TIBET, KASHMIR AND NORTH INDIA 647-747

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Tibet made her debut into history with the unification and consolidation, brought about by Songtsen-gampo in 630 A.D. (1). With the help of a strong army, he subjugated the provinces of Ghusa and Ge箍and and quickly became the master of the whole of Tibet. In conflict with extending his empire from Gilgit to Chinese Turkestan, he vanquished King Anurudda of Nepal, forcing him to marry his daughter, named Kh Astro (Bharkot) to him (2), and challenged the emperor of China, compelling him also to offer him the hand of his daughter Wen-cheng along with some territories. This consolidation of home and expansion abroad was accompanied by socio-religious organization and cultural upliftment. Thus Tibet emerged as a great power on the Asian scene.

The consolidation of a big power across the frontier is usually a menace for a country, for two is company. This is not the case with India, for India and Tibet were already united in the tradition of the Sanskrit-Vaishnavite literature. This is a fact that should be borne in mind by all those who seek to understand the history of Tibet. The consolidation of Tibet under the rule of the Lhasa Tibetans in the 7th century was a natural development of the political situation in the region. The Tibetan empire was a powerful force in the region, and its consolidation was a significant event in the history of Tibet.

We know that there were friendly relations between Tibet and India during the Tang dynasty. The Chinese astronomer Xuanzang (7th century) visited Tibet and India several times. The Chinese poet Li Bai (8th century) also visited Tibet and India. The Chinese emperor sent envoys to Tibet and India, and the Chinese and Indian governments exchanged gifts. This was a sign of the close relationship between Tibet and India.

When the mission was on its way, Kong-he the king of Tibet died and his minister Gao-ru-sha, Azura or Arunava, assumed the throne. He is called his-ro-ti, which Syriac Levi takes to mean a Brahman (4). He broke off with China, the reason for which may have been his anti-Buddhist feeling, born of his Brahman heritage, and went in the extent...
of maltreating the Chinese embassy. The Ancient History of the T'ang Dynasty Ch. 198 states that "he used in the campaign the troops of the barbarian to attack Wang Huen-t'se. They (the escort of the mission) gave a fight to the barbarian but the party was not equal to the enemy: when the arrows got exhausted, all were taken prisoners and the tributes given by the different kings were all plundered. Wang Huen-t'se alone escaped under the cover of night." (6) The New History of the T'ang Dynasty Ch. 221 gives the following account of this incident: "He (O-lo-ts'ao shone) placed the army in the field to drive away Wang Huen-t'se. The mission did not have an escort of more than a few dozens of cavalry; they could do nothing and all perished. The goods offered as tributes by the kings were all plundered. Wang Huen-t'se escaped." (6)

Thus harassed, the Chinese envoy reached Nepal and Tibet to seek the help of their kings. To quote the Ancient History of the T'ang Dynasty he "fled to Tou-fan (Tibet) which gave him 1200 soldiers. Ni-po-lo (Nepal) gave him 7,000 cavalry. Wang Huen-t'se, with the help of his assistant, Tsang Cheu-chen led the army of the two kingdoms and advanced as far as the capital of central India. The battle continued for three days, the loss was terrible. Three thousand persons were killed straightaway and about 10,000 fell into water and were carried away. O-lo-ts'ao shone fled from his capital, Cheu-chen pursued him and made him captive along with 12,000 persons, men and women, and more than 30,000 animals, oxen and horses. India was thus conquered. Wang Huen-t'se brought to the capital of China his prisoner in the 22nd year (Tchang Kao 648). He was promoted to the rank of ts'ai-po-san-ts'ea-fuo." (7) The New History of the T'ang Dynasty Ch. 221 gives some different details of this episode. It says that Tibet supplied the Chinese envoy with an army of 1,000 soldiers rather than 7,200 true but Nepali gave him 7,000 troops. He divided his army into several corps, advanced as far as the village of Ts'ai-po-ts'ai-lo and, after besieging it for three days, captured the town. 3,000 men were killed and 10,000 drowned in the river. O-lo-ts'ao shone, leaving the kingdom, fled and regathered his troops and returned to offer another battle. Cheu-chen made him prisoner, killing about 1,000 persons this time; the others, who were guarding the women of the royal household hurried the crossing of the river K'ien-t'o-wel. Cheu-chen attacked them: there was a great confusion. He imprisoned the wives and daughters of the king and 12,000 persons and all the domesticated animals numbering some 30,000. He received the submission of 589 fortified towns. The king of Eastern India, Ch'i-kew-lao (Sri Kumara) presented some 30,000 animals, oxen and horses, for the army, and after due salutes and riddles. The kingdom of Kie-mou-lau (Kamarupa) offered to the emperor cutias, a map of the country and wanted an image of Lao-tzu as gift. Wang Huen-t'se offered humble
to his envoy O-lo-na-shon as prisoner. The victory was proclaimed officially in the ancient imperial temple.

