

SIKKIM — WHERE FEUDALISM FIGHTS DEMOCRACY

By S. C. SEN

1. Sikkim and its history

The Kingdom of Sikkim, situated in the Eastern Himalaya, was a protectorate of India. It has an area of 2,818 sq.miles. The name Sikkim is derived from two Limbu words meaning "New palace". The Tibetans called it Drend Zong, or the land of rice, while it was known to the Lepchas, the original inhabitants of the country as "Nye-ma-el" or heaven.

The country can be divided into two geographical parts: northern and southern. Tangu can be taken as marking the dividing line between the two parts. The southern part consists of dense forests and precipitous hills. It is sparsely populated and the villages are few and far between. The northern part is comparatively a more open and undulating country. In this region good pastures and pine forests are found.

The total population of Sikkim is about 162,189, which is composed mainly of the Lepchas, Bhutiyas and Nepalese. The Lepchas were the original inhabitants of the country, and number about 14,847. Their origin is doubtful but they are supposed to have come from the east along the foot of the hills from the direction of Assam and Upper Burma. There are two accounts regarding the origin of the name Lepcha. According to the first version, the name "Lepcha" had been derived from a Nepali word "Lapcha" meaning "vile speakers". According to the second version, there is a type of fish in Nepal, known as Lapcha, which is very submissive in nature like the Lepcha people who are also noted for their submissiveness and as such the Nepalese termed them as Lepcha not in contempt but to give them credit for their submissive temperament. The word "Lapcha" was modified in English pronunciation as "Lepcha". The Lepchas were originally animists, but most of them now profess Buddhism. They are noted for their mild, quiet and indolent disposition.

The next group of people to enter Sikkim were the Khambas, popularly known as the Bhutiyas. They were immigrants from Tibet. They number about 14,000. They profess Buddhism and are generally very strong, hardy and good tempered.

The Nepalese immigrants now far outnumber the Lepchas or the Bhutiyas. They are almost all Hindus by religion. At present they number about 108,165. They are on the whole "a steady, industrious and thrifty people".

Mahayana Buddhism is the state religion of Sikkim but the Sikkimese are allowed full freedom of worship. There are about 67 monasteries in the country and the most important among them are located at Pemayang-tse, Tashiding, Phodang, Ralang, etc.

The three numerically important languages are Nepali, Sikkim Bhutiya and Lepcha, spoken respectively by 74,359, 36,577 and 14,847 people. English is used extensively and officially for internal and external correspondences and communications. (The population figures are based on 1961 census. Since then there has been large increase of the Nepali population.)

Very little is known about the early history of Sikkim. The Lepchas, as mentioned earlier, were the original inhabitants of Sikkim and they claim to be autochthones

of Sikkim proper. In the beginning of the seventeenth century A.D., three Lamas came from Tibet into Sikkim to convert the people to their doctrines. They found at Gongtok, one Penchu Namgyal, the great-grandson of Guru Tashe, a Tibetan noble. The lamas selected and invested the young man as the Gyalpo or the King of Sikkim. This event took place in 1641 at a place called Yoksam. Penchu Namgyal thus became the first ruler of the present Namgyal dynasty. The Kingdom of Sikkim in those times was very extensive and included the Chumbi Valley of Tibet and the Darjeeling district of West Bengal.

For the next 150 years after the accession of Penchu Namgyal to the Sikkim throne in 1641, succession passed from father to son. During the reign of the third Gyalpo, Chador Namgyal, Sikkim was overrun by the Bhutanese in 1706. Tibet then came to the rescue of Sikkim and drove out the Bhutanese from the country. The Sikkim King in gratitude founded the great monastery at Pemiongchi. It is the largest in Sikkim and wholly Tibetan in character.

During the reign of Gyurma Namgyal, Sikkim lost the province of Limbuana to Nepal. In the time of the sixth Gyalpo, Tenzing Namgyal, the Nepalese invaded Sikkim and overran the country as far eastward as the Tista river including the Morung or the lowlands at the foot of the hills. Tenzing Namgyal died in 1793 and was succeeded by his son Chugphui Namgyal. Shortly after his accession to the throne, war broke out between Nepal and Tibet, in the course of which the Nepalese established themselves firmly in Sikkim, south and west of the Tista.

According to a tradition, the Chinese after expelling the Nepalese from Tibet called on the Sikkimese to show their boundaries. Chugphui Namgyal, being a minor and a fugitive could not come forward to protect the interests of his kingdom. The Chinese thereupon gave the region west of the Tista to Nepal. The Chola-Jelap range was made the north and east boundary of Sikkim. The Chumbi Valley was given to Tibet.

Sikkim's Contact with the East India Company

The attention of the East India Company was attracted towards Sikkim, due to its strategic importance, in the year 1814 when it was involved in a war with Nepal. The opening of relations with Sikkim became a political and military necessity on account of three reasons:

1. it was easily accessible,
2. it would facilitate communication with China via Tibet since the Princes of Sikkim were closely connected by matrimonial relations as well as religious affinities with Tibet;
3. to prevent possible Nepalese-Bhutanese intrigues against the Company.

In view of these advantages the company instructed Captain Barre Latter of the Bengal Army to establish contacts with Tsugphud Namgyal, the ruler of Sikkim. Captain Barre Latter after establishing contacts with the Sikkimese authorities, promised to help Sikkim, to recover its territories lost to Nepal during the Nepalese invasion of Sikkim in 1780. Sikkim agreed to support the company and undertook to play the role of a faithful ally. The Nepal war came to an end with the signing of the treaty of Segauly on December 2, 1815 between the company and Nepal. A part from the territories secured by it, the company made the Nepalese government to agree not to molest or disturb the Rajah of Sikkim and

British arbitration was accepted in case of all differences arising between these two states. In 1817 a new treaty was signed between the Raja and the Company known as the Treaty of Titalia.

The Treaty of Titalia 1817 and its Significance

To establish the company's relations with Sikkim on a firmer footing, Lord Moira (afterwards Marquis of Hastings), the Governor General of India, restored to Sikkim the territory lying between the rivers Meehi and Teesta (wrested from Nepal) by signing a treaty with the Raja Teugphud Namgyal on February 10, 1817. The British, however, reserved to themselves the right to arbitrate in any dispute that might arise between Sikkim and Nepal. The political significance of the treaty was tremendous:

1. It helped to check the Nepalese expansion towards the east. Sikkim became a strong buffer state between Nepal and Bhutan with the restoration of the territory between the rivers Meehi and the Teesta.
2. It brought Sikkim for the first time under the influence of the company and the freedom of action of Sikkim was limited to a great extent by the provisions of the treaty.
3. The company gained trade privileges and the right to trade upto Tibetan frontier.

