

# THE PANCHEN LAMA'S VISIT TO CHINA IN 1780: AN EPISODE IN ANGLO-TIBETAN RELATIONS

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IN THE AUTUMN OF 1773, the Panchen Lama of Tashilhunpo, Lobzang Paldan Yeshe,<sup>1</sup> sent a letter to Warren Hastings in Calcutta. He was writing to ask for clemency on behalf of his vassal, the rajah of Bhutan, who had recently been defeated by the East India Company's soldiers in a border war.<sup>2</sup> For some time, the officials of the company had been discussing how they might open relations with Tibet, and to Hastings this seemed the opportunity they had been waiting for.

Accordingly, in May 1774, two months after he received the letter, he took advantage of the lama's overture and sent a young Scotsman, George Bogle, to Tashilhunpo with an answer, hoping that he might be able to initiate commercial and diplomatic relations with the Tibetan government. This mission was noteworthy, as it was the first time that an Englishman had crossed the Himalayas, and Bogle made the best of it. He returned

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<sup>1</sup> In this article we shall use phonetic simplifications of the Tibetan names. For example, this lama's name is spelled in Tibetan bLo-bzang dpal-ldan ye-she, while his capital, Tashilhunpo, is spelled bKra-shis-lhun-po. This Panchen (or "Tashi") Lama was the sixth by Chinese and Tibetan reckoning but is usually called the third by Western writers; cf. L. A. Waddell, *The Buddhism of Tibet, or Lamaism* (2nd ed., Cambridge, England, 1934), 236. An abridged version of his Tibetan biography, translated into English by Sarat Chandra Das, appears in his "Contributions on the religion, history &c. of Tibet" (*Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, 51, pt. 1 [1883], 29-43). This gives a conventionalized portrait of him (plate XIIIa), but better ones may be found in *JAOS*, 52 (1932), plate II, facing p. 339, and in *Asia*, 29 (1929), 476. Another biography of him is given by G. Huth, *Geschichte des Buddhismus in der Mongolei* (Strassburg, 1896), 299-324. This German translation of a Mongol history, written in Tibetan, is virtually unreadable because of the great number of Tibetan and Sanskrit terms and Mongolian and Chinese names in atrocious transcription. The dates for the years are miscalculated one year too early throughout.

<sup>2</sup> Captain Samuel Turner, *An account of an embassy to the court of the Teshoo Lama in Tibet* (London, 1800), Introduction, vii-xii, gives a full translation of the Panchen Lama's letter. The Bhutanese, who were vassals of Tibet, had raided into Cooch Behar and carried off the rajah of that country, who had then appealed to the English for aid. See Sir Ashley Eden's report in *Political missions to Bootan* (Calcutta, 1865), 1-3. Earl H. Pritchard, discussing this episode, errs in saying that the Goorkhas invaded Behar (which is not the same as Cooch Behar) and that the Dalai Lama wrote a letter to Warren Hastings; see. E. H. Pritchard, *The crucial years of early Anglo-Chinese relations 1750-1800* (*Research studies of the State College of Washington*, 4, nos. 3-4, Pullman, 1936), 231.

to Calcutta with extensive, detailed reports and great hopes for the possibilities of a lucrative trade.<sup>3</sup>

In view of Bogle's success in cultivating a friendship with the "Teshu Lama," as he called the Panchen,<sup>4</sup> and in view of economic conditions in Bengal which made an immediate extension of trade seem highly necessary, Hastings soon decided to send him north again. On April 19, 1779, he appointed Bogle to make a second trip to Bhutan and Tibet, for the purpose of cultivating and improving the good understanding already existing between the rulers of those countries and the government of Bengal; and to endeavor to establish free and lasting trade relations with "the kingdom of Tibet" and the other states to the north of the company's possessions. Shortly after, however, news arrived that the Panchen Lama was about to set out for Peking to attend the birthday of the emperor of China, and this naturally caused a change in plans.<sup>5</sup>

A brief mention of the lama's projected trip, together with a suggestion for means by which he might utilize this in the interests of the East India Company, was found in a memorandum of July 1779, recovered among Bogle's private papers in Scotland.<sup>6</sup> This begins with a reference to the debts owed by Chinese merchants to English individuals and the difficulty of collecting them, and conducting other company business, without any channel of communication or representation to the court of Peking. Bogle goes on to suggest that he might take advantage of his friendship with the lama to get to Peking, or failing that, to find some official stationed at Canton through whom representations could be made. He states his plan, in part, as follows:

<sup>3</sup> See C. R. Markham, *Narratives of the mission of George Bogle to Tibet and of the journey of Thomas Manning to Lhasa* (London, 1879). The Introduction, pp. lxvii-lxx, gives the background of the mission so briefly outlined here. The lives of Hastings and Bogle can be found in the *Dictionary of national biography*.

<sup>4</sup> In speaking of this second great dignitary of Tibet, Hastings and Bogle, and other Western writers of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, generally used the term "Teshu" or "Teshoo Lama," instead of Panchen Lama, while later Occidental writers have used the variant "Tashi Lama." Presumably these expressions were derived from the first part of the name of his capital, Tashilhunpo, but they are neither used nor known in Tibet and the other lama countries; see Sir Charles Bell, *The religion of Tibet* (Oxford, 1931), 105, note 1. We shall, therefore, use the correct title of Panchen Lama, throughout, regardless of the term used in the sources quoted.

<sup>5</sup> Markham, *Narratives*, Introduction, cli, lxx. The emperor in question was the Ch'ien-lung Emperor, who was born in 1711. Since, by Chinese reckoning, he was two years old on his first birthday, he was celebrating his seventieth birthday in 1780. For details of his life, see *Eminent Chinese of the Ch'ing period* (ed. A. W. Hummel) (Washington, 1943-44), 1:369-73.

<sup>6</sup> Markham, *Narratives*, 207-10. The date of this document given by Markham in parentheses on p. 207 is July 1778, but it was obviously written in the following year, for it was not until after April 1779 that Bogle heard of the lama's proposed trip to Peking.

