

## SELECTED WORKS OF JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

*Series II Volume 35*

### **India-China Boundary Question<sup>1</sup>**

I have only now seen these papers. I agree with the suggestion made in the office memorandum sent by the Ministry of External Affairs to the effect that it would not be desirable for this question to be raised in the Lok Sabha at the present stage. We have informally mentioned this matter to the Chinese Government previously and we have at the same time made it perfectly clear that, so far as we are concerned, there is no boundary question. We were assured then by the Chinese Government that the maps were old ones.<sup>2</sup> It is possible that we may raise this question in some other form in the near future.

2. There is at present a dispute going on between Burma and China about their border.<sup>3</sup> We are interested in this also.

3. I think that if this question is raised in our Parliament at this stage, this might prove embarrassing from the point of view of the negotiations between Burma and China. Also, it might rather come in the way of our taking this matter up more formally later with the Chinese Government.

4. I would, therefore, suggest to Mr Speaker that this question be not admitted at this stage.

### **The Shipki La Pass Incident<sup>4</sup>**

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<sup>1</sup> Note, 7 September 1956. JN Collection.

<sup>2</sup> See Selected Works (second series), Vol. 27, pp. 17, 19-20, 81-82; see also Vol. 33, pp. 475-479.

<sup>3</sup> See ante, p. 506 fn 3

<sup>4</sup> Note to Foreign Secretary, 21 September 1956. JN Collection.

This is a serious matter and we cannot accept this position.<sup>5</sup> We should, of course, protest in emphatic language both to the Chinese Embassy here and to the Chinese Government through our Ambassador in Peking. But I do not think this is quite enough. The question arises as to what directions we should give to the Himachal Pradesh Government which they can pass on to their police force at the border. From the telephone account it appears that our party consists of 27 persons of the Border Security Police and the Chinese party consists of 20 officers and men. Thus, the numbers on both sides are small and there is a slight advantage on our side.

I think instructions should be sent to our force near the Shipki La Pass that they must on no account withdraw from their present position, which appears to be between the Shipki La Pass and Hupsang Khad. They must remain there even at the cost of conflict. For the present, they should not force their way beyond this place, as this would presumably mean a conflict with the Chinese. But it must be made clear that they must remain where they are and if the Chinese advance further, they should be checked. Before doing so, the Chinese forces should be clearly informed that we consider their crossing the Shipki La

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<sup>5</sup> On 21 September 1956, T.N. Kaul, Joint Secretary, MEA, was informed by the Inspector General of Police, Himachal Pradesh, that a party of 20 Chinese troops and officers had crossed over Shipki La Pass (200 miles from Shimla) into India's territory. On advance information, a 27-member Border Security Force party, led by a Deputy Superintendent of Police, met them at 4.45 a.m. on 21 September at mile 198. The DSP was told by a Chinese officer that their instructions were to patrol right up to Hupsang Khad (196 miles from Shimla) where a stone marked the India-Tibet boundary, and, if Indian troops went beyond that, they would be opposed with arms. Kaul told the Inspector General that it should be conveyed to the Chinese that Shipki La was the border pass, recognized under the Sino-Indian Agreement of 1954, and if the Chinese troops crossed it without proper documents, they would be responsible for the consequences of violating India's sovereignty and territorial integrity. Kaul also advised him to instruct the DSP to avoid an armed clash but not yield to the Chinese troops.

Pass without our permission as improper and an aggression and they must go back. We would not permit them to go any further and if they did not go back, we would have to take further steps in the matter. We are not doing so immediately because the matter has been referred to Delhi and Peking and because of our friendly relations we should like to avoid a clash. But if there is any further aggression, a clash is inevitable. The Himachal Pradesh Government should be asked if they can send some further troops or members of the Border Security Police immediately to this place. If this is possible, they should do so.

In our protest to the Chinese Embassy here as well as the one we are sending to the Chinese Government through our Ambassador, it should be stated that in view of the fact that Shipki La is clearly the border and is acknowledged as such even in our agreement with China, we consider any crossing of armed forces without our permission as aggression and we have to resist it. This was pointed out by our Border Force to the Chinese Officer who had come two or three miles beyond the Shipki La and who stated that he had been ordered to go on to Hupsang Khad, which is four miles on our side of the Shipki La. Our Border Force met them half way between the pass and the Hupsang Khad. We have ordered our force not to take any action for the present in repulsing this aggression and to await instructions which we hope Peking will send immediately. Our Force has been directed, however, on no account to retire from their position or to permit the Chinese forces to go beyond where they are, even if this involves a clash.

