

TIBET: AFTER THE FALL OF CHAMDO

# TIBET

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24. Goldstein *op.cit.* p.84.
25. *ibid.*, p.94
26. Tsarong Dundul Namgyal, *op.cit.*
27. Tsarong, Dundul Namgyal, *What Tibet Was*, p.37
28. Rahul, R. 'The Government of Tibet', *International Studies* Vol.IV, No.2, p.184.
29. Dundul Namgyal Tsarong, *What Tibet Was*, *op.cit.*, p.37
30. Tada, T. *op.cit.*, p.70
31. *ibid.*
32. Shakabpa, *op.cit.*, p.259
33. Rahul, *op.cit.*, p.184
34. Tada, *op.cit.*, p.70
35. IOR, L/PS/10/344, letter no 448EB. *op.cit.*
36. Snellgrove and Richardson, *op.cit.* p.242
37. Mining was considered by the monks as violation of the sacred earth.
38. Winnington, A. *Tibet: Record of a Journey*, p.117.
39. See Hayden, H and Cosson C. *Sport and Travel in The Highlands of Tibet*, London, 1927.
40. Tada, *op.cit.*, p.72
41. Snellgrove and Richardson, pp.240-241 See also Goldstein, M. 'A study of the Ldab Ldob' *Central Asiatic Journal* Vol.9, (2) 1964.
42. Rahul, *op.cit.*, p.193
43. Snellgrove and Richardson, *op.cit.*, p.228-9
44. Nakamura, H. (Ed) Wiener, P. *Ways of Thinking of Eastern Peoples*, p.331.
45. Shakabpa, *op.cit.*, p.246-247.
46. Grenard, F. *The Country and its Inhabitants*, p.135
47. FO 371 F984/22/10 May 31st, 1920. 'Supply of Arms to Tibet'.
48. Snellgrove and Richardson, *op.cit.*, p.242.
49. *ibid.*, p.263
50. Goldstein, *op.cit.*, p.97
51. Rahul, *op.cit.*, p.174.
52. IOR, L/PS/10/1088 translation of the petition of Tibetan military commanders attached to a letter from the political officer in Sikkim to the Government of India, dated 28 May, 1927. cited in Goldstein, *op.cit.*, p.125.
53. Shakabpa, *op.cit.*, p.248.
54. IOR, L/PS/10/1088, letter from the political officer in Sikkim to the Government of India, 27th August, 1926. cited in Goldstein, *op.cit.*, p.133.
55. Taring, *op.cit.*, p.68
56. Petech, *op.cit.*, p.138
57. Rahul, *op.cit.*, p.178.
58. Goldstein, *op.cit.*
59. Bell Papers, F80, 5E 21/26, Bell to India, 21 February, 1921. [emphasis added]
60. Goldstein, *op.cit.*, p.82.
61. Taring, *op.cit.*, p.209

## Tibet: After the Fall of Chamdo\*

MELVYN GOLDSTEIN

On 17 October, almost two weeks after the Chinese offensive began in Kham, the Kashag informed Shakabpa in Delhi of the Chinese invasion and the likelihood that Chamdo would fall within a few days.<sup>1</sup> They instructed him to contact the Chinese ambassador immediately to try to stop the invasion.<sup>2</sup> This news led the Tibet trade mission, which was also in Delhi, to decide not to open planned negotiations on military aid with the Americans, since they feared that if the Chinese found out it might impede Shakabpa's task.<sup>3</sup>

### Shakabpa Confronts The Chinese

On the eighteenth, while Ngabö and his staff in Kham hurriedly fled Chamdo, the Shakabpa delegation met with the Chinese ambassador in Delhi and accused China of flagrantly ignoring international law by attacking without warning while peaceful negotiations were in progress.<sup>4</sup> The Chinese ambassador immediately blamed the attack on the Tibetans' failure to go to Peking to negotiate:

We also know about the attack on Chamdo. However, since we gave you terms to respond to, almost a month has passed so we are not in violation of any laws. Whatever people may say throughout the world, it is our firm decision that we will liberate Formosa and Tibet. It is better now that you accept Tibet as part of China. And if your delegation goes now to Peking, there will be no further military suppression.<sup>5</sup>

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\* Extracted (with slight editing) from *A History of Modern Tibet, 1913-1951*, with due permission of both the author and the publishers.

