

**THE HISTORY OF THE EXPANSION OF
PROTESTANT CHRISTIANITY AMONG THE NEPALI DIASPORA**

by
Cindy L. Perry

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis has been composed by myself and is based upon work done by myself, that it has not been accepted in any previous application for a degree, that all quotations have been distinguished by either quotation marks or indentation, and all the sources of information have been acknowledged.

ABSTRACT

The history of the Protestant Christian church among Nepali people started while Nepal was still a "closed" country, among a diaspora community across the eastern border in Darjeeling, then a part of British India. This thesis documents the history of the expansion of Christianity throughout the Nepali diaspora as it spread to disparate parts of India and beyond. In order to trace that history, it was also necessary to historically trace the dispersion itself and its contacts with Christianity.

The first chapter deals with the basic question of "Who is a Nepali?" and the historico-sociological forces that led to widespread external migration out of Nepal. Then a two-tiered region by region historical analysis is made of the Nepali diaspora itself in the context of its receptor communities and the influence of Christianity among it, resulting in the establishment of Nepali Protestant Christian churches. This process is traced from its early beginnings in Darjeeling on through the Eastern Himalayan states of Sikkim and Bhutan and into the Duars, and along the relentless eastward migration trail into North East India and Burma. The analysis then looks at the regions to the south and west of Nepal in three broadly defined blocks: the North India plains of North Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, the Western Himalayas with emphasis on the UP hills and Himachal Pradesh, and urban India. A separate chapter documents the spread of Christianity among Gurkha soldiers, particularly within the British Brigade of Gurkhas. Throughout attention is given to the agents of Christian expansion and other factors inherent in that expansion, the particular ethnicity of the Nepali most affected, their links back to the "mother church" in Darjeeling and with the church in Nepal. Finally, contrasts concerning where and how Christianity has spread among the Nepali diaspora are drawn between the regions.

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Note: Computer generated maps composed by Katie Dick, Church of Scotland graphic artist, and the author.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

- ABC - Assam Baptist Convention
ABFMS - American Baptist Foreign Mission Society
AG - Assemblies of God
AMEM - American Methodist Episcopal Mission
AP - Arunachal Pradesh
BCMS - Bible Churchmen's Missionary Society
BFBS - British and Foreign Bible Society
BGC - Baptist General Conference
BIC - Brethren in Christ
BMMF - Bible and Medical Missionary Fellowship
CBCNEI - Council of Baptist Churches in North East India
CE - Christian Endeavour
CHT - Cachar Hill Tribes
CIGM - Ceylon and Indian General Mission
CMS - Church Missionary Society
CNAS - Centre for Nepal and Asian Studies, Kathmandu
CNI - Church of North India
DBCI - Darjeeling Bible Correspondence Institute
DBI - Delhi Bible Institute
DDC - Darjeeling Diocesan Council
DHBS - Darjeeling Hills Bible School
DMI - Darjeeling Mission Institute
ECC - Evangelical Convention Church
EHC - Eastern Himalayan Church
EHCC - Eastern Himalayan Church Council
EHM - Eastern Himalayan Mission

EHMC - Eastern Himalayan Mission Council
EU - Evangelical Union
FEBA - Far East Broadcasting Association
FEBC - Far East Broadcasting Corporation
GBC - Gorkha Baptist Churches
GCO - Gurkha Commissioned Officer
GRU - Gurkha Reserve Unit
HFC - Himalayan Free Church
HP - Himachal Pradesh
IEC - India Evangelical Crusade
IEM - India Evangelical Mission
INAS - Institute for Nepal and Asian Studies, Kathmandu
JJP - Jiwan Jyoti Prakashan
KBA - Kachin Baptist Association, Myanmar
KBC - Kuki Baptist Convention, Manipur
- Kachin Baptist Convention, Myanmar
KCC - Kuki Christian Church, Manipur
KJP - Khasi and Jaintia Presbyterian (Synod)
KMA - Kvinnlige Missionsarbetare (Swedish Mission)
LMS - London Missionary Society
MBC - Manipur Baptist Convention
- Myanmar Baptist Convention
MCC - Myanmar Council of Churches
MMPM - Major Millet's Private Mission, Dharamsala
NBA - Nepali Baptist Association, Manipur
NBBCA - North Bank Baptist Christian Association
NBCC - Nagaland Baptist Christian Council
NBCI - Nepali Bible Correspondence Institute
NBF - Nepal Border Fellowship
NBIS - Nepali Baptist Isai Sammelan, Nagaland

NCC - Nepali Christian Church, Manipur
NCCC - Nepal Campus Crusade for Christ
NCF - Nepali Christian Fellowship, in Shillong, Aizawl, Imphal
(not connected with the following)
- Nepal Christian Fellowship, an association of churches in Nepal, now
National Church Fellowship Nepal
NCHP - Nepal Church History Project
NCRC - Nagaland Christian Revival Church
NEB - Nepal(i) Evangelistic Band
NEFA - North East Frontier Agency
NEIGM - North East India General Mission
NIBI - North India Bible Institute
NISS - Nepali Isai Sahitya Sangha (Nepali Christian Literature Society)
NLTC - New Life Training Centre
- Nepali Leadership Training Course
NMM - Nagaland Missionary Movement
NWFP - North West Frontier Province
PWD - Public Works Department
QGO - Queen's Gurkha Officer
RBMU - Regions Beyond Missionary Union
RMM - Raxaul Medical Mission
SAM - Scandinavian Alliance Mission
SASRA - Soldiers' and Airmens' Scripture Readers Association
SUM - Scottish Universities' Mission
SUMI - Scottish Universities' Mission Institute
TEAM - The Evangelical Alliance Mission
TLM - The Leprosy Mission
UBC - Union Baptist Church, Kohima
UBS - United Bible Societies
UCNI - United Church of North India
UMN - United Mission to Nepal

UP - Uttar Pradesh (formerly United Provinces)

WEC - World-wide Evangelization Crusade

WME - World Missionary Evangelization

WMPL - World Mission Prayer League

YFC - Youth for Christ

YWAM - Youth With A Mission

ZBM - Zoram Baptist Mission, Mizoram

ZBMM - Zenana Bible and Medical Mission

INTRODUCTION

In 1985, together with a group of Nepali church leaders, the author helped to formulate the Nepal Church History Project (NCHP) to research and record the history of the church within Nepal. It became evident that the history of the Nepali church could not be confined within national boundaries, but is a history of the expansion of Christianity among a people. It is intimately tied up with the migration of Nepali people into India, Tibet, and beyond, and with the recruitment of Gurkha soldiers. Thus when the initial objectives of the NCHP were completed by the publishing of A Biographical History of the Church in Nepal, Nepali church leaders in both Nepal and India encouraged the author to continue and expand her research to cover the Nepali diaspora.¹ This grew out of their desire to bring greater unity and understanding between the Nepali Christian world as a whole, to learn about each other, the full extent of their dispersion and means of mutual support, and to identify Nepali diaspora communities still relatively untouched by Christianity. As a whole the older mission related Nepali-Lepcha churches of Darjeeling and Sikkim and the fast growing churches in Nepal were largely unaware of one another's history and current situation. Both groups were also facing a surprising influx of Nepali evangelists from NE India, who were an unknown quantity, and Nepali Christians from Bhutan were just beginning to come into the lime-light.

This thesis was embarked upon in direct response to the above concerns. It aims to discover and describe where and to what extent Christianity has expanded among the Nepali diaspora, and to trace the history of its expansion in each area. In order to do this, it also traces the historical expansion of the Nepali diaspora itself and identifies some of the chief characteristics of the various diaspora communities in relation to their receptor communities.

This task has been extra challenging due to the dearth of comprehensive documentation or published accounts available, either concerning the Nepali diaspora or missions and national church work among Nepali outside of Nepal. Various Census of India, District Gazetteer and other government reports have been widely consulted for historical and statistical documentation of the diaspora, and a broad range of historical, geographic, and anthropological works also reviewed. The common practice of lumping Nepali together with Indians, and the generalised use of the term "Gurkhas" (not differentiating between soldiers and the general Nepali populace), in many British-Indian records and historical documents compounds the difficulties. The Nepali diaspora as a whole has never been fully investigated or described, particularly in the context of its receptor communities. To date it has only been touched upon in a few works on external migration from Nepal, or treated regionally, notably in the context of India.² In order to ascertain the true extent of the diaspora and to obtain an up-to-date understanding of it and its receptor communities extensive field work was necessary.

Concerning Christian mission work among Nepali ethnics in diaspora, only in the case of Darjeeling District and Sikkim, where Nepali became the majority of the local population and the focus of the Church of Scotland's Eastern Himalayan Mission, is thorough documentation available. Even then, many original documents have been lost and extant mission records do not fully reveal the unfolding history of the Nepali churches or Nepali personalities involved, nor do they include the later stages of the churches' development and their diversification. Other missions' involvement with Nepali in India and further afield has been gleaned from an extensive review of mission literature and archives, personal interviews, and correspondence with former and current missionaries in the areas concerned. This has also involved the collection of neglected mission records and personal papers. In addition, local church records have been searched and the life-histories and testimonies of numerous Nepali

Christians recorded. All materials obtained, oral, written and photographic, have been incorporated into the Nepal Church History Project Collection.³

Two periods of extensive field work were undertaken during the past three years involving travel in Nepal, across North and North East India, along the border of Bhutan, and in Myanmar (Burma). The physical difficulties involved in travel, often off of the main routes, and the distances covered and recurrent political unrest in areas concerned, were a further challenge. Over 150 interviews were conducted, both in English and in Nepali, and including Christians and non-Christians. Some local church records were available to be reviewed, but generally a serious lack of record keeping was discovered. Reliance on oral sources has demanded rigorous cross-checking of information and copious follow-up correspondence.

A further dilemma faced by the author in seeking to trace the expansion of Christianity among diaspora Nepali was the general lack of knowledge among established Nepali churches of diaspora Christians in other locations, and between dispersed Nepali Christians concerning one another's existence. It has been like fitting pieces of a jigsaw together, but first having to find the pieces.

ENDNOTES - INTRODUCTION

(1) **A BIOGRAPHICAL HISTORY OF THE CHURCH IN NEPAL** was written by the author in 1989 as her MA thesis at Wheaton Graduate School, and published by the NCHP in Kathmandu, Nepal, in 1990 (2nd edition Kathmandu: NCHP, 1993).

(2) Details of relevant published works and theses which deal with either external migration from Nepal or Nepali in India are given in the following region by region analysis.

(3) The Nepal Church History Project Collection has been gathered by the author and is held at the Centre for the Study of Christianity in the Non-Western World, New College, University of Edinburgh. Some sections are restricted. A description of some of its holdings relevant to this study is found in the List of Sources at the end of this thesis. The NCHP Collection, together with the United Mission to Nepal Archives and the International Nepal Fellowship Archives, make up what is jointly called the Himalayan Collection.

CHAPTER 1 - WHO IS A NEPALI?

INTRODUCTION

Before any discussion of the Nepali dispersion or migrations of Nepali peoples can be embarked on, first there must be an understanding of who and what is encompassed by the rather ambiguous term "Nepali." Certainly in our modern era it is most simply defined as a citizen of Nepal. But such a definition is misleading at best. As stated by Dor Bahadur Bista, a prominent Nepali anthropologist, Nepali society today is "a unique combination of peoples of different origins... (who) come from different directions... different periods of history... blended into one national identity."¹ That one identity is made up of an incredibly complex ethno-religio mix which has challenged scholars from east and west, a social system which Furer-Haimendorf reflected "appeared uniform throughout Nepal," but "proves unexpectedly complex and varied."²

No one linguistic or ethnological interpretation encompasses what it is to be a Nepali. Historically, Nepal referred merely to the Nepal Valley (now known as the Kathmandu Valley), the home of the Newar people, making a Nepali of that day synonymous with Newari. This understanding persisted in the common mind even into the modern era when Nepal was unified by the Gorkha ruler Prithvi Narayan Shah and attained her present boundaries. During the author's own travels in the hills of Nepal elderly people have related proudly of when they visited "Nepal" (Kathmandu). But as Prithvi Narayan Shah's Gorkha army gradually conquered the surrounding mini-states, and even expanded beyond Nepal's current boundaries into Kumaon and Sikkim, the conquerors became known as Gorkhali, regardless of caste or tribe. This common perception of them as a military people was further strengthened as they were recruited into the Gurkha regiments of the British-Indian army following Nepal's defeat in the

Anglo-Nepal War 1814-1816. They fast gained respect as fierce and loyal soldiers, and the use of the term Gurkha or Gurkhali became widespread and has been used in a confusing manner, both by British authors during the colonial era and in popular usage, often not distinguishing between those who were actually employed as Gurkha soldiers or those who simply originated from Gurkha/Gorkha (often used as a synonym for Nepal).

Obviously such an understanding did not take account of the diverse racial-linguistic-religious strains represented in the new Nepal. This included not only the unique Khas-Bahun and tribal ethnic mixture of people who came from Gorkha, but all those who were conquered and unified into modern day Nepal -- the Khas-Bahun society of far-western Nepal, the syncretistic Buddhist-Hindu Newari society of the Nepal valley, and a profusion of tribal peoples, most prominent being the Tibeto-Burman language group Mongoloid tribes -- a very complex multi-ethnic mix. The process of these diverse peoples' being blended into Bista's "one national identity" has been a continuing challenge within Nepal. It has been further complicated by the most recent wave of immigration into the Nepal terai of orthodox Hindu Indians from the northern Gangetic plains who are now struggling for political recognition as citizens of Nepal.

However, the question of "Who is a Nepali?" was simplified for the thousands of people who joined a migratory flow out of Nepal into India and beyond from about the mid-1850s. Regardless of ethnic background or even mother-tongue, they became lumped together as simply Nepali or Gorkhali, both in their receptor communities' perception, and their own need for a common identity.³ It has been noted by Bista, which accords with this author's own observations, that in their new locales outside of Nepal, Nepali ethnics tend to disregard their individual ethnic identities in favour of identifying themselves as a single community, discarding ethnic languages (except sometimes in the home) and speaking Nepali almost exclusively.⁴ This found political expression from the 1920s in the Gurkha League, in the organisation of Nepali across ethnic lines

in political parties in Sikkim and Bhutan to press for common demands, and during the 1980s in the Gorkhaland movement in Darjeeling District. Only in recent decades has there been a move among some of the Nepal ethnics in India to reassert their tribal identity versus simply being considered "Nepali" -- a move to capitalise on social/political benefits available to those classified as "Scheduled Tribes" or "Other Backward Classes" according to the Indian Constitution.

Thus in this study of the Nepali diaspora, "Nepali" is not a designation of nationality, but of a multi-ethnic people encompassing all the diverse tribes and castes -- Aryan, Mongoloid and Australoid -- that found their home in the unified Nepal of Prithvi Narayan Shah. It includes not only first or second generation emigrants, but also descendants of Nepali who may never have visited their fathers' families' place of origin, regardless of place of birth or citizenship. It also includes both temporary/circular (short or long term) and permanent migrants. Therefore in India four classes of Nepali ethnics are found (with slight variations in Bhutan and Myanmar where there are also significant Nepali populations): Nepali citizens working in India either short or long term; those born in Nepal, emigrated to India and now Indian citizens; those born in Nepal, emigrated and now resident in India, but without citizenship, including many who emigrated as children; those born in India, descendants of Nepali ethnics, some with and some without Indian citizenship. From the latter two categories thousands today are "people without a country," unable to obtain citizenship in either their receptor country or their ethnic homeland, and many of them unwilling victims of "sons of the soil" movements, particularly in NE India.

In order to understand this diaspora, first there must be a clear comprehension of the peoples of Nepal themselves. Who are they historically -- in their racial/ethnic make-up, linguistically, religiously, culturally? How did the nation of Nepal come into being, and how did her people come to be dispersed so widely, all the while clinging tenaciously to their "Nepaliness?" With this as a

background, a region by region exposition of the Nepali diaspora will be examined, leading to the heart of this thesis: the history of the expansion of Christianity among the diaspora.

THE POPULATING OF NEPAL

"Nepal has always had a share in two different worlds. Throughout the great part of the country speakers of Indo-Aryan languages dovetail with populations speaking Tibeto-Burman tongues."⁵ So Furer-Haimendorf succinctly sums up the two major influences in the development of Nepali culture. Historically speaking, scholars are almost universally agreed that the people of current-day Nepal came in migratory waves from north and south, Tibet and India, her two great neighbours. Nepal became the meeting ground where these diverse peoples, cultures and religions interacted and evolved into unique forms.

Successive waves of Mongoloid tribal peoples speaking Tibeto-Burman languages came from the north-east, and caste-stratified Aryans speaking Indo-Aryan languages from the west and south -- the two predominant racial groups found along the whole span of the Himalayas. But prior to either of these were some aboriginal or indigenous (variously labelled by different scholars) peoples who were displaced in the wake of the more numerous and powerful newcomers. They are described by Bista as "those few Australoid short and bushy haired savages" from the pre-Kirata period, later pushed down into the terai when the Tibeto-Burman Mongoloids moved in.⁶ In his earlier writing Bista identified today's minority groups of the terai as "probably the truly indigenous people of the regions," saying they originally dwelt mostly in forested areas.⁷ In contrast, Rana and Malla call them "Austriacs," ascribing to them racial and linguistic affinity with the ancient "adivashis" of Assam and Bihar, and pointing to their having originated in the north-east, the seat of India's eastern aboriginals.⁸ Frank refers to groups with Melanide features and languages of a yet unknown nature, and puts them in what he calls the "awalia" (immune to malaria/awal

fever) cluster of ethnic groups.⁹ Although more scholarly inquiry remains to be done, it is generally agreed that they are pre-Aryan and were first displaced by the arrival of Mongoloid peoples. The fact that they display some features of Mongoloid physiognomy indicates a prolonged period of intergroup mixture.¹⁰

Predominant among these indigenous tribes are the Tharu, found in settlements all along the Himalayan terai.¹¹ Others include the Danuwar, Majhi, Darai, Chepang, Hayu, Vrahmu and Satar. Some of these were traditional hunters and gatherers in forested hill areas, still found in isolated pockets today, but more and more pushed out of their traditional habitat and forced to learn new means of subsistence. Others, as the "awalia" cluster of Frank, seem to have been indigenous to the terai. They evidently acquired an immunity to the murderous malarial fever over the centuries, and thus were able to preserve their traditional terrain and culture into the modern age. Until today they have mostly retained animistic religious practices. Much further research is needed on the origins of these groups. But for the purposes of this study, the movements of the Tharu, who spanned Nepal's southern border into N. India, are examined more closely in Chapter 10.

If indeed these were the first inhabitants of Nepal, soon on their heels in a time of pre-history came an ancient migration of nomadic Mongoloid peoples from the north and east, all speaking Tibeto-Burman languages. According to Rana's and Malla's analysis they came in three successive waves.¹² First, those speaking pronominalised languages, who absorbed some Austric influences from the aboriginal peoples. They settled mostly in Sikkim and the eastern part of modern day Nepal, the Limbu and Rai, and some within a certain strata of Newar society. Second were those whose languages were not pronominalised and do not today evidence any Austric influences. They settled in today's central and western Nepal and included certain segments of the Newar, Tamang, Magar and Gurung. Vansittart includes all the tribes of these two waves among those who arrived in Nepal before the advent of Buddhism.¹³

Bista does not make a distinction between these first two waves, as Rana and Malla did on the basis of pronominalised versus non-pronominalised language classification, and the presence or lack of Austric influences in language and physiognomy.¹⁴ Rather, he classes the early Tibeto-Burman Mongoloids together as "Kirata" who settled into the more temperate hill areas of Nepal, pushing some of the Australoids into the terai and absorbing others in a general westward movement as far as the western hills. They were well established in the lower Himalayas by 500-1000 B.C, which is attested in Indian Puranic literature. To the Vedic Aryans of the pre-Christian era they were known as dwellers on the slopes of the Himalayas, where the Mahabharata clearly places them. It should not be lost sight of that these Mongoloid peoples were made up of distinct tribes with their own languages, culture and religious practices, and they settled into geographically isolated areas which allowed little interaction for many centuries. Perhaps best known among them because of their highly developed ancient civilisation and their widespread reputation as traders and businessmen are the Newar of the Nepal Valley.

Then came the much more recent wave of distinctly Tibeto-Himalayan peoples like the Sherpa and Dolpo, who have traditionally lived in the high Himalayas along the border with Tibet.¹⁵ They have a much more distinctly Tibetan heritage and are predominantly Lamaistic Buddhist, thereby perhaps leading to some historians' conclusion that they probably migrated into Nepal after Tibet's conversion to Buddhism in the mid-7th century.

Even as the Mongoloids were moving in a south-westerly arc into and across the Eastern and Central Himalayas, another movement of people was taking shape in the Western Himalayas. About two millenium B.C., Aryans from Central Asia gradually moved from the north-west into the Indian subcontinent. A section of them, who evidently separated from those who went to the Indus and Sutlej basins, gradually moved eastward through the Himalayas.

In Himalayan ethnology they are commonly referred to as the "Khas" or "Khasa" or "Khasiya" tribe, and they were gradually absorbed into the Hindu caste hierarchy.¹⁶ There is some debate over when their gradual eastward movement brought them into western Nepal, but general agreement that it followed the arrival of the Mongoloids whom they found already inhabiting the temperate hills and valleys.¹⁷ The southwesterly move of the Mongoloids "met and coalesced" with the easterly moving Indo-Aryan-speaking Khas in what became western Nepal. Prior to this the Khas had conquered and reduced to virtual slavery the indigenous Dom people in the Western Himalayas,¹⁸ presumably sweeping them along in their eastward movement and incorporating them into the depressed occupational castes as the Khas themselves were Hinduised.

Having moved into western Nepal, the Khas were reinforced by the arrival of another wave of Aryan immigrants from about the 12th century. This time they were strict caste-stratified Hindus from the Gangetic plains, driven out by Muslim invasions which broke up the Rajput kingdoms, and gradually reinforced by the arrival of more and more high caste Hindus over several centuries. The presence of these Brahman and Rajput (Kshatriya or Chhetri status) strongly affected the whole character of these western hills, which gradually evolved into a unique "Nepali-Pahari" culture area.¹⁹ Along with them of course were the traditional service castes, or "untouchables," into which the Dom were probably assimilated.

Mention must also be made of one other strand of the ancient movement of Aryans northward: those who moved into the first urban centers, especially the Nepal Valley (now known as Kathmandu). Historical evidence again points to the fact that they arrived after the valley was already inhabited by Austric and Mongoloid people, most significantly the Newar. As proof of this several scholars point to Sanskrit inscriptions of the Licchavi kings (the 1st line of kings in the Nepal Valley, who ruled from the 5th-9th century) in which 80 percent of the place-names are of non-Sanskritic origin.²⁰ Through the Licchavi, Indic

elements infiltrated into the Nepal Valley long before anywhere else in modern-day Nepal.

18th CENTURY REGIONAL ANALYSIS: 3 CULTURAL AREAS

The Nepal Valley was "Nepal" before the mid-1700s. The rest of what now constitutes present-day Nepal was a multitude of Himalayan mini-states, a consequence of the land itself. Geographically the various ethnic groups which had gradually populated the hills and valleys over the centuries were divided and fragmented by mountain barriers running east and west, and uncrossable raging rivers gouged through the mountains, dividing the land further from north to south. Through history political divisions also emerged, but as Stiller points out, "It is known as a fact that many of the ethnic groups that inhabited the hills were spread rather evenly through many different kingdoms in the same general region."²¹ Thus the ethnic composition of the various regions that make up modern Nepal is not directly related to the early political divisions that emerged, but it was crucial to their cultural formation and later contribution to the modern state of Nepal.

In order to understand the onward migration patterns of the multi-ethnic peoples who came to consider themselves as "Nepali," it is important to look more closely at three broad geographical regions which were united in the latter half of the 18th century to form modern-day Nepal -- the western hills, the Valley of Nepal, and the eastern hills -- all part of the temperate middle hills traversing Nepal from east to west, which until recent decades have always held the vast majority of Nepal's population.²² From the political perspective, these Himalayan hills and valleys were divided into a number of mini-kingdoms or states with shifting alliances and varying degrees of unification within the above regions.²³ From a cultural perspective, three distinct yet overlapping cultural areas evolved in these regions, corresponding to the broad movements of people into them as outlined above: Nepali-Pahari culture which evolved in the western

hills; Newar culture in the Nepal Valley; and Kirata tribal culture in the eastern hills. These will each be briefly examined and contrasted in terms of their ethnic mixture, linguistics and religion, in the context of regional political developments.

THE NEPAL VALLEY: ANCIENT NEWAR CIVILISATION

The Newar civilisation is generally accorded to be the most ancient in Nepal.²⁴ The Newar formed the basis of the valley's population, and although influenced over the centuries by various immigrant groups, according to Bista most of the outsiders "were ultimately absorbed into the Newar community."²⁵ Part of the ancient move of Mongoloid tribes into the temperate region of the Himalayas, the Newar somehow came to settle in this, the most fertile valley of all. There they developed a unique urban culture, different from all the hill tribes who surrounded them. The 14th century Nepalese chronicle "Gopalaraj Vamshavali" mentions a long rule of 29 Kirata kings in the valley who were later driven out to the east by the Licchavi.²⁶ Before their subjugation the population of the valley had already been converted to Buddhism and became the seat of Mahayana Buddhism.²⁷ Then the Licchavi brought with them an ardent form of Vishnu worship (king worship), the Sanskrit language, and the Gupta script.²⁸ Under the Licchavi, then subsequently the Karnatak and Malla dynasties, the valley society absorbed a succession of cultural and religious influences, and a synthesis of Hinduism and Buddhism began to take form.²⁹

Even while Buddhism developed and flourished in the isolated Nepal Valley, it was on the wane in India. The Valley became a refuge for Indian Buddhists, yet at the same time interaction with the strong Hindu kingdoms of the north Indian plains continued as well. In the 11th century Nanyadeva founded the Tirhut kingdom east of Birgunj. There was cultural exchange. Maithili scholars were respected in the Nepal valley and their Brahman priests incorporated into the Nepali priesthood. Many Khas as well as Tirhut immigrated into and settled in the valley. Both a Brahman and a Buddhist

priesthood functioned side by side and they maintained the literary function in society. The fact that all extant ancient Mahayana Buddhist and Hindu sacred texts are in Sanskrit shows that it had the highest status in the religious realm. Only during the early Malla period from about 1200 did the Newari language begin to rival Sanskrit in inscriptions, and by the 14th century it had become a language of literature, though infused with a profusion of Sanskrit-derived words.³⁰ This very development of language shows the high level of interaction between the two cultural forces from north and south.

A further significant development in Hindu-Buddhist interaction came in the 14th century when Jayasthiti Malla enforced an elaborate form of the Hindu caste system in the Valley. This is depicted by Gewali as a means of settling or fixing the place in society of the large number of refugees which had streamed in from India, especially since the Muslim invasions.³¹ Until then the two forces had not only co-existed, but freely interacted in an ethic of tolerance. The syncretism in art forms has been described as "a remarkable efflorescence and cross-fertilization of religious ideas."³² Rana and Malla are even more eloquent in their description:

With each new ruling dynasty came its own form of worship. The pantheon of the valley began to bulge with Mahayana Buddhist gods as well as the tantric cults of Vajrayana...Hindu Shakta cults penetrated the Buddhist cosmos... Wave upon wave of immigrants... brought diverse social, cultural and religious influences to bear upon the local society... As far as the receptivity of the valley society was concerned there seemed to be no limit for absorbing anything. It is this capacity to absorb and then transform which seemed to characterize the culture and society of the valley. As long as this receptivity was retained the confluence of peoples, worships, practices and beliefs seemed to flower, transforming the valley into a museum-like fantasy erected within the Buddhist-Brahmanical religious and social set-up ...men lost their sectarian identity...even gods shed their sectarian aspects.³³

But they then claim that the formalisation of the caste-system effectively "eroded the absorbing and transforming power of the valley social and cultural life."³⁴ Yet that very transforming power is evidenced in the subsequent changes that

took place within Newar social structure. Not only the Hindu Newar, but the Buddhist Newar as well, developed a highly complex caste-system which has remained effective and an object of intense research by anthropologists of the 20th century. In religious observance, Petech describes a process of gradual transformation, a toning down of religious differences to the point that people became accustomed to worshipping both Hindu and Buddhist deities "in a spirit of toleration and syncretism."³⁵

Over the centuries, Hinduism and Buddhism in the Valley of Nepal co-existed, with continuing influences from north and south, interacting, competing and gradually melding into a syncretistic expression within Newar society, although not without a struggle. This is seen not only in the religious sphere, but in the language, and the very social structure. Although the Newar were predominant, the population of the Valley had been infiltrated and influenced to a large degree by high-caste Hindu Aryans from India who were the political rulers, while the Newar themselves evolved both a Buddhist and Hindu stream, each worshipping one another's deities. It was a very complex society. Up until the present day Hindu kings rule over a mixed Hindu and Buddhist society in Nepal.³⁶

By the 18th century the Valley had been divided into the three independent kingdoms of Kathmandu, Bhaktapur and Patan, the latter being "the stronghold of Buddhism in Nepal" and the former having more Hindus in residence.³⁷ Thus divided, its strength to resist invasion was weakened, and the stage was set for a "strong man" to come in.

THE WESTERN HILLS: NEPALI-PAHARI CULTURE AREA

This strong man emerged in the nearby hill kingdom of Gorkha to the west of the Nepal Valley, in the person of Prithvi Narayan Shah, the founder of modern-day Nepal. Until the mid-1700s Gorkha was only one of a profusion of mini-states in the western hills which had emerged following the decline of the

"western Malla Dynasty" in about the 14th century which had professed both Hinduism and Buddhism.³⁸ It is generally acknowledged that the Malla dynasty ruled for about 300 years from the 11th or 12th century, linking a vast area from western Tibet and the Himalayan regions of Garhwal and Kumaon of current-day Uttar Pradesh (UP), India, to the western hills of current day Nepal. It is a story of the Aryan Khas' gradual eastward movement, early political alliances and rivalries, and their political and economic subjugation at the hands of Hindu Rajput and Brahman who came up from the plains and became the aristocracy. There were constant struggles for power, with the Doti or Jumla Rajas (now in far-western Nepal) generally acknowledged as suzerain in Kumaon (now in UP, India).

In the process the Khas were endowed with Kshatriya (modern-day Chhetri) status, the warrior caste just below the Brahman priestly caste, and counted among the twice-born. As Srivastava says, "The Khasiyas, after their subjugation probably decided to 'join' the immigrants since they could not 'beat' them."³⁹ Some scholars write of invented Rajput genealogies and the conferment of Kshatriyahood by the Brahmans on the predominant Khas.⁴⁰ Regardless of the exact historical process, this merged Aryan line came to be known as "Khas-Bahun" (Chhetri and Brahman) and has dominated the strict caste-stratified society of the Western Himalayas for centuries.

When the early Malla dynasty declined, a number of smaller independent states emerged under autonomous rulers. In historical accounts of Nepal they became known as the "Baisi Raj" or twenty-two states in the Karnali basin. At the same time, a loose alliance of "Chaubisi" or twenty-four states emerged in the Gandaki basin, a product of the further expansion of the Khas who merged with indigenous Mongoloid tribes, particularly Magar and Gurung, and usually ruled by Rajput kings who had moved north to escape the Muslim invasions in India. These were not political alliances so much as geographic generalities which persisted until they were conquered and united into the modern kingdom of

Nepal by the Shah dynasty of Gorkha.

Their influence and cultural continuity extended beyond the hills of what is now western Nepal, into Kumaon and Garhwal, the contiguous Western Himalayan regions of India. This historical relationship is important to this study because of the area's religious and ethnic composition, and its influence on migration patterns from western Nepal which persist until today. They were part of the same historical-cultural unit until first conquered by the Gorkha kings, but the Indian sector was lost to the British following the Anglo-Nepal War of 1814-1816.⁴¹

As the Khas and subsequent Brahman-Chhetri of the plains moved into the western hills of today's Nepal and then on eastward along the mid-montane range, there was one significant difference in the process from that in the Western Himalayas: they began to encounter and settle among Mongoloid tribes. Out of this encounter emerged the "Nepali-Pahari" culture. Although as in the Western Himalayas the Khas-Bahun became politically and economically dominant, there was also a strong degree of what Zurick has termed "cultural integration" with the long-established tribals, especially Magar and Gurung.⁴² This points to another important feature of this Nepali-Pahari culture -- Sanskritisation of the Mongoloid tribes as they were encountered in the Khas-Bahun eastward advance.⁴³ H. Gurung, the first Nepali scholar to define Pahari culture in the context of Nepal's western hills, described it as "...an ecological adaptation of Hindu culture to a hilly environment," a meshing of "tribal Mongoloids" and "caste-stratified Europoids." He goes on,

...the Pahari population is a complex of diverse castes derived from different sources - functional, hybridization, incorporation of broken tribes, etc. The dominant Khas-Bahun, depressed service castes, and Hinduised tribal elements live in occupational inter-dependence.⁴⁴

The Tibeto-Burman speaking Magar and Gurung became identified as part of the "military culture" of the area for which it became known, fighting

alongside the Khas and Thakuri (the group of Chhetris in Nepal to which the royal line is traced) while being forced to accept the India-origin Rajput as overlords. The strong Magar kingdoms in particular were directly in the path of the Khas expansion, and interaction with the Khas-Bahun immigrants resulted in a considerable racial mixture.⁴⁵ As a whole, the Tibeto-Burman tribals won a special middle-status in modern Nepal's caste hierarchy, living and working side by side in mutual interdependence with the dominant Khas-Bahun. A three-tiered caste hierarchy for all Nepal was codified into law in 1853, in essence a formalisation of the evolved Nepali-Pahari societal formation.⁴⁶

The interaction taking place and contributing to a unique Nepali-Pahari culture is reflected not only in the ethnic composition of the area and even racial mixing which took place (especially by intermarriage between Khas and Magar), but also in the language and in religious development.

The Indo-Aryan language of the dominant Khas-Bahun, "Khas-kura" (language of the Khas) as it was then known, began to hold sway and became the basis of the present day Nepali language.⁴⁷ It is believed that it reached present-day Nepal before the 6th century and was gradually diffused throughout the western hills long before Nepal was unified.⁴⁸ D.R. Regmi's historical research has found that it was used in royal records during the western Malla dynasty from the 12th century, and became the dominant language of inter-state communications not only in the later Baisi and Chaubisi states, but also in communications with the Nepal Valley.⁴⁹ The language itself is a testimony to the mixture of Aryan and Tibeto-Burman elements, as well as the historically close relationship of western Nepal with the Western Himalayas.⁵⁰

There was also modification in the religious structure of the region. Buddhism was fairly well established in Kumaon during the 7th century, with elements of it spreading through outlying tribes in the Himalayas, until it had a firm hold among them by the 11th century. According to D.R. Regmi, until the 14th century Buddhism was respected in different parts of today's Nepal.⁵¹

But in the Western Himalayas it succumbed to Brahmanical Hinduism until hardly a Buddhist temple remained. In the Nepali-Pahari culture area, the advancing Khas-Bahun encountered partially Buddhised tribals who still had a strong element of primal religious belief, and gradually were Hinduised.⁵² Yet while there was an incorporation of some Hindu forms into their indigenous cultural, there was influence both ways, also resulting in a general laxity of Hindu forms, which has been attested to by many modern anthropologists. Although the Hinduism of the politically and economically powerful Khas-Bahun predominated, in the Nepali-Pahari area it was not so strict as in the Indian plains, or even to the west in Kumaon.

Thus in the hills west of the Nepal Valley a unique Pahari culture had evolved -- a complex ethnic mixture of peoples including the politically and economically dominant Khas-Bahun, their "untouchable" service castes, and Tibeto-Burman speaking tribals ascribed a middle-status. The language of the Khas-Bahun was widely adopted, although not obliterating the tribes' mother-tongues, and it took on Tibeto-Burman elements. The Hindu religion of the Khas-Bahun also became predominant, but was itself modified in the process, while the earlier primal belief system and Buddhist influences remained, though submerged. Even while the local tribal and advancing Khas-Bahun cultures interacted, in H. Gurung's words with "varying degrees of diffusion and assimilation," the Kshatriya ideals of the ruling immigrant Rajput were laying the twin ideals of Hindu religion and military chivalry as foundations for the rise of modern Nepal.⁵³ These ideals became embedded in the Nepali-Pahari culture of the western hills.

THE EASTERN HILLS: KIRATA TRIBAL CULTURE AREA

Quite distinct from what was happening in either the Nepal Valley or the western hills, the Tibeto-Burman speaking Kirata tribes to the east were left pretty much to themselves. Whereas the Magar and Gurung were integrated into

the Pahari culture to the west, the Khas-Bahun did not extend their influence further eastward, nor did the syncretic Buddhist-Hindu forces at work among the Newar extend beyond the Nepal Valley before the unification of Nepal in the late 1700s. Thus more purely tribal cultures ebbed and flowed in the eastern hills, with some peripheral influences from India, but with much stronger ties through ethnic linkage to Sikkim, which in turn came to look to Tibet as its spiritual home.

Most authors dealing with the early history of Nepal tend to emphasise the Nepal Valley and western hills, from which the Gorkha kingdom emerged, to the virtual exclusion of the Kirata kingdoms to the east. This is perhaps natural because of the former's dominant place in typically Nepali (Newari) ancient civilisation and the formation of modern Nepal, and their continuing dominance in politics, education, and economics today. The Kirata tribes were only drawn into the bigger picture of Nepal following their conquest by the Gorkha dynasty. Yet the east of Nepal and her people are a very important part of today's Nepal, as well as to an understanding of Nepali external migration.

According to Bista, the Kirata (variously called "Kirat," "Kirata," and "Kiranti" by different authors) are an ancient people who have been "associated with the history of Nepal for thousands of years."⁵⁴ However, those in the eastern hills of Nepal only enter recorded history in the 18th century. Furer-Haimendorf maintains that any connection between present Kirata tribes of eastern Nepal and the Kirata kings who ruled the Nepal Valley before the arrival of the Licchavi is "very doubtful."⁵⁵

Most accounts include three tribes among the Kirata of East Nepal: the Limbu, Rai and Yakka. The first two are the most important and occupied distinctive provinces at the time of the Gorkha conquest: the Rai just east of the Nepal Valley, in "Middle Kirat" between the Dudh Kosi and Arun River; and the Limbu in "Far Kirat" or "Limbuana" (land of the Limbu), extending from the Arun River into Sikkim. Foning would also "loosely include" the Lepcha of

Sikkim as Kirata.⁵⁶ Himself of the Lepcha tribe, Foning not only makes a case for their having a common heritage with the Limbu historically but further theorises that, "In days gone by and beyond the pale of history, the two tribes, the Rong (Lepcha) and the Chong (Limbu) may have been one and the same tribe."⁵⁷ Certainly the Lepcha are a Mongoloid tribe and they share several characteristics with the Limbu. Several historians and analysts place the Limbu alongside the Lepcha as the oldest inhabitants of Sikkim.⁵⁸ Thus historically the Kirata cultural area extended from the hills east of the Nepal Valley, across Sikkim, and into the western province of Haa in present-day Bhutan. It was sparsely populated by Tibeto-Burman speaking Mongoloid tribes which settled in the more temperate hills and valleys, intermarried to some degree with one another, and practiced a kind of shamanistic animism overlaid with growing Buddhist influence.

The Limbu are known as "Tsong" or "Chong" by the Lepcha and Bhotia of Sikkim because it is believed they originated in the Tsang-po valley of Tibet. The eastern end of present-day Nepal, as well as Sikkim, was essentially a Lepcha-Chong area. Their tribal culture and isolated way of life was not disturbed until the early 17th century when the first wave of immigrants from Tibet immigrated into Sikkim: Buddhists of the "red hat" sect fleeing the religious upheavals taking place in their own country. There was earlier contact with the Lepcha in the 13th or 14th century by Kham people from Tibet who colonised the Chumbi valley, but they only later went into Sikkim. Lama Lhatsun Nangkha Jigma is considered the "patron saint" of Sikkim, the "pioneer Lama" who is mainly responsible for bringing Buddhism into the land and installing Sikkim's first king in 1642, a Bhotia from Tibet. Until then the Lepcha and Limbu chiefs had looked after their own respective domains. Now for the first time they came under one central authority, a "Dharmaraja" invested with both spiritual and temporal powers, in a state based on Lamaistic Buddhism. The fact that the immigrant Tibetans in the Eastern Himalayas (who became politically, religiously

and economically dominant just as the Hindu Khas-Bahun did in the Western Himalayas) took steps to incorporate the Limbu as well as the Lepcha in their sphere of influence is another indication of the Limbu's intimate place in Sikkim's society at the time.⁵⁹ The first king, Pencho Namgyal, married a Lepcha, and the second king married a Limbu. But a break came in the early 1700s when many Limbu left the area of present-day Sikkim and retreated into Limbuana due to "the apathetic and careless action of later rulers" and alleged mistreatment.⁶⁰ Rahul called it an uprising of the Tsong against the Bhotia rulers.⁶¹

Perhaps they perceived an advantage in further contact with the Khas-Bahun kingdoms to the west? For in the meantime, much of the Kirata area east of the Nepal Valley had become nominally subject to a branch of the Palpa ruling family, the Sen dynasty of the Chaubisi Raj. Self-preservation and a desire not to be fully subjugated by the growing power of the Tibetan rulers of Sikkim to the east, nor by the Hindu rulers of the western hill states, may have caused the Kirata chieftains to play off one against the other. D.R. Regmi refers to a Sen-Kirata alliance and a call to arms against Sikkim of all Kirata chiefs (in the eastern hills) by a Sen prince in 1706 and 1707.⁶² Although the Kirata were forced to accept the Sen as non-resident overlords, the local chiefdoms retained their autonomy and local authority, while the Sen rulers' control was but tenuous.⁶³ From available accounts it seems this contact with the Hindu states to the west was quite peripheral, not affecting the traditional "kipat" land tenure system, communal life style, nor religious expression. The Kirata tribal culture remained largely undisturbed until the time of the Gorkha dynasty's expansion and Nepal's unification in the late 1700s, with only the latter day influence of Tibetan Buddhism.

IN THE WIDER HIMALAYAN CONTEXT

The three cultural areas described above fit into a wider Himalayan context. They emerged from the ancient movement of peoples into the

Himalayas, broadly speaking the Aryans into the Western Himalayas and the Mongoloids into the Eastern Himalayas, and both moving on until they met and coalesced in the area that became modern Nepal. From west to east:

WESTERN HIMALAYAS:-

Hindu/Central Pahari culture

Aryans, Hindu religion, C. Pahari language

HILLS WEST OF NEPAL VALLEY:-

Nepali-Pahari culture

Aryan-Mongoloid ethnic mix, E. Pahari & Tibeto-Burman languages, Hindu-Buddhist-tribal religious mix

NEPAL VALLEY:-

Newar culture

Predominantly Mongoloid, Sanskrit literary language and Tibeto-Burman Newar spoken language, Hindu-Buddhist syncretic religious mix

HILLS EAST OF NEPAL VALLEY:-

Kirata culture

Mongoloid, various Tibeto-Burman languages, Lamaistic Buddhist influenced tribal religion

EASTERN HIMALAYAS:-

Kirata/Bhotia culture

Mongoloid, Tibeto-Burman languages, predominantly Lamaistic Buddhist

Before the Gorkha dynasty just to the west of the Nepal Valley began its quest of expansion and unification of the myriad hill states, there was little to tie these diverse peoples and cultural expressions together. However, there is evidence of some political linkage between the Himalayan kingdoms from at least the century before, evidently due to their need to bond together in the face of perceived common threats from north and south, from Tibet and growing British power in India.

To the east, there were tributary missions between the Nepal Valley kingdoms and Bhutan from at least the 1600s, and following the first king of Bhutan's defeat of Tibet in 1639, friendly missions were received from both

Nepal and Gorkha.⁶⁴ There were also religious links, particularly between the Buddhist areas, as evidenced by Bhutan having rights in monastic enclaves in Ladakh, the Western Himalayas and Nepal, and a Bhutanese monk representative being stationed in Nepal during the 17th century.⁶⁵ Rose points out that the Buddhist areas from Bhutan and Sikkim to Ladakh, including those in Nepal, were all "red hat" areas (with the Hindu caste-stratified Pahari culture area between them).⁶⁶ Thus religiously and politically there was a common sense of identity between these Himalayan kingdoms in their struggle against the Gelugpa who had come to power in Tibet. British expansion to the south heightened their need for cooperation.

Then a "strong man" from within emerged to try and build a greater Himalayan kingdom. From the mid-1700s, Prithvi Narayan Shah, the shrewd visionary ruler of the hitherto relatively insignificant Hindu kingdom of Gorkha, embarked on a successful campaign of conquest of the profusion of mini-states and kingdoms in the Central Himalayas. The local Magar, Gurung and Tamang chieftains had gradually been overthrown and control consolidated by the new rulers who claimed Rajput ancestry. As the Gorkha kingdom was extended, political expansion was accompanied by cultural-religious expansion. Once the Nepal Valley was conquered (1765-69), including the lucrative Tibet trade routes, Kathmandu was made the capital and it has remained the centre of government and power until today. Expansion went on both east and west until the borders of the newly unified kingdom of Nepal reached from the Sutlej in the Western Himalayas to the Teesta River in the Eastern Himalayas. By 1803 the political expansion of the Gorkha dynasty encompassed present day Garhwal and Kumaon of Uttar Pradesh across Nepal and Sikkim to the border of Bhutan.

Even further west there was contact with Lahore from at least the mid-18th century, and soldiers from Nepal served under the Sikh Maharaja Ranjit Singh, under Gulab Singh in Kashmir, in another army of Shah Shuja, the exiled emir of Afghanistan, and as the body guards of the Khan of Khelat.⁶⁷ In the

years immediately following Nepal's unification the British feared a military alliance between the Gorkhali of Nepal, the Sikh under Ranjit Singh, and the Maratha. Overtures had reportedly been made by the Nepal court to enter into such a defence alliance prior to Nepal's war with the British in 1814, and their early successes in the Anglo-Nepal War made this look quite feasible. According to Stiller, Ranjit Singh actually began to make moves to come to Nepal's aid, until two significant battles were lost by the Gorkhali and it became obvious that Nepal could not continue the war.⁶⁸

But aside from these political developments, cultural-religio expansion was primarily on an eastward route, the Pahari culture with its Khas-Bahun power structure incorporating more and more Mongoloid or Kirata tribes into its unique Nepali form and their gradual Sanskritisation. The army itself became an important social institution and instrument for integrating the diverse tribes, starting with the Magar and Gurung who were an important part of the early Gorkha army, but largely excluding the Newar. Although the emergence of this Nepali-Pahari culture was the result of an ancient but potent process, what H. Gurung has described as "the synthesis of a native Nepalese culture imbued with certain attributes of both Indian and Tibetan cultures," the last 200 years have been the story of its expansion and predominance throughout Nepali society, and of the resultant pressures inherent in such expansion.⁶⁹ While one of the means of this expansion was eastward internal migration, one of the perhaps unexpected consequences in ensuing years was massive external migration.

UNIFICATION:

THE MAKING OF A NATION AND RESULTANT POPULATION MOVEMENTS

Prior to Nepal's unification the people were largely confined within particular areas due to geographic barriers and the large number of principalities which created political barriers to internal movement. The only significant movement was northward in cultural exchange and trade with Tibet, primarily by

Newar from the Nepal Valley from as early as the 7th century. There was a significant migrant community of Newar artisans and merchants resident in Lhasa for several centuries.

But the very process of unification and territorial expansion brought further movement, both internally and externally: of the army and labourers to support it, officials to govern the newly conquered areas, and a myriad of others in their wake. Following the Gorkha army's conquest of the Nepal Valley in 1769 there were fairly large-scale internal population shifts, but comparatively little movement outside of Nepal. Mobilising for the ongoing conquest campaigns involved a great deal of population mobility. In the wake of conquest, the Gorkhali Pahari -- Brahman, Chhetri, Thakuri, Magar and Gurung -- moved in large numbers into their new capital of Kathmandu, and on into the eastern hills, the Magar and Gurung often moving as community groups.⁷⁰ The Brahman and Chhetri "independence of local ties" favoured their widespread diffusion, and they most often acted as agents of the central government.⁷¹ These groups went as settlers as well as in their military or official capacities, usually in a search for land or trade opportunities. During Hooker's unprecedented three-month excursion into East Nepal in 1848 he found evidence of these dispersed peoples.⁷² His descriptive account has references to "Hindoos," "Khas-tribes," "Geroong shepherds" in a "Geroong" village, and a Gorkha cantonment at a stockaded post in Ilam inhabited mostly by Brahmans and some "Moormis" (Tamang) -- all examples of internal shifts of population from the west to the east. Conversely, any movement by the Kirata tribes from the east to the west was negligible aside from some individuals to Kathmandu.

The move was on, and this internal hill to hill migration pattern was greatly facilitated by an extensive east-west hill track, the military route from Kathmandu east to Sikkim and west to Kumaon, "thus marking the extent of Gorkhali territorial expansion by the early years of the 19th century."⁷³ The principal artery for government communications and transport, it also became

the means of people movement. Oldfield described it as,

A continuous high road, along which troops can march and light guns be carried, traverses the whole extent of the central and western provinces of Nipal [sic], connecting together the principal towns which lie scattered among the hills from the capital to the borders of Kamaon [sic].⁷⁴

As the Gorkhali advanced they took not only their language with them (which became the lingua franca of unified Nepal), but the high-caste Bahun-Chhetri power structure became established across the land, displacing traditional chiefs and communal administrative structures. These Indo-Aryan pahari became "the most important group numerically, socially, and politically in much of Nepal," and their number included the ruling class.⁷⁵ They not only considered themselves culturally superior and more civilized, but came to inhabit the most fertile land of the lower hills and river valleys. The wealth of Nepal, including the best lands, was concentrated in the hands of these high-caste Hindus and the central government.⁷⁶ As they moved into tribal areas, the Tibeto-Burman speaking Kirata tribes were gradually amalgamated into the wider Gorkhali/Nepali milieu, but at a lower level on the social scale as "matwalis" (drinking caste).

This direction of movement was reinforced by government policies restricting hill to terai or India north-south movement. This was part of a defence syndrome against possible British incursion following the 1814-16 Anglo-Nepal War, following which only a few well-guarded select routes were left open. This pre-occupation with the British threat also led to further displacement of people in an unusual direction. Cultivators of the Rapti valley and the "dhuns" of Chitwan and Makwanpur in the terai were forced to abandon their fields, allowing the area to revert to jungle as a natural barrier to penetration from the south.⁷⁷ They were removed to villages on the surrounding hills. More significantly, the restrictions on free movement between Nepal and India stifled trade and was a deterrent to migration in that direction.

The other group that became widely dispersed within Nepal were the

Newar. But they had a different pattern of movement. As primarily urban dwelling traders and craftsmen, they went in all directions, although almost exclusively to bazaar towns and government centers.⁷⁸ There is some evidence that their dispersion from the Nepal Valley was hastened by persecution and discrimination at the hands of the Gorkhali conquerors.⁷⁹

In the process of the Gorkhali expansion and internal population movement, pressures on the vast majority of the population, who have always been engaged in subsistence agriculture, built up and finally overflowed. This happened during two distinct periods in Nepal's history: under the Shah kings of the Gorkha dynasty from the mid-1700s (the period of unification and expansion, cut short by the Anglo-Nepal War of 1814-1816 and its aftermath), and the subsequent century long oppressive Rana regime of hereditary Prime Ministers from the mid-1800s. Although the Anglo-Nepal War limited and basically defined the political boundaries of Nepal, it did not prevent the spilling over of her people and the seemingly relentless push eastward which had started centuries before with the Khas-Bahun in the Western Himalayas.⁸⁰ Within Nepal itself the traditional migration pattern followed this broader regional movement, from the drier west to the wetter east through the middle hills, usually in search of more productive or virgin lands. In Gaige's description:

The balance between population and available resources must have narrowed quickly for the settlers in the dry and inhospitable western Himalayas, pushing them eastward into less densely populated and less dry hill regions. This process--migration, settlement, gradual overpopulation, agricultural deterioration, famine, migration -- produced a kind of Malthusian peristalsis, pushing people further and further east along the hill ranges. The eastward migration of people speaking a Sanskrit-based language, an early form of Nepali by the time they reached the central Himalayas around the 12th century, began to sweep the hill tribals along with it.⁸¹

First with territorial expansion, then in the face of unsurmountable economic pressures, the Mongoloid tribes were also caught up in this west to eastward movement. But what were the combination of factors that finally led to extensive

external migration?

PRESSURE BUILDS UNDER THE SHAH KINGS: "PUSH" FACTORS

Prithvi Narayan Shah is widely and rightly heralded as the founder of the nation of Nepal. But the military unification of Nepal and its thirst for territorial expansion also had a cost side in human terms. Stiller poignantly points to this in his masterful historical analysis, The Silent Cry -- the cry of the villagers, the common man of Nepal, as the government forged ahead with expansion "...without weighing the cost in terms of human suffering for one's own people..."⁸² The wheels of unrelenting economic pressure were set in motion which would ultimately lead to the emigration of hundreds of thousands. The "costs" pointed out by Stiller which made village life increasingly hard to sustain are also indicators of the "push" factors towards migration. There was an accumulation of physical and psychological factors which finally led to a break and launching out into the relative unknown.

Primary among these factors, and the cause most often pointed to by writers concerning migration and Nepal, was the building economic pressure: oppressive land and labour policies and the ensuing rampant rural indebtedness which threatened the villagers' very survival.⁸³ Demographic pressure came later. The very transition from the simple economies of the mini-states of the pre-unification period to the much more complex economy of an extended Himalayan state brought mounting economic pressure on the populace.⁸⁴

Ironically, some of the very means necessary to the unifying of the nation also led to building discontent and ultimate migration. Unification and the continuing push for expansion was a costly process; the army had to be supported and administrative costs met, and the process went on for more than half a century. Then there were the added costs of the Nepal-Tibet War (1787-1793) and the Anglo-Nepal War (1814-1816), the loss of revenue due to the extensive loss of territory following the latter war, and Bhim Sen Thapa's subsequent

maintenance of a large army for his own political survival in the face of a perceived continuing threat from the British. The increased costs were reflected in an increased tax burden on the peasantry. Yet there was no corresponding growth in the revenue base, no significant increase in overall productivity, and thus more and more pressure on limited resources. As pointed out by Stiller,

The economic position of the villager could be expected to deteriorate as a direct and immediate result of unification... The increased costs of government and defense had to be paid out of substantially the same pool of agricultural revenues that had formerly financed the mini-states.⁸⁵

This produced the net effect of reducing most farmers to a subsistence level.

Further, state ownership of land was the basic principle in force at the time (except in the Kirata area of the east where "kipat" or communal tenureship was allowed to continue for a time, although it was gradually eroded). The normal form of land tenure, "raikar" lands, were under state landlordship, and the individual's right of tenancy was only as long as taxes were paid. However, with unification many of the best agricultural lands were converted from "raikar" to "birta" and "jagir" lands. These were extensive grants of land given as rewards or emoluments, and monopolised by the religio-politically privileged Brahman and Chhetris. Such grants became what M.C. Regmi called the "bed-rock" of Nepal's political and administrative set-up, showing the immense fiscal importance of land.⁸⁶ Not only did they provide a means of supporting the army, religious institutions, a growing bureaucracy, and a power-base through well-placed "favours," but they also served to further entrench the advantageous position of the Bahun-Chhetri segment of society which included the bulk of the aristocracy, the landowning class, and the government bureaucracy. As described by M.C. Regmi,

... (land grants) tended to be concentrated for the most part among Brahmans, Chhetris and Thakuris, particularly from the western hill areas, who sustained the political authority of the new rulers. Gurungs, Magars, Tamangs and Newars generally did not receive such favours. On the contrary, they suffered a

gradual depletion of, or encroachment on, the lands they had obtained during previous regimes.⁸⁷

Ever increasing land acquisitions by the state were necessary to pay the growing number of bureaucratic and military officials. This in turn fed the fires of expansionism.

Tenants on these lands then were responsible to their respective "Birtawal" or "Jagirdar," paid rent in kind to them, and were subject to eviction.⁸⁸ Although the backbone of the nation, the tenants' existence was very precarious. Another blow was struck when the central government, in order to raise much needed revenue for continued expansion in the early 1800s, instituted a new "kut" rent system for cultivators, which was a much less secure tenure system. Now a fixed amount was set which had to be paid whether or not the crop failed, whereas under the prior system revenue was assessed as half of the produce.⁸⁹ Seddon points to this "oppressive taxation and the inability to earn a subsistence in Nepal" as being a major cause of emigration long before population or land pressures built up.⁹⁰ If the tenants could not pay, they were subject to being alienated from their land. Then economic pressure on the villagers "intensified dramatically" when rent payment under the "kut" system began to require payment in cash rather than in kind.⁹¹ The economy was not yet monetised; cash was not easily available, and the farmers were already producing all that they could.

In the ensuing search for cash, many of the ordinary villagers fell into a descending spiral of debt, leading to loss of tenancy rights or dispossession of their land, bondage of one or more members of the family, and even slavery. As they sought out a money-lender in order to fulfill obligations (usually Brahmans, which further entrenched their position of power in the villages), the interest rates were often prohibitive, and prevented the loan ever being paid back, and the guarantee of repayment was often in the form of bonded labour. "The traditional system of bondage certainly received a strong impetus from the

increased monetary demands being made on the villager in the hills of Nepal at this time," according to Stiller.⁹² He goes on to state that as the spiral of indebtedness spun on down, slavery became "...a product of a socio-economic system that forced men and women to accept this as a solution to the economic pressures under which they laboured..."⁹³ It was a desperate solution, and one that was class specific to the matwali and menial castes.⁹⁴

In addition to these economic pressures, the villagers were subject to an oppressive compulsory labour system called "jhara," under which "Countless villagers were pressed into service on a compulsory and unpaid basis..."⁹⁵ This forced labour was exacted almost exclusively from the peasants of the matwali and low castes, as in the case of bonded labour and slavery above. Local villagers were traditionally subject to providing "jhara" labour for local official projects, and the "jagadirs" and "birta" landowners often pre-empted this labour for their own projects.⁹⁶ Such abuse of the system was endemic. With the increased labour demands which accompanied military expansion, the "hulak" system was also instituted, a kind of primitive transport system using porters to move mail, military supplies and other goods to the farthest reaches of the kingdom.⁹⁷ A royal order of May 1808 empowered military officials to seize men and women and constrain them to carry loads, a kind of forced temporary migration. They were often compelled to leave their villages to provide service in distant communities, bringing their own provisions and forcing them further into debt. Although local villagers co-opted into this system were technically exempted from other compulsory labour demands, abuses by officials were still common. Stiller notes instances of corporal punishment used even on children, and one case where a man died from a beating administered to extract "hulak" labour.⁹⁸

The use of land for political means, as with the "birta" and "jagir" land grants, and compulsory labour systems were not abolished until the 1950s. Hofer, in his study of Tamang ex-soldiers, has documented how the system worked in Dhading District in the 19th century.⁹⁹ The central government in Kathmandu

donated "birtha" lands to Bahun-Chhetri immigrants in this traditionally Tamang area, then the local Tamang were obligated by decree to provide forced labour for the new immigrants on these lands, as well as to pay taxes in cash or in kind to them. Under the "hulak" system some of the villagers were made directly dependent on the government by being obligated to carry loads of goods destined either for the military or Kathmandu instead of paying taxes. Thus the original Mongoloid inhabitants were subjugated both to the central government and a new local Bahun-Chhetri elite, and were gradually impoverished by their obligations to them.

Through these combined economic pressures and forced labour, not only was there a visible decline in the quality of life in the villages, but for many, "The only escape...was through the development of some source of income other than agriculture."¹⁰⁰ For some the response was "outright abandonment of the land...the farmer's ultimate response to a system that he found overly oppressive."¹⁰¹ In M.C. Regmi's search of Nepali archival records he found one instance where a local tax collector made such extreme assessments that in a "five year period 45 villages were reported to have been totally depopulated."¹⁰² The only logical next step for many became migration.

These pressures were initially the greatest in the western hills due to the inferior quality of the land and its low productivity, and to the length and intensity of the western military campaign.¹⁰³ Then the cycle of impoverishment and landlessness spread into the central hills, gradually pushing people further and further east, until Nepali ethnics began to spill over into Darjeeling, Sikkim, Bhutan, Assam and beyond.

In contrast, in the eastern hills the Limbu retained a measure of local autonomy and their "kipat" lands, on which no taxes were initially assessed, although these were gradually added later.¹⁰⁴ But government policy did encourage the immigration of high-caste Hindus into Limbuana. As there was initially plenty of good cultivable land available, they were welcomed by the

Kirata and given grants of land. But gradually these high-caste immigrants gained political and economic ascendancy in the east of Nepal, as elsewhere, and "kipat" land rights were eroded. In Lionel Caplan's historical examination of government policy towards the Limbu he concludes,

It would appear that the main concern of the authorities all along has been to establish their own hegemony in east Nepal, and the control and decrease, not to say abolition, of kiptat tenure was a priority in effecting such a goal... At the expense of the Limbus, they (Brahmans) have become the most powerful ethnic group in east Nepal society.¹⁰⁵

Other forces were at work alongside the above mounting economic pressures which may have contributed to the later waves of external migration under the Ranas from the 1850s. With the campaigns of expansion from the Sutlej to the Teesta hitherto unknown horizons were opened up: to the soldiers and those who accompanied them, to government officials and their entourage dispatched to work in the conquered areas, even to those taken out of their isolated village units for forced labour. The very process of unification introduced people to new places and ideas, possibly leading to dissatisfaction and raised expectations. Those who were part of the eastward expansion passed through the fertile and relatively sparsely populated "greener pastures" of Limbuana and Sikkim. Then conflict with the British in the Anglo-Nepal War brought them for the first time into contact with an even wider world, and exposed their own limitations. As Stiller observed,

All of this educated the villager-become-soldier in the idea of a state that transcended strictly local and regional interests... even a modest growth in his thinking would help to tear down some of the provincial boundaries that the old mini-states had imposed on thinking and imagination.¹⁰⁶

All these "pushes" towards migration now only needed the "pull" of outside opportunity, which came from the second half of the 19th century with the expansion of British power in India, their unquenchable thirst for labour, and the

opening up of new sparsely populated lands.

THE BEGINNINGS OF EXTERNAL MIGRATION, AND FIRST CONTACTS WITH CHRISTIANITY

Before the mid-19th century only the precursors of large-scale external migration were seen. First were the Newar artisans and traders in Tibet from the medieval period, where until the beginning of the 19th century there were more Nepali than anywhere else outside Nepal.¹⁰⁷ About the 7th century Mahayana Buddhism spread from the Nepal Valley northward to Tibet, what Sharma has called the "cultural colonization of Tibet" by Nepal and India.¹⁰⁸ From this time the Nepal Valley's connection with Tibet flourished and skillful Buddhist Newar craftsmen were in great demand. In addition to craftsmen, Buddhist monks, traders, builders and masons became a common sight in Tibet and even into China.¹⁰⁹ This relationship persisted until the 14th century from which time trade and commerce began to predominate in the Nepal Valley-Tibet relationship, and a significant community of Newar traders, along with the earlier artisans, was established in Lhasa and other outlying areas. This was the first diffusion of Nepali (Newar) people outside of Nepal, and the only significant one until the late 18th century.¹¹⁰ It was also the sight of the first recorded conversions of Nepali ethnics to Christianity, in the early 1700s.¹¹¹

Then long before the current political boundaries of Nepal were defined by the 1816 Segauli and 1817 Titalya Treaties, there had also been natural movement amongst like peoples both in the Pahari culture area of the Western Himalayas and the Kirata culture area encompassing Limbuana and Sikkim, contiguous common culture areas to the west and east. The expansionism of the Gorkha kingdom brought different peoples into those areas. In Kumaon the army of occupation and various officials were resident for about 25 years; in Garhwal and Dehradun for about 12 years. They also controlled Sikkim for about 25 years, constituting what Foning describes as the "first wave" of Nepali

immigrants from the west into Sikkim.¹¹² But when these territories were relinquished following the Anglo-Nepal War, most of the occupying forces and officials returned to areas within the new political boundaries of Nepal, although some stayed behind and settled (especially in the Western Himalas from Kumaon to Dehradun), having taken local wives.¹¹³ Even for those who returned to Nepal, they had been taken out of their traditional locales and exposed to wider horizons. For most this led to a broadening of their thinking and world view, and to raised expectations -- an impetus to further migration in the face of ever mounting economic pressures back at home.

Political and religious pressures also contributed to emigration. The very process of conquest and unification caused many of the vanquished rulers to flee, including some of the Malla Kings and their supporters from the Nepal Valley. These political refugees fled mostly to the urban centre of Benares or frontier districts of British India where the East India Co. guaranteed their security and Nepal had no right of extradition.¹¹⁴ There was also a small group of religious refugees who found their way to Bettiah: a community of 57 Newari Christian converts from the Nepal Valley who were banished in 1769 by the new King Prithvi Narayan Shah because of suspected relationship with the British enemy.¹¹⁵ This was the first small community of Nepali ethnic Christians in Nepal, an outcome of the earlier work in Tibet by the Jesuit and then the Capuchin Fathers. After being forced out of Tibet a community grew up in the Nepal Valley, from where they were in turn forced out to India in order to retain their religious convictions. After they and the Capuchin Fathers left, Nepal was devoid of any resident Christian mission or national presence until the mid-20th century.¹¹⁶

Although the signing of the Segauli Treaty in 1816 marked the end of territorial expansionism and the type of migration that went with it, it also opened up one of the most significant avenues of labour migration Nepal has ever experienced: the recruitment of Nepali into the British-Indian army.¹¹⁷

Migration, which had been led by military conquest, was then led onward by the recruitment of Gurkhas into a foreign army, a form of labour-export. Within a short time four battalions of Gurkhas were raised, not significant in numbers, but in that the door to recruitment was opened. Initially only the Gorkhali pahari were recruited -- the Khas (Thakur and Chhetri), Magar and Gurung -- and they served exclusively in the Western Himalayas for about forty years.¹¹⁸ Then following the Mutiny in 1857, when the Gurkhas proved their loyalty beyond any doubt, the situation changed dramatically. Rai and Limbu also began to be recruited and further battalions were raised and posted in the northeast of India and on into Burma, in addition to the Western Himalayas. As regimental homes were established, ancillary forces were raised, and word of waste lands and outside opportunities reached back to the villages of Nepal, thousands followed in the wake of the Gurkhas. Although by 1921 only eight percent of the Nepali in India were in the army, yet, as Davis points out, the influence of Gurkha recruitment was far greater than this suggests "because many of the recruits bring their families with them, and on the expiry of their term of service, settle permanently in the country, especially in Assam."¹¹⁹

As emigration from Nepal entered this new phase of labour-export, Nepali ethnics were recruited not only as soldiers, but to feed the development needs of British India: for the new tea plantation industry in Darjeeling and Assam, mining projects, construction of roads and railways, and for factories in burgeoning urban centres. In the face of growing economic and land pressures within Nepal, the promise of land was one of the strongest pulls, together with the various wage-earning opportunities. Emigration was seen as a way out of impoverishment, and sometimes of escaping social stigma. Thousands of Nepali ethnics were drawn eastward, first into Darjeeling and Sikkim, on to the southern reaches of Bhutan, into Assam and throughout NE India, and even on to Burma. From the colonial era there were also instances of Nepali being shipped abroad as part of the indentured labour force to such widely disparate destinations as

Fiji, Natal, British Guiana and Trinidad. During the late 20th century the attraction of wage-labour opportunities has spread the dispersion on around the world, especially to the Gulf States, Eastern Asian nations, Britain and Europe.

With Nepal's extreme isolationism under the Rana regime, there were no complementary development efforts before the mid-20th century. In addition to the downward spiral of rural indebtedness, declining living standards and very limited employment opportunities, there was a lack of even elementary medical or educational facilities. Their presence across the border in India was another major pull outwards. Local disasters as floods and land slips, and periodic epidemics also contributed to population drift as the victims sought relief. For most of those involved in external migration it was not a point of trying to accumulate wealth, but rather of simple survival.

When the oppressive social structure and building economic pressures, as noted above, combined with the perceived opportunities presented by British colonial rule in India and beyond, what began as a trickle of people became a flood of all major tribes and castes which burst out of the boundaries of Nepal as it gained momentum. By 1900 there were over a quarter million Nepali emigrants in India, about half of them who spoke Nepali/Khas-Kura as their mother-tongue, and half speaking other Nepal-origin tribal languages.¹²⁰ The most numerous of the latter were Rai, Murmi/Tamang, Limbu and Magar. Half a century later, popular estimates put the figure of Nepali ethnics in India at two to three million, and in Burma at 200,000.¹²¹ To arrive at any accurate estimate of the entire Nepali diaspora around the world today, including both circular and permanent migrants and the latter's descendants, would be extremely complex, especially in view of the recent reverse migration taking place from places like NE India and Bhutan. However, it is said that it may include between five and ten million people.

In the midst of this growing external migrant population of Nepali ethnics came the beginnings of a vibrant Nepali Christian church. While Nepal observed

a "closed door" policy to the outside world, including towards Christianity, in British India there was relative religious freedom and Christian missions were welcomed. The Church of Scotland's move into Darjeeling, and henceforth Sikkim and the Duars, each of which had an expanding Nepali population, heralded the beginnings of the modern-day Nepali church -- a church which started in and expanded throughout the diaspora, and extended from there back into the homeland.¹²² The following sections document the fascinating history of this diaspora church.

A region by region historical analysis of the expansion and influence of Christianity among the Nepali diaspora is presented, alongside a more detailed examination of the migration flow and the Nepali community in each of these regions as a background and basis for the analysis. For the purposes of this thesis, the regions will be treated as follows: Eastern Himalayas, including Darjeeling, Sikkim, Bhutan and the Duars; North East India, including a state by state presentation, and Burma; North India, including N. Bihar and the UP plains; Western Himalayas, with emphasis on UP and Himachal Pradesh (HP); Urban India, with emphasis on Calcutta, Delhi and Bombay; the British Gurkhas, and the Nepali abroad.



Figure - 1. Nepal and South Asia

ENDNOTES - CHAPTER 1

(1) Dor Bahadur Bista, "The People," in *NEPAL IN PERSPECTIVE*, eds. K.P. Malla and Pashupati Shumshere J.B. Rana (Kathmandu: CEDA, 1973), 42.

(2) Christoph von Furer-Haimendorf, "Status and Interaction among the High Hindu Castes of Nepal," *Eastern Anthropologist*, Vol. 24, 1971, 7.

(3) People originating from Nepal are generally known either as Nepali or Gurkhali/Gorkhali (these terms are used interchangeably, reflecting simply a difference in spelling) outside of Nepal, one or the other title usually being adhered to for political reasons. Those who have gone directly from Nepal, particularly circular migrants, are naturally identified as Nepali as a designation of nationality. However, those domiciled in India, particularly those more politically conscious and seeking to establish their identity as an integral part of Indian society as distinct from citizens of Nepal, generally identify themselves as Gorkhali. This is personified in the Gorkhaland movement in Darjeeling District of W. Bengal. On the other hand, there was a rift in the domiciled Nepali community (meaning all the peoples who originated from Nepal) in India over recognition of the Nepali language under the Indian Constitution; whether it should be called the "Nepali" or "Gorkhali" language. Those of Bhandari's party in Sikkim fought for recognition of "Nepali," while those of Ghising's party in Darjeeling fought for "Gorkhali," and others from across the whole span of India were divided in their opinions. The self-designation of either Nepali or Gorkhali in the context of India, especially among the educated, usually takes on political connotations. In areas where there has been a strong Gurkha soldier presence (either past or present), they are naturally known as Gurkhalis, or often simply as Gurkhas, regardless of the fact that the majority population of such communities today has no military connection. For instance, in Myanmar the people with roots in Nepal usually call themselves Gurkhalis, while the surrounding receptor community often simply call them Gurkhas; a throw-back to the days of British colonial rule. Thus in Myanmar, and also in Malaysia and many rural areas of India, their settlements are commonly referred to as "Gurkha bastis."

(4) Bista, 1973, 43.

(5) Christoph von Furer-Haimendorf, "Unity and Diversity in the Chetri Caste of Nepal," *CASTE AND KIN IN NEPAL, INDIA AND CEYLON*, ed. Christoph von Furer-Haimendorf (London: East-West Publ., 1979), 13.

(6) Dor Bahadur Bista, "Patterns of Migration in Nepal," in *HIMALAYA: ECOLOGY-ETHNOLOGY*, Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, Vol. I (Paris: CNRS, 1977), 397-8.

(7) Bista, 1973, 38-9.

(8) Malla and Rana, 1973, 4-5.

(9) Walter Frank, "Attempt at an Ethno-demography of Middle Nepal," in *CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE ANTHROPOLOGY OF NEPAL*, ed. Christ-

oph von Furer-Haimendorf (Warminster: Aris & Phillips, 1974; New Delhi, 1977), 87.

(10) Bista, 1973, 36.

(11) Risley, Vol. 2, 1891, 312-321, gives a fairly lengthy early description.

(12) Malla and Rana, 1973, 5. Nanda R. Shrestha, "The Political Economy of External Migration and Economic Underdevelopment in Nepal," Political Geography Quarterly 4 (1985), 291 also follows this three wave analysis.

(13) Lieut. Col. E. Vansittart, GURKHAS: HANDBOOK FOR THE INDIAN ARMY, rev. by Major B.U. Nicolay (Calcutta, 1915), 45.

(14) Bista, 1977, 398.

(15) Dor Bahadur Bista, PEOPLE OF NEPAL (Kathmandu: Ratna Pustak Bhandar, 1987), 159-195 also includes the Manangba, Lhomi, Lopa of Mustang, and other little known groups in this wave.

(16) Edwin Atkinson, HIMALAYAN GAZETTEER, Vol. II (Allahabad, 1882; Delhi: Cosmos Publ., 1973, vii and 379), one of the early British scholars to write about the Western Himalayas, refers to them as Aryan in the widest sense, but claims that they had "not yet come up to their plains brethren in caste and religious observance (who) still excludes them from the ranks of the twice-born," although the Khas professed themselves to be Rajput. Sir George A. Grierson, INDO-ARYAN FAMILY, Vol. IX of LINGUISTIC SURVEY OF INDIA (Calcutta, 1916), part IV, p.7 says they were looked on as barbarians because of their non-observance of Sanskrit rules.

(17) Grierson (Vol. IX:IV, 1916, 8) places it before the 6th century; whereas Malla and Rana (1973, 2) quote Petech to support their contention that the Khas only arrived in the 12th century and had no extensive kingdom in the west before that; while N.R. Shrestha (1985, 291) says they reached the western hills of Nepal "somewhat less than 1000 years ago," and there were concurrent waves of high-caste Brahman and Rajput fleeing the Muslim invasion to the south. Furer-Haimendorf ("Chetri caste", in CASTE AND KIN IN NEPAL, 1979, 20) and D.N. Zurick ("Historical Links Between Settlement, Ecology, and Politics in the Mountains of West Nepal," in Human Ecology 17:2, 1989, 233) prefer to simply say that the Khas' history is "obscure" because of lack of documentary evidence.

(18) Ram P. Srivastava, "Tribe-Caste Mobility in India and the Case of Kumaon Bhotias," in CASTE AND KIN IN NEPAL (1979), 187-8.

(19) "Nepali-Pahari" is a distinct term the author has chosen to use, to distinguish from Pahari culture as described by Gerald Berreman (HINDUS OF THE HIMALAYAS: ETHNOGRAPHY AND CHANGE, Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1972) and Srivastava (1979) in their treatment of the Himalayas to the west of current-day Nepal which only includes the Khas-Bahun and low-caste sectors of society.

(20) This is noted by the following: Malla and Rana (1973, 6); David Snellgrove, INDO-TIBETAN BUDDHISM: INDIAN BUDDHISTS AND THEIR TIBETAN SUCCESSORS (London: Serindia Publ., 1987); P.R. Sharma ("Culture and Religion," in NEPAL IN PERSPECTIVE, 1973, 58); and K.P. Malla ("Language," in NEPAL IN PERSPECTIVE, 1973, 101).

(21) Ludwig F. Stiller, *THE SILENT CRY 1816-1839* (Kathmandu: Sahayogi Prakashan, 1976), 31. This contention is also supported by Bista (1987).

(22) Although many students of the peoples of Nepal (eg. Bista 1987) consider them according to geographic divisions north to south -- the Himalayan highlands, lower or middle Himalayan hills and valleys, and inner and outer terai -- for the purpose of this study east to west divisions are considered in order to point out the broad cultural developments and interactions, as well as distinctive migration patterns that emerge in connection with each.

(23) Stiller (1976, 16, n.31) notes three sets of kings who achieved a high degree of unification in their respective areas, but lost it due to internal and geographic reasons: the Malla kings of Jumla, in the north-western hills; the Sen kings of Makwanpur, in the south-western hills and with some influence in the east; and the Malla kings of the Kathmandu Valley. But he ignores the Kirata chiefs in the whole of the eastern hills in this analysis. In a much earlier analysis by Atkinson (Vol. 2, 1973, 607) the Kirata are included in his breakdown of groups of "petty states": Vaisya Rajas of Dulu, Doti, Jumla, and Achham in the west; "petty chiefs" of the Kirata in the east; and "petty Rajas" in the north as in Gorkha. But he does not include the ancient Newar civilization of the Nepal Valley, evidently putting it in a different category.

(24) The oldest historical evidence found in Nepal is a pillar at Lumbini in the eastern terai, reputedly the birth-place of Buddha, with an inscription by Ashoka dating back to 249 B.C. But this was not a part of Nepal at the time, and Ashoka would have had no conception of going to Nepal when he was at Lumbini. The terai experienced cultural impacts from various dynasties of adjacent India: the Mauryan, Sunga, Kushana, and Gupta. But with the demise of the Gupta the terai seems to have faded into oblivion, and the spotlight shifts to the Nepal Valley where the Licchavi rose to eminence. Surya Bikram Gewali ("Political History," in *NEPAL IN PERSPECTIVE*, 1973, 47-8) states further that the early Licchavi kings in the Nepal Valley paid tribute and homage to the great Gupta monarch Samundragupta, but with the waning of Gupta power in India, the Licchavi rule in Nepal began to grow and prosper. The earliest inscriptions which have come to light then date from the Licchavi dynasty in the 5th century. See K.P. Malla ("Language", 1973, 101) for details of epigraphic evidence of early language in Nepal.

(25) Bista, 1987, 17. Bista estimates the beginnings of the Newar civilisation to be from the 6th century B.C., when he says Kirata, Killiya, Salamliya, Sakya, Licchavi and Shresthi combined to form the earliest known group of the Nepal Valley.

(26) This is noted by Malla and Rana (1973, 6), and is supported by David Snellgrove in *BUDDHIST HIMALAYA* (Oxford: Bruno Cassirer, 1957), 94.

(27) Several authors point to the existence of four Buddhist stupas at the four corners of the ancient city of Patan, the earliest religious monuments in the Nepal Valley, as evidence of the Valley's conversion to Buddhism before Hinduism. Local tradition says they were built by Ashoka, but Snellgrove (1987, 365) says there is no historical evidence that he ever reached there.

(28) Malla and Rana, 1973, 78.

(29) Stephen Greenwold in his article "The Role of the Priest in Newar Society," in *HIMALAYAN ANTHROPOLOGY* (ed. James F. Fisher, Paris: Mouton Publ., 1978, 488) calls Newar Buddhism the "buddhized aspect of

contemporaneous Nepalese Hinduism."

(30) Malla, "Language," 1973, 102.

(31) Gewali, 1973, 51.

(32) Ruth L. Schmidt, "Symbolic Fields in Nepalese Religious Iconography," in *HIMALAYAN ANTHROPOLOGY* (1978), 448.

(33) Malla and Rana, 1973, 9.

(34) Malla and Rana, 1973, 9.

(35) Luciano Petech, *MEDIAEVAL HISTORY OF NEPAL*, 2nd ed. (Roma: Istituto Italiano Per Il Medio ed Estremo Oriente, 1984), 203.

(36) Although the kings of Nepal have been predominantly Hindu, which accounts for Vishnu (or king) worship, Petech (1984, 203) points out that there were two kings in medieval times who privately followed Buddhism. But in their public capacity they were bound to follow the Hindu rites and uphold the Hindu social order. In practice the kings of Nepal have traditionally supported Buddhist as well as Hindu institutions.

(37) H. Ambrose Oldfield, *SKETCHES FROM NEPAL* (1880; reprint Delhi: Cosmo Publ., 1974), 121.

(38) Gewali, 1973, 49-50.

(39) Srivastava, 1979, 188-9.

(40) Harka Bahadur Gurung, "Pokhara Valley, Nepal Himalaya: A Field Study in Regional Geography" (PhD thesis, Faculty of Social Sciences, Univ. of Edinburgh, 1965), 109; and Oldfield (1974, 168) based on a paper by Hodgson dated Oct. 1832.

(41) See Chapter 11 for a description of Nepali expansionism in the Western Himalayas.

(42) Zurick, 1989, 234.

(43) This is also referred to as Hinduisation, and as Nepalisation in later works, although the latter carries nationalistic connotations. It is both a social and religious process of what M.N. Srinivas ("The Cohesive Role of Sanskritization," in *INDIA AND CEYLON: UNITY AND DIVERSITY*, ed. P. Mason, London: OUP, 1967, 81) calls "cultural osmosis."

(44) H. Gurung, 1965, 118.

(45) Vansittart (1915, 4,66,81) makes a case for the Chaubisi rajas actually being Magar descendants but claiming Rajput status, where many of those converted to Hinduism were given the sacred thread and took Khastriya clan names. Furer-Haimendorf ("Chetri caste," 1979, 17) attributes the common clan-names to mixed marriages, which many anthropologists point to as being fairly common, especially between Khas men and tribal women. Bista (1987, 62) is more non-committal, saying some Magar "believe" they have the same origin as the Thakuri, and that it is "quite possible" that the aristocracy among the early Magar assumed and acquired Thakuri caste and status.

(46) In Lionel Caplan's work, *LAND AND SOCIAL CHANGE IN EAST NEPAL* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1970), p.70 he delineates the three levels in Nepal's caste hierarchy as: 1) "tagadhari jat" high-caste Hindu Brahman and Chhetri who wear the sacred thread; 2) "matwali jat" or drinking castes, the Tibeto-Burman language speaking tribal groups not entitled to wear the sacred thread; and 3) untouchables or menial castes from whose hands others will not even accept water.

(47) The national language of Nepal has been variously known as "Eastern Pahari" or "Parbatiya" (hill speech), "Khas-kura," "Gurkhali" or "Gorkhali" (language of the Gurkhas), "Naipali," "Nepalese" or "Nepali" (language of the Nepali people).

(48) H. Gurung, 1965, 112.

(49) D.R. Regmi, *MODERN NEPAL* (Calcutta, 1961), 302-3. This is backed up by K.P. Malla (1973, 111) in his article on "Language." Malla cites the earliest extant epigraphic evidence of Nepali as dating back to 1336, a copper plate inscription by Punya Malla.

(50) In 1916 Grierson (Vol. IX:IV) classified what is now known as Nepali as Eastern Pahari, one of the three major divisions of the Hindi dialect "Pahari" which he found to be intimately related to the language of Rajputana and also allied to Sanskrit. But he also noted that Eastern Pahari borrowed from Tibeto-Burman languages, not a feature of Western and Central Pahari. Western Pahari was classified as the language of Simla and Kashmir; Central Pahari as the language of Kumaon and Garhwal, and along the Nepal frontier showing the influence of Nepali; and Eastern Pahari/Khas-kura/Naipali as the language of Nepal, with borrowings from Tibeto-Burman speech.

(51) D.R. Regmi, 1961, 5.

(52) Historical and anthropological studies point out various degrees of Hinduisation or Sanskritisation of almost all of the Nepal Tibeto-Burman speaking tribes. The Magar, those in the most direct line of the Khas-Bahun expansion and thus having the most contact, are often pointed to as being the most Hinduised. Furer-Haimendorf ("Chetri caste," 1979, 17) goes to the point of affirming that the Magar are "close to the point where a tribal group may enter Hindu society as a caste of recognised status."

(53) H. Gurung, 1965, 119. The "twin ideals" of Hindu religion and military chivalry are put forth by Malla and Rana (1973, 3).

(54) Bista, 1987, 32.

(55) Furer-Haimendorf, "Chetri caste", 1979, 18, n.5.

(56) A.R. Foning, *LEPCHA MY VANISHING TRIBE* (New Delhi: Sterling Publ., 1987), 144.

(57) Foning, 1987, 131. The historical connection between the Limbu and Lepcha is substantiated by Sir Joseph Hooker's (*HIMALAYAN JOURNALS*, London: Ward, Lock, Bowden & Co., 1891, 87) contention that the Lepcha once possessed a great part of present-day eastern Nepal at an earlier period, all the way to the Arun River. L. Caplan (1970, 7, n.3) also mentions evidence that Ilam, in eastern Nepal, once contained a "sizable population" of Lepcha. Foning (1987, 143-4) further conjectures a possible

connection of the Lepcha with the Rai, pointing to similar oral traditions of both tribes which depict Lepcha and Jimdar (Rai) as descendants of two of the three sons in creation accounts.

(58) For further discussion of this point see the following: Foning (1987); Pranab K. Jha, *HISTORY OF SIKKIM 1817-1904* (Calcutta: OPS Publ. 1985), 51; Vincent Herbert Coelho, *SIKKIM AND BHUTAN* (New Delhi: Vikas Publ., 1971, 3), and Hooker (1891, 94-5).

(59) In illustration of this incorporation of the Lepcha and Limbu by the dominant Tibetans, Foning (1987, 134-5) notes that the Tibetans called the Lepcha and Chong/Limbu by the joint name of "Men-Chong," and they further devised the slogan "Loh-Me-Chong-Sum," meaning that "the Tibetans, the Lepchas, and the Chongs belonged to the same inseparable tribe of three."

(60) Foning, 1987, 135; and P.K. Jha, 1985, 51.

(61) Ram Rahul, *THE HIMALAYA AS A FRONTIER* (New Delhi: Vikas, 1978), 39.

(62) D.R. Regmi, 1961, 38-9.

(63) For an account of the Kirata's relationship to the Sen, see D.R. Regmi (1961, 27,36), Gewali (1973, 52,55) and L. Caplan (1970, 14).

(64) Michael Aris makes numerous references to these tributary missions in his work, *BHUTAN: THE EARLY HISTORY OF A HIMALAYAN KINGDOM* (Warminster: Aris & Phillips, 1979); also see Ram Rahul, *MODERN BHUTAN* (New Delhi: Vikas, 1971), 2.

(65) Aris (1979, 269) also notes diplomatic relations between Assam, Sikkim, Nepal and Ladakh in the 18th century.

(66) Leo Rose, *THE POLITICS OF BHUTAN* (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1977), 68.

(67) C.G. Bruce, *HIMALAYAN WANDERER* (London: Maclehose, 1934), 200. See Chapter 11 for a detailed account of Nepali soldiers' service under these various rulers in the Western Himalayas.

(68) Stiller, 1976, 4-5,110.

(69) H. Gurung, 1965, 120.

(70) C.B. Shrestha, "Trends of the Redistribution of Population in Nepal," in *POPULATION AND REDISTRIBUTION AND DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTH ASIA*, eds. L.A. Kosinski & K.M. Elahi (D. Reidel Publ. Co., 1985), 128; and Furer-Haimendorf, "Chetri caste" 1979, 12 and 16.

(71) Furer-Haimendorf, 1979, 65.

(72) Hooker, 1891.

(73) N.R. Shrestha, *LANDLESSNESS AND MIGRATION IN NEPAL* (Colorado: Westview Press, 1990).

(74) Oldfield, 1974, 49.

- (75) N.R. Shrestha, 1990, 166.
- (76) Mark Poffenberger, "Patterns of Interaction: demography, ecology, and society in the Nepal Himalaya" (PhD diss. Educ., Univ. of Michigan, 1976), 86-7.
- (77) Oldfield, "Remarks on the Routes by which an Invading Army could approach the Valley of Nipal," (condensed from a Report to Government by Mr. Ross Bell, Delhi, March 1839), 1974, 136-141.
- (78) This movement is noted both by Bista (1973, 39,44) and Doherty (1978, 433).
- (79) Stiller, 1976, 299; and David Seddon and Piers Blaike and J. Cameron, eds., PEASANTS AND WORKERS IN NEPAL (Westminster: Aris and Phillips, 1979), 86.
- (80) Also called the Indo-Nepaulese War, this conflict was precipitated by territorial disputes over sections of the terai between Nepal and the British in India. But according to Amar Kaur Jasbir Singh (HIMALAYAN TRIANGLE: A HISTORICAL SURVEY OF BRITISH INDIA'S RELATIONS WITH TIBET, SIKKIM AND BHUTAN 1765-1950, London: British Library, 1988, 299), the real objective of the British was "to prevent Gurkha expansion into the Himalayan fringe and to surround Nepal by territory under British control or protection." With Nepal's defeat, she lost much of the land conquered during the Gorkhali expansionism -- Kumaon and Dehradun to the west and Sikkim to the east -- and was confined between the Kali and Mechi Rivers.
- (81) Frederick F. Gaige, REGIONALISM AND NATIONAL UNITY IN NEPAL (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1975), 63.
- (82) Stiller, 1976, 66.
- (83) See N.R. Shrestha (1985, 292-297) for an account of these pressures. Shrestha and Poffenberger (1976) both rely heavily on M.C. Regmi's 1971 in-depth historical study of land tenure and economics in Nepal (A STUDY IN NEPALI ECONOMIC HISTORY 1768-1846, New Delhi: Manjushree Publ. House, 1971), giving a very similar analysis to Stiller (1976) of the socio-economic situation in the Nepal hills during this period following unification.
- (84) Stiller, 1976, 290.
- (85) Stiller 1976, 74-75.
- (86) M.C. Regmi, "Land Tenure," in NEPAL IN PERSPECTIVE (1973), 182.
- (87) M.C. Regmi, 1971, 44.
- (88) Both D.R. Regmi (1961, 311-2) and Stiller (1976, 296) describe this relationship.
- (89) Poffenberger, 1976, 88-9.
- (90) Seddon, et. al., 1979, 50.
- (91) Stiller, 1976, 61. This is also noted by Poffenberger (1976, 89), and

Piers Blaike (THE STRUGGLE FOR BASIC NEEDS IN NEPAL, Paris: OECD, 1979, 71) identifies this growing demand for cash as one of the reasons for later migration.

(92) Stiller, 1976, 63. He notes an increase in the incidence of bondage during this period and attributes it to a sharp change in the villages' economic position.

(93) Stiller, 1976, 65.

(94) Furer-Haimendorf's observation ("Chetri caste" 1979, 18) that only the "matwali jats," Tibeto-Burman speaking groups, were subject to being made slaves at this time is significant. No Brahman, Thakuri or Chhetri could become a slave unless expelled from caste due to pollution. This is another indicator of those within Nepali society who were most vulnerable to the economic pressures and possible subsequent migration.

(95) Stiller, 1976, 292. "Jagar" is also called "begar," "beth," or "corvee" labour, depending on the source consulted. According to H. Tinker in A NEW SYSTEM OF SLAVERY (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1974), 39, this practice was also enforced in pre-industrial India.

(96) Stiller, 1976, 36; and Seddon, et. al., 1979, 145-6.

(97) Stiller (1976, 34-38) gives a detailed description of the "hulak" system. Also see N.R. Shrestha (1990, 74-5).

(98) Stiller, 1976, 38.

(99) A. Höfer, "A New Rural Elite in Central Nepal," in HIMALAYAN ANTHROPOLOGY (1978), 180.

(100) Stiller, 1976, 296,307.

(101) Stiller, 1976, 72-73.

(102) M.C. Regmi, 1971, 203. He also refers to lands which were abandoned before the crops were even harvested. The Bhim Sen Thapa Documents (7/967/183 in the Regmi Research Collection, Kathmandu, as cited by Stiller, 1976, 72) reveal instances in the early 1800s of farmers deserting their land in Doti, Kumaon, Accham, and Kullu-Dailekh. This further confirms the process of land alienation moving from west to east.

(103) This westward campaign from Gorkha to the Sutlej lasted about 40 years. Stiller (1976) points out that it became particularly intense with the determined push beyond Almora through Garhwal, culminating in the unsuccessful Kot Kangra three year siege from 1806 into which every available resource was poured.

(104) The preferential treatment of the Limbu and their retention of land rights at least for a time is attested to by several scholars, including Gewali (1973, 56), L. Caplan (1970, 4) and Stiller (1976, 142-3). D.R. Regmi (1961, 94) draws attention to a royal charter which was issued in 1773 concerning the relationship between the central government in Kathmandu and the Kirata. Caplan (1970, 29) further notes that some of the Limbu "kipat" land claims were later legitimised by various royal decrees, the first given in 1825.

(105) Caplan, 1970, 59-60. See Caplan (1970) for a full description of the

historical process of Brahman encroachment in Limbuana.

(106) Stiller, 1976, 43.

(107) Dor Bahadur Bista (former Nepali Ambassador to Tibet), "Nepalis in Tibet," in *HIMALAYAN ANTHROPOLOGY* (1978), 187-204. D.R. Regmi (1961, 201) says that following Nepal's defeat by Tibet, entry of Nepalis was banned by the 1792 treaty. If true, the ban was evidently not enforced, for there is abundant historical evidence of a sizable Newar merchant community in Tibet until the events of 1959 stopped the flow. In Bista's account, he cites Huc's description (1852, 251-252) of this Newar community as part of the "fixed population of Lhasa" and the most numerous group of foreigners in Tibet. Then in 1854 Nepal invaded Tibet, ostensibly because of mistreatment of Nepali traders resident there, and in the resultant treaty of 1856 Nepali citizens in Tibet secured extra territorial rights, the Nepal government was permitted to establish a trading station at Lhasa and to maintain a representative in Lhasa (C.U. Aitchison, compiler, *A COLLECTION OF TREATIES, ENGAGEMENTS AND SANADS RELATING TO INDIA AND NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES*, Vol. 14, revised and continued to 1929 [1866; reprint Delhi: Mittal Publ., 1983], 15). This is also attested to by Oldfield (1974, 413-415). Then Bista (1978, 193) notes a report in the 1920s by Sir Charles Bell, the British resident in Lhasa, of a large colony of Nepalis in Lhasa and smaller colonies in Tse-tang, Shigatse, Gyantse, Lhatse, and places in the province of Kongpol.

(108) P.R. Sharma, "Culture and Religion," 1973, 71. A further significant change which took place within Buddhism in Nepal from the 10th century, and also had an impact on its development in Tibet, was the growth of Tantrism (see Sharma, p.72-73,76). Concerning Buddhism's spread into Tibet, Sir Monier-Williams (*BUDDHISM IN ITS CONNEXION WITH BRAHMANISM AND HINDUISM*, London: John Murray, 1889, 271) claimed it was the Nepali wife of a king of Tibet who was instrumental in propagating Buddhism in Tibet. Sharma (p.71) clarifies that it is the traditionally held view that the Nepali King Amshuvarman married his daughter Bhrikuti to the first historical King of Tibet, Srong-tsan-Sgam-po, and she took an image of Buddha with her and spread the knowledge of Buddhism in Tibet.

(109) Bista (1978, 190) notes that Aniko, the famous Nepali architect, travelled in the 13th century with a band of workers to Lhasa and ultimately on to Peking where they built temples and monuments of renown.

(110) According to P.R. Sharma ("Culture and Religion," 1973, 75), from the 18th century the tide of religious influence was reversed and began to flow from Tibet to Nepal, with the authority of Tibetan Lamas being recognised in Buddhist centres in Nepal.

(111) Fr. Fulgentius Vannini has given this subject the most extensive treatment in three main works: *THE BELL OF LHASA* (New Delhi, 1976); *HINDUSTAN-TIBET MISSION* (New Delhi: Vishal Printers, 1981); and *CHRISTIAN SETTLEMENTS IN NEPAL DURING THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY* (New Delhi: Mssrs. Devarsons, 1977). His work is based largely on Luciano Peteck's 7 volume work, *I MISSIONARI ITALIANI NEL TIBET E NEL NEPAL* (Roma: La Libreria Dello Stato, 1952). Father Giuseppe also gives a first-hand account of his experiences in "Account of the Kingdom of Nepal," *Asiatick Researches*, Vol. 2 (Calcutta, 1790), 307-322.

(112) Foning, 1987, 57. Here Foning is referring to the mainly Hindu pahari conquerors and their representatives, not Kirata from eastern Nepal who

already flowed freely through this area.

(113) This is attested to by the fact that recruiters for the British Indian Army went as far as Kumaon to recruit from the many Gurkha families who had resided there since the Gorkhali occupation (see E.D. Smith, *JOHNNY GURKHA*, London: Leo Cooper, 1985, 26).

(114) D.R. Regmi, 1961, 105 and 147; and B.D. Sanwal, *NEPAL AND THE EAST INDIA COMPANY* (Bombay: Asia Publ. House, 1965), 265. This kind of exodus into north India for political reasons continued throughout the Rana regime, and the exiles often used their refuge as a base to mount intrigue against the rulers in Kathmandu.

(115) The author deals with this early group of Newari Christians in some detail in an earlier work, *A BIOGRAPHICAL HISTORY OF THE CHURCH IN NEPAL* (1990; reprint Kathmandu: Nepal Church History Project, 1993).

(116) See Perry (1993) for an account of this earliest community of Nepali Christians, first in Tibet, then in Nepal, and their subsequent exile to Bettiah (p.1-11); then of the beginnings of the church in Nepal and its establishment from the mid-20th century.

(117) See Chapter 11 for a more detailed account of the early recruitment of Gorkhali into the British-Indian Army.

(118) Vansittart, 1915, 46.

(119) K. Davis, *THE POPULATION OF INDIA AND PAKISTAN* (Princeton: Univ. Press, 1951), 95.

(120) Combining Grierson's analysis of the 1901 Census of India of 143,721 E. Pahari/Khas-Kura speakers (Vol. IX:IV, 1916, 19), and 140,596 Nepal-origin tribal language speakers (Vol. III:I, 1909): yields a total of 284,317 people in India who spoke a language of Nepal.

(121) The figure most quoted for Nepali in Burma is from Kesar Lall, "The Nepalese Without Nepal," *Nepal Review* 1:8, June 1968, 346. Although the author has not been able to determine on what Lall based his estimate, her own interviews in 1993 with the Nepali community in Burma yielded roughly the same estimate, from 150-300,000. The discussion on Myanmar (Burma) in Chapter 9 shows the reasons for this fairly constant number.

(122) The first Nepali converts in Tibet, who made their way back to Nepal almost 200 years earlier than Protestant mission work started among Nepali in Darjeeling, were a precursor of this. But the author has found no evidence that the subsequent Catholic Christian community in Bettiah had any significant further influence among Nepali ethnics either in India or in Nepal.

SECTION 1
THE EASTERN HIMALAYAS*

CHAPTER 2 - NEPALI ENTER THE EASTERN HIMALAYAS

INTRODUCTION

Sikkim, once the undisturbed mountain enclave of the gentle nomadic Lepcha, was overrun in the course of history by the more sophisticated Khampa Tibetans who brought both Lamaistic Buddhism and a ruling dynasty of successive Dharmarajas (Chogyal) who reigned supreme in both temporal and spiritual matters.¹ As already seen, Sikkim and Limbuana (later E. Nepal) were already linked ethnically, culturally and religiously when the kingdom of Sikkim emerged in 1642. "Denzong" (the Dragon Kingdom) as it was known, extended east across the Chumbi Valley to the Haa Valley of Bhutan, west into Limbuana, north nearly to Phari in Tibet, and south to Titalya. It was subsequently encroached upon by its Himalayan neighbours of Bhutan and Nepal to the east and west with their respective expansionist goals. Territory changed hands back and forth between the three throughout the 18th century. By 1775 Limbuana was overrun by the Gorkhali army, and within fifteen years they had pushed on eastward through the Morang and lower hills of Sikkim as far as the Teesta River. The land east of the Teesta, including the present-day Kalimpong subdivision and the Duars, had fallen into the hands of Bhutan from the beginning of the century. But it was the expanding British colonial empire to the south, in pursuit of its own interests, that finally defined the present-day boundaries of this area and also dramatically changed its ethnic balance.

*The Eastern Himalayas as dealt with in this section include the following areas to the east of Nepal: present-day Sikkim, Darjeeling and Jalpaiguri Districts of West Bengal, and Bhutan.



By the 1817 Treaty of Titalya, to which Sikkim was not even a party, Nepal retained all territory west of the Mechi River (including Limbuana). Although the territory east of the Mechi was restored to Sikkim, within just 20 years the hill tract of Darjeeling had been "gifted" to the British at their request for use as a sanatorium, and it became known as "British Sikkim." The whole of Sikkim's terai lands were seized just 15 years later in a dispute over the alleged abuse of two British explorers in Sikkim. This linked Darjeeling to the terai below, making it no longer an enclave within Sikkim territory. In the process the Dragon Kingdom was reduced to a mere 60 mile girth of rugged mountainous terrain and cut off from all access to the plains. Also, with the British now so close at hand, and their alternate desires to use it as a trade route and then as a kind of buffer zone with Tibet, Sikkim became what Jha calls an "easy prey of British colonialism."² By the turn of the century Sikkim had been made a British Protectorate, John Claude White was appointed as the Political Officer to reside in Gangtok, and Sikkim was progressively opened up to the outside world.³ One of the consequences was that Sikkim was opened to a flood of Nepali immigration.

To the east Bhutan deliberately pursued a policy of isolationism from the mid-18th century in order to escape the pressures from Tibet to the north and the British in India to the south. Although this protected their sovereignty, they progressively lost territory to the British in a series of confrontations. In 1839 the Assam Duars were occupied by the British because of their fertile land and suitability for tea cultivation, and also in a move to make the Bhutanese dependent on them; these Duars were formally annexed in 1841.⁴ A series of frontier disputes culminated in the Anglo-Bhutan War of 1864-1865. In the resultant Treaty of Sinchula, dated 11 Nov. 1865, Bhutan lost the whole of the Bengal Duars, 220 miles of border territory, and the Kalimpong area, together called "British Bhutan." Bhutan retained its independence, although not without a

measure of British influence. Kalimpong area was soon made a sub-division of Darjeeling District, and the Bengal Duars together with the Morang immediately below the Darjeeling hills were formed into Jalpaiguri District of West Bengal. From at least this time Nepali ethnics began to move on eastward from Darjeeling into British Bhutan, which became a bridge onward to Bhutan itself.⁵ This onward move was facilitated by the emergence of Kazi Ugyen Dorji who settled in Kalimpong and maintained estates both there and in West Bhutan, serving as the Bhutanese Agent responsible for Indo-Bhutanese relations and as Governor over both west and south-west Bhutan.⁶ He was cultivated by the British who encouraged him to invite Nepali into these areas to clear and cultivate the land, providing him with vastly increased revenue collections. By 1904 when the Settlement Officer in Kalimpong, Charles Bell, did a survey of 500 square miles of western Bhutan, he estimated about 15,000 Nepali ethnics were settled in the region.⁷ Thirty years later when Captain C.J. Morris did a tour of southern Bhutan he estimated a population of at least 60,000 Nepali, who extended by then into the south-east as well as the south-west.⁸

British holdings in the Eastern Himalayas now included Darjeeling District and its newly acquired Kalimpong sub-division wedged between Nepal and Bhutan, the fertile land of the Bengal and Assam Duars, and virtual suzerainty over Sikkim. In the meantime, the British had already begun the development of Darjeeling, their first enclave in the region. Although it was originally a Lepcha area, when the British arrived it was practically uninhabited.⁹ Coolie labour was needed to transport goods up from the plains, to build roads and begin construction. When the Mechi proved unsuitable for such work in the hills and the Sikkim Maharaja forbade his people to work for the British, they began to look to the industrious Nepali to the west as a source of immigrant labour.¹⁰ When Dr. Campbell was posted in 1839 from Kathmandu to Darjeeling as Superintendent, he immediately began to encourage immigrant settlers and cultivators and to recruit labourers for the development of the area.

From an estimated native population of only about 100 upon Campbell's arrival, according to Dash it multiplied 100 times in the next ten years to 10,000.¹¹ By the time of the first regular census of Darjeeling in 1872, the population of the hill section of the district was recorded as 46,727, with the great majority of them being Nepali ethnics.¹² At this stage Nepali were also being drawn in as labourers for the growing number of tea plantations (74 in 1872), for which Nepali provided 96 percent of the labour in the hills.¹³

The other big draw towards Darjeeling was for Gurkha recruitment. As early as 1857 Campbell was authorised to recruit East Nepali for the Assam and Burma Police battalions, and in 1890 Darjeeling was made the second main recruiting station for the Gurkha battalions of the Indian Army.¹⁴ Thousands of Nepali men were also recruited as ancillary labour for military transport as coolies, road construction labourers, etc. in Assam and North East India.¹⁵ According to Sen, between 1886 and 1904 over 27,000 Nepali were recruited through the Darjeeling depot.¹⁶ Before World War I there was a policy not to recruit from domiciled Nepali in Darjeeling or Sikkim; thus the very process of recruitment greatly encouraged the continuing migration flow eastward from Nepal. Darjeeling District has continued to be a Nepali enclave outside of Nepal until the present day.

Nepali were also drawn into the terai below the hills and Jalpaiguri District both as cultivators and as tea garden labourers, although not nearly in the same numbers as those who went to the hills. As hill people they preferred the hills, and only as land and population pressure later built up around Darjeeling were some pushed down to the terai and on eastward to the Duars. Kalimpong likewise became a further destination. When it was annexed in 1866 the population was estimated at only about 3,500, almost all indigenous Lepcha. But within twenty-five years it had swelled to almost 27,000 and continued to grow, primarily due to immigration.¹⁷ Unlike Darjeeling, land was withheld from tea cultivation in Kalimpong sub-division, leaving it open for small

agriculturalists. Also, transfers of land holdings to plainsmen or from native Lepcha/Bhutia to Nepali was not permitted, ensuring a stronger Lepcha presence and self-identity in contrast to those west of the Teesta. In addition, Lepcha from Sikkim were also drawn into Darjeeling and Kalimpong by the attraction of land and the opportunities opened up by development. Here they underwent a high degree of integration with the predominant and more aggressive Nepali through intermarriage and virtual adoption of the Nepali language which was soon the lingua franca of the district.¹⁸ Foning laments the Lepcha as a "vanishing tribe" whose people are "imperceptibly and gradually but surely becoming members of this ever-growing group (Nepali) now inhabiting the hilly regions of the Himalayas, running right across the stretch from Nepal to Bhutan and beyond in the east."¹⁹ This process of integration was accelerated within the Christian community as it grew.

Meanwhile the Lepcha population in Sikkim had retained a majority over the ruling Bhutia, with the Limbu/Tsong estimated by British observers in the mid-1800s as the second largest group. But by the end of the century there had been a massive influx of Nepali immigrants with the encouragement of the British which propelled them to a 65 percent majority of the population.²⁰ Although the Chogyal made repeated protests against the Nepali inflow and did all he could to obstruct it, following the signing of the Anglo-Sikkim Treaty in 1861 Sikkim came under the sway of the British with the installation of a pro-British Lepcha leader as Dewan. Then the Anglo-Chinese convention of 1890, to which Sikkim was not even a party, but which recognised her as a British Protectorate, effectively sealed Sikkim's fate. Article two of the Convention stated:

It is admitted that the British Government, whose protectorate over the Sikkim State is hereby recognised, has direct and exclusive control over the internal administration and foreign relations of that State, and except through and with the permission of the British Government neither the ruler of the State, nor any of its officers, shall have official relation of any kind, formal or informal, with any other country.²¹

These events were followed by even further immigration of Nepali agriculturalists and labourers for road construction and other projects. J.S. Lall quotes White's rationale for a policy that altered the ethnic composition of the country, as in Darjeeling and Kalimpong:

The country was very sparsely populated, and in order to bring more land under cultivation it was necessary to encourage immigration, and this was done by giving land on favourable terms to Nepalis, who, since they knew it was to be had, came freely in.²²

As much as to encourage economic growth, another evident goal of the policy toward Sikkim was to modify Tibetan influence in this tiny buffer state, and to destabilise the Maharaja's authority.²³ This is laid bare by Risley:

The Lepchas are rapidly dying out; while from the west, the industrious Newars and Gurkhas of Nepal are pressing forward to clear and cultivate the large areas of unoccupied land on which the European tea-planters of Darjeeling have already cast longing eyes. The influx of these hereditary enemies of Tibet has our surest guarantee against a revival of Tibetan influence. Here also religion should take a leading part... In Sikkim as in India, Hinduism will assuredly cast out Buddhism, and the praying wheel of the Lama will give place to the sacrificial implements of the Brahmins. The land will follow the creed; the Tibetan proprietors will gradually be disposed...

Thus, race and religion, the prime movers of the Asiatic world, will settle the Sikkim difficulty for us, in their own way.²⁴

Indeed the proportion of Nepali ethnics in Sikkim's population continued to grow, reaching 77 percent of the total in the 1951 Census. Tibetan influence in the political sphere was not only curbed, but Sikkim was finally fully absorbed into the Indian sphere and given full statehood in 1975. During the following decade a high-caste Nepali was elected as the Chief Minister, N.B. Bhandari, who has become a leading figure in the whole Indian Nepali sphere. On the religious front Lamaistic Buddhism continued to play a major role, officially recognised as the state religion, although practiced by a minority of the population next to the increasing number of Hindu Nepali.

In this way Darjeeling/British Sikkim and Kalimpong/British Bhutan

were absorbed into the British realm and Sikkim was forced out of isolation and exposed to a myriad new influences, both sacred and secular, Western and Asian, while Bhutan retreated into her mountain fastness. The area was increasingly Nepalised. The Nepali language became the lingua franca (except in Bhutan), and high-caste Hindu and Newar gradually assumed disproportionate economic and political influence as they pushed on eastward from Nepal, causing resentment not only by the native Lepcha and Bhutia populations but also by the more numerous Nepali tribal ethnics.²⁵ Yet at the same time the traditional Lamaistic Buddhist politico-religious power structure in Sikkim and Bhutan retained power. This provided an atmosphere conducive to Nepali ethnics from a Buddhist background (eg. Sherpa, Tamang, Limbu, some Rai, Gurung and Newar) to avoid the rapid Hinduisation taking place in Nepal, and where Lepcha, while increasingly absorbed into the Nepali milieu, particularly in Darjeeling, were able to retain their animistic and/or Buddhist practices.

One of the new influences which Risley evidently did not foresee for Sikkim was Christianity, imported by the hands of mostly Lepcha preachers and a handful of missionaries over the years. But that story starts in Darjeeling, where the way for Christian missions was first opened into the Eastern Himalayas by the British desire for a sanatorium in the hills.

