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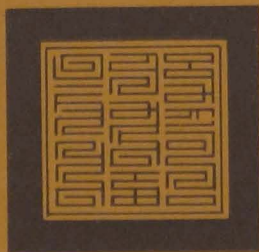
## TIBETAN POLITY, 1904–37

The Conflict Between the 13th Dalai Lama  
and the 9th Panchen

A Case-Study

by

PARSHOTAM MEHRA



OTTO HARRASSOWITZ · WIESBADEN

# ASIATISCHE FORSCHUNGEN

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Walther Heissig

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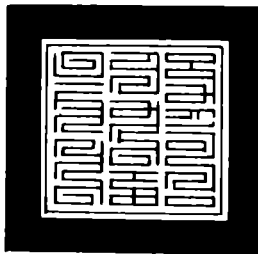
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The emblem shows a seal of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama

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For

BÖRTE · MATTHIAS · GAURAV



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## Acknowledgments

This slender volume on a recent phase in the history of Tibet took shape and form in the course of a 12-week stay at the University of Bonn in the summer (April–June) of 1972. During an earlier visit to London (1968–69) and stay in New Delhi (1966–67) I had gathered most of the research material on which the lectures draw so heavily. Nonetheless a welcome invitation from the Deutsche Akademische Austauschdienst provided a rewarding experience of sharing my work, and views, with a small but select audience at the Seminar für Sprach- und Kulturwissenschaft Zentralasiens, at the University of Bonn – an experience that was at once sobering as well as stimulating.

I owe a deep debt of gratitude to Professor Dr. Walther Heissig, Director of the Seminar whose own work in the field of Mongolistic studies knows no peer; he took a keen personal interest in all that I was about. To his younger colleague and a dear friend, Professor Dr. Klaus Sagaster, these pages owe a lot more than mere words can convey or record. To him fell the thankless task of making me welcome – which he did in his characteristically unassuming, but remarkably efficient manner. More, it was he who encouraged me to give the spoken word a written content.

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The manuscript in its final stages went through the hands of Mr. Ved Parkash whose professional competence in straightening out my hand-written scribbles needs no emphasis.

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## **Abbreviations**

<b>FO</b>	<b>Foreign Office, Foreign Office Confidential Prints</b>
<b>HMG</b>	<b>His (Her) Majesty's Government</b>
<b>HMSO</b>	<b>His (Her) Majesty's Stationery Office</b>
<b>IOR</b>	<b>India Office Records</b>
<b>P &amp; EF</b>	<b>Political &amp; External Files</b>

## Foreword

In the long and chequered annals of Tibet, one of the most fascinating, if also intriguing, conflicts has centered around its two supreme incarnate Lamas, the Dalai and the Panchen. In forms other than human, these clashes of will may be viewed as differences, or variations in emphasis, on matters appertaining to the spirit. In their human manifestation, however, the petty rivalries and jealousies so characteristic of the work-a-day world repeat themselves in the story of Chen-re-si, the Tibetan Lord of Mercy, incarnate in the person of the Dalai Lama, on the one hand, and Ö-pa-me, the Buddha of Boundless Light, whose worldly attribute is the Panchen Lama, on the other.

It would be ideal if one were to track down in detail and build up a whole sequence of events conterminous with the emergence of the two incarnations—a sequence that, in essence, may not be inseparable from the history of Tibet under the Ge-lug-pa sect, or the more familiar Yellow Hats to the world outside. The present writer with all his limitations, is characteristically un-ambitious with the result that this study confines itself to a small segment of the whole, a more recent, if also perhaps a more interesting, period. In sum, it is the story of the running battle between the 13th Dalai Lama and his near-contemporary, the 9th Panchen, a saga that spans the first four decades of the twentieth century.

For greater clarity, a brief introductory chapter maps out the relationship between the two Lamas providing at once a conceptual analysis as also an ideological disquisition. An epilogue helps to bring the narrative to-date.



## Introduction

Recent tragic happenings in Tibet- the armed revolt in Lhasa in 1959, both preceded and followed by a widespread national uprising throughout the country, the flight of the Dalai Lama followed, a few years later, by the near-complete disappearance of the Panchen, and finally the emergence of a new Peking-controlled administration in place of the now defunct "Local Government of Tibet" – have thrown into bold relief the long and chequered story of relations between Peking and Lhasa. An important aspect of this grim, if human tragedy has been the unfortunate rivalry bared, albeit not for the first time, between the two supreme incarnate lamas of Tibet. There is little doubt that a free and frank discussion of the unhappily wide differences between the aims and purposes for which the Dalai strove and those which animated the Panchen may have pointed the way to a resolution of some of Tibet's present difficulties. Unfortunately the gap was always wide and extraneous influences helped to make it well-nigh unbridgeable. As a backdrop to this monograph which is concerned principally with developments in the earlier part of the century, an interesting and indeed instructive exercise would be to work out an approximate definition of the powers and functions of the two lamas, of the historical evolution of their offices, of the divergent outlook and policies they have pursued in the past. The following pages make an attempt to sketch this relationship in a bare outline with a view to obtaining a clearer perspective; a fuller account may be indistinguishable from a detailed history of the land.

Broadly speaking, the Dalai Lama is the sovereign ruler of his land – at once its lay as well as spiritual head; the Panchen, rated by his ardent partisans as spiritually superior to the Dalai, occupies himself largely with other-worldly affairs and wields little temporal authority. Traditionally, the Dalai Lamas of Lhasa – their story goes back to the middle of the 14th century – have been engaged in a never-ending tug-of-war with the Panchens of Shigatse,<sup>1</sup> their own creation and hence slightly younger and less sanctified by age. As a matter of fact over the past half a century or more, the Tibetan pontiffs have inclined for support either towards the Russians in the north or the British in India to the

<sup>1</sup> The Panchen Lama told the British journalist, Alan Winnington that "disunity between the Dalai Lama and myself was a historical fact..." Alan Winnington, *Tibet*, London, 1957, p. 161.

south, while the Panchens have invariably been dependent on the Chinese.<sup>2</sup> To a very large extent Tibet's own story has revolved around the personalities and politics of the master of the Potala on the one hand, and the head of the Tashilhunpo monastery on the other.<sup>3</sup>

As a starting-point it is necessary to remember that the Buddhism which came to Tibet from India was of the Mahayana school, prolific in its Bodhisattvas, deities, superhuman beings, ritual and the credo of personal devotion. Part of the Mahayana belief is in the heavenly Buddhas known as "Jinas", the most important of the line being Amitabha. Amitabha, or to use his Tibetan name "Ö-pa-me", literally "Buddha of Measureless Light", is believed to be incarnate in the person of the Panchen Lama. Ö-pa-me is also rated as the spiritual father of Chen-re-si or Lord of Mercy, Tibet's own patron-saint. Chen-re-si, in turn, is in the Mahayana pantheon no other than Avalokiteshvara, incarnate in the person of the Dalai Lama. To be sure Chen-re-si, Jam-pe-yang (Lord of Speech), and Do-je-chhang (Holder of the Thunderbolt) constitute the trinity of Tibet's all-powerful deities. The Dalai, as Chen-re-si, is the incarnation of

<sup>2</sup> Popular literature seeks to represent the Dalai Lama as pro-this, the Panchen as anti-that. This is a basic misunderstanding of Tibetan thought on the subject. Actually, according to Tibetan thinking, the Dalai Lamas or the Panchens may have looked for support in different quarters, but that does not mean that they were pro-British, pro-Russian or pro-Chinese.

<sup>3</sup> The title Dalai Lama is Mongolian in origin and is used mainly by the Chinese and the Manchus. The Tibetans know him as Kyam Rim-po-che (the Precious Protector), Gye-wa Rimpoche (the Precious Sovereign), Kyam gon Buk (the Inner Protector), Lama Pon-po (the Priest Officer) and sometimes just simply as Kundun (the Presence). For details see Charles Alfred Bell, *Tibet, Past and Present*, Oxford, 1924 and *The Religion of Tibet*, Oxford, 1931. A comprehensive study of the life and times of the 13th Dalai is to be found in the same author's *Portrait of the Dalai Lama*, London, 1946. Another biographical study is Tokan Tada, *The Thirteenth Dalai Lama*, The Centre for East Asian Cultural Studies, The Toyo Bunko, Tokyo, 1965.

For the Panchen, besides the works cited, reference may be made to Clements R. Markham, *The Diary of George Bogle*, London, 1876, and Samuel Turner, *An Account of an Embassy to the Court of the Teshoo Lama in Tibet*, London, 1806. Gordon Bandy Enders (with Edward Anthony) *Nowhere Else in the World*, New York, 1935 purports to be a biography of the 9th Panchen, but should be accepted with considerable caution. For details see the same author's *Foreign Devil*, New York, 1942.

For some intimate, though extremely coloured, glimpses of the present incarnations see Alan Winnington, op. cit. and Roma and Stuart Gelder, *The Timely Rain*, London, 1964. For the Tibetan gloss see Thubten Jigme Norbu, *Tibet is my Country*, London, 1961, and Dalai Lama, 14th, *My Land and My People*, London, 1962. The latter work is abbreviated, et seq, as *Dalai Lama*.

According to L. S. Dargyab, a friend of the Dalai Lama and a very high incarnation himself, Tibetans usually know the Dalai Lama as Gye-wa Rim-po-che (the Precious Conqueror i. e. Jina, Buddha); Tham-che Khyen-pa (the All-knowing), Kun-dün (the Presence); Kyam-gön bug (the Inner Protector, obsolete).

Buddha's body; Jam-pe-yang, incarnate in the Ch'ing Emperors of China, of Buddha's speech; and Do-je-chhang, incarnate in the Panchen, of Buddha's mind. Since the mind is admittedly superior both to the body as well as speech, the Panchen Lama ranks highest in the Tibetan hierarchy of gods.

Important as these distinctions and semantics are in themselves, they are of greater interest to the outside theoreticians than to the people of Tibet, the vast majority of whom have no doubt at all of the supremacy, in all things, of the Dalai Lama. Only the keenest partisans of the Panchen are at pains to spin out a theory about his spiritual superiority. A significant point in this essentially theological hair-splitting is that the Panchen being an aspect of the Buddha ought to operate only in the realm of pure thought. The Dalai Lama is an aspect of the Bodhisattva – the active reflex – and naturally operates in the active world. The Panchen Lama is therefore, theoretically at any rate, untrue to himself if he has anything to do with temporal affairs.

Historically the institutions of the Dalai and the Panchen are to be traced back to the birth of the Ge-lug-pa or the reformed Yellow Hat sect. Its founder was Tsong-kha-pa (1358–1419), literally the “man from the onion land”.<sup>4</sup> It was Tsong-kha-pa's chief disciple, Ge-dün Trub-pa (died 1475) however, who placed on a firm basis the growing importance of the Yellow Hats.<sup>5</sup> The doctrine that each grand lama is re-born in order to take up his life's work over again had been an accepted norm long before Ge-dün Trub-pa's death, in fact for several centuries earlier. Nonetheless it was not until the middle of the 16th century, when the conversion of Mongolia to the Lama faith had been completed by Sö-nam Gya-tsho, that the institution became firmly established.<sup>6</sup> Actually, in the hierarchy of the Dalai Lamas, Ge-dün Trub-pa takes his place as the founder-father and Sö-nam Gya-tsho as the third in the line. From now on the light of incarnation was to be focussed increasingly on the succession to this spiritual sovereignty.

<sup>4</sup> Tsong-kha-pa derived his name from a district in what is now the Chinese province of Ch'inghai. Looked upon by most Tibetans as a second Buddha, it was he who introduced “Monlam”, the Festival of the Great Prayer, with which the Tibetan New Year commences. According to Petech, “The Dalai Lamas and the Regents of Tibet: a chronological study”, *T'oung Pao*, Series II, XLVII, Leiden, 1959, pp. 368–94, the life time of Tsong-kha-pa is 1357–1419 and not 1358–1419.

<sup>5</sup> Ge-dün Trub-pa was the founder of Drepung, Tibet's – and probably the world's – largest monastery, situated 4 miles to the west of Lhasa.

<sup>6</sup> Sö-nam Gya-tsho went to Mongolia in 1578, and again in 1579. On his first visit he met the Tumet chief, Altan Khan, at Koko Nor and converted him to the Yellow Hat faith. The Mongol chief, in turn, proclaimed him Vajradhara Dalai Lama (Holder of the Thunderbolt, Ocean Lama). The term Dalai, which is a Mongolian translation of the Tibetan Gya-tsho, was thus, for the first time, employed by the Ge-lug-pa spiritual succession. Eventually, it was to acquire immense popularity both in China and the world outside.

The Dalai Lamas of Lhasa did not come fully into their own till the time of Nga-wang Lo-sang Gya-tsho (1616–1680),<sup>6\*</sup> the fifth in the line. By then, while it is true that the Yellow Hats had gained some spiritual recognition in the country, politically Tibet was still under the sway of its Karma-pa chiefs who patronized the older, Red Hat, sect.<sup>7</sup> The Lama who did not lack in ambition, nor had forgotten his old and intimate associations with the Mongol chief, Gushri Khan (also spelt Guzi or Kusi Khan) – both the fifth Dalai and Gushri had studied under the same spiritual teacher – appealed to him for help. The Mongol ruler responded to the Lama's entreaties and in alliance with other (Mongol) chiefs, proved too strong for the ruler of Tsang whom he eventually worsted in battle in 1642. The conquest which was to impart a strong and continuing influence to Lama Buddhism in Tibet, appears to have been an almost complete one, embracing at once the central, eastern and north-eastern parts of the country. For his part the Mongol chief having accomplished his assigned task made Tibet over to the supreme pontiff of the Yellow Hats, who from that day to the present has been not only the spiritual head of his country, but its ruler in things temporal as well. A priest by spiritual descent and later recognised as an incarnation of Chen-re-si, the Fifth was now invested with supreme worldly authority. Thus he was priest, god and king in one, a formidable combination that has been the sheet-anchor of successive Dalai Lamas.

It may be added, if only in parenthesis, that Gushri was not moved solely by religious devotion, much less altruism. As a matter of fact, it was not until Gushri's death that the Dalai Lama could fully establish his own temporal supremacy. Gushri remained King of Tibet, as did his successors after him, but their authority gradually declined until the reign of Lha-sang (Lhatsang) Khan, although the separate kingship of Tibet continued until 1750.

Fully entrenched in his new power, the Fifth gained added prestige by accepting an invitation to visit the Chinese Emperor at Peking. Just about this time the Ming dynasty (1368–1644) was tottering to its fall and the Ch'ing, or the more familiar Manchus (1644–1911), were gradually gaining political ascendancy. Indifferent to Buddhism for its own sake, the new rulers were nevertheless resolved, on political grounds, to gain power with the Tibetan lamas in order to control the Mongols through them. The Dalai who for his part had been anxious to cultivate closer ties with the Middle Kingdom visited the Manchu ruler in 1652–1653, and was received with great honour, as if he were an independent sovereign. Apart from the Emperor's studied courtesies to a spiri-

\* According to Petech, "China and Tibet in the early Eighteenth Century, History of the Establishment of Chinese Protectorate in Tibet", *T'oung Pao*, Monograph Series I, Second Edition, Leiden, 1972, p. 9, the life time of Nga-wang Lo-sang Gya-tsho is 1617–1682 and not 1616–1680.

<sup>7</sup> The Karma-pa were the most powerful sect after the decline of the Sa-kya-pa. They were patronized by and gave their support to the Pha-mo-tru-pa, then Rin-pung and finally the Tsang lay rulers.



tual head, the Lama's own stature, buttressed no doubt by the friendly Mongol armies and the single-minded devotion of his own people, ensured a warm welcome.

The Great Fifth also instituted the office of the second incarnate lama of Tibet by bestowing that title on his old teacher Chos-kyi rgyal-mtshan (Chhō-kyi Gye-tshen), literally the "Victorious Banner of Religion". He gave him Tashilhunpo,<sup>8</sup> founded by the first Dalai Lama, as his monastery, declared him to be an incarnation of Ö-pa-me, and named him Panchen Rimpoche, the "Precious Great Sage".<sup>9</sup>

In nearly all directions, not least in the evolution of Tibet's present system of administration, the Fifth mapped out the broad outlines which have persisted till today. In fact, Tibet regards him as a national hero, and always refers to him reverently as the Great Fifth. A compelling figure, his mausoleum in the golden-roofed Potala still stands out as the most striking among his numerous forbears and successors. It has already been noticed that his span of life marked a turning point in Tibetan history, for during these years the priesthood was fully enthroned and a living Buddha wielded at once the spiritual as well as temporal authority.

By the first half of the eighteenth century the influence of the Mongols on Tibet, and on China's other peripheral regions, had given way to that of the Manchus. The previous hundred years had, in fact, been a witness to the establishment of Manchu ascendancy; they had succeeded in worsting their chief rivals, the Western and Northern Mongols, and been hailed as the paramount power over the entire length and breadth of the land. This new accretion to their authority brought in the overlordship of Tibet as well. It is beyond the scope of these pages to detail the evolution of the Sino-Tibetan relationship during the Manchu rule in China, except insofar as it has a bearing on the emerging importance of the office of the Dalai Lama. Only a bare outline may, therefore, be attempted. Here apart from William Woodville Rockhill, a knowledgeable American authority on Tibet (and China), a painstaking Italian scholar, Dr. Luciano Petech, has traced at considerable length the events leading to what he calls the establishment of a Chinese "protectorate" over Tibet in the 18th century.<sup>10</sup> His researches have revealed the different forms

<sup>8</sup> In Tibetan language, Tashilhunpo means the "Mount of Blessing". The monastery which was founded by Ge-diin Trub-pa took six years (1447-53) to build.

<sup>9</sup> The present Dalai Lama has maintained that the first incarnation of the Panchen "took place" in the fourteenth century. *Dalai Lama*, p. 95.

<sup>10</sup> Rockhill served as United States Minister in China for over a decade at the turn of the 19th century period. His stay in the country and explorations in Tibet and Mongolia stretched over an even longer span of years. Reference above is to W. W. Rockhill: *The Dalai Lamas of Lhasa and Their Relations with the Manchu Emperors of China, 1644-1908*, T'oung Pao, Series II, Vol. XI, Leiden, 1910.

As for Dr. Luciano Petech, see his "China and Tibet", *supra*, n. 6a.

and the varied political experimentation through which the Manchu-Tibetan relations passed in the early stages. Starting with a total absence of any direct political control of Tibet, it worked its way through a protectorate, without an armed occupation, to the posting of a Manchu Resident at Lhasa. The third stage was the appointment of two (Resident) Ambans, supported by a garrison. The fourth, and as it proved the last, stage saw the Imperial Residents – always chosen from among the Manchus – invested with rights of control and supervision, and somewhat later, even with those of direct participation in the Tibetan Government. Thus the Chinese rulers “wound their way”, through several experiments, to the only possible form of control over Tibet.<sup>11</sup>

Two facts may be borne in mind here. One, that the original Chinese administration of Tibet was supported by and indeed dependent upon a garrison. The latter was withdrawn for a short time after 1722 but the Chinese soon discovered that their authority needed the support of troops. Two, that the Resident, in one form or another, continued from the very start of the connection in 1720. The final change in 1792 – although conveying the appearance of a much closer supervision of Tibetan affairs – was, in practice, little more than a paper claim. The reason why the system was not seriously challenged after 1792 was largely due to the fact that it was so loose and vague that the Tibetans did not find it very irksome.

Not that Peking's masters found it easy to rule Tibet through their local Resident Ambans for, by the close of the 18th century – when Chinese control was at its height – the office of the Dalai Lama, both as the spiritual and temporal ruler of his land, had taken firm roots in Tibetan soil. Short of abolishing that institution it became imperative, therefore, that the Chinese control it effectively. In other words, foreign imperial domination was now to take the form of manipulating the apparently impersonal status of the Church in a manner that would subserve to its ends. An interesting, and what proved in the long run to be an extremely important, innovation in this context was the institution of a golden urn<sup>12</sup> for the choice of the Tibetan pontiff. Actually the Emperor in 1793 sent such an urn all the way from Peking to Lhasa. At the ceremony for the final choice of the Tibetan ruler, the names of children who had been reported as likely re-embodiments of Chen-re-si were written on slips of paper, and placed in the urn. Meantime a religious service was held and at its close, in the presence of the Amban, one of the slips was drawn from the urn and held up for all those present to see. When the Chinese were in power in Lhasa this ceremony was presided over by the Amban himself. The boy so chosen was always able to identify various articles, chiefly the bell, dor-je etc., belonging to his predecessor, or more accurately to himself in his previous

<sup>11</sup> Luciano Petech, *Supra*, n. 6a, p. 240.

<sup>12</sup> It may be stated here that the golden urn was used not only for the selection by lot of the Dalai Lama but of other high lamas as well. For details see H. E. Richardson, *Tibet and its History*, London, 1962, p. 10.

birth.<sup>13</sup> It is necessary to emphasise here that even after the urn had been used, the full and final investiture of authority for the pontiff's office vested in the issue of an Imperial Mandate by the Son of Heaven.

The institution of the golden urn may be viewed in its proper perspective by recalling two important facts. One, that the very first Dalai Lama to be selected after the Edict, was chosen without the use of the urn; two, that in practice the importance of the system could easily be rendered ineffectual by a collusion between the Amban and the Regent. In fact, the Regents were the driving force in the years from about 1800 to say 1860. Additionally, the urn was a valuable item in Chinese propaganda. Similarly the Imperial Mandate was often-times no more than a grandiose yet empty gesture making the most of a fait accompli. It is important to underline here the extent of play-acting and make-believe in Sino-Tibetan relations right down to the present day.

Apart from the golden urn, a few other practices were resorted to as well. Thus, for most part, the new Dalai was chosen from among the children of relatively unknown, or undistinguished families – a peasant household, for instance. The aim here appears to have been to combat native (Tibetan) control of the internal affairs of Tibet which nearly approximated to a monopoly of the Church's control in the hands of powerful local families. It stands to reason that in ennobling a poor peasant family the Chinese risk was far less than in making immensely powerful a family that already belonged to the nobility. Another "system" that seemed reasonably well-established by the last quarter of the 19th century was that the Tibetan pontiff would oblige by "retiring to the heavenly field" before he came of age. It may be noted that the ninth incarnation died at the age of 10 (1805–1815), the tenth at 20 (1817–1837), the eleventh at 17 (1837–1854) and the twelfth at 18 (1857–1874)<sup>14</sup> – the average for the four working out at 16 years. It may thus be evident that during the long intervals of the minority of the Dalai Lamas, the Ambans could, through their influence with the Regents, exercise a far wider control over the affairs of the country than if the Lama were in actual authority. For most part in the nineteenth century, however, the reverse held true, for it were the Regents who usually influenced the Ambans. It has even been suggested that a plot, in which the Chinese were directly involved, to be rid of the 13th Dalai Lama before he came of age, miscarried because the "affair" had been managed very badly.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>13</sup> For a description of the ceremony, see Regis-Evariste Huc and Joseph Gabet, *Travels in Tartary, Tibet and China, 1844–46*, transl. by William Hazlitt, London, 1928, 2 vols., II, pp. 248–49.

<sup>14</sup> According to Petech, "The Dalai Lamas and the Regents of Tibet", *supra*, n. 4, the respective dates are: ninth 1806–1837, tenth 1816–1837, eleventh 1838–1856, twelfth 1856–1875.

<sup>15</sup> The 13th Dalai Lama was born in June 1876 in a family of ordinary peasants in the province of Dak-po, a few days' journey to the south-east of Lhasa. His discovery was a particularly clear one, nor were there any rival candidates. Having been chosen, the young

Apart from measures adopted in Tibet, the degree of authority wielded by the Ambans at Lhasa was determined by another major consideration. This was the firmness or otherwise of the Emperor's own hold on the mainland and thus his ability to intervene by force, if necessary, in the internal affairs of Tibet. It is important to mention here, if briefly, the impact of the Opium Wars of the early forties and fifties, of the T'ai-p'ing Rebellion which occupied the interregnum between the two, and to emphasise that by the latter half of the 19th century the power wielded by the Manchu Ambans in Lhasa had been rudely shaken. The growth to adulthood of the 13th Dalai and his assumption of full powers as the lay and spiritual ruler of his country, were eloquent at once of the Amban's inability to influence events and of the Lama's growing confidence in himself to manage his country's affairs. It may be noted that the Lhasa Government had refused to use the golden urn for the 13th Dalai's selection and that although the Emperor had tarried long over the final acceptance of his name, he had been left but little choice in the matter. Later the pontiff showed scant courtesy to the wishes of the Emperor's representative in the choice of Tibet's ministers.<sup>16</sup> In fact, as events leading to the Younghusband Expedition were to make clear, Lhasa's ingenuity in evading, and indeed openly defying, Chinese dictates was a subject of considerable disquietude, not to say frequent embarrassments, to Peking. This was the more noticeable as, in their dealings with foreign Powers, the Chinese had kept up an outer façade of a complete control over the Dalai Lama's government.

Another aspect of the relationship between the Tibetan pontiff and the Manchu Emperor should not be lost sight of. As the spiritual head of the Buddhists in Tibet, as well as in Mongolia, the Dalai enjoyed unbounded prestige.

Dalai, then hardly two years of age, was brought to Lhasa. His enthronement, however, had to await the confirmation of the Emperor and was not celebrated until 1879.

The Regent, head of the Ten-gye-ling monastery whose brother was Chief Minister, concocted a plot aimed at the young ruler's life. The plot was, however, discovered and the conspirators meted out exemplary punishments. The Chinese too did their bit, unsuccessfully though, to be rid of him. Thanks to these manoeuvres the Dalai, though entitled to succeed to the sovereignty of Tibet at 18 (17 by our reckoning, for the Tibetans, like the Mongols, take into account both the year of birth as also the current year), he actually did not take over until 2 years later. For details see Bell, *Portrait*, pp. 38, 40, 49, 53-4, 57-8.

<sup>16</sup> A story of the early nineties of the preceding century merits a mention here of the Tibetan ingenuity to evade, and of the Chinese helplessness to force issues. The then Amban had nominated a certain Ram-ba as a member of the Tibetan Cabinet. The Dalai resented this and so the Amban was informed that Ram-ba had "died". Actually, the Tibetan government had sent him to his country home, a few days' journey outside Lhasa. The Amban, who was not unaware of the inside story, informed the Emperor that Ram-ba had, in fact, died. Meanwhile the Dalai appointed his own nominee in the vacancy caused by Ram-ba's "death". For details see Bell, *Portrait*, p. 59.

The Emperor was obviously anxious that this be used to his advantage – to help him consolidate his own political hold over that vast expanse on the periphery of his Empire where people swore by the Lamaist faith. Hence he assumed towards the priest the attitude of his lay protector. The relationship was always regarded by both as one of expediency, of convenience and, by the Dalai at any rate, as of a purely personal nature. Later when the Manchu dynasty was toppled over in the October (1911) Revolution, the Dalai repudiated China's new regime on the plea that with the Emperor's deposition his ties with the Son of Heaven had snapped and that the Republic had no locus standi in the land of the Lamas.<sup>17</sup> The fact that the Ambans were always drawn, as pointed out earlier, from among the Manchus and not from among the more numerous Han, lent added support to this purely personal, if almost familial relationship. As one follows the story of the first decade of Kuomintang rule in China, it is evident that it had to negotiate *de novo* with the Lhasa authorities in an effort to define both the nature and extent of its control over Tibet. For obvious reasons, and quite frequently too, these negotiations were stalled by the Tibetans who, always hyper-sensitive on questions of religion, were not prepared to trust a regime which swore by the godless concept of a secular state! Besides, the writ of Kuomintang rule did not run over all parts of the mainland nor did its ability to force issues in Tibet carry conviction.

From the Dalai we may pass to the Panchen. It has already been noticed that, in contrast to the master of the Potala, the ruler of Tashilhunpo monastery has to do much less with wordly affairs, although the monastery is well endo-

<sup>17</sup> In a bid to assert his authority over Mongolia, Yüan Shih-k'ai, the first President of the then newly proclaimed Chinese Republic wrote a message to the Jebtsundamba, the Mongolian Living Buddha:

the preceding T'sing (viz. Manchu) dynasty has ceded all rights of administration to the Chinese people, and the people have entrusted them to me, the President. . .

The Living Buddha's rejoinder was prompt and to the point:

As to the claim that the Manchu dynasty surrendered its suzerain rights over them to you, it is known to all that the widow and orphan (the Emperor's widow Lung-yu and the minor Emperor Hsuan T'sung) have lost the throne through Yuan Shih-k'ai's fraud. History will set this question straight. You would have acted more honourably had you refrained from provocative action towards others and worried more about the internal situation, in order to preserve the Chinese people from new misfortunes. Take care you are not carved up like a melon. . .

Ivan Korostovetz, "Von Chinggis Khan zur Sowjetrepublik" (Berlin and Leipzig, 1926), pp. 226-9, cited in Robert A. Rupen, "Mongolian Nationalism", *Royal Central Asian Society Journal*, XLV, 2, April, 1958, pp. 157-78.

