

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

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Summary:

An update on Tibet's relations with India, China, Nepal, the UK, and the US in early 1950. There are also comments on political and economic developments within Tibet.

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SECRET

From: The Officer in Charge, Indian Mission, Lhasa
P.O. Gyantse, Tibet.
To: The Political Officer in Sikkim, Gangtok.

Memorandum No.3(7)-L/50

Dated Lhasa, Tibet, the 15th February 1950.

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

I. EXTERNAL RELATIONSA. Relations between Tibet and India.

1. During the course of the month the Tibetan Government communicated their reply to the message sent to them by the Government of India, containing a brief statement of its policy towards Tibet and general advice. They appreciated the message as frank and sincere, and showed their willingness to be guided by the policy suggested. The Government of India took immediate steps to implement the policy of rendering all reasonable help in military supplies and training to Tibet by proposing a meeting of Indian and Tibetan military officers at Gyantse to discuss plans and requirements to be held on 25th February and the Tibetan Government decided to depute Depon Kusangtse as their representative at this meeting. Later on it was suggested that this preliminary meeting should be followed by another meeting attended by a high ranking Indian military officer at Yatung or if necessary at Gangtok to round off discussions. The Tibetan Government has taken note of this and is thinking of the best means by which they would be adequately represented at these meetings and the fullest advantage derived from them.

2. The Tibetan Government showed that it has become suddenly alive to the necessity of opening up the country to modern communication, if help is to be obtained urgently for purposes of defence and modernization from India and other countries. It has accordingly asked the Indian Government whether they would be agreeable to a proposal of opening air-communication from India to Tibet and is anxious to get a favourable response.

3. In the absence of any Chinese representative in Lhasa after the expulsion of the Chinese mission in last July, the Tibetan Government is now itself issuing travel certificates to Chinese nationals from Chinghai, Yunnan and other regions wishing to go to India, and are at the same time taking proper precautions to check their bona fides before allowing them to proceed.

4. The Government of India promised to consider sympathetically the question of giving facilities of exchange and travel to the Tibetan missions going out to foreign countries, when the other Governments concerned had agreed to receive them.

B. Relations between Tibet and China.

1. Tsipen Shagap-pa, a leader of the Tibetan Government's mission for China left Lhasa on 10th February. In addition to the personnel of this mission already mentioned in the last report, Jigme Taring Lachag was appointed an English interpreter. The members of the mission are expected to reach India by the middle of March.

2. It was significant that the Peking radio propaganda took special notice of the Tibetan Government's proposed missions to U.K. and U.S.A., and asked the Tibetan Government to cancel them and send a mission instead to Peking to negotiate and open friendly relations with the new Chinese Government.

3. Absence of any reports of Communist troop concentration on the Tibetan borders, combined with news of guerrilla fighting in Yunnan and bombing of Shanghai by the KMT forces from Formosa seem to be creating an impression and a hope among the Tibetans that an invasion by Communist forces is not imminent.

4. The Tibetan Government have however received a report from Chamdo that the officials of the late Tashi Lama in Sining are sending telegrams repeatedly to Peking

asking the Communist Government to take early action for the 'liberation' of Tibet.

C. Relations between Tibet and Nepal.

1. There was no further news about the plans of the Tibetan Government's proposed mission to Nepal.
2. A rumour was current, that Gurkha troops were about to be on their way to Tibet for the defense of Lhasa against a possible Chinese invasion.

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

1. Mr. Bevin's discouraging reply regarding the poor chances of Tibet being admitted to the U.N.O., was followed by Mr. Hector McNeill's further message to the Tibetan Government asking them to reconsider their proposal to send a mission to U.K., as no direct help from U.K. to Tibet would be possible. This proved most disappointing and as some members of the mission were already on their way from Lhasa, the Tibetan Government found themselves in a bad fix. They seem to have felt it very awkward that the National Assembly, who had initiated the proposal to send out the missions, should be asked to recall the mission to U.K. The Foreign Bureau therefore in its own authority sent immediate instructions to the members of the U.K. and also U.S.A. missions not to proceed beyond Gyantse until further orders. The National Assembly was then told that they had better await the results of preliminary investigations by the mission to China, and allow their missions for U.K. and U.S.A. to proceed only after the prospects of the mission to China were communicated to the Tibetan Government by its leader Tsipen Shagap-pa. That ultimately the U.K. and U.S.A. missions would have to be withdrawn was and is still being kept a secret even from members of the missions themselves. There is doubt that Tsipen Shagap-pa has been instructed to advise the Tibetan Government from India that the above missions should be suspended for the time being. Until Shagp-pa's report is received and these missions are finally cancelled, the members will probably be kept hanging about near Gyantse and asked to look after some local duties in the meanwhile.

2. The message sent by the Government of the U.S.A. to the Tibetan Government through Mr. Loy Henderson, the U.S.A. ambassador at Delhi, was couched in similar terms as the one from U.K. referred to above, and did not seem to cause too much surprise, as in anticipation of it, the delegates of the U.S.A. mission had already been stopped from proceeding beyond Gyantse by the Foreign Bureau, along with those of the U.K. mission as described above.

II. DOMESTIC AFFAIRS.

1. The Chikyap Khampo, who was known to be an official head of the monks, died suddenly of a heart attack on 1st February. His successor has not yet been appointed.
2. The Tibetan Government started broadcasting from the Lhasa station in Tibetan-Chinese, and English for about half an hour daily from 30th January to counteract the Peking radio propaganda. The broadcasts denied all claims of the Chinese suzerainty over Tibet, which was declared to be an independent theocratic and peace loving state. The station is organized and run by Mr. Fox.
3. Kusho Dorji Hima, Dalai Lama's brother-in-law, was promoted to the rank of a Se-nap-pa before his departure with the Mission for China as a Chinese interpreter.

III. ECONOMIC AFFAIRS.

1. The Tibetan Government decided to take out of the Potala Treasury silver tankas amounting approximately 30 or 40 lakhs of Rupees and mint them again into 10 sang silver coins to meet the expenditures on military pay and supplies.
2. The price of wool decreased considerably since the beginning of February.
3. The Tibetan Government made arrangements to pay the instalment of one lakh of Rupees to the Government of India for arms and ammunition supplied to them previously.

IV. PRESS.

The Foreign Press continued to take lively interest in the Tibetan question and pro-Chinese articles continued to base their claims on dubious historical traditions. A few well-informed articles appeared in the Indian and English press. The United Press of America continued to correspond with the Tibetan Government to elicit authentic information.

V. PERSONAL & SOCIAL.

Mr. Richardson left Gangtok on 5th February for Lhasa where he is expected to arrive early in March.

The Indian Republic Day was celebrated at the Indian Mission with due decorum and on a modest scale. Early in the morning on 26th January there was a flag salutation after which the Prime Minister's message was read out. The Mission servants performed a Lhapse ceremony. A lunch party and cinema show were given to the staff of the Tibetan Foreign Bureau. Owing to lack of sufficient accommodation, some Tibetan officials, the Nepalese Representative and other friends had to be entertained to a lunch party on 27th January.

The Ta Lama (Necheng State Oracle) and several learned Rimpoches were among the visitors of the Mission who were entertained to cinema show.

VI. MISCELLANEOUS.

--- NIL ---

Sd/- V.V. Gokhale.

for Officer in Charge, Indian Mission, Lhasa.