



## **The Last Rites for Tibet**

*Toward Peaceful Co-existence?*

March & April 2002

### **Introduction**

The twenty-third day of May 1951 was to be one of the most important watersheds in the history of the relations between India, Tibet and China. On that day, a 17-Point Agreement was signed between the People's Republic of China and some Tibetan representatives in Beijing. The Tibetans had no choice, but to accept a new deal: China had invaded their country a few months earlier; they were no more an independent nation. From the Chinese side, Mao could claim that the Tibetans had finally rejoined the great Motherland.

Apart from the fact that Tibet was becoming an 'autonomous region' of China, the other particularity of the Agreement was that, for the first time in fifty years, India was not a party to the accord between Lhasa and Beijing. We shall see the disastrous consequences for India and Tibet during the three following years. This will finally ended up in the signature of another agreement concerning Tibet, this time between China and India, the famous Panch Sheel Agreement.

### **The Downgrading of the Mission in Lhasa**

Soon after the signing of the 17-Point Agreement, Panikkar, the Indian Ambassador to China, came to India for consultation with his government. At that time he was already fully in love with the Communist regime. Nehru, his Prime Minister was also convinced that the future of India lay with the East. In one of his letters to the Chief Ministers, he described the situation thus: *"it is important to know what the new China is and in what direction it is going... For the first time, China possesses a strong Central Government whose decrees run even to Sinkiang and Tibet. Our own relations with China are definitively friendly."*<sup>1</sup>

However, very early in the bilateral relations, differences began to appear. A few weeks after the above letter, the Indian Prime Minister admitted for the first time that there were some differences of perceptions with the Chinese government. At a press conference, on 3 November 1951, when someone pointed out to certain differences between India and China especially about the Indian Mission at Lhasa<sup>2</sup>, he remarked:

So far as our mission or trade with Tibet is concerned, our mission is there and our trade continues. It is true that it is desirable to remove any doubt if there is any. In course of time that will be done by friendly talks with the Government of China.<sup>3</sup>

A few months later on 28 February 1952 at another press conference when asked again about the position of the Indian Mission in Lhasa, Nehru said, *"At present, it is exactly the same as it was. It dealt with certain trade and cultural matters more or less. Of course there is not too much trade and it continues to be there."*<sup>4</sup> He added that "it never had any diplomatic status technically", which was not completely true as the British and then Indian Representative had definitively a diplomatic status till 1952.

During the same conference the Indian Prime Minister declared that he was not aware of "any infiltration of Chinese troops in India." Rumours had begun of incursions of Chinese soldiers through the UP-Tibet border as well as through the Ladakh-Tibet border. The first surveys of the Sinkiang-Tibet highway cutting through the Aksai Chin most probably occurred during these years. Unfortunately, as we shall see later the Indo-Tibetan border in the western sector was still shown on the Indian maps as 'undefined'.

In June 1952, the situation had further evolved, the Chinese had taken physical control of most parts of Tibet and the Tibetans had begun discovering the hardship caused by an invading army.<sup>5</sup> During a press conference in June 1952, when asked about the negotiations with China on Tibet, Nehru's answer was vague:

Nothing very definite has taken place yet. In Tibet we have our Mission in Lhasa; we have a trade mission at Gyantse and we keep some guards to safeguard the route and the communications system to some extent. None of these things really are of any great difficulty. They are not difficult

questions at all. Obviously once it is accepted and admitted that the Chinese Government is not only the suzerain power in Tibet but is exercising the suzerainty, then something will flow from it. Then you cannot treat Tibet as an independent country with an independent representation from us. Though our Representative remains, this changes his character somewhat, and the trade mission and other things also follow. I do not think there is any difficulty about it. It has to be negotiated with China and Tibet both.<sup>6</sup>

During the following months, in direct contradiction of the Simla Convention which had been ratified by the Government of India and the Tibetan Government, the question of involving the Tibetans in negotiations would be completely forgotten. India, in the worst colonial tradition begun by the British at the beginning of the century, was ready to negotiate an agreement on Tibet without any reference to the Tibetan authorities.

Though a few months earlier, Nehru had ambiguously declared that the Mission in Tibet never had a diplomatic status, now he more prudently admitted: "the fact of the matter is that the status of the representative in Lhasa has never been defined for the last thirty years."

However, the Prime Minister had to admit that the circumstances have changed and from an independent country Tibet had become a country under the effective suzerainty of China: "China is now exercising its suzerainty".

In June 1952, at another Press Conference, he told the press: "Our representative in Lhasa will in course of time become a Consul-General, as Tibet is no longer an independent country. There will be no difficulty in fixing these and like matters up."<sup>7</sup>

The decision had been taken to demote the diplomatic relations between Tibet and India.

In the same month, the clever Zhou Enlai told the gullible Indian Ambassador that he "presumed that India had no intention of claiming special rights arising from the unequal treaties of the past and was prepared to negotiate a new and permanent relationship safeguarding legitimate interests." Panikkar informed Nehru<sup>8</sup> that Zhou Enlai "clearly wanted to convey the impression that the only issue was to find "an agreement in principle" about the transformation of the

Indian Mission in Lhasa into a proper Consulate-General. It was the “immediate practical step” and negotiation for India’s special rights like military posts, trade marts and posts and telegraphs could come later on. No mention of the border was made.

Nehru replied the following day to Panikkar.

As for our Mission in Lhasa being converted into a Consulate-General we have no objection, we would also be agreeable to opening of Chinese Consulate in Bombay. We would like you to consider however how far it is desirable to have these piecemeal arrangements. We would naturally prefer a general and comprehensive settlement which includes Frontier.<sup>9</sup>

In a letter to Nehru of 28 July, Zhou Enlai for the first time, requested officially the “regularisation” of the Indian Mission in Lhasa. While recognising the legitimacy of India’s trade and cultural interests in Tibet, the Chinese Premier suggested that the political agency at Lhasa should be *“regularised by its transformation into an Indian Consulate-General in exchange for the opening of a similar Chinese Consulate in Bombay.”*

In a cable to the Indian Mission in Lhasa on 6 September 1952, Nehru clarified the policy of the Government of India vis-à-vis the Mission in Lhasa: Sinha, the Indian Representative in Lhasa, had asked for a loan of Rs 2 lakhs to help the forces which wanted to continue the fight for Tibetan independence<sup>10</sup>:

We have already agreed to convert our representative in Tibet into a Consul General. That itself indicates what future position is going to be. It would be improper and unwise for our representative to get involved in Tibetan domestic affairs or intrigues. We are naturally friendly towards Tibetans, as we have been in the past, but we must not give them any impression of possibility of interference or help. Therefore, any question of loan as suggested is completely out of the question. We have to judge these matters from larger world point of view which probably our Tibetan friends have no means of appreciating.

The Tibetan friends could understand less and less what was happening to them or perhaps they were beginning to grasp the meaning of the prophetic words of the Thirteenth Dalai Lama “and long and dark shall be the night.” But

how could they understand that they were sacrificed for the sake of “larger world point of view”?

