

BHUTÁN.

AN independent State in the Eastern Himálayas, between 26° 45' and 28° N. latitude, and between 89° and 92° E. longitude, bordered on the north-east and west by Tibet and on the south by British India. Extreme length from east to west 160 miles; extreme breadth 90 miles.

The original inhabitants of Bhután, the Tephús, were subjugated about two centuries ago by a band of military colonists from Tibet. In 1774 the East India Company concluded a treaty with the ruler of Bhután, but since then repeated outrages on British subjects committed by the Bhután hill men have led from time to time to punitive measures, usually ending in the temporary or permanent annexation of various *dúars* or submontane tracts with passes leading to the hills. In November 1864 the eleven western or Bengal *dúars* were thus annexed. The Bhutiás at first acquiesced in the annexation, but in January 1865 attacked an English outpost, and it was found necessary to send an expedition into their country. Peace being restored, a treaty was signed (November 1865) by which the rulers of Bhután receive a subsidy of Rs. 50,000, on condition of their good behaviour. This gives the Indian Government an effective control over them, while the occupation of two strong positions at Baxa and Diwángiri, within a few miles of their frontier, serves as a material guarantee against further aggression.

The government of Bhután resembles that of Tibet, the chief authority being nominally divided between the Deb Rájá, or secular head, on the one hand, and the Dharm Rájá, or spiritual head of the State, on the other. Practically, the Deb Rájá is a mere instrument in the hands of powerful barons (penlops and jungpens), while the Dharm Rájá is only supposed to be concerned with the spiritual welfare of his people. In theory the Deb Rájá is elected by the penlops and jungpens, but he is usually the nominee of the most powerful chieftain for the time being. The Dharm Rájá is supposed to be the incarnation of his predecessor, and is chosen in infancy. The most powerful chieftains of Bhután are the penlops of Tougso, Páro, and Taka, and the jungpens of Thimbu, Punakhá, and Angdaphorang.

Area about 16,800 square miles; population about 20,000 in 1864, but now much larger.

The chief towns of Bhután are Punakhá, the capital, a place of great natural strength; Tásichozong, Páro, Angdaphorang, Togsa, Taka, and Biaka.

The people are nominally Buddhists, but their religious exercises consist chiefly in the propitiation of evil spirits and the recitation of sentences from the Tibetan Scriptures. Tásichozong, the chief monastery in Bhután, contains 300 priests.

The military resources of the country are insignificant. Beyond the guards for the defence of the various castles, there is nothing like a standing army.

The chief productions of Bhután are rice, Indian corn, millet, two kinds of cloth, musk, ponies, chowries, and silk. Muzzle-loading guns and swords of highly-tempered steel are manufactured.

The trade between British India and Bhután amounted in 1891-92 to Rx. 22,760 imports from and Rx. 33,530 exports to India. The chief imports are tobacco, European cotton goods, betel-nuts, and rice; the chief exports, wool, musk, ponies, and caoutchouc.

See Report on Explorations in Sikkim, Bhután, and Tibet, 1856-86. Edited by Lieut.-Colonel G. Strahan. Dehra Dún, 1889.