

TRAVAILS OF BORDER TRADE



Bhawan Singh Rawat

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Front Cover:

Author riding a Yak on way to Gyanima
Trade Mart (authors collection)

Back Cover:

On way to Tholing with a colleague, Wangda Tseringm
(See captures in Tibet)

TRAVAILS OF BORDER TRADE

**An Account of Shauka Traders,
Kailas Mansarovar Yatra and
Indian Trade Agency**


Bhawan Singh Rawat



About the Author

Bhawan Singh Rawat

Born in Rachhuli, Pithoragarh on 14th October 1936 Bhawan Singh Rawat passed his Intermediate (Arts) from Government Inter College Almora. He studied Nepali, Nepali Affairs and Tibetan Affairs while in Kathmandu, Nepal.

He has served in Tibet, Sikkim, Kathmandu and Pokhara in the Kingdom of Nepal, Baghdad in Iraq, Washington in the USA and New Delhi. He joined Government service in 1955 and retired in 1994. For his exceptional service he received two Commendations, two other rewards, Independence Silver Jubilee Medal in 1972 and finally the coveted Indian Police Medal for meritorious service in 1990.

Bhawan Singh Rawat also hails from Milum, in Johar Valley of Pithoragarh, the village to which belonged the Deb Singh of Moorcroft Travels fame; is married to Kaushalya and is now happily settled in the scenic Lake city of Bhim Tal, Naini Tal district of Uttarakhand. Widely traveled, active in social life, interested in various public interest issues he is devoted to angling.

CONTENTS

Introduction	i
Preface	vi
Chapter: 1	1

BORDER TRADE WITH WESTERN TIBET

History of Trade Marts in Tibet-Conventions and Agreements, Simla convention of 1914, Agreement on Trade and Cultural Intercourse-1954, Johari Traders going to Tibet for trade, Trade Agency Gartok-a seasonal office, Route followed by Trade Agent, Visits to Trade marts, Trade Marts, Living Conditions,

Border Trade-Origin and Changing Patterns, Seasonal Nature of Trade in Western Tibet, 1954 Panchsheel Trade Agreement lapses, Resumption of border trade since 1997

Chapter: 2	42
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CHINESE OCCUPATION OF TIBET

Tibetan uprising of 1959-impact on Western Tibet, Impact of Tibetan Uprising on Bhutanese enclave in Western Tibet, Deterioration in Sino-Indian relations, Anecdotes.

Chapter: 3 **61**

DEVELOPMENT OF ROAD, RAIL AND AIR COMMUNICATIONS IN TIBET

Chapter: 4 **65**

PILGRIMAGE TO KAILASH-MANSAROVAR

Sino-Indian Agreement 1954 on Pilgrimage and Trade, Mansarovar, Kailash Parikrama, Uniqueness of Kailash Mansarovar pilgrimage Resumption of Pilgrimage, Group Pilgrimage, Future Prospects.

Chapter: 5 **73**

BRIEF HISTORY OF WESTERN TIBET (NGARI)

Ancestors of Kings of Western Tibet. End of a Long Lineage of Tibetan Royalty, Western Lineage, Ladakhi Kings-Lha Chen Dynasty, Namgyal Dynasty Ladakh War 1679-1684 AD, Purang and Guge Kingdoms, Bod-Chhogyal or Choe-Gyal-, Expansion of Western Tibetan Empire towards India, Chronology.

Chapter : 6 **87**

Laxman Singh Jangpang, Padma Shri

Annexure: I	96
Text of Convention between Britain and Tibet of 1904	
Annexure: II	103
Text of Sino Indian Agreement on Trade between Tibet and India of 1954.	
References	116
Index	120

Introduction

For an authoritative first-hand account of the trans-Himalayan trade between India and the Western Tibet region one has to necessarily turn to William Moorcroft's 'Journey to Lake Mansarovara in Un-des, a Province of little Tibet' which appeared in the 12th volume of the celebrated Asiatic Researches, in 1816. The published account of the journal kept by Moorcroft covers the period between the 26th May 1812, when the party departs from Joshimath for the Niti valley and ends up on 4th November 1812, when Governor Bum Shah's son meets the thoroughly harassed party, commiserating about the mal-treatment suffered by it.

As this book provides us yet another belated but most welcome first-hand account of the Shauka traders in Western Tibet, not unexpectedly raising a host of interesting research issues for the scholars, it would be appropriate to recall a few observations made by that intrepid Superintendent of the Company Studs, during his daring adventure nearly 200 years ago. A few running excerpts of this Journal would suffice, which concerns the history and the future potential of the fabled Tibetan shawl-wool trade and the role of the Shauka traders therein. Moorcroft records as he travels :

“ The Garpon brought with him shawls of various kinds for sale and said that his people, who were not come up, had some of great value in charge. No body he said could trade at Latak without the direct permission of the Raja. We first supposed that the Cashmirians came to

Undes for part of the wool they used; and learning that they did not, were disposed to blame them for want of enterprise. However it appears that they have not been permitted to trade directly with Undes by the Latakisa state of wartime had long existed with intervening periods of peace. The Chinese Tartars then invaded Latak, whose inhabitants applied to the Cashmirians for assistance. These represented their state to the Emperor, who ordered them to send some infantry to their aid. By their help the Latakis repulsed the assailants; and a treaty of amity was made between the conflicting parties, of which one article was that that the shawl wool raised in Undes should be sold to the Latakis alone. This has since been little infringed upon, except two years ago, when the Jouari Marchas purchased a small quantity on account of Mr. Gillman of Bareilly. The Latakis apprised of the transaction, complained to the government of Ghertope, who issued the rigorous edict...forbidding the sale of any except to the Latakis, on pain of death to the party selling (22nd July)"; and only eight days later

"Halt at Misar..at this place we found many Jouari and Dharmi merchants, who were troublesomely inquisitive as to who we were, what could be our motive of coming, and why we purchased shawl-wool. The sight of some of our wares seemed to convince them, that we were what we appeared to be"...Moorcroft looking into the future prognosticates "...I consider this day as the epoch at which may be fixed the origin of a traffic which is likely to be extremely beneficial to the Honourable Company (30th July)...Find two Juaris encamped here on the road to Kien-lung: one of these traders reproached us with

spoiling their market, by selling our goods at too low a rate. The Juaris have hitherto been the principal medium through which the Uniyas have received, since the conquest of the hills by the Gorkhalis, the produce of Hindustan and European merchandize..(August 15th)...finally nine days later...This day a well looking Juari in a clean dress, of the name of Deb or Debo Singh, came to pay his respects to us, he was son to a man of consequence of the name of Dhamu, who had ordered him to come over, and, whether we were Mahants or not, to offer his services in whatever we thought he might be useful...he was directed to say that 2000 men were ready to take arms for the cause of the Raja whenever a rallying point was furnished. He said that our journey had been long, and we had, he understood, been made to incur unnecessary expence, he should be happy to furnish a draft on Srinagar for a thousand rupees, if it would afford us any accommodation, and would take the amount at Haridwar either in goods or money, as might be most agreeable to us (24th August).”

These excerpts provide us a vivid picture of the various trading points, the restrictions on trade in some articles and the over-all influence the Sauka traders wielded nearly two hundred years ago. William Moorcroft and Rutherford's reports were made available to Lord Moira, the Governor-General of India, who wrested Kumaon-Garhwal from the Gorkhas, and who ensured that Lipulekh and Niti passes remained within bounds of British Kumaon.

Charles A. Sherring, the Deputy Commissioner of Almora, first to visit Western Tibet officially after the

Younghusband Mission, nearly 100 years after William Moorcroft, provides us the next authoritative first-hand account of the reality of the so-called international trade, in his article in Memoirs of the Asiatic Society of Bengal (1905-7), about the trade over the Lipu Lekh Pass :

"In 1841, the trade over this Pass was only Rs 35,900, showing that the trade has increased since then eleven fold. Meanwhile, over the Johar Pass trade has, in the same period, increased only 2 ¼ times. A further point of interest is that, between 1872 and 1902, the population in Johar has increased 13.75 per cent, and in Pargana Darma 93.12 per cent. About 80 per cent of the trade of the United Provinces goes through the Almora district," Sherring adds, " The wonder is not that the entire trade is so small, but, considering the execrable routes, that there is any trade at all."

Bhawan Singh Rawat connects Moorcroft's and Sherring's accounts to the actual commencement of this ancient land-route trade, suggesting certain facts which require historical corroboration, prior to the Simla Convention of 1914, when it was formalized for the first time, through to the Tibetan uprising of 1959 and later certain infrastructural developments which have had far reaching consequences for what is today known as the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR).

This book is an invaluable contribution to our existing knowledge about the British, and later Indian, Trade Agency and its work and provides us an equally invaluable life-sketch of Sri Laxman Singh Jangpangi, former Trade Agent (1941- 59). Sri Jangpangi was the

first person from Uttarakhand to be honoured with the country's highest civilian award, Padma Shri, in 1959. More importantly, as only Bhawan Singh could inform us, Sri Jangpangi was the only Indian officer who had traveled through all the five trade-routes to Western Tibet.

That the author's contribution to our existing knowledge about Western Tibet is immense would be apparent both from the narrative as well as the references he has quoted, the latter ample proof of his abiding interest in Tibet and all Indo-Tibetan issues of public interest. Over the years I have had the pleasure of sharing his tit-bits on Western Tibet, off and on, and pestering him no end to put all these in black and white. I am so grateful to him to have finally agreed to share his extremely valuable insights of a by gone era and region with which Uttarakhand's future is inextricably linked, notwithstanding his indifferent and failing health.

I am quite sanguine that this book is only a beginning and his physical presence in Bhim Tal would encourage a host of research scholars of our two regional Universities, as well as other centres of higher learning, to embark upon subjects which have remained neglected far too long, as his knowledge happens to be first-hand. It would be indeed highly amiss of me not to express my deeper gratitude to his alter ego, Kaushalya di, but for whom this book could not have appeared in print and Renu Rawat for the photographs.

PREFACE

Western Tibet better known as Ngari Khorsum was earlier one of the four provinces of Tibet. After reorganization of administrative divisions by the Chinese, it has now become one of the eight Prefectures of Tibetan Autonomous Region (TAR). The administrative subdivisions have similarly been reorganized into seven Counties replacing the four districts (dzongs).

The remoteness of Western Tibet could be judged from the fact that before 1959, a mounted Government messenger traveling round the clock and changing riding ponies at different transport change stations used to negotiate the 1,300 kms. journey from Lhasa, capital of Tibet to Gartok, summer capital of Western Tibet in about 15 days. Other travelers who had to wait for transport at different stations took almost three months to reach Lhasa from Gartok. The backwardness of the region was quite visible. There were no schools for public and religious teachings for monks were organized by monasteries. There were no medical facilities and Tibetans depended for treatment on spiritual healings practised by lamas. Only one crop of foodgrains was grown in some villages in the river valleys but the produce was not enough to meet even local requirements and the majority of the Tibetans who were nomads with large herds and flocks as their main assets, depended on Indian border traders for supply of foodgrains, mostly through barter trade. The border trade was, therefore,

as important for Tibetans as it was for Indian border residents.

The Tibetans of Western Tibet were not heard of having played any role in the politics of Tibet. Their representation in bureaucracy was nil. There were over 150 aristocratic feudal families including the descendants of ancient kings and members of the families of Dalai Lamas, who had large land holdings in Tibet. They along with the monks of three main monasteries of Lhasa area monopolized all government jobs. So far Western Tibet was concerned there was only one family - Surkhang family - which was recognized as belonging to Royal lineage. This family migrated from Ladakh to Lhasa during time of the 7th Dalai Lama.

After the collapse of the powerful Central Tibetan dynasty, a regional lineage of the Tibetan kings was established in Western Tibet in the 10th century. But soon after this the Ladakhi branch of this lineage started treating the other two kingdoms of Western Tibet as vassals. However, the progeny of the Tibetan kings of ngari worked as principal agents of Buddhist renaissance in 11th century A.D. This has been explained in detail in Chapter V.

Till 1959 two governors and four district Commissioners (Dzongpons) were posted to administer Western Tibet. In the absence of police and military forces, they were ineffective in controlling the menace of robbers and dacoits.

My accounts of border trade and the major developments affecting it are based on what I had seen and heard and subsequently it has been corroborated by primary and secondary sources. I cannot claim to having personally observed the unfolding of the major developments when they took place, as we in the Trade Agency and the Indian traders were back to India for winter. This has reference to chapters relating to the Chinese occupation of Tibet and Tibetan uprising.

The Chinese are not going to stop at what they have achieved in building of strategic roads in Western Tibet. Apart from constructing an airfield near Kailash Mansarovar to promote religious tourism for pilgrims/ tourists from Buddhist countries like Japan, they may bring in a railway line linking Nachu to Rodok on Aksai Chin highway via mineral rich Thak-jalon area. This may lead to Han influx into this remote area also.

We can not claim that we are trying to "catch-up" with the Chinese. We know the progress of road construction on our side of the border.

Thanks to Dr. R.S. Tolia for forcing me out of hibernation to walk down memory lane and unfold my experiences. Thanks to Shri S.S. Rawat for his encouragement and useful advice and to my son-in-law, Shri B.D.S. Rawat for all help he rendered.

Bhawan Singh Rawat
Bhimtal
01.10.2008

CHAPTER

1

BORDER TRADE WITH WESTERN TIBET

History of Trade marts in Tibet-Conventions and Agreements

To cover the lack of definite information as to when the border trade had started, there has been a tendency to describe it as an "age-old" trade. Late Shri Ram Singh Pangtey in "Johar ka Itihas and Vansavali" suggested that the border trade with Tibet from Johar Valley was approximately 600 years old. Besides the age of the trade, there is also no definite information whether there had been any written agreement or orders regulating the border trade before the British signed the first Trade Convention in 1890.

The British Government was keen to establish Commercial and Trade relations with Tibet. Apprehending Tibetan resistance, the British approached the Chinese whose authority had extended to Tibet during 18th Century and signed a Convention in March 1890 with them which covered among other things, the delineation of boundary between Sikkim and Tibet and recognition of Sikkim as a protectorate of British India. A set of regulations regarding trade, communication and pasturage was also signed in December 1893 as an

appendix to the Convention of 1890. The regulation provided for the establishment of a trade mart at YATUNG and permission for free movement of British subjects between Sikkim border and Yatung. The Convention and Trade Regulations had been signed between the Britishers and the Chinese without the consent and knowledge of Tibet who refused to accord the concessions agreed upon under the 1890 Convention¹.

The Tibetan refusal to accept 1890 Convention and 1893 Trade Regulations signed between the Britishers and China was a provocation for the Britishers to dispatch a military expedition to Lhasa and to force a Trade Agreement on Tibet. The agreement known as Lhasa Convention was signed at Lhasa on 7th September 1904 which inter-alia provided opening of trade marts at Gyantse and Gartok in addition to Yatung. It also provided that Tibet would consider the question of establishing new trade marts if the development of trade so required. Apparently under this provision of the Convention, the then Deputy Commissioner, Almora(UP) had during his trip to Western Tibet in 1905, obtained the consent of Tibetan authorities for opening of additional trade marts in Western Tibet². The Convention also mooted a proposal of appointing Tibetan and British Trade Agents to monitor the progress of British Trade. Thus trade marts' officially came into existence and British Trade Agencies were opened at Yatung and Gyantse in Central Tibet and Gartok in Western Tibet³.

Simla Convention of 1914

Great Britain, China and Tibet signed Simla

Convention-1914 on 3rd July 1914. The Government of China later declined to ratify the Convention. Great Britain and Tibet declared that the convention would be binding on these countries. Under the Convention, the Trade Regulations of 3rd July 1914 which, among other issues, dealt with the procedure regarding the taking of land on lease for building houses and godowns at the trade marts by British subjects, administration of trade marts, procedure for settlement of disputes between British and Tibetan subjects, etc.

In political terms, Great Britain and China recognised Tibet being under the suzerainty of China. They also recognised the autonomy of outer Tibet. Britain adopted a policy based on the idea of autonomy for Tibet within the context of Chinese suzerainty and articulated it in the Simla Convention⁴.

Agreement on Trade and Cultural Intercourse-1954

An Agreement on Trade and Cultural intercourse between Tibet region of China and India was signed by China and India on 29th April 1954 which naturally superseded previous trade agreements regarding Tibet. Under the new agreement, India and China agreed to the establishment of the Chinese Trade Agencies at New Delhi, Calcutta and Kalimpong and Indian Trade Agencies at Gartok, Yatung and Gyantse (which had originally been opened as British Trade Agencies under 1904 Lhasa Convention). The agreement specified the trade marts, where border traders could trade and six border passes and routes through which the traders and pilgrims may travel. The important points of the agreement as

mentioned in the notes exchanged after the agreement related to India's agreeing to withdraw within 6 months, the military escorts stationed at Yatung and Gyantse, and also to hand over at reasonable price, the post telegraph and telegram services with equipments, as well as, 12 rest houses built along the Yatung-Gyantse route.

There had been severe criticism of India's signing the agreement, in main, on two aspects, namely, India's accepting without any ambiguity of Tibet being an integral part of China and India surrendering certain ancient privileges even without setting the question of Indo-Tibetan boundary⁵.

Barter Trade between Shauka traders and Hunia (Tibetan) 'Mitras'

Barter Trade System in Western Tibet is as old as its history. Even before the Regional Tibetan dynasty was established in Ngari (Western Tibet)(in 10th Century AD, the original settlers - Dards, Mons and Tibetans used to procure essential commodities through barter trade with each other. As the regional Tibetan rule expanded towards Indian borders, particularly to Ladakh, Lahaul, Spiti and Kinnaur areas, the base for barter trade widened, and it was, perhaps the starting point of Indo Western Tibet border trade based on the barter system.

The Tibetan monetary system was conducive to the growth of the barter system of trade. The important establishments such as the Department of Finance in Tibet was based on natural produce and all the taxes were collected in kind-in the shape of barley, cattle animal

produce etc.⁶. Not only this, there was no Tibetan currency. Tibetan 'Tanka' (Silver Coins) was introduced in 1781 and paper currency much later. Apart from direct taxes, other revenues like duties on Gold Mines in Ngari and Kham and rental of government land holdings and estates were also collected in kind. With this background, it is understandable as to why barter trade system flourished in remote areas like Western Tibet and for that matter, in all the areas across the Indian borders from the very beginning of Indo-Tibet border trade.

'MITRA' system of barter trade covered exchange at a pre-fixed ratio of foodgrains to Tibetan salt and wool. Western Tibet was deficient in food supply and Indian border residents required Tibetan salt and wool for their home consumption and for further barter trading in the interior areas of border districts. To secure on a permanent footing the supply of these items, Indian Shauka traders and Hunias (Tibetans) entered into 'MITRA' agreements, which bound them to barter foodgrains for salt and wool with each other only. Once signed, Mitra agreement become hereditary and permanent unless the Indian party sold his Mitra rights to a third party. Drinking alcohol or tea from one cup and exchanging gifts between the two parties to the agreement marked the initiation of the Mitra agreement. This ceremony was followed by splitting of a stone into two halves-each party retaining one half as a proof of the agreement in the event of any dispute over the trading rights.

The salient features of the Mitra agreement were:

- The agreement was hereditary and once signed continued for generations.
- The Shauka Traders had exclusive rights to barter foodgrains for salt and wool with their Hunia (Tibetan) Mitras.
- In case a Sauka trader was not in a position to supply foodgrains, he could arrange a third party to carry out barter with his Hunia Mitra and claim a 10% commission from both the parties.
- The Shauka trader had the right to sell his Mitra rithts to another Shauka trader without obtaining prior consent of his Hunia Mitra.
- Mitra agreement was legally binding on both the parties and complaints about its violation were filed in the office of TSASHYO (Tibetan Tax Collector) or the Trade Agent⁷.

Guidelines: In due course of time, some confusion and complications arose particularly about the scope of Mitra agreement and the British Trade Agent issued a guideline on 14th August 1945 which inter alia specified that:-

- The written Mitra Agreement should be registered within a year with the office of British Trade Agent, Gartok and his approval obtained.

- The agreement about sale and purchase of Mitra rights should be drawn on stamp Paper and British Trade Agent, Gartok informed about it within a year.
- Any person found guilty of doing trade with the Mitra of another person, in Tibet or in India by force or through forgery was liable to be fined Rs. 100.
- An Indian party would have no Mitra rights on the children of his Hunia Mitra who are married off in other families.
- The Indian party to the Mitra agreement would have trading rights over his Hunia Mitra who has left his original illage and migrated to a new area⁸.

During my 8 years posting in the Indian Trade Agency, Gartok from 1955-62, there were no applications for the registration of Mitra agreement or complaints of the violation of Mitra agreement. This was apparently an indication of the changing pattern of trade.