When I was in Tibet, the Lama promised to endeavor to procure for me passports to go to Peking. He has not yet succeeded, but has sent a man to assure me that he will exert himself to procure me at least a passport by way of Canton. I propose to write him that I shall prepare myself either to go by land over Tartary, if he thinks it possible to procure me passports; otherwise, to go by sea to Canton in the full confidence of his sending me some person from himself to Canton with passports, so that I might get to Peking while the Lama is with the Emperor. I propose also to send back a Gosain who is in great favour with the Lama, and whom he has sent down to Calcutta, so as to be with him before he sets out from Tibet; and that this man who is much attached to me, together with one of my servants, should accompany the Lama to China, and come and meet me at Canton.<sup>7</sup>

The *gosain*, or Hindu holy man, in question must have been Purangir,<sup>8</sup> who had brought to Warren Hastings the first communication from the Panchen Lama, and who had been with Bogle in Tibet. For when the lama went to China, Purangir joined him en route and became one of his retinue. On his return, some three years later, Purangir made a rather complete report of the trip to his English patrons, which became one of the two chief European sources for the lama's visit to China<sup>9</sup> (the other being Fr. Amiot's translation of the Ch'ien-lung Emperor's letter to the Dalai Lama, discussed below). But before taking up this report, it seems advisable to refer to the more exact details of the events of this visit as preserved in the official Chinese records.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 208-09. In a conversation at Tashilhunpo on April 4, 1775, the Panchen Lama asked Bogle whether an Englishman had ever gone to Peking, and when Bogle told him that none ever had, except Dr. John Bell who had gone with a Russian mission many years before, he said that he would try to get permission for the English to visit the emperor (Markham, *Narratives*, 167-68).

<sup>8</sup> Brief accounts of Purangir's extraordinary life are given by Gaur Das Bysack, "Notes on a Buddhist monastery," *JASB*, 59 (1890), 50-99, and S. C. Sarcar, "A note on Puran Gir Gosain," *Bengal past and present (The journal of the Calcutta Historical Society)*, 43 (1932), 83-87. Though he was one of the remarkable men of his time, he has been so completely forgotten that Graham Sandberg, in his *Exploration of Tibet* (Calcutta, 1904), 102, 105, was able to write that Purangir was the name of the Panchen Lama!

*Gosain* is an Indian vernacular modification of the Sanskrit word *goswami* and is applied to Hindu religious mendicants in general; see H. H. Wilson, *A glossary of judicial and revenue terms of British India* (ed. A. C. Ganguli and N. D. Basu, Calcutta, 1940), 285. This book explains that Purangir is a fairly common name among these men. Bogle found a considerable number of *gosains* in Tibet. He speaks of them as "trading pilgrims" and remarks that though they were clad in the garb of poverty, many of them were very wealthy (Markham, *Narratives*, 124-25).

<sup>9</sup> First published in Alexander Dalrymple's *Oriental repertory* (London, in periodical form, April 1796, and as a book in 1808; pp 145-64 of the latter) and republished by Turner (457-73). In this report Purangir's name appears as "Pourungheer," a phonetic transcription.

<sup>10</sup> Our chief source is the *Kao-tsung Shun-huang-ti shih-lu* 高宗純皇帝實錄, the "Veritable record of (the reign of) the Emperor Kao-tsung." The careful way in which the *Veritable records* were compiled ensured great accuracy and reliability (see C. S. Gardner, *Chi-*

First, we are impressed by the preparations that were made for receiving the guest from Tibet. The Ch'ien-lung Emperor had had built, near his summer palace in Jehol, a vast new lama monastery called the "Tashilhunpo Temple,"<sup>11</sup> for the Panchen to stay in. And what seems more remarkable, according to the Chinese records, he even took the trouble to learn the Tibetan language in order to be able to talk to his guest without an interpreter.<sup>12</sup>

In an entry for August 20, 1780, the court records announced the lama's first meeting with his emperor, as follows: "The Panchen Erdeni<sup>13</sup> from Further Tibet came to have an audience: the Emperor summoned him to the I-ch'ing-kuan palace,<sup>14</sup> offered him a seat, inquired about his health, and bestowed on him some tea."<sup>15</sup> Equally bald statements at intervals during the next six weeks tell how various banquets and tea parties were given for the Panchen Lama and his retinue, along with various Mongol nobles and some Moslem dignitaries from Turkestan,<sup>16</sup>

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*nese traditional historiography* [Cambridge, 1938], 88-93). We have used the modern photolithograph edition (Mukden, 1937). Hereafter we shall abbreviate this title as *KTSL*. A second important source is the *Gazetteer of Jehol (Jo-ho chih)* 熱河志, which has additional details of the events in the summer of 1780. In transforming the Chinese dates of these and other works to their Western equivalents, we have used Cheng Hao-sheng 鄭鶴聲, *Chin-shih Chung-hsi shih-jih tui-chao piao* 近世中西史日對照表 (Shanghai, 1936).

<sup>11</sup> *Jo-ho chih*, ch. 80:13-14. This temple was called in Chinese either Cha-shih-lun-pu Miao 札什倫布廟 or Hsü-mi-fu-shou Miao 須彌福壽廟, the former being a transliteration of "Tashilhunpo" and the latter the direct translation of this compound Tibetan word (*ibid.*, 15).

<sup>12</sup> Wei Yüan 魏源, *Sheng wu chi* 聖武記 (1842), ch. 5:15.

<sup>13</sup> *Erdeni*, a Mongol word meaning "precious," is the equivalent of the term *rinpoche* in the Panchen Lama's Tibetan title; see Waddell, *Lamaism*, 235, note 4.

<sup>14</sup> 依清曠殿. When we visited Jehol in 1936, this palace hall was badly delapidated. For photographs of it in its present condition, see *Nekka* 熱河, by Sekino Tadashi 關野貞 and Takeshima Takuichi 竹島卓一 (Tokyo, 1932), 1:plate 7.

<sup>15</sup> *KTSL*, ch. 1111:4, and *Tung-hua ch'üan-lu* 東華全錄, Ch'ien-lung, ch. 92:3. W. W. Rockhill made a number of errors in translating this passage from the latter source (*The Dalai Lamas of Lhasa and their relations with the Manchu emperors of China 1644-1908* [Leyden, 1910], 48, note 2). He gives the date as "45th year Ch'ien-lung, 4th moon, i.e. May 4-June 2, 1780." It is true that the cyclical characters for the day are given incorrectly in this work (*ting-ch'ou* 丁丑 for *ting-yu* 丁酉), but Rockhill still could have figured out the correct one by the order of this entry in the day-by-day chronicle of court events. The mistake of the month is less excusable. Presumably because of calculating the wrong date, he was misled into thinking that this item was recorded before the Panchen Lama's visit and must therefore have been a prescription for the court procedure when he came, and thus he gave all the verbs in future tense. Furthermore, it was not an imperial decree, as stated by Rockhill, but merely the standard recording of an actual event after it had taken place. Lastly, he left off the first syllable of the name of the palace hall and attempted to translate the extra character of the name as part of the first sentence.

