CHAPTER XXVI

THE THIRD BURMESE WAR AND THE ANNEXATION OF BURMA

Things remained quiet in Burma after the annexation of Pegu\textsuperscript{1} and cordial relations were established between Burma and India. A commercial treaty was concluded by Col. Phayre in 1862, offering facilities to traders of both countries. It opened up British trade with China through Burma, by authorizing British steamers to proceed up the Irawadi and the British merchants to settle in any part of the Burmese territory.\textsuperscript{2} Phayre rightly claimed, and the Government of India agreed, that the treaty was highly favourable to British interests. Further advantages were secured by another commercial treaty in 1867. By this treaty the King of Burma surrendered his right of monopoly in all articles except earth-oil, timber and precious stones. It also authorized the British Government to establish a Resident or Political Agent in Burmese territory invested with full and final jurisdiction over all civil suits between British subjects in the Burmese capital. Cases between British and Burmese subjects were to be decided by him in cooperation with a Burmese officer. There is hardly any doubt that this treaty, which the Burmese had to execute under pressure, was the thin end of the wedge by which the British octopus was extending its stranglehold over the hapless state of Burma. The King of Burma was gradually induced, or rather forced under pressure, to agree to the surrender of frontier dues and abolition of monopolies, the establishment of a new Political Military Agency at Bhamo far to the north, and conveyance by British steamers of traffic between Yunnan and Rangoon hitherto carried on by Chinese caravans. All these slowly but surely crippled his political power and financial resources, and may be regarded as the precursors of the further expansion and consolidation of British authority in Burma. It was foreshadowed by the plan to construct a railway from Rangoon to Prome and also to build such steamers as could rapidly convey large armies from Prome to Mandalay. Indeed the cry for annexation of Upper Burma was already raised by British merchants and officials.\textsuperscript{3} A British expedition was sent in 1868 to explore the route from Bhamo to Western China.\textsuperscript{4} Although it appears from official accounts that the King of Burma rendered all possible assistance to it,
the *Rangoon Gazette* accused him of 'behaving in an underhand manner' and threatened him with the annexation of his country.⁵

While the general tendency of the British settlers and officials in Burma was to extend their authority, the Burmese Government also gave causes of friction. Even the experience of the last two wars had not taught them to forego their sense of dignity and etiquette which had become an anachronism in the civilized world, and prudence, foresight and forbearance were not certainly among the characteristic virtues of their Kings and officials. The result was a series of disputes regarding the authority over the Eastern and Western Karen States, the judicial powers vested in the Political Agent by the treaty of 1867, extradition and domicile of British subjects, the failure of the Burmese Government to punish their subjects who committed robberies in British territory, revival of the monopoly system by the King, etc. Lastly came the shoe-question. In pursuance of the Burmese etiquette the British officers, including the Chief Commissioners, had to take off shoes before they were interviewed by the King. In 1876 the Governor-General of India decided not to yield to this humiliating procedure. Both sides were adamant, and a characteristic remark is attributed to the King of Burma that he would fight for 'shoe' though he had not fought for Pegu.⁶ Thus the Political Agent was no longer received by the King.

In the meantime the King of Burma sought to establish contact with other European powers. A Burmese mission visited Paris and concluded a commercial treaty in 1873.⁷ But the French agent who came to Mandalay to obtain ratification of the new treaty suggested some additional clauses which would oblige the French Government to use its good offices on behalf of Burma and send military officers to train the Burmese army. Due to the intercession of the English, and in order to avoid offending them, the French refused to ratify either the original or the supplementary treaty.⁸ The King of Burma also concluded a treaty with Italy, but here again the British Government intervened, and the clause regarding the importation of arms and ammunition was considerably modified in order to make it innocuous for all practical purposes.⁹ The King of Burma also sent an envoy to Persia, but a proposed mission to Russia had to be abandoned on account of her unwillingness to receive it.¹⁰ The King of Burma wanted to carry on diplomatic relations directly with the Queen of England as he regarded it as beneath his dignity to treat on equal terms with the Governor-General of India, who was a mere official.¹¹ But in this he was not successful. Beyond these efforts to establish contact with foreign powers which bore little
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fruit, and an attempt to cast guns and construct vessels in his own country with the help of European adventurers,¹² Mindon did not do anything which might disturb his relations with the British.

In 1878 King Mindon died and was succeeded by Thibaw, a youth of twenty. It coincided with the period when, under Lord Lytton, the 'Forward Policy' was ascendant in British relations with neighbouring States, as has already been noticed in the case of Afghanistan.¹³ So, advantage was taken of the accession of a new king to press the usual grievances and attempt to wring out new concessions. As usual, the maltreatment of British subjects formed the chief complaint. These were partly redressed, but the objection to taking off shoes was overruled.

About this time news reached the Government of India that the new King had executed on February 15-17, 1879, about eighty members of the royal family including "the late king's sons, with mothers, wives and children".¹⁴ A vivid and detailed account of the horrible massacre, with all its attendant cruelties, is given in the diary of the British Resident at Mandalay, but while there is no doubt about the execution, the details must be accepted with caution, as we have no version of the other side, and independent corroborative evidence is lacking. Under instructions of Lord Lytton the Resident delivered "forcible remonstrance against these barbarities" and threatened to leave the capital. The remonstrance had little effect upon the ministers who took their stand upon the sovereign authority of Burma, and justified their action by reasons of State.¹⁵ But it gave the imperialist jingos a good handle, and loud cry was raised for the annexation of Burma by its European residents. It was inevitable that in such a strained atmosphere, incident would happen disturbing the normal relations between the British and the Burmese, giving rise to charges and counter-charges.

The Government of India, however, did not respond to this cry, nor were they moved by the reported grievances of British subjects and later massacres by the King of Burma, to take any hostile step. For the Secretary of State had turned down the Governor-General's suggestion, that advantage should be taken of the old grievances to wring concessions from the new King, and held the view that nothing he had done so far called for any change of policy. But on the death of R. B. Shaw, the British Resident in Upper Burma, on 15 June, 1879, the Chief Commissioner of Lower Burma recommended that "no successor to Mr. Shaw should be appointed unless and until we receive from the Burmese Government satisfactory assurances of a change of attitude on their part and of their consent to a revision of our general relations with them." Col. H. A. Browne,
who temporarily took up the duties of the Residency, left Mandalay
in August, 1879, and the staff of the Residency with all American
and English residents of Mandalay left the city on October 6.16

The Government of India were insistent on the cancellation of
all treaties with Burma on the plea of acts of violence to which
British subjects were victims. Two illustrative cases will suffice.
On November 13, 1879, the crew of a British steamer were assault-
ed by some Burmese. The Burmese magistrate imposed a fine of
Rs. 100/- and some punishments on two coolies. On May 27 and
28, the British Mail steamer ‘Yunan’ was alleged to have been for-
cibly detained. On complaint being made, the Burmese Foreign
Minister challenged the accuracy of the fact alleged, but dismissed
the Governor in whose jurisdiction the incident had occurred, and
took steps to prevent any such incident. On both these occasions
the Government of India, being dissatisfied with the action of the
Burmese Government, requested the Secretary of State to authorize
the cancellation of the existing treaties. The spirit of “Delenda est
Carthago” was not dead even after two thousand years! But the
Secretary of State did not think either of the two incidents mention-
ed above as of sufficient gravity to justify cancellation of treaties.
It must be remembered that this was in 1881 when the Liberal
Ministry of Gladstone had supplanted Disraeli’s Government, and the
‘Forward Policy’ had suffered a serious reverse in Afghanistan and
by the resignation of Lord Lytton as Viceroy.

All the while, the tension between the two Governments in-
creased over the question of monopoly exercised by the king of
Burma. It was injurious to British trade, but even the Chief Com-
misssioner doubted very much whether it could be regarded as an
infringement of the treaty of 1867. Nevertheless, strong pressure
brought by the mercantile community of British Burma induced the
Government of India to make a strong remonstrance, describing the
exercise of the right of monopoly by the King of Burma as an un-
friendly act. As a result of this the King abolished all monopolies
on February 16, 1882, and sent an envoy who reached Simla on
April 30, 1882, but no agreement could be reached.17

In the meantime Thibaw pursued his father’s policy of seek-
ing allies in Europe. A mission was sent to Paris in 1883 to renew
the commercial treaty of 1873 which had not been ratified. By this
time France had established her influence in Cochin-China and Ton-
kin and was believed to have an eye on Upper Burma. So England
was naturally jealous of any alliance between Burma and France.
She represented to France that as she had special and predominant
interest in Burma, she entertained serious objections to any special alliance or political understanding between Burma and any other power. France however assured England that the proposed treaty would be of a purely commercial character.

A Franco-Burmese treaty was concluded on January 15, 1885, and ratified in November next. Though the British could not point out anything objectionable in the treaty, they felt that Burma sought alliance with France with the real and ultimate object of emancipating herself from the special influence and control of British India. Such a conviction was bad enough, but it was rendered worse by alarming reports such as the concession of ruby mines in Upper Burma to a French Company, reduction of import duty on French goods, construction of a railway line in Upper Burma, and founding a bank at Mandalay. Most of these were unfounded and none proceeded beyond the initial stage of planning, and the French Government denied them. Yet the very prospect of having to face French rivalry in the economic exploitation of Upper Burma, which had hitherto been a close preserve of Britain, created great indignation among the British commercial classes. The Rangoon Chamber of Commerce and the Irawady Flotilla Company passed resolution after resolution demanding annexation of Upper Burma. The British commercial circle was also perturbed and requested the Secretary of State to re-establish a British Resident and a mixed Court of Justice at Mandalay and to secure facility for freedom of commerce.

The rumours about concessions to France and the importunities of the British commercial circles gradually brought about a change in the attitude of the Home Government, and it came round to the view that political and commercial dominance of France in Burma must be prevented at any cost, even at the risk of hostilities with the Burmese King. The British Prime Minister reminded the French Government that Her Majesty's Government could not view with indifference "the establishment of any preponderating influence in Burmah other than that of the Indian Government". The mercantile community in Britain now fell in line with the views expressed in India. The London Chamber of Commerce requested the Secretary of State "either to annex the whole of Native Burmah, or to assume a protectorate over that country by the appointment of a sovereign under British control". Those who knew the influence of commerce upon British politics could not doubt for a moment that the fate of Burma was sealed.

The political relations between Burma and the British in 1885 were thus very similar to those which led to the Second Burmese War in 1852, and, as on the previous occasion, incidents happened
at the opportune moment which could be made to serve as pretexts for an open rupture. But these were, in both cases, mere excuses, and not the real causes of the war that followed, and so need not be elaborated in detail.

There was a long-standing dispute between the Governments of India and Burma regarding the boundary line between Burma and Manipur. The Burmese Government did not accept the boundary line fixed by a British Commission in 1881 and requested the Government of India, in 1884, to remove the boundary pillars put up by them, failing which they would be destroyed by them. The Maharaja of Manipur was authorized by the Government of India to resist Burmese troops if they destroyed the pillars. But the Burmese did not push the matter further.

