



**PROCEEDINGS OF  
NORTH EAST INDIA  
HISTORY ASSOCIATION**

**SEVENTH SESSION**

**PASIGHAT : 1986**

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NORTH EAST INDIA  
HISTORY ASSOCIATION



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## PREFACE

It gives us great joy to find that the Association has been growing in strength over the years as the premier research organisation in North East India. Our strategies of grass-root research, inter-disciplinary approach, and group orientation for an objective understanding of the nature of socio-economic developments and social formations at different points of time have started to yield the cherished results. The membership of the organisation has been steadily increasing. Our more than three hundred members today are the researchers from the Surveys and research departments and the teachers in the Universities, Colleges and Schools spread over all the seven States in the North-East, besides a few from outside the region. Our members are not from History but also almost all the Social Sciences and Humanities streams, and this is because of our faith in the study of history as a science for socio-economic development. Our annual sessions are major academic gatherings in the region, attended on an average by hundred and fifty delegates from all over the region. A large number of research papers are presented and discussed in the annual session each one of which is a substantial addition to the existing literature. Our proceedings volumes are acclaimed as major references on North East India. We get requests for copies of current as well as back volumes from all over the country and even abroad.

We have also been able to create some enthusiasm about research in the history of the region. The researches in the history of North East India are going on in all the Universities in the region. A large number of M. Phil. and Ph. D. candidates are working in regional history. There are on-going individual research projects by teachers and professional researchers. The seminars are occasionally organised in various institutions. A fair number of research publications have come out in recent years and many more must be in the pipe lines. The under-graduate and post-graduate level courses in the history of North East India are offered in the Universities in the region. Some of the State departments are planning to introduce the study of the history of the concerned State in the schools, and some of our members are cooperating with the SCERTs in preparing the text books. The emerging important functions of this Association are to coordinate the on-going researches, to design a perspective for research, to develop appropriate tools and methodologies, and

to create literature in the history of the region so that it may be possible to prepare a Comprehensive History of North East India in the next few years.

The present volume is the Proceedings of the Seventh Annual Session of the North East India History Association held at the Jawaharlal Nehru College, Pasighat on November 11-13, 1986. Professor J. B. Ganguly, Director, Calcutta University Post-graduate Centre, Agartala presided over the Session which was inaugurated by Shri Khapriso Krong, Minister of Education, Government of Arunachal Pradesh. Shri B. K. Kakoty, Principal, and Dr. S. Dutta, Head, Department of History, Jawaharlal Nehru College, Pasighat did us great honour as Chairman of the Reception Committee and Local Secretary of the Session respectively. Besides its high academic contents, the delegates shall cherish the fond memory of the session for warmth of the reception extended by the organisers and the colourful entertainment programme. Our thanks are due to the authorities of the Jawaharlal Nehru Colleges Pasighat and the Government of Arunachal Pradesh.

I am personally thankful to my colleagues Dr J. P. Singh, Dr. O. P. Kejariwal, Dr. Milton S. Sangma, Dr. D. R. Syiemlieh and Mr. Abhijit Choudhury for the help in editing and publishing this volume. We are also thankful to the Indian Council of Historical Research and the North Eastern Council for financial assistance.

Shillong

The 25 September 1987.

(J. B. Bhattacharjee)

General Secretary,

North East India History Association.

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## The Anglo Adi Relation (Upto 1922)

S. Dutta

Arunachal Pradesh - the land of the rising sun in the north-eastern tip of India spread over approximately an area of 84,000 sq. kms, is the home of a large number of tribes, including 22 major ones. Of these tribes those who inhabit the Siang district with an approximate area of 20,480 sq. kms. (now the East and West Siang Districts), are classified under the general head as 'Adis'.\*

The Adis inhabiting the east and south-east of the district are generally divided into two main groups the Padams and the Minyongs. To quote Mackenzie.

As regards the Adis, that section of the tribe to the east of the Dihang river that is to say upto the Dibang river, which divides the Adis from the Mishmis and who occupy the inner and more lofty ranges calls the Bor-Abor or the Great Adis of the Assamese (Padams). While the section to the west of that river bordering the plains are called Miyang, Pasi and Daba. To the westward of the Dihang, Adi villages may be found here and there among those of the upper hill Miris.<sup>1</sup>

There is, however, little difference, either in outward appearance or social customs, between the Minyongs and the Padams. The Adis in fact are the most democratic people of Arunachal Pradesh. Self-governing laws are made, interpreted and implemented by an institution in the Adi society called the 'Kabang' or the Village Council to which everything, however trifling, is referred to.<sup>2</sup> Being thoroughly democratic in their way of life and approach, the Adis are very sensitive by nature and do not tolerate anything that amounts to violation of the basic norms of life. We must remember this point while dealing with the relationship of the Adis with any outside force. Added to this, we should also remember the inhospitable and difficult terrain of the Adis because of which the British Government failed to curb this indomitable tribe for a long time.