<sup>16</sup> Among the Mongol guests specifically mentioned (*KTSL*, ch. 1111:10) was Ubasi, Khan of the Torguts, whose tribe had recently (1770-71) returned to Chinese territory from Russia,

all of whom had come to Jehol to pay respects to their suzerain.<sup>17</sup>

The records then shift to events in Peking, where the Panchen Lama went when the court moved back there in the autumn. On October 30, for example, he dined with the emperor at the Pao-ho hall<sup>18</sup> in the Forbidden City.<sup>19</sup> We have been unable to find any mention of the lama's sudden death or its circumstances in these court records. The last entries concerning him, in December, merely speak of the arrangements being made for sending his remains back to Tibet in a golden reliquary.<sup>20</sup>

The other dates are supplied by a letter from the Ch'ien-lung Emperor to the Dalai Lama, dated February 2, 1781, informing him of his colleague's death.<sup>21</sup> According to this, the Panchen Lama arrived at Jehol on August 20, the date of his first audience.<sup>22</sup> On September 29 he came to

in a dramatic retreat that inspired Thomas De Quincey's "Revolt of the Tartars" (first published in *Blackwood's magazine*, 42 [July, 1837]). De Quincey calls him "Prince Oubacha."

<sup>17</sup> *KTSL*, ch. 1111:10, 10b-11; ch. 1112:17b, and *Jo-ho chih*, ch. 22:5b-8. Most of the events at Jehol were given by Sven Hedin in his rather popular *Jehol, city of emperors* (New York, 1933), 107-08, apparently translated from the latter source. However, his translator, T. K. Koo, was not particularly accurate and miscalculated a number of the dates. For example, he has the Panchen arrive at Jehol on August 10.

<sup>18</sup> 保和殿. This is the third in the series of main halls in the Winter Palace. Foreign tribute missions were regularly received there. See L. C. Arlington and William Lewisohn, *In search of old Peking* (Peiping, 1935), 40. Note also the Japanese woodcut of a banquet there, reproduced on pp. 38-39, as this gives some impression of what the banquet for the Panchen Lama must have been like.

<sup>19</sup> *KTSL*, ch. 1116:4.

<sup>20</sup> *KTSL*, ch. 1118:7; also p. 10, for later entries on the same subject. The reliquary is here described as a "golden stupa," *chin t'a* 金塔, but in another source it is called a "golden shrine for the relics," *she-li chin kang* 舍利金龕 (*Sheng wu chi*, ch. 5:16b). This reliquary contained his body. The clothes he was wearing when he died were placed in a magnificent marble *chorten* (Tibetan-style stupa) erected by order of the Ch'ien-lung Emperor at the "Yellow Temple" (Hsi-huang-ssu 西黃寺), where he stayed on his visit to Peking. The emperor's inscription commemorating its erection, with the lama's epitaph, dated June 21, 1783, was published by Ernest Ludwig in *The visit of the Teshoo Lama to Peking* (Peking, 1904), 23-32.

<sup>21</sup> *KTSL*, ch. 1122:9-10b.

<sup>22</sup> Most of the accounts agree that the Panchen Lama left Tashilhunpo in July 1779: Purangir says, on July 15 (Turner, 548). Therefore he must have been more than a year on the way, but much of this time would have been spent at Kumbum, in Kokonor, where he spent the winter. For some reason, the dates of this trip have been greatly confused in Western writings. C. Imbault-Huart twice says that the Panchen Lama came to Peking in 1781 (*Histoire de la conquête du Népal*, *Journal asiatique*, 7th ser., 12 [Paris, 1878], 358; and "Une épisode des relations diplomatiques de la Chine avec le Népal," *Revue de l'Extrême Orient*, 3 [Paris, 1887], 5). The inscription translated by Ludwig gave the exact dates for the lama's arrival and his death, but the translator was unable to figure them out; though he was obviously a learned philologist, his sense of history and chronology in this article is very weak. Lastly, Baron A. von Stael-Holstein said that the Panchen Lama visited China in 1779 and died there in that year ("Notes on two lama paintings," *JAOS*, 52 [1932], 345, 349, note 45).

Peking; on November 24 he developed a fever, which physicians sent by the emperor diagnosed as smallpox; and three days later he died.<sup>23</sup> On March 7, 1781, the writer announces, the coffin<sup>24</sup> would leave Peking under guard for Tibet. This important letter also proclaims that the lama's elder brother, Chung-pa Hutukhtu,<sup>25</sup> who accompanied him to Peking, was to be Nomin Khan, or Regent of Tashilhunpo, a position of great power.<sup>26</sup>

This letter to the Dalai Lama came briefly into the hands of Father Amiot of the Jesuit Mission in Peking, confided to him by the mandarin who had the duty of translating it into the Mongol language before transmission.<sup>27</sup> Fr. Amiot translated it into French, and it was published in Paris the following year (1783).<sup>28</sup> Not long after, it was translated into English, and published by Alexander Dalrymple, the geographer to the East India Company, in his *Oriental repertory*, along with Purangir's

<sup>23</sup> Rockhill (*Dalai Lamas*, 43) gives this date correctly as November 27, 1780, but practically all the other Western writers who refer to this event give the date as November 12 (see, for example, Markham, *Narratives*, lxx; Waddell, *Lamaism*, 239). The *Ch'ing shih-kao* 清史稿 (ch. 14:9) has December 1. An Indian writer discussing Bogle's career "corrects" the date to July 4, 1780, basing his contention on a letter from the regent at Tashilhunpo to Warren Hastings; see D. B. Diskalkar, "Bogle's embassy to Tibet," *Indian historical quarterly*, 9 (Calcutta, 1933), 423. For comments on the complete unreliability of the dates in this letter see note 54, below. Incidentally, Diskalkar presents this letter as "unpublished," though it appeared in the second most important source on his subject (Turner, 449-53). Of the four other "unpublished" documents in this article, one is found in Markham's *Narratives*, 124-29, one in Forrest's *Selections from state papers*, 1:75, and another in Turner, 454-56.

