

**REPORT OF A MISSION TO
SIKKIM AND THE TIBETAN
FRONTIER: WITH A
MEMORANDUM
ON OUR RELATIONS WITH TIBET**

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Report of a mission to Sikkim and the Tibetan frontier: with a memorandum on our relations with Tibet by Colman Macaulay

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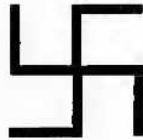
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UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

REPORT OF A
Mission to Sikkim and the
Tibetan Frontier

WITH A
Memorandum on our Relations with Tibet

BY
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OF THE BENGAL CIVIL SERVICE,
SECRETARY TO THE GOVERNMENT OF BENGAL
AND
MEMBER OF THE BENGAL LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.



Calcutta:
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INTRODUCTION.

I was deputed to Sikkim and the Tibetan frontier by the Lieutenant-Governor in October last with a triple object. (1) To discuss with the Maharaja certain pending questions concerning the administration of his State and his relations to the British Government; (2) to visit the Lachen valley to see if a trade route could be opened up in that direction, with the province of Tsang in Tibet; (3) to endeavour to meet, and to establish friendly relations with, the Tibetan authorities of the district adjoining Sikkim on the north. The first and third points have been discussed in separate reports, and I am conscious that the diary of my tour, apart from the record of the proceedings at Tumlong, the capital of Sikkim, and at Giagong, on the frontier, contains little of practical interest. As, however, photographs were taken on the journey, and the diary may possibly be found of some use as an itinerary, I have, by the Lieutenant-Governor's desire, published the latter as it was written. I must ask for indulgence for the shortcomings of the diary on the ground of the difficulties under which it was written. Owing to the very limited time at my disposal, I was obliged to make the longest marches I could induce the coolies to undertake, and, except at Tumlong and at Giagong, I was unable to halt for a single day. The diary was written, *currente calamo*, every night after a long journey, which, owing to the necessity of moving as rapidly as possible, had afforded few opportunities for observation. Incidents of little interest to any one not concerned in them, were recorded while they were fresh in my mind, and it is only because I am aware that if I once began the process of excision, I should leave but

little text to accompany the photographs, that I have reproduced the diary in its entirety.

I wish to record my acknowledgments of the excellent service rendered throughout this expedition by Baboo Sarat Chandra Das and Lama Ugyen Gyatso, and by Nimsering, the interpreter of the Deputy Commissioner's Court at Darjeeling, whom Mr. Oldham kindly deputed to accompany me to render general assistance.

REPORT OF A MISSION

70

SIKKIM AND THE TIBETAN FRONTIER.

TEMI, Monday, 20th October.

We made a very long march today from Darjeeling over the shoulder of Tendong to Temi (4,770). We crossed the Rungeet by the cane suspension bridge, and rode up to Keadom, the first village in Independent Sikkim. About a hundred yards below the village we were met by the principal villagers with drums and fifes, and some men and women who sang and danced before us till we reached an arbour which had been prepared for our reception. Here we had some oranges. This was the fourth time I have enjoyed the hospitality of Keadom, and I have always welcomed the rest there after the stiff and hot pull up from the Rungeet. From Keadom we rode on up the valley of the Mongpoo, which seems more lovely every time I see it. At the shoulder between Silokevoke and Namtchi we were met by my old friend the Lasso Kazi, looking in excellent case, the lord of half a hundred villages and many a mile of forest. His band was in full force, and the men were dressed in smart red jackets and new striped Lepcha chud-ders of white and blue. They struck up as soon as we appeared at the bend in the road. In the arbour we had each a choonga full of murwa beer of my friend's own special

Temi.

Tem.

tap. I gave the Kazi a robe of honour. As we rode along the shoulder, preceded by the band playing and drumming vigorously, we all enjoyed the lovely view of the Rungeet like a streak of light blue paint, far down in the valley between Rinchi-poong and the Timbi La, as it flowed south after its junction with the Ratong under Tassiding. At Namtchi we were met by the Lama and the full chapter of monks, dressed out in their smartest mitres, and blowing trombones and trumpets, and clashing cymbals. Some of the trombones (like those I saw last year at Tassiding) were many feet long, and gave forth most sepulchral tones in response to the vigorous efforts of the performers. The Lama, an old acquaintance of mine, presented me with a scarf, and led the way into the Gomba, where prayers for our safe journey were chanted, as we sat on Tibetan rugs and sipped murwa. Drops of rain began to fall as we rode up the steep side of Tendong above Namtchi, and I became aware of a tall, gaunt, hard-featured person in a monk's dress, who offered to hold an umbrella over my head. On reaching the summit of the shoulder, I ascertained that this was a Lama of Pemiongechi monastery, who had joined us at Namtchi and wished to go in our train to Tumlong. I recognized, as we marched along the shoulder, the path by which I ascended in 1882 and 1883 to the cone of Tendong (8,676), where the head Lama of Namtchi spends the months of the rainy season. The tradition is that in a great flood the whole world was immersed except the top of Tendong, and that a Lepcha man and woman, the only survivors of the deluge, took refuge there. At the beginning of the rains accordingly, the Lama proceeds to the summit and prays continuously that a repetition of the disaster may be averted. Food is supplied to him at intervals from the monastery, and it is said that he has the power, at this time and place, of curing grievous diseases of pilgrims who visit his lonely cell. As we reached the point where the path to Temi leaves the road to the Timbi La, and descends the northern side of the mountain, night was closing in fast and a heavy mist was coming up. We had 3,000 feet to descend, and the path, though not very steep, was incredibly slippery,—far more so than it was seven years ago when Croft and I struggled down the

same descent at the close of the same march. The Lama,—who had been staring at me with an expression of mingled curiosity and reverence at every available opportunity, since our parley at the top of the rise from Namtchi,—began to pray vigorously in a monosyllabic chant ending every now and then in a long drone. Alpenstocks were soon found to be a delusion, and hobnailed shooting boots a snare. The flicker of the lantern only served to illumine our mishaps. Every two or three minutes one of the party would be seen suddenly accelerating his pace, and brandishing his alpenstock as he staggered forward into the darkness: then the Lama prayed louder and louder, till a double-knock on the ground announced that the performer of the involuntary evolution had finally come to grief. It was past 9 o'clock when the unearthly yells set up by Furchung and Dadji reached the camp, and men with lanterns and torches set out to meet us. We found that Oldham had sent to meet us two hours before, but that the men had returned saying it was impossible for us to get beyond the Namtchi monastery tonight.

Lingmo.

LINGMO, *Tuesday, 21st October.*

Hot and uninteresting march to Lingmo. Before leaving Temi, I sent for the son of the Barmie Kazi, who had taken much trouble in laying out the camping ground, and presented him with a robe of honour. The descent from Temi to the Teesta valley was slippery, but the morning was bright and clear. The bridges over the different streams in the valley had been repaired. I noticed that the flat of Shingchu Thang (*Shing* wood; *Chu* water; *Thang* flat), which had been cleared for cultivation in 1877, was overgrown with low jungle. The mundle of Ben met us here with the usual preparation of an arbour, and oranges, milk and murwa. He explained that what I had noticed was due to the dispute about the settlement of the Nepalese between the Phodang Lama and the Pemiongchi Lamas, which has now been set at rest. Under Yangang an arbour had been prepared by the Lamas of the Gonpa. Ugyen Gyatso, who is himself a Lama, is the great man here,—he owns the living, in fact, of the monastery,—and he introduced the