EARLY CHRISTIAN ADVANCES

During the nearly two centuries preceding Britain's involvement in this area, and Protestant advances, early Roman Catholic missions alternately tried various routes through the Himalayas as a passageway to Tibet. There was a kind of preoccupation with mysterious Tibet, and the intervening Himalayan kingdoms were seen more as a barrier to be overcome than as mission fields in their own right. Even the short-lived Capuchin mission of the mid-1700s in the Nepal Valley was a consequence of the earlier Tibet Mission. Following the British acquisition of Darjeeling, Kalimpong and the Duars area, Catholic

interest in the Eastern Himalayas continued to be primarily as a gateway, or potential "footholds" to entrance to Tibet.²⁶ Finally frustrated in their attempts, a station was established in 1882 at Pedong in British Sikkim, an important commercial center in trade with Sikkim and Tibet.²⁷

On the Protestant side, the first indications of interest in this area were from Baptists and Anglicans. William Carey's breadth of vision encompassed both Nepal and Bhutan before the British had even been drawn into involvement along their borders. The abortive "Bootan Mission" was initiated in 1797 with a visit by Carey himself to the border of Bhutan.²⁸ Work on the first translation of a "Nepala" New Testament began in 1812 in Serampore.²⁹ Then a Church Missionary Society (CMS) missionary, Mr. Schroeter, went to Titalya in 1815 at the suggestion of Major Latter. Titalya was the site of a military outpost below the hills of Sikkim from which the Morang was occupied and then restored to Sikkim by the British following the Anglo-Nepal War. Although Schroeter's eyes were on Tibet and his primary objective was to learn Tibetan, he took a tour of the country bordering "Nipal" in 1818, "and was received with great respect by the Hill people, who professed a willingness to teach him their language."³⁰ Major Latter himself was described by Long as squatting on the ground with a dozen Lepcha around him, reading to them, and they freely went in and out of his tent.³¹ But both Schroeter and Latter died by 1822, and the CMS Titalya Mission died with them. This is the earliest known mission tour by a Protestant missionary along the border of Nepal.

In the meantime, a letter was written in 1816 by Mr. Robertson of CMS "on the prospects of conversion to Christianity of some up-country tribes in India and Nepal," evidencing concern from other CMS quarters.³² However, this was evidently not taken up and the next CMS proposal concerning Nepal came in 1860 "from Captain Hawthorne of the Bengal Artillery for the formation of a CMS Mission in Darjeeling for an eventual entry into Nepal, Tibet and China and for the Sanatorium resort for Bengal missionaries."³³ In further CMS

correspondence there is no indication that either aspect of Captain Hawthorne's proposal came to fruition.³⁴

It was a former Church of England clergyman turned independent Baptist who took up the baton in Darjeeling, Rev. William Start.³⁵ When he first went to Darjeeling in 1841 he was deeply impressed with the native peoples and determined to start a mission to reach the Lepcha, Bhutia and Nepali with the Christian Gospel. With the encouragement of Gossner, the following year Start brought out more than twenty German missionaries at his own expense. They located their headquarters at Tukvar in the hope of establishing a Moravian style self-supporting mission. Although not successful in this ambition, some books of the Bible in both Lepcha and Nepali were translated and published for distribution.³⁶ A school was also started at Tukvar for Lepcha. M. Wylie, who described Start as having "a patient, self-denying, life of holiness" in his 1854 missions' survey Bengal as a Field of Mission, described the establishment of the mission at length:

In, and around Darjiling...here the Rev. W. Start and the Rev. W. Niebel carry on their Mission. They have translated the Gospels into the Lepcha language and have published them at Mr. Start's expense for the Lepcha tribe. Mr. Start has also translated Luke and the Acts into Nepalee, and this version has been published by the Bible Society, and has been circulated among the Nepalese who come to Darjiling, and those who attend the Melas in Purneah and elsewhere ...he came out to India to devote himself to the good of the people, and on his arrival settled in Patna. Subsequently...(he) went to Germany where the venerable Gossner urged him to take out a body of young men, who under him, had been preparing for Missionary labour. He did so, and then sent for others, so that he has brought out no less than twenty Missionaries at his own expense. Some of these were designed for mechanical and agricultural labour, with a view to the support of the Mission, but little was expected from this, and little has been effected by it. Others became valuable Missionaries... some like Mr. Procknow, the worthy Missionary of the Church Missionary Society at Koteghur, have joined other bodies; some are still labouring in connection with Mr. Start... To their support, his fortune and his counsel, have been devoted; and, little known to the noisy world around, this little band of faithful men have been working on together..."³⁷

When Start retired to England in 1852, C.G. Niebel alone remained of Start's

original band of missionaries to carry the work forward. The others had variously connected themselves to other mission societies or taken up private occupations such as tea-planting. Niebel continued to labour in Darjeeling until the time of his death, when he was honored by the local people with a brass plaque which hangs in St. Columba's Church today: "1865. Karl G. Niebel, 23 years translator with the Lepcha, died." This was the end of the first mission among the Lepcha and Nepali in the Eastern Himalayas, but not for long. Although no converts are mentioned in the various accounts of Start and Niebel's work, translation work had been done in the Lepcha language for the first time, Nepali language translation work had been carried a step forward, and at least 5,000 Gospels had been printed and distributed in the two languages. This proved to be the foundation for the Church of Scotland's work which shortly followed.

Having viewed Start and Niebel's pioneer endeavor first-hand, Wylie issued an eloquent appeal for more missionaries:

...in Darjiling...the climate is so remarkably salubrious, that there are great facilities for Missionary labour, to those who are acquainted with the language of any of the tribes... (It) appears frequently to be succeeded by a rare elasticity of mind and body in this delightful sanatorium, and thus, far more can be there attempted, than elsewhere. Yet the progress of the truth among the tribes has been very slight, and there have been very few baptisms. Still, however, there is much to encourage further labour, in the interesting character of the people, and in their freedom from caste, and from the influence of Brahmanism. At Darjiling, too, there are good opportunities of preaching to many of the Nepalese, who frequent that place.³⁸

The direct effects of this appeal are unknown, but certainly it brought the opportunity and need for missionary endeavour among the Lepcha and Nepali of Darjeeling into the public light.

In the meantime other more indirect Christian influences in Darjeeling were a natural accompaniment to its development as a hill station. With the growing European population came an Anglican English-medium church (St. Andrew's Church founded in 1843) with a full-time Chaplain for the cantonment,³⁹ and Union Chapel twenty-five years later for the non-Anglicans.

One of those who proposed the building of the latter was Rev. J.C. Page, an Anglo-Indian who was educated in Britain and appointed as a missionary in India with the Baptist Missionary Society from 1841. Due to poor health he began to reside in Darjeeling during the hot season from 1868.⁴⁰ Like Start and Niebel before him, he also developed a strong desire to evangelise the local Lepcha and Nepali. Church of Scotland missionaries running an orphanage in Gyah, Bihar, sent a young Lepcha convert to assist Page, little realising that within two years they would themselves be starting a mission in Darjeeling.⁴¹ Through this "Lepcha lad" a Nepali resident in Darjeeling was "led to believe in Christ, and to profess him openly by baptism."⁴² These are the first recorded Lepcha and Nepali Christian converts from Darjeeling area to be baptised, but unfortunately nothing else is known about them. Before Page's retirement in 1875 he erected two Christian bookshops, which doubled as preaching houses, in Darjeeling bazaar and Lebong. But once again there was no one to carry on when he left, and the Baptist Mission's Darjeeling station was reported closed in the BMS "Annual Report of 1879-80".

By this time another mission had entered the field, spearheaded by the Scottish missionary in Gyah, Bihar, who sent the Lepcha lad to work with Rev. J.C. Page. William Macfarlane was a zealous preacher who had refused to go to India as a teacher. He made it a condition of his missionary service that he would exercise the functions of a preacher only. But the utter lack of responsiveness to the Gospel by the people around Gyah left him sorely discouraged and wondering if "his life was not being spent in vain."⁴³ However, a number of hill boys sent to the Gyah Mission orphanage by a tea-planter in Darjeeling, Captain J. Jerdan, caught his interest. Comparing them with the Bihar orphan children he was moved to write:

For the future, we should take no more orphan children from this place (Gyah). We get children from only the lowest castes, and these are morally and intellectually in such a degraded state, that nothing can at present be made of them...

All my hopes of getting any good from the Orphanage are now founded on the hill-boys we have from Darjeeling. There is a marked difference between them and the boys we get from around Gya. They are far more intelligent, and far simpler in their character. They have heads to understand, and hearts to feel; and I am persuaded that, if God should spare them, many of them will be found worthy to preach the Gospel of Christ...⁴⁴

When a new branch of the Church of Scotland's India Mission was proposed among "aboriginal tribes" who were judged to be "more accessible than the Hindus to directly evangelistic labour," this fitted Macfarlane's own predisposition and he resolved to investigate the possibilities among the hill tribes of Darjeeling.⁴⁵ After traveling to Darjeeling in 1869 he argued persuasively for the abandonment of Gya Mission on the premise that even though the Gospel had been preached in the district for fifteen years by different missionaries,

Not one convert from the place has been made by preaching during all that time... There is no hope, as far as I can see, of getting a living Church established in Gya within the lifetime of the missionaries at present working there.⁴⁶

He also felt that the orphanages for the children of the plains had been failures because he saw no hope in them "for the spreading of the faith in Christ."⁴⁷

When Macfarlane went to Darjeeling he found three distinct peoples -- "the Nepaulese, the Lepchas, and the Bhootes," of which he successfully convinced the Foreign Mission Committee that the Lepcha and Nepali were "a very favourable field" among which they could "succeed in planting a living, self-propogating church."⁴⁸ He also found a warm reception from Major B.W.D. Morton, the Deputy-Commissioner of Darjeeling, and the local tea-planters, many of them Scottish, who welcomed the idea of a Scottish mission in the hills.⁴⁹ They made request for the establishment of vernacular schools and for Macfarlane's services in officiating at the non-Anglican Union Church. Macfarlane urged that a Hill branch of the Mission be established in Darjeeling "at once", adding that there was "considerable danger of the people of Darjeeling

forcing the Baptists to occupy it instead."⁵⁰ His recommendation was taken up with alacrity and he was transferred there in 1870. It was soon accepted within mission circles in India that this was a Church of Scotland field. Within less than twenty-five years the Church of Scotland's Eastern Himalayan Mission (EHM) expanded like a tree spreading its branches. From its initial base in Darjeeling it extended east into Kalimpong, south into Kurseong and the terai, north into Independent Sikkim, and south-east into the Bengal Duars. In addition, mission outreaches of the young Nepali-Lepcha * "native" churches were initiated into Bhutan, Nepal, and later on a more limited scale among Nepali in the terai to the south. Macfarlane's original hope that a mission in Darjeeling among the Lepcha, Nepali and Bhutia would be "virtually a mission to the great independent states of Nepaul, Sikkim, and Bhootan" was on its way to fulfillment.⁵¹ With EHM's entry into Sikkim, this vision was conceptualised as driving a wedge between Nepal, Tibet and Bhutan, putting the Scottish Mission "On the Threshold of Three Closed Lands," as a book by one of the pioneers of the Mission was entitled.⁵²

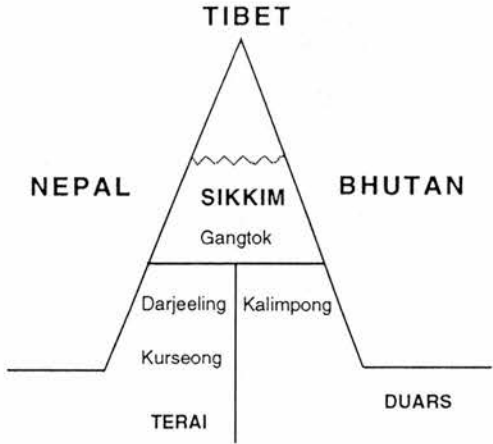


Figure 2 The Wedge into the "closed lands"

*The term "Nepali-Lepcha" is employed from here on in the text for ease of expression, recognising that the Lepcha are a distinct ethnic group, yet have largely been assimilated within the broader Nepali milieu in the context of the Christian church.

The only other mission with significant involvement in the Eastern Himalayas from this period was the Scandinavian Alliance Mission (SAM), founded in America by Fredrik Franson in 1890. Two years later nine missionaries (six women and three men), under the leadership of Rev. John F. Fredericksson, made their way to Darjeeling with the object of penetrating Tibet with Christianity.⁵³ This provided no conflict of interest with the already well established EHM, focused as it was on the Nepali and indigenous Lepcha population. They reached an agreement that EHM would continue work among the Nepali and Lepcha, and SAM would concentrate on the Tibetan and Bhutanese Bhutia. The SAM team established their headquarters at Ghoom, several miles down the road from Darjeeling bazaar, and set about studying the Tibetan language. At the suggestion of the EHM they cooperated in outreach to the local Bhutia and Tibetan people at Ghoom and Bhutia Bustee (on the outskirts of Darjeeling bazaar).⁵⁴ They were soon conducting vernacular schools in Tibetan in each of these places, and preaching in Tibetan on Sundays from EHM's preaching house.⁵⁵ Although frustrated in reaching Tibet, as were the Roman Catholics before them, after two years in Ghoom while praying for direction SAM decided to concentrate its mission efforts in areas where there were no other missionaries and among people related to Tibetans.⁵⁶ Thus the workers were divided into four groups and SAM extended its work to include stations in Garhwal in the Western Himalayas, and two further areas of the Eastern Himalayas in North Sikkim and on the southern border of Bhutan at Baksaduar, each in a separate location from the EHM stations. Their work again reflected the overall preoccupation of many of the missions based in or at the foothills of the Himalayas with Tibet: the Moravian Mission, American Methodist Episcopal Mission and Tibetan Frontier Mission in the Western Himalayas, and the Tibet Pioneer Mission of Annie Taylor which also moved northwards through Darjeeling District.

Over the years SAM found themselves involved not only with the less

numerous Bhutia peoples, but also among the Lepcha of North Sikkim, and then peripherally with Nepali ethnics in all three areas due to the press of their growing population. By this time the work of SAM in India had been divided between the home end committees during its 1906 Annual Conference. The Himalayan field was entrusted to the Finnish Alliance Mission, which they in turn handed over to the Finnish Free Mission, later known as the Free Church of Finland Mission (Suomen Vapaakirkko).⁵⁷ Their work never approached the scope of the EHM, mostly due to their narrower ethnic focus and a smaller pool of missionary personnel which confined them to more limited geographic locations. For instance, for most of Pastor Eli and Sonja Ollila's first twenty-five years on the field following their arrival in 1914, Eli was the only male in the mission. The Finnish Himalayan Mission also faced financial hardships which greatly hindered its work. The wars made it very difficult to get funds to India, and the missionaries were often cut off from Finland for long periods of time and had to find ways to support themselves.⁵⁸ The force of circumstances prevalent in Darjeeling District also affected their work, bringing them more and more into contact with Nepali. The Nepali language finally superseded Tibetan in the mission when in 1950 Hellin Hukka was the last missionary to study Tibetan.⁵⁹ When national leaders assumed control of the churches following the departure of the last Finnish missionaries from Ghoom in 1971 there was an almost total refocus towards Nepali work, except in Baksaduar.

Numerous other small missions and independent missionaries also gradually followed EHM's lead into Darjeeling District, but they all came under EHM's shadow and their influence was limited.⁶⁰ It was from the womb of the Church of Scotland's Eastern Himalayan Mission that the Nepali-Lepcha church was birthed, in diaspora, during the late 19th century.

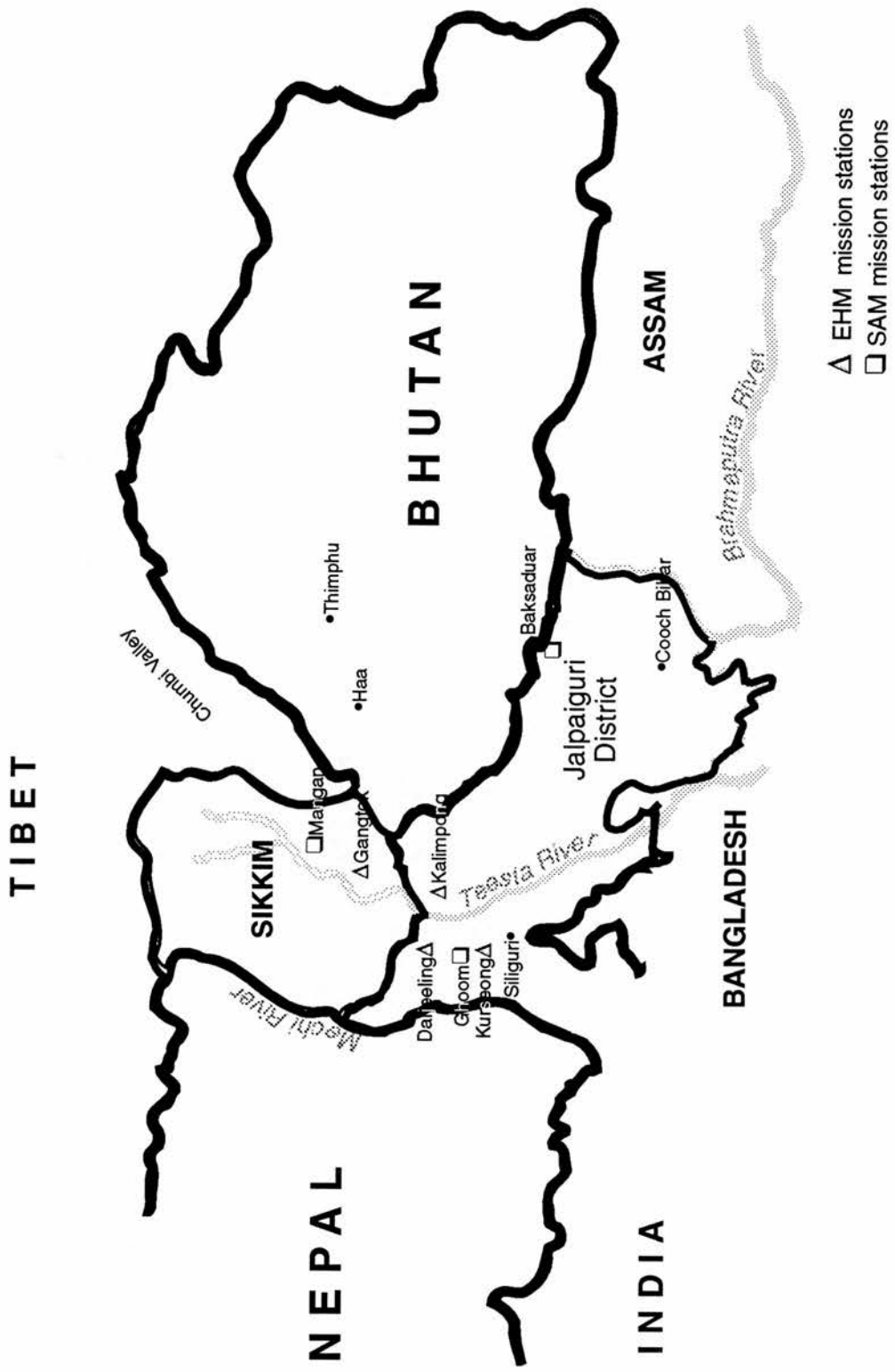


Figure - 3 Eastern Himalayas

ENDNOTES - CHAPTER 2

(1) Within Sikkim the ruler was called the 'Chogyal,' of which Dharmaraja is the Sanskritised version.

(2) P.K. Jha, 1985, vii.

(3) The Political Officer for Sikkim also served as the British Indian Government's representative for Tibet and Bhutan.

(4) A. Singh, 1988, 306-7.

(5) A.C. Sinha ("The Indian North-East Frontier and the Nepalese Immigrants," in *HIMALAYAN ENVIRONMENT AND CULTURE*, eds. N.K. Rustomji & Charles Ramble, Shimla: Indian Institute of Advanced Study, 1990, 225) says that Nepalese sources claim that from the 17th century the Dharmaraja Namgyal settled some Nepalese in the Dalimkote region of Bhutan (Gorubathan, E. Kalimpong today). But when Ashley Eden, the British Envoy to the Bhutanese court, travelled across this region in 1863 he reported finding "not one single cultivated acre of land," then only two grass huts and a few men and women in Sipchu, and a few houses at Tsangbe. Similarly during the Anglo-Bhutan War of 1864, Surgeon Rennie found only twenty houses and a monastery in Samchi. Effective Nepali colonisation in this area only started following the Anglo-Bhutan War.

(6) A.C. Sinha, *BHUTAN: ETHNIC IDENTITY AND NATIONAL DILEMMA* (New Delhi: Reliance Publ. House, 1991), 36-7. According to Aitchison (Vol. 14, 1983, 88), the Maharaja of Bhutan had two agents in British India, of which the chief was based in Kalimpong, Raja Ugyen Dorji. He also held the high position of Deb Zimpon. His authority was such that he concluded the 1910 Treaty between Bhutan and Great Britain on behalf of the Bhutan Government.

(7) A.C. Sinha, 1990, 225, citing Bell's 1904 report. Sinha goes on to detail the four main reasons Bell pinpointed for the Nepali immigration: 1) more abundant land in Bhutan than the adjoining British territories; 2) the tenants were allowed to cultivate any unoccupied land; 3) they could brew liquor without restriction either on its sale or their own consumption; and 4) they could cut wood wherever they desired.

(8) A.C. Sinha (1990, 226) calls this figure "empirical guess work," but says that Morris had reason to believe that the real number was considerably higher.

(9) Capt. G.A. Lloyd and Mr. Grant first spent six days at "the old Goorkha station of Darjeeling" in 1829 when they were sent to settle a border dispute between Sikkim and Nepal. They found it deserted at the time, but it was previously a large village and the residence of a principal Kazi. According to Arthur Dash (*BENGAL DISTRICT GAZETTEERS: DARJEELING*, Bengal, 1947, 37-38), citing Capt. Herbert, Darjeeling had become uninhabited ten years previously when 1200 Lepcha, about two-thirds of the current population, were forced to flee due to extreme oppression of the Sikkim Raja and they took refuge in Nepal. Cultivation was abandoned at that time, and the Raja prohibited his other subjects from going there to establish new settlements.

(10) Fred Pinn, *THE ROAD OF DESTINY: DARJEELING LETTERS 1839* (Calcutta: Oxford Univ. Press, 1986), p.118 states, "The Rajah was indeed one of the major obstacles in the development of Darjeeling. The hill people had been forbidden to offer their services to the Europeans, and their passive resistance was entirely due to their fear of punishment by the Rajah's officials. Those Lepchas who worked at Darjeeling did so at a risk." He also cites correspondence in the late 1830s by Garstin, Secretary of Commerce of the Darjeeling Association (p.48), and a letter in "The Englishman", dated 25 Feb. 1839 (p.72), which point out the difficulties encountered in securing coolies from among the Mechi who resided at the foot of the mountains.

(11) Dash, 1947, 38. This figure is also used by Vidya Bir Singh Kansakar in his article, "Indo-Nepal Migration: Some Facts," *Himalaya Today* (Sept. 1988, 42), whereas Hooker (1891, 462) estimated the population to be about 5,000. The difference may have been in whether they were estimating the population of the environs of Darjeeling municipality or included the surrounding hills.

(12) H. Beverley, *REPORT ON THE CENSUS OF BENGAL 1872*, Calcutta, 1872, 7 and 180.

(13) Dash, 1947, 64 and chart p.50.

(14) Jahar Sen, *DARJEELING A FAVOURED RETREAT* (New Delhi: Indus Publ. Co., 1989), 61. The opening of the Darjeeling Depot was in conjunction with the decision in 1889 to form the 7th and 10th Gurkha Rifles, the first battalions to be made up of Rai and Limbu from East Nepal. The depot was moved to Ghoom in 1901. From 1910 to 1926 there was also a cantonment for two battalions of Gurkha Rifles at Takdah, near Darjeeling.

(15) See below, p.299.

(16) Sen, 1989, 61.

(17) Dash, 1947, 49.

(18) Intermarriage of Lepcha with Nepali ethnics has mostly been with Kirata tribals as the Limbu or Rai, those they are culturally and religiously most similar to. Of the 8,825 Lepcha MT speakers in West Bengal recorded in the 1961 Census of India, about 5,000 also recorded Nepali as their second language. When compared to the 1951 Census, which recorded 13,443 Lepcha MT speakers, it is evident that in 1961 a large number of these now claimed Nepali as their MT.

(19) Foning, 1987, 296-7.

(20) In 1840 Dr. Campbell estimated the population of Sikkim to include 3,000 Lepcha and 2,000 Bhutia, quoted by Herbert Risley, *GAZETTEER OF SIKHIM* (Calcutta: Bengal Secretariat Press, 1894), 259. These figures were reiterated by the Scottish missionary Wm. Macfarlane (*CHURCH OF SCOTLAND HOME AND FOREIGN MISSIONARY RECORD*, Vol. XV, 1885-1886 [Edinburgh: Wm. Blackwood & Sons], June 1886, 476-9), although he also included 2,000 Limbu, citing Aitchison's *COLLECTION OF TREATIES* (Vol. I, 1866); and Hooker (1891, 86 and 94), as the first British explorer into Sikkim from 1848-50, noted the Lepcha as the most numerous and the "Limboos" as the second largest group. By the time of the 1891 Census of India, 5,800 Lepcha and 4,700 Bhutia were recorded, while the Nepali population had grown to 19,500, or 65 percent of the total population

of Sikkim (as detailed by Risley, 1894, 259)

(21) "Convention Between Great Britain and China, Relating to Sikkim and Thibet," dated 17 March 1890, in Aitchison's Treaties, Vol. 12 (1983), 66.

(22) J.S. Lall, "Sikkim," in *THE HIMALAYA: ASPECTS OF CHANGE*, ed. J.S. Lall (Delhi: Oxford Univ. Press, 1981), 218.

(23) A. Singh, 1988, 204 and 224.

(24) Risley, 1894, xxi.

(25) In both West Bengal and Sikkim the early Census of India returns clearly show a larger number of people speaking Nepal-origin tribal (Tibeto-Burmese) languages as their mother-tongue than those speaking Nepali/Khas-Kura. In the 1901 Census those speaking Nepal-origin tribal languages were nearly double the Nepali speakers in both places (15,913 Nepali MT vs. 27,170 Nepal-origin tribal MT in Sikkim; 65,400 Nepali MT vs. 112,000 Nepal-origin tribal MT in West Bengal), but by 1951 the proportion had decreased in West Bengal (174,017 Nepali MT vs. 210,000 Nepal-origin tribal MT) while holding fairly constant in Sikkim (38,500 Nepali MT vs. 67,000 Nepal-origin tribal MT). During each of these censuses, in both Sikkim and West Bengal, more than half of the Nepal-origin tribal MT speakers were made up of Rai, Limbu and Tamang, with Rai being the most numerous.

(26) C. Becker, *EARLY HISTORY OF THE CATHOLIC MISSIONS IN NORTH-EAST INDIA 1598-1890*, transl. F. Leicht & S. Karotemprel (Shillong: Vendrame Insti., 1989) describes Catholic missions in Assam and the Eastern Himalayas during the early 1800s in some detail. He repeatedly points out that they were primarily looking for a route to Tibet rather than to establish mission work in the area itself. He notes this in relation to missionaries seeking a route through Bhutan, Darjeeling and Sikkim (p.107-8, 166, 171-2).

(27) This station was started by Father Desgodins who had tried from at least the 1850s to find a way into Tibet. It became the headquarters for the Mission to Tibet, with a chapel, the "Bhutia School" for boys, an orphanage, a Tibetan press, and a Christian village started on a nearby grant of land called Maria-basti. In the meantime the Loreta Convent opened in Darjeeling in 1846, followed by other institutional works. But unlike the work in Pedong, the focus of these other works was not on the native peoples. Pedong itself soon turned its attention towards the more numerous Nepali who began to dominate the area.

(28) See below, p.299ff for an account of the "Bootan Mission."

(29) See Perry (1993, 44-45) for details of this earliest translation of the New Testament into the Nepali language.

(30) J. Long, *HANDBOOK OF BENGAL MISSIONS* (London: J.F. Shaw, 1848), 235-6. This mission is not mentioned by either M. Wylie, *BENGAL AS A FIELD OF MISSION* (London: W.H. Dalton, 1854), or by Eugene Stock in his later three volume work, *THE HISTORY OF THE CHURCH MISSIONARY SOCIETY* (London: CMS, 1899).

(31) Long, 1848, note g. 236. This mention by Long of Major Latter's intercourse with some Lepcha is somewhat curious. At this early period Lepcha

did not normally traverse into the plains. Major Latter evidently met them in the course of the British first incursions into Sikkim when he led the drive to force out the Gorkhali conquerors. But what could he have been reading to them, and in what language? The first Lepcha scriptures were not translated until the 1840s by Rev. W. Start in Darjeeling; the "Nepala" New Testament, the first Nepali literature put in print, was only available from 1823, after the death of Schroeter and Latter; Schroeter was just beginning work on a Tibetan dictionary and grammar; and it is highly doubtful that Lepchas would have understood Hindustani at this time.

(32) Letter from Mr. Robertson to Mr. Sherer, Calcutta, 8 Sept. 1816, at St. Paul's College, Calcutta: CMS Documents, file "CMS Minutes of the Calcutta Correspondence Committee Meeting 1814-1820," p.115-117, as listed by N.R. Ray and N.S. Bose, ed., *A DESCRIPTIVE CATALOGUE OF CHRISTIAN MISSIONARY RECORDS IN CALCUTTA AND AROUND* (Calcutta: Institute of Historical Studies, 1986).

(33) "Proceedings of the Calcutta Correspondence Committee 1857-1865," handwritten, Calcutta, 12 Sept. 1860, at St. Paul's College, Calcutta, as listed by Ray and Bose (1986).

(34) The idea of a sanatorium in Darjeeling for CMS missionaries was first proposed in 1838, and land was granted by the government for this purpose ("Resolution directing the Secretary to apply to the proper quarter for a grant of land at Darjeeling for the purpose of establishing a missionary sanatorium," and "Information on the grant of land by the government to the CMS at Darjeeling for building a sanatorium for sick CMS missionaries," at St. Paul's College: CMS Documents, Minutes of the Calcutta Correspondence Committee 1836-40, MS, 8 Aug. 1838 and 27 March 1839, p.217 and 239, cited by Ray and Bose, 1986.) However, according to Long (1848, 237) the land was subsequently given back to the government by CMS. Thus Hawthorne's new proposal in 1860.

(35) Rev. W. Start was originally sent to Patna in 1832 by the Church of England, then went on to Darjeeling almost ten years later when it began to be developed by the British. When and in what circumstances he became a Baptist are not clear.

(36) Start and Niebel translated the following: a Primer, various Scripture portions and tracts, Genesis, part of Exodus, the Gospels of Matthew and John, and a manuscript dictionary in Lepcha; the Gospels of Luke and Acts in Nepali; and a tract in "Bhootea." See Wm. Macfarlane, "Church of Scotland Mission to the Various tribes in the Darjeeling District: Preliminary Study," Darjeeling, 1870. However, British and Foreign Bible Society records only indicate the publishing of the Gospel of Matthew in Lepcha in 1846, then of the Gospels of Luke and Acts in Nepali both separately and together on several occasions from 1850. A revised edition of Luke and Acts in Nepali by Rev. C.G. Niebel was published in 1861. This translation work was the foundation on which William Macfarlane and his colleagues of the Church of Scotland's Darjeeling Mission later built.

(37) Wylie, 1854, 236-7.

(38) Wylie, 1854, 237.

(39) Edward Eastwick, *HANDBOOK OF THE BENGAL PRESIDENCY* (London: John Murray, 1882, 146).

- (40) E.C. Dozey, *A CONCISE HISTORY OF THE DARJEELING DISTRICT SINCE 1835*, reprint (formerly *DARJEELING, PAST AND PRESENT*, Darjeeling, 1916; Calcutta: Jetsun Publ. House, 1989), 73. See Perry (1993, 26 & 50 n.8) for details of J.C. Page's mission work in Darjeeling.
- (41) W. Macfarlane, "Report of the hill Branch of the Darjeeling Mission for the Year ending March 31, 1871," in *REPORTS ON SCHEMES OF THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND* (Edinburgh: William Blackwood and Sons, 1871), 141. This Lepcha young man was converted while in Gyah and baptised by Mr. Clark before he was sent to Darjeeling by W. Macfarlane about 1868.
- (42) Macfarlane, "Darjeeling Mission 1871," in *REPORTS ON SCHEMES*, 1871, 141.
- (43) "Gyah and Darjeeling," 1 Dec. 1870, in *HOME AND FOREIGN MISSIONARY RECORD*, Vol. VII, 1870-72, 222-223.
- (44) Wm. Macfarlane, "Half-Yearly Report of the Orphanage at Gya in connection with the Foreign Mission Committee of the Church of Scotland," December 1869, 6.
- (45) "Darjeeling: Report by Rev. Mr. M'Murtrie," in *REPORTS ON SCHEMES*, 1870, 143. This report indicates that there was a strong desire in the Church of Scotland to add to its educational missions in India one to aborigines. A Mission to the Aborigines was approved by the Assembly in Scotland in 1869, and the Foreign Mission Committee was commissioned to make preparations and a decision on where to go.
- (46) Macfarlane, letter to Corresponding Board, Calcutta, 28 February 1870, in *REPORTS ON SCHEMES*, 1870, 155.
- (47) Macfarlane, letter to Corresponding Board, Calcutta, 28 Feb. 1870, in *REPORTS ON SCHEMES*, 1870, 156.
- (48) Macfarlane, letter to Corresponding Board, Calcutta, 28 Feb. 1870, in *REPORTS ON SCHEMES*, 1870, 156. From the beginning Macfarlane pinpointed the Nepali and Lepcha as the main focus of the new mission, to the detriment of the Bhutia.
- (49) Major Morton and Captain J. Jerdan both served on the first Local Management Committee for the Scottish mission in Darjeeling; Major Morton was the President and Chairman. (Wm. Macfarlane, "The Church of Scotland Mission to the Various Tribes in the Darjeeling District: Preliminary Statement," 1870, in *EHM REPORTS*, 1870-1890).
- (50) Macfarlane, "Letter of Rev. Mr. Macfarlane to Corresponding Board, Calcutta" 28 Feb. 1870, in *REPORTS ON SCHEMES*, 1870, 156.
- (51) Macfarlane, "Aboriginal Tribes in Darjeeling and Neighbourhood," second report sent to Rev. Donald Macleod, Correspondent for Gyah, July 1869, in *HOME AND FOREIGN MISSIONARY RECORD*, Vol. VI, 1868-1870, 610.
- (52) J.A. Graham, *ON THE THRESHOLD OF THREE CLOSED LANDS*, 2nd ed. (1895; Edinburgh: R. & R. Clark Limited, 1905), adapted from "the wedge" illustration, p.12. Graham writes, "as an assailant of all

three (Tibet, Nepal, Bhutan) the Church of Scotland, through her Eastern Himalayan Mission...occupies a unique position of vantage and of privilege...roughly compared to a wedge driven right into the heart of these three great closed lands."

(53) Otto Christopher Grauer, *FIFTY WONDERFUL YEARS MISSIONARY SERVICE IN FOREIGN LANDS* (Chicago: Scandinavian Alliance Mission, 1940, 151). The initial SAM team to Darjeeling included the following: Rev. John F. Fredericksson, Mr. A.E. Shoberg, Mr. F. Gustafson, Misses Anna Fredericksson (John's sister), Amanda Larsson (later Gustafson), Signe Rasmussen (later Fredericksson), Emma Swenson, Vendla Carlsson, and Beda Olofson (later Shoberg). By 1900 the only members of this original team still with SAM in the Himalayas were Fredericksson's wife and sister (p.151-162), although they had been joined by others, including the first Finnish missionaries.

(54) "A Scandinavian Mission for Tibet," April 1893 in *HOME AND FOREIGN MISSIONARY RECORD*, Vol. XIX, 1893-4, 246.

(55) Kilgour, "Tibet," July 1894, in *HOME AND FOREIGN MISSIONARY RECORD*, Vol. XIX, 1893-1894, 553.

(56) Eila Hämelin and Sisko Peltoniemi, *EDELLÄKÄVIJÄT: VUOSISATA VAPAAKIRKOLLISTA LÄHETYSTYÖTÄ* (The Forerunners: One Century of the Mission of the Free Church), Finnish (Hämeenlinna: Päivä Osakeyhtiö, 1990), 107-8. According to Grauer (1940, 154), this decision was made during a visit from F. Franson in 1894, when he came to confer with the missionaries.

(57) See Appendix F for a detailed account of the Free Church of Finland Himalayan Mission drawn from a variety of Finnish sources by retired Finnish missionary, Miss Vappu Rautamäki.

(58) The Finns were not only affected by World Wars I and II, but also the Finnish War of Independence in 1918, Finnish Winter War in 1939-40, and the Finnish Continuation War in 1941-44.

(59) Vappu Rautamäki, "The Free Church of Finland Himalayan Mission and the Nepalese," trans. from Finnish by Rebecca Scotson, *TS*, April 1994, 9.

(60) For a list of missions which were working among Nepali by the 1950s see Perry, Appendix B, 1993, 136-9.

CHAPTER 3 - CHRISTIANITY AMONG THE NEPALI-LEPCHA OF DARJEELING DISTRICT

THE EASTERN HIMALAYAN MISSION OF THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

When Macfarlane arrived in Darjeeling to start work in June 1870, he came with a well thought through agenda in mind. He had already determined that the Lepcha and Nepali, rather than Bhutia, were the most likely to respond to Christian preaching. He purposed that direct preaching in the vernacular was to be the primary missionary task, both in the weekly bazaars and by house to house visiting.¹ But he also strongly endorsed the establishment of vernacular schools (the responsibility for which was turned over by the government to the Mission by the end of the year) using the Bible and the Christian Vernacular Education Society's books as texts.² He stated his argument thus:

Without such schools, how can the people learn to read? and if they cannot read, of what use will it be to send Bibles and tracts among them? We therefore think that it is the duty of the missionaries, in subordination to the great work of preaching, to do their utmost to establish such schools wherever they can be set up.³

The Christian Gospel and schools were to go hand in hand, the schools clearly a means to the "higher" end for Macfarlane of converting the natives to Christianity, but what to others made them "victims" of proselytisation. As perceived by Dick Dewan in his analysis of education in the Darjeeling hills:

The missionaries have come here not only with the Bible and the Cross in hand but also with zealous mind to uplift the people intellectually. The church and the school have gone together in the hill region of Darjeeling district ever since the advent of the missionaries, who had chosen the pen rather than the sword in proselytizing and in disseminating education.⁴

This necessitated the establishing of a Normal School to train Nepali and Lepcha

teachers for the district schools, and they were freely taught the Bible as a part of their course work. Macfarlane's sister arrived in 1871 to take charge of this side of the work, along with promoting female education.⁵ By 1873 the mission was responsible for twenty-five primary schools with 650 boys and girls.

Macfarlane's other passion was for the production of Christian literature in Nepali and Lepcha. A printing press was procured by 1872, and a Nepali translation of the Bible was begun three years later by one of the first converts, Ganga Prasad Pradhan.⁶ In the meantime, Gospels and tracts written by Start and Niebel were re-printed and distributed throughout the district. Even with the press Macfarlane was determined to keep the missionary aspect of the work free from the secular. When he noted the "evil" of English job-work taking precedence over the vernacular he procured a second press to be used exclusively for mission work.⁷ School books were printed in Hindi, tracts and catechisms in Hindi and Nepali, the Christian scriptures section by section as they were translated into Nepali, and hymnals for the churches. In 1877 a monthly Hindi-language semi-religious paper called "Masik Patrika" was started as another means of knitting together all of those connected with the mission.⁸ In conjunction with the press, Book Depots were opened later in the bazaars of Darjeeling and Kalimpong. The printed word was found to be a powerful tool for Christian influence in the hands of a newly literate society.

Macfarlane originally settled at a house procured in Lebong, about four miles from Darjeeling, together with twenty Nepali and Lepcha orphans whom he brought back with him from Gyah. He soon discovered that this was not a suitable location and he moved to the outskirts of Darjeeling itself a few months later, at Lochnagar.⁹ He then immediately set out on a tour of the district with a tent. As a result of this tour he determined that two more stations should be established in addition to the one at Darjeeling, which was in the midst of the tea-belt with an estimated 10,000 Nepali labourers: one to the west, among primarily Limbu villages, an area from which the Lepcha had been gradually

driven out by Nepali immigrants; and another to the east, among a predominantly Lepcha population, but where Nepali were gradually entering in.¹⁰ He called on the Foreign Mission Committee in Scotland to send out two more ordained missionaries so the district could be divided into three divisions, "like neighbouring parishes at home."¹¹ But this desire was not fulfilled until ten years after the mission's commencement. During that time Macfarlane and his sister carried on almost single-handedly from Darjeeling with a band of dedicated national workers -- preaching, establishing schools throughout the district, training teachers, and printing Christian literature.¹²

The national workers who accompanied Macfarlane and Campbell to Darjeeling from Gyah, along with some of the Gyah orphans, were instrumental in helping to found the Mission.¹³ One of them, Nund Lall Roy, acted as catechist for the native church from its inception, had charge over the remaining orphan boys before the arrival of Miss M.A. Macfarlane, and was headmaster of the Normal School (later Teachers' Training Institute).¹⁴ Another, David Mohan, was sent to Kurseong in 1873 to start a school and commence regular preaching in its bazaar.¹⁵ Macfarlane himself desired to move to Kalimpong, and he spent the month of April 1872 going from house to house among the Lepcha around Kalimpong sharing the Christian message. Early the following year he completed the building of a simple bamboo house at Pudung which he intended using as a base for such village work. But after that there is no mention of Kalimpong in Macfarlane's reports for over two years, until he returned in late 1875 with a Nepali preacher, Sukhman Limbu, one of the first converts in the mission. Native workers like David Mohan and Sukhman Limbu were the first to carry on regular preaching in residence outside of Darjeeling. From this time forward there were full-time Nepali and Lepcha preachers continually in residence in the Kalimpong area, but not so consistently in Kurseong.

Conversions of local Nepali began to take place four years after the Church of Scotland's Darjeeling Mission (later Eastern Himalayan Mission) was

established. Between October 1874 and December 1875 the first twelve baptisms were performed in conjunction with the mission, all of them Nepali ethnics, and all but two (orphans who returned with Macfarlane from Gyah) EHM teachers who had received their training at the Normal School.¹⁶ Among them was also the first convert from Kalimpong. The Normal School was proving not only an effective institute for training teachers, but also for indoctrinating them in Christian teaching. This was according to Macfarlane's fervent hope:

It (Normal School) is also of great importance for Missionary purposes. The Bible or books saturated with Bible teaching are taught in every class; so that we have every opportunity of teaching the students who Christ is, and what His gospel teaches. A considerable number of the students voluntarily attend the services held in connection with the Native Church.¹⁷

But their response was not without opposition, primarily over the issue of breaking caste, which Macfarlane called the "greatest obstacle...to the progress of the Gospel amongst them [Nepali]."¹⁸ The first baptisms also caused disruption in the mission schools. Macfarlane wrote at length in his reports home of the difficulties encountered by former Hindu Nepali converts, contrasting it with the comparatively light trials borne by Lepcha who also soon began to convert.

The following year (1876) thirteen converts were baptised in Kalimpong, all but two of them Lepcha, and several related to the same family. An analysis of the ethnicity of the converts over the following ten years reveals a continuing trend of mostly Nepali converts in Darjeeling area and mostly Lepcha in Kalimpong area, and of generally one by one individual conversions of Hindu Nepali in contrast to Lepcha response in family units.¹⁹ It is also striking that the early Nepali converts were almost all Rai and Limbu, except for two families who had lost caste before becoming Christians. Conversions of high-caste Hindu Nepali were very rare; the first was a Brahman man and his Newar wife and son in 1881 in Kalimpong, and the second a Brahman in Darjeeling eight years later.²⁰ Newar conversions in these early days were also rare, although the

extended family and descendants of Ganga Prasad Pradhan, and Harkadhoj Pradhan, who married Ganga Prasad's eldest daughter, came into prominence in the Christian communities of both Darjeeling and Kalimpong.²¹ By 1880 the number of converts in the Kalimpong area had outstripped those in Darjeeling and Kurseong combined, 108 to 76; by 1890 the numbers had risen to 666 native Christians in Kalimpong compared to 565 in Darjeeling and Kurseong.²² The number of early conversions in Kalimpong strengthened Macfarlane's inclination towards a centre there, prompting him to write, "the Lepchas seem to be the most hopeful people for us in the hills."²³

The sudden rise in conversions from 1875 shifted Macfarlane's attention to the need of teaching and instructing the new converts in their new faith. His letter to supporters in Scotland reveals the depth of his concern:

The present position of this Mission is one of very great and solemn responsibility to all concerned. The converts have to be instructed, counselled, and directed. They are all crying out for instruction, and it is a most difficult matter to know what to do for instructing them seeing that they will now be scattered all over the District.²⁴

He began to meet with those in Darjeeling four nights a week, and also invited unbaptised students and teachers who were interested to come and learn more. Two of the converted teachers were set apart that same year for Christian ministry: Ganga Prasad Pradhan as Nepali Bible translator and Sukhman Limbu as the first native preacher, appointed to Kalimpong.²⁵ Macfarlane himself started to make regular monthly rounds of the district to meet, instruct and encourage the scattered Christians. For those who were illiterate a simple liturgy was developed in the Sunday services, consisting of repeating the Ten Commandments, the Nicene creed, a short Form of Prayer and the Lord's Prayer.²⁶ The problem of illiteracy reinforced his conviction of the necessity of the mission running schools where children could be taught to read the Word of God from an early age.

Macfarlane soon found it necessary to appoint more local Christians to help him with the work of consolidating the church in its now five scattered locations. In 1877 four more men were set apart for specifically church work: Nand Lall Roy and Anta in Darjeeling, Sri Lall (Nepali) in Kurseong, and Namthak Rongong (Lepcha) in Sidyang and Mongpu outside Kalimpong. Two years later a second Lepcha, Dyongshi, was appointed to work with the congregation in Sitong, near Kalimpong. Macfarlane called them "catechists," but they did the same work as unordained licentiates in charge of a congregation in Scotland.²⁷ From this early point he stated his "hope and desire...to train up these and similar men for the full exercise of the ministry," and that his hope of "planting really living Churches amongst the heathen" rested on men like these.²⁸ In subsequent reports Macfarlane reveals his conviction that such men, properly trained and entrusted with the full powers of the ministry, would be "more efficient both as Ministers of congregations and as Missionaries than any Europeans can be," because they were "of the people themselves" and knew the people as no European could know them.²⁹ He proposed that an additional Scottish missionary be sent who could devote himself exclusively to the training of "suitable faithful men" as ordained ministers and missionaries to their own people. But this idea did not begin to find fulfillment until the mid-1880s, through the efforts of Macfarlane himself following his furlough. The first Nepali-Lepcha ministers were not ordained until 1900, twenty-five years after the first conversions.

By 1880, when two more ordained Scottish missionaries finally joined the Darjeeling Mission, there were already congregations of Nepali-Lepcha Christians under the care of national catechists in five places: Darjeeling, Kurseong, Kalimpong, Sidyang-Mongpu, and Sitong. The Mission was now formally divided into two divisions: Kalimpong division, including Sidyang-Mongpu and Sitong, under Rev. W.S. Sutherland; and Darjeeling division, including Kurseong, under Rev. Archibald Turnbull; and Macfarlane went to

Scotland for a furlough. When Macfarlane returned it was to develop the Sikkim field. He found that he also had to revive the Normal School (later Scottish Universities' Mission Institute, SUMI) for the training of mission agents, and he moved it to Kalimpong with the dual objective of training catechists for the growing number of churches.³⁰

Ten years later, in 1890, the Eastern Himalayan Mission (EHM) had grown to encompass the work of four different groups within the Church of Scotland, covering a significantly broadened geographic span. The Foreign Mission Committee continued to run the work in Darjeeling and Kurseong, including a Ladies Zenana Mission. With Macfarlane's return from furlough the Scottish Universities Mission took responsibility for Independent Sikkim and the Training Institute in Kalimpong. The Young Men's Guild Mission sent its first missionary in 1889, Dr. J.A. Graham, and took responsibility for Kalimpong division and the Bhutan Duars, while the Women's Guild began medical work and a Girls' High School in Kalimpong following its formation in 1891. With the advent of the Grahams, Kalimpong became known as the "power house" of the Eastern Himalayan Mission.³¹ This basic organisational structure of EHM held throughout the rest of its active involvement in the Eastern Himalayas.

While various forms of institutional work expanded under the above groups within EHM, the churches came to be organised within five basic geographical areas, or districts -- Darjeeling, Kurseong and the low-lying terai (supervised from Darjeeling), Kalimpong, the Duars (supervised from Kalimpong), and Sikkim.³² The progression was as follows: During the first decade of the Mission the work of preaching, and resultant conversions, spread from Darjeeling southward into Kurseong and eastward into Kalimpong; during the second decade it began to spread into Sikkim;³³ during the third decade it spread from Kalimpong into the Duars, and from Kurseong tentative steps were taken on southwards towards Siliguri and the terai.³⁴ (See Figure 4. below.) This extension of the church was at the behest of the Scottish missionaries, although

most often carried out by the native Nepali and Lepcha Christians, both lay and the unordained catechists.

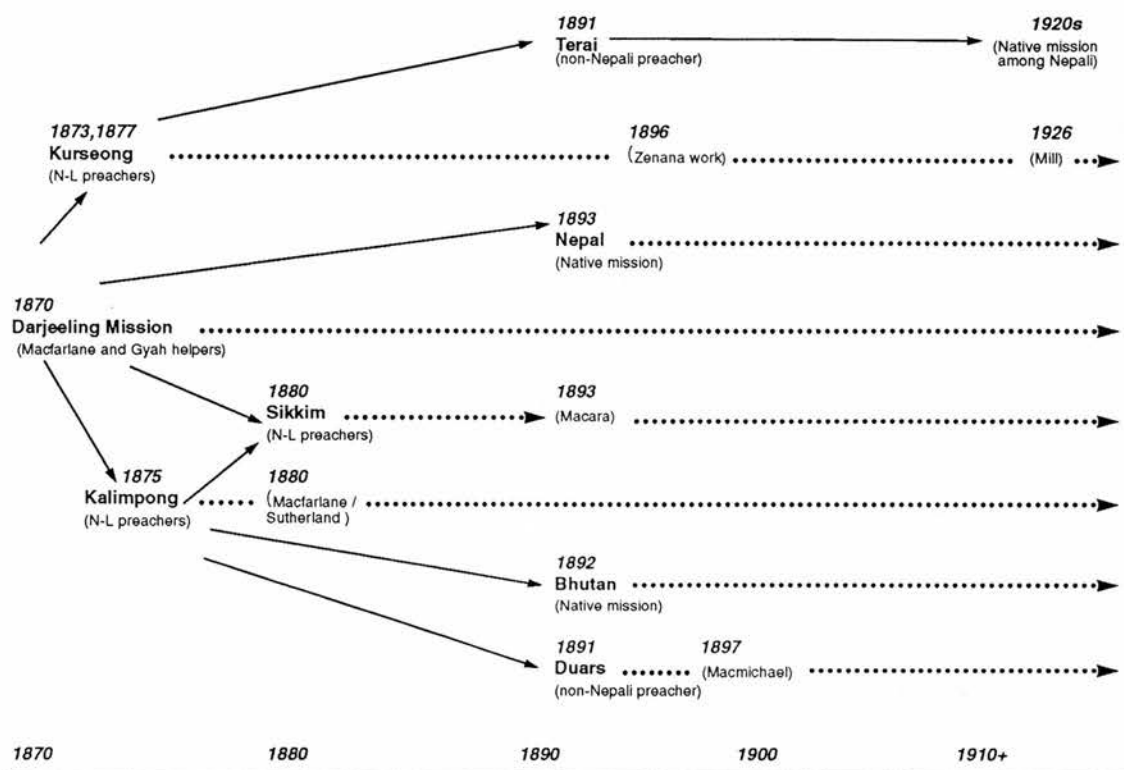


Figure- 4. Expansion of EHM's preaching ministry: the first Nepali-Lepcha (N-L) resident preachers and ordained missionaries.

In addition to the Mission's initiatives in spreading the Christian message, the national churches themselves had grown to the point by the early 1890s that they began to engage in missions to areas where the foreign missionaries could not go. The churches of Kalimpong, not long separated from Bhutan and incorporated into British Bhutan, started the "Mission to Bhutan" and by their own resources sent their first native missionaries in 1892.³⁵ Later the same year the churches of Darjeeling division organised the "Gorkha Mission." They sent their first missionary, Ezra Kaziman, a Nepali teacher, into Nepal in early 1893.³⁶ Kilgour explained the Nepali Christians motivation in starting the Gorkha Mission on the basis of ethnicity and their continuing ties to Nepal:

It is natural, with the great number of Nepalis in this district, and the fact that most of the native Christians in the Darjeeling Division were formerly caste-observing Nepalis, that the minds of these who dwell here, and especially of the Christians, should frequently turn to Nepal.³⁷

Among the national Christians of the Eastern Himalayas the following slogan was popularly understood -- "Darjeeling for Nepal" and "Kalimpong for Bhutan." The efforts to take the message of Christ into these still "closed countries" were mostly those of the new Nepali-Lepcha Christians of Darjeeling-Kalimpong themselves. Later the national Christians of the Kurseong Kirk Session also developed a mission outreach by sending colporteurs and evangelists to work among the Nepali in the Terai each winter "who at this time of year come in large numbers from Nepal in search of work."³⁸

When the Scottish Mission celebrated its Silver Jubilee in 1895 a Nepali-Lepcha church had been firmly established alongside extensive school work. There were nearly 2,300 Nepali and Lepcha Christians, 32 catechists overseeing scattered congregations, 78 schools with 73 teachers and 17 pupil-teachers and 2,700 pupils, and the Training Institute at Kalimpong with 45 students.³⁹ Large Scottish Presbyterian-style church buildings had been constructed by the Mission in Darjeeling and Kalimpong, and eight small village churches by the national Christians themselves.⁴⁰ Sikkim was now a separate field and missions had been established by the national churches to Bhutan and Nepal. The Mission press was in full swing, producing thousands of pieces of Nepali Christian literature each year; the first Nepali hymnal had been produced and a start made on compiling a Lepcha hymnal; and most of the New Testament, Genesis, Exodus and Proverbs had been translated and published in Nepali.⁴¹ In addition, Charteris Hospital had been opened in Kalimpong just the year before, signaling a new thrust of mission work in the medical field which developed throughout EHM from that time.⁴²

Well into the 20th century the Scottish Mission worked in close

cooperation with British Government officials, and was lauded by them for their contribution in the field of education and other civilizing influences. In the words of Sir Charles Elliott, former Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal:

The assistance given by the Mission to the work of civilization has been considerable. It has been the agent of Government in the spread of education. It has co-operated with the District Officer in keeping order in the village, and in putting down drunkenness, gambling and other vices.⁴³

Sir Charles Elliott also revealed his sympathy for the Mission's work of evangelisation in a speech delivered at Darjeeling in 1892, although the Government had to maintain a position of neutrality in religious matters:

As the head of the Government, I feel that the missionaries are, so to speak, an unrecognised and unofficial branch of the great movement in which we are all engaged, and which alone justifies our presence in the country. They occupy a field which the officers of Government are unable to take up...we cannot directly touch on religious subjects. By the orders of the Queen...we are prevented from proselytising...and yet we know right well that the only hope for the realisation of our dream, and for the true elevation and development of the people, lies in the evangelisation of India, and we know that the people who are carrying on this work are the missionaries. It is they who are filling up that which is deficient in the efforts of Government, by devoting their lives and their labours to bringing the people of India to the knowledge of Christ.⁴⁴

The participation and laudatory speeches by the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, the Deputy Commissioner of Darjeeling, the Government Inspector of Schools, and the Tukdah Tea Garden tea-planter at the Mission's Semi-Jubilee celebration in 1895 reveal the extent of the European community's support for the Eastern Himalayan Mission.⁴⁵

Alongside this support of the European community, several other factors also stand out from this historic recitation to account for the early success of EHM in establishing Christian churches among the Nepali-Lepcha of Darjeeling District. These include Macfarlane's genuine compassion, openness and concern for their welfare, affectionately dubbing them "the Highlanders of the

Himalayas," combined with he and his successor's communication skills in capturing the imagination of the Scottish public to generate prayer and financial backing for the mission.⁴⁶ Macfarlane already had the beginnings of a prepared Christian staff from the Gyah orphanage, as well as a group of Nepali and Lepcha boys and girls who became some of the first teachers, press workers and preachers. Other factors included Macfarlane's strategy of using the Normal School to indoctrinate the school teachers in the Bible, and use of the Bible and other Christianised texts in the schools; the development and distribution of Nepali literature in a pre-literate society where the printed word carried authority; a concentration on the local people most receptive to the Christian message; the use of the Nepali language, and Lepcha to a lesser extent, in preaching and worship services, combined with a reliance on native preachers; and intensive instruction and follow-up of the first converts and preachers in the Christian faith.

EHM: THE NEXT FIFTY YEARS

During the next fifty years both EHM and its national churches went through many changes. The ordination of the first five nationals as ministers coincided with the churches first being officially organised into Kirk Sessions in 1900. The Kirk Sessions included Darjeeling, Kurseong-terai, Kalimpong, the Duars, and Sikkim. These initial five were gradually added to until there were nine Kirk Sessions by 1930, including the two main local congregations as the first self-supporting churches, Macfarlane Memorial Church in Kalimpong from 1910, and St. Columba's Church in Darjeeling from 1929.⁴⁷ Together they formed the Eastern Himalayan Presbytery (later called Eastern Himalayan Church Council, EHCC), which was responsible for purely ecclesiastical matters and included the European ordained missionaries, national ministers and elders as representatives of the Kirk Sessions. The Presbytery subsequently joined the Presbyterian Church of India when it was formed in 1905, then was united with the United

Church of North India (UCNI) in 1924. These events brought the Church out of its Himalayan isolation and linked it with the wider Protestant realm in India.

Leading up to these events the EH Presbytery joined the Indian Sunday School Union in 1901 as the Eastern Himalayan Auxiliary, and preparation of Sunday School (SS) materials in Nepali, Lepcha and Tibetan was begun.⁴⁸ Ten years later a committee was appointed within the EH Presbytery specially for Sunday School and Youth work.⁴⁹ There were also active Temperance, Christian Liberality, and Literature Committees. The Christian Endeavour (CE) movement in India was joined at the initiative of J.A. Graham in Kalimpong, and from 1912 one of the national ordained ministers was entrusted with the SS and CE work among all the churches, subsequently called the "Sunday School Missioner and Christian Endeavour Travelling Secretary."⁵⁰ For the ongoing Christian education of the church workers, times of Bible study were incorporated into the regular divisional Panchayat meetings, and during the 1920s regular reports of annual Bible study retreats for the church and other Christian mission workers are found. In addition, open-air preaching was carried on, usually from the Preaching Houses set up in Darjeeling and Kalimpong, and Book Depots were established in conjunction with them to aid in the distribution of both school books and Christian literature. Colporteurs were sent out into the hills, and the first national Bible women were appointed during this period.

The Eastern Himalayan Mission Council (EHMC), made up of the male missionaries of the various divisions, handled all of the administrative and policy matters of the mission. Within each division of the mission regular Panchayat meetings were also held between the local missionary and national workers, but the nationals had no voice on the EHMC until fifty years after EHM was established.⁵¹ In 1921 female European missionaries were admitted onto the EHMC, and four national agents of the mission were added as "consulting members" for the first time.⁵² Two years later nationals were finally given full member status, and in 1933 they were first added to the committees responsible

for control of the various departments of mission work. Throughout this period ordained European missionaries remained as Superintendents over both the churches and the mission work of each division. It was not until the 1950s, through the process of integration of the Mission and the Church following Indian Independence, that the EHMC was abandoned in favour of the EHCC and leadership passed into the hands of the Church.⁵³ The EHM thus passed through four stages in the process of transition from mission to church -- management exclusively by the missionaries, the addition of national representatives, division of responsibilities between Mission and Church Councils, and integration of Mission and Church under Church Council management. Only following the final stage were national ministers, rather than the ordained missionaries, given responsibility for superintending the groups of district churches in the different areas. Throughout, Hindi remained the official language of the mission, even on the Church Council; this was an anomaly since Nepali had long since become the lingua franca of Darjeeling District and was commonly used in the local congregations.⁵⁴

During the early part of this period Christianity continued to spread rapidly among the local Nepali and Lepcha population, particularly around Kalimpong. Among the hill divisions in Darjeeling District by 1915 there were 2,376 baptised Christians reported in Kalimpong division, compared with only 722 in Darjeeling division, and 444 in the Kurseong-terai division.⁵⁵ (The figure for those in the Kurseong-terai included mostly plains tribal peoples of the terai, not Nepali.) But by the 1920s numerical growth in the churches hit a plateau and there were very few new converts. From 1912 the lack of numerical growth was noted in the "Eastern Himalayan Presbytery Minutes," and an Evangelism Campaign was held in 1916, and repeated in the following years until the mid-1920s.⁵⁶ Even so, Darjeeling division actually experienced negative growth through deaths and transfers, mostly to Kalimpong and Sikkim, with an average of 665 on the church rolls throughout the decade; while Kalimpong division

experienced moderate growth, reaching a membership of 2,796 by 1928.⁵⁷ By this time most of the dynamic national pioneers of the churches had died or retired, and church membership in each of the hill divisions was centred at the respective mission centres in Darjeeling, Kalimpong and Kurseong towns. A large part of the church growth from this period was biological. By mid-century the number of EHCC Christians in each hill division was as follows: 594 in Darjeeling local congregation, and 487 in Darjeeling district churches, totalling 1,081; a total of 1,217 in Kurseong-terai division (no ethnic breakdown available, but mostly plains tribals); and 1,128 in Kalimpong local congregation, and 2,465 in Kalimpong district churches, totalling 3,593.⁵⁸

There were a number of factors which contributed to this slowdown in the spread of Christianity, including diversities between the different hill divisions, which also help to explain the disparity in the growth of their respective churches. The ethnic, religious and settlement pattern distinctives of each area have already been noted, and the ready response to Christianity of the predominantly Lepcha population around Kalimpong. As the district centre and a sanatorium for weary Europeans from the heat-ridden plains below, Darjeeling was a relatively cosmopolitan town, entertaining a variety of outside influences. There was also the nearby Gurkha recruitment centre at Ghoom which attracted a constant stream of hopeful Nepali recruits, adding to the mobility of the population and its dispersion, and making Darjeeling particularly susceptible to the disruptive effects of World Wars I and II as thousands of young Nepali were recruited to support the War effort.⁵⁹ Both Darjeeling and Kurseong, the headquarters for the railway, were gathering places for the tea-planters and were surrounded by tea gardens which employed thousands of mostly Nepali immigrant labourers. The Scottish missionaries were only one outside voice among many competing for the attention of the local people. Although many of the tea-planters were sympathetic to the Scottish Mission and supported the starting of schools, not all gave ready access to their labourers who were tied to

the plantations and did not have freedom of association. In contrast, Kalimpong had very little contact with the outside world before Macfarlane's early journeys and attracted few foreigners besides the missionaries. It was a much more rural setting where most of the population were independent agriculturalists and were masters of their own time, an important distinctive when considering the spread of Christianity. This also meant that the missionaries' attentions were more concentrated on the local people. Christians became the major outside influence in Kalimpong, and an increasingly prominent one which brought not only a new religion, but education, medical facilities, cottage industries and employment opportunities. These differences are illustrated by the fact that while it was necessary to hold worship services at Darjeeling in four languages (Hindi, Bengali, Nepali and English) each Sunday, and in English and Nepali at Kurseong, the only languages used in Kalimpong were Nepali and Lepcha.

Differences between Darjeeling and Kalimpong in terms of mission approach can be traced back to 1880 when the Mission was divided into two sections. There is a discernible early difference in emphasis between the two divisions of the mission. In Kalimpong there were only the schools -- five compared with twelve under Darjeeling in 1880 -- and the native church work. Although there were three catechists assigned to each division in 1880, two of those in Darjeeling had responsibilities additional to their church work. Also, the missionaries based in Darjeeling, the centre of EHM at this time, had a multiplicity of responsibilities: oversight of the Bible translation work, the press and publishing work, two English-speaking congregations, and the Normal School (until 1887), in addition to an expanding number of primary schools and the native churches.⁶⁰ Thus the missionary and his catechists in Kalimpong had much more time and freedom to devote to evangelism and church work than their counterparts across the Teesta. It is also striking to note that all of the school teachers under Kalimpong were Christian converts, compared to less than half of those under Darjeeling.⁶¹ Further, the proportion of catechists for the

churches to school teachers was much higher in Kalimpong -- in 1884 there were six catechists around Kalimpong and six schools all with Christian teachers, while under Darjeeling there were seven catechists compared with thirty-four teachers in fifteen schools. New schools continued to be opened around Darjeeling irrespective of the religion of the teacher or the existence of local Christian converts, but during the 1880s and 1890s new schools in Kalimpong were only opened to meet the needs of the children of new converts and Christian families.⁶² In Darjeeling the opening of new schools and the uplift of the people through education had become an end in itself, while in Kalimpong, Sutherland maintained Macfarlane's original determination of subservience of the school work to preaching and church work. This differentiation was a major factor in the more rapid spread of Christianity in Kalimpong division during this early period. However, this changed under the leadership of J.A. Graham who greatly expanded the school work in Kalimpong. The number of primary schools increased in Kalimpong division from nine to sixty-two between 1890 and 1938, and from twenty-two to sixty-one between 1890 and 1941 in Darjeeling division, including night schools for adults and girls' schools in both areas.⁶³

Dr. and Mrs. J.A. Graham dominated the scene in Kalimpong from the 1890s, while across the Teesta, Rev. H.C. Duncan became the patriarch of Darjeeling division for over fifty years from the time he took control in 1902. They were both men of great energy and ability, and strong personalities -- the "sahibs," a product of the times in which they lived. Duncan is remembered by the local people as being very unapproachable, and even church members would not think of entering his compound or using the front entrance to his house. It is said of Graham that he tended to do everything himself and completely overshadowed the national leaders. Both of these characteristics contrast sharply with their predecessor, Macfarlane, who was known for his intimate association with the local people, his identification with their personal needs, and his passion to train and promote them into the primary leadership of the church. But the

mission had grown and changed over the ensuing years. Such a subservient attitude of the nationals was also a product of the times, the respect in which the missionaries were held, and among the Lepcha it was a product of their naturally gentle temperament. Both Duncan and Graham accomplished a prodigious amount of work, often at great personal sacrifice, building up their respective mission centres and superintending large areas of rugged mountainous terrain without the aid of any modern transport or communication facilities.

Rev. H.C. Duncan had responsibility not only for Darjeeling division, but also for the Kurseong-terai until 1926 and Sikkim for a couple of years. He continued to oversee the press and served on the Bible translation committee alongside his superintending duties over the schools and churches. In addition, he acted as Chaplain to the Scottish troops stationed at Jalapahar and Lebung, and he oversaw two European congregations in Darjeeling. The effects of World Wars I and II and the consequent social upheaval hit Darjeeling particularly hard, adding to Duncan's pastoral responsibilities, and taking young men out of the churches. Duncan also clearly had a strong interest in Nepal, and supported his own son, Dr. Cecil Duncan, in the establishment of Raxaul Medical Mission on the southern border of Nepal. The elder Duncan journeyed there himself on more than one occasion. Although it is said that there was little active evangelistic work under him within Darjeeling division, he encouraged the work of the Gorkha Mission, sent Nepali workers from his division on evangelistic treks to various points on the border of Nepal, and later was a member of the Nepal Border Fellowship.⁶⁴

On the church front, "Padre" Ganga Prasad Pradhan was the outstanding personality in Darjeeling.⁶⁵ He not only served as the ordained minister of St. Columba's Nepali congregation, but was engaged by the British and Foreign Bible Society as their official Nepali Bible translator from 1894. Completion of the translation of the whole Bible into Nepali was celebrated by its publication in 1914, and Pradhan finished a further revision of the Gospels during the 1920s.⁶⁶

In addition, he obtained the Scottish Mission Orphanage Press in 1901 and re-established it as Gorkha Press. This was the source of continuing Nepali-language literature production, including Christian books and tracts, the first Nepali school texts, and the first Nepali newspaper called "Gorkay Khabar Kagat."⁶⁷ He was also a driving force in the activities of the Gorkha Mission, and tried to emigrate in 1914 with forty members of his family back to his native Kathmandu as Christians, but they were turned back by local officials.⁶⁸ From 1916 to 1920 G.P. Pradhan spent one month of every winter in Calcutta to minister to the hill Christians who were emigrating there in increasing numbers.⁶⁹ Affectionately dubbed "the Grand Old Man of the Mission," he was held in high respect in all corners of local society, European and Nepali-Lepcha, Christian and Hindu-Buddhist alike. However, following his death in 1932 there is an easily traceable decline in each of the works to which he gave so much energy: following his revision of the Gospels, further Bible revision and translation work was in abeyance until the 1950s; the production of "Gorkay Khabar Kagat" stopped in 1932 and there was no further publishing of Nepali Christian literature until the 1950s; and there are not any reports of the Gorkha Mission after the 1920s.

When Padre G.P. Pradhan resigned, Rev. K.S. Peter was elected as the next pastor of St. Columba's Nepali congregation. When he was inducted, 15 December 1929, the church took on his full support and was established as a separate Kirk Session, the second local congregation after Kalimpong to attain this status.⁷⁰ By this time numbers in the church were in decline. K.S. Peter and James Longman, who followed him as pastor at St. Columba's, are both said to have resigned in discouragement after a few years each due to the lack of growth in the church and the meagre pay.⁷¹

The multiplicity of tasks engaged in by both mission and national leadership may have been a contributing factor in the limited further expansion of Christianity around Darjeeling itself, but the fruits of some of those very tasks

were important to expansion elsewhere among Nepali. From Darjeeling came the resources of Nepali Bibles, hymnals, tracts and other Christian literature which were instrumental in the propagation and instruction in Christianity among Nepali beyond its own limited boundaries for almost one hundred years.⁷² Nepali Christian workers were also sent out from Darjeeling, particularly to the border of Nepal at Raxaul and to Calcutta. It was the Darjeeling Kirk Session that drew the attention of the Eastern Himalayan Presbytery to the growing number of Christians from the hill divisions going to Calcutta, and the need of provision for their spiritual welfare.⁷³ There was also a growing awareness of the evangelistic potential among the large non-Christian Nepali population of Calcutta. All of those sent by the Presbytery in response to this need were from the Darjeeling division of the Mission, until responsibility was turned over to the Calcutta Presbytery in the mid-1920s.⁷⁴ A report from Darjeeling about one of the catechists sent to Rupaidhia, on the south-west border of Nepal, noted, "We are always glad to help those who are carrying on work in Nepali in other parts of India."⁷⁵

To the south, Kurseong was also a separate Kirk Session, but it came under the Darjeeling mission centre's supervision until 1926, when the first Scottish missionary took up regular residence there.⁷⁶ In the meantime, national ordained pastors were posted there from the turn of the century. The first was Rev. Jasbir Philip, and he was followed in 1907 by Surjaman Mukhia, formerly a catechist in Kurseong. Surjaman was ordained three years later after the Presbytery was petitioned by the Kurseong congregation. During the earlier brief stay of Rev. T.E. Taylor the building of St. Andrew's Church had commenced, and it was dedicated on 22 November 1902, in anticipation of the time when Kurseong would itself become a mission centre.

Across the Teesta in Kalimpong the Grahams were busy implementing a multitude of new ideas, and in extending the work into the Duars.⁷⁷ They were innovators in both the church and mission sides of the work. Together with

Sutherland, Graham initiated the building of the EHM's first permanent church structure, called Macfarlane Memorial Church in memory of the mission's founder.⁷⁸ Although the local people also gave sacrificially towards its building, interestingly there was no thought of building in a style in keeping with the local surroundings; rather it stood on top of a ridge as a landmark to all around, an imposing Western-style monument to the pervasive Christian presence in the town.⁷⁹ It was dedicated in 1891 with great ceremony by a delegation of European tea-planters, missionaries and other friends alongside about 700 local Christians from all parts of the mission, followed by the baptism of 134 people, mostly Lepcha, and the first Christian mela (fair).⁸⁰ This latter initiative of Graham became a popular annual event, a gathering including the Christians of all the surrounding district churches, and melas were soon also being held in Darjeeling and Sikkim, although never on the same scale.⁸¹ Macfarlane Memorial Church was the first local congregation of EHCC to become self-supporting and to call its own pastor.

Rev. Namthak Rongong was called to Kalimpong from his pastorate at Mangwa and inducted as their pastor and as Moderator of the new Kalimpong Kirk Session in 1910.⁸² This was noted with enthusiasm by the EHMC in a resolution dated 5 March 1910, "The council rejoices in the notable step towards a self-supporting and self-governing church in the Eastern Himalayas."⁸³ Namthak was also involved in Lepcha Bible translation work, which was mostly carried out from Kalimpong, along with his friend Dyongshi. Namthak was noted for his simple but straight-forward faith. Stories abound of people being healed after he prayed for them, sometimes simply using the Lord's Prayer which he had memorised. His fourth son, Joseph, hoped to succeed him as pastor of Macfarlane Memorial Church, and completed the English-language Divinity course under Mr. Ogg, but Gyan Tshering Sitling of nearby Chhobo was chosen instead. Namthak died in 1921, just a year after his life-long friend and fellow pioneer of the Kalimpong churches, Dyongshi. Second generation national

leadership was now at the helm.

In the meantime, a large part of Graham's energies were not directly church-related. His efforts included the expansion of a network of primary schools throughout Kalimpong division, no longer only in the places where there were Christians, and the establishment of Kalimpong Home Industries, an Anglo-Hindi school, and St. Andrew's Colonial Homes. Although it has justifiably been said that the increasing institutional work of EHM diverted energies from evangelism and care of the churches, each of the mission institutions had an effect on the further spread of Christianity among Nepali-Lepcha, bringing many more in contact with Christians for the first time. The provision of quality educational and medical facilities was widely appreciated in the community at large and in surrounding areas. As a few schools were upgraded to middle-English and high school level they attracted students from across the borders in Nepal, Sikkim and Bhutan, all of whom were taught from a Christian curriculum.⁸⁴ Kalimpong Home Industries, started by Mrs. Graham, employed about 1,000 people throughout the area by the 1920s.⁸⁵ St. Andrew's Colonial Homes (later Dr. Graham's Homes) for Anglo-Indians was started in 1901 and had about 600 pupils by the early 1920s. Because of its English curriculum and connection with Dr. Graham, it attracted the sons of men of influence, like Raja Tenduk, the former Lepcha manager over the government estate of Daling, and others from Bhutan.⁸⁶ But the school with the most far-reaching influence was SUMI in Kalimpong, both through its High School which attracted students from afar, and the Teachers' Training School for men and women, which sent out teachers throughout Darjeeling District and into Sikkim and Bhutan. Almost all of the teachers sent to Sikkim and Bhutan were Christians.

The other area of institutional work which had wide-reaching Christian influence among the Nepali was in the medical field. Although Macfarlane had insisted that "the medical work is to be kept quite subordinate to the evangelical," and he did not solicit any medical missionaries to join the Mission during his

time, the foundation of Charteris Hospital dramatically changed this.⁸⁷ The reputation of the hospital spread quickly and patients were attracted from Nepal, Sikkim and Bhutan where there were no comparable medical facilities. From Charteris catechists were trained in compounding, supplied with medicines, and sent out to dispensaries established in Kalimpong, Darjeeling and Sikkim divisions.⁸⁸ Others made their own way to Bhutan, and even to Tibet.⁸⁹ Nurses were also trained and in 1934 the State Government recognised Charteris as a nurses' training institute.⁹⁰ Nepali-Lepcha Christian nurses went out from Charteris to Duncan Hospital in Raxaul, on the border of Nepal, and later on into Nepal alongside the missionaries.⁹¹ Nurses were also trained for the Bhutan Government.⁹² A separate Leprosy Hospital was started by Dr. Macdonald Smith in 1929 while he was the Superintendent of Charteris. It was the only place for leprosy treatment in the whole Central or Eastern Himalayas or in Tibet, and many reports of patients from Nepal, Bhutan, Sikkim and Tibet are found in EHM records. In the 1940s and 1950s the majority of patients were reported to be Nepali, and several of them became Christians before returning to their homes.⁹³

In the meantime, SUMI's (the former Training Institute) role in directly training leaders for the churches had been lost sight of by the early 20th century, evidently following Sutherland's departure in 1899.⁹⁴ This stands in direct correlation to the downturn in church growth from this time. Whereas SUMI was originally set up by Macfarlane in Kalimpong to train both full-time catechists for the churches and teachers for the schools, a report in 1907 shows that it had devolved into basically teachers' training, and catechists were being drawn from the ranks of the teachers. From this point there is a marked decline in the number of full-time catechists. The focus shifted to an emphasis on catechists with other practical skills such as teaching or medical compounding for their main employment, and to preparation of an ordained national ministry. Although admirable perhaps in terms of self-support, the resultant decrease in

local level Bible-trained church leaders had a negative effect on the continuing growth of the churches. It also marked a subtle change in the amount of respect in which catechists were held; whereas formerly they were given at least equal place in the prestigious Training Institute, now in the public's eye the spiritual side of their training was subordinated to the practical. Again in 1928 it was noted in the "EHMC Minutes" that "from its very start SUMI had been intended for training catechists as well as teachers and that this work had fallen into abeyance," but nothing was done about it.⁹⁵ By the 1930s a large number of the early catechists had either died or retired, and during the 1940s and 1950s there were virtually no new appointments made by the EHCC. Within less than twenty years of its beginning, the Bible school side of the Training Institute had ceased, and full-time catechists for the churches were no longer being trained.

In the meantime, a vernacular "course of study and examination for candidates for licence and ordination" within the EHM was drawn up by Turnbull and Graham and adopted by the Eastern Himalayan Presbytery in 1895.⁹⁶ The emphasis was now on ordained national church leaders. Training of the ordinands was done almost exclusively in-house, through the EHM's own vernacular home study course. Candidates for the two-year course were drawn from the existing catechists, who did the course alongside their normal duties in the churches.⁹⁷ Although EHM shifted to a formal ordained national ministry, no theological institute or seminary for the training of local church leaders was set up, and of the twenty-three Nepali and Lepcha men ordained between 1900 and 1960, only two of them received any outside theological training: K.S. Peters at Saharanpur Theological Seminary (but this was in preparation for ministry to the Darjeeling English-speaking congregation, not initially for the local Nepali congregation);⁹⁸ and Gyan Tshering Sitling, who had an IA degree and was sent to Calcutta for a year of study to supplement the new English Divinity course drawn up by Mr. Ogg at SUMI.⁹⁹ Initial reliance on the catechists as candidates for ordination was natural and necessary, but there seems to have been little

subsequent effort to raise the educational standard of new potential leaders in preparation for higher level training outside the area. Ironically, P.S. Targain, who was chosen to succeed G.T. Sitling as pastor of Macfarlane Memorial Church, was a vocational teacher at SUMI who only had a Class 6 education, yet was licensed and ordained in less than a year without completing the normal EHCC presbyter's course.¹⁰⁰ This state of affairs was lamented by one of the missionaries in an article written in 1944 in which he expressed frustration at the low level of training of church workers, and that the districts were "grievously deficient" in pastors and there was no Nepali-medium theological college:

[The Church's] most pressing need is a sufficiently large and sufficiently educated ministry. Until it has that it cannot undertake fresh responsibilities... If the Indian Church of this area is to move towards independence it must have greater opportunities of fuller training for its pastors and catechists... they work with little training and for very little remuneration. If it were not that many of them have land to support them, it is difficult to see how they could provide for their households.¹⁰¹

He also pointed out that there were well-educated Christians in the community capable of outside theological training in English, but they were generally not attracted to church ministry because of the low pay and prestige. It took a man of exceptional inner spiritual motivation to choose to go in that direction. The first man to go outside of Darjeeling to pursue a BD degree was D.D. Pradhan in the late 1950s; he was later the first Nepali to serve as a Bishop under the CNI.

The first five national ministers ordained by the Eastern Himalayan Presbytery in 1900, all experienced former catechists, included: Dyongshi Lepcha and Namthak Rongong for Kalimpong division, Temba Tshering and Kantu Singh for Darjeeling division, and Jasbir Philip for Kurseong. They were all appointed to the district churches, outside of the mission centers. This at least partially accounts for the continuing growth of the churches during the early part of the 20th century in the three divisions. But after the initial five were ordained, during the following fifty years (1901-1951), only six of the next fourteen newly

ordained national ministers in the Darjeeling- Kalimpong-Kurseong divisions were appointed to district churches. One was also appointed to the town of Kurseong as a replacement for Jasbir Philip, where no missionary had yet taken up residence. Even more notable is the fact that of the ten district churches which received ordained national leaders during this whole period, only one was replaced by another ordained man, at Kizom.¹⁰² The first two pastors at Kizom, near the border of Sikkim, were the only ordained Lepcha appointed in Darjeeling division. Following this initial surge of support for the district churches, basically through the training and ordaining of their earlier catechists, these churches were left to the care of a dwindling number of barely educated and meagerly remunerated local catechists, with only occasional visits from the missionary superintendents in Darjeeling and Kalimpong. The distribution of these district pastors -- in seven villages of Kalimpong division compared to only three in Darjeeling division (and two of these for relatively short periods) -- again highlights the lopsided growth in Kalimpong division.

Another striking fact is the preponderance of simple church buildings constructed in Kalimpong division compared to Darjeeling and Kurseong. Before the 1960s the only villages of Darjeeling division with their own church buildings, separate from the schools, were at Nagri and Kizom, although Rev. H.C. Duncan held occasional worship services at seven other reported locations.¹⁰³ Both of these were built before 1900. In conjunction with Kurseong two small churches were built by the tea estate managers of Marionbari (1925) and Manjha (1941), but these did not belong to the people and served very few Christians.¹⁰⁴ Worship services were also held in Tindharia, another railway junction below Kurseong, but without benefit of a church building. Further south a church was built in Siliguri (1926) in the terai, but it hosted a very mixed ethnic congregation with services held in Hindi, Nepali, and later also in Bengali, English and Tamil. Thus when the schools of Darjeeling District went under government control, many of the Christian congregations of

Darjeeling and Kurseong divisions no longer had secure meeting places. But in the predominantly Lepcha populated areas around Kalimpong at least eight new churches were built by the local Christian communities themselves between 1900 and the 1960s, and six others had already been built during the 1880s -- a testimony to the relative vitality of the national Christians in this area and their leadership.¹⁰⁵

During this time there was also a clear trend towards centralisation, as seen in the increasing appointment of ordained nationals to the mission centre churches. Ganga Prasad Pradhan was the first appointed to St. Columba's Church in Darjeeling from 1901, and Namthak was transferred to Macfarlane Memorial Church in Kalimpong from 1909. These two churches were the first and only Nepali-Lepcha self-supporting churches in the hill divisions before the 1960s.¹⁰⁶ The majority of the ordained national ministers were assigned to these two large central churches, in the same locations where the ordained missionaries were resident.¹⁰⁷ They were looked to like "mother" churches by the much smaller district churches, although not officially tied to them. Kurseong was also developed as a mission centre from the time Rev. G.S. Mill took up residence, shortly before Rev. Surjaman Mukhia's retirement in 1926, and programmes similar to those in the other two centres were begun.¹⁰⁸ But no further national ordained minister was appointed to Kurseong until the teacher-cum-catechist M.D. Subba was ordained in 1941. With mission-church integration, not only the large centre churches, but the district churches also, gradually came under national pastors as superintendents, beginning with Rev. D.H. Mukhia over Kurseong division from 1954.¹⁰⁹

IN SUMMARY

Leading up to mission-church integration the EHCC hill divisions in Darjeeling District had become centralised in the towns of Darjeeling, Kalimpong and Kurseong, while Kalimpong had largely grown up around the

mission institutions. An immense contribution was made to the development of Nepali literature, and the emphasis on development of educational and medical institutions within EHM had made an unequalled contribution to the social development of the region. These institutions had also drawn many Nepali, Lepcha and Bhutia from surrounding areas into the "wedge" where they encountered Christianity for the first time, and sent other national Christians back to each of those areas and beyond.

Two of the prominent Christian families serve as an illustration of the contribution made to local society by the Nepali-Lepcha hill Christians, and of their dispersion and leavening influence as Christians among the wider Nepali diaspora and in reverse migration back to Nepal. Among the children of Ganga Prasad Pradhan and Namthak Rongong were the first two native doctors to qualify in the Darjeeling-Kalimpong hills, and the first Bible woman of the EHCC.¹¹⁰ Their direct descendants are spread from the Punjab to Nepal, Bhutan, Sikkim, Shillong and Burma, and they include an ordained pastor in Darjeeling and in Kalimpong, the Headmaster of Turnbull High School in Darjeeling, the Headmistress of Kalimpong Girls' High School, three Principals of SUMI, the first lady doctor in Darjeeling, two early contributors to the beginnings of the modern-day church in Bhutan, and one of the pioneers of the church in Nepal.

These two families also illustrate the influence Christians had on the breakdown of caste and ethnic barriers between the Nepali and Lepcha communities as they began to inter-marry, although not without opposition. This was partly due to the difficulty in finding Christian marriage partners, which took a higher priority than marrying within caste.¹¹¹ Ganga Prasad Pradhan, himself a Newar, married a Rai woman.¹¹² Of his five daughters, only one married a Newar Pradhan, while one married a Rai, another a Limbu, and two others married Lepcha. This same trend was followed by several of his grandchildren, including intermarriage with Namthak Rongong's family. One of Namthak's sons

married Ganga Prasad's granddaughter and another married a Chinese woman, while two of his daughters married a Limbu and an Anglo-Indian.¹¹³ It was through the Christian community that this trend of Nepali-Lepcha intermarriage also moved into Sikkim, although it was not common there before the 1950s.¹¹⁴ Also, those in general society who had been ostracised because of inter-caste marriage could find acceptance in the Christian community through conversion. In this way, particularly among the Christians of these Himalayan hill areas, both the Nepal-origin ethnic tribals and the Lepcha gradually lost their distinctive language and were gradually amalgamated with "the huge group now known as Nepali."¹¹⁵ At the same time, the Scottish missionaries, conscious of the more aggressive nature of the Nepali and their growing dominance in hill society, were seen as purposely propelling the Lepcha forward educationally and in the church, where they found a place of respect and leadership opportunities.¹¹⁶

Aside from the contributions the above developments made to society in general and to the spread of Christianity among Nepali outside the Darjeeling-Kalimpong hill region, they had diverted energy and attention from the local churches and leadership development. By the 1920s and 1930s numerical growth in the churches was nearly at a standstill, with very few new converts, and both the Gorkha Mission and Bhutan Mission had floundered. During Duncan's fifty years in Darjeeling only two or three new preaching points-cum-congregations were established and no church buildings were erected. National Christians also say that there was a waning in the spiritual vitality and enthusiasm of the national churches, a kind of spiritual stagnation, partly due to a lack of the kind of Bible teaching and instruction about which Macfarlane had been so passionate.¹¹⁷ In one village church visited by the author the elders said that most of their parents and grandparents, although baptised into the church, did not understand what it meant to be a Christian; for many it was simply a change of religion, without understanding, and made out of respect for the missionaries and Christian teachers.¹¹⁸ They had very little further instruction after baptism. There were

also a growing number of second and third generation Christians in the churches by this time. The typically large number of children in Nepali and Lepcha families contributed most of the new members to the churches.¹¹⁹ Then the first church split in 1931 sent shock waves throughout the EHCC.

In what was termed "Roman Catholic aggression," the pastor of Macfarlane Memorial Church in Kalimpong, Rev. G.T. Sitling, and most of his family, including his brother Pasang Sitling, a catechist, his father Rev. Gora Sitling of Chhobo Church, and two teachers, left the Scottish Mission fold to join the Roman Catholic Church.¹²⁰ At this time, Roman Catholics were the only other Christian presence in the Kalimpong area; although in Darjeeling area SAM and the Finnish missionaries had been active in Ghoom, and Dr. Innes Wright's "Nepal Mission" in Sukhia Pokhri, since the 1890s without any conflict of interest.¹²¹ This event was a precursor of what was to come, although from within the Protestant fold, as more and more outside Christian influences entered Darjeeling District from the 1940s.

NEW CHRISTIAN INFLUENCES ENTER IN

The Government of India Act of 1935 changed Darjeeling's designation from "excluded" to "partially excluded," opening it up to more outside influences. It was formerly a Non-Regulation district with no representation in the Legislative Council, largely cut off from Bengal for the Britishers' own interests. Then the advent of World War II brought great social and political upheaval even in this remote Himalayan enclave. It also brought much wider exposure to the world outside. In December 1939 Mission News noted that many of the local youth were waiting eagerly for the opportunity to join the Allied cause.¹²² Thousands were recruited both for the Gurkha battalions, with the more highly educated Nepali and Lepcha of Darjeeling-Sikkim supplying most of the clerks, and labour forces in North-east India.¹²³ Dash notes that India-domiciled Nepali were recruited from Darjeeling as "mess staff", for the Assam Civil Porter

Corps to build roads into Burma, as chowkidars for RAF aerodrome protection, and to fill technical ancillary war service jobs;¹²⁴ the India Tea Association helped to keep supply lines open to Assam and Burma by organising a steady stream of tea garden labour.¹²⁵ Christians were inevitably included amongst this out-flow of manpower, while there was also an in-flow of refugees retreating from Burma and medical evacuees from Calcutta. In addition the agitation for Indian Independence was on the rise.

INDIAN EVANGELISTS

In this context of social change and uncertainty, new Christian influences began to penetrate the district of Darjeeling, both Indian and foreign. They were initially welcomed by the EHCC as a breath of fresh air, bringing new spiritual teaching and life to the churches. First came itinerant Indian evangelists from outside the area, the most influential being Brahman converts. Sadhu Masih, reportedly from a Pentecostal background, made his way to Kalimpong in 1939 and was well received by some of the church elders.¹²⁶ But his ministry resulted in the second splinter group from Macfarlane Memorial Church, this time over the issue of adult baptism by immersion.¹²⁷ Full Gospel Pentecostal Church was formed in Kalimpong in 1944, the beginnings of a Pentecostal movement which expanded to Darjeeling over ten years later, and went on to spawn numerous Pentecostal churches now spread throughout the Eastern Himalayan hills and into the Duars.¹²⁸ In the meantime, two influential Indian evangelists who reached Darjeeling in 1941 stand out for their impact, particularly on the spiritual life of St. Columba's Church -- Pandit K.P. Tiwari and Sadhu M.G. Garhwali, both from Uttar Pradesh.¹²⁹ Both of their ministries were warmly welcomed within the EHCC churches, as attested by Mission News accounts such as the following: Tiwari was praised for his "attractive personality, his constant emphasis on prayer and dependence on God, his searching messages and his inspiring bhajans (songs)..."; Garhwali Sadhu was depicted as "the picturesque, bearded,

white-robed, white-topped preacher so well known in the E. Himalayan area," and "much respected and greatly beloved by the whole Christian community...doing much for the welfare of the Church."¹³⁰ Neither of them represented any particular denomination. They were lauded by the missionaries and national Christians alike for their contribution to a spiritual awakening, bringing new enthusiasm to the church, ministry among the youth and children, and renewal of bazaar preaching.¹³¹

In Darjeeling the Christian Book Depot, under the management of K.D. Mukhia from 1937, was a central point for the growing spiritual renewal.¹³² Both Tiwari and Garhwali Sadhu, and others who followed them, stayed with K.D. Mukhia at the Depot and conducted extra meetings from there. K.D. Mukhia was chosen unanimously by the Nepali congregation at St. Columba's as their new pastor after Rev. D.H. Mukhia was transferred to his home area of Kurseong in 1954. K.D. served this congregation for twenty years until his death in a motor accident.¹³³ Rev. H.C. Duncan is said to have also experienced a kind of spiritual renewal during these latter days of his work in Darjeeling and was welcoming towards the new influences which the church was largely able to absorb. In contrast, the church in Kalimpong was buffeted by successive splits, what Rev. P.S. Targain called "denominational trouble," which he found hard to handle and caused him much discouragement until a few of those who left began to come back.¹³⁴ This is posited as the reason for a lack of evangelism by Macfarlane Memorial Church during that period:

...[MMC was] threatened by the infectiously factious evangelism carried out by some free-lance evangelists... They pulled out some of the members of the MMC and pushed away the Church into the defensive line. So the Church, under this threatened life-situation could not encourage its vulnerable young members to evangelism at its own apprehensive expense.¹³⁵

But there were a few active evangelists from a perhaps unlikely source in Kalimpong, the Blind School started by Miss Mary Scott in the 1940s after her

departure from Sikkim. From the early 1950s three students in particular went out regularly to sing and preach in the villages round about: the brothers Gyanendra and Birendra Rongong, and John Dick Khawas.

Following K.P. Tiwari's untimely death in 1944, the Darjeeling church continued to look for fresh spiritual input from outside Indian preachers -- a new phenomenon in EHCC. In May 1947 Jordan C. Khan, an evangelist from the Punjab, was invited to hold a series of "revival meetings" among St. Columba's Nepali congregation, and then in other churches in the district.¹³⁶ For the Darjeeling Annual Conference in the Autumn, D.P. Titus, Secretary of N. Bihar Evangelical Crusade, was invited.¹³⁷ Titus was invited back several times over successive years, to both Darjeeling and Kalimpong, particularly as a speaker for the Eastern Himalayan Youth Conferences which were started in 1949. In the meantime, with a recommendation from Darjeeling where he had been well accepted, Jordan Khan went to Kalimpong and began to hold a series of meetings at Macfarlane Memorial Church. But Khan's teaching on the "blood of Christ," the need for "repentance from sin" and to be "born again" were new and threatening to Pastor Targain, and he stopped the meetings in the church. The outcome was a third split in the Kalimpong church, this time as a branch of the Bahkt Singh movement in India, with the defection and re-baptism of a number of former EHCC members.¹³⁸

Following a visit from Bahkt Singh, the name El Shaddai began to be used in Kalimpong, which became the headquarters for subsequent "Believers' Assemblies" as they grew up.¹³⁹ The first extension of this new church was back in Darjeeling in 1949, where a few EHCC members were also re-baptised and formed a new Believers' Assembly which was later named Mt. Pisca.¹⁴⁰ This was the first break-off from the St. Columba's Church in Darjeeling. Several of those who initially left the EHCC churches through Pentecostal and El Shaddai influences subsequently returned to the EHCC fold, yet both of these new streams began to grow slowly and spread from the 1950s.

THE ENTRY OF OTHER MISSIONS

In the meantime, new foreign Christian influences had also been attracted into the area.¹⁴¹ Jonathan Lindell chose Darjeeling as a headquarters for the Himalayan work of the World Mission Prayer League (WMPL) and concluded an agreement with EHM in 1946; the same year Mildred Hasselquist arrived and took up the children's work started earlier by Garhwali Sadhu. Becky Grimsrud followed in 1947 and others in the early 1950s. Several missionaries of the World-wide Evangelization Crusade (WEC) were allowed to go to Sukhia Pokhri for Nepali language study from 1946, and went out from there to the Western border of Nepal, taking three Nepali Christian workers with them.¹⁴² Several of the WEC missionaries returned to Darjeeling and Kurseong in the early 1950s and developed new means of spreading Christianity among Nepali-speaking people, especially in the area of communications; in the meantime two others went to Shillong to take up Nepali work alongside the Nepal Evangelistic Band (NEB).¹⁴³ Miss Elizabeth Franklin of the Regions Beyond Missionary Union (RBMU) was welcomed to Kalimpong in 1948, followed by the McCabes. Others included the Ralph Cunninghams and the Stroms, Americans with the Independent Board of Presbyterian Foreign Missions, and two Assemblies of God single women missionaries at Graham's Homes in Kalimpong. It is significant to note in each of these cases that they came with the agreement of the Scottish Mission, under comity rules effective at the time, and most of them worked in cooperation with the EHCC. An example of this, and the concerns of the EHMC, is seen in the "EHMC Minutes" of 20-21 October 1948 regarding Elizabeth Franklin's desire to go to Kalimpong:

In view of the assurances given by Miss Franklin to the Kalimpong local Kirk Session that no interference will be made with the denominational loyalties of students and that there will be no controversial treatment of any Christian doctrine, particularly that of baptism, it was agreed that Council give approval to the carrying on of this school in Kalimpong by Miss Franklin.

The effect of the coming of these new missionaries, most of them American and concentrated around Darjeeling, was at least four-fold: a continuing revitalisation of the EHCC churches, especially among the young people; the training and motivating of many of the young people to become involved in Christian ministry, and some to go out as "missionaries" themselves among Nepali in other areas; the development of ministry expressions complementary to the EHCC, but more far-reaching in their impact; and a growing desire among some to reach the whole Nepali-speaking world with the message of Christ.

For the first time missionaries' homes were opened to the local people for social gatherings, Bible study and informal Christian fellowship, and they were treated on a friendship basis as equals.¹⁴⁴ The biggest impact was among the youth who were not only involved in Bible studies in homes, but taught how to articulate their Christian faith and challenged to go out in teams to distribute tracts and tell others about their faith; there was a similar emphasis among the women.¹⁴⁵ The Indian preachers from outside Darjeeling had brought a message of the need for individual salvation through faith in Christ; now the new generation of missionaries, along with D.P. Titus, built upon this, also emphasising individual responsibility to grow in one's Christian faith by Bible study and prayer and to share it with others. These were activities in which lay people of the earlier generation had generally not been involved; they were formerly left to the full-time national Christian workers such as pastors, catechists and colporteurs.

There was also a new generation of Scottish missionaries which encouraged the youth movement and general spiritual revitalisation. Rev. and Mrs. James Brodie replaced the Duncans in Darjeeling from 1955. They opened the Mission House to the church members, held singing sessions, and even equipped a special room in their home with a library, table tennis, carom and

other games for the young people. Across the Teesta in Kalimpong, a new teacher at SUMI, Tom Brunton and his wife, were renowned for their "Thursday Bible class" held at the Guild Mission House during the 1960s, and also for their evangelistic work, motivating the young people out to surrounding villages in preaching teams.¹⁴⁶

Youth For Christ (YFC) chapters were formed in both Darjeeling and Kalimpong with the young people in charge, and these helped to carry forward the youth movement in the churches.¹⁴⁷ Acclaimed as the most "alive" part of the church at the time, they held monthly rallies and regular Bible studies, and went on outreaches to the outlying churches. Evangelical Unions (EU) were also started among Christian college students in both places.¹⁴⁸ In complement to these local Christian youth activities, Operation Mobilisation in India sent their first team to the area in 1968 and organised an outreach together with the local youth called the "Duardonian Campaign."¹⁴⁹ These activities proved to be a training ground from which new Nepali-Lepcha Christian leadership emerged, both within the EHCC realm and beyond -- the second effect of the new Christian influences which had entered the district.

Several of the young people who came under the new missionaries' influence were motivated to go out beyond Darjeeling-Kalimpong with them as co-workers and missionaries themselves. Many young men and women from the Scottish mission churches in Darjeeling and Kalimpong looked to these missionaries rather than the EHCC as their spiritual mentors.¹⁵⁰ Nor did they receive any material support from their home churches when they accompanied these missionaries outside the EHCC realm. Subit Tshering and two other national workers went with WEC to Kumaon, on the western border of Nepal, to establish a new work among the Nepali there.¹⁵¹ Several young people were recruited by Elizabeth Franklin (RBMU) in Kalimpong to go to Nepal as Christian workers. Daftan Sada and Prakash Rai were the first young people to go to join the newly formed United Christian Mission to Nepal (later United

Mission to Nepal, UMN) in Nepal, as laboratory technician trainees for the hospital in 1955.¹⁵² Robert Karthak, Rajendra and Jermit Rongong with their young daughter Sharon, Dhanmaya Khawas and three of her young siblings, and Daniel Sitling from Kalimpong accompanied Miss Franklin into Bhaktapur, Nepal as missionaries the following year.¹⁵³ They were followed by a number of others, some seeking employment in the medical or education fields, and others as full-time Christian workers, several of whom became influential leaders in the emerging church in Nepal.¹⁵⁴

The EHCC also took a few initiatives during the 1960s to send out workers beyond its boundaries. In line with the Darjeeling Kirk Session's earlier concern for Calcutta, Rev. M.F. Rai went to serve the Calcutta Hill Christian Church from 1963.¹⁵⁵ In 1964 the EHCC sent its own missionary to Nepal for the first time, the former colporteur L.P. Neupany.¹⁵⁶ Evangelists were also sent to Assam on at least two occasions. But such official efforts from within EHCC were quite limited and few in number.¹⁵⁷

In the meantime, Roy Hagen of WMPL used the agency of the Darjeeling Hills Bible School (DHBS), founded by himself, to train and send out a number of young people to Nepal.¹⁵⁸ The foundation of DHBS in 1954 was one of the works developed by the new missionaries in complement to the EHCC. It was the first Nepali-medium Bible School since the beginnings of the Nepali church almost a century earlier, and was set up "to strengthen the lay witness of the Nepali Church (in the Eastern Himalayas) and to prepare some to serve the Lord in Nepal."¹⁵⁹ DHBS was the only Nepali-medium Bible school in existence for nearly thirty years, until the Nepal Bible Ashram was founded in Kathmandu in the early 1980s. From that time, in addition to the numerous Nepali-speaking students trained for Christian work in the Eastern Himalayas and in Nepal, DHBS took on a new emphasis of training Nepali Christian workers for North East India.¹⁶⁰ In 1982 the Manipur Evangelical Baptist Convention recognised DHBS for training its students, followed by the Mizo Synod. The new DHBS

Principal, Rev. K.A. Rai, wrote:

...the existence of this school is more relevant today than ever before. The phenomenon of church growth among Nepali in North-East India and Nepal widens its practical horizon, and in fact, make its ministry an imperative.¹⁶¹

By 1987 former DHBS Nepali students could be found in Mizoram, Manipur, Nagaland and Assam; ten of them had been commissioned as missionaries by the Presbyterian Synod of Mizoram and the Manipur Baptist Convention.¹⁶²

Due to WEC's and WMPL's agreements with the Scottish Mission they were forced to develop alternative types of work, supportive of the existing Nepali churches rather than in competition with them or in new church-planting endeavours -- the third effect of their move into Darjeeling. These works in actuality carried forward earlier EHM work which had fallen into abeyance, especially in the areas of Bible training and the translation and production of Nepali Christian literature. Added to these was the development of a Nepali Bible Correspondence Course and Nepali radio programming. Nepali Christians were trained to work alongside the missionaries in each of these works, and later carried them forward themselves.

Dycks developed the Darjeeling Bible Correspondence Institute (DBCI) and, with the help of Subit Tshering, started Christian radio broadcasts in Nepali from 1955.¹⁶³ By 1963 there were daily Nepali broadcasts going out from FEBC in Manila, linked to the DBCI which by 1966 had 9,811 students on file from across the Himalayas as well as some from North-East India, Burma, Hong Kong, Singapore and Malaysia, "the latter being contacted through the radio."¹⁶⁴ Outside of the Himalayan region, their key target was, and responses were from, British Gurkhas. In a letter to Betty Young of UMN in Kathmandu, dated 11 September 1963, Ernie Shingler reported, "We have a burden to reach the thousands of soldiers in the British Gurkhas in these places. Of course, radios are plentiful and cheap where they are stationed!" In a similar letter about

DBCI, Shingler reported, "A small link has been made, and we look for a real opening among the 10,000 or more troops there (Singapore and Malaysia)."¹⁶⁵

Rita Skilbeck headed up the Himalayan Mission Literature Committee of WEC which was formed in 1956, "...as the result of a burden for Nepali Christian literature and because there were so few other Missions who were giving their time to translation and publishing Christian literature."¹⁶⁶ Just prior to this, in 1954 Roy Hagen of WMPL had started the Mirik Press (later called Jiwan Jyoti Press) with a similar burden. He was a man of unusual vision and drive, and spearheaded the formation of the Nepali Isai Sahitya Sangha (NISS, Nepali Christian Literature Society) as a cooperative effort between WMPL, UMN and EHCC in 1959.¹⁶⁷ In a 1963 NISS report it was noted that Nepali publications had been sent beyond the immediate Nepali-speaking areas "to Sikkim, Bhutan, Assam, Malaysia, Africa, and the UK as well as to Nepal itself."¹⁶⁸ When WEC joined this united effort for publication and distribution of Nepali Christian literature in 1968 all of the above were united into a new Christian publishing concern named Jiwan Jyoti Prakashan (JJP) to serve all Nepali-speaking Christians.¹⁶⁹ Interestingly, almost all of the Nepali literature published during this era were translations of English works; there was no evident encouragement of original writings. Some of the principal early Nepali translators involved with WEC's and WMPL's literature work were H.C. Pradhan, Suk Namfok, Theodore Manaen, Jonathan Thapa, Mahendra Kumar, and others. One of those trained in publishing work by Roy Hagen from the ground up, Adon Rongong, went into Nepal with the Hagens prompting and later became the National Director of Nepal Campus Crusade for Christ (NCCC), while still continuing his involvement in writing and publishing Nepali Christian literature.

Engagement in these kinds of work, which were not geographically bound, also contributed to the formation of a broader vision for reaching what has been called the "Nepali-speaking world" -- the fourth effect of the new Christian influences in Darjeeling. Historically such a vision was sparked by the EHM's

very dominance of the Eastern Himalayas, the only part of India where Nepali were the majority population, and by Nepal's own closed borders. Outreach to other Nepali in their widespread migrant communities in India developed more by default than design. As the lure of the "closed land" of Nepal began to draw missionaries from a wider spectrum of backgrounds, they had to find other places and means to reach Nepal's people. From the early 1900s younger interdenominational evangelical and faith missions began to dot the southern border of Nepal, while others lined themselves along Nepal's western border.¹⁷⁰ Two people in particular were responsible for seeking to transform this scattering of missionaries along the borders into a strategic means of reaching the widely dispersed Nepali -- Dr. Katherine ("Kitty") Harbord and Mr. Jonathan Lindell.¹⁷¹ Harbord issued passionate appeals for prayer and for workers among the Nepali, in which she was backed by Mr. McLeish of World Dominion Press.¹⁷² Harbord and Lindell together pioneered the Nepal Border Fellowship (NBF), the successor of the Nepal Border-line Conferences which had been organised by Dr. Cecil Duncan in Raxaul from 1933 but had languished.¹⁷³ Their vision was to occupy all the border towns and trade routes through which Nepali regularly passed to and from India, and Lindell fleshed out the idea with detailed research about Nepali throughout India.

Although the ultimate objective being looked to at this stage was the eventual evangelisation of Nepal itself, Lindell was pragmatic enough to direct the workers he was responsible for to wherever there was an opening among Nepali people. Himself based in Darjeeling, workers were instructed that "...while waiting to enter the land, the worker shall temporarily take up such Nepali work as can be found...;"¹⁷⁴ and "this field may also send workers to other parts of India where work with Nepalese may be done."¹⁷⁵ During the 1930s Harbord specifically drew attention to the potential for workers among Nepali in urban areas and Nepali settlements in Assam, and Lindell's extensive survey in 1946 of Nepali resident in India bore this out:

...about two million or more Nepalese living as residents in India. These are more or less scattered across north India... Roughly, they may be grouped thus: 1) those in the army camps... 2) those employed in the large towns, and there are appreciable groups in Lucknow, Calcutta, etc. 3) those living in settled communities on the land; these are chiefly in Darjeeling District and in Assam province. Among these groups of Nepalese much more could be done than what is being done.¹⁷⁶

This type of information was circulated abroad in WEC and WMPL circles, and among NBF prayer partners, raising awareness and prayer support on a broader basis, and as a guide for workers' placement. But the actual work which could be done among the more dispersed Nepali at this stage was quite limited. Back in Darjeeling it was only natural that the EHM, the best known mission involved directly in Nepali work, received occasional requests for help from other missions who had contact with Nepali people -- for Bibles, Nepali literature, and even to send Nepali evangelists. But EHM did not initiate and were not looking for outside opportunities, as has been demonstrated. This was in direct contrast to the leading members of the NBF who actively sought and advised workers among Nepali in the broader sphere. When Nepal finally opened its doors to the outside world following the overthrow of the Rana regime in the winter of 1950-51, Christian missions were invited in to do medical and development work, although with restrictions against proselytising. The NEB (later International Nepal Fellowship, INF) went into Pokhara in November 1952 and the UMN into Tansen, Bhaktapur and Kathmandu from 1954.¹⁷⁷ The main focus of attention shifted from the borders and Nepali outside of Nepal to Nepal itself. Missionaries stationed along the borders began to stream into Nepal, including a few from the Church of Scotland, and by 1960 fourteen member missions came under the umbrella of the UMN; during the 1960s the number of member bodies grew to twenty-seven.¹⁷⁸

Although the focus was now on Nepal, during the formative years of the establishment of Christian churches in Nepal the links across the border with

Darjeeling remained strong, and even aided the further development of a wider vision of reaching the whole Nepali-speaking world. It was from Darjeeling during the 1950s and 1960s, primarily through WMPL's and WEC's development of the above supplemental Christian work in the communications and leadership training fields, that Christian outreach to the Nepali diaspora found its widest expression.¹⁷⁹ Correspondence and minutes of the UMN, NISS, WMPL, WEC and the Bible Society of India began to refer to a "Nepali Zone" and the "Himalasia Region" from the mid-1960s. Particularly in the areas of Nepali Christian literature development, Bible training, and radio broadcasting there was an attitude of working together for the good of the Nepali churches on both sides of the border, and to reach non-Christian Nepali regardless of geographic confines. For example, in a letter by Lindell in 1964 he noted a discussion about possibilities of working "in the larger plans of literature, literacy, and evangelistic efforts in the Nepali-speaking world which NISS has been trying to initiate,"¹⁸⁰ and two years later he made a proposal to the Bible Society of India for a Bible Society Auxiliary to be set up for the Himalasia region.¹⁸¹ The NISS Secretary appealed for "Nepali contacts who might help with the distribution of Christian literature among Nepalis abroad," and noted contacts in Burma, Singapore and England.¹⁸² Such thinking and efforts to reach all Nepali people possible through Christian literature continued through the 1960s. One of the NISS' "Five Year Objectives" in 1965 was to "Make Christian literature available to all. Organize a wider and more effective coverage of our entire Nepali speaking world."¹⁸³

But changes in Indian government policy towards the missionaries from the mid-60s brought these Darjeeling-based mission initiatives for spreading Christianity among the "Nepali-speaking world" to a virtual standstill.¹⁸⁴ For the first time, Commonwealth missionaries had to register with the police. Those in Assam were told to quit India, and applications both for new visas and for permits to return to the Darjeeling area were refused. The Dycks, who initiated

the DBCI and Nepali radio broadcasts, left on furlough in January 1966 and were unable to return, then the Shinglers' permits to return were refused in 1967. The DBCI was moved out of Darjeeling in 1966, and although it continued (later called Nepali Bible Correspondence Institute, NBCI) it wandered to various locations for several years and never regained its former breadth of contacts. The Nepali Gospel broadcasts over FEBC Manila which had advertised the DBCI were also discontinued. FEBA briefly took up the challenge with sporadic broadcasts from late 1973 to early 1976, this time from the Seychelles, but then there was another gap until daily broadcasts were restarted only in 1985. Although Ernie Shingler of WEC had made attempts to involve UMN missionaries in producing broadcasts before he had to leave Kalimpong, he was unsuccessful, and there was no one to carry on the work. The Hagens departed for Kathmandu in 1972, leaving both DHBS and JJP under national leadership.¹⁸⁵ Darjeeling, which had served for almost twenty years as the centre of this broader vision of ministry to the whole Nepali-speaking world, found itself bereft of the missionaries and most of the alternative ministries which had serviced the vision.

