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These includes volumes and files of letters received and written by the Superintendent and Deputy Commissioner of Cachar.

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      Bengal Board of Revenue Files.
      Dacca Commissioners File.
      Assam Commissioners File.

   b) Assam Secretariat Proceedings (Department of Revenue, Agriculture and Commerce), since 1875.

   c) Home Department Proceedings (Public, General, Judicial, Revenue, Forests), since 1868.

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F. INTERVIEW

Interview was conducted from the different personalities who were directly or indirectly involved in the cachar tea gardens with a view to proper magnitude of the present study. Following is the list of personalities whom I had interviewed.

1. Sanatan Tanti, Hospital Dresser, Kathal Tea Estate. (3rd September 2009)
2. Gobordhan Tanti, Agent, Samabai Samiti, Kathal Tea Estate. (3rd September 2009)
3. Raghu Tanti, Permanent Labourer, Kathal Tea Estate. (3rd September 2009)
5. Bishu Bagti, Permanent Labourer, Kathal Tea Estate. (10th September 2009)
8. Smt. Sabita Sarma, Head Teacher, Barsanga M E School, Kathal Tea Estate. (5th October 2009)
10. Kajal Chandra Kanu, Hospital worker, Derby Tea Estate. (20th December 2009)
16. Ajoy Panika, Social Worker, Poloi Tea Estate. (5th April 2011)
17. Bijoy Krishna Pandey, Head Teacher, Poloi Tea Estate, (5th April 2011)
18. Sinha, Monoj Kumar, Manager, Poloi Tea Estate, (10th August 2011)
19. Kairi, Jyotirmoy, Panchayet Member, Poloi Tea Estate, (10th August 2011)
20. Dutta, D, Employee, Surma Valley Branch Indian Tea Association, (25th August 2011)
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The Frontier Sun – 1st April 1999


E. UNPUBLISHED THESIS

An early letter on the Tea Industry –
Written by T Fisher, Esq., A A G G to G S Gordon, Secretary, to the Committee for Tea Culture and dated Cachar, the 25th March, 1834.

1. I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 3rd instant, and in reply to submit such information as I possess relative to the feasibility of introducing the tea plant into this part of the Eastern Frontier.

2. The country of Cachar of which I am stationed being to the Eastward of Sylhet, the boundary of which it was long ago remarked by Major Renhell, is as near to the Chinese province of Yunan as it is to Calcutta, it might be expected that some information relative to the subject would be derived from passing travelers, but the political condition of the intermediate countries has long proved a virtual prohibition on all commercial intercourse through this quarter and seems likely to continue so. I have however met a few persons who have visited the Chinese frontier and from their reports it seems probable that tea is grown and manufactured within 300 miles of this place.

3. This circumstance, however, I should regard as but of little movement had I not remarked on perusing the documents contained in your letter an agreement in various particulars between the physical conditions of this country and those of some of the tea districts of China. In regard to climate it would appear that neither the heat nor cold are as intense in Cachar as in China but the rainy season would seem to occur at precisely the same time in both countries, the rivers in Cachar being swollen from February as in the tea districts. The conditions of the atmosphere accompanying the blowing of certain winds appears to be precisely similar in both tracts. The latitude of Man-Choo-foo, one of the tea districts, is the same with that of much of Cachar. The face of the country appears similar, there being in both mountains and hills, the bases of which are washed by numerous rives and lakes flowing through river tracts with gentle falls to the sea. The soil on the slopes near the foot of many of the hills and mountains is such as Dr. Abel
states the tea plant to be grown upon; viz- loose and gravelly formed by the debris of sandstone scists and granite and containing very little vegetable mould.

4. Thinking it therefore likely that certain parts of Cachar and the adjacent district of Sylhet may be found adapted to the purpose in view I proceed to answer the questions contained in the close of your letter so far as I am able.

i. I recommend for the experiment the tract comprised between 24.45 and 20.20 N. Lat. and 91 and 93, 30 East-longitude including the southern fall of the Casia and Cachar mountains with the level country at the base watered by the Soormah and which is broken by isolated hills and low ranges.

ii. The mountains contained within the limits above assigned are from four to five thousand feet high and their bases are about two hundred feet above the level of the sea.

iii. I regret I am unable to answer the third question at length. The extremes of heat and cold which I have observed at my residence in the plain part of the Cachar are 88 and 42 respectively, the first occurring in September and the last in January. At Sylhet 92 and 50 are the limits and on the Casia mountains about 78 and 27 but the mountains of Cachar have a more uniform temperature.

iv. No snow falls but ice formed at night.

v. I am not prepared to say what quantity of rain falls but it is very large, much larger than in Bengal, the rainy season commencing in February or March and only breaking up in October.

vi. The atmosphere is surcharged with moisture from March to December and is dry only during about 3 months. Fogs are frequent during during the cold season.

vii. The wind during the cold season is usually from the North-East and is cold and dry; in the spring it blows from the East and South East, bringing rain and damp, and during the rest of the year from the South with the
same accompaniments. Occasional guests from the Westward are always hot and dry.

viii. Thunder storms are of frequent occurrence in February, March, April and May.

ix. Hail storms occur I think on an average about once in four or five years and in the spring.

x. I have never known or heard of the appearance of locusts in either of the districts.

xi. The slope of Casia Hills consists of Secondary Limestone over laying Sandstone composed of the debris of these rocks intermixed with vegetable mould. In Cachar the soil includes a larger admixture of Silicious particles and the hills contain no Limestone but are composed of Sclists and Sandstone only.

xii. Streams and lakes are numerous and during the greater part of the year contain plenty of water, many of the former at the post of the hills might be made available for the purpose of irrigation if it were considered desirable. They are in general pure but there are salt well in Cachar and a few streams in their neighbourhood are brackish.

xiii. The vegetable productions of Sylhet and Cachar are much too numerous and various for specification in this communication, but I may observe that they include a Camellia from the leaves of which I have seen an inferior kind of tea prepared by a native of Munnipoor who had been on the Chinese frontier, which however was not fit for use.

xiv. Farm servants usually receive eight annas a month besides their food and clothing but men may be hired for heavy work by the job or at from two to three rupees per mensem. Women and children at from one rupee to one rupee eight annas each.

xv. The climate of the plains is on the whole favourable to Europeans provided they are not exposed much during the rains. The complaints of the native are generally contracted in the forest and jungle which extend over the mountains in Cachar and along their base throughout the tract
under consideration. Hindustanis and others suffer at first from the climate
but generally become acclimated and there retain their health very well.
xvi. There is an excellent water communication with Calcutta by the River
Soormah and boats may be built in number and of any size at a low rate in
Cachar.
ANNEXURE – B
No. 180 of 1855

To,

W Grey, Esqr.