The Japanese exploited this argument when they set up P'u-yi – "last of the Manchus" – as the puppet ruler of Manchukuo. They told the Mongols that the Manchus, to whom they owed allegiance, were now represented by P'u-yi. For P'u-yi's version of events see Aisin-Gioro Pu Yi, *From Emperor to Citizen*, Peking, 1964, 2 vols., II, pp. 251-320.

wed and the Lama traditionally the ruler of the rich Tsang province in Central Tibet.<sup>18</sup> A brief reference has also been made to a persistent theme in most Western literature on Tibet that the Dalai is “politically more powerful”, though “spiritually inferior”, to the Panchen. A recent variation on the theme has tried heroically to taper off the edges and as such bears citation:

In general . . . it was agreed that the Dalai Lama and the Panchen Lama stood together at the apex of the monastic pyramid, with the latter assigned . . . a minute degree of spiritual precedence in dogma – a technicality with little or no practical effect. In the sphere of lay authority, on the other hand, the power of the Dalai Lama was, in principle paramount, even if its actual exercise was . . . very markedly circumscribed by the realities of Tibet’s feudal mode of life.

As to the Panchen’s territorial domain,

numerous districts in the Shigatse area held in fief by the Panchen Lama personally, that is, by virtue of his high office, and those allotted to the corporate body of the monastery of which he acted as the religious and administrative head to furnish its inmates with the basic means of sustenance . . . In this the arrangement did not differ from that which obtained on all important estates . . .<sup>19</sup>

Purists, pandits and partisans alike maintain, however, that insofar as the Panchen is the incarnation of Amitabha he takes precedence over the Dalai who represents the human form of Avalokiteshvara.<sup>20</sup> Plausible even though it may

<sup>18</sup> The Panchen’s authority, however, is only in theory, for the actual administration of the province is under the direct control of Lhasa.

In June, 1952, the Tibet Military Area was established by the Chinese and the region was divided into three administrative zones: a) Central and Western Tibet under the Dalai Lama at Lhasa; b) Central Tibet, under the Panchen Lama at Shigatse, and c) Eastern Tibet under the Chamdo Liberation Committee headed by a Chinese General.

<sup>19</sup> George Ginsburgs and Michael Mathos, *Communist China & Tibet*, The Hague, 1964, p. 44.

<sup>20</sup> Bell’s comment on this question merits reproduction:

Yet even though Chen-re-zi is but the spiritual son he is, nevertheless, the patron deity of Tibet. The early kings whose memories are universally revered, ruled over the entire country from Lhasa and were regarded as incarnations of Chen-re-zi. There is nothing in Tashi-lhun-po quite as holy as the temple in Lhasa. “The place of the gods” is above all other places in name, in fame, in sanctity, and its Grand Lama sits above all others.

Bell, *Religion of Tibet*, p. 190.

A French scholar, Fernand Gerard in “Haute Asie”, *Geographie Universelle*, Paris, 1929, Vd. VIII, p. 376, makes a less sophisticated observation namely that the Panchen is important because he controls a separate territorial enclave, and is temporarily inferior to the Dalai “only because his principality is smaller”.

appear in theory, two factors militate against the above hypothesis. Firstly, as already noticed, the office of the Dalai Lama was established before that of the Panchen. Secondly, it was the Great Fifth who first created the institution of the Panchen. And why should he have set up, it is pertinent to ask, someone spiritually higher than himself? The prevalent misconception appears to have arisen if partly from the fact that the Dalai Lama elevated to high status the incarnation of his old guru and owing to the respect which a teacher is accorded, especially in the East, the notion of higher status took shape and form. It may be mentioned here, if only in parenthesis, that whenever the Panchen Lama is older than the Dalai he is, of course, his teacher – and vice versa.<sup>21</sup> This imparts its own particular tint to their relationship without affecting its basic connotation.

In sum, it may be relevant to cite the 14th Dalai Lama's considered views on the subject which, without eschewing controversy, appear in retrospect to be tantamount to a pronouncement *ex cathedra*:

the Panchen Lamas had been among the Lamas second only to the Dalai Lamas in religious authority in Tibet, but they had never held any secular authority. Throughout our history, relations between the two had been perfectly cordial . . . In most generations, the younger had become the pupil of the older.<sup>22</sup>

<sup>21</sup> Bell, *Portrait*, p. 64, maintains that the 13th Dalai "being the older of the two was the spiritual guide of the Panchen", that when the latter visited Lhasa in 1902, the Dalai administered to him the highest religious vows' and again that when the Dalai Lama returned from China to Lhasa in 1909, the Panchen came to meet him "on the way ten days' journey north of Lhasa". The word Panchen is an abbreviation of Pandita Ch'en Po (Great Scholar/Professor). Tibetans call him Panchen Rim-po-che, and not Tashi Lama, a term used interchangeably by Western scholars. Actually the term "Tashi Lama" is used for priests of inferior position, who attend weddings etc.

<sup>22</sup> *Dalai Lama*, p. 95.





## Tibetan Polity, 1904-37

From the spiritual, theological disputations of the introductory pages, we now may turn to the temporal, mundane affairs of the world – from the abstract, doctrinaire to the cold matter of fact. In this context, a word about the historical setting in which the narrative unfolds itself may not be out of place. At the outset it may be recalled that John Company's first contacts, after establishing a secure base in Bengal, were with Shigatse – not Lhasa. Thither it was, towards the last quarter of the 18th century, that Warren Hastings despatched his two envoys, George Bogle and Samuel Turner, for a commercial reconnaissance of the land. The Panchen who was personally very well-disposed towards Hastings' representatives, did not however succeed, albeit for no want of trying, in getting them admittance to Lhasa. The result was that even though the immediate goal of the British remained unfulfilled, the foundation was laid of an intimate understanding between Calcutta and Shigatse.<sup>1</sup>

Towards the closing decades of the 19th century when the Dalai Lama, thanks to the activities of the Russian Buryat Agvan Dorjieff, openly defied the Chinese and befriended the great White Tsar, the Panchen still seemed to be well-disposed towards the British. Subsequently, in 1904, with Younghusband and his men marching relentlessly on to Lhasa, while the Dalai became a fugitive from his land, the Panchen still swore fealty to his old allies.<sup>2</sup> Actually, a little earlier he had sent his delegates, including the head abbot of the Tashi-lhunpo monastery, to meet the British Commissioner at Gam-pa-dzong. Later, he was to receive, and “most warmly”, at Shigatse one of the Commissioner's representatives, Captain (later Sir) Fredrick O'Connor, thereby laying the foundations of “as sincere a friendship as Bogle had with his [Panchen Lama's] predecessor.”

If not entirely, certainly in a goodly measure, the 13th Dalai Lama's own inept handling of a complicated, and indeed complex sequence of events had

<sup>1</sup> For some recent studies of Tibetan polity see H. E. Richardson, *Tibet and its History*, Oxford, 1962, George Ginsburgs and Michael Mathos, *Communist China and Tibet*, The Hague, 1964, Tsepon W. D. Shakabpa, *Political History of Tibet*, Princeton, 1967, Nirmal Chandra Sinha, *Tibet: Considerations on Inner Asian History*, Calcutta, 1967, and Ram Rahul, *The Government and Politics of Tibet*, New Delhi, 1969.

<sup>2</sup> Two detailed studies of the Younghusband Expedition are Peter Fleming, *Bayonets to Lhasa*, London, 1962, and Parshotam Mehra, *The Younghusband Expedition, an Interpretation*, London, 1968. Additionally, both Alastair Lamb, *Britain and Chinese Central Asia*, London, 1960, and Daniel Dilks, *Curzon*, London, 1970, 2 vols., II, provide interesting sidelights.

led to this first, and as it turned out the last, British armed expedition to Lhasa in the opening years of the present century. Unfortunately for him, he had been pitted in an unequal battle of wits against the cleverer, and indeed remarkably unscrupulous Lord Curzon, the then all-powerful Viceroy and Governor-General of British India. Face to face with an ugly situation precipitated by a variety of circumstances which, for most part, were outside the Lama's immediate ken, and control, his much-vaunted boast of leaning on the Russian potentate proved singularly unavailing. And this despite all the to-ings and fro-ings of the Buryat Mongol, Dorjjeff.

Not to speak of the Russians, Tibet's Chinese overlords too – whom in any case the 13th Dalai Lama had defied with impunity – did not demonstrate any willingness, much less capacity, to hasten to the aid of their oft-proclaimed, yet recalcitrant protégé. The result, to no one's surprise, was the British expedition's successful assault and smothering of such resistance as an "army" of lamas was supposed to muster. Before long, in the first week of August, 1904, as Younghusband's men arrayed themselves, in battle formation, before the gates of the golden Potala, the Dalai Lama betook himself from the city of gods. He headed north towards the barren wastes of Chang Thang and the vast uplands that stretch themselves beyond the horizon.

## Younghusband's aftermath: Dalai Lama visits Peking (1908)

Convinced that the Lama had been responsible for most of their troubles, the British understandably did not want him to return on the morrow of their own unhappy, and indeed calamitous experience at his hands. Thus in March, 1905, even before Whitehall was informed that the Chinese had acceded to the Lama's desire to re-trace his steps, Satow, the British Minister in Peking, "warned" the Wai-wu-pu – and in no uncertain terms – that

Great Britain would be compelled again to take action against him if he (Dalai Lama) were allowed to return to Lhasa.<sup>3</sup>

For their part, the Russians showed a great deal of concern in the fortunes of the Tibetan ruler. From St. Petersburg – and the peripatetic Dorjjeff had carried from his master valuable presents to the Great White Tsar – the Lama had sought assurances of protection "in the event of his life being endangered".<sup>4</sup> The Tsarist regime which appears to have made up its mind that the

<sup>3</sup> Satow to Lansdowne, March 28, 1905, No. 23 in *Foreign Office Confidential Prints*, 535/6, cited, et seq, as *FO*.

<sup>4</sup> Spring-Rice to Grey, March 14, 1906, No. 47 in *FO* 535/7.

Dorjjeff had brought some presents, as well as a message, from the Dalai Lama and the Russian Foreign Office showed itself anxious that "what has passed" should "at once" be brought to the notice of the British government.

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THIBET.

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[November 26.]

SECTION 1.

[39559]

No. 1.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received November 26.)

(No. 770. Confidential.)

St. Petersburg, November 19, 1906.

Sir,

M. ISVOLSKY informed me to-day that he desired to mention to me, privately and confidentially, that M. Dorjief, the former Agent or Representative of the Dalai Lama, was at present in St. Petersburg, and had been in communication with certain officials in the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. M. Isvolsky said that he had not himself seen M. Dorjief, and did not propose to do so, as he did not wish to give that gentleman an undue sense of his own importance. He wished, however, to acquaint me with the fact of his presence here, and also to mention that he was in consultation with officials, but chiefly on matters pertaining to Mongolia. He desired to inform me further that the Dalai Lama was at present at Gumbum, and that the Russian Government had let him understand that, in their view, it was undesirable that he should return to Thibet, in any case for the present. The Russian Government could not, of course, control the movements of the Dalai Lama, but they had taken all possible steps, in the event of that personage moving towards Thibet, to prevent any Russian official or any one over whom the Government had any control from accompanying him. At the same time his Excellency said that he had received information, for the accuracy of which he could not vouch, that the Chinese Government were urging the Dalai Lama to return to Lhasa as they found him an inconvenient guest.

M. Isvolsky said that the Dalai Lama exercised great influence over all the Buddhists, both Russian and Mongolian, and it was, therefore, of interest to the Russian Government to keep in touch with him, presumably through M. Dorjief, not as the Grand Lama of Thibet, but as the spiritual Chief of so many Russian subjects. He wished to be quite frank and open with me; and therefore gave me the above information in a private and confidential form.

M. Isvolsky proceeded to say that the measures which the Chinese Government were taking, and those which they were apparently contemplating, in Mongolia, were causing some uneasiness to the Russian Government. The project which the Chinese Government had in view was evidently to replace the ancient feudal system of more or less independent Principalities by a centralized Chinese Administration, and one result of this proposed ~~plan~~ had been already to induce many Mongols, who disapproved of these changes, to ~~take~~ a refuge in Russian territory. The Japanese also had numerous Agents in Mongolia who were actively furthering the aims of the Chinese Government, and he thought that this action on the part of Japan was unnecessary and irregular. M. Isvolsky wished to impress on me the great importance which any change in the former political status in Mongolia had to Russia, and he feared that the action of China would necessitate the strengthening of the Russian frontier posts and garrisons.

From the observations of M. Isvolsky in regard to the influence of the Dalai Lama over the Mongols, it is possible that the Russian Government would be willing that he should remain at his present domicile, and that they would endeavour to utilize him, with the assistance of M. Dorjief, who, I understood, had left a secretary with his Eminence, either as a source of information or as an Agent in hampering the policy of the Chinese Government.

I reported in my telegram No. 296 of this day's date the information as to M. Dorjief's presence here and the present domicile of the Dalai Lama.

I have, &c.

(Signed) A. NICOLSON.

(376/106)

[2233 cc-1]

Dalai's "continued presence" in Mongolia was "undesirable"<sup>5</sup> and feared lest his absence from Lhasa should necessitate that his vacant place there be filled by somebody else,<sup>6</sup> was playing with the idea of an armed Buryat escort accompanying him on his way back home. Their number, the Russians explained, would be limited to forty;<sup>7</sup> they would be disarmed as soon as they crossed the (Russian) frontier; they would not, in any case, remain in Lhasa for long.<sup>8</sup> As if this were not enough, St. Petersburg further assured the British Minister, that the Dalai Lama had been given clearly to understand that he was expected "to remain quiet" and "was not to reckon on any support or assistance on the part of the Russian government."<sup>9</sup>

All this notwithstanding, Whitehall was not easily persuaded. It protested – and strongly – against any escort whatsoever being provided and, for the matter of that, against the Lama himself:

it is because they have no desire to interfere with the internal administration of Tibet, that HMG deem it inexpedient for the Dalai Lama to return to Lhasa for present. On a previous occasion his action was so hostile as to provoke our interference, and our intervention might be necessitated again.<sup>10</sup>

Meanwhile conflicting news about the Lama continued to pour in. There were reports that the Lhasa authorities, "much perturbed", and "afraid", and

<sup>5</sup> Spring-Rice to Grey, April 9, 1906, No. 66 in *ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> Arthur Nicolson to Grey, June 8, 1906, No. 124 in *ibid.* Nicolson who had been especially deputed to St. Petersburg to help sort out differences and prepare the way for the Anglo-Russian entente of 1907 anticipated that the Russians might raise the question should his (Dalai Lama's) return to Lhasa be prevented. Specifically he had asked:

would you wish me to say that you would consent to the matter being mentioned to the Chinese government by the British and Russian representatives?

<sup>7</sup> Grey to Satow, May 1, 1906, No. 86 in *ibid.*

Grey had pointed out to the Russians that the presence of their escort beyond the Tibetan frontier would be "objectionable" and amount to "an interference" in Tibet's "internal affairs".

<sup>8</sup> Spring-Rice to Grey, May 2, 1906, No. 90 in *ibid.*

The Russians had explained at length that the escort, not of their seeking, was voluntary (viz. composed of volunteers) and that it was due entirely to the insistence of the Russian Buddhists for the "local authorities feared an outbreak among the Buriats if anything befell the Lama".

<sup>9</sup> *Loc. cit.*

<sup>10</sup> Grey to Nicolson, June 12, 1906, No. 127 in *ibid.* This was in response to Nicolson's earlier query and Grey had prefaced his remarks by the words, "if you are questioned..." Also see *supra*, n. 6.

Earlier, Spring-Rice had told Lamsdorff that a condition precedent to Lansdowne's assurance of June 2, 1904 was strict "non-intervention" by Russia in Tibet. Spring-Rice to Grey, April 29, 1906, No. 78 in *ibid.*

“unwilling to do anything without him”, were “very desirous” of getting their ruler back home before the new Imperial Commissioner (Chang) arrived;<sup>11</sup> that “orders” had been conveyed to him (Dalai Lama) from the Ch’ing Emperor that he should return to Lhasa;<sup>12</sup> that, on his own, the Lama had sought out the views of the Panchen and his alignments in the context of his (Dalai Lama’s) dispute with the British and the Chinese. Inter alia, he had told the Abbot of Tashilhunpo that

he (Dalai Lama) would have returned before but was not sure of the Tashi Lama’s intentions and of his relations with us (the British) and therefore sent the Kundelling (his agent) to enquire.<sup>13</sup>

It was not to Lhasa however that the Dalai Lama was to return as yet, for as the months rolled by, his wanderings seemed to continue, almost endlessly. In November, 1907, news arrived that Peking had permitted him to leave Ning-hsia for Wu-t’ai-shan in Shansi.<sup>14</sup> By then a sea-change had transformed the political landscape in Lhasa where, in place of a derelict regime the Chinese were asserting control in a big way. No wonder, the British now argued that if he returned home, via Peking, Court, and Government, influence on him would be exercised in a manner hostile to their own interests in Lhasa;<sup>15</sup> in reverse, if he repaired home without going to Peking he may be able to act as a “useful counter-poise” to Chinese authority (in Lhasa).<sup>16</sup>

Jordan’s reasoning notwithstanding, it would have been obvious that the Lama could not leave for Tibet without direct permission<sup>17</sup> from his Chinese masters. And soon enough, Peking ordered him to proceed to the (Chinese) ca-

<sup>11</sup> Claude White (then in Gyantse) to India, August 29, 1906, Encl. in No. 77, *FO 535/8*. White confirmed that “beyond arrangements for journey” nothing was known about the Dalai Lama’s return.

<sup>12</sup> India to Macdonald, December 22, 1906, encl. in No. 107 in *ibid*.

The above information was based on a report “received by Chang while at Gyantse” that the Ti Rimpoche and the Shapas at Lhasa had heard from the Lama to this effect.

<sup>13</sup> Political Officer, Sikkim, to India, July 7, 1906, encl. in No. 56 in *ibid*.

<sup>14</sup> Jordan to Grey, November 13, 1907, No. 109 in *FO 535/10*. Jordan was informed that if the Lama asked for leave to come to Peking, the Emperor would accord him an audience. In return, Jordan told his political superiors that

so long as he (Dalai Lama) does not return to Tibet, I presume that we can hardly raise objections to his being received in Peking.

<sup>15</sup> Jordan to Grey, December 23, 1907, No. 123 in *ibid*.

Inter alia, Jordan told Grey that, according to his Russian colleague, the Lama had not left Hsining “upto November 1” and that the Wai-wu-pu for its part was far from certain “if” he would come to Peking.

<sup>16</sup> Jordan to Grey, February 4, 1908, No. 78 in *FO 535/11*.

According to the Lama’s envoy, who had arrived in Peking, his (Lama’s) intention was “to return to Tibet” for the “Emperor had no objection and the Lama had no wish to visit Peking”.

<sup>17</sup> India Office to Foreign Office, February 3, 1908, No. 35 in *ibid*.

pital where he was to be received in audience by the Emperor.<sup>18</sup> Although a change in their stance had been noticeable for sometime, the British took the opportunity of the Lama's impending arrival to stage a complete volte face from their earlier position. For Grey now directed Jordan to

inform the Chinese, unless you have already done so, that we have no wish to put difficulties in the way of the return of the Dalai Lama to Tibet and that we do not desire to exercise any influence upon them.<sup>19</sup>

In Peking, the Chinese treated the Lama with studied disdain, bordering on outright discourtesy. For his part, the Tibetan ruler was playing an astute game; keeping through his agents, more particularly Dorjjeff, secret communications with the Russians, and making ill-disguised overtures to the British. In Rockhill, the American Minister, the Lama discovered a kindred soul, a warm-hearted man who took great pains to tender him correct advice, draft and re-draft his memorials to the Throne and otherwise keep the Tibetans au fait with all that was happening in the Chinese capital.<sup>20</sup>

To cut him to size, the Chinese had directed that foreign envoys in Peking could meet the Lama only in the presence of their (Chinese) representatives. The procedure took away from these visits whatever political connotation they may have had, made them appear as little better than courtesy calls and, strictly from the Lama's point of view, purely perfunctory.<sup>21</sup> Conscious that he must make up for lost time, the Dalai Lama, at his interview with Jordan, pleaded that he be exonerated "from all participation in events preceding the troubles of 1904".<sup>22</sup> While the British Minister for his part was well-posted with all that he (Lama) was doing, through Rockhill and more so his principals, Whitehall had access to a far more detailed analysis of what had transpired in Peking. Nor was it a very flattering picture:

<sup>18</sup> Jordan to Grey, July 21, 1908, No. 94 in *ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> Grey to Jordan, October 22, 1908, No. 108 in *ibid.*

<sup>20</sup> Rockhill had met the Dalai Lama at Wu-t'ai-shan and established a friendly and cordial relationship with Dorjjeff and other agents of the Lama, listening to their grievances and advising as to the action they should take. Jordan to Grey, October 25, 1908, No. 117 in *ibid.*

<sup>21</sup> Jordan noted that the Tibetans' principal complaint to Korostovets, the Russian envoy, was that the behaviour of Chinese officials was both "insolent and insulting" and affirmed that, at his own interview with the Dalai Lama he found their (Chinese officials') attitude "supercilious throughout". *Loc cit.*

<sup>22</sup> Jordan's own interview with the Lama was "very formal", except for a request which the Tibetan ruler wanted to be conveyed to the King. The "Memorandum" on the interview by Mr Mayers reveals that "after a pause the Lama said God-speed, if there were nothing to talk about". Encl. in No. 117, *loc cit.*

Later the Lama's agents asked for and Jordan, with ill-grace, gave them the English texts of the Trade Regulations of 1908 and of the Anglo-Russian Convention of 1907 relating to Tibet. Jordan to Grey, November 25, 1908, No. 5 in *FO 535/12.*

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[August 24.]

THIBET.

CONFIDENTIAL.

SECTION 2.

[29341]

No. 1.

*Sir J. Jordan to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received August 24.)*

(No. 812. Confidential.)

*Peking, July 9, 1908.*

Sir,

WITH reference to my telegram No. 129 of the 30th ultimo, I have the honour to report some further details which have been courteously communicated to me by Mr. Rockhill, the American Minister, respecting his visit to the Dalai Lama at Wutaishan.

The Dalai Lama, who accorded Mr. Rockhill two interviews, is described by his visitor as a man of keen intelligence and of great natural dignity. Mr. Rockhill states that in all his varied experience he has rarely been present at any reception which was marked with such innate courtesy and good feeling.

The Lama seemed to be deeply conscious of the isolation and ignorance of his people and their need of enlightenment, but he evidently did not believe in the Chinese reform of Thibet. He inquired as to the terms of the recent Treaty with India, and on being informed that it related chiefly to trade, he said that he had every desire to encourage trade, but that Trade Conventions, if accompanied with other conditions, were apt to lead to undesirable complications. The Chinese, he said, had kept him in complete ignorance of the negotiations, and he was afraid that any concessions made to India would be claimed by Nepal and other countries. Speaking of the misunderstandings which had led up to the British expedition of 1904, the Lama attributed them largely to the officials on the spot, and thought that the inner history of the proceedings could not have been known to His Majesty the King-Emperor.

Mr. Rockhill said that, as an Anglo-Saxon by origin, he could assure the Lama that the aims of the Indian Government in seeking closer relations with Thibet were purely of a commercial nature, and he advised him in his own interests and in those of his people to make friendly intercourse with that Government the pivot of his policy. China and Russia were a long way off, while India was a near neighbour of Thibet.

Adverting to his visit to Peking, the Lama said that he had made no application to be received by the Chinese Court, but had received several pressing invitations to come here. He hoped to do so in the autumn, but he thought it undesirable that he and the Tashi Lama, who was also, he understood, coming to China, should both be absent from Thibet at the same time. He was desirous of returning to Thibet, but gave Mr. Rockhill to understand that he would select his own time, and would not submit to Chinese dictation in the matter.

The relations between the Lama and the Chinese authorities were evidently far from cordial. The Governor of Shansi had sent a deputy to introduce Mr. Rockhill and he present at his interview, but this official was not admitted to the Lama's presence at the first interview. At the second he somewhat unceremoniously entered the room, whereupon the Lama significantly inquired who the intruder was, and turned his face in the other direction. The attendants lost no time in enveloping the stranger's shoulders with the customary "hata," or scarf, and bundling him out of the apartment.

This is not the first interview the Dalai Lama has had with Western people. The late Russian Minister, M. Pokotilow, and the Russian Consul at Urga both saw him at that place, and since his arrival at Wutaishan, he has received an officer of the German Legation guard here. Among the presents which the latter offered him were a photograph of the German Emperor and an illustrated book of German arsenals.

I am sending a copy of this despatch to the Government of India.

I have, &c.  
(Signed) J. N. JORDAN.

[1922 aa-2]

Document 2: Jordan to Grey, July 9, 1908.

(By courtesy of the India Office Library and Records)

I (Rockhill) gathered from this very long conversation that the Dalai Lama cared very little, if at all, for anything which did not affect his personal privileges and prerogatives; that he separated entirely his case from that of the people of Tibet, which he was willing to abandon entirely to the mercy of China. He did not care particularly regarding administrative reforms so long as he could feel assured . . .

Not Rockhill alone, but Peking too may perhaps have come to much the same conclusion for while

it has treated him simply as the Head of the Yellow Church, and has shown him Honours accordingly, it has made him clearly recognise that he was a subject of the Emperor, no information whatsoever concerning the administrative reforms to be introduced into Tibet has been given him, no opportunity afforded him of speaking or discussing any questions with the Chinese Government . . .

The American Minister was of the view that the Imperial edict of November 3 (1908), conferring on the Lama his new title, which underlined his subordinate status and against which he had protested but in vain,<sup>23</sup> must be regarded as "memorable". For, as he saw it, it "possibly" marked the end of the political power which Tibet's Dalai Lamas had wielded for so long. For receiving this unsolicited "honour", the Lama was to submit a memorial to the throne, the terms of which, Rockhill was informed, "had been dictated to him (the Lama)" and to which "not a word could be added". When the harried Lama sought the Minister's advice, Rockhill was quite plain-spoken and even categorical:

I said that I saw absolutely no way out of the difficulty; the Dalai Lama must submit to his Sovereign's commands . . . and the only suggestion I could make was that he should not delay too long complying with the wishes of the Chinese Government . . .

In the result, Rockhill confessed,

His (Dalai Lama's) pride has suffered terribly while here, and he leaves Peking with his dislike for the Chinese intensified.

What was worse – and here the American Minister seems to have touched the nub of the problem,

I fear that he will not cooperate with the Chinese in the difficult task they now propose to undertake of governing Tibet like a Chinese province . . .

Altogether, it was a memorable visit and Rockhill was deeply moved:

<sup>23</sup> The Dalai Lama who had hitherto enjoyed the rank of "The Most Excellent, Self-existent Buddha of the West" was now elevated to "The Sincerely Obedient, Reincarnation-helping, Most Excellent Buddha of the West" and in addition given an allowance of 10,000 taels.



The special interest to me is that I have probably been a witness to the overthrow of the temporal power of the head of the Yellow Church which, curiously enough, I heard 20 years ago predicted in Tibet . . .<sup>24</sup>

Unknown to the Minister, factors other than the treatment meted out to him by the Chinese, had weighed on the mind of the Lama too. It has already been noticed that as early as July, 1906, he had despatched his agent Kün-de-ling to sound the Panchen Lama and ascertain the true extent of the latter's political ambitions. Subsequently, in Peking, at a private interview with the youthful Maharajkumar of Sikkim, later Tashi Namgyal (father of the kingdom's last ruler, Palden Thöntrup Namgyal), the Lama enquired about the Panchen's visit to India, referred to later in the narrative, and was curious if

he had obtained any influence over Buddhists or Buddhist sympathisers (in India).

Additionally, he confided in the Maharajkumar that on his return home, he (Dalai Lama) expected to see the Panchen at Nag-chhu-kha.<sup>25</sup> It is clear that this meeting between the two Lamas did take place, sometime in November,

<sup>24</sup> These excerpts are from a long despatch addressed by Rockhill to President Theodore Roosevelt and dated November 8, 1908 which forms Encl. 1 in Bryce (British Minister in Washington) to Grey, December 17, 1908, No. 3 in *FO 535/12*. In forwarding the enclosure, the British Minister made some very pertinent observations:

There is a sort of tragic interest in observing how the Chinese government, like a huge anaconda, has enwrapped the unfortunate Dalai Lama in its coils, tightening them upon him till complete submission (had been) extracted.

He recalled how Emperor Henry V had arrested Pope Pascahl II "making him (the Pope) accept the terms which he repudiated as soon as he was free. . .".

Inter alia Bryce expressed the view that the moral of the entire British exercise in Tibet had been to give

British India upon the northern frontier, instead of the feeble and half-barbarous Tibetans, a strong, watchful and tenacious neighbour which may one day become a formidable military power.

For an authoritative account of the Dalai Lama's visit to Lhasa, based on Rockhill's private papers, see Paul A Varg, "Open Door Diplomat: the Life of W. W. Rockhill", *Illinois Studies in Social Sciences*, vol. XXXIII, No. 4, Urbana, 1952, pp. 94-97. Also see Rockhill's "The Dalai Lamas of Lhasa" *op. cit.*, pp. 85-86.

