

December 1950

Dispatches from Delhi, Gangtok and Lhasa

(Source: JN Collection, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library)

December 2

The question of sending plane to Lhasa comes again in the dispatches. It is again explained there are political as well as technical aspects "from stand-point of Tibet and NOT of Dalai Lama alone."

Delhi acknowledges a former communication from Lhasa: "We were glad to see that Dalai Lama had NO intention of leaving Lhasa and that rumours about his impending departure were untrue."

This solved the issue for the time being, though the Ministry adds: "If circumstances absolutely compel him to leave Lhasa, he is of course free to seek asylum in India; and we shall extend to him the respect and consideration due to the spiritual as well as temporal potentate of a neighbouring State."

The words 'temporal potentate' means the India still recognize Tibet as a separate political entity.

The telegram from Delhi continues: "We hope, however, this contingency will NOT arise. Departure of Dalai Lama will result in frustration and demoralization of Tibetan people and there will be NO hope left of saving anything of Tibetan autonomy. These are doubtless factors to which the Tibetan Government are alive."

The handling is however left to Sinha's discretion "to remind them of these considerations in an entirely friendly and informal manner. It should NOT appear that Government of India are trying to influence conduct of Dalai Lama or Tibetan Government unduly."

In conclusion, the Ministry tells the Mission that in case Dalai Lama has to come to India, "we would prefer that he should do so by land as that

would be the normal course. We are advised that a flight to Lhasa and back, though difficult and risky, is NOT impossible."

It is clear that for political reasons, it is not advisable that "Government of India should send an aeroplane to fetch Dalai Lama. It is equally inadvisable to encourage flight, sponsored as newspaper stunt by Trumbull. Least objectionable course will be for Dalai Lama's agents in India to charter an Indian plane, preferably with an Indian pilot."

The Dalai Lama will eventually take refuge in Chumbi Valley via Gyantse by road.

December 4

Harishwar Dayal reports to Delhi the visit of Shakabpa and some of his colleagues, earlier in the day. The Tibetan official requested the Government of India on behalf of the Tibetan Government to inform Trumbull on their behalf that his plane was not repeat not required. Dayal explained to Shakabpa that the correct procedure would be for the Tibetan Government to inform Trumbull of their decision. Shakabpa agreed to do this.

The PO also told the Tibetan delegation that a premature flight of Dalai Lama would be inadvisable: "it was desirable to consider getting him down by road if he was forced to leave Lhasa." Shakabpa informed the PO that "pack transport also was being kept ready and that Dalai Lama would flee only if this becomes absolutely necessary."

The Tibetan Government however wanted Delhi to keep a plane ready for dispatch to Lhasa whenever required: "the landing ground was ready", he says.

Dayal inquired if Lhasa had considered the possibility of chartering a plane from Indian Air Company. When the PO pointed out to the dangers of using foreign pilots, the Tibetans asked for advice as to which company they should approach.

In turn, Dayal asks Delhi whether to suggest "a company which has planes and Indian pilots of the necessary quality," the PO adds: "Perhaps Government of India could also take confidential soundings to ascertain whether an Indian Company would be prepared to undertake this commission. Whoever does so will NO doubt wish to make a preliminary trial flight so publicity will be inevitable."

The same day, the Mission in Lhasa addressed Gangtok. As mentioned earlier all these cables are always repeated to the Political Officer in Sikkim and the Ministry of External Affairs in Delhi.

Sinha reports the latest news from the front: "It is reliably understood that 200 Tibetan soldiers encountered 300 mounted Chinese troops in the neighbourhood of LHODZONG and held them up for two days till Chinese reinforcements arrived and dispersed the Tibetans."

The IFS officer says that further information is awaited.

On another front, the Tibetan Government has received some information from Lhari that Ngabo Shape has sent two emissaries with a report regarding his discussions with Chinese at Chamdo.

There is possibly some truth in the 'bazaar gossips' which says that Ngabo was talking to the Chinese.

Sinha says that following the Indian government's latest instructions: "I propose to advise Tibetan Government to explore every possibility to reach an amicable settlement with Chinese. Tibetans will NO doubt have to pay a heavy price for peace."