Secretary to the Govt. of Bengal, Fort William. Dated, Cachar 10th July, 1855

Sir,

As no doubt it will prove interesting to this Honour the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal I have the honour to state for his information that I have ascertained that the real tea plant is indigenous to this province, it is growing wild in the jungles.

I submitted specimens of the plant to Dr. Thomas, Supdt. of the Govt. Botanical Garden, Calcutta, and to others and all agree in considering them identical with the tea plant of Assam. Dr. Thomson, in a letter received from him two days since says, ‘the specimens forwarded by you are beyond any reasonable doubt the true tea plant (Assam Valley). The capsules are those of the Thea and not like those of any Caseicellia with which I am acquainted.

Amongst other I sent some specimens to a Mr. Williamson, who has a Tea Plantation at Jorhat in Assam and who is most anxious to embark in an enterprise at once and says that if sanctioned by Govt. he would be prepared to take up lands to the extent of 500 acres and to commence active experiment in the coming cold season, but he first wishes to know on what terms he could obtain a grant of land.

On my first ascertaining that the plant discovered was the genuine tea plant, I sent people in several directions into the jungles to look for it, and whatever I sent, the plant was found, more or less abundant and no doubt on search being made, it will be found in the jungles wherever there are low hills. In one place there are several acres of land covered with the plant, and where, were the jungle plants removed, there would be a tea plantation already to commence with.

If I might be permitted to make a recommendation it would be that an experimental tea plantation should be sanctioned by Govt. to be commenced upon at once, were it even on a small scale. If successful it might turn out very advantageous to my district and tend to develop quickly the resources of it. For Cachar being easy
of access at all times of the year either by land or water, and labour being to be had in abundance there is no doubt but that before long the demand for tea lands would become very great and large tracts of waste jungles lands might be reclaimed and be brought under cultivation. And should the above meet well with the appreciation of His Honour the Lieutenant Governor, I would be most happy to do everything in my power towards superintending the plantation.

When in the Mofassil last February the first specimens I saw of the Cachar plant, were brought to me by an individual who had been employed in a Tea Plantation in Assam, and who recognized the plant and as an inducement to others, to bring to my notice any discoveries they may make. I beg to suggest that he be given a present of some thirty or forty rupees, or any sum which may be considered sufficient. Further, I beg to state for the information of His Honour that I have reported regarding the above discovery to C T Davidson, Esq. Commissioner of Revenue of the Dacca Division.

Further, I beg to be excused taking advantage of this opportunity of requesting to be permitted to offer a reward of Rs. 100/- to any person who will point out to me in Cachar where good coal or lime stone is to be procured near water cairage for if either are discovered great advantages might ensue to the province.

I have etc.

G Verner
To,
R Houston, Esqr.

Dated, Cachar 4th Sept. 1855

Sir,

The day before yesterday I had the pleasure of receiving your letter dated 24th ultimo, making enquiries regarding tea and other lands in the provinces of Cachar, also regarding the amount of labour procurable – wages etc., and the routes to Cachar from Calcutta etc. In reply I beg to inform you that you can obtain any quantity of land in Cachar that you may require, fit and suitable, either for the cultivation of tea, cotton, rice, sugarcane, mustard seed and if I am not very much mistaken, on which Indigo would also thrive well.

I have some of the finest lands in my district waste, and available for any party wishing to obtain a Zummundaree and which were formerly, many years, since, under cultivation, but which were deserted owing to the incursions of Kookies, long before Cachar became part of the Company’s territories and have not since been resumed. With regard to tea lands, it is only a couple of months since I ascertained that the real tea plant is indigenous to this province and that is growing wild in the jungles, not in a small patches only, but also in large and as far as I have been able to ascertain in that short period, extending over a considerable quantity of land with room sufficient for several plantations of say one thousand acres each. As yet I have only caused search to be made for the tea plant in the likely jungles nearest to this station and the searcher has been most successful, for here, them and everywhere within a certain distance and on a particular description of land the tea plant has been found growing in abundance, of course in some places the number of plants is much greater than in others. Tea is found practically growing on very low hill lands that are above inundation in a rich, rather reddish soil in some places extending over some thirty, forty acres or more, no measurements have bee made. Some fifty sixty large tea trees have been found in different localities all bearing seed and on one of
them at Barrahungun, where the first party has commenced clearing away the jungles for a tea plantation. The Overseer told me that in one acre there might be some tree, four hundred or more young tea plants, on one hill, containing 50 to 100 acres, and of the same description of land any quantity may be had, not in one place but in several places with a number of old tea trees some of them three, four or even more fact in girth, here and there, and where they are, many young plants are to be found, but to obtain a regular tea plantation of say 1000 acres it would be of course necessary to sow seed and as seed trees have been found in all directions, each party obtaining a grant of land might collect a sufficient quantity of seed from his own trees. The seed is now ripening, and any person who has made up his mind to embark in the enterprise, and try tea planting in Cachar. I recommend strongly his not losing one day, but that he should set people to work at once to clear away the jungles. About the old tea trees so as to be able to collect the seed or it will be lost, as will also another year.