<sup>25</sup> "Memorandum regarding interview between the Dalai Lama and the Maharajkumar of Sikkim held at the Yellow Temple, Peking, November 25, 1908", encl. 1 in Jordan to Grey, No. 7 in *FO 535/12*.

Inter alia, according to the Maharajkumar (and no one else was present), the Lama had shown himself "nervous" regarding his relations with the Chinese even though he recognised the "necessity" of working in harmony with them; for the British, he had "friendly sentiments" and realised the need for being on "good terms" with the Government of India.

1909, a fact later attested to by a Tibetan informant of the British Trade Agent at Yatung.<sup>26</sup>

## The Lamas meet (1912)

The Dalai Lama's return to the Potala, sometime in December, 1909, after his long wanderings, proved to be no better than a breathing spell; in actual fact, he spent less than fifty days in Lhasa! His Chinese masters, if also tormentors, followed him close on his heels as he fled from the Potala, early in February, 1910, almost with a price on his head. Instead of ploughing over again through the barren wastes of Nag-chhu-kha and the Chang Thang, the Lama now took a southerly direction and, crossing over into India, sought refuge from his former foes. Despite his ill-disguised overtures and clear anxiety – he offered the Indian Governor General a virtual protectorate over his land and people – any possibility of the British coming to his aid in his unequal struggle with the Chinese, was categorically ruled out in Whitehall.<sup>27</sup>

No that Britain's lack of interest in his fortunes prevented the Lama from circularising all foreign powers for help against Chinese "aggression", or secretly soliciting the Tsar's "protection and assistance". Actually, he communicated with the Russian ambassador in Paris, "begging" him to "consult with" his British counterpart there.<sup>28</sup> Nor, for that matter, did it deter his agents

<sup>26</sup> Macdonald to Political Officer in Sikkim, October 25, 1909, encl. No. 49 in *FO 535/12*.

Macdonald's informant had told him that the Dalai Lama had arrived at Nag-chhu-kha with "2000 camels, 100 horses and a large number of followers", that the Tashi Lama was there too and may return "either to Shigatse via Lhasa or by the northern route".

<sup>27</sup> Secretary of State to Viceroy, No. 532 in *Foreign and Political Department (National Archives of India) Proceedings 276-550*, June, 1910.

Whitehall had made it clear that

Definite information should now be made to the Dalai Lama that there can be no interference between Tibet and China on the part of HMG.

For details, see *Tibet Papers*, Cd. 5240, HMSO, London, 1910, No. 354.

Years later, Bell recorded:

when I delivered the message to the Dalai Lama he was so surprised and distressed. . .

He could not. . . realise the extent to which we were tied and the attitude of the Home Government.

Bell, *Tibet*, p. 113.

<sup>28</sup> The Lama had written to the Russian Emperor complaining against Chinese actions in Tibet and of the persecution to which he personally was subjected; a similar message had been conveyed to Izvolsky in Paris asking him to confer with the British ambassador there. Buchanan to Grey, May 24, 1911, No. 39 in *FO 535/14*.

Earlier, in February 1910, the Dalai Lama had sent his messengers to Peking with letters addressed to the British, Japanese, French and Russian Ministers intimating that the Chinese had been very active in Tibet and soliciting their help against "aggression". Max Muller to Grey, February 22, 1910 and Jordan to Grey, March 4, 1910, Nos. 13 and 48 in *FO 535/13*.

from making Darjeeling a base for their "anti-Chinese" intrigues in Tibet.<sup>29</sup> Mercifully, the years of the Lama's exile (1910-12) were witness to a mighty cataclysm in the fortunes of the Ch'ing dynasty which, in its wake, brought about a complete collapse of Chinese authority in Tibet and thereby helped to restore the Dalai to his former throne.

Paradoxically even during these difficult days there was no end to the internecine rivalry between the two Lamas. Thus it had been widely believed that the Chinese having denounced, and dethroned the Dalai a second time,<sup>30</sup> found themselves in a mess from which, they hoped, the Panchen would extricate them by occupying the Potala and taking the Dalai's place.<sup>31</sup> There is evidence to suggest that the Panchen almost, but not quite, played into Chinese hands: in 1910, he repaired to Lhasa but, in the end, shrank from falling over the precipice.<sup>32</sup>

<sup>29</sup> An instance having come to their notice wherein the Dalai Lama had come in the way of Chinese authorities in Tibet - for while they (Chinese) had ordered the province of Kongbu to send a militia to fight the Popas, the Lama forbade this course of action - India informed its Political Officer that

there were strong objections to the Dalai Lama intriguing from Darjiling against the Chinese government in Tibet. . . and that should any instance of similar proceedings on his part come to your notice, you will at once repeat the warning given in August, 1910 to the Lama and his Ministers, that their presence near the frontier will not be tolerated unless they exert themselves in the cause of peace.

India to Weir, August 5, 1911, encl. in India Office letter of September 5, 1911, No. 71 in *FO 535/14*.

<sup>30</sup> (Earlier, in 1904, they had disowned him too).

Peking denounced the Dalai Lama for his "pride, extravagance, lewdness, sloth, vice and perversity" and deposed him by an Imperial Decree of February 25, 1910. For the full text, which makes extremely interesting reading, see Eric Teichman, *Travels of a Consular Officer in Eastern Tibet*, Cambridge, 1922, pp. 16-17. The Decree was "officially communicated" to the British Legation in Peking.

<sup>31</sup> Max Muller to Grey, September 8, 1910, in *India Office Records* (abbreviated, et seq, as *IOR*) L/P & S/10/150.

Inter alia, Max Muller revealed that at the Wai-wu-pu, a Chinese official had confessed to him that Peking now realised that the difficulties in appointing a new Dalai Lama, during the life of the present one, "were insuperable"; at the same time they were "very nervous" about allowing the present incumbent to return to Tibet. To the Chinese, the best solution seemed to be to induce the Dalai to come to Peking where he could reside as "head of the Lamaist church in some temple in the neighbourhood". Here there would be veneration for him but "political agitation" would be eschewed.

Also see Max Muler to Grey, September 6, 1910, No. 151 in *FO 535/13*.

<sup>32</sup> Three specific charges were levelled. One, that in establishing a political relationship with Amban Lien Yü, thereby "breaking traditional rules", the Panchen had shown an intent to assume power. Two, that in 1911 when the Dalai Lama had "ordered" strong action against the Chinese garrisons occupying Lhasa, "the Panchen Lama's followers", and other disgruntled monks of the Tengyeling monastery in Lhasa, paid little attention. Three, that the Panchen's "association" with the Chinese Amban and his "inaction" in

Again, at the behest of the Chinese, he wrote to the Lama to return to Tibet but carefully balanced the written missive by an oral message:

Advising him (Dalai Lama) not to return to Tibet unless his safety was guaranteed by British Government and explaining that his letter had been written under pressure from the Chinese . . .<sup>33</sup>

Despite his ostensible concern for the safety and welfare of the Dalai Lama, at heart, the Panchen had been uneasy both during the former's long wanderings in Mongolia, and later China, and his second exile in India. On both occasions, he had confided in the British his growing sense of anxiety and concern as to what fortunes awaited him, should the Dalai return in high dudgeon.<sup>34</sup> While there is no knowing as to what transpired at Nag-chhu-kha in October-November, 1909, when, as has been noticed earlier, the two Lamas had conferred, it is clear that the quiet, unobtrusive, diplomacy of the British played a significant role in arranging a meeting between the Dalai and the Panchen at Ralung, not far from Gyantse, in July, 1912. For earlier, the Dalai Lama gave directions to Tashi Lama in course of communication with him by telephone to meet him at Ralung on the 16th instant, and added an assurance that no apprehension as to future need be felt by Tashi Lama or his officials.<sup>35</sup>

## The Panchen Lama's visit to India (1906)

Between the Dalai Lama's flight from Lhasa, on the eve of Younghusband's arrival, in August, 1904, and his return there, towards the end of 1909, an episode of some significance in the rivalry between the two Lamas was the visit to India, briefly alluded to earlier, of the Panchen Lama in the winter of 1905-1906. It is not germane to this study to delve deep into all the details of this fascinating, if also perhaps sordid affair, except in two important respects: one, to underscore the policy which lay at the root of the British invitation to the Lama; two, and more significantly, assess the aftermath of the visit in terms of its impact on the relations between the two Lamas.

face of virtual Chinese occupation in 1910-11 showed collusion if not collaboration. For details see "Panchen Lama (Ninth)" in Howard L. Boorman, (Editor) *Biographical Dictionary of Republican China*, Columbia, New York, vols. I-IV, III (1970), pp. 57-61.

<sup>33</sup> India to Morley, September 16, 1910, encl. in No. 158 FO 535/13.

<sup>34</sup> India to Morley, December 12, 1907, encl. in No. 120 FO 535/10.

The Panchen Lama had sent a secret envoy to Peking who, in an interview with O'Connor, told the latter that "he (Panchen Lama) anticipated trouble" if the Dalai Lama returned.

<sup>35</sup> India to Crewe, July 16, 1912, No. 159 in FO 535/15.

It may be recalled that the linchpin of Lord Curzon's approach to Younghusband's Tibetan expedition was the stationing of a British Agent at Lhasa. Since this had been sternly ruled out in Whitehall, the Governor-General, half-heartedly and with ill-grace, had been willing to accept its less satisfactory compromise of permitting the Trade Agent at Gyantse to visit the Tibetan capital as and when the need arose. In the face of an unambiguous official directive to the contrary, Younghusband while refraining from incorporating the latter provision into the terms of the Convention which he, in September 1904, concluded with the Regent, and the rump of the Dalai Lama's government, put it into a "separate agreement" to which the Thri Rimpoche's apart, all available seals in Lhasa were solemnly affixed. Whitehall, understandably rattled by Younghusband's clear defiance of authority, had categorically directed Amptill to modify the Convention's terms in regard to the amount and the mode of payment of the indemnity. At the same time he was to ignore the Commissioner's "separate agreement" authorising the Trade Agent's visits to Lhasa - from whence it remains consigned to the limbo of oblivion as an historical curiosity.

After his return, in October, 1904, Younghusband soon disappeared from the Lhasa scene - in a miasma of suspicion, bitter controversy and a lasting feud. Curzon, now in the second year of his renewed, lame-duck term as Viceroy was left to retrieve what he could from the shambles of a policy with which he had been so closely identified. The overtures to the Panchen Lama resulting in his visit to India may be viewed as an integral part of this process of retrieval. The instruments to hand were Fredrick O'Connor, Secretary to the Lhasa Expedition and newly-appointed British Trade Agent at Gyantse, and John Claude White, the much-ignored number two to Younghusband who was now Political Officer in Sikkim, in which capacity he served as O'Connor's immediate superior. The ostensible occasion for the invitation to the Panchen was the Prince of Wales' (later George V) visit to India in the winter of 1905-1906.

With the Dalai Lama's departure from Lhasa, the Tibetan administration had been left shaky, rudderless; when the Chinese decided to stage a come-back in a big way, it revealed itself as ineffective, inert, powerless. Curzon's first exposure to what Peking was about was his encounter with Tang Shao-yi, the Special Chinese Commissioner who, originally detailed to go to Lhasa, now repaired to Calcutta to negotiate Peking's "adhesion" to the September, 1904 convention. No sooner did the parleys commence, in March, 1905, it became apparent that the two sides were working at cross purposes: Curzon, refusing to yield ground and conceding, at best, a vague Chinese suzerainty; Tang (a Harvard graduate but pronouncedly anti-British owing to his tragic, unhappy experiences in the aftermath of the Boxer rising) calling into question, ab initio, the entire Younghusband performance at Lhasa and scrutinising the Convention's terms with a powerful magnifying glass. Curzon revealed himself, not for the first time, as overbearing; Tang, unyielding, and refusing to be

browbeaten, eased his way out. He made his government recall him, leaving his place at the negotiating table to his deputy, Chang Ying-tang who, with the Calcutta talks hopelessly stalemated, was soon on his way to Lhasa as a Special Imperial Commissioner.

The first faint rumblings of the policy of building up the Panchen Lama, as a counterpoise to the Dalai, are audible in Younghusband's distinctly friendly overtures to the (Panchen) Lama's representative who had met him at Gam-pa-dzong in the fall of 1903. Later, during the progress of the Mission to the Tibetan capital, more especially its long sojourn (April-July 1904) at Gyantse, contact had been maintained with Tashilhunpo. Yet the first ostensible evidence of this new "political" alignment comes out distinctly in the opening paragraph of the Amban's pronouncement, deposing the Dalai Lama. Its timing is revealing and indeed significant for it was issued on the eve of, and with a view to legitimising the conclusion, then impending, of the Lhasa Convention. *Inter alia*, the Chinese functionary proclaimed:

This notice is posted by Lu Amban on receipt of a telegram on the 5th September. The rank of the Dalai Lama is temporarily confiscated and in his place is appointed Tashi Lama . . .<sup>36</sup>

As if this were not clear enough, there is the unimpeachable evidence of Percival Landon, the (London) *Times* correspondent who had accompanied Younghusband all the way to Lhasa and was close to the fount of authority in Simla, no less than in Whitehall. In summing up the "Political Results of the Mission", Landon made two interesting observations:

The temporary, almost nominal government which we helped the Chinese to set up at Lhasa may almost be dismissed from consideration . . . The Tashi Lama for whom we secured the temporary ascendancy in things spiritual, and provisionally, in things temporal also – has had no intention of leaving his secure retreat at Tashilhunpo to risk the unpopularity, impotence and personal danger which he would surely meet with in Lhasa . . .

Elsewhere, Landon termed the building up of the authority of the Panchen, at the cost of the Dalai, as "this deliberate challenge" to accepted norms. Interestingly enough, he stoutly denied that the British intent was any "immediate re-devolution to Tashilhunpo" of the power which had long vested in the Dalai Lama at Lhasa.<sup>37</sup>

The man who conceived the idea of persuading the Panchen Lama to leave his "secure retreat" at Tashilhunpo was Fredrick O'Connor who, appointed Trade Agent at Gyantse on Younghusband's return from Lhasa, had visited the

<sup>36</sup> For the text see L. A. Waddell, *Lhasa and Its Mysteries*, Fourth Edition, London, 1929, Appendix XIV, pp. 500-1.

<sup>37</sup> Perceval Landon, *Lhasa*, New and revised edition, London, 1906, 2 vols., I, Appendix L, p. 507.

Lama at his monastery as part of the expedition to western Tibet led by Captain Rawling. Briefly, and in the short run, O'Connor argued, the British should help the Lama assert his independence of the Dalai's control and thereby, to an extent, fill in the political vacuum which, for want of an alternative, would be filled by Peking.

In the long run, O'Connor was much more ambitious. For while seizing the present "favourable opportunity" of cementing Britain's friendship with the Panchen – "even going so far, if necessary, as to subsidise and protect him" – he would

open, under the terms of the Lhasa Convention a new trade mart at Shigatse and to let it be clearly understood that any intrigues of other Powers at Lhasa would be met by a corresponding extension of our influence in the province of Tsang and southern Tibet; and all this might be done without openly impugning or infringing Chinese suzerainty.<sup>38</sup>

To begin with the beginning, O'Connor proposed inviting the Panchen to pay a ceremonial visit to India to meet the Prince of Wales and attend the Durbar to be held on the occasion at Calcutta. But a condition precedent to the Lama's visit, the British Agent argued, was that Calcutta should guarantee to protect him against the possible combined wrath both of the Dalai Lama and the Chinese.<sup>39</sup> "Without such a guarantee" forthcoming, O'Connor reasoned, it may not be easy to persuade the Lama to leave his monastery; more, in its absence, it would be "less than fair" to ask him to "compromise himself with us" in such a "marked manner".<sup>40</sup> White forwarded O'Connor's proposal to Calcutta recommending that an invitation be extended without stating explicitly the attendant undertaking to which the Trade Agent had drawn his pointed attention.

The Viceroy's formal invitation was received in September and two months later O'Connor finally persuaded a seemingly reluctant, half-hearted, if timid, Panchen to accept it on the "clear(ly) understanding" that "it involves a promise of help from us against any attempted retaliation on the part of the Lhasa government".<sup>41</sup>

<sup>38</sup> O'Connor to White, November 23, 1905, No. 10 in *FO 535/7*.

<sup>39</sup> On November 30, 1905, when the Panchen had barely left Shigatse, on his way to India, the Wai-wu-pu addressed a semi-official note to the British Legation in Peking intimating that the Chinese government "will refuse to recognise any agreement which the Tashi Lama may make", should he, on his visit to India, discuss any such matters. Satow to Lansdowne, November 30, 1905, No. 138 in *FO 535/6*.

<sup>40</sup> O'Connor to White, June 25, 1905 *IOR*, Political & External Files, 1903/22; cited, *et. seq.*, P & EF.

<sup>41</sup> *Supra*, n. 38.

When White, after lending a full-throated support, endorsed O'Connor's despatch to Calcutta, the latter, not fully in the picture hitherto,<sup>42</sup> was visibly shaken. This appeared to be far in excess of what it had initially bargained for. As it was, even if it had so desired, it was unable at this stage to countermand the visit, for the Panchen, with a large escort and in full regalia, had already left Shigatse on his way to Calcutta. Here meanwhile a complete transformation had come over the administration with the departure of Lord Curzon on November 17 (1905) and the assumption of office by Lord Minto – a change further accentuated when, a few weeks later, the rickety Tory government of Arthur Balfour gave place to the Liberals under Asquith. The latter brought in the overbearing, if imperious Morley to the India Office. Was it any wonder then that the full impact of these changes on O'Connor's ill-starred initiative did not take long to manifest itself?

In Calcutta, when the Panchen sought his promised assurances from the mouth of the Viceroy himself, the latter found it hard to return any honest, much less categorical replies. Determined to disassociate himself completely from all that Curzon had stood for – and with the new political orientation in Whitehall this appeared best – Minto understandably pooh-poohed the idea of any attack on the Lama, either by the Chinese or the Lhasa authorities. This clearly implied that the Panchen's much sought-for military help from the British was uncalled for. To the Lama's further plea that the Trade Agent at Gyantse should keep in the closest possible contact with him so that, in an emergency, he could communicate direct with the Governor General, through a special messenger, Minto returned an equally vague, if non-committal, answer.<sup>43</sup> Not long after the fan-fare of the Durbar and the usual junket to the Buddha's holy places, the Lama returned to his monastery wiser, if sadder for his experience.

## The Panchen's visit: Its aftermath

The empty-handed return of the Panchen marked the end of O'Connor's brilliant, albeit short-lived, foray to save what he could of the shambles of Curzon's Tibetan policy. Nor was the fault entirely Minto's. To be fair, O'Con-

<sup>42</sup> On December 2, 1905, Brodrick had asked the Government of India if the visit of the Tashi Lama was "anything more than a complimentary one?" Brodrick to India, December 2, 1905, encl. 1 in No. 149, *FO* 535/6.

With its tongue in its cheek, India's reply, four days later, was beautifully vague: "In the event of his (Panchen Lama) touching upon possible consequences of his acceptance of our invitation, or any political questions, we will refer matters for orders of HMG"; for the rest, the invitation was "complimentary". Encl. 2 in *ibid*.

<sup>43</sup> Minto to Morley, January 16, 1906 in *IOR*, P & E F 1908/22.



nor's whole approach had, in the final analysis, evoked a sympathetic interest even in Minto for the unenviable plight in which the Panchen now found himself, and for no fault of his own.<sup>44</sup> Actually, it was Morley, not Minto, who completely, and unreservedly, repudiated every bit of all that O'Connor had planned and intended. The new Secretary of State argued that, pursued to its logical conclusion, the Trade Agent's policy may compel the British government to sanction another expedition into Tibet, that he (Morley) viewed the entire plan with a goodly measure of "dismay" and thought that the proposition of helping the Lama, against the Chinese or the Tibetan authorities, was "thoroughly dubious", and even "obnoxious".<sup>45</sup>

Presently Morley's thinking on O'Connor's so-called "new" policy was conveyed to White,<sup>46</sup> and his local subordinates, in language that left little doubt as to what it was. Inter alia, the Political Officer was told that relations with the Panchen Lama were to be confined "within the narrowest possible limits", that no interference was to be tolerated in the "internal affairs" of Tibet or with the "relations of the Tashi Lama to the Lhasa government and the Emperor of China".<sup>47</sup> In a word, O'Connor's sedulously nurtured dream of building up where Younghusband had left must have collapsed around his ears! Meanwhile, it would appear, the Dalai Lama who, through his agents, was well posted with all the goings-on in Tibet, may have been none too happy to hear of the Panchen's new tantrums. Understandably, exaggerated reports of what was afoot had already reached his ears and he sought out the Panchen's intent by querying if the latter had indeed

received permission from the Prince of Wales and the Government of India to make himself supreme.<sup>48</sup>

Later, in the fall of 1908, when the Maharajkumar of Sikkim met him in Peking, the Dalai again expressed his strong suspicions and, as has been noticed earlier, was curious to know the extent to which the Panchen's visit had helped in furthering his influence among the Buddhists in India.<sup>49</sup>

That, for their part, the Chinese did not approve of the Panchen's visit to India is borne out by the fact that somewhat belatedly – "three days after the

<sup>44</sup> Minto to Morley, January 10, 1906, *Minto Papers*.

<sup>45</sup> Morley to Minto, December 28, 1905, *Morley Papers*.

<sup>46</sup> According to Professor Lamb, in his correspondence on the Panchen Lama's visit White was "only doing what he thought Lord Curzon wanted him to do"; more, "the whole episode has a distinctly Curzonian aura". Alastair Lamb, *The McMahon Line*, London, 1966, 2 vols., I, p. 238.

<sup>47</sup> India to White, February 12, 1906, in *IOR*, P & EF, 1908/22. Also see White to India, February 16, 1906, encl. in No. 103 in *FO 535/7*.

<sup>48</sup> Political Officer, Sikkim to India, July 7, 1906 in *supra*, n. 13.

<sup>49</sup> "Memorandum regarding the interview between the Dalai Lama and the Maharajkumar of Sikkim", in *supra*, n. 25.

Lama had left the Valley" – their officials had arrived "bringing him (Panchen Lama) orders" from the Amban not to leave.<sup>50</sup> It is significant too that their earlier protest at Shigatse had ruled out the use of physical force to prevent the Panchen Lama's actual departure, nor was any opposition offered en route.<sup>51</sup> That Peking could not have been deceived of Calcutta's real intent may be evident from a report in the "Ching Wai Jih Pao" which stated inter alia that the

British Government had induced the Panchen Lama to be presented to the Prince of Wales and were trying to gain him over to their side, their intention being to oust the Dalai Lama and to instal the Panchen Lama as the ruler of Tibet . . . Such being the secret aim of Great Britain, there was no hope of the questions outstanding between the two governments being settled in the near future.<sup>52</sup>

Again, a measure of the initial Chinese distrust of the Panchen was the pressure which they were reportedly exerting on the Dalai Lama

urging him to return to Lhasa as they do not want to recognise Panchen Rimpoche, the Lama who was taken to India, as King of Tibet.<sup>53</sup>

The Panchen's honey-moon with the British, as we have noticed, was notoriously short-lived. Completely disillusioned, the timid incarnation was scared

<sup>50</sup> India to Brodrick, December 4, 1905, encl. in No. 147, FO 535/6.

The Indian telegram underlined the fact that the delay in the despatch of the Amban's "orders" was "possibly intentional".

According to a Chinese scholar, the Panchen Lama's letters to the Chinese Resident underline the fact that "he was forced by the British Trade Agent at Gyantse, Captain O'Connor, to take the journey in spite of his plea that he dared not leave his country without the sanction of the Chinese Emperor". His conclusion, however, was that the "whole incident laid bare the helplessness of the Chinese government". Tieh-tseng Li, *The Historical Status of Tibet*, New York, 1956, p. 113. For details see *ibid.*, n. 240, p. 262.

<sup>51</sup> The Panchen's journey, through Tibet, the Calcutta despatch emphasised, "has partaken of the nature of a triumphal procession". India to Brodrick, December 4, 1905, encl. in No. 147, FO 535/6.

<sup>52</sup> "Extract from Chung Wai Jih Pao" was dated February 14 (1906) and appeared under the caption "Government Measures for the safeguarding of Chinese Interests in Tibet". For the text, encl. 2, No. 119 in FO 535/7.

Inter alia, the paper had concluded that the Imperial and Assistant Residents in Tibet "are not equal to their posts" and therefore it was proposed "to replace" them at "an early date". Besides, the paper reported, a Tartar general and a Commander in Chief were also to be posted at Lhasa and "important strategic points" occupied by regular troops.

<sup>53</sup> Extract of Private Letter from Tatsienlu (Szech'uan) dated March 19, 1906, encl. 2, in No. 134, FO 535/7.

The letter made two additional points: one, that the Dalai Lama "refuses to go beyond the Chin Hai, West of Kansu"; two, that the Chinese were afraid of using force "for the Mongols are prepared to fight for him, if necessary".

to death and, through his Minister, hastened to assure Chang, the new (Chinese) Imperial Commissioner, that his visit to India notwithstanding, he would "continue to serve the Emperor as before". Nonetheless, the rebuke from Peking for his lapse was unmistakable in its tone:

In going to India (the Imperial commandment ran) without previously obtaining any leave, you acted very wrongly. I (Manchu Emperor) am however glad to hear that you are soon returning to Tibet and that you will continue to serve me loyally . . . In these circumstances no punishment will be imposed.<sup>54</sup>

The Lama's fears, however, were not entirely set at rest by the Emperor's epistle. Thus on his visit to Tashilhunpo, in November (1906), Bell reported that the Lama "still feared trouble"; earlier, he had repeatedly complained to the British official against Chinese "oppression".<sup>55</sup> Bell noted, however, that with the Emperor's letter having been received, the Lama felt "more re-assured regarding Chinese designs against him" through their new Commissioner from Lhasa.<sup>56</sup>

Writing years later of his "visit to the Tashi Lama", Bell recalled that the Lama's "interest" centred "chiefly" on the political situation. He had accepted the Indian government's invitation "depending on their support if his acceptance" should subsequently lead him into trouble. Since the Chinese were regaining power in Tibet, the Lama "feared their reprisals". Nor was that all. For the Lama "feared also" the Tibetan government at Lhasa who

<sup>54</sup> Bell to India, October 23, 1906, encl. in No. 85, FO 535/8.

Bell informed his superiors that when the Panchen Lama was in India, his Chief Minister (Kyab-ying chhen-mo) had asked Chang to send a letter to the Chinese Emperor intimating that he (Panchen Lama) hoped Emperor would not be "angry with him (for) going to India" and that he (Panchen) would soon return and "continue" to serve him "as before". The reply of the Emperor (cited in the text) to this communication was received "about a week ago". Furthermore, Bell continued, the Chief Minister had now come to Gyantse to await Chang's arrival partly "in order to show him exceptional politeness" and partly to sound him "if he (Chang) has any other instructions from the Chinese government about the Tashi Lama".

<sup>55</sup> Bell to India, October 6, 1906, encl. 1, No. 83 in *ibid*.

The Lama had sent his Chamberlain (Drön-nyer chhen-mo) to ask Bell to visit him, for he did not want to speak on matters "through a third party". Bell indicated that the acceptance of the invitation was "very desirable" for "continual refusal" (of invitations to British officials) "will necessarily alienate sympathies of Lama from us".

<sup>56</sup> India to Morley, November 28, 1906, encl. in No. 87, FO 535/8.

At Tashilhunpo, the Lama read out to Bell "a garbled version of promises of arms and protection" which, he alleged, the Viceroy had made to him. Bell repudiated this by reading out the "correct account" of the Calcutta interview. Later, we are told, the Lama "professed himself satisfied" with what Bell had said.

suspected that Tashilhunpo aimed at soliciting the help of Britain to obtain independence from their rule, and thus to divide and weaken Tibet as a whole.<sup>57</sup>

As the Dalai Lama continued to be recalcitrant, the Panchen, weak and timid, and far from sure of his ground, soon found himself playing into Chinese hands. Thus at his meeting with Chang, the new Chinese Commissioner then on his way to Lhasa, sometime in July, 1907, the latter allegedly

offered to make the Lama Regent in place of Ti Rimpoche, but the Tashi Lama refused. Nevertheless the Ti Rimpoche has been ordered by Chang Tajen to carry out orders given by Tashi Lama. Lama was also advised by Chang Tajen to make friends with Lhasa Government, as otherwise the British would make trouble.<sup>58</sup>

Meanwhile there was another string to the Panchen Lama's bow. While he had made amends so far as China was concerned – and assurances, as the preceding lines reveal, had been both sought and received – the Dalai continued to loom large, and portentuously, on his mental horizon. Nor, as has been noticed, had the master of the Potala made any secret of his grave displeasure at the Panchen's conduct. With mutual suspicion mounting at both ends, the news that the Dalai was on his way to the Imperial capital, sometime in August, 1908, made the Panchen, it appears, also express a desire to go there – “through India, and by sea”. The Chinese, for obvious reasons, did not want to have the two incarnations at their hands at the same time<sup>59</sup> and possibly showed no enthusiasm for the Panchen's proposed visit. Undeterred by this rebuff, the Lama, who had made no secret of his fears at the hands of the Dalai when the latter returned home, confided in the Maharajkumar of Sikkim. It may be safely deduced that inspired by the Panchen or someone on his behalf, the Maharajkumar at his meeting with the Dalai Lama in Peking told him that the ruler of Tashilhunpo had been “invited” to visit India and had “no option but to accept”.<sup>60</sup>

<sup>57</sup> For details of the visit see Bell, *Tibet*, pp. 82–87; for the citation, p. 84.

