

Stepping into British Shoes

Tibet After India's Independence



On August 15, 1947, the Indian Tricolour replaced the Union Jack at the Mission



Dekyilingka, the British and Indian Mission in Lhasa

After India's Independence, Hugh Richardson, head of the British Mission, continued to represent India. He explained: "In 1947 the speed with which the British Government was divesting itself of its responsibilities in India caused the Tibetans to wonder whether they were about to be deprived of the diplomatic support they had hitherto enjoyed in their difficulties with China without anything being provided to take its place."



Hugh Richardson continued as the head of the Indian Mission after Independence

"...It was left to the British Mission in Lhasa, with little official guidance, to reassure the Tibetans as far as possible."



The telegraph lines remained the responsibility of the Indian Government



Telegraph-in-charge Reginald Fox with his Tibetan wife

In Lhasa, "the transition was almost imperceptible. The existing staff was retained in its entirety and the only obvious change was the change of flags. After about a year the British Civil Surgeon was replaced by an Indian doctor; and an Indian Army Officer joined the British officer," wrote Richardson.



Indian officials, like Sumal Sinha (2nd left), progressively replaced the British



Life continued as usual for some time... S. Sinha having lunch with Tibetan officials



A first Tibetan Mission visited Independent India in 1948