The incident which precipitated the war was the fine inflicted by the Government of Burma on the Bombay-Burma Trading Corporation. This Company took the lease of Ningyan forests for cutting timbers, a fixed amount being paid per log. It was reported to the King of Burma that the Company had deprived him of his just revenue by having paid a bribe of Rs. 60,000 to the Governor of Ningyan. A regular trial was held and some foresters employed by the Company gave evidence against them and supported the charge. Ultimately on August 12, 1885, the Government of Burma decided that the Company had defrauded the King to the extent of ten lakhs of Rupees by taking away 56,702 logs without entering them in the books. They proposed at first to cancel the lease, but later imposed a fine of Rs. 23,59,066 in four equal instalments. The London agent of the Company approached the Secretary of State; so high politics gathered round the simple matter of a civil dispute. The Chief Commissioner wrote to the Burmese Foreign Minister on August 28, 1885, asking him whether he was prepared to suspend the decree against the Corporation and refer the matter to an arbitrator to be appointed by the Viceroy. Three days later he sent a telegram to the Foreign Minister not to press the Corporation for payment, and held out the threat that otherwise “serious consequences might arise”, if the case was summarily dealt with. In reply to the letter dated 28 August, the Burmese Foreign Minister reiterated that the charges against the Corporation were true and refused to suspend the decree or accept an arbitrator. In reply the Chief Commissioner, in his letter dated 22 October, demanded that (1) an envoy from the Viceroy should be suitably received at Mandalay and the case of the Corporation should be settled in communication with him; (2) no action shall be taken against the Corporation till the arrival of the envoy; (3) in future an envoy from the Viceroy
should reside at Mandalay; (4) the Burmese Government should regulate his relations with foreign powers in accordance with the advice of the Viceroy; and (5) complete facilities should be afforded for British trade with China. The first three demands were to be accepted before November 10, without any further discussion.20

The Burmese reply was received on November 9. The Burmese Government defended the judgment passed in the case of the Corporation, but nevertheless, being desirous of assisting foreign merchants, agreed to review it if the Corporation presented a petition to the King. They also accepted demands Nos. 3 and 5. As regards the fourth demand they were prepared to refer to the arbitration of France, Germany and Italy, who were friends of both Governments, the propriety of such demand being made by one independent State of another.21

The British Government had begun military preparations immediately after sending the ultimatum, and as soon as the reply was received, ordered General Prendergast to advance upon Mandalay (November 13). King Thibaw also did not wait for the reply to his letter and issued a proclamation asking his people to fight for national honour. There was, however, scarcely any fight. The British army advanced practically without opposition, and King Thibaw and his army surrendered at Mandalay on November 28. On January 1, 1886, Lord Dufferin, the Viceroy, issued a proclamation annexing Upper Burma to the British dominions.

The prevailing feeling among Englishmen was reflected in the following statement of Lord Randolph Churchill: "The arrogance and barbarity of a Native Court, the oppression of British subjects, the hindrance to British commerce, the intrigues of foreign nations, are for ever terminated in Upper Burma."22

Any one who carefully reads the above narrative would perhaps carry the impression that while the last two were the real grounds for annexation, the first two were more or less pretenses for the same and hardly justify it. The cruelty and barbarity of the Burmese Government must be denounced in the strongest possible language, but cannot under the accepted principles of international law, be regarded as a cause for annexation. The oppression of British subjects in Burma was undoubtedly much exaggerated, and the available evidence shows that the Government of Burma never refused to make such amends as an independent State could be expected to do. As regards the hindrance to British commerce, it is not justified by facts unless the British wanted monopoly of trade to the exclusion of others. As regards the intrigues of the French, it is difficult to determine their exact nature. The gravamen of the
British charge was the existence of a secret arrangement by which France permitted Burma to import arms through Tonkin. This was officially denied by the French Government and the truth of the allegation cannot be said to be above all doubts. But assuming every allegation to be true, France did not attempt to do anything more than what the British did, and the Burmese Government had not thereby infringed any treaty stipulation with the British or violated any principles of international law.

It would be an insult to the understanding of an average man to argue at length in order to demonstrate that the British attitude to Burma was opposed to all known conventions, principles, and procedure, which regulate the relation between civilized States in modern age. The real explanation of the conduct of the British has been furnished by one of their great legal luminaries. Sir James Stephen refused to put the smaller Asiatic States, including Afghanistan and Native States of India, in the same class as civilized States of the West. His frank statement on the policy to be pursued towards the former furnishes the true basis of the imperial policy pursued by the British. Referring to these States he says: "They occupy a distinctly inferior position—their inferiority consisting mainly in this that they are not to be permitted to follow a course of policy which exposes us to danger. This is the footing on which every State enclosed in the British Dominions is practically treated... at bottom our relations with all of them (Sindhi, Kabul (amir), Holkar, Nizam) stand on the same basis. They are all determined by the fact that we are exceedingly powerful and highly civilized, and that they are comparatively weak and half barbarous".23

The words are brutally frank and truly reflect the inner principles dominating imperialist outlook of the West almost throughout the nineteenth century. They are writ large on the history of British relations with Indian States and neighbouring countries. The three wars by which the whole of Burma was added piecemeal to British dominions, and which mark the beginning and end of British annexations in India during the period covered by this volume, merely illustrate the active, though often unconscious, application of the principle enunciated by Sir James Stephen. A critical or philosophical discussion of the principle is, however, outside the scope of this work.

British statesmen and historians have emphasized the barbarous cruelties of the Burmese king, presumably in justification of their aggressive policy. The stories rest mainly upon the evidence of the British who were interested in painting the Burmese ruler in the blackest hue. But even admitting that the facts are substan-
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tially true, they can hardly justify the course of action pursued, even if the British were really inspired by humanitarian motive. The case of Burma proves, what has been illustrated again and again in the history of European colonialism in Asia, that humanity and trade interest form a powerful but very unholy combination in aid of aggressive imperialism.

1. See p. 126.  
3. Ibid, 188.  
8. Ibid, 238.  
10. Ibid, 240.  
13. Cf. Chapter XXV.  
17. Ibid, 272, 277.  
20. Ibid, 310.  
22. Ibid, 315.  
CHAPTER XXVII

WAR AGAINST MANIPUR

It has been mentioned above,\(^1\) how, as a result of the First Burmese War, the State of Manipur was made independent of Burma, and Gambhir Singh, who played an important role in that war, became its first independent king. Gambhir Singh's son, Chandrakirtti ascended the throne in A.D. 1834, on his father's death, but as he was only two years old the real authority was exercised by Nar Singh as regent. Nar Singh subsequently usurped the throne and ruled for fourteen years, but, after his death in 1850, Chandrakirtti recovered the throne and ruled till his death in 1886. He had ten sons born of his six queens and distributed the different offices among them before his death. In accordance with his wishes his four sons, Sura-chandra, Kula-chandra (or Kuladhwaja-chandra), Tikendrajit and Jhala-kirtti, born of the first four queens in order of seniority, became, after his death, respectively Maharaja (King), Jubraj (Heir Apparent), Senanayak (Commander) and Senapati (Commander-in-Chief). Jhala-kirtti died within a few months and Tikendrajit succeeded to his office of Senapati. Of the three uterine brothers of the Maharaja, Bhairabjit held the offices of Pucca Sena (Lieutenant-General) and Shagol Hanjaba (Commander of the Horse), and the other two, Kesarjit and Padmalochan, alias Gopal Sena, were in charge, respectively, of elephants and doollies (vehicles carried by men on their shoulders). Prince Angao Sena, son of the fifth queen, was officer-in-charge of roads, and Zilla Singh or Zilla Gumba, son of the sixth queen, was very young and acted as an A.D.C. to the king.\(^2\)

The new king Sura-chandra had to face a sea of troubles. There were no less than three rebellions in course of a little more than a year, and the Kukis also created troubles. The King himself was a peace-loving man, but Tikendrajit, who had already during his father's reign distinguished himself by his prowess and military skill, suppressed all the risings, occasionally with British help. All this made Tikendrajit the most powerful and prominent member of the court, and he offered a refreshing contrast to his elder brother, the King, who was weak and vacillating. On the other hand, while the King was mild and benevolent, Tikendrajit was somewhat proud.

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* This Chapter was originally published in the Bengal Past and Present, Vol. LXXVIII, Part I serial No. 145 (pp. 1–29 Jan.–June 1959). For abbreviations used in the footnotes of this Chapter, cf. Bibliography to this Chapter.
haughty, and arrogant. Nevertheless, Tikendrajit and the King were both very popular.

There was not much love lost between the brothers and this was highlighted by the open rivalry, almost animosity, between Tikendrajit and Bhairabjit, generally referred to as Pucca Sena. Bhairab was an able and, comparatively speaking, educated man. But he was mean and jealous, according to all contemporary evidence, and was never liked by the people of Manipur. Even the Maharaja asked Tikendrajit to forgive his many misdeeds. He was the sworn enemy of Tikendrajit since the day when the latter, as Senapati, became his superior officer. There were frequent dissensions between the two on petty matters, but the ill feeling rose to its height when both asked for the hands of a girl, supposed to be the prettiest maid in Manipur. The King at first remained neutral and held the balance between the two, but was gradually won over by Pucca Sena. A glaring instance of this was furnished by the creation of a new judicial post to which Pucca Sena was appointed, though the whole department of administration of justice was hitherto in charge of Jubraj. Gradually the brothers were split into two factions. The King and his three uterine brothers formed one group, and the other step-brothers rallied round Tikendrajit.

The popularity and ability of Tikendrajit drew upon him the wrath of the British Political Agent at Manipur who, in 1888, prepared a list of his crimes, some of which were committed as far back as 1877 and 1881. The most serious among them was beating of several persons, including a woman, at different times, for what he considered, rightly or wrongly, as offences against his person and honour. On receiving the report of these crimes the Government of India advised the Maharaja to banish Tikendrajit. The Maharaja issued the order but later withdrew it, ostensibly on the ground that there was already a great commotion in the State over the slaughter of a cow. The Political Agent protested, but the Government of India acquiesced in the withdrawal.

Everything in this episode is curious and hardly complimentary to the British. Their interference in such petty personal matters of a foreign State—whatever may be its power—is not sanctioned either by law or reason, but can only be explained by the logic of the strong towards the weak. But even such logic can hardly be invoked in support of the penalty of banishment for offences which were not infrequently committed by the British officers and civilians, particularly tea-planters, in India, almost always with impunity, and rarely at the cost of a few rupees by way of fine. Lastly, if the acquiescence in withdrawal was right, the original order was wrong,
and vice versa. The incident is, however, worth noting as an evidence of the strong prejudices of the British Government against Tikendrajit, although he seems to have been very much liked by the Political Agent, Mr. Grimwood.\textsuperscript{6}

The dissensions between the two rival factions of royal brothers culminated in a palace revolution. The immediate occasion seems to be the humiliation inflicted upon Angao Sena and Zilla Gumba by the King at the instance of Pucca Sena. The two first-named lost some of their offices, rights and privileges and had good reason to fear that they would be either banished or otherwise punished. This goaded them to rebellion.\textsuperscript{7} So, at midnight, on September 21, 1890, Angao Sena and Zilla Gumba, accompanied by a number of attendants, scaled the walls of the zenana mahal with the help of a ladder, and proceeded towards the bed-chamber of king Sura-chandra, who immediately fled to the Residency Building. Tikendrajit was not present at the time of this occurrence,\textsuperscript{8} but joined his two step-brothers shortly afterwards and the whole palace was occupied without any bloodshed. For reasons, not definitely known, Jubraj Kula-chandra had left the palace that very night, but returned in the morning and was proclaimed King.