In the meantime, the Chinese were reported to be building up strength in Jyekundo, which is the northern route. The plans of Mao progressing well.

December 7

The next bulletin from the Mission in Lhasa clarifies that the Tibetan Government is fully aware of different issues regarding the Dalai Lama's flight from Lhasa: "There is NO reason for any apprehension that Dalai Lama will leave Tibet earlier than is absolutely necessary. Tibetan

Government has long decided that he should leave only when danger approaches gates of Lhasa. Hence they were keen danger approaches gates of Lhasa. Hence they were keen on arranging his departure by air." Sinha had explained the position to the Foreign Bureau: "When question of sending planes to Lhasa was first broached I had warned them NOT to take any risk with life of Dalai Lama who is symbol of Tibetan unity and resistance. I told them that it was my fear that nobody in his senses would venture to fly such precious cargo from Lhasa under hazardous conditions. The matter would have closed there had it NOT been for certain hopes held out by Government of India."

In the meantime, the Lhasa Government have already completed building runway in Lhasa: "however, having reviewed the question, they feel that safest and best way would be for Dalai Lama to go down by land route in full view of his followers causing them to ponder over circumstances leading to his flight from his own people and country to spend life of an exile in India."

The tragic flight will happen less than 9 years later, when the Dalai Lama will take the direction of the exile."

Sinha adds that he was informed by the Dalai Lama "that messengers from Chamdo are expected in Lhasa in a day or two. Tibetan Government will seek Government of India's advice when Chinese terms are known."

It confirms that Ngabo, the 'prisoner of war' had started 'negotiating' without any mandate from the Tibetan Government, without even Lhasa knowing it.

December 11

The Indian Embassy in Beijing brings to the Ministry's notice an article which appeared in *The People's Daily*¹.

¹ And other papers

On December 8, the article mentioned that the Tibetan Officers and their men who surrendered at Chamdo² were released by the PLA and given funds to go home: "They attended short term study classes and expressed hope that light of liberation would soon shine on Lhasa and whole Tibet."

The same day, Robert Webster Ford, the 'British spy' captured by PLA during battle for CHANGTU proved to be espionage agent for Britain and America: "His espionage activities revealed designs of British and American imperialists in invading China's Tibet."

The article reported by Panikkar says that on July 20, 1949, Ford set up Wireless Station at Tungkiangka near Chamdo: "In October 1950 Ford set up branch station on Chinghai-Sikang border³ and gathered military intelligence. After his capture, Ford admitted that he had always maintained close contact with his 'friends' in America Britain and Japan through the station and with Porell Thomas [Lowell Thomas] the U.S. spy who had visited Tibet. He planned to poison Geda Tibetan member to the Military and Administrative Committee when Geda arrived in Changtu 24th July with Mission to bring peaceful liberation of Tibet. Geda died of poisoning on 22nd August."

The article does not mention the fate of the Indian assistant of Robert Ford. This will be the object of a long correspondence in 1951-52.

The Mission has received the expected information from Chamdo. Sinha immediately informs Delhi and Gangtok: "Two emissaries from Chamdo arrived in Lhasa on 7th December and reported to Kashag on 8th. Kashag went into conference with Dalai Lama today. National Assembly will meet tomorrow and consider terms offered by the Chinese."

The Head of the Mission writes that the content of Ngabo's report are not yet known "but it is surmised that he has given a glowing account of Chinese military strength at Chamdo and emphasized futility of Tibetan

² Always written CHANGTU by Panikkar

³ On the Upper Yangtze

Government's efforts to stem their advance. Fuller details of this report will be available to the Mission in a day or two."

Sinha conveys to Delhi the outcome of his discussion with the Tibetan Foreign Bureau's official over past few days. He says: "I have advised them to be reasonable in their attitude to this peace offer and to seek opportunities for salvaging whatever possible, of Tibetan autonomy from present deluge."

