworded as to assure the Nepalese government that their obligation to assist the British in emergencies would not remain "undefined and undefinable", but it would be limited to the defence of Britain's interests in the Indian Empire alone. The British, for their part, would not lose much by this amendment, because it was their Indian interests more than any thing else for which Nepalese assistance was necessary. From the fourth article the specific mention of Tibet was omitted, and instead it was provided that "as the preservation of peace and friendly relations with the neighbouring states whose territories adjoin" India and Nepal, was to the mutual interests of the two governments, they would keep one another informed of any "misunderstanding which may from time to time arise in such relations" and each would "exert its good offices to avert and determine such friction and misunderstanding." Regarding Gurkha recruitment also the Indian government had now changed their attitude: they wanted its inclusion in the treaty in an indirect and very subtle form. They suggested the following phrase :

Neither of the High Contracting Parties would employ subjects of the other without the previous general or special consent of the other High Contracting Party, and each of the High Contracting Parties agrees to assist the other as heretofore with regard to the employment of its subjects by the other High Contracting Party.

It was the second clause, ("each ..Party"), which the Indian government believed would ensure the uninterrupted supply of Gurkhas.¹

¹ PEF, 3085/1912, Pt. 2, Reg. No. 2232, Govt. to Envoy, 24 May 1923.

Throughout April, May and June 1923 Chandra Shamsher and O'Connor kept discussing the terms of the treaty. The Prime Minister accepted the fifth article of Hirtzel's draft with some modifications,¹ and O'Connor agreed to Chandra Shamsher's amendment of the fourth² and sixth articles.³ The third and the seventh articles of Hirtzel's draft, even in the forms suggested by the Indian government, were rejected by Chandra Shamsher, who continued to regard the former article, in particular, with "almost equal apprehension and dislike."⁴

O'Connor, who by now had become thoroughly impatient, kept insisting that, since the two articles (the third and seventh) had caused only "suspicion, delay and difficulties" for both the governments, they should not be pressed on Chandra Shamsher any further. It was better, he added, to show deference to the Nepalese government's prejudices and sentiments and to get in return whatever they conceded in good grace than to impose on them "an agreement constructed on commercial lines, the provisions of which could always be rendered inoperative by specious excuses."⁵ O'Connor also referred to the opinion of Major W. Brook Northey, a veteran officer with long experience with the Gurkhas and an authority on Nepal,⁶ who held that the Gurkha recruiting arrangement was "working very well and cannot be improved upon", and so any pressure on Chandra Shamsher for additional facilities was wholly unnecessary.⁷ And then, at last, the Government acquiesced. The third and seventh articles were omitted from the final version of the treaty, which was signed on 21 December 1923. Chandra Shamsher gave a formal confirmation of Ranuddip's and Bir's engagements regarding Gurkha recruitment, which he believed and O'Connor

¹ The article was embodied as the fourth article in the final treaty. See Appendix, IV.

² The article was embodied as the third article in the final treaty.

³ The article was embodied as the fifth article in the final treaty.

⁴ *PEF*, 3085/1912, Pt. 2, Reg. No. 2516, O'Connor to Govt., 8 June 1923, Govt. to O'Connor, 11 June 1923; Reg. No. 2573, O'Connor to Govt., 18 June 1923. Viceroy to Secy. of the State, Telg. 6 July 1923; Reg. No. 3910, O'Connor to Govt., 16 September 1923.

⁵ *PEF*, 3085/1912, Pt. 2, Reg. No. 2516. O'Connor to Govt. 8 June 1923; Reg. No. 3910, D.O. Telg. to Govt., 10 September 1923.

⁶ For Northey's works on Gurkhas see the Bibliography.

⁷ *PEF*, 3085/1912, Pt. 2, Reg. No. 2002, O'Connor to Govt. 29 April 1923.

agreed, secured what the British wanted: to ensure that the supply of Gurkhas from Nepal would remain unaffected by any change of regime in the country or change in the attitude of the government at Kathmandu in future. In a note to the Envoy, which was appended to the treaty, Chandra Shamsher also undertook to furnish detailed lists of the imported arms and machinery to the British to enable them to provide necessary facilities for the clearance of the consignments from ports and railway stations. In deference to Chandra Shamsher's desire—that is, to further emphasise Nepal's independent status—the treaty was ratified by King George V, although the India Office would have preferred the Viceroy to do it. The treaty was registered with the League in 1925.¹

¹ *Ibid.*, Reg. Nos. 2870, 3033, 3566, 4090, 4672, 4939/1923 ; 945/1924 ; 3516/1925. O'Connor. *op. cit.*, pp. 308-11. *AP*, 1924, XXVI; 1924-5, XXX.

CHAPTER EIGHT

BRITISH IMPACT ON NEPAL

THE BRITISH influence on Nepal was limited both in extent and intensity—and for four main reasons. Nepal lay outside the administrative framework of British India and could, therefore, remain to a great extent free from British impact on her life. Secondly, there was for all practical purposes one agency through which this influence could operate—the Nepalese government. Thirdly, the Nepalese government were suspicious of the British government, and although they could not avoid the British influence altogether, they succeeded in keeping it restricted. Finally, the British themselves had limited objectives in Nepal which they wanted to realise with the minimum of friction with the Nepalese government.

British interests in Nepal were mainly political and military and their direct influence was seen mostly in these respects. Ever since their contact with Nepal in the late eighteenth century, the British had been a force in Nepalese politics. Internal dissensions in the court of Kathmandu created openings for British influence, the effectiveness of which depended upon the intensity of the power struggle there. Alliance with the British was a political weapon which made and unmade the career of Nepalese statesmen. Both Damodar Pande¹ and Bhimsen Thapa provide the typical examples. The tide of anti-British feelings created by Damodar's policy swept Bhimsen on to power, and it was these feelings, again, which swept him off it.² For about a decade after Bhimsen's fall, one central issue kept the Nepalese court at once divided and turbulent: whether or not to exploit the British difficulties. Anglo-Nepalese relations were seriously strained during these years when the strength and influence of the British government became manifest. The Ranas who came to power in this tumultuous period were impressed, and therefore their policy

¹ See Chapter II.

² See Chapter I.

was to cultivate British friendship as a means of strength.¹ The Ranas did not allow any one other than themselves to have contact with the British; in other words, they established a complete monopoly over Nepal's relations with Britain.

Britain's political influence in Nepal worked through the Rana regime. The Ranas gave the British what they wanted : a stable, friendly and cooperative government. The British were relieved of anxiety regarding the security of the richest part of India. Later by supplying the Gurkhas the Rana regime served as a vital element in British India's military structure. The Ranas, for their part, got what they expected : consistent support of the British government, though not their openly declared alliance. The Ranas succeeded in convincing the British that so long as they ruled, Nepal would remain not only a good neighbour of British India but a trusted ally in all emergencies. But then, British connexion with Nepal could not result in British hegemony because of the Rana policy of keeping the British influence rigidly restricted.

In Nepal's internal administration the British did not interfere nor did they question how the Ranas ruled. The Rana regime was a family oligarchy, its head being the Prime Minister, who was the beginning, the middle and the end of all governmental powers. His authority was absolute. It was a personal rule, buttressed by a strong army whose maintenance and efficiency was the first care of the Prime Minister himself. There were internal strain in the regime created by the jealousy and ambition in the family itself.² There were Kings in Nepal, crowned puppets, displayed by the Ranas on only ceremonial occasions. But for British opposition the Ranas would have done away with even these titular Kings and assumed royalty themselves. It was one of these *rois faineant* of Nepal, Tribhuban Vir Vikram Shah (1906-1955), the father of the late King, Mahendra Vir Vikram Shah (1920-1972), who eventually became the rallying point of the anti-Rana movement in Nepal.³

¹ See Chapter I.

² For a scathing indictment against the Rana rule see D.R. Regmi, *A Century of Family Autocracy in Nepal*.

³ Aniruddha Gupta, *Politics in Nepal*, p. 43. B.L. Joshi and L.E. Rose, *Democratic Innovations in Nepal*, pp. 36-9. Erike Leuchtag, *With a King in the Clouds*.

Nepal, under the Ranas, had, politically, a stable government, and it was the British influence which made Nepal's domestic policy gradually less sanguinary. Court intrigues did not cease, but there were increasingly less bloody incidents. The British made it quite plain to the Ranas that they disliked violence as a means either of acquiring power or safeguarding it from actual or imagined threats. This was the ground on which Lord Hardinge delayed recognition of Jang Bahadur's regime in 1846 despite the Resident's favourable recommendations.¹ When Ranuddip was murdered by Bir Shamsheer, Dufferin did not hesitate to strongly express his revulsion and displeasure before recognising the new regime.² No Prime Minister of Nepal hereafter suffered a violent death, although one—Juddha Shamsheer—voluntarily resigned in 1945 and another—Padma Shamsheer—was forced to abdicate in favour of Mohan Shamsheer in 1948.³ Political crimes came to be dealt with either by expulsion to remote regions of Nepal or to India where the British government took the responsibility of preventing the emigres from subverting the regime at Kathmandu.

British influence was markedly seen in Nepal's military life. The early Gurkha rulers of Nepal recognised the efficiency and superior organisation of the British Indian army which they set as a model for the Nepalese army.⁴ A good deal of imitativeness was evident in dress and accoutrements, in training, discipline and words of command. The British had made Gurkha military expansion impossible, but the military spirit of the country lived on and even flourished, due partly to the British contact with Nepal. Fear of the British was one of the reasons why the Nepalese government maintained a large army at a considerable cost. There was no means of balancing the cost by territorial acquisitions, but then, in Nepal considerations of security pre-

¹ SC, 31 July 1847, No. 203, Hardinge's *Memo on Nepal Affairs*, 23 July 1847. Also SC, 31 July 1847, Nos. 188-9, 196.

² See Chapter III.

³ After Chandra Shamsheer's death in 1929, Bhim Shamsheer, his brother, ruled for three years, whereafter Juddha Shamsheer, the next surviving brother, ruled. Mohan Shamsheer, Chandra Shamsheer's eldest son, ruled until 1951 when the Rana regime ended.

⁴ L.S. Baral, *Life and Writings of Prithvinarayan Shah*, p. 311, *Papers on Nepal War*, p. 48. Captain Hearsey to Govt., 24 August 1816, *Mss. Hodgson*, Vol. 10, p. 6, *Note on Nepal Army, 1825*. W. Kirkpatrick, *Account of Nepal*, p. 214.

ailed over those of economy. During Chandra Shamsher's rule the increased efficiency of the Nepalese army was due to the supply of arms by the British. The Nepalese army, for instance, could not do regular target practice until the British agreed to make an annual supply of ammunition for this purpose. The retired Gurkha soldiers of the Indian army brought with them home their experience and served the Nepalese army as instructors. Nepalese troops who did garrison duty in India were trained by expert British officers, and their engagement in the frontier warfare¹ was for them a wholesome experience, the more so because they could not see any active service at home.

British contact with Nepal led to no transformation of her economic life; there was no peaceful penetration of British finance capital in the country nor any application of British economic principles by the Nepalese government. In fact, the latter showed little initiative or enterprise to develop the economic life of the people. The arteries of this life—the means of communication and transport—were few and of a primitive nature. The Nepalese economy was purely agrarian, lacking variety and dynamism.

The general policy of the Nepalese government was to avoid close economic contact with the British for fear that such contact was the precursor of political domination. The early British attempts to develop Nepal as a highway of Indo-Chinese trade failed because of the Nepalese government's opposition.² The latter showed no interest in a definite commercial agreement either, on the contrary, their commercial policy caused the British irritation and inconvenience. There were instances of Indian traders at Kathmandu being harrassed for which the Resident had to remonstrate.³ A serious hindrance to trade lay in the prevalence of different rates of customs duties on the same commodities at different places along the trade routes. The Nepalese officers on the border were not cooperative, and misunderstanding with their British counterparts was not rare.

For political reasons the British did not press the *darbar* for commercial facilities and concessions, although Hodgson adduced

¹ See Chapter VII.

² See Chapter I.

³ In 1831 there were thirty-four Indian merchants at Kathmandu with a working capital of twenty-three lakhs of rupees. *PC*, 2 December 1831, No. 4; 3 August 1835, Nos. 39-45. W.W. Hunter, *Life of Hodgson*, pp. 115-6.

powerful economic and political arguments in favour of developing Indo-Nepalese trade. Commerce, Hodgson urged, could alone cause the euthanasia of Nepal's military spirit and relieve the British of their anxiety. The more the Nepalese became trade-minded, he argued, and the more they earned profits, the less would be their inclination to the hazardous avocation of war.¹ Thanks to Hodgson's persistence the Nepalese government submitted in 18 9 a schedule of duties on imports and exports and engaged not to levy any duty not included in that schedule.²

The Rana government maintained the same general disinclination to economic intercourse with the British, although the attitude of the second generation of Ranas—particularly of Chandra Shamsher—was tempered by the realisation that no development of Nepal could take place without British assistance. Of Jang Bahadur's attitude, the Resident, Colonel George Ramsay, informed the Government that the Prime Minister was so

wary . . . [and] so suspicious that we are merely biding our time warily for an opportunity to insert the point of the wedge, that we may gradually obtain a firm footing in the country, that I think he would rather counsel the cession to us of a considerable slice of it than consent to a system of free trade and permit English merchants to have transactions in it.³

In 1856-7, Jang Bahadur refused permission to one Cameron, an English merchant, to trade in Nepal; William Norris, a timber merchant of the North Western Provinces, who asked for similar permission in 1858-9, had no better luck either, although Lord Canning, the Viceroy, personally wrote to the King of Nepal for him.⁴ Jang Bahadur's commercial policy was prejudicial to Indian merchants and Indo-Nepalese trade. Trade in oil, tobacco, sugar, grain of all sorts, cotton, salt, ghee and other necessities of life was monopolised by the Prime Minister, his family and favourites to the detriment of other traders. Prices rose high at Kathmandu : this led Ramsay to fear that the general well-being of the country was being "seriously and visibly affected" and that the monopoly system

¹ PC, 26 March 1830, No. 24; 12 June 1834, No. 140. Hunter, *op. cit.*, pp. 110-15. B. Hodgson, "On the Commerce of Nepal", *Essays on the Languages, Literature . of Nepal and Tibet*, Part II, pp. 92-121.

² Aitchison, *Treaties and Engagements* (1909 edn.), II, pp. 116-7.

³ PC, 26 August 1859, No. 211, Resident to Govt., 8 August 1859.