In the meantime the ex-King had found shelter in the Residency along with his brothers, ministers, and a number of armed retainers. The conduct and attitude of the ex-King Sura-chandra as well as of the Political Agent, Mr. Grimwood, from this moment onward, has been the subject of dispute and a matter of keen controversy. It is not easy to disentangle the truth from their conflicting versions of what actually took place on that eventful day.\textsuperscript{9} According to Sura-chandra, his brothers, ministers, and other officers met him at the Residency at the dawn of 22 September, “with about 2,000 men, of whom about four or six hundred were properly armed.” He asked for the Political Agent’s assistance and sanction to fight with the rebels at once. But the Political Agent told him that he should not be allowed to fight until the orders of the Chief Commissioner (of Assam) were received. On the other hand, he (Grimwood) ordered the British sepoys to seize the arms of the Manipuri troops, and as soon as this was done, “ordered the (Manipuri) troops to disband and return to their homes, which, disheartened and humiliated, they did”.

Grimwood’s version is that the Manipuri troops, who came to the Residency on the dawn of 22 September, were not 2,000, but “may have been 400 at the outside, of whom 40 or 50, certainly not more, were armed.” “The Maharaja never asked me for sanction to fight.” The Maharaja had no wish to fight, and his troops had
the whole day to fight, if they wished to, as the disarming took place late in the afternoon. Grimwood justifies the disarming on the ground that it was considered necessary for the protection of the Residency during the night, and then adds: “If I recollect right, there were about 30 guns altogether. While the guns were being collected, the Maharaja objected, and I at once gave them all back on the condition that the armed men went into one of the villages near by, which they did.” The following statement of Mr. Grimwood traces the course of events: “In the evening I received a telegram from the Chief Commissioner directing me to try and mediate between the parties, and also saying that 200 rifles from Kohima were ready to march here if I wanted. I then sent word to the palace that I would come and see the Senapati next morning and decided not to ask for the troops from Kohima till after the interview with the Senapati”. But nothing came out of all this, for, Grimwood continues: “On the next morning (Tuesday) the Maharaja told me he had fully made up his mind to leave the country and go on a pilgrimage and settle at Brindaban”.

This statement is of special importance as it enables us to test the truth of Mrs. Grimwood’s account as well as of the official version of the Government of India. Mrs. Grimwood says: “My husband brought every argument to bear upon the Raja to induce him to brave the matters out, and allow some efforts to be made to regain his throne; but he would not listen to any reason, and after some hours spent in fear and terror ............signified his intention to my husband of making a formal abdication of the throne”. This is out-Heroding Herod, for even Grimwood makes no such claim. As a matter of fact, he himself wired to the Chief Commissioner on the 22nd morning that “Maharaja and brothers are preparing to attack Senapati if they can collect men”. It is significant that even with this knowledge he did not ask the troops of Kohima to march, nor evidently informed the Maharaja that he could count upon their help. Neither of these would have adversely affected his proposed negotiations with the Senapati, which he offers as an excuse. On the other hand, the march of British troops from Kohima would have surely enhanced the chance of a successful negotiation with the rebels, and a knowledge of it would probably have induced the King not to abdicate.

The statement of Grimwood, quoted above, is hardly compatible with the following account of the Government of India:

“Shortly after daybreak the Langthobal detachment joined the Residency escort, and the Political Agent opened communications with Tikendrajit. The latter was asked to come to the Residency, but declined to do so while the Maharaja was there, saying he was afraid. Mr. Grimwood then wrote urging him to reinstate the Maha-
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raja and promising to enquire into his disputes with the Pucca Sena; but apparently no answer was received”.

On a perusal of all the available evidence, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the ex-Maharaja Sura-chandra certainly wanted to fight out for his throne, but was positively discouraged by the attitude of the Political Agent, Mr. Grimwood, who, in this instance, followed a policy which was at variance with not only what was expected of him in his position, but also the view of the Chief Commissioner implied in his telegram about the Kohima troops. His conduct was justly censured by the Government of India.

There is no doubt that being disappointed at not receiving any help from the Political Agent, the ex-Maharaja Sura-chandra told Grimwood that he had decided to retire to Brindaban. Grimwood himself says: “I told him I would arrange it to be so, if he had really made up his mind, but he must understand he could never return to Manipur, Cachar, or Sylhet, and I also said that the Pucca Sena must go with him, but the others might stay or not as they liked”.

Mrs. Grimwood says (in continuation of the passage quoted above): “My husband was anxious to get him to reconsider his hasty resolve to abandon his throne; but fear of the Senapati overcame all other sensations.... my husband finding every argument of no avail, began to make the necessary arrangements for his highness’s departure”. This is hardly borne out by Grimwood’s own statement quoted above, or the version of the Government of India which merely states that he advised the ex-Maharaja to re-occupy the throne for a few days, if he were determined to leave. There are, however, two significant steps which Grimwood should have taken but omitted to take, by way of inducing the ex-Maharaja to reconsider his decision. He should have first assured the ex-Maharaja that the Chief Commissioner had placed the troops at Kohima at his disposal in order to help him, and then held the proposed interview with the Senapati on the 23rd morning. He did neither. It may be mentioned that he had told the Maharaja, when he asked for help, that with the men at his disposal he could not take the offensive. The hollowness of this excuse is exposed by his refusal to send for the Kohima troops. Then, knowing full well that the recognition of Maharaja Sura-chandra as the king of Manipur by the Government of India gave him full authority in speaking on his behalf, he did not intercede, on his behalf, in any way, nor even asked for an explanation of their conduct from the rebels. The Government of India expressed the following view, which appears to be quite just and reasonable:—
“We consider that in his conduct of this affair the Political Agent showed some want of judgment. He should have exerted his influence more strongly to uphold the authority of the Maharaja; and he should not have accepted the Maharaja’s abdication, and allowed him to leave the State, without reference to the Government of India, by whom Sura-chandra had been recognized as chief of Manipur. A Political officer has no power to accept the abdication of a Native Chief. Mr. Grimwood’s action greatly prejudiced the case, and was the cause of much subsequent trouble”.

On the whole, judging all the circumstances, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that Grimwood, for some reason or other, was sympathetic to the new régime and unwilling to see Sura-chandra restored to the throne. The latter seems to insinuate that this was due to Grimwood’s friendship for Tikendrajit. Captain Hearsy holds Mr. Grimwood principally responsible for the palace revolution of 21 September. He alleges that Grimwood used to take photographs of nude girls and women of Manipur and debauched many of them. Complaints of his conduct having reached Maharaja Sura-chandra, the latter took Grimwood to task, and unpleasant correspondence followed. This enraged Grimwood who sent unfavourable reports about the Maharaja during 1889 and 1890 to the Chief Commissioner and Viceroy, strongly recommenting his removal. There is no authentic evidence of all this, but the conduct of Grimwood and the reference to the Muslim photographer by the Maharaja lend strength to the allegations of Hearsy, a contemporary military officer.

The ex-king Sura-chandra had finally made up his mind to go to Brindaban, a holy place near Mathura in U.P., and actually wrote a letter to this effect to Tikendrajit. In this letter he informed the latter that he had no desire to contest the throne, and in accordance with this decision returned the royal dress and sword, etc., asking in exchange that arrangement should be made for his journey. Tikendrajit’s reply shows that he, like Grimwood, construed it as an abdication, and made satisfactory arrangement for Sura-chandra’s journey to Brindaban. It appears that Grimwood himself visited Tikendrajit in his palace, with Sura-chandra’s letter or shortly after it was sent, and got his promise to arrange for Maharaja’s journey. Sura-chandra, however, asserted, as soon as he reached Silchar on 3 October, that he did not abdicate, that Grimwood must have misunderstood him, and that it was only after reaching Silchar that he discovered from the Political Agent’s Pass that he was said to have abdicated. He wired to the Government of India to this effect on 6 October. In his Memorial to the Government of India, dated 14 November, he said that his so-called letter of abdication was merely a ruse to get out of Manipur, because the roads were blocked by rebels and the Political Agent advised him to go to Kohima.
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It is true that, technically speaking, King Sura-chandra had not formally abdicated the throne. There is, however, no doubt that his letter bears this interpretation and, what is more important, he intended that it should be interpreted as such, as the word 'ruse' indicates. It is clear, therefore, that either he at first really intended to abdicate and later changed his mind, or played a very dirty trick for getting out of Manipur.

The departure of the ex-Maharaja Sura-chandra from Manipur made the palace revolution completely successful without any bloodshed. It was held later by the Government that Tikendrajit was the prime mover of this revolution. But there are certain facts which are usually ignored in this connection. In the first place, Tikendrajit did not accompany his two step-brothers when they attacked the palace, and the Political Agent, Mr. Grimwood, makes no reference to him in his first report of the revolt. Secondly, Tikendrajit did not occupy the throne as he easily could, particularly as Kula-chandra was not present in Manipur. Tikendrajit very rightly emphasized this point in his statement before the court: "It is the custom of the Manipur Raj family, more than perhaps of any of all the royal families of the world, that the victorious party occupies the throne and wears the crown, but neither the defendant (i.e. Tikendrajit himself) nor the other two princes attempted to overstep the eldest of them, and it was resolved to ask the Jubraj (i.e. Kula-chandra) to preside. But he was nowhere to be found during the night".\(^{20}\)

Kula-chandra was evidently aware of the coming revolution and decided to sit on the fence without compromising himself in any way, so that if the revolution failed, he could claim innocence of the whole affair. The two brothers who staged the revolution were attached to Tikendrajit, and he could easily declare himself king as the army was under his command, he was very popular, and there was nobody to oppose his claim. He showed a rare magnanimity in waiting for his absent elder brother to return and crown himself king.

In view of the subsequent events, and the constitutional position claimed by the ruler of Manipur as well as the Government of India, it is necessary to find out the exact circumstances attending the change of the Government at Manipur. The account of the Government of India runs as follows:—

"After the Maharaja's departure, the Ministers who had accompanied him to the Residency returned to the Palace, where they were well received by Kula-chandra, the Jubraj, who had meanwhile come back to Manipur and proclaimed himself Maharaja. On the 29th September, Kula-chandra despatched letters to the Government of India, announcing that he had ascended the Manipur gadi in consequence of his elder brother's abdication and asking for the Viceroy's favour".\(^{21}\)
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It is not quite clear from the above whether Kula-chandra asked for formal sanction or approval of the new Government in Manipur by the Government of India. In his statement to the court Tikendrajit said that on 23 September he had sent telegram to the Chief Commissioner of Assam “soliciting permission to install the Jubraj Kulachandra on the Gaddi”.

But as will be shown later, the English translation of his Bengali statement was very defective, and in some places substantially modified the ideas of the original; it is not, therefore, safe to rely on the words “soliciting permission”. It is significant that Kula-chandra proclaimed himself ‘Maharaja’ even before he sent any intimation to the Government of India. But it is equally significant that the Chief Commissioner, in reply to the telegrams from Manipur, recognized Kula-chandra as Regent and not Maharaja, though he accepted the other changes in various offices, namely, Tikendrajit as Jubraj, Angao Sena as Senapati, and Zilla Gumba as Superintendent of the State elephants. The Government of India “declined to pass orders regarding the succession or to acknowledge the letters received from Kula-chandra whom the Chief Commissioner of Assam had recognized as Regent pending the orders of Government”.

For the time being everything went on well. The new administration of Manipur, free from internecine quarrel, brought peace and prosperity which the country had not known for some time past. Mrs. Grimwood testifies to the improvements effected by the new Government within a few months. But some amount of disquiet was created by the ominous silence of the Government of India regarding its attitude to the new Government of Manipur.