Sinha mentions the terms of an appeal to Mao Zedong:

1. Tibetan Government will welcome a Chinese Mission in Lhasa and will consult them whenever necessary.
2. Tibetan Government assure the People's Republic of China that there is NO foreign influence in Lhasa inimical to Chinese interests. In case Peking Government have knowledge of any specific agents of foreign powers working against them, Tibetan Government would take steps to remedy the situation.
3. In view of poverty and inadequate resources of Tibet Tibetan Government are constrained to appeal to the generosity of China NOT to station large forces inside Tibet. Tibetan Government will raise NO objection if the Chinese maintain a suitable force for emergency purposes at Chamdo.

The last point will become the first bone of contention less than two years later, when food shortage will create serious tensions by the Tibetans and the occupying forces.

Sinha is been told that the Tibetan Government considers that there is no immediate threat to Tibet's security from 'outside': "Should there ever be a threat of invasion, Tibetan Government assure the Government of China that they would seek Chinese assistance."

The Communists knew perfectly well that their argument that Tibet was in danger was bogus, it was just a pretext. In 1950, there was no direct threat of 'external interference', though the U.S. government was probably keen to keep a tab on what was happening in the Tibetan capital, but at a minimum cost.

The cable gives some more information from the front: "Chinese captured a Depon⁴ in recent encounter near Lhodzong. News of this defeat has sent Lhalu Shape scurrying from Lhariguo to Giamda. Tibetan Government have informally requested me to advice Govt. of India to maintain strict vigilance on Assam-Bhutan frontier with Tibet. They have received reports that Chinese troops are heavily concentrated in [the area]."

December 13

The Political Officer does not fully agree with Sinha's approach and his advices to the Tibetan Government: "It is natural that in present situation Tibetans should look to us for advice. However we are not repeat not in a position either to secure acceptance of any terms we may suggest or to enforce their observance in the future."

Dayal had a point. He continues: "Nor have we been appointed to mediate either by the parties to the dispute or by the United Nations. In these circumstances it appears to me that our pending decision should be of a general character and that we should avoid putting forward detailed proposals at this stage."

The same day, the Mission in Lhasa provides more information on the 'negotiations' in Chamdo: "In a further communication from Ngapho Shape which reached Lhasa on 11th December he complains that there is dearth of news regarding Tibet in Chamdo and that he has to depend entirely on Chinese officials for information. Till a few days ago he was told that Dalai Lama had left Tibet but he had just received information that His Holiness has NOT been evacuated from Lhasa. He implores the Tibetan Government to consult His Holiness and send a reply in clear terms to his earlier communication by 16th December."

The Chinese have started blackmailing; accept our conditions or we advance: "If No reply is received by that date Chinese troops poised for assault on Lhasa will go into action. If for any reason Tibetan Government

⁴ Or Dapon

decide NOT to negotiate with the Chinese and to carry on their policy of resistance he should be informed accordingly."

Ngabo gives his own views; but let us not forget that he is a prisoner: "His own position in Chamdo is unenviable as he is kept in close surveillance by Chinese troops. He is NO longer a free agent and has to order his behavior in a manner pleasing to his captors. He requests his release if and when Tibetan delegation reaches Chamdo for negotiations." This is strange that Lhasa should accept that an official who has just been taken prisoner can at the same time become the main negotiator. It is what will happen during the following months.

Sinha continues his reports and confirms that messengers from Chamdo have brought some information: "Chinese troops put up an impressive show in operating field guns of Japanese, Chinese and American make for the benefit of the Tibetan officials. Chinese had concentrated twenty thousand well armed and disciplined troops at Chamdo who carried rations and equipment in packs and moved faster than Tibetan pack animals. These troops had suddenly disappeared from Chamdo a day or two after the demonstration and later reports say that they were moving towards Po."

Po is located on the way to the Indian border: "The Tibetan Government fear that these men are being deployed in an encircling movement to cut off Tibet's life line with India and to intercept His Holiness's escape from Lhasa."

There are still far away from Lhasa and it is doubtful if Lhasa has proper maps to follow the situation.

Sinha has nevertheless been informed by the Foreign Bureau that a reply "accepting Chinese offer to negotiate and affirming Tibet's desire to establish friendly relations with China is being immediately communicated to Chamdo."

