

The Emergence of Darjeeling as a Tourist Destination

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Abstract

Joseph makes an overview of the development of Darjeeling as a hill station and traces its history with special reference to the potential for tourism in the district. Besides highlighting the transitions the hill district has undergone he also draws attention to the new tropes of tourism.

Keywords: Darjeeling, Gorkha, Sagauli, Tourism Destination

Introduction

Darjeeling, one of the well-known tourist destinations in the world, is situated about 7500 feet above sea level on one of the majestic Himalayan ranges as it is overlooked by the world's third highest snow-capped mountain peak, the Kanchenjunga.¹ Geographically it comes within the borders of the Indian State of West Bengal. Darjeeling has been known to millions of tourists around the world as one of the magnificent tourist destinations in India.

The District of Darjeeling consists of hills and plains. It is the hilly region of the district that attracts large number of tourists due to its scenic beauty and temperate climate. Being situated on foot of Himalayas, it offers an awe inspiring vision of Kanchenjunga from Tiger Hill, the highest point in Darjeeling hills.²

The History of Darjeeling is intimately connected with the history of the three neighbouring Himalayan kingdoms of Nepal, Bhutan and Sikkim, which is part of the Indian Union since 1975. As we explore more about the emergence of Darjeeling as a tourist destination, it is imperative to have a fair idea of the events that shaped Darjeeling into a hill station. In the following pages an attempt is made to present the major events that determined the destiny of Darjeeling as a haven for tourists all over the world.

A Peep into the Past

In 1780 Darjeeling was conquered by Gorkhas defeating the Raja of Sikkim. In 1815, the British recaptured this territory from the Gorkhas and gave back to the Raja of

1 Pronoy Chand Mehtab, "Destination Darjeeling" in *Seminar* 572, Delhi, (April 2007), 50.

2 *Ibid.*

Sikkim. In 1835, Sikkim Raja granted Darjeeling to the British to make a sanatorium for their ailing soldiers.

The History of Kalimpong is entirely different from the history of Darjeeling though today it is part of the Darjeeling District. This area was under the Kingdom of Bhutan till 1866. In 1866 as a result of Treaty of Sinchula between the British and Kingdom of Bhutan Kalimpong was annexed and incorporated into the District of Darjeeling. Today the Hilly Region of Darjeeling District consists of Kalimpong, Darjeeling and Kurseong Subdivisions in which Kurseong was part of Sadar subdivision prior to its formation in 1891. The following paragraphs give a detailed description of the above mentioned events in view giving a fair idea of the events that shaped the history of the Hilly Region of Darjeeling.

The Gorkha Conquest

Prior to the year 1816, the vast territory of Sikkim including Darjeeling belonged to the Gorkhas who had won it by conquest from Sikkimese (Inhabitants of Sikkim)³. It is to be noted that little is known of the origin of Gorkhas. They said to have come to Nepal from Rajputana where they were overrun by Muslim invaders. Fleeing from the onslaught of Muslims they took shelter in a small locality called Gorkha in Nepal from where they got the name Gorkhas⁴.

Prithvi Narayan Shah (1742-1771) was one of the most powerful kings of Gorkhas. He conquered all the existing kingdoms of Nepal and made himself the sole master of Nepal and transferred his capital from Gorkha to Kathmandu in 1769. He did not live long enough to reap the full benefit of his triumph as he breathed his last in 1771.⁵ His successors too continued the policy of expansion as they threatened Tibet and invaded Sikkim and captured Darjeeling which was part of Sikkim in 1780.⁶ The Gorkhas' entry into Tibet did cost them dearly. As Tibet was under the protection of Chinese emperor he did not tolerate the recalcitrant activity of the Gurkhas. He dispatched an army of 70,000 men against the invading troops. In the battle that followed the Gorkhas were thoroughly defeated. The treaty of peace which was signed between the Empire of China and the Gorkhas was a great humiliation for the Gorkhas as they were forced to accept the suzerainty of China.⁷

The defeat which they sustained at the hands of the Chinese did nothing to quench the conquering spirit of Gorkhas. In 1794 they annexed the provinces of Garwhal and

3 K.C. Bhanja, *History of Darjeeling and the Sikkim Himalaya*, New Delhi, Gyan Publishing House, 1993, p. 17.

4 V. Brook Northey, *The Land of the Gurkhas or the Himalayan Kingdom of Nepal*, New Delhi, Asian Educational Services, 1998, pp. 42-43.

5 *Ibid*, pp. 42-53.

6 Pronoy Chand Methab, *op cit.* p. 50.

7 V. Brook Northey, *The Land of the Gorkhas*, p. 52.

Kumaon. Now the Gorkha kingdom extended from Sikkim to the borders of Kashmir, as even Simla came within the boundaries of their kingdom.⁸

Gorkhas continued their territorial expansion from 1804 to 1812 and pushed steadily into British territory and annexed around two hundred villages in the fertile Terai region. A commission including the representatives of both sides was setup to settle the territorial dispute but an attack by Gorkhas on the three police stations of the British precipitated the Anglo Gorkha war of 1814. Warren Hastings, the then Governor General planned the campaign and led the forces against the Gorkhas but was not successful. This was followed by a change in the leadership. In 1815, General Ochterlony assumed command of the British forces and defeated Gorkhas in May, 1815.⁹

The Peace of Sagauli

The Anglo Gorkha War (1814-1816) ended with the treaty of Sagauli on 28 November in 1815. Unfortunately this treaty was not ratified by the High Command in Nepal so the hostilities were resumed and General Ochterlony defeated the Gorkhas again in Makwanpur on 28 February 1816. This defeat led to the ratification of the Treaty of Sagauli. According to the terms of the treaty the Gorkhas surrendered Simla Hills and the districts of Garhwal and Kumaon to the British and withdrew from Sikkim.¹⁰

After the Treaty of Sagauli Sikkim became a British protectorate, subsequently the Treaty of Titalya was signed between Sikkim Raja and the British, in 1817.¹¹ According to the terms of this treaty the whole of the country between the Mechi and the Tista was restored to the Raja of Sikkim, whose sovereignty was guaranteed by the British. The boundary between Sikkim and Nepal was laid along the Mahanadi and the Mechi rivers and the Singalila range.¹²

The Gift of Sikkim Raja

Ten years after the Treaty of Titalya a boundary dispute arose between Sikkim and Nepal. According to the terms of the treaty, the matter was referred to the Governor General William Bentinck. In 1828, Captain Lloyd and J.W. Grant, Commercial Resident at Malda, were deputed by Governor General William Bentinck to settle the dispute. As they surveyed land of Sikkim they were enchanted by the possibilities of Darjeeling, which was still part of Sikkim, as a centre which would engross all the trade

8 K.C. Bhanja, *History of Darjeeling and the Sikkim Himalaya*, New Delhi, Gyan Publishing House, 1993, p. 17.

9 V. Brook Northey, *The Land of the Gurkhas or the Himalayan Kingdom of Nepal*, New Delhi, Asian Educational Services, 1998, pp. 42-43.