It is interesting to note in this connection that Grimwood himself did not take the palace revolution seriously; he observed that “Manipur has witnessed many palace revolutions—that of 1890 is merely a repetition”.

Though the people of Manipur accepted, without demur, the new régime set up by the revolution of 22 September, 1890, the exiled Maharaja Sura-chandra did not give up all hope for recovering his kingdom. As soon as he reached the British border, he telegraphed to the Viceroy asking for help. A few days later he telegraphed again repudiating his so-called abdication which, he said, was the result of a misunderstanding. He arrived at Calcutta on 12 October, and on 14 November submitted a detailed statement to the Viceroy. As this differed substantially from the official version of Mr. Grimwood, the Political Agent at Manipur, and cast aspersions on his conduct, it was sent to that gentleman who made detailed comment on the observations made by the Maharaja. The
differences between the two versions were of a vital nature and have been referred to above.²⁶

The Political Agent, as might be expected, was definitely against the restoration of Sura-chandra. He held the view that the ex-Maharaja could not recover the throne and maintain it without the help of a sufficient number of British troops, and as the eight brothers could no longer live together in peace, it would be necessary to remove Kula-chandra and Tikendrajit from Manipur.²⁷ The Chief Commissioner also took the view that the Maharaja could be maintained on the gadi only with the help of British troops.²⁸ It was not till January, 1891, that the Government of India received these views, but they were not favourably impressed and were rather inclined to restore Sura-chandra and remove the rebels from Manipur. In view of the difference of opinion between the Government of India on the one hand, and the Chief Commissioner and the Political Agent on the other, there was a prolonged correspondence²⁹ between these three, extending over more than a month. At last, after an interview between Lord Lansdowne, the Viceroy, and Mr. Quinton, the Chief Commissioner, towards the end of February, the Government of India arrived at the following decision: Kula-chandra was to be recognized as the Maharaja of Manipur if he agreed to the following conditions, namely, (1) to administer the country according to the advice of the Political Agent; (2) to deport Tikendrajit from Manipur; and (3) to allow the Political Agent to keep 300 soldiers in the Residency.³⁰ This decision, to say the least of it, is very curious. It accepted the revolution as a fait accompli and condoned the person who got the greatest benefit out of it, but banished another who was not known to have taken any actual part in it, but whom they held, without any positive evidence, as its chief instigator.

If the decision was of a dubious character, the procedure followed in carrying it out deserves the strongest condemnation. As an illustration of the imperial arrogance at its worst, and offering an explanation of subsequent events, it deserves a detailed notice.

On 21 February, 1891, the Government of India asked for the opinion of Mr. Quinton as to the best way of arresting Tikendrajit without giving him opportunity to resist the measures by force and also about the conditions to be imposed on Kula-chandra.³¹ The Government of India also suggested that the decision about Manipur should be kept a close secret until it was announced by Mr. Quinton personally at Manipur. Quinton was advised to take sufficient force with him even though no resistance was apprehended. Quinton left Calcutta on 21 February, and on 7 March started for Manipur by
the Kohima route, together with four hundred Gurkha soldiers commanded by Col. Skene, and a few civilians. An additional body of 200 Gurkhas were directed to proceed from Cachar to Manipur. It was not till 18 March that Quinton informed the Government of India his views about the conditions to be imposed upon Kula-chandra for recognizing him as Maharaja and intimated that unless he heard anything to the contrary by Saturday (i.e. 21 March) he would treat them as the final decision of the Government of India. He also informed the Government that on his arrival at Manipur he proposed to hold a durbar for announcing the decisions of the Government of India and to arrest Tikendrajit in the Durbar Hall. These and other proposals of Mr. Quinton were approved by the Government of India on 19 March. But the Government of India did not realize, as they later remarked, that the durbar meant a big open public assembly. They took it to mean a gathering of the Maharaja and his courtiers.

The news of the proposed visit of Quinton caused great consternation to the Manipur Government, as it was generally believed that he was bringing Sura-chandra with him in order to restore him to the throne. It seems the Manipur durbar made preparations to meet that eventuality. Mrs. Grimwood writes: “It seemed as though the whole state was on the qui vive, to discover any slight clue to the mystery which surrounded the visit of the Chief Commissioner... About ten days before Mr. Quinton arrived we heard for certain that the object of his visit was not the restoration of the ex-Maharajah”.

Even Mr. Grimwood, the Political Agent, was as ignorant as the rest, until about March 15 he received a verbal message of Mr. Quinton, conveyed through Mr. Gurdon. It merely informed him of the decision to recognize Kula-chandra as Maharaja and deport Tikendrajit from Manipur. Grimwood “expressed astonishment at these orders”, and deprecated the idea of deporting Tikendrajit; he also hinted that this could not be effected without creating trouble. It was not till 21 March when Mr. Quinton was within one day’s march from Manipur that he met Mr. Grimwood and disclosed his plan of arresting Tikendrajit at the durbar, if he declined to submit voluntarily to the Government Order. Mr. Grimwood, as before, opposed the proposal.

Mr. Grimwood’s objection was brushed aside by Mr. Quinton who further ordered the former to personally arrest Tikendrajit at the close of the durbar. Accordingly all arrangements were made for the meeting of the durbar at 12 noon on March 22, and Maharaja Kula-chandra was asked to attend it with all his brothers.

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Mr. Quinton was received with more than due honours. Tongol General and prince Angao Sena met him respectively at six and one day's journey from Manipur. On March 22 he was received by Tikendrajit and a guard of honour, four miles from Manipur. Here the Chief Commissioner dismounted and had some conversation with him at 10 a.m. On that day Mr. Quinton and his escort entered Manipur under the usual salute, the streets being lined by Manipur troops. Outside the main gate of the fort the Chief Commissioner was met by Maharaja Kula-chandra, and, after a little conversation, Mr. Quinton announced that a durbar would be held at the Residency on that day at noon and that the Jubraj (i.e. Tikendrajit) and his brothers were required to attend.36

The official account, from which the above is quoted, then merely adds that “the necessary orders regarding the parades and guards for the proposed Durbar were issued to the Chief Commissioner's escort”.37 It is discreetly silent about the elaborate military preparations made in and around the durbar room of the Residency. A confidential agent of Tikendrajit reported to him that “armed sepoys were placed in front and rear of the Residency Bungalow and that the British Officers were fully equipped and on horse-back”.38 This is corroborated by Mrs. Grimwood who writes: “Precautions were taken to prevent his (Tikendrajit’s) escaping. The doors of the durbar room were all locked with the exception of the one by which the princes would enter and guards were stationed in the adjoining rooms, as well as all round the house and in the veranda”.39

According to the official account “Tikendrajit and his brother Angao Sena went to the Residency to attend the durbar, but afterwards went away, and Kula-chandra accounted for their non-attendance on the ground of illness”.40 The statement of Tikendrajit gives the full story. When he reached the Residency he was made to wait in the sun as the Commissioner was not ready at the hour fixed for the durbar. Tikendrajit “being on horseback, exposed to the burning sun, became annoyed and disheartened” at this discourteous treatment. Then he noticed the unusual military preparations going on inside, and sent Dasu Sardar to enquire. On receiving his report, mentioned above, Tikendrajit was confirmed in his suspicion that the durbar was only a trap to arrest him. “Besides, having been fasting during the previous day and night on account of Ekadasa and having undergone the fatigue of going and coming back up to the river to receive the Chief Commissioner in the morning, he felt exhausted and unable to wait longer, and consequently returned to the palace”.41
As the absence of Tikendrajit at the durbar was the pivot round which the tragic happenings at Manipur moved, and the real cause of it has been suppressed in the official version and is not generally known to historians, it is necessary to quote Mrs. Grimwood’s account of the incident.

Mrs. Grimwood says that if the princes were not kept waiting at the gate things might have ended very differently. But that delay enabled some of the Manipuri sepoys to gain admission into the Residency grounds, and they “marked the distribution of our forces, saw the Gurkhas lining the entrance-steps and officers in uniform in attendance outside. Some of them even strolled round to the back of the house, and there they saw the same preparations—sepoys on the steps and guards about the grounds”. The Manipuris told the Jubraj of all they had seen and he returned to the house with his brother, the Senapati.42

According to Mrs. Grimwood the delay in holding the durbar was due to the fact that the translation of the order of the Government of India into Manipuri could not be completed in time.42a But that does not condone the treatment accorded to the Maharaja and his brothers, who could surely be asked to wait in a room within the Residency.

The following is the Manipur version of what happened after Tikendrajit’s departure. “The Maharaja accompanied by Zilla Gumba and the Ministers arrived at the Residency and had to remain standing in the sun below the steps for half an hour. Subsequently when he had remained standing in the verandah for an hour and a half, he wanted to sit, feeling tired. It was then that Mr. Grimwood allowed him to sit in another room”.43

Such was the reception of the independent ruler of Manipur State in his own capital city. But the worse was yet to come. As soon as the Chief Commissioner came to learn that Tikendrajit was not there, a special messenger was sent to him, but he replied that he was too ill to attend the durbar. Thereupon the Chief Commissioner cancelled the durbar, and did not even interview the poor King, waiting for three hours to know the orders of the Government of India. After suffering all these humiliations and indignities, the King Kula-chandra returned to his palace, a sadler but wiser man. For, being summoned to the durbar next day, 23rd March, at 9 a.m., he did not attend, and sent instead a message to the effect that he would not attend the durbar as Tikendrajit was too ill to leave his house.44
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Mr. Grimwood and Mr. Simpson tried to see Tikendrajit, once on the 22nd afternoon and again on the 23rd morning, but the latter said he was too ill to see them. Then, on the afternoon of the 23rd Grimwood and Simpson saw the Maharaja and communicated to him the decision of the Government of India. According to the Manipur official version the Maharaja thanked the British Government for confirming him as ruler of Manipur. As regards the deportation of Tikendrajit, the Maharaja pointed out that he was already ill, due to his exertions and exhaustions on the 22nd, and his old colic pain had recurred owing to exposure to the sun at the Residency gate. The Maharaja then added: "He was unable to go on account of illness; he would make preparations for leaving Manipur in two or three days".\footnote{45}

A contemporary account written by an Indian runs as follows: On hearing the decision of the British Government, the King expressed his inability to arrest Tikendrajit without consulting his ministers. He was given half an hour's time for the purpose and held a council of ministers including Tikendrajit. Tikendrajit himself offered to surrender but the other ministers did not agree to this and wanted to make a further appeal to the Chief Commissioner. Grimwood requested the King to issue a warrant to arrest Tikendrajit, but the King refused. Thereupon Grimwood had an interview with Tikendrajit but failed to persuade him to surrender.\footnote{46}

According to Mrs. Grimwood her husband and Simpson saw the Jubraj at four in the afternoon. "He (Mr. Grimwood) said the Jubraj was certainly very unwell...had himself carried down to see them in a litter. The exertion caused him to faint; and my husband said that there was no doubt as to his illness, and that he found him in high fever".\footnote{47} Tikendrajit himself states that he told Mr. Grimwood that he was ready to comply with the Government order and wanted a few days' leave for his recovery and preparations. He corroborates the Manipur official version of the durbar mentioned above, but says it was held after his interview with Mr. Grimwood, and he repeated at the durbar the answer he had given Mr. Grimwood.\footnote{48}