It is clear from there accounts that the Chinese envoy Wang Huen-

ste’s was not only greeted by the Aithui. Waley calls “benevolence without spirit of early Tang diplomacy" (8) but also made the best of the worst situation that faced him. Obviously, he could not have initiated the aggression, accomplished as he was with an escort of 30 horsemen only. He must have used all the force of caprice and persuasion at his command to win an easy passage to the capital. But the Indian king was averse to everything Chinese and so used to discourage him thoroughly. However, he managed to escape and succeeded in getting 1,200 or 1,000 items from Tibet and 7,000 from Nepal and fought his way into the Indian capital, probably Kautai. Whether he appealed to the religious sentiments of the Tibetan monarch or counted upon the friendship between China, Tibet, and Nepal or availed upon the prospect of an easy conquest of an empire as India or dwelt upon the menace of the northward expansion of the Brahmanical ruler of Kamat, we do not know, but it seems certain that he could convince his Tibetan and Nepalese friends that an expedition into India would be a profitable undertaking for them. Thus his death in North India was inevitably a joint Tibetan-Nepalise enterprise to conquer an empire to the south of the Himalayas. Though Chinese annalists described it as a triumph of their country, it can not be doubted that it was a success of Tibetan and Nepalese arms against North India. For some time Wang-chung-tshang-po might be regarded for some time with the king of India and the provocation of Wang Huen-ste give him the occasion to lash out against it. So Wang’s adventure proved the veteran for Tibetan and Nepalese aggression against North India for which the ground had been prepared with the consolidation of the military strength of Wang-chung-tshang-po. That the Tibetans and their protectors, the Nepalese, succeeded in occupying large parts of North India’s mini-

fied from the remark of the Chinese chronicles that 550 fortified towns submitted to their armies led by Wang Huen-ste and an enormous booty fell into their hands and O-lo-na-shon and his family, with a large number of followers including the abbeys of Namsaparwang, who claimed the knowledge of the skill of his, became their prisoners (10). Besides this, the powerful ruler of Eastern India, Kuma Prakasaman, also made friends with them offering them 30,000 oxen & horses for the army and boys, rations and fringes as well as a map of the country which had a great military value. The impact of these events on the history of North India must have been tremendous.

