

The Geographical Journal

Vol. LXIII No. 2

February 1924

A YEAR IN LHASA

Sir Charles Bell, K.C.I.E., C.M.G.

Read at the Meeting of the Society, 3 December 1923.

VISITORS to Tibet, and even those who stay there a long time, do not as a rule come into touch with the leading people of the country. But during the nineteen years out of my public service which I spent partly on the borderland between India and Tibet and partly in Tibet itself, it was my good fortune to be brought into close contact with the Dalai Lama and the leading men of the country on several occasions. In 1910 the Chinese invaded Tibet and occupied Lhasa. The Dalai Lama, with the majority of the members of his Government, fled to India and remained there for over two years. Being, among other duties, in charge of our political relations with Tibet, I saw His Holiness and his ministers at short intervals during the whole of this period. For they were naturally distressed at the invasion and occupation of their country, and any little kindness or hospitality that one could show was likely both to ease their minds and to react favourably on the relations between Tibet and India. They returned to Lhasa in 1912, after their soldiers had expelled the Chinese troops from Central Tibet, and from that time onwards I received constant invitations from His Holiness and the Tibetan Government to visit them at Lhasa.

The Prime Minister of Tibet revisited India in 1913 in connection with a diplomatic conference, and remained there for eight or nine months, during which time our friendship was further strengthened.

In October 1920 our Government deputed me on a diplomatic mission to Lhasa. I left the Chumbi Valley on November 1, arrived in Lhasa on the 17th, and remained for nearly a year—longer than any white man had been there for over a hundred and fifty years. And as the invited guest of the Dalai Lama and the Tibetan Government I was shown pretty well everything that I wished to see. I quote these biographical details merely to show that I enjoyed facilities for studying the life in Lhasa, a few features of which I propose to show you this evening.

And how interesting that life is! For—more than in most countries—

the social, political, and religious activities of Tibet centre in their capital. Here the leading men and women foregather, here are the members of the Government and the large monasteries, here dwells the Vice-Regent of Buddha in the person of the Dalai Lama.

The road from Sikkim to Lhasa is by now fairly well known. The first portion of it is especially familiar to you from the admirable photographs of the Mount Everest Expedition. We will therefore pass over it quickly. You experience a great change as you pass from lower Sikkim, with its warm wet climate, its large proportion of Gurkhas, and its semi-Indianized bazaars, across one of the passes into the Chumbi Valley. Here we are in a valley the lower portion of which is 9000 to 10,000 feet above sea-level and possesses a good climate, temperate in heat and cold, temperate in rainfall. The standard of prosperity, shown among other ways by the houses of the people, is high compared with that of India.

We go up this valley to Phari, which is known to you from the Mount Everest pictures, and the Tang La, or "Clear Pass," where we cross the main axis of the Himalaya and are at once in the cold dry climate which Tibet knows so well how to provide. Here our road diverges from that which was subsequently followed by the Mount Everest party. They proceeded westward to their highly successful attack on the great mountain, an attack which we all hope may attain a greater, and even a complete, success next year. Our road lay to the north-east. Crossing "The Plain of the Three Sisters" at an elevation slightly lower than the summit of Mont Blanc, we passed along the "Otter Lake" and other plains and valleys to the town of Gyantse, whose name denotes "The Peak of Victory." This, one of the largest towns in Tibet, was opened as a mart for British and Indian trade by the treaty which our late President Sir Francis Younghusband concluded at Lhasa in 1904.

From Gyantse onwards one of the two officials, jointly in charge of the Gyantse district, accompanied us. He had been deputed by the Tibetan Government for this purpose, and served also to show the people that we were going to Lhasa on the Dalai Lama's invitation.

The road crosses the Karö La, 40 miles from Gyantse, at an elevation of between 16,000 and 17,000 feet, descends to "The Lake of the Upland Pastures" (*Yamdrok Tso* in Tibetan), along which it passes for some 27 miles. A few miles off our road was the monastery of Samding, the home of Dorje Pamo, the highest lady in Tibet. For she ranks as an Incarnation of a Buddhist deity, the only female Incarnation in Tibet, and possesses the peculiar power of turning herself and the fifty-nine other inmates, who are monks, not nuns, into pigs. I was, I think, the first white man to visit her at her own monastery. We had a long conversation, and she regaled my party and myself with an excellent lunch. It is not every day that one has the opportunity of lunching with a goddess! She was twenty-four years of age, with a pensive mien

and an air of quiet dignity. We exchanged presents, in accordance with Tibetan custom. I sent her a watch, for she told me that she hardly knew the time except at sunrise and sunset.

From this lake we crossed the Kamba Pass into the valley of the great river which flows from west to east through southern Tibet. On our maps it figures as the Tsangpo, but this is merely the Tibetan word for a large river. The actual name of this river varies in different parts of its course ; here it is known to Tibetans as Tsang Chu ; *i.e.* " The river of the Tsang province."

As we drew nearer to the Holy City we passed many pilgrims going and returning. Some of these were covering every inch of the way by prostrating themselves. Lying on his face the pilgrim makes a mark with his fingers a little beyond his head. Rising, he brings his feet to this point and again, muttering a prayer, prostrates himself. We met a Mongolian pilgrim who was travelling thus from Lhasa to the Yambu Chöten, a sacred Buddhist shrine near Katmandu, a distance of some 700 miles. He had already been three and a half months on the road, and would take at least two years more to reach the goal of his pilgrimage. Slabs of wood were fastened to his hands to prevent them from being torn to shreds on the stony ground. Pilgrims from Eastern Tibet, seeking the sacred lake of Manasarowar in Western Tibet, have been known to traverse 2000 miles in this manner, a journey which takes them from seven to ten years.

Perhaps some of our party, more than three-fourths of whom were Buddhists, were inclined to envy these pilgrims on account of the amount of religious merit which they were amassing by these mortifications of the flesh. But we were entitled to consider that we too were not entirely without religious merit. We had come to Lhasa in winter over the high Tibetan passes and tablelands. We might have expected gales and blizzards ; and indeed a blizzard was raging on " The Plain of the Three Sisters " until the very day that we reached it. But to us the weather had been remarkably kind. Now the Tibetans have unlimited faith in the power of the mind. They believe that it can influence a man's material surroundings ; that it can even influence the climate. My Tibetan friends quoted to me the verse—

Deeds white and black, for minds are clean and foul.
Is the mind clean? Then earth and sky are clean.
Is the mind foul? Then earth and sky are foul.
For 'tis upon the mind that all depends.

The good weather with which we were favoured was thus doubly good for us.

Crossing the Tsang Chu, where we were joined by one of the Dalai Lama's secretaries, the road runs down it for a short distance and then follows up the Kyi Chu to Lhasa 40 miles away. A few miles from Lhasa we crossed this river by a remarkably fine bridge, known as

Tölung Tresam, "The Bridge at the Corner of the Upper Valley." Tibetan names usually give a good deal of information.

We drew nearer to Lhasa, but still we could not see it. It seemed as though the Holy City must be screened from the outside world as long as may be. Two low hills blocked the view. On one stands the Temple of Medicine; on the other the palace of the Dalai Lama. It is not until you pass under the long arch of the chöten or stupa, known as the Pargo Kaling, that the town bursts on your gaze. We were now in front of the Dalai Lama's palace, the famous Potala. In it are the Dalai Lama's own rooms and numerous chapels, occupying the yellow and red portions of the great building. Behind the white walls are quarters for Ministers of State and ecclesiastical officials as well as a college, containing one hundred and seventy-five priests, who are in immediate attendance on His Holiness. The Dalai Lama has frequently to come to the Potala for religious ceremonies, but lives as much as possible in his country palace at Norbu Lingka, "The Jewel Park," a mile away, and two miles from Lhasa. This he finds cleaner and healthier. It affords him also more privacy and more room for exercise.

