

The Asian Relations Conference

Tibet Still Independent



Gandhi addresses the delegates from Asian countries



Nehru, Abdul Gaffar Khan and other delegates

At the end of 1946, Hugh Richardson, the British Representative in Lhasa, handed over the official invitation from the Indian Council of World Affairs to the Tibetan Government for an Asian Relation Conference to be held in Delhi in March 1947. He told the Tibetan Foreign Office that it was a good opportunity to show the world that Tibet was de facto independent.

The delegation journeyed via the Chumbi Valley, Gangtok and Calcutta where they heard about the Chinese protest against their representation. Once in Delhi, the delegation called on Nehru, the Prime Minister designate who immediately informed them that the Conference was not a political conference and that they were welcome.



Tibetan flags showing on the dais during Gandhi's address

Later, they called on Sarojini Naidu, Sardar Patel and Gandhi who told them that a brochure on the proceedings of the Conference would be published; it was the best way for the Tibetan delegates to demonstrate their independence.

The plenary session of the Conference was held in Purana Qila. The leaders of each of the thirty-two delegations sat on the dais behind a plate board with the name of their country and flag.



Nehru, Sarojini Naidu with Tibetan delegate on the dais

The Tibetan leader Teji Sampho told the audience: "We are a country which administers its subjects on the basis of religious aspirations. Tibet has had especially friendly relations with India from ancient times."



Teji Sampho, the leader of the Tibetan delegation



Map displayed during the Conference



The next conference was in Bandung in 1955
The Tibetans were not invited since Tibet had lost its independent status