

## *Formation of Jammu and Kashmir State*

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Maharaja Ranjit Singh was born in 1780AD at Gujranwala Punjab. He assumed the ruler-ship of his father's territory from his mother in 1797 AD .He conquered Lahore in 1799, Amritsar in 1802, Central Punjab in 1803 and Ludhiana in 1806. but the Treaty of Amritsar 1809 between Maharaja Ranjit Singh and East India Company had fixed river Sutlej southern boundary of Lahore Durbar from British Empire. So he expanded his empire towards north and west. Consequently he conquered Jammu, Sind, Kangra, Multan, Peshawar, Kashmir etc. In this way he built a powerful empire, with Lahore its capital. It was in 1809, Gulab Singh of Jammu went to Lahore for service, where fortune prevailed upon him and Maharaja Ranjit Singh appointed the person a commander of a small regiment. Due to Treaty of Amritsar 1809, as a checkmate towards British territories Maharaja Ranjit Singh launched several campaigns against Afghans to expand his sphere of influence. Gulab Singh won the heart of Lahore Darbar as he showed his mettle in these expeditions . Thus he became a trusted general of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. Unfortunately, the forces of Maharaja Ranjit Singh at Jammu province were terrorized by a local intrepid chief "Mian Dido". He attacked the Sikh garrison at Jammu occasionally. No doubt a few expeditions were sent against him but of no use. At last Gulab Singh was deputed at the head of Sikh forces to liquidate the offender. He succeeded in his mission and Mian Dido was killed in action. Accordingly, fortunes of Gulab Singh turned the table as Maharaja Ranjit Singh handed over Jammu province to Gulab Singh in 1820 as Jagir who was permitted to maintain his army for peace as well.

Gulab Singh being energetic conquered Kishtawar in 1821AD, which enabled him to gauge the strength of his troops in the mountain warfare, so he maintained a strong force under General Zorawar Singh. Marching through Kishtawar the Dogra army fought the first battle in Ladakh at Pushkyun and second at Langkat, where Ladakhies were defeated badly in 1834AD, The subjugation of Ladakh was followed by Baltistan in 1841AD, with the conquest of Ladakh and Baltistan. Gulab Singh's dominion enveloped the Kashmir Valley from all sides. Thus he becomes the sole controller of trade in shawl wool, which functioned as a backbone for economy of Kashmir. The same increased his greed to search out an opportunity to acquire its possession and become the ruler of the state on the frontiers of India.

Maharaja Ranjit Singh died in 1839AD, as there was no strong successor of the dynasty to control the affairs, so bloodshed continued and disorder prevailed for years together. However 1843AD Dilip Singh a minor son of Maharaja Ranjit Singh sat on the throne, while his mother

Rani Jindan acted his regent. In the meantime English East India Company stationed their additional force at Ludhians, Ferozpure and Ambala across the river Sutlej, They also kept their forces at Sind which had created suspicion in the mind of Sikh chiefs of their evil plans. But the defeat of English East India company in the first Anglo-Afghan war of 1843AD lowered their prestige among Sikhs .The Sikhs underestimated their strength as they had defeated Afghans in Kashmir in 1819AD. This imbued the Sikhs to cross the river Sutlej which had remained the southern boundary of Lahore Darbar since 1809AD due to the Treaty of Amritsar. Lord Harding the then governor-general of India could not accept the highhandedness of the Sikhs .He declared a war against Lahore Darbar in October 1845AD.The Sikhs fought bravely but due to the treachery of some generals, they suffered defeat at various fronts viz. Mudki, Ferozpure, Buddewal etc by the English, but the final blow to the Lahore Darbar met at Sabroan on the banks of river Sutlej in Feb, 1846AD.After a tough fight the English came out victorious. The Sikhs fled from the battlefield and a good number of the retreated force drowned in river Sutlej. The bloodshed war ended by a treaty known in the history of India as Treaty of Lahore signed on March 9,1846AD.

The chief features of the Treaty Of Lahore 1846 were as;-

- 1-The Khalasa army was reduced to 20000 infantry and 12000 cavalry,
- 2-Sir Henry Lawrence was made British Resident at Lahore.
- 3-The Bist Jullande Doub and the Sikh areas to the left of river Sutlej were taken over by the English.
- 4-The English army was stationed at Lahore to keep peace and order in Punjab.
- 5-Dilip Singh was recognized as the ruler of Punjab and placed under the council of Regency .Ranijindan; his mother was appointed his regent.
- 6-The Sikhs had to pay 15000000 rupees in cash as war indemnity ,or pay 5000000 rupees in cash and cede the territory lying between River Beas and River Indus including the province of Kashmir and Hazara.