⁴ PC, 31 December 1858, No. 1719. FPA, August 1864, No. 51.

must act injuriously, if it has not already done so, upon our commercial interests by restricting within even narrower bounds our present trade with Nepal.¹

Indian merchants had to pay both import and export duties at rates far in excess of those fixed by the engagement of 1839; some had even to close their business at Kathmandu. Ramsay urged strong political pressure and even retaliatory economic measures.

"Jang Bahadur is himself the obstacle to all free intercourse between Nepal and British provinces", Ramsay alleged, "he is the mainspring...all restrictions emanate from himself. His Excellency's power is absolute; he can do what he pleases; his word is law; his government is the most perfect autocracy that can be imagined; he could throw open the country tomorrow to English merchants if² he so willed, and without a dissentient voice being heard."

The Indian government, however, did not want to make commerce an issue with Jang Bahadur, and this remained their settled policy with his successors. Girdlestone saw little prospects for the development of Indo-Tibetan trade through Nepal by the British government's efforts—a project in which some British commercial concerns were interested in the later decades of the nineteenth century.³ Jang Bahadur and all his successors were extremely jealous of British attempts to open up Tibet for trade.⁴

British relations with Nepal improved during the rule of the second generation of Ranas—the Shamshers. Their cooperation with the British to improve law and order on the frontier gave the economic life of the region a sense of security. The construction of Indian railways on the Nepalese border stimulated trade.⁵

¹ PC, 26 August 1859, No. 211, Resident to Govt., 8 August 1859.

² FPA, August 1864, No. 51, Resident to Govt., 6 July 1864.

³ *Ibid.* PSLI, Vol. 26, *Trade with Nepal*, by Girdlestone, 13 July 1880 PSM, D 70, *Trade with Nepal*, 1877, J. Inglis, *Sport and Work on the Nepal Frontier*, pp. 215-8. A Lamb, *Britain and Chinese Central Asia*, pp. 133-53. D. Wright, *History of Nepal*, p. 70.

⁴ See also Chapter IV.

⁵ The Bengal and North-Western Railway skirted the entire southern frontier of Nepal, serving as the most important channel of Nepal's trade with India. L.S.S. O'Malley, *Bengal District Gazetteers, Darbhanga*, p. 95; *Champaran*, p. 104; *Muzaffarpur*, p. 94; *Purnea*, pp. 122-5; J. Byrne, *Bhagla-pur*, p. 129. H.R. Nevill, *District Gazetteer of the United Provinces of Agra and Oudh*, Gonda, p. 53; *Bahraich*, pp. 52-3; *Gorakhpur*, pp. 75-9; *Pilibhit*, pp. 73-7; *Bareilly*, p. 69; *Basti*, pp. 62-6; *Kheri*, pp. 56-7.

Timber for the railways became a profitable item in Nepal's export trade. The total value of this trade with India in 1884-5 was 14,073,870 rupees; in 1904-5 it increased to 17,544,330 rupees, and in 1923-4 to 62,724,000 rupees. The figures for the import trade in the corresponding years were 9,857,510; 9,991,010 and 28,388,000 rupees.¹

Nepalese border towns, Birganj, Biratnagar, Bhairwa, Chandan-chowki, Hanumannagar, Jaleswar, Janakpur and Nepalganj, which were near the Indian railway heads, grew up into commercial centres. The Terai, which was formerly an extremely unhealthy malarial tract, was gradually reclaimed. The Rana government offered special inducements to settlement by the remission of land revenue and other concessions.² Cultivation of rice spread, also of jute and sugar. Railways on the Nepalese border facilitated the quick movement of food grains from and to Nepal during scarcities. So they did the migration of the Nepalese population to the bordering districts of India and to Sikkim.³ This somewhat eased the pressure on land in the hills of Nepal where arable land was limited. The economy of the Terai was closely intertwined with that of Northern India; and the Indian rupee was the standard medium of exchange in the Nepalese Terai.

But then, it was only in the border regions of Nepal where contact with the British territory led to some economic growth; where such contact was lacking such growth was absent. The interior of Nepal, excepting the Nepal valley, had no effective means of communication and transport; there was no wheeled traffic. Trade was restricted to nearby villages or at the most to the adjacent valleys. The Nepalese government fondly believed that in their country's inaccessibility lay its security. The hills were regarded as forts and "a good road over them would be... a source of as great concern as a breach in his walls to a besieged general", so observed the Indian Foreign Department.⁴

The second generation of Ranas made some attempts to adjust their traditional prejudices to their essential political and econo-

¹ *AP, Statistical Account Relating to British India*, 1890, Vol. LXXVIII, pp. 230-1; 1910, Vol. CIV, pp. 195-6; 1929-30, Vol. XXIX, pp. 562-5.

² *PSLI*, Vol. 104, Reg. No. 693, *Annual Report on Nepal*, 1897-8.

³ The number of Nepalese immigrants to India recorded in 1931 was 327,028. *Census of India, 1931*, Vol. 1, Pt. I, p. 76. See also Chap. VII.

⁴ *FPA*, December 1881, No. 38, Dept. Notes.

mic needs. These Ranas were generally more enlightened than their predecessors. They were educated. Both Bir and Khadga Shamsher¹ went to English schools in India; Chandra Shamsher was the first in the Rana family to obtain a University degree. The Shamsher Ranas were interested in the amenities of the modern civilisation and were willing to obtain them with British assistance. It was under these Ranas that a regular arrangement with the British was made regarding Gurkha recruitment which provided the martial population of Nepal with an assured means of livelihood for themselves and their families. In 1927-8, we are told, the Indian government paid about twenty-five lakhs of rupees as pension to retired Gurkha soldiers in Nepal.²

In Chandra Shamsher's rule the Nepalese administration underwent some reforms indicating that the Prime Minister was influenced by the examples of British administration in India, though not by its underlying principles such as the progressive devolution of governmental responsibilities and making the administration more responsive to the public needs and demands. Chandra Shamsher was careful before making innovations, for fear of opposition from the powerful obscurantist elements in the *darbar*. In spite of being "virtually autocratic", Chandra Shamsher, so O'Connor observed, "was too wise a ruler to strain his powers unduly or to raise unnecessary difficulties for himself." Therefore, "although at a pinch he can and does override" these elements, "he naturally seeks the line of least resistance."³ Besides, his desire to modernise Nepal was balanced by his apprehension that modern ideas which would follow as an inevitable consequence might be detrimental to his autocratic rule. In fact, the nature of the Rana government, centralised and military—remained unchanged during Chandra Shamsher's rule. There was no attempt at liberalising the regime or broadening its power base. Not any spirit of public weal,

¹ Khadga Shamsher plotted against Bir Shamsher, his brother, in 1887, and was removed to Palpa in central Nepal, of which, after being pardoned, he became the governor. Later he plotted against Chandra Shamsher and was obliged to escape to India where he died in 1921. Landon, II, pp. 76, 100.

² H. Wilkinson-Guillemayd, "Nepal and her relations to the British Government", *The Asiatic Review*, April 1934, p. 214. The author was British Envoy in Nepal between 1924 and 1931.

³ PEF, 3085/1912, Pt. 2. Reg. No. 2516, O'Connor to Government, 8 June 1923.

duty or responsibility but administrative convenience dictated Chandra Shamsher's reforms. The efficiency of the administration was the object of the reforms and the tendency was towards some extension of the governmental functions.

The departments of the state were reorganised, giving the officers security of tenure and thus providing them with an incentive for efficiency. The police system and the jails were reformed and some modern practices introduced. A criminal investigation department was set up; a few officers were sent to the Indian Police Training Centre at Patna. In the jails provisions were made for the registration of finger prints and teaching the prisoners a variety of crafts. The remission of a part of the sentences for good conduct and the grant of a small sum of money to the discharged men were some other new measures.¹ Changes were made in the Army department, too. A set of drill books modelled on similar books in the Indian army was compiled in the *Parbatiya* language² as a measure of coordinating the training of the troops. Examinations were introduced for the selection and promotion of officers, but the higher ranks of the army continued to be the exclusive preserves of the Ranas and their close kinsmen; the Nepalese army continued to have generals in their teens, brigadiers, babes in arms, and colonels in sucking stage of infancy. The army commissariat, transport, ammunition, store and other departments were also improved. A new service code replaced the old military law of the land. The pay scale of the troops was increased, and the system of payment in cash, instead of in land, gradually adopted.³

Large scale economic development was neither Chandra Shamsher's object nor was it feasible. The construction of the means of communication and transport in an extremely hilly terrain with numerous rivers and streams was an enormously expensive undertaking for a state with an annual revenue of only fifteen million rupees.⁴ Taxation was an unpopular measure; it would hit the poorer section hardest, because the vested interests

¹ Landon, *op. cit.*, pp. 158, 194-5. *PF*, 1921, Vol. 7, Reg. No. 8149, *Annual Report on Nepal, 1919-20*.

² The language of the people in the Nepalese hill districts, such as the Magars and Gurungs.

³ Landon, *op. cit.*, pp. 186-90.

⁴ W.B. Northey and C.J. Morris, *The Gurkhas*, pp. 82-3.

of the nobility, both lay and ecclesiastical, mainly in the form of free-holds,¹ could not be touched. Technical skill was lacking too, while political reasons would prevent too much dependence on British skill for the economic development of the state. The maintenance of a large standing army—44,000 strong²—took too great a share of the state revenue to permit undertaking more than a few public utility services. Besides, the Ranas believed that improved economic standards and abject subservience to authority had an inverse relationship.

The construction of a light railway from Raxaul to Amlekhganj in the foothills of the Terai—a distance of twenty-nine miles—was the most important communication project in Chandra Shamsher's rule. The road from Raxaul to Bhimphedi (51½ miles) was made motorable with the assistance of Indian engineers. From Bhimphedi to Kathmandu (14 miles) an aerial ropeway was constructed in 1925 for the conveyance of goods, but for three years it was only "partially in action." The materials were supplied by an English firm and an English engineer was in charge of the project. The cartroad between Thankot and Kathmandu (7 miles) was metalled. A number of bridges were built. An electric supply plant was set up near Kathmandu under the direction of an English engineer. A telephone line was opened in 1915 between Kathmandu and Birganj (74 miles).³ An internal postal service existed since 1875, but for communication with India and other countries, the Residency post office was used. The exploitation of Nepal's natural resources was another scheme in which the British government's help was obtained. Geological exploration was put in charge of an Indian mineralogist. A department of Forestry was created, and the services of the Indian Forest Department were requisitioned by Chandra Shamsher for the profitable utilisation of Nepal's vast forest wealth. In the river irrigation projects in the Terai the British and Indian engineers were engaged as consultants.⁴

¹ Called *Birta*. M.P. Regmi, *Land Tenures in Nepal*, I, pp. 25-7.

² C. Bruce, *Foreword* to Morris and Northey, *op. cit.*, pp. xxxi, 86.

³ *PF*, 1922, Vol. 9, Reg. No. 3160, *Annual Report on Nepal, 1921-2*. Morris and Northey, *op. cit.*, p. 143. Landon, *op. cit.*, pp. 197-204. Regmi, *op. cit.*, (second edn., 1958), p. 133.

⁴ Landon, *op. cit.*, pp. 204-5. *Annual Report on Nepal, 1921-2*. Tek Bahadur Khattri, *Nepal: A Glimpse*, p. 44. *PF*, 1915, Vol. 11, Reg. No. 3596, *Annual Report on Nepal, 1914-5*.

Certain other economic reforms were put through. The register of land ownership was regularised; a standard unit for revenue assessment was adopted to avoid the complications of many different measurements of area according to the quality of the land. Corvée was abolished; the ryots of the *Birta* lands could no longer be evicted at will by the *Birta* holders. Octroi duties were abolished on goods entering the Nepal valley. Tolls were made uniform; local duties levied on goods in transport between the hill districts were also done away with. Customs duty on exports and imports was regularised and made uniform throughout the border. In 1923 the first Nepalese joint stock company was formed with a Board of Directors. Kathmandu had a tannery, an electroplating and polishing plant and an aerated water manufacturing unit.¹

The Rana government had a very limited programme of public health, sanitation and hygiene, and in this some influence of the British government was seen. The British Residency dispensary ever since its establishment in 1816 was a popular institution which the Rana government subsidised. The Ranas often availed themselves of the services of the Residency surgeons. Drs. H. Oldfield and Daniel Wright were given 1,200 rupees as monthly allowance by Jang Bahadur.² Chandra Shamsheer and his sons went to Calcutta for medical treatment and brought specialists from London, when necessary.³ At first the Ranas were apathetic to the making of essential sanitary arrangements, and the Residency surgeons faced great difficulties in checking the spread of epidemics. For instance, in 1886, Dr. Gimlette reported the "disgustingly insanitary condition of Kathmandu and other towns" in the valley, regretting that "no efforts to remedy it are in the least likely to be made by the darbar." "The foundations of the city", he added, were "saturated with filth and the air is thick with stench." A severe cholera epidemic broke out in the summer of 1885 when

¹ *Annual Report on Nepal, 1902-1*, *op. cit.* S.C. Das Gupta, "Modern Nepal", *The Modern Review*, August 1925, pp. 198-206. *PEF*, 3955/1908, Reg. No. 1939/1908. Landon, *op. cit.*, pp. 205-7.

² *Commandari Kitab Khana, Nizamati Phant, Registers for 1919 and 1932* V.S. (1862 and 1875). Oldfield, *Sketches from Nipal*, I, pp. 246-50, 252-5.