### Relation with the Ahoms

A short mention of the Adi-Ahom relationship will serve as a helpful prelude to understand the Anglo-Adi relationship. By the annexation of the Chutiya Kingdom by the Ahoms in 1523 AD, during the reign of Suhungmung, the Ahoms came into the possession of the territory on the north bank of the Brahmaputra upto

\* Here the accepted word Adi has been used.

the river Subansiri. This brought the Ahoms into contact with the Mishings, \*\* and the Adis the two hill tribes living on the northern border of the old Chutiya kingdom.<sup>3</sup> Unlike the other hill-tribes, the Daphalas, \*\*\* the Akas (Hrussos), and the Bhutias, the Adis, though much more powerful than any of these tribes, were not granted 'posa' \*\*\*\* by the Ahom government. This was perhaps because of their comparatively remote abode from the plains, cut off as they were by the great river Dihang from the cultivated areas along the Brahmaputra valley.

The Adis, however, had rights of a different kind, which was more difficult to settle than those arising out of 'Posa'. The Adis claimed absolute control over the Mishings of the plains. They also claimed an inalienable right to all the fish and gold found in the Dihang river. The Mishings for many years acknowledged the Adis as their masters. The Ahom government, which was always anxious to conciliate the Adis, acknowledged this claim, and relieved or exempted the Mishings of all revenue charges. The Adis also compelled the Beheeahs, the Hindu gold-washers and fishermen employed by the Ahom government, to deliver to them frequent conciliatory offerings.<sup>4</sup>

The chronicles of the Ahom period, however, do not explicitly mention the relationship between the Adis and the Mishings of the plains. Some of the chronicles, however, mention that during the reign of King Pratap Singha (1603-4 AD), the Adis were given some villages in the plains by the Ahom Government the inhabitants of which used to cultivate paddy for their masters, i. e. the Adis.<sup>5</sup> But the claim of the Adis over the neighbouring villages might have been confused by the chroniclers as 'Posa'. For, no direct relation was ever established between the Adis and the Ahoms.

### Anglo-Adi Relationship

With this historical background, we now proceed to sketch the

\*\* Earlier they were called Miris

\*\*\* Daphalas-New they are known as Nishis

\*\*\*\* 'Posa' strictly denotes the subscription which the village raised to meet the customary demands of the hill-tribes. In other words, it may be termed as black mail. (*Physical and Political Geography of Assam*, the Assam Secretariat Printing Office, 1896, p. 216).

Anglo-Adi relationship. Assam came under the control of the British after the Peace of Yandaboo in 1826. Sadiya and the area around it came under direct British administration in 1842. The British found certain areas on the north bank of the Brahmaputra, especially the area between Dibrugarh and Sadiya, sparsely populated largely because of the raids of the Adis. The Adis who occupied both banks of the Dibang beyond the Mishings, levied tax on the Assamese, who though became the subjects of the British Government, preferred submitting to this tax rather than incur the resentment of the Adis which might lead to frequent raids.<sup>6</sup> Thus, initially the hill-tribes like the Adis bordering the Assam plains, were little affected by the British occupation of Assam. They proved to be so hostile and their territory as inhospitable that, although a large section of their territory had for many years been nominally within the British territory of Assam, the British Government had to remain content to leave them alone except for an occasional expedition and the establishment of a few military outposts, to punish a particular tribe for raiding and massacring British subjects.<sup>7</sup>

But in course of time certain developments-economic, political, and administrative-compelled the British Government to give up the policy of non-intervension in dealing with the tribes. It now pursued a policy of slow but steady penetration. Some of these were as follows :

1. The inability to protect the ryots within the British territory from the raids and the taxation of the tribes would impair the faith and trust the people reposed in the British Government.
2. The gradual expansion of tea plantation in the erstwhile Lakkimpur district of Assam required an end to the murderous raids by the hill tribes on the plains.<sup>8</sup>
3. Earlier the plainsmen had little interest in owning land in the hilly terrain because it was difficult to bring such lands under cultivation. But during the British period some hill land was also occupied for the purpose of tea cultivation. The boundary fixed for such purpose was, however, not defined. The boundary given in an application for land grant by the tea planter was according to his speculative desire. In one such application submitted during the middle of the 19th century the boundary specified was as follows :

East : as far as will complete the area ;

West : road to Bhooi poonjee ;

North and South : high hills.<sup>9</sup>

When the Britishers started tea cultivation in the Lakhimpur

district, such unspecified boundaries might have created doubts and suspicion in the minds of the hill tribes, such as, the Adis. A part of the vast surface of unsurveyed waste area over which the tribes had customary and traditional rights, under the circumstances, was gradually threatened with usurpation. This happened particularly in areas bordering the present day Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, and Mizoram.<sup>10</sup>

The inter-tribal conflicts and the desire for domination of one by another was fully exploited by the imperial power. "It is probable that the Adis, as a warlike race were expected by the local officers to act as a counterpoise to the Khamtis, Singphos, and Mishmis, who at this time were giving cause for anxiety. In 1840, indeed, the Adis did take the side of the Government unmistakably, when the Khamtis, in alliance with the Mishmis, were fighting against us."<sup>11</sup>

On the other hand, the Adis had their own causes of resentment against the British.