Travellers in Tibet seldom, if ever, fail to notice the lack of cleanliness among the people. However strong may be the justification for such remarks, we must remember that an elevation of 12,000 to 15,000 feet above sea-level gives a very cold climate, and that the Tibetans have not arrangements, as we have, for heating their houses or their water. The Tibetan himself, indeed, does not appeal to considerations of this kind. He views the matter from a different standpoint, and deals with it in one of his short and simple proverbs. Before quoting this I must explain that Tibetans divide humanity into two classes: Buddhists, whom they refer to as "the inside people," and non-Buddhists, whom they refer to as "the outside people." And so their proverb runs:

The outside man is clean outside;
The inside man is clean inside.

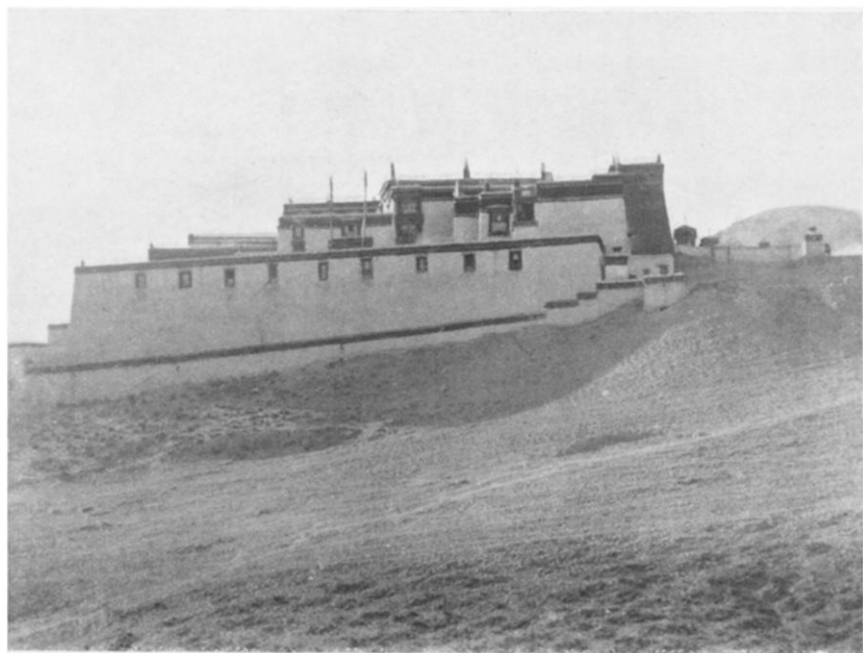
A bare mile beyond the Potala is the city of Lhasa, lying on the broad plain surrounded by groves of willow and poplar. The houses are large and substantial, built of stone and sun-dried brick. There are no brick-kilns.

Lieut.-Col. Kennedy, I.M.S., for whose services I had asked, joined us a week after our arrival. Mr. Dyer, the Civil Surgeon at Gangtok, who had accompanied us to Lhasa, returned to his work in Sikkim. Our party was now complete. Among my colleagues, to each of whom I owe more than I can express, was Kusho Palhese, a member of the Tibetan nobility, who had worked with me for seventeen years and had taught me much, very much, about the Tibetan people, their language, their customs, and their government.

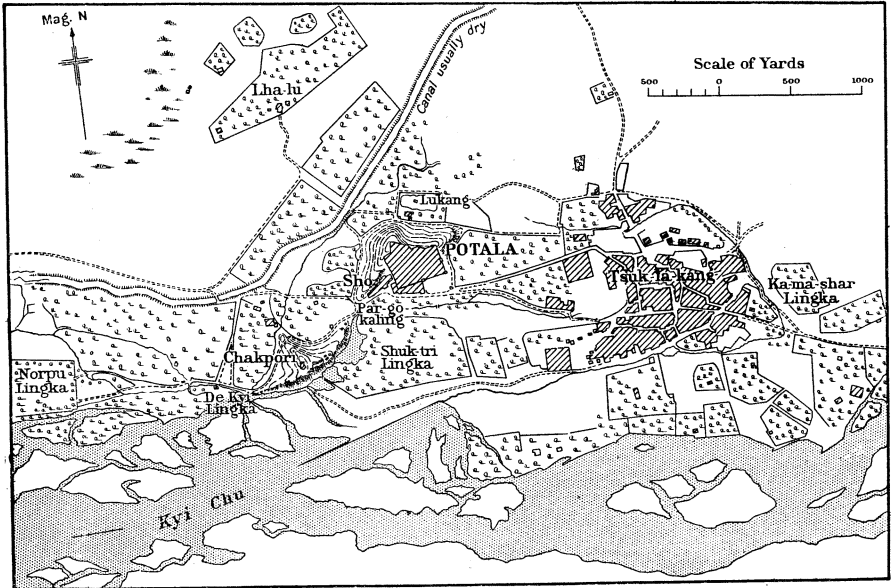
Our first days were largely occupied in paying and receiving numerous



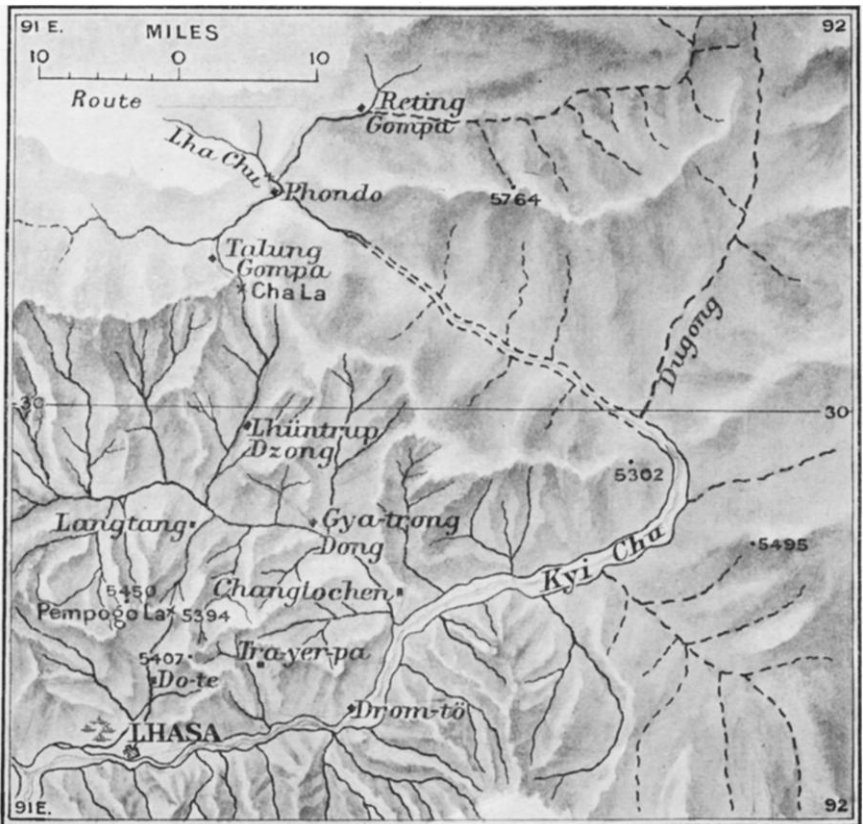
THE NATU LA BETWEEN SIKKIM AND TIBET



SAMDING MONASTERY



SKETCH-MAP OF LHASA, FROM THE SURVEYS OF COLONEL RYDER ON THE TIBET MISSION OF 1904



SKETCH-MAP OF COUNTRY BETWEEN LHASA AND RETING

visits. Everything in Tibet centres on the Dalai Lama, so that my first visit was necessarily to him in his country palace in the Jewel Park. He received me as an old friend. We sat together in one of his private rooms, fitted up half in Tibetan, half in European style. He dismissed everybody from the room so that we two could talk together alone, free from all restraint. In all our conversations both in India and here in Lhasa he was singularly frank. After this I exchanged visits with the ministers and other leading people in Lhasa.