In September 1952, the Indian Political Officer was demoted to Consul General and Panikkar could say: *“The main issue of our representation at Lhasa was thus satisfactorily settled and I was happy to feel that there no outstanding issue between us and the Chinese at the time of my departure”*.<sup>11</sup>

Seeing the way the Indian diplomats were ready to bend backward to any of their demands, Mao Zedong and his colleagues were prompt to find more and more outstanding issues. The Indian weakness must have been interpreted in Beijing as a green light to go ahead to build a road cutting through the Indian territory of Aksai Chin.

Though it was ‘understood’ in the talks between Panikkar and Zhou Enlai that the ‘regularisation’ of the Mission in Lhasa would be the first step to pave the way to negotiations for all other outstanding problems, the Chinese had another priority, this was to consolidate their position in Tibet, build strategic roads, and bring more so-called ‘liberation forces’.

A year later, in September 1953, Nehru would have to remind the Chinese Premier.

The Government of India has been anxious to come to a final settlement about pending matters so as to avoid any misunderstanding and friction at any time. On the 2nd August 1952, they presented a note to Your Excellency’s Government about all pending matters expressing their willingness to discuss them and to modify certain practices and even to remove some of them, if they are considered as affecting the dignity of China. Subsequently, at the request of the Chinese Government, they agreed to the establishment of Consulates-General in Lhasa and Bombay.

No further steps have been taken since then to negotiate a settlement.<sup>12</sup>

The Chinese troops were now occupying the Roof of the World fully; time was now going in their favour.

## **Border Issues: The Panikkar Doctrine**

On the border issue, as in the case of the Indian Mission in Lhasa, things took a new turn soon after the signature of the 17-Point Agreement and the arrival of the first Chinese troops in Lhasa.

On September 21, exactly two weeks after the PLA had entered the Tibetan capital, Panikkar had a meeting with Zhou Enlai who told the Indian Ambassador: "there was no difference of point of view in regard to Tibet between India and China". Zhou was only "particularly anxious to safeguard in every way Indian interests in Tibet." At that time he spoke of "the stabilisation of the Tibetan frontier [which] was a matter of common interest to India, Nepal and China and could best be done by discussions among the three countries."<sup>13</sup> Six days later, Zhou Enlai invited Panikkar to one of his succulent private dinners. During the course of the evening (given in honour of Panikkar's wife), the Chinese Premier laid special emphasis on the necessity of friendship between India, Burma, Indonesia and China. When informed of this, Nehru, very credulously replied that he had "little doubt that Chou En-lai's talk with you is related to the larger framework of China's policy vis-à-vis neighbour ...of which Tibet's boundary with India and Nepal and China's boundary with Burma are only parts." He added, "Our provisional view is that in first instance, conversations should take place between China and us regarding our interests in Tibet and common boundary between Tibet and India." A few days earlier Nehru had a lunch with Henderson, the American Ambassador to India and after their meeting the Prime Minister noted:

The developments in Tibet and Chinese forces coming right near the Indian border has created a new situation for us. We did not think for a moment that there was any danger of invasion of India *via* Tibet (Mr Henderson entirely agreed with this). But, nevertheless, the new situation made us somewhat apprehensive of this long frontier and we had to take some steps in regard to it. Previously we had completely ignored this frontier. Now we could not do that. <sup>14</sup>

Month after month, Panikkar became more and more enamoured of the Communist regime in Beijing. When Zhou had spoken of stabilisation of the Indo-Tibetan border, he had understood that there was no difference of

opinion on the border and both India and China agreed to the McMahon Line and the central and western sectors in UP and Ladakh.

In his biography of Nehru, Dr S. Gopal noted: "this shrouded sentence [about the stabilisation of the border] was not an explicit recognition of the frontier". As during the previous years, the other officials of the Ministry of External Affairs did not agree with Panikkar's optimistic views.

In a Note entitled *The Threat from Tibet* written early October by G.S. Bajpai, the Secretary-General of Ministry of External Affairs he had pointed out that "though a large Chinese army or a Tibetan army under Chinese inspiration and leadership may not attempt an invasion of India, the possibility of small forces dribbling in through the numerous passes and then combining to make trouble for us cannot be and had not been ruled out".<sup>15</sup>

However, Nehru replied:

...The possibility of a regular invasion of Nepal or India by Chinese forces through Tibet can be ruled out even as a remote contingency. In any event, in the present state of affairs, it is not a proposition which we need consider. I need not go into the reasons for this. What might happen is some petty trouble in the borders and unarmed infiltration. To some extent this can be stopped by check posts, which are necessary. Ultimately, however, armies do not stop communist infiltration or communist ideas. .... Any large expenditure on the army will starve the development of the country and social progress. That is much more likely to endanger the stability than the lack of army to protect frontiers.

Panikkar arrived in Delhi for consultations on October 16, 1951.

After discussing with his colleagues, Bajpai wrote another note. It was clear for the Secretary General that the recognition of the border had to be part of a general settlement. For him there was no question of surrendering the advantages accrued from the Simla Convention without getting a firm assurance from the Chinese on the McMahon Line and other sectors. It was also no question of withdrawing the garrisons in Gyantse and Yatung without securing some assurance on the border.<sup>16</sup>

The Secretary General drew up instructions for Panikkar in which it was clearly stated that India's main interests in the negotiations with China on Tibet was the confirmation of the McMahon Line and the other sectors of the frontier.<sup>17</sup>

It is however true that at that time in India, there was a very poor awareness of the border. To give an example during a Press Conference, on 14 January 1952, Nehru was asked about the extension of the administration up to the McMahon Line. A journalist asked "Is there any implication of joint administration and joint defence [with Nepal] of the north-east border?"

After having explained that McMahon Line had nothing to do with Nepal, Nehru continued:

The McMahon Line is the frontier, but on this side of the McMahon Line there have been undeveloped territories-jungles, etc. You take ten day to a fortnight to reach the frontier from any administrative centre. So, all that we are doing is to improve communications there up to our frontier and to get into better touch with it.

However when the journalist pointed out at the north-west sector, the Prime Minister was less assured: "I do not know. The McMahon Line is a definition of that border on the north-east." But the journalist insisted: "There is a certain tract which is undefined so far - even on the maps it is shown as undefined - towards the north-east and north-west, between Nepal and the province of Kashmir: near Lake Manasarovar. Nehru answered "I do not know that any question has arisen; it has not come up before me at all at any time."

And once again when the press pointed out "But even on the maps it is shown as an undefined border." Nehru could only say "Maybe. All these are high mountains. Nobody lives there. It is not very necessary to define these things."

Nobody lives there!

Panikkar returned to Beijing and he immediately forgot the instructions given to him, though he knew that they had been approved by the Prime Minister. In his next meeting with Zhou Enlai, he did not take the border issue as instructed as he felt that the Chinese Premier was not in a mood to speak about "larger issue".<sup>18</sup>

A few weeks later, a note on India's interests in Tibet was presented by the Indian Ambassador to the Chinese Foreign Office; at that time again there was

no mention of the frontier problems. During the following meetings with Zhou Enlai, both sides remained silent on the border. There was no border question between friends!