The Treaty of Titalia, thus marked the beginning of the British interest in Sikkim as a trade route to Tibet and as a factor in India's security.

Two months after the signing of the Treaty of Titalia, in order to strengthen Sikkim as a buffer between Nepal and British India, Lord Moira ceded to Sikkim an additional territory of the Morang — the low lands lying between the rivers Meehi and the Mahanadi.

Sikkim though now had security against external aggression, it had no respite yet from its own internal feuds. The Lepchas, who had been in the vanguard of the struggle against the Gorkha invaders were opposed to the domination of the Bhotiyas in the affairs of the kingdom. This tendency was not liked by the ruling group. The ruler and his group went so far as to accomplish the assassination of a Lepcha minister in 1826. This led to the migration of hundreds of Lepchas to the Ilam area of Eastern Nepal on account of the feeling of insecurity, with the connivance of the Gorkhas, they frequently raided Western Sikkim and caused several border disputes between Nepal and Sikkim. In pursuance of the terms of 1817 treaty, Sikkim referred the matter for arbitration to the Governor General of the East India Company. The Governor General deputed J. W. Grant, who was Commercial Resident at Malda, and Captain George William Aylmer Lloyd, who commanded the British frontier force at Titalia, to look into the matter and make an award. As a result of their intervention, the Lepcha raiders of eastern Nepal were compelled to return to Nepal.

Cession of Darjeeling

Grant and Lloyd during this tour came across a small hill village called Darjeeling. They suggested to the Governor General that the site would not only make an ideal health resort and as a suitable site for a sanatorium for the convalescence of the British troops, but will also confer considerable commercial and political benefits on the company in the Eastern Himalayas. The British Government offered to buy

the site or to exchange some other territory for it. But in the initial stages Sikkim appeared reluctant to part with it. However, after prolonged communication and having regard to the constant need for British help and protection in putting down the hostile elements of the Lepchas and the uncertain attitude of Tibet, Tsugphud Namgyal changed his mind. He presented to the British Government on February 1, 1835 in the language of the Grant Deed "all the land south of the Great Rangeet River, east of the Balasun, Kahil and little Rangeet rivers, and west of the Rungno and Mahanadi rivers. Instead of an equivalent tract in exchange the British Government sanctioned an annual subsidy of Rs. 3,000/- as compensation to Sikkim in 1841. It was increased to Rs. 6,000 in 1846.

The territory thus ceded to the British later on became the nucleus of the district of Darjeeling. The British Government first placed it under a Superintendent who besides the administration and development of Darjeeling, held charge of British political relations with Sikkim also. In 1850, the designation of the Superintendent was changed to that of Deputy Commissioner. The cession of Darjeeling was an important event in the history of East India Company's relations with Sikkim. Darjeeling became an important observation post of the British in the Himalayas and enhanced the possibilities of trade with Tibet.

The Treaty of 1861

On March 28, 1861 at Tum-long, a detailed treaty containing 23 Articles was signed on behalf of the Government of India by the Hon'ble Asley Eden and by the Maharaja's son, Sidkeong Namgyal. Maharaja Tsugphud Namgyal was in Chumbi and declined to return to Sikkim. It was about this time that the title of Maharaja came to be used for the rulers of Sikkim.

The treaty embodied recognition by Sikkim of the defacto British protectorate over Sikkim and of the right of the Government of India to construct roads through Sikkim to the Tibetan border, the banishment of Ex-Dewan Namguay and his blood relations to Tibet, and the transfer of the seat of the Government from Chumbi in Tibet to Sikkim for at least nine months in a year. Matters relating to the trade and extradition were also settled to the satisfaction of the British. Further, the Government of Sikkim would not cede or lease any portion of its territory to any other state without the permission of the British Government.

The Treaty of 1861 was very significant in the British-Sikkim relations. It brought also Sikkim under the British control. Almost all the demands of the Government of India were realized by the Treaty. The Treaty checked Tibetan influence in Sikkim for a time. The Government of India were then in a position to annex Sikkim, but did not contemplate such a step in view of the British disinclination to involve in any conflict with Tibet, which had vague claims over Sikkim.

Anglo-Chinese Convention 1890

A settlement of the Sikkim Tibet hostilities in which the British were actively involved was, however, reached only on March 17, 1890 with the signing of the

Anglo-Chinese Convention at Calcutta by Lord Lansdowne, Viceroy and Governor General of India and the Amban Shen Tai (Imperial Associate Resident in Tibet).

It was laid down that the boundary of Sikkim and Tibet shall be the crest of the mountain range separating the waters flowing in to the Sikkim Teesta and its affluents from the waters flowing into the Tibetan Mochu and northwards into other rivers of Tibet. It recognised the status of Sikkim as a British Protectorate and the right of the British Government to have direct and exclusive control over the internal administration and foreign relations of that State.

The Convention settled once for all the status of Sikkim, which for all practical purposes, became part and parcel of British India and lost its separate existence and identity and the Britishers came to exercise paramount political control over Sikkim. Peking gave up the Sino-Tibetan claims to suzerainty over Sikkim.

The Lhasa Convention 1904

A convention was signed in the audience hall of the Potala on September 7, 1904 popularly known as Lhasa Convention.

It embodied among other things, the Tibetan endorsement of the boundary between Sikkim and Tibet as defined in the Anglo-Chinese Convention of 1890 and also of commercial rights that the British had secured in Tibet through the Trade Regulations of 1893. The Convention of 1904 stated that Tibet would uphold the Convention of 1890 and reference was made to the "relations of friendship and good understanding which had existed between the British Government and the Government of Tibet". It contained nine Articles. Article IX of the 1904 Convention is of paramount importance. This article specified that the Government of Tibet would guarantee that, without the previous consent of the British Government it would allow:

1. No portion of Tibetan territory to be ceded, sold, leased, mortgaged, or otherwise given for occupation to any foreign power;
2. No foreign power to intervene in Tibetan affairs;
3. No representative of any foreign power to be admitted to Tibet;
4. No concession for railways, roads, telegraphs, or other rights to be granted to any foreign power or the subject of any foreign power; and
5. No Tibetan revenues whether in kind or cash, to be pledged or assigned to any foreign power or the subject of any foreign power.

This Convention served to intensify Tibet's isolation from the rest of the world.