³ *PEF*, 3085/1912, Pt. 2, File Nos. 2462, 2563, Envoy to Government, 23 April 1921. Landon, *op. cit.*, pp. 301-05.

the mortality rate was as high as sixty to seventy a day. The *darbar* not only made no arrangements to fight the epidemic but even refused to assist Dr. Gimlette in getting temporary accommodation for the patients. The matter having been reported to the Government, the Resident was asked to draw the attention of the Minister to the need for sanitary arrangements at Kathmandu.¹ The Residency surgeons introduced vaccination and inoculation, and that not without some initial difficulty. The vaccination of the King of Nepal in 1894, writes Dr. Armstrong was "an important local event." Brahmins were consulted and, as could be expected, they were divided in their opinions; Armstrong had to wait for an auspicious moment; in short, the whole affair was "a regular state performance." The Government looked upon the incident as having both "a political and a medical aspect", and encouraged Armstrong in "obtaining a footing in the medical practice of the *darbar*."² Bir Shamsher started a system of drainage and conservancy for Kathmandu under the superintendence of a Bengali engineer; in 1899 Kathmandu had sewers.³ Bir Shamsher established the first modern public hospital at Kathmandu in 1890 but pulled it down nine years later to make a palace for himself on that site.⁴ During Chandra Shamsher's rule there were eighteen hospital and fourteen charitable dispensaries in the kingdom. There was one female hospital in the capital, a bacteriological laboratory and an X-ray unit.⁵ Hospitals were staffed by doctors and nurses from Bengal⁶ and later by Nepalese doctors who received their training in Indian medical colleges. Vaccination was not compulsory, but was available free.⁷ For the supply of piped water, an English engineer was employed who constructed Nepal's first waterworks at Kathmandu in 1892. Later, under Deb and Chandra Shamsher, water works were set up at Patan, Bhatgaon, Bichiakhoh, Bhimphe, Pokhara, Dhankuta and Birganj. Two Nepalese engineers, educated at Rurki, were in charge of

¹ *IFP*, Vol. 2785, February 1886, Nos. 105-12.

² *Ibid.*, Vol. 4815, January 1895, Nos. 90-92.

³ *PSLI*, Vol. 115, Reg. No. 733. *Annual Report on Nepal*, 1898-9.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ Das Gupta, *op. cit.*, p. 204.

⁶ J.M. Das, *Banger Bahire Bangali, Uttar Bharat*, pp. 550-52.

⁷ *AP*, 1906, LXXXII, *East India (Progress and Condition)*, p. 181.

these works. Kathmandu had a municipality as well, having both official and non-official members; the chairman was Kaiser Shamsheer, Chandra Shamsheer's third son.¹

It was in Nepal's social life that the influence of the British was the least: there was hardly any scope for it. The rulers of Nepal being Hindus made Hinduism the state religion. In course of time the Hindu social practices, in varying degrees of rigidity, took root in the land. The state not only upheld the Hindu social system but rigidly enforced its provisions—the divisions and restrictions of caste, the acceptance of the supremacy of the Brahmins in the social hierarchy, the exclusion of Christian influences. The Nepalese laws had codified caste rules and injunctions based on *Shastras*, violations of which resulted in social degradation, which was one of the five severe punishments, the others being confiscation of property, banishment, mutilation and death. The taking of prohibited food and drink was generally punished by social degradation. Cases of excommunication were decided by the law courts, and the Prime Minister was the final court of appeal. Conversion was a punishable offence, and Christian missionaries were barred from the country.² Even Hindu reformist activities were discouraged. In 1909, for example, one Madhabraj Joshi was publicly lashed and exiled for his being a follower of Swami Dayanand, the founder of the Arya Samaj movement in India. Another, Kartick Prasad, an Indian doctor,

¹ Das Gupta, *op. cit.*, pp. 204-5.

² In 1913 one of the leading missionaries in Kalimpong attempted to settle with his family in Nepal for doing missionary work there. He was summoned by the Prime Minister, given some presents and asked to leave Nepal forthwith. Chandra Shamsheer did not allow the sale of Christian gospels in Nepal, but permitted their procurement for private use. Several missionary organisations were active on the bordering districts of Bihar and Uttar Pradesh as well as among the Nepalese tea garden workers at Darjiling and Kalimpong.

The earliest Christians to go to Nepal were the Jesuits and the Capuchins who established their mission at Patan in the Nepal valley in 1715. The Jesuits Joao Cabral and Greuber on their way from Tibet to India took the Kuti-Kathmandu route in 1628 and 1662. So did the Capuchin Ippolito Desideri in 1721. The Capuchins were expelled by Prithvinarayan in 1769. The Serampur missionaries were the first to translate the New Testament into Nepali in 1821. A. Mcleish, *The Frontier Peoples of India, A missionary survey*, pp. 126-8, 182-3. F. De Filippi, ed., *An Account of Tibet*, pp. 22-3, 30, 130-1, 316, 360-61, 384, 428. C. Wessels, *Early Jesuit Travellers in Central Asia, 1603-1721*, pp. 157, 192-7. Landon, *op. cit.*, pp. 231-3, 235-8.

was dismissed from the Nepalese government service for his links with Bhai Parmanand and the Arya Samajists whose egalitarian and anti-clerical ideas were anathema to the priestly community. In the 1920's, Madhabraj's sons, who were educated in the Arya Samaj schools in India, returned to Nepal, but were soon expelled again.¹ Intimate contact with the British was disliked because it would bring social and cultural influences which might undermine the interests of the dominant classes, chiefly the Brahmins.

There was no European community in Nepal, except the Resident and his staff. Visits of Europeans to Nepal were few.² Not only was the British contact limited to the Rana family alone, but even this contact the Prime Ministers did not allow to ramify beyond themselves and those on whom they could safely rely. None could see the Resident without the knowledge and express authority of the Prime Minister—not even his brothers and sons.

The Ranas were acquainted with the western life but themselves did not lead such a life. They were in no sense a westernised community eager to infuse the social and other ideas of the west into Nepal. They were orthodox Hindus, observing the caste rules rigidly, making liberal endowments to temples and going on pilgrimages to shrines in India. They protected and promoted the social and economic privileges of the priestly community. The Brahmins, whatever their crime, were immune from capital punishment. In the Nepalese state council (*Bharadari Sabha*) the *Rajguru*, or the Chief Priest, held great influence. He advised the government on social and religious matters and prescribed the fitting penance and purificatory rites for the violation of the ceremonial law of purity.

Temporal authority being under sacerdotal influence, it was hard for the Rana rulers, even if they wanted, to depart from the established social customs and practices; it was harder to make social changes. Jang Bahadur, for instance, was bold enough to cross the sea and go to Europe, but on the ship and in foreign lands he and all who went with him strictly observed their caste rules in matters of food and other social habits. Before returning home he underwent a purification ceremony at the temple of Rameshawaram in Madras and made large gifts to the temples at

¹ Balchandra Sharma, *Nepalko Itihasik Ruprekha*, p. 388.

² Between 1881 and 1925 about 153 Europeans visited Nepal. Landon, II, pp. 298-305.

Puri and Madura to expiate his sin.¹ So did Chandra Shamsher who went to Europe fifty-eight years later. Regarding food and housing arrangements, the British government found him as fastidious as his grand uncle had been and, therefore, as inconvenient. V. Gabriel, the Political Officer attached to Chandra Shamsher's party, found the journey "a very quaint proceeding." The Nepalese would not take meals on the trains and insisted on stopping them at frequent intervals so that they could get down, pitch tents beside the railway track, cook and eat. The authorities in France, Switzerland and Italy were naturally "much mystified" by their Nepalese guests taking "elaborate precautions" against contact with European food.² Percival Landon in his adulatory biography of Chandra Shamsher observes that the Prime Minister was a "Hindu of the strictest sect, not only by blood, but by instinct, training and experience."³

The objection of the Nepalese *darbar* to the Gurkha troops sent for overseas service was another example of the rigid social custom in Nepal; it posed an annoying problem for the British government. The issue first came up when the 4th Gurkhas returned from China after the Boxer rebellion. Chandra Shamsher had to plead hard before the *Bharadars* decided not to excommunicate the Gurkhas. The Prime Minister quoted the *Shastras* to prove that sea voyage was not unknown to the ancient Hindus, and therefore it could not have been a taboo. He urged the *Bharadars* to take a liberal view of the matter and to interpret the religion "in true spirit taking into account all changing circumstances of the times."⁴ Otherwise, he pointed out, the Gurkhas would not serve in the Indian army and Nepal would, in consequence, lose one of the main props of her economy. The question was again raised in 1911-2 when two Gurkhas, who went to England⁵ as orderlies of King George V during his coronation, were promptly ostracised. Chandra Shamsher frankly told Manners Smith that his personal sympathy for

¹ P.J.B. Rana, *Life of Jang Bahadur*, pp. 121-5, 128, 148-9, 153.

² Gabriel to Curzon, 25 May 1909, *CRP*, Vol. 428.

³ Landon, *op. cit.*, p. 182.

⁴ Chandra Shamsher's address, sent by Manners Smith to L. Dane, Foreign Secy., 9 May 1906. *FO*, 766/11.

⁵ One of them, Sher Singh Rana, kept a diary of the journey and published it. *Rajtilak Yatra* (Benares, 1913).

the two men alone was not enough; his hands had to be strengthened by the moral support of the British government to overcome the "strong and stubborn opposition of the deep-seated conservatism prevalent in the country in matters of caste and religion."¹ It was only when George V personally intervened and the Indian government pressed Chandra Shamsher that the *Bharadars* revoked their decision, readmitting the two Gurkhas into caste.² But when Chandra Shamsher proposed, at the suggestion of the Resident, that a general arrangement be made, guaranteeing that Gurkhas who went overseas for service would not lose caste, strong protests were voiced from "almost every quarter."³ Chandra Shamsher pleaded helplessness, admitting to Manners Smith

that in matters like these, whatever my personal views may be, I must conform to the opinion of the priesthood and the people.

It was a question of "very great importance", he added, because of its "intimate bearing upon the vital religious and social customs and beliefs of the country."⁴ The problem was far greater when, during the World War, hundreds of Gurkhas had to go overseas. After a good deal of persuasion by the Prime Minister the *Bharadars* agreed to readmit the Gurkhas into caste provided they underwent purification ceremony and received dispensation, called *Panipatya*; it was decided that Nepalese priests would go to India to conduct the purification ceremony.⁵ It was also ruled that in future Gurkhas could go overseas for "bonafide active service" only, and that they must obtain a certificate from the appropriate British officers that they had strictly observed caste rules in foreign lands; and this alone would entitle them to *Panipatya*, for which some monetary payment had to be made to priests conducting the ceremony.⁶ In 1919 two Gurkhas who went to London to participate in the victory celebration were declared outcaste. Since they were not on active service, Chandra Shamsher refused to intercede on

¹ Chandra to Manners Smith, 24 December 1913, *FO*, 766/11.

² *Ibid*, C. Wigam, Private Secy. to King, to Manners Smith, 6 January 1914.

³ *Ibid*, Chandra to Manners Smith, 24 December 1913.

⁴ *Ibid*, Chandra to Manners Smith, 6 November 1913.

⁵ Chandra to O'Connor, 16 March 1919, *FO*, 766/11.

⁶ Northey and Morris, *op. cit.*, pp. 103-4. *PF*, 1915, Vol. 11, Reg. No. 3596, *Annual Report on Nepal*, 1914-5.

their behalf with the *Bharadars*, despite the Indian government's requests.¹ The British government themselves were always careful that the religious and social susceptibilities of the Gurkhas were not ruffled in any way.²

In such circumstances the British could hardly have any desire of setting the pace of social reforms in Nepal. But whenever the Ranas themselves took some hesitating steps towards social reforms, the British government supported and encouraged their moves. The British took a keen interest in the moral and material progress of Nepal, although it was not under British administration; as early as 1889 the Home government had asked the Indian government to furnish an annual report on such progress.³ Relations with the British did give the Ranas a sort of moral strength in tackling some social problems like *Sati* and slavery. The visits of British dignitaries to Kathmandu were made use of by Chandra Shamsher both to improve his standing with the British government and to show his people that the British supported his reform projects. During Kitchener's visit to Kathmandu in 1906, for instance, the Prime Minister addressed the *Bharadars*, urging them to look "kindly on reforms and innovations" he had made.⁴ On returning from his European tour a similar meeting was held when, in the presence of the British Resident, Bhim Shamsher, the Prime Minister's brother, referred to Chandra's various reforms.⁵

Sati and slavery were the two well-established social institutions of Nepal. Although Jang Bahadur was unable to stop the practice of *Sati* in the face of the opposition of the obscurantists in the *darbar*, he succeeded in preventing it in his own family. In 1857 and 1863, for instance, he did not let the widows of his brothers, Bam Bahadur and Krishna Bahadur, undergo this

¹ O, Connor to Chandra, 1 July 1919, Chandra's reply, 3 July 1919; also his letter to Resident, 26 January 1920, FO, 766/11.

² The recruitment of Brahmins was not allowed because if they crossed the sea they were not given *Panipatya*, and so became outcaste. However, many Brahmins passed themselves off as *Khettris* to enrol themselves. H.R.K. Gibbs, *The Gurkha Soldier*, p. 7.

³ Political Despatch from the Secy. of State to Governor-General in Council, No. 39, 11 July 1889, cited in *PSLI*, Vol. 191 (1906), Reg. No. 1402.

⁴ *PEF*, Vol. 26, 1912, Pt. 3, File No. 183/1907, Resident to Govt., 23 November 1906.

⁵ *Ibid.*, Vol. 35, 1908, File No. 1939/1908.

cruel rite.¹ In May 1876, he succeeded, with the active support of the Resident, Girdlestone, in saving his daughter from the funeral pyre of her husband. Lytton, then Governor-General, heartily congratulated Jang Bahadur, assuring him that "both the Queen of England and the Prince of Wales would learn with the liveliest satisfaction his enlightened and energetic action." Jang Bahadur was encouraged to abolish the practice once for all—an act which, Lytton added, was "sure to honour his (Jang Bahadur's) administration with the approbation of the whole civilised world." He was also asked to make adequate provisions for the maintenance of the rescued widows.² Dr. Oldfield informs us that during Jang Bahadur's life time there was considerable diminution in the number of *Satis*; they were seen, but "very rarely."³ However, a reaction soon set in after Jang Bahadur's death when two of his wives committed *Sati*. This was hardly surprising in view of the fact that his successor, Ranuddip, was under strong priestly influence. Bir Shamsheer sought to control the practice by declaring that the Prime Minister's or, in his absence, the highest legal authority's sanction had to be procured before *Sati* could be performed. But this declaration had no effect.⁴ It was Chandra Shamsheer who by a proclamation on 28 June 1920 banned the practice throughout the kingdom.⁵

Slavery prevailed only in the hills. It was absent in the Terai as well as among the Newars who lived in the Nepal valley. There were three classes of slave owners—the aristocrats, who had inherited slaves as their ancestral property and maintained them as personal retainers; agriculturists, who depended on slaves as labourers in the fields; and those who reared slaves like cattle and dealt in them for profit.⁶ Slaves in Nepal, both male and female, were "usually kindly treated, fed and clothed and not overworked."⁷ The Nepalese nobles procured slaves from

¹ SC, 25 September 1857, No. 470. FPA, September 1863, No. 179. Wright, *op. cit.*, pp. 31, 68.