Opening of Border Trade-Visit of Tibetan emissary

Every Year in the month of June a Tibetan emissary called 'Surji', nominated by the concerned Tibetan District Commissioner (Dzongpons) visited the last Indian border village of Milam in Johar valley (now in Pithoragarh District) to ascertain the prevailing situation political and health related. He met the headman of the village to exchange information. On return to Tibet he

submitted a report to the Dzungpon. If he reported the situation to be normal on the Indian side of the border, the Dzungpon ordered opening of the borders for trade. Similar emissaries were also sent to other valleys on Indian side of the borders. It is however, not known when and under what circumstances the system of sending emissaries to Indian side of the borders to ascertain the situation - political and health related began. According to Sri Kedar Singh Fonia, former minister and now MLA in Uttarakhand, the Maharaja of Chandpur in Garhwal and a representative of the Dalai Lama had an agreement under which the Tibetan emissary called 'SURJI' used to visit Niti valley every year before the start of seasonal border trade. His mission was to ascertain whether the situation on Indian side of the border was conducive for border trade⁹. In his Thok Jalun Diary-1867, Pandit Nain Singh Rawat mentions about the visit of Tibetan emissary (Surji) nominated by Chaprang Zongpon to Mana or Badrinath in the month of June every year. It appears that apart from political factor which could affect Tibet's self chosen policy of 'isolation' the Tibetan authorities were concerned about the incidence of epidemics etc. on the Indian side of the borders, which could spread to Tibetan areas. In his Thok Jalun Diary, Pandit Nain Singh Rawat also mentions that the Bushahri traders were not allowed to visit Tibet in 1867 for reasons that during previous year an epidemic had occurred in the areas inhabited by them.

Immediately after the Tibetan authorities declared opening of borders for trade, Hunia (Tibetan) Mitras of Shauka traders visited Indian border villages with large flocks of sheep and goat laden with salt to barter for

foodgrains with or through their Shauka trading counterparts. They camped with their livestock outside the villages for about a week and visited the houses of their Shauka Mitras for food. During their stay, they sheared the wool of their sheep and bartered wool and salt for foodgrains. The visit of Tibetan traders in the last week of June or first week of July cleared whatever uncertainties prevailed about the seasonal trade and paved the way for Shauka traders' visit to Tibet.

Both Tibetan and Indian traders used sheep and goats as pack animals for transportation of salt, wool and foodgrains. Each sheep or goat carried a load of about 10-15 kgs. To avoid loading and unloading of a large number of livestock every day, Tibetan traders during their visit to Indian border village and Trade Marts in Tibet, unloaded the animals only after reaching the destination.

Johari Traders going to Tibet for trade

Gonkhal Dhar, a ridge forming the eastern border of Milam village, used to be the spot where the traders going to Tibet for trade were given a hearty send-off and accorded a warm welcome when they returned. They were accompanied to this place by relatives and friends and escorted by drum beaters and professional singers/dancers known as "mirasis" who sang songs praying for traders' well being during the Tibet visit. Before they stepped out of their houses their women folk used to bid them farewell with teary eyes. The scene was, to a small measure, like the soldiers going to the battle field. Those days, it was an amusement to see the goings-on for us children who went to Gonkhal Dhar as on lookers. Later,

when I was posted to Tibet and personally saw the hazardous conditions under which the traders traveled and lived in trade marts in Tibet, I realized that their trips to Tibet were as risky as going to a battle field. They fought the fury of nature, suffered from high-altitude problems, had lingering fear of bad elements committing theft and dacoity and over and above, always worried about the trade prospects. A bad trading season could upset their system as the traders used to buy trade goods, particularly textile on credit and were required to clear the accounts at the conclusion of the trading season. The Johari traders endured the physical hardships the very next day of starting their journey from Milam, as after crossing Unta Dhura pass (17950 ft), they were required to negotiate two additional passes of Jayanti (18500ft) and Kungrbingri (18300ft) in a single day as it was not possible to camp in the gaps between these three passes due to severe cold and non availability of fuel. The distance from Dung, the first stage to chhurchin, the next stage is about 31 kms. Unta Dhura pass route was the most difficult among the trade routes to Western Tibet. The traders suffered from acute breathing problems while negotiating these three mountain passes in a single day. While the well-to-do traders had ponies to ride, the others, marginal traders, not only marched on foot but also drove the pack animals or live-stock laden with trade goods. Once at Gyanima or Shivchilam or Tarchen trade marts, these Johari traders set up their shops in kuchcha, low mud-walled enclosures roofed with single-fly tents. The trade goods were arranged in such a way that chill wind did not filter in. The shops served as living/sleeping space for the traders. Some of the traders had joint kitchens. The

traders used the open area around the market to answer the call of nature.

Some of the Johari traders visited Tarchen (61 kms. from Gyanima), located at the foot-hill of Mount Kailash during July/August each year. The nomads of Changthang (northern plateau) visiting Tarchen area with a large number of their live stock were not bound by any agreement to barter their wool, etc to Johari traders as was the practice, elsewhere. The nomads (dokpas) grazed their live stock in the vast plains between Tarchen and Parkha, sheared the wool of their sheep and sold the same to Indian traders.

By the month of September, the majority of Johari traders returned home from Tarchen and Gyanima. They hired Tibetan yaks to transport wool, etc to Milam. One of the frequent problems faced by the Johari traders was unwillingness of Tibetan transporters to go to Milam with wool if weather conditions deteriorated. Some well-to-do traders visited Gartok, summer capital of Western Tibet and an important trade mart, for trade at the conclusion of trading season at Tarchen and Gyanima. Like at Gyanima, Shivchilam and Tarchen, Johari traders set up their shops in tents which also served as their living and sleeping space at Gartok. The constant high wind and falling temperature rendered life miserable. This is explained in more details in the following paragraphs. The trading season at Gartok concluded in the last week of October and if the passes remained open, the traders were home by the first week of November.

Trade Agency Gartok: a seasonal office

As mentioned under Chapter "History of Trade

Marts-Convention and Agreements", the Trade Agency at Gartok was established under 1904 Lhasa Convention to oversee trade in the marts in Western Tibet. In the absence of office and residential accommodation, the Trade Agency functioned on seasonal basis. Till 1942, the Trade Agency at Gartok was under the administrative control of British Political Agent at Shimla and as such the Trade Agent and staff moved down to Shimla during winter months. Later on, all the three Trade Agencies in Tibet were brought under the administrative control of the Political Office in Sikkim. It may be of interest to mention that Capt. Hayat Singh Rawat of Johar was appointed as British Trade Agent, Gartok in 1928 but was removed from his post within a few months as he misbehaved with Daba Dzungpon.

The Indian Trade Agency had as in 1955 a Manpower of 18, which included the Trade Agent, Accountant, medical officer, Compounder, two clerks, 8 peons, 2 chowkidars and 2 Mail Runners. Johari Shaukas dominated the set-up as all the posts except for medical Officer, Compounder and a clerk were held by them in 1950's. the composition of staff had undergone changes after the winter headquarters of the Agency had been transferred from Shimla to Gangtok (Sikkim) in 1942. The staff members belonging to Rampur Bushahr and Ladakh left their jobs as they found it inconvenient to go to Gangtok. This afforded an employment opportunity in lower ranks to Johari Shaukas, who had established themselves as physically hardy and adventure loving. Padmashri L.S. Jangpangi who had been continuously in this difficult post for 29 years helped poor Shaukas in getting jobs in the Agency. A note on him is at Annexure-1. After 1942 the

Political Office in Sikkim posted for some seasons Sikkimese officers and staff as Trade Agent, medical Officer, Accountant and clerks to the Trade Agency. However, this practice was discontinued as Sikkim based officer and staff preferred to serve in Political Office, Consulate at Lhasa and Trade Agencies at Gyantse and Yatung. During about 6 months Annual Tour of Western Tibet, the Trade Agent and team spent almost two and a half months on travel both through Indian territory and within Tibet, stayed at Gartok, summer headquarters for nearly two months in two phases and remained in trade marts during the remaining one and a half month. The Trade Agency hired about 40 yaks for transporting camp equipments mainly heavy tentage, camp furniture, office records, rations and personal baggage etc. In addition riding ponies/yaks were hired for individual staff members. Two mail runners were required to carry by turn diplomatic mail bags from Gartok or camp office at trade marts to Gunji or Garbyang in India and back. They had to travel all alone through wilderness for days together. Their job was physically tough and full of risks. Fortunately, nothing untoward ever happened. For such a tough job they were paid a consolidated salary of Rs. 100 per month plus Daily Allowance @ of 6 annas per day for the period spent away from Gartok. Other seasonal staff like 4 peons and 2 chowkidars also received salary and D.A. at the same rates. During Travels from Indian border towns like Almora or Shimla to border passes and then to Gartok/trade marts, the Class-IV staff was hard pressed with unending and tiring chores. From early morning they had to remain busy in handling dismantling of camps, packing of heavy tentage and other equipments and helping Tibetan transporters in

loading the animals. Dismantling the tents in the morning and pitching them again in the evening at the next halting place was physically exhausting especially when there was high wind and a fall in temperature. With frozen ground it was difficult to fix or take our iron pegs of tents unless hot water was poured on them. After reaching next halting place and setting up camps the staff members would go out to collect fuel- mostly dried roots of thorny bushes and dung of wild animals. In river valleys however, there was not much problem of firewood. Once all these were done, the staff would cook dinners in three kitchens. At times, one or two staff members would go hunting for barhal. Forging of rivers presented big problems in the absence of bridges over them. During summer when snow melted, most of the rivers originating from mountain ranges were in spate, with very strong current in the afternoons. We had a serious problem in 1958 in crossing Par-Chu, the same river which ravaged some areas in Himachal Pradesh a few years back. In the afternoon on that day the current was so strong that the pack animals battled to ford it. I crossed the river several times to guide the animals across. The Chinese gave me the nickname of 'Tam' (river cat) and the Trade Agent who always gave me fatherly advice against drinking offered me small amounts of brandy each time I crossed the river. There was another problem in fording the rivers in Western Tibet. In the beds of the rivers passing through plain areas or marshy land like Gartung Chu near Gartok, Indus near Gargunsa, and Parkha plains, there were holes and many times feet of animals got trapped into them. The Tibetan transporters used to guide us to the points from where we could safely ford the rivers. During

these travels we attended to urgent work only. The messages received from the Ministry of External Affairs had to be replied to immediately. During our stay at Gartok or in trade marts, we would open office from morning to evening on all the days of the week. Our office work was frequently interrupted by Indian traders or other visitors coming to the Agency camp for some work or to pay courtesy calls. The ministerial staff remained extremely busy for two days after receiving weekly mail bags from India as they had to prepare materials for sending mail bags to India on third morning. They worked up to late hours to prepare replies to letters from Political Office in Sikkim and the Ministry of External Affairs on various subjects including developments in trade marts, The Trade Agent and the Accountant devoted a couple of hours in the evenings to prepare a report of political nature.

All the messages to or from the Ministry of External Affairs which were transmitted through the Chinese wireless network were coded. Manual coding and decoding of such messages was tedious and time consuming. I would mostly do this work at night hours when there was no disturbance. A cup of coffee courtesy night chowkidar or a large peg of whisky if available at midnight would invariably give relief from freezing cold and fatigue.

Hunting of wild-life like 'barhal' was the only diversion for the Agency personnel during arduous touring till 1957. The Trade Agency had a couple of good marksmen who never missed a shot. The Tibetans and the Chinese did not object to our hunting of barhal. The Chinese themselves used to hunt for wild horses called

'kiang' and wild yaks though very discreetly. Cold water Trout fish was in abundance in all the rivers and streams. It was child's play to catch them. During his official visit to Western Tibet Sri S.K. Roy had brought his fishing rods etc. One day accompanied by his wife he went for angling in Gartung Chu at Gartok. He was surprised to catch a couple of large fishes within a few minutes. The Tibetans do not take fish and the Chinese as well as Trade Agency personnel avoided hurting their religious sentiments (till 1959) by openly catching fish. After the Tibetan uprising of 1959, the Chinese however resorted to using explosives to kill fish. According to some Tibetans of Gartok area the Chinese carried truckloads of fish to their military posts and road construction sites in western Tibet.

The Trade Agent and staff spent winter months at Gangtok (Sikkim). The office and residential accommodation was provided by the Political Office. It was almost a fixed routine for the Agency personnel to leave Gangtok for annual tour to Tibet in the last week of May. A couple of staff visit Calcutta to procure medical, stationary and forms stores, tinned food, confectionary items, liquor, both scotch and IMFL and gift items. The Trade Agent visited Delhi for consultation with the External Affairs Ministry. The main group accompanied the office records and equipments and proceeded to the main border towns like Almora or Shimla on the routes to be followed for the entry into Tibet and made final preparations-buying food provisions, etc-for the tour. The seasonal staff like doctor, Compounder, chowkidars, dak-runners and temporary peons joined duty at this border town.

Till 1954, the Trade Agency had its own wireless sets for communication with headquarters. In view of the menace of dacoits in Western Tibet, the Agency personnel were issued with arms. After 1954, the Chinese provided communication facilities to the Agency through their wireless network and hence the wireless unit of the Agency was withdrawn from 1955. Similarly, the arms and ammunition held by the Agency were withdrawn and deposited with Ministry of External Affairs in December 1957 after the Chinese detailed a section strength of armed guards with the Agency.

Route followed by Trade Agent

There were five main trade routes to Western Tibet which the Trade Agent followed. These routes were via Almora-Dharchula-Garbyang-Lipulekh Pass, Shimla-Chini-Shipki Pass, Joshimath-Chor Hoti-Niti Pass, Milam-Untadhura-Kungribingri Pass and Zojila- Taglungla Pass. The Trade Agent had not followed the last two trade routes after the winter headquarters of the Trade Agency had shifted from Shimla to Sikkim in 1942. The Trade Agent followed the same route for entry into Tibet by which his party had returned to India at the conclusion of previous trading season. This compulsion was due to the fact that while returning to India, the Trade Agency stored all its bulky camp equipment like tentage, camp furniture, etc near the last Indian border village to be picked up during the next annual tour.

Till 1957-58 there was not much progress in road construction towards Indian borders. For our annual visit to Western Tibet, we were required to cover journey from Almora to Lipulekh Pass-Taklakote (283kms.) on foot, which took about twenty days. From Lipulekh pass to

Gartok via Kailash-Mansarovar took another ten days. In 1957, motorable road had been extended to Chaukori and in 1958-59 to Thal via Bageshwar, which had cut down the journey time through this route by seven days. Lipulekh pass (16,750ft) was the easiest pass leading into Western Tibet.

During 1957, the Trade Agent and party returned to India via Shipki-Shimla route and stored their heavy equipment at namgia village. Compared to other two routes, Gartok-Shipki-Shimla route was shorter. It took us twenty-two days only to reach Shimla. Moreover, the Hindustan-Tibet road was well maintained right up to the top of Shipki pass. There were Dak Bangalows at every stage. Fresh fruits like apple and grapes and dried fruits like apricots, walnuts and nyoza (chilgoza) were available in plenty and cheap too. Senior Governor of Western Tibet, Rimshi Lobzang Tsewang, was proceeding to Kalimpong along with his family to meet his wife's relatives. He also followed Gartok-Shipki-Shimla route and was one stage behind us. He met us at Rampur on 18th November 1957 and we travelled together to Shimla, 138kms. by vehicular transport. Kuccha road had been extended up to Rampur. I accompanied the Governor and family to see Nangal-Bhakra hydel project which was still under construction.

In 1958, we entered Western Tibet through the same route (Shimla-Shipki-Gartok route). Shimla-Rampur road was, this time, open only up to a distance of 80 kms. Half way between Chini and Namgia, there is a village called Rarang, which during those days was known for brewing "angoori", a grape-based hard liquor, which

cost Rs. 14 per bottle, at a time when Solan whisky was much cheaper. The best part of this route was a gradual ascent to the pass from where green valleys of Shipki, Mayang and Tiag villages and a portion of snow-capped Shirang-La pass (17500 ft) were clearly visible. Besides Shirang-La pass, four other smaller passes had to be negotiated on this route. Mayang-Chu, a tributary of Sutlej had plenty of hill trout. This route was a hunter's paradise as a large number of wild-life like "barhals" could be seen almost at every stage.

We followed Niti pass route for our return journey to India in 1958. We passed through Tholing and Daba. It took us nine days from Gartok to Niti village. Since we had left our heavy tentage and camp furniture at Niti village, we were scheduled to enter Western Tibet by this route in 1959. In fact, we had reached Niti on way to Gartok but could not proceed further as the Chinese had advised us through Ministry of External Affairs not to enter Tibet through Niti Pass route for security reasons. We later learnt that in view of March 1959 Uprising, the Chinese had taken certain measures in border areas to prevent Tibetans from fleeing to India. With no other option with us, we collected our tentage etc from Niti village and came all the way to Almora and then proceeded to Tibet via Lipulekh pass. As in 1958. motorable road had been extended up to a point short of Joshimath.

Visits to Trade Marts

During about six months annual tour, the Trade Agent and team visited most of the trade marts in Western Tibet to see the progress of trade and to look into the grievances of traders. After 1955, a section strength of

Chinese military and wireless personnel accompanied the Trade Agent during tours to the trade marts.

The main hurdle in the smooth conduct of the tours of the trade marts by the Trade Agent was the non-availability on time of animal transport. Under the then existing system the jurisdiction of individual Tibetan area or village was fixed for the purpose of providing animal transport (on hire) and the villagers would not provide transport beyond the stipulated points. It was the responsibility of the next village/area to arrange transport for the onward journey. In some areas the transport was required to be changed within or after a day's journey which invariably resulted in avoidable enforced halts. In the absence of regular "Tarzam" posts (dak and transport change stations) in the interior areas, the arrangements for animal transport were done by the heads of the concerned tibetan villages. To ease this transport problem, the Trade Agency had been hiring for some years, some two dozen yaks on contract basis through an Indian trader. But still the Trade Agency had to depend on the local Tibetans for riding ponies, as also for additional pack animals.

As and when the Trade Agent entered Tibet via Lipulekh pass, the tour of trade marts began at Taklakote in Purang valley. This trade mart was visited for trade by Indian border residents from Darma and Bians-Chaudas valleys, besides Nepalese traders from Changru and Tinkar villages. Lipulekh pass route being the main pilgrimage route to Kailash and Mansarovar, a clerk of the Trade Agency was stationed at Taklakote for some months. The Trade Agent stayed at this trade mart for about a week.

He met the Dzongpon (District Commissioner) and the Chinese representative, invariably a military officer posing as a civilian. He called a meeting of Indian traders and also invited them to tea or lunch. From Taklakote, the Trade Agent and team proceeded to Tarchen Trade and Pilgrimage Centre, located at the foot-hill of Mt. Kailash. Some Johari traders used to come to Tarchen, a Bhutanese enclave, for trade during July/August. From Tarchen, the Trade Agent usually proceeded to Gartok. Journey time from Taklakote to Gartok via Tarchen was about twelve dyas. Before proceeding to other trade marts, the Trade Agent and team usually stayed at Gartok for about a month during which period, there was exchange of courtesy calls with Tibetan Governors (till 1958) and the Chinese Foreign Bureau officials. This was followed by lunch-cum-dinner parties hosted by the Tibetan Governor, Chinese Foreign Bureau Chief and the Trade Agent. In between, there were official discussions with the Chinese, mainly about the problems of Indian traders.

Usually, the Trade Agent and team proceeded on tour of other trade marts like Tholing, Nabra, Daba, Shiv-Chilam and Gyanima in August-September. The journey from Gartok to Gyanima via Tholing/Daba took twelve days excluding the days of haltage. The Trade Agent also visited Gyanima-Chakra, the trade centre of Darma traders for a day. Gyanima was the most important trade mart in Western Tibet which was mainly visited for trade by Johari traders for about three months till september. The Trade Agent halted at Gyanima for a period from one week to ten days, during which he met the Tibetan Government representative called "Tshasyo" (Tax Collector), held meetings with Indian traders and

entertained them to tea or lunch. From Gyanima, the Trade Agent and team returned to Gartok, usually at the end of September, via Tirthapuri/Minsar (122kms.), which took seven days.

The Trade Agent had last visited Tashigong, located opposite Demchok border in Ladakh, in 1958. Tashigong was a trade centre of Ladakhi traders. Rudok, a strategically located place on the Western Highway passing through Aksai Chin, was not recognised as a Trade Centre under the 1954 Trade Agreement. The Trade Agent did not visit that place after 1954, though some Ladakhi, Himachali and Niti traders did go there for trade.

By the time the Trade Agent returned to Gartok from the tour of trade marts, it was already October. The second round of social meeting like attending lunch-cum-dinner hosted by Tibetan Governors and the Chinese Foreign Bureau took place in October. The Trade Agents also hosted lunch-cum-dinners for the Tibetan Governors and the Chinese Foreign Bureau officials. These were in a way, farewell parties. Several rounds of official meetings with the Chinese Foreign Bureau officials followed during this period in which the trade disabilities faced by the Indian traders were discussed. Preceding these official discussions with the Chinese, there were interactions with the Indian traders at Gartok during tea parties and luncheon hosted by the Trade Agent. The Trade Agent and team left for India in the last week of October. The traders followed a few days later after concluding their trade at Gartok.

Trade Marts

The location of and route to the trade marts which the Trade Agent visited annually were :

- (a) On Gartok - Tholing - Gyanima route

Tholing trade mart

The distance between Mana pass (18,400') and Tholing (about 12,000') is about 114 kms. From Gartok (15,100'), it is about 45kms. or 3 days journey. The route passes through Dunkar village which is in a green valley and has a good area under cultivation. The route has plenty of wild animals. Located in Sutlej Valley, Tholing is the site of the first and famous Tholing Monastery built by Tsenpo Khore alias Lha Lama Yeshe Od in the 11th century AD. As in 1960 there were about a dozen Tibetan houses in Tholing and a few cave dwellings could also be seen in the nearby low hills. Tholing is a warm valley where Tibetans grow barley, buck-wheat, peas etc. "Zimbu" (a scented grass) grows in plenty on the slopes of surrounding hills. Chaprang also known as Guge is at a distance of about 13 kms. Tholing mart, which was under the administrative control of Chaprang Dzongpen, was visited by some traders from Mana and Niti area in July-August.