<sup>58</sup> India to Morley, July 24, 1907, encl. in No. 25, *FO 535/10*. The despatch gives the gist of a conversation which the Lama had with Chang at Dongtse, on July 20. The Lama had sent one of his agents to O'Connor to keep him posted with what had transpired.

<sup>59</sup> Jordan to Grey, May 27, 1908, No. 90 in *FO 535/11*.

Jordan's informant was Yüan Shih-k'ai himself. Inter alia, Yüan had told Jordan, that the Dalai's stay at Wu-t'ai-shan, where he had been for two months, had entailed “considerable extraordinary expenditure” to the provincial government.

<sup>60</sup> Bell to India, April 1, 1909, encl. 2 in No. 34, *FO 535/12*.

Bell revealed that the Tashi Lama had sent “a secret and oral message” to the Maharajkumar that he (Tashi Lama) apprehended “ill-treatment” when the Dalai returned; on January 10, 1906, in Calcutta, the Viceroy was told much the same thing by the Lama himself. He confided in Bell much to the same effect during his visit to Shigatse in November, 1906.

Despite these assurances, the Dalai Lama's suspicions were not entirely allayed for it would seem that he had despatched a Grand Secretary, Trung-yig chhen-mo, to Tashilhunpo charged with making further enquiries. To these the Panchen replied by asserting that O'Connor had "threatened" him that "ill-will will befall if he (Panchen Lama) did not go (to India)". Additionally, the Lama confessed, there was "nothing" between him and the British government. Specifically questioned, he expressed his willingness to go to meet the Dalai when the latter returned which, as we have noticed, he did.<sup>61</sup>

## Tashilhunpo: Attempts at "independence" and "reconciliation" (1912)

As on the occasion of his earlier "wanderings", so too during the Dalai Lama's second exile (1910-1912), this time in India, the Chinese made a big effort to persuade the Panchen to accept his vacant guddi. Thus, early in 1911, there were persistent reports that, "under compulsion" from Ma Chi-fu, the then Chinese Trade Agent at Gyantse, the Panchen, escorted by the Tibetan Trade Agent at Yatung, had left for Lhasa.<sup>62</sup> It was widely believed that, in Lhasa, not unlike an earlier re-incarnation, he desired to hold the post of Regent;<sup>63</sup> that, additionally, in the course of his visit he (Panchen Lama) wanted to "discuss with the Amban the disputes between the Chinese and the Lhasa government".<sup>64</sup> Nor was that all. For, through the Amban, he had petitioned the

<sup>61</sup> "Note Communicated by Mr. Bell respecting Lhasa and Shigatse", encl. 4 in No. 34, FO 535/12.

Bell reported that "last December" (December, 1908) a Grand Secretary had visited Shigatse where he had questioned the Panchen "twice about his visit (to India)" and this time "under direct orders of the Dalai Lama".

<sup>62</sup> India to Crewe, February 6, 1911, encl. in No. 9; British Trade Agent, Gyantse to India, January 26, 1911, encl. in No. 14; and Political Officer, Sikkim to India, February 16, 1911, encl. in No. 19, all in FO 535/14.

<sup>63</sup> Bell to India, August 4, 1911, encl. 1 in No. 70, FO 535/14. Ten-pe Nyi-ma, a former Tashi Lama had, allegedly, held the post during the minority of the 10th Dalai Lama (1817-37).

According to Petech, the Panchen Lama took over the administration of Tibet from September 1844 to April 1845, for about 8½ months. This could only be when the 11th Dalai Lama (1837-54) was a minor and the Emperor had ordered the deposition of the then Regent. Luciano Petech, "The Dalai Lamas and Regents of Tibet" *op. cit.*

Richardson, *History*, p. 55, maintains that the Panchen Lama acted as Regent (1861-62) for 8½ months during the deposition of the then Regent. This was the period of the minority of the 12th Dalai Lama (1857-74).

<sup>64</sup> Bell to India, March 3, 1911 in FO 371/1078/283.

It would appear that the Amban had written to the Thri Rimpoche directing him to arrange for the reception of the Tashi Lama.

Emperor to permit the Dalai Lama's return.<sup>65</sup> This request, however, was summarily turned down. For the Amban ruled that as the

absconding Dalai Lama has been loitering too long in outside territories, it is difficult for me the Great Minister, to memorialise. For if the Dalai Lama still stays in outside territories even after the memorial has been submitted, not only undeserved punishment will be meted out to me, but it will be difficult for you (Panchen Lama) also to act.<sup>66</sup>

It may be recalled in this context that the Chinese government had sternly rebuked the then Regent, Sang-gye Gya-tsho who, for fourteen long years, kept from the Ch'ing Emperor the news of the death of the 5th Dalai Lama (1617-1682), Tibet's first temporal ruler who exercised authority from 1642-1682. This "foolish error" apart, the real gravamen of the Chinese charge against the Regent was his abandonment of the "restraining policy" of the deceased Lama by cultivating the Dzungar chief, Galdan Khan who was openly hostile to the Ch'ing Emperor.<sup>67</sup>

Meanwhile whatever the Panchen's true intent, although August-September (1911) reports had persisted that he was behaving "as though he were Dalai Lama"; that he was desirous of holding the post of Regent and was endeavouring "to settle" the case between the master of the Potala and the Chinese.<sup>68</sup> According to a recent authority, after the flight of the Dalai Lama in February, 1910, the Amban Lien Yü had asked the Panchen Lama "to come to Lhasa" and "administer" Tibet in the Dalai's absence, whereupon

the Panchen went to the capital as requested, but he asked the Dalai, then in India for instructions. At the Dalai's behest, he left Lhasa and returned to Tashilhunpo.<sup>69</sup>

Bell who was very knowledgeable about Tibet and its two Lamas has summed up the situation aptly:

The spirit of the Tibetan constitution is against his (Panchen Lama) acting as Regent, though it would be unsafe to assert that such an appointment could never be made. In any case a Regent has not the power of a Dalai

<sup>65</sup> Encl. in Bell to India, May 31, 1911 in *ibid.*

In making his request the Panchen underlined the fact that the Amban "must not forget the good names of the father, the son and the disciple (viz. the Dalai Lama, the Panchen Lama and the Chinese Emperor)".

<sup>66</sup> Encl. in Bell to India, May 31, 1911 in *ibid.*

For the full text see the reply of "Len Amban, the Great Resident Minister in Tibet who holds the rank of Pu-tu-tung and Peacock feathers by command of the Emperor".

<sup>67</sup> For details see Richardson, *op. cit.*, pp. 46-47 and Li, *op. cit.*, pp. 37-38.

<sup>68</sup> Bell to India, September 5, 1911 and British Trade Agent, Gyantse to India, August 11, 1911, both in *FO 371/1078/283*.

<sup>69</sup> For details "Panchen Lama (Ninth)" in *supra*, n. 32.

MINUTE.

As the situation is becoming somewhat confused, the following resume of recent correspondence may be convenient.

Mr. Max Muller's  
Tel. (Telegram)  
No. 141, 12 Aug.  
3502 [Proc. 3502]  
/10 1910

Mr. Max Muller telegraphed on the 12th Aug. (August) that the Chinese Resident in Tibet had telegraphed to his Govt. (Government) - "I propose to send Taotai Lo Chang Chi to India to persuade Dalai Lama to return to Tibet". The Wai-wu Pu asked for facilities for him.

Tel. from V. (Viceroy), 20 Aug.  
- to - , 21 -

We agreed to give facilities. Mr. Bell was to tell the Dalai Lama, but not to give him advice.

Tels. from V.,  
30 Aug., &  
2 Sept.

We next heard of Lu Chang Chi's onward journey and of his communication with our Trade Agent at Gyantse, in which he spoke of the Dalai Lama's returning to Tibet.

Mr. M. M. 3 (Max  
Muller's) Tel.  
No. 151, 6 Sept.  
3917  
/10

Mr. Max Muller then announced (16th Sept.) that the Chinese Govt. seemed "nervous as to the possible results of the return of the D.L. (Dalai Lama) to Tibet, and were considering the advisability of endeavouring to induce him to take up his residence in or near Peking, with rank and spiritual power as D.L." He asked how H.M.'s (His Majesty's) Govt. would view a proposal for the D.L. to return through Tibet to Peking.

3910  
/10

The telegram sent to the Viceroy on the 18th Sept. said :  
"If Mr. Max Muller is again approached by Wai-wu Pu, I consider reply should be that H.M.'s Govt. will facilitate D.L.'s return to Peking by sea route, should His Holiness so desire. Have you any observations ?"

Two telegrams now come from the Viceroy dated 21st Sept. The first replies to the Sec. (Secretary) of State's telegram of the 18th and suggests in effect that the Wai-wu Pu should be informed that their question is a hypothetical one, which cannot be answered at present. The other tells us of a letter received from the Amban Lin describing Lo Chang, his secretary, as a "Special Commissioner" coming to discuss "certain matters" with the Viceroy himself, instead of what we had all along supposed him to be, viz. an emissary to the Dalai Lama.

{ J E Ferrard }  
22 - 9 - 10.

Lama; he is largely under the control of the National Assembly in Lhasa. Thus were a Panchen Lama to act as Regent, there would almost certainly be friction between him and the Lhasan authorities, who would side with their National Assembly.<sup>70</sup>

Before long the October (1911) Revolution in China brought about a complete metamorphosis in the political landscape in Tibet where, by the end of the year, there was an almost total collapse of Chinese authority. A direct consequence thereof was that the Dalai Lama's return to his land after his sojourn in India, instead of being a vague, if distant, possibility, now became a categorical certainty. In this changed situation, appropriately enough, the Panchen too shifted his stance. Thus on the one hand he asked the Dalai Lama and his Ministers to return to Tibet "as soon as possible", offering his good offices to negotiate, on their behalf, with the Chinese;<sup>71</sup> on the other, he reminded the British of their earlier promise of affording him (Panchen Lama) "every facility" in the matter of arms and ammunition. More specifically, he demanded

200 modern rifles, 2 machine guns and sufficient ammunition for defence of Shigatse.<sup>72</sup>

Early in 1912, when it became increasingly clear that the Dalai would soon be returning, the Panchen's importunities with the British became more pronounced. He now made the "frequent request", the British Trade Agent at Gyantse reported, that "an assurance" be given to him that he would

enjoy an independence equal to that which he enjoyed prior to the departure from Tibet of the Dalai Lama.<sup>73</sup>

For obvious reasons, the British were not prepared to oblige the Panchen albeit they imparted him the reassuring information that it had "informally (been) ascertained" that "action on the latter's (Dalai Lama's) part apprehended by Tashi Lama" was "not contemplated".<sup>74</sup> This, however, did not entirely allay the Panchen's anxiety, much less bury his fears, for the (British) Trade Agent at Gyantse reported to his principals that he (Panchen) was

still uneasy as to future and would like to have a further assurance as to the intentions of the Dalai Lama, and if he (Panchen Lama) should hereafter be unable to come to an understanding with Dalai Lama, to know definitely how he would be received in India.<sup>75</sup>

<sup>70</sup> Bell, *Portrait*, p. 97.

<sup>71</sup> Bell to India, February 29, 1912 in FO 535/15.

<sup>72</sup> British Trade Agent, Yatung to Political Officer, December 28, 1911, encl. 4 in No. 14 FO 535/15.

The Trade Agent reported that the Lama had sent the Gam-pa Dzung-pön to him "with the same request for British assistance".

<sup>73</sup> British Trade Agent, Gyantse to India, June 7, 1912, encl. 2 in No. 135, FO 535/15.

<sup>74</sup> India to Political Officer, June 10, 1912, encl. 4 in No. 135 in *ibid.*

<sup>75</sup> British Trade Agent, Gyantse, to India, June 18, 1912, encl. in No. 146 in *ibid.*



Finding the British unresponsive, the Lama, "very seriously alarmed for his own and his officers' safety", now

repeatedly requested . . . to urge Government to allow me (Trade Agent, Gyantse) to act, whether officially or unofficially, as intermediary between Dalai Lama and himself at Ralung or Kangma.<sup>76</sup>

Interestingly enough, about the same time, the Dalai Lama was making a similar request to the British Agent at Yatung!<sup>77</sup> He had arrived thither, from India, on his triumphal return to his land, and his people. With mounting pressure from both sides, the Indian government asked Whitehall if it could play any useful role

on the understanding that we are not thereby committed to any responsibility as to any arrangement arrived at between the Lamas being fulfilled.<sup>78</sup>

Wiser by experience, the authorities in London refused to plough the barren sands of controversy and clearly stipulated that, for Delhi, it was "undesirable" to mediate. This, in view both of the risk of encouraging Tashi Lama to count on "our assistance" in future and of the "mutually self-denying clauses" of Article I of the Anglo-Russian Agreement (of 1907).<sup>79</sup>

Despite their posture of ostensible neutrality, behind the scenes, however, as has been noticed earlier, the British made sure that the meeting between the two Lamas at Ralung<sup>80</sup> would achieve desired results. In fact, the Panchen later conceded as much, and called it a "complete success" for a settlement of "all differences" between him and the Dalai Lama, had been brought about. More, he had been "entirely relieved" of his previous anxiety, albeit his ministers had been "warned" and, for his part, he had again proffered his services as an "intermediary" between the Dalai and the Chinese.<sup>81</sup>

## Panchen Lama seeks Chinese intercession (1913-1914)

In the tortuous annals of the relations between the two Lamas the years between 1912, when the Dalai Lama wended his way back to Lhasa after what seemed to be a sincere rapprochement with the Panchen, and 1914, when the

<sup>76</sup> India to Crewe, July 10, 1912, encl. in No. 148 in *ibid.*

<sup>77</sup> Trade Agent, Yatung to India, July 6, 1912, encl. in No. 148, in *ibid.* The Dalai Lama had asked the Trade Agent to go "as far as Ralung with him in order to mediate between himself and Tashi Lama".

<sup>78</sup> *Supra*, n. 76.

<sup>79</sup> Crewe to India, July 12, 1912, No. 167 in *FO 535/15*.

<sup>80</sup> According to a recent authority the Panchen Lama met the Dalai Lama "ten days" journey from Lhasa at the end of 1912 to accompany the Dalai back to his capital". For details "Panchen Lama (Ninth)" in *supra*, n. 32.

<sup>81</sup> India to Crewe, August 2, 1912, No. 167 in *FO 535/15*.

tri-partite Simla confabulations proved abortive, are a complete gap. Detailed, much less authentic, information about what transpired is conspicuous by its absence largely because of (a) a complete eclipse of Chinese authority in Tibet; and (b) a stern refusal by the British to allow their Trade Agent in Gyantse, as well as their Political Officer in Sikkim, to visit the Panchen's headquarters. In the absence of any hard core of facts to bite on, one is constrained to fall back upon a stray bit here or a piece there and re-construct the narrative as best one can.

Even before the Dalai Lama returned to the Potala, early in January, 1913, feelers were thrown out by the new Republican regime in Peking to resolve its many outstanding disputes with Lhasa. Nor, for that matter, was the Dalai any the less keen. The exercise, through many a circuitous, if also perhaps devious, channel led finally to the convening of a tri-partite conference at Simla, in India, in October, 1913. It would be obvious that Yüan Shih-k'ai, the ramshackle Republic's first compromise President, was above all anxious to preserve the status and dignity of Manchu authority which he had inherited. This meant, vis-a-vis the mainland, a subordinate position for the Outer Dependencies. Yüan was thus determined, from the very outset, not to accord Tibet the status of an equal and, understandably, fought every inch of ground before finally succumbing to the inevitable. In this long drawn-out, and tenacious, struggle, Peking employed two principal props. One was to persuade the Dalai Lama and/or his Ministers, to engage in independent, if exclusive, China-Tibet parleys at Chamdo, in Kham, obviating thereby the necessity for a tri-partite meeting that would bring in the un-wanted British. Failing this, if the conference convened at all, the plan was to subvert by confronting it with the fait accompli of a bi-partite settlement. Despite what would seem to be Lhasa's equivocal behaviour at times and the faint echoes of an alleged (bi-partite) settlement, the Chamdo parleys proved still-born.

A second major bid by Peking was to sabotage the Dalai Lama's position in his own country both by endeavouring to buy his Ministers as well as using the Panchen Lama as the hard core, if also the backbone, for retrieval of what was a well-nigh hopeless Chinese position in Tibet. The brain behind these ingenious, and indeed extremely well thought-out, Chinese moves was Lu Hsing-ch'i, a Calcutta-based (Chinese) furrier who, after the withdrawal of Chung Ying, had been officially nominated as Peking's Amban-designate to Lhasa. Unfortunately for him, owing to a rigorously enforced British interdict on journeys to Tibet, across the Indian frontier, Lu was, in fact, never allowed to leave Calcutta. Endowed with a razor-sharp mind, though handicapped in terms of movement – albeit not funds, which appear to have been in generous supply – Lu operated through a number of Tibetan agents who had fanned out all over the land, broadcasting his news and views and running his all too numerous errands. To a large extent thus Lu kept himself, and his political masters in Peking, well-posted with all that was happening in the Dalai Lama's domain.

To Lu Hsing-ch'i's all too obvious blandishments, the gullible Panchen fell an early, if also an easy, prey. Thus one of the first bits of news from Lu in Calcutta to his principals in Peking, on June 6, 1913, mentions the Lama's acceptance of the Chinese President's gifts, and of a newly-bestowed title:

I respectfully prepared (the Lama wrote) an incense altar in the monastery at Tashilhunpo, and after lighting the incense and making nine prostrations, humbly received the present in a kneeling posture and rendered thanks for this mark of celestial favour.<sup>82</sup>

Gratified by this initial gain, Lu confidently wrote home about a final settlement in Tibet presenting "no difficulty", if "external relations" could be successfully tackled.

For his part the Panchen Lama, assured that he was now on an excellent wicket with the President - in fact, he had been keen to send a special messenger to Lu to thank Yüan - made a fervent plea

requesting that an order be sent to Tashilhunpo, through the Tanguts, directing that a representative be sent to the Conference in India to take part in the negotiations between China and Tibet.<sup>83</sup>

Lu put in a strong plea and added that the course suggested by the Panchen would greatly benefit both China and the Lama himself. Furthermore, he pleaded that, as desired by the Lama, the fact that he "wants to send" a representative should not be made known!<sup>84</sup>

Despite its plausibility, added to Lu's fervent advocacy, Peking seemed to be in no dismal hurry to reach a conclusion. It would appear that after talking it over with Ivan Chen,<sup>85</sup> and for once tossing it back into Lu's court,<sup>86</sup> in a telegram on October 29 (1913) Peking threw on the entire scheme a douche of cold water:

<sup>82</sup> Lu Hsing-ch'i to the President and the Cabinet, June 6, 1913, *IOR*, P & EF, 2350/1913 "Tibet: Intercepted Telegrams".

One of Lu's agents in Tibet reported, *inter alia*, that the Tibetan officers en-route were "exercising the strictest surveillance" which explained why the Tashi Lama did not correspond "freely", or that there was "great dearth of news" regarding Tashilhunpo.

<sup>83</sup> Lu Hsing-ch'i to the President, July 18, 1913, in *ibid*.

To all outward appearances, Lu Hsing-ch'i worked with a Calcutta Chinese trading firm of furriers, Thinyik And Company which, *inter alia*, had played a significant role in arranging for the repatriation of Chinese garrisons in Tibet, through India.

<sup>84</sup> *Loc cit*.

<sup>85</sup> Cabinet to Lu Hsing-ch'i, July 24, 1913 in *ibid*.

Among other things, the Cabinet had informed Lu that while his proposal must await Chen's arrival in Lhasa, "in the meantime", it had been transferred to the Board of Foreign Affairs.

<sup>86</sup> Lu Hsing-ch'i to Cabinet, September 17, 1913 in *ibid*.

In his telegram, Lu had enquired whether the Panchen Lama "should be instructed to send representatives" as the "present situation affects the whole of Tibet".

It would appear better (the Chinese Foreign Office wrote) not to cavil at distinctions between Anterior and Uterior Tibet, since both China and Great Britain have accepted the said representatives it follows that they represent the whole of Tibet.

Besides, Peking argued

Now that the Conference has begun, there is no advantage in our raising questions of this nature; on the contrary it is to be feared that complications would ensue.<sup>87</sup>

Unsuccessful in his attempt to cut Lhasa to size by securing, through the Chinese, separate and independent representation for Tashilhunpo at the tripartite Conference, the Panchen Lama now set himself on a tangential course. Why not, he seems to have argued, plan a visit to Peking and there seek the active support and intercession of the regime? And albeit a formal letter of invitation was despatched post-haste, the Chinese in their heart of hearts were a little less than sure. This alone would explain why they asked Lu

to communicate secretly with the Tashi Lama and ascertain if he is really able to undertake this journey. Also please enquire secretly by what route he should travel and find out what conditions prevail in the places through which he will pass.<sup>88</sup>

In sharp contrast to the Lama, Lu, a down-to-earth realist, could clearly see that the journey contemplated by the Panchen may not be an easy one to undertake. In fact, his telegram to Peking on December (1913) is much more explicit than he probably meant it to be:

If the Tashi Lama dares to make this journey to Peking, the situation in Tibet will no doubt be vastly improved. But the Tashi Lama secretly fears the Dalai and has the greatest dread of the British, so it may be that he is

<sup>87</sup> Ministry of Foreign Affairs to Administrator Lu, October 29, 1913 in *ibid.*

Peking now further underlined the fact that the representatives sent by Tibet to the Conference were "recommended" by Great Britain, and that they were "neither nominated nor sent by China".

<sup>88</sup> Mongolian-Tibetan Bureau to Administrator Lu, December 1, 1913, in *ibid.* Among other things, the Board directed Lu that he "render every assistance" and report "in cypher by telegram from time to time".

The President's invitation to the Lama read:

The said Lama has ever been an advocate of peace and has from the first to last shown his loyalty in the most commendable manner. His request to visit Peking is granted.

The Cabinet should instruct the (Mongolian-Tibetan) Bureau to issue the necessary passport.

undecided and will in the end do nothing. . . . If he travels through India, Britain will devise means of impeding his progress.<sup>89</sup>

Two expressions are of significance: "dares to" and "will in the end do nothing". They are perhaps far more revealing, than Lu may have intended, of the true character of the 9th incarnation of the Abbot of Tashilhunpo. And it may be of interest to note that despite a pressing letter, written at Lu's behest, from the Panchen Lama's own agent in Peking,<sup>90</sup> the Lama dared not move out of Tashilhunpo; more, unmindful of the noises made and the motions through which he went, the Panchen remained where he was and, in the end, did nothing.

Not that the British were ignorant, much less oblivious, of all that was happening. Thus as early as April 15 (1913), the India Office wrote to the Foreign Office in London about the Lama passing "completely" under Chinese influence. There was an inevitable, if unfortunate concomitant, it noted, to this proposition namely, that Shigatse would become a "centre of Chinese intrigue".<sup>91</sup> No wonder that a few weeks later, the Secretary of State asked the Viceroy to have the Panchen informed

that we wish to warn him in (a) friendly manner that no influence on his behalf by Chinese could be tolerated by us and that if a collision between him and Dalai Lama results from his intrigues, no protection can be looked for from us.<sup>92</sup>

It is sobering to reflect that less than a year earlier, in July, 1912, largely through British efforts, and initiative, a scared Panchen Lama had been assured by the Dalai that he held nothing against him (Panchen) and that they could start afresh!

<sup>89</sup> Lu Hsing-ch'i to the Mongolian-Tibetan Bureau, December 7, 1913 in *ibid*.

Lu, on his own, had enjoined the Board "to hold secret deliberations upon the means to be adopted" to bring Tashi Lama to Peking and, off his own bat, undertook to send a "special messenger" to Tashilhunpo to hold a "secret interview" with the Panchen Lama.

<sup>90</sup> Sha Chung's message read:

I beg your Holiness to decide on making this Journey and to appoint a date for your start. You will be accorded a most joyous reception here, so on no account hesitate. Please send all details to Lu Hsing-chi who will transmit them.

From Sha Chung, incharge Tashi Lama's Bureau in Peking, to Administrator Lu, Peking to Calcutta, December 27, 1913 in *ibid*.

<sup>91</sup> India Office to Foreign Office, April 15, 1913 in *FO 535/16*.

The India Office noted that should the Panchen Lama, in fact, come under Peking's control, it would be "directly opposed" to the policy of HMG.

<sup>92</sup> Crewe to Government of India, May 3, 1913, encl. in No. 216 in *ibid*.

That Lu's intrigues with the Tashi Lama were having effect is indicated by the warning from the Government of India that he may be deported. India to Secretary of State, July 27, 1913, encl. in 329 in *FO 535/16*.

## Growing differences: Flight of the Panchen Lama (1923)

What exactly filled up the years between the abortive Simla Conference (1913–1914) and 1923<sup>93</sup> when the Panchen left Shigatse on his way to Mongolia, and later China, there is no sure way of knowing. Yet insofar as one is aware of what took place both before and after, it would not be hard to deduce that relations between Lhasa and Shigatse continued to deteriorate. Once the ground-swell of suspicion and intrigue built up, it managed to snowball, as it invariably does. There was also perhaps a supplementary reason which could only have added to, and further complicated, the relations. And this emanated from the Dalai Lama's new-fangled pre-occupation, if also a certain obsession, with reform indistinguishable, in Tibetan eyes, from westernisation.

From Darjeeling the Lama imported Laden La, the Sikkimese police official who had attended on him during his stay in India, in order to create, out of the blue as it were, a small but viable police force; four Tibetan boys had been sent to England for schooling; youngmen were drafted to Gyantse, and different places in India, to serve as the nucleus of an armed force in their own land; an English-medium school with a blue-blooded (English) Headmaster had been established at Gyantse and last, but by no means the least, Tibet's until then unexplored mineral wealth, reportedly abundant, was to be prospected – and exploited. Most of these measures, if not all, so vital to development, would have been termed innovations in many Asian lands then; in Tibet, they partook of the nature of a revolution. A lama-ridden, tradition-bound land which for centuries had been a cesspool of political, if also religious stagnation must have felt their earth-shaking impact.

Jolted out of its old static stance, and rudely, Tibet showed signs of some life, of movement. The lamas who, besides being rich traders, are the biggest landlords – for the monasteries are richly endowed – constituted the most powerful, if also a strongly-entrenched, vested interest. On the occasion of the Monlam festival in Lhasa, in the winter of 1921, they staged an ill-disguised revolt against the Lama's authority to which Bell, then on a visit to the Tibetan capital, was an eye-witness; un-reported, there may have been others. A clever, and astute, manager and manipulator of men, and affairs, the 13th Dalai Lama crushed the revolt and was soon on top again. But – and not in Lhasa only – the reverberations of the storm that loomed large, threatened and then blew over must have been felt far and wide, with Shigatse itself perhaps not immune from their impact. Not unlike the reaction of the three

<sup>93</sup> According to "Panchen Lama (Ninth)" in *supra*, n. 32, in 1914, the Panchen Lama sent a message to Lhasa that the Dalai Lama receive him 'at Lhasa' and give him benediction. The Dalai Lama replied in September, 1915 that the visit be postponed because he (Dalai Lama) was busy with affairs of state. For various reasons, we are told, it was not until December 1919 that the Panchen Lama was able to go to Lhasa and receive the Dalai's benediction.

great monasteries outside Lhasa, what may have irked Tashilhunpo most, could not have been different. The fact was that the reforms were costly and their burden, in terms of making the monks disgorge their fat, long-cherished, if till-gotten hoardings hit where it hurt most.