10 *Ibid*, p. 42-53.

11 Pronoy Chand Methab, *op cit.* p. 50.

12 V. Brook Northey, *The Land of the Gorkhas*, p. 52.

of the country and as a position of great strategic importance commanding entrance into Nepal and Bhutan. In his report to the Governor General William Bentinck, J. M. Grant, mentioned about the numerous advantages of establishing a sanatorium in Darjeeling and also advocated its occupation for military purposes as it is the key of a pass into the Nepal territory.¹³

These suggestions were taken to heart by William Bentinck, who deputed Captain Herbert, then Deputy Surveyor-General, to examine the country in company with J.W. Grant. The report of the two persons proved the feasibility of establishing a sanatorium at Darjeeling and the Court of Directors approved the project, hoping that it might prove a valuable depot for the temporary reception of European recruits, and even a permanent cantonment for European regiment. General Lloyd was appointed to start negotiations with the Raja of Sikkim for the cession of Darjeeling in return for an equivalent in money or land.¹⁴

It happened that in 1834 some persons of the indigenous tribe of Darjeeling called *Lepcha*, who had earlier taken refuge in Nepal due to the oppression of the Raja of Sikkim,¹⁵ raided some part of the territory of Sikkim. General Lloyd was deputed to enquire into the causes of the Lepcha incursion from Nepal. He made use of this opportunity in obtaining a deed of grant executed by the Raja of Sikkim on 1 February 1835.¹⁶ Through this grant the Raja of Sikkim made over a strip of territory on the Himalaya, 24 miles long about 5 to 6 miles wide, as a mark of friendship with the Governor General William Bentinck for the establishment of a sanatorium. In return the Maharaja was allowed a subsidy of ₹ 3000 a year, which was later on raised to ₹ 6000.¹⁷

In 1835 Dr. Chapman was sent together with General Lloyd to explore the country, to examine the nature of its climate and to investigate the potentialities of the place. Here they spent the winter in 1836 and partly in 1837. On the receipt of their report it was finally decided to go ahead with the plan of building a sanatorium at Darjeeling.¹⁸

Annexation of Darjeeling

In 1848 Dr. Campbell, the then superintendent of Darjeeling had been authorized by the British Government to have an interview with the King of Sikkim in view of further cementing the already existing relationship between the British and the King. He was accompanied by Sir Joseph Hooker, an eminent explorer and naturalist. The Dewan of the king who was against any further relations between the British and the Raja

13 L.S.S. O'Malley, ed. *Bengal District Gazetteers Darjeeling*, New Delhi, Logo Press, rept. 1999, p. 20.

14 *Ibid*, 21

15 Sanjay Biswas and Sameer Roka, *Darjeeling: Truth and Beyond*, Darjeeling, Systematic Press 2007, p. 6.

16 Jahar Sen, *Darjeeling a Favored Retreat*, New Delhi, Indus Publication, p. 15.

17 K.C. Bhanja, *History of Darjeeling and the Sikkim Himalaya*, New Delhi, Gyan Publishing House, 1993, p. 18.

18 Jahar Sen, *op cit*.

tried his best to block the interview with the Raja. It has been said that the Dewan was dealing in wares which the British could supply better and cheaper so he was afraid of losing his trade monopoly if the British were to enter into any trade agreement with Raja regarding the supply of wares. After a long delay the meeting between the British representatives and the Raja of Sikkim took place on the east bank of the Tista River in January 1849. As they were returning they were caught and imprisoned at Tumlong, the then capital of Sikkim.¹⁹

The British Government protested vehemently against the imprisonment of its representatives. Unfortunately their protest was not heeded by the authorities in Sikkim. A punitive expedition was launched by the British in February, 1850. This expedition culminated in the annexation of the whole of the district of Darjeeling, a territory of nearly 640 square miles and the withdrawal of the allowance for the king of Sikkim.²⁰

The Anglo-Bhutan War

The British relationship with the kingdom of Bhutan commenced in 1772, prior to this there is little record to prove that the British had any political relations with Bhutan. Ever since its establishment in 1510, Cooch Behar had been targeted by Bhutanese. As years went on the Bhutanese incursions increased both in temp and frequency. In the war of succession in Cooch Behar the Bhutanese interfered and put the stepbrother of late Raja infant Raja Debendra Narayan (1764-66) as the claimant to the throne. Nazir Dev Rudra Narayan wanted to enthrone his nephew Khagendra Narayan. In order to foil the attempt of Bhutanese, Nazir Dev sought the help of British East India Company. The British extended their assistance. An agreement was thus signed on 5th April, 1773 by which Cooch Behar was asked to pay immediately ` 50,000 to the British to meet expenses of the troop deployed to assist them and subsequently, to pay one half of the revenue of the State to the British East India Company. The British sent a small force and the Bhutanese were driven out of Cooch Behar and three forts of Daling, Chitchacotta and Passakha in the Bhutanese territory were also occupied. In their desperation the Bhutanese appealed for peace and the pace treaty was concluded on 25th April 1774 at Fort William in Calcutta.²¹

The terms of the treaty demanded that Deb Raja, the king of Bhutan should respect the territory of the East India Company and deliver up *ryats* running away from company's territories. The Bhutanese could seek justice from the courts of the British Government against any British subjects. Bhutan should refuse shelter to any persons hostile to the English and should allow English troops to follow them to Bhutan. The Company also sought permission to cut timber from the forest under the hills of

