

**From National Archives of India**

*File: Monthly report of the Indian Mission Lhasa; Indian Missions; Lhasa Tibet,  
1951; Progs., Nos. 4(6)-P, 1951*

**SECRET**

From: The Officer in Charge,  
Indian Mission, Lhasa.

To: The Political Officer in Sikkim,  
Gangtok.

Memorandum No. 3(10)-L/51.

Dated, Lhasa, Tibet, the 15th April, 1951.

*Monthly report of the Indian Mission, Lhasa,  
for the period ending 15th April, 1951*

**I. EXTERNAL RELATIONS:**

**(a) Sino-Tibetan Relations:**

(i) During the period under review, the Tibetan situation underwent no significant change. While the military situation remained frozen, and no fresh activities were reported from the various fronts, despite the advent of spring; diplomatic efforts have begun in earnest to resolve the present impasse. For the first time since the beginning of the present crisis in Tibet, Tibetans generally seem to appreciate the folly of further procrastination, which had marked their policy towards China hitherto, and erstwhile diehards are now inclined, even anxious, to come to terms with China and from an

alliance, which it is believed would help Tibet retrieve lost territories on her southern frontier.

(ii) After much fruitless talk on peace terms and many assurances of pious intentions, the Chinese seem at last to have decided on their basic demands for a peaceful settlement with Tibet. These are (a) Chinese control of Tibetan foreign relations, and (b) of her frontiers.

(iii) We have had occasion to note earlier of a change in Chinese tactics in Tibet which did not intrinsically alter their ultimate designs. This change of tactics from one of forceful and outright conquest to that of peaceful liberation has probably been necessitated by the heavy military burden imposed on China by her intervention in Korea, and notwithstanding Chinese professions to the contrary, we should not allow ourselves to be deluded into thinking that the transformation has come in deference to the views of the Government of India. If Tibet were to become an integral part of China in the near future, and Chinese claims in this respect accepted without demur by interested powers, the Chinese would thereby reserve for themselves freedom of further action, as and when convenient, to make Tibet conform to her own pattern of life, and should existing foreign interests be allowed to preserve themselves in Tibet that would be by courtesy of the Chinese alone.

(iv) Confident that Tibetan resistance for all practical purposes has come to an end, and that there will in any event be no external intervention, the Chinese can now well afford to wait with bluff tolerance for negotiations to complete Tibet's surrender. Meanwhile, Chinese espionage being active in Lhasa, it may be surmised that confidential news reaching the Chinese from the Tibetan capital has in no small measure contributed to modifying their aggressive and punitive attitude towards recalcitrant Tibet.

(v) The latest instructions of the Tibetan Government to their delegation proceeding to Peking for negotiations are in fact a rehash of suggestions made to them by this Mission in December, 1950. (Vide our Top

Secret telegram No. 178 of 10<sup>th</sup> December.) While the Tibetans may be expected to surrender control of their foreign relations to the Chinese, they may not find the Chinese demand to place troops all along the Tibetan frontier an acceptable proposition, particularly as this will largely reduce Tibetan autonomy to impotency. To allay present Tibetan fears and suspicions on this point, the Chinese seem to be circulating rumours in Lhasa that they will station troops on the Indo-Tibetan frontier only as long as there is an 'unfriendly' Government in India, which may be a partial concession to legitimate Tibetan fears, but as it is China and not Tibet who will decide whether the Government of India is 'friendly' or 'unfriendly' at any point of time, the Chinese will thus reserve for themselves the right to place troops on the Indo-Tibetan frontier whenever they choose to do so. Incidentally this will give Chinese troops free ingress into Tibetan territory at all times.

(vi) Two Tibetan visitors arrived in Lhasa during the month from Chamdo and Giamda respectively. Having been with the Chinese at Chamdo, or close to them at Giamda, they were able to give fairly accurate accounts of what they had seen and known. One of them, Manang Abo, a trader, who was once related to Pangda Tsang, having married and deserted the latter's sister arrived in Lhasa from Chamdo on the 17<sup>th</sup> March with two sealed communications from Ngapho Shape and the Chinese commander at Chamdo for His Holiness. These messages are reported to contain requests from the two officers to His Holiness that he should return to Lhasa without further delay and that, at any rate, he should abandon plans for taking refuge in India. Manang Abo left for Yatung on 21<sup>st</sup> March. We gathered from Manang Abo that the Chinese were also worried about the treasures removed by the Tibetan Government from Lhasa, though they frequently refer with supreme disconcert and scorn to the value of these treasures which are rated at less than the capital of a shoe Factory in Hongkong! We also learnt that the Chinese have plans ready to withdraw Tibetan currency from circulation and to replace it with their own currency.