As yet the tea plant has only been discovered to the south and south-west of Silchar my sudder station on the hills low hills in east and west of the Chatla-owhar distance from this 12 miles or so. To one of two places you can go by land all the year round, to those places in the Chatioa-owhar, during the rains, you can only to by water, in the cold whether by land. The Chatla-Howhar is an immense plain, inundated during the rains, but with range of hills in all directions and which hills are almost all fit for the cultivation and available. The names of the Principal places where I have ascertained that the tea plant is growing in greatest abundance and at each of which there might be sufficient room for two plantation, are on the Bargoongoor Hills, four miles suth of this, in the Chatla-Howhar at Baokara and Nawowalla near the Gagera river at Barrahungun near Hylakandy where a gentleman in Assam a tea planter, has commenced and a place of Rajnugar Pargunnah no measurement have been made of the hills, so I cannot tell you of what extent they are, but there can be no want of land, fit for tea cultivation in Cachar, there being low hills in all directions and on which no doubt before long tea will be found now that the inhabitants there will be any great difficulty in obtaining the
quantity which may be required, if not in Cachar, in the neighbouring districts of Sylhet the inhabitants of which district and of district and of Jynteah come very willingly to Cachar and settle down in it.

The pay of labourers in the station is Rs. 2/8 per mensem, but at a distance from their homes they would require higher pay. I would always pay them in cash and if employed on a tea plantation at a distance from a bazaar, would have a godown where they would get all necessary supplied. Many are anxiously looking out plantations to be commenced upon and very few days pass, that some people do not ask me about it. The plan would be to entertain Daffadars and Sirdars who would engage to keep up a certain number of coolies always at work and if well-treated the coolies would remain and work as long as they are paid and the numbers to them would gradually increase according to the demand.

There is no difficulty in reaching Cachar from Calcutta at any time of the year, by water in two or three and twenty days, or in a quick boat in half that time. In the dry weather, from the Megna into the Soorma River, via Oznureegunge, Soonamghnge, Chatuck and Sylhet, on to the Barak River to this. In the rains the more direct route would be from the Megna to the Kooseearash or Barak and up at via Hubbigunge and Nubbigunge to this and without touching at Sylhet. Except in the cold weather, it would not be possible to reach Cachar, through the district of Sylhet in any other way, but by water.

Any person intending to cultivate tea in Cachar should employ some person at once to look out the best locality and to collect the seed. I have already received four or five applications for tea lands from parties willing to embark in the enterprise on a larger scale and besides the half dozen applications you tell me I may calculate on receiving, I have also heard of some half a doze more persons who purpose applying, but I am anxious to see work commenced. I have just received a letter from Assam from C L Jarkins, who appears to think that if I can find the tea plants growing on the high mountains, that the chances are it would be very superior to the tea of the low lands. I have not caused any search to be made there yet, but I will do
so during the cold weather and also in other directions where I have no doubt but that the plant will be found. I trust that the above contains all the information you require.

I have the etc.

G Verner.
To,
The Commissioner of Revenue,
Cherrah.

Sir,

I have the honour to forward for confirmation the map and papers relate to the grant for waste lands applied for by Mr. G Williamson for the purpose of tea cultivation.

2nd. Mr. G Williamson was the first gentleman who applied for lands after the discovery of the tea plants in the district and in consideration of his energy, in this respect, Government order that he should obtain the tea lands ret free for one year longer than the period mentioned in the Assam rules.

3rd. Mr. Williamson has commenced the cultivation of tea with great spirit and his garden is further advanced than that of any other in Cachar. His application is a very moderate one amounting to only 500 acres as surveyed ad there is every probability of his being able to meet the Government demands and requirements upon it. Mr. Williamson having already a large and flourishing tea plantation in Assam.

I have etc.

R Stewart
Off. Supdt.
ANNEXURE – E
INTRODUCTION OF OLD ASSAM RULES

Having considered the progress of tea plantation in Cachar, G Verner, the then Superintendent of Cachar, proposed the following rules, known as the Old Assam Rules to be adopted, while undertaking the tea plantation in Cachar -

RULE – I: Preference will be given to the first applicant in case of larger grants, the means together with other circumstances was to be considered.

RULE – II: All grants of 100 Kulbahs about 5000 acres and upward one-third exempted from assessment in perpetuity. Sites of houses, roads and tanks were not separated from the rest of the grant.

100 Kulbahs about 5000 acres 1/3rd to be exempted from assessment.
500 Kulbahs about 2500 acres 1/4th to be exempted from assessment.
100 Kulbahs about 500 acres 1/5th to be exempted from assessment.
20 Kulbahs about 100 acres 1/10th to be exempted from assessment.
20 Kulbahs about 100 acres 1/20th to be exempted from assessment.

RULE – III: The remaining portion of the grants will be rent free for 3 years and then to be assessed as follows –

2 years at 10 annas per Kulbah about 2 annas per acre.
5 years at Rs. 1 per Kulbah Rs. 1-14 annas per acre.
20 years at Rs. 2-8 per Kulbah about 8 annas per acre.

RULE – IV: After 30 years the grant was to be resettled with the grantees it they wish at such moderate rates with reference to the quality and description of the land.

RULE – V: 1/5th of the grant was to be declared and rendered fit for cultivation by the expiration of the 5th year and 4/5th by the expiration of the 10th year.

Failure to fulfill any such conditions the grant was to be resumed by the Government and all right and interest of the grantees in the cleared and jungle lands would be resumed.
Thus, the first rules to be introduced in tea cultivation in Cachar were known as the Old Assam Rules of 1854 which were extended to the province in 1856. The total lease granted for 99 years, one-fourth of which was to be exempted from assessment in perpetuity. The remaining three-fourth was to be dealt with in the following manner –

15 years ............... revenue free.
10 years ...............3 annas per acre.
74 years ............... 6 annas per acre.
ANNEXURE – F

INTRODUCTION OF WASTE LAND RULES IN CACHAR

In order to encourage the cultivation of tea, the Government created revenue free or concessional revenue paying estates by settling waste land with tea Planters in perpetuity. The Waste Land Settlement Rules were first framed in 1838 and later on it modified successively especially during 1860-1880. The rules for leasing such land in Cachar were as follows –

I. Unassessed waste land not previously cultivated or only cultivated in the jhoom method and long since abandoned, and which are so covered with jungle as to require clearance, may be granted on leases for ten years in lots containing not less than a hundred and not more than thousand acres.

II. Application for such leases shall be made to the Deputy Commissioner of the district in which the land is situated.

Every such application stated –

the estimated area in acres of the land applied for, the situation of the land and its boundaries accurately defined in such a way that it can be clearly recognized.

III. The Deputy Commissioner on receipt of such application, shall enter it into a Register to be kept for the purpose, and shall compare it with the records of his office.