One sometimes wonders how an Ambassador can meet for consultations with the Foreign Minister of a neighbouring country without referring the matter to his Foreign Secretary or Foreign Minister. But Panikkar was an establishment by himself. He was nevertheless sending his reports of his encounters ...after the meetings.

John Lall, a former Diwan of Sikkim who was serving at that time in Gangtok wrote: *"Very few people in Delhi other than Nehru had any illusions about Panikkar. N.R. Pillai, Bajpai's successor as the Secretary General of the Ministry of External Affairs told a highly perceptive diplomat then in Delhi that Panikkar 'had the reputation as an historian mixing fiction and fact and in his reporting from Peking he had the tendency to believe what he wanted to believe."*

The Canadian High Commissioner thought that Panikkar was just a cynic *"He had no illusions about the policies of the Chinese Government and he had not been misled by it. He considered however, that the future, at least in his lifetime, lay with the communists and he therefore did his best to get on well with them by misleading Nehru."*

On 14 June 1952, Panikkar met with Zhou again.<sup>19</sup> During this meeting Panikkar said that he had expected the Chinese Premier would raise the border question with India, but the shrewd Zhou remained silent. The Indian Ambassador concluded again that "India's position on the frontier with Tibet was well known to China, and as Chou En-lai had not raised the border issue in his interviews with him [Panikkar], his silence should be presumed to be acquiescence, if not acceptance, and it was wisest to ignore the subject." Nehru left it to Panikkar to judge what was the best policy to follow.

In our instructions to you dated 25th January, you were asked to specify our interests including those on the Frontier. We presume you have done so. If so, we can presume that Chou En-lai's silence means some kind of acquiescence. It is not for us to suggest any reconsideration. At the same time I should like to be assured on this point. I leave it to you to exercise your discretion in this matter.<sup>20</sup>

But soon, as Dr S. Gopal put it: "Nehru's surprise turned to ill-ease."

We think it is rather odd that, in discussing Tibet with you, Chou En-lai did not refer at all to our frontier. For our part, we attach more importance to this than to any other matters. We are interested, as you know, not only in our direct frontiers but also in the frontiers of Nepal, Bhutan and Sikkim... There are perhaps some advantages in our not ourselves raising this issue. On the other hand, I do not quite like Chou En-lai's silence about it when discussing even minor matters.<sup>21</sup>

Though many other officers of the Ministry of External Affairs, particularly G.S. Bajpai and K.P.S. Menon did not agree with Panikkar's theory that if the Chinese do not raise the issue, it was a sign that there was no problem. Ultimately, Panikkar's advice prevailed and Nehru wrote to the Foreign Secretary on July 19:

On reconsideration, I accept Shri Panikkar's advice that we should not make specific mention about the frontiers. I think, however, that this point should be made clear to Kaul,<sup>22</sup> so that he may know exactly how our mind is working in regard to it.

However there were still some doubts in Nehru's mind. A week later, he again wrote to the Foreign Secretary:

I am inclined to think that in our future talks or notes about Tibet, we should mention the frontier. I appreciate the reasons which Panikkar advanced and it is because of these reasons that we have not brought up this subject.<sup>23</sup> But I am beginning to feel that our attempt at being clever might overreach itself. I think it is better to be absolutely straight and frank. You might discuss this matter also with Panikkar and perhaps get notes drafted.

The *volte-face* of the Chinese government on the exchange of prisoners of the Korean conflict as well as the constant protest from Bajpai was temporarily opening the Prime Minister's eyes. He had himself admitted that Panikkar had "the habit of seeing further than perhaps facts warrant, though he could not see obvious facts happening right under his nose."<sup>24</sup>

For a few months, the situation remained unchanged, in a note to the Secretary General of the Ministry of External Affairs on March 5, 1953, Nehru wrote:

When Sardar Panikkar was in Peking,<sup>25</sup> the question arose of our settling our frontier with Tibet, that is the McMahon line, finally with the Chinese Government. Mr. Panikkar was of opinion that we had made our position clear to the Chinese Government and that it will serve no useful purpose to raise that question formally at that stage. We agreed at the time. Perhaps the present is not a suitable time to raise this question. But if occasion offers itself and especially if any challenge to that frontier is made, then we shall have to make this perfectly clear.<sup>26</sup>

The Government of India was still trying to be clever! But the old fox Zhou Enlai was cleverer, it would take a few more years for Nehru to discover. There was again no question of discussing the borders and including their recognition in a general package deal. Nehru thought:

For the present, we need not raise the question of the frontier, but this will have to be brought in a larger settlement. In that settlement, I should like to make clear our special position in the border States. Perhaps an occasion might arise even before that settlement for us to make this clear. But, for the present, no mention need be made.<sup>27</sup>

It is in this atmosphere that Nehru announced in September 1953 that negotiations would start soon at the suggestion of the Government of India. India took the initiative and proposed negotiations in Beijing to resolve all outstanding issues, though it was still not clear if the border problem should be discussed.

In early December, the Secretary General put up a Note in which he defined the main points for discussions at what became known as the Beijing Conference. These points were:

1. The question of India's frontier with Tibet,
2. Indo-Tibetan trade and trade agencies,
3. Freedom of movement of Indian and Tibetan traders and pilgrims,
4. Passports and visas,
5. Telegraph, post office and hospitals

6. Security guards and escorts and

7. Special position of Bhutan.

On 3 December 1953, Nehru replied to a Note from the Secretary General giving the framework for negotiations to be held in Beijing regarding the relations between India and China and India's interests in Tibet.

Though he generally agreed with the points made by the Secretary General, he again remained faithful to the Panikkar's doctrine: not to say anything about the border.

We should not raise this question. If the Chinese raise it, we should express our surprise and point out that this is a settled issue. Further, that during the last two years or so, when reference was frequently made about Indo-Chinese or Indo-Tibetan problems, there has never been any reference to this frontier issue and it is surprising that this should be brought up now. Our delegation cannot discuss it.

Though Panikkar had been transferred more than a year earlier to Cairo, Nehru was still keen to consult on China's affairs. The former Ambassador suggested a step further, he noted "if China insisted on reopening the whole issues of the frontier, the Indian delegation could walk out of the conference and break off the negotiations." Nehru did not agree. "We should avoid walking out unless the Chinese insist on taking up this question. If such an eventuality occurs, the matter will no doubt be referred to us." To agree to discuss was for Panikkar an admission that there was a problem.

Nehru objected to the inclusion of some parts in Pakistan occupied Kashmir in eventual discussions. He rightly pointed out that India was not in possession of these territories. He also noted that it would not be wise to restrict trade between India and Tibet. "Tibet is our natural market and we should develop it normally."

He was also in favour to keep the trade agencies open: *"Gartok is important. Yatung especially, and, to some extent, Gyantse are likely to become more important as trade between India and Tibet increases. They are on the main route. Therefore, it is eminently reasonable that we should have some trade agents there or at least at Yatung."*

That was the context in which the Indian delegation proceeded to Beijing in December 1953.