Nabra Trade Mart

Under the administrative control of Daba Dzongpon, Nabra is located at a distance of about 40 kms. from Niti Pass (16,600') and about 48 kms. from Tholing. The route from Tholing to Nabra passes through

Manglang, Dongsha and Daba. There were a few Tibetan houses and a monastery at manglang. The Tibetans grow one crop of barley etc. Dongsha is in a green valley. Daba, headquarters of Data Dzungpon, has many Tibetan houses and a monastery. Some cave dwellings could be seen on the surrounding hills. The land around the village was under cultivation.

A sizeable number of Niti traders used to visit the Nabra trade mart during the summer months. Earlier the trade mart was located at Daba but due to some problems between the Indian traders and Dzungpan over the collection of taxes etc the trade mart was shifted to Nabra, which is in a green valley.

Shivchilam Trade Mart

Located at a distance of about 97 kms. from Niti pass and 45 kms. from Gyanima, this trade mart was visited by some Niti traders during the summer months. Some Johari traders from Gyanima also used to visit this trade mart as their Tibetan trading partners from Khyunglung village used to come to the area closer to Shivchilam for grazing their livestock. The trade mart was under the administrative control of Daba Dzungpon. At a distance of about 23 kms. from Nabra on the way to Shivchilam, there is a sizeable village called Dongbu which has a monastery at the top of a hill. The land in the village was under cultivation.

Gyanima Trade Mart

It is located at a distance of 105 kms. from the last Indian village of Milam. Johari traders used to cover the journey from Milam to Gyanima in 4 days. Halting at

Dung (14 kms.) on the first day, they used to cross three mountain passes, namely, Unta Dhura pass (17950'), Jayanti pass (18500') and Kungri Bingri pass (18300') in a single day and camp at Chhirschin (31 kms.).

Gyanima was the biggest trade mart in Western Tibet till 1961. Situated on a vast plain at the height of about 15,000 feet from sea level, there was no permanent Tibetan settlement in or around Gyanima. Some ruins on a hill at some distance from the market site suggest existence of some Tibetan establishment like a fort or a Gompa (monastery) in the area long back. There is a hillock type raised ground by the side of the marketplace on which there was a "Mani-wall."

A large number of Johari traders used to visit this trade mart from July to September each year till 1961. Some of these traders used to open branch business establishments at Tarchen and Gartok. Besides the Tibetans from the neighboring areas, a large number of traders from Sinkiang, Central Tibet and Kham area used to come to this trade mart to buy merchandise on cash or credit basis. A few traders from Rampur Bushahr, Ladakh and Bians-Chaudas as well as from Garhwal also used to come to Gyanima during the trading season. Gyanima trade mart was under the administrative control Daba Dzungpon.

Gyanima Chakra Trade Mart

It is located at a distance of 122 kms. from the Darma pass (18500') and 87 kms. from Taklakote via Harkong, and 8 kms. from the Gyanima trade mart. The traders of Darma valley used to visit this trade mart for 2-3 months for trade. They also used to visit Gyanima from

time to time. Chakra mart was under the administrative control of Parkha Tarzam.

(b) On Taklakot (Purang) - Tarchan - Gartok Route

Taklakote Located in Purang valley at a distance of about 50 kms. from Garbyang via Lipu Lekh pass (16,750'), this trade mart was/is visited by traders from Bians-Chaudas and Darma valley as also by the Nepalese traders from border villages of Chhangru and Tinkar. Some Nepalese from Jumla-Humla also used to come to Taklakote during summer months. Lipu Lekh pass being easier to negotiate, trade mart at Taklakote functioned a little longer as compared to other trade marts in Western Tibet.

Besides Tibetans of neighbouring areas, traders from central Tibet used to visit Taklakote to buy goods. The Indian traders from this trade mart also used to go to Thokar Mandi, located at south eastern shore of Mansarovar during wool shearing season to buy wool from nomads who used to visit the area for grazing their live stock.

Purang is a large fertile valley consisting of about twenty villages including Khojarnath and other villages which till 1959 were under Bhutanese control. The Chinese have since given a facelift to Taklakote and turned it into a modern border town. Purang has an historical background. Kyido Nyimagon started his campaign to establish the Western Tibet lineage of Tibetan kings from Purang in 10th century AD. Zorawar Singh's forces were defeated in Purang and he was killed at Toyo,

a village about 4-6 kms. away from Taklakote. Some of the soldiers of Zorawar Singh stayed back in Tibet. It is said that the Tibetans with thin beard living in Purang are descendants of Zorawar Singh's soldiers. During his visit to Kailash and Mansarovar in 1670 AD, Raja Baz Bahadur Chand fought a war with Tibetans at Taklakote to secure Indian pilgrimage to Kailash-Mansarovar.

Tarchen Trade Mart

Located at the foothill of Mount Kailash at a distance of about 61 kms. from Gyanima and 100 kms. from Taklakote via Mansarovar Tarchen (15,100') was a trade mart and more importantly a centre of pilgrimage to Kailash. It is the base for parikrama of Kailash. Till 1959 Tarchen was under the administrative control of Bhutan. Some Johari traders used to visit Tarchen during summer months for trade. Some Indian traders from Taklakote also visited Tarchen sometimes. Tibetan nomads from areas beyond Kailash range used to visit sheep during July-August.

Gartok Trade Mart

The summer capital of Western Tibet-Gartok (15,000') is located on a fast plain on the right bank of Gartung Chu, and is surrounded by hill ranges on the east and west. Till 1959 two Tibetan Governors had their summer headquarters at Gartok which was also the headquarter of Indian Trade Agency and the Chinese Foreign Bureau (sub office). There were a few Tibetan houses in Gartok. Traders from Johar, Rampur Bushahr and Ladakh used to come to this trade mart, which functioned till the last week of October.

c. On Gartok-Tashigong-Rudok route

Tashigong Trade Mart

Located in Indus valley, Demchok border which is at about 29 kms. can be seen from Tashigong. There was a sizeable tibetan settlement and a monastery at Tashigong. Gargunsa, the winter capital of Western Tibet is situated at a distance of 55 kms. towards Gartok. Some Ladakhi and Himachali traders used to visit this trade mart in July August. The Indian Trade Agent had last visited Tashigong in 1958.

Rudok and Rawang

Though officially not recognized as trade mart even by the Sino India Agreement of 1954, the Indian traders from Ladakh and Himachal Pradesh had traditionally been visiting these places for trade since long. These places were under the administrative control of Rudok Dzongpon. Rawang is located quite close to Ladakh border and Rudok is on Sinkiang-Gartok highway. The Indian Trade Agent, who had visited these places in the past, had not been there after 1954.

There were restrictions on travel by Indian traders or Trade Agency personnel from Western Tibet to Central Tibet through the interiors of Tibet and vice-versa as the 'existing routes' through which Indian traders were allowed to visit the trade marts in Tibet under the 1904 Lhasa Convention and 1954 Panchsheel Agreement did not include the routes through the interior of Tibet from Western Tibet to trade marts at Gyantse and Yatung. There was only one case of a Shauka trader visiting Lhasa to recover his dues from a Tibetan trader. His

name was Kharak Singh Pangtey later nicknamed Kharku Lhasa. He traveled to Lhasa through Kalimpong and Chumbi valley in the garb of a Tibetan.

Living Conditions

During their sojourn in Tibet, the Indian traders as well as the Trade Agency personnel lived in camps. The basic differences between them were that the traders camped in a cluster. They used ordinary tents. The Trade Agency camped in open areas and had special double-fly tents with attached bath for emergency use. These tents were procured from the famous Elgin Mills of Kanpur. The Indian traders and assistants/ servants crowded in their shop-cum-residences while the Trade Agency personnel had comfortable living accommodation. The Trade Agent, Doctor and Accountant had separate tents with floor coverings, folding cots, table and chairs. Two clerks shared a tent and the compounder was accommodated in the Dispensary. Class IV staff were accommodated in a separate tent and two kitchens. Apart from tents for individual officers and staff, the Agency had an elegant double-fly tent for entertainment purposes, which could accommodate over a dozen guests for sit-down lunch or dinners, besides the bar and service tables. The Indian traders had advantage over the Trade Agency personnel in the matter of social life and recreation. The older lot of traders met in the evening in the evenings in one or the other shops to gossip, while the younger ones played football (even at that high altitude) or indulged in card games. The Trade Agency personnel remained confined to their camps and worked till late hours. They received

newspapers and magazines only once a week, through couriers.

Unlike their counterparts at Yatung and Gyantse across Sikkim borders, Indian traders in Western Tibet had no communication facility. They depended on fellow traders or transporters for exchanging letters with their families in India. In emergency, sending of messengers was the only option for them. A good news from home like a birth in the family called for celebration. Individual traders used to host small parties on such occasions in which the main fare used to be meat and local drinks. The Indian traders celebrated national days like Independence Day and Gandhi Jayanti in their respective trade marts. They also observed Hindu festivals like Janmashtami.

The common factor causing discomfort and anxiety to both the traders and Agency personnel was unpredictable weather conditions. Come the month of October, an appearance of even a small black cloud in the sky would lead to apprehensions about early snow fall and blockade of the passes. From the last week of October, temperature steadily dipped, reaching below freezing point. The fall in temperature coupled with constant high wind threatening to sweep away the camps made life really miserable. To prevent wind burns of nose and lips, the Agency personnel used to put on surgeons mask, while traveling. In 1956, a Keralite had joined the Agency on deputation. He was newly married and had left his wife at his native place. He used to remain depressed and had grown beard and moustache. Once on reaching the camp, he removed his surgeons mask. He was amused to find two ice-balls hanging on his moustache. He wanted

to remove them with hand, but we advised him against it lest the moustache should fall. He rushed to the kitchen to melt the ice balls. On reaching Delhi, he started narrating exaggerated stories to his old friends about the life in Tibet. One of the Stories he told was that the temperature had fallen below freezing point and when he urinated, the urine instantly turned into an icicle.

Swami Pranavananda, had for the first time visited Kailash and Mansarovar via Ladakh in 1927-28, and thereafter made several trips there. He stayed in Mansarovar area continuously for over a year twice. He has somewhere said that the climate of Western Tibet was a test of human endurance. I realised the truth in this statement on November 9th, 1956, when I was stranded under heavy snow on the Tibetan side of Lipulekh pass for three days. It so happened that the unladed yaks, which we had engaged to clear the trek of heavy snow, could not negotiate the ascent of Lipu pass and went back. The remaining yaks laden with our records, camp equipment and personal luggage also returned to Taklakote. Our goods were abandoned in an open area. I and one of our staff members spent an uncomfortable night in the snow, On November 10th, some Johari traders passed through Lipulekh pass at mid-night when the snow had hardened. These traders could not go home via Kungri-Bingri pass which was blocked by heavy snow. A couple of pack animals of these traders had died after crossing the pass. On November 11th, the Chinese had arranged porters instead of yaks to carry our luggage. I crossed the pass at mid-night with the last group of porters. As I descended along the slope (on the Indian side of borders) on hardened snow, I saw a couple of

sacks full of Chinese silver dollars (Da-yuan) lying on the road. I pushed them off the road lest the Tibetan porters should pick them up. These sacks belonged to Johari traders. At some distance, I found a "hookah" and wanted to retain it as a souvenir, but unfortunately a Johari trader whom I met at Kalapani, the next day claimed it and I had to part with it. The Trade Agent had sent a riding pony to Kalapani for me. I reached Garbyang in the evening of November 12th, The Medical Officer rushed me to the dispensary for a through medical check-up. I had escaped the frostbite. I had passed the test of human endurance. I was then, just 21 years old.

Earlier in September, when the Trade Agent was at Gyanima, there was a report of early snowfall on passes leading to Milam. Tibetan transporters refused to go to Milam with wool of Johari traders. The traders took a panicky view of the development and insisted that the Trade Agent should not leave Gyanima till the problem was sorted out with his and local Tibetan officials' intervention.

Apart from unpredictable climatic conditions, the high altitude and non-availability of food provisions except for animal produce made life hard. Only healthy people could stand it. During his official visit to Western Tibet in 1956, S.K. Roy, Special Officer, Frontier Areas (SOFA) called the Agency personnel as "Super Humans".

Border Trade-Origin and Patterns

It has been suggested that trans-border trade between Johar Valley and Western Tibet, had developed in three stages. During the period of Halduwa and Pingaluwa, a small number of Tibetan-border residents

visited Johar Valley with their livestock laden with salt and wool for bartering with locally produced food grains. During the period of Sunpati Shauka, the number of Tibetan visitors increased. The two way trans-border visits for trade by Tibetans and Johari traders began after the arrival in the valley of new settle¹⁰. The time period when this "age old" trade had started could be determined through approximation of the age of the Haldua and Pingaluwa and Sunpati Shauka. It has been suggested that Sunpati Shauka belonged to the 14th Century¹¹.

The pattern of border trade from Johar Valley had undergone changes with major political developments on both sides of the border. Originally, the border trade between Johar Valley and Tibet was purely based on barter system and that too between Johari traders and their Tibetan trading partners. After establishment of their rule over Kumaon and Garhwal in 1815, the Britishers started taking keen interest to promote Tibet Trade. Their aim was to establish, in due course, trade and commercial relations with Tibet. To begin with, they gave indirect help to broaden the trade base. They facilitated availability of British mill produced broad-cloth, etc, for export to Tibet¹². The British expedition to Tibet in 1903-04 and signing of Lhasa Convention, trade marts were established and British Trade Agencies were opened to oversee the progress of British trade. The volume of trade increased considerably with the export to Tibet of textiles, etc and import of Tibetan wool to meet the demands of woolen mills. This brought about a major change in the pattern of trade as besides carrying out barter trade with their Tibetan trading partners, Johari traders started selling their goods to together parties against cash or on

credit. After the occupation of Tibet in 1950-51, the Chinese folded Tibetan markets with their silver dollars called "Da-Yuan" in early 1950s and introduced Chinese currency notes as legal tender in 1959-60, elbowing out the circulation of the Tibetan TANKA/ paper currency, as also Indian Rupees, which till then were freely accepted by the Tibetans. With the arrival of the Chinese, a variety of non-traditional trade goods were introduced in the market. A couple of enterprising Johari traders tried to introduce Indian motor cycles and Indian made Foreign Liquor in the Tibetan market. The Chinese had by middle of 1950s started buying goods like textiles from traders against payment in Da-Yuan. It was rumoured at that time the Chinese were buying textile, etc to sell the same on no-profit basis to Tibetan labourers working on road projects and also to nomads living in Changthang area who were forced by Tibetan officials and the government traders to buy goods from them at higher prices. By that time, Johari traders were seriously faced with the problem of repatriating to India their surplus money as there was no exchange facility. In 1956, Government of India issued an order allowing Indian border traders to import into India up to 500 Yuans per head, at a time. During the visit to Western Tibet in 1956 of Shri S.K Roy, Special Officer Frontier Area (SOFA), Ministry of External Affairs, Johari traders at Tarchen complained that 500 Da-Yuan was too meager an amount to solve their problems. Roy gave a sarcastic reply-Should the Government of India tell them how to make use of the loopholes in the orders which did not put restrictions as to now many times in a season, a trader or members of his family could bring in 500 Da-Yuan to India. In the meantime, the Chinese realized that Da-Yuan was being smuggled out of Tibet. This gave them

an excuse to take control of Tibetan Customs offices along the Indo-Tibet border trade routes. Tsering Shakya tells an interesting story about the background of introduction of the silver dollars called Da-Yuan in Tibet. "As a part of their propaganda, the Communists had always stated that they would pay for everything they acquired. The Chinese money was, however, not accepted by the Tibetans (since it could not be exchanged in India). With great ingenuity, the Chinese collected silver ornaments and religious objects in China, which were melted down into bullion. In Chengdu, a special mint was set up to produce old nationalist silver dollars known as Da-Yuan. This was used exclusively in Tibet. The circulation of Da-Yuan in Tibet served two purposes, first, it was acceptable to Tibetans because it could be melted down and resold. Second, the large scale use of Da-Yuan meant that the Chinese were able to undermine the circulation of Tibetan currency and make it virtually worthless" What a great ingenuity indeed to bring Tibet under the Chinese monetary system!!¹³.

The Tibetan uprising of March 1959 and the Dalai Lama's escape to India was the last major political development in Tibet affecting Indo-Tibet border trade and leading ultimately to its closure in 1962. Consequent to the uprising, the old Tibetan administration had been arrested. These Tibetan officials besides performing their official duties were engaged in private trade and as such, had commercial relations with Indian traders. Their removal from the scene was certainly a loss to traders. Johari traders also lost contact, in the wake of the uprising, with many Tibetans from outside Western Tibet who had been buying goods from them on credit basis. They did not turn up during the 1959 trading season to pay the dues of previous years and order for fresh supplies. We compiled a list of such

and other Tibetans with details of dues of Johari traders and took up the matter with the Chinese during 1960-61, who refused to entertain such cases. The Chinese took the stand that the Trade Agency was not assigned to Consular functions and thus could not raise such issues. About the genuineness of the traders' claims, the Chinese made allegations that Indian traders had been exploiting the poor Tibetans by selling to them goods at exorbitant prices and then charging high rate of interest on pending dues.

At the end of 1961 trading season, the Indian traders were not sure whether they would be able visit Tibet for trade in 1962 as there was a considerable suspense about the prospects of the renewal of 1954 agreement.

Seasonal Nature of Trade in Western Tibet

The trade marts and the Trade Agencies at Yatung and Gyantse in Central Tibet have been functioning from the very beginning on round the year basis. The trade marts in Western Tibet and the Trade Agency at Gartok functioned on seasonal basis. The main reasons were severe climatic conditions, absence of sizeable permanent Tibetan population at or near the trade marts including at Gartok, headquarters of the Trade Agency, non-availability of residential accommodation and space for shops and godowns. Another important reason was the impossibility of procuring replenishment of stock of trade goods as also ration for at least six months during winter.

The average altitude of Western Tibet is about

13000 feet from sea level. Save the river valleys, the land is barren with no vegetation except for thorny bushes here or there. There is high wind most of the time. The temperature drops to freezing point by November end. During winter months, the surface of rivers and lakes freeze and animals can walk over them. A large number of local inhabitants are nomads who move with their herds and flocks from one pasture land to another. Except for at Taklakote (Pulan) there were no large and permanent Tibetan settlements at or around the trade marts like Gyanima and Gartok. Government of India had a plan to construct an office and residential complex for the Trade Agency at Gartok. In Panchsheel Agreement of 1954, the Chinese government had agreed to "render every possible assistance for housing the Indian Trade Agency at Gartok". In 1958, a lease agreement was signed for the land at the existing trade Agency camp site at Gartok, but the plan for construction did not materialise.

1954 Panchsheel Trade Agreement lapses

The Sino-Indian Trade Agreement of 1954 on Tibet lapsed in June 1962 as the two countries could not reach an agreement to renew it. The mistrust had continued between the two sides beyond 1959 and the tension in border areas had increased. Restrictions had been imposed on the Trade Agencies in Tibet—they were no longer allowed to procure items of their daily needs like animals produce, directly from Tibetans. The Tibetans were discouraged from visiting Indian dispensaries. The Chinese instigated Tibetan transporters to raise hire

charges of riding horses and pack animals in Western Tibet. During 1961, Government of India circulated a questionnaire seeking views of all concerned including Trade Agencies about the desirability or otherwise of renewing the Trade Agreement beyond 2nd June 1962. Till the end of 1961 trading season, we had no inkling of the status of the negotiations. Hoping that the agreement may finally be renewed, the Trade Agents had not been warned to prepare closure of their offices. Some Calcutta newspapers reported on 3rd of 4th June 1962 that the Chinese Trade Agency at Kalimpong had quietly been closed on 2nd June and its personnel had been transferred to Calcutta. It was then, that the Indian Trade Agents at Yatung and Gyantse were asked to pack up and come down to Gangtok (Sikkim), which they did. Indian Trade Agent-Gartok (Western Tibet) and staff had already moved to Gangtok (Sikkim) for winter at the conclusion of 1961 trading season. They had no moveable properties left behind in Western Tibet. However, the Trade Agent and a small group of staff visited Gartok after the expiry of 1954 Agreement to formally close the Trade Agency. During the return journey, they retrieved some trade goods of Johari traders which they had stored at Tarchen. The Chinese provided a truck and pack animals to transport these goods to Taklakote and then to Garbyang village in India.