If, in such comparison, it shall appear the land is available, he shall take measures to have it identified on the ground and measured either by the mouzdar, or, if he think necessary, by any other special agency. He shall also satisfy himself by careful local inquiry that there are no claims of any kind to the land. If the land applied for be bordered on any side by jungle, the Deputy Commissioner may, for the purposes of the identification and measurement required by this section, call upon the applicant to cut a boundary line between the land and such jungle.

IV. If on enquiry the Deputy Commissioner is satisfied that no right of any kind exists in the land applied for, and that there is no other objection to leasing it; and if, after its position, extent and description have been accurately ascertained,
it be found to fulfill the conditions prescribed in Rule I, the Deputy Commissioner may grant it to the applicant on a lease for ten years at the rate of eight annas, equivalent to one shilling, per acre per annum, provided he be satisfied that such applicant is prepared to reclaim and utilize the land. In such cases a reasonable proportion of unculturable land used for grazing, fuel or other purposes may be let four annas per acre, if the Deputy Commissioner is satisfied that it is not worth more. If there be more than one applicant for the same land, the Deputy Commissioner may put the lease up to auction.

V. The lease holder shall be bound to put up within one year from the date of leases such as boundary marks as the collector may deem sufficient. If he should fail to comply with the condition, the Deputy Commissioner shall cause the marks to be put up, and shall realize the cost from the lease-holder in the same manner as if it were an arrear of revenue on the land.

VI. Holdings settled for ten years under the above provisions shall be heritable and transferable on the condition that all transfers are registered in the office of the Deputy Commissioner. At the end of 10 year’s settlement, if the leasee is found to have properly used and cultivated the land, he will be entitled for a renewal of lease for 10 years at fair revenue rates, such as are charged on land cultivated with the ordinary crops of the country and so on after every ten years, or any longer period which the Government may fix. In the case of such renewal of fair proportion of land used for fuel, grazing, sites of houses etc., may, at the discretion of the officers of Government, may be included at half rates if culturable and at one-fourth rates if unculturable.

VII. Under a similar procedure, leases for 10 years of plots of uncultivated jungle land not less than five and not exceeding five-hundred acres, which are in such a condition as to require heavy labour for clearance, may be given to cultivators or planters on the following terms, if the Deputy Commissioner is satisfied that the land is not likely to be taken up for cultivation without special concession and that the applicant has the means of reclaiming and is about bona-fide to reclaim the land. But such leases shall not be transferable without the consent of the Deputy Commissioner and that consent will not be given unless the Deputy
Commissioner is satisfied that throughout the time of occupation there has been continuous and active reclamation of the land and that the occupant is compelled to part with it by unforeseen circumstances –

Rates for the above leases -

Four years rent free
Three years one-fourth full revenue rates
Three years one-half full revenue rates.

VIII. If at the end of a ten years lease under rule VII the land is found to be properly reclaimed and utilized, the leasee will be entitled to a renewal of lease on a heritable and transferable title on the conditions laid down in Rule VI.

IX. No more than one lease can be given to any one person under rules IV and VII without the special sanction of Government

X. If the Deputy Commissioner at any time finds that land leased under rules IV or VII is not properly reclaimed and utilized, he may resume the lease; but his decision shall be subject to appeal to the Commissioner. In case a leasee holding rent-free under Rule VII is not fairly reclaiming the land, the Deputy Commissioner shall be bound to resume it.

XI. No leasee under Rules IV and VII is entitled to sell or carry off wood growing on the land. Such wood may only be used for the fair and legitimate purposes of cultivation and manufacture on the land leased.

The right of the Government to the minerals under the land is surveyed during the currency of the lease under Rule IV and VII, but the leasee may quarry stone or other minerals for fair use on the land.

A renewal of lease after the expiration of the first ten years under rules VI and VIII will convey the right to wood and minerals unless they are specially reserved.
ANNEXURE – G

To,
Parbutty Churn Bunnoorjee,
Banker and Agent, Sylhet.

Dated, Cachar 23rd July, 1855

Sir,

I beg to acknowledge the receipt of your letter, dated 18th instant requesting to be informed, if I can grant you any lands in Cachar by way of Zumeendarree and if so on what term etc.

In reply I beg to inform you that there are large tracts of lands available in the province for the purpose you require, high and low lands, good and bad and where all the articles you mention would no doubt be cultivated with great advantages.

The real tea plant I have ascertained is indigenous to Cachar, and is to be found growing wild in the jungles in almost all directions, and might be cultivated with very great advantages. Coffee also thrives well in Cachar. Cotton is cultivated by the Hill tribes, Kookies, Cacharies and Nagas to a very considerable extent, the Cachar ‘Goor’ is, I have been told by those who have cultivated the sugar-cane, in the upper provinces of India, of a very superior description, and well adopted for the manufacture of sugar, cinnamon and Cafsia are I fancy to be found growing all over the mountains.

In Cachar there have not been as yet any hill or mountain lands leased, they are all the property of Government and as no applications have ever been made for lands of the kind I cannot at present inform you on what terms you could obtain, the highest rates at present demanded by Government for land-leased are Rs. 3/- per koobia or about 10 annas per acre per annum.

Should you wish to obtain a Zummeendaree in my district I would strongly recommend that in the first instance you should come up here yourself in order to fix upon a suitable locality and determine what quantity of land you might require after which arrangement might be made and I shall have much pleasure in
giving you all and every information in my power. I trust therefore you will come up and see for yourself.

I have etc.

G Verner
### ANNEXURE – H
Sample Form of Lease for Waste Lands in Cachar

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<td>Number of Pottah</td>
<td>Number of former settlement</td>
<td>Name of village or township</td>
<td>Number of plot</td>
<td>Boundaries</td>
<td>Description of land</td>
<td>Total area</td>
<td>Rate per acre</td>
<td>Total revenue</td>
<td>Particulars of revenue payable to each year</td>
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To
The Sanderman Esquire,
Cachar, Goongoor Hill.

Dated, Cachar 13th May, 1858.

Sir,

In answer to your letter of today’s date with reference to the importation of labour into Cachar, I have the honour to state that I am of opinion it would be a measure attended with much benefit to the country and to the tea planting interest.