1. The Ahom Government, had exempted the Mishings from taxation, thereby acknowledging subjection of these people to the Adis. During the Burmese invasion, and after the British occupation of Assam, many Mishings found it to their advantage to move away from the vicinity of the Adi lands. The Padmas group of the Adis made a demand in February 1830 that the British authority should push back a new village of the Mishings.<sup>12</sup> Even though the British Government could not force the Mishings, the Mishing village returned to old site and the British Agent induced the Adis to leave them free from exaction for two years. The two Chiefs of the lower Adis became surety for their good treatment.

"But in communities where each individual was his own master and where every affair of importance had to be decided by the Council of the Elders, engagements with the chiefs bore little fruit. Hence followed raids and counter raids involving . . . . slaughter, arson and rapine."<sup>13</sup> The extension of revenue and police jurisdiction beyond the border areas could not but produce ill-feeling and resentment among the tribesmen to whom no motive was so strong as the preservation of their rights of lands and forests.<sup>14</sup>

Captain Bedford and Wilcox were the only officers who had over penetrated into the Adi territory (in 1825) in endeavouring to trace the source of the Dihang river. The knowledge acquired by them of these tribes remained very limited as their intercourse was confined to short interviews with the Adis and the Mishings, who opposed their further progress up the river.<sup>15</sup>

In 1836 a body of about 200 Adis came down and offered to settle on the Dibang. They were willing to submit to the coniminal jurisdiction of the British Government but refused to pay taxes.<sup>16</sup>

It has already been mentioned that the Adis besides claiming sovereignty over the Mishings also claimed the right of all the fish and gold found in the streams that flowed from their hills. The Adis also recieved if not regular tax, atleast frequent conciliatory offerings from the gold-washers and fishermen called the Beheeahs. The Ahom government used to derive a good portion of its revenue from these Beheeahs. Even though in course of time it became less remunerative, the Ahom government used to maintain those Beheeah settlements.<sup>17</sup> But the situation altered under the British rule when the Beheeahs, like the Mishings, moved to areas under British protection away from their Adi masters. They finding a change in the policy of the new Government as against that of the Ahom Government, which had rendered protection in contrast to the apathatic attitude of the earlier Government, began to repudiate the claims of the Adis.<sup>18</sup> The Adis, in order to avengæ it, carried off to the hills such of the refractory Beheeahs as they could lay their hands on. Further, they lodged complaints with the local British authorities for the loss of supplies like salt, cloth and other necessities they incurred as a result of these migrations. In 1847, Captain Vetch, Political Agent, Upper Assam, held a meeting with several Chiefs of the Pashi, Moybo, and other Padams and initiated steps for the establishment of a trading depot at a convenient place on the Dibang to facilitate the supplies to the Adis and to establish a direct intercourse with the people on the other side of the hills. The Adis also, to conciliate Captain Vetch, voluntarily returned all the captives.<sup>19</sup> But this promising prospect failed bitterly when towards the end of 1847, the Deba section of the Adis carried off a body of Kachari gold-washers. Two courses were now open to the British authorities - absolute central or absolute withdrawal. The practical effect of the latter course would be, it was feared, that within a few years the districts in the plains, would be parcelled out amongst the neighbouring hill tribes and the British would be driven out speedily from the province. "So a decision was taken to assert British authority over these tribes and bring them under a system suited to the circumstances."<sup>20</sup> This policy was to be pursued not only with the Adis, but with other tribes too.

Accordingly, Capt. Vetch led an expedition and the captives were restored. But his camp was attacked on the same night by the hillmen, which of course was repulsed. Capt. Vetch burnt

their village, which led to the submission of the offending tribes. Even after this, friendly intercourse, though not cordial, continued. Early in 1851, a large body of the Adis of the upper region settled down on the Dirjma (Simon) and the British Government helped them to purchase implements and husbandry.<sup>21</sup> At the very time when this settlement was encouraged and patronized, the other clans of the Dihang renewed their deprivations on the gold washers. As in the meantime, the Government farmed out the right of gold washing @ Rs. 80.00 per year, it was the moral and bounden duty of the Government to protect the gold-washers from such deprivations.<sup>22</sup> Consequently, orders were issued that an escort should accompany the gold-washers to the Dihang, and a guard be permanently posted at the mouth of the Dihang river. Along with it, however, efforts were made to conciliate the Adis by establishing a market or fair for their convenience. Thus a policy of coercion and conciliation was continued with the Adis.<sup>23</sup>

But the prospects of a friendly intercourse continued to be remote so long as the British claimed suzerainty over lands upto the foot hills, and the Adis were being denied the right of collecting their dues directly from those whom they considered their vassals<sup>24</sup>

E. T. Dalton, whose pioneering work 'The Ethnology of Bengal and Assam' is well known, visited the Adi area with Lt. Frederick Gray Eden and Dr. R. Muir in 1855 and has left an account of the Adis in detail. Dalton has mentioned that the first Adi or Padam village that they came across was Bornjir on the Dibang, which was a newly established one as it was not there when Capt. Badford and Wilcox visited the area. He found it strongly stockaded and was placed as an outpost of the confederated Padam states to resist encroachment and prevent the marauding expeditions of the Idu Mishimis. Dalton also found Padam villages bordering on Assam were larger, more flourishing in all respects than these in the interior. He found Mambu the largest of the neighbouring Padam settlement as well as the most influential in the confederation. Dalton found the Padams had direct or indirect trade with Tibet, as they used to wear coats and had vessels, swords and beads of Tibetan or of Chinese manufacture.<sup>25</sup> Waddell also confirms that, "their rough swords and hatchets are not made by themselves, but imported either from Assam or Tibet, chiefly the latter. They also get from Tibet rough woollen cloth for winter wear and various metals and turquoise ornaments, though they deny that any direct communication takes place, the articles in question being passed on by inter-tribal barter".<sup>26</sup>