In the light of the above, it is thus possible to view the breach with Tashilhunpo as part of a larger, deeper and, as it was in Tibet then, an almost universal protest, or resistance. The expression "universal" in the then context of Tibet has a limited connotation being valid in terms of its only vocal, best-organised, if also most reactionary, vested interest – the large "armies" of monks in its all-too-numerous gompas. Put differently, even apart from the bad blood, the intrigues and suspicions that bedevilled relations between Lhasa and Shigatse, there was the much more fundamental, if frontal, clash of interests. Tashilhunpo may have hoped, as did many others, that the Dalai Lama would see reason and desist from measures that were bound to be resisted; for its part, Lhasa saw in non-compliance of its administrative fiat a rebellious posture that at the same time afforded it an opportunity to tighten the screw. It argued, plausibly enough, that the Panchen and his estates could not be treated differently from the rest of the country, or the community;<sup>94</sup> like everyone else, he too must pay, and play, his part in the new scheme of things. In the words of a knowledgeable authority on Tibet, the situation could best be summed up as

a conflict between the determination of Lhasa to reduce Tashilhunpo to the status – on which there was fair reason to insist – of an honoured vassal, and the reluctance of Tashilhunpo to give up any of the privileges which it had acquired in the past century and more.<sup>95</sup>

Two reports, towards the end of 1922, underline the fact that Lhasa's demands were being vigorously pressed. Thus on November 18 (1922) the British Trade Agent at Gyantse reported that the Panchen Lama was being asked to contribute a quarter of the total expenditure for the upkeep of the proposed Tibetan army. Since remittances sought, and due, had defaulted, some officials of Tashilhunpo were "already undergoing imprisonment". The

<sup>94</sup> In Tibetan theory, according to Richardson, the Panchen Lama's rights over the districts concerned "were never more than those which the Tibetan feudal nobility and the great monasteries" exercised over their large landed estates. He maintains that it were the Chinese who, "to keep alive" the rivalry between Lhasa and Tashilhunpo, "build up" large claims on his behalf to "temporal authority" over large parts of Tibet and also to "spiritual superiority" over the Dalai Lama. Furthermore, Richardson contends, the "simple fact" that the Panchen Lamas were long-lived and did not have to compete with the influence of an active Dalai Lama led to a growth in their prestige and to an "air of independence" in the administration of their fief. Richardson, *History*, pp. 53–54 and 125–26.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 126.

Panchen had, understandably, made representations to the Dalai and enquired from the Trade Agent whether, in case these did not bear fruit, the Government of India "will intervene" on his behalf.<sup>96</sup> "It was clear", the Political Officer wrote forwarding the Trade Agent's report to Delhi, that "in a matter of this kind" such interference would be "impossible", nor would he recommend any. Inter alia, he noted that it had

always (been) curious to me that the Tashi Lama has borne such a small proportion of the expenses of the central administration.<sup>97</sup>

A little over a year later, on December 26, 1923 to be precise, the Panchen Lama, accompanied by a large retinue – a hundred attendants and twice that many mules – left Shigatse<sup>98</sup> amidst contradictory reports that he was on his way to western Tibet,<sup>99</sup> Mongolia,<sup>100</sup> even British India.<sup>101</sup> Under Lungshar, then a rising star and soon to be one of the Dalai Lama's favourites – and later identified as the root-cause for all the Panchen's troubles –<sup>102</sup> the Lhasa government despatched three hundred of its troops to Mongolia to intercept the

<sup>96</sup> British Trade Agent, Gyantse, to Political Officer, November 18, 1922 in *IOR L/P & S/12/580*, External Collection 36/16.

The Trade Agent listed what the Lama was supposed to contribute: a) Rs. 650,000 approx. (presumably in cash?); b) 10,000 maunds of grain, valued at Rs. 80,000; c) 2,000 boxes of Chinese brick tea, valued at Rs. 85,000 and d) "other liberal concessions" which were "not specified".

<sup>97</sup> Political Officer to India, December 12, 1922 in *ibid.*

Richardson, *History*, p. 127 regards it as "unfortunate" that the Panchen Lama's request for British mediation was turned down.

<sup>98</sup> India to Secretary of State, December 31, 1923 in *supra*, n. 96.

The Indian communication, based no doubt on the Political Officer's report, made two interesting points: one, the Lama "was believed to have set out" for Western Tibet; two, the "object" of his journey was "unknown".

<sup>99</sup> *Loc. cit.*

<sup>100</sup> India to Secretary of State, January 5, 1924 in *ibid.*

<sup>101</sup> Reports appearing in London's *News Chronicle* (February 20), and the *Daily Telegraph* (March 20), mentioned the fact that the Lama had arrived in British India and would soon be "sailing for China". Cited in *IOR, L/P & S/12/580*, External Collection, 36/16.

The Tibetan Ministers too had informed Bailey that the Tashi Lama's intention was to go to China or another country, "through India". *Supra*, n. 100.

<sup>102</sup> This was an assessment made by the Nepalese Agent in Lhasa who had spent five years in the Tibetan capital. According to what he told Bailey, Lungshar who "at one time" was an official of Shigatse had reasons "for revenging himself" on some of the higher officials of the Tashi Lama and did this "by raising and pressing the questions" which led to the flight of the Lama. India to Secretary of State, July 9, 1928 in *IOR, L/P & S/12/580*, External Collection, 36/16.



fleeing Lama.<sup>103</sup> This, however, proved to be a wild goose chase; after many a harrowing experience, the men beat back a retreat.

To all outward appearances the Panchen had departed so as to be able to raise sufficient funds to satisfy Lhasa's imperious demands. And yet there could be no mistaking as to where precisely the shoe pinched. As he confided:

Lhasa has been giving me nothing but trouble, sometimes summons were received demanding that I myself should go and appear before them and again at times they advance claims to half our income . . . Unable to live under these troubles and suffering, I depart.<sup>104</sup>

Despite his inmost rancour and bitterness, the Panchen Lama's official proclamation was couched in a low key. He did not blame the Dalai Lama personally for his ills but roundly condemned the Lhasa officials who were "creating difficulties"; his own representations to the Tibetan ruler, he now revealed, had borne little, if any, fruit. The purpose of his self-imposed exile, he maintained, was both to see whether "mediation" was possible as well as to raise funds.<sup>105</sup>

In sharp contrast to the Panchen's suave, if well-mannered stance, the Dalai Lama was blunt and hit back hard. Unmistakably and without mincing matters he directly blamed the Panchen and declared that the latter's conduct had left a lot to be desired:

You seem to have forgot (sic) the sacred history of your predecessors and wandered away to a desert . . . like a (butter-fly) moth that is attracted by the lamp-light. (Nor had the Panchen cared to consult the Dalai, his – Panchen's – teacher or "Lopa") and ran away with his sinful companions who resembled mad elephants and followed the wrong path . . .

As if that were not enough of plain-speaking, the Dalai went on:

It is difficult to believe that a person who thinks of himself only and who is not freed from the three sins (anger, pride and ignorance) should be regarded as a Lama or Buddha. As selfishness is a great evil in this world,

<sup>103</sup> India to Secretary of State, January 5 & 9, 1924 in *ibid*.

In the latter telegram, India informed the Secretary of State that Laden La, then in Lhasa, had reported that he may be asked to follow the Tashi Lama and persuade him to return. India, in turn, informed Laden La that since he was in the pay of the Tibetan government he should go "if asked to".

<sup>104</sup> Letter from Chandra Shamsher Jung Bahadur Rana, Prime Minister of Nepal to O'Connor, Resident in Kathmandu, January 20, 1924. The citation here is from the Panchen Lama's "note" which the Prime Minister re-produced. For the text, *ibid*.

<sup>105</sup> Among other things, the Panchen Lama's proclamation, issued on December 26, 1923, indicated that, during his absence, "his acting Prime Minister and four members of his Council" would govern. For the text, *ibid*.

the wisest course to adopt is to turn repentant and turn back from the wrong path . . .<sup>106</sup>

Unfortunately, for all the Dalai Lama's harsh words – and it is hard to miss his repeated emphasis on the “wrong path” – the Panchen was far away and, ere long, arrived in Peking where the then derelict Chinese regime showered “royal honours” on its distinguished guest.<sup>107</sup>

The British who had kept a close watch on men and affairs and were, understandably, keen that the breach between the two Lamas be healed by the Panchen's return, were yet patient and discreet and waited for the initiative to come from the Lama himself. Nor did they have to tarry long. To start with, Prince George, the then Duke of Kent, met the Panchen Lama, in Peking, in 1926. There was an innocuous exchange of small talk, of pleasantries, but no more. Later, in a message through Williamson – having officiated as the British Trade Agent at Gyantse he knew the Lama – who met him at Mukden, in February, 1927, the Panchen while conceding that he had left Tibet “owing to his own fault”, indicated that he “proposed to return” as soon as possible, even suggesting that he would “go by sea” and “via India”.<sup>108</sup> A little earlier, the Lama had addressed a letter to Colonel Bailey, then Political Officer in Sikkim, intimating that the climate of China did not “suit” him and seeking “any help and advice, both in official or private matters” that he could tender.<sup>109</sup> Similar communications, it would appear, had been addressed by the Panchen Lama, among others, to the Maharajas of Bhutan and Sikkim.<sup>110</sup>

In August, and again in October, 1927, the Panchen's representatives met the British Minister in Peking, and gave him to understand that the Lama

<sup>106</sup> The Dalai Lama's proclamation was issued on January 26, 1924, exactly a month after the Panchen's. For the text, *ibid.*

<sup>107</sup> According to the *Peking Daily News* of February 26, 1924, “as a special tribute to the high status of the visitor”, the front gate of the T'ien-men which was only used when the Manchu Emperor worshipped at the Temple of Heaven, was opened on this occasion and the Lama passed through it to Yingtai.

The first news of the Lama's arrival in Peking came in a telegram to the Foreign Office from the British Charge d'Affaires dated February 25, 1924. For the text, *ibid.*

For a graphic account of the Panchen Lama's reception in Peking see Gösta Montell, “Sven Hedin and the Panchen Lama”, Appendix in Toni Schmid, *Saviours of Mankind*, II: Panchen Lamas and Former Incarnations of Amitayus, State Ethnografiska Museum, Stockholm, 1964, pp. 99–100.

<sup>108</sup> New Delhi had approved of Williamson (then on his way home via China) interviewing the Panchen Lama in Peking. For the text of his “Report”, dated March 21, 1927, see *IOR*, L/P & S/12/580, External Collection 36/16.

<sup>109</sup> The Tashi Lama had complained to Bailey that officers sent by him to Lhasa “to settle accounts” were arrested by the Dalai Lama's government. His letter was dated December 17, 1926. For the text see Bailey to India, May 28, 1927 in *ibid.*

<sup>110</sup> *Loc. cit.*

wanted to return. Furthermore, they suggested a conference between him, the Dalai Lama, and the representatives of the Government of India and enquired if the time was ripe for such an initiative. From all this, Sir Miles Lampson formed the clear impression that the Lama was "wavering" and had not yet made up his mind.<sup>111</sup> Sir Miles' assessment notwithstanding, the Panchen in a letter to O'Connor, then British Resident in Kathmandu, was much more direct and specific. He reminded his old English "friend" about his visit to India in 1905 and the promise which the Viceroy then gave him

to render me all assistance which I might require . . . I wish to obtain your good advice as to how to enable myself to return to Tibet before long.<sup>112</sup>

Feelers to Prince George, Bailey, Williamson, the British Minister in Peking and O'Connor, listed in the preceding paragraphs, and spanning the early years of the Lama's exile, may be viewed in the nature of informal, even preliminary soundings. Yet perhaps the first *formal* request from the Panchen was addressed to the British Minister (in Peking) whom he now importuned for the "good offices" of HMG to enable him to retrace his steps. This was in April, 1928. One would deduce that by then it was evident to the Lama that to wait for the civil war in China to draw to a close, would be a long enough wait and, in the bargain, his temples and his priests may be in dire peril of their life and limb.<sup>113</sup>

Both the informal soundings for "help and advice" and the more formal request for the British government's "good offices", were responsible for Colonel Bailey's initiative, early in May, 1928, at the instance of his political superiors, both in India and Whitehall. In pursuance thereof the then Political Officer in Sikkim wrote to the Dalai Lama to the effect that the Panchen wanted to come back; more, that he (Panchen) was "a friend" and would accept his (Bailey's) advice. It followed, Bailey wrote, that he "would like to assist" in the matter.<sup>114</sup> The Dalai Lama's response to the Political Officer's overtures, a few weeks later, is eloquent both of the then climate of political opinion in Lhasa and the latter's refusal to brook any interference in its affairs:

It is very good of you, the Political Officer in Sikkim, to send me such letter after having considered matter from broad point of view. You are aware that His Serenity without considering interests of Buddhist doctrine of Tibet, without any reason, fled to China, although we were helping him

<sup>111</sup> Miles Lampson, British Minister in Peking, to Foreign Office, in *ibid.*

<sup>112</sup> Tashi Lama to O'Connor, December 4, 1927 in *ibid.*

<sup>113</sup> On April 13, 1928, the British Minister reported that the Lama's formal request had been received. For the text, *ibid.*

Earlier, it appears, the Lama's representatives had met the British Minister and told him that the Lama wanted "definitely" to return and implored the intercession of the "good offices" of the Government of India for the purpose.

<sup>114</sup> Bailey's letter to the Dalai Lama was dated May 5, 1928. For the text, *ibid.*

in every respect. Now if His Serenity returns to Tibet, I shall do my best to help him. I could not reply to you about this at once. I hope you will remember that, in accordance with treaty, British Government should not interfere in internal affairs of Tibet.<sup>115</sup>

Could Bailey have anticipated this sharp rebuff? For the record, it may be recalled that four years earlier viz., in 1924, the Political Officer in the course of his visit to Lhasa, had been discreetly told by the Lama's Ministers about the Tashi Lama returning "by sea", and "through Sikkim", and the need for him (Tashi Lama) of "good advice". It had also been suggested that since he (Bailey) was a "personal friend" of the Lama, might he not go to Peking, "on my way to England", and advise him (Tashi Lama) to return. To all of which the Political Officer's reply was characteristic:

I said that China was not on my way and I did not know when I should be going on leave. I told the Prime Minister that I thought that if the Tashi Lama were left to himself, he would soon wish to return.

Bailey noted nonetheless that the Tibetans for various reasons, which were mostly of a religious nature, "want him (Panchen Lama) back" very badly. And, on his own, argued:

I do not think that the Tashi Lama would trust to promises made by the Lhasa authorities and, if steps were taken to persuade him, I think that the terms of his return should be guaranteed by the Tibetan government to the Government of India . . . I do not think that he will trust any promises made direct to him by Lhasa, and I think that if the Government of India would consent to act to this extent as an intermediary, there would be a better prospect of the Tashi Lama returning, and of removing a means of Chinese and Bolshevik intrigue in Tibet.<sup>116</sup>

## Efforts at reconciliation, 1924–1930

In 1924, Bailey had kept himself to himself and refused to share his thoughts—"this suggestion of mine", he had noted, "was not discussed or even mentioned" to the Tibetan authorities; four years later when he did, the Dalai Lama's rejoinder, as has been noticed, was a firm, if unqualified, rebuff. Bailey was convinced, as the Nepalese Agent in Lhasa who was his informant, that "as long as" Lungshar wielded influence, it would be "impossible" for the Panchen to return. Additionally, the Political Officer now argued, the Dalai Lama would have the Panchen return "on his (Dalai's) terms". More, Bailey's own

<sup>115</sup> India to Secretary of State, July 9, 1928 in *ibid.*

<sup>116</sup> Bailey's "Report on Visit to Lhasa, 1924", para 1, pp. 1–2, in Bailey to India, October 28, 1924 in *IOR, L/P & S/10/1113*.

overtures had synchronised with a “movement” in Lhasa against the Panchen’s adherents – his nephew and his step-father had been consigned to the dungeons for an alleged attempt to escape secretly from Tashilhunpo – and were thus ill-timed. It was obvious, Bailey had concluded, that “in these circumstances” the Panchen Lama would not return.<sup>117</sup> His concrete suggestion that the Lama may be given political asylum in India at Darjeeling, or Kalimpong – the Dalai, he pointed out, could scarcely object, for he had lived there himself – was ruled out of court in Delhi. “The danger”, the latter argued, in implementing Bailey’s proposal, in the face of the Dalai Lama’s unfriendly, if hostile attitude would be greater than of leaving the Panchen in China.<sup>118</sup>

As the months rolled by and no headway could be made, or was in sight, the Panchen began harbouring some impractical, if perhaps fanciful schemes. One of these envisaged the raising of a Mongolian force, with Soviet Russian assistance, to attack and oust the Dalai Lama!<sup>119</sup> Nor was that all. An agent, “nominally of the Tashi Lama”, had set up an office at Ch’engtu in Szech’uan and, reportedly, was in the pay of the local provincial government; another, had appeared at Nanking. Again, some of the Lama’s followers had told Colonel Weir, Bailey’s successor as Political Officer, and in a minatory tone, that failing in their efforts with the British, they would turn to China for aid and “raise up” a party in Tibet.<sup>120</sup>

News from Lhasa, in terms of a peaceful return of the Panchen Lama, were not heartening either. For while the “religious – and economic” policies of the Dalai Lama had bred large-scale discontent and the three great monasteries (Sera, Ganden and Drepung) had petitioned for the Panchen’s return, they were also said to be “storing” arms!<sup>121</sup>

Faced with a difficult, if delicate, situation Colonel Weir, in a letter written to his superiors on March 7 (1929) argued cogently, and convincingly, that the

<sup>117</sup> Bailey to India, in *IOR*, L/P & S/12/580, External Collection 36/16.

<sup>118</sup> India to Secretary of State, November 2, 1928 in *ibid.*

<sup>119</sup> Miles Lampson to Foreign Office, December 9, 1929, in *ibid.* The British Minister based his remarks on the statements “allegedly” made by the Panchen Lama to Marshal Chang Hsüeh-liang and communicated by the latter to W H Donald (a British Legation employee?).

<sup>120</sup> India Office Minute, dated April 29, 1929 in *IOR*, L/P & S/10/1113.

The minute stated, *inter alia*, that while it was not possible to say if the Panchen Lama himself was cognisant of all these happenings, “a man of his disposition lends himself to the machinations of others”. It also mentioned a (London) *Times* report that representatives of the Tashi Lama had arrived in Nanking to urge the newly-established Kuo-mintang regime to assume charge of affairs in Tibet and ensure its incorporation in the Republic as they feared that “Tibet may be a second India”.

The bulk of the minute is recorded by H. A. F. Rumbold and is dated April 27 while the final annotation is by J. C. Walton and bears the date April 29.

<sup>121</sup> Proceedings 6795/28 and 1550/29, both in the India Office Minute, in *ibid.*

“principal weapon of a China bent on intervention”, namely the Panchen Lama, should be removed from the hands of the Nanking government. Inter alia, he now suggested that in the course of a visit to Lhasa, he should take up this question with the Dalai Lama.<sup>122</sup> The Foreign Office in London, after consulting their Minister in Nanking, raised no objection and thus, so far as Whitehall was concerned, there was an unqualified “Go ahead!”<sup>123</sup>

Unfortunately for Weir, as for everyone else, it was akin to staging Hamlet without the Prince of Denmark! Norbu Dhondhup, Weir’s assistant and confidante who was in Lhasa on behalf of his master, found it “no easy task” to obtain the required invitation for the Colonel. In the final count, the Dalai Lama’s government, “owing to uncertainty” about the Chinese Communist General Feng’s movements in northern Tibet, suggested a postponement of the British official’s visit.<sup>124</sup> Weir was phlegmatic if also philosophical in pocketing the insult. He explained it away by making out that

if an invitation had been issued to me by the Dalai Lama . . . he would have been assailed by demands for similar invitations to Russian or Chinese officials which he would have found impossible to refuse.<sup>125</sup>

The Political Officer’s explanation notwithstanding, the harsh truth that emerged was that an affirmative reply from the Tibetan capital to every British demand could not always be taken for granted. More, contrary to popular belief, Lhasa may have been a satellite, but certainly was not a stooge of the British.

By 1930, however, the situation had changed and, from New Delhi’s point of view, for the better. This was largely because of the Indian authorities’ active intercession on the Lama’s behalf to help defuse a very explosive situation that had brought him almost to the brink of a catastrophic war with Nepal. Through Laden La’s visit to Lhasa, undertaken at New Delhi’s behest, the Tibetan

<sup>122</sup> Weir’s letter was dated March 7, 1929. The India Office noted that, as they viewed it, the “main object” of Weir’s mission will be “to attempt a reconciliation” of the Dalai and the Tashi Lamas, for a “continuance of the quarrel” between the two could “only be advantageous” to the Chinese. India Office Minute in *ibid*.

<sup>123</sup> Whitehall over-ruled possible Chinese objections to Weir’s visit insofar as the earlier visits of Bell (1921) and Bailey (1924) had attracted “no undue attention” in China: the Peking government had been told of Bell’s visit after he had left India and was on his way to Lhasa, whereas no such communication was deemed necessary in the case of Bailey. For details India Office Minute in *ibid*.

<sup>124</sup> Weir to India, July 19 and August 13, 1929 in *IOR, L/P & S/10/1113*.

The Dalai Lama’s letter of July 20 was sent as an enclosure to the Political Officer’s communication of August 13. Inter alia, the Lama wrote:

The foreigners are troubling (us) with applications for permission to allow them to come to Tibet and at present the Chinese are also introducing innovations through the north and it is not known what (they) will do.

<sup>125</sup> Weir to India, August 13, 1928 in *ibid*.

authorities were made to see reason and save themselves from the near-certain disaster they would have met at the hands of the numerically superior, better-armed, and drilled, Gurkhas. Here undoubtedly was an exercise for which the Lama must have felt greatly beholden. Indicative of his new mood was the "wish" he now expressed that the Political Officer may visit Lhasa "to discuss important matters".<sup>126</sup>

Among the subjects that Weir raised with the Dalai Lama, the question of the return of the Tashi Lama was, understandably, the most important. There was what the Political Officer termed, a free and frank exchange of views. *Inter alia*, the Dalai Lama revealed that initially, and this shortly after the Panchen's arrival in Peking - and "in interest of Tibet and for his own health's sake" - he had written to him. In reply, the Panchen, while avowing that "their relations were those of father and son" and that "there was no enmity between them", had said "nothing" about returning. To his second letter, assuring the Panchen that there was "nothing between them" that could not be settled "in accordance with their religions, and ties", the Abbot of Tashilhunpo had vouchsafed no reply. Weir noted that the Dalai Lama appeared "very concerned" about the Panchen's health, as "recent photographs" showed him both "worn and aged". The real difficulty, Weir noted, was the Panchen's refusal to answer. Further, he remarked that

His (Dalai Lama's) conversation about Tashi Lama lasting three quarters of an hour had given impression that he would really like to see Tashi Lama re-installed (at) Tashilhunpo. Fear is loss of face in event of curt rebuff from Tashi Lama.<sup>127</sup>

It is interesting too that the Dalai Lama drew a clear line (even as the Panchen had done in reverse) between the Abbot of Tashilhunpo on the one hand and his followers who "mised" him and were responsible for all the "trouble" that had resulted on the other. For his part, Weir had conceded the Lama's claim that the flight and, therefore, the return of the Panchen were Tibet's internal affairs. And yet "owing to a possibility" of hostilities between the two Lamas breaking out, he made it plain to the master of the Potala that New Delhi could not remain "a disinterested spectator" to war in a country "on their frontiers".<sup>128</sup> All in all, Weir carried the distinct impression that the Dalai Lama "will again" open negotiations with the Panchen "to induce him to return" to Tibet.<sup>129</sup>

<sup>126</sup> Report on Political Officer's visit to Lhasa in 1930, Para 2, in Weir to India, November 18, 1930 in *IOR*, L/P & S/10/1113.

<sup>127</sup> Political Officer to India, September 15, 1930 in *IOR*, L/P & S/12/580, Political & External Collection 36/11.

<sup>128</sup> *Loc. cit.*

Also see Political Officer (Lhasa) to India, September 29, 1930 in *ibid.*

<sup>129</sup> Para 10 (a) in *supra*, n. 126.

Efforts at reconciliation, 1924-1930

duplicate (original sent by Air Mail)

India Office and Peking.

P.7259  
30

3536.

DL/PL  
30  
L/Prsb/1580  
Ext. Co. M.  
36/11

Telegram P. No.12(3)-P/30 dated (and recd) 29th Sept 1930

From.....Political Sikkim, Lhasa.

To..... Foreign, Simla.

(Lhasa)  
Weir (on Pz's Return)  
(Sept 1930)

Government of India's decision regarding wool monopoly was communicated by me to Dalai Lama at interview on September 26th. His Holiness expressed gratitude and asked that arrangement might be allowed to continue until after the end of winter of 1930, 2-337. Reason for request was that if terminated in October 1930 wool business for that year would only be half completed. I said that I would convey his request to the Government of India.

I then asked him with reference to previous interview what conclusion he had arrived at regarding Tashi Lama. He replied that he had given matter much thought but had not reached definite decision. He rather implied that it was an internal affair of Tibet. I replied that at last meeting this was (group omitted) but that owing to possibility of hostilities between Tashi Lama and Dalai Lama Government of India could not remain disinterested spectator to war in country on their frontiers. He replied that Tashi Lama was a man of peace and that his followers alone are responsible for any trouble that has been caused. He added that he hoped amicable settlement would be arrived at by early date. I said Government of India would be as pleased as he to see such a satisfactory termination and would be ready to assist in bringing about an assurance which he appeared to appreciate.

It is clear that Dalai Lama since our last discussion sought advice of advisers who unfortunately were some movers in pressure on Tashi Lama which culminated in his flight. His Holiness probably feels that he was too frank at former meeting but I think that the point

REC'D IN  
1725  
SEP 1930  
OCT 1930



On his way back from Lhasa, Weir visited Shigatse and Tashilhunpo – the first time a British Officer had undertaken this journey since Bell's visit in those crowded, if critical days of November, 1906. Inter alia, the Political Officer noted that

after the activity of Lhasa, Shigatse appeared dead. An air of apathy hung over it. As is only natural, the inhabitants sullenly resent the sterner rule of the Central Government and are longing for the return of the Tashi Lama to his home.<sup>130</sup>

### The Panchen draws closer to the KMT (c. 1932): Dalai Lama dead (1933)

The Dalai Lama's renewed overtures to the Panchen, it would appear in retrospect, were singularly unavailing. This fact, added to the use which the Nanking government was by then making of him, put the Abbot of Tashilhunpo once again high on the agenda for Weir's next visit to Lhasa, in 1932.<sup>131</sup> No doubt anticipating British anxiety on this count, the Lama had himself suggested the subject in his telegram to Weir of August 10 (1932) inviting the latter to the Tibetan capital.<sup>132</sup> Once there, the Political Officer interceded, and it would appear powerfully, on the Panchen Lama's behalf. He noted that

after several discussions with the Dalai Lama I induced him to release the relatives of the Tashi Lama who had been imprisoned in chains for several years. He also eventually agreed to write a sincere friendly letter to the Tashi Lama asking him to return.<sup>133</sup>

Weir rated this to be a "great concession" on the Dalai's part, more so as the Panchen had maintained a "stubborn silence" towards previous letters from Lhasa. For himself, the Political Officer noted that if the Panchen

fails to respond to the friendly overtures now made, he deserves little further consideration at our hands.<sup>134</sup>

Sometime in November (1932), the Dalai wrote his promised letter which, it was arranged, should be delivered through the British Minister in Nanking.

<sup>130</sup> Para 23 in *ibid.*

The year of Bell's visit to Shigatse is 1906 and not (as mentioned) 1908.

<sup>131</sup> For the text of the report, "Visit of the Political Officer in Sikkim to Lhasa in 1932" see Weir to India, March 1, 1933 in *IOR*, L/P & S/12/578.

<sup>132</sup> Para 3 in *ibid.*

The Dalai Lama's telegram asked Weir "to come to Lhasa and render assistance" by discussing matters "concerning China and the Tashi Lama".

<sup>133</sup> Para 10 in *ibid.*

<sup>134</sup> *Loc. cit.*

Despite his studied courtesies on receiving it and the interest he evinced, the Panchen was far from responsive:

I assured him (the British Charge d'Affaires noted) of the Government of India's anxiety to bring about a reconciliation between him and the Dalai Lama and to promote his return to Tibet, and of my belief that the Dalai Lama was also genuinely anxious to attain the same end. The Panchen Lama whose attitude was most friendly, expressed his gratitude for our assistance; there was, he said, no personal animosity between himself and the Dalai Lama and immediately on receipt of the original text of the latter's letter he would study it carefully and communicate with him again.<sup>135</sup>

Far from enthusiastic with the Panchen's attitude, Ingram's own feeling was that New Delhi was not well-advised in "pressing for" his return:

He has been so long in Chinese territory and has been subjected to Chinese influences and flattered by Chinese government to such an extent that it seemed to me that it was more than a possibility that if he returned to Tibet he might become a tool in Chinese hands and facilitate the spread of Kuomintang influences in that country in a manner which might subsequently prove very embarrassing to the Government of India.

In further support of his view, the British official revealed that at a press interview in Nanking on December 20 (1932) the Panchen while "emphatically denying" his intention of effecting his return to Tibet by use of armed force made the significant point that he

had been in China for ten years, during which he had visited many parts of Mongolia and the interior of China for the purpose of winning over his followers to Nanking. . . . He only hoped that the Tibetans would return to the fold of the Central government so that the Government would be relieved of its anxiety regarding the western frontier.

A few days later, Ingram noted that at a ceremony marking the inauguration of the Panchen Lama as "Special Commissioner for the Western Border", Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek, then head of the KMT government in Nanking, said *inter alia* that

he (Chiang) deplored the gulf which seemed to have separated the Government and the people of the Western border, and expressed the belief that

<sup>135</sup> E. M. B. Ingram was the then British Charge d'Affaires in Nanking. He called on the Panchen Lama, in Nanking, and handed the letter - "a copy of the English text of the Dalai Lama's letter and a summary of the contents in Chinese". His report on what transpired is contained in para 22 in Ingram to Simon, January 9, 1933 in *IOR, L/P & S/12/578*.