The Chinese later repeated this charge in a note to the Indian government dated 16 November 1950, stating that their ambassador in Delhi, Yuan, as well as their chargé d'affaires, Shen, had told the Tibetans in Delhi "that it was imperative that they should hasten to Peking in September, or that the said delegation should bear the responsibilities and be held responsible for all the consequences resulting from the delay."<sup>6</sup> Shakabpa then went to the Indian Foreign Ministry, informing them of the invasion and requesting their help in persuading the Chinese to stop.<sup>7</sup>

The deteriorating situation in Chamdo finally forced the Tibetan National Assembly to compromise on the Chinese three-point proposal, with the hope of preventing the renewed Chinese offensive. On 21 October, the Kashag informed the mission in New Delhi that Lhasa no longer had wireless communication with Chamdo<sup>8</sup> and instructed them:

- 1) To proceed immediately to China for negotiations.
- 2) Regarding the Point One—that Tibet is a part of China—If you have to accept this it is permissible if you are able to guarantee that the Dalai Lama's name and authority will remain intact and the Tibetan Government will continue to function like it is now making decisions and acting independently.
- 3) Regarding Point Two—that all foreign trade and political dealings will be done through China—you have to convey to the Chinese that Tibet will continue to handle all its foreign dealings by itself.
- 4) Regarding Point Three—that Chinese soldiers will take over security/defence forces in Tibet—this is a very dangerous issue and we do not accept this. Tibet will appoint its own soldiers to protect our own territory.
- 5) Impress on the Chinese that no harm should befall the Tibetan government officials who were captured in Eastern Tibet and that all Tibetan prisoners should be returned home speedily.<sup>9</sup>

Shakabpa and the mission were disappointed by this response, feeling that it was too little, too late. Nonetheless, they immediately contacted the Chinese and arranged a luncheon meeting at the Chinese Embassy for the next day, 22 October.<sup>10</sup>

In Lhasa, however, even this mild compromise produced a very strong negative reaction from those who believed that once Tibet admitted being a part of China, Tibet's legal status would

be transformed and her appeals for help would have little weight. Many of the officials holding this view felt that it would be better if the Dalai Lama sought refuge in a foreign country and continued the struggle for independence from abroad as the 13th Dalai Lama had done forty years earlier. The main forces behind this position appear to have been Surkhang Shape and Drönyerchemmo Phala.

This disagreement reflected, to an extent, a deeper political cleavage. Taktra, the seventy-five year old regent, —the "old man" as he was derogatorily called—had become very unpopular during the previous four or five years. The Reting affair and a resurgence of corruption had eroded the esteem in which Taktra had been held. Many officials now believed that Tibet had to respond to the Chinese threat in a unified and strong fashion and that to do this it was necessary to remove the unpopular and divisive Taktra. In late September, for example, an anonymous poster, put up on walls throughout Lhasa, accused Taktra of emptying the treasury and of making secret plans to remove the Dalai Lama from Lhasa in case of trouble. The poster appealed to the Three Seats to persuade the fifteen-year-old Dalai lama to take power immediately. It said, "If this is done, Tibet will be unified behind the government in the event of any calamity."<sup>11</sup>

But the memory of Reting Rinpoche's destruction of Khyungram and his family in 1939 stopped the officials from outwardly criticizing or opposing Taktra. The answer lay in appeal to an authority above the regent; either the Dalai Lama, or the protective deities and oracles. It was through the latter that the center of power was shifted during the month from mid-October to mid-November 1950.