In 1858, three years after the visit of Dalton to the Adi area, occurred the first serious Adi outrage.<sup>27</sup> On 31 January 1858, news reached Dibrugarh, the civil station of the district, that the Beheeah village of Sangajan, situated at a distance of only six miles from Dibrugarh in the north of the Brahmaputra, had been raided by the Minyong Adis of the Kabang Village. 21 Persons had been killed and six rounded. It appears that the raid was due to the fact that the Beheeahs had migrated from the area of control of the Adis and refused to pay the dues or tributes as demanded by the Adis. Despite overwhelming odds resulting from the Revolt of 1857, and its after effects, the Government of India had to sanction an expedition against the raiders to protect the people who paid taxes to the British Govt. On 19 March, a force under Capt. Bivar and Capt. W. H. Lowther arrived at Pasighat and on the next day the advance began against the enemy. The expedition, for various reasons . . . . . paucity of troops, difficult terrain, etc, failed to achieve its aim. Emboldened, the Minyongs, allying with the neighbouring clans, advanced and took up a threatening position at Pasighat. It now became clear that if the Government wished to prevent a state of chronic outrage along the border, a serious effort must be made to display the power of the Government. When the overtures by the Mebo Adis to act as mediators failed, "it was considered impossible to everlook the events of the past or to accept anything short of complete submission on terms to be dictated by the Government."<sup>28</sup>

Accordingly in 1859 a well-organized, well-prepared, and well-calculated expedition was sent under Col. Hannay, Commandant of the Assam Light Infantry, aided by Major Reid of the Local Artillery. On 28 February, the expedition arrived at Pasighat, where the Adis had gathered with a great force. On the following day the village was stormed and occupied by the troops. This was followed by the destruction of two other offending villages, Munko and Runkong.<sup>29</sup> The punishment inflicted was so strong that the Pashi Adis with other clans in the neighbourhood made overtures for peace. But the Minyongs remained unbending as ever, asserting that all the land on the northern bank was their own and that any advance by the Britishers beyond the river would be at their peril.<sup>30</sup> Since early 1861, the Minyongs assumed such a threatening attitude that military guards at Sisi and Domoh had to be strengthened and a party of sepoys was despatched to the junction of the river Dihang and Dibang to seal the route of the raiders towards the plains. In spite of these precautionary defence measures, the Miny-

ong Adis towards the close of 1861 cut up a Beheeah village situated fifteen miles from Dibrugarh on the south side of the Brahmaputra. This village shifted from north to the south of Brahmaputra after the Adi raid on Sangajan, and it is said that these people helped the Britishers in the campaign of 1859 against the Adis. Thus this attack was purely a vindictive one to enforce the idea that the Ba-heeahs were not beyond the perview of Adi attack inspite of their emigration to the south of the Brahmaputra river.<sup>31</sup>

Bivar, the Deputy Commissioner of Lakhimpur district, now proposed two means to prevent further raids : 1. The deportation of the Mishings to the South of the Brahmaputra who it was felt helped the Adis in planning and executing the raids ; and 2. the military occupation of the Adi Hills at least for a season and to build for this purpose a fort between Lalimukh and Pabhamukh and to link it up with Demoh and Sisi, so that it might be patrolled properly.<sup>32</sup> The first measure was not accepted on the grounds that the submission of the Mishings to the Adis was not out of love but cut of fear and it was the duty of the Government to protect and not to evacuate them. Secondly, the Mishings were required for the construction of the roads in the border, as no other people would go there for fear of Adis. Henry Hopkinson, who succeeded Jenkins, as the Agent in 1861, agreed with Bivar that defensive measures alone would not ensure the security of the frontier. "He desired to make Pabhamukh the base of operations, wherefrom it would be possible to push forward towards Pasighat so as to make it and the tract in its vicinity a British possession. He would then make further advances as far as Kabang so as to get into the rear of the Adis and to control them effectively. In spite of it being a costly proposition, it was inevitable specially after the occupation of Lakhimpur, Sadiya and the Matak kingdoms.<sup>33</sup> Evidently, Hopkinson advocated a forward Policy and this should be carried out not so much by force of arms as by constructing military forts and roads in as much as :

Their (Adi's) chief strength lay in their impregnable country ; when that was pierced and made accessible to our troops, their submission was accomplished.....<sup>34</sup>

This proposal of Hopkinson was approved by John Peter Grant, Lt. Governor of Bengal. The increasing importance of extensive tea-plantation on the north bank of the Brahmaputra convinced him to take such a decision, even though the proposal was sufficiently expensive. To reduce the expenditure of fort and road construction, it was suggested to utilise the services of the con-

vict-labourers. Thus a scheme was laid before the Supreme Government to open and maintain a road to Pabhamukh "for retaining by means of troops, forts and roads, effective military control" on the entire Adi territory.<sup>35</sup>