² FPA, May 1877, No. 55, Keep With, Lytton's Note.

³ *Sketches from Nipal*, I, pp. 251-2. Wright, *op. cit.*, pp. 31-2.

⁴ Landon, *op. cit.*, p. 172.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ R.L. Kennion, "Abolition of Slavery in Nepal", *The Nineteenth Century and After*, September 1925, pp. 381-9.

⁷ FPA, April 1867, No. 124. Also Wright, *op. cit.*, p. 45. *Mss. Hodgson*, Vol. 7, p. 67.

among the poor peoples of the adjacent districts of Bihar and the North-Western Provinces, and during scarcity large numbers of such slaves were sent to Kathmandu by the slave dealers in the Terai. In 1866-7, for example, through the efforts of Jang Bahadur and the Resident, Ramsay, many such newly brought slaves were liberated, and orders were issued by the Prime Minister to the Nepalese officers in the Terai against indulging in slave trade.¹ Jang Bahadur made a law forbidding any person to sell himself to slavery; it was also illegal for parents to sell their children. It was further declared that a fugitive slave, who had settled in the *Naya Mulk*² and Morang in the Terai, could not be enslaved again. These enactments were, however, of little use. Deb Shamsher during his brief rule set the female slaves of Kaski and Lamjung³ free, but his project of liberating all slaves met with serious opposition of vested interests.⁴

Chandra Shamsher moved cautiously. He started with the rigid enforcement of the laws passed under Jang Bahadur's rule prohibiting the inclusion in the ranks of slavery of anybody who was not a born slave. Next, he took several measures to improve the lot of slaves and to reduce the distinction between them and the free men. It was provided in an enactment in 1920 that fugitive slaves who resided for ten years or more in India would be treated on return home as free men; those who escaped to India and lived there for three years could become free if they paid reasonable ransom to their masters. Slaves were given the right of pre-emption too; it was followed in 1921 by the right of ownership of property and of devolution by succession. Another enactment made it a legal offence to prevent a slave from going to and settling in Chitwan, a district in the Terai, where he would live as a free man. In 1911 and 1920 census of slave population was taken; a third census followed in 1923-4 which showed the total number of slaves as 51, 419 and that of slave owners as 15,719.⁵ In November 1924 the Prime Minister took

¹ *FPA*, April 1867, Nos. 124-7; July 1867, No. 139; August 1867, Nos. 178-81; September 1867, Nos. 62-4; October 1867, Nos. 225-6.

² The western Terai given to Nepal after the Mutiny. See Chap. I.

³ These were the Prime Minister's two personal duchies in central Nepal.

⁴ Landon, *op. cit.*, pp. 164-5. Regmi, *op. cit.*, (1950 edn.), pp. 159-60, 165.

⁵ Kennion, *op. cit.* pp. 382-4. Landon, *op. cit.*, p. 165. Northey and Morris, *op. cit.*, pp. 107-12.

the final step. He made an appeal seeking the country's support to completely abolish the practice. The appeal which was later printed in English¹ is a unique document in the history of social reforms in Nepal. It contained powerful arguments, moral, social, religious and economic, to establish that there was no justification for the continuance of the institution. Although slavery was referred to in the ancient Hindu literature, Chandra Shamsher argued, it formed no part of the Hindu religion, while trading in slaves was repugnant to its spirit and teaching. The Prime Minister's appeal was successful. Of all the slave owners only 467 desired the retention of slavery. A new law was then enacted which made slavery a penal offence; it also provided for compensation to the slave owners. Since the *Bhara-dars* were as a body opposed to the immediate emancipation of all slaves, it was decided that the freed slaves would render their masters "voluntary service" for seven years, whereafter the masters would have no claim upon their men. All children under seven were immediately set free. The liberation of slaves scheme cost the Nepalese government a sum of 3,670,000 rupees, an average of seventy rupees per slave. Of the total slave population, 59,873, compensation had to be paid for 51,782; 4,651 slaves were freed by their masters without compensation; 1,984 died; 1,342 fled, and 114 paid for their release.² There remained, however, a kind of forced labour, called *Begari*, *Jhara* and *Bethi*, to meet official requirements at the local level.³

The Nepalese law and judicial system were reformed in the Rana regime, and here, too, some influence of the British was seen. One of the first measures of Jang Bahadur after his return from the European tour was to codify the law and humanise the severe penal code. Jang Bahadur's *Ain* came into force from January 1854. The number of crimes involving capital punishment was greatly reduced, and mutilation was abolished.⁴ Dalhousie approved of Jang Bahadur's reforms and gave him every moral support. In 1851, for example, Jang Bahadur re-

¹ *An Appeal for the Abolition of Slavery made on 28 November 1924* (Kathmandu, 1925).

² *Ibid*, Kennion, *op. cit.*, pp. 385-9. Landon, *op. cit.*, pp. 167-72. D.R. Banaji, *Slavery in British India*, p. 55. Kathleen Simon, *Slavery*, pp. 123-34.

³ Northey and Morris, *op. cit.*, p. 113.

⁴ Oldfield, *op. cit.*, I, pp. 244-5.

quested the British government to take charge of the conspirators against him,¹ or else he could not save them from either execution or mutilation for which the *Bharadars* pressed the Prime Minister.² Dalhousie agreed to take the "very troublesome charge", because Jang Bahadur might "with reason remind us that if he fails now in saving from mutilation or from death the brother of the sovereign and his own kindred, there will be little chance in obtaining those measures of amendment by which he hopes to moderate the severity of the martial law." If such moral support were denied, Dalhousie minuted, Jang Bahadur would not only lose heart but reproach the British government's "indifference or selfishness" as responsible for the postponement of those great measures for the improvement of national institutions and for the future happiness of his race, which amidst such obloquy and, I fear, with imminent danger to himself, he is resolved to attempt in Nepal.³

The Resident made "remonstrance in the strongest terms" against the punishments which the *Bharadars* wanted to inflict on the offenders. Although Dalhousie was averse to interference in the domestic politics of Nepal—"a foreign state which is entirely independent of us, neither tributary to us, nor subordinate in any way"—with his reforming spirit he viewed it as the British government's "duty" to morally support Jang Bahadur in the interest of "increasing civilisation and . . . tempering the ferocity and smoothening the rudeness of law and custom" of an "allied state."⁴ Ripon also followed Dalhousie's example when agreeing to take charge of Prince Narendra Vikram and Bam Vikram, alleged conspirators against Ranuddip Singh, as state prisoners.⁵ Since even petty offences were punishable by mutilation according to Nepalese law, the British government, on humanitarian grounds, consistently refused to extradite run-away Nepalese offenders to the *darbar*.⁶

Nepalese laws were further revised and systematised by Bir

¹ The King's younger brother, one of Jang Bahadur's own brothers and his cousin were implicated in the conspiracy.

² SC, 28 March 1851, Nos. 10-14. P.J.B. Rana, *op. cit.*, pp. 155-8.

³ SC, 25 April 1851, Dalhousie's Minute, 9 April 1851.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ See Chapter II.

⁶ Court of Directors specifically instructed the Indian government against such surrender, *Political Letter to India*, No. 3 of 1834.

Shamsher; Chandra Shamsher did this thrice. The Nepalese code was printed and made easily available to all; formerly officers of the government alone had access to the code, while the people remained ignorant of the successive changes made in law. In the new code a careful distinction was made between offences against state, person and property and those against the religious laws of the country. Criminal and civil jurisdiction were separated. A High Court was set up with Dharma Shamsher, Bir Shamsher's second son, as the Chief Justice; the Prime Minister continued to be the highest court of appeal.¹

English education had been one of the main channels of western influence on Indian society and politics; in Nepal facilities for this education were extremely limited. An intelligentsia was absent; there was nothing like a western educated class of people with advanced social, political and economic thinking. English education was looked upon by the Ranas rather as an essential means of dealing with the British government than as an instrument of popular enlightenment and progress. Jang Bahadur employed a few Englishmen and Bengalis as private tutors of his sons and nephews.² The Shamsher Ranas went to schools in Calcutta. In the pre-Rana period there was nothing like state initiative or state responsibility for the promotion of public education. There were educational institutions, of course, but they were run on traditional lines, privately financed and managed. The Ranas established government primary schools at Kathmandu and other places—there were sixty such schools in 1928 built over the last thirty years. There was only one High English School (established in 1880) affiliated to the University of Calcutta. It was purely an aristocratic institution, catering to the needs of the Ranas and other noble families alone. In 1901 the number of new students admitted to the English department in the government schools at Kathmandu was 17; in 1919 the figure was 142. An intermediate college—named Tribhuban-Chandra, after the King and the Prime Minister—was started in 1919; it was raised to the B.A. standard in 1924. Chandra Shamsher created a Directorate of Public Instruction. A few

¹ Landon, *op. cit.*, pp. 174-9, Das Gupta, *op. cit.*, p. 200. Ambika Prasad Upadhyaya, *Nepal Ko Itihas*, pp. 195-201.

² *Commandari Kitab Khnaa, Nizamati Phant*, Registers for V.S., 1916, 1921, 1923 and 1928 (corresponding to 1859, 1864 1866 and 1871).

Nepalese, mostly of the Rana family, went to the engineering and medical institutions in India with state scholarships. Two Nepalese engineers were members of the engineering associations of England and U.S.A. In 1925 there were five Nepalese M.A.s of the University of Calcutta and three M.B.B.S. from the Calcutta Medical College.¹ Chandra Shamsher also set up a committee for the improvement of the Gorkhali language. It published translations from English books for use as school text in Nepal.²

The progress of education in Nepal was inhibited by tradition, the opposition of the vested interests and religious orthodoxy. Deb Shamsher had a scheme of mass education which failed on account of the *Bharadars*' strong opposition; many schools set up by him had also to be closed down.³ Six Nepalese students were sent to Japan for technical training and not to England because of the belief that in an oriental Buddhist state the risks of moral degradation were less than in a western Christian state; the students were asked to rigidly observe their religious and social habits. In 1905 the *Bharadars* rejected Chandra Shamsher's suggestion that students should be sent to Europe and America and instead advised, what became hereafter the Nepalese government's policy, the employment of a large number of Bengali teachers in Nepal.⁴ Personally the Prime Minister was well-informed, particularly on international events. In 1908 he received from Oxford an Honorary Doctorate in Civil Law; to the Indian Institute of the University he presented valuable Sanskrit manuscripts. His third son, Kaiser Shamsher's private library contained more than forty thousand works of mostly western authors. The policy of exclusion of the Europeans notwithstanding, Professor Cecil Bendall, Sylvia Levi, Percy Brown and others were allowed entry into Nepal for literary and archaeological researches; even some Japanese scholars' applications for such

¹ Landon, *op. cit.*, p. 180. Morris and Northey, *op. cit.*, foreword by C. Bruce, p. xxix. Das Gupta, *op. cit.*, pp. 202-3. Hemalata Devi, *Nepale Banganari*, pp. 3, 14, 101-3. *PSLI*, Vol. 87, Reg. No. 293. *Annual Report on Nepal*, 1895-6.

² Das Gupta, *op. cit.*, p. 203.

³ Landon, *op. cit.*, p. 179. Regmi, *op. cit.*, pp. 165-6. M.K. Shrestha, *Hand book of Public Administration in Nepal*, p. 4.

⁴ For the names of prominent Bengalis, teachers, doctors and engineers see J.M. Das, *Banger Bahire Bangali, Uttar Bharat*, pp. 550-52.

purposes were not refused.¹

Education in Nepal had no popular and, therefore, broad basis. The Ranas disfavoured any rapid extension of western education for fear of creating influences prejudicial to the established social, economic and political order of the country. Chandra Shamsher, in fact, told the British Residents and Envoys that agitation in India against British rule was the result of English education. He also referred to the swelling ranks of educated unemployed in India as a social menace.² There was nothing like a popular movement in Nepal; there were no means of organising or ventilating public opinion. *Gorkhapatra*, the only newspaper³ was government controlled; there were few readers of Indian newspapers in Nepal. The Prime Minister, as has already been seen,⁴ was anxious about the effects of political unrest in India which led him to take precautions against the infiltration of political ideas from India into Nepal. The entry of undesirable persons into Nepal was restricted by the introduction of a passport system; even Indian traders had to obtain passports every year from the Nepalese authorities at Birganj.⁵

The British Residents and visitors to Nepal were full of praise for Chandra Shamsher, and with reason; he had left the British government with little cause for complaint; he was cooperative and obliging. The journey to Kathmandu for the Envoys was no longer an ordeal, and living in Nepal was a romantic experience. While Hodgson and Henry Lawrence⁶ reached the Nepalese capital on *doolies* (litters), Geoffrey Betham⁷ covered the first twenty-three miles of the journey in 1938 by the Nepalese

¹ FO, 766/1, Note of Envoy, 7 May 1925. J.K. Das Gupta, "Nepal's Relations with the Outer World." *The Calcutta Review*, July 1930, p. 101. C. Bendall, *A Journey of Archaeological and Literary Research in Nepal and Northern India during the winter of 1884-5*.

² FO 766/1, Note of Envoy, 7 May 1925. Wilkinson-Guillemard, *op. cit.*, p. 273.

³ Started in 1901.

⁴ See Chapter VII.

⁵ PF, 1919, Vol. 5, Reg. Nos 1298/1919, 3713/1928.

⁶ Lawrence was Resident from December 1843 to December 1845.

⁷ Betham was British Minister in Nepal from 1938 to 1944. See his article, "Nepal", in *JRCAS*, January 1948, pp. 18-25. After July 1934 the British representative in Nepal was designated Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary. A Nepalese representative was posted at the same time to London with similar status.

