

## CHAPTER VII

### ANNEXATION OF NORTH CACHAR

At the end of the Burmese war Govinda Chandra came back to Cachar as a tributary king of the British. But his authority was soon challenged by a formidable enemy, Tularam. Tularam was the son of Kahi Dan, a khitmatgar, in the service of Raja Krishna Chandra. But Tularam, claimed descent from Raja Tamradhvaj. Anyway, being attracted by Tularam's ability Govinda Chandra on his accession to the throne in 1813, invested him with the command of a wing of foot soldiers. Soon Tularam shook off the yoke of his royal master and joined his father who had since established a principality of his own in the hills of North Cachar. During the confusion following the occupation of Cachar by the Manipuri princes, Kahi Dan extended his sway and even enlisted the support of some Cacharies to make a bid for the throne of Cachar. During the Burmese war he allied himself with the Burmese, as his rival Govinda Chandra sided with the British. On his restoration to the throne of Cachar at the end of the Burmese War, Govinda Chandra treacherously murdered Kahi Dan and made several vain attempts to dislodge Tularam, who on his father's death, became the ruler of the hill principality. Govinda Chandra treated Tularam as a usurper, and Tularam retaliated by repeatedly descending on the plains of Cachar. Being unable to repel the incursions of Tularam, Govinda Chandra appealed for aid to the British Government. The Supreme Government asked Scott, Agent of the Governor-general, to effect a compromise between the two chiefs. Scott personally arrived at Sylhet in June 1829, and succeeded in inducing Govinda Chandra to acknowledge Tularam as his Senapati or general with the formal charge of the areas which he (Tularam) had held under his jurisdiction. Moreover, Govinda Chandra undertook not to send any force to the area occupied by Tularam, in default of which he would forfeit claims of protection against aggressions from the British Government. In return Tularam agreed that he would refrain from further encroachment on the territory of Cachar, and on the violation of this condition he was threatened with expulsion from his possessions.



In April, 1830 Govinda Chandra, was murdered by a gang of Manipuris. As he died without leaving any issue there were many claimants of the throne. Tularam was also a claimant, as he claimed descent from the royal family. But as the British Government was not satisfied with claims made by the claimants, the plains of Cachar were annexed to the British dominion by a proclamation issued on August 14, 1832.

Tularam, no doubt, was disappointed by the Government's decision, but he was then too old to fight for his claim. Moreover Tularam's position had also grown shaky in North Cachar. Being too old, he, in 1828, left the principality in charge of his cousin Govindaram, who soon proved to be a traitor and drove Tularam out of his possessions. In 1829 Tularam regained his territory with the aid of Gambhir Singh, Raja of Manipur. Govindaram fled away to Govinda Chandra's territory.

After the murder of Govinda Chandra at the instigation of his queen Govindaram made several incursions into the territory of his uncle. Lt. Fisher, who was appointed the Superintendent of Cachar after its annexation, feared that law and order of Cachar might be disturbed unless the hostility between Tularam and Govindaram could be stopped. Fisher and Commissioner Robertson were in favour of helping Tularam with arms but this proposal was turned down by the Supreme Govt. on the ground that by the agreement of 1829 the British Govt. promised protection to Tularam in case of aggression from the side of Govinda Chandra only. Fisher then proposed to bring Tularam under direct control of the British Govt. as a tributary chief. This proposal, too, was turned down by the Supreme Govt.

When Jenkins came as the Commissioner, he did not like to keep a strategic place like North Cachar wholly in charge of a weak ruler like Tularam. Moreover, he noticed that the inhabitants of North Cachar had universally expressed a desire to be brought under the British Government. Jenkins therefore lost no time in procuring from Tularam a new agreement on November 3, 1834.

The terms of the agreement were: (1) Tularam was to surrender the claims to the territory between the rivers Mahur and the Dayang on the one side and the Dayang and the Kapili on the other (2) Tularam was to pay 4 pairs of elephant tusks, which was later



commuted for a cash payment of Rs. 490.00. (3) In return Tularam was guaranteed in his possessions from foreign aggressions, in addition to a life pension of Rs. 50/- per month. (4) The British retained the right of placing military posts in any part of Tularam's country, and Tularam was to supply provisions and labour to the marching British army. (5) Tularam was not to commence military operations against any neighbouring chiefs without permission of the British Govt.

After the treaty of 1834 Tularam began to be troubled by the Angami Nagas who frequently raided his territory. Trouble originated on the question of the possession of the salt springs near Semkhar which were situated within Tularam's territory. Tularam was unable to resist the Naga raids. This encouraged the Nagas, who, in 1839 in course of raids, reached the British territory. A British force was sent to drive out the Nagas. Tularam, as per agreement, rendered all help to the British.

By 1844 Tularam became too old. He then entrusted the charge of his territory to his two sons Nakulram and Brajanath. Naga raids continued and Tularam's territory became desolated. Tularam sometimes quarrelled with the British when they forcibly seized men and provisions in his territory.

Bulter, the Principal Assistant of Nowgong, brought many allegations against Tularam and suggested full annexation of his territory, but his suggestion was not appreciated by Jenkins, the Commissioner.

Tularam died in 1851. Bulter again recommended annexation on the ground that the agreement had lapsed with his death. But Dalhousie was not convinced by Bulter's argument. So Nakulram and Brajanath got a further lease of their possessions.

But the lease proved to be short-lived. To take vengeance on the Nagas who had made one of the worst raids on his territory, Nakulram marched against the Dishoma Nagas with an army of 300. But on the way he was hoodwinked, trapped and hacked to pieces. The Cacharies made a hasty retreat.

This incident provided an opportunity to the British officers who advocated annexation of North Cachar. They said that by attacking the Dishomas without authority from the paramount power, Nakulram had violated the terms of the argument. Moreover, they were convinced that Brajanath had neither the means nor the ability to

resist the Naga incursions, Jenkins was now impressed by the arguments of his subordinate officers and so he advised the superior authorities to resume North Cachar. Accordingly in 1854 North Cachar was annexed to the British dominion, and the remaining heirs of Tularam were granted compensation to the extent of Rs. 3000/- annually, with rent-free grants during their life-time.

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