

**PEACOCK VERSUS DRAGON: DIPLOMACY, STRATEGY,  
AND WAR 1914-1962**

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**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

in Arts

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**2024**

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## DECLARATION

I do hereby declare that the research work entitled 'PEACOCK VERSUS DRAGON: DIPLOMACY, STRATEGY, AND WAR 1914-1962' is an original work done by me under the supervision of **Professor Kaushik Roy**, Jadavpur University which was approved by the research committee.

To the best of my knowledge, this thesis is not substantially the same as those, which have already been submitted for a degree or other academic qualification at any other universities.

Date: 25.11.2024

*Yangden Lepcha*  
(YANGDEN LEPCHA)

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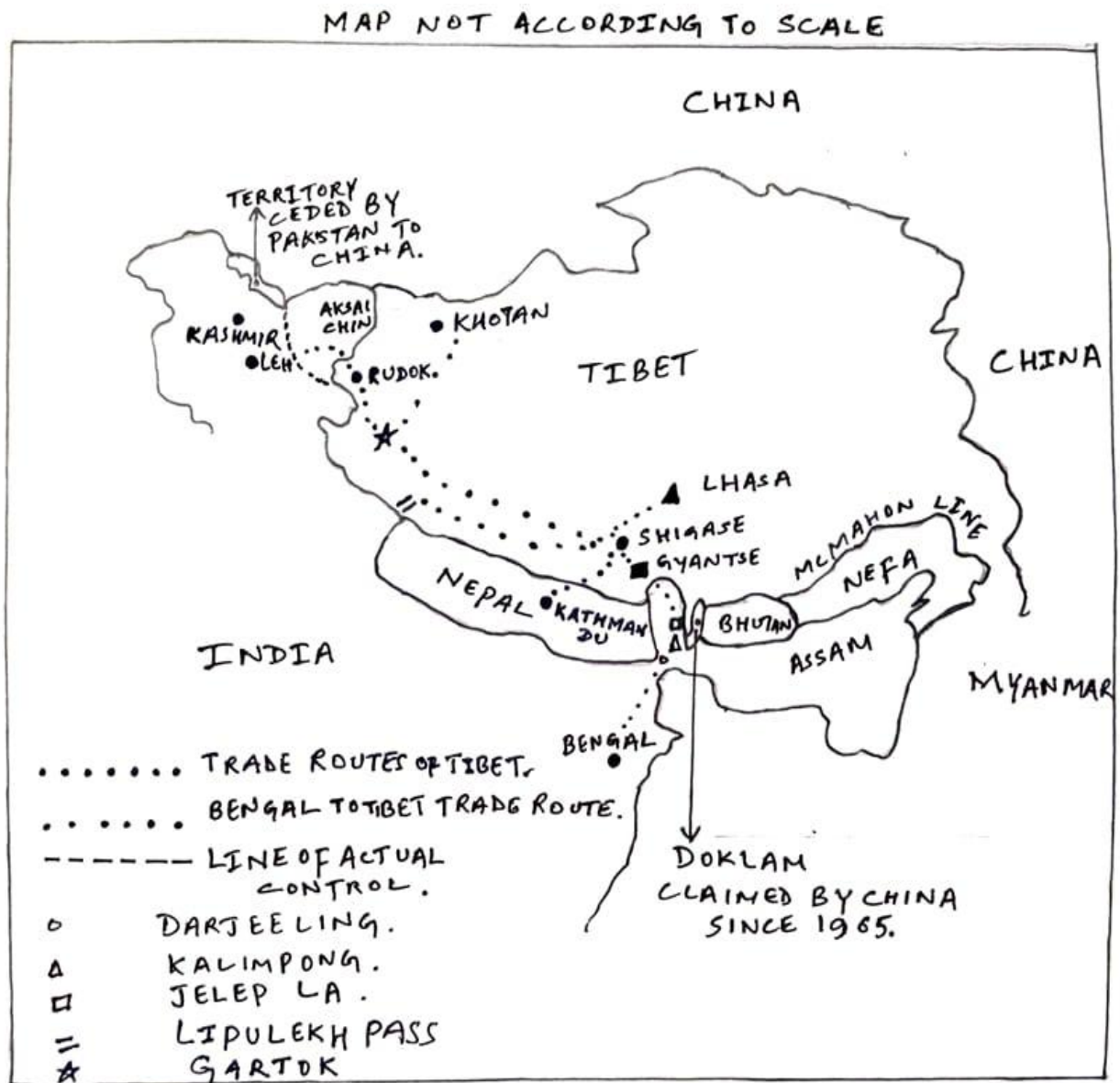
## Abbreviations

|                |                                                          |
|----------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>APSA</b>    | Arunachal Pradesh State Archive                          |
| <b>ASA</b>     | Assam State Archive                                      |
| <b>BBS</b>     | Bhutia Boarding School                                   |
| <b>BL</b>      | British Library                                          |
| <b>CCP</b>     | Chinese Communist Party                                  |
| <b>CR</b>      | Commonwealth Relations                                   |
| <b>EAD</b>     | External Affairs Department                              |
| <b>EIC</b>     | East India Company                                       |
| <b>FD</b>      | Foreign Department                                       |
| <b>F&amp;P</b> | Foreign and Political                                    |
| <b>GOI</b>     | Government of India                                      |
| <b>HMG</b>     | His Majesty's Government                                 |
| <b>IOR</b>     | India Office Records                                     |
| <b>JNMF</b>    | Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund                           |
| <b>MEA</b>     | Ministry of External Affairs                             |
| <b>NAI</b>     | National Archive of India                                |
| <b>NEF</b>     | North East Frontier                                      |
| <b>NEFA</b>    | North East Frontier Agency                               |
| <b>NMML</b>    | Nehru Memorial Museum and Library                        |
| <b>OUP</b>     | Oxford University Press                                  |
| <b>PCART</b>   | Preparatory Committee for the Autonomous Region of Tibet |
| <b>PLA</b>     | People's Liberation Army                                 |
| <b>PPCC</b>    | People's Political Consultative Council                  |
| <b>PRC</b>     | People's Republic of China                               |
| <b>R&amp;I</b> | Research and Intelligence                                |
| <b>SCD</b>     | Sarat Chandra Das                                        |
| <b>SWJN</b>    | Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru                       |
| <b>WBSA</b>    | West Bengal State Archive                                |

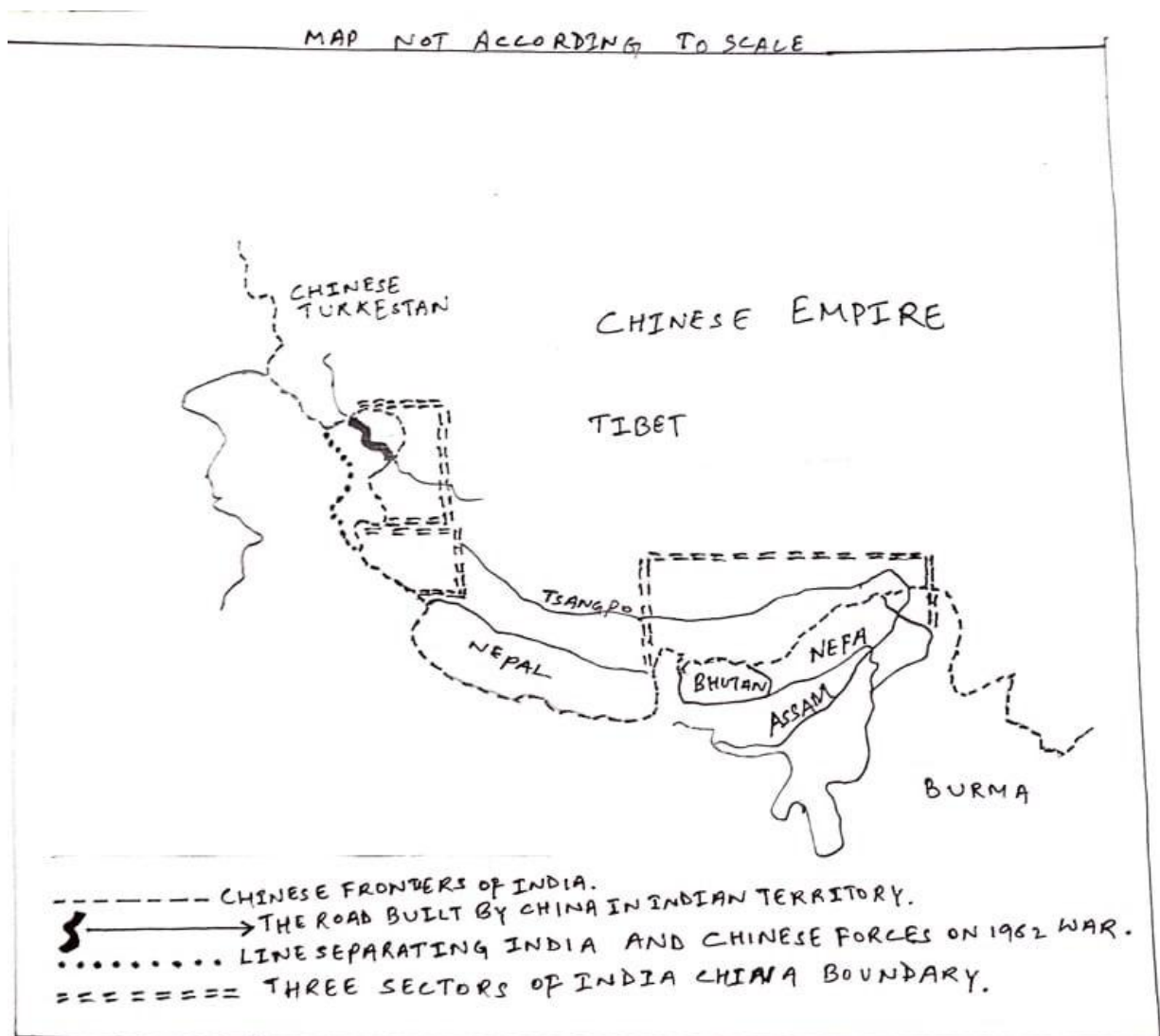
## Glossary

|                              |                                                                                                                                |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b><i>Ambam</i></b>          | The term meaning “high official” in the imperial government of Qing China.                                                     |
| <b><i>Bön</i></b>            | Ancient religion of Tibet.                                                                                                     |
| <b><i>Dalai Lama</i></b>     | The highest spiritual leader and Head of Tibetan Buddhism.                                                                     |
| <b><i>Drepung</i></b>        | One of the “great three” Gelug (Yellow Hat) monastery in Tibet.                                                                |
| <b><i>Dzongs</i></b>         | Fortified monasteries in Tibet and Bhutan.                                                                                     |
| <b><i>Gaden</i></b>          | The first monastery of the Gelugpa (Yellow Hat) School of Tibetan Buddhism. One of the “great three” Gelug monastery in Tibet. |
| <b><i>Hutukhtu</i></b>       | The Living Buddha.                                                                                                             |
| <b><i>Jingals</i></b>        | A large musket fired from a rest and was used in India and China.                                                              |
| <b><i>Jungpens</i></b>       | Governors of forts.                                                                                                            |
| <b><i>Kashag</i></b>         | The governing council of Tibet.                                                                                                |
| <b><i>Khache</i></b>         | Muslim merchants in Tibet.                                                                                                     |
| <b><i>Lama</i></b>           | Title for a teacher of the Dharma in Tibetan Buddhism.                                                                         |
| <b><i>Maund</i></b>          | Traditional Indian unit of mass measurement.                                                                                   |
| <b><i>Mendap</i></b>         | Fire arrows.                                                                                                                   |
| <b><i>Nor-bu-Ling-ka</i></b> | It was the summer palace of the successive Dalai Lamas.                                                                        |
| <b><i>Potala</i></b>         | The Dzong fortress in Lhasa capital of Tibet. It was the winter palace of the Dalai Lama from 1649 to 1959.                    |
| <b><i>Panchen Lama</i></b>   | The second most important religious Head in the Tibetan Buddhism.                                                              |
| <b><i>Pundits</i></b>        | The title of the native explorer given by Survey of India.                                                                     |
| <b><i>Sera</i></b>           | One of the “great three” Gelug (Yellow Hat) monastery in Tibet.                                                                |
| <b><i>Shapes</i></b>         | An honorific term for a member of the Kashag.                                                                                  |
| <b><i>Sikkimputtee</i></b>   | The title of the Raja of Sikkim.                                                                                               |
| <b><i>Tangkas</i></b>        | A silver currency of Tibet until 1941.                                                                                         |
| <b><i>Tashi-lhünpo</i></b>   | It’s a Monastery in U-Tsang province of Tibet founded by the 1 <sup>st</sup> Dalai Lama, Gyalwa Gedun Drupa, in 1447.          |
| <b><i>Tsongdu</i></b>        | National Assembly of Tibet.                                                                                                    |
| <b><i>Wai-chiao-pu</i></b>   | The Chinese department dealing with Foreign Affairs.                                                                           |
| <b><i>Wangsew</i></b>        | Memorandum.                                                                                                                    |
| <b><i>Yamen</i></b>          | The Chinese Amban’s residency.                                                                                                 |

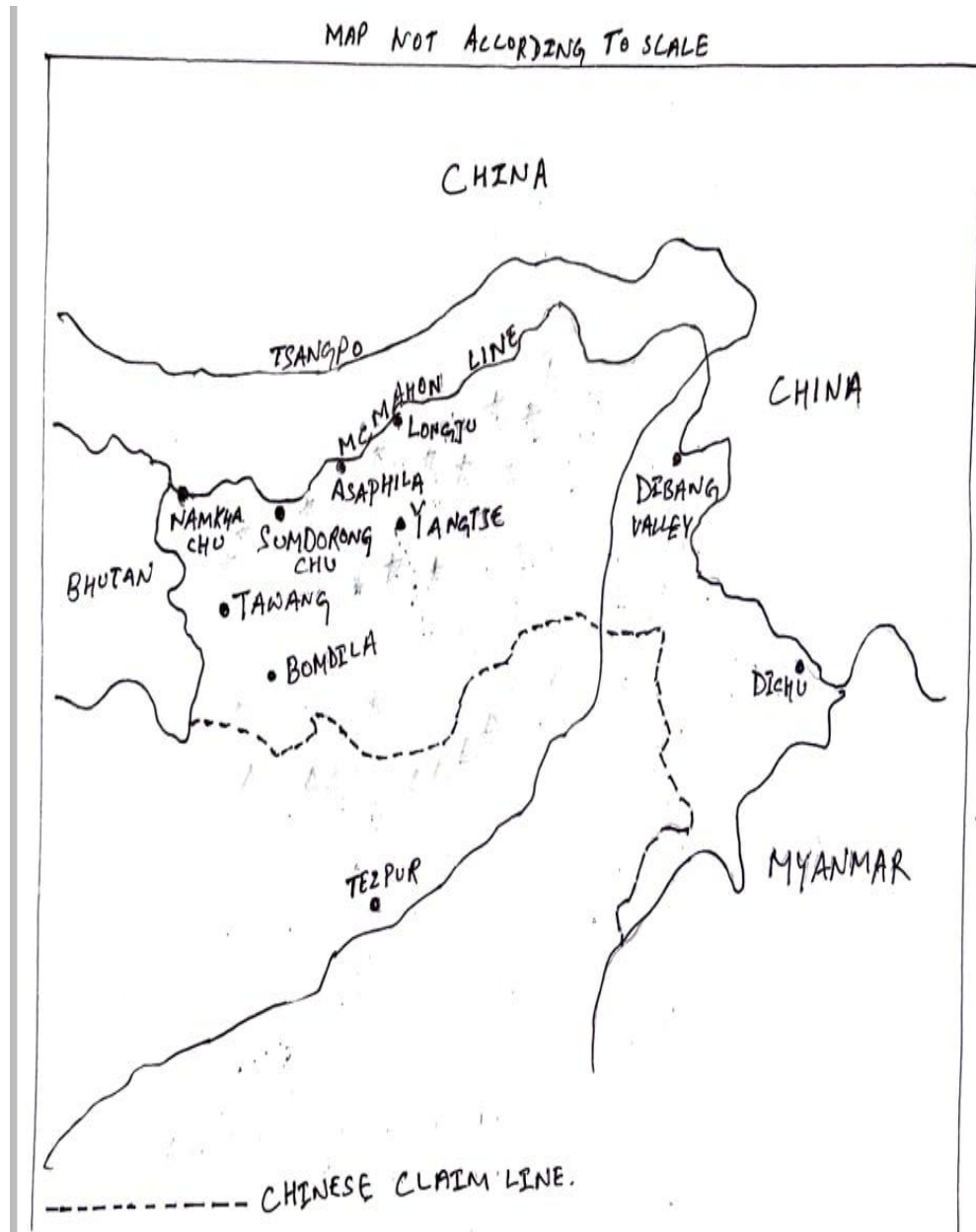
Map 1: The map shows the old trade routes to Tibet. It also shows disputed territories between India and China.



Map 2: The map shows the Chinese Empire frontiers with India. It also shows three sectors of contemporary boundary demarcation between India and China. It further shows the road built by China inside Indian territory in Aksai Chin area. The map also shows the line separating India and Chinese troops during 1962 war in western side.



Map 3: The map shows Chinese claim line in India territory of Arunachal Pradesh.



## **Introduction**

In the first half of the twentieth century India's foreign policy towards China was largely influenced by the British India efforts to establish a diplomatic connection with Lhasa. China had asserted its claim of suzerainty in Tibet but the Chinese influence in Tibet was not substantial. However, the British India Government's attempt to establish a diplomatic connection with Tibet accelerated after the arrival of Lord Curzon in 1899. Curzon adopted a new strategy to establish direct connection with the Tibetan Government. During this period, Tibet was maintaining its own external policy with her neighbours, especially with Russia, which indirectly confronted the British position in India. The British was unwilling to acknowledge Russia's influence in Tibet. In this geopolitical scenario, Tibet became strategically important for the British. The British implemented forward policy to establish a direct contact with the Tibetan Government. In 1903-04 the British Government of India dispatched a mission to Tibet under Francis Younghusband and this event in the history of India and Tibet relations ultimately marked the beginning of diplomatic crisis between the British India, Tibet and China.

In mid-1912, the Chinese Empire collapsed resulting in the creation of the People's Republic of China. During this period of transition, the growing demand for the Tibet's autonomy increased, but this was soon shattered by the new regime of China. In this period, the British India Government was making arrangements to resolve the boundary question with Tibet. Subsequently, invitations were sent to the Tibetan and Chinese Governments for the tripartite talk. The agreement was concluded in 1914 between the British and Tibetan representative without the Chinese side signing. After the Simla Conference the advance of Chinese troops in the eastern Tibet emerge as an important factor in the British policy towards Tibet. During this time, British provided logistical aid to the Tibetan Government and acted as the mediator between the two rival powers. The Chinese were against the British intervention in Tibet. However, by the beginning of 1920s the British policy with regard to Tibet changed. Henceforth, the British policies towards Tibet continued with the diplomatic mission to Lhasa until the end of their rule in India. In this context, the British Officer's played crucial role in India's Tibet policy. According to Parshotam Mehra the British Government took Tibetans for granted and did not

adopted strong policy to strengthen the relations between Britain and Tibet. However, the British Officer on the spot who were representing the British Empire could not ‘possibly negotiate’ unless the British Government showed interest in Tibet.<sup>1</sup>

The British foreign policy towards Tibet in relation to China was more focused on gaining influence over Lhasa. The British Mission to Lhasa, initiated following Charles Bell’s visit in 1920 altered India’s approach towards Tibet. The Dalai Lama Government saw these visits made by the British Officer’s as a friendly gesture of the British India Government towards Tibet. Furthermore, the role of the Political Officer in Sikkim and the Trade Agents in Sikkim-Tibet frontier also becomes significant in channelizing the link between India-Tibet. The British relations with Tibet were mostly guided by the correspondence of officers on the spot directly representing the British Empire. The British policy in the mid-1930s towards Tibet was lacked due to inadequate occasional access to Lhasa and had a limited influence over the Tibetan authorities. The British India Government also faced the inconvenience on maintaining a representative permanently at Lhasa. The rivalry between the British and Chinese in Tibet during the interregnum period after the death of the 13<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama was mostly dominated in gaining political influence in Tibetan Government. Tibet itself was facing internal problem of power struggle and was re-shaping its foreign policies. China itself was facing internal problem due to the struggle between the Communist and Nationalist group.

In the mid-1930s, China developed a renewed interest in Indo-Tibet border in the eastern Himalayan region, and issued official map that directly challenged 1914 Convention alignments. The British officials in India noted that Chinese expansionist move over Tibet might become a source of trouble in India’s North East Frontier. The British India Government desired that if the Chinese suzerainty should ever become effective in Tibet an Anglo-Chinese treaty might become desirable not only to cover the question of the British interests in Tibet, but also the question of the Indo-Tibetan frontier that was settled between India and Tibet in 1914 Convention. In this period, the British policy towards Tibet was more focused maintaining close contact with the authorities in Lhasa and to secure the India’s North East Frontier from further Chinese expansion. The extension of the British Mission of 1936, year to year showed British

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<sup>1</sup> Parshotam Mehra, *The McMahon Line and After A Study of the Triangular Contest on India’s North-eastern Frontier Between Britain, China and Tibet, 1904-47*, London, Macmillan Press Limited, 1974, p. 348.

growing interest in Tibet and to settle the issue in the eastern frontier was one major factor for British to sustain its policy with Tibet.<sup>2</sup> However, after the end of World War II the British certainly did not wish to usher in the peace-time era of Anglo-Chinese relations with the question of Tibet's suzerainty and autonomy.<sup>3</sup> By the end of the British rule in India, the Tibet issue mostly remained absent from eyes of the policymaker in India. The British policy towards Tibet that began from Warren Hasting governor-generalship till the viceroyalty of Lord Mountbatten could not achieve fruitful outcome from its diplomatic and strategic move to settle the issue with China. The question of boundary remained unsettled between India and China after 1947. After the Chinese occupation of Tibet in 1950s brought same challenges between India-China based on the boundary question and Tibet issue which remained unsettled during the British rule in India with China.

After independence India wanted Tibet to be autonomous but did not guarantee that autonomy. The rise of Communist China in October 1949 brought drastic change in the relations of India-Tibet. India became the first country to recognize the Communist China government with the hope of building a strong bilateral connection. Further, India's foreign policy approach towards its neighboring countries was shaped with believe of non-interference. After the PLA occupied Tibet in 1950s the India Government's attitude toward Tibet changed and began to see Tibet as part of China. In this time, the Indian Government was focused on strengthening connections with China. Paradoxically, the Chinese policy differs from that of India and was more inclined with expansionist ambition. Later, the boundary question and Tibet issue emerge as important factor in Sino-India relations culminating into a war in the Himalaya in 1962.

## **Literature Review**

India's policy towards Tibet and China from the early to mid-twentieth century stands important subject for interpretation and analysis among the historians. In the colonial context the historical narratives is shaped with perspective of the British diplomacy and intervention into Tibet vis-à-vis China. Many scholars assumed that the British relentless attempt to establish diplomatic and economic connection prompted China to strengthen its claim of suzerainty over Tibet. The

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<sup>2</sup> Mehra, *The McMahon Line and After*, p. 442.

<sup>3</sup> Alastair Lamb, *Tibet, China & India 1914-1950 A History of Imperial Diplomacy*, Hertfordshire, Roxford Books, 1989, p. 335.



British made early contact with the Tibetan authorities in the second half of the eighteenth century to establish firm commercial and friendly relations. However, the policy was soon abandoned for many years. The British failure to establish relations with Tibet has different reason most of the historian interpreted that the Tibet's policy of isolation and China's interference hampered the diplomatic ties between this two nations from the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> up to the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The British policy towards Tibet vis-à-vis China from the early twentieth century changed and Tibet no longer remained unknown land to the British. Many historians has assumed that the Russian factor and to establish direct contact with Tibet led to the change in the British policy towards Tibet during this period. The British policy towards Tibet vis-à-vis China after the Simla Conference 1913-14 till the end of their rule in India witnessed direct and indirect intervention in both the internal and external politics of Tibet.

The post-independence period in India's policy towards Tibet and China was overshadowed by the expansionist policy of Communist China. The Tibet factor and boundary question emerged as the prime subject of debate among the many scholars. The China began to challenge the validity of the Indo-Tibet boundary and asserted their claim. India peaceful co-existence policy towards China was soon shattered by the continuous violations of Indian territory by the PLA army. Historians have given the assessment of India-China diplomatic crisis in 1950s with various interpretations and assumption. Many scholars like Bertil Lintner, Parshotam Mehra, Bruce Ridel, B.N. Mullick, argued that the expansionist policy of China shadowed the friendly connection between India-China; and, some scholar blamed India's forward move in the Himalaya as the major factor for the crisis between two powers in Asia.

For early colonial scholars like Walter Hamilton, Clements Markham, Sarat Chandra Das, and C. U. Aitchison, the historical narratives on the Tibet's politics, geography, and culture remained limited. In this context, the information collected by the western missionaries and travelers became the important source in understanding the historiography of the land beyond Himalayas. According to Clements Markham during the early phase of India's Tibet policy the British EIC wanted to establish a friendly relation and encouraged trade between two countries. He further pointed out that the British policy towards Tibet was soon abandoned and the policy

of opening of commercial intercourse between India and Tibet was forgotten.<sup>4</sup> His work fills the gap that existed between India-Tibet relations. He further argues that the British politics towards Bhutan, Sikkim, and, Nepal, further shaped the British approach towards Tibet.<sup>5</sup> After the political settlement was made with following states including Kashmir the British India began to share a common boundary with Tibet by the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. In the second half of the nineteenth century the British Government of India secured valuable information from the findings of the Great Trigonometrical Survey about the precise geographical limits of Tibet. Derek Waller work throws light on the expedition conducted by the native explorer of the British India in Tibet gathering the information of topography of the region, the customs of its inhabitants, and the nature of its government and military resources which was unknown to the British earlier.<sup>6</sup> In the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century ‘secret’ and ‘diplomatic’ tactics was used by the British to established direct contact with Tibetan Government but resulted into anti-British resistance in Sikkim-Tibet frontier. Further, the boundary settlement in Sikkim-Tibet frontier following with the recognition of British Protectorate over Sikkim and opening of trade mart marked the shift in the British policy towards Tibet.

Alastair Lamb in his work examines that the commercial and diplomatic motives of the British in Tibet and strategic significance of Nepal, Sikkim and Bhutan shaped the British policy towards Tibet from mid-18<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> century CE. He shows that after the arrival of the Lord Curzon the attempt was made to established direct connection with the authorities of Tibet. He pointed out that the major reason for Curzon’s forceful Tibet policy was mainly shaped with the frontier dispute and Russian influence over Tibet. And the British policy towards Tibet during this time was designed to ensure that Tibet would decide to ally herself with the British and not with the Russians. It was a policy both of pressure and of persuasion.<sup>7</sup> He further argued that the neutralization of Russia influence and to develop the British influence in Tibet were the main objective of the Curzon’s forward policy and it was not directed towards the Chinese.<sup>8</sup> According to Alex McKay the British Mission to Tibet in 1903-04 was designed with the motive

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<sup>4</sup> Clements R. Markham (ed.), *Narratives of the Mission of George Bogle to Tibet and of the Journey of Thomas Manning to Lhasa*, London, Trübner and Co., 1876, pp. xxi-xxii.

<sup>5</sup> Markham (ed.), *Narratives of the Mission*, pp. xxi-cxxiii.

<sup>6</sup> Derek Waller, *The Pundits British Explorations of Tibet & Central Asia*, Kentucky, The University Press of Kentucky, 1990, p. 272.

<sup>7</sup> Alastair Lamb, *British India and Tibet 1766-1910*, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1960, pp. 193-195

<sup>8</sup> Lamb, *British India and Tibet*, p. 257.

of invasion and this mission transformed the history of Tibet and marked the culmination of British imperial expansion in South Asia. And in the Chinese perspective, the mission was an invasion on China by the British. He argued that the immediate consequence of the mission was that it allowed the Chinese to assert control over Tibet and strengthen their position considerably.<sup>9</sup>

According to Charles Bell, ‘buffer’ and ‘protectorate’ concept were important aspects in India-Tibet relation in the early twentieth century. The British desire to maintain Tibet as a buffer country to ensure India’s security from other powers in Asia. The Tibetan Government, however, desired for the British Protectorate. He observed that Tibet gain political and military stability by maintaining diplomatic ties with the British. His work throws light in empirical understanding in changing scenario in India’s Tibet policy. And his personal involvement within the authorities in Lhasa clearly shows in his work the changing attitude of the Tibetan officials towards India.<sup>10</sup> Sneh Mahajan in her work shows that the centrality of the ‘Indian factor’ played vital role in shaping the Britain’s diplomatic and strategic priorities. She traces out that growing Russia’s expansion in the Central Asia region forced the British to ensure security not only the frontiers of India but off all states along the territorial rim of the Indian Empire; and, the British foreign policy focused on ensuring the goodwill and co-operation of these states. She pointed out that the Britain’s quest to maintain status quo globally defined its foreign policy. Further she argued that in the diplomatic field, Britain, on the whole, followed a policy of accommodation and deterrence.<sup>11</sup> In 1914, during the tripartite talk Chinese declined to acknowledge the agreement and refused to sign in it. However, the negotiations between the British and Tibetan plenipotentiaries happened and conference was concluded. The Indo-Tibet boundary line got demarcated in the eastern Himalaya. After the conference the British policy towards Tibet changed the active forward policy initiated by Curzon’s was now transformed into the hand of the frontier officers who were active in channelizing the diplomatic connection between the authorities of Delhi and Lhasa.

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<sup>9</sup> Alex McKay, The British Invasion of Tibet, 1903–04, *Inner Asia*, vol. 14, no. 1, 2012, pp. 5–25, Jstor, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24572145> accessed 14 Oct. 2024.

<sup>10</sup> Charles Bell, *Tibet Past and Present*, New Delhi, Motilal Banarsidass, 1992, pp. 244-253.

<sup>11</sup> Sneh Mahajan, *British Foreign Policy 1874-1914*, London, Routledge, 2002, pp. 197-201.

Alex McKay has argued that the encounter between the British and Tibetan during the first half of twentieth century brought change in the administrative structure of Tibet. He shows the role of the frontiersmen who were diplomatically involved with the authorities in Lhasa these officers were the Political Officer Sikkim, Bhutan and Tibet, the office of the Trade Agent Gyantse and, the post of Head of British Mission Lhasa. Further he argues that these officers exerted a considerable influence on events, ideas, and policies in the region. He examines the character, role, and actions of the most influential officers in the Anglo-Tibetan encounter within the wider context of the frontier zone in which they were located and, how their ideas and actions affected events on the periphery of empire. He has mainly delved into the character of the British officers and their actions with the Tibetan authorities.<sup>12</sup>

Alastair Lamb argued that the British policy towards Tibet after the 1914 Simla Conference divided into two streams, sometime merging and sometimes flowing quite separately.<sup>13</sup> He highlights in his work that the Chinese policy in the eastern Tibet shaped the attitude of the British India Government; and, also shows the role of the frontier officers on the spot associated with Sino-Tibetan crisis. He traces out the crisis in the eastern Tibet focusing on the diplomatic settlement between Tibet and China. He further pointed out that the Government of India did not showed interest for the full independence of Tibet. And the British desired to isolate Tibet from all other powers and make dependent upon British India for military and diplomatic strength.<sup>14</sup> He has further traces out that the British and Chinese Missions sent to Lhasa in different period with objective of gaining political and diplomatic influence in the Tibetan Government. He argues that the British India was in more or less maintained direct diplomatic contact with Lhasa from 1912 until 1947.<sup>15</sup> China always maintained its political presence during the diplomatic talk between the British and the Tibetan showcasing its suzerainty over Tibet. However, the China never acknowledged the British involvement in Sino-Tibet negotiations and demanded bilateral settlement. This puts the question on the status of Tibet independence. According to W. D. Shakabpa in his work shows the evidence of Tibetan independence from the early kings of Tibet. He further justifies that the Tibet's historical and

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<sup>12</sup> Alex McKay, *Tibet and the British Raj The Frontier Cadre 1904-1947*, Dahramsala, Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, 2009, pp. 1-3.

<sup>13</sup> Alastair Lamb, *Tibet, China & India 1914-1950*, Hertfordshire, Roxford Books, 1989, p. 19.

<sup>14</sup> Lamb, *Tibet China & India*, p. 117.

<sup>15</sup> Lamb, *Tibet China & India*, pp. 144-146.

political developments clearly shows that it was a sovereign country, which enjoyed the right to negotiate treaties and to have direct relations with her neighbours.<sup>16</sup>

During the colonial period the demarcation of the boundary between India and Tibet was one of the important aspects of the British policy and remained centrality factor in Sino-India relations. Chinese made several attempts to redefine the geographical limitations of Tibet. In 1930s Chinese published a map of its frontier and challenged the validity of the McMahon Line that was drawn in the Simla Conference between the British and the Tibetan representative. A.G. Noorani has examines the boundary problem from the history, politics and diplomatic angle. He has pointed out that the British efforts at boundary-making began almost immediately after the State of Jammu & Kashmir became part of the British India. He further argued that on the India-China boundary dispute the history has a direct bearing on the issues of legal title.<sup>17</sup> His work show that the British made several attempts for boundary settlement with China but the Chinese showed no interest for solving the problem, after India's independence the boundary dispute was important factor.

Parshotam Mehra work delves into the evolution of India's north-eastern frontier from the early twentieth century by juxtaposing the historical significance with the contemporary geopolitical scenario. He traces out that in the evolution of boundaries, as of the men who make them and of the people who live on either side, there is a remarkable flux and a variety of developments impinge. And in the context of India's north-eastern frontier, this variety is the greater.<sup>18</sup> His work highlights the significant impact of the Lhasa Mission 1903-04 on the India's north eastern frontier. Despite the Government of India unambiguously authoritative assertion in regard to a north-east frontier policy or province, the expedition to Lhasa gave a powerful impetus to activity on this part of the frontier. This is noticeable in a number of developments which, through individually of little moment, did collectively lend themselves to a considerable impact. He argues that the emphasis on trade and the opening up of eastern Tibet, which may be regarded as characteristic features of the early twentieth century, gradually give way to a growing interest in the exploration of tribal areas and of extending the governmental sphere of

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<sup>16</sup> W.D. Shakabpa, *Tibet A Political History*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1967, p. 323.

<sup>17</sup> A.G. Noorani, *India-China Boundary Problem 1846-1947*, New Delhi, OUP, 2011, pp. 5-9.

<sup>18</sup> Mehra, *The McMahon Line*, pp. xiii.

influence.<sup>19</sup> He further asserted that Chinese strategy was devoted either to running down the British for their alleged ‘designs’ on Tibet or to working out paper plans for an eventual settlement in regard to Tibet.<sup>20</sup> However, the boundary issue in the eastern Himalaya between India and China after the end of the British rule developed into a both diplomatic and political contention between two countries.

Bérénice Guyot-Réchart in her work highlights that the expansionist design of both India and China was witnessed from early twentieth century in the eastern Himalayan region. She has shown that the existing analyses in India, Tibet and China relations based on the theme of the boundary question, Tibet factor, and historical connection miss a fundamental element of the Sino-India rivalry: the difficulty of coexisting in the Himalayas, a region whose distinct human landscape exposes India and China’s imperial nature. She further argued that it is not just the boundary dispute or power games that create tension, but the fact that India and the PRC both seek to consolidate their presence in the regions east of Bhutan by achieving exclusive authority and legitimacy over local people.<sup>21</sup> Amar Kaur Jasbir Singh in his book entitled *Himalayan Triangle* has argued that the proximity of Chinese troops during early twentieth century was so near the north eastern frontier caused the Indian Government to look at their positions in these sensitive areas. He further pointed out that the Government of India during this period saw its future policy in the Assam Himalaya as being ‘one of loose political control’, and administering and protecting the tribal people in the hills became the major objective for the British India administrators. He further asserted that the British objective of dispatching expeditions under different officers focused on exploring trade route, improve communications, increase trade, and to ascertain Tibetan Government influence in the region.<sup>22</sup>

In the post-independence historiography of Sino-India relations the Tibet issue and the Chinese encroachment on the Indian side of the territory escalating into war in the Himalayas is much debated subjects among the historians. A voluminous scholarship has tried to explain this tension and provided different narratives on the causes and failure of the diplomacy between

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<sup>19</sup> Mehra, *The McMahon Line*, pp. 11-15.

<sup>20</sup> Mehra, *The McMahon Line*, p. 385.

<sup>21</sup> Bérénice Guyot-Réchart, *Shadow States India, China and the Himalayas, 1910-1962*, Delhi, Cambridge University Press, 2017, pp. 2-3.

<sup>22</sup> Amar Kaur Jasbir Singh, *Himalayan Triangle A Historical Survey of British India's relations with Tibet, Sikkim, and Bhutan 1765-1950*, London, The British Library, 1988, pp. 52-58.

India and China. New independent Government of India policymaker drafted a friendly policy towards China without hampering its claim of suzerainty over Tibet. The crisis erupted soon after PLA invasion on Tibet and the rising boundary tension created tense atmosphere in diplomatic level between India-China. According to Neville Maxwell the India's forward policy having objectives to block potential lines of further Chinese advances and to establish an Indian presence in Aksai Chin escalated the 1962 war between India and China. He further argued that Nehru from very soon after the boundary dispute became a political issue in India began to speak of war with China as a possibility. His work asserts that the India's forward policy lacked leaders assumption of its consequences, unprepared defence and bad connectivity in the frontier vis-à-vis China. He further argued that the long delay between the adoption and implementation of the forward policy reflected the Army's unwillingness to undertake a course for which the military means were wholly lacking.<sup>23</sup>

Paradoxically, Bertil Lintner in his book entitled *China's India War* argued that the prior to India-China war the Chinese established military outposts all over Tibet, including in areas close to the Indian territory. New roads were built down to the Indian border opposite the NEFA in the east. He further argued that China's own forward policy was more aggressive and assertive than India's.<sup>24</sup> India's defence policy after independence lacked in upgradation and was poorly crafted to defend the high Himalayan frontier vis-à-vis China. According to B.M. Kaul in his work states that so far as defence was concerned 'no comprehensive defence policy' was adopted by the civilian leaders of India and they lacked a sense of urgency.<sup>25</sup> Kaushik Roy in his work shows that the India's military internal affairs were negatively impacted by political interference and the bureaucrats' monopolization of power, hindering the defence ability to carry out plans during wartime. He further asserts that the biggest deficiency as regards to civil-military interaction in India remains the absence of any institution for long-range strategic planning and for coherently implementing a strategic plan during the war. He further states that just after independence, the Government of India had no clear-cut strategic objectives and there was inadequate coordination between the three services of Indian Army and the policy makers.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Neville Maxwell, *India's China War*, New Delhi, Natraj Publishers, 2015, pp. 192-221.

<sup>24</sup> Bertil Lintner, *China's India War*, New Delhi, OUP, p. xii.

<sup>25</sup> B.M. Kaul, *The Untold Story*, Bombay, Allied publishers, 1967, p. 330.

<sup>26</sup> Kaushik Roy, *The Armed Forces of Independent India:1947-2006*, New Delhi, Manohar, 2010, pp. 68-86.

John W. Garver in his article asserts that the view of the Chinese side to declare war with India in the Himalayas with the objective of ‘showing power’ of new China that had stood up and, unlike pre-1949 old China could no longer be bullied and humiliated by foreign power. He also states that the India’s leaders believed that China would not strike back, but would back down before Indian provocations. He further pointed out that the Indian leaders were unaware of the power and determination of the new China and the China’s hardheaded leaders took India’s disregard for China’s power as disdain.<sup>27</sup> B.M. Kaul, however, juxtaposing, the defence position during the wartime between the India-China asserts that Chinese had larger forces all along the frontier and their tactics and improvisations were sound and their weapons, equipment and logistics, particularly communications, were better than India. Further he shows that the reinforcement strategy was quicker compare to Indian army.<sup>28</sup> Kaushik Roy in his article shows that besides logistical failure, inefficient political and military leadership were also responsible for India’s defeat in India-China war.<sup>29</sup> J.P. Dalvi who was an Indian Army officer during the Sino-Indian War of 1962, he was the commander of the Indian 7<sup>th</sup> Brigade, which was destroyed by the Chinese troops, leading to his captured by the PLA. Later, writes in his book entitled *Himalayan Blunder* asserts that defeat of the Indian army in war with China was due to failure in the ‘higher direction’ of war a term which embraces the entire process of the formulation of the national policy, and the readiness of the nation and armed forces for war.<sup>30</sup> He further states that many of the omissions which resulted in the tragedy of 1962 can legitimately and fairly be attributed to General Pran Nath Thapar for his little achievement in preparing the Army for a war with China; and, he failed as a COAS in coordinating and controlling the working of all branches within the Army. His work shows that the Army Headquarters designed to be the solid professional, independent and objective organ but ultimately proved to be impotent.<sup>31</sup>

The Sino-Indian war in the Himalaya was not a sudden outburst it had a historical implications. The ‘Tibet factor’ played crucial role in shaping the India’s relations with China

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<sup>27</sup> John W. Garver, ‘China’s Decision for War with India in 1962,’ in Alastair Iain Johnston and Robert S. Ross (ed.), *New Directions in the Study of China’s Foreign Policy*, California, Stanford University Press, 2006, pp. 123-124.

<sup>28</sup> Kaul, *The Untold Story*, p. 403.

<sup>29</sup> Kaushik Roy, ‘Focusing on India’s Look East Policy: India-China relationship from 1947 to 2020,’ *International Area Studies Review*, Vol. 24 (2), 2021, pp. 79-96.

<sup>30</sup> J.P. Dalvi, *Himalayan Blunder*, Bombay, Thacker & Company Ltd., 1969, p. 397.

<sup>31</sup> Dalvi, *Himalayan Blunder*, pp. 228-229.



just after the independence. B.N. Mullik in his work asserts that the India's role in consolidating Tibet's position in the geopolitics of Asia would have disastrous consequences against the China's imperialist ambitions.<sup>32</sup> He states that the Panchsheel Agreement between India and China completely ignored Tibet's autonomy.<sup>33</sup> He further asserts that the promise which the Chinese made in the Sino-Tibetan Agreement to respect the Tibetan autonomy but after PLA invasion China proceeded to treat the Agreement as only a scrap of paper. And India has suffered much for the sake of the Tibetans in order to uphold one of the most precious international principles of giving shelter to political refugees.<sup>34</sup> Hugh Richardson in his work states that India's right in Tibet were mainly theoretical but when the Chinese took control of the country after the Sino-Tibetan Agreement they could not fail to see themselves the effective existence of those rights.<sup>35</sup> His work shows the transition in the political history of Tibet and stress the point that the Tibetan has never recognized any affinity with the Chinese and the relationship that existed in the past was based on the *priest-patron* relations. He further asserts that the attitude of the Indian Government at the time Tibetan uprising against Chinese was strangely unrealistic and avoiding embarrassment to the China discount all the information on the uprising that reached India as greatly exaggerated.<sup>36</sup> According to John W. Garver 'maintaining' Tibetan autonomy and 'minimizing' Chinese military presence in Tibet had been a key Indian goal just after the PRC came to power.<sup>37</sup> He further argues that the major problem in India-China relations is not the problem of the McMahon line, but the Tibet question which escalated a war between these two nations in Asia.<sup>38</sup> He further asserts that the Sino-India border dispute entangled with the stability of China's control over Tibet with the factors like 'terrain' and 'weather;' and, building motor roads into Tibet was a top order of business for the PRC. He further states that the importance of roads in Tibet was to full fill the logistic supply of the PLA.<sup>39</sup>

Melvyn C. Goldstein in his book entitled *A History of Modern Tibet* explores the geopolitical change that occurred after the PLA invasion of Tibet. In his work he shows the

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<sup>32</sup> B.N. Mullik, *My Years with Nehru: the Chinese Betrayal*, Bombay, Allied Publishers, 1971, pp. 74-84.

<sup>33</sup> Mullik, *My Years with Nehru*, p. 157.

<sup>34</sup> Mullik, *My Years with Nehru*, pp. 599-605.

<sup>35</sup> H.E. Richardson, *Tibet and its History*, London, OUP, 1962, p. 195.

<sup>36</sup> Richardson, *Tibet and its History*, p. 207.

<sup>37</sup> John W. Garver, *Protracted Contest Sino-India Rivalry in the Twentieth Century*, Seattle, University of Washington Press, 2001, p. 90.

<sup>38</sup> Garver, *Protracted Contest*, p. 59.

<sup>39</sup> Garver, *Protracted Contest*, pp. 82-84.

transition in the politics landscape in Tibet from the old feudal state to the Communist rule establishment. He states that the Tibetan after signing the 17-Point Agreement with China grudgingly accepted Chinese sovereignty for the first time in its history and Chinese Communist troops and officials quickly entered Lhasa. His work explores that how both Tibetan and Chinese dealt with this new situation. His work focuses on the period after the Chinese implementation of its ideology in the traditional society of Tibet. Further he asserts that neither the Chinese nor the Tibetan side was as homogeneous as previously thought.<sup>40</sup> He asserts that setting out to transform the attitudes and perspectives of the Tibetan religious and feudal elite peacefully was the major strategy of China's to bring Tibet under its sovereignty.<sup>41</sup> Dawa Norbu in his work states that at the peak of the Cold War the nascent communist regime in Beijing faced a security dilemma in a defenceless Tibet and the threat perceptions from the then American-led bloc and South Asia might have reinforced, if not compelled, the Communist leaders to take over Tibet by military and other means. He further asserts that the communists have attempted to create a "revolutionary" sense of legitimization based on proclaimed social justice.<sup>42</sup> Bruce Riedel in his work states that the China's involvement in the border conflict with India was driven by two interrelated concerns its control of Tibet and India's forward policy. Tibet was probably the more crucial factor.<sup>43</sup> His work examines that at the peak of India-China war the US was willing to defend India against Chinese advance. His work further traces out the role of the US ambassador in New Delhi whose crucial role in crisis management is the main theme of his work.<sup>44</sup>

The existing historiography has demonstrated various aspects of India, Tibet and China co-existence in the twentieth century. Some scholars have attributed the root cause of the India's volatile relations with China to colonial period. The colonial historical accounts explore into the British India attempts to establish the commercial and diplomatic connection with Tibet. Researchers have also delved into the British political agreements with the Himalayan states in the eighteenth century to foster commercial link with Tibet. Historians have debated that the

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<sup>40</sup> Melvyn C. Goldstein, *A History of Modern Tibet The Calm before the Storm:1951-1955*, Vol. 2, Berkeley, University of California Press, 2007, pp. xi-xii.

<sup>41</sup> Goldstein, *A History of Modern Tibet*, Vol. 2, pp. 542-543.

<sup>42</sup> Dawa Norbu, *China's Tibet Policy*, Surrey, Curzon Press, 2001, pp. 7-9.

<sup>43</sup> Bruce Riedel, *JFK's Forgotten Crisis: Tibet, the CIA, and The Sino-Indian War*, Noida, HarperCollins Publishers, 2016, p. 97.

<sup>44</sup> Riedel, *JFK's Forgotten Crisis*, p. 4.

Russia's growing influence over Tibet shaped the British India's policy towards Tibet in early twentieth century. Additionally, many scholars have examined British diplomacy towards Tibet vis-à-vis China and its implications on the bilateral relations between India-China after end of colonialism. Numerous academic works have highlighted that the mid-twentieth century historical narratives on India-China relations were overshadowed by the boundary question and Tibet factor. In the context of the India-China war, historians have analyzed India's Forward Policy, the Tibet factor, logistical failure, Chinese military superiority, in constructing the narrative of the war.

### **Scope of the work**

The thesis attempts to analyze the India's diplomatic relationship with Tibet and China from the colonial to post-colonial era. The thesis examines the role of the administrators, envoys and agents in the India-Tibet relations in the development of the diplomatic and commercial connection with Tibet in the eastern Himalayan frontier from mid-eighteenth to nineteenth century. As mentioned above, the scholarly literature throws light in the historical background of India-Tibet relations. However, the early colonial writing on the history on the India-Tibet relations delves with the concept of 'diplomacy' and 'economy' as the major objectives in constructing narratives. In the diplomatic aspects, the researchers have examined on the problems in developing connection between the British EIC and a theocratic state of Tibet. In the concept of economy, scholarly works highlights the British EIC commercial expansion in Tibet. This thesis with the support of empirical data attempts to examine the role of the British Officers and native people in developing commercial link with Tibet in the Sikkim-Tibet frontier and in the trading routes of Kalimpong and Darjeeling in the nineteenth century. It shows that the initial development of the trading routes in the eastern Himalaya was important aspects for the British administrators particularly focusing on the role of the British officers involved in the service and the cost of financial constraints faced by these officers in opening of the trade route to Tibet. The British India's Tibet policy from the mid-nineteenth to early twentieth century witnessed change in the pattern of diplomacy and strategy. This thesis attempts to examine shift in the British diplomacy and strategy in Tibet. It shows that the geopolitical developments in Tibet that led to the British military intervention. The thesis attempts to analyze the diplomatic approach of the British India towards Tibet vis-à-vis China and Russia in the early twentieth century. It shows

that the British geopolitical interest in Tibet in this time gave rise to the China's expansionist ambition over Tibet. After the Simla Agreement between the British, Tibetan and Chinese the approach of the British India Government towards Tibet changed. However, the Chinese troop's invasion in eastern Tibet led to the British intervention.

The British India's policy to Tibet after the visit of Charles Bell to Lhasa continued on the basis of the diplomatic mission carried out by the various officers over the time and these officers played crucial role in developing India-Tibet relations. This thesis attempts to examine the British policy to Tibet aftermath of the Simla conference tracing out the role of the frontier officer in the eastern Tibet. The thesis also investigates the supply of the arms and ammunition to Tibet and its implications in India-Tibet relations. The British mission to Lhasa which began from the visit of the Charles Bell brought transition in the British India Government approach towards Tibet vis-à-vis China. Therefore, this thesis attempts to examine the British diplomatic mission to Lhasa carried out by the British officer's by analyzing its political and diplomatic impact within the Tibetan Government. It show that the diplomatic relations between India-Tibet was monitored by the British officers and the British Government occupied with other internal and external issue maintained 'direct' or 'indirect' diplomacy with Tibet till the end of their rule in India. After the establishment of the PRC the geopolitical scenario in Tibet changed. The Chinese occupation of Tibet ended the diplomatic ties between India-Tibet. India's adopted friendly policy with the Communist China with the ideology of 'peaceful co-existence'. However, after the PLA incursion inside the Indian territory created diplomatic tension between the two countries. This thesis attempts examine India's policy toward China in the context of diplomacy and strategy particularly concerning with Tibet and boundary. Further, this thesis also investigates the boundary issue and the factors leading to the outbreak of India-China war in 1962. As mentioned above, the existing historiography shows the causes for the outbreak of the India-China war and the reason for India's defeat. This thesis examines the role of the civilian leaders and military officers during the period of crisis in the Himalayan frontier with China. The thesis also investigates India's territorial dispute with PRC and the significance of Tibet factor.

## **Methodology**

The research work is based on both primary and secondary sources. The primary sources include data collected from the National Archives of India, New Delhi; Nehru Memorial Museum and

Library, New Delhi; West Bengal State Archive, Kolkata; Assam State Archives, Guwahati; and Arunachal Pradesh State Archives, Itanagar. The secondary sources are the books and articles published on the subject.

## **Chapterisation**

The thesis is divided into five chapters. The first chapter of this thesis delves into the historical background of the India-Tibet relations which began under the governor-generalship of Warren Hastings. During this period, the first British envoy George Bogle was dispatched by Hastings to the court of Tashi Lama (Panchen Lama) to develop commercial and friendly intercourse between India and Tibet. The chapter also provides assessment on the historical past of Tibet's geography, polity, religion and culture; and, its relations with Chinese Empire. It highlights the early western missionaries mainly both Capuchin and Jesuit exploration in Tibet. Further, traces out the British political developments in the eastern Himalayan region and Tibet. This work also gives account of confrontation between Tibet and Nepal during the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The chapter also shows the British trade with Tibet from Darjeeling-Sikkim region and also the opening of trade mart and demarcation of the India-Tibet boundary in Sikkim.

The second chapter delves into the British political motives within Central Asian geopolitics. The proposed chapter covers the period from the Curzon to Hardinge, providing insight into the geopolitical tensions involving British India, Russia and China in Tibet. In the beginning of twentieth century the British India Government was observing Russia growing influence in Tibet. The contact between the authorities of Lhasa and Moscow was increasing and the British were not ready to acknowledge Russia influence over Tibet. Implementations Curzon's forward policy towards Tibet actually shows the British Government of India insecurities regarding Tibet. Later, after the British invasion of Tibet the British were diplomatically engaged in concluding agreements with Russia and China. The chapter gives an understanding of Tibet political status in Central Asian politics. And the power struggle between Britain, Russia and China in asserting their political influence in Tibet.

The third chapter traces out the British India's policy after the Simla Conference with Tibet vis-à-vis China. It also delves in the Sino-Tibetan crisis in the eastern Tibet and the British intervention during Sino-Tibet crisis. It delves into the role of the British officers

involved in the India-Tibet relations and their attempts in establishing a contact with the Tibetan authorities. The British relations with Tibet during this period remained diplomatic and as intermediary between Tibetan and Chinese. Tibetan authorities appealed frequently to the British intervene diplomatically when they had a problem with China. The only failure of the British policy towards Tibet in this era was that they couldn't persuade the Chinese to make a permanent settlement with the Tibetan government. Furthermore, the chapter examines the diplomatic connection establish by the visits of the British officials in their mission to Lhasa.

This fourth chapter examines British influence in Tibet after the death of the Dalai Lama. The British policy to Tibet this time was based on the temporary diplomatic mission. During the final phase of the British India and Tibet relations the Political Officer in Sikkim and the Trade Agencies played a significant role in developing India-Tibet relations. The Sino-India rivalry over Tibet became acute in this time. The chapter explores the understanding of the geo-political situation between India, Tibet and China during the World War II and role of the frontier officers in continuing the British relations with Tibet vis-à-vis China. The British policy towards Tibet form mid-1930s existed on the continuance of mission by the officers till the end of their rule in India.

The fifth chapter delves into the post-independence developments in India's policy towards Tibet and China. The India's relation with China since the end of the British rule was defined by the Chinese expansionist ambitions. The approach of the Indian Government on the boundary issue was to settle through negotiations. However, the Chinese Government never accepted the traditional boundary demarcated during the British rule. Another issue that overshadowed the India-China relations was Tibet. The Tibet uprising followed by the Dalai Lama escape into India created tense atmosphere between two nations. The tension further escalated in early 1960s in the Himalayan frontiers which ultimately led to clash. This chapter will explore boundary issue and Tibet problem between India and China. The chapter also traces the transition in India-China relations after the establishment of PRC.

The conclusion of the thesis addresses that the British policy after the Simla Conference towards Tibet saw shift in diplomatic approach and the involvement of the British officers in India-Tibet relations. The Political Officer of Sikkim continued to develop link with the authorities in Lhasa. However, the British Government supplied the arms ammunition to the

Tibetan Government but did not indulge directly with the Sino-Tibetan crisis which was occurring in the eastern frontier of Tibet. Charles Bell Mission to Lhasa has little impact to the authorities both in New Delhi and at Whitehall in London. Hereafter the British mission under different officers attempted to develop link with Lhasa. China on the other hand was encroaching Tibetan territory and also in the eastern Himalayan of India. After 1947, the new independent India Government continued same policy of the British toward Tibet but soon it was shattered after the PLA troop's occupation of Tibet. The boundary question and Tibet factor remained hurdle in the India-China relations. The outbreak of 1962 war finally overshadowed further hope of strengthening the ties between India and China.

## Chapter 1

### **British India confronts China's Tibet: Administrators, Envoys, and Agents**

In the latter part of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the British East India Company (EIC) endeavored to establish diplomatic and commercial relations with Tibet. The abrupt shift in the British approach towards its northern neighbour is evident in the strategic and economic importance attributed to Tibet and the initiation of trade and diplomatic ties with China via overland routes. Traditionally, the link between India and Tibet was intertwined with religious and commercial exchanges. The Society of Jesus and the Capuchins, a religious order of Franciscan friars, were among the first Western missionaries to offer insights into Tibetan culture, religion, and political context. However, the accounts provided by these missionaries were limited, prompting the administrators of the EIC to initiate contact with Tibet. The Jesuits and the Capuchins were, above all, missionaries, not geographers or surveyors. And unlike the Jesuits and the Capuchins, the British were interested in trade, not in the propagating of religion. The EIC viewed trade with Tibet both as desirable for itself, particularly with respect to Tibet exports of gold and silver, and also as back door to the lucrative markets of China proper, bypassing the officially sanctioned entry point of Canton. Unfortunately, the interest on the part of the EIC coincided with the closing of many of Tibet's doors to the outside world.<sup>1</sup>

In the year 1767 CE, the EIC sent military aid to the ruler of Patan against the Gurkhas, under Captain George Kinloch and small force were dispatched to the valley of Nepal to help the Newars. The unhealthy climate of Nepal Terai and the disease ridden lowland slowed the movement of the British troops that ultimately led to a defeat of Newars by Gurkhas. This was the EIC initial move in the cis-Himalayan region. The flourishing trade between Newars in Nepal and Tibet was of great value before Gurkha attacked, attracting the EIC in India, who focused on developing commercial intercourse with Tibet. The political transformation in Nepal

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<sup>1</sup> Derek Waler, *The Pundits: British Exploration of Tibet and Central Asia*, Kentucky, University Press of Kentucky, 1990, p. 7.



brought an end to the EIC projects and halted the trade between Bengal and Tibet. The only feasible way to rekindle commercial ties was to discover alternative routes to replace the trade route that had been established through Nepal.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, the area of the eastern Himalaya, specially Bhutan and Sikkim, became significant region for enhancing commercial connections with Tibet. During this time, Warren Hasting took on the role of governor-general of Bengal in April 1772, leading to alterations in the EIC approach toward Tibet.

In the mid-quarter of the eighteenth century, the Bhutanese soldiers invaded Cooch Behar. During the war the British interceded militarily and defeated Bhutanese King Desi Shidariva in the battle for Cooch Behar 1772-1774.<sup>3</sup> The confrontation marked the beginning of the British-Tibet relationship. On behalf of the Bhutanese government the then the Acting Regent<sup>4</sup> of Tibet the third Panchen Lama also known to British administrators as Tashi Lama called Palden Yeshe negotiated with the British.<sup>5</sup> The Tashi Lama is spiritually higher than the Dalai Lama but his power in worldly affairs is limited.<sup>6</sup> The EIC dispatched diplomatic mission to Tibet to enhance relationship in the second half of the eighteenth century. In the later period, however, the British Tibet's policy was abandoned and most of the valuable records of the Tibet and Bhutan mission were lost.<sup>7</sup> During the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, there was a shift in British policy towards Tibet after a significant period of inactivity. The unfriendly attitude and isolationist policies of the Lhasa authorities towards the British were significant factors influencing British-Tibetan relations. This chapter attempts to explore the diplomatic and commercial history of the British India with Tibet, focusing on the roles of the British administrators, envoys and agents. It will also examine the political developments of the British in the Himalayan states within the context of India, Tibet and China relations.

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<sup>2</sup> Alastair Lamb, *British India and Tibet 1766-1910*, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1960, pp. 1-5

<sup>3</sup> Arabinda Deb, *A study in trade policy and trade pattern 1775-1875*, available in <https://www.repository.cam.ac.uk/bitstream/id/636937/> accessed on 04/March /2022.

<sup>4</sup> "In Tibet, the age of majority for the ruler was eighteenth years of age. This represented a significant span of time and the Tibetan solution was a Regent who ruled in the Dalai Lama's name and ruled Tibet most of the time. From 1751-1950 there was a shift in ruler on the average of every 13 years, with Regents ruling 77 percent of the time. If we exclude the reign of the 13<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama (1895-1933) from this, Regents ruled approximately 94 percent of the time." In *The Circulation of Estates in Tibet: Reincarnation, Land and Politics*, by Melvyn C. Goldstein <https://case.edu/affil/tibet/documents/The%20circulation%20of%20estates%20in%20tibet.pdf> accessed on 13/03/2022.

<sup>5</sup> Francis Younghusband, *India and Tibet*, London, John Murray, 1910, pp. 4-5.

<sup>6</sup> Charles Bell, *Tibet Past and Present*, Delhi, Motilal Banarsidass, 1992, p. 36.

<sup>7</sup> Clements R. Markham (ed.), *Narratives of the Mission of the George Bogle to Tibet, and of Thomas Manning to Lhasa*, London, Trübner and CO., 1876, pp. xxii-xxiii.

## Tibet

Tibet geographically stretches over a vast area and it is often described as the ‘roof of the world’ averaging up to 4,950 meters above the sea with peaks at 6,000 to 7,000 m including Mount Everest, on the border with Nepal. The Tibetan plateau is one of the isolated regions in the world, bound to the south by the 2500 km long Himalaya, to the west by the Karakoram and to the north by the Kunlun and the Altyn Tagh ranges.<sup>8</sup> The geography of Tibet consists of high mountains, lakes and rivers lying between central, east and south Asia. In the era of Tibetan empire Tibet vastly covered area from north Turkestan to the east of Changan, and in the south to the banks of the Ganges and as far west to Afghanistan.<sup>9</sup> In the contemporary period the Tibet under China is known as the Tibetan Autonomous Region (TAR) covers an area of 1.23 million sq km it encompasses the Tibetan provinces of Ü (capital Lhasa), Tsang (capital, Shigatse) and Ngari, or western Tibet. The TAR shares a 3,482 km international border with India, Bhutan, Nepal and Myanmar and the region is surrounded in the north and east by the Chinese provinces of Xinjiang, Qinghai, Sichuan and Yunnan.

Tibet, the name which is western in origin mostly adopted by the Europeans came from the Turks and the Persians. Formerly the name used in the west was Tangut. The true name is ‘Bod’ and ‘Bodyul’, called Bhot and Bhotiya in India, literally “Bod Land”. Tibet or the Bodyul is divided into four major provinces called Kham, Ü, Tsang, Amdo.<sup>10</sup> The origin of the Tibetan race can be traced among the Mongolian family with their allied Turkish tribes, inhabited high Asia from time immemorial<sup>11</sup> which is also true to the most of the sub-Himalayan people who also claims Mongolian blood line having same body structure and appearance akin to its origin. It is said that they originated from the nomadic, warlike tribes known as the Qiang. According to the Chinese records these tribes which constantly were disturbing Chinese Empire frontiers dates back as far as the second century BCE.<sup>12</sup> It is generally believed that the Tibetan people migrated from the north east and later from Assam and Burma in the south east. Tibetan people belong to same linguistic family as the Burmese as far as appearance goes it’s hard to distinguish Tibetan

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<sup>8</sup> Bradley Mayhew, *Tibet*, Melbourne Australia Oakland, Lonely Planet Publications, 1999, p.29.

<sup>9</sup> Patrick French, *Tibet Tibet*, London, Penguin Books, 2011, p. 12.

<sup>10</sup> Markham, *Narratives of the Mission*, p. xxvi.

<sup>11</sup> Bell, *Tibet Past and Present*, p. 21.

<sup>12</sup> Mayhew, *Tibet*, p. 13.

and Mongol, and also with the other ethnic tribes living in the sub-Himalaya region until he or she speaks.

The history of Tibet is obscure and most of the writing reference for the Tibetan history comes from the Buddhist scripture, manuscript and foreign accounts. In seventh and eighth century CE, Tibetans invented written character which was based on the Indian alphabet as then used in Kashmir hitherto Tibetan people had only oral language without script. The historicity based on oral narratives and foreign sources remains the important source of information about ancient Tibet. With no indigenous writing system, they knotted cords and marked tallies as their means of record keeping. Around 617 CE the rulers of Yarlung dynasty, who took their name from the river valley to the southeast of Lhasa, unified Tibet for the first time. They modified the Sanskrit alphabet to form their own writing system.<sup>13</sup>

Charles Bell, the British diplomat who served in Indian Civil Service writes in his book entitled '*Tibet Past and Present*' that Tibet did not escape from the notice in the writing of Father of History, 'some two thousand four hundred years ago Herodotus tells us of a rumour about a race of enormous ants that delved for gold in a country in the north-west of India...'<sup>14</sup> Tibet was rich in gold mines all imports into the country in the past, whether from China or Nepal, were paid in gold and silver.<sup>15</sup> British agent Nain Singh presented firsthand report to the British about the gold mines in Tibet at Thok Jalung in 1867.<sup>16</sup> Tibet's western region is a gold producing region that attracted explorer and travellers over centuries to visit the area and in the eighteenth century the objective behind the opening of the commercial intercourse with Tibet by the Hastings somewhere it showed his interest in Tibetan gold.<sup>17</sup> Prior to the appointment of Hastings as the governor-general of Bengal in 1772, the English EIC officials were looking for the possibilities of encouraging trade with Tibet, especially as a source of supply of gold and silver, and also the idea that Tibet might provide alternative route to China through land was in their minds, but such policy couldn't take political shape before.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Valerie Hansen, *The Silk road a new history*, New Delhi, OUP, 2015, p. 184.

<sup>14</sup> Bell, *Tibet Past and Present*, p.22, also cited by Waller, p. 108.

<sup>15</sup> NAI, GOI, FD, 1870, File No.401, pp. 12-13.

<sup>16</sup> Waller, *The Pundits*, p. 111.

<sup>17</sup> Lamb, *British India and Tibet*, p. 220.

<sup>18</sup> Hugh Richardson, *Tibet and its history*, Boston, Shambhala Publications, 1984, pp. 64-65.

## **Tibet's Monarchy and the beginning of the Buddhism**

In ancient times, Tibet arose from the Yarlung Valley, which the Tibetan people consider to be the birthplace of the Tibet's civilization. The glorification of the early Yarlung kings by the legend, were probably no more than chieftains whose domain and the power of influences extended not much further than the Yarlung Valley. The Yumbulagang which is the first fortress which is still exist in the Yarlung valley and it is here that the twenty-eighth king of Tibet is said to have received Tibet's first Buddhist scriptures in the mid third century and according to the legend they fell on the roof of Yumbulagang.<sup>19</sup> Tibet established itself as a sovereign nation in the seventh century, marking the beginning of Tibetan civilization under the reign of King Song-tsen Gam-po from 618-649 CE. He was the 33<sup>rd</sup> king of the Yarlung dynasty, which originated in 127 BCE. Ascending to the throne at the young age of thirteen, he implemented a variety of reforms concerning law and order in Tibet.<sup>20</sup>

During this period, the political position of Yarlung dynasty was relatively seen as newcomer. The Chinese Tang Empire sought for military support from the Tibetan ruler to suppress the rebels in the frontiers. The Tibetans were fine horsemen, and the Chinese admired their military equipment. Tibet before 617 CE had no political unification the region was mostly divided in the north to herders who raised horses in the grasslands, and in the south, to the farmers who planted barley in the river valleys.<sup>21</sup> Song-tsen Gam-po successfully conducted military campaigns in China and upper Burma, gaining control over the territories. In his reign, Tibet became a formidable nation. He married two princesses from China and Nepal; these queens, being born into Buddhism, led the king to embrace their faith. Song-tsen Gam-po after adopting new religious doctrine significantly contributed in introducing Buddhism into Tibet.

The 'Bon' religion was in practice in Tibet since ancient time before Buddhism was introduced in Tibet. This belief came to the Tibet from the country of Shang-shung<sup>22</sup> which was an ancient kingdom in western and northwestern Tibet. The Bon religion which then prevailed throughout the country was largely animistic, and was too powerful to be ousted altogether by

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<sup>19</sup> Mayhew, *Tibet*, p. 13.

<sup>20</sup> Jayanta Kumar Ray, *India's Foreign Relations 1947-2007*, New Delhi, Routledge, 2015, p. 198.

<sup>21</sup> Hansen, *The Silk road*, p. 185.

<sup>22</sup> Jeffrey Hopkins, *The Buddhism of Tibet*, Delhi, Motilal Banarsidass, 1987, p. 21.

the new doctrine.<sup>23</sup> However, Buddhism had entered Tibet two hundred years earlier before seventh century. This religion was brought and introduced to Tibet from India, partly from Nepal and Kashmir, but the Tibetan people adapted according to their own practices and rituals. In the early days of the Tibetan Buddhism the Indian influence was considerable, while during the last six or seven centuries it became predominating in nature by both China and Mongolia.<sup>24</sup>

By the end of the 8<sup>th</sup> century CE, Tibet rejected the ideological teachings of Chinese philosophies such as Confucianism and Taoism in favor of Buddhism. The Buddhist teaching first spread in Tibet during the reign of the Tibetan king ‘Hla-to-to-ri-nyen-tsen’ and gradually expanded thereafter. Prominent Indian scholars like Santaraksita, Kamalasila and Padmasambhava were crucial in the translation and dissemination of numerous sutras, tantras and commentaries. Tibetan scholar such as Rin-chen-sang-po engaged with renowned Indian scholars of the time to study Buddhist philosophy. Atiśa Dipamkara was another significant Indian Buddhist scholar who had a profound impact on Tibetan Buddhism. He was one of the major figures in the spread of 11<sup>th</sup> century CE, Mahayana and Vajrayana Buddhism in Asia and inspired Buddhist thought in Tibet. The Tibetans developed expertise in this doctrine and started writing numerous Tibetan commentaries, while the movement of scholars from India and Nepal continued. Therefore, it was truly the insights of Indian scholars that helped disseminate Buddhist philosophy throughout Tibet.<sup>25</sup>

The schools of Buddhist teachings in Tibet are categorized into four main branches: Nyingma, Kagyu, Sakya, and Gelug. This classification closely parallels the divisions found in the Indian tradition when examining the scholars from Nalanda and Vikramsila. The prime objective of their teachings remained same but they had differences in their names and the mode of instructions. William Jones considered Tibetan people as Hindus who had engrafted the heresies of Buddha on their own mythological religion.<sup>26</sup> The principal idol in their temples is

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<sup>23</sup> Bell, *Tibet Past and Present*, pp. 24-25.

<sup>24</sup> Bell, *Tibet Past and Present*, pp. 25-26.

<sup>25</sup> Yangden Lepcha, ‘Buddhism’s link between India and Tibet: A Study on the Role of Indian Buddhist Philosophers from c. Eight to Thirteenth Centuries CE’, in Swami Umapadananda (ed.), *Themes in Early Indian History*, Howrah, Ramakrishna Mission Vidyamandira Belur Math, 2023, p. 198.

<sup>26</sup> Walter Hamilton, *The East-India Gazetteer, India beyond the Ganges, and the Eastern Archipelago*, Second Edition Vol. II, 1828, London Printed by J. L. Cox, p. 649. Krishnakanta Basu one of the emissary of the British EIC to Bhutan in the early nineteenth century also showed in his work titled ‘*Account of Bootan*’ that “the assimilation of Booteahs (Bhutias) religion with that of the Hindoos; worship the images of deities, count their beads at prayer, and offer clarified butter to the gods by throwing it into fire... The image of Laberem buche (Lama Rinpoche?)

Mahamuni, the Buddha of Hindustan, who is worshipped throughout the vast Tartarian plains under an infinite variety of names Durga, Cali (Kali), Ganesa with his elephant head, Cartikeya (the Hindu Mars), with many other Brahminical deities, have also a place in the pantheon of Tibet. The places of popular esteem or religious resort are equally respected in Tibet and Bengal, Allahabad, Benares, Durjodun, Gaya, Saugor Island, and Juggernaut being objects of devout pilgrimage. Among all the pilgrimage the most important for the Tibetan people is Bodh Gaya located in the Indian state of Bihar.<sup>27</sup>

In the latter half of eight century another powerful king emerged in Tibet his name was Ti-song De-tsen (755-97 CE) ruled over Tibet with many successful military campaign against its neighboring states and his political influences extended across Turkestan, northern Pakistan, Nepal and India. In this period, Tibetan armies conquered Gansu and Sichuan in China and in 783CE Tibetan armies overran Chang'an (present day Xi'an), the Chinese capital and concluded treaty that recognized new borders incorporating most of the Tibetan conquest. During his reign, the Tantric Buddhist Vajra master Padmasambhava from Udyayana (possibly the Swat Valley, Pakistan or Odisha in India) was invited to his court. By this period original teaching of Buddha had been almost discarded in India and replaced by the Tantric doctrines with their charms and mystic meanings. It was this later phase of Buddhism that penetrated Tibet.<sup>28</sup>

Initially, Buddhism did not appeal to the Tibetan population, especially those leaving far from central Tibet, who leaned more towards Bon traditions. At this time, Guru Padmasambhava presents Buddhism, incorporating Tantric wisdom that parallels existing traditions. His teachings ushered in a transformation and adaptation of Buddhist practices within Tibet. It was in the reign of Ral-pa-chan Buddhism disseminated throughout the country.<sup>29</sup> During this period, treaty was signed between Tibet and China it was immortalized in stone on 'three stele' in Lhasa, Chang'an (Chinese capital) and one in the border of Tibet and China among all these three only one Lhasa stele still stands.

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resembles that of Ram; his countenance is similar, and he holds in his hand bow and arrow; the Bootan deity is, however made of copper and gilt. There are also many images of deities with four arms..." cited in John Bray, 'Krishnakanta Basu, Rammohan Ray and Early 19th Century British Contacts with Bhutan and Tibet.' *The Tibet Journal* 34/35, no. 3/2, 2009, pp. 329–56 (p.49) <http://www.jstor.org/stable/43302075> accessed on 13/03/2022.

<sup>27</sup> Devendra Nath Panigrahi, *The Himalayas and India-China Relations*, Oxon, Routledge, 2016, p. 68.

<sup>28</sup> Bell, *Tibet Past and Present*, p. 26.

<sup>29</sup> Bell, *Tibet Past and Present*, p. 27.

During Lan-dar-ma's rule, Buddhism in Tibet was slowly disappearing from the Tibetan society. Following his death, the Tibetan state swiftly fragmented into various warring factions, disrupting the central political structure of Tibet and leading to a significant decline in Buddhist teachings.<sup>30</sup> The resurgence of Buddhism in Tibet occurred gradually, yet its impact on the Tibetan people intensified significantly. During, this time, the Tibetans embraced this faith with genuine spirituality rather than a desire for political power. Eventually, this shift led to a political structure in Tibet that was heavily influenced by religious head, making it into a theocratic state. Buddhism experienced resurgence in Tibet due to Atiśa Dipamkara in 1042 CE,<sup>31</sup> who was invited by the ruler of Western Tibet. His efforts spread from western to central Tibet, motivating the ruling nobles across the region to support a revival of Buddhism. Consequently, the belief and devotion to Buddhist teachings grew tremendously, leading to a corresponding rise in the political influence of religious heads in Tibet.<sup>32</sup>

Chingis Khan who was constantly expanding his political control over the Central Asian region and his military invasion on the Tangut of Si-hia forced some of the nobles in Tibet to think that their turn would come next, so they decided to send some delegation to meet him with an offer of submission, this formal acknowledgement of his overlordship impressed Chingis, for the time while he lived, there was no Mongol interference in Tibet.<sup>33</sup> The first Mongol emperor of China, Kublai Khan who established Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368 CE), invited the Sakya priest of the Tibetan monastery and gave the sovereignty to Tibet which led to the beginning of the rule of 'priest-kings' relationship. The relation of the Tibet and Mongols was established in the so-called 'priest-patron tie' in which the Mongols ruler looked at the Tibet's eminent lama for the spiritual authority and guidance, while considering Tibetan nation to be within its sphere of their political influence.<sup>34</sup> The rise of Chang-Chub Gyal-tsen, who brought nearly all Tibet under his sway and inaugurated the second monarchy in Tibet, ended the power and influence of Sakya.

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<sup>30</sup> Mayhew, *Tibet*, pp. 13-15.

<sup>31</sup> Atiśa Dipamkara Srijnana (c. 982-1054 CE) was a Buddhist religious leader and master. He is one of the major figures in the spread of 11<sup>th</sup> century Mahayana and Vajrayana Buddhism in Asia and inspired Buddhist thought from Tibet to Sumatra. He is renowned for revitalizing Buddhism in Tibet in 11<sup>th</sup> century CE. His major contribution was that upon the Tibetans to rethink the integration of mainstream and Mahayana Buddhist principles with the practices of secret mantra or Vajrayana. In 'An Early Tibetan Commentary on Atiśa's 'Satyadvayāvatāra'', by James B Apple, *Journal of Indian Philosophy*, Vol. 41, no. 3, 2013, pp. 263–329 (p. 264 ) <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23497722> accessed on 4/05/2022.

<sup>32</sup> Richardson, *Tibet and its history*, p. 39.

<sup>33</sup> Richardson, *Tibet and its history*, pp. 33-34.

<sup>34</sup> John F Avedon, *In exile from the land of snows*, New York, Vintage Books, 2015, p. 14.

He continued to promote the religion but discarded many of the Chinese and Mongols innovations introduced by the Sakya priest-kings. The relation with the Mongol was consisted in a nominal expression of allegiance by the ruler of Tibet and a diplomatic connection with the Mongols was kept up even after the fall of the Yuan dynasty and its eviction from China. The rise of Ming dynasty in China meant nothing much to the Tibetan people.<sup>35</sup> The cooperation of Tibet with China happened only after the conquest of China by Mongols to whom Tibetan people has already accepted as their overlord and the Ming China did not try to exercise any authority in Tibet both were having its own distinct independent identity.

Following the rise of the Ming dynasty (1368-1644 CE), initiative were undertaken to establish a strong bond with Tibet. As a result, a prominent spiritual leader from Tibet was welcomed at the Chinese imperial court. During this period, the political status of religious figures in Tibet was restricted; they were regarded solely authorities. During this time, however, Tibet was divided into different independent rulers of Pagmotru, Rimpung, and Tsang provinces. These rulers never made any act of submission or showed allegiance towards the Ming Emperor. In the archival documents from the Ming dynasty period mentioned of the frequent visit of the Tibetans monks to China and its describe as the '*tribute mission*', to invite such mission to China their lies political motives of Ming rulers and the reason was to have homogeneous entity with its neighbors. The members of the mission group received expensive gifts from the Chinese court in the form of silk, tea and porcelain. The main ideology behind these practices by the Chinese ruler is to acknowledge its supremacy upon the 'barbarians' from outside who will be dazzled by seeing the China's greatness. In the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries the monks from Tibet visited China but that does not mean Tibet being subordinate to Chinese empire it is true there was some distant diplomatic relation between two; and, it is only in the Ch'ing dynasty era (1644-1912 CE) overlordship of China in Tibet was witnessed.

In the beginning of the second half of the 14<sup>th</sup> CE century the reformer Tsong Kapa from the north eastern region of Tibet in the province of Amdo came to limelight among Tibetans, who introduced the new form of the institution for the Tibetan lamas which came to be known as '*yellow hat*' sect who were forbidden to marry or to drink wine, and stricter code of morals was practiced. He founded the large lamaseries at Ganden and Sera, which, along with the Drepung

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<sup>35</sup> Richardson, *Tibet and its history*, pp. 35-36.



monastery were regarded as the three most influential religious institutions in Tibet. His successor was Ganden Truppa, who established the Tashi-lhunpo monastery, which in the 17<sup>th</sup> CE century became the residence of the Tashi Lama, the second grand lama of the yellow church. After his death in 1474 CE, his spirit was held to have passed into an infant born two years later. The child became his successor, and this system of reincarnation rapidly became popular practices and spread throughout Tibet.<sup>36</sup> The title of Dalai Lama was conferred upon this sect by the Mongolian leader Altan Khna in 1578 CE, granted to Sonam Gyatso (1543-1588 CE).<sup>37</sup> The bond between Tibet and Mongolia was further strengthened when some of the subsequent Dalai Lamas were born into princely families of Mongolia.

In the early 17<sup>th</sup> CE century, one of the most celebrated Tibetan religious figures the fifth Dalai Lama Ngawang Lob-sang Gyatso played important role by bringing Tibet into unified political order and forged a union of temporal and spiritual powers with the help of Mongolian military assistance. From 1642 CE till the fourteen Dalai Lama escape to India in 1959, the central part of the Tibetan plateau and most of its western territories was under the direct political and religious influences of Dalai Lama or their Regents who ruled from the Ganden Phodrang (where the fifth Dalai lived before the reconstruction of the Potala palace and from there he took the charge of the political and religious power of Tibet and it became synonymous with the Tibetan government and the historian called the government headed by the Dalai Lama as rule of the Ganden Phodrang) based in the city of Lhasa.<sup>38</sup> During his time the reconstruction of the famous Potala palace was built. When he visited Peking the Emperor of China treated him as an independent sovereign. There is discourse regarding his visit to the Chinese Emperor some of the recent Chinese writers claim that the Dalai Lama went as a vassal whereas the western writers say that he went as independent ruler of Tibet.<sup>39</sup> It was during the early years of the fifth Dalai Lama, about 1626 CE, that the first European entered Tibet. This was a Portuguese Jesuit Father Antonio de Andrada, but he did not reach Lhasa or Shigatse.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Bell, *Tibet Past and Present*, p. 34.

<sup>37</sup> Stephane Gros (ed.), *Frontier Tibet patterns of change in the Sino-Tibetan borderlands*, Amsterdam, Amsterdam University Press, 2019, p. 21.

<sup>38</sup> Gros, *Frontier Tibet patterns*, pp. 19-20.

<sup>39</sup> Richardson, *Tibet and its history*, 1962, p. 44.

<sup>40</sup> Bell, *Tibet Past and Present*, p. 36.

## **Tibet relation with the Qing Dynasty**

In the seventeenth century the Ming dynasty which was the last imperial dynasty ruled by the Han Chinese came to end. The main reason for the collapse was the rise of the various tribal family divisions of the Manchu people in the north east region of China under the leadership of Nurhachi who was chieftain of the Jurchen community who rose to prominence in the sixteenth century in Manchuria. In the beginning of seventeenth century he maintained cordial relation with the Ming but in 1618 when he established his political and military position firmly he invaded China. The Manchu armies occupied and encroached farther upon Chinese territory and in 1636 his son Abahai assumed the title of Emperor of China and named his dynasty the Ch'ing. The Manchus-Mongols relations were established by the matrimonial alliances. When Manchus were imposing their domination over China, during the same period the Gusri Khan conquered the king of Tibet and set up the Dalai Lama as religious sovereign in Tibet. The Manchu rulers realized that they needed unity to preserve the largest empire in the Chinese history which laid to the acceptance of the Tibetan Buddhism (Lamaism) as the national religion by the first Ch'ing Emperor and his successor followed him.<sup>41</sup>

The chance to make political intervention in Tibet for the Ch'ing China came after the death of the Fifth Dalai Lama in the year 1682 CE, in the last years of his life he appointed the Sangye Gyatso as the Regent of Tibet who was widely believed to have been his natural son and some sources from the Chinese account say that Sangye Gyatso instigated the death of the Dalai Lama to keep the powers in his hands. Sangye Gyatso ruled was seen as tyranny and hostile towards the Mongols which laid to the military invasion and was killed by the Lhabzang Khan the descendant of Gusri Khan. The Chinese Emperor sent help to the Lhabzang Khan and to defend Tibet this ultimately showed Manchus action in the most favourable light and to justify its position in Tibet after 1720 CE.<sup>42</sup> The Tibetan authority of the central Tibet began to lose its political autonomy which ended with the establishment of Manchu power in China in the early eighteenth century which brought Tibet within its shadow of political sovereignty and thus Tibet in 1720 became the protectorate of China. Ch'ing influence on the Tibetan plateau increased under the reign of the Qianlong Emperor and gradually dwindled during the nineteenth century.

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<sup>41</sup> Ray, *India's Foreign*, p. 202.

<sup>42</sup> Richardson, *Tibet and its history*, pp. 43-46.

In the northeastern and eastern provinces of Amdo and Kham were not consistently ruled by Lhasa during this period, the ruling chieftains of these regions showed loose and sometimes shifting allegiance to the political centers of power Beijing and Lhasa.<sup>43</sup>

The foundation of the Qing dynasty's two centuries overlordship in Tibet which came to end in 1912 was laid down by Chinese Emperor Kangxi who helped Tibetan authority to defeat the Dzungars who belonged to the Mongol Oirat tribes. In 1717 CE, the Dzungars invaded Tibet to overthrow Lhabzang and to restore the rightful Dalai Lama because after the mysterious death of the sixth Dalai Lama there was a clash regarding the choosing of the rightful successor. Dzungars were militarily powerful and they invaded Lhasa and killed Lhabzang. At first Dzungars were receiving the sympathy of the Tibetan people but slowly it turned into hatred when the child from Litang chosen by the Tibetan people for the next Dalai Lama was not brought along by Dzungars into the city instead they began looting in Lhasa and oppressed its populace. Henceforth, Tibetans resisted against the tyranny of the Dzungars and were waiting for the help from the Chinese Emperor. In 1718 CE the Emperor of China dispatched his armies but was overthrown by the Dzungars which led into the next aggressive military move from the Chinese Emperor with greater force in autumn of 1720 CE and drove out the Dzungars from Tibet and escorted the awaited Dalai Lama of Litang to his throne in Lhasa. This incident made the Chinese Empire's overlordship over Tibet strong for a long period of time and his army was welcomed in Lhasa as the saviour of the Tibetans. Over two centuries from 1720 to 1912 CE Chinese political influences in Tibet went through several changes. The arrival of the British from the second half of the eighteenth century with the objective of developing commercial intercourse with Tibet inevitably changed the political phenomenon in the roof of the world. Throughout the nineteenth century Tibet never showed any interest of developing close ties with the British Indian Empire and continued to maintain its 'closed door policy'. Notwithstanding, this attitude of Tibetan people and the mythical Tibet has long been an integral part of the story of the western world.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Gros, *Frontier Tibet patterns*, pp. 19-20.

<sup>44</sup> Lezlee Brown Halper and Stefan Halper, *Tibet an unfinished story*, London, OUP, 2014, p. 7.

## **The rise of political and religious control of Dalai Lama in Tibet**

The rise to power of Dalai Lama in the Tibetan government was the culmination of a long process of adjustment between the Buddhist hierarchy and the lay nobility and its most striking feature of the Tibetan state. The Gelugpa sect, which commanded the loyalty of the most of the Mongols, also became the ruling power in Tibet, and for the ruler of China it became advantageous to secure control over the high priest of this spiritual unity. The Gelugpa during that period attracted number of followers by their strict discipline life of Lamaism and through their code of conduct this laid to their growing power in the Tibetan system of government and was soon the principal rival of the dominant Karmapas who were the spiritual leader of the Karma Kagyu lineage of the Kagyu school of Tibetan Buddhism. The kings of Tsang province for long period had a physical power to maintain their supremacy in Tibet and the position of the Karmapa in their administration was looked as the religious advisers and supporters and their institution was safe. In 1642 CE, Gusri Khan, a Mongol prince supported by the Gelugpa sect invaded Tibet and defeated and killed king of Tsang and displaced the Karmapa Lama from their high position, and established the Dalai Lama as the supreme religious head of Tibet.<sup>45</sup> Henceforth, the absolute power of Tibet remained in the hand of the Gusri Khan, it led to the development of *Patron-Priest* relation. After his death in 1655 CE, his successors did not showed interest over the political administration but they just appointed Regent to look into the affairs in Tibet. It was the fifth Dalai Lama the man of great determination and force of character, brought all the political powers in Tibet in his own hands including the appointment of the Regent which ultimately started the polarization of power into the hands of Dalai Lama.

From the fifth to the fourteenth Dalai Lamas that is 1649 CE to the mid-twentieth century the Tibetan state system was under these religious heads and also including the periods of Regent's rule, the Tibetan state was run by the Dalai Lamas as joint religious-political system, referred to in Tibetan as *chos srid*. Based in Lhasa, the Tibetan governed its subjects through a range of hierarchical practices that varied throughout the regions of Tibet. Center-periphery political ties also included the monastic relations the Dalai Lama's government was of the Gelug sect, and the three major Gelug monasteries in the Lhasa area, Sera, Drepung, and Ganden, were

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<sup>45</sup> Richardson, *Tibet and its history*, pp. 41-42.

intimately involved in government affairs. Throughout Tibet, Gelug monasteries had special and specific relations with the Dalai Lama's government in Lhasa.<sup>46</sup>

C. T. Metcalfe Commissioner of the Cooch Behar Division writes to the Secretary to the Government of Bengal, Political Department dated the 16<sup>th</sup> August 1873, regarding the general character of the government of Tibet, the whole machinery of government, the enthusiasm of its numerous priesthood, the religion of the masses, is bound by the belief which, amongst Europeans, some regard merely as a self-imposture, and in which others see analogy to our own Christian religion of the assumption by the eternal power of a human body who, whilst subject to the laws of human corruption, constantly manifests himself by re-appearance in the bodily shape of little child. This child is the Dalai Lama of Tibet. Another portion of the Tibetan creed is the frequent recurrence in the flesh of the deified spirits of dead men made perfect. From this latter class, which for political purposes is necessarily limited, are selected the great Council of Five, who elect themselves by the Emperor of China, is styled the Nomehan; then there is a secretary or Tsidung, and a lesser Council of fours, called Shaffees. At the head of all the monastical institutions of each province is a Grand Lama. There is also a chief metropolitan of Tibet, and under him the Genden Tepas Lama, who is the next highest clerical authority. Whilst, therefore, the Nomehan and the Shaffees represents high temporal estate, the Grand Lama and the priesthood represent the spiritual. Both spiritual and temporal render genuine veneration to the person of the Dalai Lama. The Emperor of China, either in reality or in pretence, offers the same veneration and spiritual obeisance, and constitutes himself the guardian of his welfare and retains an army at Lhasa, ostensibly to protect Dalai Lama from foreign and internal foes. The Chinese have for many years past undoubtedly exercised considerable influence in the affairs of Tibet. The Dalai Lama is of infinitely greater rank than the Amban or Chinese Resident, who can alone approach him on bended knees, and his assumption of temporal duties at once strikes a blow at the root of Chinese influence, as represented by the Amban. Although Dalai Lama is thus theoretically supreme head of the church and state, in practice the temporal power was, as early as Turner's time, wielded by the Gesub Rimbouchi, known as Nomehan to the Chinese, by whom he was also called, according to Huc, Tsan-Wang, or King of Tibet. Dr. Campbell, writing

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<sup>46</sup> Carole McGranahan, *Arrested Histories, Tibet, The CIA, and Memories of a forgotten War*, Durham, Duke University Press, 2010, p. 41.

in 1855 CE, describes him as 'Regent' when the Grand Lama is a minor, he looks after the administrative function of Tibetan Government<sup>47</sup>

### **The entry of the British power in Tibet**

The European missionaries were the first to explore Tibet and shared their information about this mysterious place which remained the important source for all the future travelers, diplomatic envoys, and explorers in mid-eighteenth to nineteenth century. These missionary was laid by the two groups Capuchin and Jesuit. The objective of these missionary was to propagate their faith and also to locate the lost Christian community of Cathay<sup>48</sup>, it was believed by the Europeans then that there might have been Christian communities in Tibet which need only to be revitalized. The pioneer in this filed were Capuchin's who were exploring Tibet since fourteenth century and after two hundred years later the Jesuit missionary entered into the region from seventeenth to early eighteenth century. In the first half of the eighteenth century both Capuchin and Jesuit missionary were spreading the doctrine of Christian religion in Tibet. The Jesuit missionary ended their missionary activities in 1721 from Tibet and the Capuchin due to lack of fund and pressure from the Tibetan Lama's authority ended their mission on 1745.<sup>49</sup> The European missionaries were also active in nineteenth century in Tibet but their presence was limited. Jurisdictional dispute occurred between Jesuits and Capuchins in the early eighteenth century in Tibet and the matter was referred to Rome which gave decision in favor of Capuchins in 1718 this happened during the Desideri's visit to Tibet.<sup>50</sup>

The success of the Capuchin in Lhasa was looked with jealousy by the Jesuit missionaries who were then propagating their faith within Chinese Empire to which the Tibetan territory was more or less subordinate, and they felt that they had neglected to enter Tibet this laid to entry of

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<sup>47</sup> NAI, GOI, FD, Political A, 1873, October, Decline of Chinese Influence in Tibet, File No.127, Dated Camp Darjeeling, the 16<sup>th</sup> August 1873, No. 507, pp. 1-6.

<sup>48</sup> "Before the time of the Mongols 13<sup>th</sup> century the name Cathay had not been known in Europe, originally it belonged to a people which were not Chinese, the Khitans, a Manchu tribe, who up to the tenth century occupied a tract of country in the north-east of China beyond the Chingan Mountains. The nations which have come into touch with China by land, call country Khitai. When in their turn the Leao dynasty and its successor had to yield before the savage Mongolian hordes under Jengis-Khan 1206, the new conquerors considered themselves rulers of Khitai or Cathay. Famous Venetian Marco Polo also described the country name Cathay." In *Early Jesuit Travelers in Central Asia 1603-1721*, by C. Wessels, Delhi, Low Price Publication, 1924, pp. 3-4.

<sup>49</sup> Jose Kalapura, 'Constructing the idea of Tibet: Missionary Explorations 17-18<sup>th</sup> centuries', *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress*, Vol.73 (2012), p. 1065, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/44156306> accessed in 14/3/2022.

<sup>50</sup> Waller, *The Pundits*, p. 5.

the mission of renowned Jesuit Ippolito Desideri who arrived at Lhasa in 1716.<sup>51</sup> C. Wessels writes that it was the milder feeling towards strangers from the west that allowed some Jesuit missionaries to explore Tibet and the quest to understand this isolated country dragged the missionary and the aversion did not exist in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries before Chinese domination.<sup>52</sup> The absence of opposition to foreign travelers entering Tibet in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries gives a different picture from the traditional one of the Tibet as a close country. Those missionary fathers who entered Tibet were careful to avoid the political issues. It was only after the closing of the Capuchin mission in 1745 at Lhasa that the world of western diplomacy and statecraft began to have an effect on Tibet. In 1772 the British India developed semi-political intercourse with Tibet.<sup>53</sup> In the mid-nineteenth century witnessed the European missionary activity of the two Europeans called Abbe's Huc and Joseph Gabet which ended in 1845, it was undoubtedly due to the Chinese representative that they were sent back from Lhasa after the Tibetan Regent had agreed to open a communication for them with British India.<sup>54</sup>

The end of the European missionary's activities by mid-eighteenth century in Tibet brought a halt to the direct contact of the European with Tibet for thirty years. However, there was now availability of considerable amount of information and data on Tibet's geography, trade, and customs for the future explorations.<sup>55</sup> The EIC which emerged as the joint stock cooperation in London during the Tudor period was successful in establishing some trading rights over India in eighteenth century. On 31 December 1600 CE, some merchants group of London trading to the East Indies received royal charter, which provided the privileges such as trade, semi-sovereign power to rule territories and raise army. It took almost two centuries to experience these privileges by the EIC when they materialized themselves as the successful commercial entity in India.<sup>56</sup> Henceforth, the position of their commercial interest in India developed when in 1613 CE the Mughal Emperor Jahangir issued a '*farman*' which permitted

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<sup>51</sup> Graham Sandberg, *The exploration of Tibet*, Delhi, Cosmo Publication, 1973, pp. 51-52.

<sup>52</sup> C. Wessels, *Early Jesuit Travelers in Central Asia 1603-1721*, Delhi, Low Price Publication, 1924, p. v.

<sup>53</sup> Richardson, *Tibet and its history*, p. 63.

<sup>54</sup> WBSA, Political, Proceedings, 28<sup>th</sup> September 1874, File No. 48 (A – 34/35), p. 172.

<sup>55</sup> Waller, *The Pundits*, p. 7.

<sup>56</sup> William Dalrymple, *The Anarchy the East India Company, corporate violence and the pillage of an empire*, London, Bloomsbury Publishing, 2019, pp. 7-14.

English to establish a factory permanently at Surat this decision led to the beginning of the British power in India.

In the mid-eighteenth century, the EIC crossed the frontier of the Himalayan region to its immediate northern neighbours. During this time, conflict erupted between the Newars and Gurkhas, the EIC intervened by sending military troops to support the Newars. It is said that, towards the close of the 15<sup>th</sup> century CE, the Kingdom of the Valley was split into three principalities among the sons of Yaksha Malla of the Malla Dynasty which was established towards the end of 12<sup>th</sup> century CE. Rajya Malla ruled over Bhatgaon; Rana Malla over Banepa; and Ratna Malla over Kathmandu. These three lines continued till 1769 CE when they were attacked by the Gorkhas from the west.<sup>57</sup>

The subsequent occurrence that involved the British in the geopolitical landscape of the cis-Himalayan region was the Bhutanese invasion of Cooch Behar in 1772-74 CE. In the request of the Raja of Cooch Behar, Warren Hastings sent an armed force which drove the Bhutanese out of the plains into their mountainous region, during the war the disease and malaria became challenging to Captain Jones who was leading a contingent of the British force. The Bhutanese requested to the Tashi Lama of Tibet who was then Acting Regent of Tibet, to intercede for them with the governor-general of Bengal. Tashi Lama on request of the Bhutanese sent a letter to Warren Hastings where he writes that “I request you will cease all hostilities against him, and in doing this you will confer the greatest favour and friendship upon me” it is a remarkable letter in the relationship between British and Tibet which literally showed that the instigation of the relations was actually started by the Tibetans.<sup>58</sup> Derek Waller in his work traces out that it was the Gurkhas who encouraged the Tashi Lama of Tibet to write a letter on behalf of Bhutanese; he further added that the Gurkhas who may have political aim for themselves on Bhutan.<sup>59</sup>

### **George Bogle and Samuel Turner mission to Tibet**

Warren Hastings replied to the letter of the Tashi Lama proposing for a general treaty of amity and commerce between Bengal and Tibet. In 1774 he dispatched George Bogle, a young writer

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<sup>57</sup> Gopal Singh Nepali, *The Newars An Ethno-Sociological Study of Himalayan Community*, Bombay, United Asia Publications, 1965, pp. 14-15.

<sup>58</sup> Younghusband, *India and Tibet*, pp. 4-6.

<sup>59</sup> Waller, *The Pundits*, p. 8.



of the East India Company, not only to Bhutan but also to Tashi-lhunpo, to improve the commercial intercourse between Bengal and Tibet. After some opposition Bogle was permitted to enter Tibet. George Bogle was born in Scotland in 1746, he obtained a position with the EIC in Calcutta and by 1774 he achieved the ranks to hold three positions simultaneously. He was the first British to enter Tibet and account which he left behind became important source of this mystical land.<sup>60</sup>

Bogle stayed several months at Tashi-lhünpo, where he gained friendship of the Tashi Lama this led to the beginning of the relationship between Tibet and British.<sup>61</sup> His main guide and mentor in Tibet was Purangir a member of the Gosain community of the north India who had developed healthy network of contacts on both side of the Himalaya. The Panchen Lama held great influence in this period, not only in Tibet but also at the Qing court in Peking, where British hoped to open relations through Tibet.<sup>62</sup> The account of the mission of Bogle journey to Bhutan and Tibet was collected from journals, partly from official dispatches, and partly from private correspondence.<sup>63</sup> His diary and travel notes were found in his Ayrshire family archives and it was published by Sir Clements Markham.

Bogle's mission was considered by the EIC administrators as a positive starting point for the relationship with Bhutan and Tibet. His bond with Tashi Lama resulted into opening of trade with Tibet for short duration through Bhutan. Bogle with his diplomatic skill was able to convince the Bhutanese authority to allow the passage of merchants through their territory from Bengal to Tibet. His diplomatic success was visible when there was heavy reduction in the duties on the frontier. According to the Bogle the Gesub Rimboche or Regent at Lhasa was under the influence of the Chinese agents and opposed the more liberal and enlightened view of Tashi Lama on the regards of the foreigners into Tibet. Bogle's arrived in India on June 1775, the success of this first attempt of the diplomatic mission beyond Himalayas made Hastings to dispatch another mission to Bhutan under the supervision of Dr. Alexander Hamilton who accompanied Bogle to Tibet, he reached the northern frontier of Bengal and received a letter from the Deb Rajah inviting him to Punakha and he reached there on April 6, 1776, the role of

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<sup>60</sup> Halper, *Tibet an unfinished story*, pp. 7-8.

<sup>61</sup> Bell, *Tibet Past and Present*, p. 41.

<sup>62</sup> Halper, *Tibet an unfinished story*, p. 8.

<sup>63</sup> Markham, *Narratives of the Mission*, p. xxii.

Hamilton was to examine into the claims of Deb Rajah the district of Ambari Fala-kottah and Jalpaish (present Jalpaiguri region). Hamilton came to the conclusion that if the restitution is made he will persuade Deb Rajah to fulfill his agreement with Bogle and to levy moderate transit duties on merchandise. The reasons why Hamilton could not repeat Bogle's journey are good enough instances of the basic insecurity of British relations with Tibet at that time.<sup>64</sup>

In 1779, Bogle was reassigned for the second time for Tibet mission. Tashi Lama was at visit to Peking to meet Emperor of China which caused the delay to the mission he discussed about the importance of the Warren Hastings and the EIC in the Chinese court. The arrangement was made for the Bogle that he will meet his friend Tashi Lama and planned to return Tibet from China, but sudden death of this two figures impacted the developing friendship between British and Tibet. This incident did not turn aside the Warren Hastings hope of building and strengthening connection with Tibet.<sup>65</sup> Geographically Tibet was at suitable position for the EIC in developing overland route to China an alternative to Canton where the EIC was facing problem. Hastings was well aware about this fact but it was Bogle's friendship with the Tashi Lama that showed in detail how Tibet might be made to play a part in Anglo-Chinese relations.<sup>66</sup>

Hasting desire to developed political relations and extend influence of the EIC in Tibet continued with other projects. He established a small Buddhist temple at Howrah near Calcutta, to be used by any Tibetan traders who might be visiting and they did then, the great lama of Tashilhumpo even transmitted thence to Howrah several images and Tibetan books to furnish the new fame. This shrine was accidentally rediscovered in 1887 with the name Bhot Magân. The Tibetan books, still there, being examined, proved to be some of the works of Tsongkhapa, but the gods of the shrine were now being worshipped by Hindu devotees as Hindu deities and the Buddhists are ousted from shrine which Hastings specially build for their attraction and use.<sup>67</sup>

In 1783, Samuel Turner was sent as the British envoy to the court of Tashi Lama who was then spiritual Regent and guardian of the Dalai Lama.<sup>68</sup> Turner was welcomed and favorably received at Shigatse and at the first meeting informed the Regent that Warren Hastings wanted to

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<sup>64</sup> Lamb, *British India and Tibet*, p. 11.