"special" train; for the last lap of seven miles, from Thankot to Kathmandu, the Prime Minister's 'Buick' stood ready. There were rest houses all along the road where European delicacies could be had on request. The arrival of the Resident to Kathmandu was "almost a ritual", writes Kennion; and "elaborate ceremonial" was observed when he took office. Nepalese officers escorted him from the Terai; the troops at Kathmandu paraded and presented arms; mass bands played the British and Nepalese national anthems; the Union Jack fluttered. In full *darbar* the Prime Minister presented the Resident, or the Envoy, as he came to be called after 1920; both then made speeches, emphasising the indissoluble link between the existing regimes in Nepal and India. Life in Nepal for the British representatives was a welcome change from that in India. Here there were no political or other problems, no agitation, unrest or excitement; life was easy, placid and restful. A visitor to Kathmandu went so far as to remark that in Nepal "one sees more smiles in a day than in India in a month."¹ Chandra Shamsheer was courteous and polished, treating the British representatives as "honoured guests" and exuding "extraordinary charm of manner." His wide knowledge of world affairs and shrewd judgment made conversation with him an "instructive and delightful experience", so Kennion tells us. He was an autocrat, we are told, but an enlightened autocrat; his was a personal but paternal rule. There was no economic affluence in Nepal, but no economic discontent either. People appeared to be happy and contented, well fed and well housed, Showers, for instance, saw in his one and a half years' stay in Nepal (April 1912 to October 1913) "nothing in the shape of a mean, tumble down tenement."² But then, he as well as all those who preceded and succeeded him had personal knowledge of only the Nepal valley, the Terai and the road from Raxaul to Kathmandu; the rest of the country, especially the hill districts, was closed to the Europeans.

Life at Kathmandu was, of course, enjoyable; the capital had all the appurtenances of modern civilisation and all its amenities. Here there were numerous palaces, furnished by Maples and

¹ Quoted in Mcleish, *op. cit.*, p. 126.

² H.L. Showers, "Eighteen months in Nepal", *Blackwood's Magazine*, May 1916, p. 597.

Hamptons, with well-laid gardens—monuments of extravagance rather than expressions of the artistic taste of their builders—the Shamsher Ranas. There were equestrian statues of the Ranas, made by British craftsmen. There were broad roads, electricity, some sanitary arrangements, sewers and covered drains. Piped water was also available; there were hospitals and dispensaries, doctors and trained nurses. Most of the things found in London and Paris, says Showers, could also be had at the Nepalese capital. On the roads could be seen motor cars of the latest make, huge cranes, steam rollers and other heavy building materials—and all had arrived at Kathmandu on human backs. For the British representatives and visitors there was no dearth of entertainment; the Prime Minister invited them to parties to celebrate the birthdays of his numerous sons and relatives;¹ there was big game hunting in the Terai, besides polo, golf and tennis; the billiard room in the residency, Kennion and O'Connor inform us, used to be always "nearly full." The birthdays of the Kings and Queens of Britain were celebrated in all pomp and ceremony. Chandra Shamsher lent films for the Resident's private exhibition; but there were no cinema houses at Kathmandu, for the Prime Minister would not permit anything to affect the peoples' morals. Naturally with all this, Showers, for example, could not imagine if

anyone can ever have performed official duties among more novel and interesting surroundings or under happier and pleasanter circumstances.

So felt his wife, too, who could recall forty-nine years later how much she had been impressed by the "perfect English" of Chandra Shamsher and his sons and enjoyed the fireworks display on the eve of Manners Smith's departure from Kathmandu on furlough,² the garden parties, sports and, for a change, a quiet sojourn in the hill bungalow at Nagarkot, to the extreme east of the Nepal valley, which the Prime Minister was good enough to let her use. The wives of the Ranas were a pleasant, companionable lot who could play the piano.³ For O'Connor, Nepal with

"its ancient temples, its exclusive high caste aristocracy and the glitter and glamour of its Court, the marble stairways and halls and the fabulous jewels"

¹ In 1923 the Rana family had 481 members. Landon, *op. cit.*, I, Geneo-logical tables at the end of the book.

² In April, 1912.

³ *Notes on her life*, by Christian Showers Stirling.

was "like a setting from the Arabian Nights."¹

The traditionally exclusive policy of the Nepalese government was no doubt the most serious impediment to the development of Nepal on modern lines. But, paradoxical as it might appear, the British themselves were partly responsible for it. The Nepalese policy of exclusion and non-intercourse with foreigners was from the British point of view an insurance against foreign intrigue in this strategically important state, and so they did not allow Nepal to establish contact with any western power. In 1862, for example, when Jang Bahadur wished to meet the rulers of France, Austria and Russia as an ambassador of an "independent state", the Indian government warned him that political relations with foreign powers were prejudicial to Nepal's interests "without any prospect of countervailing advantage."² Seventy-three years later, during negotiations for a new treaty, one finds the British government's attitude regarding Nepal's contact with foreign powers unchanged.³ The Indian government discouraged Europeans from visiting Nepal, and the Nepalese government's repugnance to such visits was a convenient excuse. In the war and post-war years greater restrictions were imposed on such visits; applications were subjected to confidential enquiry to make sure that no German agent, Japanese spy or Bolshevik intriguer got into Nepal as a *soi disant* student of Buddhism. The Reverend Wass' application was rejected on this suspicion in 1919; the Czechoslovak Consul in Bombay was refused entry into Nepal, although his declared object was scientific researches.⁴ It was, in fact, impossible for a foreigner to go to Nepal without being sponsored by the Indian government.

The latter while condemning Nepal's exclusive policy, in fact,

¹ W.F. O'Connor, *Things Mortal*, pp. 162-72. Also R.L. Kennion, "Recollections of Nepal", *Blackwood's Magazine*, May 1931, pp. 665-78. Showers, *op. cit.*, pp. 595-613. O'Connor, *On the Frontier and Beyond*, pp. 277-86. H.J. Elwes, *Memoirs of Travel, Sport and Natural History*, pp. 251-7.

² *FPA*, May 1862, No. 24, Govt. to Resident, 5 May 1862. In 1850, however, Jang Bahadur was allowed to meet Louis Napoleon, then President of France. P.J.B. Rana, *op. cit.*, pp. 142-6.

³ See Chapter VII.

⁴ *PEF*, Vol. 50, 1918, File No. 2096/1918. *PF*, 1919, Vol. 5, Reg. Nos. 1298/1919, 4927/1922, 1577, 1711/1923, 708/1924. Also *HC*, Vol. 133, (1892), No. 946. *PSLI*, Vol. 28, 1912, Reg. No. 3400. *PEF*, Vol. 26, 1912, Pt. 5, File No. 2949, Political Dept. Minute, February 1911.

never wanted the country to be open even to British visitors. Alfred Lyall, the Foreign Secretary under Ripon, for instance, noted thus :

I do not find that the Government of India ever expressed and desire that Nepal should be opened to British visitors generally...I should very much doubt the expediency of thus opening Nepal, even if it were in our power by diplomatic pressure to accomplish this.¹

What alone the Indian government then wanted was to secure the Resident's free movement in the interior of Nepal to collect political and military intelligence. Even this seemed hardly necessary when, in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, relations with Nepal improved considerably and confidence grew. In such circumstances the Residents did not want to press the Nepalese government; they appreciated the latter's sentiments regarding the issue. One of them, Colonel F.W.P. Macdonald, went so far as to say thus :

From our point of view...I cannot see that it will benefit us at all to press him (Chandra Shamsher) to let us go beyond the limits now laid down...I see no good to be got out of it for Government.²

The British regarded Nepal as a breakwater of the Indian nationalism and had every interest in keeping Nepal closed to the influence of Indian politics; naturally, they took measures to this end.

"As a matter of fact", Macdonald noted, "the people of Nepal are happy, contented and uncommonly well off, and it will be a thousand pities if Indian 'civilisation' and its accompaniments in the shape of education, forward movement and sedition were to penetrate into Nepal—the longer it is kept back the better."³

This was Chandra Shamsher's own views, too, based as they were on his determination to keep the anti-British influences in India away from Nepal. In 1922, for example, he rejected the application of one K.P. Chattopadhyaya, a lecturer in Cambridge, for anthropological research in Nepal because the British intelligence reports discovered Chattopadhyaya's links with the Indian revolutionaries in Berlin and Communists in Moscow.⁴ Chandra

¹ *FPA*, October 1879, Nos. 49-54, Keep With, Dept. Note. See also Lyall's view in Chapter II.

² *FO*, 766/13, Macdonald to H.V. Cobb, Offg. Secy. Foreign Dept., 9 March 1909.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *PF*, 1919, Vol. 5, Reg. Nos. 4927/1922; 1197, 174, 1577, 1711/1923.

Shamsher told H. Wilkinson, the British Envoy, that not the British but the Bengalis were his real enemies.¹

Chandra Shamsher also asked the British to keep the Gurkhas away from the anti-British elements in India. Some Gurkhas after service overseas had imbibed modern ideas of progress and reform.² In 1921, for instance, one Thakur Chandan Singh started publishing from Dehra Dun, where there were many Gurkha settlers, two weekly papers, *Gorkha Sansar* and *Tarun Gorkha*, and propagated for social reforms in Nepal.³

Exposure of the Gurkhas to anti-British sentiments in India was a danger of which the British were for long aware, and necessary precautionary measures were already extant. In fact, since the formation of the Gurkha regiments in 1815, the British had kept them isolated from the rest of the Indian troops as a matter of deliberate policy. The Gurkhas were regarded as a safety valve against a mutiny by other troops. The British fostered the Gurkhas' innate sense of separateness from the Indian soldiers by "purposely allowing them to become a cult, a service apart."⁴ Gurkhas had their own exclusive colonies in the hill stations; they were never brigaded with Indian troops except during active service; their commands were never given to Indians. General Francis Tukur, a recognised authority on the Gurkhas,⁵ testifies thus:

Ever since we had first raised the Nassiri battalion and the Sirmoor and the Kumaon battalion in 1815 it had been agreed, perhaps unwisely, that Gurkha regiments in our service would never be officered by Indians. For one hundred and thirty odd years that rule has been carefully kept...Thus the Gurkha connection, though it has been through the Indian army, has been with Britain, and always with the British rather than with India. It may be that because of this the men regarded themselves as belonging to a force apart from the Indian army...In fact, they came to look upon themselves as being in India as mercenaries to see that the Indians did not molest each other...The British Gurkha regiments had close affiliations with British regiments and the year round telegrams of greeting sped

¹ FO, 766/1, Note by Envoy, 7 May 1925.

² These Gurkhas all settled down in India.

³ Balchandra Sharma, *op. cit.*, p. 335. Regmi, *op. cit.*, pp. 219-76, discusses at length the anti-Rana movement in India and its links with the anti-British elements there.

⁴ G. MacMunn, *The Martial Races of India*, p. 198.

⁵ For Tukur's works see the bibliography. Tukur served for many years with the Gurkha regiments in India.

back and forth between Gurkhas and the British...Thus whenever progressive steps to Indianise the Indian army were taken by increasing the number of Indian officers in units, the Gurkha brigade was specifically excluded from the scheme and remained in tact with their British officers. No written promise was ever made to the Gurkhas except perhaps by Lord Linlithgow to the Maharaja of Nepal, but the rule was well known throughout the Indian army that Indians would not be posted as officers to Gurkha battalions.¹

However, there was another side of the Nepalese exclusive policy to which Kennion drew attention. Kennion argued that the policy was harmful to the interests of both the Ranas and the British. The isolation of Nepal, however justified politically, was from the economic point of view dangerous. "Civilisation" in Nepal, Kennion pointed out, was only "court deep"; outside Kathmandu there was no sign of a modern life, "so that the country may be likened to an organism with an active brain but a partly paralysed body." Large scale emigration of Nepalese to India, which was causing Chandra Shamsher "great uneasiness", manifested economic discontent and insecurity. Raising the general standard of living of the Nepalese people, in Kennion's opinion, was a measure in which the British should actively help Chandra Shamsher, because this would check the migration of population and prevent what looked like Nepal's "slow death by exhaustion."² Economic discontent in Nepal would create political problems for the Rana government, and this certainly was not in the interests of the British themselves. Therefore, Kennion urged, the British government must help in the economic development of Nepal. The country needed roads, telegraph, efficient postal service, exploitation of her natural resources; also foreign capital and foreign experts. Kennion suggested the abolition of all duties on exports to Nepal through the Raxaul route so that the Prime Minister by bringing things cheaply into Nepal could raise "the general standard of comfort" of his people. It was in the interests of the British themselves, Kennion pointed out, to encourage Chandra Shamsher to make economic reforms because

a backward state that is conterminous with a progressive one is in the greater

¹ F. Toker, *While Memory Serves*, pp. 631-2.

² R.L. Kennion, "England and Nepal", *The Nineteenth Century and After*, January 1922, pp. 53-4. *IFP*, Vol. 10890, June 1920, No. 1.

danger, for civilisation produces its own resisting anti-toxins.¹

Kennion, however, did not want political reforms in Nepal. In fact, he regarded Chandra Shamsheer's regime as "perhaps of all forms of government the sanest." He was in complete agreement with the Prime Minister that the progress of a country need not necessarily be measured by whether or not it had a democratic form of government. In 1931 we find the ex-Envoy worried over the future of Britain's relations with Nepal should "the British nation" commit "the crime of offering to India the poisoned cloak of complete independence and India were mad enough to accept it." Kennion had no doubt that the Rana regime was the best the British could have in Nepal. So far as the British government were concerned, he said, it hardly mattered if Nepal was too slow in absorbing western ideas; rather "the danger is that false ideas about progress should penetrate across the frontier from India to the detriment of this brave, docile and attractive people."² General Bruce, another authority on the Gurkhas, echoed this:

It really would be a terrible disaster [Bruce held] to find the one country in the world which entirely lives its own life modernised and vulgarised. At the same time it is an anomaly and the only possible method of keeping it in its present excessively interesting though anomalous condition is to continue the policy so long established.³

¹ *Ibid.* The Govt. rejected this suggestion; but in the treaty of 1923 allowed Nepal customs facilities. Aitchison, (1929 edn.), XIV, p. 76, Art. VI of the treaty.

² Kennion, *Recollections*, *op. cit.*, pp. 675-7.

³ C.G. Bruce, *Himalayan Wanderer*, p. 186. The policy Bruce refers to was that of let alone and non-interference. See also Patrick Balfour, *Grand Tour; Diary of an Eastward Journey*, p. 168.

CHAPTER NINE

CONCLUSION

B RITISH POLICY in Nepal was evolutionary in character, and its underlying objectives not only changed in importance and urgency but were to a great extent conditioned by the internal situation in Nepal over which the British government had little control. In fact, while implementing their policy and realising their objectives, the British had to reckon with one important fact: the Nepalese government, too, had their own policy towards British India.