The official version of the Government of India is radically different from all the three versions stated above. After referring to the fact that a fresh durbar was fixed for 9 a.m. on March 23, it proceeds:

\begin{quote}
"When the time came it was found that none of the Manipuris were present; and Mr. Grimwood was again sent to the palace, but was unable to obtain an interview with Kulachandra or his brothers. It was then evident that the Senapati was determined not to obey any orders to attend a Durbar, and Mr. Quinton
\end{quote}
decided to demand his surrender. At 2 p.m., accompanied by Lieutenant Simpson, Mr. Grimwood went once more to the palace, with a letter to Kulachandra from the Chief Commissioner, intimating that if Tikendrajit was not delivered up, Mr. Quinton would be compelled to have him arrested. Mr. Grimwood saw Kulachandra; but all attempts at persuasion proved useless, and the Political Agent was forced to return unsuccessful. On his way back to the Residency, Mr. Grimwood saw Tikendrajit, who was brought out of his house in a dooly, but he still refused to attend Durbar. When they arrived at the Residency Mr. Grimwood and Lieutenant Simpson reported that the palace enclosure was full of Manipuri troops, to the number of five to six thousand. Nevertheless, after consulting Colonel Skene and Mr. Grimwood, Mr. Quinton decided that an attempt should be made to arrest the Senapati in his house at day-break on the following day. Col. Skene then summoned the officers of the escort and made his arrangements.\textsuperscript{49}

The statement ignores the fact that Tikendrajit was seriously ill on March 23, which is conclusively proved by the statement of Mrs. Grimwood and indirectly supported by the casual reference in the official version that Tikendrajit was brought out in a dooly. It does not refer to the reply of either Maharaja Kula-chandra or Tikendrajit beyond using some vague expressions. In view of the real illness of Tikendrajit it is very probable that he must have asked for some time, in any case, before he could leave Manipur. It is significant that the official version does not say positively that either the Maharaja or Tikendrajit refused point-blank to carry out the order of deporting the latter. The Manipur official version, therefore, seems generally acceptable. They asked for time, whatever their ultimate motive might have been. But Mr. Quinton immediately made preparations to arrest, by force and stealth, a man who was seriously ill and might have possibly surrendered in a few days' time.

Mr. Quinton decided to arrest Tikendrajit in his house during the same night by suddenly invading the palace. In order to conceal this design and put Tikendrajit off his guard, requisition was made to the palace for porters to carry the luggage of the Chief Commissioner next morning to Imphal. But this trick did not deceive Tikendrajit who got scent of Quinton's plan and made adequate arrangement for defending his house.

In the early hours of the morning, at about 4-45 a.m., on March 24, the British forces suddenly attacked the house of Tikendrajit. But the Manipuri soldiers gave a good account of themselves, and though some of the British soldiers effected an entrance into the house, they could not seize Tikendrajit, and the British force had to fall back to the Residency. The events are thus described in a petition addressed to the Viceroy by the ladies of the Manipur royal family:

"A body of British troops leaped over the wall in the north-west corner of the Pat\textsuperscript{6} and attacked Jubraj's house. The Jubraj, considering this a calamity, fled

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through a hidden path, and took refuge in the Pat. On the other side the sepoys put to death some of the guard people, women, boys, girls, and male and female servants, attacked the temple of the household god, called Brindabanchandra, stole the jewels dedicated to the idol, and having gone up the temple, fired the Pat. Another body of troops entered the village lying east of the Pat, and put to death Dasu Sardar and his whole family. They burned down 10 or 12 houses adjoining his own. In these houses, idols, cows and boys and girls were killed. They murdered wayfarers—subjects who were frightened and fleeing. It was then that the Jubraj took up arms with a view to save the lives of the excited subjects and specially in self-defence. The fighting having continued the whole day on both sides, many persons were killed and wounded. After nightfall, when the British troops had expended all their ammunition, the fighting ceased on both sides just at the sounding of the British bugle to cease fighting”.

This account is supported by the only other contemporary Indian evidence available to us which, however, mentions the stiff resistance offered by the soldiers in the Jubraj’s house, although the Jubraj, i.e. Tikendrajit, himself was not present, and may be said technically to have taken no part in it.

The official version makes a very brief reference to this ignoble episode, and agrees with the above account so far as military operations are concerned, but refutes “the allegations regarding cruelty and outrage and the killing of women and children”. These are said to have “received the most careful investigation after the occupation of Manipur, and were proved to be false”. Little value attaches to such investigations by the party that is charged with the crimes, and at a time when no Manipuri would dare utter a syllable against the British. It is, however, significant that even in the brief account of the campaign the official version refers to “seizing the temple” and “inflicting considerable loss on the enemy”. It also admits that the “village to the west of the Residency was promptly burned”, and further that “in the heavy firing of the 24th within the fort, three Manipur women are believed to have been killed, though whether by the fire of British troops or by that of Manipuris is not certain”.

In spite of the official denial of the charges, which was almost a routine normally followed by the British Government in India, it may be regarded as almost certain that, though the allegations possibly exaggerated actual facts, the sudden invasion of the palace at an unearthly hour must have inflicted considerable loss and damage, and this was the main cause of the popular fury and excitement which led to the tragedy of the 24th night.

The Manipuri troops not only fought with the British inside the fort, but, after the first effect of the surprise attack was over, opened fire on the Residency and cut the telegraph wire. The official version gives the following account: “At 5 p.m. a heavy fire of shell and musketry was opened on the Residency from the opposite
walls of the Fort, while musketry fire also opened from the villages to the north and the south. The Hospital soon became untenable and the wounded were removed and placed under cover. At about 8 p.m. it became clear that the Residency could not be held much longer, and Mr. Quinton decided to enter into negotiations with the Regent.  

This account suppresses the very important fact that when the British position was almost a hopeless one, they sounded the bugle 'to cease fire', and though the Manipuris were in a position of vantage and under no obligation to cease fire, except on the unconditional surrender of the enemy, they did cease fire without any parley. This fact is admitted by Mrs. Grimwood and clearly proves that the Manipur authorities had no vindictive desire to wreak vengeance upon the British for their treacherous attack in the morning.

As to the negotiations the official version runs as follows:

"A letter was accordingly written by Mr. Quinton to Kula Chandra Singh, proposing a cessation of hostilities, and a reply purporting to come from the Regent was received to the effect that he would cease firing if our troops would throw down their arms. There was some doubt as to the meaning of this letter, and it was suggested that a meeting should take place between Mr. Quinton and the Senapati. This having been arranged Mr. Quinton walked out towards the Fort gate accompanied by Mr. Grimwood, Mr. Cossin, Colonel Skene, Lieutenant Simpson, and a native bugler."

This account is supplemented by the statements of Mrs. Grimwood and Tikendrajit. Mrs. Grimwood says that the letter signed by the Chief Commissioner ran as follows: "On what condition will you cease firing on us, and give time to communicate with the Viceroy and repair the telegraph". But before this letter was despatched there was 'cease fire' on both sides. What followed is thus described by Mrs. Grimwood.

"At last their guns ceased, and all was quiet. Then my husband went out with the letter and called a Manipuri off the wall to take it to the Jubbaj. The man went away with it and my husband returned to the Residency. Some minutes later a message came to say that the Regent wished to see Mr. Quinton and talk over matters with him; and this message was followed by a letter written in Bengali, which contained an acknowledgment of the Chief's letter, and a proposal to the effect that we should surrender our arms if the Manipuris agreed to cease firing. 'We cannot lay down our arms', they said, 'for they belong to Government'. There was some discussion about the translation of part of this letter and Mr. Quinton proposed that the Jubbaj should be called upon to explain the meaning of the passage in question, and asked whether it would be possible to see him."
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"Meanwhile the Chief Commissioner's party consisting of himself, Colonel Skene, Mr. Cosain, Lieutenant Simpson and my husband had gone down to the office at our entrance gate and waited there while the Regent's letter was being translated".62

According to the contemporary Indian account the Maharaja's letter ran as follows: "Received your letter. I had never any intention to fight with you, but as your troops attacked the palace my men had to fight in self-defence. There is none in my palace who can read and understand English. But as I received your letter immediately after cease-fire, I take it that you want to conclude peace. If your soldiers give up arms, I shall conclude peace with you in a moment".62

There was some discussion about the true import of 'giving up arms' when Quinton suggested that the real meaning of it might be ascertained from the Jubraj. Grimwood then asked the Manipuri bearer of Maharaja's letter—"Will Jubraj see any of us?"

Manipuri—Of course, he will.

Quinton. Do you think it safe for us now to go to Jubraj?

Grimwood. No fear about that. (Turning to Manipuri) Can you swear that no danger will befall us if we go there?

Manipuri. We revere you as god. Why should we harm you?

Grimwood. He is one of the distinguished followers of Jubraj, belonging to his family. When he gives us assurance I don't see any objection to go.

Colonel Skene supported Grimwood and then all the five got out of the Residency together with a bugler.

As the Durbar Hall was closed, Jubraj had a talk with them in the courtyard for half an hour. He said "your conduct has made us afraid. So unless you give up arms we cannot rely solely on your oral assurance". The Chief Commissioner did not agree, and said there will be a durbar tomorrow. Then the Englishmen rose and Jubraj went to top-garad.63

The statement of Tikendrajit at his trial throws further light on the situation. It is reproduced below, substituting 'I' for the 'defendant':

"The British troops killed a number of subjects, women and children, burnt about a dozen houses with their goods and cattle in them, and the regular fighting commenced by the infuriated people without the distinct order of any particular leader. The fighting continued the whole day. In the evening the British bugle sounded "cease fire", and the operations were instantly stopped on both sides. A letter was received from the Chief Commissioner, and being in English, it was sent to the Regent's clerk for translation; but as the clerk was at a distance, it took a long time to find him out and get it translated; and in the meantime the British officer being anxious to get a reply, Mr. Grimwood shouted from the outside and
sent in a messenger, and it was arranged that they should hold a durbar in the Palace Durbar Hall. Mr. Quinton, Mr Grimwood, Lieutenant Simpson and two other gentlemen then came in and held the durbar with Angao Mingto and myself. After the usual salute and shaking of hands were over, I enquired about Mrs. Grimwood, and was informed of her safety. I then said that it was a matter very much to be regretted, that the Chief Commissioner has acted so unkindly, and thereby destroyed the friendship and amity which existed heretofore. The men were much infuriated by the hostile actions taken first by the British troops, and it was beyond my power to control them; but it was highly advisable to come to terms and desist from further actions. The officers then expressed their regret and said that they now wanted to go to Kohima, and there may be no more hostility on either side. It was then proposed by me that unless the arms of the British troops were made over, which I promised to have safely carried by my own coolies and delivered at Kohima, the mere words of the Chief Commissioner could hardly be relied on, as it appeared that he only pretended friendship in order to gain time for further attacks, since he used a lot of pretences about going to Tammu, then to Kohima, then to entertain a natch party, then to invite me to a durbar, while he arranged everything for my arrest. To this the officers disagreed, and I, desiring to consult the ministers of top-garad, left them with Angao Mingto."