Lhasa realizes the seriousness of the situation. Sinha writes: "to forestall Chinese interception they propose to send Dalai Lama to Yatung."

In the meantime, the Lhasa Government is keen to incorporate Sinha's suggestions in their reply to the Chinese: "They would also be grateful to receive Government of India's considered views on the Chinese terms as soon as possible."

The National Assembly has deliberated and "regards Chinese proposals as tempting but NO member would trust the Chinese to abide by their offer." How right they were. Many in Lhasa believe that the Chinese are trying "to lure a fly with honey spread on a sharp blade."

What choice do the Tibetans have? Probably none.

Sinha concludes his cable to Delhi: "On my persuasion they are willing to make a sincere effort for peaceful settlement against their conscience and convictions," the IFS officer adds: "They are dogged by a mystic belief in their doom which has been strengthened by an evil omen which appeared from the day emissaries from Chamdo reached Lhasa."

The Tibetans probably sensed that it was the end of an era.

December 14

Sinha answers the 'advices' of the Political Officer: "Your advice has been noted. I am aware of circumstances mentioned in your telegram."

He explains the situation prevalent in Lhasa: "Left to themselves Tibetans would reject outright offer of terms by China. They implored me for advice and in discussion with them which was of a general nature I suggested that there might be a possible way out of the present impasse, I made it clear that my views were NOT official and that they should themselves decide their future course of action. This involves neither Government of India NOR me in any commitments."

One can understand that the Tibetan Government with no experience in diplomacy or foreign affairs, it totally at a loss in front of the developing situation.

The same day, Sinha addresses Delhi and Gangtok: "Foreign Bureau Chief saw me this morning with original communication from Chamdo a copy of which has been left with Mission."

The report was sent by Ngabo Shape "with the approval of Peking"

Sinha then gives the main points of Ngabo's communication:

- The Order for invasion of Tibet was issued by China only when it was realized that Tibetan Government was not ardent in their desire to seek peaceful settlement.
- Fall of Chamdo however brought a change in the situation as Chinese and Tibetan officials of high rank were thereafter able to meet. Chinese were kind enough to suspend further military action [sic] beyond Chamdo and Riwoche circuit sparing Tibet the misery of war.
- It advisable that peace negotiations should begin forthwith on the following basis.

Retrospectively, it could make smile if it was not so tragic:

- (a) Union of the 5 races of China with a view to preserving minority races from the tyranny of the majority races.
- (b) Tibet will be allowed as a special case to remain under rule of Dalai Lama and Regent.
- (c) Tibetan religion to receive protection.
- (d) China to assist Tibet in reforming her army into a powerful Defence Force against external aggression [India?].
- (e) China to provide expert assistance to Tibet on matters concerning agriculture, animal husbandry, Commerce and Industry.
- (f) Measures to reform Tibetan Administration to be taken only after mutual consultations between China and Tibet.
- (g) Local customs and practices NOT to be disturbed.
- (h) Collaborationists with American British and Kuomintang interests NOT to be persecuted.
- (i) Tibet to be assured that the liberation movement is NOT in support of anti-Tibetan elements like Tashilhunpo and Reting factions.

- (j) China to help Tibet in getting rid of pernicious influence of Anglo-Americans.
- (k) Tibetan Government should discount all propoganda relating to tyranny of Chinese rule as a means of depriving Dalai Lama of his power, monasteries of their tradition and property, the rich of their wealth. It is NOT true that Chinese confiscate land and properties of the rich and equate them with the poor. All this is malicious propoganda spread by enemies of China. Tibet officials captured in Chamdo say they are convinced from their own observations that there is NO truth in these allegations.

The following years will show the emptiness of the Chinese words. It has to be noted that the Indian presence in Tibet is not mentioned.

The report of Ngabo pleads with Lhasa: "steps may be taken to initiate negotiations at an early date. If any of the points detailed above are NOT acceptable to the Tibetan Government, Chinese Government are prepared to consider Tibetan objections as far as possible without impairing communist ideals."