<sup>65</sup> Markham, *Narratives of the Mission*, pp. lxviii-lxx.

<sup>66</sup> Lamb, *British India and Tibet*, p. 9.

<sup>67</sup> Sandberg, *The exploration*, pp. 106-107.

<sup>68</sup> NAI, GOI, FD, Political 1836, June 27, File No.52, pp. 6-7.

develop the relation which was established during the times of Bogle and former Tashi Lama. Chinese officials during this time were politically active within the Tibetan government. When Turner invited Regent to attain ceremony he declined on the reason that it may offend Chinese. Regent told the Turner that many letters had passed between him and the Dalai Lama, who was always favorably inclined towards English but he attributed the discouragement and obstruction. Samuel Turner almost spent a year in Tibet but he never reached Lhasa as his predecessor. The mission of Turner was quiet fruitful for the British in India it obtained some substantial concessions from the Regent of the Tashi Lama at Shigatse on the regard of movement of the merchant between India and Tibet.<sup>69</sup>

In 1786, Lord Cornwallis succeeded Hastings as the governor-general which ultimately changed the course of the British policy towards Tibet. Cornwallis was more preoccupied with developments in southern India than with the Himalaya. In 1788, the Regent in Tashi Lhunpo sent two Kashmiris, Mohammed Rajeb and Mohammed Wali, to carry letters to Cornwallis in Calcutta for seeking the British assistance to repulse a Gorkha invasion on Tibet.<sup>70</sup> Cornwallis refused to intervene and in this situation the Chinese sent a military aid to Tibetan government and drove the Nepalese invaders out from Tibet.

The invasion of Nepal into Tibet in 1792 effectively changed the dynamic of the intercourse of the British and Tibetan. Chinese during the Nepalese invasion acted as the protector for the Tibetan people and drove the invaders out. The arrival of the first British envoy in Nepal during same period had an impact on India and Tibet relations. Chinese on the other side disseminated telling Tibetans that the British is the one who instigated or encouraged Nepalese for the invasion in Tibet this propaganda of the Chinese heavily hammered the newly developing friendship between India and Tibet. Sir Francis Younghusband later commented by observing this unfortunate event in British Tibet relation he said that “certainly it is a most unfortunate circumstance that we so often are unable to help our friends just when they most need our help, press our friendship upon them just when they least want it”.<sup>71</sup> After 1792 the Chinese had more power in Tibet than they had ever possessed before. The trade sustained and

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<sup>69</sup> Younghusband, *India and Tibet*, pp. 26-32.

<sup>70</sup> John Bray, ‘French Catholic Missions and the politics of China and Tibet 1846-1865,’ in Alex McKay (ed.), *The History of Tibet The Medieval Period c.850-1895 the development of Buddhist Paramountcy*, Volume II, London, Routledge Curzon, 2003, p. 333.

<sup>71</sup> Younghusband, *India and Tibet*, p. 31.

link with Tibet remained inevitable and was maintained by the Indian agent Purangir Gosain, whose role in developing early contacts between the EIC and Tibet is very significant.

When the second Manchu army left Tibet after the Nepalese attack in 1792, one of the Manchu officials warned the Tibetans that they must do a better job of governing themselves and defending bodies, because next time the Manchu would not come to help them. The Manchu Emperors never wanted to garrison and occupy Tibet. What they wanted to maintain was a loose *status quo* in Tibet to ensure that other forces did not use Tibet to cause trouble for Manchu rule in China.<sup>72</sup> After defeating the Nepalese, the Chinese tightened their authority over Lhasa. From now on two Ambans (Chinese Imperial Residents) in Lhasa were to take part in the administration of Tibet on an equal footing with the Dalai Lama and the Panchen Lama (Tashi Lama) all senior Tibetan officials had to submit questions of importance on appointments, judicial or financial matters to the Ambans, the Ambans were responsible for frontier defence, the efficiency of native levies, finance and foreign relations and trade, the Dalai Lama and the Panchen Lama lost their right to 'memorialise the throne' and were authorized only to report to the Ambans and ask their orders.<sup>73</sup>

In the beginning, India and Tibet relations started with friendly approach between Warren Hastings and Tashi Lama. Later, it was later shadowed by the interference from Nepal and China; and, the formal communication between the British and Tibetan became uneven, until Francis Younghusband's expedition in 1904 made them a priority again.<sup>74</sup>

### **The British political developments in the Eastern Himalayan region and Tibet**

The British Government of India in the nineteenth century strategically maneuvered the frontier policy to establish connection with Tibet. The first move was to encircle Tibet with the states favorable to British interests are followed by their settlement with Nepal in 1816 which gave political control over some of the strategic Himalayan districts of Kumaon and Garhwal by the treaty of Sugauli. In 1846 while handing over Kashmir to Maharaja Gulab Singh, Lahaul and Spiti were carefully detached from the Ladakh district of Kashmir and incorporated into the Kangra district of Punjab, the latter was finally annexed in 1849. To the east of Nepal, the

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<sup>72</sup> Thomas Laird, *The story of Tibet Conversations with the Dalai Lama*, New York, Grove Press, 2007, p. 195.

<sup>73</sup> Bray, *French Catholic Missions*, p. 735.

<sup>74</sup> Halper, *Tibet an unfinished story*, p. 11.

Darjeeling district was acquired from the Raja of Sikkim in 1835, after several vicissitudes, satisfactory settlements were reached with the Sikkim in 1861 and Bhutan in 1865.<sup>75</sup> In consequence of this geographical and political settlement of the British in the sub-Himalayan region technically manifested to be advantageous for the British to have access to Tibet extensively.

From 1816, the British interests in expanding trade with Tibet focused primarily on Western Tibet. During this time, numerous attempts were made by the British officials to enter Tibet from the western zone but were unable to obtain any significant results in their explorations. The strict presence of the frontiers Tibetan officials stopped them to move further into Tibet. In the mid-nineteenth century British tried to demarcate the boundary with Tibet and for this projects the boundary commission under British officers Captain Alexander Cunningham and Mr. P. A. Vans Agnew was sent in 1846 and again in 1847 under Alexander Cunningham, who was joined by Henry Strachey and Dr. Thomas Thomson but the Chinese or Tibetan did not came for the talk with the British commissioners. After defining the boundary themselves, the British commissioners retired, and the government gave up the idea of a joint demarcation.<sup>76</sup>

The British were engaged in developing its political influences over the sub-Himalayan states in the first half of the nineteenth century and informal links was maintained with the Tibet. At this stage in 1811, the British adventurer, Thomas Manning reached Lhasa and stayed for four months without any recognized or official positions as he travelled disguise as medical practitioner his main intention was to reach Peking through Tibet. Manning's very detailed diary was first printed in 1876 and recounted an arduous trip. In his diary he writes about that he was not received as were as predecessors like Bogle and Turner by the Tibetans, he had to face difficulties in accommodation during his stay in Lhasa. Manning's arrived at the Potala on 17 December 1811 and was blessed by the young ninth Dalai Lama who was then nine year old. He was greatly impressed with the young Dalai Lama and by the time Manning arrived in Lhasa, the city developed into important commercial center. The growing interest of the British towards

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<sup>75</sup> Richardson, *Tibet and its history*, p. 73.

<sup>76</sup> Waller, *The Pundits*, pp. 11-13.

Tibet created anxiety among the Tibetan administrators and they maintained isolation in order to preserve their distinct identity.<sup>77</sup>

After the end of Anglo-Nepalese War 1816, the British territory came into direct contact with Tibet. The treaties of Sugauli and Titalia which was concluded between British with its instant neighboring states rulers of Nepal and Sikkim; through this the company acquired trade route to the Tibetan border. In the west, British territory was geographically connected with the Tibet and in the east Sikkim provided a corridor of nominally British protected territory to the Tibetan frontier. The British Government feared that their policy on the Tibetan border might upset the smooth running of the Anglo-Chinese relation, but there were to be very few British officials indeed who would argue that the attempt to extend British influence into Tibet would ameliorate those relations. After the treaty of Nanking in 1842 the British Indian Government, when it thought of China in relation to Tibet, tended to think in terms of applying through the British representative in China, first at Hong Kong and then in Peking, pressure on the Chinese to make them co-operate in attempts to open Tibet to British influence and commerce.<sup>78</sup>

After signing of the treaty of Titalia of 1817 did not result into immediate development in the relations between the EIC and the rulers of Sikkim which was hoped by the British administrators during the Gurkha War, the challenges faced by the British in opening the commercial intercourse with the Tibet through Sikkim and the provisions of the treaty which was signed between both the powers were not at practice in reality until they secured a new treaty with the Sikkim ruler in 1861. Hence, Sikkim developed into significant location for the British to establish its contact with Tibet.

Despite the provisions of the treaty of Titalia, disputes occasionally broke out between Sikkim and her neighbors. Sikkim, like Bhutan, was very prone to internal feuds. The ruling family was largely Tibetan in its connections and outlook, while the bulk of the population, the Lepchas, were the remnants of older states that had been conquered by invaders from Tibet in the legendary past. According the Mr. Edgar report during his visit to Sikkim he presented brief narratives on the background of the region he writes “I was informed by the monks that more than three hundred year ago, three professors of the Dookpa faith, discontented with the pre-

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<sup>77</sup> Halper, *Tibet an unfinished story*, p. 11.

<sup>78</sup> Lamb, *British India and Tibet*, pp. 41-42.

eminence of the Gelookpas in Thibet, left their respective monasteries, and, after many wanderings to and fro, all met at Yaksun, under Kunchinjinga. Here, by a chance which they looked on as providential, they were found by the ancestor of the Rajahs of Sikkim, Pencho Namgay, then residing at Guntuck, apparently as a private person. The result of the meeting was an agreement that the three Lamas should attempt to convert the Lepchas and form a church among them, and that they should endeavour to make Pencho Namgay Rajah of the whole country. They succeeded in both attempts.”<sup>79</sup>

In 1828, Lt. General (then Captain), G. A. Lloyd and G. W. Grant, I.C.S., the Commercial Resident at Malda after settling the internal factions between Nepal and Sikkim states, found their way into Chungtong to the West of Darjeeling, and were much impressed with the possibilities of the station as sanatorium. The year following the former officer visited Darjeeling to be followed shortly after by Mr. Grant and Capt. J. D. Herbert, the then Deputy Surveyor General, Bengal, who likewise reported favorably on the situation of the hill of Darjeeling. The court of directors of the EIC accordingly directed that General Llyod be deputed to start negotiations with the Sikkim Raja of cession of the hill either for an equivalent in money or land. This transfer was successfully accomplished on 1<sup>st</sup> February 1835, through the personal influence and efforts of Lloyd with the Raja of Sikkim who handed over a strip of hill territory, 24 miles long and about 5 to 6 miles wide, stretching from the northern frontier of the district to Pankhabarie in the plains, which in its trend included the villages of Darjeeling and Kurseong. In return the Raja will receive an annual allowance of rupees three thousand which later was subsequently raised to rupees six thousand. The portion of the land which British acquired from the Sikkim Raja at the beginning the revenue derived from this area never exceeded rupees twenty a year.<sup>80</sup> After the arrival of the British, the hills developed into an important area for the tea plantation. The ruler of Sikkim looked with jealousy over the progress of Darjeeling under the British curtailed the friendship and erupted into crisis in 1849.

The cession of Darjeeling and bringing it within its political influence was an event of the greatest importance in the history of the British India and Tibet relation. The main factor of this region that attracted the British was the high possibilities of trade with Tibet. Since the beginning

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<sup>79</sup> WBSA, Political, Proceedings 10, October 1874, File No. 15 (A – 11), p. 217.

<sup>80</sup> E. C. Dozey, *A Concise History of the Darjeeling district since 1835*, Calcutta, 1922, pp. 2-3.

of the days after the establishment of Darjeeling as the sanatorium there were always English residents who strongly advocated the building up of co-operation with Tibet. The appointment of Archibald Campbell as superintendent of Darjeeling in 1839, brought change in the pattern of British India and Sikkim relations and his contribution towards opening of Sikkim for India-Tibet trade is significant for the EIC. In 1849, a conflict arose between the EIC and the Raja of Sikkim, triggered by the visit of Campbell and the renowned naturalist Joseph Hooker, who was exploring the Himalayan flora and glaciers. After returning from the Tibetan border, they were detained by the authorities. The EIC resolved the situation without engaging in conflict with Sikkim, and both individuals were soon released, arriving back in Darjeeling on December 24, 1849. As a direct result, the Sikkim ruler faced the cessation of the allowance that had been granted by the EIC since 1841 as compensation for the loss of Darjeeling. Additionally, the remaining territory of Sikkim Morung (Terai) was annexed, and the boundary between the British India and Sikkim was demarcated along the Ranjit River.<sup>81</sup> Following the settlement with the Sikkim ruler, the EIC secured a favorable stance in establishing trade links with Tibet in the Eastern Himalaya.

In 1861 February, British government dispatched mission to Sikkim under Ashley Eden to show the Raja that resistance to the British Empire was not to be tolerated. Prior to leaving Darjeeling for Tumlong the capital of Sikkim ruler, Eden wrote a letter to the Raja warning him what to expect once the expedition reached the capital. Before the British troops approached to Tumlong the British officers discovered that the Dewan Namgyal has already fled to Tibet. The Sikkim Raja has taken up residence on his estates in the Chumbi Valley and absent from his kingdom. Eden was only met by the Lasso Kazi who brought letters from the Raja to his camp at Temi. Eden and his troops when reached Tumlong he met with the Raja's son and Eden was informed that the old Raja wished him to be recognized as the regent power. Eden treated the Raja's son as the Maharaja of Sikkim with whom he discussed about the possibility of the trade between India and Tibet through Sikkim which in future will certainly established a healthy relation between the British and Sikkim. The Treaty of Tumlong was signed on 28<sup>th</sup> March 1861 this treaty changed the political status of Sikkim both in relation of India and Tibet.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> Lamb, *British India and Tibet*, pp. 68-82.

<sup>82</sup> Amar Kumar Jasbir Singh, *Himalayan triangle a historical survey of British India's relations with Tibet, Sikkim and Bhutan 1765-1950*, London, The British Library, 1988, pp. 191-197.



## **British India and Tibet during the second half of nineteenth century**

Since the time Warren Hastings the relation of the British with Tibet went through many changes and was not settled permanently or politically. The Tibetan Government was influence by the Chinese authorities and they were persuaded and prohibited not to maintain any type of contacts with the British. The Lhasa authorities never endeavor the policy of cordial relation with the British envoys since the time of George Bogle and never trusted the objectives of the British Missions. In the beginning only the southern part of Tibet which was religiously and politically influence by the Tashi Lama showed some positive attitude for strengthening the relations with the British. However, that was not continued for the long time.

The British were not allowed to enter Tibet. However, in India the Tibetan were allowed to visit when and where and how they liked, to trade there without duty and hindrance, to travel and to reside wherever they wished. In 1873, the British India Government began to stir, and take stock of the position, and to reflect whether this one-sided condition of affairs might not be changed to the advantage of Indians and Europeans without hurting the Tibetans. During this time, the British administrators in Bengal sent a letter to the Government of India in which they urged that the negotiations with the Chinese authorities must be done as soon as possible and pressed for an order of admittance to Tibet and also to renew the friendly connection between India and Tibet that existed in the period of Bogle and Turner. On the other side the Survey of India officials were deploying their agents into the trans-Himalaya region with geographical objective.

## **Tibet war with Nepal**

In the beginning of the second half on nineteenth century Tibet enter into a confrontation with her southern neighbor Nepal in 1855-1856 CE for the third time. In late eighteenth century the Nepal invaded Tibet for two times and Chinese Empire militarily supported Tibet and drove them away, in which British missed the opportunity to help Tibet. The Nepal fought war with British too in 1814-1816 CE and was defeated by the British troops. The consequences of this war with the British were very traumatic for the Nepalese ruler like Bhimsen Thapa who lost his hegemony over Nepal followed by peasant unrest. These factors contributed in the failure of economy and political condition in Nepal from 1816-1839 CE. Despite challenges, Nepal

emerged under the strong leadership of Jang Bahadur, who established an independent political identity for the country within South Asian politics. To address the crisis, the Nepalese ruler aimed to resolve economic issues with Lhasa while also reasserting their political authority across the Himalayas up to the watershed. From 1852 onward, tensions arose between Nepal and Tibet concerning border disputes and infringements on Nepalese trading rights in Lhasa, along with the mistreatment of Nepalese missions travelling to China.

During this time, Nepal likely had the military capability and strength to invade Lhasa, but an economic crisis within the country prevented the Nepalese from initiating a prolonged military campaign in Tibet. On the other hand, the Tibetans army held a respect for the Gurkha army, who had successfully secured an annual tribute and the right to station a Nepalese resident at Lhasa after their victory in 1856. They were treated to periodic exhibitions of Nepalese strength in the shape of the Tribute Mission to Peking which the Gurkhas had been obliged to send once every five years by the treaty of 1792. The Chinese and the Tibetans both did not at all appreciated or had affection towards mission. The Chinese authorities saw Nepalese as the threat to the Tibet and also considered presence of other power as menace in Tibet which certainly showed their begrudged attitude towards the any type of commercial activity in Tibet by the foreign powers. The Tibetan suspected the conquest nature, behind the harboring ambitions of Nepal in their territory. The passage of a Nepalese tribute mission through Tibet was often coincided with tense relations between Tibet and Nepal.<sup>83</sup>

In 6<sup>th</sup> May 1854, Major General Ramsay British Resident in Nepal wrote to T. P. Grant informing about the political situation between Nepal, Tibet and China, Ramsay writes that “General Jung Buhadoor informed him that he has lately received a letter from Lhasa from a Lieutenant a Nepalese officer who accompanied the quinquennial mission to Lhasa, that left Kathmandu in the month of August 1852 and has not yet returned, reports that Jung Bahadoor had lately had an interview with the chief Unbak of Lhasa on the request of the civil war now ranging in China; and that, in reply to a question of the Unbak’s, he had told him that he fell run his minister would send a body of troops to the Emperor of China’s assistance is a requisition were made to him to do to. General Jung Buhadoor pressed me for an opinion upon this subject and begged my advice within in an official or in a private form, but I told him that, as my own

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<sup>83</sup> Lamb, *British India and Tibet*, p. 94.

Government had remained strictly neutral with the reference to the present state of affairs in China.” Ramsay further informs that “Jung Buhadoor pressed himself disappointed and that he felt himself placed in dilemma that he had an equal regard for two great Asiatic powers the British Government in Hindustan and China, although his country was tributary only to the latter, that he is anxious of called upon to do to, and the British Government does not take on fact, to send of twelve to fourteen thousand men either into Tibet, or wherever else their presence may be useful in supporting the present Chinese dynasty. Jung Buhadoor assured Ramsay that it is his intention to make formal representation to the British Government on the subject, the moreover he has my real ground for believing that the Court of Peking intend seeking Gurkha aid. The four circumstances have occurred in Tibet that have placed *Nepal Durbar* in air embarrassing position that the desire to send troops across the snow arises some indignity that has been offered to the Nepalese embassy regarding which all kind of rumours are about, amongst others that the Chief Surdars who were in charge of have been murdered and that the Emperor of China indignantly refused the presents that were taken to him, saying that Jung Buhadoor chose to go to England with presents for Queen Victoria, he should either come to Peking or there should be war between the two countries.”<sup>84</sup>

The other factor for the clash was boundary dispute between Nepal and Tibet near the village of Khasa, which became acute towards the close of 1852. Jung Bahadur argued that if the Chinese or the Tibetans could produce a document or a map that could substantiate their claim that the territory had been transferred to the Tibetan government then he was prepared to withdraw his claim and even give back the revenue collected from the disputed villages south of Khasa in Nepal. Jung Bahadur further said that if they failed to prove their claim he would forcibly take possession of the disputed lands and expel the Tibetans. Jung Bahadur’s tough stand was also dictated by the offensive and insulting letters from the Chinese Ambam. The Nepalese Prime Minister sought advice too, from the British resident in Kathmandu on the Khasa dispute and ill-treatment of mission with George Ramsay as discussed above.<sup>85</sup>

Major G. Ramsay receives a letter from the Governor General Secretary at Fort William informing him that the Government of India asks for explanations of such military preparation

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<sup>84</sup> NAI, GOI, FD, Secret, 1854, 26 May, File No. 50, pp. 1-4.

<sup>85</sup> Prem R. Uprety, *Nepal-Tibet Relations 1850-1930*, Kathmandu, Puga Nara, 1980, pp. 61-62.

and the dispatched of troops from the capital of Nepal. It also mentioned that no objection can rightly be made by the Government of India so long as the Nepalese do not violate any of the obligations imposed upon them by treaty with us.<sup>86</sup> During this time, the Nepalese were ramping up their preparations for the war with Tibet. However, the recruitment of new soldiers and the mobilization of the nation for mountain warfare proved to be formidable challenge. It involved a series of operations like the training of the fresh recruits, productions of purchase of armaments, collection of food and other commodities and the construction of the mountain roads in the frontier. However, on the diplomatic front the British assistance and Chinese neutrality had to be desperately sought by Nepal. The Jung Bahadur took personal responsibility over war preparations. Thus within the short period of time Jung Bahudur was able to build up new army which had fourteen thousands foot soldiers with twelve hundred horses, and including the non-fighting men were also recruited during the preparations of war. The detailed report of the non-fighting men exclusive of servants, coolies attached to the Nepalese Expedition for the invasion of Tibet was given by Major G Ramsay on 12 May 1855 to the foreign department at Fort William, Government of India:

**Table: 1.1:** The non-fighting men during Nepal-Tibet war 1855-56.

|                    | Kerong | Kooti  | Samoo<br>Buggar | Nallang<br>Chong | Moostang | Hoomla |
|--------------------|--------|--------|-----------------|------------------|----------|--------|
|                    | Column | Column | Column          | Column           | Column   | Column |
| Darftsmen          | 4      | 2      | 1               | 1                | „        | 1      |
| Byds or Physicians | 10     | 4      | 1               | 2                | 1        | 2      |
| Naos or Sergent    | 20     | 8      | 1               | 4                | 1        | 4      |
| Ironsmith          | 20     | 6      | 3               | 5                | 3        | 5      |
| Carpenter          | 20     | 6      | 3               | 5                | 3        | 5      |
| Leather workers    | 30     | 9      | 3               | 6                | 3        | 6      |
| Persian Moonshees  | 1      | „      | „               | „                | „        | „      |
| English Writers    | 1      | „      | „               | „                | „        | „      |

<sup>86</sup> NAI, GOI, FD, Secret, 19<sup>th</sup> May 1854, File No.58, pp. 15-17.

|                    |     |     |    |    |    |    |
|--------------------|-----|-----|----|----|----|----|
| Bhotea Moonshees   | 4   | 2   | 1  | 1  | 1  | 1  |
| Ditto Interpreters | 4   | 2   | ,, | 1  | ,, | 1  |
| Chinese Moonshees  | 2   | ,,  | ,, | ,, | ,, | ,, |
| Ditto interpreters | ,,  | 1   | ,, | 1  | ,, | 1  |
| Bunuyas            | 200 | 100 | ,, | ,, | ,, | ,, |
| Hulwaies or sweet  | 4   | 2   | ,, | ,, | ,, | ,, |
| Meat seller        | 4   | 2   | ,, | ,, | ,, | ,, |
| Band men           | 180 | 65  | 6  | 48 | 8  | 68 |
| Grand Total        | 500 | 207 | 19 | 74 | 20 | 94 |

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**Note:** Detail of non-fighting men exclusive of servants, coolies attached to the Nepalese expedition for the invasion of Tibet. **Source:** NAI, GOI, FD, Secret Consultation, 25<sup>th</sup> May 1855, No.41/47, p.21.

Shortly after the death of the eleventh Dalai Lama, war broke out in 1855, the Tibetan government sent troops from Lhasa and militia from Kham region under the command the command of Kalon Tashi Khangsar. Fighting ensured and there were casualties on both sides, but the Tibetans were unable to recover their territories. During this war Tibetan monks from the three main monasteries of Tibet volunteered to fight and left in large numbers for the battle, but they did no actual fighting. Before the monks reached the front, the Gurkhas had opened negotiations and requested Tibetan representatives to precede Kathmandu. A ten point Agreement was drawn up on eighteenth day of the third month of the fire-Dragon year that is 24 March 1856.<sup>87</sup> The Nepalese retaliated upon the enemy with such fearful vengeance that they never afterwards dared wait the Goorkha onslaught, and similar successes attending the Goorkha arms in other engagement, the Tibetans sued for peace and concluded a humiliating and inglorious Treaty with Nepal.<sup>88</sup> In August 1886, Nepal decided to resume its traditional relations with China, but the tribute mission of that year, which did not return to Kathmandu until 1869, was a failure in many respects. The main objective behind such practices of tributary system was

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<sup>87</sup> W.D. Shakabpa, *Tibet a political history*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1967, pp. 181-182.

<sup>88</sup> NAI, GOI, FD, 1870, File No.401, p. 11.

actually a forceful imposition by the Chinese suzerainty upon its neighboring states to prove their supremacy over the Himalayan states.

### **British trade with Tibet from Darjeeling-Sikkim**

Juxtaposing Indian and Chinese political stances on Tibet in the nineteenth century were contrasting. The Chinese Emperor exerted a close and strong influence over the Tibetan Government and its people, while the British India Government mostly engaged in diplomacy, with their goals often overshadowed by the Chinese resentment. Henceforth, from the mid-nineteenth century the British Government in India adopted the policy to reestablish commercial relation with the Tibet. The British were attempting to restore a trading route from Darjeeling and Sikkim Himalayan region. In the past, however, trade between Tibet and India flourished through Nepal and Western Tibet. Prior, to the annexation of Darjeeling by the EIC; Tibet influence over Sikkim was limited. Tibet regarded Sikkim as quiet beneath her notice, and held but little communication with her. But since the British have approached closer to the Tibetan frontier, Tibet has made advances to Sikkim and sought closer friendship.<sup>89</sup>

For a long time, Tibet maintained a trade relationship with China, primarily influenced by the Eastern Tibetans, with the main interactions revolving around both commercial and political interest. There are two roads from Lhasa to Peking, the Chinese capital. The first is the post roads along which dispatches are carried on horses, the journey to and from usually occupying two months, but expresses get over the space in twenty days, the other road is more circuitous, yet it is the one usually selected by the merchants, being better adapted for the conveyance of baggage and merchandise. It is, however, much more tedious, and commonly employs eight months, but it is the route pursued by the annual caravan, which reaches Lhasa in October, and sets out on its return to China in June. The principal imports to Lhasa in 1814 were tea in large quantities; cochen, a Chinese Silk, European broadcloth to a small amount, silver bullion in lumps, besides European cutlery and other miscellaneous articles. From Lhasa to Peking the caravan carries *puttoo* (a coarse woolen cloth manufactured near Lhasa, of which a great amount is annually exported to China); *toos* (a fine woolen cloth, resembling the *looe* of Hindostan; and manufactured in Tibet); gold bullion, produce in the Tibet mines; *mushroo* (a silk manufacture of

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<sup>89</sup> WBSA, Political, Proceedings, 28<sup>th</sup> September 1874, File No. 48 (A – 34/35), p. 171.

Benares); Hindostan *chintzes*, Allahabad *cloths*, imported from upper Hindostan, and *otter* skins, chanks or large shells, rhinoceros-horns, and peacock feathers, all in the first instance imported from Bengal. A commercial intercourse subsists between Tibet and Assam, transacted on the confines of the respective states. The exports to Assam consist principally of silver bullion and rock-salt; the imports from Assam are rice, coarse silk, cloths, iron, sticklac, and few other articles of small value; the whole estimated at one lack of rupees.<sup>90</sup>

From the sixteenth century the Kashmiri Muslim communities were active in trading activities in Tibet and in the trans-Himalayan regions Nepal, Bhutan, and Sikkim in the east. Kashmiri merchant communities dominated most of the trading activities. A prominent presence in virtually every large Himalayan trading *entrepot* the Kashmiri formed the backbone of trans-Himalayan trade. In the time of the fifth Dalai Lama, there was a notable influx of foreign artisans, scholars and traders into Tibet, a development that he undoubtedly promoted. During this period, the Muslim merchants came to Lhasa and they were come to be known as *Khache* in Tibet.<sup>91</sup>

Tibet was actively involved in the trading activities with its neighbors before British EIC developed its commercial interest. Colonel J.C. Haughton, C.S.I., Commissioner of the Cooch Behar Division, in one of his dispatched letter to the Junior Secretary to the Government of Bengal dated Julpigoree, the 21 April 1871, writes that “the Cashmerees having recognized the rights and privileges to trade freely for the last four hundred years in Tibet.” He further added some important point regarding the re-opening of commercial intercourse with Tibet referring Kashmiri merchants and traders, he writes that “at present the chief trade with China via Nepal and Lhasa is carried on by Cashmerees from Patna, with whom Haughton been in communication. Some of the older ones of Cashmerees merchants have penetrated China, and many of them know the whole countries between Cashmere and Lhasa.” Haughton also writes that “he personally met with the one of them and with whom he conversed had resided twenty-eight years in Thibet, and, in addition to the ordinary routes, had travelled from Lhasa via Towang to Calcutta. He had also visited Burmah, and proceeded as far as Bhanmo. Haughton

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<sup>90</sup> Walter Hamilton, *The East-India Gazetteer, India beyond the Ganges, and the Eastern Archipelago*, Second Edition Vol. II, London, Printed by J. L. Cox, 1828, pp. 642-643.

<sup>91</sup> David G Atwill, *Islamic Shangri-La Inter-Asian Relations and Lhasa's Muslim Communities 1600-1960*, Oakland, University of California Press, 2018, pp. 21-24.

says that I found him a well-informed man, and fully up in the affairs of Asia able to give details of our war with China and Afghanistan, and informed of events now passing in Bokhara. I proposed that he should be the bearer of friendly letters to the authorities in Thibet, but this he at once negative observing that he felt sure such a measure would be premature and defeat its own object, (for if Thibetans received letters from us, and he describe them in high terms as exhibiting the most friendly feelings towards foreigners) the Chinese would intervene, and nothing was done without the Chinese interfering. This man was at Lhasa when the Jesuits Hue and Gabet visited.”<sup>92</sup> The uncertainty held by British officials in India about the Tibetan Government’s willingness to engage in commercial relations with India, along with the isolationist approach of Tibetan authorities towards the British, persisted throughout the nineteenth century. During the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, British officials sought insight from Kashmiri merchants and traders to comprehend the strategic factors in fostering trade with Tibet.

In the past, Tibet was also engaged in the commercial relations with the Newars of Nepal. The Malla dynasty of Newar encouraged the arts, agriculture, and commerce. In the era of Malla dynasty, flourishing trade was carried out between Tibet and the plains of India, through the passes of Nepal. The sixth King of the Malla dynasty, at his death, divided his dominions into three principalities with capitals within the valley, Kathmandu, Lalita Patan, and Bhatgaon. In these towns there were mints for coining money, and they seem to have formed centers of trading enterprises in 17<sup>th</sup> and the first half of the eighteenth century. The Kashmiri merchants carried their goods to Ladakh to Kuti, at the head of the pass, to procure wool, and their manufactures went thence partly for use in Tibet, partly to China by Sining (Xining), and partly to Patna by the valley of Nepal. Tibet merchants brought woollen cloths, ponies, shawl goats, yaks, sheep, musk, salt, borax, gold, silver, and paper to Kathmandu, and the lamas sent much bullion to the Nepal mints. From India came cotton cloth, cutlery, glassware, coral, pearls, spices, camphor, betel, and hardware, which were passed on, from Nepal, over the passes to Tibet.<sup>93</sup>

The British Government of India decided to open communication with Tibet for this purpose Captain E. Smyth of the Bengal Army was dispatched to Western Tibet in 1863 he was

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<sup>92</sup> NAI, GOI, FD, Political A, Consultation, October 1871, File No. 613, p. 2.

<sup>93</sup> Markham, *Narratives of the Mission*, pp. liii-liv.



authorized to cross into the very remote regions opposite to Kumaon, but he was stopped on the border by the Tibetan frontier officials informing him that he should not proceed further without passports issued in Peking.<sup>94</sup> British Government of India was determined to open communications with Tibet, during this time T. T. Cooper an English traveller tried with the knowledge and support of the British merchant community at Shanghai to enter Tibet from the side of China. He obtained his passport from the viceroy of Szechuan to go to India via Lhasa, but on the Tibetan frontier he was stopped by the frontier guards who refused him to proceed further. In 1869 he tried to enter Tibet from India but again he was stopped by the Tibetan frontier guard. Cooper, though he had failed to reach Tibet, was able to give much publicity to the prospect of developing Indian tea trade with that country which consumed annually six to eight million pounds of Chinese brick tea. His advocacy of this point had a profound effect on the subsequent British India and Tibetan relations.<sup>95</sup>

In 1857, when Lord Elgin was on his way to China, B. H. Hodgson urged that the British Ambassador should seek from the Chinese the right for a representative of the Indian Government to reside in Lhasa, or, failing that, Chinese help in the creation of a regular trade mart somewhere on the Indo-Tibetan border, where Indian and Tibetan traders could meet exchange their wares.<sup>96</sup> The early advocates of developing a road to Sikkim to Tibet was suggested by Hodgson and Campbell, the prime objective of these two gentlemen was that they visualized that an improvement in the conditions of trade in the Himalaya 'would greatly improve the resources of Darjeeling' they were confident about their vision due to rapid growth of the tea industry in Kumaon, Darjeeling, and Assam needed an outlet and according to their observation Tibet will emerge as the best market for the British Tea where the Chinese brick-tea of Szechuan was widely preferred by the Tibetan people which arrives at the market of Tibet by a long and arduous road, whereas, the Darjeeling tea can reach Tibetan market via Sikkim sooner than Chinese brick-tea.<sup>97</sup> Campbell himself started an experimental growth of tea in Darjeeling in 1841 with the seeds of the Chinese variety first grown in Kumaon Himalayas. The experiment turned into a success this encourage the Campbell to established experimental nursery at Lebong

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<sup>94</sup> P.R. Rao, *India and Sikkim 1814-1970*, New Delhi, Sterling Publishers, 1972, p. 67.

<sup>95</sup> Rao, *India and Sikkim*, pp. 49-50.

<sup>96</sup> Lamb, *British India and Tibet*, p. 88.

<sup>97</sup> Singh, *Himalayan triangle*, p. 197.

in Darjeeling in 1845.<sup>98</sup> By figuring out the enquiry report of Edgar's proposal on India-Tibet trade, it became evident that tea was not included in the list of items exported from the Darjeeling to Tibet. This clearly indicated that the Chinese were not ready to accept the domination of the British tea in the market of Tibet.

The flow of trade between Tibet and Sikkim from 1860-1863 appears to have been at its best. According to the statement submitted with report of the Deputy Commissioner of Darjeeling on 30<sup>th</sup> June 1864 which gave following figures on the trade for the years 1860-63:

**Table 1.2:** Tibet-Sikkim trade.

**Trade with Sikkim**

|         |            |
|---------|------------|
| Imports | Rs. 89,535 |
| Exports | Rs.19,450  |
| Total   | 1,08,985   |

**Trade with Tibet**

|                             |          |
|-----------------------------|----------|
| Imports                     | 64,005   |
| Exports                     | 43,600   |
| Total                       | 1,07,605 |
| Total for four years Rupees | 2,16,590 |

**Note:** Deputy Commissioner of Darjeeling dated 30<sup>th</sup> June 1864. The value of rupees 55,000 yearly was a total exports and imports of trade between Sikkim-Tibet. In 1860 the British government was at war with Sikkim and consequently there was little or no trade in that year but the trade was progressively increasing during this period.<sup>99</sup>

<sup>98</sup> Tanka Bahadur Subba, *Dynamics of a Hill Society, Nepalis in Darjeeling and Sikkim Himalayas*, Delhi, Mittal Publications, 1984, p. 2.

<sup>99</sup> WBSA, Political, File 72, Proceedings 78-79, December 1875, File No. 238P, pp. 245-246.

**Table: 1.3:** Tibet-Sikkim trade.

**Trade with Sikkim**

|         |            |
|---------|------------|
| Imports | Rs. 33,090 |
| Exports | Rs.5,750   |
| Total   | 38,840     |

**Trade with Tibet**

|         |        |
|---------|--------|
| Imports | 22,902 |
| Exports | 13,650 |
| Total   | 36,552 |
| Total   | 75,392 |

**Note:** Deputy Commissioner of Darjeeling dated 30<sup>th</sup> June 1864. If the year 1863 be taken, when the trade appears to have been at its best, the following is the result of trade of that year.<sup>100</sup>

The table above indicates that trade between Sikkim and Tibet was thriving in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, which may have drawn the British to assert their political control over Sikkim to link with Tibet. Alex McKay in his article argued that certainly the 1861 Treaty increased Sikkim's opening to the world, or at least to the colonial state, with a number of travellers, surveyors, and road-builders entering the country in the ensuing decades. Sikkim now became the main focus of British efforts to reach Lhasa. Trade with Sikkim was of little or no importance and free trade there was only important if, as the British hoped, Tibet was opened to trade via Sikkim route.<sup>101</sup>

In October 1869, Colonel J. C. Haughton, of Commissioner of Cooch Behar and officer in charge of British Government expressed the opinion that it was desirable that the Government of India should cultivate the friendship with Tibet and asked for permission to open communications with the Tibetan authorities. The Bengal Government did not accept the proposal of opening relations with Tibet and felt that any attempt to open communications with

<sup>100</sup>WBSA, Political, File 72, Proceedings 78-79, December 1875, File No. 238P, p. 246.

<sup>101</sup> Alex McKay, *A Difficult Country, A Hostile Chief, and A Still more hostile Ministers: The Anglo-Sikkim War of 1861*, pp.31-48 available in [https://himalaya.socanth.cam.ac.uk/collections/journals/bot/pdf/bot\\_2009\\_02\\_02.pdf](https://himalaya.socanth.cam.ac.uk/collections/journals/bot/pdf/bot_2009_02_02.pdf) accessed on 31/10/2024.

Tibet might excite suspicions as to our motives and do more harm than good. William Grey, the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, thought it undesirable to disturb the existing satisfactorily relations between India and Tibet.<sup>102</sup>

The British was aware about the prohibition to the entry of Europeans into Tibet, which undoubtedly came from the Chinese. During this time, The Chinese garrisons were stationed at principal routes along the Sikkim-Tibet frontiers, specifically on the Darjeeling - Sikkim route. However, the British officials believed that until the Chinese Government can be induced to cause the removal of restrictions of Europeans visiting Tibet, it will be hopeless tasks for travelers to attempt to pass. And so long as the routes and emporia remain closed to Europeans, they will remain closed, or nearly so, to Indian trade. The Tibetans authorities were averse to the export of tea from British territory and the prohibition existed to its passing of Tibet. Tibet at this time was supplied chiefly with brick-tea, made of the old coarse refuse leaves of the tea plant, which probably has to find its way quite as far at least in coming from China to Tibet as the Darjeeling tea would have to travel going there; indeed, for a considerable portion of the country Darjeeling itself would have a decided advantage, as the station is only about 45 miles from the frontier of Tibet in a direct line. The remove of existing barriers to free trade should be the priority of the British in developing commercial intercourse with Tibet.<sup>103</sup>

Colonel Haughton, Commissioner of Cooch Behar Division suggested some measures for removing existing barriers to free trade.

- Firstly, that measure should be taken to move the court at Peking to take effectual steps in the spirit of existing Treaties to remove all restrictions on the free passage of merchants or travelers.
- Secondly, that the *Sikkimputtee* be required to obtain from Tibetan authorities authentic information as to duties leviable on their frontier, and prohibitions, if any, to import of any particular article, with a view, if necessary, to further communications.<sup>104</sup>

In 1873 the Deputy Commissioner of Darjeeling Sir John Edgar, was deputed to enquire into the possibility of re-establishing trade with Tibet, which had been the prime objectives since

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<sup>102</sup> Rao, *India and Sikkim*, p.50.

<sup>103</sup> NAI, GOI, FD, Political A, October 1870, File No. 70, p. 1.

<sup>104</sup> NAI, GOI, FD, Political A, October 1870, File No. 70, pp. 1-5.

the time of Hastings almost century ago when the mission was dispatched under George Bogle. A few years later a road was made by Sir Richard Temple through Sikkim to the Tibetan frontier at the Jelap Pass.<sup>105</sup> In the minute by the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, dated 28 June 1875 where the discussion on the trade route from Darjeeling, through Sikkim to the Tibetan frontier is much mentioned. “Starting from Darjeeling, the route descends for about 6,000 feet to the River Runjeet (Darjeeling being 7,000 feet and the river under 1,000 feet) by a very good bridle-road, aligned and constructed by the Public Works Department (PWD). From this point onwards it is under the care of the district authorities. It passes by a fair bridle-road (without crossing that river) along the right bank of the Teesta, a total distance of eight miles. Then it crosses the Teesta, for which crossing a cane bridge for foot passengers and a raft for the passage of laden animals are provided. From across the Teesta it proceeds by gradual ascent without meeting any river also by a fair bridle-road to Fedong (the present name is Pedong is located in 20km East of Kalimpong district at an altitude of 1,240metres), height 4,500 feet, which is situated just below the Dhumsong Ridge (the present name is Damsang Gree), and distant 19 miles from the Teesta. The rafts there could not cross in the rainy season and even in the other months; there would be much delay and trouble in crossing any large number of animals at once. The distance from Darjeeling to Fedong may be taken at 37 miles.”<sup>106</sup>

The distance between Fedong to Jeylup Pass (Jelep La) is divided into six stages by British officials like J. W. Edgar, confirmed by others Major Judge, Mr. Blandford, and others.

- The first stage, distance about 6 miles, from Fedong, 5,200 feet, descend to the River Rishi, 2,400 feet, width of river about 25 yard, cross it and ascend to Rheinock, 5,100 feet high.
- Second stage, distance about 9 miles, descend to the Rilli river, 2,817 feet, width about 35 yards, cross it and ascend to a spur of the Lingcham Range; camp above Chus-achen 5,400 feet.
- Third stage, distance about 12 miles, cross Lingcham Ridge, 6,500 feet, then descend to Lingtam River, 6,500 feet, then descend to Lingtam River (4,800 feet), about 15 yards in

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<sup>105</sup>C. U. Aitchison, *A Collection of Treaties, Engagements, and Sanads Relating to India and neighboring countries*, Vol. XIV, Delhi, Mittal Publications, 1983, p.16

<sup>106</sup>NAI, GOI, FD, Political A, 1875, November, Minute by the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, dated 28 June 1875, File No.93, pp. 1

width, cross it, then reascend Lingcham Range to Kenlaka (5,200 feet), a winter station for herdsmen.

- Fourth stage, distance about 9 miles, perhaps less, but road difficult, and ascend to Jeyluk (10,000 feet) on the side of the Lingtu Hill, near the base of the highlands leading to the Jeylup Pass.
- Fifth stage, distance about 11 miles, passes over top of Lingta (12,500 feet) to Guatong (13,000 feet).
- Sixth stage, Guatong to Kofoo, at the foot of Jeylup Pass, about seven miles; height of the pass itself about 14,000 feet about two miles further: total distance nine miles, when the frontier of Thibet is met with.

From Fedong to the Jeylup Pass the route is travelled by laden men with some difficulty, but by the laden animals not at all. But Mr. Edgar, with good ponies and mules, was able to ride over the greater part of it, having to dismount, however, occasionally. The total distance between Fedong to Jeylup Pass, Thibet frontier during that time was around 56 miles and from Darjeeling to Jeylup Pass was around 93 miles.<sup>107</sup>

The advantages of Sikkim as a trade route between Bengal and Tibet had received considerable publicity after the British expedition of 1861. Dr. Campbell, who looked on Darjeeling as his own creation, lost no opportunity to press for an improvement in the conditions of trade and travel in the Himalayas, which would greatly improve the resources of Darjeeling and add to its attractions as a Sanatorium. Campbell the superintendent of Darjeeling sent a letter in 4 January 1844 to J. R. Davidson the officer secretary to Government of India in Foreign Department at Fort William, Campbell writes that “to forward for the information of the Honble the President in Council and in continuation of the routes furnished on 20 August 1840 a route from the Jumloong in Sikkim to Phari in Tibet with a rate on the Lake Salt of Tibet which brought for sale to Darjeeling and other places in the Himalaya south of the Irrawy range.” He further added that “last year August he had forwarded the specimens of the salt to W. Piddington of the Asiatic society which was brought from Eastern Tibet to Darjeeling. The price of the salt

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<sup>107</sup> NAI, GOI, FD, Political A, 1875 November, Minute by the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, dated 28 June 1875, File No. 93, pp. 1-2

in Darjeeling was eight rupees per mound which is two rupees less than the salt of Indian is sold.”<sup>108</sup>

The expansion of trade from Darjeeling to Tibet became utmost priority for the British Government in India. Tea is the primary beverage of Tibetans and is regarded as their national drink. The market for this product in Tibet was primarily controlled by imported Chinese tea, while the British aimed to promote Darjeeling tea in Tibet to rival Chinese tea. India-Tibet trade from the route of Jelep La through Pedong in Kalimong was carried since long time before the British decided to use this route which has easy Himalayan pass to enter Tibet through Chumbi Valley which lies in between Sikkim and Bhutan. This is the shortest trade route between Calcutta and Tibet which was opened legally after 1904.

After signing of 1856 treaty with Tibet the Nepalese traders throughout the Tibet were exempted from the burden of taxes. As the Nepalese merchants had privileges in both internal and external trades of Tibet, they wanted to carry trade through the Chumbi valley trade route. After the opening of Phari trade route, the Nepalese traders had transferred their trading centre from Kathmandu to Kalimpong (India) but the Tibetan resisted Nepalese intrusion over this route by imposing taxes on the goods from Nepal and discouraged Nepali merchants to use this route.<sup>109</sup>

Richard Temple the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal in his minute dated 28 June 1875 writes that “the Jeylup Pass crosses the Chola Snowy Range, to the north of this Pass there are other Passes such as the Guatni, Yukla, and the Chola. But this Jeylup Pass is the best, and is open all the year round. It is the lowest Pass in the Chola Range, which again is one of the lowest sections of the main Himalayan Snowy Range. It leads into the territory of Choombee (Thibetan), and an undulating tract, average height about 11,000 feet. The town of Choombee, the administration of which is under the Lhasa Lama, is reported to be only a few miles distant from the Jeylup Pass. The journey from Pass to Lhasa is said to be 15 equestrian marches almost 250 to 300 miles, but what is more important, commercially, the distance to Jhansu Jong (or Gyangze Jong), the principal mart of Eastern Thibet, is only 150 miles; and distance only 50

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<sup>108</sup> NAI, GOI, FD, 1844, Political, Consultation, Fort William, File No.62, pp. 1-7

<sup>109</sup> Tirtha Prasad Mishra, ‘A critical assessment of the Nepal-Tibet treaty’, in Alex McKay (ed.), *Tibet and her Neighbors A History*, London, Edition Hansjorg Mayer, 2003, p. 141.

miles, or so onwards, say 200 miles, or a little more, to Tashilumbo on the great Narichoo River, where one of the best tracts of Thibet is situated. This route is the best and nearest between Northern Bengal and Thibet. It already has some trade, not inconsiderable, for hilly country, which is increasing, and which would be augmented if the route were open.”<sup>110</sup> Through this trading route British India Government was also trying to develop commercial intercourse not only with Lhasa but also with other important trading marts of Tibet.

Mr. Edgar presented enquires about the traders at Darjeeling which at this period turned into the principal mart in the northern Bengal and surrounding hills, and checking the data by similar enquires from in the interior and came up with the statement which is not more than approximate, and which he apprehends may slightly be wrong from the reality:

**Table 1.4:** John Edgar’s report on the commercial exports and imports of the Darjeeling, Sikkim with Tibet.

|                                                                  |          |
|------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|
| Present annual exports from Darjeeling to Tibet value in Rupees. |          |
| Broadcloth, 500 pieces                                           | 25,000   |
| Flannels and similar cloth, 15,000 pieces                        | 45,000   |
| Chintz and cottons, 7,000 pieces                                 | 30,000   |
| American Drill, 4,000 pieces                                     | 28,000   |
| Tobacco                                                          | 8,000    |
| Indigo                                                           | 14,000   |
| Catechu                                                          | 800      |
| Umbrellas (Gingham)                                              | 1,750    |
| Iron hooks and pots                                              | 500      |
| Brass utensils                                                   | 2,200    |
| Looking glasses                                                  | 1,000    |
| Goor (molasses)                                                  | 500      |
| Hookahs (smoking pipes)                                          | 800      |
| Miscellaneous                                                    | 7,000    |
| Total Rupees                                                     | 1,64,550 |

<sup>110</sup> NAI, GOI, FD, Political A, 1875, November , File No.93, pp. 2-3



Present annual exports by this route from Sikkim to Tibet value in Rupees.

|                    |          |
|--------------------|----------|
| Muriva (Millet)    | 500      |
| Rice               | 1,000    |
| Oranges            | 250      |
| Madder             | 4,000    |
| Miscellaneous      | 1,000    |
| Total Rupees       | 6,750    |
| Grand Total Rupees | 1,71,300 |

Present annual imports from Tibet into Sikkim and Darjeeling, value in British Rupees

|                        |        |
|------------------------|--------|
| Ponies 300             | 39,000 |
| Blankets, coarse (450) | 900    |
| Blankets, good (75)    | 500    |
| Salt, 3,000 maunds     | 24,000 |
| Jewellery              | 200    |
| Yaks' tails            | 5,000  |
| China caps             | 150    |
| Musk                   | 1,000  |
| Silk                   | 1,500  |
| Tea                    | 300    |
| Sheep                  | 2,500  |
| Total Rupees           | 75,050 |

**Note:** John Edgar's report on the commercial exports and imports of the Darjeeling, Sikkim with the Tibet, through enquires from the traders. This report is mentioned in the minute of the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, dated 28 June 1875.<sup>111</sup>

The total value of all the ascertained exports from Darjeeling and Sikkim to Tibet being Rupees 1, 71,300 annually; while the value of the imports amounts to Rupees 75,050 annually; there remains a balance of Rupees 96,250 due by Tibet. This balance due from Tibet is paid, in

<sup>111</sup> Yangden Lepcha, 'British India policy towards Tibet through Darjeeling: A study on the opening of trade route 1849-1890', in Anjan Saika (ed.), *The Mirror*, Vol. 9, Jorhat, Cinnamara College Publications, 2022, pp. 215-228.

British rupees, which rupees the Tibetans obtain by selling their cattle, salt, and other produce in Assam and Nepal. This approximate amount of treasure then should be added to the total value of the trade. Besides the articles above specified, there used to be borax, which for some reason, not yet ascertained, has not come down from Tibet by this route and the absence of wool from the list will be remarked. Mr. Edgar believes that (and he is probably right) that the wool fails to come down from Tibet, only because laden animals cannot travel by this route; the article being too bulky to be carried by men. The excellence of the Tibetan wool has a certain degree of celebrity.<sup>112</sup> The principal articles of merchandise between Bengal and Tibet were broad-cloth, attar, skins, indigo, chalk, spices, pearls, coral, amber, and other leads, tobacco, sugar, maida, striped satins, and a few white cloths chiefly coarse. The returns were made in gold dust, musk and cow-tails.<sup>113</sup>

After his return to Darjeeling from Sikkim in December 1873, Edgar made a number of the proposals to the Government of India to improve the relations with Tibet.<sup>114</sup> Mr. Edgar, in his report on Sikkim, recommended that “all necessary improvement on this route should be gradually carried out by degrees through the district officer of Darjeeling. It will be remembered that from the Rishi river below Pedong the Sikkim jurisdiction commences; but we have, by treaty, a right to make roads at our own expense through that jurisdiction. The Government of Bengal recommended that a larger view should be taken of the case, and that a regular road, on professional plans, should be constructed, but the Government of India did not accede to that proposal. But having seen during the last autumn and the present summer something of the manner in which roads are made in the Darjeeling district. Richard Temple, Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, agreed with Mr. Edgar in thinking that he and his subordinates would make the road from Pedong to the Jelep La Pass, 56 miles, passable for laden animals, at a comparatively small expense. Temple himself believes that he could do the work at a cost of Rupees 500 a mile, including the bridges over the three Rivers Rishi, Rilli, and Lingtani; the estimated cost thus amounting to Rupees 28,500.”<sup>115</sup>

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<sup>112</sup> NAI, GOI, FD, Political A, Progs. November 1875, File No. 93, pp. 3-4.

<sup>113</sup> Savitri Saran, ‘Trade and Commerce of Tibet in the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century,’ *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress* Vol. 30 (1968), pp. 426-29, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/44141514> accessed on 14/02/2022.

<sup>114</sup> Rao, *India and Sikkim*, p. 59.

<sup>115</sup> NAI, GOI, FD, Political A, Progs. November 1875, File No.93, p. 5.

The Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, Richard Temple believed that British-Tibet relations could be developed simply by improving the communications in the Sikkim frontier. He came forward and supported the proposal and idea of Edgar's report which was focused on the construction of the road to the Tibetan frontier through Pedong to Jelep La, and Sikkim, and wanted that the whole project should be completed within the span of three four years with the support of British Government in India by assigning the proposed plan from the imperial funds for this special purpose. Unfortunately, the Government of India, unlike the Bengal Government did not react favorably to Edgar's proposal for the construction of a road to the Tibetan frontier through Sikkim. In 19<sup>th</sup> November 1875, Government of India dispatched a letter to the Secretary of State for India, mentioning on the subject of the development of trade between India and Tibet, that a survey should be at once undertaken to ascertain the estimated cost of making a tolerable bridle path throughout that portion of the route from Darjeeling to the Tibet frontier this lies within British territory. While concurring generally in the views therein expressed by Temple, we have stated our opinion that, although the probabilities of trade with Tibet are not sufficiently great to justify a grant from Imperial revenues for the purpose of undertaking the survey, such measures as may be necessary for the improvement of the route will doubtless be gradually effected from the provincial resources at the disposal of the Government of Bengal.<sup>116</sup>

The Governor-General in Council has no doubt that Temple will gradually improve the trade route from Provincial resources; but that His Excellency in Council does not consider the probabilities of trade with Tibet sufficiently great to justify a grant from Imperial funds.<sup>117</sup> The reason behind the British Government for not implementing any type of strong hold over the development of the commercial intercourse with the Tibet through Sikkim during 1874 was due to the existing relations between India and China which might get affected by this decision and certainly results into crisis between two countries. Nevertheless, the influence of British Government in Sikkim increased after the Edgar's visit in 1873.<sup>118</sup>

The death of Maharaja Sidkeong Namgyal in April 1874 changed the course of the British Government political position over the Sikkim Kingdom. The British supremacy in Sikkim was witnessed during this time when the British government succeeded in nominating its own

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<sup>116</sup> NAI, GOI, FD, Political A, Progs. November 1875, File No.102, pp. 3-4.

<sup>117</sup> NAI, GOI, FD, Political A, Progs. November 1875, File No.103, p. 5.

<sup>118</sup> Singh, *Himalayan triangle*, p. 203.

candidate as the ruler of this Himalayan Kingdom. The dispute for the succession of the throne in Sikkim arose when the former ruler had only two half-brothers one legitimate Thothab Namgyal and the other illegitimate Tinley Namgyal. The letter was forwarded to the Deputy Commissioner of Darjeeling from the Sikkim Darbar informing him of the event and passed away of the Sikkim ruler but there was no mention about the next successor to the throne this made Edgar suspected that an attempt was made to set aside the succession of the Thothab Namgyal in favor of Tinley Namgyal. To prevent such a contingency, Edgar informed the Sikkim Darbar that the Government of India would not recognize any succession apart from Thothab Namgyal who ultimately became the ruler of Sikkim. In the letter from A. C. Lyall Secretary to the Government of India foreign department to the Secretary to the Government of Bengal political department, it is stated “that His Excellency the Viceroy and Governor General in council approves of the proceedings of the Deputy Commissioner of Darjeeling in recognizing, by anticipation of the sanction of the Government of India, the succession of Thothub Namguay, the younger brother of the late Maharaja. The recognition is hereby confirmed by the Government of India and the request for the allowance to the new king will be granted.”<sup>119</sup>

Edgar’s decision on this matter certainly increased the British influence in Sikkim and it also affected the Tibet’s suzerainty over the kingdom. In 1875 the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, visited Sikkim during his tenure the road was constructed from Darjeeling to the Tibetan frontier at Jelep La Pass. While constructing the road the British Government received active assistance of the Sikkim State, and met with no objections on the part of Tibet. The British Government was well aware of the fact that the people and the Tibetan Government looked on our proceedings with a certain amount of suspicion and uneasiness.<sup>120</sup>

During the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the British were able to establish a strong political presence in Sikkim. However, the settlement of the Nepali people over the region was a concern. This British policy faced opposition from the pro-Tibetan faction, led by Tinley Namgyal, who had fled to Tibet in 1874 after failing to claim the throne in Sikkim. They were apprehensive that the influx of Nepalese would lead to the displacement of the indigenous people

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<sup>119</sup> WBSA, Political, Proceedings 10, October 1874, File No. 15B-27, p. 227.

<sup>120</sup> H. H. Risley (ed.), *The Gazetteer of Sikkim*, Calcutta, 1894; [Reprint] Oriental Publishers, Delhi, 1973, p. vi.

of Sikkim and outnumber them. The large numbers of Nepalese were settled in the Darjeeling and Sikkim that happened between 1871 and 1888. Nepalese were the most sought-after people by the British not only as soldiers but also as agriculturalist.<sup>121</sup> The oversight of the British Government in restricting the settlement of Nepalese in the Sikkim resented the Pro-Tibetan Party, which started to foster anti-British sentiments among Tibetans in Tibet.<sup>122</sup> Such development played significant role in affecting the India-Tibet relations.

### **Sarat Chandra Das clandestine journey to Tibet**

In 1879 British India Government deployed a very secret mission into Tibet under Sarat Chandra Das and Ugyen Gyatso, SCD was born in the town of Chittagong, in Eastern Bengal, in 1849, in a Hindu family. He received his education at Presidency College in Calcutta, where he became favorably known to Sir Alfred Croft the Director of Public Instruction of Bengal, who later played important role in SCD journey to Tibet.<sup>123</sup> SCD was appointed as the Head Master of the Bhutia Boarding School at Darjeeling. The pupils come from Sikkim, and some few from Tibet. They learn Tibetan and English in BBS; and the main object of the BBS is to train up interpreters, geographers, and explorers, who may be useful if at any future time Tibet is open to the British. SCD has learnt Tibetan (both classic and vernacular) assiduously. He acted as interpreter between the Raja of Sikkim and the Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal at their conference in Kalimpong. He is also ardent student of Buddhism; and is well known throughout Sikkim and also persons having authority in Tibet. During his journey to Tibet he was accompanied by the Lama Ugyen-gyatso, the Tibetan teacher of the BBS in Darjeeling and a monk of the *Pemiongchi* monastery, had occasion to go into Tibet in order to pay his respects to the Dalai Lama at Lhasa, and also to convey the tribute of the *Pemiongchi* monastery to the Teshu Lama.<sup>124</sup>

SCD took the opportunity of sending a letter the Teshu Lama, praying that he might be admitted to study in the Tashilumbo monastery. The reply to that letter was very gracious. Lama Ugyen-gyatso, who had been during his visit the guest of the Teshu Lama (Panchen Lama), brought back a letter to SCD from the “Lord of Worship”, the Teshu Lama’s prime minister,

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<sup>121</sup> Subba, *Dynamics of a Hill*, p. 19.

<sup>122</sup> Rao, *India and Sikkim*, pp. 63-66.

<sup>123</sup> W. W. Rockhill (ed.), *Journey to Lhasa and Central Tibet*, London, 1904, p. v.

<sup>124</sup> NAI, FD, K.W. Secret, January 1882, File No. 722-723, p. 2.

inviting “the Indian Pandit Sarat Chandra Das” to Tashilumbo, where his name had been inscribed, with that of Lama Ugyen-gyatso, as a student in the grand monastery, offering him his choice of routes, and commanding all *Jungpens* or other persons to whom that letter might be shown to help him forward with all his baggage.<sup>125</sup> To insure SCD safety and justify his presence in the country in the eyes of suspicious lamas and Chinese, he entered Tibet in the guise as a student of theology in the Grand Monastery of that place.<sup>126</sup>

In 20<sup>th</sup> July 1881, A. W. Croft writes to the Sir A. C. Lyall, about the friendliness and liberal attitudes of the Prime Minister of Tashilhunpo in Tibet that “the travellers were cordially welcomed and hospitality entertained by the Prime Minister, and was presented to the Tashi Lama. The Minister appears to be man of an intelligent and inquiring mind, and to have readily assimilated the elementary lessons in astronomy and physics which SCD gave him. He showed much interest in photography and the telescope, and took frequent lesson in Hindi.”<sup>127</sup> Tashi Lama fully cooperated with the SCD during his stay at the Tashilhunpo he was seen as the guest of the Prime Minister, with whose support and assistance SCD was able to examine the rich collection of the Buddhist and Sanskrit works some of which he brought back to India. The journey of SCD was successful in achieving a friendly relation with the Prime Minister who was highly impressed and deeply interested in the Western civilization and their scientific discoveries of which he had learned much from the SCD, and requested him to visit again to Tashilhunpo.<sup>128</sup> Since his return, he has been busily engaged in writing, besides an account of his journey, a long series of papers on the laws, manners, and customs of Tibet, its foreign relations, its folk-lore, and its history and antiquities.<sup>129</sup> The year of 1880 was passed by SCD at his home in Darjeeling which he later named as ‘*Lhasa Villa*’ where he hosted many notable guests including Charles Alfred Bell a British diplomat and Ekai Kawaguchi a Japanese Buddhist monk.

SCD left Tashilhunpo, not only with a safe-conduct which provided him with beasts of burden all along the route, but with a cordial invitation from the Minister to return the next year, that is 1880. Prior, to SCD visit there was trouble and disorder in Sikkim, and SCD did not think

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<sup>125</sup> NAI, FD, K.W. Secret, January 1882, File No. 722, Projected journey of the Babu Sarat Chandra Das to Tibet, Office of the Director of public instruction, Calcutta dated 12 April 1879, p. 2.

<sup>126</sup> Rockhill, *Journey to Lhasa*, p. vi.

<sup>127</sup> NAI, New Delhi, K.W. Secret, January 1882, File No. 722, p. 1.

<sup>128</sup> Rockhill, *Journey to Lhasa*, p. vi.

<sup>129</sup> NAI, FD, K.W. Secret, January 1882, File No. 722, p. 1.

it safe to travel in a country where passions ran high and life was little regarded. He accordingly sent a musical-box to the Minister, with other presents, and a letter explaining why his journey must be postponed until 1881. SCD purposes then to start again for Tashilhunpo, leaving Darjeeling as soon after 15 August 1881 as may be. If he puts off his departure until September, he fears that the passes may be closed by snow.<sup>130</sup>

During the second visit of the SCD proposal was submitted to the British Government of India, A. W. Croft mentioning his desire to set out from Lhasa for the unknown regions lying to the east and north-east on a geographical expedition, exploring and surveying the country either to Batang or to Lobnor, or possibly even to Pekin (returning by sea), according to the facilities that might offer themselves. "In the guise of Lamas he and his companions would travel without any difficulty, and additional safe-guards would be provided by the friendship of the Minister. Should however unforeseen obstacles present themselves, the further journey would be abandoned. The cost of such a journey can hardly be estimated with accuracy. SCD thinks it would take two years and Rs. 20,000 if Pekin were the object. A. W. Croft further added that it would be necessary to carry the amount in gold and jewels, such as find a ready sale in the principal towns of Mongolia and China. SCD was receiving only his Deputy Inspector's salary of Rs. 150 a month, plus small travelling allowances. What he asks for is a salary of Rs. 200 a month for himself, and an allowance of Rs. 200 a month for his wife during the years of his absence; this last allowance to be added to his own salary on his return, or to be converted into a pension for his wife in the event of his death. He cannot, however, enter upon pecuniary engagement of this kind without the sanction of the Supreme Government."<sup>131</sup> In the telegram dated Simla, 29 July 1881 the Government of India agree to the proposals.<sup>132</sup>

The confidential agreement was made with SCD by the Government of India where it is mentioned that "no limit is fixed as to the duration of his stay at Lhasa; but special reasons, he should endeavour to return to India within twelve months. He should also endeavour to maintain regular communications with India during his absence, reporting his proceedings from time to time to the Director of Public Instruction, and making arrangements for the safe transmission of letters to himself. A sum of Rs. 5,000 will be placed at his disposal in gold, pearls, coral or other

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<sup>130</sup> NAI, FD, K.W. Secret, January 1882, File No. 722, p. 2.

<sup>131</sup> NAI, FD, K.W. Secret, January 1882, File No. 722, pp. 2-3.

<sup>132</sup> NAI, FD, K.W. Secret, January 1882, File No. 723, p. 3.

objects of value in Tibet. With this sum he will defray all necessary expenses of himself and of those who accompany him, including any purchases that he makes in relation to objects of his journey. He will keep a strict account of all his expenditure, and will submit it on return, together with the balance remaining in his hands to the Director of Public Instruction. From the 1 September 1881 his pay will be raised during good behavior to Rs. 300 a month. During his absence from British India, his salary will be kept at his credit in the Treasury, or be paid in whole or in part to any person authorized to receive it on his behalf. In the event of his death before returning to India a pension of Rs. 100 a month will be paid to his widow during her lifetime, and will be continued in the event of her death to his family until such date as the youngest son now alive attains the age of 21, or until the youngest daughter now alive marries, whichever happens last. Same condition was applied to Lama Ugyen-Gyatso who will be accompanying him to Lhasa, will be raised during good behavior to Rs. 100 a month from 1 September 1881.”<sup>133</sup>

The Tashi Lama was very friendly to SCD. He was about to visit the Tibetan capital and offered to take the Indian explorer there in his suit. The Lama, unfortunately, died suddenly before he could introduce SCD to Lhasa. However, SCD visited Lhasa where he spent some time where he had to remain in hiding in the house of a friendly monastic official. SCD's journey coincided with another period of crisis on the Tibetan-Nepalese frontier. During the celebration of the Great Prayer festival in the spring of 1883 an anti-Nepalese riot broke out in Lhasa.<sup>134</sup> During this visit to Tibet SCD gathered valuable information and compiled reports on important geographical features of Tibet. The Tibetan Government began to suspect the objectives of his secret explorations and came to the conclusion that he was the agent of the Government of India and ordered his arrest, but he escaped. He returned to India in the spring of 1883, and has since been engaged in the preparation of a series of reports of the results of his investigations. “This work, at which the SCD is employed, is what the Bengal Government now term ‘*special duty*’.”<sup>135</sup> “His ‘*special duty*’ will it be said, continue so long as it may please government to employ him in investigations relating to Tibet.”<sup>136</sup> Charles Bell writes that in 1910 he had conversation with the late Prime Minister of Tibet who informed him that Sarat's clandestine

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<sup>133</sup> NAI, FD, K.W. Secret, January 1882, File No. 724, pp. 3-4.

<sup>134</sup> Lamb, *British India and Tibet*, pp. 122-123.

<sup>135</sup> NAI, FD, A – Political – E., November 1883, File Nos. 265-272, p. 3.

<sup>136</sup> WBSA, Political, file A-15(1-12), Proceedings B, 191-202, August 1894, Letter from the Director of Public Instruction No.997, Dated 13, Feb, 1884.



entry and his superstitious inquiries the Tibetan Government reacted very harshly after the escape of the SCD from Tibet, everyone involved in the connections with the SCD journey to Tibet were severely punished and their property was confiscated some of them were thrown into prison. Some were even executed, including a high Incarnate Lama, the high priest of the *Dong-tse* monastery.<sup>137</sup> By comparison with other travelers of the time, often lavishly equipped and backed by their government, Das's success in reaching Lhasa was particularly significant.<sup>138</sup>

### **Abandoned Tibet Mission of Colman Macaulay**

Tibetan suspicion towards British power in India intensified as their rule control expanded over the Himalayan states where the influence of Lhasa, even if not sovereign, had long been respected. For centuries, Tibet maintained a spiritual and cultural link with the cis-Himalayan region; and, the people inhabiting the region saw Lhasa as the center of their faith.<sup>139</sup> After the return of the Sarat Chandra Das in 1883, the commercial intercourse between India-Tibet from Sikkim was stopped by the Tibetan government. The Bengal Government suggested to the Government of India that a repetition of a Mission to Sikkim, like Edgar's of 1873, was essential to investigate the cause of trade stoppage on the this frontier. The Government of India approved of the suggestion and asked the Bengal Government to depute its finance secretary, Colman Macaulay, to visit Sikkim in October 1884. In 1885 a serious effort was made to open up intercourse with Tibet, Macaulay was deputed on a commercial mission and to find out whether a direct road could be opened up between Darjeeling and the province of Tsang which is famous for its wool production. In 1885 he visited Peking to obtain passport for the mission to Tibet, under the provision of Chefoo Convention in 1876 which guaranteed the protection of British mission. After some difficulty, the Tsungli Yamen granted the required passport.<sup>140</sup>

Captain W.F. O'Connor believed that "the grant of passports was not the end of the matter, but only the beginning of their difficulties. He feared that both the Chinese and Tibetan local influence would throw obstacles to the Mission's entry into Tibet. He recommended avoiding such circumstances the Mission objective should be more commercial in nature rather than a political without the assistance of any military presence in the Mission. Macaulay did not

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<sup>137</sup> Bell, *Tibet Past and Present*, p. 59.

<sup>138</sup> Waller, *The Pundits*, pp. 204-205.

<sup>139</sup> Dawa Norbu, *China's Tibet Policy*, Mitcham, Curzon Press, 2001, p. 151.

<sup>140</sup> Aitchison, *A Collection of Treaties*, Vol. XIV, p. 16.

accept O'Connor view, in his later notes Mr. Macaulay seems disposed to attach more importance to the political than to the commercial results of the mission, and his golden fleece melts into a glowing picture of a conference between the representatives of two great Empires in the walls of Central Asia.”<sup>141</sup> The British Government had made settlement of pay allowances of the European and Native non-military members of mission:

**Table 1.5:** The expenditure of the British Mission to Tibet

|                                                          |                                |
|----------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Colman Macaulay                                          | Rs. 3,500                      |
| Mr. Paul, C.S., 2 <sup>nd</sup> in command and Secretary | Rs. 1,500 with free house      |
| Dr. Cunningham, Naturalist                               | Rs. 1,300 with house allowance |
| Colonel Tanner, Survey                                   | Rs. 1,300                      |
| Dr. Leahy, Medical Charge                                | Rs. 400                        |
| Mr. Oldham, Geologist                                    | Rs. 620                        |

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**Source:** NAI, New Delhi, Foreign Department / Progs. September 1886, Nos. 172-324 / Secret –E, Organization of British Political Mission to Tibet. K.W. Section 1, p.9

In 26<sup>th</sup> February 1886, H. B. Medlicott, Esq., Director of Geographical Survey of India writes to the Secretary Government of India (Revenue and Agricultural department), that the proposed Mission to Lhasa being now freely noticed in the newspapers, he recommends the geologist should joined the Mission.<sup>142</sup> The appointment of Oldham as geologist for the mission was confirmed. The Government of India decided the military will escort the Mission to Tibet, and for this purpose the 13<sup>th</sup> Bengal Lancers will accompany the Mission under the command of Captain F. S. Gwatkin which will leave Darjeeling about the end of May.

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<sup>141</sup> NAI, FD, Progs., Secret E, September 1886, File Nos. 172-342, Organization of British Political Mission to Tibet, K.W. 1 (Section XIII), p. 83.

<sup>142</sup> NAI, FD, Progs., September 1886, Secret E, File No. 173, pp. 1-2.

**Table 1.6:** Composition of escort; 13<sup>th</sup> Bengal Lancers for the Mission to Tibet.

|                |                                      |
|----------------|--------------------------------------|
| Native officer | 1                                    |
| Duffadar       | 1                                    |
| Lance duffadar | 1                                    |
| Sowars         | 15                                   |
| Total          | 15 {13 <sup>th</sup> Bengal Lancers} |
| Subadar        | 1                                    |
| Jemadar        | 1                                    |
| Havildars      | 4                                    |
| Naiks          | 4                                    |
| Buglers        | 2                                    |
| Sepoys         | 48                                   |
| Total          | 60 {23 <sup>rd</sup> Pioneers}       |

**Note:** The following escort under the command of Captain F. S. Gwatkin, 13<sup>th</sup> Bengal Lancers, has been detailed to accompany the mission. **Source:** NAI, New Delhi, Foreign Department /Progs. September 1886, Nos. 172-342 / Secret –E, File No. 190, p. 1.

Captain F.S. Gwatkin and any other officer who may be hereafter attached to the Mission for military duty will receive the ordinary pay and allowances of rank, together with any staff pay to which they may be entitled, plus a special allowance of 20 percent on the total of the above mentioned in table 6. “The infantry of the escort and all the followers will receive marching *batta* and free rations. The cavalry will receive free rations and forage. Their horses and grass cutter’s ponies will receive grain and forage. The charge for grain and forage will be 4 *annas* a day per house (including pony or share of pony) for all ranks. The escort and followers will be supplied with camp equipage, free transport, and such warm clothing as may be necessary. A special outfit allowance of Rupees 750 is sanctioned for military officers, escort, and followers.

Two hundred rounds of ammunition per arm will be taken, unless a larger amount is considered necessary by the head of the Mission.”<sup>143</sup>

The Mission stayed in Darjeeling inactively until other developments had taken place. The Government of India did not receive Macaulay’s proposals with enthusiasm. The Viceroy, Lord Dufferin, did not want to spoil the existing relationship of British with China by allowing this Mission to continue further that any attempts to open Tibet might involve complications with China. After third Anglo-Burmese War the British political influence in the region increased and the British wanted Chinese recognition of their political victory in Burma. China, taking advantage of the British anxiety, secured the countermand of the Mission into Tibet. In return, it agreed to recognize British rule and supremacy in Burma. On 29 July 1886, the Secretary of State for India asked the Government to countermand the Mission.<sup>144</sup> According to O’Connor’s *Report on Tibet* states that “the Tibetans, who had been greatly disturbed by the prospect of the mission, naturally attributed its abandonment to our pusillanimity, and, apparently out of pure bravado, crossed the frontier by the Jelep La and established a standing camp in Sikkim.”<sup>145</sup>

In 24<sup>th</sup> September 1886, Colman Macaulay writes to the Secretary of the Government of India (Foreign Dept.), that Macaulay submits the copy of a translation by Mr. Warry of a note prepared by Chen-Huan, the Chinese Writer attached to the Mission which has just been dissolved. He writes “that the Chinese merchants in Darjeeling and Calcutta faces lots of obstacle while trading through the route of Sikkim-Tibetan frontier and absence of the official in India to whom they could make known their grievances. While beyond the frontier, they, or their agents, and all traders except the Lhasa monks, are subjected to every form of harassment and obstruction at Phari, and they obtain no redress for the robberies and outrages to which they are constantly exposed between that place and the end of our road at the Jeylep Pass. The main reasons why the English wished to open relations with Tibet was a prudent and natural desire to make acquaintance with a neighboring nation, and a not unreasonable fear least an unfriendly nation, for instance, Russia on the north, or France on the south-east, should a march on them and endanger the security of their empire in India. Hence they inserted a special article in the

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<sup>143</sup> NAI, FD, Progs., September 1886, Secret –E, File No. 190, pp. 1-2.

<sup>144</sup> Rao, *India and Sikkim*, pp. 71-79.

<sup>145</sup> W.F. O’Connor, *Report on Tibet*, Calcutta, Government Printing, 1903, p. 68.

Chefoo Convention in order that they might be in a position to put a stop to French or Russian intrigues in Tibet.”<sup>146</sup>

The Tibet Mission, assembled at Darjeeling for two months, has been finally countermanded. Henceforth, the position in Sikkim frontier was changing into anti-British resistance, it was reported that the armed parties of Tibetans approximately 300 troops under Tibetan officers, have occupied the upper Edgar Road, for a length of 12 miles in Sikkim, to oppose the mission. They are building a fort a Langtu and a habitation for soldiers at Choambok, both on road. They requisitioned the village of Rhenock, immediately on the British border, and other neighboring villages with the help of unpaid labor to help the erections of fort, and the demand has been compiled with, Sikkim officers of Rhenock informing us of the fact and protesting that they are acting under compulsion.<sup>147</sup>

The Chinese Government tried to persuade the Tibetans but as their efforts to induce them to abandon Lingtu proved futile, the British Government was left with no other option but to retaliate forcefully with Tibetans and deployed the force of 1,400 hundred men with 2 guns which successfully drove out the Tibetans from their fort into Chumbi. On the 21 May 1888, the Tibetans troops consisting of 3,000 attacked the British camp at Gnatong, but were repulsed. On September 23 they again advance from Chumbi, and erected a stone wall 3 miles long above Gnatong.<sup>148</sup>

In March 1888, Major General Thomas Graham, attacked the fort, defeated the Tibetans in three engagements, and advanced twelve miles across the frontier into the Chumbi Valley. But, in order to avoid offending Chinese Government the British troops were called back immediately to Gnatong within Sikkim territory. The Chinese Resident in Lhasa came to India to negotiate the dispute between British and Tibet at his arrival the British Government put forward some of the agreement with the Amban, firstly, British Protectorate over Sikkim should be recognized, secondly the Tibet-Sikkim frontier should be delimited, and thirdly the British India and Tibet trade to be promoted prosperously, the negotiation on these condition between British and Chinese took almost year which made British to decide to close the incident, as far as China

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<sup>146</sup> NAI, FD, Progs., Secret E, November 1886, File No. 234-235, pp. 1-8.

<sup>147</sup> NAI, FD, Progs., Secret E, September 1886, File No. 473, p. 1.

<sup>148</sup> Aitchison, *A Collection of Treaties*, Vol.XIV, pp. 16-17.

was concerned, without insisting upon a specific agreement.<sup>149</sup> The reason why British could not established its relations with Tibet and its people lies in the ignorance attitude. They confound all foreigners together, and are unaware of any distinction of nationality or creed for example between French and English. Thus the English suffer unjustly by being confounded with the French, with a people, that is to say, violent and treacherous in disposition, and professing religion admittedly objectionable and inferior to that of the English.<sup>150</sup>

In March 1890, the Convention between Britain and China was held relating to Sikkim and Tibet and the treaty was signed. It recognized a British Protectorate over Sikkim and in the article one of the treaty the boundary between Sikkim and Tibet was demarcated. The water-parting of the Teesta River should form the boundary between Sikkim and Tibet. The increased facilities for trade across the Sikkim-Tibet frontier will hereafter be discussed with a view to mutually satisfactory arrangement by all the participants.<sup>151</sup> Henceforth, Chinese authority feared the growing influence of the British over Sikkim and Tibet and agreed for the negotiations which finally resulted in an agreement in 1893 this led to the opening of the Yatung trade mart.<sup>152</sup>

In 1893 British and Chinese representatives signed agreement and opened a trade mart at Yatung, eight miles on the Tibetan side of the frontier. The location of this trade mart was not suitable site due to the narrow side-valley running down from Sikkim towards the Chumbi valley. The British subjects were allowed to rent houses and purchase and sell goods without vexatious restrictions; earlier the wall was built from side to side and manned by soldiers to prevent British traders and travellers from going any farther into Tibetan territory. After the agreement British exported goods to Tibet from the Sikkim-Tibet frontier. The convention was signed between the British and Chinese without the participation of Tibetan officials. The Tibetan Government refused to recognise it.<sup>153</sup>

Trade between Tibet and Bengal has been somewhat slack, but the total volume of Tibet trade with Bengal, the North-Western provinces and the Punjab, keeps up by the end of

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<sup>149</sup> Bell, *Tibet Past and Present*, pp. 59-61.

<sup>150</sup> NAI, FD, Progs., Secret E, November 1886, File No. 235, p. 5.

<sup>151</sup> NAI, FD, Progs., Secret E, March 1890, File No. 241, p. 55.

<sup>152</sup> A. C. McKay, 'The establishment of the British Trade agencies in Tibet: A survey', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, November 1992, Third Series, Vol. 2, No. 3, pp. 399-421, Cambridge University Press, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/25182574> accessed on 14/02/2022.

<sup>153</sup> Aitchison, *A Collection of Treaties*, Vol. XIV, p. 16-17.

nineteenth century. The figures of the last three years for the nine months, April to December, are –

**Table: 1.7:** India-Tibet trade.

| <i>Tibet</i>                            | Imports   |           |           | Exports  |          |          | Total     |           |           |
|-----------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|----------|----------|----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
|                                         | 1894      | 1895      | 1896      | 1894     | 1895     | 1896     | 1894      | 1895      | 1896      |
|                                         | Rs.       | Rs.       | Rs.       | Rs.      | Rs.      | Rs.      | Rs.       | Rs.       | Rs.       |
| <b>Punjab</b>                           | 1,22,646  | 1,37,575  | 1,39,213  | 34,177   | 37,428   | 32,940   | 1,56,823  | 1,75,003  | 1,72,153  |
| <b>North-Western Provinces and Oudh</b> | 6,12,526  | 4,91,240  | 6,51,767  | 2,20,669 | 3,37,114 | 2,84,765 | 8,33,195  | 8,18,354  | 9,39,532  |
| <b>Bengal</b>                           | 4,74,893  | 4,12,417  | 3,90,446  | 2,26,983 | 2,31,312 | 1,88,369 | 7,01,896  | 6,43,729  | 5,78,815  |
| <b>Total</b>                            | 12,10,065 | 10,41,232 | 11,84,426 | 4,81,829 | 5,95,854 | 5,06,074 | 16,91,894 | 16,37,086 | 16,90,500 |

**Note:** Trade between India-Tibet in the last decade of the nineteenth century report by H. Daly. **Source:**

NAI, FD, Political, May 1897, Progs. No 127, p. 5.

In 1895, the British and the Chinese Governments delimits frontier between Sikkim and Tibet. But the pillars erected by the British and Chinese officers were removed by the Tibetans, and no further progress was made in the settlement of the frontier. In 1899 Lord Curzon addressed the Chinese Resident at Yatung, stating that the India Government was prepared to agree to a revision of the Tibetan frontier, so as to leave to Tibet the land which they claimed in the neighbourhood of Giagong, on condition that Phari should be thrown open to traders from British India, Yatung having proved unsuitable. However, Curzon's proposal never received answer from Chinese and the Tibetans.<sup>154</sup> However, after arrival of Curzon to India, the political change was taking shape in Tibet they were now refusing right of China to conclude binding treaties on their behalf. During this time, Curzon's policy towards Tibet mainly focused on the Russia's growing

<sup>154</sup> Aitchison, *A Collection of Treaties*, Vol. XIV, p. 17.

influence over Tibet.<sup>155</sup> In the years 1899-1901 several fruitless attempts were made by the Government of India to open negotiations with the Tibetans.

It can be observed that since the era of Warren Hastings, it has been noticed that the British approach towards Tibet varied based on the geopolitical conditions in the region. On the other hand, Chinese political influence in Tibet greatly hindered the British attempt to build stable relationship with Tibet. However, the role of the administrators, envoy, and agents from the mid-18<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> century largely contributed in shaping the approaches of the British India Government towards Tibet in the twentieth century.

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<sup>155</sup> Suchita Ghosh, 'British Penetration of Intransigent Tibet', *The Tibet Journal*, Vol. 4, No. 1, 1979, pp. 7–16, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/43299930> accessed on 2/05/2022.



## Chapter 2

### British India's Tibet policy vis-à-vis Russia and China 1899-1914

In January 1899, when Lord Curzon succeeded Lord Elgin as the Viceroy of India, a shift was observed in the British foreign policy regarding Tibet and China. By the early 1900s, the British Indian Government had a clear understanding of the Chinese presence and its political impact on Tibet. However, the British in India felt they could no longer deal with Tibet through China due to Russia's increasing influence in the region. The only way to develop a link with Tibet was to establish direct contact with the Tibetan government.<sup>1</sup> Curzon's approach to Tibet varied from that of his predecessors and was a direct consequence of the fear of Russia's expansion in Asia.<sup>2</sup> Consequently, the issue of Tibet continued to be a significant focus during Curzon's viceroyalty in India (1899-1905). The influence of the Tsarist regime in Lhasa<sup>3</sup> and its clandestine espionage operations played a significant role in influencing British policy regarding Tibet in the early twentieth century, which ultimately laid to the emergence of geo-political ambitions among imperialist power in Tibet.

During Warren Hastings tenure as governor-general, the British consistently sought to engage in diplomatic relations with Tibetan leaders. Throughout this period, various strategies were formulated and executed regarding Tibet, but they ultimately failed to convince the Tibetans of the potential advantages of cultivating a friendly relationship with their southern neighbour, India, in order to maintain their distinct political status in Asia. The efforts of British political representatives and covert agents in fostering relations between India and Tibet had little impact. In 1885, Colman Macaulay, a Secretary of the Government of Bengal, obtained Chinese assent to conduct a Mission to Lhasa but it was soon abandoned in return for a

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<sup>1</sup> W. D. Shakabpa, *Tibet a political history*, New Haven, Yale University, 1967, pp. 203-204.

<sup>2</sup> Suchita Ghosh, *Tibet in Sino-Indian relations 1899-1914*, New Delhi, Sterling Publishers, 1977, pp. 13-19.

<sup>3</sup> The name Lhasa is properly restricted to the great temple. It was founded by Song-tsen Gam-po during his reign and generally known to European as Lhasa. According to recorded sources it is said that he exchanged the wild Yarlung valley the homeland of his ancestors, for the more central position to the north of the Tsangpo, a village named Rasa, which, on account of the temple he erected, was altered to Lhasa, or 'God's place'. An old form of the name is said to be 'nga-dan'. In *The Buddhism of Tibet or Lamaism*, by L. Austine Waddell, London, W. H. Allen & Co., Ltd, 1895, p. 301.

concession from China in the newly-annexed province of Upper Burma. The Tibetan authorities were also against the mission which was conducted without their consent. Another event that jeopardizes British India's efforts of establishing diplomatic ties with Tibet was 1888 border skirmishes between British and Tibetan troops in the Sikkim Tibetan frontier. In the telegram, dated the 23<sup>rd</sup> May 1888, from Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, Pedong, to the Viceroy, it was mentioned that "Tibetans attacked Gnatong in force this morning soon after daylight. Estimated force at fifteen hundred. They never got within three hundred yards of the stockade, and by ten were in full retreat over the Jakola. Pursuing parties not yet returned. Our loss killed No. 2659 Sergeant Luke Seckington, Derbyshire, No. 1686 Sepoy Kharuk Singh, and No. 1811 Sepoy Hookum Singh, 32<sup>nd</sup> Pioneers. Wounded seven Pioneers, three severely and the enemy's loss not known, probably at least 100."<sup>4</sup> The confrontation stance of the Tibetans indicates their desire to resist foreign influence, reminiscent of the aggression displayed by them during the Younghusband expedition, which ultimately concluded the prolonged and complicated diplomatic situation between the British India and Tibet. The British Officer, Charles Bell, later wrote that no doubt our abandonment of the Macaulay Mission was attributed to weakness<sup>5</sup> by the Tibetans.

In mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, another factor overshadowed the relations between the British and Tibetans was the expedition of Sarat Chandra Das into Tibet, a renowned Tibetologist who served as a British secret agent in Tibet and gathered valuable information to comprehend the landscape, culture, politics, and history of Tibet through his clandestine activities. This had a profound impact on India-Tibet relations. His secret journey within Tibet created a divide in the relations between India and Tibet. The British followed years of the usual policy of forbearance and appeasement towards Tibet's<sup>6</sup> unfriendly attitude. However, Tibet was not ready to establish contact with the British. During this time, the Qing officials in Tibet were spreading falls propaganda that the British would destroy their religion by introducing Christianity, made the Tibetan avoid contact with them. The British government in India was also well aware of China's internal weaknesses and was concerned with the prospect of Russia extending her influence in Tibet. The Tibetans had no intention of being influenced by any foreign power; but

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<sup>4</sup> NAI, FD, Secret-E, June 1888, File No. 287-288, p. 2.

<sup>5</sup> Charles Bell, *Tibet Past and Present*, Delhi, Motilal Banarsidass, 1992, p. 60.

<sup>6</sup> George Seaver, *Francis Younghusband Explorer and Mystic*, London, John Murray, 1952, p. 201.

the British did not know this as the Tibetans refused to make contact with them. The British wanted Tibet should be under Manchu's influence not under imperial Russia.<sup>7</sup>

In the last decade of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the British Indian Government successfully established trade link with Tibet from Sikkim-Tibet frontier following the 1890 convention and the trade regulations agreement in 1893. The fact that both these agreements proved in practice to be of not the slightest use was because Tibet never recognized them.<sup>8</sup> Claude White during his service as a Political Officer in Sikkim was sent to witness the opening of the trade mart of Yatung in May 1894, reports that the Chinese official acted so friendly but had no actual political authority over Tibet. On the other side, Tibetans believed that the treaty was not carried out in a proper spirit and they repudiated it on the ground that it was an agreement between India-China, not Tibet. White concluded through his visit that 'China was suzerain over Tibet only in a name'.<sup>9</sup>

In the late nineteenth century, a Japanese monk named Ekai Kawaguchi (1866-1945) in the guise of a Ladakhi monk was enrolled on Buddhist studies at the *Sera* monastery<sup>10</sup> one of the major schools in Tibet.<sup>11</sup> He was delivering inaccurate information to the British in India through Sarat Chandra Das<sup>12</sup> who was then well-known agent of the British. It led the British in India to believe that Tibet was receiving military aid in the form of "small firearms, bullets, and other interesting objects" from Russia. He also put forward that a large number of Buriat students were present in the major monasteries of Tibet.<sup>13</sup> Kawaguchi's imprecise facts on the Tibet-Russia link forced the British policymaker to reshape its approach in dealing with Tibet. During this period, Tibet's contact with Russia became a significant discussion among the British administrators in India.

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<sup>7</sup> Shakabpa, *Tibet a political*, p. 196.

<sup>8</sup> Shakabpa, *Tibet a political*, p. 204.

<sup>9</sup> Francis Younghusband, *India and Tibet*, London, John Murray, 1910, p. 54.

<sup>10</sup> Ser-ra, or "The Merciful Hail". It is said to have been so named out of rivalry to its neighbour "The rice-heap" (De-pung) as hail is destructive of rice, and two monasteries have frequent feuds; cited in Waddell, *The Buddhism of Tibet or Lamaism*, p. 269. This monastery was founded in 1419 by Jamchen Choje Sakya Yeshe a disciple of Je Tsongkhapa. In *Footprint Tibet*, by Gyurme Dorje, Bath, Footprint, 1996, p. 117.

<sup>11</sup> Shakabpa, *Tibet a political*, p. 203.

<sup>12</sup> On 25<sup>th</sup> July 1897, Ekai Kawaguchi reached Calcutta and stayed under the care of the Mahābodhi Society of Calcutta after spending some days he continued his journey towards Darjeeling to meet with Sarat Chandra Das. On 3<sup>rd</sup> August he reached Siliguri and in same day to Darjeeling where he met with Das at his famous country house named 'Lhasa Villa'. In *Three Years in Tibet*, by Ekai Kawaguchi, London, 1909, pp. 9-10.

<sup>13</sup> Kawaguchi, *Three Years in Tibet*, pp. 496-508.

British India's foreign policy served the interest of the British Empire. Hence, the British policy towards Tibet was framed to develop a strong political influence in the region to maintain the balance of power vis-à-vis Russia. In the beginning of the twentieth century, the influence of Russia within the authorities in Lhasa was increasing and this became more prominent factor under the Curzon's viceroyalty. The British Indian Government felt that the growing influence of the Russian in Tibet will inevitably challenge their rule in India. However, in London the threat of Russia to the British position in the Indian subcontinent was considered as unjustified scaremongering. On the other side at the North-Western frontier of India the friction between Anglo-Russia in the geo-politics of Afghanistan (a region which increasingly became the buffer between British India and the rapidly expanding Tsarist Empire in Central Asia) was well witnessed over a long period of time.<sup>14</sup> This chapter is an attempt to examine the British India policy towards Tibet in the early twentieth century. Why did the British invaded Tibet? How did the political developments change in the cis-Himalayan region after the military attack on Tibet? Does this move of the British bring any drastic change India-Tibet relations? How the other political power of Asia reacted to the British invasion in Tibet? What happened to Tibet questions? How the diplomatic relations changed after the end of Curzon's viceroyalty? How the end of Manchu's rule in China affected India-Tibet relations?

### **Russia's expansion in Asia**

The role of Mongol's in the geopolitics of Russia, Central Asia, Tibet, and China is significant in understanding the political transformation of these region and it remains incomplete without understanding its history of origin and influences. This group of nomadic warlike tribe people in Asia has dominated and challenged the legitimacy of most of its neighbouring countries. China referred to them as the barbarians and since the 8<sup>th</sup> century BCE, these nomadic people were attacking its realm. In the 12<sup>th</sup> century CE, the Mongols who were originally a nomadic tribe emerged into superior power under the leadership of Genghis Khan (1162-1227). He established an empire that stretched from the Mediterranean to the Pacific, from Siberian Taiga to the Himalayas the largest or mightiest empire that ever existed in the world.<sup>15</sup> During the period of

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<sup>14</sup> Alastair Lamb, *British India and Tibet 1766-1910*, , London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1960, pp. 269-271.

<sup>15</sup> Michael Prawdin, *the Mongol Empire its Rise and Legacy*, London, George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1940, pp. 21-23.

Kublai Khan, Mongol rule extended over the four Khanates<sup>16</sup> it was the Golden Hordes that ruled Russia and a part of Central Asia from 1237-1480.<sup>17</sup> Mongols played important role in the evolution of the Russian state and in the post-Mongol period the Russian people migrated eastward which did not cease until the Russians crossed North America in the nineteenth century.<sup>18</sup> The eastward migration of Russia mostly began after the annexation of the Khanates of Kazan and Astrakhan in the mid-nineteenth century.<sup>19</sup>

In the nineteenth century CE, Russia was expanding its political power in most of the independent states of Asia. This expansionist approach of the Tsar's regime was seen as of vital concern by the British in India. During the reign of Alexander II (1855-81) who succeeded his father, Nicholas I (1825-55), on the Russian throne at the age of thirty-seven, Russia fought a successful war against Turkey and largely redrew the map of the Balkan. Also in the course of the reign, the empire of the Romanovs made a sweeping expansion in the Caucasus, Central Asia, and the Far East.<sup>20</sup> From the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century CE, the movement of Russia towards the Oxus and Jaxartes basin opened up a serious challenge to the British in India. The expansion of Russia from the Chinese Turkestan and the Caspian brought the spread of its political power through the mountain barriers of Persia, Afghanistan, and India. The territory occupation of Russia is witnessed in Ili in 1854; Tashkent in 1865; Samarkand in 1868; Bokhara in 1869; Khiva in 1873 and Khokand in 1876; Turkmenistan in 1881; Merv in 1884; Penjdeh in 1885; the Pamirs in 1895.<sup>21</sup>

The tsarist regime's dealings with European powers in the reign of Alexander II brought mixed results, the empire of the tsars continued to expand in Asia, transforming Russia into a colonial power. This colonial expansion of Russia made other colonial-imperialist power particularly British Empire increasingly apprehensive about their intentions. Russia's main objective in Central Asia was to control the region and its people rather than focusing on assimilation. But, Russia was facing a political crisis within its territory from the period of

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<sup>16</sup> The Mongol empire was split into four Khanates. These were the Golden Hordes in the northwest, Yuan Dynasty or great Khanate in China, Ilkhanate in the southeast and Persia, and the Chagatai Khanate in Central Asia.

<sup>17</sup> Ghosh, *Tibet in Sino-Indian*, pp. 19-20.

<sup>18</sup> Charles J. Halperin, 'George Vernadsky, Eurasianism, the Mongols, and Russia', *Slavic Review* vol. 41, no. 3 (1982): 477-93 <https://doi.org/10.2307/2497020> accessed on 13.11.2022, pp. 479-481.

<sup>19</sup> Hugh Richardson, *Tibet and its history*, Boston, Shambhala Publications, 1984, p. 78.

<sup>20</sup> Nicholas V. Riasanovsky; Mark D Steinberg, *A History of Russia*, New York, OUP, 2005, p. 357.

<sup>21</sup> Richardson, *Tibet and its history*, p. 79.

Alexander III (1881-94) and the reign of Nicholas II (1894-1905) until the Revolution of 1905.<sup>22</sup> During this time, the British Government in India was implementing forward policy to bring Tibet under its shadow which resulted in a British military invasion of Tibet (1903-04).

In the proceedings, March 1902 of the Foreign Department at the Government of India it is mentioned that “the Vienna political correspondence hears from St. Petersburg that an extraordinary Mission from Tibet sent by the Dalai Lama, will shortly arrive at the Russian capital. At the end of 1899, says the Vienna correspondent of the ‘standard’, Mr Badmaeff, Professor of Chinese in St. Petersburg, went to Tibet with presents from the Czar for the Dalai Lama, and that in October last a representative of the Dalai Lama was received by the Czar at Livadia in the special audience, the Chinese minister in St. Petersburg being honoured with an audience about the same time. The return visit having been paid only last October, it is curious that another Tibet mission should be expected in Russia. If it arrives, the old rumours that Tibet is seeking a Russian protectorate against British designs on its liberty might be revived. The insinuation that the Indian Government has a design on Tibet that is on the commercial monopoly exercised by the Lamas is said to find real credence with the Tibetans, who may also suppose that the Russians, being further away, have less interest in breaking through the Tibetan trade monopoly. However, it is Russia, rather than England, which has designs on Tibet, and a Russian protectorate over Tibet would be quiet in harmony with French design upon Yunnan. Should the plans of both countries be carried out, the Russo-French alliance would rule from the Himalayas to the Gulf of Tonquin (Tonkin, northern region of Vietnam), thereby enriching Burma and bringing such pressure upon Siam that this kingdom would also fall entirely under their influence. People of Vienna who take an interest in the matter are curious to know whether England will allow Russia to get a footing in Tibet without an effort to thwart her designs before it is too late.”<sup>23</sup> The threat of the Russian invasion on the British India was observed by the William Moorcroft an English veterinary surgeon in the early nineteenth century and was the first Englishman to worry publicly about the plots in St. Petersburg to subvert Tibet as prelude to

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<sup>22</sup> Riasanovsky; Steinberg, *A History of Russia*, pp. 360-362.

<sup>23</sup> NAI, FD, Progs., Secret E, March 1902, File No. 1-77, File No. 3, p. 2.

the invasion in India, and in the beginning of the twentieth century most of the British administrators shared these concerns.<sup>24</sup>

After the annexation of the Amur region and of Central Asia, an important phase in Russian history came to end. The possession of the entire Eurasian plain and its geographical extensions had been secured, and the natural limits of greater Russia in every direction had been reached. In the context of Tibet, Russia's relation was established in an accidental way which excluded the possibility of any long premeditated scheme on the part of Russia.<sup>25</sup> The Russian diplomats were not at all interested in Tibet until 1890's. In the eighteenth century, Catherine the Great established some trading intercourse with Lhasa and had a regular correspondent with the leading authorities in Tibet. The tsarina's heirs, however, did not continue her efforts to establish ties with Lhasa, and until the reign of Nicholas II, Tibet was largely peripheral to Russian foreign affairs.<sup>26</sup> The major challenge to the expansionist Russia came when Lord Curzon was appointed the viceroy of India, Curzon having seen at first-hand the expansion of Tsarist Russian state in khanates of Central Asia, he regarded this as major concern for the British India.<sup>27</sup> He saw it as his duty to protect India from the influence of Russia.

Curzon in his minute on Russian ambitions in Eastern Persia dated October 28 1901, has observed that "as a student of Russian aspirations and methods for fifteen years, I assert with confidence what I do not think that any one of her own statesmen would deny that her ultimate ambition is the dominion of Asia. She conceives herself to be fitted for it by temperament, by history, and by tradition. It is a proud and not a ignoble aim, and is well worthy of the supreme moral and materials efforts of a vigorous nation. But it is not to be satisfied by piecemeal concessions, neither is it capable of being gratified save at our expense. Acquiescence in the aims of Russia at Tehran and Meshed will not save Seistan. Acquiescence in Seistan will not turn her eyes from the Gulf. Acquiescence in the Gulf will not prevent intrigue and trouble in Baluchistan. Acquiescence at Herat and in Afghan Turkistan will not secure Kabul. Acquiescence in the Pamirs will save Kashgar. Acquiescence at Kashgar will not divert Russia

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<sup>24</sup> David Schimmelpenninck van der Oye, 'Russia's Great Game in Tibet', *In Toronto Studies in Central and Inner Asia*, vol. 5 (2002), 35-52, pp. 1-2, available in [https://www.academia.edu/28709989/Russias\\_Great\\_Game\\_in\\_Tibet](https://www.academia.edu/28709989/Russias_Great_Game_in_Tibet) accessed on 30.11.2022.

