TIJET, KASHMIR AND NORTH INDIA 647-747

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Tibet made her debut into history with the unification and consolidat-
ion, brought about by Song-ba-szag-po 650-688 A.D. (1) With the
help of a strong army, he subjugated the provinces of Chuan and Greng
and quickly became the master of the whole of Tibet. Not content
with extending his empire from Glijk to Chinese Turkestan, he vanquis-
hed King Anuugarman of Nepal, forcing him to marry his daughter,
named Khreun (Bhrikuti) to him (2). and challenged the emperor of China,
compelling him also to offer him the hand of his daughter Wen-Cheng
along with some territories. This consolidation of home and expansion
abroad was accompanied by socio-religious organisation and cultural
upliftment. Thus Tibet emerged as a great power on the Asian scene.

The consolidation of a big power across the frontier is usually a
means for a country, for 'two is company, three is crowd' is the very
axiomatic truth in political history. However, during the lifetime
of Harsha in India for a variety of reasons—the prestige of his power, his
intimate relations with China, manifest in the frequent exchange of emba-
cass, his interest in Buddhism, which had become the dominant ideology
of Tibet, and the preoccupations of the Tibetan emperors with his own
affairs—the notion of North India did not witness any serious disturb-
ance. But the death of Harsha in 647 and the disappearance of his new
and glory gave the green signal to the frontier troubles and led to a rupture
between India and Tibet.

We know that Harsha tried to cultivate friendly relations with the
Tang court of China. The opening of a route through the Barapa-kuti
plains about 639 had shortened the journey from India to China via Nepal
and Tibet. Just after his meeting with Yuan-Chiwing, Harsha sent an
envoy to Chiang-an, bringing among other gifts a hand-carved idol of
a king unknown in China (3). The Tang reciprocated this gesture by
sending a return mission to India in 642 under Li-I-Pian with Wang Huen
as its escort officer. This mission returned to China in 649. But, soon
afterwards, another mission was dispatched to India, this time under
Wang Huen-tye with Wang Chiu-len as the second officer and an escort
of thirty horsemen. When the mission was on its way, King Harsha died
and his minister O-lo-na-shien, also known as Annasava, assumed the throne.
He is called 'Harshita', which Suryabhuti refers to mean a Brahmana (4).
He broke off with China, the reason for which may have been his anti-
Buddhist feeling, born of his Brahmana heritage, and went to the extent

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of maltreating the Chinese embassy. The *Ancient History of the T'ang Dynasty* Ch. 198 states that "he used in the campaign the troops of the barbarians to attack Wang Huen-see. They (the escort of the mission) gave a fight to the barbarians but the party was not equal (to the enemy); when the arrows got exhausted, all were taken prisoners and the tributes given by the different kings were all plundered. Wang Huen-see alone escaped under the cover of night." (6) The *New History of the T'ang Dynasty* Ch. 221 gives the following account of this incident: "He (O-lo-ra shone) placed the army in the field to drive away Wang Huen-see. The mission did not have an escort of more than a few dozens of cavalry; they could do nothing and all perished. The goods offered as tributes by the kings were all plundered. Wang Huen-see's escape." (6)