The Peking Convention

The Lhasa Convention was not final, as the assent of China whose suzerainty over Tibet, Great Britain had recognized, was not obtained. Therefore after the return of the Expedition to the British territory, the necessary negotiations with China were undertaken. On April 27, 1906, the Convention between Great Britain and China, generally known as the Peking Convention was signed at Peking. It contained six articles.

The British had always classed Sikkim as a Princely State like many other states of India such as Bashahr, Manipur and Patiala. Hence the Government of India used to conduct its affairs with Sikkim through the medium of the Government of Bengal. But Lord Curzon in 1901 decided that while the internal administration of Sikkim should remain under the control of the Bengal Government, on political and commercial questions, the Political Officer should correspond directly with the foreign Department of the Government of India.

In 1914, the Simla Convention signed by the representatives of Britain, China and Tibet ratified the delimitation of the northern frontiers of Sikkim, as had been set down in the Anglo-Chinese Convention of 1890.

2. Sikkim's Situation after independence of India

India became independent in 1947 and became the successor State. Sikkim's position remained unaltered but steps were taken to legally continue the old relationship and some new provisions were later made.

Pending negotiations for a fresh or modified treaty spelling out precisely the nature and extent of its relations with independent India, Sikkim signed a standstill agreement with India on February 27, 1948. According to the terms of this agreement, "all agreements, relations and administrative arrangements as to matters of common concern existing between the crown and the Sikkim State on August 14, 1947" were deemed to continue between the Dominion of India and the Sikkim Darbar pending the conclusion of a new agreement or a treaty. This became essential since the Indian Independence Act, 1947 passed by the British Parliament had stipulated that: "the suzerainty of His Majesty over the Indian States lapses, and with it, all treaties and agreements in force at the date of the passing of this Act between His Majesty and the rulers of Indian States, all functions exercisable by His Majesty at that date with respect to Indian States, all obligations of His Majesty existing at that date towards Indian States or rulers thereof, and all powers, rights, authority or jurisdiction exercisable by His Majesty at that date in or in relation to Indian States by treaty, grant, usage, sufferance or otherwise.

Negotiations for the final and a new treaty between the Sikkim Darbar and the Government of India proceeded favourably and the Treaty was signed in Gangtok on December 5, 1950 between Maharaja Tashi Namgyal and Harishwar Dayal, the then Indian Political Officer in Sikkim.

Treaty between India and Sikkim 1950

Relevant Clauses

The President of India and His Highness the Maharaja of Sikkim being desirous of further strengthening the good relations already existing between India and Sikkim, have resolved to enter into a new Treaty with each other, and the President of India has, for the purpose, appointed as his plenipotentiary Shri Harishwar Dayal, Political Officer in Sikkim and His Highness the Maharaja having examined Shri Harishwar Dayal's credentials and found them good and in due form, the two have agreed as follows:

All previous treaties between the British Government and Sikkim which are at present in force as between India and Sikkim are hereby formally cancelled. Sikkim shall continue to be a Protectorate of India and, subject to the provisions of this Treaty, shall enjoy autonomy in regard to its internal affairs.

The Government of India will be responsible for the defence and territorial integrity of Sikkim. It shall have the right to take such measures as it considers necessary for the defence of Sikkim or the security of India, whether preparatory or otherwise, and whether within or outside Sikkim. In particular, the Government of India shall have the right to station troops anywhere within Sikkim.

The Government of Sikkim shall not import any arms, ammunition, military stores or other warlike material of any description for any purpose whatsoever without the previous consent of the Government of India.

The external relations of Sikkim, whether political, economic or financial, shall be conducted and regulated solely by the Government of India, and the Government of Sikkim shall have no dealings with any foreign power.

Subjects of Sikkim travelling to foreign countries shall be treated as Indian protected persons for the purpose of passports, and shall receive from Indian representatives abroad the same protection and facilities as Indian nationals.

Inside Sikkim — Tensions and Storms

While the peasants of Sikkim were plodding along under the feudal yoke with the resignation born of oriental fatalism — nurtured by ignorance of the outside world —, very much as their forefathers had done before them, momentous changes were taking place not very far. The mighty British Empire was crumbling. The once all-powerful British had to give in to the demands of the Indian National Congress led by the naked fakir, Gandhi.

The momentous changes heralded by the independence of India on 15th August, 1947, sent shock waves into Sikkim as well. The intelligent among the peasants read in the Indian independence a message of hope for a better deal for them, too. But the ruling clique seemed to be little prepared for the changes that were inexorably knocking at the gates. While India in the wake of her newly-won freedom, began to grapple with the problems at home and widen her contacts abroad, the people of Sikkim, under the leadership of some enlightened members of the peasantry, taking inspiration from the lofty ideals proclaimed by the Indian leaders, sought to free themselves from the feudal bondage. It is necessary, at this stage, to examine, in some detail, the conditions obtaining in Sikkim in 1947, in order to be better able to grasp the significance of the birth of political parties in Sikkim, their struggle against feudalism, and subsequent developments. And one could not do that better than by referring to the document entitled “A few facts about Sikkim”, prepared by Tashi Tshering — the foremost leader of the people’s movement in Sikkim —, in 1947. The salient features of the document are reproduced below:

“Sikkim is a small Indian State tucked away in a corner of the Himalayas. Its ruler, Maharaja Sir Tashi Namgyal, KCSI, KCIE, is of Tibetan descent and so are his personal adherents called ‘Kazis’, who form the majority of the landlords of Sikkim. His Highness has a State Council consisting entirely of landlords and a Secretariat which is largely controlled by the landlords . . . The subject people or Eyots (peasants) have no voice in the administration and they have long groaned under the pernicious yoke of landlordism.”

"The Kazis, who are the landlords, claim to belong to the old nobility and compare themselves with the barons of the feudal system. By long usage they have been accustomed to oppress the people and to expect the utmost subservience from them. They form the exclusive and influential coterie around the ruling family and are able to impose their will on all and sundry. The rest of the landlords, called 'Thikadars', are content to play second fiddle to the Kazis and thus share in the loaves and fishes of office and other privileges . . . Bound by a common policy to oppress the ryots, the 'Thikadars', especially the more influential among them, have proved as bad as any of the Kazis. Landlordism, as obtaining in Sikkim, has proved the curse of the Eyots. It has enabled the landlords, through coercion and intimidation, to acquire for themselves the best holdings of the ryots. The landlords pay no taxes, which, consequently, fall with greater severity upon the Eyots. On the other hand, the landlords receive large unearned commissions from the State as reward for carrying on a thoroughly corrupt system of government."

