CHAPTER SEVEN

BRITISH SUPREMACY AND THEIR CONCERN OVER THE BOUNDARIES OF LADAKH

After settling his scores with Tibet and entrusting the administration of Ladakh to the Thanadars, Raja Gulab Singh, now turned his attention to developments nearer Jammu. It is beyond the scope of this survey to discuss the part played by the Raja in the Lahore politics of eighteen-forties. Towards the close of 1845, when the first Anglo-Sikh war broke out, the Raja kept aloof and did not help her suzerain, the Lahore Durbar. But after the decisive battle of Sobraon, at which the British were victorious, the Sikh court appointed Raja Gulab Singh to negotiate peace with the British. The Raja played the part of a mediator, and the British were happy and told him that for displaying such a disposition he would soon be rewarded. Under Article XII of the Treaty of Lahore, signed on March 9, 1846, Raja Gulab Singh was recognised an independent sovereign both by the Lahore Durbar as well as the British Government. Thus the long-cherished ambition of Raja Gulab Singh to become an independent ruler was realised, yet the manner in which he got control of the

1 These Thanadars were the appointees of Raja Gulab Singh, and were solely responsible to him.

2 "I told the Rajah, that I recognized the wisdom, prudence, and good feeling evinced by him in having kept himself separate from these unjustifiable hostilities of the Sikhs, and that I was prepared to mark my sense of that conduct, in the proceedings which must now be carried through". (Governor-General to Secret Committee, 19 February 1846, No. 6).

different territories which constituted his domain is both significant and interesting. Under Article IV of the Treaty of Lahore, the Sikh Maharaja, in place of a cash indemnity of rupees one crore (ten millions) ceded "all his forts, territories, rights and interests, in the hill countries, which are situated between the Rivers Beas and Indus, including the province of Cashmere and Nazarah." On March 16, 1846, Raja Gulab Singh signed the Treaty of Amritsar with the British, whereby he became the Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir. Under this treaty, the British transferred "for ever, in independent possession, to Maharaja Gulab Singh and the heirs male of his body all the hilly territory or mountainous country, with its dependencies, situated to the eastward of the river Indus and westward of the river Ravee, including Caumba and excluding Lahul." In lieu of this territory, Maharaja Gulab Singh was to pay a sum of rupees one crore to the Company; later on, out of this amount a remission of rupees twenty five lakhs was allowed as compensation for Kulu and Mandi districts which, because of their commercial and strategic importance, the British kept under their own possession. Under the Treaty of Amritsar, inter alia,

2. Ibid., Vol. XII, p. 21.
3. Lord Hardinge, the Governor-General wrote to the Secret Committee, "It is highly expedient that the trans-Beas portion of Kooloo and Mandi, with the more fertile districts and strong position of Noor Pore, and the celebrated fort Kangra - the key of the Himalayas in native estimation - with its districts and dependencies should be in our possession". (Governor-General to Secret Committee, 4 March 1846, No. 7).
Maharaja Gulab Singh recognised the supremacy of the British Government and was to allow the boundaries of his state with the Chinese Empire to be determined by a joint frontier commission. Further, he was to pay a small annual tribute to the British, and the latter were to help and protect the Maharaja from external aggression. Thus for all practical purposes, the chief results of the Treaty of Amritsar were: the British became a paramount power vis-a-vis the Dogras; Gulab Singh was freed from the control of the Lahore Durbar and recognised as an independent ruler not only of Jammu, Ladakh and Baltistan - territories already conquered by him - but of Kashmir and Hazara also.

This arrangement was mutually advantageous to the Dogras and the British. Gulab Singh at last saw the fulfilment of his long-cherished ambition of an independent Dogra state. The British, on the other hand, in addition to getting a handsome amount, saved themselves from formidable difficulties involved in the occupation or defence of their newly-acquired territories. Another object with which they were mainly concerned and which