It should further be added that we attach great importance to this matter and request immediate action by the Chinese Government. Otherwise there might be an unfortunate clash on our border which will have undesirable results.

### **Cable to R.K. Nehru<sup>6</sup>**

Your telegram 472 September 28th.<sup>7</sup> Chou En-lai's visit to India. Dates suggested broadly suit us. Perhaps if he could come a day or two earlier, it would be better.

2. We should like to know what places in India he would like to visit, such as Bhakra Nangal, Damodar Valley group including Sindri and Chittaranjan; Jamshedpur, Simla, Dehra Dun for Military Academy, also Khadakvasala near Poona; Bombay, Bangalore, and Madras. Obviously he cannot visit every place. Presumably he will spend three clear days in Delhi.

3. We are having Buddha Jayanti Seminar and celebrations from 24th November to 3rd December. Because of these a number of distinguished visitors are coming, probably including Prime Ministers of Nepal and Ceylon. This need not interfere with Chou En-lai's visit, but careful arrangements will be necessary to avoid duplication of functions.

### **Invitation to Dalai Lama<sup>8</sup>**

The telegram to Peking sent yesterday from the Ministry of Education, enquiring immediately if the Dalai and Panchen Lamas have accepted the Buddha Jayanti invitations and further that the Dalai Lama has been

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<sup>6</sup> New Delhi, 29 September 1956. JN Collection

<sup>7</sup> On 27 September, Chou En-lai asked R.K. Nehru to inform the Prime Minister of his plan to visit India from 30 November to 12 December and thereafter Myanmar. The Chinese Premier also told the Ambassador that "China will not do anything in South East Asian countries without informing or consulting India," and hoped that "India will be able to draw her (Thailand) to right road." Since Myanmar, according to her Ambassador in China, expected Chou to be in their country on 11 December, R. K. Nehru thought of asking for his travel schedule.

<sup>8</sup> Note to K.G. Saiyidain Education Secretary, 5 October 1956. JN Collection.

invited to address a public meeting is extraordinary.<sup>9</sup> It indicates complete ignorance of the political situation in Tibet and China and might well lead to difficulties. As it is, it is very doubtful if the Dalai Lama can come to India. The matter rests not only with him but with others also. To suggest that he is expected to address a public meeting here is to add to these difficulties and make it almost impossible for him to come.

2. I think that in this matter, as indeed in all matters affecting foreign affairs, far more discretion is necessary and reference should be made to the External Affairs Ministry.

3. I am now sending a telegram to our Ambassador in Peking explaining the situation.

### **The Fate of Shipki La<sup>10</sup>**

There is no question of sending any troops to the Shipki La now.<sup>11</sup> In fact, even in the spring next year, I do not envisage the necessity of sending troops. The fate of Shipki La is not going to be decided by fighting or by a large show of force. .

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<sup>9</sup> The telegram dated 4 October also enquired about Dalai Lama's acceptance of invitation to address a public meeting on 24 October.

<sup>10</sup> Note to Foreign Secretary, 8 October 1956. JN Collection.

<sup>11</sup> . A meeting of representatives of Ministries of External Affairs, Defence and Home, and of the Himachal Pradesh Government, was held on 3 October to consider the situation at Indo-Tibetan border in Himachal Pradesh. Its recommendations were: (1) not to send any troops to this area at present but reconnaissance by a few Army officers to meet a possible threat from the Chinese troops next spring; (2) establish a permanent police outpost at Namgia (194 miles from Shimla) with increased strength; (3) physical possession of Shipki La Pass by the Indian personnel before 1 April 1957 and construction of cave shelters and aluminium huts before March 1957; (4) constant patrolling from Namgia up to the Pass as often as possible.

2. It might be desirable, however, for some Army officers to reconnoitre and see the place at a suitable time now or early next year.
3. The main thing to do is to have a Police outpost there and that our personnel should be in physical possession of the Shipki La when the snows melt.
4. Also, it is desirable for us to investigate the other Passes, as suggested in para 7 <sup>12</sup>

### **To Maharaja of Sikkim<sup>13</sup>**

New Delhi 12 October 1956

My dear Maharaja Saheb,

Thank you for your letter of the 29th September. I also saw your letter of the 22nd June on my return from Europe towards the end of July. Some reports of disturbances in Eastern Tibet have reached us during the last few months. It is, however, difficult for us to know what exactly the situation is there. Reports brought by travellers or refugees are not always reliable.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> T.N. Kaul, who had recorded the minutes of this meeting, informed that during the preceding weeks, the Chinese had transgressed into Indian territory on three occasions. Notes of protest were handed over to the Chinese Embassy in Delhi on 8 September and 22 September. The Indian Embassy in Beijing also took up the matter with the Chinese Foreign Office. Paragraph 7 of the minutes specified that the reconnaissance should be made of all disputed areas including Lanak La, Dopko Karpo, SpongurTso, Shipki La, Tsang Chok La, Mana Pass, Tunjun La, Hoti Plain, Darma Pass, Kungi Bingri Pass and Lipu Lekh Pass, and recommendations should be sent as soon as possible.

