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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 May, 1951.

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

I. EXTERNAL RELATIONS:

(a) Sino-Tibetan Relations:

(i) With suspense and anxiety, the Government and people of Tibet are awaiting the results of the Peking talks, and perhaps significantly on the 25th April, 1951, (the date on which Ngapho was expected to reach Peking) prayers were offered in the Potala and the Lhasa Cathedral for the success of the talks, while at the same time the common people were exhorted to burn incense and pray for the welfare of the country. All their efforts to defeat Chinese aims in Tibet having proved in vain, the Tibetan Government are now relying with tragic faith on the *deus ex machine* to resolve the crisis.

(ii) Ngapho Shape, leader of the Tibetan delegation to the Peking talks, arrived in Peking on 25th April, and according to a Chinese radio

broadcast was accorded a warm reception by high Chinese officials which, incidentally, brought forth a protest from the officer of the Chinghai Government now in Lhasa who compared his own shabby reception in Lhasa to that of Ngapho's in Peking, and petulantly chided the Lhasa officials. It is not known to this Mission whether Dzasa kheme and Lahu Tara have also reached Peking for the talks. They were last heard of in Canton sometime in mid-April.

(iii) Much to the chagrin of Tibetan officials here, the Chinese seem to have simultaneously invited the Panchen Lama to be present in Peking during the talks; and as this wily move by the Chinese will undoubtedly create a schism in the Tibetan camp in Peking, officials in Lhasa are likely to be more sober in their expectations from the talks.

(iv) The Panchen Rimpoche (he is only a candidate for the exalted office and has not been accepted as such in Tibet) arrived with an entourage of no less than 40 officials in Peking, on the 27th April, and was accorded a great official welcome. Prime Minister Chou En Lai reported to have given a banquet in his honour the same evening, and in his speech at the banquet the Panchen Lama is reported to have said: -

"Tibet is an inseparable territorial part of China and the Tibetan people are indivisible from the Chinese people. We firmly support the policy of the Chinese People's Government.

He then proposed a toast to Mr. Mao Tse Tung and "to the peaceful liberation of Tibet." Sentiments not very dissimilar though not so ardent or forthright were also attributed to Ngapho Shape who is reported to have spoken at a banquet in Chungking.

(v) These are significant trends, and it is becoming clear that if the Chinese have their way, Tibet will never again speak with one voice. It is true that the split in the Tibetan camp for the time-being is confined to

the top, but Chinese machinations will in due course infect the people of Tibet with partisan spirit, if and when the Chinese decide to contest the spiritual authority of the Dalai Lama with that of the puppet Panchen Rimpochhe, and unless fortune intervenes in favour of the former, the Chinese will win.

(vi) We have had some rather alarming reports of the activities of the self-styled Representative of the Chinghai Government in Lhasa which are known to range from trade and politics to espionage. He had another meeting on 17th May with the Kashag when he is said to have delivered a message from his Government.

(vii) In Chamdo the Chinese do not seem to be idle. They have already opened a school where 120 Khampa boys and girls are now receiving their education. This is a significant development as it is probably the first organized school in Tibet under official patronage. The school is well-staffed, and some of the teachers are proficient in English. We understand that similar schools may be opened shortly at Lho Dzong and Shobando.

(viii) The large-scale slaughter of Yaks for meat has seriously affected the internal transport system of Kham, and the Chinese who have built up supplies at Kamto Trukha are finding it difficult to move them to Shobando and Pemba Go where they are most needed.

(ix) Manang Abo of whom we have reported earlier is said to be leaving for Peking via India on a business trip. He is being armed with a letter from Surkhang Shape to Dzasa Kheme. From what we know of Surkhang, he will never allow an opportunity to slip without making the most of it. Trade with China is probably his latest gamble-one with few, if any, risks.

(x) Tibetan Officials arrived in Lhasa from Chamdo during the month. One of them, Phopon Horkhang Se, who reached Lhasa on 5th May gave us information which partially conflicts with our earlier reports regarding the disposition of Chinese troops in Kham. The distribution of troops, according to the informant, is as under: -

Chamdo 300/400 troops.

Lho Dzong 1,000,,

Shobando 500,,

Pemba Go 500,,

Ngo Trukha 50,,

All our reports seem to confirm that the Chinese have now established a small outpost manned by 50/60 soldiers at Ngo Trukha where they are constructing water-mills for grinding barley. Ngo Trukha is a ferry two stages west of Pemba Gompa.

(xi) Kandron Tsoko Se arrived in Lhasa from Chamdo on 30th April and left for Yatung on 1st May. He was the bearer of letters from Ngapho Shape to the Yatung Government.