### **Border infiltration in UP and NEFA**

We shall now look at the actual situation on the border in the early fifties. From 1951, disturbing rumours of Tibetan and Chinese infiltration through the UP border had been circulating in the press and some government circles. In October 1951, Sampuranand, a Minister in the U.P. Government, wrote to the Prime Minister pointing out that some areas adjoining Tibet had become vulnerable "because of Tibetan activities supported by China." He asked the Government to take necessary precautions by laying strategic roads, constructing barracks for soldiers and establishing army outposts on the Indian side.

Nehru replied a few days later:

We have not been entirely negligent about our Tibetan border. Full enquiries have been made by air and on land and we are considering reports of these enquiries. Some steps have already been taken on the lines of the recommendations made. <sup>28</sup>

It is not clear what was the extent of the 'enquiries' and which agencies (Central Government, the Survey of India or IB?) had made them. It is true that a border defence Committee under Lt Gen. Kulwant Singh had been set up earlier and some recommendations had been given. However, we shall see that very little was achieved in term of intelligence gathering and manning the border till the early sixties. Anyhow, Nehru optimistically concluded "*I do not think that we need take too gloomy a view of the situation.*"

In September 1952, the Prime Minister wrote a Note to the Foreign Secretary about some alleged intrusion. He had received a letter from Dr K.M. Munshi the Governor of Uttar Pradesh pointing out that the boundary between Tehri and Tibet was not clearly defined.

Nehru answered:

That is perhaps so. The matter might be looked into. My own impression is that we are clear about the boundary. But Tibetans have regularly come

across it here as well as in Assam and collected rent or revenue... we have never accepted the fact that there is a dispute about the boundary.<sup>29</sup>

The fact that revenue was collected in some areas by the Tibetan authorities till 1951-52, would have very serious repercussions on the future of the border areas particularly in the North-east and UP/Ladakh sectors. The Chinese who were slowly and systematically building the road and communication network from Lhasa to the borders of India,<sup>30</sup> would soon claim as part of the People's Republic of China, all the areas where the Tibetans had once collected revenue whether it was on the Tibetan or Indian side of the McMahon Line.

In the central and eastern sectors, the situation was even more complicated because as admitted by Dr Munshi the frontier was not physically demarcated. Obviously as long as a friendly and peaceful state was on the other side of the border, it was not so important to have a proper delimitation. Tibet and India had lived for millennia as neighbours and friends without problems, but in the early fifties the situation had changed.

In September 1952, Nehru wrote to the Foreign Secretary to reiterate what he had earlier told Sampurnanand: *"definitely and precisely that they [the Tibetans] should not be allowed to come and they should be pushed back if they cross over."*

He admitted he had not followed up the matter "what happened later, I do not know." The UP Government was ready to keep some armed police on the border provided that the Center put up some barracks. Nehru added: "it was not fair to expect them to remain in tents or in the open." Unfortunately for India's defence, the buck was passed from one ministry to another and from the State to the Centre and back. Finally bureaucracy prevailed and nothing happened for one more decade.

It has to be pointed out that in 1952 the question was about Tibetan incursion into Indian territory. One or two years later it will be far more serious as it will be the Chinese troops which would begin intruding on Indian soil. The Chinese had never ever visited these areas before, but their policy was clear, wherever Tibetans had made claims on the Indian soil, this territory automatically became Chinese territory.

But the Prime Minister saw things from a different angle, apart from his soft approach for China, the most important task was for him to 'develop' the border areas. He believed that the people of the border areas, if provided for better opportunity would be the first to defend the borders of India. On 12 April 1952, he wrote:

The people living on the country's borders play an important role in determining her relations with the neighbouring countries. While they can ensure peace in their own country, they can also create troubles with the neighbouring countries. Nobody need get upset over the recent developments in Tibet. I would like to repeat that one of the foremost interests of India is cultivation of friendly relations with her neighbours, especially China and Tibet. <sup>31</sup>

Development particularly in the North-East, was the only way to tackle the situation, felt Nehru who was directly responsible for the border areas as the Minister of External Affairs: "In a wider sense, it is our responsibility to look after the entire border even apart from the North-East Frontier Agency."

The manning of the border posts remained the responsibility of the Ministry of External Affairs and when all kinds of rumours were going around, Nehru had to take a renewed interest about possible infiltration and the steps to be taken to control them. In March 1953, he wrote again to the Foreign Secretary:

I think I have drawn your attention previously to the difficulties we are experiencing on the UP Tibet border. Two years ago or so a committee under certain recommendations about the steps to be taken on our frontier areas. Among these, they dealt with the UP-Tibet border and suggested check-posts, etc. Since then the UP Government has repeatedly written to us on this subject, but somehow the matter has got hung up between the Home Ministry and the Finance Ministry, <sup>32</sup>

A few months later Nehru wrote again to the Home Minister,

... Nevertheless, I am writing to you because this matter has been delayed very greatly, although it is of high importance. <sup>33</sup> A Border Defence Committee was appointed long ago and it made certain recommendations about the putting up of check-posts and taking other steps on the UP-Tibet border. There is no doubt that it has to be done, but long argument

has resulted over the quantum of expenditure which the Government of India or the UP Government should bear.<sup>34</sup>

A year later the matter was taken up again by the Secretary General of the Ministry of External Affairs. Nothing had move for the past three years.

Apparently information of infiltration had been increasing.

When on 17 February 1953, Pant, the U.P. Chief Minister, took up again the issue; he drew Nehru's' attention on the lack of means of communication and development in the Indo-Tibet border area. The matter had been taken with various ministries and a comprehensive scheme had been sent to the Planning Commission by the UP Government and nothing had happened.

Nehru regretted once more the slow progress in spite of the various recommendations made from time to time. "Nothing is moving, we must get this moving... I am particularly interested in the roads, because without the roads nothing else can really be done."

Here we see the difference between the Indian and Chinese way of functioning. In the early 1950's, Communist China decided to defend its border and roads were immediately made, while in India, despite the decision at the highest level, nothing happened for several years. Files were again and again stuck in a bureaucratic process.<sup>35</sup>

By the end of 1953 India had began initiating talks with the Chinese government in view of an agreement in the changed situation<sup>36</sup>. All these rumours of incursion made many Indian leaders resentful of the 'special' friendship with China. Where were the reciprocal sentiments and actions? In fact, the Indian government was not serious about the Chinese threat.

One cannot be in love and at the same time suspect one's lover.