"The landlords are vested with magisterial powers in both civil and criminal matters. They are also empowered to register documents for the sale or transfer of landed properties. There are no effective checks on these powers and the landlords are free to abuse them for their own gains. The more fine a landlord can impose, the larger his share of spoils, for he receives one-half of the collection as his fees and the other half goes to the State. When, as has happened many times, a landlord 'forgets' to enter a fine in his books, nobody is wiser, and he appropriates the whole amount to himself. A grabbing landlord has no difficulty in dispossessing an uncompromising ryot of his cherished possession, be it a paddy field or a herd of cattle. The slightest delay in the payment of taxes, a matter of common occurrence, enables a landlord to seize the very property he has set his eye upon, to the exclusion of any other, and thus the transfer is effected speedily and very profitably to the landlord. Numerous Eyots have thus been reduced to penury and practical slavery. Landlords are invested with different classes of legal powers with due regard to their merits and qualifications. But most of the landlords live away from their estates and their powers are exercised by ignorant and rapacious underlings who have no scruples about filling their own pockets besides extracting as much as they can for their masters."

The document then goes on to list the most hated form of all oppression, forced labour¹.

Soon after the independence of India three political parties sprang up in Sikkim with ill-defined programmes, no cohesive course of action, and no set goal. But their very presence was a great leap forward inasmuch as by the very fact of their being political parties they proclaimed a challenge to the old order, in itself a tremendous advance.

At Gangtok, the capital, the Praja Sudharak Samaj was formed with Tashi Tshering, Sonam Tshering and Kezang Tenzing as its leading lights. A second party, the Praja Sammelan, was formed at Temi Tarku, west of river Tista, under the leadership of Gobardhan Pradhan and Dhan Bahadur Tewari. Further west, at Chakhung, the Praja Mandal was formed by Kazi Lhendup Dorji Khangsarpa, himself a member of the landlord family. On the 7th December 1947 Sikkim saw its first political meeting at Polo Ground, Gangtok. All the political parties participated and the speeches were revolutionary. Later in the evening all the parties merged to form the Sikkim State Congress. It was decided that a five member deputation should meet the Maharaja and present its three-fold demands:

¹ Sikkim — L. B. Basnet.

- (i) Abolition of landlordism.
- (ii) Formation of responsible and democratic interim Government.
- (iii) Complete integration with India.

The feudal lords of Sikkim however were not sitting quietly. The Maharajkumar and a group of influential landlords mobilised their resources and mastered a number of Bhutiyas, Lepchas and Nepalese to form a new political party called the Sikkim National Party to oppose the Sikkim State Congress. The principal aim and object of the party was to maintain the status quo, strengthen the monarchy and if possible, separation from India. The stage was now set for a headlong clash between the monarchy and the people. The political parties hit back with various campaigns including a no-rent campaign. The Darbar retaliated by having the leaders arrested from time to time. Sikkim was being swept by a storm of political movements and some negotiation between the Darbar and the people followed.

The negotiations that followed were not successful. The Congress Committee decided to resume the agitation. The time-honoured weapon of "Satyagraha", perfected and used with such outstanding success in India by Gandhi, was adopted by the Sikkim State Congress as its sword and shield.

On 1st May, 1949, ten thousand people gathered at Gangtok to offer Satyagraha. Early in the morning a 3,000 strong procession went up to the palace, shouting slogans like "Down with the landlords", "Long live democracy", "People's rule is a must", etc. The Maharaja fled to the "Residency". The Maharajkumar came out in a jeep, only to find that the road leading to the palace gate was full of demonstrating squatters. Two Congress leaders barred the onward progress of the jeep by crossing Congress flags. The Maharajkumar was compelled to get down and traverse the distance to the gate on foot amidst ear-splitting slogans.

It had now become clear that the continued defiance of the popular will could only aggravate the situation. The Sikkim Darbar had to yield some ground if it did not want to face a worse situation. On the advice of the Political Officer, the Maharaja agreed to form a "Popular Ministry" under the Chief Ministership of Tashi Tshering.

History was made in Sikkim when a five-member Council of Ministers, composed of three Congress nominees and two Darbar nominees, took oaths of office and secrecy on 9 May, 1949, heralding the beginning of a new chapter and closing the dark feudal chapter for ever.

Peace however did not descend on Sikkim. The developments thereafter were dramatic and tumultuous.

American Gyalmo on the Himalayan Scene

The standstill agreement of 1948 and the treaty of 1950 gave the Sikkim Darbar considerable scope for manoeuvring. The Government of India was soft-paddling on the Sikkim's internal political problems. Whenever representations were made to Delhi either by the Darbar or by the political parties Delhi's almost stock answer was that the two groups should negotiate with each other and settle their disputes. Other events also made things easier for the Darbar.

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Prime Minister of India, was a dreamer. He was a highly cultured man with a great sense of aesthetics and a love for natural beauty. He was in perpetual love with colourful folklore of all sorts. Under the influence

of a very well known anthropologist he had developed the theory that tribals' way of live should not only be preserved it should be insulated from the impacts of modern civilisation. This he tried to implement in various areas resulting in considerable complications at a later stage. While native States in India were quickly integrated after independence Nehru showed marked indulgence to Himalayan border areas. In his anxiety to preserve the cultural peculiarities he encouraged isolation. The ruler of Sikkim was always known as the Raja of Sikkim. He was later made a Maharaja by the British Government. The Maharaja of Sikkim was not only a member of the Chamber of Princes which was the Assembly of the Native Princes but was its Vice President. In a colourful ceremony Jawaharlal Nehru made the Maharaja of Sikkim the "Chogyal" of Sikkim and the Maharani of Sikkim was called the "Gyalmo". Both these two titles were spiritual titles given from time to time from monasteries. The expression "Chogyal" literally translated means the King of Religions. Stage was thus set for imperial ambitions.

In the meantime, tension between India and China over border was increasing. It was apparent that Chinese were showing more than just border interest in Sikkim, Bhutan and Nepal. There were frequent intrusions by Chinese troops into Indian territory. Under the circumstances, Indian Government was somewhat unwilling to introduce any new measures in border areas. The Darbar in Sikkim felt encouraged and the people and political parties felt discouraged by the attitude of New Delhi. In the meantime, the Chinese invasion of India took place in 1962. The disastrous defeat of the Indian army made India's prestige slumped down everywhere. There was no exception in Sikkim. The Darbar felt encouraged to follow a fissiparous tendency and if possible aim for independence and higher rights for the monarchy.