1 Aitchison, Treaties & Engagements, Vol. XII, pp. 21-22.

2 Lord Hardinge, made these points amply clear when he wrote to the Secret Committee: "Its (territory ceded to Gulab Singh) occupation by us will be, on many accounts disadvantageous. It would bring us into collision with many powerful chiefs, for whose coercion a large military establishment at a great distance from our provinces and military resources would be necessary. It would more than double the extent of our present frontier in countries assailable at every point, and most difficult to defend, without any corresponding advantages for such large additions of territory. New, distant and conflicting interests would be created, and races of people, with whom we have hitherto had no intercourse, would be brought under our rule, while the territories, excepting Cashmere, are comparatively unproductive and would scarcely pay the expenses of occupation and management", (Governor-General to Secret Committee, 4 March 1846, No. 7).
they fully achieved by this agreement was the maintenance of a balance of power in this region. The establishment of an independent Rajput dynasty in the north would serve as a useful check on the turbulent Sikhs, whose power though crippled at the battle of Sobraon, was never crushed at all. Thus both these powers would serve as a check on the ever-aspiring Mohammadens who coveted the possessions of Kashmir and Delhi. Furthermore, the British Indian authorities were obsessed by the ever-present fear of a Russian invasion of India and at about this time, this fear was the mainspring of Indian foreign politics. They were presummably thinking of a "buffer zone". So it appears that the British thought that a friendly and independent Dogra state will play a more useful role as a buffer-state between their Indian possessions and Russia on the northern frontier of India.

After the settlement of the Treaty of Amritsar, the British took up the work of demarcating the boundaries of Gulab Singh's newly established state, for it was feared "that the hope of plunder and desire of revenge" might again tempt the Maharaja to invade Western Tibet. Any such invasion was likely to be deleterious to the British; not only would it stop the import of shawl wool into their territory, but the entire commerce of their hill states with Western Tibet will come to a standstill. It was also possible that due to "His

1 Governor-General to Secret Committee, 19 March 1846, No. 8.
3 Cunningham, Ladak, p. 12.
Celestial Majesty’s ignorance of any distinction between the rulers of India and the rulers of Kashmir, such an invasion might affect the “peaceful relations” of the British with the Chinese Emperor. So “the British Government determined to remove the most common cause of all disputes in the East — an unsettled boundary.”

Another consideration which necessitated the demarcation of the boundaries at an early date was the commercial interests of the newly-acquired British territories of Nurpur, Kulu and Mandi. Nurpur was a flourishing trade mart and it received shawl wool from the traders of the eastern hill states and not from Kashmir. But by giving Spiti, the boundaries of which were conterminous with Kulu, Bashahr and Western Tibet, to Maharaja Gulab Singh, the British had actually interposed a rival territory between their possessions on the Sutlej and the shawl wool producing district of Chang Thang. This was likely to impede the flow of shawl wool and other commodities from Western Tibet into British territories. Therefore, by compensating the Maharaja elsewhere, Spiti was taken and added to British dominions. Thus, after the Treaty of Amritsar, Lahul and Spiti, the two southern districts of Ladakh were dismembered from that country and added to the British possessions of Kangra, Kulu and Mandi. Now it became necessary to define the northern boundaries of these districts with the other districts of Ladakh.

Accordingly, towards the end of July 1846, the British Government appointed Mr. P.A. Vans Agnew and Captain A. Cunningham, as Boundary Commissioners; the former was to be in command, whereas the latter was to assist him in his enquiries and map the line that his (Cunningham's) "own researches may establish as the best". The Commissioners were to demarcate first, a boundary between British territory (Lahul and Spiti) on the south and Gulab Singh's territory of Ladakh on the north, establishing clearly the points at which the two meet with the Tibetan frontier; and then, a boundary between Ladakh on the west and Chinese Tibet on the east. For laying down this boundary, the Commissioners were given two instructions: firstly, in terms of territory they were to be generous to Gulab Singh; secondly, in case of Spiti, as "it is an object to prevent the Jammu troops, traders or people turning our flank to the north-eastward", the boundary line was to be drawn "eastward to such point of territory, as is clearly beyond Maharaja's influence."

The second object which the Commissioners were desired to perform was to settle the revenues of Spiti. While assessing the district, they were asked not to realise more than three-fourth of what the Sikhs had been taking and to "see that whatever here then is

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1 H.M. Lawrence (agent to G.G., North West Frontier) to Vans Agnew and A. Cunningham, 23 July 1846: F.D.S.C., 26 December 1846, No. 1332.
2 "Where you differ let the Maharaja have the advantage. Bear in mind that, it is not a strip of more or less of barren or even productive territory that we want but a clear and well defined boundary in a quarter likely to come little under observation". Ibid.
3 Ibid.
laid on the people, is fairly distributed," They were further desired to see that the people of Spiti discontinued all kinds of payments, except the religious presents which they had hitherto been giving to their neighbours of Tibet, Ladakh, Kulu and Bashahr; this was suggested by J.D. Cunningham in 1842. To facilitate matters, Maharaja Gulab Singh was asked to aid the British party, and send two intelligent agents from Leh who should assist the British Commissioners.