<sup>13</sup> JN Collection.

<sup>14</sup> Attacks on their religion, property, and social system by the Chinese inflamed the people of Eastern Tibet and they retaliated by causing extensive destruction of roads and bridges and raiding supply columns and outposts. This resulted in large-scale military operation with armoured vehicles and aircrafts by the Chinese. Monasteries were singled out as centres of resistance and destroyed. Villagers faced repression

In any event, you will appreciate that it is difficult for us to interfere in a matter concerning the internal affairs of the Tibetan region.

With all good wishes,

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

### **Talks with Dalai Lama<sup>15</sup>**

The following notes were jotted down by the Prime Minister during his talks with Dalai Lama:

26.11.56

- Three areas of Tibet: (1) Eastern area liberated by force; (2) Central Tibet under Dalai Lama; (3) Tsang Tibet under Panchen Lama. Originally all these under Dalai Lama, thus limiting Dalai Lama's authority-at present preparation for local self-government in Tibet-creating three parts as autonomous regions.
- This region to carry out orders of the Chinese Government.
- Chinese say that Tibet very backward and wanted help to advance.
- No present intention but future idea to take lands from monasteries-schools new educational institutions-equal distribution of land-postpone because of people's opposition.
- State authority must be based on people having faith; otherwise religion suffers. Hope lies in India.
- Some fighting still going on in Eastern areas. In other areas preparation going on, including Lhasa.

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when large numbers of Chinese settlers were poured in to take over the land of the dispossessed. A delegation sent in July 1956 by the Dalai Lama for pacifying the area proved futile.

<sup>15</sup> Nehru's jottings of his talks with the Dalai Lama on 26 and 28 November 1956. S. Dutt Papers, NMML

- No definite idea among Tibetans. They have grown desperate, prepared to die.
- Foreign sympathy and aid-majority do not think they can fight out Chinese. Chinese troops about 1,20,000.
- Talks with Chairman Mao in Peking-attempts to convert Dalai Lama to communism.  
Dalai Lama did not commit himself to communist ideology but expressed objections.

*Jawaharlal Nehru: Panchen Lama's views?*

Dalai Lama: Panchen Lama's party gaining power because of friendship with Chinese authorities.

Russians playing a part in Tibet-no representative in Lhasa-only Indian, Nepal and, in a way, Bhutan.

*JN: Tibet can no longer remain forbidden land.*

(PM told me<sup>16</sup> that he had advised Dalai Lama to accept Chinese suzerainty and try to secure the maximum internal autonomy. If he contested Chinese suzerainty, then the Chinese would try to take over Tibet entirely, thereby eliminating any idea of autonomy. Dalai Lama appealed to India for help. PM's reply was that, apart from other considerations, India was not in a position to give any effective help to Tibet; nor were other countries in a position to do so.

Dalai Lama should not resist land reforms. The Chinese Government have not yet started such reforms, but in India and other underdeveloped countries, land reform has been the main plank in the political platform of progressive parties. Dalai Lama himself should take the lead in such reforms. He should be the leader of the people. It is not possible for Tibet to remain isolated from the rest of the world. PM's

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<sup>16</sup> This paragraph was added by S. Dutt.

feeling was that Dalai Lama was still thinking in terms of Tibetan independence and looked to India for guidance.)

### **28-11-56**

- D.L: Tibet having some connection with China externally but having internal autonomy.
- So long as Chinese suzerainty is there, there would be no internal freedom.
- Tibet different country from China-culturally, economically and politically.
- No previous record of being under Chinese suzerainty except for certain periods.
- In 1910-50, complete freedom; then communist intervention.
- In 1951, temporary treaty-internal autonomy under pressure.
- 17 clauses-Tibet returns to its ancestral home (China)-no interference by Chinese on customs, monasteries etc.
- China not following terms of treaty.
- Chinese tightening their grip gradually.
- When Dalai Lama went to China in 1954, public much upset. This time, when he came to India, great hopes and satisfaction.
- For freedom, method not military or force, but peaceful.
- In the past Tibet also conquered parts of China.