Three or four months before I came to Lhasa, the Royal Geographical Society and the Alpine Club had asked for permission to attempt the ascent of Mount Everest through Tibetan territory. I felt bound at that time to oppose the project, for I knew that the scheme would raise suspicion in the mind of a people circumstanced as are those of Tibet. Difficulties of this kind cannot be smoothed out in letters. When, however, I came to Lhasa, the matter being left to my discretion, I asked the Dalai Lama and obtained permission for the Expedition. Personal intercourse removes many misunderstandings. In this, as in all talks with the Dalai Lama, I found him full of tolerance. It was certainly a noteworthy fact that Tibet should grant to Britain, her former enemy, a privilege which Britain's own ally, Nepal, had felt unable to accord.

I understood that the country, in which the great mountain is situated, is known as Chamalung, an abbreviation—such abbreviations are common in Tibetan—for Cha Dzima Lungpa, "The Country where Birds are kept," *i.e.* "The Bird Sanctuary." I was informed that it was so referred to in a Tibetan work, known as the Mani Kabum, which relates to the time of the famous king, Song-tsen Gam-po, in the seventh century of our era. In this book it is stated that birds were fed in Chamalung at the expense of the king. But the name can hardly refer to the mountain as a whole. Any name ending in lung or lungpa denotes a valley or other land lying lower than land near it. And the bird sanctuary would be on the lower slopes rather than in the snowy wastes which hold the upper lands of the mountain in their death-like grip. Tibetans often leave mountain peaks unnamed, whether these be great or small.

Visits to the streets and shops of Lhasa were not without interest. The goods are exposed for sale partly in the shops, partly on the road outside. It may interest you to see two or three as samples of the rest. Vegetables are not eaten largely in Tibet, for it is difficult to produce them in such a cold climate. The Chinese and semi-Chinese element are the chief growers of vegetables, but they are sold here and there in Tibetan shops.

Since his return from India in 1912 the Dalai Lama has started a meat market in Lhasa. I dare say our Food Inspectors would not pass it. But for Lhasa it marks a great advance on previous arrangements and meets the requirements of the people.

The staple diet of Tibet is yak's meat, mutton, barley flour, cheese,

butter, and tea: especially tea, of which every Tibetan drinks at least ten or fifteen cups a day. The average daily consumption might be about thirty, but there are many who drink fifty or sixty cups regularly every day. The tea, which is as a rule of a coarse quality, is grown in China and is pressed into the shape of bricks, which on their long journey through Tibet are encased in coverings of hide. They are carried on the backs of ponies, mules, or donkeys, of yaks or other cattle, and thus travel from the extreme east to the extreme west of Tibet, a distance of some 3000 miles across the great mountains and valleys of this difficult country. The yak, which is one of the chief beasts of burden, covers only $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles in an hour, and perhaps 10 to 15 miles in an ordinary day's march. So the journey takes a long time, and the tea must of necessity be well packed.

In our own country it would no doubt be difficult to prescribe when winter will begin and when it will end. Our ministers, officials, and clergy would resent being forced to wear an overcoat on a warm day or forbidden its use when an icy north wind was blowing. But Tibet, in this as in so many other matters, does things differently. On the anniversary of the death of Tsongkapa, who in the fourteenth century reformed the Tibetan Church, winter commences. On the eighth day of the third Tibetan month it ends. This places winter between a fixed date in the first half of December and another in the last half of April. Between these dates all officials, lay and ecclesiastical, must wear fur hats and cloaks after prescribed patterns. Outside these dates, however cold the day may be, they are not allowed to do so. The Tibetans are in the main an orderly people. Even the brigands, of whom there are plenty, are governed largely by rule. Many of them are highway robbers for six months in the year in their own districts and peaceable traders when they visit Lhasa and elsewhere. Nobody minds this: it has been so since time immemorial. Many of these brigands are markedly prosperous. They find the combination of business profitable; trading in other districts and robbing in their own.

In Lhasa there is frost at night for eight months out of the twelve. From the beginning of December to the end of January the temperature in some of the rooms in our house did not rise above freezing-point, night or day. Our highest temperature in the summer was 91° Fahrenheit in the shade; our lowest in the winter 10° below zero. What made it really cold was the strong wind, which attains its greatest violence during the winter and spring months. Tibetan residences are plentifully supplied with windows; we had about fifty in the small house in which Colonel Kennedy and I lived. Instead of glass you have white cloth in these barely thicker than muslin, a somewhat incomplete protection against the winter gales at an altitude of 12,000 feet.

Lhasa is the home of festivals. They take place on specified dates throughout the year. I shall have time to touch on only a few of them,

and that briefly. The Tibetan calendar differs from ours. Their New Year falls in February; when we were in Lhasa it fell on the eighth. Four days before it the Dalai Lama made a State Entry into the Potala from his country palace.

In Christian lands on the last day of the year midnight services are held in the churches that men and women may repent of the sins of the old year and start afresh in the new. Something of the same kind may be seen in Tibet, though the manner of action is different. Two days before the close of the year a monastic dance is held in the great courtyard of the Potala. Its object is to cast out the evil of the old year so that the new year may start fresh and clean.

On the first day of the new year the leading priests make their obeisance to the Dalai Lama in the Potala. The next day is known as "The King's New Year." We attended it, and a most interesting ceremony it was. It represents events in the times of the kings of Tibet, one thousand to twelve hundred years ago, when Tibet was probably one of the most powerful nations in Asia. There are religious services and songs, a dance with axes, a dance with swords, and theological disputations between two of the leading doctors of divinity. In an interval between these all Tibetan officials, from the ministers downwards, made their obeisances to the god-king, and received his blessing.

At one point there was an interlude that, though comical, was not without its significance. A large number of low square tables were brought in and placed in the centre of the hall. On them were laid fruits, cakes, sweetmeats, dried carcasses of sheep, and the head of a bull. These had all been blessed by the Dalai Lama and were meant for the sweepers, grooms, sedan-chair carriers, and other servants of His Holiness, that these poor folk, though not admitted to the ceremony, might share in the general rejoicing and in the blessing. The doors were thrown open and in they rushed. With them crowded in a number of outsiders, eager also to gain some of the food, not because they were poor—most of them were not—but because it had been blessed by the Dalai Lama. These thrusters were belaboured by the door-keepers, strongly built men, between 6 and 7 feet in height, who laid on with thick sticks, one stick breaking in the process. The intruders, however, seemed to care but little, provided they could gain the blessing that came with the food. Like Jacob in the Bible, each wrestled for his blessing and refused to let go, even though he was hurt.