(vii) Shatra Se, the second visitor, is a grand-son of Lonchhen Shatra and is now Phopon (Pay Master) at Giamda. He confirmed that Manang Abo had been entrusted with messages entreating the Dalai Lama to return to Lhasa. The Chinese commander is said to have informed the Dalai Lama that a deputation of Khampa chieftains will shortly visit Yatung to plead for His return. As a last resort, the Chinese officer and Ngapho Shape might jointly visit Yatung to see His Holiness. If all these efforts prove abortive, Tibet will have to suffer the consequences.

(viii) Shatra Se further confided to us that the present total strength of Chinese troops stationed at Pemba Gompa, Shobando and Lho Dzong is about 1,000, which corroborates our earlier information that the Chinese had substantially withdrawn troops from forward bases in Kham. The strength of Tibetan troops in the Lhariguo area is said to be 2,000, and there are only 400 Tibetan soldiers at Giamda.

(ix) Latest reports say that troops of three new Tibetan regiments stationed at Sok and Lhariguo have become restive as they have not been receiving regular pay and rations. Some of them deserted their posts and returned to Lhasa, whereupon they were disarmed and disbanded. The Tibetan Government are taking steps to disband the three regiments involved.

The Chinese have completed the Sikang- Chamdo road, which is now open to traffic, upto a distance of 2 days march east of Chamdo. Two monoplane from China are now landing daily at Kanze.

(x) Ngapho Shape is reported to have left Chamdo for Peking sometime in the second week of March. He was accompanied by his wife and an assistant. The Tibetan Government have appointed him leader of their delegation to the Peking talks.

(xi) Early in April the Tibetan Government sent a special messenger- viz., Khenchung Lotyo Kesang, with 5,000 dotses (equivalent of Rs.62,500/-) to Chamdo. This money will be converted into Chinese currency and sent to Ngapho to pay for his expenses in China.

(xii) The Tibetan Government have made arrangements to set-up a small wireless station at Chamdo for use of Tibetan officials there. They have already dispatched a portable wireless (receiving and transmitting) set along with an operator (Sonam Wangdi) to Chamdo.

#### WESTERN TIBET

(xiii) In response to a request from the Chinese commander in Western Tibet who is stationed at Tingung, the Tibetan Government deputed Garpon Trimon Se to proceed to Tingung for discussions. The outcome of these talks is not yet known.

(xiv) According to a later report the Chinese officer at Tingung and some of his men are seriously ill. The exact nature of their malady is not known but the symptoms are said to be swelling of the face and body with broncho-pneumonic tendency. Their transport animals suffered heavy casualties last cold season but fresh transport is on the way to Tingung.

#### **(b) INDO-TIBETAN RELATIONS:**

(i) In March our Ambassador in Peking had an opportunity of discussing the Tibetan problem with the Chinese Foreign Minister, and it transpired that the latter not only revealed how the Chinese were acting in accordance with the view of the Government of India in seeking the liberation of Tibet by peaceful means, but also warned the Ambassador that if the Dalai Lama sought refuge in India, it would prejudice Sino-Indian amity. This unseemly threat deserves to be treated with some concern. It is true we have not encouraged His Holiness to seek asylum in India, but if he, despite our views in the matter, is driven by Chinese aggression to enter Indian territory, it would-apart from other things-be crude and uncivilized to refuse him the

customary hospitality. If necessary Mr. Chou En-lai could also seek and receive the same asylum. Furthermore, any action taken by the Government of India at this juncture to make the Dalai Lama feel that his visit to India would be unwelcome, on however sound and irrefutable logic, could only drive another wedge between Tibet and India; and that would ultimately be much more unfortunate than the purile threats of the Chinese Foreign Minister.

(ii) Chinese diplomacy which is active in this area should not, I think, be allowed as long as possible to alienate the natural ties between Tibet and India. For sometime to come it is reasonable to expect that the Chinese will not be able to divert sufficient forces to constitute a serious threat to our North Eastern frontier, for as long, that is, as they have a long and vulnerable sea-coast, a War in Korea, and KMT forces poised for an attack on the main-land; whereas the Tibetans if annoyed and made hostile by our indiscreet acts might imperil the security of the 1500-miles of Indo-Tibetan frontier.