<sup>25</sup> Prince A. Lobanov-Rostovsky, *Russia and Asia*, New York, The Macmillan Company, 1933, p. 206.

<sup>26</sup> Schimmelpenninck van der Oye, *Russia's Great Game*, p. 11.

<sup>27</sup> Alex McKay, *Tibet and the British Raj The frontier cadre 1904-1947*, Dharamsala, Library of Tibetan works and Archives, 2009, p. 11.

eyes from Tibet. Each morsel but whets the appetite for more, and inflames the passion for a pan-Asiatic dominion. If Russia is entitled to these ambitions, still more is Great Britain entitled, may compelled, to defend that which she has won, and to resist the minor encroachments which are only a part of the larger plan. Like many other students of the Asian problem, I have often pondered, at each stage from Korea to the Bosphorus, whether we could not, by a friendly agreement with Russia, arrive at such a demarcation of our respective interests as would enable us to eschew rivalry and to cultivate an amicable co-operation, if not an actual alliance, in the future.”<sup>28</sup>

### **Tibet’s link with Russia**

In the past, the only connection between Russia and Tibet was through the Buriat subject who were Mongolians and whose territories were annexed to the Trans-Baikal and Irkutsk Governments in Siberia. In the capital city of Tibet Lhasa, many Buriats enrolled themselves in Buddhist studies in the monasteries and lived in Tibet for many years. The Silk from Russia has been highly valued in Tibet and through trade Russia-Tibet relations existed in the past.<sup>29</sup> These Mongol tribes which gradually came within the Russian sphere were originally the converts to the reformed sect of Tibetan Buddhism during its great diffusion in the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries CE. There was also a connection through the Targot Kalmuks who were driven out of their original homelands in the sixteenth century, and settled down in the Volga basin, and later in the mid-sixteenth century, they were accepted as the subjects of the Russian Tsars. Lhasa remained their spiritual home.<sup>30</sup> In the telegram dated camp, Malda the 10 July 1901, C.E. Buckland Chief Secretary to the Government of Bengal, sends a copy of a note by Rev. Sandberg on Mr. J. C. White letter to H. S. Barnes Secretary to the Government of India in the Foreign Department, he writes that “it is interesting and suggestive that in South Russia in the lands lying between Astrakhan and the northern shore of the Black Sea, there has been settled for very many years a large colony of Kalmuk Buddhists (said to number 110,000). The delta of the Don is also peopled by Kamluk fishermen, and that part cannot be more than 420 miles from Odessa (is a port city on the Black Sea in Southern Ukraine). That now it is known that biennially or

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<sup>28</sup> BL, IOR, Private Papers, Mss Eur F111/535, 1908, p.74, in Qatar Digital Library, [https://www.qdl.qa/en/archive/81055/vdc\\_100000001491.0x000067](https://www.qdl.qa/en/archive/81055/vdc_100000001491.0x000067) accessed on 15.11.2022.

<sup>29</sup> Bell, *Tibet Past and Present*, pp. 222-223.

<sup>30</sup> Richardson, *Tibet and its history*, pp. 79-80.



triennially (I forget which, but think it is every 3 years) the Dalai Lama deposes a Lama of some standing to visit these far away votaries for the purpose of collecting offerings, distributing life-pills, benedictions, &c., and this may be the official object of the Tshan Nyid Khempo's also known as Dorjiew (Professor of metaphysics in Drepung Monastery) Mission so far as the Dalai Lama is concerned. He would have to go to Odessa for the purpose at least now-a-days one would think he would choose that route; though in account I have read of a former mission to these Black Sea Kalmuks many years ago the Dalai Lama's agent went via Caspian."<sup>31</sup> These people also participated in religious ceremonies in Tibet monasteries and also supported those institutions financially in their time of need. In 1771, the majority of these tribes migrated towards Central Asia back to their origin due to the oppressive rule of the Russian regime. When Bogle and Turner were in Tibet they came across some people who were different to their Tibetan counterparts whom they describe as Siberians; Kalmuks; and Tartars. They also mentioned the trade goods originating in Russia, the other account they provide is that they found Tibetans well informed about the Russian activities in Asia. Traffic with Tibet by Russian subjects of Asiatic origin appears to have been regular and long-established. It was probably a party of 600 such persons that Moorcroft reported as having visited Gartok about 1812. The British goods were reaching Tibet by way of Russia. The Tibetans knew of the Russians through Buriats and Kalmuks who was entering Tibet annually for the past many years, their observations towards Russian was based on similar suspicions as they had of the British.<sup>32</sup>

The most popular figure to visit Tibet was the Buriat Mongol and a Buddhist lama called Dorjiew. In 1880 he first travelled to Tibet and lived in the capital, Lhasa, for several years. At the end of the nineteenth century when the British were constantly developing political interest in Tibet and the surrounding region, Dorjiew, who by now had gained some influence in Tibetan lamaist authorities, suggested to them including the 13<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama, to seek protection from Russia. The Grand Council of Lhasa lamaist circle argued that Tibet needed no such protection. However, the Dalai Lama ignored the Council and privately sent a mission to Russia, which was well received. In 1901, the mission returned to Tibet carrying with it a draft treaty this event

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<sup>31</sup> NAI, FD, Progs., Secret E, March 1902, File No. 1-77, Pro. No. 6, p. 4.

<sup>32</sup> Richardson, *Tibet and its history*, pp. 80-81.

caused great concern in London.<sup>33</sup> The arrival of costly fancy goods from Russia which compared to British India is all cheap things which are hardly fit for the uses for which they are intended. The goods coming from Russia are not intended for sale they are mostly gifts and presents which were highly appreciated by the Tibetans. During this time, the Dalai Lama received as a present a suit of Episcopal robes glittering with gold from the Tsar, a present forwarded through the hands of the Tsar's emissary and was accepted by the former.<sup>34</sup> The relationship between Tibet with Russia was notably stronger compared to its southern neighbour, India.

### **Curzon policy towards Tibet**

Lord Curzon during his tenure in the office of the Viceroy of India he adopted active policy towards the cis-Himalayan region and Tibet which certainly resulted into the military invasion over Tibet, in the past British never made such attempt. Before understanding the Curzon's policy it is important to look into his background before he assumed the office of Viceroy of India. George Nathaniel Curzon the eldest son of the Reverend Alfred Nathaniel Holden Curzon was born at Kedleston, in Derbyshire, on 11 January 1859. During the early days, two person role in Curzon life is significant in every aspect they were Miss Paraman who played important role in upbringing for whom he termed 'a brutal and vindictive tyrant' and the another person in his life who had a influence on him was his preparatory schoolmaster Mr. Archibald James Campbell Dunbar both this personalities left deep mark in his life. Curzon was definitely a good writer and speaker his interest in literature developed during his days in Eton and received many prizes for French, Italian, and history, among other subjects.<sup>35</sup> Curzon thought towards India developed at very early age of his life when he was at Eton. In one of the lecture delivered by Sir James F. Stephen to the Eton boys about India had an immense impact on the mind of the young Curzon that it profoundly influenced him in his administrative career later.<sup>36</sup>

The appointment of the Viceroy of India after the Lord Elgin (1894-1899) was debatable topic in the Britain that who will succeed him? Some of the ministers had an opinion of

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<sup>33</sup> Thomas J Wersto, 'Tibet in Sino-Soviet Relations', *Asian Affairs*, vol. 10, No. 3 (1983): 70-85  
<http://www.jstor.org/stable/30172983> accessed on 14.11.2022.

<sup>34</sup> Kawaguchi, *Three Years in Tibet*, pp. 500-501.

<sup>35</sup> Lord Ronaldshay, *The life of Lord Curzon*, vol.1, London, Ernest Benn Ltd., 1928, pp. 17-21.

<sup>36</sup> Ronaldshay, *The life of*, p. 28.

appointing a person who had worked closely with Elgin during his five strenuous years. There were others who were thinking of George Curzon's name in the succession list of viceroyalty of India for his brilliant imagination, specialised knowledge, outstanding personality, self-confidence and assiduous industry combined with great gifts of speech and writing these were the attributes to his appointment. Finally, in the papers of 11<sup>th</sup> August morning the news of the appointment of Curzon appeared officially and in the House of Commons it was made known in the previous evening.<sup>37</sup> Curzon was an ardent supporter of forward school regarding the political interest in the frontier. In the Russian press the appointment of Curzon as the viceroy of India was described that he was sent to India to give effect to a policy which challenged the Russian political aspirations in Central Asia and Middle East. In Britain the fear of confrontation with Russia was strongly prevailing among the people in his appointment to office of Viceroy of India.<sup>38</sup> The British became skeptical towards Russia's intentions over Tibet when the Buriat Mongol named Argvan Dorjieff<sup>39</sup> who worked as the Russia agent in Tibet started building ties between Dalai Lama and Tsar. Dorjieff clandestine activities were designed with the objectives of the Russian Empire's perceived ambitions in the East. In 18<sup>th</sup> century Russia expansion towards Central Asia and her southward move towards the British Empire in the 19<sup>th</sup> century was design to upset the power equilibrium in the east. Hence it became the vital concern to the British authorities in India.<sup>40</sup>

Prior to 1904 China had very little control over Tibetan foreign policy.<sup>41</sup> In 1899 Lord Curzon, then the Viceroy of India, gained permission from the British Government to communicate direct with the Tibetans. The main objective behind this is to obtain Phari as a trade mart instead of Yatung, in return for a concession to Tibet as regards to the Sikkim Tibetan frontier. The failure of the 1890 Convention and the Trade Regulations of 1893 became the prime reason for the political clash between British and the Tibetans. As the Indian Government was thinking of the equivalent concession with the Tibetan on the occupation of the trade marts. The small piece of territory in the Northern Sikkim called Giagong which Tibetan attached great

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<sup>37</sup> Ronaldshay, *The life of*, pp. 293-294.

<sup>38</sup> Ronaldshay, *The life of*, pp. 295-297.

<sup>39</sup> Argvan Dorjieff was the Buriat Mongol, who had a very high diplomatic skill according to Sir Charles Bell; Dorjieff had very close ties with both the Russian and Tibetan authorities and good friendship with the 13<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama.

<sup>40</sup> Ghosh, *Tibet in Sino-Indian*, p. 19.

<sup>41</sup> Bell, *Tibet Past and Present*, p. 56.

importance to retaining it and the British were ready to bargain it if Tibetan authorities recognize Phari as the trade-mart.

In 1899, Captain E. Le Mesurier, Officiating Political Officer for Sikkim, send a letter to the H.S. Barnes, Officiating Secretary to the Government of India, Foreign Department, mentioned that “the inspection of the new section of the Lachen road is completed that is up to Giagong in the tract disputed by the Tibetans. And his visit to Giagong was the occasion of fortunate interview. On his arrival he met Thigatsi Jongpen, who had been sent by the Teshu Lama to interview him. With a friendly conversation, he said to Jongpen that he was there on duty in connections with the new road built by the British India Government, and had not come to discuss boundary questions; Jongpen informed him that he was also not authorized to discuss such questions, but had been sent only for a friendly meeting by the Teshu Lama.” Captain E. Le Mesurier, also pointed out in his letter that “it should, however, be noted that the Giagong valley is everywhere locally considered part of Tibet, and there are three small Tibetan officials actually residing on our side of the Treaty border. I therefore hold to the opinion, that it is useless to make Giagong valley a set-off to trade concessions at Rinehingong or Phari, as long as we neglect to make some kind of effective occupation of the valley.”<sup>42</sup>

Since the time of Warren Hastings the southern part of Tibet which was under the control of the Panchen Lama's<sup>43</sup> or Teshu Lama's, this region of Tibet in different phase of time unhesitatingly welcomed the friendly gesture of the British. However, the Curzon was trying to develop a direct correspondence with the Dalai Lama in Lhasa, the British officer in the frontier of Sikkim were already having a contact with the southern part of Tibet and the exchange of gifts between the British officials and Teshu Lama was well witnessed. On 15 August 1899, Captain E. Le Mesurier, sends a letter to the Penchen Lama that “after many compliments under the orders of His Excellency the Viceroy of India I came to Sikkim as Political Officer in April of this year. I have now come to Giagong, to inspect the new road which Sirkar has made to that place, and have been very pleased to meet one of your representatives (“Khanpa Jongpen”),

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<sup>42</sup> NAI, FD, Secret-E, Proceedings, September 1900, Trade and Frontier relations between Sikkim and Tibet; Proposals for opening direct communication with Lhasa, File No. 78-108, Pro. No. 78, p. 1.

<sup>43</sup> The successive Panchen Lama form a *tulku* reincarnation lineage which are said to be the incarnations of Amitābha. The title meaning “Great Scholar” is a Tibetan contraction of the Sanskrit *pandita* (scholar) and the Tibetan *chenpo* (great). The Panchen Lama traditionally lived in Tashilhunpo Monastery in Shigatse. From the name of this monastery, the European referred to the Panchen Lama as the Tashi-Lama (or spelled Tesho-Lama or Teshu-Lama)

although it was only for a few minutes and to have had friendly conversation with him. It is my sincere wish that great and small, rich and poor, on both sides of the boundary, may remain to constant friendship and sympathy with each other. In recognition of the good feelings I bear towards you, I beg you will accept the trifling present of revolver and fifty cartridges, with a “patrochin” (i.e., scarf of friendship).”<sup>44</sup>

Lord Salisbury agreed that some action is necessary in building of ties with Tibet and prefer to open direct communication with Lhasa. And for this job the Lord Curzon choose a Bhutanese agent named Kazi U-gyen who was then living in Kalimpong, he was accustomed to visit Tibet in trade purposes and was ordered to write letter at first by him to the Dalai Lama in discussing important issue relating trade and frontier with the British government of India. Kazi U-gyen on behalf of the British Government wrote to Dalai Lama that “any conclusion with the come to the British will be a permanent one, and there will be no trouble for you. And the British government will ensure any encroachment of either China or Russia. Dalai Lama replied to his letter but with no positive note to U-gyen he asked to obtain certain articles and merchandise and also two elephants.”<sup>45</sup>

Curzon writes that “Ugyen Kazi has proved a failure, and we can now settle what we like. I am not impressed with the efficacy or success of the present system. Will department submit proposals?”<sup>46</sup> The only motive of the Curzon was to have a direct communication with the Head of the Tibet as soon as possible but his effort was not showing any fruitful results due to segregation attitude of the Lhasa authorities towards foreigners. Captain H. Daly the British officer suggested alternative routes to the Viceroy for the attempts of communication with the Dalai Lama and high Tibetan officials after the failure from the Sikkim route. According to his suggestion There appear to be three alternatives: -

- 1) To send up someone from or through Nepal;
- 2) To send up someone from or through Ladhak;
- 3) To send someone round through China from East.

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<sup>44</sup> NAI, FD, Secret-E, Proceedings, September 1900, File No. 78, pp. 1-2.

<sup>45</sup> NAI, FD, Secret-E, Proceedings, September 1900, File No. 94, p. 51.

<sup>46</sup> NAI, FD, Secret-E, Proceedings, September 1900, File No. 85, p. 6.

He further writes that “I have discussed the first alternative with General Wylie. The Nepal Darbar maintains a Mission at Lhasa and a good moved by trader go up through Nepal. It seems me possible, therefore, that a carefully selected Native Agent, travelling as a trader might go through Nepal without attracting attention or suspicion and might, especially if he will be able to gain the assistance of the Nepalese Mission at Lhasa, succeed in gaining access to Dalai Lama. I do not suggest any attempt to get into Tibet through Almora, because the case of Mr. Landor another occurrence on that parts of the frontier vindicate, I think, that suspicion is quite as rife as on the Sikkim side. The third alternative remains. It may seem rather a starting one. The reason for my bringing it forward is that, I think, we have in Burma in the person of Mr. Taw Sein Ko a man who in many respects would be a most admirable Agent.”<sup>47</sup>

W.J. Cuninghame also added his point on finding the new routes for the communication with Lhasa, that “the idea of getting at Lhasa from Yunnan was suggested to me the other day by Mr. Jamieson, recently Consul at Momein. He thought it would be feasible. I think we may pursue that, and also the idea of getting in from Ladakh; and while these plans are being tried I would make no effort through the Nepal Darbar; nor since General Wylie advises it against, any effort through Nepal independently of the Darbar. Meantime I would drop any pressure from the Sikkim side and tell the Political Agent to be as friendly as possible with all Tibetans, but to ask them for nothing. And I would tell the Bengal Government that in the opinion of the Governor-General in consul Sikkim affair will be better managed by eliminating the Commissioner of Rajshahi from the chain of official correspondence, and by letting the Political Agent write direct to Local Government.” In 14 January 1900, Curzon replied that “I am quite willing that Mr. Taw Seiu Ko should be approached on the matter. I conclude that he is a Buddhist? Otherwise he would surely be unsuitable.”<sup>48</sup> A person who was given the responsibility of delivering Viceroy Letter to Dalai Lama was Captain R. H. Kennion, the Assistant to the Resident in Kashmir, who annually visits Leh and the Western Tibet frontier. He was told to handover it to the Tibetan frontier officials. After six month the letter was returned unopened. British failed to have any type of communication with the head of the Tibetans government through the correspondence.

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<sup>47</sup> NAI, FD, Secret-E, Proceedings, September 1900, File No. 85, p. 6.

<sup>48</sup> NAI, FD, Secret-E, Proceedings, September 1900, File No. 85, pp. 6-7.

Nevertheless, the British made another attempt to send a letter to the Dalai Lama and this time Kazi U-gyen was assigned again for the purpose and he was given the task to present at Lhasa.<sup>49</sup>

In his letter to Dalai Lama dated Simla, the 11 August 1900 send through Captain Kennion, Curzon mostly focuses on the strengthening of the friendly diplomatic ties between India-Tibet. “The object of the British Government is to facilitate trade between India and Tibet, to the mutual advantage of both countries, and to foster that direct and friendly intercourse which should subsist between neighbors. It is an undesirable and unfortunate thing that two Governments and two peoples, who are so near to each other, and who possess so many common interests, should not be drawn together by close and friendly bonds, but should be kept asunder, as though they were complete strangers. It is this condition of affairs which I would propose to modify. The British Government has no desire to interfere in any way with the internal administration of Tibet. That is a matter that concerns the people and the ruler of Tibet. But they are anxious that Tibet should feel confidence in their friendship and should be free from encroachment from any other quarter. I need to remind Your Holiness that the regulations which we agreed to for the provision of increased facilities for trade, have been attended with no fruitful result, and that the settlement of a small question regarding the boundary between Sikkim and Tibet has been long and unnecessarily delayed. This regrettable state of affairs is probably to be ascribed in a great measure to misconception on the part of the Tibetans as to the aims and intentions of the British Government. I am confident that all difficulties and misunderstandings could be removed by direct communication between Your Holiness and my Government. I would therefore, invite Your Holiness to depute to India a responsible official on behalf of the Tibetan Grand Council, whom I shall be pleased to receive, and in consultation with whom measures may be concerted for the mutual advantage, both commercial and political, of Tibet and India.”<sup>50</sup> The Dalai Lama refused to accept this letter and it was brought back unopened. It can be observed that the Tibet would have used this opportunity of strengthening the ties with British India which for sure would have benefited her politically later, which they realized lately its significance when British were hardly concerned about Tibet after 1914.

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<sup>49</sup> Younghusband, *India and Tibet*, pp. 66-67.

<sup>50</sup> NAI, FD, Secret-E, Proceedings, September 1900, File No. 99, p. 67.

## Argvan Dorjjeff in Anglo-Tibet relation

The British relations with Tibet by 1902 were mostly dominated by the issues of trade and frontier when compared to the need to convince the Dalai Lama of the dangers inherent in refusing to open intercourse with the British. Tibet during this period of time had become a possible field for Anglo-Russia geo-political clash. The British Government was regularly informed about the Russians making considerable progress in Tibet, and the British were unable to make their influence felt at all. Talks with the Chinese on the Sikkim-Tibet frontier were no answer to this situation. And by the beginning of 1902 Curzon was sure about the Dorjjeff was a Russian agent of some importance.<sup>51</sup>

Dorjjeff was a Russian subject, and had gained great influence during his twenty years residence in Lhasa. He was received by the Tsar, as an envoy from the Dalai Lama, in 1900 and again in 1901, at the time when the communications of Viceroy of India were not answered by the authority of Tibet. Whenever he returned to Lhasa from Russia he brought rich gifts from Tsar to the Dalai Lama.<sup>52</sup> The Japanese monk Kawaguchi who was at Lhasa during this time and describe about the arrival of the caravan of 300 camels with load consisted of small fire-arms, bullets, and other interesting objects from Russia.<sup>53</sup> Lovat Fraser writes that “Dorjjeff played a double game. In Lhasa he represented the Tsar as an incarnation of the founder of the Tibetan religion, eager to build up a great Buddhist Empire; in St. Petersburg and Yalta he declared that the Dalai Lama sought Russian protection.”<sup>54</sup> Dorjjeff had left Tibet when Dalai Lama attained his majority, and after returning he spread the story that North Shambala was Russia and the Tsar was the king who would restore Buddhism. He urged the authorities of Lhasa the desirability of seeking friendship with the northern power and more Russians were adopting the Tibetan religion and the Tsar himself was likely to embrace it.<sup>55</sup> While the Dalai Lama was convinced of the necessity of such alliance, the Tibetan Grand Council argued Tibet needed no such protection from Russia. However, the Dalai Lama ignored the council and privately sent a mission to

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<sup>51</sup> Lamb, *British India and Tibet*, pp. 214-215.

<sup>52</sup> Lovat Fraser, *India Under Curzon & After*, London, W. Heinemann, 1911, p. 138.

<sup>53</sup> Kawaguchi, *Three Years in Tibet*, p. 506.

<sup>54</sup> Fraser, *India Under*, pp. 138-139.

<sup>55</sup> Bell, *Tibet Past and Present*, pp. 62-63.



Russia, which was reportedly well received.<sup>56</sup> According to information received here, “an Embassy to the Russian Imperial Court from the Tibetan Dalai Lama, numbering seven officials with the Lama Dorjiew at their head, is due to arrive here from Colombo on board the volunteer fleet steamer “Tambov” about the 24<sup>th</sup> instant. The Embassy will leave Odessa for St. Petersburg immediately on its arrival. Tibetan Mission was ceremoniously received by Tsar at Peterhof yesterday, and handed many valuable presents to His Majesty.”<sup>57</sup> To Russian official account (given by Count Lamsdorff to Sir C. Scott) states that “the Mission is of a religious characters from the Dalai Lama to the Buddhist in the Russian Empire, and that it has no political or official character Count Lamsdorff added that Dorjiew is a Russian subject and a member of the Russian Geographical Society, but holds a confidential post in the service of the Dalai Lama, and visits Russia occasionally to collect money.”<sup>58</sup> But British in India were suspicious about the mission and thought it had more political objectives rather than religious.

Tsarist Russia was more successful than British India in establishing diplomatic connection with Tibet. Russia’s relative success indicates what the Lamaist regime at Lhasa considered as the proper mode of diplomatic conduct. It raises the question of the Lamaist conception of international relations, with whom and how such international relations may be properly conducted and sustained. The Russian success in gaining access to the XIII Dalai Lama was the achievement of a single Russian citizen of Mongol origin called Dorjiev he thoroughly understood more relevantly the political culture of Tibet. As an advisor to the Dalai Lama, he argued that, as Tibet’s traditional protector, China was getting weaker; Lhasa should seek a Tsarist alliance in order to defend itself from British India.<sup>59</sup>

### **The secret treaty between Russia and China regarding Tibet**

J. C. White Political Officer in Sikkim writes to H.S. Barnes Secretary to the Government of India in the Foreign Department, informing him that “Mr. Kang Yu Wai called on me the other day and gave me some interesting information which, I think, you may like to hear. Mr. Kang Yu

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<sup>56</sup> Thomas J Wersto, ‘Tibet in Sino-Soviet Relations’, *Asian Affairs* vol. 10, no. 3 (1983): 70–85, p.71 <http://www.jstor.org/stable/30172983> accessed on 25.11.2022.

<sup>57</sup> NAI, FD, Secret-E, March 1902, File No.3, pp. 2-3.

<sup>58</sup> NAI, FD, Secret-E, March 1902, File No.10, p. 7.

<sup>59</sup> Dawa Norbu, *China’s Tibet Policy*, Surrey, Curzon Press, 2001, p. 154.

Wai (the Chinese refugee now at Darjeeling) is one of the Chinese reformers and he tells me his present information has been received from friends in Peking who keep him posted up as far as possible in what is going on. He tells me that Jung Lu (the head of the Chinese Grand Council and the most trusted of the advisers of the Empress Dowager) has been taking many bribes and is now afraid of his life, and on that account is throwing in his lot with the Russians in the hopes that they will protect him, he put it that it was better to be in the palm of the hand than near the claws. On this account he is giving away his own country; it was his doing that the Manchurian Convention was signed, and that he has made some sort of a treaty or arrangement with Russia regarding the territory north-east of Szechuan. He also asserts that the Russians are attempting something with Lhasa, and that a Lama has gone from there to parley with the Russians. He does not know the name of this Lama. (It may be the same man who went to Russia, returned again to Lhasa, and is reported to have again left. He also says some mission have been to Russia from Lhasa. In the course of conversation he said he had warned Sir Claude Macdonald that trouble was coming and that his warning was disregarded, and that, instead of backing up the Emperor, Sir Claude went to Pa-ta-ho. Kang Yu Wai is an interesting personage, and, should the Empress Dowager die and the Emperor come into power, will in all probability return to some post of importance.”<sup>60</sup> The same story was heard by Captain Parr at Yatung. In August Ernest Satow reported that rumours of such a treaty had been appearing in the Chinese press.<sup>61</sup> The telegram dated 11 August 1902, to the Secretary of State to Viceroy, E. M. Satow reports “from Peking a rumour put forward designedly by the Russo-Chinese Bank in the press that China may transfer to Russia her interests in Tibet if Russia will promise to uphold the integrity of China. He believes that the Russian minister has hinted that Russia desires an agreement with China on the question of Tibet.”<sup>62</sup>

Private arrangement between Chinese Empire with Russia Empire:<sup>63</sup>

- 1) Chinese Government seen his parties very weak and not so active, so he hand over the Tibet to Russian Government, and requested him to help them.
- 2) The Russian Empire received the Tibet now, and he helps the mother of the Chinese Empire.

<sup>60</sup> NAI, FD, Secret-E, Proceedings, October 1902, File No. 95-115, Pro. No. 95, p. 1.

<sup>61</sup> Lamb, *British India and Tibet*, p. 217.

<sup>62</sup> BL, IOR, Private Papers, Mss Eur F111/172, File No. 345, p.93, in Qatar Digital Library, [https://www.qdl.qa/en/archive/81055/vdc\\_100152865249.0x000030](https://www.qdl.qa/en/archive/81055/vdc_100152865249.0x000030) accessed on 14.11.2022

<sup>63</sup> NAI, FD, Secret-E, Proceedings, October 1902, File No. 95-115, Pro. No. 95, p. 2.

- 3) If any danger will occur in China, then Russian will be in charged, and nothing can be done by Chinese Government.
- 4) Chinese Government allowed to Russian to open his Government at Tibet, and also there will be Chinese Counselors.
- 5) Chinese will be trader to Tibet, and the Russian will protect them.
- 6) If any false person will enter to Tibet being done some false, then, then the Russian Government will catch him and bring to Chinese Government.
- 7) Russia will be taking fewer taxes in Chinese trade to Tibet.
- 8) The Russian Government is intimated with Tibet's Government subordinates.
- 9) The Russian are not allowed to bring their religions in Tibet.
- 10) All the mines of Tibet are in charged to Russian and he can open railway, & C.
- 11) The Russian is allowed to build a fort at Tibet and also railway, but they are not to destroy those monasteries of Tibet.

The Nepalese Resident at Lhasa also reported rumour that treaty was concluded between China and Russia. J. C. White reports that three Tibetans have been sent from Lhasa to Russia to enquire if in case of disturbance, Russia will assist Tibet.<sup>64</sup> The British warn the Chinese government against the conclusion of any such agreement, and to intimate that His Majesty's Government would, in that event, be compelled to take steps for the protection of British interests by the occupation of such Chinese territory as might seem desirable.<sup>65</sup> In 9 September 1902, C. E. Buckland Chief Secretary to the Government of Bengal writes to H.S. Barnes Secretary to the Government of India in the Foreign Department, that "I am now able to send you a further communication from Mr. Kang Yu Wai. In the month of June 1902, the younger brother of Russian Emperor named Prince Chi arrived at Peking, and he chatted privately with the Chinese President Minister, or Yung Lu, two or three times regarding Tibet. The newspapers of Tientsin, Shanghai and Hong-Kong; including Japanese newspaper received the wire and letter from Peking. I have sent all the Chinese newspapers to Captain W.R.,McD. Parr at Yatung, so, if you will ask him, he will let you know all things."

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<sup>64</sup> NAI, FD, Secret-E, Proceedings, October 1902, File No. 95-115, Pro. No. 105, p. 10.

<sup>65</sup> BL, IOR, Private Papers, Mss Eur F111/172, File No. 379, pp. 101-102, in Qatar Digital Library, [https://www.qdl.qa/en/archive/81055/vdc\\_100152865249.0x000030](https://www.qdl.qa/en/archive/81055/vdc_100152865249.0x000030) accessed on 14.11.2022.

- 1) I don't know their private conversation, but I found in one newspaper that Russian Prince Chi consulted with Yung Lu, not to give the Tibet to any other nations.
- 2) And again I found in one other newspaper that the Tibetanese is allowed to be the inhabitants of Tibet. The Chinese and Russian will only protect them, but, if anything will occur, then Chinese armies will be sent, but the Chinese must inform to Russia that how many armies have been sent for the battle.
- 3) If the Chinese armies be defeated by any other nations in Tibet, then the Russian will help them. The Russian Emperor will send his General to Tibet to train the Tibetan soldiers.

Buckland further added that "the information which I sent you before and this, I cannot make out properly which one is true, between this two information, but my experience is going so far that it may be truth, because I heard the Prince Chi came Peking for the purpose. The Yung Lu himself thinking that only he is the head of box fighting, therefore he always enmity and against the foreigners and also the desire to kill the foreigners. He himself knows that he has false, so he fearing that other nations may not come and ask him, also the Chinese if anything will happens on him and on Empress Dowager, then the Russian will help them, so he gave the Tibet to him. From a long time Russian Prince Chi was intimate friendship with Yung Lu, because he gave the Manchow railway too him for asking help. It is better not to allow him to do the President Minister of China, because he is always helping Russia and not useful to English."<sup>66</sup>

Captain W.R.M'D. Parr, Chinese Customs Commissioner at Yatung, writes to C.E. Buckland, dated 29 September 1902, that "I was informed of the existence of a secret Treaty between China represented by Yung Lu and the Empress Dowager and Russia, some three months ago and have been endeavoring since my arrival here to ascertain the nature of its terms. Early in August I received a letter containing a cutting from the "Hua Tze Jit Pao" (some Chinese writing) giving the text of this Treaty and the translation sent to you by White are roughly correct. I have not the slightest doubt in my own mind as to the existence of this secret treaty. Therefore, I may here remark that my chief source of information is an ex-Chinese Minister who is thoroughly in touch with Peking. But there is yet another secret Treaty it is concluded between Yung Lu, Chinese Generalissimo, and the Russian Prince but the alleged

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<sup>66</sup> NAI, FD, Proceedings Secret-E, October 1902, File No. 106, p. 6.

treaty fails to give its validity. At present the Chinese are militarily weak to gain control in Tibet and Russia will certainly dispatch troops to Tibet to assist the Chinese. However, the presence of 100 Indian troops on the Sikkim-Chumbi frontier or other cosign of vantage would bring about a speedy solution of Tibetan obstruction, and it may stop Russian's realization of their Tibetan dream."<sup>67</sup> In the telegram dated 10 September 1902, Satow reports that the Chinese Government strongly denies that any such arrangement has been discussed between the Chinese and Russian Governments.<sup>68</sup>

The rumours of the various treaties by which Russia was said to have obtained for herself a special position in Tibet but the more alarming for the British in India during these geo-political events was the Dorjjeff missions.<sup>69</sup> But the rumour seems to have had a wide prevalence and to and to have been regarded seriously, for our Ambassador at St. Petersburg reported in October that the Chinese Minister and their officials there were making inquiries of this pretended agreement, which had appeared in several Continental as well as Russian newspapers. The Government of India, also, reported to the Secretary of State that circumstantial evidence, derived from variety of quarters, all pointed in the same direction, and tended to show the existence of an arrangement of some sort of settlement between Russia and Tibet.<sup>70</sup>

### **British Mission to Tibet**

In the beginning of the twentieth century, the British faced external crisis within its colonies. The Boxer rebellion threatened to bring about the complete disintegration of the Chinese Empire. The advance of Russia in Asia seemed to be about to enter fresh era of accelerated progress with the Russian occupation of Manchuria and with the signs of unhealthy Russian interest in Korea, Mongolia and Chinese Turkestan. Trouble was threatening on the Afghan frontier and a third Afghan War seemed not improbable. There were threats to the British position in Persia and the Gulf. Anglo-French tension was approaching a climax in Africa. In South Africa Britain was at war with some of her subjects. Britain relations with Germany were steadily deteriorating.<sup>71</sup> The

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<sup>67</sup> NAI, FD, Proceedings Secret-E, October 1902, File No. 114, p. 8.

<sup>68</sup> BL, IOR, Private Papers, Mss Eur F111/172, File No. 384, p.103, in Qatar Digital Library, [https://www.qdl.qa/en/archive/81055/vdc\\_100152865249.0x000030](https://www.qdl.qa/en/archive/81055/vdc_100152865249.0x000030) accessed on 14.11.2022.

<sup>69</sup> Lamb, *British India and Tibet*, p. 219.

<sup>70</sup> Younghusband, *India and Tibet*, p.73.

<sup>71</sup> Lamb, *British India and Tibet*, p. 209.

British relation with the Tibet during this time was not going smoothly and the Russia's political activities inside Lhasa were hampering the situation for the British administrators in India. Curzon attempted in peaceful manner to have a correspondence with the Dalai Lama but it did not show any fruitful results which ultimately led to the British military invasion into Tibet in 1903-1904.

In January 1903 Lord Curzon proposed to dispatch a Mission with an armed escort to Lhasa, to deal with the Dalai Lama, to discuss the entire question of British relations, commercial and otherwise, with Tibet, and to establish a permanent British Representative at Lhasa.<sup>72</sup> The English are evidently ceasing to conceal the real significance of the much-talked-of expedition to Tibet. According to Mr. Labouchere, "Colonel Younghusband's "walk" to Gyantse can only be explained as being prompted by the desire to damage Russia's prestige in Central Asia. If this, comprehensible to every Englishman, is disallowed as being the object in view, not a single inhabitant of the United Kingdom will discover any other reasonable explanation for the persistence with which Lord Curzon has endeavored to develop Indo-Tibet "trade". Hence, we are opinion that this Tibet Expedition is the primary and most salient obstacle to that improvement of Anglo-Russian relations, about which so much has lately appeared in the Press.

Until the English put a stop to this military demonstration, clearly directed against Russia, there can be no question of any form of 'rapprochement'."<sup>73</sup> The mission first move was at Khamba Jong, a fort just inside the Tibetan border with Sikkim, and it was led by Colonel Francis Younghusband who was the popular choice of the Curzon. The entire member attached to this mission was handpicked for their devotion to Curzonian 'forward policy' and for their willingness to face whatever dangers they might meet once in Tibet. Mission members, each with military or civil service background had an additional role to play in collecting and collating information, and scientific experts were called in to examine the geology, fauna, and flora that was discovered as the expedition moved further into the Tibetan hinterland.<sup>74</sup>

On 30 March 1904, the mission began its advance to Gyantse with a 10 mile march to the village of Guru, But Tibetan forces were waiting to prevent their advance and inevitability armed

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<sup>72</sup> Bell, *Tibet Past and Present*, p. 65.

<sup>73</sup> NAI, FD, Secret E, Proceedings, February 1905, File No. 609, pp. 9-10.

<sup>74</sup> Wendy Palace, *The British Empire and Tibet 1900-1922*, London, Routledge Curzon, 2012, p. 6.

hostilities began. Macdonald's troops attempted to disarm the Tibetans, but when the two forces closed, fighting broke out and a massacre ensued when the British machine-guns opened fire on the Tibetans. The mission then continued towards Gyantse, which was reached on 11 April, and the town surrendered the following day. Younghusband remained at Gyantse for two months, and with the Dzong lacking a regular water supply, situated his mission headquarters in Chang-lo, a rented mansion by the river that was later the site of the British Trade Agency.<sup>75</sup> The telegram, dated the 9 October 1903, from the Foreign Secretary, Simla, to Colonel Francis Younghusband, Khamba Jong, states that on receipt of Secretary of State's telegram, dated 1<sup>st</sup> October, repeated to you on 3<sup>rd</sup> October, a consultation was at once held with military authorities here, and the arrangements proposed were communicated to the Viceroy by telegram as follows:

- 1) Mission to stay at Khamba Jong until Chumbi valley is occupied.
- 2) Further movement can then be determined.
- 3) If force advances on Gyantse, Colonel Younghusband can move and join them at Kala Tso, but not too soon.
- 4) He might occupy Khamba Jong itself at once on any sign of hostility.
- 5) Preparations for advance into Chumbi valley to be made at once. One Gurkha battalion to be warned and moved into Sikkim.
- 6) Nepal Government to be asked to send 3,500 yaks, with drivers, &c., to be collected near Darjeeling, say, in the vicinity of Phallut.
- 7) A company of Bengal Sappers and Miners and 2 guns, mountain battery, Native, with 2 mortars 4 2/5, manned from native mountain battery. 'o b dent up.
- 8) Six months' supplies for 2,000 men to be pushed up to Gnatong as fast as possible and thence on to Chumbi.
- 9) We might suggest that Nepal should occupy Khamba Jong, when Colonel Younghusband moves, with, say, 300 men.

In reply, Viceroy enquires "whether you are strongly in favour of advance to Gyantse. His Excellency then observes our advance depends on two conditions – first, complete rupture of negotiations with Tibetans which depends on reply of Amban not yet received; second, desirability of Phari or Gyantse as head-quarters of the Mission throughout the winter in the

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<sup>75</sup> Alex McKay, 'The British Invasion of Tibet, 1903–04,' *Inner Asia*, vol. 14, no. 1, 2012, pp. 5–25. *JSTOR*, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24572145> accessed 4/11/2024.

event of advance. This is partly political, partly military question. Younghusband must advise on former aspect. Latter depends upon suitability of Gyangtse for advanced post, upon feasibility of connection, and upon provision of supplies. Question has further to be considered in relation to possible further movements next spring. It in spite of our advance Tibetans decline even at Gyangtse, shall we be in better position next April if we have to spend whole winter at Gyangtse at enormous expenses, or will advance from Phari then be sufficient. Proposed preparations seem to me excessive without further explanation.” Younghusband in his telegram dated 15 September 1903 said that “two Pioneer battalions and company of Sappers and Miners are already in Sikkim, if strengthened in by British mountain battery, would probably suffice for combined occupation of Chumbi Valley and advance to Gyangtse. In addition to the current force, it was proposed that the Gurkha battalion, another Sappers company, and native mountain battery be added to existing force for the operation. Is it anticipated that there will be serious fighting in Chumbi Valley. We seem to drift into unnecessarily large military expeditions with undue hurry. The viceroy suggested that it would be best to summon Younghusband to Simla to meet me on return to advice on all above points. It may also be necessary to issue some sort of ultimatum to Tibetans before advancing.”<sup>76</sup>

In the sixth Tibetan month of 1903 (July), information reached Lhasa that Colonel Younghusband and his troops were on their way to Khamba Dzong, within Tibetan territory, for the purpose of opening trade negotiations and discussing the question of British relations with Tibet. The Tibetan officials Lozang Trinley and Tsarong were given orders from the Lhasa authorities that they will hold talks with the British only on the border and not within Tibetan territory. These two representatives sent the district officer of Khamba Dzong and 25 soldiers to Giagong, with instructions to prevent the British from entering Tibet and to report back as soon as the British appeared. From Lachen, Sikkim, news came that the British with seven hundred troops, had already set out June 19, 1903, Lozang Tinley, the Secretary-General, and General Tsarong left immediately for Giagong. After reaching Giagong, they met with Tibetan speaking British office Captain William O'Connor, accompanied by two hundred soldiers. O'Connor

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<sup>76</sup> NAI, FD, Secret-E, Proceedings, January 1904, File No. 286, pp. 3-4.



informed them that they will be moving towards Khamb Dzong where the British government had decided to hold negotiations with the Tibetans representatives.<sup>77</sup>

The Russia ambassador represented that authoritative information has reached the Russia Government that a British military expedition has reached Kombaovaleko (Khambajong) on its way north by Chumbi Valley, the great importance which Russian Government attaches to avoiding all cause of trouble in China would cause it to consider such an expedition as likely to produce situation of considerable gravity, which, in such cases, might compel it to take steps to safeguard its interest in those region.<sup>78</sup> The British was well aware of the significance of removing Russian influence out from Tibet. The Whitehall in London also realized that the Russia's inconveniences and intrigues along coterminous frontier of India, Nepal, and Tibet will further escalate geo-political tension in the region. Lord Lansdowne mentioned that in the memorandum communicated by the Russian Embassy on 2<sup>nd</sup> February shows that the British refused to admit the right of Russia to interrogate His Majesty's Government as to incidents affecting our frontier relations with Tibet. He pressed for distinct statements as to the existence of a secret agreement between Russia and China, and as to the actual or intended presence of a Russia Agent in Tibet. He has intimated that, if any steps of the kind are taken, they will certainly be followed by a display of activity not only equivalent to, but exceedingly, that made by Russia. Lord Lansdowne has also explained that His Majesty's Government are in communication with the Chinese and Tibetan authorities for the purpose of negotiating the settlement of a Commercial treaty and certain frontier questions, that we do not admit Russia has any right to take exception to those negotiations; that these local questions must be disposed of to our satisfaction, and that we shall continue to take the necessary steps for the purpose. The Russia ambassador distinctly denied that Russia had any political designs upon Tibet, and will make specific enquires of Russian Government as to truth of statements referred to. His Majesty's Government is of opinion that, while discussions are in progress between the two Governments, it would be most undesirable that an expedition should forcibly enter Tibet. Meanwhile you should reply to the Amban that you are ready to reopen negotiations, but that a

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<sup>77</sup> Shakabpa, *Tibet a political*, pp. 205-206.

<sup>78</sup> BL, IOR, Private Papers, Mss Eur F111/173, File No. 35, p.12, in Qatar Digital Library, [https://www.qdl.qa/en/archive/81055/vdc\\_100000001452.0x00032c](https://www.qdl.qa/en/archive/81055/vdc_100000001452.0x00032c) accessed on 15.11.2022.

Tibetan representative with full powers must be a party to them, and that time and place where negotiations should be conducted is under your consideration.<sup>79</sup>

The Mission stayed in Kham Dzong for days but could not achieve any fruitful talk with the Tibetan. At all events, the Tibetans did not trouble to send representatives of any but inferior status who lacked powers to do anything but press for a withdrawal of the mission. The Chinese were not, it seems in a position to send suitable representative even if they wanted to do so. In the way five months was wasted. Curzon secured agreement from the Whitehall and the mission advance inside Tibet and by January 1904 the expedition was ready to advance and reached Gyantse. Here too British expedition member faced same problem like in Kham Dzong. There was clearly no hope for negotiations which made the break to the final decision to advance into Lhasa. When the mission reached Lhasa it was found that the Dalai Lama and Dorjief fled the city. The Chinese Amban was the first to welcome the British Mission but during this time his power in Tibet has decreased and China's suzerainty claim over Tibet was not strong enough. The Tri Rimpoche of Gaden who was appointed Regent when he left Lhasa and without any delay an Anglo-Tibetan Convention was signed.<sup>80</sup> The defeat of Tibetan army in the hand of the British troops was inevitable. During this time, the core of the Tibetan 'army' was made up of Khampa mercenaries from east Tibet. As for arms, the majority had *mendab* or fire arrows as their weapon together with side arms in the shape of long, straight swords with heavy one-edged blades. These were no match for the Indian army's Lee-met ford rifle, let alone the British army's Lee-Enfield. Further, Tibetan firearms were inefficient and primitive, consisting of old, smoothbore brass cannon, about the size of the British army's 7-pounders, and old muzzle-loading jingals.<sup>81</sup>

The British mission ultimately enabled the Qing dynasty to reassert control over Tibet. During this time, the only Chinese Amban was removed from office by Imperial Decree for his failure to prevent the mission, his replacement, Youtai, proved as able diplomat. On reaching Lhasa in February 1904, he recognised that China's best interests were served by the Tibetan defeat, and with Younghusband's acknowledgement of his status he played an important role in

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<sup>79</sup> BL, IOR, Private Papers, Mss Eur F111/173, File No.58, pp.21-22, in Qatar Digital Library, [https://www.qdl.qa/en/archive/81055/vdc\\_100000001452.0x00032c](https://www.qdl.qa/en/archive/81055/vdc_100000001452.0x00032c) accessed on 15.11.2022.

<sup>80</sup> Richardson, *Tibet and its history*, pp. 84-87.

<sup>81</sup> Parshotam Mehra, 'Tibet and Its Army,' *The Tibet Journal*, vol. 32, no. 4, 2007, pp. 33-60. *JSTOR*, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/43301021> accessed 4/11/2024.

the Convention negotiations.<sup>82</sup> In 11 August 1904, Lhasa, Younghusband wrote to L.W. Dane, Secretary to the Government in India in the Foreign Department, that “he have obtained a copy of a sort of reply to our terms of settlement which the National Assembly have drawn up and sent to the Amban. It is the most amazing document, but I cannot say yet how far it is meant to be taken seriously, and I am sending it to you unofficially, because it was only sent over unofficially to Wilton by the Amban who is sending back to the Tibetans a reply “reviling them severely”. Possibly it is merely meant to show people what fine fellows they are, and throw upon the Amban the onus of making them agree to our terms. The Tibetans officials on the advice of the Amban gave way to the British in Lhasa.”<sup>83</sup> Younghusband spent his last fortnight in Lhasa in cementing the friendships with the Tibetans and visited the monasteries discussing with them their religion; he was even invited to enter and inspect their temple. Finally, he took farewell of Ti Rimpoche, before leaving on the following morning the Ti Rimpoche visited him, and presented each of us with an image of Buddha. A mile out of the capital he found a large tent pitched and in it the whole of the Tibetan Council assembled to bid him and his staff farewell. Tea was served, and then, with many protestations of friendship we shook hands for the last time, remounted our ponies, and rode away.<sup>84</sup> Later, Younghusband wrote in his work that “in spite of the military operations which we were forced to undertake, and in spite of the Tibetans being compelled to pay an indemnity, the position of the Tibetans towards us was distinctly more favourable when we left Tibet than we entered it.”<sup>85</sup>

## **After the Mission**

In 1904 Convention was drawn up directly between the government of Tibet and Great Britain, without the participation of the third country, though it establishes Tibet as an independent country for some time.<sup>86</sup> but soon China In 1906 Great Britain signed an agreement with China that ratified the Lhasa Convention of 1904. This was done without the knowledge of the Tibetan government. This agreement is known as the Adhesion Agreement of Peking, was amended in

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<sup>82</sup> McKay, *The British Invasion*, p. 17.

<sup>83</sup> NAI, FD, Secret E, Proceedings, February 1905, File No. 635, p. 16.

<sup>84</sup> Seaver, *Francis Younghusband*, pp. 246-247.

<sup>85</sup> Younghusband, *India and Tibet*, p. 336.

<sup>86</sup> Shakabpa, *Tibet a political*, p. 221.

1908 in an agreement called the Tibet Trade Regulations, in the presence of Tibetan representative, Kalon Tsarong. In addition Tibetan Government knew nothing about another Convention signed by Great Britain with Russia in August 1907, which related to Persia, Afghanistan, and Tibet. However, the new Trade Regulations acknowledge the old Regulations of 1893 that it should remain in force, in so far as they were not inconsistent with the new Regulations. These Regulations was not observed appropriately, in 1910 the Indian Government reported that the Chinese did not allow the Tibetans to deal directly with the British Agents. During this time, the Chinese forward policy into the Tibetan territory was increasing. The first indication of this significant change of Chinese policy was the appointment of Chao Erh-feng, the Acting Viceroy of Szechuan, as Resident in Tibet, in the spring of 1908.<sup>87</sup>

During 1905 two prominent Curzonians, Frederick O'Connor, British trade agent at Gyantse, and Claude White, Britain's political officers in Sikkim, co-operated in a plan to invite the Panchen Lama to India to coincide with the official visit there of the Prince and Princess of Wales; the intention was to present him to the royal couple as the ruler of Tibet. The two incidents of the Panchen Lama's visit and the erection of boundary pillars would set the tone of future discussions about Tibetan policy throughout the Minto/Morley tenure as the viceroy of India. Thus, creating a situation in which Curzonian forward policy was kept alive when it might so easily have collapsed in the face of such formidable opposition from London.<sup>88</sup> The 13<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama while in exile in Mongolia turned to Russia. He met Pokotiloff, the new Russian minister to China, in Urga and sent Dorjieef, to St. Petersburg to meet the tsar and ask for protection after he returns to Lhasa. Russia, however, had just lost war with the Japanese and was experiencing political disturbance internally. The tsar, therefore, was not interested in getting entangled in Tibetan situation.<sup>89</sup> The Chinese introduce the Imperial Decree issued in November, 1908 ostensibly conferring an additional honor on the Dalai Lama. According to the John Jordan it was the Chinese move to regard Tibet as within her sovereignty.<sup>90</sup>

When the question of an adhesion treaty was first raised almost immediately after the Lhasa Convention was signed in September 1904, there were encouraging indications that the

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<sup>87</sup> Younghusband, *India and Tibet*, pp. 361-362.

<sup>88</sup> Wendy Palace, *The British Empire and Tibet, 1900-1922*, London, RoutledgeCurzon, 2005, pp. 17-20.

<sup>89</sup> Melvyn C. Goldstein, *A History of Modern Tibet, 1913-1951, The Demise of the Lamaist State*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1989, p. 47.

<sup>90</sup> Younghusband, *India and Tibet*, p. 364.

Chinese were prepared to cooperate. While Younghusband was still in Lhasa, for example, their Amban, Yu-Tai, had telegraphed Peking to say that, in his opinion the Convention ‘contained nothing subversive of Chinese suzerainty.’<sup>91</sup> In the telegram, No. 1573 E-C., dated 26 April 1905, from the Foreign Secretary, Simla to Sir E. Satow, writes on the subject relating to Anglo-Chinese negotiations in regard to the adhesion of China to the Tibet Treaty of 7<sup>th</sup> September. We are of opinion that you should now be informed of the stage which negotiations with the Chinese Commissioner, Tang Tachen, have reached. As result of the discussion, Tang Tachen, has been told that Government of India would be prepared to propose to His Majesty’s Government a Convention containing the following:<sup>92</sup>

- Article I: The British Government recognizes the suzerainty of China over Tibet.
- Article II: The Convention signed on the 7<sup>th</sup> day of September 1904 on behalf of the Government of Great Britain and Tibet, and the text of which, in English, is attached to the present Convention as an annex, is hereby confirmed, subject to the modification granted in the Declaration appended thereto, and both the High Contracting Parties engage to take at all times such steps as may be necessary to secure the due fulfillment of the terms specified therein.
- Article III: The British Government has no desire either to annex Tibet, or to establish a Protectorate over it, or in any way to control its internal administration, so long as no Foreign Power endeavours to intervene in the affairs of Tibet.
- Article IV: the British Government have no desire to seek for themselves or their own subjects the concessions denied to Foreign Powers or their subjects by Article IX (d) of the Convention signed on the 7<sup>th</sup> day of September 1904 on behalf of the Governments of Great Britain and Tibet. But they reserve the right to lay down by arrangement with the Tibetan Government telegraph lines connecting India with the trade marts defined in Article II of the aforesaid Convention.
- Article V: the Chinese Government engage not to employ any one, not a Chinese subject and not of Chinese nationality, in any capacity whatsoever in Tibet.

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<sup>91</sup> Palace, *The British Empire*, p. 26.

<sup>92</sup> NAI, FD, Secret-E, October 1905, File No. 577, p. 2.

- Article VI: The English and Chinese texts of the present Convention have been carefully compared; but in the event of there being any difference of meaning between them, the sense as expressed in the English text shall be held to be the correct sense.

From the discussions with Tang Tachen we had reason to believe that the whole of these Articles would meet with his acceptance, but we hear that, in telegraphing them to Peking, he is advising in a contrary sense. We would point out, in case the subject is mentioned to you, that the self-denying explanation of Article IX of the Lhasa Convention contained in draft Article 3 and 4 goes far beyond what China had reason to expect, and that the terms generally are the utmost which the Government of India are prepared to offer.<sup>93</sup> During this time, the Chinese were demanding sovereignty right over Tibet be officially recognised.

Whether the Expedition of 1904 was justifiable or not on moral grounds or on grounds of political expediency, it may be thought that having gone to Lhasa the British government ought to have stationed a permanent Agent there. In 1910, China, invaded Tibet, seized a great part of the administration, desecrated monasteries and oppressed its people. The Dalai Lama and his government fled to India. British afforded them sanctuary by giving good consideration and kind treatment. It was then that Tibetan opinion veered round to the British side, that closer intercourse with the British was desired.<sup>94</sup> Meanwhile, the Chinese came to realize the immense difficulty they would face in trying to replace a living Dalai Lama. Thus, in September 1910, the Amban offered to rescind the deposition order if the Dalai Lama would return to Tibet. The terms of the offer reflected a new Chinese policy towards Tibet. While the Dalai Lama would not be punished, neither would be restored to his political position. He could live in the Potala Palace and resume his religious offices, but not his temporal ones. The Dalai Lama's response opened a new era in Tibet-Chinese relations by introducing, for the first time, what was to become basic Tibetan strategy that is utilization of Britain and India as mediators or supporters vis-à-vis China.<sup>95</sup> But British this time had no such interest in Tibet. The almost closing phase of the British active diplomacy over Tibet can be witnessed after the conclusion of the 1913-1914 Simla Convention between India, Tibet, and China. Though, the agreement was never recognized by the Chinese believing it was framed against their geo-political interest. Moreover, the

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<sup>93</sup> NAI, FD, Secret-E, October 1905, File No. 577, p. 2

<sup>94</sup> Bell, *Tibet Past and Present*, pp. 71-72.

<sup>95</sup> Goldstein, *A History of Modern Tibet*, p. 54.

outbreak of the World War I shifted the British approach towards Tibet. Henceforth, the people involved in dealing with Tibet were the British Officers who were actively involved in maintaining British India relations with Tibetan authorities throughout the British rule in India.

The beginning of the twentieth century witnessed the drastic change in the British foreign policy towards Tibet. The increasing influence of the Tsarist Russia in Tibet; and, the involvement of the Dorjiew in clandestine activity in developing ties between these two powers in Central Asia certainly made British more skeptical about Russia's intentions over the region. It can be observed that the British military move in Tibet was the direct challenge to Russia's political motives in Asia. However, Tibet no longer remained a mysterious land after the British force reached Lhasa. After the British mission a political vacuum was created in Tibet between the powers in Asia. China's political influence increased and their claim of 'suzerainty' change into their demand of 'sovereignty' in Tibet. The absence of the Dalai Lama created power clash inside the authorities in Lhasa and the Chinese Resident. However, Tibet tried to maintain its distinct identity within Asia geopolitics to uphold their freedom from China's suzerainty and sovereignty claims.

### Chapter 3

## **India, Tibet and China: A study on British intervention during Sino-Tibet crisis 1913-33**

Prior to the British military expedition into Tibet in 1903-04, the Tibetan people maintained distance with India. However, numerous attempts were made from the British side to establish a relationship but they failed to establish diplomatic and political ties with the authorities in Lhasa. It was during the Anglo-Gurkha War (1814-16) the British first came into direct territorial contact with Tibet when they annexed some Himalayan region from Nepal.<sup>1</sup> After the British invasion on Tibet in the beginning of twentieth century the situation changed the relations which had been broken since the time of Warren Hastings was reestablished between the British India and Tibetan governments. Chinese political influence upon Tibet during this period was declining through their claim of suzerainty remained uncertain.<sup>2</sup> Since, then the political status of Tibet remained disputed between the foreign powers like British India, China and Russia.<sup>3</sup> The important event that happened was the outbreak of Chinese Revolution which overthrew the last imperial dynasty Qing (1636-1912) and established Republic these events also gave a chance to the Tibetan people to resist the Chinese supremacy in Tibet. The peaceful settlement agreements was signed between British India, Tibet and China in different period of time to bring an end to the Tibet question but the outcomes of those political settlements were not permanent and it only brought more problems ahead in the diplomatic intercourse between these States. The growing geo-political ambitions of the Chinese in early twentieth century in the Central Asian region directly impacted the authorities in Lhasa and to counter this move of China the Tibetan

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<sup>1</sup> Alastair Lamb, *The China-India Border The Origins of the Disputed Boundaries*, London, OUP, 1964, p. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Charles Bell, *Tibet Past and Present*, Delhi, Motilal Banarsidass, 1992, p. 59.

<sup>3</sup> Tibet's geographical position in the centre of Asia has made her the political junctions between powers: China, India and Russia. With China proper, Tibet shares 14,000 miles of common borders along Yunnan, Szechuan and Kansu, and 13,000 miles more with Sinkiang. With India, Sikkim, Kashmir, Bhutan and Nepal, Tibet has some 2,000 miles of common borders. Though Tibet is separated from Russia by Chinese Turkestan, but Russia expansion in the Central Asia brings Tibet under its ambit. In 'British Penetration of Intransigent Tibet,' by Suchita Ghosh, *The Tibet Journal*, Spring 1979, Vol. 4 No. 1, pp.7-16 <https://www.jstor.org/stable/43299930> accessed on 7.03.23.



Government largely depended on the British Government. The main motive of the China during the last decades of Manchu rule was to ‘absorb’ Tibet within its geographical limitation, and later on it became the main political program under the new Republic of China (1912-1949).

The Chinese military incursion in the eastern part of Tibet and the disputes regarding the boundary demarcation between China-Tibet remained the challenging for the Tibetan authority to deal with it which forced them to ask for the help from the British Government to settle the issue with China. The only political agenda of the Tibetan Government in developing firm relations with the British was to counter the Chinese intervention into Tibet. This chapter examines the diplomatic relations of the British and Tibetan Governments after the Simla Conference. The chapter will also explore in understanding the supply of arms and ammunitions by the British to the Tibetan Government. The chapter will also look into the role of the British officers in the Tibet-China frontier. Further, the chapter will investigate that why Tibet failed to gain good relations with the British government after Simla Convention? How did military assistance provided by the British help Tibet? How did the British officers contribute in establishing the ties between the British and Tibetan governments? How did British react towards the problems in the eastern frontier of Tibet? How Chinese military incursion on the Eastern Tibet had an impact on the India-Tibet relation? Finally, this chapter mostly focuses on the understanding of the diplomatic and strategic approaches of the British Government towards Tibet problem in the early decades of the twentieth century.

### **Tibet; prior to the end of Manchu Dynasty**

The intervention of foreign power into Tibet was never accepted by the Chinese. This became clearer after the British military expedition under Francis Younghusband which had less impact in solving the issue of Tibet question rather it gave opportunity to the Chinese to launch massive military attack on Tibet in early 1910. The British diplomatically failed in bringing peace settlement between Tibet-China through the Mission. However, the far reaching consequences of the Younghusband Mission is that it gave a understanding to the British of the Tibet’s polity and geography that remained an important question since the time of Hasting’s governor generalship.<sup>4</sup> The Mission resulted neither in the British protectorate over Tibet nor did it

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<sup>4</sup> Alastair Lamb, *British India and Tibet 1766-1910*, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1960, pp. 256-258.

succeeded in creating an independent Tibetan states. In fact, it created more problems than it solved. It shattered the power of the Dalai Lama without deciding the international status of his country. It produced no geographical definitions and it delimited no boundaries. Aftermath, of this event witnessed a decade long discussion between the Anglo-Chinese and Anglo-Russian over the nature of the Government in Lhasa. These discussions culminated in the Simla Conference of 1913-14, when on the eve of the World War I the three powers Chinese, Tibetan and British arrived at a common interpretation of the political and geographical meaning of Tibet.<sup>5</sup>

The Chinese Government had been seriously alarmed by the British Mission which brought major challenge to their political position in Tibet which it had maintained since the eighteenth century. Whenever the Tibetan Government faced crisis in the past from the foreign powers the Qing Dynasty assisted with Tibet with the military support. The British negotiated with Tibetan in Lhasa Convention without the presence of Chinese representatives this made Peking authorities suspicious towards British motives.<sup>6</sup> It was repeated again during the Simla Conference when only two parties agreed to each other proposals and Chinese representative did not accepted it.

In the beginning of the twentieth century the policy of the Chinese towards Tibet changed it involved the restructuring of the provincial area of China by extending westwards which include the area of Tibet where Dalai Lama rule had a strong influence and perhaps even to embrace all territory that could be said to be in any way Tibetan. The outcome of this dramatic expansion of Chinese regime actually created the dividing line between Tibet and British India. After demarcation of the boundary line with British India the Chinese army invaded Tibet in 1910. This move made the British administrators in India anxious and began to rethink on the security of the northern frontiers which now shared a long border with Chinese dominated Tibet.<sup>7</sup>

In 1906 British Government signed an agreement with China that ratified the Lhasa Convention of 1904, which was done without the knowledge of the Tibetan Government. This agreement, known as the Adhesion Agreement of Peking, was amended in 1908 in an agreement

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<sup>5</sup>Alastair Lamb, *The McMahon Line A study in the Relations between India China and Tibet, 1904 to 1914*; Morley Minto, *and Non-Interference*, vol. 1, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1966, p. 3.

<sup>6</sup> Lamb, *British India and Tibet*, p. 274.

<sup>7</sup> Lamb, *British India and Tibet*, pp. 258-259.

called the Tibet Trade Regulations, 1908, in the presence of Tibetan representative, Kalon Tsarong. It was believed by the Tibetan that Tsarong had signed this agreement without first consulting the Tibetan authority. The Tibetan government was also not aware of the Convention signed between Great Britain with Russia in August 1907, which related to Persia, Afghanistan, and Tibet.<sup>8</sup>

From 1905 to 1907 Britain and Russia were engaged in patching up their differences, and a convention was signed at St. Petersburg in August 1907 in which the suzerain rights of China over Tibet were recognized by both Governments, but it was agreed that Great Britain, “by reason of her geographical position”, had a “special interest in the maintenance of the *status quo* in the external relations of Tibet”. Both countries recognized the engagements of the Lhasa Convention and the Convention of 1906, and they both undertook to respect the territorial integrity of Tibet and to abstain from interference in her internal affairs, as well as to treat with Tibet only through the intermediary of the Chinese Government. The Indo-Tibetan interchange of 1903-04, concretized in the Lhasa Convention, stirred up the Peking authorities to a realization of the possibility that Tibet might drop from out the ambit of Chinese jurisdiction, and in 1905 an effort was commenced to bring the Tibetan Marches, and indeed Tibet itself, more directly under the Chinese control. China was being reminded by both Great Britain and Russia that she was responsible for Tibet, and Tibet was reminding her that she was supposed to exercise some sort of protection over her quasi-dependency.<sup>9</sup>

The Russian Government expressed the willingness to accept the British preamble, and thus the whole Convention was agreed to by both sides. It was proposed to treat the question of the prohibition of the entry of scientific missions into Tibet. The British Government agreed not to permit any mission organized for the purpose of investigation to enter Tibet and also requested the Chinese Government to prohibit so far as lay in their power the entry of similar expeditions into Tibet. This undertaking was to hold good for five years, at the expiration of which time the

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<sup>8</sup> W. D. Shakabpa, *Tibet A Political History*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1967, p. 220.

<sup>9</sup> NAI, F&P, File No. 1-X (Secret) of 1934, Serial Nos. 1-268, S. No. 70, p. 52.

British Government in consultation with Russia would consider the advisability of extending the prohibition for a further period.<sup>10</sup>

In the absence of the Dalai Lama from Lhasa the Chinese military strength over Tibet increased. After the payment made by China of the Younghusband indemnity also strengthened its hold in Tibet.<sup>11</sup> The Peking authorities appointed as Warden of the Marches a capable soldier, Chao Erh-feng, who was well informed on the affairs of the Szechwan frontier, and he carried on a series of campaigns from 1905 to 1910 directed towards reducing the lawless frontier tribal regions to order. He introduced a regular administrative system imposed some sort of law and restraint over the thitherto haughtily independent lamaseries and tribesmen, established garrisons in every frontier town between Tatsienlu and Chiamdo, imported Chinese settlers to occupy and develop the waste places, and established also a series of military posts all the way Lhasa. Whilst these things were being done the Dalai Lama himself was an exile from his country having fled to Urga at the time of the British advance on Lhasa in 1904 and from there passing on to Kumbum (Kansu), Wutai Shan (Shansi) and eventually to Peking, where he was given hospitality in the Yellow Temple, which had been built by the Emperor K'ang Hsi to receive one of the Dalai Lama's predecessors in 1653, the only occasion on which a Dalai Lama had visited the Manchu Court.<sup>12</sup> An additional title was conferred upon him, and this too showed that the Chinese government was determined to keep him in strict subordination. However, Dalai Lama also met with the British consulate John Jordan, at Peking and expressed his desire for friendly relations with the Indian government.<sup>13</sup>

It was during this visit that the Imperial Government, in consultation with the Dalai Lama himself, drew up a scheme of improvements for Tibet dealing with administration, education, industries, military organization, and communications. In order to assist in the introduction of these reforms, which the Dalai Lama resented as he realized that they were undertaking that should have originated with himself, the imperial Government appointed Chao Erh-Feng, a man of tremendous energy and of forceful character (*Amban* or Chinese Resident at Lhasa) and his brother, Chao Erh-hsun, Viceroy of Szechwan to support him and co-operate with the Dalai

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<sup>10</sup> G. P. Gooch, Harold Temperley (ed.), *British Documents on the Origins of the War 1898-1914*, vol. 4, London, Johnson Reprint Company, 1929, p. 347.

<sup>11</sup> Bell, *Tibet Past and Present*, 1992, p. 93.

<sup>12</sup> NAI, F&P, File No. 1-X (Secret) of 1934, Serial Nos. 1-268, S. No. 70, p. 52.

<sup>13</sup> Bell, *Tibet Past and Present*, p. 96.

Lama, especially in securing a settled frontier region. Shortly afterwards the Dalai Lama returned to Lhasa, he sought for the assistance of the British India Government against the Chinese. In this he failed, but his gesture had served as a warning to Chao Erh-feng, who moved a large body of troop's right up to Lhasa, whereupon the Dalai Lama fled to Darjeeling. Following the flight to India the Dalai Lama was formally deposed by the Chinese authorities. What did count was the steady advance of Chao Erh-feng's forces. This advance alarmed not only the whole of Tibet but the populations of Sikkim, Nepal and Bhutan.<sup>14</sup>

According to a proclamation by Chao Erh-feng, the troops beyond the frontier in 1906 were only sufficient to fulfill the functions of couriers, and were totally inadequate to protect the people. It seems that the 1,500 men allowed by the Imperial Institutes were mainly scattered in small detachments on the two roads from Tachienlu to Lhasa, and were little more than couriers or couriers' escorts, and cannot be said to be a garrison of Tibet in the sense applied to the Chinese troops in Lhasa prior to the Revolution. The first important stage in the replacement of those effete troops by more modern ones, and in the progress of Chinese military activity in the Tibetan borderland, was the subjugation of the semi-independent states between Tachienlu and Batang. A Tibetan rising early in 1905 in the country round Litang, Batang, Yakalo and Atuntzu gave the Ssuchuan (Szechuan a province in South West China) authorities an opportunity to send an expedition to this region. Accordingly, a force of about 2,000 Ssuchuan Provincial troops, called the Hsin Chun Hsun Fang, specially enlisted for service in the Tibetan Marches, captured in succession Litang, Batang and Hsiangcheng, the latter offering a stubborn resistance until June 1906. The rising appears to have been put down with severity, and the burning of monasteries greatly incensed the Tibetans. One of the Commanders of these troops was Chao Erh Feng, then a Taotai. The troops remained as garrisons in these districts, but there are indications that some of them moved either in 1907 or early in 1908, from Yakalo (sometimes called "Yenching" or salt mines) into the country in the Sangachujong neighbourhood, across the border line usually considered as the frontier. During 1906 and 1907 the Chinese seem to have consolidated their position in the regions occupied by this Expeditionary Force improving the road from Tachienlu

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<sup>14</sup> NAI, F&P, File No. 1-X (Secret) of 1934, Serial Nos. 1-268, S. No. 70, p. 53.

to Batang, laying a telegraph line and taking over the Civil Administration. A further move from Batang, via Bamutang and Gartok, towards Chamdo was not made at this stage.<sup>15</sup>

Throughout the Chinese advance into Tibet the Tibetan government had abstained from ordering its troops to fight. Chao Erh Feng had therefore to meet only sporadic and unauthorized risings of tribesmen. Even when the Chinese troops were in possession of Chamdo and threatening an advance to Lhasa, and the Tibetan soldiery were drawn up only half a mile from them, the Dalai Lama did not encourage his soldiers to counter the Chinese troop's advancement. He wished to avoid a quarrel with China, whom Tibet, without resources or organization, was unable effectually to oppose.<sup>16</sup>

After the Younghusband Mission the Chinese regime changed the pattern of operating in traditional way with Tibet in which the Lhasa Ambans were not directly represented the Chinese Government in Peking this was in practice in the old patterns of Sino-Tibetan relationship. Henceforth, whatever they did or happened to them was soon reported to the British Minister in Peking and became by this means the concern as much of the British Foreign Office as of the Government of India and the Indian Office. Through them the political negotiations was conducted and this established the strong impression for China that in Central Tibet they assumed the greater part of the powers and advantages which the Lhasa Convention had conferred upon British India. The next move of the Chinese Government was to control eastern part of Tibet. In 1905 the Eastern Tibetan Policy came under the control of a Manchu General, Chao Erh Feng, who played important role in strengthening the Chinese military position not only in Eastern Tibet but also in Central Tibet during his five years of service in Tibet.<sup>17</sup>

In 1908 the Chinese troops made advance towards Tibet through the northern road from Tachienlu *via* Derge to Chamdo under the supervision of Chao Erh Feng who was Warden of the Tibetan Marches, taking with him force of specially enlisted Provincial troops, called the Hsi Chun, with a personal escort and some artillery, passed rapidly through the Horba country without interfering with the tribes till he reached the State of Derge. Chao Erh Feng seems to have been very secretive about his movements and to have been careful not to call attention to

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<sup>15</sup> NAI, FD, Secret-E, Proceedings, May 1913, File No. 261-502, Pro. No. 347, p. 57.

<sup>16</sup> Bell, *Tibet Past and Present*, p. 97.

<sup>17</sup> Lamb, *British India and Tibet*, pp. 272-275.

his contemplated move to Tibet by crossing the frontier in force. Chinese troops, however, appear to have been passed into Tibet in small bodies, without attracting much attention, and seem to have made their way to Lhasa, and to posts on the Lhasa-Chumbi road. By the autumn of 1909, the Chinese troops were strongly posted at Derge and Batang with a safe line of communication to Tachienlu, and were ready to advance across the frontier which they did accordingly. When Chao Erh Feng advanced to Chamdo<sup>18</sup> in the autumn of 1909, he met with no serious opposition from the Tibetans, probably partly owing to the fact that they were uncertain whether he would move from Derge or from Batang. His advance was made about the same time as the advance from Chengtu to Lhasa of the Expeditionary Force of modern trained troops (estimated at 2,000 including camp followers), under the command of Brigadier-General Chung Ying, and by the time Chung Ying's force had reached Chamdo, this State was in the hands of Chao Erh Feng. Chung Ying was thus able to push straight on to Lhasa during the winter of 1909-10 along the road *via* Shobando, Pemba and Lari, which seems to have been held by men pushed quietly on by Chao Erh Feng. After arrival in Lhasa in February the regular troops of his command appear to have been quartered approximately as follows<sup>19</sup>

**Table 3.1:** Chinese military force in Tibet

|                                  |                |                    |
|----------------------------------|----------------|--------------------|
|                                  | 1 battalion    | Lhasa-Chumbi road. |
| Infantry Regiment                | 1 battalion    | Kongbu district    |
|                                  | 1 battalion    | Lhasa              |
| Artillery, Cavalry and Engineers | Lhasa (mainly) |                    |

**Note:** The distribution of Chinese military force in Tibet. **Source:** NAI, FD, May 1913, File No. 261-502, Pro. No. 347

In 1910 the Chinese Government was planning for the deposition of the Dalai Lama from his political and religious position from Tibet during his exile. Hence, Chinese believed the status of the Dalai Lama was entirely the gift of the Emperor of China, that the latter could also

<sup>18</sup> Chamdo was a small city-state sort of place, with barely 84,000 families. It was the most important place between Ta-chien-lu and Lhasa. It did not form the part of the Lhasa territory, but had a Government on the Lhasa pattern. An incarnate Lama was the ruler and had three chief Lamas as his Ministers, all residing within an enormous monastery. It used to send a tribute to Peking every six years, but it did so because it received much more valuable gifts in return.

<sup>19</sup> NAI, FD, Secret-E, Proceedings, May 1913, File No. 261-502, Pro. No. 347, pp. 58-59.

deprive the Dalai Lama of the spiritual distinction.<sup>20</sup> On a previous occasion the Dalai Lama had been divested of his temporal power, which he had virtually forfeited by his flight from the country, but this time he was deposed from his spiritual office, and the announcement was made to find new successor. The National Assembly of Tibet claimed that China and Tibet were not in the position of suzerain and dependency, and that China had power neither to appoint nor dismiss a Dalai Lama. British Government was aware about the Chinese political move in Tibet and was sure that the Chinese Government was deliberately making its suzerainty over Tibet more effective.<sup>21</sup>

The presence of the Dalai Lama in India posed a problem for the British authorities and the agreement signed by the British with China and Russia which precluded the British Government from interfering in the internal administration of Tibet. However, the British Government accepted the deposition of the Dalai Lama by China and informed the Dalai Lama that British Government cannot interfere between them and the Chinese Government. Dalai Lama was then anticipated that the British policy of non-intervention would be abandoned. However, the British Government throughout 1910 declared neutrality regarding Tibet question. In late 1910 Charles Hardinge became the Viceroy and his approach towards the Tibet problem was essentially negative.<sup>22</sup> This gave blow to Dalai Lama hopes of developing strong ties with the British against the Chinese.

The Chao Erh Feng's effective administration in the Marches of Eastern Tibet between the years 1906 and 1911 is described by the Harold Porter Esq., His Britannic Majesty's Acting Consul-General, Chengtu, in his memorandum to J. N. Jordan, British minister in Peking, where he expressed "the era of Chao Erh Feng's in Tibet. Prior to the year 1904 the boundary between Tibet and Szechuan was situated at Ning Ching Shan, close to Pang Mu Tang, three and-a-half days journey from west of Batang. A stone pillar was erected at spot in the region of the Emperor Yung Cheng (1723-1736). In the autumn of 1906 Chao Erh Feng was appointed Warden of the marches of Szechuan and Yunnan. At that date the boundaries of the Marches extended from

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<sup>20</sup> The appointment of a Dalai Lama is not, and never has been selected by the Emperor of China. The Dalai Lama was elected by lamas at Lhasa. The golden urn which China lung presented to Lhasa in 1793, and prescribed to be used in selecting the new Dalai Lama by lottering in the presence of the Amban, in the hope of controlling the nomination seems only to have been used once out of five times. The 13<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama was selected by the *Nechung oracle* at Lhasa without regard to Chinese wishes.

<sup>21</sup> Suchita Ghosh, *Tibet in Sino-Indian Relations 1899-1914*, New Delhi, Sterling Publishers, 1977, pp. 101-107.

<sup>22</sup> Ghosh *Tibet in Sino-Indian*, pp. 108-113.



Tachienlu in the province of Szechuan on the east to Chiamdo on the west and from Yunnan on the south to Kokonor and Kansu on the north.”<sup>23</sup>

Although Chinese suzerainty over Tibet, including the border districts, dates from the year 1720, when Lhasa was first occupied and guards stationed at all the principal places among the main road from Tachienlu to keep the lines of communication open, no attempt to administer any of the territory was made until after the British expedition to Lhasa in 1903 had given China cause to fear the possibility of losing her paramount position in Tibet. The first move in the direction of strengthening her hold on the frontier districts was made in 1904 when the territory of the king of Chala, of which Tachienlu, a town occupied by a Chinese garrison since 1700, was the capital, was incorporated into the province of Szechuan. In the year 1905 the tribes in the Marches revolted and Feng Ch’uan, the new Assistant Amban on his way to Tibet was killed at Batang. His murder was due to the resentment that he had aroused among the lamas and tribesmen by the drastic measures of reform which he sought to impose with a view to reducing the powers of the lamas and native chiefs and increasing Chinese authority in the tribal districts. Hsi-Liang, viceroy of Szechuan, despatched a punitive expedition under General Ma Wei-chi and Taotais Chao Erh Feng and Ch’ien Hsi-pao which succeeded in its object. Chao after the appointment as the Warden of the Marches of Szechuan and Yunnan he proceeded to bring a large part of this area into subjection during his three years campaigning from 1906 to 1909, and established Chinese administration in exchange for the former rule of the native chiefs in the following fourteen places:-<sup>24</sup>

- 1) K’ang T’ing Fu – Formerly called Tachienlu and the seat of the Ming Cheng T’u-ssu (King of Chala). This district was formally made a part of the Marches under Chinese jurisdiction in 1904.
- 2) Li Hua T’ing – Formerly called Litang and the seat of the Litan T’u-ssu. It was incorporated into the Marches in 1904. In 1906 the territory was taken out of the jurisdiction of the T’u-ssu and regular Chinese official jurisdiction substituted.
- 3) Ho K’ou Hsien – Formerly the area intervening between the territories of the Litang and Chala T’u-ssu. Chinese official jurisdiction substituted in 1906 and district created a

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<sup>23</sup>NAI, FD, Secret-E, Proceedings, May, 1913, File No. 261-502, Pro. no. 275, No.98, dated Chengtu, the 26 November 1912, pp. 7-8.

<sup>24</sup> NAI, FD, Secret-E, Proceedings, May, 1913, File No. 261-502, Pro. no.275, pp. 2-4.

“Hsien” in 1908. In the summer of 1911 this district was given jurisdiction over part of the territories of the Ch’ung Hsi and Chala T’u-ssu.

- 4) Ting Hsiang Hsien – Formerly under the jurisdiction of the Litang T’u-ssu. The old name of the territory was Hsiang Ch’eng and it was under the independent jurisdiction of a T’u-ssu who refused allegiance. Chinese jurisdiction was substituted in 1906 and the name changed to Ting Hsiang Hsien. In 1907 the district paid land tax.
- 5) Tao Ch’eng Hsien –Formerly Tao Pa under the Litang T’u-ssu placed under the Chinese jurisdiction in 1906 and land tax collected in 1907.
- 6) Kung Ka Ling, a sub-district – Formerly under the Litang T’u-ssu placed under Chinese jurisdiction in 1906 and made a sub-district of Tao Ch’eng Hsien.
- 7) Pa An Fu – Formerly Batang under the Batang T’u-ssu. Placed under Chinese jurisdiction in 1906 and land tax collected.
- 8) San Pa T’ing – Formerly territory lying between Litang and Batang districts. Placed under Chinese jurisdiction in 1906. Was given jurisdiction over Mao-ya and Ch’u teng in 1908.
- 9) Yen Ching Hsien – Formerly under the Batang T’u-ssu. Placed under the Chinese jurisdiction and paid land tax in 1906. Name changed to Yen Ching Hsien in 1908.
- 10) T’eng K’o Fu – Formerly in Derge jurisdiction. Placed under Chinese jurisdiction in 1909 and paid land tax. Given joint jurisdiction over territory of Ch’ung K’o and a partial jurisdiction over territories of Kao-jih and Ling Tsung T’u-ssu.
- 11) Te Hau Chou – Formerly formed the central portion of Derge territory. Placed under Chinese jurisdiction and paid land tax in 1909.
- 12) Shih Ch’u Hsien – Formerly formed the northern part of Derge territory. Placed under Chinese jurisdiction and paid land tax in 1909. Has also partial jurisdiction over territory of Kao-jih. The remaining portion adjoins the Hsining district of Kansu province.
- 13) T’ung P’u Hsien – Formerly formed the western section of the Derge territory. Placed under Chinese jurisdiction and paid land tax in 1909. In 1911 given partial jurisdiction over territory of the Chiamdo Hutukhtu and over Na-To territory.
- 14) Pai Yu Chou – Formerly also Derge territory. Placed under Chinese jurisdiction and paid land tax in 1909.

There seems to be no doubt that the Chinese jurisdiction was established in these places on the different dates mentioned. The important point is that how far the Chinese administration was effective. Some of the official contemporary reports bear out the supposition that an effective administration was exercised in the majority of these districts. Chinese colonisation which Chao himself saw was the proper remedy and the only hope of retaining a permanent hold on the territory or of reaping any profit out of the enterprise, proved a failure under the heavy pecuniary inducements offered. The respectable Szechuan farmer refused to leave his fertile plain and equable climate for the rigours of the Tibetan uplands.<sup>25</sup>

Chao Erh Feng was strongly supported by his brother, Chao-erh-Sun, the Viceroy of Szechuan, continued subduing the semi-independent tribes of the Szechuan-Tibet border, and in raising the troops under his command to a high pitch of efficiency, entered Tibet at the head of a considerable force, nominally as reinforcement for the Amban's guard. He met with little organized resistance, and in due course reached Lhasa, from which the Dalai Lama fled a few days before his arrival. From this time the Chinese influence in Tibet was steadily strengthened and extended, the principal towns were garrisoned by Chinese troops.<sup>26</sup> Chao Erh Feng's troops were provincial troops of Ssuchuan, but appear to have had some training on modern lines. They are generally reported to be good fighting material. They do not appear to have been necessarily natives of Ssuchuan province, in fact the Ssuchuan Hsun Fang Tui are stated to have been recruited from Anhui and other provinces.<sup>27</sup> The number of troops under Chao Erh Feng's command seems to have varied greatly at different periods of the operations, and the estimates given differ considerably. M. Bons d'Anty, writing in October 1910, gives their numbers at about 6,200 and their general distribution approximately as below —<sup>28</sup>

**Table 3.2:** Chao Erh Feng troops in Tibet

|                                 |               |                |                                               |
|---------------------------------|---------------|----------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| Hsin Chun Hsun Fang.            | H.-Q. Batang. | Strength 1,600 | Stationed at Litang, Batang, Hsiangcheng, &c. |
| His Chun, Escort and Artillery. | H.-Q. Chamdo. | Strength 3,000 | Stationed at Chamdo, Draya, Derge, &c.        |

<sup>25</sup> NAI, FD, Secret-E, Proceedings, May, 1913, File No. 261-502, Pro. no.275, pp. 3-4.

<sup>26</sup> A.G. Noorani, *India-China Boundary Problem 1846-1947 History and Diplomacy*, New Delhi, OUP, 2011, p. 175.

<sup>27</sup> NAI, FD, Secret-E, Proceedings, May 1913, File No 261-502, Pro. No. 347, p. 59.

<sup>28</sup> NAI, FD, Secret-E, Proceedings, May 1913, File No 261-502, Pro. No. 347, p. 60.

|           |               |                |                                                                                       |
|-----------|---------------|----------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Hsun Fang | H.-Q. Kantse. | Strength 1,600 | Stationed on the lines of communication from Derge to Batang, and Derge to Tachienlu. |
|-----------|---------------|----------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

**Note:** Chao Erh Feng troops in Tibet, information provided by M.Bons d'Anty writings. Source: NAI, FD, May 1913, File No. 261-502, Pro. No. 347

**Table 3.3:** The troops in the Tibetan Marches

|                                            |       |
|--------------------------------------------|-------|
| With Chao Erh Feng, 3 days north of Batang | 1,600 |
| Garrisons at –                             |       |
| Chamdo                                     | 80    |
| Zayul district, &c. (H.-Q. Chikung)        | 440   |
| Yakalo                                     | 100   |
| Hsiangcheng, Taopa & Kungkaling            | 320   |
| Batang                                     | 500   |
| Litang                                     | 100   |
| Tachienlu                                  | 60    |
| Total                                      | 3,200 |

**Note:** On the other hand, the troops in the Tibetan Marches are given as only 3,200 by Captain F. M. Bailey, who travelled in the Marches in the summer of 1911, quartered approximately as below. Many of these troops were stated to be distributed in small detachments. Source: NAI, FD, Secret-E, Proceedings, May 1913, File No 261-502, Pro. No. 347, p. 60.

The outbreak of the Revolution in October 1911,<sup>29</sup> and its rapid progress, had a direct result on the relations between China and Tibet, Szechwan had for months before the outbreak been in a state bordering on insurrection, arising partly out of dissatisfaction with the Government's railway programme. The viceroy Chao Erh-hsun was replaced by his brother Chao Erh-feng, who was besieged in Chengtu and eventually murder there. Chao Erh-feng's place as Amban to Lhasa was taken by Chung Ying, who was virtually cut off in Lhasa. The outlying garrisons of Chinese in Tibet were obliged to lay down their arms and in some cases accepted safe-conduct back to China. The Amban's garrison in Lhasa itself was being besieged by a force of Tibetans said to number 20,000 and had to surrender. For the time being China could do nothing to help either him or her isolated forces along the Marches. When the first phase of the Revolution had closed with the appointment of Yuan Shik-k'ai as President, a Presidential Mandate was issued dealing with the status of what had previously been regarded as

<sup>29</sup> In October 1911, the revolution led by Sun Yat-sen overthrew the Manchus in China. When this news reached Lhasa, the member of the Ko-lao-hui mutinied. Ko-lao-hui, a secret society of revolutionists formed because of rivalry among the Chinese soldiers and the insufficiency of their pay in Tibet. In Shakabpa, *Tibet A Political*, p. 238.

dependencies. In future, they were to be regarded as integral part of the Republic their administration reorganized on the normal provincial system, and thus he brought more fully into the general political, administrative, economic and national life of the Republic of Five Races. This proclamation had the unexpected result of bringing forth a note of protest from the British authorities. This dispatch was dated the 17 August 1912. And the Dalai Lama returned in January 1913, a month after the remnants of the Chinese garrison had left. The Chinese replied to the dispatch of the British 17<sup>th</sup> August which emphasized the necessity under which China felt herself of maintaining troops in Tibet to preserve order, and referred the British authorities back to the Treaty of 1906. Communications back and forth during the greater part of 1913 seemed to lead nowhere, so it was arranged that a conference, at which Great Britain, Tibet and China should all be represented and should take place at Simla.<sup>30</sup> China deliberately was refuting memorandum of 17<sup>th</sup> August, or of their nominally accepting it, and at the same time of Chinese continuing their advance into Tibet with or without the sanction of the Central Government. Our present uncompromising line in either case commits us to direct negotiations with Lhasa and possibly to the despatch into Tibet of troops to resist Chinese re-occupation.<sup>31</sup>

The fall of the monarchical rule in China happened with tremendous effectiveness of foreign powers interest over China. The Ch'ing emperors' great achievement had been assert their central power over the arid peripheral regions of Manchuria, Mongolia, Sinkiang and Tibet as well as over the heartland so densely populated by the Han Chinese. In all these regions of Inner Asia, Ch'ing rule had been set up by warfare and was maintained by garrisons. In Tibet-Mongolia the Ch'ing emperors patronized the heads of the Lamaist Church. The Ch'ing empire, like Ch'ing rule over China, was sustained by intricate and sophisticated system of checks and balances between, for example, the local chieftains, ecclesiastics and tribal princes on the one hand and the central government generals and administrators on the other, between religious and civil elites within the local scene, between the military and civilian officials of the Ch'ing central government, and between local trade revenues and military expenditures. The empire began to fall apart only when international trade, backed by foreign military power, increased on the frontiers. The commercial, political and military advance of the tsarist Russian empires on

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<sup>30</sup> NAI, F&P, File No. 1-X (Secret) of 1934, Serial Nos. 1-268, S. No.70, pp. 53-54.

<sup>31</sup> NAI, FD, Secret-E, Proceedings, May, 1913, File No. 261-502, Pro. no. 272, Telegram dated the 16 January 1913, from the Viceroy, Delhi, to Secretary of State for India, London, p. 5.

China's north and west and of the French and British empires on China's south and south-east is one of the best-known sagas of imperialism in the nineteenth century. Soon Japan encroached upon the east and the north-east.<sup>32</sup>

The evacuation of the Chinese enabled the Dalai Lama to proceed as far as Samding Monastery where he remained until the last Chinese had been expelled from Tibet and arrived in Lhasa in January 1913.<sup>33</sup> According to the report of the British officer it was reported that "the last of the Chinese troops with General Chung will have finally left Tibet in a few days time, unless something untoward happens, and Tibet will for the moment be free from all Chinese interference. On the Eastern Marches, it is true, a Chinese force have been endeavoring since July (1913) last to re-conquer the districts subjugated by Chao Erh Feng, but as yet without any decisive results. For the time being the severity of the climate has stopped Chinese military activity on that side. As far as our information goes the Chinese have apparently more or less\*(\*From Chengtu reports their positions is a somewhat precarious one) established themselves as far as Chiamdo on the north, but have done nothing in Pomed, Zayul or Markham in the south-eastern corner of Tibet. Indeed from a recent Assam report it appears that the massacre of the Chinese garrison at Rima finally cleared the Chinese out of that quarter. It can roughly be say that the exception of Chiamdo, Tibet proper is, for the first time since the beginning of Chinese domination, absolutely free from the presence of Chinese troops or Chinese interference. This fact must be a valuable asset in negotiation and strengthens our position considerably."<sup>34</sup>

Dalai Lama indicated the British Government of India on different occasions that Tibet will cut-off all the political and diplomatic ties with China, and after reaching Lhasa he issued what the Tibetans regard as a declaration for independence.<sup>35</sup> His departure from British India was in one way a great relief to Lord Hardinge's Government.<sup>36</sup> Tibet after the departure of the Chinese force was again free to pursue an independent foreign policy and the British

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<sup>32</sup> John K. Fairbank & Albert Feuerwerker (ed.), *The Cambridge History Of China, Vol. 13, Republican China 1912-1949*, Part 2, London, Cambridge University Press, 1986, pp. 74-75.

<sup>33</sup> David Macdonald, *Twenty Years in Tibet*, Philadelphia, J.B. Lippincott Company, 1932, p. 114.

<sup>34</sup> NAI, FD, Secret-E, Proceedings, May, 1913, File No. 261-502, p. 1

<sup>35</sup> Alex McKay, *Tibet and the British Raj; The Frontier Cadre 1904-1947*, Dharamsala, Library of Tibetan Works & Archives, 2009, p. 62.

<sup>36</sup> Alastair Lamb, *The McMahon Line A Study in the Relations between India China and Tibet, 1904 to 1914; Hardinge, McMahon and the Simla Conference*, vol.2, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1966, p. 377.

administrators in India were thinking that the secret relations might develop between Tibet-Russia like during the time of Lord Curzon. This doubt became clearer when Dorjiev came to receive Dalai Lama in Phari on his return journey to Tibet from exile.<sup>37</sup>

In the telegram dated 13 January 1913, from the Political Officer in Sikkim, to the Foreign Secretary, Delhi. In this telegram the officer had put forward his opinion on the Question of Tibet. "Russia is drawing nearer Tibet and may later on acquire a hold over Tibet by arrangement with China giving a *quid pro quo* to latter elsewhere. That Russia will always be scrupulous in observing her treaties with us cannot be assumed. Russia and China might agree upon united action against us in direction of India. We should bring Tibet definitely within our sphere now that Russian Government has advanced in Mongolia. We should do this recognising the autonomy of Tibet under suzerainty of Chinese, excluding Chinese colonists and Chinese troops, except the 300 Chinese troops at Lhasa. A British representative should be stationed at Lhasa having an escort of 300 troops. Tibetans would welcome such an arrangement with enthusiasm and would be of great assistance to us in maintaining it. Above all things Tibetans want to be permitted to manage their affairs peacefully; British representative will be able to check both Chinese intrigues and those of Russians, and to protect British interests in Tibet generally and to maintain personal relation with Tibetan Government. Russian influence at Lhasa and in Tibet generally is bound to increase at our expenses unless we take action on lines indicated above as there are many Mongolian in Lhasa and elsewhere in Tibet holding high positions. Idea of Russia's power will be magnified by these people as also will her sympathy for lamaist religion. Chinese believes that without stationing in Tibet considerable numbers of troops they cannot enforce their treaty obligations towards British Government in respect of Tibet. The answer to this is that the treaties were never worse observed than recently when the Chinese were in control of Tibet. For instance, a trade monopoly was started at instigation of a former Amban name Chang Yin Tang and this monopoly reduced very largely the trade between Tibet and India. Also the Tibetan officials at Shigatse, Gyantse and elsewhere were forbidden by Chinese officials to communicate with our officials and this violated Article XII of Tibet Trade Regulations of 1908."<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Lamb, *The McMahon Line*, vol.2, p. 378.

<sup>38</sup> NAI, FD, Secret-E, Proceedings, May, 1913, File No. 261-502, Pro. no. 267, Telegram P., No. 7 S., dated the 13 January 1913, from the Political Officer in Sikkim, to the Foreign Secretary, Delhi, pp. 3-4.

In 1912 when the Chinese position in Central Tibet was crumbling with the political disruption in China after the fall of Qing dynasty the British Government did not intended for intervention or establishing a British presence at Lhasa upon the disintegration of the Chinese position in Tibet. The important factor that made British to re-think about gaining control during 1912-13 in Lhasa was the Russia expansion in the east. The British were united, however, regarding the need to keep Russia out of Tibet. The revived problem of a Russian menace in Central Asia was the primary reason for the British to exert pressure on China to attend a conference at Simla, where the British was planning to redefined the status of Tibet. British main interest of their foreign policy in Asia during the last years before World War I was its loss of potency to take actions to secure British interest.<sup>39</sup> The uncertain foreign policy of the British toward Tibet gave opportunity to the Chinese regime to intervene militarily into Tibet.

The Dalai Lama telegraphed to the President at the end of the year as follows “The Republic has only just been proclaimed and the national foundations are far from strong. It behoves the President to exert his energies towards the maintenance of order. As for Tibet, the Tibetans are quite capable of preserving their existence intact and there is no occasion for the President to worry himself at this distance or to be discomposed. The reason why the Tibetans do not approve of the Central Government is entirely due to the excessive ill-treatment inflicted upon them by the Chinese troops in Tibet. Their indignation has been roused. How many, to take an instance, of the temples and shrines have been set on fire or demolished by the Chinese troops, while the officers in command have been quite powerless! How could the Tibetans fail to oppose China?”<sup>40</sup> If the outbreak of the Chinese Revolution would have not occurred than both Central and Eastern Tibet would almost certainly have been absorbed into the structure of Chinese provincial administration, and the British probably would have had to face the confrontation with China in the northern frontiers.<sup>41</sup>

### **Nepal intervene in Tibet-China crisis**

The Chinese military could not hold out for long in Lhasa due to lack of reinforcement and supplies which made impossible for their troops to continue military operation upon the

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<sup>39</sup> Ira Klein, ‘The Anglo-Russia Convention and the Problem of Central Asia 1907-1914,’ *Journal of British Studies*, Nov., 1971, Vol. 11, No. 1 (Nov., 1971), pp.126-47 <https://www.jstor.org/stable/175041> accessed on 23-05-2023.

<sup>40</sup> NAI, FD, Secret-E, Proceedings, May 1913, File No 261-502, Pro. No. 349, p. 75.

<sup>41</sup> Lamb, *The McMahon Line*, vol. 1, p. 196.



Tibetans. In this situation they contacted the Tibetan War Department through the Nepalese representative and offered to surrender. The Chinese officials informed the Lhasa authority to send their representatives at the time of surrender. The Dalai Lama sent Lonchen Changkhyim, Sera Mey Tsawa Tritrul, and Tsedron Tenzing Gyaltzen to Lhasa to accept the surrender and to conduct negotiations, and the talks began in the presence of the Nepalese representative.<sup>42</sup> H.L. Showers, Officiating Resident in Nepal writes on the subject of affairs in Tibet to the Secretary of the Government of India in the foreign department, that a copy of telegram was received by the Prime Minister of Nepal from the Chinese officials in Lhasa. In this telegram dated the 22<sup>nd</sup> August 1912, the Chinese official Minister Lien Yu and Lieutenant-General Chin Yin has thanked the Prime Minister of Nepal for his assistance in Tibet. They wrote that mediation has been successful and the peace being restored we are grateful for your favorable attitude. The Gurkha officers who have assisted us in bringing about the reconciliation are –<sup>43</sup>

- 1) Captain (Major) Jit Bahadur who is a good officer;
- 2) Lieutenant Lal Bahadur who is brave and loyal and who has given us much practical assistance;
- 3) Ditha Kula Partap knows law well and he too has helped in the work of reconciliation;
- 4) Subadar Rana Gambir Singh knows Tibetan well and all about everything in Tibet. Therefore his skilful help has been most valuable.

The Prime Minister of Nepal Chandra Shumshere Jung Bahadur Rana, writes to the Resident of Nepal, about the news from Lhasa concerning the *peace settlement* between the Chinese and the Tibetans, and enclosed a translation of a letter from Major Jit Bahadur on the subject. He also received a telegram from Lieutenant Lal Bahadur, dated Lhasa, the 7<sup>th</sup> Bhadra, which states that on the 5<sup>th</sup> Bhadra, the Chinese and the Tibetans having stored the arms at Hyapsi and ammunition at Dhuring and placed the same under the seal and signature of the three parties in the custody of the Gurkhas, I, with 1 officer, 4 soldiers and 20 of our mongrels, am guarding the Hyapsi and have deputed 1 officer with 4 soldiers and 10 of our mongrels to guard Dhuring. Bahadur have issued an order to fire and kill any Chinese or Tibetan soldiers should they come to use force at those places and have informed of it to the Chinese, and the Tibetan

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<sup>42</sup> Shakabpa, *Tibet A Political*, pp. 243-245.

<sup>43</sup> NAI, FD, Secret-E, February 1913, File No. 170-509, Pro. No. 171, telegram dated the 22 August 1912, from Chinese official to Nepal Prime Minister, p. 89.

officer who concurring with the appropriateness of the order have promised to issue strict orders to their respective soldiers not to go to those places under any circumstances, with also this warning that in case anybody did so they would be fired at and killed by the Gurkha guards.<sup>44</sup>

The Nepalese merchants in Tibet had suffered considerable financial loss during this period due to a confrontation between Tibetan and Chinese. The Nepalese, too, were urging for the peace settlements between these two powers. The authorities in Kathmandu had more than once indicated that it would be willing to send its army into Tibet to restore order, a plan which caused much anxiety to the British Government of India. Hence, the British advised the Nepal Government through Lieutenant-Colonel Showers that the Durbar should attempt, through its representative in Tibet, to mediate between the Tibetan and Chinese. Accordingly, the British India Government decided to act as the mediator in the crisis, for this purpose Laden La, Superintendent of Darjeeling Police was selected as a trusted native agent who will be sent to Lhasa and persuade the Chinese to surrender. Lord Hardinge justified Laden La's deputation by pointing out to his masters in London the steadily increasing urgency of the Tibetan situation. The Nepalese, he said, were becoming more and more bellicose; and they were now declaring that, whatever the outcome of the struggle between the Chinese and the Tibetans, they would demand compensation for the losses suffered by their subjects, and that, if need be, they would use their army to exact payment. The longer the fighting in Lhasa continued, the harder it would be to restrain the Nepalese.<sup>45</sup>

In the translation letter of Major Jit Bahadur, dated Lhasa, the 30 Sravan 1969 (13 August 1912), it is known that "under his efforts the peace between the Chinese and the Tibetans was made. In his personal correspondence with the Regent Thirring Pochhe Lama on various days and with Dhuik Chhembu and Magantwaba who were acting as the Kazis of the Kasyal, and also with the Bada Kazi and the incarnate Lama of Chha who was sent up by the Dalai Lama to act on his behalf and tried to impress upon them the advisability of coming to an early settlement. Lieutenant Lal Bahadur was doing the same on the Chinese side. On the 26<sup>th</sup> Sravan, Jit Bahadur visited the incarnate Lama of Chha, the said Lama sent a letter to the Amba and Tung Thonlin

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<sup>44</sup> NAI, FD, Secret-E, February 1913, File No. 170-509, Pro. No. 172, Letter from the Resident in Nepal, No.116, dated the 3 September 1912, forwarding copy of a letter from the Prime Minister of Nepal Sir Chandra Shumshere Jung Bahadur Rana, with enclosure regarding the conclusion of peace between the Tibetans and Chinese at Lhasa and the custody of the arms and ammunition surrendered by the Chinese, p. 190.