Resumption of border trade since 1997

Following the introduction of the Policy of Liberalisation in Tibet in 1980, the Chinese gave the impression to Tibetans that border trade with India may be resumed soon. Sometime in 1986, Ngopoi Ngawang Jigme, the former Chairman of Tibet Autonomous Region

(TAR) and the highest ranking Tibetan functionary under the Chinese rule toured Western Tibet and gave an indication at Taklakote about the possibility of resumption of border trade after a lapse of over 20 years. Almost during the same period, the Chinese were reported to be developing infrastructure on trade route across Nathula borders in anticipation of the resumption of trade. It appeared at that time that the Chinese were more interested than India in this regard, apparently to placate the Tibetans. The subsequent developments proved that the Chinese were indeed tough negotiators. What they agreed to was opening of the trade through only one route i.e. Lipulekh pass with Trade Centres at Taklakote on Tibetan side of the borders. While during last one decade a good number of Indian traders, mainly from Dama, Bians and Chaudas, visited Taklakote for trade, the number of Tibetan traders visiting Gunji suggests the unsuitability of the place as a Trade Centre. For Tibetan nomads living in the interior and the villagers inhabiting the Sulej Valley area who were the traditional trading partners of Indian traders, it is a long distance to come to Gunji with their live-stock. The following is a table showing the number of Indian traders who visited Taklakote, the number of Tibetan traders who came to Gunji and the volume of export and import trade, during last one decade:-

Year	Nos. of Trade Passes issued by India	Nos. of Tibetans who come to Gunji	Import from Tibet (in Rupees)	Export to Tibet (in Rupees)
1997	339	-	4,87,475	14,37,296
1998	346	-	32,99,230	7,34,444
1999	260	6	29,00,475	7,89,748
2000	322	4	29,50,750	9,30,380
2001	283	-	4,72,99,889	20,83,866
2002	449	2	7,20,96,717	24,69,557
2003	384	-	5,61,32,066	23,30,525
2004	457	-	14,87,87,772	38,41,840
2005	128	-	1,21,39,225	39,29,038
2006	115	-	81,64,306	2,40,665
2007	118	-	1,02,75,760	14,86,519

It would be seen from the above table that the balance of trade is in favour of China. Raw silk, consumer durables and of course, wool constituted major portion of imports up to 2004.

Since 2005, Indian authorities have banned import of raw silk to protect Indian raw silk production and also import of live-stock and animals as no quarantine facility exists in the border area. Since these two items of import

were profitable, the ban has discouraged some of the traders from going to Tibet and hence the decrease in their number. No Tibetan trader has visited Gunji, the Trade Centre on Indian side of border during the last five years.

The agreement with China for opening of one trade route to Western Tibet has not proved beneficial to all the border traders who were badly affected by closure of border in 1962. The traders from Johar Valley (Pithoragarh District) and Niti Mana (Chamoli District) cannot, for obvious reasons, visit Taklakote for trade. While conducting negotiations with the Chinese, Government of India does not appear to have strongly advocated opening of trade through other border areas including Himachal Pradesh and Ladakh. Incidentally, a limited trade has reportedly been going on clandestinely through Himachal Pradesh and Ladakh borders.

CHAPTER

2

CHINESE OCCUPATION OF TIBET

The Chinese occupation of Tibet has changed the life of Indian border residents who were for centuries engaged in border trade with Western Tibet. Fortunately, as a result of new awareness generated by freedom movement leading to India's independence the Shauka youths born in late 1930's onward had gone for education and after the closure of the border trade, they succeeded in making new careers. undoubtedly, the border residents went through an acute financial crisis for over two decades. The deserted villages and ruined houses in border areas. Particularly in Johar Valley continue to tell the story of their plight. the surviving old traders remember their days in Tibet with nostalgia and tell the stories of their adventurous trips to Tibet to their grandchildren.

I had for the first time come in contact with a Chinese in July 1955, when a local representative of the Sub office of the Chinese Foreign Bureau accompanied by an interpreter paid a courtesy call on Indian Trade Agent on his arrival at Taklakote (W. Tibet). This was my first visit to Tibet after joining the Indian Trade Agency. I feel recapitulation of the events leading to consolidation of Chinese rule over Tibet and the role played by People's Liberation Army (PLA) may be of interest. On New Year's

Day in 1950, the Chinese had announced that the task of PLA for 1950 would be to liberate Taiwan, Hainan and Tibet. this announcement was followed by the Chinese Government issuing warning to any government that support to the handful reactionaries and separatists in Tibet would be seen as interference in the internal affairs of China and it would be interpreted as an act of hostility against the Chinese people. The warning was unmistakably directed against India though without naming it¹⁴. The PLA carried out the task assigned to it in 1950 so far as Tibet was concerned. they could not dare to attack Taiwan which had solid backing of the USA. About 80,000 Chinese troops invaded Tibet from North eastern, Eastern and South eastern sectors across the upper Yangtse River on 7th October 1950. They destroyed the Tibetan military posts in Chamdo sector. The Governor General of Chamdo, Ngapoi Ngawang Jigme was arrested but made use of by the Chinese for negotiations with Tibetan Government . Later, he become a staunch supporter of the Chinese rule and has been holding highest position in Tibet. The PLA troops stayed put in Chamdo area till the 17-point agreement was signed between China and Tibet in Beijing on 23rd May 1951 under which China promised cultural, religious and internal political autonomy to Tibet in return for Tibet's integration with China . The Chinese troops finally arrived in Lhasa in October 1951¹⁵. The PLA troops advancing towards Tibet from across the Yangtse river met with some resistance from Tibetan troops deployed in Chamdo sector in Kham as explained above. But at the same time, a smaller Chinese force entered in Western Tibet without any resistance from the Tibetans. This force

came from Khotan across the Kuen Lun mountains, apparently passing through the Indian territory in the barren Aksai Chin region and entered the upland of North West Tibet, in a bold drive which took the almost undefended western part of the country completely by surprise¹⁶. The absence of regular army units and disintegration of local militia called Yulma long back had made the Chinese advance in to Western Tibet easy. It may be mentioned that the last time a military garrison that was set up in western Tibet was during the Tibet-Ladakh war of 1883-84 and since then there had been no deployment of regular army units¹⁷.

While the troops invading Tibet from across Yangtse river were said to belong to Chengdu Military Region, the soldiers who came to and have been guarding Western Tibet belonged to North-West Military Region of China. They are from the same group that was primarily responsible for resisting any possible soviet threat on China's northern borders¹⁸.

According to some Tibetans the Chinese troops coming to Western Tibet were ill-equipped and short of food provisions and still tried to follow the Party's directive that they should pay for whatever they acquired. According to a Johari shauka trader, a small group of the Chinese soldiers came to Gyanima trade mart in the summer of 1951. They camped at some distance from the trade mart and visited shops only once to enquire whether any of the Indian traders was having arms. They avoided mixing up with Tibetans or Indian traders. They declined to accept offer of food provision by local Tibetans or Indian traders. They were apparently short of

food provision as they were seen collecting weeds from river side and hunting for 'Kiang' (wild horse) for meat purpose.

By 1955 when I first visited Western Tibet, the Chinese had established themselves, though many of them were seen wearing cotton padded tunic and trousers with patches all over. The Chinese had opened a sub office of Foreign Bureau headed and staffed by Military personnel posing as civilians. This office had taken over foreign relations work and Tibetan officials had been debarred from conducting official dealings with the Indian Trade Agency.

The PLA played the main role in consolidating the Chinese rule over Tibet. In fact, from the very beginning, the Chinese generals had controlled the Communist Party and the security apparatus. To begin with, general Chang Ching-wu (Zhang Jingwu) was appointed in July 1951 as the Commissioner of Civil and Military Affairs. Later in November 1951, he took over as First Secretary, Tibet Work Committee of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and continued in that powerful post for 14 years. [He had earlier served as Deputy Chief of Staff of South-West Military Region. He was promoted in 1955 as the Chief of Staff of the Chairman of CCP, Mao Tse-tung, but was not moved out of Tibet]. He was succeeded as TAR Party Secretary by Gen. Chang Guo-hua (September 1965-67). He was earlier the leader of 18th Corps of the Second Field Army which led the PLA invasion of Tibet. The next three army officers to head TAR party committee were Commander Zeng Yongya (September 1968-August 1971), Major Gen. Ren

Rong(August 1971-May 1980) and Gen. Yin Fatang (May 1980-1985). Commander Zeng Yongya came to Tibet in 1962 at the start of Sino-Indian war. He commended 46th Regiment of the Fourth Field Army which was increasingly becoming a dominant political force in Tibet with 38 percent of key posts occupied by it. After the coup attempt against Mao by Defence Minister Lin Piao, Commdr. Aeng Yangya was removed form his position and banished from Tibet for his past links with Lin Piao in the Fourth Field Army. The first civilian to head the party in Tibet was Wu Jing-Hua (1985-July 1988). He belonged to a minority community. The present CCP Chief and Presedent of China, Hu Jintao took over as Tibet Party Chief in December 1988 and continued till October 1990 though he was conspicuous by his absence from Tibet for some time in the middle of his tenure.

The army generals had such a strong hold in the party and political affairs of Tibet that during the period of Cultural Revolution when the existing administrative, political and party structures were dismantled and revolutionary committees were formed, it was the same army generals who headed the new revolutionary committees. For instance, Zeng Yangya and Ren Rong headed the committees as Chairman from 2/1964 to 8/1971 and 8/1971 to 5/1980, respectively.

In order to establish an effective Chinese rule over Tibet, the Chinese had set up military establishments. In October 1951, they had formed a Military Region For Tibet under the leadership of Gen. Zhang Guo-hua. It was, however, downgraded later to the status of Tibet

Military District. On February 10, 1952, the Chinese announced the establishment of Tibet Military District Headquarters. It was inaugurated with a great pomp and show. It was seen as a key to an effective Chinese rule in Tibet. The troops of North-West Military Region were given representation in the Military District Command. There had been some kind of rivalry between the two armies. South-West Military group working at tandem with the Central Government at Lhasa dominated Tibet while the North-West army group patronized the Panchen Lama and his Shigatse group besides looking after the security of Western Tibet, which generally speaking remained a peaceful area except for Khampa activities from across Mustang borders.

Tibetan uprising of 1959-impact on Western Tibet

The Tibetan uprising against the Chinese took place in Lhasa on 10th March 1959. Thousands of Tibetans took to streets and formed a human wall around the Dalai Lama's palace for a week to protect him. On 17th March, the Dalai Lama accompanied by a small group of followers gave a slip to the Chinese and left for India. About 80000 Tibetans from different areas followed him into exile as refugees. Except for Western Tibet, the uprising had impact on different parts of Tibet including "ethnographic Tibet" (a term coined by H.E. Richardson to describe the Tibetan populated area in neighbouring Chinese provinces). No one from Western Tibet participated or was involved in the uprising. In fact, some of the remote areas of Western Tibet remained unaffected by the events in Lhasa and were not aware of

the Dalai Lama's escape until they heard about it on All India Radio. "In the nomadic communities of Western Tibet, the revolt in Lhasa made no impact and the people had not been in any way involved in the uprising, yet they were subjected to the antirebellion campaign on grounds and some of them had given food to pilgrims who had later on fled to India"¹⁹. Since the Indian Trade Agency personnel and Indian traders were out of Western Tibet when the uprising took place, there was no way for immediate assessment of the situation. However, according to some input subsequently received from Tibetans living in areas close to District Headquarters, immediately after the uprising, all the Tibetan officials-provincial Governors and district officers (Dzongpons) were arrested and the Chinese imposed direct rule over Western Tibet. The arrested Tibetan officials were produced before the "masses" for trial. Two Governors of Western Tibet-Rimshi Lobsang Tsewang and Karisipa and members of their families were reportedly subjected to severe physical torture. Rimshi Lobsang Tsewang was suspect in the eyes of the Chinese from the very beginning, as he was member of the team sent to Tshinghai province in search of birth of the 14th Dalai Lama. Later, just before the Chinese invaded Tibet, he visited India as a member of Tibetan delegation to seek help of foreign powers against the Chinese invasion. One of the serious charges against the two Governors was that they were in league with Indian "reactionaries". At the root of this charge was the Governors' help in collecting some construction materials for Indian Trade Agency's proposed Headquarters building at Gartok. It so happened that a few days before the conclusion of 1958 trading season, the Governors had called on the

Trade Agent and pleaded with him to expedite construction of Agency's buildings and offered help in collecting construction materials. The Trade Agent did not formally ask them to start collecting the material, and yet the Governors in their zeal to help took the initiative to mobilize Tibetan labourers and collected during 1958-59 winter months, some materials from river beds. After their arrest and during the trial by masses, they were charged for exploiting poor Tibetans by engaging them in collecting construction materials without payment of wages (The Chinese raised the question of payment of wages to Tibetans with Indian Trade Agent during 1959-60 and the Government of India finally agreed to pay the amount demanded by the Chinese).



With Tibetan villagers who provided animal transport during our visits at Trade marts

The exodus of Tibetan refugees from Western Tibet took place mostly during 1961-62. It was, in part due to the rumours of possible crack down on Tibetans by the Chinese. Initially these rumours had spread during 1959-60, when a few Tibetans of Purang valley were arrested allegedly for providing food and shelter to some Khampa

Pilgrims, who later tried to escape to India. Following the Tibetan uprising of March 1959, the Chinese had started in July 1959 a campaign called 'Three Strikes' anti-rebellion, anti-feudal structure and anti slavery. The Tibetans of Western Tibet were not involved in rebellion and basically there did not exist a feudal structure and slavery in that part of Tibet. Still, the Chinese teams visited Tibetan settlements and grazing camps to hold meetings of locals in which religion was the main target of attack. This coupled with the presence in and activities to Tibetan resistance forces from Nepalese borders of Mustang gave further fillip to the rumours of the possible forces from Nepalese borders of Mustang gave further fillip to the rumours of the possible crackdown which led to a good number of Tibetans escaping to India. They were initially sheltered in a temporary refugee camp at Sandeo near Didihat in Pithoragarh district and later shifted to refugee camps in Karnataka. Earlier in 1959 the Chinese had tried to strengthen security in border areas to prevent Tibetans from fleeing to India.

Western Tibet basically being a backward and nomadic area, there were no high strata families or feudal lords to be proceeded against under political campaigns as was done in other parts after the uprising. There were no reports about confiscation of properties belonging to those involved in the uprising and their distribution to poor people under the "democratic reforms". The animals and live-stock of nomads were, however, registered in 1959 and they were asked not to sell or slaughter more than a fixed percentage of animals.



*At Gangtok, with Communist Party Chief (in the middle),
the new Trade Agent and Chinese Foreign Bureau Chief*

After dismantling the Tibetan administration, the Chinese imposed a direct rule over Tibet including Western Tibet. Tibet was divided into eight Zones (prefectures) which were called "Diqu" or "Zhou", namely. Lhasa Municipality, Chamdo, Nyingtri, Lokha, Shingaste, Nachu, Gyantse and Ngari. Each prefecture was subdivided into seven or more counties (Xian) headed by "Xian-Drang". Between Xian and Xiang there is another coordinating unit called Dzong or "QU" headed by "Chu-Drang". Xiang is the lowest administrative unit which consists of a township or a group of villages and is assigned with the task of collecting local data, implementing orders received from above and serve as a primary legal-judicial body dealing with divorce cases and local disputes²⁰. Xiang-Drangs are locals and are elected on the basis of names short-listed by higher authorities. Chu-Drang are also Tibetan but not

necessarily locals.

Impact of Tibetan Uprising on Bhutanese enclave in Western Tibet

From 1684 till 1959, when Tibetan uprising took place, Bhutan had an enclave consisting of seven villages and some Gompas in Western Tibet. The villages included Tarchen, located at the foot hill of Mount Kailash and Khojarnath situated towards east of Purang valley. A Bhutanese representative called Tarchen Labrang was deputed on contract basis to Tarchen to administer the enclave. Despite availability of residential accommodation both at Tarchen and Khojarnath, Labrang used to withdraw to Bhutan via India during winter months. In due course, Tarchen developed into a Trade Centre which some Johari traders visited for trade during July-August every year. Labrang had good income from taxes he collected from Indian traders, Tibetan pilgrims and Tibetan nomads. The Tibetan nomads (Dokpas) from Changthang area, used to come to Tarchen during July-August for trade and to graze their live stock. During this period, they used to shear wool of their sheep and sell the same to Indian traders. Since they did not use their sheep as beasts of burden, their wool was considered to be of superior quality.

Writers and historians have different versions of as to how Bhutan acquired the enclave in Western Tibet. According to Dr. S.S.Pangtey, a Bhutanese lama was residing with the peremission of Tibetan government at Tarchen about 350 years back. His influence spread to local monasteries and in due course, Bhutan gained administrative control over the monasteries and the area

they were located at²¹. According to Ram Rahul. Ngawang Namgyal who came to be known as Shahdrung Rimpoche, was the head of Druk sub-sect of Kargyupa. He was the spiritual head of Bhutan. Senge Namgyal, the King of Ladakh (1569-1594) whose kingdom extended to almost entire area of Ngari Khorsum, including Kailash, Mansarovar and Purang region, granted in recognition of Shabdrung Rimpoch's spiritual authority, the villages around Mt. Kailash in Western Tibet to him for use for meditation²².

During 1679-84, the Ladakhis were faced with the attack by the combined Mongol and Tibetan forces led by Ganden Tsewang. Apprehending the possibility of a long drawn-out campaign, especially when the Ladakhi King had sought help of Mughals in Kashmir, the 5th Dalai Lama and his cabinet decided to seek a negotiated settlement with the Ladakhis. They made use of the good offices of Dugpa Mipham of Bhutan who was also the Pontiff/Patron Lama of the Ladakhi King. With his help, a treaty was finally signed in 1684 under which the King of Ladakh gave up the territory of Ngari Khorsum and the boundary between Ladakh and Tibet was approximated for the first time. The Bhutanese incarnate Lama was given an estate in Tibet (apparently the enclave in Western Tibet) in recognition of services rendered²³.

Historian Tsepon W.D. Shakapa also confirms that the 5th Dalai Lama had used the good offices of Mipham Namgyal, a Bhutanese incarnate Lama with several aliases for settlement of territorial dispute with Ladakhis²⁴.

After 1959 Tibetan Uprising, the Chinese dismantled Tibetan administration and imposed a direct

rule. The Bhutanese enclave was merged with Ngari prefecture.

Deterioration in Sino-Indian relations

By 1959, the euphoria of Hindi-Chini Bhai Bhai phase in Sino-Indian relations had steadily started turning sour. Till then, the Chinese followed correct protocol in dealing with Indian Trade Agency personnel in Western Tibet. They showed warmth during social interactions. The English knowing Chinese officials did not hesitate to tell us during private conversation about their commitments to Mao's thoughts. I remember even now their explaining to me about the ultimate goal of the Chinese Communism to establish a classeless society which provided to each one according to his needs and takes from each according to his capacity. After the 1954 Panchsheel Agreement, the Chinese were mainly concernec that we did not have dealings in official matter with the Tibetan officials, as they (the Chinese) said they were responsible for foreign relations. There were no complaints from Indian traders in Western Tibet about their being harassed in any manner. In fact, the Indian traders were happy that the menace of dacoits was over due to the presence of the Chinese. After the escape to India of the Dalai Lama in March 1959, the strain in Sino-Indian relations was felt by us, as there was gradual change in the attitude of the local Chinese officials.

There were three factors leading to the deterioration in Sino-Indian relations which ultimately resulted in non-renewal of the Panchsheel Agreement of 1954 and border war in 1962.

The Dalai Lama's escape to India in March 1959 followed by an exodus of Tibetan refugees into India.

India pursuing a forward policy aimed at securing border areas by opening police posts etc.

Tibetan insurgency and lingering suspicion in the mind of the Chinese that Indian soil was being allowed for anti-Chinese activities by Tibetan rebels.

These may be explained as follows :

The Dalai Lama's Excape

On March 10, 1959 there was a Tibetan uprising against the Chinese in Lhasa. The Dalai Lama and a few of his followers gave a slip to the Chinese and left Lhasa. He managed to cross over into India on 31st March. He was not only granted political asylum readily but Pandit Nehru in a message to him conveyed his greetings on his safe arrival. I was at that time in Gangtok (Sikkim) and had gone to Siliguri to join hundreds of people from Sikkim, Darjeeling, Kalimpong and Bhutan to welcome the Dalai Lama at Silguri Railway Station. The Chinese recated sharply to India's granting political asylum to the Dalai Lama. They considered ti improper and unfriendly for the Indian Prime Minister to arrange a welcome and to pay a personal visit to Mussoorie to meet the Dalai Lama in April 1959. The Chinese Government and media accused India of expansionist aims on Tibet, and criticized the statement on Tibet made by Pt. Nehru in Lok Sabha on 30th March²⁵. There is no doubt that the presence of the Dalai Lama in India at least till late 1970 was the core issue affecting relations between the tow countries. With a policy of liberalization

introduced in Tibet after the inspection tour of Lhasa by Party General Secretary, Hu Yaobang in 1980, there was some change in the Chinese attitude towards India as is reflected by the Chinese opening the Kailash Mansarovar route to Indian pilgrims in 1981. Earlier, the Chinese had allowed the Dalai Lama to send fact-finding missions to Tibet. Almost simultaneously, the Chinese allowed Tibetan refugees living in India and Nepal to visit their native places on Chinese "travel documents" and also permitted on selective basis Tibetans from inside Tibet to visit India to meet relations among the Tibetan refugees. During 1984-86, I had visited Bodh Gaya to attend annual religious discourses by the Dalai Lama. A large number of Tibetans had come from inside Tibet with or without the Chinese permission. The negotiation for reopening of Indo-Tibet border trade had also started during 1986-87 which resulted in the opening of Lipulekh pass for trade at Taklakote and Gunji in 1997.

The Forward Post

After the Chinese occupation of Tibet in 1950-51, India woke up to the urgent need to secure the border. The process of opening of border check posts started in 1951 and to man these posts, some young men from border areas were recruited. The Chinese resented India's establishing forward posts particularly in forward areas which they claimed to belong to them. On October 21, 1959, the first border clash took place in Ladakh sector. An Indian post was attacked and encircled by the Chinese. It may look ironical that on that very day the Chinese had hosted a party for us and everyone was in high spirits. I had fixed a meeting with the Chinese after the party to

discuss some urgent matter relating to Indian traders. Accompanied by junior colleague. I visited the Chinese office at 8 pm. The Chinese guard at the gate showed a hostile posture aiming his gun at me. My Chinese counterparts came out after some time but did not show the usual cordiality. The meeting ended abruptly. The Trade Agent was informed of what happened. He was listening to All India Radio broadcast, He told me the Chinese were apparently reacting to the news of the border clash in Ladakh of that day. After 1959 Indo-Tibet borders had become live with both sides monitoring developments in each other's border areas.

