

April 16, 1950
**Monthly Report of the Indian Mission, Lhasa for
Period Ending 15th April, 1950**

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Summary:

Writing from Lhasa, Hugh Richardson summarizes recent developments in Tibet's relations with India, China, Nepal, the US, and the UK, as well as political and economic trends within Tibet.

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SECRET

From - The Indian Trade Agent, Gyantse, & Officer in Charge, Indian Mission, Lhasa, P.O. Gyantse, Tibet.

To - The Political Officer in Sikkim, Gangtok.

Memorandum No. 3(13)-I/50.

Dated Lhasa, Tibet, the 16th April, 1950.

Monthly report of the Indian Mission, Lhasa for period ending 15th April, 1950.

I. EXTERNAL RELATIONS

A. Relations between Tibet and India

1. The Tibetan Government have decided not to pursue the question of making an air strip at Gyantse for the present.
2. An Indian Sadhu from Hyderabad (D) who had spent about a year in Lhasa has travelled through East Tibet on his way to see the Panchen Rimpoche candidate and to visit holy places in China. It is possible that the Tibetan Government consider him to be an agent of the Government of India.

B. Relations between Tibet and China

1. The Tibetan Mission to China have been advised that a new Chinese Ambassador is shortly expected in India and it has been suggested to them that they might conduct their discussions in Delhi rather than go to Hongkong where there is at present no representative of the new Chinese Government.
2. The outbreak of famine and disease in China has brought hopes in Lhasa that the Communists may be unable to take any action against them for some time. It appears, however, that the Communists assault on Formosa is to be pressed in spite of internal difficulties. If the attack is swiftly successful the reported Communist programme of invading Tibet in July 1950 might be possible. The Tibetans also hope to hold off action by the Communists by the talks with a representative of the new government which their "Mission to China" is to undertake.
3. There are unconfirmed rumours that the Chinese Government are cooling towards the so-called Panchen Rimpoche.
4. The Tibetan Government received a report of a suspicious arrival at Tashilhunpo and they suspect that the man, who seemed wealthy and well provided with baggage, may be a Communist agent.

C. Relations between Tibet and Nepal

There have been rumours that the Nepalese Government have offered to put 3,000 troops at the disposal of the Tibetan Government. The Nepalese Officer laughed at these stories when I mentioned them to him.

D. Relations between Tibet and the U.K. and the U.S.A.

1. Mr. Ward Price, correspondent of the Daily Mail, who was refused permission to visit Lhasa, has made a statement about the Tibetan Government in rather uncomplimentary terms.
2. The U.S. Vice Consul in Urumchi, with five companies, is reported to be about to enter Tibet from the North, having fled from Urumchi because his life was said to be in danger from the Chinese Communists. The Tibetan Government have agreed to give the party all help in crossing Tibet to India; but the journey from the north Tibetan border to places where active Tibetan administration begins is over many hundreds of miles of territory where only a few brigand nomads may be met. It is essential that no publicity should be given to the movements of this party; and that has been impressed on the Tibetan Government.
3. The Tibetan Government have refused permission to Mr. Trumbull, Delhi correspondent of the New York Times and to Mr. Steele, correspondent of the New York Herald Tribune, who has been in Tibet before to visit Lhasa at present.
4. The Government of the U.S.A. have thanked the Tibetan Government for permitting American missionaries in the Sino Tibetan border territory to travel through Tibet on route for Burma.

II. Domestic Affairs

1. The Tibetan Government are reported to have taken action to discourage possible Communist infiltration into Tashilhunpo (see I.B.4 above) by searching the quarters of monks about whom they had suspicions.
2. Ngapho Tsipen has been appointed additional Shap-pe and will relieve Lhalu Shap-pe as Commissioner in Kham this year. This change is generally welcomed as Lhalu, although he made a good start, is said to have become careless.
3. About 1200 recruits for a new regiment have arrived in Lhasa recently.
4. Increased rates of pay have been sanctioned for the Tibetan Army. Each man will receive an additional money payment of about Rs . 8/- per month.
5. There is some talk of improving the standard of living by bringing empty land under cultivation and letting it to landless persons on low rents; but so far nothing practical has been done.
6. There are some signs of attempts by villagers to put pressure on the Government by sending deputations to Lhasa to complain of the local administration. The Tibetan Government is taking this seriously but want to avoid increasing the flow of complaints by making any great concessions.
7. Two broadcast statements have been made from Lhasa during the month under report. One contrasted the troubles in the rest of the world with the peace prevailing in Tibet and gave the credit of this to the fact that Tibet is ruled by religion. This statement was made in Tibetan and English by a Tibetan official. The second statement explained the Tibetan Government's attitude towards the Panchen Rimpchhe candidate whom the Chinese treat as the true Panchen Rimpochhe. It stressed that all Panchen Rimpochhes were selected at Lhasa with traditional Tibetan ceremonies and that no candidate could be recognised until these formalities had been fulfilled. The statement avoids any provocative remarks about the Chinese.
8. A number of very skilfully forged notes of 100 sengs (about Rs.20/-) have been found in Lhasa. The Tibetan Government are investigating.
9. An outbreak of smallpox is feared and the Tibetan Government have asked for vaccine to be secured from India.
10. The Monlam passed peacefully and the Tsomchho has begun in a quiet way. There are fewer monks attending than usual.

III. ECONOMIC ANALYSIS

The exchange rate has fluctuated mildly between 4 sengs 5 shokengs and 4 sengs 7 shokengs. Normally it might be expected to fall when the price of Tibetan wool is as high as it is at present; but the Tibetan Government's need for Indian currency may have a part in keeping the exchange fairly steady; and Tibetans are probably acquiring Indian currency against an emergency.

IV. PRESS

There has been little about Tibet in the foreign press in the past month. Mr. Yard Price's frustration has been mentioned above.

V. SOCIAL AND PERSONAL

The annual visits to Drepung and Sera with cash present have been paid and at both monasteries were given a friendly reception. It is noticeable that during the past year the Drepung Abbots have become less aloof. Similar visits to other monasteries and to the Tsuk Lak Khang have also been paid.

VI. MISCELLANEOUS

A Tibetan of the official class but who holds no appointment is now attending the Mission hospital daily to learn the elements of hygiene and simple forms of medical treatment. He wants to be able to help the people of his village near Shigatse where he usually stays.

Sd/ - H.E. Richardson

Indian Trade Agent, Gyantse, and Officer in Charge, Indian Mission, Lhasa.

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