The beginning of this shift in power was the sudden reversal of the decision regarding the first point of the Chinese Ambassador's proposal. The Dalai Lama was informed about this point on 21 October and at once reacted strongly against it. He said he thought that "if we accept that we are a part of China then of course by definition we belong to China and it will be difficult [in the future] to do what we want. I thought it was a bad idea and suggested that the protective deities be consulted through the mechanism of a 'divine lottery

divination."<sup>12</sup> The regent organized a lottery ceremony for the next morning in the presence of the Dalai Lama as well as various high-ranking government officials. The lottery indicated that the government should not agree that Tibet was a part of China, and an urgent telegram was immediately sent to Shakabpa in Delhi countermanding the earlier one.<sup>13</sup>

Meanwhile, in Delhi on the morning of 23 October, the Tibetan delegation was preparing to leave for their luncheon at the Chinese Embassy when they learned of the urgent telegram from Lhasa. Although the car the Chinese had sent to pick them up had already arrived, the Tibetans took an hour to decode the message, which was dated 22 October, one day later than the previous telegram. Shakabpa recalled that he was shocked when he read the opening line: "By the order of His Holiness the Dalai Lama," for at that time the Dalai Lama was not yet in power.<sup>14</sup> The Lhasa communiqué read:

Regarding the reply to the Chinese Three Points, we have had meetings between the Regent and Kashag and also discussed this with the National Assembly and have communicated our decisions to you which we hope you have received. However, with regard to Point One regarding Tibet's acceptance of being a part of China, the Dalai Lama ordered that a lottery-divination should be done to determine whether this will cause any harm to Tibet in the future. Consequently, we did such a lottery-divination in Norbulinga in the chapel of Gombo where we invited both the deities Gombo and Lhamo together when we rolled the lottery. The lottery answered that if you accept that Tibet is a part of China then this will be harmful for Tibet. Therefore, we have to rely on this answer so do not accept any of the three Chinese points. However, you should all leave [Delhi] for Peking by the 26th of October.<sup>15</sup>

Embarrassed and angry, the delegation told Ambassador Yuan that they had just received instructions from Lhasa ordering them to leave Delhi for Peking by 26 October. The ambassador was not put off by this, but asked Shakabpa what reply he had received regarding the three points. Shakabpa answered that there had been no reply to this, but he felt that Yuan could tell from his expression and demeanor that this was not true. Shakabpa said that the mission would leave the next day for Kalimpong to pick up all their winter clothes and would

then go directly to Calcutta. Yuan replied that all their papers would be issued by the Chinese Consulate in Calcutta.<sup>16</sup> About a week later, however, on 2 November, while they were making final arrangements to leave in Calcutta the delegation received another telegram from Lhasa, dated 31 October, which reversed the instruction that they should go to Peking. It said: "Since we started peaceful discussions with the Chinese and the Chinese have invaded our territory, therefore, we should postpone your trip to Peking to continue negotiations. This was the demand of the Tibetan National Assembly so therefore you should not yet proceed. We will let you know when you can leave."<sup>17</sup>

The next day, the delegation was informed by cable that their departure to China had been indefinitely postpone. The cable said that a divine lottery conducted in Norbulinga determined that the mission should not be sent to Peking. Shakabpa duly informed the Chinese in Calcutta and Delhi that they could not leave as planned and that he would inform them of a new date later. As will be seen below, the real reason this sudden shift was that the Tibetan government had decided to appeal to the United Nations and did not want a delegation waiting in Peking while the United Nations was considering their appeal.<sup>18</sup>

In the United States, news of the invasion sparked further interest in assisting Tibet. On 1 November, Secretary of State Dean Acheson told a news conference that the United States would view seriously any new evidence of Communist aggression in Tibet.<sup>19</sup> More important, the United States tried to interest the Indian government in cooperating closely with them to forestall a Chinese conquest of Tibet.<sup>20</sup>

On 30 October, Ambassador Henderson had a conversation with G.S. Bajpai of the Indian Foreign Office in which he asked whether India would favor U.S. assistance of Tibet:

4. I asked Bajpai what in his opinion US could do at this time that would be most helpful. We wanted to do what we could; on other hand we realized tremendous responsibility which rested on India and did not wish to do anything which might render India's efforts less likely to succeed. Bajpai said that for time being he thought it would be preferable for US to take no action which might give Communist China a chance to renew its charges that

great powers were unduly interested in Tibet or which might make it appear to India leaders that US was endeavoring to use Peiping offensive in Tibet in order to create rift between Communist China and India. If rift should come, he pointed out, it should clearly come through force of events and not with help of outside powers.<sup>21</sup>