19 K.C. Bhanja, *History of Darjeeling and Sikkim Himalaya*, p. 19-23.

20 *Ibid.*

21 Nagendra Singh, *Bhutan: A Kingdom in the Himalayas*, New Delhi, Thomson Press (India) Ltd, 1972, pp. 29-30.

Bhutan and the protection of wood cutters. As the British had access to both Bhutan and Tibet, Warren Hastings, sent trade-cum-intelligence mission to Bhutan and Tibet. The relations between Bhutan and the British went on without any major incidence of discontentment till 1826.²²

In 1826, the relations of Bhutan and the East India Company got strained. The bone of contention was the conflict over Duars (passes) of which there were as many as eighteen i.e. seven Assam Duars and eleven Bengal Duars. The whole area came to be known as the Athara (Eighteen) Duars of which eleven was known as Bengal Duars were situated between the Tista and Manas, while the seven known as the Assam Duars were situated between the Manas and the Dhanasiri. While Bhutan had control over the Bengal Duars which they had won from the Muslim rulers the Assam Duars were not in their custody. They were controlled by the Ahoms who could not maintain law and order in the area and were, therefore, led to the purchase security by giving over their Duars to the Bhutanese in lieu of an annual payment of yak tails, ponies, musk, gold dust and blankets. Thus, when the British occupied Lower Assam, they renewed and continued the engagements made by the Ahom rulers with the Bhutan Government. These arrangements were so complicated that soon dispute arose. As the payments made were in kind question as to the real value of the articles came up often. Their actual value often fell below the Bhutanese assessment and this led to the arrears of payments due from Bhutan Government. When the British asked for the clearance of such arrears the Bhutanese took offense and retaliated by plundering the frontier areas. Such incidents embittered relations between the British Government and the Bhutanese. The period from 1828 to 1864 the relations between the two powers were far from cordial.²³

The British was in favour settling the dispute through negotiations. In 1838, the Governor General, William Bentinck sent Captain Pemberton to Bhutan as his Envoy to settle the terms of commercial intercourse between the states and to effect such adjustment of the tribute payable for the Duars as it might reduce the chances of misunderstanding arising from that source. The treaty proposed by Captain Pemberton was rejected. On the failure of this mission the British authorities contemplated the annexation of Duars permanently. In 1841 all the Assam Duars were taken over and a compensation of ` 10000 was paid to Bhutan annually.²⁴

The annexation of Assam Duars did not solve the disturbances at the frontier. The Bengal Duars continued to be a pain in the neck of the British. After 1857 the raids of Bhutanese on the British frontier increased considerably. In 1861 some British residents of Cooch Behar were abducted by the Bhutanese. The British demand surrender of the British subjects but the Bhutanese did not oblige. The British Government of India sent

²² *Ibid*, pp. 29-34

²³ *Ibid*, pp. 35-36.

²⁴ *Ibid*, pp. 36-37.

another mission to Bhutan to bring about a peaceful settlement of the issue. The mission was led by Ashley Eden. This mission too was a complete failure. Now the British Government of India decided to capture Ambaree Fallacottah and in addition withhold payment of subsidy to Bhutan for Assam Duars. The annexation order was conveyed to Bhutan by a *Khareeta*, legal instrument special to the Indian region signifying some sort of direction from a superior to an inferior power. As Bhutan refused to answer the British *Khareeta* the British proceeded with the annexation of Bengal Duars and the Anglo-Bhutanese war (1864) started. By January 1865 the occupation of Bengal Duars was completed. As the British forces threatened full scale military operation into the heartland of Bhutan, the Bhutanese Government relented and asked for peace.²⁵

The Treaty of Sinchula

The peace negotiations which ensued between British and Bhutan were concluded by a treaty. This treaty was signed at Sinchula on November 11, 1865. Treaty is known to Bhutanese as the Ten-Article Treaty of Rawa Pani.²⁶ According to the Treaty of Sinchula the country ceded to the British Government comprised the Athara Duars, a narrow strip of territory averaging about twenty two miles in width and 250in length, lying at the foot of the hills. The eastern Duars lying east of the Sankos River have been incorporated with the Goalpara and Kamrup districts of Assam.²⁷ In 1866 a slip of hill territory of 486 square miles, which was annexed from Bhutan by the treaty of Sinchula, had been added to the district of Darjeeling.²⁸ This area was made Kalimpong sub-division subsequently.²⁹ Thus in 1866, the Darjeeling district consisted of two sub-divisions only namely, Darjeeling and Kalimpong. In 1891, the Kurseong subdivision was formed from sadar sub-division.³⁰ Today the Hilly Regions of Darjeeling District includes three subdivisions namely Darjeeling, Kalimpong and Kurseong.³¹

The Growth of Darjeeling as a Tourist Destination

Tourism as an industry came into the hills of Darjeeling with the arrival of British and got official recognition in the year 1835. This is the year the township of Darjeeling was formally inaugurated. Its temperate and cool climate and enchanting hills full of flora and fauna Darjeeling soon became a destination most sought after by the tourists who wanted to escape from the scorching summer heat of the plains of Bengal.³² The tourists

25 *Ibid*, pp. 39-46.

26 *Ibid*, p. 46

27 J. Claude White, *Sikkim & Bhutan Twenty one years on the North-East Frontier 1887-1908*, Delhi, Vivek Publishing House, 1971, p. 281.

28 Jahar Sen, *op cit*, p. 16.

29 L S S O'Malley, *op cit*. p. 27.

30 Jahar Sen, *op cit*, p. 16.

31 Sukla Chakraborti, *Fragile Mountain Eco-System and Sustainable Development in Darjeeling Himalayas*, p. 37.

32 Kamal Kumar Gurung, "A Note on the Present State of Tourism in Darjeeling" in *Discursive Hills Studies*

who visited Darjeeling following the opening of the township were mainly Europeans. As years rolled by the certain well-to-do Indians like barristers of the Calcutta High Court, the Maharajas of the Princely states also started heading for Darjeeling during the summer.³³

The British who came to work for East India Company could not cope with the heat of the plains of Bengal and to escape from this they started flocking to the hills of Darjeeling whenever they could. Soon Darjeeling became so popular that it is begun to be acclaimed as the “Queen of the Hills”. The British found the climate of Darjeeling conducive for tea cultivation and started numerous tea gardens which brought financial stability to the economy of the hills.³⁴ It is the continued infrastructural developments of many years that made Darjeeling a tourist-friendly hill station. A study of Tourism Industry in the region should include a moderate description of the various developments during the British period (1835-1947) which made Darjeeling the “Queen of the Hills”.