All that is known of the events that followed one another in quick succession ending with the cruel murder of five helpless and unarmed Englishmen, is derived from the statement of Tikendrajit and the witnesses during his trial, and the three petitions for mercy sent by Maharaja Kula-chandra, Tikendrajit, and the ladies of the royal family of Manipur. The contemporary account written by an Indian closely agrees with them. These give minute details of all the incidents, which need not be repeated here as there is no means of testing their accuracy. The story is consistent and reasonable and appears to be not very far from the truth. According to this Manipur version, after the negotiations failed, Tikendrajit sent one of his brothers, Angao Sena, to escort the British and see them safely out, while he himself returned to the top-garad. As soon as the British party moved towards the gate they were attacked by the excited crowd. Angao Sena stood against the mob to save them, but failed. Grimwood was killed, Simpson was wounded, and the rest were overpowered. Tikendrajit, on hearing the uproar, came to the scene, "sent away the attackers, placed the three English gentlemen in the Hall, and carried the wounded Mr. Simpson himself into the Hall. At his order Jatra Singh gave Simpson water to drink and tied the wounded part with his own head-dress." After this Tikendrajit fell asleep, out of sheer exhaustion. Then, without his knowledge, and against his express orders, Tongol General had the four Englishmen and the bugler murdered. Tongol General, it is said, had personal grievance against Grimwood and Simpson for seducing his daughter, and he killed the rest to suppress all evidence of his guilt. As soon as Tikendrajit awoke and learnt the whole affair, he took Tongol General severely to task
and the Maharaja also scolded him. Tikendrajit then set free the British troops and subjects who were captured and imprisoned, gave them food and raiment, and sent them to their destination after furnishing them with road expenses and escorts. The first part of the story is supported by British official account and the general accuracy of the account was proved by Tikendrajit’s witnesses during his trial.

The rest of the story may be briefly told. As Quinton and his party did not return to the Residency, and the firing from the palace began again, those who were in the British Residency, together with 200 Gurkha soldiers, stealthily left for Cachar, and were not molested on the way. They met the British force of 200 coming from Silchar, and safely reached the British territory on March 31.

The fate of Quinton and his party was first definitely known on 8 April from a letter of Maharaja Kula-chandra. Punitive military expeditions were immediately sent by the British Government to avenge the foul murder. Three columns of troops advanced simultaneously from Kohima on the north, Silchar on the west, and Tammu on the south-east. There was little resistance and the three columns met at Manipur on April 27 after two or three engagements in which the enemy suffered heavily. The palace was found deserted and Kula-chandra, Tikendrajit, their brothers, and Tongol General had all fled. A price was set upon their heads and by May 23 all of them, with many other persons accused of murdering the British Officers or taking part in the assault, were arrested, though some of them, including Tikendrajit, are said to have voluntarily surrendered. For the trial of all persons other than the members of the royal family two political officers were vested with full powers. For the trial of the members of the ruling family a Special Court (sometimes referred to as Special Commission) was constituted, consisting of two military officers and one political officer. No lawyer was allowed to appear before these courts.

The trial of Tongol General before the political officer lasted from May 22 till June 1, and he was sentenced to death. The trial of Tikendrajit before the Special Court commenced on June 1 and ended on June 10. The charges framed against him were: (1) Waging war against the Empress of India; (2) Abetment of murder of four British officers; and (3) Murder. Fifteen witnesses were examined on behalf of the prosecution and six for the accused, who also filed a written statement. Tikendrajit was found guilty on the first and second charges, and not guilty on the third. He was sentenced to death. Maharaja Kula-chandra and Angao Sena were
found guilty of waging war against the Queen-Empress, and sentenced to death.

The nature of the trial and the arguments on behalf of the accused will be discussed in detail in the appendix to this chapter. It will suffice here to state that the defence was mainly based on the question of facts and the legal status of the accused vis-à-vis the British Government.

Tikendrajit pleaded not guilty to all the three charges. He maintained that to defend his house against a surprise and treacherous attack cannot be regarded as waging war against the Queen. As regards murder, he stated the circumstances, mentioned above, and maintained that he took all possible steps to safeguard the prisoners, and had no reason to suspect that Tongol General, who heard in silence, signifying approval, his definite orders not to kill the Englishmen, would execute them during his sleep. The defence witnesses supported the statement of Tikendrajit and were not shaken by the cross-examination. The British Court, however, did not believe that Tongol General would dare to order execution against the wish of Tikendrajit.

After the sentences were passed by the Special Court the cases against the royal brothers were considered by the Governor-General in Council. Here, also, the accused were not permitted to engage a lawyer to argue the case, but they submitted petitions for mercy and their legal adviser, Manmohan Ghosh of the Calcutta Bar, submitted his arguments in writing. Sir A. E. Miller, the Law Member of the Governor-General’s Council, argued the case on behalf of the Government.

It was pointed out on behalf of the accused that Manipur was an independent State and the British had no right to attack the house of Tikendrajit in order to arrest him. Miller argued that even though the status of Manipur was never defined in clear terms, the British action was fully justified in view of the past precedents. The Viceroy upheld this view, which he expressed as follows in a telegram, dated 5 June, 1891, to the Secretary of State: “Manipur is a subordinate Native State. We rendered it independent of Burma. We have recognized succession in Manipur and have asserted suzerainty in many ways; and Manipur ruling family have repeatedly acknowledged their position of dependence”. He cited several concrete instances which hardly leave any doubt about his contention. Miller’s argument is more questionable. “We have unquestionably the right”, said he, “to treat the murder of European British subjects as a crime wherever committed in India, even in States, as independent as Afghanistan or Nepal; and we have also ex-
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ercised, possibly originally by usurpation, but at any rate so long and so uniformly that the right has become firmly established, the prerogative of removing, by administrative order, from any Native State, any person from the sovereign downwards, whose presence there we deem objectionable on any grounds whatever. These two principles will, as I view this case, be sufficient to enable us to dispose of all the questions".71

The Governor-General confirmed the death sentences of Tikendrajit and Tongol General, and commuted the death sentences of Maharaja Kula-chandra and his brother Angao Sena to transportation for life, with confiscation of property. Tikendrajit and Tongol were publicly hanged on 13th August amid the heart-rending cries of thousands of men and women. The sentences of death passed on nine other accused persons (guards, executioners etc.) were commuted to transportation for life. Thus the curtain fell on the tragic drama at Manipur. There is hardly any doubt that the sentence passed on Tikendrajit cannot be justified by available evidence even if we admit the jurisdiction of the tribunal, set up by the British Government, to try him. Two points emerge clearly from an unbiased consideration of the whole affair. In the first place, Tikendrajit's so-called rebellion was an act of self-defence against an unprovoked, one might say treacherous, attack. There is no clear evidence that Tikendrajit actually violated any order of the Maharaja banishing him, or would have done so. His banishment from Manipur was a condition imposed upon the Maharaja, who merely pleaded for a few days' delay to execute it, but never declined to do so. If he did not fulfil this condition, the British might have withdrawn the whole offer including the recognition of him as king. Tikendrajit was not, in any case, liable for the remissness, if there were any, and the British had no right to attack his house. Nor can it be supported by any consideration of justice or equity. To resist an unwarranted aggression cannot certainly be treated as a rebellion or act of waging war against the British Queen.

Secondly, as regards murder or abetment to murder, the charge was certainly not proved against Tikendrajit, and the circumstantial narrative in the petition signed by the ladies of the Manipur royal family and put in as defence by Tikendrajit, has not been rebutted by any evidence worth the name. Even if one cannot fully accept all the particulars stated therein, the least that one can say is that Tikendrajit was certainly entitled to the benefit of doubt.

On the other hand, there is enough evidence to show that the British Government had a special grudge against Tikendrajit. This was first manifested in 1888 in the unsuccessful attempt to banish
him from Manipur, to which reference has been made above. In 
the official resolution about the palace revolution in September, 1890, 
Tikendrajit was singled out for punishment, while Kula-chandra, 
who derived the greatest benefit, was allowed to enjoy his ill-gotten 
gain. Tikendrajit was held as the chief conspirator, though accord-
ing to all evidence, it was his younger brothers who made the coup. 
It may be that Tikendrajit was involved in the conspiracy, but that 
was at best a conjecture, and he was given no opportunity to rebut 
it.

Even in the official version of the rebellion there is a distinct 
attempt to fasten positive crimes upon Tikendrajit. Thus referring 
to the conference between Tikendrajit and the British officers on the 
fateful evening of the 24th March, the official version observes: "It 
had apparently been Tikendrajit's intention to entrap all the British 
officers. The Chief Commissioner's letter already mentioned was 
conveyed by a sepoy to Tikendrajit, who said to the messenger—
'There are fourteen Sahibs in the Residency, send them all to meet 
me, and I swear I will not fire on them".72

This is not only not referred to by anybody else, but is incom-
patible with the account of that incident given above. It is contra-
dicted by the Manipur version as well as Mrs. Grimwood's state-
ment, at least by implication. It is palpably untrue and absurd, and 
was evidently prompted by a sinister motive to blacken the character 
of Tikendrajit.

A far more serious attempt in the same direction is the follow-
ing statement in the official version: "On the 25th March at midday, 
they reached the rest-house at Myangkhang. At 5 P.M. the Manipur 
official in charge of the post received a letter from Tikendrajit. This 
letter is not forthcoming, but there is evidence to the effect that it 
contained instructions to the Manipur officials to arrest all British 
subjects, and kill those who might offer resistance".73

By what means the exact purport of the missing letter came to 
be known to the British is not difficult to imagine. After the con-
quest of Manipur by the British, their anxiety to hold Tikendrajit 
mainly responsible for the rebellion was widely known, and people 
would not be wanting who would seek the favour of the British by 
making all sorts of allegations, true or false, against him. It is pro-
bably some such source that is responsible for the statement about 
the letter alleged to have been written by Tikendrajit.

A quasi-judicial trial, prompted by such ideas of vendetta 
against an individual, hardly deserves to be called a trial, and the 
punishment inflicted upon Tikendrajit is bound to be regarded by 
many as a judicial murder.
The real crime for which Tikendrajit paid the extreme penalty was not the charge brought against him in 1891, or in 1888 (for which he was sentenced to banishment at the instance of the British), but his capability and manliness which the British could not tolerate in the de jure or de facto ruler of any Native State. This is amply illustrated by the British attitude to Wazir Ali of Awadh and several other Ruling Chiefs, such as those of Sāṭārā, Bharatpur and Coorg, dealt with in this volume. Here, in the case of Tikendrajit, the cat was let out of the bag by the Under-Secretary of State for India, in his speech in the British Parliament, defending the punishment inflicted upon Tikendrajit. After referring to his ability, good character and popularity, he went on to say that the Government of India had never encouraged men of that kind. “Governments”, said he, “have always hated and discouraged independent and original talent, and they have always loved and promoted docile and unpretending mediocrity. This is not a new policy. It is as old as Tarquinus Superbus; and although in these modern times we do not lop or cut off the heads of the tall poppies, we take other and more merciful means of reducing any person of dangerous pre-eminence to a harmless condition.”

For once a British statesman had publicly stated the real policy which guided the Government of India in their treatment of Indian rulers, but which they took good care to conceal under a verbiage of effusions of sympathy and professions of disinterested motive for the welfare of the people.

The removal of the royal family raised to the forefront the question of the future settlement of Manipur. Even before the British troops had captured Manipur, the British Government issued a proclamation on April 19, declaring the authority of Kula-chandra to be at an end, and assumption of the administration of the State by the General Officer commanding the British troops in Manipur territory. Another proclamation, issued on 21 August, 1891, stated that although the Manipur State was liable to the penalty of annexation it was decided to re-establish the native rule. It was accordingly notified on 18 September, 1891, that Chura Chand was selected as Raja of Manipur. He was a boy of five and great-grandson of Raja Nar Singh of Manipur, who had usurped the throne of Manipur and whose sons, brother and brother's son had rebelled against both Maharaja Chandra-kirtti and Maharaja Sura-chandra immediately after their accession. The sanad granted to the new king imposed an annual tribute and also the condition that the Raja and his successors shall carry out “all orders given by the British Government
with regard to the administration...and any other matters in which the British Government may be pleased to intervene''.