On 2 November, Henderson discussed Tibet with Nehru and reported:

He [Nehru] said he has personally been deeply disappointed by Peking's decision, in spite of its knowledge of Indian sensibilities regarding Tibet, to launch invasion at a time when a Tibet mission was preparing departure for China for negotiations. He believed that friendly relations between China and India were in the interests of Asian and world peace. He regretted Peking's attitude as reflected in the invasion. This attitude, if adhered to, might result in considerable friction in future.

2. I did not think it would be wise at this juncture to say anything which he might construe as attempt to drive any deeper wedge between India and China. I therefore referred to recent statements made in Washington regarding Tibet and said that US Government also deeply regretted Peking's action. It agreed with India that this action was not in interest of peace. We realized that in view of its geographic and historic factors, the main burden of Tibet problem rested on India. US did not want to say or do anything which might increase this burden; on the contrary we desired to do what we could to help. What suggestions, if any, did he have to offer as to what we might do or should not do at this juncture?

3. Nehru said he thought US could be most helpful by doing nothing and saying little just now. Series of announcements by US Government condemning China or supporting Tibet might lend certain amount of credence to Peking's charges that great powers had been intriguing in Tibet and had been exercising influence over India's Tibet politics. He had seen reports that Chinese Nationalist Government was planning to present the Tibetan matter to UN. US could be of service in his opinion if it could prevail on Chinese Nationalist not to do so. Motives of Formosa in this regard would be suspect. Furthermore among charges made by Peking was that Chinese Nationalists had been active in Tibet. Presentation of matter (Tibetan) by Formosa (at UN) would give fresh ammunition to Peking.<sup>22</sup>

After this exchange, the United States did nothing until the Tibetan appeal reached the United Nations.



### The Dalai Lama Assumes Power

The pressure for a transfer of power from the regent to the Dalai Lama came to a head when the two main state oracles, Nechung and Gadong, were invited to advise the government about the current dangers. This Oracle session, attended by the regent, the Dalai Lama, the shapes, and other leading officials and abbots, began with the senior truniychemmo, Cawtang, informing both deities that the government wanted their prophetic advice on what action Tibet should take to insure that its dual religious/temporal form of government not be lost. Nechung replied unintelligibly, "If you don't make good offerings I cannot protect the welfare of religion and the people." Gadong then possessed his medium but he did not say much either. Just as he was about to leave the medium's body, however, the truniychemmo Cawtang went over to him and said (paraphrased): "While we [humans] are dull and stupid, you are the one who has brilliant wisdom and knowledge of things. You also have the special responsibility for Buddhist in general and Tibet in particular. You should not be behaving like an ordinary human being so give us a proper prophecy so we will know what to do in the future."<sup>23</sup> Gadong immediately started dancing (in trance) as in a monk's religious dance and when he was directly in front of the Dalai Lama he prostrated three times; on his knees and with tears streaming from his eyes, he said, "The responsibility for both the spiritual and the temporal should be taken by Thowang Thönden [the Dalai Lama]. This will benefit all Tibet, both Buddhism and the people. But you should request the Maharaja [which referred to Nechung]."<sup>24</sup> Nechung was immediately recalled and asked about the Dalai Lama taking power. This he cryptically supported Gadong, responding, "I have already said this before."<sup>25</sup> Taktra said nothing about either prophecy and the oracle session ended.