In addition to the above, the Commissioners, by avoiding as far as possible any cause of offence to Maharaja Gulab Singh and his people or to the Chinese authorities, were instructed "quietly and unostentatiously" to make enquiries as to the "lines of trade between Central Asia and the Panjab". H.M. Lawrence was at pains to impress upon the Commissioners that wherever they went and with whomsoever they came in contact, they were to tell that no duty will be levied on shawl wool or other commodities that may be brought by the Chinese or Tibetans or other traders into British territory. Agnew and Cunningham were further asked not to enter into commercial engagements with any party, for it was hoped that trade "will soon find its way, where best protected and least taxed."
The British were anxious to settle the trade question; they wanted to have free access to the Tibetan wool market. After the signing of the Sino-Sikh Treaty of 1842, according to which transmission of Tibetan trade to places other than Ladakh was prohibited, the trade of Bashahr had received a set-back. Now that the British were a paramount power vis-a-vis the Dogras, it was thought desirable to get that obnoxious trade clause amended or annulled.

There were indications that the Tibetan authorities were also willing to enter into some form of agreement. In 1845, the Garpon of Gartok, informed the Raja of Bashahr that if the latter could procure a letter from the British authorities addressed to the "Chief of Lassa intimating the wish of the British Government that the clause in the treaty of the Chinese with Gulab Singh granting the latter a monopoly of the shawl wool trade should be set aside," then all restrictions on the traders of Bashahr for buying shawl wool from West Tibet will be removed. Thus, considering the circumstances favourable, Lord Hardinge, the then Governor-General addressed a letter to the "Vizeer of Lassa-Gartoë" informing him that after the Treaty of Lahore, the Sikh Government has ceded to the British in perpetual sovereignty the hill territories including Ladakh, and that Maharaja Gulab Singh, who now controlled

1See infra p. 291, Appendix E, Art. II.
2J.C. Erskine (Superintendent, Hill States) to Government, 19 July 1847: F.D.S.C., 28 August 1847, No. 159.
3Ibid.
Ladakh was under British supremacy; therefore all the treaty engagements which the Sikhs or the Dogras may have made with Tibet in 1842, were now transferred to the British Government. Under these changed circumstances, the Governor-General desired that Article II of the Treaty of 1842, which was "highly injurious to the interests of the British Government and its dependents" should be cancelled and suitably modified so as to include the names of the traders of British territories. The Tibetan authorities were further informed about the deputation of Van's Agnew and Cunningham to the frontier and it was desired that the Lhasa 'Vizeer' should also "depute confidential agents" who would point out to the British representatives and those of Maharaja Gulab Singh "the exact limits of the Chinese frontier" with Ladakh.

The task of delivering this letter was entrusted to Anant Ram, an official of the Bashahr Raja, who could speak and write Tibetan and Hindustani. Anant Ram was selected to perform this duty because the experience of the British to establish direct contacts with Tibet during the past few years had not been encouraging; the Tibetans had refused to entertain any communication from the Europeans. Further, after the Treaty of Nanking, British relations with China were, on the surface at any rate, friendly and peaceful, so it was thought desirable that China as suzerain of Tibet, might render useful help in achieving the objects of the Boundary Commission. Therefore, the Governor-General despatched one copy of

1 Governor-General to the Vizeer of Lassa-Gartope, 4 August 1846; F.D.S.C., 26 December 1846, No. 1336.

2 Ibid.
his letter (addressed to the Lhasa authorities) to Sir John Davis, the British Plenipotentiary in Hongkong, requesting him to suggest to the Chinese Minister there that the Celestial Emperor should depute Commissioners to proceed to the western frontier of Tibet to lay the boundary lines jointly with their British and Dogra counterparts.1