<sup>24</sup> Actually not a coffin in our sense of the word (see note 20.)

<sup>25</sup> Chung-pa 仲巴, with the addition of the Mongolian title for a "Living Buddha," Hutukhtu, is the name by which this (later to be notorious) regent is generally referred to in the Chinese historical records; although an alternative name, Chung-k'o-pa 忠克巴, is used for him in this letter. Rockhill, *Dalai Lamas*, 47, note 2., miswriting his name as Ch'ung-pa, said that it presumably stood for the Tibetan title *Shakdzo* (-pa), but this seems too far-fetched. His alternative Chinese name, Chung-k'o-pa, might possibly confirm Markham's supposition that his original Tibetan name was Thango-pa (*Narratives*, 91, note 1.), but the single instance of its use seems too slight to serve as concrete evidence. Bogle speaks of this regent as "Chanzo Cusho" throughout: "Cusho" probably stands for the honorary title of *kushog*, as Markham has suggested (*ibid.*), but "Chanzo" has no obvious Tibetan equivalent. For a brief description of him as an individual, see Turner, 241-42.

<sup>26</sup> *Nomin Khan* (諾們汗, in Chinese) is the Mongol equivalent of the Sanskrit title *Dharma raja*, literally, "King of the Law." The regents, or secular kings, of Tibet, like the co-ruler of Bhutan, always bore the official title of *Dharma raja*. Theoretically, only the regent of Lhasa should have borne this title, but as the Panchen Lama was, at that time at least, co-ruler of Tibet and sole ruler of the province of Tsang, the regent who ruled for him at Tashilhunpo also merited the title. In this connection, Turner's "Raja Nimohheim" was the Nomin Khan of Lhasa and was not the same as this regent of Tashilhunpo, in spite of Rockhill's statement in *Dalai Lamas*, 49, n.1.

<sup>27</sup> *Mémoires concernant l'histoire, les sciences, les arts, les moeurs, les usages, des chinois par les missionnaires de Pé-kin* (Paris, 1873), 9:446, 454.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 447-53.

report,<sup>29</sup> these two documents now becoming the chief Western sources for the Panchen's trip. Father Amiot admitted that he had the original in his possession for too short a time to do a thorough job of translating it; but he said that if it was not elegant, it was as faithful as possible.<sup>30</sup> On comparing his version with the original, however, it is so highly embroidered with extra details, that it scarcely seems possible that it could be the same document.<sup>31</sup> In addition, he gives the wrong date for it; but the imperial archives contain no letter to the Dalai Lama on the subject of the Panchen's death other than the one we have mentioned.<sup>32</sup>

The account of Purangir Gosain is even more flowery than that of the Jesuit, and aside from the day of departure from Tashilhunpo, July 15, 1779,<sup>33</sup> he gives no dates. Moreover, if one were to accept his chronology of the journey, it would be necessary to assume that the lama must have arrived at Jehol several months earlier than he actually did.<sup>34</sup> It is also very difficult to make out the names of people and places, because of the extremely clumsy system of transliteration of foreign words used by himself or his translator.<sup>35</sup> But with all its defects it has some very interesting information.

Purangir begins by telling how the emperor of China had sent repeated invitations to the Panchen for several years in succession, but that the latter had refused them, because of his fear of smallpox.<sup>36</sup> Then when the lama had finally decided to accept in 1779, he had confided to some of his close friends that he had intimations that he would never return.<sup>37</sup> He then goes on to give a long and circumstantial account of the journey and the

<sup>29</sup> *Oriental repertory*, 273-82. This letter was again reproduced in Turner (443-48), since it was apparently considered one of the great curiosities of the period.

<sup>30</sup> *Mémoires concernant les chinois*, 9:454.

<sup>31</sup> These extra details sound quite circumstantial, but some of them at least, seem to have been fabricated. For example, Amiot speaks of the lama as staying at the Yüan-ming Yüan, the summer palace outside Peking, while visiting that city, when we know from the Chinese accounts that he actually stayed at the Yellow Temple (see *Sheng wu chi*, ch. 5:16).

<sup>32</sup> Amiot has "the . . . of the second moon of the 46th year of Ch'ien Lung (1779 of our era)," although the 46th year of Ch'ien-lung was of course 1781. Dalrymple (*Oriental repertory*, 282) preserves the date in this form; but Turner, or his publisher, apparently felt that it would sound more effective to be specific and inserted the "16th" (of the second moon). The original letter is dated with cyclical characters corresponding to "10th day of the first month" (*KTSL*, ch. 1122:9).

<sup>33</sup> See note 22.

<sup>34</sup> Purangir's chronology in general seems rather doubtful, but that for the first part of the trip sounds very suspicious. It is difficult to see how he could have known how long the party took to reach Kumbum, for example, when he was not with them.

<sup>35</sup> For example, Jehol is written "Jeeawaukho."

<sup>36</sup> Turner, 457.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 458.

rich receptions for the lama along the way, describing the number and magnificence of the gifts presented to the holy man by chieftains, officials, and representatives of the emperor.<sup>38</sup> He obviously had the Oriental gift for florid description, especially since we learn from another source that he did not join the expedition until it reached Kumbum, well on the way to China, and could not possibly have seen some of the events he so vividly portrays.<sup>39</sup>

After describing the arrival at Jehol, he tells about meetings between the emperor and his guest in very great detail;<sup>40</sup> in fact, he often seems to remember too much in the way of conversations, as we shall see. From Jehol, he goes on to describe events of the lama's visit to Peking, mentioning various places in that city in recognizable fashion.<sup>41</sup> He concludes his narrative by an account of the Panchen Lama's last sickness, of the emperor's efforts to provide him with the best possible care, and of the sincere grief of the emperor at his death,<sup>42</sup> together with a brief description of the return of the remains to Tibet.<sup>43</sup>

The most important part of Purangir's narrative, from the point of view of our subject, is his testimony about the conversations of the lama with the emperor regarding Warren Hastings and the English.<sup>44</sup> In fact they are alluded to so frequently in British writings concerning efforts to open Tibet that they deserve to be discussed in detail.