Alleged use of Indian soil by Rebels

After the Dalai Lama's escape to India, the Chinese made allegations that Indian soil was being used by Tibetan rebels for anti-Chinese activities. They named Kalimpong in particular which, they alleged, had become a "commanding centre" of rebellion²⁶. Kalimpong was then an important centre for trade with Tibet. The township was founded in 1904 when it became a ration supply centre for British expeditions to Tibet. Some rich Tibetan traders including Khampas who were engaged in import-export trade had set up business establishment in Kalimpong. There was already a sizeable population of the people of Tibetan origin in Kalimpong who were naturally concerned about the developments in Tibet. Then in the wake of the Dalai Lama's escape to India, a good number of Tibetan Government officials had come to and settled in Kalimpong, and they were highly critical of the Chinese policy on Tibet. Besides a network of spies, the Chinese

Trade Agency in Kalimpong was engaged in monitoring anti-Chinese activities including those of Tibetan resistance groups, which came into existence in early 1950s in Tibetan/Khampa populated areas of Szechuan and Yunan provinces commonly known as "Eastern Tibet". The Khampas had intensified their rebellion against the Chinese when they introduced socialist reforms in their areas in or around 1955. The implementation of these reforms had been postponed for six years in main Tibet on the grounds that the situation was not ripe. The Khampa rebellion slowly began to spread from Eastern Tibet to main Tibet. The main reason for this was the influx of refugees from Eastern Tibet into the relatively peaceful area of Lhasa. As the Chinese troops were moved into Eastern Tibet to combat the rising rebellion there, the Tibetan Resistance Forces (guerrillas) not surprisingly responded by concentrating against the Chinese in Central Tibet²⁷. They became active in Lokha area between 1957 and 1960. They were helped in training and arms dropping by the CIA. Mustang area in Nepal-Tibet border was the centre of Final phase of Tibetan armed resistance which continued till 1974²⁸. The Chinese charges of Kalimpong being "the commanding centre" of Tibetan rebellion was duly repudiated by Pt. Nehru in the Parliament.

Anecdotes

Mao's thoughts and radicalism guided the thinking and actions of the Chinese masses in general and cadres in particular till the end of the proletarian Cultural Revolution. As a part of the ongoing Socialist reforms and political education, the Chinese were required to

participate in the criticism and self-criticism sessions. It was a common practice for the family members to spy over each other. During Hindi-Chini Bhai-Bhai period, we had cordial relations with the Chinese officials in Western Tibet. We had been interacting with them in official meetings and meeting them in parties. However, the Chinese functionaries never talked about their private and family life. They seemed to me be totally devoid of emotions and sensitivity. With this in mind, it was a pleasant surprise for me when the commander of the Chinese security and the English Interpreter detailed with the Trade Agency, came to meet me at Tarchen located at the foot-hill of Mt. Kailash, when I was in mourning over the death of my mother in 1958. The English interpreter while paying condolence told me that I was lucky that I got news from home about the death of my mother so quickly. In his case, he said, the information about his mother's passing away in mainland China was conveyed to him by the authorities after two years. While saying so, he became a bit emotional. I realized for the first time that after all, the Chinese cadres were not indeed devoid of human feelings. I had no way to check if he later regretted his remarks as his companion could have reported the matter.

Introduction of a Hindi knowing staff in the Foreign Bureau

The Indian Trade Agency, Gartok (Western Tibet) was required to deal in official matters only with the Sub Office of Chinese foreign bureau which had three English interpreters, who claimed to have learnt English at Beijing

University, during the time when Mrs. R.K. Nehru, wife of Indian Ambassador to China was conducting some programme in the university. During the summer of 1957, the Chinese and inducted one more staff member in the Bureau who used to sit quietly during official meetings and parties. One day I was alerted by a Tibetan official that the new corner was a Hindi knowing staff member who attended our meetings and parties with the Chinese, to monitor the consultations that we had in Hindi among ourselves about the issues discussed. I brought this to the notice of the Trade Agent. I was surprised when during our next official meeting, the Trade Agent tried to speak in Hindi with the newcomer. The Chinese officials attending the meeting were embarrassed and the newcomer was not seen again in Gartok.

CHAPTER

3

DEVELOPMENT OF ROAD, RAIL AND AIR COMMUNICATIONS IN TIBET

To facilitate troops movement, the Chinese had started in 1951, work on two strategically important highways connecting Tibet with mainland China. They had employed thousands of PLA personnel and a large number of Tibetans including prisoners on road construction projects. During 1952-54 the Chinese had engaged 30,000 Tibetans-erstwhile farmers and herdsmen in road building projects paying them 3-4 Da-yuan per day.

By 1954, they had built over 2,000 miles of roads. Qinghai-Tibet highway known as Northern highway, connecting Sining with Lhasa was completed by the end of 1954. This highway is 1,975 kms. and passes through high and difficult mountainous terrain with heights of 15,000 ft. The first vehicle reached Lhasa by this highway on 15th December 1954. The 2,400 kms. long second highway known as Eastern highway connecting Lhasa with Chengdu, capital of Szechuan province was also completed in 1954. This highway also passes through difficult terrain. In 1957, the Chinese built a 3rd artery,

1,200 kms., connecting Western Tibet with Sinkiang via Aksai Chin²⁹. We were at Gartok when this highway was officially inaugurated with a colourful ceremony on 6th October 1957. The Chinese had combined National Day celebration with the inauguration of the highway. A large number of Chinese military and civilian officers headed by Wei San-chieh, who was introduced to us as head of Communist Party of Western Tibet, attended the functions. The senior Chinese officers and Tibetan provincial Governors and District Commissioners (Dzongpens) had started arriving at Gartok on 1st October to attend a banquet hosted to celebrate National Day, on that day. We were also invited. On sidelines, the Tibetan Governors hosted a party on October 5 which was attended by the Trade Agent and staff, two Chinese Foreign Bureau officials and Tibetan District Commissioners (Dzongpens) of four districts of Western Tibet. Wei San-chieh (a Tibetan) also hosted a lunch on October 13. This Sinkiang-Gartok highway was later extended to connect Gartok with Shigatse. It runs almost parallel to northern borders of Nepal. A feeder road connecting this highway with border town of Taklakote opposite Lipulekh pass was completed in 1960 and we had traveled by a Chinese truck from Taklakote to Gartok that year. During 1955-56, an 800 kms long strategic artery was built by PLA to connect Lhasa with Khasa (Dam) on Tibet-Nepal borders. This road was later extended to Kathmandu, capital of Nepal under the Chinese aid. During 1960s, the Chinese had built a road network through Tibet where virtually no roads existed till 1950. Construction of bridges over numerous rivers and streams was a major problem faced by the Chinese for several years, due to non-availability of materials like

cement, iron girders and timber. To ford the rivers, the Chinese used to raise the river beds by putting layers of stones and drive the vehicles over them. Construction now of major concrete bridges in Purang area suggests that the Chinese are no more faced with shortage of



At Chinese Foreign office, Gartok before leaving by Chinese Truck for Taklakote (1960)

cement etc. The systematic way the roads have been developed facilitates the Chinese troop movements to Indian, Nepalese and Bhutan borders with ease and without delay.

Besides developing strategic roads, the Chinese built four airfields in Tibet within a decade or so after occupying Tibet. One of these airfields located south of Lhasa is operational both for military and civilian use while

the remaining three can be operationalised at short notice as and when need arises. A 5th airfield is proposed to be built in Ngari (Western Tibet) to promote, as the Chinese say, tourism to Kailash and Mansarovar region, but in reality it is aimed at strengthening Chinese defence preparedness in Western Tibet.

The train service between Beijing and Lhasa has already started. The first train arrived in Lhasa in July 2006. Work on this mountainous rail line had commenced on 29th June 2001 and was completed on schedule. The rail-line is 1,956 kms from Sining to Lhasa and 4,064 kms from Beijing to Lhasa. It is the longest plateau rail-line with highest elevation in the world. It was an impressive engineering innovation to build this rail line at a cost of US\$ 4.2 billion, which passes through an extreme elevation and difficult terrains. The high altitudes require cabin pressurisation and extra oxygen for passengers. The Chinese have started work to extend rail-line from Lhasa to Shigatse which is scheduled to be completed by 2010. They are planning to further extend the line from Shigatse to Yatung across Sikkim borders. It would not come as a surprise if the Chinese also bring rail-line to strategically important Western Tibet in the near future. Whatever the Chinese long term objectives-strengthening defence preparedness against India, exploiting Tibet's mineral resources, colonization of Tibet by Hans etc, the Chinese achievements in developing road and rail communications are just admirable³⁰.

CHAPTER

4

PILGRIMAGE TO KAILASH-MANSAROVAR

Impact of Chinese occupation

Within a couple of years of the Chinese arrival in Western Tibet the menace of dacoits on pilgrimage and trade routes was eliminated. It was admittedly a positive development. On the negative side, the Chinese tried to regulate the pilgrimage to Kailash and Mansarovar. To start with they imposed restrictions on Indian pilgrims carrying photo equipments. Buddha Bose, a famous documentary film producer was not allowed to carry his cameras and photo equipments beyond Taklakote. Prem Nath, a well known Hindi film actor faced similar problem when he visited Kailash Mansarovar in 1955. He wanted to produce a film 'Gullu Ki Kailash Yatra' but his movie cameras and other equipments were detained at Taklakote. The intervention by the Indian Trade Agent did not yield results.

Sino-Indian Agreement 1954 on Pilgrimage and Trade

The agreement of 1954 was perhaps the first written agreement officially regulating pilgrimage to

Kailash and Mansarovar. The agreement stipulated six routes by which the Indian pilgrims were to visit Kailash-Mansarovar. In the notes exchanged following the signing of the Agreement, the Chinese agreed to construct rest house on pilgrimage to kailash and Mansarovar. The agreement stipulated six routes by which the Indian pilgrims were to visit Kailash-Mansarovar. In the notes exchanged following the signing of the Agreement, the Chinese agreed to construct rest houses on pilgrimage route from Taklakote to Kailash-Mansarovar. The Chinese allowed the Indian pilgrims to enter Tibet though six approved routes but discouraged them from visiting places away from the main route. Lipu Lekh pass route was, however, the main pilgrimage route from India. The Chinese did construct a rest house near Rakshas Tal in 1959-60. We had stayed for a night in that rest house in 1960 while on our way from Gartok to Taklakote.

Mansarovar

For the first time I visited Mansarovar in 1955 to see the boat of Swami Pranavananda at Thogolho monastery located towards south eastern shore of the lake. Swami had brought this boat from India in 1947 to reach the centre of the lake, measure its depth through lead dropping and to study the location of thermal springs in the bed of Mansarovar. For some reasons Swami stopped visiting Western Tibet from early 1950. The Chinese wanted us to take over the boat which we could not remove and it may still be lying in the monastery. As we entered Mansarovar area through Gurla pass in

Mandhata range we were bewildered by the captivating view of Mansarovar and Rakshas Tal with snow capped Mount Kailash in the background. There was a reflection of Kailash on Mansarovar though the distance between the two is over 16 kms. During my posting to Western Tibet I had visited Tarchen, the base for Kailash Parikrama eight times and had passed through Mansarovar the circumference of which is about 98 kms., sixteen times, though due to tight touring schedules of the Trade Agency I did not get an opportunity to go on Mansarovar Parikrama.

In the first week of November 1956, the weather conditions had deteriorated and there was heavy snowfall on passes leading to India. We were on our way from Gartok to Taklakote en route to India. We had been warned in writing by our Medical Officer against our taking a dip in Mansarovar lest we should catch pneumonia. Standing at the lake shore below Chiu Gompa, I and two of my colleagues did not know as to when we took off the layers of our apparel and jumped into the water which we felt was warmer compared to outside temperature. The attraction of the blue and clear water of the lake was irresistible. There was a thermal spring at some distance. We were told by Indian traders and some Tibetans that the surface of Rakshas Tal freezes during winter and Tibetans visit the island in the middle of the lake on horseback to collect duck eggs. They also told us that Mansarovar does not freeze. However, Swami Pranavananda, who had stayed at

Thugolho monastery during two winters, had witnessed freezing of Mansarovar too.

Kailash Parikrama

It is the most difficult part of Kailash Mansarovar pilgrimage. Many pilgrims used to end their 'yatra' at Tarchen, the base for Kailash Parikrama route including the distance to the locations of three monasteries en route is about 48 kms. Many Tibetan pilgrims used to do the parikrama in one day while others including Indian pilgrims normally took three days. Devout Tibetan pilgrims doing the parikrama through prostration movement took over ten days.

In the first week of August 1958 the Trade Agent and the team was on a visit to Tarchen trade mart. I received a message from home about the passing away of my mother I decided to go on parikrama of Kailash. Accompanied by a colleague I started from Tarchen at 4 a.m., we followed the route along the left bank of Lha Chu which originates from beyond Kailash range and falls into Rakshas Tal. To save time, we avoided visiting Nyanri and Dhiru-Phuk monasteries, both of which are located at some distance across Lha Chu. From across Dhiruphuk monastery the route moves towards south east direction behind Mount Kailash. The 6.5 km. stretch to Dolmo-La is a steep ascent full of rocks and stones. The physical hardship and fatigue is fully compensated

by the enchanting backside view of Mount Kailash. The pilgrims enjoy the bliss. Gauri Kund, a round shaped lake is located at a distance of about 1 km. through steep descent from Dolmo-La. We went to the lake shore and washed our faces. The water was very cold and broken ice sheet were floating near the shore. From Gauri Kund the route passes through a valley full of stones right up to the third monastery of the route namely Zuthul-Phuk. It had take us about thirteen hours to cover journey up to this point. We rested for some time near the monastery before resuming our journey to Tarchen where we reached at about 7:30 p.m. Next morning our party left for Gyanima.

Somewhere between Dhiru-Phuk monastery and Dolmo-la, we met a Tibetan couple. The male was carrying some bags and the female was moving by prostration. She had thick pads tied to her palms and elbows which touched the ground during the prostration movement.

Uniqueness of Kailash-Mansarovar Pilgrimage

Kailash Mansarovar are sacred places for Hindus as well as for Buddhists. A large number of Tibetan pilgrims have been visiting these places from far off areas like Kham and Amdo in Szechuan and Tshinghai provinces respectively. As mentioned, some of them do Kailash parikrama through prostration movement which

shows their devoutness. The Buddhists believe that going through physical hardship during pilgrimage they earn credit for next life. They stayed in the monasteries, lighting oil lamps and praying there.

For Hindu pilgrims there are no separate temples and hence there was no scope for carrying out rituals as they do during pilgrimage. There are no pandits or pujaris nor are there any vendors selling puja materials near Kailash and Mansarovar. More importantly, there are no crowds and queues to reach the centre of pilgrimage. What this pilgrimage provides them is an inner happiness, enjoyment of bliss and spiritual upliftment even by simply gazing from a distance at the overpowering view of holy Mount Kailash and taking a dip in the sacred Mansarovar Lake.

Resumption of Pilgrimage

Border Trade, as also pilgrimage to Kailash-Mansarovar had been closed in 1962 after the expiry of Sino Indian Agreement of 1954. The immediate impact of the policy of liberation introduced by the Chinese in 1980 was the resumption of pilgrimage from 1981- the resumption of border trade took place sixteen years later in 1997.

Group Pilgrimage

Till 1961 the Indian pilgrims made their own arrangements for travel. They were not required to carry passport or documents of certification but were to register themselves at the border check post in Tibet.

Now, under the new arrangement / agreement, group pilgrimage has been introduced. The Ministry of External Affairs invites application from Indian national desiring to go on pilgrimage and makes selection of pilgrims through a 'computer generated random gender-balance selection process'. Individual pilgrims are required to hold national passport and obtain the Chinese visa. Arrangement for travel on Indian side of border is done by Kumaon Mandal Vikas Nigam (KMVN) and the medical examination of the pilgrims is arranged by ITBP both at Delhi and Gunji. The Chinese look after the travel arrangements of the pilgrims on their side of the border. The duration of pilgrimage for each group is twenty six days plus four days stay at Delhi for obtaining the Chinese visa and undergoing medical examination. The cost of pilgrimage per head is as under:

For arrangements of travels on Indian side of border by KMVN including non- refundable deposit of Rs. 5,000.	Rs. 19, 250
Cost of medical examination to be paid to ITBP (with extra charges of Rs. 500 for a particular test and Rs. 2,500 for stress echo test)	Rs. 1,950

For travel arrangements
on Tibetan side of the
border-to be paid to the
Chinese. US Dollars 700

Expenditure on equipments,
clothings, stores, porters,
baggage, ponies and other extra
items required by individual
pilgrims.

Since 1981 to 2007, 294 groups consisting of 9,222 pilgrims have gone on pilgrimage to Kailash-Mansarovar. There was a plan to send 16 batches of pilgrims in 2008 but due to Olympic Games in Beijing there was delay in sending individual groups.

Future Prospects

The Chinese may develop the existing Kailash Mansarovar pilgrimage into a religious tourism to attract Buddhist pilgrims from countries like Sri Lanka, Thailand, Japan and China itself. This may happen when construction of the proposed airport near Kailash is completed and becomes operational. The Chinese may also construct in the near future hotels and restaurants in Kailash Mansarovar areas.

CHAPTER

5

HISTORY OF WESTERN TIBET (NGARI) IN BRIEF

Western Tibet is known as Nagri Khorsam. This name is derived from the name of a place located in the Indus Valley near Demchok border. The Chinese have given a new name, Shiquanhe, to this place. The area of Ngari extends to 650 kms. from Demchok border to Mayumla located in watershed of Indus and Brahmaputra rivers. For several centuries-1000 to 1684 AD. - Ngari Khorsum (Western Tibet) was a part of Ladakhi Kingdom. It was for this reason that Ladakh was termed as Western Tibet by Western writers and Greater Tibet by oriental scholars³¹.

Before a branch of Central Tibetan Dynasty arrived in Western Tibet in 10th century to establish a new regional lineage of kings, there existed some important and celebrated tribes of Tibetan stock in the Indus valley between Dardic country and Mayumla (watershed of Indus and Brahmaputra) In ancient Tibetan records, this area was known as Zan-Zun which included Purang, Guge, Rudok, Chhumurti, Spiti, Gazra or Lahul, Zangskar, Maryul, Ladakh, Balti and Gilgit, Even until

now, these areas are Tibetan- speaking areas with exception of Gilgit. Zan-Zun is the name of a tribe or lineage. Out of 18 main Tibetan lineage or tribes, Zan-Zun and Rma or Smra seem to have moved en masse around 4-5 centuries BC from their original homes in Central Asia or the watershed of rivers Yangtse Kiang and Hwang-ho, advancing by stages towards Zungaria in the west, where during their stay, they appears to have mixed racially with cattle-rearing Mongols and Turks, Invasion by new hordes seem to have compelled them to leave their adopted homes later and migrate and settle in the upper Indus valley and valleys of tributaries³².

The present population of Western Tibet is a product of a long process of blending of at least three distinct people, two of Aryan stock- Dards of Gilgit and Mons of North India and of Mongolian origin-the Tibetan Stock³³.

Ancestors of Kings of Western Tibet

The Ladakhi Kings Claimed to be the descendants of Nyatri Tsangpo, the first king of Tibet (about 200-300 BC). However their special and direct ancestor after whom the dynasty branched off from the Central Tibetan Dynasty, was Lang Darma. On the eve of his father's death (the 40th king) Tride Songtsen Sadnale in 815 AD, Lang Darma's claim to the throne was overlooked mainly due to the fact the opposed Buddhism. His younger brother Trisung Detsen alias

Ralpachen became the 41st king. He did good work for the country and Buddhism but faced opposition from his elder brother and from anti-Buddhist elements. Lang Darma succeeded in his plans to assassinate his brother, the King with the help of pro-Bon ministers who placed him on the throne without any opposition. Soon after becoming the 42nd King, Lang Darma started the campaign to destroy the teachings of Buddhism in Tibet. By 842 AD, the religious persecution had become so intense that a Buddhist monk took a desperate step to single-handedly assassinate him, which led to the end of the unified Central Tibetan rule³⁴.

End of a Long Lineage of Tibetan Royalty

At the time of his death, Lang Darma's Queen was pregnant and gave birth to a son and heir apparent. He was named O-Sung. The older Queen pretended that she too was pregnant and finding an abandoned boy adopted him and claimed that he was her son. He was named Yumtan. O-sung succeeded the throne in central Tibet and Yumtan went to Yarlung to establish a separate lineage of kings. O-Sung's two grandsons were robbed of all their possessions in Central Tibet by Yumtan and forced to go in exile to Ngari (Western Tibet). The older grandson, Tri Tashi Tsekpai became the King of Yarlung, the most eastern part of Western Tibet and Kyibo Nyimagon captured Purang and established the western lineage of Kings in Ngari³⁵.