CHANGES IN EHCC

The winds of change in India also affected the EHCC. In the aftermath of Mission-Church integration in the 1950s, and the advent of a new generation of Scottish missionaries, more young national leaders were encouraged to come forward and several went off for theological training. At the catechist and lay level, Rev. N.T. Molommu, Superintendent of the Kalimpong district churches, was himself responsible for sending six young men to DHBS in 1968 and enrolled a further seven in a Serampore Lay Preacher's Course.¹⁸⁶ With his encouragement six new village churches were also built by the local people in Kalimpong district during the 1950s and 1960s. Church membership in all of Kalimpong division rose by about 800 between 1950 and 1970, while in

Darjeeling it remained dormant over the same period.¹⁸⁷ On the Darjeeling side the only significant district work which took place was around Kizom under Rev. R.S. Molommu, and a new congregation started in nearby Rimbick in 1957 by R. Saharaja who became the pastor and R.S. Molommu's successor.¹⁸⁸

In 1970 the UCNI joined the new union of churches called the Church of North India (CNI), and the EHCC became the Darjeeling Diocese Council (DDC).¹⁸⁹ This was to have far-reaching effects on the local EHCC churches, all of which joined the new union except Bom Busty Church.¹⁹⁰ Under the UCNI they had remained basically autonomous within the Eastern Himalayan region, retaining their own leadership and Presbyterian-style church structure. But the CNI brought them into union with a much broader spectrum of denominations, of which the EHCC Nepali-Lepcha leaders arguably had very little understanding, and their European and American mentors were gone. After the last two ordained missionaries under the CNI left by the mid-1970s, Rev. Al Berg of WMPL and Rev. James Brodie of the Church of Scotland, they were never replaced.

Bishops were elected for each Diocese, and in an ironic twist a Bengali from an Anglican background, the Rt. Rev. John Ghose, was placed over Darjeeling Diocese, while the first Nepali Bishop, the Rt. Rev. D.D. Pradhan, was sent to the predominantly Anglican Diocese of Assam.¹⁹¹ Bishop John Ghose proved to be a very able administrator, but with an autocratic style reminiscent of the earlier generation of missionaries. He closed the library and youth room in his residence at the former Mission House in Darjeeling, and under his leadership Darjeeling Diocese became more and more insular. Printed liturgies were introduced, but largely ignored outside of the town churches. Of nine young Nepali-Lepcha church leaders encouraged forward and sent for theological training just prior to Bishop Ghose's arrival, five of them left the church within a few years of their ordination due to various internal conflicts. From their midst Rev. Benjamin Rai became the head of the United Bible

Societies' Translation Centre for North East India in Shillong, with a much respected ministry among Nepali throughout the region; Rev. S.K. Moral initiated and now heads up the work of Medical Ambassadors in the Himalayas, based in Darjeeling; Rev. M.H. Subba became a pastor with the Presbyterian Free Church and helped to found the Himalayan Evangelical Fellowship, based in Kalimpong; Rev. Lucky Karthak pastored Siliguri Church for several years and now is in-charge of Asian Outreach in the Himalayas. Five others who went of their own initiative for training during the 1980s and returned with a desire to serve under the DDC were given no opportunity; four of them ended up as Christian leaders in more broad-based ministries in Siliguri, Nagaland, Gorakhpur and Delhi, and one in Nepal. This was in spite of Bishop Ghose's own lament of the "great dearth of Presbyters in the Diocese" and a DDC decision not to allow current elderly Presbyters to retire at age sixty-five because of there being no one to replace them.¹⁹² In this way a lack of flexibility in the DDC facilitated the spread of well-trained and highly motivated Christian leadership among the Nepali diaspora and the initiation of new Nepali-led para-church ministries in the Eastern Himalayas.

Although the Darjeeling Diocese in conjunction with the Church of Scotland retained membership in the UMN, it never had the active involvement of its predecessors in Nepali ministry outside its own jurisdiction.¹⁹³ Rather, there was a kind of retrenchment, and Bishop Ghose sought to bring the supplemental ministries which had developed over the previous years under his control. Darjeeling Hills Bible School and JJP, both initiated by WMPL, were eventually brought under the DDC and their scope was significantly limited. Until the present day the only long-term Nepali missionary that has been sent officially out is L.P. Neupany.¹⁹⁴ Others with mission vision have gone out by their own initiative, such as the team of young people who accompanied Elizabeth Franklin into Bhaktapur, Nepal in 1956; and N.B. Isaac Thapa who made repeated evangelistic tours to Manipur and NE India from the late

1960s.¹⁹⁵ But the DDC itself retreated into a geographical cocoon, confined within the Eastern Himalayas and its own continuing internal struggles.¹⁹⁶

INDIGENOUS DENOMINATIONS TAKE ROOT

While the former Scottish Mission churches were struggling to find their identity within the wider Indian church, and most missions' attention was turned towards Nepal, the alternate streams of Christianity which had found their way into the area began to grow and expand, particularly the Brethren-style El Shaddai and the Pentecostal churches. Some explain this as a search for "spiritual independence" in accord with the mood of the times, a search for a more indigenous expression of Christianity which also afforded more opportunities to aspire to leadership. Others repeatedly point to the nominal state of the faith of many Christians in the EHCC churches, the lack of teaching in the churches and resultant spiritual hunger yearning for satisfaction. This is testified to by Rev. D.D. Pradhan:

I grew up as a nominal Christian. For instance, when I went into the army I carried a Bible given to me by Rev. H.C. Duncan but never read it. I sometimes went to church just to escape work details. When I finished my army service in Burma I lived with a Hindu family for awhile and did all the pujas with them, never letting them know that I was a Christian. I knew nothing about a personal relationship with Christ and thought a Christian was simply born that way.¹⁹⁷

After returning to Darjeeling he made a personal commitment to Christ through YFC meetings, was attracted to the confident Bible teaching of the El Shaddai group, convinced of the need for "believers' baptism," and joined them for a time.¹⁹⁸

El Shaddai grew out from its base in Kalimpong through a campaign of aggressive evangelism coupled with intensive times of prayer for the "unreached."¹⁹⁹ Its members were challenged to a strong personal commitment to Christ and separation from the world, a life of sacrifice, involvement in

evangelism, to expect opposition and persecution, and to bear it proudly as a follower of Christ.²⁰⁰ Regular evangelistic meetings and street preaching were conducted in the town bazaars and outlying bastis, and all new "believers" were called into Kalimpong for an annual Convocation. Two new Believers' Assemblies were started near Kalimpong in the 1950s; expansion spread north to Sikkim and south to Siliguri in the 1960s; and further throughout the Eastern Himalayas during the 1970s and 1980s, including into Bhutan and the Duars and contacts with Gurkha soldiers in the British Army. A 1992 list of local churches connected with the El Shaddai headquarters in Kalimpong reveals a total of twenty-eight churches in the hills around Darjeeling-Kalimpong, a further eight in Siliguri and the terai, and numerous others in Sikkim, Bhutan, Nepal and North East India -- all among Nepali-speakers.

Kalimpong also served as host to the beginnings of a Pentecostal movement in the hills, which stemmed from the Full Gospel Pentecostal Church. This church was at the centre of the Pentecostal movement for nearly twenty-five years, first under Pastor Matthew Subba, then Subang Sodemba. There were also Indian and Western missionary influences, particular Scandinavian. Key figures from the Indian side were N.K. Dutt of Calcutta, founder of India Evangelistic Crusade (IEC), and his son David who carried it forward. They were invited by Full Gospel Pentecostal Church to hold occasional crusades in Kalimpong during the 1950s, then also in Sikkim and Darjeeling.²⁰¹ IEC gradually took on the support of several small churches which were founded by members of Full Gospel Pentecostal Church. In the meantime, Swedish Pentecostals and Swedish Baptists with Orebro Mission (a split from the old Swedish Baptists with Pentecostal leanings) moved into the area from the 1950s and established stations north of Kalimpong at Pedong and Algarah respectively.²⁰² Like the Free Church of Finland Mission in Ghoom, with which they had close fellowship, their primary interest was in Tibetans.²⁰³ But they were soon leading small, mostly Nepali congregations. The Swedish Baptist women in Algarah invited

B.K. Biswas, a Bengali connected with the Free Pentecostal Movement, to join them in 1956, and groomed him as their successor.²⁰⁴ The Finnish Mission in Ghoom also had some Pentecostal leanings, and in the mid-1950s they invited a preacher from the Full Gospel Pentecostal Church for special meetings.²⁰⁵ From that time they had regular input from Pentecostals. Since the Free Church of Finland Mission was nationalised as the Himalayan Free Church (HFC) it has been considered one of the local denominations with a Pentecostal bent. B.S. Cargay, a Christian teacher in a school in Pedong when the Swedish Pentecostal women arrived, became their local pastor.²⁰⁶ The church in Pedong was later joined with the HFC as the last Finnish missionaries left Ghoom, and Cargay was made the HFC Secretary until his resignation in 1983.

In the meantime, a WEC missionary who himself had a Pentecostal experience at Full Gospel Pentecostal Church, Al Adam, was instrumental in spreading its influence to Darjeeling during the late 1950s.²⁰⁷ However, in Darjeeling it did not have the divisive effect on the Scottish Mission church that it had in Kalimpong. This was mainly due to the Adams' residence at Mt. Hermon, far from the centre of town. They called David Dutt to conduct a local crusade, who was joined by David Mangratee, a convert to Christianity from one of N.K. Dutt's crusades in Kalimpong.²⁰⁸ When the three-day crusade resulted in several new Christian converts Mangratee stayed in Darjeeling to work alongside of Adam. A local Pentecostal fellowship was started and they did regular preaching in the nearby villages. Mangratee and Adam were both called by the Free Church of Finland Mission in Ghoom to preach from time to time. A second fellowship in Darjeeling also started at the home of Dr. B. Sereng Subba, a disaffected member of St. Columba's Church who had left the church a few years earlier. This was the seedbed from which the Pentecostal movement extended into Sikkim.²⁰⁹

From these small beginnings the Pentecostal movement took root, new indigenous denominations arose, and their leaders were nurtured. During the

1960s the Full Gospel Pentecostal Fellowship sought to keep unity among the young Pentecostal churches which were springing up, and an annual conference was held in Kalimpong. But competition among the leadership and for foreign sources of funds led to its dissolution. From the 1970s indigenous Pentecostal denominations arose with funding from various sources, and splits and transfers of loyalty from one group to another have characterised the Pentecostal churches of the Eastern Himalayas ever since. Pastor Subang Sodemba left the Full Gospel Pentecostal Church to form Himalayan Crusade. He claims to have established 150 churches over the years, although only about seventy are currently affiliated with him, and he also runs a large children's home in Kalimpong.²¹⁰ The Himalayan Free Church based in Ghoom, with which B.S. Cargay's church in Pedong was amalgamated, consisted of only four churches with about 300 members when the Finnish missionaries handed over to national leadership in 1972.²¹¹ But a new thrust of extensive evangelism among Nepali brought quick expansion, until twenty years later there were twenty-five HFC congregations in Darjeeling District, the majority around Darjeeling and Kurseong.²¹² Five small churches connected with the Swedish Baptist work were turned over to Pastor B.K. Biswas, locally called Masih Mandali.²¹³ David Mangratee secured affiliation with World Missionary Evangelization (WME) in America which took on the support of Nepali evangelists and pastors he recommended from Darjeeling to Assam.²¹⁴ He also began a WME-supported children's home and the second Nepali-medium Bible school which ran for almost ten years, until the funds from America stopped. Most of the students came from the multiplying Pentecostal churches in Darjeeling-Kalimpong and Sikkim.

Unrelated to the above, two other new denominations were also formed -- the Presbyterian Free Church based in Kalimpong, and the Assembly of God Church based in Darjeeling. Just after the CNI was formed Macfarlane Memorial Church faced a transition in leadership due to the resignation of Rev.

P.S. Targain. A struggle in the leadership succession, coupled with dissatisfaction with the church's bureaucracy and the CNI system of church government through bishops, led to the fourth break-away group from Macfarlane Memorial Church and formation of the Presbyterian Free Church in 1973. This was in contrast to the earlier El Shaddai and Pentecostal break-aways which were on clear theological grounds. Through the efforts of energetic young leadership an evangelistic arm, called Himalayan Evangelical Fellowship (HEF), was formed three years later, followed by implementation of community development and school projects, a knitting training for self-employment scheme, and opening of the Himalayan Evangelical Book Center, Grace Bible Institute, and a new CE Hostel for poor children.²¹⁵ There are now nine churches under the Presbyterian Free Church Council, with about 1,600 members.²¹⁶ From the early 1980s a new Pentecostal denomination took root in Darjeeling, but without reference to its fore-runners in the area. An Assemblies of God (AG) Church was started by Claude Barua, a former Buddhist and drug addict who became a Christian in Kathmandu then returned to his home in Darjeeling.²¹⁷ Since Barua's ministry began, over 500 people in the Darjeeling area have been baptised and nine branch congregations started. In addition, the Assembly of God Church School was started in 1982, and a Nepali-language branch of the International Correspondence Institute (ICI) for Darjeeling and Sikkim which had 3,364 students enrolled by 1992.²¹⁸ Unlike most of the other locally established Pentecostal groups, Barua's church work was self-supporting from the start and has not been dependent on outside funds.²¹⁹

As has been amply demonstrated, the diversification of the Nepali-Lepcha church in Darjeeling-Kalimpong through the rise of indigenous denominations with young leadership and a strong emphasis on evangelism led to much wider expansion of Christianity throughout Darjeeling District. The main surge of growth was among the predominant Nepali ethnics, particularly Rai and Limbu. These new groups were also responsible for expansion into the surrounding

areas, especially Sikkim from the 1960s, then into Jalpaiguri and the Assam Duars, and even into Bhutan to a more limited extent. A few of them have also had minimal involvement in North East India and Dehradun (UP) through their evangelists and students sent out to Bible school; but there has been little continuity to the work in those areas, nor long-term effects.

SUMMARY

In retrospect, the 1940s and 1950s were the beginning of a new era for the Nepali church and its expansion. Fresh outside Christian influences brought spiritual renewal to the Scottish Mission churches, but were also the impetus to the first splits in the church and formation of indigenous denominations which charted their own path forward, expanding further afield within the Eastern Himalayas and into the Duars. Largely due to these outside influences, the form of Christianity which spread outward from the Eastern Himalayas was not Presbyterian, as might have been expected. On the Nepal side, by the 1970s the church was beginning to grow, providing more and more scope for ministry. The Nepal government was appreciative of the Christian missions' development work which continued to expand, demanding more and more workers. With India closing to missions, and the missionaries mostly gone from the Darjeeling area, missionaries poured into Nepal in increasing numbers, attracting numerous Nepali-Lepcha Christians from India to work alongside them, while the DDC was increasingly parochialised. The spotlight for Nepali ministry faded on the Himalayan regions beyond Nepal, while the attention of the world Christian community shifted almost exclusively to Nepal itself. The Darjeeling side of the border retained a significant influence on the wider Nepali-speaking Christian world only in the area of leadership training.²²⁰ By the 1980s even the formerly broad-ranging ministries of Nepali Christian literature, radio broadcasting, and Bible correspondence courses were centred in Nepal and for Nepal, and firmly in the hands of Nepali Christians themselves. Until the 1990s the only exceptions to

this shift in emphasis within the mission community were the Church of Scotland's continuing benign support of the Darjeeling Diocese of the CNI, and the development of ministry among the British Gurkhas.²²¹ Nonetheless, Christianity continued to spread among the ever widening sphere of the Nepali diaspora -- but from this time forward largely through the agency of either Christians in the receptor communities or Nepali Christians themselves.

ENDNOTES - CHAPTER 3

(1) See Appendix B for a verbatim account of Macfarlane's initial proposals concerning the new mission's work.

(2) The Bengal branch of the Christian Vernacular Education Society for India was established in 1858. It existed "for the purpose of providing the Indian people with larger means of acquiring knowledge, both secular and religious, through their own mother tongues" (Dick Dewan, EDUCATION IN THE DARJEELING HILLS: A HISTORICAL SURVEY 1835-1985 [New Delhi: Indus Publ. Co., 1991], 99). The vernacular used in the Darjeeling hill schools was Hindi for most of the first fifty years of EHM's work, although some classes were held in Lepcha during the early days for those who did not understand.

(3) Macfarlane, letter to supporters in Scotland, 20 Oct. 1871, in HOME AND FOREIGN MISSIONARY RECORD, Vol. VII, 1870-1872, 564.

(4) Dewan, 1991, 100.

(5) Prior to Miss Macfarlane's arrival, Mr. D. Campbell, one of William Macfarlane's colleagues in Gyah, transferred to Kurseong with four of the Gyah Christian teachers in order to take over the schools in Darjeeling District (Campbell, "Report of his work and of the Schools, written on 29th March, two days before his death," 29 March 1871, in REPORTS ON SCHEMES, 1871, 145). Campbell arrived in Kurseong in December 1870, but died within four months of his arrival from fever evidently contracted in the terai. Within that short time he had expanded the number of schools in the district from five to sixteen, and had started training ten young people as teachers in a Normal School he established. After his death this work moved to Darjeeling under Miss M.A. Macfarlane.

(6) See Perry (1993, 45-47) for a description of the translation of the Bible into Nepali under EHM and then the British and Foreign Bible Society, with particular emphasis on the involvement of Ganga Prasad Pradhan. He worked from the Hindi Bible, first under Macfarlane, then with the active assistance and guidance of A. Turnbull and R. Kilgour who was a Hebrew scholar.

(7) Macfarlane, "DMI Report for the Year ending 31 December 1876," 14, in EHM REPORTS. This press became known as the Scottish Mission Orphanage Press.

(8) Macfarlane, "DMI Report for the Year ending 31st Dec. 1877," 12, in EHM REPORTS. This paper included contributions from the various mission agents, church news and local news. By 1880 it also included regular Sunday School lessons for use in the scattered churches, and from the 1890s Nepali hymns were regularly printed.

(9) The mission headquarters at Lochnagar was described as "once the gay abode of a military officer, then it passed into the royal hands of the Raja of Burdwan, then was converted into a Roman Catholic convent, and is now currently believed to be occupied by devils and Scotch missionaries!" (Fauld,

letter to the Foreign Mission's Committee, 31 March 1872, in REPORTS ON SCHEMES, 1872, 128). A few years later newly arrived missionary A. Turnbull described it as "a commodious mansion" on a twelve acre compound, including the houses of eighty or ninety adherents and retainers of the Mission. On the ground-floor and the abutting wings of the Mission house were the school-rooms, one of which served as the native church, the printing establishment and servants' offices. (Turnbull, "DMI Report for the Year Ending 31st December 1879," 19, in EHM REPORTS.) In the early 1890s the mission headquarters was again removed to a more desirable location at Banstead following the "great Darjeeling disaster" when most of Lochnagar area was washed away in a massive landslide (HOME AND FOREIGN MISSIONARY RECORD, Vol. XVII, July 1890, 497-8). It was now more centrally located, on a hill above the Darjeeling Railway station.

(10) Macfarlane, "Report of the Hill Branch of the Darjeeling Mission for the Year ending March, 31, 1871," in REPORTS ON SCHEMES, 1871, 142-3. Macfarlane proposed at this early date two more mission stations to be established -- at Kurmee, about twenty miles north-west of Darjeeling, and at Kalimpong, about thirty miles east of Darjeeling. Although a mission station was never established at Kurmee, a second station was established at Kalimpong from 1880, and then Independent Sikkim was opened as a third field.

(11) Macfarlane, "Darjeeling Missionary Institution: General Report for the Half-Year ending September 30, 1871", 12 in EHM REPORTS.

(12) Following Campbell's demise, Dr. Henry Fauld joined the Macfarlanes for a few months during 1872-1873, then Rev. John and Mrs. Anderson were in Darjeeling from December 1874 to August 1876 when they left due to Mr. Anderson's ill-health and their daughter's death.

(13) Two of the national workers who came from Gyah and filled important roles as teachers and preachers were Nand Lall Roy, Macfarlane's 'right hand man' from the beginning of the Mission, and David Mohan. Khullu (Bhutia, first listed in 1870 as one of the boys at DMI) was the teacher in Jorebungalow for two years from 1871, worked in the press in Darjeeling, then from 1874-1880 was the teacher for the Darjeeling Girls' School, all the time actively assisting in bazaar preaching and leading worship meetings before being released from his duties for health reasons and given a yearly "sick allowance." Anta, a blind boy from Gyah, also assisted in bazaar preaching and regular house-to-house visiting (Macfarlane, DMI Half-Yearly and Annual Reports). Several of the Nepali and Lepcha orphan children sent to Gyah by Captain Jerdan either became teachers or worked in the mission press, including Letin who was a teacher in the Normal School.

(14) Macfarlane depended on Nund Lall to keep the mission running when he was out of station. Later known as Babu Nund Lall Roy, he served as catechist in Darjeeling concurrent with his duties as headmaster of the Normal School from 1870-78, then as head of the mission press from 1879 onwards. He stayed in Darjeeling when the Normal School was moved to Kalimpong.

(15) David Mohan, later known as Babu David Mohan, was a teacher in the Normal School in 1871-72, then was sent to Kurseong in 1873, but for about eight years from 1874 there is no mention of him in the DMI reports, until in 1882 he is listed as a teacher again. He later became the head teacher of the Teacher's Training Institute in Kalimpong.

(16) The twelve first baptisms included: Bhimdal Dewan (Rai), Oct. 1874 in

Darjeeling, a teacher; Ganga Prasad Pradhan (Newar), Jan. 1875 in Allahabad, a teacher; Lachsman Singh Mukhia (Limbu), March 1875 in Darjeeling, a teacher; Sukhman Limbu, Oct. 1875 in Darjeeling, a teacher; Nundlall (Nepali) and his wife, Dec. 1875 in Darjeeling, a school sub-inspector; Lachsman's wife and infant, Dec. 1875 in Darjeeling; Surjaman Mukhia (Limbu), Dec. 1875 in Darjeeling, a Normal School student; two Nepali orphans returned from Gyah, Dec. 1875 in Darjeeling; and Jangabir Mukhia, Dec. 1875 in Kalimpong, a teacher.

(17) Macfarlane, "DMI Report for the Year ending 30th September 1874," 6, in EHM REPORTS.

(18) Macfarlane, "DMI Report for the Year ending 31st December 1878," 4, in EHM REPORTS. According to the above report, no one was received into the church who was not willing to utterly forsake caste, and this was made a part of the baptismal ceremony. There is no indication in Macfarlane's or his successor's detailed reports and correspondence of opposition from official sources or the English-speaking community in Darjeeling District to conversions to Christianity among the native population. Opposition came from within the Nepali-Lepcha-Bhutia communities. See Perry (1993, 28-29) for a brief description of the kind of opposition the early converts in Darjeeling-Kalimpong encountered.

(19) Darjeeling Mission semi-annual and annual reports analysed from 1874 to 1884, in EHM REPORTS.

(20) Macfarlane, "DMI Report for the Year 1881," 4; and Turnbull, "EHM Report for the Year 1890," 14, in EHM REPORTS. Macfarlane notes that Dharmanand and Dhanmaya, the couple in Kalimpong, did not eat together before becoming Christians because of their inter-caste marriage; this may have been a factor in their decision to embrace Christianity. Lal Tewari, the Brahman in Darjeeling, openly ate with the Christians following his baptism, but finally succumbed to pressure and threats from the local community and returned to the Hindu fold. According to Turnbull, Tewari's baptism was considered an "attack on Hinduism." Following his baptism by J.A. Graham, a novice missionary at the time, Graham had neglected to cut either the distinctive knot of hair on Tewari's head or the sacred cord worn around his body which marked him as a high-caste Hindu, thus making it easier for the Hindu religious establishment to readmit him after doing penance and paying the necessary fines.

(21) See Perry (1993, 32-39) for the life-history of Ganga Prasad Pradhan, Bible translator and ordained minister of the EHM, founder of the Gorkha Press, and active promoter of the Gorkha Mission. His brother, Gokul Das Pradhan, was also an EHM teacher and catechist who engaged in many preaching tours. His son-in-law, Harkadhoj Pradhan, started the first English-medium school in Kalimpong, and Harkadhoj's son and grandson, K.D. Pradhan and P.R. Pradhan, became the successive Principals of SUMI. One of Harkadhoj's daughters became the first 'Lady doctor' in Darjeeling, and his granddaughter was a pioneer of the church in Samchi, Bhutan. Ganga Prasad's daughter Alice was the first Bible woman in Darjeeling, and his great-grandson, Rajendra Rongong, was one of the first to go as a missionary from Kalimpong to Nepal.

(22) "DMI Annual Report" for 1880 and 1890, in EHM REPORTS.

(23) Macfarlane, "DMI Report for the Year Ending 31st December 1879," 11, in EHM REPORTS. By this time Macfarlane had obtained from the

Government the lease of a piece of land in Kalimpong for the mission, and was anxious to erect suitable premises for a missionary to take up residence.

(24) Macfarlane, "DMI Report for the Year Ending 30th September 1875," 11, in EHM REPORTS.

(25) Miss Macfarlane, "DMI Report for the Year Ending 30th September 1875," 17, in EHM REPORTS.

(26) Macfarlane, "DMI Report for the Year Ending 31 December 1876," 9, in EHM REPORTS. Macfarlane said that this practice was begun by the native Christians themselves and he merely gave it his approval, noting that it was reminiscent of the method preferred by Sherring in his review of methods used by Protestant missions in India for instructing young converts.

(27) They were expected to perform all the work of a Christian minister with the exception that they could not administer the Lord's supper, baptise, or marry.

(28) Macfarlane, "DMI Report for the Year Ending 31st December 1877," 8, in EHM REPORTS.

(29) Macfarlane, "DMI Report for the Year Ending 31st December 1878," 12-13, in EHM REPORTS.

(30) When Macfarlane returned from furlough he found that the Normal School was no longer functioning, and there were neither new teachers nor catechists available for the Sikkim field. He revived it as the Training Institute of the Scottish Universities Mission in 1886 with thirteen students in Darjeeling, then moved it to Kalimpong to begin building its permanent quarters. When Macfarlane suddenly died Feb. 1887 in the midst of this work, it passed to Sutherland to carry on. See below, p.94, for a description of the Training Institute's later developments regarding catechist training.

(31) For a full understanding of the Grahams' contribution in Kalimpong and the Guild Mission see the following three works: J.A. Graham's own account, *ON THE THRESHOLD OF THREE CLOSED LANDS* 2nd ed. (1897; Edinburgh: R. & R. Clark, 1905); D.G. Manuel's account of the Guild's first twenty-five years in the Himalayas, *A GLADDENING RIVER* (Edinburgh: R. & R. Clark, 1914); and James R. Minto's biography of Graham done for St. Andrew's University, *GRAHAM OF KALIMPONG* (Edinburgh: William Blackwood, 1974).

(32) Within Darjeeling District this conformed to the government's division of the hill region into the three sub-divisions of Kalimpong, Kurseong and Darjeeling. However, within the mission Kurseong remained under Darjeeling division until the 1920s when the first ordained Scottish missionary finally took up residence there, Rev. G.S. Mill. Siliguri and the terai was a sub-division below the hills where the EHM was active among plains tribals from the 1890s, but this thesis only considers the mission's involvement among immigrant Nepali in that area.

(33) See Chapter 4 below, "Christianity in Sikkim."

(34) See Chapter 6 below, "Nepali Christians in the Duars."

(35) See Chapter 5 below, "Christianity in Bhutan."

(36) R. Kilgour, "The Gorkha Mission," HOME AND FOREIGN MISSIONARY RECORD, Vol. XIX (1 June 1893, 180, and July 1894, 553). Three men volunteered to be the first missionary of the Gorkha Mission, including Lachsman Singh, one of the oldest and most faithful catechists at the time. But Ezra Kaziman was selected, described by Kilgour as "younger, a mere lad, only three years ago a Hindu, a clever teacher and earnest." He was set apart for the Gorkha Mission on 12 January 1893, then departed for Ilam. From Dec. 1886, before the Gorkha Mission was formed, Christian tracts in the Nepali language had been regularly sent to "a Christian Babu" at Ilam. See Perry (1993, 39-41) for the story of the Gorkha Mission and its longest serving missionary, Buddhi Singh, who served from 1901. For other early efforts by Nepali Christians to evangelise Nepal see Perry (1993, 29-30), and the above article by Kilgour.

(37) Kilgour, "The Gorkha Mission," HOME AND FOREIGN MISSIONARY RECORD, Vol. XIX, 1 June 1893, 180.

(38) Mission News of the Church of Scotland's Eastern Himalayan Mission, Supplement to "Life and Work," Darjeeling: Scots Mission, Feb. 1927, 16 (hereafter Mission News). Mr. Kilgour of Darjeeling first made a tour of the terai together with four catechists in 1894, followed by Taylor from Kurseong in 1900, and Rev. H.C. Duncan again from Darjeeling in 1904. Duncan noted the prevalence of three groups of native peoples, including Rajbansi, Nepali and Nagpuri, and that the Gospel was new to all of them (Mission News, March 1904, 612). In 1918 the Gorkha Mission took the first evangelistic initiative by national Christians in the terai by appointing a colporteur during the cold weather. From the 1920s until the 1950s, after Kurseong was made a separate division within the EHMC under its own resident ordained missionary, there are regular Mission News reports of Nepali colporteurs and evangelistic trips supported by the Kurseong Kirk Session during the cold weather for work among Nepali labourers. Although there are no reports of conversions among this floating population, lots of Christian literature was distributed and presumed to be carried either back into Nepal or on their onward migration route.

(39) W.S. Sutherland, "The Mission's Semi-Jubilee," Mission News, Oct. 1895, 30-31.

(40) Macfarlane Memorial Church in Kalimpong, the first church constructed by the Mission, was dedicated in 1891, followed by St. Columba's Church in Darjeeling in 1894, both in conjunction with the respective mission compounds. A further church was constructed with the help of the Mission in Kurseong division in 1902, St. Andrew's Church, and at Gangtok in 1936. Gangtok Church was the only mission built structure where an attempt was made to utilise the local architectural style. However, when the Sitong congregation built a more permanent structure in the early 1900s they modelled it on the lines of a Buddhist monastery, with carved woodwork and painting done by a lama from a neighbouring monastery (Manuel, 1914, 78). Apart from the mission stations it was EHM policy for the villagers to provide for and build their own schools and churches (Graham, 1905, 122). Usually the schools doubled as meeting rooms for Christian worship services, and congregations which did not grow up in the presence of a school mostly met in private homes. The existence of separate church buildings in the villages, where the people were mostly very poor, depended on the means of the local congregation and the attitude of the overall community.

(41) From the Darjeeling Mission annual reports a detailed account of the output of the mission press is easily gained. For example, during 1880 the

following were printed: 2,000 portions of the Bible, 1,000 Christian books, 2,250 Christian tracts, and a monthly edition of 'Masik Patrika' to 600 subscribers. Striking in its absence is the lack of translation and publishing of literature in the Lepcha language, except for reprints of Start and Niebel's much earlier work. Lepcha type was secured for the press by A. Turnbull during the early 1880s, when both he and Sutherland in Kalimpong lamented the need for Lepcha literature, but the pressure of other work, and perhaps the lack of an educated translator, left this need unfulfilled except for a hymnal finally published in the early 1900s.

(42) In 1891 the Women's Guild in Scotland decided to make itself responsible for medical work at Kalimpong. The following year the foundation for Charteris Hospital was laid, and it opened two years later. In the meantime the first doctor, C.F. Ponder, arrived in 1893, started dispensary work and toured the districts. From Charteris, nursing training, medical training and medicines for catechists were provided, and dispensaries were opened in each of the divisions of EHM.

(43) L.S.S. O'Malley, *BENGAL DISTRICT GAZETTEERS: DARJEELING* (Calcutta: The Bengal Secretariat Book Depot, 1907; 2nd reprint 1989), 52.

(44) Graham, 1905, 138.

(45) *Mission News*, Oct. 1895, 29-33.

(46) Macfarlane's lengthy reports back to Scotland reveal the extent of popular support garnered, from Sabbath-schools all across Scotland to high church officials. Sponsorships were raised for each of the orphans, students in the Normal School, and all mission agents, which in 1875 totalled eighty-five people being supported from different sources, and other additional contributors. Macfarlane wrote separate reports to each of them, adding up to over 200 individual letters in 1876. Graham later popularised the work of Guild Mission in Kalimpong, and the Honorable Mary Scott in Sikkim, to the extent that their names became the subject of household conversation in Scotland, and are recalled by many even today.

(47) In addition to Kalimpong and Darjeeling local congregations, the Tibetan congregation in Kalimpong and the Eastern Duars district were recognised as Kirk Sessions in 1918 and 1926 respectively.

(48) *Mission News*, May 1901, 199, and Feb. 1903, 450. It is unclear from records available if Lepcha materials were actually produced, but subsequent reports only indicate Sunday School exams given in Nepali.

(49) "Eastern Himalayan Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church in India: Minutes Book," July 1907-Dec. 1929, Darjeeling, handwritten, minute of 27 July 1911 (hereafter "EH Presbytery Minutes").

(50) "EH Presbytery Minutes," 18 July 1912. This work was originally entrusted to Rev. Surjaman Mukhia from 1912, then subsequently by Rev. Lachman Singh and Rev. K.S. Peter. They had a goal of establishing a CE branch in every congregation. In Oct. 1915 a Presbytery-wide CE Convention was held in Kalimpong and attended by the Executive Committee of the Indian CE Union.

(51) Within each of the EHM districts there was a system of "chhoti" (small) and "barhi" (large) panchayats to handle ecclesiastical matters and the day to

day running of the churches and the mission. The Chhoti Panchayat was a village level church council made up of the heads of the families of all the members of the local church. The Barhi Panchayat was a district-wide church council made up of the catechists, over which a European ordained missionary acted as Superintendent. In Sikkim the Barhi Panchayat included all national mission agents and dealt with both school and church matters, while in Kalimpong there was a separate quarterly Guild Panchayat for all the mission workers and the Barhi Panchayat met monthly to deal with strictly ecclesiastical matters. Minto (1974, 30) mistakenly credits Dr. J.A. Graham with introducing this system of church government, whereas it was actually introduced by Macfarlane in 1876.

(52) "Church of Scotland Mission: Eastern Himalayan Missionary Council Minutes," Jan. 1920-Jan. 1929, Darjeeling: Gorkha Press and Kalimpong: Mani Press, minute of 27 Jan. 1921 (hereafter "EHMC Minutes"). The first four nationals invited onto the EHMC were Revs. Lachsman Singh, Ganga Prasad Pradhan, Temba Saring, and Naiman Kachap.

(53) An integration service was held at Macfarlane Memorial Church on 26 October 1954, when the Mission Council gave over its responsibilities for handling administrative matters to a Central Board, which included missionaries, and was responsible to the Church Council, which included all ordained ministers, European and national. Regional Boards were responsible over the former mission side of the work in each district under the Church Board.

(54) This phenomenon of EHCC business being conducted in Hindi was noted in Mission News, Dec. 1947, 63, and again in January 1951, 3. In 1946 a quarterly Hindi newspaper was started within EHCC, carrying news of each area of the Church, and this was still in publication in the 1970s as the Dioce-san Samachar -- still in Hindi rather than the local Nepali language.

(55) REPORTS ON SCHEMES, for the year 1914. This thesis is concerned primarily with the hill divisions of EHM and their predominantly Nepali-Lepcha population. The EHM also had extensive work in the terai and the Eastern Duars among plains tribals.

(56) "EH Presbytery Minutes," 18 Jan. 1912, 21 July 1916, etc. From 1926 the individual Kirk Sessions were urged to hold their own campaigns in unreached places, and occasional reports are found of workers going to the bastis and tea gardens.

(57) Various Mission News reports throughout the 1920s.

(58) Mission News, Jan. 1950, 55.

(59) See above, p.54.

(60) Both Rev. A. Turnbull (1880-1889) and Rev. R. Kilgour (1889-1901) had a particularly heavy involvement in the very exacting work of Bible translation along with all of their other duties as Superintendent of Darjeeling division. From 1902 until he left Darjeeling in 1909 Kilgour was freed to concentrate on Bible translation following the arrival of Rev. H.C. Duncan.

(61) In 1881 eight of the thirty teachers under Darjeeling division were Christians, four on tea estates, two in Darjeeling, three at rail towns south of Darjeeling, one each in Mirik and Nagri. In 1884 fourteen of the thirty-four teachers under Darjeeling were Christians, while all six of those under

Kalimpong were Christians. (DMI Annual Reports for 1881 and 1884.)

(62) In the case of Pemling, Sunathong, Pudung, Tashiding, Chhobo and Bom in Kalimpong division, primary and night schools were only opened during the 1880s and 1890s, after there were a number of Christian converts in each place.

(63) Manuel, 1914, 19 and Mission News reports.

(64) Some of those who went out from the Darjeeling division of EHCC under Duncan included the following: teacher David Mukhia, later a pastor with the Nepal Evangelistic Band; evangelist Barnabas Rai to the Assembly of God work in Rupaidhia; and catechist Nawalbir James Rai on short-term trips to Raxaul and Rupaidhia. See Perry (1993) for the story of each of their lives and ministries. Other examples of those who have gone out from EHCC are found throughout the remaining chapters of this thesis.

(65) See Appendix C for an account of Ganga Prasad Pradhan's early life, conversion and ordination, as recounted in Mission News, Sept. 1901, 246-149.

(66) See n.60 above for details concerning the missionaries who worked with G.P. Pradhan on the Nepali Bible translation. The 1920s revision of the Gospels resulted in the publication of a 2nd edition of the Nepali New Testament in 1930. The whole Bible, Old and New Testament, was not published again until a revised edition came out in 1977.

(67) Mission News, Feb. 1907, 15. According to Mission News (July 1900, 78) the Nepali "Gorkha Newspaper" was started by Ganga Prasad in 1900, and issued twice monthly. In addition to his Bible translation work, he translated Bunyan's PILGRIM'S PROGRESS, which was published by Mani Press in Kalimpong and became a favourite. Following G.P. Pradhan's death in 1932, Mani Press in Kalimpong, run by P.M. Pradhan, became the most active Nepali-language publisher in Darjeeling District. See Perry (1993, 55 n.45) for a list of publications which the author has been able to confirm as done by Ganga Prasad Pradhan at Gorkha Press. A special issue of Sangati magazine devoted to Ganga Prasad Pradhan, July-Aug. 1975 (published by EHCC in Darjeeling), contains a list of thirty publications credited to him.

(68) See Perry (1993, 37-38) for the story of his family's attempt to return to Kathmandu.

(69) See below, p.528.

(70) "EH Presbytery Minutes," 15 Dec. 1929.

(71) K.S. Peter and James Longman were the first two theologically trained national pastors to serve the EHCC. See below, n.99 in this section. Longman resigned in 1943 to become a teacher at SUMI in Kalimpong.

(72) Although the production of Nepali Christian literature from Darjeeling largely died out from the 1930s, it was taken up again by new mission groups that came into Darjeeling from the 1940s, WMPL and WEC, and greatly expanded (see below, p.105ff). The centre of production later shifted to Nepal from the 1970s.

(73) "EH Presbytery Minutes," 22 July 1915. See below, p.527ff for a full description of EHM involvement in Calcutta and the formation of Calcutta

Hill Christian Church.

(74) Those who went from Darjeeling included Ganga Prasad Pradhan, Gokal Das Pradhan, K.S. Peter, and Hangsa das Rai.

(75) Mission News, March 1941, 11. The catechist sent to Rupaidhia at this time was Nawalbir James Rai.

(76) Rev. T.E. Taylor and his wife moved to Kurseong in September 1900, with the intention of establishing Kurseong as a third mission centre at that time. But his wife became dangerously ill the end of 1901 and they had to leave. Mrs. Taylor died in February 1902.

(77) See Graham (1905) and Manuel (1914) for early detailed accounts of the Guild Mission and all its activities in Kalimpong and the Duars.

(78) Church meetings had originally been held in a simple bamboo and thatch hut built by Macfarlane, then graduated to the school hall, sometimes meeting in two shifts because of the growing congregation (Graham 1905, 65; and Minto 1974, 20).

(79) This is also commented on by Minto (1974, 20), who wrote, "A church had to be as large and as imposing and as similar to churches in Western Europe as was humanly possible." There was obviously no concern at the time that this would contribute to a perception of Christianity as foreign. Just as the mission itself was modeled on the parish system in Scotland, with a school and a church in each parish, so the few church buildings constructed by the mission were a Western copy. The plans for the church in Kalimpong were drawn by Mr. Hardy of Edinburgh in a typical Gothic design.

(80) See Mission News, Nov. 1891, 41-44, for a full description of the dedication ceremony and of the church structure; also Graham (1905, 66-68).

(81) These annual gatherings were later called "Isai Sammelan" (Christians' Gathering) and included times of Bible study with special speakers, sports and games, and a multi-language song contest for new contributions to be added to the hymnals being compiled. It was usually held during the Hindu festival of Dasai, an alternative gathering for the Christian community. It was noted in the Nov. 1895 Mission News (p.46) that "hundreds" attended the Kalimpong "Mela and Bible School" and it lasted a fortnight, but this was impossible in Darjeeling because most of the Christians were "in service of the most exacting kind."

(82) Namthak Rongong was originally from a Buddhist family in Ilam District of Nepal. He immigrated to Darjeeling District to find work and eventually settled near Sitong. He was the first member of his family to become a Christian after a remarkable confrontation with the local Lamas (see MACFARLANE MEMORIAL CHURCH CENTENARY SOUVENIR 1891-1991, Kalimpong: Mani Press, 1991, 9).

(83) Eastern Himalayan Church News, Kalimpong: Mani Press for Eastern Himalayan Church Board, Nov. 1970, 54 (hereafter Church News), quoting an EHMC resolution dated 5 March 1910.

(84) SUMI's middle-English school was recognised as a High School in 1922, soon followed by the Kalimpong Girls' High School in 1924; SUMI achieved University standard in 1942. The Girls' Boarding School in Darjeeling became the Nepali Girls' High School in 1942, followed by Turnbull High

School for boys in 1952.

(85) This included lace, embroidery and weaving for the women, and carpentry, wood-carving, blacksmith work and tailoring for the men.

(86) Manuel (quoting a letter from J.A. Graham written in 1900), 1914, 161.

(87) Macfarlane, "DMI Report for the Half-Year ending March 31, 1872," 15, in EHM REPORTS. Macfarlane experienced first-hand the value of medical help as a tool to winning the local people's trust when his and Sukhman's quick response to a cholera epidemic which swept through Kalimpong opened the doors of the local people to them as never before (Graham, 1905, 75).

(88) Three dispensaries each were run by EHM in Kalimpong and Darjeeling divisions. The earliest was opened in Pedong in 1897, and it was later overseen by Dr. Ongden Rongong, the first native doctor in Kalimpong and Namthak's eldest son. Two others were also opened in Kalimpong division at Nimbong in 1904 and at Teesta Bazaar in 1912. In Darjeeling division dispensaries were opened at Kizom in 1902, and later at Pul Bazaar, and the dispensary connected with Dr. Innes Wright's independent Nepal Mission in Sukhia Pokhri was taken over in 1925.

(89) See below, p.245,249ff concerning some Bhutanese who were converted in Kalimpong and returned to Bhutan to offer basic medical services. Mission News (March 1956, 28) contains the story of a leprosy patient from Nepal, Birdhoj, who was treated in Kalimpong, baptised at the hospital and trained as a dresser, then went to Tibet to treat leprosy patients: "He had himself been under treatment for a considerable time and there was no longer any sign of his disease. When he heard of the number of lepers in Kham he volunteered to go off to help them. And so he has left, with a party of Khambas, laden with medicines, to make the long journey over the Himalayas and across Tibet to bring help to those folk in their need." He was feared lost, but finally returned four years later.

(90) Matron D. Karthak, "Kalimpong: Charteris Hospital," Church News, Oct. 1963, 41.

(91) Some of the earliest Nepali-Lepcha Christians to enter Nepal after missions were invited in to start medical work were trained at Charteris. The first two were the nurses Ithmanom Sitling and Nermit who accompanied Dr. M.H. Maclachlan to Kathmandu in 1954 (Mission News, Oct. 1954, 58). Two years later Dr. J.F. Dick and his family also went from Charteris to Nepal, where he later pioneered the United Mission to Nepal hospital at Okhaldunga.

(92) Matron D. Karthak, "Kalimpong: Charteris Hospital," Church News, Oct. 1963, 41. This article mentions six girls who were under training at the time for Bhutan.

(93) For example, when Dr. J. Dick arrived in Okhaldunga, Nepal, he found three local Christians, all converted at Kalimpong Leprosy Hospital, one of whom became the foundation of the first local church in the area (Dr. J. Dick, "Okhaldunga," Church News, Oct. 1965, 38). In another instance an ex-Gurkha NCO from Nepal was baptised at the Hospital, then returned to Pokhara, Nepal to work (Mission News, July 1954, 52). A Brahman from Nepal, Liladhar Gautam, who went to Kalimpong after contacting leprosy, became the Headman of the Leprosy Hospital, and after his retirement

served as a catechist for a village church (Church News, Oct. 1964, 39).

(94) Sutherland returned again nine years later and resumed the Principalship of SUMI until 1920, but a new direction had already been set in motion. See above, p.77-78, regarding Macfarlane's original vision for the Training Institute. Under Sutherland's leadership from 1887-1899 the Bible was the chief text and was taught for two and a half hours each day (Mission News, March 1937, 4-5). The curriculum included Church History, Pastoral Theology, Apologetics, especially how to approach Hinduism, and some general knowledge subjects. The students also regularly went out to nearby villages to teach Sunday Schools.

(95) "EHMC Minutes," 8 June 1928. Various schemes were forwarded to rectify this need, but none took hold for more than a short time. Mostly short Bible courses of a few days to two weeks were held off and on for the catechists and other interested mission agents in the different divisions.

(96) Mission News, Oct. 1953, 40. Originally the course for English-speaking candidates used in the Presbyterian Body of Bengal, Assam and Burmah had been adopted. But it was soon realised that a course in the vernacular was necessary. Twenty-six years later another English course was drawn up and introduced by Mr. Ogg, but only three candidates were accepted for this course before Ogg's departure in 1926: Gyan Tshering Sitling, Joseph Rongong, and C.T. Pazo.

(97) In 1925 this course was extended from two to three years, with three exams, as it had been found to be too heavy a burden on the catechists with all of their other duties ("EH Presbytery Minutes," 28 Jan. 1925).

(98) "St. Columba's Church: Kirk Session Darjeeling: Minute Book," July 1905-Dec. 1947 (handwritten, minutes of 29 June 1918 and 17 June 1919) reveals that "Babu K.S. Peters" was supported during two years of ministerial training at Saharanpur by St. Columba's English Kirk Session. After serving the English congregation for nine years, he was inducted as the pastor of St. Columba's (Nepali) Church in Dec. 1929 when Rev. G.P. Pradhan resigned.

(99) See n.96 above about the Divinity course designed by Ogg. Two other men, James Longman and Subit Tshering, sent for theology training by Finnish and WEC missionaries respectively, were also later ordained to serve the Scottish mission churches. Longman, who received his BD from Serampore, was ordained and inducted to the UCNI, Darjeeling Nepali congregation on 22 Nov. 1936; he was the first BD trained pastor within the EHCC (Mission News, March 1937, 13).

(100) Pasang Targain was accepted as a student for licensure in August or September 1932, following eighteen years as a teacher at SUMI, and was subsequently ordained 7 May 1933 and inducted as pastor of Macfarlane Memorial Church. The rush in Targain's ordination was due to the pressure of circumstances in the church following the unexpected departure of Rev. G.T. Sitling to the Roman Catholic Church (see below).

(101) Mission News," December 1944, 45.

(102) These ten churches and the ordained Nepali-Lepcha national ministers who served them included the following in Darjeeling and Kurseong divisions, both overseen from Darjeeling: Temba Tsering in Kizom (1900-1937), replaced by R.S. Molommu (1942-1979); Kantu Singh in Nagri (1900-?); Jasbir Philip in Kurseong (1900-1907), replaced by Surjaman Mukhia

(1910-1926); and Jasbir Philip in Mirik (1907-1927). In Kalimpong division were the following: Namthak Rongong in Mangwa (1900-1909); Dyongshi Lepcha in Sitong (1900-1920); Anambo Lepcha in Todey (1917-1937); Chhiring in Dalapchan (1917-1942); Gora Sitling in Chhobo (1923-1927); S.B. Rai in Pedong-Sakyong (1939-1966); and M.S. Tingbo in Byong-Pakang (1951-). See Appendix D for a complete listing of national Nepali and Lepcha ministers ordained by the Eastern Himalayan Presbytery and subsequent DDC of the CNI.

(103) Mission News (March 1941, 11, and July 1948, 24) mentions services held by Duncan at the following places: Dhajia, Tukvar, Manindhara, Sukhia Pokhri, Jorebungalow, Chongtong and Rimbick. There was also a small congregation at Mirik, sometimes overseen from Darjeeling and sometimes from Kurseong. A church was built there in 1962 after the arrival of some World Mission Prayer League missionaries from America who founded the first local Nepali-medium Bible school.

(104) "EHMC Minutes," 5 June 1925, and Mission News, June 1941, 21.

(105) The eight new Kalimpong area churches were built at Dalapchan (1914), Todey (1919), Sakyong-Pedong (early 1900s), Pakang (1937), Rongchong (1934), Samalbang (1953), Yok-Pringtam (1955), and Rango Gairibas (1962).

(106) Kalimpong was the first local congregation to become self-supporting in 1910, followed by Darjeeling in 1929.

(107) See Appendix D for a complete listing of the Nepali-Lepcha ordained ministers of the Eastern Himalayan Presbytery.

(108) Kurseong had quite a mixed population, including many Europeans and Indians from other parts of India in conjunction with the railway headquarters. Thus English language worship services were started in addition to those already being held in Nepali (Mission News, Feb. 1927, 16). The Christian Association Hall was rented from 1938 for a preaching house, and also used to lodge Christian visitors.

(109) From 1954 Rev. D.H. Mukhia was the first national minister of the EHCC to be made a Superintendent, based in Kurseong over the Kurseongterai district. He took over from Rev. W.W. Ferrie when he retired. Rev. M.S. Tingbo was the Acting Superintendent of Kalimpong district churches during the early 1950s under Rev. George Watt, then the area was divided between Tingbo and Rev. N.T. Molommu in 1956 when Watt left (Church News, March 1956, 27). In 1957 N.T. Molommu was made the Superintendent of the whole Kalimpong district, including the mission schools (Church News, May 1957, 41). The Darjeeling district churches were finally handed over to Rev. D.D. Pradhan in 1961, alongside his duties in Bible translation.

(110) Dr. Ongden Rongong, Namthak's oldest son, practiced medicine in Pedong and Darjeeling, then as Sub-Assistant Surgeon at Charteris Hospital in Kalimpong for nine years before his death in 1934 ("EHMC Minutes," 9 May 1934). He was known for giving free service to the poor. His younger brother, Kok Tshering, also qualified as a doctor, but died shortly afterwards before he could begin his practice. Alice, one of Ganga Prasad Pradhan's five daughters, was the first EHCC Bible woman; she also wrote songs and was St. Columba's Church organist.

(111) This observation was also made by Foning (1987, 299) who considered

it an introduction of a new value into Lepcha society, as religious affiliation took precedence over ethnicity.

(112) This was very unusual at the time, and all the more surprising because his wife was a Roman Catholic convert.

(113) Namthak initially strongly opposed the marriage of his son Joseph to Surjamati Pradhan. It simply was not done at that time, nor was it encouraged by the missionaries.

(114) Two of Ganga Prasad Pradhan's daughters married Karthaks (Lepcha) in Sikkim. It is noteworthy that this Karthak family also originally came from Darjeeling District, where attitudes were more liberalised.

(115) Foning, 1987, 296.

(116) Minto (1974) speaks of the Lepcha as the missionaries' favourites, which won them a kind of protection in the district. Foning (1987, 295) says that the "vast majority" of Lepcha with a modern education or holding important posts in government or other services are Christians. It has also been demonstrated above that the majority of Christian workers, particularly in Kalimpong division, were Lepcha. This also held true in Sikkim until the modern era (see Chapter 4 below.)

(117) See above, p.77.

(118) This was typical of the assessment of this era by local Christians interviewed by the author both in town and village churches throughout Darjeeling District. Some noted that it was not uncommon at that time for people to become Christians for what they could get out of it, that they were easily taken into the church without a clear understanding or teaching on the meaning of being a Christian, and many of these later rejected Christianity.

(119) A typical illustration is found in the large families of some of the well-known local church leaders. Namthak Rongong had ten children; Ganga Prasad Pradhan had seven, as did Harkadhoj Pradhan.

(120) Mission News, Dec. 1931, 64. The exact reasons why the Sitlings joined the Roman Catholic church are unclear. Neither Rev. G.T. Sitling nor his father Rev. Gora Sitling became priests. According to local informants Rev. G.T. Sitling had a vision which he felt was from God telling him to join the Catholic Church; others say that various enticements were offered to attract them away.

(121) See above, p.58 n.27 concerning early Roman Catholic work at Pedong, Kalimpong division, since the 1880s. They had no established work in Kalimpong town before the Sitling clan's departure from the EHCC. See above, p.64ff about SAM's entry to Darjeeling District. The Nepal Mission was established in 1896 by Dr. and Mrs. J.W. Innes Wright at Sukhia Pokhri with the "object of spreading Christianity among the Nepalese who come in large numbers to the market held there every Friday" (O'Malley, 1907, 210). It was a small medical mission which E.C. Dozey (1989, 74) reported as treating about 10,000 patients annually. Mrs. Wright died in 1902, and in 1916 when Mr. Wright was invalided home to Scotland the dispensary was taken over by EHM. The Wrights had enjoyed a close relationship with the Darjeeling Mission throughout.

(122) Mission News, Dec. 1939.

(123) There are several mentions in EHM records of men going from Darjeeling District to help build the Manipur Road, lured by the attraction of high wages.

(124) Dash, 1947, 147.

(125) Mission News, March 1947, citing FORGOTTEN FRONTIER which documented this supply of labour.

(126) S. Sodemba, "How Pentecost Came to Kalimpong" (handwritten, May 1992, in NCHP Collection) also refers to Sadhu Dhan Bahadur Tamang (referred to by others as Sadhu D.B. John, and later as John White) as a local man in Kalimpong who together with Sadhu Masih "brought Holy Spirit FIRE from God" to Kalimpong.

(127) The Church of Scotland, a Presbyterian denomination, practiced infant baptism and sprinkling of adult converts. Sadhu Masih taught the doctrine of adult baptism by immersion in water, following an adult individual experience of 'salvation by faith' and decision to follow Christ and His teachings -- traditionally practised in most Pentecostal, Baptist, Brethren and other fundamentalist denominations. Meetings were originally held by the Sadhu in the homes of local Christians, including Pastor Targain's home. But when a few were re-baptised in 1941 it caused a reaction. They were threatened with expulsion if they did not repent, occasioning a split in the church.

(128) See below, p.118ff.

(129) Both converted Brahmans, K.P. Tiwari was a relatively young man of thirty years of age when he reached Darjeeling from Benares, while Garhwali Sadhu was only converted at age fifty. Tiwari spoke in Hindi and Garhwali Sadhu used a mixture of Hindi and Nepali.

(130) Mission News, Dec. 1941, 59; March 1944, 5; and April 1950, 6.

(131) Tiwari was particularly noted for his ministry in song, teaching the congregations many new songs, for his ministry of healing by prayer, and for his strong Bible teaching ministry. He was invited to be the speaker at the Darjeeling Convention and held series of public meetings on different occasions. He made several trips to Darjeeling between 1941 and his death at age thirty-three in 1944, and also made occasional visits to other Darjeeling division churches, and to Kalimpong in 1941 for ten days. Garhwali Sadhu had a more extended ministry in the Eastern Himalayas and stayed for longer periods between 1941 and at least 1950. Although a much older man (age 83 on the caption of a photo taken about 1948), he captured the imagination of the youth and children, and started a Youth Fellowship and the Children's League in 1943. He also helped out at St. Columba's in the absence of a pastor following Rev. James Longman's departure. Both men were noted for their sense of humour and overall enthusiasm, and for the simple fact that they stayed in the local people's homes, communicating their faith on a very personal level.

(132) Mission News reports indicate that the Book Depot became "an increasingly popular institution" since Kristadas Mukhia took it over from May 1937, and that he was the one who developed it the most (Dec. 1937, 58; and Dec. 1946, 52). Although he did not have much education, he was characterised by his contemporaries as being "a very Godly man," very devoted and zealous in his faith, constantly out witnessing to non-Christians and distributing tracts. He lived at the Book Depot and his rooms were always open to

the young people and any who came by. He was also known for going to the jungle at Birsha Hill to spend time in prayer with two or three others, especially for revival in the church.

(133) K.D. Mukhia was appointed as pastor of St. Columba's in 1954 while still a senior elder of the church (Mission News, Jan. 1954, 9), and was formally ordained on 25 Nov. 1956. His service to the church is commemorated on a brass plaque at St. Columba's Church which makes special note that he was "a man of prayer."

(134) Church News, Feb. 1963, 12.

(135) K.A. Rai, "Youth and Evangelism," MACFARLANE CENTENARY, 1991, 26.

(136) Jordan Khan was recommended to Rev. D.H. Mukhia as a revivalist speaker by a WEC missionary who had met Khan in Landour. The invitation was sent by "the Kirk Session of the Darjeeling Local Nepali Church," with the agreement and evident encouragement of Rev. H.C. Duncan, because of their concern "about the spiritual needs of the congregation" (Mission News, Sept. 1947, 54). He stayed at this time with Rev. H.C. Duncan at the Mission House. He was depicted as a man of prayer with a very good knowledge of the Bible and a powerful message, especially for nominal Christians. A second series of meetings was also held at the Book Depot, then Khan went to Sukhia Pokhri and other churches in the district.

(137) Mission News, Dec. 1947, 64. Titus was from a Methodist background and had worked with E. Stanley Jones.

(138) P.N. Namchyo and other El Shaddai elders, interview with author, Kalimpong, 15 April 1992. Victor Pradhan, the son of one of the Macfarlane Memorial Church elders and a former Communist agitator who made a personal profession of faith in Christ through Jordan Khan's meetings, opened his home for meetings to continue. Many of those affected were second and third generation nominal Christians with little understanding of the meaning of Christianity. As more teaching was given on the meaning of the church, baptism, tithing, etc., many were baptised by immersion. Victor Pradhan and four women became full-time Christian workers by the end of the year.

(139) Bakht Singh was brought to Kalimpong by Jordan Khan after some internal misunderstandings arose within the group meeting at Victor Pradhan's home, which he called 'Jehovah Nissi.' In 1949 the group in Kalimpong was formally established as a church by Bakht Singh, two local elders were appointed, D.K. Mukhia and Robert Mukhia, and two men were sent from Madras to work full-time to help establish the new work.

(140) Mt. Pisca was started under the leadership of Dr. Andrew Pradhan, brother of Victor Pradhan in Kalimpong, and L.T. Fudong, but it drew out fewer EHCC members than the Assembly in Kalimpong.

(141) Even before the 1940s there were a few other foreign Christian missionaries present in Darjeeling District, including the Free Church of Finland Mission headquarters at Ghoom already mentioned. One of the Finnish missionaries, Anna Kempe, began an independent work in Pedong from the 1920s, where she lived very simply until her retirement in the 1940s. The NEB founders, Dr. Lily O'Hanlon and Hilda Steele, occasionally ran the clinic at Sukhia Pokhri on behalf of EHM from the mid-1930s. There was

also the Indian and Nepali Children's Home established in 1928 by Miss Ada Bruhn of Australia in Kalimpong. But these works were all very localised and had little effect on the wider spread of Christianity among the Nepali-Lepcha communities.

(142) See below, p.502.

(143) See below, p.312 and p.314ff.

(144) This is testified to time and again by local Christians in Darjeeling who were initially surprised by these missionaries who freely opened their homes to them. Jonathan Lindell refused to let them call him 'Sir' and even rebelled against use of the honorific form in conversation.

(145) Instrumental in these activities were Miss Elizabeth Franklin and the McCabes in Kalimpong, and Misses Mildred Hasselquist and Becky Grimsrud in Darjeeling. Franklin took teams of young people out on preaching tours to the surrounding villages, and they soon were being invited by others; she also took women out in a similar way. The McCabes were active in the beginnings of a Youth for Christ group in Kalimpong. Hasselquist and Grimsrud led Bible studies for the youth and taught them how to witness about their faith, trained at least two national women as co-workers, and went out with them to places like Sukhia Pokhri and Jorebungalow. The Ralph Cunninghams also opened their home in Darjeeling where they taught music to the young people and held Bible study sessions.

(146) MACFARLANE CENTENARY, 1991, 19-20; and Church News, Feb. 1966, 7. One of the young men greatly influenced by Mr. Brunton's Bible classes was Solon Karthak, who later went to Nepal and became the Director of Nepal Every Home Concern, founder and President of Communication Arts Association Nepal, and founder of Christian Professionals in Nepal.

(147) In 1968 the Darjeeling group was reformed as Darjeeling Khristiya Yuba Junda (DKYJ, Darjeeling Christian Youth Fellowship), and there was no formal connection with YFC in India. The leaders at that time were Benjamin Rai, Lucky Karthak and Enos Dos Pradhan. They appointed a part-time youth evangelist, Surja Prasad, who served for three or four years. In Kalimpong it became known as the Kalimpong Khristiya Yuba Sangati (KKYS).

(148) These were locally known as DEUS (Darjeeling Evangelical Union of Students) and KEUS (Kalimpong Evangelical Union of Students) in the two towns.

(149) Church News, June 1968, 27. Operation Mobilisation's nearest base was Gorakhpur, but they were also starting work inside Nepal at this time. The 1968 campaign mobilised Christian youth from the churches in Darjeeling, Kalimpong and Gangtok for this outreach to the Duars. Forty thousand Gospels were reportedly sold. Occasional OM teams visited the Darjeeling-Kalimpong area from this time, but no local work was established.

(150) Subit Tshering, interview with author, Kurseong, 14 May 1992; Robert Karthak and Rajendra Rongong, interviews with the author, Kathmandu, July 1986.

(151) See below, p.502. Subit Tshering was later helped by WEC missionaries to attend Bible School at Allahabad, after which he returned to Darjeeling, worked with Rev. D.H. Mukhia for about a year in Kurseong, was or-

dained for ministry with EHCC in 1956, and joined the staff of Darjeeling Hills Bible School while also serving as pastor of Mirik Church.

(152) Elizabeth Franklin, "Mahendra Bhawan," TS, 1988, in UMN Archives, Himalayan Collection, CSCNWW, New College, University of Edinburgh. These young men were recruited by Miss Franklin following her visit to Kathmandu when she was requested to find two Nepali Christian boys from Darjeeling/ Kalimpong to send to Kathmandu as trainees. They were both active members of the Christian Endeavour youth group.

(153) Elizabeth Franklin, correspondence with Ernest Oliver, 1955-1956, in UMN Archives. Franklin felt a strong calling to go to Nepal after it opened, and called the Nepali-Lepcha Christian young people she had been involved with in Kalimpong to a 'missionary meeting' at her house to challenge them also. Four in particular shared her sense of calling and they made a commitment to go into Nepal as a group -- Robert Karthak as a minister of the Gospel, Rajendra Rongong and his wife Jermit both as teachers, and Dhanmaya as a teacher. Franklin's vision was to start a girls' school in Kathmandu. Daniel Sitling went along as a peon, but also with a desire to share his Christian faith.

(154) Examples of Nepali-Lepcha Christians from Darjeeling and Kalimpong who became leaders in the church in Nepal include: Pastor Robert Karthak of Gyaneshwor Church in Kathmandu, looked to by many as a 'father' of the church in Nepal, and several of the elders of Gyaneshwor Church; Solon Karthak, Director of Nepal Every Home Concern (see above, n.25); Loknath Manaen, Director of Nepal Bible Society; Adon Rongong, founder of Patan Church in Kathmandu, and Director of Nepal Campus Crusade for Christ (see below, p.110); Pastor Attan Tshering of Lamachaur Church, Pokhara; and several of the Nepal Campus Crusade for Christ graduate level staff. Several have also made significant contributions to development efforts in Nepal, alongside their role in local churches, for example: Bir Bah. Khawas, Chief Executive Officer of Patan Hospital; Dr. Rajendra Rongong, Dean of the Curriculum Department at Tribhuvan University; Jermit Rongong, founding teacher and early assistant head of Mahendra Bhawan Girls' School; Martha Mukhia, Gandaki Boarding School founding Head, later Headmistress of Mahendra Bhawan Girls' School; Nermit Sitling, Headmistress of Mahendra Bhawan Girls' School; Bishnu Rai, Campus Chief, UMN Lalitpur Nursing Campus; Suson Sada, Acting Nursing Superintendent of Shanta Bhawan Hospital, Kathmandu; Nathaniel Rai, Lecturer in Education Dept., Prithvi Narayan Campus, Pokhara; S. Sodemba, founder of the first Christian school and hostel in Kathmandu; Daftan Sada, trainer of laboratory technicians at Tribhuvan University; Itmanom Sitling, UMN Dispensary in-charge at Pharping; and numerous nurses and other medical workers, teachers and literacy workers who have worked in locations throughout Nepal.

(155) See below, 530-531. Martin Rai chose this assignment himself out of frustration at not being assigned to a pastorate in the hills. EHCC originally proposed sending him to Nepal to start a church, but he declined in deference to his brother-in-law, Pastor Robert Karthak, in Kathmandu.

(156) Laxmi Prasad Neupany graduated from Darjeeling Hills Bible School and was appointed by the EHCC to Darjeeling Book Depot in 1962, and occasionally conducted worship services in the Darjeeling district churches. In 1963 he became the despatch-clerk with NISS, then in 1964 was appointed by the EHCC as its missionary in Nepal, to work with Shanti Book Stall in

Kathmandu. Through the years Mr. Neupany has worked closely with Gyaneshwor Church, under Pastor Robert Karthak, and has run a cassette tape distribution ministry.

(157) Following Rev. M.F. Rai no one else was sent to Calcutta from EHCC. Although the Presbyter currently responsible for Calcutta Hill Christian Church, Rev. Andrew Simick, is originally from Kalimpong, his training, ordination and assignment in Calcutta were all through the Calcutta Presbytery. L.P. Neupany is still working in Nepal as a missionary of the Darjeeling Diocese of the CNI, and no other missionaries have been sent out by the Diocese.

(158) One of the purposes of the Bible School was to train Christian Nepali workers for work in Nepal. In 1955 Roy Hagen and Alvin Berg of WMPL went to Kurseong and Darjeeling to challenge young people to engage in adult literacy work in Nepal. In 1956 the first group trained at DHBS were sent to Tansen, and on to Gorkha. Within five years of the school's opening, eight former students were working in Nepal: Shillong Ford Mukhia, Mon-subba Martha (Rai) Mukhia, S. Sodemba, Unamani (Pradhan) Sodemba, S.K. Moral, Dorcas, Manimit Juriboo, and Hastaman Rai. By the end of 1967, twenty-seven former Nepali and Lepcha students were working in Nepal, and seven at Duncan Hospital in Raxaul ("DHBS Principal's Report for 1967," and Church News, June 1968, 25.)

(159) "The Story of the Darjeeling Hills Bible School," TS at the front of the DHBS Minutes Book. DHBS offered a two-year course from its inception, and had two principle teachers from 1955 -- Miss Rebecca I.K. Rai, and Rev. Subit Tshering. Subit Tshering resigned in 1987 to take up full-time pastoral ministry at Kurseong, and Rebecca Rai retired in 1992. The first five full-time students from February 1954 were Srimati Mary Thapa, Susri Alice Rai, Susri Martha Monsuba Rai, Sri Shilling Ford Mukhia and Tezbahadur Thapa. Throughout its existence many of its students have served as catechists for the EHCC in each of its divisions, including Sikkim and Bhutan.

(160) The "DHBS General Board Minutes" of 26 Nov. 1981 note a sub-committee's recognition of church growth among Nepali in North East India; this was seen as a justification for the continuation of DHBS even though there were fewer students coming from Nepal than in earlier years.

(161) K.A. Rai, "DHBS Principal's Report," TS, May 1982.

(162) K.A. Rai, "DHBS Principal's Report," Sept. 1987.

(163) Other early Nepali-Lepcha helpers with the early radio programmes included Birendra Rongong, Samuel Khawas, and B.D. Rai. Birendra Rongong and his family were later taken to Hong Kong by Roy Hagen for three months of intensive recording, and he has regularly recorded his own weekly Nepali programme for FEBA since 1985 called "Mero Herdaiya ko Bhajan" (Song of My Heart).

(164) Nancy Lindsay, letter to J. Lindell, 1 Dec. 1966, in NCHP Collection.

(165) Ernie Shingler, Himalayan Mission of WEC Field Letter, April 1963, in NCHP Collection.

(166) Himalayan Mission Nepali Literature Committee Report, March 1961, in NCHP Collection. Miss Skilbeck was also the Literature Convener for the Nepal Border Fellowship, oversaw the compiling of a new Nepali hymnbook,

and did Nepali work for the Scripture Gift Mission.

(167) Nepali Isai Sahitya Sangha (Nepali Christian Literature Society), **MEMORANDUM OF ASSOCIATION AND RULES AND REGULATIONS** (Darjeeling: Mirik Press, 1960), 1.

(168) United Mission to Nepal, "Annual Report for 1964", Appendix H, p.71, in UMN Archives, CSCNWW, Univ. of Edinburgh.

(169) See Perry (Appendix C, 1993, 140-145) for a fuller treatment of the process of development of Nepali Christian literature.

(170) See Chapters 10 and 11 for detailed treatment of missions among Nepali in N. Bihar, the plains of UP, and Kumaon.

(171) Kitty Harbord was a ZBMM missionary, later affiliated with WEC (see below, p.111 and p.462). Jonathan Lindell was a member of WMPL, but because WMPL had no recognised field in India when Lindell first arrived, he was linked with WEC for a few years and pioneered their Nepal Border Field (see below, p.501).

(172) Katherine Harbord, "The Closed Land of Nepal: A Modern Jericho," World Dominion, Vol. XVII, No. 1, Jan. 1939, pp.81-85. See Appendix E for the full text of this appeal.

(173) See Perry (1993, 61) for the history of the Nepal Border-line Conferences and the Nepal Border Fellowship.

(174) Lindell, "The Nepal Border Crusade," TS, Jan. 1943, in NCHP Collection.

(175) Lindell, "The Score Concerning the Nepal Border Work," TS, 10 Nov. 1943, in NCHP Collection.

(176) Lindell, "Some Notes on the Border Lands of Central Asia," TS, 1947, p.6 and 8, in NCHP Collection.

(177) Several of the missions working along the border of Nepal were among the eight charter members of the UMN: RBMU with work at Raxaul and Jogbeni; WMPL, Jonathan Lindell's mission; ZBMM (now InterServe), Dr. K. Harbord's mission; Swedish Baptist Mission with work at Gorakhpur, and the Church of Scotland with work in Darjeeling District and Sikkim. The remaining three UMN charter members were the American Presbyterian Church (now Presbyterian Church, USA), the Methodist Church in Southern Asia (now United Methodist Church), and the United Christian Missionary Society (now Christian Church, Disciples).

(178) See Lindell, **NEPAL AND THE GOSPEL OF GOD** (New Delhi: United Mission to Nepal and Masihi Sahitya Sanstha, 1979) for a detailed history of the beginnings of the United Mission to Nepal, including a list of the UMN member bodies in Appendix I.

(179) This work was also supported by Rev. J. Brodie of the Scots Mission in Darjeeling, and he served as the Secretary of the NISS for several years.

(180) Lindell, letter to James Brodie, n.d.[about Aug. 1964], in NCHP Collection.

(181) Lindell, letter to Dr. A.E. Inbanathan, General Secretary of the Bible Society of India, 2 March 1966, in NCHP Collection. This issue was again taken up two years later by Howard Barclay of UMN. He urged the UBS to treat Himalasia as a separate region with its own staff and promotion, but the recommendation was never carried forward. Rather, a local Bible Society committee was organised in Kathmandu in 1969 to serve Nepal itself.

(182) James Brodie, "Some comments on the Nepali Christian Literature Scene after a visit to some Christian centres in Nepal," confidential TS, 6 March 1964, p.4, in NCHP Collection.

(183) "NISS Report and Projected Plans," Appendix M of UMN Report for 1965, p.96, in Nepali Christian literature file, NCHP Collection.

(184) Editorial, Church News, Oct. 1967.

(185) DHBS was under a succession of WMPL missionary Principals until 1969 when Rev. Martin F. Rai was the first national appointed to this position.

(186) Church News, June 1968, 37.

(187) The Kalimpong town and district churches' combined membership rose from 3,593 to 4,380, while the Darjeeling town and district churches' membership rose only slightly from 1,081 to 1,135 (Mission News, Jan. 1950, 55; and "Church Statistics," Darjeeling Diocese Church News, Sept. 1972, 9).

(188) Rev. R.S. Molommu was ordained and transferred to Kizom in 1942. In the 1950s he was reported as touring the district with a flannelboard and magic lantern, seeking to reach every house (Mission News, Oct. 1951, 54 and April 1955, 19). During the 1950s there were about one hundred Christians widely scattered throughout the area. In 1957 Ranjit Saharaja was appointed as a colporteur in Rimbick, after which several baptisms were reported. Saharaja was one of the earliest graduates of DHBS. A church was built at Rimbick in 1964, the same year Saharaja was ordained, and it became the centre of Kizom Pastorate.

(189) James Massey, "Christians in North India," Indian Missiological Review (July 1987), 214-5. The CNI was inaugurated on 29 Nov. 1970, a union of six participating churches: Council of Baptist Churches in North India, Church of Brethren of India, Disciples of Christ, Church of India (Anglican), Methodist (British and Australian Conferences), and United Church of North India (a union of Congregational and Presbyterian churches).

(190) According to the "Bom Busty Church Minutes Book" entry dated 26 March 1967, Bom Busty Church became self-supporting on this date and was dedicated as a new Kirk Session in the EHCC. It was the only church which elected not to join the CNI, and has been independent since that time.

(191) From 1970-1974 the Rt. Rev. D.D. Pradhan was Bishop of Darjeeling Diocese alongside his responsibilities for Assam Diocese. Rev. Alvin Berg of WMPL, who was unified into the CNI ministry, served as his commissary during this time in Darjeeling, until the Rt. Rev. John Elliot Ghose was appointed for Darjeeling Diocese from 1974. The former Presbyterian Church of Assam (now Presbyterian Church of North East India) was a part of the UCNI, but opted out of union with the CNI in deference to a hoped for separate union with the Baptists of North East India as the proposed

Church of North East India. Thus Bishop D.D. Pradhan of the CNI was left to preside over the former Anglican Church in Assam.

(192) "Darjeeling Diocese Council Executive Committee: Minutes Book," 17 June 1977; and DDC News, Oct. 1979, 8.

(193) Until 1988 the "DDC and Church of Scotland" together constituted a member of the UMN Board, and the CNI was a separate member. Bishop Ghose occasionally attended the yearly Board meetings as the DDC and Church of Scotland representative, and served on the UMN Executive Committee for a time. Since 1988, the Church of Scotland and the CNI have been separate members, and the UMN has had no direct link with the DDC.

(194) See above, p.108 and n.156 above.

(195) See below, p.319.

(196) Shortly after EHCC joined the CNI there was a further split in the Kalimpong church, resulting in the formation of the Presbyterian Free Church. About twenty years later the internal conflicts within Darjeeling Diocese boiled over, primarily in reaction to Bishop John Ghose. All but a very few of the churches in Darjeeling-Kalimpong-Sikkim pulled out of CNI or split and most of the Presbyters resigned in 1993 to form their own local denomination. Court cases are currently pending over some of the property involved.

(197) D.D. Pradhan, interview with author, Darjeeling, 29 April 1992, paraphrased.

(198) D.D. Pradhan, interview with author, Darjeeling, 29 April 1992. Most of D.D. Pradhan's family joined El Shaddai at that time, including his father who was an elder at St. Columba's Church, and his grandfather. However, he soon became dissatisfied with El Shaddai's separatist and elitist tendency, not being allowed to have Christian fellowship with his former friends still in the Scots Mission churches, and he decided to return. In 1952 he was accepted back into St. Columba's Church by Rev. D.H. Mukhia, and later went on for theological training and to become the first Nepali Bishop in the CNI.

(199) See above, p.104.

(200) The level of commitment of El Shaddai believers and workers is commented on by missionaries who have worked in association with them, and also revealed in the circular letters sent out from Kalimpong. For instance, Hester Withey of WEC expressed her admiration for some of the women who were "so abandoned to the Lord that He really is their only source of joy" (letter to a friend in America, 12 May 1960, in NCHP Collection). An El Shaddai circular letter dated 30 Jan. 1980 states, "By experience we have come to know that we believers have to face more opposition than other christians do, so we have to be more vigilant and prayerful than others."

(201) N.K. Dutt was first invited to preach at a crusade in Kalimpong in 1953. His son David later spent several months in Kalimpong assisting Full Gospel Pentecostal Church, and held crusades in Sikkim and Darjeeling. Although normally based in Calcutta, David Dutt made frequent preaching trips into the hills throughout the following years.

(202) Anna Kempe, a Finnish missionary who left the Finnish Mission in 1923 to work independently pioneered the work in Pedong. She was beloved

by the local people as a kind of 'saduni' because she fasted herself in order to share her food with the poor. She built a simple house complete with baptismal pool, then left it to her adopted daughter when she finally retired in the 1940s. Rev. Arne Nordmark, a Swedish Pentecostal, arrived in Kalimpong from China early in 1950, and left for the USA after about a year. He escorted two newly arrived Swedish-speaking Pentecostal women from Finland to Pedong the summer of 1950, Misses Signe Bäck and Frida Genberg, to revive Kempe's work. Before long Genberg had to return to Finland due to ill health, and she was replaced by another Swedish-speaking Finnish national, Ranghild Björklund, who accompanied Bäck to Pedong upon her return from furlough in 1957.

Swedish Pentecostal missionaries, Albert and Anna Carlsson, also arrived from China just shortly after Nordmark and started work in a small rented room in Algarah. It is said that John Gurung, a member of the Kalimpong Full Gospel Pentecostal Church had already started a small work in Algarah when the Carlssons arrived, perhaps a reason for their choice of this location. Following the arrival in 1952 of Misses Agnes Oden and Nanna Allebert, Swedish Baptists with Orebro Mission, Carlssons handed over the Algarah work to them, went to Kalimpong and later moved down to South India.

(203) There was close cooperation and fellowship between these three Scandinavian groups, due to their common interest in Bhutia peoples and a clear Finnish connection. The Swedish-speaking Pentecostals who worked to revive the earlier work of Anna Kempe in Pedong were themselves Finnish nationals. Then when Miss Bäck had to leave in 1961 because of visa problems, her co-worker Miss Björklund joined the Finnish Mission and went to Ghoom to work. Nanna Allebert, who started the work in Algarah with Agnes Oden, had formerly worked alongside the Finnish missionaries in North Sikkim.

(204) B.K. Biswas, interview with author, Kalimpong, 4 June 1992. Biswas met one of the Algarah missionaries at Barrackpore and she invited him to visit them in Algarah, which he did in 1956. He had a personal vision from God that he was to work in the mountains among Mongolian people, so he felt this was its fulfillment. He was officially made a part of the mission from April 1957, and they sent him to Doon Bible School (run by Swedish Pentecostals) and other subsequent theological training before their departure in 1969.

(205) According to Burton Goddard, ed., *THE ENCYCLOPAEDIA OF MODERN CHRISTIAN MISSIONS* (New Jersey: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1967), 619, the Pentecostal movement reached into Finland from 1911 and influenced the Free Church movement.

(206) See below, n.213 in this section.

(207) Mrs. Edna Adam, letter to author, 21 Jan. 1993; and Miss S. Bäck, letter to author, 17 March 1993. Al and Edna Adam were asked to go to Pedong to relieve Miss Bäck's furlough. While there Mr. Adam developed a close relationship with B.S. Cargay. They both had a yearning for a deeper spiritual experience, which culminated in a Pentecostal experience through special meetings at the Full Gospel Pentecostal Church in Kalimpong. Upon return from the meetings they began to have evangelistic street meetings and healing meetings in Pedong, and Cargay was ordained as pastor of the Pedong Church. Upon Bäck's return from furlough, the Adams returned to Kalimpong for a short time, then went to Darjeeling to live at Mt. Hermon Estate and run NBCI during Dyck's furlough.

(208) David Mangratee, interview with author, Darjeeling, 27 April 1992. Mangratee was sent to an Assembly of God (AG) Bible school in Bangalore by two AG women missionaries who were working at Graham's Homes in Kalimpong. It was after his return that he went to Darjeeling with David Dutt.

(209) See below, p.193ff.

(210) Subang Sodemba, interview with author, Kalimpong, 5 June 1992. A list of churches submitted to the author includes churches in the following places: West Bengal among Nepali (19), West Bengal among Boro or Bengali (3), Sikkim (25), Bhutan (7), Assam (5), Nepal (7), and Orissa (8).

(211) These four churches included one each from the three Finnish Mission fields of Ghoom, N. Sikkim (at Mangan), and Baksaduar, plus Cargay's church in Pedong.

(212) P.K. Rai, former General-Secretary of HFC, interview with author, 12 May 1992. There were another twelve congregations in Sikkim. Since 1986 the Baksaduar field separated from HFC to maintain its distinctiveness, but retained a direct connection with the Free Church of Finland. When B.S. Cargay resigned as Secretary of HFC in 1983, his church in Pedong also dropped its affiliation and is now independent.

(213) B.K. Biswas, interview with author, 4 June 1992. At this time B.K. Biswas was responsible for the churches as a regional branch of the central headquarters in Gorakhpur, registered as the "Fellowship of Free Baptist Churches of North India." Because of misunderstandings with Gorakhpur and the funds from Sweden not being transferred on to his headquarters in Kalimpong, in 1991 Biswas severed his connections with them and re-registered his own group as the "Fellowship of Free Baptist Churches of West Bengal and Sikkim." As of 1992 Biswas claimed to have about twenty-five churches in his Fellowship, but only five or six of them are in the Darjeeling-Kalimpong hills.

(214) David Mangratee, interview with author, Darjeeling, 27 April 1992. Mangratee worked in Nagaland as a teacher during most of the 1960s and returned to Darjeeling in 1970 due to his son's illness. He began working with the small church near Mt. Hermon started by himself and Al Adam several years before, and sought outside support for evangelistic ministry.

(215) Rev. D.C. Lucksom and Rev. M.H. Subba, interviews with the author, 6 and 16 April 1992.

(216) The Presbyterian Free Church Council, with headquarters in Kalimpong, is a member of the Federation of Evangelical Churches of India. Its work has all been within Darjeeling District and Sikkim.

(217) Claude Barua, interview with author, Darjeeling, 29 April 1992. Claude was converted in 1975 while in jail in Kathmandu, then found Christian fellowship with a local AG group after his release. They recommended him for Southern Asia Bible College in Bangalore, and he returned to Darjeeling the end of 1981 after completing his studies with a desire to start a church.

(218) Mrs. C. Barua, interview with author, Darjeeling, 28 April 1992. The Nepali-language ICI was started in 1985 as an extension of the Kathmandu office for the Darjeeling side. Mrs. Barua and five full-time staff now run the

Institute in connection with the Calcutta office, as its Nepali section. This work is separate from the AG Church in Darjeeling of which Claud Barua is the pastor.

(219) Barua's church work in Darjeeling has no official relationship with the large Assembly of God worked started in Calcutta by Rev. Mark Buntain. The church is affiliated with the Assemblies of God in North India for the sake of fellowship, but there is no financial link; all churches are run independently.

(220) The two principal influences in training have been through DHBS and Nepal Campus Crusade for Christ's New Life Training Centre based in Siliguri since 1984. More recently Asian Outreach opened the Great Commission Institute in Siliguri, offering a one-month course in Nepali for church lay workers, and the Presbyterian Free Church opened Grace Bible Institute in Kalimpong, offering a six-month course.

(221) See Chapter 13 concerning Nepali Christians among the Gurkhas.

CHAPTER 4 - CHRISTIANITY IN SIKKIM

INTRODUCTION

By the beginning of the 20th century two Christian missions were firmly established in Sikkim: the Church of Scotland's EHM, with Sikkim adopted as the field of the Scottish Universities' Mission but headquartered in Kalimpong, and the Scandinavian Alliance Mission (later under the Free Church of Finland Mission). Until the present day they are the only Protestant missions which have been allowed to place resident European missionaries in Sikkim, although only in limited numbers. Significant to both of the missions' entries was the political climate of the day, and increasing British influence. The 1861 Treaty stipulated that British subjects could freely travel through the Raja's territory, but they evidently had to have special permission to reside there.¹ According to one former missionary in Sikkim permits to cross the frontier into Sikkim were obtained from the Deputy Commissioner in Darjeeling.

For four years from 1880 Rev. W.S. Sutherland of the EHM made annual trips to Tumlong to try and secure permission from the Raja of Sikkim for missionaries to settle in his territory to preach the Gospel.² At the end of 1883 he ascribed the difficulties to the Lamas and outlined the Raja's position as follows:

The Raja is pretty much in the hands of the Lamas, and the Lamas do not want us in Sikkim. In short the matter stands thus. The king does not wish a European missionary to build a house and take up a residence in his dominion, but is not unwilling that schools, carried on by natives, should be started. I have no doubt that by and by the Raja would be willing to allow us to settle.³

Sutherland was correct in his prediction that "by and by" the Raja would allow a missionary to settle within Sikkim territory, but it took ten years from the time he

first headed for Tumlong. Permission was finally granted following J.C. White's appointment as the British Political Officer in 1889. The missionaries' understanding of their position in Sikkim was as follows:

...the State laid down that no foreigner was to own land or be permanently resident in Sikkim. The mission approached the palace asking for permission to station a missionary there to minister to the Christian community. This was conditionally granted. He (the missionary) himself was not to do "propaganda" outside the church. He was not to live in Gangtok but be allowed to build a house on an area arranged...⁴

Sutherland chose Chidam, South Sikkim, as the ideal location for a mission station "because it is in the middle of the bulk of the population in the south consisting mainly of Nepaulese... Settlers are flocking into the country now..."⁵ A missionary bungalow was built in 1891, and the first Scottish missionary finally took up residence two years later.

SAM did not have such a long wait to receive similar permission, presumably because the EHM had paved the way before them. A delegation of three SAM missionaries departed from Ghoom for the border of Tibet within a few months of their arrival in 1892.⁶ After reaching the Jalep Pass they returned via "Guntok" (Gangtok) where they met J.C. White and requested permission to settle in Sikkim. Although he was not authorised to give them such permission, he recommended that they write a petition which he would put to the Sikkim State Council.⁷ Shoberg made a subsequent visit to choose a location for a mission station as far north as possible, during which the Maharani invited him to the palace in Tumlong and granted him permission to travel throughout the domain. He traveled to Lachung where he was kindly received by local dignitaries and given a house to stay in.⁸ In 1894 SAM's first missionaries to North Sikkim, two Swedish women, left for Lachung where they took up residence.⁹ Although SAM also had an early mission station in South Sikkim at Song, it primarily served as a relay point on the route to their much more extensive work which developed in North Sikkim. The Song station was turned

over to the EHM in 1924 with the sanction of the Darbar of Sikkim.¹⁰ Throughout their work in Sikkim the EHM and SAM remained distinct, both in the region of the country in which they worked, and the ethnic groups among whom they were most active.

Although the Scottish EHM and SAM finally secured permission for their expatriate missionaries to reside in Sikkim and to build mission stations, it was in limited numbers and restricted areas of the country. The records of both missions indicate the continual difficulty in securing work-cum-residence permits for successive missionaries. EHM were confined to southern Sikkim, and missionaries were not allowed to reside in the capital of Gangtok until the Honourable Mary Scott secured permission on the strength of her personal friendship with the Chogyal in 1923.¹¹ Even then, it was partly on the basis of her being a female and not ordained that she was allowed to reside there, and no other European missionary could reside at the former centre in Temi while she was in Gangtok.¹² Miss Scott's chosen successor, Rev. Gavin Fairservice was subsequently barred from residing in Gangtok and had to move the mission centre back to Temi.¹³ It was noted in the Church of Scotland's Minutes of the Foreign Mission Committee, minute dated 18 July 1939, that Miss Scott had been allowed in Gangtok "mainly in consideration of her friendship with His Majesty the Maharaja and on purely personal grounds."¹⁴ No more than one EHM missionary (or family) was ever allowed to reside in Sikkim at one time. The Sikkim Government's regulation of the extent of the missions' involvement in Sikkim is also demonstrated by the sanction necessary from the Darbar for SAM's Song station to be handed over to EHM.

In Jha's History of Sikkim he raises a question concerning the British attitude to Christian mission work in Sikkim, and wonders, "Why were Christians not encouraged to check the influence of monasteries in Sikkim, especially when they were 'so enthusiastic' in neighboring Darjeeling District?"¹⁵ The question is interesting, but his conclusions are weak. He concludes that it

was due to two fears on the part of the British: 1) that it would upset the Tibetan/Bhutia population and thus hamper trade with Tibet; and, 2) that attempts to convert the Hindu Nepali would "create adverse repercussions" among them as a needed labour force and "annoy them" in a way that would work against the British desire that they "outnumber the pro-Tibet Bhotias."¹⁶ According to Risley, writing in 1894, British policy in the region was precisely to destabilise Tibetan influence, and he foresaw that Nepali Hindus, or "race and religion" would "settle the Sikkim difficulty."¹⁷ But he made no mention of Christianity as a religion which could displace the Buddhist Bhutia, although the EHM in Darjeeling and Kalimpong already had a strong hold, several national churches had been established, and numerous conversions were recorded. Perhaps Risley was aware that in spite of the above, Christianity was having negligible impact on Tibetans and Bhutia in Darjeeling District. But more important was the political situation of which Jha makes no mention in his arguments -- that the native population in Darjeeling-Kalimpong were British subjects; under the British Government there was religious freedom and the EHM had free rein, while the people of Sikkim were not considered British subjects, and the Sikkim Darbar was allowed relative freedom to handle its own internal affairs, including religious matters. He also seems to be unaware of the extensive mission work of SAM for over fifty years, dating from 1894, which the Sikkim Darbar allowed in the heart of Bhutia territory in North Sikkim. Jha points out that J.C. White was of the opinion that a number of different mission organisations or denominations in one such small area as Sikkim could lead to bewilderment and confusion among the local people who would not grasp the point of such divergence.¹⁸ Yet White actively supported the work of SAM in North Sikkim. Finnish missionaries credit him with helping Mathilda Johansson to open the first weaving school at Lachung in 1899, and with helping the pioneer missionary in Lachen to acquire land.¹⁹ He also initiated the planting of apple orchards and helped find a market in Darjeeling for the mission-produced

products. White was not averse to using Christian missions for the social and economic uplift of the people under his charge in Sikkim.



Figure - 5. Sikkim

EHM'S FIRST QUARTER CENTURY IN SIKKIM, 1880-1905

The Scottish missionaries were interested in Sikkim from the time Macfarlane started the mission in Darjeeling -- a natural interest due to Darjeeling originally being a part of Sikkim and the free flow of the local peoples back and forth across the border. Macfarlane's early pleas for at least three missionaries was with a view to one of them concentrating on Sikkim, and when he was joined by Revs. A. Turnbull and W.S. Sutherland in 1880, Sutherland was deputed the same year to take up the "Independent Sikkim Division."²⁰ This was the beginning of the EHM's direct involvement in Sikkim. In November, with tent and provisions in hand, Sutherland left on a three-month exploration of his newly assigned area, with the intent of starting a school in Daramden (near Phambong) in Western Sikkim. He was accompanied by a Christian teacher, Gambu (Lepcha), who originally came from that village and had stayed behind after Sutherland left to start the missions's first school in Sikkim.²¹ Although Sutherland was soon called back to oversee the Kalimpong Division of the mission while Macfarlane went on furlough, a beginning had been made in Sikkim. Responsibility for oversight of the school now fell to Turnbull from Darjeeling, while Sutherland continued his efforts to secure permission for a missionary to reside in Sikkim. In 1881 Turnbull despatched a new young catechist, Buddhiman Limbu, "to the virtually virgin field of Daramden" where he joined Gambu, and Turnbull noted that "the two families form society for each other and constitute, let us hope, the germ of a new Church."²² From this time forward the work of establishing churches in Sikkim was largely in the hands of Nepali and Lepcha preachers. Although Buddhiman resigned at the end of the following year, there were four new Christian converts by that time, and Bahadur, "a comparatively recent convert, but...an earnest Christian and an enthusiastic propagandist," was assigned to replace him.²³ But, just as Buddhiman before him, Bahadur also endured indifferent health in the hot climate of Daramden and had to leave within two years. From 1885 Gambu, the teacher, was

appointed the official catechist for Western Sikkim, where he served for twenty-six years, a true pioneer of the church who travelled the length and breadth of the land and was later succeeded by his own son.²⁴ When he assumed responsibility for the church it included just twenty-four Christians, almost all Lepcha. These new converts were evidently mostly from Gambu's own Lepcha community rather than from Daramden in the valley below, which was a Nepali village.²⁵

When Turnbull sent the first catechist to Sikkim in 1881 to work alongside the Christian teacher he noted, "The native authorities know that he is there, and for what purpose."²⁶ The starting of the school in Daramden with Gambu as the teacher was indeed at the local Kazi's suggestion, and the Maharaja had also indicated to Sutherland his willingness for schools to be started if they were staffed by native teachers.²⁷ Thus when Sutherland's continued requests for permission for a missionary to reside within Sikkim were rebuffed, he had good reason to make the following proposal:

...for the present I think our best plan would be to start schools on the Sikkim frontier, which is the most populated part of Sikkim. These schools would be superintended easily by the missionaries at Kalimpong and Darjeeling.²⁸

This was the strategy that continued to be followed over the coming years. Several of the teachers of the schools that were established were appointed as catechists in turn. The Nepali-Lepcha teachers and catechists were trained in Darjeeling-Kalimpong then sent to reside and work in Sikkim, while the missionaries made occasional supervisory and itinerate preaching trips across the border.²⁹ Because of this pattern being established from the beginning, the grass-roots work of evangelism and establishment of Christian congregations was not unduly affected by the missionaries' erratic presence over the coming years.

When Wm. Macfarlane returned to Darjeeling in 1885 it was with a special commission for him to seek a new field for the proposed Scottish Universities' Mission (SUM) to adopt. From November he left on an eight-week

tour of inquiry to Independent Sikkim, resulting in an "elaborate report of eighty-eight pages, with an accompanying explanatory letter of fifteen pages" in which he strongly recommended its adoption as an SUM field.³⁰ This was unanimously approved. Macfarlane was appointed as the SUM's first missionary, and he took over responsibility for the work already begun in Western Sikkim (which at this time included one catechist and two schools). He proposed four main modes of operation in the commencement of the mission: 1) to begin itinerant evangelism as soon as possible; 2) to plant as many catechists and schools as possible; 3) to establish a training school to provide catechists and teachers for both Sikkim and the Darjeeling Mission; and, 4) to extend the translation and production of Christian literature in the Nepali, Lepcha, and Tibetan languages.³¹ This was almost identical to his strategy in establishing the Darjeeling Mission fifteen years earlier. The establishment of a training school to provide the national personnel needed to carry the mission forward became paramount in Macfarlane's efforts. Neither the Darjeeling nor Kalimpong divisions of the Darjeeling Mission could spare any men for Sikkim, so Macfarlane had to train up his own agents.³² In 1886 a beginning was made in temporary quarters in Darjeeling. He soon had eighteen students, including eight for the Sikkim Mission.³³ In January of the following year Macfarlane went to Kalimpong to begin building permanent quarters for the Training Institute, but tragically died on the 15th of February after a strenuous day in the forest cutting timber. Sutherland then once again assumed responsibility for Sikkim and was appointed as the missionary of the fledging SUM, in addition to his charge over the Kalimpong division of the Darjeeling Mission.

Although Wm. Macfarlane's tenure as the first SUM missionary for Sikkim was cut short, he had paved the way for the adoption of Sikkim as a mission field, laid the foundations for the new mission, and set it on course with clearly defined objectives which guided its further development. To what extent were those objectives fulfilled over the coming years? Itinerant evangelism by

the missionaries mostly involved short annual trips from Kalimpong. This was due to the missionaries' dual responsibility for Sikkim work, including the Training Institute in Kalimpong, and for the Kalimpong district churches. As the Training Institute began to produce new agents for the mission, Sutherland was able to open four more schools in Sikkim during the first half of 1889, and by the end of 1890 there were seven schools spread across southern Sikkim.³⁴ There were also two full-time catechists -- Gambu continuing in West Sikkim, and Apun Lucksom, a Lepcha Christian school teacher at Singtam, East Sikkim, who was appointed in 1890 as catechist for that area.³⁵ They went about "day by day among the villagers preaching the Gospel," conducted public worship and instructed the scattered Christian community of seventy-two baptised members, and visited each of the schools monthly to examine the pupils.³⁶ In the meantime the Training Institute in Kalimpong (later SUMI) continued to aggressively recruit students from Sikkim, until in 1891 seventeen of its thirty-seven students were from Sikkim (the others for Darjeeling and Kalimpong).³⁷ Sutherland repeatedly cried out in his reports for a missionary to be appointed full-time for the development of this Institute.

Throughout the following decade, until the Guild Mission took responsibility for Kalimpong from 1899 and sent their own missionary, whoever was stationed in Kalimpong had dual charge of both the Kalimpong Mission and of SUMI. They also often had to oversee the work in Sikkim. During this decade the first Scottish missionary arrived who was able to settle inside of Sikkim with the sole intent of devoting himself to its evangelism, Rev. J. Macara.³⁸ He took up residence in a bungalow prepared for him in Chidam (also called Sadam) from 1893, but little is known about his ministry during the next few years. He was in Chidam less than five years when illness forced him to take a furlough in early 1898.

Four years after Macara's departure a second missionary and his family was able to settle inside Sikkim, Rev. W.G. Mackean, who became affectionately

known as "Uncle Sikkim."³⁹ He resided at Chidam for four years, from 1902-1905, then was recalled to Kalimpong to run SUMI. Following their furlough the Mackean family returned to Sikkim in 1910 to build up a new mission centre more centrally located at Temi, on the old direct route from Darjeeling to Tibet. They built a manse to accommodate a growing family and a governess who came to help with the children and to be a companion to Mrs. Mackean when her husband was itinerating. They also started a weaving school and taught the local people to grow vegetables and to raise poultry to supplement both their diets and their income, for which the Mackeans are gratefully remembered even today. Although a church was never established in Temi, for the next ten years Mackean engaged in "strenuous itineration among the little churches and schools of that mountainous land."⁴⁰ He built a strong bond with and between the mission workers, encouraging and supervising them as they carried on the day to day work of evangelism and church building. When Mackean suddenly had to abandon his station about 1920, and again there was no missionary immediately available to replace him, the catechists, Christian teachers and church members faithfully carried on the work.

As from the beginning, the success or failure of Christianity gaining a hold among the people of Sikkim fell squarely on the shoulders of these Lepcha and Nepali workers, and the teaching they had received from the missionaries. The second decade of active mission work in Sikkim saw an increase in the number of national mission workers. The number of teachers almost doubled as new schools were opened. The Maharaja publicly recognised the Mission's work in the schools and appealed for even more to be opened.⁴¹ A new aspect of mission work in Sikkim was introduced in 1897 when Elatji Matiyas, the first compounder-cum-catechist, was sent to open a small dispensary in conjunction with the mission centre in Chidam.⁴² Three years later the mission agents carried out a vaccination campaign in the midst of a smallpox epidemic; over 100 deaths were reported in one area alone.⁴³ By 1906 there were four mission

dispensaries staffed by compounder-cum-catechists: two in the West at Dentam and Phambong, one in the South at the mission centre in Chidam, and one in the East at Rhenock. The Indian Government recognised the essential medical service being provided to the local people and gave a grant of medicines for the dispensaries.⁴⁴ These social services of primary schools and basic medical facilities served the people of Sikkim regardless of race or religion and brought many into contact with Christians and Christian teaching for the first time. But, perhaps most significant for the growth of the church, the number of catechist-preachers tripled. Gambu and Apun were joined by a third catechist in January 1892, Kartik Singh Rai, for Central Sikkim.⁴⁵ Now all areas except North Sikkim, which was the domain of the Scandinavian Alliance Mission, had a full-time catechist in residence. Although Kartik Singh resigned within a year of his appointment, he was immediately replaced by his younger brother Parbal Singh who was the mission appointed teacher at Saryong, a predominantly Nepali village.⁴⁶ By the end of the decade there were six catechists in Sikkim serving four congregations of over 200 Christians, who were predominantly Lepcha.⁴⁷ They lacked only the ability to administer the sacraments, as there was no ordained man among them. It was not until the 1920s that the Sikkim Kirk Session had its own native ordained minister in residence.⁴⁸ In the meantime they were dependent on either the missionaries or occasional visits from ordained Nepali or Lepcha ministers from other EHM churches in Darjeeling District.⁴⁹

These first six catechists were men of unusual dedication and steadfastness, strong in their faith and withstanding inevitable opposition as the first Christian preachers in their country. Five of the six served out their careers as catechists, and three of them served literally until their deaths, an average of thirty-three years each.⁵⁰ Apun, Parbal Singh and Dachek serve as examples. Apun, responsible over three congregations in East Sikkim (Pakyong, Rhenock and Singtam), was in service the longest, for forty-seven years, from 1890 until the time of his death in 1937. His youngest son recalls that he preached in both

Lepcha and Nepali, moving monthly between the three congregations, and daily out among people's homes for evangelism and house meetings.⁵¹ He endured much hardship, walking everywhere over the rough terrain, often with no proper paths, always carrying his own loads, holding meetings late into the night, and then having to write a daily diary report of his activities to show the missionary. A description by Sutherland of itineration in Sikkim gives an idea of the difficulties encountered:

It (Sikkim) is one of the most rugged, mountainous parts of the globe. It is one mass of crumpled, cracked, and twisted mountain ridges, meeting one another in deep, gloomy gorges, which form the channels of innumerable streams, torrents, and rivers. It has within itself all climates -- from tropical heat in the confined ravines to the polar cold of everlasting snow. Bridges of cane thrown over the rivers in the dry season are swept away by the roaring floods in the rainy season. Whatever has to be transported from one part to another must be carried on men's backs; the country is impracticable for beasts of burden.⁵²

Parbal Singh lived a selfless and sacrificial life. After he was chosen by the Gangtok Christians to be their own catechist, he built a two-room house and set one of the rooms aside for Sunday worship.⁵³ At the time of Parbal Singh's retirement as a catechist, the Mission newspaper eulogised him as follows:

He was a splendid pioneer; he worked very quietly and unobtrusively and his great aim was to live at peace with all his neighbours; he had a horror of debt and during the time he was educating his sons at High School, he often ate only one meal a day; he was very charitable in helping others out of debt or when in trouble.⁵⁴

He was also said to have often restricted himself to one meal a day in order to help feed his poorer neighbours.

Dachek, in West Sikkim, was an avid evangelist who often frequented the trail cutting through Sikkim from Nepal to Darjeeling "talking to everyone on the road and distributing Christian literature."⁵⁵ He set an example by his own life of practising his Christian principles by ringing every tenth tree in his orange grove as "God's tree," then using the income from those trees exclusively for

"God's work." He enlarged the school building and built a bigger building beside the school for the church.

Five of these original six catechists came from Sikkim, and they were all Lepcha except Parbal Singh Rai.⁵⁶ Twenty years earlier, when Sutherland made his first itineration in Sikkim, he had observed that although the Nepali were most numerous, the Lepcha were the "most hopeful field" and "the most amiable."⁵⁷ The early years of the mission confirmed this observation. For example, of thirty-eight new converts recorded in 1895, they were all Lepcha except for one Nepali and two Sikkimese Tibetans. Rev. Mackean reported at the turn of the century that the majority of the converts in Sikkim were Lepcha:

Up till now very few of our converts have come from among the Nepalis who, numerically are in a very large majority in Sikkim. The Nepali settlers coming as they do direct from Nepal are bigoted Hindus and though eager to avail themselves of the education afforded by the mission schools, have not responded to the preaching of the Gospel.⁵⁸

Rather than harbour such a prejudicial view, Mackean would have done well to mark Macfarlane's earlier observation concerning the efficacy of Lepcha preaching to Nepali:

...the difference in race between the Lepchas and Nepaulese is so strongly marked, that we find that a Nepaulese Catechist can do little amongst the Lepchas, while a Lepcha Catechist can do nothing amongst the Nepaulese.⁵⁹

The majority of the converts being Lepcha during these early days was but a natural outcome of the overwhelming majority of the catechist-preachers being Lepcha. They not only most easily related to their own people, but worship services were often conducted in the Lepcha language, which was unintelligible to Nepali speakers.

The only congregation of predominantly Nepali ethnics (Limbu and Rai) was in Saryong, West Sikkim, where Parbal Singh Rai was the catechist. Parbal Singh and his family were the first converts baptised in the village while Parbal

was serving as the mission teacher. The "Sikkim Minutes" in 1891 recorded that there were many secret believers in the village, and it was agreed to seek a Limbu evangelist from Kalimpong to come and encourage them to make an open profession of the Christian faith.⁶⁰ Back in Scotland a "religious movement in Western Sikkim" was reported with great expectation:

...the missionary has not yet been able to visit Saryong himself. But if the letters we receive and the reports that are brought to us be true, then there is a wonderfully white field ready there... remarkable interest [is] shown by a remarkably large body of hearers. The teacher now writes asking to receive baptism with his family. One of the most influential of the Limbu caste there also desires more light...⁶¹

Between July 1891 and December 1892 eight Nepali adults, all Limbu and Rai ethnics, were baptised in comparison with seventeen Lepcha adults.⁶² The year after Parbal Singh's family's baptism, Lalsingh Limbu's family and then a second Limbu family were baptised in Saryong. They formed the foundation for a local congregation and Parbal Singh was appointed as their catechist. Lalsingh became the local school teacher, and was chosen as an Elder in the church in 1906.

The lack of Nepali catechists was not the only factor contributing to the Lepcha predominance in the churches. Nepali converts also experienced the stiffest resistance from their families and local communities, such as the Limbu in Saryong who were afraid to make an open profession of faith in Christ. Lalsingh reported being persecuted by his wife and the "Subbalog" (village chief). A fifteen year-old Limbu girl was turned out of her father's house after eating with some Christians in her village as a practical demonstration of her desire to be baptised.⁶³ The main issue was "breaking caste" and the resultant severance from family and community. Numerous accounts appear in various Sikkim Mission records of converts who returned to Hinduism and idolatrous practices under pressure, others who "fell away" due to the opposition of relatives or through marriage to a Hindu partner, and others who resorted to Hindu priests

and did puja at a time of illness.⁶⁴ Yet there is no indication of discussion at Sikkim Panchayat meetings of the issues involved; no record of special Biblical teaching being given on the areas concerned; no evident attempt to understand the cultural dynamics involved or find creative means of helping converts translate their new faith into their cultural milieu. Rather, there seems simply to have been enforcement of standards imposed by the missionaries from their Western theological outlook. During a Panchayat meeting in 1908 the catechists themselves voiced their concern about the number of "lapses," and when the missionary Chairman mentioned the small number of baptisms they countered with a comment about the missionary's tendency to baptise too quickly.⁶⁵ Only from that time were the catechists given the responsibility to test applications for baptism.

Lepcha also experienced opposition to conversion to Christianity, especially those who had earlier adopted Buddhism. For instance, local lamas and Lepcha "bongtings" (Lepcha priests) attempted to counter the early movement towards Christianity in Namthang.⁶⁶ But generally, partly because there was no caste issue, and conversion did not involve "pollution," Lepcha converts were still accepted within their families. For example, Adyat (later called Elatji) hung back from the decisive step of baptism because of his elder brother who was a Lama, and "this brother used all his influence to prevent Adyat taking the name of Christian."⁶⁷ But after Adyat finally made his decision, although he "had some bitterness to endure," his relatives continued to accept him as one of themselves. This was the same experience of the Lepcha converts in the Kalimpong Mission.

Numerical growth in the church was not only due to the efforts of the mission workers. Many conversions came through the new converts actively telling about their new faith to their friends and family. Mission reports are replete with examples of family members becoming Christians, sometimes whole families being baptised at once, especially among the Lepcha. Also, many of the

Christians in the Darjeeling and Kalimpong division churches had family members across the border in Sikkim, and there was plenty of mutual intercourse back and forth. Those who came across to British territory, either temporarily or permanently, were exposed to Christian influences through the schools, medical services in Kalimpong, preaching on bazaar days, and the fast growing Christian presence in many villages. In the other direction, the "Sikkim Minutes" record many instances of Christians from Darjeeling District who migrated into Sikkim for employment and had their membership transferred on the church rolls. For example, Harkadhoj Pradhan and his family transferred to Sikkim from Kalimpong in 1897, and he was ordained as an Elder of the Gangtok congregation in 1906.⁶⁸ The process of Christianity taking root in Sikkim is aptly described by Rev. P.S. Tingbo in the Gangtok Church Golden Jubilee 1936-1986 souvenir:

...the Gospel seed started taking its strong root in Sikkim...when Nepali and Lepcha converts from Kalimpong and Darjeeling frequented Sikkim visiting their relatives. Some of them settled down over there permanently. These unknown and unsung Christian converts who came to Sikkim and worked there as teachers, compounders and clerks were the first among those who introduced Jesus Christ to the people of Sikkim.⁶⁹

The above illustrates the positive effect of migration on the spread of Christianity. It should be noted that a number of the Christian mission agents who served in Sikkim were originally from the Darjeeling side of the border, but lived their lives out in Sikkim, deliberately transplanted for the purpose of disseminating the Christian message. There were also instances of internal migration for this purpose, as in the case of Dorji, the Christian teacher at Chidam who resigned in 1897 after ten years of service because, "He desired to return to his native place. He expressed the hope that he would be able to work among his non-Christian relatives."⁷⁰ Emigration of Christians out of Sikkim also aided the spread of Christianity. For example, Mangalsingh Ribu Karthak, one of the earliest converts from East Sikkim, moved his family to Kalimpong

where he attended SUMI, was recognised as an Elder in the church, and was made in-charge of the SUMI Teachers' Training Department.⁷¹ In this position his Christian testimony had an influence on students from all the surrounding Himalayan areas. He was also one of the first SUMI teachers to be deputed to Haa, Bhutan for a few years, and his son, Robert Karthak, later became one of the first pastors in Nepal.