Vans Agnew and Cunningham started from Simla on August 2, and spent the next few months in delineating the boundaries of Lahul and Spiti with the territories of Maharaja Gulab Singh. Moving from Phalang Danda or the boundary stone between Lahul and Zanskar to the east, the Commissioners, mapped the boundaries of Lahul and Spiti up to the Tso Morari lake — a place near which the boundaries of Ladakh, Tibet and Spiti meet.2 In this demarcation, the Commissioners adopted the general plan of selecting as a boundary such mountain ranges as formed the watershed lines between the drainages of different rivers.3 As for settling the revenues of Spiti, Vans Agnew made a summary settlement and fixed rupees 753 per year as the revenue payable by the district to the Government.4

1 Governor-General to J. Davis (British Plenipotentiary in Hong Kong), 29 August 1846: F.D.S.C., 26 August 1846, No. 1338.

2 Cunningham, Ladak, p. 14; F.D.S.C., 30 December 1846, No. 763.

3 For details, see "Memo by Capt. A. Cunningham, detailing the boundary between the territories of Maharaja Gulab Singh and British India, as determined by the Commissioners, P.A. Vans Agnew and Capt. A. Cunningham," JASB., XVII Pt. I (1848), pp. 295 et seq.

As regards demarcating the boundary between Ladakh and Tibet, the Commissioners could not do that partly owing to Imam-ud-Din's rebellion in Kashmir and disturbances in Hazara, and partly due to the lateness of the cold season. Vans Agnew, however, wrote a detailed memorandum in which he pointed out that because of the inclement weather, inaccessibility of stations for survey, carriage difficulties and absence of roads in the mountainous terrain to be traversed by the Commissioners, it will at least take two years to accurately survey the eastern and northern boundaries of Ladakh.

Anant Ram, who was sent in 1846 to deliver Lord Hardinge's letter to the Tibetan authorities was not very successful in his mission; he was not allowed to proceed beyond Gartok and the Tibetans there would not let him see the Garpon. After repeated representations when Anant Ram met the Garpon, the latter was reluctant to accept the letter, for it was addressed by the British authorities with whom the Tibetans could not have any dealings whatsoever. Nevertheless, the Garpon told Anant Ram that he would be forwarding the letter to Lhasa, but there was little hope of receiving an answer for a year at least.

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1 He was the last Governor of Kashmir (1845-46) appointed by the Lahore Durbar.
2 F.D.S.C., 28 August 1847, No. 151.
3 F.D.S.C., 27 August 1847, No. 154.
4 Cunningham, Ladak, p. 14. In this connection it may be noticed that early in 1848, when Lieutenant Strachey was carrying on explorations on the Tibet-Ladakh frontier, he gathered that what actually the Garpon told Anant Ram was that the Governor-General's letter could not be forwarded to Lhasa; after the expiry of a year, it was still lying in the Garpon's office. Further, Tibetan translation of the letter "was found so illiterate penned as to be quite unintelligible". (Strachey to Resident at Lahore, 26 January 1848: F.D.S.C., 27 May 1848, No. 73).
Early in 1847, the Raja of Bashahr reported that some Chinese officials had arrived at Gartok. Although it was believed that they were the Chinese Boundary Commissioners, whose deputation to the western frontier of Tibet had been asked by Sir John Davis, Hardinge suspected that "these Chiefs may have been sent as much for the purpose of preventing our Commissioners from crossing the boundary, as for defining it." Nevertheless, the Governor-General was determined to appoint a second Commission for the purpose of carrying out the objects which could not be completed in the previous year. This Commission was to consist of three persons: Captain Alexander Cunningham, Lieutenant Henry Strachey and Dr. Thomas Thomson. They were selected not only on the grounds of their "general qualifications of energy, temper and prudence, but more especially on account of their scientific attainments", for which they were favourably known to the Indian sub-continent. A. Cunningham was to be the Senior Commissioner, whereas H. Strachey, who had recently returned from an adventurous tour to Lake Manasarowar, and Dr. Thomson, a well-known naturalist, were to be his assistants. The Commissioners, in addition to demarcating the Ladakh-Tibet boundary, of course, in collaboration with the