In this grim Himalayan scene a light dramatic touch came from the United States of America. The Chogyal was an ascetic widower for six years. He had two children who were studying in Darjeeling. He had gone to Darjeeling to visit them when he met a young American girl by the name of Hope Cooke. After a very short courtship he married her and installed the new American Queen (Gyalmo) on the Himalayan scene. The coronation was a lavish affair in which people from all over the world had come to witness the himalayan drama.

The American Gyalmo was however not content to be a dream-book queen. She had other ambitions. Encouraged by the Chinese attitude to Nepal she started having dreams of making Sikkim independent of India. She was ruling the attitude of the Sikkim Darbar. Attempt was made by her to increase the strength of the Sikkim Guards and thereby create a military force. So long Sikkim's defence was looked after by India and it was looked after rather well even during the Chinese troubles. She succeeded in getting an increase in the number of Sikkim Guards.

Not content with that a new national anthem was found for Sikkim. It was openly whispered in Gangtok that it had been collected by the new American Gyalmo. She also started what was known as the Study Forum which was officially a group to discuss development of Sikkim. In practice however the Study Forum became a political organisation of which the main and almost the only activity was to preach anti-Indianism to the Sikkimese people and encourage cessation of Sikkim from India. In the process the political parties of the people felt that their interests were being jeopardised and that feudalism was scorning a march over the interests of the people.

Democratic movement was losing ground every day. The first popular ministry was formed after the 1948 uprising. It was formed on the 9th of May 1949 and was dismissed by the Maharaja on the 6th of June 1949. The Darbar had clearly demonstrated that it had no time to listen to the voice of the people. In a shrewd move, the Maharaja introduced in 1953 a new Constitution. Under this Constitution a legislative body called Sikkim State Council was formed with separate electorates for Bhutiyas and Lepchas, Nepalis each having seven seats. There were 6 nominated seats and also seats for monks etc. This Constitution was an attempt to divide-and-rule and the King continued to enjoy all powers. Between 1959 and 1970 four general elections so-called were held in Sikkim. None of them however made real progress. The first general election of 1957 was boycotted by a large section of the population who doubted that the general elections would at all be free or fair. In the second general election of 1960 the Sikkim National Congress had won 8 of the 14 elective seats but these were declared null and void by the Darbar. The Congress won the bye-election but the results were again nullified. National Congress thereafter declared that it would not contest the general elections any more but would resort to direct action. In the third general election held in 1967 the National Congress emerged as the strongest political party polling over 55% of votes. The feudal sponsored National Party failed to secure any seat, not even one Nepali seat. It however got 5 of the 7 seats reserved for Bhutiyas and Lepchas. The fourth general election was held in 1970 when the National Congress led by Kazi Lhendup Dorji contested 17 seats and got 5 whereas other parties got smaller number of seats.

All these general elections were plagued by the communal electorate. Under the existing constitution of Sikkim people were divided into ethnic groups. There were seats reserved for Nepalese, for Bhutiyas and Lepchas and even reservation for monastery. People were thus being divided into ethnic groups. It was quite clear that the Darbar wanted to divide the people into different groups and follow the policy of divide-and-rule. The Nepalese by this time were about 75% of the population but were held to a parity of seats with the Lepchas. This was a fragile state of affairs which could hardly continue.

In the meantime, economically Sikkim was not making any progress. It was still in the pre-industrial stage. Even agriculture was primitive. Small industries had been set up and there was a hydro-electric project. All these were being financed by New Delhi although the official Sikkim Darbar was consistently following an anti-Indian line. The condition of people was not getting any better. One could hear agitations in central places in Gangtok that under the Darbar's policy the rich were getting richer and the people were getting poorer and that ethnic differences between the people were being taken advantage of by the Darbar for keeping feudalism in power. A show-down was almost inevitable under the circumstances. This show-down came in 1973.

3. The Revolt of 1973 and the Capitulation of Feudalism

A general election was held in 1973. Even prior to the election there were charges that the election was being rigged. Official results of the election justified the fears of the political parties. It appeared that the Darbar's sponsored party had scored a victory. There were violent demonstrations in Gangtok. People from all over

Sikkim started trooping in towards Gangtok. The palace was besieged by thousands of people. The Darbar retaliated by issuing warrants of arrests against various leaders of political parties including Kazi Lhendup Dorji. The leaders had taken sanctuary in the home of the Political Officer, Government of India. When news of the warrants of arrest reached the people there were violent demonstrations. This spread all over Sikkim and in a span of two days even in the remotest corner rebels took control and Sikkim Government for all practical purposes ceased to exist. Matters were made worse by arrogants of the royal family. The Crown Prince drove to Ranipul, a small town, accompanied by security forces. Spurred by a sense that a demonstration of power would be useful he crashed through a barrier erected by the people. A shout was raised and the young man drawing his revolver fired at random wounding several people including two women. This incident started flames all over Sikkim. The royal family was besieged in the palace in Gangtok. Their safety was feared and it was quite clear that unless there was a settlement matters would go out of hand. Chogyal asked New Delhi to send Indian army to keep law and order. He also offered to negotiate with representatives of the people for a settlement. While at the request of the Chogyal Indian army restored peace demonstrations were still going on. The palace was still besieged. Effigies of the Chogyal, the Gyalmo and the Crown Prince were being burnt all over Sikkim and demands for the Chogyal's abdication were coming from all over. At the request of the Sikkim Darbar the Government of India appointed a Chief Administrator. The Administrator also advised the Chogyal to settle with his people. Drafts of settlement were being exchanged between representatives of the people and the Chogyal, who was a virtual prisoner in his palace. He was adequately protected by the Indian army but it was quite clear that if he had to remain in Sikkim he must settle with his people.

As a result of the talks held by the Foreign Secretary of India with the Chogyal, the JAC, and the Sikkim National Party, an agreement was signed on the 8th May, 1973. The agreement purported to be the basis of a future constitution for Sikkim as well as that of a future Indo-Sikkim Treaty.

The agreement called for "the establishment of a fully responsible government in Sikkim with a more democratic constitution, the guarantee of fundamental rights, the rule of law, an Independent Judiciary, and greater legislative and executive powers for the elected representatives of the people". It also called for election based on adult suffrage, equitable representation to all sections of the people, and the voting to be based on the principle of one man one vote.

According to the agreement, the Chogyal and the people of Sikkim had requested the Government of India to provide the Head of the Administration, and the Government of India had agreed to do so.