The first episode took place at Jehol, five days after their arrival, which must have been August 25, 1780.<sup>45</sup> Purangir describes how the lama went to visit the emperor five days after arrival and was given a special entertainment of singing and dancing. After this, according to him, the Sanskya Hutukhtu,<sup>46</sup> Grand Lama of Peking, told the emperor that the Panchen

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 458-61.

<sup>39</sup> Bogle said of the Hindu "fakirs" around the Panchen Lama, the group to which Purangir belonged, that as far as he could judge they were in general a very worthless set of people, devoid of principle and having no object but their own interest, combining the most fawning and flattering servility with the most clamorous insolence (Markham, *Narratives*, 88). But he quotes the Panchen Lama, who was apparently not deceived by his parasites, as saying that Purangir had served him very well, and he had not found him guilty of as many lies as most other fakirs (*Ibid.*, 165).

<sup>40</sup> Turner, 459-64.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 469-71.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 464-69.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 471-73.

<sup>44</sup> As we shall see, this testimony regarding the conversations may possibly be entirely false; but whether it was authentic or not, it was considered so, then and later, and from this it derives its importance.

<sup>45</sup> Turner, 463-64.

<sup>46</sup> This is a composite Tibetan-Mongolian title. The Chinese version of it is *Chang-chia hu-t'u-k'o-t'u* 章嘉胡圖克圖. This particular one was the second generation; he is commonly known as Lalitavajra, the Sanskrit equivalent of his Tibetan name, Rolpahi Dorje.



Lama had something special to say to him "which friendship required him not to neglect." Then when the emperor asked him to speak freely, the Panchen Lama replied that in the country of Hindostan, which lay on the borders of his country, there lived a great prince, or ruler, for whom he had the greatest friendship,<sup>47</sup> and that he wished that the emperor should know him and think highly of him also. And if he would write him a letter of friendship and receive his in return, it would give the lama great pleasure. The emperor, says Purangir, replied that the request was a very small one indeed, but that this, or anything else he desired would be readily complied with, and went on to ask him about the ruler and his country. Whereupon the lama called in Purangir<sup>48</sup> — who could not have heard the conversation he repeats in such detail — and asked him to answer the emperor's questions. Purangir says that he then told him that the governor of Hindostan was called Mr. Hastings, that the extent of the country he governed was not nearly equal to that of China, but superior to any other, and that its troops numbered more than three hundred thousand horsemen.<sup>49</sup>

The second episode took place after the Tibetan visitors had moved on to Peking. According to Purangir, at one of the many entertainments given in honor of the Panchen Lama, the latter reminded the emperor that he had some time previously mentioned to him a prince, or governor, of Hindostan called Mr. Hastings, who was his friend. And he repeated his wish that the emperor should know him and have friendly relations with him by opening a correspondence with him. The lama went on to say much more on the same subject, to all of which the emperor replied that he could assure him that it would give him great pleasure to know and correspond with the governor of Hindostan, his friend. He also said that if the lama wished, he would have a letter written immediately to the governor, in such words as the lama would dictate. Or, if he thought it would be more effective toward establishing the friendship he wished, the letter would be ready when the lama left China, and he could take it with

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See Baron A. von Stael-Holstein, "Remarks on an eighteenth century Lamaist document," *Kuo-hsüeh chi-k'an* 國學季刊, 1 (Peking, 1923), 401-02. Purangir's report calls him "Cheen-geea Guru," *guru* being the Sanskrit word for "teacher."

<sup>47</sup> Meaning Warren Hastings.

<sup>48</sup> Purangir, or the translator, refers to himself as "the writer of this narrative" (Turner, 464), indicating that it was a written report; although the subtitle speaks of "the verbal report of Poorungheer Gosein," suggesting that it might have been an oral one.

<sup>49</sup> He uses the expression "three lacks," one *lakh*, in Indian reckoning, being equal to a hundred thousand.

him and forward it himself. The lama chose to take a letter with him and expressed much satisfaction.<sup>50</sup>

Sven Hedin, the modern Swedish explorer and writer, comments realistically on Purangir's testimony,<sup>51</sup> saying that if there is any truth in this account, the emperor was playing a part; for he who some years later snubbed George III as if the latter were a disobedient vassal of the Son of Heaven, would never have lowered himself to enter into correspondence with the official of a trading company.<sup>52</sup> However, the English in Calcutta took it very seriously, especially since the subject of the conversations between the lama and the emperor came up again in two letters which Hastings received from Tibet in the spring of 1782.<sup>53</sup> These were from the regent of Tashilhumpo and his cupbearer, telling about the Panchen's death. It is probable that Purangir brought them, and that he made his report at this time.

At first glance, these letters appear to add little information to that which we have already gleaned from the Ch'ien-lung Emperor's letter to the Dalai Lama and Purangir's report. Certainly the dates they give for events on the journey are totally impossible, even allowing for mistakes in converting them from Tibetan into Persian (the language in which they were sent), and then into English;<sup>54</sup> and the statement made in one — that

<sup>50</sup> Turner, 468-69.

<sup>51</sup> Hedin, *Jehol*, 111. In another place he says, "There is too great a discrepancy between Porungheer's (*sic*) account in Captain Turner's book and the Chinese records, and it cannot be denied that the latter are more credible" (*ibid.*, 109).

<sup>52</sup> The three communication from the Ch'ien-lung Emperor to George III are presented in translation in Backhouse and Bland, *Annals and memoirs of the Court of Peking* (London, 1914), 322-34. A few extracts from the first of these can illustrate the general tenor of them all.

"You, O King, live beyond the confines of many seas, nevertheless, impelled by your humble desire to partake of the benefits of our civilization, you have dispatched a messenger respectfully bearing your memorial. . . . I have perused your memorial: the earnest terms in which it is couched reveal a respectful humility on your part, which is highly praiseworthy" (p. 322).

"As your Ambassador can see for himself, we possess all things. I set no value on objects strange or ingenious, and have no use for your country's manufactures. . . . It behooves you, O King, to respect my sentiments and to display ever greater devotion and loyalty in future, so that, by perpetual submission to our Throne, you may secure peace and prosperity for your country hereafter" (p. 325).