Several characteristics of the Scottish Sikkim Mission during its first quarter century have already been reviewed: schools opened as a means of gaining entrance and the local people's good-will, later supplemented by medical work; catechists trained from among the local people to work alongside the schools, and appointed strategically in different areas of the country; limited missionary attendance, although a mission centre was finally established, with the burden of evangelism and teaching of new converts falling on the catechists; dual responsibilities of oversight of the institutional work and spiritual ministry by both the missionary and the catechists; no native ordained ministers able to administer the Christian sacraments; a migration flow back and forth across the border with Darjeeling District and its influence on the growth of the church; Lepcha predominance among both the native mission agents and the overall Christian community; and opposition to conversions from families and the local community, especially among Nepali ethnics.

But what did the Sikkim church actually look like after the first quarter century of EHM work in Sikkim, and where were local congregations growing up? As mentioned above, by the early 1890s there were catechists stationed in the three general areas of West, South/Central, and East Sikkim. Then in 1897 a fourth area was carved out by combining the Christians of Vok and Namche in the Central region with those nearby in the Western region at Rinchinpong, and put under a separate catechist. At the same time, a second full-time catechist was assigned to Saryong in West Sikkim, so there were now catechists over what were commonly referred to as five "congregations." These congregations consisted of

scattered Christians surrounding the area where each catechist was based, often in nearby villages that could only be reached on a monthly basis. They grew up in the following places:

1) The oldest group was from Phambong and Chekung in Western Sikkim where the first baptisms took place in the 1880s. The first church building constructed in Sikkim was at Phambong in 1896, when a stone church was built to replace the old bamboo hut which housed both the school and the church, and the cost was borne entirely by the catechist's and the Christian teacher's families.⁷² (The policy of the mission was for both school buildings and local church buildings to be constructed entirely by the local people, without mission help.) This area was so strongly Lepcha that all worship services were held in the Lepcha language. A second congregation in the West was formed around Saryong, a Nepali stronghold, together with Soreng. Additional groups of Christians were found at Mangmo, Rumbok and Rinchinpong, each of which had local baptisms from the 1890s.

2) The East was the second area with a catechist. Before the end of the century there were enough Christians connected with the following three villages to warrant a monthly visit from Apun the catechist to conduct worship services: Pakyong, Singtam/Dikkling and Rhenock. He also paid visits to Gangtok where the first converts, the brothers Baksingh and Phursingh Karthak, were baptised in 1901.⁷³ A few years later the Christians of Gangtok invited Parbal Singh to be their catechist and a congregation in Gangtok was subsequently established.

3) The mission station was built at Chidam in the Central area, the third place a catechist was appointed. Although the Chidam "congregation" is referred to in various mission records, no actual congregation of local Christians was established there; nor in Temi to which the mission centre was transferred from 1910. The Christians in Chidam consisted of the various mission agents connected with the centre, and the catechist assigned there helped to keep the station running and assisted the missionary when in residence. However, there

was a strong movement towards Christianity among the Lepcha of nearby Namthang from the early 1890s, involving the baptism of whole families. In 1902 they became the first group of Christians in Sikkim to construct a church building separate from the school building.⁷⁴ At this time they formed the largest group of Christians in any single village in Sikkim.⁷⁵

4) The Vok-Namche area also saw baptisms from the early 1890s and grew to the extent that they had their own catechist appointed in 1897, to serve a recorded twenty-two Christians.⁷⁶ The Christians in this area were concentrated in Vok itself and constituted one of the earliest congregations. They built their own church about 1917, and the first ordained minister in Sikkim was posted there about ten years later.

By the end of the first twenty-five years of work in southern Sikkim, the number of EHM-related Christians had increased from the 72 reported in 1890 (after the first decade) to 305 in 1905.⁷⁷ There were groups of these Christians in at least fourteen different villages, with regular worship services held in at least nine or ten of them, in addition to scattered individual Christians.

EHM IN SIKKIM THE NEXT 50 YEARS (1905-1955):

THE ERA OF CONSOLIDATION, GOVERNMENT RECOGNITION AND MISSION TO CHURCH TRANSITION

As Sikkim entered the 20th century the foundations of the Christian church had been laid. The church continued to be characterised as an overwhelmingly Lepcha institution, with a slow-growing number of Nepali converts, mainly Limbu and Rai. The ratio of Lepcha to Nepali ethnics in the church did not undergo significant change until the second half of the century. Into the 1940s there was also no significant change in the number of congregations, nor in the number of schools or dispensaries under the Sikkim Mission, and they all continued to be spread out between the three main geographic regions of East, West and South Sikkim. Missionaries also continued

to come and go, one at a time, and with gaps in-between. During Mackean's second period of residence in Sikkim, from 1910-1920 when the mission centre was moved from Chidam to Temi, the mission work carried on much as before, but with the added strengthening of his regular presence.⁷⁸ Following another three year gap, it was the appearance of the Honourable Mary Scott as the new head of the Sikkim Mission which most strongly impacted its development, including the shift of its centre to the capital of Gangtok.⁷⁹ She was the first and only female and unordained superintendent of an entire district in EHM. Rev. C.T. Pazo, who came to be her counterpart as an ordained national minister in the Sikkim church, is a second personality who overshadows this era.⁸⁰ Their combined influence largely shaped the future development of the church.

When EHM joined the Presbyterian Church in India in 1905, the "Sikkim congregation," including all the Christians in East-South-West Sikkim, was named one of the Kirk Sessions of the Eastern Himalayan Presbytery. From the following year elders began to be ordained, until there was a total of thirteen by 1925.⁸¹ This basically entailed a recognition of those who were already mission workers also as "elders" in the church. All of the current and retired catechists were automatically made elders, and other Christian mission agents and occasional laymen were gradually added.⁸² Thus the ordination of elders seems to have done little to help develop further lay leadership in the churches during this era. These elders made up the Sikkim Bahra Panchayat until it was divided into two sections from 1923 -- the Kirk Session to handle church affairs, and the Workers' Panchayat to handle EHM work, in which all mission agents had a right to participate.⁸³ For the first time the institutional and ecclesiastical aspects of the Sikkim Mission were separated, although they both remained under the missionary's direction for another twenty-five years. This separation was due to the immediate organising influence of Mary Scott when she became SUM's missionary over the Sikkim field in 1923, and brought it into line with the structure already in place in the other EHM fields.

As Mary Scott assumed responsibility over all aspects of the Sikkim Mission's work, including the schools and dispensaries and the small churches, she began an immediate "house-cleaning" and structural reorganisation. She was obviously a good administrator and able to get the people to work with her in new initiatives. She was loved and respected by the local people not only for these qualities, but because she loved them and worked so hard on their behalf.⁸⁴ She was also seen as a friend of the nation of Sikkim, not only of the Christians.⁸⁵ Her prior eighteen years with the Guild Mission in Kalimpong, including extensive work around the district and at the centre, gave her a wealth of experience on which to draw, and which she used to good advantage.

On the church side Scott brought both further organisation and innovations, many of which found their inspiration in Kalimpong. The individual churches were instructed to hold monthly Chota Panchayat meetings of their adult male members, and the catechists to keep Church Membership Roll Books.⁸⁶ Sikkim-wide annual church conferences were instituted from 1925 and held in different locations, including special "Git Concerts" and prizes given for the best new songs in Nepali, Lepcha and Tibetan. She implemented plans for strengthening the Sunday Schools, for the formation of Women's Fellowships, for adult literacy programmes, for teaching a simple liturgy to the illiterate, and for money boxes to be distributed to the catechists to stimulate church collections. As church administration and programmes were strengthened, evangelism was not neglected. But it was no longer a role primarily of the catechists, as it had been in the mission's formative years. An "Evangelistic Week Campaign" was held in nine different centres in 1924.⁸⁷ Through bazaar preaching and house-to-house visits it was reported that over 1,560 people heard the Gospel, and the campaign was repeated the following year. For continued itineration, Miss Scott made contact with the National Bible Society of Scotland which began to support two colporteurs in Sikkim from 1926. Occasional references to these colporteurs

and their tours to sell Christian literature, often in remote areas, are found in the Panchayat Minutes into the early 1950s. Attention was also given to further Bible training for the "prachins" (formerly called catechists), to better equip them in caring for their congregations.⁸⁸ At the Panchayat meetings they were given books to study, such as "The Lord's Supper" and "Workers with God," then exams were held. From the 1930s the Scripture Union exams were required for all prachins and teachers. Occasional special courses were held, such as the "Prachin Refresher Course" for a month in 1933 in Gangtok, with lectures by both Scott and Pazo. Scott was the administrator, motivator and innovator, but the prachins were still the grass-root workers among the churches. As she herself stated,

It is good to remember that the main part of the work, and the success or failure of it, rests on the local Indian Catechists, Compounders and Teachers. Of these the best known are Gomba, Apun, Parballeasingh and Dachek.⁸⁹

Yet despite the key role played by the prachins, their place in the church was dramatically reversed by the 1950s. There was evidently a shift in the understanding of the role of the prachins. Whereas they were originally responsible over particular areas of the country, for both evangelism through bazaar preaching and house to house visitation and the care of the scattered Christians, their role had narrowed to being responsible over particular congregations. The function of itinerant evangelism shifted from the prachins during Scott's time to colporteur-cum-evangelists who were engaged with the help of the National Bible Society of Scotland. At the same time, even though the number of mission-supported prachins increased somewhat under Scott, there were fewer than before involved in full-time church work. Rather, the increase in number was through the addition of compounder-cum-prachins to staff the expanded dispensary work. On an average there were no more than four or five prachins engaged in full-time church work through the late 1930s; the same number as at the end of the 19th century.⁹⁰ In addition, no new full-time

workers devoted specifically to the churches were appointed by the mission after the 1930s.⁹¹ As the early pioneer prachins died or retired there was a steady decrease, until by 1950 only four prachins remained, including three with the dual responsibility of being compounders. In 1952 both of the two remaining mission-supported prachins had extra responsibilities as either a teacher or compounder, leaving only Rev. C.T. Pazo available to travel among and support all the churches.⁹²

This dramatic change in the position of prachins within the Sikkim Mission reflected changes within EHM as a whole. A combination of factors may have been involved, including: financial constraints during the war years; a possible lack of interested candidates, attracted elsewhere by the spectre of much better paying jobs as educational opportunities improved; the beginning of EHM's reflections on necessary transitions in the mission-church relationship, and a shift of emphasis towards an ordained national ministry; SUMI's change in focus from training church workers to a more purely educational function; and perhaps the expectation that the combination of ordained national ministers with elders as local lay leaders would eliminate the need for the less educated prachins. But could it reasonably be expected that one man (C.T. Pazo) could adequately care for the spiritual needs of a Christian community spread across the expanse of Sikkim, with its rugged terrain and difficulties of travel and communications? Or was the above combined with a new concentration on the centre at Gangtok to the neglect of the village congregations, especially after Scott's departure? There is no simple answer. But it is clear that when Pazo was installed in 1928 as the only ordained national minister of the "Sikkim congregation" it heralded one of the most significant changes to take place in the church by the end of the first half of the 20th century -- the shift from dependence on relatively uneducated but highly dedicated prachins, based in various locations throughout the southern half of Sikkim, to an ordained national ministry vested in the person of one man based in Gangtok. The era of the unordained prachins

with EHM in Sikkim was virtually at an end.

Mary Scott was instrumental in motivating C.T. Pazo to study theology and return to serve the church in his native Sikkim.⁹³ She not only saw her need for an ordained colleague, but the need of the national church to develop its own leadership. But why had this obvious need of the church in Sikkim been neglected until this time, over forty years after the work had begun? Since 1900 fourteen men from the Darjeeling and Kalimpong Missions had been ordained; why had no one been raised up from and for Sikkim? And with the shift of emphasis to an ordained ministry, why was no one else ordained in Sikkim for another forty years, leaving Pazo alone to carry the burden? This seems especially ironic when the other main branch of the Scottish University Mission work in the Eastern Himalayas was the Training Institute, SUMI, which was originally started by Wm. Macfarlane with the express purpose of training national church workers for Sikkim.

Before Pazo's ordination in 1928 various native pastors from the Darjeeling and Kalimpong Missions had occasionally gone to Sikkim to perform baptisms or weddings, in addition to the missionaries. Then following Mackean's departure, Rev. Lachsman Singh was transferred from Kalimpong to be in-charge of Sikkim from 1921, the first native pastor given that responsibility.⁹⁴ But he found the work in Sikkim too strenuous and in late 1922 agreed to continue as the Moderator of the Sikkim Kirk Session only, and to serve as their ordained minister in an honorary capacity from Kalimpong as he was able.⁹⁵ He continued in this role during the first few years of Mary Scott's superintendency, basically to perform baptisms and administer the sacraments. The first national of Sikkim to be ordained was Rev. Pahlo Targain of Vok. Following a year of training in Kalimpong, given to him on condition that he "be willing to go wherever sent in Sikkim," Targain was licensed and then ordained in 1926 and posted to Vok.⁹⁶ However, two years later he resigned and was "deposed from the office of a minister by the Presbytery and excommunicated by the Sikkim

Kirk Session."⁹⁷ The need of an ordained national minister, and one who would be respected within the society at large, was now of paramount importance.

Chhotuk Tsering Pazo had his primary education at the small mission school in Namthang, then joined the SUM Institute in Kalimpong where he was converted and baptised. His studies not only included teacher's training, but also the study of Tibetan. He was the first SUMI student to matriculate in Tibetan, which was an important factor in his later acceptance by the Maharaja as the spiritual leader of the Christians in Sikkim.⁹⁸ While working as the Tibetan teacher at SUMI, with the encouragement of Miss Scott he became a student of Divinity in an English course taught by Mr. Ogg. He completed the course and was licensed for ministry in 1925, then offered to replace the prachin in Gangtok, Parbal Singh, when he was due to retire in 1927.⁹⁹ Rev. C.T. Pazo was ordained for the ministry in Sikkim on 22 February 1928. The same year he helped P.B. Rai, a committed Christian who had recently moved up from Kalimpong to take a government job, to start the first CE group in Gangtok.¹⁰⁰ A few years later, from 1933, Pazo was made the Moderator of the Sikkim Kirk Session, responsible to regularly visit all of the congregations in Sikkim.¹⁰¹ From this point onward the administration of the affairs of the church were increasingly entrusted to Pazo's hands by Miss Scott, although she remained the overall superintendent of the mission.¹⁰² Finance for all mission workers, including for the church, continued to come from the mission.

In the meantime Miss Scott also worked hard to sharpen up and improve the institutional side of the mission's work in Sikkim. This was done through a new emphasis on the training of teachers and compounders and through various innovations. Numerous students were sent to Charteris Hospital and SUMI in Kalimpong on a scholarship scheme that Scott organised. Scholarships were given on the condition that the student was "willing to go wherever sent in Sikkim," just as P. Targain was told when he offered as a candidate for ordination.¹⁰³ Scott's emphasis was not on education for its own sake, but on

education which would be used to contribute to the development of Sikkim.¹⁰⁴ She instigated classes for girls in Gangtok soon after her arrival, which gradually developed into the prestigious Paljor Namgyal Girls' High School and is a lasting legacy of the EHM in Sikkim.¹⁰⁵ In 1927 C.T. Pazo served as Headmaster alongside his duties as pastor of the Gangtok congregation, while Scott went on furlough. Classes for girls later spread to other places such as Chekung, Vok, Rhenock and Pakyong, teaching both the "3 Rs" and practical skills such as sewing, knitting and weaving. Industrial classes in gardening, carpentry and crafts such as basket weaving were also introduced to all the mission schools during the late 1930s. While the number of schools run by the Scottish Mission did not appreciably change during this time, such innovations as the above were warmly welcomed. To further involve the mission agents in administrative matters a "Consulting Committee to the Missionary" was formed in 1933 at the recommendation of the EHMC.¹⁰⁶

1933 also heralded a temporary agreement with the Darbar to make Gangtok the official centre for the Sikkim mission work.¹⁰⁷ This goal is revealed in the Church of Scotland Minutes of the Foreign Missions Committee: "...the longer our missionary stays in Gangtok the more chance is there of its becoming the permanent centre of our work in Sikkim."¹⁰⁸ Although this hope was never fully realised for the mission (Mary Scott was only allowed to stay in Gangtok out of her personal friendship with the King), it was for the national church. Mary Scott's very residence in Gangtok from 1923-1939, and the prominent place given to the growing Girls' School, made it the de facto centre of the mission.¹⁰⁹ This was reinforced by Rev. C.T. Pazo's being located in the capital. Although Panchayat meetings for the mission agents were held mostly at Temi and occasionally at other locations in the district until 1930, during the rest of Scott's term in Sikkim they met as a rule in Gangtok -- another indication of increasing centralisation and of Rev. C.T. Pazo's central role in the church.

Another important factor in the cementing of Gangtok as the spiritual

centre of the Christians in Sikkim was the fulfillment of the dream of the local Christians to build a pukka church in the capital. Scott wrote,

The desire of the Christians in Gangtok for a pucca Church building which became my dream, fulfilled after many prayers by many people when the Maharaja gave permission to the Indian Christian Community to build themselves a Church and the hearts of many were opened to give money, time and labour and in 1936 the Church was opened free of debt.¹¹⁰

The Gangtok local congregation had met in different homes of the local Christians from the beginning of the century, then shifted to the largest room of Miss Scott's residence at Mazong Kothi from the 1920s, but desired a permanent location. According to C.T. Pazo, permission for a church in Gangtok had originally been granted by the late Maharaja of Sikkim to Sutherland almost fifty years earlier, but was "held in abeyance" until the 1930s.¹¹¹ It was through the persistence of Mary Scott that permission was finally granted.¹¹² In 1933 there was an official proposal within the EHM to build a Church and a Pastor's house in Gangtok for the local Christian community, and by 1934 permission had been granted "to the Indian Christian community of Sikkim" to purchase a site for the church.¹¹³ It is important to note that this permission was for the Christian community, not for the mission, although the mission contributed a large part of the necessary funds for the church, mainly through the money-raising efforts of Mary Scott back in Scotland.¹¹⁴ Within two years the site had been purchased from a local Christian woman and registered in the name of the Gangtok Church, UCNI.¹¹⁵ The new Church was proudly dedicated on 30 October 1936, the first officially recognised Christian church in Sikkim. It was also the first church in any of the EHM fields built in the local architectural style, in harmony with its surroundings.¹¹⁶ This continues to be a point of pride with the local people.

This centralisation of the church in Gangtok was a very significant change. Before this the scattered congregations in the outlying areas were of relatively equal prominence and given equal attention by the mission. But with the

increasing concentration on Gangtok, the mission's focus had gradually shifted away from the village congregations. This was particularly true following Scott's departure from Sikkim in 1939. Her retirement also signalled the end of strong missionary influence in the church in Sikkim. Although she was succeeded by Rev. Gavin Fairservice and his wife Rachel for a few years, their time was divided between Temi, which they had to temporarily re-open as the mission centre, and Gangtok, where Mrs. Fairservice was responsible for the Girls' School.¹¹⁷ Rev. G. Fairservice was called to Kalimpong by 1945, and he was not replaced, leaving Rev. C.T. Pazo responsible for all aspects of the mission's work. Pazo was made Superintendent over the Sikkim field, then in 1952 was nominated as Moderator of the newly formed EHCC, showing the high regard in which he was held by both missionaries and his national colleagues. But it left him even less time to devote to the village congregations of Sikkim.

Although by the 1950s the early division of the EHM field in Sikkim into three districts still held, East-West-South, and churches had been designated as District Centres in each -- Phambong in the West, Vok in the South, and Gangtok in the East (shifted from Pakyong) -- these very designations reflect the greater centralisation taking place, and resultant decline of the other congregations. Phambong, Vok and Gangtok were the only three churches in Sikkim with buildings by this time.¹¹⁸ They were also the only three congregations with Christian Endeavour and Women's Fellowships locally established. Even more importantly, Gangtok was the only place with a full-time Christian leader in residence.¹¹⁹ The others received only annual visits from the mission Superintendent. In the meantime, Gangtok Church continued to grow and develop a multi-faceted church programme. With the combined influence of Scott, Pazo and the elders, a regular Sunday School, CE group and Women's Fellowship had been established by the 1930s, and from there extended to Vok and Phambong. By the 1940s the congregation had its own catechist, K.T. Lucksom, supported locally rather than through the mission. By the early 1950s

there were also several dedicated and actively involved elders located in Gangtok, to whom much of the credit for the growth of the church belongs.¹²⁰ A club and library were opened, and a music group started by the 1950s which supported Sunday worship services. Then in 1954 the Sikkim Christian Youth Group was formed in Gangtok, the first youth association under the Sikkim Kirk Session and meant to serve all the district churches.¹²¹ Gangtok was now clearly the pace-setter for all the EHM- related churches in Sikkim.

A second effect of centralisation was the much higher public profile of the church and more direct exposure to the eyes of the Sikkim Darbar. Before the early 1900s the village congregations, which made up the church side of the Sikkim Mission, were far removed from the government's direct vision. They were thus relatively free to carry on without obstruction, and three local church buildings had been constructed in outlying areas by the local Christians own initiative.¹²² But the construction of the Gangtok Church, combined with Rev. C.T. Pazo's high-profile presence as a man known to and respected by government officials, brought the Sikkim church into the public light. Following this, permission had to be sought from the government for more churches to be built. The majority of the congregations continued to meet either in private homes or in a local mission-staffed school or dispensary building. The next church built in Sikkim was not until twenty years later in Chekung, through the generosity of retired Captain D.S. Lepcha of the Gurkha Rifles.¹²³ It was after yet another thirteen years, 11 May 1969, that the next church building was dedicated, in Rhenock. When the government took over the Rhenock dispensary, where the congregation formerly met, permission was granted for a church to be built and compensation was paid to help with the expense.¹²⁴

Official recognition of the Christian community in Sikkim was a process which ultimately found expression in the registration of Gangtok Church, UCNI. Several things contributed to this. The mission's school work and dispensaries in the villages fostered good relations within Sikkimese society as a whole. Miss

Scott's personal friendship with the Maharaja, her presence in Gangtok, and the impressive work of the Girls' School nurtured a positive attitude towards the Christian community from official circles. This was further enhanced as students from Sikkim found educational opportunities at EHM institutions in nearby Darjeeling and Kalimpong. Educated Christians from Darjeeling and Kalimpong also began to be engaged in government posts in Sikkim and built a reputation for being honest, hard-working, and loyal to the government. The road connection between Siliguri and Gangtok completed in the 1920s also helped to bring Sikkim out of isolation; it encouraged the flow of ideas and made movement to and from the capital much easier. But it was with the advent of Rev. C.T. Pazo's leadership in Gangtok that the government began to have direct dealings with the national church and to recognise the legal rights of their Christian subjects. This was in part due to the predominantly Lepcha ethnic character of the church, and the fact that it was viewed as basically a Lepcha institution under a Lepcha leader at a time when the Government was seeking to strengthen Bhutia-Lepcha solidarity, a minority in their own country threatened by Nepali encroachment.¹²⁵ In 1931 the Sikkim Darbar adopted the 1872 Christian Marriage Act of British India as law in Sikkim, and applied it retrospectively to validate the marriages of all Christian subjects.¹²⁶ About the same time a half acre of land was granted to the Christian community in Gangtok as a cemetery. Rev. C.T. Pazo began to be included in special public events involving the spiritual leaders of the community, whereas no ordained missionary had ever been accorded this recognition.¹²⁷ When the Ecclesiastical Department of the Government was formed, it was Pazo who they consulted on matters concerning the Christians. Throughout his career Pazo was increasingly involved in the social and public life of Sikkim:

He was Honorary Magistrate and member of various Educational and Government Boards and Committees, Sikkim State Council (1959-1969 and 1972-73). Because of his vast knowledge in Tibetan language and literature he is still regarded by Buddhist friends

as "Rimpoche", "Gye She La" or "Lopen La" (great teacher). He was unanimously chosen to read out the congratulatory address from the subjects of Sikkim to the former Chogyal of Sikkim on his coronation day. After the ceremony, one of the biggest erstwhile landlords and an advisor remarked-- "You are not only Pastor to Christians, but to us also." In recognition of his faithful services rendered to the Government of Sikkim, the former Chogyal conferred on him the then second highest title of "Pema Dorje."¹²⁸

With Pazo's extensive involvement in public life, alongside increasing responsibilities within the EHM then EHCC, he had little time left for either pastoral attention to the village Christians or further evangelistic activities, although he did continue the missionaries' traditional annual tour of the field. At a time when local church leaders were needed more than ever they were least available, and nothing was being done to redress the problem. In light of this it is not surprising that the EHM-related churches as a whole in Sikkim, outside of Gangtok, entered a time of virtual stagnation. Both external and internal political factors exacerbated the situation. Following Indian Independence, India assumed Britain's role in Sikkim with the signing of the Indo-Sikkim Treaty, making Sikkim an Indian Protectorate. The frontier with Darjeeling District was closed to foreigners, effectually cutting the missionaries off.¹²⁹ Internally, almost ten years earlier, at a time when the church had been experiencing at least limited growth under Mary Scott's guidance, a significant decision was taken by the Sikkim Darbar in an attempt to limit Christian baptisms. As reported in the Minutes of the Foreign Missions Committee of the Church of Scotland, a decree was passed in 1938 stating that the names of all intended Christian converts were to be reported to the local landlord who would then examine them with the local panchayat and pass their application for baptism on to the Darbar.¹³⁰ Only when permission was finally granted by the Darbar were the candidates to be baptised. Although the minute of 20 December 1938 goes on to say that since the decree went into effect adult converts had been examined, permission received and baptisms taken place, former missionaries in Sikkim and national Christians

alike both testify that from this point the performance of baptisms within Sikkim was fraught with difficulties. It is said that the process was long and slow, applications were often "lost," and permission only came through for a few. Some crossed into Darjeeling or Kalimpong in order to be baptised, a tactic later duplicated by converts in Bhutan and Nepal who crossed their southern borders into India. But this was a long and expensive journey for most people. This decree, together with the fact that Rev. C.T. Pazo was the only ordained minister within Sikkim authorised to perform baptisms after Rev. G. Fairservice's departure, resulted in very few baptisms of adult new converts in Sikkim until the decree was repealed some twenty years later.¹³¹ Even though the Christian community had been accorded official recognition, their higher public profile and continuing conversions were a cause of concern to the politico-religio structure. The decree was an obvious attempt to regulate and keep closer tabs on the growth of Christianity in the State.

Finally, the very Lepcha character of the church may have become a factor in its limited growth. The Lepcha population in Sikkim was not more than several thousand, limiting the evangelistic potential. In addition, the perception in society at large that the church was primarily a Lepcha institution presented little appeal to the fast growing Nepali population. This also seems to have been the church's own self-perception, and Rev. C.T. Pazo was clearly aligned with the Bhutia rulers. Further, for Lepcha Christians to seek to evangelise Hindu Nepali would have required a cross-cultural presentation. Regardless, by the mid-20th century the church evidenced little evangelistic or missionary zeal. It never developed an equivalent of either the Gorkha Mission of the Darjeeling churches or the Bhutan Mission of the Kalimpong churches. It was not until more than twenty-five years later, through an infusion of new leadership and the challenge of new streams of Christianity entering the State, that the Scottish Mission related churches began to grow anew -- and then it was primarily through Nepali ethnics coming into the churches.

SAM IN NORTH SIKKIM

While EHM was engaged in the southern districts of Sikkim, SAM firmly established itself in three different centres in North Sikkim: Ringim (later Mangan), on the road north from Gangtok to Tibet, and further north in the twin valleys of Lachen and Lachung. They were specially chosen by Shoberg during his survey trip to North Sikkim as the three most important villages on the way to Tibet. From the 1870s an agreement had been reached between the Maharaja of Sikkim and the Lt. Governor of Bengal to restrict Nepali immigration to the area below a line drawn north of Gangtok.¹³² This was reinforced by rulings in the early 1900s.¹³³ Within the general restrictions against Nepali immigration to the North, the Lachen-Lachung area was given special status as a "reserved" area where it was difficult for even Lepcha and Bhutia from other parts of Sikkim to get permission to settle.¹³⁴ Thus North Sikkim was inhabited almost exclusively by Lepcha and Bhutia, with some well integrated Limbu/Chong and a few other Buddhist Nepali ethnics -- the only area of Sikkim where the Nepali did not become the majority of the population. This was precisely the kind of area that SAM, with their vision for work among Tibetans peoples, desired to work. Although Ringim was originally populated almost entirely by Lepcha, Lachen's population had a large component of Tibetan Bhutia, and Lachung of Bhutanese Bhutia.

The question should be asked, "Why were the SAM missionaries allowed into this isolated Bhutia-Lepcha region?" It has already been noted that Mr. Shoberg met the Queen of Sikkim during an early survey of the region, and that she ordered that a permit be issued to him. Was she anxious for some of the same benefits of schools and medical treatment to accrue to her Bhutia people as EHM was offering in the predominantly Lepcha-Nepali populated southern half of the country? Perhaps the SAM missionaries' Tibetan language ability appealed to the Darbar, and their primary interest in Tibetan people, which was

the ancestry of the royal family. But would the Darbar not also have been wary of them as Christians, and the possibility of conversions among their people? Rautamäki states that the Queen of Sikkim later opposed the entry of the first missionaries to Lachen in 1900 and sent a message to the village, "No one is allowed to have foreign teachers under their roof nor sell them any food."¹³⁵ This was after the first conversions to Christianity had taken place in Lachung and Ringim. It has also been suggested that the two women who first entered were given permission precisely because they were women, and thus non-threatening; the first male missionary did not take up residence until five years later.¹³⁶ The country was also unsettled politically, with British power in the ascendancy and the Political Officer installed in Gangtok.

Another closely related question is, "Why were so many Finnish missionaries allowed in Sikkim in comparison with the Scottish EHM, and to man three different stations concurrently?" While EHM was never allowed more than one resident foreign missionary or family at a time, SAM and the later Free Church of Finland Mission consistently had a resident ordained couple at Ringim and one or two single women at both Lachen and Lachung for almost fifty years. Was it because the area was so remote that little attention was paid to happenings there, and the benefits from the development-type works and creation of employment opportunities countered most local resistance while the missionaries were in residence? Also, early baptisms of new converts were held in far away Ghoom, in British Indian territory, rather than under the eye of the Buddhist religious establishment. A full answer to these questions will only be found with further in-depth research.

Although the details of the early history of SAM's work in North Sikkim are obscure, the existence of an English handwritten account left by the Finnish missionaries with a national pastor in Ghoom, and the Free Church of Finland Mission's official history published in 1990 contain relevant clues.¹³⁷ The two Swedish women who were sent by SAM to Lachung from Ghoom in 1894, Signe

Rasmussen and Amanda Larsson, together with a Tibetan man as a guide-cum-interpreter, were the first Protestant missionaries to penetrate into North Sikkim. They started work in a humble way, rented a native house, planted a vegetable garden and opened a small school. According to the "SAM in the Himalayas" handwritten records the first local people were baptised in 1895.¹³⁸ Larsson was joined by Mathilda Johansson after Rasmussen left to marry J.F. Fredericksson, then Larsson herself left and was married to F. Gustafson in 1899. A mission compound was slowly established with the building of a mission house and school in 1903, followed by a church in 1910.¹³⁹ Work was slow due to the villagers' nomadic lifestyle. They roamed with their cattle from one pasture to another, and moved to lower elevations in the winter, leaving the village deserted. Work was also initiated in the Lepcha area of Ringim during the winter seasons by these pioneering Swedish women. The first convert in Ringim, Lhenze, was the wife of Chhangchyung the Munshi (headman).¹⁴⁰ She was baptised in 1897, and her son, Tsering Lepcha, later became one of the mission evangelists. Other early Christians were from a nearby leper colony where Rev. Kaarlo Waismaa and his wife Hanna began to work after their arrival in 1899. Waismaas were accompanied by a Bhutia evangelist and his wife, Y. Isaac and Rebecca, the first native workers. The following year work was begun at Lachen by Anna Massinen, Klara Hertz and a Bhutia Christian worker, Kjenrab.¹⁴¹

There was now a line of SAM mission stations from Ghoom in Darjeeling District northward through Pedong-Song and Ringim to Lachung and Lachen. Song was the only station with a sizable Nepali population.¹⁴² Missionaries and "native helpers" were stationed in each of these places, and often moved between them. Extensive evangelism was also carried on in the hills and valleys round about these northern stations, particularly Ringim-Mangan and Chungthang, both predominantly Lepcha populated. These were all areas where the Christian message had never been heard before, very isolated from almost any outside influences. Yet a ready response is testified to by the baptisms recorded in the

SAM handwritten manuscript: 27 from Lachung (probably including Lachen) between 1895 and 1907; 23 from Ringim between 1897 and 1910; 17 from Pedong-Song between 1895 and 1910; and 11 from "Bob" (Chungthang) in 1905 -- a total of 78 in the first fifteen years of SAM's mission work in Sikkim. Many of the earliest baptisms took place in Ghoom during SAM's annual conferences which were started the Autumn of 1897.¹⁴³

Some of the converts baptised at the first conference became mission workers, including: Pasang Tenzing (Lepcha) of Ringim who was the first evangelist and unordained pastor back in Ringim until his death in 1930; Tsering Lepcha of Ringim, a young boy at the time, who became a local evangelist and later worked in Ghoom and Baksaduar; and Y. Isaac (Bhutia) of Pedong who accompanied Waismaa to Ringim, returned to help in the station at Song, later went to Yatung in Tibet, and back to his native Pedong.¹⁴⁴ Chodrug and Karma, both Bhutia from Lachung, are also noted by Hämelin and Peltoniemi as converts who attended the 1897 conference, and they both worked alongside the missionaries.¹⁴⁵ Another early Bhutia convert from Lachung was sent as an evangelist to the SAM station at Baksaduar on the border of Bhutan. These early mission workers had to be trained by the missionaries themselves, just as in EHM.¹⁴⁶ Through the combined efforts of these native workers and the missionaries, Christian congregations were established at each of the stations, and also at Chungthang. During the early years worship services were conducted in the Tibetan language, then were explained in Lepcha for those who did not understand. They used the Tibetan Bible, a Tibetan song-book, and even Tibetan tracts on evangelistic tours.¹⁴⁷ This was in keeping with SAM's single-minded vision for working with Tibetans, and with their language training from Darjeeling. But it is surprising that among the Lepcha converts around Ringim-Mangan and Chungthang the missionaries did not give more attention to the Lepcha language.¹⁴⁸

Both Lachen and Lachung were pioneered by mostly single women

missionaries while Ringim was staffed by mostly ordained men and their wives, from where the men made occasional visits to the stations in Lachen-Lachung.¹⁴⁹ Mission compounds were built in each of these three stations, complete with their own church buildings and schools. In Lachen and Lachung each compound also included a weaving center for the women and a dispensary. According to local informants, in order to improve the local diet and produce income generating crops the missionaries introduced various apple varieties, barley, wheat, cabbage, coffee and even potatoes. The introduction of the weaving industry and these new crops are what the missionaries are most remembered for today. EHM Mission News of December 1931 reported that Lachung, a village of about 600 people, had handlooms in every home, the men were attending the apple orchards of the Maharaja, there was a school run by the mission, and about 40 resident Christians.¹⁵⁰ All of the recorded early converts and mission workers from Lachung and Lachen were Bhutia.¹⁵¹ During the 1920s and 1930s two teachers, Thrinlay (Lepcha), who came up from Ringim, and Gompu Dorji were the local evangelists.¹⁵² The local Christians considered Thrinlay their Pastor, and according to local informants he performed baptisms. In addition to the male native workers, three women evangelists are singled out by Rautamäki as being very important to the work in North Sikkim: Esther Dukpa from Baksaduar, Vasti Lepcha who was raised by Miss Kronqvist at Lachen, and Nordro.¹⁵³

In Ringim the conversion of the Lepcha Munshi's wife and son gave Christianity a high profile. Following the conversion of Pasang Tenzing in 1897, who soon became the local evangelist-cum-pastor, a mission compound and simple church were built on his land.¹⁵⁴ This was later re-established part-way down the hillside at Mangan. During the Revs. E. Owen's and E. Ollila's time much evangelism was done throughout the Lepcha-inhabited jungle areas of North Sikkim. Together with the native evangelists and teams of six to eight local Christians, they regularly went on evangelistic camping tours, travelling about on

foot through the hills and valleys, carrying their loads on their backs, and searching out the scattered Lepcha homes.¹⁵⁵ In those days the Lepcha in the jungle areas were mostly animistic, with little Buddhist influence, except where Tibetan Bhutia had settled. They are described as having been so superstitious, shy and fearful of strangers that they would not even open the doors of their huts, but would hide inside and listen from behind closed doors as Pasang and others preached from the yard outside. In addition to Pasang, Thrinlay was based in Ringim-Mangan for over ten years before going to Lachen-Lachung in the 1920s, and he was followed by Tsering Lepcha. Thargyal Lucksom, formerly at the mission station in Song, East Sikkim, also joined the team as a trained teacher-cum-preacher.¹⁵⁶ Through their evangelistic efforts the Ringim-Mangan congregation had grown to forty-two Christians by 1923, including thirty-three Lepcha and nine Bhutia.¹⁵⁷ About two years later, after Eli Ollila's arrival he performed another ten baptisms. Following Pasang's death in 1930, his second son, Palden, was sent to Serampore for Bible training.¹⁵⁸ Upon his return Palden followed in his father's footsteps as the pastor in Ringim.

Chungthang was also the site of much preaching. It was on the route directly between Ringim and Lachen or Lachung which was regularly traveled by the missionaries and local Christians. There were no resident missionaries, and thus no mission compound as in the other three places where Christian congregations were established, nor was a church built. But by the 1940s there were fifteen to twenty Christian families which met in a rented house for worship, and the Chungthang Pasal acted as the local pracharak.

During this period leading up to the 1940s there was reportedly a lot of response to the Christian message and baptisms were administered locally by the missionaries. Some were converted through prayer for physical healing or for deliverance from the oppression of evil spirits. But the early converts also recall a great deal of societal opposition. Converts were looked down upon, particularly by the surrounding Buddhist community, and efforts were made by

the Buddhist hierarchy to dissuade them from becoming Christians. One Lepcha woman, whose father was a lama, remembers how she and her mother waited until after her father's death before they dared to be baptised. Even so, several Lepcha bongtings and lamas were converted, and they were counselled to leave their former religious practices immediately and destroy their implements.

The number of people who converted to Christianity was evidently brought to the attention of the Darbar, and local informants say that an order was issued from Gangtok in about the early 1940s for preaching of Christianity to be stopped. This may have been related to the 1938 Sikkim Government decree concerning baptisms.¹⁵⁹ Evidence that this decree affected SAM as well as the EHM is found in a letter from E. Kronqvist to the Maling Kazi, dated 8 December 1938, which reads:

Sir, We beg to inform your Honour that a girl here, Changdze by name, Lhagpa's wife, wants to become a Christian. (The husband is a Christian.) Would you kindly approve her, and kindly grant an evidence for her being a Christian.¹⁶⁰

The local interpretation of this requirement was that Christianity had become perceived as a threat to the integrity of the Bhutia and Lepcha original tribes of the land, and the order was meant to stop further spread of the Christian message. The effect was a severe reversal in the fortunes of the churches in North Sikkim. By the mid-1940s Christianity in Lachen, Lachung and Chungthang was in the process of dying out, and in Ringim-Mangan the church went into decline. But there were also other potent forces at work in this reversal.

Some of the most obvious difficulties the mission faced were those associated with World War II, particularly the decline in missionary personnel and financial hardship. By the time Kronqvist returned to North Sikkim in 1938 she was the only senior missionary, albeit with four new recruits. The Ollilas were back in Ghoom. After Kronqvist's death the following year the new team

was depleted one by one until they were all gone by 1941.¹⁶¹ From this time forward the missionaries based at the Free Church of Finland Mission headquarters in Ghoom tried to oversee the North Sikkim work from there, but were only able to make occasional visits. There was a reprieve from 1943 when a Scottish missionary, Margaret Doig, went from Kalimpong to Lachung.¹⁶² But it is said that the last loyal Bhutia Christian, Anni Norden, died while Doig was there.¹⁶³ She was kept in the "got" (cow shed) during her final days because of being a Christian; but she refused to deny her faith in Christ or to accept Buddhist rites. Doig also died before the end of the decade, leaving Pylkkanen as the only missionary to watch over all three stations from Mangan following his return in January 1950. Pastor Thrinlay remained in Lachen until his death in the early 1960s, but Gompu Dorji is said to have reverted to Buddhism.

The fact that Lachen and Lachung were strong Bhutia, and thus Buddhist, areas is one of the most striking factors in the demise of the relatively new Christian communities in their midst. According to Rautamaki, the Lamas gave strict orders from the beginning of SAM's work in North Sikkim against cooperation with the missionaries:

From the start the Buddhist lamas in the area had ordered a death sentence for those assisting missionaries. On one occasion, when two young men, who had been involved with missionaries, were going to be thrown over a bridge into the Tiista-river, at the last moment an English road engineer hurried to the spot and saved the sentenced men. One of these became a christian.¹⁶⁴

She also notes an initial order against assisting the first two missionaries to Lachen five years later, then an outbreak of more open hostility towards the Christians from 1912 when Madame Alexandra Neel entered a Buddhist monastery in Lachen.¹⁶⁵ Neel reportedly incited the Maharaja against the Christians, who were all called in for questioning, and the Lachen school and Lachung weaving centre had to be closed.¹⁶⁶

Another factor in the weakening of the church was that many of the local

Christians were employed by the missionaries. Thus when the missionaries departed the converts lost both their spiritual guides and their livelihood, and they were much more susceptible to societal pressures. In addition, no Christian Bhutia from within the community had been trained into leadership.¹⁶⁷ Further, many of the early converts had died by this time, and the number of new converts in Lachen-Lachung during the past thirty years had decreased.¹⁶⁸ Some reverted to Buddhism, and a few went down to Mangan and other Finnish Mission centres. Following the War, Arthur Pylkkänen returned to Lachung in 1950 with a young Nepali evangelist, Reuben Singh Chhetri, to try to revive the work there. But they were both tragically killed in a landslide caused by flooding in which the whole mission centre was swept away.¹⁶⁹ From the 1950s the Finnish missionaries were no longer able to secure work permits for Sikkim. The only legacy today of this Bhutia side of the Finnish missionaries' labour in Lachen-Lachung is the agricultural crops they introduced, and a lone bell standing on the side of a hill.¹⁷⁰

Some of the same forces were at work in Ringim-Mangan, but here the Christian community survived and over forty years later began to flourish anew. Two of the most striking contrasts between the two places which help to account for this are the difference in ethnic make-up and consequent strength of Buddhist influence (Ringim being Lepcha, and Lachen-Lachung being Bhutia), and the continuing presence of local church leadership in the Ringim-Mangan community. Although Thrinlay and Tsering had both been transferred by the 1930s, the Christian teacher Thargyal Lucksom and evangelist Palden Tenzing were in Ringim. Palden, the first national from North Sikkim sent for theological training, served on as pastor of the Christian community after the missionaries' departure until his death in the mid-1950s. Worship services were now conducted mostly in Lepcha, the mother-tongue of the vast majority of the Christians, rather than in Tibetan. In the meantime the church was forced to move location again when the government took over the mission compound area

for an agriculture centre. Palden donated a piece of land even further down the hill in Mangan and started to build a small church there, with financial assistance from the Finnish missionaries in Ghoom.¹⁷¹

By this time Mangan was being developed by the Indian government as a district centre for the North, which brought in many government officials and workers, gradually changing the population structure of Mangan itself. Some of those in government posts were EHC-related Christians, and they joined in the local worship services. Consequently, the Mangan Christians began occasionally to call on Rev. C.T. Pazo in Gangtok for his services as an ordained man, a further support to them. In 1956 Pazo wrote an article in the EHC Mission News in which he referred to the "sister church" in Mangan; between 1955 and 1960 he had been called to Mangan to perform six Christian weddings.¹⁷² The young people from Gangtok Church also held an outreach at Mangan in 1957, at which time they noted sixteen Christian families in Mangan, including four EHC members and twelve Finnish Church members.¹⁷³ The Finnish missionaries also sent another evangelist-cum-pastor to Mangan, Nathaniel Bhutia, who served the church from 1956-1964, followed by P.K. Rai for one or two years.¹⁷⁴ In the meantime, Jonathan Lepcha, the son of Vasti, one of the early Bible women, was sent to DHBS by the Finnish missionaries in Ghoom. He has served the Mangan congregation as their pastor since the mid-1960s, supported by the Free Church of Finland.

The combination of continuing national leadership, and occasional oversight and concern shown from the missionaries in Ghoom, combined with the reinforcement of EHC-related Christians and support from an ordained national minister in relatively nearby Gangtok, kept the Christian congregation in Mangan alive. The Lachen-Lachung groups had none of these assets. As in Lachen-Lachung some of the Christians in Mangan also reverted to Buddhism, and there is little evidence of growth in terms of new converts, partly due to the reported order against preaching-evangelism. Yet the existing Christians and those who

transferred in continued to meet for worship through the next few decades, until another reversal for the positive began from the 1980s. This again is strongly related to a change in the ethnic composition of the area, as numerous Government offices were opened following Mangan being made the official District Headquarters, and Nepali labourers were allowed into the North in conjunction with development efforts. During the past decade the church in North Sikkim has become a Lepcha-Nepali amalgam centered in Mangan. It is unique as the only congregation in Sikkim to incorporate former Finnish Mission converts, members of CNI (the former Scottish Mission), and El Shaddai-related believers in a truly inter-denominational fellowship. By the 1990s new congregations were also reported in Chungthang and in Jangoo (a cardamom-growing area across the river from Mangan), with new converts mostly from the floating population of Nepali labourers.

DIVERSIFICATION OF THE CHURCH IN SIKKIM, 1950-1990s

As Sikkim entered the second half of the 20th century it was a time of internal political unrest. Democratic forces, led by Nepali seeking a greater share of power with the ruling Bhutia and demanding abolition of the lessee system of landholdings and of forced labour, were on the rise. An agitation movement resulted in a land reform act which abolished the zamindar system, and in the "Sikkim Subjects Regulation" in 1961 which granted citizenship to some Nepali for the first time.¹⁷⁵ The most dramatic political change came with the abolition of the monarchy and Sikkim's loss of sovereignty as an independent nation. Sikkim was made a State of the Union of India on 4 May 1975.

The sweep of change also affected the churches and missions in Sikkim. The last resident missionaries of both EHM and the Free Church of Finland Himalayan Mission had left before the signing of the Indo-Sikkim Treaty of 1950 (except for the Church of Scotland seconded headmistress of the Girls' High School in Gangtok who had no direct role in the church). Finnish missionaries

testify that work permits for new missionaries after the 1950s proved impossible to get, and the border with India was closed following Indian Independence, making missionary visits also much more difficult. The onus for the propagation and continued endurance of Christianity within Sikkim was now more clearly than ever on the national church. At the same time, the mission-related churches were in a state of either decline or stagnation, with a predominantly Lepcha membership and leadership. Only the church in Mangan survived of the Finnish Himalayan Mission's three centres in North Sikkim. The EHCC churches of the UCNI were in a dormant state as a whole, with only one full-time church leader to oversee them all, while the institutional side of the work, including schools and dispensaries, was all gradually turned over to government. This situation persisted into the 1970s, with only one new congregation established and mostly biological growth in the existing churches.¹⁷⁶ In the meantime when the EHCC was transformed into the Darjeeling Diocese Council of the CNI the name of the diocese caused some resentment among the Sikkim churches.

With Sikkim's incorporation into India it became part of an avowed secular nation, and thus technically there was now freedom of religion. In practice this had little effect on the DDC churches. Rev. C.T. Pazo had cultivated a good relationship with the Sikkim government for many years, and through his influence with the former Chogyal the decree concerning baptisms had been lifted at least a decade earlier.¹⁷⁷ However, there were two new streams of Christian influence which had entered Sikkim by this time, although not yet officially recognised, who did feel the difference -- Pentecostal and El Shaddai -- both carried in by Nepali-Lepcha Christians from Darjeeling-Kalimpong. Some of the same forces that so effected the churches across the border began to infiltrate Sikkim. Although these counter streams of Christianity were delayed in reaching Sikkim, due to its relative isolation and their initial incubation period in Darjeeling-Kalimpong, it proved fertile ground for their more populist Christian message. Until their entry from the late 1950s, there had

been virtually no outside influences on the predominant Scottish Presbyterian church in Sikkim. New young churches under various banners soon began to multiply throughout the southern half of Sikkim, and by the 1980s renewed evangelism was taking place in the older mission churches north and south also. The combined effects of these different forces and their evangelistic emphasis resulted in a more than 400 percent increase in the number of Christians recorded between the 1971 and 1981 Census of India.¹⁷⁸ By the 1990s there were at least 200 Christian congregations, the overwhelming majority of them established during the 1970s and 1980s.¹⁷⁹ This surge in the spread of Christianity was primarily among Nepali ethnics. Interestingly, two of the earliest Pentecostal preachers in Sikkim were Limbu, the very people for whom Macfarlane and Sutherland had held out such hope in the previous century.

Pentecostal Christians from Darjeeling and Kalimpong both began evangelistic outreach in Sikkim about the same time, but in different places. From the Kalimpong side the Full Gospel Pentecostal Church, pastored by Rev. S. Sodemba (a Limbu sub-caste), sent a team to Gangtok in 1958 with a well-known visiting evangelist, P.S. Samuel, who conducted an open-air evangelistic meeting.¹⁸⁰ During the 1960s teams of young people were occasionally sent to Gangtok and other locations in East Sikkim, and informal meetings were held in the home of James B.K. Basnet (Chhetri) now and then. Basnet had been baptised in the Full Gospel Pentecostal Church in Kalimpong and then migrated to Gangtok where he was employed in government service and became a member of the UCNI Gangtok Church.¹⁸¹ No new church was started in Gangtok at this time, but their evangelistic activities reportedly caused a reaction from both the local UCNI church and the Government.¹⁸² According to S. Sodemba, the Chogyal ordered the Gangtok DSP to investigate the Pentecostals' activities, but the DSP gave a good report because of his own earlier positive contact with some Pentecostal Christians in London, and the matter was dropped.¹⁸³ The only new Christian congregation that resulted from this early

work was in Singtam, East Sikkim. Samuel Lepcha, who was converted and sent to Bible School through "Papa" B. Sereng in the 1960s, became the Singtam congregation's first full-time worker in 1972.

Dr. Bahadur Sereng (Subba, a Limbu sub-caste), who was born in Sikkim but ran away to Darjeeling as a young boy, was the real pioneer of the Pentecostal churches in Sikkim. In a little over twenty years of ministry he baptised over 2,000 Christian converts, founded new churches, and raised up the pastors of many of today's numerous Pentecostal and independent churches in Sikkim. A former elder of St. Columba's Church (UCNI) in Darjeeling, Sereng began to tour West and South Sikkim for his homeopathic medical practice from the early 1950s.¹⁸⁴ After he personally embraced a Pentecostal type doctrine with an emphasis on healing in the late 1950s, and was re-baptised by immersion in water, his medical work in Sikkim took on a strong evangelistic character. According to his son, "the real work started" from this time. "He started carrying the tracts and started preaching and his heart was burdened very much for the lost souls."¹⁸⁵

About 1958 the first person was converted through Sereng's ministry in Budang, West Sikkim, and by the mid-60s he gave up his medical practice in order to devote full-time to Christian ministry. Sereng says that healing was a major phenomenon at the beginning of his preaching ministry, and because so many were healed through prayer he felt that was more effectual than his medical treatments.¹⁸⁶ One example comes from the testimony of Reuben Moses Rai of Jhoom, West Sikkim, a Hindu village. He was visited by Dr. Sereng in 1960 and given some medicine when he was very sick with a diseased liver, but his condition continued to deteriorate. When Sereng returned a second time he told Rai that God can heal those who believe in His Son, Jesus Christ, and shared several examples until Rai declared that he believed. Sereng then prayed for him, gave him no more injections, and Rai was slowly restored to health over the coming month.¹⁸⁷ In another instance, Samuel Lepcha and his mother, from a

Buddhist family, were converted in Chumbung, West Sikkim, following the healing of his mother, and then his older sister's child, through prayer.¹⁸⁸ Sereng's own wife was healed through prayer in 1960 of a heart ailment that had troubled her from her youth, and a man who had been declared dead was reportedly restored to life again when Sereng prayed over him five hours later. Such faith-raising events stirred Sereng to trek throughout Sikkim, particularly the West and South, preaching the power of God in Christ to "save souls" and heal peoples' bodies. The phenomenon of physical healing and deliverance from the oppression of evil spirits throughout the ensuing years is credited by many local Christians, regardless of denominational affiliation, with being one of the key factors in the surge of conversions to Christianity.

The first Pentecostal church was formed in Chumbung, W. Sikkim, in 1961, while Sereng was still resident in Darjeeling and making his medical-cum-evangelistic tours from there. This is attested to in WEC correspondence by the WEC Field Director, dated May 1961, where he wrote, "A Dr. Subba...who works mainly in Sikkim, has been the means of several in that country coming to the Lord recently. They are now requesting baptism."¹⁸⁹ A church was built and Chumbung became a centre from which evangelism was conducted all around, until the area became largely Christianised. In 1962 Himanchal Christa Sangati was formed and later registered with the Sikkim Government, the first indigenous grouping of churches in Sikkim.¹⁹⁰ From 1970 Sereng moved back to his native Sikkim with his family and settled at Namche, which became the new centre for Himanchal Christia Sangati. A children's home was opened in 1973. With his work concentrated in the rural areas of West and South Sikkim, and mostly among Nepali ethnics, it attracted little attention from Gangtok.

"Papa" Sereng, as he was affectionately known throughout the hills, often trekked alone, carrying his own load, to many distant places. His ministry was characterised by evangelistic preaching, prayer for the sick, conducting baptisms by immersion, and encouraging new Christians to meet together in small groups

for fellowship. As he says, "I did what I knew to do." He also encouraged many young, often uneducated men to go to Bible school, sometimes taking them into his own home to teach them for a few months first. Along with the evangelistic thrust, this preparation of future Christian leaders was Sereng's greatest contribution to the church in Sikkim, and was in direct contrast to the situation prevalent in the former Scottish Mission churches.¹⁹¹ Some of the Bible students were supported through Himanchal Christia Sangati as evangelists and pastors upon their return.¹⁹² On the other hand, Sereng did very little teaching or follow-up in the young churches, and was weak in organisational ability. Nor was a local support base built up, although Sereng personally had supported his own family and "walked by faith" for many years. Thus as competing groups followed in his footsteps into Sikkim, and the outside financial support for his workers dried up in the latter 1970s, loyalties were divided, most began to look elsewhere for financial support, and others became independent. Sereng's own travelling ministry ended in November 1984 when he was paralysed and confined to his bed by a stroke. Even then his son testifies that he continued a ministry of prayer, "counselling, exhorting and encouraging and teaching people from the bed he occupied."¹⁹³ One of Sereng's last converts in 1984 was a Lama who burnt a whole roomful of his religious implements as a demonstration of his new faith in Christ.

Just as the EHM had done decades before, younger church groups which grew up in the Eastern Himalayas of Darjeeling-Kalimpong began to look northward to the harvest field of Sikkim. These included: Himalayan Crusade from Kalimpong, Masih Mandali from Pedong and Kalimpong, El Shaddai from Kalimpong, Himalayan Evangelical Fellowship from Kalimpong, Himalayan Free Church from Ghoom, and David Mangratee (WME) from Darjeeling. Of these, only the HFC, the nationalised church of the Free Church of Finland, independent since 1972, had historical links in Sikkim. From the 1970s HFC extended the former Finnish Mission work from the north into southern Sikkim,

until by 1992 there were twelve HFC churches in Sikkim, all with full-time workers. David Dutt of IEC in Calcutta came from even further afield, following his experience in Darjeeling District. These groups became involved to varying degrees in the support of church workers and evangelists, occasional preaching and building of churches. Some of them ordained pastors and sought to operate within Sikkim as a denomination, and others simply provided financial support. There was a tremendous fluidity of movement and cross-fertilisation between the groups, often based on the financial support available and personalities involved. Personality clashes, and occasionally theological differences, caused splits and realignments. But all the time the number of new Christian converts and small churches kept growing. Sikkim's incorporation as a State of the Union of India encouraged even more cross-border involvement. It also brought a greater sense of freedom within the churches to openly evangelise and seek official recognition with the government through registration.

Besides such outside groups, albeit mostly Nepali-Lepcha led, by the early 1970s several new "home-grown" Pentecostal and evangelical non-denominational churches had been formed in Sikkim, and were soon registered with the Government: Himanchal Christia Sangati based in Namche; Shiloh Church in Singtam and the surrounding area; Full Gospel Pentecostal Church in Gangtok; and Bethlehem Fellowship based in Gangtok. In 1980 the El Shaddai-related group in Gangtok was also registered, under the name of Beracah. There were also numerous individual independent churches, mostly with Pentecostal roots, among which James Deshpande of Kalimpong began to give teaching, help organise, and help get registered with the Government. As outlined above, Himanchal Christia Sangati, led by Dr. B. Sereng, was the pioneering group throughout West and South Sikkim from which many of the later independent churches stemmed. Shiloh Church, under Rev. Samuel Lepcha, went through some of the vagaries of affiliation described above: initial evangelism by the Full Gospel Pentecostal Church of Kalimpong; the pastor converted and sent to Bible

School by Dr. B. Sereng; financial support first from Himalayan Crusade, then David Dutt and IEC; and finally independent and self-supporting from the mid-1970s.¹⁹⁴ Along with the headquarters in Singtam, Shiloh Church had five outlying branch groups and three evangelists by 1992. The following year Sikkim Bible Institute was inaugurated through the vision of Rev. Samuel Lepcha, who now serves as the first Principal. The Full Gospel Pentecostal Church in Gangtok, a lone independent church led by Pastor B.K. Basnet, is an example of the various influences which have shaped most of the present-day churches in Sikkim: the Scottish and Finnish Missions, Pentecostal and El Shaddai.¹⁹⁵ Each of these influences is reflected in a unique amalgamation of teaching which is given at Basnet's church.

Altogether there are estimated to be at least 150 Pentecostal churches in Sikkim, including most of the above, but the largest group among them are the unaffiliated independent churches, little churches which are mostly little-known.¹⁹⁶ It was a concern for this latter group that caused James Deshpande, former Headmaster of a high school in Kalimpong, to commit himself full-time to working among them.¹⁹⁷ He says that when he went to Sikkim he found the condition of these churches "pathetic" educationally and organisationally, and those two concerns became the keynotes of his work among them. He began an itinerant ministry; taught in homes and in the churches; started and trained choirs, Sunday Schools, and literacy work; encouraged proper record-keeping and yearly plans; encouraged the beginning of the first Christian magazines in Sikkim; and organised church conferences. Noting the bitter experiences of several of the churches through affiliation with various outside groups, he became a strong proponent of self-support through increased giving and development of means of local income-generation. Perhaps most significantly, Deshpande has helped to organise the churches by area into joint fellowships, each with a simple constitution, then to get registered with the government. By mid-1992 five geographically grouped fellowships of six to eight formerly independent churches

had been formed. Two were registered, and the others in process of doing so.¹⁹⁸

While the above conglomerate of Pentecostal churches was growing and developing, another indigenous Sikkim group, called Bethlehem Fellowship, emerged out of the UCNI Gangtok Church. In contrast to the early Pentecostal ministry of Dr. B. Sereng and others, which was mostly in rural areas, among the uneducated and the unchurched, this church was started in Gangtok by four well-educated men who were all leading members of the local UCNI church. The four founding elders-cum-joint leaders of Bethlehem Fellowship (there has never been a full-time pastor) were all originally from either Darjeeling or Kalimpong, and came to Gangtok over twenty years ago in government service jobs. They left the UCNI and formed their own church over clear theological issues and disagreement with Rev. C.T. Pazo. (This is reflective of how new young denominations had been formed across the border in Kalimpong during the preceding decades.) Evangelical influences in the UCNI churches to the south, combined with those outlined above, had begun to penetrate the UCNI Gangtok Church, especially among the young people. The Sikkim Youth Group was the one group in the UCNI which was active in evangelism during the late 1950s and 1960s, and they were inspired by visits from Kalimpong young people on preaching tours and occasional special outside Bible teachers. The four men mentioned above heard and accepted teaching on the need for individual salvation, to be "born again", but then the issue of adult baptism by immersion caused a reaction from the UCNI local church leadership and eventually led to a split. This is explained in a Bethlehem Fellowship report to the Evangelical Fellowship of India:

Four believers of like burden who previously belonged to the presbyterian faith started praying every Friday in one of their residences since Good Friday of 1970 (27.3.1970) at Gangtok for the spiritual upliftment of the Church to which they belonged. They had on their own started holding meetings in their respective areas of origin for propagation of the Gospel and had even been instrumental in winning souls and in motivating others to win souls. Gradually the number of converts increased and they wanted baptism

by immersion. Since these 4 brothers did not believe in the traditional faith of baptismal regeneration and child baptism, they had to be out from the traditional church in the interest of the new believers since baptism by immersion and regeneration by faith through acceptance of Jesus as Lord and Saviour was taboo in those days in the church where they belonged. Accordingly the group started to function as a Cell with strong emphasis on:--

- (1) Acceptance of Jesus Christ as one's Personal Saviour and Lord,
- (2) baptism by immersion,
- (3) need to be filled by the Holy Spirit by faith.¹⁹⁹

Adult baptism by immersion, taught by the Pentecostal churches and by El Shaddai alike, was a divisive issue within the UCNI in Sikkim just as it was across the border. The third point above concerning the Holy Spirit, with an accompanying emphasis on the miraculous and the "gifts of the Holy Spirit," was added later to Bethlehem Fellowship's doctrine and experience, through the teaching of Pastor Robert Karthak of Gyaneshwar Church in Kathmandu, Nepal.²⁰⁰ By early 1992 Bethlehem Fellowship had six branch fellowships, including three across the border in Darjeeling District of West Bengal through the reverse migration of new converts.

El Shaddai was the other stream of Christian influence that was imported to Sikkim from the 1960s. The first Believers' Assembly was started in the home of M. Lingdong, an El Shaddai-related Christian from Darjeeling who emigrated to Gangtok, and he was joined by a man who was put out of the UCNI after being re-baptised by immersion. As open-air preaching was engaged in opposition was felt from both the UCNI and from government officials, particularly due to the aggressive style of evangelism and frequent criticism voiced against other Christian groups and other religions. Nevertheless preaching went on, both by teams from across the border and by resident immigrant believers and new converts. Immigrants in towns centres provided the basis for new Believers' Assemblies to be established, and branches grew out from them, until by 1992 there were claimed to be about twenty El Shaddai-type Assemblies of varying sizes scattered across East, South and West Sikkim, made up of some 800 baptised adults.²⁰¹

The majority of the members are Nepali ethnics. 1987, the 25th Anniversary of the founding of the first Assembly in Sikkim, marked the coming of age of the El Shaddai-related churches in Sikkim as an independent group of churches, when their first Convocation was held locally in Sikkim. Until then they had annually trekked across the border to the Kalimpong Convocation.

As already seen, the influence of these different streams of Christianity also effected the UCNI churches both from within and from without, although often resisted by Rev. C.T. Pazo. Pazo's own pastoral assistant, P.T. Sukmimu, testifies that he was only truly converted two years after his ordination, when he realised his need to personally repent and accept Christ at a convention led by Pastor Robert Karthak and Rev. D.D. Pradhan.²⁰² He told the author, "My life is as different as east to west since truly believing in Christ." Visits by young UCNI Christians from Kalimpong full of evangelistic zeal had an impact in the South as well as in Gangtok, and began to touch Nepali ethnics. This is attested by the conversions of men like Daulat Singh Rai and P.B. Rai. In 1961 Daulat was the first convert from a Rai village in the Namche area, having first heard the Gospel in the Darjeeling bazaar.²⁰³ He was baptised by Pazo, subsequently boycotted from village society because of losing his caste, then was the impetus for starting the first CNI fellowship in Namche together with Christians who were transferred there in service. P.B. Rai was converted in 1965 in Vok through the preaching of Birendra Rongong and a group of UCNI young people from Kalimpong; it was the first time he had heard the name of Christ.²⁰⁴ When he moved to Damthang a few years later, a predominantly Rai populated rural area, he was the only Christian among them and his religion was initially vigorously opposed. They had never known a Rai to be a Christian. He was told that Christianity was not for the Rai, it was "Lepchako dharma" (religion of the Lepcha) and "aru jat pasnu hoondaina" (other castes should not enter it). But slowly others were converted: a second Rai in 1976, then a Gurung, a "guru-jakhri" (teacher of witch-doctors) who became an ardent lay evangelist, until a

church of mostly Rai, Gurung and Sherpa, with four branches in the area round about, had been established by 1992. This is indicative of the fresh breeze of change which began to sweep through the former mission-related churches, spurred on by the growing number of conversions taking place all around them.

Following Pazo's retirement in 1976, Rev. P.S. Tingbo was appointed Presbyter over the Sikkim Pastorate. Tingbo was a product of the renewal that swept the UCNI churches of Darjeeling-Kalimpong in the preceding decades and he came to Sikkim fresh from five years of pioneering pastoral-cum-evangelistic ministry in Bhutan.²⁰⁵ The same year DDC inaugurated "Operation Outreach" with Sikkim as one of its targets, and four evangelists were deputed in 1977 to South-West Sikkim under the guidance of Rev. P.T. Sukmimu.²⁰⁶ In 1982 a fifth evangelist was sent to North-East Sikkim under the same scheme. These evangelists were sent to DHBS for varying amounts of time for training, and four of the five were still serving in Sikkim in 1992 as catechists in the CNI churches.²⁰⁷ In the meantime Rev. P.S. Tingbo negotiated with the National Missionary Society (NMS) for three evangelists to be appointed to Sikkim under his supervision.²⁰⁸ In February 1980 he organised a Good News Festival to be held in Gangtok, the first initiative of its kind in the whole Darjeeling Diocese. The 1980s saw the implementation of a "Church Building Project" by the DDC during which five new churches were built in Sikkim.²⁰⁹

In 1979 Sikkim was divided into two Pastorates, each under its own Presbyter, and by 1986 the growth in the churches prompted a further division into three Pastorates: the West under Rev. P.T. Sukmimu based in Chekung, the South under Rev. P.S. Tingbo based in Namche, and the North-East under Rev. M.F. Rai based in Gangtok. When M.F. Rai was appointed to Gangtok two years earlier he was returning to serve his home church.²¹⁰ The spurt in growth is easily seen in the following figures: in 1962 there were a total of 943 baptised members, including 310 adult communicants, in the EHCC Sikkim Church, compared to a total of 1,310 baptised members, including 399 communicants in

1972 -- an increase of only 89 adult communicants in ten years; and nine congregations throughout this time.²¹¹ By 1989 there was a total baptised membership of 2,990, including 838 communicants, in 24 different congregations within three distinct pastorates.²¹² In 1992 Rev. P.S. Tingbo estimated a membership of nearly 5,000 in the Sikkim CNI churches.

The 1990s have continued to witness increasing growth in the Christian community in Sikkim on all fronts. It has also become the arena for even more Christian groups from other states in India to become involved. Both Baptists and Pentecostals from Nagaland have come, including: the Sikkim Missionary Movement, a special branch of the Nagaland Missionary Movement, with four full-time Nepali and one Naga worker; Latter Rain Revival Ministry based in Namche, led by L.Y. Murray of Wokha, Nagaland; a branch of the Nagaland Christian Revival Church in Gangtok, and several Bible students from Sikkim now attending their Bible college in Kohima; and Naga missionaries supported by the Angami Baptist Church Council. Three Nepali pastor-evangelists are supported by Mission for Christ from Mizoram, and closer to home, Rev. Lucky Karthak of Asian Concern, based in Siliguri, and the Presbyterian Free Church from its headquarters in Kalimpong now have branch churches in Sikkim. Nepal Campus Crusade for Christ (NCCC) has had the most extensive involvement in giving basic Bible training to young Christians, and their first permanent staff were appointed to Sikkim in 1991.²¹³ In July 1993 the Sikkim Bible Institute was opened in Singtam with sixteen students, the first such institution in Sikkim.²¹⁴

The 1990s also witnessed a major change in the former EHM churches of the CNI. Due to internal conflicts throughout Darjeeling Diocese, the majority of the churches in Sikkim left the CNI in 1993 and formed the Council of Evangelical Presbyterian Churches in Sikkim, registered with the Sikkim Government as a local denomination. Of the three presbyters current at the time, only Rev. Martin F. Rai remained with the CNI. Only time will tell the effect this will have on Christianity in Sikkim and the relationship between

churches.

For over 80 years, until the 1970s, the former Eastern Himalayan Church epitomised the church in Sikkim -- mostly rural, but centralised in Gangtok; generally in favour with the government, and officially recognised from the 1930s; predominantly Lepcha and loyal to the Bhutia power structure. This picture changed dramatically from the 1970s, even as the country changed. The UCNI churches soon found themselves in a minority as other streams of Christian churches, particularly Pentecostal, flooded into Sikkim and multiplied, and new groups of churches indigenous to Sikkim grew up. Evangelism and preaching, often accompanied by prayer for healing, was the order of the day. While the UCNI Gangtok Church continued to be looked to by the Government as a kind of spokesman for the overall Christian community, new groups gradually gained recognition and were registered. Lepcha remained a strong part of the churches, with many in leadership, both those native to Sikkim and others who came from Darjeeling-Kalimpong, but they soon found themselves in a minority numerically. The churches became a Nepali-Lepcha amalgam, a kind of melting pot, and the majority of new converts in all the different Christian streams were Nepali ethnics. The Pentecostal pioneer, Dr. B. Sereng, a Limbu who preached effectively among primarily Rai and Limbu villages, recalls being told in the early days of his ministry by Nepali villagers that they did not realise Christianity was also for the Nepali; they thought it was only for the Lepcha. That was also the testimony of many Rai and Gurung who began to come into the CNI churches in the south. While the Pentecostal churches initially multiplied in rural areas removed from the centre at Gangtok, there was further extension amongst the more mixed population of towns and district centres as they developed and drew in outsiders. The outsiders were mostly those in government service, the more educated class who were generally educated in the mission-run schools of Darjeeling and Kalimpong, including Christians from those places who then provided the basis for the formation of new churches. As noted by Rev. M.F. Rai

in 1989,

The growth of Christian population in Sikkim during the last decade has been more than tenfold. This is due to the incoming of Christians into the state from other parts of India and also the result of massive evangelical work.²¹⁵

Christians from Sikkim were an impetus in turn to the further spread of Christianity to places like Bhutan, Nepal, Calcutta and other urban centres in a continuing movement of Nepali-Lepcha Christians.

ENDNOTES - CHAPTER 4

(1) According to Article 5. of the 1817 Treaty of Titalya the Raja was not permitted to allow any British subject or other European or American to reside in his domains without permission of the English Government. But Article 1. of the 1861 Treaty cancelled all previous treaties, and in Article 8. it abolished all restrictions on travellers and trade between British territory and Sikkim. Article 8. specifically stated, "...it shall be lawful for British subjects to go into any part of Sikkim for the purpose of trade or travel, and the subjects of all countries shall be permitted to reside in and pass through Sikkim." This reference to "reside" evidently had a restricted meaning, considering J.C. White, the British Political Officer's response to the SAM missionaries (see below, p.150), and the necessity of both EHM and SAM to petition the Raja of Sikkim directly for permission for their expatriate missionaries to take up residence within Sikkim. Former EHM missionaries in Sikkim testify that they were given only six month resident permits at a time which regularly had to be renewed.

(2) During Sutherland's first trip to Sikkim during the winter of 1880-1 with Gambu Lepcha he tried to meet the King who resided in Tumlong, two to three days journey from Kalimpong, but had to turn back just four hours short of his destination (Sutherland, "DMI Annual Report for the year ending 31 Dec. 1880: Independent Sikkim Division," p.30). Upon his return to Kalimpong, Sutherland received an invitation from the King to return when he could and he would be granted an audience. However, when he returned in February the King was in mourning for his Queen. Then in February of 1882 he made a further trip with another trusted worker, Sukhman Limbu, and had an audience with the King. When he was told by the King's minister, "There can be no preaching of Christ in the realm of Independent Sikkim," Sutherland proceeded to argue the point (HOME AND FOREIGN MISSIONARY RECORD, Vol. XIII, Nov. 1882, 361-363). He was told again that they "could not be permitted to settle in the land for the preaching of Christ." But when he requested this in writing he was then told that the matter would be further considered in consultation with the Kazis who would meet the following year. In 1883 Sutherland returned to Tumlong once again, but the Raja had still not made up his mind. Albert Craig (A SCOT IN SIKKIM [Edinburgh: Board of World Mission and Unity, Church of Scotland, n.d. about 1984], n.p.) notes that Macfarlane met the ruler of Sikkim in 1885, who "refused permission for a missionary to live in Sikkim, but made no serious objection to one touring in Sikkim, so long as his home was outside the frontier." (The author has not been able to confirm from available EHM primary sources that Macfarlane himself met the Raja, but this is consistent with what Sutherland was told. The alleged meeting may have been reported by Macfarlane in his 88 page report to the Scottish Universities' Mission which is referred to in the HOME AND FOREIGN MISSION RECORD, Vol. XV, April 1886, 395). Following Macfarlane's death, Sutherland made another trip to Tumlong in 1889, when he finally received permission to establish a mission station with a resident missionary in South Sikkim. In his "Scottish Universities Mission, Sikkim, Report for the Year 1890" Sutherland reported that he had already selected Chidam for the first centre and arranged for the erection of a small dwelling house.

(3) Sutherland, "Darjeeling Mission: Kalimpong Division, Report for the Year 1883," 10, in EHM REPORTS.

- (4) Grace Patterson, former missionary in Sikkim, letter to author, 18 Aug. 1992.
- (5) "Scottish Universities Mission, Sikkim: Report for the Year 1890," 52, in EHM REPORTS.
- (6) John F. Fredericksson, F. Gustafson and A.E. Shoberg left Ghoom on 4th Nov. 1892 with "a desire to penetrate to the boundary of Tibet" (Shoberg, "Scandinavian Alliance Mission," HOME AND FOREIGN MISSIONARY RECORD, Vol.XIX, Sept. 1893, 247).
- (7) Shoberg, "Scandinavian Alliance Mission," HOME AND FOREIGN MISSIONARY RECORD, Vol. XIX, Sept. 1893, 247.
- (8) Grauer, 1940, 152. The account of Shoberg's reception by the Queen of Bhutan is reiterated in Edvard Paul Torjesen's thesis, A STUDY OF FREDRIK FRANSON: THE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPACT OF HIS ECCLESIOLOGY, MISSIOLOGY, AND WORLDWIDE EVANGELISM, PhD, International College, 1984 (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms International, 1985), 590.
- (9) Hämelin & Peltoniemi, 1990, 108. Although this book is the official history of the Free Church of Finland Mission (formerly Finnish Alliance Mission, one of the early branches of SAM which took on the Tibeto-Himalayan work from 1906), it makes no mention of how permission was secured for them to work in North Sikkim. However, it was the British officials who granted them permission to cross the border. SAM (later the Finnish Himalayan Mission) was allowed a regular flow of missionaries between three main centres in North Sikkim for over fifty years.
- (10) "Scottish University Mission: Independent Sikkim - Minutes and Meetings of Panchayat," handwritten, Kalimpong, 2 July 1924 (hereafter "Sikkim Minutes"). The Minute stated, "It was reported that the Free Church of Finland Mission had handed over their work at Song to the Scotch Mission permanently and that this had been approved and sanctioned by the Darbar of Sikkim." Correspondence between Mary Scott of EHM and Mr. E. Ollila of the Finnish Mission negotiating the turnover of the Song property shows that it included a school, a room for a dispensary, and a teacher's house (photocopies in NCHP Collection). There is no mention of a residence for missionaries. But one missionary couple is listed in the "Scandinavian Alliance Mission in the Himalayas" handwritten record as being in Song -- Rev. and Mrs. C.A. Tjäder who arrived in India in 1903. Three "native workers" are also listed: Y. Isaac, baptised in 1897, and later ordained; Adook Dorji, baptised in 1904, an unordained preacher; and R. Nathaniel, baptised in 1895, a teacher. Y. Isaac and his wife Rebecca moved to Song in 1901, built two houses and opened a school, and were joined by the Tjäders from 1905-1909 who started dispensary work (Vappu Rautamäki, letter to author, 20 April 1994).
- (11) Elizabeth G.K. Hewat, VISION AND ACHIEVEMENT (Edinburgh: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1960), 165. According to Dr. A. Craig (A SCOT IN SIKKIM, n.p.) it was a "great concession" by the Sikkim Maharaja to allow Miss Scott to live in Gangtok, and she was not permitted to own land or buy a house. Mrs. R. Fairservice, former missionary to Sikkim who worked with Miss Scott, attributes this concession by the Maharaja partly to Miss Scott's family background -- her father was Lord Palworth and her uncle the Duke of Aberdeen ("Sikkim as I Remember it," TS, August 1992, in NCHP Collection).

(12) CHURCH OF SCOTLAND MINUTES OF THE FOREIGN MISSION COMMITTEE, Vol. V, 18 July 1933, 73, item 1985. According to this minute, even while Mary Scott was living in Gangtok negotiations were going on for formal permission to make Gangtok the centre for EHM's Sikkim work. Only in 1933 was a temporary agreement with the Darbar reached, but it did not allow another European missionary in Temi as long as Scott was in Gangtok. It also noted that it was not likely that a male missionary would be allowed to reside in Gangtok.

(13) MINUTES OF FOREIGN MISSION COMMISSION, Vol. X, 20 Dec. 1938, 193 item 4770, and Vol. XIV, 18 July 1939, 91 item 5169. In Rev. G. Fairservice's own recollections of these events he attributes the refusal partly to a book written by an English lady traveller to Sikkim who stayed with Miss Scott ("Notes on Sikkim," TS, 1946, 2, in NCHP Collection). Her "witty writing" later came into the hands of the Sikkimese authorities and caused offence, just at the time they were deliberating the EHM's request for Fairservice to reside in Gangtok as Miss Scott's successor. Fairservices did subsequently reside in Gangtok for a time, but only due to Mr. Fairservice then serving as a teacher at the Girls' School and not in the role of an ordained minister.

(14) Ibid., Vol. XIV, 18 July 1939, 91, item 5169.

(15) P.K. Jha, 1985, 121.

(16) P.K. Jha, 1985, 121-22.

(17) Risley, 1894, xxi. See above, p.56 for the full quote.

(18) P.K. Jha, 1985, 42.

(19) Rautamäki, 1994, 7 and 25.

(20) The "Darjeeling Mission Institution: Report for the Year ending 31st December 1880" was the first one to contain a section on the "Independent Sikkim Division," written by W.S. Sutherland (p.25-30), in EHM REPORTS. The plan was for Macfarlane to develop work in East Sikkim from Kalimpong, and for Sutherland to explore and develop work in Western and Central Sikkim. But such reports then lapsed for several years due to Macfarlane's furlough and Sutherland taking over the Kalimpong Division in the interim.

(21) "DMI: Report for 1880," 25-30 in EHM REPORTS. The following account of Gambu's association with EHM in Sikkim is taken from this 1880 report by Sutherland: Gambu was one of the original boys who Macfarlane gathered together into his school in Darjeeling ten years previously. After completing his course of instruction he was sent out as a teacher, but then returned to his own people on the hill above Daramden. A few years later the Kabi Kazi of that area sent his own son to Macfarlane's school, accompanied by Gambu as a companion and tutor. This was followed by a request from the Kabi Kazi for a school to be started in his land, and the Kazi proposed Gambu as the teacher. Macfarlane acquiesced, but on condition that Gambu first return to the Normal School for further teachers' training. During this period of training, both Gambu and his wife were convinced of the truth of Christianity and requested baptism. Thus they returned to their village of Daramden in 1880 as committed Christians. Slightly different accounts of Gambu Lepcha's life history and conversion to Christianity are found in an article entitled "A Sikkim Retrospect" in Mission News (1937, 17-

18); and in the booklet **A BRIEF HISTORY OF FAMBONG CHURCH**, in Nepali and English (Gangtok: Himalayan Printing Press, 1991).

(22) Turnbull, "Darjeeling Mission: Darjeeling Division, Report for the Year 1881," 26, in **EHM REPORTS**. Turnbull reported that Buddhiman was the youngest of his Nepali evangelists, born in 1859, and entered the Church in 1877. After graduation from the Normal School, he served as a teacher in the Darjeeling school, then "sought and obtained promotion to the high work of the Catechistship in the month of May last." He described him as "a big, honest fellow with stentorian lungs...the most interesting and popular preacher to the untutored audiences which assemble in the bazaar on Sundays."

(23) Turnbull, "Darjeeling Mission: Darjeeling Division, Report for the Year 1882," 27, in **EHM REPORTS**. Bahadur also had a background as a teacher with the Darjeeling Mission, and developed his preaching skills on a voluntary basis at the Darjeeling bazaar preaching-house. Turnbull notes that Bahadur and his wife were people of social importance in Darjeeling who when they broke Caste and joined the Christians actually had to "flee their old home." Bahadur was a relative of Ganga Prasad Pradhan.

(24) **THE HOME AND FOREIGN MISSIONARY RECORD**, Vol. XV, (Nov. 1885, 279) notes that Gambu was serving as catechist at Chekung in 1885. Chekung is a Lepcha village on the hill above Daramden (or Phambong as it is later referred to).

(25) Sutherland, "Darjeeling Mission: Sikkim Division, Report for the Year 1880," 26, in **EHM REPORTS**. Sutherland notes that the Nepali in Daramden felt they would be more comfortable in Independent Sikkim than under the oppressive Gorkha Raj, and thus "they left their own country obtained the permission of the chief under whose jurisdiction the land lay to settle here, and then purchased from the Lepcha that then dwelt on the soil their claim to the settlement, agreeing in exchange to supply annually a certain fixed quantity of rice... by the arrangement concluded with the incoming Nepalese, the Daramden Lepcha could move up the hill above the fever region." This displacement of the Lepcha by Nepali settlers was repeated throughout both Darjeeling-Kalimpong and southern Sikkim with the Lepcha's innocent acquiescence for many years. In 1885 Macfarlane noted that the settlement of Nepali in Sikkim had "changed the whole aspect of Sikkim, as it has that of the Darjeeling district," and that the parts of Sikkim populated by Nepali were as thickly populated as in Darjeeling district (extract of Macfarlane's report, **HOME AND FOREIGN MISSIONARY RECORD**, Vol. XV, May 1886, 421).

(26) Turnbull, "Darjeeling Mission: Darjeeling Division, Report for the Year 1881," 26, in **EHM REPORTS**.

(27) See above, p.148 n.2 and n.3.

(28) Sutherland, "Darjeeling Mission: Kalimpong Division, Report for the Year 1883," 10, in **EHM REPORTS**.

(29) During such visits across the border the missionaries were responsible for the care of the Christians, including administration of the sacraments, and supervision of both the catechists as the local agents responsible for the church, and the teachers as the local agents responsible for the schools. The missionaries required monthly written reports from both sets of agents.

(30) "Universities Mission," HOME AND FOREIGN MISSIONARY RECORD, Vol. XV, April 1886, 395-6.

(31) "Universities Mission," HOME AND FOREIGN MISSIONARY RECORD, Vol. XV, April 1886, 396. These objectives are nearly identical to those Macfarlane initially proposed at the beginning of the Darjeeling Mission fifteen years before, and which had guided the Mission forward.

(32) Macfarlane explained in a letter to Mr. Maclagan in Scotland the reason for this state of affairs ("Universities Mission," HOME AND FOREIGN MISSIONARY RECORD, Vol. XV, Sept. 1886, 544). Sutherland and Turnbull could not only not spare any workers for Sikkim, but they also had no means of training agents for their own work. The original Normal School established by Macfarlane during his first term had been "allowed practically to become useless." When Macfarlane returned to Darjeeling he found neither new national agents available nor a means of getting them, as all capable teachers had been taken away from the Normal School to other important mission work. In essence he had to begin again.

(33) HOME AND FOREIGN MISSIONARY RECORD, Vol. XV, Sept. 1886, 543.

(34) Sutherland, "SUM, Sikkim: Report for the Year 1890," 46, in EHM REPORTS. The seven schools included: three in West Sikkim at Chekung, Saryong and Mangbo; three in Central Sikkim at Kitam, Chidam and Namthang; and one in East Sikkim at Singtam. In addition, there were three teachers for the Training School in Kalimpong under SUM, and ten students for the Sikkim Mission at the Training School. Of these ten students four were Lepcha Christians, one was a Nepali Christian, and the other five were all Nepali Hindu or Buddhists.

(35) According to D.C. Lucksom, Apun's youngest son (interview with the author, Gangtok, 17 March 1992), Apun Lucksom's father migrated to Mangwa from Ilam, Nepal, then left his wife and son for another woman. When Apun's mother died, Wm. Macfarlane took Apun with him to Darjeeling and put him in the Boys' School. He became a teacher-cum-preacher with the mission in schools around Kalimpong, then was sent to East Sikkim because it was a predominantly Lepcha area. As a catechist he was based in Pakyong, but also made regular visits to Singtam, Rhenock and Gangtok. He lived out his life in Sikkim, raising ten children and serving the church as long as he was able.

(36) Sutherland, "SUM, Sikkim: Report for the Year 1890," 47-50, in EHM REPORTS.

(37) Mission News, January 1891, 1.

(38) Mission News, August 1892, 29.

(39) Mission News, March 1933, 6.

(40) Mission News, March 1933, 6.

(41) Mission News, Nov. 1907, 93.

(42) "Sikkim Minutes," 7 April 1897; Mission News, May 1898, 20 and Feb. 1902, 315. According to Sutherland ("SUM, Sikkim: Report for the Year 1890," 7), "Elatji Matiyas" given name was Adyat (Lepcha). While a teacher

at Chidam he was converted to Christianity against the wishes of his elder brother who was a Buddhist Lama. He was baptised in 1890 and chose to take the name "Elatji Matiyas," then was appointed as a medical-catechist seven years later. Evidently in the meantime he received training in basic compounding.

(43) Mission News, Feb. 1901, 164.

(44) Mission News, Sept. 1907, 79.

(45) Kartik Singh was born the eldest son of Tilak Singh (of the Jimidar, Rai sub-caste) in Bhojpur, Nepal. He and his brother Parbal accompanied their father to Darjeeling where he sought work on a tea garden. Kartik later rose to the position of tea garden manager. When he volunteered to become a catechist, Sutherland described him as "a Christian Babu who was formerly a mission teacher, but for some time has been working on a tea garden," and who decided following the dedication of the Macfarlane Memorial Church in Kalimpong that he wanted "to do more direct work for Christ" (Sutherland, "Sikkim," HOME AND FOREIGN MISSIONARY RECORD, Vol. XVIII, March 1892, 387). He resigned his post at the tea garden to accept the catechist post with the Sikkim Mission at half the salary he was presently receiving.

(46) It is unclear why Kartik Singh resigned as a catechist, possibly due to family considerations. But he remained a member in good standing in the Sikkim Church and later was appointed an Elder of the Gangtok congregation. According to Parbal Singh's father, Jus Jit Rai (interview with author, Siliguri, 10 April 1993), Parbal was converted through Ganga Prasad Pradhan's preaching, and was educated to matric level. He was baptised in early 1892 while serving as a teacher at Saryong ("Sikkim Minutes," 3 Feb. 1892). Due to his education he was appointed as clerk of the Sikkim Panchayat in 1897 to keep a record of the minutes in Hindi. He was later chosen by the Gangtok congregation to be their catechist, and also served as an Elder of the Sikkim Church.

(47) Hewat (1960, 163) makes a mistake in stating that there were only four catechists in Sikkim by 1900, evidently assuming that there were only as many catechists as congregations (four). The six catechists included: 1) Gambu Lepcha based in Phambong, W. Sikkim; 2) Dachek Lepcha, in Saryong, W. Sikkim; 3) Apun Lucksom (Lepcha) in Singtam, E. Sikkim; 4) Parbal Singh Rai in Chidam, C. Sikkim; 5) Adyat "Elatji Matiyas" (Lepcha) as a compounder-cum-catechist in Chidam; and 6) Sonam Tarbo (Lepcha) over a new division formed in 1897 by joining Namchi-Vok-Raho-Rinchinpong. Another young man, Asing, also served as a catechist in W. Sikkim with Gambu from 1892 until his untimely death in 1897. Dachek, the son of Gambu, was then appointed to replace him. Sonam Tarbo was the teacher at Vok before he was appointed as a catechist, also in 1897.

(48) See below, p.167.

(49) The first Nepali and Lepcha pastors ordained by the EHM were in 1900. Before that only the ordained Scottish missionaries were authorised to administer the Christian sacraments. After 1900 visits are recorded to Sikkim from the following ordained native pastors: Temba Tsering (Lepcha) of Kizom to perform baptisms; Namthak Rongong (Lepcha) of Mangwa, Kalimpong Division, to perform baptisms and a wedding; R. Chhiring (Lepcha) of Kalimpong Division; Lachsman Singh Mukhia (Limbu) to perform baptisms and weddings and administer communion.

(50) Of the six catechists in 1890, Sonam Tarbo was the only one who did not continue. Gambu, Apun and Elatji all served up to the time of their deaths; Dachek retired on pension after 37 years as a catechist; and Parbal Singh resigned after 34 years due to ill health.

(51) D.C. Lucksom, Gangtok, interview with author, 17 & 21 March 1992.

(52) A quote from Sutherland's letter in HOME AND FOREIGN MISSIONARY RECORD, Vol. XVII, May 1890, 413.

(53) J.J. Rai (son of Parbal Singh), "Reminiscences," GANGTOK CHURCH GOLDEN JUBILEE 1936-1986 (Delhi: n.p., 1986), n.d. This is also noted in Mission News, July 1937, 18-19.

(54) Mission News, July 1937, 19.

(55) Grace Patterson, former missionary in Sikkim, letters to author, 22 Sept. 1987 and 18 August 1992.

(56) See above, p.158 and n.46.

(57) Sutherland, "Independent Sikkim Division," in "Darjeeling Mission: Report for the Year 1880," 27, in EHM REPORTS.

(58) Mackean, Mission News, Feb. 1906, 20ff.

(59) Macfarlane, "Darjeeling Mission: Report for the Year ending 31st December 1879," 10, in EHM REPORTS.

(60) "Sikkim Minutes," 3 Dec. 1891.

(61) HOME AND FOREIGN MISSIONARY RECORD, Vol. XVIII, March 1892, 387.

(62) Mission News and "SUM, Sikkim: Annual Reports" for 1891 and 1892.

(63) "Sikkim Minutes," 5 April 1905.

(64) Mission News (Feb. 1904, 605) notes twenty-five converts being excommunicated and cut from the church rolls, mostly due to consulting priests and doing puja at a time when there was much illness all over Sikkim.

(65) "Sikkim Minutes," 7 Oct. 1908.

(66) Mission News, Feb. 1895, 5.

(67) Sutherland, "SUM, Sikkim: Report for the Year 1890," 49, in EHM REPORTS.

(68) "Sikkim Minutes," 6 August 1897; and Mission News, July 1906, 65. Harkadhoj started the first Anglo-Hindi school in Kalimpong (see above, p.126 n.21).

(69) P.S. Tingbo, GANGTOK CHURCH GOLDEN JUBILEE 1936-1986, n.p.

(70) "Sikkim Minutes," 2 Dec. 1897.

- (71) Church News, June 1968, 35.
- (72) Mission News, June 1896, 22. The "Sikkim Minutes" (9 April 1896) also noted that several of the Hindu school boys gave a day's labour each in the construction.
- (73) "Sikkim Minutes," 5 Aug. 1901.
- (74) Mission News, Jan. 1902.
- (75) Consistently in the "Sikkim Minutes" from 1898 to 1902 the 'Chidam congregation' on the roll of churches had more than double the number of baptised members recorded than in any other congregation (an average of 68 members). Here 'Chidam' was simply a term of convenience as the Mission headquarters was there, but the native Christians were almost all found in the nearby village of Namthang. This is clarified in the Minute of 9 Jan. 1924 which reports a new congregation of thirteen members formed at Chidam, distinct from Namthang.
- (76) M.F. Rai, "100 Years of the Gospel in Sikkim" (in Nepali), GANGTOK CHURCH GOLDEN JUBILEE 1936-1986, n.p.
- (77) "Sikkim Minutes," 7 Feb. 1906, for the year 1905.
- (78) See above, p.156ff concerning Mackeans' first term of service in Sikkim.
- (79) See above, p.150 concerning Mary Scott's special permission to reside in Gangtok. Mary Scott transferred to Sikkim in 1923 after eighteen years of service with the Guild Mission in Kalimpong. See Mission News (Sept. 1937, 36-39) for an autobiographical account of her life and experiences in India and Sikkim; and A. Craig (A SCOT IN SIKKIM) for his account of her life and work in Sikkim.
- (80) A brief overview of C.T. Pazo's life was published as a tribute to his ministry by the Sikkim Church at the time of his retirement in 1976: PADRE CHHOTUK TSERING PAZO, in Nepali and English (Darjeeling: JJP Press, 1976), in NCHP Collection.
- (81) Mission News, July 1906, 65; and "Sikkim Minutes," 8 Jan. 1925. There was an earlier decision in 1892 by the Sikkim Panchayat to appoint mature lay Christians to help the catechists ("Sikkim Minutes," 2 Dec. 1892); but it evidently was not acted on until the early 1900s, as no elders are subsequently listed in the Sikkim Minutes between 1892 and 1906.
- (82) The "Sikkim Minutes" dated 8 Jan. 1925 show the thirteen elders current at that time to include: nine active catechists, two teachers, a former colporteur-cum-chaprasi of the mission, and one 'bastiwala' (villager). One of the first lay people ordained as an elder, in 1906, was Harkadhoj Pradhan, a respected Christian originally from Kalimpong.
- (83) C.T. Pazo, Mission News, January 1954, 16. Technically this division took place in 1923, but both aspects of the work remained under Miss Scott's direction until Rev. C.T. Pazo became the Moderator of the Sikkim Kirk Session in 1933. Because the personnel for these two divisions overlapped to a large extent their meetings were normally held in conjunction with each other. Only from Miss Scott's time does the Sikkim Panchayat Minutes book make reference to a separate Kirk Session Minutes Book, which is indicative of their separate meetings.

(84) A practical example of her loving concern for the mission workers is seen in her taking all of them on an excursion to Siliguri in the plains in 1937 for their Panchayat meeting. When she retired in 1939 she self-financed a trip for them all the way to the seaside at Puri, India, in a munificent farewell gesture -- her way of both demonstrating her love and appreciation for them and of continuing to "broaden their horizons."

(85) See above, n.11 in this section.

(86) "Sikkim Minutes," Sept. 1923.

(87) "Sikkim Minutes," 3 April 1924.

(88) During this period catechists began to be referred to as prachin (preacher) in the "Sikkim Minutes."

(89) Mary Scott, "A Sikkim Retrospect," Mission News, June 1937, 17.

(90) In 1906 there were eight catechists, including four with the dual designation of compounder. Then consistently throughout the 1920s and mid-way into the 1930s there were ten catechists, including three or four compounders and one teacher.

(91) Although the appointment of new catechists for the churches stopped from this time, compounder-cum-catechists and teacher-cum-catechists continued to be appointed until the early 1950s. No new catechists were appointed after that until 1977 as part of the Sikkim Outreach Programme of the DDC.

(92) Pazo was assisted in Gangtok from the 1940s by K.T. Lucksom, the only catechist supported by a local congregation. But Pazo himself was responsible over all of the district churches from 1947 when he took on what was formerly the missionaries' role as Superintendent of the Sikkim Mission, and there was no longer a team of dedicated prachins in each of the regions whose main responsibility was the care of the scattered congregations.

(93) P.O. Pazo, C.T. Pazo's son, interview with author, Gangtok, 23 March 1992.

(94) EHMC Minutes, 27, Jan. 1921.

(95) EHMC Minutes, 8 June 1923. Lachsman was 67 years old and had already worked for EHM over 45 years -- as a teacher, catechist, and latterly as Headmaster of SUMI for 25 years -- before he was asked to take charge of the Sikkim Kirk Session.

(96) "Sikkim Minutes," 8 April 1926. The Eastern Himalayan Presbytery Minutes reveal that at the end of his one year theology course he could not pass the examination, but P. Targain was still licensed in October 1925 and ordained the following January.

(97) "Sikkim Minutes," 25 Jan. 1929. According to the "EH Presbytery Minutes" of 23 Oct. 1928 he was charged with adultery.

(98) According to Pazo's son, Pazo had many good job offers because of his Tibetan studies, including in Tibet and from the Sikkim Government. But he decided that his first desire was to do God's work.

(99) "EHMC Minutes," 28 Jan. 1927. According to the "Sikkim Minutes" (13 Jan. 1927) C.T. Pazo returned to his home in Namthang after being licensed in 1925. He offered twice to go to Gangtok, and finally the move was approved by Rev. W.R. Scott of SUMI. He was appointed to the Gangtok congregation from 15 January 1927 as a licentiate, then ordained in Feb. 1928 at the Eastern Himalayan Presbytery meeting in Kurseong.

(100) H.C. Simick, "The Gangtok Christian Endeavour Group," GANGTOK CHURCH GOLDEN JUBILEE 1936-1986, n.p. P.B. Rai, an active lay Christian and part of the backbone of the Gangtok congregation, led the CE group in Gangtok for the next twenty years. He was very active in youth and music ministry, organised singing groups and dramatic productions within the church, and was ordained as an Elder of the Sikkim Church in 1952. His only son, Martin F. Rai, was ordained in the mid-1960s and became the Presbyter of the North-East Sikkim Pastorate based in Gangtok from 1984.

(101) FOREIGN MISSIONS COMMITTEE, Vol. V, 18 July 1933, 73, item 1985.

(102) This transfer of responsibility for the church is reflected in the Sikkim Panchayat Minutes books. During the 1920s the Sikkim Panchayat included all church and mission affairs. But from 1934 it is referred to as the Sikkim Mission Panchayat and includes very few references to church affairs. A separate minutes book for the Sikkim Kirk Session was begun at that time, presumably kept by Rev. C.T. Pazo, but could not be located by the author.

(103) "Sikkim Minutes," 4 Dec. 1930. From 1930 scholarships for teacher training had the stipulation that if there was not a teaching post available within the Scottish Mission the candidate would be willing to work in another private school in Sikkim.

(104) Miss Scott's emphasis on education was also a key tenant of Rev. C.T. Pazo and Elder P.B. Rai of Gangtok. Their children were the first Christians in Sikkim to pass matriculation exams. Pazo impressed on his sons the need for Christians to enter key positions in government service as a benefit to the Christian community. P.B. Rai was so convinced of the value of education that rather than build a house for his family he built for the future through the education of his children. His eldest daughter Mary was one of the first batch of four girls from Paljor Namgyal Girls' High School to pass her matric exam; his second daughter became a respected hospital matron; his youngest daughter has distinguished herself in the Education Department in Sikkim; and his son studied three years of medicine before dedicating himself to service in the church and becoming a Presbyter under the EHCC. ^{to}

(105) According to PALJOR NAMGYAL GIRLS' HIGH SCHOOL: GOLDEN JUBILEE (Gangtok, n.d., 6), initially Miss Scott simply had a private English class for two interested girls. Then the Chogyal noted her interest and offered to allow the classes to be held in the palace compound. By October of 1923 she had permission from the Chogyal to open a girls' school in Gangtok, which she started in a large room of her rented quarters at Mazong Kothi.

(106) "Sikkim Minutes," 9 Jan. 1933. This first committee consisted of four members: Rev. C.T. Pazo, Apun Lucksom representing the prachins, Rapden representing the compounders, and Kshyogel Saring representing the teachers. It was set up to advise the missionary and help with administration, and as a step towards self-government. However, in Sikkim it evidently lapsed in the next few years. There is a reference in the Minutes of 24 April

1939 of the "Advisory Committee" to the missionary being re-begun under Rev. G. Fairservice.

(107) FOREIGN MISSIONS COMMITTEE, Vol. V, 18 July 1933, 73, item 1985.

(108) FOREIGN MISSIONS COMMITTEE, Vol. V, 18 July 1933, 73.

(109) The Girls' High School ensured a place for further Scottish missionaries residence in Gangtok, but no ordained missionary was ever allowed to reside there as head of the mission.

(110) Mary Scott, "Mary H.H. Scott," Mission News, Sept. 1937, 39.

(111) C.T. Pazo, "Sikkim Church News," Church News, Nov. 1970, 645. This early permission is also alluded to by Rev. G. Fairservice in a typescript (1946) of his memories in which he noted a promise that had been given in the early days of the mission for a church in Gangtok, but "always there were obstacles in the way."

(112) There are different local versions of how this permission was finally obtained. By one account, after Mary Scott's return from a visit to Israel she brought back a gift of 'the Lily of Nazareth' to the Chogyal, who loved flowers. Although he made no direct comment, a senior Government minister then beckoned Miss Scott to another room and told her that since her work with the Girls' School was so appreciated, why did the Christian subjects of His Majesty not apply for permission to build a place of worship. According to another account, His Majesty gave his consent for a church one day, but after Miss Scott had already started collecting funds he changed his mind. She reportedly said that she would have to return all the gifts to Scotland, and hinted this would entail a 'loss of face.' Permission was then granted.

(113) FOREIGN MISSIONS COMMITTEE, Vol. V, 18 July 1933, item 1985; and Vol. VI, 18 Dec. 1934, 56, item 2579.

(114) In general it was against EHM policy to help local congregations to build their own churches, just as the mission did not build school buildings or dispensaries. The local communities were expected to do this much as a sign of good faith and to encourage self-support. But the large churches built at each of the EHM divisional centres in Darjeeling, Kalimpong, Kurseong and Gangtok were exceptions, built with foreign funds to supplement local fundraising efforts. In addition to funds for the land and building in Gangtok, some of the most striking furnishings were donated from Scotland: the carved communion table in memory of Miss Grizelle Baillie, a banner of Cantonese silk from Audrey Harris, a friend of Mary Scott's who visited her in Gangtok; and the old church bell from Scott's own parish in Scotland, Humber Parish.

(115) FOREIGN MISSIONS COMMITTEE, Vol. VIII, 21 July 1936, 68, item 3384. According to Grace Patterson, former missionary in Sikkim, the land was purchased from a Nepali Christian widow lady, Mrs. Pestomji (letter to author, 18 Aug. 1992).

(116) According to I.M. Ritchie, Church of Scotland missionary in Sikkim, it was Miss Scott's own vision to have a building "that really belonged to Sikkim" and built in a style "in harmony with Sikkimese architecture and not an alien importation." ("The Hon. Miss Mary Scott," GANGTOK CHURCH GOLDEN JUBILEE 1936-1986, n.p.) Ironically, the architectural plans were drawn up in Scotland, but inspired by Sikkimese monastic design. Intri-

cate wood carving was done by a skilled local lama. A wide verandah on three sides of the church enabled people to sit and listen without committing themselves to entering inside. The inner furnishings were a mixture of East and West, including pews facing a beautifully carved communion table, with a Christian version of a 'tanka' on the wall behind it -- a kind of sacred banner with a cross of golden brocade in the middle which is entwined with a silk scarf as a mark of respect.

(117) See above, p.150. The Fairservices were based in Temi for about two years, 1939-41, while Mrs. Fairservice travelled back and forth occasionally to Gangtok as Principal of the Girls' School. Then in 1941 the Sikkim Darbar decided to build a Girls' High School and invited SUM to run the school, and Mrs. Fairservice was appointed to be in-charge (FOREIGN MISSIONS COMMITTEE, Vol. XIV, 14 Dec. 1942, 137-8, item 6723.) From this point she and her husband were allowed to live in Gangtok because Mr. Fairservice became one of the three required graduate teachers on the staff. The Girls' School had reached ME level before Mary Scott's retirement in 1939, and then under Rachel Fairservice's direction, in a new building constructed by the Darbar, it was finally recognised as a High School by Calcutta University in 1945. Following Mrs. Fairservice's departure, Paljor Namgyal Girls' High School has continued to be run by headmistresses from the Church of Scotland, including: Miss Shirras (1945-47), Miss Grace M. Patterson (1948-1958), Miss Martha Hamilton (1958-1966), and Miss Isobel Ritchie (1966-present).

(118) Another church had been built in Namthang also as early as 1902 (see above, p.166), but by the 1950s it was no longer in use. Plans to rebuild it were mentioned in the "Sikkim Minutes" of 9 Jan. 1933, but these plans were evidently overshadowed by the events in Gangtok which took precedence. In 1957 it was reported that a Christian congregation was meeting in a home in Namthang, but there was no church building (*Mission News*, July 1957, 69).

(119) Aside from Rev. C.T. Pazo in Gangtok, those leading the congregations in the other District centres included the following: At the centre for West Sikkim, Phambong, there was a compounder-catechist, Jaibir Singh Lepcha, appointed after Dacheck's death in 1946. There was also a compounder-catechist at the dispensary in Dentam, C.D. Sanguth, appointed in 1948, and a medical doctor, Dr. J.B. Tazo in Chekung, who served as an honorary catechist. Vok, the centre for South Sikkim, was overseen by a retired catechist, Elder D.W. Targain, who had served there since 1929. At Namthang, once the largest congregation in South Sikkim, dispensary work had ceased and the only Christian mission agent was a teacher appointed in 1951, D. Sanguth. In East Sikkim, outside of Gangtok there was only a catechist-teacher at Rhenock, Gayas Sanguth, who was appointed in 1951, and Elder Ongdup Tshering, a retired catechist-compounder (died 1958). The catechist for Pakyong had been transferred to Namthang as a teacher (D. Sanguth), and Singtam had been brought under Gangtok since 1935, leaving no resident Christian mission agent in either of these places which had been sites of the earliest evangelism and congregations in East Sikkim.

(120) The "Sikkim Minutes" list P.B. Rai and S.D. Karthak as elders in Gangtok from 1952. (See above, p.172 and n.100 concerning P.B. Rai's contribution to Gangtok Church.) In 1955 six more elders were ordained for Sikkim: Capt. D.S. Lepcha, H.C. Simick, D. Karthak, D.C. Lucksom, D.B. Chhetri, and J.J. Rai. All of them were resident in Gangtok (Minute of 9 Jan. 1955). Capt. D.S. Lepcha, retired from the Gurkha Rifles, was also one of the early political leaders in Sikkim. He strongly encouraged P.B. Rai to send his son Martin for theological training as a future leader of the church.

D. Karthak was Chairman of the Sikkim Christian Youth Group. D.C. Lucksom was the youngest son of the first catechist in East Sikkim, Apun Lucksom, and worked with Mary Scott at the Girl's School for ten years before joining government service. J.J. Rai was the son of Gangtok's first catechist, Parbal Singh Rai.

(121) Mission News, Oct. 1954, 68. This followed the first EHM Youth Conference for all of the EHM fields combined held in 1949 in Darjeeling District, which became an annual event. D. Karthak, the Sikkim Youth Group chairman, submitted a draft constitution to the EHCC in 1955, but it was later returned to the Sikkim Kirk Session. The following year they requested permission to have an annual Youth Conference, and Rev. S.K. Sahu of Youth for Christ in Calcutta came to Gangtok as the special speaker. After this regular reports appear in Church News of teams of youth going out on evangelistic tours all over Sikkim.

(122) Before the Gangtok Church was built in 1936, three other churches had been built, at Phambong in the West, and at Namthang and Vok in the South. See above, p.164-5. Phambong Church had even been rebuilt of stone, much larger than before, in 1918 (Mission News, March 1918).

(123) Mission News, April 1958, 30. Captain Dimik Singh Lepcha, born in Chekung, built the church for the local congregation following his retirement in Gangtok. It was dedicated in April 1956, and subsequently signed over to UCNI through the Sikkim Kirk Session. See above, n.120 in this section, concerning his role in the Gangtok church.

(124) C.T. Pazo, Church News, Feb. 1968, 16.

(125) According to Chie Nakane, "A Plural Society in Sikkim: a study of the inter-relations of Lepchas, Bhotias and Nepalis," in CASTE AND KIN IN NEPAL (1979, 261), as late as the 1970s all Ministers in the Sikkim Government were either Bhutia or Lepcha, and Nepali were employed only in middle and lower level government service jobs, although they were the majority of the population.

(126) Sikkim State: General Department, Notification No. 6803/G, Gangtok, 28 Jan. 1931; cited in "Sikkim Minutes," 5 March 1931.

(127) From the 1940s onward there is frequent mention in Mission News of Rev. CT Pazo's association with government officials and participation in public events.

(128) PADRE CHHOTUK TSERING PAZO, 1976. The contents of Rev. C.T. Pazo's public address on the occasion of the Coronation of the Chogyal of Sikkim can be found in the article, "Ser-Thri-Nga-Sol, 4 April, 1965" CORONATION BOOK (Gangtok, n.d.), photocopy in NCHP Collection.

(129) Mission News (July 1951, 47) reported the frontier was "now closed to foreigners" and Miss Patterson was the only European in Sikkim, as Headmistress of the Girls' High School.

(130) FOREIGN MISSIONS COMMITTEE, Vol. X, 20 Dec. 1938, 192-3, item 4770. The Minutes also state that prior to 1938 it was a rule of the Sikkim Darbar that all adult baptisms must be reported. But this evidently did not inhibit baptisms taking place, as there is no earlier mention of this in the EHM Sikkim field records.

(131) According to the late C.T. Pazo's son, it was through his father's direct access to the Chogyal after being made a Councillor that the system of permissions for baptism was abolished, through an appeal by Rev. C.T. Pazo to the Chogyal (P.O. Pazo, interview with author, Gangtok, 23 March 1992).

(132) Rahul, 1978, 46.

(133) Nima Tenzing, a former Councillor in the Sikkim Government from Mangan (interview with author, Mangan, N. Sikkim, 20 April 1993), says that Revenue Order No. 1 of 1917 forbade Nepali acquisition of Lepcha or Bhutia land in North Sikkim. In Chie Nakane's article, "A Study of plural societies in Sikkim" (in *CASTE AND KIN IN NEPAL*, ed. Furer-Haimendorf, 1979, 260), he makes mention of laws enacted by the 1930s to check Nepali expansion with the following provisions: 1) territory north of the Dikhu River was reserved for the Lepcha and Bhutia "hereditary inhabitants", but some Nepali Buddhists were also allowed to settle there; and 2) land alienation by Lepcha or Bhutia in favor of Paharis or plainsmen was prohibited.

(134) Leo Rose, "Modernizing a Traditional Administrative System," in *HIMALAYAN ANTHROPOLOGY* (1978), 223, n.16. Rose says that the right to settle or acquire land by outsiders was strictly regulated in this "reserve" area, and it had a separate administration. It was even difficult for Bhutia and Lepcha from other parts of Sikkim to get permission to settle there.