The Dalai Lama's original letter did not arrive in Peking until December 21 by which time the Panchen had already gone to Nanking.

by virtue of his high spiritual authority the Panchen Lama would spread the teachings of Dr Sun Yat-sen and thereby promote political progress.

The British official underlined the fact that while the importance of both these incidents – the Panchen Lama's press interview and the remarks of the Chinese head of state – may not be “unduly exaggerated”, he cited them

merely to show the nature of the influences to which the Panchen Lama is constantly subjected and his public reaction to them.<sup>136</sup>

By the end of 1932, it is thus apparent, the Panchen Lama had arrayed himself solidly behind the Kuomintang regime in Nanking which, in the then political situation in China, appeared to represent his solitary oasis of hope and viability. It may be recalled that in the decade following the death of Yüan Shih-k'ai, China had broken up into ill-defined, if also overlapping and ideologically non-descript north and south factions, and a myriad war-lords. Out of this political chaos the KMT under Chiang Kai-shek had gradually emerged, by the end of the twenties, as a possible stabiliser. Even as it did so, it was not slow to recognise in the Panchen a possible solvent to the Tibetan imbroglio. What followed on either side was easily predictable: the regime showered gifts and honours, and a substantial allowance; the Lama owned up the cause of the Central government and fervently pleaded for Tibet's return to the embrace of the Motherland. In the evolution of this new political relationship it was significant that, by the close of 1932, Chiang's overtures to the 13th Dalai Lama had proved singularly unproductive, as earlier had the Panchen Lama's numerous efforts to stage a return to his beloved Tashilhunpo. The Panchen was grist to Chiang's mill; in reverse, China alone, the Lama calculated, could help salvage his future. No wonder, to China – and Chiang – he stuck, and tenaciously.

Two things are of interest in the new-born ties between the Panchen Lama and the Kuomintang regime. One, that even though Chiang encouraged him in all possible ways – through a judicious mixture of honours and rewards – the Chinese ruler did not give up his efforts, simultaneously, to make an accommodation, independently of the Panchen, with the master of the Potala. It followed that in helping the Panchen's forlorn cause, a line was always sought to be drawn indicating the extent to which help and encouragement was forthcoming, or beyond which it was to cease. It is equally significant that, in reverse, the Panchen had no second string to his bow, unless the British link may be viewed as such. One may hasten to add, however, that the latter was a poor, shaky and tenuous string, even at the best of times. Broadly, the Panchen's increasing reliance on the Chinese would largely explain why he was, outwardly at any rate, far from responsive to the Dalai Lama's repeated overtures. It is possible that he was not oblivious of the fact that a settlement with the master

<sup>136</sup> Para 24 in *ibid.*

of the Potala may have been unworkable in any case. It may be recalled that in his letter of October 9 (1932), referred to earlier in the narrative,<sup>137</sup> the Dalai pointedly complained that none of his earlier communications – in 1923 and again in 1926 – had brought forth a reply from the Panchen. Nor, so far as is known, did the letter under reference.<sup>138</sup>

Typical of the strained relations between the two Lamas was the fact that as soon as hostilities broke out in East Tibet, in 1931, from an inconsequential quarrel across the mutually unsatisfactory (Teichman) truce line of 1918, they found themselves solidly pitted against each other on opposite sides of the fence. The Panchen unreservedly put himself up as a champion of the Be-ru monastery, whose cause the Chinese had owned up and whom Lhasa had branded as the aggressor. The result was an unseemly row for the

old quarrel between him (Panchen Lama) and the Dalai Lama broke out again, each trying to persuade the Nanking government of the responsibility of the other for the troubles.<sup>139</sup>

Before the 13th Dalai Lama retired to the Heavenly Fields, in December 1933, the fracas on the frontier had been patched up, at the local level at any rate. This was largely owing to the outbreak of a civil war in Szech'uan resulting in a settlement that was not altogether unsatisfactory from Lhasa's viewpoint.<sup>140</sup> Be that as it may, the Panchen's ill-concealed advocacy of the party that Lhasa had branded as the aggressor must have been an eye-opener to the Dalai, and no doubt the British. It is thus not without significance that in September, 1933, in the course of his talks with the new Political Officer Williamson (who had

<sup>137</sup> For the text of the letter, see encl. in Weir to India, October 11, 1932 in *IOR, L/P & S/12/578*. Also see *supra*, n. 135.

<sup>138</sup> There is an intriguing one-sentence reference in the Dalai Lama's letter to Williamson in March, 1933 to a communication he had received from the Panchen Lama and the reply he proposed to give; unfortunately, it has not been possible to track down the text. For details see Dalai Lama to Political Officer, March 27, 1933 encl. in Williamson to India, March 31, 1933, in *ibid.*

<sup>139</sup> For details see "Note on Tashi Lama" appended to India Office Minute by J. P. Donaldson dated December 2, 1932 in *ibid.*

<sup>140</sup> Inter alia, Shakabpa informs us that he accompanied the Tibetan negotiator, as "Keeper of the Seal", and "took a number of photographs of the Chinese camp as well as of the signing of the treaty and other functions". Shakabpa, *History*, pp. 269–70.

According to Richardson, *History*, p. 136, the result of the local arrangements, "in which the National Government had no part", was that the Tibetans gave up everything to the east of the Yangtse but kept possession of the Yakalo (Yenchin) district which had hitherto remained a Chinese enclave to the west (of the Yangtse).

Also see entry under September 21, 1933 in Williamson to India, January 6, 1934 in *IOR, L/P & S/12, External Collection 36/12*.

replaced Weir), the Tashi Lama again figured prominently.<sup>141</sup> At the same time it may be noted that negotiations, then said to be “in progress”, between the Dalai Lama and the representatives of the Tashi Lama, in Lhasa, had registered “no progress”.<sup>142</sup>

## Panchen Lama keen for a settlement: British mediation

The death of the 13th Dalai Lama in December, 1933, marks a distinct watershed in the recent history of Tibet; more, it opens a new and indeed significant chapter in the story of the Panchen Lama. For the next four years, until he himself was no more, the Lama waged a relentless battle to return home to the peace and tranquillity of his monastery and his monks – but, only as the spearhead of an armed Chinese escort. It may be recalled in this context that preliminary thinking along these lines, which was later to become a fixity and an obsession, is noticeable among the Lama’s more ardent followers as early as 1929. That year they had supplicated the British – in pursuance of the latter’s alleged promise of 1905 – to furnish the Lama “a reasonable quantity of arms, ammunition and supplies” which would enable him to raise, and equip, a force on the Sino-Tibetan frontier and indeed in China itself.<sup>143</sup> In November of the same year, the Kansu authorities, we are told, had made him “an offer” of 10,000 soldiers. Later, in the opening months of 1932

it was again rumoured that he would return to Tibet with the help of the Chinese and that, in that event, the Dalai Lama had ordered his immediate arrest.<sup>144</sup>

That use of force majeure was in the air is evident too from the letter which the Dalai Lama wrote to the Panchen in October, 1932 and has been referred to earlier in the narrative. The Dalai Lama’s hint here is broad enough and yet unmistakable in its intent:

<sup>141</sup> Williamson who met the Dalai Lama in Lhasa in September (1933) noted *inter alia*: We also talked about the Tashi Lama... He (Dalai Lama) was very familiar in his manner and patted me on the back constantly. He was very frank in his views on the frontier situation... In any case he did not want a Chinese official ever to visit Lhasa as all that the latter would want to do would be to pave the way for the renewal of Chinese domination.

Williamson to India, January 6, 1934 in *IOR*, L/P & S/12, External Collection 36/12.

<sup>142</sup> “Visits to Lhasa made by Political Officers in Sikkim since Sir Charles Bell” in *ibid*.

It may be noted that the India Office viewed Williamson’s (1933) visit as “social” rather than “official”, designed to, apart from maintaining “existing cordial relations”, help explain to the Lama that the British were unable to persuade the Chinese “to accept our mediation”.

<sup>143</sup> “Note on Tashi Lama” in *supra*, n. 139.

<sup>144</sup> *Loc. cit.*

It cannot therefore be possible that you are now acting in a way calculated to rupture this relationship (between the two Lamas). The extent of the harm which has been done by the conspiracy of some of the conscience-stricken servants is well-known. But you naturally would not for a moment think of plunging Tibet into war, the country which is administered by the father and the son; yet rumours are rife in Lhasa to that effect.<sup>145</sup>

Nor is it without significance that the Huang Mu-sung mission which repaired to Tibet in October, 1934, ostensibly to mourn the death of the 13th Dalai Lama but in reality to coax, or cajole, the new Tibetan administration into a more, from the Chinese viewpoint, meaningful relationship with the motherland, kept the Panchen Lama very much in the forefront of its talks. In the course of its negotiations, it was reported, the Tibetan government had expressed itself as willing to guarantee that "no harm" would befall the Panchen or his followers, and that all his former "powers, estates and other property" would be restored to him, should the Chinese, in return, pledge to take "all his arms and ammunition away". Whereupon both the

Kashag and the National Assembly agreed, adding that, as a religious person, the Tashi Lama required no arms. If China took away the arms and munitions, they would welcome the Tashi Lama, guarantee his personal safety and the return of his powers and property. They added that the Tashi Lama should be asked to return via India according to the wishes of the late Dalai Lama.<sup>146</sup>

Unfortunately, the Huang Mu-sung mission proved to be an expensive failure – for all the time, money and effort expended, its net gain, in terms of concrete achievements, was far from impressive.<sup>147</sup> This disillusionment appears to have been shared, among others, by the Panchen and his coterie of advisors. Two snippets of news are of interest in this context. The first related to Huang holding out a threat to the Tibetan government that the Panchen Lama would return "by force of arms", if Tibet refused to fall in line!<sup>148</sup> Another related to the visit to Lhasa – and to Williamson in Gangtok – of Chwang Tseh Cheun

<sup>145</sup> *Supra*, n. 137.

<sup>146</sup> The proposed settlement between the Tibetan government and the Tashi Lama was incorporated in Article 12 of the draft proposals for a Chinese-Tibetan settlement presented to the Kashag on November 1, 1934. For details see Williamson to India, November 22, 1934 in *IOR*, L/P & S/12, External Collection 36/14.

<sup>147</sup> This was a view held even by the Chinese: Thus a (Chinese) newspaper underlined the fact that whereas Huang had been sent to Tibet to "seek peace and make a compromise", he had returned with "no success to his credit". Extract from the *Yung Pao*, March 27, 1937, encl. in Embassy (Peking) to Viceroy (Simla), April 8, 1937 in *IOR*, L/P & S/12, External Collection 36/27.

<sup>148</sup> India Office minute by D. M. Cleary dated December 31, 1934 in *IOR*, L/P & S/12, External Collection 36/14. For the threat, under reference, see Proceeding PZ/7709/34.

Lin (Gyang-tse chhō-ling?) Huthukthu, said to be a brother of the Tashi Lama. It is interesting that the Huthukthu was re-assuring on the then widely-held belief that a British national was acting as a military instructor in the Tibetan army, or that the country was swarming with British nationals. Both reports, the incarnation asserted, were untrue.<sup>149</sup>

It may be of interest to recall here that as early as 1927 the British Consul in Chungking had reported that it was a "common belief" there that Britain had "designs" on Tibet. Later that year, we are told, a "Save Tibet Society" was founded at Chungking.<sup>150</sup> Interestingly enough while discussion proceeded apace all over China, of converting Tibet into "a province" or of splitting it into three parts – with headquarters at Batang, Lhasa and Tashilhunpo respectively – the Tibetans showed "no enthusiasm" whatsoever for these proposals.<sup>151</sup>

A word here about Williamson's visit to Lhasa in 1935 may not be out of place. It is necessary to underline the fact that in according its approval to the Political Officer's projected journey, and his efforts at promoting a settlement between Lhasa and the Panchen Lama on their "internal and religious dispute", HMG was quite categorical that this was to be

without the assumption (by HMG) of any responsibility for its maintenance . . . If guarantee is asked for by Tibetans, Williamson should merely undertake to refer question for orders . . . (for, insofar as Whitehall was concerned) guarantee could not at the very outside go beyond standing offer to mediate or possibly arbitrate in any future difficulties regarding the maintenance of the settlement and it is doubtful whether we will be prepared to go so far . . .<sup>152</sup>

In this context, a minute by the India Office official Walton on the subject makes interesting reading. He noted, inter alia, that the guarantee "now asked for" from the British would be "risky" and

<sup>149</sup> This appeared as a news item under the head-line: "Tibet Employing no British Military Instructor" in the *China Weekly Review* dated January 26, 1935, encl. in Williamson to India, March 1, 1935 in *IOR, L/P & S/12, External Collection* 36/14.

<sup>150</sup> Consul-General, Chungking, to Minister, Peking, October 10, 1927, in *IOR, L/P & S/10/1228*.

<sup>151</sup> Consul-General, Chungking to Minister, Peking, November 28, 1928 in *ibid*.

<sup>152</sup> Secretary of State to India, August 17, 1935, in *IOR, L/P & S/12, External Collection* 36/12.

It may be noted that the (British) Minister in Nanking was averse to any British mediation between the two Lamas, for China, he felt sure, was "likely to take offence". He had, therefore, suggested that no information should go to the press on the subject of Williamson's proposed initiative, a suggestion later endorsed by the Secretary of State in his communication to India referred to above. For details see Alexander (later Sir Alexander) Cadogan to the Foreign Office, August 12, 1935 in *ibid*.

Panchen Lama keen for a settlement: British mediation

(L/P/S/12/24/12] R.L. + F.C. 24/12

Copy to Peking.

Translation:

To

The excellent Lonchen Sahib.

The reason of sending this message.

I have duly received your kind message dated the 1st day of the 9th month (28th October 1935) which you so kindly sent me through my representatives, Ngagchen Rimpoche and others. In this you inform me that, among my demands there are three points on which the Tibetan Government are unable to agree with me.

They are

- (1) my wish to have control over the whole of the army (in Tsang),
- (2) my desire to have control of more Dzongs than before and
- (3) my wish to bring Chinese officials and soldiers.

To avoid all possible trouble in the future I must be frank. I have already told my representatives what they should tell the Tibetan Government with regard to my demands. Kindly note that the Tibetan Government's statement that I wish to bring Chinese officials and soldiers with me is untrue. This is not one of the points in my demands. Kindly make enquiries as to this. I would request that the British Government may be kind enough to bring the differences between the Tibetan Government and the Labrang (the Tashi Lama's administration) to a definite settlement in accordance with the list of the demands which I have already made. Kindly let me have a reply by wire so that I may take a definite line of action.

Dated the 7th day of the 9th month (3rd November 1935).



could hardly at the moment go beyond a standing offer to arbitrate; even this would be an advance on our previous attitude which has been confined to the mildest form of mediation.<sup>153</sup>

It is also worth observing that Lhasa went a long way towards meeting the dictates of the Panchen Lama, including restoration of "practically all" his movable and immovable property – and this in spite of the fact that some of the demands made by the Lama, or on his behalf, were viewed as "outrageous".<sup>154</sup> As for British mediation, it is interesting to note that the Tashi Lama's own representatives wanted Williamson to settle, on their behalf, and "as much as possible", with the Lhasa regime. Unfortunately, the Political Officer's brief was singularly narrow in its scope with the result that in a communication he told the Lama that

it would be best for Your Serenity to return without Chinese officials or soldiers and that thereafter it will be easier to settle outstanding differences.<sup>155</sup>

Even as the Tashi Lama's representatives were keen for a settlement, so were the Tibetan authorities. Thus when, in November, 1935, Captain Battye, who temporarily took over after Williamson's death in Lhasa itself, went to make a farewell call, the Regent earnestly pleaded that HMG should "bring pressure to bear" on the Tashi Lama so as to make him accept the Tibetan offer.<sup>156</sup> It may be noted that, for its part, Whitehall was satisfied that the Tibetan "offer" was "reasonable" and that "when and if" the Tashi Lama arrived in Lhasa it may be necessary to tender the British Government's "good offices" – for, "apparently", it had concluded, both parties "desire assistance".<sup>157</sup>

<sup>153</sup> India Office Minute by J. C. Walton, July 15, 1935 in *ibid.*

<sup>154</sup> Inter alia, these conditions included the Tashi Lama asking for control over the dzongs of Nagartse, Shigatse, Namling and Penam – none of which had been "under his control before". In reply to the Lama, Lhasa had also insisted on continuing to recruit the Tsang (or Labrang) army and pay it out of central revenues; nor could a part of the Tashilhunpo's immovable property, it felt, whose proceeds had been distributed to certain monasteries, be now "collected or returned". For details see Battye to India, December 16, 1935 in *ibid.*

Battye's report was entitled "Settlement between Tashi Lama and Tibet".

<sup>155</sup> From the telegram drafted by the Political Officer (Williamson?) and sent to Tashi Lama "by his representatives, through the Chinese wireless". For details, *loc. cit.*

<sup>156</sup> This was on November 18, 1935. For details, *loc. cit.*

<sup>157</sup> India Office Minute on "Battye's Report from Lhasa", dated February 21, 1936 in *IOR, L/P & S/12, External Collection 36/12.*

HMG noted with satisfaction the Tibetan government's anti-Chinese attitude "exemplified" by their (Tibetan) refusal to "compromise" with them (Chinese) until escort question – "on which they had taken a strong line" – is solved.

## Panchen Lama to spearhead KMT armed escort: Lhasa "Firm"

Not long after Captain Battye's return from Lhasa, Basil Gould took over the late Williamson's place as the new Political Officer. No sooner did he do so, than the question of his mediating in the dispute between the Tashi Lama and the Tibetan authorities came to the fore again. Understandably, New Delhi was willing that

if Tibetan Government agrees, (Gould was) to address Tashi Lama and act as mediator between him and Lhasa. If Lhasa accepts, Gould will have to go and guarantee a settlement.

The real nub of the problem was the modicum of "responsibility" that Gould's mediation would attract – a responsibility that would, in the final count, devolve on India, and HMG. More, it was necessary to define the nature of the sanctions, if any, should the two contending parties prove recalcitrant. To resolve the dilemma, it was suggested that if the Tashi Lama should back out "due to non-observance of agreement", New Delhi may refuse him asylum, should he, as a run-away, seek it. Nor, may it be forgotten that the Panchen's province of Tsang adjoined India. If, however, Lhasa misbehaved, it could be threatened with "withdrawal of diplomatic support" and non-supply of "arms and precious metal", on favourable terms.<sup>158</sup> Reluctantly, Whitehall agreed to the solution proffered yet, while giving Gould "discretion" regarding tactics, clearly stipulated that he would

avoid responsibility for maintenance of settlement barring provision that both parties accept our mediation in any future dispute arising out of settlement.<sup>159</sup>

While spelling out its detailed instructions for Gould, New Delhi further dotted the i's and crossed the t's in the India Office despatch. Inter alia, the despatch now laid down that the Political Officer should not act as "guarantor" but may show a "willingness" to assist in "disposal of disputes". Additionally, it stipulated that, in supersession of an earlier proposal, the Tashi Lama's escort, as he entered Tibet, was to comprise, not British, but Tibetan government troops and that Gould's letter to the Lama was to reach him before he (Lama) entered Tibet.

<sup>158</sup> India to Secretary of State, April 13, 1936 in *IOR*, L/P & S/12, External Collection 36/27.

New Delhi made it clear that in its view the Tashi Lama's return to Shigatse, in which it appeared to have a vested interest, "may avert" a threat which Tibet most feared, and strengthen the position of the Regent. More, the Lama's return would subserve British ends – "if it comes about peacefully and particularly if it is secured with our (British) cooperation".

<sup>159</sup> Secretary of State to India, May 21, 1936 in *ibid.*

Nonetheless the

actual terms of settlement cannot be profitably discussed until you are able to confront Tibetan authorities with Tashi Lama in your presence at place to be decided on with the Tibetan Government.

The above "mediation" by the British, the Tashi Lama was to be told in no uncertain terms, was "conditional" – on his returning to Tibet "without Chinese escort or officials".<sup>160</sup>

Even as Gould's brief was being finalised and the Political Officer braced himself for the visit, Norbu, then in Lhasa, informed New Delhi, in the middle of July, of a marked shift in Tibet's earlier stand. The latter, Norbu told his principals, while it welcomed Gould's proposed communication to the Tashi Lama – just then it had forwarded (through Norbu) its own unqualified protest to China regarding the Lama's escort – was "not keen" any longer on British mediation which, earlier, it had solicited repeatedly.<sup>161</sup> This made New Delhi a little less than certain as to whether Lhasa was indeed serious about coming to terms with the Panchen. More, although for its part India would "welcome" a "direct settlement" between the two, it feared Lhasa "may (yet) play us (British) or him (Panchen Lama)".<sup>162</sup> Actually, with the Communist threat abating, and the "Long March" wending its way to the north-west, the Tibetan capital had become a little less jittery.

Additionally, it may be recalled here that the Lama's advance baggage, which had arrived at Nag-chhu-kha, was found to contain "rifles, ammunition and bombs" – a discovery that raised some inconvenient question-marks about his bona-fides. Last, but by no means the least, Lhasa's protest in Nanking, now relayed through the British, made its position unequivocally clear:

We the Ministers of Tibet, send this letter to inform you that . . . in view of the fact that the outstanding Chinese-Tibetan question has not been settled, we cannot allow Chinese officials and troops to enter Tibet . . . As we have repeatedly informed you . . . If the escort is sent with the Tashi Lama, the majority of Tibetans will become suspicious and religious bonds between the two countries will be severed and very serious harm may result.<sup>163</sup>

<sup>160</sup> India to Political Officer, June 3, 1936 in *ibid.*

A little later India told the Secretary of State that there was a "possible danger" in continuing to give the Tashi Lama's representatives in China an "entirely non-committal" reply as to HMG's, and the Government of India's, attitude to his requests for mediation. It therefore suggested that his representatives may be informed, when they met British officials in Peking, that Norbu, Gould's under-study had preceded him to Lhasa to help in mediation and that a communication had been sent to him (Tashi Lama). India to Secretary of State, June 19, 1936 in *ibid.*

<sup>161</sup> India to Secretary of State, July 14, 1936 in *ibid.*

<sup>162</sup> *Loc. cit.*

<sup>163</sup> For the full text of the "Summary in English" see India to Secretary of State, July 22, 1936 in *IOR, L/P & S/12, External Collection 36/27.*

On its own, and without bringing in the British, Lhasa too had supplicated the Panchen Lama. Inter alia, it reminded him that "previously" he had affirmed his intent not to bring in "Chinese officials or soldiers", assuring him at the same time that a Tibetan escort would be sent to meet him while the three principal monasteries would "guarantee" his safety. At the same time, however, it was made abundantly clear that the Tibetan regime "cannot concede" his demand for control of troops, nor his claim for exercise of authority over Shigatse Dzong.<sup>164</sup> Even as this was being done, Gould started on his mission to Lhasa amid reports that the Lama was sixteen marches south of lake Kokonor – with a "very great armed" following "actually with him", or indeed "ready to join him".<sup>165</sup>

Understandably, in the light of what has been retailed above, rumours had continued to persist that the Tashi Lama might force his entry with a retinue of Chinese officials and a military escort of three hundred picked troops. In one of his earlier reports from Lhasa, in October (1936), Gould gave expression to the view that the Lama was "now practically a prisoner of the Chinese" and much influenced by his staff "who were soaked in Chinese money and ideas".<sup>166</sup> It is significant, however, that at the time of Williamson's last visit to Lhasa, in 1935 – he was to die in November while still there – the Tashi Lama had requested for British mediation, an offer repeated by him in 1936. The British Minister in Nanking, however, as has been noticed, was averse to his country doing anything towards "compromising differences" between the Lama and the Tibetan authorities for the simple reason that the Chinese were "likely" to "take offence".<sup>167</sup>

To be candid, in the post-1933 period, the question of the Panchen Lama's escort became increasingly complicated if largely because the Lama's own position seemed to be somewhat confused, if also ambivalent. Thus, significantly, on a direct enquiry, the Panchen Lama had told Williamson, in 1935, that "this (viz., the escort) is not one of my demands". Yet later when some efforts were made for bilateral negotiations between the Tashi Lama and the authorities in Lhasa, the Lama's position seemed to be far from clear or categorical. As Gould later summed it up:

so far as I am aware he has never demanded of the Tibetan Government that they should assent to his being accompanied by a Chinese escort, although it is equally true that he had not replied to telegrams addressed

<sup>164</sup> India to Secretary of State, August 18, 1936 in *ibid.*

Norbu had intimated that two letters had been handed over to Ngagchen Rimpoche (Tashi Lama's representative) who had wirelessly to the (Tashi) Lama.

<sup>165</sup> India to Secretary of State, September 30, 1936 in *ibid.*

<sup>166</sup> Gould to India, November 4, 1936 in India to Secretary of State, November 6, 1936 in *ibid.*

<sup>167</sup> Alexander Cadogan to Foreign Office, August 12, 1935 in *IOR, L/P & S/12, External Collection 36/12*. Also see *supra*, n. 152.

Panchen Lama to spearhead KMT armed escort: Lhasa "Firm"

SECRET

(Copy into file re Chinese escort 36/22)

SECRET

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DE C Y P H E R O F T E L E G R A M S.

(COPIES CIRCULATED)

From Government of India, Foreign and Political Department, to Secretary of State for India.

Dated Simla, 10th October, 1936.

Received 10.30 p.m., 10th October, 1936.

2306. FIRST OF TWO PARTS.

XXX

7256

Addressed to Secretary of State for India, repeated to Peking and Gould, Lhasa.

Our telegram No.2302, 10th October, repeating Gould's telegram No.157.

7301

7134 copy attached

Your telegram No.2833, 8th October, regarding mediation on behalf of the Tashi Lama, has since been received and repeated to Gould. Meanwhile Gould's latest information from Tibetan sources is that the Tashi Lama is expected to leave Ragya Gomba immediately for Jyekundo, where he might arrive towards the end of October, and is believed to be accompanied by force of his own and complete Chinese escort of 300. Tashi Lama's agent in Lhasa has informed Gould in confidence that the Chinese escort have secret orders not to fire if opposed, but to return to China bringing the Tashi Lama with them. Attitude of Kashag towards mediation at present appears to be that they do not definitely ask for it, but circumstances may arise in which they will invite it. They are at present more anxious for our diplomatic support in China than for mediation (see our telegram No.2268).

7242 copy attached

SECOND AND LAST PART.

They have also stated that they will be compelled to oppose the Chinese escort by force, though they fear that such action will be followed by war with China.

2. In the circumstances we entirely agree that

to him by the Tibetan government in which they have requested him not to bring the escort; and there is reason to believe that quite recently he informed the Chinese Commissioner in Kham that he does not want the escort.<sup>168</sup>

Briefly, to recapitulate the sequence leading to Gould's visit, it may be recalled that initially the Tibetan government had protested vigorously – both to the Chinese and to the Tashi Lama himself – against the escort. Again, it was to prevent Lhasa from falling into the Chinese lap, that the British Government had decided to lend diplomatic support to these protests.<sup>169</sup> Understandably, even though these were, in fact, lodged, Nanking denied that any protests had been received (from Lhasa). This made New Delhi rule that Tibet should renew the protests and, in order not to give the Chinese an alibi, route them through the Government of India and HMG's Minister in Nanking. More, it was decided that in order "to maintain touch, ascertain and report on the situation", and at the same time be at hand "for mediation", Gould should repair to Lhasa.<sup>170</sup> An invitation for the visit was sought, and obtained, through Nor-bu Thön-trub, the Assistant to the Political Officer referred to earlier in the narrative.

### Panchen Lama to spearhead KMT armed escort: Lhasa "Soft"

Interestingly enough even as Gould was preparing to leave, early in October (1936), news was received that, in face of contrary advice from its National Assembly, the Tibetan government had softened in its attitude towards the Panchen Lama. Reports gained currency that the Lama's Chinese escort had "secret orders" not to fire "if opposed, but to return to China bringing the Tashi Lama with them". The Kashag was also said to be much less keen about British good offices: "they are at present more anxious for our diplomatic support in China than for mediation". Paradoxical as it may seem, Lhasa still talked of being "compelled" to oppose the Chinese escort "by force" yet feared that "such action will be followed by war with China".<sup>171</sup> The whole situation was pretty confused and as Gould conjectured:

It (was) likely to crystalize when the Tashi Lama arrives at or near de facto Tibetan limits, i.e., possibly in two or three weeks' time. Tibetan

<sup>168</sup> Para 20 in "Lhasa Mission, 1936–37", encl. in Gould to India, April 20, 1937 in *ibid*. This is a very useful, and comprehensive, report on Gould's visit to Lhasa and is cited, et seq., as "Lhasa Mission".

<sup>169</sup> Para 1 in "Lhasa Mission", in *ibid*.

<sup>170</sup> These proposals were made in a communication to the Secretary of State on April 13, 1936. Para 2 in "Lhasa Mission", *ibid*.