This Chinese attitude toward the "foreign barbarians" from the West persisted un'til well into the nineteenth century, as illustrated by their official documents. See for example S. Cammann, "New light on Huc and Gabet, their expulsion from Lhasa in 1846," *Far Eastern quarterly*, 1 (August 1942), esp. 362.

<sup>53</sup> Turner, 449-53, 454-56.

<sup>54</sup> We have investigated these with the aid of a Muhammedan date-table (E. Mahler, *Vergleichungs-tabellen der mohammedanischen und christlichen zeitrechnung* [Leipzig, 1926]), only to discover that the English equivalents given in Turner's footnotes do not cor-

the Panchen Lama had spent six months in Peking before his death<sup>55</sup> — is patently false. In spite of these obvious errors in fact, however, these letters still contain important evidence. First they show that Purangir was not at Tashilhunpo when the Panchen's party left for China, but only caught up with them some months later at Kumbum, bringing messages and presents from Warren Hastings.<sup>56</sup> This shows that he undoubtedly left Calcutta after Bogle's memorandum stating that he intended to send a *gosain* with the lama to Peking, and that he must have been the man referred to. Secondly, and far more significantly, they speak of rich gifts sent by Hastings: nine strings of pearls without blemish, among them one string of large pearls of great brightness and purity, and two chaplets of coral, for the Panchen Lama himself, strings of pearls and corals for the present regent, and a string of corals for his cupbearer.<sup>57</sup> Their remarks suggest that they realized that the gifts were intended to reward the Panchen Lama and his two great officials, themselves, in advance, for stating the English case to the emperor of China, just as Purangir claimed that the Panchen had done. One of the letters specifically says, "And during this time [of their residence in China] the Gosein Poorungher made known those things in which you had repeatedly instructed him; all of them he made known; and all which you had said and directed was acceptable and pleasing to the Lama; and he took measures according with the wishes of your noble heart."<sup>58</sup>

But aside from the testimony of these two Tashilhunpo lamas (in those letters, and later to Captain Turner) and that of Purangir, who all along had been the agent of Tashilhunpo rather than of Calcutta,<sup>59</sup> there is no other evidence that the conversations concerning the English ever took place in Peking. It is true that the Chinese records of the Panchen's visit

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respond at all to the Persian dates in the text. Furthermore, the Persian dates do not correspond to the proper Tibetan ones for the events mentioned, even if we assume that the Persian names for the months might have been substituted for the Tibetan names. As the Tibetans in general tend to lack the well-developed historical and chronological sense of the educated Chinese, however, it seems quite possible that the lamas who wrote these letters just chose dates at random in order to give their statements an appearance of greater authenticity. For the Tibetan attitude toward dates see Abbé Huc, *Travels in Tartary, Thibet and China* (The Broadway Travellers ed., New York and London, 1928), 2:272.

<sup>55</sup> Turner, 449.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 451.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 451, 454.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>59</sup> Purangir first came to Calcutta to bring the letter from the Panchen Lama; and if he worked for Hastings later, there is reason to believe that he continued to serve other masters in Tashilhunpo. In 1778, not many months before he set out for China, a passport was issued to him at Tashilhunpo, describing him as "one of the servants of the (Government)." See Gaur Das Bysack, "Notes on a Buddhist monastery," *Journal of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, 59 (1890), 99.

are too brief to mention such things, but if he had made such pro-English remarks we would expect to find them referred to in later Chinese documents protesting against the activities of the English on their Tibetan frontiers, and we have been unable to find any such allusions.

It seems possible that the Panchen Lama, who well knew the Chinese emperor's sentiments regarding Tibet's relations with foreign nations,<sup>60</sup> would have hesitated to take the liberty of speaking about Warren Hastings to his all-powerful overlord.<sup>61</sup> Let us assume for a moment that the lama's desire for a lucrative trade with India — in which, as ruler of Further Tibet, he would enjoy a full monopoly — did overcome his natural timidity sufficiently to enable him to discuss the English. Even then, this subject would not have played such a prominent part in his conversations with the emperor as the weighted statements of Purangir and the Tashilhunpo Lamas would imply. For host and guest had many other matters to discuss which would have been far more important to the emperor. However, the Tashilhunpo lamas had accepted and kept the expensive gifts sent by Hastings, and they probably felt obliged to give him some assurance that what he had asked in return had been done. Hence the statements made then to Hastings, and later to Captain Turner, his representative, that the lama had earnestly pled his cause to the Chinese emperor. The death of the lama would have seemed to the English an ample reason to account for the failure of the emperor of China to follow up his supposed promise to write Hastings; and since the latter had no access to the court of Peking, there was no way in which he could investigate their statements, even if he doubted them.

As the Tashilhunpo lamas seem to have anticipated, their testimony regarding the alleged conversations were accepted by the English in perfectly good faith and made a great impression on them. In fact we find the subject frequently alluded to, in the years that followed, as evidence of the good relations that might have been established with Tibet had the Panchen Lama not died when he did.<sup>62</sup>

<sup>60</sup> George Bogle wrote Hastings telling how the Panchen had written him, when he first tried to cross the Tibetan frontier, concerning the orders from the emperor of China that he should admit no foreigners from India into Tibet (Markham, *Narratives*, 45, 48).

<sup>61</sup> Bogle, in describing the Panchen Lama's fear of horses, gives the impression that he was by nature a very timid man (Markham, *Narratives*, 90).

<sup>62</sup> See, for example, Rev. G. R. Gleig, *Memoirs of Warren Hastings* (London, 1841), 1, 416–17. This writer has added a garbled and misleading interpolation to the effect that, before going to China, the "Tershoo Lama" wrote to Peking "in very high terms both of the English nation and of their representative." His remarks on Bogle's mission are also somewhat confused; yet this is the basic biography of Hastings.

Instead of doubting the authenticity of the conversations, the English developed quite different suspicions regarding the happenings in China. Almost inevitably, the inopportune death of the lama who had been friendly to the English inspired the growth of a dark legend to the effect that he had died under very suspicious circumstances. People said that he had doubtless been disposed of by the Ch'ien-lung Emperor, on the assumption that the latter must have been upset over the fact that the ruler of Tibet had permitted Englishmen to enter his country and was apparently planning to have further dealings with them.