As the new King of Manipur was a minor, the new Political Agent in Manipur was also appointed the Superintendent of the State with full powers of administration. It was also decided to impose a fine on the people of Manipur, as a community, for their misconduct.

APPENDIX.

THE TRIAL OF TIKENDRAJIT

The trial of Tikendrajit before the Special Court (also referred to as Special Commission), mentioned above, commenced on June 1. Three charges were framed against him, namely, waging war against the British, murder and abetment of murder of the British officers. As mentioned above, the defence on the first charge was based on the status of Manipur and this had also a great bearing on the defence in regard to the two remaining charges. It is therefore necessary to examine this point at some length.

I. STATUS OF MANIPUR.

Mention has been made above of the creation of the State of Manipur with Gambhir Singh as ruler, by Article II of the Treaty of Yandabo (1826) which terminated the First Burmese War. It runs as follows: “With regard to Manipur, it is stipulated that should Gambhir Singh desire to return to that country, he shall be recognised by the King of Ava as Raja thereof.” It leaves vague and undefined the exact status of the Manipur State, and there is no subsequent treaty to indicate that it was a vassal State, either of Burma or of the British. No exception need therefore be taken to either Aitchison’s remark that Gambhir Singh “was declared independent” by the Treaty of Yandabo, or the statement by Hunter that “in 1826 peace was concluded with Burma and Manipur was declared independent of Burma”. It is interesting to note that both these statements proved highly inconvenient to the British, when Tikendrajit, during his trial, challenged the right of the British authorities or courts to try the general of an independent State. There was a flutter in the dovecot. G. Forrest, in a letter dated 18 June, 1891, drew the attention of Sir H. Mortimer Durand to these two statements, and undertook to correct Aitchison’s remark in a fresh edition. The reply of Mortimer Durand is an important document and may be quoted in full. “Hunter never wrote an accurate sentence in his life. I think we have made the position of Manipur pretty clear now. The Maharaja presented a Nazar to Lord Northbrook
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in 1874, and we have at their own request acknowledged successions
and done other acts of the same nature. They have repeatedly pro-
fessed their readiness to obey our orders etc. We have upheld their
Chiefs by force of arms and given away their territory, and asserted
supremacy in a variety of ways.

"But I knew that the remark of Hunter, coupled with the fact
that Manipur has no Adoption Sanad, would do harm"81

As mentioned above82, the Viceroy also advanced similar argu-
ments in order to support the contention that Manipur was a subor-
dinate State. This is a tacit admission that while theoretically the
British Government had no suzerainty over Manipur, this petty
State, as was inevitable, acted as a subordinate ally, thereby giving
rise to a prescriptive right of supremacy or suzerainty to the British.
In other words, the authority, which the British undoubtedly exer-
cised over Manipur, was not based on any legal right, but was mere-
ly derived from the natural right of the strong over the weak, fortifi-
ced by the prerogatives of a Paramount Power, a role assumed by
the British since 1818.

The status of Manipur from a legal point of view was ably dis-
cussed by Monmohan Ghosh in his Memorandum of Arguments sub-
mitted to the Governor-General in Council on behalf of Kula-
chandra Singh and Tikendrajit and the members of the royal family
of Manipur who were sentenced by the Special Commission.83 Ghosh
maintained that Manipur was an independent State like Nepal. He
pointed out that the British never acquired Manipur by conquest,
but entered into certain treaties whereby a certain amount of protec-
tion was promised to Manipur on certain conditions. Manipur never
paid any tribute to the British Government of India and the treaties
governing the relation between the two never state explicitly, nor
even suggest by implication, that Manipur was in any way subordinate
to the British or owed allegiance to the sovereign of England.

In the absence of any express reservation or declaration of such
allegiance, the mere fact that the weaker power has occasionally sub-
mitted to be dictated to in the management of its internal affairs by
the higher power, does not create such an allegiance as would make
the weaker power liable to be tried for treason which implies a breach
of allegiance to the Sovereign. In support of Mr. Ghosh's argument
reference may be made to the Agreement between the two States
dated 18 April, 1833. It is laid down in Clause 7 that "in the event
of anything happening on the eastern frontier of the British terri-
tories, the Raja (of Manipur) will assist the British Government with
a portion of his troops".84 This and the other clauses of this Agree-
ment, particularly clauses 5 and 6, do not seem to be compatible with
the relation between a suzerain and a vassal State. Mr. Ghosh further pointed out that the absence of such a relationship was tacitly admitted when, on 23 March, Mr. Quinton sent Mr. Grimwood to Maharaja Kula-chandra to demand the surrender of Tikendrajit or a written authority to arrest him. Mr. Ghosh also referred to some legal precedents, both from India and outside. In 1865 (and again in 1867) the High Court of Calcutta held that the Raja of Manipur was “an Asiatic Sovereign in alliance with the Queen”, clearly implying that the Government of India had hitherto dealt with Manipur on the footing of its being a Sovereign Power in alliance with, and not as owing any allegiance to, the Queen. The High Court also held, in agreement with the Governor-General in Council, that the Tributary Mahals of Orissa did not form part of British India, and Mayurbhanj was an independent State in spite of “acts of interference by the British authorities”. The status of Manipur was certainly higher than that of Mayurbhanj which was ceded to the British by the Bhonsle. Mr. Ghosh cited the case of Ionian Islands which not only became a British Protectorate in 1815 under the Treaty of Paris, but whose administration was in the hands of a High Commissioner appointed by the King of Great Britain. When, during the Crimean War, an Ionian vessel, engaged in trading with Russia, was seized by the British fleet, the Court of Admiralty released it on the ground that the people of the Ionian Islands were not British subjects in the proper sense of the term, and they did not owe any allegiance to the British Crown, because allegiance exists only between the Sovereign and his subjects properly so called, which they were not.

In view of all these Mr. Ghosh held that as the accused members of the Manipur royal family were not British subjects, the Special Court set up by the Government of India had no jurisdiction to try them. Further, the section of the Indian Penal Code under which they were charged with ‘waging war against the Queen’ was applicable only to British subjects or people under the authority of the British Government of India.85

II. THE TRIAL

As noted above, Sura-chandra, Tikendrajit and others were tried by a Special Court. The accused were not permitted to engage any competent pleader on their behalf, though they were allowed to submit a written representation. As Mr. Ghosh pointed out, this was against the British tradition “that every British subject has the right, no matter how atrocious the crime with which he is charged, to be defended by the Counsel at every stage of the proceedings.
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against him”. For, “there is a vast difference between arguing a case *viva voce* and submitting a written defence; the former enables the Counsel to remove the doubts or misconceptions of the trial-judge, and every point may be thoroughly discussed and explained.” A statement to the following effect was made by Braja Mohan Singh in a sworn affidavit:

I was the Private Secretary of Jubraj Tikendrajit. I wrote out a petition on his behalf to the Special Court praying that time might be given him to enable him to get pleaders from Cachar to defend him at the trial. The Jubraj signed it and it was presented to the Special Court by Chandra Singh. The Court rejected the prayer and returned the petition and we were told to engage some one who might be available at Manipur. Then, at the suggestion of Partha Singh, who acted as interpreter at the trial, and of one Kulendra Singh, the Police Officer who arrested the Jubraj, I advised him to engage the services of Janaki Nath Basak and Bamscharan Mukhopadhyay, who were the only persons available in Manipur for that purpose and understood English.

Accordingly two days after the trial began, Major Maxwell, who conducted the case on behalf of the Government, sent for Janaki Nath Basak and asked him to defend Tikendrajit. He agreed to do so on receiving one thousand Rupees. But as he himself said, he was not a lawyer and never had any experience of how criminal trials were conducted.

Mr. Monmohan Ghosh argued in his Memorandum that the “Manipur princes were not, and could not have been tried under the Indian Penal Code, or any other British law.” Referring to the Special Court Mr. Ghosh pointed out that “it was not constituted under any legal authority derivable from any Act of the British Parliament or Indian Legislature. The Government was the accuser, its own officers held the first trial, and it was the Government who heard the final appeal. None of the two military and one civil officials who constituted the Special Court had any legal training or any knowledge of judicial procedure followed during criminal trials. The inquisitorial cross-examination of the accused by the members of the Court was a procedure repugnant to the humane traditions of British justice which, had it been adopted by any judge or magistrate in British India, would have called forth severe censure from the High Court.”

The members of the court could not understand the witnesses who deposed in Manipuri language, and accordingly an interpreter was appointed. According to the sworn affidavit of Brajamohan Singh, Partha Singh, who was appointed interpreter, was an employee of Pucca Sena, the chief enemy of Tikendrajit. The procedure followed was that Partha Singh translated the statement of witnesses into Urdu, and Mr. Maxwell re-translated it into English.
Janaki Nath Basak, in a sworn affidavit, pointed out the discrepancies between the statements of witnesses and the version given by the interpreter or recorded by the Court. He says: “I informed the Court many times that Partha Singh’s translation was not correct. One of the judges (Major Ridgway) corrected his mistakes many times”. Basak cites an instance: “Jatra Singh in evidence said: ‘As soon as Jubraj began to talk with Tongol General about the order said to have been given by the General to kill the Sahibs, I came away without waiting to learn what reply the Jubraj made to the Tongol General.’ But the Special Court has recorded: ‘Jubraj did not say anything’. This is not correct. Again I distinctly recollect that the witness Aru Singh, alias Utsaba (Usurba), said, among other things, ‘Jubraj told Tongol General that the Sahibs must not be killed on any account’, but this was not recorded by the Court”.

Janaki Nath Basak who, as mentioned above, was permitted to defend Tikendrajit, wrote the latter’s statement in English and submitted it to the Special Court. He states in his sworn affidavit:

“The President of the Special Court told me that the language of the statement was defective and required correction. Accordingly he made some alterations and returned the statement to me. I was then asked by him to revise it with the help of an Englishman named Du Moulin, the special correspondent of the Pioneer and certain other English papers. After the statement was thus revised I got it signed by the Jubraj (Tikendrajit). I now understand (presumably as a result of consultation with Mr. Ghosh) that the revised statement has attributed to him some words which he never meant or said (some concrete instances are cited). Immediately after my arrival in Calcutta I showed to Mr. Ghosh the original draft of my statement, with the corrections made therein by the President of the Special Court and Mr. Du Moulin with their own hands, and forward the same herewith. Neither Maharaj Kula-chandra nor Yuvaraj Tikendrajit knows a word of English. The draft I prepared of the statement of Maharaj Kula-chandra underwent revision”.

Mr. Monmohan Ghosh also laid stress on this point in his Memorandum.

These must be considered as serious defects in the trial. In addition, it should be remembered that in the absence of a competent defence pleader the witnesses were not properly cross-examined in order to bring out facts that might be of the utmost importance in favour of the defence. The evidence against the accused was left almost where the prosecution chose to leave it. Mr. Monmohan Ghosh pointed out how the failure to cross-examine the witnesses on some vital points vitiated the whole judgment. On the whole it is difficult not to agree with the contention of Mr. Monmohan Ghosh that “having regard to the nature of the tribunal, and the manner in which the trial was conducted, the accused belonging to the royal family of Manipur were practically undefended and
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had not received any fair and impartial trial, which the humblest British subject could have claimed as a matter of right."