At this ceremony, and at certain others during the next two months, Tibetan lay officials wear a special uniform with a white cap. These caps were introduced by King Song-tsen Gam-po, when, some twelve hundred years ago, he introduced Buddhism from India. They represent the turbans worn by Indians.

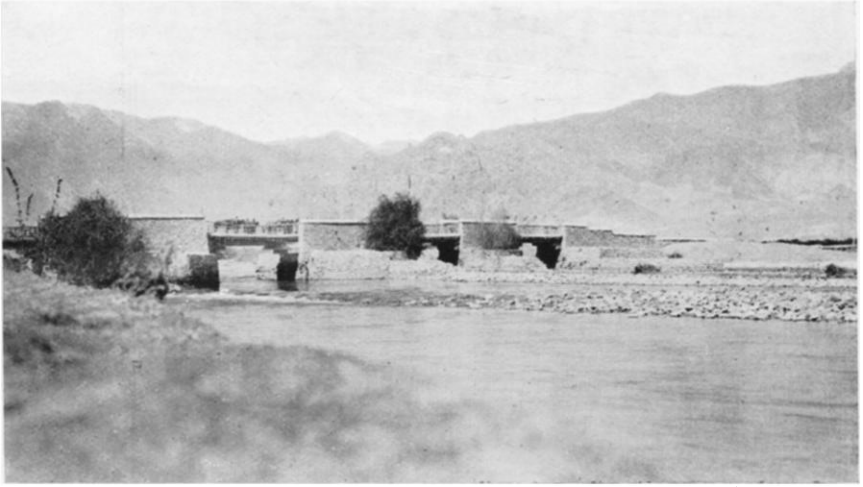
Now begins what is the most important festival of the whole year. It is called Mönlam Chempo, *i.e.* "The Great Prayer," and lasts for

twenty-one days. People flock into Lhasa from all directions, especially monks, and most of all those of the great monasteries. The population of the capital, which is ordinarily perhaps fifteen to twenty thousand, is swollen to four or five times this number. More than three-fourths are monks, many of them spoiling for a fight. It is a time of grave anxiety for the Dalai Lama and his Government, as in times past there have been serious outbreaks leading to wholesale massacres. "The monks," as the Dalai Lama used to tell me, "act on the spur of the moment; they never stop to think." During this particular year everybody feared an outbreak owing to some measures which had been brought forward by the Tibetan Government, and were by most of the people believed to have been inspired by me. These measures, though necessary, were unpopular among many of the people and especially among the more bigoted section of the priesthood. Householders, large and small, were sending away their property by night and hiding it in the villages in the country. However, by a judicious mixture of tact and firmness on the Dalai Lama's part, the danger was eventually averted.

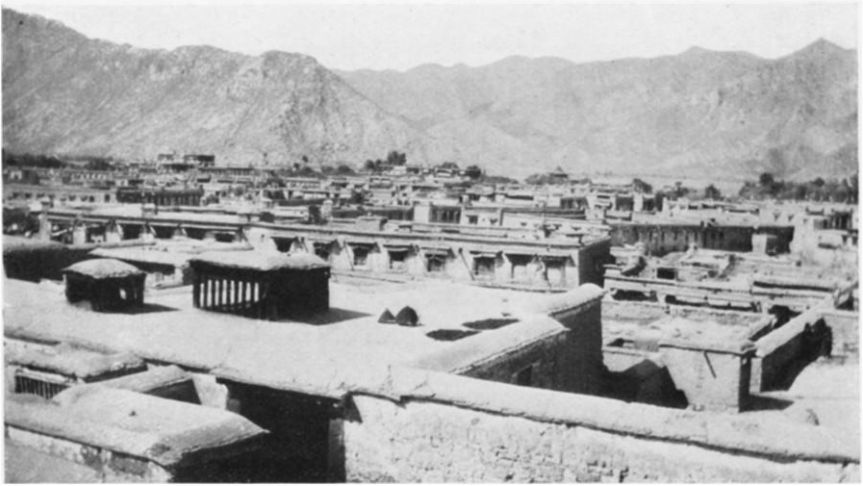
Throughout the "Great Prayer" religious services are held thrice daily in the great Temple in Lhasa. I watched the proceedings at one of these, and found twelve thousand monks taking part in the service. They were divided into sections and placed wherever room could be found for them.

On the night of the fifteenth day we attended a festival which is known as "The Offerings of the Fifteenth," but may briefly be described as the Butter Festival. The monasteries, ministers, and others make offerings of butter, eighty or ninety offerings in all. Each is in the form of a triangular wooden frame, 40 to 60 feet high, with a sharp apex. On the frame is stretched a covering of leather, and on this are figures, pictures, etc., all of butter, painted in various colours, and often covered with gold leaf. On each side of the frame is an ascending dragon; in the middle a circular flower or wheel, usually red. Below are figures, in groups and alone. The whole is tastefully and elaborately designed, and the figures are carefully moulded. And all are made of butter. On the top of each offering is a red silk umbrella.

As it was night and the festival took place in the heart of Lhasa, the authorities were very nervous for our safety. The tension among the monks was high. There were a good many of them in Lhasa at the time, the streets were narrow and unlighted, and a stone could easily be dropped or a shot fired from the darkness of a neighbouring house. But we had attended other ceremonies, and the people would have drawn wrong conclusions if we had not been present at this one. By the Dalai Lama's orders twelve soldiers accompanied us, and six monks equipped with long staves. The crowds made way for us, and we were able to make a thorough inspection of the various interesting exhibits. In some of these small platforms were arranged, and the figures made to move by



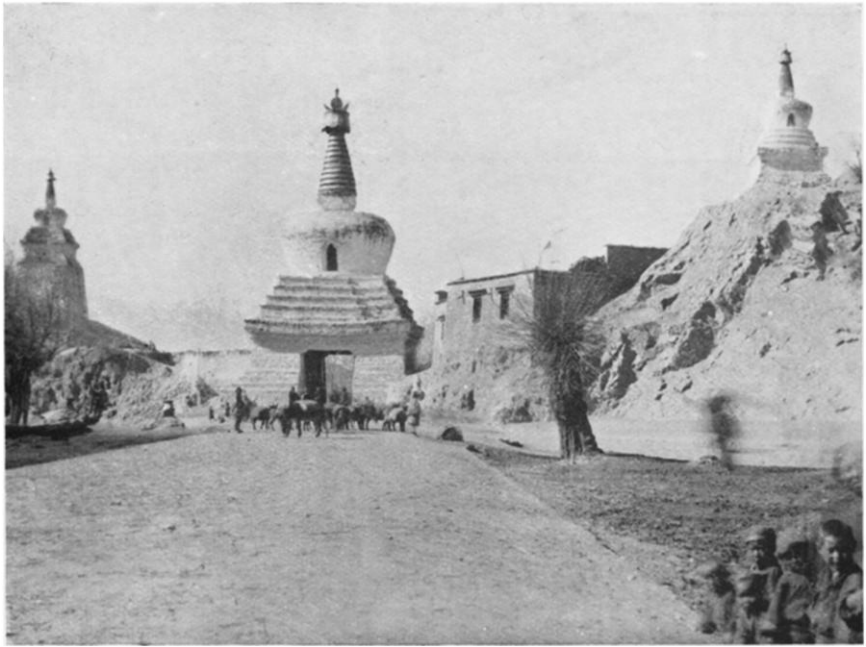
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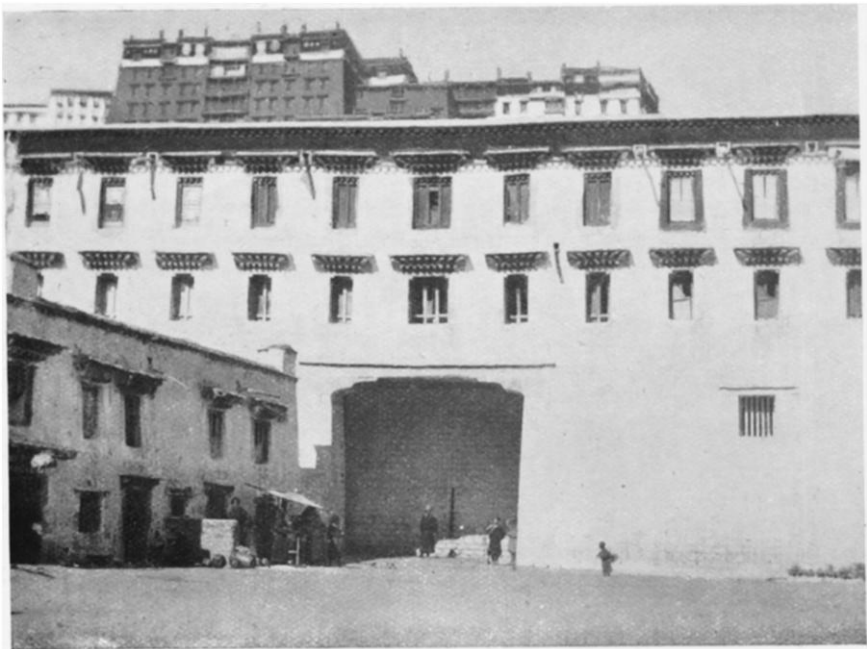
THE NORTHERN QUARTER OF LHASA