(135) Rautamäki, 1994, 26, based on an account in Arthur Pylkkänen's book, *HIMALAJAN RINTEILLÄ*, Finnish (1939).

(136) Rautamäki (letter to author, 8 May 1994) says that it was easier for women to get permits into North Sikkim in the beginning, and later it became clear that the Sikkim authorities preferred women. On the other hand, it was a very difficult place for men with families and young children to live.

(137) "The Scandinavian Alliance Mission in the Himalayas," handwritten in English (Ghoom, Darjeeling District, n.d.); and Hämelin and Penttoniemi, 1990. The SAM handwritten volume, reviewed by the author in Ghoom, contains miscellaneous records of SAM and the Free Church of Finland Mission in the Himalayas dated from 1892 to the 1940s; but the first entries appear to have been made about 1911. It includes a partial record of the missionaries, children, native helpers, full members of the churches, inquirers or probationers, and orphans.

(138) This list appears to have been compiled a number of years later, in about 1911, and there is no indication of what earlier records it was based upon. According to Hämelin and Peltoniemi (1990, 117) SAM's first annual conference in the Himalayas was not held until 1897, in Ghoom, when several early converts from N. Sikkim were baptised. Presumably they were baptised by the SAM team leader and only man on the field at the time, John F. Fredericksson. The next man to arrive was Kaarlo Waismaa in 1899 from Finland.

(139) Vappu Rautamäki, letter to author, 16 April 1994.

(140) "Ringim and Mangan Christian's Record for 1923," in SAM in the Himalayas.

(141) Rautamäki (1994, 26-27) describes how Hertz and Massinen initially had to live in just a shack beside the road without even a door until they slowly gained the people's trust. After just one year Hertz had to return to Finland due to ill health, and Anna Massinen carried on alone. Kjenrab returned to Ghoom where he assisted in the revision of Tibetan Bible into the Lhasa dialect. Massinen started a school where she lived for a time, founded a weaving school in 1903, and finally moved into the new mission house seven years after arriving in Lachen. A church building was completed in 1911.

(142) See above, p.149-50 and n.10 about Song. There was a resident SAM missionary couple during the early 1900s, Mr. and Mrs. Tjäder, who lived in a native house, and a school and simple dispensary were opened. There is no record of a SAM mission station being established at Pedong, although Waismaa wrote home about how he stopped there enroute to Sikkim and preached in the bazaar, and those who followed him on this route may have done likewise.

(143) See above, n.139 in this section.

(144) Interviews by the author in Mangan, 20 April 1993, with Mr. Nima Tenzing (grandson of Pasang Tenzing), Mrs. Vasti Lepcha (granddaughter of Chhangchuyung, the first convert in Ringim), and Mrs. Achim Lepcha (converted in 1925 in Ringim, mother of the current Mangan pastor, Jonathan Lepcha).

(145) Hämelin and Peltoniemi, 1990, 117. Grauer (1940, 159) notes that two young Bhutia offered to help the SAM missionary ladies after they arrived; this was evidently Chodrug and Karma. Chodrug was baptised in 1896 and worked with the missionaries in Sikkim for four years. According to the handwritten "SAM in the Himalayas" records, Karma was also baptised in 1896, and was a teacher in Lachung. Hämelin and Peltoniemi (1990) mention Karma still in Lachung in 1911 (p.167), and also in connection with Anna Kempe in Ghoom (p.136).

(146) It may be presumed that some of SAM's and the later Finnish Mission's workers received training at EHM's facilities, although the author has found no explicit references to this.

(147) The Tibetan New Testament was revised in Ghoom for those who spoke the Lhasa dialect, and for use in Sikkim. K. Waismaa translated, composed and arranged Christian songs in Tibetan for a hymn book.

(148) There is some evidence that the Waismaas and the Eklunds attempted to learn the Lepcha language, but evidently did not gain facility in it and preached in Tibetan. But there is no indication that they used any Lepcha Christian literature which would have been available from the EHM's press in Darjeeling. Local informants only recall the use of Tibetan literature. Local preachers at Ringim-Mangan and Chungthang often had to explain in Lepcha the messages given in Tibetan by the missionaries. In later years the worship services in these places were conducted in the Lepcha language by the national preachers.

(149) The following missionary couples all helped to oversee the Lachen-Lachung stations from Ringim: Kaarlo and Hanna Waismaa from 1899 (Hanna died in Ghoom in 1905), followed by Ossian and Hulda Eklund (until their return to Finland in 1908), Rev. Edward H. and Anna Massinen-Owen from their marriage in 1907 (Anna died in Ghoom in 1909), Rev.

Edward and Mathilda Johansson-Owen until 1914, and after a gap of almost ten years, lastly Rev. Eli and Sonja Ollila from 1923. The single women who built up and ran the Lachen-Lachung stations included: the SAM Swedish pioneers Signe Rasmussen and Amanda Larsson, and their successor Mathilda Johansson (later Owen) in Lachung and Ringim; then Klara Hertz (died in Lachen in 1920) and Anna Massinen (later Owen) in Lachen, Elly Peterson (died in Lachen after only two years in 1922), Edla Träsbäck in Lachen for a few years, Siiri Aartola and Annikki Tunturivuo during the 1920s, May Isaacson in Lachen (left for health reasons in 1932 after two years), and Elin Kronqvist (died in Lachen in 1939 after thirty-four years of work in India and Sikkim). When Miss Kronqvist returned from furlough in Finland in 1938 she brought back four new missionaries to Sikkim. Mr. Arnold Hyttinen (died in Baksaduar in 1948) and Mr. Arthur Pylkkänen (died in Lachung in 1950) divided their time between the North Sikkim stations in support of Miss Kronqvist, who was then the senior missionary in the field, until they were ordered to Ghoom because of the War, and Miss Astrid Virtanen and Miss Elvi Mäkelä went to Lachen for several years. The above demonstrates a high incidence of missionary deaths on the Sikkim field: over twenty-five percent of those who worked there.

(150) Mission News, Dec. 1931, 56.

(151) The Lachen-Lachung early Christian converts and mission workers who originated there included: Chodung and Karma baptised in 1897, Gompu Dorji the teacher, an evangelist sent to Baksaduar, and Tsering Wangdi. An EHM report (Mission News, Dec. 1931, 56) mentioned the recent wedding of the Tibetan Christian pastor in Lachung, although it is not clear who this was referring to.

(152) It is not clear if these were local men or brought in by the Finnish missionaries from outside of Sikkim. Neither of their baptisms are recorded in the handwritten "SAM in the Himalayas" records. There is an obscure reference to Thrinlay having a connection with the Moravian Mission, but 'Thrinlay' is reportedly a Lepcha title. According to local informants he was trained as both a teacher and a compounder, in addition to being an effective evangelist. Several references are made to Thrinlay as an evangelist in Lachen in Hämelin's and Peltoniemi's history of the Free Church of Finland Mission in the Himalayas (1990, 186,216,221). Local informants also say that Gompu (Tsering) Dorji was originally from Lachung and worked as both a teacher and an evangelist in Lachung about the same time that Thrinlay was there. He is also referred to as an evangelist in Lachung in 1928 by Hämelin and Pentoniemi (1990, 186).

(153) Rautamäki, 1994, 28.

(154) According to Nima Tenzing (Pasang's grandson), Pasang was the first convert in his family and one of the earliest converts in North Sikkim. In 1900 he accompanied John Fredericksson to Ahmedabad to assist with famine relief. Hämelin and Peltoniemi (1990) make numerous mentions of him as an evangelist in Ringim-Mangan, and later as Pastor in Mangan.

(155) Nima Tenzing, grandson of the first Pastor Pasang Tenzing, interview with author, Mangan, 20 April 1993.

(156) D.C. Lucksom, Thargyal's younger brother, interview with author, Gangtok, 21 March 1992. Thargyal was the oldest son of Apun Lucksom, the pioneer EHM evangelist in East Sikkim. He was in Ringim at least by the early 1920s when he wrote the "Ringim and Mangan Christians Record for

1923" on behalf of Munshi Pasang (in "SAM in the Himalayas").

(157) "Ringim and Mangan Christians Record for 1923," signed by Thargyel, teacher, for Munshi Pasang, evangelist, age 50. The 42 Christians included 17 male and 15 female adults, and 10 children under the age of 12 years. By profession the adults included 17 farmers, 8 students, 2 evangelists, 1 Munshi, 1 teacher, 1 compounder, 1 cook, and 1 person in Darjeeling.

(158) Nima Tenzing (son of Palden Tenzing), interview with author, Mangan, 20 April 1993. Nima says that his father was first taught the Bible by Rev. E. Ollila, who sent Palden to Serampore. This is the first of only two instances the author has found of converts from North Sikkim being sent for theological training by the Finnish missionaries. A second person was not sent until the 1960s.

(159) See above, p.178.

(160) E. Kronqvist, letter to Maling Kazi, Court Maling, Sikkim, 8 Dec. 1938, photocopy in NCHP Collection.

(161) A. Hyttinen and A. Pylkkänen were both detained and then interned in concentration camps in British India because of their Finnish citizenship; A. Virtanen was in Lachen for about two years before she married and left; and E. Mäkelä left in 1941.

(162) According to the Mission News (March 1943, 13) she went "for a short time." But she stayed for several years, first in Lachung then in Mangan. Her efforts on behalf of the Finnish Mission were so appreciated that part of her diary, PAGES OF THE MEMORY BOOK OF A MISSIONARY were published in Finnish, translated by Helvi Parviala (Hämeenlinna: Päivä, 1949).

(163) Vasti Lepcha, 'adopted' daughter of Elin Kronqvist, interview with author, Mangan, 20 April 1993.

(164) Rautamäki, 1994, 25. The English road engineer referred to is probably Mr. Claude Dover who later married Signe Fredericksson, the SAM team leader's widow, and became a missionary with SAM near the Bhutan border (see below, p.233). Rautamäki's account is similar to one told by Grauer (1940, 159) which indicates that the people in Lachung were initially strongly opposed to the missionaries and wanted to drown them, but were prevented by British officials; it is more likely that at the instigation of the Lamas they tried to drown their own people, as recounted by Rautamäki.

(165) Rautamäki, 1994, 27-28.

(166) Rautamäki, 1994, 27-28. In a letter to the author (8 May 1994) Rautamäki further states in what she calls "the great opposition of 1912-1914" that the Maharaja himself went to Lachung and Lachen to meet the new Christian converts and made threats of hard punishment against them. He is said to have wanted to get rid of the missionaries and to reform the Buddhist religion. But this situation was reversed when the Maharaja died. The new Maharaja, Tashi Namgyal, was sympathetic to the missionaries and their work; he expelled Madame Neel from Sikkim, and even invited the Finnish missionaries to his coronation in 1916.

(167) Ollila ran a small Bible school in Mangan for a time, and Palden Tenzing was one of his students. But no one from Lachen or Lachung was

trained into church leadership.

(168) The "SAM in the Himalayas" section on 'Record of Baptisms' between 1915 and 1944 only includes seventeen 'Sikkimese' (evidently Bhutia and Lepcha combined, and from all three stations). There is no way of being sure if this is a complete record, but if so it shows a drastic downturn in the number of baptisms compared to the first fifteen years when there were a total of seventy-eight baptisms in Sikkim (see p.183 above).

(169) Hämelin and Peltoniemi, 1990, 217-218; and Mission News, Oct. 1950, 49. T. Wangdi, a mission worker originally from Lachung, had accompanied them to Lachung as a guide. But they were not together the night of the flood, and Wangdi survived.

(170) It is reported that when a national Christian from Ghoom visited Lachung during the mid-1980s to see what was left of the former Christian community he found just a bell still standing. When he rang it a few elderly people were attracted by the sound and came out to see if the missionaries had returned. But there were no Christians among them.

(171) This small church was started in 1952 by Palden, then completed by his relatives in 1956, following his premature death at the age of forty-nine.

(172) Mission News, March 1956, 31.

(173) Mission News, May 1957, 31.

(174) Nathaniel Bhutia, handwritten personal testimony, 21 Jan. 1994, in NCHP collection. He was taken into the Finnish Mission's orphanage from Baksaduar, raised by the missionaries, then sent to Doon Bible School from 1948-49, and returned to work as an evangelist first in Ghoom and then in Mangan, North Sikkim. In 1964 he resigned from the Mission, took a government post, and now resides in Ghoom.

(175) Govt. of Sikkim, SIKKIM'S BASIC ISSUES (Gangtok, n.d.). Nepali had to have been resident in Sikkim for at least fifteen years immediately preceding 1961 in order to qualify for citizenship, but registration was not mandatory and many in the rural areas were left out. Thus when the Sikkim Citizenship Order of 1975 was instituted following Sikkim becoming a State of the Union of India, based on those registered under the 1961 Sikkim Subjects Regulation, thousands of domiciled Nepali were not granted citizenship of India.

(176) The new congregation was in Namche, the district centre of the newly created South District (see below p.200).

(177) P.O. Pazo, interview with author, Gangtok, 23 March 1992.

(178) In the 1971 Census, 1,663 Christians were recorded in Sikkim, and in the 1981 Census, 7,015 Christians.

(179) According to their own count, related to the author through interviews in 1992 and 1993 with church and mission leaders and their own records, the 200 Christian congregations in Sikkim included the following: 24 CNI churches; 12 HFC (former Free Church of Finland Mission) churches; 20 El Shaddai-related Believer's Assemblies; about 20 Pentecostal and evangelical or non-denominational churches and branch-churches related to Shiloh Church, Masih Mandali, Bethlehem Fellowship, Himalayan Evangelical

Fellowship, Himalayan Crusade, Himanchal Christia Sangati and IEC; about 10 new churches related to groups that have entered Sikkim since the 1990s, including the Presbyterian Free Church (Kalimpong-based), Shalom Church (Siliguri-based), Mission for Christ (from Mizoram), Revival Church (from Nagaland), and Nagaland Baptists; and over 100 independent Pentecostal and non-denominational churches. The latter figure, based on estimates from various church leaders in Sikkim, is admittedly imprecise and very difficult to accurately determine due to a lack of any central organisation, the difficulty of terrain, and the fact that no state-wide survey of the churches in Sikkim has been conducted to the author's knowledge.

(180) James P. Deshpande, interview with author, Kalimpong, 20 April 1992. Deshpande accompanied the group as an interpreter for P.S. Samuel, who spoke only Hindi, and he secured permission from the necessary officials for the open-air meeting.

(181) James B.K. Basnet, interview with author, Gangtok, 16 March 1992. Basnet had a mixture of UCNI, El Shaddai and Pentecostal influences in his own Christian experience. His parents were UCNI members in Kalimpong; he was personally converted in Kalimpong through the street preaching of an El Shaddai group in 1952, then baptised by immersion a few years later through the Full Gospel Pentecostal Church; and he joined the UCNI Gangtok Church when he immigrated to Sikkim about 1960.

(182) Although no new church was started in Gangtok directly through the efforts of the Kalimpong group, B.K. Basnet later left the UCNI Gangtok Church in 1969 and started a "family church" in his home. This was later registered in Sikkim as the Full Gospel Pentecostal Church, Gangtok, but has no relationship with the church of the same name in Kalimpong.

(183) S. Sodemba, interview with author, Kalimpong, Jan. 1986.

(184) See Appendix G for the life-history of Dr. Bahadur Sereng Subba (a Limbu title), his personal Christian experience, and how he came to embrace Pentecostal teaching.

(185) Samuel Sereng, letter to author, 22 Dec. 1992.

(186) Dr. Bahadur Sereng, interview with author, Namche, Sikkim, 28 March 1992.

(187) Reuben Moses Rai, interview with author, Namche, Sikkim, 30 Sept. 1992. He was later sent by Sereng to the AG Bible School in Hardoi, UP, and is now pastor of Emmanuel Pentecostal Church in Namche, an independent church.

(188) Samuel Lepcha, interview with author, Singtam, Sikkim, March 1992. Samuel Lepcha, converted in 1967, was also sent by Sereng to Bible school at Hardoi, UP, returned and became an evangelist, and now is pastor of an independent church in Singtam, Shiloh Church, which has several branches in East and South Sikkim.

(189) Ken Booth, Field letter for WEC Himalayan Mission, May 1961, in WEC file, NCHP Collection.

(190) Himanchal Christia Sangati was indigenous in the sense that it was started by and for nationals of Sikkim, and fully administered by them. However, some financial support was received for the workers and a child-

ren's home in Namche from overseas.

(191) Most of the young men referred to Bible school by Sereng were to the North India Bible Institute in Hardoi, UP, a Hindi language institute to which Nepali speakers could easily adapt. This came from his earlier contact with Rev. G. Dial of Hardoi who visited Sereng's home in Darjeeling in the late 1950s. Others were sent to the WME Himalayan campus run by his son-in-law, David Mangratee, in Darjeeling, some to Doon Bible School in Dehradun, UP, and a few to Nagaland. Sereng did not raise the sponsorship for those he sent to Bible schools, but encouraged the students and gave his recommendation to the schools, which helped to provide needed scholarships. Of the at least thirty leaders of Pentecostal and non-denominational churches in 1990 who had Bible college training, at least half of them were converted through Sereng's ministry or originally related to Himanchal Christia Sangati.

(192) According to Samuel Sereng (letter to author, Guwahati, 22 Dec. 1992), fourteen workers were originally supported by the T.L. Osborn Foundation (USA). Then sixteen honorary and partially supported workers were given assistance directly by Himanchal Christa Sangati, until World Missionary Evangelism (USA) took on the support of eight workers from 1972.

(193) S. Sereng, letter to author, 22 Dec. 1992.

(194) See above, n.189 in this section.

(195) See above, p.192 and n.182 and n.183 in this section.

(196) See above, n.180 in this section.

(197) James Deshpande, interview with author, Kalimpong, 20 April 1992. Deshpande is a respected educator and Bible scholar, and put both of these talents to work on behalf of the little scattered churches he encountered in Sikkim.

(198) The first group, "Independent Fellowship of the Bible Pentecostal Churches of Sikkim," in West Sikkim, was registered in 1985 and is now run by their own committee, on which Deshpande is only an advisor. This has brought cooperation between the churches involved. They are building new church buildings, and bearing all of their own expenses.

(199) L.B. Rai, General Secretary, "First Report Submitted to the Evangelical Fellowship of India During the 38th Annual Convention at Ernakulam, Kerala," Gangtok: Bethlehem Fellowship Church, 1 April 1989, 1, in NCHP Collection.

(200) L.B. Rai and other Bethlehem Fellowship elders, interview with author, Gangtok, 17 March 1992. Pastor Robert Karthak is the brother of one of the Bethlehem Fellowship elders, S.G. Karthak. He was invited to a special church convention in 1973 and then again in 1975 when he taught specifically on the subject of the Holy Spirit. This brought great encouragement to the church, there was an increased burden for outreach to non-Christians, and miracles of healing began to take place through their prayers. Robert Karthak's teaching was not through Pentecostal affiliation, but rather stemmed from teaching his church had received from visiting leaders of the charismatic movement and house church movement in the UK, and from his own ministry experience.

- (201) M. Lingdong, interview with author, Gangtok, 18 March 1992.
- (202) P.T. Sukmimu, interview with author, Chekung, W. Sikkim, 30 March 1992. See below, n.207 in this section.
- (203) Daulat Singh Rai and Rev. P.S. Tingbo, interview with author, Namche, Sikkim, 30 March 1992.
- (204) Padam Bahadur Rai, interview with author, Damthang, Sikkim, 29 March 1992.
- (205) See below, p.258ff.
- (206) Phurpa Tshering Sukmimu (Lepcha), a native of Chekung, West Sikkim, was a teacher in Gangtok when he applied to be a pastoral assistant to Rev. C.T. Pazo in 1965 (interview with author, Chekung, 30 March 1992). While under Pazo he completed the EHCC Presbyterian's two year course, was ordained in 1967, and continued to work under Pazo until he had a stroke in December 1973. After treatment he returned to his native Chekung to serve as a local pastor. When he arrived there were no CNI pastors or catechists in the whole South-West area. From 1979 he was officially appointed as Presbyterian over the South-West Pastorate, from Chekung, then from 1986 over the West Pastorate when the South-West was divided into two.
- (207) Those appointed under the DDC Outreach Programme included: Dayal Singh Rai, Dhanman Tamang, Daulat Rai and Sukt Tshering, appointed 1977 to the South-West Pastorate; and Namgyal Lepcha, appointed 1982 to the North-East Pastorate ("DDC Executive Committee Minutes," 26 Oct. 1977 and 14 Dec. 1982). The first four received from one to three months training at DHBS, and Namgyal Lepcha did a full two-year programme. All except Sukt Tshering were still serving in Sikkim under the CNI in 1992.
- (208) P.S. Tingbo, "Ringing the Gospel Bells at the Foothills of the Himalayas," (paper for Princeton Seminary, Jan. 1985), 18. Missionaries were sent by NMS, including Abraham who worked in Gangtok and Singtam for many years, but the arrangement with Rev. P.S. Tingbo was later opposed by the Bishop of Darjeeling Diocese and had to be abandoned. At least three evangelists in Sikkim were still being supported by NMS in 1992.
- (209) DDC News, Nov. 1985, 4. A grant received in 1985 from the United Presbyterian Church in America was used to help build these new churches in Tadong, Rhenock, Singtam, Namche and Jorethang.
- (210) Rev. Martin F. Rai is the son of P.B. Rai, one of the early elders of Gangtok Church. He grew up as an active member of the Gangtok Church and felt called to Christian ministry early in life. He was only the second person from the EHCC to receive formal theological training, graduating with a GTh from Leonard Theological College in Jabalpur, and was ordained by the UCNI in the mid 1960s. He subsequently served as pastor of Calcutta Hill Christian Church and over various pastorates in Kalimpong division before being appointed as Presbyterian of the North-East Sikkim Pastorate in 1984.
- (211) Church News, Feb. 1963, 17; and DDC News, Sept. 1972, 11.
- (212) "CNI Darjeeling Diocese Pastorate-Wise Information," a chart dated 1 April 1989, in NCHP Collection.

(213) As of December 1991 sixty-five Nepali and Lepcha from Sikkim had graduated from a New Life Training Centre (NLTC) course run by NCCC held in Siliguri; one NLTC was held locally in Sikkim during the late 1980s; and in December 1991 the first 3-day Leadership Training Institute was held in Gangtok with 64 participants from several churches, called "Basic Training for Soul Winning Camp" (Chandra Sewa, "A Brief Evaluation of NLTC Graduates," MS, 1988, updated March 1991). Sonam and Rita Kabo were posted to Gangtok in June 1991, but then transferred to Kathmandu a year later, and as of 1993 they had not been replaced.

(214) The Principal of the Institute, Rev. Samuel Lepcha, is also pastor of Shiloh Church. He did advanced theological training in Korea before opening the Institute.

(215) M.F. Rai, "North-East Sikkim Pastorate," Outreach: Bulletin of Darjeeling Diocese, Nov. 1989, 22.

CHAPTER 5 - CHRISTIANITY IN BHUTAN

INTRODUCTION

Bhutan, unlike Sikkim, the other Lamaistic Buddhist stronghold of the Eastern Himalayas, never lost its sovereignty to either British or Indian overlords; but this was at the price of isolationism. Nepali-Lepcha from Darjeeling, Sikkim and British Bhutan as well as from Nepal, were welcomed in to tame the largely uninhabited south of the country by the beginning of the 20th century. Then hoards of Nepali labourers were employed for heavy labour construction projects when Bhutan suddenly began to play development catch-up from the middle of the century. But soon the example of Sikkim began to send shivers down the Bhutanese rulers' backs. Restrictive policies on Nepali immigration were introduced and a kind of forced integration into the Bhutanese milieu was attempted. Finally the politically dominant ruling Ngalong, a minority in their own country and fearful of the fast-growing Nepali population in the south (by then known as Southern Bhutanese) who were becoming politically restive, undertook a radical cultural-religio-politico protectionism by a programme of strong repression and forced expulsions of "non-nationals" to drastically reduce the Nepali population. All of these developments affected the slowly growing Christian population within Bhutan which had taken root predominantly among the resident ethnic Nepali-Lepcha Southern Bhutanese and the "non-national" Nepali labourers, together with the many Indian Christians (including many ethnic Nepali-Lepcha) engaged in government service or by the missions. However, the very first mission efforts in connection with Bhutan were aimed at the Bhutia peoples, although they were largely unsuccessful.

Just as the early explorers and colonialists looked on Bhutan largely as a

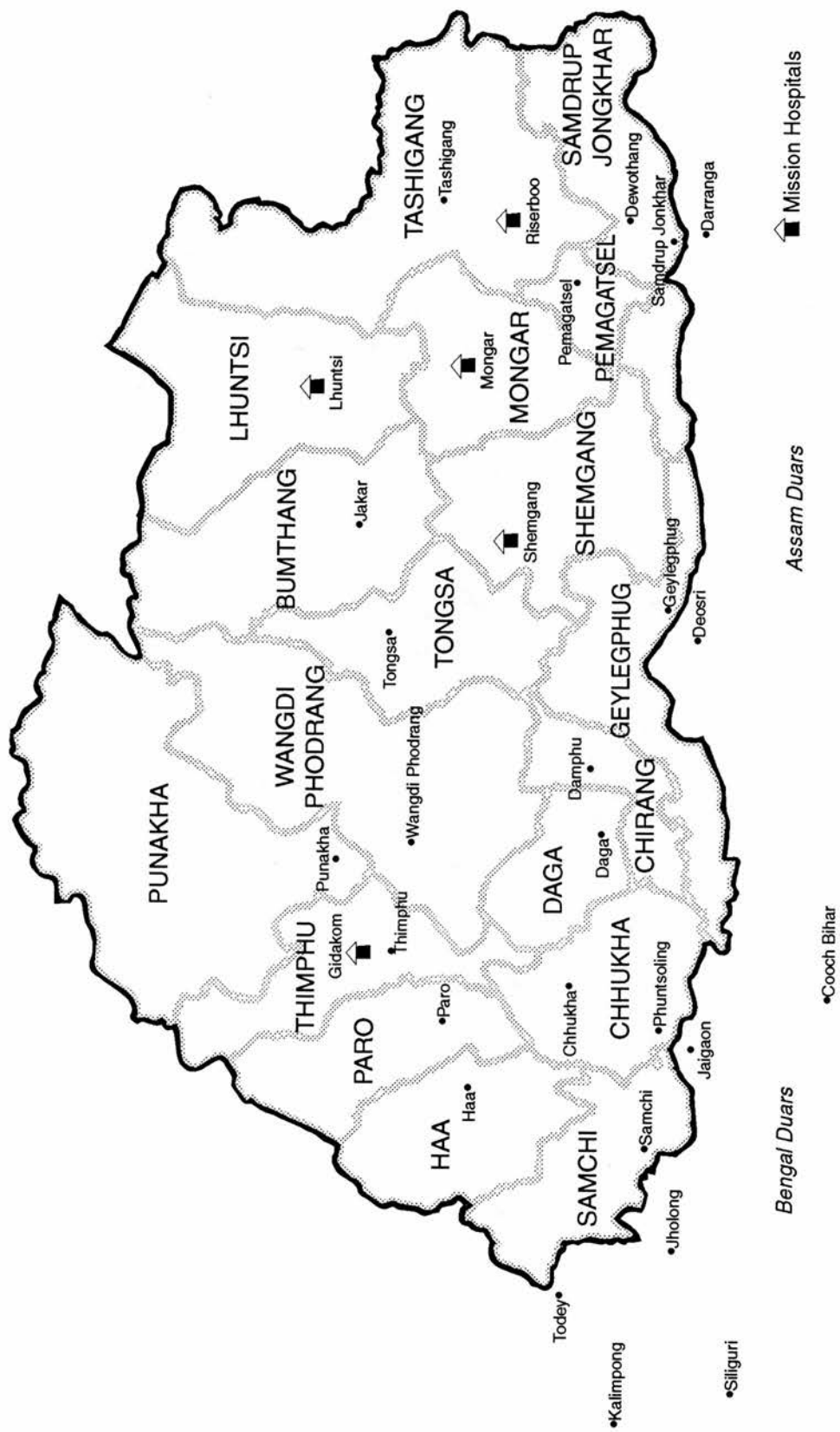


Figure - 6 Bhutan

route to Tibet, so it was with the first Christians who entered Bhutan. The first recorded visit of Christians was by two Portuguese Jesuit priests enroute to Tibet in 1626, Cacella and Cabral.¹ In Paro they met the Dharmaraja Ngawang Namgyal and gave him presents. He promised to build them a house and a church, and freedom to preach Christianity if they would stay. But they decided to push on to their goal of Tibet, and never returned. Only two centuries later was there an attempt to establish Christian missionary work in Bhutan, this time by Protestants.²

WILLIAM CAREY'S "BOOTAN MISSION"

At the beginning of the Protestant missionary movement William Carey and his Serampore colleagues envisioned a "Bootan Mission," and in 1795 they urged their society in England to send out missionaries for Bhutan. In March of 1797 Carey himself, along with Mr. Thomas, undertook a missionary journey to the borders of "Bootan." In a letter by Carey dated 23 March 1797, he described their journey in great detail, and how they were received with great honour and exchanged presents with the "Soobah."³ Although the Subbha could not give them permission to go into the hills without the sanction of the Deb Raja, they returned with his promise to supply two persons to instruct them in the "Bootani" language. A few years later a plan was put forward at Serampore to translate the Scriptures into Bhutanese, and the opening of the new field was offered to William Robinson, described as follows:

...Bhote-haut, in the Bootan territory, about 150 miles north of Dingepore. Brother Carey has been there, and was received with much kindness. The Bengalee language is spoken at this place, though in the Bootan territory; but the Bootan language could be acquired, and such a farther entrance be finally made into Bootan and Thibet, as providence might permit. The Scriptures here could be translated into the Bootan and Thibet languages (said to be the same) which alone were worthy of a man's whole life.⁴

Finally in April 1808 Mr. William Robinson, in company of Mr. Carey, Jr., set out for Bhutan to engage in this task, but they were turned back. Robinson tried persistently on five different journeys with various companions over the next three years to settle within or on the border of Bhutan.⁵ The first time he was prevented from reaching his goal by civil war.⁶ The second time he was received into friendship with the Katma at Bhote-haut in a special ceremony, but not allowed to proceed into the interior, so he erected a simple hut for his family near the border at Barbari, then was forced to leave due to illness.⁷ The third time he brought his wife and children to Barbari and began preaching on each "Lord's day," but they all suffered intermittently with fever until his wife, six months pregnant, died. Robinson was subsequently attacked by dacoits, and finally he had to take his motherless children to Serampore. At the conclusion of this tragic episode he wrote to Mr. Marshman,

I feel much discouraged. My hands hang down, and my knees are ready to smite one against another. I am like a man amazed, and can scarcely believe that I am in the state I am. Never could any passage of scripture be more applicable, than that of Isaiah is to my case - 'He that walketh in darkness and hath no light, let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay himself upon his God.' I am without any light except that which faith affords; and my faith is so weak that, like a glimmering taper, it only serves to prevent total darkness. ...It appears as if all things went against me: I hope, however, that is not the case in reality. I must now come to Serampore. I hope you will look out for some body to return with me, for I do not think I can go by myself, and live alone at a place where, but a few days ago, I had a wife and two children!⁸

Nevertheless, Robinson went back yet a fourth time in January 1811, when he and his companions were again forced out by an attack of 50-60 dacoits and barely escaped with their lives while three of their servants were brutally murdered. This time Barbari was abandoned, yet Robinson determined to make one more "attempt on Bootan."⁹ Lastly he sought permission to settle at either Minagari or Chamarchi, but was again refused. Finally a response from the Deb

Raja to Robinson's request to enter the interior was forwarded with a clear refusal to permit any Englishman to settle within his domains, and the mission was abandoned before it was ever established. The door to Bhutan for these Christian missionaries was shut tightly at the border of the Bhutan Duars.

Bhutan continued to lie barren to the missionary movement until the end of the century, although there was momentary rejoicing when a twenty-six year old "native of Bootan... named Kiaba" appeared in Patna in 1815 and requested baptism.¹⁰ He was employed by the missionaries for about a year, then moved to Monghyr, and was not heard from again. Kiaba was the first Bhutanese convert to Christianity, and as C.B. Lewis reflected near that time, "Had the Bootan Mission been carried on to the date of Kiaba's conversion, it is probable that he might have rendered important service in it."¹¹ It fell just four years short. Nevertheless, it was a genuine effort to establish a Christian witness among the Bhutanese people and to learn their language in order to do so. It also fell fifty years short of British annexation of the Bhutan Duars and the beginnings of Nepali immigration into Bhutan.

EARLY CHRISTIAN INFLUENCE FROM DARJEELING AND KALIMPONG

Only from the end of the 19th century did there begin to be Christian influence in the kingdom of Bhutan, an influence that spread across the border from neighbouring Darjeeling District and Kalimpong (British Bhutan), the latter having been most recently annexed by the British along with the Bhutan (now Bengal) Duars in 1865. From that time missionaries were able to reside inside former Bhutanese territory, that much closer to the Tibeto-Buddhist peoples of the hills which were still insulated from Christianity. Two missions which first established themselves in Darjeeling District were soon looking towards Bhutan as well: the Scandinavian Alliance Mission, which had a primary aim of Tibetan and Bhutia peoples, and the Church of Scotland's EHM.

In relation to Bhutan the initial concern of both groups was for the Bhutia

peoples. But as the proud Buddhist Bhutia proved to be very slow to respond, and there was an increasing immigration of Nepali peoples into southern Bhutan, the area which was most accessible to Christian outreach, both groups found the greatest responsiveness to the Christian message among the more recent Nepali settlers. This pattern has continued into the modern age. Despite the concern shown and evangelistic outreaches towards the indigenous ethnic groups of Bhutan through the years, the greatest church growth has been among the Southern Bhutanese (domiciled Nepali) and temporary migrant Nepali labourers. As of 1991 there were an estimated 30 to 50 native Dzongkha, Scharchopka and Kengkha speaking Christians, and over 1,000 Southern Bhutanese/Nepali Christians in Bhutan.

SAM AND THE FREE CHURCH OF FINLAND MISSION

Within three years of the first SAM Himalayan Mission workers arriving in Ghoom, Darjeeling District, J.F. Fredericksson went for three months to Baksaduar (called Pasakha inside Bhutan), in the Bengal Duars on the southern border of Bhutan. Baksaduar was a strategic location as the main point of intercourse between Bhutan and British India.¹² Here Fredericksson set up the third SAM station among Tibeto-Buddhist people in the Eastern Himalayas. After building a house along the Buxa road in the village of Chunabatti, a Norwegian widow lady, Mrs. Susanna Hansen and her eleven year old daughter Alfhild arrived in May 1895 as the first missionaries to reside in this area.¹³ Tragically, Mrs. Hansen died within four months. But she requested in her will that her friend, Lady Sigrid Gahmberg, the first Finnish missionary with SAM, would both care for her daughter and take over the work in Baksaduar among the Bhutanese. In December Miss Gahmberg, together with the child Alfhild, Fredericksson's sister Anna, and an evangelist-cum-interpreter called Lebsong, departed together for Baksaduar and stayed through the winter season, distributing tracts and providing basic medical service. In November 1896 they

returned again, this time with a former monk from Lhasa who had converted to Christianity, Kenrab, as their interpreter and fellow-worker. The following Spring they opened a school in Chunabatti and were able to cross the border into Bhutan on brief visits, and in 1898 they were joined by Hilja Heiskanen, also from Finland.¹⁴ Evangelist Pasang Tenzing, one of the first Christians in N. Sikkim, also joined them for a time. However, just two years later Gahmberg died of malaria and Heiskanen was posted to Cooch Bihar. In the first five years of pioneering work in this remote corner two women gave the ultimate sacrifice of their lives. Miss Anna Fredericksson carried on alone for a time, but the Baksaduar station was bereft of resident missionary staff for most of the next twenty-five years. As contact between there and Ghoom was very difficult to maintain due to the rugged terrain and its isolated position, the connection was kept up through Cooch Bihar, just thirty-four miles south.¹⁵ In 1925 Mrs. Signe Dover, a SAM missionary posted to Cooch Bihar, was reported to be running a school for girls in Baksaduar. The teacher, Norbu Tenzing, was the son of one of the Sikkim evangelists.¹⁶ No converts to Christianity in connection with SAM are known of from this period.¹⁷

In the meantime the Finnish Alliance Mission took responsibility for SAM's Himalayan field. They bought the Baksaduar station from the SAM American Committee in 1908, although they had no missionaries available to send at the time and were fully occupied with the other two main stations at Ghoom and in North Sikkim.¹⁸ In August 1929 three Finnish missionaries finally went to Baksaduar to take over and revive the station, including the girls' school which had been run by Mrs. Signe Dover.¹⁹ Miss Edla Träskbäck and Miss Hanna Juureva, affectionately known as the "anilas," transferred both the children's home and weaving shop from Ghoom to Baksaduar, along with all of their native workers. They also had at least one Bhutia evangelist with them who transferred down from Lachung, N. Sikkim, and they began systematic evangelisation of the surrounding area.

By that time, Nepali settlers had begun to immigrate into the area on both sides of the border.²⁰ Thus when the new missionaries brought Nepali Christian colleagues with them from Ghoom it was not surprising that there was a response to Christian teaching from both the local Nepali and Bhutanese population. A small clinic was started with the assistance of Dr. Ruth Longman, a Nepali Brahman woman raised in the Ghoom orphanage; Mirjam Rai, another Nepali formerly in the Ghoom orphanage and an elder of the Ghoom church, acted as a Bible woman and taught in the school; and Rev. James Longman, Ruth's brother, and his wife helped carry on the Baksaduar work when Misses Träskbäck and Juureva went on leave about 1934.²¹ Samuel, a native colporteur from Lachen, N. Sikkim and supported by the British Bible Society and the Bible Society for Foreign Countries, also came to Baksaduar during this period to distribute Christian literature. He made his way into Bhutan, accompanied by a local Baksaduar church member on his journeys. Although these native workers were only there for a few years (Dr. Ruth Longman, Rev. James Longman and Mirjam Rai were all back in Ghoom by the mid-1930s), several Christians were reported in Adama, a nearby village, in 1937. They included "John," "Abraham" and "Sarah," "Magdalene," "Tabitha," "Martha," and evangelists "Enok" and "Stephanus," but few of these were converts from the Baksaduar area.²² The summer of 1938 the first local baptism of several young couples took place in Adama stream, including "Silas" and "Lea," a Dukpa couple.

Due to the missionaries' habit of giving all of their converts Christian names, it is very difficult to determine their ethnic origin. It is known that Ram Bahadur "Jonathan" Chhetri was converted during this time. He then became the missionaries' weaving master and moved to Ghoom when the weaving works were transferred back there in 1935.²³ He married one of the Nepali orphan girls, Martha Tamang, and their son, J.B. Samuel, became an ardent evangelist in Ghoom during the 1960s, was subsequently ordained as a pastor with the

Himalayan Free Church and pioneered a church in Kurseong. A Bhutanese who came to Baksaduar for trade, Stephanus Kuchu, was also converted. He remained as an evangelist for twelve years among his own people until he died, allegedly of poisoning. His orphaned son and daughter, Ishmael Tshering and Esther Dukpa, later became evangelists alongside J.B. Samuel, and Ishmael was ordained as pastor of the church in Ghoom.²⁴ Magdalene, a young widow and well-known local witch born in Adama village went to Chunabatti where the Finnish missionaries taught her to read and do elementary nursing. She became a faithful women's evangelist around Baksaduar, travelled as far as N. Sikkim, and finally retired in Bhutan where she died, reportedly a strong Christian until the end. The eldest son of Silas and Lea, Norbu Dukpa, was dedicated to Christ at their baptism in 1938 and later became one of the first Bhutanese pastors. Nathaniel Bhutia, who was brought up by the missionaries in Baksaduar from his boyhood, became an evangelist in 1948, was sent to Bible School in Dehradun, and later to N. Sikkim as a pastor. Native workers such as these kept the flame of a Christian witness alive in Baksaduar, while the Finnish missionaries struggled to maintain a presence at this remote station, especially during the war years.

After Arnold Hyttinen's arrival in India in 1938 the elderly "anilas" retired to Ghoom. Hyttinen carried on through the next decade, alone except for the evangelists Stephanus and Magdalene. They engaged in lengthy evangelistic tours both in Bhutan among the Bhutanese and among the Nepali of Jalpaiguri District. A natural linguist, Hyttinen quickly learned Dzongkha, the official language of Bhutan, and completed the translation of two of the Gospels before his death in 1948.²⁵ But the mission work was severely hampered by World War II, during which Hyttinen spent four years in a concentration camp in Dehradun. In addition, the Bhutia evangelist, Stephanus, died of poisoning, all the mission buildings were pulled down, including the church, and many of the young Christian converts gave up their new faith in Hyttinen's absence. When he

returned to Baksaduar after the War the work was in ruins. In a mixture of despair and hope for the future Hyttinen undertook a forty-day fast in July 1948, near the end of which he died in the arms of one of the Dukpa Christians. Others followed Hyttinen off and on, until the last Finnish missionaries left India in 1971, all except one: Mrs. Hellin Hukka-Dukpa, who had married Rev. Norbu Dukpa of Baksaduar in 1957.²⁶

From the 1950s it was primarily Dukpa and Nepali workers who carried the work forward, together with Hellin Hukka. Simon Dukpa, a native of Chunabatti, was converted and baptised in 1952 and became an evangelist with the Finnish Mission before going to Kalimpong.²⁷ Three Bhutanese Dukpa Christians were sent to Bible School in Hardoi, UP, returned by the end of the decade and were ordained -- Norbu Dukpa (son of Silas and Lea), Andreas Dukpa (son of Simon) and Thomas Dukpa. They were the chosen successors of the missionaries to carry on the work from Baksaduar under national leadership. This gave a firm foundation to the work in this Duars area, with a distinctly Bhutanese focus.

Nevertheless, from the next decade the church was increasingly Nepalised. Miss Vappu Rautamäki, who first went to Baksaduar in 1955, describes how a Nepali village grew up in Suntalabar, on the Buxa road to Chunabatti, through the 1960s and 1970s, until in 1985 the Himalayan Free Church meeting room was located there with a full-time Nepali evangelist.²⁸ Thirty years earlier, when Rautamäki lived in Baksaduar, she recalls only one Nepali member in the church, a peddler called "Markus." The Nepali seldom sought help at the mission dispensary, while it was frequented by Bhutanese who sometimes came even from the interior of Bhutan. Yet by 1985 the church had many Nepali members. They regularly visited the mission house, Hellin had learned some Nepali, and songs originally translated into Tibetan were now sung in Nepali. Such Nepalisation of the church was its adaptation to the gradual Nepalisation of the area as a whole. There was not only steady Nepali immigration into the Duars area, but by this

time Buxa had been cut off as the main road into Bhutan. When the road connecting Thimphu with India was built it was routed through Jaigaon, leaving Baksaduar isolated and increasingly remote as facilities shifted to Jaigaon.

When the churches under the Free Church of Finland Mission were registered with the Indian government as the Himalayan Free Church and handed over to local leadership, Rev. Norbu Dukpa was elected the first Chairman. During the 1980s the Baksaduar-based branch of HFC was re-registered as the Free Church of Finland, in an effort to distinguish it from the distinctly Nepali HFC churches in Darjeeling and Sikkim. Although detailed current statistics were not obtainable by the author, there are now reportedly ten Free Church of Finland congregations or related fellowships in the Duars along the border of Bhutan,²⁹ but although their main focus has been the Tibeto-Buddhist Bhutanese, a large proportion of their members are ethnic Nepali. A full-time Nepali evangelist, Nicodemus Rai, watches over the church in Suntalabar, along with a Nepali Bible woman, Magdalene. A house fellowship was started in Jaigaon in 1965, alternately watched over by Andreas and Thomas Dukpa from the headquarters at Baksaduar, and in 1986 Canaan Church was built and dedicated with the help of the Free Church of Finland. In 1992 the congregation had grown to 92 baptised members, about 60 percent Dukpa who attend from across the border, and 40 percent Nepali.³⁰ Simon, Andreas' father, was also in Jaigaon as an evangelist and spent the last years of his life pastoring a church at Kokla. The main expansion of the work has been among Nepali in Jalpaiguri District along the Bhutan border. In the words of Vappu Rautamiäki, "The evangelizing work of the Bhutanese Church of Baksaduar has expanded to the Dooars area and as a result become Nepalized."³¹

CHURCH OF SCOTLAND EASTERN HIMALAYAN MISSION

The rapid spread of Christianity through the agency of EHM into Kalimpong division became the natural springboard for its movement on into

Bhutan, due to its historic relationship as part of Bhutan from at least the 1700s. The indigenous inhabitants of Kalimpong, the Lepcha, had also inhabited West Bhutan for many generations. The influence of Christianity came in two ways. One, through the direct evangelistic efforts of a native "Mission to Bhutan" of the church in Kalimpong. Two, through the indirect effects of medical and educational Christian mission institutions established in Kalimpong before the end of the 19th century, particularly SUMI and Charteris Hospital. These institutions attracted numerous patients and students from Bhutan where there were no comparable services, and many of them were exposed to Christianity for the first time. The presence of Bhutan House and the Bhutan Agent in Kalimpong was a further pull. Thus Kalimpong became the means of indirect mission influence on the closed land of Bhutan, similar to that of the missionaries stationed along the border of Nepal, although without the same intensity of focus. Although the missionaries could not freely penetrate Bhutan themselves, they were very conscious of its proximity, and encouraged native preachers to go.³²

KALIMPONG MISSION TO BHUTAN

The main channel of Christian influence was through Nepali and Lepcha Christians of the relatively young church in Kalimpong, not the missionaries.³³ Following an evangelistic tour by two of the EHM catechists, they "came back burdened with the thought of the great tracts lying around us as yet untouched by the gospel, and gradually the scheme of starting a definite mission, to be controlled and supported by the Native Christians, took shape" -- the formation of the "Kalimpong Pardeshiyon ka Mishan" in 1891, popularly known as the Kalimpong Mission to Bhutan.³⁴ This was the first foreign mission initiative of the young Nepali-Lepcha churches of the Eastern Himalayas, and it was aimed specifically at the people of Bhutan.³⁵ In contrast, Gorkha Mission of the Darjeeling Church was aimed at their own ethnic homeland of Nepal. But as it took shape, the Kalimpong Mission to Bhutan's ministry was primarily among

Lepcha and Nepali in Southwest Bhutan, an area long settled by Lepcha and from which those in Kalimpong had only recently been cut off. The Kalimpong Mission to Bhutan set the stage for the pattern which has continued to the present day, of Lepcha and Nepali Christians being the primary force in the spread of the Gospel in Bhutan. Through the years this has been through permanent migration, temporary/reverse migration for employment, and movement in and out of the country for specifically evangelistic purposes. The original Mission to Bhutan was formed with the latter intent.

Although the native mission initially adopted the missionaries' strategy of supporting a Bhutia lad at the Training Institute to become a missionary to his own people, he "tired of study and left the school."³⁶ Soon after, Sukhman Limbu, EHM's pioneer catechist in Kalimpong, volunteered to go to Bhutan as the first missionary. He was scheduled to depart on 15 July 1892. Two others came forward to go with him, Jitman Murmi, the Duars catechist at Nagrakata, and Karnabir, a Kshatri who was baptised just prior to their departure. Tragically Sukhman was struck down by cholera and died literally on the eve of his departure after nursing his wife through the same. A few months later his two appointed companions carried on, and in October they were reported on their first tour. Four years later Jitman also died of cholera, and in 1898 Karnabir died.³⁷ Chuten Bhutia was then appointed in his place, and by 1901 he was living inside the border of Bhutan, across the Jaldhaka River from Todey, which had become the base for the Bhutan missionary-evangelist. Just the year before, the first family of converts from Bhutan were reported as having moved down to the plains due to opposition from their neighbours.³⁸ Chuten was the first Christian to settle in Bhutan, but on a trek to Paro later in the year he died mysteriously, reportedly poisoned.³⁹ This is evidence of the stiff resistance of the Bhutanese to this foreign religion: a continuing phenomenon until today. Within ten years the first four native Christians to volunteer for the Mission to Bhutan paid the ultimate cost of their lives, and the Mission was hard pressed to go on.

Nevertheless, a year later the EHM teacher at Godok, Chodda Lepcha, volunteered to be the next missionary. By 1904 he was settled inside Bhutan along with an assistant, and various native EHM pastors visited from time to time to perform the sacraments. When Dr. Graham visited Todey on one of his occasional tours of the Bhutan border in 1904, he conducted some baptisms, including a few Bhutia, "the fruit of the native mission to Bhutan," and reported:

The chequered career of this native mission has sorely tried the faith of the native church in Kalimpong district...perseverance and determination to carry on the work at all costs.⁴⁰

How long Chhoda was able to live within the boundaries of Bhutan as a Christian evangelist is indeterminate, but he died in 1918. His successor, Takchyö and an assistant named Pachén were reputed to have acquired a plot of land in the name of the Bhutan Foreign Mission at Bara Bhutan for Rs. 150, and started a night school.⁴¹ But Todey was evidently the Mission's forward base in "safe" territory, both for evangelistic tours and for fellowship with the few from Bhutan who were converted.⁴² It was strategically located in the far northern corner of Darjeeling District, separated from Bhutan by the Jaldhaka River, also near to Sikkim and the Chumbi Valley of Tibet, and cut off from the rest of the district for several months each year. By 1908 the Christian community in Todey totalled over 100, including a majority of Lepcha, but also Nepali and Bhutia.

Unfortunately the Church of Scotland EHM records contain no description of the reported converts from Bhutan, so it is difficult to assess their ethnic origin. But the fact that the missionaries of the Bhutan Mission who resided in Bhutan, and the visiting native pastors from Kalimpong, were almost all Lepcha must have been significant in the ethnic make-up of the resulting early converts. Although one of Dr. Graham's reports notes some "Bhutia" at a service he held in Todey, in those early days it is reasonable to presume that the Mission mainly touched the southwest corner of Bhutan (present-day Samchi District),

where the Bhutanese normally refused to reside and only visited during the winter months; an area which was increasingly populated by Nepali immigrants from the early 1900s, even as Lepcha moved from Sikkim into Western Bhutan. Another interesting question this raises is "What language and literature did these early evangelists and missionaries use to communicate?" Nepali had become essentially the lingua franca of Darjeeling District, although Hindi was used in the schools. But this was not the case among the Bhutanese, although Nepali had become an increasingly common trade language for those who made their way to Kalimpong or the Duars. There was no literature in Dzongkha, the language of the ruling family, and only the monks and a few of the ruling elite were literate. The Finnish missionaries relied on the Tibetan language, and had portions of the Bible and tracts available for distribution.⁴³ As late as 1965 the Kalimpong Bhutan Mission made the following deliberations about literature to be used during visits to Bhutan:

Hindi and Tibetan Holy Bibles, Tracts and Hymn Books may be taken with them. Further that they are requested to introduce Lepcha Tunes whenever opportunity is availing amidst the aborigines. The Bhutanese Tune is practically the same as Lepchas thus weapon of attraction and friendliness could be secured. The script is Tibetan though language is different, yet Tibetan language is generally understood by all, hence Tibetan Holy Bible and Tracts could be beneficial.⁴⁴

There were very few converts, and after 1910 there are scant references in Church of Scotland and EHM records to the Mission to Bhutan, except for a brief mention in 1928 that the Kalimpong congregation was continuing to support an evangelist in Bhutan, a Christian farmer who felt "called" to settle there in order to spread the Christian message.⁴⁵ But from at least the 1930s there is no evidence of any EHM-related full-time workers based in Bhutan, although the Nepali language handwritten "Minutes for Bhutan Congregation" (Kalimpong Mission to Bhutan Committee, later called Bhutan Christian Welfare Committee) ran from 1913-1942, followed by only occasional entries until the last

one in 1965. There were some instances of individual Christians who occasionally went to Bhutan of their own initiative to preach, like the nephew of Rev. Ganga Prasad Pradhan, but they were not allowed into the interior. There were also occasional reports of conversions, as in the March 1938 issue of Mission News when it was noted that several converts from Bhutan were "recently baptised at the Manse" in Chalsa, West Duars. But on the whole the Mission to Bhutan had entered a relatively dark period of little activity, and care of the few new converts within Bhutan was left to the church in Todey. From there, Sahabir Rai, who often testified that "once in his dream he heard the voice of God calling him to go to Bhutan to preach the Gospel," frequented the nearby border areas for almost fifteen years.⁴⁶

Before the 1970s there was at least one other mission which made an attempt to evangelise Bhutan, the small Nepali Evangelistic Band from their base in Shillong during the 1940s. But when they were repulsed at the border and not allowed to enter, they gave it up.⁴⁷ The Norwegian Santal Mission also had a mission station on the south-eastern border of Bhutan from the 1940s, but they were not able to enter the land until the 1960s.

BHUTANESE IN KALIMPONG AND EHM MISSIONARIES TO BHUTAN

In the meantime, there were significant developments among the Bhutanese in Kalimpong, and in the relationships being built by the missionaries with Bhutanese government officials. Raja Ugyen Dorji, appointed by the Maharaja of Bhutan as his Agent to the British Government,⁴⁸ and his son S.T. (Sonam Tobgay) Dorji, who succeeded him, both had great influence in beginning to open up Bhutan to medical and educational development. This was largely through their friendship with two of the EHM missionaries in Kalimpong, Dr. J.A. Graham and Rev. W.S. Sutherland. Minto, Graham's biographer, says that Graham had a strong friendship of twenty-seven years with Raja Ugyen Dorji, and that his son Sonam Tobgay "was one of the family," even living with

Graham's family for a while and having part of his education alongside Graham's daughters.⁴⁹ Ugyen Dorji perceived the need for education for his people if they were to survive in the modern world, and in 1914 he made an arrangement with Sutherland for an initial batch of forty-six boys from Bhutan to be educated by SUMI teachers, all of whom were native Christians.⁵⁰ The school boys spent six months in Kalimpong and six months in a school set up in Haa, which was inside Bhutan and staffed by SUMI teachers. One of the first two teachers sent by SUMI to Bhutan was a Christian Bhutia. According to an article in Mission News:

Arrangements have been made with the Prime Minister to the Maharajah of Bhutan by which schools will be opened on his estates in Bhutan. For this work of opening one of the closed lands for Christian education, two boys in the Training College at Kalimpong have been chosen. One of them, Ugyen Tsiring, is a Bhutia by birth, and though his parents are Buddhist, was sent to Kalimpong for his education. Some years ago he became a Christian; and for the last three years he has taught in the school at Kalimpong and done very good work. His companion, Dawa Namgye, is a Lepcha, belonging to Sikkim, who recently completed his training as a teacher. They were dedicated for their work at a special service conducted by the Rev. Dr. Sutherland before setting out on their nine days' journey to their new home.⁵¹

A new school was opened in Bumthang with SUMI teachers the following year.⁵² Before this time, only those in the monasteries of Bhutan were able to read. The significance of this was not lost on Charles Bell in Sikkim who observed that Ugyen Dorji "appears to have made himself responsible for imparting English education to Bhutanese boys."⁵³ Although Raja Ugyen Dorji died in 1916, his son, himself educated in Kalimpong and Darjeeling, inherited his position and carried on in his father's footsteps. By the early 1920s, eleven of the original forty-six students had passed their Indian matriculation exam, and the first qualified Bhutanese teacher was installed at Bumthang.⁵⁴ Significantly, one of the main purposes of the Training School section of SUMI was to train teachers for Sikkim, the Duars and Bhutan.

Another indication of the close relationship Bhutan felt with Kalimpong in regard to education is seen in Maharaja Ugyen Wangchuk's handsome contribution to a fund set up in 1927 to start the first college in the hills.⁵⁵ SUMI's relationship with Bhutan through the field of education continued at least into the 1950s; another staff member was sent to Bhutan in 1956.⁵⁶ Although the Teachers' Training Institute of SUMI closed in 1955, students from Bhutan have continued to attend SUMI's primary and secondary school and the Kalimpong Girls' High School until the present day. When Raja S.T. Dorji died in Kalimpong in 1953, his death was lamented and a special commemoration article appeared in EHM's Mission News, noting his former residence with the Sutherland family while he was a pupil of SUMI, and the contribution he had made to education in Bhutan.⁵⁷ Through the son and daughter of S.T. Dorji, who became the Prime Minister and the Queen of Bhutan respectively, close ties between Kalimpong's influential mission institutions and Bhutan were guaranteed. Many influential Bhutanese today continue to acknowledge the role SUMI has played in education and development in Bhutan, as illustrated by the greetings sent to the SUMI Centenary celebration in 1986 by Major-General Lam Dorji, Royal Bhutan Army:

It is a matter of great pride for me to state that SUMI of which my late father, my son and myself are grateful and proud alumni, has, since the beginning of this century been the pioneer in the promotion of awareness and the rapid growth of education in Bhutan. Sumites are today found at every level of our administration and the success that they have achieved in various fields in the service of the Kingdom is a clear manifestation of the role that SUMI has played towards accelerating the process of Bhutan's socio-economic development. Needless to add, SUMI today enjoys a unique position in Bhutan.⁵⁸

In the 1960s and 1970s a large number of Bhutanese students, including the Crown Prince, were sent to Graham's Homes for an English education, most of them on government scholarships, and missionary teachers such as Stuart

Philby and James Minto were also sent to Bhutan from the Homes. In addition to Kalimpong, Bhutanese students on government scholarship were sent to the mission schools in Darjeeling and several places further afield, notably Chandigarh, until secondary education facilities could be developed within Bhutan.

SUMI Bhutanese students went on to train in various fields to assist in the development of their country.⁵⁹ Pharmacists and nurses were trained at Charteris Hospital. But the first reported Bhutanese convert to Christianity, of any of those who did their training in Kalimpong, was Phup Rinzin. However, Rinzin had not been sent straight from Bhutan to train as a compounder; although an ethnic Bhutanese he was born in India and was an orphan. After becoming a compounder at Charteris Hospital he returned to Bhutan twice, in 1938 and 1941, out of Christian conviction to heal the sick and to share his faith. It was reported concerning the 1941 visit: "By the courtesy of Raja S.T. Dorji he was given every facility and he was able to see and help more than five hundred sick persons during his short stay there."⁶⁰ Once again S.T. Dorji's compassion for his people took precedence over any fear of undue Christian influence.

There was also an increasing flow of medical patients from Bhutan to Kalimpong. A report in 1901 by Nurse Campbell at Charteris Hospital noted that "the increase of Bhutia patients has, I think, been the most striking feature of the year."⁶¹ For more than thirty years, until The Leprosy Mission (TLM) was invited into Bhutan in the 1960s, the Leprosy Hospital in Kalimpong was the only place people from Western Bhutan could seek treatment. More than half of the forty leprosy patients when the hospital first opened were reported to be from Bhutan.⁶²

Interestingly, EHM and church reports record very few instances of conversions of Bhutanese in Kalimpong. Was there an informal agreement with the Bhutan Agent not to seek to convert those being sent to Kalimpong? SUMI obviously approached the Bhutanese students as a professional charge. Or was it

simply "politic" for the mission and church to keep a low profile in regard to any converts? Several students from Bhutan have been converted in Kalimpong through the years and have become key leaders among the growing Christian community within Bhutan, but their testimonies have not been made public because of government opposition.

In these ways the door was opened to Christian influence among Bhutanese studying at Christian institutions in Kalimpong, and through Christian teachers and medical workers serving in Bhutan. This was the beginning of a trend, which accelerated and had greater impact through the following decades, of employing educated Nepali and Lepcha from Darjeeling-Kalimpong and Sikkim in various government departments as Bhutan slowly advanced into the modern era. Inevitably many of them were Christians who quietly shared their faith among themselves and with their colleagues as there was opportunity, and with the advantage of cultural similarity and language facility.

It was also the beginning of opening the door to more direct foreign missions influence. In 1917 Sutherland was allowed to go to Haa to inspect the new school, the first EHM Scottish missionary officially allowed inside the country. The following year Dr. Ethel Cousins was welcomed to help deal with an epidemic. In 1921 Dr. J.A. Graham received an official invitation to visit the Maharaja Ugyen Wangchuk at the Darbar. Following Graham's return he wrote two long discourses to the Maharaja on what could be done to develop Bhutan.⁶³ After the Maharaja's death Graham was invited to the Darbar of his son, Jigme Wangchuk. According to Minto, even as Ugyen Dorji had often consulted Graham on matters of state in Kalimpong before his death in 1916, Graham now became "the friend and advisor of the King. No European has since had so much influence in the country's affairs."⁶⁴ One of the reasons Graham was welcomed was probably because he did not try to directly influence the Bhutanese towards Christianity, as they were exclusively Buddhist and historically jealously guarded their nation and people against Christian and other outside

influences. Rather, Graham displayed a genuine and unfeigned interest in their country and affairs, and a desire to assist in any way he could. He did not seek to evangelise, but he built bridges of understanding between the Bhutanese officials and himself as a Christian emissary. This may have helped to smooth the way for Dr. Albert Craig, Superintendent of Charteris Hospital, who later became a personal friend and private physician to the Maharaja of Bhutan.

MODERN DAY MISSIONS IN BHUTAN*

In the early 1960s Dr. Craig was the first Western missionary to be allowed to settle inside Bhutan. His involvement with the Royal family and as an advisor in the improvement of health services helped to open the way for the entry of medical missions into the country. His first visit to Bhutan was recorded in EHM's Mission News dated January-April 1951, after which he returned to Kalimpong with several leprosy patients.⁶⁵ During that decade he made at least two or three tours of Bhutan, one time for three months with a trained nurse and treating over 9,000 patients. In 1962, on the invitation of the Bhutan government, Craig was appointed by the Eastern Himalayan Church Board to work in Bhutan, and by early the following year he and his wife were settled in Bhutan in what his colleagues termed "a lonely outpost," and he worked in a government hospital in Thimphu.⁶⁶ Although Craig's residence in Bhutan was brief, not more than two years, it had two significant outcomes for the spread of Christian influence in the country. One, he paved the way for the establishment of resident foreign mission projects, and two, he secured official permission for a native "mobile pastor" from Kalimpong to care for the spiritual needs of EHCC parishioners inside of

*Details of the modern day expansion of Christianity among indigenous Bhutanese ethnics, particularly the ruling Dukpa and the E. Bhutanese Kengkha and Sharchopkha, is purposely excluded from the rest of this chapter for the purpose of security. However, it should be understood that the Christian community as a whole in Bhutan perceives itself as Bhutanese and not Nepali.

Bhutan.⁶⁷

Craig's concern for leprosy patients and early negotiations with the government for a leprosy hospital at Gidakom prepared the way for The Leprosy Mission's (TLM) entry, who sent a fact finding team on 30 September 1964 at the invitation of the Prime Minister.⁶⁸ Two years later the first TLM workers arrived, Dr. Gottfried Riedel and Nima Tshering Rongong, a Lepcha Christian physiotherapy technician, and work began. Nima Tshering, originally from Mangwa, received his physiotherapy training at the TLM hospital in Purulia, and in 1971 was the first student to go from Bhutan to attend Darjeeling Hills Bible School. In 1972 a second leprosy hospital was opened in Mongar, East Bhutan; in 1977 a third in Lhunsi District; and in 1981 a fourth at Yebilapcha, Shemgang District. Most of these moves into new areas were at the instigation of the government.

In the mid-1970s TLM invited the first Bible and Medical Missionary Fellowship (BMMF, later Interserve) worker to join them in Mongar, and by 1977 the government had invited Dr. Rachel Pinniger to set up a paediatric unit at the government hospital in Thimphu, and to teach in the Health School.⁶⁹ From that time BMMF also had direct relations with the Bhutan government, seconding personnel to various departments and government hospitals, and working alongside TLM and the Norwegian Santal Mission. As of 1991 over twenty-five Interserve missionaries and their families had served in the Health sector alone.

From the 1940s, even before TLM entered Bhutan, the Norwegian Santal Mission became involved in work just across the south-eastern border of Bhutan in the Assam Duars of India. After the David Westborgs of the Norwegian Tibetan Mission had to leave China during the war, they joined the Santal Mission "with the view of starting work among the Bhutanese and Tibetans who visited the marketplaces along the Bhutan-India border in great numbers during the cold seasons."⁷⁰ On a survey trip near the border in February 1943,

Westborg unexpectedly met two men who were key to the early evangelisation of Eastern Bhutan, a Boro and a Bhutanese Christian.⁷¹ Maguram Mosahary, a Boro pastor who felt a personal calling to take the Christian Gospel to Bhutan, had settled as close to the border as possible, and frequented the melas at Darranga which were attended by scores of Bhutanese.⁷² Rinchen Lama was one of the earliest Bhutanese converts to Christianity who Hodne says "had dedicated himself as an evangelist among the Bhutanese, Tibetans, and Nepalis."⁷³ Born in a village in Western Bhutan, Rinchen went to Kalimpong to study, became a Christian, was baptised, and later made his way to the Darranga mela to do evangelism where he met Mosahary. Together with Westborg they decided that Christian work should be started at Dewangiri (now Dewothang), a village just on the India side of the border but populated mostly by Bhutanese. The ensuing work was a three-pronged effort of Bhutanese and Nepali Christian teachers educated in Kalimpong, supported by Boro Christians from Assam, and the Santal Mission.⁷⁴ Rinchen Lama, trained in Kalimpong as both a teacher and a compounder, took up residence in Dewangiri from the autumn of 1943, supported by the Boro church in nearby Parkijuli.⁷⁵ He opened a small school and clinic and often travelled into Bhutan to care for the sick and give vaccinations to the public at large until his death in 1947.⁷⁶ It was suspected that he was poisoned. An ethnic Nepali Christian, Mr. Dan, married to a Bhutanese Christian from Western Bhutan, was then hired to run the school. He presumably also came from Kalimpong, and is the first known Nepali Christian worker in Eastern Bhutan. The little Christian school, which doubled as a church and where the Bible was part of the curriculum and Christian prayers were said every morning, was annually attended by 15-20 Bhutanese children until Mr. Dan left in 1958.⁷⁷ Three of the boys who attended this school were baptised during the 1950s in Parkijuli, two of them by Pastor Maguram.⁷⁸

In 1945 the Assam Christian Council had decided to give the responsibility for work among Bhutanese peoples to the Santal Mission, and Pastor Maguram

encouraged Westborg to build a mission hospital at Parkijuli, near Darranga, as a potential stepping-stone into Bhutan.⁷⁹ Building was started in 1947, and while waiting for the opportunity to enter Bhutan mission work was conducted mostly among the local Boro and Santali population. When the border demarcation between Bhutan and India was changed under the Indo-Bhutan Treaty of 1949 and the Dewangiri hill strip was restored to Bhutan the move to Parkijuli proved to be a good decision. The school in Dewangiri was appreciated by local Bhutanese officials and allowed to continue under Mr. Dan, but further visits by the missionaries are not recorded again until the early 1960s. It is significant to note from Norwegian accounts that it was not Bhutanese officials who blocked the missionaries entrance, but rather the Indian government which was obstructive from time to time throughout the Norwegian Santal Mission's work in Bhutan during the following decades. For instance, when Westborg and his family once met the Queen of Bhutan at the Darranga mela she expressed her appreciation for the Dewangiri school and gave gifts to the Westborg children. When Westborg was invited into East Bhutan by the local Zongpen in 1953, Indian government officials refused permission for him to cross the border.

In the meantime, the little church in Dewangiri, the first in East Bhutan, served a mixed population including the school boys, a few Christian Boro and other Indians, and local Bhutanese onlookers. Pastor Maguram sometimes preached in Hindi while Rinchen would translate, and singing was done in different languages. Regular evangelism and distribution of Christian tracts in Hindi, Tibetan and Nepali was also continued at the Darranga melas. From the early 1960s, when roads into Bhutan began to be constructed with the aid of the Indian government, Indian Christian labourers became a part of the congregation, making it even more mixed ethnically. They banded together to construct a small church building which was dedicated on Christmas day 1963. By this time an evangelist from Manipur, who had secured a job with one of the road crews, was leading the group.⁸⁰ According to one informant he speaks fluent Nepali.

Evangelistic activities among the road labourers included Nepali, and a few gradually joined the church.

In parallel to events happening in Western Bhutan, the Parkijuli work became the impetus for the Norwegian Santal Mission's move into Eastern Bhutan to do leprosy work, under the direction of Dr. Edel and Rev. Magnus Haugstad:

...many Bhutanese had brought their goods for sale to the Marketplace at Darranga...and they remained there from December to March. Many suffered from leprosy and other diseases, and came to be treated at Parkijuli.

For this reason, in the spring of 1964, Mrs. Haugstad applied to the government in Thimpu for permission to build an Out-patients clinic for lepers in Bhutan to be supervised and administered from Parkijuli. The Minister of Health's response was positive and permission to visit the country was granted, but it was not until 1965 that definite go-ahead to build both an out-patients clinic and a hospital of 20-30 beds was given.

...from October 1966 Rev. and Dr. Haugstad made regular daytrips to Riserboo to treat patients in a small "room" on the site. The building work began in 1967.⁸¹

In 1966 the Haugstads received a coveted "inner-line permit" from the Indian government, also signed in Thimphu, which allowed them to freely travel to and from Bhutan.⁸² They were the first Christian mission allowed to purchase land and build within Bhutan. Once again a Bhutanese Christian, an orphan who had been converted at the Christian school in Dewothang when it was a part of India, was central to the work. This young man, a trained compounder with experience at Parkijuli Hospital, assumed full responsibility for supervision of the construction work at Riserboo and began clinical work. He later had opportunity to attend Darjeeling Hills Bible School and in addition to his medical duties acted as pastor to a small Christian fellowship which slowly grew up. Other national co-workers included Boro and Santal Christians. In adherence to a verbal understanding between Haugstad and the Bhutan Health Minister a separate church building was not built by the mission, but Christian meetings were held discreetly within the hospital facilities.

During the following years Basic Health Units were built in five nearby villages: Kangpara, Khaling, Gondar Bhu, Thrimshing Bhu and Nanowg Bhu. From 1985 the Norwegian Santal Mission was invited to cooperate in the government District Hospital at Pemagatshel where ten years earlier the Haugstads had started leprosy work, making regular visits by walking and staying with the District Officer who himself was under treatment.

In the meantime, the Minister of Trade and Industry invited the Swedish Mission, Kvinnlige Missionsarbetare (KMA), which had a blind school in Cooch Bihar, to start a blind school in East Bhutan. Construction on Khaling Blind School was started in 1972 by a builder lent from the Norwegian Santal Mission, Einar Kippenes, and a weaving project grew up alongside it through the efforts of Mrs. Reidun Kippenes, and subsequently Ruth Hylander. The Kippenes hiked the hills and valleys of Bhutan searching for blind children and bringing them back to the school. Until today this is the only blind school in Bhutan, and children now attend from all parts of the country.

From the government side, the few Christian missions and their personnel which were invited into Bhutan were for the purpose of development, especially in the area of education and health services. Bhutanese officials observed the work of missions across their borders in Kalimpong and Assam and longed for some of the same services for their people. According to Rustomji, the Indian Advisor to the government of Bhutan and a personal friend of Prime Minister Jigme Dorji, he and the "anglicized" Prime Minister prompted the government's departure from their traditional policy of discouraging foreign missions in the interests of development, feeling it was worth the potential risks:

While realising that missionary orders might be motivated by the idea of proselytising, it was our considered view that they would be unable to make much impact in a society where Buddhism had had such a strong and all-pervading hold for well over a thousand years...There was little risk therefore that the presence of Christian missionaries would

constitute a threat to the established order, or result in any clash of interests or loyalties.⁸³

From the missions' own perspective, they came from a combination of humanitarian and distinctly Christian motives, to care for the sick and aid the poor as an active expression of their faith in Jesus Christ, following the example of His life, and in this way to serve the people of Bhutan. However they did not go in alone. It was inevitable that a number of Christians, mostly Nepali-Lepcha from Darjeeling-Kalimpong-Sikkim, were initially employed by the missions, as they were the only ones with the requisite skills or training. It was thus natural for small Christian fellowships among the missionaries and Christian employees to grow up in most of the places the missions went, and Christianity slowly expanded from there among the wider population.

However, after just thirty years the modern era of Christian missions in Bhutan seems to be drawing to a close in the 1990s. Have missions fulfilled the development role initially envisioned for them by the government, or was Rustomji's confidence misplaced and the missions' Christian influence became a threat? The Don Bosco Fathers, for whose Technical School near Phuntsoling Rustomji helped to pave the way, were expelled by the government in the early 1980s due to charges of proselytising.⁸⁴ The Government of Bhutan's strong objection to conversions of its subjects is clearly expressed in a letter from the Government explaining the reason for its taking over the school:

The Salesian Fathers were invited to work in Bhutan on the clear and express understanding that they would not indulge in any religious activities. As a Buddhist Kingdom, we cannot permit any proselytising activities. ...we became aware of certain proselytising tendencies ...which deeply offended the religious susceptibility of our people. ... The proselytising tendencies of the Salesian Fathers at Kharbandi have become a serious public issue in Bhutan, and have been discussed in our National Assembly and other important forums on numerous occasions.⁸⁵

This perception of the propagation of Christianity as a threat to the Buddhist

Kingdom of Bhutan has been applied to Roman Catholic and Protestant, Western, Indian, Nepali and Bhutanese national Christian alike. Conversions are generally understood by the Government to be the result of proselytising or enticement, a definition consistently denied by the Christians concerned.

From the 1980s Christian mission institutions have been progressively handed over to the Government. By 1989 both Khaling Blind School and the weaving project had been handed over, and all Swedish KMA personnel had withdrawn from Bhutan.⁸⁶ Of the six mission-run hospitals in Bhutan, Pemagatshel Hospital (Norwegian Santal Mission) and Lhunsi Leprosy Hospital (TLM) were nationalised in 1990, Yebilapcha Leprosy Hospital (TLM) in 1991, Mongar Leprosy Hospital (TLM) in 1992, and the other three are scheduled to be handed over by 1995. All of them still retain a few missionary staff, but government plans are for them to be gradually replaced by Bhutanese staff.

The government policy of expelling non-nationals from the country has also significantly cut down on the number of Indian and Nepali Christian auxiliary staff employed by the missions. The missionaries have generally chosen to view the government policy of nationalisation as being "pro-Bhutan" rather than "anti-mission" or "anti-Christian." However, the fact that several evangelical foreign personnel who were directly, albeit discreetly, involved in national church activities have been expelled or had their visa renewals refused since the mid-1980s, indicates the government's displeasure with foreigners' encouragement of local Christians.⁸⁷ In some locales missionary personnel have been directly warned against associating with the local Christians, and Christian expatriates in secular posts have been told there are no local Christians, and even if there are, they should not associate with them. One particular evangelical mission organisation has been most severely affected, with the number of their personnel involved in Bhutan consistently cut back by the Government, until in 1992 all of their visa applications for new workers were turned down.

EHCC AND THE FIRST CHRISTIAN CONGREGATIONS

Parallel to the development of Christian missions' work, and perhaps more significant to the spread of Christianity among the people of Bhutan, in 1964 Craig secured official permission from the Bhutan government for a national pastor of the EHCC to travel to and from Bhutan for the spiritual care of EHCC members settled or employed in Bhutan. By this time Bhutan had begun to open up to the outside world and was pursuing a cautious programme of development. This meant employing a large number of Indian blue and white collar workers until enough of Bhutan's own people could be educated to meet the growing needs. Due to Bhutan's close relationship with Kalimpong and her educational institutions, where many friendships had been fostered which transcended national boundaries, many of the needed personnel were welcomed from Kalimpong, Darjeeling and Sikkim. This inevitably included a number of Nepali and Lepcha Christians.

According to the Minutes of the Bhutan Christian Welfare Committee, Kalimpong, "He [Craig] obtained permission for entry of [a] pastor into Bhutan for the welfare and fellowship with the Christian employees."⁸⁸ Although not allowed to reside within Bhutan, now mobile pastors could freely travel to and from Bhutan with government sanction. In preparation for this, the Bhutan Christian Welfare Committee commissioned Rev. N.T. Molommu and Rapden Lepcha in 1964 to do a survey of Bhutan. They reported back that they had found seventy-two Christians in twenty houses, scattered in thirteen different places, who originated in Kalimpong, Sikkim, Darjeeling and Kurseong.⁸⁹ As a consequence of these developments P.S. (Panthuk Singh) Tingbo was sent to Serampore Theological College with the specific intent of becoming the first officially recognised full-time mobile pastor of the EHCC to Bhutan. He returned to Kalimpong in 1969, was ordained and started a prayer fellowship with a group of other keen young men which he credits with being "the key to the work

in Bhutan which followed."⁹⁰ He commenced ministry in Bhutan the following year. Ostensibly this was strictly for the spiritual care of EHCC church members currently residing within Bhutan, not for evangelistic purposes. But with the Great Commission of Matthew 28:19-20 as a basic tenet of their faith -- "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you" -- it was inevitable that active telling of their faith to non-Christians took place, by laity and clergy alike, and the number of Christians in Bhutan began to grow.

SAMCHI DISTRICT

Even before official permission was granted, Kalimpong area pastors had been occasionally visiting the slowly growing number of scattered mostly ethnic Nepali and Lepcha Christians in the southwest corner of Bhutan. This was especially true of Revs. N.T. Molommu and M.S. Tingbo who were ordained together in 1951. N.T. Molommu became the Superintendent of the Kalimpong District churches, including Bhutan area, while M.S. Tingbo served as Chairman of the Bhutan Mission Committee from 1952 to 1970, alongside his other duties as a district pastor. During the 1950s and 1960s M.S. Tingbo reported visiting local Christians, preaching and organising them into informal house fellowships, and baptising new Christians in six different villages of Samchi District and also in Geylegphug.⁹¹ As Kalimpong District Superintendent, N.T. Molommu recalls going often to the Bhutan border and performing baptisms, after which the people returned to their homes in Bhutan.⁹² He also conducted services in Christian homes in various places within Samchi District, going in and out for a few days at a time from his base in Kalimpong.

Because Samchi was largely cut off from the rest of the country and given little attention by the government centered in Thimphu, the local Christians had a relatively free rein during this period, aside from societal opposition. The

travelling pastors were village men themselves, Nepali-speaking Lepcha, preaching within their own cultural milieu, which led to their relatively easy acceptance. Another major factor in their acceptance in Samchi District was the influence of one particular local family.⁹³ The family's paternal grandfather emigrated to Samchi District from Nepal at the turn of the century, along with many other Nepali who developed the region by cutting the forests and bringing it under cultivation, although many died of malaria and black water fever in the process. His son became an important government servant accountable for much of South Bhutan, from Chirang to the western border. He had responsibility over the local mandals and village headmen to collect taxes and deliver them to Bhutan House in Kalimpong, and later served as a Royal Advisor. He in turn sent his son to Kalimpong for education, where he converted to Christianity, was baptised, and married a Newar woman, the daughter of one of the leading Christian families in Kalimpong. When his son returned to his home in 1948 he inherited his father's mantle as a government administrator.⁹⁴ From that time he and his wife were leading members of the EHCC-connected Christians in Samchi District, the area in which EHCC activities were largely confined. Following a distinguished career in government service he had to retire early due to health considerations, but his wife went on to serve two terms as the first woman member of the National Assembly of Bhutan.

The continuing close connection between Kalimpong and the spread of Christianity, particularly in relation to Samchi District, is readily seen in the following examples. The first Christian in "D" village was a Lepcha boy, Chyo, who ran away from home when he learned of his relatives' plans to force him to become a Buddhist monk. Chyo ended up in Rev. M.S. Tingbo's village of Byong-Pakang (in Kalimpong division) where he was able to go to school.⁹⁵ While in Byong-Pakang, Chyo became a Christian and was baptised in 1940, then stayed on for another ten years during which time he was ordained an Elder of the church and was married. After Chyo's return to "D", M.S. Tingbo went to visit

in 1952 and baptised two families of new Christians. He visited again in 1954 and 1956. From there, Tingbo also visited "D2", the village across the river, where there were two Christian families. In the 1960s the government resettled Chyo's family on ten acres of land in a district further east, where his was again the first Christian family. When he invited M.S. Tingbo to visit them in their new home in 1969, ten people were baptised. Tingbo later reported to the DDC, "Thus there has been established in [Chyo's village] a little congregation of two households with 22 people."⁹⁶ When four or five other Christian families from Samchi District were also resettled in Chyo's new village soon after, together they formed a firm foundation of a local church.

The first Christian family in "K" were also Lepcha from Kalimpong area, former members of Rev. M.S. Tingbo's church in Pakang. When N. Lepcha's wife became very ill with epilepsy, he eloped with another Christian woman to "K", where they had a child together and settled down. M.S. Tingbo visited them in 1967 and found that N. Lepcha had been witnessing to his neighbours about his Christian faith.

The first Christian in "C", a remote Rai village with little Hindu influence, was converted across the border in Todey. When his mother in "C" was pronounced as having incurable cataracts by the local jhakarīs, "Philip" took her to Charteris Hospital in Kalimpong where a simple operation restored her sight. For her this was a miracle; she became a Christian and asked to be baptised. In "C" it also caused a sensation and raised many questions about this God that could make the blind see. Several were baptised in the 1960s and 1970s.

REV. P.S. TINGBO AND "B" PASTORATE

Thus when Rev. P.S. Tingbo, the son of M.S. Tingbo, was appointed as the first full-time mobile pastor for Bhutan in 1970, the foundations were already set for the formation of the four congregations of what became known as simply "B" Pastorate of Darjeeling Diocese of the CNI. Left to devise his own strategy, P.S.

Tingbo spent his first months touring the country to meet the scattered Christians. He found "many Christians from Darjeeling and S. India...working in almost all towns and places in Bhutan," including in Thimphu, Gidakom and Paro, in addition to those in Samchi District.⁹⁷ A family in Kalimpong encouraged him to visit their relatives in Samchi, and Tingbo was surprised to find sixteen candidates for baptism just waiting for the opportunity for instruction, soon followed by many more. According to Tingbo's description,

I sensed that whole area unexpectedly responsive to the Gospel through the Christian influence of that lone Christian house. In due course a number of evening gospel meetings were being held on the large verandah of [the family concerned]. From time to time, some of my prayer partners from Kalimpong came to assist me in the spiritual harvest. Some of them are unusually good in singing and in preaching. The surrounding villages mounted on beautiful hills and valleys were covered on foot with the members of the Gospel team, distributing tracts, sharing personal testimonies and singing simple but beautiful gospel songs. Within a short while, 48 souls were added in the household of God through water testimony. As the numbers of new converts began to increase steadily the place for Sunday service was shifted from the dining room to the drawing room; then to the large verandah of...
...By the early part of the year 1971, more than a hundred souls started attending the instructions on Baptism. Then came the eventful day in the history of Bhutan church when 111 souls were being baptised in one Sunday service. The fellow CNI pastors who worked in nearby tea gardens of Jalpaiguri (Rev. BK Lakra and Rev. J. Tuti) came to assist me in Baptismal service. The entire Sunday and Baptismal service lasted for 3 1/2 hours. It was, indeed, a great day of spiritual harvesting as well as of spiritual feasting! Among the new converts who came from different castes and tribes to be baptised, five of them were practising sorcerers.

...
Within a short period of 3 years, the number of Christians only at [the village concerned] exceeded 300.⁹⁸

P.S. Tingbo's ministry in Bhutan, although it only lasted for six years, proved to be a turning point into an era of evangelism and unprecedented response to the Christian message. Congregations were organised in four locations in Samchi District. The first was officially opened on 22 November 1970 by the Moderator

of the EHCC, Rev. S.B. Tshering, who travelled there to conduct the service. This congregation was inaugurated as the EHCC's first and only Kirk Session in Bhutan. Rev. P.S. Tingbo was consecrated as its Moderator, and three local elders were ordained.⁹⁹ Sunday Schools and a Women's Fellowship soon followed.

Tingbo also travelled to Thimphu to encourage the mixed group of Christians there, mostly Indians in government service from a variety of denominational backgrounds, including a few EHCC members. K.M. (Karkaman) Rai of Todey was appointed as an assistant to Tingbo, and he served as a catechist based in the more remote "C" village for two years.¹⁰⁰ Following the well established pattern in Darjeeling-Kalimpong, small bamboo-thatch schools were built on land donated in both "C" and "K", which doubled as places of Christian worship on Sundays, and Tingbo did his best to recruit teachers-cum-preachers from Kalimpong.¹⁰¹ He also began to send young Christian men out of Bhutan to Darjeeling Hills Bible School for training as catechists to serve the growing congregations.

But the rapid growth in the number of Christians in Samchi District began to cause concern in some official quarters. When the leader of the main congregation requested permission of the late Home Minister to construct a "House of Prayer" during the early 1970s written permission was initially granted, and the building project was embarked upon with enthusiasm:

...a piece of land [was donated] for the church building which lies in the heart of the whole village. We organised 'A Voluntary Labour Camp' for 10 days for the preparation of the foundation of the church building by levelling a hillock. There was a good response to the 'Labour Camp' from both old and young, men and women of the church. It was a real joy to see the new converts contributing for construction work in cash and kind, - voluntarily offering their labours. The foundation was ready. Masonry and carpentry works were on the way.¹⁰²

But at this point a new Sub-Divisional Officer, an orthodox Buddhist, was posted

to the area, and negative reports were sent to a member of the Royal family in Thimphu "against the proselytising act of christians and the preparation that was going on to construct the church building."¹⁰³ The construction work was ordered to be halted, and P.S. Tingbo interpreted this intervention to be "an indirect warrant against my free movement in Bhutan."¹⁰⁴ He later wrote,

This happened after my 3 1/2 years stay... My continual presence...seemed to be an unnecessary harassment of the local christians from the local Government authority. So I shifted my base for the Bhutan Mission work...to Jaldhaka, a border town of Kalimpong that stands on the western bank of the river Jaldhaka, the river that acts as bordering line between Kalimpong and Western Bhutan.¹⁰⁵

From this point Tingbo was based just across the border at Jaldhaka, travelling to and fro to meet his parishioners. But his labours were cut short when in December 1975 Bhutanese soldiers interrupted a baptismal service at "C", and arrested him and the local church leaders. He was held in custody for five days, reportedly because "this man is bringing disharmony and confusion among the village-folks by preaching a strange religion," then sent under escort to Thimphu.¹⁰⁶ However, through the intervention of an influential friend with the Brigadier of the Bhutan Army, who himself had studied at SUMI, Tingbo was released at Phuntsoling; in Tingbo's interpretation this was "an example of the indirect good effect of christian institutions."¹⁰⁷ After this he elected to discontinue his involvement in Bhutan, feeling that his presence would unnecessarily bring further pressure against the local Christians.

The "golden age" of P.S. Tingbo's tenure and the EHCC-DDC's involvement in Bhutan -- with extensive evangelism in Samchi District, several hundred baptisms performed and four congregations formally organised -- was over. Since Rev. P.S. Tingbo's departure the DDC has not appointed another presbyter full-time to "B" area Pastorate. Rather, three evangelists for "B" area were appointed in 1977 as part of the DDC's new Outreach Project, and the care of local congregations was entrusted to local catechists who were selected and

trained for the task.¹⁰⁸ Until the mid-1980s various Kalimpong district presbyters were given the responsibility of providing pastoral oversight to "B" area Pastorate alongside their other duties; these included Rev. M.S. Tingbo (1976-79 from Jholong), Rev. K.A. Rai (1979-81 from Jholong), and Rev. N.T. Molommu (early 1980s from Nimbong). They were seldom able to make their way across the border to visit the Christians or administer the sacraments. This proved increasingly unsatisfactory, leading to virtual neglect of this lonely Pastorate from at least the mid-1980s, as revealed in the DDC Executive Committee Minutes. On 11 October 1985 it was resolved that the DDC Secretary, N.T. Molommu and R. Saharaja should make a visit to "find out the real situation in 'B' area Pastorate." When this was not carried out a new resolution was recorded in the Minutes of 6 May 1986; again those appointed were unable to go, another resolution was made, and finally in 1987 Rev. Saharaja was able to briefly visit only the western part of the Pastorate. The next year it was agreed that Rev. B.K. Larka at Giarketta in the Duars would take on the pastoral care of "B" area, but this also proved unsatisfactory and the "B" area congregations began to request the DDC to ordain one of their local catechists. Finally in 1991 an ethnic Nepali who had served as a catechist for over ten years in Bhutan was ordained as Deacon with the authority to perform baptisms, following a special six-month course at DHBS. A full century after the founding of the Kalimpong Bhutan Mission, the still struggling CNI-related pastorate in Bhutan had its first local man ordained.

In combination with the DDC's seeming neglect of its "B" area Pastorate, further hardship was wrought by increasing government pressure both against "non-nationals," defined as anyone who did not have documentary proof of their (or their parents') residence before 1959, and against Christians. In view of the latter pressure, the "B" area Pastorate discontinued submitting reports to the DDC News for publication following Rev. P.S. Tingbo's departure. Since the population of Samchi was primarily Nepali-Lepcha, as in most of Southern

Bhutan, the Christians of the district had two potential strikes against them. By the beginning of 1993 the congregations were severely depleted through the classification and consequent expulsion of many of their members as "non-nationals," including a Rai evangelist at "G"; and the two simple huts in "C" and "K" which had been built as schools, but doubled as places of Christian worship, were torn down by local government order. Well before this time the group at "G" had developed into a congregation of people from mixed backgrounds, most of whom had no direct connections with the Darjeeling Diocese of the CNI, as was the case in Thimphu and most other parts of the country.

THE MODERN DAY SPREAD OF CHRISTIANITY IN BHUTAN

By the 1970s the Christians in Bhutan were still largely confined to the DDC-CNI connected "B" area pastorate, made up of predominantly Lepcha and Nepali matwali ethnic peoples. In addition to these there were foreign missionaries and Indian Christian employees connected with the mission hospitals, scattered Indian Christians engaged in government service posted to various parts of the country, and a few Bhutanese converts who had chosen to settle in Indian border towns, notably at Baksaduar in connection with the Free Church of Finland Mission, and in Jaigaon, the gateway to Thimphu. But from the 1970s there was noticeable growth in the number of Christians and organised fellowships right across the country.

FACTORS THAT LED TO GROWTH

This growth was due to a combination of factors, and was facilitated by government policy. As already mentioned, Bhutan's earlier isolationism had forced many Bhutanese out to India for education and basic medical attention, and while a few returned with a new Christian faith, others came back with at least a tolerance and appreciation for the help they received from Christians. In addition, the government's early encouragement of Nepali immigration into the

south, along with its long-standing Lepcha population, provided a natural pull and challenge to the Lepcha-Nepali Christian community of Kalimpong both for care of their emigrant parishioners and for evangelism. This was as true in the 1970s as it had been at the end of the 19th century. Then Christian missions were invited into Bhutan to undertake medical and other development projects, entailing their import of western missionary personnel and some Indian employees, particularly medical staff, and the need to train local staff and the close inter-personal relationships that often entailed. Some of the effect of this is seen in the fact that as of 1990 there were at least sixteen native Christian health workers in Bhutan, at least eight of whom had been converted within Bhutan, and seven of whom were working in remote places outside of hospital settings. Also, as government service posts opened up to Indians, graduates of SUMI had been especially welcomed. For the growing numbers of educated Nepali-Lepcha in Kalimpong who were looking further afield for employment opportunities, Bhutan became a land of opportunity for many, including a number of Christians. Christians from other parts of India also used the opportunity to enter Bhutan, a few of whom had a dual motive of evangelism alongside their employment, including some from South and North-East India.¹⁰⁹

At the same time, the Bhutan government recognised the legitimate concern of the church in Kalimpong to provide pastoral care for their members working in Bhutan, opening the door for an EHCC ordained pastor to travel freely at least as far as Thimphu until the mid-1970s. Those who came in as Christians had a natural desire to gather together wherever they were located for fellowship and worship with other Christians, which provided the basis for house churches which began to spring up in different parts of the country. In addition, when these scattered Nepali-Lepcha lay Christians found themselves posted in areas of southern Bhutan with its wide-spread settlement of domiciled Nepali (Southern Bhutanese), or near the Nepali labourers' camps where they had been brought in to do heavy construction and road work in central and northern

Bhutan, it was perhaps inevitable that evangelism among their own language group would take place. The government further unconsciously facilitated the scattering of ethnic Nepali-Lepcha Christians through its resettlement programme of the late 1960s and 1970s, of Southern Bhutanese from the densely populated south-west to the more sparsely populated areas further east. The offer to Chyo and other Christian families from Samchi of land grants in south-eastern districts illustrates this point. In each instance they became the instruments of Christian witness among their neighbours.

CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIPS/HOUSE CHURCHES AND THEIR CHARACTERISTICS

The earliest Christian fellowships in Bhutan (aside from the EHCC-related congregations) were informal gatherings of Christians from outside, missionaries and Indians who were predominantly ethnic Lepcha-Nepali. As already noted, an EHCC survey in 1964 reported Nepali-Lepcha Christians scattered in thirteen different places in Bhutan.¹¹⁰ As more and more conversions took place within Bhutan, especially among Southern Bhutanese and Nepali immigrant labourers, Christians continued to be scattered throughout the country and to meet in small groups for Christian fellowship whenever they had opportunity. Their locations frequently shifted with job transferrals, and more recently due to the effects of the political situation and expelling of "non-nationals." As of 1993 Christian leaders within Bhutan estimated that there were over 1,000 Christians in more than 50 different locales, and more than 10 groups of at least 15-20 members each meeting regularly for worship.

For example, during a year of government service in 1965 at "R", Y.D. Tshering (originally from Todey) recalls meeting together with another Christian family from Kalimpong and a Scottish missionary couple connected with Graham's Homes in Kalimpong. A Lepcha doctor and his wife from Kalimpong also served in "R" for a time and held Christian meetings in their home,

sometimes attended by 25-30 people.¹¹¹ This was the beginning of a mixed ethnic fellowship which was attended by Nepali, Lepcha and Bhutanese, and conducted in the Nepali language.

The Lepcha doctor was from an El Shaddai background. After "R" fellowship was visited in 1981 by Reuben Rai of the Kalimpong El Shaddai group, baptisms were conducted by Reuben Rai and Daniel Rai two years later, and the El Shaddai-related Christians began to be identified as a separate group in "R".¹¹² This was repeated in several places from the early 1980s, as the El Shaddai-related Christians, mostly employed in Bhutan in various government service positions, formed separate groups in seven other locations all across Bhutan.¹¹³ Their membership has been predominantly Nepali-Lepcha ethnics. Although El Shaddai does not classify itself as a denomination, this is the only group of Protestant Christians in Bhutan which have consistently formed groups separate from the other Christians on theological grounds. The others have generally met together regardless of denomination or ethnic background.

A large number of outsiders in government service were naturally posted to the capital of Thimphu. The Christians among them began quietly meeting together for fellowship from at least 1966 following the transfer of Y.D. Tshering. He was joined by L.O. Panluk, Stanley Robbins and Kogen Rongong, also EHCC-related Christians from Kalimpong, one or two from Sikkim, Mani Kumar Mukhia of El Shaddai, a former Catholic turned Protestant named "Michael," some South Indian Christians including two Keralan Pentecostals, Matthew and Verghese, and a growing number of missionaries from the late 1970s. When Rev. P.S. Tingbo visited them in the early 1970s he helped to organise this diverse group into a congregation, and Y.D. Tshering provided lay leadership.¹¹⁴ According to Tingbo's description:

My first responsibility at Thimpu was to assemble all the available christians (who came from different parts of India to work in various development programs of Bhutan Government) in one place and to organise a church

there. With the help of a good christian couple from Kalimpong, Mr. and Mrs. Y.D. Tshering I was successful in that venture. A new congregation came into being and regular Sunday services and weekly prayer meetings were started. It was a strange 'mixed congregation' with members comprised of different church background such as:- CNIs, CSIs, RCs, Pentecostals, Baptists and Jacobites. An ideal example of typical church unity in a nutshell! Mr. Y.D. Tshering volunteered to lead the congregation in absence of the pastor. Through the ministry of this congregation quite a number of souls were won for the Lord right in the heart of Bhutan.¹¹⁵

Tshering's initial leadership was augmented by others who came and went. They were soon leading a predominantly Nepali ethnic congregation.

How did such informal congregations come to be overwhelmingly Nepali in composition in the midst of the Ngalong stronghold? Originally they were simply groups of Christians from outside Bhutan, meeting quietly together for fellowship and mutual encouragement. Then some of the EHCC-related Christians became concerned for a few backslidden Christians from Kalimpong whom they came to know about and who were part of nearby Nepali labour camps. A few of them began to visit one of the labour camps to try and draw those from a Christian background back into fellowship, and in the process became aware of the hundreds of Nepali labourers from Nepal, most of whom were very poor and uneducated. What began with a modest concern for "their own" people, slowly turned into a concern for the mass of Nepali labourers, both spiritually and physically. After a young thirteen year old girl was healed through prayer, her father and the whole family converted and asked for baptism. This was the beginning of a large movement within one camp, and independent internal sources attest that more than 150 Nepali labourers, almost exclusively matwali and low castes, were baptised by the early 1980s. Many of them were moved by the Public Works Department to different parts of the country for construction and road-building projects, further scattering Christians into remote areas, from which reports were occasionally received of their gathering together in small groups. Others began to be classed as "non-nationals" from the late

1980s and were either expelled from the country or left in fear of reprisal. Some of those who left are now found in the refugee camps in East Nepal and others as church members within Nepal.

The phenomenon of healing was one of the things that drew many of the mostly illiterate Nepali labourers into the church. A Christian man who had been in government service since the late 1950s developed a special ministry of healing and intercessory prayer after having a dream and being healed of a serious illness himself. According to his own description:

I saw the dream first in 1977. In that year I went to such a remote place of Bhutan. It was a five or six day walk from Shemgang, and the journey was very tough; it was in the middle of the jungle. In that jungle in a dream the Lord showed me doing all this healing and miracle work, and I was amazed. What is this? And I saw some poor sick boys, I saw them coming, having high fever and much pain, and I was praying in my mind. Whenever I see sick peoples or in this painful condition tears just start to come to my eyes and start to flow, and I pray in my mind quietly. But I was afraid to pray for these people. I thought if I pray for these sick and mad people, these with diseases, then these things will come in my life.

Then I was very sick, and I was admitted to hospital in Gangtok. Many people came and prayed for me. In that time I was in the death bed; I was about to die. Six specialists they checked me thoroughly, x-rays... I was in very serious condition in the hospital, and I was about to die. And one day I just prayed, "God if You will heal me, I will go back to Bhutan again and I will pray for the sick, I will pray to the mad people, I will pray to all, I will love to everybody." Because God revealed to me that we must love each other like Jesus Christ. God healed me in the hospital, and I came back to Bhutan in 1979 February. And I started to pray for the sick, whoever comes, and they received healing.¹¹⁶

One of the earliest Nepali converts, a Limbu who claims he was healed from leprosy and then baptised about 1976, himself became a man of unusual dreams and visions, a "prayer warrior" and "wiry itinerate evangelist" according to his contemporaries. He is credited with being one of the great lay evangelists of modern-day Bhutan, having trekked over large sections of the land, encouraging little groups of Christians and evangelising as he went. He was often joined by

another Nepali convert, "Caleb," and they regularly used their leave days to go out preaching.

Several other characteristics common to the house churches all across Bhutan stand out. There has been a strong Baptist and Pentecostal influence, except within the El Shaddai-related groups. This is evident in the free style of worship, lack of liturgy, practice of immersion baptism, and emphasis on healing and deliverance from evil spirits. At the same time there are no denominations within the country, except for the limited but continuing DDC-CNI influence in its "B" Pastorate and the separatist El Shaddai groups. However, some groups on the India side claim to have affiliated churches within Bhutan, and have been influential along the Bhutan border, particularly Himalayan Crusade and Masih Mandali, both Pentecostal groups based in Kalimpong.¹¹⁷ In general there is a lack of any uniting or organisational structure between the scattered house churches and individuals, and a consequent lack of a "voice" within society or the means to either encourage or correct one another. This has ushered in a present-day effort on the part of some of the Christians in Bhutan to form a "Bhutan Christian Fellowship," intended to encompass all of the local Christians without regard to ethnicity or denomination.

This points to another characteristic of the churches. They are generally a mixture of Nepali-Lepcha-Bhutia peoples, and may conduct their meetings in one or a combination of several languages. This is one segment of Bhutanese society where racial integration on a social level has worked. Although Nepali ethnic Christians are numerically dominant overall, the majority of them are poor and often illiterate; they are not the influence leaders. There has also been a strong Lepcha Christian influence. All of the Kalimpong EHC mobile pastors assigned to Bhutan, most of those from Kalimpong and Sikkim in government service who were influential in the formation of early scattered house churches, and several of the early Christian mission employees were Lepcha.

This points to the fact that most of the leaders are from at least nominal

Buddhist or animist rather than Hindu backgrounds, and almost all of them were educated in Kalimpong. There is no formal ministry nor any full-time pastors within the country. The churches are dependent upon lay leadership, although there are those who have been recognised among themselves to administer the sacraments. Christians in the south have often crossed into India to receive the sacraments at one of the many churches which dot the border, or at one of the annual Christian conferences held in Jaigaon and other places. One fairly recent exception to this is a Southern Bhutanese (ethnic Nepali) young man who returned in 1988 from the North India Bible Institute in Hardoi, UP as the first person from within Bhutan to receive Bible college training, and who functions as a travelling evangelist.¹¹⁸ The other main exception is the "B" area Pastorate of the DDC-CNI which has its own recognised catechists and one ordained deacon.

As has been amply illustrated, a "church" in a given locale in Bhutan does not imply a church building, due to both government restrictions and societal opposition. Such opposition has come from both the Lamaistic Buddhist and Hindu communities, the latter being particularly strong in the staunch high-caste Hindu populated districts of Chhukha, Daga, Chirang and Geylegphug. Even though ethnic Nepali-Lepcha have made up the majority of the Christians inside Bhutan, in the most densely Nepali populated districts of Chhukha, Daga and Chirang there have been very few converts.

Official government policy has also militated against the expansion of Christianity, and there has never been open evangelism. According to Harriet Watson of the Institute of Buddhist Studies, U.S. Center for World Mission, "Official government policy prohibits public proselytism within Bhutan, but families can worship according to their own religion within their own homes."¹¹⁹ Miss Watson notes that in a resolution passed by the National Assembly of Bhutan in the Spring of 1980 it was stated that there were to be no conversions to Christianity and no public preaching, and that all religious worship except of Buddha was to be restricted to one's own residence with one's own family.¹²⁰

During the 1970s and 1980s there were at least two cases of arrests of Christians because of their faith, one in Samchi District and one in Geylegphug District, and from the late 1980s there have been repeated reports of harassment and threats against Christian nationals in various locations east and west.¹²¹

The establishment of a Christian witness and presence within Bhutan has been achieved at great human cost -- the cost of several people's lives, foreign missionary, Nepali, Lepcha and Bhutanese evangelists alike, of illness and physical abuse endured, jobs and property lost and threatened, and expulsion from the country -- the Christians' way of "bearing the cross" of their Lord Jesus Christ.

MODERN DAY INFLUENCES FROM OUTSIDE BHUTAN

Growing influences from across the border contributed to the spread of Christianity within Bhutan from the 1970s. National churches began to dot Bhutan's southern border in the Duars as a base for evangelism to those within the "Dragon Kingdom."¹²² The Finnish and Scottish missionaries and their native evangelists at Baksaduar and Todey were the pioneers for this type of strategy from almost a century earlier. This was followed by the Santal Mission and the Boro church (Northern Evangelical Lutheran Church) to the east. In addition to Pastor Maguram Mosahary and the Boro congregation in Parkijuli which supported the early work in Dewangiri, they built a new church inside Bhutan at the border town of Samdrup Jonkhar in 1966, the first "pukka" church structure within Bhutan. The 1970s and 1980s saw a new surge of activity, particularly from the indigenous Pentecostal churches in Kalimpong. Himalayan Crusade, under the direction of Rev. S. Sodemba, pioneered work from Kalimpong to Bhutan in the modern era by sending two Bhutia evangelists in 1970 to Jaigaon, just opposite Phuntsoling on the way to Thimphu: Pema Paul Bhutia and Simon Dukpa, both of whom had earlier connections with the Finnish Mission.¹²³ Their goal was "to reach the word of God inside Bhutan."¹²⁴ A

local church grew up in Jaigaon as an initial base, and by the mid-1980s Himalayan Crusade reported having Gospel Houses set up at two more main entry points to Bhutan, on the Indian side further east along the border.¹²⁵ El Shaddai also has assemblies which meet on the Assam side at each of these three points, where they bought land in the early 1980s and erected prayer houses for safe meeting places.

Himalayan Crusade's example was later followed by the Fellowship of Free Baptist Churches in West Bengal and Sikkim (popularly known as "Masih Mandali") led by Rev. B.K. Biswas, and the Presbyterian Free Church, both with headquarters also in Kalimpong. By 1992 Biswas claimed to have work in three places within Bhutan which were being visited monthly by an evangelist based in Jaigaon, and Rev. K.M. Rai of the Presbyterian Free Church was involved across the border in Bhutan from his base in Jaldhaka. However, both Biswas and K.M. Rai report that since the anti-Nepali agitations began the majority of their converts in Bhutan have now become refugees across the border in India or in Nepal. Churches pastored by Indian missionaries from South India and Nagaland have also targeted Bhutan for outreach from across the border, particularly Emmanuel Pentecostal Church in Jaigaon.¹²⁶

The other major influences on Christianity in Bhutan have been in the areas of Bible or theological training, and the surge of interest being shown by international Christian organisations since the 1990s. In the 1950s at least four Dukpas from Baksaduar were sent by the Free Church of Finland Mission to Bible schools in the UP. But Darjeeling Hills Bible School in Mirik has had the biggest impact in training Bible students from Bhutan. In the twenty year period between 1971 and 1991 thirteen students from Bhutan attended DHBS, most of them in connection with DDC-CNI's "B" Pastorate. In addition, since the late 1980s at least two Southern Bhutanese have attended the Pentecostal style North India Bible Institute in Hardoi, UP; at least four students have gone to Bible colleges in Nagaland; and one young woman has joined YWAM's nine-month

Discipleship Training Course in Kathmandu. In terms of short-term training, by the end of 1991 NCCC had hosted fifteen ethnic Nepali from Bhutan at their courses in Siliguri, and at least four Bhutanese had attended a Christian Foundation Course at Delhi Bible Institute. All of this has contributed to the stability of the small groups within Bhutan as their members have had the opportunity to increase their knowledge of the Bible and the basic tenets of their faith.

ENDNOTES - CHAPTER 5

- (1) N.K. Rustomji, **BHUTAN: THE DRAGON KINGDOM** (New Delhi: Oxford Univ. Press, 1978), 49, citing C. Wessel, **EARLY JESUIT TRAVELLERS**, 1924.
- (2) This provides an interesting parallel to the history of Christianity in Nepal, where Jesuits and Capuchins were the first Christian visitors in the 17th century. In Nepal they established residence for a few years during the 18th century, but then took their few converts into exile in India following Prithvi Narayan Shah's conquest of the Kathmandu Valley. It was only two centuries later that Protestant missionaries were finally allowed to work in Nepal.
- (3) Mary Drewery, **WILLIAM CAREY** (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1978), 96.
- (4) **BMS PERIODICAL ACCOUNTS**, Vol. III, 1806-1809, 466-467, at the Angus Library, Regent's Park College, Oxford.
- (5) See Appendix H for a complete account of the Bootan Mission as recorded by C.B. Lewis in the **ORIENTAL BAPTIST**, Vol. VIII (Calcutta: J. Thomas, Baptist Mission Press, 1854) 114-117.
- (6) **BMS PERIODICAL ACCOUNTS**, Vol. III, 1806-1809, 517.
- (7) **BMS PERIODICAL ACCOUNTS**, Vol. IV, 1809-1811, 7-10.
- (8) **BMS PERIODICAL ACCOUNTS**, Vol. IV, July-Sept. 1810 Extracts of Letters, "Bootan," Mr. Robinson to Mr. Marshman, August 7, 1810, 159-160.
- (9) "Bootan Mission," **BMS PERIODICAL ACCOUNTS**, Vol. IV, 1809-1811, 266-271. This article contains a graphic account of the dacoit attack on Robinson and party.
- (10) Lewis, **ORIENTAL BAPTIST**, 117.
- (11) Lewis, **ORIENTAL BAPTIST**, 117.
- (12) Aitchison (Vol. 14, 1982, 83). Aitchison refers to Baksaduar as Buxa. His narrative amply reveals Buxa's strategic importance: it was to Buxa that the Deb Raja came to meet the Lt. Governor of Bengal in 1873; two of the Bhutanese chiefs sought refuge in Buxa in 1877; and captives taken in a raid on a British village were surrendered in Buxa two years later. According to Vappu Rautamäki (1994, 23) it was the gateway to Punakha, the capital of Bhutan at the time, and the site of an old fortress which was then used for political prisoners.
- (13) This summarised version of the early SAM work in Baksaduar is taken from the official account of the Free Church of Finland Mission by Hämelin and Peltoniemi (1990, 106-117), relevant sections translated for the author by Miss Liisa Ilomaeki, Free Church of Finland missionary in Nepal, March 1993. There is also a brief account of SAM's early years in Baksaduar in

Grauer's history of SAM (1940, 155 and 160).

(14) According to the SAM historical account (Grauer, 1940, 155), Misses Fredericksson and Gahmberg were joined by Tina Johnson, who later moved south to work among the Bhils with SAM after Gahmberg's death.

(15) Miss Hulda Nordin (later Eklund) and Mrs. Ossian Eklund were stationed in Cooch Bihar and Baksaduar for a few years until the children rescued from the Ahmedabad famine were transferred to Ghoom in 1904. Then from 1922 Mr. Claude Dover, a British engineer who had married John Fredericksson's widow seven years earlier, was appointed as a SAM missionary to Domar in Cooch Bihar, from where they conducted work in Baksaduar.

(16) In August 1932 Claude Dover wrote that Norbu Tenzing, formerly their school teacher at Baksaduar, was now undertaking studies to become a doctor for Bhutan and Tibet, supported by an associate member of the Officers Christian Union (TS of TEAM journalist' notes compiled August 1961, photocopy in NCHP Collection).

(17) Hämelin and Peltoniemi (1990, 117) mention an evangelist named Tsering "from Baksaduar" who was baptised at the first SAM conference in Ghoom in 1897. But local informants in Mangan, North Sikkim, say that this Tsering was the son of the first Christian convert in Ringim, Sikkim who then served as an evangelist with the Finnish missionaries in Baksaduar and in Ghoom, where he died in the 1930s (see above, p.182ff).

(18) Hämelin and Peltoniemi, 1990, 188.

(19) Misses Edla Träskbäck, Hanna Juureva and Elin Kronqvist went to Baksaduar in 1929 to take over the station, then Träskbäck and Juureva returned in January 1930 to reside there, until they went on furlough about 1934.

(20) Thirty years earlier, when Sigrid Gahmberg was in Baksaduar in the late 1890s, she hardly mentioned any Nepali in her letters to Finland, although there were a few settled at Lal Bungalow near the Baksaduar fortress (V. Rautamäki, 1994, 19). But by the 1930s more Nepali were gradually moving in.