The report of the Governor states that "40 [Tibetan] officials captured at Chamdo are willing to guarantee that any agreement reached with China will NOT be violated by Chinese at a later date. As Chagtsi⁵ has incurred displeasure of Chinese, it would be advisable to send high powered delegation authorized to negotiate with Chinese via Kham."

After their striking victory in Kham, the Chinese are in a position to dictate their terms and even chose the members of the delegation who will 'negotiate' with them: "Should Tibetan Government find it inconvenient to send such a Delegation, officials already in Chamdo may be authorized to conduct peace talks."

Via Ngabo, the Chinese add that the Tibetan officials prisoner in Chamdo: "assure their Government that they will perform their duties faithfully

⁵ The Shakabpa delegation in India

bearing in mind the interests of their [Tibetan] Government and country. They request for a reply which should reach them NOT later than 16th December."

Ngabo's message to Lhasa ends by a threat: "They warn their Government that should there be any signs of hesitation on their part the Chinese Liberation Army will ruthlessly proceed with the task of Liberating Tibet which would only bring disaster and misery to the people of Tibet." The message is clear, surrender or we will force you to surrender. Sinha concludes: "Grateful if information continued in this telegram and the next is not repeat not given any publicity."

December 18

The previous message seems to have left Delhi and Lhasa speechless. The Head of the Mission in Lhasa then conveys its views on possible consequence of the Dalai Lama's departure from Lhasa. The communication had a cold reception, after he explained that India "had NO desire to influence their judgement though we wished them to know that evacuation of Lhasa will NOT only be an invitation to the Chinese but will lead to internal turmoil unnecessarily."

The Head of the Mission remarks that for a Government "ready to flee from the closing net, these views were a rude shock."

Especially after the National Assembly had agreed to the flight and preparations were well under way: "Troops and messengers have gone out to warn officials on the road."

Following Sinha's explanations, the Tibetan Government promised to reconsider the issue: "though from appearances their decision appears to be irrevocable."

Sinha describes the situation thus: "The guiding sentiment is abnormal fear of Chinese proWess. They gave alarming accounts of Chinese mobility and were convinced that if Dalai Lama was to be taken captive by surprise assault it would mean the extinction of Tibet for all time to come".

The Tibetan officials take the example of the Garpon of Gartok who has been taken prisoner by a surprise attack at Rudok; further the news from Po in South Tibet are not at all encouraging and Taktser Rinpoche's personal experiences in Amdo have added to these fears.

In fact the panic is reigning in the Tibetan capital: "Large scale exodus from Lhasa has begun. Most people would at present seek shelter in areas close to India. All important officials in present administration are likely to accompany Dalai [Lama]. New officials are being appointed for Lhasa. They will be in daily contact with the Dalai [Lama] by wireless."

To diffuse the situation Tibetan officials in Lhasa "intend to inform the Chinese that Dalai [Lama] has gone on a short trip to Yatung and will return to Lhasa in due course when a settlement has been reached."

Sinha rightly noted that once the Tibetan Government has left, the importance of Lhasa will considerably diminish "and our Mission will be rendered of little use. Pending instructions, we shall remain here to watch the rump but it will be necessary now to send for a few men from Gyantse."

The Tibetan Government has already promised to provide in the next few days, the Indian soldiers the necessary permits. Apparently, the Tibetan Government is preparing to reply to the Chinese points by incorporating some of Sinha's suggestions.

December 19

The Ministry instructs the Mission in Lhasa that the Mission should remain in Lhasa even after Dalai Lama leaves and await developments four soldiers armed but in plain clothes will proceed to Lhasa as soon as permits for them are obtained: "Particulars about these men may be obtained from Officer in charge of our detachment in Gyantse," Sinha is told.

The same day, Sinha informs Delhi that "50 mounted Chinese troops reached outskirts Lhasa yesterday and 150 Chinese agents have so far infiltrated into Lhasa. Looting on minor scale started last night and

conditions might worsen tonight. We are taking every possible step to defend Mission and are prepared for worst to happen."

At the end of the cable, Sinha however says that the news about the arrival of Chinese troops has NOT yet been confirmed: "But the Bazaar is full of alarming rumours."