The first public expression of this hypothesis that we have been able to find was a statement made by Sir George Staunton in 1797, in his rather biased account of Lord Macartney's embassy to China four years before.<sup>63</sup> He remarks that the suddenness of the lama's death had excited strong suspicions in Tibet, where it was imagined that the Panchen Lama's correspondence and connections with the English government of Bengal had offended the emperor, who, "yielding to the suggestions of a policy practiced sometimes in the East," had drawn the lama to his court with intentions different from those which he had expressed in his invitation.

These aspersions quickly took root, and the legend that the lama had been poisoned rapidly grew, to persist for a long time;<sup>64</sup> but Staunton's words can easily be picked to pieces. In the first place, we have no real evidence that the emperor had any conversation with the lama about the English at all. In the second place, the national pride of the English, and particularly the English in India at that time, did not permit them to realize what a small place they occupied in the policies and calculations of the shrewd and powerful Ch'ien-lung Emperor, if he considered them at all in connection with his Inner Asian possessions. Most certainly he was not sufficiently afraid of them to be reduced to murdering his most important vassal in order to thwart their possible designs on Tibet. The Panchen Lama was much more valuable to him alive than dead. As the spiritual leader of the emperor's Mongol subjects, as well as both spiritual and temporal ruler of the Tibetans,<sup>65</sup> he could ensure their peaceful

<sup>63</sup> Sir George Staunton, Bart., *An authentic account of an embassy from the king of Great Britain to the emperor of China* (London, 1797), 2:52.

<sup>64</sup> The suspicion of an unnatural death was not expressed in the English edition of Turner's book but was suggested in the French translation by J. H. Castéra (*Ambassade au Thibet et au Boutan* [Paris, 1800], 1:528, note 2; 2:329, note). It was expressed again as a possibility by J. P. Abel-Rémusat (*Nouveaux mélanges asiatiques* [Paris, 1829], 2:54), and more forcibly by C. F. Koeppen (*Die religion des Buddha* [Berlin, 1859], 2:221). It was still cited as a possibility by Diskalkar ("Bogle's embassy," 423) and by Sven Hedin (*Jehol*, 117).

<sup>65</sup> The Dalai Lama in Lhasa generally has the chief temporal power in Tibet, unless he is

allegiance; and since he would now be more than ever devoted and obligated to the emperor for his vast hospitality and largesse on the China visit, he could have been expected to bend every effort to do so for many years to come.

This brings us to the subject of the Ch'ien-lung Emperor's real intentions in inviting the Panchen Lama to Peking; of course they included more than the pleasure of having a very distinguished visitor at the imperial birthday. Father Amiot, like many others at the time, was very well aware of the political and diplomatic motives behind the invitation. Writing back to France in 1779, he announced that the emperor was awaiting the visit of the Panchen Lama, intending the better to cement the obedience of all the Tartars under the pretense of doing honor to one of the chiefs of their religion by receiving him with all the trappings of imperial majesty before all the Mongol princes who had been commanded to attend the birthday ceremonies.<sup>66</sup>

"By this political stroke," said Father Amiot, "his Majesty foresees at once the execution of his orders, devotes the disobedient to the vengeance of the Lamas, and procures for himself more glory than ever, in their most brilliant days, had the Jenghis Khans, the Tamerlanes, and the Khubilais, who, like him, have given laws to the Tartars."<sup>67</sup>

It was for this, then, that the emperor took the trouble to learn the difficult Tibetan language and authorized the vast expense of the "Tashilhunpo Temple" and the countless lavish gifts for the Panchen Lama. He would scarcely have been so extravagant of his time and wealth if he were merely expecting to entertain an important but recalcitrant subject whom he secretly planned to dispose of.

As to the accusations of murder, it is true that while the Panchen Lama unquestionably died of smallpox, it could have been given to him; at the same time, it would seem that the Ch'ien-lung Emperor did not invite him

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a minor. But while the current one was in his minority the Panchen had been ruling for him; and even after the Dalai had come of age (*ca.* 1780), the riper years and vaster prestige of the Panchen would have helped him to retain much of his power. It is not true, however, that the Ch'ien-lung Emperor gave the Panchen Lama on this visit "an Imperial diploma and seal appointing him the sovereign of the whole of Tibet," as Sarat Chandra Das states ("Contributions," *JASB*, 51:40), because what is apparently the said "diploma" is reproduced in *KTSL* (*ch.* 1113:17-17b) and turns out to be a formal document praising the Panchen Lama for his education and guidance of the young Dalai Lama and announcing the conferring of a golden seal of investiture on the latter.

<sup>66</sup> *Mémoires concernant les chinois*, 9:6-7.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*; Sven Hedin also emphasizes the importance of the visit of the Panchen Lama in the Ch'ien-lung Emperor's plans to secure the loyalty and subservience of the Mongols for his dynasty.

with the purpose of disposing of him and that he had more to lose from the lama's death. Moreover, if the emperor merely wanted to prevent relations between the lamas of Tibet and the English, there would have been easier and safer ways of handling this than a murder, which if it had misfired, would have alienated most of the emperor's Western subjects in Tibet, Mongolia, and Turkestan, an eventuality he would never have wanted to risk.

Lastly, we must consider Staunton's reference to the suspicions entertained in Tibet — rather than in India or Europe. In 1882, Sarat Chandra Das, the famous Indian student of Tibetan culture, published his abridgment of the Tibetan biography of this Panchen Lama, translated into English.<sup>68</sup> He devotes considerable space to the account of his journey to Peking, giving dates which correspond within a day to those cited in the Chinese records,<sup>69</sup> and even recording some of the conversations between the lama and his suzerain.<sup>70</sup> Significantly, none of the latter as much as mention Warren Hastings or the English in India. This source, furthermore, leaves no room for any doubt that the Panchen Lama died of smallpox,<sup>71</sup> and it adds the detail that his last words were addressed to Purangir.<sup>72</sup> It closes by saying that this was the greatest and noblest, and perhaps the wisest, of the sovereign lamas that ever appeared within the snow-girt realm of Tibet; and equally wise and noble was his friend the great Ch'ien-lung Emperor.<sup>73</sup>

When this translation belatedly appeared, it should in itself have disposed of Staunton's rumor that the Tibetans had thought that their ruler had been poisoned by his suzerain. But it came out in a relatively obscure publication, and few people saw it. In the meantime, several European historians and savants had taken up the story of the Lama's "unnatural

<sup>68</sup> "Contributions," *JASB*, 51:29-43.