(21) Hämelin and Peltoniemi, 1990, 190-92.

(22) Hämelin and Peltoniemi, 1990, 193-6, citing a report from Juureva in 1937. Of these native Christians very few were local converts from Baksaduar. John and Abraham were the eldest boys from the original children's home rescued from Ahmedabad; Tabitha was the daughter of a Bhutia evangelist from North Sikkim; Martha was a Nepali (Tamang) orphan girl from the children's home. Magdalene and Stephanus were clearly local Bhutanese converts, but the author has been unable to trace the origins of Sarah and Enok.

(23) Mrs. Laila Chhetri, daughter-in-law of Jonathan Chhetri, interview with author, Kurseong, 12 April 1993.

(24) Stephen's wife was Sikkimese, the daughter of one of the original Bhutia evangelists who came to Baksaduar from Lachung with the Finnish Mission. After Stephen's death, she and the children were moved to Ghoom where they could be looked after by the mission, and she re-married with

Pema Paul Bhutia, born in Tibet. There was lots of movement of the Finnish missionaries' converts between the three main stations in N. Sikkim, Ghoom and Baksaduar on the Bhutan border, and intermarriage particularly among the Sikkimese-Bhutanese-Tibetan Christian Bhutia.

(25) Goddard, 1967, 623. According to V. Rautamäki (1994, 13 and 21) Hyttinen could speak twelve different languages. During his ten years of missionary service, including four years spent in a concentration camp in Dehradun, he began translation of the New Testament into the Dzongkha language. Parts of the work have been lost, and only the Gospel of Mark, entitled "Toivon tie" (Way of Hope), has been published, in 1970.

(26) In the early 1950s Oili Lappalainen again transferred the weaving work to Baksaduar from Ghoom, together with the weaving foreman, Jonathan Chhetri, and some of the weavers; and Hellin Hukka began regular dispensary work. Lappalainen had to return to Finland in 1954 due to an illness. Vappu Rautamäki joined Hellin for one year from November 1955; the last Finnish missionary to obtain a work permit for Baksaduar was Riitta Siikainen who was there for two years (1959-1960). Under Hellin Hukka's direction a new mission house was completed in 1956, and later a school was built. Mrs. Hellin Hukka-Dukpa was the last worker of the Free Church of Finland Mission to return to Finland when she retired in 1987 after thirty-seven years at Baksaduar.

(27) Simon Dukpa's history is a good example of the fluid movement of national workers, especially those connected with Bhutia ministry, between various missions. After starting as an evangelist with the Finnish Mission, Simon joined Rev. Tharchin who was with the Tibetan Mission of the EHM in Kalimpong. According to Rev. S. Sodemba of Himalayan Crusade in Kalimpong, Sodemba ordained Simon and sent him back to Jaigaon together with Pema Paul Bhutia. But Simon was again an evangelist with the Free Church of Finland Mission through their headquarters at his native Baksaduar from at least the 1980s.

(28) Rautamäki, 1994, 22.

(29) Rev. P.K. Rai of HFC, interview with author, Ghoom, 12 May 1992; also Vappu Rautamäki, 1994, 21. In an independent survey of churches on the border of Bhutan conducted by James Thapa in 1992, four Free Church of Finland churches were noted: the headquarters at Baksaduar led by Rev. Norbu Dukpa and Rev. Andreas Dukpa, Canaan Church in Jaigaon led by Rev. Thomas Dukpa, Kokla Church near Jaigaon led by Pastor Simon Dukpa, and an all-Nepali church at Sunkosh Tea Estate with two local leaders and overseen by Simon Dukpa (now deceased).

(30) Thomas Dukpa, interview with author, Jaigaon, Nov. 1991.

(31) Rautamäki, 1994, 22.

(32) An account in the HOME AND FOREIGN MISSIONARY RECORD (Vol. XV, Oct. 1885, 256-7) demonstrates the missionaries' desire for Christianity to be preached in Bhutan. Great hope for potential Bhutia to Bhutia evangelism was generated when Kanden Tsering, from a noble Kazi family in Bhutan, and his wife were baptised in 1885, and Kanden entered into training to become a Christian worker among the Bhutia. However, following his entry into training, there is no further mention of Tsering in EHM records, and his training to work as an evangelist in Bhutan was evidently abandoned. Tsering was not a Bhutia by birth, but had been adopted and brought up by a

Bhutanese Kazi. His wife, Goraklamo, was an ethnic Bhutia.

(33) Through the years the missionaries in Darjeeling and Kalimpong occasionally had hopes of finding a native Bhutanese who would accept Christ and become a missionary to his own people. The first Bhutia baptised in the EHM was Angchhering in 1877, but he was subsequently expelled from the church in 1881. In a letter of December 1884 by Mr. Turnbull to supporters in Scotland he urged them to pray for a Bhutia to be raised up to work among his own people, and noted one man awaiting baptism. The following year one of the former EHM Normal School students and his wife were baptised, Kanden Tsering and Goraklamo. Turnbull again notes a Bhutia young man baptised in 1887 whom he felt was well-qualified to be a catechist, but this also evidently did not materialise. The Scottish missionaries were not able to realise their desire of training a Bhutia convert as a missionary among his own people before the native Christians in Kalimpong developed a burden for evangelising Bhutan and began to send out successive Nepali and Lepcha evangelists from their own midst.

(34) "Foreign Mission to Bhutan," Mission News, January 1891, 2. See Appendix I for the early accounts of the Bhutan Mission which appeared in the following issues of Mission News: Jan. 1891, March 1892, July 1892, Sept. 1898. Dr. J.A. Graham wrote a full account of the Kalimpong Mission to Bhutan in a series of articles originally submitted to Guild Life and Work, then recounted in his history of the Guild Mission in Kalimpong, ON THE THRESHOLD OF THREE CLOSED LANDS (1905), 151-158.

(35) Further evidence of the Mission to Bhutan being a national church rather than foreign mission initiative is found in the handwritten "Bhutan Congregation" Minutes book, which chronicle the proceedings of the committee governing the Foreign Mission to Bhutan (later called Bhutan Christian Welfare Committee) from 1913-1965. It is written almost entirely in the Nepali language.

(36) Mission News, March 1892, 8. This was probably an Anglo-Bhutia lad mentioned in the Kalimpong 1890 "Annual Report"; he reportedly was baptised in 1890 and then entered the Training School with a view to future work among his mother's people.

(37) According to P.S. Tingbo ("The Echoes of Gospel Bell in the Land of Thunder Dragon," in MACFARLANE CENTENARY, 1991, 22) Jitman and Karnabir worked mostly on the periphery of the south-west Bhutan border, in Chamarchi, Banerhat, Nagarkatta, Mattigara and Todey.

(38) Mission News, March 1900, 32. By this time there was an EHM catechist based in Todey as its closest outstation to the Bhutan border, a church and a school, more than 50 in the Christian community, and another school nearby at Godok. In 1903 a dispensary was also opened at Todey, proving a further attraction for those in Bhutan to cross the border.

(39) Albert Craig, "Dr. Craig's Research on the History of the Church in the Eastern Himalayas," TS, n.d., section 3, 2-3. However P.S. Tingbo (MACFARLANE CENTENARY, 1991, 22) asserts that he was bitten by a rabid dog and died of hydrophobia.

(40) Mission News, May 1904, 632.

(41) P.S. Tingbo, MACFARLANE CENTENARY, 1991, 22.

(42) Manuel (1914, 242) wrote that the Bhutan Mission was being carried on from Todey. Anambo Lucksom (Lepcha), who was converted through the ministry of Dr. Graham in Mangwa and accompanied him to Todey, became the first EHM catechist in Todey. He was accepted as a candidate for the licentiate in 1911, was ordained in 1917, and served as Pastor of Todey Church until his resignation in 1937. As a compounder-cum-catechist, then ordained minister, he also ran the EHM dispensary in Todey which opened in 1908. The first church was built in 1919. Anambo was reported to have frequently crossed the border into Bhutan for quiet evangelism and ministry among the few converts who resided there. Following Anambo, there were one or two intermittent catechists until Gyandup Ongber (Lepcha) was posted there from 1948 until he died in 1959 from a long illness. He was succeeded by Gyamsingh Gyatzo (Lepcha) who spent his life in the service of the church in this isolated corner until his death in 1984. At that time there were reportedly more than 300 members in the Todey congregation, including several from across the border in Bhutan. Todey continues to be the most inaccessible and remote of the Darjeeling Diocese pastorates of the Church of North India.

(43) The famous Moravian missionary-linguist in the Tibetan language, Rev. H.A. Jaeschke, resided in Darjeeling in the 1860s to study Tibetan, then went to Kyelang in the Western Himalayas. In 1887 a large box of printed portions of the Old Testament and tracts in the Tibetan language were sent from Kyelang to Darjeeling for distribution in Sikkim and Bhutan, presumably to the Scottish EHM, but also made available to SAM missionaries who studied Tibetan in Darjeeling before going to Baksaduar.

(44) "Bhutan Christian Welfare Committee," in "Minutes of Bhutan Congregation," minute of 1 April 1965, handwritten and TS, Nepali with portions in English (Kalimpong, 1913-1965).

(45) Mission News, March 1928, 2; and Craig, "Craig's Research," n.d., section 3, 10.

(46) P.S. Tingbo, MACFARLANE CENTENARY, 1991, 22-23. Sahabir Rai's son, Rev. Saharaja Rai, says that his father was converted in Todey, became a compounder-cum-catechist and made numerous trips into Bhutan, even establishing a congregation at Sibsoo.

(47) Hilda Steele, interview with author, Oct. 1986.

(48) See above, p.53 concerning Ugyen Dorji's influence in Bhutan.

(49) Minto, 1974, 166. According to Minto it was because of Ugyen Dorji's desire for his son to have an English education that he requested permission for him to attend the Homes' school as a day scholar, and his son was invited to live in the Mission House with the Grahams for a time. Manuel (1914, 114) notes that Raja Ugyen Dorji made contributions towards building programmes at Graham's Homes.

(50) Peter Collister, BHUTAN AND THE BRITISH (Serindia Publ., 1987), 174. A handwritten entry in "SUMI Visitors and Inspectors Book," dated 1 December 1914, noted that 40 boys from Bhutan were attending SUMI in Kalimpong during the current cold weather, but their education had been started in Bhutan by teachers sent from Kalimpong.

(51) Manuel, 1914, 242-243, quoting from "a recent issue" of Mission News. B.C. Simick gives the names of the first two teachers sent to Bhutan as Ugyen

Chirring and Dawa Namgye Targyen (SUMITE CENTENARY SOUVENIR 1886-1986, Kalimpong: Mani Press, 1986, 9). Simick says they were followed by Ribu Karthak, who was later in-charge of the Teacher's Training Institute, Joseph Stein, S. Sitling. H.H. Pradhan, and K.K. Sarkar.

(52) Craig ("Craig's Research," section 3, 7) notes that it was the request of the Maharaja of Bhutan to send teachers "to open a school for the sons of chiefs," and that of the teachers sent out from SUMI, two went to the Durbar of the Maharaja. B.C. Simick (SUMITE CENTENARY, 1986, 9) says it was Ugyen Chhiring, one of the first two teachers to Haa, who opened the second school at Bumthang and also worked at the Durbar school. Chhiring was later appointed by King Jigme Wangchhuk as his agent at Baksaduar, where he served until 1954.

(53) Collister 1987, 174. Collister says that instruction was carried out in both English and Tibetan.

(54) Major F.M. Bailey, British Political Officer in Sikkim, Reports 1922-24, cited by Collister, 1987, 177.

(55) SUMITE CENTENARY, 1886, 12-13.

(56) Church News, March 1956, 29.

(57) Mission News, Oct. 1953, 51.

(58) Maj-Gen. Lam Dorji, letter to P.R. Pradhan, 14 April 1986, in SUMITE CENTENARY SOUVENIR, 1986, n.p.

(59) The first Bhutanese group at SUMI to pass the matriculation exam went on to study medicine, forestry and animal husbandry, including Dr. Phanchhung, the first medical trainee who became a Medical Officer in Bhutan.

(60) Mission News, March 1941, 3. Rinzin died the following year while in military service.

(61) Manuel, 1914, 180.

(62) Mission News, May 1929, 41.

(63) See Minto (1974, 166-183) for details of Graham's advice to the Maharaja and the Maharaja's response.

(64) Minto, 1974, 183. This visit to Bhutan by Graham in 1921 as a personal guest of the Maharaja was also reported by Major F.M. Bailey, British Political Officer in Sikkim.

(65) Mission News, Jan.-April 1951, 22.

(66) Church News, Oct., Feb. and June 1963; and Craig, "Craig's Research," section 3, 15.

(67) The term 'mobile pastor,' as used by the EHC in relation to Bhutan, meant that the pastor was necessarily resident outside of Bhutan and thus mobile in his ministry to and within Bhutan from Kalimpong division.

(68) The Church of Scotland's MINUTES OF FOREIGN MISSION

COMMITTEE, No. 7999, dated 18 Feb. 1964, reveals that Dr. A. Craig was seeking permission from the government to open a leprosy hospital at "Gidda" [sic] and was "wholeheartedly supported" by the Committee in this. Craig chose the site for the proposed hospital, but the opportunity was referred to TLM who took up the challenge as the first western missionary organisation to start long-term work in Western Bhutan in specific agreement with the Government of Bhutan.

(69) Rachel Pinniger, "The History of the Church in Bhutan," TS, n.d. [late-1980s], 4. These invitations grew out of the demand for general medical services at the various places TLM set up hospitals, and BMMF personnel were invited in to help meet the general medical needs. They initially worked in conjunction with the Health Department, then from the mid-1980s also had personnel seconded to the Agriculture and Public Works Departments.

(70) Olav Hodne, *THE SEED BORE FRUIT: A Short History of the Santal Mission of the Northern Churches 1867-1967*, 2nd ed. (Calcutta: C.D. Media, 1982), 150. David Westborg, one of the founders of the Norwegian Tibet Mission, went to Tibet in 1938 and was joined by his fiancée, Anne Helene, in 1940 (Anne Helene Westborg, letter to author, 12 May 1994). At the time of the Japanese occupation they were forced out of China and went to India where they were invited to join the Santal Mission among the Boro in Assam, at a leprosy hospital in Santipara, Goalpara District.

(71) According to Anne Helene Westborg (letter to author, 12 May 1994) David Westborg had gone to the Darranga mela together with Gunnar Fossland, superintendent of the Santipara Leprosy Colony, where they stayed in a government dak-bungalow. While there they heard coughing outside the door, the traditional way of 'knocking', and it was Rinchen Lama and Maguram Mosahary who had come to seek them out.

(72) Edel and Magnus Haugstad, "ALT DET JEG VIL, DET GJOR JEG": SPEDALSKE-ARBEIDET SPRENGER GRENSER I BHUTAN ("I will do all that I will do": The Leprosy Work Expands into Bhutan) Norwegian, (Norway, n.p., n.d. [about 1978], 25). Pastor Maguram was born about 1910, baptised in 1931 and ordained in what became the Northern Evangelical Lutheran Church in 1946. Haugstads say that he was given four Bhutanese orphan boys to bring up by an Eastern Bhutanese chief, who indicated it was okay to raise them as Christians (p.27). Bhutanese officials were well aware of his concern for Bhutan, and he was requested to help get Christian missions to bring schools and medical facilities to the area. Maguram worked near the border of Bhutan most of his life, and was instrumental in promoting a vision for Bhutan among the Boro church. According to Mrs. Anne Helene Westborg (letter to author, 12 May 1994) Maguram was the brother of a village chief, and "he had a special burden for the Bhutias in the eastern part of Bhutan. He had made several trips into the valleys and mountains of Bhutan."

(73) Hodne, 1982, 150.

(74) The local Christian Boro promised to provide rice and vegetables for Rinchen in Dewangiri, and Westborg offered to give him seven rupees a month for expenses and to make the government application for a piece of land, which was granted.

(75) Haugstad, 1978, 25.

(76) Asbjorg Fiske, one of the earliest missionaries with the Norwegian

Santal Mission in Bhutan (letter to author, 17 Feb. 1994), as related to her by Maguram Mosahary. According to Mosahary, Rinchen not only met Bhutanese at the border marketplace of Darranga and travelled within Bhutan, but also visited Tibet and Nepal. According to Anne Helene Westborg (letter to author, 12 May 1994), Rinchen had a licence for giving vaccinations against cholera, smallpox and typhoid. Two houses were built at Dewangiri, and a few orphan boys came to stay with him.

(77) Haugstad, 1978, 26.

(78) Haugstad, 1978, 36-38. There was a school in Parkijuli where many of the boys from Dewangiri went for further education, and they also received further Christian instruction. Of the three boys who became Christians: one went on to Kalimpong for further education and later received a government service post in Central Bhutan; another served in the Bhutanese army then settled in his native area of Dewothang; and the other went on to get training as a compounder, worked at the Santal Mission hospital in Parkijuli, served in the military, and finally became a co-worker of the Norwegian Santal Mission in their work inside Bhutan. (The above men's names are withheld for reasons of security.)

(79) Haugstad, 1978, 34. A clinic had been run in Parkijuli for several years prior to this by a Boro Christian, who also helped with the school in Dewangiri from time to time, but a hospital was deemed a good foothold for the Santal Mission towards getting into Bhutan.

(80) This man from Manipur had attempted to do evangelism in East Bhutan in years past, but was arrested and sent back to Assam. His second chance came through getting a job with one of the road construction groups for two years. Then he opened a shop and got a permit to stay in Dewothang.

(81) Fiske, letter to author, 17 Feb. 1994. A detailed account of their entry into East Bhutan is contained in the Haugstads' own book (1978), drawn from their diary entries at the time.

(82) According to Haugstad's account (1978, 59) it was again New Delhi that delayed their being able to start work at Riserboo. In November 1965 the whole Haugstad family had been invited to meet the King and the Health Minister at Dewothang and they were encouraged to start leprosy work as soon as possible, but permission was not forth-coming from the Indian side until the middle of 1966.

(83) Rustomji, 1978, 49.

(84) The Salesians of Don Bosco were invited by the Government of Bhutan in 1963 to open a Technical School in Bhutan. Kharbandi Technical School opened in 1966, and was run by the Don Bosco Fathers until 1982 when the Government of Bhutan ended the relationship and ordered the hand-over of the school. The students during this period were about 55 percent Bhutanese and 45 percent Nepali.

(85) A confidential letter from an officer of the Royal Government of Bhutan, dated 26 Feb. 1982, in the author's possession. A response dated 4 March 1982 vigorously denied the charge of proselytising while agreeing that "no one may force his religion on others," but "at the same time one may not deny others the freedom to accept the religious persuasion of his choice." The response also reminded the Government that when the Prime Minister

had invited the Salesian Fathers "it was fully known to them that they were inviting religious men inspired and guided by the principles of a particular religion," and complimented the Government on its "initiative and religious tolerance" upon its initial invitation.

(86) Nine or ten KMA missionaries and their families served at Khaling Blind School before it was handed over to the government.

(87) At least six western families and individuals who have lost their visas for Bhutan since 1984 were indirectly informed that it was because of their involvement with local "non-national" Christians or in Christian activities, although this is seldom the official reason given. All but one of the above, a Dutch volunteer, were missionary personnel serving in Thimphu where they are directly under the government's eye.

(88) "Minutes of Bhutan Christian Welfare Committee, formerly Bhutan Foreign Mission," 7 May 1964, signed by President M.S. Tingbo, in "Minutes of Bhutan Congregation." Rev. P.S. Tingbo ("Ringing the Gospel Bells," 1985, 7-8) notes that Craig secured this permission from the government of Bhutan in writing. The name of the Bhutan Foreign Mission Committee was changed in consequence of these developments to 'Bhutan Christian Welfare Committee.'

(89) "Minutes of Bhutan Congregation," 7 May 1964.

(90) P.S. Tingbo, interview with author, Gangtok,

(91) M.S. Tingbo, DDC News, April 1971, 22-23; and interview with author, Pakang village, Kalimpong, 11 April 1992.

(92) N.T. Molommu, interview with author, Pakang village, Kalimpong, 10 April 1992.

(93) At the request of those concerned and for reasons of security the names of Christians living in Bhutan and the place names where Christian congregations are located are not named in this account.

(94) (Wife of the family concerned), interview with author, Gangtok, April 1993.

(95) P.S. Tingbo, "Ringing the Gospel Bells," 1985, 13-14.

(96) M.S. Tingbo, DDC News, April 1971, 22-23.

(97) Church News, June 1970, 38.

(98) P.S. Tingbo, "Ringing the Gospel Bells," 1985, 9. The figures given by P.S. Tingbo in the above account are also attested in the following articles which appeared in DDC News: April 1971, 25; Dec. 1971, 25; and Sept. 1972, 20 -- all on-the-spot reports written by Tingbo at the time of occurrence.

(99) DDC News, April 1971, 26. Less than two years later the Rt. Rev. D.D. Pradhan, Acting Bishop of Darjeeling and Bishop of Assam, visited this newly organised Kirk Session on the 23rd April 1972 (DDC News, Sept. 1972, 20).

(100) K.M. Rai, interview with author, Kalimpong, 14 April 1992. After two years in "C", K.M. Rai was sent with the support of the main DDC-related

congregation in Bhutan to Kalimpong for training to become a mobile compounder back in Bhutan. But when the Bhutan government refused permission for him to return in that capacity he discontinued the training and set up a dispensary in Todey.

(101) P.S. Tingbo, *DDC News*, April 1971, 25. Tingbo's attempts to recruit Christian teachers and compounders from Darjeeling-Kalimpong were not successful, and he turned his attention to sending local young Christians out of Bhutan for training as catechists.

(102) P.S. Tingbo, "Ringing the Gospel Bells," 1985, 10.

(103) P.S. Tingbo, "Ringing the Gospel Bells," 1985, 10.

(104) P.S. Tingbo, "Ringing the Gospel Bells," 1985, 11.

(105) P.S. Tingbo, "Ringing the Gospel Bells," 1985, 11.

(106) P.S. Tingbo, "Ringing the Gospel Bells," 1985, 15.

(107) P.S. Tingbo, "Ringing the Gospel Bells," 1985, 15.

(108) K.M. Rai of Todey, who served alongside Rev. P.S. Tingbo for two years, was the first catechist-cum-evangelist appointed to Bhutan by the EHCC since the 1930s or 1940s. P.S. Tingbo's efforts to have catechists from within Bhutan trained was one of his most significant contributions to the growth and stability of the churches, especially in Samchi District. Since the mid-1970s nine men and one woman have served the "B" area Pastorate of Darjeeling Diocese, and at least six of them attended Darjeeling Hills Bible School for training. Of these ten, the one woman was a Pradhan (Newar), two of the men were Lepcha, and the other seven were all from Nepali matwali castes (Rai, Limbu and Gurung). As of 1993 there were still five catechists in this area on the DDC payroll, including one ordained deacon.

(109) At least two South Indian Christians, Matthew and Verghese, were influential in the early growth of a Pentecostal church in Thimphu. Two other Pentecostal Keralan pastors have also started churches across the border at Jaigaon, one of which now gives occasional oversight to Matthew's former group in Thimphu. Another South Indian Christian lady, married to a Hindu Nepali doctor, has occasionally held Christian meetings in her home in Southern Bhutan.

Christians from Manipur and Mizoram, NE India have also been employed in Bhutan, and Naga in evangelistic ministry along the border. Rev. T. Sungte of Manipur and his wife have worked in Diafam, E. Bhutan since the 1960s, with his wife employed as a teacher in a government school. He reportedly speaks fluent Nepali. Mr. S. Sawa and family, Mizo Presbyterians, were in service in Bhutan for many years, until his retirement in the early 1970s. He also spoke fluent Nepali, and was so sympathetic to Nepali Christians that he supported the formation of the first Nepali fellowship in Mizoram upon his return home. The Siamlianas, also Mizo Christians, served both at Mongar and at Gidakom with TLM, and now are based back in Mizoram with TLM. A group of Naga Baptists held some meetings in Thimphu and did surveys with the hope of starting work in Bhutan in the early 1980s, but nothing came of it. Since then the Nagaland Missionary Movement has placed Naga missionaries on the border at or near Jaigaon, including Pastors Allen Ao, Imty Jamir and Miss R. Zulu Walling.

(110) See above, p.255.

(111) Pinniger, "History of the Church in Bhutan," 2. The Lepcha doctor concerned was originally given a scholarship by the Bhutan government to study medicine in Calcutta, and thus served as a doctor in Bhutan following his training.

(112) El Shaddai circular letters, 18 June 1981, and 13 July 1983, in El Shaddai file, NCHP Collection.

(113) P.N. Namchy, El Shaddai Elder, interview with author, Kalimpong, 15 April 1992; and El Shaddai, "List of Churches," handwritten, Kalimpong, 1992, in El Shaddai file, NCHP Collection.

(114) P.S. Tingbo visited Thimphu for the first time in 1970 during his first tour in Bhutan (Church News, June 1970, 38).

(115) P.S. Tingbo, "Ringing the Gospel Bells," 1985, 16.

(116) Partial transcript of confidential unedited video shot in Bhutan, 1989, in NCHP Collection.

(117) See below, p.289 and p.291.

(118) Soon after this young man's return to Bhutan he discovered that his name had been removed from the citizens' list, making his position within the country precarious. Thus he has not served as a resident pastor in any one place, but has had a Bible teaching ministry as an independent evangelist. In February 1994 he was arrested and imprisoned following a baptism he conducted.

(119) H. Watson, confidential statement on Bhutan, Institute of Hindu Studies, U.S. Center for World Mission, n.d.(mid-1980s), in Bhutan file, NCHP Collection. One of the Bhutanese Christian leaders says that there was a law in Bhutan from at least 1957 which forbade preaching or witnessing but allowed Christians to pray and follow their own religion. However, the author has not been able to verify this from other sources.

(120) H. Watson, statement on Bhutan, n.d. This prohibition in 1980 was also noted by Dr. Theodore Srinivasagam, "Bhutan our Northern Neighbour," (TS, n.d.), in Bhutan file, NCHP Collection.

(121) Rev. P.S. Tingbo was arrested while conducting a baptism in 1975 (see p.261). During the 1980s a DDC-supported catechist was arrested by local officials in Geylegphug. According to an informed source, this young man was threatened with deprivation of his land and expulsion from Bhutan if he would not recant Christianity, but was finally released with a stern warning not to preach. A few years later he was classed as a "non-national" during a local census and forced to leave the country.

(122) See below, p.288ff "Modern Day Nepali Churches in the Duars" for a fuller treatment of this subject.

(123) Pema Paul Bhutia (interview with author, Kalimpong, 15 April 1993) was born in Tibet about 1926, then brought to Jorebunglow, Darjeeling District, by his mother as a young boy. He married a Christian Sikkimese woman from Lachung, Tabitha, who had been brought to Jorebunglow by Finnish missionaries. Then at twenty-two years of age he was converted to Christianity through the testimony of El Shaddai believers and was subsequently baptised by Jordan Khan in Kalimpong. His brothers tried to tempt

him to give up his new faith by offering to build him a house, but he refused. He worked for some years in Jorebungalow, then with Rev. Tharchin, a Tibetan pastor in Kalimpong, for several months before he was encouraged by Rev. S. Sodemba to pursue his desire to go to Bhutan to preach. He first visited Bhutan in 1969, then lived in Jaigaon until 1985 before retiring in Kalimpong.

See above, p.236 for details about Simon Dukpa.

(124) Abner Sodemba, letter to prayer supporters, 15 April 1986, in Bhutan file, NCHP Collection. See p.289 for further details of the work of Himalayan Crusade in the Duars.

(125) Abner Sodemba, map on letter to prayer supporters, 15 April 1986, in Bhutan file, NCHP Collection.

(126) See above, n.109 in this section; also p.289ff in the Duars section for details about South Indian Pentecostals in Jaigaon and Emmanuel Pentecostal Church.

CHAPTER 6 - NEPALI CHRISTIANS IN THE DUARS

INTRODUCTION

After the Bhutan Duars were annexed by the British in 1865, A. Singh states, "The Duars were subsequently to become one of the main tea-growing areas of India and to acquire great economic importance."¹ This led to the Nepali migration flow on eastward into the Duars as labour for the new tea plantations being established. Although they never reached the same proportion of the population as in the hills above, their presence made enough of an impact to cause comment by missionary observers. Dr. J.A. Graham of Kalimpong noted in the early 1900s that "The Nepalis, from the neighbouring kingdom of Nepal, swarm over the hill district, and many of them go to the Duars."² Then during Manuel's research he concluded that the Mechi population of the Duars were being ousted by the Nepali and Hindu "invaders."³ Jalpaiguri District of West Bengal became the plains district with the highest number of Nepali tea plantation labourers. They began to move into the Duars from at least the latter 1800s after it came under British dominion. However there was a marked decline of about thirty percent in the Nepali population between 1911 and 1921 as they were evidently lured northwards into the more attractive hilly and forested areas of Bhutan.⁴ Nevertheless according to Dash, by the 1940s Nepali ethnics still made up about seven percent of the population.⁵ The 1961 Census of India recorded 109,253 Nepali MT speakers in Jalpaiguri District.

EHM'S DUARS MISSION

After the Scottish EHM extended into Kalimpong division it was only natural that they began to look towards the Duars as well. Dr. Sutherland made some initial efforts to extend work into the Duars from the 1880s, but no definite

progress was made until after Dr. J.A. Graham's arrival as the Young Men's Guild missionary. The Duars were then incorporated as part of the "Guild Mission to British Bhutan." By 1891 a teacher, Naiman, who was later ordained as the first native minister for the EHM in the Duars, was sent to Luksan. A school was started, a few converts were baptised, catechists itinerated, and Graham held occasional services for the tea planters. But it soon became apparent that a full-time missionary was needed for this "lovely stretch of forest belt and tea-estates that extends south of Kalimpong to the borders of Assam," and Graham sent off an appeal to Scotland in 1897.⁶ The following year Rev. Duncan Macmichael established a headquarters at Gorubathan and the Duars became a separate division of the Guild Mission. Over the next eight years this mission was served by four missionaries in succession, until the death of Rev. T.E. Taylor from black-water fever on Christmas day 1906. While the missionaries primarily served as chaplains to the tea-planters of the region, nine parishes were also established, each with a native catechist.⁷

Manuel's account indicates a three-pronged concern of the Duars Mission: for the tea-planters, for the coolies on the tea-estates, and for "the aborigines."⁸ However, the concern for the tea-garden coolies was not directed at the Nepali, and there is only one mention of them in EHM Duars reports. Rather, the work that developed was primarily among the local Mechi and imported plains tribal labourers from Chota Nagpur, many of whom were already Christians when they arrived. Nepali were conspicuous by their absence in the EHM churches of the Duars, and continue to be so today. By the 1970s the DDC-CNI terai and Duars churches were divided into three sections: Eastern Duars pastorates of mainly Boro speakers, Western Duars pastorates of mainly tea estate labourers, largely Oroan and Munda, and Jalpaiguri Pastorate. Although the congregations of these pastorates consist of several thousand adivasi, there is only a handful of Nepali among them.

Why did the EHM and later DDC-CNI never develop work among the

Nepali in the Duars, in spite of the fact that they sent Nepali-Lepcha evangelists and teachers into both Sikkim and Bhutan? The Duars were also right next door. In discussion with current church leaders from Darjeeling and Kalimpong the following reasons were given. Evangelism from Darjeeling-Kalimpong was traditionally hill area to hill area, and both the Nepali and Lepcha are hill people who find it difficult to live in the terai. It was much more natural for them to go to Sikkim and Bhutan than into the Duars. In addition, the Duars were known to be full of endemic malaria and black water fever, as the deaths of their earliest missionaries on the border of Bhutan proved. The Duars have also been traditionally considered a dacoit area, full of dense forest, and even today people are afraid to venture through large portions of the area.⁹ Finally, they noted that the EHM missionaries did not pass on a mission vision to the local churches, nor challenge them to pray, sacrificially give, and go to difficult places; rather, several of the missionaries were such dynamic personalities that they tended to do everything themselves. In addition to these observations is the fact that although many thousands of Nepali moved into the Duars, their numbers were relatively insignificant compared to the adivasi population. They were not in a majority as in the hills, and it was the natural missionary inclination to focus on the majority, among whom it was also much easier for them to find native workers because of the number who were Christians when they arrived.

MODERN DAY NEPALI CHURCHES IN THE DUARS

Evangelistic outreach specifically targeting Nepali in the Duars of West Bengal (in present-day Jalpaiguri District) and Assam (in present-day Kokrajhar, Barpeti, Nalbari and Darrang Districts) only began during the last two decades. There were no predominantly Nepali churches in this area before the 1970s. The only churches with at least partial Nepali membership were connected with the earlier Free Church of Finland Mission work based in Baksaduar.¹⁰ Most of the new evangelistic thrust originated from younger evangelical or Pentecostal

denominations in Kalimpong, with one or two foci: as a safe-haven and base for outreach within Bhutan, and/or with a focus on the Nepali resident in the Duars (often including the adivasi as well).

An example of the former is Himalayan Crusade which has been involved in the Duars since 1970, but has a primary focus on Bhutan. It claims to be the "mother church" of many of the groups in Bhutan today. Following the initial despatch of two Bhutia evangelists to Jaigaon, an evangelistic team was sent several times from Kalimpong to assist them during their first year on the border.¹¹ Soon a small fellowship among new converts was started in Pema Paul's rented room. The establishing of a church on the border was considered essential as a base for mission work inside Bhutan. But the membership naturally included a large percentage of Nepali resident in and around Jaigaon on the India side. From the beginning meetings were conducted in the Nepali language. The original house fellowship grew into a church of 56 families with 235 members by 1992, called Himalayan Crusade Pentecostal Church.¹² Its primary evangelistic impact on the Bhutan side was among Southern Bhutanese, Nepali ethnics. Being literally just a short walk across the border from Phuntsoling, it has served as a local church for Christians from there as well. It has also served as a gathering place for Christians from Bhutan together with those in the Duars for teaching, celebration and mutual encouragement at the Church's annual conference. The conference provides a place and opportunity for such large group fellowship which is not possible within Bhutan.

Two churches led by South Indians in Jaigaon demonstrate the development of a dual focus in ministry -- both on Bhutan and on the local population of Jalpaiguri District. P.M. Matthew and A.T. Thomas first met in Kathmandu as young missionaries. While there it was recommended to them by another colleague, K.B. Abraham, that they go to the Bhutan border to start a new work because there were no known local Christians there at the time.¹³ With their eyes set on Bhutan they arrived in Jaigaon in 1968 and opened the

New Life Bookshop right on the border where they were able to make lots of personal contacts. They sent packets of Gospel tracts to various Post Offices within Bhutan in the hope that someone would read them. They also started a small house church. But during its first few years of existence it functioned basically as a Christian fellowship for South Indians who were working in the area, and meetings were conducted in their own language. By 1972 the two men had separated, and eventually formed two different churches in Jaigaon: Emmanuel Pentecostal Church led by Pastors A.T. Thomas and K.T. Oomen, now a member of the Fellowship of Pentecostal Churches of God in India; and Bethel Church led by Pastor P.M. Matthew, supported by India Evangelical Mission (IEM). Emmanuel Pentecostal Church's first baptism was of thirty ethnic Nepali in 1976, most of them Southern Bhutanese, while Bethel Church's first converts were Nepali labourers in a nearby tea plantation in 1979. This was indicative of the direction the two churches took.

Due to the difficulties of mission work inside Bhutan and among native Bhutanese, Emmanuel Pentecostal Church pragmatically widened its view to include the evangelistically neglected local Nepali and adivasi in the tea-gardens of the Duars. A.T. Thomas reported that his church was supporting twenty Nepali evangelists in the Duars and three inside Bhutan, and that they had branch house fellowships in thirty locations in the Duars and another ten inside Bhutan, mostly among ethnic Nepali.¹⁴ This mixture of focus as well as ethnic makeup is characteristic of many of the churches which sprang up in the Duars during the 1970s and 1980s.

The largest church which serves as an illustration of a focus specifically on the Nepali population of the Duars is Bethel Church in Dalsingpara, started in 1985 by Pastor Joseph Chhetri from Nepal.¹⁵ Before Chhetri's arrival, two or three Christian families of Nepali tea-garden labourers had been praying for a Nepali pastor to come to their area. The first convert among them went to Jaigaon after discovering he had cancer, and a relative took him to a mission

hospital across the border in Bhutan where he received treatment and became a professing Christian. He then started to attend his relative's church in Jaigaon, Bethel Church under Pastor P.M. Matthews, and to bring other friends from the tea-estate. But they found it hard to understand the Hindi language services, and the church's distance from Dalsingpara presented a hardship. Thus IEM, which supported P.M. Matthews, was on the lookout for someone to develop a Nepali side to this work which had been begun by Matthews, and Joseph Chhetri was invited. He came with a vision for church planting, and by the end of 1991 a church building was erected in Dalsingpara for a congregation of almost 250 baptised Nepali Christians.¹⁶ In addition, another six branch fellowships which meet in the tea gardens and villages round about were started on weekdays, and local leaders for each of them were being trained. In the case of Bethel Church, Dalsingpara, the focus has been directly on the resident Nepali of Jalpaiguri district, and they have proved to be a very responsive group.

One of those with the most widespread influence among Nepali in the Bengal Duars, and active there since the 1970s, has been Rev. B.K. Biswas and his Masih Mandali churches, although they operate among a mixture of ethnic peoples and the overall majority of the churches' membership today are adivasi. As of 1992 six churches in Jalpaiguri District were members of his group, three of them led by ethnic Nepali. The further extent of Biswas' influence among Nepali in the District is demonstrated by the fact that at least four Nepali pastors of churches outside his group were baptised by him, although they are now independent or affiliated with other groups.

Similar to Darjeeling and Sikkim, Pentecostal churches and indigenous missions have had the greatest modern-day evangelistic impact in the Duars. In addition to Himalayan Crusade, Emmanuel Pentecostal Church and the Masih Mandali churches above, other Pentecostal groups which have had fairly extensive involvement include: the IEC, an indigenous Indian mission based in Calcutta under the leadership of David Dutt; and David Mangratee of

Darjeeling's WME-supported evangelists and churches, usually called "Himachal Masih Mandali." Noteworthy of each of these groups is that they have mainly provided financial support with a minimum of oversight or structure (although for a short time David Mangratee ran a Nepali Bible school in Darjeeling). The churches and church workers affiliated with them have tended to shift between them with a rapidity that defies categorisation.

In addition to the above, there are churches with a large percentage of Nepali members or workers among Nepali which are supported by the Zoram Baptist Mission of Mizoram, the Nagaland Missionary Movement, Church of Christ, and others which are independent. This denominationalism and support of churches by outside groups is distinctly different from the situation in Bhutan just across the border. Another distinction is that more than half of the churches in Jalpaiguri District have full-time pastors, and at least twelve of them have attended a Bible college and have been ordained. Even so, the only two pastors who are known to have at least a BTh degree are not Nepali or other local people; they come from Nagaland and South India.

Between 1970 and 1980 at least ten new churches emerged in the Bengal Duars, including three in Jaigaon which were formed with a primary focus on Bhutan. By the end of the next decade there were at least thirty-three churches in the Bengal Duars with predominantly Nepali congregations or Nepali leaders, including eight in Jaigaon.¹⁷ This indicates a very swift Christian growth rate over the past decade. However, almost half of them are concentrated in or around Jaigaon in the nearby tea gardens. Another six predominantly Nepali congregations also emerged in the Assam Duars during this decade. In this case they have all been formed either in connection with Christians from Bhutan who regularly cross the border in order to attend worship, or with the flow of Southern Bhutanese refugees into Assam fleeing political oppression.

The location of most of the Nepali churches in the Duars along the border of Bhutan, several of them with a central focus on the evangelism of semi-closed

Bhutan, presents a picture similar to that of the missions that dotted the Nepal border a few decades earlier. However, except for the limited earlier work of the Free Church of Finland Mission at Baksaduar and the EHM from Todey, Christian ministry in the Duars has not been "pre"-evangelism within the "closed" country (as it was along the border of Nepal). Rather, it has been "co"-evangelism taking place at the same time within Bhutan, albeit discreetly. Also, the concern has not been only for those within the "closed" country, but extended to the planting of viable churches among Nepali and others in the Duars as a mission field in its own right. Another distinction is that while primarily foreign mission stations lined the Nepal border, it has been a later generation of developing national churches and missions which has taken up the challenge in the Duars.

Historically the churches located at various entry points to Bhutan in the Duars provided a place of refuge, fellowship and baptism for the first Christians in Bhutan, as at Todey and Baksaduar. Some opted to settle there. Others crossed the border back and forth. Since the late 1980s history has been repeating itself as "non-nationals" have been forced out of Bhutan, and the new generation of local Nepali churches have provided a place of fellowship and refuge for the Christians among them in places like Jaigaon, Deosri and Darranga. Even in the present day the predominantly Nepali churches in the Duars and the Christians across the border in Bhutan seem to be inextricably interwoven.

ENDNOTES - CHAPTER 6

- (1) A.K. Singh, 1988, 324.
- (2) Manuel, 1914, 97, quoting Dr. Graham.
- (3) Manuel, 1914, 97.
- (4) A.C. Sinha, 1990, 223.
- (5) Dash, 1947, 64.
- (6) Hewatt, 1960, 163.
- (7) Graham, 1905, 117-8.
- (8) Manuel, 1914, 82-3.
- (9) The author encountered this fear when she tried to find someone to accompany her from Siliguri to Baksaduar, and was strongly recommended not to make the journey.
- (10) See above, p.232ff for a description of this work and their later expansion along the Bhutan border in Jalpaiguri District of West Bengal.
- (11) See above, p.236 and p.271 n.123 for details concerning these two Bhutia evangelists, Pema Paul Bhutia and Simon Dukpa.
- (12) "Survey of churches along the Bhutan border," handwritten, 1992, in Bhutan file, NCHP Collection.
- (13) P.M. Matthew and A.T. Thomas, interview with the author, Jaigaon, Nov. 1991.
- (14) A.T. Thomas and K.T. Oomen, interview with the author, Jaigaon, Nov. 1991; confirmed by 1992 "Survey of churches along the Bhutan border." These evangelists are locally trained at an annual three-month Nepali-language course which has been held at Emmanuel Pentecostal Church since 1982.
- (15) Joseph Chhetri was born in Ilam, went to Kurseong as a young boy where he was educated, then returned to Nepal and was baptised by Pastor David Mukhia at Pokhara in 1971. He then worked as a staff member of Nepal Campus Crusade for Christ (NCCC) in Butwal following a nine-month course in Bangalore. In agreement with the Director of NCCC, he was sent by IEM to Dalsingpara in 1985 specifically to work among Nepali in the tea-garden area.
- (16) Joseph Chhetri, interview with author, Dalsingpara, Nov. 1991.
- (17) These 33 churches in the Bengal Duars have been classified as "Nepali" on the basis of either having a Nepali ethnic leader/pastor, or a clear majority of the congregation being Nepali ethnics.

SECTION 2

NORTH EAST INDIA AND BURMA

CHAPTER 7 - INTRODUCTION TO NEPALI IN NORTH EAST INDIA

At the same time that the British were developing Darjeeling and enticing Nepali immigration as tea garden labourers, another even vaster field was being explored further to the east -- the region that became known as North East India.* British involvement arose out of invasions from Burma. There were long-standing power plays between the Ahom kingdom in the Brahmaputra Valley and the Burmese. When in 1816, and again 1819, the Burmese invaded and conquered Assam and Manipur, the British were already established in Goalpara and the Surma Valley. The combination of requests from the Ahoms to help rid their territory of the invaders, with Burmese raids into British territory, finally drew the British into the politics of the area. The Burmese were driven out in 1826, and the British gradually brought the whole region under their administration as the North East Frontier of Bengal, beginning with the Brahmaputra Valley. As the British opened up this new area with its vast potential, Nepali both went in the vanguard, as Gurkhas, and were drawn along in the wake of eastward movement.

S.D. Jha asserts that as the British took control, the East India Co. took note of long-established trade relations between Nepal and this region.¹ But there were even more ancient connections between the Hindu kingdoms of the plains and valleys of the region in the Brahmaputra Valley, Manipur and Tripura

* For the duration of the chapter, North East India refers to the seven states of Assam, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram, Tripura and Arunachal Pradesh.



Figure - 7. North East India

with Hindu Nepal, demonstrating a degree of inter-relationship and communication. A.C. Sinha, referring to Dungal's work, "The History of the Nepalese Communities in North East India," notes the marriage of the daughter of the Malla king of Kantipur (Nepal), Ratna Kanti Devi, to the Cooch king (current day Jalpaiguri District, W. Bengal), Vishwa Singh, in the early 16th century, and all those who accompanied her back to his kingdom:

It is claimed that the Coch king brought from Nepal to his kingdom a number of Brahmin priests, woodwork artists, stone and metal sculptors and the pagoda-style temples.²

Similarly, he claims that two Kamrup kings (current day Assam) were married in Nepal, and they also brought Brahman priests, Chhetri warriors, farmers, herdsmen and artisans from Nepal back to their kingdom and granted them rent-free land.³

There is also some evidence of connections between the royal families of Nepal with both Manipur and Tripura. A Raja of Manipur is rumored to have taken a queen from Nepal. According to a Government of India publication dealing mostly with the succession of rulers of Cooch Behar and Tripura, several grandsons of Maharaja Jung Bahadur Rana (Nepal) came to hold responsible positions in the Tripura court: both Nepal Jung Bah. Rana and Jhapat Jung Bah. Rana are listed as ADCs, and Bodhjung Bah. Rana was on the personal staff of the Raja of Tripura as his private secretary, as well as being a member of the Legislative Council.⁴ This may have been a result of their having to flee Nepal during one of the many court intrigues of the Rana era, but indicates a definite connection between the two royal courts, and the degree of respect in which the Nepal (Kathmandu Valley) ruling families were held in other Hindu kingdoms to the east. Thus from ancient times Hinduism and intermarriage of royal families bound Nepal together with the plains and valley cultures of NE India, and small communities of Nepali came to reside in those areas.

However, it was the Nepali who came into the area alongside the British

from the early 1800s who were the spearhead for a growing stream of Nepali immigration that has continued until today. First were the Gurkhas, the "pioneers of the British penetration into the eastern Himalayas," who A.C. Sinha asserts had their first direct contact with the region during the Sylhet operation in 1817, in which 1,000 Hindustanis and Gurkhas took part.⁵ Gurkhas were recruited into the Sylhet Local Battalion (predecessor of the 44th Gurkha Light Infantry which became the 8th Gurkha Rifles) which was raised in 1824 at the beginning of the Anglo-Burmese War. Then a Recruitment Depot was opened in Sylhet in 1865 which drew in more Gurkhas, as there was an effort to replace "the useless Bengalis."⁶ In the meantime, Campbell had been authorised in Darjeeling to recruit Gurkhas from there, and with the formation of the Frontier Police Force in 1867 for the Eastern Frontier, more and more Gurkhas were enlisted, mostly from Eastern Nepal.

In 1874, Assam was made a separate Province from Bengal, and the capital was moved from Guahati to Shillong. The Frontier Forces (reorganized in the 1880s as Military Police, then later renamed the Assam Rifles) were distributed in posts along the foot of the hills to provide protection from raids by the hill tribals, and engaged in expeditions to pacify them. In Shakespeare's history of the Assam Rifles, he paid the Gurkhas a high tribute for their role in the North East: "The Gurkhas were the backbone of the Frontier Police... The valour and courage of the Gurkhas are written in letters of gold in the military history of India."⁷

These forces had become necessary, not only to protect the plains from raids by the "savage" hill tribes, but also to protect the increasing British interests in Assam, both administratively and economically. An indigenous tea plant was discovered in Assam, and by the 1830s the Assam Tea Company was formed and gardens were started in the Brahmaputra Valley. By 1842 the entire Assam Valley up to Sadiya, as well as Cachar and part of the Khasi Hills, was brought under British administration, and the Assam Duars were annexed, "subsequently

to become one of the main tea-growing areas of India and to acquire great economic importance."⁸ Tinker characterized the Assam tea planters' demand for labour as "insatiable."⁹ Coal mining was also started in Assam by the 1840s, and rail and road construction was underway to further exploit the new-found potential riches. But all of this demanded labour, something which Assam had in short supply, as the Burmese invasions and raids from the hills had virtually depopulated large areas. Downs estimates that "fully half the population had died during the period of Burmese occupation."¹⁰ Depopulation also meant there were vast tracts of waste land not under cultivation, and in May of 1856 the Government of Bengal granted approval for waste lands to be given to anyone without distinction, and that the grantees would be free to cultivate whatever they chose.¹¹ Davis described the situation as follows:

Being one of the few places left in the subcontinent where extensive tracts of rich agricultural land awaited the plow, this province became the destination of a swarm of indigenous farmers seeking new land to cultivate.¹²

As the way into Assam was opened up, with the railway reaching Dibrugarh by 1883, then extended to Guahati by 1910, it was a one-way flow of traffic. Nepali helped to open the way, acting as the military spearhead, and providing the muscle for British development and economic activities. Large numbers of Nepali were also recruited from Darjeeling to accompany the military expeditions into the hills. For the Lushai Expedition of 1871-72 alone, 5,555 transport coolies were recruited from Darjeeling and the UP;¹³ and Sen's review of annual reports by the Darjeeling Deputy Commissioner between 1886 and 1904 reveals over 4,300 Nepali recruited as coolies for military transport, as muleteers, and for construction alongside Gurkha battalions.¹⁴ Many then stayed to take advantage of the availability of land, or further jobs. For Gurkha soldiers it was even easier, as settlements grew up around their postings, and they were encouraged to bring their families. They were usually the first Nepali to

settle in various areas of Assam, especially the hill districts which they helped to pacify. Pensioners were given land on special settlement sites throughout NE India, usually in strategic locations, either around district centers and where there were major British settlements, or in sensitive areas. A.C. Sinha says there are at least thirty-eight such sites for Gurkhas of the Assam Rifles alone, and he lists twenty-six of them in the hill states.¹⁵

They were followed by graziers and cultivators, sawyers to cut the forests, and a continuing stream of labourers, especially in heavy work as construction, road building and mining. Proportionally, Nepali were a minor part of the Assam tea gardens labour force, just the opposite of the situation in Darjeeling.¹⁶ There were objections by the Darjeeling Planters' Association to recruitment for Assam from Darjeeling, as it "interfered unfairly with the supply of labour to the local tea gardens."¹⁷ This is borne out by four cases reported in 1891 alone of recruitment from Darjeeling for Assam gardens under false pretences: one group of nine alleged that they were recruited as sepoy, another as a gunkeeper, another group of fifteen for an expedition to Manipur, and a group of twenty-six for mining in the Assam Railway collieries.¹⁸ These cases show the Nepali's obvious preference for those types of employment over being tea garden coolies in Assam. Nevertheless they still went, as attested by a 1901 Census report showing 5,018 Nepali on Assam tea gardens, born in Nepal and the upper divisions of Bengal "from which coolies are not supposed to come."¹⁹

Nepali went first into the Brahmaputra Valley, and gradually on into the hills on the heels of the British. They brought many skills to the NE, including terracing and milk production, and quickly built a reputation for being hard-working and fearless, willing to do jobs and make journeys which the local people would not do. Even today Nepali are popularly known as the "hill-tractors" of Assam: the ones who have gone in and cut the forest, cleared and terraced the land and brought it under the plow, and often moved on as they were crowded out, going even deeper into the forest and starting again. They also built a

reputation as herdsmen and introduced the drinking of milk, not traditional among the local people, thus carving themselves a special niche in society as the dairy producers of the NE. These roles are attested in Assam Gazetteers, Census of India, British and Indian officials' reports throughout the years, such as the 1911 Census report by J. McSwiney:

The majority of those born outside India come from the State of Nepal, which supplies most of the fighting strength of the province and a great part of its cattle graziers... The Brahmaputra Valley contains very large numbers of Nepalis who are mostly engaged in breeding buffaloes and making ghee; they also do a certain amount of rather nomadic cultivation and work as sawyers in the Government forests; they are spreading into the hill districts, where they follow the same callings. ...the majority are semi-permanent settlers verging towards permanency.²⁰

The Nepali of NE India have come from a mixture of Nepali castes and tribes, some direct from Nepal, others through recruitment depots in Darjeeling and to a lesser extent through Calcutta, and some moving on from earlier settlement in Darjeeling, Sikkim, or Bhutan, in a continuing eastward flow. Gurkhas in the Gurkha Rifles Regiments of the Indian Army were almost exclusively western Nepal tribals direct from Nepal, the preferred Gurung and Magar, typified by one of their officers as "brave as a lion in the field, light-hearted as a schoolboy and true as steel."²¹ According to Shakespear, the enlistment of Magar and Gurung from Nepal was prohibited by the Indian Government in any other forces except the Gurkha Regiments of the Indian Army.²² But the Gurkhas recruited for the Frontier Forces and Military Police of Assam and Burma were almost exclusively eastern Nepal tribals, the Rai and Limbu, partly because of the above prohibition. Thus a high proportion of tribals of East Nepal origin are found among the ex-Gurkha settlements scattered around North East India. Nepali who have migrated in as labourers also tend to be of the "matwali" tribals groups, while the large communities of herdsmen-cum-dairy producers and cultivators are largely Brahman and Chhetri.

As British economic interests expanded in Assam, they began nominally

to administer the surrounding tribal hill districts, but still kept them largely cut off from the plains below by the drawing of an Inner Line beyond which outsiders were not to pass. (Of course this did not apply to the Gurkha settlements.) The Government of India Act of 1935 formalised this by designating the tribal areas as "excluded" and "partially excluded" areas. The former included the North East Frontier Agency (present day Arunachal Pradesh), the Naga Hills (Nagaland), the Lushai Hills (Mizoram), and the North Cachar Hills; while the Garo Hills and Khasi and Jaintia Hills (joined together later as Meghalaya), and Mikir Hills were partially excluded. Following Indian Independence all of these gradually broke away from Assam and became separate states of India, except the North Cachar and Mikir Hills.²³ Ethnically, culturally and religiously different from the Assamese, the hill tribals chafed under their dominance and sought the right to govern their own affairs. Together with Assam, Manipur and Tripura, they form the "seven sister" states of North East India today.

The people of these states have formed the receptor communities for immigrant Nepali. Assam, Manipur and Tripura had majority Hindu populations and dominant plains cultures: the Assamese and Cachar of Assam, the Meitei of Manipur, and the Bengali Hindu of Tripura (who have long been the majority population, and through whom the indigenous Tripuri were gradually Hinduised), surrounded by a variety of tribal peoples. Even under British colonial rule, these three states were handled differently from the hill districts, and were not included in the "excluded areas" of Assam. Manipur and Tripura were left largely to manage their own affairs. Risking generalities, predominantly high caste Hindu Nepali have settled among the Hindu of the valleys and plains of these three states, and in hill state and district centres. They are mostly graziers and cultivators, often living in segregated communities, and among the semi-professional, white collar and professional ranks of well-educated Nepali. On the other hand, although the Nepali "matwali" castes are found in all parts of NE India, they are predominant in the hill states among the local Mongoloid tribals,

wherever there are ex-Gurkha settlements, and where there are continuing labour demands on the frontiers. Within both of these groups there has been a fair degree of assimilation into the local communities. Adoption of local surnames, acquiring facility in the local language, and inter-marriage, especially with the hill tribals, are fairly common.

Such integration with local communities has also been important in the conversion to Christianity of many Nepali in NE India. It was the basically animistic tribals of the former hill districts who responded most readily to the introduction of Christianity. In McSwiney's report on the 1911 Census of India he noted that the growth rate of Christians was 85 percent in Assam, with the fastest growth in the hills "amongst animistic tribes who have not yet felt the attraction of Hinduism."²⁴ This was indirectly a result of British policy. Once the tribes were pacified, British administration was minimal, taking the path of "least possible interference" in the hills, while missionary work was actively encouraged. Missionaries were given a fairly free hand in educating and civilising the natives; they were the change agents in what were considered "barbarous" societies. In a remarkably short time in the annals of Christian history in India, Nagaland and Mizoram became Christian states, with Meghalaya close behind. By the 1960s a simple majority of the population of both Nagaland and Mizoram were Christians. Then by 1981, 80 and 84 percent respectively were recorded as Christians, while Meghalaya has 53 percent.

On the other hand, the missionaries were largely excluded from Tripura and the valley of Manipur -- a result of the opposition of their respective local Hindu rulers, British respect for those rulers, and British desire not to offend local sensitivities. Only one missionary couple, with the New Zealand Baptist Missionary Society, was ever allowed to work in Tripura, and they entered the capital of Agartala in 1938 with special permission of the Raja.²⁵ Nearly 90 percent of the response to Christianity has been among the tribals, while the Hindu majority in the plains have hardly been touched; only 1.21 percent of the

population are Christians according to the 1981 Census of India. The situation in Manipur is remarkably similar. Very few foreign missionaries were ever allowed into Manipur, and they were refused permission to work in the capital of Imphal.²⁶ It was Mizo evangelists sent up from Aizawl by the North East India General Mission (NEIGM) who introduced Christianity among the tribals in the south. While Manipur has a much higher percentage of Christians than Tripura, 29.68 percent in the 1981 Census of India, the great majority are among the Kuki, Naga and Mizo tribals in the hills surrounding the Meitei Hindus on the central Manipur plain.

The case of the Brahmaputra Valley was different, being directly under British administration due to its strategic and economic importance. Although it was also predominantly Hindu, the British did not interfere with the aspiration of Christian missions to establish new works, and in some cases officials even gave the initial invitation. However, the main response was among the plains tribals and tea plantation workers, while it was almost negligible from the Hindu Assamese, leading to the missionaries' shift of interest to the much more responsive hill tribal areas. The 1971 Census of India returns showed only 4.46 percent of the total population of Assam as Christians, and this figure is slightly high since it included Mizoram.

The other plains area of present-day Assam, Cachar District, was Hinduised by Bengali immigrants from the adjoining Sylhet plains in the 1700s.²⁷ Although missionaries also had free access here with the encouragement of British officials, response to Christianity was very limited. According to the Presbyterian Church in Assam's own figures, Christians only comprised 1.13 percent of the total population of Cachar District in the 1960s, compared to 19.89 percent Christians among the North Cachar Hill tribals.²⁸ Similarly to the Brahmaputra Valley and the Manipur and Tripura plains, the ratio of Christians to population is much lower than in the surrounding hill tribal populations, demonstrating a much higher resistance to conversion to Christianity among the

Hindu plainsmen.

In this context, Christianity also began to spread among the Nepali community in NE India. Both immigrant Nepali, and Christian missionaries, had followed in the footsteps of the British into this new territory. The Nepali came as: 1) Gurkha recruits in the military forces, to protect British interests and pacify the local tribals; 2) labourers in the British programme of development of local economic potential; and 3) cultivators and tamers of the sparsely populated land. The missionaries were welcomed and even invited by the British overlords, especially among the hill tribal "savages," to do the work of civilising, usually through providing education and teaching western Christian moral values. During the heady years of British domination, the Nepali were largely ignored by the missionaries. But they continued to be welcomed by the British to fuel their economic interests and develop the land, having a reputation for hard work and trustworthiness. The missionaries were taken up with the challenges inherent in reaching and teaching the indigenous people, among whom they found a ready response, especially in the hill areas. The Nepali were an immigrant, minority community; the Gurkha Regiments were understood to be "hands off" due to an agreement between the British and Nepal governments; and the wider Nepali community had a different language, culture and religion than those with whom the missionaries hands were already full. There was only one exception: the relatively short-lived and confined efforts of the small Nepali Evangelistic Band and their WEC successors from the 1940s.

Thus the task of presenting Christ to the Nepali in NE India fell to the newly Christianised tribal communities left behind by the missionaries following Indian Independence, and the missionaries' forced exit from Assam which followed in its wake. These local Christian tribals, especially the Naga, Mizo, and Kuki, gradually themselves developed a mission vision to reach the non-locals in their midst with the Gospel of Christ. Having evangelised their own people, they began to reach out more and more to the non-Naga, non-Mizo, etc. from the

1960s and 1970s. In most of the hill areas the Nepali were the largest non-indigenous ethnic group, and well accepted and integrated into the tribal receptor communities. Therefore it was a natural progression for the indigenous tribal Christians next to seek to convert the Nepali in their midst. In addition, it was about this same time, the 1960s and 1970s, that a few Nepali evangelists from the historic Nepali churches in Darjeeling began to come to NE India.

Within the above "seven sister" states of NE India, there are now growing Nepali Christian churches in all but two of them: Tripura, which has the lowest Nepali population of any of the states, and Arunachal Pradesh, in which Christianity has only begun to expand during the last twenty years. The rest of the chapter examines each of the states, except Tripura, individually.

ENDNOTES - CHAPTER 7

- (1) S.D. Jha, **THE WEALTH OF ARUNACHAL PRADESH** (Delhi: Mittal Publ., 1985), 398. Jha asserts that there were relations among traders from "Leh, Sadiya, Lahul, Spiti, Garhwal, Kumaon, Nepal, Assam and the NEF Region," right across the Western, Central and Eastern Himalayas, and this encouraged the East India Company to think of developing their own trade in those markets.
- (2) A.C. Sinha, 1990, 222, citing B.D. Dungal, "The History of the Nepalese Communities in North East India," Sakhari Samikscha (Nepali monthly magazine), Shillong, Dec. 1983-June 1984. The author has been unable to obtain a copy of Dungal's work in order to evaluate it herself.
- (3) A.C. Sinha, 1990, 222.
- (4) **BRIEF ACCOUNTS OF THE INDIAN STATES IN BENGAL**, Govt. of India, Calcutta, 1928, 10-11.
- (5) A.C. Sinha, 1990, 227.
- (6) L.W. Shakespear, **HISTORY OF THE ASSAM RIFLES** (London: Macmillan & Co., 1929), 66 and 242.
- (7) Shakespear, 1929, 142.
- (8) A.K. Singh, 1988, 324.
- (9) Tinker, 1974, 50.
- (10) F. Downs, **THE MIGHTY WORKS OF GOD** (Guahati: CLC, 1971), 3.
- (11) H.K. Barpurjari, **ASSAM IN THE DAYS OF THE COMPANY, 1826-1858** (Guahati: Spectrum Publ., 2nd ed. 1980), 240.
- (12) Davis, 1951, 117-8.
- (13) B.C. Chakravorty, **BRITISH RELATIONS WITH HILL TRIBES OF ASSAM SINCE 1858** (Calcutta: Firma KLM Private Ltd., 1981), 59.
- (14) Sen, 1989, 61-62.
- (15) A.C. Sinha, 1990, 228.
- (16) **ANNUAL REPORT ON LABOUR IMMIGRATION INTO ASSAM**, Shillong, reports for the years 1878-1923 reviewed.
- (17) **ANNUAL REPORT ON LABOUR IMMIGRATION INTO ASSAM**, Report for 1911-12, 2.
- (18) **ANNUAL REPORT ON LABOUR IMMIGRATION INTO ASSAM**, Report for 1891, 11.

- (19) B.C. Allen, ASSAM, in 1901 CENSUS OF INDIA, Vol. IV (1902, reprint Delhi: Manas Publ., 1984), 34.
- (20) J. McSwiney, ASSAM, in 1911 CENSUS OF INDIA, Vol. III, Part I Report, 28.
- (21) A.S. Reid, CHIN-LUSHAI LAND (1893; Aizawl: Research Institute, 1976), 72. This policy was changed when the 7th and 10th Gurkha Rifles were deliberately recruited from 1889 through Darjeeling from the Kirata tribes, the Rai and Limbu of East Nepal. Of the ten Gurkha Regiments, only these two were made up of East Nepal tribals, one primarily of Chhetri, and the other seven were drawn from Magar and Gurung of Western Nepal.
- (22) Shakespear, 1929, 242.
- (23) The United Mikir and N. Cachar Hills District of Assam is also now campaigning for separation, under the name of Karbi Anglong.
- (24) J. McSwiney, ASSAM, in 1911 CENSUS OF INDIA, Vol. III, Part I Report, 37.
- (25) Rajani Kaipeng, "A Brief Introduction of Christianity in Tripura, and the Tripura Baptist Christian Union (TBCU)," TS, July 1991, in NCHP Collection.
- (26) T. Luikham, A SHORT HISTORY OF THE MANIPUR BAPTIST CHRISTIAN: GOLDEN JUBILEE (Ukhrul, Manipur: N.E. Christian Asso., 1948), 12 and 21.
- (27) John Hughes Morris, THE STORY OF OUR FOREIGN MISSION: Presbyterian Church of Wales (Liverpool: Hugh Evans & Sons Ltd., 1930; Aizawl, Mizoram: Synod Publication Board, 1990), 61.
- (28) "Annex A to the Questionnaire issued by the Home Board of the Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Assam," 31 Dec. 1962, Calvinistic Methodist Archives, National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth, Wales, UK.

CHAPTER 8 - NEPALI CHRISTIANS IN NORTH EAST INDIA:

A STATE BY STATE ANALYSIS

NEPALI CHURCHES TAKE ROOT IN ASSAM

MISSION BACKGROUND

Within a few years of the Treaty of Yandabo being signed between the British and Burmese, the Baptist Missionary Society had been invited into Guahati by the Commissioner of Assam. James Rae, the first Serampore graduate to serve in NE India, arrived in Guahati in 1829, started a school and evangelised widely, but resigned less than ten years later in discouragement.¹ The Assam field was then offered to the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society (ABFMS), by which time they were already working in Upper Assam at Sadiya. They had first come to Assam from Burma in 1835, following C.A. Bruce's suggestion to the Commissioner to invite members of the Shan Mission to open schools for the tribal people in Sadiya.² However, their attention soon shifted to the plains people of Assam, and the first permanent center of the American Baptists' "Assam Mission" was established at Sibsagar in 1841, then at Nowgong and Guahati.³ The ABFMS remained the preeminent mission throughout the plains of Assam and into the hills of Nagaland and Manipur for over 100 years, while the Welsh Presbyterians firmly established themselves in the Khasi-Jaintia Hills.

The American Baptist area in Assam was divided into North Bank (of the Brahmaputra) and South Bank fields, and in 1946 the North Bank fields were handed over to two other missions: the Baptist General Conference (BGC) in America, and the Australian Baptists. Today the South Bank Baptist churches, called the Assam Baptist Convention (ABC), together with the Nagaland and

Manipur Baptist Conventions, are united under the Council of Baptist Churches in North East India (CBCNEI), all former American Baptist fields. The North Bank Baptist churches, with their more recent BGC heritage, come under the North Bank Baptist Christian Association (NBBCA). By the 1960s, when the missionaries had to quit NE India, Downs informs us that among Protestant churches the CBCNEI's membership was second only to that of the Church of South India, and included 60 percent of all Protestant Christians in NE India.⁴ On the other hand, the vast majority of these were among the plains and hill tribals, not among the indigenous Hinduised Assamese of the Brahmaputra Valley. By the 1890s conversions among the Assamese were negligible, and from the early 1900s the American Baptists were concentrating their efforts increasingly on the more responsive tribals.⁵ Even today the Associations within the Assam Baptist Convention of the CBCNEI are quite weak in comparison to their sister Nagaland Baptist Convention.

While the Baptists held sway in the Brahmaputra Valley, the Welsh Presbyterians (then known as Welsh Calvinistic Methodists) began work in the Khasi Hills, spreading south to the Plains of Sylhet, east to Cachar and the Lushai Hills (Mizoram), and back to the North Cachar Hills. They first entered the Khasi Hills in 1841, almost as early as the American Baptists reached the Assam Valley. They extended into the Plains of Sylhet within a decade, and on to Silchar, the center of Cachar District, where a school was opened in 1856. With the active support of the local Government Agent, Captain Stewart, "arrangements were made for the opening of a large number of schools in the villages around."⁶ Cachar became a route into the Lushai Hills in the 1890s, and by 1923 the Presbyterian churches of these areas were divided into three Assemblies (later called Synods), namely the Khasi-Jaintia Assembly, the Lushai Assembly, and the Plains Assembly (including Sylhet and Cachar). Due to the different needs and ethnic make-up of the North Cachar Hills, a fourth Assembly was formed in 1930, the Cachar Hill Tribes (CHT) Assembly. This area was

inhabited by a number of hill tribes speaking different languages, mostly living in the interior regions. It was only added to the Welsh Presbyterian field in 1905, and the first resident missionary went to Haflong, the local Government headquarters, in 1912.⁷ However, in 1890 some Khasi Presbyterian Christians had settled in North Cachar and started a church.⁸ There were never more than two missionaries in North Cachar at a time, and no institutional work aside from village schools was established. But tribal evangelists from surrounding areas, especially Manipur and Mizoram, later flocked in, and the growth of Christianity was much faster than in the plains below. Presbyterian work was also extended into the Mikir Hills in the 1890s, entirely by tribal evangelists sent out from the Jaintia and then the CHT Presbyteries. The Mikir Hill Presbytery was finally established in 1960, with no Welsh missionaries having served there. In the meantime, partition dealt the Plains Assembly a near death blow, as Sylhet was severed from Assam and became a part of East Pakistan. By the 1960s "the Presbyterian Church in the Cachar Plains faced the prospect of imminent collapse," and responsibility for its administration and evangelisation was handed over to the Mizo Synod.⁹ The strongest Presbyterian churches in present-day Assam had emerged in the N. Cachar Hills, with a young Presbytery in the Mikir Hills, and the churches of the Cachar plains under the Mizos; all a part of the larger Presbyterian Church in NE India.

THE FIRST EVANGELISM AMONG NEPALI: NEB

Although these pioneer missions were well established and reaching into all parts of present day Assam by the early 1900s, there is no evidence of either of them having any ministry directed at the thousands of Nepali both resident and continuing to stream in.¹⁰ The Baptists were dominant in this area, but the closest they came was in giving permission for the Nepal Evangelistic Band to explore possibilities for Nepali ministry in their midst. This the NEB did from 1940 with the opening of its "Assam field." Undoubtedly there were unrecorded

cases of individual conversions of Nepali before this time, but it was the NEB which was responsible for the first sustained pioneer evangelism among Nepali in the Assam Valley.

The two NEB pioneers, Pat O'Hanlon and Hilda Steele, and their WEC successors, Beth Allinger and Elaine Crane, are the only foreign missionaries who have engaged in ministry focused on the Nepali in Assam. In 1947 Allinger wrote in a letter home that "so far no one has taken on the Nepalese, whose numbers in Assam have been steadily growing... Elaine and I are the only white missionaries to the Nepalese in all of Assam, as far as we know..."¹¹ The Nepal Border Fellowship Field Survey conducted in 1948 confirmed this.¹² But the NEB's active work in the Assam Valley only lasted about 15 years, and the results were negligible in terms of conversions, although they did annual evangelistic tours up and down the Brahmaputra, on both North and South banks, with a team of Nepali evangelists.

The NEB originally went into Assam out of its own vision to reach Nepali wherever they could be found, not by invitation of the resident missions. The possibilities for ministry had been "discovered" by O'Hanlon and Steele, the founders of the NEB, when they went on holiday to Shillong in 1939. At the time, they already were manning a station in Nautanwa, on the border of Nepal, and had no other colleagues to send out. In September they were joined by their first Nepali colleagues, Daniel and Martha Pradhan, converts of the Finnish Mission in Ghoom, Darjeeling District.¹³ The Pradhans both spoke fluent English and were well educated, so it was hoped they would be able to fill positions of responsibility.¹⁴ They were despatched the following summer to establish a second NEB base in Shillong, while O'Hanlon and Steele remained in Nautanwa. The next summer the whole team of Nepali evangelists at that time -- David Mukhia, Dhan Bah. "Philip" Gurung, Daud Masih, and Prem Masih -- trekked from Nautanwa to Shillong for outreach alongside the Pradhans, while O'Hanlon and Steele had an overdue holiday in Kashmir. The following summer they went

again, this time accompanied by their British mentors. In Steele's history of the NEB she later reflected, "Slowly we began to see God's Plan for us... we realized that it was not only the Nepalese in Shillong and the surrounding district for whom we were responsible, but those domiciled throughout Assam."¹⁵ These initial evangelistic tours were largely exploratory -- to Guahati, then a few weeks eastward, then westwards -- searching out Nepali communities, living in tents, sharing the Gospel and distributing Nepali Christian literature, and giving basic medical attention.

Unfortunately, Martha Pradhan died of typhoid in 1942, and her husband Daniel left the NEB soon after. Another couple from the Darjeeling area, John and Elisabeth Sodemba, were put in charge of the Assam field, a welcome addition due to John's Bible training and previous evangelistic experience, and his ability to speak fluent Assamese to addition to his mother-tongue, Nepali.¹⁶ At the same time, Pastor David Mukhia, the NEB's senior Nepali member, and his family were transferred to Shillong, due to his wife's illness with TB, where he gave local pastoral care and started a small Nepali school. The Sodembas continued in charge of the Assam Valley outreach for about five years, until personal difficulties caused them to withdraw. In the meantime, regular evangelistic tours continued, with members of the NEB coming from Nautanwa on the border of Nepal every summer.

The earliest years of NEB ministry in Assam were during the War years. After prayer, O'Hanlon and Steele had made a conscious decision to stay, even in the face of the Japanese advance into Burma and threat to Assam. The War itself was indirectly a contributing factor to the NEB's gaining access to the Assam Nepali field, as it severely reduced missionary staff all over India. One of the missionaries wrote in a letter home:

(The American Baptists) have not been able to take on the Nepali work because of their reduced missionary staff (before the war they had 70 missionaries now they have only 28) so they have invited us to work in their territory among the Nepalese, who have been increasing

rapidly in numbers during the past 10 years until there are now many thousands of them living in the Assam Valley.¹⁷

Following the war, in 1946 O'Hanlon and Steele and their growing Band of Nepali evangelists were joined by two young WEC missionaries, Beth Allinger and Elaine Crane, who became the first resident missionaries for the Shillong base. Allinger and Crane were requested to make a survey of the Assam Valley during the winter months "to ascertain where there were sizable Nepali populations - number of houses, etc., and if workers could be placed there."¹⁸ Allinger recalls, "...we were told there were many Nepalis. No one had any accurate figures or statistics."¹⁹ Such survey work could only be done in the dry season, and tours were shifted from the summer to winter months from 1947 onwards. In the next few years, regular tours were taken along both the North and South Banks of the Brahmaputra. They went to Guahati, west to Boko, by then under the Australian Baptists, north to Darrang, and east to N. Lakhimpur and Sadiya, covering hundreds of miles. In Guahati it was reported: "People asked us to stay for several days and teach them -- a request that isn't common from our fanatical Hindu Nepalese."²⁰ Concerning Sadiya, at the furthest eastern edge of the administered territories, "We found many large settlements of our Nepalese and went from village to village with the Gospel story...a huge job!"²¹ In Darrang District, "...a foothold was gained amongst the Nepalese of that area."²² In N. Lakhimpur "where Nepali villages are numerous," mostly Brahman and Chhetri, people reportedly begged them not to leave.²³

As the tours went on, the team of Nepali evangelists also expanded as local converts joined the NEB. First were Samuel and Lakmatti Subba, following their baptism in 1942. Samuel was appointed as an evangelist in 1943, going on to do more evangelistic tours than any other Band members. After the Sodembas left, Philip Gurung was sent from Nautanwa to join the Mukhias and Subbas in Assam in 1949. The same year Noah, another local convert, was accepted as an evangelist. He and his wife, together with Philip, moved to Guahati in 1950 to

work among the Nepali there.

Good relations had been established with the American Baptists, and with the BGC missionaries when they took over the North Bank from 1946. Official NEB and NBF documents and correspondence attest to this relationship, although neither of these Baptist missions were in a position to take up specific Nepali ministry themselves. According to Warren Johnson, one of the first BGC missionaries appointed to Assam:

Our Mission was concerned for resident Nepalis in our area. However, our outreach was limited. I think this was for several reasons: The Nepali people did not intermingle with the tribals to whom we were assigned, none of our missionaries spoke the Nepali language, also none of our national workers were capable in this language, and we had good working relations with national and foreign personnel working with the Nepali Fellowship (NEB) to whom we looked for this outreach.²⁴

Further, when the NBF was revived in 1948, Allinger and Crane were the only missionaries from NE India who joined, although information was also sent to the Welsh Presbyterian Mission. In 1952 the names of both Rev. Wilbur Sorley of the BGC, based in N. Lakhimpur, and Rev. John Selander of the American Baptist Mission, based in Sadiya, were included on the list of NBF members, but they do not appear again, and it is not clear if they actually attended any NBF meetings. Nevertheless NBF reports as late as 1952 and 1954 speak of further invitations from Baptists in the Assam Valley, and "wide open doors for evangelistic enterprise."²⁵

Involvement of the Baptist missions took the form of employment of NEB Nepali workers and converts, the welcoming of preaching tours by both NEB missionaries and Nepali evangelists, and cooperation in follow-up and baptisms. Allinger recalls an informal agreement they had:

We became good friends with the North Bank Baptists who were all keen evangelicals, and urged us to come to their areas anytime we could, to evangelize the Nepalis in their areas. The Hagstroms in N. Lakhimpur, the Warren Johnsons in Bishwanath Ghat, the Sorleys in Udalguri, and their people at the Hospital in Tezpur.

...we had an informal agreement with them that if anyone did want to come out as a Christian and be baptized they would be glad to do the necessary... Through the N. Bank friends we met the Selanders of Sadiya and he immediately urged us to come to Sadiya with a team, because of many Nepalis in the area.²⁶

The following examples are illustrative of this growing cooperation. In 1943 the American Baptists in Guahati indicated their willingness to cooperate, but the NEB found the local Nepali community largely unresponsive to direct evangelism.²⁷ That year a Nepali worker was posted to the American Baptists' Hospital in Guahati as NEB's representative.²⁸ A few years later the American Baptists sent a Nepali-speaking Brahman woman up to Shillong, asking the NEB to instruct her for baptism. She was accompanied by her daughter and son-in-law, and they were all later baptised.²⁹ About the same time, the BGC in N. Lakhimpur asked the NEB to supply a Nepali worker for their area, one of the most heavily Nepali populated areas of Assam, but NEB did not have anyone to send. So they suggested a new NEB convert, "Noah," who was taken on by the Hagstroms as a cook, and used his spare time to go out and preach.³⁰ Allinger recalls how the BGC wanted to take Noah on as a Nepali evangelist, but the NEB leaders, O'Hanlon and Steele, "felt he was too immature as a believer," and they recalled him.³¹ The NBF Conference Reports of both 1950 and 1952 indicate that the BGC were hoping to soon place one of their own missionaries in Nepali work, but it never materialised.³²

The NEB had already recognised the need to establish more permanent work in the Valley, to have Nepali evangelists resident there rather than the occasional forays from Shillong in the hills above. This need is reiterated in NEB and NBF documents and correspondence into the mid-1950s. One short-lived attempt was made in 1950 by Philip Gurung and Noah's and Hannah's family, following their addition to the Assam team the year before. They reportedly moved to Guahati because of the need for a permanent witness among the resident Nepali there, with the intention of returning to Shillong occasionally for

fellowship and encouragement.³³ But it was discovered a few months later that Hannah had TB, and they returned once more to Shillong. Again and again in letters home, the need was expressed in pleas for prayer:

Please join us in praying that the Lord will raise up a Nepali young man who would be fitted to go down to those areas and live among the people for awhile there; at present we know of no suitable one and yet the need is too appalling.³⁴

However, their desire was never fulfilled. Allinger notes that "lack of time and personnel hindered us from taking greater advantage."³⁵ Perhaps more consequential were the effects of quick-moving political events which overtook them.

At the beginning of the decade Nepal had opened its doors, and the NEB recalled all its workers to Nautanwa to prepare to go into this formerly "closed land" for which they had prayed so long. The Assam field was entrusted to their WEC colleagues, Allinger and Crane, who felt led to stay in this neglected area. Only one of the Nepali evangelists and his wife stayed with them, Samuel and Lakmatti Subba, and Samuel began to function as pastor and fiery evangelist.³⁶ Even as NEB regrouped to go into Nepal, the effects of Indian Independence caused the lone WEC ladies to retrench in Shillong and curtail their evangelistic tours of Assam. There was rising political unrest in Assam, due to both the influx of thousands of refugees pouring in from E. Pakistan, and the Assamisation policy of the government, contributing to separatist movements by the hill peoples. Weiner pointed out that the tribal populations' sentiment for political separation from Assam was strengthened "in direct proportion to the growth of Assamese nationalism."³⁷ In this atmosphere, village headmen were ordered to report any strangers in their villages, and the WEC missionaries found their movements in the Assam Valley being closely watched by plain-clothes CID; even their Nepali evangelists were questioned.³⁸ In a letter home from Shillong in 1956, Allinger explained their decision to stop any further open-air preaching,

and also mentioned an alarming increase in anti-missionary propaganda.³⁹ From this time there are no further mentions of evangelistic tours in Assam in either of the WEC missionaries' correspondence or reports. The China-India conflict in 1962 essentially sealed them into the confines of Shillong, with "Restricted Area Permits" being required thereafter for any movement in Assam. Their work was now concentrated in and around Shillong itself -- a trend that extended into the 1980s even by the strong Nepali church which grew up in Shillong from the 1940s, the Nepali Christian Fellowship (NCF).

THE GAP YEARS: 1960s and 1970s

This situation prevailed through the 1960s and 1970s -- occasional evangelistic forays into Assam, particularly from Shillong and also from Darjeeling-Kalimpong, and isolated cases of Nepali conversions, but no churches or fellowships established until the 1980s. From the NEB-WEC side, only Samuel Subba, who stayed with the WEC missionaries in Shillong when the others went into Nepal, continued to make occasional tours into Assam. He was invited by the Australian Baptist Mission in 1957, 1960 and 1961 to speak at their Village Preachers' Conferences among the Boro, and also ministered to local Nepali, baptising a few during those years.⁴⁰ With the WEC missionaries confined to Shillong, and Subba the senior and best known Nepali evangelist in the NE of that period, he also received numerous invitations to the surrounding hill districts and Manipur. But he could not do it all; as Allinger wrote home, "One man just can't hope to answer all the calls that come."⁴¹ Where he was able to reach, there was no consistent follow-up.

From the Darjeeling side there were also occasional evangelistic forays into the Assam area by Nepali Christians, mostly by students from DHBS. There were natural links between the growing Nepali church in Shillong and the Nepali Christian community back in Darjeeling-Kalimpong, with WEC's Himalayan Mission headquarters in Darjeeling, and Samuel Subba having been born in

Kalimpong. In the winter of 1953-4 Subba was joined in touring by John Hannay of Kurseong, a Bible student from the short-lived Nepali Bible School at Gorakhpur.⁴² Then Subit Tshering spent a few weeks touring in Assam with Subba in 1955 before joining the DHBS teaching staff, and later passed on the vision.⁴³ Ten years later, in the winter of 1965-66, when Eriel Pradhan of the EHCC was serving on the Executive Committee of North East India Christian Council, he arranged for two of the DHBS graduates to take two trunk loads of Nepali tracts and booklets to Darrang District for evangelistic outreach.⁴⁴ This was the same place to which NEB evangelist Philip Gurung had led a team over 15 years previously.⁴⁵ K.M. Rai and Ongdup Sada, both from Kalimpong, took up the challenge. They reportedly did not meet any Nepali Christians in Darrang, only when they went up to Shillong where they had fellowship with Samuel Subba's group, and the Nepali they did meet in Darrang claimed to have never heard about Christ before.⁴⁶ About five years later two more DHBS graduates were sent to Assam to preach, Elder James Sampat Rai and Elder N.B. Isaac Thapa. As recorded in the DDC News, they were prayed over and dedicated for the task at St. Columba's Church, Darjeeling, on 26 September 1971, and sent out to Assam to preach.⁴⁷ N.B. Isaac Thapa had been going on evangelistic tours of several months at a time to NE India from the late 1960s, mostly to Manipur, but this was the only time he was officially commissioned by the church back in Darjeeling. On the whole, the Nepali "mother church" in Darjeeling took surprisingly little interest or initiative in extending Nepali ministry among the hundreds of thousands of Nepali throughout the NE, although various individuals ventured forth out of their own concern. Some also went looking for job opportunities.

Perhaps the most important contribution of the Darjeeling Nepali church to Assam Nepali ministry was in the persons of two men, Rev. Benjamin Rai and Rt. Rev. D.D. Pradhan, both ordained under the Eastern Himalayan Church Council of the UCNI. From 1973, when Rai took up a new post as director of the

UBS Translations Center for North East India, based at Shillong, he began to receive reports of and requests from scattered Nepali Christians in Assam to come and preach and administer baptism. D.D. Pradhan was elected the first Bishop of the Assam Diocese of the CNI, based in Shillong.

None of the early evangelistic efforts among Nepali in Assam, either by the NEB from Shillong, or by Nepali evangelists from the Darjeeling churches, touched the Nepali of Cachar or the North Cachar Hills -- a largely Presbyterian domain. There is no evidence in NEB, NBF or WEC records of any invitations to them from this area. There are also no references to Nepali (except in Shillong) in official documents in the Presbyterian Church of Wales Archives,⁴⁸ nor are there any references to Nepali in either the Cachar Hill Tribes Synod Souvenir: Diamond Jubilee (1929-1989), or the Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in North East India Golden Jubilee Souvenir: 1926-1976. Even though the latter contains accounts of the different Synods' mission work, and of outreach to different ethnic groups, the Nepali are not even mentioned, showing a total disregard for them at least into the late 1970s. However, a few isolated cases of individual conversions from the 1960s have been uncovered. The earliest evidence found is a letter in the Presbyterian Church of Wales Archives written by a Nepali Christian in 1966 from Haflong in the North Cachar Hills, in which he requested Nepali hymn books and Bibles.⁴⁹ The testimony of I.B. Thakuri, now an evangelist with the Mizo Synod, notes Nepali converts in connection with Kuki Presbyterians in North Cachar. Thakuri was converted about 1970 through the help of two Nepali in North Cachar originally from Okhaldhunga, Nepal, S. Rai and P. Magar. They migrated to North Cachar and became Christians through marriage to local Kuki Christian women.⁵⁰ Thakuri was then baptised by a local Kuki Presbyterian pastor.⁵¹ Further attesting to the presence of some Nepali Christians in the 1970s, Benjamin Rai received a request to visit a small group of Nepali who met together informally for fellowship, but were members of a local church. Bishop Pradhan also recalls reports of Nepali Christians in both

Karbi Anglong and North Cachar, mixed in with local tribal churches. However, before the 1980s the incidence of Nepali conversions in the Presbyterian mission areas of Assam, as already seen among the Baptists, was quite unusual.

From the beginning of Nepali evangelism in Assam in 1940 by the NEB, for almost 40 years there were few results in terms of conversions, baptisms or churches being established.⁵² The Baptist missionaries of the Brahmaputra Valley opened their fields to the NEB, while the Presbyterians in Cachar and North Cachar were so caught up among the diverse indigenous ethnic groups as to be unaware of the Nepali in their midst. The ones doing the evangelism themselves were like circular migrants to the area, coming and going from Nautanwa, Shillong and Darjeeling, but with no one, Nepali evangelist or missionary, in permanent residence among the wide-spread Nepali immigrant community. It was a time of "seed-planting," hundreds of Nepali Gospels and Christian booklets were distributed and people confronted with the Christian message for the first time, but the "harvest" was entrusted to another generation. Foreign missionaries were ordered out by the Indian government in the late 1960s, and the task of further evangelism was left in the hands of the national churches they left behind. (See "Nepali Churches in Assam: Post-Mission Era" p.393ff for the next stage of Nepali evangelisation.)

NEPALI CHURCHES TAKE ROOT IN MEGHALAYA

NEPALI ENTER MEGHALAYA

Made up of the Garo Hills in the west, and the Khasi and Jaintia Hills in the center and east, Meghalaya only became a separate state of India in 1972, with its capital in the former hill-station of Shillong. Before that, it was one of the earliest parts of Assam (then forming part of the Presidency of Bengal) with British involvement, when there was an expedition into Jaintia in 1774. The Khasi and Jaintia Hills were brought under the control of a Political Agent from the 1830s, following raids by the hill tribals into the British-controlled Sylhet

plains below. They established their first headquarters for the Khasi Hills in Cherrapunji, more easily accessible from Sylhet. One of the earliest objectives of the British was to build a road right through the Khasi-Jaintia Hills from north to south, connecting Guahati in the Assam Valley with Shillong, and on down to Sylhet.⁵³ The headquarters was moved from Cherrapunji to Shillong in 1866, which became the capital of the Province of Assam when it was formed in 1874. Thus it became the hub of British administration and of the military forces of Assam, and headquarters for the Indian Tea Association, leading to its development as the most cosmopolitan city in NE India. It also became the center for Gurkha forces used throughout NE India, headquarters both for the 8th Gurkha Rifles and for the Assam Rifles.

Therefore it is not surprising that the first recorded Nepali settlers in modern day Meghalaya were Gurkhas and their families. A.C. Sinha notes a claim that Subedar Jaichand Thakur settled in Shillong in 1824 after his retirement from the Sylhet Local Battalion (later called the 8th Gurkha Rifles), and he is credited with building the local Radha Krishna temple.⁵⁴ It is unlikely that this date is correct, as the British only extended administration to Assam from that year, the same year the Sylhet Local Battalion was raised. Nevertheless, there are numerous other indications of a settled Nepali community in Shillong by at least the 1880s, who put a high value on education, and the preservation of their religion and culture. An early example of this is the Gorkha Association, established in 1886 "to cater to the need of social activities" for Gurkhas and their families who settled around Shillong after retirement, especially in the suburb of Mawprem.⁵⁵ In addition to taking advantage of local educational opportunities, Nepali-medium schools were also opened for their children. Mani Singh Gurung became the first Nepali graduate from Shillong, passing his BA from Calcutta University in 1915.⁵⁶ Then Retd. Honorary Captain Bhawansing Rai founded the Gorkha High School, Upper Shillong, in 1946.⁵⁷ Prior to that, Nepali students attended the Shillong High School and

Normal School run by the Welsh Presbyterian Mission. There are now five Nepali high schools in Shillong, and at least ten or twelve Nepali college and university level teachers in Meghalaya.⁵⁸ Many of the resident Nepali families, especially in Shillong, are well educated with positions of respect in the community, including a number in government service or with their own businesses. They are also quite politically conscious, and have representation in various legislative and political bodies, including M.L. Joshi, a former State Assembly member.

Once the link between Nepal and Shillong had been made by the Gurkha families, Nepali continued to find their way into the surrounding hills. Besides Shillong, Gurkhas had served in Jowai in the Jaintia Hills to the east, Cherrapunji to the south, and at Tura, the headquarters of the Garo Hills to the west, during the mid-late 1800s -- inroads for smaller Nepali settlements as well as migrant labourers. There were only 1,722 people recorded with Nepali as their mother tongue in the Khasi-Jaintia Hills in the 1901 Census of India, some of them graziers in addition to the Gurkhas, as attested by the Assam District Gazetteer: "Buffaloes are kept in the neighbourhood of Shillong by Nepali herdsmen."⁵⁹ These graziers were encouraged by the local Siems (Chiefs) who levied a grazing tax on them as immigrants, to their considerable profit.⁶⁰ The original trickle of Nepali immigration gradually turned into a fast-moving stream. They came not only as graziers and cultivators, but also as labourers, especially in cutting lumber, mining and portering. Traditionally the local hill people were unwilling to do such heavy labour, or face the dangers involved, for which the Nepali have won a grudging respect and have used as doors of opportunity.

By the time of the 1961 Census of India, 29,469 Nepali-speakers were recorded in the Khasi-Jaintia Hills, the second largest non-indigenous group, plus 2,819 in the Garo Hills. This made it the largest Nepali-speaking population of all the hill areas of NE India, which it still is today, with by far the highest concentration in the East Khasi Hills in and around Shillong. By this time it was

getting harder for non-tribals like the Nepali to get land. A Transfer of Land Act was passed in 1953 concerning the Khasi and Jaintia Hills,⁶¹ then reaffirmed again in the 1971 Transfer of Land Act, basically forbidding the transfer of land to non-locals.⁶² Trade and business licences for non-tribals were also not being renewed. Restrictions were made even tighter after Meghalaya's maturity into statehood, when a residence permit bill was passed in 1974.⁶³

In the wake of the influx of Bengali from Bangladesh in the 1960s and 1970s, an anti-foreigner movement developed. K.S. Singh notes that there was a demand to shift Central Government offices and the army establishment out of Shillong, because of their being run by "outsiders."⁶⁴ He notes further that the local tribals in Meghalaya even opposed major industrial projects because of the fear it would encourage an inflow of outside labourers.⁶⁵ On the same grounds local tribals opposed the extension of the railroad into Meghalaya from Assam, and development of coal mining, even though it offered economic growth for the state. Various Khasi interviewed by the author freely admitted that their own people were not willing to do such work, yet they resented the influx of Nepali labour to do it. Beth Allinger, a missionary resident in Shillong, observed in 1970 that even though the Nepali were politically classed as "outsiders," not as "tribals," and thus were ineligible for government benefits under the new state government, many would remain because of the Army and other All-India Government services, and the settled agriculturalists.⁶⁶ Her prediction was true, and more, as Nepali continued to come in, though mostly as labourers with little hope of permanent settlement in recent decades.

The official number of Nepali-speakers in Meghalaya more than doubled between 1961-1981, to 61,259 in the 1981 Census. This is probably still well below the actual number for two important reasons. Firstly, because the Khasi and Jaintia are both matriarchal societies, the children or descendants of mixed marriages involving Nepali men would not be recorded as Nepali, nor of course is Nepali their mother-tongue. As part of the assimilation process, it is not uncom-

mon for Nepali men to marry Khasi women, speak fluent Khasi, and even change their surnames to a Khasi title. Secondly, due to the anti-foreigner agitations, which have displaced thousands of Nepali from Meghalaya in the 1980s, there is a large incidence of mis-reporting or deliberately falsifying place of origin. As of 1992, estimates by reliable sources placed the figure at 100,000-150,000 Nepali ethnics in Meghalaya. Since the intensified anti-foreigner agitations of the 1980s, the border of Meghalaya has been sealed to Nepali from Nepal. They can no longer legally pass without proper documents and have no legal rights when they do arrive. Even so, thousands continue to do so every year, often through the manipulations of local contractors or payment of bribes, largely to provide labour for lumbering and mining which local tribals are not willing to do, yet profit hugely from the sweat of Nepali labour.

CHRISTIAN MISSIONS IN MEGHALAYA

It was in the Khasi Hills, not only where the oldest Nepali settlements in NE India are found, but also where missions have the longest history in NE India, that the Nepali of NE India first began to respond to Christianity. The Serampore Mission's first convert, Krishna Chandra Pal, after initially going to Silchar in 1813 made his way to Cherrapunji in the Khasi Hills, staying until the 1830s. There were a few local converts, but no church was established.⁶⁷ Then after the Serampore Mission re-united with the Baptist Missionary Society in 1837, they turned over the Khasi Hills field to the Calvinistic Methodist Church of Wales (later known as the Presbyterian Church of Wales). According to Downs, their first missionary arrived at Cherrapunji in 1841, and "it was not long before a church was growing among the Khasis."⁶⁸ The Welsh Presbyterians, along with the American Baptists in the Assam Valley, were the two pioneer missions in NE India. The 1901 Census of India recorded over fifty percent of the Christians in NE India as being converts of the Welsh Mission in the Khasi and Jaintia Hills,⁶⁹ and in 1911 the Presbyterians and Baptists accounted for

four-fifths of all the Christians.⁷⁰

The missionaries were responsible for starting schools in the Khasi Hills from the 1840s. They also reduced the Khasi language to writing using the Roman script, which is still used today. Then in 1891 government and mission schools were amalgamated, with the mission keeping responsibility. In John Morris' history of the mission, he notes that by the 1920s there were 800-900 students, speaking as many as twelve different languages, including "Gurkha."⁷¹ Then when T. Bevan Phillips was Headmaster of the Shillong Government High School in 1935-6, he recalls about 50 Nepali students, mostly sons of men in the Gurkha Regiment and ex-servicemen.⁷² Hospitals were also opened to serve the people in Shillong, Jowai and Durtlang. They of course also served the resident Nepali. Within fifty years, there had been "a harvest of some seven thousand souls," and there were 189 churches and preaching stations.⁷³ In 1895 they were organised into five Presbyteries, then formed into an Assembly (now called Synod) the following year.⁷⁴ Thus the Khasi and Jaintia Presbyterian Synod (KJP) had both extensive institutional and church work.

The Presbyterian mission churches experienced rapid growth into the 1950s, especially among the Khasi, until the movement was arrested by increasing political tensions in the area. The partition of East Pakistan from India which caused thousands of Hindu refugees to flee into Assam, including Shillong and the Khasi Hills, also caused severe local disturbances and a growing resentment of encroaching "outsiders." This was compounded by a move to make Assamese the official state language, following which demands began to be made by the hill tribals for a separate state. When these demands were finally met in 1972, with the formation of Meghalaya, 47 percent of the total population were Christians.⁷⁵ In the meantime, missionaries had been ordered out of Assam and the hill districts, leaving the KJP Synod under local leadership. Tensions continued as there was a new influx of Bengali following the Bangladesh War in 1971, and the movement against non-locals or "foreigners" gained in momentum

on into the 1980s, leading to the forced expulsion of tens of thousands. Although primarily directed at Bengali, the Nepali, particularly in the Khasi Hills where they were the most progressive, were also targeted. During this period, the churches grew little; only 53 percent of the population was recorded as Christian in the 1981 Census of India. Christian and non-Christian alike were caught up in the anti-foreign agitations, the Khasi taking the biggest part. These events evidently not only retarded growth among the indigenous population, but also militated against evangelistic zeal towards outsiders. A separate Evangelism Department of the KJP Synod was only formed in the 1980s. Although the KJP Synod is the oldest and largest Presbyterian Church in NE India, including about 80 percent of the Khasi and Jaintia tribals in its membership,⁷⁶ it also is freely acknowledged by Khasi church leaders that it is the most inward-looking, and backward in terms of mission vision. In addition to political factors, this is also attributed to social factors related to the matriarchal society. Mr. Jywra, former head of the KJP Synod Department of Mission and Evangelism, related to the author that Khasi are generally not willing to leave Meghalaya, no matter what incentives are offered.⁷⁷ No one within the Synod has offered for missionary service, except one lady for the Solomon Islands, and she is married to an Englishman. These attitudes had direct bearing on the development of Nepali ministry, or its lack, within the KJP Synod.

While the Welsh Presbyterians were hard at work in the Khasi and Jaintia Hills, in the 1860s the American Baptists moved into the Garo Hills to the west, stationing missionaries at Tura, the administrative headquarters, as well as Goalpara (now a part of Assam). A Military Police battalion, including 202 authorized Gurkhas, was also stationed there, bringing Nepali into contact with the area probably for the first time. The number of Nepali recorded in the Indian Census in the Garo Hills was quite low until the last two decades: only 1,767 in 1951, and 2,819 in 1961. In K.I. Aier's definitive history of the Garo Baptist Churches, he simply mentions the Nepali as one of the lesser numbered

local non-Garo groups which together total an estimated 20,000.⁷⁸ But he makes no mention of any ministry among Nepali in his section on "Discipling the Non-Garos in the Garo Hills."⁷⁹ However, within the last few years, the Garo Baptists have evidenced a new concern for the Nepali in their midst, and have asked help from a Nepali pastor in Shillong to secure a Nepali evangelist.⁸⁰ This is probably partly due to the growing number of Nepali in the Garo Hills, as evidenced in the 1981 Census of India: 4,620 in the Western Garo Hills, and 1,982 in the Eastern Garo Hills. Nepali there are reportedly better off and better accepted than in the Khasi Hills, and most of them have their own houses. There was little effect on them during the anti-foreign agitations, so fierce in the area surrounding Shillong.⁸¹ This probably attracted some of those forced out of the Khasi Hills, contributing to the steep rise in numbers. By 1980 the number of Nepali-speakers in the Garo Hills bypassed those in Mizoram; yet Mizoram had several Nepali Christian fellowships, and the Garo Hills still has none.

In this context, it is not surprising that although the number of Nepali in Meghalaya is the highest in all the hill states of NE India, and the majority of the local population are Christians, yet the extent of local evangelisation of the Nepali is the least in the Christian hill states. There are even fewer Nepali churches in Meghalaya than in Manipur, which is a predominantly Hindu state. Nevertheless, the earliest beginnings of Nepali evangelism in the NE were from Shillong and the Khasi Hills.

NEPALI MINISTRY DURING THE MISSION ERA

During the mission era, Shillong became the only base for Nepali ministry in NE India. It had two prongs. The first was in conjunction with the Welsh Presbyterian Mission, starting with the conversion of a Gurkha soldier who attended Mawkhar Presbyterian Church from the early 1900s, and culminating in a small Nepali school and branch church being established during the 1930s. However, this did not grow over the next 30 years beyond a strictly local concern.

On the other hand, the NEB, a young faith mission, had extended into the area by 1940 and established a base at Shillong. They not only planted a local independent Nepali church, but also conducted evangelistic tours among Nepali all around the area. When wide-ranging evangelistic tours were curtailed during the 1950s due to political developments in Assam, ministry was concentrated within the environs of Shillong.

Welsh Presbyterian Related Work

"Goman Singh: The First Among Nepalis to Become Christian," an article written in Khasi by Rev. Thomas Pradhan to commemorate the first known Nepali Christian in Shillong, tells the story of this Gurkha who attended Mawkhar Presbyterian Church from about 1907.⁸² This was so unusual at the time that it was written up in the EHM's Mission News in Darjeeling by a woman who met Goman Singh when she was attending services in Shillong "when the revival on the Khasia Hills was at its height."⁸³ Robert Cunville recounted the story in his thesis, noting that "Whenever he [Goman Singh] had the opportunity he would stand at the junction of roads and preach Christ to his fellow Nepalis."⁸⁴ Singh attended the Khasi-speaking Mawkhar Church regularly, was baptised there and learned to read just so that he could study the Bible, before being posted to Burma. He was described by Thomas Pradhan in the following words:

His very appearance testifies his godliness and humility. His only joy was to preach Jesus Christ. He always wore a red coat, with a green half-pant and a round cap. Nepali Bible in one hand and a walking stick in the other, he most diligently attended the services at Mawkhar Church... He attended almost every meeting of the Sub-District, Presbytery and Synod then known as Assembly. In about the year 1910, at the Assembly meeting held at Mawkhar, Goman Singh experienced the revival and he was wholly shaken, touched by the Spirit of God in a wonderful way. His regular attendance to Church services with the walking stick and the Nepali Bible whom he loved very dearly was by itself a witness to the Nepali friends of Jhalupara, Palton Bazar and Upper Mawprem.⁸⁵

After Singh's discharge in Shillong, it is said that he desired to go to Nepal to preach to his fellow countrymen, but was denied his pension because of being a Christian. He died in Shillong about 1920 and was buried according to Christian rites by Mawkhar Church. Singh's conversion and witness in association with this church was the first link between the Welsh Presbyterian mission and local Nepali. The second and enduring link came when Singh met J.B. Lama. He both shared his Christian faith with Lama and recruited him into the Gurkhas. After Lama's own retirement from the Indian Army over twenty years later, he became the founder of a Nepali branch church of Mawkhar Presbyterian Church, called Mawprem Nepali Presbyterian Church.⁸⁶ Until the present day the Lama family are the leading members of this church.

According to J.B. Lama's family, he was born in Darjeeling, went with his family as a child to Haflong, Assam, then ran away to Darjeeling as a young man.⁸⁷ There he met a missionary who took him in. After accompanying him to Lahore, the missionary sent Lama to Shillong where he met Goman Singh Thapa in 1912, and enlisted in Singh's old Regiment, the 1st-8th Gurkha Rifles. Since the oral tradition of how much persecution Singh endured as the lone Christian within his Regiment is often repeated today, it must have made a strong impression on young J.B. Lama. After entering the military, Lama was baptised in a Methodist Church in North West India, evidently near one of his postings. He retired with a pension after 22 years of military service and returned to Shillong.

Upon Lama's return he met Ellen Hughes, the only Welsh Presbyterian missionary in the Khasi Hills with a demonstrated burden for the local Nepali. This was significant enough to be pointed out by Cunville, stating that she was "noted for her work among the Nepalis."⁸⁸ A small Nepali school was started on Hughes' compound in Laitumkhrah in 1935, but whether Hughes or J.B. Lama instigated it is unclear from documents available. Regardless, Lama's wife and children were baptised that year by Rev. H. Williams, and an informal Nepali

fellowship was started in their quarters with his family and two or three others. Two years later they shifted to Mawprem, a heavily Nepali-populated area on the other side of Shillong, where a home for Lama's family and a school building were constructed; the school was used as a preaching point on Sundays. This was the seed from which Mawprem Nepali Presbyterian Church grew up, as a branch of Mawkhar (Khasi) Presbyterian Church. In the meantime Hughes maintained the Nepali school in Laitumkhrah for a few years, having been joined in 1940 by another independent missionary, Margaret Vitants, whose first concern was for Tibetans.⁸⁹ Until her retirement Hughes continued to refer to the work in Mawprem as "our Mawprem work,"⁹⁰ although it is unclear how long Lama was supported by her, and at what point Mawkhar Church integrated Mawprem as a branch work.

Hughes had originally gone to India with the Welsh Presbyterians in 1899 and ran a school for European and Euro-Asian children in Shillong until 1906.⁹¹ But, for unspecified reasons, she reportedly returned to the field after a furlough using her own private means.⁹² She bought a large piece of property in Laitumkhrah, not far from one of the Gurkha cantonments, where an orphanage for Nepali and Tibetan children and the small Nepali school were started.⁹³ Her correspondence during the 1940s, both in the Calvinistic Methodist Archive files and the NCHP files, gives evidence of her personal burden for the Nepali, and her efforts to get her former mission more involved.⁹⁴ But she was largely frustrated in the latter. By the mid-1940s she was getting ready to retire. She had a falling out with her younger colleague, Margaret Vitants, who went to Ghoom, Darjeeling District, to work with the Finnish Mission; the numbers in the school had "dwindled from 30 to 19 and the teacher has stopped since mid June"; and she found no interest on the part of her own former mission to take up her work.⁹⁵ In 1948 she wrote to one of the key figures of the NBF, "Shillong needs especial prayer that the Khasi Church may realize her responsibility for Nepali work."⁹⁶ She even wrote to Rev. W.W. Ferrie in Kurseong and George

Mahabert in Siliguri, the EHM representative on the Assam Christian Council, in hopes that they would take over the Nepali work, but they replied that they were short of workers.⁹⁷ She returned to Wales by 1951.

As a mission, the Welsh Presbyterians had developed no outreach to Nepali, although the ordained local missionaries gave sacramental support to the small Nepali fellowship in Mawprem under J.B. Lama's leadership. Ellen Hughes' work was independent, although her roots were in the mission. Further, when the NBF was officially re-formed following the war years, none of the Welsh Presbyterian missionaries joined.⁹⁸ Rather than seeking to develop a Nepali side to their work, they invited the NEB in 1948 for the first time to come and work in the Mawprem area, where there were an estimated 5-10,000 resident Nepali.⁹⁹ This followed the NBF Conference being held in Shillong in 1947, which perhaps gave the Welsh missionaries a better perception of the NEB work. Although WEC workers who were then with the NEB began to hold some meetings in Mawprem, they stepped back when it became evident that J.B. Lama was feeling threatened by their popularity. The Mawprem work was integrated as a branch of the Mawkhar Presbyterian Church, with Lama designated as a Bible man and his salary paid by Mawkhar Church. According to Rev. Wellburn Manners, Khasi pastor of Mawkhar from 1960, Lama was directly supervised by the Welsh missionaries until they left in 1969, and only from then did the Khasi church itself take over responsibility for the Mawprem branch.¹⁰⁰ When Manners first assumed pastoral responsibilities at Mawkhar he recalls the Mawprem fellowship only included five or six Nepali families, after over 20 years of existence.¹⁰¹ Most of those families were of Nepali men with Khasi Christian wives, among whom Lama did extensive house to house visitation. Lama's own wife was Jaintia, of a Nepali father.¹⁰² Lama's personality dominated this small church internally throughout his life, while the Mawkhar Church virtually ignored its development, simply standing by to administer the sacraments as needed, but taking little initiative to help it grow. During its first 20 years, J.B. Lama was also

given no Bible training, nor was anything done by the Mawkhar "mother church" to raise up trained leadership -- until Thomas Pradhan came forward.

Towards the end of the mission era, the other most significant development for Nepali ministry within the Presbyterian sphere was the ordination of Rev. Thomas Pradhan in 1966, the first Nepali pastor in the KJP Synod. He was converted, then baptised in Mawprem Nepali Church in 1953, after which his family disowned him and he lived in poverty for many years.¹⁰³ His calling and early involvement in ministry are described in the official Khasi "History of Mawkhar Church, 1871-1978" as follows:

Thomas Pradhan is a Nepali belonging to the Nepali branch of the Mawkhar Church. He worked for some time as a teacher of the Nepali School under the Mawkhar Sub-District, in which time he expressed his desire to serve the Lord in the Ministry of the Church. Thus the Church recommended his name to be enrolled at Cherra Theological College. After completing his study at Cherra he was appointed Pro-Pastor in the Nepali Branch of the Church in the years from 1963-1965.¹⁰⁴

Mawprem finally had a Nepali pastor, but only for a short time. When Pradhan was ordained at Mawkhar Church on 11 March 1966, it was "to work especially amongst the non-Khasis,"¹⁰⁵ and he was sent to Lyngngam in the West Khasi Hills.

NEB-WEC

In the meantime, the second prong of Nepali ministry in Shillong was developing in a very different way. While on holiday in 1939, Shillong's potential for Nepali ministry had been noted by Dr. Pat O'Hanlon and Hilda Steel, the two indomitable British women who made up the NEB at the time.¹⁰⁶ As already pointed out, they sent the first Nepali members of the Band, Daniel and Martha Pradhan, to Shillong the following year as vanguards for ministry among Nepali in Assam. That same year O'Hanlon and Steele were joined in Nautanwa by more Nepali colleagues, David and Premi Mukhia from Raxaul Medical Mission,

and Tir Bah. Dewan from a RBMU station. In 1941 and 1942 the whole Band trekked to Shillong for evangelistic tours in Assam, but 1942 marked the beginning of permanent work. That summer Premi Mukhia was diagnosed with typhus, went to hospital and recovered, but then was found to have active TB. By October it was decided that she and David should stay in Shillong to aid her recovery, and would start a small school for Nepali children.¹⁰⁷ Cottages were rented for the Mukhia family and to start a school in Nongthymai, and they stayed for five years as the main-stay of the NEB's new base in Shillong, with occasional trips back to Nautanwa. Early on, David was taken to Calcutta where he was dedicated on the 10th of January 1943 as Nepali pastor, the first both for the NEB and in Shillong.¹⁰⁸ The beginning of the NEB-related Nepali church in Shillong is dated from this time, although it had no real organisation as yet, and basically consisted of "a few odd characters who attended and some of the school children and any others they could persuade to come in from the road."¹⁰⁹

In the meantime, Samuel and Lakmatti Subba, the "first-fruits" of the local NEB ministry, were converted, and baptised with the help of one of the Welsh Presbyterian missionaries. In 1943, Samuel also felt a calling to full-time Christian ministry, and he joined the NEB as an evangelist. After the Mukhias were called back to Nautanwa in 1947, Samuel became the acknowledged Nepali leader of the NEB group in Shillong. One by one there were conversions in Shillong, and in 1944 the NEB held their first short-term Bible school for the new Nepali Christians.¹¹⁰ Two other Nepali couples, both local converts, were added to the Band as evangelists before the end of the NEB's first decade in Shillong -- Buddhi Sagar and Putali Gautam, and Noah and Hannah Tamang. Additionally, with Pastor David's return to Nautanwa, the Subbas were consecrated at Christmastime 1948 as the first elders of the emerging church in Shillong, and Samuel began to perform baptisms.¹¹¹

But most significant to the long-term growth and stability of this group was the arrival of two WEC young women in 1946, Beth Allinger and Elaine Crane.