One more of these false rumours.

Later the same day, the PO writes to Delhi, Lhasa and Gyantse: "If withdrawal of Indian Mission was to coincide with Dalai Lama's flight it might give the impression that we had instigated him to leave Lhasa. I understand Sinha agrees with this view and also feels that it would be useful for him to remain at Lhasa for the present especially as he knows Chinese."

Maj Krishnatry, the Indian Trade Agent Gyantse has been instructed to keep 4 men of escorts ready to go Lhasa when they receive a call from Mission. Dayal adds: "It would not repeat not be safe to use them for escorting Dalai Lama or for any other purpose which might provoke the Chinese. Trade Agents will telegraph immediately for instructions in case of need."

And the final news of the day is communicated to Delhi and Gangtok: "This morning Dalai [Lama] and his Government left Lhasa. Dalai [Lama] has taken everybody of any importance with him. Lhasa is completely deserted. Their departure was so sudden that most officials who accompanied him were taken by surprise. Orders for evacuation of Lhasa were issued last night."

Sinha gives some details on the tragic circumstances: "Foreign Bureau Chief in a letter prays that we might meet again. He asks for dak bungalow facilities and if necessary protection for Dalai [Lama] from Gyantse escorts. Permission has been granted to bring up four men from Gyantse for our protection."

A relative good news is that the Tibetan government has appointed two new Prime Ministers. Sinha writes: "One of my PROTEGES here Tsipon Lukhangwa has been appointed Prime Minister along with Lobsang Tashi a

monk official." The Indian official however doubts if in the present circumstances his presence in Lhasa can be of any value to the Government of India.

At the end of this eventful day, Sinha is able to provide more reliable information: "I saw new Prime Minister today. He believes that Chinese are still some distance from Lhasa though he had NO precise information as to their present location. He apprehends trouble in Lhasa but will do his best to keep order. He has already taken steps to increase skeleton police force of Lhasa and has advised that we bring up a few men for our protection."

December 20

Delhi instructs Sinha to remain in Lhasa "for the time being. Decision regarding future of Mission in Lhasa can be taken in the light of developments during next few days."

The situation is rather dramatic.

December 21

The Political Officer writes to Gyantse: "I see no repeat no objection to Trade Agency Staff going out to meet Dalai Lama if his arrival is public but I considered that Escorts troops should remain in their quarters throughout party's stay at Gyantse. Guard of honour may be furnished only at Trade Agency if Dalai Lama or Cabinet Ministers call there. Tibetans may NOT like this but it seems important to avoid giving impression that Escorts troops are in any way assisting the Tibetans. Troops may give a physical training display in Agency grounds if Dalai [Lama] asks for it."

Gyantse asks for instructions: "whether [the Dalai Lama] should be given a guard of honour by Escorts and received by me ceremonially at fourth mile. I presume I should in any case call on him later. No request for escorting him or accommodating him has been made so far and he might stay in monastery."

Harishwar Dayal further notes that "Since Chinese have not repeat not asked Government of India to remove their staff or Escorts from Tibet it appears unlikely that they will attack our posts. Our officers may meet them if asked to do so and if it becomes necessary to approach them for any work for our staff or nationals. Strength of Escorts is not repeat not sufficient to meet attack by organized force."

The Indian Trade Agent is requested to repeat all important telegrams addressed to Gangtok, to Lhasa.

The same day, Maj Krishnatry informs his boss in Gangtok that he has reliably been informed that the Dalai Lama will be arriving at Gyantse on December 26 in the morning. The Indian Trade Agent however is not aware of any further plans for the Tibetan leader: "but [he] will probably stay the night and resume journey next morning unless he decides to establish his temporary next headquarters here."

The Dalai Lama's mother is expected to reach Khangmar by the direct route on December 23.

Regarding the Dalai Lama, Gyantse asks for instructions: "whether he should be given a guard of honour by Escorts and received by me ceremonially at fourth mile. I presume I should in any case call on him later. No request for escorting him or accommodating him has been made so far and he might stay in monastery."

Gangtok is informed that seven men from the Escort as well as a medical orderly are 'standing by' to leave for Lhasa "but passports NOT yet received."