The Sikhs were unable to pay the whole amount, so they cede the territory lying between river Beas and Indus, paid 5000000 rupees in cash only. Further they agreed to recognize the independent sovereignty of Gulab Singh in his possession. Lord Harding the then Governor-General of British India decided to annex the Trans-Beas portion of Kulu Valley, Kangra and Nurpure to the British dominion and sold to Gulab Singh the territory of Kashmir and Hazara through a separate agreement known in the history of Kashmir, the Treaty of Amritsar 1846.This way the First Anglo –Sikh war of 1845-46 gave birth to the Treaty of Amritsar of 1846 which functioned a foundation stone in the formation of Jammu and Kashmir state.

## **Treaty of Amritsar 1846.**

The treaty of Amritsar March 16, 1846 possess ten articles which had given a detailed information about the transfer of Kashmir Valley to the Dogra chief of Jammu, The same had been endorsed by both the parties viz. Maharaja Gulab Singh on one side and Fredrick Currie and Brevet Major Henry Montgoery Lawrence from British Government. The treaty bore the following articles:

1. The British Government transfers and makes over forever, in independent possessions Maharaja Gulab Singh and all the hilly or mountainous country, with its dependencies, situated to the eastward of the river Ravi, including Chamba, and excluding Lahul, being part of the territories ceded to the British Government by the Lahore State, according to the provisions of Article IV of the Treaty of Lahore dated 9<sup>th</sup> March 1864.
2. The commissioners appointed by the British government shall lay down the eastern boundary of the tract transferred by the foregoing Article to Maharaja Gulab Singh and Maharaja Gulab Singh respectively for that purpose, and shall be defined in a separate engagement after survey.
3. In consideration of the transfer made to him and his heirs by the provisions of the foregoing Articles, Maharaja Gulab Singh will pay to the British Government the sum of Seventy Five Lakh Rupees (Nanuk Shahee), fifty lakhs to be paid on ratification of his TREATY and Twenty five lakhs on or before the first October of the current year, AD. 1846.
4. The limits of territories of Maharaja Gulab Singh shall not be at any time changed without the concurrence of the British Government.
5. Maharaja Gulab Singh will refer to the arbitration of the British Government and dispute or question that may arise between himself and the Government of Lahore or any other neighboring State, and will abide by the decision of the British Government.
6. Maharaja Gulab Singh engages for himself and heirs to join, with the whole of his Military Force, the British troops when employed within the hills or in the territories adjoining his possession.
7. Maharaja Gulab Singh engages never to take or retain in his service any British subject of any European or American state without the consent of the British Government.
8. Maharaja Gulab Singh engages to respect, in regard to the territory transferred to him, the provisions of Article V, VI and VII of the separate engagement between the British Government and Lahore Darbar, dated March 11, 1846.
9. The British Government will give its aid to Maharaj Gulab Singh in protecting his territories from external enemies.
10. Maharaja Gulab Singh acknowledges the supremacy of the British Government and will token of such supremacy present annually to the British Government one horse, twelve shawl goats of approved breed (six male six female) and three pairs of Kashmiri shawls.

Although Gulab Singh became the nominal ruler of Kashmir through the Treaty of Amritsar 1846, yet to get its actual possession proved an uphill task. His forces under Wazir Lakhpat were opposed by the Sikh troops as guided by the then Governor of Kashmir Sheikh Imam-ud-din. A battle was fought at the foot of the Shankaracharya hill, in which wazir Lakhpat was killed and his forces took shelter behind Hari Parbat Fort. Accordingly Gulab Singh appealed to the British Government for help as an article of the Treaty 1846 mentioned, so they dispatched a force under Sir Henny Lawrence to help Gulab Singh and establish his rule in Kashmir. On receiving information about British intervention, Sheikh Imam-ud-din left the valley along with his troops. Thus Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) came into being as a single political and geographical entity. The Treaty of Amritsar 1846 handed over the control of Kashmir state to the Dogra ruler (Gulab Singh) of Jammu who had earlier annexed Ladakh and Baltistan as well. Thus a new state comprising three distinct regions of three regions; Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh were formed with Maharaja Gulab Singh as its founder ruler.