(b) Indo-Tibetan Relations:

- (i) Our occupation of Tawang seems to have put the Tibetans in a cantankerous mood, and they may be expected to return to the attack with slow but determined regularity once a month. On the 27th April, the local Kashag sent two envoys to deliver a further admonishing sermon to us on Tawang. They denied that Tawang was ever ceded to India, and that in any event since there was no physical transference of the territory in question to India for the last 36 years after the conclusion of the 1914 convention, the cession of Tawang to India could have no legal validity. In their view the Government of India had acted in a manner suggestive of stealth, and in utter disregard of the friendly relations existing between the two countries, and that, too, at a time when Tibet has been facing a serious crisis. They were hurt because the Government of India had not considered it even necessary to inform the Tibetan Government of their intention to occupy Tawang before the event, despite the presence in Tibet of three Indian officials.
- (ii) It has been our endeavour to allay Tibetan suspicions regarding our motive, and to restore as far as possible the old relations of cordiality between the Mission and the Lhasa officials.

- (iii) When we were informally asked whether our Government would consider revising the frontier in favour of Tibet in the Tawang area, in accordance with previous assurances, we thought it would be unwise to summarily dismiss the plan. We, therefore, informed our interrogators rather cautiously that as we had no authority to discuss the subject, the Tibetan Government could, if necessary, take the matter up on a higher level, say, with the Political Officer in Sikkim. Furthermore, we told them that it appeared rather odd to us that the Tibetan Government should be so anxious to disown an agreement made under the seal of His Holiness the Dalai Lama in his 13th incarnation. Surely the present incarnation will not tolerate such desecration of his authority.

(c) Nepal And Tibet

- (i) There was no sign of improvement in the strained relations between the Tibetans and the Nepalese Mission in Lhasa during the month. Tibetan officials have adopted a hostile and a non-co-operating attitude towards the Nepalese Representative making it difficult for him to function in Lhasa. All this would probably lead up to the refusal by the Tibetan Government to pay the annual sum of Rs. 10,000/- to the Nepalese (vide treaty of 1856), when it falls due this year.
- (ii) In Lhasa, two Newar communists, or crypto-communists, are having frequent meetings with the Chinese officer. One of them is also acting as his business agent, and has been provided with sufficient funds to make large-scale purchases of cotton piece-goods and other articles badly needed in Kham.

II. Internal

- (i) The situation has generally been quite, although there have been reports of local restiveness in Nagchuka. Lhasa officials apprehended an uprising, but nothing has so far happened.
- (ii) In Lhasa there was some excitement when soldiers of the Trongtra regiment fought a battle with the Trukna regiment on 26th April. In the

fight sten-guns and rifles were freely used but the casualties were unexpectedly low. Only 9 soldiers of the Trongtra regiment were seriously wounded. The commanding officer of the Trongtra regiment told us that his troops actually fetched 3" mortars for use against the opposing troops but at the last moment they wisely decided not to take recourse to so extreme a measure which would have left Lhasa in ruins.

- (iii) There was also a minor incident in the Kashag's office when a Chinese renegade, by name Li His-hai, who claimed to be an ex-KMT official, threatened to commit suicide in the presence of the two Lhasa dignitaries if they did not provide him with a travel certificate. He was immediately apprehended, given 50 lashes, and consigned to prison.
- (iv) It is understood that a number of important Tibetan officials are returning to Lhasa. Dzasa Samdup Photrang has already arrived and taken over his duties as the new Master of the Lhasa Mint. Others have been delayed enroute by bad weather conditions.

III. Economic:

- (i) For sometime, the food situation in Lhasa has been deteriorating. Prices of both essential and non-essential goods have shown a phenomenal rise. There is nothing unusual in this as Lhasa is virtually in a state of siege from three directions- the north, east and west. In their usual manner the Chinese appear to be consuming anything that is edible in the areas where they are located, thereby not only creating local food shortages but depleting the cattle population of the country which latter is seriously impeding internal transportation. It is unfortunate that this had to coincide with a political upheaval in Nepal from which quarter no further supplies of rice are now available. The Bhutanese alone seem to be reaping fantastic profits out of this difficult situation, but even they do not seem to have enough to offer. We give below the prevailing prices of some essential supplies in Lhasa during the month under reviews: -

RiceRs. 140/-per maund.
FlourRs. 40/--do-
TsampaRs. 30/--do-
SugarRs. 260/--do-
ButterRs. 8/-per seer.
EggsRs. 2/4/-per dozen.
Mustard OilRs. 4/-per seer.

It will be seen that the worst hit are the poorer classes, who are entirely dependent on Tsampa (barley flour), and concrete evidence of this is to be found in the sudden increase in the number of beggars in the city. As a result there are growing signs of dissatisfaction among the people. The Government in a special notification promised the people to bring down the price of barley flour, but so far they have not met with any startling success. As in certain parts of India, hunger seems to be on the march in Lhasa.

Incidentally, it may be of some interest to know that the buying spree of the Chinese officer in Lhasa has in a measure contributed to the worsening of the food situation in Lhasa. He is reported to be laying in huge stocks of rice and flour in anticipation of the early arrival of his comrades from Chamdo.

(ii) Despite the rise in prices, the value of the rupee remained unchanged during the month. It fetched only four sangs in Tibetan currency.

IV. Miscellaneous:

Heavy snow fall on the Nathula, and rain in the adjoining areas, have interrupted mail-communication between Sikkim and Tibet. In some cases, our mails reached us almost a week after they were due.

(S. Sinha)
Officer in Charge.