The Trade Agent seems a bit anxious too. He asks if while Delhi has "agreed that our posts in Lhasa and Gyantse must stay on, I shall be grateful to be informed whether Chinese have reconciled in the maintenance of status quo."

Nobody knew except for Mao and a few of his generals had the answer to this question: "Instructions for any specific action to be taken by me on Chinese arrival [at] Lhasa and whether to resist any armed attack on Agency by them may also be communicated."

December 23

The Trade Agent in Gyantse sends more precisions to the ministry: "DALAI arriving Gyantse 26th December at 10 a.m. leaving for KHANGMAR next morning." Krishnatry continues: "Have just been asked by ABBOT who called in and Tibetan Trade Agent from RALUNG over telephone whether I would go to receive and escorts give guard of honour. I told I would inform after making plans." He then ask Delhi to suggest if he should "go out ceremonially with my mounted escorts and flag to receive at fourth mile. When I present SCARF my mounted escorts should dip flag and salute. Guard of honour should be given only if DALAI visits Agency or passes through." His comments are that these suggestions "have precedents and anything less may be unhappily misconstrued."

He asks Delhi to confirm by return

Later in the day, Dayal cables Delhi to say that he agrees that "Trade Agent may go out with small mounted escort to meet DALAI LAMA. This is the escort that normally accompanies Trade Agent when he goes out and does NOT amount to guard of honour."

December 26

Krishnatry in Gyantse sends a message to the ministry (and Gangtok): "DALAI LAMA arrived Gyantse 10 a.m. from TARING in State seated in PALANQUIN with everyone in official uniforms and thousands LINING the route in OBEISANCE. All agency staff with mounted escorts accompanied me to receive a little beyond fourth mile. Understand DALAI LAMA will stay Yatung at least for some time. Am told idea of holding on to CHUMBY⁶ NOT entirely given up by DALAI LAMA who however thinks military situation beyond repair." The Trade Agent adds: "Troops alleged

⁶ Chumbi

to be body guards have recently been proceeding to PHARI and KHAMBA DZONG."

December 29

Three days later Delhi answers the PO: "DALAI LAMA is of course free to stay wherever he wishes in his territory. We are however apprehensive that if he stays for any length of time in Yatung our detachment there may get involved and continuance of our Trade Mart jeopardized. From our point of view it would be better if DALAI LAMA stays elsewhere, but suggestion has to be put to him with the utmost tact."

Delhi can't certainly dictate to Lhasa where the Dalai Lama should stay, even if it jeopardizes the trade.

The same day, the Trade Agent in Gyantse informs Delhi: "DALAI LAMA left 27th December morning he expressed hope that India would continue helping Tibet as in the past and said our friendship must continue."

After the Dalai Lama's departure, the Dzasa Lama, the Tibetan Foreign Secretary called on the Trade Agent "to inform why DALAI LAMA left Lhasa. Narrating events leading to Chinese invasion he said National Assembly and all Tibetans requested DALAI to leave Lhasa for safety as he is SYMBOL of Tibetan independence. DALAI carrying his seals and entire staff to establish his Government headquarters in Yatung. Care-TAKER Government in Lhasa would carry on administration under his instructions."

Krishnatry who earlier served in the Army writes: "NOT clear but unlikely whether DALAI would try to defend CHUMBI valley against Chinese attack. Troops moved to PHARI and KHAMBA DZONG so far number about five hundred and fifty including bodyguards. Understand about two hundred soldiers expected to arrive in SHIGATSE from Lhasa soon. DZONG LAMA reiterated the hope that India would continue helping Tibet."

About the 'escort' for the Indian Head of the mission, the Trade Agent says: "Five men including guide and medical orderlies are leaving for Lhasa 28th December morning."

December 30

The PO writes to Delhi, Lhasa and Gyantse that the telegram of December 29 was received "too late for action at Gyantse. In any case DALAI Lama would NOT alter his plans once he was on the move. Information from Yatung suggests that the party may proceed India before very long." It would take a few months for the Tibetan leader to return to Lhasa.