Several phases can be identified in the development of Anglo-Nepalese relations. During the first phase—1767-1804—the main aim of the British was to develop Bengal's Himalayan trade for which Nepal provided both the customary route as well as an important entrepôt; the means adopted by the British to achieve their object were military intervention to forestall the Gurkha conquest of the Nepal valley followed by the conciliation of the Gurkha rulers and the despatch of commercial missions to Kathmandu, and finally, the attempts at establishing British influence in the unsettled court of Kathmandu. None of these measures, however, proved successful, their net result being only to sow in the Nepalese *darbar* the feeling of deep distrust and hostility towards the British which lay at the root of Nepal's policy of jealous exclusion of and non-intercourse with the foreigners. The next phase—1804-1816—was dominated by the British anxiety for the security of their territory against Gurkha expansion. The war (1814-16) and the treaty that followed aimed at putting a definite limit to this expansion and restraining the Gurkha military power. The British then sought to translate their military victory into permanent and stable relations with Nepal; the treaty of Sagauli secured this object. The British policy was just to keep the Nepalese government to the terms of the treaty—neither to press them for any commercial concession nor for any subordinate alliance. The war had cost the British

much in men, money and morale, creating in them a healthy respect for their defeated enemies. The British would not have another war except as a last resort. The risk of provoking the freedom-loving Nepalese to a war served as a major influence on the British attitude to Nepal in subsequent years.

The war and the loss of one-third of their territory sobered the Nepalese government, who realised that mountains were no impregnable defence against a determined enemy of superior resources. The Nepalese respect for British arms increased; so did their fear. The treaty of Sagauli was a galling restraint on Nepalese military ambitions, but it had to be borne for fear of another and possibly a more disastrous war. The British in India were a compelling phenomenon and Nepal had to reconcile herself to it; Nepal's history would from now on be dominated by her relations with British India. None was convinced of this more than Bhimsen Thapa himself. Both the Nepalese and the British governments, for their own reasons, wanted to live in peace with one another. The British hands were full with campaigns against the Indian powers, like the Marathas; and the Nepalese government needed a breathing spell to recover from the shock of the war.

During the thirty years following the war the British learnt from their experience that a strong regime at Kathmandu was essential to political stability in Nepal, the lack of which was invariably accompanied by the recrudescence of Nepalese military aspirations and their eagerness to exploit the internal and external troubles of the Indian government. So long as Bhimsen ruled, Anglo-Nepalese relations were peaceful, though not cordial. Bhimsen was cold, resentful and afraid of the British, to escape whose domination he perfected the Nepalese policy of isolation and non-intercourse. From the Nepalese point of view the policy was a defensive measure against the power whose relations with the Indian states had ultimately cost them their military strength, territorial integrity and even independence. The British resigned themselves to Nepal's haughty aloofness, expecting time and circumstances to gradually change this attitude. It proved a vain hope; the Nepalese attitude did not change. The British policy of winning Nepalese confidence by conciliatory forbearance had, thus failed. This failure and the serious external crises and internal difficulties of the Indian government in the fourth decade of the 19th

century led them to adopt a different, a more forceful policy : confirming British influence in Nepal by active involvement in her internal affairs and strengthening the Resident's position as the main channel of that influence. For the advocates of this policy, it was just a political expedient to tide over the existing emergencies, *a pis aller*. The fall of Bhimsen, partly the result of this policy, was expected to be a British gain, but it proved just the reverse. Almost a decade of internal strife and political chaos followed together with bitter anti-British feelings at Kathmandu, a serious risk of violation of British territory by the excited Nepalese army and ultimately of a war, which the Indian government averted by relentless pressure on the King of Nepal reinforced by threats of invasion.

The experience of both the British and the Nepalese governments during these turbulent years was bitter, but the lessons learnt were wholesome. The Nepalese government saw how their internal dissensions created opportunities for British intrigues and intervention and how an ambitious Resident could create problems. The British, for their part, realised that active involvement in Nepalese court politics accentuated political confusion at Kathmandu; that it intensified rather than removed anti-British feelings in the *darbar*; that these feelings led to excitement in the Nepalese army, for every aspirant to power encouraged its cherished ambition to conquer the opulent British territories; and finally, that disturbed situation in British India created repercussions in the Nepalese politics. The policy of intervention was, therefore, abjured, and that of disengagement from the internal affairs of Nepal adopted.

Political stability returned to Kathmandu when the Ranas came to power in 1846—a great divide in the history of Nepal's relations with British India. The Ranas ruled Nepal with absolute power for one hundred and five years, drawing strength from British support. Jang Bahadur initiated the Nepalese government in the policy of active cooperation with the British and benefited thereby. His role during the Mutiny indicated that the Nepalese government had abandoned their earlier policy of taking advantage of British troubles. With the consolidation of the Rana regime, the British had attained one important political objective: the Nepalese were now not only safe neighbours but cooperative allies.

Jang Bahadur's friendliness held out for the British the hope that Nepal would cease to be a closed land to them—or at least to their Resident—so that between the governments more intimate intercourse, both political and economic, would follow. This hope was not fulfilled, and because Jang Bahadur, with all his effusive cordiality and cooperation, shared the Nepalese government's traditional belief that intimacy with the British was prejudicial to Nepal's independence, and that the exposure of the interior of Nepal to the "prying eyes" of the Resident hastened the loss of this independence. Jang Bahadur maintained peace and amity with the British, but the latter should not expect a greater degree of attachment than he could safely allow them. The Indian government, particularly the advocates of a forward policy, resented this, and when Jang Bahadur died, they saw their opportunity. They wanted to effect a change in the Nepalese policy by pressure and to improve the Resident's position as a means of strengthening British influence in Nepal. This influence was looked upon by Lytton, Durand, Henvey and Girdlestone as the only insurance against a change in the Nepalese government's erstwhile friendly attitude towards the British caused by a change in regime at Kathmandu. However, Ranudip's and Dhir Shamsher's stubborn resistance to the Resident's pressure left the British government in no doubt that the Nepalese government would never abandon their exclusive policy which in their view was the only defence against a neighbour whose influence spread as much by a conscious effort on its part as by its sheer position and overwhelming power and resources. This was the strongest susceptibility of the Nepalese, and hereafter the British always took care not to ruffle it.

From the last two decades of the 19th century, owing to political and military exigencies of the two governments, their relations developed towards greater interdependence and closer understanding. The Russian menace and the frontier expeditions obliged the Indian government to strengthen their army by enlisting a large number of Gurkhas in it and to keep on good terms with the Rana government to ensure regular supply of Gurkha recruits. Another factor influencing British policy towards Nepal at this time was their realisation that China's relations with Nepal, Bhutan and Sikkim conflicted with the Indian government's policy of keeping these border states exclusively

under British influence. The importance of Nepal as a frontier state and its military resources, both actual and potential, were now appreciated as never before, resulting in an adjustment of British attitude towards the Nepalese government and the adoption of a new policy: winning Nepalese confidence by liberal concessions and progressively increasing their dependence on the Indian government. The scheme of supplying arms to the Nepalese government in return for Gurkha recruits was an expression of this policy. Henceforth Nepal's military resources, particularly her man power, were looked upon by the British as an essential accessory to the Indian government's own armed strength. The Rana government, on the other hand, found in the Gurkha recruitment scheme, apart from its economic and other benefits, a means of ingratiating themselves with the British as well as keeping the restless martial tribes of Nepal gainfully engaged and contented. By the turn of the century the British had thus achieved another objective: Nepalese friendliness enabled them to not only strengthen the Indian army for meeting external energies but to minimise any risk of internal threat to British rule caused by mutiny in that army. The Gurkha mercenaries under British command who would fight ferociously against the Russians and the restless Pathans of the frontier were expected to show no sympathy for any rebellious Sikh or Punjabi muslim contingent of the Indian army. The Gurkhas were naturally looked upon as the most satisfactory guarantee of the continued good relations between the British and Nepalese governments.

With the years the growing internecine jealousy and bitter rivalry for power weakened the Rana family, proportionately increasing its vulnerability to British influence and pressure. Alongside improved political relations was seen the increased economic interdependence between Nepal and British India: there was expansion of trade; Nepalese in large numbers found employment in India; the volume of capital invested by the Ranas in Indian industries and commercial establishments grew—all this made the Nepalese government's stake in British friendship correspondingly heavy.

Isolating Nepal and restricting her external contact was one important feature of British policy. The British discouraged Nepal from having any relations with any foreign power other

than themselves. Nepal's desire to have diplomatic representation at the Court of St. James was not met until 1934, for fear that foreign powers might establish relations with Nepal through her embassy in London. When Chandra Shamsher sent a few Nepalese young men to Japan for technical training, there were not a few in the India Office who felt uneasy. It was, in fact, held as an axiom that the political and military requirements of the Indian empire could not allow Nepal to pass out of the British sphere of influence to that of any other power. Nepal's land-locked position and economic dependence on India and the lack of any power in her neighbourhood sufficiently strong to prevent her gravitation towards India enabled the British to exercise this virtual monopoly on Nepal's diplomatic relations. Nepal could not play the same role as Afghanistan between Russia and Britain. She did serve as a buffer state when China was powerful in Tibet; but the breakdown of the Chinese power and the emergence of a Tibetan government theoretically independent but really—under British influence, made India's North-East frontier safe, and correspondingly Nepal's importance as a buffer state decreased.

The Nepalese government's interest in the political and military events in India roused disfavour and even alarm in the Indian government who took all measures to keep the anti-British elements in India—be they disaffected Indian princes, as in the 19th century, or Indian nationalists, as in the 20th—away from Nepal. An important element in the Indian government's North-Eastern frontier policy lay in isolating Nepal from her Himalayan neighbours so as to prevent the formation of a large Himalayan kingdom under Nepalese hegemony. Sikkim was taken under British protection with the avowed object of preventing her and Bhutan's absorption into Nepal. In early British policy towards Bhutan and Sikkim, Nepalese reaction was an element for consideration, although eventually influence in the two states was increased in the second half of the 19th century despite Nepal's known dislike.

British influence on Nepal's relations with Tibet and China was a later development in Anglo-Nepalese relations, its main result being to cause a diminution in the Nepalese government's freedom of action in this sphere. In the late 18th and early 19th centuries, in the absence of definite diplomatic relations

with the Nepalese government, the British could hardly expect to control Nepal's relations with China and Tibet, although—as the result of Nepal's war with Tibet (1788-92) showed—the lack of this control did prove injurious to British interests. But even after the British had defeated Nepal and established regular relations with her, they did not interfere with her traditional relationship with China and Tibet for fear of possible Chinese annoyance and resultant damage to Britain's commercial interests in China.

The progressive decline of Chinese power from the second half of the 19th century acted as a stimulus to Nepalese military ambitions in Tibet which were further whetted by the Rana government's expectation of British support or at any rate their protection in case China retaliated. Nepal's relations with Tibet became very strained during the last decades of the 19th century, and war was averted by China's diplomatic pressure on Nepal and Tibet and the Rana government's failure to commit the British to Nepal's defence against China.

For several reasons the British disapproved of Nepalese ambitions in Tibet and yet refrained from putting any great pressure on the Ranas to abandon them. A war between Nepal and Tibet, besides, resulting in the inevitable restriction in the supply of Gurkha recruits by the Nepalese government, would have involved not only China but Sikkim and Bhutan as well—thus spreading tension along the entire North-East frontier. Another result would have been the impairment of Britain's relations with China and injury to her trade there resulting from the Chinese impression that the British were using their Rana allies as a cat's paw to further their own objectives in Tibet—and these objectives China had strong reasons to dislike. But then, the knowledge that the Nepalese government resented any pressure on them as an unwarranted interference with Nepal's external relations limited the Indian government's action during Nepal's disputes with Tibet to the offer of friendly advice to the Ranas to peacefully settle these disputes.

British policy in Tibet from the 1880's onwards had an important bearing on Nepal's relations with Tibet and China. Britain's commercial schemes in Tibet of which the opening of the Sikkim route was an important result, proved detrimental to the Nepalese merchants' virtual monopoly of Indo-Tibetan trade, of

which a large volume had hitherto been carried mainly through the Nepalese route. Nepal became an important element in British policy towards Tibet in the first decade of the present century; in their object of keeping Tibet free from foreign influence, the British made political use of Nepal and her anxiety to maintain her privileged position in Tibet which was threatened by the Dalai Lama's ambitious policy, the alleged Russian intrigues with the Dalai Lama and the Chinese scheme of absorption of Tibet. But the British, considering adverse international reaction to what would appear as the violation of the territorial integrity of the Chinese empire by a British protectorate, did not let the Nepalese government realise their long-cherished territorial aspirations in Tibet. The cessation of Russian intrigues with the Dalai Lama and the removal of Chinese power from Tibet did not end the Nepalese anxiety regarding their position in Tibet, because they saw a new threat to that position in the British policy of establishing friendly relations with the Dalai Lama and of strengthening him militarily, the policy which made it hard for Nepal to maintain her erstwhile military superiority on which was based her privileged position in Tibet. The British did not interfere with the normal relations between Nepal and Tibet, but their influence on both was effective enough to prevent any active hostility between them, if not to remove their age-old jealousy and ill-feelings.

As for Nepal's relations with China, they appeared to the British more a political embarrassment than a serious military danger, necessitating watchful interest rather than any vigorous action. The only exception to this attitude was seen in the British reaction to China's emphatic assertion of her suzerainty over Nepal in 1906-11 and her intrigues with Nepal, Bhutan and Sikkim, the result of which did China no good whatsoever. Nevertheless, not so much British policy as China's own weakness, her inability to manage her client states, her ambitious policy in Tibet in the last years of the Manchu rule, the disappearance of this rule itself—all of which cost China her prestige, reduced in the Nepalese eyes her efficacy as a counterpoise to the British and ultimately showed her as a menace to Nepalese interests—which had the decisive effect on Nepal's traditional relations with China.

The 20th century saw, under stress of several circumstances,

the areas of agreement between the governments of India and Nepal considerably widened, their respective interests closely identified and mutual obligation further increased. The development of this trend was in no small measure due to the efforts of the British representatives in Nepal, Ravenshaw, Manners Smith, Showers, Bayley, O'Connor and Kennion, whose amicable relations with the Nepalese government proved that the policy of gentle handling worked far better with the latter than attempts at cowing them into quiescence—the method either advocated or adopted by Hodgson, Ramsay, Girdlestone, Henvey and Durand. Of the Viceroys in the period under review Lytton's and Curzon's distrustful attitude towards Nepal was in contrast to the policy of all the other Viceroys—Ripon, Dufferin, Lansdowne, Elgin, Minto, Hardinge, Chelmsford and Reading—who chose not to pressurise the Nepalese if conciliation and soft-peddalling could earn the desired result. This also was the general attitude of the Home government where strong Secretaries of State like Kimberley, Morley and Montagu wanted to keep the Indian government to the beaten and, therefore, safe track, and where old India hands like Lee Warner, Lyall and Fitzpatrick and cautious civil servants like Godley, Ritchie and Wakely held a moderating influence on their more zealous colleagues, Barnes and Hirtzel, for instance.