Arnold J. Toynbee has shown that the challenge of blow and
pressures stimulates a people to creative activity and often intensifies the process of political and military consolidation among them. In India also, after the subjugation of vast territory by the Tibetans and Nepalese and their intermittent with a big booty and a large train of prisoners of war, the imperatives of political unity became strong and the imperial tradition of Harsha revive for a revival. For a time there was a fee-for-all in which Dhiskarvarman occupied Karmavvana and the adjacent territories, the later Guptas of Malwa fought their way into Magadha, the Maukharis revived in their ancestral seats and one of them Bhogavarman established matrimonial relations with the rulers of Nepal, the Turk chief, assuming the title of Tiuna, pressed into the Punjab and the Kiratans or Nagas began to rise in Kashmir. But out of these conflicts and struggles, the later Gupta ruler Adityavasa emerged supreme and cemented his alliance with the Maukhari Chief Bhogavarman by marrying his daughter to him. The successors of Adityavasa continued to use the imperial title indicative of paramount sovereignty, but the invasions of the Tibetans also battered the states of North India from time to time intensifying the urge of a more effective unification (11). Ultimately the man of the hour appeared in Yasovarman in the last part of the seventh century and beginning of the eighth. Most probably he was connected with the rulers of Kanauj and inherited their imperial tradition. At the head of a large army, he campaigned in all directions and became the paramount sovereign of North India from the eastern sea to the north-western marches with an appreciable influence in South India also. After consolidating his position in India, he, according to the chronicler of his campaign, Volap-krish conquered the Himalayan region (12). This shows that, after setting his house in order, he grappled with the challenge of the Tibetans, Nepalese and other mountainous people. In order to strengthen his offensive against these people, he sought the collaboration of the Karkota King of Kashmir, Laladitya Muktapada, inspite of his rivalry with him over the states of the Panjab, like Jedarhara reported by the Korean pilgrim Hui-ch'ang. This is clear from the memorial presented by Laladitya's envoy Bhadanta Worli-to to the T'ang court in May 733 in which he stated that his master, along with the King of Central India, controlled the five principal routes of communication of Tibet and fought against the Tibetans with constant victories (13). Earlier, in November-December 721. Yasovarman (Yi-sha-fu-mo) himself sent an embassy under Bhadanta Pa-ta-hsin (Bharvesa?) to the court of emperor Hsuan-tsung with the presents of local products obviously with a view to seeking succour against the Tibetans with whom Laladitya was also engaged (14). All this undoubtedly proves that Yasovarman was keenly conscious of the Tibetan menace and after entrenching his paramounty

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in India, moved in the Himalayas, as Valkap' states in his Gokhdpma, to quell it, and, in collaboration with Lalitaditya, controlled the five principal routes of communication with Tibet and also inflicted some reverses on the Tibetans. And, in that process, composed his affairs with his Kashmiri colleague, devotee regular pinpricking and provocation over the states of the Punjab, and also tried to form an entente with the Tang of China in order to secure what assistance he could get from them.

The impact of Tibetan expansion was ever greater on Kashmir. The mountain range running from the Zoji-la due south to Kashmir and the narrow valley of Mara Wardaw (Kashmir Vaidyana), adjacent to it, separates Kashmir from the Tibetan country called Bhalnedasa. Baltistan (Skardo) and Ladakh, to the east of it, are called “Little and Great Tibet”. “Little and Great Po-lu,” in Chinese Annals, SaktimdrisatlasOdasa in the Rajasthanagiri of Srivara (ii, 448) and Ladh Bhan and Bul Bhan in modern Kashmiri. To the east of them is a belt of high mountains and glaciers and then the region of Guru and Zanskari (15). Thus Kashmir was very close to Tibet and exposed to her aggression. This filled up the rapid rise of the the Karkota or Naga dynasty there.

The routes passing through Baltistan and Ladakh and connecting Tibet, Sinkiang and Kashmir were vital arteries of commerce and communication and hence the bone of contention among these powers. But Tibet was the strongest among these contestants. Srong-btsan-sgam-po’s son Ming-bron-bstan (689-712) defeated the Chinese when they tried to recover some of the territories ceded by them during the preceding reign. His son and successor, Dung-srong (712-730), won the hand of the Chinese princess Bun-sing-kong. He was followed on the throne by his infant son Khri-sde-gtsan-btvan (730-802). During his infancy China made another bid to regain the lost territories, particularly, the strategical region of Gilgit. In 736 Tibet made a show of submitting to China, but, in the same year, her forces attacked Baltistan, taught the Chinese army, stationed there, and, in 738, totally defeated it (16). Again in 744, the Tibetans conquered this region and up to 747 retained their control over Ladakh (17). Baffled in his moves, the Chinese emperor had to marry his daughter Chin Cheng to the Tibetan crown prince Hjang-tsha-Ii-dbo, and, on his death due to an accident, to the Tibetan emperor himself, as dowry, she brought with her two Chinese provinces, Chin-chu and Ku-e-i on the Yellow River. This train of events indicates how powerful Tibet was at that time and how serious her menace was for Kashmir.