<sup>45</sup> Lamb, *The McMahon Line*, vol.2, pp. 374-377.

proposing a conference between the Chinese and the Tibetans on the maiden near Lubhusinga to discuss a settle terms of peace on the lines suggested in the reply letter from the Dalai Lama to the Chinese. The next day Lieutenant Lal Bahadur came to me to say that the Amba and Tung Thonlin had requested us to arrange for an armistice and settle the preliminaries of the conference. Accordingly, Jit Bahadur and others went to Potala to speak on the subject with the incarnate Lama of Chha and other Tibetan officials who were there. We talked over the matter with them and it was decided that the conference should be held the very next day at 1 o'clock in the afternoon, though the Tibetans thought the day to be not very auspicious for the purpose. Two days armistice was also arranged commencing from 6 o'clock the next morning. The conference met on the 13<sup>th</sup> Sraavan Badi and held its sittings on a grassy plain near Lubhusinga. On the first meeting, after the exchange of courtesies or enquires about mutual health was finished among those present and they were seated in accordance with their respective ranks or positions, the incarnate Lama of Chha, who represented the Dalai Lama, together with Tenjin Chhyanjen, the Dungen of the Potala, spoke to the seven Chinese officers present, including Haye Tarhin and Tang Kwangthay who represented the Amba. Dalai Lama the incarnation of the 'Chyangrasi' was ever anxious that such a thing or calamity should never befall on living beings yet impelled by the force of destiny as there has been so much fighting between China and Tibet resulting in so much harm and immense sufferings on all living creatures and the Amba and Tung Thonlin to actuated by the same sympathetic feelings for the living beings have, with a view to bring about an amicable settlement, sent in a *wangsew* (memorandum) accepting the three terms proposed by Dalai Lama. According the wishes of the Dalai Lama and Chinese officers the agreement was concluded in which a resolution was passed by both side agreeing to an armistice commencing from 6 o'clock this morning till 6 o'clock the day after tomorrow on the understanding that neither side would act on the aggressive unless compelled to do so by the aggressive actions of the other side and the all the arms stored in the house as agreed in the *wangsew*. The Chinese officers said that, unless the other side acting aggressively fired on them (the Chinese), the latter too would not open fire. The selecting of a house wherein to keep the arms should be given to the Gurkha officers and both Tibetan and Chinese officials agreed to this statement. It was decided under the supervision of Gurkha officers that all the arms and ammunition shall be kept separately at Hyapsi, Langton and Dhuring under the seals of the

Chinese, the Tibetans and the intermediary.”<sup>46</sup> Chinese soldiers were not happy at the prospect of leaving their weapons in Lhasa, even though the Nepalese representatives, Lal Bahadur, pledged that the Tibetans would not be allowed to make use of them. In the end, while leaving their rifles and ammunition, they retained the bolts to their arms, thus making the weapons quite useless and this caused the Tibetans considerable annoyance.<sup>47</sup>

Chinese also proposed the other terms during the discussion that the Tibetans would provide funds to defray the cost of Chinese withdrawal to India and the safety of the Chinese during their withdrawal should be guaranteed by the Nepal. The other development in the peace settlement happened was that both the parties will for short duration agreed to a cease-fire, and they would vacate the monasteries which then occupied, the Tibetan forces leaving Sera and Gaden and the Chinese giving up Tengyeling. Chinese subjects remaining in Lhasa, such as Chinese traders, would be guaranteed the protection of the Tibetan authorities so long as they obey Tibetan laws. The British Government in India welcomed this move made by Tibetans and Chinese in the proposed agreement. The arrangements for the evacuation of the Lhasa garrison through India to China and other Chinese forces in Tibet were already made by the Indian Government.<sup>48</sup>

In early September 1912 Chung Ying received orders from Peking appointing him Amban (or its Republican equivalent) at Lhasa in place of Lien Yu. Chung Ying was instructed to remain in the Tibetan capital, while Lien Yu was told to return to China. He contrived to keep part of his force with him and to get some support by playing on local rivalries. The downfall of Chinese power in Central Tibet was soon followed by attacks on Chinese garrisons in the many states of East Tibet which had been subordinate Chao Erh Feng. The Chinese invasion of 1910 marked as the turning point in the relations between China and Tibet and also marks a break with previous Chinese policy.<sup>49</sup> In 11 January 1913, A. H. Grant, Esq, C.I.E., Deputy Secretary to the Government of India in the Foreign Department, in his note asked a question that “what do we want in Tibet? And his answer was that we do not want Tibet ourselves. To establish a protectorate over it formally to annex it would enormously increase our responsibilities and

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<sup>46</sup> NAI, FD, Secret-E, February 1913, File No. 170-509, Enclo. 2, Pro. No.172, pp. 90-94.

<sup>47</sup> Lamb, *The McMahon Line*, vol. 2, p. 380.

<sup>48</sup> Lamb, *The McMahon Line*, vol. 2, p. 379.

<sup>49</sup> Hugh E. Richardson, *Tibet and its History*, Boston, Shambhala Publications, 1984, pp. 97-102.

expenditure without any corresponding advantage. All we want in Tibet is a reasonably friendly Government who will not interfere with our frontier or with our comparatively insignificant trade interests. It is admitted that Tibetans are incapable of maintaining their own independence, to attempt to allow them to do so would be to create a political vacuum with the result that another Power or Powers would at once step in. Accepting, therefore, the premise that there must be some suzerain power in Tibet and that we do not wish to be suzerain power ourselves, it remains to consider what power can most conveniently to us be allowed these suzerain rights. There are only three Powers in the field Russia, China, and Nepal. As regards Russia, it is out of the question to contemplate for a moment inviting Russia to assume this position on our borders. The whole object of the Anglo-Russian Convention as regards Tibet has been to exclude Russian interference in this quarter. As regards Nepal we obviously could not encourage her to assume the position of suzerain over Tibet without a revision of the Anglo-Russian Convention which binds Russia and British India to respect the integrity of Tibet, moreover the relation of Nepal to British puts Nepal equally out of the question. Nor would Nepal herself desire such a consummation. British were therefore come into conclusion that the only Power who can conveniently to ourselves exercise suzerain rights in Tibet is, as heretofore, China.”<sup>50</sup> Chung Ying’s departure from Tibet marked the end of that Chinese military domination over Tibetan land which had begun in February 1910 when Chao Erh Feng launched military attacked in Tibet.<sup>51</sup> Hence, the Chinese influence in Tibet remained silent until it again invaded in the mid-twentieth century.

### **Tibet-Mongolia Agreement and its impact on the British India policy towards Tibet**

Shortly after his return to Lhasa, the 13<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama of Tibet issued a proclamation to all his officials and subjects throughout the Tibet. He believed that the China-Tibet relationship was based on the ‘*patron-priest*’ and had not been based on the subordination of one to the other. The Dalai Lama in his independence declaration has mostly noted that the Tibetans should follow proper path of faith and justice in their service to the nation, but Dalai Lama did not talked about any type of full political independence of Tibet. However, before one month Dalai Lama’s proclamation an agreement was signed between Tibet-Mongolia.<sup>52</sup> The British Government were

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<sup>50</sup> NAI, FD, Secret-E, Proceedings, May, 1913, File No. 261-502, p. 2

<sup>51</sup> Lamb, *The McMahon Line*, vol. 2, p. 385.

<sup>52</sup> Shakabpa, *Tibet A Political*, pp. 246-250.

not pleased when they found out that Tibet and Russia-dominated Mongolia had subsequently agreed a mutual-aid treaty in which each recognized the other's independence.<sup>53</sup> In Grand Hotel, Calcutta 7 January 1913, Mons. C. Nabokoff, Consul- General for Russia at Calcutta wrote to the Lieutenant-Colonel A.H. McMahon, Secretary to the Government of India in the Foreign Department, that "several newspapers have reproduced a telegram published by the Russian daily 'Novoe Vremia' and commented upon the telegram in the usual manner stating that the Buriat Dorjief was approaching the Russian Government with a scheme of joint protectorate of Great Britain and Russia over Tibet. I am instructed by the Russian Foreign Office to offer a categorical denial of these rumours which are absolutely unfounded. The question had never arisen. The statement in the Novoe Vremia and commented on by various English papers to the effect that the Buriat Dorjief was approaching the Russian Government with a scheme for a joint protectorate of Great Britain and Russia over Tibet is absolutely without foundation. It is understood that the Russian Foreign Office have categorically denied the statement."<sup>54</sup> The Dorjief had a strong presence in Tibet, Mongolia and Russia during this time.

Mongolia and Tibet, having freed themselves from the Dynasty of the Manchus and separated from China, have formed their own independent States and having in view that both States from time immemorial have professed one and the same religion, with a view to strengthening their historic and mutual friendship the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Nikta Biliktu Da-Lama Rabdan and the Assistant Minister-General and Manlai baatyr beiseh Damdin surun, as plenipotentiaries of the government of the ruler of the Mongol people, and gudjir tsanshib kanchen Lubsan-Agvan, donir Agvan Choinzin, Director of the Bank Ishichjamtsu, and the clerk Gendun Galsan, as plenipotentiaries of the Dalai Lama, the ruler of Tibet, have made the agreement.<sup>55</sup> According to Agvan Dorjief that the initiative in the matter of the agreement comes from the Dalai Lama who has always striven for a spiritual and political union of two countries of one race and faith and feeling in equal degree the weight of Chinese Sovereignty.<sup>56</sup>

The Dalai Lama has repudiated the suzerainty of China by making an alliance with a Foreign State without the sanction of the Chinese Government. For Mongolia, since Russo-

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<sup>53</sup> McKay, *Tibet and the British Raj*, pp. 62-63.

<sup>54</sup> NAI, FD, Secret-External, Proceedings, July 1913, File No. 199-239, p. 1.

<sup>55</sup> NAI, FD, Secret, Proceedings, July 1913, File No. 199-239, Pro. no. 217, p. 6.

<sup>56</sup> NAI, FD, Secret, Proceedings, July 1913, File no. 199-239, Pro. no. 217, p. 7.

Mongolia Treaty, must be regarded as outside the Chinese Republic. This somewhat complicates the situation, as acknowledgement of the suzerain powers of China over Tibet is the *basis* of our Memorandum of the 17 August 1912 to China. The position is extraordinary. China claims both suzerain and sovereign rights over Tibet and the British thinks that she has merely suzerain rights and the Dalai Lama denies that she has either. There is nothing to be done at present, and Dalai Lama has complicated the situation by an alliance that can be of no practical value, and which in the end will have to be annulled unless the British are forced into the position of helping Tibet to throw off the Chinese yoke altogether.<sup>57</sup> A. H. McMahon writes dated 8 February 1913 that this is the handiwork of our friend Mr. Dorjiew who we heard of recently at Urga. There is a further danger in the new complication owing to the recent understanding between Russia and Mongolia, Russia will doubtless associate herself with any agreements which Mongolia makes with Tibet.<sup>58</sup>

The new factor which has been introduced into the Tibet question i.e., the recent Tibetan and Mongolia Agreement effected by Dorjiew and now in the hands of the Russian Government is a most important one. The agreement provides for an open door into Tibet for interchange of Tibetan and Mongolia trade. The importance of this lies in the protocol of the Russo-Mongolian Agreement of 21 October 1912, which practically took all intents and proposes hands over Mongolia trade to Russian hands. It contains mutual recognition of each State by other and provides for development of trade relations and advancement and spread of Buddhism. Dorjiew's mission is still undefined. All he is willing to say is that he is charged to ascertain views of Russia, on certain questions concerning Mongolia and Tibet. "Novoe Vremya" understands that Dorjiew is charged to seek Russia's attitude mediation to reconcile Britain and Tibet in consequence of Tibetan resentment of Britain's attitude towards relations between China and Tibet. "Times" correspondent continues "Russia fully understands Britain's attitude to Tibet, and it is declared that Russia does not desire to create for herself interests in Tibet on ground of her new relations with Mongolia or relations between Tibet and Mongolia. In this respect Anglo-Russian Agreement remains decisive."<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> NAI, FD, Secret-External, Proceedings, July 1913, File No. 199-239, Telegram from British Minister at Peking, No. 935, Dated the 6 (Received 7) February 1913, p. 1-2.

<sup>58</sup> NAI, FD, Secret-External, Proceedings, July 1913, File No. 199-239, p. 2.

<sup>59</sup> NAI, FD, Secret-External, Proceedings, July 1913, File No. 199-239, No. 201-204, p. 2-3.

British officer A.H. Grant writes date 7<sup>th</sup> March 1913 that “we cannot say anything about the subject-matter of the Tibetan-Mongolian Agreement until we receive the text. But apart from the question of the subject-matter, there are two points for consideration –

- i. Is it desirable to enquire from the Dalai Lama whether or not he authorised Dorjjeff to sign this agreement on his behalf?
- ii. If he admits having done so, is the agreement valid in view of the relations of the British, Tibet and China as defined in the various treaties, and can we countenance such an agreement?

As regards;

(i), I do not think that any harm can be done by getting Mr. Bell to write to the Dalai Lama and ask him point-blank whether he has authorised the agreement. If he says ‘no’, the whole matter drops, and we have a final answer to Russia. If he says ‘yes’, we have then to consider whether we can recognise the agreement or not. This brings us to;

(ii). The Tibetan-Mongolia Agreement would appear to contravene Article IX (B) of the Anglo-Tibetan Convention of 1904, read with the Anglo-Chinese Convention of 1906, as also of Article II of the Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907. The Tibetans would, of course, plead that they had thrown off the Chinese yoke and were free to negotiate with whom they liked. But we should be in a strong position to protest –

- a) To Tibet that the Tibetan-Mongolian Agreement – apart from all question of Chinese suzerainty – violated their agreement with British;
- b) To Russia – that the Tibet-Mongolia treaty was a violation of the Anglo-Russian Convention, and that we should both, therefore, refuse to recognise it – pending some fresh definition of the status of Tibet;

If the agreement has been made with the authority of the Dalai Lama, shows more clearly than ever how incapable the Tibetans are of managing their own affairs. The agreement simply throws Tibet into the hands of the Russians, though the Dalai Lama does not probably realise the full extent of this, and gives Russia through Mongolia an excuse for armed intervention in Tibet when she chooses. The idea of ‘mutual assistance against internal and external dangers’ between



Mongolia and Tibet is laughable. The idea of the Tibetan Army assisting Mongolia is preposterous. The probability of Russian troops, under the name of Mongolians, ‘assisting’ Tibet (i.e., entering it) is considerable.”<sup>60</sup>

The defection of Mongolia from China and the proclamation of the Khutukhta as Khan still further strengthened this aspiration of Tibetan High Priest and inspired him with the idea of giving to the projected “rapprochement” the form of a written Agreement based upon mutual recognition of independence. The proposal of the Dalai Lama met with a sympathetic reception at Urga, where the text of the Agreement was drawn up in accordance with the instruction received by Dorjiew and the wishes of the Mongols, who took the Treaty of 21<sup>st</sup> October – 3<sup>rd</sup> November as a pattern. For Tibet, and especially for the Dalai Lama, an Agreement with Mongolia appeared desirable as a means for displaying his independence and for showing that at Lhasa they are unwilling to recognise Chinese sovereignty, but sympathise with the revolution and value good relations with the new Mongol Government. Although the Mongol-Tibetan Agreement, in view of the absence of legal rights of the signatories, does not possess political significance and does not merit the title of an international Act, is nevertheless to a certain degree symptomatic, and is a protest against Chinese sovereignty, binding both Tibet and Mongolia.<sup>61</sup> In the absence of evidence as to legal rights of the signatories, the document does not possess any political significance. However, that in the event of Dorjiew’s proceedings being formally confirmed by the Dalai Lama a situation may arise in which the question of recognising Tibetan “independence” may assume a practical form requiring early consideration and decision on the part of His Majesty’s Government.<sup>62</sup>

### **Chinese reoccupation of eastern Tibet**

After the completion of the revolution which brought end to the last Ch’ing Dynasty the political situation in China began to settle down. Chinese Government reinitiated their expansionist policy in the eastern Tibet which was stopped after the death of Chao Erh Feng. The loss of Chao and

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<sup>60</sup> NAI, FD, Secret-External, Proceedings, July 1913, File No. 199-239, No. 212, p. 4.

<sup>61</sup> NAI, FD, Secret-External, Proceedings, July 1913, File No. 199-239, Pro. No. 217, pp. 7-8.

<sup>62</sup> NAI, FD, Secret-External, Proceedings, July 1913, File No. 199-239, Pro. no. 216, Letter from Indian Office to Foreign Office, No.723-P., dated the 5 March 1913, from T.W. Holderness, agreeing with the view that it will suffice for the time being to inform the Russian Government that HMG concur in the opinion that, in the absence of evidence as to the legal rights of the signatories, the Tibet-Mongolia treaty does not possess any political significance, p. 11.

his men in the eastern Tibet was a severe blow to Chinese power in the eastern Tibet. Chao's demarcation of the Marches was upheld by the Republic and China wanted to recover the lost position of Chao in the Tibetan region of Marches and during 1912 the Chinese were active in setting administration in the eastern Tibet. Yin Ch'ang Heng the military Governor of Szechuan was appointed the new warden of the Marches. Yin moved with the force of 4,000 men which included infantry, artillery, and engineers and reached Techienlu on July 29, 1913. It was reported that the Tibetans were assembling forces in the Hsiang Ch'eng district. Yin main motive in Tibet was the recovery of Chinese position in Central Tibet.<sup>63</sup>

The clashes between the Tibetans and the Chinese in the eastern part of Tibet were disturbing the diplomatic ties of these two countries. The situation in the Tibetan Marches was not stable and the movement of the Tibetan troops and the border tribesmen against Chinese was reported. During February 1913, a body of about a thousand Tibetans succeeded in crossing the Mekong at Yenching (Yerkolo) by means of an improvised bridge. Whether their object was to advance northwards against Batang or eastwards across country to the relief of Hsiang Cheng was not clear. The first act of the leaders on reaching the Yenching side of the river was to attempt to levy toll on the inhabitants. This aroused great resentment and the Lamas of the Kangta monastery, several hundred strong, successfully opposed all further advance. The episode affords an illuminating example of the utter lack of mutual sympathy and cohesion among the border tribesmen who have taken up arms against China. It is doubtless due to this want of union for concerted action that the Chinese garrisons at Batang and elsewhere have been enabled to hold out during the winter months although short of supplies and cut off from the distant base of the expedition at Tachienlu. Conversely it renders the position of Hsiang Cheng, the main centre of Tibetan opposition, one of complete isolation and enables the Chinese to take their own time concentrating an overwhelming force upon its reduction while the remainder of the area of hostilities is left unattended to. With the fall of Hsiang Cheng it is unlikely that there will be any further serious opposition, and the Chinese expedition will be free to clear the country at any rate as far as Chiamdo. The restoration of the Chinese paramount position in the Marches would seem, therefore, to be within measurable distance of accomplishment.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Lamb, *The McMahon Line*, vol. 2, pp. 402-403.

<sup>64</sup> NAI, FD, Secret-E, Proceedings, September 1913, File No. 1-271, No. 6, p. 3.

The Chinese troops reached Litang, the country off the main road between Tenchienlu and Litang was by no means re-subjugated. The Tibetans were reported to be assembling forces in Hsiang Ch'eng district. On arrival at Tacheinlu the expeditionary force proceeded to loot the city, burned down the place of the ex-chief of Chala. Batang and Chamdo were duly reached and relieved, and Draya, Markam, and other frontier districts fell again into Chinese hands. De-ge and Kaze on the north road had never been lost. Lengthy military operations in Hsiang Ch'eng resulted reduction of that district in 1913.<sup>65</sup>

The table below shows the numbers and distribution of troops as they stood in November 1913, and at present —<sup>66</sup>

**Table 3.4:** The distribution of Chinese troops in Tibet in the year 1913-1914.

|                   | November 1913 |      | 1914   |      |
|-------------------|---------------|------|--------|------|
| Commands          | Troops        | Guns | Troops | Guns |
| Tachienlu         | 500           | ...  | 1,260  | 6    |
| Ting Hsiang Hsien | 2,600         | 10   | 2,700  | 10   |
| Batang            | 1,860         | 1    | 1,830  | 2    |
| Chiamdo           | 1,560         | 2    | 2,260  | 4    |
| <b>Total</b>      | 6,520         | 13   | 8,050  | 22   |

**Source:** NAI, March 1915, File No. 398-508, Pro. No. 406

To the number of troops in the Marches in November 1913 must be added the 500 men engaged in suppressing the Nomichangku revolt and 100 who were dealing with the disturbances south of Hokou. The total force in the Marches in November 1913 was therefore 7,120 men and 13 guns. This force has now been increased by 930 men and 9 guns. British Government in India need not perhaps view this increase with alarm unless there are indications that the Chinese mean to be aggressive and move forward their forces west of Chiamdo. The March situation would now appear to have entered on a less disturbed phase; aggression on the part of the Chinese has now for some time past been out of the question, and the news seems to indicate that the Tibetan intend to content themselves with a defensive policy.<sup>67</sup> Chinese hold over the Marches in 1911-

<sup>65</sup> Ghosh, *Tibet in Sino-Indian*, pp. 138-139.

<sup>66</sup> NAI, F&P, Secret-E, Proceedings, March 1915, File No. 398-508, Pro. No. 406, p. 3.

<sup>67</sup> NAI, F&P, Secret-E, Proceedings, March 1915, File No. 398-508, Pro. No. 406, p. 3.

1912 was an artificial and insecure as it was in Chao's time, though by the end of 1914 Chinese control had been to a great extent re-established in the frontier regions as far as Mekong.<sup>68</sup>

If the Chinese were to rest content with the recovery of the Marches up to the old boundary or even including the Chiamdo, Draya and Kiangka territory, they would have ample scope for years to come for all their energies in devising and putting into operation administrative measures of all kinds for bringing this large area under settled government. A further advance westwards cannot fail to have a disturbing effect not only in Tibet proper, but on the Burma and Assam frontiers of India where the influx of Chinese troops engaged in hostilities with the local tribes in the Zayul and Bomi districts will in all probability result in the raising of awkward frontier questions with the Government of India.<sup>69</sup> The proximity of Chinese troops so near the north eastern frontier caused the Indian Government to look at their position in these sensitive areas. The British Government in India in this circumstances thought of developing a policy in the tribal areas of north east frontier which will guarantee in establishing some measures of permanent British influence. Hardinge's solution to a Chinese invasion of Assam was based on the assumption that an attack on British territory was an attack on Great Britain, and would be dealt with as part and parcel of global British strategy. Assam was economically very significant for the British and they could not afford to ignore the enormous economic importance of the Assam tea trade. The movement of Chinese troops in Assam border areas forced British authorities to think about safeguarding the frontier tribal area. The imminence of Chinese influence which the Indian Government feared seemed somewhat remote to the Chief Commissioner of Assam. During this period British send the Abor expedition under the supervision of Major General Bowers and another mission to Miri, to understand the position of Chinese troops in the tribal regions but neither the Abor Expedition not the Miri Mission found any trace of the Chinese in the country which they explored. Only in the extreme north of the Abor country was there some signs of Tibetan influence. The Indian Government, galvanized by the increase of Chinese penetration into the tribal areas of Assam, had managed by the end of 1914 to have established their permanent control over the region.<sup>70</sup> The challenged encountered

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<sup>68</sup> Ghosh, *Tibet in Sino-Indian*, p. 141.

<sup>69</sup> NAI, FD, Secret-E, Proceedings, September 1913, File No. 1-271, No. 6, p. 4.

<sup>70</sup> Amar Kaur Jasbir Singh, *Himalayan Triangle: A Historical survey of British India's relations with Tibet, Sikkim and Bhutan 1765-1950*, London, The British Library, 1988, pp. 52-58.

by this expedition exemplified the rift between colonial beliefs in the possibility of perfect cartographic knowledge and the messy reality of mapping.<sup>71</sup>

The Political Officer in Sikkim, Gangtok, received a report from an informant, who is at the present time in Lhasa, that on the 9 April, 500 soldiers of the Lhasa province left Lhasa for Eastern Tibet and that shortly afterwards 1,000 from the Shigatse province and 500 more from Lhasa were expected to follow.<sup>72</sup> The Lhasa information has recently been received that some of the local people have been gained over to their side by the Chinese troops in Eastern Tibet, and that there have arrived at Lhasa soldiers from the Shigatse province who are intended for services in Eastern Tibet and are undergoing training accordingly.<sup>73</sup> The Tibetan army before 1913 was consisted of 4,000 regular troops. They lacked in the modern techniques of warfare and were untrained equipped with out-of-date arms, and most of the soldiers were old and infirm. They had been recruited as a corvée labor tax from landholders who had in the past been granted arable land with the obligation that they provide and support a soldier. It was during 1913-14, the Dalai Lama, with his close advisors reorganized the soldiers and raised an additional 1,000 troops.<sup>74</sup>

The Kuo Min Pao newspaper of the 15 June 1914 states that General Hu Chung Liang, who arrived in Chengtu on a tour of inspection of the troops in Szechuan, brought with him from Peking a consignment of arms and ammunition specially dispatched by the Ministry of War for the use of troops in Tibet. This armament, which is being sent to Tachienlu in charge of a Major Chang Pei Shen, one of the General Hu's staff, is said to consist of 2,000 rifles and 1,000,000 rounds of ammunition. The Chinese troops have not evacuated the Enta region of Tibet and that the Tibetans have ceased hostilities in, and have withdrawn from, that neighborhood. The Cha Ya revolt has been suppressed by Chinese with the assistance of a battalion of troops from Batang. The Hsiang Ch'eng lamas and people are gradually returning to their normal occupations, and that district may now be considered reasonably quiet. The situation in March have entered on a less disturbed phase and the aggression on the part of the Chinese for some

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<sup>71</sup> Bérénice Guyot -Réchard, *Shadow States India, China and the Himalayas, 1910-1962*, Delhi, Cambridge University Press, 2017, p. 43.

<sup>72</sup> NAI, FD, Secret-E, Proceedings, September 1913, File No. 1-271, No. 7, p. 4.

<sup>73</sup> NAI, FD, Secret-E, Proceedings, September 1913, File No. 1-271, No. 14, p. 5.

<sup>74</sup> Melvyn C. Goldstein, *A history of Modern Tibet 1913-1951, The Demise of Lamaist State*, California, University of California Press, 1989, pp. 66-67.

time past been out of the question, and the news reported above seems to indicate that the Tibetans intend to content themselves with a defensive policy.<sup>75</sup>

By 1914 the Chinese front extended along the Mekong river from the Yunnan border northwards to the neighborhood of Chamdo, whence it ran along the Mekong Salween divide up to the southern border of the Kokonor territory (Chinese Ch'ing Hai). Batang and Chamdo were before the principal outlying bases, while outlying Chinese garrisons were scattered up and down the frontier, watching the Tibetan forces under the Kalon Lama. The latter's troops being centred on Sherapando and Sha-Yu Zanka (Chinese Chaiyu Chiago) in the Salween Valley and the Chinese were on the defensive position in Marches.<sup>76</sup> The Chinese troops were in defensive position in the Eastern Tibet by the end of 1914, and it seemed extremely unlikely that the Chinese would be able to establish themselves even in the British India North-East Himalayan frontier, let alone advance from their base at Chamdo for the reoccupation of Lhasa.<sup>77</sup> China to recover its lost political position in Eastern and Central Tibet became the main motive of Yuan Shi-kai Government.

### **The tripartite negotiations between Britain, Tibet and China**

In 1913 the new Chinese regime of Yuan Shih-k'ai was persuaded by the British Minister in Peking, Sir John Jordan, to send a representative to India to discuss with the Tibetans, the British acting as mediator and as active participants. The main aspects of this tripartite discussion will include the nature of Sino-Tibetan relations and the geographical limits of the boundary in the eastern Tibet. The Chinese were extremely reluctant to take part in the discussion but due to constant political and diplomatic pressure from Jordan that they agreed to participate. The Chinese moreover, were under the impression that if they did not took part in the Conference the British would in all probability negotiate directly with the Tibetan Government without consulting them at all.<sup>78</sup> A telegram was sent from E. Grey to J. Jordan, dated the 5 April 1913, asking for his proposal for the conference of Tibetan and Chinese delegates in India for the purpose of settling the Tibetan question. British Government consider that the most effective

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<sup>75</sup> NAI, Foreign and Political Department, Secret-E, Proceedings, March 1915, File No. 398-508, Pro. No. 398, p. 1.

<sup>76</sup> Ghosh, *Tibet in Sino-Indian*, pp. 142-143.

<sup>77</sup> Lamb, *The McMahon Line*, vol. 2, pp. 410-411.

<sup>78</sup> Alastair Lamb, *Tibet, China & India 1914-1950 A History of Imperial Diplomacy*, Hertfordshire, Roxford Books, 1989, p. 13.

means of obtaining a solution of the immediate difficulties between the Tibetans and Chinese would be a conference of Tibetan and Chinese delegates in India; that the India Government should take a direct part in the negotiations with a view to controlling their course, and should maintain an attitude of benevolent assistance to both parties; but that there should be no tripartite agreement, as this would involve responsibility on British Government. By this policy the British Government would establish relations with the Dalai Lama and induce him to accept the Amban and a suitable escort, and induce China to settle direct with Tibet, but to the satisfaction of the British Government, the points raised in the Memorandum of 17<sup>th</sup> August. The formal communication of an agreement on these lines by the Chinese Government to His Majesty's Government would enable the latter to postpone an agreement between them and the Chinese Government. In this proposal the Indian Government concur, and suggest that Darjeeling would be the most appropriate place of meeting for the conference. The result would be to amalgamate the two proposals of the Chinese, viz., the discussion of terms of peace between General Chung and a Tibetan delegate and the mission of Wen Tsung Yao, which would thereby be diverted from London to India. Before any definite steps are taken towards bringing about the conference, it will be necessary to notify the intentions of His Majesty's Government to the Russian Government.<sup>79</sup>

The Chinese did not like the idea of British mediation in their affairs with the Tibetans, but they had no alternative. Chinese witnesses in 1912, Mongolia pass under Russia control and were apprehensive of Tibet coming under the influence of the British. The Chinese wanted the Conference to be held either in Peking or London and they were against the participation of the Tibetan representatives and being accorded equal status with the Chinese and British. By making such objections, they hoped to delay the conference for some time, but the strong military position of Tibetan army in Kham under the leadership Chamba Tendar made them reconsider their position.<sup>80</sup> Chinese Government wishes to send Wen Tsung Yao, formerly Assistant Resident in Tibet, to London as special envoy with full powers to negotiate an agreement with British Government regarding Tibet.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> NAI, FD, Secret-E, Proceedings, September 1913, File No. 1-271, No. 2, pp. 1-2.

<sup>80</sup> Shakabpa, *Tibet A Political*, p. 251.

<sup>81</sup> NAI, FD, Secret-E, Proceedings, September 1913, File No. 1-271, No. 1, Letter from the Foreign Office to Indian Office, No. 14001-13, dated 28 March 1913, p. 1.

On 30 April 1913, the Political Officer in Sikkim, Gangtok, sent a telegram to the Foreign Secretary, Simla, referring to the letter of The National Assembly of Tibet to Viceroy in India about the situation in Eastern Tibet where a complain of military aggression by China in spite of the promise of the president of the Chinese Republic to refrain from dispatching military expedition to Tibet. Tibetans ask again for deputation of delegates to discuss matters in Darjeeling and request the Viceroy may arrange with president Yuan Shi Kai for withdrawal of Chinese troops from Eastern Tibet. In the telegram received by the Dalai Lama from Yuan Shi Kai in which the former in charged with maltreating Drepung and Tengyeling monasteries; with sending troops against the Tashi Lama; and with oppressing the people in Tibet under direct Chinese administration. The Dalai Lama denies these charges and states that they are either intended as pretexts to justify military measures by China in Tibet or are outcome of false reports by General Chung. His Holiness requests that Sir J. Jordan may be instructed to tell President Yuan that it is not the Dalai Lama who is disturbing the peace in Tibet but China that is doing so.<sup>82</sup> It appears from intercepted telegrams that His Holiness the Dalai Lama has been informed by the Chinese Government that as soon as the Board of Foreign Affairs comes to an agreement with Sir J. Jordan, a delegate will be sent to Darjeeling for Conference.<sup>83</sup>

In the Letter from the Foreign Office to the India Office, dated the 30 April 1913, regarding the Chinese-Tibetan negotiations which it is proposed should take place in India. W. Langley, writes that “he has been directed by Secretary Sir E. Grey to transmit a copy of a telegram from His Majesty’s Minister at Peking, to the Indian Office. From this telegram it is clear that Sir J. Jordan is not satisfied that a settlement negotiated and concluded solely between China and Tibet will have the effect desired by the British Government, unless they themselves are a party to and sign the Agreement, and, in view of J. Jordan’s expressed opinion on this point and the arguments which he has not put forward to support it, E. Grey is disposed to examine the question further, and, if necessary, to agree to a reconsideration of the decision originally arrived at in conjunction with your department that a tripartite agreement was open to objection. Any such reconsideration of the question must, however, necessarily be subject to the maintenance of the principle which is E. Grey has throughout insisted should guide the policy of British

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<sup>82</sup> NAI, FD, Secret-E, Proceedings, September 1913, File No. 1-271, No. 3, Telegram P., No. 85S., dated (and received) 30 April 1913 from The Political Officer in Sikkim, Gangtok, to the Foreign Secretary, Simla, p. 2.

<sup>83</sup> NAI, FD, Secret-E, Proceedings, September 1913, File No. 1-271, No. 4, p. 2.



Government in dealings with Tibet, viz., that HMG must acquire no rights and undertake no responsibility that can, in any way, be held to infringe the terms of the Anglo-Russian Convention 1907. The 1907 Convention could not debar the British Government from negotiating with China about Tibet or for endeavoring to secure the observance by Tibet of the agreement entered into between that country and Great Britain in 1904, this agreement being prior to the Anglo-Russian Convention, and the fact that British Government have a clear-right according to the provisions of this Convention to see to the fulfillment of the 1904 Agreement, may legitimately be held to enter them to become a party to negotiations both with China and Tibet., which in substance aim at bringing this about. The original objections to a tripartite agreement were that it would throw a very definite responsibility on British Government, in the event of the agreement being disregarded. Against this, however, it may fairly be contended that whether British Government are a party to the Chinese-Tibetan Agreement or not, they do incur the responsibility in fact of seeing that its provisions are observed. Before intervening in the negotiations the British should notify the Russian Government of the intentions of British Government in the matter. The British were bound to inform the Russia Government of everything affecting only the relations of Tibet with China that passed in the course of the negotiations.’’<sup>84</sup>

The British Government desire for a freer hand in Tibet is more likely to be favourably received by Russia if it is represented, not as a demand for a *quid pro quo* to set against Russian proceedings in Mongolia, but as a necessary consequence of Chinese policy in Tibet during last six years. The effects of that policy, culminating as it did in the revolt of the Tibetans and the expulsion of the Chinese garrison, have been completely to alter the *status quo* in the maintenance of which Russia has formally recognised that British Government have a “special interest” and to create a situation on the northern borders of India which we cannot be expected to tolerate indefinitely. These were the main considerations underlying the British Memorandum to China of the 17 August 1912, which was communicated to the Russian Government at the time, and was received by them without protest. The draft Agreement of which the Russian Government might perhaps be furnished with a copy at this stage; merely embodies the policy of the Memorandum, to which we are justified in assuming that Russia will not now object in

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<sup>84</sup> NAI, FD, Secret-E, Proceedings, September 1913, File No. 1-271, Pro. No. 26, pp. 19-20.

principle, and which, in the opinion of British Government, affords the most hopeful basis for a permanent settlement of the Tibetan question. With a view to avoiding delay, that discussion with the Chinese and Tibetan Governments on the proposed new treaty should proceed *pari passu* with the Russian conversations. Lord Crewe accepts the view that the new agreement should be tripartite in form, and should be signed by the British delegate as well as by Chinese and Tibetans. While the right to send an agent to Lhasa, which, in altered conditions of Tibet, Lord Crewe regards it as essential to obtain, even though the occasion to use it may not immediately arise.<sup>85</sup>

The telegram dated the 23<sup>rd</sup> (received 24<sup>th</sup>) May 1913, from the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, to the Viceroy of India, Simla, with a view to concluding a tripartite agreement the British Government have now decided to invite Tibetans and Chinese Governments to a joint conference in India. The British government is proposing that China should participate with Tibetan Government and with the British authority in joint conference in India with a view to settlement of the Tibetan question by means of an agreement to which all three Governments are signatories. As regards British position *vis-à-vis* Russia, the British Government at present proposes merely to notify Russia Government of their proposed action giving the reasons which have made this action necessary and communicating to them, as an indication of line upon which they intend to proceed, the text of revised draft agreement. If any objections are raised by Russian Government, The Secretary of State propose referring them to Anglo-Russian Convention, 1907, Article 2, and Anglo-Chinese Convention, 1906, Article 1, by which right is reserved to His Majesty's Government and Chinese Government "to take at all times such steps as may be necessary to secure due fulfillment specified in Anglo-Tibetan Agreement of 1904."<sup>86</sup> In the telegram dated 26 May 1913, from the British Minister at Peking to the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, he communicated through interview with the Chinese Minister of Foreign Affairs, he clearly showed a dislike to idea of a Tibetan delegate taking part.<sup>87</sup>

The invitation has been tendered by His Majesty's Government to the Chinese Government to a joint conference in India with Tibetan and the British Governments for the settlement of questions relating to Tibet and that HMG invite Dalai Lama to send a delegate to

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<sup>85</sup> NAI, FD, Secret-E, Proceedings, September 1913, File No. 1-271, Pro. No. 27, pp. 20-21.

<sup>86</sup> NAI, FD, Secret-E, Proceedings, September 1913, File No. 1-271, Pro.No. 37, p. 46.

<sup>87</sup> NAI, FD, Secret-E, Proceedings, September 1913, File No. 1-271, Pro.No. 39, p. 47.

Darjeeling to represent Tibetan Government who should arrive there not later than the 1 July 1913.<sup>88</sup> The Political Officer in Sikkim, Gangtok, sends a telegram to the Foreign Secretary, Simla dated (and received) the 28 May 1913, informing that he received a letter from the Tibetan Chief Minister stating that Chinese Major Ping threatens that he will come to Lhasa soon; that 500 Chinese officials troops have arrived at Chamdo recently and that Kalon Lama has been sent by the Tibetan Government to ascertain their intentions; and that there are Chinese troops at Markham, at Nyarong and at Draya. They again emphasises the necessity of holding at Darjeeling meeting for negotiating terms of peace.<sup>89</sup> W. Langley writes that if the conference in India results in a suitable agreement, the British Government would be in a better position for approaching the Russian Government on the wider issue, as not only would they be able to represent that their request was the natural sequel of the Tripartite Agreement concluded with the acquiescence of the Russian Government, the due fulfillment of which they were anxious to secure, but they would also be in possession of fuller knowledge of the attitude and aspirations of both Chinese and Tibetans than they possess at present, and consequently better able to judge as to the exact nature of the concessions which should be demanded from the Russian Government.<sup>90</sup>

In the draft despatch from Sir E. Grey to Sir G. Buchanan writes that the Russian were aware that the situation in Tibet had caused grave inconvenience and anxiety to the British Government throughout 1912 was further complicated during the later months of that year and in the commencement of 1913 by the expulsion of the remaining Chinese from Tibet, by the conclusion of the so-called alliance between Tibet and Mongolia, which formed the subject of correspondence between the British and the Russian Governments in February and March last, by the accompanying declaration of Tibetan independence, and by continued hostilities in Eastern Tibet, in which the Tibetans were temporarily successful. These circumstances have so altered the situation that though the Chinese Government have now intimated that they are willing to enter into negotiations for a settlement on the basis of the British Note of 17 August 1912, the British Government consider that it would be useless to do so in view of the difficulty of obtaining the observance by the Tibetan Government of any convention thus concluded independently of their participation and consent. They cannot, however, contemplate an

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<sup>88</sup> NAI, FD, Secret-E, Proceedings, September 1913, File No. 1-271, Pro.No. 43, p. 48.

<sup>89</sup> NAI, FD, Secret-E, Proceedings, September 1913, File No. 1-271, Pro.No. 46, p. 51.

<sup>90</sup> NAI, FD, Secret-E, Proceedings, September 1913, File No. 1-271, Pro.No. 52, pp. 53-55.

indefinite prolongation of the present situation which is the cause of serious administrative inconvenience to the Government of India of loss to British subjects and commercial interests, and of anxiety and unrest in the Native States on the borders of India, and bordering on the North-Eastern Frontier of India and on the eastern Marches of Tibet threaten to aggravate in the near future.<sup>91</sup>

Chinese Government wanted that the conference about peace to take place in Chamdo, partly as they seem to fear that the Tibetans would ask the help of the British Government if it takes place elsewhere, and partly because they intend to start fighting as soon as they see that they cannot arrive at a satisfactory settlement and that they can very easily bring more troops from Bal and Litang to reinforce their present troops in Kham, where there are at present about 1,000 officers and men.<sup>92</sup> J. Jordan British Minister at Peking writes to the Viceroy, Simla, informing about his conversation with the Chinese President about Tibet. He seemed genuinely surprised when I explained to him import of his recent mandate and confessed that he had no knowledge of geography of frontier. He was not opposed to tripartite negotiations in India, but could not induce Wentsungyao to go there. Wentsungyao had originally suggested London as the best place on the ground that attitude of his Majesty's Government towards Tibetan question was much more reasonable and liberal than that of Government of India. Chinese President mentioned Changyintang as a possible substitute for Wentsungyao but the British Minister did not accepted this proposal and suggested Ivanchen lately Councilor, Chinese Legation, London, and President promised to entertain suggestion.<sup>93</sup>

Charles Hardinge writes to the Dalai Lama that he would do all in his power to promote the welfare of Tibet and to secure an early satisfactory settlement of the dispute and on the 28 May 1913, the British Government had invited the Chinese Government to a joint conference in India with the Tibetan and the British Governments for the settlement of the matters in question, and depute the Tibetan delegate for the conference. Hardinge further added that it is the earnest

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<sup>91</sup> NAI, FD, Secret-E, Proceedings, September 1913, File No. 1-271, Enclo. to Pro. No. 52, pp. 55-56.

<sup>92</sup> NAI, FD, Secret-E, Proceedings, September 1913, File No. 1-271, Enclo. to Pro. No. 56, pp. 57-58.

<sup>93</sup> NAI, FD, Secret-E, Proceedings, September 1913, File No. 1-271, Pro. No. 59, pp. 58-59.

desire of the British Government to re-establish peace and harmony between China and Tibet and to preserve the ancient rights and privileges of the Tibetans.<sup>94</sup>

The year 1911 saw the Revolution in China and the fall of the Manchu dynasty. In the conditions of political instability this created, Russia saw an opportunity to strengthen its position in the outlying provinces of this vast empire. The British Government was keen to maintain the entente and asked the government of India to preserve *status quo* as defined. The then the 13 Dalai Lama the spiritual and political head of Tibet issued a proclamation which was regarded by Tibetans as formal declarations of independence in 1913.<sup>95</sup> The Dalai Lama requested the both Britain and Russia to recognize for the independent status of Tibet. Russia signed treaty with Mongolia in which the former agreed to support Mongol autonomy in return for extensive privileges there. Russia was trying to establish its influence to the north of India by working through Mongolia neglecting the Anglo-Russo Convention. In this situation the British administrators began to advocate on establishing influence in Tibet. These included Lord Crewe<sup>96</sup> at the Indian Office, J. N. Jordan at Peking, and Hardinge, the Viceroy of India. British ultimately decided that the problem between Tibet-China should be tackled through diplomacy.<sup>97</sup>

The Foreign Secretary, Simla writes to the Political Officer in Sikkim, Yatung, that if conference were held at Simla instead of at Darjeeling, it would facilitate conduct of negotiations, and it would be more convenient from every point of view. Please let me have your opinion as to whether, if Simla was suggested, Dalai Lama would be likely to raise any objection<sup>98</sup> In his reply the Political Officer in Sikkim, Yatung, writes that on account of its greater proximity to Lhasa and Tibet, Dalai Lama would prefer Darjeeling to Simla. The Tibetans are in the possession of no Cypher Code of their own and the one which they at present employ is a Chinese Code. In the circumstances, the Tibetan Representative will have to ask for instructions from Lhasa by letter whenever any hitch occurs in the negotiations. Letters from

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<sup>94</sup> NAI, FD, Secret-E, Proceedings, September 1913, File No. 1-271, Pro. No. 61, p. 59.

<sup>95</sup> Shakabpa, *Tibet A Political*, pp. 246-248.

<sup>96</sup> He was known as The Honourable Robert Milnes from 1863 to 1885, The Lord Houghton from 1885 to 1895 and as The Earl of Crewe from 1895 to 1911, was a British Liberal politician, statesman and writer. From September 1910 he served as Secretary of State for India (1910-11 and 1911-15).

<sup>97</sup> Sneh Mahajan, *British Foreign Policy 1874-1914 The Role of India*, London, Routledge, 2002, pp.183-184

<sup>98</sup> NAI, FD, Secret-E, Proceedings, September 1913, File No. 1-271, Pro. No. 82, p. 69.

Darjeeling take seven days only to reach Lhasa, whereas letters from Simla to Lhasa will take eleven days.<sup>99</sup>

The Government of India proposes selecting Sir Henry McMahon, Secretary to the Government of India in the Foreign Department, as the Representative of British interests. The Foreign Secretary will have the assistance of the Political Officer, Sikkim, and should also be assisted by a competent British Officer deputed from British Legation Peking with knowledge of China and Chinese Government. Government of India would be glad could such an officer be deputed for this purpose. It would be in every way more convenient and the conduct of negotiations would be greatly facilitated if actual negotiations could be conducted at Simla instead of Darjeeling. Reasons for this are –<sup>100</sup>

- 1) That at Simla Government of India could much more effectively exercise control over the proceedings; and
- 2) The Tibetan Representative would not be exposed to Chinese intrigue to such an extent as were the negotiations held in Darjeeling. Chinese Government will not perhaps object to proposed change of venue now that they have agreed to holding of conference in India. On the Dalai Lama's part we do not anticipate any serious objection as regards change of venue.

Mr. McDonald informs that the delegate from Tibet under Lonchen Shatra (who is Dalai Lama's Chief Minister and accompanied him to India in 1910) and his staff will leave Lhasa on 22 June 1913 instant for Darjeeling.<sup>101</sup> The British Minister at Peking writes to the Viceroy of India, that the Gazette published on 15 June 1913 morning contains Presidential Order appointing Ivan Chen, and Hu Han Min at present Tutu of Canton, to be Commissioners for pacification of Tibet. This announcement following closely on previous order of 25 May casts serious doubts on sincerity of Chinese Government in regard to our proposed negotiations and seems to call for strong remonstrance without loss of time.<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>99</sup> NAI, FD, Secret-E, Proceedings, September 1913, File No. 1-271, Pro. No. 83, p. 69.

<sup>100</sup> NAI, FD, Secret-E, Proceedings, September 1913, File No. 1-271, Pro. No. 84, pp. 69-70.

<sup>101</sup> NAI, FD, Secret-E, Proceedings, September 1913, File No. 1-271, Pro. No. 85, p. 70.

<sup>102</sup> NAI, FD, Secret-E, Proceedings, September 1913, File No. 1-271, Pro. No. 86, p. 70.

The British Government wanted to inform Chinese Government as soon as they intimate their formal acceptance of proposal regarding conference in India that British Government expects an immediate suspension of hostilities in Eastern Tibet, and that until Tibetan limits have been defined by the conference further advance of Chinese troops should be forbidden. If Chinese Government delay communicating their acceptance of proposal regarding conference, British Government in India should avail the earliest opportunity to remind them that British Government expects Chinese representative on conference to reach India early next month.<sup>103</sup> The British Minister at Peking interviewed President of Chinese Republic told the British Minister that it was proposed to send Ivan Chen and Hu to India on the way to Tibet, but that it was uncertain whether Hu would proceed. British Minister mentioned that place of meeting might be Simla and said that British Government was anxious for early commencement of negotiations. Chinese President promised to expedite their departure. British Minister also informed that to the Viceroy of India that he subsequently learnt from President's Private Secretary that Hu's appointment was not to be taken too seriously.<sup>104</sup>

A Chinese official named Tsen-tsen Tao-yab, who call himself a delegate deputed to discuss matters relating to Tibetan affairs, has arrived at Chiamdo with about 300 soldiers. A higher Chinese official, named Shetu Siwang, is said to be soon arriving at Chiamdo with about 800 soldiers. The Chinese soldiers who are already at Markham, Traya, Chiamdo, Ngenda, and Pashot are lawlessly erecting forts and new houses for themselves. The Chinese official Tsen-tsen and soldiers who have already arrived at Chiamdo have written to the Dza-sag Khe-med asking him to go to Shetu Siwang to negotiate for peace. The Chinese are very cunning and do not adhere to their promise. They have sent their peace delegate to Chiamdo with soldiers and have occupied the Tibetan territories of Markham, Chiamdo and Traya. They intend to come to Lhasa with soldiers. The Tibetan requested to the British Government in India to prevail upon the President of China to have the Chinese officials and soldiers withdrawn from Tibet to China and arrange soon to negotiate for peace. If the Chinese still insist on sending their delegate to Chiamdo and do not withdraw their soldiers, then the British Government may be moved to send a learned British Representative with an escort to Lhasa. According to the annexure of the Lhasa

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<sup>103</sup> NAI, FD, Secret-E, Proceedings, September 1913, File No. 1-271, Pro. No. 93, telegram from the Foreign Office, London, to His Majesty's Minister, No.197, dated the 17 June 1913, p. 73.

<sup>104</sup> NAI, FD, Secret-E, Proceedings, September 1913, File No. 1-271, Pro. No. 96, telegram R., No. 143, dated the 18 (received 19) June 1913 from British Minister at Peking, to the Viceroy, Simla, p. 74.

Convention 1904 states that on important occasion British Representatives can be sent to Lhasa. The Chinese are acting too high-handedly towards Tibet.<sup>105</sup>

According to Viceroy of India telegram of 28 and 29 May 1913 it has been reported that the intention of Chinese Government to occupy the Pomed district on the borders of Tibet and the tribal country north of Assam. The British Government in India thought that once the conference is assembled, the British shall be in a strong position for insisting on a strict adherence to the *status quo*, pending the conclusion of an agreement.<sup>106</sup> The Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs notified the British that the Tibetan question had no great interest for the Russian Government<sup>107</sup> and the Chinese Government has formally accepted the conference.<sup>108</sup>

The British informed the Chinese that hostilities should immediately be suspended in Eastern Tibet, and that the further advance of the Chinese forces should be forbidden until the limits of Tibet have been settled by the Conference.<sup>109</sup> Chinese President said that he definitely accepted invitation to conference, but said that it would be necessary to agree upon designation to be given to delegates before the order of appointment of Ivan Chen could issue. With regard to cessation of hostilities in Eastern Tibet, Wai-wu-pu had communicated with him secretly. While ordering Wai-wu-pu forces to remain for the present at Entachai and other places which they now occupy some 75 miles from West Chiamdo (Chamuto), gave him a free hand to deal with 39 banners and with Pomi on the ground that those districts were never subject to Tibet.<sup>110</sup> Wai-wu-pu handed the Presidential Orders to the British Minister in Peking sent 30 June 1913 to Chinese Commanders on Szechuan and Yunan frontiers of Tibet which state that it had been agreed with British Government to appoint negotiators for settlement of Tibetan affairs, and that all troops along the frontiers are to adhere strictly to present positions and not to advance.<sup>111</sup>

The major objective of the Tibetan Government through this Conference with Chinese was to have complete autonomy, if not independence from the China, and that any settlement, which involves control or interference by China in any portion of territory which Tibetans regards as

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<sup>105</sup> NAI, FD, Secret-E, Proceedings, September 1913, File No. 1-271, Pro. No. 119, translation of a letter from His Holiness the Dalai Lama to the excellent Mr. Bell, Political Officer in Sikkim dated 17 June 1913, p. 80.

<sup>106</sup> NAI, FD, Secret-E, Proceedings, September 1913, File No. 1-271, Pro. No. 122, p. 83.

<sup>107</sup> NAI, FD, Secret-E, Proceedings, September 1913, File No. 1-271, Pro. No. 121, p. 82.

<sup>108</sup> NAI, FD, Secret-E, Proceedings, September 1913, File No. 1-271, Pro. No. 129, p. 86.

<sup>109</sup> NAI, FD, Secret-E, Proceedings, September 1913, File No. 1-271, Pro. No. 133, p. 92.

<sup>110</sup> NAI, FD, Secret-E, Proceedings, September 1913, File No. 1-271, Pro. No. 138, p. 93.

<sup>111</sup> NAI, FD, Secret-E, Proceedings, September 1913, File No. 1-271, Pro. No. 139, p. 94.



belonging to Tibet, will not be accepted by them. It has also been decided that all the negotiators should have same rank, status and designation. It was certain that Tibetans will not admit subordination to Chinese delegate, nor would such subordination be logical in view of the fact that one of subjects for deliberation at the Conference in the future relations of Tibet and China.<sup>112</sup>

Chinese Government was opposed to the participation of Tibetan delegate in the Conference that was about to happen in Simla. In the letter from J. N. Jordan, British Minister in Peking to Edward Grey informs through the enclosed memorandum by the Chinese Secretary, Mr. Barton, gives a condensed account of the Chinese Foreign Minister on the proposal for the peace negotiation which he thought the best hope of a satisfactorily solution, evidently demurred to the idea of Tibetan participation and made a pointed reference to his former contention that China's rights over Tibet were of a sovereign and not of a suzerain character, the implication being that Tibet had no 'treaty making status'.<sup>113</sup> In the earlier agreement relating to Tibet, that of 1904 had been negotiated with Tibet direct, that of 1906 with China, and that of 1908 with both China and Tibet, and this proposal therefore followed the precedent of the last agreement. The British Government has no ulterior motives and desired nothing beyond peace on the Indian Frontiers.<sup>114</sup> The British Minister at Peking on 14 July 1913 said that he saw Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs and informed that representative of Great Britain and Tibet were ready to meet at Simla at once and enquired when the Chinese representatives might be expected to start. The Chinese Minister at once raised the question of Tibetan representative occupying the same position as in 1908 negotiations and laid stress particularly on his signing after and as adjoint to Chinese representative. The British Minister said that question of signature might remain over until agreement had been reached, but insisted that representative must go to Conference 'on equal footing'.<sup>115</sup> As regards the question of the venue, His Lordship recognises that there are administrative grounds for giving Simla the preference over Darjeeling, as desired by the

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<sup>112</sup> NAI, FD, Secret-E, Proceedings, September 1913, File No. 1-271, Pro. No. 145, p. 95.

<sup>113</sup> NAI, FD, Secret-E, Proceedings, September 1913, File No. 1-271, Pro. No. 166, p. 104.

<sup>114</sup> NAI, FD, Secret-E, Proceedings, September 1913, File No. 1-271, Sub. Enclo. 1, Pro. No. 166, pp. 105-106.

<sup>115</sup> NAI, FD, Secret-E, Proceedings, September 1913, File No. 1-271, Pro. No. 183, p. 112.

Government of India, the change likely to cause delay in opening negotiations or to arouse suspicion on the part of the Chinese Government.<sup>116</sup>

The terms Dalai Lama proposes to press for in the negotiations —<sup>117</sup>

1. Tibet to manage her external affairs after consultation with the British Government on matters of importance.
2. To control her internal administration.
3. Tibet to include Batang, Nyarong, Litang, Derge and in fact the whole of the country which Tibetan population inhabit. This extends up to Tachienlu.
4. To have Chinese traders only, but no Chinese *Amban*, nor other Chinese officials, nor Chinese soldiers in Tibet.

The British Government thought that such extensive claim as put forward by the Tibetans and which amount to a virtual declaration of the independence of Tibet cannot of course be supported by us. British saw no disadvantage in the Tibetans, in the first instance, putting forward claims of a more extensive nature than we are prepared to agree to or that the Tibetans perhaps expect to obtain. In relation to China, we shall be in stronger position if we can assume the role of arbitrator and show that we are using our influence with a view to curtailment of Tibetan pretensions. The same argument applies naturally to the excessive pretensions on the part of China.<sup>118</sup>

The Marquess of Crewe would propose, with the concurrence of the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, to approve the selection of Lieutenant-Colonel Sir Arthur Henry McMahon, Secretary to the Government of India in the Foreign Department, as British representative at the proposed Conference; and he would suggest for E. Grey's consideration that a Royal Commission should be issued in McMahon's favour similar to that granted to Sir L. Dane in 1907 for the revision of the Tibet Trade Regulations. Lord Crewe desires also to support the Government of India's recommendation that, in addition to Mr. C. A. Bell, Political Officer in Sikkim, who will contribute the requisite local knowledge of Tibetan affairs, a British officer acquainted with China and the Chinese Government should be deputed to assist McMahon in the

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<sup>116</sup> NAI, FD, Secret-E, Proceedings, September 1913, File No. 1-271, Pro. No. 186, p. 113.

<sup>117</sup> NAI, FD, Secret-E, Proceedings, September 1913, File No. 1-271, Pro. No. 208, p. 124.

<sup>118</sup> NAI, FD, Secret-E, Proceedings, September 1913, File No. 1-271, Pro. No. 213, p. 125.

negotiations.<sup>119</sup> Tibetan authority wanted Mr. Bell to be appointed as the British delegate in the Conference for his good knowledge in Tibet's language, polity, and geography.<sup>120</sup> The Tibetan also wanted British Government kindly have the boundary discussion between Tibet and China demarcated according to the old records and the administration of the country restored to us.<sup>121</sup> Unlike Chen, the British team had been well briefed and had a very clear idea of what they wanted from the talks and the way in which they proposed to get it. This was partly because the idea for the conference had come from Britain, and partly because Chinese and Tibetan claims seemed to them to be at once unrealistic and incompatible. These factors allowed McMahon to establish himself as a mediator very early on and, once elected conference president, he proceeded to throw himself enthusiastically into the task of finding a rational solution which he hoped all sides could accept.<sup>122</sup>

The Chinese Government published the Presidential Order 23 June 1913 that announced the appointments of Ivan Chen, formerly Secretary to the Chinese Legation in London and at present the Commissioner for Foreign Affairs at Shanghai, and of Hu Han-min, at present Tutu of Canton, to be Commissioners for pacification of Tibet.<sup>123</sup> The delegate that will represent Tibetan Government was Lonchen Shatra who has been specially deputed with some minor officials and the representatives of three monasteries to represent the Tibetan Government.<sup>124</sup> For Tibet negotiations Ivan Chen is appointed as special officer with plenipotentiary powers. Though Ivan Chen has repeatedly been told to expedite his departure from Shanghai, where he is, it appears that in connection with the revolution there are certain matters there which must first be settled, no date can therefore, be given for his arrival at Peking. British Minister at Peking is asking meanwhile for a draft of the proposed full powers to be given to Ivan Chen, and it is useless for Ivan Chen to proceed at all unless these provide explicitly for tripartite agreement.<sup>125</sup>

A Presidential Order was received on 2 August 1913 appointing Ivan Chen as special plenipotentiary of Chinese Government for the conduct of negotiations relating to Tibet. It therefore devolves on the British Government to order Ivan Chen to proceed to India as speedily

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<sup>119</sup> NAI, FD, Secret-E, Proceedings, September 1913, File No. 1-271, Pro. No. 186, p. 113.

<sup>120</sup> NAI, FD, Secret-E, Proceedings, September 1913, File No. 1-271, Pro. No. 218, p. 134.

<sup>121</sup> NAI, FD, Secret-E, Proceedings, September 1913, File No. 1-271, Pro. No. 219, p. 134.

<sup>122</sup> Wendy Palace, *The British Empire and Tibet 1900-1922*, Oxon, RoutledgeCurzon, 2005, p. 100.

<sup>123</sup> NAI, FD, Secret-E, Proceedings, September 1913, File No. 1-271, Pro. No. 233, p. 144.

<sup>124</sup> NAI, FD, Secret-E, Proceedings, September 1913, File No. 1-271, Pro. No. 182, p. 112.

<sup>125</sup> NAI, FD, Secret-E, Proceedings, September 1913, File No. 1-271, Pro. No. 238, p. 140.

as possible there to open negotiations for a treaty jointly with the Tibetan plenipotentiary and the plenipotentiary appointed by British Government and to sign articles which may be agreed upon for the purpose of removing all difficulties which have existed hitherto in regard of Tibet. Explicit provision is contained in these powers for conducting tripartite negotiations, but they do not necessarily prevent Chinese delegate from reopening the question of status of Tibetan delegate at Conference. In any case note concedes that Tibetan delegate is now a Plenipotentiary which is a contention that has been insisted upon by British Government and that arrangement may be considered as satisfactorily concluded, provided any attempt on part of Chinese delegate to raise in India question of equal status of his Tibetan colleague is met on the British part by a categorical refusal to reopen discussion which has already been closed on the ground that Chinese Government were fully acquainted with the conditions attached to invitation to attend Conference before date of their note of 7 August 1913.<sup>126</sup>

Lonchen Sahtra the Tibetan delegate writes to the Political Officer in Sikkim requesting that arrangements for advent representative from China at coming Tibetan Conference and for the early inauguration of this Conference. He also encloses in his letter a communication, dated 23 June, from Tao Tsentsen, the Chinese official in Chiamdo, urging Tibetan officials of Eastern Tibet to present themselves at a Conference to be held at Chiamdo. It should be noted in this connection that Chinese President agreed to the principles of the negotiations to be held in India on 4 June and Chinese Government had enough time in which to communicate this fact to Tao Tsen Tsen before 23 June. It is also pointed out by the Lochen Shatra that, on receipt of the invitation of the Government of India to attend Conference, he came promptly and is now having to cool his heels while the Chinese Government are endeavouring to advance matters in Eastern Tibet. In his opinion, advantage should be taken of the present civil war in China to advance interests of Tibet and he hints that the Tibetan people may be forced to conclude a settlement with Chinese Government at Chiamdo, unless the Tibetan Conference is held without further delay.<sup>127</sup>

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<sup>126</sup> NAI, FD, Secret-E, Proceedings, September 1913, File No. 1-271, Pro. No. 252, Telegram from His Britannic Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires, Peking, No.185, dated the 10 August 1913, repeating a telegram which he has addressed to His Majesty's Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs communicating the text of a note from the Wai-wu-pu regarding the appointment of Ivan Chen as Chinese Plenipotentiary, p. 156.

<sup>127</sup> NAI, FD, Secret-E, Proceedings, September 1913, File No. 1-271, Pro. No. 254, p. 157.

The British Minister at Peking, despatched a letter to the Viceroy in India, informing that it is useless to rely on assurance of Chinese Government as to their intentions and that the resultant delay would depend on the amount of pressure which British Government are prepared to exercise in order to force Chinese Government to accept solution on these terms satisfactory alike to the Tibetans and ourselves. It is, therefore, a question of policy, in my opinion, whether this pressure can best be exercised before or at Conference, as Chinese Government have yielded to a great extent on the subject of question of equality of status since the despatches referred to were written and necessary steps and now being proposed to make sure of this point. It is moreover likely that, if demands were now made for fresh assurances that memorandum of 17 August is accepted, our hands would be tied at the Conference when we proceed to discuss questions which we regard as amplifications, but which will be regarded as a departure from memorandum by Chinese Government. Chinese Government are only too anxious to see this memorandum adhered to, because they realize that it is much to their advantage and in fact we have, in order to secure its benefits for Tibet, used its advantageous nature as an argument to induce Dalai Lama to agree to tripartite negotiations.<sup>128</sup>

### **Emoluments of the British officers**

Mr. B. J. Gould, an officer of British Government in India at Political Department, who was appointed to officiate as Political Officer in Sikkim during the absence of Mr. C. A. Bell, who was selected for the Tibet negotiations as the representative of the British Government. Mr. Gould, during the period of his officiating appointment, should be permitted to draw his time-scale pay in the Political Department, a local allowance of Rs. 200, and a sumptuary allowance of Rs. 100 a month, plus the usual charge allowance admissible to a junior officer of the British Government of India Political Department officiating in a superior post. The compensatory personal allowance of Rs. 106-4-0 anna month at present drawn by Mr. Gould will be absorbed in the charge allowance, and the above proposals will therefore give him an increase of Rs. 93-12-0 anna compared with his emoluments.<sup>129</sup>

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<sup>128</sup> NAI, FD, Secret-E, Proceedings, September 1913, File No. 1-271, Pro. No. 263, pp. 161-162.

<sup>129</sup> NAI, F&P, Est. B, Proceedings, January 1914, File No. 252-268, Enclo. to Pro. No. 267, p. 9.

**Table 3.5:** Emoluments to be granted to B.J. Gould by the GOI

| Emoluments at Gyantse                      | Rs.   | a. | Emoluments now proposed                    | Rs.   |
|--------------------------------------------|-------|----|--------------------------------------------|-------|
| Time-scale pay                             | 750   |    | Time-scale pay                             | 750   |
| Personal allowance as an<br>I.C.S. officer | 100   |    | Personal allowance as an<br>I.C.S. officer | 100   |
| Compensatory personal<br>allowance         | 106   | 4  | Compensatory personal<br>allowance         | 200   |
| Local allowance                            | 200   |    | Local allowance                            | 200   |
| Sumptuary allowance                        | 100   |    | Sumptuary allowance                        | 100   |
| Total                                      | 1,256 | 4  | Total                                      | 1,350 |

**Source:** Emoluments to be granted to Mr. B. J. Gould by the British GOI during officiating period as the Political Officer in Sikkim. NAI, Foreign and Political Department, Est. B, Proceedings, January 1914, File No. 252-268, Enclo. Pro. No. 267, p.9

The emoluments of the British officers deputed to the Royal Commission on Tibetan affairs and other miscellaneous expenditure in connection therewith. As regards to the Henry McMahon, the Finance Department agree that the circumstances attending his appointment justify the grant to him of a deputation allowance and is prepared to recommend to the Secretary of State, whose previous sanction is necessary, the grant of a deputation allowance of Rs. 500 a month in addition to his pay of Rs. 4,000 a month as Foreign Secretary for the period during which he is employed on the Commission. In the case of Mr. C. A. Bell, Political Officer in Sikkim, who has been appointed as Assistant to the British Commissioner, the Finance Department considers that it would suffice to allow him, during the period of his deputation, a deputation allowance of Rs. 10 a day under Article 81 of the Civil Service Regulations in addition to his salary of Rs. 2,250 a month. These terms may be recommended for him to the Secretary of State. Mr. Bell will, of course, cease to draw, during the period of his deputation, the language allowance of Rs. 100 a month which he is at present in receipt of. The salary and allowances of Mr. Rose of the Chinese Consular service should be left to the decision of the Secretary of State, the terms granted to Mr. E. C. Wilton on the occasion of his deputation to India in 1907-08 in connection with the revision of the Tibetan Trade Regulations, being pointed out to His Lordship. The Foreign Department will submit later on proposals relating to the

salaries of the Chinese writer and the interpreter, who will accompany Mr. A. Rose from China. These proposals will be awaited. There is no objection to the two officials being allowed a lodging allowance of Rs. 2 a day while in India, and travelling allowance under the Civil Service Regulations. As regards the question of accommodation, the undersigned is to say that there is no objection to the Chinese and Tibetan delegates being housed free of charge, or to the hiring of a suitable building at a reasonable rent for the Commission to meet in. it is understood that the cost of accommodation will be defrayed, as far as possible, from the Toshakhana grant at the disposal of the Foreign Department.<sup>130</sup>

The recommendation was granted that the McMahon will get deputation allowance of Rs. 500 per mensem in addition to salary as Foreign Department Secretary and the C. A. Bell deputation allowance rupees 10 per day in addition to salary of rupees 2,250, and also granted the Rose's salary and allowance. Wilton, when similarly employed in 1908, was granted deputation allowance rupees 15 per day, house allowance rupees 5 per day and travelling allowance under the Civil Service Regulations including journeys to and from China. British authority in India presumes that, as in case of Wilton, Home Government will continue to pay A. Rose's salary during deputation.<sup>131</sup>

### **Tibetan and Chinese representatives arrive in India 1913**

As Ivan Chen, the Chinese Commissioner, will come direct from China by sea and will land at Calcutta, the ceremonial observed on the occasion of Tang Shao-yi's arrival at Calcutta, in connection with the 1905 negotiations will be found useful as a guide to the procedure to be followed. The head-quarters of the Government of India are no longer Calcutta, we shall have to address the Bengal Government and ask them to depute a junior officer to meet Ivan Chen on arrival. It would perhaps also be polite to grant him customs facilities and the Commerce and Industry Department might be asked to take necessary action. Until the date of Ivan Chen's arrival in Calcutta is known the British Government in India cannot make any move for the arrangements for his convenience. In Tang's case the Chinese Commissioner was given a salute of 15 guns on alighting from the train; in other respects the arrival was private. The question of what salute, if any, the Tibetan delegate should receive was not discussed. The two

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<sup>130</sup> NAI, F&P, Est. A, Proceedings, January 1914, File No. 10-25, Pro. No. 12, p. 17.

<sup>131</sup> NAI, F&P, Est. A, Proceedings, January 1914, File No. 10-25, Pro. No. 20, pp. 19-20.

Commissioners paid a formal call on the British Commissioner at the Foreign Office and as on the occasion of Tang's call light refreshments were served and the conversation was purely formal. In regard to the form of address to be used in addressing the Chinese Commissioner it was decided that it should be, in writing, Chang Tachen and in speaking Chang Tajen. The question of the form of address of the Tibetan delegate never arose, he was simply addressed in writing as the "Tsarong Shape". Having regard to the changed relations between China and Tibet, it will no doubt be found necessary to accord the Tibetan Commissioner the same honours as those the Chinese Commissioner receives.<sup>132</sup>

The Tibetan Plenipotentiary, Kusho Lonchen Shatra, called on the British Plenipotentiary Lieutenant-Colonel A. H. McMahon, at Knockdrin at 11 am. The Tibetan party was as follows –

- a) The Plenipotentiary
- b) Techu Kusho
- c) The Nyen-dron, i.e., a sort of Secretary
- d) Depon Taradoba (a Depon is an officer in command of 500 soldiers)
- e) A representative of the three great monasteries, Sera, Drepung and Gaden.

Sir Henry McMahon was accompanied by C. A. Bell, both were in levee dress. Mr. Bell received the party in the verandah and shook hands with them. He conducted the Plenipotentiary and Techu Kusho to the drawing room, at the door of which McMahon received them and shook hands with them. He and the Lonchen sat on the sofa and Bell and Techu Kusho sat on chairs. The remainder of the party received seats in the hall. The conversation opened with the usual complimentary remarks as to health, etc. The Lonchen then expatiated on Chinese oppression in Tibet and expressed the gratitude of the Tibetan Government to the British Government for bringing about this Conference, for stopping the Chinese advance in Eastern Tibet and for hastening the coming of the Chinese Plenipotentiary to Simla. Sir Henry impressed on him that these were undoubtedly due to the pressure brought to bear by HMG. The Lonchen noted that the British Government had intimated to the Chinese Government that the British Plenipotentiary would deal direct with the Tibetan, if the Chinese Plenipotentiary failed to appear by the date fixed for the opening of the Conference, and hoped that this fact would deter the Chinese

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<sup>132</sup> NAI, F&P, Secret-E, Proceedings, April 1914, File No.46-55, Correspondence, pp. 1-2.



Plenipotentiary from leaving during the negotiations, should the latter not proceed altogether to his liking. McMahon trusted that this would be so and he congratulated the Dalai Lama on his choice of a Plenipotentiary. He also hope that the Lonchen would give him every assistance in the conduct of the negotiations and that the latter would have a successful issue. The Lonchen promised his best assistance. McMahon accompanied by Bell, returned Lonchen Shatra's call at 12:30pm at the Mythe, the residence provided by the Government of India for the Tibetan party.<sup>133</sup>

Mr. Ivan Chen, the Chinese delegate was due to arrive at Calcutta on the 3 October 1913 by a British India Steam Navigation Company's steamer leaving Singapore on the 24 September 1913. The British Government has decided that while in India Ivan Chen and Lonchen Shatra, shall not be accorded salutes or special official honours, but shall be treated in all respects as distinguished foreign visitors. Ivan Chen may be met on arrival by a junior officer of the Government of Bengal, and that arrangements may be made to facilitate the journey of himself and his staff to Simla.<sup>134</sup> On 4 October 1913, dated Simla, McMahon wrote a letter to Ivan Chen, Chinese Plenipotentiary, offering him, his friendly greeting and welcome to Simla. The Chinese Plenipotentiary, Mr. Ivan Chen, accompanied by Mr. Bruce, Mr. Hsia, called on Henry McMahon on 7 October at 10:45 am at "Knockdrin". They were received by Mr. Rose and McMahon in the reception hall. Ivan Chen was seated on sofa at right hand of McMahon. Chen expressed thanks for all the arrangements made for him. Conversation was of general character and lasted about 20 minutes. But McMahon took opportunity of informing Ivan Chen of news just received from Reuters of the election of Yuan Shi Kai as President of Chinese Republic and of fact that Great Britain proposed formally recognising the Republic. McMahon congratulated Ivan Chen on this news, and latter appeared very relieved and please at the news.<sup>135</sup>

On Tuesday, 7 October 1913, Ivan Chen, accompanied by B. D. Bruce and Mr. Shah called on the Lonchen Shatra at 11 am. The Lonchen Shatra received the party at the front door of the "The Mythe", surrounded by his staff, but only the Lonchen and the Techu Kusho were in the room during the interview. The Lonchen's Chinese interpreter was present, but he was not

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<sup>133</sup> NAI, F&P, Secret-E, Proceedings, April 1914, File No.46-55, Correspondence, Note on the exchange of visits between the British and Tibetan Plenipotentiaries, on the 25 September 1913, at Simla, p. 4.

<sup>134</sup> NAI, F&P, Secret-E, Proceedings, April 1914, File No. 46-55, Pro. No. 50, p. 2.

<sup>135</sup> NAI, F&P, Secret-E, Proceedings, April 1914, File No. 46-55, p. 6.

seated. Ivan Chen spoke in Chinese, the Lonchen spoke in Tibetan and it was translated by the interpreter. The conversation was of a most formal in nature, the only remark being an enquiry from the Lonchen as to Chen's service in England, to which the Chinese plenipotentiary returned the non-committal reply that the climate of England could only be described as perfect.<sup>136</sup> The Chinese plenipotentiary, accompanied by Mr. Bruce and Mr. Shah, was received by the Viceroy. Ivan Chen expressed his thanks for the various courtesies which had been extended to him since his arrival in India, including the loan of "Oakover" as a residence. Viceroy expressing the hope that his visit would prove both pleasant and profitable, Ivan Chen also assured the Viceroy that he was anxious for a speedy and amicable settlement of the question now at issue, and expressed his intention of furthering that end by every means in his power.<sup>137</sup>

### **'Inner' and 'Outer' Tibet**

On their return from their New Year's holidays, the Chinese and Tibetan Plenipotentiaries informed Henry McMahon of their readiness to present the written statements of their frontier claims to which reference was made in my last Memorandum of the 24 December 1913; and, in accordance with their wishes, a meeting of the Conference was called on the 12 January 1914. In the summary of evidence which had been produced during the December discussions, and which included vague demands on the part of the Chinese for the inclusion of Giamda, Jyade, Zayul, Chiamdo and Kokonor within their territory; whilst the Tibetan presented well-authenticated and long-standing claims to the whole country as far east as Tachienlu. Henry McMahon of the 6 January 1914 for the division of the country into two zones, to be known as "Inner"<sup>138</sup> and "Outer"<sup>139</sup> Tibet, had been approved by HMG; and, in view of the fact that McMahon two

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<sup>136</sup> NAI, F&P, Secret-E, Proceedings, April 1914, File No. 46-55, p. 7.

<sup>137</sup> NAI, F&P, Secret-E, Proceedings, April 1914, File No. 46-55, p. 7.

<sup>138</sup> Inner Tibet; A line along watershed of Kuen Lun, Altyn Tagh and Humboldt ranges, thence north of Kara Nor and along crest of Nan Shan to about Longitude 101. Thence due south running just west of Donkyr to point where Hwang Ho rounds east corner of Amne Machin range and along eastern limit of Gyarong, Gyakog, Chogyet to Tachienlu, which remains in Tibet. Line then runs to corner of sharp bend of Yalong Ho, Longitude 102, and thence up the Yalong and Litang rivers to point where Latitude 28 cuts latter river for the second time. Thence it follows latitude 28 to crest of Mekong-Salween divide and runs southward along that watershed to about Lat. 27° 30' where it crosses Salween to its western watershed and follows it to Isu Razi Pass, which it thus becomes the tri-junction point of the Tibet-China-India frontiers. Source: NAI, F&P, Secret-E, Proceedings, October 1914, File No. 134-396, Pro. No. 190, p. 61.

<sup>139</sup> Outer Tibet; Watershed of Kuen Lun, Marco Polo and Shuga Ula ranges to about latitude 96, thence skirting west corner of Tsaring Nor and crossing Yangtse river at about longitude 97 to Jyekundo, which should remain in outer Tibet. Along Mekong-Yangtse divide (except where departure from watershed in an easterly direction may be found necessary in order to include whole of Draya and Markham within Outer Tibet) passing Chinese boundary pillar at

colleagues had now thoroughly discussed their respective cases, whilst McMahon had hitherto avoided any expression of opinion during the four months that the Conference had been in progress. And he had felt that the time had at last come for some definite statement of policy from the British side. He accordingly summoned a meeting on the 17 February 1914, and read to his colleagues a statement formulating the proposal for the two zones, which were shown on an accompanying map. McMahon also proposed at the same time a solution of the political issue by the recognition of autonomy for Outer Tibet, whilst reserving to China the right to re-establish such a measure of control in Inner Tibet as would restore and safeguard her historic position, without in any way infringing the integrity of Tibet as a geographical and political entity. McMahon made it clear indeed that British were prepared to consider the Tibetan March country between Batang and Tachienlu as a buffer state, which would effectually safeguard the border provinces of Szechuan and Yunnan; whilst the territory round the Lake of Kokonor, of which little was known by the British Government of India and regarded this region practically unadministered and was inhabited by bands of Mongol nomads, would play the same part in regard to Kansu and the nee dominion but that the British Government were determined to prevent the absorbtion of any part of Tibet.<sup>140</sup>

The Viceroy of India was also recommending the treatment of Tibet in two zones, to be known as “Inner” and “Outer” Tibet respectively, for the purposes of the Tripartite Agreement now under the negotiation at Simla. It will be observed that “Outer” Tibet corresponds roughly with the area defined in Article 5 of the draft Agreement while the “Inner” zone comprises the March country in which hostilities have been in progress between the Chinese and Tibetans, practically without intermission, since 1905.<sup>141</sup> On the 7 March 1914 both Tibetan and Chinese delegates communicated to McMhaon their criticisms of my statement of 17 February 1914 on the division of Tibet into two zones. The Lonchen maintained that the territories included within both the Inner and Outer zones were under the direct control of the Lhasa Government, in whose

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Pamotang west of Batang (*vide* McMahon’s memorandum of December 24, paragraph 3) to a point abreast of Yakalo. Thence across Mekong valley just north of Yakalo to crest of Menkong-Salween divide and southwards along that divide to a point abreast of Menkong. Here it crosses river just south of Menkong to crest of Salween-Irrawaddi divide thence along the divide to Tila La and from that pass along northern watershed of Taron Valley to nearest point on the Tibet-India frontier. Source: NAI, F&P, Secret-E, Proceedings, October 1914, File No. 134-396, Pro. No. 190, p. 62.

<sup>140</sup> NAI, F&P, Secret-E, Proceedings, October 1914, File No. 134-396, Memorandum regarding the progress of negotiations from 25 December 1913 to 30 April 1914, p. 52.

<sup>141</sup> NAI, F&P, Sec-E, Proceedings, October 1914, File No. 134-396, Pro. No. 188, p. 60.

hands lay the right to levy and collect rents and taxes and to appoint the hereditary chiefs, and that he was unable to recognise any consolidation of Chinese influence even within the Inner zone. Mr. Chen sought to ignore not only the background of history and tradition, but also the foreground of the cessation of Chinese control in any part of Tibet, and he based his claims on the middle distance, represented by the campaigns of Chao Erh Feng and the accession of territory which had ensued as a result of that short-lived period of Chinese success. Ivan Chen declined to consider McMahon proposal in regard to the zones and was prepared only to recognise a limited Tibetan autonomy in a loosely defined area, which appeared to consist of little more than the country in the immediate vicinity of Lhasa.<sup>142</sup>

On 20 March 1914, Mr. Chen communicated to McMahon a message from his Government, which amounted to a virtual rejection of our entire draft. McMahon replied on the 26 March 1914 that the attitude of the Chinese Government appeared to indicate a lack of appreciation of the actual conditions existing in Tibet; that it was becoming increasingly difficult to restraint the activities of the Tibetans, in view of the delay on the part of the Chinese in presenting any reasonable reply to our proposals; and that, unless he was prepared to discuss the questions at issue in a spirit which gave promise of some settlement in the near future, McMahon tells that he has no alternative but to withdraw present draft with the accompanying map, and to lay before the Conference proposals of different nature. Ivan Chen convened a meeting of the Conference on 7 April 1914, when he laid before us a document purporting to convey the final attitude of his Government. The river Salween was indicated as the boundary between Szechuan and Tibet and no mention was made of Giamda, but the document was so worded that it offered no hope of finality and no prospect of a settlement. A. Rose called on Mr. Chen on 8 April 1914 and, after reminding him that the Conference would have been in session for six months on 13 April 1914, and that nothing had been achieved, he announced my intention of convening a meeting on the 14 April 1914, adding that the proceedings would be of a conclusive nature. Mr. Chen asked if he was to understand that the meeting was being called in order to break negotiations. Mr. Rose stated that he had no instructions to convey to him the exact purpose of

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<sup>142</sup> NAI, F&P, Sec-E, Proceedings, October 1914, File No. 134-396, p. 52.

the meeting, but that he must be prepared for the withdrawal of our former proposals, and for some new course of action.<sup>143</sup>

On the day before the proposed meeting Mr. Chen called at the Foreign Office and stated that his Government was extremely anxious to secure a postponement of the meeting for few days. Chen said that such a request from his Government at so late an hour placed him in a very difficult position vis-à-vis my Tibetan Colleague. However, he was so insistent in his request that a postponement of meeting for one week until 22 April 1914 was eventually conceded. The Chinese Government was evidently determined to secure at all costs the postponement of a conclusive meeting and the possible rupture of negotiations, and Mr. Chen offered to reveal the final attitude of his Government in regard to our entire draft. A meeting at the Foreign Office was arranged for the following day and, during an interview which lasted for ten hours, Mr. Chen gave his first intimations of serious negotiation. He discussed the draft, clause by clause, debating his points with skill and tireless persistency. Such of his proposals as were of a reasonable nature were provisionally accepted and the interview resulted in a slight remodeling of the draft at various points, including the elimination of the indemnity clause and the other provisions which had been temporarily inserted for purposes of negotiation, together with the relegation of certain provisions which Mr. Chen considered inconsistent with the dignity of China from the body of the Convention to subsidiary notes. Late on the evening of the 21 April 1914 Mr. Chen personally presented the translation of a telegram from Peking to McMahon embodying five new demands, which showed no signs of a conciliatory attitude. It was too late at night to communicate this document of Chen with his Tibetan Colleague, and there was no alternative but to place it on the table at the meeting on the following morning. In opening the meeting McMahon reviewed the situation and asked the two representatives if they were prepared to initial the draft. Mr. Chen said that any such conclusive action was out of the question in view of the five new demands which he had been instructed to present, and it was clear to me that the Peking authorities had declined to attach any importance to the threat of a conclusive meeting. McMahon also asked the Lonchen Shatra if he desired to make any statement, and he replied that his Government recognised the need for certain sacrifices in a settlement which must necessarily be based on mutual compromise, but that in view of the

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<sup>143</sup> NAI, F&P, Sec-E, Proceedings, October 1914, File No. 134-396, pp. 53-54.

Chinese attitude, he refused to commit his Government to any agreement which would reinstate an Amban at Lhasa or involve the exclusion of Derge and Nyarong from autonomous Tibet.<sup>144</sup>

Henry McMahon was now in a somewhat delicate position on the one hand a complete rupture of negotiations appeared undesirable, whilst on the other it was obviously difficult to convince the Chinese that we were now in earnest in forcing events to an issue. McMahon accordingly decided to withdraw the draft Convention, and it was removed from the table with as much ceremony as possible. This incident gave McMahon an indication of the real situation. The tension had become very marked and, when the documents were actually removed, the usually placid and inscrutable faces of Tibetan and Chinese plenipotentiaries showed for a moment the most intense astonishment and agitation. McMahon told both the delegates that the withdrawal of the Convention would not be absolute until the meeting actually terminated, and he hoped they would endeavour to avoid the rupture which then appeared to be so imminent. McMahon announcement was received by both Plenipotentiaries with obvious relief. He had thought of adjourning only until the following evening, but at the earnest request of his Chinese colleague he prolonged the period for five days until the 27 April 1914, in order that he might have an opportunity of further reference to Peking. He promised that his government should be allowed no possibility of misunderstanding the finality of our attitude, and we accordingly left the table. The discussion was renewed on the 27 April 1914 with some trepidation Mr. Chen had received his final instructions at the eleventh hour and had communicated them to me late at night on the 26 April 1914, they were vague and elusive, expressing general acceptance of the main principles of the articles of the Convention, but demanding further unspecified concessions in regard to the frontier before any settlement was possible, and appearing to convey no authority for the acceptance of our draft. As McMahon had anticipated, Mr. Chen stated that his position was in no way better than it had been on the 22 April 1914 the postponement and adjournment indeed had no effect upon the Chinese Government, and he categorically refused to initial the draft. McMahon felt that it was useless to expect any finality from Chinese Plenipotentiary, and he suggested that Mr. Chen should withdraw unless he was able to co-operate with the Tibetan and British Representatives in attempting to effect some settlement, the Chinese attitude throughout had been entirely destructive any constructive efforts on the British part had been brushed aside,

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<sup>144</sup> NAI, F&P, Sec-E, Proceedings, October 1914, File No. 134-396, pp. 54-55.

and it was impossible to continue a Conference on such unequal terms. Mr. Chen accordingly left the Conference chamber, accompanied by his staff and by Mr. Rose, and McMahon remained in consultation with the Lonchen Shatra.<sup>145</sup>

McMahon persuaded Lonchen Shatra to make some last concession to the Chinese Plenipotentiary in order to meet the spirit of his final instructions, if we could do so without detriment to the interests of Great Britain or Tibet, and to this he agreed. A tract of country in the neighbourhood of Lake Kokoner to which the Chinese appeared to attach importance, although neither the Chinese nor the Tibetans had any definite information in regard to its nature or inhabitants was accordingly excluded from Inner Tibet and included in China proper, whilst the prohibition against Tibetan representation in the Chinese National Assembly was confined to the inhabitants of Outer Tibet. These modifications were made in the Convention and in the map, and the Tibetan Representative and McMahon then initialed the documents. McMahon specifically mentioned that the words in Article 2, recognizing the suzerainty of China the cancellation of which had been sanctioned by His Majesty's Government on 21 April 1914 would be omitted unless the Chinese Plenipotentiary initialed the draft before the conclusion of the meeting. Mr. Chen found himself in the difficult position on the one hand, his Government, though fully informed of the conclusive nature of the meeting, had given him no indication of their willingness to accept British terms; on the other hand he saw the possibility of losing the Chinese seat in the Tripartite Conference and the danger of the conclusion of an agreement between Great Britain and Tibet alone.<sup>146</sup>

On the morning of the 29 April 1914 Mr. Chen called at the Foreign Office with a message from his Government to the effect that they disavowed his action in initialing the Convention, and declined to recognise the settlement. McMahon says that the disavowal by the Chinese Government of their Plenipotentiary's action in concluding an agreement is somewhat difficult to explain. He has reason to believe that the Chinese have obtained all they really need and even more than they expected, as a result of the Conference. McMahon can only attribute their action to their proverbial inability to recognise finality in any issue. He observed that any further territorial concessions would be unfair to Tibet, detrimental to the British and subversive

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<sup>145</sup> NAI, F&P, Sec-E, Proceedings, October 1914, File No. 134-396, p. 55.

<sup>146</sup> NAI, F&P, Sec-E, Proceedings, October 1914, File No. 134-396, pp. 55-56.

of the fundamental principles underlying the Convention, which aims at securing a lasting peace in Tibet and on British India frontiers.<sup>147</sup>

Charles Bell writes that the negotiations with China broke down on one point only namely the demarcation of the frontier between China and Tibet.<sup>148</sup> The Chinese rejected the claim made by the Tibetan that all territory in which the population was almost entirely Tibetan belongs to Tibet. According to Hugh Richardson the main factor for the Chinese dissatisfaction was that the surrender of territory which was acquired by the Chinese troops in Tibet and the prohibition against making Inner Tibet a province may have seemed too great an affront to Chinese pride. They also had a fear that once the border area had been given the name of Tibet- Inner Tibet- the British might help the Lhasa Government to occupy it.<sup>149</sup> From what has been related it is evident that the claims presented in the Tibetan settlement are inadmissible, and in answer to them and one of the significant demand that Chinese Plenipotentiary made during the Conference is that Tibet forms an integral part of the territory of the Republic of China, that no attempts shall be made by Tibet or by Great Britain to interrupt the continuity of this territorial integrity, and that China's rights of every description which have existed in consequence of this territorial integrity shall be respected by Tibetan and recognized by Great Britain.<sup>150</sup> Alastair Lamb pointed out that the question of the permanent settlement of the Tibetan problem through the Convention can hardly described as a complete success and the status of Tibet in international law remained undefined. The existence of the unsigned Simla Convention seems to have prevented the Indian Government between 1914 and 1947 from ever expressly recognizing Tibetan independence.<sup>151</sup>

The Plenipotentiaries of Great Britain and Tibet, agreed with the Declaration to the effect that they acknowledge the annexed Convention as initialed to be binding on the Governments of Great Britain and Tibet, and they agree that so long as the Government of China withholds signature to the aforesaid. Convention, she will be debarred from the enjoyment of all privileges accruing there from, signed in Simla July 3 1914, corresponding with the Tibetan date,

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<sup>147</sup> NAI, F&P, Sec-E, Proceedings, October 1914, File No. 134-396, p. 56.

<sup>148</sup> Bell, *Tibet Past and Present*, p. 156.

<sup>149</sup> Richardson, *Tibet and its history*, p. 113.

<sup>150</sup> NAI, F&P, Sec-E, Proceedings, October 1914, File No. 134-396, Pro. 149, p. 11.

<sup>151</sup> Lamb, *The McMahon Line*, vol. 2, p. 523.



the tenth day of the fifth month of the Wood-Tiger year.<sup>152</sup> In that case the Chinese Government will, of course, lose all the privileges and advantages which the Tripartite Convention secures to them including recognition of Chinese suzerainty over Tibet; while the return of the Chinese Resident to Lhasa will be postponed indefinitely, and the British Government will render the Tibetans all possible assistance in resisting Chinese aggression.<sup>153</sup> In the telegram from the Wai Chiao Pu to Lew Yuk Lin, it is mentioned that the Chinese Government have instructed their delegate, Mr. Ivan Chen, to inform the Tibetan Conference that the Chinese Government regret very much that the proposals regarding the boundary question did not meet their approval, and they are unable to sign the agreement as it stands. The Chinese Government cannot recognise any agreement that the British Government may see fit to enter into with the Tibetan Government without their consent and approval.<sup>154</sup> In the Peking Daily News, dated Wednesday, 8 July 1914, has reported that Conference at Simla between representatives of China and Tibet and a representative of Great Britain in the capacity of “honest broker” has proved abortive, and that hopes of a settlement amicable to all parties have been doomed to disappointment.<sup>155</sup>

The tripartite agreement, however, was only part of the British agenda. Apart from this agreement British and Tibetan representative agreed in other economic conditions bilaterally which certainly favored British interest such as dealings in trade marts and among other things, extraterritorial powers in trade marts, complete control over the lines of communication between trade marts and the Indian border, and access to all of Tibet for British.<sup>156</sup> The British and Tibetan Plenipotentiaries discussed regarding the New Trade Regulations for outer Tibet, and it has been approved by the British Government. This Trade regulation was drafted by Mr. Bell on a simple and practical basis, and which he succeeded in commending to the favourable consideration of Tibetan Plenipotentiary. The main advantages obtained from these Trade Regulations are as follows – <sup>157</sup>

- a) The right to export Indian tea to Outer Tibet free of duty instead of under a prohibitive duty of five annas per lb.

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<sup>152</sup> NAI, F&P, Secret-E, Proceedings, October 1914, File No. 134-396, p. 150.

<sup>153</sup> NAI, F&P, Secret-E, Proceedings, October 1914, File No. 134-396, Pro. No. 368, p. 206.

<sup>154</sup> NAI, F&P, Secret-E, Proceedings, October 1914, File No. 134-396, Encl.1, Pro. No 374, p. 215.

<sup>155</sup> NAI, F&P, Secret-E, Proceedings, October 1914, File No. 134-396, Encl.2, Pro. No. 387, p. 224.

<sup>156</sup> Goldstein, *A history of Modern Tibet*, p. 75.

<sup>157</sup> NAI, F&P, Secret-E, Proceedings, October 1914, File No. 134-396, pp. 56-57.

- b) The avoidance of any reference to a customs tariff.
- c) The annulment of our previous undertakings for future transfer of British Posts and Telegraphs to the Tibetan Government, and for the future withdrawal of our escorts and our rights of extra territoriality.
- d) The withdrawal of the previous restrictions on British subjects travelling in Tibet.

British subjects shall be at liberty to deal in kind or in money, to sell their goods to whomsoever they please, to hire transport of any kind, and to conduct in general their business transactions in conformity with local usage and without any vexatious restrictions or oppressive exactions whatever. The Tibetan Authorities will not hinder the British Trade Agents or other British subjects from holding personal intercourse or correspondence with the inhabitants of the country.<sup>158</sup>

These Trade Regulations were initialed between the British and Tibetan Plenipotentiaries shortly after the initialing of the Convention on the 27 April 1914. The final issue before the Conference was the difficult problem of the Indo-Tibetan frontier. It will be remembered that the entire belt of country stretching from Bhutan to Eastern Assam was practically unknown to the British geographically until within the last three years. The expeditions which have operated in the Abor, Mishmi, Miri and Kampti Long country, and the journeys of Captain Bailey, Morshead, Pritchard and Waterfield have now placed us in possession of a mass of new material, on which British were able to base a boundary line such as would meet administrative needs and provide political safeguards along an extended belt of tribal country between India and Tibet. After his prolonged discussions between Mr. Bell and Tibetan Plenipotentiary the later and McMahon exchanged notes dated the 24 and 25 March 1914 which have at last formulated upon a large scale map a clearly-defined frontier extending for some 850 miles along the north-east Frontier of India from the Irrawaddy-Salween divide on the east to Bhutan on the west. The conclusion of an agreement in regard to this vast tract of tribal country, and the acceptance by the Tibetans of a recognised boundary, will so lighten British responsibilities, and so materially strengthen British position, that McMahon cannot but regard

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<sup>158</sup> NAI, F&P, Secret-E, Proceedings, October 1914, File No. 134-396, Encl. 5, Pro. No. 346, pp. 189-191.

this definition of the Indo-Tibetan frontier as not the least important and valuable of the results which have been achieved by work of the Conference.<sup>159</sup>

In the letter of C. A. Bell, Political Officer in Sikkim, dated 6 August 1915, to the Secretary of the Government India, Bell mentioned that the cession by Tibet to us of the Tawang district, a country with an area of some 2,000 square miles, and much of it fertile. Also the cession of other tracts of Tibetan territory bordering on the territories of the hill tribes of the north-eastern frontier, the British Government of India was able to form buffer territories along the whole northern frontier of Assam, between it and Tibet. Formerly Tibetan territory in Tawang adjoined the plains of Assam and might at any time have been occupied by Chinese troops. The cessions are naturally of great importance.<sup>160</sup>

The Government of India believed that the advantages gained by Tibet and British under the Simla Convention is necessarily purely academic since the Convention has not been signed by the Chinese Government or accepted by the Russian Government and is, therefore, for the present invalid. The fact remained that the negotiations conducted in Simla broke down simply and solely, because the Government of India attempted to secure for Tibet greater advantages than the Chinese Government were prepared to concede, and the fact that China has persisted in her refusal to sign the Convention can only be regarded as an indication that both the Government of India and the Tibetan Plenipotentiary, Lonchen Shatra, were unduly anxious to secure the best terms they could for Tibet.<sup>161</sup> Lamb pointed out that the main reason of the failure of the Simla Convention was the division of the whole Tibetan area into Inner and Outer line.<sup>162</sup> The outbreak of the World War I after the completion of Conference overshadowed the whole question of Tibet problem. The situation in the Eastern Tibet was not stable witnessing the clashes between the Tibetan and Chinese troops this created problem to the Lhasa authorities. Tibet demanded the British intervention in solving problems with China.

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<sup>159</sup> NAI, F&P, Secret-E, Proceedings, October 1914, File No. 134-396, pp. 52-57.

<sup>160</sup> NAI, F&P, Secret-E, Proceedings, October 1915, File No. 61-224, Pro. No. 189, p. 82.

<sup>161</sup> NAI, F&P, Secret-E, Proceedings, October 1915, File No. 61-224, Pro. No. 194, pp. 86-87.

<sup>162</sup> Lamb, *Tibet, China & India*, p. 40.

## Aftermath of the Simla Conference

The Tibetan Government has done what it could. For eleven years they were at war first with Great Britain and then with China, they maintain some ten thousand men in Eastern Tibet to keep the Chinese soldiers from advancing further. To all threats and inducements they have given straightforward replies, asking the Chinese Government to recognize the Convention that was signed in India which Chinese Plenipotentiary initialed. The Tibetan men in the frontier are not trained or equipped as are the Chinese troops they have no cannon, no mountain guns, no machine guns. Still they have done what they could, and so far they have kept the Chinese back.<sup>163</sup>

The Tibetans have been greatly disappointed owing to the Conference at Simla not having ended satisfactorily to all concerned. It is still unknown whether the Chinese will take forcible measures against them, but in the event of their doing so, they hope that the great British Government will do their best to support them.<sup>164</sup> Louis King, British Consul at Dartsedo, wrote to the J. N. Jordan, British Minister at Peking, that the news from the frontier reports no change in the situation and all the frontier districts appear to be quiet and the Chinese troops seem well in hand.<sup>165</sup> D. MacDonald, British Trade Agent at Gyantse and Yatung, reported to the Deputy Secretary to the Government of India in the Foreign and Political Department that a few Mongolians visited the Dalai Lama and presented him with twenty horses, four gold vases, and eight bundles of silk. The head lama of Kundeling Monastery has presented the Dalai Lama with one golden vase and four silver ingots. Three thousand people also tendered him various gifts. The Chinese soldiers still occupy Chiamdo, Riche, and Ngenda, and that there has been no fighting at these places. The Tibetan officers have collected 1,000 Tibetan troops at Tra-ya. The Tibetan General Dergese has collected 3,000 soldiers at Sangngen, with a view to regain his lost lands.<sup>166</sup> The “Kuo Min Pao” newspaper of 13<sup>th</sup> July publishes a Peking telegram stating that General Tsai Ao, formerly Military Governor of Yunnan, has been offered the appointment of Frontier Commissioner of Defence for the provinces of Szechuen and Yunnan, ‘Chuan Tien Pien Fang Chen Shou Shih’, but that he has declined the same. It is thought that the Government have

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<sup>163</sup> NAI, F&P, Secret-E, Proceedings, October 1915, File No. 61-224, Pro. No. 189, p. 83.

<sup>164</sup> NAI, F&P, Secret-E, Proceedings, March 1915, File No. 398-508, Pro. No. 408, p. 4.

<sup>165</sup> NAI, F&P, Secret-E, Proceedings, March 1915, File No. 398-508, Pro. No. 409, p. 5.

<sup>166</sup> NAI, F&P, Secret-E, Proceedings, March 1915, File No. 398-508, Pro. No. 413, p. 7.

the intention of reviewing the post held by the late Chao Erh Feng whose title was 'Chuan Tien Pien Wu Ta Chen', Warden of the Marches of Szechuen and Yunnan.<sup>167</sup>

The Chinese are concentrating their forces at Traya, where fighting continues between them and Tibetans. The Dalai Lama and the Tibetans are very grateful to the Government of India for the valuable gift of rifles presented to the Tibetan Government. The Dalai Lama also offered prayers for the success of Britain in the Great War.<sup>168</sup> On the 23 July 1914, the Chinese Commissioner addressed a representative gathering of lamas. He stated that the independence of Tibet was an unattainable ideal, that if Tibetan succeeded in throwing of her allegiance to China she must inevitably fall a victim to foreign aggression, and that Chinese sovereignty was the only protection against worse things. He then dwelt on the predominant religious and economic status the lamas had enjoyed under China's rule, and asserted that, if Tibet should fall under English control, the lamas' power and influence would be gone forever and their religion superseded by Christianity.<sup>169</sup>

The Szuchuan Kung Pao newspaper of 5 August 1914 states that, as the result of a conference on Tibetan affairs held in Peking between the President, Hsu Shih-chang and Sun Pao-ch'i, the telegraphic orders have been sent to the Commander-in-Chief at Chengtu and the Commissioner at Tachienlu directing them to strengthen the forces on the frontier in order to prevent Tibetan incursions. The Chinese troops were ordered to hold securely Tachienlu, Hsiangcheng and Chiamdo, but they are not allowed to act offensively without orders and not to advance westward beyond the Chinese frontier.<sup>170</sup> The Chinese have consolidated their position in the Chiamdo region.<sup>171</sup> From the report of H. H. Fox, Consul-General, Chengtu, to John Jordan, states regarding the present numbers and distribution of the Chinese troops in Eastern Tibet.<sup>172</sup>

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<sup>167</sup> NAI, F&P, Secret-E, Proceedings, March 1915, File No. 398-508, Pro. No. 416, p. 8.