The People

When the British acquired Darjeeling in 1835, it was mostly covered with forest. The population of the whole district was about 100 persons only. With the arrival of Campbell as the Superintendent of Darjeeling the population scenario underwent a drastic change. He worked hard to instil confidence in the minds of people about the British rule and thus encouraged the local tribes to settle down in the territory. As a result the population of the hills showed an upward trend. An addition to the already existing population took place when people from the neighbouring country Nepal, began to flock to Darjeeling because of the abundant job opportunities offered by the Tea Industry of Darjeeling.³⁵

In the course of time even the European population of Darjeeling showed an upward trend. In the year 1872 the district did not contain more than 419 Europeans and 32 Eurasians whereas by 1907 the number of the former has risen to 1,309 and of the latter to 329. This increase in the number of Europeans was due to the development of Tea Industry, which offered supervising to job entirely for Europeans and the establishment of the town of Darjeeling as sanatorium.³⁶

The population of Darjeeling had always been exceedingly heterogeneous. The majority of the people in the hills are of Mongolian origin, belonging chiefly of Lepchas, Bhutias and Tibetans. There are also few people from the plains mostly businessmen

in History, Polity and Economy, P.J. Victor, Prabhat Pradhan, *et al*, ed. Darjeeling, St. Joseph’s College, 2007, p. 225.

³³ [url:www.exploredarjeeling.com/history.htm](http://www.exploredarjeeling.com/history.htm) on 16-11-2008

³⁴ Harish C. Mukhia, *The Development of Darjeeling through Tea*, p. 225.

³⁵ L S S O’Malley, *op cit*. pp. 35-36.

³⁶ *Ibid*, p. 37.

who were attracted to the hills for business reasons. The dominant race in Darjeeling is the Nepalese. They are a capable, cheerful and alert people, and are essentially a virile race.³⁷

Apart from the above mentioned races there are also other people belonging to different communities like Bengalis and Marwaries have been living in Darjeeling for many years. Many of them have made Darjeeling Hills their first home and have intermingled with the local communities so well that they speak Nepali language fluently. Nepali language is the *Lingua Franca* of this place. Other languages like English, Hindi and Bengalis are also spoken and understood in town areas and any business can be transacted very comfortably with the help of any of these languages.³⁸

The Lepchas are a tribe who were the aboriginal inhabitants of the country, who call themselves Rong, i.e. the squatters, and their country the land of caves. Formerly they possessed all the hills country of Darjeeling and Sikkim, but about 250 years ago the Tibetans invaded their country and drove them into the lower valley and gorges and in 1706 the tract east to the Tista, which is now known as Kalimpong was conquered and taken by Bhutanese. These people are born naturalists and have separate names for nearly every bird, plant orchid and butterfly. The Lepchas are not prolific like other races of the hills and that is one of the reasons for saying that they are a vanishing tribe.³⁹

The religions of the people here are mainly Hinduism, Buddhism, Animism and Christianity. A small percentage of Muslims are also found here. People of all religions live in peace and harmony. Communal disturbance is unknown to the hills.⁴⁰

Means of Communication

Good communication facilities are imperative to the development of any area. The developers of Darjeeling seem to have understood this maxim more than anybody else because as soon as they acquired Darjeeling they thought of linking it with the plains of Bengal by means of Road and Railways. The task of constructing a road from Siliguri to Darjeeling was entrusted to Lord Napier who was a lieutenant in the Royal Engineers. The road was laid out in midst of the thick forest and along the steep ridges for a length of 40 miles. This road later on came to be known as the Old Military road. Even today this road is partly used for transport.⁴¹

The Tea Industry of Darjeeling had an amazing growth in the 1850s. As the industry progressed the need for transportation also increased manifold. The old military road

³⁷ *Ibid*, p. 40.

³⁸ Sanjay Biswas and Sameer Roka, *op.cit.* p. 8.

³⁹ L.S.S O'Malley, *op cit.* p. 44.

⁴⁰ Sanjay Biswas and Sameer Roka, *op. cit.* p. 8.

⁴¹ L .S .S O'Malley, *op cit.* p. 132.

was found not suitable for wheeled traffic. The need of another road which could be used for transporting tea to the plains of Bengal for shipping abroad became a necessity. The Government of the day sanctioned the making of another cart road. The construction of this road began in 1861. The first half of the road from Darjeeling to Kurseong was opened for traffic in 1864. By 1869 the whole road was ready for traffic.⁴² This road connects Darjeeling to the plains of Bengal and even today it is the main high way that bridges Darjeeling Hills with Siliguri. This road came to be known as the Hill Cart Road. Among the many roads which connects Darjeeling Hills with other parts of India the Hill Cart Road occupies a prominent position as it is one of the best mountain roads in India for scenic beauty.⁴³

Another road which comes next to Hill Cart Road in the order of importance is the Tista Valley Road. It is a highway for travelers and merchants going to Sikkim and Tibet. It runs through the banks of the Tista, for a distance of 34 miles.⁴⁴ Of the two roads (Tista Valley Road and the Road via Takdah) from Darjeeling to Tista Bridge, the best is that going along the Takdah ridge from Ghoom, which is 17 miles long and sinks from an elevation of 7,000 feet to 700 feet above sea level. For the first three miles it winds through great Rangarun forest and is fairly level, but then it dips down rapidly till the 6th mile. Later it descends by sharp zig-zags through some magnificent forest scenery to Pashok, where a beautiful view of the meeting of the Tista and Rangit can be seen. The other road from Darjeeling descends rapidly pass Lebong to the dak bungalow at Badamtam, 4000 feet below and 8 miles distant from Darjeeling, where there is a magnificent view of the Great Rangit is reached, after which it branches off, to the right along its southern bank as far as the junction with the Tista; it then follows the course of the latter river till the Tista bridge is reached.⁴⁵

The Tea Industry of Darjeeling played a crucial role in connecting Darjeeling with the plains of Bengal by road. The same industry as it grew rapidly felt the need for more transportation facilities. The amount of goods which could be carried by road was limited so the need for a railway was keenly felt. In 1878-79 a Company was started for the purpose of constructing, maintaining and working of a steam tramway between the terminus of the railway at Siliguri and Darjeeling. The government gave substantial aid to the enterprise by permitting the line to be laid along the Hill Cart Road. The construction of the line started in 1879. In 1881 the line was open for traffic as far as Darjeeling from Siliguri. A new name "Darjeeling Himalayan Railway" was given to the steam tram line. The highest point of this railway line is Ghoom and after that station the line descends for some 4 miles to Darjeeling with an average gradient of 1 in 31.5 feet. To the ordinary traveller of this railway, winding in and out among the mountains, below great crags and over deep precipices, appears a wonderful piece

⁴² *Ibid*,

⁴³ *Ibid*, p. 136.