In March, Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee, leader of the Hindu Mahasabha, told the Parliament: *"some of our frontiers on the northern side, namely the impregnable Himalayas, have today broken down and there is no reference in the Report [Annual Report of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs] as to what steps the Government are taking for the purpose of securing strategic importance of that particular area. These are matters which vitally concern us."*

The matter was again raised during a debate in Parliament at the end of 1953. A member, Lanka Sundaram (Independent) referred to the news about

“percolation” of the Chinese troops on the Indo-Tibetan border across various passes. He claimed that 60,000 to 100,000 Chinese troops were poised across the Himalayan border, and expressed concern over the Government’s inadequate security measures. He also pointed out India’s special responsibility towards Bhutan, Sikkim, Nepal and Tibet, and referred to the existence of a note in the External Affairs Ministry in which it was mentioned that China was disinclined to accept the McMahon Line. He moved an amendment pressing for the strengthening of the national defence. Though the amendment was later withdrawn, Nehru tried to answer in details to Lanka Sundaram on December 24, 1953:

Now, Dr. Lanka Sundaram gave some facts which rather surprised me. I do not know where his information comes from about the happenings on the Indo-Tibetan border. He said that 100,000 or, I forget 50,000, troops are concentrated there. I have a few sources of information too, but I have not got that information. I should be very happy if Dr. Lanka Sundaram will supply me with some information on that subject so that I can verify it. I am in intimate touch this way and that way on the border, on both sides, and those figures which he mentioned, so far as I am concerned are completely wrong, and far out from truth. I would like to say further that in a way, in the way in Dr Lanka Sundaram put it, there seems to be some connection with our talks with China which are going to take place in the course of the next week in Peking, some connection between them and the recent development in regard to the proposals for US military aid to Pakistan.<sup>37</sup>

As a matter of fact this question of our talks in Peking has been under correspondence for the last many, many months, and ultimately, I should think, about three months back, we suggested to the Chinese Government that we would like to have some talks with them and that we could have them either in Delhi or in Peking.<sup>38</sup>

It was again discussed in March 1954 while the negotiations were going on in Beijing. Nehru tried his best to pacify the members: negotiations would soon be concluded in Beijing, and all problems solved:

Yesterday some of our friends here raised the subject of our borders,

particularly on the Tibet side, what is known as the McMahon Line. I do not know why they had this sudden doubt because the McMahon Line constitutes India's border at the moment on which we have a number of established check posts. And as far as we are concerned it is our border and will continue to be so. There is no dispute with any other country over this, nor are we about to raise any problem. Therefore it makes no sense for these doubts to be voiced.<sup>39</sup>

Unfortunately, as we saw earlier, the Indian delegates were not to take up the border issue during the negotiations, it was not part of the agenda.

### **Towards the Panch Sheel Agreement: the end of the Tibetan state**

The last rites for Tibet were performed in 1952 by Panikkar, before he left his post in Beijing, when he agreed to dismantle India's "colonial" rights in Tibet and offer them to neo-colonialist China. It was considered by India as a gesture of goodwill towards new China. In 1947, India had inherited from the British the rights and obligations acquired during the tripartite Simla Convention of 1914. The rights comprised the telegraph lines, the Indian Trade marts with military escorts in Gyantse, Gartok and Yatung and the Mission in Lhasa.

Instead of seeking a guarantee for a true autonomy for Tibet, which would have assured the security of the Indian border, the Indian Prime Minister bent backward and decided to consider the border issue with China as "a petty frontier dispute".

Krishna Menon, one of the main instigators of the pro-China Indian foreign policy declared: *"Tibet, including the various trade arrangements involved, was the only problem we had with China, which called for regularisation. We were determined not to be in anybody else's territory, and we wanted to make some practical arrangements."*

The argument that India did not want to be stationed on someone else's territory does not hold water, as for example in the case of Sikkim<sup>40</sup> and Bhutan, the Government of India had signed treaties to the effect that India

would look after their external affairs and defence, while these nations would retain their full internal autonomy.<sup>41</sup>

It should also be pointed out that in the case of Nepal, India took a very strong stand in favour of the popular and progressive forces in the country and intervene when the Ranas tried to depose the King in November 1950.

Nothing similar happened in the case of Tibet, although on 6 December, the Prime Minister had said in the Parliament:

...it should ultimately be the wishes of the people of Tibet that should count and not any legal or constitutional arguments... surely, according to any principles you proclaim and the principle I proclaim, the last voice in regard to Tibet should be the voice of the people of Tibet and nobody else.

Nehru had also said that if "by some remote and unlikely" chance, the Opposition could come to power, they would certainly follow the same policy. He further insisted that the Government had to take into consideration the fact the two nations (India and China) had a common frontier of 2000 miles. *"We have to consider our policy in regard to China remembering not only whatever past we may have had, but the present and the future, that we have to live together in peace and friendship, and I hope co-operation."*

Though we saw earlier that some members of Parliament had stated in the House that according to some secret files in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Government of India was aware that the Chinese did not agree with the McMahon line.

However, it is difficult to ascertain the true situation and unless researchers are able to access the classified files in the Ministry of External Affairs and the Nehru Papers, it will be very difficult to have a clear idea of the real situation in 1953/54 and what were exactly the compulsions and the pressures on the Indian Government, though it is clear that it was not only the question of the acceptance of the McMahon line, but also its demarcation which needed have been discussed.

One point remains: there was a general euphoria in India about Asia's resurgence. Many politicians, bureaucrats and intellectuals did not share the feeling that something 'new' was happening and the invasion of Tibet in October 1950 had deeply shocked the Indian masses, though it was soon to be

forgotten under Nehru government's propaganda. A handful of people around Nehru who had a deep admiration for the Maoist revolution<sup>42</sup> were the architects of the new orientation of India's foreign policy; they believed that the Chinese regime was a viable model for India's future. They considered that the Chinese 'democratic' and 'socialist' revolution had achieved a lot to defeat the forces of tradition and corruption<sup>43</sup>. Not only Mao and his comrades had succeeded to get rid of the 'four olds'<sup>44</sup> in China, but they had managed to unify the country for the first time in centuries. To Panikkar and Krishna Menon (as well as for Mao), the main villain was the United States.

Leaders like President Rajendra Prasad, Kripalani or S.P. Mookerjee though deeply concerned about India's security, were helpless without access to proper information. In any case, who could oppose Nehru in foreign policy matters, during those days?

What is most difficult to comprehend is that while India was enamoured of these fine ideals of Asian resurgence enunciated by Panikkar, she had become, at the same time, blind to the imperialistic objectives of the Communists. Whenever it was pointed out to them, like for example in the case of the Chinese maps including NEFA, Bhutan, Sikkim and Ladakh into the Chinese territory, Nehru's government discarded it as something not purposely done. It is a fact that for more than ten years the Indian leaders would be taken for a ride by the soft words of the suave Premier of China.

Did Nehru's government really believe that the only way to establish an eternal friendship with China was to accept compromises after compromises? He did know the real situation in Tibet<sup>45</sup>, but still believed that the Chinese socialist system was far superior to the one practised in India? Nehru's suspicion over the good intentions of the Chinese must have grown over the years, but he kept it to himself and never let it appear in public.

While researching for this book, in several occasions, it was pointed out by informants that some Indian leaders were not unhappy with the events in Tibet. Many of these leaders had been educated in England and had what Nehru called a liberal socialist education. Influenced by the French revolution, they wanted secular and religious powers to be totally separated; the concept of a theocracy practiced in Tibet was against their sentiments and beliefs.