In the above circumstances the Karkota ruler sent a diplomatic mission
to China in 713 for seeking her aid, (18). Then, in 720, another embassy from Kashmir visited China. In referred to the King of Kashmir as Chan-t'o-lo-pi-li (Chandrapida), in return, an envoy came to Kashmir from China conveying the recognition of Chandrapida as the king of that realm. Following this diplomatic activity, an army of 4000 Chinese soldiers entered Baltistan and repulsed the Tibetans who had entrenched themselves there, (19). But it does not appear that the Tibetan occupation was permanently vacated for we find the struggle in full swing in the next decade.

Thereafter the Kashmiri King Chandrapida was assassinated through the machinations of his brother Tariqdi Upasaditya who is described by Kashiwal as a cruel and unjust ruler opposed by the Brahmas. So much engrossed he must have been in his home affairs that he could hardly attend to the problems beyond the frontiers and the diplomatic moves they involved. However, the next King, Muktidipa Lalitaditya was an energetic and enterprising ruler. He took up the frontier issue, collaborated with Yasovarman in containing the Tibetans, barred the five main routes of their country and inflicted significant defeats on them. Having thus won the breathing space, he proceeded to mobilise the resources of China against the Tibetans and, with this end in view, sent an embassy headed by Bhadanta Wu-li-to, to the Tang emperor in 733. The memorial presented by this envoy was as follows:

"Since the establishment of my country (all kings) sent tributes to Your Majesty, Emperor, the Heavenly Khan, obeyed and acted upon your order. In this country there are three armies, namely, elephant corps, cavalry and Infantry, I, a humble servant of Your Majesty, along with the king of Central India, control the five principal routes of communication of Tibet, fought against the Tibetans with constant victories. If your Majesty, the Heavenly Khan, will dispatch the Imperial armies to Po lu, I will be able to supply food to two hundred thousand soldiers. Moreover, there is a dragon pool in this country named Mo-lo-po to-mo (Mahagama). I wish to build a memorial building for Your Majesty the Heavenly Khan, I, therefore, pray for an Imperial Appointment by proclamation." (20).

This document shows that the Khokrots had ever been solicitors of the alliance and assistance of China in their struggle with the Tibetans and that Muktidipa was particularly keen on seeking her succour and offered to bear the huge expenses of maintaining an enormous Chinese army of 2,00,000 men at Vular Lake and also to raise a memorial for the
T'ang Emperor Huang Taung (713-766) in his kingdom. The outcome of Muktapada's diplomatic endeavour must have been positive for we find the Tibetans making a show of peace by paying tribute to the T'ang Emperor in 756. But, side by side, they intensified their campaign in Badakshan and, in 738, completely annihilated the Chinese army in that sector, as said above.

In the meantime, Muktapada fell out with Yosovnaman over the suzerainty over the Panjan states. It appears that the Tusi Shahi rulers, convinced by Yosovnaman and patronised by Lalitadiva, added fuel to the fire. Thus, the erstwhile colleagues in the protection of the frontier and the struggle with the Tibetans for that purpose were locked in a deadly conflict. Lalitadiva marched in the Ganges Valley, defeated Yosovnaman but reinstated him as a vassal at Kanaui, undertook a triumphal march in eastern and probably even southern India and emerged as the paramount sovereign of the whole of India (21).

After thus assuming the role of the undisputed emperor of North India and watching the failure of Chinese arms in Badakshan, Muktapada decided to deal with the frontier problem himself and pounced upon the Tibetans singlehanded. 