⁴⁴ *Ibid*, p. 137.

⁴⁵ *Ibid*,

of engineering work.⁴⁶ In the year 1999, UNESCO's International Council Monuments and World Heritage enlisted Darjeeling Himalayan Railway as the World Heritage Train.⁴⁷

Tourists move away from home to visit another for leisure and pleasure. The only means to contact home when they are far way is communication system. Telephones were not widespread during the British time in India. The Post and Telegraph was doing the job of communication which is mainly done through telephone and e-mail today. The British Government realizing this urgent and important need started a Post and Telegraph Office in Darjeeling on the Mackenzie Road. By 1906 there were 33 post offices in the whole district of Darjeeling and 305 miles of Postal communication. Though no detailed record could be found about the number of postal transaction but from the enumeration which was done between August 1905 and February 1906 it appears that an average of 5650 postal articles were distributed daily.⁴⁸

The later and the middle half of the 19th century Darjeeling witnessed the visit of world famous personalities to Darjeeling. Among them Sir Joseph Hooker, the botanist deserves special attention as he had explored the Himalayas and brought about the Himalayan journal that describes the various types of medicinal and other plants available in the hills of Darjeeling. Alexander Csoma de'Koros, the Hungarian scholar who painstakingly translated many Tibetan and Sanskrit manuscripts into English, was instrumental in compiling the first Anglo-Tibetan Dictionary. He breathed his last in Darjeeling and his tomb continues to be a place of pilgrimage of many Hungarian nationals.⁴⁹

The Evolution of Hotels

The evolution of hotels in Darjeeling started in 1839. The first hotel built in Darjeeling was 'The Darjeeling Family Hotel', which contained only 12 rooms. It was followed by 'Wilson's Hotel' which was established in a two storied house containing 18 rooms. Then Hotel Woodlands came to be established followed by Drum Druid, Rockville, Bellevue, and the Central Hotel, which could accommodate 40 boarders.⁵⁰

Hotel Mount Everest, which was completed on the 12th October, 1915, was the most modern Hotel of the time. The opening of the Hotel took place with a formal fashionable gathering and dinner in an evening of 1915. The specialty of this hotel was that it was built according to the latest principles adopted in all continental hotels.

46 *Ibid*, p. 133.

47 Sanjay Biswas and Sameer Roka, *op. cit.*, p. 29.

48 L S S O'Malley, *op. cit.* p. 142.

49 Kamal Kumar Gurung, *op. cit.*, p. 225-226.

50 E.C. Dozey, 'A Concise History of the Darjeeling District since 1835,' Calcutta, Jetsun Publishing House, rept. 1989, pp. 27-28.

Any occupants of the hotel could enjoy a view of over 100 miles of snowy mountain range from the window. The Hotel had a majestic look as it stands well above the town on the Auckland Road.⁵¹

As accommodation is one of the most essential facilities that a tourist destination should offer to the incoming tourists, it is important to have an idea of the number of hotels and Dak bungalows that existed during the time of British in Darjeeling. Given below is the list of Hotels:⁵²

Table I

List of Hotels in Darjeeling (1839 to 1922)

No	Name	Location
1.	Bellevue	Commercial Row
2.	Carrets (Central House)	Mount Pleasant Road
3.	Central Hotel	Post Office Road
4.	Drum Druid	Commercial Row
5.	L.J. Vado, Ltd.	-Do-
6.	Hotel Mount Everest	Auckland Road
7.	Park Hotel	Macadow Bank Road
8.	Rockville (The Grand)	Harman's Road
9.	Woodlands	Off Cart Road
10.	Ada Villa	Observatory Hill
11.	Alice Villa	Mount Pleasant Road
12.	Annandale	Cart Road
13.	Beachwood House	Mackenzie Road
14.	Caroline Villa	Kutchery Roa
15.	El Esparanza	-Do-
16.	Fern Cottage	Post Office Road
17.	Havelock House	Auckland Road
18.	La Roche	Kutchery Road
19.	May Cottage	Lloyd's Road
20.	Moss Bank	Car Road
21.	The Labyrinth	Auckland Road
Ghum		
22.	Balaclava Hotel	Old Military Road
Kurseong		
23.	Clarendon Hotel	Cart Road
24.	Sorabjee's Hotel	-Do-
25.	Wood Hill	Club Road

51 *Ibid*, p. 28.

52 *Ibid*, p. 29-30.

Dak Bungalows

Apart from the hotels there were bungalows in many places of the Darjeeling hilly terrain to offer accommodation to tourists who visited Darjeeling. The Dak Bungalows were meant for providing accommodation to the tourists who would like to enjoy the beauty of the hills a bit away from the hustle and bustle of life in Darjeeling Town. These bungalows were built in the small towns and rural centers. The Dak bungalows provided accommodation to the tourists who obtained a pass from the concerned authorities. The list of Dak Bungalows is given below.⁵³

Table 2

List of Dak Bungalows in rural areas

No.	Places	Distance in miles from Darjeeling
1.	Badamtan	7.5
2.	Jorpokhri	12.5
3.	Kalijhora	32 (via Tista Bridge)
4.	Kalimpong	28 (via Rangit)
5.	Mirik	32 (via Pashok)
6.	Pashok	26
7.	Pedong	18.5
8.	Phalut	43
9.	Rangarun	50
10.	Rayeng	7.5
11.	Sandakphu	25
12.	Senchal	37
13.	Tanglu	6
14.	Tista Bridge	23,22 (via Pashok), 19 (via Rangit)

Educational Institutions

The Christian missionaries were the pioneers in education in Darjeeling hills. When the British took over the Darjeeling Hills popular education was unknown to the masses. Apart from few well to do people who afford private tutors for their children and Buddhist monasteries which taught their novices to chant the Tibetan texts there was no educational institution worth the name. The first attempt in this direction was made by W. Start, a private missionary by opening a school for Lepchas. After him came a band of German missionaries among whom Niebel dedicated himself to the work of education of Lepchas.⁵⁴

The educational work in the hills of Darjeeling took a quantum jump with the arrival of William Macfarlane, in 1809. As he himself was from the mountains he could better

⁵³ L S S O'Malley, *op cit.* p. 142.