In Tibet, the Gaden Phodang's form of Government had been characterised by a "harmonious blend of religion and politics" and it is true (and it was known) that the blend had not always been harmonious and very often during the last centuries Tibet had faced serious problems.<sup>46</sup> Without denying the weakness of the system, how could free India abandon the peace loving Tibetans to a regime which was ruthless and professed that the atom bomb was a 'paper tiger'?

To conclude, we should say a few more words on Nehru's vision on the frontier areas and the ideology which motivated him to abandon Tibet in the early fifties.

During the years following the signature of the 17-Point Agreement, relations between India and Tibet were regulated by the Simla Convention and the Trade Agreement which was attached to it. This Agreement was confirmed as valid when the Government of India wrote to the Government of Tibet in 1947 asking Lhasa to accept it.

In one of the White Papers on China, in which the Government of India published the correspondence between India and China on the border, it is said:

In the Eastern Sector, the Simla Convention and the "McMahon Line" Agreement merely formalised which had for centuries been the traditional boundary between India and Tibet. It is clear from the records of the Simla Conference that the then Government of China had full knowledge of the formalisation of the India-Tibet boundary and of the "McMahon Line" and had approved of them. This is attested by the initials and the seal of the Chinese plenipotentiary on the document and by the subsequent correspondence between the Governments concerned. If ratification of the Simla Convention was subsequently delayed, it was not because of any opposition to the formalisation of the boundary between Tibet and India as shown in the "McMahon Line" but because the then Government of China did not agree to the line of demarcation between Inner Tibet and Outer Tibet, it being understood that the former would be under Chinese influence.<sup>47</sup>

After the invasion of Tibet in 1950, things changed dramatically for Tibet: the 'hazy suzerainty', became a full-fledged occupation. In these circumstances, Nehru and some of his close advisors<sup>48</sup> felt that some new arrangements had to be made taking into account the latest developments in Tibet.

In the beginning of fifties, it is clear that the Simla Convention was legally and practically in force. The *quid-pro quo* arose only later when the Government of India became keen to change the terms of the Treaty between India, Tibet and China and at the same time wanted to stick to the some of the clauses of the Treaty, namely the demarcation of the McMahon Line. There was no logic in the Indian stand.

In addition, Nehru was dreaming about an eternal brotherhood between India and China which would propel the Asian continent as the future centre of world power; a kind of third block balancing the Western and communist blocks. His first assumption was that there could be no possible threat from India's new neighbour and partner: China.

When in October 1951 Bajpai, the Secretary General of the Ministry of External Affairs, suggested the possibility of "small forces dribbling in through numerous passes and then combining to make trouble for India"; the Indian Prime Minister rejected it even as a remote contingency, he wrote: "In any event, in the present state of affairs, it is not a proposition which we need consider." He added that it was for him an obvious conclusion. Nehru also felt that large expenditures on the army would starve the development of the country and social progress.

In July 1951, Nehru had already written to the Ministry of External Affairs that "so far as the Peking agreement<sup>49</sup> is concerned, there is no question of our approval or disapproval. We have had nothing to do with it and we have not been consulted at any stage either by the Tibetans or the Chinese."<sup>50</sup> He further advised the officials of the Ministry that it would not be proper for the Government of India to give any false hopes to the Tibetans, as India was not in a position to provide any help.

The assumption that India had nothing to do with the Agreement between Tibet and China was however totally wrong as India had in fact a Treaty with Tibet which stipulated that none of the parties should go into agreement

without the previous concurrence of the other party.<sup>51</sup> However Nehru, influenced by Panikkar, thought that the Simla Convention was a colonial sequel of the British rule and at the same time wanted the McMahon Line which was born out this treaty, to be recognised and accepted. His logic of defender of the oppressed people of Asia failed further when he accepted that Tibet could be swallowed up and colonized by a larger one, only for the sake of an elusive, hypothetical and one-sided friendship.

In a speech at Kalimpong on 12 April 1952, Nehru further elaborated on his ideology of 'non-interference'. The first element of the Panch Sheel Agreement was slowly taking shape in his vision of an ideal world order: "There will be no war in the world if every nation followed a policy of non-interference in the domestic affairs of sister countries."

He added "Nobody need get upset over the recent developments in Tibet. I would like to repeat that one of the foremost interests of India is cultivation of friendly relations with her neighbours, especially China and Tibet."<sup>52</sup>

But soon there would be only one neighbour. India would follow the old immoral colonial British habit of signing a treaty with the Chinese over the heads of the Tibetans, without even informing them.

When in September 1952, S. Sinha, the Indian Representative in Lhasa wrote a long report; Nehru got very upset and immediately answered his

Representative in Tibet:

Your telegram is rather disturbing as it indicates that our policy is not fully understood. That policy is to recognize that Tibet is under Chinese suzerainty and, subject to that, to protect our own interests in Tibet. Otherwise, we do not wish to interfere in internal affairs of Tibet and we can certainly be no party to any secret or other activities against the Chinese. That would be both practically and morally wrong. It is for Tibetans and Chinese to settle their problems.<sup>53</sup>

Nehru added: "We are naturally friendly towards Tibetans, as we have been in the past, but we must not give them any impression of possibility of interference or help."

The note of S. Sinha, the former head of the Indian Mission in Lhasa was titled: "*Chinese Designs on the North East Frontier of India*". This foreign

service officer was warning his South Block bosses against the new danger on the northern border. Nehru immediately sent the note to K.M. Panikkar for his comments.

Panikkar's view was that the issue was "not one of Chinese, or Chinese-inspired military adventure against the border of India", but he felt that India should be "developing settled conditions within India's border, in area where the administrative position was weak and the political position was only growing". His suggestions which were to be followed by Nehru during the following years were to implement a policy of firm friendship to the people of the area, of non-interference in their social life and making available to them the advantages of modern developments. Nehru also thought that India should take advantage of the contradictions of Chinese policy in Tibet. The meaning of this last proposal was not clear as there was no much contradiction or even opposition as yet to the Chinese policy in Tibet.

About Sinha's note, he wrote to Panikkar: "to talk about China's designs itself indicates that he is not taking quite an objective view of the situation but has started with certain presumptions. I do not rule out the possibility of such developments in Tibet, on our border or elsewhere. But we must take a balanced view."<sup>54</sup>

Sinha had mentioned about the possibility of a Chinese invasion of Nepal. It was indeed part of his duties, with the intelligence information in his possession, to examine all the possible scenarios. But it was not appreciated by the Prime Minister who felt that the "imaginative" approach of Sinha vitiates his argument and conclusions.

Nehru remarked: *"There is danger in Nepal, but this too is due to internal chaotic conditions than to outside interference. As a matter of fact, the outside interference that is troubling us is American and not Chinese."*

This would become a leitmotiv of his policy.