2nd The climate of Cachar is a healthy one and I think it very probable that if coolies were imported they would settle here for food and form a permanent population. Every facility should therefore be given them for prosecuting a cultivation of their own as well as laboring for the tea gardens. Once settled on a piece of land which they had cleared themselves and which they call their own, I do not think that it is at all probable that men who are so badly off as to be obliged to shift themselves off to Mauritius and the West Indies for subsistence would ever think of quitting and you would thus have a lasting supply of labour settled on your grants.

3rd. The coolies on first coming up to Cachar, that is before leaving Calcutta should be bound down by an agreement to serve for a certain number of years, a breach of this agreement, if the documents were regularly and fairly drawn out, would subject the delinquent to one month’s imprisonment and then if he still refused to fulfill his contract to another month in addition, but no more, and any advances that had been made to him would be recoverable through the civil courts.

I have etc.

R Stewart

Off. Supdt.
To
The Sandeman Esq.
Cachar, Goongoor Hill

Dated, 15th May 1858

Sir,

Wishing to move the Govt. of Bengal to facilitate the immigration of coolies into Cachar to supply labour for the cultivation of tea I have the honour to request that you will be so good as to fill up the accompanying form with respect to the coolies now laboring on your grant.

I have etc.

R Stewart
Supdt.
From, J F K Hewitt, Esq., Commissioner of he Chota Nagpore Divisionn
To, The Under Secretary to the Government of Bengal, General Department (Emigration).

With reference to your No. 37, dtd. 25th January 1883, calling for a further report on the subject of free emigration, I have the honour to submit as follows -

1. The Deputy Commissioner of Hazaribagh reports that a system of local dealers, sardars and village arkattis, similar to that described by Mr. Edgar in his No. 479Cr., dtd. 2nd Nov. 1882, exists in his district and that men who work for them bring coolies from the interior to the depots at head-quarters. He instances a case in which a man of the Dosadh caste complained to the Asstt. Commissioner that two men of the Kherwar caste had enticed away his nephew and niece, both under age; that he had traced them to the depot; and that on claiming them was driven by a sardar in charge of the depot. When they were brought before the Asstt. Commissioner, the Kherwars described the boy and girl as their grandchildren; and the sardar alleged that he believed this story of the Kherwars and had taken them into the depot. The Civil Surgeon was requested to ascertain the age of the boy and girl; but in the meantime they absconded with their uncle. The Deputy Commissioner, on returning from his tour, had caused the uncle, nephew and niece to be brought before him under a warrant and it then turned out that the uncle was a sardar of the same depot to which the Kherwars had taken the boy and girl and that he wanted to get them from the sardar in order to take them himself to the labour district. Their statements were so contradictory that prosecution against the Kherwars was impossible and they were accordingly discharged. He states that, since the introduction of the new Act, cases of kidnapping, abduction and elopement have increased. The following cases have occurred in his district during the last six months –

i) A woman went off with a recruiter, leaving her infant child uncared for. The woman has been committed to the Sessions under Section 317, Indian Penal Code.
ii) One Domna sardar brought a boy of ten years old to the depot, falsely stating that he was his nephew. He has been charged with kidnapping and has been committed to the Sessions.

iii) A sardar was taking away his married niece without the knowledge of her husband. His certificate has been cancelled.

iv) An old man complained that his two sons had been taken to the depot as emigrants. The sons were consenting parties; but the younger was a minor. The elder was allowed to proceed, while the younger was restored to the father.

v) A sardar recruited a girl of ten years old. Her guardian complained. The sardar pleaded that he had married the girl, who said that some sort of form was gone through in the depot. The case is a serious one and still pending.

vi) Another sardar recruited a boy of twelve years of age without the consent of his guardian. This case is also pending.

2. The Assistant-Commissioner of Giridih states that when women of his subdivision are abducted they are seldom brought to Giridih, as the recruiters are well aware that the women’s relatives will at once complain to the Magistrate and they are consequently smuggled out of the district either through Manbhoom or Deoghur. He says that abuses still continue to exist under the recruiting system which is by no means improbable.

3. The Deputy-Commissioner of Lohardugga reports that the abuses referred to in Mr. Edgar’s No. 479Cr., dtd. 2nd Nov. 1882, still continue to occur and that wives and young girls still elope to the labour districts. During the last year there were 43 complaints made against sardars, 27 of which referred to abduction of wives, daughters and boys under age. Arrests were made in seven cases only and convictions followed in four of which two were upset on appeal. In some instances chaprasis were deputed with the complainants to search depots in and about Ranchi, but without success.

4. The following particulars of the four cases are given by him –

   i) Two girl’s, aged thirteen and sixteen respectively, disappeared from their houses. They were found with one Dunka, who admitted making them over to Jouram Sardar. Their parents applied to Mr. Whitley, who sent them to the Deputy-
Commissioner, by whose order a chaprasi was deputed to search in the various depots. In the meantime, the girls managed to effect their escape and returned home. Joyram absconded. Danka was arrested and committed to the Sessions and was sentenced to eighteen months rigorous imprisonment. Bhawan Dube, an arkati of Ranchi, who was also suspected of having kept the girls for three days in his house, was acquitted by the Judicial Commissioner.

ii) Three boys, all under twelve, were decoyed from their houses by a village arkati, who made them over to an unlicensed sardar, called Uchit, and sent off as dependents to Ranigunge. On their way the boys complained to the Silli Police-station and were sent back. Uchit was rigorously imprisoned for one year.

iii) Two girls were decoyed, one was sent off to Assam by a Mr. Driver; the other escaped. Two men were arrested and convicted, but were acquitted on appeal. Application was made to the Deputy-Commissioner of North Lakhimpur for the girl who was sent there, but no trace could be found of her.

iv) In this case the accused was released on appeal. As the Judicial Commissioner was of opinion that the person kidnapped was over fourteen years.

5. The Deputy-Commissioner states that emigrants to Assam are sold by one arkati to another, and that the facts disclosed by Mr. Edgar regarding the manner in which they are passed from hand to hand are literally true. He believes that it is not unusual for a sardar to dispose of his coolies to the man of rival firms, provided it is made worth his while to do so.