Consequently, a strong stockade with accommodation for a European officer was erected at Pobha, midway between Lakhimpur and Pabhamukh. From Rangdai Chapari in the erstwhile Matak Kingdom, a road was opened upto Rangapara. The Adi territory had been further cut off by another road from Lakhimpur to Demoh through Pobha. The tract between Demoh and Sisi had been cleared, communication from Demoh to Dibrugarh was opened and to ensure security of the line from Dibrugarh to Sadiya, a stockade was built at the confluence of the river Dihang and Dibang.<sup>36</sup>

All these defensive and other preparations had the direct desired effect. Impressed and terrified, the Adis made overtures for general reconciliation.<sup>37</sup> The Government, while approving the defensive measures, also suggested to take advantage of such friendly overtures to avoid hostile aggression. These suggestions were : a) to enter into a binding and written agreement with the Adi Chiefs for the preservation of law and order along the frontier ; b) small stipends were to be granted to those who would undertake the responsibility of preventing hostile aggressions by their own clans ; c) to keep up a tribal police for the prevention of attacks ; and d) to surrender criminal refugees. An annual meeting between the civil officers of Lakhimpur district with the willing clans was also suggested.<sup>38</sup>

At length in November 1862, the Deputy Commissioner could meet the Minyong (Meyong) Adi representatives in a conference at Laloo Mukh and after a prolonged and protracted discussion lasting for seven days an agreement was concluded between the British Government and eight communities of the Adis. Instead of paying money to the Chiefs only, the treaty provided for payment in kind so that the same might be distributed among the members of the whole community. Numerous other clans of the Adis made similar engagements with the British, of which the 1863 agreement with the Kebang Adis is noteworthy.

**Agreement entered into by the Minyong (Meyong) Adis on 5th November, 1862**<sup>39</sup>

Whereas it is expedient to adopt measures for maintaining the integrity of the British territory in the district of Luckhimpoor, Upper Assam, on the Meyong Adi Frontier and for preserving

peace and tranquility, and whereas by virtue of a letter No. 11 of 11th October, 1862, from the Officiating Commissioner of Assam, transmitting orders from the Government of Bengal conveyed in a letter No. 265-T, dated 8th August, 1862, from officiating Junior Secretary to the Government of Bengal, the Deputy Commissioner of Luckhimpur has been authorised to proceed in this matter, an engagement to the following effect has been entered with the Meyong Adis this 5th day of November A. D. 1862 at camp Laloo Mukh. 40.

#### **Article - 1**

Offences committed by the Meyong Adis in time of hostility towards the British Government, for which the assembled heads of the villages have sued for pardon, are overlooked and peace is re-established.

#### **Article - 2**

The limit of the British territory which extends to the feet of the hills is recognized by the Meyong Adis who hereby engage to respect it.

#### **Article - 3**

The British Government will take up positions on the frontier in the plains, will establish stations, post guards, and construct forts or open roads as may be deemed expedient, and the Meyong Adis will not take umbrage at such arrangements, or have any voice in such matters.

#### **Article - 4**

The Meyong Adis recognise all the persons residing in the plains in the vicinity of the Meyong Hills as British subjects.

#### **Article - 5**

The Meyong Adis engage not to molest or to cross the frontier for the purpose of molesting residents in the British Territory.

#### **Article - 6**

The communication across the frontier will be free both for the Meyong Adis and for any person British Subjects, going to the Meyong village for the purpose of trading or other friendly purpose.

#### **Article - 7**

The Meyong Adis shall have access to markets and places of trade which they may think fit to resort to ; and on such occasions they engage not to come around with their spears and bows and arrows, but merely to carry their 'daos'.

#### **Article - 8**

Any Meyong Adi desiring to settle in or occupy lands in the British territory engage to pay such revenue to the Government as may be fixed upon by the Deputy Commissioner ; the demand, in the first instance, to be light.

#### **Article - 9**

The Meyong Adis engage not to cultivate Opium in the British territory or to import it.

#### **Article - 10**

In the event of any grievance arising or any dispute taking place between the Meyong Adis and the British territory, the Adis will refrain from taking the law into their hands, but they will appeal to the Deputy Commissioner for redress and abide by his decision.

#### **Article -11**

To enable the Mayong Adis of the eight Khels or communities who submit to this engagement, to keep up a police for preventing any marauders from resorting to the plains for sinister purpose, and to enable them to take measures for arresting any offenders, the Deputy Commissioner on behalf of the British government, agrees that the communities referred to shall receive yearly the following articles :

100 iron hoes, eighty bottles of rum, thirty maunds of salt, two seers of Abkaree opium and two maunds of tobacco.

#### **Article - 12**

The articles referred to above which will be delivered for the first year, on the signing of this engagement, will hereafter be delivered from year to year to the representatives of the eight Khels or communities of the Meyong Adis as aforesaid on their meeting the Deputy Commissioner at Laloo Mukh or at any other convenient place on the Meyong Doar side.

### Article - 13

On the occasion of meeting the Deputy Commissioner, the Meyong Adis in earnest of their continued friendly feelings, engage to make a tribute offering a Mithun, pigs and fowls, in exchange for which they will obtain usual suitable acknowledgements.