⁵⁴ *Ibid*, p. 170

understand the problems of the hill people. He had the idea of offering education for each and every child within the possible limits. He realized that his dream of popular education would not bear fruit unless trained teachers were available for the work of education. With this intention in mind he collected few hill lads and to teach and train them to become the future instructors. This constituted the nucleus of the Training school in Kalimpong. He also appealed to the government to offer scholarship for his students. The Government of the day came willingly to his help. Having realized the fact that Hindi is akin to Nepali, the language of the hills, he made Hindi as the medium of instruction and prepared very many text books in Hindi. He was also able to start a host of primary schools all over the District with the grant of the government.⁵⁵ As time went on he was able to induce the planters and several village headmen to built schools in their own respective places and look after the needs of the teachers. In 1873 there were 25 primary schools with 615 boys and girls receiving instruction.⁵⁶

The government too opened its own Anglo-Vernacular schools at Darjeeling and Kurseong reaching out to the Children of Bengali, and other immigrants of the district. The instruction given in the primary schools was of the simplest nature like reading, writing, spelling, arithmetic a little geography, and very little science.⁵⁷

The Schools for educating the children of the Europeans were opened in Darjeeling by Christian missionaries. Among them St. Paul's School, St. Joseph College and Loreto Convent at Darjeeling Town, Victoria School and Dow Hill Girls' School at Kurseong were of high repute. It is to be said that all of them remain as the most sought after educational institutions even today.⁵⁸

Amusements

The British who lived in Darjeeling were interested in various types of entertainment. During the season of favorable weather various outdoor games and entertainment shows were held in various parts of Darjeeling Hills. Cricket and hockey played at the Government House ground attracted a large number of people. Golf was another game which attracted many who were keen to play. Every Sunday the Golf link at Sanchel had matches going on. The Polo was played at Race Course at Lebung. The annual sports day organized at St. Joseph College was a really an event that pulled a large throng consisting of about 500 Europeans and 3000 locals.⁵⁹ The other amusements included Bioscope Shows at Palace of Varieties, dancing, tableaux, theatricals, tennis at squash courts in the Amusement Club, flower, dog and horse shows and carnivals.⁶⁰

55 *Ibid*, p. 171

56 *Ibid*, p. 171-172.

57 *Ibid*, p. 172

58 *Ibid*, p. 177

59 E.C. Dozey, "A Concise History of the Darjeeling District since 1835", p. 115.

60 *Ibid*.

The Tea Industry

Tea Industry has played a unique role in the development of Darjeeling as a tourist destination. The establishment of Tea Industry in Darjeeling is due to the unwavering effort of Campbell, then Superintendent of Darjeeling.⁶¹ In 1833, the Governor General William Bentinck thought about the prospect of tea growing in India and appointed a committee in 1834 to formulate a plan for the introduction of tea plantations. Gordon, a botanist by profession was sent to China to bring tea seeds and seedlings and in 1835 he brought back the same to be distributed to various parts of India, most in the hilly regions. At about the same time, Major Crommellin started an experimental Tea Nursery in Lebong, Darjeeling.⁶²

In 1840 Campbell started the experimental growth of tea in Darjeeling. By 1856 the industry began to be developed on an extensive scale. In 1856 the Tea Industry was established as a commercial enterprise. In the same year Alubari tea garden was opened by the Kurseong and Darjeeling Tea Company and another tea garden was started on Lebong spur by the Darjeeling Land Mortgage Bank.⁶³

In the meantime the development of the industry in the hills had been even more rapid as the suitability of the soil and climate to the growth of tea became apparent and Government came forward to offer land on favorable terms to the investors. By the end of 1866, i.e. only ten year after the establishment of Tea Industry as a commercial enterprise there were about 39 gardens and 10,000 acres under cultivation. The growth of Tea Industry reached considerable height with regard to production and the area brought under cultivation. By 1906 the Tea Industry occupied about 50,600 acres of land for the cultivation. Around this time the Tea Industry experience a lull in the market as well as the area for extension as the almost all the available land was already used for cultivation.⁶⁴

Darjeeling tea has a unique flavor and is well known all over the world. Many tourists visit Darjeeling to see tea gardens and tea manufacturing process. Thus industry of Darjeeling provided the foundation for the developing Darjeeling as a tourist destination. It is to be mentioned that the tea plantation gives a captivating look to the Darjeeling Hill Regions as it enhances the scenic beauty of the hills.

The Development of Tourism Sites

As the British took up the administration of Darjeeling Hills they made an all out effort in developing the whole area into a very attractive tourist spot. British erected numerous buildings for various purposes which in the course of time became

61 L S S O'Malley, *op. cit.* p. 72.

62 Harish C. Mukhia, *The Development of Darjeeling through Tea*, p. 220.

63 L S S O'Malley, *op. cit.* pp. 72-73.

64 *Ibid*, pp. 73-76.

monuments that attract numerous tourists both domestic and international. A quick review of the various tourism sites is made in the following pages.