Thus harassed, the Chinese envoy reached Nepal and Tibet to seek the help of their kings. To quote the *Ancient History of the T'ang Dynasty* he "fled to Tou-fan (Tibet) which gave him 1,200 soldiers. Ni-lo-lo (Nepal) gave him 7,000 cavalry. Wang Huen-see, with the help of his assistant, Tsang Cheu-Jin led the army of the two kingdoms and advanced as far as the capital of central India. The battle continued for three days, the loss was terrible. Three thousand persons were killed straightaway and about 10,000 fell into water and were carried away. O-lo-ra shone fled from his capital, Cheu-Jen pursued him and made him captive along with 1,200 persons, men and women, and more than 30,000 animals, oxen and horses. India was thus conquered. Wang Huen-see brought to the capital (of China) his prisoner in the 22nd year (Tchang Kao 546). He was promoted to the rank of tsa' ao-san-ts'ou-fu." (7) The *New History of the T'ang Dynasty* Ch. 221 gives some different details of this episode. It says that Tibet supplied the Chinese envoy with an army of 1,000 soldiers rather than 7,200 true but Nepali gave him 7,000 troops. He divided his army into several corps, advanced as far as the village of Tsang-pou lo-lo and, after bereaving it for three days, captured the town. 3,000 men were killed and 10,000 drowned in the river. O-lo-shon, leaving the kingdom, fled and reassembled his troops and returned to offer another battle. Cheu-jen made him prisoner, killing about 1,000 persons this time; the others, who were guarding the women of the royal household hurried the crossing of the river Kien-lo-wei. Cheu-jen attacked them: there was a great confusion. He imprisoned the wives and daughters of the king, and 12,000 persons and all the domesticated animals numbering some, 30,000. He received the submission of 589 fortified towns. The king of Eastern India, Chi-kleou-nou (Sri Kumara) presented some 30,000 animals, oxen and horses, for the army, and after bowing, salutes and greetings, The kingdom of Kik-mouv-lou (Kamrupa) offered to the emperor cutias, a map of the country and wanted an image of Lao-tou as gift. Wang Huen-see offered humbly
to his emperor Chao-na-shan as prisoner. The victory was proclaimed officially in the ancient imperial temple. (8)

It is clear from these accounts that the Chinese envoy Wang Huen-ts’se was not only greeted by the Aithi-Walayi Schooling spirit of early Tang diplomacy (9) but also made the best of the worst situation that faced him. Obviously, he could not have initiated the aggression, accompanied as he was with an escort of 30 horsemen only. He must have used all the force of diplomacy and persuasion at his command to win an easy passage to the capital. But the Indian king was averse to everything Chinese and so used to receive him thoroughly. However, he managed to escape and succeeded in getting 1,200 or 1,000 ponies from Tibet and 7,000 from Nepal and moved his way into the Indian capital, probably Kani. Whether he appealed to the religious sentiments of the Tibetan monarch or counted upon the friendship between China, Tibet and Nepal or availed himself of the prospect of an easy conquest of an empire in India or dwelt upon the menace of the northward expansion of the Brahmanical rulers of Kani, we do not know, but it seems certain that he could convince his Tibetan and Nepalese friends that an expedition into India would be a profitable undertaking for them. Thus his death in North India was mutually a joint Tibetan-Nepalese enterprise to conquer an empire to the souh of the Himalayas. Though Chinese annalists described it as a triumph of their country, it cannot be doubted that it was a success of Tibetan and Nepalese arms against North India. For some time after 753-754, Chinese might be roused for some time with the kingdoms of India and the provocation of Wang Huen-ts’se gave him the occasion to lash out against it. So Wang’s adventure proved the turning point. Tibetan and Nepalese aggression against North India for which the ground had been prepared with the consolidation of the military strength of Tibet by Dzungsar. That the Tibetans and their protectors, the Nepalese, succeeded in occupying large parts of North India’s missionary from the remark of the Chinese chronicles that 500 fortified towns submitted to their armies led by Wang Huen-ts’se and an enormous booty fell into their hands and O-lo-na-shon and his family, with a large number of followers, including the abbot Damka-sam, who claimed the knowledge of the art of war, became their prisoners (10). Besides this, the powerful ruler of Eastern India, Kumara Bhaskaravman, also made friends with them, offering them 30,000 oxen & horses for the army and bow, sabres and horses as well as a map of the country which had a great military value. The impact of these events on the history of North India must have been tremendous.