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1Cunningham, Ladak, p. 15.
2Government to Resident at Lahore, 10 July 1847: F.D.S.C., 28 August 1847, No. 156.
3Governor-General to Secret Committee, 28 July 1847, No. 48.
4Ibid.
Dogra and Chinese Commissioners were "to make particular enquiries respecting the lines of the trade" between British India and Central Asia, and to secure the abolition of that clause in the Treaty of 1842, under which Ladakh enjoyed the monopoly of Tibetan shawl wool trade. The clause under reference had operated injuriously to the interests of Kinnaur traders and was not favourably looked upon by the Chinese themselves. Further, after the Dogra conquest of Ladakh many 'abuses' such as the imposition of heavy duties and the establishment of Chowkies or octroi posts at many places had impeded the flow of trade of British hill states with Yarkand. These 'abuses' were first brought to the notice of the Government by Vans Agnew, who had pleaded with Maharaja Gulab Singh to remove these prohibitory duties, but was not very successful. Now, it was reported that the Kardars of the Maharaja, did not allow the traders of British hill states to enter Ladakh and carry on their usual commercial speculations with Yarkand. So, the Commission was asked to secure

1 Governor-General to Secret Committee, 28 July 1847, No. 48; Government to Cunningham, 27 July 1847: F.D.S.C., 28 August 1847, No. 162; F.D.S.C., 28 August 1847, No. 159.

2 According to Vans Agnew, between Nurpur and Yarkand, the traders had to pay a duty of rupees forty-nine and a half on every horse load (of about three pakka maunds). Agnew told Maharaja Gulab Singh that the imposition of such a heavy transit duty would lead to the desertion of the Ladakh road by the Nurpur and other British Indian merchants, and consequently the revenue of the Maharaja will suffer. Yet, all that the latter promised was to reduce the duty by rupees three per maund from Nurpur to Karakoram. (F.D.S.C., 28 August 1847, No. 154).

the removal of these obstructions.¹

The issuance of these detailed instructions for the improvement of British trade with Tibet and other countries of Central Asia seems to have been motivated by the presence of Russian traders and Russian goods in these regions. There appears to have been a lurking fear in Hardinge's mind that inundation of markets of the countries of "high Asia" situated on the periphery of British India, with Russian goods will be injurious to the interests of British manufacturers. This is clear from his report to the Court of Directors:

> It seems to me strange, notwithstanding even the mountain barrier of the Himalayas assuming the passage to be equally difficult on both sides, that Russian goods, burdened with all the additional expense of a tedious as well as dangerous land carriage should be able to compete successfully with those of British manufacture in countries adjoining our own empire.²

In addition to achieving the aforementioned objects, the Commissioners were asked "to endeavour to increase the bounds of ... geographical knowledge of those remote regions." Cunningham was to follow the course of the Indus and conduct his observations on both sides of the river down to Gilgit, whence he was to proceed to Dardistan. After conducting his antiquarian researches there, he was to return to the Punjab through Hazara. Strachey was to follow his researches in West Tibet and, if possible he was to visit Lhasa and then travelling along the course of Tsangpo or Brahmaputra, to return to British territory through

¹Governor-General to Secret Committee, 28 July 1847, No. 48.
²Ibid.
Bhutan or Darjeeling, Thomson was to employ himself in ascertaining the mineral resources along and within the British frontier. The Commissioners were told explicitly that the objects pertaining to Tibet were to be achieved by peaceful means, if possible, with the willing co-operation of the Tibetans, but if the latter resisted, the Commissioners were not to force their way. The period of their appointment, as earlier suggested by Vans Agnew, was to be two years.

The Tibetans looked on the Commission with the deepest suspicions. When the Commissioners reached the Tibetan frontier on August 29, contrary to expectations, no Chinese or Tibetan agents had reached the place. Further, the headmen and Zamindars of the Tibetan frontier villages put all kinds of obstructions in the way of British Commissioners and Tibetan authorities posted "usual levies of the country people" on every pass leading into Western Tibet. Earlier reports that some Chinese officials had reached the frontier were found to be incorrect. Initially, Sir John Davis, was optimistic and hoped that the Chinese would agree not only to the delineation of the Tibet-Ladakh boundary, but would also be willing to reassess Chinese trade policies towards India. But the Chinese