Western Lineage

Kyido Nyimagon first occupied Purang and married a daughter of the local chieftain. Subsequently, he conquered whole of Western Tibet and also the areas of Ladakh, Zangskar, Lahual and Spiti. He had three sons among whom he divided his kingdom. The eldest son, Lha Chen Palgyigon was given Ladakh area. Tashi Gon II received Purang area and Ade Tsug-Gon the youngest son, got Guge area and the southern province of which Zangskar, Lahoul and Spiti are best known³⁶. Though the tree brothers were given separate areas to rule over, Lha Chen Palgyigon, the King of Ladakh continually claimed authority over the entire kingdom (of Nyimagon) as the younger brothers were in some degree of vassalage under him.

Ladakhi Kings-Lha Chen Dynasty

"Lha Chen" (Great God) was the first name of the first king of Ladakh. It became the prefix to the names of his descendants till the second Dynasty took over. In total 20 kings from this dynasty took over. In total 20 kings from this dynasty ruled over the kingdom of Ladakh from about 1000 AD till 15th century. The 5th King, Lha Chen Utpala (1125-1150AD) subject all the vassal chiefs, conquered a new province of Lowo east of Purang, invaded Kulu and forced the king to agree to pay a tribute to him. During the reign of the 12th King: Lha chen Ngorub (about 1300-1325

AD) Usage of sending novices to Central Tibet was introduced which was a death blow to the Bon religion in Ladakh.

The 19th king, Lodros (about 1440-1470 AD) subdued all the vassal chiefs and collected a vast quantity of tributes and presents including valuables, weapons ponies etc. from Guge³⁷.

Namgyal Dynasty

King Lodros was deposed by his own grandson-Bhagan (about 1470-1500 AD) who founded "Namgyal" (meaning perfect victor) dynasty which lasted down to the end of the kingdom. Including the founder, the dynasty had 15 kings who ruled over the Ladakhi kingdom almost for 365 years till 1835AD. Representatives of Zorawar Singh ruled over Ladakh from 1835 to 1841. The first governor was appointed for Ladakh in 1841. Bhagan was reportedly very fond of fighting but the details of the wars he fought are not known³⁸. Trashi Namgyal, 3rd king (about 1500-1530 AD) conquered Droshod, an area beyond Rudok. He defeated the army of the Turks which had invaded the kingdom. Tsewang Namgyal, the 4th king (about 1530-1569 AD) not only successfully faced the revolt by the vassal chief but also extended the empire. To end the continual warfare with them he took the vassal chiefs as hostages and placed his representatives in their castles.

During his time, Ladakh received 900 gms. of gold from Guge and 780 gms. from Rudok annually. During the time of the 6th king, Senge Namgyal (about 1569-1594 AD) there was an acute tension between the followers of Ningmapa sect (to which majority of Ladakhis belonged) and the Gelugpas. King Senge Namgyal did not pay much heed to the persuasion by Lhasa, raided some villages of Tsang and brought back booties to Ladakh. He did not spare Gelugpa monasteries³⁹.

Ladakh War 1679-1684 AD

Provoked by intermittent raids of Tibetan villages and harassment of the Gelugpa monasteries as also with a view to establishing Gelugpa monasteries in Ladakh as well as acquiring gold-rich Ngari Khorsum area from the Ladakhi kingdom, Lhasa government raised a huge army of Tibetans and Mongols under the command of Galden Tsewang, son of Dalai Khuri-Thai-Jie of Mongolia and invaded Ladakh in 1679/80. The combined force won the first battle and the Ladakhi force had to retreat. In 1680-81 Mongols captured Purang fort. The people of Guge rebelled against the Ladakhis and helped the combined force to advance towards Changthang Changla. In 1682-83, Mongols advanced to Leh and captured the town. In the meantime on the request of the Ladakhis the army of Aurangzeb from Kashmir came to their help. The combined force had to flee to Tashigong. They suffered another defeat in 1684.

Lhasa government now realised that the Ladakhis

could not be subdued by force and sought negotiated settlement. The 5th Dalai Lama's government cleverly appealed to the incarnate Lama of Bhutan who was the Raj Guru of Ladakh to mediate between the Ladakhi king and Galdan Tsewang. The Ladakhi king succumbed to the religious importunity of Raj Guru who was under the influence of the Dalai Lama, and agreed to hand over Ngari area east of Demchok borders to the Tibetan Government. Thus in 1684 the boundary between Ladakh and Tibet approximated for the first time at the present location⁴⁰.

Purang and Guge Kingdoms

As stated earlier, in the division of the kingdom of Nyimagon, Trashigon was given the Purana area. Nothing is known about his descendants. It is as believed that he had no children and as such on his death his kingdom was inherited by his younger brother-the king of Guge.

Ade Tsung Gon received Guge (Tsaprang) area and also the southern province which included the area of Zanskar, Lahoul and Spiti. Guge (Tsaprang) is located at a distance of about 13 kms. down the river Suttlej from Tholing. Three of the kings of Guge became famous for their role in Buddhist Renaissance in Tibet.

Bod-Chhogyal or Choe-Gyal

Those three kings of Guge could rightly be called "Choe-Gyal". Dawa Norbu explains that the Bon-

Buddhist conflict was the main cause of disunity among the Tibetan elite and the downfall of powerful Tibetan empire. Lang Darma, the last Tibetan king who was assassinated in 842 AD was a supporter of Bon religion and had, during his reign carried out intensive persecution of the Buddhists. In the face of which, there was a serious effort in some areas for Buddhist renaissance. For this, Ngari in particular became the principal agent where the service rendered to the doctrine of "Chos Byung" (the history of religion) by three kings find no parallel in other countries. The myth of "Choe-Gyal" then appears to be a post Lang Darma phenomenon. It was an Honorific title conferred posthumously by the authors of the history of religion or Lama Scholars on those Tibetan kings who were believed to have patronized Buddhism⁴¹.

According to Tsepon W.D. Shakapa, Tsenpo Khore was the famous king of Guge in the 11th century. The grandson of Nyimagon, the founder of the western lineage of the Tibetan kings built the Tholing monastery (probably in 1030 AD). Turning his rule of the Guge kingdom to his brother, he ordained himself a monk and took the name of Lha Lama Yeshe Od. He sent 21 lads to Kashmir to learn Sanskrit and to study the Buddhist Doctrine only two of them survived the heat and the rigours of the journey. They returned to Ngari in 978 AD and brought with them some Indian Pandits. One of the two survivors was Rinchen Zangpo (958-1055 AD) who became a famous translator and as in 1042 AD he was

the abbot of Tholing monastery.

After building Tholing monastery King Tsenpo Khore concentrated in his efforts to invite Indian Mahayana Pandit Atisha of Vikramashila to Tibet. While mobilizing enough gold for sending as gift to Atisha he landed himself in Garlok Jail. It was his great-nephew Changchub Od, a monk who took lot of troubles to fulfill the dreams of his great-uncle by having Atisha in Tibet in 1042 AD. Tsenpo Khore and his two successor kings played an extremely important role for the renaissance of Buddhist religion. They were perhaps conferred with the honorific title of "Choe-Gyal" by lama scholars posthumously⁴². Incidentally two family members, perhaps sons of King Tsenpo Khore who had become monks were known by their Indian names Nagaraja and Devaraja.

Expansion of Western Tibetan Empire towards India

Ladakh, Zangskar, Lahaul and Spiti areas which were inhabited by the people of Tibetan stock formed part of Ngari kingdom when the new lineage of Western Tibetan kings was established in 10th Century AD. Subsequently the Tibetan kingdom was further expanded to Kinnaur in Himachal, Barahat in Uttarkashi and some areas of Garhwal. Thus, the Indo Tibetan borderland from Ladakh to Garhwal was under Tibetan occupation during 10th to 13th century AD. During this period the Tibetan rulers had established family relation through marriage etc. with the local elites of the new areas of the kingdom

like Kinnaur and had depended on them for running the administration. That was the beginning of "Indianisation" of Guge regime. The Guge kingdom had greatly been weakened by the beginning of the 14th century which led to disintegration of Tibetan rule in Kinnaur area with feudals called "Thakars" or "Thakurs" declaring themselves independent. With the signing in 1681 AD an agreement of friendship between the king of Rampur Bushahr and commander of combined Mongol and Tibetan forces the remnants of former occupation of Kinnaur area was over⁴³.

CHRONOLOGY

Development in Western Tibet

922 Khyido Nyimagon, great grandson of Lang Darma, the last king of Central Tibetan Dynasty, established Regional Tibetan kingdom in Ngari (Western Tibet).

10th Century (Second half)

Division of Regional Kingdom among three sons of Khyido Nyimagon-founding of Lha Chen Dynasty in Ladakh and Kingdom of Guge and Purang.

1030 Building of 'Tholing Monastery by Tsenpo Khore@Lha Lama Yeshe Od, grandson of Nyimagon, and king of Guge who sent 21 Lads to Kashmir to learn Sanskrit and study the Buddhist doctrine.

1042 Atisha Dipankarajana, the great Mahayana Pandita of Vikramasila arrived in Tholing at the invitation of Lha Lama Yeshe Od (who however passed away before Atisha's arrival)

1470 Lha Chen Dynasty overthrown by a member of the clan and Namgyal Dynasty founded in Ladakh.

1624 Antonio de Andrade, a missionary visited Chaprang. He met the king of Guge. Dzungpon had a residence there which suggests that Guge kingdom had come under Lhasa Government.

- 1670 Raja Bajbahadur Chand visited Kailash and Mansarovar and attacked the Tibetan for in Purang valley to secure interests of pilgrims and traders from India.
- 1681 Treaty of friendship between Raja Kehar Singh of Bushahr (1639-1696) and Tibet under which Bushahr forces Joined Mongol-Tibetan combined army to fight against Ladakhis and in return, Tibetans gave all the upper kinnaur area to Bushahr.
- 1684 Treaty between Ladakh and Tibet under which the boundary between Ladakhi kingdom and Tibet approximated for the first time at the present location.
- 1812 William Moorcroft an East India Company official, visited Western Tibet and was detained at Daba for his delayed return from Kailash and Mansarovar and Johari Shauka traders arranged his release. He submitted a report to East India Company about the prospects of Pashmina wool trade with Tibet.
- 1841 Dogras of Jammu invade Western Tibet and Zorawar Singh killed at Toyo near Taklakote.
- 1842 Treaty between Jammu and Tibet.
- 1854 During second invasion of Tibet, Nepalese force destroyed Tibetan fort in Purang valley. The first Nepalese invasion took place in 1788.
- 1904 Lhasa Convention between Tibet and Britain signed under which British Trade Agency at

Gartok (W.Tibet) apart from the Trade Agencies at Yatung and Gyantse opened and border trade between India and Western Tibet got official recognition and protection.

- 1905 C.A. Sherring, Deputy Commissioner Almora, visited Western Tibet and persuaded Tibetan authorities to agree for additional Trade Marts in W.Tibet.
- 1941 A large number of Kazaks intruded into Western Tibet, damaged and looted monasteries around Mansarovar Lake and other places, looted merchandise of some Johar Shauka Traders and escaped to Kashmir, where they were given refuge.
- 1944 Two German prisoners of war-Heinrich Harrer (author of Seven Years in Tibet) and Peter Aufschnaiter escaped from a British internment camp in India and entered Western Tibet en-route to Lhasa.
- 1950 The Chinese troops belonging to Northern Army entered Western Tibet without any resistance from Tibetans. They came from Khotan across Kuen Lun mountains, apparently passing through Aksai Chin area.
- 1954 Panchsheel Agreement on trade and intercourse between Tibet region of China and India signed.
- 1957 Sinkiang-Gartok highway was inaugurated on 6th October. Party chief of ALI (Chinese name for Ngari) Wei San-Chieh was present on the

occasion.

- 1959** Tibetan uprising against the Chinese rule, at Lhasa and the Dalai Lama's escape to India. Provincial administration of Western Tibet dismantled and Governors and District Officers arrested.
- Over three hundred years old Bhutanese enclave in Western Tibet including Tarchen and Khojarnath reverts back to Tibet.
- First border clash between Indian border post and the Chinese troops took place in Ladakh sector on October 21.
- 1960** Gartok-Taklakote road was opened to traffic.
- 1961-62** Exodus of Tibetan refugees into India from Western Tibet.
- 1962** The Panchsheel Agreement of 1954 expired on 3rd June and consequently border trade and pilgrimage to Kailash-Mansarovar closed. Sino-Indian War.
- 1981** Group-Pilgrimage to Kailash-Mansarovar resumed through Lipulekh pass-Taklakote route.
- 1997** Border trade resumed through Lipulekh pass-Taklakote route with Trade Centre at Taklakote (Tibet) and Gunji (India).

Chapter

6

Laxman Singh Jangpangi, Padma Shri

On January 25, 1959 Shri Laxman Singh Jangpangi, the then Indian Trade Agent, GARTOK (Western Tibet), was in Almora, spending his well earned leave with his family. On the same day, the Northern Division of the Ministry of External Affairs was trying to contact him as the President had approved award of **Padma Shri** to him. Later in the evening when Republic Day 1959 honours list was announced his friends and colleagues started making enquiries from the Political Office in Sikkim regarding his whereabouts. From the next days, messages/letters of congratulations started pouring in. In his letter. Shri S.Dutt, the then Foreign Secretary, described the award of Padma Shri to Shri Jangpangi as a fitting recognition to his "selfless and strenuous work over a period of years under the most difficult conditions". Paying equally warm compliments to Shri Jangpangi, Padma Shri Apa B. Pant, Political Officer in Sikkim in his letter said that Shri Jangpangi's "hard and selfless work in the cause of the country has gained for him the gratitude and thanks of the country".



*Padma Shri Laxman Singh Jangpangi
with Pt. Jawahar Lal Nehru*

Shri J.S. Mehta, the then Director (China) and Shri S.K. Roy, Special Officer Frontier Area (SOFA) in the Ministry of External Affairs played important role in highlighting the work and sacrifices of Shri Jangpangi for due national recognition. Shri S.K. Roy had visited Western Tibet in 1956 and had toured with Shri Jangpangi and team to the trade marts of Taklakote, Darchin, Gyanima and Gartok. He was the first senior Govt. of India Officer to visit Western Tibet. He had gained first hand knowledge of the working conditions in Western Tibet. At the time of his departure for India via Shipki-Shimla route. Shri Roy described the Trade Agent and his staff as "Super-Humans" to live and work under the most trying conditions in place like Western Tibet. Shri J.S. Mehta (who later became Foreign Secretary) had been in touch with Shri Jangpangi's work and sent a letter of congratulations to him saying "There are very few civil servants in the country who have endured such hardships in discharge of their duties as you do on your annual trek to Western Tibet. Despite the rigours of the climate as well as the discomfort of living conditions, you have established a name for yourself and been an effective help to our people." For apparent reasons, Shri Mehta could not give more details of Shri Jangpangi's contributions particularly regarding his warning about the Chinese constructing a road through Indian territory of Aksai Chin.

Shri Jangpangi was the first person from the Kumaon hills to be honoured with the civilian award of Padma Shri in 1959. It was surprising that no politicians,

organization or individuals from Kumaon took pride in a fellow-Kumaoni being honoured. On the other hand, Shri Bhakt Darshan, Member of Parliament from Garhwal had shown his affinity as a man from UP hill region by sending a letter of congratulations to Shri Jangpangi.

The investiture ceremony was held on 8th April 1959, when the President of India presented the insignia of Padma Shri to Shri Jangpangi.

FAMILY BACKGROUND Son of Rai Saheb Soban Singh, Shri Laxman Singh was born in Burfu in Johar Valley on 24th July, 1905. He belonged to a rich family. His grand father, Phannu Jangpangi was awarded with a certificate of dagger and a medal by the British Government in recognition of his cooperation with the British administration. His father, Soban Singh was conferred upon the title of "Rai Saheb" for his services to British administration. As in 1930, Rai Saheb held considerable landed property paying a revenue of Rs. 200 (Rupees two hundred).

Shri Laxman Singh Jangpangi did his matriculation and Intermediate Science from Almora in 1926. He studied up to B.A. Final in Allahabad University.

SERVICE CAREER Shri Jangpangi joined service in 1930 as an Accountant in British Trade Agency, Gartok (Western Tibet). The post of Accountant in the Trade Agency was of the second in command. He was given an officiating promotion as Trade Agent during the year

1941-42. He got his regular promotion as Trade Agent, Gartok in 1946 and remained in the post till 1959 when he was transferred to Indian Trade Agency, Yatung in Chumbi valley across Sikkim borders. He was the only Indian Officer who had traveled through five trade routes to Western Tibet-via Lipulekh pass, Unta Kungri-Bingri pass, Chor Hoti-Niti pass, Shimla-Shipki pass and Zojila-Taglungla pass.

SELECTION IN IFS (B) The formation of IFS(B) had been delayed. It was finally constituted in 1956. Shri Jangpangi, a Sikkim cadre officer till then, was selected for IFS (B). Unfortunately, he did not have enough service to get promotion to higher rank or posting to better stations abroad. On superannuation, he was to retire at the age of 55 in 1960.

POSTING TO YATUNG Shri Jangpangi was transferred to Indian Trade Agency, Yatung in December 1959. For the first time in his 29 years of service, he got a posting to a family station and expected to lead a relaxed life. He had a beautiful Government bungalow with a large apple and vegetable garden and spacious our house. (I visited Yatung in February 1960 to finalise our annual report on Western Tibet tour). But that was not to happen unfortunately. He was, at that stage faced with twin problems-he had been informed that he was on superannuation to retire in July 1960 and in the wake of Tibetan uprising of March 1969, Yatung area had become a hot bed of political activities and the Trade Agent was required to monitor the situation, which he did effectively.

Regarding the retirement, Shri Jangpangi was mainly worried about his children's education-his two daughters were still studying in high school in Lucknow and three sons were yet to get admission in good schools. He still had not decided about the place for post-retirement settlement. Govt. of India did grant him extension of service but in piece-meal manner. He finally retired three months after the closure of Trade Agencies in Tibet in June 1962. He temporarily shifted to Kalimpong and finally settled in Haldwani.

His life in 1930s and thereafter A few pages of his Tour Diaries of 1930 and 1937 are available. A perusal of these diaries gives the impression that he was physically and socially active. Those days British Trade Agency of Gatok (W. Tibet) was under the British Political Agent at Shimla and as such, the Trade Agent and Staff spent winter months at Shimla. Shri Jangpangi had a close circle of friends at Shimla and maintained contacts with respectable people of Rampur Blusher and Ladakh. During tours of Western Tibet, he went out for hunting of barhal and spent leisure time playing chess, making rounds of the market and meeting acquaintances and relatives among the traders.

It seems there was a big change in him after his promotion as Trade Agent and transfer of his winter headquarters from Shimla to Gangtok (Sikkim). Over the period of five years, during which I worked under him in 1950s, I found him to be a loner. He avoided active social life. He had a few personal friends like late Shri Diwan

Singh Tolia and Shri Nirmal C. Sinha, Director-Namgyal Institute of Tibetology, Gangtok. The lack of company with intellectual compatibility during the long years of his posting in Tibet had added to physical hardship and discomfort. He was constantly worried about the education and future of his children.

A man of peaceful nature Shri Jangpangi was a man of peaceful nature. I never saw him lose temper or mouthing bad language against anyone. He remained calm and calculated even in adverse situation, though at times, personally speaking it caused irritation. He would never give an impression of being excited or happy over favourable developments nor would he easily get upset over adverse conditions. On October 21, 1959, I had gone to the Chinese SubOffice of Foreign Bureau with prior appointment to discuss some official matter. It was already dark. A colleague of mine carrying a petromax lamp accompanied me. As we approached the entrance of the Chinese Office, a Chinese armed guard showed a hostile posture, aiming his gun at me. My Chinese counterpart, whom I had come to meet, appeared at the gate after some time but did not behave properly. The meeting ended abruptly. I was clueless about the sudden change in the attitude of the Chinese who had hosted a sumptuous party for us earlier during the day. I was highly agitated and went straight to Shri Jangpangi's camp to report the incident. He listened to my story and tried to calm me down. He then said that the Chinese were apparently reacting to the border incident in Ladakh sector that took place that very day.

He had learnt about it through All India Radio news. He was not at all disturbed as I was, over the incident.

Caution-a personal trait Shri Jangpangi was cautious in his official and personal dealings. He would never takes decisions or make commitments in haste. In dealing with the Chinese, even at social level, he was all the more careful and would always consider the pros and cons before taking up any matter with them. In 1958 we had entered Western Tibet via Shimla-Shipki route. We were stranded at Mayang village across Shipki pass for 3-4 days for want of animal transport. It was very hot during the day time, so I along with a colleague went to Mayang Chu for a swim. We were surprised to find plenty of cold water trout in Mayang Chu. We called a couple of staff members and diverted a small branch of the river. We caught about four sacks full of fish. We passed on some fish to the Chinese guards accompanying us. When told about our giving of the fish to the Chinese, Shri Jangpangi expressed his displeasure over my action, saying that the Chinese will make an issue of it. Later, I was surprised how prophetic he was when during our first official meeting of the season at Gartok, the Chinese lodged a verbal protest over my action-catching fish and thereby hurting the religious sentiments of Tibetans.

Shri Jangpangi's gift to the Institute of Tibetology
During a visit to Namgyal Institute of Tibetology at Gangtok (Sikkim), one may see a small image of Avalokiteswara (Chatur-Bhuja) on display. This valuable

artifact was presented to the institute by Shri Jangpangi in February 1963. According to Dr. Nirmal C. Sihna, Director of the Institute of Tibetology, also a close friend of Shri Jangpangi, the image was attracting the attention of lot of visitors.