The Religious Sites

Among the many churches in Darjeeling Town St. Andrew's Church deserves special mention. The foundation stone for this Church was laid on 30th November, 1843. It could accommodate a congregation of 150 persons. The total cost of the buildings came to ₹ 9,000. In 1883 a clock tower was added with a bell with cost of ₹ 6,600. Along the wall of the interior of the church are inlaid mural tablets to the memory of some of the oldest residents and settlers, chief among them being Lt. General Lloyd, the discoverer of Darjeeling.⁶⁵

St. Columbus's Church was built in May 1804 by the Church of Scotland Mission. The Church of the Immaculate Conception was built in 1893 on the site of the old Loreto Chapel by Rev. Bro. Rotsaert, SJ who also designed St. Joseph's College, North Point. It can accommodate a congregation of 300, and has some beautiful Bavarian statuary presented by the parish. Another church called Union Chapel was built in 1869 on the Auckland Road for the Protestants who are not communicants of the above mentioned churches.⁶⁶

The Darjeeling monastery, which once stood on Observatory Hill, was built in 1765 as a branch of the Phodang Monastery of Sikkim. It was looted and sacked by the Nepalese in 1815, leaving only a small shrine called Mahakal. What remained of it was transferred in 1860-61 to the north east of St. Andrew's Church, and in 1878-79 was finally removed to Bhutia Busty, where it still exists.⁶⁷

The Ging monastery, which is three miles north of the Darjeeling town, is reached by the Rangit Road to the east of Mall. It was originally situated below the village of Ging but was demolished under certain political differences after 1860-61. When these differences were settled in 1879, after the Sikkim trouble, by the late Ashley Eden, a thatched structure was erected on the present site, which in 1896-98 was rebuilt in stone through the exertions of the high priest, Lodio Lama.⁶⁸ Ghum monastery was founded in 1875 by Lama Sherabgyatsa, one of the yellow-sects Geylukpa, and was intended primarily as a place for political meeting more than a monastery. On 27th March, 1918, this monastery witnessed the consecration of an image of Champa or Maitraya, the coming (5th) Buddha.⁶⁹

The Hindu Mandir had been the one of the oldest buildings in the whole of Darjeeling. The antiquity of this temple could be proved by the fact that when the first

65 E.C. Dozey, *op. cit.*, pp. 75.

66 *Ibid.*

67 *Ibid*, p. 79

68 *Ibid*, p. 80

69 *Ibid.*

Marwari firm was established in Darjeeling, in 1830, this temple was already existing at the same site. The temple was erected by Rangit Singh, an ex-army Subadar employed in the local Police Force. The temple has five separate buildings each one dedicated to a different Hindu god.⁷⁰

The Brahmo Mandir or Theistic church which is associated to the Sadharan Somaj of Calcutta, was consecrated on the first Baisak (15th April) 1880. This building could accommodate a congregation of 100 people at its services which were held every Sunday morning at 8.30 am in Bengali, and occasionally in English.⁷¹

There were two Mosques during the time of British in Darjeeling, namely the Jamma Masjid and Chota Masjid in Butcher Busty. According the available historical records the Jamma Masjid was erected by Naser Ali Khan, Daroga Salamat Ali, Munshee Tarikulla and other Mohammedans most of whom were Government servants. The building of the Mosque had taken place between the years 1851 and 1862. The Anjuman Islamia was established in December, 1909. It took charge of the Jamma and Chota Musjids, rebuilt the former at an expenditure of ₹ 13,000, and established schools for boys and girls. A Musafir Khana had been built for the reception of travellers of any caste or creed, and furnished them with a shelter free of charge for period of three days.⁷²

The Secular Sites

The Planter's Club which was formed in 1863 was first located in 'Thron Cottage', then in 'Alice Villa' and finally established itself in a building above and to the east of Commercial Row. It was converted in 1908 into a Limited Liability Co, and styled "The Darjeeling Club, Ltd". Officers attached to the several services and planters were entitled to have its membership. Others too, if properly vouched for, were readily admitted as members. There were stables for members' horses as also a three-storied concrete structure erected to the east of the main building for the accommodation of servants.⁷³

The Chinese Club

The Chinese population of both Kalimpong and Darjeeling increased in 1912 when the army called 'Chinese rabble' was repatriated from Tiber through British territory. Many were deserters who hid in the forest and later found employment in the Rinchipong block where extensive sawing was carried out by the European firms. These Chinese nationals found shelter in Darjeeling as the years went by and started a club on the

⁷⁰ *Ibid*, p. 81-82.

⁷¹ *Ibid*, p. 82

⁷² *Ibid*, p. 82-83.

⁷³ *Ibid*, p. 88

Jail Road. The club offered good Chinese dishes and facilities for gambling⁷⁴. For the purpose of public gathering a Town Hall was built. The construction of the Town Hall started with the laying of the foundation stone by Ronaldshay in October, 1917. This building was completed in 1921 and the estimated cost was ` 2.5 lakhs. Half of the amount was contributed by His Highness the Maharaja of Cooch Behar for memory of his late father Maharaja Nripendra Narain Bhup Bahadur.⁷⁵

The Pleasance Park is situated to the south-west of St. Andrew's Church. It covered 2.5 acres of ground. In the centre of the park there were two pavilions, meant for shelter in case of sudden rain. A separate bandstand was also erected for the purpose of having band shows during sunny afternoons.⁷⁶

The first Botanic Garden, during Sir Ashley Eden's tenure as Lieutenant Governor of Bengal, was laid out in 1876 at Rangiroon six miles east of Darjeeling. It was eventually abandoned in favour of the one below Eden Sanatorium owing to the frequent hailstorms. In 1878 the greater part of the present site was donated by W. Lloyd. He did not have any connection with Lt. General Lloyd, the discoverer of Darjeeling. The Lloyd Botanic Garden is named after W. Lloyd who was also the proprietor of the local Bank in Darjeeling.⁷⁷

The garden is divided into two main parts, the upper or indigenous section, and the lower or exotic section. Many of the paths intersecting it are lined with tea plants. The whole plot measuring 14 acres of land was neatly laid out, and contains many exotic plants including the Australian Blue Gum tree (eucalyptus). A pavilion was also built for use of picnic parties.⁷⁸

A number of exhibits were being added to the garden annually thereby making it correspondingly interesting to such visitors who were capable of appreciating its contents from a botanical point of view. In 1916 over 11,500 plants, over 5,173 dozens of annual seedlings, over 908 bulbs and over 417 packets of seeds were either exchanged or distributed to other gardens. In addition to these there were special collections of the seeds of Himalayan species made available.⁷⁹

At a short distance away from Darjeeling Railway Station down to the south is situated the beautiful Victoria Falls created by Kalijhora, a small stream. From a distance 100 feet high, it cascades down over a precipitous rock and rushes down to the valley below, through deep ravines to Sidrapong. There is a concrete bridge over

74 *Ibid*, p. 96-97

75 *Ibid*, p. 99

76 *Ibid*, p. 90-91. (Presently Bhanu Bhawan is being constructed on this site)

77 *Ibid*, p. 91

78 *Ibid*.