6. As to the remedy that can be proposed, he thinks that no number of laws can prevent women eloping and children being deceived, and strongly objects to the continuance of the Act. Female children are persuaded to admit that they are dependents of some one; and as registration is effected in Assam, they are thus bound to serve out three years. He, therefore, urges the immediate repeal of Act I of 1882, leaving the Assam authorities ample power to deal with the matters of sanitation and health on the gardens. He also believes that a planter who treats his coolies well would have no difficulty in retaining them even if the Act were abolished and till one planter does not entice away another’s labourers there is no danger of the industry collapsing for want of labour. In the event of the Act being
repealed, Government could not be accused of having anything to do with these abuses.

7. The Deputy-Commissioner of Manbhum reports that under the system of free emigration coolies are neither medically examined nor registered; and even they are not brought to the head-quarters station at all. In many cases they are marched direct to Ranigunge, and dispatched by rail to Assam via Dhubri. Their relatives, who can only work by way of petition to the Deputy-Commissioner, never get a chance of claiming them at all. In the majority of instances the wrong done by the recruiters does not amount to the offences of kidnapping as defined in Section 361, Indian Penal Code. Most of the free emigrants are over sixteen; and in few cases when women are accompanied by children old enough to be technically under their father’s guardianship, it is doubtful whether a prosecution would lie against the recruiter; nor does he believe that any appreciable number of the persons recruited go to Assam against their will. They have unlimited opportunities of complaining or of escaping while on their way to Ranigunge, where no attempts are made to control their movements. He says that persons who emigrate from Chota Nagpore are induced to leave their homes by exaggerated reports of the wages they will get in Assam; the price of rice, and the amount of work demanded, being understated. In addition to this, difficulty arising from debt or crime, and also village or domestic quarrels, are unscrupulously taken advantage of and kept alive in order to induce people to emigrate. As regards women, he believes that those who go to Assam without their husbands become prostitutes on the garden, or contract unlawful marriages with others. Mr. Owen, Assistant-Superintendent of Police, who worked for some time as a tea-planter in Assam also corroborates this view.

8. In the Deputy-Commissioner’s opinion, it would be premature to suggest any legislative remedy of the new Act, which has been in force for a short time only. But he suggests that when all local enquiries have failed, the Magistrate of a recruiting district may be authorised to forward the petition ad other necessary particulars to the Secretary to the Chief Commissioner of Assam for publication in the Assam Gazette and that all Deputy-Commissioners, Assistant-Commissioners, and Inspectors, &c., be required to trace out the emigrants in question when inspecting
the gardens. This will serve as a slight check upon the recruiters and it will give great satisfaction to the petitioners, who will readily pay the cost of publication of the notice in Assam.

9. Babu Gunga Nund Mukerjee, Deputy-Magistrate and in charge of emigration, Manbhum, states that 58 applications were filed during the last year, complaining of the elopements of wives, brothers, sisters & c., out of which in three cases only the applicants succeeded in tracing out their relatives from the local depots., while in 55 cases every attempt to trace them out was unsuccessful. In his opinion, the system of free emigration gives rise to most of the evils complained of. Village arkatis generally entice away young girls and unmarried youths from the protection of their guardian, and bring them secretly to a recruiter of free emigrants, who is not required to take out licenses under the new Act, and who is at liberty to dispatch his coolies at once without giving their unfortunate guardians opportunity of tracing them out. They have to expend a great deal of money without any good results. He, therefore, suggests that some restrictions should be imposed on the free emigration system.

10. The Deputy-Commissioner of Singbhum reports that the system of free emigration prevails in his district also, and that the class of people who furnish emigrants are quite ignorant of the tea districts and of the advantages awaiting them in those districts as labourers on the tea-gardens, consequently persons must be employed to enlighten possible emigrants and those who are thus employed must be paid for their services. Whether those persons who solicit otherwise to emigrate, not having license, act contrary to the law is a question requiring solution, as they, in fact, recruit emigrants. On the other hand, if soliciting people to emigrate be absolutely prohibited, then there will be no free emigration. He states that several cases have occurred in which women were induced to leave their houses.

A girl, under age, was enticed away, but she was recovered and made over to her guardian, and the man who enticed her was punished. Five cases of married women, who were induced to leave their homes for the labour district, have occurred, in three of which no traces of the women, or of the persons who took them away, have been found. In one case, the woman was recovered and made over to her
husband; in one case the woman refused to return to her husband; and in another the husband declined to have anything to do with his runaway wife. Besides the above, no other irregularities have come to his notice.

11. The above reports all show that the system of free emigration leads to great abuses, but that there is no reason to believe that emigrants are taken away to Assam against their will or that, expect in the case of unprotected women, who are practically made prostitutes, the emigrants, when recruited, are badly treated. They doubtless hear from the recruiters glowing accounts of what they are to expect in Assam; but though these accounts may be highly coloured, yet I cannot but believe, considering the admirable arrangements made for securing their comforts in Assam and the high wages they get, that, as long as they remain in good health, they are in many ways better off there than in their own homes; and as far as health is concerned the emigrants from this part of the country are generally quite as well in Assam as at home.

12. I do not myself see how the practice of enticing away women and children can be put a stop to, unless the village chaukidars are made responsible for reporting at once all cases that occur in their villages and hunting up the fugitives; and I have pointed this out to the Deputy-Commissioner. But unfortunately, the village chaukidars are rarely to be relied upon; and even if chaukidars were dismissed when it was proved that they had failed to report a case, yet it would be mere difficult to get any more trustworthy men to replace the dismissed chaukidar than it would be for the arkati, who gets about Rs. 40 per head for each coolie, to bribe the chaukdar, and his successor, successively, not to report; or else, which would probably be the more usual course (if the chaukidars really reported all cases where complainnts were brought), to bribe them to run on a false scent, and take the police with them. Either course would be profitable to the arkati, but the latter would be the cheapest, as he would have to pay less for getting the chaukdar to do what would be less likely to lead to his dismissal.

13. As for cases of women over sixteen being induced to leave their husbands, the police could not interfere in these cases; and it is only in cases of kidnapping that early information could lead to the immediate arrest of the guilty parties. Even if
women living their husbands were traced out, they would probably be out of the
district long before a charge of adultery could be laid by the husband.