Although they initially came on a six-month invitation from the NEB ladies, "loaned" by WEC to work alongside the Mukhias while doing language study, they ended up staying over 30 years. Their presence in Shillong gave continuity to the work, whereas there had been constant personnel changes until then, sometimes with no one in residence during the winter months. As described by Allinger:

From 1947 on we were determined that the Sunday services and the weekly Women's meetings, the school, and home outreach meetings had to be taken care of without closures and interruptions, and if there were no NEB workers there to do it, we would carry on ourselves. We experienced steady growth from that time on.¹¹²

But this was also a period of uncertainty. During their first term, working on behalf of the NEB in Shillong, there was no thought that Allinger and Crane would be staying. WEC had other plans for them. There were also political tensions in the aftermath of Indian Independence and the partition of East and West Pakistan. When Steele visited Shillong in October 1947 she was visibly concerned about the possibility of Assam being cut off, and discussed the idea of closing the work there.¹¹³ She even made approaches to Rev. T.M. Thomas of the Welsh Presbyterian Mission, offering the NEB Nepali school to them.¹¹⁴ But when five more Nepali asked for baptism soon after, Steele took this as a "sign" that they were to continue.

When Allinger and Crane went on furlough in May 1951, they were not sure what the future held, and new NEB missionary recruits replaced them in Shillong. On coming to India it had been intended that they would join WEC's team off the western border of Nepal. Then political developments largely influenced their choice upon return. Due to local tensions in Kumaon, UP, WEC closed their base at Bharalu and most of the team relocated in Darjeeling.¹¹⁵ About the same time Nepal opened its borders and the NEB received an invitation to open a hospital in Pokhara, precipitating the recall of all NEB workers to Nautanwa in preparation to enter Nepal. Thus, Allinger and Crane of

WEC were offered the Shillong field by NEB, and Samuel Subba resigned to stay and work together with them as the acting pastor. They arrived back in Shillong on 3 January 1953 to carry the work forward.

Within a decade the NEB-WEC Shillong work, in sharp contrast to the Mawprem Presbyterian Nepali fellowship, had grown considerably and developed an indigenous leadership base. The contrasts were stark, and indicative of why the former grew so much more quickly. Both the NEB and WEC were overtly evangelical, with a much stronger emphasis on evangelism than institutional work. Following a few years of off-and-on evangelism and informal Christian meetings, two expatriate missionaries wholly dedicated to the Nepali and speaking their language took up residence, something the Presbyterians never had. During these formative years, there was also a Nepali pastor in place, with ten years prior ministry experience. As evangelism continued, the missionaries gave intensive Bible teaching to new converts and Nepali workers alike. Again, the Mawprem Nepali Christians had neither an experienced Nepali leader, nor anyone else to give them Bible teaching for over 25 years. Three local converts were raised up as NEB evangelists, of which one, along with his wife, was consecrated as a local elder. There was a growing group of Nepali believers, with at least 25 local converts baptised by 1951, and none of them from mixed marriages. Although the NEB's opening into Nepal seriously depleted their numbers, including all the Nepali evangelists except Subba, he was equipped by then to consolidate and build on the work of the preceding decade with the continued guidance of the WEC missionaries. Whereas at Mawprem, the founding family of J.B. Lama continued to provide leadership, with little other input from their Presbyterian mentors. Even after Thomas Pradhan's return from Theological College in the early 1960s, he was soon sent outside of Shillong, partly due to conflicts with J.B. Lama.

As the former NEB-related church, now known as Nepali Christian Fellowship (NCF), grew into the 1950s and 1960s, further changes were

experienced. Tensions with E. Pakistan were increasing, with a flood of refugees pouring into Assam, including Shillong, and resulting in local disturbances and riots. In the midst of palpable unrest, with village headmen ordered to report any strangers in their villages, evangelistic tours were cut back, and ministry concentrated more on the area around Shillong itself. A positive result was a strengthening of NCF, the local church. Additional stability was given by the acquisition of property for the church in Laitumkhrach -- Ellen Hughes' former compound, including an apartment for Allinger and Crane, a school and little dispensary, a house for the pastor, and a bookshop.¹¹⁶ A church building was also constructed. In the meantime, the political situation contributed to another strategic decision. Following the China-India confrontation in 1962, "Restricted Area Permits" were required for any travel within Assam by outsiders, restricting the WEC ladies to the environs of Shillong. Rather than "smothering" the growing church, Allinger and Crane branched into mixed ethnic student ministry, "to let the Nepalis get on with the church, but still be there to support them."¹¹⁷

These two original Nepali churches in Shillong were on opposite sides of the sprawling town, with little overlap or interrelationship. Intermittent tensions between them perhaps kept them from being the mutual support to each other they could have been. The Welsh Presbyterians were initially somewhat reluctant to have the NEB intruding into what had been their exclusive domain. In an unpublished outline of missionary work among Nepali written by Lindell in about 1944 he stated, "Others can come and work in the area provided they cooperate with the Welch mission and allow all converts to join the Welch Mission Church... (NEB) have not found it possible to cooperate with the Welch Mission."¹¹⁸ Perhaps the NEB's loose association with Ellen Hughes, who had returned to Shillong independently, also aroused some early suspicion. Additionally, the NEB was a small, unknown faith mission with no ordained ministry or denominational links, and a loose administrative structure, naturally suspect in

the eyes of the well- established Presbyterians. The NEB and WEC had a more inherent affinity with the Baptists of the Assam Valley who warmly welcomed them for evangelistic tours. When NEB were eventually invited to minister in Mawprem, J.B. Lama felt threatened. Lama and Subba were both very strong personalities, and over the years little love was lost between them. Although there were occasional cooperative events, distance, theology and personality separated them, and the two works continued to develop along quite distinct lines.

NEPALI CHURCHES DURING THE MODERN ERA

As the era of the major missions drew to a close in NE India in the 1960s, there were still only two Nepali churches in the Khasi-Jaintia Hills, both in Shillong, and a few Nepali converts in the surrounding area. During the next two decades, the NCF continued to grow steadily in numbers and in stability as an independent local church. A firm foundation was laid through consistent Bible teaching and development of further Nepali leadership, but it did not develop any branch churches. Only in 1990 were the first five members of NCF sent out as "missionaries," and plans began to be formulated to develop NCF Shillong as a Bible training center for Nepali throughout NE India. The Nepali branch of Mawkhar Presbyterian Church also continued in the course set during the preceding years. But within the KJP Synod at large, Nepali outreach was extended to at least four other locations through the ministry of Rev. Thomas Pradhan, and later, N.B. Chhetri as a Bibleman. However, in 1991 there was only one remaining distinctive Nepali fellowship connected with any of the KJP churches holding regular meetings, and four other places where there were 25 or more Nepali Christians mixed in with local Khasi Presbyterian churches.

By the 1960s the WEC missionaries who gave guidance to the NCF began to develop a mixed ethnic student ministry among those who came from all over the NE for education. As related by Beth Allinger, this had unexpected far-

reaching side-effects in other parts of NE India: "These students are really the ones who have triggered off the Nepali work in the areas where they are. Some of them became graduates, got into a good job and have paid for evangelists to go among the Nepalis in their areas."¹¹⁹ One of those young men was Solon Karthak from Kalimpong, who went on from Shillong to Dimapur, Nagaland, where he started the first Nepali church in that area. As Allinger and Crane gradually phased out their involvement with NCF, Samuel Subba continued in leadership of the church while also going on occasional evangelistic tours both in the Khasi Hills and beyond. However, no consistent follow-up could be carried out among the scattered converts, or new fellowships formed, although several converts were baptised over the years. Although an excellent evangelist, Subba was quite weak in pastoral work, and the local political situation, combined with their growing student involvement, restricted Allinger and Crane from being involved outside of NCF. Therefore, most significant for the NCF during these years was the development of a new line of younger, more educated Nepali leadership.

When the WEC missionaries left in 1978, they handed over the work to a church committee of five men and women, including K.B. Thapa as full-time administrator to work alongside Subba. Unfortunately, this led to conflict with Subba, who was hurt and threatened by the younger, better educated Thapa's position of leadership. As part of the transition another house was built for Subba's family away from the compound in anticipation of his future retirement, and Thapa moved onto the church compound with his family, as administrator over the NCF property. Divisions of responsibility were agreed by the Elders' Committee, as explained by Allinger:

He (Subba) was to remain as a sort of Senior Pastor and take turns with K.B. and other able brothers at preaching on Sunday... K.B. would take over the administration. For many years Samuel and K.B. were very close, so we hoped that things might go smoothly in the transition.¹²⁰

But Subba found it very difficult to adjust to the changes. He had been acting Pastor for 30 years, while Thapa had been his student as a young boy in the NEB Nepali school. Further, they both had strong personalities, and a rift developed between them which "widened and became personal and bitter," until Subba finally left NCF two years later, to the sorrow of all concerned.¹²¹

Thapa, born in Shillong the son of an ex-Gurkha, had post-graduate education and was in government service for 18 years before he took up the challenge to become a full-time worker with NCF. Like many of his colleagues, when the capital of Assam was shifted to Guahati following Meghalaya's formation as a state, he was also transferred there. While in Guahati, he recalls that the question came to him, "What will you do with your life?"¹²² The answer came in his decision to give up the security of his government position in order to work in the church, and he has become a well-known and respected Bible teacher among Nepali. From the 1980s he has received increasing invitations to preach outside of Meghalaya, and has been several times to Nepal, and also to Kalimpong and Nagaland, while he has not yet been able to answer calls from other places from Mizoram to Delhi. The invitations are an indication of the growing Nepali Christian community of the past decade in far-spread places. In 1990, NCF as a church took its first steps in outreach beyond Shillong by commissioning five young men to work with various Christian organisations, mostly in Nepal.

The question could be asked, "Why has the NCF, one of the oldest, most spiritually mature and fully independent Nepali churches in NE India, been so late in developing outreach ministry beyond its own immediate sphere around Shillong?" As will be seen, much younger churches in other North Eastern states started sending out Nepali evangelists and planting branch churches from a much earlier stage in their development.

While the roots of NCF were in wide-spread evangelism which later

consolidated into a strong local church, the trend among the Presbyterians was the opposite: from one localised Nepali branch church in Mawprem for almost 30 years, to Synod-wide outreach among Nepali and other non-Khasi. Mawprem continued on under Mawkhar Church, with J.B. Lama as the Bibleman relating to the Khasi church leaders who gave supervision from 1969 after the missionaries left. Even today, after more than 50 years of existence, it remains fully dependent upon the Khasi church, administratively and financially, and with no ordained Nepali pastor to administer the sacraments. There is only one ordained Nepali within the whole KJP Synod, Thomas Pradhan, and the majority of his career has been spent as a "touring pastor." Although he was originally sent for theological training with a view to being made the pastor at Mawprem, and served there for short periods off and on, misunderstandings with J.B. Lama prevented this from taking place. During the early years of his ministry he was very active, travelling between different places within the Synod where there were Nepali Christians, giving teaching and baptism, and seeking to organise them into small fellowships for mutual encouragement. In Cunville's 1975 thesis he presented an overview of the work begun by Pradhan in Upper Shillong, Nongpoh, Lyngngam and Jowai, each of which had a local Nepali population of several thousand.¹²³

Rev. Thomas Pradhan was supported wholeheartedly by his wife, Rodha, who was active in women's ministry. She was the first to preach among the Nepali in the Jaintia Hills, from 1969.¹²⁴ She lived in Jowai for a few years during the 1970s as the guiding force to a small Nepali fellowship which she formed in 1972, supported by the Women's Wing of the KJP Synod, while her husband continued to tour the Khasi Hills.¹²⁵ He baptised the first five Nepali converts in Jowai, but since then the local Jaintia Presbyterian pastor has taken responsibility. After Mrs. Pradhan's departure there was no consistent leadership for this fellowship except a local Hindi-speaking woman who opened her home to them on Sunday afternoons. The numbers dwindled, with only a few attending

the Jaintia worship services, due to language difficulties. This is the only Nepali fellowship attached to a Presbyterian church (besides Mawprem) that survived from the 1970s into the 1990s. It got a renewed impetus from Nov. 1991 when the Jaintia Presbytery requested the Synod to place Rev. T. Pradhan in Jowai as a base for work among Nepali in the area, after almost 20 years of relative neglect. From Jowai he became an evangelist among the Nepali coal-belt workers, and by June 1993 forty-eight new Nepali converts had been baptised and a Nepali congregation was meeting weekly in Lad-Rymbai.¹²⁶

One of the other Nepali fellowships organised by Pradhan, at Nongpoh on the road to Guahati, developed into a full-fledged Nepali branch of Nongpoh Presbyterian Church (Khasi), with its own church building and about 150 members in the mid-1980s. It was originally started by a Rai Christian family from Kalimpong who moved into the area. Rai went to Mawprem in Shillong to ask for assistance, and Rev. T. Pradhan began to visit and give baptisms. But in 1987 the church was burnt down and the majority of the congregation widely dispersed in the conflagration of the anti-foreigner agitations.

In Lyngngam there were Nepali fellowship meetings when Pradhan and then N.B. Chhetri were based there, but again, due to lack of on-going leadership the Nepali Christians were later mixed into Khasi Presbyterian churches. Others joined the Roman Catholics when they entered the area in the 1970s. N.B. Chhetri, "a Nepali young man, very fluent in Khasi, educated up to Class IX, and baptised also at Mawaynram" (and married to a Khasi), appeared on the scene from 1969 when he was appointed as the first teacher of a new Nepali school at Lyngngam by the Women's Wing of the KJP Synod.¹²⁷ Rev. T. Pradhan originally went to Lyngngam three years earlier, an area where there were reportedly about 4,000 Nepali graziers, and he baptised nine families.¹²⁸ In 1987, the year after Chhetri was appointed as a Bible-man among the non-Khasi in the KJP Synod, he reported that a plan had been approved to open a Mission Center for the Lyngngam area.¹²⁹ But this was never fulfilled, as the anti-

foreigner agitations broke out the same year, and many of the Nepali in those western Khasi Hills were dispersed.

In Upper Shillong, there were about 50 Nepali Christians meeting together in a school room during the early 1970s when Pradhan visited regularly.¹³⁰ But in 1986 only about 35 were reported, worshiping together in the Khasi services of Nongpyiur Church, with no organised Nepali services, just occasional informal fellowship in homes.¹³¹ Two years later in a report by the KJP Evangelism Department only 18 Nepali members were reported.¹³² This may be partly attributable to the anti-foreigner agitations, but it is also an indication of the clear decline in active involvement of Nepali Christians when left in the care of local Khasi churches with no Nepali leadership or regular meetings in their own language, as also happened in Jowai and Lyngngam.

In addition to the above four places, there were also early Nepali baptised Christians in Umpling and Barapani, near Shillong. The Stanley Wall family, NEB missionary recruits, reported two Nepali Christian families in Umpling when they were there for a few months in 1952-53.¹³³ But no local Nepali-language fellowship ever developed there. In Barapani a Nepali Sunday School, started in conjunction with the local Khasi-speaking Presbyterian Church by a strong Nepali Christian who moved into the area, developed into a Hindi-language branch fellowship in 1980. This again points to the importance of local resident Nepali leadership for Nepali branch ministry to develop.

The 1980s witnessed a new thrust in evangelistic outreach to Nepali within the KJP Synod, primarily a result of N.B. Chhetri's placement in Shillong and of Mr. Shanpru's leadership of a newly created Evangelism Department of the Synod. In 1977 Pradhan had been sent to Aizawl at the request of the Mizo Synod, where he stayed until 1981. In the meantime, N.B. Chhetri was posted to Mawlai Church (Khasi) in Shillong. In 1980 he journeyed with several others to Aizawl to support and assist Pradhan in the first Nepali Evangelistic Crusade held in a Presbyterian Synod area. With that as inspiration, Chhetri worked with

the Mawlai Khasi youth group to hold two Nepali Crusades in Shillong in 1981 and 1982. According to the Mawlai Church youth leaders, the Nepali crusades resulted from their desire to reach their neighbours of other language groups, and since they considered local Nepali "like brothers and sisters" with the Khasi, they chose them as the group to target. Nepali Christians from both Mawprem and NCF were involved, with Rev. Benjamin Rai of the local Bible Translation Center as chairman, and Nepali preachers from Kalimpong and Kathmandu called as special speakers. However, after this initial thrust, there was no other Nepali Crusade until the end of the decade. This next evangelistic thrust was held among a fast-growing coal mining community of Nepali labourers in Lad Rymbai,¹³⁴ known back in Nepal as "the 2nd Arab" for its high wages and opportunity to make quick money. This was again at the instigation of Chhetri, but as in the above Crusades, there was no strategy for follow-up or further contact of those who responded. After being left on their own for almost two years, a Christian Nepali from Kalimpong who had opened a small business in Rymbai organised a fellowship in his home, then a cow-shed was converted into a meeting hall. Eleven men came forward requesting baptism following the Crusade, but the local Presbyterian minister was not willing to help, and some had moved on before their request could be met. Only after Rev. T. Pradhan's appointment to this coal-belt area of the Jaintia Hills many more Nepali were baptised, and since mid-1992 Mrs. Ruth Subba, a mature Nepali Christian worker from Aizawl, Mizoram began to serve the congregation as a local preacher.¹³⁵

The Synod's creation of the separate Evangelism Department and N.B. Chhetri's appointment as Bibleman among the non-tribals were complementary developments, as Chhetri became the main implementer of schemes formulated for reaching the non-Khasi-Jaintia of the Synod. According to Shanpru, the first scheme, covering the whole Synod, had been devised to fit Pradhan upon his return from Mizoram in 1981.¹³⁶ But it proved too big for one man to handle, and Chhetri was brought in. From 1986, Chhetri not only assisted at Mawprem,

but started twice monthly Bible studies at Umpling, on the outskirts of Shillong, and visited Nepali Christians in outlying areas.¹³⁷ Again, a scheme entitled "Evangelism Work among Non-Tribals in Shillong" (rather than the whole Synod) was devised in 1988 with Pradhan in mind, but Chhetri was finally appointed as Nepali evangelist to implement it.¹³⁸

The above indicate promising beginnings of Nepali ministry within the KJP Synod, initially through the efforts of Rev. and Mrs. Thomas Pradhan from the mid-1960s, followed by N.B. Chhetri and the evangelistic thrusts of the 1980s. Yet of the four Nepali branch fellowships instigated in the 1960s by Pradhan, only one has survived into the 1990s. The obvious question arises, "Why?" Some of the answers are also obvious -- a lack of real commitment to the development of Nepali work on the part of the Synod, beyond supporting Pradhan after he came forward, and then Chhetri; lack of Nepali leadership development, both on a local and on a Synod level; lack of a sense of self-identity on the part of the Nepali fellowships, continuing their dependence on and dominance by the KJP churches; and lack of consistent follow-up and teaching subsequent to conversions and baptisms, especially in the Nepali language.

For twenty years from the time Thomas Pradhan was first ordained in 1966 as a Minister "to work especially amongst the non-Khasis," until Chhetri's appointment in 1986, this was solely Pradhan's responsibility throughout the whole Synod. It was a wide area, demanding constant travel, and simply too much for one man to cover. Although he performed many baptisms in various places, and started small Nepali fellowships, it was not possible to give consistent teaching, and there was no local leadership. Together with the conflicts with J.B. Lama at Mawprem, where he was originally intended to become the pastor, this led to discouragement. Then after returning from Aizawl he was shuttled around by the Synod from placement to placement. Later, Chhetri faced many of the same difficulties, being entrusted with wide-ranging responsibilities, but getting little practical support from the Synod.

The above schemes and crusades tend to obscure the fact that until the 1990s the KJP Synod itself has demonstrated very little real commitment to Nepali or other non-tribal outreach. The Evangelism Department schemes were created around the personality of Thomas Pradhan, in order to create a job for him within the Synod, rather than out of a committed objective to reach the non-tribals, while the Nepali crusades were at the instigation of N.B. Chhetri through a particular Khasi local church, rather than being Synod initiatives. Further, although the 1988 scheme called for two evangelists, one for Nepali and one for Bengali, by the end of the year it was decided to entrust the total responsibility to N.B. Chhetri alone.¹³⁹

Underscoring the above is the fact that almost all of the non-tribal ministry has been supported by the Women's Wing of the KJP, partially due to the influence of Mrs. Pradhan who was very active in the Women's Department prior to her death. The women supported the Nepali school started by Thomas Pradhan in Lyngngam in 1966, and Chhetri as its first teacher; they supported Mrs. Pradhan for almost three years as leader of a Nepali fellowship in Jowai during the 1970s; and they provided Chhetri's support as Bibleman to the non-tribals from 1986, and again when the 1988 scheme was implemented. The Synod only directly took on Chhetri's support in late 1988, and stood behind the 1989 Rymbai Nepali Crusade.

There is no evidence of either the Synod or local Khasi churches with Nepali members having made any effort to raise up additional local or Synod-level Nepali Christian leaders through the years. Both J.B. Lama, who died in 1988, and Thomas Pradhan, soon ready to retire, came forward of their own initiative, and the help in theological training given to Pradhan in the 1960s seems more of a token gesture in historical perspective. Although N.B. Chhetri has now been a worker within the KJP Synod for over 20 years, first as a teacher, then a Bibleman-cum-evangelist, he has been given no help by the Synod for

theological training and is currently completing a BTh by correspondence of his own initiative. During the over 50 years since the beginnings of Mawprem Nepali Presbyterian Church (branch), there have only been three Nepali workers within the KJP Synod, and there is no new line of Nepali leadership being prepared, although the Nepali population in Meghalaya remains the second highest in NE India. The need for both lay and ordained Nepali leadership is acute if the Nepali Christian community under the Synod is to grow.

This is partly due to the language issue, and cultural differences between the predominantly Hindu Nepali and local tribals. Not only do the Nepali have a different mother-tongue, but they come from a different socio-religious-cultural background. Many Nepali's facility in the local language is merely functional, while the Nepali language is still used in the homes and among their own communities within the larger Khasi-Jaintia context. They have also retained a certain pride of ethnic identity, seen in their political consciousness and local social organisations. These factors make it difficult for local tribal Christians to teach them effectively, apart from the overall lack of interest and domineering attitude already demonstrated by the KJP churches. This is emphasised by the finding that in none of the above KJP-related cases was any evidence found of local Khasi or Jaintia churches giving positions of leadership within those churches to Nepali members, except in a Nepali-speaking context or where the said Nepali was married to a Khasi or Jaintia woman. There is a feeling among the Nepali KJP-related fellowships and branch churches of being dominated, with all finances and decisions having to be channeled through the local Khasi or Jaintia church, hampering their growth and development as valued members of the overall Christian community.

In contrast, these very factors may be part of the reason why NCF has grown into a strong local Nepali church experiencing consistent growth -- because of its clear sense of identity as a Nepali church, standing on its own in the midst of Khasi society, exemplifying the three-self philosophy held by its early WEC

mentors, and led by Nepali in their own language. Also, there are relatively few mixed ethnic families within the NCF, whereas most of the Nepali Christians married to Khasi women around Shillong are members of Synod churches. This is probably a factor as to why the KJP-related Nepali churches and fellowships are not an attraction to the Hindu Nepali community, as they perceive involvement as a loss of identity, while for those who have inter-married involvement is a part of their new identity and assimilation into the dominant Khasi society.

In addition to the above, there have been few other influences among the Nepali Christians in Meghalaya. The most noteworthy is that of Rev. Benjamin Rai in Shillong with the UBS, recognized throughout the NE as a senior Christian leader, and a kind of "statesman" among the Nepali Christians. He is often called upon for ministry wherever there are Christian Nepali. In Shillong he is also often called on to preach, is looked to for advice by Khasi and Nepali leaders alike, has chaired most of the KJP-related Nepali crusades, and has served as a link for invitations to other Darjeeling-Kalimpong based Nepali Christian leaders. Only in recent years have other denominational influences come into Shillong. El Shaddai-related Christians originally from Kalimpong started their own fellowship in the late 1980s. Since about 1990 three different small branch fellowships connected with the Khasi-led Church of God and Church of Christ have been formed in Shillong. However, they are mostly made up of disaffected former members of either Mawprem Nepali Presbyterian Church or NCF. One of them has a Nepali pastor, although not ordained, Bikram Thapa, who is married to a Khasi woman from the Church of God.

NEPALI CHURCHES TAKE ROOT IN MIZORAM

NEPALI ENTER THE LUSHAI HILLS

The British rush into Assam did not initially take them into the Lushai Hills (Mizoram), although Shakespear notes that there were efforts to enter as

early as 1844.¹⁴⁰ The Lushai made repeated raids down from the hills into the neighbouring plains, and were regarded by some as "the fiercest and most barbarous of all the Hill tribes... notorious for their head-hunting expeditions."¹⁴¹ Nepali were first brought into contact with them when the British used Gurkha regiments to launch retaliatory punitive raids. A particularly brazen attack on a tea garden in Cachar, resulting in the death of one British man and a little girl being carried off as a captive, caused the massive Lushai Expedition of 1871-72 to be launched as a kind of final solution to put down the raids. It involved two columns of soldiers: the Chittagong Column, including both the 2nd and 4th Gurkha Rifles, with 500 men each; and the Cachar Column, including the 22nd, 42nd and 44th Assam Rifles, which was made up of Gurkhas, Punjabi and Sikhs.¹⁴² In addition, a large portion of the 5,555 coolies for the two columns were Nepali, having been recruited from the Darjeeling Hills and UP.¹⁴³

At the conclusion of the Expedition, a series of frontier posts were established, the beginnings of a continuing Gurkha presence in the Lushai Hills. However, by the 1880s the government realised that this system of defence was powerless to check the raids,¹⁴⁴ and there was a reorganisation of the various forces being used on the Assam frontier to form three full-strength battalions of Military Police. One of these, the Lushai Military Police Battalion, was headquartered at Ft. Aizawl, with 844 Gurkhas authorised to serve in it, while a lesser-strength S. Lushai Battalion was established at Ft. Lunglei with 350 authorised Gurkhas.¹⁴⁵ By the end of the century the North and South Lushai Hills were amalgamated into one district under Assam, and the two Lushai Battalions both had their headquarters at Aizawl, the historic Gurkha settlement site of present day Mizoram. Thus Lunglei's importance to Nepali immigration declined in comparison with Aizawl, and the majority of the Nepali population today is found in N. Mizoram. In addition, A.C. Sinha notes that there were seven such settlement sites for Gurkhas in Mizoram.¹⁴⁶ Nepali immigration into

the Lushai Hills was given special note in the Assam District Gazetteer of 1901:

...a few hundred people had moved across the frontier from Manipur and the Chittagong Hill Tracts, but the bulk of immigrants came from Nepal and were serving in or had been connected with Military Police Battalions.¹⁴⁷

In one of the early missionaries' later description, he wrote, "In the Gurkha Veng where soldiers were living there were neat and pretty houses, and usually there was cow's milk available, a precious commodity."¹⁴⁸

However, aside from the settlement of Gurkhas' families and pensioners, Nepali immigration in Mizoram was limited in comparison with other parts of NE India. Not only was distance a limitation, but also the difficulty of reaching the area. The first road to connect it with the outside road was built in conjunction with military needs during World War II, to Silchar. And there was no link between north and south except by bridle path, an eight hour journey from Aizawl to Lunglei, until the 1950s. The Gurkhas who entered with the military were able to bypass the Inner Line Regulation, but it was a deterrent to others. Both the Government of India Act 1935 which declared the Lushai Hills an "excluded area," and the later Transfer of Land Act which forbade the sale of land by local tribals to non-locals or non-tribals, were further deterrents to settlement or the acquisition of land by outsiders.

Even so, the Census of India statistics show a steady growth in the numbers of Nepali speakers: from 1,342 in 1901, to about 3,500 in 1951, to 5,983 in 1981 -- the largest non-indigenous language group in Mizoram. Almost 80 percent of those recorded in the 1981 Census were in Aizawl district, about half in urban and half in rural areas. One informant places the number of domiciled Nepali in Mizoram at about 5,000, with at least 60 percent of them being professionals in service occupations with relatively good education.¹⁴⁹ This reflects Mizoram's excellent educational facilities, and unusually high literacy rate of over 50 percent, second only to Kerala.¹⁵⁰ This also fits with Timsina's

conclusion that Nepali in Mizoram are economically better off than elsewhere in India.¹⁵¹ The other 40 percent are mostly in the villages, as cultivators and dairy producers, and many have intermarried with Mizo women.¹⁵² However, there are thousands of others from both Nepal and Darjeeling who come and go as itinerant labourers for varying periods, often as lumber sawyers, in which occupations they are highly skilled. Many of them would not show up in Census statistics. Also, due to the high incidence of inter-marriage with Mizo women and taking of Mizo names as part of the assimilation process, many of the domiciled Nepali and the second generation from mixed marriages would also not show up in Census statistics. This would at least partially account for the much larger number of Nepali, about 11,000, which were reported in a Mizo Synod evangelist's survey. It has been noted by some that those coming directly from Nepal or Darjeeling do not always mix well with their generally economically advantaged ethnic brothers, and there are discernible language differences.

BEGINNINGS OF CHRISTIAN MISSION WORK IN MIZORAM

Aizawl was the hub of the Lushai Hills, and Christian missions also naturally established their headquarters there. The first missionary to visit was Rev. William Williams of the Welsh Presbyterian Mission in 1891, who returned to the Khasi Hills and persuaded his mission to accept the Lushai Hills as a new field. However, they did not send out their first resident missionary, Rev. D.E. Jones, until 1897. In the meantime, two Baptist missionaries with the Arthington Mission had arrived in 1894, Rev. F.W. Savidge and Rev. J.H. Lorrain. They succeeded in reducing the Mizo language to writing, putting it on its way to becoming the lingua franca of modern day Mizoram, before they departed at the end of 1897. The Welsh Presbyterians were soon entrusted with the responsibility of establishing all educational programs in Mizoram by the Assam government, and they started primary schools in nearby villages.¹⁵³ By the early

1900s, Lorraine and Savidge had returned. Although they worked in cooperation with the Welsh missionaries, a kind of comity agreement in effect divided the country into north and south, with the Presbyterians in the north based at Aizawl, and the Baptists in the south based at Lunglei.

It was in the North, among the Presbyterians, and where the largest number of Nepali had settled through the years, that the first Nepali Christian fellowship was formed -- but not until the 1970s. First came the job of converting the indigenous Mizo tribes. Thanga notes that by the 1920s, barely 20 years after the first Mizo were baptised by Rowland and Jones, all opposition to the Christians had subsided, and by the 1940s virtually every Mizo had heard the name of Christ.¹⁵⁴ This was largely the result of extensive lay evangelism which started as a result of "Revival fire" which broke out in the early 1900s.¹⁵⁵ As described by Morris,

...large numbers were added to the churches, in spite of the severity with which the Christians were persecuted... The zeal of the newly converted Christians knew no bounds. Bands of young men, calling themselves "Kraws Sipai" ("Soldiers of the Cross") travelled together over the Hills, carrying with them their supply of food, preaching the Gospel wherever they went.¹⁵⁶

This evangelistic zeal spurred Mizo Christians to be the first to carry the message of Christianity across geographical boundaries to their tribal brothers in neighboring Tripura and Manipur. In 1918 a sweeping evangelistic campaign was organized when bands of Christians travelled literally from village to village throughout the Lushai Hills, and in some places whole villages were reported to have been converted. Growth was so rapid that in 1924 a N. Mizo Presbyterian Assembly was formed, separate from the Khasi Assembly, and from 1946 all evangelical workers were being paid for by the Mizo Assembly, while other institutional work was gradually transferred from the Welsh Mission to the Synod. Within another 15 years they had formed their own Synod Mission Board, and non-Mizo ethnics began to be targeted for mission. Nepali and other non-

Mizo were now on the agenda, as the vast majority of Mizo had been evangelised. The 1971 Census of India showed 86.09 percent of the population as Christians, a slightly lower figure than the 92.52 percent shown by a special joint census of the three major churches in Mizoram in 1980.¹⁵⁷ It was only natural that their eyes were turning outward; the only people unreached with the Gospel in their midst were the migrant communities, of which the Nepali-speakers were the largest language group. It was reported in the "Mizo Synod Report 1972-74":

The primary evangelistic task among proper Mizo speaking people in the Mizoram Territory is practically over. However, there are still a fairly good number of non-Mizo speaking people, such as Riangs, Chankmas and Nepalis and a few Bengalis... We have had a number of converts from Nepalis, Manipuris and other military and semi-military personnel.¹⁵⁸

NEPALI CHRISTIANS IN MIZORAM

The first Nepali Christian in Mizoram of whom the author has found evidence was Padam Lal Adhikari, a Christian from a Presbyterian background in Kalimpong whose family was connected with Dr. Graham's Homes.¹⁵⁹ While in Calcutta for higher education, he met his wife, Lalsangpui, a Mizo Christian woman. They moved back to Mizoram in the 1940s where they both had distinguished careers in the field of education. Padam Lal became a leading member of the local Nepali community and the leading Nepali figure in the Mizo Synod.¹⁶⁰ Adhikari took a key role in urging the formation of the first Nepali Christian Fellowship (NCF) in Aizawl almost thirty years later when a few local Nepali were converted. His younger brother, John Lal, also migrated to Mizoram and married a Mizo Christian woman, and later became Secretary of the NCF.

The earliest Nepali converts traced by the author were through marriage to Mizo women, who generally refused to marry a man who was not baptised. At least two of the earliest members of the NCF who embraced Christianity in this way were Gopal Gurung, an Assam Rifles pensioner who taught school in Aizawl

after his retirement, and Harka Bah. Bhujel.

The first converts other than by marriage were in the 1970s, through various contacts with local Christians. By this time the Mizo churches were growing in their missions consciousness, and had begun to evangelise to other language groups in their midst. In Lalpianga's search of the Mizo Synod Mission Committee and Board records, he found:

Evangelism among Nepali in Mizoram started round about 1970 or earlier by some Christian endeavours. After some years there were few Christians among them. Through the evangelistic campaign organised by some local churches such as Bungkawn Church, Khatla Church, etc. and some Young Christian Fellowship, a number of Nepali new converts received baptism.¹⁶¹

Intermittent evangelistic contacts were taking place, but the campaigns and baptisms referred to by Lalpianga did not happen until the 1980s. In interviews and correspondence with some of the first Nepali evangelists and pastors in Mizoram, the earliest local converts pointed to were all in the early 1970s, and all had emigrated from Nepal as young men in search of work. Hom Karna Puri was baptised in 1974 at Durtlang Presbyterian Church, after getting sick and being cared for by a Mizo Christian man. He was one of the earliest members of the NCF in Aizawl, and pushed for it to be started. Dambar Bah. Rai was also baptised in 1974 by a Mizo pastor, but arrived in Aizawl soon after the NCF was formed. The following year these two young Christians decided of their own initiative and out of zeal in their new faith, to return to their homeland as evangelists. In the meantime, another Nepali labourer had been baptised in the nearby N. Cachar Hills by a Kuki Presbyterian pastor. Indra Bah. Thakuri moved on to Mizoram in 1975 and did wood-cutting in the forest, walking about 14 kilometers every Sunday to go to the nearest Mizo church, although he could not understand the preaching. He did not find any other Nepali Christians with whom to have fellowship or to teach him about his new faith -- the few Nepali-speaking Christians in Mizoram at that time were mostly centred in Aizawl.

The first worship service of the Nepali Christian Fellowship was held at the 1st Assam Rifles church on 22 December 1974.¹⁶² This came about through the felt need of the few Nepali believers living in and around Aizawl, especially for the new ones who had come recently from Nepal and knew little of the Mizo language. The number of known Nepali Christians connected with various Presbyterian churches in Mizoram then was sixteen.¹⁶³ NCF's initial nurturing by and dependence on the local Mizo Presbyterian Church was only natural, and Rev. V.L. Zaithanga came forward to oversee the group, while George Walter, a local Anglo-Nepali, served as preacher.¹⁶⁴ With the slow growth of the group,

It came to the notice of the Synod Mission Board that there should be a Pastor to look after those (Nepali) Christians... For quite some years attempts were made to get a suitable Pastor... Lastly Rev. Thomas Pradhan who was a Pastor in the Khasi and Jaintia Synod was found. The Mizo Synod seek a permission from the KJP Synod to render the services of Rev. T. Pradhan, to work among the Nepali Christian in Aizawl, Mizoram. Accordingly, Rev. Thomas Pradhan with his family came out to Mizoram in 1977.¹⁶⁵

In the meantime the older members of the NCF, like Padam Lal Adhikari and Gopal Gurung, had been in consultation with Rev. Benjamin Rai of Shillong about the needs of their fellowship. Rai helped in the negotiations with the KJP Synod about sending their Nepali pastor, Thomas Pradhan, to Mizoram for a period. Pradhan served in Aizawl for almost four years, until October 1981 when he was called back to Meghalaya by the KJP Synod, during which time "a good number of Nepali Christians [were] added to the fellowship."¹⁶⁶

During this time, the Mizo Synod also appointed their first Nepali evangelist within Mizoram.¹⁶⁷ In his desire to learn more about his new Christian faith, I.B. Thakuri had applied to the Aizawl Theological College. Because they only offer courses in English, a place was arranged for him at Darjeeling Hills Bible School and he started his course in 1977. Upon completion in 1979, the Synod called him back to Mizoram and he was appointed as an evangelist under the supervision of Rev. Thomas Pradhan.¹⁶⁸ Together

they planned the first Nepali evangelistic crusades in Mizoram, the initial one being held in Aizawl, in January 1981, with Rev. Benjamin Rai of Shillong and John Dick Khawas of Kalimpong as the main speakers. After Pradhan's departure for Shillong later in the year, Thakuri carried on with the crusades. As reported by the Mizo Synod to the Presbyterian Assembly in NE India concerning their Home Mission:

During 1980-81, Nepali crusade was held five times at different places, and during the last 4 years there were about 240 new converts... Some of these new converts are being trained for evangelists.¹⁶⁹

In a similar report given a few months earlier, it was noted that "There are now more than 200 Nepali Christians as against less than ten just four years ago."¹⁷⁰ This shows a 200 percent increase in the numbers of Nepali Christians in N. Mizoram through the medium of the crusades. However, it should be noted that the crusades were basically a follow-up and "reaping of the harvest" of the rural evangelism that had been going on since the early 1970s. In Khanpuikawn, a community of about 200 Nepali wood-cutters living in the jungle at the time, where 48 people were baptised at the second crusade, the new converts built themselves a simple church. They now also have a Synod supported Nepali evangelist working among them. A total of nine Nepali crusades were held in different places by the end of 1982, and there are Nepali fellowships today in at least four of those locations.

Pradhan was the first and last Nepali pastor to serve the Mizo Synod related Nepali fellowships up to the present day. Following Pradhan, two different Mizo pastors in succession were appointed by the Synod specifically to oversee the Nepali Christians. But their role was primarily supervisory and to serve the sacraments, while I.B. Thakuri and a local committee of Nepali Christians carried on the day-to-day ministry. The Mizo Synod has "grown their own" two Nepali pastors in the early 1990s, but both are now serving in

connection with the Synod's Siliguri Mission Center, not among the Nepali in Mizoram. This fact points up a discernible shift in the attitude of the Mizo Synod towards its mission among Nepali -- on the home front, a shift from distinctive Nepali outreach to a more generalised non-Mizo emphasis; and through the Mission Board, sending Nepali converts back to Nepal and other Nepali-speaking areas as evangelists-cum-missionaries. Whereas they started with a concern for the Nepali as a distinct group in their midst (according to I.B. Thakuri it was originally called the "Nepali Mission"), by the early 1980s the emphasis was more towards non-Mizo in general. This was primarily through the influence of Mr. Vanlabela, who pioneered the "Non-Mizo Mission" from 1982 as an evangelist and Gospel team leader, having attended a Hindi Bible college in UP as preparation. He was appointed as Principal of the Synod's new Hindi Bible School in 1990, and ordained in 1991 as full-time Pastor for the "Non-Mizo Mission," in-charge of all non-Mizo fellowships connected to Presbyterian churches in Mizoram, including the Nepali.

The NCF in Aizawl was perhaps most directly affected by these changes. With the rapid increase in the number of Nepali Christians, the late Mrs. Parkungi, a Mizo Christian woman who was dying of cancer, gifted Rs. 60,000 to buy a plot of land in Aizawl for the construction of a church building for the NCF. Land was bought at Bawngkawn, Aizawl, but a six-storey building was built on it by the Synod Mission Board which became the headquarters for the Non-Mizo Mission and Hindi Bible School.¹⁷¹ This caused some misunderstanding with the NCF, who felt the land was to have been used for them to build a proper church. Also, it became known as the "Non-Mizo Christian Fellowship" with services held in Hindi, further alienating many of the Nepali Christians. Finding donations from outside India, the disaffected group were able to build their own church at Chaltlang, in the centre of Aizawl, and named it "Gorkha Christian Fellowship."¹⁷² It is made up mostly of domiciled Nepali, some married to local Mizo, and generally with a higher educational and professional standard than the

labourers who have immigrated to Mizoram more recently. They also formed what they called the "All Mizoram Gorkha Christian Fellowship" in 1990, with headquarters at their new church in Chaltlang. The aim was to bring all Nepali Christians in Mizoram together, and to send out missionaries to Nepal to work under local churches in Nepal. Two men, Raj Kumar Shrestha and Raj Kumar Rai, were sent to the Dharan area, but they are financially supported by an indigenous Mizo mission, Mission for Christ.¹⁷³

There are now 43 non-Mizo fellowships under the Mizo Synod, consisting mostly of mixed ethnic groups with meetings conducted in Hindi, but also including six Nepali fellowships with their own local Nepali leaders or evangelists.¹⁷⁴ However, Vanlalbela has no plans for enabling these fellowships to become churches in their own right, as he considers them to all be in the midst of migrant, unstable communities, with no permanence.¹⁷⁵ This means no administrative or financial independence, and no pastors or church buildings of their own. Before Vanlalbela was ordained, such fellowships were connected to local Mizo Presbyterian churches, but now they are all directly under him, and he travels between them to administer the sacraments except where he gives permission to a local pastor to do this.¹⁷⁶ This has all caused further feelings of resentment and powerlessness by the Nepali Christians related to the Synod, feeling that as a community they are not being lifted up, rather they feel looked down upon, and kept down, due to their generally lower levels of education and social status, similar to the situation in the KJP Synod. Only one of the Nepali fellowships has its own meeting place, in Khanpui, which they built largely by their own efforts, and the others meet either in Mizo church buildings or in homes. Only one of the eleven current Nepali evangelists with the Mizo Synod has been to Bible school, although the policy now is to send all non-Mizo evangelists through a three-month course at the Hindi Bible School in Aizawl.¹⁷⁷ These evangelists are almost all new converts from within Mizoram in the last five years.

On the other hand, the Mizo Synod Mission Board has sent out at least 13 Nepali evangelists-cum-missionaries, mostly to Nepal and through the Siliguri Mission Center. Two of the earliest converts in the NCF, Hom Karna Puri and Dambar Bah. Rai, had returned to Nepal of their own initiative in 1975, the first Nepali converted in the NE to return to East Nepal as evangelists in what became a growing trend in the 1980s.¹⁷⁸ But they found it extremely difficult. Their first convert was imprisoned, and they returned to the Darjeeling side of the border when the police began to look for them. On recommendation from Rev. P.S. Tingbo of the CNI Darjeeling Diocese, both of them were enabled to attend DHBS in Mirik, about the same time I.B. Thakuri arrived there direct from Mizoram. When the Mizo Synod Mission Board heard of their studies and desire to serve in Nepal, they were called back to Mizoram, and commissioned as missionaries back to their homeland. Hom Karna Puri was the first to go officially from the Synod in 1978, and, because of the special situation in Nepal where no ordained pastor would be available to give the sacraments, he was specially consecrated to do so. Dambar Bah. Rai followed him a few years later in 1981, and three more men, including I.B. Thakuri, in February 1986, using Siliguri as a base for their "Nepal Evangelism Mission." This was put on official standing by the Synod Mission Board in 1988 and became known as the "Siliguri Mission Centre," with Rev. H. Sangkhuma, accompanied by probationary pastor John Sharma, heading up the team.¹⁷⁹ Under Sangkhuma, Nepali evangelists were posted to Jorethang, Sikkim, and Jaigaon, on the border of Bhutan, and in Nepal. But when Rev. Vanlalchhuanga took over in 1990, he recalled everyone to Siliguri to consolidate the work. Only since the beginning of 1993 has church-planting work been started again in Nepal, this time with Rev. John Sharma in residence in Karkavitta, but still responsible to the Siliguri Mission Center Mizo in-charge.

Due to various misunderstandings and differences with the Siliguri

Mission Center policy, including feelings of not being treated equally with Mizo colleagues, five of the Nepali evangelists have left the Synod in recent years, four of them joining Mission for Christ, a Mizoram-based indigenous mission.¹⁸⁰ By the beginning of 1993 the following Nepali workers were serving outside of Mizoram with the Mizo Synod: five evangelists and one ordained pastor in Nepal; one evangelist with the Siliguri Mission Center; and one evangelist in Silchar, Cachar District of Assam. Of these eight Nepali missionaries, two have Bible college degrees, including Rev. John Sharma, and three have completed the DHBS two year course.

The Baptist Church of Mizoram, mostly in South Mizoram, also has some Nepali work, but it is of much more recent origin. Although there was limited mission work by British Baptists from the beginning of the century, the Baptist churches in the south were only organised in 1956, with headquarters in Lunglei, the hub of S. Mizoram.¹⁸¹ In 1964 the Zoram Baptist Mission (ZBM) was founded. In recent years they have extended outreach to the "Vai" (non-Mizo), with the goal as stated by Rev. H. Thansanga, in-charge of the Non-Mizo Mission, "to preach to all Non-Mizo in Mizoram and to imbibe in them a new burden for their own Community as they go back to their homeland."¹⁸² In 1992 they had ten Non-Mizo Christian Fellowships, made up mostly of Santali, Nepali, Behari and Madrasi.¹⁸³ By the following year, two of these fellowships had been recognised as full-fledged Baptist churches, something not seen in the Mizo Synod, but reminiscent of the situation amongst the Naga Baptist churches. Seven of the non-Mizo fellowships include at least 10 Nepali families, but in a mixed ethnic context, with meetings led mostly by Mizo either in the Mizo or Hindi language, and under local Mizo Baptist churches.¹⁸⁴ The largest group of Christian Nepali, about 87 families, is found in the Lunglei Non-Mizo Fellowship, where the leader is an ordained Mizo ex-soldier who speaks fluent Nepali and Hindi.¹⁸⁵ According to the 1991 statistical records, there was a total of 412 Nepali Christians in the Baptist Church of Mizoram.¹⁸⁶ Similar to those

connected with the Presbyterian Synod in the north, they are mostly labourers involved in road building, forestry, construction projects, or keeping cows.¹⁸⁷ As of 1991 there were also three Nepali evangelists under the Non-Mizo Mission, the first appointed in 1989. Again, all of them were born in Nepal, immigrated to Mizoram in search of work, and were converted there. Two of them have been given six months training at either the Mizo Baptists' Jubilee Bible School, or the Missionary Training Institute in Lunglei.

In addition to the outreach among Nepali within S. Mizoram, the ZBM has two fields in the West Bengal and Assam Duars which include a significant Nepali population. For Birpara, along the border of Bhutan, they ordained Robin Phipol from near Kalimpong to oversee the Nepali churches of that field.¹⁸⁸ The second field at Dhuburi in Assam has emphasised Nepali ministry since 1989. There are currently two Nepali evangelists in Dhuburi: Padam Bah. Rai (Vanlalsiama) who immigrated from Nepal to Assam, Nagaland and finally Mizoram where he was converted in the early 1980s, and later married a Mizo girl and took a Mizo name; and Barnabas Subba, born in Bhutan but converted in Kalimpong where he became an evangelist with Himalayan Crusade, later taken on by the Zoram Baptist Mission -- both unskilled labourers before their conversions.

Another expression of how Nepali Christians have been caught up in the Mizo churches' missionary zeal is clearly seen in the numbers of Nepali missionaries supported by Mission for Christ, an indigenous faith mission based in Aizawl. By 1992, 15 of their 39 missionaries were Nepali, serving in Darjeeling District, Sikkim, Jalpaiguri on the Bangladesh border, and Nepal.¹⁸⁹ Those in Darjeeling and Sikkim are local Nepali, but most of the original five supported in Nepal were converted in Mizoram. As of 1993 they had 16 Nepali evangelists in Nepal: four of them were formerly under the Mizo Synod Mission Board, and most of the rest are more recent converts in Nepal, now supported at the recommendation of the earlier evangelists. With the rapid growth in Mission for

Christ's work -- 27 Nepali evangelists between Sikkim, Darjeeling and Nepal in early 1993 -- a new Mission for Christ area headquarters was established in Siliguri from January 1993, with a Mizo missionary in-charge.¹⁹⁰ When the former Mizo Synod Nepali missionaries were asked why they resigned and joined Mission for Christ, one of the principal reasons was that they are treated with equality, given the same salary and benefits as their Mizo colleagues, and their advice and comments are listened to.

Although Mizoram has the second lowest Nepali population of the "seven sisters," its churches have been among the most zealous in terms of Nepali evangelism, both locally and outside of Mizoram. Although the few Nepali-language branch churches inside Mizoram are generally weak and dependent, a disproportionate number of new Nepali converts have been motivated and enabled to return to Nepal and other areas as evangelists among their own people.

NEPALI CHURCHES TAKE ROOT IN MANIPUR

NEPALI ENTER MANIPUR

As has been seen, there were ancient connections between Nepal and the Hindu Meitei of Manipur, living in the heart of present-day Manipur, the plains around the capital of Imphal. The site of an ancient kingdom, these plains are surrounded by high lateral hills, which cut it off from both Assam and Burma. The hills are inhabited by tribals, mostly various Naga tribes in the north and formerly nomadic Kuki akin to the Mizo-Chin scattered throughout. There are longstanding animosities between these two basic groups.

It was not until the 19th century that Nepali had any regular contact with Manipur, and that was initially through Gurkha soldiers alongside the British. When the Burmese invaded Assam early in the 19th century, they also conquered Manipur, until they were driven out by the "Manipur levy" under Raja Gambir Singh. The first Gurkhas were involved in Manipur as an escort for the first

British Political Agent, Captain George L. Gordon, who was installed at the old capital of Langthabal in the 1830s. But their main involvement came from the time of the Anglo-Manipuri conflict in 1891, occasioned by the Chief Commissioner of Assam's march on Imphal, accompanied by an armed guard of 400 men of the Assam Gurkha Battalions, to impose the British will over who should be the Raja of Manipur.¹⁹¹ From that time Gurkhas were used intermittently in the pacification of Manipur, and to enforce British administration of the hill areas from 1907, although the main Gurkha forces were stationed further north in the Naga Hills and Lakhimpur, and to the south in Aizawl.¹⁹² A.C. Sinha notes that there is a Gurkha settlement site at Mantripokhari, Manipur, which is at least 100 years old, and that there are eight other such sites in Manipur.¹⁹³ As has been noted before, the presence of such Gurkha settlements always attracted further Nepali migration.

The 1911 Indian Census only recorded 1,896 people with "Naipali" as their mother-tongue, but by the 1961 Census the number had multiplied to 13,571, the largest non-indigenous language group in Manipur at the time. The 1981 Census recorded a further increase to 37,046 persons, although popular estimates of the 1990s place the figure at nearer 100,000.

The First and Second World War brought a sharp influx of Nepali migration, not only in connection with the Gurkhas, but also labourers to aid the war efforts. In B.K. Roy Burman's analysis of the 1961 Indian Census he noted:

They [Nepali] were allowed to settle along the Imphal-Dimapur Road by the Durbar of the Manipur State after the First World War. A grazing tax of Rs. 1/25 per head of cattle was levied on them.¹⁹⁴

The Second World War brought an additional influx, first with labourers for the building of the Manipur Road, "attracted by the high wages offered,"¹⁹⁵ followed by many others at the end of the War. In addition to retired Gurkhas who chose to settle mostly in the hilly districts of northern Manipur, they came as cultivators

and graziers, and were soon the major producers of milk products. In Panchani's work on Manipur, he notes the following groups of Nepali who settled there after the Second World War: retired army personnel at Senakaithal; servants and labourers who stayed and settled; cultivators in the interior hills where land was available; cultivators as tenants of tribal chiefs who took a share of the crop; and cattle rearers.¹⁹⁶ In his own field investigations, he found the "main belt" of Nepali in scattered groups through the small valleys and hills of Mao, Maram, Karong, and Kangpokpi, with the thickest population between Tomei and Kangpokpi. This corresponds with Burman's observation above that Nepali were allowed to settle along the Imphal-Dimapur road. There are also Nepali in the southern part of the state, but these are not so highly concentrated nor are so many of them permanent settlers.

CHRISTIAN MISSIONS IN MANIPUR

From the time of the first church being organized in Imphal, the capital of Manipur, there is evidence of isolated cases of individual Nepali embracing Christianity in this small Hindu state. Following the baptism in 1915 by U.M. Fox of six "Christianized tribals" who had begun to hold clerical posts in Imphal, as Dena prefers to call them, they organized a church.¹⁹⁷ According to Luikham,

In 1915 Rev. U.M. Fox baptized the following men in Imphal: 1. Maipak Kabui, 2. Kachindai Kaccha Naga, 3. Bhagirath Gurkha, 4. Thanga Marh, 5. Jaison Kom, 6. Mangjaching.¹⁹⁸

Number three, Bhagirath Gurkha, is probably a corrupted form of an original Nepali title, but indicates that Bhagirath must have been a Gurkha soldier, possibly retired and settled in Imphal. His Gurkha service may have qualified him for a clerical position under the new British administration.

William Pettigrew of the Arthington Aboriginal Mission was the first missionary allowed to work in Manipur. The British authorities did not want to

antagonise the Hindu Manipuri, and, although Pettigrew was initially invited into Imphal in 1894 by the Acting Political Agent to start a school, he was soon sent on into the hills around Ukhrul. He centered his work there from 1896 among the Tangkhul tribe, and organised the first church in 1902, by which time he was working with the American Baptists. According to Dena, the Manipuri durbar refused permission to open a new mission station in Imphal.¹⁹⁹ Thus the first church in Imphal was organised by the new Christians themselves, a pattern that was typical for the later Nepali churches also. Another significant point for the extension of ministry among local Nepali was the location of a new ABFMS mission centre in Kangpokpi in 1919,²⁰⁰ a Gurkha settlement area.

The number of missionaries and places of mission work were severely restricted. Under Pettigrew's leadership, joined by a second missionary family in 1917, an American Baptist foothold was established in the north. Through Watkin Roberts' Indo-Burma Pioneer Mission (later known as North East India General Mission), although Roberts could not enter, some churches were established by Mizo Presbyterian Christians sent up from Aizawl, among the Kuki in southern Manipur. However, aside from isolated conversions like Bhagirath Gurkha's in Imphal, there is no indication of specific evangelistic outreach to, or significant numbers of conversions among, Nepali before the late 1960s -- more than 60 years after the first church was organised in Manipur.

NEPALI CHRISTIANS IN MANIPUR

The first evangelists among the growing numbers of Nepali in Manipur were Nepali Christians from other areas, notably N.B. Isaac Thapa and James Shankar, and local Kuki Baptists, particularly K. Chongloi. Their ministries started in the late 1960s.

N.B. Isaac Thapa, a Nepali born in Manipur, spoke fluent Manipuri as well as his mother tongue. He developed a personal burden to return to share Christ among his own people in Manipur following his conversion in Darjeeling.

Thapa's father had gone to Manipur from Mechi Anchal, Nepal, with the Indian Army. He settled his family there, and N.B. was born in 1924. When his father retired, the family moved to Darjeeling where N.B. was educated at Turnbull School, run by the Church of Scotland's EHM. After Thapa's marriage to a girl from Mirik, they were both converted in the 1950s through WMPL missionaries who came to start the Mirik-based Darjeeling Hills Bible School. DHBS was to have a significant impact on the training of Nepali Christians from the NE two decades later. Thapa himself graduated from DHBS in May 1957, and later became an elder of the local UCNI church in Mirik. Before many years he was engaged in regular evangelistic tours among Nepali in Assam, Sikkim, and most frequently in Manipur. According to his son David, his first trip back to Manipur was in 1968, and he baptised some of the first local Nepali Christians in the early 1970s.²⁰¹ Although physically weak and often sick, he was a man of exceptionally strong character and determination. At one point he almost succumbed to black fever, and he suffered from recurrent malarial fever, yet he returned to Assam and Manipur time and time again throughout the 1970s, often staying for several months before returning to his family in Mirik. Students from Manipur who later attended DHBS have credited Thapa with being the one to first share the Gospel with them.²⁰²

Kaingul Chongloi, a Kuki evangelist who spoke fluent Nepali, also had a special burden for the Nepali. He grew up in Nagaland, embraced Hinduism while serving in a para-military force, migrated to Manipur in 1954 where he became a Christian, and pastored a local Kuki Baptist church. In the mid-1960s he "heard a call to preach the Gospel among the non-believers particularly the Nepalis and the Kukis," and Kuki Baptist Convention (KBC) sponsored him to attend a Bible course at DHBS conducted in Nepali.²⁰³ Following his return he started actively preaching to the Nepali in Manipur. Chongloi claims that the first Nepali Christian in Manipur, Mr. Agamsingh, was converted through his ministry and that he started the first Nepali church: "[The] Nepali Church at

Toribari Kangpokpi was the first Nepali Church of any denomination in Manipur. It was established by me with the active co-operation of Agamsingh in 1968."²⁰⁴ According to KBC records, Chongloi was only officially appointed as an evangelist among Nepali in January 1970, and served with the KBC until December 1974.²⁰⁵ Shortly before he left the KBC, Chongloi baptised fifteen Nepali at Mantrypokhri on 15 October 1974, and formed them into a fellowship. Due to some differences, which Chongloi states pertained to the KBC's neglect of Nepali ministry, he joined the Zougam Baptist Convention (ZBC, which was formed in 1975 of nearly 100 Kuki local churches), under which Nepali ministry was greatly expanded with Chongloi as the ZBC's missionary to Nepali. By 1978 he claims to have planted seven Nepali churches, culminating in the formation of the Nepali Christian Church (NCC) at Taphou village on 4 September.²⁰⁶ When the ZBC dissolved in 1979 to form the Kuki Christian Church (KCC), the NCC then affiliated with them, and Chongloi was ordained. Since then he has served as the Moderator of KCC, and continues to be their "Nepali Missionary."

In the meantime, N.B. Thapa was involved in the formation of the first Nepali church in Imphal, under Centre Church of the Manipur Baptist Convention (MBC). According to Rev. S. Prim Vaiphei,

The Nepali Christian Fellowship was started in September 1974 at Manipur Baptist Convention (MBC) Centre Church Imphal under the leadership of Shri Albert Lall, Evangelist and Shri N.B. Thapa with seven members; namely 1. Supal Subba; 2. Gambirsing Pradhan, Ex. Subedar; 3. Bom Bahadur Gurung, Ex. Subedar; 4. Lal Bahadur Chhatry; 5. Manising Rai; 6. Shrimati Sumi Subba, and 7. the sister of Gambir (now deceased)... They used to have their worship service in one of the classrooms of MBC High School, and then in the MBC Centre Church.²⁰⁷

Among the original seven members of this Nepali Christian Fellowship (NCF) was Supal Subba, retired from the Manipur Rifles and deemed by some as the first Nepali convert in Manipur. Subba was baptised in 1972 and became a pioneer evangelist among his own people, supported by Centre Church Women's Society from 1974, the same year he helped to found the NCF. He was supported

by them for ten years, but in the Manipur Baptist Association's 1984 Annual Report it was noted, "...we are sorry to say that due to his prolonged sickness he will not be able to continue his work from 1985."²⁰⁸ Of the other original members: two were also ex-subedars, Gambirsingh Pradhan and Bom Bah. Gurung, making a majority of the five men ex-soldiers; two were baptised by N.B. Thapa, Gambirsingh Pradhan and his sister; and one was baptised by Pastor Albert Lall, Manisingh Rai. Pastor Lall, originally from UP, was supported by MBC Centre Church, and evidently took responsibility for NCF in its early years, baptising several of those who serve as Nepali evangelists today.²⁰⁹

At the same time that N.B. Thapa first came to Manipur from Darjeeling, another Nepali evangelist arrived from Assam -- James Shankar, an ex-Gurkha. While Thapa's work centered around Imphal, Shankar concentrated on the large Nepali settlements in Senapati District and the Sadar Hills of North Manipur, and the two men had little contact. Shankar was born in 1935 on a tea-estate in Darjeeling, went to Tezpur, Assam with the Indian Army in 1957 where he married a Nepali woman, and resigned in 1964.²¹⁰ He was converted in Assam through reading a tract in 1968, but found no other Nepali Christians with whom to have fellowship. The following year he was sponsored by the Fellowship of Baptist Churches, who first licensed him to preach, to go to Manipur for a short-term Bible course, and while there he felt a burden to preach the Gospel to his own language group in Manipur. In his own words,

In 1969 I had an opportunity to come to Manipur from Tezpur (Assam)...During my stay I enquired sincerely about my own people Nepali whether there was any Christian or not. Finally to my great shock I did discover that there was not a single Nepali convert in the whole of Manipur. This really began to make my heart restless and heavy with great concern for my people. That same night with a great burden in my heart I prayed to God like this: Lord though the Christians here might have neglected my people yet you still love them and have shed your precious blood for them as well...If it is your will let me come to Manipur and preach the Gospel to my people and as well as other unreached Hindus.²¹¹

When Shankar returned to Manipur the following year he felt that his future

ministry was confirmed when Krishan Bahadur Pradhan was converted following preaching in the market place at Kalapahar. Through Rev. J.S. Garlow, Shankar was enabled to go to Biren Baptist Bible College in Bangalore, and upon completion of his BTh he went immediately to Manipur as a pioneer evangelist among the hitherto unreached minority Nepali. He was later ordained by the Independent Church of India. By 1974 he had started what is said by some to be the first Nepali fellowship in Manipur, at Lamchowk, Senapati District, with two families. He moved his family from Assam to be with him, based in Keithalmanbi, while he continued extensive evangelistic tours around N. Manipur. In 1976 a simple church building was constructed for the Lamchowk Nepali Christians -- possibly the first in Manipur for a Nepali church -- today known as Emmanuel Baptist Church. But his ministry really began to spread from about 1979. By 1984 six churches and three fellowship centres, with about 500 members, had been established among the Nepali of Manipur.²¹² Students had also been sent to Bible schools, a primary school had been opened, and Nepali Christian literature was being published. Shankar's ex-military status may have helped to give him a hearing in Senapati, where large numbers of ex-Gurkhas were resettled. According to C.B. Baraily, Executive Secretary of the Nepali Baptist Association, Manipur, Shankar is looked on by many as the founder of the Nepali churches in Manipur.²¹³ During his first ten years of evangelism, Shankar's reputation as a Nepali preacher spread across the border to Nagaland, where a similar surge of evangelistic activity among Nepali was taking place. In 1980 he was invited to Kohima to pastor a young Nepali church.

As the 1970s progressed into the 1980s there were a number of developments which shaped the emerging Nepali churches into distinctive groupings. By the late 1970s Chongloi had left the KBC along with a number of Nepali Christians and formed the Nepali Christian Church. One of those who went with him was Kisan Lal Sharma, now the most senior Nepali Pastor in the NCC. Sharma was born in Sikkim, immigrated to Manipur in 1958, was baptised

in Imphal by Chongloi in October 1974 (before he left the Kuki Baptists), appointed as an evangelist in 1975, and finally ordained by the M.C. Litan Church in 1977. As of 1993, the NCC had the following churches affiliated with it: seven Nepali churches in Manipur, five in Assam, and one in Nagaland, with a total of 2,090 members and fourteen Nepali workers salaried by the KCC.²¹⁴ A NCC Centre was under construction at Kangpokpi. Rev. K. Chongloi remains at the head, as KCC "Missionary to NCC." Although five of the fourteen workers are designated as "Pastors," only one of them has been to Bible School, having graduated from DHBS's two year course.

In the meantime, as NCF in Imphal grew it began to experience some internal strife and also some friction in its relationship with MBC Centre Church. For internal reasons its name was changed and officially registered as Gorkha Baptist Churches (GBC) Fellowship in 1982, with S.K. Sharma as the General Secretary.²¹⁵ According to one of the early leaders of the fellowship at the time, this was partly a response to the formation of the Nepali Baptist Association by James Shankar, following Chongloi's formation of the NCC, and the desire to clarify their own position with a distinctive name.²¹⁶ Despite these internal differences, Evangelist Supal Subba, S.K. Sharma, and others, continued to go out to surrounding hill areas to preach. By 1984 S.K. Sharma was watching over the Gorkha Baptist Fellowship of MBC Centre Church, due to Supal Subba's prolonged illness, when the following report was made:

By God's grace our Gurkha Fellowship is growing gradually. Mr. S.K. Sharma, one of our church deacons is looking after this Gurkha Baptist Fellowship of our MBC Centre Church. 24 new members were baptized in 1984 and now the total number baptized members is 142 for 1984. The Gurkha Women Society consists of 10 members and the Youth Society consists of 15 members. The Fellowship has separate Sunday School which has 15 students.²¹⁷

However, by 1986 their differences with MBC Centre Church had matured to the point that GBC broke its affiliation with them, and became independent. As described by the GBC General Secretary:

Formerly GBC was called as Nepali Christian Fellowship...in 1981 we all are gathered to organize it as GBC at MBC Centre Church... MBC Centre Church did not look over us as mother so we left MBC Centre Church since 1986 and now we are not affiliated with any MBC or KBC organization still today.²¹⁸

The final statement of the above is slightly misleading. Although the GBC has no continuing association with the MBC, S.K. Sharma freely admits that fully half of the eight current GBC churches are being financially supported by the KBC.²¹⁹

From 1981 the KBC assumed particular responsibility within the MBC for the evangelism of Nepali in Manipur.²²⁰ Besides Shankar's work in N. Manipur, until the 1980s there had only been the NCF (GBC from 1982) under MBC Centre Church in Imphal, with scattered believers and informal fellowships in the surrounding hills, and the ministry of Kuki evangelist K. Chongloi which culminated in the NCC. In April 1979, the KBC appointed Volkhopao Kilong, another Kuki, as Pastor among the Nepali. He served in this capacity for ten years.²²¹ By 1984, the "Gorkha Mission" of KBC was supporting four Nepali evangelists, in addition to Volkhopao.²²² He was followed a few years later by another Kuki evangelist who speaks fluent Nepali, Paulan Kipgen, who did the DHBS two-year course all in Nepali. Kipgen was supported for a time by the KBC as one of their two Kuki evangelists among Nepali in Manipur, then joined the Thadau Baptist Association who sent him to Nepal in 1993. In 1985 the KBC work among Nepali launched out for the first time beyond Manipur, sending a team to Guahati, Assam, headed up by Man Bah. Khatri.²²³ By 1992, the KBC were supporting 12 Nepali evangelists, mostly based in rural areas: four as leaders of GBC churches in N. Manipur, and one in S. Manipur; three in Assam; four in Nepal; plus four Kuki missionaries among Nepali, two each in Manipur and Nepal.²²⁴ The KBC's involvement seems to be mainly financial support for the evangelists, with little supervision, spiritual guidance or Bible training given. It is reportedly also the evangelists' own responsibility to build their own churches

as needed. Of the above twelve Nepali workers, only one has been ordained, and there is one licentiate pastor. Further, only one of them has completed at least two years of Bible college, while all four of the Kuki missionaries among Nepali have had at least a two-year course, a disparity commonly seen in the churches in the NE. Thus, although Nepali Christians have been commissioned and sent out as evangelists, there has been very little done in terms of either local Bible teaching, leadership development, or helping young Nepali congregations to become viable local churches. The emphasis is on evangelism alone.

Similar to MBC Centre Church's support of the NCF, other local Baptist Associations have also supported Nepali evangelists and outreach on a local level. For example, a local church women's group of the Mao Baptist Association in North Manipur supported Thomas Limbu for almost five years as a special project, until other projects took preference.²²⁵ Limbu was then left without support and is now loosely affiliated with the GBC. The Thadau Baptist Association has also supported Nepali evangelists from at least 1984, when they started an evangelism program among Nepali in the Sadar Hills by engaging Bhim Bah. Ghatani.²²⁶

While all these developments were taking place, resulting in two groupings of Nepali churches -- Nepali Christian Churches, a branch of KCC, and Gorkha Baptist Churches Fellowship, with financial support from KBC -- James Shankar's evangelistic efforts, which had always been independent of the above, were also bearing fruit. When he returned from Kohima in 1982, he initiated formation of the Nepali Baptist Association (NBA, initially organised as the Resurrection Gospel Preaching Fellowship) in Manipur, sister to a similar association of Nepali churches he formed in Nagaland, the Nepali Baptist Isai Sammelan (NBIS). This may have partially been a reaction to Chonglo's formation of the NCC. But primarily it was out of his concern over the Nepali Christians' dependence on and dominance by the Naga and Manipur Baptist churches, and their need to forge their own identity, develop their own leadership

and organisational structure for mutual support, and to mature as churches in their own right. He was also aware of the vulnerability of young Nepali converts, their often lower standard of education and need for Bible teaching and clear guidance in their new Christian faith. Shankar's pioneering work in organising young Nepali Baptist churches, in Nagaland, Manipur, and later in Assam, has proved to be one of the most significant moves towards the development of strong and growing Nepali churches in NE India. The NBA is fully independent of either the MBC or KBC, and distinct from the Gorkha Baptist Fellowship in Imphal which only broke its association with MBC Centre Church in 1986 (but continues to receive substantial KBC financial support). The NBA headquarters is in Kalapahar, Senapati District, an almost purely Nepali area, where Shankar is pastor of the Kalapahar Nepali Baptist Church. Since its inception nearly ten years ago, by 1992 the NBA had ten affiliated churches, four of which had "pukka" buildings; five full-time workers, two of whom had BTh degrees from Biren Bible College in Bangalore, India; and twenty-three other evangelists, six of whom had completed the two-year course at DHBS.²²⁷ Financial support comes from various sources, including New Life Ministries based in Delhi, and the support of four evangelists by the Thadau Baptist Association of Manipur, while the NBA works towards self-sufficiency.²²⁸ Seven of its ten churches are in Senapati District, one in Imphal, and two in Chandel District of S. Manipur -- the only Nepali churches known to the author in the whole of S. Manipur.

South Manipur

Although the majority of Nepali are in N. Manipur, by one estimate 63 percent in Senapati District alone,²²⁹ there are still several thousand scattered through the hills and valleys of S. Manipur. While those in the north live mostly in Nepali-speaking villages and are permanent settlers, many in the south, especially those among the Zou tribe, speak the local Zoumi language, are tenant cultivators or graziers, and are subject to the local chiefs' good will. Evangelistic

work among them has been almost non-existent, and mostly aimed from the north, for example the two NBA churches established in Chandel District in recent years, and one KBC Nepali evangelist supported in Serou since 1988. The north has been a traditional Baptist stronghold, the largest denomination in Manipur, while there is a proliferation of smaller denominations in the south, often one having grown out from another. They mostly have Presbyterian roots stemming from early evangelism of S. Manipur by their Mizo Presbyterian cousins to the south. Most of their headquarters are found in Churachandpur, the main town in S. Manipur. Upon inquiry by the author, it was found that the following churches have no work among Nepali: the original NEIGM, now called Evangelical Congregational Church of India, the second largest denomination; the Independent Church of India, which split from NEIGM; and the Evangelical Free Church of India, which also grew out of the above.

There are only three exceptions. Firstly, the Evangelical Synod Church, based in Churachandpur, supported Daniel Subba as a Nepali evangelist for several years, from 1978-1986.²³⁰ But their involvement was a result of circumstances rather than by design. As a result of Subba's conversion and baptism in North Manipur, he was dismissed from his teaching job, then found a new position with a mission school in Churachandpur. He used his free time to preach to the Nepali round about, some of the earliest Nepali-to-Nepali evangelism in S. Manipur, although short-lived. Within a short time Subba was appointed as the Evangelical Synod Church's first and only Nepali evangelist. But his evangelistic work was mostly in the north, where he established two Nepali churches. Secondly, the Gam Presbytery of the Manipur Presbyterian Synod, a Zoumi speaking area, is said to have had a mission field among the Nepali in their midst for about eight years.²³¹ It consists of a primary level school for Nepali children in Liklai which was opened privately by the local Nepali headman in 1983, and the Women's Christian Association took on its support from 1986. They supplied a Zou teacher for a few years, then engaged

the son of the headman, Bhim Prasad, to teach in Nepali. He was converted in 1989, the first Christian among the local Nepali, and since then a few of the children's parents have also become Christians. They are given pastoral oversight by the local Zou-speaking Presbyterian Church. Thirdly, the Evangelical Convention Church (ECC) currently supports seven Nepali evangelists, but all outside of Manipur -- six in Nepal, and one in Assam.²³² Most of them originated in Nepal, were converted in Manipur and had connections with GBC in Imphal. The first one sent out as an ECC-supported "missionary" was in 1982. Significantly, six of the seven have completed at least two-year Bible college courses, mostly supported by ECC. Yet on the field they have received only partial support, and until 1993 their families have stayed in Manipur, with the men traveling back and forth.

A feature of the Nepali churches in Manipur which should not be overlooked is that they survive in the midst of an often hostile Hindu society, very different from the situation in Mizoram, Nagaland or Meghalaya. Sixty-four percent of the total population are Meitei, traditionally strong Hindus. This is a conducive setting for the local Nepali, especially as the majority of them are high caste Brahman and Chhetri, perhaps attracted by the familiar Hindu society. But it has also been a factor in the abuse of Christians. C.B. Baraily notes there is often severe persecution of Nepali believers, comparing it from a societal perspective (versus legal or political) with Nepal prior to the advent of democracy.²³³ Manipuri Christians also come under threat, especially the Meitei, and recently two of their churches were burned down.²³⁴ The case of a new Nepali convert, Khem Prasad, being murdered by his indignant relatives within a few days of his baptism on 4 January 1992 was confirmed to the author by three independent sources. He was reportedly baptised in secret and kept at the pastor's house. When his family found out they forcibly took him away with them, and when he refused to go through ritual "cleansing" rites and to deny his new faith, they hung him in a cowshed, and burned the body early the next

morning.

Other difficulties in Nepali ministry in Manipur were also noted by informants. The orthodox upper-caste Hindu Nepali have been much more reluctant to consider Christianity than the middle and lower castes, and the race and caste of the presenter have sometimes been a block to reception of the message. There is also a common perception that reception of Christianity means Westernisation -- one of the reasons K. Chongloi states for adopting indigenous cultural means of presenting the Gospel: "We preached through the culture and practices, singing, preaching and dancing (the Nepali are very fond of dancing) in their language and style mostly in open fields, thereby attracting a few crowds."²³⁵ Finally, recurrent communal violence between Kuki and Naga, reportedly claiming at least 1,000 lives by October 1993, has severely restricted freedom of movement especially in N. Manipur. Nevertheless, the Nepali churches in Manipur continue to experience some of the most consistent growth in the NE.

NEPALI CHURCHES TAKE ROOT IN NAGALAND

NEPALI ENTER THE NAGA HILLS

Gurkha units in the Indian Army were the first Nepali to have contact with the Naga Hills, when they participated in retaliatory punitive expeditions following the notorious Naga headhunters' raids onto the plains. Traditionally there was hostility between the Naga and the Assamese, but conflict with the British came as their tea plantations expanded across the plains of Assam, right up to the Naga hills, posing a threat to Naga territory. Between 1836 and 1851, ten such punitive expeditions were conducted.²³⁶ When the expeditions proved unsuccessful, frontier posts were set up, and in 1878 a Frontier Headquarters was established in Kohima, although fiercely resisted by the Naga.²³⁷ In the 1880s when the Assam Frontier Forces were reorganized into three full-strength battalions of Military Police, one was based at Kohima, called the Naga Hills

Military Police Battalion.²³⁸ It included a contingent of 671 authorised Gurkhas.²³⁹ From this time until the present there has been a Nepali community in Nagaland.

The Naga Hills, under minimal British administration, were located behind the Inner Line and designated as an "Excluded Area" of Assam. Furer-Haimendorf notes that the British policy of "non-interference" strictly controlled the settlement of outsiders in the Naga Hills, except for a few clerks, officers and sepoy, and traders.²⁴⁰ However in 1883 the restriction against women and children of the Military Police was lifted, and they were allowed to bring their families to Kohima.²⁴¹ From that time Nepali not only were present, but began to settle in the Naga Hills, and were given land allotments by the British.²⁴² Being hill people themselves, they fitted in well with the Naga, unlike the Assamese and Bengali, and were gradually accepted into their communities. According to A.C. Sinha, there are seven different Gurkha settlement sites in Nagaland, including one at Mokokchung of at least 100 years.²⁴³ Nepali have settled in both Kohima and Mokokchung from the early days of British administration of the Naga Hills.

As in other parts of NE India, alongside the Gurkhas and their families came other Nepali: coolies and auxiliaries for the military, labourers for construction of roads, cultivators, foresters, and traders. British oversight gradually brought improved communications, especially through the building of roads to link important stations in the hills and with the plains. Timsina notes that Nepali were recruited for road construction crews with the "Separ Minor" Company.²⁴⁴ Although according to the 1901 Census of India there were only about 900 Nepali, mostly Magar and Gurung (the martial tribes of Nepal), by the 1961 Census (the first time results for Nagaland were recorded separately from Assam) 10,400 Nepali-speakers were reported: the largest non-indigenous ethnic group in Nagaland. Twenty years later that figure had doubled again, with 24,918 Nepali-speakers recorded in the 1981 Census of India. But popular estimates put

the figure much higher, at least 80,000, with a significant portion being migrant labourers, part of the large "floating population" of Nepali in the NE. Many of this group have been there for many years in government service jobs, especially with the Public Works Department (PWD), but are not permanently settled and are without land.

By the 1940s the number of Nepali in the Naga Hills had grown sufficiently to cause alarm on the part of J.H. Hutton, a British official. According to A.C. Sinha, Hutton initiated a policy to remove Nepali settlers from the Naga Hills, based on economic considerations and the amount of land they were taking up.²⁴⁵ However, this was evidently not followed up, as Indian Independence was soon followed by the Naga's own move for independence from India, and the Gurkhas were once again called upon to help quell the insurgency movement.²⁴⁶

As the Indian government tried to integrate the Naga Hills into the State of Assam, with, in the words of Furer-Haimendorf, locally-posted officials seeing themselves as "bringers of an altogether superior civilization,"²⁴⁷ they only succeeded in causing more resentment, a rise in nationalistic feelings, and a desire to preserve their cultural integrity. After being granted limited autonomy in 1960, Naga nationalists continued to demand full independence. This led to the Naga Hills being formally inaugurated as a full-fledged state in 1963 -- Nagaland, the smallest state in India, and the first of the former hill districts of Assam to be granted such status. Through all of these changes Nepali continued to migrate into Nagaland, mostly as labourers. The majority came as sawers in the lumber industry, others in road construction and development projects, as herders-cum-dairy producers, share-croppers, drivers, domestics, and chowkidars. They were also recruited into the newly-formed Naga Police, although this was stopped in the 1980s. According to a Sema Naga, the Nepali came to be preferred in these positions to other non-Naga, as they were considered more reliable, hard-working and trustworthy, and they had a certain commonality as

hillmen.²⁴⁸ The Naga were willing to let them live and work among them. Intermarriage, especially of Nepali men with Naga women, was not uncommon, and has made it possible for many to get land. Adoption of Nepali into certain Naga tribes has also been practiced. They must give their word to follow the Naga tribe's customs; then, even if the parents die, their children will be cared for as part of the tribe. They are given a share of the jhum fields and allowed to settle as tribe members. In the Meluri area of the Pochury Naga, from a Nepali community of about 400-500 who mostly live in the forest and do lumbering work, about fifteen Nepali have been adopted into the tribe and settled.²⁴⁹ Some have married with local Pochury women, they speak the village language, and their children go to Naga schools. The author was told of several instances of adoption of Nepali by the Angami, Pochury and Rengma Naga, but that the Ao, Sema and Konyak Naga have no tradition of adopting outsiders; the latter only keep non-Naga as slaves or servants. Traditionally the Naga and Nepali have got along very well, having the best record of integration in the NE observed by the author.

THE COMING OF THE AMERICAN BAPTIST MISSIONARIES

Hand in hand with the British in the 1800s came American Baptist missionaries. Originally invited into Sadiya, Assam by the Political Officer, Major Jenkins, they were soon driven by the Kampti tribals down to Jaipur, on the edge of the Naga Hills.²⁵⁰ Several attempts were made over the next few years to reach the Naga, but the first success was by an Assamese evangelist, Godhula, from 1871. The following year he conducted the first baptism of 15 converts within the Naga Hills. From 1876 Dr. E.W. Clark became the first resident American Baptist missionary. Even though the Naga Hills were separated off from the rest of Assam by the Inner Line, keeping most outsiders out, the ABFMS missionaries were given a relatively free hand, in hope that they would help to subdue and civilise the headhunters. Over the years they were so successful in winning the Naga to Christ that, by the time the Indian government

banned the missionaries in 1955, Christianity had become "virtually a tribal institute and way of life by a considerable and influential section of the community."²⁵¹ The 1951 Indian Census recorded 46 percent of the population as Christian, and 20 years later the figure had reached a remarkable 67 percent. Thus the removal of the missionaries by Government order in 1955 was another cause of deep resentment by the proud Naga. The missionaries had brought them education and medical care, reduced their languages to writing, and helped build bridges of communication between the numerous formerly autonomous Naga tribes. Christianity was a unifying factor, helping to forge a sense of national identity, and all the time protected from other outside influences by the British "non-interference" policy. According to Philip's account, by the time the British left, "the nationalists thought that they were to build a Christian state and a Christian government," and they opposed union with what they considered a Hindu government of India.²⁵² They wanted nothing of Assam's or India's "superior civilisation," rather they identified the Christianity they had embraced with progress, civilisation and prosperity.²⁵³ Thus in the new era of Indian Independence, Nepali in Nagaland found themselves in the midst of a self-identified Christian state.

Nagaland has traditionally been a strictly Baptist domain. The fastest growing of the ABFMS fields, by the 1950s fourteen different tribal Naga Baptist Associations had been formed, and Naga Christians constituted 47 percent of all members of churches related to the Council of Baptist Churches in Assam.²⁵⁴ A few other denominations have come into Nagaland over the years, the most significant being the Roman Catholics who entered in the 1950s. The Revivalist Movement of the same decade resulted in at least three indigenous denominations which split from the Baptists. The largest of these is the Nagaland Christian Revival Church (NCRC), founded in 1961. But the Baptists have remained predominant, and their tribal Associations together form the Nagaland Baptist Christian Council (NBCC).

NAGA BAPTISTS: AGGRESSIVE EVANGELISM AND REVIVAL

Due to the Naga's own rapid Christianisation, they began to look outward to extend the Gospel to others. First that was expressed by extensive lay evangelisation of the Naga border tribes, which was commented on by Elwin when he wrote in 1961 that "their own Naga missionaries are proving far more successful than outsiders."²⁵⁵ Downs gave a telling description of the enthusiasm of the lay people from early on:

One missionary working in the Sema area of the Naga Hills in the 1920s reported his entire time was spent trying to locate congregations that had already been established by unknown laymen who had heard the Gospel in the bazaars of neighboring tribes.²⁵⁶

As early as 1958 one of the Ao Naga Christians (according to Philip the Ao were the most outstanding Baptist Association for their mission-mindedness in the whole CBCNEI) issued a call to all the Naga Baptist churches "to go forward to proclaim the Gospel of Jesus Christ not only to the Naga, but to the world."²⁵⁷ A little over ten years later, in 1971, the Nagaland Missionary Movement (NMM) was formed, under the NBCC, to cover both home and foreign mission fields. Leading up to this, a series of intensive evangelistic crusades in all major towns in Nagaland were held, in which hundreds of people became Christians. This included a United Evangelistic Crusade in Dimapur which almost 15,000 attended, and two years later a Billy Graham Crusade in Kohima in November 1972. The latter was summed up by the visionary behind both the NMM and the crusades, Longri Ao:

The Billy Graham Crusade left a convicted and inspired Christian community in the whole of North East India to carry on the proclamation of the Gospel of Christ in this hill region and beyond...²⁵⁸

Intensive evangelism throughout Nagaland not only brought revival among the churches, but reached the remaining non-Christian Naga and non-Naga alike.

The NMM commissioned its first missionary evangelist in 1971, and by the end of the decade it had 30 missionaries, including one from among the Nepali community in Nagaland.²⁵⁹ These missionaries were sponsored variously: some directly by the NMM, and others by the Associations, local churches, or individuals through the NMM. This emphasis on and involvement in evangelism right down to the local level was very significant in the conversion of Nepali scattered throughout Nagaland. Naga laymen were imbued with a burden to share the Gospel with their neighbours. Longri Ao also had a plan to give theological training to new non-Naga converts, then to send them among their own communities. He wrote in a letter to K.I. Aier, General Secretary of the CBCNEI, in 1979: "In addition to our students scholarship load, quite a number of new converts from Hindu and Muslim communities are going to be supported in Theological Colleges from this year."²⁶⁰ In partial fulfillment of this vision, twelve students from the Nagaland Nepali community had been sent for theological training on the recommendation of Kohima Nepali Baptist Church (a branch of Union Baptist Church, Kohima) by 1992.²⁶¹

It was in the aftermath of the Naga Revival which swept through Nagaland in the mid-1970s that evidence of growing numbers of Nepali converts under different Associations emerged. The revival was described by Longri Ao in the following words,

The whole of Nagaland is today in flames of Revival. We had been praying for the last six years for it and the Lord is dealing with the people of Nagaland in a special gracious way. There are about 1,000 Baptist churches in this hill state with a baptized membership of over 140,000... Thousands of people are today coming to Christ in tears and deep repentance."²⁶²

The majority of the citizenry of Nagaland was caught up in an evangelistic fervour. It was primarily a lay movement, characterised by special manifestations of the "gifts" of the Holy Spirit such as prophecy, healings and speaking in tongues, and also by visions and exorcism. Longri Ao saw this as God's way of

both saving the Naga and making them into "a missionary people."²⁶³ Both Naga and leading Nepali Christian leaders today point to those years of revival, with its aggressive evangelism and accompanying miraculous manifestations, as the stimulus to Nepali in Nagaland being converted in increasing numbers.²⁶⁴

THE FIRST NEPALI CHURCHES IN NAGALAND

The formation of the first Nepali Christian fellowships, as branches of Naga Baptist churches, was in response to the growing numbers of Nepali conversions in various locations. The first Nepali Christians in an area often met with established Naga Baptist churches, then gradually began to meet among themselves using their own language. It is generally agreed that the first four Nepali fellowships were established in Kohima, Mokokchung, Wokha, and Dimapur, all independently of one another.

Not surprisingly, the first of these was organised in conjunction with the Union Baptist Church (UBC), Kohima. The Billy Graham Crusade was held there in 1972, and one of the first four NMM evangelists was sent out by the UBC. Also, almost two-thirds of the Nepali-speaking population of Nagaland was located in Kohima District.²⁶⁵ Mighito Sema describes in his own words how he was called by the UBC to serve the new Nepali Christians in 1976:

I was called by the Union Baptist Church (UBC) to serve the newly Nepali Christian. In 1976 the Nepalese started to become Christian with few members. On 13th March 1976 the fellowship started with 18 members, esp. those who married with Naga girls. The church was sponsored by the UBC Kohima. In that year Mrs. V. Thenukevi personally paid my salary of Rs. 100/ per month. By the end of 1976 the church members increase up to 112 which God used them wonderfully. In 1976-1990 the members baptised were up to 356.²⁶⁶

It was reported to the NBCC in 1977 that the UBC, a member of the Angami Baptist Association, "has been active among the Hindu Nepalese and they have already established a new church with 105 Nepalese new converts."²⁶⁷ In the same year, Jivan Jyoti Press in Darjeeling received a request from Nagaland

pleading for Nepali language Christian literature, because "the Nepali church is fast growing here."²⁶⁸ Sema pastored the UBC Nepali group as a layman while continuing to serve as a government teacher for the next few years, during which time he struggled to learn the Nepali language, often preparing sermons first in Roman script.²⁶⁹ From 1980 arrangements were made for him to take a one-year Hindi course in Dimapur to facilitate his learning the Devanagari script. In the meantime, James Shankar, a well-known Nepali pastor and evangelist in nearby northern Manipur, had been called by the UBC to take up the Nepali ministry in Nagaland.

In 1977 it was also reported that the Lay Evangelistic Fellowship of the Ao Baptist Association, in Mokokchung, was contributing Rs. 13,000 every year "towards the evangelization of Mikirs, Nepalese and Assamese."²⁷⁰ B.D. Barua, a Christian Assamese high school teacher married to a local Ao Naga, was instrumental in organising a Nepali fellowship in Mokokchung.²⁷¹ About the same time, Samuel Subba, the widely-traveled former NEB evangelist from Shillong, was invited to Wokha by the local Baptist church to follow up new Nepali converts. When he was called back again in 1980, he recalls that the group had grown to almost 30 and was being led by Pastor Tshering (now known as Zachia Rengma).²⁷² Z. Rengma was a Nepali who was adopted by a Rengma Naga, and also took his tribal title. A Christian Nepali from Darjeeling, David Mangratee, had done some initial evangelism in Wokha while serving there as a school teacher during the 1960s. Presumably Mangratee was acquainted with Z. Rengma from that period, as he took on Rengma's support as an evangelist in Nagaland during the 1970s, after getting support himself from WME in 1972. Until his source with WME dried up in 1986, Mangratee supported at least five Nepali evangelists in Nagaland and across the border in Assam, and sent several young men through his WME-sponsored two-year Bible School back in Darjeeling. A second Nepali congregation in Dimapur was started a few years after the one in Wokha by Rengma. Originally it was named "Himalaya Masih

Mandali," in accordance with other churches sponsored by WME through Mangratee, but today is known as Duncan Nepali Baptist Church. The current pastor, Tikaram Sharma, was also formerly supported by Mangratee, but now is leader of the Assam-Nagaland Border Area Nepali Baptist Fellowship which he founded in 1990.

By the late 1970s another young Christian from Darjeeling District found his way to Nagaland as a teacher -- Solon Karthak of Kalimpong joined the staff at Patkai Christian College, Chumukidima, just outside Dimapur. He initiated the first Nepali church in that area, and led it for two years. After his arrival he started looking for any local Christian Nepali. After meeting six or seven at the nearby Naga Police Training Center, he began to attend the Police Church with them on Sundays. Soon they were having an informal Nepali-language fellowship on a rotation basis in the different men's homes. At the same time, Karthak was contacting other Nepali round about and bringing them along. Within two years, when Karthak returned to Kalimpong, the group had grown to include 77 adults.²⁷³ At his departure, a church committee was formed to run the group, and in 1983 their first pastor, Hari Gurung, was appointed. In the meantime a local Naga Christian had donated a piece of land, and the church members joined together to build a thatched house for Sunday worship. Similarly, a rich Naga in Wokha donated a piece of land and building for the young Nepali church there. Several years later, in 1989, the Nepali Baptist Church in Chumukidima was finally enabled to construct a proper church building.

Similarly, more and more Nepali fellowships and branches of local Naga Baptist churches were formed. Although in the 1970s there was no coordinated effort among the Naga churches to reach the Nepali, they had all been imbued with an evangelistic zeal to reach their neighbours, Naga and non-Naga alike, with similar fervour to that exhibited by the Mizo to the south. More than anywhere else in the NE, the Naga Christians also demonstrated a willingness to support the Nepali converts financially, whether in providing land or buildings for

Christian meetings, or sustenance for evangelists. Again, this was not the result of a centralised policy, but came from individuals, local churches or their women's or youth societies, and from some Associations and the NMM. With this initial support, the converted Nepali themselves became the most effective evangelists among their own people. They could penetrate areas where the Naga did not normally go, especially among the many Nepali living and working in the jungle as woodcutters. Rev. Benjamin Rai of Shillong recalls meeting a few Nepali Christians in Tuensang in the 1970s who attended Naga churches; one was even a deacon.²⁷⁴ By the early 1980s they had been organised into a Nepali-language church by a Gurkha pensioner, Major M.B. Rai of the Assam Rifles.

In another case a simple woodcutter near Meluri, Dilip Chhetri, was converted through a Nepali tract he received from a Nepali pastor in the district center of Phek. Upon his return to Meluri he went to see the General Secretary of the local Pochury Baptist Church Convention, obviously by referral, and was soon made an evangelist among his own people.²⁷⁵ The General Secretary, Rev. T.S. Nyuwi, took Chhetri into his own home and provided his daily needs and travel expenses until sponsorship was found for him through UBC in Kohima. Nyuwi recalls, "He was like my family because he lived with me. I looked after him, gave him food, clothing and these things."²⁷⁶ As more Nepali became Christians, Chhetri functioned as their pastor, until another man was appointed a few years later, Pastor Subba. Subba was also supported for a time by Nyuwi from his personal tithe money, but later the United Baptist Church Fellowship took on his support. In the meantime Nyuwi paid the rent for a place for the young Meluri Nepali church to meet, and later supplied the timber and bamboo for them to construct their own simple church building. By 1991 there were about 100 Nepali Christians in the Pochury Naga area around Meluri, served by the Nepali church located in Meluri town. As the Nepali Christians are scattered between five or six villages, they often attend local Naga Baptist churches, coming into Meluri occasionally. Several of them are married to Pochury Naga

women, and most have learned the local tribal language. A number of them have received extra Bible training by attending one of the New Life Training Centre (NLTC) courses conducted by Nepal Campus Crusade for Christ. In addition to the regular one-month sessions held in Siliguri, near the Nepal border, one NLTC has also been held in Nagaland, at Dimapur, in addition to a shorter session at Phek where ten Nepali were baptised.²⁷⁷ By the end of 1991, forty Nepali from Nagaland had attended an NLTC in either Siliguri or Dimapur, in addition to the special session held in Phek.²⁷⁸ This was the only Bible training either Dilip Chhetri or Pastor Subba received, as is the case of many Nepali pastors and evangelists.

The variety of input and cooperation demonstrated in the establishing and nurture of the Nepali church in Meluri is a fairly typical case study of many places in Nagaland: Nepali (or Naga) to Nepali evangelism; incorporation of new Nepali Christians into local Naga churches; Naga Christian encouragement and practical (including financial) support of local Nepali evangelists, for Bible and theological training, and in starting Nepali-language branch churches; help from both individual Naga Christians and Naga churches and Baptist Associations; Nepali-language Bible training available in Darjeeling and Nepal, and from the mid-1980s occasionally offered locally by visiting Nepali preachers-teachers from those areas.

However, aside from D. Mangratee and S. Karthak, there was little influence from the Darjeeling area during the first decade of the Nepali churches' growth in Nagaland. Mangratee was a product of the early Pentecostal movement in Darjeeling. Although in the midst of a predominant Baptist environment in Nagaland, this evidently produced no conflict at the time because of the local revival movements and accompanying emphasis on the person and work of the Holy Spirit. Karthak was from a Presbyterian background with the Darjeeling Diocese of the CNI, but had more recent influence from the strongly evangelical Nepali Christian Fellowship and the WEC missionary ladies in

Shillong, where he did his graduate studies before going to Dimapur. In addition to these men, the leader of the Nepali Baptist Church in Changtongya, Mokokchung District, is a Lepcha from Darjeeling District. There were also occasional visiting preachers, including Subit Tshering, one of WEC's earliest national workers in the late 1940s before becoming a teacher at Darjeeling Hills Bible School. In 1980 the first two Nepali students from Nagaland enrolled at DHBS. Rev. S. Sodemba of Himalayan Crusade, a leader in the Pentecostal movement in Kalimpong, also held some crusades and evangelistic meetings, but established no ongoing ministry in Nagaland.

NEPALI CHURCHES ARE ORGANISED

As has been demonstrated, by 1980 several Nepali fellowships had sprung up in different parts of Nagaland, all of them associated to different degrees with local Naga Baptist churches or Associations. At this point came a significant development towards unifying the scattered fellowships, and giving them a sense of identity as Nepali. James Shankar, a mature Nepali church leader from Manipur, had been called to pastor the most prominent group which was in Kohima, under UBC of the Angami Baptist Association. He became convinced that the growing Nepali churches and fellowships needed to be organised into an association of their own, along the lines of the various Naga tribal Baptist associations, with their own administrative and leadership structure, rather than to remain under Naga churches. Therefore in 1980 he formed the Nepali Baptist Isai Sammelan (NBIS), independent of the NBCC, including all of the existing Nepali churches at the time.²⁷⁹ Shankar was convinced that the only way the Nepali churches would grow strong was for them to come out from under the "domination" of the Naga churches and begin to forge their own identity. Two years later, in 1982, a sister association of Nepali churches in Manipur was formed under Shankar's leadership. They function as a denomination, with a constitution and administrative structure, licensing their own pastors according to

set criteria, and sending young people for theological training. The NBIS now holds an Annual Conference for its affiliated churches, and for their youth wing, the All Nagaland Nepali Christian Youth, with participants coming to the latter from Assam and Manipur as well as Nagaland. This is the only known inter-church association for Nepali Christian youth in NE India. Occasional Nepali crusades have also been held by Rev. J. Shankar, the one in 1988 reportedly drawing almost 10,000 participants, not uncommon in the Naga Christian culture.²⁸⁰

However, Shankar's efforts to organise the emerging Nepali churches did not go without a challenge. When Mighito Sema returned to Kohima from his language training in Dimapur there was a clash with Shankar. Sema was strongly opposed to what he calls a move for "independence," feeling that the Nepali Christians were not mature enough to have their own association, and should continue under the NBCC churches.²⁸¹ The General Secretary of the NBCC circulated a letter dated 25 September 1980 which stated that there should be "no independent [sic] for Nepali church or fellowship." Shankar objected to this view, noting that it was "a great contradiction with our constitution, and our Baptist distinctiveness (Baptist Principle)."²⁸² After stating his understanding "as a Baptist" of "a local new testament Church...Independent, autonomous, independent of ecclesiastical authority outside its own membership, that is self-governing," he concluded with the following appeal:

According to the Bible teaching we understood that no out-sider should put their hands upon the affairs and decision of a local Church. Therefore we request you please re-consider this matter prayerfully, and let us remain as an independent Nepali Church or fellowship. But the same time we like to have fellowship with them that have obtained like (same) precious faith and practice with us.²⁸³

When the NBIS applied for affiliation with the NBCC as Nepali churches they were told that non-Naga were not eligible. Sema's and the NBCC's view prevailed in Kohima, and after Shankar returned to Manipur, Sema pulled the

UBC-connected Nepali church out of the NBIS. A few others followed suit, including the Mokokchung group under the leadership of D. Barua who was in sympathy with Sema. They formed their own loose fellowship of Nepali churches related to Naga Baptist churches, with M. Sema as the first President; but its main function has been to hold a yearly conference for fellowship between the concerned Nepali Christians.

Until today, the Kohima Nepali Baptist Church, formerly pastored by M. Sema, is a branch of UBC. It had a strong impact on the earlier growth of Christianity among Nepali in Nagaland, but its influence has waned in the face of growing independent Nepali churches. Between 1976 and 1991 reportedly 381 Nepali were baptised by this church, although they were not all local members. Many have gone out from there to become pastors and evangelists in a wide variety of places. At least twelve Nepali men and women have been recommended for Bible schools and colleges, of which nine are still in active ministry between Nagaland, Assam, Manipur, and Nepal. But these figures tend to cloud the fact that none of the above Bible school graduates are now pastors or evangelists in Naga Baptist-related Nepali churches, although at least two of them are pastoring NBIS and NBA churches. Even the current pastor of the Kohima congregation was originally licensed by NBIS.

There is little evidence today of active organisation of the Nepali churches which are branches of Naga Baptist churches within the NBCC, nor is there a unified strategy within the NBCC for training or raising up of Nepali church leadership in Nagaland. Whatever help is given is left to the discretion of the local Naga churches or Associations involved. Further, some of these local Naga groups also support NBIS-affiliated churches and church workers, without discrimination.

Although the author was able to verify the existence of at least 40 some Nepali churches and fellowships in Nagaland as of the end of 1992, official reports could not be obtained from all the groups concerned. Therefore a full

detailed analysis of the current churches is not possible. Also, affiliations of individual churches have changed from time to time. However it is clear that the strongest and fastest growing group of Nepali churches is the NBIS.²⁸⁴ In addition to the NBIS and Naga Baptist-related churches, there are currently six El Shaddai assemblies related back to their headquarters in Kalimpong.²⁸⁵ Daniel Rai of Kalimpong first visited Nagaland in 1982, at the request of a few Nepali Christians in Dimapur and Zunheboto, after which small separate non-denominational fellowships were started in each place.²⁸⁶ One of the El Shaddai elder's description demonstrates how this was in reaction to the "rowdy" revivalism and emphasis on the Holy Spirit which was prevalent in the Baptist churches:

We received a SOS call from Zunheboto, one of the main towns of Nagaland. There a handful of believers were put into trouble by the Christians who were bent upon the unscriptural customs of Christianity... So we sent Bro. Daniel Rai to lend a hand... Just a few years back rowdy, jumping, yelling Christianity visited this place. For a long time they wanted to have a true fellowship, but they could not find one against the mighty established churches of Nagaland. The place where these believers take fellowship is infested with people who shout "Glory! Hallelujah!!" When the spirit (I delete the word 'Holy' because, I believe, it is blasphemy) visit, people start doing uncomely things... These believers, though babes in the Lord, expressed their desire to start gathering together separately.²⁸⁷

D. Rai returned again in 1983, performed several baptisms, and started a third El Shaddai-related group.²⁸⁸

As of the 1990s, Nepali ministry in Nagaland has become even more diversified. Tikaram Sharma formed the Assam-Nagaland Border Area Nepali Baptist Fellowship from Dimapur in 1990, although the majority of the related churches are on the Assam side. In connection with the Nagaland Christian Revival Church (NCRC), at least two Nepali Revival Fellowships have been started. The NCRC started its own Bible School, called Kohima Bible School, in 1970,²⁸⁹ and in the 1980s accepted its first Nepali student. According to the NCRC Executive Secretary, "we have [Nepali] ministry in Sikkim, Bhutan,

Assam, Nepal, and Nagaland; good number of Nepali are working with me as Pastors, Evangelists and teachers. They are our converts and some of them we are supporting."²⁹⁰ The NCC from Manipur also has one church in Nagaland now linked with it, served by three Nepali workers.²⁹¹ There are also a few Hindi-language churches of mixed ethnic membership which include at least 25 percent Nepali each.

NEPALI CHRISTIAN OUTREACH FROM NAGALAND

The most significant corollary of the rapid growth of Nepali churches within Nagaland is the number of Nepali Christians who soon began to go out from there to other Nepali-speaking areas. The impetus for this move came again from the Naga Baptist churches, particularly the vision of Longri Ao in the formation of the NMM. In contrast to the NBCC's lack of discernible strategy concerning ministry among Nepali inside Nagaland, the NMM is a clear exception to this regarding ministry among Nepali outside Nagaland. As early as 1979 Longri Ao wrote to the United Mission to Nepal inquiring about opportunities for service there.²⁹² He also wrote to the National Missionary Society, in Madras, indicating the NMM's interest in working among the large Nepali-speaking resident populations of Sikkim and Bhutan, and in Nepal.²⁹³ Because of government restrictions against direct evangelism and church planting under which the UMN is compelled to work in Nepal, the NMM never joined the UMN. However they did send their first missionary to Nepal in the early 1980s, a young Ao Christian who went to Kathmandu for a few years. A group of Naga Christians were also sent out to Sikkim and Bhutan to conduct surveys and hold meetings, and Naga resident missionaries were soon working in both of these places. However the NMM found that Nepali evangelists were the most effective among their own people, and they were soon sent following in Naga footsteps. By the end of the 1980s the NMM had separate Nepali-led fields established in Nepal and Sikkim, and Nepali evangelists in Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, and on

the Bangladesh border. Daniel Subba, former pastor of the Nepali Baptist Church in Chumukidima, is in charge of the Nepal field, based in Itahari, East Nepal, and since 1990 has had a second NMM-supported evangelist working with him, Gopal Chhetri.²⁹⁴ The Sikkim field, now called "Sikkim Missionary Movement," is led by Nowin Karthak, who claims to have four BTh level trained Nepali colleagues working with him.²⁹⁵ In addition to those supported through the NMM, there are several other Nepali individuals converted in Nagaland who are now in active Christian ministry in Nepal, including at least six formerly connected with the Kohima Nepali Baptist Church. More recently, the NCRC also claims to have ministry among Nepali in Sikkim, Bhutan, Assam, and Nepal, in addition to Nagaland.²⁹⁶

NEPALI CHURCHES IN ASSAM: POST-MISSION ERA

Ironically, of the historic churches in present-day Assam, it was the Presbyterians in the North Cachar Hills, only added to the Presbyterian field in 1905 and lacking any mission era involvement among Nepali, who first began to reach out to Nepali during the 1970s. According to Rev. H. Thiek, Executive Secretary of the CHT Synod, they started work among the Nepali from 1974.²⁹⁷ However, what his assertion is based on is unclear. Documents already mentioned give no indication of any officially recognised or organised outreach by the CHT Synod at that time. Thiek's description of how Nepali started becoming Christians is through physical healings: "The Lord performed miracles among them from that year. A number of sick people were healed through the prayer of Christians and many began to open their hearts to the Gospel."²⁹⁸ This is very similar to the descriptions of the revivals that swept through Nagaland in the 1970s, and may indicate a spontaneous movement to Christ, in which the local North Cachar Presbyterian churches' main role was follow-up. From the late 1970s the first two Nepali evangelists were appointed in the CHT Synod -- Premnath Upadhaya and Prem Kumar Rai.²⁹⁹ About the same time, the first

documented fellowship specifically for Nepali Christians in Assam, Sarkari Bagan Fellowship, was also formed under the CHT Synod.³⁰⁰ But gradually Christians of other ethnic communities joined this fellowship, the Nepali became a minority, and meetings began to be held in Haflong Hindi rather than the Nepali language. It was not until 1986 that a new proposal was made by a young Nepali Christian, Kailash Kumar Chhatry, to start a separate fellowship for Nepali Christians in the Haflong area. Chhatry was ministering as Pro-Pastor in Sarkari Bagan Fellowship at the time, having recently returned from Aizawl Theological College with a BTh. His proposal was accepted, and permission was granted by the Haflong Presbytery in February 1987 to open a Nepali language branch-church of Haflong Presbyterian Church. But no land or funds were made available to them. One of the poor Nepali Christians gave a portion of her land, and the people built themselves a small thatched church, which was dedicated in June of the same year.³⁰¹ Chhatry pastored this church, Boildhura Nepali Christian Fellowship, until 1989 when he was ordained. In the meantime he went on to become the first local Nepali in NE India to earn a BD degree. He was also the first Nepali ordained minister under the CHT Synod. However, since then he has been serving as Headmaster-cum-pastor at Kumacherra Mission Middle-English School, Cachar, not among Nepali.³⁰² Boildhura Nepali Christian Fellowship continues to be the only Nepali fellowship in connection with the CHT Synod, and is looked after by Pro-Pastor Somnath Upadhaya. From the mid-1980s there have also been CHT sponsored outreaches led by Nepali evangelists, both brothers of Somnath Upadhaya, in two other places in N. Cachar, Umrangso and Mahur.³⁰³ Writing in 1992, Rev. Thiek noted:

There are about 300 Nepali Christians in the C.H.T. Synod area which covers the districts of North Cachar Hills, Cachar, Karbi Anglong and the border areas of the states of Manipur, Nagaland and Meghalaya. These Christians are very thinly scattered and it has been very difficult to organize them.³⁰⁴

These include many in the interior areas of N. Cachar who have been absorbed

among the local hill tribes and embraced the Christian faith.

Of the Baptist Associations within the Assam Baptist Convention under the CBCNEI (South Bank), none of them reports having work among Nepali, although there are a few individual Nepali Christians mixed in with their congregations. Even around the Tangsa Baptist Church Association in Upper Assam, where it is noted that "surrounding Lakla our Mission Centre there are Nepali majority, they are Hindu," they have no ministry directed at Nepali.³⁰⁵ Of the Associations in the NBBCA (North Bank), only in Darrang is there a small Nepali work, the result of the conversion of a local Nepali village woman, Sharon Meena Rai, when she visited relatives in Nepal in 1987, and her subsequent personal desire to return and preach to her own people in Darrang.³⁰⁶ There was Nepali evangelism in the Darrang area before that time, first by an NEB team in 1949, then almost 35 years later a month-long outreach by a Nepali church from Siliguri, reportedly organised by a local Baptist Association.³⁰⁷ Siliguri Church sent its Assistant Pastor Dawa Sada to work in Darrang for two years, but there was no significant response until after Meena Rai's return in 1989. When the Darrang Baptist Churches Association (DBCA) heard of her preaching, they began to support her as an evangelist, and she soon founded a Nepali church at Chanmari village, which is now under the DBCA.³⁰⁸ Since then Miss Rai has also begun outreach to Nepali in the Garo Hills of Meghalaya. In this one isolated case of a Baptist Association supporting work among Nepali, it was circumstantial, a following up of the conversion of a single young woman in their midst. Perhaps the more general lack of involvement by Baptists in Assam is because of their own struggle for existence in the midst of the strongly resistant Hindu Assamese of the Brahmaputra Valley.

Except for limited outreach through the CHT Synod, in an area populated by diverse tribals, the historic local churches of present day Assam have had negligible involvement in Nepali ministry. Nevertheless, more than 25 small Nepali Christian congregations can be counted in the different districts of Assam

today. Where are they, and where have they come from?