### Article - 14

In event of the Meyong Adis infringing or failing to act up to any of the provisions of this engagement, it will be considered null and void, and will no longer have effect.

### Article - 15

The original of the above engagement which is drawn up in English, will remain with the Deputy Commissioner of Luchhimpoor, Assam and a counterpart of copy will be furnished to the subscribing Meyong Adis.

### Articles - 16

In ratification of the above engagement contained in fifteen paragraphs the Deputy Commissioner of Luchhimpoor, Assam, on behalf of the British Government, puts his hand and seal, and the recognized headmen of the chiefs of the eight Khels or the communities of the Meyong Adis affix their signature or marks, this 5th day of November A.D. 1862.

Signed ; H. S. Bivar Major  
Deputy Commissioner, 1st class,  
Luchkimpoor and Agent, Governor  
General, North-East Frontier.

Then follows the signatures of 34 Chiefs of the eight Khels or communities of the Adis.

A precisely similar Agreement was signed with the Kebang Adis on 16 January 1863. The articles given to them annually however, were thirty maunds of salt, forty bottles of rum, four maunds of tobacco or rupees 28 for tobacco, twenty eight iron hoes and two seers of opium.

Another agreement entered into by Seven Gams or headmen of the Adis of the Dihang-Debang Doars on 8 November 1862 with H. S. Bivar, the Deputy Commissioner, of the Lakhimpoor district also carried practically similar terms. The Gams, as men-

tioned in the engagement, represented the Meyboh, Pades, Silookh, Bomjeon, the Padam and the Bor Silookh Adis.

The articles to be given to the consenting parties annually were : one hundred iron hoes, forty maunds of salt, one hundred bottles of rum and two maunds of tobacco.

It appears that the treaties were dictated and they displayed the sign of 'might is right'. The Adis agreed to sign these engagements not out of love, but out of fear that was created on their minds by the British preparations to effectively control them. Knowing fully well that the balance of the engagements were highly unfavourable to them, specially the clauses of acknowledging the extension of the British boundary upto the limit of the foothills and the recognition of all the persons residing in the plains in the vicinity of the Adis as British subjects contrary to their traditional mastery over them, the Adis agreed to sign the same with a vacillating mind. Apparently, even though for the next two years the relation of the British with the Adis continued to be friendly, the Adis could hardly abide by the Agreements of such imposing nature, which deprived them of their rights over the plains. In the heart of their hearts the Adis were not prepared to resign their claims over all the lands upto the Brahmaputra.<sup>41</sup> Naturally their discontentment was displayed on several occasions after the treaty.

In 1863, for example, the Meybo Adis went off in a temper from the annual meeting, refusing to take their presents, because the Deputy Commissioner refused to tolerate their pertinency. Again in 1865, the Minyong Adis remained absent in the meeting on an excuse of prevalence of small-pox and cholera in the plains. But on enquiry it was found that the actual cause of their indignation was the rise of salt price at Sadiya market, which affected them badly.<sup>42</sup>

In 1866, they again absented themselves demanding abolition of the posts at Pabhamukh. Seeing this display of indignant attitude on the part of the Adis, the British strengthened the stockades. This again had the desired result for the Padams, a very influential clan, attended the meeting of 1866, and entered into an agreement with the British Government. This had an important impact on the Adis as a whole. As even the Padams, the most influential and powerful group of them, had agreed to enter into an engagement with the British, it naturally dampened greatly the martial spirit of the other clans. As a result, there had been no open disturbances

or dissatisfaction for a long time. The agreement with the Padams is given below :

Agreement entered into by the Padams on 5th April, 1866.<sup>43</sup>

We, the representatives of 12 Padam tribes, who have not yet entered into any Agreement with the British Government, do hereby express our desire to enter into the same compact as that agreed upon between the other Adi tribes and the Deputy Commissioner of Luckhimpoor.

2. We agree to abide by the provisions of the Adi Treaties of 1862-63, on condition that we receive from Government, yearly to defray our expenses, we preserving the tranquility of our frontier, the following articles :

Salt sixty maunds, iron hoes one hundred and twenty, rum one hundred bottles, tobacco three maunds and opium two seers.

3. Should we anytime transgress the provisions of the above Treaties, the same to be null and void.

4. In ratification of this agreement we hereto affix our signatures or marks.

Then follows the fourteen signatures or marks of the Gams of the clans.

Before me, this fifth day of April, one thousand eight hundred and sixty six.