THE TWO SHENGOS WITH IRON RODS OF OFFICE



PARGO KALING



MAIN ENTRANCE TO THE POTALA

strings pulled from behind and below. The countrymen stared agape at this marvellous performance ; the sophisticated town lads laughed, but enjoyed it just as much.

It is a pleasure to be able to record that, when the trouble broke out again five months later, the monks themselves, suspicious though they are of the foreigner, desired my arbitration in the dispute.

During the concluding days of the " Great Prayer " there were sports of various kinds, gun-firing and arrow-shooting on galloping ponies, a pony race without riders, a foot-race over a 6-mile course, wrestling, and the carrying of a heavy weight. These sports are presided over by two masters of ceremonies, who are chosen from the youngest officials just beginning their career. They are attended by a large staff, including six Maids of Honour chosen from the ladies of Lhasa.

The festival of the " Great Prayer " is in its essence a prayer to the next Buddha, " The King of Love," to come quickly. And when it was over, all dispersed to their homes far and near, and as they went you could hear some of them singing :

Lhasa's Great Prayer now is ended ;
And the King of Love invited.

Many of the ceremonies in the Great Prayer illustrate events in the times of the early Tibetan kings. Some of these kings conquered territory in China and India, and recorded their conquests, their treaties, and their internal affairs on monoliths in Lhasa and elsewhere. But one of them, a young man, departed from the ordinary lines and introduced a measure somewhat akin to the capital levy of which we hear so much at present. The wealth of the country was divided equally among all the people. But the equality soon disappeared. He tried again, with the same result. Yet a third time the division was made. But during their times of ease the poor had lost the habit of working, and so became poorer than ever. After this third attempt the king was poisoned by his mother.

The present Dalai Lama is the thirteenth of the series. Soon after each one dies, or, as the Tibetans say, retires to the heavenly fields, his spirit is believed to pass into the body of a newly born boy. The fifth Dalai, who was the first to rule as a king and is the most highly revered of the whole series, introduced the present system of administration in Tibet. Among other innovations he transferred the civil and criminal jurisdiction of Lhasa city to two monks during the Prayer festival each year. The ordinary judiciary and police are for the time removed, while these monk-magistrates, known as Shengo, hold control throughout the city with their own henchmen. In former days they were not scrupulous as to how they exercised the control, provided that their coffers were filled. Many abuses resulted, heavy fines were imposed on trifling pretexts, and people used to flee from Lhasa to avoid the

exactions. During the early years of his rule over twenty years ago the young Dalai Lama sent for the two monk-magistrates.

"By whose authority do you do these things?" he asked.

"By the authority of the Great Fifth Dalai Lama," they replied.

"And who is the Great Fifth Dalai Lama?" queried the young ruler.

Though taken aback for a moment, the Shengo did not fail to answer, "Without doubt Your Holiness is he."

"What I have given I can take away," came the quiet reply, "and I will assuredly do so unless you cease from your exactions."

From the date of that interview the worst abuses ceased, and the good people of Lhasa have always been grateful to the Head of the Faith for his intervention.

The Dalai Lama's government rules an area of some half a million square miles, with a population averaging only five or six to the square mile. It is a land of mountain, desert, and unbridged rivers, a land of snow and ice and blizzards. There are no railways, no roads as we understand them, no motor cars. There is, practically speaking, no carriage, cart, or other wheeled conveyance of any kind from one end of the land to the other. The country is poor. When these limitations are considered, it must be admitted that the Lama and his Government exercise a very creditable control over their territory. It is not indeed as close a control as in Nepal, one of their southern neighbours, where the Gurkha proverb runs :

There's no answer to an order ;
There's no medicine for death.

But Nepal has a dense population concentrated in a comparatively small area.

Law and order are maintained in those portions of Tibet which are still under the Dalai Lama's rule far more successfully than in the parts of Tibet which have been annexed by China, or in China herself.

Numerous indeed were the religious ceremonies that we attended throughout our stay in Lhasa ; many were the monasteries that we visited, with their monk inmates ranging from thirty to ten thousand. And often after a round of such visits I seemed to hear the gentle voice of the old Prime Minister, who from the first had spoken to us as follows :

"There are in Tibet many religious ceremonies, many monasteries and innumerable priests ; but the whole of our religion can be summed up in one short verse, a verse that every Tibetan knows :

Taking self as an example,
Do ye good, not harm, to others ;
This, just this, is Buddha's teaching."

The same thing, is it not, as "Do unto others as ye would they should do unto you," or "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" ?

The Tibetans like being in the open air as much as possible. During

the summer they often spend the whole day in picnics and other outdoor entertainments ; sometimes right out in the open, sometimes under awnings. The time is spent in feasting, singing, dancing, and gambling, in having a good time generally. Towards the end of the summer theatrical entertainments take place. The Dalai Lama starts the ball rolling in the Jewel Park with a series of plays that continue for a week. I followed with an entertainment to my Tibetan friends that lasted for three days ; a separate play being performed daily. The play began each day in a park near Lhasa at about ten o'clock, and ended with the daylight nine hours later.

On August 24, by the Dalai Lama's invitation, Colonel Kennedy and I left Lhasa for a tour along the northern road from Lhasa to Mongolia. This had, I think, never before been visited by white people except by Huc and Gabet, the well-known Lazarist missionaries who had passed along most of our route seventy-five years before, but have not left much record of this portion of their journey.

Crossing the Pempogo pass, we descended to the Pempogo valley and halted for the night at the monastery known as "Elephant Plain," built in the twelfth century. We were accommodated in the large Assembly Hall. We found here the mummy of an Indian saint, who is believed to have lived over nine hundred years ago. We saw also a chöten or stupa erected by the founder as a protection against epileptic fits, these being held to be due to planetary influence. The protection is gained by walking round the chöten.