The majority are the result of spontaneous growth and Nepali-to-Nepali evangelism. They can be found along the Nagaland border area with Assam, having sprung up as an overflow of the earlier revival of the 1970s among the Naga Baptist churches which resulted in active evangelisation of Nepali as well. Although the extended influence into Assam was partly unprompted, historically part of it can be traced to the mission vision of Longri Ao, Executive Secretary of the NBCC. From 1979 he worked hard to motivate both the Naga Baptist churches and the Assam Baptist Convention leaders towards the evangelisation of Assam.³⁰⁹ This included sending NMM missionaries, of which four were in Karbi Anglong by 1979, an area bordering Nagaland where there is a significant Nepali population.³¹⁰ These developments immediately preceded the emergence of Nepali fellowships on the Assam side of the border. Most of the Nepali churches in this area of Assam are currently related to one of two independent associations of Nepali churches in the NE -- the "Assam Nepali Baptist Fellowship," sister to the NBIS in Nagaland and NBA in Manipur started by James Shankar of Manipur; or the more recent "Assam-Nagaland Border Area Nepali Baptist Fellowship" organised in 1990 by Tikaram Sharma of Dimapur, Nagaland -- both with little formal structure, and formed mostly for the purpose of fellowship. The latter has earlier connections with David Mangratee of Darjeeling, where Sharma attended his Bible School, and then was supported by him as a pastor in Nagaland. Mangratee went into Golaghat District after several local Nepali were converted in the aftermath of the Naga revival in the late 1970s. He took on the support of a handful of Nepali evangelists and churches through WME until the mid-1980s, including a church in Karbi Anglong District. Several of those now in Sharma's group were formerly associated with Mangratee. Shankar's group from Nagaland seem to have been the most aggressive evangelistically into Assam, establishing churches in Golaghat and Karbi Anglong Districts. One example is seen in the establishing of a new Nepali

church in Ladigar, Sibsagar District of Assam, by K.M. Chhetri when he was still the NBIS pastor of Tuensang Nepali Baptist Church in Nagaland. Over the years shifting alliances can be traced between those related to David Mangratee, James Shankar, and more recently Tikaram Sharma, and they receive financial support from a variety of sources, especially from Naga churches. The strongest of the Nepali Baptist churches in Karbi Anglong are reportedly supported by the Lotha Naga Baptist Churches Association. They have sent at least two young people to the Nepal Bible Ashram in Kathmandu, and the current Pastor has a BTh from Mokokchung, Nagaland.

A few Nepali churches have been started as specific mission outreaches from denominational churches among the tribals in the neighbouring hill states: 1) Gorkha Baptist Church, Guahati, started in 1985 as a mission outreach of the KBC in Manipur, by Nepali evangelist Man Bah. Khatri;³¹¹ 2) three small Nepali churches in Dhuburi District, started since 1989 through the Zoram Baptist Mission of Mizoram as part of a plan to target Nepali as one of three "tribal" groups in the District;³¹² 3) Baigazin Nepali Church, Silchar, Cachar District, started in 1985 by Nepali evangelist Kumar Sharma, sent by the Mizo Synod.³¹³ It was natural for the Mizo Synod to send the first Nepali evangelist to Cachar, rather than the CHT, as from 1974 "all matters relating to the administration and evangelisation of the Cachar area (were) handed over to the Mizo Synod."³¹⁴ These churches are scattered widely, in areas of high Nepali population, but where there was no one else involved in Nepali ministry when they arrived. They are also a living demonstration of the growing mission vision of the churches in NE India.

In addition, other indigenous churches and missions from the surrounding hill states have sponsored either Nepali or local tribal evangelists among Nepali in Assam, including the Evangelical Convention Church from Manipur, Mission for Christ from Mizoram, the Nagaland Missionary Movement, and Kuki Baptists from Manipur. ECC involvement followed the marriage of a Nepali Bible School

graduate, Samuel Lama, to a local Naga woman, a member of ECC. They were subsequently sent out to Karbi Anglong District about 1990 and started Bethany Nepali Church.³¹⁵ According to one source, the ECC also supported an earlier evangelist in Karbi Anglong during the late 1970s, Rabilal Sharma, who was converted there, then went to Manipur in 1979.³¹⁶ Mission for Christ had a Mizo evangelist among Nepali in Dhuburi District, who was based alongside the Zoram Baptist Mission, until he was transferred to Siliguri the end of 1992.³¹⁷ The NMM began to support at least two workers among Nepali in Assam in recent years: Cornelius Bishwakarma, formerly with David Mangratee, in Golaghat District; and Pradip Tathi from Orissa, a fluent Nepali speaker based in Dimapur.³¹⁸ According to P. Kipgen of the KBC, in addition to the Gorkha Baptist Church in Guahati, they have also supported a Nepali evangelist, Chandra Bah., in Karbi Anglong District of Assam since 1991.³¹⁹

Additionally, at least five Nepali churches in Assam are now affiliated with the Nepali Christian Church (the Nepali branch of the KCC in Manipur), and are located from Silchar to Karbi Anglong.³²⁰ In contrast to the churches above, which were started through tribal denominations as specific mission outreaches to Nepali, at least three of the NCC churches in Assam were started by other groups and only later sought affiliation with the NCC. Neighbouring districts of Assam seem to be the place into which the NCC is seeking to expand from Manipur, or at least to take existing Nepali fellowships under their wing. None of the Nepali leaders of the five NCC churches in Assam has any Bible training, and only one has been designated as a pastor, again demonstrating the low priority given to training of Nepali leadership among the Nepali branches of most denominational churches in the NE. The NCC branch of the KCC's extension into Assam also points up the influence of Kukis in the spread of Christianity among Nepali -- already seen in the early examples of Nepali Christians in N. Cachar from the 1960s.

A few congregations in Assam are the result of recent political tensions

and anti-foreigner agitations which have pushed tens of thousands of Nepali out of their homes into neighbouring Assam. Even as Assam was the hotbed of early anti-foreign movements in NE India from the 1970s, it has also become the recipient of displaced Nepali from neighbouring areas in more recent years. After the Nongpoh Nepali Presbyterian Church was burnt to the ground during the anti-Nepali agitations of 1987 in Meghalaya, and the local Nepali population fled, a few families from the church settled in Assam, about three hours east of Guahati. They started meeting together again, and now have a former Bibleman from Shillong to help them. But more recent ethnic tensions within Bhutan have caused the most significant displacement of Nepali (Southern Bhutanese) Christians. In one case a whole congregation from the Bhutan side of the border moved into Assam for the sake of security; in two other places significant numbers of displaced S. Bhutanese Christians now make up the majority in mixed ethnic congregations, one served by a Nepali pastor.³²¹ There are also untraceable numbers of individual Christians who have been scattered across the border into Assam and are now most probably without fellowship. The largest portion of the S. Bhutanese Christians affected have been dispersed into W. Bengal and refugee camps set up in E. Nepal (see Chapter 5 on Bhutan).

Finally, there are two young El Shaddai Nepali assemblies in Assam, according to the El Shaddai headquarters in Kalimpong.³²²

As can be seen, the above 25 plus Nepali churches are widely scattered across Assam, with the largest geographical grouping being along the border with Nagaland and Manipur. Their establishment is not the result of any coordinated effort. Rather, they are a smorgasbord of mostly small, independent congregations, with little inter-relationship between each another and largely unaware of each others' existence (except those in localised groupings as Shankar's and Sharma's Nepali Baptist Associations, or the NCC). The only "home-grown" (within Assam) Nepali church and leadership is within the CHT Synod, where local converts were trained up to minister among their own people,

ordained, and are being supported locally. Otherwise, at least two-thirds of the Nepali pastors and evangelists active in Assam today are from neighbouring states, mainly Nagaland and Manipur, and a few from Mizoram. Further, they are all young churches, none more than 15 years old. The Nepali population of Assam is like a mission field for other Nepali churches of NE India, as well as for denominational and indigenous NE Indian missions.

NEPALI IN ARUNACHAL PRADESH

Originally known simply as part of the "Tribal Areas" to a handful of British officials in Shillong, current day Arunachal Pradesh (AP) was largely ignored as the British expanded their interests in Assam. The establishment of the Inner Line Regulation in 1873 formalised its isolation, and access to all outsiders, including plainsmen from Assam, was strictly regulated. The British attitude towards its tribal inhabitants is typified by a statement in the 1880 Assam Frontier Tract Regulation that it was "frequented by barbarous or uncivilized tribes."³²³ It later came to be known as the North East Frontier Agency (NEFA), over which the British exercised only the barest minimum of administration. In turn, many of the various tribes inhabiting NEFA lived in virtual isolation from the outside world, retaining their indigenous cultural practices and separate languages.

Following Indian Independence there were arduous efforts to bring NEFA under effectual administration, but at the same time to protect the local tribals from outside encroachment and exploitation. Because there were no development efforts in NEFA before this period, there were practically no medical or educational facilities; not even a common language or social-political structure united the conglomeration of tribes spread across the vast land area of over 81,000 square kilometers.³²⁴ NEFA only achieved the formal status of a Union Territory in 1972 and its name was changed to Arunachal Pradesh. It finally became a full-fledged state of India in 1987.

The push for NEFA's development from the 1950s brought two significant decisions which also resulted in a flow of Nepali ethnics into the hills: the decision to build roads to connect NEFA with Assam and to enable a local Division Headquarters to be set up; and the strengthening of the Assam Rifles to five battalions within NEFA. The former demanded a body of labourers, the large part of which were made up of Nepali who flowed in through Assam. The latter was for protection of the northern border, the need for which was brought into sharp relief with the China-India conflict of 1962 when the Chinese crossed into NEFA, and included many Gurkha soldiers.

In addition, Rustomji recalls a policy "to settle the seemingly empty spaces of NEFA with ex-servicemen of the martial races" as a "line of defense" against any future attacks.³²⁵ He specifically noted, "A small colony of Gurkha ex-servicemen of the Assam Rifles was indeed settled in an uninhabited tract in eastern Arunachal Pradesh..."³²⁶ A.C. Sinha's study of Nepali in NE India also mentions three settlement sites for ex-Gurkhas in AP.³²⁷ These Gurkhas, together with Nepali surveyors sent out from Shillong alongside the Army, were about the only Nepali who reached the interior of NEFA before the 1960s.

The major influx of Nepali into AP has been to meet the heavy demand for labourers, especially for road building and construction with the PWD. A few are in business or dairy farming, or hold government posts, and they all must have special permits or identification in order to travel in and out of the state. In relation to the rest of NE India, the Nepali in AP have the most uncertain existence, and few have been able to settle there due to strict maintenance of the policy of protecting the local population from encroachment. This has meant both stringent border checks and denial of land to outsiders. Even Nepali who came from the late 1950s to take up proffered government posts (because there were no local people yet qualified) have had difficulty. For example, Dev Kumar Chhetri's father, an ex-Gurkha who had a job with the Education Department,

was posted to NEFA in 1961, and moved his family to be with him in 1969.³²⁸ In over thirty years of residence and service he was not able to get land, and the future of his children is very uncertain. In another case, a Sherpa man who left Nepal with his family over twenty years ago in search of work found his way to AP and got a job with the PWD. His wife also worked alternately on a road gang smashing rock and as a daily wage earner cutting paddy. Through their combined efforts they were able to send their children to school and eventually to build a simple house on government land. But later they were forced off the land in a local "sons of the soil" movement, and found themselves in a more precarious situation than ever.³²⁹ In this way, even as the Nepali population in AP increased significantly from the 1960s, to the extent of the Nepali language becoming "the language most frequently spoken...as a mother-tongue,"³³⁰ they are largely treated as outsiders and interlopers.

CHRISTIANITY IN AP

The influence of Christianity in AP has also been mainly since development efforts were begun in the area. Although there were sporadic attempts by Christian missionaries from as early as the 1830s to reach the tribals of the AP mountains, it has remained officially closed to non-indigenous faiths until the present day. However, with the beginning of development efforts, AP tribals began to be converted to Christianity. This was not through outside Christians coming in, either Western or Indian missionaries, but rather through the influence of young Arunachali who began to travel outside of AP, especially for education. Others traveled across the border into Assam for trade, medical attention, etc. In these places they often encountered Christianity for the first time, particularly students in Shillong or medical patients in Christian hospitals as at Tezpur. Lay evangelism soon became the main means of the spread of Christianity in AP through these neo-converts.

From some quarters there was ready response and from others there was

severe opposition. The rapid growth in conversions to Christianity prompted a reactionary anti-conversion law in 1978 called the "Arunachal Pradesh Freedom of Religion Act" (originally titled "Arunachal Freedom of Indigenous Faiths Bill").³³¹ Reportedly its purpose was not so much to protect "indigenous faiths" as to exclude Christianity and to clear the way for Hinduisation. According to Pushparajan, subsequent to its passage certain "Internal Instructions" were issued by the local government, "that those who renounced their traditional faith and accepted the Christian faith would do so at their own cost for opportunities of education, jobs, and social welfare..."³³² Nevertheless, although the 1971 Census of India only recorded 3,684 Christians in AP, by the 1981 Census there were 27,306 Christians recorded. The incidence of conversions and subsequent persecution is attested not only by Christian sources, for example through missionary letters, a report by the NEICC Secretary, and an article in Indian Missiological Review,³³³ but also by the renowned anthropologist, Furer-Haimendorf.³³⁴

Since the 1980s, response to Christianity seems to have boomed, as in the other tribal areas of NE India. The Mizo Church tried since the early 1960s to open a mission field there, but were not allowed to do so by the government. This prompted a leading Mizo church leader in 1971 to write that "the entire area is still closed to the Word of God."³³⁵ But now evangelists, particularly from Nagaland and Mizoram, have secured firm footholds and it is claimed that a small church or fellowship can be found in most villages.

In this context, a few Nepali in AP have also embraced Christianity. However, like the local tribal neo-converts before them, they have often been converted outside of the state. For example, Dev Kumar Chhetri was converted after leaving his home in AP and going to Delhi. He was subsequently forced out of his strict Hindu home in AP, and ended up going to Kathmandu in a reverse migration. There he has been made a full-time worker of Putali Sadak Church.³³⁶ Before his conversion, he attests that his family had never met a

Nepali Christian, and he has only met two or three since that time within AP (although he admittedly has spent only a few months there since his conversion). In another example, a Nepali Christian man and his family were posted to Itanagar in 1979, just shortly after his baptism in Shillong.³³⁷

The author has also come across reports of two small Nepali Christian fellowships: one in the capital of Itanagar, and another in a village area among forestry workers. But these reports have not been able to be substantiated. Upon inquiry with Rev. A.K. Sangma, Executive Secretary of the North Bank Baptist Christian Association which has two constituent bodies in AP, in Subansiri and Siang districts, "There is not any Nepali Church/Fellowship under NBBCA at present."³³⁸

The only clearly documented incidence of a group of Nepali Christians in AP is in conjunction with the Tangsa Baptist Churches Association based at Lakla, Tinsukia District in Upper Assam. Molem Ronrang describes those living among the Tangsa within AP:

There are 22 Nepali Christian families living in different villages in Tangsa area. Almost all of them got married with Tangsa women. They are farmers. There is no separate Nepali church or Christian fellowship, but they are members of the church where they belong - I mean members of the village church, mixed with the Tangsa... Many Nepalis living in Arunachal are farmers, mostly coming from upper Assam, working in Tangsa field on share crops/paddy production.³³⁹

It is likely that this type of situation is repeated in other parts of AP, where Nepali have been converted in the midst of local tribal Christians.

Although there clearly are individual Nepali Christians and their families scattered in different parts of AP, the difficult terrain, their assimilation with other local village churches, and their isolation from one another makes them very difficult to trace. Also, the author has not found any evidence of specific evangelistic outreach aimed at Nepali in AP. Although Nepali Christians in nearby Northeastern states such as Nagaland have expressed a desire to do evangelism in AP, the strict border crossing regulations make it very difficult.

According to one informant, most Christian ministry among Nepali resident in AP takes place along the Assam side of the border where they often go for trade purposes. However, the question may be asked if the greatest possibility of further conversions of Nepali to Christianity in AP is not among the increasingly Christianised tribal receptor communities, as has happened in other states of NE India, or the example of the Tangsa area of AP noted above?

ENDNOTES - CHAPTER 8

- (1) Downs, **MIGHTY WORKS**, 1971, 11-12.
- (2) Downs, **MIGHTY WORKS**, 1971, 16. Wylie (1854, 89) gives the date as 1835 when Rev. Nathan Brown first went to Assam.
- (3) Downs, **MIGHTY WORKS**, 1971, 28-29.
- (4) F. Downs, "The Church of Christ in North East India," National Christian Council Review," Vol. LXXXV, No. 9 (Mysore City: Wesley Press), Sept. 1965, 381-2.
- (5) Downs, **MIGHTY WORKS**, 1971, 82 and 86.
- (6) Morris, 1990, 66.
- (7) Morris, 1990, 75.
- (8) Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in North East India, **GOLDEN JUBILEE SOUVENIR**, 1926-1976 (Shillong, 1976), 39.
- (9) Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, **GOLDEN JUBILEE**, 1976, 11.
- (10) There was a small work among the Nepali in Shillong connected with the Welsh Presbyterians, but Shillong is the capital of the present day state of Meghalaya. It is dealt with in detail in another section of this chapter; see p.329ff.
- (11) Beth Allinger, letter home to Canada, from Shillong, 23 March 1947, in Beth Allinger Correspondence file, NCHP collection.
- (12) NBF, "Field Survey," TS, 1948, in NBF file, NCHP Collection.
- (13) Lily O'Hanlon and Hilda Steele, **HILLS AND VALLEYS** (Surrey: NEB, n.d.), 14-15.
- (14) Lily O'Hanlon and Hilda Steele, **EXCEPT THE LORD BUILD** (Surrey: NEB, n.d.), 30.
- (15) O'Hanlon and Steele, **HILLS AND VALLEYS**, 18.
- (16) O'Hanlon and Steele, **HILLS AND VALLEYS**, 23.
- (17) Allinger, letter home to Canada, from Shillong, 10 May 1947, in NCHP Collection.
- (18) Elaine Crane, letter to author, 26 Sept. 1988.
- (19) Allinger, letter to author, 29 Dec. 1992.
- (20) Allinger, letter home to Canada, 15 April 1947, in NCHP Collection.

- (21) Allinger, letter home to Canada, 28 Dec. 1947, in NCHP Collection.
- (22) "NBF Conference Report," TS, 1950, 3, in NCHP Collection.
- (23) Allinger, letter home to Canada, 11 March 1954, in NCHP Collection.
- (24) J. Warren Johnson, letter to author, 9 Feb. 1993.
- (25) "NBF Conference Reports," 1952 and 1954.
- (26) Allinger, letter to author, 29 Dec. 1992. Following is a list of the Baptist missionaries in Assam known to have cooperated with the NEB in Nepali ministry: Rev. Wilbur Sorley and Rev. Kurt Hagstrom, N. Lakhimpur, BGC; Warren Johnson, Bishwanath Ghat, BGC; Rev. John Selander, Sadiya, American Baptist.
- (27) O'Hanlon and Steele, HILLS AND VALLEYS, 26.
- (28) O'Hanlon and Steele, HILLS AND VALLEYS, 31.
- (29) Crane, letter to Elizabeth Franklin of Nepal Border Fellowship, NBF 1949 Correspondence file, in NCHP Collection.
- (30) Crane, letter to Dr. Harbord, 14 Feb. 1949, in NBF Correspondence file, NCHP Collection.
- (31) Allinger, letter to author, 29 Dec. 1992.
- (32) O'Hanlon, notation on her visit to N. Lakhimpur, "NBF Conference Report," 1950, 3; and Hilda Steele, notation on ministry in Assam, "NBF Conference Report," 1952, 4.
- (33) Allinger, letter home to Canada, 21 April 1950, in NCHP Collection.
- (34) Allinger, letter home to Canada, 11 March 1954, in NCHP Collection.
- (35) Allinger, letter to author, 29 Dec. 1992.
- (36) O'Hanlon and Steele, HILLS AND VALLEYS, 22-23.
- (37) Myron Weiner and Mary Katzenstein, INDIA'S PREFERENTIAL POLICIES (London: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1981), 115.
- (38) Allinger, letter to author, 29 Dec. 1992.
- (39) Allinger, letter home to Canada, 13 August 1956, in NCHP Collection.
- (40) Allinger, letters home to Canada, 2 Jan. 1958, 21 Jan. 1961; and Samuel Subba, interview with author, Shillong, 10 Dec. 1991.
- (41) Allinger, letter home to Canada, 22 June 1961, in NCHP Collection.
- (42) "NBF Conference Report," 1954, 7.
- (43) "NBF Conference Report," 1955, 3.
- (44) E. Pradhan, interview with author, Darjeeling, 5 May 1992.

- (45) "NBF Conference Report," 1950, 3.
- (46) K.M. Rai, interview with author, Kalimpong, 14 April 1992.
- (47) DDC News, Dec. 1971, 15.
- (48) Gaynor Newbery, "Notes of materials from the Presbyterian Church of Wales Archives, Aberystwyth," for the NCHP, TS, n.d.
- (49) G. Newbery, "Notes of materials," n.d. No reply or other follow-up to this letter was found in the Archives.
- (50) I.B. Thakuri, Mizo Synod Nepali evangelist, interview with author, Siliguri, Darjeeling District, 10 April 1993.
- (51) I.B. Thakuri, interview with author, 10 April 1993.
- (52) The author has only found documentation of one Nepali convert from this period, in two letters home to Canada from Shillong by Beth Allinger. On 2 Jan. 1958 she mentions Mani Kharki, who accepted the Lord in Guahati and was then seeking a transfer to Shillong. A year later she wrote that his wife had now joined him from Nepal, Samuel Subba was following them up, and they were both seeking baptism. Following their baptism they took the Christian names of Cornelius and Rebecca.
- (53) Nari K. Rustomji, *IMPERILLED FRONTIERS* (Delhi, 1983), 73.
- (54) A.C. Sinha, 1990, 227.
- (55) "Editors Note," in *THE GORKHA ASSOCIATION: SHILLONG, CENTENARY 1886-1986* (n.p., 1986).
- (56) "Editor's Note," in *GORKHA ASSOCIATION CENTENARY*, 1986.
- (57) Bishnu Lal Upadhaya, *AASAMAY NEPALIHARU* (Nepalis of Assam), (Kathmandu: Bhanu Prakashan, 2028), 51.
- (58) G.N. Pradhan, St. Anthony's College instructor, interview with author, Shillong, 19 Dec. 1991.
- (59) B.C. Allen, *ASSAM DISTRICT GAZETTEER: THE KHASI AND JAINTIA HILLS*, Vol. 10 (Allahabad, 1906), 81.
- (60) R. Robert Cunville, "A Comprehensive Plan for the Evangelization of North East India" (DMiss thesis, Fuller Theological Seminary), 1975, 229.
- (61) B.K. Roy Burman, *DEMOGRAPHIC AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILES OF THE HILL AREAS OF NORTH-EAST INDIA*, Census of India 1961 (New Delhi: Office of the Registrar General, 1970), 161.
- (62) K.S. Singh, *TRIBAL MOVEMENTS IN INDIA* (New Delhi: Manohar Publ., 1982), 371.
- (63) Weiner & Katzenstein, 1981, 23.
- (64) K.S. Singh, 1982, 70.
- (65) K.S. Singh, 1982, 70.

- (66) Allinger, letter home to Canada, 5 May 1970, in NCHP Collection.
- (67) Downs, MIGHTY WORKS, 1971, 11.
- (68) Downs, MIGHTY WORKS, 1971, 13.
- (69) B.C. Allen, ASSAM, in 1901 CENSUS OF INDIA, Vol. IV, 1984, 45.
- (70) M. McSwiney, ASSAM, in 1911 CENSUS OF INDIA, Vol. III, Part I Report, 37.
- (71) Morris, 1990, 52.
- (72) T. Bevan Phillips, letter to author, 11 Feb. 1987.
- (73) Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, GOLDEN JUBILEE, 1976, 4.
- (74) Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, GOLDEN JUBILEE, 1976, 5.
- (75) A. Chandra Sekhar, "Religion," in 1971 CENSUS OF INDIA, Series 1, Paper 2 of 1972, 2.
- (76) Dr. O.L. Snaitang, interview with author, 9 Nov. 1991.
- (77) Mr. Jywra, interview with author, Bible House, Shillong, 12 Dec. 1991.
- (78) K.I. Aier, THE GROWTH OF BAPTIST CHURCHES IN MEGHALAYA (Guahati: CLC, 1978), 114.
- (79) Aier, 1978, 114.
- (80) K.B. Thapa, Pastor of Nepali Christian Fellowship, Shillong, interview with author, 7 Dec. 1991.
- (81) Prof. G.N. Pradhan, interview with author, Shillong, 19 Dec. 1991.
- (82) Thomas Pradhan, "U Goman Singh--U Khristan Ba Nyngkong Eh Hapdengki Nepali" (Goman Singh--The First Among Nepalis to Become Christian) Ka Pateng Khristan, Shillong: KJP Synod official magazine, July 1971, 110-111.
- (83) Mission News, Nov. 1909.
- (84) Cunville, 1975, 230-231.
- (85) T. Pradhan, July 1971, 110-111.
- (86) S.J. Lama, son of J.B. Lama, interview with author, Shillong, 9 Dec. 1991.
- (87) In a note by the editor in THE GORKHA ASSOCIATION: SHILLONG, CENTENARY 1886-1986 (Shillong, 1986), it is stated that J.B. Lama was "born in 1890 at Haflong (Assam)... He came to Shillong in 1912 to enlist..." The place of birth may have been an assumption of the editor, or possibly declared by Lama on his enlistment papers. Regardless, it does confirm the date of his enlistment in Shillong given by his family, which is also when he met Goman Singh.

(88) Cunville, 1975, 231.

(89) The name of Ellen Hughes' companion from 1940 is variously spelled in different sources as 'Vitants' (Finnish Mission sources) 'Vibant' (Hughes' correspondence), 'Vitant' (Lindell in NBF correspondence 1943), 'Vittants' (Allinger's and Crane's correspondence with author); 'Villant' (SAM Himalayan Mission, 1947 handwritten list of missionaries), and 'Vittandt' (Himalayan Children's Home pamphlet). According to the latter she was an independent German missionary who later married Rev. G. Tharchin La, a Tibetan pastor, in 1956. She was originally with the Baltic Evangelical Mission, worked with Ellen Hughes in Shillong for a few years during the 1940s, then went to Baksaduar with the Finnish Mission during the 1950s before marrying Tharchin.

(90) Ellen Hughes, letter to Dr. Harbord, 22 July 1948, in NBF Correspondence 1948 file, NCHP Collection.

(91) Ellen Hughes, letter to NBF Secretary, 25 March 1950, in NBF Correspondence 1950 file, NCHP Collection; and J.E. Wynne Davies, Presbyterian Church of Wales, letter to author, 21 Dec. 1992.

(92) According to Beth Allinger (letter to author, 29 Dec. 1992) a WEC missionary who knew Ellen Hughes personally in Shillong in the 1940s, "The Mission could not have her back, but she had private means and came back on her own (no visas or permits necessary during British Raj days) and bought quite a large piece of property in Laitumkhrach." This is borne out by Rev. J.E. Wynne Davies' (letter to the author, 21 Dec. 1992) review of the "Historical Journal of the Presbyterian Church of Wales" in which he only found references to Hughes' work running a school for European and Euro-Asian children in Shillong between 1900 and 1906; although there is a correspondence file on her covering the years 1891-1961 in the Calvinistic Methodist Archives.

(93) Allinger, letter to author, 29 Dec. 1992.

(94) E. Hughes, Correspondence 1891-1961, no.27,301 Foreign Mission Manuscripts, Calvinistic Methodist Archives, National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth, Wales, UK.

(95) E. Hughes, letter to Dr. Harbord, 22 July 1948, in NBF Correspondence 1948 file, NCHP Collection.

(96) E. Hughes letter to Harbord, 22 July 1948.

(97) E. Hughes, letter to Harbord, 22 July 1948.

(98) Nepal Border Fellowship, "Field Survey," MS, 1948, in NBF files, NCHP Collection.

(99) Allinger, letter home to Canada, 10 Jan. 1948, in NCHP Collection.

(100) Wellburn Manners, Pastor of Mawkhar Presbyterian Church, interview with author, Shillong, 13 Dec. 1991.

(101) Manners, interview with author, 13 Dec. 1991.

(102) Because of the Khasi and Jaintia being matriarchal societies, the children are ethnically identified by their mothers' blood line. But J.B. Lama's

own strength of personality is seen by the fact that even though his wife was Jaintia, his children all speak fluent Nepali and identify themselves by their father's Nepali title, Lama.

(103) Cunville, 1975, 231.

(104) W. Shullai and Tymmen Basan, KA HISTORY JONG KA BALANG MAWKHAR (History of Mawkhar Church) 1871-1978 (Shillong: Mawkhar Presbyterian Church, 1979), 14-15.

(105) Shullai and Basan, 1979, 14-15.

(106) O'Hanlon & Steele, HILLS AND VALLEYS, 14.

(107) Perry, 1993 , 86, and n.116 on p.123 for a description of the school.

(108) O'Hanlon and Steele, EXCEPT THE LORD, 27.

(109) Crane, letter to author, 26 Sept. 1988.

(110) O'Hanlon and Steele, EXCEPT THE LORD, 79.

(111) NEB Prayer Letter, TS, Jan. 1949, in NEB files, INF Archive, CSCNWW, New College, Univ. of Edinburgh.

(112) Allinger, letter to author, 23 March 1988.

(113) Allinger, letter home to Canada, 10 Jan. 1948, in NCHP Collection.

(114) Ellen Hughes, letter to Dr. Harbord, 22 July 1948, in NBF Correspondence 1948 file, NCHP Collection.

(115) "NBF Conference Report," 1953, 2.

(116) Allinger, "Before the Opening of Nepal," INF Orientation, Pokhara, Nepal, cassette recording, n.d., in NCHP Collection.

(117) Allinger, "Before the Opening", cassette.

(118) Jonathan Lindell, "Out-Line of Missionary Work on the Nepal Border," MS, n.d., in NCHP Collection.

(119) Allinger, "Before the Opening," cassette.

(120) Allinger, letter to author, 29 Feb. 1992.

(121) Allinger, letter to author, 29 Feb. 1992.

(122) K.B. Thapa, interview with author, 11 Dec. 1991.

(123) Cunville, 1975, 232.

(124) Rev. Thomas Pradhan, letter to author, 4 July 1993.

(125) Jowai Nepali fellowship committee members, interview with author, Jowai, 17 Dec. 1991.

(126) T. Pradhan, letter to author, 4 July 1993.

- (127) Rev. S. Wollington, "Ka Jingplie Ia Ka Skul Nepalese Ki Kynthei Synod Ha Larkang Kaikhuti - Ri Lyngngam" (Report on the Opening Ceremony of a School for Nepalese at Larkang Kaikhuti of Lyngngam by Women's Wing of the KJP Synod), Ka Pateng Khristan, July 1969, 135.
- (128) Cunville, 1975, 231.
- (129) N.B. Chhetri, "Report from the Bibleman on His Work among the Non-Khasis under the KJP Synod," TS, 11 March 1987, in NCHP Collection.
- (130) Cunville, 1975, 232.
- (131) N.B. Chhetri, "Report from the Bibleman," 11 March 1987.
- (132) "Ka Jingtei hapteng ki Non-Tribal ha Shillong" (Mission Work for the Non-Tribals in Shillong), in KA REPORT KA EVANGELISM DEPARTMENT (Shillong: KJP Synod, 1988), 4.
- (133) Stanley Wall, letter to Dale Leathead of WEC in Darjeeling, 11 May 1953, in NBF Correspondence file, NCHP Collection. Wall spelt the name of the village as Umyngka, saying it was about four miles outside of Shillong, in Upper Shillong area.
- (134) "Minutes of the Executive Committee held at Shillong," in ASSEMBLY OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN NORTH EAST INDIA: MINUTES OF THE TWENTY-NINTH SESSION, held at Jatinga, Cachar Hill Tribes Synod, Assam, 19-22 April 1990, 70.
- (135) T. Pradhan, letter to author, 4 July 1993.
- (136) Shanpru, former Director of Evangelism Department of KJP Synod, interview with author, Shillong, 12 Dec. 1992.
- (137) N.B. Chhetri, "Report from the Bibleman," 11 March 1987.
- (138) Shanpru, interview with author, 12 Dec. 1992.
- (139) "Ka Jingtei hapteng," KA REPORT KA EVANGELISM DEPARTMENT, 1988, 4; and "Ki Khristan Nepali ka Shillong" (Nepali Christians of Shillong), Ka Pateng Khristan, Dec. 1988, 187.
- (140) Shakespear, 1929, 5.
- (141) Morris, 1990, 77.
- (142) Reid, 1976, 9.
- (143) Chakravorty, 1981, 59.
- (144) Col. E.B. Elly, MILITARY REPORT ON THE CHIN-LUSHAI COUNTRY (1893; reprint, Calcutta: Firma KLM-Private Ltd. on behalf of Tribal Research Institute, Aizawl, 1978), 13.
- (145) Sen, Appendix 3, 1989, 103; citing Vansittart, 1890, 97-99.
- (146) A.C. Sinha, 1990, 228.
- (147) Suman Raj Timsina, NEPALI COMMUNITY IN INDIA (Delhi:

Manak Publ., 1992), 19, quoting ASSAM DISTRICT GAZETTEER, Lushai Hills, 1901, Chapter 3, 79.

(148) J.M. Lloyd, HISTORY OF THE CHURCH IN MIZORAM (Aizawl: Synod Publ. Board, 1991), 40.

(149) John Sharma, interview with author, Siliguri, India, 23 Dec. 1991.

(150) Chhangte Lal Hminga, THE LIFE AND WITNESS OF THE CHURCHES IN MIZORAM (Sarkawn, Mizoram: Literature Committee, Baptist Churches of Mizoram, 1987), 41.

(151) Timsina, 1992, 21.

(152) John Sharma, interview with author, 23 Dec. 1991.

(153) THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF MIZORAM (Geneva: World Alliance of Reformed Churches, 1989), 12.

(154) L.B. Thanga, "The Mizos and the Bible Society," National Christian Council Review Vol. XCI:5 (May 1971), 219-20.

(155) Morris, 1990, 82.

(156) Morris, 1990, 82.

(157) Hminga, 1987, 334.

(158) "Mizo Synod Report 1972-74," section on Home Mission, ASSEMBLY OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN NORTH EAST INDIA: MINUTES OF THE TWENTY-FIRST SESSION HELD AT HAFLONG (25-28 April 1974), 12-13.

(159) According to Ronald Adhikari (Padam Lal's son, letter to author, 18 March 1994), Padam Lal's father, Bishnu Lal Adhikari, was the first Christian in the family and migrated to Kalimpong from Nepal where he was employed as the Supervisor of Dr. Grahams' Homes Farm. His eight sons and two daughters were all born in Kalimpong. Three of the sons joined Gurkha regiments in the Indian Army.

(160) After Padam Lal's move to Mizoram he was involved in establishing seven Nepali elementary schools during the 1950s and 1960s. According to his son (Ronald Adhikari, letter to author, 18 March 1994), "Being a Christian gave him easier access to the Mizo government employees and similarly he could identify with the officials who came from outside of Lushai Hills." He had a desire to see the condition and status of the mostly illiterate Nepali of Mizoram improved, formed the Gorkha Sangh and served as its chairman for a few years. He was also active in Boy Scouts work.

(161) Lalpianga, Moderator, Mizoram Presbyterian Church, letter to author, 21 August 1992.

(162) "Nepali Christian Fellowship," Minutes of the first meeting held at the residence of Rev. V.L. Zaithanga, Aizawl, Mizoram, 16 Dec. 1974. Present at this planning meeting were Rev. Zaithanga (Chairman), P.L. Adhikari (Secretary), Gopal Gurung, Sherbahadur and Preamsingh (members). It was arranged for worship meetings of the NCF to be regularly held "for gathering Nepali people for service in their own language" at the 1st Assam Rifles

Church from 22 Dec. 1974. Speaker at the first meeting was George Walter.

(163) Mizoram Presbyterian Church, "A brief account of how Nepali Christian Fellowship was organised in Mizoram," TS, 20 Nov. 1985, in NCHP Collection.

(164) Hom Karna Puri, senior Mission for Christ evangelist, interview with author, Siliguri, India, 12 April 1993; and Indra Bah. Thakuri, eldest Mizo Synod Nepali evangelist, interview with author, Siliguri, 10 April 1993. Lalpianga, Moderator of the Mizo Synod, confirmed that Walter was a part of the NCF in its early days, and worked voluntarily distributing tracts over a wide area, but he was not appointed by the Synod.

(165) Lalpianga, letter to author, 21 August 1992.

(166) Lalpianga, letter to author, 21 August 1992.

(167) Hom Karna Puri was the first Nepali evangelist appointed by the Mizo Synod Mission Board, in 1978 after finishing a two year course at DHBS, but they commissioned him to go to Nepal as a missionary.

(168) Lalpianga, extracts from Mizo Synod records in letter to the author, 21 August 1992.

(169) "Report of the Mizo Synod 1980-1982," section entitled "Home Mission," ASSEMBLY OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH IN NORTH EAST INDIA: MINUTES OF THE TWENTY-FIFTH SESSION HELD AT THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH HAFLONG, NORTH CACHAR HILLS, ASSAM, (15-18 April 1982), 16.

(170) Presbyterian Church in North-East India, REPORT ON THE CONSULTATION ON THE MINISTRY (Silchar, 16-17 December 1981), 15. The figures given in this report roughly correspond with the verbal testimony of I.B. Thakuri when interviewed by the author, 10 April 1993, at the Siliguri Mission Centre. He noted only six Nepali Christians in the Aizawl NCF when he was appointed as an evangelist in 1979, and detailed at least 197 baptisms during nine Nepali crusades in 1981-82.

(171) Lalpianga, extract of Mizo Synod minutes in letter to author, 21 August 1992.

(172) Most of the funds for this distinctly 'Gorkhali' church were raised by Padam Lal Adhikari when he visited his son, Ronald, in America. It is now called the Gorkhali Presbyterian Church of Mizoram.

(173) John Sharma, interview with author, 23 Dec. 1991.

(174) Vanlalbela, Principal of Hindi Bible School, interview with author, Siliguri Mission Center, April 1993.

(175) Vanlalbela, interview with author, April 1993.

(176) Vanlalbela, interview with author, April 1993.

(177) Vanlalbela, interview with author, April 1993.

(178) The only earlier Nepali evangelists who went to Nepal from North East India were those in Shillong with the NEB. They returned to Nepal as

members of the NEB when they entered Pokhara in 1952 and 1953.

(179) H. Sangkhuma, interview with author, Shillong, India, 18 Dec. 1991.

(180) The Mizo Synod evangelists in Nepal who have left the Synod and joined Mission for Christ are: Hom Karna Puri in 1989, Dambar Bah. Rai in 1989, Hari K.C. in 1993, and Kishan Lal Sunar in 1993. Gopal Rai also left in 1993, and is now working in Jaigaon, on the border of Bhutan.

(181) Hminga, 1987.

(182) H. Thansanga, Non-Mizo Mission, Baptist Church of Mizoram, letter to author, 14 June 1993.

(183) H. Thansanga, letter to author, 23 March 1992.

(184) Surjelal Tamang, Non-Mizo Mission Nepali evangelist, letter to author, 18 Nov. 1992.

(185) Surjelal Tamang, letter to author, 18 Nov. 1992; and Rev. Darkhuma, Mizo Baptist Church in Shillong, interview with author, 14 Dec. 1991.

(186) H. Thansanga, letter to author, 23 March 1992. This roughly corresponds with the figures given by evangelist Surjalal Tamang (letter to the author, 18 Nov. 1992) of at least 158 Nepali families between the Non-Mizo fellowships.

(187) Darkhuma, interview with author, 14 Dec. 1991.

(188) Darkhuma, interview with author, 14 Dec. 1991.

(189) Lalchungnunga, President of Mission for Christ, letter to author, 12 March 1992.

(190) Rema Sailu and Lalremliana, Mission for Christ, interview with author, Siliguri, India, April 1993.

(191) K.M. Singh, HISTORY OF THE CHRISTIAN MISSIONS IN MANIPUR AND NEIGHBOURING STATES (New Delhi: Mittal Publ., 1991), 3.

(192) L.W. Shakespear, HISTORY OF UPPER ASSAM, UPPER BURMA, AND NORTH-EASTERN FRONTIER (London, 1914), 246-7.

(193) A.C. Sinha, 1990, 228.

(194) B.K. Roy Burman, 1970, 263.

(195) Mission News, Dec. 1943, 46.

(196) Chander Sheikhar Panchani, MANIPUR: RELIGION, CULTURE AND SOCIETY (Delhi: Konark Publ., 1987), 77.

(197) Lal Dena, CHRISTIAN MISSIONS AND COLONIALISM (Shillong: Vendrame Institute, 1988), 38. Downs (1971, 174) gives the date of these first baptisms as December 1914, and says the church was organised in 1916 after others were added.

- (198) Luikham, 1948, 25. Downs (1971, 174) also notes that "when the church was established it had 18 members, including a Gorkha."
- (199) Dena, 1988, 38.
- (200) Downs, MIGHTY WORKS, 1971, 160.
- (201) David Thapa, son of N.B. Isaac Thapa, interview with the author, Mirik, Darjeeling Dist., India, 14 March 1993.
- (202) K.A. Rai, Principal of DHBS, interview with author, 20 May 1992.
- (203) K. Chongloi, KCC missionary in-charge of the NCC, letters to author, 17 May and 11 Oct. 1993. According to DHBS records in Mirik, K. Chongloi attended a special one-month course in 1968.
- (204) K. Chongloi, letter to author, 11 Oct. 1993.
- (205) P. Kipgen, Mission Secretary, KBC, letter to author, 19 July 1993.
- (206) K. Chongloi, letter to author, 11 Oct. 1993.
- (207) S. Prim Vaiphei, letter to author, 5 March 1992.
- (208) "MBC Centre Church Report, Imphal," in MANIPUR BAPTIST CONVENTION: ANNUAL REPORT for 1984 (Imphal: MBC, 1986), 65. Although Supal Subba's support from Centre Church Women's Society stopped from 1985, after the NCF separated from MBC Centre Church in 1986, renaming itself the Gorkha Baptist Church, he was reengaged by them as an evangelist. At the time of his death in April 1993, he was still in charge of Mantripokhri Gorkha Baptist Church, having faithfully served as the first locally converted Nepali evangelist in Manipur for almost 20 years.
- (209) P. Kipgen, letters to author, 23 Sept. 1992 and 19 July 1993. In addition to Manisingh Rai of the original NCF members, Lall also baptised S.K. Sharma, General Secretary of the Gorkha Baptist Churches Fellowship, and R.K. Burman, an evangelist and pastor supported by KBC, among others.
- (210) James Shankar, personal handwritten testimony, Nov. 1993, in Manipur file, NCHP Collection.
- (211) James Shankar, "An Appeal," letter explaining the vision of "Punaru-
than Susamachar Prachar Sangati" (Resurrection Gospel Preaching Fellowship), n.d.[1984], in Manipur file, NCHP Collection.
- (212) Shankar, "An Appeal," n.d.[1984].
- (213) C.B. Baraily, NBA Executive Secretary, interview with author, Siliguri, India, 11 March 1992. P. Kipgen, Missions Secretary of the KBC, also names Shankar as one of three evangelists, the two others being Kuki, responsible for the conversion of most of the Nepali converts and evangelists in Manipur today.
- (214) K. Chongloi, letters to author, 17 May and 11 Oct. 1993.
- (215) S.K. Sharma, letter to author, 14 October 1992.
- (216) Tikaram Thapa, interview with author, Dharan, Nepal, 2 April 1993.

- (217) "MBC Centre Church Report, Imphal," in MBC ANNUAL REPORT for 1984, 67.
- (218) S.K. Sharma, letter to author, 14 October 1992.
- (219) S.K. Sharma, letters to author, 20 June and 14 October 1992.
- (220) P. Kipgen, letter to author, 23 Sept. 1992; and S. Prim Vaiphei, letter to author, 5 March 1992, where he wrote: "The MBC is not directly responsible for the evangelization of the Nepalis, the KBC is taking the responsibility."
- (221) Besides Chongloi's move to the ZBC (later called KCC), Pastor A. Lall, who had some pastoral responsibilities under the MBC for the NCF in its early days, evidently had decreasing direct Nepali involvement. Later he left the MBC and was appointed by the KBC as an evangelist for the Imphal area, but not particularly among Nepali. According to P. Kipgen (letter to author, 19 July 1993) Lall served the KBC in this capacity from July 1985 to September 1989.
- (222) Kuki Baptist Convention Report on "Mission and Evangelism," in MBC ANNUAL REPORT for 1984, 153.
- (223) KBC Report on "Mission and Evangelism," in MBC ANNUAL REPORT for 1984, 153.
- (224) P. Kipgen, letter to author, 23 Sept. 1992.
- (225) K.H. Mao, interview with author, Bible Translation Center, Shillong, India, 13 Dec. 1991. Thomas Limbu's support by the Mao Baptist Asso. was stopped in 1990.
- (226) "Thadou Baptist Asso. Report, Manipur and Assam 1984-5," in MBC ANNUAL REPORT for 1984, 126.
- (227) C.B. Baraily, interview with author, 11 March 1992.
- (228) C.B. Baraily, interview with author, 11 March 1992.
- (229) K.H. Mao, Bible translator from Manipur, interview with author, 13 Dec. 1991.
- (230) Daniel Subba, interview with author, Dharan, Nepal, April, 1993.
- (231) B. Lalhnuna, Manipur Presbyterian Synod, Executive Secretary, letter to author, 24 August 1992.
- (232) Tikaram Thapa, ECC senior Nepali evangelist, interview with author, Dharan, Nepal, 2 April 1993.
- (233) C.B. Baraily, interview with author, 11 March 1992.
- (234) C.B. Baraily; interview with author, 11 March 1992. The severe persecution of Meitei Christians was also confirmed in conversation with Dr. Saroj Parratt, May 1991.
- (235) K. Chongloi, letter to author, 11 Oct. 1993.

- (236) Downs, MIGHTY WORKS, 1971, 7.
- (237) Rustomji, 1983, 26.
- (238) Shakespear, 1914, 246-7.
- (239) Sen, Appendix 3, 1989, 103; citing Vansittart, 1890, 97-99.
- (240) Furer-Haimendorf, "The Position of the Tribal Populations in Modern India," in INDIA AND CEYLON, ed. Philip Mason, 1967, 185.
- (241) H.K. Barpurjari, PROBLEMS OF THE HILL TRIBES, NE FRONTIER 1873-1962, Vol. III (Guwahati: Spectrum Publ., 1981), 73.
- (242) Timsina 1992, 22; citing H.P.G. Rai, "Nagaland Man Nepali Jana Jivan," in Bijuwa, vol. 2:2, 1987, 6.
- (243) A.C. Sinha, 1990, 228. In 1866 the British had set up a headquarters at Samaguting (now Chumukidima), near modern Dimapur, to try and control the Angami. In 1875 it was shifted into the hills to Wokha, in latter day Mokokchung District, before the headquarters for the Political Officer was finally established at Kohima (Philip 1983, 18). This may be the reason for A.C. Sinha identifying Mokokchung as the earliest Gurkha settlement site in present day Nagaland.
- (244) Timsina, 1992, 2; citing H.P.G. Rai, "Nagaland Man Nepali Jana Jivan," in Bijuwa, Vol. 2:2, 1987, 6.
- (245) A.C. Sinha, 1990, 229-30; citing Confidential File No. C125/47, Political, Assam Secretariat, Fortnightly.
- (246) One informant, a former college lecturer in Darjeeling, reported that the Nagaland state government made an exhaustive list of all Nepali in Nagaland in the 1960s, and only those families on the list were allowed to stay. The author has not been able to independently confirm this.
- (247) Furer-Haimendorf, "Tribal Populations," in INDIA AND CEYLON, ed. Philip Mason, 1967, 205.
- (248) Mr. Sema, Bible translator, Shillong, interview with author, 11 Dec. 1991.
- (249) Rev. T.S. Nyuwi, Pochury Naga Bible translator, interview with author, Shillong, 7 Dec. 1991.
- (250) P.T. Philip, THE GROWTH OF BAPTIST CHURCHES IN NAGALAND 2nd ed. (Guwahati: CLC, 1983), 48.
- (251) Rustomji, 1983, 63.
- (252) Philip, 1983, 167.
- (253) Philip, 1983, 175.
- (254) Downs, MIGHTY WORKS, 1971, 155.
- (255) Philip, 1983, 133, quoting Elwin, 1961, 63.

(256) Downs, 1965, 380.

(257) Philip, 1983, 208. According to Philip, the Ao Association was the most outstanding Baptist Association for their mission-mindedness in the whole CBCNEI.

(258) O.M. Rao, LONGRI AO: A BIOGRAPHY, (Guwahati: CLC, 1986), 112.

(259) Rao, 1986, 114.

(260) Rao, 1986, 117.

(261) Mighito Sema, former Kohima Nepali Baptist Church pastor, "Nepali Baptist Church History, Kohima in Nagaland," trans, Avili Awomi from Sema Naga, 2 March 1992, in NCHP Collection.

(262) Rao, 1986, 126-7; citing Longri Ao's letter to Roger Frederikson, 22 March 1977.

(263) Rao, 1986, 126-129, contains lengthy quotations from Longri Ao's correspondence and a report to the NBCC describing what he called "the Holy Spirit revival."

(264) This conclusion is reached both through a review of the limited literature available, and interviews with both Naga and Nepali Christian leaders from Nagaland.

(265) According to the Census of India 1981, 16,790 people in Kohima, of a total of 24,918 in Nagaland, were recorded as speaking Nepali as their mother tongue.

(266) Mighito Sema, "Testimony of my Life and Ministry of God," trans. Avili Awomi from Sema Naga, handwritten MS, 2 March 1992, in NCHP Collection.

(267) Rev. Longri Ao, "Report of Nagaland Baptist Church Council 1977," Appendix VII in TRIUMPH OF FAITH IN NAGALAND, by Renty Keit-zar (Kohima: NBCC, 1987), 87-88.

(268) L.B. Rai, report in Jiwan Jyoti Prakashan newsletter, 17 December 1977, in NCHP Collection.

(269) M. Sema, interview with author, Kathmandu, 2 March 1992.

(270) Longri Ao, "Report of Nagaland Baptist Church Council 1977," 1987, 91.

(271) Benjamin Rai, interview with author, Shillong, 9 Dec. 1991; and Mohan Chhetri, interview with author, Kathmandu, 16 June 1992.

(272) Samuel Subba, interview with author, Shillong, 10 Dec. 1991.

(273) Solon Karthak, interview with author, London, September 1991.

(274) Benjamin Rai, interview with author, 9 Dec. 1991.

(275) T.S. Nyuwi, interview with author, 7 Dec. 1991.

- (276) T.S. Nyuwi, interview with author, 7 Dec. 1991.
- (277) C. Sewa, "Evaluation of NLTC Graduates," 1991.
- (278) C. Sewa, NCCC's Training Director, interview with author, Siliguri, 12 March 1992.
- (279) The earliest Nepali churches in the following locations initially all joined the NBIS in 1980: at Kohima, Mokokchung, Tuensang, Zunheboto, Chumukidima, and Wokha.
- (280) C. Sewa, "Evaluation of NLTC Graduates," 1991.
- (281) M. Sema, interview with author, 2 March 1992. Sema still retains the view that the Nepali churches in Nagaland need to be under the more mature Naga Baptist churches.
- (282) James Shankar, letter to Mr. Phuveyi Dozo, General Secretary NBCC, Kohima, n.d.(1980), in Nagaland file, NCHP Collection.
- (283) Shankar, letter to P. Dozo, NBCC (1980).
- (284) Of the 40 Nepali churches confirmed by at least two reliable sources each, only 12 of them were clearly NBIS-related. However, no official list could be obtained directly from NBIS. The Executive Secretary of their sister organisation in Manipur, the NBA, reported that NBIS has 22 affiliated churches in Nagaland (C.B. Baraily, interview with author, 11 March 1992).
- (285) El Shaddai, "List of Churches," 1992.
- (286) L.T. Fudong, "Circular Letter," El Shaddai, Kalimpong, 30 Sept. 1982, in NCHP Collection.
- (287) L.T. Fudong, "Circular Letter," El Shaddai, 30 Dec. 1982.
- (288) L.T. Fudong, "Prayer and Thanksgiving," Bulletin No. 3, El Shaddai, 13 July 1983.
- (289) Philip, 1983, 199.
- (290) Shiwoto Sema, NCRC Executive Secretary, letter to author, 29 August 1992.
- (291) K. Chongloi, letter to author, 17 May 1993.
- (292) Longri Ao, letter to UMN, 17 July 1979, cited by O.M. Rao, 1986, 122, n.4.
- (293) Rao, 1986, 122.
- (294) Vitoi Kappo, NMM Associate Secretary, letter to author, 4 March 1992.
- (295) Nowin Karthak, interview with author, Darjeeling, 15 May 1992.
- (296) Shiwoto Sema, letter to author, 29 August 1992.
- (297) H. Thiek, CHT Synod Executive Secretary, letter to author, 6 April

1992.

(298) H. Thiek, letter to author, 6 April 1992.

(299) Kailash Kumar Chhatry, the only ordained Nepali in the CHT Synod, letter to author, 13 August 1993, in NCHP Collection. Prem Kumar Rai left the Synod and joined the United Pentecostal Church after about three years, and is still serving with them as an ordained evangelist in Umrangso, Cachar hills, today.

(300) K.K. Chhatry, letter to author, 20 June 1993.

(301) K.K. Chhatry, letter to author, 20 June 1993.

(302) K.K. Chhatry, letter to author, 3 Feb. 1993.

(303) H. Thiek, letter to author, 6 April 1992; and K.K. Chhatry, letter to author, 20 June 1993.

(304) H. Thiek, letter to author, 6 April 1992.

(305) Molem Ronrang, Tangsa Baptist Churches Asso., Lakla, letter to author, 4 June 1993.

(306) Sharon Meena Rai, testimony in letter to author, 5 Aug. 1992.

(307) Pastor Enos Simick, Siliguri Church, interview with author, 13 March 1992; and Mrs. Mahabert, interview with author, 1 March 1992.

(308) Sharon M. Rai, letter to author, 30 Oct. 1992.

(309) Rao, 1986, 113.

(310) Rao, 1986, 114.

(311) G.P. Devkota, Nepali evangelist for Gorkha Baptist Church, Guahati, interview with author, 18 Dec. 1991; and P. Kipgen, KBC, letter to author, 23 Sept. 1992.

(312) Rev. C. Zatawna, Field Director of Assam Dhuburi Field, Zoram Baptist Mission, letter to author, 13 Feb. 1992.

(313) K.K. Chhatry, letter to author, 20 June 1993; and I.B. Thakuri, interview with author, 10 April 1993.

(314) Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, GOLDEN JUBILEE, 1976, 11.

(315) Mohan Chhetri, former NBA evangelist, interview with author, Kathmandu, 16 June 1992; and Tikaram Thapa, ECC senior Nepali evangelist, interview with author, Dharan, 2 April 1993.

(316) Tikaram Thapa, interview with author, 2 April 1993.

(317) Lalchungnunga, letter to author, 12 March 1992.

(318) Pradip Tathi, NMM evangelist, interview with author, 18 April 1993. Upon inquiry directly with NMM by the author, no reply has been received.

- (319) P. Kipgen, letter to author, 23 Sept. 1992. The author has found no independent confirmation of this report.
- (320) K. Chongloi, letter to author, 17 May 1993. For a fuller treatment of the NCC, see above, p.367-369.
- (321) The author is pledged to confidentiality concerning both the details of these churches and her sources of information, for the security of those involved.
- (322) El Shaddai, "List of Churches," 1992.
- (323) Manilal Bose, *BRITISH POLICY IN THE NORTH-EAST FRONTIER AGENCY* (New Delhi: Concept, 1979), 156.
- (324) N.K. Rustomji, "Sikkim, Bhutan and India's North-eastern Borderlands: Problems of Change," in *THE HIMALAYA*, ed. J.S. Lall 1981, 236.
- (325) N.K. Rustomji, "Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim and Bhutan," in *HIMALAYAN ENVIRONMENT AND CULTURE*, eds. Rustomji and Ramble 1990, 211.
- (326) Rustomji, "Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim and Bhutan," 1990, 211. This corresponds with a more recent report from a Mizo informant who lives in AP. He knows an Indian Army officer with a Nepali wife who is helping retired Gurkhas to settle on the border of AP with Myanmar, an extremely sensitive area where others are not allowed to go.
- (327) A.C. Sinha, 1990, 228.
- (328) Dev Kumar Chhetri, interview with author, 21 June 1992.
- (329) Gore Sherpa, letter to author, April 1991.
- (330) Roy B.K. Burman, 1970, 26.
- (331) A. Pushparajan, "Are Christian Conversions Communalistic?" in *Indian Missiological Review*, Vol. 6:4, Oct. 1984, 270.
- (332) Pushparajan, Oct. 1984, 270.
- (333) A. Pushparajan, Oct. 1984, 286-288. Robert Cunville, NEICC Secretary, letter to Frank Wilcox, UMN Director in Kathmandu, 26 Feb. 1972; and Beth Allinger, letters home from Shillong, 24 Feb. and July 1971, in NCHP Collection, CSCNWW, Univ. of Edinburgh.
- (334) Christoph von Furer-Haimendorf, *TRIBES OF INDIA: THE STRUGGLE FOR SURVIVAL* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1982), 306-8.
- (335) Thanga, 1971, 218,223,225.
- (336) Dev Kumar Chhetri, interview with author, 21 June 1992.
- (337) K.B. Thapa, letter to Beth Allinger, 4 April 1979, in B. Allinger correspondence file, NCHP Collection.
- (338) A.K. Sangma, letter to author, 26 July 1993.

(339) Molem Ronrang, Tangsa Baptist Churches Asso., letter to author, 4 June 1993.

CHAPTER 9 - GURKHALI CHRISTIANS IN BURMA*

NEPALI ENTER BURMA

The Anglo-Burmese War of 1824-26 not only drew the British into Assam, but also further eastward into Burma. There had been a British Resident at Rangoon from 1796, but only with the Treaty of Yandabo at the end of the War was any Burmese territory occupied. Following a second conflict a quarter of a century later, the British fully occupied Lower Burma and began to encourage Indian emigration and colonisation.¹ Pushed northward, King Mindon transferred his capital to Mandalay, the seat of Upper Burma, until his son took the throne and precipitated the 3rd Anglo-Burmese War. The young King Thibaw was deposed, and Upper Burma was formally annexed in March 1886, according to one British official, "to secure peace and prosperity" and for "our own imperial and commercial interests."² Burma had now been completely absorbed into the British-Indian Empire, and Gurkhas were used to help in the pacification of the tribals of Upper Burma, just as in the hill areas of Assam.

There were two groups of Gurkha soldiers alongside the British in Burma: 1) those in the regular British-Indian Army, including both Gurkha Rifle Regiments and the newly formed Burma Rifles; and 2) those recruited into the Burma Military Police from the late 1880s. The 42nd and 44th Gurkhas spearheaded the British move into the Chin Hills from Assam in the 1880s, then

*The modern name of Burma is "The Union of Myanmar," but for the ease of the reader the more commonly known name of Burma is used throughout the text of this chapter until the last section. Within Burma, ethnic Nepali commonly call themselves and are known by the larger society as "Gurkhali," to distinguish them from Nepali nationals. The term is rooted historically to the fact that most of the first Nepali into Burma were Gurkhas engaged in the defence forces. But in current usage it is a general term with no military connotations.

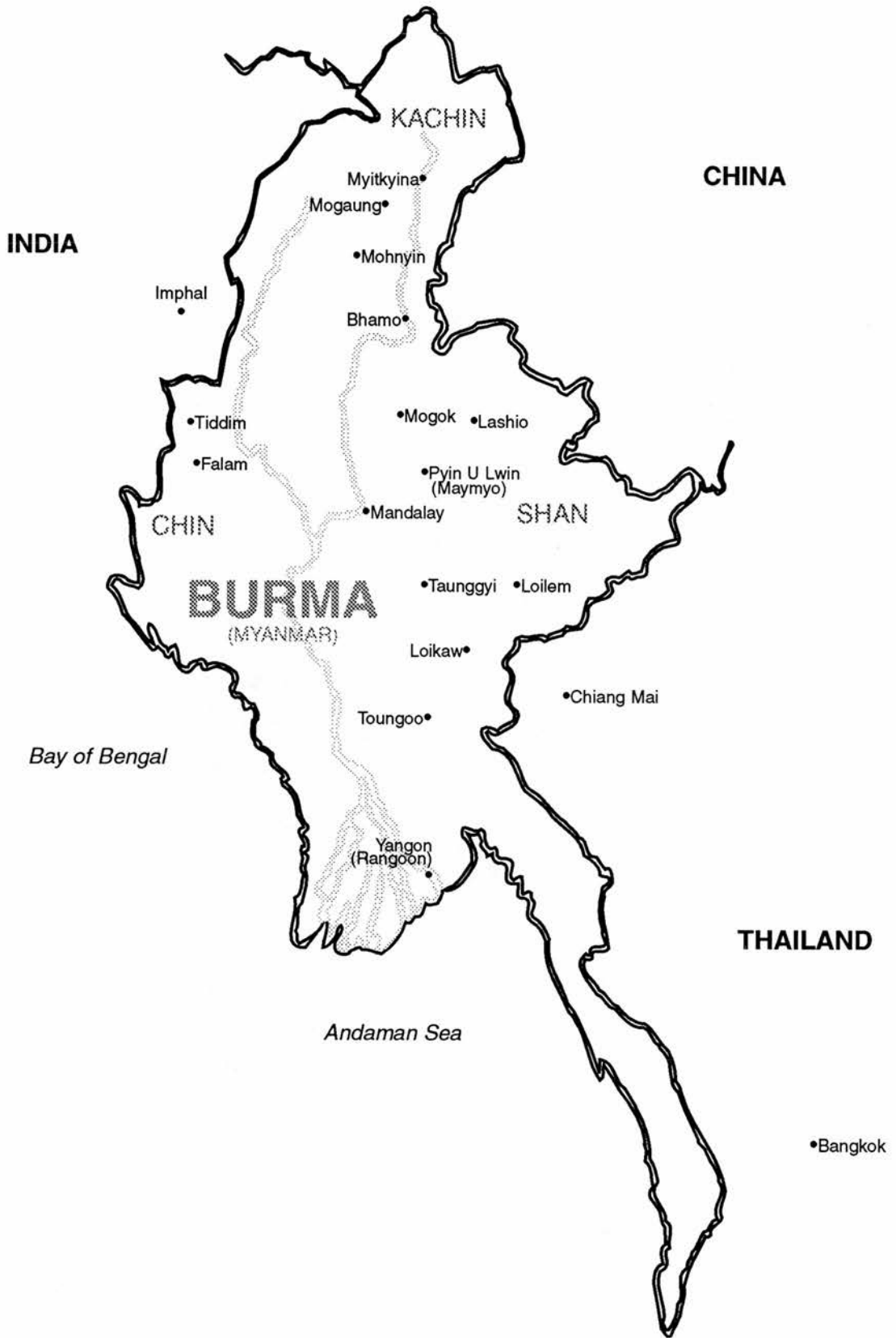


Figure - 8. Burma (Myanmar)

the 2-4th Gurkha Rifles were used in the Chin-Lushai Expedition of 1889-90.³ About the same time the 10th Gurkha Rifles were formed from among E. Nepal tribals, mainly Rai and Limbu, especially for Burma. Their Regimental home was established in Maymyo. Although the 2nd Battalion of the 10th Gurkha Rifles was transferred out of Burma to Quetta in 1905, the 1st Battalion remained in Maymyo, making it the nucleus of a Gurkha settlement area which has continued until today.

In the meantime, the first battalions of the Burma Rifles had been raised as part of the regular army. British officers "followed the easiest line and drew their recruits from the races which were familiar to them,"⁴ hence the inclusion of yet more Gurkhas. They also were primarily from E. Nepal. When Burma was officially separated from India in 1937, the Burma Rifles and its own ancillary services, together with the Military Police, made up Burma's defence forces. Prior to this Burmans were excluded from the regular units of the Army, but from this time they began to be recruited.⁵ The 2nd Battalion of the Burma Rifles was a "mixed" unit made up of Gurkhas and hill peoples of Burma. Tinker called it "the staunch old 2nd," describing how it was the one battalion which remained a firm fighting unit in the face of the Japanese advance during World War II, when most of the Burmese forces fell apart.⁶ During the War, more Gurkha units from India were rushed in, and over 5000 Gurkhas died in heroic attempts to repel the Japanese invaders.⁷ Many of those who came and survived the onslaught stayed on in Burma. When the Burma Army was formed in 1948, the 2nd Burma Rifles with its Gurkhas became the nucleus of the new army.⁸ When civil war flared up with the Karen tribals and their battalions mutinied, it was the Gurkhas along with local Kachin and Chin who helped to "save the day" for the government. The 4th Burma Regiment was formed as a Gurkha battalion during this time, and then used during the Chinese threat in 1950.⁹ These latter recruits have been drawn from the large number of domiciled Gurkhali, especially in Myitkyina and the Shan States, as recruitment from India ceased following Burmese

Independence. In addition, many of the British-Indian Army Gurkhas posted in Burma switched over and joined the Burmese Army. They had high hopes of promotion opportunities in view of their experience and demonstrated loyalty. By this time there were three types of Gurkha soldiers in Burma, according to place of birth: those originally from Nepal, those from India, and the second and third generation from Burma. As fate would have it, only those in the third category found it easy to survive in the new army, especially after a new rule was imposed in 1951 making it mandatory to be literate in Burmese in order to get a promotion.¹⁰ The earlier British system of units formed on an ethnic basis was abandoned as the new government gradually restructured the Army, putting Burmese firmly in control. Ethnic concentrated regiments, including the Gurkhas, were broken up and the men replaced or dispersed into other units. Many of those who had switched over from the Indian Army Gurkha units now left in discouragement to find alternative sources of employment, although their lack of Burmese language fluency was a handicap. Some made the trek south to the urban centre of Rangoon and became security guards or worked in other service occupations. Although domiciled Gurkhali continued to be recruited, they were placed in mixed ethnic units, usually under Burmese officers.

The Burma Military Police Battalions which were raised following the occupation of Upper Burma also included large contingents of Gurkhas recruited from East Nepal through the Darjeeling and Purnea recruitment depots. Thus the Nepali who served in Burma with the Gurkhas, in both the Indian Army and Military Police, were largely Rai, Limbu, and some Tamang. By 1890 there were eight battalions of Military Police in Burma, with 3,353 authorized Gurkhas spread between them.¹¹ The largest numbers were in the Myitkyina and Mogoung Battalions, closely followed by the Ruby Mines Battalion in Mogok, and the North Chin Hills Battalion in Tiddim.¹² Then by 1912 a shift had taken place and about half of the companies in both the North and South Shan States Battalions, with headquarters in Lashio and Taunggyi, were made up of Gurkha

companies.¹³ Two years later the number of Gurkhas had risen to 5,135, the entire Myitkyina Battalion being made up of Gurkhas, not including those in the Gurkha Rifles of the Army.¹⁴ When Burma separated from India, six of the battalions were reconstituted as the "Burma Frontier Force," made up of "principally Gurkhas of Nepal," and stationed in Myitkyina, Bhamo, Lashio, the Chin Hills, and at various points in the excluded areas on the frontier.¹⁵ This amply demonstrates the wide dispersment of Gurkhali throughout the hill areas of Burma, especially to the north, east and to a lesser extent the west. In most of the places where the battalions were posted, Gurkhali villages can be found today.

Prior to Burmese Independence, pensioned Gurkhas from both the Army and the Military Police were easily able to buy land on which to settle, and many were given generous land grants. Having come this far, and finding Burma a rich land of opportunity, few returned to their native Nepal or India. In Major C.M. Enriquez' description of Myitkyina in 1923, he mentions "the Gurkhas, who have come to stay - sturdy, desirable folk whose Mongolian origin renders them particularly suitable as settlers in Burma."¹⁶ But following Independence, although Gurkhas continued to be recruited into the Military Police, which consisted of about 20 battalions by the late 1950s, from this time they were recruited only from locally domiciled Gurkhali. In direct contrast to the Indian Army, Burma no longer recruited soldiers from either India or Nepal. The last major wave of Nepali immigration into Burma was in conjunction with World War II, and the refugees who returned in its aftermath.

In addition to military personnel, there was also increasing immigration of Nepali agriculturalists, herdsmen and labourers following the annexation of Upper Burma: a continuation of the migration stream into Assam. With the encouragement of the Indian government, cultivators streamed onto the fertile land, of which less than 1-12th was being cultivated according to one British official.¹⁷ That same official, Philip Nolan, wrote a special "Report on

Emigration from Bengal to Burma and How to Promote It," calling for the acceleration and guidance of population movement into Burma: 1) for permanent settlers to reclaim the vast tracts of fertile uncultivated land; and 2) for immigrant labourers for public works, offering land as an incentive or reward at the end of their service.¹⁸ He also noted the normal flow of labour migration from west to east, and the attraction of generally higher wages and the lower cost of living in Burma compared with Bengal, with the added possibility of getting land, and thus a chance to escape from poverty and achieve a higher social status.¹⁹ The promotion proved effective, and Nepali from both Nepal and India were caught up in this basically one-way flow of humanity into Burma. Again, as for Assam, thousands of labourers were recruited from Darjeeling District. Sen notes at least 2,100 Nepali recruited through Darjeeling between 1891 and 1899 for various duties alongside the Military Police and Burma Rifles battalions, such as portering and construction work.²⁰ Dash also notes the recruitment of 2,000 Nepali as porters for road building projects in Burma,²¹ while Tinker points out their employment in mining, Burma's second most important industrial enterprise at the time.²² These labourers, cultivators and herdsmen constituted the second major group of Nepali who made their way to Burma and settled.

There have also been two major exoduses of Gurkhali out of Burma. Thousands fled into Assam in the face of the Japanese invasion and as the military withdrew. Even Myitkyina, the center of Gurkhali population, was bombed in 1942. But most of those who fled returned to start their lives over again after British reoccupation in 1945. With General Ne Win's military take-over of the government, instituting the "Burmese Road to Socialism," and soon followed by the Burmese Nationalisation Act of 1964, the second main exodus took place. Nationalisation was an effort to stamp out capitalistic enterprise: land, industry, education, services such as hospitals, and businesses -- all were suddenly nationalised overnight and very little compensation given. Many people

lost everything. In addition, all "foreigners" (the classification of most Gurkhali, including those born in the country) were now forced to carry Foreign Registration Certificates (FRC). The FRCs were a form of discrimination directed mainly at the remaining Indian population to force them out of the country, but in which the Gurkhali were caught up. There had been no system of citizenship certificates before Burma's Independence. Then in the late 1950s all "foreigners" were urged to apply. But by the time of the 1962 military coup by General Ne Win, none had been issued, and applications were closed. Only the Gurkhali currently serving in the military or engaged in government service were given recognition as citizens, leaving tens of thousands in a very tenuous situation. Besides losing their livelihood, classification as a "foreigner" meant limitations on educational and employment opportunities, and on freedom of travel within the country. Thousands streamed out, scavenging what they could of what was left of their earthly belongings, and returned to Nepal where a resettlement program was set in motion; while others chose to stay and take their chances, including the many who had married local women. About fifteen years later, citizenship began to be issued to some of them, including B.P. Rai who fought for Burma in the Second World War and was married to a local Karen woman, but only received citizenship in 1982.

Aside from the settlements surrounding Maymyo, home of the 10th Gurkha Rifles, and the mining communities around Mogok, the great majority of Nepali settled in the former Myitkyina District and the Shan States. In 1947 the Nepali Association, Myitkyina and the All-Burma Gurkha League, Maymyo made an official representation to the government of Burma on behalf "of all Gurkhas settled in Burma including Frontier Areas," at which time it was stated that there were 15,000 Gurkhas in Myitkyina alone, about one-third of them born in Burma.²³ From 1901 to 1931 the total number of Nepali-speakers in Burma recorded on the Indian Census had risen from 5,463 to 38,381, and it continued to rise. Unfortunately no official Census statistics are available after 1931, but by

the late 1960s there was an estimated 200,000 people of Nepali origin in Burma.²⁴ Spokesmen for the resident Gurkhali community today still place the figure between 150,000 and 200,000.²⁵ Since Independence there has only been natural population growth among the Gurkhali, and since the 1960s the mass exodus following the Nationalisation Act would account for the overall lack in population growth. The major concentrations of Nepali population today are all found in Upper Burma: firstly around Myitkyina, Bhamo and scattered locations throughout Kachin State; then in Mogok and Maymyo (now called Pyin U Lwin) of Mandalay State; and in Taunggyi, Loilem and Lashio of Shan State. Compact village communities of Nepali are found in all of these places, where they have retained use of the Nepali language, and various cultural and religious practices, including worship at Hindu temples specially constructed by several of the communities. Especially in Myitkyina, conservative Hindu Brahman-Chhetri communities are predominant. By one description,

Socially, economically and educationally they are still backward. Due to political unrest they had suffered much. In faith, they are still strong Hindus. Most of them are earning (their living) by breeding cattle in the remote areas, and as cultivators where the land is fertile.²⁶

There are also smaller groups of ethnic Nepali along the Tiddim-Falam road in Chin State, in the hills of Kayah State, and a Gurkhali village in Insein on the outskirts of Rangoon (now called Yangon). In all but Rangoon, they have settled in the midst of local tribal communities -- the Kachin, Shan, Chin and Karen (now called Kayin) -- the very people whom the Gurkhas mostly served alongside in the military. Even in the midst of these communities most Gurkhali have a self-perception of being second class citizens, a minority within the minority tribal population. Although several Gurkhali villages totalling several thousand Nepali are scattered around Maymyo, only a few individuals are found in the town itself. This seems to be typical. Many of the local tribals themselves have adopted Burmese names to smooth their way in the dominant Burmese society and under

the present military government. In numerous instances Gurkhali also have adopted this strategy as part of the assimilation process.

Many of the younger generation are being more and more absorbed into Burmese society. As in Tibet, which is also politically and geographically cut off from Nepal, many of the second and third generation Burmese Nepali are becoming fully "Burmanised." Most have never seen Nepal or the part of India from which their fathers or grandfathers emigrated, and have lost all ties (except where members of the family have re-emigrated, especially following Nationalisation). They also have no schooling in their own language. This process is happening more quickly among the matwali and ex-Gurkha families, the majority of whom came as single men, because they have tended to inter-marry more with local tribal women, and have less strict caste rules. But it is also happening among the Bahun-Chhetri community, as illustrated by one Chhetri family the author met in Yangon. The father emigrated to Burma from Darjeeling in search of land, and settled near Myitkyina. When his wife died, he returned all the way to Nepal to get a second wife to be able to marry within his caste and keep the line pure, a strong value within the local high-caste Gurkhali communities. He raised his family in Myitkyina until due to family problems they were forced to move south to Rangoon where he got employment. His children, now in the midst of main-stream Burmese society, educated in Burmese schools and bilingual in the Burmese and Nepali languages, largely cut-off from the local Nepali community, with their father being the only living link back to Darjeeling and Nepal, are on the way to being fully "Burmanised." Although ethnically still pure Nepali, when their elderly father dies they and their children will probably be fully assimilated.

CHRISTIAN MISSIONS AND THE NEPALI

Even as the Gurkhas helped to spearhead the British move into Burma, missionaries followed on their heels. Just the year before the Province of Burma

was formed in 1862 the American Baptists opened their first base for Shan work in Toungoo, about half way to Mandalay from Rangoon. The ABFMS was the largest mission in Burma, working primarily among the tribals of Upper Burma, the same people among whom most Gurkhas settled. As the British moved on northward into Upper Burma the first mission work among the Kachin was started in 1876 at Bhamo, and extended to Myitkyina within twenty years.²⁷ This developed into the Kachin Baptist Association, the largest member of the present day Myanmar Baptist Convention (MBC), which in turn is the largest denomination within the Myanmar Council of Churches (MCC). The first Lisu (Kachin) converts in Myitkyina were baptised in 1902, and from then Christianisation of the Lisu was rapid, similar to the story in Nagaland and Mizoram. Christianity became known among non-Christians, including Gurkhali, as "the Lisu religion." According to David Barrett, 75 percent of baptised Christians in modern day Myanmar are ethnic tribals, most notably the Kachin, Karen and Chin,²⁸ thus dividing them from the majority population of Burmese Buddhists who also represent the power structure of the country. This was a situation similar to Assam, where the Hindu Assamese who came to control the local government were most resistant to Christianity, while the hill tribals responded in large numbers. However, unlike the Naga and Mizo Christians of NE India, there is no evidence of the tribal Christians of Burma targeting local Gurkhali in evangelism, except in isolated situations. The Gurkhali of Burma remained largely undisturbed in their traditional Hindu religion into the 1980s. This may have been partly due to the tribals' preoccupation with the insurgency movement. But also, the Gurkhali, although hill people like the tribals of Burma, had a different language, culture and religion, to which it was not easy for local tribal Christians to relate.

Some of the first documented references to Nepali Christians in Burma are in connection with Gurkha soldiers, as in NE India. But such references in mission records are scarce. There was a smattering of Christians, particularly

from the EHM churches in Darjeeling and Sikkim, who served in the Gurkha units of the Military Police and Indian Army in Burma. A handful of others were converted locally early in the century. The earliest references found are in the Church of Scotland's EHM and in ABFMS sources, dating back to the early 1900s. Contact between these two missions concerning ministry among Gurkhas in Upper Burma is also attested to in these sources. But their involvement was short-lived, only lasting about ten years.

In his 1908 "Darjeeling Annual Report," Rev. R. Kilgour made note that news had been received of New Testament portions printed by the EHM having reached Gurkha sepoys in Maymyo, Burma.²⁹ This is of particular interest since Maymyo was only chosen as an out-station of the American Baptist center at Mandalay in 1900, and there was no missionary posted there for over a decade.³⁰ The New Testament portions in question may have been sent upon request from a local Gurkha Christian from Darjeeling, or from a missionary based in nearby Mandalay. In both the 1901 and 1911 Census of India the second largest number of Nepali speakers in Burma were recorded in Mandalay District, and in Searle's 1925 report in the Burma Gazetteer he locates them mainly in Maymyo: "A considerable Ghurkha population is springing up in the neighborhood of Maymyo where some villages are composed mainly, and a few entirely, of Ghurkhas. They are mostly ex-soldiers or relations, children or friends of ex-soldiers."³¹ However, other than Rev. R. Kilgour's rather obscure reference, no Gurkhali Christians are known to have been resident in Maymyo until Capt. Kaluman Rai retired there in 1960; and the first regular evangelism undertaken among the surrounding Gurkhali villages only started in the mid-1980s.

It was the American Baptists who were on the spot, with mission centres directed at the local tribal people in several of the same places where Gurkhas in the Military Police were posted in Upper Burma. It was only natural that they had at least superficial contact with Gurkhas. In two places in particular there is documented evidence of ministry among Gurkhas having developed: in Taunggyi,

the administrative centre for the Shan States, and in Myitkyina, the northernmost district with the highest Nepali population. Outreach to Gurkhali began under the patronage of Dr. A.H. Henderson, who started the Taunggyi mission station in 1906, including a dispensary and school.³² One or two Gurkhali connected with the school were converted and became keen evangelists among their own people. A Gurkhali ministry was built up around them, and soon extended to the American Baptist station in Myitkyina. Fervent letters and reports from Henderson, and then also from Stella T. Ragon in Myitkyina, describe the promising beginnings and conversions between 1914 and 1919.³³

The first Gurkhali convert and evangelist was Lal Singh Basnet, a clerk in a government office, employed by the mission as an interpreter for the "Goorkha boys" who attended the school but did not understand Burmese. By 1914 he had become a Christian, was teaching a Sunday School for the boys, and was determined to be baptised. He was described by Henderson as having "spoken to others so constantly about Christ that they say he is mad. He replies that if he is, he is happier than when he was sane."³⁴ But he was initially quite fearful about being baptised, afraid that his wife would leave him and take away the children. Both his own relatives and his wife's were bitterly opposed to this step, saying it would "make him an outcaste."³⁵ His father-in-law was the chief native officer of the local Gurkha battalion, and had the potentially negative effects of such a decision on his own position to consider. Henderson wrote, "They tried to persuade him against it, and failing came to me to ask me not to administer the ordinance."³⁶ When Basnet was baptised in spite of their strong objections the "Goorkha boys" he had been teaching were all withdrawn from the American Baptist school; his own mother would not allow him to sleep inside the house; and there were efforts to have him transferred to where there were no Christians. Yet he was zealous in sharing his new faith, and shortly one of his friends was also requesting baptism. By the end of the following year, Henderson was having regular Bible classes with a group of Gurkhali, including Basnet and his friend,

"active evangelists as far as their work will allow."³⁷ Basnet desired to be an evangelist full-time, and even considered offering himself to the EHM in Darjeeling for work in Nepal. But Henderson appealed to the Burma Baptist Convention to support him in local evangelistic work among Gurkhas, which was taken up from 1917. That same year Basnet traveled all the way to Myitkyina to initiate Gurkhali work there as well. Stella Ragon reported, "A Christian Gurkha from Taunggyi is here now helping me and we are expecting large results from his work. This morning he brought up three men who know a little English, asking me to have a Bible reading with them."³⁸ She also wrote to the EHM in Darjeeling requesting Nepali Christian literature, noting:

I am in need of Nepali literature and it has been suggested that I write to you. The Government has been encouraging the Gurkhas to settle here when their time expires in the military police and there are now hundreds of their tiny farms on all the roads leading out from Myitkyina and several of its outposts. In the hands of our Gurkha evangelist I saw leaflets printed in colour. If you can send me a supply of these I will send the money...³⁹

But in her Annual Report the following year, after noting that prospects for fruitful ministry among the local Gurkhas were very hopeful, with six converts already, she also makes mention of "an unfaithful evangelist."⁴⁰ Although the said evangelist remains unnamed, the EH Presbytery in Darjeeling received a request from Henderson soon after for a Nepali evangelist to be sent to them for Burma.⁴¹ Evidently Basnet, the first and only Gurkhali evangelist under the Burma Baptist Convention, was out of the picture.⁴² Henderson, who had continued to work since his retirement in 1906, and Ragon, in Myitkyina only to relieve the Geis' furlough, were also presumably soon absent from their respective stations. Although Henderson's request was circulated among the EHM Kirk Sessions, it went unmet, and the chapter evidently closed on Gurkhali ministry by the American Baptists in Burma.

After the abortive Gurkhali ministry of the American Baptists, there was no similar outreach for nearly fifty years. During these interim years, most of the

Nepali Christians who have been identified either came in from the EHM area or Shillong, especially Christians in the Gurkha Regiments who served in Burma during World War II, or were locally converted through: 1) marriage with local tribal Christian women, 2) the continuing mission work, or 3) their own personal spiritual searching. But they were widely scattered and had no knowledge of one another. For example there was Man Bahadur, employed at the Bible Churchmen's Missionary Society (BCMS) station in Mohnyin, who followed his Shan wife in baptism in 1930 after she stood firm in the face of his threats of divorce;⁴³ Kaluman Rai, born in Burma to a Gurkha father and educated at a Christian high school, then baptised when he married a Karen Christian woman in 1948; Jit Bahadur Limbu, also born in Burma to a Gurkha father, and baptised just prior to his marriage to a Karen Christian woman in 1950; Man Bah. Rai, converted in Shillong just before being shipped out to Burma;⁴⁴ B.P. Rai, who went to Burma with the 10th Gurkha Rifles in World War II, was converted through reading a Hindi Bible given to him by a friend, and baptised by a Karen Baptist pastor in 1968; Nepali Christians from Sikkim who joined the Gurkha Rifles in Burma after the War broke out, enough so that mention was made in the EHM's Mission News;⁴⁵ and others whose names may never be known.

World War II displaced not only thousands of Gurkhali resident in Burma, but also missionaries who were evacuated. In one instance this gave opportunity for a missionary woman with the BCMS who ended up in Kalimpong, and indicated a burden for the Gurkhali settled in Burma, to study the Nepali language in preparation for her return.⁴⁶ There is no indication that she made it back. In other cases it brought some of the refugees who streamed westward into contact with Christian Nepali in the Eastern Himalayas and NE India; several of the refugees who found their way to Shillong are said to have attended the Mawprem Nepali Presbyterian Church services, and four of them were baptised in the mid-1940s, but they were later lost track of.⁴⁷ Whether any of those who became Christians made their way back to Burma or not is unknown. At the end

of the War, an NBF Field Survey estimated one million Nepali were in various parts of Burma, but to its knowledge no Christian work was being done among them.⁴⁸

The only other missionary activity among Gurkhali came in the 1960s through Rev. Ray W. Trask of the Assemblies of God Mission who was in the Mogok area from 1960-66. His involvement, which mainly consisted of holding a Sunday School and obtaining Nepali Christian literature for distribution, was subsidiary to his main responsibilities as head of the AG Mission. According to his own description,

The people of Nepal were farmers and I bought eggs and ground wheat from them... So I got acquainted with them through that contact and started holding services for children. Then teaching them to read and write Burmese. Some started attending the local church services, but remained very much to themselves as they thought of themselves as second class citizens.⁴⁹

Trask held Sunday School classes in Burmese, but was able to get some Nepali Christian literature to use from Darjeeling. He wrote to NISS in 1963 asking for the help of a Nepali national, noting that in a radius of 50 miles of Mogok there were about 10,000 Nepali, and the only work they could do among them was literature distribution because of the language barrier.⁵⁰ The first local Nepali Christians through the AG Mission were the parents of George Bahadur, a young lad in Trask's Sunday School. George Bah., of the Chhetri caste, became a Christian after the missionaries had been expelled from the country, and was sent to the AG's Evangel Bible School in Myitkyina to become the first modern-day Gurkhali evangelist in Burma.

By the time the Burmese Government ordered all missionaries out in 1966, there were very few and scattered Gurkhali Christians. Whatever long-distance contacts the missionaries had afforded between these few in Burma and the Nepali church in Darjeeling was lost. The few Gurkhali Christians were totally cut off from the growing Nepali churches in India and Nepal, and

geography, lack of means of communication, and politics militated against any potential linkage. Even into the early 1990s they had hardly any awareness of one another. Burma was in the grip of an isolationist military regime and the border was closed, regardless of which rugged mountains separated Burma and India and the journey was long, arduous and expensive. Any further ministry among the Gurkhali community was now up to the local tribal Christians and the handful of scattered Gurkhali converts.

GURKHALI CHRISTIANS IN MODERN-DAY BURMA

(The Union of Myanmar)

The Assemblies of God involvement as a denomination has mainly consisted of the recognition and support of two Gurkhali who were converted in their midst and volunteered for ministry. George Bah. carried on evangelistic work from the 1970s for about 15 years in the Mogok area, but with little result or encouragement. Gradually becoming very frustrated in his lonely work, he left in the mid-1980s, started his own business and joined the Pentecostal Church. About that time another Gurkhali young man from Kachin State, who was baptised when he married a Christian woman whom he met at University, moved to Mogok. A few years later, Durba Bah. (now called Harry Bah.) became the AG's second Nepali worker, as explained in his own words:

Just to get a wife I became Christian and baptised in 1982. But I did not know Jesus and accept Him as my Saviour. I forced my wife to transfer to Mogok, and in my mind I was planning to convert my wife to Hinduism. But on the way to Mogok, I met Rev. Ngwa Yee Yaw (Pastor of Mogok AG Church) and his group. I reached Mogok in 1985. They shared with me about Jesus Christ. They prayed for my sickness, and I was healed. Many times I tested Jesus to know whether He is a living God or not. He answered my prayer many times. I began to trust in Him and in 1987 I was baptised in the Holy Spirit and I felt burden for the Nepalis of Myanmar and decided to enter to His ministry. In 1989 I went to Bible college. In March of this year I completed my M.Div and now I am ministering as a Pastor in Mogok AG Church.⁵¹

By the time Harry Bah. left for Bible college in Bangalore, there were six

Gurkhali families spread between four different AG churches around Mogok, and one man had been made an Elder.⁵² In addition, by 1993 there were scattered Gurkhali Christians among the local Kachin Baptist, Pentecostal, and Roman Catholic churches: an estimated total of 150 between all the local churches. A Baptist pastor personally supported a Gurkhali woman who had been converted in Myitkyina as a local evangelist in Mogok for two years, by providing her food and a place to stay. But there has never been any separate Nepali-language fellowship among this community of an estimated 10-20,000 Gurkhali, mostly engaged in mining, farming and some in business, with the majority very poor. Since Harry's return in early 1993, he has sought to organise an inter-denominational monthly Gurkhali fellowship. Again the question of language is a major factor in the response of this depressed minority group: "Gurkhalis do not want to come to the church because we have only Burmese and Lisu service. If we could have a Nepali service I believe that many Gurkhali will come and listen to us."⁵³

This has been one of the precepts on which B.P. Rai, founder of the "Gurkha Baptist Mission" in Yangon, has operated since its inception. He and three other Gurkha pensioners who became Christians formed a small Gurkha Christian Fellowship at Rai's home in July of 1978. This became the seed-bed for evangelistic tours among Gurkhali communities all over Myanmar during the following years. On Christmas Day 1980, ten Gurkhali from two different villages on the outskirts of Yangon were baptised. The same year, one of the original members, Jit Bahadur Limbu, was ordained by the Kayin Baptist Convention, and he became the pastor of a Kayin Baptist supported mixed ethnic church in Mobi, about thirty minutes drive from Yangon.⁵⁴ Although called "Gorkha Baptist Church," meetings are held entirely in the Burmese language and his congregation only includes the families of five Gurkha pensioners, all married to local tribal Christian women and whose children speak very little Nepali.

In contrast, the Gurkha Baptist Mission, largely through the personal

efforts of B.P. Rai and his sons, developed both as a local Gurkhali Church and as a base for evangelistic tours, independent of any denominational affiliation. This may reflect Rai's own conversion process, as he was convinced of the truth of Christianity through three years of personal reading and study of a Hindi Bible given to him by a friend in the army, then sought out a pastor to baptise him. The Gurkha Baptist Mission was born in Rai's heart as a desire to share this truth with his own people in Myanmar who had never heard of Christ. Sunday worship is held in his home, half of which has been sectioned off and converted into a simple meeting hall, and three Sunday Schools for different ages in two different locations are held each week, partly in Nepali and partly in Burmese. The second location is at a nearby "Gurkha basti" (village) in which only 14 houses of Gurkhali remain, largely made up of displaced ex-Gurkhas and their families who lost out when the Burma Army converted to a strong Burmese orientation. Between 1978 and his retirement as a security guard at a bank in 1986, Rai used his one month's annual leave to itinerate among Gurkhali communities, often taking a team of two or three with him. He became known to some as "Padre" B.P. Rai. By the 1990s he had traversed much of the length and breadth of the country, from Yangon northwards to Toungoo, Mandalay, Maymyo, Mogok and on to Myitkyina, and from Falam and Tiddim in the west to Loikaw in the east, making him the most widely-travelled Gurkhali evangelist in Myanmar. Significantly, the work of the Gurkha Baptist Mission has all been Gurkhali to Gurkhali, and from within the Gurkhali cultural context.

The beginnings of concerted local outreach to resident Gurkhali in Myitkyina, Kachin State to the far north of Yangon, were also Gurkhali to Gurkhali, although the first known Gurkhali converts were those married to Kachin Christians. One destined to become a Gurkhali minister was Kumar Limbu (known locally as M. Zau La), the son of a Gurkha officer. Limbu was born in 1942 in Myitkyina, educated in a Christian mission school, and married a Kachin Christian woman in 1970. According to his own testimony:

Though I was very familiar with the Christian life I never wanted to be a Christian. My wife did much to convince me about the Gospel but I could take only as the Jewish history. I used to attend church but nothing impressed me... While I was there [in the jungle] in the malaria infested area, serious illness took me; [because of] lack of medicine I was left to die, but something strange happened, a deacon and some Christian came to my bed to pray for me. At that moment though I was lying helpless my hearing was quite sensitive. When they sang a hymn and prayed I felt really very happy and I could feel I never experienced the kind of happiness I had that moment. After that I went into coma for several days, yet gradually I began to win my health without medicine and proper care. From then I realised it was a touch and call from God. I was baptised in 1975 January and received Jesus Christ as my Saviour.⁵⁵

After his baptism K. Limbu became a member of a local Kachin Baptist church.

But it was the conversion and subsequent return to Myitkyina of a young Gurkhali in Thailand which became the spur to active Christian outreach among the Gurkhali community almost ten years later. Kumar Adhikari (Chhetri, known locally as Gilbert Kasharb) had gone to Bangkok, evidently in search of work (a common circular migration route for unemployed Gurkhali from Myitkyina). Through contact with a local Thai Christian he was converted and baptised in 1984, and eventually returned to his home in Myitkyina to share his new Christian faith. Although there was lots of opposition from his predominantly Brahman-Chhetri community, his brother Kishor and a handful of friends were also converted. He met Kumar Limbu, and the home of a Kachin Christian man married to a Gurkhali woman, U Gaw Lu Paul and Sarbitri (Thapa), was opened to them to start a Sunday School among Gurkhali children.

As the group of Gurkhali Christians in Myitkyina grew, largely through the young converts' enthusiastic evangelism, they worshipped with various local churches. On two separate occasions in 1988 and 1989 several of them were baptised at the United Pentecostal Church. But they were dissatisfied by not having fellowship or any teaching in their own language, and to which they could easily bring others. When Kumar Limbu introduced them to Rev. L. Naw Tawng of the Myitkyina Zonal Kachin Baptist Association (KBA), who offered them a

piece of land and a small church for their own worship services, they decided to join the Baptists. The Gurkha Baptist Mission Project was formed under the Myitkyina Zonal Kachin Baptist Association of the Kachin Baptist Convention (KBC) about 1988, with Rev. L. Naw Tawng in-charge, the first project among Gurkhali of any of the Associations under the KBC. In April 1990 a small thatched church was built as promised in the Gurkha basti of Maubin, with Kailash, a young Brahman convert, stationed there. Pastor Tangun, an unordained Kachin evangelist fluent in Nepali, was also appointed to serve among the Gurkhali.

By the end of 1992 there were reportedly at least 100 baptised Gurkhali Christians in Myitkyina, with many more waiting to be baptised, and weekly worship services being held in two different locations. Two acres of land had also been purchased in Myitkyina town, and construction of a special Gurkha Baptist Mission Centre was planned. Yet none of the original group of young converts who spurred on the movement are currently involved; only Kumar Limbu who is studying at Myanmar Institute of Theology (MIT) in Yangon in preparation for ordination as the first Gurkhali pastor under the KBC and to lead the Gurkha Mission Project of Myitkyina Zonal KBA. The others preparing for ministry with this project are all Kachin: two young women at MIT who still need to learn the Nepali language, and four young men from various Gurkha basti areas in Myitkyina who are studying in different Bible schools with the desire to work among Gurkhali in their own home areas. But no other Gurkhali Christians are currently being prepared for leadership. This is partly due to a lack of Bible training facilities in the Nepali language within Myanmar, and the dearth of educated Gurkhali Christians able to undertake studies in English.⁵⁶ But there also appears to be a lack of vision or trust on the part of Kachin Baptist leaders in developing Gurkhali leadership, reminiscent of the situation in parts of NE India.

Pyin U Lwin (formerly Maymyo) is the only place in Myanmar where Gurkhali ministry was started through the vision and efforts of a Burmese tribal

Christian. Rev. Dee Zee Daung, a Kachin Church of Christ pastor, started outreach among the distinctly Gurkhali villages on the outskirts of Pyin U Lwin town during the early 1980s. Only a handful of Gurkhali live in the town itself. Pyin U Lwin was Daung's first assignment following Bible School, with only five Church of Christ families, all Lisu and Rawang, when he became interested in the local Gurkhali. According to his own description:

While I was there (Pyin U Lwin), I had an opportunity to evangelize Gurkhalis around that area. I found them living dead spiritually. They were living in spiritual darkness. Some of them were Hindu, some Buddhists and some spirit worshippers. I felt pity for their lost souls. And I decided to proclaim the Good News to them. First, it was very difficult to approach them because they did not allow any Christians to enter their house. Even they did allow, they would not give you even a cup of water. But I never gave it up. I approached them where they were and where they were in interests. In 1982, I baptized 4 brothers. They were 2 of Gancha [Kancha], Suze and Buran. I had an opportunity to go to Nawkyangyi, Sinlang village, Gandongmin 1, 2, 3, Moegyawbyit village, Kachin Thaya village. I preached the word of God there almost daily as a personal evangelist. I prayed for many sick people such as [had] long suffering, paralysis and demon possession. And many were healed. These prayer miracles were the open door for them to come to wanting to know more about the God that we believe.⁵⁷

In addition to the four brothers mentioned in the account above, there were baptisms of six adults during 1988, and another ten by 1993, almost all of them Limbu from Moe Gyaw Byit, a Gurkhali village of about 112 houses. The only Gurkhali Christian fellowship in the vicinity of Pyin U Lwin town was organised in this village, in the "upper room" of one of the convert's home. Two key factors in these developments had to do with the individuals involved in ministry. Dee Zee's compassionate local outreach, regularly visiting the Gurkhali in their homes, praying and caring for the sick, and making the frequent trips to their villages by bicycle over a long, dusty and bumpy road which few were willing to travel, proved his sincere devotion to them. The healings and deliverances they experienced proved the efficacy of the Christian God. In one case, the local Gurkhali leader of a village was impressed but skeptical of Dee Zee's preaching, so before asking prayer for his sick wife, he asked Dee Zee to pray for his dog:

When I visited them, unexpectedly I was asked by Mr. Asharai (Gurkhali leader of the village) to pray for his dog which had not been well. I knew God would show something miracle here. So, I laid my hands on the dog and prayed for it. Miraculously, on the next day, the dog got well. When Mr. Asharai saw this, he called and took me to his wife in the other room and asked me to pray for her. I did pray for her and on the next day she got well.⁵⁸

Daung's pioneer outreach was followed up by frequent visits from B.P. Rai of distant Yangon, first invited to Pyin U Lwin by Dee Zee in 1987. Rai made the trip nine times over the following five years, to give Bible teaching and encouragement in the Gurkhali's own language, from an intimate personal understanding of their cultural and religious background. When the new converts began meeting together regularly and the other villagers rose up against them, a retired Christian Gurkha and well respected member of the community in Pyin U Lwin town, Capt. Kolu Ban (Kaluman Rai), was called to meet with the village elders and explain the law to them, which grants freedom to meet as Christians in Myanmar. A rumor had also been spread that Dee Zee was receiving 1,000 kyat for each person he baptised, and other material benefits from abroad, which Capt. Kolu Ban was able to quash.

In each of the places in Myanmar where Gurkhali have begun to convert to Christianity there has been such local societal opposition, although legally there is freedom of religion. Sometimes it has been expressed by ostracism of local converts, refusal to allow their use of the community water supply, refusal to serve water or food to visiting Christians, verbal or physical abuse, or attempts to disrupt or prevent Christian Gurkhali from meeting together. Much of this is typical treatment of outcastes in Hindu society. However where there has been sensitive intervention, especially by a respected Gurkhali member of the community such as Capt. Kolu Ban (Retd.), the Christians have been gradually accepted. This was also the case in Myitkyina.

After Rev. Dee Zee Daung was transferred to Myitkyina in 1990, another young Kachin Church of Christ worker was placed in Moe Gyaw Byit village, and

the Gurkhali fellowship there officially came under the Church of Christ. However, some of the Gurkhali Christians have grown discontent with this connection. In their perception the current Church of Christ worker is only there for a job, and does not care for or accept them in the same way Dee Zee did, and seldom visits their homes. This attitude is indicative of many Gurkhali's "second-class citizen" self-perception, putting a high value on the degree of acceptance they feel from the local people. With Dee Zee their natural desire to be treated as equals or at least as valued human beings, worked as a pull towards Christianity. Similarly in Myitkyina the resentment of the Kachin Baptists' domination of their group and promotion of their own people into leadership, rather than lifting up the Gurkhali converts from the main-stream of the community, has caused some of the first Christians to leave the group in frustration.

By the early 1990s there was established Gurkhali ministry going on in four locations: in Myitkyina under the Kachin Baptists; in Mogok primarily under the Assemblies of God; in Moe Gyaw Byit under the Church of Christ; and from Yangon through the Gurkha Baptist Mission, the only purely Gurkhali-administered and manned group. The total number of Gurkhali Christians is still very few, probably less than 500 scattered all over Myanmar, and evangelism is still in its pioneer stages. They have no regular links or fellowship between themselves or across denominational lines, although there are initiatives to try to foster such, and Rev. Harry Bah. in Mogok has made a start in forming a local inter-denominational Gurkhali fellowship in Mogok. The Gurkhali Christians of Myanmar are also cut off from the larger Nepali church and Christian organisations in Nepal and India. Various Nepali church leaders from Nepal and India have been requested to come to Myanmar in recent years, but so far they have been unable to do so because of political and financial constraints. However, one shipment of 100 Nepali Bibles and hymnbooks was transported overland from Calcutta in 1990 with the help of outside friends; otherwise the

Gurkhali Christians in Myanmar have no access to Nepali Christian literature and little knowledge of how or where to procure it. By 1993 only two or three individuals, from the original group in Myitkyina, are known to have made their way to Nepal to meet Nepali Christians there.

ENDNOTES - CHAPTER 9

- (1) Timothy N. Thomas, *INDIANS OVERSEAS* (British Library, 1985), 21.
- (2) J. George Scott, compiled from Official Papers of *GAZETTEER OF UPPER BURMA AND THE SHAN STATES*, Vol. 1, Part 1 (Rangoon, 1900), 118.
- (3) Reid, 1976, 72.
- (4) Hugh Tinker, *THE UNION OF BURMA: A STUDY OF THE FIRST YEARS OF INDEPENDENCE* (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1957), 313.
- (5) G.E. Harvey, *BRITISH RULE IN BURMA 1842-1942* (London: Faber and Faber, 1946), 42.
- (6) Tinker, 1957, 318 and 321.
- (7) The figure of 5,000 is taken from the author's own rough count from the official registers at the British military cemetery on the outskirts of Yangon. According to Farwell (1985, 205), there were more Gurkha battalions engaged in Burma than all the other theatres combined.
- (8) Tinker, 1957, 322.
- (9) Tinker, 1957, 325. F.S.V. Donnison, *BURMA* (London: Ernest Benn Ltd., 1970), 146, described them as "probably the most effective of the Burma army units."
- (10) B.P. Rai, ex-Gurkha, interview with author, Yangon, 7 Feb. 1993. B.P. Rai was one of the many Gurkhas who was sent to Burma with the Indian Army during World War II, joined Burma's Army with high hopes following the War, then due to limited facility in the Burmese language left in disillusionment. However, he stayed on in Burma, married a local tribal woman, and found a job as a security guard.
- (11) Sen, Appendix 3, 1989, 103; citing Vansittart, 1890, 97-99.
- (12) Sen, 1989, 103.
- (13) *REPORT ON THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE SHAN AND KARENNI STATES FOR THE YEAR ENDING 30th JUNE 1912* (Rangoon: Office of the Superintendent, Govt. Printing, 1912).
- (14) Vansittart, 1915, 170.
- (15) John Leroy Christian, *MODERN BURMA* (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1942), 161-2.
- (16) Major C.M. Enriquez, *A BURMESE ARCADY* (London: Seeley, Service and Co., 1923), 238.
- (17) Philip Nolan, *REPORT ON EMIGRATION FROM BENGAL TO*

BURMA AND HOW TO PROMOTE IT (Calcutta: Bengal Secretariat Press, 1888), 1.

(18) Nolan, 1888, 7-12.

(19) Nolan, 1888, 4-5.

(20) This is taken from statistics garnered by Sen (1989, 61-62) in his search of military records and the Darjeeling Deputy Commissioner's reports.

(21) Dash, 1947, 147.

(22) Tinker, 1957, 283.

(23) Photocopy of unidentified publication from Burma, dated 16 April 1947, p.62-63, of an interview of three Gurkhali from the Nepalese Association, Myitkyina -- Manbahadur Limbu as spokesman, Gopal Singh Pardhar, and Jung Singh Basnet as interpreter (brother of Lal Singh Basnet) -- with a letter of authority from the All-Burma Gurkha League, signed by Dalbir, President: "This is to authorize Mr. Manbahadur Limbu, the representative of the Gurkhas of Myitkyina, to speak on behalf of All-Burma Gurkha League for the welfare of all Gurkhas settled in Burma including Frontier Areas" (dated 15-4-47). Manbahadur Limbu was alternately questioned by the Chairman (unnamed), U Khin Maung Gale, and The Hon'ble U Tin Tut. M.B. Limbu stated the desire of the Nepalese of Myitkyina, Bhamo and other areas in the Kachin Hills to be included in a Kachin State within a unified Burma, and to be granted Burmese citizenship and the right to vote; that Gurkhas in the whole of Burma, whether in Shan States of the Kachin Hills or Burma proper, wanted equal rights.

(24) This figure used by Kesar Lall ("The Nepalese Without Nepal," The Nepal Review, June 1968, 346) is cited by both C.B. Shrestha (1985, 133) and Kansakar (1974, 187) in their authoritative works on population in Nepal.

(25) In Kumar Limbu's "Brief History of Myanmar Gurkhas," (TS, Feb. 1993, in NCHP Collection) he says that a private census taken of the Gurkhali community by themselves revealed an estimated population of 150,000, while in an interview by the author (Feb. 1993) of the leaders of the Nepali Dharmasala in Mandalay they estimated 200,000 Gurkhali in all Myanmar.

(26) Kumar Limbu, "Myanmar Gurkhas," Feb. 1993.

(27) Rev. D.M. Crider, "The Work Among Kachins," in BURMA BAPTIST CHRONICLE, ed. Genevieve and Erville Sowards, Part II (Rangoon: Board of Publ., Burma Baptist Convention, 1963), 368 and 371.

(28) David Barrett, ed., WORLD CHRISTIAN ENCYCLOPAEDIA (Nairobi: Oxford Univ. Press, 1982), 202.

(29) Kilgour, "Darjeeling Annual Report for 1908," Feb. 1908, TS in J. Lindell's notes, NCHP Collection.

(30) Maung Shwe Wa, BURMA BAPTIST CHRONICLE, Part I (1963), 278.

(31) H.F. Searle, BURMA GAZETTEER: MANDALAY DISTRICT, Vol. A (Rangoon, 1925), 77.

- (32) Dr. Ai Lun and Rev. E. Sowards, "Baptist Work Among the Shans," in BURMA BAPTIST CHRONICLE, Part II (1963), 358-9.
- (33) Dr. A.H. Henderson Correspondence files and Annual Reports of the ABFMS, American Baptist Archives Center, American Baptist Historical Society, Valley Forge, Pennsylvania.
- (34) A.H. Henderson, letter from Taunggyi to American Baptist Mission, 23 April 1914.
- (35) A.H. Henderson, Annual Report to American Baptist Missionary Union, 3 June 1917.
- (36) A.H. Henderson, letter to American Baptist Mission, 23 April 1914.
- (37) A.H. Henderson, letter to American Baptist Mission, 29 Dec. 1915.
- (38) Stella T. Ragon, report from Myitkyina, in ABFMS 103rd ANNUAL REPORT (Boston, 1917), 70, American Baptist Archives Center, American Baptist Historical Society, Valley Forge, Pennsylvania.
- (39) Stella Ragon, letter to EHM Darjeeling, in Missions News, June 1917, quoted in "From the Past," Church News, Feb. 1967, 21.
- (40) Stella Ragon, ABFMS 104th ANNUAL REPORT (1918), 86.
- (41) "EH Presbytery Minutes," dated 23 Jan. 1919.
- (42) The mystery of what happened to Lal Singh Basnet was intriguingly reopened when he resurfaced almost thirty years later in Shillong, by then retired from his Government service job as a head-accountant, and evidently driven out of Burma in the face of the Japanese invasion. He presented himself openly to Ellen Hughes as a Christian, staying for several months on her compound and proclaiming his interest in doing evangelism among Nepali in Shillong and Assam. He later moved on to Tezpur where he married a Khasi Christian woman, the Matron of the Mental Hospital.
- (43) A.T. Houghton, DENSE JUNGLE GREEN: The First Twelve Years of the BCMS Burma Mission (London: BCMS, 1937), 94-5. Houghton's work indicates an awareness on the part of the BCMS that ex-Gurkhas were scattered all over Upper Burma. In a list of 350 adults baptised by the BCMS between 1930 and 1936, representing 20 different races and tribes, he notes there were only 9 "Indians," including Indo-Burmese, Gurkha, Telegu, Punjabi, and Manipuri (p.230). The Gurkha was most likely Man Bahadur. Because he could not read Burmese, a Nepali Bible was somehow procured for him by the BCMS missionaries, but nothing more is known about him.
- (44) O'Hanlon and Steele, HILLS AND VALLEYS, n.d., 22. Man Bahadur was instructed in the Christian faith and had his caste lock cut off by Pastor David Mukhia of the NEB, then requested baptism. But as described by O'Hanlon and Steele, that request was not able to be fulfilled: "On the morning of that very day (of his scheduled baptism), at an early hour, a military lorry, enroute for the Front, drew up to David's house and Man Bahadur called out the sad news that he was even then on his way to further active service. He testified in front of the other men of his determination to follow Christ and, with a request that he should not be forgotten in prayer, he left us."

- (45) Mission News, June 1942, 31.
- (46) K. Harbord, letter to J. Lindell, 25 August 1942, in WEC file, NCHP Collection. This is the only mention in Harbord's correspondence with Lindell about this BCMS missionary woman.
- (47) S.J. Lama, interview with author, Shillong, 9 Dec. 1991.
- (48) NBF, "Field Survey," 1948, 5 (mimeographed).
- (49) Ray W. Trask, letter to author, 26 May 1993.
- (50) Ray Trask, quoted in a letter from John Cook to NISS, Darjeeling, 10 Dec. 1963, in NISS Correspondence file, NCHP Collection.
- (51) Harry Bahadur, letter to author, 15 June 1993.
- (52) Assembly of God spokesman, interview with author, Yangon, 8 Feb. 1993.
- (53) Harry Bah., letter to author, 15 June 1993.
- (54) Jit Bah. Limbu and Kayin Baptist spokesmen, interview with author, Feb. 1993. Jit Bah.'s contact with the Kayin Baptists evidently came through his residence in a village where they are the main Christian presence, and he formed a linkage with them. His is the only known Gurkhali related ministry under the Kayin Baptists, and it is strictly localised. There are two different Kayin Baptist groups, speaking different dialects, in the Myanmar Baptist Convention.
- (55) Kumar Limbu, "My Testimony," TS, Feb. 1993, in Myanmar Gurkhali Christians file, NCHP Collection.
- (56) Kumar Adhikari was reportedly sent to the English-medium Kachin Theological College a few years ago, but was not able to complete the course. In 1994, Miss Subana Raini of Myitkyina, one of the first Gurkhali graduates in Myanmar, is scheduled to start training at Myanmar Institute of Theology.
- (57) Dee Zee Daung, letter to author from Myitkyina, 26 Sept. 1993.
- (58) Dee Zee Daung, letter to author, 26 Sept. 1993.