Arnold J. Toynbee has shown that the challenge of blow and
pressures stimulates a people to creative activity and often intensifies the 
process of political and military consolidation among them. In India also, 
after the subjugation of vast territory by the Tibetans and Nepalies and 
their retreatment with a big booty and a large train of prisoners of war, 
the interrelatives of political unity became strong and the imperial tradition 
of Hanshe thrive for a revival. For a time there was a free-for-all in 
which Bhikshavarman occupied Karmavarna and the adjacent territories, 
the later Gupta of Malwa fought their way into Magadha, the Maukhari 
revived in their ancestral seats and one of them Bhogavarman established 
monarchical relations with the rulers of Nepal; the Turki chieftains, assuming 
the title of Tiuna, pressed into the Punjab and the Karkota or Nagas 
besieged, began to rise in Kashmir. But out of these conflicts and struggles, the 
later Gupta ruler Adityasena emerged supreme and cemented his alliance 
with the Maukhari Chief Bhogavarman by marrying his daughter to him. 
The successors of Adityasena continued to use the imperial title indicative 
of paramount sovereignty, but the invasions of the Tibetans also 
battled the states of North India from time to time intensifying the 
urge of a more effective unification (11). Ultimately the man of the hour 
appeared in Yasovarman in the last part of the seventh century 
and beginning of the eighth. Most probably he was connected with 
the rulers of Kanauj and inherited their imperial tradition. At the head 
of a large army, he campaigned in all directions and became the paramount 
sovereign of North India from the eastern sea to the north-western marches 
with an appreciable influence in South India also. After consoli-
dating his position in India, he, according to the chronicler of his cam-
paign, Volpy-Friaj, conquered the Himalayan region (12). This shows 
that, after setting his house in order, he grappled with the challenges of 
the Tibetans, Nepalies and other mountainous peoples. In order to 
strengthen his offensive against those people, he sought the collaboration 
of the Karkota King of Kashmir, Lalitaditya Muktapida, in spite of his 
rivaly with him over the states of the Punjab, like Jelarathara reported 
by the Korean pilgrim Hui-ch'ao. This is clear from the memorial 
presented by Lalitaditya’s envoy Bhadanta Wu-li-to to the Tang court 
in May 733 in which he stated that his master, along with the King of 
Central India, controlled the five principal routes of communication of 
Tibet and fought against the Tibetans with constant victories (13). Ear-
ier, in November-December 721, Yasovarman (Yi-sha Fu-mo) himself sent 
an embassy under Bhadanta Pa-ta-hsin (Bharvesa?) to the court of 
emperor Hsuan-tsung with the presents of local products obviously with 
a view to seeking succour against the Tibetans with whom Lalitaditya was 
also engaged (14). All this undoubtedly proves that Yasovarman was keenly 
conscious of the Tibetan menace and, after entrenching his paramount
in India, moved in the Himalayas, as Vatak, states in his Gotidana, to quell it, and, in collaboration with Lalitaditya, controlled the five principal routes of communication with Tibet and also inflicted some reverses on the Tibetans, and, in that process, composed his affairs with his Kashmiri colleague, despite regular pinching and provocation over the states of the Punjab, and also tried to form an entente with the Tang of China in order to secure what assistance he could get from them.

The impact of Tibetan expansion was ever greater on Kashmir. The mountain range running from the Zoji-la due north to Kashmir and the narrow valley of Marsa Wardwan (Kashmir Vaidivdrama), adjacent to it, separates Kashmir from the Tibetan country called Bhishnulanda. Baltistan (Skardo) and Ledakh, to the east of it, are called "Little and Great Tibet," "Little and Great Po-lu," in Chinese Annals, Sakthamdris-hubhastodara in the Rajatarangini of Skandav (iii, 448) and Ledkh Beden and Bulu Beden in modern Kashmiri. To the east of them is a belt of high mountains and glaciers and then the region of Suru and Zanskar (15). Thus Kashmir was very close to Tibet and exposed to her aggression. This filled up the void in the rise of the the Kharkata or Ngala dynasty there.

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

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

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

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

This document shows that the Karkots had ever been soliciters of the alliance and assistance of China in their struggle with the Tibetans and that Muktapida was particularly keen on seeking her succour and offered to bear the huge expenses of maintaining an enormous Chinese army of 20,000 men at Volur Lake and also to raise a memorial for the
T'ang Emperor Huang Tsung (713-716) in his kingdom. The outcome of Muktapida's diplomatic endeavour must have been positive for we find the Tibetans making a show of peace by paying tribute to the T'ang Emperor in 796. But, side by side, they intensified their campaign in Baltistan and, in 738, completely annihilated the Chinese army in that sector, as said above.