The agreement also provided for an assembly in Sikkim; the election to this assembly "shall be held every four years". The assembly shall have power to propose laws and adopt resolutions for the welfare of the people of Sikkim on any of the matters enumerated below, namely:

- (i) Education,
- (ii) Public Health,
- (iii) Excise,
- (iv) Press and Publicity,
- (v) Transport,
- (vi) Bazaar,

- (vii) Forest,
- (viii) Public works,
- (ix) Agriculture,
- (x) Food supply and
- (xi) Economic and social planning, including State Enterprises,
- (xii) Home and Establishment,
- (xiii) Finance,
- (xiv) Land Revenue.

The Assembly "shall not discuss, or ask questions on", among other things, the following:

"The Chogyal and the members of the ruling family . . ."

"Any matter which concerns the responsibilities of the Government of India under the agreement or under any other agreement between India and Sikkim."

The agreement provided for an Executive Council, "which shall consist of the elected members of the assembly who shall be appointed to the Executive Council by the Chogyal on the advice of the Chief Executive. The Chief Executive shall preside over the meetings of the Executive Council". Any difference of opinion between the Chogyal and the Chief Executive "shall be referred to the Political Officer in Sikkim, who shall obtain the advice of the Government of India, which shall be binding".

1974 Elections

After the settlement of 1973 elections were held in 1974. The Sikkim Congress swept the polls. It captured 29 out of 32 seats. The Sikkim National Party and the Independence Party were completely routed. The election threw up Kazi Lhendup Dorji as the national leader.

Kazi Lhendup Dorji has been elected as the leader of the Sikkim Congress legislature party in the newly constituted Assembly. The new Sikkim Assembly was inaugurated by the Chogyal of Sikkim on May 10, 1974 in Gangtok. Inaugurating the new Sikkim Assembly he said: "the country was passing through a very critical period, and hope that the assembly members would live upto the high expectations and contribute their utmost to our earnest endeavour for the welfare and prosperity of the Sikkimese people through selfless devotion and service . . . The future of the Country and Sikkimese rested on the level of our wisdom, maturity and performance".

Beyond the May 8 Agreement nothing has so far been defined about the powers of the Assembly and the Executive Council. Kazi said in Gangtok on April 25, 1974 that "Sikkim must have a Government where the will of the people shall prevail. In a truly democratic spirit elected representatives of the people must be allowed to rule in the name of our Sikkimese people". Kazi had already announced that a detailed written constitution shall be drafted in next few months to usher in an era of democratic government in the Kingdom. The Assembly has also passed a unanimous resolution on May 11, 1974 to make the Chogyal a constitutional ruler and called upon the Government of India to implement the promises of a democratic and representative government as enshrined in the Tripartite Agreement of May 8, 1973.

Shortly thereafter the elected Assembly converted itself into a Constituent Assembly and drafted the new constitution of Sikkim. The text of the new constitution is set out hereafter.

4. Sikkim — A New Constitution

Amidst mounting tension caused by last minute attempts by some palace officials to obstruct adoption of the new constitution, the National Assembly passed by an overwhelming majority on June 20 a resolution endorsing the constitution, which provided for more powers to the Legislature and the Council of Ministers and made the Chogyal a titular head.

The constitution, prepared by a constitutional adviser deputed by India, had earlier been endorsed by the Sikkim Congress, which has a strength of 31 in the 32-member Assembly.

The Assembly also resolved to have closer links with India. Twenty six members of the 32-member Assembly were present and voted for the resolution.

The call for closer relations with India came in the form of an amendment to the resolution seeking Sikkim's participation in the economic and political institutions of India.

The 34 clause Government of Sikkim Bill 1974 paved the way not only for a responsible Government in Sikkim, but also for further strengthening of its close relationship with India.

After the Assembly session, the members called on Mr. K.S. Bajpai, Indian Political Officer and condemned in strongest terms the interference of the Chogyal and palace officials in the smooth functioning of the Assembly.

Notwithstanding the near unanimous support for the new Constitution Bill in the Assembly, the Chogyal and his supporters (Bhotiyas and palace guards) tried to obstruct its passage. The palace guards surrounded the Assembly building and prevented members from entering the chamber. The police resorted to lathi-charge to enable the members to attend the crucial session. The palace guards also brought their family members in a vain bid to block the members' entry to the Assembly.

The Central Reserve Police had to be called out to prevent clashes outside the Assembly House. Mr. K.S. Bajpai urged the Chogyal to restrain his followers and the Assembly members to refrain from letting their followers retaliate.

There was also a bomb scare when an anonymous caller threatened to blow up the Assembly. Bomb experts, who were called in, made a thorough search but found no explosives.

Two members of the Assembly were kidnapped, while two others went on hunger strike demanding not only the immediate passage of the Bill but also the ouster of the Chogyal.

The Chogyal who had assured the Government of India of his whole-hearted cooperation in adopting the new constitution, declined at the last minute to deliver his customary address to the Assembly.

In New Delhi, official sources recalled how the elections were held in Sikkim in April 1974 on the basis of 'one man one vote'. The elections were held in pursuance of a promise made by the Chogyal himself in April 1973 a few days after the popular uprising and the taking over by India of the responsibility of law and order.

The Chogyal, however, made a 'volte face' when he visited New Delhi and expressed dissatisfaction with several key provisions of the draft Constitution Bill. The Government of India left him in no doubt that the Constitution Bill could not undergo any drastic alterations. Thereupon, the Chogyal agreed to extend his support, forgetting his earlier reservations. He then broke that assurance.

Salient features of new Constitution of Sikkim

The following are the salient provision of the Government of Sikkim Bill 1974 as passed by the Assembly:

The Chogyal shall take precedence over all other persons in Sikkim and he shall continue to enjoy the honour, position and other personal privileges hitherto enjoyed by him.

There shall be an Assembly for Sikkim and the total number of seats to be filled by election shall be determined by law.

The Assembly, unless dissolved, will continue for four years from the date of the first meeting.

The Chogyal shall appoint a person to be the Election Commissioner who is nominated by the Government of India and shall ensure free and fair elections.

The elections to the Assembly shall be on the basis of one-man-one vote and the qualifying age for a voter will be 25.

The Chief Executive to be nominated by the Government of India shall be the President of the Assembly and perform the functions of the Speaker.

Subject to the provisions of the Act, the Assembly may discuss the following subjects; education, public health, excise, press and publicity, transport, bazars, forests, public works, agriculture, food supplies, economic and social planning, including state enterprises and land revenue.