Rajputransi states that he undertook a campaign of conquest in the pathless tracks of the far-sweeping northern regions (22). Entering probably by the route connecting Badakshan with Little Tashk, he plunged into Turukhistan and reduced the Turhakas and their neighbours, the Kanbojas, who were a widespread people having their concentration in Badakshan near Dauar (23). According to Yuan Chwang, Turkhatistan was bounded in the north by Zarvood near Belghoshpan, in the south by the Hindukush, in the west by Persia and in the east by the Pamirs. In the Mahommedan period it signifies the region between Badakshan and Balkh. The river Oxus formed through it (24). In 718 the Turkish ruler of Turkhatistan extended his suzerainty from the Ima Gupri up to Zabulistan and from the Mughan to the Indus. In 719 the ruler of that region, named Ti-sho, sent to China a Manichaeus learned in astrology. But, in an Arab raid he fell into the hands of the Muslims who plundered the country. In 727 his son wrote to the Chinese emperor about the incident obviously to seek his help (25). Lalitadiva must have marched against him or his successor.

At that time the Arabs were hovering over the horizons of Central Asia. Qutib-ibn-Muslim had conquered up to the Jaxartes.

Nasir- יע Sayyâ engaged the regions overrun by Qutib, his successors ravaged into Turukhistan up to the borders of China. Lalitadiva came into
conflict with one of them and worsted him in three engagements (26).

But the most significant success of Lallitaditya must have been against the Tibetans. (27) called Latses, Bhodas, Bhattas, and also against the Dardas and the rulers of Sinkiang, called Uttarakuru (28). What was the impact of the victory of Lallitaditya over the Tibetans we do not exactly know, but it is clear that it evoked a sharp reaction from the Tibetans who reconquered Baltistan in 744 necessitating the Chinese offensive under Kao Hsien-shih in 747.

It is also suggested (29) that the Tibetan crown-prince Hjang-tsha-ha-don put Lallitaditya in a precarious condition compelling him to commit suicide.

Thus, we observe that in the century 647-747, Tibet was a potent factor in the history of North India, determining the policies of her rulers, giving particular turns to their attempts at imperial consolidation at home and diplomatic overtures abroad, and specially making them fastidious-conscious in their undertakings, alignments and conflicts.

NOTES

2. D. R. Regmi, Ancient Nepal, pp. 155-157 holds that Ansumavaran was never a vassal of Tibet and that the episode of the marriage of his daughter Bhrikuti to Song-btsan-sgam-po is a myth invented by Tibetan chroniclers. He bases his argument on the fact that the T'ang Annals and Yuen Chwang do not refer to the Tibetan conquest of Nepal. However, he holds that under Narendradeva Tibetan influence over Nepal was supreme. It is not necessary to go into this controversy here. What is relevant is that just before the death of Harsha Tibet had the upperhand in Nepal.
3. Arthur Waley, The Real Tripitaka, p. 78
5. Ibid., p 10
6. Ibid., p. 9
7. Ibid., p. 10
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8. Ibid p. 9
9. Arthur Waley, The Real Tripitaka, p. 95
11. L. Petesch, A Study of the Chronicles of Ladakh, p. 63
12. Buddha Prakash, Aspects of Indian History and Civilization, p. 103.
14. P. C. Bagchi, Sino-Indian Relations: ‘Sino-Indian Studies’ (Calcutta) Vol. I, p. 71 contends that Yaovarmar wanted Chinese help against Lalitaditya, but it is unlikely, for two years later, Lalitaditya’s envoy reported to the Chinese court that his relations with the King of Central India were of collaboration against the Tibetans, which shows that by that time they had not fallen out with each other.
17. Ibid., p. 530
20. Jan Yun-hua, op. cit., p. 172. This author holds that since, in that year, the Chinese emperor approved the appointment of Muktapida, therefore, he must have come to the throne that very year. But the text of the memorial shows that Muktapida had been fighting with and winning victories over the Tibetans for some time past. Thus he must have ascended the throne earlier, in fact, the proclamation of appointment by the Chinese court is merely an imperial rodemontade not indicative of the actual coronation of Muktapida.
21. For details see Buddha Prakash. Aspects of Indian History & Civilization pp. 111-12.
23. Ibid. IV., 165-166, p. 133.

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27. Ibid., IV. 168.

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