Arguing on the merits of the case, Mr. Ghosh pointed out that the accused did not invade British territory, nor committed any hostile act against the officers and men of the British Residency; they merely defended the palace which was attacked by the British without any declaration of war. The Maharaja did not wage war against the Queen and had no wish to do so. The moment the British forces invaded the palace it became the duty of the King, the soldiers and officers of Manipur to resist the troops of another Power. Maharaja Kula-chandra, while acquiescing in the acts of his officers in repelling the attack upon the palace, had no intention whatever to wage war against Her Majesty the Queen. There is no evidence that Tikendrajit had at any time any intention of waging war against the Queen until his palace was attacked. His order of cease-fire on hearing the English signal also proves that he never intended hostility against the British.

Tikendrajit was brother, officer and subject of Maharaja Kula-chandra who alone had the right of punishing him. Mr. Quinton evidently held the same view and therefore sent Mr. Grimwood to the Maharaja as stated above. It was stated by the Government witness Rasik Lal Kundu that even Mr. Grimwood, during his interview with the Jubraj, did not say anything to the effect that the British might arrest him by force. As Tikendrajit expressed his willingness to leave Manipur in accordance with the order of the British Government, the whole trouble might have been avoided by granting him a short time for which he prayed.

As regards the second charge, namely, abetting the murder of the Englishmen, Mr. Ghosh made a lengthy analysis of the prosecution evidences and summed up the facts elicited from them as follows:

'What then is the result of all this evidence? If believed, it proves that the idea of killing the Sahibs originated with the Tongol General, that the Jubraj expressed his surprise when the matter was first reported to him, so much so, that he himself came to enquire if the report he had received was true; that he then had some conversation with the General, regarding the nature of which the prosecution can throw no light; that after the lapse of more than half an hour, while the Jubraj was apparently sleeping, the General repeated his previous order; that the sentries had no direct order from any one except Tongol, and that the Sahibs were beheaded by the public executioner'. Mr. Ghosh then argued: "It cannot be possibly suggested that the surprise at first expressed by the Jubraj
was simulated, or was not perfectly genuine, for at that time there was no reason why he should have acted a part to deceive his own adherents and people after having openly resisted the British troops. If then he honestly took the trouble of going to the Tongol General to remonstrate with him, would the Government be justified in inferring (in the absence of any evidence as to what passed between him and the General) that he must have eventually agreed with the General? Is that a necessary inference?".88

But while the evidence for the prosecution was wholly negative in character, the evidence of the defence witnesses clearly maintained that the Jubraj positively forbade the Tongol General not to kill the Sahibs. And they were not shaken from this position by the cross-examination in the Court.

Mr. Ghosh concluded as follows:

"As regards the charge of abetment of murder, the evidence adduced by the prosecution entirely fails to establish the complicity of the Jubraj, and that, on the contrary, there is enough on the record to raise a strong presumption in his favour, that he was entirely opposed to the murder of the British officers, and that the orders of the Tongol General were carried out in spite of his protests and without his knowledge".89

But neither facts nor arguments could move the Government of India from its determination to cut off the tall poppy, as the Roman king put it. Tikendrajit paid the supreme penalty of law, not for his crime but for his courage and ability.

It is now definitely known that the Viceroy, Lord Lansdowne, sanctioned the judicial murder of Tikendrajit in spite of the remonstrances of Her Majesty, the Queen-Empress. Queen Victoria wrote to Lord Cross, the Secretary of State for India, on 8 August, 1891: "I can only regret the decision as to the Senapati.... I cannot consider that the Senapati was not aware of our intention to seize him and thus HAD CAUSE for resistance. The Queen...thinks we... ought not to hang the Senapati, though certainly Tongal." In reply Cross informed the Queen on 9 August that he "had written to the Viceroy so often and so strongly that no one of the Princes at Manipur or indeed anyone else should suffer unless absolutely identified with the assassinations...." Two days later the Queen again wrote to Cross: "The reasons why she regrets the Jubraj's sentence of death being carried out are threefold. First, because... the seizure in Durbar was wrong and gave the Jubraj an excuse for resistance.... Secondly, because he was not convicted of wilful murder, and thirdly, because she has a great and strong feeling..."
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that the principle of governing India by fear and by crushing them, instead of by firmness and conciliation, is one which never will answer in the end and which the Queen-Empress would wish to see more and more altered. . . . . She intends neither writing nor saying anything to him (Viceroy) about it, as he is evidently very sore about it." Nevertheless, we find the Queen sending a cypher telegram to the Viceroy on 12 August, 1891: "—Baboo who defended Senapati appeals to me for commutation. Is it possible to do this?" The Viceroy replied on the same day: "I entertain no doubt commutation of sentence would be a grave public misfortune, and I regard it as now absolutely impossible." Comment is superfluous on this very interesting correspondence which throws a flood of light on the whole episode and supports the point of view urged by the author of this chapter.

This episode may be fittingly concluded by quoting the comments of Captain Hearsey, an Anglo-Indian military official of the time. He says:

"The tone of the Government organs, such as the Englishman of Calcutta, the Pioneer and Morning Post of Allahabad, especially the latter, has been towards the accused Princes of Manipur spiteful and vindictive in the extreme, and this feeling has, in a very great measure, been shared by the Government officials themselves. It is an axiom of law and justice not to comment on a case that is "sub-judice", yet these organs have been incessant throughout the whole course of the trials of uttering constant and reiterated shrieks for blood; it has, to say, been a cry of hang first and try afterwards. This last-mentioned cry I have not only seen expressed by the rabid anti-Indian Press, but I regret to say echoed by many who deem themselves to be honest, just, well-educated Englishmen. But if this is the modern Englishman's idea of fair play and justice, I shall feel proud that I can call myself an Anglo-Indian.""31

Later, Capt. Hearsey observes: "The trial of the accused Princes has been one of the most outrageous farces and parodies of justice that have ever yet been exhibited to the Indian nation".32

2. Considerable difficulty is experienced in writing the names of these royal brothers, as they are sometimes referred to by their official designations, which are also written in slightly varying forms. For full personal names and official designations, cf. MCR, 91.
4. For more details about the relation between the brothers, cf., GRM, 130 ff.; MCR, 100 ff.; B. 10.
6. That Tikendrajit was liked by both Mr. and Mrs. Grimwood will be clear from a perusal of GRM, 175-7.
7. B. 10; MCR, 100 ff.
8. Tikendrajit's name is not mentioned in the first report of Grimwood (B. 10).
9. The versions of both are given in D. 4. The extracts quoted are taken from this document.
10. GRM, 142.
12. D. 1, para. 9.
13. D. 1, para. 11; also cf., B. 15.
14. Maharaja Sura-chandra alleged that Grimwood was influenced by a letter which was handed over to him by Tasu Sardar, a Muslim photographer, while they were talking. Grimwood, however, denied the change, and asserted that the letter which was in the file could have been seen by the Maharaja if he liked. Cf., D. 4.
17. B. 6.
18. B. 10.
21. D. 1, para. 10.
23. D. 1, para. 12.
25. B. 10.
27. B. 13.
29. B. 16, 17.
30. These and other details were not finally settled till 19 March, 1891, as will be stated later.
31. B. 18.
32. B. 20.
33. B. 32; D. 1, para. 16.
34. *GRM*, 168.
35. D. 1, paras 16, 18. As there was no secret code in use, the Chief Commissioner could not send any written communication to the Political Agent at Manipur and therefore sent a verbal message through Gurdon.
36. D. 1, para. 19.
37. Ibid, para. 20.
38. D. 2.
40. D. 1, para. 20.
41. D. 2, D. 3. *Ekadasi* is the eleventh lunar day of the fortnight. It may be mentioned that the Maharaja objected to the holding of the *durbar* on 22 March as it was *ekadasi*, a day of fast, and also a Sunday. Mr. Quinton, however, brushed aside these objections, and pretended to be in a hurry to go out for hunting.
42. *GRM*, 183-4.
42a. *GRM*, 182.
43. D. 3; *MCR*, 138. All this is ignored in the official version.
44. D. 3. The time for the proposed *durbar* on 22 March is given as 9 A.M. in D. 1, para. 20, but Mrs. Grimwood puts it at 8 A.M. (*GRM*, 185).
45. D. 3.
46. *MCR*, 142-5.
47. *GRM*, 190-92.
49. L. 1, para. 21.
50. *Pati* refers to the palace.
51. D. 3.
52. *MCR*, 152.
53. D. 1, para. 22.
54. According to the official version, the British forces entered the fort and, halting before the house of the Jubraj, asked for his whereabouts, when the party was at once fired on at close quarters. But even this does not mean that the Manipuris took the offensive, for it is admitted that the British troops had entered inside the fort, and the Manipuri troops had every right to fire upon the nocturnal invaders.
55. D. 1, para. 29.
56. D. 1, paras. 22, 29.
57. D. 1, para. 23.
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58. GRM, 216.
59. D. 1, para. 23.
60. GRM, 215.
61. GRM, 216; Cf., MCR (second edition), 151.
62. MCR, 150.
63. All this conversation is recorded in MCR, in Bengali (pp. 150-52), but the source of information is not stated by the author.
64. D. 2.
66. According to MCR² (p. 153), as soon as the Englishmen neared the gate the excited Manipurs closed it, threw brickbats at them and struck them with the butt-ends of guns.
67. Of course, so far as the main incidents were concerned; but it is silent about the actual perpetrator of the murder (D. 1, para. 24).
68. B. 21, B. 22.
69. B. 35. Foreign Department Proceedings, September 1891, Nos. 120-29.
70. B. 32.
70a. The Viceroy cites instances such as the presentation of nazor by the Maharaja to the Viceroy in 1874 and the acceptance of a khilat, recognition of Surchandra by the Government of India as the heir and successor of his father, at the request of the latter, and similar recognition of Kula-chandra as successor of Surchandra. It was also pointed out by the Viceroy that the Government of India, on more than one occasion, punished those who rebelled against the Manipur Government.
72. D. 1, para. 25.
73. D. 1, para. 27.
74. Speech by Sir John Gorst, Under-Secretary of State for India, in the Manipur Debate in the House of Commons on June 16, 1891 (Hansard, Series 3; Vol. 354, p. 567).
75. B. 36.
76. See above p. 709.
77. Aitchison. Treaties and Engagements, etc. XII, 198.
78. Ibid, 230.
79. Ibid, 102.
80. Reference may be made to other statements to the same effect. For example, Mr. Brown writes in 1873 in the Statistical Account of Manipur that "on the conclusion of the Burmese War by the treaty of Yandabo in 1826, Manipur was declared independent." Quoted by Roy, 81.
81. D. 5. Durand was Foreign Secretary in India.
82. See p. 728.
83. See "Appeal", pp. 9 ff.
84. Aitchison, XII, 196.
85. For the arguments of Mr. Monmohan Ghosh, cf., 'Appeal'.
86. B. 24. 'Appeal'.
87. B. 23. 'Appeal'.
88. 'Appeal', 23.
89. 'Appeal', 35.
90. The Letters of Queen Victoria—Third Series, Edited by G. E. Buckle (1931), pp. 55-7. I am indebted to Dr. D. K. Ghosh for drawing my attention to this correspondence.