The Assembly may also discuss other matters on being referred by the Chogyal through the Chief Executive or by the Chief Executive himself.

When a Bill has been passed by the Assembly, it shall be presented to the Chogyal for assent. He may withhold assent and refer it back to the Assembly. Thereupon, the Assembly will consider it within six months. But whether amended or not, the Chogyal shall give assent to it once it is passed the second time.

The Chogyal can reserve any Bill for consideration of the Government of India. The latter's decision shall be binding on him.

There will be an Executive Council (Council of Ministers) with one of them designated as Chief Minister and others as Ministers. Every advice tendered by the Council of Ministers shall be binding, but the Chief Executive may require it to be modified if he feels it interferes with his special responsibilities or those of the Government of India.

The Chief Minister and the other Ministers shall be appointed by the Chogyal on the advice of the Chief Executive. The Council of Ministers shall be responsible to the Assembly. At the head of the administration there shall be Chief Executive nominated by the Government of India and appointed by the Chogyal.

The Assembly elected in April 1974 shall be deemed to be the first Assembly duly constituted under this Act.

All sections of people shall enjoy basic human rights and fundamental freedoms without discrimination. Special provision will be made for advancement or the protection of aboriginal inhabitants of Sikkim and other minorities.

Resolution on closer links with India

In another resolution adopted on June 20, the National Assembly called for the integration of Sikkim's economic and social development with India's planning effort.

It said that "the interests of the Sikkimese people require fuller participation of Sikkim in the economic and social institutions of India". It wanted India's Planning Commission to include Sikkim's planned development in its plans and associate Sikkim officials in this task.

The resolution was passed after the Assembly had unanimously endorsed the Government of Sikkim Bill 1974 which spelt the end of the monarchial rule and ushered in a democratic set up in this Himalayan Kingdom.

The resolution said that the fundamental rights applicable to Indian citizens should also be extended to the Sikkimese people. Candidates from Sikkim should also be eligible for all India services.

It wanted the facilities provided by financial institutions in India (banks and life and general insurance companies) to apply to the Sikkimese.

The resolution urged the Government of India and the constitutional adviser to take immediate steps to provide for amendments to the Sikkimese Constitution. It was pointed out that the Government of Sikkim Bill did not specify how the provisions of the constitution could be changed. Every constitution normally had a provision for amendments.

The Chogyal seemed apparently to have accepted the new state affairs. All over Sikkim it was announced that the constitution would be formally promulgated by the Chogyal in the presence of the representatives of the new Assembly. Whole of Gangtok was gaily decorated for the occasion and people trooped to witness a historic ceremony. The day and the hour arrived and all Sikkim waited anxiously for the history-making event. The Assembly waited in its hall. The wait was long and grew longer and there was still no sign of the Chogyal. Ultimately informations were given that the Chogyal refuses to sign the new Bill. The first reaction of the people was one of bewilderment which soon gave way to one of violent disapproval. Demonstrations were held throughout Sikkim and it was quite clear that if the Chogyal did not agree there was going to be an end of monarchy. The Sikkim Assembly re-assembled and in terms of the Constitution Bill passed it again which made it binding on the Chogyal. The Chogyal still did not relent but made an air-dash to Delhi. He sought intervention of the Prime Minister of India. India Government told him firmly and politely that he was to settle with his own people. Disappointed Chogyal came back to Sikkim. On the 4th of July 1974 the Chogyal formally promulgated the Sikkim Act, 1974 which ended feudalism in Sikkim and initiated a new era of democracy.

5. From Protectorate to Associated Nation

Sikkim was throughout recent history a protectorate of Britain and thereafter a protectorate of India. In terms of the resolution passed by the Sikkim Assembly on the 20th June 1974 the Government of India introduced a new Bill for amendment of the Constitution of India under which Sikkim would cease to be protectorate and obtain the higher status of an "associated state". Under the

new amendment Sikkim ceased to be a protectorate and became an associated nation. The new associated state was under the Constitution entitled to send two members to the Indian Parliament. The rights and obligations between India and Sikkim were also clearly defined in the Constitution Amendment Act. The scope and effect of the amendment will appear from the Statement of Objects and Reasons to the Bill and also from the relevant provisions of the Amendment Act set out below:

Statement of Objects and Reasons: The statement of Objects and Reasons of the Constitution (35th Amendment) Bill described "as historic" the agreement of May 8, 1973 between the Chogyal, the leaders of Political Parties, representing the people of Sikkim, and the Government of India.

"It was in pursuance of this agreement and the unanimous desire of the members of the Sikkim Assembly expressed on May 11, this year for the progressive realisation of a fully responsible Government in Sikkim and for furthering its close relationship with India, that the Sikkim Assembly considered and passed the Government of Sikkim Bill of 1974 unanimously."

The Statement said: "For the speedy development of Sikkim in the Social, Economic and Political fields, section 30 of the Government of Sikkim Act of 1974 empowers the Government of Sikkim inter alia to seek participation and representation for the people of Sikkim in the political institutions of India."

"On June 28, after passing the Government of Sikkim Bill, the Sikkim Assembly resolved unanimously that measures should be taken, among other things, for seeking representation for the people of Sikkim in India's Parliamentary system."

"After the promulgation of the Government of Sikkim Act, the Chief Minister of Sikkim has made formal requests to the Government of India to take such steps as may be legally or constitutionally necessary to give effect to the Government of Sikkim Act, 1974, and the resolutions passed by the Assembly and, particularly for providing for representation for the people of Sikkim in Parliament."

Relevant Provisions of the Constitution Amendment Act

1. (1) This Act may be called the Constitution (Thirty-fifth Amendment) Act, 1974.

(2) It shall come into force on such date as the Central Government may, by notification in the official Gazette, appoint.

2. After article 2 of the Constitution the following article shall be inserted, namely: 2A. Sikkim, which comprises the territories specified in the Tenth Schedule, shall be associated with the Union on the terms and conditions set out in that Schedule.

Tenth Schedule

[Articles 2A, 80(1) and 81(1)]

PART B

Terms and conditions of association of Sikkim with the Union.

Responsibilities of the Government of India:

(a) Shall be solely responsible for the defence and territorial integrity of Sikkim and for the conduct and regulation of the external relations of Sikkim, whether political, economic or financial;

(b) Shall have the exclusive right of constructing, maintaining and regulating the use of railways, aerodromes, landing grounds and air navigation facilities, posts, telegraphs, telephones and wireless installations in Sikkim;

(c) Shall be responsible for securing the economic and social development of Sikkim and for ensuring good administration and for the maintenance of communal harmony therein;

(d) Shall be responsible for providing facilities for students from Sikkim in institutions for higher learning in India and for the employment of people from Sikkim in the public services of India (including the All India Services), at par with those available to citizens of India;

(e) Shall be responsible for providing facilities for the participation and representation of the people of Sikkim in the political institutions of India.