<sup>69</sup> If the Tibetan calendar corresponded exactly with the Chinese in 1779 and 1780, as it seems to have, then all these dates appear to be a day off. There is a strong possibility, however, that the error is due to the translator's miscalculations, since Pelliot warns us that "all the chronological reductions affected by Sarat Chandra Das are suspect" (P. Pelliot, "Le cycle sexagénnaire dans la chronologie Tibétaine," *Journal asiatique*, 11th ser., 1 [Paris, 1913], 649). Unfortunately, most of the studies in Tibetan chronology, like this of Pelliot's, discuss the system of recording years at great length, without mentioning the method for months and days.

<sup>70</sup> Das, "Contributions," *JASB*, 51:39-41.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, 42.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, 43. The translator calls the Chinese emperor "Emperor of the Celestials," but the original expression undoubtedly must have been the Tibetan equivalent of the title *T'ien huang* 天皇, usually translated as "Celestial Emperor."

death" and had given it a quasi authenticity which occasional expressions of doubt or denial had been unable to shatter.<sup>74</sup>

Whether or not the Panchen Lama ever did urge the Ch'ien-lung Emperor to establish relations with Warren Hastings, and whether or not he was murdered for his pains — which we cannot conscientiously believe — his visit to China and subsequent death had an enormous effect on Anglo-Tibetan relations. For the government of Tibet now reverted completely to the Dalai Lama, and since Hastings had bent all his efforts to establishing negotiations with Tashilhunpo rather than with Lhasa, he had no diplomatic relations with the main capital.

Even before the news of the Panchen's death could have reached Calcutta, a second blow came to complete the disaster of the second English attempt to establish relations with Tibet. On April 3, 1781, George Bogle died of cholera, at the early age of thirty-four.<sup>75</sup> Thus, within six months' time, Warren Hastings was deprived of the only Englishman who had experience in dealing with the Tibetans, as well as the only high-placed Tibetan who had shown a sincere sympathy with his aims.

So eager was Hastings to establish trade relations with Tibet, however, that in spite of these great setbacks, in 1783 he sent his kinsman, Samuel Turner, to Tashilhunpo with Purangir, to take a letter of greeting to the new incarnation of the Panchen Lama.<sup>76</sup> But Turner discovered that the power to make decisions had shifted to Lhasa, where he was not permitted to go, and he returned with little more than some hopes of favorable negotiations in the future.

<sup>74</sup> The first strong denial was expressed by an anonymous but obviously learned writer in the *Asiatic journal and monthly register* for 1832 (new ser., 9, Sept.-Dec., 1832, 153), who said that all the accounts which he had been able to consult, respecting the death of the Tibetan patriarch, confirmed the fact of his dying of smallpox, and that the report spread in Europe that the Ch'ien-lung Emperor had poisoned him in order to dissolve the connection between him and Warren Hastings seemed altogether without foundation. More recently, the great Tibetan scholar, Baron von Stael-Holstein, in writing about the death of this lama, remarked, "A rumour current at the time, that he died of poisoning, and that Imperial displeasure, not smallpox, was the cause of his death, hardly deserves credence" (*JAOS*, 52, [1932], 349, note 4). Ludwig summed up the controversy neatly, concluding with the remark, "It is not at all likely that the Emperor... would have been driven to take refuge in the Borgian method of eliminating dangerous rivals" (*Visit*, 18). But the legend still lives on because of its dramatic implications.

<sup>75</sup> Markham, *Narratives*, Introduction, cliv. Bogle was buried in Calcutta, where he died, and his tomb may still be seen there in the South Park-Street Cemetery. See *Bengal: past and present*, 26 [1923], 195.

<sup>76</sup> Turner wrote a full report of this mission in his *Account of an embassy to the Teshoo Lama* (see note 2, above).



Warren Hastings soon went back to England, and, after he left, the company's representatives in India were no longer interested in Tibet.<sup>77</sup> Even if they had been, the Nepalese invasion of that country (1790–91) in which the Chinese suspected that the English had connived,<sup>78</sup> caused the Chinese and Tibetans to close the Himalayan frontiers even more firmly to trade and intercourse with India.<sup>79</sup> It was over a hundred years before the British found another Tibetan ruler as co-operative as Bogle's Panchen Lama had been. But this was only after entrance had been effected by force, and the co-operation was somewhat less voluntary.<sup>80</sup>

<sup>77</sup> Hastings left Calcutta in February 1785 and was succeeded by John MacPherson, who acted as governor-general until the arrival of Lord Cornwallis (whom Washington had defeated at Yorktown), in the following year. MacPherson carried out Hastings' idea of sending another mission to Tashilhunpo under Purangir, which was described by Turner (*ibid.*, 419–23). Under Cornwallis, however, there was a distinct reversal of policy regarding the northern countries, and no attempt was made to continue Hastings' efforts to maintain contact with Tibet. See S. C. Sarcar, "Some notes on the intercourse of Bengal with the northern countries in the second half of the eighteenth century," *Bengal: past and present*, 41 (1931), 120.

<sup>78</sup> See Hummel, *Eminent Chinese*, 1:254, and C. Imbault-Huart, "Histoire de la conquête du Népal." The latter is translated from the *Sheng wu chi* (ch. 5).

<sup>79</sup> Turner, 440, 442. For the effect of this suspicion on the Macartney mission to China, see Staunton, *Embassy*, 2:48 ff., and Pritchard, *Early Anglo-Chinese relations*, 332, 380.

<sup>80</sup> When the British invaded Tibet in 1904, a Captain O'Connor visited Tashilhunpo and made the acquaintance of the current Panchen Lama, who was the nominal ruler of Tibet, since the Dalai Lama had fled when the British approached Lhasa. The following winter the Panchen came down to India and was received by the Prince of Wales, later George V; see Sir Charles Bell, *Tibet past and present* (Oxford, 1924), 96–98, 123 ff. Accused of pro-British sympathies after these and other, rather casual, relations with the British, he met with such great opposition from the Lhasa government that he had to flee to China in 1924 and never came back to Tashilhunpo. He died on the northern border of Tibet in 1937, and his successor has not yet been formally "discovered," although the Chinese have a claimant at Kumbum; see *Life* (Feb. 16, 1948), 78–79.