<sup>168</sup> NAI, F&P, Secret-E, Proceedings, March 1915, File No. 398-508, Pro. No. 421, p. 10.

<sup>169</sup> NAI, F&P, Secret-E, Proceedings, March 1915, File No. 398-508, Pro. No. 426, p. 13.

<sup>170</sup> NAI, F&P, Secret-E, Proceedings, March 1915, File No. 398-508, Pro. No. 426, p. 12.

<sup>171</sup> NAI, F&P, Secret-E, Proceedings, March 1915, File No. 398-508, Pro. No. 426, p. 13.

<sup>172</sup> NAI, F&P, Secret-E, Proceedings, March 1915, File No. 398-508, Pro. No. 431, p. 14.

**Table 3.6:** The numbers and distribution of the Chinese troops in Marches

|                                                                 |                        |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|
| <b>Tachienlu district –</b>                                     |                        |
| Tachienlu                                                       | 1,100 men and six guns |
| Nomichangku                                                     | 100                    |
| Taowu                                                           | 30                     |
| Changku                                                         | 30                     |
| Total                                                           | 1,260 and six guns     |
| <b>Ting Hsiang Hsien command –</b>                              |                        |
| Litang                                                          | 200                    |
| T'ao Ch'eng                                                     | 300                    |
| Hsia Hsiang Ch'eng                                              | 300                    |
| Kung Ke Ling                                                    | 300                    |
| Lines of communication and scattered garrisons in Hsiang Ch'eng | 400                    |
| Ting Hsiang Hsien                                               | 1,200                  |
| Total                                                           | 2,700 and ten guns.    |
| <b>Batang command –</b>                                         |                        |
| Kantzu                                                          | 130                    |
| Batang                                                          | 400                    |
| Te Jung                                                         | 300                    |
| San Pa                                                          | 100                    |
| Chiangch'ia                                                     | 300                    |
| Yenching                                                        | 300                    |
| Nantun                                                          | 300                    |
| Total                                                           | 1,830 and two guns     |
| <b>Chiamdo or Leiwuch'i command –</b>                           |                        |
| Shih-ch'u                                                       | 130                    |
| Kung Chiao                                                      | 30                     |
| Chaya                                                           | 300                    |
| Between Enta, Leiwuch'i and Chiamdo                             | 1,800                  |
| Total                                                           | 2,260 and four guns.   |
| Grand total for Marches                                         | 8,050 men and 22 guns. |

**Source:** NAI, Foreign and Political Department, Secret-E, Proceedings, March 1915, File No. 398-508, Pro. No.431, p.15

All the troops at the front are well supplied for some months to come with ammunition, provisions and funds. The treasury here, however, is very nearly depleted and the Commissioner has only some 30,000 in hand. In addition to the regular troops each hsien-city has some 30 military police forming the magistrate's body-guard.<sup>173</sup> The Tibetan troops crossed the Salween and have occupied three important strategically important places, respectively, Pang Ta, Tso Kung and Pi T'u Ssu, situate between the Salween and Mekong rivers. The Chiayuchiaio region

<sup>173</sup> NAI, F&P, Secret-E, Proceedings, March 1915, File No. 398-508, Pro. No. 431, pp. 15-16.

was occupied by the main force of Tibetan and also the Banner country was occupied by Tibetan troops. Tibetans were holding all the main approaches to Tibet. Amongst the thousands of Tibetan troops on the frontier there are some two thousand men armed with modern rifles and properly organized as a military body. Chinese General Sun of Hsiang Cheng resigned and handed over to General Chi. A Chinese non-commissioned officer, who was captured by the Tibetans during the Chaya revolt and had escaped via Tsarong, claimed to have seen three foreigners with the Tibetan force at Pi T'u Ssu; they were, he says, in command, and had with them a portable bullet-making machine. This story is generally believed by the Chinese, as also is that to the effect that all the modern arms in the possession of the Tibetans have been supplied by the British Government.<sup>174</sup>

The relations between Tibet and China continued on the basis of undeclared hostilities after the Simla Conference. The Chinese made occasional attempts to negotiate an agreement regarding the frontier demarcation in eastern Tibet. However, they found the Dalai Lama's terms to be exacting and in addition, the British Government were swift to inform both sides that they looked upon any such meeting as a 'most discourteous and unfriendly act', in the light of Tibetan acceptance of the terms of the Simla Conference. The Tibetan Government, having resolutely refused Chinese overtures, repeatedly pressed the British to secure Chinese agreement to the Convention, and reminded them of their promise to supply arms and ammunition.<sup>175</sup> British were preoccupied due to the outbreak of World War I which began shortly after the end of Simla Conference this made Lhasa authorities anxious and feared that Chinese would try to take advantage of the British preoccupation with the situation in Europe to renew military activities against Tibet. Therefore in 1914 Britain sold arms and ammunition to Tibet.<sup>176</sup>

In his final memorandum, Sir Henry McMahon recommended that the Tibetan Government be presented with 3,000 to 5,000 rifles and 500,000 rounds of ammunition, and that the services of two or three military instructors be lent to the Tibetan Government.<sup>177</sup> Though this was a great help, it could not defend Tibet from an all-out Chinese attack. The undersigned is directed to state that the cost of the freight of 5,000 old 303 rifles and 500,000 rounds of

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<sup>174</sup> NAI, F&P, Secret-E, Proceedings, March 1915, File No. 398-508, Pro. No.437, p. 19.

<sup>175</sup> Singh, *Himalayan Triangle*, p. 83.

<sup>176</sup> Goldstein, *A history of Modern Tibet*, p. 77.

<sup>177</sup> NAI, F&P, Proceedings, June 1915, File No. 135-220, Pro. No. 135, p. 1.

ammunition supplied for presentation to the Tibetan Government as well as the cost of the ammunition referred to should be debited to the Civil (Political) Department.<sup>178</sup> The Government of India received letter from the Tibetan Prime Minister informing that the Chinese troop's aggression in the Eastern Tibet, and the news was also reported in Britain about the military aggression of China. The British Government in India replied to the Tibetan authority regarding present situation in eastern Tibet that they regret that they cannot do more at present than give the arms and ammunition to which the reference is made above.<sup>179</sup> The Government of India was prepared to lend the services of four Indian Non-Commissioned Officers, as Infantry Instructors, to the Tibetan Government.<sup>180</sup>

The Sho-Kang Minister informs the British Trade Agent, Gyantse, dated the 25 October 1915 that he has been instructed by the Dalai Lama to make the following communications that Chinese reinforcement's having arrived at Traya, the Tibetans have been compelled to abandon the Traya Monastery and to retreat. The Dalai Lama, therefore, asked for the immediate grant by the Government of India of 20 guns and maxims, with a sufficient supply of ammunition either on payment or as a loan. He also asked that rifles which have been presented to him by Government of India an extra 3,000,000 round of ammunition may be supplied on payment immediately. The Dalai Lama also requests that the Government of India will negotiate with the Chinese Government with a view to effect the withdrawal of Chinese troops from Tibet at an early date.<sup>181</sup> The Chinese collected taxes in kind and cash from the Tibetan subjects of Traya, thus not observing the treaty signed in India.<sup>182</sup>

The Government of India rejected the request made by the Tibetan authority for their demands and informed that it is not possible at present for them to supply any further ammunition or arms of any kind either on loan or on payment, also that news received from British Consular officials in Szechuan by the Government of India does not indicate that there is any fresh action on part of Chinese to warrant either further diplomatic representation at Peking

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<sup>178</sup> NAI, F&P, Proceedings, June 1915, File No. 135-220, Pro. No. 146, p. 8.

<sup>179</sup> NAI, F&P, Proceedings, June 1915, File No. 135-220, Pro. No. 149, p. 9.

<sup>180</sup> NAI, F&P, Proceedings, June 1915, File No. 135-220, Pro. No. 158, p. 13.

<sup>181</sup> NAI, F&P, Proceedings, June 1915, File No. 135-220, Pro. No. 176, Telegram from the British Trade Agent, Gyantse, to the Secretary of the Government of India, p. 21.

<sup>182</sup> NAI, F&P, Proceedings, June 1915, File No. 135-220, Pro. No. 207, p. 47.



or grant of further munitions of war.<sup>183</sup> The reason for the Tibetan Government request of arms and ammunition from the British was that they have received reports stating that reinforcements of Chinese troops have already arrived in Kham and attacked the Tibetans who were in their own territory, and that they are making preparations to make further attacks. Tibetan believed that they had no benefactors other than the British Government.<sup>184</sup>

The cost of ammunition plus freight to Siliguri is Rs.16045 and the Government of India agrees that, until amount is paid, ammunition should not be made over.<sup>185</sup> The Political Officer in Sikkim informed that he is making delivery of ammunition to the Tibetan Government contingent also on abolition of wool monopoly.<sup>186</sup> The Government of India has sanctioned the supply, on payment, of 200,000 rounds 303 ammunition to the Tibetan Government.<sup>187</sup> The British Government has arranged to lend them the services of four drill-instructors to work under the supervision of the Officer Commanding the escort at Gyantse. The Chinese military forces on the Tibetan frontier are disorganized by mutiny, and British Government thought that the situation justifies the grant of any further assistance to the Tibetan Government. The British Government, therefore, propose to inform the Dalai Lama, in reply to a letter addressed to the Viceroy, that his requests have received the fullest consideration, and that, in view of reports from British Consular officers specially deputed to watch events in the Marches, the British Government do not propose at present to furnish further military assistance or to despatch a British officer at Tachienlu specially appointed to watch the situation on the Eastern Frontier of Tibet and through diplomatic measures the British Government will do everything in their power to prevent Chinese aggression until such time as a final settlement in regard to the status of Tibet shall reached.<sup>188</sup>

One of the numerous results which the World War I has brought about is the unmistakable rapprochement between China and Tibet. As long as British influence dominated the Dalai Lama in Lhasa, Tibet was an irreconcilable opponent of China. Relations, however,

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<sup>183</sup> NAI, F&P, Proceedings, June 1915, File No. 135-220, Pro. No.178, Telegram from the Secretary to the Government of India; to the Political Officer in Sikkim, Gangtok, p. 22.

<sup>184</sup> NAI, F&P, Proceedings, June 1915, File No. 135-220, Pro. No. 189, Letter from the Chief Minister of Tibet to the British Trade Agent at Yatung and Gyantse, p. 32.

<sup>185</sup> NAI, F&P, Proceedings, June 1915, File No. 135-220, Pro. No. 210, p. 48.

<sup>186</sup> NAI, F&P, Proceedings, June 1915, File No. 135-220, Pro. No. 212, p. 48.

<sup>187</sup> NAI, F&P, Proceedings, June 1915, File No. 135-220, Pro. No. 203, p. 45.

<sup>188</sup> NAI, F&P, Proceedings, June 1915, File No. 135-220, Pro. No. 213, p. 49.

between China and Tibet have improved so much since the outbreak of the European war that direct negotiations are possible without the obligation of submission to British tutelage. The Chinese General Chang Yi, Commissioner of the Tibetan Marches, sent an agent to Lhasa with the objective to open direct negotiations with the Peking Government.<sup>189</sup> The Chinese in Eastern Tibet continue attempting to persuade the Tibetan Government to negotiate direct with them, without the intervention of the British Government. Another Chinese official, named Ting Da, was sent from Szechuan for this purpose. The struggle with China, protracted during several years, added to the shortage of supplies, is discouraging the Eastern Tibetans, who appear to be anxious for peace. The Tibetan Government has so far been able to take a firm stand in the matter, but it is clearly a matter of difficulty for them to withstand Chinese pressure.<sup>190</sup>

A meeting of the National Assembly of Tibet was held on the 26 February 1915, and it was decided that the National Assembly understand that the British and Japanese Governments are on friendly terms, while the relations between the Japanese and Chinese Governments are strained. Therefore a deputation consisting of Tsatrul Rimpoche (a Japanese knowing lama) and a 4<sup>th</sup> rank official should be sent to the Japanese Government with the request that they, as well as the British Government, would use their influence with the Chinese Government, to settle the Tibetan question. The cost of maintaining troops in the frontier for the Tibetan Government was becoming difficult and they could not afford the supplies necessary for stationing troops on the frontier indefinitely. The Tibetan Government wanted a meeting to be held between the British, Chinese and Tibetan Governments somewhere near Giamda (The capital of the Kongbu province of Tibet) to settle the Tibetan question. They desire the question to be settled one way or the other, even if fighting be necessary to settle it. The Dalai Lama, in reply to the National Assembly said that he did not see that any useful purpose would be served by sending a deputation to Japan as suggested, and said that it might arouse their suspicions against the Tibetan Government. In another meeting of the National Assembly, this was held on the 12 March 1915 the representatives of three monasteries of Sera, Drepung and Gaden were informed that the Dalai Lama had decided, as in the case of the people of Tibet, that the monasteries also should contribute ten per centum of their supply of grains for the use of the Tibetan troops. On the 18 March 1915, the representatives of the monasteries laid a protest saying that the three

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<sup>189</sup> NAI, F&P, Secret-E, Proceedings , October 1915, File No. 61-224, Pro. No. 89, p. 16.

<sup>190</sup> NAI, F&P, Secret-E, Proceedings , October 1915, File No. 61-224, Pro. No. 90, p. 17.

monasteries did not contribute grain to the Tibetan Government during the British Expedition of 1888-89 or during that of 1904, and should, therefore, be exempted in the same way in the present case also. In consideration of this exemption the monasteries offered to surrender to the Government the sum of Rs. 90,000 deposited with the three monasteries. The Tibetan Government had sought for the patronage of the British Government and therefore, whatever happened, they would not act against the advice of the British Government.<sup>191</sup>

The Tibetan Government never before had to keep an army in being for so long and the strain on their finances and meager military supplies was severe. For Dalai Lama the period was disappointing who have pinned his hopes to new ally, each new shipment was attached to a *quid pro quo*. His position was made even worse after 1916 when the British Government, on the plea of international restrictions, placed a total embargo on the supply of arms to Tibet from India and also prevented the Tibetan Government from obtaining munitions from Japan.<sup>192</sup>

On 28 October 1915, C. A. Bell, Political Officer in Sikkim, forwarded the letter of the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan Council (Shapes) and also the Lonchen Shatra to the Secretary to the Government of India in the Foreign and Political Department, informing that Kalon Tsa-rong Shape discussed with Mr. Bell the questions raised in these letters on the 28 September 1915 and subsequently. The requests of the Tibetan Government may be summed up as follows –<sup>193</sup>

- a) The conclusion of the Tripartite Convention, but, if this is not possible at present,
- b) To ask the Chinese to withdraw their troops from the Tibetan frontier so that the Tibetans may also do the same.
- c) Supply of mountain guns and machine guns from the British Government.
- d) The loan of the services of three or four good mechanics to teach the Tibetan mechanics at Lhasa how to make good ammunition for the rifles presented to the Tibetan Government by the Government of India, as the ammunition turned out at Lhasa is unsatisfactory.
- e) Assistance in the construction of a telegraph line between Lhasa Gyantse.

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<sup>191</sup> NAI, F&P, Secret-E, Proceedings, October 1915, File No. 61-224, Pro.No. 135, pp. 54-56.

<sup>192</sup> Richardson, *Tibet and its history*, p. 119.

<sup>193</sup> NAI, F&P, Secret-E, Proceedings, May 1916, File No. 28-33, Pro. No. 28, p. 1.

- f) Intention to levy a tax of 5 *Tangkas* per load, i.e., Rs. 1-4 per *maund* approximately, of wool and Yak hairs, tails, etc., as tax on the profits accruing from rearing sheep and cattle, and request that no objection may be taken by the Government of India to this

With the object of giving autonomy to Tibet the British Government made an agreement with the Tibetan Government and presented arms and ammunition and with other kindness on Tibet. As, however, the Treaty has not yet been finally concluded the Chinese in Kham are intriguing in many ways to upset the interests of Tibet. Therefore, Tsa-rong Shape, our Commander-in-Chief and his assistants are going to Gyantse to discuss with you the present state of affairs. The chief objective of the Lhasa authorities is the final conclusion of the Treaty between Tibet and China.<sup>194</sup>

As regards to some of the demands Mr. Bell reminded the Shape (an honorific term for a member of the governing council of Tibet) that “the Tibetan Government must take into consideration the present European war and the very heavy obligations which it entails on the British Government. He also reminded them that the British Government had rendered substantial diplomatic support at Peking and promised that this diplomatic support will be continued. Mr. Bell also informed them that with so many of the British troops engaged in several theatres of war, it is not possible for British Government to purchase mountain guns or machine guns for the Tibetan Government. The Shape was of opinion that he might be able to arrange through Calcutta gun makers for a few of these guns, of an older or inferior type, that would be of no use to the Government of India. In that case he would desire only a license to pass such guns through India to the Tibetan frontier. It appears that he is in communication with some firm in Calcutta on the subject. The Tibetan Government was at their wit’s end to find the revenue necessary for paying their troops and for the administration of their country. Their treasuries are depleted and this is one of the reasons for them to impose a tax on sheep and yaks. The Government of India was aware that Tibet is a pastoral rather than an agricultural country, sheep and yaks form the chief wealth of the pastoral areas. The Shape, who was the Commander-in-chief of the Tibetan army, told C. A. Bell that the 5,000 rifles, which the Government of India gave in 1914 to the Tibetan Government, had no bayonets attached to them. He therefore asked

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<sup>194</sup> NAI, F&P, Secret-E, Proceedings, May 1916, File No. 28-33, Pro. No. 28, Enclo. 1, p. 3.

that one bayonet, one only, might be sent them as a pattern, from which they would make others.<sup>195</sup>

The Shape also informed Mr. Bell that the Tibetan Government had learnt that the German Government had advised the Chinese Government to settle the Tibetan question now that the British are preoccupied with the European war. Shape also informed Mr. Bell that when the Dalai Lama was at Peking some years ago, the German Minister there informed His Holiness entourage that the British had shamefully oppressed Tibet. The Minister, therefore, offered to arrange for the sale to the Tibetan Government of German rifles and ammunition, to be dispatched *via* Siberia.<sup>196</sup>

The Chinese troops under Phin Tungling returned to the eastern Tibet bringing with him cannon, machine guns, chikar bou (probably a Chinese word) etc., and are making preparations for hostility. Also that Masi Utang will soon be coming to treat for peace but, if no settlement is then arrived at, Phin, assisted by some other Tunglings, will advance and attack Tibet. The Chinese are very cunning and may come upon Tibet all of a sudden. Tibetans was not prepared for a sudden attack from the Chinese, which may continue for many days and months together. The Tibetan officials talked with the firm called Lyon in Calcutta for the purchase of the machine guns which they replied stating that they will quote prices after hearing from Europe. The Chinese growing military presence in the Eastern part of Tibet, Tibetan informed the British authority for the supply of machine guns as soon as possible.<sup>197</sup>

The report from Mr. King which he received from his trustworthy source on 17 October 1915 that the Chinese Government, in view of the repudiation of negotiations by Tibetans Government, had resolved to use force and had instructed General P'en to advance on Lhasa.<sup>198</sup> J. N. Jordan informed the Edward Grey, that he instructed Mr. O. R. Coales to proceed to Tachienlu and relieve Mr. L. M. King as Intelligence Officer on the Tibetan Frontier. Mr. Coales, under this Jordan instruction proceeded to Peking from Shanghai, arriving here on 28 October 1915, in order that he might be presented to the Minister for Foreign Affairs and have the opportunity of becoming acquainted with the present position of affairs on the Tibetan

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<sup>195</sup> NAI, F&P, Secret-E, Proceedings, May 1916, File No. 28-33, Pro. No. 28, pp. 1-3.

<sup>196</sup> NAI, F&P, Secret-E, Proceedings, May 1916, File No. 28-33, Pro. No. 28, p. 2.

<sup>197</sup> NAI, F&P, Secret-E, Proceedings, May 1916, File No. 28-33, Pro. No. 29, p. 5.

<sup>198</sup> NAI, F&P, Secret-E, Proceedings, File No. 39-163, July 1916, Pro. No. 97, p. 33.

Frontier and with the nature of his duties as Intelligence Officer.<sup>199</sup> According to the Jordan instructions Mr. Coales will meet Mr. L. M. King in the headquarters at Tachienlu where he has been Resident for some two years, and Mr. Coales principal duty was to obtain information regarding the movements of Chinese troops in the March region and in Tibet.<sup>200</sup> The Chinese Government stated that they had no intention of sending a Chinese Envoy to Lhasa and that still less did they propose to invade Tibet with military force, and it was hardly conceivable that they could now have sanctioned a measure so directly at variance with their previous written declarations.<sup>201</sup>

In his letter C. A. Bell, mentioned that the Chinese in Eastern Tibet are still insisting on sending a Chinese official to Lhasa. In Lhasa there was trouble arising between the authorities of Tashlhunpo and the Dzongs under them in connection with the furnishing of supplies of the Tibetan army. The Kalon Lama and Shape Kun-sang-tse continue to urge the Tibetan Government repeatedly to negotiate terms of peace with the Chinese, arguing that the latter are friendly and that the British Government is now affording assistance to Tibet.<sup>202</sup>

The Chinese troops in the Sino-Tibetan frontier was reorganized consists of two commands under General Ch'en and P'en respectively. General Ch'en's command is a complete brigade formed by combining various units. The brigade consist of two regiments of three battalions of 4 companies of 3 sections of 42 men each, as follows –

**Table 3.7:** The Chinese troops under General Ch'en in the eastern Tibet frontier.

|                                            |           |
|--------------------------------------------|-----------|
| 42 men from 1 section                      | 42 men    |
| 3 sections from 1 company                  | 126 men   |
| 4 companies from 1 battalion               | 504 men   |
| 3 battalions from 1 regiment               | 1,512     |
| 2 regiments from 1 brigade                 | 3,024 men |
| Making a total for General Ch'en's command | 3,024 men |

**Source:** NAI, F&P Dept., Secret-E, Proceedings, File No. 39-163, July 1916, Pro. No.124, p.56

<sup>199</sup> NAI, F&P, Secret-E, Proceedings, File No. 39-163, July 1916, Pro. No. 99, p. 34.

<sup>200</sup> NAI, F&P, Secret-E, Proceedings, File No. 39-163, July 1916, Sub. Enclo. to Pro. No. 99, p. 34.

<sup>201</sup> NAI, F&P, Secret-E, Proceedings, File No. 39-163, July 1916, Pro. No. 106, p. 39.

<sup>202</sup> NAI, F&P, Secret-E, Proceedings, File No. 39-163, July 1916, Pro. No. 101, letter No. 335-E.C., dated Gangtok, the 9 (received 13) December 1915 (Confidential) from C. A. Bell, Political Officer in Sikkim, to the Secretary to the Government of India in the F&P, p. 36.

General P'en's command consists of twelve battalions, these battalions having an average actual strength, as before, of three companies of about 100 men each; making total for General P'en's command of 3,600 men. Of these twelve battalions, seven are directly under General P'en and five under Lieutenant-General Liu, who takes his order from General P'en.<sup>203</sup> The Tibetan Government informed the Tin Hru Hre, Chinese Frontier Officer of Szechuan, that they should not cross their frontier into Tibet and also issued orders to the commanders of the Tibetan troops that they should simply guard their country and should not advance.<sup>204</sup> The President of China received the Dalai Lama's message with veneration. The Central Government of China sent telegraphic orders to the different armies on the frontier that they should for the present only guard their own frontier and not advance beyond it.<sup>205</sup> D. Macdonald reported on February 1916 that at present everything is quiet in Eastern Tibet.<sup>206</sup>

O. R. Coales, Vice Consul at Tachienlu (H.B.M. Consular Service), reported on the situation on the frontier mentioned that "in the Marches the situation remains quiet and there is also no indication that the Tibetans intend to take advantage of the disturbances in China to invade the occupied territory. The conditions of the Chinese troops in the frontier were unsatisfactory. The men of the Pien Chun or Frontier Force after long years on the frontier have become "Tibetanised", living in almost native style with native wives."<sup>207</sup> The Tibetan Trade Agent informed that hostilities in Kham are at a standstill. The Tibetan Government was experiencing considerable difficulties in rationing their troops, partly owing to the scarcity of supplies and partly owing to the exhausted condition of the transport animals. A disease which appears to resemble dropsy is spreading among the Tibetan troops and is attributed by the Tibetan officials to the bad water-supply and to the insanitary condition of the camping grounds which have been occupied continuously for nearly three years. The Tibetan doctors, who are mostly lamas, are very unwilling to proceed to the front. The Chinese troops are said to be

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<sup>203</sup> NAI, F&P, Secret-E, Proceedings, File No. 39-163, July 1916, Pro. No. 124, pp. 56-57.

<sup>204</sup> NAI, F&P, Secret-E, Proceedings, File No. 39-163, July 1916, Pro. No. 126, p. 61.

<sup>205</sup> NAI, F&P, Secret-E, Proceedings, File No. 39-163, July 1916, Sub. Encl. 2 to Pro. No. 126, p. 61.

<sup>206</sup> NAI, F&P, Secret-E, Proceedings, File No. 39-163, July 1916, Pro. No. 127, letter dated Gyantse, the 1(received 8) February 1916, from D. Macdonald to the Foreign Secretary, Delhi, p. 62.

<sup>207</sup> NAI, F&P, Secret-E, Proceedings, November 1916, File No. 1-65, Pro. No. 1, p. 1.

suffering from the effects of a prolonged diet of ‘yak meat’ and ‘barley flour’ to which they are not accustomed.<sup>208</sup>

**Table 3.8:** Statement of the distribution of the Chinese troops in the Tibetan Marches.

| (A) – Pien Chun or Frontier Force                                                  |           |                                |                                                                                                     |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| General-in-Chief, Peng Jih-sheng                                                   |           |                                |                                                                                                     |
| General Tu Pei-chi: Headquarters at Chiamdo                                        |           |                                |                                                                                                     |
| Battalion                                                                          | Men       | Headquarters                   | Sub-station                                                                                         |
| 1 <sup>st</sup> Battalion                                                          | 300 men   | Enta                           | Nakung                                                                                              |
| 3 <sup>rd</sup> Battalion                                                          | 300 men   | Chaya (Draya)                  | Yentaitang                                                                                          |
| 5 <sup>th</sup> Battalion                                                          | 300 men   | Chaya                          | Kungchiao                                                                                           |
| 7 <sup>th</sup> Battalion                                                          | 300 men   | Chiamdo                        |                                                                                                     |
| 10 <sup>th</sup> Battalion                                                         | 300 men   | Waipa                          | Yentaitang                                                                                          |
| 11 <sup>th</sup> Battalion                                                         | 300 men   | North Road, Derge to Tachienlu |                                                                                                     |
| One Battalion Luchun, 504 Leiwuchi. Artillery, two filed guns, three machine guns. |           |                                |                                                                                                     |
| Lieutenant-General Liu Tsan-ting: Headquarters at Batang.                          |           |                                |                                                                                                     |
| 2 <sup>nd</sup> Battalion                                                          | 300 men   | Yenching                       | Sanai                                                                                               |
| 4 <sup>th</sup> Battalion                                                          | 300 men   | Batang                         |                                                                                                     |
| 6 <sup>th</sup> Battalion                                                          | 300 men   | Nantun                         | Kushu                                                                                               |
| 8 <sup>th</sup> Battalion                                                          | 300 men   | Ningching                      | Batang                                                                                              |
| 9 <sup>th</sup> Battalion                                                          | 300 men   | Tinghsiang                     | Chungcha                                                                                            |
| (B) – Lu Chun or Regular army                                                      |           |                                |                                                                                                     |
| General Chen Hsia-ling: Headquarters at Litang                                     |           |                                |                                                                                                     |
| 1 <sup>st</sup> Regiment                                                           | 1,512 men | Litang                         | Chingchi.<br>Hsingolo.<br>Tungngolo.<br>Yachiang (Hokou).<br>Mayen (Mangai)<br>Lamaya.<br>Huochuka. |
| 2 <sup>nd</sup> Regiment                                                           | 1,512 men | Tinghsiang                     | Taocheng (Taopa).<br>Kungskoling.<br>Huochuhsiang.<br>Tzuwu.<br>Tungkung.<br>Pomi.                  |
| Artillery, nine field guns, eight machine guns.                                    |           |                                |                                                                                                     |
| (C) – Tuliying (Independent or Frontier Commissioner's Force)                      |           |                                |                                                                                                     |
| One Battalion of nominal 504 men:- Tachienlu                                       |           | 200 odd men                    |                                                                                                     |
| Tengko and Shihchu                                                                 |           | 200 odd men                    |                                                                                                     |
| Part of these forms the Commissioner's Bodyguard.                                  |           |                                |                                                                                                     |
| (D) – Lu Chun (Artillery)                                                          |           |                                |                                                                                                     |
| Attached to the Pien Chun                                                          |           | 150 men                        |                                                                                                     |
| Attached to the Lu Chun                                                            |           | 150 men                        |                                                                                                     |

**Source:** NAI, F&P Dept., Secret-E, Proceedings, November 1916, file No. 1-65, Pro.No.8, p.6

<sup>208</sup> NAI, F&P, Secret-E, Proceedings, November 1916, File No. 1-65, Enclo. to Pro. No. 5, p. 4.



The situation on the frontier remains unchanged. The relations between the Chinese and Tibetan troops on opposite side of the Mekong and Salween are comparatively amicable. The troops on the both sides was employing their time cultivating the soil, and the only warlike demonstrations being daily parades of the rival forces in each other's view, the Tibetans was also showcasing the European style of drill.<sup>209</sup> The Tibetan Government was considering the advisability of establishing additional Arsenals at Shigatse and Gyantse. A suitable building has been purchased at Shigatse and Gyantse and sublet by December 1916.<sup>210</sup>

The Dalai Lama, who had commenced his annual religious retreat at *Nor-bu-Ling-ka* in December last, is still in deep meditation. This prolonged seclusion is unusual and is obviously due to the threatened Chinese advance into the Kham country. Although the relations between the Sera and Dre-pung monasteries were unfriendly, the Dalai Lama was always very popular and it was due to his good office that calm now prevails in Lhasa. A large Tibetan army was maintained under the command of the Ka-lon Lama to prevent Chinese aggression. The Tibetans still fear their approach. The Chinese are said to be fairly strong numbering 7 to 8 thousand and armed with breech-loading rifles, machine guns and field-pieces. There was no fighting during the year 1916 but a great deal of futile attempts was made by the Chinese to open negotiations with the Tibetans.<sup>211</sup> The Dalai Lama was pro-British and was constantly seeking to gain firm friendship with the British GOI to maintain her *status quo* in Asia through the strong support of the British.<sup>212</sup>

The Tibetan Trade Agent informed that Dalai Lama has decided to spend three years in meditation and throughout the period he will remain in the Norbu Ling Summer Palace, taking no part in public functions and receiving no pilgrims. The members of the Lhasa council will however, be received when there is state business of importance to be transacted. The Tibetan Trade Agent believes that Dalai Lama will probably continue to take an active part in the direction of external relations, but that the control of the internal affairs of the country will be largely left in the hands of the council.<sup>213</sup> This time it is surmised that the reason is, that he anticipates trouble with the Chinese, who are believed to be advancing towards Chamdo. The

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<sup>209</sup> NAI, F&P, Secret-E, Proceedings, November 1916, File No. 1-65, Pro. No. 14, p. 15.

<sup>210</sup> NAI, F&P, Secret-E, Proceedings, November 1916, File No. 1-65, Pro. No. 42, p. 37.

<sup>211</sup> NAI, F&P, Secret-E, Proceedings, May 1917, File No. 98-101, Pro. No. 98, pp. 2-3.

<sup>212</sup> NAI, F&P, Proceedings, October 1917, File No. 1-51, Pro. No. 3, p. 1.

<sup>213</sup> NAI, F&P, Secret-External, Proceedings, April 1917, File No. 77-157, Pro. No. 148, p. 49.

Tibetan soldiers have orders to resist should they advance into their country. The Kalon Lama, Tibetan Commander of the Field Troops in Kham, is stationed at Lho-jong about six days march from Chamdo. The strength of the Tibetan army is reported to be about 20,000, but is really about 12,000 mixed troops armed with about 3,000 modern rifles and the rest with matchlock prong-guns. They have also a few jingals and some muzzle loading cannons. The Chinese are believed to be about 7,000 strong, scattered between Jeykunde and Chamdo, all armed with modern rifles and fifteen machine guns. The Tibetans report that there are 2,000 reinforcements expected shortly at Chamdo. The Tibetans say that the Chinese are using persuasive measures and are giving large money presents to the Tibetans who visit them. They have been sending verbal messages that they are very anxious to be on friendly terms with the Tibetans, as they all belong to one family.<sup>214</sup>

In 1917 the Chinese General P'eng Jih-Sheng, Commander of the Chinese troops on the frontier, finding that neither his promise nor his threats induced the Tibetan Government to forsake the British connection and deal with him direct, decided to attack. The Tibetan troops were unprepared and the Chinese attacked during the religious festivals. Tibetan successfully drove out the Chinese from their territory of Mang-kam, Tra-ya, and Cham-do and recaptured most of the territory which had been seized by Chao Erh Feng several years before. Later on, a truce was made, the Tibetans retaining the lands which they had re-conquered but did not advance further into Chinese territory. P'eng had been on the frontier since Chao Erh Feng's early campaigns and towards the end of 1917 his position in the Tibetan territory was in financial straits.<sup>215</sup>

In the telegram date the 31 August 1917 from the Viceroy, Simla, to Secretary of State for India, London, pointed out that "it has long been realized by us that Convention will never be accepted by China as it stands, and we should gladly welcome settlement on workable lines. It seems doubtful however whether present moment is opportune. As regards China our opinion is offered with diffidence based as it necessarily is on very imperfect information. We cannot but feel however that political situation is so chaotic and unstable that even if existing Government could be brought to accept a new Convention agreeable both Tibet and ourselves, there would be

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<sup>214</sup> NAI, F&P, Secret-External, Proceedings, April 1917, File No. 77-157, Pro. No. 149, D. Macdonald letter to the Deputy Secretary to the Government of India, dated, Yatung, the 3 (received the 9) March 1917, pp. 50-51.

<sup>215</sup> Bell, *Tibet Past and Present*, p. 167.

no guarantee that it would be effectively binding on its successors, and little prospect of its being acquiesced in by provincial Governments. Any revision of Convention agreeable to Chinese would inevitably cause Tibet disappointment, which might disturb our present excellent relations and open door to fresh foreign intrigues. Hence we would recommend postponement of action till after war unless questions were raised in amicable spirit by Chinese Government themselves.”<sup>216</sup>

In the enclosure of Peking dispatch, No 153, dated the 19 May, of Mr. O. R. Coales, it was mentioned that “when the Simla Convention was formally adopted by the representatives of Great Britain and Tibet on July 3, 1914, it was confidently expected that, after some slight delay and the exercise of further persuasion and pressure in Peking, China would fall into the line and record her adherence also. But it became evident that no Chinese Government will adhere to the Convention in its present form. The present unsatisfactory state of affairs if continued indefinitely can have but one ending, the submission of the Tibetans to the Chinese, and consequently the loss of an opportunity for a satisfactory settlement of the Tibetan question which is never likely recur. Since the close of Conference in India the Chinese Government was endeavoring by persuasion and threats to induce the Tibetans to enter into separate negotiations with them. During the past two years the Chinese have been restrained from making a forward move against Lhasa by the influence exercised by Sir. J. Jordan over Yuan Shih-kai and by internal unrest culminating in the anti-monarchial rebellion. The great superiority of modern Chinese troops over the Tibetans has of course been demonstrated again and again of recent years.”<sup>217</sup>

The British officer Mr. O. R. Coales, proposed a plan to settle the Tibetan question once and for all by the conclusion of a new tripartite arrangement between Tibet, China and India in the following points –<sup>218</sup>

1. Complete autonomy of Tibet under Chinese suzerainty.
2. The boundaries of autonomous Tibet to follow the lines fixed in the Convention map for “Outer Tibet,” which correspond to what has in modern times been popularly considered

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<sup>216</sup> NAI, F&P, Secret-External, Proceedings, October 1917, File No. 1-51, Pro. No. 48, p. 40.

<sup>217</sup> NAI, F&P, Secret-External, Proceedings, October 1917, File No. 1-51, Pro. No. 31, pp. 29-32.

<sup>218</sup> NAI, F&P, Secret-External, Proceedings, October 1917, File No. 1-51, Pro. No. 31, p. 31.

to be the dividing line between China and Tibet (Batang boundary pillar), watershed between Yangtze and Mekong, watershed between sources of Yellow River and Yangtze, range South of Tsaidan swamps, etc.), the entire frontier to be exactly delimited later on by a British-Chinese-Tibetan boundary commission.

3. British and Chinese representatives of equal status with escorts of equal size (not to exceed three hundred men) to be stationed at Lassa for the purpose of looking after the interests of their respective nationals, advising the Tibetan Government regarding foreign relations and, in the case of Chinese representative, of seeing that the autonomous Government of Tibet does not by its acts violate the suzerain rights of China.
4. British and Chinese Trade Agents, or Consuls, of equal status to be stationed at the Trade Marts, which shall include Chiamdo, for the purpose of looking after the interests of and exercising jurisdiction over their respective nationals (which in the case of the Chinese would not include Tibetans), and of maintaining Consular relations with the local Tibetan officials.
5. Apart from the above no British or Chinese troops, or civil or military officials to be allowed in Tibet except with the concurrence of all three contracting parties; Chinese garrisons to be withdrawn from the Eastern Tibet and Kham within three months. Neither Great Britain nor China to interfere in any way with the internal administration of Tibet, nor to found colonies of their nationals in Tibet.
6. Extraterritorial rights for British and Chinese nationals in Tibet; British subjects to have the same rights of freedom and trade as Chinese; most favored nations clause for British and Chinese commerce.
7. Tibet not to be represented in the Chinese parliament.
8. Provisions in existing conventions, &c., inconsistent with or repugnant to present convention to lapse.
9. Treaty to be published at the trade markets throughout Tibet and Chinese Tibet. Great Britain engages to keep China fully informed of any negotiations or agreement she may enter into with Tibet.
10. China to adhere to the new Trade Regulations.
11. Religious rights of Dalai Lama over monasteries in the Kokonor, Kansu, and Szechuan to continue.

The British Government rejected the proposed agreement on the ground that the whole subject has been so thoroughly argued out with the Chinese Government in the past that a new conference would be merely a waste of time. China having agreed in principle to most of the above provisions, might be privately sounded through an intermediary, say a British Adviser, and the whole question settled with a minimum of negotiations. It is unfortunate that a Parliament is again in existence in Peking, since it would probably prove the chief stumbling block on the Chinese side.<sup>219</sup>

### **Sino-Tibet Frontier Crisis**

By the end of the 1917 the Tibetan troops under Kalon Chamba Tendar was able to defeat Chinese strong hold at Chamdo, the capital of Kham province, where most of their troops were stationed. The Tibetans also recovered most of the territory from the Chinese occupation. The Chamdo region was well fortified place, and the confrontation between the Chinese and Tibetan lasted for several months. The local inhabitants of the region who had suffered under Chinese rule came forward and supported the Tibetans against their fight with the Chinese troops.<sup>220</sup> The Tibet Council noted earlier to the British Officer C.A. Bell before the fighting broke out between Tibet and China that they received a report dated the 3 September 1917, from the Kalon Lama in Eastern Tibet. The reports states that the Chinese troops from Riwoche attacked our outposts at Basharitot and Zhi-sam Yeru and took two Tibetan soldiers, with arms, prisoners and also they attacked Zhi-sam on 1<sup>st</sup> September 1917. On the break-up of the Sino-Tibetan Conference the great British Government enjoined us not to attack each other, but the Chinese have not abided by this arrangement. If the Chinese behave in this way we shall be obliged to retaliate.<sup>221</sup> At any rate this campaign has shown that the Tibetans are willing to make sacrifices in order to recover their territory from Chinese rule. It has shown that the Tibetans are at last learning again how to fight.<sup>222</sup>

Throughout 1917-18 repeated messages poured from the Tibetan Government entreating the British Government to help secure a permanent settlement with regard to the Tibet-China frontier. At the same time they redoubled their efforts to acquire more arms and ammunition

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<sup>219</sup> NAI, F&P, Secret-External, Proceedings, October 1917, File No. 1-51, Pro. No. 31, p. 31.

<sup>220</sup> Shakabpa, *Tibet A Political*, p. 260.

<sup>221</sup> NAI, F&P, Secret- E, Proceedings, May 1918, file No. 15-145, Encl. to Pro. No. 34, p. 53.

<sup>222</sup> Bell, *Tibet Past and Present*, p. 168.

from India, but neither met with much response.<sup>223</sup> In the forwarded copy of a letter from the Chief Minister of Tibet and other papers regarding on affray between Chinese and Tibetan outposts and the request of the Tibetan Government for machine guns and ammunitions etc.,<sup>224</sup> had given the total supply of the arms and ammunitions to the Tibet since 1914.

**Table 3.9:** Arms and ammunitions supply to Tibet by the British GOI

| Year of Supply | Rifles            | Ammunition     | Whether free or on payment |
|----------------|-------------------|----------------|----------------------------|
| 1914           | 5000 – 303 Rifles | 500,000 Rounds | Free                       |
| 1915           | ...               | 200,000 Rounds | On Payment                 |
| 1916           | ...               | 200,000 Rounds | On Payment                 |

**Source:** NAI, F&P, Secret-E, May, 1918, file No. 15-145, Pro. No. 52

In a letter dated Delhi, 9 January 1918, Denys Bray, Deputy Secretary to the Government of India in the Foreign and Political Department replied to the letter of C. A. Bell, Political Officer in Sikkim, dated 8<sup>th</sup> December where Bell has mentioned about Chinese aggression in Eastern Tibet and the request of the Tibetan Government that they may be supplied with arms and ammunition and that negotiations may be reopened with the Chinese Government for the settlement of the Tibetan question. Bray replied that these matters referred to HMG. As you are aware the Government of India was hardly less anxious than the Tibetan Government that the Tripartite Convention which had been accepted by themselves in 1914 should be accepted also by the Chinese Government. He further added that the experience of the past four years however has made it abundantly clear that the Chinese Government will never willingly assent to the Convention as it stands. In particular there is little or no likelihood that they will ever assent to the artificial division of Tibet into Inner and Outer Tibet or to the distinction between Inner and Outer Tibet is the regions involved - their strategic and economic values should be delineated relinquishment of their claims over Inner Tibet which rightly or wrongly they claim to be territory which has been Chinese from time immemorial. On the other hand, if the Tibetan Government were to relinquish its claims to Inner Tibet, the Chinese Government could possibly be induced to give their consent to a Convention framed on the lines of the memorandum

<sup>223</sup> Singh, *Himalayan Triangle*, p. 84.

<sup>224</sup> NAI, F&P, Secret-E, May, 1918, file No. 15-145, Pro. No. 52, p. 7.

enclosed in the marginally noted despatch. Bray also mentioned that the HMG has agreed to supply 500,000 rounds of ammunitions to Tibet.<sup>225</sup>

The situation in the eastern Tibet was not settled permanently though Chinese troops were defeated and left the region there was utter need for the settlement of boundary question between Tibet and China. It was at this juncture that the local Chinese leaders on the frontier sought the help of Eric Teichman, the British Consular Officer stationed at Chengtu to negotiate a truce on the basis of the *status quo*. Teichman who took the charge from O. R. Coales at Tachienlu as the British officer and later became British Consular Officer in place of Louis King at Chengtu noticed the crisis between Tibetan and Chinese thought that early settlement of frontier dispute is needed. He considered the situation to be grave beyond measure. To him more than anyone else, the Chinese and Tibetans owed a temporary boundary settlement, followed by a one-year truce. By June 1918 Teichman, to settle the problem had written to Jordan regarding the crisis. On the one hand he wanted General Liu, the Chinese commander at Batang, invested with fullest authority to act on behalf of Peking as also of Szechuan. The observation of Teichman regarding Tibetan occupation of Chantui and of Derge this would rather anticipate Chinese authorities to further hostilities.<sup>226</sup>

During his service at Tachienlu, Teichman witnessed different political events in the frontier between Tibetan troops and Chinese, and among the local tribesmen which he have recorded in the dispatch which he have addressed to His Majesty's Minister at Peking, under flying seal through His Majesty's Consul-General at Chengtu, dated Tachienlu, the 11 December 1917. In this dispatch he has mentioned that "it is difficult observe that who were the aggressors; probably the Pien Chun soldiers were to blame originally for seizing the two Tibetans, which caused the Tibetans to attack them; it seems unlikely that there was any premeditated aggression on the part of the leaders on either side. The Chinese Authorities on the frontier, who are being more than usually neglected at present, far from having any intention of advancing are nervous about their position, and doubtful of their ability to maintain themselves should the Tibetans attack in earnest. A widespread revolt of the tribesmen in the frontier territory now, combined with a determined advance by the Lhasa troops on Chiamdo, would probably overwhelm the

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<sup>225</sup> NAI, F&P, Secret- E, Proceedings, May 1918, file No. 15-145, Pro. No. 77, pp. 84-85.

<sup>226</sup> Parshotam Mehra, *The McMahon Line and After A study of the Triangular Contest on India's North-eastern Frontier Between Britain, China and Tibet, 1904-47*, London, Macmillan, 1974, p. 317.

Chinese for the time being entirely, but apart from the Hsiangch'eng troubles there are so far no signs whatsoever that a general rising is impending. Without such a rising any local success that the Tibetan troops might gain in the vicinity of Chiamdo would be likely to be of a temporary nature only.”<sup>227</sup>

As regards the claim of the Tibetan Government to do as they please regarding Nyarong and Derge, the map attached to the 1914 Convention shows clearly that Derge and Nyarong are outside autonomous Tibet (or Outer Tibet), and the Tibetan Government therefore have no claim to temporal jurisdiction in these provinces. The Yangtze boundary, to the acceptance of which they demur, will indeed give them more territory than they would get under the terms of the 1914 Conventions. It is plain that their recent military successes have encouraged the Tibetan Government to adopt a policy of aggrandisement and they evidently mean to pay no heed to our exhortations and advice but to make the most of their present favourable position. Their unreasonable frame of mind is shown in their demand for an immediate settlement instead of temporary truce despite our having made it clear to them that the latter is an essential preliminary to a final settlement. The time therefore appears to have arrived for dealing firmly with the Tibetan Government, and a warning should perhaps be conveyed to them that unless they abandon their policy of aggrandisement and act on the advice given them as regards a temporary boundary and co-operate to bring about truce which the Government of India are anxious to see arranged in interests of Tibet, the Government of India will be constrained to withhold in future the support and assistance they have been giving them.<sup>228</sup>

The action suggested above disposes of the second desideratum referred to in Foreign Secretary's note, dated the 7 August. As regards –<sup>229</sup>

- a) The Chinese Government have refused to invest General Liu with authority to negotiate a temporary settlement, and Sir John Jordan has instructed Mr. Teichman to arrange a truce without such authority as he has little hope of the Central Government giving it. In the circumstances, there seems little use in suggesting that the Chinese Government should

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<sup>227</sup> NAI, F&P, Secret-E, Proceedings, May 1918, File No. 15-145, Pro. No. 117, Dispatch dated Tachienlu, the 11 December 1917 (received the 11 February 1918) from Eric Teichman, to A. H. Grant, Foreign Secretary to the Government of India in the F&P, Delhi, p. 137.

<sup>228</sup> NAI, F&P, Secret-E, Proceedings, October 1918, File No. 11-202, Pro.No. 99, p. 16.

<sup>229</sup> NAI, F&P, Secret-E, Proceedings, October 1918, File No. 11-202, Pro.No. 99, p. 16-17.



be pressed in the matter, especially as General Liu is preparing to negotiate without the authority of his Government, and Sir John Jordan thinks that any local arrangement which Teichman can make may possibly influence the Central Government in coming to terms.

- b) Mr. Teichman has been definitely told that he should not raise the Derge question at the Chiamdo Conference and he is not likely therefore to pursue his idea of a buffer state. We should perhaps support his proposal to stipulate that Chinese troops should not be stationed at Nyarong and indeed suggest that this should apply also to Derge (at present both these localities are free of Chinese troops.) as such a condition would probably remove the principal objections the Tibetan Government have to the Yangtze boundary and would reconcile them to withstanding their troops who have apparently already occupied these regions.
- c) As regards Major Campbell's request to be supplied with a copy of the 1914 Convention and map in their final form, it may be pointed out that it is not intended that these documents should be supplied to the Political Officer in Sikkim officially until something definite is settled about the Convention.

By the end of July, the Tibetan and British Governments had approved the negotiations, but General Liu never received permission from the Chinese Government but the three members proceeded with the talk. On 11 August 1918, the negotiations commenced. Teichman opened by pointing out two things firstly, General Liu, should make clear to the Chinese Government that if they did not ratify any agreement signed in Chamdo, that the Tibetans would have no recourse but to continue their advances on Batang. Secondly, that these negotiations were for provisional peace between the Chinese and Tibetans until the three governments could arrange a permanent settlement. The Kalon Lama a Tibetan representative and General Liu presented statements which were mostly concerned primarily with establishing the limits of their territory.<sup>230</sup> Teichman negotiated two settlements the first was a ceasefire, signed at Chamdo on 19 August

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<sup>230</sup> Carole McGranahan, 'From Simla to Rongbatsa: The British and the "Modern" Boundaries of Tibet,' *The Tibet Journal*, vol. 28, no.4, 2003, pp.39-60, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/43302541> accessed on 15 June 2023.

and the second was a supplementary agreement enforcing a truce and troops' withdrawals, at Rongbatsa<sup>231</sup> on 10 October.<sup>232</sup>

In the agreement which was signed by all the parties agreed to undertake to regard the Yangtzu River (Dre Chu or Chin Sha Chiang) from the existing borders of Yunnan Province in the South to the existing borders of the Kokonor (i.e., the territory now controlled by the Sining and Jyekundo officials) in the North as the temporary frontier line for military and other purposes; the Tibetan troops remaining to the West, and the Chinese troops remaining to the East, of this frontier line respectively; the existing borders of Yunnan and the Kokonor remaining unchanged. The agreement also mentioned that in the event of any dispute arising between the Tibetan and Chinese Authorities on the frontier which is incapable of peaceful settlement between the parties concerned there shall be no recourse to arms; but the matter in dispute shall be referred to the British Consular Officer for his arbitration, or for the arbitration of his Minister or Government; in order to enable the British Consular Officer to carry out successfully and satisfactorily his duties as arbitrator and middlemen generally he shall receive every assistance from the Chinese and Tibetan frontier Authorities in traveling through the frontier districts and in visiting the frontier officers.<sup>233</sup> Teichman, considered that a Yangtzu boundary would be preferable, as being a simpler and more stable arrangement.<sup>234</sup>

The Tibetan Government was demanding for the supply of arms and ammunition in payment from the British Government in India which was brought under consideration the supply of following items listed below –

**Table 3.10:** Arms and ammunition supply to Tibet by the British GOI

|                                                                                                                                                    |           |          |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|----------|
| Two L. V. Maxims complete with spare parts boxes and Mark IV mounting can be made available; also the 1,300,000 rounds of Mark VI ball ammunition. |           |          |
|                                                                                                                                                    | Rs. A. P. | Rs. A.P. |
| 2 Maxims at £54 5s. each or....                                                                                                                    | 1,627 8 0 |          |
| 2 Spare part boxes at 31/7. each                                                                                                                   | 940 8 0   |          |

<sup>231</sup> Rongpats'a (Rongbatsa) is a wealthy district formerly belonging to Hor Drio and Dege (Derge). The population was about equally divided between the two states and two officials resided in Drio and Adu (Dege) P'odros respectively. In addition to agriculture and grazing the people, like those of Karnze, are extensively engaged in the Lhasa tea trade. A main road to Paiyu and Batang branches off to the south. *Source:* NAI, F&P, May 1918, File No 15-145, p. 9.

<sup>232</sup> Mehra, *The McMahon Line and After*, p. 322.

<sup>233</sup> NAI, F&P, Secret-E, Proceedings, October 1918, File No. 11-202, Pro.No. 104, pp. 23-24.

<sup>234</sup> NAI, F&P, Secret-E, Proceedings, October 1918, File No. 11-202, Enclo. 1, to Pro. no. 143, p. 118.

|                                                                           |             |             |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|
| or...                                                                     |             |             |
| 2 Mark tripod mountings at 24/15 each or...                               | 742 8 0     |             |
|                                                                           | Total       | 3,310 8 0   |
| Add 12 ½ per cent sea and rail freights                                   | 413 13 0    |             |
|                                                                           |             | 3,724 5 0   |
| 50,000 rounds of ball ammunition for two Maxim guns as Rs.55 per 1,000    | 2,750 0 0   |             |
| 1,250,000 rounds of ammunition for the old. 303 rifles at Rs.55 per 1,000 | 68,750 0 0  |             |
| Total                                                                     | 71,500 0 0  |             |
| Add 2 ½ per cent rail feight                                              | 1,787 8 0   |             |
|                                                                           | Total       | 73,287 8 0  |
|                                                                           | Grand Total | 77,011 13 0 |

**Source:** NAI, F&P, July 1919, File No. 15-96, p.7

The Tibetan authorities reported the British government that the Chinese are making active preparations for the attack in Tibet after the end of one-year Rongbatsa truce which was getting expired on October 1919. Moreover, Mr. Hewlett and Mr. Teichman have suggested to the His Britannic Majesty's Minister at Peking that early steps should be taken for arranging direct with the Canton Government for the extension of present armistice pending a final settlement, and if this can be arranged the danger of resumption of hostilities between the Chinese and Tibetans may be averted indefinitely.<sup>235</sup>

According to Tsepon W. D. Shakabpa, that it is clear from the wording of those agreements, and the events which led up to them, that Tibet was a power not to be ignored. References to the governments of China, Tibet, and Great Britain in the agreements and the fact that China had to appeal to the British to mediate should be evidence enough of Tibet's independence.<sup>236</sup> In Teichman observation regarding these agreements was that it created the basis for further negotiations between the Tibetan and Chinese.<sup>237</sup> The Chinese attitude to the Chamdo-Rongbatsa was same as it was reflected in Simla 1914 when they protested the participation of Tibetan representative though both the event was different but the Chinese attitude remained unchanged.

<sup>235</sup> NAI, F&P, Secret-E, Proceedings, July 1919, File no. 15-96, Pro. no. 80, p. 13.

<sup>236</sup> Shakabpa, *Tibet A Political*, p. 262.

<sup>237</sup> Lamb, *Tibet, China & India*, p. 68.

The British relations with Tibet during this time was different they did not supplied the Tibetan Government with the arms and ammunitions. Ever since the weakening of the military position of the Chinese in the Marches and the forward move of the Tibetans in that region, British Government have ignored repeated requests of the Tibetan Government for munitions of war, and, as pointed out by Major Campbell, the London Foreign Office also consider that, unless attacked by the Chinese the Tibetan Government should be given no further assistance to encourage them to continue their policy of aggression until further attacked from the Chinese side.<sup>238</sup> In May 1919, the Chinese put forward proposals for a compromise formula based on Simla Conference. They proposed that Tibet was part of China and this should be inserted into the treaty itself. Chinese Commissioners were to be stationed at the trade marts; autonomous Tibet should be recognize Chinese suzerainty, and a revision of the old historic boundary line of autonomous Tibet should include an Inner Tibet consisting of Derge, Nyarong and the southern portions of the Kokonor territory. Tachienlu, Batang and Litang were to be included in Szechuan and the original jurisdiction of Yunnan and Hsiang Cheng was to remain unchanged.<sup>239</sup> Alastair Lamb traces out that to settle the Tibetan question British has two obvious possibilities, either to set of bilateral discussion between the British and Chinese in Peking, or a tripartite talk by exploring the possibility of creating a new instrument to replace abortive Simla Conference. Jordan had failed to convince Chinese in Peking negotiations. With the opening of 1920 it became quite clear to the British Legation in Peking that the negotiations with China reagarding Tibet will remain unsettle. India Government during this period saw Tibet from a very vintage point. The British Political Officer in Sikkim and other British officials like the Gynatse Trade Agent, had to deal with the Government of Tibet which fundamentally theocratic in nature. China considers the Tibet problem as the internal matter and they did not appreciated the participation of British as mediator in every crisis of Sino-Tibet. By the beginning of second decade of twentieth century it became clear that the history of the Tibetan problem was clearly entering new phase. The British Government attempts to bring China to some binding agreement which would protect those features of Tibetan autonomy so desirable to the security of British

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<sup>238</sup> NAI, F&P, Secret-E, Proceedings, July 1919, File no. 15-96, Pro. no. 44, p. 5.

<sup>239</sup> Singh, *Himalayan Triangle*, p. 85.

India without, at the same time abandoning Chinese claims to some kind of special position in Tibet and thus alienating Chinese opinion, had failed.<sup>240</sup>

The Chinese regime wanted to settle their problem with Tibet through bilateral way for this purpose they gave green signal to Kansu Mission to Lhasa. The main objective of the Kansu Mission of the Chinese was to deal with Tibet alone without the presence of British as mediator. This Chinese Mission into Tibet laid uncertainty among the administrators in India and as in Whitehall and the Legation in Peking which made them rethink about their policy towards Tibet. British to rebuild or to strengthen its hold in Lhasa they thought of sanctioning of arms and ammunition for Tibet. According to Parshotam Mehra the Whitehall took Tibetans for granted, and the British Officer on the spot could not 'possibly negotiate' unless the British Government acted as mediators. Nor Lhasa willingly accepted the gratuitous role of Great Britain especially when China regarded as Tibet as 'irredenta country' to be recovered and incorporated in China.<sup>241</sup>

In the translated letter of the Chief Minister of Tibet addressed to Major W. L. Campbell, Political officer in Sikkim, dated 3 January 1920, it is mentioned that "His Holiness Dalai Lama wrote on the 3 December 1919 both to his Excellency the Viceroy and yourself. The officers said to have sent by the President at Peking with presents to His Holiness the Dalai Lama and letter in Chinese thorough the Kalon Lama, the Commissioner of Eastern Tibet. A report has also been received from the officers at Nagchukha stating that Li Chung Lien, Darin, the representative of the Governor of Lanchoufu, and Tru Chi Hsiu, Darin, the representative of the Amban of Hsiningfu, with a party of fourteen persons, and Curong (Ku Lang Tsang) Lama with a party of sixteen persons have arrived at Hor Drachen on the 22 December 1919 and that they will start for Lhasa on the 24 December 1919 and that Lab Trulku will start later on. If, on their arrival at Lhasa, they open negotiations for the settlement of the trouble between China and Tibet it will not be possible to proceed with the discussion without the meditation of the British Government."<sup>242</sup>

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<sup>240</sup> Lamb, *Tibet, China & India*, pp. 83-99.

<sup>241</sup> Mehra, *The McMahon Line and After*, pp. 347-348.

<sup>242</sup> NAI, F&P, Sec-E, Proceedings, May 1920, File No. 4-142, Pro. no. 43, p. 45.

Charles Bell advocates that a British officer must be sent to Lhasa now or in near future, but, until the Chinese Government reply to the proposal for tripartite negotiations at Lhasa which is still awaited, is received by the Peking Legation, nothing can apparently be done. Although as Bell thinks the Chinese Mission now at Lhasa may attempt to conduct negotiations without the intervention of the British Government. The Tibetan Government is firm in their resolve not to discuss the settlement without the mediation of the British Government and it is unlikely that any delegate will be sent without British instructions with the Chinese Mission to China. The return of the Mission after the Tibetan new year (20 February) without a Tibetan delegate would be all to the good. Bell has not yet furnished us with his views in the matter, but to be on the safe side it seems advisable that a reply should be sent to the Dalai Lama at once if only to hasten the departure of the Chinese who may not leave Lhasa until His Holiness can give them a definite reply. Bell may accordingly be instructed to send a reply to the effect that the question of the negotiations being resumed at Lhasa is under discussion with the Chinese Government and that the Tibetan Government should not entertain the request of the Kansu Mission now at Lhasa, which it has been ascertained from the Chinese Government, does not in any sense represent them.”<sup>243</sup> The impact of this mission was felt firmly in India and the demand for a rival mission to be sent to Lhasa to establish British presence became stronger among the administrator in India. The Kansu mission provided Curzon with a very convenient excuse for further British Involvement in Tibet, which happened during his tenure as the Viceroy of India in the beginning of twentieth century when he sent Younghusband Expedition in 1903 which was military in nature, but this time the Mission was dispatched under the leadership of Charles Bell in late 1920 was no invasion force, although it did have the equally serious purpose of reestablishing British interest in Tibet.<sup>244</sup>

### **Charles Bell’s Mission to Lhasa**

In 1920 Dalai Lama invited Charles Alfred Bell to Lhasa on a friendly gesture. He was known as “British India’s ambassador to Tibet” before retiring from his service. He also served as the British Political Officer for Bhutan, Sikkim and Tibet. However, for few months the Indian Government’s decision to send Bell was held up in London. Later, Bell wrote in his work that

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<sup>243</sup> NAI, F&P, Sec-E, Proceedings, May 1920, File No. 4-142, p. 7.

<sup>244</sup> Palace, *The British Empire and Tibet*, p. 135.

“my reception by the Dalai Lama, in the Jewel Park, was of extremely friendliness. He was not seated in the formal fashion on his throne, as is usual, but received me in his private apartments, as he had done in the old days at Darjeeling, when he came to us in trouble and we did our best to make things easy for him.”<sup>245</sup> The growing interference of the Chinese in Tibetan affairs and the Kansu Mission to Lhasa brought British Government under uncertainty regarding the hidden motives of China over Tibet.

Charles Bell writes in his telegram dated the 26 August 1920, to the Foreign Secretary in Simla, that “the Chief Minister and the Dalai Lama told my friend more than once that they were very apprehensive of my retiring before Treaty is settled as I took part in its conception and am familiar with Tibetan politics. They are anxious in any case that I should visit Lhasa before I retire to discuss the whole situation with the Tibetan Government and especially with the Dalai Lama as business cannot be transacted by correspondence alone and some considerable time has passed since we last met. China is fully occupied with her own domestic troubles and they do not think therefore that my visiting Lhasa would encouraged China to take aggressive action against Tibet; moreover they would inform the Chinese that the visit of a British Representative to Lhasa is the naturally corollary of the visit of the Chinese Envoy to that place. On the contrary they are of opinion, and so am I, that my visit will stimulate China towards negotiating the Treaty.”<sup>246</sup>

The Bell’s mission to Tibet was mainly focused on the strengthening friendship between India-Tibet with new dimensions. The mission was to mark a turning point in British policy towards Tibet. Bell pointed out that the failure to bring about a tripartite settlement and India’s refusal to meet the Tibetans demand for an increase in military aid had been the prime cause of reducing British prestige in Lhasa. On 31<sup>st</sup> May 1920 J. E. Shuckburgh, Secretary, Political Department Indian Office, Whitehall, mentioned in his letter that “it will be observed that the immediate requirements of the Tibetan Government, as stated by Mr. Bell, comprise –

- a) 2 machine guns, with 50,000 rounds of ammunition
- b) 1,250,000 rounds of rifle ammunition.

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<sup>245</sup> Bell, *Tibet Past and Present*, p. 181.

<sup>246</sup> NAI, F&P, Secret-E, Proceedings, November 1920, File No. 1-102, Pro. No. 74, p. 71.

Mr. Bell's arguments emphasise the need for an early solution of the difficulty in regard to the supply of arms for the use of the Lhasa Government."<sup>247</sup>

India's Tibet policy was significantly influenced by the two colonial offices of the British Empire. The India Office was founded in London in 1858 to supervise the governance of the Provinces of India, with the viceroy and other administrators. The other significant department was the Foreign Office established in 1782, which was in charge of advocating for and safeguarding British interests globally within the British Empire. The India Office was informed by the Foreign Office on 23 September 1920 that "as Tibet was not a party to the Arms Traffic Law (signed 10 September 1919) the supply of munitions to the Tibetan Government would be contrary to its provisions. The India Office asked reconsideration of the question and pointed to the exceptional circumstances of the case as the inability of the Peking Government to control the aggressive tendencies of local officials compelled Tibet to put herself in a state of defence." The Indian Office were further informed on 23 October 1920 that "the question had been submitted to an International Department meeting on the Arms Convention which has decided that such action 'would be most emphatically a violation of the Convention'. We were told by Mr. Wilton, Consul-General in China, who has had special experience of questions affecting Tibet and an authority on these matters, that there was no need to give the Tibetans arms as there was no real danger of the Chinese attacking them. The Government of India and His Majesty's Minister at Peking have now come forward with a suggestion that as Tibet has always been looked upon as autonomous we should invite her to adhere to the Arms Convention in like manner as Canada is a party to it; that we should tell the Chinese openly what we propose to do and invite them to come to a friendly settlement, that we send a Resident to Lhasa and open Tibet. We have no objection to sending an officer to Lhasa, but the British Political Officer in Sikkim, Mr. Bell, points out that it is useless to send one unless he can bring the Tibetan Government some assurance as regards ammunition to relieve their dangerous situation. The Indian Office do not entirely favour the solutions of Tibet joining the Convention as Canada has done, nor do they see much use in deputing a British officer to Lhasa. In their opinion the question of immediate urgency being the supply of arms."<sup>248</sup>

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<sup>247</sup> NAI, F&P, Secret-E, Proceedings, November 1920, File No. 1-102, Pro. No. 55, p. 54.

<sup>248</sup> NAI, F&P, Secret-E, Proceedings, November 1920, File No. 1-102, Encl.1 to Pro. No. 63, pp. 57-59.



According to Bell, the Chinese could not reasonably object to Tibet importing munitions through India. Any objection on the part of China would be further discounted by the fact that Chinese officers and soldiers in Tibet and China had frequently and openly sold rifles and ammunition on a large scale to the Tibetans. One Chinese General alone had sold three hundred rifles. And for us to bar their passage from or through India was not the right treatment to show towards a friendly neighbour.<sup>249</sup> The main instruction for the Bell during this mission was to urge the Tibetan Government to end the hostilities with the China and to find out whether the Tibetans were contemplating a separate settlement between themselves and the Chinese. The British Government also informed Bell that his stay in Tibetan capital must not last more than one month but as negotiations with China dragged on, and Jordan was succeeded by Beilby Alston at Peking encouraged him to prolong his stay in the hopes that Peking might be impressed with the fact that the British Government was earnest about negotiations.<sup>250</sup> During his private conversation with the Dalai Lama, Bell discussed on various issues relating Tibet political and her relations with British and suggested to increase the number of Tibetan army which he seemed was inadequate.<sup>251</sup>

After considerable discussion between the London, Peking and India, by June 1921, British decided to ask Chinese to reopen negotiations of their 20 May 1919 proposals. If they declined they should be informed that the Tibetans would receive arms and ammunition from the British. Chinese like in the past was not ready to discuss in the matter of Tibetan question which made British to sanction the arms and ammunition to Tibet. On 11 October 1921 Bell had an interview with the Dalai Lama in which he reported that the GOI were prepared to supply Tibet on payment with the quantity of arms and ammunition which Bell had recommended in February, namely 10 pieces of mountain artillery with adequate ammunition, 20 machine guns, 10,000 Lee-Enfield rifles and an initial supply of 1,000,000 rounds, with the possibility of like amounts of ammunition each year in future.<sup>252</sup> Bell in his final report of the mission presented summary of results obtained by this mission can be as follows –<sup>253</sup>

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<sup>249</sup> Bell, *Tibet Past and Present*, p. 193.

<sup>250</sup> Singh, *Himalayan Triangle*, p. 88.

<sup>251</sup> Bell, *Tibet Past and Present*, pp.184-185.

<sup>252</sup> Lamb, *Tibet, China & India*, pp.118-121.

<sup>253</sup> NAI, F&P, Secret-E, 1922, File No. 393, Serial Nos. 1-9, Encl. to S. no. 1, Lhasa Mission, November 1920 to October 1921 Final Report, dated Delhi, the 29 (received 30) November 1921, from C. A. Bell, to the Secretary of GOI, in the Foreign and Political Department, pp. 4-8.

- a) The confidence of the Tibetan Government in us has been thoroughly restored. The friendship they felt towards us is probably greater than ever before.
- b) The policy, which I proposed for regulating our future relations with Tibet, has been accepted in its entirety. The probability of China negotiating a tripartite Treaty with Britain and Tibet has been increased. In fine, one may perhaps say without exaggeration that the Tibetan question has been settled as far as it can be settled at present. This settlement should last for several years and promote very greatly our own interests as well as the interests of Tibet, and future, - in the truest sense. – the ultimate interests of China.

The main motive of the Britain to send Bell to the mission to Lhasa was to build up trust among the authorities in Lhasa and with Dalai Lama and make them believe that the British Government did not intend to abandon them to an attack from the China. The mission real objective so far was achieved and the Dalai Lama government re-established their trust towards Britain for the solution of Tibetan question and the treaty of settlement with China which is only achieved through the close friendship with the British.

### **India's Tibet policy after Lhasa Mission**

The British Government approach with the Dalai Lama government after the Bell's mission remained under the supervisions of the Political Officers and Trade Agents who were constantly reporting on the Tibetan internal affairs to the Government of India. The correspondence between the officials from both sides in the India-Tibet frontier continued until the end of the British power in India. China on the other hand was not ready to settle dispute with Tibet until it was in her interest to do so and the Chinese regime unwillingness to ratify the tripartite negotiations of 1913-14, made the political and diplomatic position with the British uncertain.

The British Government with objective of building close relationship with Tibet decided to send officer to Lhasa from time to time and also came up with the thought of giving reasonable assistance to the Tibetan Government in the process of development and protection of their country. The British were also thinking that if the settlement of the Tibetan question could be reached with the Chinese Government, then Curzon the leader of the House of Lords and served as the Foreign Secretary of the British Empire (1919-1924) was prepared to give

favorable consideration to the Chinese consular representative to reside in India.<sup>254</sup> Finally after many years back the Lhasa was at its peace. China was having her on internal problem and other factor like growing stronghold of Japanese over China certainly crippled the Chinese administration which kept them away for sometime from the internal affairs of Tibet. Dalai Lama was now ruling his large domain peacefully and unchallenged.

The main aim of the Dalai Lama since Simla Conference was to make a permanent settlement with China which in reality was impossible. He undertook different initiative to modernize Tibet in every as aspects and to achieve this objective he needed large financial co-operation of the rich monasteries like Drepung, Sera, and Ganden and others like Kumbum at Sining and the Panchen Lama's Tashilhunpo at Shigatse but they move back and showed unwillingness to contribute financially to modernizing Tibet. The situation became worst when Lhasa imposed heavy financial burden on Tashi Lama towards the cost of maintain Tibetan army in the frontier for which Panchen Lama protested the authorities in Lhasa for imposing such measures.

Panchen Lama appealed to the British to meditate between him and the Dalai Lama but British Government rejected the proposal on the ground claiming that it is an internal matter of Tibet. In 1923 seeing no hope from the British the Panchen Lama escaped secretly from the Shigatse by living behind a letter saying that he was unable to meet the exorbitant demands of the Lhasa authorities. Hence, for the next fourteen years he lived in China until his death. Chinese regime taking advantage of his presence in China began to exploit him with considerable skill to counter the Dalai Lama's influence in Lhasa. When Bell was returning back to India from his Lhasa Mission he got invitation from Panchen Lama to visit Shigatse where he would like to have personal interview with him. Bell in his letter dated 30 March 1921, Lhasa, to the Secretary of Government of India, Delhi, he enclosed the translation of letter from the Tashi Lama, "asking me to visit Tashilhunpo on my return from Lhasa. I would solicit instructions that whether I should accept or decline the invitation. Its seems difficult to avoid accepting the invitation for the following reasons –<sup>255</sup>

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<sup>254</sup> Singh, *Himalayan Triangle*, p. 91.

<sup>255</sup> NAI, F&P, External-B, Progs. May 1921, File No. 3-6, Pro. no. 3, pp. 7-8.

- a) During the last twelve years the Tashi Lama has frequently invited me to visit him, but I have not been authorized to accept any of those invitations.
- b) Now that I have visited the Dalai Lama at Lhasa and have stayed here for several months, it will cause offence to His Serenity, the Tashilhunpo administration and the people of the Tsang province of Tibet, if I do not pay him visit Tibetan etiquette requires this: if I do not go it will, I think, be construed as a slight to him. The Tashi Lama is our oldest friend in Tibet. Our friendship with him dates from the time of Warren Hastings. In the cold weather of 1905-06 he visited India as the guest of the GOI was entertained there sumptuously and treated as a special friend.”

When Panchen Lama arrived at Peking in February of 1925, he was given warm reception. The Kuomintang Nationalist Chinese party was rising to power in China though it was emerging power but the Kuomintang government could do nothing to help the Panchen Lama in his dispute with the Lhasa government.<sup>256</sup>

The drive of modernizing Tibet became the primary motive of Dalai Lama in twenties. He introduced numerous changes like the introduction of English education which he realized the importance for his people and approached British Government for the help which laid to the establishment of English school at Gyantse, under the supervision of Fran Ludlow.<sup>257</sup> This issue created ideological difference with Panchen Lama who was against such development project of Dalai Lama. The British encouraged the Dalai Lama's administration to establish a stronger administration and army. In this process British helped Tibet in the transition of the Tibetan society from the pre-modern state to a modern one. In traditional Tibet the central Tibetan state was very weak and the Lhasa administration was hardly described as the central state in the past. It did very little in the way of governing the country such as providing a centralized administration, collecting taxes or enforcing it. The main practical problem for the Tibetan Government towards the modernization of Tibet was that cost of financial burden which the traditional Tibetan political system could not raise and the taxes which was in practiced was not enough to fulfill to achieve the dream of modernizing Tibet. The only source of healthy revenue

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<sup>256</sup> Shakabpa, *Tibet A Political*, p. 263.

<sup>257</sup> Shakabpa, *Tibet A Political*, p. 264.

was Tibet's foreign trade. According to American consular figures in 1912-13 the Tibetans took exports worth \$423,000 from India while sending \$813,000 worth of imports into India.<sup>258</sup>

In the annual report on the British Trade Agency at Yatung, submitted by Mr. Macdonald for the year 1916-17. Mr. Macdonald tactfully and efficiently managed the work and his long residence in Tibet and his thorough knowledge of the language and his unobtrusive amiability submitted the report on the trade between India-Tibet.

**Table 3.11:** Statement of trade between Tibet and Bengal from the year 1906-07 to the year 1916-17.

| Year    | Import trade in merchandise into Tibet. | Export trade in merchandise into India. | Import of treasure. | Export of treasure. | Total.    |
|---------|-----------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|-----------|
|         | Rs.                                     | Rs.                                     | Rs.                 | Rs.                 | Rs.       |
| 1906-07 | 9,47,628                                | 11,53,226                               | 1,84,190            | 1,72,494            | 24,57,538 |
| 1907-08 | 11,86,276                               | 17,41,943                               | 2,63,425            | 6,48,840            | 38,40,484 |
| 1908-09 | 13,36,853                               | 12,53,683                               | 8,260               | 4,78,790            | 30,77,586 |
| 1909-10 | 7,48,362                                | 5,36,433                                | 55,700              | 1,97,587            | 15,38,082 |
| 1910-11 | 8,25,141                                | 9,56,214                                | 10,550              | 2,26,935            | 20,18,840 |
| 1911-12 | 6,71,382                                | 12,45,283                               | 17,844              | 2,12,446            | 21,46,955 |
| 1912-13 | 8,61,554                                | 8,30,745                                | 2,000               | 1,91,480            | 18,85,779 |
| 1913-14 | 6,82,906                                | 7,99,678                                | 12,276              | 2,46,453            | 17,41,313 |
| 1914-15 | 11,09,357                               | 11,77,183                               | 1,33,000            | 1,95,245            | 26,14,785 |
| 1915-16 | 11,62,257                               | 15,30,885                               | 87,618              | 3,55,240            | 31,36,000 |
| 1916-17 | 11,33,723                               | 17,09,577                               | 59,000              | 3,15,083            | 32,17,383 |

**Source:** NAI, F&P Dept. Secret-E, Proceedings, May 1917, File No. 98-101, Pro. No. 98, p.3

The annual report on the British Trade Agency at Yatung for the year 1916-17 was submitted by Mr. Macdonald together with a statement of the trade between Tibet and Bengal from the year 1906-07 to the year 1916-17. Macdonald through his long residence in Tibet and his thorough knowledge of the Tibetan language and his intimate friendship with many Tibetan officials of all guards had done the work tactfully and efficiently. The post of British Trade Agent, Yatung, was held by Macdonald, throughout the year under report. The escort of the Trade Agent was maintained throughout the year at a nominal strength of one Indian officer and 25 rank and files of the 113<sup>th</sup> Infantry.<sup>259</sup>

<sup>258</sup> Joseph Benjamin Askew, Unpublished Thesis (PhD), *The Status of Tibet in the Diplomacy of China, Britain, the United States and India, 1911-1959*, pp. 85-86, South Australia, University of Adelaide, Dept. of History, 2002, <https://hdl.handle.net/2440/21830> accessed on 01/12/2022.

<sup>259</sup> NAI, F&P Dept. Sec-E, Proceedings, May 1917, File No. 98-101, Pro. No. 98, p. 1.

Trade during the past year was fairly maintained. The value of exports to India excluding treasure amounts to Rs. 17,09,577 and treasure Rs. 3,15,083 total Rs. 20,24,660; and imports to Tibet excluding treasure Rs. 11,33,723, treasure Rs. 59,000, total Rs. 11,92,723. The figures for 1915-16 were exports Rs. 15,30,885 and imports Rs. 12,49,875, total Rs.27,80,760. Raw wool, ponies, mules and sheep, yak tails, and musk were the principal items of export. Cotton woolen piece goods, precious stones, tobacco, silk and metals continue to be the chief article of import. The largest article of export was raw wool weighing 64,960 *maunds* to the value of Rs.15,14,334. Yak tails came next, viz. 1,268 *maunds* valued at Rs.66,718. The largest item of import was cotton piece-goods of foreign manufacture weighing 1,580 *maunds* to the value of Rs. 1,69,440. Next came cotton piece goods of Indian manufacture weighing 2,224 *maunds* valued at Rs.1,29,710. It will be noticed that there is an increase of Rs.1,78,692 in the export trade, and a decrease of Rs. 28,534 in the import trade as compared with the figures of the previous year. The decrease in the import trade is entirely due to the high prices of foreign goods prevailing in the Indian markets. The Tibetan traders of the Chumbi Valley are still doing good business with their carrying trade between Phari and Kalimpong. There were only a few traders in the Yatung bazaar. The road between Phari and Jelep La was in a very broken condition making travelling very rough and was getting worse every year. The local Tibetan authorities carried out some petty repairs, such as repairing bridges over the Ammo-Chu River.<sup>260</sup>

Tibet was exporting wool to its neighbouring countries especially to Kalimpong in India. During this time, the Chinese Government was paying better prices than India on Tibetan wool. However, transporting to China through the wettest part of Tibet hampered the trading activities and caused trouble to the Tibetan traders and dealers. Therefore, getting transportation of this good to the shortest trade route to Kalimpong was the only option left for the Tibetan dealers. The size of a bale of wool will be roughly 24 x 12 x 14 inches just a nice size for a mule load. Nobody was allowed to buy wool in Kalimpong and Government had a monopoly right over this product. In the copy of demi-official letter dated Amritsar the 14 December 1916, from Captain A. W. L., Western Officer for buying mules at Kalimpong, to Colonel N. Moore, Deputy Director, Transports, mentioned that “there is plenty of wool in Tibet but it will come down Kalimpong until it is realized that Government can only prevent its own subjects buying but

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<sup>260</sup> NAI, F&P Dept. Sec-E, Proceedings, May 1917, File No. 98-101, Pro. No. 98, pp. 1-2.

cannot stop Chinese from competing. The whole fact of the case is a Government cannot monopolize a frontier trade; it can stop its own nationals interfering but on the other side of the boundary line its authority and power amounts to plus and minus nil exactly. I believe it is on record that only 600 mules at the outside can be brought in Kalimpong in any one year.”<sup>261</sup>

The export of wool during the year 1915-16 amounted to 59,228 *maunds* and from April 1916 to January 1917 amounted to 50,654 *maunds*. Despite the small profits the Tibetan wool trade followed the route from the Phari to Kalimpong. The price of wool at Phari during 1917 was Rs. 25 per *maund* and the carriage of one *maund* from Phari to Kalimpong was Rs. 512 with the profit of Rs. 14 only per *maund*.<sup>262</sup> The cost of modernizing Tibet with the profit of trading activities was not possible. If the Lhasa administration wanted to pay for its army and administrators, some form of direct taxation would have been levied on Tibetan landowners.<sup>263</sup>

Shortly afterwards when Major Bailey visited Lhasa, he was urged by the Tsarong, a member of the Kashag and others to use his influence to persuade the Government of India to act as intermediary in persuading the Panchen Lama to return and thereby remove a means of Chinese and Bolshevik intrigue in Tibet. Bailey found the Tibetans most anxious to have the Lama back, and recommended a policy of inaction.<sup>264</sup> Bailey wrote in his Lhasa report in 1924, that “I do not think that in the present state of China, the Panchen lama will long welcome there; at the same time the people of Tibet are getting used to his absence; but any calamity which may occur in Tibet will put down to his absence, and it would be a very good thing if he could be persuaded to return. I had several discussions separately with the Dalai Lama and the Prime Minister on the subject. They claimed that the Tashi Lama was originally of small importance and was given his rank, power and land by a former Dalai Lama (this is of course open to dispute). For his maintenance the Tashi Lama was given the district of Kamba Dzong, Lhatse and Penzoling, all in the province of Tsang, and also a district of Cho-ko Gye, north of the Tsangpo, Takpo. He also receives revenues of many small estates in different parts of the country. The arrangement has always been that he pays one quarter of the Tibetan Government’s expenses in time of war; in time of peace he pays nothing. In the same way the large and

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<sup>261</sup> NAI, F&P, External-B, May 1917, File No 7-15, Pro. No. 13, pp. 28-29.

<sup>262</sup> NAI, F&P, External-B, May 1917, File No 7-15, D. O. No. 3-C, letter to C. A. Bell, from British Trade Agency, Yatung, Tibet, dated the 19 February 1917, pp. 37-38.

<sup>263</sup> Askew, *The Status of Tibet*, p. 87.

<sup>264</sup> Singh, *Himalayan Triangle*, p. 93.

powerful monasteries of Sera, Drepung and Ganden also pay a proportion of war expenses to the Central Government. At the time of the war with Sikhs in Ladak, and in two wars with Nepal, the Tashi Lama of that day paid up his share. In this more recent fighting with the Chinese the large monasteries paid their shares, but the Tashi Lama became 8 years in arrears. Being unable to pay the large accumulation of arrears he has ‘taken bad advice’ and left the country.”<sup>265</sup>

The assurance of return of Tashi Lama was now depended on the British interference in Tibet internal matter. Major Bailey writes that “the terms of his return should be guaranteed by the Tibetan Government to the Government of India. The Tibetan Government would not be likely to try to get behind such a guarantee and the Tashi Lama would trust to it. I do not think he will trust any promises made direct to him by Lhasa, and I think that if the Government of India would consent to act to this extent as an intermediary, there would be a better prospect of the Tashi Lama’s returning, and of removing a means of Chinese and Bolshevik intrigue in Tibet. This suggestion of mine was not discussed or even mentioned to the Tibetan Government. On his departure the Tibetan Government sent troops under the command of Rupon Tsoko 27 day’s journey to the north in pursuit but they failed to overtake him. These troops suffered great hardships and were obliged to live on the meat of their baggage yaks and many of their ponies died.”<sup>266</sup> By the end of 1929, the Panchen Lama had made it clear that, unless he got a definite assurance from Lhasa that they would reinstate him, he intended to remain on in China.<sup>267</sup>

The Tibetan army during 1920s was in better position armed with the British supplied arms and ammunition and had a touch of the western military skills. Prior to this, the Tibetan army largely made up of Khampa warrior tribes and were hardly equipped with modern weapons when Francis Younghusband invaded Tibet in 1903-04 the Tibetan army fought with *mendap*. However, the older generals, who had served the country well and loyally in the past, were still campaigning in Kham region. The new generals in Lhasa were young men, some of whom had been trained in Gyantse and in India by the British Army Officers.<sup>268</sup> During this time, the economic condition of Tibet was not stable the heavy burden of ‘modern reforms’ policy of Dalai Lama and cost of maintaining troops in the frontier was heavily hampering the economy of

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<sup>265</sup> NAI, F&P, External, 1925, File No. 221-X, Correspondence 1, Letter from Major F. M. Bailey, C.I.E., Political Officer in Sikkim, No.631-P., dated Gangtok, the 28 October 1924, p. 4.

<sup>266</sup> NAI, F&P, External, 1925, File No. 221-X, p. 5.

<sup>267</sup> Singh, *Himalayan Triangle*, p. 93.

<sup>268</sup> Shakabpa, *Tibet A Political*, p. 264.



the Lhasa. Major Bailey reported that “Tibet was finding it very difficult to maintain a large army on the Chinese frontier. Bailey saw arsenals at Lhasa one in the old Chinese Yamen in the city and one at Dote about 6 miles off. It is proposed to run the later by electricity. In the one in the city large wheels were turned by hand and driving-belts from these turned smaller wheels and lathes. I also saw bullets being made and caps fitted to our empty cartridge cases; damaged cases were being re-moulded and filled. One 3 or 4 pounder muzzle loading gun is made a year here. He further writes that at Dote about 6 miles north of Lhasa where it is proposed to install hydro-electric machinery we saw more rifles being made. The lathes were turned by a water wheel. The man in charge is a Chinese mechanic who came to Lhasa with the Chinese troops in 1912. He was forcibly detained when the rest of the Chinese were repatriated, but now he has been given two wives and is quiet content to remain.”<sup>269</sup>

In 1922 after the visit of General George Pereira former military attaché at the British Legation in Peking, who send detailed report to Bailey on the state of Tibetan military throughout the country and suggested Bailey to send a military advisor to Tsarong for strengthening the Tibetan army. Tibetan Government after his return requested the GOI to lend the services of the Darjeeling Police inspector, Laden La, to establish and train a police force in Lhasa.<sup>270</sup> After extensive negotiations, he proceeded to Lhasa in September 1923. He was to be engaged directly by the Tibetan Government, and on arrival in Lhasa he was conferred the title of Dzasa, a hereditary title, commensurate with his responsibilities.<sup>271</sup> Laden La service in Tibet could not last long and he was soon deported to India. The reason behind this might be his closeness with the Tibetan officers and was attempting to overthrow the Dalai Lama.<sup>272</sup>

The British Government prestige and friendship with the Tibet was at very low ebb by the mid-twenties and the reason for the decline had a various causes. According to Alex McKay the events of this period indicate that ultimately the British presence in Tibet was designed to advance British interests, just as the Chinese sought to promote their interests.<sup>273</sup> On the other hand Lamb argued that the Bailey Mission to Lhasa, rather as had that of Charles Bell, seems to

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<sup>269</sup> NAI, F&P, External, 1925, File No. 221-X, p. 6.

<sup>270</sup> McKay, *Tibet and the British Raj*, pp.121-122.

<sup>271</sup> Nicholas and Deki Rhodes, *A Man of the Frontier S. W. Laden La 1876-1936 His Life & Times in Darjeeling and Tibet*, Kolkata, Mira Bose, 2006, p. 38.

<sup>272</sup> McKay, *Tibet and the British Raj*, p. 125.

<sup>273</sup> McKay, *Tibet and the British Raj*, p. 129.

have precipitated a major crisis in Tibetan politics. It gave a highly visible image to the process of modernization which caused considerable alarm among the conservative elements of Tibetan society.<sup>274</sup> Bailey in his letter writes that “the Government of India is conceived that a policy of *non-interference* with Tibetan affairs is, for the present at least, the best for both Tibetan and British interests. He also pointed out that in the matter of extradition, it is understood that the chief idea underlying the Prime Minister’s suggestion was to secure the return of Tibetans who, to avoid Tibetan taxation, emigrate periodically to India. This, in itself, furnishes a strong argument for advising the Tibetan Government to drop the idea for the present, but apart from that, any question of extradition between India and a country so devoid of ordinary judicial routine as Tibet, would obviously prove a very difficult one.”<sup>275</sup>

Lt. Colonel Leslie Weir took over from Major Bailey as Political Officer in Sikkim at the end of 1928. Simultaneously, the political change happened in China the Northern Expedition of the Kuomintang under the Chiang Kai-shek was well on its way to establishing national China Government and moved its capital from Peking to Nanking. On the arrival in Lhasa, Weir found that the Tibetan troops were continuing to fare badly at the hands of the Chinese, and many of them have actually surrendered.<sup>276</sup> After the decline of the British relations with the Tibet in the 1920s, the Tibetans were suspicious when Weir arrived in Lhasa in 1930. Weir was also aware of the problem and made improving Anglo-Tibetan relations his priority. Although it did not entirely eradicate their suspicions about British intentions, Weir’s visit to Lhasa was successful in bridge-building exercise in the India-Tibet relations.<sup>277</sup>

By the beginning of 1930s the fighting broke out in the eastern Tibet between the Chinese and Tibetan troops. Dalai Lama looked for the support from the British government and appealed the British to intervene diplomatically, on their behalf, at Nanking. In the despatch from his Britannic Majesty’s Consulate-General, Shanghai, to His Majesty’s Minister, Peking, dated the 22 March 1930, it is mentioned that Panchen Lama at the time informed me that, after spending some time in Chengtu had actually proceeded to Nanking and that it is quite possible that he was holding conversation with the Chinese in regard to the occupation of Tibetan

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<sup>274</sup> Lamb, *Tibet, China & India*, p. 159.

<sup>275</sup> NAI, F&P, External, 1925, File No. 221-X, Letter from Major Bailey, No.459/2-X., dated Delhi, the 18 December 1924, p. 19.

<sup>276</sup> Singh, *Himalayan Triangle*, p. 97.

<sup>277</sup> McKay, *Tibet and the British Raj*, p. 135.

territory.<sup>278</sup> While the Panchen Lama's representatives were preparing to return to China with the report of their negotiations in Lhasa, the situation changed dramatically when the Dalai Lama died on 17 December 1933. With the death of the Dalai Lama, a struggle for the power began almost at once.<sup>279</sup>

The British relations with Tibet during this period remained diplomatic and as intermediary between Tibetan and Chinese. Since the Simla Convention 1913-14 British got directly involved in every major issues of Tibetan Government with China. Tibetan authorities appealed frequently to the British to intervene diplomatically when they have problem with China. However, British provided healthy support to the Tibetan Government in maintaining her *status quo* in the Central Asian politics. In 1920s there emerged a feeling of anti-British among the Tibetan but it was soon resolved due to constant presence of the British Officers in Lhasa. The only failure of the British policy towards Tibet in this era was that they couldn't persuade the Chinese Government to make a '*permanent settlement*' of Tibet question.

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<sup>278</sup> NAI, F&P, External, 1930, File No. 47-X, pp. 37-38.

<sup>279</sup> Singh, *Himalayan Triangle*, p. 101.

## Chapter 4

### **Sino-British rivalry over Tibet: a study on the India, Tibet and China relations 1933-47**

Since the Simla Convention of 1913-14 between the India, Tibet and China the political status of Tibet remained independent. The Tibetan Government maintained an army modeled on Western lines equipped with arms and ammunition and was also receiving the military logistic aid from the British Government in India. The confrontation in the eastern frontier of Tibet with the Chinese troops proved Tibetan people zeal to defend its geographical boundaries from the foreign incursion. In this period up to the time of the death of the 13<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama the Whitehall approached towards both Tibet and China remained unprejudiced. Paradoxically the British Government in India since the time of Francis Younghusband invasion 1903-04 kept alive the foreign policy of Britain with Tibet. The major protagonists in the intercourse were the British officers in the frontiers and Political Officer in Sikkim who were constantly indulged in strengthening India-Tibet ties. According to Parshotam Mehra the Whitehall took Tibetans for granted, and the British Officer on the spot could not 'possibly negotiate' unless the British Government acted as mediators.<sup>1</sup> The historiography of this period throws light in these different approaches and gives an understanding of authenticity of the nature of Tibet's sovereignty status within Asia.

The British GOI dispatched important diplomatic missions under the specialists in Tibetan affairs during the first half of twentieth century. British Officers like Charles Bell, Frederick M. Bailey, Leslie Weir, Frederick Williamson, Basil Gould, Hugh Richardson, Frank Ludlow and Major George Sherriff who were perfectly aware of the complexity of the structure of Tibetan politics,<sup>2</sup> and they were selected for the missions representing the British Empire.

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<sup>1</sup>Parshotam Mehra, *The McMahon Line and After A Study of the Triangular Contest on India's North-eastern Frontier Between Britain, China and Tibet, 1904-47*, London, Macmillan, 1974, p. 317.

<sup>2</sup>Alastair Lamb, *Tibet, China & India 1914-1950 A History of Imperial Diplomacy*, Hertfordshire, Roxford Books, 1989, p. 147.

These officers channelized the link between Delhi and Lhasa through the correspondence and by other means that certainly clarified the policy makers in Delhi and London about the situation in Tibet and its relations with India-China. Alastair Lamb pointed out that the Tibet's political system was still under an anachronism state and was a very odd regime indeed during this period of twentieth century.<sup>3</sup> However, from the period of Henry McMahon to the Frederick Williamson Political Officer in Sikkim witnessed numerous changes in the approaches of the Indian Government towards the Sino-Tibetan crisis and its impact on the frontiers of British India. This chapter will explore the next phase of the British policy toward Tibet vis-à-vis China after the death of the 13<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama. This chapter will investigate the certain developments that occurred in the bilateral link between the India-Tibet vis-à-vis China. Why British established permanent representative in Lhasa? What was the impact of the death of the 13<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama in the diplomatic and the political conjunction of India-Tibet and China? How the Tibet continued maintained its *status quo* during the outbreak of Second World War? What was the nature of the British policy towards Tibet during this period? The chapter will also explore the role of the British officers in their quest for strengthening the ties with Tibet. Finally, the chapter will throw light on the understanding of the British political motives with Tibet and China during the last decades of their rule in India.

### **British approach towards Tibet prior to the death of the 13<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama**

The Chinese Government has so far refused uncompromisingly to admit British as intermediaries between them and Tibet. The British Government instructed their representative at Peking to continue pressure on the Chinese Foreign Ministry with a view to overcoming this opposition. The British Government was not in a position to force the Chinese Government to agree to the British intervention and would not be ready to proceed to extremes when they have so many other international complications on their hands both with China over the League attitude towards the Lytton Report and also with Persia and other countries. The situation is moreover complicated by the fact that the Chinese Government are themselves unable to exercise effective control over the outlying provinces and rebellious war lords, which makes it essential for them to adopt face-saving tactics towards any representations which the British may make about Tibet.

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<sup>3</sup> Lamb, *Tibet, China & India*, p. 141.

The Dalai Lama on his part refused negotiate direct with China unless a representative of British Government is also present to see fair play.<sup>4</sup>

The misleading rumours about Great Britain's attitude to Tibet cannot be too soon contradicted, and the Foreign Office has promptly dealt with the latest canard that a bargain has been struck between the Great Britain and Japan, leaving the former a free hand in Manchuria in return for free British action in Tibet, the implication being that the vultures have agreed to divide the Chinese carcass between them. The only free hand that Great Britain desires to see in Tibet is the Tibetan. Tibet is far too valuable a buffer State for Great Britain to desire any modification of its present sovereignty.<sup>5</sup>

The official letter from the Foreign Office, London, and dated 15 May 1933 to His Majesty's Minister at Peking, about the Sino-Tibetan situation that the GOI has apparently been somewhat perturbed at the suggestion contained earlier telegram No.39 of the 7 February that the policy of HMG towards Tibet should undergo a 'radical change'. A letter received from the Indian Office contains the following message that Sir Samuel Hoare hopes that the communication which the GOI was authorized to make the Dalai Lama will not be misconstrued by Sir M. Lampson as implying that HMG are prepared to depart from their accepted policy *vis-à-vis* Tibet. This policy is, as announced to the Chinese Government in 1921, to deal with Tibet as an autonomous State and to give her any reasonable assistance required for her development and protection. HMG policy and interests in relation to Tibet are not affected or diminished by the question whether or not the Dalai Lama should enter into direct negotiations with the Chinese Government on the isolated matter of the Sino-Tibetan frontier. It follows that there can be no question, for example, of discontinuing the British official relations with the Tibetan Government. We must, of course, deal with each Sino-Tibetan situation as it arises in the light of actual realities. We can adapt our tactics to the situation and psychology of the moment. But there does not seem to be sufficient reason to make any change in our fundamental policy.<sup>6</sup>

To settle the dispute between the Tibet-China the only way is to come forward for the negotiations. The Dalai Lama is extremely anxious not to negotiate with China unless a British

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<sup>4</sup> NAI, F&P, File No. 1-X (Secret) of 1933, Serial Nos. 1-137, pp. 2-3.

<sup>5</sup> NAI, F&P, File No. 1-X (Secret) of 1933, Serial Nos. 1-137, Extract from the 'Statesman' dated 3 February 1933, p. 5.

<sup>6</sup> NAI, F&P, File No. 1-X (Secret) of 1933, Serial Nos. 1-137, p. 11.

representative is also present as an intermediary. The British also wanted to pressurize on the Chinese authorities, and the British were aware that there is a real danger that circumstances (for instance further considerable Chinese successes on the frontier) may force the Dalai Lama to negotiate direct.<sup>7</sup> Dalai Lama states that he received long message from his representative in China informing him that the Chinese Central Government was still pressing for negotiation of permanent settlement without the British mediation and are preparing in case of Tibetan refusal to renew hostilities. The Dalai Lama comments are –<sup>8</sup>

1. Tibetan Government intends to persist in their request to Chinese Government to conclude Simla Treaty with our aid.
2. He asks for continued pressure on Chinese Government to agree to such negotiation and for our advice as to his future course of action.
3. We propose if His Majesty's Government approve to authorize Political Officer, Sikkim, to reply that British Government are doing all that they can to impress on Chinese Government their anxiety to see a settlement achieved and their readiness to assist in the negotiations. As to Dalai Lama's future course of action he may be told British cannot give advice but that maintenance of their present attitude of refusal to negotiate without British meditation may lead to ultimate acquiescence by Chinese Government in this course.

The GOI and the British Government are greatly interested in the re-establishment of friendly relations between Tibet and China. There are however certain difficulties, which the Dalai Lama will appreciate, arising from the unwillingness of the Chinese Government to admit a third party to participate in negotiations between themselves and another power over whom they claim suzerainty. A further difficulty perhaps also arises from the internal state of China which prevents the central Government from establishing complete authority over outlying provinces of the Empire.<sup>9</sup>

Tibetans are simple and straight-forward people and would not be able to cope with clever Chinese diplomats. The Simla Convention gave Tibet all that was necessary in the way of

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<sup>7</sup> NAI, F&P, File No. 1-X (Secret) of 1933, Serial Nos. 1-137, Enclo. to S. No. 23, p. 33.

<sup>8</sup> NAI, F&P, File No. 1-X (Secret) of 1933, Serial Nos. 1-137, Enclo. to S. No. 28, pp. 35-36.

<sup>9</sup> NAI, F&P, File No. 1-X (Secret) of 1933, Serial Nos. 1-137, Enclo. to S. No. 29, p. 36.

independence. The British also repeatedly recognized Chinese suzerainty and British do not wanted to run the risk of allowing this suzerainty to be other than nominal. This recognition gives China all that she can reasonably demand, and there was no proposal from the British side to attempt to diminish China's theoretical position as suzerain of Tibet. However, in the past China repeatedly recognised our special interest in Tibet and our right to be represented at negotiations between Tibet and China.<sup>10</sup>

The policy of the British Government and of the GOI towards Tibet has always aimed merely at securing a peaceful and friendly neighbour on this portion of the Indian Frontier. There has never been any intention or attempt to secure any kind of suzerainty over the Tibet. On the contrary the suzerainty of China over Tibet has never been disputed. Unfortunately, the Tibetan Government itself are extremely distrustful of Chinese influence, since they fear both the infiltration of communistic ideas and also that China intends to substitute armed conquest and occupation for the nebulous control which they at present claim. Such influence as HMG and the GOI possess with the Tibetan Government is invariably used to promote peace between Tibet and China, and offers have more than once been made to the Chinese Government of the good offices of HMG in finding a peaceful solution for the perennial frontier disputes in Eastern Tibet. Any Scheme of territorial expansion from India in the direction of Tibet would be manifestly absurd, since neither the climate nor the country would be suitable for Indian settlers, nor would the volume of trade between Tibet and India justify expenditure upon any scheme.<sup>11</sup>

Edwin Haward, the British journalist in China sends copy of extract from the 'North-China Daily News' (established in 1850 at Shanghai, China) of 13 March which contains an article on North-West China. The article states that the Chinese and Tibetans are racially and linguistically of different stock, but they have, in the past, been closely connected by tradition and commerce and by the religious and political ties between the lama rulers of Lhasa and the Manchu Dynasty. An equitable settlement satisfactory to both parties in solution of the troubles and misunderstandings between China and Tibet would be a valuable contribution to the peace and stability of Central Asia. Suspicions and misunderstandings of the past can fortunately be set aside and the Chinese Government is probably well aware of the readiness with which free and

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<sup>10</sup> NAI, F&P, File No. 1-X (Secret) of 1933, Serial Nos. 1-137, Enclo. to S. No 85, p. 52.

