

Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru

Series II, Volume 9

1. Sino-Indian Cultural Bonds¹

I send my greetings to the Meeting of the General Assembly of the Sino-Indian Cultural Society.² The bonds that have held China and India together in the past were far deeper and more abiding than political bonds can be. Whatever the future may bring to our respective countries, I have no doubt that these cultural bonds should and will continue. The Sino-Indian Cultural Society represents these and I wish it all success.

2. Sino-Indian Relations³

I attach a letter from the Chinese Ambassador.⁴ Will you kindly deal with it and send him a friendly reply without expressly committing ourselves to anything.⁵

3. Cable to K.M. Panikkar⁶

¹ Message to Professor Tan Yun Shan, General Secretary of the Sino-Indian Cultural Society, Shantiniketan. 20 December 1948. J.N. Collection.

² The General Assembly of the Sino-Indian Cultural Society, formed by Rabindra nath Tagore in 1940, met on 25 December 1948 in Shantiniketan.

³ Note to Foreign Secretary, 31 December 1948. J.N. Collection.

⁴ Dr. Lo Chio-Luen wrote on 31 December expressing his concern over the Tibetan Trade Mission's proposed visit to India in the near future to discuss trade matters, which could "raise some points affecting the sovereignty and administrative integrity of China." He wished Indian authorities to discourage and refuse such discussion.

⁵ On 3 January, K.P.S. Menon wrote assuring China that India had no intention to discuss issues which would embarrass China in any way.

⁶ New Delhi, 31 December 1948. J.N. Collection. Panikkar was at this time Ambassador to China.

The Chinese Ambassador to Turkey⁷ approached Chaman Lall⁸ with the suggestion that India should make an offer of mediation between the Kuomintang and the Communists. The Ambassador said that it was purely a personal suggestion. We felt that, in the absence of any request from you or from the Chinese Ambassador in India, it would be unwise to make any such offer. We also doubted whether such an offer would appeal to the Communists even if the Kuomintang Government were in its favour. We have replied accordingly to Chaman Lall.

4. Economic Co-operation with Tibet⁹

The Tibetan Trade Mission was received by H.P.M. at his residence. After enquiring about the countries the Mission has visited, the Prime Minister asked if they had succeeded in achieving the objects of their tour.¹⁰

Tsepon Shakabpa¹¹ made a request for the grant of two million dollars to Tibet for the purchase of gold, which, he said, was required in order to back Tibetan currency. The Prime Minister pointed out that India was herself suffering from a severe shortage

⁷ Li Ti-tsun, Ambassador to Turkey, 1941-57.

⁸ Then Ambassador of India to Turkey.

⁹ Record of Nehru's talks with the Tibetan trade mission led by Tsepon Shakabpa at New Delhi on 8 January 1949 as reported in the minute. File No. 1(t).NEF/48, M.E.A. & C.R., N.A.I, Extracts.

¹⁰ In January 1945, the Tibetan Government sent a trade delegation to visit the United Kingdom, the United States, India and China to seek relaxation of Indian control on Tibetan exports, explore prospects of securing machinery for use in agriculture and wool factories and, bear witness to Tibet's independent and sovereign status. The trade mission on its second visit to New Delhi in January 1949 expressed its desire to Station a Tibetan representative in India.

¹¹ Tsepon W.D. Shakabpa (b.1907); head of the Finance Department and President of Tibetan National Assembly, 1939; headed Tibetan Trade Mission which went round the world, 1941; took refuge in India, 1951.

of dollars but that the Government of India would do their best to meet essential Tibetan requirements. Shakabpa said that gold was essential for lowering the prices of commodities in Tibet. The Prime Minister said that rise in prices was due rather to shortage of goods than to inadequate gold backing for currency.

Tsepon Shakabpa next raised the question of free transit facilities through India for Tibetan exports and imports. It was pointed out that the question was being referred to the Ministries of Finance and Commerce for detailed consideration and that the considered views of the Government of India were expected to be communicated to the Trade Missions when they came back to Delhi from Calcutta in February. The Prime Minister assured the Mission that the question would receive very careful consideration from his Government.

Shakabpa said that the Tibetans were a poor people and that the Tibetan Government was very anxious to improve their economic condition. The Prime Minister fully sympathised with the Tibetan Government's desire for the betterment of the economic condition of their people and said that not being fully industrialised itself, India was in a unique position to offer suggestions for the lines along which the economic development of Tibet might be undertaken. He made two broad suggestions for the achievement of that object:

(I) He told the Mission that, in view of lack of technical personnel and capital and of modern means of transport and communication in Tibet, it was difficult for large-scale industries to be established. It was, therefore, advisable for a country like Tibet to plan her economic development in accordance with the suggestions made by Mahatma Gandhi for India. Tibet should undertake the establishment of cottage and small-scale industries. For the purpose, he assured the Mission that the Government of India would make the services of a few experts from the All India Village Industries Association available to the Tibetan Government. These

experts, he said could visit Tibet during the summer for about 3 months, work under the direction of the Tibetan Government and make the results of their investigations available to the Tibetan Government for such use as they might like to make of them. The development of such industries could be undertaken in spite of lack of educated people and of skilled workers;

(2) he also suggested a careful survey of the mineral resources of Tibet. He said that even though it was difficult for India to spare trained geologists he would try to make the services of two or three such people available to the Tibetan Government for a few months in order to undertake a preliminary survey of the mineral resources of Tibet. These experts also, he said, would work under the directions of the Government of Tibet and make the results of their investigations available to that Government. He made it clear that before any detailed implementation of the programme suggested by him was possible, it was necessary for these experts to make a preliminary investigation. Shakabpa welcomed the H.P.M.'s suggestions and promised to convey them to his Government on his return to Tibet.

The Prime Minister assured the Trade Mission that his Government entertained the most cordial feelings of friendship for Tibet, her Government and people and that it would be his constant endeavour to foster the relations of friendship existing between the two peoples.

5. Cable to K.M. Panikkar¹²

I have given most careful consideration to the suggestion for an appeal contained in paragraph of your telegram No.43, dated 28th

¹² New Delhi, 7 February 1949. J.N. Collection.

January¹³ and have also consulted some friendly Governments informally. Balance of opinion is against our making any appeal, especially as events show that victorious Communists seek a victor's, not a negotiated peace. In this mood, they are not likely to pay much heed to our voice, and we also run risk of hurting feelings of Nationalist China by advising realistic settlement which, in circumstances of today, must necessarily be more favourable to the Communists than to them. I have, therefore, decided not to say anything, at least for the present.

6. To Li Tsun-jen¹⁴

New Delhi, February 15.1949

Dear friend¹⁵,

Thank you for your letter of the 3rd January which I have only just received. I appreciate your good wishes for the New Year which I cordially reciprocate.

We have been watching with neighbourly concern the recent developments in China¹⁶.: We hope that the Chinese people, with that spirit of reasonableness which has characterised them from time immemorial, will find some way out of their present perplexities. My own feeling is that the less outsiders meddle with China the better.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely, Jawaharlal Nehru

¹³ Pannikar suggested that an appeal could be made to some friendly governments for mediation, to negotiate peace with the Communists on behalf of the Nationalist Government.

¹⁴ J.N. Collection

¹⁵ Secretary General, Municipal Government of Shanghai, second-in-command in Chiang Kai-shek's army, succeeded Chiang Kai-shek as acting President in January 1949.

¹⁶ The Communist successes in China in the civil war.