W. W. Hums, Lt.  
District Supdt. of Police  
Luckhimpoor.

The Agent was further advised by the Lt. Governor to be more generous in his dealings with these tribes. In case of good behaviour, the Chiefs were to be given more than the stipulated allowances of salt, clothes and even money to show that "they will gain more by friendly and neighbourly conduct than by lawlessness."<sup>44</sup> Hopkinson, of course, did not like such a policy of conciliation. To him the policy of subsidising the Adis or 'Blackmail' as he termed it, might be "a mere staving off the problem of defence in the frontier."<sup>45</sup>

In the opinion of the Lt. Governor Cecil Beadon, however, the Commissioner Hopkinson was wrong to term the subsidies as 'Blackmail', for the allowance paid to the Chiefs indirectly was payment for police duty for the preservation of peace along the frontier. This they were expected to do not by keeping red-turbaned uniformed police in the visible stations, but by measures fitted with their tribal organisation and custom<sup>46</sup>. For, the essential difference between blackmail and the annual allowance paid

to the Chiefs was, "that in one case the forbearance of the savage tribe is made conditional on the payment of the stipulated allowances and on the other the payment is made by us conditional on the good behaviour of the conduct of the tribe. One is initiated in the aggressive spirit the other in a spirit of conciliation."<sup>47</sup> That is why Beadon suggested that patience, infinite patience, was required of the local authorities in dealing with these tribes. For,

No one supposes that their civilization is to be affected in a few years ; and no one expects that in endeavouring to conciliate them, the Government will not meet with occasional disappointment, but the policy is nonetheless sound and intelligible.<sup>48</sup>

The Governor-General in Council in the proceedings on 14 July 1865 concurred with the policy of the Lt. Governor by asserting the policy that every effort should be made to conciliate the Adis and to establish British influence over these tribes.<sup>49</sup> Thus the military occupation of the Abor Hills so strongly advocated by the ever-enthusiastic local authorities was ruled out. The Government expressed its inability to provide men or money at a time, when it required the same very badly to meet the more pressing demands elsewhere in India. The local authorities, were therefore, directed to confine their attention upto the foot-hills and not beyond. They were told :

Our object should not be to extend our frontier, but to secure its good administration. If at any time, it may be necessary to advance into the hills beyond the border as a punitive measure, our troops should remain as long as it is necessary for the attainment of this object, and no longer.<sup>50</sup>

In 1876-77 a section of the Adi tribes showed symptoms of hostility consequent upon the advancement of a Trigonometrical Survey Party into the hills. As a result, the place was abandoned. The aggressive attitude taken up by the Padams towards the Idu-Mishmis compelled the British Government in 1881 to have a forward movement. For, the British thought that once the Adis were allowed to cross the Dibang, they would establish themselves in the plains and would threaten Sadiya. Troops were despatched Bomjur and Nijamghat, without opposition to the Adis, withdraw to their own hills. Then the occupation of Nizamghat by the Britishers served to impose a salutary check upon the Padam villages. But the Assam Report for 1881-82, contains an account of an outrage committed by Borkheng, the Chief of Pade clan, upon two Mishmis and a native sepoy.<sup>51</sup>

In 1889, four Mishmis, who were British subjects, were de-

coyed and enticed by the Pasi-Minyongs across the frontier and killed. The guilty villages were punished by a fine. But in 1893 the hill-men again broke out and they cut up a police party of three. A few weeks later, a second attack was made on a police patrol, one of whom was killed and the other injured. An expedition was then sent into the Adi territory, which occupied the principal villages after meeting with a good deal of resistance. As a further punishment, a blockade was also imposed against the tribe, which however, was withdrawn in 1900. These measures, it appears, had some impact upon the Adis, for after this their conduct for some years was satisfactory.<sup>52</sup>

Mr. Williamson, Asstt. Political Officer of Sadiya visited some Minyong villages in 1909. He again, alongwith Dr. Gregerson, visited them in 1911, at the invitation of some of the leading men of Riu village. They had 42 followers and labourers. But he and his followers were killed at Kemsing village. Dr. Gregerson, who had stayed behind to treat some sick labourers, had been murdered the previous day. A military expedition was sent to exact reparation for the murders, which could bring to the Adis the idea that the British Government had the power and resources to deal with such exigencies. Since then the Adi area was surveyed and explored and a loose political control established over them.<sup>53</sup> The terms of peace (1912), imposed on the chief offending villages of the Minyong Adis are as follows : <sup>54</sup>.

The Gams of Sissin are to pay a fine of 2 Mithuns and 6 pigs. On payment they may collect their people and rebuild their village. They undertake to assist the Government in everything and to give information.

Orders to Panggi dated 30th December, 1911 :

The Sarkar knows you are guilty in matter of Mr. Williamson's murder, but is merciful and gives you a chance of making peace. If you do not accept the terms, there will be war. If you agree to the terms, you must in future obey the orders of the Sarkar and not fight among yourselves. The terms are :

- i) To dismantle the stockade of the village.
- ii) To deliver up 500 iron-barbed arrows with quivers, 6 Tibetan swords, 20 Mithuns, 50 pigs and 50 maunds of rice (unhusked).
- ii) To return any property belonging to Mr. Williamson, Dr. Gregerson and their party.

Orders to Kebang dated 1st January, 1912 :

- i) In future to obey all orders from the Government, and not

- prevent people from trading in the plains.
- ii) To return the five stolen rifles and also all other property belonging to Mr. Williamson, Dr. Gregearson, and their party.
  - iii) To surrender the telephone cables and five drums taken by them.
  - iv) To surrender 2000 war arrows and complete war kit of 50 men, including bows, arrows and quivers, hats and daos.
  - v) To be responsible for the maintenance of the road from Yambung camp to Puak.
  - vi) To be allowed to rebuild the village at a site a mile further up-stream.
  - vii) To call in the Gams of Yemsing, Babuk and Kalak.
  - viii) To surrender 25 Mithuns.
  - ix) No pardon extends to Lemleor Bapuk.