1 F.D.S.C., 28 August 1847, No. 162; Governor-General to Secret Committee, 28 July 1847, No. 48.
2 Ibid.
3 Cunningham to Lawarenee, 29 August 1847: F.D.S.C., 27 November 1847, No. 22.
4 Strachey to Lawrence, 25 September 1847: F.D.S.C., 31 December 1847, No. 130.
5 Davis to Hardinge, 10 November 1846: F.D.S.C., 28 August 1847, No. 139.
officials were unwilling to demarcate the boundary and Davis' persistent efforts which he continued throughout 1847 and 1848 did not bear any fruit. In reply to his letter regarding the establishment of commercial intercourse of British hill states with the Chinese territory of Tibet, Keying, the Chinese Viceroy at Canton, told Davis that no more concessions as laid down in the treaties of Nanking could be granted to the British. With respect to the demarcation of the Tibet-Ladakh frontiers, Keying observed:

> the borders of those territories have been sufficiently and distinctly fixed so that it will be best to adhere to this ancient arrangement and it will prove far more convenient to abstain from any additional measures for fixing them.

On Davis' insistence, Keying transmitted the whole tenor of the former's despatch to the Emperor, and was informed that the matter will be discussed by Chi'shan, the Chinese Resident in Lhasa. Although the Emperor commanded Chi'shan to examine into this affair and manage accordingly, yet nothing was done by the latter. This non-cooperative attitude of Chi'shan was due to the fact that he was not well-disposed towards the British. As a background it may be relevant to mention that towards the close of the year 1839,

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1 Keying (Chinese Viceroy at Canton) to Davis, 13 January 1847: F.D.S.C., 28 August 1847, No. 145. It may be noticed that in 1848, similar reply was received from the Garpon of Gartok, who told Henry Strachey's correspondents that Tibet's boundary with Ladakh was "fixed of old". (Strachey to Lawarence, 25 September 1847: F.D.S.C., 31 December 1847, No. 130).

2 F.D. Sec. Progs., 28 August 1848, No. 148; Keying to Davis, 7 January 1848: F.D.S.C., 31 March 1848, No. 36.

3 Keying to Davis, 8 August 1847: F.D.S.C., 3 October 1847, No. 28.
when Chi-shan was sent to Canton as Viceroy of that province, he failed to restrain the British and in the Opium War which started soon after, the Chinese were defeated by the British. Thereafter, Chi-shan was disgraced, plundered and even condemned to death by the Emperor, but, at the last moment, through the intercession of his friends, he was pardoned and appointed as Resident at Lhasa. This was considered a sort of banishment into Tibet. 1

The attitude of the Dogras towards the Commission was not very co-operative either; Maharaja Gulab Singh seems to have been afraid, perhaps rightly, that any trade settlement between the British and the Tibetans was likely to affect his monopoly of shawl wool trade with Western Tibet. Colonel Basti Ram and Mian Jawahir Singh, two Motmids or confidential agents of the Maharaja, who were asked to meet their British colleagues at Hanle, did not reach there at the expected date. When at long last they joined their British counterparts near Leh, 2 they were not anxious to demarcate the eastern boundary of Ladakh. Cunningham believed that the absence of the Maharaja's Commissioners on the frontier was deliberate and designed "to delay, as long as possible if not absolutely to thwart altogether the final settlement of the boundary." 3

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2 Mian Jawahir Singh joined the Commissioners at Puga on September 22, and Col. Basti Ram at Giah on September 27, 1847. (Cunningham to Lawrence, 27 September 1847: F.D.S.C., 31 December 1847, No. 136).

3 Cunningham to Resident, 20 October 1847: F.D.S.C., 31 December 1847, No. 133.
Under these circumstances, the British Commissioners were left with no alternative, except to carry on explorations individually. From Bashahr's frontier with Tibet, they wanted to reach Hanle, the district headquarters of Rupshu in Ladakh, by the direct route which passed through West Tibet. But the Tibetans did not allow them to enter into their territory, hence, the Commissioners followed a circuitous route through Spiti. Cunningham and Thomson, leaving Strachey at Chumar, moved to Hanle, whence travelling to the left of the Indus, they reached Leh in October, 1847. From Leh, Thomson, following the Leh-Yarkand route, visited the Nubra district and the Karakoram pass, and carried out his researches in the Shyok valley. Cunningham, intending to visit Gilgit, moved down along the Indus into Lower Ladakh, but due to the lateness of the season all passes leading into Baltistan had been closed, so he crossed into the vale of Kashmir where he conducted antiquarian researches. Information collected by these officials on the little-known regions of Ladakh and Western Tibet was later published in Cunningham's Ladak and Thomson's Western Himalaya and Tibet.¹