<sup>171</sup> India to Secretary of State, October 10, 1936 in *IOR, L/P & S/12, External Collection 36/27*.

government will then be obliged to take full stock of the situation; Tashi Lama and Chinese Government will have to decide on definite line of action; and the result of protest will presumably be known. Situation may be affected by the actual position at that time both of the Chinese government and of the Communists.<sup>172</sup>

Lhasa's alleged "softening", if also its seemingly contradictory attitude, may be attributed to two factors. One, that the Chinese had thrown out feelers "with a view to (a) settlement of the points of difference" between themselves and Tibet, more specifically in terms of "negotiating for (a) settlement" of the Sino-Tibetan boundary.<sup>173</sup> Two, the Regent who, as head of the administration, provided leadership was "hopelessly venal" and not only in big things but

even in small matters, and disinclined to view any matter otherwise than from the point of view of his own financial advantage.<sup>174</sup>

Nor was that all, for Gould discovered that he (i.e. Regent) had

by threat of resignation, obtained from National Assembly and all officials an undertaking that they would unquestionably abide by his decision in all matters.<sup>175</sup>

Was it a matter of any surprise then that the invitation to the British to mediate was being soft-pedalled? In its place Lhasa

would prefer to rely on its own efforts to bring about a settlement of "family differences" (and) offered to the Tashi Lama concessions on several points in regard to which its attitude upto date had been unaccommodating.<sup>176</sup>

Gould's instructions, alluded to earlier, had included, inter alia, the clear injunction that he should impress on Tibetan authorities the "need of strengthening their own position" by "making peace" with the Tashi Lama. While doing so, Lhasa was to be left in no doubt

as to effective support on the part of the Government of India and the promise of diplomatic (but not of direct military) support vis-a-vis China . . .

<sup>172</sup> Gould to India, October 7, 1936 in India to Secretary of State, October 10, 1936 in *ibid.*

<sup>173</sup> Gould to India, October 16, in India to Secretary of State, October 17, 1936 in *ibid.* Gould's informant was an official, "who is on very intimate terms" with the Kashag.

<sup>174</sup> Gould to India, November 4, 1936 in India to Secretary of State, November 6, 1936 in *ibid.*

Gould gathered this impression from Ngagchen Rimpoche, the Panchen Lama's agent, then visiting Lhasa.

<sup>175</sup> Gould to India, November 11 in India to Secretary of State, November 14, 1936 in *ibid.*

<sup>176</sup> Para 3 in "Lhasa Mission", *supra*, n. 168.

Again, Tibet was to be assured that

HMG who would not in any event negotiate with China over the head of the Tibetan Government, would like, if it were possible to arrange it, to be represented at any general negotiations that might take place between China and Tibet.<sup>177</sup>

This was in August, 1936, when Gould's instructions were being drawn up; by the time he left Lhasa, in February, 1937, the Political Officer had concluded that

as between the Tibetan government and the Tashi Lama little or nothing remains in dispute except two points on which the Tibetan government stand firm, viz., civil control by the Tashi Lama of a separate army for the Tsang province. The argument of the Tibetan government is that there must be not two Tibets, but one ...<sup>178</sup>

As regards the question of the Tashi Lama's escort Lhasa's position, as Gould viewed it, was a delicate one. On the one hand it was prepared "to go to any reasonable lengths" to secure the Lama's return; on the other, it could clearly see that the admission of the escort may lead to the "subjugation of their country, to the ruin of many individuals who are in power, and possibly also to the impairment of their religion".<sup>179</sup> A further complication arose from the fact that the Panchen had been far from categorical on the question and, twice over, as has been noticed, was on record as saying that he was not committed to an accompanying Chinese escort.<sup>180</sup> Repeatedly rattled, the Tibetan authorities, according to Gould, "have resolved, not once, but many times" that should the escort attempt to "force a direct issue", they would oppose it "by force". It is also significant that "after six months of close association" with Cabinet ministers and many others he (Gould) was

unable to discover any indications that the repeated protests have not been genuine or that at the present time the Tibetan government are otherwise than determined to oppose the escort if necessary by force ...<sup>181</sup>

Two caveats may be entered here. One, that the Regent evidently worked on more than one wavelength and that with his known, and indeed notorious, love for "filthy lucre" his loyalties were bound to be sharply divided. Thus in his report of November 4 (1936) from Lhasa, Gould intimated that

shortly before leaving India\* [sic (misprint for Lhasa?)] on tour Regent had secretly authorised Chinese officer to inform the Chinese Government

<sup>177</sup> Para 5 in "Lhasa Mission" in *ibid.*

<sup>178</sup> Para 18 in "Lhasa Mission" in *ibid.*

<sup>179</sup> Para 21 in "Lhasa Mission" in *ibid.*

<sup>180</sup> *Supra*, n. 60.

<sup>181</sup> *Supra*, n. 179.



that, in the event of the Tashi Lama and Chinese escort proceeding towards Lhasa, they will not be opposed . . .

Significantly, Gould added, "this communication had been made without the knowledge of the Kashag or of the National Assembly".<sup>182</sup>

Five weeks later, his assessment was no different:

Regent and Kashag are incapable of taking strong line about anything or of following any consistent policy except that of waiting on events.<sup>183</sup>

## British attitudes to the Panchen's return

Revealing as the Tibetan attitude is, no less intriguing is that of the British. Thus it is evident that by the middle of December (1936), Whitehall itself was not clear as to what it wanted Lhasa to do for, as an India Office minute recorded:

As a matter of fact, the Regent's attitude does not seem to indicate that the Tibetans would put up much, if any resistance. Nor is it at all certain that we should want them to do so, especially as it is possible that the Chinese might make it a pretext for a more serious invasion . . .<sup>184</sup>

Two days later, and now much more categorically, the India Office defined its attitude in a communication to the Foreign Office:

it does not seem at all certain that this (active resistance to Chinese escort) would be the wisest course for the Tibetan government to adopt if, despite HMG's representation at Nanking, the escort should actually enter Tibet . . . in any case it seems desirable to avoid any risk that the Tibetan government on the departure of the (Gould) Mission from Lhasa, might be left under the impression that HMG would encourage such a course.<sup>185</sup>

A few days earlier Denys Bray, then a member of the Secretary of State's India Council, had minuted that if there were a clash "with our Mission actually in Lhasa and the Tibetans armed with our munitions, a difficult and potentially dangerous situation" might arise. "The weaker China is," he argued, "the greater the probability of her bringing her case" before the League of Nations. But with no Mission (or one only in Lhasa) "we could still play the part of mediator".<sup>186</sup>

<sup>182</sup> Gould to India, November 4 in India to Secretary of State, November 6, 1936 in *IOR, L/P & S/12, External Collection 36/27*.

<sup>183</sup> India to Secretary of State, December 12, 1936 in *ibid*.

<sup>184</sup> India Office Minute, dated December 16, 1936 by J. C. Walton in *ibid*.

<sup>185</sup> India Office to Foreign Office, December 18, 1936 in *IOR, L/P & S/12, External Collection 36/27*.

<sup>186</sup> Minute by Denys Bray, December 16, 1936 in *ibid*.

British attitudes to the Panchen's return

13.

*It is requested that in any further communication on this subject the under-mentioned letter and number may be quoted, and the reply addressed to—*

The Under Secretary of State for India,  
Political Department,  
India Office,  
London, S.W. 1.

P. N. 514/37.

2408

INDIA OFFICE,  
WHITEHALL,  
LONDON, S.W. 1.

8th February, 1937.

Sir,

I am directed by the Secretary of State for India to refer to Foreign Office letter No. F 7826/4/10 of 23rd December, regarding the Chinese escort accompanying the

Government of India's telegram No. 241 of the 22nd January, 1937. } Tashi Lama, and to enclose a copy of a telegram from

the Government of India on the subject.

2. It appears to the Marquess of Zetland that it is desirable, if possible, to avoid the responsibility of giving advice of one sort or another to the Tibetan Government regarding the question of armed resistance to the escort, at any rate at this stage. He would therefore be prepared to agree with the Government of India and Mr. Gould that the proposed intimation to the Tibetan Government should not be made in a form which would be construed as a positive offer of advice. The object of the instructions in India Office telegram No. 3701 was rather to correct any impression (which it appeared from Mr. Gould's telegram of 9th December that the Tibetan Government might have received) that His Majesty's Government were necessarily in favour of Tibetan resistance. It still seems desirable to take steps to correct any such impression, and with this object it is proposed, if the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs agrees, to telegraph to the Government of India as in the enclosed draft, leaving to Mr. Gould's discretion the best method of doing so. I am to enquire whether Mr. Secretary Eden concurs.

I am, Sir,  
Your obedient servant,

The Under Secretary of State,  
Foreign Office,  
S.W. 1.

(Sd) J. G. WALTER

Document 7: India Office to Foreign Office regarding advice to Tibetan government, February 8, 1937.

(By courtesy of the India Office Library and Records)

Whatever the credibility gap in the case of the Regent and the Kashag, a question that formed the subject of serious contention between Gould (in Lhasa), the Government of India and Whitehall related to the advice that was to be tendered to the Lhasa authorities in the light of views expressed by HMG, and retailed in the preceding paragraph. Initially, it would seem, on the lines of the minute cited, Whitehall had concluded that Gould should intimate that it (HMG) would not favour the Tibetan government offering any resistance to the Tashi Lama's escort. This ruling, however, was to arouse the Political Officer's strong opposition. He argued, and convincingly, that it was at New Delhi's instance that Lhasa had reiterated its protest to China "in strong terms"; that since, "of late", Tibetans had become "more resolute", tendering such advice would imply:

- (a) that Tibetans "would be completely puzzled and suspect our motive";
- (b) that it would be tantamount to "tendering overt advice";
- (c) that if the advice were followed "they would throw on us responsibility for the consequences"; if rejected, a "bad precedent" would be established;
- (d) that if intimation (of the advice tendered) leaked out, the Chinese would see "less reason than now" to go slow over escort – while Tibetans would be deprived of their best asset in what was "a game of bluff".<sup>187</sup>

New Delhi in lending its support to Gould's line of reasoning, as spelt out above, noted that it was afraid that "however tactfully couched", HMG's advice to Lhasa "might be misunderstood" and weaken the latter's "professed opposition" to the Chinese escort.<sup>188</sup>

Meanwhile as exchanges between Gould, New Delhi and Whitehall proceeded apace, Lhasa's and H.M.G.'s protest to the Chinese government against the Lama's escort brought forth from the latter a categorical rejection for an answer, even though the reply was tactfully worded and garnished by a variety of assurances. Nanking maintained that the question had been "carefully considered" and that, essentially, the escort had been viewed by it as a "suitable administrative step". Its "object", the Chinese regime stressed, was to "maintain dignity" of Panchen Lama in accordance with "traditional custom", as well as to "protect" him during his journey. As before, in this case too, a "peaceful policy" guided China's "present action" and insofar as the Panchen Lama was in constant touch with the Tibetan authorities, there was no possibility of a misunderstanding arising. In sum

Chinese government will take utmost care to see Panchen Lama's return to Tibet gives rise to no international complications which cause HMG or Government of India to suffer any disturbance of peace on account of geographical propinquity.<sup>189</sup>

<sup>187</sup> India to Secretary of State, January 22, 1937 in *ibid.*

<sup>188</sup> *Loc. cit.*

<sup>189</sup> Knatchbull-Hugessen to Foreign Office (repeated to Viceroy) February 2, 1937 in *ibid.*

The upshot of all this was that on the question of Lhasa offering armed resistance to the Tashi Lama's escort the India Office foreswore the responsibility of giving advice of one sort or another.<sup>190</sup> With this view, the Foreign Office appears to have concurred, with the result that, after "full consideration", it was decided not to tender any advice. It is interesting to note that an important reason adduced in favour of this decision was

that the fact of such advice having been offered would inevitably come to the knowledge of the Chinese government and would tend to prejudice the Tibetan government in the spheres of bluff, procrastination and diplomatic manoeuvre.<sup>191</sup>

### Nanking withdraws support: Panchen Lama's death (1937)

Characteristically all through his stay at Lhasa, Gould was far from remiss in maintaining his contacts with the Panchen Lama. Thus, it may be noted that he assiduously cultivated one of the Lama's closest advisors, Ngagen Rimpoche who was then in Lhasa. The Political Officer observed that besides being a "genial, bald-headed, much-travelled little man with a goatee beard and a twinkle in his eye", he was a "great" diplomat. For when he first came to see the British Mission "he quibbled to such an extent" that, Gould recorded, "we discovered nothing". Later, however, things changed for the better and on one of his visits he was "in a most confidential mood" with the result that, Gould noted, no high official in Lhasa was proof "against his caustic but generally just" criticism.<sup>192</sup>

From being "somewhat difficult and retiring" to start with, the Rimpoche gradually became, Gould recorded, "more communicative", while the Political Officer "impressed" upon him to keep his master informed of "our exercise of good offices" on his (Lama's) behalf. When he left for China, early in January, 1937, he expressed his firm belief that "some way will be found" for getting the Lama back "in peace" and that too "during 1937".<sup>193</sup> More, the Rimpoche had been appreciative of the role which the British Mission had played for, he confided in Gould, that "very good progress" had been made during its stay. Blame for the Panchen's

failure to return this year (1936) had been largely due to stubborn attitude of Tibetan Government prior to arrival of mission and to bad influence of

<sup>190</sup> India Office to Foreign Office, February 8, 1937 in *ibid.*

<sup>191</sup> Para 22 in "Lhasa Mission", *supra*, n. 168.

<sup>192</sup> "Lhasa Mission Diary" for November 2, 1936 in *IOR, L/P & S/12, External Collection* 36/25.

<sup>193</sup> Para 23 in "Lhasa Mission", *supra*, n. 168.

Nanking withdraws support: Panchen Lama's death (1937)

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Original on Tashi Lama file  
IT/PJM/MM. (172 groups.)

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DECYPHER OF TELEGRAMS.

(COPIES  
CIRCULATED)

From Government of India, Foreign and  
Political Department, to Secretary  
of State for India, repeating  
telegram from Gould.

Dated New Delhi, 29th December, 1936.

Received 3.45 p.m., 29th December, 1936.

1440  
XXX

2084. Addressed to Secretary of State for India repeated to Peking. Following from Gould 213, December 23rd. Beings.

3085. Ngagchen called yesterday. He expects to leave on (corrupt group) to China via India. He said that, thanks largely to presence of the mission, very good progress has been made during the past few weeks in conversations with Tibetan Government with a view to return of Tashi Lama, and that he himself now definitely expects that Tashi Lama will return to Tibet next summer. Failure to return this year had been largely due to stubborn attitude of Tibetan Government prior to arrival of mission and to bad influence of certain members of Tashi Lama's entourage, which he (Ngagchen) hopes to counteract by re-establishing personal touch with Tashi Lama. He added that Tashi Lama must realise that, in the matter of his return, it is probably case of "next year or never" and he thought present difficulties in China might facilitate return. He stated explicitly that continued presence of mission would definitely tend to keep Tibetan Government in a reasonable frame of mind and would contribute towards confidence of Tashi Lama and prospect of his return.

2. I was careful to try to discover whether Ngagchen was speaking from conviction or was intent rather on staging a good "getaway" Both during conversation and in subsequent more intimate talk with Norbhu he gave every indication of speaking conviction. What is open to doubt is whether in his absence Tibetan Government will continue to be reasonable. Ends.

Document 8: India to Secretary of State, December 29, 1936, regarding the Panchen Lama's return.

(By courtesy of the India Office Library and Records)

certain members of Tashi Lama's entourage which he (Ngagchen) hopes to counteract by establishing personal touch with Tashi Lama.

What was more, the Rimpoche concluded

Tashi Lama must realise that, in the matter of his return, it is probably case of "next year or never" and he (Rimpoche) thought present difficulties in China might facilitate return.<sup>194</sup>

Of his own mission, Gould was convinced that it had acted as a "conciliator", though not an "official mediator" and that

nothing now stands in the way of the return of the Tashi Lama except such demands or conditions as would be inconsistent with the maintenance of Tibetan unity and effectual independence and with established British policy in regard to Tibet . . .<sup>195</sup>

Meanwhile, it is evident that inside China public opinion, in terms of what can be gleaned from newspapers or comments in the press, was getting restive on the question of the Lama's interminable delays:

by snow in spring and winter and by rain in summer and autumn. Then, is there any date during a year at which he will be able to return to Tibet? Is he procrastinating intentionally?

The aim of the Nanking regime, in lieu of its "exceedingly generous and gracious" treatment of the Tashi Lama, the paper noted, lay in its "hope" of utilising his religious position "to form a link" between the Central government and the Tibetan local government. It followed, it argued, that he must go back with "material force" – a contingency in which the British were "not (to) be allowed to interfere". As to use of force majeure, the exploits of Chao Erh-feng and, under the Manchus, of Generals Yin Ch'ang-heng and Yin Cheng-hsien were dutifully recalled: they had marched troops into Lhasa and duly established Chinese "prestige". Events now, the paper stressed, pointed in much the same direction:

Since the Central government now has so many troops, why not send a portion of them west-wards to Tibet? If this is not done, Tibet will sooner or later be wiped out of the map of China . . .<sup>196</sup>

As debate proceeded apace, the Lama readied himself over again for his journey. Thus it is reported that sometime between June and September (1937) the Panchen informed Shigatse that he was leaving Jyekundo "shortly" (for Tibet). Further, he intimated that arrangements be made for himself and his

<sup>194</sup> Gould to India, December 23, 1936 in India to Secretary of State, December 29, 1936 in *IOR, L/P & S/12, External Collection 36/27*.

<sup>195</sup> Para 42 in "Lhasa Mission", *supra*, n. 168.

<sup>196</sup> Extract from the *Yung Pao*, March 27, 1937, *supra*, n. 147.

Nanking withdraws support: Panchen Lama's death (1937)

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EXTRACT from Yung Pao of 27th March, 1937.

The Panchan Lama has long been on his journey back to Tibet. The Central Government has appropriated large sums of money and despatched a special Escort Envoy in connection with the Panchan Lama's return to Tibet. It has been made a great event. But the Panchan Lama up to today has been lingering at Jyekundo and delaying his journey. According to press reports the Panchan Lama has been prevented from setting out on his journey for Tibet by snow in spring and winter and by rain in summer and autumn. Then, is there any date during a year at which he will be able to return to Tibet? Is he procrastinating intentionally? Or is there any other reason? It is learned that the Panchan Lama has been forced to postpone his trip to Tibet because Britain does not want him to go back to Tibet. Nominally the political power in Tibet is in the hands of the Jöchen Hutuktu but actually the pro-British elements and the British Advisors are the most influential in political circles in Tibet. Britain only wants the Panchan Lama to return to Tibet to take charge of religious affairs and does not want him to have a hand in political affairs. The Panchan Lama, however, does not quite agree with the proposal, hence his return to Tibet has been refused. The Central Government has not adopted appropriate measures in dealing with Tibet. Two years ago General Huang Wu Sung was sent to Lhasa to seek peace and make a compromise, but General Huang soon after returned to China with no success to his credit. The relation of Tibet to the Central Government is but superficial and nominal but the Central Government has been exceedingly generous and gracious to the Panchan Lama with the hope of utilizing the religious position of the Panchan Lama to form a link between the Central Government and the Tibetan Local Government. When the Panchan Lama was in Nanking, Mr. Tai Chi T'ao and other prominent Government leaders "koto'ed" to him as his disciples.

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party at various stages of his stops-over and also for grain – “for about 2,000 ponies and mules”.<sup>197</sup> Presently, two developments, however, cast a grim shadow over his fortunes. The first was a frontal Japanese onslaught on China in the wake of the famous-infamous Marco Polo incident of July, 1937. Since the British were a major source of moral as well as material support to the Nanking regime in what appeared to be a mortal blow directed against its very being, the latter took to an immediate elimination of all likely irritants. Understandably, the Panchen's progress on his intended march to Tibet was initially, to the Lama's great chagrin and disappointment, temporarily halted and a little later firmly counter-manded. According to Mr. Richardson, who had been head of the residuary British Mission in Lhasa after Gould's departure, the Panchen Lama had, in August, 1937, moved to Rashi Gumpa, just on the Tibetan border—whereupon Lhasa “ordered mobilisation”, thereby “reaffirming its intention to resist”. Soon enough however, as has been noticed, the Chinese, with a major war with Japan on their hands, were “compelled” to call off the Panchen's expedition.<sup>198</sup>

Even as Nanking did so, the Tibetans, in a “diplomatic counter-stroke”, renewed their request to the Panchen Lama to return and were “even considering”, we are told, the admission of a small escort.<sup>199</sup> The Lama, however, refused to oblige and, reportedly, returned to Jyekundo. Old, disappointed and fatally stabbed in the back, on the very eve of realising his life-long ambition, he fell ill and died on November 30, 1937 – “to the mingled sorrow and relief of the Tibetan people”.<sup>200</sup>

The Panchen Lama's death, sad and tragic, and away from his hearth and home, laid low, for the time being, the ghost of Chinese armies forcing their way into Tibet on the plea of restoring the ruler of Tashilhunpo to his seat of authority. Additionally, it ended, if temporarily, the impending political confrontation which may have disrupted, and well-nigh completely, the rickety, inefficient, if remarkably corrupt post-13th Dalai Lama regime in Lhasa. For their part, the Political Officer and his masters in New Delhi, no less than in Whitehall, must have heaved a sigh of relief for escape from a situation which, as the preceding pages reveal, would have been embarrassing, to say the least.

<sup>197</sup> “Lhasa Mission Diary”, for June-September, 1937 in *IOR, L/P & S/12*, External Collection 36/25.

It is interesting to note that the Diary underlined the fact that the Tashi Lama's officials in Shigatse did not wield “much influence”, whereas Dzasa Lama, the Lhasa appointee, was “very much” liked. It was he who had met with the Tashi Lama's request for supplies “as far as possible”, being “desirous of returning” to Lhasa on the Tashi Lama's arrival.

<sup>198</sup> Richardson, *History*, p. 146.

<sup>199</sup> *Loc. cit.*

<sup>200</sup> *Loc. cit.*



## Epilogue

The 13th Dalai Lama died in December 1933, the 9th Panchen followed him four years later, both unreconciled to the last. Strange as it may seem in retrospect, their new incarnations demonstrated how, on rebirth, the two persisted in their old, unhappy legacies.

Usually, in Tibetan tradition, Chen-re-si would re-incarnate in a human body at about the same time as it left the old. There may be instances, however, where this restless spirit would tarry awhile before taking human form. Thus it was that the child who was eventually discovered to be the 14th Dalai Lama in 1937, had actually been born in June 1935<sup>1</sup> of a peasant household in a village in the vicinity of Lake Kokonor, in the district of Amdo, in the province of Ch'inghai. A search party from Lhasa, headed by the Keutshang Rimpoche, brought the child Lama to the Tibetan capital in the summer of 1939. In February 1940, during the Great Prayer festival, he was enthroned.<sup>2</sup> According to Chinese accounts, at the actual ceremony on February 22, Wu Chung-hsin, head of a high-ranking delegation from Chungking, occupied the place of honour. Wu is reported to have sat by the side of the child Dalai Lama facing south – a signal honour which, back in 1934, had been denied to General Huang when he attended the funeral ceremonies for the previous Dalai. It has also been claimed that earlier, on Wu's recommendation, the Chinese Government exempted the new Dalai Lama's choice from the traditional lot-drawing ceremony of the golden urn and that the young child was identified by the Chinese delegate as the new incarnation at a private interview with him. Again,

<sup>1</sup> The 14th Dalai Lama's original name was Lha-mo Thön-trub. His father, Chhö-kyang Tshe-ring and his mother De-kyi Tshe-ring, both of peasant stock, were 35 years of age at the time of his birth. Their home, Kumbum, is celebrated in history as the birthplace of Tsong-kha-pa. The Dalai Lama has three brothers who are older than him and a brother and a sister who are younger. It has been related that at the time of his birth there was a rainbow over the house. Heinrich Harrer, *Seven Years in Tibet*, London, 1957, pp. 266–71, bases his account on that of an actual eye-witness Dzasa Kunangtse, the then Commander-in-Chief of the Tibetan Army.

<sup>2</sup> The culminating event in the assumption or resumption of authority by a Dalai Lama, subject to the continuance of a Regency during his minority, is the occupation by him of the Golden Throne. Tibetans call this Ser-thri nga-sö, the "request to occupy the Golden Throne". The essence of Ser-thri nga-sö is the public acknowledgement of his people by the Dalai Lama and of the Dalai Lama by his people.

it was at Wu's instance that the Nationalist Government issued a formal order proclaiming the young child as the 14th Dalai Lama.<sup>3</sup>

Plausible as the Chinese version would appear, it has been categorically repudiated by a responsible eye-witness who maintains that it offered an account "as detailed as it was no doubt inaccurate" of the ceremony as it might no doubt have been conducted, "if the Chinese representative in Lhasa had been the chief actor" in the drama. According to this witness, no other than Sir Basil Gould, the then Indian Political Officer who was representing his government at the ceremony, Wu was as good a spectator as anyone else among the invited representatives and did no more than present the ceremonial scarf, as indeed did the others. His turn came after the Regent, the Prime Minister, members of the Cabinet, the family of the Dalai Lama, Abbots of monasteries and Incarnate Lamas had paid obeisance and been blessed.<sup>4</sup> Controversy regarding the role of the Chinese delegate apart, the major impression produced on all eye-witnesses to the Lama's coronation was the extraordinary interest of the child in the entire proceedings day after day – the same ceremony was performed eight times over – the clear impact of his presence, his infallible skill in doing the right thing to the right person and at the right time. "It was evident", wrote the British representative, "that the Ser-Thri-Nga-Sol was indeed the return, in response to prayer, of the Dalai Lama to a throne which by inherent right was already his".<sup>5</sup>

Impressive as no doubt the installation was and peaceful and happy the augury, the new Dalai, in fact, entered a most troubled period in Tibet's history. For even before he was enthroned, a mighty cataclysm had enveloped humanity. The grim details of the war in Europe did not touch his domain directly, but the battles then being waged in China and later in Burma did deeply involve his country. The Nanking regime, driven to sore straits by powerful Japanese onslaughts on its traditional coastal strongholds had now established its seat of authority far in the interior at Chungking, in Szech'uan.

<sup>3</sup> For the Chinese version see Tieh-tseng Li, *op. cit.*, pp. 280–5, and Shu-hsi Hsu, *An Introduction to Sino-Foreign Relations*, Shanghai, 1941, p. 19.

<sup>4</sup> The eye-witness in question was B. J. Gould who draws a graphic, if detailed picture of the installation ceremony in his *Jewel in the Lotus*, London, 1957, pp. 209–35. This is an elaboration of the author's earlier account, "The Discovery of the 14th Dalai Lama", *Geographical Magazine*, London, Vol. XIX, No. 6, October 1946, pp. 246–58.

Another authoritative account is that of Ila Tolstoy, "Across Tibet from India to China" *National Geographic Magazine*, Washington D. C., Vol. XC, No. 2, August 1946, pp. 169–222. Also see Bell, *Portrait*, pp. 399–400.

<sup>5</sup> Gould, *op. cit.*, p. 225.

In 1945 the Tibetan Government accepted as their official version a (Tibetan) translation of Gould's "Discovery and Installation of the Dalai Lama" with "a few small corrections", for one or more of the Cabinet "could vouch from his own knowledge for the accuracy of every word". The official (Tibetan) version was later printed at the Potala Press. For details, *ibid.*, p. 240.

Fighting virtually with its back to the wall, it had persuaded a reluctant British government to keep open a major link in its supply line – the Burma-Lashio road. Later, in 1942, when Burma too fell before a major Japanese offensive in South-East Asia, the Chinese suggested another link – “over the hump”, and through the tableland of Tibet. Neither London nor Washington was visibly impressed, though the Generalissimo showed increasing keenness. The Tibetan Government, for obvious reasons, was sternly opposed to what came to be known as the Trans-Tibet Transport Project. In fact, it was only after hands had been changed at the British Mission in Lhasa and mounting pressure brought to bear on Tibet that it agreed, and then only in respect to goods other than actual weapons of war.<sup>6</sup> The episode was characteristic of China’s continuous anxiety to establish its hold over the land of the Lama – through the backdoor, and by means studiously devious.

As World War II drew to a close and the Allies of the KMT government defeated Japan, the conflict in Tibet was again brought to the fore. With Outer Tibet still somewhat remote, the Chinese now evinced an active interest in the discovery of the Panchen Lama’s successor. The eventual selection here was disputed between a boy found by the Nationalist regime in Ch’inghai – to whom they continued to pay a heavy subsidy all through – and another who had been discovered by the Tibetan Government. Each party refused to recognize the other’s candidate as legitimate, albeit both refrained from any precipitate action. Matters, however, were brought to a head by Lhasa’s decision, in the fall of 1949, to drive out all Kuomintang officials from Tibet. This was done ostensibly to avoid compromising the country’s independence in the eyes of the emerging communist regime by any taint of its past association with the KMT. Additionally, it was also designed to keep in check the pro-Chinese elements in Lhasa who, in 1947, as we would notice presently, had staged an abortive coup d’état.