His Spiced Tea Shri Jangpangi was fond of good food. He would prefer to have non-vegetarian items in his lunch or dinner. Two of our staff members were excellent cooks and skilled hunters, too. One of them worked with Shri Jangpangi. The "Spiced tea" that Shri Jangpangi was used to, was much talked about in our Political Office. So much so, that his Sikkimese colleagues would drop by his office on one pretext or the other during tea-time to share the "Spiced tea".

His passing away Shri Jangpangi passed away at Haldwani in 1976. He was not destined to see his children making progress in their respective careers and his eldest son, Shri Bala Singh the getting prestigious "National Mineral Award".

I had last met Shri Jangpangi at Haldwani in 1971, before I left for Baghdad (Iraq.) As always, I pleaded with him to write his memoirs. To avoid the subject, he asked me to get him a good typewriter, first.

Annexure: I

Convention Between Great Britain and Thibet (1904) [385]

Signed at Lhasa, 7 September, 1904

Whereas doubts and difficulties have arisen as to the meaning and validity of the Anglo-Chinese Convention of 1890, and the Trade Regulations of 1893 and as to the liabilities of the Thibetan Government under these Agreements; and whereas recent occurrences have tended towards a disturbance of the relations of friendship and good understanding which have existed between the British Government and the Government of Thibet; and whereas it is desirable to restore peace and amicable relations, and to resolve and determine the doubts and difficulties as aforesaid, the said Governments have resolved to conclude a Convention with these objects and the following Articles have been agreed upon by Colonel F.E. Younghusband, C.I.E. in virtue of full powers vested in him by His Britannic Majesty's Government and on behalf and on behalf of that said Government, and LoSang Gyal-Tsen, the Gaden Ti-Rimpoche, and the Representatives of the Council of the three monasteries, Sera, Dre-pung, and Gaden, and of the ecclesiastical and lay officials of the National Assembly on behalf of the Government of Thibet.

I. The Government of Thibet engages to respect the

Anglo-Chinese Convention of 1890 and to recognize the frontier between Sikkim and Thibet, as defined in Article 1 of the said Convention, and to erect boundary pillars accordingly.

- II. The Thibetan Government undertakes to open forthwith trade marts to which all British and Thibetan subjects shall have free right of access at Gyantse and Gartok, as well as at Yatung.

The Regulations applicable to the trade mart at Yatung, under the Anglo-Chinese Agreement of 1893, Shag, subject to such amendments as may hereafter be agreed upon by common consent between the British and Thibetan Governments, apply to the marts above mentioned.

In addition to establishing trade marts at the places mentioned, the Thibetan Government undertakes to place no restrictions on the trade by existing routes, and to consider the question of establishing fresh trade marts under similar conditions if development of trade requires it.

- III. The question of the amendment of the Regulations of 1893 is reserved for separate consideration, and the Thibetan Government undertakes to appoint fully authorized Delegates to negotiate with the Representatives of the British Government as to the details of the amendments required.
- IV. The Thibetan Government undertakes to levy no dues of any kind other than those provided for in the tariff to be mutually agreed upon.
- V. The Thibetan Government undertakes to keep the

roads to Gyantse and Gartok from the frontier clear of all obstruction and in a state of repair suited to the needs of the trade, and to establish and Yatung, Gyantse, and Gartok, and at each of the other trade marts that may hereafter be established, a Thibetan Agent, who shall receive from the British Agent appointed to watch over British trade at the marts in question any letter which the letter may desire to send to the Thibetan or to the Chinese authorities. The Thibetan Agent shall also be responsible for the due delivery of such communications and for the transmission of replies.

- VI. As an indemnity to the British Government for the expenses incurred in the dispatch of armed troops to Lhasa, to exact reparation for breaches of Treaty obligation and for the insults offered to and attacks upon the British Commissioner and his following and escort, the Thibetan Government engages to pay a sum of 500,000 pound, equivalent to 75 Lakhs of rupees to the British Government.

The indemnity shall be payable at such places as the British Government may from time to time, after due notice, indicate, whether in Thibet or in the British districts of Darjeeling or Jalpaiguri, in seventy-five annual installment of 1 lack of rupees each, on the 1st January in each year, beginning from the 1st January, 1906.

- VII. As security for the payment of the above-mentioned indemnity and for the fulfillment of the provisions relative to trade marts specified in Articles EU, III, IV and EV, the British Government

shall continue to occupy the Chumbi Valley until the indemnity has been paid, and until the trade marts have been effectively opened for three years, whichever date may be the later.

- VIII. The Thibetan Government agrees to raze all forts and fortifications and remove all armaments which might impede the course of free communication between the British frontier and the towns of Gyantse and Lhasa.
- IX. The Government of Thibet engages that, without the previous, consent of the British Government.
- a. No portion of Thibetan territory shall be ceded, sold, leased, mortgaged or other wise given for occupation to any foreign Power.
 - b. No such Power shall be permitted to intervene in Thibetan affairs;
 - c. No Representatives or Agents of any foreign Power shall be admitted to Thibet;
 - d. No concessions for railways, roads, telegraphs, mining or other rights, shall be granted to any foreign Power, or the subject of any foreign power. In the event of consent to such concessions being granted similar or equivalent concessions shall be granted to the British Government.
 - e. No Thibetan revenues, whether in kind or in cash, shall be pledged or assigned to any foreign Power, or to the subject of any foreign Power.
- X. In witness whereof the negotiators have signed the

same, and affixed thereunto the seals of their arms.

Done in quintuplicate at Lhasa, this 7th day of September, in the year of our Lord 1904, corresponding with the Thibetan date, the 27th of the 7th month of the Wood Dragon year.

(Seal of Dalai Lama, affixed by the Ga-den
Ti-Rimpoche)

(Seal of Thibet Frontier Commission)

(Seal of British Commisioner)

(Seal of Council)

(Seal of the Dre-pung Monastery)

(Seal of Se-ra Monastery)

(Seal of Ga-den Monastery)

(Seal of National Assembly)

F.E. Younghusband, Colonel,

British Commissioner

In proceeding to the signature of the convention, dated this day, the Representatives of Great Britain and Thibet declare that the English text shall be binding.

(Seal of Dalai Lama, affixed by the Ga-den
Ti-Rimpoche)

(Seal of Thibet Frontier Commission)

(Seal of British Commisioner)

(Seal of Council)

(Seal of the Dre-pung Monastery)

(Seal of Se-ra Monastery)

(Seal of Ga-den Monastery)

(Seal of National Assembly)

F.E. Younghusband, Colonel,

British Commissioner

This Convention was ratified by the Viceroy and Governor-General of India in Council at Simla on the 11th day of November, A.D. 1904.

S.M. Fraser

Secretary to the Government of India

(Foreign Department)

Declaration Signed by his Excellency the Viceroy and Governor-General of India on the 11 November, 1904, and Appended to the Ratified Convention of 7 September, 1904.

His Excellency the Viceroy and Governor-General of India, having ratified the Convention which was concluded at Lhasa on 7th September, 1904, by Colonel Younghusband, C.I.E., British Commissioner for Thibet Frontier Matters, on behalf of His Britannic Majesty's Government; and by Lo-Sang Gyal-Tsen, the Ga-den Ti-Rimpoche, and the Representatives of the Council, of the three Monasteries Sera, Drepung, and Ga-den, and of the ecclesiastical and lay official of the National Assembly, on behalf of the Government of Thibet, is pleased to direct as an act of grace that the sum of money

which the Thibetan Government have bound themselves under the terms of Article VI of the said Convention to pay to His Majesty's Government as an indemnity for the expenses incurred by the latter in connection with the dispatch of armed forces to Lhassa be reduced from 75,00,000 rupees to 25,00,000 rupees; and to declare that the British occupation of the Chumbi valley shall cease after the due payment of three annual installments of the said indemnity as fixed by the said Article: Provided, however, that the trade marts as stipulated in Article [p. I of the convention shall have been effectively opened for three years as provided in Article VI of the Convention; and that in the meantime, the Thibetans shall have faithfully complied with the terms of the said Convention in all other respects.

Amphill

Viceroy and Governor-General of India

Annexure: II

AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE REPUBLIC OF INDIA AND THE PEOPLES'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA ON TRADE AND INTERCOURSE BETWEEN TIBET REGION OF CHINA AND INDIA

Peking, 29 April 1954

The Government of the Republic of India and The Central People's Government of the People's Republic of China, Being desirous of promoting trade and cultural intercourse between Tibet Region of China and India and of facilitating pilgrimage and travel by the peoples of China and India, Have resolved to enter into the present agreement based on the following principles:

- (1) mutual respect for each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty,
- (2) mutual non-aggression.
- (3) mutual non-interference in each other's internal affairs, (4) equality and mutual benefit, and (5) peaceful co-existence. And for this purpose have appointed as their respective Plenipotentiaries:

The Government of the Republic of India,

H.E. Nedyam Raghavan, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of India accredited to the People's Republic of China;

the Central People's Government of the People's Republic of China, H.E. Chang Han-fu, Vice- Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Central People's Government, who having examined each other's credentials and finding them in good and due form, have agreed upon the following: Article I The High Contracting Parties mutually agree to establish Trade Agencies:

- (1) The Government of India agrees that the Government of China may establish Trade Agencies at New Delhi. Calcutta and Kalimpong.
- (2) The Government of China agrees that the Government of India may establish Trade Agencies at Yatung, Gynatse and Gartok. The Trade Agencies of both Parties shall be accorded the same status and same treatment. The Trade Agents of both Parties shall enjoy freedom from arrest while exercising their functions, and shall enjoy in respect of themselves, their wives and Children who are dependent on them for livelihood, freedom from search. The Trade Agencies of both Parties shall enjoy the privileges and immunities for couriers, mail-bags and communications in code. Article II The High Contracting Parties agree that traders of both countries known to be customarily and specifically engaged in trade between Tibet Region of China and India may trade at the following places
 - (1) The Government of China agrees to specify (1) Yatung, (2) Gyantse and (3) Gyanima-Khargo, (4) Gyanima-Chakra, (5) Ramura, (6) Dongbra, (7) Pulang-Sumdo, (8) Nabra, (9) Shangtse and (10)

Tashigong as markets for trade; the Government of India agrees that in future, when in accordance with the development and need of trade between the Air District of Tibet Region of China and India, it has become necessary to specify market for trade in the corresponding district in India adjacent to the Ari District of Tibet Region of China, it will be prepared to consider on the basis of equality and reciprocity to do so.

Article III

The High Contracting Parties agree that pilgrimage by religious believers of the two countries shall be carried on in accordance with the following provisions:

(1) Pilgrims from India of Lamaist, Hindu and Buddhist faiths may visit Kang Rimpoche (Kailas) and Mavern Tso (Manasarovar) in Tibet Region of China in accordance with custom.

(2) Pilgrims from Tibet Region of China of Lamaist and Buddhist faiths may visit Banaras, Sarnath, Gaya and Sanchi in India in accordance with custom.

(3) Pilgrims customarily visiting Lhasa may continue to do so in accordance with custom. Article IV Traders and Pilgrims of both countries may travel by the following passes and route: (1) Shipki La pass (2) Mana Pass, (3) Niti Pass, (4) Kungri Bingri pass, (5) Darma pass and (6) Lipu Lekh pass. Also, the customary route leading to Tashigong along the valley of the Shangatsangpu

(Indus) River may continue to be traversed in accordance with custom. Article V For traveling across the border, the High Contracting Parties agree that diplomatic personnel, official and nationals of the two countries shall hold passport issued by their own respective countries and visas by the other Party except as provided in Paragraphs 1, 2, 3 and 4 of this Article.

- (1) Traders of both countries known to be customarily and specifically engaged in trade between Tibet Region of China and India, their wives and children who are dependent on them for livelihood and their attendants will be allowed entry for purposes of trade into India or Tibet Region of China, as the case may be, in accordance with custom on the production of certificates duly issued by the local government of their own country or by its duly authorised agents and examined by the border check-posts of the other Party.
- (2) Traders of both countries known to be customarily and specifically engaged in trade between Tibet Region of China and India, their wives and children who are dependent on them for livelihood and their attendants will be allowed entry for purposes of trade into India or Tibet Region of China, as the case may be, in accordance with custom on the production of certificates duly issued by the local government of their own country or by its duly authorised agent and examined by the border check posts of the other

party.

- (3) Porters and mule team drivers of the two cross the border to perform necessary transportation services need not hold passports issued by their own country, but shall only hold certificates good for a definite period of time (three months, half a year or one year) duly issued by the local government of their own country or by its duly authorised agents and produce them for registration at the border checkpoints of the other Party.
- (4) Pilgrims of both countries need not carry documents of certification but shall register at the border checkpoints of the other Party and receive a permit for pilgrimage.
- (5) Notwithstanding the provisions of the foregoing paragraphs of this Article, either Government may refuse entry to any particular person.
- (6) Persons who enter the territory of the other Party in accordance with the foregoing paragraphs of this Article may stay within its territory only after complying with the procedures specified by the other Party. Article VI. The present Agreement shall come into effect upon ratification by both Governments and shall remain in force for eight(8) years. Extension of the present Agreement may be negotiated by the two Parties if either Party requests for it Six (6) months prior to the expiry of the Agreement and the request is agreed to by the other Party. DONE in duplicate

in Peking on the twentyninth day of April, 1954 in Hindi, Chinese and English languages, all texts being equally valid.

(Sd.) Nedyam Raghavan, Plenipotentiary of the Government of India.

(Sd.) Chang Han-fu, Plenipotentiary of the Central People's Republic of China.

NOTES EXCHANGED

Peking, April 29, 1954

NOTE: Your Excellency Mr. Vice-Foreign Minister, In the course of our discussions regarding the Agreement on Trade and intercourse Between Tibet Region of China and India, which has been happily concluded today, the Delegation of the Government of the Republic of India and the Delegation of the Government of the People's Republic of China agreed that certain matters be regulated by an exchange of notes. In pursuance of this understanding, it is hereby agreed between the two Governments as follows: (1) The Government of India will be pleased to withdraw completely within six (6) months from date of exchange of the present notes the military escorts now stationed at Yatung and Gyantse in Tibet Region of China. The Government of China will render facilities and assistance in such withdrawal.

(2) The Government of India will be pleased to had

over to the Government of China at a reasonable price the postal, telegraph and public telephone services together with their equipment operated by the Government of India in Tibet Region of China. The Concrete measures in this regard will be decided upon through further negotiations between the Indian Embassy in China and the Foreign Ministry of China, which shall start immediately after the exchange of the present notes.

- (3) The Government of India will be pleased to hand over to the Government of China at a reasonable price the twelve (12) rest houses of the Government of India in Tibet Region of China. The concrete measures in this regard will be decided upon through further negotiations between the Indian Embassy in China and the Foreign Ministry of China, which shall start immediately after the exchange of the present notes. The Government of China agrees that they shall continue as rest house.
- (4) The Government of China agrees that all buildings within the compound walls of the Trade Agencies of the Government of India at Yatung and Gyantse in Tibet Region of China may be retained by the government of India. The Government of India agrees that the Trade Agencies of the Government of India may continue to lease the land within its Agency compound walls from the Chinese side. And the Government of India agrees that the Trade Agencies of the

Government of China at buildings thereon. The Government of China at buildings thereon. The Government of China will render every possible assistance for housing the Indian Trade Agency at Gartok. The Government of India will also render every possible assistance for housing the Chinese Trade Agency at New Delhi.

- (5) The Government of India will be pleased to return to the Government of China all lands used or occupied by the Government of India other than the lands within its Trade Agency compound walls at Yatung. If there are godowns and buildings of the Government of India on the above mentioned lands used or occupied and to be returned by the Government of India and if Indian traders have stores, godowns or buildings on the above-mentioned lands so that there is a need to continue leasing lands, the Government of China agrees to sign contracts with the Government of India traders, as the case may be, for leasing to them those parts of the land occupied by the said godowns, buildings or store and pertaining thereto.
- (6) The Trade Agents of both Parties may, in accordance with the laws and regulations of the local governments, have access to their national involved in civil or criminal cases.
- (7) The Trade Agents and traders of both countries may hire employees in the locality.

- (8) The hospitals of the India Trade Agencies at Gyantse and Yatung will continue to serve personnel of the Indian Trade Agencies.
- (9) Each Government shall protect the person and property of the traders and pilgrims of the other country.
- (10) The Government of China agrees, so far as possible, to construct rest houses for the use of pilgrims along the route from Pulanchung (Taklakot) to Kang Rimpoche (Kailas) and Mavam Tso (Manasarovar); and the Government of India agrees to place all possible facilities in India at the disposal of pilgrims.
- (11) Traders and pilgrims of both countries shall have the facility of hiring means of transportation at normal and reasonable rates.
- (12) The three Trade Agency of each Party may function throughout the year.
- (13) Traders of each country may rent building and godowns in accordance with local regulation in places under the jurisdiction of the other Party.
- (14) Traders of both countries may carry on normal trade in accordance with local regulations at places as provided in Article II of the agreement.
- (15) Disputes between traders of both countries over debts and claims shall be handled in accordance with local laws and regulations. On behalf of the Government of the Republic of India I hereby agree that the present Note along with Your Excellency's reply shall become an

agreement between our two Government which shall come into force upon the exchange of the present Notes. I avail myself of this opportunity to express to Your Excellency Mr. Vice-Foreign Minister, the assurances of my highest consideration.

(Sd.) N. Raghwan, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic in India.

His Excellency Mr. Changan-Fu, Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs, Central People's Government People's Republic of China, April 29, 1954

Your Excellency Mr. Ambassador:

I have the honour to receive your note dated April 29, 1954 which reads: [Not reprinted] On behalf of the Central People's Government of the People's Republic of China. I hereby agree to Your Excellency's note, and your note along with the present note in reply shall become an agreement between our two Governments which shall come into force upon the exchange of the present notes. I avail myself of this opportunity to express to Your Excellency,

Mir. Ambassador, the assurances of my highest consideration.

(Sd.) Chang Han-Fu, Vice Minister, Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

People's Republic of China

H.E. Nedyam Raghavan.

Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, Republic of India.

**(Original in English) Notes Regarding Ratification Peking
the 17th August 1954**

Excellency, I have the honour to state that whereas an agreement between the Government of the Republic of India and the Central People's Government of the People's Republic of China on trade and intercourse between Tibet region of China and India was signed at Peking on the 29th Day of April, 1954 by the respective plenipotentiaries of the two Governments, namely, For the Government of the Republic of India His Excellency Nedyam Raghavan, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of India, For the Central People's Government of the People's Republic of China, His Excellency Chang Han-fu, Which Agreement is reproduced, word for word, in the Annexure hereto.

AND whereas the Government of the Republic of India has ratified this Agreement on the 3rd June, 1954, I request you to convey information of the said ratification to the Central People's Government of the People's Republic of China. I avail myself of this opportunity to renew to you, Excellency, the assurance of my highest consideration.

Nedyam Raghavan, Ambassador of the Republic of India.

His Excellency Mr. Chou En-lai, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Central People's Government of the People's Republic of China, Peking. (Original in Chinese)

EXCELLENCY

**EMBASSY OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF
CHINA IN INDIA (Translation)
No. M/680/54 17 August 1954**

I have the honour to inform you that the Agreement between the People's Republic of China and the Republic of India on Trade and Intercourse between Tibet Region of China and India, which was signed at Peking on the 29th of April, 1954, by Chang Han-fu, Vice-Minister, Ministry of the people's Republic of China and of the People's Republic of China, for the central People's Government of the Republic of India to the People's Republic, of China, for the Government of the Republic of India, was subsequently ratified on the 3rd June 1954, by the Central People's Government of the People's Republic of China, I hereby request you to convey information of the said ratification to the Government of India.

The Agreement is reproduced, word for word, in the annexure hereto, I avail myself of this opportunity to renew to you, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

(Sd.) Yuan Chung-hsien, Ambessador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the People's Republic of China.

His Excellency Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru
Minister for External Affairs,
Government of Republic of India, New Delhi.