(iii) Towards the end of March, two members of the new Tibetan delegation to China namely, Dzasa Khemed and Lahu Tara, visited Delhi for consultations with the Government of India and in particular to meet the Prime Minister of India. They were advised by the Prime Minister to strive their utmost for a settlement, and not to allow the negotiations to break down over the Chinese demand for control of Tibet's external relations. The Government of India have also asked their Ambassador in Peking to use his influence to dissuade the Chinese from insisting on placing troops on the Indo-Tibetan frontier which would have the effect of alarming the Tibetans, and causing at the same time unfavourable reactions in India.

The two delegates were expected to leave Calcutta for Hongkong enroute to Peking on 13/14<sup>th</sup> April according to a broadcast from A.I.R.

(iv) The position with regard to Tawang was explained to three envoys of the Kashag when they came to the Mission with a protest note on the 16<sup>th</sup> March. We were later told that the Kashag were satisfied with our views on the

matter. However, with regard to a reference we had made to the alleged violation of Indian territory by the Chinese during our talks on Tawang, the Government of India informed us that there had been no violation of Indian territory by Chinese troops. The news about the alleged violation of our territory reached us through A.I.R. news broadcasts, and the Tibetans were aware of this long before we mentioned it to them. In any case, they are aware that the incident was in no way serious.

(v) The subject of Tawang was further explained by the Indian Trade Agent to the Tibetan Government at Yatung. Normally the excitement on this issue should have died out by now but for the monks of Drepung, who have large vested interests in Tawang, and are bent on ranking up trouble on this issue between India and Tibet. They regard Indian action in Tawang as a dastardly act taken against Tibet at a time when she is faced with a grave external crisis.

## **2. INTERNAL:**

(i) It is understood that the following Tibetan officials have been ordered by their Government to return to Lhasa: -

Dzasa Tsarong, George Tsarong, Rampa Phopon, Dzasa Shrkhang Surpa, Taring Lachag, Changchen Surpa, Dzasa Yuthok, Tendong Se, Dryul, Dzasa Ngawang Gyaltsen and Tsechang Thupten Gyalpo.

(ii) The Tibetan Government are reported to have accepted the resignations of the Ta Lama and Dzasa Tsarong as Joint Directors of the Trapchi Mint. Theiji Samdup Photrang has been appointed as the new Director of the Mint with the rank of Dzasa.

(iii) The 'Tsom Chho' (prayer meeting of monks) also known as the second monlam was held from the 26<sup>th</sup> March to 6<sup>th</sup> April. The 'Logong' and 'Tsom Chho Serpang' ceremonies took place on the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> April.

(iv) Lay officials in Lhasa gathered at the Potala on the 3<sup>rd</sup> April to offer prayers for the well-being of His Holiness and for his early return to Lhasa. Tri Rimpoche of Ganden monastery conducted the ceremony, and a collection amounting to 1,000 dotses was made for presentation to the Dalai Lama.

(vi) On the 14<sup>th</sup> April Tibetan officials met at the Potala for the annual 'Gye-tor' ceremony when they formally discarded winter clothes for summer.

### **3. ECONOMIC:**

(i) While the rate of exchange remained more or less stationary at 4 Sangs to the rupee during the month, prices of essential and luxury goods showed abnormal rise. This may partly be attributed to the large-scale purchases now being made in Lhasa by traders from Kham and Yunan, and partly to the acute shortage of goods in Lhasa. Chinese merchants are making heavy purchases of drill-cloth, cigarettes and soaps for the Chamdo market. Prices of rice and sugar have recorded a tremendous increases as the Lhasa market is not receiving adequate supplies of these commodities from Nepal, Bhutan and India. Medium quality rice is now being sold at Rs. 120/- per maund, and sugar is being sold at almost Rs. 260/- per maund.

(ii) The Chinese officer in Lhasa was seen buying large stocks of rice from the local bazaar which he is storing in anticipation of an influx of Chinese visitors from Chamdo.

### **MISCELLANEOUS:**

23 White Russian refugees from Sinkiang left Lhasa for Gyantse on 30<sup>th</sup> March. Each of them received 270 Sangs as a parting gift from the Tibetan Government who also gave them transport facilities upto Gyantse.

(S. Sinha)  
Officer in Charge.