<sup>11</sup> NAI, F&P, External, File No. 57-X (Secret) of 1934, Supply to Mr. Edwin Haward, British journalist in China of a brief note on the policy of His Majesty's Government and the Government of India towards Tibet, p. 10.



frank consultation with the British Government could evoke a lasting and equitable settlement of the Tibetan question. British relations with Tibet are not in doubt. Both the British and Indian Governments have consistently aimed merely at securing a peaceful and friendly neighbour on the Tibetan border of the Indian Frontier. There has never been with either of these Governments any intention or attempt to secure any kind of sovereignty over Tibet. On the contrary Chinese suzerainty over Tibet has never been disputed. The influence which London and Simla may conceivably possess with the Tibetan Government is invariably used to promote peace between Tibet and China. To the Chinese Government the offices of the British Government have been tendered more than once for the purpose of finding a peaceful solution for the perennial frontier disputes in Eastern Tibet, where friction with Szechuan has been a regular difficulty.<sup>12</sup> China has already lost, for the time being at any rate, two of her great dependencies; and it would surely be an act of true statesmanship if the National Government would seek to forge again by wise concessions the historical links connecting China with Tibet. Attempts at coercion in such matters are worse than useless, and no settlement can serve that is not based on mutual consent.<sup>13</sup>

### **Death of the 13<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama**

Since the death of the 13<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama of Tibet on the 17 December 1933,<sup>14</sup> the administration of the country has been carried on by the Prime Minister and the cabinet. Information has also been received by the GOI that prayers were being offered throughout Tibet for the speedy

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<sup>12</sup> NAI, F&P, External, File No. 57-X (Secret) of 1934, p. 14.

<sup>13</sup> NAI, F&P, External, File No. 57-X (Secret) of 1934, pp. 17-18.

<sup>14</sup>From many points of view the news of the death of the Dalai Lama is of very great interest both politically and considered with reference to internal affairs of the Buddhist Church in Tibet. His power is concerned, he may be considered as King or Overlord of Tibet, but as far as his spiritual power is concerned he is one of a group of high spiritual heads who are technically called lamas. Spiritually he is considered to be an incarnation of Chenresi, who in India is known as Avalokiteshvara, and as such perhaps not looked upon so highly as his spiritual brother the Tashi Lama who is an incarnation of Amitabha. The two consecrate each other spiritually according to who is the younger or the older at time of accession. The late Dalai Lama was the 13<sup>th</sup> in the succession and tradition has been reported that he will be the last of his line. The successive Dalai Lamas have during the years of their minority been guided by a Council of Regency which has been said to be largely under Chinese influence and it is strange that most conveniently the last five Dalai Lamas have always died when about to attain their maturity. The late Dalai Lama was the first of the line to survive his minority. The Dalai Lama was a forceful personality who had been in contact with several acute European observers who had formed a very great opinion about him. Sir Charles Bell has expressed his admiration for him very clearly; so did the great American traveler, Rockhill. Source: NAI, F&P, External, File No. 468-X (Secret) of 1933, p. 16.

reincarnation<sup>15</sup> of the Dalai Lama. The head lama the Reting Monastery who is a *Hutuktu* (or incarnate lama) will be installed immediately as Regent of Tibet pending the discovery of the new incarnation of the Dalai Lama.<sup>16</sup> One Monk recalled “the moment I entered the room I saw not the Dalai Lama but his clothes. I felt so bad when I saw this that I started to cry (because) I had some kind of feeling that the Dalai Lama was going to die. I cried a lot”.<sup>17</sup> The newspaper statesman reported on 31.1.1934 that the new Dalai Lama of Tibet will not be discovered for three or four years if the procedure of the past is followed. How the Regent came to be chosen is not clear; it may have been by express desire of the late Dalai Lama or he may be the choice of the Tibetan Cabinet. The administration in Lhasa will be carried on by the authorities who have acted since the powerful personality of the late Dalai Lama was removed; the Prime Minister, who is layman, his Cabinet of four Ministers and also some high military officials and the heads of the three chief monasteries, aided by the Tibetan Assembly. The Tashi Lama, who fled to China as a result of a quarrel with the Dalai Lama, is going to Nanking from Inner Mongolia where he has been attending a conference. The quick selection of a Regent has apparently spoilt his chances of assuming that post. The death of the Dalai Lama has made no difference to the peaceful condition of Tibet internally.<sup>18</sup> The high Chinese official is preparing to visit Tibet on behalf of the Chinese Government to perform the appropriate rites in connection with the Dalai Lama’s death. It is thought possible that his visit may have some political significance.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>15</sup>The new ruler is not usually found until three or four years after the death of his predecessor and it is a very elaborate process before the monks can be certain of his identity. The deceased Dalai Lama normally gives some indication where his reincarnation will be found; he may for instance, leave instructions for search to be made in a village with such and such characteristics. Children born about the time the Dalai Lama died are then examined for certain traits of which the length of the lobes of their ears is apparently one. Those Children with the maximum number of these characteristics are questioned and on the strength of their replies a further selective process takes place. The names of those ‘left in’ are then written on leaves and drawn from a golden urn presented by a former Emperor of China and the one that appears in a certain order is the new Dalai Lama. The Regency lasts until the young ruler is 18. There can therefore be no question of a search being made for a new Dalai Lama at present as it is held in Tibet that children likely to be incarnations of the deceased ruler are not intelligent enough until the age of three or four to answer the ritualistic questions addressed to them at the testing ceremony. Source: Extract from the “Statesman” dated 31.1.1934, NAI, F&P, External, File No. 468-X (Secret) of 1933, D. No. 570-X/34, p. 11.

<sup>16</sup>NAI, Foreign and Political Department, External, File No. 468-X (Secret) of 1933, Copy No. 1-X Sec / 34 , Sino-Tibetan affairs, Press Communiqué of Assistant Secretary to the Government of India the 30 January 1934, p.10

<sup>17</sup> Temba Chonden (interview), Cited in Melvyn C. Goldstein, *A History of Modern Tibet 1913-1951 The Demise of the Lamaist State*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1989, p. 139.

<sup>18</sup> NAI, F&P, External, File No. 468-X (Secret) of 1933, Diary No. 570-X/34, p. 11.

<sup>19</sup> NAI, F&P, External, File No. 468-X (Secret) of 1933, D. No. 1003-X/34, Extract from the Statesman newspaper dated 23.2.1934, p. 12.

During the period of interregnum before a new Dalai Lama was discovered the biggest challenge for the Tibetan authorities was to keep up the legacy of the former head of the state who always cultivated the idea of sustaining an independent status and also forming the new policies which encompass the separate ambitions of China and Great Britain in Tibet. The growing ambition of the China in Tibet also made authorities in Lhasa to rethink in strengthening its military position against the dangers of incursion of foreign power in Tibetan soil.<sup>20</sup>

A Lhasa message reports the death of the Dalai Lama of Tibet,<sup>21</sup> His Holiness Ngawang Lobsang Thubten Gyatsho, at the age of 60. The late Dalai Lama's rule was an eventual one, as he had to flee from Lhasa in 1904 on the approach of the British mission and for five years was a wanderer in exile in Mongolia and China. After a brief stay in Tibet in 1909, he was again forced to take flight, this time from the Chinese, and he took refuge in India. Until 1909, he was a wanderer in Mongolia and China, when he was accompanied by a Buriat Lama, named Dorjief, his former tutor, who by virtue of this office had obtained considerable influence over the young prelate. The Dalai Lama took refuge on this occasion in India, where, as the guest of the GOI, he remained for some three years in the hill station of Darjeeling, where a house was placed at his disposal. In 1912, he returned to his country after the Tibetan rising against the China. The revolution of 1912 in China, which left the Chinese garrisons in Tibet stranded without orders and without pay, gave the Dalai Lama the opportunity of returning to his own country in safety. The Tibetan people rose against the Chinese and drove them from the country. On his return to that year, the Dalai Lama found the last traces of Chinese occupation being rapidly wiped out. From that date, Dalai Lama<sup>22</sup> had wielded supreme temporal powers in Tibet, and was absolute master of his realm, until his death, on 17 December 1933.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Amar Kaur Jasbir Singh, *Himalayan Triangle: A Historical survey of British India's relations with Tibet, Sikkim and Bhutan 1765-1950*, London, The British Library, 1988, p. 101.

<sup>21</sup> NAI, F&P, External, File No. 468-X (Secret) of 1933, D.No.6140-X/33, p. 18.

<sup>22</sup> The late Dalai Lama is described by Sir Charles Bell, from a fairly intimate personal knowledge, as being a man of strong character, what indeed some would call headstrong, very frank and candid; and distinctly progressive seeking the development of his country on modern lines. In personal appearance he was somewhat below the average Tibetan in height, of robust constitution, but somewhat lethargic on account of his remaining for hours together, sometimes eight or nine or ten hours, seated cross-legged on cushions, mediating, reading, blessing and eating. There are usually reckoned to be five characteristic marks of a predestined Dalai Lama: tiger-skin marks on the legs; upward curving eyebrows, rather long; large ears; two curious pieces of flesh near the shoulder-blades indicating two of the hands of Chenrezi; and an imprint like a conch-shell on the palm of one hand. Of these five marks the Dalai Lama now deceased possessed the last three. Source: NAI, F&P Dept., File No. 1-X (Secret) of 1934, Serial Nos. 1-268, S. No.70, pp. 50-51.

<sup>23</sup> NAI, F&P, External, File No. 468-X (Secret) of 1933, D. No. 6216-X/33, p. 15.

The late Dalai Lama's rule of Tibet was marked by a striking change in their attitude to Britain. After the Chinese had been expelled they attacked the country again (in 1917), but were defeated, and the Tibetans pushed them back more or less to the positions which had been held since 1720. During 1912, Russia, by a treaty with Mongolia, gained further influence in that country. The following year a conference was held in India by Britain, China and Tibet to discuss the political status of Tibet, but achieved no decisive result. Then followed the World War the Tibetan Government offered a thousand soldiers to fight on the British side, a striking change from their former attitude of hostility. Towards the end of 1920, Charles Bell, the British representative in Tibet, was deputed to Lhasa at the request of the Tibetan Government, the first white man to be invited to Lhasa by the Tibetan themselves. As a result of his visit which lasted for about a year the growing friendship between the two nations was still further strengthened, and a line of policy in consonant with that attitude was marked out.<sup>24</sup>

From the time of his return to Lhasa from India the late Dalai Lama has turned his eyes towards India, has secured British-Indian advice, technical assistance, co-operation and inspiration, and this has not tended to sweeten relations either between Tibet and China or, between British India and China. However, there has been a distinct straining of relations between the Governments of the Republic and Tibet, resulting in some fighting, a good deal of bluster, and some half-hearted overtures towards an understanding.<sup>25</sup>

The Dalai Lama's reign has been amongst other things remarkable for the practical shaking off of Chinese suzerainty over Tibet, which had been powerful for over a century before him, and also for his closer approach to India, culminating in the stay for over a year in Lhasa of Bell as the first invited representative of the British Empire. During the latter years of his rule an army modeled on Western lines, though of moderate size, was organized; coinage was reformed and an arsenal was founded; a certain amount of electrical power was introduced and postage stamps were issued. The telephonic communication with India was opened and there have been an attempt to issue bank notes.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> NAI, F&P, External, File No. 468-X (Secret) of 1933, p. 16.

<sup>25</sup> NAI, F&P, File No. 1-X (Secret) of 1934, Serial Nos. 1-268, S. No. 70, p. 50.

<sup>26</sup> NAI, F&P, External, File No. 468-X (Secret) of 1933, p. 16.

The death of the Dalai Lama brought change in the administrative setup of the Tibetan Government in theory the governance was under the hand of the newly appointed Regent, but in practice it rested with Tsepon Lungshar who had a strong influence inside the Lhasa authorities. Kashag (Council) was responsible for the day-to-day affairs of the administration. Lungshar with the help of the dissident figure of the Tsongdu (National Assembly) and with the help of three great monasteries of Drepung, Ganden and Sera aspired of becoming the supreme power in the Tibetan Government. Opposed to the Lungshar was the Kashag Party whose principal figure was Trimon Shapé, an elderly Conservative who had once been assistant to the Lonchen Shatra at the Simla Conference in 1913. He finally brought down the Lungshar and Tibet remained under the Dalai Lama testament until Chinese occupied Tibet.<sup>27</sup> Alex McKay points out that until 1934 their witnessed power struggle within the administration of Tibetan Government though partially settled after the appointment of the Regent but the real power struggle continued behind the scenes.<sup>28</sup> According to Melvyn C. Goldstein, Lungshar's movement was the last attempt to reform and revitalize the traditional political system before World War II. Its destruction was a major turning point in modern Tibetan history. Goldstein further argued that in retrospect, his downfall must be seen as a main factor underlying the demise of the Lamaist State.<sup>29</sup> Tibetan Government never accepted the concept of political shift from the traditional to modernity.

A message from Peking published in *The Times* says that His Holiness's death is expected to have important effects on Sino-Tibetan relations. The late Dalai Lama early in his career threw off Chinese temporal influence and it is perhaps unfortunate that his death should have come at a time when feeling between the two countries is still strained over the boundary dispute. According to custom the Tashi Lama, if older than the Dalai Lama, has to consecrate the latter as soon as the child in which he is reincarnated is found. The present Tashi Lama, whose office has greater spiritual but far less temporal authority attached to it than that of the Dalai Lama, was on bad terms with his brother pontiff and fled a few years ago to China where he was cordially received.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Singh, *Himalayan Triangle*, pp. 101-102.

<sup>28</sup> Alex McKay, *Tibet and the British Raj The Frontier Cadre 1904-1947*, Dharamsala, Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, 2009, p. 154.

<sup>29</sup> Goldstein, *A History of Modern Tibet*, p. 212.

<sup>30</sup> NAI, F&P, Secret, 1934, File No. 1-X, Nos. 1-268, p. 1.

The news of the death of the 13<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama was transmitted by the Tibetan Government through telegram dated the 18 December 1933 to the Nationalist Government, Nanking, and to Chiang Kaishek which passed through Gangtok, informing the death of Dalai Lama and also indicating a hope for friendly relations with China, the telegrams also warns the Chinese Government that the policy of the senders will be same as that of His late Holiness and that intervention by China will not be tolerated.<sup>31</sup> However, the Tibetan Government informed to India Government that they are conducting all affairs, internal and external, as before, and hope for a continuation of the present friendly Anglo-Tibetan relations and the civil and military affairs of the State are progressing as before.<sup>32</sup> It can be observed that the Tibet Government remained vocal about their sovereignty with her two military powerful neighbours India and China.

### **Sino-India rivalry in Tibet; the visit of envoys**

After the death of the 13<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama until the new one was discovered during this interregnum phase the rivalry between the British India and the Chinese in Tibet became the most important factor in Tibet's foreign relations. Both the Government dispatched their envoys to develop the relations with the Tibetan authorities. From the Chinese side the high-ranking General Huang Mu-sung, a member of the National Military Council, arrived from China to offer condolences on the death of the Dalai Lama and to start talks aimed at winning over his successors.<sup>33</sup> The telegraphic message received from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Nanking, that Chiang Chi Yu and Wang Liang Kwen, Councilor and Secretary respectively to General Huang Mu-Sung, Special Envoy to Tibet to represent the National Government in the ceremony of offering sacrifices to the late Dalai Lama, have been instructed to proceed to Tibet via India. They are bringing with them a quantity of ceremonial articles and official requisites.<sup>34</sup>

The Chinese Mission to Tibet may result in the re-establishment of Chinese Amban at Lhasa this will be followed by an increase in Chinese influence in Tibet and may lead to serious weakening of British influence in Tibet. The British Government large commercial interest in

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<sup>31</sup> NAI, F&P, External, File No. 468-X (Secret) of 1933, D.No.6249-X/33, p. 30.

<sup>32</sup> NAI, F&P, External, File No. 468-X (Secret) of 1933, pp. 44-46.

<sup>33</sup> Singh, *Himalayan Triangle*, p. 102.

<sup>34</sup> NAI, F&P, External, File No.1(2)-X (Secret) of 1934, D.No. 1569-X/34, letter from the Secretary to the Government of India, New Delhi to the Consulate-General of the Republic of China, p. 102.

China which made it extremely undesirable for them to antagonize the Central Chinese Government for their Mission in Tibet and being the member of the League of Nations cannot afford to incur any suspicion that they are aiming at detaching Tibet from China in the same way as Japan have detached Manchuria. The only real interest which British had in Tibet is the maintenance on the Indian Frontier of a friendly Government which is unlikely to create disturbance within our borders. This consideration was naturally of greater concern to the GOI than it is either to British Government or to the Peking Legation and neither of the latter authorities are likely to attach much importance to it as opposed to their own interest in retaining the goodwill of the Chinese Government. The Government of India had difficulties in persuading the British Government to take a strong line with the Chinese Government over the Tibetan question. British Government of India believed that the maintenance of political influence at Lhasa in some form essential.<sup>35</sup> The similar to Chinese mission the British Government of India dispatch mission under the leadership of Rai Bahadur Norbu Thondup, a member of the staff of the Political Officer in Sikkim. He was also instructed to look into the activities of the Chinese envoy in Tibet. Thondup was also given task by the British to find out the geographical limits within which the Tibetan Government claimed they exercised *de facto* control.<sup>36</sup>

Huang Wei-sun a relative of General Huang Mu-Sung, who was a member of the advance party of the Chinese Mission to Tibet and styled as “pay-master” by many, arrived in Calcutta from Lhasa via Kalimpong dated 1 October 1934, and is leaving Calcutta by S.S. Kut Sang for China. For some reason General Hung Mu-Sung is sending him back to China to Nanking to report to the Government. The GOI was willing to give proper facilities to the Chinese Mission.<sup>37</sup> The news reached to the British that Huang Musung is to be allotted 400,000 dollars, some four lakhs of rupees, points to a great effort by China to re-establish her position in Tibet.<sup>38</sup>

Chinese Mission presented 50,000 dollars for expenditure on Dalai Lama’s tomb and a similar amount to three great monasteries of Drepung, Sera, and Ganden.<sup>39</sup> This is the first

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<sup>35</sup> NAI, F&P, External, File No.1 (2)-X (Secret) of 1934, Pro. No. 113, pp. 29-33.

<sup>36</sup> Tsepon W. D. Shakabpa, *Tibet A Political History*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1967, pp. 276-277.

<sup>37</sup> NAI, F&P, External, File No.1(2)-X (Secret) of 1934, p. 52.

<sup>38</sup> NAI, F&P, External, File No.1(2)-X (Secret) of 1934, D.No. 1889-X/34, F. Williamson letter to the Foreign Secretary to the Government of India, New Delhi, p. 114.

<sup>39</sup> NAI, F&P, External, File No.1(2)-X (Secret) of 1934, D.No. 2931-X/34, p. 177.

definite indication of the great effort which is planned by China to regain her domination over Tibet. These offerings were undoubtedly made with a view to preparing a favorable atmosphere for the demands which will be made by Huang Musung when he eventually arrives.<sup>40</sup> Alex McKay pointed out that the Chinese had traditionally made large donations to Tibetan monasteries as part of their religious policy (although those payments had clear political implications). But the cash payments or benefits to individuals in the 1930s and 40s, whether by the Chinese or the British, greatly exceeded the traditional ethical limits of this system. General Huang's mission 1934 there witnessed increasing emphasis on paying influential elements of Lhasa society in return for their support and the main objective behind all this was to keep Tibetan happy.<sup>41</sup>

The Chinese Mission also enquired about the Political Officer in Sikkim and asked whether he was the sort of person who would consent to see them if they visited Gangtok. It seems, however, that they later had no intention of doing so, but propose to travel to Yatung direct from Kalimpong over the Jelap La. From another source it was known to British that the Chinese profess to be most impressed with the strength of the British position in Tibet and with the immense efforts which will be necessary to undermine it. This appeared to indicate the British the real objective of the Mission.<sup>42</sup>

F. Williamson reported that as Huang had carefully avoided mentioning any official business and as Chinese has continually refused to negotiate with Tibet through British as intermediaries the Tibetans decided in private conference to try settle outstanding political questions with Huang with whom they discussed question on 17 September 1934. Questions discussed were frontier and independence of Tibet. Huang stated matter was trifling and could easily be settled but he had no authority to discuss such question, his object being to perform religious ceremonies. Tibetan retorted that if as alleged he was next man in China after Chiang Kai-Shek he could easily decide such questions which would enable them to save much money by withdrawing troops from Kham. Question of return of Tashi Lama was also discussed. On Tibetans expressing apprehension that his apparent present intention of returning overland might

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<sup>40</sup> NAI, F&P, External, File No.1(2)-X (Secret) of 1934, D.No. 2982-X/34, p. 179.

<sup>41</sup> McKay, *Tibet and the British Raj*, p. 174.

<sup>42</sup> NAI, F&P, External, File No.1(2)-X (Secret) of 1934, No.7(8)-P/34, F. Williamson letter dated Gangtok the 27 April 1934, to the Foreign Secretary to the Government of India, pp. 142-143.



lead to fighting Huang gave re-assurance that Lama would be accompanied by small escort and would not resort to force.<sup>43</sup>

The Chinese suggested that Tibetan Government should declare a Republic and promised them support in that event as well as protection against invasion. The National Assembly of Tibet considered matter for two days and declared emphatically that Tibet should never become republic but should maintain existing constitution. Chinese mission were informed accordingly much to their disappointment.<sup>44</sup> The British wanted to break up the Chinese diplomatic mission to Tibet. British think the Chinese mission is going to undermine the British grip on Tibet. Alert British agents are on the spot in a flash, all ready with what it takes to disorganize a diplomatic mission.<sup>45</sup>

The British Government on the other side wanted permanent political solution for Tibet-China and settlement of their boundary disputes in the eastern fronts. As Indian Office saw it there were two issues outstanding between the China and Tibet were the eastern frontier of Tibet and China's position over Tibet. The essential basis of British policy was the existence of a Tibetan Government that wanted the policy to exist. The Chinese proposals brought by Huang Mu-sung mission were not fully accepted by the Tibetans. They only agreed to nominal suzerainty of the Chinese. The position of the Whitehall in the affairs of Tibet was more neutral in nature the His Majesty Government was approached by the British Government of India that there must be a swift reappraisal of the foreign policy toward Tibet. The British Government to maintain their traditional friendship was prepared to offer full diplomatic support to Nanking and they will not enter into negotiations with China in the matter of Tibet unless the Tibetan representative in equal terms.<sup>46</sup>

After the appointment of the Frederick Williamson in 1933 as the Political Officer in Sikkim there seems a change in the attitude of the British toward Tibet. Soon taking over he wrote to the Dalai Lama assuring him that he would endeavor to keep up the friendly relations

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<sup>43</sup> NAI, F&P, External, File No. 1(2)-X (Secret) of 1934, telegram dated 24<sup>th</sup> Oct 1934, from Viceroy , New Delhi, to the Secretary of State for India, London, p. 57.

<sup>44</sup> NAI, F&P, External, File No. 1(2)-X (Secret) of 1934, p. 58.

<sup>45</sup> NAI, F&P, External, File No. 1(2)-X (Secret) of 1934, p. 97.

<sup>46</sup> Singh, *Himalayan Triangle*, pp. 102-104.

existing between Britain and Tibet.<sup>47</sup> The policy was shifted the more focus was given to the Political Officer and was made responsible to deal individually with the Tibetan Government on behalf of the British Government. This change in the British Government approach with the authorities in the Lhasa was well observed by the Chinese who were designing a plan of permanent representative in Lhasa. However, the late Dalai Lama wanted both the British and Chinese should have their representative in Lhasa this he thought on the basis of maintaining equal balance of power. Alastair Lamb pointed out that during the last days of the Dalai Lama the GOI was looking into the three aspects to secure its relations with the Tibetan authorities were encouraging a dialogue between the Panchen Lama and the Dalai Lama and facilitating the return of the former into Tibet and the second step was the supply of the arms and ammunitions to Tibet without the consultation of the Cabinet in London this support from the British will definitely help the Tibetan army to hold off any Chinese forays in the Marches. And the final step by the British Government in India was to send another formal visit to Lhasa by the Political Officer in Sikkim to demonstrate the reality of British good will and support.<sup>48</sup>

The GOI's policy with regard to Tibet was for long been to maintain a friendly, congenial and independent neighbour, uninfluenced by any foreign power, along British north-east frontier. Chinese interest in Tibet is as strong as ever and that the China would lose no opportunity to re-establish her power in that country. The Soviet expansion too has to be considered. Outer Mongolia is now included among the Republics which constitute to Soviet Union while Sinkiang, by a clever combination of Soviet military and commercial policy, is gradually and irresistibly being absorbed by her Russian neighbour. Japan has made tentative commercial offers to Tibet and cannot be disregarded as a possible competitor with China and Soviet Russia.<sup>49</sup>

The absence of a Dalai Lama undoubtedly added enormously to the prestige of the Panchen Lama and, of course, to that of his enormously to the prestige of the Panchen Lama and, of course, to that of his Chinese protectors. The Tibetan Government, to, could benefit from some British counterbalance to Chinese influence and perhaps the British could persuade the Panchen Lama to moderate some of his demands. This was the major reason to dispatch the

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<sup>47</sup> Singh, *Himalayan Triangle*, p.100.

<sup>48</sup> Lamb, *Tibet, China & India*, pp. 225-226.

<sup>49</sup> NAI, F&P, External, File No. 33-X (Secret) 1936, D.No. 90-X/36, p. 2.

Williamson Mission on 20 March 1935 by the GOI.<sup>50</sup> F. Williamson visit to Lhasa was the event that marked the new epoch in the India-Tibet relations. The main motives of the British to send the representative to Lhasa were to secure it permanent British presence in Lhasa and also to discuss into the return of the Panchen Lama to Tibet. The question of the Panchen Lama had remained one of the major unresolved issues within the Tibetan authorities. The Panchen Lama who escaped in 1923 refusing to accept the 13<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama's policy of centralized authority in Tibet was now preparing for his return from China where he took shelter from a long time. However, Panchen Lama put forward some of the demand to the Tibetan Government which became the debatable in the Tibetan Assembly. One of the most crucial demand of the Panchen Lama was to bring with him the Chinese escort in Tibetan territory this was not acceptable for the Tibetans and threat to their independence.<sup>51</sup>

On 17 November 1935, two days before Mr. F. Williamson Mission returned from Lhasa he felt ill and died. Both Tashi Lama and Mrs. Williamson had made themselves universally well-liked by their continued devotion and untiring efforts to establish that attitude of mutual confidence and intimate friendship between the British and Tibetans, which so facilitated all other official negotiations, and it came as a cruel shock to both communities. The reasons for the dispatch of the Mission to Lhasa in August 1935, the instructions that were received and the subsequent 'modus operandi' must be considered against a background of the recent political history of Tibet culminating in the Chinese Mission to Lhasa under General Huang Musung in 1934.<sup>52</sup> Captain Battye, who was in Lhasa with the Mission, now took the command. After few weeks the news arrived that a contingent of 300 Chinese soldiers had left Nanking to join the Panchen Lama at Kumbum and accompany him to Tibet in the coming year. The Tibetan National Assembly passed a resolution stating that if the Panchen Lama tried to enter Tibet with a Chinese and Mongolian escort he would be oppose by force. Thus, an armed confrontation seemed a distinct possibility if the Panchen Lama tried to force his return with the escort.<sup>53</sup>

Captain R. K. M. Battye, British Trade Agent at Gyantse, reported on the following Mission to Lhasa, he writes that "the Mission consisted of the F. Williamson and his wife

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<sup>50</sup> Lamb, *Tibet, China & India*, p. 240.

<sup>51</sup> Singh, *Himalayan Triangle*, p. 104.

<sup>52</sup> NAI, F&P, External, File No. 33-X (Secret) 1936, D.No. 90-X/36, p. 1.

<sup>53</sup> Goldstein, *A History of Modern Tibet*, pp. 270-273.

Captain J. Guthrie, and with Rai Bahadur Norbhu Dhondup, as a personal assistant, and their staffs who left Gyantse on the 6 August and myself and staff who left five days later and joined the others at Samye in the Tsangpo Valley on the 19 August. I was unable to accompany Williamson's party from Gyantse on the 6 August owing to the expected arrival of Mr. Bett, an Executive, who was to have come up to give advice on the reconstruction of some of the Agency buildings. He never came. Our route lay along the main Lhasa track as far as Chak Sum – through Ralung, over the Karo La pass, 16,500 feet, Nagartse, along part of the north border of the Yam-drok Tso Lake to Tra-ma-lung, then over the Kam-pa La and down 4,000 feet into Tsangpo Valley. Williamson's party went as far as Tsetang, where there are some interesting monasteries, spent a few days there then crossed the river in the usual ark-like lighters and came up the left bank again joining me at Samye, where I had been for three days, on the 19 August. The reception on approaching the capital was practically the same. The guard of honour and band of about 300 soldiers under the command of Jigme Tering Depon was drawn up two miles from Lhasa city; the usual reception tent, outside which were waiting representatives of the Tibetan Government and leading officials, was pitched a short way further on, and here it was interesting to note that the Chinese wireless operator took the opportunity of thrusting himself into a seat inside the shamiana and attempting to ingratiate himself during the five minutes we were seated; the Nepalese representative's assistant, the Bhutanese representative and numerous Ladakhi Mohammedan traders met us a short way further on and the crowd swelled quickly as we approached the metropolis. After passing through the city we soon arrived at the Dikyi Lingka which was to be our home for eleven weeks. The Dikyi Lingka belongs to Kundeling monastery and has always been allotted to successive British Missions since Sir Charles Bell first visited Lhasa. It is a small house in the centre of a willow park which is bordered on one side by a tributary of the Kyichu River. Owing to the lack of sufficient indoor accommodation I was obliged to pitch my tents among the willow trees, and, except for being troubled by myriads of mosquitoes and pig-dogs, was extremely comfortable in this camp.”<sup>54</sup>

After the Mission arrived at Lhasa on 26 August, a hospital was opened on 28 August. During the first week a total of 385 new patients were treated. After one month's work a total of 1,086 had been reached. By the 17 November 1935, when the hospital was closed, 1,720 new

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<sup>54</sup> NAI, F&P, External, File No. 33-X (Secret) 1936, D.No. 90-X/36, pp. 3-4.

patients had been treated. These figures show *pro rata* a considerable increase over previous years. 661 vaccinations against small-pox were done.

**Table 4.1:** The medical cases among the Tibetans during the Lhasa Mission

| Summary of cases                      |       |
|---------------------------------------|-------|
| Syphilis                              | 506   |
| Gonorrhoea                            | 139   |
| Digestive Disorders                   | 187   |
| Teeth extractions, minor operations   | 85    |
| Dressings: Ulcers Wounds, Boils, etc. | 103   |
| Eye Conditions                        | 105   |
| Respiratory diseases                  | 86    |
| Miscellaneous                         | 509   |
| Total                                 | 1,720 |

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**Source:** NAI, F&P Dept., External, file no. 33-X (Secret) 1936, D.No.90-X/36, p.10

The total cost of the medical stores was Rs. 3,000. The medical staff consisted of Sub-Assistant Surgeon Rai Sahib Bo Tsering from Gyantse replaced on 20 October, by Sub-Assistant Surgeon Rai Sahib Bo Tsering was invaluable. It was anticipated that, with growing confidence in Western Medicine and decreasing ecclesiastical hostility, the scope of medical work in Tibet will in future be greatly extended.<sup>55</sup> The new hospital was designed by the British, but paid for by the Tibetans, whose attitude to Western medical practice had undergone a sea change since 1904. The opposition to the Western medicine largely came from the monastic institutions in Tibet who were the only source for the cure of any type of sickness and the monastic medical practitioners lost much of their customs, and hence fees. On the other hand the greater efficiency of modern science won over the general populace and British provided treatment for free of charge. McKay argues that the modern medicine was a means by which the imperial power could gain goodwill among all social classes, and generate a positive attitude to modernity.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> NAI, F&P, External, File No. 33-X (Secret) 1936, D.No. 90-X/36, pp. 10-12.

<sup>56</sup> McKay, *Tibet and the British Raj*, pp. 187-188.

The British Government informed the Tibetan Government that if the development of an aggressive Chinese policy against Tibet occurs in future, in that case the British Government are prepared to use all their diplomatic influence with the Chinese Government to prevent of such a policy. The following assurances were given to the Tibetan Government —<sup>57</sup>

- a) That HMG while prepared to admit the theoretical suzerainty of China would adhere to their present policy of regarding Tibet as an autonomous country in practice.
- b) That HMG was anxious to maintain their traditional friendship with the Tibetans and to continue to deal with them direct as in the past.
- c) That HMG was prepared, in so far as the merits of the case justified, to give Tibet their fullest diplomatic support in Nanking should she become involved in any trouble with China.

China continuously provided stipends of 300 to 1,000 dollars monthly according to the rank to the Tibetan monks. During his stay in Tibet Huang Mu Sung is believed to have spent some 400,000 dollars of which 80,000 went to the monasteries. On the other hand the monks have not forgotten the early days of the Chinese revolution when the Chinese troops burned monasteries, butchered monks and desecrated holy books, on the fact that the British Government provided the arms with which serious dangers were averted. But now, though the Tibetans are imperfectly informed of conditions in neighbouring countries, it is common knowledge that the Chinese are re-establishing authority in Szechuan, the imperturbability with which the Chinese tend to maintain their claims is in itself impressive, and always there are cultural ties which have long existed between China and Tibet.<sup>58</sup>

General Huang Mu Sung in 1934 while he was in Tibet he pressed the Tibetan Government to admit Chinese suzerainty outwardly. The Tibetan Government to admit Chinese suzerainty outwardly. The Tibetan Government replied that they would be prepared to do so provided the Chinese would surrender to them certain territory, namely Derge and Nyarong on the Eastern Frontier, while as regards the administration of their internal and external affairs Tibet would remain free and untrammelled by China. Derge and Nyarong as the Government of India are aware have not been surrendered to Tibet and the Tibetan Government now refuse to

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<sup>57</sup> NAI, F&P, External, File No. 33-X (Secret) 1936, D. No. 1026-X/36, pp. 17-18.

<sup>58</sup> NAI, F&P, External, File No. 33-X (Secret) 1936, D. No. 1026-X/36, p. 21.

acknowledge Chinese suzerainty either in theory or in fact vis-à-vis China, the Tibetan outlook on the 1914 negotiations is similar.<sup>59</sup>

The policy of the British Government towards Tibet during this period of time is one of the occasional access to Lhasa as a practical compromise between lack of touch and of influence on the one hand and the inconvenience on the other hand of maintaining a British Representative permanently at Lhasa. The late Dalai Lama had given practical support to the realization of such a policy. The British Lhasa Mission of 1935 was small, non-military, and totally unarmed a practical example of what a foreign mission to Lhasa should be.<sup>60</sup>

Since Henry McMahon first sanctioned the supply of arms and ammunition to Tibet in the memorandum of Simla Convention the Tibetan Government has received number of logistic freight through the Sikkim-Tibetan frontier in the eastern Himalaya. This military logistic support to the Tibetan Government helped them to defend its boundary from the foreign incursion and Tibetan army was successful in defeating Chinese troops in the eastern frontier of Tibet. The consignment was delivered through payment under the supervision of the British Officers in the frontier India-Tibet. In mi-1936, the Tibetan army had 5,000 regular troops in Eastern Tibet (nine regular regiments) and 11 regiments of militia troops. These troops had 4 mountain guns, but 3 had been stolen by Pandatsang Tobgye in 1934 and their condition was doubtful. There were 6 goods Lewis guns and about 5,000 good Lee-Enfield, 303 rifles that the regular troops used. The militia has some old 303 and a motley collection of other foreign guns and old Tibetan rifles. They had no machine guns.<sup>61</sup>

The Defence Department was asked to arrange for supply of arms and ammunition to the Regent of Tibet as requested by the Political Officer in Sikkim. In this connection it may pointed out that Tibet has not yet paid up for the arms and ammunition supplied to her in 1933; the cost, viz. Rs. 8,10,677 has been treated as a loan free of interest and is being recovered in annual installments of Rs. 1 lakh each. In the circumstances it may not be possible for Tibet to place any orders with the Imperial Chemical Industries Ltd., through us if the latter are not willing to make supplies on easy terms for payment. In any case we may before referring the

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<sup>59</sup> NAI, F&P, External, File No. 33-X (Secret) 1936, D.No. 1026-X/36, p. 27.

<sup>60</sup> NAI, F&P, External, File No. 33-X (Secret) 1936, D.No. 1026-X/36, p. 28.

<sup>61</sup> Goldstein, *A History of Modern Tibet*, pp. 280-281.

matter either to Indian Office or to the Imperial Chemical Industries Ltd ascertain the requirements of the Tibetan Government. The case may be discussed with the B. J. Gould as has already placed a small order with us and it is likely that the Tibetan Government may not requiring any further supply at present.<sup>62</sup> In Mr. Caroe's note it states that the request of the Tibetan Government for arms and ammunition to the British Government in India, and enquire whether Defence Department will agree to supply of 30 S. M. L. E. rifles with 30000 rounds S.A.A. to the Regent of Tibet on condition of payment in one installment on delivering. If we can comply it may smooth the path of the projects mission to Lhasa.<sup>63</sup> The General Staff agree to the supply of 30 rifles and 30,000 rounds of S.A.A.<sup>64</sup>

The mountain artillery equipments and 10 Lewis guns, all in serviceable condition but not new, can be made available for sale to the Tibetan Government. It is regretted that we have no surplus Vickers machine guns which we could make available for sale. As these are not manufactured in India it is recommended that purchase should be made from home. In regard to Vickers guns, we suggest that Mr. Gould be informed that only new guns at fullest are available, but that if the Tibetans would prefer additional part-worn Lewis guns in place of Vickers guns, they would be made available.<sup>65</sup>

The following items were issued to the Tibetan Government by the British Government of India is shown below:

**Table 4.2:** Number of rifles, etc. issued to the Regent of Tibet.

|                                 |         |
|---------------------------------|---------|
| Rifles No.1 MK.III              | No. 30  |
| Bayonets No.1, Mk. I            | No. 30  |
| Slings Rifles leather           | No. 30  |
| Scabbards bayonet No.1, Mk. II  | No. 30  |
| Bottles Oil Mk. IV              | No. 30  |
| Pullthroughs Single Mk. IV "B"  | No. 30  |
| Pullthroughs Gauze "A" pieces   | No.30   |
| Flannelette yards               | No. 180 |
| Cartridges S.A.A. Ball          | 303     |
| Mk. VII Charger packed. Rounds. | 30,000  |

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**Source:** NAI, Foreign and Political Department, External, File No. 340-X (Secret) of 1936, p.16

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<sup>62</sup> NAI, F&P, External, File No. 340-X (Secret) of 1936, pp. 5-6.

<sup>63</sup> NAI, F&P, External, File No. 340-X (Secret) of 1936, p. 6.

<sup>64</sup> NAI, F&P, External, File No. 340-X (Secret) of 1936, p. 7.

<sup>65</sup> NAI, F&P, External, File No. 340-X (Secret) of 1936, p. 12.



The British warned the Tibetan Government that the elevation at which they will be used is 12,000 to 16,000 therefore necessitates adjustment in the sighting.<sup>66</sup> That the sighting of the rifles is not adjusted for firing at great heights and when used in Tibet the rifles will tend to fire high. The following sighting correction would be necessary when using a rifle 1 with Mk. VII ammunition at 12,000 to 16,000 ft. altitude:-<sup>67</sup>

- For every inch the barometer falls below 30 inches deduct 1 ½ yards, for each 100 yards of range.
- Note – Barometer falls about 1 inch for every 1000 feet of altitude.
- At 12,000 feet altitude the barometer reading would be 18 and at 16,000 feet would be 14
- Therefore – At 12,000 feet correct elevation would be a deduction of –  $12 \times 1 \frac{1}{2} = 18$  yards for each 100 yards of elevation
- And at 16,000 feet altitude would be a deduction of  $16 \times 1 \frac{1}{2} = 24$  yards for each 100 yards of elevation.

L. E. Dennys letter in November 1936 to H.A.F. Rumbold stating that the British Government realise the political importance of meeting the requirements of the Tibetan government and suggested that they should be accorded similar treatment to Afghanistan, as a matter of fact, the Afghans are getting all the second-hand rifles that can be spared and there are no more which can be regarded as surplus.<sup>68</sup>

The GOI already supplied arms and precious metals on favourable terms to the Tibetan Government and allowed free transit on goods consigned through India to the Regent. In addition, the free transit of Chinese brick tea through India has recently been conceded for a period one year. The GOI contemplates further favors such as the free transit of goods through India to Tibet, and the training of Tibetan military officers in India. The Tibetan Government may wish to supply with more arms, but it may be impolitic to supply arms otherwise than on payment. Money being scarce, the Tibetan Government might be content to purchase out of date models, or second hand arms. We need to have less hesitation in regard to the supply of arms if

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<sup>66</sup> NAI, F&P, External, File No. 340-X (Secret) of 1936, p. 17.

<sup>67</sup> NAI, F&P, External, File No. 340-X (Secret) of 1936, pp. 18-19.

<sup>68</sup> NAI, F&P, External, File No. 340-X (Secret) of 1936, 7102-X/36, L. E. Dennys letter from the War Office, Whitehall, November 1936, p. 12.

Tibet commits itself fully to models to supply of which, and ammunition for what we can control. Similar information on the mountain guns would be useful.<sup>69</sup>

The undersigned is directed to state that the GOI is pleased to accord sanction to the issue of the following munitions to the Regent of Tibet. Rifles No.1 '303' (new), with all accessories including bayonets, scabbards, oil bottles and pullthroughs; cartridges S.A.A. 303 with 30000 rounds.<sup>70</sup> In the telegram from Mr. Gould, Yatung, to Foreign Office, Simla, that the Tibetan Government request supply of following arms on payments viz., four mountain guns, four machine guns and ten Lewis guns. Reasons assigned are anticipation of trouble with Chinese and Tashi Lama's parties and fact that three mountain guns lost in 1932-33 disturbances on Eastern frontier and since recovered are in damage condition. It is also reported that the selected Tibetan troops are being given intensive machine gun practice.<sup>71</sup> The reply from the Foreign Office, Simla to Mr. Gould, Political Officer in Sikkim, mentioned that it is necessary to consider on board lines financial arrangement for supply and Tibet is considerably in GOI's debt in respect of previous consignments of munitions.<sup>72</sup> Tibetan Government possessed sufficient rifles for war purposes according to the Kashag.<sup>73</sup>

During the visit of Political Officer of Sikkim to Lhasa he estimated that the total number of troops did not at any time exceed 2,000. These consisted of the Dalai Lama's bodyguard which was maintained at its strength of 500 and the artillery regiment. In addition there was the least raised regiment from Kongbu and a mixed regiment of other details. The Kongbu regiment is numbered the "Pa" or 13<sup>th</sup> regiment ("Pa" is the 13<sup>th</sup> letter in the Tibetan alphabet). Three regiments only of the Tibetan army are approximately 1,000 strong and the remainder only had some 500 men in the ranks. The total number of regular Tibetan troops is therefore approximately 8,000. To this must be added a variable number of militia, almost entirely in Eastern Tibet, of perhaps 6,000. Apart from the Lhasa garrison there are no troops in Western or Central Tibet. Their entire forces were concentrated in Kham to withstand the Chinese advance. The regular troops were provided with arms obtained by purchase from the

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<sup>69</sup> NAI, F&P, External, File No. 340-X (Secret) of 1936, pp. 28-31.

<sup>70</sup> NAI, F&P, External, File No. 340-X (Secret) of 1936, draft from the Defence Department dated 21, July, 1936, p. 35.

<sup>71</sup> NAI, F&P, External, File No. 340-X (Secret) of 1936, D. No. 4653-X/36, Telegram XX No. 104 dated 4 (received 5) August 1936, p. 36.

<sup>72</sup> NAI, F&P, External, File No. 340-X (Secret) of 1936, p. 41.

<sup>73</sup> NAI, F&P, External, File No. 340-X (Secret) of 1936, p. 44.

GOI in the past and during the present year. Repairs and renewals are carried out in the arsenal at Tapchi where rifles of a similar pattern can also be turned out at the rate of one a day. Experiments are being made to manufacture shrapnel shell for the mountain guns. The case and the shell were made of copper and not of iron. The troops were provided with the Khaki drill uniforms and Khaki helmets of the type supplied to British troops in India. The only training of troops in Lhasa was squad drill and ceremonial parades. Almost complete ignorance of musketry is common to most officers and men. Officers of all ranks are lamentably ignorant of strategy, tactics and map reading. As a map, it was entirely inaccurate. Its only value was that it showed routes connecting various places. Every soldier is the tenant of some landlords (individual, monastery or Government institution). The landlord was responsible that grain rations for these tenant soldiers is provided at the places selected by Government. Medical arrangement for the soldiers was in a very primitive state.<sup>74</sup>

In Lhasa, there were only the 600 troops of the Bodyguard Regiment, 400 armed police, and 300 soldiers from regiments stationed in Kham who were learning to use mountain guns. There were 6 mountain guns in Lhasa (2 of which were dangerous to fire), 2 good Lewis guns, and 5,000 modern rifles with the Bodyguard Regiment. The Tibetan government had about 4,000 new rifles in the armory at Tapchi, as well as 4 machine guns. A few regular troops were stationed on the Nepal border; all the other districts, including those bordering Ladakh, were defended entirely by militias with ancient matchlock rifles.<sup>75</sup>

The rivalry between the British and Chinese in Tibet after the death of the 13<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama was mostly focused on growing the political influence inside the Lhasa authorities. Chinese was more cautious in regaining their suzerainty over Tibet. This period of interregnum in the political history of Tibet was mostly dominated by the power struggle and in re-developing its foreign policies. British Government assisted Tibet with the supply of arms and ammunition which helped the Tibetan Government to re-build its military organization. Chinese regime also provided strong financial assistance to the Tibetan Lamaist institution. The question of the Panchen Lama's escort, which had begun to emerge on the eve of the second Williamson Mission, continued to dominate British policy to the north of the Himalayas until the end of

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<sup>74</sup> NAI, F&P, External, File No. 1-X (Secret) of 1933, Serial No. 91, p. 74.

<sup>75</sup> Goldstein, *A History of Modern Tibet*, p. 281.

1937. It was believed that the escort issue was encouraged by the Nanking Government in deliberate response to the Williamson Mission and to demonstrate Chinese political position in Outer Tibet.<sup>76</sup>

The representatives of the Tashi Lama at Lhasa have been Ta-Lama Ngagchen Rimpoche, a senior Incarnation Lama of Tashi Lhunpo, and two-fourth rank officials, Tsa-Serkang and Deli Rabden. Tsa-Serkang went off to China via India in the spring of 1936 and appeared, when B. J. Gould met him in Calcutta to be optimistic as to the prospects of the Tashi Lama's return. He recently imported a large amount of property to Tibet via India. Ngagchen Rimpoche commands the highest respect in Lhasa, and has the reputation of having both the Tashi Lama's and Tibetan interests genuinely at heart. When the Mission first arrived at Lhasa he was somewhat difficult and retiring and appeared to be depressed. Gradually he became more communicative and as already stated it was partly on his advice that I recommended that the Mission should stay on. In January he left for China via India, having remarked that for the Tashi Lama it is a case of retuning "this year or never", and fully convinced, if the words are to be believed, that some way will be found for getting the Tashi Lama back to Tibet in peace during 1937. He has kept the Tashi Lama fully informed of our exercise of good offices on his behalf. It transpired later that Ngagchen Rimpoche had left Lhasa without the permission of the Tashi Lama, and that consequently the Tashi Lama had dismissed him. This does not however necessarily imply that he will cease to exercise a strong influence towards reconciliation.<sup>77</sup>

The entry of Panchen Lama into Tibet with the 300 Chinese escort remained the significant factor in the Sino-Tibet relations with equal participation of the British in this crisis. The outcome of the negotiations between the Lhasa and Panchen Lama was not fruitful which made Lama to abandon his decision to return to his homeland Tibet for the time being. Wai-chiao-pu, on 18 October 1937, informed authorities in Nanking to not allow the Panchen Lama's escort to enter Tibet at present. In 30 November 1937, the Panchen Lama died this event greatly impacted the Tibetan politics and Tibet now had neither a Dalai Lama nor a Panchen Lama. In the words of Lamb "it was a theocracy without its two great theocrats".<sup>78</sup> Tibet during this period

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<sup>76</sup> Lamb, *Tibet, China & India*, p. 250.

<sup>77</sup> NAI, EAD, External, Secret, 1937, File No. 504-X, Pros. Nos. 1-16, Report on Lhasa Mission 1936-37 by B. J. Gould Political Officer in Sikkim dated Gangtok the 30 April 1937 and the views of the Government of India, p.32

<sup>78</sup> Lamb, *Tibet, China & India*, p. 260.

was experiencing drastic change in their governance and the only hope was the discovery of new Dalai Lama who will unite Tibet under one roof.

### **B. J. Gould Mission to Lhasa**

Mr. Williamson's Mission was curtailed by his death at Lhasa in November 1935. At that time the main factors in the political situation were that, the Dalai Lama having died in December 1933, the Tibetans were feeling their way towards the evolution of some form of Government to replace the autocratic rule of the late Dalai Lama, and were looking forward to the discovery of a new infant Dalai Lama; the Tashi Lama was endeavouring to arrange for his return from China; and the Chinese were hoping to bring about a settlement with Tibet, on terms more favourable to themselves than the late Dalai Lama, or the Tibetan Government at the time of the visit of Huangmusung in 1934, had been willing to concede.<sup>79</sup>

In 1934, because of the struggle in China between the Communists and Nationalist, over one hundred thousand poorly-equipped Communist troops, driven by Nationalist force, began the "Long March" to the northwest. They moved into the Tibetan territories of Horkhog, Bah, Lithang, Nyarong, and Derge. This was the first time the Chinese Communists had set foot on Tibetan soil. Tibetan government dispatched troops to the frontier region in the east and to stop the movement of the Communist from entering Tibet.<sup>80</sup> In 1936 the news came that the Chinese Communists had captured Litang and were in possession of Derge, within the boundaries of Inner Tibet as defined in the 1914 Convention. However, the recapture of Litang by Chinese Government troops, the Communists in their peregrinations had turned northwards towards the Kanze-Derge area. Basil Gould, Political Officer in Sikkim, considered that the proximity of the Communists, in an area so close to the Tibetan border, was likely to hampered the China-Tibet trade and bring economic hardship in its wake. To make British position strong vis-à-vis Chinese growing influence in Tibet Gould recommended the name of Rai Bahadur Norbu Dhondup should be sent to Lhasa on diplomatic mission. In July 1936, the Tibetan Government gave Norbu Dhondup an invitation for Gould to visit Lhasa. While the Tibetan National Assembly was engaged in dealing with the Chinese incursion in Tibet and on the other

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<sup>79</sup> NAI, EAD, External, Secret, 1937, File No. 504-X, Pros. Nos. 1-16, p. 25.

<sup>80</sup> Shakabpa, *Tibet A Political History*, p. 278.

side Gould with his team partly including Brigadier Philip Neame and Hugh Richardson was prepared for the advancement towards Tibet on a Mission.<sup>81</sup>

In pursuance of the policy of an adequately strong and independent Tibet, it was considered desirable to obtain what had never been obtained in the past, viz., expert first hand military opinion as to military strength of Tibet, and as to what measures would be desirable and practicable with a view to increasing the military strength of the country. For these purposes the General Staff were so good as to agree that, subject to certain limitations of time, Brigadier P. Neame and other officers should accommodate mission.<sup>82</sup>

The Political Officer in Sikkim, Mr. B. J. Gould, suggested through a letter dated 14 April 1936, that to re-start military training of Tibetan officers. It would be a good thing if as a preliminary an officer of wide experience could see something of Tibetan troops and form his opinion of their merits and of the sort of training which would suit them best. Mr. Gould writes that the opinion of Colonel Philip Neame, BGGs Eastern Command would be likely to be of great value in the concerning matter. The Gyantse escort is under Eastern Command, and General Baird has arranged to visit Gangtok in May bring Neame with him. Mr. Gould also wanted to discuss with Mr. Baird the possibility of Colonel Neame or other suitable officer coming to Lhasa for a short time.<sup>83</sup>

The deputation of a military officer with the projected Lhasa Mission of 1936 to establish touch with the Tibetan Government in the matter of military training of the Tibetan army.<sup>84</sup> The training of Tibetans by the Government of India appeared to have begun first in 1915 and was stopped by the Tibetan Government on the reason that they considered sufficient had been done. On this anticipation we may ask the Defence Department in consultation with the branches of the Army Headquarter concerned to consider provisional arrangements both for the dispatch of military officer with Mr. Gould to Lhasa and for a suitable medical officer to succeed Captain Guthrie.<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> Singh, *Himalayan Triangle*, pp. 105-106.

<sup>82</sup> NAI, EAD, External, Secret, 1937, File No. 504-X, Pros. Nos. 1-16, p. 26.

<sup>83</sup> NAI, EAD, X-Branch, File No. 246-X/36 (Secret) of 1936, Serial Nos. 1-57, p. 1.

<sup>84</sup> NAI, EAD, X-Branch, File No. 246-X/36 (Secret) of 1936, Serial Nos. 1-57, D.2618-X/36, pp. 2-3.

<sup>85</sup> NAI, EAD, X-Branch, File No. 246-X/36 (Secret) of 1936, Serial Nos. 1-57, para. of notes 59-x/23 Slip A, pp. 3-4.

Gould during his visit in Lhasa re-examined the general line of British Government policy in Tibet with particular regard to China. He noticed that since 1914 British maintained its relations with Tibet with the supply of the limited amount of arms and ammunitions in order to support Tibet fight in the eastern frontier with the Chinese troops. During the time of the Dalai Lama Chinese were preoccupied by with their own internal problem thus the *status quo* had been maintained and after his death the military organization of Tibet was in poor state.<sup>86</sup> Charles Bell writes about the situation in the India-Tibet relations during this period where he mentioned that “our policy which has for the last 30 years produced such good results in maintaining peace and friendship with Tibet has been based on the exclusion of Chinese influence and in maintaining direct relations between our officers and the Tibetans. I think that this policy should not be reversed without very careful consideration. Therefore, our policy ought to be to keep Tibet as strong as possible and independent. This is a big question which affects Nepal and the whole North Eastern frontier, including especially the Buddhist States of Sikkim and Bhutan. The other way is to encouraging our officers on the Tibetan frontier to maintain their influence in the country. This can be done by frequent visits to Lhasa, comparatively well supplied with funds. At each visit the Political Officer in Sikkim should be given a special grant of at least Rs. 20,000”.<sup>87</sup>

The Commander-in-Chief agrees that Mr. Gould may be authorized to offer military training facilities to the Tibetan Government and that a military officer may accompany Mr. Gould on his projected visit to Lhasa, provided that no extra expense is entailed to the Defence Budget on account either of the training facilities or the traveling expenses of the officer.<sup>88</sup> The principle observed in the past has been that the Defence Department has been good enough to contribute without charge whatever services have not involved them in actual extra expense.<sup>89</sup> The Finance Department agreed to the proposed Mission to Lhasa at an estimated cost of Rs. 1,50,000 and they gave authority to the member of the mission to spend Rs. 50,000 only at

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<sup>86</sup> Singh, *Himalayan Triangle*, p. 107.

<sup>87</sup> NAI, F&P, External, 1935, File No. 294-X, Secret, Written advice given by Sir Charles Bell to Tibetan Government while in Tibet with regard to their negotiations with the Chinese Mission in Lhasa., view of Charles Bell about Tibet and China. D. No. 433- x/34, pp. 5-6.

<sup>88</sup> NAI, EAD, X-Branch, File No. 246-X/36 (Secret) of 1936, Serial Nos. 1-57, p. 6.

<sup>89</sup> NAI, EAD, X-Branch, File No. 246-X/36 (Secret) of 1936, Serial Nos. 1-57, D.3270X/36, p. 12.

present in anticipation of provision of funds. The various items of expenditure in connection with the Mission are as under – <sup>90</sup>

- a) Preliminary deputation of Norbu – estimated cost 6,000
- b) Appointment of Mr. Chapman – 600 p.m. plus actual travelling expenses
- c) Travelling allowance of the Military Staff Officer from his headquarters to Lhasa and back.
- d) Cost of the Second Medical Officer from the date of his relief from the Army till Captain Guthrie proceeds on leave.
- e) Honorarium and travelling expenses of Mr. Ludlow.
- f) Appointment of Mr. Macdonald.
- g) Wireless set & a wireless operator.
- h) Pay of the staff of the Sikkim Agency & of Trade Agencies who will accompany the Mission.
- i) Presents, rewards, travelling allowances, medical stores and appliances, secret service and contingencies.

The account of the Lhasa Mission up to the 30 November 1936 was received by the Government of India. The total expenditure incurred by the Political Officer, according to the books of office, comes to Rs. 80,267-10-0 as detailed below:

**Table 4.3:** The account of the Lhasa Mission 30 November 1936 received by the GOI

|                            | July     | August    | September | October   | November  | December    | Total       |
|----------------------------|----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-------------|-------------|
| Of Officers                |          |           | 74-3-0    | 700-0-0   | 800-0-0   |             | 1574-3-0    |
| Of Estt.                   | 677-7-0  |           |           |           | 2836-8-0  |             | 3513-15-0   |
| Allowance etc.             |          |           | 1792-0-0  | 7165-13-0 | 2879-0-0  |             | 11836-13-0  |
| Supplies and Services.     |          |           | 2719-13-0 | 41-13-0   | 964-5-0   |             | 3725-15-0   |
| Secret Service Expenditure | 350-0-0  |           |           |           | 856-7-0   |             | 1206-7-0    |
| Contingencies              |          | 2366-3-9  | 754-15-0  | 303-14-0  | 1610-3-0  | 579-4-6     | 5614-13-3   |
| Wireless                   |          | 24-3-0    | 620-12-0  |           | 1859-4-0  |             | 2504-3-0    |
| Entertainment charges      |          |           |           |           | 152-11-0  |             | 152-11-0    |
| Toshakhana                 | 2719-4-0 | 15693-2-0 | 7563-12-0 | 2067-2-6  | 8343-4-9  | 3990-12-0   | 40277-5-3   |
| Presents and others        | 13-8-0   | 3205-7-0  | 1615-2-6  | 3145-7-0  | 1868-12-0 | 13-0-0      | 9861-4-6    |
|                            |          |           |           |           |           | Grand Total | 80,267-10-0 |

**Source:** NAI, External Affairs Department, X-Branch, File No. 246-X/36 (Secret) of 1936, Serial No. 1-

57, p.49

<sup>90</sup> NAI, EAD, X-Branch, File No. 246-X/36 (Secret) of 1936, Serial No. 1-57, pp. 28-29.



The Lhasa Mission was continuing for an indefinite period and Mr. Gould proposed that it should be considered as an extension of the normal activities of the Political Officer of Sikkim.<sup>91</sup>

The main objective of the British Government for the Lhasa Mission were as follows –<sup>92</sup>

- a) Negotiating, if required, for a settlement between the Tibetan Government and Tashi Lama,
- b) Bringing about the latter's return to Tibet without the Chinese escort, and
- c) Placing our relations with Tibet on a strong friendly footing generally and also to offer advice on any points which might be brought forward by the Lhasa Government.

It was the aim of the British to preserve of the autonomous and friendly Tibetan Government determined and able to resist Chinese aggression political or military and also to retain full independence against Russia or Japanese influence. In pursuance of this policy Lhasa has been visited by our Political Officers in Sikkim from time to time. The GOI felt that the Chinese designs in Tibet or the possibility of their becoming a source of trouble to us on our North East Frontier and if the Chinese suzerainty should ever become effective an Anglo-Chinese treaty might become desirable not only to cover the question of the British other interests in Tibet, but also the question of the Indo-Tibetan frontier which at present rests only on the basis of Anglo-Tibetan agreements. British regarded that no such treaty with China is apparently feasible within the foreseeable future and the war with Japan renders the political situation all the more obscure. In this connection it may, however, be mentioned that with a view to forestall any possible territorial claims by China on the British India North East frontier the British took up the question of the annexation of the Tawang area which was ceded to the British under the 1914 Convention with Tibet and the British decided to send an expedition to that area for the purpose in the ensuing then at an estimated cost of Rs. 33,000.<sup>93</sup>

In 25 October 1942 the Sikkim Political Officer asked for the enquiry to the Government of India regarding discussion of matters with the Consul General of China. The officer mentioned that Chinese Consul General will be staying with him from 27 to 31 October if there are any matters on which he needs to be especially cautious the Government should

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<sup>91</sup> NAI, EAD, X-Branch, File No. 246-X/36 (Secret) of 1936, Serial No. 1-57, S. No. (18) p. 35/c, p. 76.

<sup>92</sup> NAI, EAD, X-Branch, File No. 246-X/36 (Secret) of 1936, Serial No. 1-57, p. 99.

<sup>93</sup> NAI, EAD, X-Branch, File No. 246-X/36 (Secret) of 1936, Serial No. 1-57, pp. 100-103.

perhaps advise him. In reply the GOI suggested that Consul-General should be ridden off Tibetan and other affairs which can be discussed more appropriately with Chinese Commissioner in Delhi.<sup>94</sup>

There was proposal for the postal service between India and China via Tibet Mr. G. E. D. Walker, Political Officer in Margherita, wrote a letter to J. P. Mills, Adviser to the Governor of Assam on Tribal Areas and States, that “I have recently seen some correspondence, between a Peter Goullart of the Chinese Industrial Co-operative at Likiang<sup>95</sup> and Mr. Smith, the Director of posts at Kuming (Kunming capital of Yunnan Province at present). The correspondence deals with the opening of a Postal Service between India and China via Rima.<sup>96</sup> The writer who claims to have personal knowledge of the route between Likiang and Rima also states that the Chinese Ministry of communications is interested in this, and that the route was indeed opened in 1943. From the letter it appears that the carriers were intended to be Tibetans, and that they would in addition to mail carry loads of essential equipment. The correspondence is dated August 1942 and there is a note, apparently inserted in the copy, about the opening in 1943. One William Brough is interested, but I do not know if he is American.”<sup>97</sup> The Gould Mission was also sent with another significant objective by the GOI that was issue to discuss with the Kashag about the problem in the Tawang problem and also along with the other frontier questions such as the Tehri-Garhwal dispute. The Tawang problem remained unsolved during this Mission. The most important result of this mission was the establishment of a form of permanent British representation in Lhasa.<sup>98</sup> Basil Gould mission to Lhasa in 1936 was the landmark in British relations with Tibet comparable with that of Charles Bell mission in 1920.<sup>99</sup> The Bell mission to Lhasa established a friendly contact with the Dalai Lama and his

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<sup>94</sup> NAI, EAD, Government of India, External Branch, Serial No. 1-2, File No. 409-X/42(Secret), of the year 1942, telegram XX No. 8514 dated 26 October 1942, from Foreign, New Delhi, to Political, Gangtok, pp. 1-2.

<sup>95</sup> Likjiang, also known as Likiang, is a city in the northwest of Yunnan Province of China. It is located in the northwestern portion of Yunnan and border Sichuan. It is within the region encompassed by the Hengduan mountains, where the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau and Yunnan-Guizhou plateau converge.

<sup>96</sup> Rima, is the former capital of the Zayul in the Southeastern Tibet Autonomous Region of China. It is on the border with India's Arunachal Pradesh at the confluence of the Rongtu Chu and Zayul Chu rivers, which join to form the Zayul River (or Lohit River) before it flows into Arunachal Pradesh. Rima was a notable border trading town, which the British contemplated as location for a trade mart in the Lhasa Convention.

<sup>97</sup> NAI, EAD, C.A.-Branch, File No. 104-C.A./44 of 1944, Serial No. 1-2, G.E.D. Walker, letter dated the 16 December 1943, p. 4.

<sup>98</sup> Lamb, *Tibet, China & India*, p. 277.

<sup>99</sup> Hugh E. Richardson, *Tibet and Its History*, Boston, Shambhala Publications, 1962, p. 148.

governance. Paradoxically, Gould mission cemented the ties between the authorities of Delhi and Lhasa that began from the friendship of Charles Bell and Dalai Lama.

The Political Officer in Sikkim though his letter has acknowledge contribution of the Commander-in-Chief for having placed at the disposal of the Mission for having placed at the disposal of the Mission the services of Brigadier P. Neame, V.C., D.S.O., and Lieutenants E. Y. Nepean and S. J. Dagg, Royal Corps of Signals, whose pay was met by the Defence Department; and of Captain W. S. Morgan, I.M.S., after their return from Lhasa Mission. After the return of the most of the Mission personnel to India, the Mission continues to be embodied in charge of Mr. H. E. Richardson, I.C.S., who will, it is contemplated, be relieved shortly by Rai Bahadur Norbhu Dhondup; Mr. Richardson remaining in superior charge of Tibetan affairs. Tibet's main desire is to fulfill the function for which she is adapted by her religion and by nature to dwell in peace. While she is aware that China if determined and united, could overwhelm her, she has on the other hand the belief that there is no limit to the diplomatic influence of HMG. While Tibet has no desire to act as a buffer state, in so far as a buffer is a thing designed to absorb shocks, she has nevertheless habituated herself to offering a considerable resistance to such attempts as have in recent years been made upon her integrity, and it would appear that her Government is determined to pursue this policy to any reasonable length. Now as in the past the opinion is widely held that no negotiations with China are likely to be successful, and no settlement can be expected to endure, except with the help of HMG; who may be trusted to decide in what manner such help may most effectually be rendered.<sup>100</sup>

B. J. Gould in his report to Lhasa Mission observed that "Tibet is a country disposed by a reasoned consideration of her own interests and by natural inclination, to progress along the lines of our settled policy, but hampered by fear of China. At his final interview the lay Commander-in-Chief informed me that in his opinion it had been the presence of the Mission, rather than any efforts which the Tibetans themselves had been able to put forth, which had averted a crisis in the matter of the Tashi Lama's escort. I have been careful to point out the fact that, and the reasons why, Tibet denies that, pending the execution of new agreement, China enjoys any rights in Tibet, and what appears to me to be the present treaty position in regard to Tibet. Amongst tangible results of the Mission are the facts that the Mission had undoubtedly

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<sup>100</sup> NAI, EAD, External, Secret, 1937, File No. 504-X, D. No. 2456-X/37, p. 21.

been potent as a conciliator, though not as an official mediator, between the Tibetan Government and the Tashi Lama, and that nothing now stands in the way of the return of the Tashi Lama except such demands or conditions as would be inconsistent with the maintenance of Tibetan unity and effectual independence, and with established British policy in regard to Tibet; permission has been accorded for another Everest expedition; the Kaulback incident has been adjusted; the Tibetan military position has been appreciated by an expert and arms are being supplied on an agreed basis; the influence of Mr. Tsiang and of the Chinese wireless has been neutralized; the Tawang position has been ventilated; the Tibetan Government have been reminded of their treaty position vis-à-vis HMG; without commitments as to permanent representation it has been arranged that for the time being representation shall be continuous; the Tibetan Government have become familiar with the idea that we can afford support in certain ways but not in others; means of developing the trade, prosperity and national consciousness of Tibet have been investigated and in some cases put into practice. Gould further added in his report that possibly however the most valuable result of the Mission, and of its present continuance under Mr. Richardson, is that we now know the Tibetans, and they know us, better than can have been the case since the days when Sir Charles Bell was in close touch with the Dalai Lama.”<sup>101</sup> The GOI attempt to strengthen her ties with Tibet was countered by Chinese strong influence over Tibet. Tibetan Government always tried their best to maintain *status quo* in the geo-political crisis with the support of diplomatic intercourse with India-China.

### **The Discovery of 14<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama; Tibet’s political transition**

In the interregnum phase the authorities in Lhasa adapted the policy which practiced by the 13<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama that was maintaining *status quo*. In the absence of a head of the state, the inclination of the Tibetan Government was to avoid making any changes on the frontiers with the Chinese and their relations with the British Government in India. The Tibetan Government never accepted the idea of mediation with the China and the situation in the eastern frontier in 1936 was in a position of stalemate which existed along the line of the Yangtse. The British India Government continued to propagate the same old view that the Tibet frontier with China could best be settled by stabilization on the basis of the status quo rather than by unfruitful attempts to settled boundary issue by means of long, drawn –out negotiations. The death of the Dalai Lama

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<sup>101</sup> NAI, EAD, External, Secret, 1937, File No. 504-X, Pros. Nos. 1-16, pp. 38-39.

and his theocracy rule brought challenges to the Tibetan political leaders to come to a settlement with China. The Tibetan Government also attempted to send emissaries to China to settle the problems between two countries. The British on the other side was not ready to encourage Tibet to send emissaries to China. The reason was British had its own implications on Tibet such as they might had to compromise the treaty rights which British enjoy since 1914 Convention such as the annexation of Tawang. The British statesmen were also sure that if Tibet plenipotentiaries visit China for the negotiations it will have zero benefits for Tibetans and British.<sup>102</sup> The British main motives in Sino-Tibet crisis were to act as the mediator which Chinese Government was not ready to accept it. The important decision was made by the authorities in Lhasa during 1937 was the search for the new incarnation of the Dalai Lama.

After the death of the 13<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama according to customs and rituals his body was embalmed, dressed in gold brocade robes, placed in the lotus position and seated facing south the direction of long life on a throne in the Norbulingka. But even before government declared the news of his death across the country the omens predicting the next incarnation of the Dalai Lama was spreading quickly among the people. The sign of coming of the next Dalai Lama was witnessing by the Tibetan people in Lhasa. The first auspicious sign was the head of the Dalai Lama which was facing toward the northeast and in the ensuing months further signs appeared. The three state oracles turned eastward in trance and presented scarves a patch of snapdragons sprouted from the east end of the platform used for public sermons in Lhasa's main square overnight a giant star-shaped fungus grew on the east side of the northeast pillar of the shrine in the Potala where the Dalai Lamas jewel-inlaid tomb was under construction. The sign of the auspicious cloud formations pierced by rainbow rising over the mountains and ringing the northeast end of the city marked a signal for the birth of the new Dalai Lama from that part of Tibet.<sup>103</sup>

Before his death, the thirteenth Dalai Lama appointed his nephew, head of the Reting Monastery and a Hutukhtu (Living Buddha) as Regent. One of the duties of this Regent, who is still under thirty and is said to be a man of unusual intelligence, was to find a successor to the vacant throne. In conformity with traditions, he visited the *Tengri Nor*, a salt lake ninety odd

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<sup>102</sup> Singh, *Himalayan Triangle*, pp. 117-118.

<sup>103</sup> John F. Avedon, *In Exile from the Land Of Snows*, New York, Vintage Books, 2015, p. 4.

miles north of Lhasa, scores of times, hoping to obtain divine guidance. His assiduous efforts were finally rewarded by a vision in the summer of 1937. It was a bright day. As he was gazing at the “inland sea,” he first saw three Tibetan words meaning Taerhssu, a Buddhist centre in Kokonor Province, then a great crowd of people dressed in heterogeneous costumes and finally a house distinguished from all others by trees and a rock nearby. The meaning of the vision was clear. The spirit of the late Dalai Lama must have entered into the body of baby in Taerhssu, because Taerhssu is one of the places on the Tibetan border known as a living ethnological museum on account of racial complexities there. Agents were sent to Kokonor on a search for the holy child, a search in which hundreds of lamas took part. Finally in October, 1937, they located him in a Tibetan home at Hungtuya, or the Red Earth Cliff, fifteen miles or so from Sining, the capital of Kokonor.<sup>104</sup> The Tibetan Government maintained strict secrecy and made efforts to bring the selected child as fast as possible to Lhasa.<sup>105</sup> The fear of child might get abducted by the Chinese was strongly prevalent among the Tibetans during that time. In recent history of Tibet it happened that on 14 May 1995 the 14<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama selected the new Panchen Lama named Gedhun Choekyi Nyima born on 25 April 1989 he was kidnapped by the Chinese Government after three days of his selection.

Gyalo Thondup the elder brother of the 14<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama describes the events that happened after his younger brother was recognized the incarnation. He narrates that “thousands of people came to Kumbum to send us off – lamas, monks, and ordinary Tibetan alike. The nomads from Amdo, Xinjiang, and Mongolia came to greet us with presents of butter, cheese, yogurt, and meat. Everyone wanted to pay homage to the child they hoped and believed would be the next Dalai Lama. Everyone wanted the little boy’s blessing.”<sup>106</sup> Thondup has narrated the story of his journey from Amdo to Lhasa with his family and along with his brother who was now heir to the throne in Potala. His account as recorded by the Anne F. Thurston throws new light in the historiography of selection of new Dalai Lama in Tibet.

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<sup>104</sup> NAI, EAD, External Branch, Secret, 1940, File No. 124-X/40, Pros. Nos. 1-122, p.102; article by James Shen, ‘A New Dalai Lama is Found,’ published in *ASIA* (ASIA; magazine was established by the American Asiatic Association in 1898 as *Journal of the American Asiatic Association*) , edition-January 1940, p. 25.

<sup>105</sup> Singh, *Himalayan Triangle*, p. 118.

<sup>106</sup> Anne F. Thurston, *The Noodle Maker of Kalimpong The Untold story of my struggle for Tibet*, London, Random House Group Limited, 2016, p. 31.

The Lhasa authorities tried to maintained full secrecy of this whole event even they restricted the entry of newspaper men and photographers from all over the world. In fact, however, no foreigners, not even the British who maintain a mission in Gyantse, will be privileged the witness the exotic ceremony. Even in ordinary times there is a strict ban on the entry of non-Buddhists; hence it is utterly inconceivable that officials in the only theocracy in the world will admit any “outsiders” on the eventful day.<sup>107</sup> The secrecy which Tibetan monks maintained in their finding of child in Amdo and bringing him safely to Lhasa a serious obstacle confronted the party. The Muslim Governor of Chinghai, General Ma Pu-feng (or Ma Bu-feng) a warlord of the northwestern China came to know about the child in Takster. The Tibetan delegates out of fear and to avoid his intervention the delegation sought to conceal their choice by examining dozens of children at the general’s heavily fortified *yamen* or headquarters in Xining. The general with his sharp instinct noticed a child who was selected by the delegation team. Now he started to bargain with the huge sum of money he demanded 100,000 Chinese silver dollars (approximately \$92,000) in ransom. With no other recourse, the officials paid. However, instead of releasing the boy, Ma Bufeng made further demands: 300,000 more dollars, a full set of the past Dalai Lama’s robes and throne ornaments and a valuable gold-lettered edition of all 333 volumes of the Buddhist cannon. The Tibetan monks had no other option and they compiled once again with General.<sup>108</sup> After the consultation with the Chinese Government in Nanking revealed that the General was essentially playing his own hand. The Government of India steeped in and secured Reserve Bank permission for the Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank to telegraph the money direct to the Tibetan Government.<sup>109</sup> In July 1939, the child was taken to Lhasa with the escort and reached Lhasa on 8 October 1939.

In Lhasa, the Tibetan Government begun serious business of selecting a successor to the Tibetan Pontiff, than the Chinese informed that they wanted to be part of the new Dalai Lama installation ceremony. The projected Lhasa ceremony naturally affords a good opportunity to the Chinese Government to bring about closer relations with Tibet. A special delegation left Chungking in the latter part of October to attend the rite. At its head is General Wu Chung-hsin, chairman of the Commission on Mongolia and Tibetan Affairs, who, together with the Regent,

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<sup>107</sup> NAI, EAD, External Branch, Secret, 1940, File No. 124-X/40, Pros. Nos. 1-122, p.102; Shen, p. 25.

<sup>108</sup> Avedon, *In Exile from the Land*, p. 8.

<sup>109</sup> Singh, *Himalayan Triangle*, p. 118.

will preside over the all-important function. Advisor to the delegation is His Lun, member of the People's Political Council, and its secretary is Lo Liang-chian, a deputy department chief in Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek's personal headquarters. Other members are Kong Chin-song, director of the Tibetan Affairs Bureau of the Commission, Tsao Chin-yuan, formerly Civil Affairs Commissioner of Kweichow, Chow Kun-tien, General Wu's personal secretary, Chu Tsang, a sectioned chief of the Commission, Lee Kuo-ling, Tibetan interpreter, and Chang Kuo-shu, also secretary. None of these members of this delegation has ever before visited Tibet. The party headed by General Wu is the second from China to visit Lhasa in six years. General Huang Mu-sung, his predecessor in the Commission on Mongolia and Tibetan Affairs visited Lhasa in 1934 as the national government's special envoy to confer posthumous honours on the late Dalai Lama. But up until very recently, mainly because of British interference, the relations between Tibet and the rest of China have been strained. There are three political cliques in Tibet during this period they are pro-British, pro-Chinese and holding the middle ground between these two groups are the "autonomists" who, while wishing to see Tibet remain as part of China, want self-government in local affairs.<sup>110</sup> In Lhasa, it seemed that the Regent's pro-Chinese tendencies had brought about this change in attitude of the Tibetan Government toward China.<sup>111</sup>

The Reting qutuqtu's regency (1934-1941) is remembered as a period of stagnation. Without preparing Tibet for upcoming challenges or not focusing on overall development of the Tibetan Government this Reting was primarily busy filling his own pockets. For this reason and his immoral lifestyle, he was deemed not a perfect guardian or a teacher to ordain the new Dalai Lama. His conspiratorial efforts to achieve his administrative position in Lhasa, including his attempted assassination of the acting regent and asking for support from the Chinese Government ultimately failed later he died in the Potala prison in 1947.<sup>112</sup>

On 9 December 1939 Gould received instructions from the Government of India to attend the installation of the new Dalai Lama in Lhasa. The Kashag also informed through Norbu Dhondup the British to send its representative to attend the ceremony. Lamb expressed that this mission of the Gould was fortunate to have been able to witness some part at least of a complex

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<sup>110</sup> NAI, EAD, External Branch, Secret, 1940, File No. 124-X/40, Pros. Nos. 1-122, p.104; Shen, p. 27.

<sup>111</sup> Singh, *Himalayan Triangle*, p. 119.

<sup>112</sup> Peter Schwieger, *The Dalai Lama and the Emperor of China A Political History of the Tibetan Institution of Reincarnation*, New York, Columbia University Press, 2015, p. 234.



and ancient ritual which will almost certainly never be repeated with anything like its original purity. Lamb further argued that there was a very clear political element in this second Gould Mission to Lhasa, for the British Government in India, one of the main objective of the mission was to observe closely the activities of the Chinese party and if possible, to counter them.<sup>113</sup> There were definite indications that the Chinese Government, especially since its removal to Chungking, is paying increasing attention to the frontier regions. Sikang, that vast territory between Tibet in the west and Szechwan in the east which was marked as Tibetan territory at the ill-omened Simla Conference in 1913-1914, became full-fledge Chinese province on New Year's Day, 1939, and numerous plans for its development are already afoot. In Lhasa itself today, there is a Chinese radio station, which is in constant touch with Chungking. There is also a Chinese school, the first one of its kind in Tibet, and more schools are to be opened later on to give the Tibetans the rudiments of up-to-date education. Although even from western China Lhasa still seems far away beyond the mountains, it will be brought nearer to Chungking when the two new highways was being built westward from Kanting and Sining, capitals of Sikang and Kokonor respectively are completed. Furthermore, Chang Kai-ngau, China's then Minister of Communications, announced then that preparations were being made for the inauguration of a regular air line from Chengtu to Paan (Batang) in Sikang, which would eventually go on to Lhasa and Gyantse.<sup>114</sup> The Chinese Government aim to bring Tibet under the China was rapidly done from this point onwards.

Several foreign representatives were in the audience, too, including Wu Zhongxin from China, Basil Gould representing Great Britain, and diplomats from Nepal and Bhutan. Dalai Lama was kept in the throne, Thondup recalls that his little brother remained invariably poised, attentive, and calm throughout the endless ceremonies. He must already have begun receiving instructions from the lamas who were about to become his teachers.<sup>115</sup> The six year old child with his head closely shaven like other juvenile Lamas but gorgeously attired in a red cloak will be escorted by the Regent, General Wu Chung-Hsin, and 100 other Hutukhtus to a great bolted door gilded with gold and studded with precious stones and guarded by a Lama. To the accompaniment of sounding drums, blaring of horns and clashing of cymbals, holy mantras will

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<sup>113</sup> Lamb, *Tibet, China & India*, pp. 284-285.

<sup>114</sup> NAI, EAD, External Branch, Secret, 1940, File No. 124-X/40, Pros. Nos. 1-122, p.104; Shen, p. 27.

<sup>115</sup> Thurston, *The Noodle Maker*, p. 39.

be recited and the boy Dalai Lama with his head bowed will pause on the threshold while the great door leading to a huge richly decorated hall is slowly swung open. The Regent, amidst the continuous chanting of more mantras and the clamour of bells, gongs, conch-shells and drums will lead the chosen child to an altar or graded throne on which stands the great image of the Sakya. The new Dalai Lama will sit cross legged and one of his first acts after installation will be to receive the Kata or long silk scarf and other gifts from General Wu Chung-Hsin who will read out from a golden scroll his Government's formal acknowledgement of the installation of the new Dalai Lama. The Dalai Lama will return the compliment with a number of prostrations and genuflections towards the direction of the Imperial Abode (formerly the residence of the Chinese Emperor).<sup>116</sup> The impression of Wu visit to last failed to impress the Tibetans rather it showed the China had a designs on Tibet. When the Chinese gifts were presented Wu choose not to attend and in the event Chinese did nothing which was not also done by representatives of Britain, Nepal and Bhutan. The main aim of the Wu mission was to gain higher standing of the Chinese officials and to create a strong boundary with those who had been representing Chinese interest at Lhasa.<sup>117</sup> According to Gould the Chinese representative had been dissatisfied with the position accorded to him that he decided not to be part during the time of presentation of gifts from China.<sup>118</sup> After the departure of the Chinese representative Wu in April 1940 and left behind the man appointed was Dr Kung Ch'ing-tsung. Who during the course of his stay at Lhasa tried to act as the permanent representative of the Chinese Government for the next four years but the Tibetan people never treated him as temporary foreign representative, and he never participated in the affairs of Tibetan Government. Tibet during this period needs to build up strong army to protect her independence from foreign powers particularly with China.<sup>119</sup>

### **Final phase of the British India policy towards Tibet vis-à-vis China**

After the installation of 14<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama in the throne at Potala palace Tibet eventually came under his rule. Basil Gould finally left Lhasa in June 1940 the situation in Europe was not good due to the outbreak of the World War II. After the entry of the Japan and the United States in the war Tibet emerge into a significant geopolitical region. The rise of Japan in the east made British

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<sup>116</sup> NAI, EAD, External Branch, Secret, 1940, File No. 124-X/40, Pros. Nos. 1-122, extract from the Statesman Newspaper (dated 23/2/1940, *Installation of Dalai Lama*), p. 136.

<sup>117</sup> Singh, *Himalayan Triangle*, pp. 119-120.

<sup>118</sup> Mehra, *The McMahon Line*, p. 446.

<sup>119</sup> Singh, *Himalayan Triangle*, p. 120.

to re-think its policy towards Tibet the major factor was that Japan might soon overtake the Chinese claims in Tibet and its impact on Indo-Tibetan Himalayan frontiers was inevitable. The powerful Japanese after its onslaughts on the mainland China had a severe impact on China's KMT regime and has pushed her from the political centre to the country's extreme south-west. This event had a powerful impact on Chinese efforts, both direct as well as indirect on her come-back in Tibet. On the other hand the British India's own interest in the maintenance of Tibet's integrity was further prompted. The extension of the British Lhasa Mission of 1936 year to year showed British growing interest in Tibet and to settle the issue in the eastern frontier was one major factor for British to sustain its policy with Tibet.<sup>120</sup>

In this period the Chiang Kai-shek Government was looking for the new-link to receive supplies from land routes. The only link to connect with the ports of the Indian Ocean for the Nationalist China was through Tibet via India. Chinese Government will make attempts to exploit this link. British Government was certain about the involvement of the United States in Tibet because of its close proximity with China and in Washington Tibet was seen as part of China. The British was now in dilemma due to involvement of U.S. in Tibet and were in no position to ignore American opinion in 1940 and due to this factor British were careful about their Tibetan policy to avoid American accusations.<sup>121</sup> The continued pre-occupation of China with Japan during the war made Tibetan Government believed that the Tibet will be in peace without the intervention of Chinese Government for a while and at the same time it was certain that the Tibetans would probably at any time be ready to negotiate with China on general basis of 1914 draft agreement but preferably without admitting any considerable number of Chinese troops to Lhasa.<sup>122</sup>

Mr. Hsi Luen explained to Norbu Dhondup on 6 February 1940 in Lhasa that China's aims in Tibet is purely friendly nature and governed by the desire to give or offer help to Tibet where possible, but he added (no doubt as an afterthought) that Tibet had natural resources which one day may be exploited, and should China, being within her rights, consider such exploitation expedient, Britain in preference to any other power will be asked to co-operate and supply the necessary technical experts, etc. He stated China's suzerainty over Tibet was fully

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<sup>120</sup> Mehra, *The McMahon Line*, p. 442.

<sup>121</sup> Lamb, *Tibet, China & India*, pp. 299-300.

<sup>122</sup> NAI, EAD, External Branch, Secret, 1940, File No. 124-X/40, Pros. Nos. 1-122, D. 1066-X/40, p. 155.

recognized by the British Government, he was fully aware that the British Indian interest in Tibet was based on the desire to safeguard the Indian North East frontier. Chinese influence in Tibet could never be determined to British Indian interests and that India had nothing to fear from China. He also stated that he is convinced that a strong China will be Britain's best asset in Asia. He said the fullest autonomy was allowed Tibet, and no call was being made upon Tibet in China's present national emergency. Whatever was being done in Eastern Tibet was of a purely voluntary nature.<sup>123</sup> Wuchang pointed out to Gould that British and Chinese interests are fundamentally identical and all that China desires is Tibet should peaceful and prosperous.<sup>124</sup>

Since 1912 Tibet has just succeeded in holding its own with the British diplomatic support against a China which has been discussed or preoccupied with Japan. Gould observed that in future China will be either in (group omitted) itself or dominated by Russia or by Japan. For the present our political horizon is necessarily limited in war. What I am unable to judge is how soon these probable developments in China are likely to affect Tibet and what degree of importance Government attaches to maintaining Tibet as useful friendly buffer during war.<sup>125</sup> China wanted to help Tibetans in various ways but Tibetan Government had made it clear that they do not wish to accept such help. Before Wu Chung-hsin, left Lhasa he talked about the friendliness of Anglo-Chinese relations and of China Japan war with apparent implication that when China had won war she may again direct attention to Tibet.<sup>126</sup>

From 1941-1943 the Chinese Government under Chiang Kai-shek was looking into the developments of new land routes through Tibet. The Burma Road due to Japanese invasion reduced Chinese link to outside world. However, in 1941 Chiang Government passed an order that the new route should be developed from the south-west Szechwan across a corner of south-east Tibet into Assam via the Lohit valley and was hoping for the co-operation of the British Government of India which was certainly essential for such projects. The Chinese informed Tibetan Government that they are starting the project soon and without further argument sent a survey party to the Tibetan border. The Tibetan opposed the scheme of the Chinese. By the end

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<sup>123</sup> NAI, EAD, External Branch, Secret, 1940, File No. 124-X/40, Pros. Nos. 1-122, Enclo. to serial No. 15, D.O.No.3(16)-L/39, Note on the conversation held between Norbhu Dhondup and ND Wu's representative Mr. Hsi Luen on the afternoon of 1 February 1940, pp. 162-165.

<sup>124</sup> NAI, EAD, External Branch, Secret, 1940, File No. 124-X/40, Pros. Nos. 1-122, p. 174.

<sup>125</sup> NAI, EAD, External Branch, Secret, 1940, File No. 124-X/40, Pros. Nos. 1-122, D. No.2026-X/40, Telegram XX No.49 dated 30 (received 31) March 1940 from Gould, Lhasa, to Foreign Department, New Delhi, pp. 223-225.

<sup>126</sup> NAI, EAD, External Branch, Secret, 1940, File No. 124-X/40, Pros. Nos. 1-122, pp. 229-230.

of 1941 the Japanese enter into the war this laid to the development of the link between British and Chinese. The idea of new road through south-east Tibet was abandoned and the new possibilities were discussed. During his visit Chiang Kai-shek to India in 1942 he mostly discussed on the development of new routes.<sup>127</sup>

Britain had long been controlling Tibet. The Tibetan policy of reliance on Britain remains unchanged as ever with the enthronement of the 14<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama. Consequently attempts made by the Chiang Kai-shek regime at the recovery of Chinese suzerainty over Tibet would directly be tantamount to a dream but it may be taken as evidence that Britain is moving in the direction of helping Chiang Kai-shek. Britain's route of aggression in West China runs from Lhasa in Tibet through the Paoan and Kangtung in Sikong to Chungking in Szechuan. This route is the so-called old "official Tibetan Road". Geographically this road is a very steep and difficult road. However, when the Yunnan-Tongking Railway is being subjected to bombing and other routes to the outside are under blockade this route may possibly along with the development of the new work in Tibet become a route for extending aid to Chiang Kai-shek. The official Tibetan road is composed of a series of most difficult roads. The distance from Lhasa to Kangting is 1,600 kilometers. From Lhasa to Darjeeling across the Himalayas is six hundred kilometers. The British plan for the first stage is to build a railway from Darjeeling to Gyantze in Tibet and further to extend it to Lhasa while Chinese side is scheduled to build a railway from Lhasa to Kangting.<sup>128</sup>

In the eastern Himalayan region the overland route was re-opened which led to the trade boom between India-Tibet. Hugh Richardson a British diplomat in Lhasa, pointed out that the result of this trade boom was that many Tibetans began to travel further afield throughout India looking for trade goods. This led to the Tibetan people develop a new interest in knowing the world beyond the Tibetan frontier in the south, and in 1944, at the request of the Tibetan Government, a small school with an English headmaster was opened at Lhasa. This period in history of Tibet witness the emergence of progressive group of people against the conservative monastic group. The school which was opened continued for a short period of time and was closed. The Tibetan Government after few years later knowing the significance of

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<sup>127</sup> Richardson, *Tibet and Its History*, pp. 159-160.

<sup>128</sup> NAI, EAD, External Branch, Secret, 1940, File No. 124-X/40, Pros. Nos. 1-122, pp. 281-282.

western education began to send number of Tibetan boys, at government expenses, for good education in schools in Darjeeling run by Western missionaries.<sup>129</sup>

Tibet is a country which is governed by dictatorial spiritual power. As far as the Dalai Lama is concerned, his Regent acts for him, exercise the real councilors (Chiapulin in Tibetan language) who are chosen from amongst the chief priests. But Tibet may become a natural stronghold after the European War when Soviet-Russia in effecting her southward penetration policy sovietizes the whole of Sinkiang province and threaten the safety of British India. Britain is now daily meeting with difficulties in the governing of India. Tibet may possibly make mysterious movements in the future, although it has now been maintaining a pro-British attitude for the purpose of gaining independence.<sup>130</sup>

During the last few days of his stay in Lhasa Mr. Gould paid official visits to His Holiness the Dalai Lama, the Regent, the Prime Minister and the Cabinet. Farewell lunches were given to him by the Regent, the parents of the Dalai Lama and the Chinese and Nepalese representatives. The Prime Minister and the principal officials of Church and State called on Mr. Gould with gifts which included several horses and valuable examples of Tibetan and Chinese art. The visit of the British Mission to Lhasa and the presence of British representative for the first time on the occasion of the installation of the Dalai Lama have been very deeply appreciated by all classes of Tibetans.<sup>131</sup>

In the spring of 1943, while the threat with China hung heavy over Lhasa, Gould contemplated discarding the fiction of Chinese suzerainty and supporting Tibet's claim to independence.<sup>132</sup> British Government had a different view regarding the suzerainty claim of China over Tibet. It appeared that British took the view that the Chinese claim to suzerainty over Tibet was not a privilege accruing from the Convention of 1914 but was based on age long usage and was recognized in previous Convention which was merely confirmed in 1914. In 1921, HMG states in a memo handed to the Chinese Minister in London that they recognized Tibet as an autonomous state under the suzerainty of China. Government of India considered that it was

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<sup>129</sup> Richardson, *Tibet and Its History*, p. 163.

<sup>130</sup> NAI, EAD, External Branch, Secret, 1940, File No. 124-X/40, Pros. Nos. 1-122, D. No. 2715-X/40, His Majesty Embassy Peking, translated copy of the dispatch from the Yung Pao of the 29 March 1940 (Tientsin), p. 282.

<sup>131</sup> NAI, EAD, External Branch, Secret, 1940, File No. 124-X/40, Pros. Nos. 1-122, No. F.25/4/40-Pub. June 11, 1940, Dalai Lama's gifts to the Viceroy and Mr. Gould leaves Lhasa, pp. 311-312.

<sup>132</sup> Goldstein, *A History of Modern Tibet*, p. 398.

not open to HMG to repudiate Chinese suzerainty over Tibet or to support the Tibetan Government in an attempt to do so. Indian Office concurred in a *demi-official* but did not consult the Foreign Office.<sup>133</sup> In the end, Britain withdraw its stand on recognition of Chinese suzerainty might precipitate a Chinese attack on Tibet which it was in no position to counter militarily.<sup>134</sup>

The British Government decides for the continuance of Lhasa Mission the war situation and uncertainties as to Chinese ambitions in the direction of Eastern Tibet make it more than ever desirable for the continuance of the Mission. The present sanction for the Lhasa Mission expires on the 30 February 1942 and should invite the concurrence of the Finance Department to the continuance of the Mission up to the 28 February 1943. As regards provision of funds, we may state that the expenditure will be met from the Contract grant for the Lhasa Mission for 1942-43, which has been agreed to by the Finance Department. In support of the maintenance of the Mission for 1942-43 the Political Officer in Sikkim said that the British representation at Lhasa should be continued. China has lately become active ally of Britain in this war, and it seems to be doubtful whether China will now embark on her ambitions project towards Eastern Tibet as against British interests. The maintenance of the Mission in Tibet for the British seems to be more or less of a formal nature.<sup>135</sup> The Under Secretary to the GOI in the External Affairs Department, New Delhi replied on 17 January 1942 to the letter of the Political Officer in Sikkim, on the matter of the continuance of the Lhasa Mission that “I am directed to convey the sanction of the Governor General in Council in the further continuance of the Lhasa Mission at its existing strength from the 1 March 1942 up to the 28 February 1943. This sanction is without prejudice to the question of an earlier withdrawal of the Mission if that is necessitated by political reason.”<sup>136</sup>

The appointment of Sheng Tsung-lien as Chinese representative in Lhasa marked shift in the China’s policy towards Tibet. Sheng Tsung-lien was one of the personal staff of General Chiang Kai-shek. The Chinese Government made his appointment with a view to improve the relations with authorities in Lhasa.<sup>137</sup> The Chinese Government has asked the

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<sup>133</sup> NAI, EAD, External Branch, Secret, 1940, File No. 160-X/40, Questions of China’s suzerainty over Tibet, p. 2.

<sup>134</sup> Goldstein, *A History of Modern Tibet*, p. 400.

<sup>135</sup> NAI, EAD, External Branch, Secret, 1941, File No. 300-X/41, Pros. Nos. 1-4, D. No. 8119-X/41, Sanction to the continuance of the Lhasa Mission up to 28/2/1943, p. 3.

<sup>136</sup> NAI, EAD, External Branch, Secret, 1941, File No. 300-X/41, Pros. Nos. 1-4, p. 9.

<sup>137</sup> Mehra, *The McMahon Line*, p. 448.

Tibetan Government to arrange transport for Mr. Shen who intends to travel via India. The Tibetan Government has replied that they would like an assurance that Mr. Shen will not make trouble at Lhasa before they agree to receive him. The Chinese Government may apply to us for facilities for Mr. Shen's journey to Lhasa before they have settled matters with the Tibetan Government. The British thought if the Tibetan Government are obstinate and if the Chinese Government refuse to give them any assurance about Shen's behavior which is most probable, there may be some tension, and we may have to consider whether or not we should advise the Tibetan Government to climb down.<sup>138</sup>

Dr. Kung former representative of China in Tibet was not getting well with the Tibetan Government this is the reason that the Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek had appointed Shen with the object of finding out what the reasons were for difficulties which the Chinese were experiencing in Lhasa. The Chinese Government were inclined to speak of Tibet as a Province of China whereas the Tibetans, although they acknowledge the suzerainty of the Manchu Empire, conceived themselves as having been independent since 1911 when the Chinese left Lhasa. The British and Indian conception was one of the seeking a via media namely that the Tibetans should recognize Chinese suzerainty while the Chinese on their part should admit Tibet's local autonomy. Mr. Shen thought that responsible Chinese didn't really regard Tibet as just like a Province of China and said that he was anxious above all things to improve understanding with the Tibetans on such subjects when he got to Lhasa.<sup>139</sup> The period between 1913 and 1947 was watershed in Tibetan history during this period there would have been real scope for Tibet to have emerged as a 'nation state', provided the ruling elite was ready to accept the changes but the elites chose to remain oblivious to what was going on around them.<sup>140</sup>

The Chinese Government during this period was actively growing its influence in Tibet announcement was made that the Chungking Government intended shortly to open branches of the Central Bank of China in Lhasa and other Tibetan centres of population. Chinese broadcast directed towards the United States proclaimed that the integration of all of Tibet in

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<sup>138</sup> NAI, EAD, C.A. Branch, Secret, 1944, File No. 186-C.A./44, S. Nos. 1-132, Enclo. to S. No. (5), p. 43.

<sup>139</sup> NAI, EAD, C.A. Branch, Secret, 1944, File No. 186-C.A./44, S. Nos. 1-132, p. 9.

<sup>140</sup> Tsering Shakya, *The Dragon in the Land of Snows A History of Modern Tibet Since 1947*, London, Pimlico, 1999, p. 5.



China was proceeding apace. Chiang Kai-shek view on Tibet was that the Tibetans along with the Manchus, Mongols and Moslems were the same ancestral origin as the Han.<sup>141</sup>

Basil Gould reached Lhasa on 31 August 1944 again to attempt to make an attempt to bring the Tibetan Government to a realization of the danger into which their passiveness is leading them. The Gould was also sent for the purpose to remind the Tibetan Government that HMG's policy remains what it always has been and was ready to give diplomatic support vis-à-vis Chinese Government. Gould was also given sent with other issue to deal with the Tibetan Government and he remained there until 12 December 1944 his visit was not making further progress. Soon after his arrival he had the first series of discussions with the newly appointed Chinese representative in Lhasa Mr. Shen and understood the Chinese attitude towards Tibet. The main objective of the Gould visit was to regain the confidence of the Tibetan authorities towards British and keeping alive the notion of defending Tibetan independence or autonomy from the Chinese Government. The Tibetans reacted well to the rather guarded promise of diplomatic support from the British in protecting their autonomy. The question of the demarcation of the boundary in the Indo-Tibetan border in Assam Himalayas remained topic of uncomfortable arguments.<sup>142</sup>

After the war was over officially on 15 August 1945 the British Government Foreign Office certainly did not wish to usher in the peace-time era of Anglo-Chinese relations with the question of Tibet's suzerainty and autonomy. Basil Gould one of the most active British officers in India-Tibet relations retired from his office as the Political Officer in Sikkim and it was succeeded by Arthur Hopkinson. In January 1946 Shen Tsung-lien left Tibet en route for China via India for consultations with his Government now returned to Nanking and he never came back and was replaced by Hsiung Yao-wen who never took up his appointment. Chinese presence in Tibet ended which began from the Mission of General Huang Mu-sung in 1934.<sup>143</sup>

The British Government on the other side continued its Mission to Lhasa. The British Mission in Lhasa was established during Sir Basil Gould's visit to Tibet in 1936, and had since continued from year to year on what is known officially as "a temporary basis". No formal

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<sup>141</sup> Lamb, *Tibet, China & India*, pp. 329-330.

<sup>142</sup> Lamb, *Tibet, China & India*, pp. 330-333.

<sup>143</sup> Lamb, *Tibet, China & India*, pp. 335-336.

convention recognizing its existence has been entered into with the Tibetan Government (who nevertheless in practice have accorded full recognition to the Mission), neither have the Government of India for their part treated the Mission as a permanency. Until the budget year 1946-1947 the annual cost of the Lhasa Mission was Rs. 50,000. In the current year, 1947-1948, budget provision of Rs. 74,200 has been made for it.<sup>144</sup>

The representatives from Tibet and Bhutan visited Delhi for Asia Relations Conference and were left in no doubt of India's friendliness towards their countries. Nevertheless, GOI agreed that HMG might consider it desirable to send Government in question informal messages explaining effect of developments in India on existing treaty relations and attitude which HMG will adopt for the future towards Tibet and Bhutan.<sup>145</sup> HMG of India intends to be represented in Tibet by a mission headed by an Indian Office. HMG itself will not wish to maintain a separate mission at Lhasa after the 'transfer of power' to newly independent GOI. However, the Tibetan Government would like to provide for the continuance of contact by members of the staff of the U.K. representative in India. It is observed that the transition from a British to an Indian Mission is intended to take place unobtrusively and without publicity in order to avoid the risk of any constitutional issue being raised by China. HMG note that the GOI wish to see Tibetan autonomy maintained. The British presume that the GOI under the obligations of Simla Convention and Trade Regulations will continue the policy of maintaining India Mission at Lhasa.<sup>146</sup>

The GOI accepted the terms of HMG and proposes to maintain Trade Agents posts at Gyantse, Yatung and Gartok, with sole difference that incumbents will in future be described as Indian Trade Agents, and that for present the GOI shall continue present informal arrangement whereby Trade Agent Gyantse is head of Lhasa Mission. The GOI should be glad to know in what terms HMG wish to make their position clear to the Tibetan Government.<sup>147</sup> The British Trade Agent, Gyantse & Officer in charge, British Mission, Lhasa writes to the Political Officer

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<sup>144</sup> NAI, MEA, North East Frontier Branch, Secret, 1947, File No. – 10(14)-NEF/47, S. No. 1-50, p. 4.