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Index

- | | | | |
|---------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|-------------------|
| 14th Dalai Lama | 48 | Bala Singh | 95 |
| 5th Dalai Lama | 53 | Balti | 73 |
| 7th Dalai Lama | vii | Banaras | 105 |
| A | | Barahat | 81 |
| Aksai Chin | viii, 22, 44, 85, 89 | Barter Trade | 4 |
| Asiatic Researches | i | Baz Bahadur Chand | 27 |
| Lang Darma | 80 | Beijing | 43, 64 |
| Ade Tsug-Gon | 76, 79 | University | 60 |
| Agency | 15 | Bhagan | 77 |
| Agreement on Trade and Cultural | | Bhakt Darshan | 90 |
| Intercourse | 3 | Bhutan | 27, 52, 53, 55 |
| Agreements | 1 | borders | 63 |
| ALI (Chinese name for Ngari) | 86 | Bhutanese | 21, 26 |
| All India Radio | 48, 57, 94 | Enclave | 86 |
| Allahabad University | 90 | Incarnate Lama | 53 |
| Almora | 13, 16, 17, 87, 90 | Representative | 52 |
| Amdo | 69 | Bians | 39 |
| Anglo-Chinese Agreement of | | Chaudas | 20, 25, 26 |
| 1893, Shag | 97 | Bod-Chhogyal | 79 |
| Anglo-Chinese Convention of | | Bodh Gaya | 56 |
| 1890 | 96, 97 | Bon religion | 77, 80 |
| Antonio de Andrade | 83 | Buddhist conflict | 79 |
| Atisha | 81 | Border check posts | 56 |
| Dipankarajnana | 83 | Border trade | 1, 86 |
| Aurangzeb | 78 | Brahmaputra | 73 |
| Avalokiteswara (Chatur-Bhuja) | 94 | British | 1 |
| B | | Commisioner | 98, 100 |
| Bhim Tal | v | Expedition | 33 |
| British | iv | Expeditions to Tibet | 57 |
| Kumaon | iii | Government | 1, 90, 96, 97, 98 |
| Buddhist | vii, viii | India | 1 |
| Bum Shah's | i | Political Agent | 12 |
| Badrinath | 8 | Political at Shimla | 92 |
| Bageshwar | 18 | Trade Agencies | 34, 85 |
| Baghdad (Iraq.) | 95 | Trade Agency, Gartok | |
| | | (Western Tibet) | 90, 92 |
| | | British Trade Agent | 2, 6 |

- British Trade Agent, Gartok 12
 Britishers 2, 33
 Buddha Bose 65
 Buddhism 75
 Buddhist pilgrims 72
 Renaissance 80
 Renaissance in Tibet 79
 Buddhists 69
 Bureau 60
 Burfu in Johar Valley 90
 Bushahr 84
- C**
- Capt. Rawat Hayat Singh 12
 Charles A. Sherring iii, 85
 Calcutta 3, 16, 38, 104
 Central People's Government of
 the People's Republ 103, 108
 Central Tibet 25, 36, 58, 77
 Central Tibetan 75
 Tibetan Dynasty 74
 Chairman of Tibet Autonomous
 Region (TAR) 39
 Chamdo 43, 51
 Sector in Kham 43
 Chandpur 8
 Chang Ching-wu
 (Zhang Jingwu) 45
 Chang Han-Fu 112, 108, 114
 Changchub Od 81
 Changhan-Fu 112
 Changru 20
 Changthang 11, 34
 Chaprang 23, 83
 Zongpon 8
 Chandans 39
 Chaukori 18
 Chengdu 35, 61
 Military Region 44
 Chhangru 26
 Chhirchin 25
 Chhumurti 73
 China 2, 4, 72
- Chinese vi, viii, 1, 2, 14, 15
 16, 17, 19, 20, 21
 26, 32, 34, 35, 38
 39, 42, 43, 46, 49
 50, 54, 60, 61, 62
 65, 71, 93, 94
 Chinese cadres 59
 Chinese Communism 54
 Chinese Foreign Bureau 42
 Sub office 28
 Chief 21
 Officials 21, 22, 62
 Chinese Government 55
 Office 93
 Silver dollars (Da-yuan)
 32
 Trade Agencies 3, 38
 Trade Agency in
 Kalimpong 58
 Troops 44
 Chini 19
 Shipki Pass 17
 Chiu Gompa 67
 Choe-Gyal 79, 80, 81
 Chor Hoti 17
 Niti pass 91
 Chos Byung 80
 Chou En-lai 113
 Chu-Drang 51, 52
 Chumbi 29
 Valley 91, 99, 102
 Commander Zeng Yongya 45
 Communist Party 45
 Communists 35
 Consular 36
 Convention 2
 Great Britain and Thibet
 96
 Council of the three monasteries,
 Sera, Dre-pung, 96
 Cultural Revolution 46, 59

D			
Dalai Lamas	vii		
Dzongpons	vii		
Da-Yuan	34, 35		
Daba	19, 21, 24, 84		
Dzongpon	12, 24		
Dalai Lama			
8, 48, 54, 55, 56			
57, 58, 79, 86, 100			
Palace	47		
Dalal Khuri-Thai-Jie of Mongolia			
78			
Darchin	89		
Dards	4, 74		
Darjeeling	55, 98		
Darma	20, 21, 39		
Darma pass	26, 105		
Data Dzongpon	24		
Dawa Norbu	79		
Delhi	16, 31, 71		
Demchok	22, 28, 73, 79		
Border	73		
Deputy Commissioner	2		
Devaraja	81		
Dharchula	17		
Dhiru-Phuk monasteries	68, 69		
Didihat	50		
Diqu	51		
Dogras	84		
Dokpas	11, 52		
Dolmo-La	68, 69		
Dongbra	104		
Dongbu	24		
Dongsha	24		
Dre-pung Monastery	100		
Drepung	101		
Droshod	77		
Druk	53		
Dugpa Mipham of Bhutan	53		
Dung	10, 25		
Dunkar			23
Dzong			51
Dzongpon	7, 8, 21, 23, 25, 48,		62, 83
E			
Eastern highway			61
Tibet			58
Elgin Mills of Kanpur			29
F			
Fatang Yin			46
Foreign Bureau			45
Department			101
Ministry of China			109
Secretary			87
Fonia Kedar Singh			8
Fourth Field Army			46
G			
Ga-den			102
Ti-Rimpoche			96, 100
Monastery			101
Monastery			100
Galden Tsewng			53, 78
Gandhi Jayanti			30
Gangtok			12
Sikkim			12, 16, 38, 55
Garbyang	13, 17, 26, 32, 39		
Gargunsa			14
Garhwal			8, 33, 81
Gartok	vi, 2, 3, 6, 11, 12		
	13, 14, 15, 16, 18		
	19, 21, 22, 25, 26		
	27, 37, 49, 60, 62		
	67, 89, 94, 97, 98, 104		
	(W.Tibet)		85
	(Western Tibet)		80

Tholing - Gyanima route	23
Taklakote	66
Shipki-Shimla	18
Taklakote	86
Tashigong-Rudok	28
Gartung Chu	14, 16, 27
Gauri Kund	69
Gaya	105
Gazra	73
Gelugpa monasteries	78
Gen. Chang Guo-hua	45
Gen. Yin Fatang	46
Gen. Zhang Guo-hua	46
Gilgit	73, 74
Gompa	25, 52
Gonkhal Dhar	9
Government of China	3, 104, 109, 111
Government of India	34, 37, 41, 49 101, 104, 108, 109
Government of the Republic of India	103
Government of Thibet	96, 99
Governor General of Chamdo	43
Governor-General of India in Council at Simla	101
Governors	48, 49
Govt. of India	92
Great Britain	2
Great Mahayana Pandita of Vikramasila	83
Greater Tibet	73
Group Pilgrimage To Kailash-Mansarovar	70 86
Guge	23, 73, 78, 79, 80, 83
Tsaprang	79
Kingdom	80, 84
Regime	82
Gullu Ki Kailash Yatra	65
Gunji	13, 39, 41, 56, 71

India	86
Gyanima	10, 11, 21, 24, 25 27, 32, 37, 69, 89
Chakra	21, 25, 104
Trade mart	44
Khargo	104
Gyantse	2, 3, 4, 13, 29 30, 36, 38, 51, 85 97, 98, 99, 108, 111, 104

H

Han	viii
H.E. Chang Han-fu	104
H.E. Nedyam Raghavan	103
H.E. Richardson	47
Halduwa	33
Haldwani	92, 95
Harkong	26
Heinrich Harrer	85
Himachal	81
Himachal Pradesh	14, 28, 41
Himachali	22
Hindi-Chini Bhai Bhai	54
Hindustan-Tibet road	18
Hu Jintao	46
Hu Yaobang	56
Hunia (Tibetan) 'Mitras'	4, 6, 8
Hunia Mitra	7
Tibetans	5

I

IFS(B)	91
Independence Day	30
India	4, 17, 56
Trade Agencies	3 12, 28, 42, 45, 48, 60, 111
Indian Ambassador to China	60
Embassy in China	109
Pandits	80

Trade Agency, Gartok	7	66, 65, 69, 70, 72
Trade Agent	49, 87	Parikrama 67, 68, 69
Trade Agent-Gartok (Western Tibet)	38	Kailash-Mansarovar closed 86
Traders	44, 52	Kalapani 32
Indianisation	82	Kalimpong 3, 18, 29, 38
Indo-Tibet border trade	5, 35	55, 57, 92, 104
Tibetan	4	Kang Rimpoche (Kailas) 105, 111
Indus Valley	73	Kargyupa 53
ITBP	71	Karisipa 48
J		Karnataka 50
Jalpaiguri	98	Kashmir 53, 78, 80
Jammu	84	Kathmandu 62
Jangpangi Laxman Singh	87, 89	Kazaks 85
90, 91, 92 93, 94, 95		Keralite 31
Japan	72	Kham 5, 25, 69
Jayanti	10	Khampa 50
Johar	28	Rebellion 58
Itihas and Vansavali	1	Khampas 57
Shauka Traders	85	Kharku Lhasa 29
Valley 1, 7, 33, 42		Khasa 62
(Pithoragarh District)		Khojarnath 26, 52, 86
41		Khotan 44, 85
Johari 25		Khyido Nyimagon 83
Shauka 12, 84		Khyunglung 24
Traders 9, 10, 11, 22		Kiang 16, 45
31, 34, 39, 52		King of Ladakh 53, 76
Joshimath 17, 19		Yarlung 75
Jumla-Humla 26		Tsenpo Khore 81
		Ngari 75
K		Kinnaur 4, 81, 82
Kailash Mansarovar	viii	KMVN 71
Kaushalya di	v	Kuen Lun 85
		Lun mountains 44
Kailash 21, 27, 64, 84		Kumaon 33, 89, 90
and Mansarovar 18, 56		Kumaon Mandal Vikas Nigam 71
		Kungri Bingri pass 2, 10
		17, 32, 91, 105
		Kyibo Nyimagon 27, 75, 76

L			
Ladakh		vii	
Ladakhi		vii	
Lake Mansarovara		i	
Lang Darma		80	
Laxman Singh Jangpangi	iv,	90	
Lhasa		vi, vii	
Lipu-lekh		iii	
Lord Moira		iii	
Ladakh	4, 12, 22, 25, 28		
	31, 41, 53, 57, 73		
	76, 77, 81, 84		
	86, 92, 93		
War		78	
Ladakhi		22	
Kingdom		73, 77, 78	
Kings		74	
Ladakhis		53	
Lahaul	4, 73, 76, 79		
Lama of Bhutan		79	
Lang Darma	74, 75, 80, 83		
Leh		78	
Lha Chen		83	
Great God		76	
Ngorub		76	
Palgyigon		76	
Utpala		76	
Lha Chu		68	
Lama Yeshe Od		23, 80, 83	
Lhasa	2, 13, 29, 43, 47		
	48, 58, 61, 62, 64		
	78, 85, 86, 96, 99		
	100, 102, 105		
Convention	3, 12, 29		
	33, 85		
Municipality		51	
Lin Piao		46	
Lipu Lekh		26	
Lipu Lekh pass	17, 18, 19, 20, 31		
	39, 56, 62, 66, 105		
			Taklakote 86
			Lo-Sang Gyal-Tsen 101
			Lodros 77
			Lokha 51, 58
			LoSang Gyal-Tsen 96
			Lowo 76
			Lucknow 92
M			
			Mana 8
			Pass 23, 105
			Manglang 24
			Mani-wall 25
			Mansarovar 21, 27, 31, 53
			64, 67, 84
			Lake 70
			Parikrama 67
			Mao 46
			Tse-tung 45
			Thoughts 54, 59
			Maryul 73
			Mavam Tso (Manasarovar) 111
			105
			Mayang 19, 94
			Mayang Chu 94
			Mayang-Chu 19
			Mayumla 73
			Mehta J.S. 89
			Memoirs of the Asiatic Society
			of Bengal iv
			Milam 7, 9, 10, 11, 17, 25, 32
			Military District 47
			Military Region For Tibet 46
			Ministry of External Affairs
			15, 17, 19, 35, 71, 87, 89
			Mipham Namgyal 53
			Mirasis 9
			Mitra 5, 6, 7
			Monasteries Sera 101
			Mongol 53, 74, 78

Mongolian	74	North-West Military Region of	
Mons	4	China	44
of North India	74	Northern highway	61
Moorcroft's	iv	Nyanri	68
Mount	11	Nyatri Tsangpo	74
Mount Kailash	11, 52, 68, 70	Nyimagon	76, 79, 80
Mrs. Nehru R.K.	60	Nyingtri	51
Mt. Kailash	53, 59		
Mussoorie	55		
Mustang	47, 58		
		O	
		O-Sung	75
		Olympic Games	72
		Oriental scholars	73
N			
Nabra	21, 24, 104		
Nachu	viii, 51		
Ngari Khorsum	vi	P	
Niti passes	iii	Padmashri Jangpangi L.S.	v, 12, 87, 89
N. Raghavan	112	Panchen Lama	47
Namgia	19	Panchsheel Agreement	29, 37, 54, 85
Namgyal	77, 83	Panchsheel Agreement of 1954	86
Namgyal Insitute of Tibetology,			
Gangtok	93	Pandit Rawat Nain Singh	8
Nangal-Bhakra hydel project	18	Pandit Nehru	55
National Assembly	96	Pangtey Kharak Singh	29
National Day celebration	62	Pangtey Ram Singh	1
National Mineral Award	95	Pangtey Dr. S.S.	52
Nepal	56, 58, 62	Pant Apa B.	87
Nepalese	20, 26, 50, 63, 84	Par-Chu	14
New Delhi	3, 104	Parkha	11, 14
Ngapoi Ngawang	43	Tarzam	26
Ngari	5, 51, 80, 83		
Western Tibet	4, 64		
Ngari Khorsum	53, 78	Peking	103
Kingdom	81	People's Liberation Army (PLA)	42
Ngawang Namgyal	53	People's Republic of China	103, 114
Ngopoi Ngawang Jigme	39		
Ningmapa sect	78	Peter Aufschneider	85
Nirmal C. Sinha	93, 95	Phannu Jangpangi	90
Niti	19, 22	Pilgrimage Centre	21
Niti Mana (Chamoli District)	41	Pingaluwa	33
Niti Pass	17, 19, 24, 105	Pithoragarh	7, 50
valley	8		

District	7
PLA	61
Policy of Liberalisation	39
Political Office	12, 13, 15 16, 95
Political Office in Sikkim	87
Pontiff/Patron Lama	53
Prefectures	vi
President of India	90
Pt. Nehru	58
Pulanchung (Taklakot)	111
Pulang-Sumdo	104
Purang	26, 53, 73, 75, 76 78, 83, 84
Area	63
Valley	50, 84

R

Rawat Renu	v
Rawat B.D.S.	viii
Rawat Bhawan Singh	iv
Rawat S.S.	viii
Rutherford's	iii
Rai Saheb	90
Rai Saheb Soban Singh	90
Raj Guru of Ladakh	79
Raja Singh Kehar	84
Raja Chand Rajbahadur	84
Rakshas Tal	66, 67
Ralpachen	75
Ram Rahul	53
Rampur	18
Rampur Blusher	25, 28, 82, 92
Ramura	104
Rarang	19
Rawang	28
Regulations of 1893	97
Republic of India	103, 114
Rimshi Lobsang Tsewang	18, 48
Rinchen Zangpo	80

Rma	74
Rong Ren	46
Roy S.K	16, 34
Roy S.K. Special Officer Frontier Area (SOFA)	32, 89
Rudok	22, 73, 77
and Rawang	28
Dzongpon	28

S

Sauka traders	iii
Shauka traders	i
Simla Convention of 1914	iv
Superintendent of the Company Studs	i

S.Dutt	87
S.M. Fraser	101
Sanchi	105
Sandao	50
Sanskrit	80
Sarnath	105
Se-ra Monastery	100
Seal of Council	100
Second Field Army	45
Senge Namgyal	53, 78
Shabdrung Rimpoch's	53
Shag	97
Shangatsangpu	105
Shangtse	104
Shauka trader	4, 6, 8, 9, 29
Trading	9
Youths	42
Shigatse	47, 62, 64
Shimla	12, 13, 16, 17, 18
To Gangtok (Sikkim)	92
Shimla-Rampur	18
Shimla-Shipki	91, 94

Shimla-Shipki- Gartok route	18	T	
Shingaste	51	Teglungla pass	91
Shipki	19	Tibet	viii
La pass	105	Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR)	iv, vi
-Shimla	18, 89	Tibetan uprising	iv
Shiquanhe	73	Tibetans	vii
Shirang-La pass	19	Trade Agency	viii
Shiv-Chilam	10, 11, 21, 24	Trade Agent	v
Sikkim	1, 2, 12, 13, 15 17, 30, 55, 64, 91, 97	Taglungla Pass	17
Cadre officer	91	Taiwan	43
Sikkimese	95	Taklakote	18, 20, 26, 27, 31 39, 56, 62, 65, 67 84, 86, 89
Siliguri	55	Pulan	37
Simla Convention-1914	2	Tibet	86
Sinha N. C.	93	W.Tibet	42
Sining	61, 64	Tam	14
Sinkiang	25	Tarchen	11, 21, 25, 26 27, 53, 59, 67, 68 69, 86
via Aksai Chin	62	Labrang	52
-Gartok	62	Trade	21
-Gartok highway	28, 86	Trade marts	10
Sino India Agreement of 1954	28, 38, 70	"Tarzam" posts	20
Sino-Indian War	86	Tashigong	22, 76, 78, 105
Smra	74	Trade Mart	28
Singh Soban	90	Gargunsa	28
Singh Zorawar	27, 77, 84	Thailand	72
Solan	19	Thakurs	82
Spiced tea	95	The Government of India	110
Spiti	4, 73, 76, 79	The Trade Agency	13
Sri Lanka	72	Thibet	97, 98
Sub Office of Chinese foreign bureau	60	Frontier Commission	100
Sunpati Shauka	33	Thibetan Agent	98
Surji	7, 8	Government	97
Sutlej	79	Thibetans	102
Valley	23, 39	Thogolho monastery	66
Swami Pranavananda	31, 66, 67	Thok Jalun	8
Szechuan	58, 61, 69	Thokar Mandi	26

Tholing	19, 21, 23, 80, 83	Uprising	35, 47, 52
Monastery	23, 81		54, 86, 91
Three Strikes	50	Tibetans	4, 15, 23, 25, 27, 33
Thugolho monastery	68		39, 44, 49, 94
Tiag	19	Tibetology at Gangtok (Sikkim)	
Tibet			94
1, 2, 4, 7, 8, 9, 16, 19, 20,		Tinkar	21, 26
28, 31, 39, 42, 51, 53, 56,		Tirthapuri/Minsar	22
57, 58, 61, 63, 65, 70,		Tolia Diwan Singh	92, 93
74, 84, 85		Tolia Dr. R.S.	viii
Tibet Military District Headquarters	47	Toyo	27, 84
Tibet Region of China		Trade Agency	12, 13, 17
103, 105, 106, 108, 109			20, 22, 28, 36, 59
Tibet-Conventions	1		67, 90, 110
Tibet-Ladakh war of 1883-84	44	Trade Agent	6, 13, 15, 16
Tibet-Nepal borders	62		18, 19, 20, 21
Tibetan			22, 32, 49, 60, 62
11, 20, 24, 29, 53, 78, 84			65, 68, 89, 91, 92
Labourers	34	Trade Agencies	36, 38, 104
Armed resistance	58	Tibet	92
Currency	35	New Delhi	110
Delegation	48	Gartok	11
Emissary	7, 8	Yatung	91
Forces	53	Agent Gartok	38, 91
Governors	21		110
Governors	22	Agreement	22
Government	43	Centre	39, 52, 86
Kings	27	Convention	1
Nomads	52	marts	1
Officials	34, 48	Marts in Tibet	9
Pilgrims	52, 68	Regulations	2, 3
Rebellion	58	Regulations of 1893	96
Refugees	86	Trashhi Namgyal	77
Resistance	58	Trashigon	79
Resistance forces	50	Tri Tashi Tsekpai	75
Rulers	81	Tride Songtsen Sadnale	74
Settlements	50	Trisung Detsen	75
Stock	74	Tsang	78
'Tanka'	5, 34	Tsashyo (Tibetan Tax Collector)	
Traders	9, 39		6
Transporters	15	Tsenpo Khore	23, 80
Troops	43	W.D. Shakapa	53, 80

Tsering Shakya	35	X	
Tsewang Namgyal	77		
Tshasyo	22	Xian	51
Tshinghai	69	Drang	51, 52
Turks	74		
U		Y	
Uttarakhand	v	Younghusband Mission	iv, 96, 100, 101
Unta Dhura	10, 17, 25	Yaks	16
Uttarakhand	8	Yangtse Kiang	74
Uttarkashi	81	Yangtse River	43, 44
UP	2	Yatung 2,	
		3, 4, 13, 29, 30, 36, 64, 85,	
		91, 97, 104, 108, 110, 111	
		Yongya Zeng	46
V		Yuan Chung-hsien	114
Vice-Foreign Minister	108	Yulma	44
Viceroy and Governor-General of India	101, 102	Yumtan	75
		Yunan	58
		Z	
W		Zan-Zun	73, 74
Western Tibet	i, vi, vii, viii	Zangskar	73, 76, 79
William Moorcroft	i, iii, 84	Zhou	51
		Zimbu	23
Wei San-Chieh	62, 86	Zojila	17
Western Tibet		Zungaria	74
	1, 2, 4, 5, 10, 11	Zuthul-Phuk	69
	12, 13, 14, 16, 17,		
	18, 19, 20, 21, 25, 26,		
	31, 33, 37, 38, 42, 43,		
	44, 45, 47, 48, 49, 52,		
	53, 54, 62, 64, 66,		
	67, 73, 74, 75, 76, 84,		
	85, 86, 89, 91, 92, 94		
Western Tibet to			
Central Tibet	28		
Gartok	27		
-via Lipulekh pass	91		
Western Tibetan	81		
Wu Jing-Hua	46		