The following day we crossed the Pembo river, with some difficulty, for it was swirling along flush with its banks, and halted at Lhüntrup Dzong. Our next march took us over the Cha pass to the Talung monastery. On the way we passed several parties of Mongols and of people from the far distant regions of north-eastern Tibet. I had chosen this time for the tour as being the time when the summer caravan comes into Lhasa from Mongolia and Siberia. Once every summer and once every winter the long trek across the high cold plateau of northern Tibet is undertaken. The parties of pilgrims and traders unite in one large caravan as a protection against brigands. Arrived at Nagchuka, 150 miles north of Lhasa, they await the Dalai Lama's permission to continue the journey, and then proceed in small parties to Lhasa. The journey from Mongolia takes about four months.

We were now leaving behind the agriculturalists of Central Tibet, who enjoy the comparative luxury of a settled existence, and are approaching the land of pastoral nomads who raise no crops, but wander over the country with their flocks and herds. We saw many plants of the wonderful blue poppy of Tibet, which was then in full bloom and flourishing from an altitude of 13,500 feet upwards.

The head of the Talung monastery—the word means "The Tiger's Prophecy"—is known as "The Precious Mother," which seemed a

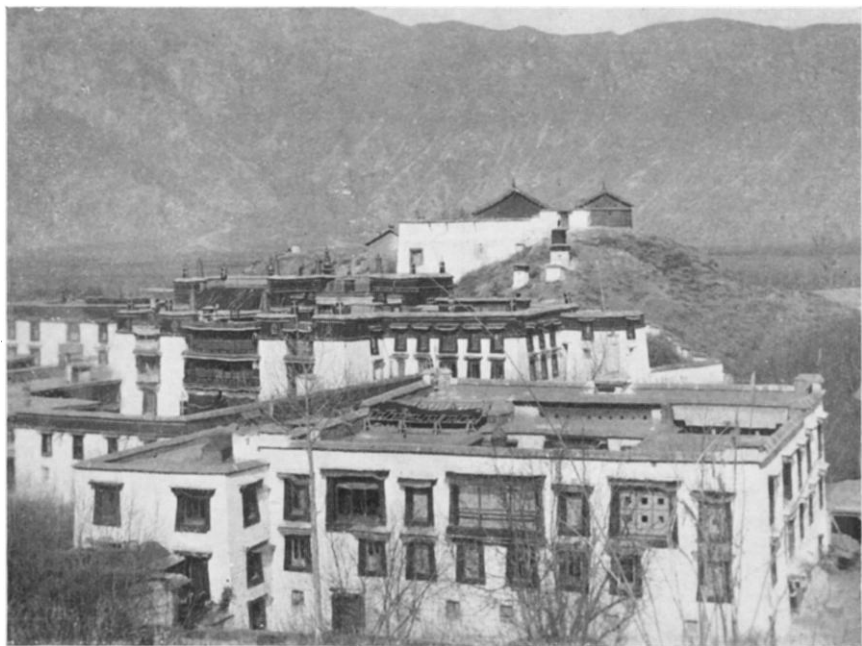
somewhat curious title, for the head in question was a boy four years of age. Another curious feature in this monastery—which, lying off the road, was probably not visited by Huc and Gabet—was its old library. Ten to twelve thousand volumes, each in its massive wooden covers and said to be written in gold letters, were piled against the walls. These books were saved from the fire that destroyed the great chapel of the monastery several hundred years ago. As a result of this experience they are now pensioned off. They are not put to further use, but rest in peace against the lofty walls. We found the same state of affairs at Reting, a new library taking the place of the old.

On our march to Pondo we passed a small house of religion built into the face of a precipice, whose priest had remained seated Buddha-wise for twelve months, so that now he was unable to stand upright. He has a reputation for learning as well as for sanctity. Young priests come to him from all over Tibet to receive instruction in the Buddhist scriptures.

At Pondo there is a suspension bridge for foot-passengers over the Lha Chu, one of the very few suspension bridges in Tibet that are usable. Tibetans ascribe the building of such bridges in Tibet to a priest named Tang-Drong Gyal-po, who lived some hundreds of years ago. Images of this saint are put up where there is danger of a river overflowing its banks, for he is believed to have power over water. From near Pondo we saw a small portion of the Nyenchen Tanglha range. Round and about we passed many parties of Mongols and others from the north on their way to Lhasa. They ride ponies, mules, and yaks, but not camels. These are largely used on the northern plains of Tibet, but are not allowed on the Lhasa side of Nagchuka.

Seven miles beyond Pondo we left the north road, a mere track leading up a side valley to the left. Another 6 miles brought us to Reting, which is 64 miles from Lhasa. Reting owes its reputation mainly to two things. The first is this: though trees in Tibet do not usually grow at a much higher altitude than 13,000 feet, and then but sparsely, here and there, yet round Reting there is a dense forest of juniper trees growing up the mountain-side up to and beyond an altitude of 15,000 feet. Tibetans regard this as a miracle and ascribe it to the prayers of the most famous of the early Tibetan kings, Song-tsen Gam-po, who lived thirteen hundred years ago. Cutting off his hair, the king strewed it on the ground and prayed that trees might grow from it to enable a temple to be built. The temple and monastery were built three hundred years later. There are twenty-one thousand trees altogether; it is not allowed to cut or lop any of them except for building material. Several of the trees have names of their own.

The other great possession of Reting is its *Cho*. A *Cho* is an image of Buddha made under the direction of Buddha himself. There are said to be only three in Tibet, two in Lhasa and one here at Reting.



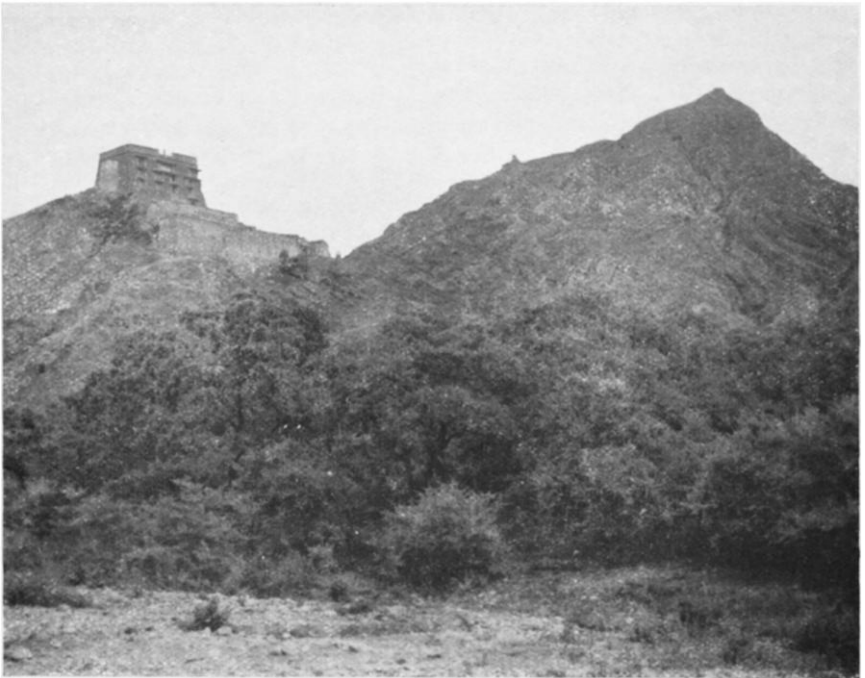
KÜNDELING MONASTERY, IN WHOSE PARK THE MISSION LIVED



A PICNIC PARTY



THE LABRANG (ADMINISTRATIVE BUILDING) OF RETING MONASTERY



LHÜNTRUP DZONG

One of Reting's unconsidered possessions was a fine Tibetan mastiff, who lived in a courtyard outside our rooms. He had a deep soft bark—a sign of good breeding. For the bark, say Tibetans, should be like the sound from a well-made copper gong.