Representation in Parliament:

Notwithstanding anything in this Constitutions —

(a) There shall be allotted to Sikkim one seat in the Council of States and one seat in the House of the People;

(b) The representative of Sikkim in the Council of States shall be elected by the members of the Sikkim Assembly;

(c) The representative of Sikkim in the House of the People shall be chosen by direct election, and for this purpose, the whole of Sikkim shall form one Parliamentary constituency for Sikkim, provided that the representative of Sikkim in the House of the People in existence at the commencement of the Constitution (Thirty-fifth Amendment) Act, 1974, shall be elected by the members of the Sikkim Assembly.

The Chogyal expressed his opposition to the Amendment of the Indian Constitution.

In messages sent to the Prime Ministers, Mrs. Indira Gandhi, on August 30 and 31, the Chogyal of Sikkim expressed the view that the steps seeking to give representation to Sikkim in both Houses of the Indian Parliament would amount to “unilateral” abrogation of the Indo-Sikkim Treaty of 1950 and integration of Sikkim with India.

He urged her to safeguard “our separate identity and international personality as guaranteed under the Indo-Sikkim Treaty of 1950 and aspirations of our people and my commitments to a fully democratic Government”.

He said the Sikkimese people were bewildered and greatly upset by the latest developments and urged Mrs. Gandhi “to postpone the amendment of the Indian Constitution on a vital issue affecting Sikkim’s separate identity and existence until opportunities were afforded to us all to present our considered opinion to you and all members of Parliament”.

In his message of August 30 through the Indian Political Officer, the Chogyal said that “having assented to the Government of Sikkim Act on your advice to give it a trial despite my serious reservations made known to you particularly on Article 30, sub-para C, newsreports headlining Sikkim’s representation and participation in political and parliamentary institutions of India are most disturbing to us all. The Political Officer’s belated information is neither comprehensive nor reassuring”.

6. Internationalising the Issue

The second Bill amending the Indian Constitution was duly passed and Sikkim with popular mandate became an associate State. But new dimensions were given to the problem by the Chogyal. He tried to internationalise the issue. He reportedly made statements to foreign press that Sikkim was being annexed by India. Across the Himalayas, Chinese newspapers and Chinese radio blared a fresh spate of anti-Indian propaganda branding India as an aggressive imperialistic nation. Chinese newspapers came out with violent attacks against India. In the United States Hope Cooke, the American Gyalmo was also supposed to have

inspired some newspapers into giving anti-Indian coverage. With an obvious and complete ignorance of the historical position between India and Sikkim, India was accused in some places of expansionism and annexation. All these reports however overlooked the fact that Sikkim had for a long time not been a sovereign state and that it was only a protectorate of Great Britain and thereafter of India. It also failed to notice that the ruler of Sikkim was always a "native prince" and originally was termed the Raja of Sikkim and thereafter the Maharaja of Sikkim and was a member of the Chamber of Princes which was an organisation of Indian Native States. Such States were not sovereign in any sense of the term.

In February 1975 the coronation of the King of Nepal took place in Kathmandu. The Chogyal was permitted by the Indian Government to go there in the face of objection by many Sikkimese politicians. During the coronation Chogyal was supposed to have indulged in violent anti-Indian propaganda and to have tried to impress the foreign dignitaries present to take up an anti-Indian attitude. The reaction in Sikkim was spontaneous and immediate. A new cry arose for abolition of monarchy in Sikkim and for expulsion of the Chogyal from Sikkim. On the 2nd of March when the Chogyal returned to Gangtok several demonstrations blocked his way to the palace. The palace Guards attacked the demonstrators and one member of the Sikkim Assembly was badly hurt by a Kukri (sword) of one of the Guards. He was taken to hospital for extensive treatment. Further information and reports from Sikkim seemed to indicate that the Chogyal was getting ready for another battle. It was reported that money had been spent lavishly and that from the Chinese occupied territories of Tibet arms had been smuggled into parts of Sikkim and that large quantities of money had been spent for building up a small group of guerrilla-trained people to harass and strike against the Sikkim Assembly and the supporters of democracy. One of the supporters of Chogyal had taken the matter to court and had obtained an injunction against Sikkim sending two members to the Indian Parliament in terms of the new relationship between Sikkim and India. The Chief Minister of Sikkim clearly indicated that in affairs of state municipal courts had no jurisdiction.

7. Sikkim's Transition from Associate State to Constituent Unit of India

Sikkim's transition from the newly attained Associate Status to that of a Constituent State of India was extremely quick. Tension in Sikkim had reached a fever pitch. Palace Guards and royal mercenaries openly tried to intimidate the people and large number of people were reported to have been shot in Gangtok. Lives of all popular leaders and members of the Sikkim Assembly were in jeopardy. The Palace radio in the broadcast alleged that the last election was a sham and not binding on the Chogyal and the Chogyal reiterated the demand made in Nepal that there should be a referendum. As the situation was explosive the Prime Minister of Sikkim asked intervention of the Government of India along with similar appeals by all political leaders of Sikkim. On the 9th of April the Indian Army disarmed the Palace Guards and the Palace was guarded by Indian troops to prevent the mob threatening the safety of the Chogyal. On the same date Kazi Lendup Dorji, Prime Minister of Sikkim ordered a referendum on two points — The referendum was fixed for the 14th of April 1975.

The referendum was peacefully held on the scheduled date. The voting was massively against the Chogyal and massively in favour of Sikkim becoming a Constituent State of India. The votes were 59,637 in favour of joining India and in favour of abolishing the office of the Chogyal and the votes against were 1,496. The Prime Minister of Sikkim and the Sikkim Assembly thereupon approached the India Government to make Sikkim a Constituent State of India.

On the 21st of April 1975 in the Indian Parliament a bill was introduced for inclusion of Sikkim as the Constituent State of India. The bill was passed on the 24th of April 1975. The President of India duly gave assent to the bill. On the 3rd of May 1975 the new status of Sikkim as a Constituent State of India came into operation. Mr. B.B. Lal, an old Indian diplomat was appointed Governor of the State of Sikkim. He was sworn in by the Chief Justice of Sikkim in a public ceremony.