14. As long as the trade of the arkati is so profitable as it is at present, abuses similar
to those stated in the above report must occur, and all that can be done to prevent
them is either to stimulate the chaukidars by rewards and punishment, to report cases
and hunt up kidnappers (and I believe that a good deal might be done in this way), or
else to abolish the system of free emigration and resort to the old plan of requiring
coolies to be registered in the district from which they come.

15. The objections to this last plan are, I believe, greater than the evils that result
from free emigration, if its abuses are carefully watched, and I certainly would not
advocate a return to the depot system.

16. As for the proposals of the Deputy-Commissioners, I quite agree with the
Deputy-Commissioner of Lohardugga that all he clauses of the Act relating to depot
emigration might be abolished, and free emigration only recognized by law. It will
practically become the rule before long, as now, as soon as a holder of recruiting
license gets into trouble on account of a breach of the rules, he at once gives up his
license and becomes a free recruiter.

17. The plan proposed by the Deputy-Commissioner of Manbhum would work well
if only coolies were registered in Assam under their real names, but this is rarely or
ever done in the case of coolies about whom an enquiry is likely to be made.
Children under age are registered under new names, and new parents are given to
them; and the names of absconding wives are changed, so that all the advertising in
the world would not enable them to be traced.

18. I, therefor end, as I began, by stating that the evils of free emigration can best be
met by making the village chaukidars report all cases and hunt up kidnappers.
Rewards should be given to those who bring cases to light, and failure to report
should be followed by dismissal. We cannot hope by this means to stop all abuses,
but we can secure that more guilty persons are punished than at present. As for
licensed recruiters, I can see no possible use in keeping up the system now that
anyone can abandon it at will and take to free recruiting.
To,
Messrs F Harley and Co.
Kolkata.

Dated. Cachar, the 18th December 1860.

Sir,

I have the honour to acknowledge receipt of your letter no. 15 dated the 19th inst. Asking me for my opinion as to the success a steamer would meet with on the line between Calcutta Cachar, via Chattack and Sylhet. In reply, I beg to state that I have always thought that a steamer was much needed on this line, and I have no doubt whatever of its ultimate success.

The traffic between Calcutta and Dacca is immense and will require many steamers to accommodate it before long. The traffic between Dacca and the marts of Ajmeereegange, Soonamgunge, Chattack, Sylhet, Banga and Cachar is also considerable, and more than sufficient to fill a steamer a month. But it will be sometime see all the traffic is diverted from its present channel of conveyances into a newly established steamer. Between Dacca and Calcutta steamers are well known, and I should say there would be little difficulty in getting cargoes of native products, but beyond Dacca of steamer is looked upon much in the same light as a great sea serpent would be if it made its appearance in the Thames and consequently will require some time to establish confidence in the native mind. It will not do therefore to feel disappointed and drawback even after the partial failure of the first few trial trips; entire success cannot be expected for some time after the running has commenced.

The above is with respect to the natives alone. On the other hand there are large societies of Europeans to whom the steamer would at once be an advantage and who would gladly avail themselves of it. The Churr, Sylhet and Cachar messboats would no longer exist, and all the supplies consumed by the Europeans in these stations, and by the Eurasians at Sylhet, together with all the manufacturing and agricultural stores needed by the Tea Planters at Sylhet and Cachar, would at
once become freight for your steamer on its upwards voyage, Tea being your cargo downwards together with usual passenger traffic.

In conclusion, I have only to add that I wish you every success in your enterprise and that I shall be most happy to do all in my power consistent with my duty towards fostering and encouraging it.

I have etc.
Sd/- R Stewart
Supdt.

N. B. – Your steamer ought not to draw more than 2 ½ to 3 feet when laden. It will then be able to come up to Cachar at all seasons except the very driest. Coal is easily and cheaply procurable at Sylhet and from them Depots could be formed at Dacca and Cachar.

Sd/- R Stewart
Supdt.
From, Messrs. JARDINE, SKINNER AND COMPANY, to the Hon'ble A EDEN, Secretary to the Government of Bengal, No. 11 dated the 22nd May 1869.

We desire to bring before you, for the consideration of His Honour the Lieutenant Governor the late attack by the Loochais on our Monierhall Tea Garden in the province of Cachar. This garden is situated on the Sonai River, about 25 miles south of the Sudder station of Silchar, has been worked during the last five years and is held under he ordinary Meerasdaree yearly rent-paying pottah of the district.

Upon the 15th January last, very early in the morning, the Loochais attacked the garden in large numbers, and the Narive Police Guard in the vicinity being either unable or unwilling to repel the marauders, the place speedily fell into their hands. Of the coolies settled upon the garden, the Loochais killed nine, also three children, and the two resident Europeans has to flee for their lives nearly naked. The remainder of the coolies were dispersed into the jungles.
ANNEXURE –M

From J GEOGHEGAN, Esquire, Under Secretary to the Government of India, to the Hon’ble A EDEN, Secretary to the Government of Bengal, Judicial Department, No.3355, dated Simla, the 19th July 1869.

I am directed to forward the accompanying copy of a letter No. 24 dated the 25th ultimo, from Messrs, Jardine, Skinner and Company, putting forward a claim for compensation for losses sustained in consequence of an attack by Loochais on a tea garden in Cachar and to request that the Lieutenat Governor will be good enough to state for the information of the Government of India, his views as to the validity of the claim.