The river at Reting is the same as the river at Lhasa, but it winds for 150 miles on its way from Reting to the capital. I went only a few miles beyond Reting, as I could not afford to be too far from the nearest telegraph office, which indeed at Lhasa was full two days' journey distant.

On leaving Reting, with its little hermitage nestling in the trees above it, we returned to Lhasa partly by the same and partly by a different route.

But it is time to conclude. We left Lhasa on October 19, and on the 18th I paid my farewell call on His Holiness the Dalai Lama. It was a sad parting for us both. When I left I felt that there were but few Orientals whom I knew as well as the mysterious personage who governs Tibet. On our departure next day, in addition to the usual receptions, guards of honour, etc., the Dalai Lama himself stood on the roof of a neighbouring house to watch us pass, and was thus himself in full view of the people. Such an action on the part of the God-King, whose sanctity requires seclusion from the eyes of the crowd, was probably unprecedented in the annals of Tibet.

Before the paper the PRESIDENT (Lord RONALDSHAY) said: We are to-night to have a first-hand account of the city of Lhasa, and that, as I need hardly remind you, is a somewhat rare privilege, for the number of Europeans who are competent to give a first-hand account of that city is necessarily very small. Rather more than a hundred years ago an eccentric traveller by the name of Manning made a journey which took him eventually to Lhasa, but his Diary reflected his own eccentricities and gave us very little information with regard to the city. Then some three-quarters of a century ago the world was startled and entertained by the descriptions given by those famous Lazarist missionaries, Messieurs Gabet and Huc. After that the curtain fell upon Lhasa and was not raised again until 1904, when the famous Younghusband Mission made its way to that city. That Mission, no doubt, did much to lay the foundations of good relations between ourselves and the people of Tibet, but it must necessarily have appeared to the Tibetans as the strong arm of Great Britain which was imposing terms upon a recalcitrant neighbour. Since then, however, the most remarkable change has come about in the relations between the Tibetans and ourselves. At the present time the Tibetans are most friendly towards Great Britain, and I have no hesitation in saying that that extraordinarily satisfactory state of affairs is very largely, if not mainly, due to the last twenty years of work which have been put in by our lecturer this evening, Sir Charles Bell. The friendly relations which he was able to establish with the Tibetans, and in particular with the Dalai Lama, culminated in the invitation which he received from the latter to visit his capital, and that invitation at last materialized in a visit to Lhasa by Sir Charles Bell which extended over a period of a full year. Sir Charles Bell, therefore, is particularly well qualified to inform us of those changes that have taken place in Lhasa since we last had an authentic account of it given by the Younghusband Mission, and I have much pleasure in asking him if he will now give us his account.

Sir Charles Bell then read the paper printed above, and a discussion followed.

The PRESIDENT: I am sure you would like, before we disperse, to hear a few words from Sir Francis Younghusband.

Sir FRANCIS YOUNGHUSBAND: I should like, in the first place, to endorse all that the President has said as to the value of the work which has been done by Sir Charles Bell during the last twenty years on the Tibetan border. It is very largely, perhaps chiefly, due to that work and to his capacity for entering into the life and thoughts and feelings of the Tibetans that our relations with the Dalai Lama's Government are so favourable as they are to-day. It is always a good way of getting to the hearts of an Asiatic people to study their literature, and especially their sacred literature. It is to that work that Sir Charles Bell has devoted many years of his life, and because of it he was able to get that friendship with the Dalai Lama himself which has been of such incalculable value to us. We in this Society are especially indebted to Sir Charles Bell, because it was through his personal influence with the Dalai Lama that we were able to get sanction for the Mount Everest Expedition to attempt to climb the highest mountain in the world.

The President has said that the number of Europeans who can give first-hand information with regard to Lhasa itself is very small. I regret to say that during the last few months two of that very small number have died. First of all, Sir Henry Hayden, a very able geologist, who was a member of my Mission to Tibet. He was a most delightful companion and very enterprising traveller, who not only went with me to Lhasa, but who last year, at the invitation of the Dalai Lama himself, had proceeded there to advise the Dalai Lama on the geology of Tibet, and who last summer lost his life in the Alps. And just this last few days we have heard of the death in China of that adventurous traveller, General George Pereira. General Pereira had only last autumn completed a great journey across China, from Peking right through Tibet to Lhasa, and from Lhasa to India. I should like to take this opportunity of bearing testimony to the great value of what a traveller of the character of General Pereira does in countries like Tibet. He was a born traveller, and travelled for the sake of travel. The world knew very little of what he did. He went out in a most modest way, telling hardly any one where he was going. But he for years travelled through China and Tibet. And it is by the influence of travellers of his description that the good name of England is carried on in out-of-the-way parts of Asia.

Sir Charles Bell has given us some very interesting details about the way of life of these Tibetan people. I gather from him that he had a very clean mind, because when he went across the passes he had very favourable weather. My mind cannot have been as clean as that of Sir Charles Bell, or at any rate some of my companions must have had very dirty minds, for certainly when we crossed the passes there were the most terrific blizzards. It was just this month twenty years ago that we made our preparations at Darjeeling to cross the Himalaya by a pass 15,200 feet high in the month of January.

We had with us a very enthusiastic correspondent of the *Times*, Mr. Percival Landon, and for weeks before we ever reached Lhasa he used to go on in front and ascend hills thousands of feet and be quite convinced that there away in the distance he saw the glittering roofs of the Potala. As Sir Charles Bell has told us, we could not see Lhasa until we were immediately upon it, and the Survey Officers assured Percival Landon that there were at least three great ranges in between him and Lhasa. However, he always used to imagine to himself that through some chink he saw the roofs of the Grand Lama's palace.

We eventually reached there, as you know, and entered Lhasa by that chöten of which we had a photograph this evening. But I noticed a change, for there is now a nice straight well-fenced road up to the gate, whereas when we went through we had to make our way through puddles over a very rough road. In Lhasa itself I rather think that I signed the Treaty in that hall in which you saw the Grand Lama seated in state, but on that occasion there was a magnificent silk curtain pulled down in front of the Dalai Lama's throne and a table put in front of it, and on that the Treaty was signed.

Sir Charles Bell has referred to the monks of Lhasa and the great monasteries there, some of which he says contain 10,000 monks. When we were there the monks were troublesome to a certain extent, but not nearly so troublesome as in ordinary times. The only really serious trouble we had was with a monk who ran amok in our camp, and suddenly drew out his sword and cut down an officer. We tried the man, and asked him why he had done this, and he said that as he was going through our camp he saw the officer wearing an ugly hat. So he thought he must knock off the hat, and when he knocked the hat off he saw the officer's face was uglier than the hat, so he thought he would have a slash at that too. The officer was very much annoyed about this, and kept muttering about it for many months afterwards. But on the whole I may say that we parted good friends with the Tibetans, and had the feeling all the way through that they were really quite friendly people. We had no special enmity with them, and it was exceedingly important that we should not establish any permanent barrier between us. I am glad to say that, thanks to Captain O'Connor especially, who was my secretary there and spoke the Tibetan language and had a great liking for the people, we were in the end able to get on quite friendly terms with them.