79 *Ibid*, p. 92

the stream. At Sidrapong Power Station, at an elevation of 3,500 ft above sea level and 3,300 ft below Darjeeling, down in the west, the waters of the Victoria Falls are harnessed for generating electricity for Darjeeling. It is said to be the first Hydel Project in India.⁸⁰

The land on which Birch Hill Park, stands was acquired by British Government in 1877 at a cost of ₹ 30,000. Material changes and improvements were effected by late Sir Ashley Eden in this park, which is 1.5 miles from Chowrasta. During the spring and summer months the cuckoo is heard all day long calling plaintively to its mate.⁸¹

Natural History Museum

Darjeeling was raised to the status of a Municipality in 1850. As a part of the improvement of Darjeeling Town a Natural History Museum was opened. The Museum functioned from a concrete structure containing 20 spacious rooms. Lord Carmichael was instrumental in allotting sufficient fund to have new building for the Museum. The new building was designed by Crouch, the Architect to the Government of West Bengal. The internal arrangement of the Museum was taken care by Annandale and F. H. Gravely of the Indian Museum Calcutta. The construction of the new building was completed in 1915, which contained a large gallery for exhibition purposes, a basement for storage, and an upper storey designed partly for the exhibition of living insets and partly for original research work.⁸²

The Darjeeling Himalayan Railway (DHR)

The journey to Darjeeling was a long and tedious one till 1878. Hill Cart road, completed in 1869 was the only way to Darjeeling from Siliguri. *Tongs* (mule cart) were the only means of travel by which travellers could reach Darjeeling. The whole journey from Siliguri to Darjeeling would take days.⁸³ Under these circumstances, Franklin Prestage hit upon the idea of having a steam tramway that connects Siliguri to Darjeeling. He approached the Government of West Bengal with detailed scheme in 1878. His proposal was gladly accepted in 1879 and the construction of the tramway was started and pushed on with great rapidity.⁸⁴

In 1880 (March) the line had been opened up to Tindharia, and Lytton, the first Viceroy to visit Darjeeling, travelled as far Tindharia from Siliguri by this railway. In 1881 the railway line up Darjeeling was completed and opened for traffic. The tramway

80 Nest & Wings, Guide to Darjeeling Area including Siliguri, Mirik, Kurseong, Kalimpong, A Travelers' Guide, New Delhi, Nest & Wings, 2006, p. 77.

81 E.C. Dozey, *op. cit.*, p. 93

82 *Ibid*, p. 94-95.

83 L S S O'Malley, *op. cit.* p. 133.

84 *Darjeeling and its Mountain Railway*, A Guide and Souvenir issued by the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway Company Ltd. Kolkata, 2002, p. 13-18.

now was christened as the “Darjeeling Himalayan Railway”. The Railway was used both for carrying goods and passengers. Tea, and fresh vegetables were carried from Darjeeling to Siliguri and items like rice, flour, oil and coal were brought from Siliguri to Darjeeling. It is estimated that in the year 1920 the railway carried 263082 passengers and 61704 tons of goods. The original cost of the 51 miles of railway from Siliguri to Darjeeling was ₹ 17, 50,000.⁸⁵

Darjeeling Himalayan Railway has been a great tourist attraction from the moment of its inception and continues even to this day. The famous American author Mark Twain, having travelled up and down by Darjeeling Himalayan Railway, described the journey as the “the most enjoyable day I have ever spent on earth.”⁸⁶

Conclusion

The History of the emergence of Darjeeling as a tourist destination goes back to the acceptance of Darjeeling by British as a gift from the Raja of Sikkim in 1835 and further annexation of the same territory. It is no exaggeration to say that it is Campbell, the first superintendent of Darjeeling, who laid the foundation of Darjeeling as a tourist destination. He with his ingenuity and hard work made the place into a beautiful British Town self-sufficient in many aspects.

If it is the climate that attracted the British towards Darjeeling, it is the Tea Industry started by them that attracted the migration of large number of people from the neighbouring country Nepal in search of employment in the Tea gardens. The Tea Industry brought financial stability to the Darjeeling Hills. It is not only the Asians who sought employment in the tea gardens but also the Europeans as the supervising jobs were exclusively reserved for them. As the population in Darjeeling Hills increased because of migration and growth, many missionaries came to preach the gospel. The coming of missionaries was a boon for Darjeeling as they brought with them education which helped the people to become self-reliant. It is because of the missionary schools and colleges that Darjeeling came to be known as one of the best education centres in India.

The temperate, cool-climate of Darjeeling coupled with ample facilities attracted large number of European tourists during summer to Darjeeling. The trend was followed by some wealthy Indians too. As the tourist inflow increased, the number of Hotels and Dak Bungalows too increased. The Tourism Industry began to bloom in Darjeeling hills. As communication with the plains of Bengal was essential for the growth and survival of Darjeeling, the government of the day planned and constructed many roads and among them the most outstanding one was the Hill Cart Road which connected Darjeeling to Siliguri. This road became very handy for the construction of

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

⁸⁶ Himal Call, Rotary International District 3240 Conference, Rotary Club of Darjeeling, 6-8 April, 2001.

the Himalayan Railway as the tracks of the railway were laid along the Hill Cart Road. As Darjeeling attracted people of various faiths, the centres of worship also became a necessity. Many centres of various religions were built to offer places of worship to people of various religions. The Buddhist monasteries, the churches, and the Hindu Mandirs attracted many tourists to Darjeeling.

The Tea, Timber and Tourism came to be associated with Darjeeling from the very beginning of the British rule in India. As the Tea Industry became the largest source of employment and income to the people of Darjeeling, Tourism Industry did not lag behind. It also recorded a steady growth over the years. So Tourism Industry could be counted as the second largest source of employment and finance to the hill economy of Darjeeling.

The History of the emergence of Darjeeling as a Tourist Destination, as we have seen, is full of interesting facts and events. It began, in 1835, and has grown over the years in a remarkable manner.