Nepal's contribution to the World War as a British ally strengthened her claim to British favour. The War met with the high hopes of the Rana government; it earned them an important means of economic sustenance in the form of an annual subsidy; it also won them a great political object: the treaty of 1923 removed the ever-present danger of Nepal's absorption in the British empire, while, enabling the Ranas to make the fullest use of the British alliance. The British, for their part, had at first considerable doubt as regards both the necessity and the propriety of recognising Nepal's internal and external independence by a treaty, but ultimately they saw that in fact, the treaty was no more than a necessary formality—a means to satisfy the Rana government's *amour propre*, to further strengthen their rule at home and to ensure the continuance of their friendly policy towards the Indian government. In fact, the recognition of Nepal's *de jure* independence made little change in her *de facto* subordination to the British government. Nepal had definitely come

within the political framework of the British empire in India, being looked upon by the Indian government as a political and military outpost of that empire. Nepal's internal autonomy was guaranteed by the British government, but her external relations had, in effect, been adjusted to the requirements of British policy, and her independence in this respect was clearly limited to the extent allowed by the British. In fact, the Ranas were no better than loyal partners of the British in protecting and furthering the latter's imperial interests in India.

This became apparent when the nationalist movement in India intensified. For this and other disturbing circumstances such as Britain's growing rivalry with Japan in Asia, the uncertain situation in Tibet created by the Chinese policy, the rise of Bolshevik Russia, the disturbed situation in Afghanistan and the restlessness among the neighbouring Pathan tribes, the Indian government considered it prudent to keep the Ranas in good humour. The latter's loyalty and cooperation came, in fact, to be valued as the very sheet-anchor of British rule in India when assailed by several internal and external forces. A review of Britain's military position in India established that in the event of a serious emergency, the Indian government could bank upon the loyalty of none but the Gurkha troops already in India and those in Nepal which the Rana government were expected to supply on request. It was also recognised by the British government that Nepal being a powerful Hindu state could exert considerable influence on the Hindu anti-British elements in India; and the more articulate these elements became the greater became the need for dependence on the Rana government. The Ranas, for their part, actively assisted the British in suppressing anti-British forces in India and keeping them away from Nepal in order to prevent their contact with the local anti-Rana elements.

The British policy in Nepal was one of tactful management of a proud, sensitive, freedom-loving government which acquiesced in the loss of *de facto* independence when an appearance of their *de jure* sovereignty was maintained by profuse professions to that effect, by the avoidance of interference in the internal affairs of the state, by the provision of economic security for its martial population and by the bestowal of honours, titles and subsidies on its rulers: That the British policy paid off was due to four main reasons understanding of the Nepalese government's senti-

ments, prejudices and susceptibilities; appreciation of the fact that Nepal had a personality of her own and quite a strong one at that; adjustment of British needs to Nepalese expectations; and the political isolation of Nepal by exclusive British influence over its foreign relations.

British influence on Nepal was limited by the fact that it could operate through practically one agency alone—the Nepalese government, whose policy was to keep this influence rigidly restricted. British influence had both a stabilising and a retarding effect on Nepal. British support to the Rana regime ensured peace and stability in a country where geographical conditions and ethnic diversity impeded political unity and where the tradition of changing regimes by violence bred political insecurity and uncertainty. But then, this support also made the setting up of any other rule impossible, let alone any other form of government. The Nepalese could, therefore, have no experience of political experiments, and this was no small handicap for them when the Rana regime collapsed in 1951. The Nepalese had no training in constitutional or any liberal form of government, and, so, small wonder they had considerable difficulty in running this form of government in the post-Rana period.

In Nepal's social life the British could hardly act as a catalytic agent or accelerate the pace of modernism in the country. But they encouraged the Ranas in effecting social reforms; they wanted the Ranas to travel in India and to go to England with a view as much to impressing them with the power and resources of the British empire as to enlarging their mental horizon. However, geographical obstacles, lack of communication facilities and the resultant immobility in life, the Nepalese government's policy of isolation and the British acquiescence in this policy—all this prevented the dissemination of even a limited degree of the liberal ideas which swept India in the 19th and 20th centuries. The Ranas in their own interest perpetuated the Nepalese belief that the modernisation of their country with British assistance would inevitably lead to the latter's economic and eventually political ascendancy. Beneath this apparently lofty patriotic spirit lurked the apprehension that education and the enlightenment that would follow would weaken the autocratic Rana regime. Vehicles of modern ideas were unknown in Nepal; an intellectual elite was conspicuous by its absence; the small

number of educated men at Kathmandu were either absorbed in government offices or purged out of the country at the slightest suspicion of hostility to the government. The Gurkha soldiers who had served in India and elsewhere returned home with nothing but memories of battles and fond expectations of similar opportunities in future. Their economic dependence on the British government was a strong deterrent to the growth of any hostile feelings against the latter.

Indo-Nepalese relations during the period under review thus had a very narrow base; it was a relationship of a family oligarchy in Nepal and an alien government in India, both of which became in course of time unpopular. The forces opposed to the Ranas naturally looked to the anti-British forces in India for support. The Indian nationalist press attacked the Rana regime, particularly when the Gurkhas were employed by the British government to put down the nationalist movement in India. In the late 1930's anti-Rana forces were organised into parties which looked to the nationalist elements in India for encouragement and inspiration. During the Quit India movement (1942) a number of prominent Nepalese were arrested in India. In the same year anti-Rana elements at Saptari in the Nepalese Terai broke open the Hanumannagar jail where Jayprakash Narayan, Rammanohar Lohia and other Indian leaders had been kept interned by the Rana government after their escape to Nepal for political asylum. The opponents of the Ranas in the Terai became a strong force in 1946-47, compelling the Rana government to make administrative reforms. The relationship between the Rana regime and the British appeared to them an unholy alliance, a partnership in the exploitation of the Nepalese people; the British were condemned as a prop of an autocratic and corrupt regime. When the British left India the Ranas found it difficult to adjust themselves to the new government of India seeking a different, a broader basis of relationship between Nepal and India. The British with their limited political and military objectives in Nepal tolerated a regime very different from their own in India. The Nehru government with their democratic ideals not only treated this regime as a political anachronism but actively assisted the opponents of the regime to effect its fall.

The disappearance of the Rana rule and of the British from

India has, on the one hand, freed Nepal from years of Indian political tutelage and, on the other, created for her the problem of managing her defence and developing her economy with extremely limited resources and backward economic conditions. Assistance from neighbouring India and China apparently offers a ready, but, from the Nepalese point of view, not always a safe solution, for its inherent risk of involving Nepal in the current Indo-Chinese strained relations.

In Indian eyes Nepal's importance as a buffer state stems from the propinquity of the Communist Chinese menace to India. Political and strategic needs are the important motivations of the Indian government's policy towards Nepal, as they had been of the British in the past. But in their approach there lies a difference : while the British could realise their objectives by aligning themselves with a particular regime and strengthening it against internal challenges, the changed connotation of a country's real strength today obliges the present Indian government to assist the Nepalese people to adjust themselves, politically, economically and socially, to the demands of modern times—and thereby to make the country less vulnerable to either ideological subversion or violent revolution. Yet, the same main reason—Nepalese sensitivity to independence—which had made the British government observe caution in dealing with Nepal has also influenced the present Indian government's approach. While the British had to stretch their policy of let alone too far, even if it arrested Nepal's progress, the present Indian government have to realise their objective without exciting the Nepalese suspicion that India is overdoing her role as Nepal's guardian and pace-setter.



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APPENDIX ONE

LIST OF RESIDENTS IN NEPAL*

1. Captain W.D. Knox	1802-3
2. Lieutenant Boileau (Officiating)	1816
3. Honourable E. Gardner	1816-29
4. B.H. Hodgson (Officiating)	1829-31
5. Sir H. Maddock	1831-3
6. B.H. Hodgson	1833-43
7. Major H. Lawrence	1843-6
8. Lieutenant-Colonel C. Thoresby	1846-50
9. Honourable J.C. Erskine	1850-52
10. Dr. H. Oldfield (nominated Hon. Assistant to Resident)	1857-8
11. Lieutenant-Colonel G. Ramsay	1852-67
12. Lieutenant-Colonel R.C. Lawrence	1865-72
13. C.E.R. Girdlestone	1872-88
14. F. Henvey	1877-8
15. Lieutenant-Colonel E.C. Impey	1878
16. Major F.A. Wilson	1883
17. Colonel I.C. Berkeley	1885-6
18. Major E.L. Durand	1888-91
19. Major-General H. Wylie	1891-9
20. Lieutenant-Colonel W.H.C. Wylie	1898
21. Lieutenant-Colonel A.H. Muir	1899
22. Lieutenant-Colonel W. Loch	1899-1901
23. Lieutenant-Colonel T.C. Pears	1901-02
24. Lieutenant-Colonel C.W. Ravenshaw	1902-05
25. Lieutenant-Colonel J. Manners Smith	1905-16
26. Lieutenant-Colonel F.W.P. Macdonald	1908-09
27. Lieutenant-Colonel H.L. Showers	1912-3
28. Lieutenant-Colonel S.F. Bayley	1916-8
29. Lieutenant-Colonel W.F.T. O'Connor	1918-20

* P. Landon, *Nepal*, I, pp 258-9.

LIST OF BRITISH ENVOYS AT THE COURT OF NEPAL*

1. Lieutenant-Colonel R.L. Kennion	1920-21
2. Lieutenant-Colonel W.F.T. O'Connor	1921-4
3. W.H.J. Wilkinson (Officiating)	1924
4. Lieutenant-Colonel W.F.T. O'Connor	1924-5
5. W.H.J. Wilkinson	1925

* *Ibid.*

APPENDIX TWO

THE TREATY OF SAGAULI, 1815

"Treaty of Peace Between the Honourable East India Company and Maharajah Bikram Sah, Rajah of Nepaul, settled between Lieutenant-Colonel Bradshaw on the part of the Honourable Company, in virtue of the full powers vested in him by His Excellency the Right Honourable Francis, Earl of Moira, Knight of the Most Noble Order of the Garter, one of His Majesty's Most Honourable Privy Council, appointed by the Court of Directors of the said Honourable Company to direct and control all the affairs of the East Indies, and by Sree Gooroo Gujraj Misser and Chunder Seeker Opedee on the part of Maha Rajah Girmaun Jode Bikram Sah Bahauder, Shumsher Jung, in virtue of the powers to that effect vested in them by the said Rajah of Nipal—2nd December 1815.

Whereas war has arisen between the Honourable East India Company and the Rajah of Nipal, and whereas the parties are mutually disposed to restore the relations of peace and amity, which, previously to the occurrence of the late differences, had long subsisted between the two states, the following terms of peace have been agreed upon.

Article I

There shall be perpetual peace and friendship between the Honourable East India Company and the Rajah of Nipal.

Article II

The Rajah of Nipal renounces all claim to the lands which were the subject of discussion between the two states before the war; and acknowledges the right of the Honourable Company to the sovereignty of those lands.

Article III

The Rajah of Nipal hereby cedes to the Honourable East India Company in perpetuity all the undermentioned territories. viz.—

- First —The whole of the low lands between the Rivers Kali and Rapti.
- Secondly —The whole of the low lands (with the exception of Bootwul Khass) lying between the Rapti and the Gunduck.
- Thirdly —The whole of the low lands between the Gunduck and Coosah, in which the authority of the British Government has been introduced, or is in actual course of introduction.
- Fourthly—All the low lands between the Rivers Mitchee and the Teestah.
- Fifthly —All the territories within the hills eastward of the River Mitchee, including the fort and lands of Nagree and the Pass of Nagarcote, leading from Morung into the hills, together with the territory lying between the Pass and Nagree. The aforesaid territory shall be evacuated by the Gurkha troops within forty days from this date.

Article IV

With a view to indemnify the Chiefs and Barahdars of the State of Nipal, whose interests will suffer by the alienation of the lands ceded by the foregoing article, the British Government agrees to settle pensions to the aggregate amount of two lakhs of rupees per annum on such chiefs as may be selected by the Rajah of Nipal, and in the proportions which the Rajah may fix. As soon as the selection is made, Sunnuds shall be granted under the seal and signature of the Governor-General for the pensions respectively.

Article V

The Rajah of Nipal renounces for himself, his heirs, and successors, all claim to or connexion with the countries lying to the west of the River Kali, and engages never to have any concern with those countries or the inhabitants thereof.

Article VI

The Rajah of Nipal engages never to molest or disturb the Rajah of Sikkim in the possession of his territories; but agrees, if any difference shall arise between the State of Nipal and the

Rajah of Sikkim, or the subjects of either, that such differences shall be referred to the arbitration of the British Government, by whose award the Rajah of Nipal engages to abide.

Article VII

The Rajah of Nipal engages never to take or retain in his service any British subject, nor the subject of any European and American State, without the consent of the British Government.

Article VIII

In order to secure and improve the relations of amity and peace hereby established between the two States, it is agreed that accredited Ministers from each shall reside at the Court of the other.

Article IX

This treaty, consisting of nine Articles, shall be ratified by the Rajah of Nipal within fifteen days from this date, and the ratification shall be delivered to Lieutenant-Colonel Bradshaw, who engages to obtain and deliver to the Raja the ratification of the Governor-General within twenty days, or sooner, if practicable.

APPENDIX THREE

TREATY OF PEACE BETWEEN NEPAL & TIBET, 1856¹

We, the undermentioned Nobles, Bharadars, and Lamas representing the Gorkha Government and the Tibetan Government have mutually settled a Treaty of the following ten Articles, and with Supreme Being as witness we have affixed our seals unto it of our own free will and choice. The Emperor of China shall continue to be regarded with respect as heretofore.² So long as the two Governments continue to abide by the terms as set forth herein, they shall live in amity like two brothers. May the Supreme Being not allow that side to prosper which may make war upon the other; and may the side be exempt from all sin in making war upon the other side which violates the terms contained in this agreement (Treaty).

(Here follow the names and seals of the signatories).

Article I

Tibet shall pay a sum of Rupees ten thousand annually to the Gorkha Government.

Article II

Gorkha and Tibet have both been regarding the Emperor of China with respect.³ Tibet being merely a country of Monasteries of Lamas and a place for recitation of prayers and practice of religious austerities, should troops of any other Raja invade Tibet in future, Gorkha will afford such assistance and protec-

¹ P. Landon, *Nepal*, II, pp. 282-5.