Garden burned to the ground and the Loochais then departed, taking with them everything of any value they could lay their hands on. The attack although threatened, has not since been repeated, but such was the panic created among the coolies, that was long before they could be again settled down, and it is only within the last few weeks that the garden has been restored to the state it was in on the morning of the attack. The loss resulting from this raid has been very serious, amounting not less than Rupees 17,000 in all, of which full details can be given if required. Meantime we may mention that nearly Rupees 3,500 of this has fallen directly upon the coolies, who lost all their clothes, brass vessels and live stock, besides over rupees 2,000 in cash. We may also add that the loss is all the more severely felt from the fact that Monierkhall being a young garden has never yet paid its way, during the current season it promised to leave some profit, but the extra expenditure thrown upon it by this calamity and the enforced interruption to work resulting therefrom, render this hope no longer tenable.
### ABBREVIATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AICC</td>
<td>All India Congress Committee</td>
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<td>AITU</td>
<td>All India Trade Union Congress.</td>
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<tr>
<td>ALECR</td>
<td>Assam Labour Enquiry Commission Report</td>
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<tr>
<td>ASP</td>
<td>Assam Secretariat Proceedings.</td>
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<tr>
<td>ASR</td>
<td>Assam Secretariat Records/</td>
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<tr>
<td>BEP</td>
<td>Bengal Educational Proceedings.</td>
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<tr>
<td>BJP</td>
<td>Bengal Judicial Proceedings.</td>
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<tr>
<td>BRP</td>
<td>Bengal Revenue Proceedings.</td>
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<tr>
<td>CCSU</td>
<td>Cachar Cha Sramik Union.</td>
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<tr>
<td>CR</td>
<td>Cachar Records.</td>
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<tr>
<td>DCF</td>
<td>Dacca Commissioner’s File.</td>
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<tr>
<td>DCRRS</td>
<td>Deputy Commissioner’s Record Room, Silchar.</td>
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<tr>
<td>FPP</td>
<td>Foreign Political Proceedings</td>
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<tr>
<td>GB</td>
<td>Government of Bengal.</td>
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<tr>
<td>HPA</td>
<td>Home Department Proceedings A</td>
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<tr>
<td>HPB</td>
<td>Home Department Proceedings B</td>
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<tr>
<td>ICHR</td>
<td>Indian Council of Historical Research.</td>
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<tr>
<td>IHC</td>
<td>Indian History Congress</td>
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<td>IHRC</td>
<td>Indian Historical Records Commission.</td>
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<td>Judl.</td>
<td>Judicial</td>
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<tr>
<td>NEIHA</td>
<td>North East India History Association.</td>
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<td>NEICSSR</td>
<td>North East India Council for Social Science Research.</td>
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<tr>
<td>SVBITA</td>
<td>Surma Valley Branch India Tea Association.</td>
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<tr>
<td>TAI</td>
<td>Tea Association of India.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
GLOSSARY

Acre : A measured area of land three times a bigha
Adalat : Court.
Akhara : Designated place for performance of Karam Puja
Anna : Sixteenth part of a rupee.
Arkatti : Literary it means Pilot.
Assarh : Third month of the Bengali calander.
Asraura : The asra paddy is generally grown in low land.
Aus : Summer paddy.
Babus : Staff.
Bagani : Inhabitants of tea garden particularly labourers.
Bhasa : Language.
Baha Puja : Flower festival among the Santhals.
Bari : Homestead.
Basti : Habitat
Bazar : A daily market.
Bil : Marshy land
Bigha : A measured area of land, one third of an acre approximately.
Bhojpuri : A language spoken by the inhabitants of eastern UP and Bihar.
Bundabast : Settlement.
Chara : Garden land meant for growing seedlings.
Chaprashi : A peon or an orderly.
Chaukidar : Watchman
Coolie : Labourer
Dag : Demarcation, small piece of land within a patta.
Dakshina : Honourarium given to a priest, religious teacher.
Dal : Lentils
Desh : Country
Dewali : Festival of Lights
Dewan : Revenue Collector
Dhol : A beating drum
Dhoti : Traditional Indian male lower garment
Falgun : Eleventh month of the Bengali calander.
Fakir : Begger
Ganja : Small market, business place
Gaonburah : Village headman.
Gham : Sweat
Ghat : A hill pass or a landing place on the bank of a river.
Girmit : Agreement
Greesma : Summer Season
Hal : A measured area of land being twelve times of a kiyar.
Hemanta : Cold season
Holi : Festival of colours
Ijara : Area
Ijaradar : Leaseholder
Jatis : Castes
Jajman : A jajman is a devotee who make a priest worship on his behalf
Jhum : Shifting cultivation by burning forestry.
Jhumur : A folkdance of the tea garden labourers
Kachcha : Raw
Kartick : Seventh month of the Bengali calendar.
Kathinach : Stick dance
Khal : Canal
Kiyar : A measured area of land being one-twelfth of a hal.
Kulbah : A measurement of land equivalent to 4.82 acres.
Larai : Battle
Magh : Tenth month of the Bengali calendar
Manjhi : A boatman
Malikana Satva: Ownership right.
Mahimal : Fisherman
Miras : Estate
Mirasdar : Owner of an Estate
Mouza : Fiscal Unit
Mukhtart : An agent
Mohurrir : A Supervisor or Clerk
Mokam : Abode of Muslim saint
Nallah : Small drain
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nirukh</td>
<td>Overtime work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pan</td>
<td>Betel leaves</td>
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<td>Pucca</td>
<td>Concrete</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pahan</td>
<td>Village Priest</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pargana</td>
<td>A revenue division</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pahar</td>
<td>A small hill</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pathsala</td>
<td>Primary School</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pattah</td>
<td>Title deed</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pattadar</td>
<td>Owner of Pattah</td>
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<tr>
<td>Patit</td>
<td>Fallow land</td>
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<tr>
<td>Patwari</td>
<td>Surveyor of land</td>
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<tr>
<td>Raiyat</td>
<td>Tenant</td>
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<tr>
<td>Raitwari</td>
<td>Name of a settlement</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rathyatra</td>
<td>A festival when the devotees pull the God Jagannath in a cart.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Roti</td>
<td>Indian bread</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sahib</td>
<td>Officer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sardari</td>
<td>A worker employed by a sardar.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sindur</td>
<td>Vermillion</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shakti</td>
<td>Power</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sraban</td>
<td>Fourth month of the Bengali calendar</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tal</td>
<td>Beating musical instrument.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tahail</td>
<td>Revenue Officer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Talsildar</td>
<td>Head of the revenue office.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Talook</td>
<td>Estate</td>
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<tr>
<td>Talookdar</td>
<td>Owner of small estates.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tila</td>
<td>Hillock</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tilak</td>
<td>A mark of sandal wood on the forhead</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vasant</td>
<td>Spring season</td>
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<tr>
<td>Varsha</td>
<td>Rainy season</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vakil</td>
<td>A Pleader</td>
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<tr>
<td>Zamindar</td>
<td>Landlord</td>
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<td>District</td>
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