<sup>145</sup> NAI, MEA, North East Frontier Branch, Secret, 1947, File No. – 10(14)-NEF/47, S. No. 1-50, Telegram No.4694 dated 17 June 1947, from Governor General New Delhi to the Secretary of State for India, London, p. 36.

<sup>146</sup> NAI, MEA, North East Frontier Branch, Secret, 1947, File No. – 10(14)-NEF/47, S. No. 1-50, D-3246-NEF/47, Telegram from Secretary of State for India, London, to Governor General, New Delhi, No.8125, Dated 24 (received 25) June 1947, pp. 39-40.

<sup>147</sup> NAI, MEA, North East Frontier Branch, Secret, 1947, File No. – 10(14)-NEF/47, S. No. 1-50, Telegram Secret No.5350 Grade 'B' No.5350 dated 10 July 1947, from Governor General, New Delhi, to Secretary of State for India, London, Repeated – P.O. Sikkim No.62 and British Mission, Lhasa No.23, p. 43.

in Sikkim, Gangtok, dated Lhasa, Tibet, the 29 June 1947 that “the GOI will have a common frontier with Tibet in the United Provinces and in Assam, and will be responsible for the important trading town of Kalimpong to establish relations with Tibet.”<sup>148</sup>

H. Richardson British Trade Agent Gyantse and Officer in Charge of British Mission, writes “so far as the Kashag are concerned that he is satisfied that they will welcome the change from a British Mission and British Trade Agencies to an Indian Mission and Indian Trade Agencies, and that they appreciate the desirability of the change being effected quietly. The matter will probably have to be deliberated by the National Assembly; but with the support of the Kashag and of other influential persons to whom I shall now explain the matter privately. Richardson was asked that would they (Tibetan) need to make a new application to the GOI for the arms and ammunition for which they already asked. Richardson replied that this was not necessary. The Tibetans asked Richardson to inform the successor Indian Government about their real anxiety to secure a proper reserve of ammunition and to do everything possible to obtain their needs for them.”<sup>149</sup> According to Richardson on 15 August 1947 the British Mission at Lhasa formally became the Indian Mission. The transition was almost imperceptible. The existing staff was retained in its entirety and the only obvious change was the change of flag. After about a year the British Civil Surgeon was replaced by an Indian doctor and Indian officer joined the British officer in charge of the Mission for training.<sup>150</sup>

It can be observed that the British Government policy during the period from 1933-1947 towards Tibet was mostly based on the ‘temporary’ diplomatic Mission. The British Political Officer in Sikkim and the Trade Agencies in the Indo-Tibetan frontier played a significant role in developing link between these two countries. The Chinese position was challenged by the authorities in Lhasa and its claim of suzerainty remained argumentative throughout the period. From the death of the 13<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama to the discovery of new Dalai Lama the Tibet political position in the geopolitical of Asia became the bone of the contention between the British and Chinese. During the interregnum period, Tibet’s faced internal problem. The period also witnesses the arrivals of the envoys from India-China with their own political

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<sup>148</sup> NAI, MEA, North East Frontier Branch, Secret, 1947, File No. – 10(14)-NEF/47, S. No. 1-50, p. 65.

<sup>149</sup> NAI, MEA, North East Frontier Branch, Secret, 1947, File No. – 10(14)-NEF/47, S. No. 1-50, D.4017-NEF/42, pp.70-71.

<sup>150</sup> Richardson, p. *Tibet and Its History*, p. 173.

and diplomatic interest. During this time, the Sino-Indian rivalry became acute in Tibet. The outbreak of World War II also impacted the political situation in Tibet and participation of the Japan and United States brought Tibet under geopolitical significance. The British Government policy after Basil Gould Mission to Lhasa in 1936 largely depended on the continuance of the Mission by the officers till the end of the British rule in India.

## Chapter 5

### **The Himalayan Frontier Crisis: a Study on the India's relations with Tibet & China, 1947-1962**

British rule in India ended on August 15, 1947, when a new republican administration was established. It was a period of geopolitical transition in Asia when the People's Republic of China, founded on Communist principles, came to power in October 1949 in China following the fall of the Kuomintang regime. A new age in world politics, especially in Asia, was ushered in by the rise of India and China. India and China, both coming out of colonialism and Western exploitation, have established governments with contrasting ideologies and policies. India is a constitutional democracy that values pluralism and diversity, while China follows a Marxist-Leninist and authoritarian system.<sup>1</sup> In the eve of India's independence Jawaharlal Nehru during his visit to Singapore in 1946 delivered speech where he talked about the Asia's unity and also mentioned that in the past India-China never fought a war with each other.<sup>2</sup>

Following the takeover of Tibet by the Chinese in the early 1950s, which saw the traditional 'lamaist regime' of Lhasa being overthrown; India made no attempt to define her attitude towards former connection with Tibet and suffered from this omission during the border dispute.<sup>3</sup> However, during the Tibetan uprising against the Chinese rule the then 14<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama escaped to India. The Indian Government granted him asylum in India. The repercussion faced by the Government of India after the arrival of Dalai Lama in Indian soil was witness on the growing diplomatic tension that erupted between these two nations in Asia. And the boundary question remained the significant factor in India-China relations. At diplomatic level the leaders of both the countries made an attempt to established friendly ties. The *Panchsheel* agreement of

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<sup>1</sup> Nirupama Rao, *The Fractured Himalaya India Tibet China 1949 to 1962*, Haryana, Penguin Random House, 2022, p. 1.

<sup>2</sup> S. Gopal (ed.), *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru*, Vol.15, New Delhi, JNMF, 1982, p. 47.

<sup>3</sup> W. F. Van Eekelen, *India Foreign Policy and the Border Dispute With China*, The Hague, Martinus Nijhoff, 1967 [Second revised edition], p. 35.

peaceful co-existence signed in April 1954 justifies that both India and China agreed to develop a strong relations. However, the relations deteriorated between two countries due to continuous encroachment of PLA troops in Indian territory. The prime ministers of the two governments met and exchanged notes in an attempt to resolve the boundary dispute, but the meeting ended in failure. Chinese have constantly disputed the traditional border in the Himalayas, considering the McMahon Line in the eastern sector of the Sino-Indian boundary as unjustifiable. The border issue eventually resulted in a clash between India and China. The chapter attempts to delve into the India's relations with Tibet and China after the end of the British rule. The chapter explores the transition of the relations between India-China in mid-twentieth century. It will further trace out the development in diplomatic contacts focusing on the boundary question and Chinese incursion on Indian territory. Why India's policies failed to strengthen the ties with China? Why the boundary question remained unsettled? And what was the cause of the outbreak of the war between India-China? These are some of the queries which will be dealt in this chapter.

### **Post-independence India's policy towards Tibet and China**

In the first half of the twentieth century the relations between the India-China was gaining momentum. Rabindranath Tagore's visits to China, in 1924 and again in 1928, and the Cheena Bhavana that he set up in Shantiniketan, revived old cultural contacts. Nehru's visit to China in 1939 and the Chinese nationalist leader Chiang Kai-shek's later in 1942 strengthened the bonds of friendship between Nehru and Chiang personally and between the Congress and the Kuomintang.<sup>4</sup> After the post World War II the international politics was divided with the ideological break between the U.S. and U.S.S.R. India adopted the policy of Non-alignment which had its roots in the Indian freedom movement and, under Nehru's predominant influence in the field of foreign affairs, the Indian leaders already had committed themselves to this policy before independence. In 1938 India National Congress session at Haripur adopted a resolution that India should direct her own foreign policy as an independent nation, thereby keeping aloof from both imperialism and fascism and pursuing her path of freedom and peace. The same resolution expressed that India should maintain friendly and cooperative relations with all nations and avoid entanglement in military or similar alliances which tend to divide up the world

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<sup>4</sup> A. S. Bhasin, *Nehru Tibet and China*, Haryana, Penguin Random House India, 2021, p. xxiv.

in rival groups and thus endanger world peace.<sup>5</sup> Nehru said, 'is to avoid entanglement in power politics and not to join any group of Powers as against any other group. We must be friendly to both and yet not join either. Our foreign policy will ultimately be governed by our internal policy.'<sup>6</sup>

The British mission to Lhasa continued until 1950 when the withdrawal of the last British representative Hugh Richardson in 1950 from Lhasa marked the end of the Anglo-Tibet relations. British India Government since the mission of Charles Bell in (1920-21) maintained close ties with the authorities in Lhasa. Chinese influence was basically non-existence in Tibet throughout the 1920s. But China had not given up its claims to Tibet. In fact, one of the primary aims of Chiang Kai-shek was the 'reunification of China', and, according to him, both Mongolia and Tibet were part of the Republic of China.<sup>7</sup> The relationship between India-China was the closest in the period prior to their emergence as modern states. This was the phase when the contacts between the nationalists of both countries came close in strengthening the friendship on the basis of the age-old civilizational links between the two peoples. What is of significance is that while the contacts between the Indian National Congress and the Guomindang (KMT) were closet at the leadership level, the popular sympathy was more evident in the contacts between Indian nationalists and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) through the activities of the Indian Medical Mission.<sup>8</sup> The India's attempt to established friendly ties with the Chinese Government began to deteriorate after the invasion of PLA troops in Tibet. The Tibet Question which India Government inherited from his former ruler the British had a long historical past. Since the time of Lord Curzon viceroyalty the Tibet remained disputed issue on the Sino-Indian relations. The British Government of India made several attempts diplomatically to settle the Tibetan question against the Chinese claims of suzerainty and sovereignty but hardly gained any success. Hence, after the India's independence the Tibet factor emerged as an important crisis in India's relation with China.

Sino-Indian relations were on a highly cordial basis during the year 1947. The fact that both countries had diplomatic representation with each other on an Embassy level

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<sup>5</sup> Eekelen, *India Foreign Policy*, p. 1.

<sup>6</sup> K.P.S. Menon, *Many Worlds An Autobiography*, London, OUP, 1965, p. 229.

<sup>7</sup> Bertil Lintner, *China's India War Collision Course on the Roof of World*, New Delhi, OUP, 2018, p. 61.

<sup>8</sup> Avinash Mohan Saklani, 'Nehru, Chiang Kai-shek, and the Second World War,' In *India and China in the Colonial World*, Madhavi Thampi (ed.), New Delhi, Social Science Press, 2005, p. 167.

represented a marked change from the previous years. China's interest in developments in India throughout the year was considerable. The unfolding of the constitutional plans which led to the division of India evoked a good deal of reaction in China. China was watching developments in India with intense interest. India's attainment of freedom on the 15 August was welcomed universally in China. While entertaining certain misgivings based on the supposed weakening effects of the partition, China recognised the clear emergence of India as a natural leading power in Asia. In an editorial on 24 September, "Ta Kung Pao", the most independent and influential paper in China stated "The future diplomatic tendency of Hindustan (India) of course is to step into the international society of Asia; and, Pakistan will turn to the Pan Arabic Group. This is a very significant pointer to the situation of the world and may be regarded as an indication for the proper development of Sino-Indian relations. China, we have often felt, as a nation in Asia is very isolated. Who, poisoned Japan by social superiority is boastful and aggressive is not worthy to be our friend. Russia is going on her way to international isolation. Young Philippines, Siam, Burma are immature yet. As to Indonesia, Korea and Annam, they are still under the bondage of foreign powers. If we want to select a good neighbour we may take India as our friendly State, especially a prosperous India".<sup>9</sup>

The British policy towards Tibet in the first half of twentieth century failed to gain any type of autonomy for Tibet whilst Russian policy in Mongolia had a healthy impact on the China's claim. Hugh Richardson then head of the British Mission in Lhasa, compares in his report about the methods of British in Tibet and Russia in Mongolia. He pointed out that "early Russian interest in Mongolia was checked by the Russo-Japanese War; but, not long after, there was agreement between Russia and Japan that Mongolia west of longitude 113° E should be a Russian sphere and East of it should be a Japanese sphere. This allowed the Russians to go ahead again, and just as our advance in Tibet led to a strong Chinese reaction in an attempt to preserve their position, so in Mongolia the Chinese adopted ruthless and violent methods. The Mongols called in Russian help, just as the Tibetans sought to get help from us. The difference was that the Mongols made their move from inside their country while the Tibetan appeals came from the Dalai Lama in exile in India. Whereas we sought to bring China and Tibet together at a tripartite conference, the Russian adopted measures similar to those used by us in 1904. They first came to

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<sup>9</sup> NAI, GOI, MEA & C.R., C.A. Branch, File No. 239.C.A./48(Secret), Annual Report of the Embassy of India in China for the year 1947, pp. 20-22.



an agreement with the Mongols and later had it confirmed by an agreement with the Chinese. While the tripartite agreement failed, and we did not recognize China's suzerainty over Tibet the Russians did recognise China's suzerainty over Mongolia and, China recognised Mongolia's autonomy. In 1924 there was a Russo-Chinese Agreement recognising that Mongolia is an integral part of China but barring China from interference in the internal matter affairs of Mongolia. Finally in 1936 the threat of Japanese invasion led to a direct treaty for defensive purposes between Mongolia and Russia. Japan on her side established an Autonomous Government of Mongolia. In Outer Mongolia, although it is by treaty an integral part of China, the Russians see to it that no Chinese official sets his foot. In effect therefore the Russians have been more successful in saving Chinese face and themselves getting all they want, while our methods have not saved Chinese face. On the other hand Russian policy aimed at a more active influence in Mongolia than we have ever sought in Tibet, and a face-saving agreement on our part would in all probability have led to the loss of our influence in Tibet."<sup>10</sup>

At the end of World War II, the Regent, Taktra Rimpoche, dispatched a mission to congratulate the Allies on their victory. The mission was headed by Dzasa Thubten Samphel and Dzasa Khemey. Hugh Richardson warned the Bureau of Foreign Affairs that if the mission should attend the National Assembly in China, the government of Tibet would be violating the Simla Convention of 1914. The Kashag explained to Richardson that the mission did not intend to attend the National Assembly in China; its only objective was to convey congratulations on the allied victory. The mission reached India and congratulatory message was also conveyed to the United States government through its representative in New Delhi. The Mission then left for China and attended the Chinese National Assembly on May 5, 1946 without the permission or orders of the Tibetan government.<sup>11</sup> The Tibetan Goodwill Mission after reaching Nanking was widely reported in the Chinese press. The GOI was rather disturbed by the presence of the Tibetans in the Chinese National Assembly. The members of this mission group acted as representatives of Tibet in the Chinese Parliament. At the same time, they delivered a demand from the Tsongdu that China surrender territory improperly taken from Kham and Amdo, in

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<sup>10</sup> NAI, GOI, EAD, C.A. Branch, File No. 107-CA(Secret), 1945, pp. 2-3.

<sup>11</sup> W. D. Shakabpa, *Tibet A Political History*, New Haven, Yale University, 1967, pp. 290-291.

other words return to Outer Tibet Sikang and the bulk of Ch'inghai.<sup>12</sup> The Chinese Government sent a proposal to the Tibetan Government through the leaders of the Tibetan Mission in China that a cart road should be built to connect Lhasa with China. The Tibetan Government replied that they could not agree as a similar suggestion by the British authorities some years ago was politely refused. The Tibetan Government was referring to the motor service between Phari and Gyantse which lasted for a short time in 1927.<sup>13</sup>

In 1947, on the eve of Indian Independence, an Inter-Asian Relations Conference was convened in Delhi. Inspired by Nehru's vision of Asian unity being forged on the anvil of anti-imperialism and anti-colonialism, here again call for unity with China was sounded. Nehru expressed hope for an enduring and growing friendship with China encountered obstacles. That a separate delegation from Tibet attended the Conference in addition to the delegation from Nanjing (the seat of Nationalist government) caused some turbulence in the proceedings. Representatives from Tibet and Bhutan who visited Delhi for the Asian Conference were left in no doubt of India's friendliness towards their countries.<sup>14</sup> A party of Tibetan representatives to the Inter Asian Relations Conference headed by Samdrup Potrang Theiji and Khenchung Lobzang Wangyal, left for India they were accompanied by two official interpreters Kusho Kyipup and Se Kusho Tendup Kapshopa. They were deputed by the Tibetan Government to attend the Inter Asian Relations Conference at New Delhi.<sup>15</sup>

Senior members of the Chinese establishment like Dai Jitao – a long-time friend of Nehru declined to attend as a result Tibet was not listed at the Conference as an independent country. The world map displayed at the Conference showed Tibet outside Chinese national boundaries this also laid to a protest from the Chinese delegation.<sup>16</sup> Dai Jitao interpreted that the separate invitation for Tibet in the Conference behind China's back as an indication of Nehru having some ulterior motive in mind.<sup>17</sup> The presence of Tibetan delegation in the Conference did not justify Tibet's independent status and Chinese did not accept such a status and that

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<sup>12</sup> Alastair Lamb, *Tibet, China & India 1914-1950 A History of Imperial Diplomacy*, Hertfordshire, Roxford Books, 1989, p. 497.

<sup>13</sup> NAI, GOI, EAD, Secret, N.E.F., Branch, File No. 1(20)-NEF/46, 1946, p. 1.

<sup>14</sup> NAI, MEA & CR, GOI, Secret, North Eastern Frontier Branch, File No. 10(14)-NEF/47, 1947, p. 36.

<sup>15</sup> NAI, GOI, EAD, N.E.F. Branch, Secret, File No.10(25)-NEF/47, 1947, Annual Report of the Trade Agent, Yatung, (Tibet) for the year 15 April 1946 to the 31 March 1947, p. 5.

<sup>16</sup> Rao, *The Fractured Himalaya*, pp. 21-22.

<sup>17</sup> Yun-yuan Yang, 'Controversies over Tibet: China versus India, 1947-49,' *The China Quarterly*, Sep.1987, No. 111, pp.407-420. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/653298> accessed on 16.03.2024.

Jawaharlal Nehru and his colleagues were not going to go out of their way to contradict the Chinese on this point. Tibetans delegation endeavored to demonstrate their special status by disassociating themselves entirely from the Chinese delegation, and by displaying their own flag at the opening session.<sup>18</sup> The leader of the Tibetan Delegation, addressing the Conference said ‘we are a country which administers its subjects based on religious aspirations and as India is the land of Buddhism; we Buddhists and especially Tibet, had friendly relations with India from ancient times.’<sup>19</sup>

On 16 October 1947 the Tibetan Government asked for the return of territories which was included in India in the past. The similar demand was placed later in 1948 by the Lhasa authorities but nothing came out of Tibet’s demand on India or China as other developments, such as civil war and communist victory, overtook the narrative.<sup>20</sup> However, the situation in NEFA between the British and Tibetan officials was not suitable in mid-1940s. The interference in the region by the Tibetan officials through collecting taxes and opposing the boundary line hampered British administrator to gain control of the region. After the end of the War in 1945 the British authority activity in the Tawang Tract increased. Politically, in 1945 the land north of the Se La was under full Tibetan administrative. The Tibetan authorities both in Tsona and Tawang held a meeting with the British India officials; and, they denied that there had ever existed any treaty or agreement by which Tibetan rights anywhere in the Tawang tract had been ceded to the British. It followed that their traditional revenue collecting activities should be allowed to go on as before.<sup>21</sup>

On 3 March 1936 the British Crown issued an Order-in-Council under Section 91 of the new Constitution, the Government of India Act, 1935, after it had been laid before the British Parliament. It declared areas it specified as ‘excluded’ or ‘partially’ excluded areas. Three tracts comprised in ‘the North-East Frontier’ were declared as ‘excluded areas which consist of Balipara, Sadiya, and Lakhimpur.’<sup>22</sup> This Act also defined that ‘tribal areas’ along the frontiers are not part of any foreign state. The British did not leave to their successors in the Indian

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<sup>18</sup> Lamb, *Tibet, China & India*, p. 498.

<sup>19</sup> Nripendra Nath Mitra (ed.), *The Indian Annual Register, January-June 1947*, vol. I, Calcutta, 1947, p. 280.

<sup>20</sup> Bhasin, *Nehru Tibet and China*, pp. 19-20.

<sup>21</sup> Lamb *Tibet, China & India*, pp. 447-482.

<sup>22</sup> A.G. Noorani, *India-China Boundary Problem 1846-1947 History and Diplomacy*, New Delhi, OUP, 2011, p. 171.

subcontinent a border in the Assam Himalayas to which Tibetans had agreed. Indeed, right up to the end of the British period the Tibetans were both protesting diplomatically about British aggression in these borders tracts and challenging the British position, albeit in a more or less passive manner, on the ground. The Chinese too objected to the activities of the British in the NEFA by virtue of their claims both to be the ultimate repository of Tibetan sovereignty and to be entitled to absolute possession of the western portion of Sikang Province actually under Lhasa control.<sup>23</sup> The British rulers of India were quite clear in their own minds about the undefined state of the frontiers. Chinese were none to certain or consistent as to where it lay.<sup>24</sup> In 1948 the Chinese Government prepared a map that revealed a considerable territory south of the McMahon Line has been shown on the Chinese map as being within the frontiers of China and Tibet. In the enclosed map of N. E. India the approximate boundary between India and Tibet according to the Chinese claims is marked in blue. The McMahon Line showing the true boundary between India and Tibet is already marked in red. It will be observed, therefore, that a large territory has been shown within China and Tibet. At one place the boundary line on the Chinese map extends as far south includes Charduar, a town in Assam, in Chinese territory.<sup>25</sup>

In the annual report for the year of 1948-49 of the Ministry of External Affairs and Commonwealth Relations describes the problems connected with the tribal areas in the NEFA region has impinge on India's foreign relations with the neighbouring countries China, Burma. To improve the general condition of the tribal people and to stabilize our administration in the tribal areas, a Five Year Development Plan has been prepared. The Plan contains schemes for the construction of roads and hospitals, buildings for administrative purposes, development of education, agriculture and forests and for the gradual extension of regular administration to the tribal areas, and is being implemented by stages. A recent proposal of the Standing Committee of the Ministry that welfare work in these areas should be conducted with the aid of trained anthropologists who have a sympathetic understanding of the ways of the tribes is being carefully examined. Additional responsibilities developed on the Assam as a result of the

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<sup>23</sup> Lamb *Tibet, China & India*, p. 489.

<sup>24</sup> Noorani, *India-China Boundary Problem*, p. 212.

<sup>25</sup> NAI, GOI, MEA & C.R., NEF-Branch, File No.15(30)-NEF/48, 1948, China Burma Boundary Line map prepared by the Chinese Government embodying Chinese claims to Indian territory on the North-East Frontier. p. 4.

partition of the Indian and the strength of this force was increased by 13 additional platoons in 1947 and by another 20 additional platoons in 1948.<sup>26</sup>

The PRC's annexation of Tibet in 1951 caused Delhi to commit to the incorporation of NEFA into India. It also made the establishment of constructive relations with local people core priority. The main fear for the Indian Government was that the PRC would win the loyalty of NEFA's inhabitants. India's choice of a development-centric expansion strategy in the 1950s answered the perceived need to convince NEFA's tribal inhabitants not to look towards China.<sup>27</sup> The NEFA occupies an area of 35,000 square miles and have a population of about 8 lakhs. The inhabitants are very back-ward without practically any education and touch with the outside world. They belong to diverse tribes speaking different languages and having different customs. As they do not have any-thing in common whether in dress, language, culture or custom with the people living in other parts of India, they do not feel as belonging to the rest of India. It is however very much desirable that these people who inhabit an area which is of vital interest to India from security point of view should be won to our side with as little delay as possible. The Assam administration has given the statement of the revenue and expenditure of the NEFA region for the administration and development of these areas.<sup>28</sup>

**Table 5.1:** The statement on revenue and expenditure in the NEFA region in 1950s

| Year    | Revenue     | Expenditure   |
|---------|-------------|---------------|
| 1951-52 | 4,85,754/-  | 1,97,95,991/- |
| 1952-53 | 5,46,765/-  | 2,42,11,690/- |
| 1953-54 | 9,79,156/-  | 3,41,49,454/- |
| 1954-55 | 13,95,422/- | 3,02,89,264/- |

**Source:** Itanagar, Arunachal Pradesh State Archive, GOI, NEFA Secretariat, NEFA Administration Record Branch, Secret, File No. 103/1/55-FA, p. 2

<sup>26</sup> MEA & CR, *Annual Report, 1948-49*, Part II, pp.9-10 <https://mealib.nic.in/?pdf2475?000> accessed on 14.05.2024.

<sup>27</sup> Bérénice Guyot-Réchar, *Shadow States India, China and The Himalayas, 1910-1962*, Delhi, Cambridge University Press, 2017, p. 25.

<sup>28</sup> Itanagar, Arunachal Pradesh State Archive, GOI, NEFA Secretariat, NEFA Administration Record Branch, Secret, File No. 103/1/55-FA, pp. 1-2.

The above table includes expenditure on account of Assam Rifles also. It was expected by the GOI that even at this rate, it will perhaps take another twenty years or so to develop the areas to an appreciable extent. The expansion of the administrative control in the frontier region between India-China was witnessed during the period of 1950s. Chinese also made incursion on the territory of India and adopted other strategic activities close to Indo-Tibet border such as the road building in the western sector of the boundary alarmed the GOI. These developments of Chinese authorities in the Himalayan frontiers led to the change in the approach of the Indian leaders toward China in this era.

### **Transition of British Mission to Indian Mission in Lhasa; Tibetan delegation in India**

On 15 August 1947, the British Mission in Lhasa became Indian Mission. Hugh Richardson as the Mission's head was now representing an independent GOI not under the Whitehall. Richardson was directed to inform the Tibetan government that after 15 August the mission at Lhasa would become the 'Indian Mission representing the Dominion of India only' and he would continue to look after the mission until some arrangement were made.<sup>29</sup> GOI's relations with Tibet, Sikkim and Bhutan are conducted through the Political Officer in Sikkim (with H.Qrs. at Gangtok, the capital of Sikkim) under whose superintendence are the Mission in Lhasa and there Trade Agencies, at Gyantse, Yatung and Gartok respectively.<sup>30</sup> The India Government inherited this region of Tibet from the British authority after independence. The British used Tibet as a buffer zone against both China and Tsarist Russia. The new Republic GOI attempted to continue the old British policy over Tibet but after the establishment of Communist power in 1949 the geo-politics in Tibet changed forever and Tibet became inseparable part of China.

The Mission in Lhasa was established during Sir Basil Gould's visit to Tibet in 1936, and has since continued from year to year on what is known officially as "a temporary basis". No formal convention recognizing its existence has been entered into with the Tibetan Government (who nevertheless in practice has accorded full recognition to the Mission); neither have the GOI for their part treated the Mission as a permanency.<sup>31</sup> Beginning from 1940, the expenditure on the Lhasa Mission has been met from out of the contract grant of Rs. 50,000/- per annum, which

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<sup>29</sup> Bhasin, *Nehru Tibet and China*, p. 19.

<sup>30</sup> NAI, MEA & CR, GOI, Secret, NEF., Branch, File No. 10(14)-NEF/47, 1947, p. 3.

<sup>31</sup> NAI, MEA & CR, GOI, Secret, NEF., Branch, File No. 10(14)-NEF/47, 1947, pp. 2-3.

amount is being increased to Rs. 74,200/- from 1947-48.<sup>32</sup> H.M.G. note that GOI to be represented in Tibet by a Mission headed by an Indian officer and that a change is expected to take place in about 4 month's time. H.M.G. themselves will not wish to maintain a separate mission at Lhasa after the transition had been made but subject to the consent of the Tibetan Government would like to provide for the continuance of contact with that Government by arranging for visits to be paid to Lhasa from time to time, by members of the staff of the United Kingdom Representative in India. It is observed that the transition from a British to an Indian Mission is intended to take place unobtrusively and without publicity in order to avoid the risk of any constitutional issue being raised by China. H.M.G fully appreciate the reasons for this precaution in present circumstances, but doubt whether the Tibetan Government will be content with the proposed assurance that the mission will continue in being as an earnest of India's continued friendly interest in Tibet. They would indeed have expected that an intimation of the kind proposed would provoke an enquiry from the Tibetan Government as to the future of the treaty relations which have hitherto subsisted between themselves and H.M.G even if the Tibetan authorities do not raise this matter, H.M.G would wish to make their own position clear before the British Head of the Mission is replaced. H.M.G note that the GOI wish to see Tibetan autonomy maintained and the GOI will therefore, we presume to be prepared to assume until other arrangements are made, obligations under the Simla Convention 1914 and associated trade regulations hitherto devolving on H.M.G a statement to this effect to the Government of Tibet by the Head of the present Mission at Lhasa or by Political Officer in Sikkim on behalf of the GOI would no doubt re-assure the Tibetans of India's friendly interest in Tibet and would be consistent with the maintenance of the proposed Indian Mission at Lhasa.<sup>33</sup>

On October 25 1947 the Tibetan Government decided to send a Trade Delegation to India, the United Kingdom, the United States, and China. The reasons for dispatching the Trade Delegation by the Tibetan Government were to develop new trading link with foreign countries and to request GOI to give relaxation on the control of Tibetan exports. Another reason was to purchase gold bullion for the backing of Tibetan currency and finally to open formal relations

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<sup>32</sup> NAI, MEA & CR, GOI, Secret, NEF., Branch, File No. 10(14)-NEF/47, 1947, D. No. 806-NEF/47, p. 2.

<sup>33</sup> NAI, MEA & CR, GOI, Secret, NEF., Branch, File No. 10(14)-NEF/47, 1947, D-3246-NEF/47, telegram from Secretary of State for India, London, to Governor General (External Affairs & Commonwealth Relations Department), New Delhi, dated 24 (received 25) June 1947, pp. 39-40.

with other nations of the world to demonstrate Tibet's independent and sovereign status.<sup>34</sup> When mission was at China the Chinese government advised them that they were not to carry Tibetan passport during their visit in Western countries. Later Dalai Lama wrote in his book that "in 1948 a trade delegation from the government of Tibet visited India, China, France, Italy, the United Kingdom and the United States of America, and the passports which the Tibetan government had issued to the delegates were accepted by the governments of all these countries."<sup>35</sup> On 30 December 1947, American *Charge d'affaires* Howard Donovan, transmit the information on the Tibetan Trade Mission where he points out that the importance of the Tibetan Trade Mission's visit from a purely commercial point of view be small, but a friendly reception in the United States may go a long way toward strengthening relations with a government which controls a large and strategic area bordering on territory where Soviet influence is widespread.<sup>36</sup>

W. D. Shakabpa during his discussion with Nehru on the objective of the Mission he emphasized on the economic development of Tibet. Prime Minister Nehru fully sympathized with the Tibetan Government's desire for the betterment of the economic condition of their people and said that, not being fully industrialized herself, India was in a unique position to offer suggestions for the achievement of that object. Nehru told the Mission that, in view of lack of technical personnel and capital and of modern means of transport and communication in Tibet, it was difficult for large-scale industries to be established. It was therefore, advisable for a country like Tibet to plan her economic development in accordance with the suggestions made by Mahatma Gandhi for India. Tibet should undertake the establishment of cottage and small-scale industries. For the purpose, he assured the Mission that the GOI would make the services of a few experts from the All India Village Industries Association available to the Tibetan Government. Nehru also suggested a careful survey of the mineral resources of Tibet. He said that even though it was, difficult for India to spare trained geologists he would try to make the services of two or three such people available to the Tibetan Government for a preliminary survey of the mineral resources of Tibet. The Prime Minister assured the Trade Mission that his Government entertained the most cordial feelings of friendship for Tibet, her Government and

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<sup>34</sup> Shakabpa, *Tibet A Political History*, pp. 294-295.

<sup>35</sup> Ngawang Lobsang (the 14<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama), *My Land and My People*, New York, McGraw-Hill, 1962, p. 78.

<sup>36</sup> Howard Donovan, The Chargé in India (Donovan) to the Secretary of State, New Delhi, 30 December 1947, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1947v07/d504> accessed on 26.06.2024.



people and that it would be his constant endeavour to foster the relations of friendship existing between the two peoples.<sup>37</sup>

As a token of friendship India provided foreign exchange for expenses of the Mission. The Mission was asked to secure redress for the grievances of Indian traders doing business in Western Tibet and to allow access to Indian trader to one of their important wool marts. With the assistance of the Political Officer in Sikkim a Syndicate has been formed in Kalimpong composed of Indian Merchants to handle India's textiles trade with Tibet.<sup>38</sup> The Indian government stated to the trade delegation that import items going directly to Tibet, via India, would be transhipped without Indian duty.<sup>39</sup> In the annual report of the British Trade Agent at Yatung in Tibet for the year ending 31 March 1947 has reported that wool tax of Re. 1/- per load at Phari was paid by the Tibetan trader. The price of best wool per *maund* at Phari went up as far Rs. 55/- per maund in February 1947. The Tibetan traders who have *godowns* at their disposal at Kalimpong for the storage of wool managed to send their wool from Phari to Kalimpong when the transport rates were very low. The export of wool (register at Kalimpong Ropeway Station) during the year from 1 April 1946 to 31 March 1947 amounted to 106615 maunds against 60171 maunds in the previous year. There was good demand for skins, musks and Yak tails in India and the Tibetan traders secured high prices for these articles in India. Tibetan tea-pods manufactured by tea-planters in India are now getting a place in the market. Poor class Tibetans are giving preference to this tea over the Chinese tea-pods due to its cheapness. This tea is being sold at a retailed price of Rs. ¼ per pod in the Chumbi Valley and at Phari.<sup>40</sup>

### **The rise of Communist in China; India's approach**

With the end of the World War, civil war broke out between the KMT and CCP in China. The Indian National Movement also approached its decisive phase after the war with the arrival of the Cabinet Mission in 1946 and the formation of an interim government under Nehru. One of the first acts of the interim government was the establishment of formal diplomatic relations with China. This period also marked as the concluding phase of the contacts between the Indian

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<sup>37</sup> S. Gopal (ed.), *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru*, Vol.9, Second Series, New Delhi, JNMF, 1990, pp. 470-472.

<sup>38</sup> MEA & CR, *Annual Report, 1948-49*, Part II, p.10 <https://mealib.nic.in/?pdf2475?000> accessed on 13.05.2024.

<sup>39</sup> Shakabpa, *Tibet A Political History*, p. 297.

<sup>40</sup> NAI, GOI, EAD, N.E.F. Branch, Secret, File No. 10(25)-NEF/47, 1947, pp. 3-4.

National Congress and the Guomindang.<sup>41</sup> A few days before 15 August, 1947 India dispatched delegation to the General Assembly of the United Nations this was to meet in New York in mid-September. This was the first international conference at which independent India was being represented. While the Assembly was in session, the news had begun to appear in the American papers that the tribal invasion of Kashmir was in progress. The Indian delegation at UN was gravely agitated by the news but in the evening Mrs. Vijayalakshmi Pandit received a personal telegram from the Prime Minister that, following the accession of the Maharaja to the Indian Union, supported by the largest political party in the State, troops had been flown to Srinagar and were in contact with the enemy. This was the first time that a discussion on Kashmir issue happened between the representatives of USA and India.<sup>42</sup> K.P.S. Menon one of the members of the UN delegation soon after his return from New York was appointed Ambassador to China with the special object of representing the interest of India. By the time Menon left China in the middle of 1948 he witnessed the decline and fall of the Kuomintang.<sup>43</sup> Dr. Wang Shih-chieh, the Chinese Foreign Minister, stressed the importance of Sino-Indian co-operation at a Press Conference and the role of the Chinese Delegation at the last U.N. Assembly meetings. On his return Dr. Wang said that “India had been represented in the U.N. Assembly as an important nation. During the past month her delegation and ours agreed on many problems in the most satisfactory manner. Our country should regard with the greatest interest the co-operation between India and China in international conferences. In the U.N. Assembly, Central and South America countries took concerted action, while other countries also formed groups. Only China was solitary. But if China and India could unite closely and work in great harmony then two countries, with their combined population of 800 millions would be able to exercise a deciding influence on the future of the world peace.” A concrete step towards bringing the relations between the two countries on a basis of friendship and understanding was taken when the Chinese Government placed in the hands of the GOI towards the close of the year (1947) a Chinese draft of a proposed Sino-Indian Treaty of friendship, navigation and commerce.<sup>44</sup>

In May 1946 the government of China moved from Chungking, its wartime capital, to its pre-war capital, Nanking. At the beginning of 1946 there was every indication of an all-out

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<sup>41</sup> Saklani, *Nehru, Chiang Kai-shek*, p. 182.

<sup>42</sup> K. M. Panikkar, *In Two Chinas Memoirs of Diploma*, London, George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1955, pp. 14-15

<sup>43</sup> Menon *Many Worlds*, p. 232.

<sup>44</sup> NAI, GOI, MEA & C.R., C.A. Branch, File No. 239.C.A./48(Secret), p. 22.

struggle between the Kuomintang and the Communist. The Chiang Kai-shek regime had a much larger army than the Communists and had more gun, rifles and machine guns. The KMT regime also had an air force and held the most fertile regions in China and the entire Chinese coast. The KMT regime was also recognized by all the Great Powers and had the might of the USA behind him. Nevertheless, they were defeated by the Communists, who were weaker than the KMT and lacked resources, receiving no acknowledgement or backing from Russia. The reason why the KMT regime were swept away was that they had no cause to fight for and had no strong policy to bring change over its people. The economy of China was collapsing and the impact of inflation and corruption destroyed the Chinese people. In 1947 the Communists won a series of impressive military victory and were gaining support within the Chinese society.<sup>45</sup> Nehru writes to Vijayalakshmi Pandit that the Communist have won in China not so much by their strength, but by the innumerable mistakes and errors of Chiang Kai-shek and the Kuomintang.<sup>46</sup>

After the collapse of the Chinese Nationalist Government the authorities in Lhasa in July 1949 asked the Chinese Mission in Lhasa and some Chinese traders to leave Tibet. The Tibetan Government apprehended that with the collapse of the Chinese Nationalist Government, the members of the Chinese Mission might transfer their allegiance to the Communist Government and the Tibetan Government would then be faced with an established Communist foothold in the country. Apprehending danger to their eastern frontier, the Tibetan Government also started military preparations, training more personnel and getting some supplies of arms. On September 10, 1949, the Peking Radio broadcast that the People's Liberation Army was ready to liberate Tibet, claiming that the Tibet was integral part of China and no foreign intervention would be tolerated.<sup>47</sup>

The transition from the old to new China brought change in the pattern of India-China relations. The friendly contacts between the Kuomintang China and India in the past on this basis Nehru dreamt of continuing the relation with new Communist China failed. The new Chinese leaders were not willing to recognize India's past contacts with Kuomintang China and looked down upon them. They felt irritated at any reference to any past contacts with the old regime in China. Chinese Communist Government after coming into power began implementing its agenda

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<sup>45</sup> Menon *Many Worlds*, pp. 232-237.

<sup>46</sup> S. Gopal, *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru*, Vol. 12, Second Series, New Delhi, JNMF, 1991, p. 409.

<sup>47</sup> B. N. Mullik, *My Years With Nehru; The Chinese Betrayal*, New Delhi, Allied Publishers, 1971, p. 60.

of 'uniting' the country. India on the side was trying to hold on to its old facilities and privileges in Tibet on the strength of its inheritance and past relations this created hurdle between the leaders of two nations.<sup>48</sup>

In April 1948, K.M. Panikkar<sup>49</sup> arrived in Nanking to take up his assignment as Indian Ambassador to China. In the telegram dated 2 March 1948, from Foreign, New Delhi, to Private Secretary to His Majesty the King, Buckingham Palace, London; it was informed that "my Government propose to appoint Sardar K.M. Panikkar, now Prime Minister of Bikaner, as Ambassador to China in succession to K.P.S. Menon who will be reverting to India. He has taken a special interest in affairs of East and South-East Asia and is well qualified to interpret India to China. Grateful if His Majesty's approval could be obtained to proposal."<sup>50</sup> The Deputy Private Secretary G.H. Nicholls telegraphed to V.M.M. Nair, Under-Secretary to the GOI, Ministry of External Affairs and Commonwealth Relations informing the King's approval to the appointment of Sardar Panikkar.<sup>51</sup>

On 19 November 1949, K.M. Panikkar submitted his report to Government of India on Communist China. He mentioned in the report that "practically the whole of China has now been occupied by the Communists. On the main land only a portion of Szechuan, some areas of Yunnan and the province of Sikang are in hands of the Nationalists. It is reasonable to assume that these territories will also fall to the Communists within next few months. Till the first of October the Communists had not organised any over-all government, but on that date, they proclaimed the People's Democratic Republic claiming to be the legal government of the whole of China which was promptly recognised by the Soviets, the new democracies of Eastern Europe and by the Republics of Outer Mongolia and North Korea. A common programme approved by all the parties to the coalition has been published as a Fundamental Law it is a document of seven chapters. The seventh chapter deals with diplomatic policy. This provides that diplomatic

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<sup>48</sup> Bhasin, *Nehru Tibet and China*, p. xxvii.

<sup>49</sup> Sardar Panikkar was born in 1895, and had a distinguished academic career at the Universities of Madras and Oxford, where he obtained a first class Honours Degree in Modern History. He is also Barrister-at-law. Having served as a Professor at the Aligarh Muslim University and as Editor of the Hindustan Times, he became Secretary to the Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes. He attended the Round Table Conference in London on Indian Constitutional Reforms, as well as Pacific Relations Conference in Canada in 1942 and the Commonwealth Relations Conference in London in 1945. Panikkar is a scholar of Sanskrit as well as mother tongue Malayalam. Source: NAI, MEA & CR, File No. 308.C.A.(Secret)-1948, p. 21.

<sup>50</sup> NAI, MEA & CR, GOI, C.A. Branch, File No. 308.C.A.(Secret)-1948, p. 12.

<sup>51</sup> NAI, MEA & CR, GOI, C.A. Branch, File No. 308.C.A.(Secret)-1948, p. 14.

relations should be set up... on the basis of equality, mutual respect of territorial and sovereign rights with those foreign governments who will break their connection with the Kuomintang and will adopt a friendly attitude to the Peoples Republic.”<sup>52</sup>

In December 1949, K.M. Panikkar was sent back to China, this time as India’s representative to the government of the People’s Republic of China (PRC) and the Republic of India, representing the oldest communities in the world, are now in the welfare of their people. Mao Zedong, in his capacity as Chairman of the PRC, spoke of the ‘profound understanding, sympathy and concerns’ that existed between China and India, ‘with our common boundary and prolonged and close relations in both history and Culture’. He extended a warm welcome to the new Ambassador.<sup>53</sup> As the Nationalist rule ended in Nanking, Tibet was still without any international contact. During the thirty years between 1914 and 1949, it had failed to achieve even de facto independence from China. The British Government during their rule established their representative in Lhasa but to the Tibetan Government they had not allowed to have its representative based in Delhi or Gangtok.<sup>54</sup>

The Communist government after its establishment developed a policy of strengthening bilateral ties with India. Both Indian and Chinese governments exchanged their representatives and the new Chinese Ambassador to India was appointed Yuan Zhongxian who arrived in New Delhi in September 1950 and met with the Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru. Zhongxian brought with him a gift of two vases from Premier Zhou Enlai to Nehru as friendly gesture.<sup>55</sup> After the proclamation of the People’s Republic of China the U.K. High Commission in New Delhi was still suggesting that a British visit to Lhasa in 1950 might have a beneficial effect on Tibetan morale and inspire the Kashag (Tibetan Assembly) to stand up to the Chinese Communists whose occupation of Tibet was not inevitable, the view in London was that while the British was ought to discourage a defeatist attitude on part of GOI and if possible stiffen Tibetan Government’s determination to resist, yet all this should happen without provoking Chinese Communist by such gestures as an official visit to Lhasa. However, the British Mission to Lhasa never took place and the withdrawal from Lhasa of Hugh Richardson in August 1950

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<sup>52</sup> NAI, MEA, GOI, C.J.K. Branch, Secret, File No. 730-CJK/49, 1949, Note on six months of Communist China by Sardar K.M. Panikkar, Ambassador of India to China. D. No. 8005-CJK/49, pp. 2-6.

<sup>53</sup> Rao, *The Fractured Himalaya*, p. 32.

<sup>54</sup> Bhasin, *Nehru Tibet and China*, p. 31.

<sup>55</sup> Rao, *The Fractured Himalaya*, p. 34.

marked the end of the official British presence in the Tibetan capital which had started with the Bell Mission in 1920 finally came to end.<sup>56</sup>

Since the early 1949 the British Government was keeping close watch in the situation in China. Speaking in the foreign affairs debate in the House of Lords on January 19, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Lord Henderson, outlined British policy with regard to China, Hong Kong and Germany. Referring to China, Lord Henderson said: “H.M.G. are very carefully watching the developments in China. H.M.G. cannot be indifferent to the fate either of our nationals or of our extensive business interests in China. Our Embassy at Nanking and Consulates elsewhere are accordingly remaining at their posts. H.M.G. expects both parties to the struggle to respect British lives and British property.”<sup>57</sup> The British investments in China were estimated at between £200 million and £300 million in this period.<sup>58</sup> The failure to dispatch mission to Lhasa in 1950 to counter Chinese move in Tibet was shadowed by other interests of the British in China.

By the end of the first half of the twentieth century the India-China relations take-off smoothly in the matter of strengthening the diplomatic ties. The situation beyond the Himalaya frontier of India began to emerge into a geo-political crisis. The increasing incursions of China in the eastern Tibet and continuous advance inside Tibetan territory affected the India’s position in Indo-Tibet frontier. Prior to the proclamation of the People’s Republic of China the India Government was keeping close watch on the developments in China. As the civil war gained momentum and the communists scored many victories, Nehru asked the foreign secretary that while the question of recognition of the communist government awaited formation of their government, our ambassador in Nanking ‘might keep up informal contacts’ which would be useful for keeping abreast of the latest developments. India was anxious to recognize new Communist government of China as early as possible. Nehru by June 1949 had come to the conclusion that the Communist Government is the real government of China (and) it is in our interest to seek early opening to establish whatever relations are possible with the Government.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Lamb, *Tibet, China & India*, pp. 510-511.

<sup>57</sup> NAI, GOI, MEA, C.J.K. Branch, File No. 716-CJK/49, 1949, Notes from the British Information Services Office of the U.K. High Commissioner in India, regarding the situation in China, p. 1.

<sup>58</sup> NAI, GOI, MEA, C.J.K. Branch, File No. 731-CJK/49, 1949, Press comments in special reports on British reactions to the Communist victories in China, p. 5.

<sup>59</sup> Bhasin, *Nehru Tibet and China*, pp. 34-35.

The Indian Foreign Secretary expressed that in view of developments in China, we should keep in close touch with their relations in Tibet, and we shall think of the policy we should pursue there in case anything happens.<sup>60</sup>

While the United States never formally recognized Tibet as part of China as claimed by successive Chinese governments. The US will not upset its relations with her Chinese allies. On 10 May 1943, Chinese nationalist leader Chiang Kai-shek asserted that ‘Tibet is part of Chinese territory... no foreign power is allowed to interfere in our domestic affairs.’ The United States attitudes changed somewhat when the World War II was over and the communists were making swift advances in China. When Kuomintang regime was declining and its fall was inevitable in front of Communist Chinese, the US government was prepared to treat Tibet as independent. Tibet for its geo-political significance and its non-Communist approach emerged as important bastions in Continental Asia for the US to develop its ideological and strategic move against Communist. Once again, Tibet found itself a pawn in a Great Game for power in Asia.<sup>61</sup> India’s stand was clear on the rise of Communist in China in the note to the Secretary General and Foreign Secretary, 15 June 1949, it was pointed out that “the American Ambassador J. Leighton Stuart, is reported to have said that the Indian Government had promised to cooperate with the U.S.A. in China. We have of course done such thing. Our Ambassador might be informed that we do not propose to align ourselves with anybody in regard to China.”<sup>62</sup> Nehru rejected America overtures for joining the Manila Conference for an alliance against communism.<sup>63</sup>

On 4 November 1949, Home Minister Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, while discussing India’s decision to recognize PRC with American *Charge d’affaires* Patel said that he felt there was no need for hurry in recognizing the Communist China. He also mentioned that matters of foreign affairs were usually left to Nehru but he wanted to discuss the question of recognition with him.<sup>64</sup> Vallabhbhai Patel writes to Nehru that he felt that “we do not stand to gain anything substantial by giving a lead in the matter and that while recognition must come sooner or later, if

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<sup>60</sup> S. Gopal, *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru*, Vol.11, Second Series, New Delhi, JNMF, 1991, p. 389.

<sup>61</sup> Bertil Lintner, *Great Game East India, China and the Struggle for Asia’s Most Volatile Frontier*, Noida, Harper Collins, 2012, p. 14.

<sup>62</sup> S. Gopal, *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru*, Vol.11, Second Series, New Delhi, JNMF, 1991, p. 389.

<sup>63</sup> Bhasin, *Nehru Tibet and China*, p. 35.

<sup>64</sup> Bhasin, *Nehru Tibet and China*, p. 36.

we are somewhat late in the company of others, it would be worthwhile delaying a bit.” Nehru in his reply to Patel dated 6 December 1949, New Delhi, writes that “the U.N. session ends within a week. There is no intention of recognizing the new regime in China immediately after the session. But roughly the date given by us to the Commonwealth Governments has been by Christmas time. In this matter the U.K. government is anxious to recognize China early and before some of the Commonwealth countries. During all our discussions in London and elsewhere, it was recognised by others that it might be desirable for India to accord recognition earlier than some of the others, but in consultation with them. Our advisers are of opinion that it would be definitely harmful to recognise them after the Commonwealth countries have done so.”<sup>65</sup> After Burma India became the second non-communist country to recognize the People’s Republic of China on 30 December, 1949.

After the deportation of the Chinese Mission from Lhasa in July 1949, India became the only foreign country officially represented at Lhasa and assumed British rights in Tibet until Chinese Communist troops marched in. However, Nehru interpreted the old Tibet policy of British India in 1950 as taking two positions: while recognizing Tibet’s autonomy, it also vaguely recognized the suzerainty of China over Tibet. He stressed the point “we have accepted that policy. We take the two positions together.”<sup>66</sup> The withdrawal of Hugh Richardson in 1950 from Lhasa actually did not brought end to India-Tibet contacts. In Kalimpong the Tibet Liaison Officer were working under the administrative control of the Political Officer in Sikkim, till the end of February, 1951. These Liaison Officer were responsible for all matters concerning the export of cotton cloth to Tibet.<sup>67</sup> When in 1949 the likelihood of a Chinese re-occupation of Tibet could not be ignored, Nehru was on record that he stood by the concept of Chinese suzerainty in Tibet whatever that might mean. As the Chinese invasion of Tibet seemed more and more likely during the summer of 1950 the India’s government position was that if the Chinese were excessively aggressive over Tibet the Government of India might not be very helpful in securing for the People’s Republic of China the Chinese seat on the Security Council of the United Nations which was then hold by the Nationalists.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> S. Gopal, *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru*, Vol.14, Part I, Second Series, New Delhi, JNMF, 1992, p. 516.

<sup>66</sup> Yang, *Controversies over Tibet*, p. 416.

<sup>67</sup> NAI, GOI, MEA, E.II Branch, File No. 31(30)-E.II/49, 1949, p. 29.

<sup>68</sup> Lamb *Tibet, China & India*, p. 521.



In the span of two years of Communist regime in China Tibet came under the direct Chinese rule. India-China now began to share a common boundary stretching from Ladakh to N.E.F.A. which will soon develop into a geo-political contention between these two giants of Asia. The Chinese occupation of Tibet had a tremendous impact on the future of India relations with China. Napoleon once declared that ‘the foreign policy of a state derives essentially from its geographic position.’ While this is no longer entirely accurate, because of the revolution in technology during the past century, the bare facts of geography do limit a state’s freedom of action in foreign affairs. No Indian statesmen can ignore the compelling fact that the two Great Powers of the Communist world stand at the gates of the Indian sub-continent; indeed, that China rings a substantial part of its northern and eastern frontiers. In the past the Himalayan Mountain stood as a barrier for the India from the foreign invasion, but after the Chinese occupation of Tibet in 1950 showed that this natural line of defence is not impregnable.<sup>69</sup> Throughout, 1950s the Tibet factor played significant role in shaping the India-China ties and in the international politics. The British policy toward Tibet after 1914 in some way helped Tibetan government to maintain its autonomy. However, India Government continued British policy after independence but lacked in many approaches compare to later in the matter regarding the question of Tibet.

### **The Communist Chinese invasion in Tibet; and, its impact on India-China relations**

In October 1949, with the Communist regime in full control of mainland China, Radio Peking announced that Tibet was a part of China and the People’s Liberation Army would march into Tibet to liberate the Tibetan from foreign imperialists. The Tibetan Government reacted strongly to the Peking announcement by stating that the relationship between Tibet and China had been that of priest-patron and that Tibet had never been a part of China.<sup>70</sup> The Tibetan Government was naturally alarmed at these broadcasts and military training was carried on extensively and all young officials, both monk and lay, were given arms. The Tibetan Government also decided to send missions to India, Nepal, the United Kingdom and the United States to explain Tibet’s case and to ask for help. In addition, a mission was also chosen to go to China to make an attempt to come to an agreement with the new regime. Unfortunately, only the missions to India and Nepal reached their destinations because U.S. and U.K. showed no enthusiasm to receive such mission.

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<sup>69</sup> Michael Brecher, *Nehru A Political Biography*, London, OUP, 1959, p. 557.

<sup>70</sup> Shakabpa, *Tibet A Political History*, p. 299.

The team chosen for Peking also ran into difficulties in India, because the British Government was unwilling to receive the mission at Hong Kong and would not issue entry visas.<sup>71</sup>

The Chinese Ambassador in New Delhi persuaded Tibetan delegation to accept two points and to proceed to China in confirmation of the agreement. The two points were that (1) China should handle matters concerning Tibetan national defense, and that (2) Tibet should be recognized as part of China. The authority in Lhasa after hearing the Chinese Ambassador proposals instructed the Tibetan delegation not to accept the Chinese proposals. Shortly after receiving the reply from Lhasa, the news arrived that the PLA launched an attack on Tibet from eight different directions. The attack was on the twenty-third day of the seventeenth month of the Iron-Tiger year (October 7, 1950).<sup>72</sup>

The position of Tibetan Government was not stable and was facing economic crisis during the time PLA invaded. Since the 13<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama's death the army of Tibet was not improved and was lacking in many aspects and was not fit to counter the Chinese troops equipped with modern weapons and training. Tibetan army in the frontier saw the invasion of the PLA in their territory as seasoned troops which they could hold off easily with the available weapons.<sup>73</sup> In the past the Tibetan government was supplied with arms and ammunition by the British Indian Government. Nevertheless, the supply was limited but it helped the Tibetan authority in strengthening its army in the eastern frontier against the Chinese incursion. However, after the end of the British rule in India the new independent Indian government to some extent supported Tibet logistically. The British before departing from India supplied arms and ammunition to Tibetan government as a parting gift. L.A.C. Fry, Deputy Secretary writes to A. J. Hopkinson, Political Officer in Sikkim, dated 14 June, 1947 that "India supplied to Tibet twice the quantity of ammunition for which the Tibetan Government originally asked; this in itself has not been achieved without difficulty, and to produce more at this stage is not a practical proposition. It was a parting gift presumably on behalf of H.M.G. to Tibet, and India could therefore hardly be expected to provide it. In any event, we are assembling a handsome present

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<sup>71</sup> Mullik, *My Years With Nehru*, p. 61.

<sup>72</sup> Shakabpa, *Tibet A Political History*, pp. 300-301.

<sup>73</sup> John F. Avendon, *In Exile From the Land of Snows*, New York, Vintage Books, 2015 [Second Edition], p. 27.

from H.M. the King to the Dalai Lama, and shall presumably be in position to despatch it within the next month.”<sup>74</sup>

In March 1947 the Tibetans asked for 42 two inch mortars with 63,000 bombs, 144 Brens with 5,000,000 rounds, 168 Stens with 3,000,000 rounds, and 1,260 rifles with 2,000,000 rounds. The supply of these was approved, with the quantity of ammunition doubled except for the mortar bombs which were in short supply in India. Jawaharlal Nehru, head of the Interim Government, was consulted and he agreed to continue the supply of ammunition to Tibet after the Transfer of Power.<sup>75</sup> The Lhasa authority asked Hugh Richardson that whether they needed to make a new application to the GOI for the arms and ammunition for which they had already asked; Richardson replied that “this was not necessary. I hoped the arms and some ammunition were already en route for Tibet, and their request for more ammunition was before the Government of India. They asked me to repeat to the successor government their anxiety to secure a proper reserve of ammunition and to do everything possible to obtain their needs for them.”<sup>76</sup>

India’s relations with Tibet in 1949 was further taken forward by establishing direct relationship with Tibet by India’s agreeing to receive two permanent representatives of the Tibetan Government at Kalimpong, although these were supposed to be there for the time being, to continue the work of the Tibetan Trade Mission. The outstanding event of the year, concerning Indo-Tibetan relations, was the Political Officer in Sikkim’s visit to Lhasa, which lasted about 6 weeks (from 28 September to 15 November). The Tibetan Government made formal requests to the GOI through Political Officer in Sikkim for supply of arms and ammunition as well as for Indian instructors for military advice and training of Tibetan soldiers in the use of new weapons, like mortars. They also asked whether India would be prepared to sign a new treaty with Tibet in which India would recognize the independence, instead of mere autonomy of Tibet. The reply to the requests made by the Tibetan Government came early this year in January 1950. In view of the high hopes entertained by the Tibetan Government of being supported by India and other countries in their claims to independence the reply, which contained a frank and sincere advice for the Tibetan Government to avoid all bellicose language

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<sup>74</sup> NAI, GOI, MEA & C.R., NEF., Branch, Secret, File No. 10(14)-NEF/47, 1947, pp. 33-34.

<sup>75</sup> Lamb *Tibet, China & India*, p. 505.

<sup>76</sup> NAI, GOI, MEA & C.R., NEF., Branch, Secret, File No. 10(14)-NEF/47, 1947, pp. 70-71.

and actions, and try to maintain their present autonomous position by peaceful methods, supported by India's diplomatic negotiations with China at the proper time.<sup>77</sup>

The Political Officer in Sikkim's visit to Lhasa at a critical juncture encouraged the Tibetan Government to press the Government of India for the much needed help they wanted in arms, ammunition and military training, particularly in the use of new weapon they have asked for. The Government of India promised to support the Tibetan autonomy, they had acknowledged in the 1914 Simla Convention, by diplomatic negotiations with the new Chinese Government, whenever the question about Tibet was raised by the latter. Indian Government also promised to give them all reasonable help, concerning military supplies and training. The following ammunitions were supplied to the Tibetan Government in 1949.

**Table 5.2:** Supply of arms and ammunition to the Tibetan Government

|                     |         |
|---------------------|---------|
| Bren gun ammunition | 1500000 |
| Rifle ammunition    | 500000  |
| Sten gun ammunition | 100000  |

**Source:** NAI, GOI, MEA, R&I Branch, File No. 3(17)-R&I/50, 1950, p.11

The need for strengthening the army the Tibetan Government was depended on the supply of arm and ammunition from their southern neighbour India. The coming of the Communist government in China and their expansionist policy made Tibetan government to secure more military assistance from India before the invasion of China. Tibetan authorities had taken belated steps to build up their army in preparation for such an attack, but within days, Chamdo, their bulwark in western Kham, was encircled by the PLA.<sup>78</sup> Another force struck western Tibet, crossing Indian soil in the Aksai Chin corner of Ladakh. This latter thrust, which went unnoticed for several years, is significant because it was Communist China's first violation inside the territory of India after the British rule.<sup>79</sup>

The Chinese viewed Tibet as an integral part of China and was determined to bring it under the direct administrative and military control. The intervention of the British and

<sup>77</sup> NAI, GOI, MEA, R&I Branch, File No. 3(17)-R&I/50, 1950, p. 10.

<sup>78</sup> Guyot-Réchar, *Shadow States*, p. 95.

<sup>79</sup> John Rowland, *A History of Sino-Indian relations Hostile co-existence*, New York, Van Nostrand Company, 1967, p. 52.

independent Indian Government in the internal matter of Tibet was not accepted by any regime that came to power in China. Chinese saw Indian expressions of concern regarding Tibet as manifestations of Indian interference in China's internal affairs. After the occupation of Tibet by the PRC in 1950s the New Delhi saw the permanent stationing of Chinese armies on the India's northern frontiers for the first time as constituting a major adverse change in India's national security situation. Where in the past India faced no danger of military attack, it now confronted large, modern, and battle-hardened Chinese armies.<sup>80</sup> The PLA had appeared north of the McMahon Line in the last months of 1951. Dzayül, which had not seen Chinese soldiers since the 1910s, soon had a network of military camps, headquarters, and garrisons, including two near the Indian border. Around the same time, troops began to arrive north of Tawang.<sup>81</sup> Tsering Shakya has pointed out that the military action was meant as a display of Chinese military strength; it showed her determination to 'integrate' Tibet within the new China. The Chinese could have marched straight on to Lhasa but the repercussions would have been far-reaching. Instead they attempted to convince the Tibetan Government that a negotiated settlement could be reached, and that they were still willing to seek 'peaceful liberation'.<sup>82</sup> The Chinese troops stationed at Lhasa in 1953 were estimated to 20,000 including 1000 women. Gradually these troops are being dispersed in batches and will be garrisoned in Chumbi Valley and western Tibet.<sup>83</sup>

When the Chinese attacked Chamdo, Tibet asked for the India's mediation in the same way as she had asked for the British mediation in 1909 and 1931. India, through her Ambassador, had made several verbal representations to the Chinese Government to settle the Tibetan question peacefully and had been assured by the Chinese Government of their peaceful intentions. The move of the Government of India in crisis between Tibet and China was mostly in diplomatic in nature rather than providing full military support to Tibet against Chinese aggression. To protest the Chinese Government military measures in Tibet during the month of October 1950 India Government pointed the Chinese authorities that when the case of China's entry in the United Nations was pending before the General Assembly, it would be against

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<sup>80</sup> John W. Garver, *Protracted Contest Sino-Indian Rivalry in the Twentieth Century*, Washington, University of Washington Press, 2001, p. 32.

<sup>81</sup> Guyot-Réchard, *Shadow States*, p. 203.

<sup>82</sup> Tsering Shakya, *The Dragon in the Land of Snows A History of Modern Tibet since 1947*, London, Pimlico, 1999, p. 45.

<sup>83</sup> NAI, GOI, MEA, N.E.F. Section, 1953, File No. N/53/1395/1201, p. 3.

China's interest to take military measures in Tibet. The India Government was persuading the Chinese regime to adopt the peaceful approaches rather than force in dealing with Tibet. However, China continued to proclaim Indian Government that they would like to make it clear that Tibet is an integral part of the Chinese territory. The problem of Tibet is entirely the domestic problem of China. The Government of India made it clear to the Chinese that it had no political or territorial ambitions in Tibet, nor did it seek any privileged position in that country.<sup>84</sup>

The PLA faced no difficulties in dealing with the traditional army of Tibet. When China invaded Tibet it had a exceptionally high standard army equipped with modern weapons and high standard training. In the annual report of China it has mentioned that "one outstanding result of the Korean War has been the transformation of a large portion of the PLA into a modern fighting force. The experience of the Korean War has been carefully studied and incorporated into the new army training. The old captured American equipment has been discarded and the New Army is equipped with the most modern weapons and is in part mechanized. Also intensive efforts are being made to train educated cadres for the army. The Middle Schools (High Schools) are combed every term for young men to be trained as officers. They are taken away from the schools, into special institutions, segregated from the community and given intensive political and military training. The new militia numbered 7 ½ millions. It consisted only of armed peasants, but as they are under continuous political education, they constitute a very effective force for defence and for guerilla warfare. They also constitute the frame-work of internal security. Public donations for an air force for the army in Korea alone numbered over 3200 planes, while the regular air force of the PLA is probably double that number. During the National Day celebrations on October 1, the jet fighter planes which flew in formation made the greatest impression. An effective Chinese navy is also being built up in Port Arthur and Dairen."<sup>85</sup>

### **17-Point Agreement**

On 17 November 1950, the fourteen Dalai Lama, then 15years old, became the ruler of Tibet. Soon after his enthronement Tibet faced major crisis from the Communist China. Prior to his enthronement, on 7 October, communist troops had crossed the River Jinsha and fought their

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<sup>84</sup> Mullik, *My Years With Nehru*, pp. 63-65.

<sup>85</sup> NAI, GOI, Ministry of External Affairs, R&I Branch, Secret, File No. 3(5)R&I/52, 1952, Annual reports from China 1951, No.1/52-A, p. 10.

first perhaps most decisive battle with the tiny, ill-equipped Tibetan army. About 5,000 Tibetan soldiers are believed to have died in the fighting.<sup>86</sup> The National Assembly of Tibet sent an urgent appeal to UNO for help against the aggressors, claiming that their country had been invaded in peacetime on the pretext that the PLA could not tolerate the influence of imperialistic powers in Tibet. Tibet was utterly free from any foreign influence with no imperialistic influences and nothing to liberate. Their appeal was rejected, and UNO expressed the hope that China and Tibet would come to a peaceful agreement. It was clear to the Tibetan Government that no outside help was forthcoming and only option left was that Tibet must surrender. In this critical time the Tibetan Government was looking for the possibilities for the protection of the Dalai Lama. Forty years ago, the thirteenth Dalai Lama had fled before the invading Chinese and things had gone well for him thereafter. But the Tibetan Government could not undertake single-handed to make such a critical decision. The Dalai Lama must have the last word. So in the presence of the Dalai Lama and the Regent; the ritual was conducted and also with the sermon of the State Oracle it was decided that the Dalai Lama should leave Lhasa.<sup>87</sup> The Dalai Lama's flight had been kept strictly secret. The authorities did not want to disturb the people and feared lest the monks of the great monasteries would do their utmost to deter him from his resolution.<sup>88</sup>

Although the PLA had not made moves to advance on Lhasa, the Tibetans feared that they might try to cut off their escape route to India. A message arrived from eastern Tibet which warned of 800 PLA soldiers on horseback moving towards Lhasa from the north. The Tibetans dispatched a number of officers to stop any Chinese attempt to cut off their escape route to Dromo, a small town 150 miles from Lhasa and near the Indo-Tibetan border. In Lhasa there were rumours that the Americans were sending a plane to pick up the Dalai Lama and an area behind the Potala was cleared for a plane to land. The Tibetan Government also decided to dispatch to India substantial quantities of gold and silver which were held in the Potala Treasury.<sup>89</sup> Heinrich Harrer, when he saw the caravan of Dalai Lama coming from Lhasa writes that "My friend and I rode for about three days along the Lhasa road and on the Karo Pass we ran into the advance party of His Holiness's caravan. Looking down from the pass we could see the long column crawling up the road in a thick cloud of dust. The Dalai Lama had an escort of forty

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<sup>86</sup> Lintner *China's India War*, p. 68.

<sup>87</sup> Heinrich Harrer, *Seven Years in Tibet*, London, Rupert Hart-Davis, 1953, pp. 273-274.

<sup>88</sup> Harrer, *Seven Years in Tibet*, p. 281.

<sup>89</sup> Shakyas, *The Dragon in the Land of Snows*, pp. 50-51.

nobles and a guard of some two hundred picked soldiers with machine-guns and howitzers. An army of servants and cooks followed, and an unending train of 1,500 pack-animals brought up the rear. In the middle of the column two flags were waving, the national flag of Tibet and the personal banner of the fourteenth Dalai Lama. The flags denoted the presence of the ruler.”<sup>90</sup>

When Dalai Lama arrived at Yatung in November, 1950, Tsepon Wangchuk Deden Shakabpa a leader of Tibetan delegation who was in India waiting for the visas to proceed to Hong Kong received telegraphed from the Kashag to come immediately at Yatung. Shakabpa on his arrival at Yatung, reported the negotiations he had carried on in India. As the Indian government had not been of effective help and because the United Nations had postponed the Tibetan question, the Tibetan government appointed Dzasa Surkhang Supra and a Secretary-General, Chosphe Thubten, to proceed to India to patch up the relations with the Communist Chinese government through its Ambassador in Delhi. The Chinese Ambassador welcomed this delegation and advised them to send a similar one to Peking. Subsequently, Dzasa Khemey and Secretary-General Thubten Lekmon and Rimshi Sampo Sey were sent from Lhasa to Chamdo, where they joined by Governor Ngabo, and then proceeded onto Peking.<sup>91</sup> From Dromo the Kashag appointed and sent two more delegates, Lhawutara, Thubten Tendhar and Kheme Sonam Wangdu, with Chinese and English translators, Takla Phuntsog Tashi and Sandhu Lobsang Rinchen, respectively via India. On 29<sup>th</sup> April 1951 the Sino-Tibetan talks formally began in Beijing and ended on 23 May 1951. The talks actually lasted eleven days.<sup>92</sup>

Once in the Chinese hands, the Tibetan Delegation had no alternative but to fall prey to Chinese pressure and agreed to sign the Agreement without consulting or referred to the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan Government for additional instructions. In July 1951, General Chang Ching-wu, newly appointed Commissioner and Administrator of Civil and Military Affairs of Tibet, arrived at Yatung and requested the Dalai Lama to return Lhasa. So, the Dalai Lama departed from Yatung on July 24, 1951 and reached Lhasa on August 17, 1951. On September 9<sup>th</sup>, several thousand Chinese Communist troops arrived in Lhasa under the command of Wang Chi-mei. These were followed soon after by some 20,000 Chinese troops under the command of Chnag Kuo-hua and T'an Kuan-san.<sup>93</sup> Dawa Norbu argued that the Seventeenth Point

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<sup>90</sup> Harrer, *Seven Years in Tibet*, p. 280.

<sup>91</sup> Shakabpa, *Tibet A Political History*, pp. 303-304.

<sup>92</sup> Dawa Norbu, *China's Tibet Policy*, Mitcham, Curzon Press, 2001, p. 181.

<sup>93</sup> Shakabpa, *Tibet A Political History*, p. 304.



Agreement was essentially the result of Maoist armed intervention, the outcome of which was a foregone conclusion. Yet the Communists made an attempt to conceal the military dimension of the “liberation”, and to highlight its quasi-legality. The Agreement was in fact a quasi-legal mechanism by which they sought to legitimate their military takeover of Tibet.<sup>94</sup>

In Tibet, the authority of the Central Government, though exercised with circumspection, is decisive. A local headquarters of the PLA has been established at Lhasa and frontier defences have been taken over by the Central Government. Roads have been built connecting not only Sikang with Lhasa, but providing communications from Sinkiang. It is understood that facilities for air transport have also been established. The Dalai and Panchen Lamas and a leading member of the Dalai Lama’s Government have been nominated to the supreme authority of the Central People’s Government, the National Committee of the People’s Political Consultative Council.<sup>95</sup>

The American embassy official, Loyd V. Steere, met with the secretary general in the MEA, Girija Shankar Bajpai, after the signing of the 17-Point Agreement, and was told that the Indian embassy had failed to obtain any authentic information about the Agreement and that the Tibetan delegation had not kept in touch with the Indian embassy. Steere, the US *Charge d’affaires* formed the impression that Bajpai was unhappy at India’s helplessness in the whole affair. According to Steere, Bajpai confirmed that India had promised support to Lhasa during the negotiations, but the Tibetan delegation, as far as he knew, had never ventured near the Indian embassy in Beijing. On 2 June 1951, the Indian Mission in Lhasa had reported utter dissatisfaction of the Tibetan prime minister Lukhangwa Tsewang Rapten with the agreement. There was communication problem between the Tibetan delegation in Beijing with the authorities in Lhasa which made matter worst.<sup>96</sup> Indian Prime Minister Nehru said that “this was not a new development under the Communist Government of China. Every government in China for hundreds of years has claimed sovereignty or suzerainty over Tibet. Strong Chinese governments have enforced and exercised it; weak governments have been unable to do so. Chiang Kai-shek’s government held firmly to the view that Tibet was part of the Chinese State, at one time, early in 1947; we had a slight argument with them about it. The PRC naturally

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<sup>94</sup> Norbu, *China’s Tibet Policy*, p. 196.

<sup>95</sup> NAI, GOI, MEA, R&I Branch, Secret, File No. 3(5)R&I/52, 1952, Annual reports from China 1951, No. 1/52-A, p. 1.

<sup>96</sup> Bhasin, *Nehru Tibet and China*, pp. 129-130.

claimed Tibet as part of its inheritance. We could not in law or fact object because India has always considered China as the suzerain power. We were anxious, however, that Tibet should retain its autonomy.”<sup>97</sup>

The year 1951 witnessed the territorial integration of the entire historic area of old China on the mainland. The settlement of the Tibetan problem by the signature of a formal agreement on May 13, 1951, between the representatives of the Dalai Lama and the authorities of the Central People’s Government in Peking completed the process. The negotiators arrived in Peking at the end of April and the talks dragged on for month. By this agreement China assumed complete authority over the external affairs, defence and communications of Tibet, while the Tibetans secured their autonomy, special position for the Lamaist church, and the temporal and spiritual rulership of the Dalai Lama. On October 24, on the opening of the 3<sup>rd</sup> session of the PPCC (People’s Political Consultative Council) the Dalai Lama sent a message which said “The Tibetan Local Government and the monks and people of Tibetan nationality are giving the agreement unanimous support. Under the leadership of Chairman Mao Tse-tung and helping the People’s Liberation Army units marching into Tibet, to strengthen national defences, drive imperialist forces from Tibet and safeguard the unification of the territorial sovereignty of the motherland.” As Chou En-lai said in his report to the National Committee of the PPCC “with the peaceful liberation of Tibet, an unprecedented unity has been achieved throughout the whole mainland of China.”<sup>98</sup>

### **India-China Agreement on Tibet**

Prime Minister Nehru said in the House of the People in November, 1953 that “outstanding matters between India and Tibet were going to be considered in a conference in Peking by both the Governments on the basis of mutual respect for each other’s sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity. Every hope that a settlement satisfactory to both sides will be reached. He added it has been the policy of both governments that all such pending matter should be settled in the normal diplomatic way as between two friendly governments. Owing to pre-occupation with other urgent matters, such a discussion had been delayed. I am glad now that it is going to

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<sup>97</sup> New Delhi, NMML, Jawaharlal Nehru Papers, File No. 678-PT-2, pp. 5-6.

<sup>98</sup> NAI, GOI, MEA, R&I Branch, Secret, File No. 3(5)R&I/52, 1952, Annual reports from China 1951, No.1/52-A, p. 2.

take place in the near future.”<sup>99</sup> The delegation for the Conference at Peking which opened up on 31 December, 1953 was led by N. Raghavan who had succeeded Panikkar as the Ambassador, with T.N. Kaul as member and Gopalachari as advisor. The delegation was told not to raise the question of frontier, as in India’s view this was well settled by custom, tradition and usage. These negotiations continued for four months, and ultimately the Sino-Indian Agreement was signed on April 29, 1954.<sup>100</sup>

G.S. Bhargava, in his article “*Tibet Headache*” pointed out that normal trade with Tibet is becoming increasingly difficult. Peking wants to replace India as a buyer of cheap raw materials from Tibet and seller of factory products to its backward people. In 1951, Chinese currency was introduced in Tibet, and Indian traders who had to accept it lost heavily because the Chinese “*ta-yeng*” depreciated in value from five to three Indian rupees. Chinese troops are also entering the trade field. They buy wool and salt at cheap prices from Tibetans and sell them at a profit to Indians. Soon, however, even this trade will disappear. After Sinkiang was taken over by the Communist, Ladakh, a province of Kashmir, lost all its trade with the Chinese-dominated province. A similar situation will undoubtedly develop in Tibet.<sup>101</sup>

The discontent among the Tibetans was growing against the Chinese occupation over Tibet in this situation the Dalai Lama was invited to an event to celebrate the inauguration of the first constitution of the People’s Republic of China in Beijing on September 1954. During this visit the Dalai Lama met with the top dignitaries of the Communist China of the time Mao Zedong, Zhou Enlai, and Deng Xiaoping. During his interaction with the Chinese leaders Mao insulted the spiritual leader by telling him that ‘religion was poison’. Mao also told him that an entirely new body, the Preparatory Committee for the Autonomous Region of Tibet, was being created, effectively undermining the promises made under 17-point Agreement of 1951. The Tibetans could forget about managing their own affairs.<sup>102</sup> Dalai Lama also met with Nehru in Peking it was his first meet with the Indian Prime Minister. In his autobiography he writes that “I was introduced to him by Chou En-lai at a cocktail party. He seemed to be absorbed in thought, and for a little while he did not say anything. I told him his name and reputation as a leading statesman of the world had reached us in our isolation in Tibet, and that I had been looking

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<sup>99</sup> NAI, GOI, MEA, R&I Branch, Secret, File No. 55-R&I/53, 1953, p. 86.

<sup>100</sup> Mullik, *My Years With Nehru*, pp. 150-151.

<sup>101</sup> NAI, GOI, MEA, N.E.F. Section, File No. N/54/1353/1201, 1954, p. 4.

<sup>102</sup> Lintner, *China’s India War*, p. 70.

forward to meeting him. He smiled, but only said he was glad to have met me; and though I saw him on the other occasions, those were the only words I had with him in China.”<sup>103</sup> The Dalai Lama in his speech at National People’s Congress session laid particular stress on the unity that had grown up among all nationalities in China since liberation and spoke of the sufferings of the Tibetan people under imperialist encroachment prior to their peaceful liberation in 1951. The Tibetan people now “deeply feel the warmth of the great family of the motherland and see a bright future ahead for them”.<sup>104</sup>

Throughout the visit, Mao continued to reassure the Dalai Lama that the Chinese troops were in Tibet to help, not to rule. If the troops did not behave, Mao said, he would pull them out. Tibet would become an autonomous region rather than province of China. Mao proposed the establishment of Preparatory Committee for the Autonomous Region of Tibet (PCART). The committee would ensure that the Tibetan people themselves, not the Chinese, would dictate the pace of future reforms. The Chinese leader was full of reassurance.<sup>105</sup> In January 1955, several important decisions regarding Tibet were taken by the State Council which was in session during the month. The most important of these decisions were:-<sup>106</sup>

1. A decision to establish a preparatory committee for the Tibetan Autonomous Region.
2. A decision on communications and transport.
3. A decision in connection with helping Tibet to carry out construction projects.

In April 1954, China and India signed an agreement on Tibet under which New Delhi gave up extraterritorial privileges inherited from the British which includes a special status for Indian traders, the stationing of Indian military detachments on Tibetan soil, an Indian-owned telephone and telegraph system. The preamble to the agreement contained five rules of international conduct. These were reconfirmed as the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence at a Chou-Nehru meeting in June subsequently became main element of China’s foreign policy pronouncements.<sup>107</sup> The Chinese had told the Indian Ambassador Panikkar on 18 July 1952 that

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<sup>103</sup> Lobsang, *My Land and My People*, p. 120.

<sup>104</sup> NAI, GOI, MEA, N.E.F. Section, 1954, File No. N/54/1741/1201, 1954, p. 68.

<sup>105</sup> Anne F. Thurston, *The Noodle Maker of Kalimpong the Untold Story of my struggle for Tibet*, London, Random House Group Limited, 2015, p. 154.

<sup>106</sup> NAI, GOI, MEA, R&I Section, Secret, File No. 19-R&I/55, 1955, Reports on China, p. 20.

<sup>107</sup> Roderick Mac Farquhar and John K. Fairbank (ed.), *The Cambridge History of China; Vol.14 The People’s Republic, Part I: The Emergence of Revolutionary China 1949-1965*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1987, p. 283.

they do not recognize the old British unequal treaties which were concluded without the full participation of the Chinese Government and wanted to set up relations between New Delhi and China in Tibet on a new basis.<sup>108</sup> It is known that the Chinese immediately after arrival in Tibet made propaganda amongst the Tibetans that they would bring back all territories that once belonged to Tibet.<sup>109</sup>

The PRC, in order to promote friendly relations between China and India, has constantly endeavoured to develop trade and cultural intercourse between the two countries on the basis of a policy of good neighbours and peaceful-co-existence. The talks between China and India which smoothly attained an agreement, once again proved the deep friendship and the desire for friendly cooperation of the Chinese people towards the Indian people. Our Government has been correctly implementing its policy of freedom of religious beliefs and thereafter is respecting the religious beliefs, customs and practices of the people of Tibet. At the same time, it also wants to give facilities to the Indian people who customarily come to Tibetan Region of China on pilgrimage. Therefore, the agreement makes correct provisions also for matters regarding pilgrims of both sides going for pilgrimage.<sup>110</sup> India rights to negotiate directly with the Tibetan government which was gained through the treaty rights of 1904 and 1914 now came to end after this agreement. China had now achieved the full control of Tibet and from now on no foreign interference will be witnessed in Tibet.

The Himalayan frontier of the Indo-Tibet boundary which was demarcated during the British rule became the bone of contention in India's relations with China. After the occupation of Tibet, China began to redefine this boundary line on their geo-political interest. The Intelligence Bureau, Ministry of Home Affairs Government of India, Deputy Director S. B. Shetty, received a report on the military situation in Tibet in 1953. The reports indicate that the centre of the activities of the Chinese troops has definitely centred round Chumbi Valley and Western Tibet where they are building up their strength. During this period two of the Chinese Generals, head of the Tibetan Army in Tibet and the Assistant Political Commissar left Tibet for China via India. The Chinese further reinforced their strength in western Tibet. The reports on the presence of the Chinese troops approximately 2,300 Chinese at Gartok were received.

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<sup>108</sup> Bhasin, *Nehru Tibet and China*, p. 137.

<sup>109</sup> NAI, GOI, MEA, N.E.F. Section, 1953, File No. N/53/1395/1201, From the Consul-General for India, Lhasa, Tibet, to the Under Secretary, MEA, New Delhi, dated Lhasa, Tibet, the 30 August, 1953, p. 44.

<sup>110</sup> NAI, GOI, MEA, N.E.F. Section, File No. N/54/1356/1201, 1954, pp. 2-3.

Further the Chinese troops were actively engaged in reconnoitering the Nepal border. A Chinese military officer with 300 armed troops had arrived at Gartok from Lhasa and it was reported that he had ordered the four Dzongpons of western Tibet to meet him at Gartok. In the southern Tibet at Shigatse the strength of Chinese troops estimated to be 3,000. They are mainly utilized in construction of buildings and also cultivation. A report from Yatung stated that the Chinese have manned their guns on mountain tops in surrounding area and that they patrol the area vigilantly.<sup>111</sup> The Chinese are giving lecture to the Tibetans that north of Siliguri and Brahmaputra was the actual boundary of Tibet and it is their intention to set it right.<sup>112</sup>

The main objective of the India-China agreement called for the establishment of Chinese trade agencies in India, and Indian agencies in Tibet. It regulated the places where trade could be conducted in both countries, and also regulated the routes for the traders, pilgrims, and officials. Following Article I of the agreement India will established trade agencies at Yatung, Gyantse, and Kalimpong. The agreement dealt with the promotion of trade and cultural intercourse between Tibet and India, the Tibetans were not a party to the agreement.<sup>113</sup> Following a rumour at Yatung that GOI would impose a ban on the export of certain specified goods with effect from the 1 January 1953, the Chinese requested the local Marwari traders to obtain their requirements as much as possible before the date. In Lhasa a meeting was held at the Bank of China by the China Procurement Board to discuss Indo-Tibetan trade. Khampa, Nepalese, Chinese and other Tibetan traders were invited. While the Bank was becoming popular, in that issuance of drafts increased from 60 to 600 during the past years, the traders were asked to utilize judiciously the amounts in importing only those goods needed in Tibet. Assurance was given that the local Chinese authorities would be prepared to help the traders in procuring goods from India by negotiating with the GOI. Tibet was exporting to India the wool needed by her, it was said, and therefore Tibet could expect to get her, it requirements in exchange. The Chinese had agreed, Tibetan traders could sell their wool stock to any party offering better prices than the Chinese. Consequently there was a flow of wool to Kalimpong. All these may have reference to the latest regulations concerning the export of Indian goods to Tibet.<sup>114</sup> Chinese Foreign Bureau requests that an export permit may be granted to Local

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<sup>111</sup> NAI, GOI, MEA, N.E.F. Section, 1953, File No. N/53/1395/1201, pp. 2-3.

<sup>112</sup> NAI, GOI, MEA, N.E.F. Section, 1953, File No. N/53/1395/1201, p. 13.

<sup>113</sup> Shakabpa, *Tibet A Political History*, p. 308.

<sup>114</sup> NAI, GOI, MEA, R&I Branch, Secret, File No. 55-R&I/53, 1953, pp. 8-9.

Government of Tibet for export from India to Lhasa of 50 *maunds* each of iron and copper telegraph wire and 5000 pieces of non-conducting porcelain insulators complete with iron screws to be fitted into wooden posts. These are required for constructing telephone communication in Lhasa.<sup>115</sup>

**Table 5.3:** Trade statistics between India and Tibet, received from Political Officer in Sikkim in the year 1954

| <b>(A) Imports from Tibet to India during May 1954.</b> |                         |               |
|---------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|---------------|
|                                                         | Approx value per maund. | Total maunds. |
| 1) Wool                                                 | Rs. 160/-               | 4312          |
| 2) Yaktails                                             | Rs. 350/-               | 14            |
| 3) Skin furs                                            | Rs. 400/-               | 2             |
| 4) Hair animals                                         | Rs. 1000/-              | 5             |
| 5) Provisions (foodstuffs)                              | Rs. 80/-                | 4             |
| 6) Miscellaneous                                        | --                      | 20            |
| 7) Total maunds                                         | --                      | 4357          |
| 8) Via Nathula                                          | --                      | 65%           |
| 9) Via Jelepla                                          | --                      | 35%           |
| <b>(B) Exports from India to Tibet during May 1954.</b> |                         |               |
|                                                         | Approx value per maund  | Total maunds. |
| 1. Cotton piece-goods.                                  | Rs.240/-                | 1829          |
| 2. Dyes                                                 | Rs.250/-                | 310           |
| 3. Gur                                                  | Rs.22/-                 | 446           |
| 4. Iron                                                 | Rs.25/-                 | 1246          |
| 5. Salt                                                 | Rs.6/-                  | 26            |
| 6. Sugar                                                | Rs.36/-                 | 1421          |
| 7. Narcotics (tobacco leaf & cig)                       | Rs.140/-                | 941           |
| 8. Metals (allumn. & copper)                            | Rs.200/-                | 713           |
| 9. Provisions (foodstuffs)                              | Rs. 80/-                | 5090          |
| 10. Hides and skins                                     | Rs.250/-                | 540           |
| 11. Stationeries                                        | Rs.168/-                | 132           |
| 12. Teapods                                             | Rs.200/-                | 238           |
| 13. Miscellaneous                                       | --                      | 3728          |
| 14. Total in tons                                       | --                      | 617.0         |
| 15. Average ton per day                                 | --                      | 19.9          |
| 16. Via Nathula                                         | --                      | 77%           |
| 17. Via Jelepla                                         | --                      | 23%           |

**Source:** NAI, GOI, MEA, N.E.F. Section, File No. N/54/2411/1201, 1954, From Commercial Secretary, Gangtok, to Foreign, New Delhi, Dated Gangtok, the 17 June 1954, pp. 9-10

<sup>115</sup> New Delhi, NMML, Jawaharlal Nehru Papers, File No. 225, From Consulate, Lhasa, to Foreign, New Delhi, p. 3.

The Plenipotentiary of the government of India, Nedyam Raghavan, in his letter to Chang Han-fu, the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the government of the People's Republic of China, dated April 29, 1954, agreed on behalf of his government to withdraw the military escorts stationed at Yatung and Gyantse in Tibet, and to hand over to the Peking government, at a reasonable price, the postal, telegraph, and public telephone services, as well as the rest houses and land in Indian possession.<sup>116</sup> It sanctified Chinese control over Tibet. The Gangtok-Gyantse postal and telegraph line was constructed by the Sikkim-Tibet Mission Field Division at the cost of the Defence Department as a part of the Military Field Telegraph system. The Field Division was in existence 17 November 1903 to 30 November 1904 and was in charge of a Superintendent assisted by one assistant superintendent and two sub assistant superintendents. The line establishment at that time consisted of 5 sub inspectors and 26 linemen. There are three posts and telegraph offices along the route falling in Tibetan territory where both postal and telegram transactions are carried out. These offices are Yatung, Pharizong and Gyantse. On the postal side, there are about 50 savings bank accounts mostly belonging to the Indian Trade Agent and P.&T. staff.<sup>117</sup> The Government of India before handling the possession submitted made a claim to the Chinese authorities. The total claim to be preferred by the Government of India against the Chinese for surrender of P.&T. assets in Tibet thus works out to Rs.89743/- with a breakup as follows:

**Table 5.4:** Claim of the GOI to the PRC on the Indian possessions in Tibet.

|                                                                              |             |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| Lines                                                                        | 20,178/-    |
| Wires                                                                        | 12,226/-    |
| A&P at Yatung                                                                | 356/-       |
| A&P at Phari                                                                 | 356/-       |
| A&P at Gyantse                                                               | 750/-       |
| E.S.Ts Quarters at Yatung                                                    | 20,201/-    |
| Furniture cost at Yatung                                                     | 700/-       |
| Furniture cost at Gyantse                                                    | 1,400/-     |
| Furniture cost at Phari                                                      | 700/-       |
| Total                                                                        | Rs.56,867/- |
| Value of P.O. buildings at Yatung (ownership of which is to be established). | 32,876/-    |
| Grand Total                                                                  | Rs.89,743/- |

**Source:** NAI, GOI, MEA, N.E.F. Section, File No. N/54/5311/1201, 1954, p.20

<sup>116</sup> Shakabpa, *Tibet A Political History*, p. 309.

<sup>117</sup> NAI, GOI, MEA, N.E.F. Section, File No. N/54/5311/1201, 1954, pp. 16-17.



In both the negotiations of 1953 and 1954 between India and China the questions of the frontier was avoided. In 1954 negotiations the general view of the Indian delegation regarding the India's northern frontier was that China will not going to recognize the McMahon Line which was demarcated during the British rule in India. However the Sino-Indian agreement of 1954 caused terrible shock to the Tibetans they believed that this new agreement between China and India completely ignored Tibet's autonomy.<sup>118</sup>

When Dalai Lama returned back from Beijing in 1955, he found that the Chinese had built new roads into Tibet, including highways close to the Indian borders. There were more PLA soldiers in the country than when he had left for Beijing. The Chinese were the new overlords. And the Communists would be much less tolerant of religious practices than their predecessors, Imperial China and the KMT, could ever have been had they extended their rule over Tibet. In 1956 India was preparing for the Buddha Jayanti, the two thousand five hundredth anniversary of the birth of the Lord Buddha. The Indians wanted the Dalai Lama to attend. The Maha Bodhi Society of India would issue the invitation, and Thondup Namgyal, the crown prince of Sikkim and president of the Maha Bodhi Society, would travel to Lhasa to present the invitation in person. The Dalai Lama gladly accepted the invitation. The Dalai Lama and his entourage entered India through Sikkim and at the same time the Chinese leader Zhou Enlai was also in India on an official visit.<sup>119</sup>

Dalai Lama asked for Nehru's help and brought up the question of political asylum, which Nehru refused. He told Nehru that he wanted to stay in India until Tibet could win back its freedom by peaceful means. Zhou met with the Dalai Lama in New Delhi and convinced him to return Tibet promising that no new "reforms" would be introduced in Tibet until the people were ready. The situation in Tibet was deteriorating, Zhou said. The Chinese were prepared to use force if the popular resistance continued.<sup>120</sup> After the return of the Dalai Lama to Tibet in March 1957, the situation in Tibet deteriorated. China's ambition to reduce the Tibet into a province of the communist dictatorship became increasingly obvious, and Tibetan resistance grew more serious. The Chinese government was no longer abiding the terms of the 1954 treaty with India

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<sup>118</sup> Mullik, *My Years With Nehru*, pp. 155-157.

<sup>119</sup> Lintner *China's India War*, pp. 70-71.

<sup>120</sup> Thurston, *The Noodle Maker*, p. 163.

and the PLA deployed more and more soldiers to crush resistance in Tibet.<sup>121</sup> Chinese were active in the Indo-Tibet frontier the report of 1953 suggests that it is presumed that they are establishing check-post at Tsona. This region is in Tibet north of Tawang and is about 20 miles from the Indian border. Indian Assam Rifles outposts are stationed at Chuna, Bumla, and Chuthangmu and these regions come under Tawang area.<sup>122</sup>

The Chinese leaders noted with suspicion that, following the Dalai Lama's return to Tibet from India in early 1957, Tibetan insurgent's attack increased and the CIA began supporting the Tibetan rebellion. Tibetan insurgent activities in Kalimpong also increased. In July 1958 China sent a note to India detailing U.S., Nationalist Chinese, and Tibetan insurgent activities in Kalimpong and asking India to prohibit them. India did, nothing, at least in China's view.<sup>123</sup> The Dalai Lama was never part of any decision to involve the CIA in the struggle for Tibet.<sup>124</sup> Kalimpong the main centre of communication between India and Tibet emerged as a hub of clandestine activity from where agents were sent across the border to collect intelligence on 'enemy troops movements' and local guerrillas resisting the Chinese occupation of Tibet were armed. In 1956, the Khampa rebellion has congregated in Kalimpong.<sup>125</sup>

### **Tibetan uprising against the Communist China rule over Tibet and the Dalai Lama's flight to India; its impact on Sino-Indian relations**

In early 1956 the warlike Khampas in the Kham area in the eastern part of Sikang and Tibetan plateau around Kantze in Szechwan province revolted against the Communist Chinese authority. They were deprived of their land and pastures in the name of socialist reforms. Chinese government adopted the policy of settlement of large number of Hans community people in their land as a part of a larger scheme to swamp minority nationality areas with them. The Tibetan people monasteries and temples were ransacked and their properties looted to finance socialist reconstruction. The Chinese pretended that these were loans to the government, but they were not repaid. The Tibetan monks were forced to do slave labour on road construction projects.

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<sup>121</sup> Bruce Riedel, *JFK'S Forgotten Crisis Tibet, the CIA, and the Sino-Indian War*, Noida, HarperCollins Publishers, 2016, p. 26.

<sup>122</sup> NAI, GOI, MEA, N.E.F. Branch, File No. N/53/1811/105, 1953, Report on the establishment of check post by the Chinese across the border north of the McMahon Line, From Adviser to the Governor of Assam, to Foreign New Delhi, p. 3.

<sup>123</sup> Garver, *Protracted Contest*, p. 60.

<sup>124</sup> Thurston, *The Noodle Maker*, p. 170.

<sup>125</sup> Lintner *China's India War*, pp. 71-72.

Throughout 1956, the situation in Tibet was tense.<sup>126</sup> The Chinese took protective measures to strengthen their garrisons, placed fresh restrictions on Tibetan traders and imposed almost a complete ban on the movement of pilgrims to India.<sup>127</sup> The Tibetan people resistance against the Chinese and the revolt of Khampas somewhere jeopardized the China's Tibet policy.

Mao Zedong made a public announcement on February 7, 1957, when the spiritual head of Tibet Dalai Lama was in his pilgrimage journey in India. Mao announced that Tibet was not ready for the introduction of new reforms. At the same time, the Communist Chinese authorities in Tibet announced that land reforms for Tibet would be postponed for six years. The Chinese authorities in Lhasa also announced that the Preparatory Committee for the Autonomous Region of Tibet would be reduced in size.<sup>128</sup> But the Chinese do not loose any opportunity which may come in their way to implement any item of their proposed reforms. An incident at Gyantse in which a Tibetan who is in Chinese employment was taken to task by his Tibetan landlord for not carrying some of his obligations gave opportunity to the Chinese to bring forth a regulation that no employee of their would be taxed by their Tibetan landlords. Tibetan landlords have their subjects who are to render service to their masters in some form or other as poll tax. They also included the students in this category. The resolution was sponsored by the Chinese in the 23<sup>rd</sup> meeting of the Preparatory Committee held in Lhasa in the beginning of January, 1958. This is the first step the Chinese have taken by which they have made a percentage of Tibetans to break away from the age old feudal system and thus introduced partially socialistic pattern of life for the Tibetans.<sup>129</sup>

By June 1958, the government had suppressed more than 230,000 ethnic Tibetans involved in revolts in these areas, mostly outside of Tibet proper. The violent suppression of the Kham uprisings untied various Tibetan resistance groups that had formed to fight CCP rule. As PLA units counter attacked, rebels fled west to escape capture, congregating in Lhasa and the surroundings areas. In March 1958 meeting was held among the leaders of Khampa and decided to unite their efforts to oppose the Chinese. In June 1958, all the disparate armed groups merged to form the National Volunteer Defense Army (NVDA), which then began to conduct raids

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<sup>126</sup> Girilal Jain, *Panchsheela and After a Re-appraisal of Sino-Indian Relations in the context of the Tibetan Insurrection*, Bombay, Asia Publishing House, 1960, pp. 62-63.

<sup>127</sup> NAI, GOI, MEA, R&I Section, File No. 6(35)R&I/59, 1959, p. 18.

<sup>128</sup> Shakabpa, *Tibet A Political History*, p. 313.

<sup>129</sup> NAI, GOI, MEA, R&I Branch, File No. b(35).R&I/58, 1958, p. 1.

against PLA outposts and convoys around Lhasa in southern Tibet.<sup>130</sup> The Khampas are only equipped with rifles and pistols and in some cases only muzzle loaders. They depend on their supplies mostly on the local resources. In view of the inadequacy of their equipments and supplies it is very doubtful if Khampas would ever come out to fight openly with Chinese. It is felt that they would limit their activities to guerrilla and other harassing tactics. For this reason the Khampas who had concentrated at Triku split themselves in small groups and left for various places. The Chinese on the other hand though would like to suppress the activities of Khampas themselves by stern military actions but to avoid the criticism of the public they would rather prefer to use the Tibetan troops to matter and was being dealt by the local government.<sup>131</sup> Between January and March 1958, about 50,000 to 60,000 Khampas and some Gholapkas migrated to various parts of outer Tibet, nearly 4,000 of them going to Lhasa.<sup>132</sup>

**Table 5.5:** Revolts in Tibet, 1954-59.

| Date                  | Revolt            | Place             | Estimated number of<br>partisans |
|-----------------------|-------------------|-------------------|----------------------------------|
| August-September 1954 | Kanting Rebellion | Tachienlu         | 40,000                           |
| February-March 1956   | Lithang Rebellion | Lithang Monastery | 15,000                           |
| June 1958-March 1959  | Chushi Gang-drug  | Lhoka             | 5,000                            |
| March 1959            | Lhasa Uprising    | Lhasa             | 30,000                           |

**Source:** Dawa Norbu, *China's Tibet Policy* (Mitcham: Curzon Press, 2001) p.218

The nationalist movement in Tibet, the climax of which reached on 10<sup>th</sup> March, 1959, had started sometime in 1955 in Kham, eastern Tibet and then spread to west in Amdo region and north-east in Golak areas. In 1955 and 1957 it took shape of an open-revolt against the Chinese regime in these areas. These movements did not succeed but they were constant headache to the Chinese who had to resort to aerial bombing and deploy large number of forces to subjugate the local inhabitants. During operations several monasteries was destroyed and the local people suffered heavy losses. Due to absence of proper means of communication and security measures adopted by Chinese to suppress the information the correct news of happenings in these areas seldom reached outside world. The Chinese did not take any action against the Khampas, except on one or two occasions but pressed the Tibetan Government to

<sup>130</sup> M. Taylor Fravel, *Strong Borders, Secure Nation, Cooperation and Conflict in China's Territorial Disputes*, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 2008, p. 76.

<sup>131</sup> NAI, GOI, MEA, R&I Branch, File No. b(35).R&I/58, 1958, Consulate General of India, Lhasa, Tibet, Dated the 10 August 1958, Monthly report for the months of July and August, 1958, Report No. 3-R(2)-S/58/12, p. 43.

<sup>132</sup> NAI, GOI, MEA, R&I Section, File No. 6(35)R&I/59, 1959, p. 17.

suppress them. The Tibetan Government under the pressure from Chinese sent Peace Missions comprising of monks and lay officials to Kham and Lhoka areas but no useful purpose was served.<sup>133</sup>

The India-China friendship throughout the period of 1952-58 was overshadowed with the issue of Tibet and boundary question. India consistently backed China's entry into the United Nations annually and established no ties with the Taiwan administration. But there was several cases of frontier violations by the Chinese. There were the notable instances in Bara Hoti and Nilang in UP, near Kaza in Himachal Pradesh, near Chushul, Dungti and Aksai Chin in Ladakh and in several places in NEFA. When the Indian Government complained about the activities in Indo-Tibet frontiers the Chinese government either claimed that these places were in Chinese territory or denied that there had been an intrusion. But within this period Chinese were actively building roads and consolidating her position even in the remote parts of Tibet. The cartographical section of the Chinese map showed most of the India's northern regions inside the Chinese territory. The GOI made several protest of the Chinese map but authorities in Beijing never took the India's protest seriously.<sup>134</sup>

However, the Chinese were also making similar allegations towards GOI on regards of the frontier violations. In the note given by the counsellor of China in India to the Ministry of External Affairs, 17 July 1954 that according to a report received from Tibet Region of China, over thirty Indian troops armed with rifles crossed the Niti pass on 29 June 1954, and intruded into Wu-Je of the Ali Area of the Tibet Region of China. It is hoped that the GOI would promptly investigate the matter, and order the immediate withdrawal of the Indian troops in question from the above mentioned territory of the Tibet Region of China. It is also inform that further investigations reveals that they were a unit of 33 persons attached to the local garrison in U.P., India. The unit was under the command of an officer called Nathauje (according to Chinese pronunciation) who was a deputy commander of the troops stationing at Kanman (Chinese pronunciation). In reply the Indian Government note given to the Chinese Counsellor in India dated 17 August 1954 clearly clarified that through the GOI further investigations have confirmed that the allegation is entirely incorrect. A party of our Border Security Force is

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<sup>133</sup> NAI, GOI, MEA, R&I Section, File No. 6(35)R&I/59, 1959, pp. 22-23.