The Prime Minister continued with his favourite theme: "this officer must clearly understand our policy not only in the region of the frontier and in Tibet but in its wider aspect all over the world." Like the poor Tibetans, many of the officers posted on the border and on a daily touch with the intricacies of the border issues could not grasp the wider issues.

Nehru believed that he could be of greater assistance to Tibet if he could manage to maintain friendly relations with China, though several times he declared that he wanted to show firmness to safeguard India's 'vital' interests. Unfortunately as we have seen earlier, no firmness was ever shown in the vital matter of border delimitation. This would not even be mentioned in 1954, during the talks with the Chinese for the 'Panch Sheel Agreement'.

In the internal correspondence,<sup>55</sup> the Government of India always showed a great determination, but when it came for discussions with Zhou Enlai, the 'Panikkar Doctrine' ultimately prevailed and the firmness evaporated.

The occasion for Nehru to formulate his new Tibet (and China) policy came when in March 1953 S. Sinha who by that time had been transferred as the Officer on Special Duty in the Ministry of External Affairs, wrote a new note on the north-eastern frontier situation. The note drew attention to various possible dangers on the border areas. It again greatly upset Nehru who contemptuously wrote: "It appears that Mr. Sinha does not appreciate our policy fully. He should be enlightened."<sup>56</sup>

It has to be noted that this comment of Nehru was passed after Panikkar had sent his comments on Sinha's assessment from Cairo. The future would show the correctness of Sinha's analysis and the 'foolishness' of Panikkar, "the so-called China expert".

It is worth quoting Nehru's answer to Sinha's Report:

I find Mr. Sinha's approach to be coloured very much by certain ideas and conceptions which prevent him from taking an objective view of the situation. The note starts by reference to the lust for conquest of the Chinese and is throughout based on this. Mr. Sinha looks back with a certain nostalgia to the past when the British exercised a good deal of control over Tibet and he would have liked very much for India to take the place of the British of those days. As a matter of fact, the weakness of our position in Tibet has been that we are successors, to some extent, of an imperial power which had pushed its way into Tibet. When that imperial power has ceased to have any strength to function in the old way, it is patent that we cannot do so, even if we so wished. We do not, in fact, wish to do so in that particular way. What we are really interested in is our

own security maintenance of our frontiers.

It serves little purpose to think regretfully of past days and past ways. That is only done by people who have been pushed aside by the advance of history and who can only think of the past when they played an important role in the historic process. The biggest event since the last War is the rise of Communist China. It is totally immaterial whether we like it or dislike it. It is a fact. It followed naturally that a strong Chinese Government had done with more or less success. It followed also that there was no power, however big, which could resist that claim in Tibet. Certainly we could not do so. To take up an attitude of resistance without the strength to follow it up would have been political folly of the first magnitude. Therefore, we had to accept the changes that took place. We shall have to accept any other changes internal to Tibet. But one thing we are not prepared to accept is any modification of or intrusion across our frontiers. Therefore, we must concentrate on that and not think vaguely of other matters.

While there is much in Mr. Sinha's report that has a basis of truth, this is put forward in such an exaggerated and emotional way that it loses force. I am sorry that a representative of ours should allow his objective analysis to be affected in this way. That does not help in understanding a situation.<sup>57</sup>

It could certainly be argued that the emotional way of Sinha was more objective than the 'objective' way of Panikkar and his Prime Minister. However, the crux of the argument comes when the Indian Prime Minister states: "We live in a revolutionary period when the whole of Asia is in a state of turmoil and change. We have to keep up with that change and not merely regret the days of pre-change."

It is true that Tibet had not been able to keep up with the sudden revolutionary changes which were shaking the world. In many ways, Tibet was an island, not yet contaminated by the revolutionary fervour of the people of Asia and Africa. Nehru and his colleagues who had lived through the years of freedom struggle against the British colonialists were dreaming of the

emancipation of the Asian people: Asia could again be able to express its own genius.

But there was a serious contradiction in Nehru's Tibet policy; while he encouraged the progressive forces in many countries<sup>58</sup> to seek their independence, he used different standards for India's closest cultural and geographical neighbour, Tibet: an autonomous nation 'verging on independence' in his own words.

The logical conclusion of Nehru's ideology would have been for India to help her younger brother and neighbour. No nation (besides Nepal and Bhutan) depended so much on India for its protection.

India had a treaty agreement with Tibet, India could have sponsored Tibet's entry onto the stage of the newly free nations: but on the contrary Nehru preferred to sacrifice this peace-loving country for the sake a friendship that would never be. In the process, India lost its preponderant place in world affairs.

Another argument which would be used again and again and greatly influence Nehru's policy was the fact that he considered Tibet to be a socially and politically backward country. He most probably agreed with the Chinese leaders that Tibet needed to be 'liberated'. He concluded, "We cannot support feudal elements in Tibet, indeed we cannot interfere in Tibet. Having come to that conclusion, we should abide by it and not pine for a different policy, which anyhow is totally outside our reach."

Around that time, the Indian Prime Minister replied in a debate on Foreign Policy in the Parliament; he was in his revolutionary mood when he said:

Now we must realise that this revolution that came to China is the biggest thing that has taken place in the world at present, whether you like it or not.

For the first time in several hundred years of history China now has a strong central government. This is a very important fact for Asia and the world.<sup>59</sup>

In the same speech Nehru spoke about Panchsheel: "Live and let live, no one should invade the other, no one should fight the other... this is the basic principle which we have put in our treaty."

## The negotiations

It is in this context that the negotiations with Beijing began in December 1953. They were to last only six weeks, but it took four months to reach an *"Agreement on Trade and Intercourse between the Tibet region of China and India"* which was finally signed in Beijing on 29<sup>th</sup> April 1954. Based on the five principles of co-existence, the document was 'officially' depriving Tibet of its independence. The Tibetans had not been consulted by either party. This marked the end of a process started by the invasion of Eastern Tibet in October 1950 and followed by the signature of the 17-Point Agreement in Beijing in May 1951. India had now formally accepted that Tibet was only a 'region' of China.

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<sup>1</sup> *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru (SWJN)*, Series II, Vol. 18. *Letters to Chief Ministers*, p 726.

<sup>2</sup> The Editor of the *Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru* says: *"Consequent upon the Chinese invasion of Tibet in 1950 there were uncertainties as regard to the functions of the Indian mission in Lhasa, awaiting a final settlement of the Sino-Tibetan dispute and India's recognition of Chinese suzerainty over Tibet."*

It clearly means that in 1951, the Government of India had not yet recognised Tibet's take over.

<sup>3</sup> SWJN, Series II, Vol. 17 (2), *Relations with China and Tibet*, pp. 507.

<sup>4</sup> Press conference. New Delhi, 28 February 1952. Press Information Bureau.

<sup>5</sup> For the first time for centuries, Tibet faced food problems. The arrival of tens of thousands of new mouths to feed was a great disturbance on the balanced economic and environmental system of the Roof of the World. See Arpi Claude, *Tibetan Review*, Feeding the Enemy,

<sup>6</sup> Press conference, New Delhi, 21 June 1952. PIB. Extracts.