In the meantime, Muktapida fell out with Yasovarman over the suzerainty over the Panjal states. It appears that the Tusri Shahi rulers, converted by Yasovarman and patronized by Lalitaditya, added fuel to the fire. Thus, the erstwhile colleagues in the protection of the frontier and the struggle with the Tibetans for that purpose were locked in a deadly conflict. Lalitaditya marched in the Ganges Valley, defeated Yasovarman but reinstated him as a vassal at Kamvaj, undertook a triumphal march in eastern and probably even southern India and emerged as the paramount sovereign of the whole of India (21).

After thus assuming the role of the undisputed emperor of North India and watching the failure of Chinese arms in Baltistan, Muktapida decided to deal with the frontier problem himself and pounced upon the Tibetans singlehanded. Rajatarangini states that he undertook a campaign of conquest in the pathless tracks of the far-reaching northern regions (22). Entering probably by the route connecting sadakshan with Little Tash, he plunged into Turukhistan and reduced the Turukhas and their neighbours, the Kanbogas, who were a widespread people having their concentration in Badakshan near Daiwak (23). According to Yuan Chawang, Turukhistan was bounded in the north by Yabwvid near Biskiakshpan, in the south by the Hindukush, in the west by Persia and in the east by the Pamirs. In the Mahamadan period it signifies the region between Badakshan and Balkh. The river Oxus formed through it (24). In 718 the Turkish ruler of Turukhistan extended his suzerainty from the Inn Ghat to the Zapalistan and from the Murghbat to the Indus. In 719 the ruler of that region, named Ti-ko, sent to China a Manichaean learnt in astrology. But, in an Arab raid he fell into the hands of the Muslims who plundered the country. In 722 his son wrote to the Chinese emperor about this incident obviously to seek his help (25). Lalitaditya must have marched against him or his successor.

At that time the Arabs were overhearing over the horizons of Central Asia. Qutab-uddin-Muhammad had conquered up to the Jaxars.

Nasir-ud-Din-Sayyid regained the regions overrun by Qutab. His successors raided into Turkistan up to the borders of China. Lalitaditya came into
conflict with one of them and worsted him in three engagements (26).

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

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

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

NOTES
2. D. R. Regmi, *Ancient Nepal*, pp. 155-157 holds that Anusuvatman was never a vassal of Tibet and that the episode of the marriage of his daughter Bhikulti to Srong-btsan-sgam-po is a myth invented by Tibetan chroniclers. He bases his argument on the fact that the T’ang Annals and Yuen Chwang do not refer to the Tibetan conquest of Nepal. However, he holds that under Narendradeva Tibetan influence over Nepal was supreme. It is not necessary to go into this controversy here. What is relevant is that just before the death of Harsha Tibet had the upperhand in Nepal.
5. *Ibid*, p 10
7. *Ibid*, p 10

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8. Ibid. p. 9
14. P. C. Bagchi, *Sino-Indian Relations*, *Sino-India Studies* (Calcutta) Vol. I, p. 71 contends that Yashowarman wanted Chinese help against Lalitaditya, but it is unlikely, for two years later, Lalitaditya's envoy reported to the Chinese court that his relations with the King of Central India were of collaboration against the Tibetans, which shows that by that time they had not fallen out with each other.
17. Ibid., p. 530
20. Jan Yun-hua, *op. cit.* p. 172. This author holds that since, in that year, the Chinese emperor approved the appointment of Muktapida, therefore, he must have come to the throne that very year. But the text of the memorial shows that Muktapida had been fighting with and winning victories over the Tibetans for some time past. Thus he must have ascended the throne earlier, in fact, the proclamation of appointment by the Chinese court is merely an imperial rōdomontade not indicative of the actual coronation of Muktapida.
21. For details see Buddha Prakash, *Aspects of Indian History & Civilization* pp. 111-12.

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