<sup>134</sup> Mullik, *My Years With Nehru*, pp. 161-162.

encamped in the Hoti Plain which is south-east of Niti pass and is in Indian territory. None of our troops or personnel have crossed north of the Niti pass, as verbally mentioned by the Chinese Counsellor.<sup>135</sup>

Nehru writes to Chou En-lai, on the issue of Indo-Tibetan Border dated New Delhi 22 March 1959 that “there is some difference of views between our two Governments in regard to the delineation of the frontier at some places, I agree that the position as it was before the recent disputes arose should be respected by both sides and that neither side should try to take unilateral action in exercise of what it conceives to be its right. Further, if any possession has been secured recently, the position should be rectified. The continuing publication of Chinese maps showing considerable parts of India and Bhutanese territory as if they were in China is not in accordance with long established usage as well as treaties and is a matter of great concern to us. Our two countries evolved the principles of Panch Sheel which has now found widespread acceptance among the other countries in the world. It would be most unfortunate if these frontier questions should now affect the friendly relations existing between our countries. I hope therefore that an early understanding in this matter will be reached.”<sup>136</sup>

According to Nehru "the Khampa Revolt did not directly affect India. But it did create the possibility of a border problem both in India and Bhutan. Occasionally, a few Khampas entered our territory, but the numbers were very small and our check-posts on the frontiers were directed to prevent such entry. Nehru further said that the Tibet regional government did not associate with Khampas in any way, though probably there was much sympathy for them. It has been reported that the Dalai Lama and his leading associates even advised the Khampas not to indulge in warfare. How far this was a gesture or really meant, I cannot say. But I have little doubt that really meant, I cannot say. But I have little doubt that they meant this as they were afraid of the consequences on themselves of such aggressive action by the Khampas.”<sup>137</sup> The tension began to rise between India-China on the long stretch of Himalayan frontiers. In spite of much evidence of Chinese forward movement, both in Tibet and Ladakh and cartographical encroachments claiming vast tracts in the north-east frontier of India and in Bhutan as part of

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<sup>135</sup> MEA, GOI, White Paper I, Notes, Memoranda and letters Exchanged and Agreements signed between The Government of India and China, 1954-1959, pp. 4-5.

<sup>136</sup> Madhavan K. Palat (ed.), *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru*, Vol.47, Series 2, March 1959, New Delhi, JNMF, 2013, p. 454.

<sup>137</sup> New Delhi, NMML, Jawaharlal Nehru Papers, File No. 678-PT-2, p. 6.

Chinese territory, Nehru continued to remain conciliatory towards China. That is until late 1957, when the Chinese announced the completion of the road between Sinkiang and Tibet and it was found that in the Aksai Chin, the road had taken in vast chunks of Indian territory. Moreover, the Indian Army discovered that Chinese troops were already in control of the road across the Aksai Chin.<sup>138</sup>

In 1958 the Tibetan people were hoping for the promised visit of Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru. This visit of the Nehru would indeed have helped Tibet's cause, for the Indian Prime Minister would have seen for himself the actual conditions in Tibet and his presence might even have led to a peaceful settlement of the conflict between the Tibetans and the Chinese. When Nehru expressed his desire to make the visit the Chinese authorities informed him that condition in Tibet is bad and that they would not be able to guarantee his safety.<sup>139</sup> Tibetan Government under the orders of Dalai Lama had set up a Committee of 64 Tibetan Government officials, representatives of three big monasteries and of the Tibetan army to discuss the Chinese complaints about Khampas and their allegations of non-cooperation and unconcerned attitude against Tibetan government. Surkhang Shape, being senior most Shape (Cabinet Minister), was naturally the Chairman of this Committee. During their meetings, this Committee had thoroughly discussed the question and pointed out that the Chinese did not follow the agreement signed between Tibet and China in 1950, specially the clause regarding Tibet. They further pointed out that the Chinese had taken away all the properties of monasteries, villagers and traders in Eastern Tibet and the people were made to work in inhuman ways. All the members opined unanimously that the above were the causes for this uprising of the Khampas against the Chinese, and thought that if the Chinese followed the common rules and regulations i.e. international laws, the Khampas trouble would subside. The Committee recommended to the local government that a reply on the above lines might be given to the Chinese. The Chinese had come to know of this and they were quite agitated and unhappy with the Tibetan officials and specially with the Chairman of the Committee.<sup>140</sup>

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<sup>138</sup> Amar Kaur Jasbir Singh, *Himalayan Triangle A Historical survey of British India's relations with Tibet, Sikkim and Bhutan 1765-1950*, London, The British Library, 1988, p. 139.

<sup>139</sup> Shakabpa, *Tibet A Political History*, p. 318.

<sup>140</sup> NAI, GOI, MEA, R&I Section, File No. 6(35)R&I/59, 1959, p. 3.

In 1959, Dalai Lama send a New Year message to Chairman Mao Zedong and to The National People's Congress, he said that "I have the implicit confidence that the various nationalities of our wide country, riding on the great leap forward wave of 1958. In this land of Tibet significant results have been obtained in every aspects during the past one year, under the leadership of CCP. The conscience of patriotism among the power people of Tibet prevailing at the present time is more powerful than ever before. Unity between the diverse nationalities of the country has been further raised. In order to preserve the fruits already achieved, and to foster the growth of socialist construction in Tibet, we have resolved to give our mind and might and to do the utmost." Panchen Lama the second spiritual head of Tibet also forwarded similar greeting message to Mao. The latter said that "the unity existing between us and the comrades is indestructible one. We affirmatively declared our unreserved support for strengthening the country, suppressing the counter-revolutionaries, opposing the imperialists and to go hand in hand with the rest of the country in the march to the goal of socialist construction."<sup>141</sup> The attitude of the Tibetan leaders towards the PRC prior to the uprising of Lhasa was diplomatically stable.

The Lhasa 'Patriotic Youth Association' celebrated its 6 anniversary on the 31 January, 1959, which was attended by about 1,000 persons. General Tan Kwan San, Chou Thai Fu, Vice-President of the Administrative Bureau of Tibet Military Command, Ngapho Shape, Secretary General of the Preparatory Committee for the autonomous region of Tibet, and other important members of PCART were present. Chou Thai Fu said that in this occasion that present strength of their Militia (gave 21 crores) far surpassed the population of U.S.A. and the future portrait of Tibet was marked with grandeur and good days. Same year in the month of February important events took place in Lhasa the Tibetan New Year followed by Great Prayer and the Chinese Spring Festival, which happened to fall on the same day i.e. 8 February. This year the 'Great Prayer' had special significance for Tibetans as the Dalai Lama had to go through the final ceremonies connected with the attainment of degree of 'Gesheship' by him.<sup>142</sup>

The attitude of the Indian Government at that time was strangely unrealistic. Although reports of the critical situation in Tibet filtered through India, the GOI, for reasons

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<sup>141</sup> NAI, GOI, MEA, R&I Section, File No. 6(35)R&I/59, 1959, p. 9.

<sup>142</sup> NAI, GOI, MEA, R&I Section, File No. 6(35)R&I/59, 1959, Consulate General of India, Lhasa, Tibet, dated the 4 March, 1959, p. 10.



perhaps dictated by the well-intentioned but misguided hope of avoiding embarrassment to the Chinese authorities continued to discount all information as greatly exaggerated. On 17 March 1959, when opposition members criticized their government's Tibetan policy in the Indian Parliament, Nehru made the statement that he did not think there was large-scale violence in Tibet and that what was happening was a clash of wills rather than arms.<sup>143</sup> Nehru in letter to his sister Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit mentioned that "there is considerable concern in India about the situation in Tibet in general and sympathy for the Dalai Lama and the Tibetans. We are faced with a difficult situation. It would be clearly not be wise for us to do or say things which would make the position of the Tibetans still more difficult. We have not made any approach to the Chinese Government. They have told Parthasarathi in Peking that the present troubles are due to instigation by the Americans and Chiang Kai-shek. It is difficult for us to say what truth there is in this allegation."<sup>144</sup>

In the history of movement for free Tibet the month of March, 1959, will be most historic as during this month Tibetans, high and low, in Lhasa openly challenged the Chinese rule in Tibet. They set up an organization called "Pho Mimang Ranchen Chi Chog" meaning Tibetan People's Independent organization, renounced the Sino-Tibetan Agreement of 1951, started demonstrations to give vent to their anti-Chinese feelings and demanded withdrawal of the Chinese from Tibet. But this challenge before the might of Chinese PLA who on 20 March, 1959, started an all out offensive against the ill-organised, ill-equipped, untrained-Tibetans with artillery, mortars, and weapons was short lived. His Holiness the Dalai Lama, smelling danger left Lhasa secretly on the night of the 17 March 1959, with important members of his personal staff, three Cabinet Ministers and members of his family for Lhoka area south of Lhasa, where at that time Khampas had fully sway and from where it was easier for him to escape to India. Many other important and un-important Tibetans followed him when the actual trouble started on the night of 19 March, 1959. On the 28 March 1959, the State Council of the PRC dissolved the local Tibet Government and transferred all its functions and powers to the PCTAR with Panchen Lama as its acting Chairman.<sup>145</sup>

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<sup>143</sup> H.E. Richardson, *Tibet and its History*, London, OUP, 1962, p. 207.

<sup>144</sup> Madhavan K. Palat (ed.), *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru*, Vol.47, Series 2, March 1959, New Delhi, JNMF, 2013, p. 459.

<sup>145</sup> NAI, GOI, MEA, R&I Section, File No. 6(35)R&I/59, 1959, Consulate General of India, Lhasa Tibet Region of China, Report for the months of March, April and May, 1959, dated the 1 June, 1959, No. 3-R(2)5/59/3, p. 21.

In the telegram from MEA, New Delhi, to Adga, Shillong, noted that “Dalai Lama has requested GOI to give him political asylum and intends to cross into our territory at the frontier near Tawang. We are prepared to give him and the party accompanying him political asylum. Please instruct A.P.O. Tawang to allow Dalai Lama and his party to cross over into our territory. Also, if an emissary from Dalai Lama comes to Tawang or our frontier check-post to enquire, he should be told that Dalai Lama and his party will be given political asylum and arrangements will be made by us for their journey inland.”<sup>146</sup>

The Dalai Lama was granted asylum in India by the Indian Government on the ground of religious and spiritual leader. He came to Tezpur where he made a statement to the effect that he voluntarily left Tibet, but the Chinese alleged that he had been forced to make this statement by the Indian Government. From Tezpur the Dalai Lama came to Mussoorie where he was temporarily accommodated. Here Nehru met him. Dalai Lama made a statement in a press conference at Mussoorie, that wherever the Dalai Lama accompanied by his Cabinet stayed, the people of Tibet recognised them as the Government of Tibet.<sup>147</sup> While public opinion in India would doubtless demand granting of asylum to all those who sought it, the Indian Government has to bear in mind the need to maintain friendly relations with China. Once before when India reacted sharply against the Chinese invasion of Tibet, the Chinese Government showered filthy abuse on India’s Prime Minister. There is desire on the part of the Indian Government to deal with the situation cautiously and carefully so as to avoid unpleasantness on any front.<sup>148</sup> Obviously, India was willing to provide asylum but prevent Tibetan exiles from using territory for political activities that might damage Sino-Indian relations. For most of April, Nehru managed to walk a fine line between dealing with the Dalai Lama and keeping relations with China unscathed. In the second half of a April, Mao however gave up his self-professed restraint toward Nehru’s alleged anti-Chinese attitude and ordered the publication of propaganda on the prime minister’s supposed role in the Tibetan uprising and his alleged cooperation with the British imperialist.<sup>149</sup>

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<sup>146</sup> New Delhi, NMML, Jawaharlal Nehru Papers, File No. 678-PT-2, Telegram CCB No. 1476, p. 122.

<sup>147</sup> Mullik, *My Years With Nehru*, pp. 218-219.

<sup>148</sup> New Delhi, NMML, Jawaharlal Nehru Papers, File No. 678-PT-2, EAM(XP)WPR/1692/28.3.59, p. 148.

<sup>149</sup> Lorenz Lüthi, ‘Sino-Indian Relations, 1954-1962,’ *Slavic-Eurasian Research Center*, Japan, Vol.13.SI, pp.104-105 [https://src-h.slav.hokudai.ac.jp/publictn/eurasia\\_border\\_review/Vol3SI/luthi.pdf](https://src-h.slav.hokudai.ac.jp/publictn/eurasia_border_review/Vol3SI/luthi.pdf) accessed on 01.07.2024.

The Preparatory Committee in its meeting held on 28 April, 1959, first after the revolution, passed resolutions these were :-<sup>150</sup>

1. Implementation of the 28<sup>th</sup> March order of the State Council.
2. Perfecting and strengthening the organization of the Preparatory Committee.
3. In addition to the existing six departments (General Office, Religious affairs Committee, Civil Affairs, Finance, Education and Culture and Construction) the opening of the following additional office was approved – Public Security, Public Health, Industrial and Commercial, Communications and Transport, Agricultural and Pastoral and a Counsellor's Office.
4. The other three resolutions provided for filling of vacancies on the Standing Committee of the Preparatory Committee, the removal of those officials, who rebelled, from the posts in government bodies and the designation of replacements.

Immediately after the suppression of the uprising the administration of the post offices were taken over by the Chinese and the Tibetan post offices closed down. As for the Tibetan currency Chinese did not themselves do anything in the beginning but gradually created conditions do devalue it. The exchange rate of the Tibetan currency vis-à-vis Chinese silver dollar and Indian rupee started declining and a stage reached that people were willing to exchange Tibetan currency with the Indian rupee at any rate asked for and then the time came when nobody would accept the Tibetan currency in the market. On 15 July, 1959 the Preparatory Committee in a notification under the signature of Panchen Lama, General Chang Kuo-hua and Fkapa La and Ngpho Shape made the Chinese paper currency as legal tender.<sup>151</sup> Due to non-availability of transport trade between Lhasa and India was at a standstill. Besides the Chinese did not allow any export to India.<sup>152</sup>

Tibet was not considered absolutely essential by Nehru and his colleagues. Moreover, in their public view the Chinese legal claim was very strong. And in any event, they were not prepared to go to war with China.<sup>153</sup> The Indian Government adopted the peaceful attitude toward Chinese in this period and tried not to harm the sentiments of the Chinese. However, the

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<sup>150</sup> NAI, GOI, MEA, R&I Section, File No. 6(35)R&I/59, 1959, p. 33.

<sup>151</sup> NAI, GOI, MEA, R&I Section, File No. 6(35)R&I/59, 1959, p. 40.

<sup>152</sup> NAI, GOI, MEA, R&I Section, File No. 6(35)R&I/59, 1959, p. 36.

<sup>153</sup> Brecher, *Nehru A Political Biography*, p. 589.

Bombay incident where the portrait of Chairman Mao was disfigured, which raised the temper of the Chinese, and a large number of letters and telegrams were received by the Embassy protesting it. Some of these were violently abusive. During the frenzied campaign by the Chinese the criticism was mainly directed against:<sup>154</sup>

1. The distribution of the Dalai Lama's statement by Indian officials;
2. The suggestion made by some Indians for a conference between China and Tibet under Indian auspices; and
3. The sympathy with the so-called Tibetan traitors and reactionaries.

The National People's Congress unanimously passed a resolution on Tibet which expressed "regret over the recent extremely unfriendly statements and actions by certain Indian political figures interfering in China's internal affairs". The Congress hoped that this abnormal situation would disappear rapidly that the great long-standing friendly relations between the two countries would be consolidated and develop through mutual efforts.<sup>155</sup> Between the end of February and early April 1959 Indian newspapers carried over three hundred articles attacking China for exercising sovereignty in Tibet, by the Beijing's count. The Nehru government permitted these activities, Chinese leaders believed, as a way of increasing pressure on China. To further pressure China again, so Chinese leaders believed that New Delhi began implementing economic sanctions designed to increase hardship in Tibet. Meanwhile, various high officials of the Congress Party helped organize a committee to assist the Tibetan rebels and called for UN intervention and for the convocation of a tripartite Sino-Indian-Tibetan conference to resolve the issue. According to Chinese leaders, India hoped that, as China faced mounting difficulties in Tibet, it would ask India to mediate the dispute.<sup>156</sup> However, India was against UN intervention in Tibet question. The Indian Government disapproved of the Dalai Lama's appeal to the United Nations which they found embarrassing in their relations with China.<sup>157</sup> The Prime Minister's speech in the Lok Sabha on the 27 April, 1959 was selected as a subject of discussion and debate. This discussion assumed the form of violent speeches. The discussion was climaxed by the publication of the editorial in the "People's Daily" entitled "Revolution in Tibet and Nehru's

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<sup>154</sup> NAI, GOI, MEA, R&I Section, File No. 3(5)R&I/59, 1959, Information Service of India, Peking, Annual Report, p. 31.

<sup>155</sup> NAI, GOI, MEA, R&I Section, File No. 6(14)R&I/59, 1959, p. 29.

<sup>156</sup> Garver, *Protracted Contest*, pp. 60-61.

<sup>157</sup> Richardson, *Tibet and its History*, p. 218.

Philosophy”. This article, after analyzing the situation in Tibet, “deplored” Prime Minister Nehru’s error in considering the attempt by the upper-strata reactionaries to maintain their hold on the people a national uprising. It regretted that some Indians, including Mr. Nehru, were asking China to do things according to Indian opinions.<sup>158</sup> The policy of India towards China was based on the 1954 Agreement, which totally shaped the outlook of the GOI while dealing with the Tibetan problem and Dalai Lama vis-à-vis China.

### **The Himalaya frontier: India’s approach toward Chinese activities in the Eastern and Western Sector of Indo-Tibet frontier**

The boundary between India-Tibet was defined into three sectors viz., western, middle and eastern, this demarcation was done during the period of the British rule. In the eastern sector that covers the region of North East Frontier Agency was officially demarcated in 1913-1914 at Simla Convention. However, the Chinese plenipotentiaries did not sign the document but both the British and Tibetan governments agreed to certain limitation on the eastern Himalayan boundary. In the western sector the traditional line was considered as boundary for many years until the PRC occupation of Tibet. Along the main range of the Himalaya at a few palces between the Shipki Pass and the north-west frontier pass of Nepal, Tibetan claims to grazing rights south of the watershed frontier had been resisted by the Indian Government for many years.<sup>159</sup> After the end of the British rule the new independent Indian government inherited the entire frontier in the Himalaya which slowly developed into a bone of contention between the India-China.

India-China boundary marked by the watershed plays important role in understanding the delimitation of the boundary in traditional basis. Throughout the long stretch of Himalaya areas are divided by rivers and mountains and since the ancient period the people moved from one place to another. The watershed limitations created gap in understanding the natural formation of the boundary between the States. Thomas H. Holdich, has stated that “Natural frontiers possess many advantages over artificial ones. They are readily delimited and demarcated; they last well under all conditions of climate, and they are, as a rule, plain and

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<sup>158</sup> NAI, GOI, MEA, R&I Section, File No. 3(5)R&I/59, 1959, Information Service of India, Peking, Annual Report, p. 31.

<sup>159</sup> Richardson, *Tibet and its History*, p. 225.

unmistakable. Mountains, watersheds (or divides), watercourses, and rivers, lakes and deserts figure largely in the political geography of the globe as indications of lines of partition between nations or communities, which may not be overstepped by unlicensed expansion of territory on either side. And of all these natural features, a definite line of watershed carried by a conspicuous mountain ridge, or range, is undoubtedly the most lasting, the most unmistakable and the most efficient as a barrier.”<sup>160</sup> Hence the Great Himalayan Range which runs right across Kashmir forms no political or natural barrier until it fringes Uttar Pradesh where it constitutes a watershed. In the northern part of Ladakh as in the Hunza area, the watershed line is formed by a subsidiary range of the Karakoram, namely, the Qara Tagh range which directly links up with the great Kuen Lun barrier. The eastern boundary of Ladakh offers an example of a traditional boundary modified by political changes. In the middle sector of India-China boundary, there is a perfect watershed line which has not only served as a clear ethnic boundary throughout history. In the Eastern sector, the watershed has been complicated to some extent by the crossing of the Nyamjang, the Subansiri, and the Dihong, and the resultant easy accessibility of some areas has led to overlapping of cultural and religious in a few areas.<sup>161</sup>

In the western sector due to uninhabitable terrain the region was barren land remained undefined in the Survey of India maps and also in those printed until 1953. And the Sikkim-Tibet boundary was delimited in 1896. Nehru had predicted the security of Indian borders on geographic factors<sup>162</sup> but after the Chinese invasion of Tibet and 1962 Sino-India War totally changed this perception of the Indian leaders. After the Tibetan rising of March 1959 the attitude of the Chinese government toward India changed the Indian nationals in Tibet faced vexatious treatment and along the Indo-Tibet frontier a more aggressive policy was adopted by China. The temperature there had been rising gradually ever since large Chinese forces had occupied Central and Western Tibet in 1951 and had sent patrols along every mile of the Indian border.<sup>163</sup> Both India and China agree that their boundary is a traditional one; but the Chinese contend that, although the line claimed by them had been formed through thousands of years of history, it could not be based on any abstract geographical principle. The line adopted different

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<sup>160</sup> Thomas H. Holdich, *Political Frontiers and Boundary Making*, London, Macmillan and Co., Limited, 1916, p. 147.

<sup>161</sup> Gondker Narayana Rao, *The India-China Border A Reappraisal*, Bombay, Asian Publishing House, 1968, pp. 6-9.

<sup>162</sup> Bhasin, *Nehru Tibet and China*, p. 186.

<sup>163</sup> Richardson, *Tibet and its History*, p. 224.

geographical principles in differed situations. The Indian side had challenged the basis of such an argument and held that in mountainous areas, which were unaffected by political changes, national boundaries tended to follow the watershed line of the mountain ranges. The dispute in the entire frontier between India-China largely centered round the determination of the particular line of mountains which acted as the natural and traditional boundary.<sup>164</sup>

In 1899 the British Indian Government conveyed formally to the Chinese Government a description of the frontier between Kashmir and Sinkiang as running along the Kuen Lun Mountains as had shown on Indian Survey maps for many years. It is not proposed to examine the Indian frontier, westward of the point, with the Chinese province of Sinkiang but only the Indo-Tibetan frontier of which that point marks the north-west corner. From there the boundary between Ladakh and Tibet runs roughly southward in a traditional line dating back to the seventeenth century and confirmed in the Tibet-Ladakh Treaty of 1842.<sup>165</sup> Between 1846 and 1864, the Ladakh-Tibet boundary was visited by a number of British officials, and valuable data were collected regarding the location of the customary boundary. Among the accounts of early travelers, those of Desideri (1715-16) and Fraser (1820) are certainly of great value both as evidence which is in agreement with facts already known as providing a basis against which the credibility of later evidence could be tested.<sup>166</sup> In its northern sector it passes through high, uninhabited country as far as the Lanak La which is a well-established frontier point between Ladakh and Tibet confirmed by travelers from William Moorcroft in 1820 onwards. Both the Indian and Chinese authorities ever had a close detailed knowledge of the frontier in that little-visited desert north of the Lanak La, known as the Aksai Chin. The Kashmir authorities also never exercised any active jurisdiction in this region. The frontier line in general had never been subject to dispute with the Tibetan Government.<sup>167</sup> In the south of Ladakh and up to the tri-junction of Nepal, India and Tibet, there was little difference between the Indian and the Chinese alignment of the boundary and the high watershed of the Himalayas was taken as the frontier between India-China.<sup>168</sup>

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<sup>164</sup> Rao, *The India-China Border*, p. 5.

<sup>165</sup> Richardson, *Tibet and its History*, pp. 224-225.

<sup>166</sup> Rao, *The India-China Border*, pp. 24-25.

<sup>167</sup> Richardson, *Tibet and its History*, p. 225.

<sup>168</sup> Mullik, *My Years With Nehru*, p. 92.

The entire Ladakh area became a part of the Jammu & Kashmir State as a result of a treaty signed in 1842 on behalf of Maharaja Gulab Singh on the one side and the Lama Gurusahib of Lhasa and the representative of the Emperor of China on the other. Ever since then this area has been a part of the Jammu & Kashmir State. Various attempts at demarcating the boundary between J&K State and Tibet were made subsequently by British officers. The Chinese Government was asked to send their representatives to cooperate in this work. They did not take part. The Chinese Commissioner, however, stated on the 13<sup>th</sup> January 1847 that “I beg to observe that the borders of these territories have been sufficiently and distinctly fixed so that it would be best to adhere to this ancient arrangement, and it will prove far more convenient to abstain from any additional measures for fixing them.” The British officers were also broadly of the same opinion. Although no actual demarcation was made on the ground, maps were prepared on the basis of old usage and convention. These maps have been used in India for the last hundred years or so. They include the Aksai Chin region. The exact boundaries of the Aksai Chin region have, however, not been clearly stated and occasionally questions have been raised about the exact location of the boundary.<sup>169</sup>

So far as the NEFA area was concerned, the Indian records showed quite clearly that the Ahom Kings had exercised effective administrative jurisdiction over these areas and the tribes inhabiting them, with whom they had treaty relations. The British inherited this position and maintained the various treaty relations. They did not bother to extend effective criminal and revenue administration into these tribal areas. So long as the tribals of NEFA did not carry on depredations on the settled areas of Assam, the British were satisfied and found no need to extend their regular criminal and revenue administration into these territories which were extremely difficult of access and not particularly healthy and yielded little revenue.<sup>170</sup> In the early twentieth century Chinese policy in Tibet underwent a radical change. Already influenced by the pressure of an increasing population, alarmed at the expansion of Russian and British influence, and disturbed by the growing strength of the 13<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama, who, after China’s defeat by Japan in 1895, began to dream of an independent Tibetan state, the Manchu dynasty in the last few years of its existence initiated a policy of incorporating Tibet into the Chinese provincial structure and converting it into a field for Chinese settlement. It was this policy, the execution of which was entrusted to Chao Erh-feng, which really marks the beginning of the Sino-Indian boundary question in the Assam

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<sup>169</sup> New Delhi, NMML, Jawaharlal Nehru Papers, File No. 689-PT-2, p. 292.

<sup>170</sup> Mullik, *My Years With Nehru*, p. 93.



Himalaya.<sup>171</sup> Hence, the British India Government changed its policy towards NEFA region. The British Officers in the northern frontier of Assam began to explore in the tribal's territories to establish British administration control in the region.

Prior to India's independence in mid-1940s Chinese Government protested the British authorities in India that alleged operations of certain Indian military units under the command of British officers at the end of 1943 and in February 1946 in various border localities, which it is intimated are in Chinese territory in the Province of Sikang. These units have infringed Chinese territorial rights and have arbitrarily set up boundary marks and constructed barracks, disregarding the protests of the local officials. The reason given for this intervention on the part of the Chinese Government is their anxiety, in consonance with the traditional friendly relations between China and Great Britain, to maintain the present position in respect of the boundaries between Tibet, Sikang, Yunnan, India, and Burma.<sup>172</sup> The Government of India replied to the Chinese Government that the only activities in which GOI have been engaged in the area in question have been entirely restricted to the area in question have been entirely restricted to the Indian side of the boundary between India and Tibet.<sup>173</sup>

In 8 June, 1947 the Ambassador, Indian Embassy, Nanking, dispatch a letter to the Secretary of the GOI, and pointed that China is evidently trying hard to consolidate her position in the South; and this development makes it more than even necessary for India to watch her North East Frontier with unremitting vigilance.<sup>174</sup> The Chinese territorial claims on India, Burma and Tibet was reported in the Tibetan Intelligence Report dated 24 February, 1947 that "the accompanying map illustrates Chinese claims on Tibet, North East India and Burma according to what appears to be an authoritative Chinese map:<sup>175</sup>

1. The claims on India relate largely to the Sadiya, Balipara and Tirap Frontier Tracts, large portions of which are shown as lying in the new Chinese Provinces of Sikang.

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<sup>171</sup> Alastair Lamb, *The China-India Border the origins of the disputed Boundaries*, London, Oxford University Press, 1964, pp. 30-31.

<sup>172</sup> Itanagar, Arunachal Pradesh State Archive, GOI, NEFA Secretariat, NEFA Administration Record Branch, Confidential, Secret, File No. A.1/47, 1947, p. 12.

<sup>173</sup> Itanagar, Arunachal Pradesh State Archive, GOI, NEFA Secretariat, NEFA Administration Record Branch, Confidential, Secret, File No. A.1/47, 1947, From the Secretary to the Govt. of India, in the External Affairs Department, to the Ambassador for India, Nanking, dated New Delhi 3, the 18 March 1947, p. 61.

<sup>174</sup> Itanagar, Arunachal Pradesh State Archive, GOI, NEFA Secretariat, NEFA Administration Record Branch, Confidential, Secret, File No. A.1/47, 1947, p. 59.

<sup>175</sup> Itanagar, Arunachal Pradesh State Archive, GOI, NEFA Secretariat, NEFA Administration Record Branch, Confidential, Secret, File No. A.1/47, 1947, General Intelligence Officer, Assam, E.T.D. Lambert, Tibetan Intelligence Report, No.4/47, p. 53.

2. The Chinese boundary with Assam follows roughly the foothills of the Himalayas.
3. It will be noticed also that portion of Assam and Bhutan have been included in Tibet.

India shared a long frontier with Tibet since long period of time and flow of trade from some strategic point continued over centuries. The large-scale defense measures were unnecessary and only a few widely-scattered police posts, at some distance from the border, watched the peaceful traffic. After the establishment of the Communist power in China naturally caused anxiety to the government, the army, and the people of India. That anxiety was reflected early in 1951 by a report that the Chinese had occupied territory of India in the Himalaya. The new situation called for new precautions and it appears that very soon advance posts of border police were established at many points on or as near as possible to the frontier along its whole length, and the strength of the Indian Army Escorts in Yatung and Gyantse was increased.<sup>176</sup> In 1959 New Delhi's approach at this time was the fact that the first reconnaissance party to the Aksai Chin in Ladakh and preliminary intelligence reports regarding Chinese road-building activity had reached the Indian Government between October 1957 and February 1958 was not sent until the middle of 1959 and then only after informing the Chinese government. The latter responded by arresting and detaining India patrols for a whole month during which confessions were sought to be extorted from them. Nehru's anxiety not to annoy Peking may also be manifest in his steadfast refusal to encourage the Dalai Lama to engage in any political activity on Indian soil. This gave much-needed ammunition to his political adversaries who accused him of leaning over backwards to appease China.<sup>177</sup>

On the 7 August 1959, an armed Chinese patrol entered Indian territory by crossing the border at Khinzemane in the Kameng Frontier Division of NEFA. They pushed back Indian patrol, which was greatly out-numbered, a mile or two to a small bridge at Drokung Samba. Later the Chinese detachment withdrew. On the 14 August another Chinese patrol tried to out-flank Khinzemane, but did not succeed and withdrew.<sup>178</sup> Chinese troops in superior numbers after camping within their own territory at Chasung Sumba map reference MJ7830 from evening 23 August opened fire on Indian forward frontier picket between Longju MJ8025 and Migyitun

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<sup>176</sup> Richardson, *Tibet and its History*, p. 227.

<sup>177</sup> Parshotam Mehra, *The McMahon Line and After A Study of the Triangular Contest on India's North-eastern Frontier Between Britain, China and Tibet, 1904-47*, London, Macmillan Press Limited, 1974, p. 471.

<sup>178</sup> New Delhi, NMML, Jawaharlal Nehru Papers, File No. 689-PT-2, p. 291.

MJ7929 at 0430 hours 25 August. Chinese were first to open fire. Message originated at 0700 hours reported firing still continuing. Assam Rifles standing firm and main position at Longju itself still intact and in wireless contact but 11 riflemen with their N.C.O. captured by Chinese in initial attack. Earlier and unidentified aircraft had flown over Limeking M08292 and Taksing M05089 on 22<sup>nd</sup> August and returned towards Tibet. After capture of one section remaining Assam Rifles strength at Longju is approximately 25 and has requested immediate reinforcement to save main position at Longju itself. Indian Army also requested for para-troop reinforcements to show Chinese that we mean business in standing firm at frontier.<sup>179</sup>

On 28 August, 1959 the boundary dispute between India-China erupted. On that day Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru disclosed in Parliament that ‘on 25<sup>th</sup> August, that is three days ago, a strong Chinese detachment crossed into our territory in the Subansiri Frontier Division at a place at a south of Migyitun and opened fire... they were in some hundreds, 200 or 300 or, may be, even more’. They surrounded a forward Indian picket consisting of twelve men and captured them. Eight of them escaped and returned to the out-post at Longju which itself was surrounded and taken over. The entire border of Arunachal Pradesh was placed ‘directly under our military authorities’.<sup>180</sup> The Indian Foreign Secretary pointed out that “the GOI attach importance to the maintenance of good relations and friendship with China and have always been anxious to do so. It can be attribute the present truculent mood of the Chinese authorities to their resentment at India giving asylum to the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan refugees. Under international usage India could not refuse such asylum. There is no slightest truth in the Chinese allegations that recent disturbances in Tibet were directed from Kalimpong or the GOI is in some unexplained way responsible for these happenings. Under the Sino-Indian Agreement of 1954 India Trade Agencies in Tibet are entitled to certain facilities. These have been denied by and large. What is even more serious, the Chiense have launched on active policy of violation of international frontier and intrusion into our territory.”<sup>181</sup>

There is a large area in eastern and north-eastern Ladakh which is practically uninhabited. It is mountainous, and even the valleys are at a high altitude generally exceeding

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<sup>179</sup> New Delhi, NMML, Jawaharlal Nehru Papers, File No. 689-PT-2, Telegram CCB No.11109 dated 25/8/59 from Adga, Shillong, to Foreign, New Delhi, p. 187.

<sup>180</sup> Noorani, *India-China Boundary Problem*, p. xiii.

<sup>181</sup> New Delhi, NMML, Jawaharlal Nehru Papers, File No. 689-PT-2, pp. 288-289.

13,000 feet. To some extent, shepherds use it during the summer months for grazing purpose. The Government of India have some police check-posts near this northern border of India. Some reports reached India that a Chinese detachment had crossed the international frontier in this area and had come a few miles within Indian territory. The attention of the Chinese government was drawn to this and they were asked to desist from entering Indian territory. Thereafter, at the end of July 1959, a small Indian reconnaissance police party was sent to a place called Khurnak fort near the frontier. This party consisting then of an officer and five others was apprehended by stronger Chinese detachment near the border. It appeared that the Chinese had established a camp at a place called Spanggur. On learning this, a protest was immediately lodged with the Chinese government of violation of Indian frontier and the release of reconnaissance party. This party was released later on August 18, but in reply, the Chinese claimed that part of the territory was theirs.<sup>182</sup> Tibet being a vast table-land with less difficult terrain, this natural advantage makes it easier for the Chinese to develop means of communication more speedily. By 1960 already western Tibet is linked with Sinking in the north and Lhasa in the east by motorable roads. Another irregular motor road from Gargunsa to Nagchukha via Napuk, Garge and Kungjen passing through Changtha-ng (Country beyond Kailash range) is said to be more or less open to traffic. It is said that the Chinese have surveyed some other feeder roads from Rudok/Tashigang side towards Ladakh border as also one from Barkha plains to Tholing via Gyanima. Due to uncertain trade prospects in western Tibet during 1960, Indian traders particularly from Himachal Pradesh, Punjab and Ladakh did not visit western Tibet in usual numbers. Even U.P. traders went up very late and carried comparatively less stock of goods.<sup>183</sup>

In 1960, the trade at Gyanima, Tarchen and Taklakot was good where Indian traders were able to dispose off their last year's stocks at good margin of profit and procured sufficient wool as several batches of Dokpas (peasant traders) visited these trade marts. The total volume of trade was, however, considerably less, say, half of the past average. This decrease in volume of trade may be attributed to the following reasons:-<sup>184</sup>

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<sup>182</sup> New Delhi, NMML, Jawaharlal Nehru Papers, File No. 689-PT-1, p. 135-136.

<sup>183</sup> NAI, GOI, MEA, R&I Section, Secret, File No. 6/33/60, Vol. II, 1960, From A.K. Bakshi, India Trade Agent, Gartok, to The Political Officer in Sikkim, dated camp New Delhi, the 30 November, 1960, p. 3.

<sup>184</sup> NAI, GOI, MEA, R&I Section, Secret, File No. 6/33/60, Vol. II, 1960, p. 4.

1. Due to uncertain trade prospects, and unsettled conditions, many Indian traders avoided visit to western Tibet, and those who took a chance carried very little goods.
2. Our executive ban on the export of certain articles of military value, for which there was quite a demand both from Chinese and Tibetan people, affected volume of exports to western Tibet.
3. Official interference in free trade was another reason for decrease in volume of trade.
4. Direct supplies of wool and borax to the maintain land and import of several articles of daily use to western Tibet, where the Chinese have opened cheap shops at Gartok, Gargunsa, Rudok and Taklakot has also limited the scope of Indian trade. It may be mentioned here that scope of Chinese and their Tibetan employees used to make lot of purchase from Indian shops but now all their requirements are being met by the Chinese shop, where they have introduced a coupon system. Possibly under instructions, these people now avoid visiting Indian shops.

In his letter to Nehru on 8 September, 1959 Chou En-lai has pointed out that “the Sino-Indian boundary has never been formally delimited.”<sup>185</sup> Nehru in his reply writes that “when our countries signed the 1954 Agreement in regard to the Tibet region I hoped that the main problems which history had bequeathed to us in the relations between India and China had been peacefully and finally settled. Five years later, you have now brought forward, with all insistence, a problem which dwarfs in importance all that we have discussed in recent years and, I thought, settled. I appreciate your statement that China looks upon her south-western border as a border of peace and friendship. This hope and this promise could be fulfilled only in China would not bring within the scope of what should essentially be a border dispute, claims to thousands of square miles of territory which have been and are integral part of the territory of India.”<sup>186</sup> Chinese Foreign Minister Chen Yi stated that “The Sino-Indian boundary question was left over by history. It is extremely complicated because of the historical background of British aggression against China. It takes time and adequate prior preparation for its overall settlement. The Chinese Government, while actively seeking a solution fair and reasonable to both sides, has adopted a realistic attitude and stands for the maintenance of the long-existing status quo of the boundary by both sides. China had never recognised and would never recognise ‘the illegal

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<sup>185</sup> Documents on the Sino-Indian Boundary Question, Peking, Foreign Language Press, 1962, p. 3.

<sup>186</sup> Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru, Vol.52, Second Series, September 1959, New Delhi, JNMF, 2014, p. 231.

McMahon Line'. In regard to western sector of the Sino-Indian border he said that China had always strictly abided by the traditional customary line, and as regards the eastern sector Chinese troops had never crossed the so-called McMahon Line." He went on to comment, "Prime Minister Nehru said that the Indian Government always tried to steer a middle course. As matter of fact to put it more frankly the Indian Government has always used two-faced tactics."<sup>187</sup>

To avert clashes in future and help improve a fast deteriorating situation Chinese Premier Chou En-lai proposed that "the armed forces of China and India should withdraw 20 kilometers at once from the so-called McMahon Line in the east, and from the line upto which each side exercises actual control in the west and that the two sides undertake to refrain from again sending their armed personnel to be stationed in and patrol the zones from which they have evacuated their armed forces." Peking also put forth the view that, in order to discuss the boundary question further, the two Prime Ministers 'hold talks' in the immediate future. New Delhi's response was cold and skeptical because in October 1959, had intervened a gruesome clash in the Chang Chenmo valley in Ladakh.<sup>188</sup> In line with consistent stand for a peaceful settlement of the Sino-Indian boundary question, the Chinese Government hopes that the Indian Government now solemnly puts forward the following three proposals:<sup>189</sup>

1. Both parties affirm that Sino-Indian boundary question must be settled peacefully through negotiations. Pending a peaceful settlement, the Chinese Government hopes that the Indian Government will agree that both parties respect the line of actual control between the two sides along the entire Sino-Indian border, and the armed forces of each side withdraw 20 kilometers from the line and disengage.
2. Provided that the Indian Government agrees to the above proposal, the Chinese Government is willing, through consultation between the two parties, to withdraw its frontier guards in the eastern sector of the border to the north of the line of actual control; at the same time, both China and India undertake not to cross the line of actual control. i.e., the traditional customary line, in the middle and the western sectors of the border. Matters relating to the disengagement of the armed forces of the two parties and the cessation of armed conflict shall be negotiated by officials designated by the Chinese and Indian Government respectively.

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<sup>187</sup> NAI, GOI, MEA, R&I, File No. 6/14/R&I/59, 1959, p. 80.

<sup>188</sup> Mehra, *The McMahon Line and After*, pp. 471-472.

<sup>189</sup> Documents on the Sino-Indian Boundary Question, Peking, Foreign Language Press, 1962, pp. 4-5.

3. The Chinese Government considers that, in order to seek a friendly settlement of the Sino-Indian boundary question, talks should be held once again by the Prime Ministers of China and India. At a time considered to be appropriate by both parties, the Chinese Government would welcome the Indian Prime Minister to Peking; if this should be inconvenient to the Indian Government, the Chinese Premier would be ready to go to Delhi for talks.

According to the report of A. K. Bakshi, Indian Trade Agent, Gartok, dated 30 November, 1960 it can be observed that the PLA was at better position in 1960 at western Tibet close to Indian border. Bakshi reported that “the main concentration of Chinese troops is reported to be in Changthang area (country beyond Kailash range) and around Konggyu lake (near Nepal border). During the Chinese offensive against Khampas in June/July last, Indian traders claimed to have seen hundreds of trucks passing to and fro in western Tibet. However, there was not more than 300 soldiers permanently stationed at Taklakot (where a piggery has also been attached to their mess), platoon strength at Bungdu (Barkha plains) and others at Tholing, Khojernath and other villages. The main army headquarters in western Tibet is supposed to be at Gargunsa, where the military fort with a moat around, covering an area of over one square mile. Other important military stations are at Rudok and Tashigang opposite Demchok sector near Ladakh. There was regular army posted at Gartok, the summer capital of western Tibet and many batches of the Chinese soldiers are reported to have been dispersed in various villages throughout western Tibet. However, there was no indication of a massive Chinese build-up anywhere near Indian U.P. borders. The Chinese have much better communication facilities as compared to Indian border areas. They have several wireless stations with R/T facilities and their military trucks can run right from Sinkiang in the north to Lhasa in the east via Gartok. These are three tons trucks with double rear wheels of Russian and Chinese makes (145 H.P.). Most of the Chinese soldiers were at their teens and twenties and equipped with automatic weapons like Sub-machine Guns etc., their uniforms were quite shabby full of several ugly patches.”<sup>190</sup> The National Defence expenditure of the PRC in the year 1958 was 5,000 Million Yuans.<sup>191</sup>

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<sup>190</sup> NAI, GOI, MEA, R&I Section, Secret, File No. 6/33/60, Vol. II, 1960, p. 14.

<sup>191</sup> NAI, GOI, MEA, R&I, File No.6/14/R&I/59, 1959, p. 33.

Chou's response to Nehru's proposals was argumentative. He reiterated his earlier view that the withdrawal of armed forces by the two sides to a depth of 20 kilometers would thoroughly eliminate the risk of border clashes but was prepared to apply to the whole frontier the Indian proposals (specially made vis-à-vis Longju) about the non-stationing of armed forces in disputed places, as also to ban on armed patrols from the frontier outposts. After furnishing what he called 'eloquent proof' that the Aksai Chin area had always been under Chinese jurisdiction, Chou turned his attention to the eastern frontier and recalled that up to now his government had made no demand in regard to the area south of the so-called McMahon Line, either as a pre-condition or an interim measure. In this context he emphasized that up to the 1938 edition of the Survey of India maps, the delineation of the eastern section of the boundary 'still correspondence' to what was shown on Chinese map.<sup>192</sup> The PRC replying on 26 December, 1959 to the Indian Prime Minister's letter of the 26 September and the Ministry of External Affairs Note of November 4<sup>th</sup> pointed out that "it was asserted that whatever be the views of the two sides about any specific matter concerning the boundary, there should no longer be any difference of opinion about the most basic fact 'known to the whole world', that the entire boundary between the two countries had never been delimited and was yet to be settled through negotiations. The letter expressed the hope that the meeting between the two Prime Ministers would reach agreement on principles and repeated the earlier Chinese proposals that pending the formal delimitation of the boundary the armed forces on both sides should withdraw twenty kilometers and as a preliminary measure stop patrolling the entire border."<sup>193</sup>

In April, 1960 New Delhi invited Chou En-lai for a summit meeting on the border question. On 9 March the Dalai Lama appealed to the world not to forget the fight of Tibet, a small but independent country occupied by force and by a fanatic and expansionist power. Three days later a senior Jana Sangh leader urged the Prime Minister to 'not compromise the sentiments of hundreds of millions of his countrymen, and to take all necessary steps against further encroachment by the Chinese.' For two days Nehru and Chou traded charges and counter-charges. If the Indian insisted that the Himalaya had long been considered his country's natural as well as demographic frontier, then the Chinese dismissed the McMahon Line as pernicious legacy of imperialism. Chou suggested that they try to seek a solution rather than

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<sup>192</sup> Mehra, *The McMahon Line and After*, p. 473.

<sup>193</sup> NAI, GOI, MEA, R&I, File No. 6/14/R&I/59, 1959, Embassy of India in China, Peking, Political Report for the month of December, p. 107.



repeat arguments. A suitable settlement, in his view, would be that ‘neither side should put forward claims to an area which is no longer under its administrative control.’<sup>194</sup> The talks, however, did not resolve the differences that had arisen and the two Prime Ministers decided that officials of the two Governments should examine the factual materials in the possession of the two Governments in support of their stands.<sup>195</sup>

The two Prime Ministers, therefore, agreed that officials of the two Governments should meet and examine, check and study all historical documents, records, accounts, maps and other material relevant to the boundary question, on which each side relied in support of its stand, and draw up a report for submission to the Governments. This report would list the points on which there was agreement and the points on which there was disagreement or which should be examined more fully and clarified. This report should prove helpful towards further consideration of these problems by the two Governments. It was further agreed that the official should meet from June to September, 1960, alternately in the capitals of the two countries. As a result of the discussions at the second and the third meetings, the following tentative pattern for the agenda had already become the basis for the discussion:<sup>196</sup>

1. Location and the Natural Features of the Sino-Indian boundary. Basis in Treaties and Agreements.
2. Basis in Tradition and Custom.
3. Basis in Administrative and jurisdiction.
4. Miscellaneous.

After Chou En-lai visit, in spite of rumours of Chinese troop concentrations, no overt action against India’s frontiers appears to have taken place. The Chinese Government turned their efforts upon frontier settlements with the Governments of Burma and Nepal in which they were anxious to appear reasonable and accommodating in order to suggest that on the issue of the Indian frontier, the Indian Government was being un-necessarily difficult.<sup>197</sup> In October 1960, Chou further explained the Chinese position to the American journalist and old friend of

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<sup>194</sup> Ramachandra Guha, *India After Gandhi The History of the World’s Largest Democracy*, London, Macmillan, 2007, pp. 215-218.

<sup>195</sup> New Delhi, MEA, GOI, Reports of the Officials of the Governments of India and the People’s Republic of China on the Boundary Question, p. 1.

<sup>196</sup> New Delhi, MEA, GOI, Reports of the Officials of the Governments of India and the People’s Republic of China on the Boundary Question, pp. 1-12.

<sup>197</sup> Richardson, *The McMahon Line and After*, p. 234.

China, Edgar Snow. Chou claimed that the boundary issue only came to the fore after the Dalai Lama had run away, and drew the somewhat far-fetched conclusion. The Indian side is using the Sino-Indian boundary question as a card against the progressive forces at home and as capital for obtaining foreign aid.<sup>198</sup>

## India-China War

India's desire to forge amicable ties with the PRC was overshadowed by the dispute over Tibet and the border. China refused to recognize the border between the two countries and held India responsible for continuing the imperialist legacy. The Indian Government inherited the entire Himalayan border based on the traditional border of British rule and based on this; India plans its foreign policy towards its northern neighbour. The indeterminate attitude of both governments created further gaps in their diplomatic relations in 1950s. Considering this changes that have occurred between India and China following the end of imperialism, conflict was unavoidable.

By the end of 1961 China had started a large-scale militarization programme in Tibet, and by the middle of 1962 India had established more than 40 forward military positions in Ladakh.<sup>199</sup> Neville Maxwell argued that the India's forward policy in the Himalayan frontier can be traced back to the beginning of 1960; but it was not really put into effect until the end of 1961. The long delay between the adoption of the forward policy and the first attempts to implement it reflected the Army's unwillingness to undertake a course for which the military means were wholly lacking.<sup>200</sup> B. M. Kaul writes in his book *'The Untold Story'* that "Nehru sent for me more than once during this period to discuss the problems of border. I told him the Armed Forces had not been strengthened by Government, despite repeated representations from Service Headquarters over a number of years and so were now not in a position to deal with the Chinese effectively. Nehru never relished this argument."<sup>201</sup>

In NEFA, operation 'Onkar' had been introduced in 1960. According to this plan, there was to be a large expansion of the Assam Rifles and units were to be posted all along the frontier and also in areas not occupied till then. But this expansion of the Assam Rifles naturally

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<sup>198</sup> William van Kemenade, 'China-India Relations: Tibet in the 1950s and the Border Issue,' *Détente Between China and India The Delicate Balance of Geopolitics in Asia*, Clingendael Institute, 2008, pp. 31-54, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep05421.5> accessed on 27.6.2024.

<sup>199</sup> Kemenade, *China-India Relations*, p. 40.

<sup>200</sup> Neville Maxwell, *India's China War*, Dehra Dun, Natraj Publishers, 2015 [Revised & Updated], p. 221.

<sup>201</sup> B. M. Kaul, *The Untold Story*, Bombay, Allied Publishers, 1967, p. 279.

took some time and it was not till the end of 1961 that new units started becoming available. In the meantime, the 4<sup>th</sup> Division had been sent to North Assam and had established its Headquarters at Tezpur. This Division had a Brigade at Tawang with a Battalion each at Tawang, Dirang and Bomdila.<sup>202</sup> In 1953 the re-organization of Assam Rifles was sanctioned by the Government of India. The North and the North Eastern Border Defence Committee recommended inter-alia that, in order to strengthen the defence of the northern border, each Assam Rifles battalion should have two or three well defended bases, sited at strategic places on the main lines of approach to Assam.<sup>203</sup>

In the western sector the battalion 1/8 Gorkha Rifles was deployed during the summer of 1961, the strength of India in this sector of the boundary was three battalions (of which two were militia), without any supporting arms, under a brigade headquarters based at Leh. The Government's pressure for forward moves has been resisted by the commands concerned, who were unwilling to send troops where they could not be supplied or supported. The transportation of supply remained challenging in western sector. The Indian road had not even reached Leh and the Chinese had pushed feeder roads up to their westernmost posts because of the relatively easy terrain compare to Indian side of area. The Chinese also had a advantages of plentiful labour and road-building equipment. In New Delhi this intensified Chinese activity on Aksai Chin was seen as a provocative and possibly menacing development.<sup>204</sup> In the eastern sector the Indian Government faced similar situation due to the lack of a road network further curtailed the Indian State's capacity to impose law and order.<sup>205</sup>

Lt Gen B.M. Kaul said in the interview that after Chinese incursion in 1960 the "Government began taking a little more seriously and, in the process, came into being the Border Roads Development Board under the chairmanship of Prime Minister Nehru. Its Deputy Chairman was Defence Minister Krishna Menon and its members included the Cabinet, Foreign, Defence and Transport Secretaries and the Army and the Air Chiefs. I was appointed by Nehru, in my personal capacity, to coordinate the activities of this Border Roads Board both at the centre and in the different States of India. In the first meeting which was held in the Prime

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<sup>202</sup> Mullik, *My Years With Nehru*, pp. 223-224.

<sup>203</sup> NAI, GOI, MEA, N.E.F. Branch, Secret, File No. N/53/4111/105, 1953, p. 29.

<sup>204</sup> Maxwell, *India's China War*, pp. 227-228.

<sup>205</sup> Guyot-Réchart, *Shadow States*, p. 110.

Minister Nehru's residence on the 29<sup>th</sup> of March, 1960, Nehru stated at the outset that speed was the essence of our problems and that it was necessary to lay down priorities of work so that essential roads could commence forthwith. He considered Ladakh and NEFA deserved our attention most. It was agreed to plan these roads carefully, procure the necessary equipment, labour force, material and the supervisory staff at the earliest. Nehru at that time asked as to be the estimate of the cost of this project which I told him would be in the region of approximately Rs.200 crores. Roughly, the problem was to build nearly 4000 miles of roads either newly or to be repaired in mountainous terrain, along our border, and the cost worked out roughly to about rupees four lakhs per mile. All sorts of difficulties were visualized by some at the meeting in this project but I undertook to take up this task."<sup>206</sup>

Bérénice Guyot-Réchard argues that "to say Indian forces were unprepared is an understatement. On both the eastern and the western fronts, their positions were thinly spread and often small, only one platoon in some cases. The soldiers who manned them lacked equipment and had but summer clothing to protect them against the onset of Himalayan winter. Nor could clothes or weapons be delivered easily, given the lack of roads between forward posts and their supply base. Yet they were facing PLA troops who had benefited from a comprehensive programme of reorganization and modernization since 1950."<sup>207</sup> Lt. Gen B.M. Kaul during his interview with A.K.Gupta and S.R. Bakshi, dated 13 January 1972, pointed out that "another problem that used to face our country in those days acutely was the absence of communications on our borders from Kashmir on the one side, through U.P., Nepal, Bhutan, Sikkim and the NEFA. In 1960 for instance the Army started building roads essential for the defence of India in light earnest. It was, however, lagging behind in their schedule because of financial hurdles and cumbersome procedures, lack of machinery, equipment, inadequate supervisory staff, but, I think, above all, lack of enthusiasm and drive on the part of many functionaries. They treated these roads as just another set of roads and not as vital roads on our border. By that year, the Chinese intrusions into our territory had increased."<sup>208</sup>

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<sup>206</sup> New Delhi, NMML, Oral History Transcript, File No. Acc.No. 93, Interviewer Dr. A.K. Gupta & Dr. S.R. Bakshi, dated 13 January 1972, pp. 93-94.

<sup>207</sup> Guyot-Réchard, *Shadow States*, p. 233.

<sup>208</sup> New Delhi, NMML, Oral History Transcript, File No. Acc.No. 93, p. 93.

India's chief-of-staff, General K.S. Thimayya was fully aware of India's military weakness and had been struggling with India's Minister of Defence V.K. Krishna Menon for years over border defences and appointments at key commands. After his retirement Thimayya in July 1962 warned at a symposium in Delhi that China's present strength in manpower, equipment and aircraft exceeds our resources one hundredfold with the full support of the USSR and we could never hope to match China in the foreseeable future. He further added that the present strength of the army and air forces of India are even below the minimum insurance we can give to our people.<sup>209</sup> Brigadier J.P. Dalvi writes that "to hide our military weakness and lack of preparations, which was inconsistent with our tough and seemingly inflexible political postures, we used various, devious methods... In October 1962 Indians were shocked beyond words to discover that we had no modern rifles, although we were supposed to be ready to 'manufacture' an aircraft; and had the know-how to make an atom-bomb."<sup>210</sup> The statistics of the ordnance factories production of India is given in the table:

Table 5.6: Ordnance Factories Production in India.

|                                                                                                                                                   | 1956-57 | 1957-58 | 1958-59 | 1959-60                                                                         | 1960-61 | 1961-62 | 1962-63<br>(Estimated) |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|---------|------------------------|
| In Crores of rupees                                                                                                                               |         |         |         |                                                                                 |         |         |                        |
| Issues to Army                                                                                                                                    | 8.64    | 12.78   | 14.31   | 19.94                                                                           | 24.24   | 33.27   | 60.00                  |
| Civil Orders                                                                                                                                      | 3.52    | 3.27    | 3.20    | 3.45                                                                            | 7.21    | 5.63    | 6.00                   |
| Air Force & Navy                                                                                                                                  | 1.93    | 2.03    | 2.08    | 1.75                                                                            | 1.66    | 2.55    | 4.00                   |
|                                                                                                                                                   | 14.09   | 18.08   | 19.59   | 25.14                                                                           | 33.11   | 41.45   | 70.00                  |
| Profit (Nett)                                                                                                                                     | -       | -       | -0.10   | 0.11                                                                            | 0.11    | 0.35    |                        |
| GRW MD                                                                                                                                            | -       | -       | -       | -                                                                               | 3.50    | 4.00    | 16.50                  |
| HAL                                                                                                                                               | -       | -       | -       | -                                                                               | -       | 9.90    |                        |
| BEL                                                                                                                                               | -       | -       | -       | -                                                                               | -       | 2.60    |                        |
| Shortages –<br>1. Foundry and Forgings<br>2. Electronics<br>3. Electrical (Light) Fire Control Special<br>4. Filling Factories<br>5. Fuse Factory |         |         |         | Used machines can be used saving foreign exchange<br>(specially heavy machines) |         |         |                        |

**Source:** New Delhi, NMML, JN Papers, File No. 739-PT-II, p. 160.

<sup>209</sup> Kemenade, *China-India Relations*, p. 40.

<sup>210</sup> J. P. Dalvi, *Himalayan Blunder The Curtain-raiser to the Sino-Indian War of 1962*, Bombay, Thacker & Company Limited, 1969, p. 101.

B.M. Kaul writes that “so far defence was concerned; neither Nehru nor any of his Ministers evolved a comprehensive defence policy. Nehru took little action on any matters required by the army. Menon had conveyed to Nehru his own view in the matters of defence, which happened to be different to those of the Army Brass... putting Nehru in a frame of mind which he looked sceptically towards our repeated representations to grant sufficient funds for modernizing the Army and making up its various shortages.”<sup>211</sup> Kaul further pointed that there was a general feeling in the Indian Air Force that MIG aircraft was being thrust or imposed on them by Government against their better judgement. In view the American F-104 supersonic fighter, capable of flying to a speed of about 1,500 miles per hour, had all-round performance and fighting capabilities when compared with the MIF 21.<sup>212</sup>

From July 1962, the relations between the two countries entered the crucial stage which finally triggered the conflict.<sup>213</sup> By the time the implications of the new policy had been studied and the requirements of re-inforcements in Ladakh and other frontier areas assessed, the winter of 1961-62 had far advanced and it was not possible for the Indian Army to make any important moves. But from April, army units from Daulat Beg Oldi started moving eastwards and setting up posts along the Depsang plains and the Chip Chap river valley and within a couple of miles of the Chinese posts to prevent their further penetration westwards.<sup>214</sup>

On 8 July 1962, the memorandum was given by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Peking, to the Embassy of India in China. It was mentioned that on July 6, about twenty Indian troops intruded into Sinkiang, China. China blamed that Indian Army intruded as deep as about six kilometers inside the Chinese territory in the Galwan Valley area and attempting to establish there a new base for aggression. This intrusion of Indian troops is a serious one; by seizing that places, they obviously intended to cut off the only rear route for the Chinese post locate at the lower reaches of the Galwan river and to launch an attack on the Chinese post. The Chinese Government hereby lodges the strongest protest with the Indian Government against the above-mentioned serious intrusion and provocation made by Indian troops. The Chinese Government further informed that once again that while always trying to avoid clashes with the intruding Indian troops the Chinese side will never yield before an ever deeper armed advance by India,

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<sup>211</sup> Kaul, *The Untold Story*, pp. 330-339.

<sup>212</sup> Kaul, *The Untold Story*, p. 344.

<sup>213</sup> Bhasin, *Nehru Tibet and China*, p. 286.

<sup>214</sup> Mullik, *My Years With Nehru*, p. 324.

nor will China give up its right to self-defence when unwarrantedly attacked. The Chinese Government hopes that the Indian Government will fully realize the danger involved in the aforesaid intrusion and provocation by Indian troops and withdraw at once their intruding troops from the Chinese territory. It is hardly necessary to point out that if the Indian troops should persist in her intrusion and provocation, India will be held responsible for all consequences arising therefrom.<sup>215</sup>

On 10 July, China in yet another note accused India that Indian troops have continued to intrude into China's Sinkiang and have further set up four new military strong-points on the Chinese territory. The first two strong-points are both as deep as about twelve kilometers, the third as deep as sixteenth kilometers and the fourth nearly one kilometer inside the Chinese territory. The aggressive strong-points set up by Indian troops formed a threatening encirclement of the Chinese posts. Meanwhile, the Indian side has kept sending more troops to these aggressive strong-points, constructing roads and building fortifications near the strong-points. Moreover, Indian troops have from time to time sallied out in different directions to harass and provoke Chinese frontier guard. Recently, Indian troops have also established a new military strong-point on the Sino-Indian boundary line west of the Spanggur Lake in China's Tibet. To the south west of the Kongka Pass, Indian troops have recently built a block house and trenches on the Sino-Indian boundary close to the Chinese post in the locality and have crossed the boundary to make harassment. Indian aircraft have continually acted in co-ordination with and support of Indian invasion on the ground, frequently intruding into Chinese air space and air dropping supplies to India's aggressive strong-points established within the Chinese territory.<sup>216</sup> In the note given by the Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi, to the Embassy of China in India, 12 July 1962, mentioned that the establishment of a number of new Chinese posts deep inside Indian territory. The particulars of these posts are given below:<sup>217</sup>

A. Chip Chap River Region

1. Post at 78° 08' E, 35° 28' N: This post is not only well inside Indian territory but also 2 ½ miles even beyond the claim line shown in the Chinese map of 1956.
2. Post at 78° 08' E, 35° 29.45' N: This post is 4 miles south of the international boundary in this sector.

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<sup>215</sup> New Delhi, MEA, GOI, White Paper No. VI, pp. 106-107.

<sup>216</sup> New Delhi, MEA, GOI, White Paper No. VI, pp. 108-109.

<sup>217</sup> New Delhi, MEA, GOI, White Paper No. VI, pp. 113-114.

3. Post at 78° 07' E, 35° 24' N: This post is not only well inside Indian territory but 6 miles further west from the claim line shown in the Chinese map of 1956.
4. Post at 78° 10' E, 35° 20.30' N: This post is not only well inside Indian territory but 6 miles south-west of the claim line shown in the Chinese map of 1956.
5. Post at 78° 11' E, 35° 18' N: This post is not only well inside Indian territory but also 9 miles further south-west from the nearest post on the claim line shown in the Chinese map of 1956.
6. Post at 78° 12' E, 35° 16.30' N: This post is not only well inside Indian territory but also 9 miles further south-west from the nearest point on the claim line shown in the Chinese map of 1956.
7. Post at 78° 15' E, 35° 15.30' N: This post is not only well inside Indian territory but also about 12 miles further south-west from the nearest point on the claim line shown in the Chinese map of 1956.

B. Chang Chenmo Valley Region

1. Post at 79° 02' E, 34° 17' N: This post is more than 30 miles west of the international border in this sector.

C. Spanggur Region

2. Post at 78° 50.30' E, 33° 44.30' N: This post is 12 miles beyond the international border in this sector.

Thus as many as 6 out of the 9 new Chinese posts referred to above are not only well inside Indian territory but well beyond even the boundary alignment claimed by the Government of China, in their 1956 map, about which Premier Chou En-lai wrote in his letter, dated 17 December 1959 to the Prime Minister of India that “it (the 1956 map) correctly shows the traditional boundary between the two countries.” These new Chinese posts, deep inside Indian territory, constitute further serious violations of India’s territorial integrity. Not only are Chinese forces now poised in menacing proximity to existing Indian posts in the area, but their incessant aggressive and provocative activities are increasing tension and, if not restrained, may create a clash at any moment.<sup>218</sup>

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<sup>218</sup> New Delhi, MEA, GOI, White Paper No. VI, pp. 114-115.



In the note given by Chinese on 13 July 1962 stated that the Chinese Government lodged a strongest protest on July 8, 1962, against the Indian troops flagrant intrusion on July 6, 1962, into the Galwan Valley in China Sinkiang, cutting off the route of Chinese post to its rear and making armed provocations against a Chinese patrol, and demanded that the Indian troops so as to avoid any unfortunate incident. The Indian side, however, has turned a deaf ear to Chinese Government's solemn waning and demand. Far from withdrawing its troops from Chinese territory up to now, the Indian side has actively reinforced its troops, tightened its encirclement of the Chinese post and patrol in preparation of an armed provocation at any time. The Chinese Government solemnly demands once again that the Indian troops immediately stop their provocations and threats against the Chinese frontier guards and withdraw from Chinese territory at once. As part of the whole Aksai Chin area, the lower reaches of the Galwan Valley have always been shown this area as within China.<sup>219</sup>

On 6 August 1962, the prime minister, making a statement in the Lok Sabha on the situation in the areas of Galwan and Chip Chap Valleys, said that "In recent weeks Chinese troops in superior strength have sometimes come up close to our posts with a view to harassing and intimidating them. This has happened in the Galwan Valley. Our men exercised the utmost self-restraint and exhibited exemplary courage and patience in the face of grave provocations from the Chinese forces. In the lower reaches of the Chip Chap Valley, an Indian patrol, while performing routine duties, was ambushed by Chinese forces and attacked by rifle, machine gun and mortar fire. Our men had to return fire in self defence. Two members of the Indian patrol were wounded, one slightly, in this incident. Another incident occurred in the Pangong area. Despite the provocation, our forces did not return the Chinese fire there." Nehru further said that "the recent increase of tension in the Ladakh region has been the direct result of intensified Chinese military activity which is inconsistent with the Chinese professions of their desire to settle this question by peaceful negotiations. We in India are by our background and temperament peaceful by nature. We earnestly believe in settlement of differences by peaceful discussions and negotiations."<sup>220</sup> The Galwan valley appeared on Army HQ's maps as one of the best routes along which troops could move into Chinese-held territory.<sup>221</sup>

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<sup>219</sup> New Delhi, MEA, GOI, White Paper No. VI, pp. 115-117.

<sup>220</sup> Madhavan K. Palat (ed.), *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru*, Vol.78, Second Series, New Delhi, JNMF, 2018, p. 600.

<sup>221</sup> Maxwell, *India's China War*, p. 266.

On 22 August, India said that China had set up no less than 18 new aggressive military posts deep inside Indian territory, 10 in Chip Chap region, 2 in Galwan Valley region, 3 in Pangong-Spanggur region and in 2 in Qara Qash region. A week later, India reported another four posts which the Chinese had set up in Ladakh. On 7 September, India yet again reported that China had set up two additional posts. China claimed that India had set up six strong points in Chinese territory in the region of Sinkiang, Chip Chap Valley and Pangong-Spanggur areas.<sup>222</sup> On 28 July Prime Minister Nehru said in Uttar Pradesh that though India did not want a war with China, the situation on the northern border had worsened of late, and he, therefore, would not entirely rule out the possibility of “suddenly, by some chance”, an armed conflict breaking out between the two countries. The Prime Minister, who was addressing a joint meeting of the members of the UP Congress Committee and of the Congress Legislature Party at Moti Mahal, said that he did not mean to imply by this that “there is bound to be a conflict between India and China: but if it comes, we should be ready to face it.” Referring to the situation on the northern border, the Prime Minister said that a threat from any country would be a matter of concern to India, and, more so, when such threat came from a big country like China. The relationship between India and China had now entered a dangerous stage, he said. However, finding that we were weak in Ladakh, China occupied a portion of our land there. Actually, we were not weak. It was the terrain of this area which had created difficulties for us, and had placed us in a weaker position.<sup>223</sup>

On 16 August, Nehru told in the Rajya Sabha on the issue of the Chinese occupation of Indian territory that:<sup>224</sup>

- a) The nature of the terrain and other factors in that part of Ladakh which is at present under the unlawful occupation of China, make it difficult to give a precise estimate of the area seized by the Chinese. However, this area is about 10,000 to 12,000 square miles.
- b) Measures have been taken to stop further Chinese encroachments on Indian territory but Chinese forces have not withdrawn from positions already occupied by them.

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<sup>222</sup> Bhasin, *Nehru Tibet and China*, pp. 287-288.

<sup>223</sup> Madhavan K. Palat (ed.), *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru*, Vol.78, Second Series, New Delhi, JNMF, 2018, pp. 595-596.

<sup>224</sup> Palat (ed.), *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru*, Vol.78, Second Series, New Delhi, JNMF, 2018, p. 625.

On 22 August Nehru said in the Rajya Sabha that “now, the present position in that in the military sense we are much stronger than we were a year or two ago. We have put a certain barrier to further encroachment or aggression and we, I think, in regard to these communications and other factors, will increase our strength in the future but we do not intend to bring about a major conflict on our part.”<sup>225</sup> The position of Indian Army in the western sector was not that strong to stop the Chinese aggression at the time of war.

The situation in the eastern frontier was also not stable. On September in the Dhola (Che Dong as the Chinese call it) at the NEFA region which was considered the most strategically sensitive spot where India had built a military post in June 1962 considering it to be in Indian territory. China fiercely contested this point. Dhola was nearly sixty miles west of Tawang, in that wedge of territory which the Chief of the General Staff judged essential for the defence of India’s northern frontier in 1912. On September 8, Chinese troops infiltrated south of the Thag La. They were variably reported as numbering 300, 800, and 1200. On September 20, Chinese guns went into action against an Indian auxiliary outpost two miles east of Dhola.<sup>226</sup> B.M. Kaul writes that “Lt Gen Sen met Lt Gen Umrao Singh and Maj Gen Niranjan Pershad at Tezpur on 12 September and told them that Government had ordered that the Chinese be expelled from our territory from Dhola, south of Thag La ridge. 4 Division accordingly ordered 7 Brigade to concentrate 9 Punjab at Lumpu and be prepared to relieve Dhola Post. Lt Gen Umrao Singh, Commander 33 Corps and Maj Gen Niranjan Pershad, Commander 4 Division, however, informed Lt Gen Sen, GOC-in-C, Eastern Command that the task of clearing the Chinese south of Thag La ridge was beyond the capability of their troops. Our build-up in the Dhola area compared adversely to that of the Chinese. Our ability to reinforce due to lack of troops and roads was limited. Our troops were on restricted scales of rations, and had no reserves. Clothing was scanty for the extreme cold. We were short of ammunition and there were hardly any defence stores available. We did not have adequate fire support. When I reiterated these difficulties to Nehru, Menon and Thapar in Delhi on 11 October, a week after assuming command in NEFA, it was already too late as the Chinese attack was to come nine days later. Lt Gen Umrao Singh told Eastern Command that an attempt on our part to clear the Chinese south

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<sup>225</sup> Palat (ed.), *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru*, Vol.78, Second Series, New Delhi, JNMF, 2018, p. 631.

<sup>226</sup> Dorothy Woodman, *Himalayan Frontiers A Political Review of British, Chinese, Indian, and Russian Rivalries*, London, Barrie and Rockliff The Cresset Press, 1969, pp. 279-281.

of Thag La Ridge would amount to rashness. To produce even a semblance of the resources required for this purpose, he would have to completely uncover Towang and also withdraw troops from Nagaland. He pointed out that Towang was our vital ground and its fall into the Chinese hands would have more disastrous consequences than the fall of Dhola. This is actually what happened later.”<sup>227</sup>

On 19 September, Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi, in its note to the Embassy of China in India, where it was proposed that “the Government of India are prepared to hold further discussions at the appropriate level to define measures to restore the status quo in the Western Sector which has been altered by force in the last few years and to remove the current tensions in the area. The implementation of such measures will create a climate of confidence between the two Governments which alone can make possible constructive discussions to resolve the difference between the two Governments on the boundary question on the basis of the report of the officials.”<sup>228</sup> In a note given by MEA to the Embassy of China in India on 21 September, 1962 pointed out that on 20 September two Chinese soldiers crept up to an Indian patrol post approximately one mile east of the Dhola Indian post and threw two head-grenades injuring three Indian soldiers.<sup>229</sup> Chinese Government in its note to India on 21 September informed that on September 20, 1962 Indian troops in the Che Dong area of Tibet, China, north of the so-called McMahon Line, into which they had intruded, made a sudden armed attack on Chinese frontier sentries standing on guard west of the Che-jao bridge. An officer of the Chinese frontier guards was hit and killed and a soldier was seriously wounded. The Chinese Government demands that the India side immediately stop its attack and withdraw at once from the area of Che Dong and the Che-jao bridge. The Chinese Government reserves the right to ask for an apology and compensation from the Indian Government.<sup>230</sup>

On September 16, 1962, the Chinese Government already lodged a strong protest with the Indian Government against the Indian troops crossing the so-called McMahon Line and establishing an aggressive strongpoint at Che Dong, Le village in Tibet.<sup>231</sup> India in its note pointed that the Government of India have categorically stated in their note of 17 September that

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<sup>227</sup> Kaul, *The Untold Story*, pp. 356-357.

<sup>228</sup> New Delhi, MEA, GOI, White Paper No. VII, p. 98.

<sup>229</sup> New Delhi, MEA, GOI, White Paper No. VII, p. 104.

<sup>230</sup> New Delhi, MEA, GOI, White Paper No. VII, pp. 105-106.

<sup>231</sup> New Delhi, MEA, GOI, White Paper No. VII, Chinese Note to the Indian Embassy, 20 Sep. 1962, p. 101.

no Indian forces or defence works of any kind exist to the North of the Thagla Ridge which is the McMahon Line boundary in this region and further pointed out that the Chinese forces have intruded to the south of the line into Indian territory. The Government also rejected the Chinese claims for apology and compensation which they demanded and described it as ‘misconceived’.<sup>232</sup> By mid-1962, a confrontation in the Himalayas became inevitable between India and China, with intense dissatisfaction in both the eastern and western sectors of the border with each other’s geopolitical ambitions, eventually leading to the outbreak of war in October-November 1962.

From the morning of September 26 until the afternoon of September 27 there was exchange of fire in the vicinity of a patrol near Dhola. On September 29 the Chinese intensified their attack and our forces sustained three casualties of a minor nature. No incidents were reported until October 9. In the October 9 morning the Chinese troops used two-inch mortars, automatic weapons and grenades against India and 17 casualties was reported.<sup>233</sup> China accused India that the Indian troops had crossed the illegal McMahon Line to intrude into the Che Dong area in Tibet, after launching a frantic attack on October 10 against the Chinese frontier guards in the vicinity of Chihlung along the upper reaches of the Kechilang River, on October 11 intruded into the area of Niangpa, Tang, Jihlungpu and Keningnai, which are to the east of north of the lower reaches of the river. China further accused that aggressive Indian troops have been continually airdropped in the Changto area north of illegal McMahon Line in preparation for war. The China also pointed that if the aggression continues than China will surely continue to strike back resolutely.<sup>234</sup>

The Indian Government replied to China that the allegations in the Chinese note of firing by Indian defence forces on 28 September and 3 October, 1962, are absolutely baseless. There has been no firing on the specified dates, in the areas mentioned. On the other hand, the Government of India must once again draw the attention of the Chinese Government to the fact the both the areas referred are located well inside Indian territory. It is not the Indian but the Chinese side that is adopting the “dual policy” of professing a desire for peaceful settlement of the border question while pursuing at the same time the path of “flagrant aggression”. This is

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<sup>232</sup> New Delhi, MEA, GOI, White Paper No. VII, MEA Note to the Chinese Embassy, 25 Sep. 1962, pp. 107-108.

<sup>233</sup> G.S. Bhargava, *The Battle of NEFA The Undeclared War*, Bombay, Allied Publisher Private Limited, 1964, p. 91.

<sup>234</sup> New Delhi, MEA, GOI, White Paper No. VII, Chinese Note to the Indian Embassy, 13 Oct. 1962, pp. 139-140.

clearly established by the fact that it is China which not only committed aggression on Indian territory in the western sector of the frontier but also started last month another aggression in the north-western area of the eastern sector of the boundary. No threats of force or use of force by the Chinese will deter the Government of India from their firm determination to defend the territorial integrity of India.<sup>235</sup>

On 20 October 1962, the PLA launched massive attack on the Indian troops the war had now begun between two old friends. The Indian Army in the defending frontier found that the Chinese has cut all their telephone lines the nights before. In preparations for assault, the Chinese had also taken up positions on higher ground behind the defences and were thus able to attack downhill on the morning attack. After the Chinese artillery barrage from the Thagla Ridge overlooking the Namka Chu, the PLA destroyed all Indian artillery positions and surrounding fortifications. The Indian border posts as well as Dhola and Khenzeman were overrun by ground forces within hours, and their defenders either lay dead or were captured alive. The strength of the Chinese attacking force was estimated at 2,000 while the Indians at those outposts numbered only 600.<sup>236</sup> Lt General B.M. Kaul who was given command of the IV Corps in NEFA and he commanded the corps from his sick bed in Delhi. This senior officer was too far away from front to be any use. Complete breakdown of communication within the command hierarchy occurred.<sup>237</sup>

Brigadier J.P. Dalvi describes the situation that “Our positions at Bridges III and IV; Tsangdhar; Log and Temporary Bridges and Brigade HQ, which was some 1,000 yards from the river bank, came in for a heavy bombardment. The Chinese used 76 mm guns which were fed and fired automatically, and 120 mm mortars.” Dalvi further writes that “the bombardment lasted an hour and soon after massive infantry assaults followed. The fate of India was now in the hands of only three weak infantry companies of the Rajput Regiment and two unbalanced companies of the 9 Gorkha. At that time India had an Army of over 400,000 men but due to our stubborn refusal to think in strategic terms, only 600 men were engaged in the initial battle. This flimsy barrier was pierced with consummate ease by the powerful force which the Chinese had

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<sup>235</sup> New Delhi, MEA, GOI, White Paper No. VII, MEA Note to the Chinese Embassy, 19 Oct. 1962, pp. 146-147.

<sup>236</sup> Lintner *China's India War*, p. 89.

<sup>237</sup> Kaushik Roy, *The Armed Forces of Independent India: 1947-2006*, New Delhi, Manohar Publishers & Distributors, 2010, p. 112.

mustered, to teach India a lasting lesson.”<sup>238</sup> The PLA troops was active in the warfare in Tibet fighting against the Khampas which made them ultimately experienced army against Indian troops in the war in Himalayas.

The Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, speaking on the radio broadcast on the A.I.R. on 22 October 1962 said that “I feel, however, that I must speak to you about the grave situation that has arisen on our frontiers because of continuing and unabashed aggression by the Chinese forces. A situation has arisen which calls upon all of us to meet it effectively.” Nehru further said that “I am grieved at the setbacks to our troops that have occurred on this frontier and the reverses we have had. They were overwhelmed by vast numbers and by big artillery, mountain guns and heavy mortars which the Chinese forces have brought with them.”<sup>239</sup> After the Chinese attack on 20 October, activity across Bum-la started in real earnest. From the Indian observation posts, the Chinese could be seen openly occupying their assembly areas. The Indian Artillery was given orders not to open fire towards Chinese troops, in this case HQ Eastern Command, whose intention was not to provoke the Chinese.<sup>240</sup>

In a letter from Premier Chou En-lai to Prime Minister of India, 24 October, 1962 writes that “In order to seek a way to stop the border clashes, reopen peaceful negotiations and settle the Sino-Indian boundary question.” Chou further pointed out that “the Chinese Government has already issued statement suggesting that both parties respect the line of actual control between the two sides along the entire Sino-Indian border, and the armed forces of each side withdraw 20 kilometers from this line and disengage. And in order to seek a friendly settlement of the Sino-Indian boundary question, talks should be held once again between two Prime Ministers.”<sup>241</sup> Nehru describe his proposal as old, something which India had already rejected, and likened it to demand for surrender to which India could not agree.<sup>242</sup> On 24 October the Chinese occupied their prime target Tawang. On 28 October Nehru removed Krishna Menon, and in what amounted to abandonment of India’s non-alignment he called on Britain and the United States to provide India with arms. Between 15 and 19 November the PLA defeated Indian

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<sup>238</sup> Dalvi, *Himalayan Blunder*, pp. 364-365.

<sup>239</sup> New Delhi, NMML, Jawaharlal Nehru Papers, File No. 738 III, pp. 318-320.

<sup>240</sup> Shiv Kunal Verma, *1962 The War That Was Wasn't*, New Delhi, Aleph Book Company, 2016, p.185.

<sup>241</sup> New Delhi, Ministry of External Affairs, GOI, White Paper No. VIII, p. 8.

<sup>242</sup> Bhasin, *Nehru Tibet and China*, p. 299.

troops in all the fronts of disputed areas, followed by a unilateral Chinese ceasefire.<sup>243</sup> It was also witnessed in the NEFA during the war that “the local people were demanding arms and ammunition and to equip themselves to fight against the Chinese.”<sup>244</sup>

The defeat of India during the war had been viewed by many angles by the scholars writing on this event. Neville Maxwell has blamed the India’s forward move that triggered the clash in the Himalaya. Maxwell argued that “forward policy, as it came to be called, was not formulated in the normal processes of government. It emerged in a kind of virgin birth out of the situation in which the Indian Government found itself at the beginning of 1960.”<sup>245</sup> However, it can be observed that the Maxwell’s pro-Chinese argument on the basis of which he has proved the India’s mistakes on 1962 war had highly focused on the western sector of border. Chinese too was moving forward in the eastern sector from mid-1962 challenging India’s integrity. Alastair Lamb also showed pro-Chinese approached in his book entitled ‘The China-India Border’ (1964) where he has argued that “India did not attempt to offer the few concessions which she could in all justice have made rather than have persisted in her declarations of absolute right. This might not have solved the problem of Sino-Indian relations; but in attempting it India could hardly have been accused of appeasement.”<sup>246</sup>

It can be observed that during the 1962 War, the Chinese was the aggressors. The greedy expansionist design of their foreign policy which overtook established power like Tibet began to sustained similar policy in the India’s Himalaya frontiers on the basis of Tibet’s historical link. B.M. Kaul during his interview said that “I would say that the Chinese being aggressors, had planned this war more thoroughly than we had done. Not only did they know what they wanted, but their preparations were made in a totalitarian manner in which no procedural hurdles were placed in their way. They had pursued their objectives much more purposefully, and they were better served as far as man-power was concerned; they had better communications; they had better clothing. Also, they had a Government which aided their aims unimpeded. So they had overwhelming advantages over us, not only because of the fact that they

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<sup>243</sup> Kemenade, *China-India Relations*, p. 40.

<sup>244</sup> New Delhi, NMML, Jawaharlal Nehru Papers, File No. 740-PT-I, p. 133.

<sup>245</sup> Maxwell, *India’s China War*, p. 192.

<sup>246</sup> Lamb, *The China-India Border*, p. 176.



were aggressors, but also because they were backed up a regime which was determined to conquer that area.”<sup>247</sup>

The failure of Indian armed force during the war can be interpreted through lack of co-operation from the Government to the Army. It was not the Chinese that defeated the Indian Army but the so-called ‘senior leadership’ of the army; almost all the brigade commanders failed miserably in NEFA, as did the GOCs of 4<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division. The three ranking officers, who collectively proved to be completely at sea and failed to instil in their subordinates the confidence to stand their ground, further compounded their failure.<sup>248</sup> Kaushik Roy has pointed out that “besides logistical failure, inefficient political and military leadership were also responsible for India’s defeat.”<sup>249</sup> Gen J. N. Chaudhuri, said during his interview said that “Well, I stayed on in the Southern Command until the 19 November 1962. I had already got my retirement orders. I was to retire in March 1963 and, in fact, I was looking around for something to do. But in mid-November, 1962, Dr. Radhakrishnan, the President, came to Poona and naturally I went to receive him at the airport. When Dr Radhakrishnan saw me he knew me very well, he called me up and said: what do you think of what is happening up in NEFA, in this Sela area? What is going to happen? I said: we are going to get a beating. He asked: what makes you say that? I said: I think we are going to get a beating, because we are not properly equipped and we are not adopting the right tactics. I firmly believed this to be so.”<sup>250</sup>

On 22 November, 1962, Indian Prime Minister Nehru wrote a letter to the President of the Republic of Tunisia, Habib Bourguiba that “we have throughout tried to established our relations with the People’s Republic of China on a basis of good neighbourliness and mutual respect and have lent our support to China’s legitimate interests in the counsels of the world. China, however, has responded with deceit and treachery and has launched a massive invasion of our territory, seizing by force large areas in Assam and Ladakh. The Chinese leaders alternate their brutal aggression with spurious cease-fire proposals whose only aim is to deceive the world and to enable the aggressor to consolidate his position for further aggressive actions. While we

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<sup>247</sup> New Delhi, NMML, Oral History Transcript, File No. Acc. No. 93, Interviewer Dr. A.K. Gupta & Dr. S.R. Bakshi, dated 13 January 1972, p. 97.

<sup>248</sup> Verma, 1962 *The War*, p. 318.

<sup>249</sup> Kaushik Roy, ‘Focusing on India’s Look East Policy: India-China relationship from 1947 to 2020,’ *International Area Studies Review*, Vol. 24 (2), 2021, pp. 79-96.

<sup>250</sup> New Delhi, NMML, Oral History Transcript, File No. Acc. No. 426, General Joyanto Nath Chaudhuri (Interviewee) recorded by Shri. B.R. Nanda (Interviewer), pp. 59-60.

ardently believe in peace, we will never accept an ignominious peace or submit to impossible terms sought to be imposed on us by force.”<sup>251</sup>

It can be observed that the India's relation with China since the end of the British rule was defined by the Chinese expansionist ambitions. The approach of the Indian Government on the boundary issue was to settle through negotiations. However, the Chinese Government never accepted the traditional boundary demarcated during the British rule. Another issue that overshadowed the India-China relations was Tibet. The Tibet uprising followed by the Dalai Lama escape into India created tense atmosphere between two nations. The tension further escalated in early 1960s in the Himalayan frontiers which ultimately led to a confrontation.

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<sup>251</sup> New Delhi, NMML, Jawaharlal Nehru Papers, File No. 739-PT-III, p. 300.

## Conclusion

This PhD thesis has highlighted India's policy towards Tibet and China from the colonial to post-independence period. The preceding chapters have also discussed how the diplomatic and commercial intercourse between India and Tibet was established during the colonial period. India's relations with Tibet and China changed after the arrival of the British EIC. In the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century, the then governor-general Warren Hastings initiated diplomatic and commercial relations with Tibet. The envoys were sent to Tibet to develop connection with the Tibetan authorities. During this time, Tibet was unknown land to the Westerners. The early explorers who visited Tibet were the western missionaries group with the objective of propagating Christianity in the land of lamas. The approach of the Tibetan authorities towards the foreigner was not too friendly and their external policy remained isolated until the British military invasion in 1903-04. The early contact between the India and Tibet started with great enthusiasm and curiosity between Hastings and Tashi Lama but later it was marginalised due to Chinese intervention over Tibet.

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century the British were developing their political influence in the cis-Himalayan region and were successful in gaining diplomatic relations with the states favorable to the British interest followed by their geopolitical settlement. The cession of some of the strategically significant hills in the Himalayan region brought the British India Government geographically close with Tibet. During this period the British were making attempts to establish commercial connection with Tibet from the western side of the trans-Himalaya region. The role of the British officers was significant in the western side of Tibet. However the strict presence of the Tibetan frontier officials created problem on the arrival of the British officers with the objective of developing commercial intercourse between the two countries. Before the British were making attempts to develop commercial connection with Tibet the Kashmiri Muslim traders were actively engaged in the trading activities through western Tibet. This group of traders dominated trade in the trans-Himalaya regions Nepal, Sikkim, and Bhutan. The British EIC after the cession of Darjeeling in the eastern Himalaya region from the Raja of Sikkim began to look for the possibilities of developing trade with Tibet. Later, the region emerged into an important *entrepôt* in the India-Tibet commercial relations. In 1849, crisis occurred between the

British and the ruler of Sikkim but soon the problem was settled by the British India Government without confrontation. In the eastern Himalaya region the British achieved the advantageous position in developing trade relations with Tibet.

The British after assuming political advantages in the Darjeeling-Sikkim Himalayan region began to focus in building roads passing through the Kalimpong to Indo-Tibet border. This development in the eastern Himalayan region brought change in the economic aspects of the region. However, in the past, the trade flourished through this region with Tibet before the arrival of the British. The research work also highlights the trading activities in this particular region since the arrival of the British. Further, the research work shows the implementation of various projects to initiated trading activities form Darjeeling-Kalimpong region to Tibet by the British administrators and officers. During this time, the principal import to Tibet from China was tea and Chinese Silk, which was brought by Chinese trader in large quantities to Lhasa from Peking. The trading route from China to Tibet was not suitable and it took 8 months to reach markets of Lhasa to the Chinese traders with their goods. However, in this time, the trade between India and Tibet continued from Assam. The exports of Assam consisted principally of silver bullion and rock salts. The British were attempting to gain control its control in tea market in Tibet by exporting tea from India to Tibet. The advantage for the Tibetans in importing tea from India was that it reaches the Tibet sooner than the Chinese tea with cheaper cost compare to Chinese brick tea.

The British officials such as John Edgar, J.C. Haughton, and Richard Temple played crucial role in establishing the commercial connection with Tibet in the eastern Himalaya region. During this time, the British authorities in India felt that the improving the connectivity and communications in the Sikkim-Tibet frontier will improve the relations between the British and Tibet both diplomatically and commercially. Throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century the Tibetan government adopted its isolation policy towards the British. However, in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the Survey of India initiated the exploration of the Tibet's geography. The native people were selected for the explorations these people were successful in collecting the valuable information on Tibet's geography and they entered Tibet disguise as travellers, monks, traders, etc. The account they presented changed the approach of the British administrators towards Tibet. Further, the British began to deploy a secret mission into Tibet. Sarat Chandra Das

clandestine journey to Tibet made Tibetans suspicious towards British intentions and they further avoided contact with British. In 1885 the British India Government made serious effort to open up diplomatic intercourse with Tibet, Colman Macaulay was deputed on a commercial mission and to find out whether a direct road could be opened up between Darjeeling and the province of Tsang which is famous for its wool production. However, the mission stayed in Darjeeling for two months and was soon countermanded. During this time, the British GOI did not want to spoil the existing relations with China by allowing the mission to continue further that any attempts to open Tibet might involve complications with China. The main reason was that after the third Anglo-Burmese war the British political influence in the region increased and the British wanted Chinese recognition of their political victory in Burma. China taking advantage of the British anxiety, secured the countermand of the mission into Tibet. In return, China agreed to recognize British rule and supremacy in Burma. The British relations with Tibet further escalated when the Tibetan troops launch an attack on the British camp at Gnatong but got defeated by the British troops.

By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the British GOI secured its political position in Sikkim after 1890 Convention with China. The Chinese government recognized British protectorate over Sikkim and the boundary between Sikkim-Tibet demarcated. In 1893 the British and Chinese representative met to discuss matters on trade and communication and treaty was signed which established a trade mart at Yatung, close to the Tibetan side of the frontier this made flow of the British goods across the Sikkim-Tibet frontier. However, Lhasa opposed to the agreement blaming both the British and Chinese for concluding treaty without the participation of the Tibetan Government.

The next phase in the British policy began after the arrival of Lord Curzon. The Curzon policy changed the course of India-Tibet relations. During this period, the influence of the Russia within the Tibetan government was increasing. The political influence of Russia over Tibet became important factor in re-shaping British policy towards Tibet. In 1899, Curzon gained permission from the British Government to establish 'direct contact' with the authorities in Lhasa. The Tibetan Government never recognised the past agreements between the British and Chinese. Thus, the main objective of the British Government to establish direct contact with Tibetan Government and to obtain Phari as a trade mart instead of Yatung. The failure of the

1890 Convention and the Trade Regulations of 1893 directly affected the India-Tibet relations. The initial approach of Curzon towards Tibet was more diplomatic he dispatched letters to the Head of the Tibetan government to establish connection between British India and Tibet. He selected Kazi U-gyen who was then living in Kalimpong to deliver his letters in Lhasa. The authorities in Lhasa ignored British friendly gesture. Curzon's only motive was to establish a direct communication with the Head of the Tibetan government, and to strengthen the friendly diplomatic ties between India and Tibet. The other object of the British GOI was to facilitate trade between India and Tibet to the mutual advantage of both countries. During this time, the Tibetan Government misconception towards the British GOI aims and intentions overshadowed the Curzon's effort of establishing relations with Tibet.

The British military invasion into Tibet under Francis Younghusband brought a shift in the India's policy towards Tibet. The main objective of the British GOI in dispatching mission to Tibet was to discuss the entire question of British relations, commercial and diplomatic with Tibet and to establish a permanent British Representative at Lhasa. After the mission the 1904 Convention was drawn up directly between the British and Tibetan Governments. However, the British did not intend to colonize Tibet, and the mission departed from Lhasa shortly. The Chinese government after the departure of the British mission began to increase their political influence over Tibet. Charles Bell in his book entitled *Tibet Past and Present* has argued that the "British created a political vacuum with the advancement of mission later China came in and filled it, destroying Tibetan freedom."<sup>1</sup> Following the departure of the British mission from Lhasa, the British concluded agreements with China in 1906 and Russia in 1907 which changed the course of India's policy towards Tibet vis-à-vis China. Later, in 1910 China invaded Tibet and strengthened its claim of suzerainty over Tibet.

The British policy towards Tibet after the end of the Qing's rule in China was focused more into settlement of the India's frontier with Tibet. During this time, the British GOI dispatches the invitations to both the Tibetan and Chinese Governments to participate in the tripartite talk in India. The plenipotentiaries of both the countries participated in the talk in Simla. The Simla Convention 1914 secured British and Tibet's geopolitical interest without the recognition from the Chinese representative. After the Convention, however, the British policy

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<sup>1</sup> Charles Bell, *Tibet Past and Present*, Delhi, Motilal Banarsidass, 1992, p. 71.

towards Tibet shifted, leading the British authorities to adopt an ‘indirect’ method to maintain relations with Tibet vis-à-vis China. In the eastern frontier of Tibet region of Tachienlu, Chamdo, Batang, and Marches the crisis between Tibet and China was increasing. Throughout 1917-18 Tibetan requested the British Government to help secure a permanent settlement with regard to Tibet-China frontier in the east. The British GOI supplied arms and ammunitions to Tibet and acted as mediator between two rival powers. During this time, the British Consular Officer, Eric Teichman stationed at Chengtu, played crucial role in the settlement of the dispute between the Tibetan and Chinese.<sup>2</sup>

The British Officer Charles Bell’s mission to Tibet changed the course of British India policy towards Tibet. Bell’s mission was dispatch with the objective to urge the Tibetan government to end hostilities with the China and to find out whether the Tibetans were contemplating a separate settlement with China. Henceforth, British diplomatic mission to Tibet channelized the bilateral ties between both the countries. During this time, however, Tibet was focusing into a permanent settlement with China in regards to frontier and political adjustment. The confrontation broke out between Tibetan and Chinese troops in the eastern frontier in the beginning of 1930s the Tibetan government asked for the assistance from the British GOI. The Dalai Lama requested for the supply of arms to the British. The GOI agreed to supply limited amount of arms and ammunitions to the Tibetan authorities on payment. In the preceding chapters of the research work has highlighted the figures of the logistics supplies from the GOI to the Tibetan Government.

With the death of the Dalai Lama, struggle for power began in Lhasa, during the period of interregnum before a new Dalai Lama was discovered the biggest challenge for the Tibetan authorities was to keep up the legacy of the former head of the state who always cultivated the idea of sustaining and independent status of Tibet and also forming the new policies which encompass the separate ambitions of China and Britain in Tibet. During this period a diplomatic clash was witnessed between the British and China over gaining political influence over the authorities in Lhasa. Both India-China dispatched diplomatic mission to Tibet. It can be observed that the British presence in Tibet during this period remained ‘formal’ more than ‘political’. The

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<sup>2</sup> Eric Teichman, *Travels of a Consular Officer in Eastern Tibet*, London, Cambridge University Press, 1922, pp. 54-56.

maintenance of the British Representative in Tibet remained sole purpose for the British GOI. The British India's temporary diplomatic mission continued every year to Tibet. Later, the continuation of a mission to Tibet for the British Government remained a non-permanent political approach occasioned by the officers' visits.

The main objective of the diplomatic mission of the British Government to Tibet was to expand its political influence within the Tibetan Government, but it was hindered by Chinese intervention. During this time China also adopted strategy to gain control after the death of the 13<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama. In this context, the British Political Officer in Sikkim and the Trade Agents in the Sikkim-Tibet frontier played a significant role in channelizing the link between the authorities in Delhi and Lhasa. Alastair Lamb in his work policy towards Tibet after the 1914 Convention divided into two streams, sometime merging and sometime flowing quite separately.<sup>3</sup> The outbreak of the World War II also affected the political situation in Tibet and participation of the Japan and the United States brought Tibet under geopolitical significance.

The end of the British rule in India and the rise of the Communists China brought a drastic change in the in the India's approach towards Tibet and China. In 1947, the British Mission in Tibet became the India Mission under the new GOI, signifying a shift in India's relationship with Tibet. After the fall of KMT regime witness the deportation of the Chinese Mission from Lhasa in July 1949, India became the only country officially represented at Lhasa and assumed British rights in Tibet until PLA invasion over Tibet. India's concern over Tibet was seen by the PRC as interference in its internal matters. However, India's relations with China further deteriorated due to the issue of Indo-Tibet border, which was settled during British rule. During this time, it emerged as the bone of contention between India-China. After the occupation of Tibet, the Chinese government began to challenge the validity Indo-Tibet border and demanded its rectification. Alastair Lamb traces out that Chinese claim for the boundary actually started during the British rule. He further argued that the Chinese claim had no practicality in the tribal hills of Assam, which had never fallen under the political control of China and Tibet.<sup>4</sup> India's diplomatic stance was friendly towards the PRC regime and cordially maintained its relations until the uprising the nationalist movement in Tibet. During this period,

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<sup>3</sup> Alastair Lamb, *Tibet, China & India 1914-1950*, Hertfordshire, Roxford Books, 1989, p. 19.

<sup>4</sup> Alastair Lamb, *The China-India Border: The Origins of the Disputed Boundaries*, London, OUP, 1964, pp. 168-169.



the Chinese were actively building roads to the close proximity of Indo-Tibet border. The PRC government issued a map showed most of India's northern region inside the Chinese territory, which created a tense atmosphere in the diplomatic relations of two countries. Alastair Lamb in his work shows that the question of boundary settlement between India and China on both the eastern and western sectors had opposite complexities and geopolitical interest to come to agreement between two countries.<sup>5</sup> Following, the Tibetan uprising followed by the Dalai Lama escape to India further affected the diplomatic relations between India and China.

The indeterminate attitude of both India and China created further gaps in their diplomatic relations in 1950s. Considering the change in the attitude of China in regards to her geopolitical interest following the end of imperialism a conflict with India was unavoidable. The increasing activities of the Chinese troops in the Indo-Tibet border from late 1950s had a direct impact on India's Himalayan frontier. China's militarization programme in Tibet and their roads building projects in the frontier led the GOI to established military post in the western sector of the Indo-Tibet border. The Chinese PLA launched an attack on the Indian troops in the Himalayan frontier on October 1962. It can be observed that during the India-China war, the China was the aggressors not India. B.N. Kaul during his visit at Tseng-Jong, a battalion of 500 Chinese troops attacked Indian army post that were stationed without proper logistics support and 50 men to defend the post from the enemy attack. Later, Kaul wrote in his work about the incident that "this was the first time that China had engaged herself in a battle with us in the real sense... it was therefore, not India but China who started this war."<sup>6</sup> The failure of the Indian armed forces vis-à-vis PLA during the war was blamed on a lack of co-ordination between the GOI and the Indian Army. It can be observed that India's relationship with China since the end of British rule was defined by the Chinese expansionist ambitions and Mao Tse Tung's policy of 'harder approach' towards India's interference in Tibet.<sup>7</sup> Paradoxically, India's adopted 'soft diplomacy' stance with the China rather than focusing on strengthening its army to defend its frontier.

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<sup>5</sup> Lamb, *The China-India Border*, p. 173.

<sup>6</sup> B.M. Kaul, *The Untold Story*, Bombay, Allied Publishers, 1967, pp. 377-382.

<sup>7</sup> John W. Garver, *Protracted Contest Sino-Indian Rivalry in the Twentieth Century*, Seattle, University of Washington Press, 2001, pp. 45-46.

However, the Indian leaders overshadowed their realization of China's political intentions with the hope of increasing the brotherhood bond. Some scholars like Neville Maxwell who argued that the India's 'forward move' as a major factor for Chinese outburst.<sup>8</sup> Juxtaposing, Bertril Linter's argument it shows that China expansionist policy in the Indo-Tibet frontier was a design to challenge India's position in non-aligned countries. He further argued that China began to develop its strategic approach towards Indo-Tibet border before PLA invasion over the Himalayan frontier of India.<sup>9</sup> There is no doubt that the academic opinion differs on understanding the formation of the strategic and diplomatic approaches, and outbreak of war, between India and China within the geopolitics of Asia. However, the cause of dispute lies in the roots of British political and diplomatic aspirations in Tibet.

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<sup>8</sup> Neville Maxwell, *India's China War*, Dehra Dun, Natraj Publishers, 2015, pp. 192-193.

<sup>9</sup> Bertil Lintner, *China's India War*, New Delhi, OUP, 2018, pp. 90-92.

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