<sup>7</sup> SWJN, Series II, Vol. 18, *Press Conference of 21 June 1952*, p. 471.

<sup>8</sup> SWJN, Series II, Vol. 18, p. 474.

<sup>9</sup> SWJN, Series II, Vol. 18, *Cable to Panikkar*, p. 474.

<sup>10</sup> Sinha in his report mentioned three main groups in Lhasa. The third group *"claiming to be the champions of Tibetan freedom and culture. This group was in need of funds to build up its units in Tibetan villages and amongst the middle classes. Funds were available from foreign countries particularly from the USA, but the group did not wish to receive help from the countries which had nothing in common with Tibet. It looked upon India for help and sought a loan of Rs .2 lakhs."*

<sup>11</sup> See Panikkar, K.M., *In Two China*, (London: Allen & Unwin, 1955).

<sup>12</sup> SWJN, Series II, Vol. 23, p. 485.

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- <sup>13</sup> Cable from Panikkar to Nehru, 28 September 1951. See SWJN, Series II, Vol. 16 (2), p.643.
- <sup>14</sup> SWJN, Talk with Loy Henderson, New Delhi. 15 September 1951, Vol. 16-2, p. 627.
- <sup>15</sup> For Nehru's comments on the note written by G.S. Bajpai, Secretary-General, Ministry of External Affairs, see SWJN, Series II, Vol. 16-2, p. 560.
- <sup>16</sup> Note of G.S. Bajpai 21 November 1951 and K.P.S. Menon, 22 November 1951. See SWJN, series II, Vol. 16(2), p. 627.
- <sup>17</sup> Instructions drawn up by K.P.S. Menon, 21 January 1952, shown to Panikkar and approved the next day by the Prime Minister.
- <sup>18</sup> Panikkar's Cable to Nehru, 13 February 1952.
- <sup>19</sup> This time to discuss a settlement in Korea.
- <sup>20</sup> In a clarification of Chou En-lai's conversation with Panikkar on 14 June, handed to T.N. Kaul, Indian *Chargé d'Affaires*, on 10 July 1952, the Chinese Foreign Office stated that Chou En-lai had said that the "Chinese Government would like to state a principle at the same time solving specific problems and then follow this up with successive solution of other specific problem." The Chinese Government added that Chou En-lai felt "existing situation of Sino-Indian relationship in Tibetan China was scar left by Britain in course of their past aggression against China. For this Government of India was not responsible." and that the "relations between new China and new Government of India in Tibet should be built anew through negotiations."
- <sup>21</sup> Nehru's Cable to Panikkar, 16 June 1952. See SWJN, Series II, Vol. 18, p. 471.
- <sup>22</sup> T.N. Kaul, was Joint Secretary in the Ministry of External Affairs. He was soon to be posted in Beijing to assist Ambassador Raghavan.
- <sup>23</sup> In a cable to Nehru on 17 June 1952, K.M. Panikkar argued that India's position on the frontier with Tibet was well known to China, and as Chou En-lai had not raised the border issue in his interviews with him, his silence should be presumed to be acquiescence, if not acceptance, and it was wisest to ignore the subject.
- <sup>24</sup> Such as the invasion of Tibet in October 1950.
- <sup>25</sup> He had been transferred to Cairo as the Indian Ambassador to Egypt.
- <sup>26</sup> SWJN, Series II, Vol. 21, p. 555.
- <sup>27</sup> SWJN, Series II, Vol. 23, p. 484.
- <sup>28</sup> SWJN, Series II, Vol. 16(2), p. 541.
- <sup>29</sup> SWJN, Series II, Vol. 19. p. 651.
- <sup>30</sup> Mainly towards Tsona and Tawang in NEFA, Chumbi Valley and Sikkim as well towards Western Tibet and UP and Ladakh border.
- <sup>31</sup> SWJN, Series II, *Desirability of Friendly Ties with China and Tibet*, Vol. 18, p. 471.
- <sup>32</sup> SWJN, Series II, *Need for Check-Posts on UP-Tibet Border*, Vol. 21, p. 308.
- <sup>33</sup> Nehru had forwarded to Katju, the Home Minister a letter sent by K.M. Munshi, the Governor of UP, about this matter.
- <sup>34</sup> SWJN, Series II, *To K.N. Katju*, Vol 21, p. 305.

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- <sup>35</sup> It is sad to note that the situation is not very different some fifty years later.
- <sup>36</sup> The invasion of Tibet.
- <sup>37</sup> Lanka Sundaram said here: "It was not my intention."
- <sup>38</sup> SWJN, Series II, Vol. 24, *A Realistic Approach to Problems*, p. 577.
- <sup>39</sup> SWJN, Series II, Vol. 25, *Principles of Foreign Policy*, p. 391.
- <sup>40</sup> Sikkim was a still a separate entity in 1950.
- <sup>41</sup> With some restrictions imposed by the Indian Political Officer in Gangtok in the case of Sikkim.
- <sup>42</sup> Though most of them felt that it should be adapted to the Indian conditions.
- <sup>43</sup> Represented by the Nationalist government of Chiang Kai-shek.
- <sup>44</sup> The 'Four Olds' during the Cultural Revolution were "old ideas, old culture, old traditions and old customs".
- <sup>45</sup> Through his Consul General in Lhasa and the Political Officer in Sikkim.
- <sup>46</sup> These problems had occurred mainly during the Regency periods when the Dalai Lamas were minor had had to govern through inexperienced regents
- <sup>47</sup> Notes, Memoranda and letters Exchanged and Agreements signed between The Governments of India and China, *White Paper VI* (November 1961 – July 1962).
- <sup>48</sup> Mainly Panikkar and Krishna Menon.
- <sup>49</sup> The 17 Point Agreement provided regional autonomy for Tibet though China was taking over Tibet's defence and foreign relations. The Dalai Lama's status was supposed to remain unchanged.
- <sup>50</sup> Historical evidence shows that it was totally incorrect.
- <sup>51</sup> Article V of Simla Convention.
- <sup>52</sup> SWJN, Series II, Vol. 18, *Desirability of friendly Ties with China and Tibet*, p. 471.
- <sup>53</sup> SWJN, Series II, Vol. 19, *Cable to Indian Mission in Lhasa*, p. 651.
- <sup>54</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>55</sup> Probably, because some officers such as Sir G.S. Bajpai could clearly see the disastrous consequences to which Nehru's policy were leading.
- <sup>56</sup> An in-depth study of Nehru shows that the Indian Prime Minister showed an utter contempt for officers who dared to speak frankly and was delighted with the "yes-sir" officials and friends. This is clearly confirmed in the dairy of Maniben Patel, the daughter of Sardar Patel, the Deputy Prime Minister.
- <sup>57</sup> SWJN, Series II, Vol. 19, *Cable to Indian Mission in Lhasa*, p. 651.
- <sup>58</sup> Such as Indonesia, Morocco or Tunisia.
- <sup>59</sup> Prime Minster's reply to the debate on Foreign Policy on 18 May 1954.