² In Aitchison's *Treaties and Engagements* (II, 1909 edn. p. 97 fn) this statement occurs: "We further agree that the Emperor of China is to be obeyed by both States as before."

³ In Aitchison's above book this statement occurs. "The States of Gorkha and Tibet have both borne allegiance to the Emperor of China up to the present time."

In the 1929 edn. of Aitchison's work (XIV. p. 49), the word "respect" has taken the place of the word "obey."

tion as it can.

Article III

Tibet shall not levy taxes (on routes), duties (on merchandise), and rates (of any other kind) leviable by Tibet on the merchants and subjects of the country of Gorkha.

Article IV

Tibet shall return to the Gorkha Government all Sikh soldiers held as prisoners and also all officers, women and guns of Gorkha that were captured and taken during the war, and the Gorkha Government shall return to Tibet all the soldiers of Tibet captured in the war, as also the arms, the yaks whatever there may be belonging to the Rayats of Kirong, Kuti, Jhunga, Taglakhar and Chewar-Gumbha, and up to Bhairab Langur range shall be withdrawn and the places evacuated.

Article V

Henceforth not a Naikhya (Headman) but a Bharadar shall be posted by the Gorkha Government at Lhasa.

Article VI

The Gorkha Government will establish its own trade factory at Lhasa which will be allowed to trade freely in all kinds of merchandise from gems and ornaments to articles of clothing and food.

Article VII

The Gorkha Bharadar at Lhasa shall not try and determine suits and cases against subjects and merchants of Tibet; and Tibet shall not try and determine suits and cases against Gorkha subjects, merchants, the Kashmeries of Nepal, residing within the jurisdiction of Lhasa. In the event of dispute between the subjects and merchants of Gorkha and those of Tibet, the Bharadars of both Gorkha and Tibet shall sit together and jointly adjudicate the cases. All incomes (fines etc.) from such adjudications realised from the subjects and merchants of Tibet shall be taken by Tibet, and those realised from the Gorkha subjects and merchants and Kashmeries shall be taken by Gorkha.

Article VIII

A Gorkha subject who goes to the country of Tibet after committing murder of any person of Gorkha shall be surrendered by Tibet to Gorkha; and a Tibetan subject who goes to the country of Gorkha after committing murder of any person of Tibet shall be surrendered by Gorkha to Tibet.

Article IX

If the property of Gorkha subjects and merchants be plundered by any person of Tibet, the Bharadars of Tibet shall compel the restoration of such property to the Tibetan subjects and merchants. Should the property be not forthcoming from the plunderer, Tibet shall compel him to enter into arrangement for restitution (of such property). If the property of Tibetan subjects and merchants be plundered by any person of Gorkha, Gorkha shall compel the restoration of such property to the Tibetan subjects and merchants. Should the property be not forthcoming from the plunderer, Gorkha shall compel him to enter into an agreement for the restitution (of such property).

Article X

After the completion of the Treaty neither side shall act vindictively against the person or property of the subjects of Tibet who may have joined the Gorkha Durbar during the war, or of the subjects of Gorkha who may have so joined the Tibetan Durbar.

This the third day of Light Fortnight of Chaitra in the year of Sumbat 1912.¹

¹ The translation is of the Nepalese text of the Treaty.

APPENDIX FOUR

ANGLO-NEPALESE TREATY, 1923

Whereas peace and friendship have now existed between the British Government and the Government of Nepal since the signing of the Treaty of Segowlie on the second day of December, one thousand eight hundred and fifteen and whereas since that date the Government of Nepal has ever displayed its true friendship for the British Government and the British Government has as constantly shown its goodwill towards the Government of Nepal; and whereas the Governments of both the countries are now desirous of still further strengthening and cementing the good relations and friendship which have subsisted between them for more than a century; the two High Contracting Parties having resolved to conclude a new Treaty of Friendship have agreed upon the following article:

Article I

There shall be perpetual peace and friendship between the Governments of Great Britain and Nepal, and the two Governments agree mutually to acknowledge and respect each other's independence, both internal and external.

Article II

All previous Treaties, Agreements and Engagements, since and including the Treaty of Segowlie of 1815, which have been concluded between the two Governments are hereby confirmed, except so far as they may be altered by the present Treaty.

Article III

As the preservation of peace and friendly relations with the neighbouring States whose territories adjoin their common frontiers is to the mutual interests of both the High Contracting Parties, they hereby agree to inform each other of any serious friction or misunderstanding with those States likely to rupture

such friendly relations, and each to exert its good offices as far as may be possible to remove such friction and misunderstanding.

Article IV

Each of the High Contracting Parties will use all such measures as it may deem practicable to prevent its territories being used for purposes inimical to the security of the other.

Article V

In view of the long standing friendship that has subsisted between the British Government and the Government of Nepal, and for the sake of cordial neighbourly relations between them, the British Government agrees that the Nepal Government shall be free to import from or through British India into Nepal whatever arms, ammunition, machinery, warlike material or stores may be required or desired for the strength and welfare of Nepal, and that this arrangement shall hold good for all time as long as the British Government is satisfied that the intentions of the Nepal Government are friendly and that there is no immediate danger to India from such importations. The Nepal Government, on the other hand, agrees that there shall be no export of such arms, ammunition, etc., across the frontier of Nepal either by the Nepal Government or by private individuals.

If, however, any Convention for the regulation of the Arms Traffic, to which the British Government may be a party, shall come into force, the right of importation of arms and ammunition by the Nepal Government shall be subject to the proviso that the Nepal Government shall first become a party to that Convention, and that such importation shall only be made in accordance with the provisions of that Convention.

Article VI

No Customs Duty shall be levied at British Indian Ports on goods imported on behalf of the Nepal Government for immediate transport to that country provided that a certificate from such authority as may from time to time be determined by the two Governments shall be presented at the time of importation to the Chief Customs Officer at the Port of import setting forth that the goods are the property of the Nepal Government, are required for the public services of the Nepal Government, are

not for the purpose of any State monopoly or State trade, and are being sent to Nepal under orders of the Nepal Government.

The British Government also agrees to the grant in respect of all trade goods, imported at British Indian Ports for immediate transmission to Kathmandu without breaking bulk *en route* of a rebate of the full duty paid, provided that in accordance with arrangements already agreed to between the two Governments, such goods may break bulk for repacking at the port of entry under customs supervision in accordance with such rules as may from time to time be laid down in this behalf. Rebate may be claimed on the authority of a certificate signed by the said authority that the goods have arrived at Kathmandu with the customs seals unbroken and otherwise tampered with.

The Prime Minister of Nepal, to the British Envoy at the Court of Nepal, 21 December 1923.

Regarding the purchase of arms and munitions which the Government of Nepal buys from time to time for the strength and welfare of Nepal, and import to its own territory from and through British India in accordance with article 5 of the Treaty between the two Governments, the Government of Nepal hereby agrees that it will, from time to time before the importation of arms and munitions at British Indian Ports, furnish detailed lists of such arms and munitions to the British Envoy at the Court of Nepal in order that the British Government may be in a position to issue instructions to the port authorities to afford the necessary facilities for their importation in accordance with article 6 of this Treaty.

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- (2) Balfour Papers (P.R.O. 30/60)
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- (2) Guru Hemraj Vamsavali, 1947 (1890).
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1866	LII	13	East India: Further Papers Relating to Bhutan.
1882	XLVIII	118	Afghanistan: Return of the Amount of money ammunition, guns and rifles given to the Amirs of Afghanistan since the time of Dost Muhammad.

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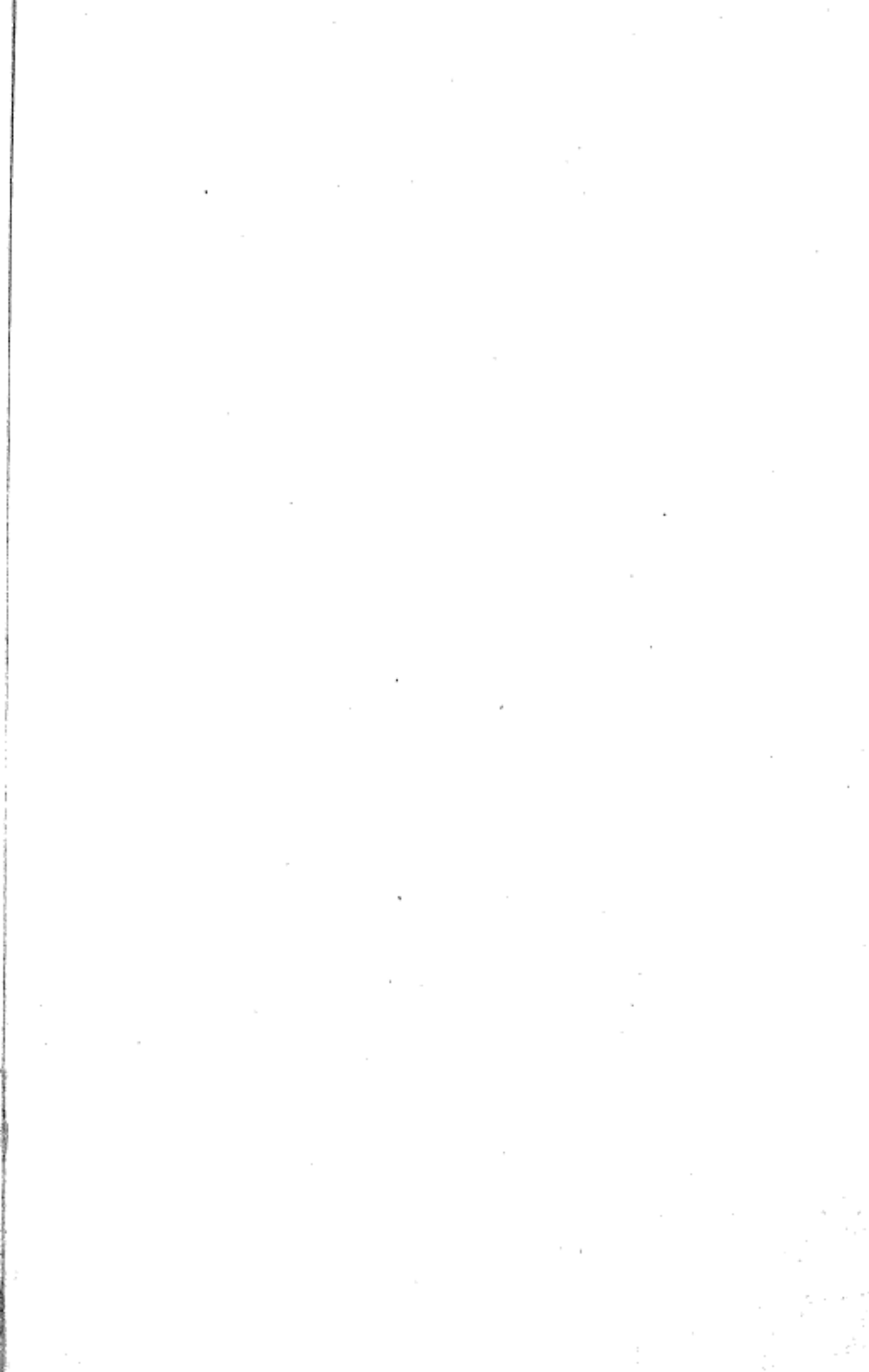
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ERRATA

- p. 2, para 1, line 2, *for* standstone *read* sandstone
- p. 4, para 3, line 4, *for* in the west *read* on the west
- p. 4, para 3, line 4, *for* in the east *read* on the east
- p. 13, foot note 2, line 6, *for* Oct. Political *read* Oot. Political
- p. 16, para 2, line 1, *for* 1857-9, *read* 1857-8
- p. 26, para 5, line 7, *delete* sign of interrogation after government
- p. 44, foot note 2, *for* Mos *read* Nos
- p. 45, para 3, line 5, *for* permanet *read* permanent
- p. 54, para 2, line 9, *after* rate *delete* not
- p. 55, foot note 4, *after* Chapter IV *delete* pp. 142-3
- p. 58, foot note, 3, *read* LNP *for* LGP
- p. 61, para 3, line 1, *for* spelled *read* spelt
- p. 63, para 3, line 1, *after* when *insert* in
- p. 68, foot note 3, *after* Chapter VI *delete* p. 223 fn. 72
- p. 81, para 4, line 9, *for* 1856-60 *read* 1857-60
- p. 88, foot note 2, line 2, *after* Chapter VI *delete* pp. 242-5
- p. 90, para 1, line 16, *after* Complacency *insert* at
- p. 90, foot note 2, line 18, *for* No. 32, January, *read* No. 3, 8 January;
- p. 91, para 2, line 16, *after* affairs *read* 2 for 1
- p. 94, para 2, line 3, *after* by *insert* 1
- p. 94, para 3, line 24, *after* aid *delete* 1
- p. 97, fn., line 5, *for* 12 *read* 82
- p. 100, fn. 1, *for* 105 *read* 95
- p. 117, line 10 (para 3), *after* government *insert* —
- p. 173, fn. 4, line 1, *after* Secy. of State *insert* to
- p. 174, fn. 2, line 1, *for* REF *read* PEF; line 2, *for* 1912, *read* 1911
- p. 179, fn. 1, line 1, *for* Vol. 121 *read* 21
- p. 180, fn. 4, line 3, *for* 40924 *read* 4092A
- p. 183, para 2, line 1, *delete* done
- p. 183, fn. 4, *for* Chapter VI and VII *read* pp. 136, 148, 175
- p. 190, para 2, line 7, *after* Nepal *insert* as
- p. 202, fn. line 2, *for* Isue Razi *read* Isu Razi
- p. 207, fn. 2, *after* VI *insert* p. 147
- p. 213, fn. 2, *for* 169-72, 189, fn. 77 *read* 115-6 129, fn. 2
- p. 224, para 2, line 5, *after* seek *insert* to
- p. 226, para 1, line 3; *for* writing *read* wring
- p. 239, para 1, line 8, *after* 8 *insert* 3
- p. 242, fn. 2, *for* Guillemayd *read* Guillemard
- p. 262, para 1, line 4, *for* and *read* any
- p. 269, para 1, line 3, *for* the *insert* two
- p. 271, para 2, line 13, *after* eventually *insert* British
- p. 275, para 3, line 9, *after* reasons *insert* :



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