Orders to Yemsing dated 6th January, 1912 :

We know that some of your men went south and stirred up trouble amongst the Galongs round about Mishing. We do not wish to punish them heavily, as they were not concerned in the murder of Mr. Williamson and his party, and for what they did they have been punished already. You must understand that trade is open to everybody with the plains. You may rebuild your village immediately, but to show that you are under the Sarkar and willing to obey all orders, you will bring in 10 bows, 20 war-arrows, 1 sword and 1 helmet.

Orders to Rengging dated 12th January, 1912 :

In future you must obey all orders of the Sarkar and must not interfere with people who wish to go down to the plains to trade. You may rebuild your village on condition that you always keep the road between Sirpe and Sirki streams in good repair.

Orders to Retung dated 13th January, 1912 :

As you have spoken the truth, the Sarkar will have mercy. You must in future obey all orders of the Sarkar and must not interfere with trade with the plains. You must return the two guns (Retung's share of the loot) personally or through Kebang. You will be responsible for the proper upkeep of the road between Retung and the Lalok streams. On these conditions you may rebuild your village.

Orders to Babuk dated 15th January, 1912 :

For having taken part in the massacre of Mr. Williamson and

his party, you are fined 5 mithuns. When you have paid this fine, you will be permitted to rebuild your village subject to the following conditions. You must in future obey all orders of the Sarkar and not prevent anyone from trading in the plains. You are responsible for the upkeep of the road between Sirpe and Retung.

After the completion of the subsequent military expedition, it was decided that the system of administration on the frontier should be changed. Accordingly, in 1912, a new charge was created under the name of the Central and Eastern Sections, North East Frontier with headquarters at Sadiya. At the same time, another charge, the Western Section, was created for the area in contact with the Bhotia, Nishi and Apatani tribes in the foot-hills of the Himalayas further to the west. Both tracts were placed in charge of Political Officers directly under the Government. As nuclei of these tracts, certain parts of the Lakhimpur and Darang Districts were transferred and placed under the two Political Officers. In 1914, the designation of the two Charges were changed to 'Sadiya Frontier Tract' and 'Balipara Frontier Tract'. The major parts of the Tracts were, however, unsurveyed and so their total area was not known then.<sup>55</sup> The Sadiya Tract area, as per the estimate of the Political Officer, covered about 10,000 sq. miles, extending to the confines of Tibet on the north and east and touching Burma on the south-east and south. Of this area again, only about 4,200 sq. miles were under regular administration. The relation with the border tribes in the rest of the area was one of loose political control only.<sup>56</sup>

The revenue settlement of the settled plain portion of the Tracts resembled that of the adjoining plain districts. For the rest, a poll-tax of Rs. 3/- for each able bodied male was levied. As per Reports of 1922, the administration was generally appreciated. Consequently, the relation between the hillmen and people of the plains greatly improved.<sup>57</sup>

The Amili outpost at the confluence of the Dibang and Ithun river in the Adi area was opened during the year 1922 and the tracts thereto was graded and improved. Trade from the valley was as bright as ever and the total hill produce brought and sold in public auction for Rs. 55,000. Two memorials in the memory of the late Mr. Williamson and Dr. Gregerson were constructed on the scene of their murder in 1911 at Kemsing and Panggi, and were placed in charge of the concerned village. The Debang country west of the Simen (Dijmur) river on the outer slopes of the hills was transferred from Lakhimpur district to the Frontier Tract during the year 1922, and assessed for poll-tax.<sup>58</sup>

## The Inner Line

Here it would be appropriate to mention about the Inner Line Regulation which was given effect by the Regulation V of 1873. The Inner Line Regulation was the result of lengthy correspondence between the Government of Bengal, and that of India on the subject of Frontier policy. It was believed that many complications were caused by permitting persons of the plains to penetrate into the hills inhabited or frequented by the hill tribes, where no effective protection could be extended by the Government and where disputes relating to buying or selling frequently occurred. At the time the Regulation was passed, the great demand and competition for India Rubber brought down by the hill-men, gave special prominence to these considerations. The spread of tea-gardens outside the fiscal limits of the British Government had also involved the Government in many difficult problems with the hill-men.

It was, therefore, decided that the best way to prevent such complications was to stop, as far as possible, the entry of strangers to tracts where adequate control could not be exercised. An Inner Line had been laid down in the following districts :

In the Balipara Frontier Tract towards the Bhutias, Akas, and the Nishis ; in the Sadiya Frontier Tract and Lakhimpur towards the Nishis, Mishings, Adis, Mishmis, Khamtis, Singphos and the Nagas ; in the Sibsagar Sub-division towards the Nagas. The Line was marked at intervals by Frontier Posts held by Military Police and commanding roads of access to the tracts beyond. Any person from the plains, who had received permission to cross the Line had to present his pass at these posts.<sup>59</sup>

Thus through the policies of Inner Line, and 'leave them alone' that were pursued by the Administration, the possible courses of conflict between the endogeneous ruling class among the tribals and their overlords the British Imperialists were successfully plugged. It facilitated the peaceful co-existence between the Imperial interests outside and a retrogressive social order within.<sup>60</sup>

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