*JN: Treaty says no change except with the will of the people. But Chinese changing thinking of the people.*

*JN: D.L. should become the leader of the reform. Best way we can help is by maintaining friendly relations with China, otherwise China would fear our designs on Tibet.*

### **Welcoming Chou En-lai<sup>17</sup>**

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<sup>17</sup> Speech while receiving the Chinese Prime Minister, Chou En-Iai at the Palam Airport, New Delhi, 28 November 1956. AIR tapes, NMML. Original in Hindi.

Honoured Guests,

You had come to Delhi two and a half years ago.<sup>18</sup> It was a very short visit and the people of Delhi could only catch a brief glimpse of you. We wanted to have an opportunity of meeting you again. So, we are happy that you are here with us and we welcome you once again.

We are happy to have the opportunity of having you with us for a longer period. You will be able to tour the country and see the old and new faces of India. We welcome you personally and as well as the representative of this great country of yours.

A great deal has happened during the last two and a half years and closer relations have been forged between our two countries. Special mention must be made of the new voice that we have raised together, the slogan of Panchsheel.

This new ideal of Panchsheel is reverberating in the world. Many countries are with us in this. There are grave dangers to the world and so it is more than even necessary to put this goal before the world. This is how we can serve the cause of world peace.

I extend a warm welcome to you on behalf of my country and its people and the Government of India. I welcome the Deputy Prime Minister of China, Marshal Ho Lung, who is standing on the other side.

### **Significance of Panchsheel<sup>19</sup>**

Mr Prime Minister and honoured guests,

About two and a half years ago, the Prime Minister of China came to Delhi and stayed for two or three days. We welcomed him. He has now come again for a little longer stay. We have gathered here to welcome

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<sup>18</sup> Chou En-lai visited India from 25 to 28 June 1954. For his conversations with Nehru and other related items, see Selected Works (second series), Vol. 26, pp. 365-414.

<sup>19</sup> Speech at a banquet in honour of Chou En-Iai, New Delhi, 29 November 1956.

him with our affection, but he himself has seen the real welcome which the citizens of Delhi gave him and wherever he goes, to our big towns and cities like Bombay, Calcutta, Madras, Bangalore or to our villages, he will receive the same welcome everywhere. He will see for himself the affection that the people have for him and his country. Wherever he goes, he will hear the slogan which is becoming more and more popular Hindi-Chini bhai bhai.

Our two countries are neighbours and we have a border extending to thousands of miles but barriers were raised between our two countries and the common routes were closed. Gradually, these barriers are being removed and there is greater intercourse between our two countries. Many people have gone to China and others have come from China. We have tried to understand each other. We have tried to understand what great events are taking place there and we have learnt many things. Just as yours is a large country, ours is also a big country though not so large as yours. We have in our country many things in common and also much diversity, but from diversity we are forging unity in the country. When there is so much difference within our country, it is not surprising that there should be a diversity between two countries and that we follow different paths. If the whole world follows the same pattern, it would not be so interesting a place. Its beauty lies in following different methods and different paths, but these paths should take us to the same goal and there should not be any conflict. This problem of elimination of conflict is before us, before you and before the whole world.

It is after taking all these facts into consideration that our two countries agreed on Panchsheel, the Five Principles. It is clearly stated there that all nations should cooperate, however, different their methods may be. For, if one nation uses force to compel another nation to follow its policy, there will be conflict and nothing can be settled by conflict. That is why we agreed on Panchsheel. Whatever the responsibility of other

nations may be, the responsibility of our two nations is much greater because we were the first to evolve the Five Principles.

The word Panchsheel is old and to some extent it was used in a different context.<sup>20</sup> We remember that context now when we are celebrating the Buddha Jayanti and we see that the Panchsheel of old laid down how people should behave towards each other, and how they should avoid taking a wrong path. Then they emphasized the value of character, purity of thought, love and mercy. But unless we follow the same principles now, whether between individuals or between nations, if there is no mercy, no love, no attempt to understand each other's viewpoint, then the Five Principles will not be of much use.

The world is passing through difficult times and difficult problems have arisen. There has been conflict and there is some danger of further conflict. At such a time, we should all try to remove the root cause of conflicts. Unless we are able to do this, all our efforts will be useless.

We all know how your nation has worked towards peace and how you have exercised great patience. We have also tried to do the same and so have other nations. I hope that all our efforts to resolve problems will continue and the causes of conflict will be removed. It is my hope that your country and your people and the people of India will progress through peace and love. In this way the cause of peace in the world will triumph. May I express the hope that you will enjoy your stay in India and when you go, you will carry away with you, a lot of our affection.

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<sup>20</sup> See Selected Works (second series), Vol. 33, p. 23.