From Chumar, following a south-easterly direction, Strachey visited the Ladakh-Tibet frontier and then marched to Hanle. Here, unlike his other two colleagues, he was put to much trouble for about a week: the sub-prior or Resident Lama of Hanle imposed restrictions on his movements, and refused to supply cattle and men for the conveyance of his camp. He was freed

¹T. Thomson, Western Himalaya and Tibet (London, 1852). See F.D. Sec. Progs., 29 December 1849, No. 332, for the original MSS of Thomson's book.
Strachey felt that the Lama did all this on the instigation of the Tibetan authorities of Garlok. As the season had advanced and it was not possible to carry on the exploration work for sometime, Strachey moved down to Leh. Here he was informed that Tibetan authorities did not like Dogra rule in Ladakh and that while Dogra communications remained unnoticed, the deposed Ladakhi Gyaipo was held in high respect, his communications, being promptly attended to. Under these circumstances, after procuring introductory letters from the dispossessed Gyaipo of Ladakh and the treasurer of the famous Hemis monastery, Strachey resolved once again to press on communications with the Lhasa Government. This time, though not without resistance, he succeeded in reaching Tso-Shaladat lake, which is at a distance of about twelve mile from Rudok. Here, he was visited by the Dzong-pon or Tibetan local authority of Rudok, to whom Strachey explained "the circumstances, which had given rise to the presence of British Agents on the Lhasa frontier, the nature of our business here and the advantage which I supposed, his Government might derive from entering into communications sought by the mission."

Though the Dzong-pon heard all this patiently, and

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1 Strachey to Basti Ram (Thanadar of Leh), 21 September 1847: F.D.S.C., 31 December 1847, No. 130; Strachey to Lawrence, 26 September 1847, Ibid.
2 Strachey to Lawrence, 25 September 1847: F.D.S.C., 31 December 1847, No. 130.
3 Ibid.
4 Strachey to F. Currie (Resident at Lahore), 10 June 1848: F.D.S.C., 7 October 1848, No. 8.
though his subordinates who had accompanied him "felt a very strong assent" to all propositions of Strachey, the latter, however believed that the Dzong-pon, for his own safety, might suppress from his superiors "the whole of my communication and the circumstances of our interview." Strachey, thinking that it was futile to make further attempts to penetrate into Tibet, devoted himself to demarcate the eastern boundary of Ladakh, in which task he was greatly helped by the clear marking of much of the Tibet-Ladakh border by boundary pillars set up in 1684. He prepared an excellent map which, along with his other explorations in this region was published in his book, *Physical Geography of Western Tibet.*

The British Government was now fully convinced of the futility of making further attempts to communicate with the Tibetan or Chinese authorities; in April 1848, "for all political purposes", it decided to wind up the Boundary Commission, though Dr. Thomson was allowed to prosecute his scientific discoveries for another year.

Thus the Second Boundary Commission, like the first one, could not demarcate the Ladakh-Tibet boundary. However, its activities were not without political significance. Strachey reported in 1848 that the Tibetans

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1 F.D.S.C., 7 October 1848, No. 8.
3 Government to Resident, 22 April 1848: F.D.S.C., 27 May 1848, No. 80.
4 Ibid.
put every kind of obstruction on the frontier and that through any of the means of direct communication at the disposal of the British Indian Government, it was not possible to establish a direct contact with the Dalai Lama or his Government at Lhasa. He observed that the Chinese Resident at Lhasa could not be addressed with any advantage except "through the medium of his own Government and her Britannic Majesty's Agent in China."\(^1\) This view was accepted by Government. Strachey further suggested that a letter from an officer of the Governor-General's rank should not be addressed to the Dalai Lama, and for promoting trade, friendly contacts should be established with local Tibetan officials through native agents.\(^2\) Finally, he urged that should any letters be written to the Tibetans, in future, greater care should be taken in their translation.\(^3\) It was probably after this suggestion that the British authorities showed a greater interest in the study of Tibetan language.

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\(^1\)Strachey to Resident at Lahore, 26 January 1848: F.D.S.C., 27 May 1848, No. 73.
\(^2\)Ibid.
\(^3\)Ibid.