Just before we left we went to a great festival in the Cathedral at Lhasa. Sir Charles Bell has described to us something of Tibetan religious ceremonies, and I must say I also was greatly impressed by them : by the masses of Tibetan monks and lamas, the great trumpets and cymbals and drums, and, most impressive of all, the deep voices to which the Tibetans are especially trained. One got the sort of feeling that these were a big people with a deep sense of religion and great power and reverence. And that, I think, is what Sir Charles Bell wished to convey to us. I would like to congratulate Sir Charles Bell and to thank him for the details which he has given us this evening of every aspect of Tibetan life. I would also express the hope that he will spend the next three days in going up and down amongst the electors of Great Britain giving an account of the Tibetans' experience of a Capital Levy !

The PRESIDENT : Sir Charles Bell has given the Dalai Lama and his Government a number of testimonials, and amongst them a testimonial as to the good order and good government of the country. The order preserved in Tibet, he said, was greater even than that which one found in China. In view of the state of affairs in China at the present moment, I am not sure that this is a testimonial which the Tibetan Government would wish to cry from the housetops. But it so happens that we have present a gentleman who with great ability has represented this country in China for a great number of years, Sir John Jordan, and he therefore may like to say a word or two.

Sir JOHN JORDAN : It is always extremely difficult to speak about a subject on which one knows nothing, and that is my position here to-night ; but Lord Ronaldshay has very kindly asked me to say something from the Chinese point of view, and I suppose that is a rôle I ought to accept. In the first place, before saying anything about China and China's relations with Tibet I should like to

express the very great interest with which I have followed the lecture. It has given us a deep insight into the life of Tibet and especially of Lhasa.

As you know, we in China have always been rather in competition with India as regards Tibet, and I suppose I have been asked to-night to show the other side of the picture, so to speak. We were interested in Tibet long before India took any interest in the subject at all. In the seventh century we sent a princess to Tibet who became the wife of that first King of Tibet whose name was something like "Strong Bow" (Srong-tsan-gampo). That lady left Peking in the T'sang dynasty, one of the most illustrious dynasties in China, which covered a period of great literary activity, and is still regarded as marking the highest stage of Chinese culture. That young lady made a long pilgrimage across Asia to civilize Tibet and became the wife of this "Strong Bow." He already had a wife—a Nepalese princess; but the princess from China took civilization and a great many things to Tibet.

I was interested in that monolith Sir Charles Bell showed us, and wonder if the writing on it referred to an early treaty with China. He said that Tibet conquered China. I should prefer to say that China conquered Tibet. Warren Hastings took much interest in Tibet, and he knew a great deal about the country in his day. He wrote a Memorandum for Bogle which might be an instruction at the present day to any one going to Tibet. And then Bogle was sent there, though he never got to Lhasa. That was about 1780. He made an arrangement to go to Peking, but that failed through the death there of the Tesho Lama, with whom he had entered into very friendly relations. The Tesho Lama was called to Peking to celebrate the seventieth birthday of the Emperor Kien Lung, and he died there of small-pox. Then China had its turn, and we sent a gentleman to whom the President has referred of the name of Manning. He was at Canton at the time, but he had been educated at Cambridge, and might, if he had chosen, have been a high wrangler. He succeeded in reaching Lhasa, but I must say I agree entirely with what the President said with regard to his Diary. Manning had one of the greatest opportunities that ever a man had; he established friendly relations with the Dalai Lama, but he was very disgruntled and spent his time in bickering with his servants. He praised the mutton, but otherwise saw little good in the country. His Diary was a most disappointing document. That was in about 1811. I think his grievance was that the Government of India had given him no encouragement.

Time passed, and Huc and Gabet went from China in 1844. In the mean time China had greatly strengthened her hold over Tibet. I do not quarrel with the lecturer in anything he has said; I only think he has omitted a good deal. He has said practically nothing about China, but, as a matter of fact, Tibet was a dependency of China. Not to go back further than 1790 or so, Nepal quarrelled with Tibet, and we sent two armies from Peking, one from the north and one from the south, to drive out the Nepalese, and followed them up to within a few miles of Katmandu. After that China sent two Residents, and for over a hundred years those Residents lived in Lhasa. The political relations of the country were entirely dictated by the Chinese Ambans, so that China had a very close interest in Tibet during all those years.

That all ended when China in 1911 became a Republic. The lecturer and Sir Francis Younghusband have quite rightly taken credit for the good that the Treaty of 1904 did. From India's point of view I admit. But then I speak for China. Immediately afterwards the Chinese said, "We will try what we can do." Just as India went in from the Indian side, the Chinese started from

their side. The districts that Sir Charles Bell has described as Tibetan territory ruled by China might rather be described as Chinese feudatory territory ruled by China at that time. As a matter of fact, in 1724 all Tibet was delimited, and all the part to the west was assigned to the Dalai Lama. The boundary was near Batang, and the part to the east was placed under feudal chieftains subject to the Emperor of China. After 1904 the Chinese came in from the Szechwan side, and made a determined effort to convert all these feudal principalities into an integral part of the Chinese Dominions. A Chinese official named Chao Erh-féng became a sort of Empire builder. He started and plundered all the monasteries, and I must say behaved extremely badly and conquered a great part of the country. During the last six or seven years of my time in China I had continual trouble over the boundary question, and all this part of the country was in a state of perpetual unrest. I want to show that the whole of that part of Tibet is not so peaceful as might possibly be inferred from the lecture.

Then for the Lamaist religion: I am afraid I cannot subscribe to the proverb that "the inside people are necessarily clean inside." I have grave doubts. We have a Lama temple in Peking. The Chinese emperors have always rather encouraged Lamaism from a political point of view. They established this big Lama Temple in Peking, with a large endowment, and a formidable array of priests. I can quite bear out what Sir Charles Bell has said with regard to the truculent nature of the monks. On one occasion, many years ago, when I was Acting Chinese Secretary at Peking, I undertook to take Lord Curzon to the Lama temple. We managed to get in, but we had the greatest difficulty in the world in getting out.

I would like to add that I thoroughly enjoyed the lecture, and I am very grateful indeed to Sir Charles Bell. In conclusion, I should like to associate myself very earnestly with the tribute that Sir Francis Younghusband has paid to my dear friend General Pereira. He served with me for over six years, and I can honestly say a finer man I never knew. I agree with every word that Sir Francis Younghusband has said. General Pereira was really a symbol of what a British gentleman ought to be all through the Far East; a marvellous traveller and a wonderful man who was respected by all for his innate kindness and goodness of heart. I think during all the time that he travelled in China he never had the least trouble with any man. I met him first in Seoul one day just before the Russo-Japanese war. He said, "I am going to stop here. I am going to be your Military Attaché." "But," I said, "I have no Military Attaché." "Oh," he replied, "telegraph home for permission. There's to be a scrap before long between Russia and Japan, and I am going to be in it."

The PRESIDENT: There are, of course, two sides to every shield, and we have just had the other side to the present shield from Sir John Jordan. It seemed to me he was rather trying to draw me into a discussion as to the merits of the respective attitudes of India and China towards Tibet. From any other platform I should be delighted to take up that challenge. As President of the Royal Geographical Society it would perhaps hardly be judicious for me to enter into a controversy of that kind. I shall confine myself, therefore, to joining with Sir John Jordan and Sir Francis Younghusband in the expression of gratitude to Sir Charles Bell for the excellent lecture which he has given us to-night.