Kuomintang China’s reaction to Lhasa’s repudiation of its accredited plenipotentiaries was equally strong for, in August 1949, with most of its territories lost to the Red (Chinese) armies and the seat of its government moved to Canton in the south, the Nationalists decided to install their candidate as the 10th Panchen at a ceremony in the Kumbum monastery, near Jyekundo.<sup>7</sup> The

<sup>6</sup> Amaury de Rioncourt, *Lost World: Tibet, Key to Asia*, London, 1951, pp. 206-7. Also see Gould, *op. cit.*, pp. 237-8.

Rai Bahadur Norbhu who had been in charge of the British Mission in Lhasa was transferred for “he failed to make headway” over the project, his place being taken by Frank Ludlow.

Tieh-tseng Li, *op. cit.*, pp. 189-90, mentions the fact that Tibetan opposition to the proposal was so vehement that Chinese survey groups on the Hsik’ang-Tibet border were driven back by the Tibetan garrison stationed there.

<sup>7</sup> A. David Neel, “Tibetan Border Intrigue” and “High Politics in Asia”, *Asia*, May 1941 and March 1943, pp. 219-22 and 157-59 respectively. The author underlines the fact that after the old Panchen’s death the Central Government continued to grant

Lhasa authorities who had their own candidate (or candidates)<sup>8</sup> for Tashilhunpo's supreme primate had long held back for fear it might offend the Chinese morally and widen the yawning gap that had already existed between the two. According to the Dalai Lama, during the Peking parleys which ended in the "so-called" agreement of 1951, his chief plenipotentiary Ngabo had cabled to him to say that "if the Chinese candidate" were not accepted, it "would hinder" his negotiations. It was thus under considerable pressure – and "without the traditional tests" being conducted – that the Panchen Lama came to be accepted as the true reincarnation. Predictably since the whole of his education and training had been subject to Chinese influence, the latter had "certainly made use of him" for their own political ends, knowing full well that he was "too young to protest".<sup>9</sup>

What shook Lhasa most in all this was not so much the action of the KMT regime in proclaiming their candidate or, for that matter, the Communists in taking him completely under their wing but that the young Panchen should so openly identify himself with the new regime's policy of "liberating" Tibet.<sup>10</sup> An interesting revelation by the present Dalai Lama is the fact that when the Chinese Communists in October 1949 took over the reins of government, a telegram of congratulations was sent to them and published in his (Panchen Lama's) name – "although he was only ten at the time and had not yet been accepted as the reincarnation".<sup>11</sup>

The new regime that succeeded the Nationalists had, from its very inception, given every indication that it would pursue the traditional, if time-worn policy of uniting Tibet with China. The People's Republic also gave ample demonstration of its skill in the art of political appeal by adopting a very comprehensive "Common Programme" for all the nationalities within its borders. The minorities were, in fact, all declared equal, and each promised its "national regional autonomy", and its individual "political, economic, cultural and educational construction work". In all this there was nothing exceptional. Nor in fact in the proclamations, now repeatedly made, that the new regime sought to

subsidies to the (Panchen) Lama's followers, "probably figuring on hand-picking a reincarnation".

According to Tieh-tseng Li, *op. cit.*, pp. 191–92, in 1941 the followers of the late Panchen, Lo-sang-chieh-tsan (Lo-sang Gye-tshen) and others, found in Ch'inghai a boy named Kung-pao tzu-tuan (Gön-po Tshe-ten?) who seemed to answer to their traditional requisites "and identified him as the real reincarnation".

<sup>8</sup> The Dalai Lama has maintained that in 1950 "two possible candidates had been discovered in Tibet itself". *Dalai Lama*, p. 96.

<sup>9</sup> *Loc. cit.*

<sup>10</sup> The 10th Panchen was installed at Kumbum on August 10. Three weeks later, on September 5, Sining, the capital of Ch'inghai, together with the newly-installed Panchen, fell into the hands of the Chinese communists. Canton was lost on October 15 and Chung-king on December 1 whence the KMT sought refuge in Taiwan.

<sup>11</sup> *Dalai Lama*, p. 96.

“liberate” Tibet, nor even in its concentration of units of the People’s Liberation Army in the border provinces of Hsik’ang and Ch’inghai. It may be recalled that forty years earlier, in circumstances which bore a striking parallel, President Yüan Shih-k’ai too had declared Tibet to be a province and an integral part of China, appointed General Yin Ch’ang-heng as commander of a large force and directed him to proceed to Lhasa to re-establish Chinese sovereignty there.

It is clearly beyond the purview of these few pages to detail events that unfolded themselves in the wake of Peking’s determined resolve to “liberate” Tibet: Lhasa’s efforts to put its own house in order, solicit friendly advice from without, make a determined attempt to reach an understanding with the new regime in China that would obviate the necessity for an armed conflict – for which it was both unequal and unprepared. People’s China too had publicly professed a desire to avoid a conflagration and seems to have held out categorical assurances to New Delhi that it would not use force majeure. Everyone had hoped that, given goodwill and a sincere desire to arrive at a peaceful solution, there would be a way out of the seeming impasse. Actually, even as discussions were proceeding apace in Lhasa and in New Delhi, between a Tibetan government delegation and the newly-arrived Chinese Ambassador, the People’s Liberation Army fired its first round and on October 7, 1950 attacked the Tibetan frontier simultaneously at six places. News of the invasion, kept a closely-guarded secret for weeks, came as a rude shock and caused some major diplomatic upsets.

That Lhasa had felt itself threatened by the new regime and its repeated talk of “peaceful liberation” was well-known. Of the various measures adopted to meet the situation – the decision to drive out all KMT officials; dispatch abroad what was officially described as a trade delegation, with New Delhi, Peking, London and Washington included in its itinerary; the marathon sessions of the National Assembly in the Nor-bu-ling-kha; the re-organization of that pitifully small, and poorly-organised force, miscalled the Tibetan army – perhaps of the greatest import was the resolve to invest the young Dalai Lama with full powers, two years before he came of age. The decision was a momentous one for there was little doubt that in contrast to the corrupt and unpopular clique which surrounded the Regent, the Dalai inspired a genuine and almost universal confidence. It may be recalled here that in 1947 the old Regent, Reting Rimpoche, had led an uprising in order to come to power, that the revolt had been the occasion for the bombarding of the Reting and Sera monasteries and of the arrest and punishment of a large number of people, reportedly, pro-Chinese in their leanings. In fact among the young Dalai’s first measures, after he assumed control, was the grant of amnesty to all political and common law offenders, an act that was especially designed to wipe off the memory of the 1947 coup and reconcile its victims to the new Lhasa administration.

Normally a Dalai Lama's assumption of complete authority is an occasion for large-scale rejoicing. In November 1950, however, times seemed to be out of joint. Lhasa was in turmoil and among the young ruler's first major pre-occupations was the decision whether, in face of the Red onslaught from the east, he and his government should remain in the capital or flee to a safer place. Precedents were feverishly ransacked. Tibet's leaders, lay and ecclesiastical alike, were in almost continuous conclave – but obviously in the land of the Lamas, the gods alone could have the final word. The 13th's was the most pertinent example – had he not fled before the invading British and, later, ahead of the Chinese themselves? Again, had he not, through these ordeals, emerged triumphant and the country gained in the end? The oracles too upheld this common measure of agreement and ordained that the 14th should follow in the footsteps of his predecessor.

On December 19, 1950 – nearly a month after he had assumed full powers – the Dalai Lama left Lhasa, accompanied by a large retinue. He headed south towards the Chumbi valley and reached Yatung towards the end of the year. It was on the cards that, should the pressure from the invading armies become relentless, the 14th incarnation would cross over into India, even as the 13th had earlier sought refuge there. Meantime the Tibetan government had addressed an appeal to the United Nations against China's "unwarranted act of aggression", demanded that, to ensure a rightful and just solution, the views of the people of Tibet be ascertained or that the world body should itself settle the issue by purely juridical means such as "seeking redress in an international court of law". New Delhi too had made strong protests against the Chinese decision to seek a solution "by force, instead of by the sober and more enduring methods of peaceful approach". It had also urged that in any eventual settlement, the "legitimate Tibetan claim to autonomy" should be adjusted "within the framework of Chinese suzerainty".

While hopes of direct UN intervention in Tibet proved still-born, Peking's rejoinder to New Delhi's action was two-pronged. To start with, it sharply repudiated "gratuitous" advice declaring *inter alia* that Tibet

is an integral part of Chinese territory and the problem of Tibet is entirely a domestic problem of China. The Central People's Liberation Army must enter Tibet, liberate the Tibetan people and defend the frontiers of China. That is the resolved policy of the Central People's Government.

As if this were not enough, the People's Government now openly charged India with being "affected by foreign influences hostile to China in Tibet".<sup>12</sup>

<sup>12</sup> For a detailed, documented account the reader may refer to Parshotam Mehra, "India, China and Tibet, 1950-54", *India Quarterly*, Vol. XII, No. 1, Jan.-Mar. 1956, pp. 3-22. For a general survey of the period see Werner Levi, "Tibet under Chinese

As a second string to its bow, Peking soft-pedalled its military campaign in Tibet. Thus after the fall of Chamdo, Kham's capital in the east, on October 19 (1950) there was virtually no large-scale fighting. With organised Tibetan resistance knocked out completely, a subtle campaign in political warfare was now launched, a campaign all the easier in a country where the masses are as ignorant, inexperienced and unsophisticated as they are in Tibet. A welcome grist to Peking's propaganda mill was the behaviour of Chinese soldiery which, even unfriendly critics agreed, was indeed exemplary. Thus with the blunting of the edge of invasion, publicly at any rate, there was less and less talk of the progress of armies, of the fall of towns, or of the surrender of garrisons and more and more of "co-operation" with the Tibetan people, of "fruitful association" with them in joint endeavours.

It was against this ostensibly helpful, if intrinsically disconcerting, background – and in the meantime it had been clearly impressed upon the Dalai Lama and his close associates that further resistance was useless – that contacts were established between the opposing sides. Thus, in February 1951, the Dalai was persuaded to appoint a 5-member delegation headed by Kalon Nga-phö Nga-wang Jig-me to negotiate a peaceful settlement with China. Nga-phö, who had been the Tibetan Governor of Kham, was captured by the Chinese outside Chamdo along with the British radio operator, Robert Ford.<sup>13</sup> Accompanied by Leg-mön and Thön-trub, he now crossed into China by way of Tachienlu, Ya-an, Chungking and Sian, arriving in Peking on April 22. Two other Tibetan delegates, Wang-dü and Ten-dar, reached New Delhi, by way of Yatung, on March 25 and Peking, by way of Hong Kong, on April 26. In the Chinese capital the stage was thus set for negotiations which commenced on April 29 with Li Wei-han acting as the principal Chinese representative. These drew to a close

Communist Rule", *Far Eastern Survey*, Vol. XXIII, No. 1, Jan. 1954, pp. 1–9, and Ginsburgs and Mathos, *op. cit.*, pp. 4–40.

Quotations here are from the first and second Indian protest Notes dated October 26 and 31 respectively and the Chinese rejoinders dated October 30 and November 14. For the texts see *Foreign Affairs Reports* (Indian Council of World Affairs, New Delhi), Vol. VIII. No. 6.

<sup>13</sup> Nga-phö's rise in the Chinese hierarchy in Tibet has been phenomenal. He was Secretary-General of the Preparatory Committee for the Tibet Autonomous Region since its very inception in April 1956, and the confidante who carried the Dalai's letters to General Tan during the March 1959 rebellion in Lhasa and later was appointed Vice-Chairman as well as Secretary-General of the reconstituted Committee. He was, along with the Panchen Lama, one of the delegates to the Second National People's Congress in Peking.

Robert W. Ford, the chief Chinese show-piece for alleged foreign disruptionist intrigues in Tibet, gives a graphic account of pre-Liberation Tibet, the fighting in Kham, his and Nga-phö's capture by the Chinese and the trials and tribulations of his 5 years of imprisonment before he finally "confessed" in his *Captured in Tibet*, London, 1957.

on May 21. Two days later, a 17-article Agreement between the "Local Government of Tibet" and the Central People's Government of China on "Measures for the peaceful Liberation of Tibet" was concluded. A state banquet on May 24 to celebrate the event was attended by the Panchen Lama and his retinue apart from the Tibetan delegation and the chief Chinese officials of the Peking regime.<sup>14</sup>

As noticed, the May 23 Agreement directly spelt out in detail measures for what it called the "peaceful liberation of Tibet". In theory, at any rate, it formed the basis of the new relationship that was to subsist between Lhasa and Peking until it was officially denounced by the Chinese State Council towards the end of March 1959.<sup>15</sup> For our limited purview it would suffice to turn to one of its principal provisions (Article 15) namely, the setting up in Tibet of a Military and Administrative Committee and a Military Area Headquarters to ensure its full implementation. These bodies were to include "patriotic elements" from the "Local Government of Tibet" as well as various districts and "leading monasteries", who were to be chosen and officially appointed by Peking after consultation with the "various quarters concerned". In accordance with this provision, General Chang Ching-wu was deputed as Peking's representative and was to serve at the same time as Director-General of the Chinese Military Headquarters in Tibet. Leaving Peking on June 23, the General arrived at Yatung, via Hong Kong and India, on July 4. Here he conferred with the Dalai Lama. As a result of these discussions His Holiness left Yatung for Lhasa on July 21. Later, on October 24, he is reported to have telegraphed to Peking his own, the lamas' and the peoples' support for the May 23 Agreement.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>14</sup> For the text of the Agreement see Foreign Affairs Reports, *supra*, n. 12.

In the course of his Press Conference at Mussoorie on June 20, 1959, the Dalai Lama said that his representatives "were compelled to sign the Agreement under threat of further military operations against Tibet... leading to utter ravage and ruin of the country" and that he and his government "did not voluntarily accept the Agreement but were obliged to acquiesce in it", the *Statesman*, June 21, 1959.

Earlier, at Tezpur, the Dalai had maintained that the Agreement was reached "under pressure" and that the suzerainty of China was accepted "as there was no alternative left to the Tibetans". *Ibid.*, April 19, 1959. The Dalai Lama has also alleged that the Tibetan seal which was affixed to the Agreement "was not the seal of my representatives but a seal copied and fabricated by the Chinese authorities in Peking and kept in their possession ever since".

<sup>15</sup> The Dalai Lama has now charged that the Chinese, in actual fact, never observed the Agreement, the *Statesman*, June 21, 1959. Earlier, Peking had openly accused the Local Government of Tibet of subverting the Agreement and its major provisions, *ibid.*, March 29, 1959.

<sup>16</sup> Tieh-tseng Li, *op. cit.*, p. 207.

Peking has charged that the dispatch of this telegram from the Dalai Lama was clear proof of his acceptance of the May 23 Agreement, the *New China News Agency* release dated April 20, 1959, quoted in the *Statesman* of April 22, 1959.



From the Dalai we may turn to the Panchen whose presence at the Peking banquet to celebrate the signing of the Agreement has been noted already. His later return to Shigatse, however, was to be closely linked with large-scale deployment of Chinese troops throughout Tibet in which context a few relevant facts may be noted. Actually, since the fall of Chamdo, PLA units had been busy laying some rough and ready roads to enter Tibet, in strength. The main body of these troops, under the command of Wang Chi-mei, now entered Lhasa on September 9 (1951) to be reinforced shortly afterwards by 20,000 regulars under Generals Chang Kuo-hua and Tan Kuan-san. By the end of December (1951) they had fanned out and set up check-posts all along Bhutan's northern frontier, and simultaneously along the trade route from Gyantse to the Indian border, a distance of nearly 295 miles. PLA personnel entered Yatung itself on March 13, 1952. The stage was thus set for the Panchen Lama's return. Flanked by units of the Liberation Army, he crossed into Tibet and arrived at Lhasa on April 28, 1952. On the afternoon of the day of his arrival, he met the Dalai Lama at the Potala. Peking maintained that the two Lamas had "a friendly exchange of opinions" on implementing the May 1951 Agreement and that the Tibetan people rejoiced at their happy union.<sup>17</sup>

Their first formal meeting, the Dalai Lama later confided, was at once "constrained" and not "very successful". Later the same day when they met informally:

He (Panchen Lama) showed a genuine respect for my position, as the custom of Buddhism requires towards a senior monk. He was correct and pleasant in his manners, a true Tibetan; and I had a firm impression of unforced goodwill. I felt sure that left to himself he would have wholeheartedly supported Tibet against the inroads of China.<sup>18</sup>

After nearly a month and a half at Lhasa, the Panchen left for Tashilhunpo, his seat of spiritual authority. To many it seemed that his return there was the fulfilment of the old dream which, in his previous birth, he had not been able to realise – the dream of ending his long years of exile in China and coming back to his country on his own terms.

A word here about the new relationship between the Dalai and the Panchen. Here Articles 1, 5 and 6 of the 1951 Agreement were relevant. The first laid down that the Tibetan people "shall unite" and drive out "imperialist aggressive forces" from Tibet: in simpler language, the Panchen was to return and thereby end the schism in Tibet's body-politic created since 1924. This intent was clarified further by Article 5 which stipulated that the "established status, functions and powers of the Panchen Ngo-erh-te-ni shall be maintained". Article 6 elaborated the theme still further by stating that the established

<sup>17</sup> T'ieh-tseng Li, *op. cit.*, pp. 208-9. Also see Werner Levi, *supra*, n. 12.

<sup>18</sup> *Dalai Lama*, p. 97.

status, powers and functions of the Dalai and the Panchen would be the "status, powers and functions of the 13th Dalai Lama and of the 9th Panchen Ng'erh-te-ni when they were in friendly and amicable relations with each other". Thus in words that gave no hint of the old controversies, disputes and rivalries between Lhasa and Shigatse were sought to be dissolved and an era of friendly cooperation promised by the new masters of China and Tibet.

Public testimony to the new-born cordiality between the two countries was the combined visit of both the Lamas to the "Great Motherland" in 1954-1955. Here, according to the Panchen, "definite decisions were reached under the personal guidance of Chairman Mao on the relations between U and Tsang, questions that had never been settled before."<sup>19</sup> In a public speech at Lhasa on June 29, 1955, immediately on his return from this visit, the Dalai confirmed that both he and the Panchen "had the honour of meeting Chairman Mao" and received "intimate instructions" from him.<sup>20</sup> The two Lamas who had represented Tibet as delegates to the First National People's Congress were elected Vice-Chairmen of its Standing Committee. They were also a party to the decision of the Chinese State Council in establishing a Preparatory Committee for the Tibetan Autonomous Region. When finally inaugurated at Lhasa, on April 24, 1956, the Dalai Lama was chosen Chairman, and the Panchen Vice-Chairman of the 51-member Committee.<sup>21</sup> In the winter of 1956-1957, the two Lamas were again together during their sojourn in India for celebrations marking the 2,500th Parinirvana of the Buddha.

To all outward appearances the rapprochement between Lhasa, Shigatse and Peking was established on a firm basis and yet discerning students of the Tibetan scene could point to the none-too-happy currents beneath the surface. Thus it was noticed that, on their way back from India while the Panchen hastened to Shigatse, the Dalai tarried here longer than anticipated and seemed reluctant, if not indeed unwilling, to depart. At Gyantse, on his return journey, the Dalai Lama made a somewhat outspoken attack on Chinese rule by insisting that their main purpose served, the Han should leave the land and let the Tibetan people manage their own affairs.<sup>22</sup> Interestingly enough, not long

<sup>19</sup> Alan Winnington, *op. cit.*, p. 160.

<sup>20</sup> *The Statesman*, July 2, 1955.

<sup>21</sup> A Preparatory Commission for the Tibetan Autonomous Region was set up by the Chinese State Council in March 1955, the *Times of India*, Delhi, April 9, 1955. Later, in October, it was reported that a committee to prepare Tibet for "regional autonomy" held its first meeting at Lhasa which was attended by some 40 Chinese officials and was according to the wishes of the Dalai and the Panchen, the *Statesman*, October 4, 1955.

<sup>22</sup> *The Times* (London), April 26, 1957.

Towards the end of April, it was reported that the Dalai Lama's Cabinet was to confer with Chinese representatives at Lhasa on the withdrawal of Chinese forces and that there were already some signs of the Chinese easing their hold on Tibet, the *New York Times*, April 28, 1957.

after the Chinese publicly announced a large-scale withdrawal of their personnel<sup>23</sup> and pledged that the minimal among them would remain to put the country on its feet. Accordingly the number of Departments of the Preparatory Committee was severely pruned and “reforms”, to which the people’s opposition had been fairly vocal, were declared postponed till the end of the Second Five Year Plan period in 1962. Seemingly Chinese building and constructional activities throughout the country too, were visibly slowed down.<sup>24</sup>

It is not the purpose of this brief survey to spell out the circumstances leading to the 1959 armed revolt in Lhasa against Chinese rule, nor the earlier Khampa uprising of 1955–1956, much less discuss the later (1958–1959) complete volte face from the earlier (1957) Chinese policy of withdrawal. The main objective is to bring into focus the remarkable parallel that can be drawn between what happened in March–April 1959 and in the earlier instances mentioned above. Thus in their first official pronouncement of 28 March, the Chinese State Council while confirming that the Dalai Lama had left Lhasa, did neither denounce him nor yet repudiate his authority. Actually, it claimed that the Lama had been “abducted” by the rebels, who allegedly held him “under duress”.<sup>25</sup> Again, while the Local Government was declared to be dissolved and the 1951 agreement denounced, the 14th Dalai Lama still continued as Chairman of the Preparatory Committee for the Tibet Autonomous Region, his functions and authority still unquestioned. Meantime the Panchen was only “temporarily” empowered to discharge his duties during the “enforced absence” of the supreme

<sup>23</sup> The *Hindustan Times*, June 18, 1957. The paper revealed that an official communique from Lhasa quoted by Peking Radio had said that since the Central Government had resolved not to carry out democratic reforms in Tibet for the next six years, the present staff was too large.

<sup>24</sup> Hong Kong reports had quoted Chinese official newspapers on October 9, 1957 for the news that at least 91.6 per cent of Communist Party officials had been withdrawn from Tibet. Further, these reports said that Chinese authorities had dropped “their plans to make the Region a completely communist province”, that Chinese schools were being closed and “wherever possible local authority was being handed back to the Tibetans, the number of Chinese being reduced drastically”. *Asian Recorder*, October 12–18, 1957, p. 1683.

<sup>25</sup> The Chinese State Council’s proclamation of March 28 barely said: “During the time the Dalai Lama . . . is under duress by the rebels”, the Panchen Lama will act as Chairman of the Preparatory Committee. However, in his address to the reconstituted Committee (18 members of the old body were declared “traitorous elements” on March 28 and replaced by 16 new members) on April 8, General Chang Kuo-hua, Commander of the Tibet Military Area and Vice-Chairman of the Committee, maintained that the “counter-revolutionary elements had abducted” the Dalai Lama. The *Statesman*, March 28 and April 9, 1959 and *Asian Recorder*, May 9–15, pp. 2647–8.

This version was later repeated by the Panchen Lama, Chinese Prime Minister, Chou En-lai and members of the National People’s Congress and, to-date, holds the field.

pontiff.<sup>26</sup> The Dalai Lama who, earlier in March, was chosen a member of the Tibetan delegation to the plenary session of the Second National People's Congress in Peking was declared elected, in absentia, as one of the 16 Vice-Chairmen of the Standing Committee of the Congress.<sup>27</sup> Hope was expressed too, both by the Chinese Prime Minister as well as the Panchen Lama, that after freeing himself from the rebels, the Dalai would return to his seat of authority to see before his eyes "his long-cherished wish for Tibetan reform" being "smoothly realized".<sup>28</sup>

Not long after, Peking resiled from its earlier stance. The Chinese now denounced the Dalai Lama as a protégé of vested interests even as he on his part repudiated the "so-called" May 1951 Agreement as null and void ab initio. In clear, unambiguous terms, the Lama declared:

when I left Lhasa I went of my own free will; the decision was mine alone, made under the stress of a desperate situation; I was not abducted by my entourage; I was not under any pressure to go from anybody, except in so far as every Tibetan in Lhasa could see that the Chinese were preparing to shell my palace and that my life would be in danger if I stayed there.<sup>29</sup>

As for the Panchen Lama, the Dalai maintained that he had been "under Chinese influence ever since his boyhood"; that he had "never enjoyed any freedom"; that in the Preparatory Committee he had no alternative except to carry out the orders of the Chinese. Nor was the Dalai altogether oblivious of the new situation for he noted that the

Chinese were trying to do in our generation exactly what they had failed to do in the last; and this time it has certainly been an advantage to them to have a Tibetan religious leader in whose name they can make their proclamations.<sup>30</sup>

It was evident that in the wake of the Rebellion and the flight of the Dalai Lama, the Panchen became a mere "puppet" in the hands of the administration which the Chinese now set up by abolishing the "Local Government of Tibet" and investing the Preparatory Committee with unquestioned authority.<sup>31</sup> In the initial stages at any rate, the Lama played his part to near perfection. At

<sup>26</sup> The Panchen Lama was for a time referred to as "Acting" Chairman of the Preparatory Committee.

<sup>27</sup> In the final count the Dalai Lama is said to have received 1,108 votes and the Panchen 1,152; both were elected Vice-Chairmen of the Standing Committee. The *New York Times*, April 28, 1959.

<sup>28</sup> The Chinese Prime Minister Chou En-lai in his address to the first session of the Second National People's Congress, April 18 and the Panchen to the CPCC, on April 29, *Asian Recorder*, April 16-22, 1959, pp. 2,660 and 2,664.

<sup>29</sup> *Dalai Lama*, p. 163.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 98.

<sup>31</sup> Richardson, *History*, p. 212.

the behest of his masters, he introduced a "system of democratic management" in the monasteries where earlier a "3-anti" movement against rebellion, feudal prerogatives and feudal exploitation and oppression had been launched at his bidding.<sup>32</sup> The honeymoon, however, was short-lived for as the years sped by, he appears to have fallen foul of his Chinese masters and gradually lost his influence (such as he possessed) and credibility. In the wake of the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution, a variety of rumours emanating from Lhasa and Peking – and for most part unsubstantiated – mentioned his hobnobbing with the reactionary clique, his escape from his captors, his "peaceful" liquidation. After a while the rumours subsided, but as is their wont left a lot of questions unanswered – leaving his fate a subject of wild speculation. In all this, a dictum of the present Dalai Lama comes back powerfully to mind:

No boy who grew up under such concentrated, constant alien influence could possibly retain his own free will. And in spite of this influence, I do not believe he will ever quite abandon our religion in favour of communism.<sup>33</sup>

In much the same context, some fateful words of the great 13th, written nearly a half century ago in what is called his "Last Testament" bear reproduction:

It may happen that here in the centre of Tibet the religion and the secular administration may be attacked both from the outside and the inside. Unless we can guard our country, it will now happen that the Dalai and Panchen Lamas, the Father and the Son, the Holders of the Faith, the Glorious rebirths, will be broken down and left without a name. As regards the monasteries and the priesthood, their lands and other property will be destroyed. The administrative customs of the Three Religious Kings will be weakened. The officers of the State, ecclesiastical and secular, will find their lands seized and their other property confiscated and they themselves made to serve their enemies, or wander about the country as beggars do. All beings will be sunk in great hardships and in overpowering fear; the days and nights will drag on slowly in suffering.<sup>34</sup>

Did the 13th Dalai Lama perhaps see through the crystal ball and prophesy – beyond human ken?

<sup>32</sup> Ginsburgs & Mathos, *op. cit.*, pp. 183–84.

<sup>33</sup> *Dalai Lama*, pp. 97–8. For texts of the Dalai Lama's statements of April 18 and June 20, 1959, see Foreign Affairs Reports, *supra*, n. 12.

<sup>34</sup> The 13th Dalai Lama's "Last Testament" is a 9-paged little book written in 1931 in response to ardent prayers by the Tibetan Government and people. Bell, *Portrait*, pp. 377–82, gives a full text translation; the above citation is from p. 380. The three religious kings referred to in the text are Song-tsen Gam-po, Thri-song De-tsen and Räl-pa-chen, who reigned during the period A. D. 600–900.

According to Petech, their respective dates are c. A. D. 620–49, 755–97, 815–38.



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The Whitehall end of the picture emerges mostly through records in the India Office Library, also in London. The principal collection used are the *Political and Secret Department Subject Files*. These are mostly distinguished by the year (indicated by a stroke at the end) in which the compilation was made. Lately, however, a new system of cataloguing designated as L/P & S/10 – has taken their place. Apart from the subject files, there are the very useful *External Collections* now listed as L/P & S/12/–, most of these in facsimile.

The records of the Government of India, preserved in the National Archives in New Delhi, have also been drawn upon. Those principally used here are the *Foreign and Political Department Proceedings*, marked Secret-External, External A and, in some cases, External B. Sometimes it is possible to find the same proceeding at more than one place but, upto 1921, conveniently for the researcher, they are indexed together under various subject-heads viz. "Affairs of Tibet", etc. Among the most interesting, and revealing, are those containing, apart from the official proceedings, the notes, marginal comments and official annotations.

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