At the time Nechung's reference to having already said that the Dalai Lama should take power was not understood, but since a record of all the oracle's statements and prophecies was kept, they were consulted. Every month one shape had to go to Nechung for an official trance audience. In that year (1950), on one occasion attended by the monk-shape Ramba, Nechung is

supposed to have said that the Dalai Lama should take over the government; this was apparently not noticed or understood, since the oracle's comments are often difficult to comprehend.<sup>26</sup> In any case, Tibet's two leading state oracles had now agreed that Taktra should transfer complete authority to the Dalai Lama, so Taktra had no real option but to resign, which he did about ten days later (in early November), saying, "During this time of trouble, which is like dust in the eye [painful] it is very sad for me to resign. However, since it is the prophecy of the two oracles, I have to resign and let the Dalai Lama take temporal and spiritual responsibilities."<sup>27</sup>

In order to forestall the possibility that the Dalai Lama would not agree to assume power, the monk-shape Ramba and Cawtang are said to have advised the Dalai Lama that when the Kashag asked whether he agreed to Taktra's resignation, he should suggest they consult the National Assembly, which was certain to recommend that the Dalai lama take power.<sup>28</sup> The Dalai Lama later wrote of this meeting:

This filled me with anxiety. I was only sixteen. I was far from having finished my religious education. I knew nothing about the world and had no experience of politics, and yet I was old enough to know how ignorant I was and how much I still had to learn. I protested at first that I was too young, for eighteen was the accepted age...yet I understood why the oracle and lamas had caused the request to be made. The long years of Regency after the death of each Dalai Lama were an inevitable weakness in our system of government. During my own minority, there had been dissensions between separate factions in our government, and the administration of the country had deteriorated. We had reached a state in which most people were anxious to avoid responsibility, rather than accept it. Yet now, under the threat of invasion, we were more in need of unity than ever before, and I, as Dalai Lama, was the only person whom everybody in the country would unanimously follow.<sup>29</sup>

The Kashag then convened the National Assembly and explained the prophecies of Nechung and Gadong and the resignation of Taktra as regent. The assembly was told that they should recommend whether or not the Dalai Lama should take over the reins of the government. They immediately declared in favour of the Dalai Lama assuming power and drew up and

presented a request to this effect. The Dalai lama accepted the request on 17 November 1950.

### Tibet Appeals to the United Nations

The Dalai Lama's accession to power represented a victory for the faction that felt it was too early to compromise Tibet's hard-won *de facto* independence by accepting any of the conditions demanded by the Chinese ambassador. These officials, led by Phala and Surkhang, felt another attempt should be made to secure outside support, particularly from the United Nations.

Surkhang Shape followed world news closely and knew that only months earlier, the United Nations Organization had come to the rescue of Korea, and that Chinese troops ("volunteers") had just crossed the Yalu River. In the third week of October, the Tibetans discussed with the Indian government the possibility that the United Nations would come to Tibet's aid, but were advised that China might regard their appeal to the United Nations as further provocation. Not to be dissuaded, on 29 October, Tibet asked India directly if it would bring a Tibetan appeal before the United Nations. India responded that Tibet itself must appeal but that India would support the appeal on the grounds that the Chinese should not have used force but should have continued peaceful negotiations.<sup>30</sup> This was, of course, the weakest support India could have offered and fell far below the obligation it inherited from the British through the Simla Convention of 1914.

Despite this disappointing response, on 3 November, Tibet informed the Indian government that it would appeal directly to the United Nations and to other Buddhist nations of South Asia (apparently meaning Ceylon and Burma).<sup>31</sup> At the same time, as was mentioned earlier, the government instructed Shakabpa not to proceed to Peking from India but instead to send the Tibetan appeal to the United Nations. Shakabpa, on the verge of leaving to negotiate with the Chinese in Peking, was shocked and initially incredulous. He immediately went to Gangtok in Sikkim, where he confirmed the order directly with

the Kashag by wireless phone.<sup>32</sup> He then returned to Kalimpong and forwarded the appeal to the Secretary-General of the United Nations on 7 November.<sup>33</sup> This appeal, which arrived at the United Nations on 13 November, effectively presented the Tibetan government's view of their historical relationship with China and events from 1911 to the present:

*Appeal to the Secretary General of the United Nations*

The attention of the world is riveted on Korea where aggression is being resisted by an international force. Similar happenings in remote Tibet are passing without notice. It is in the belief that aggression will not go unchecked and freedom unprotected in any part of the world that we have assumed the responsibility of reporting through you recent happenings in the border area of Tibet to the United Nations Organization. As you are aware the problem of Tibet has taken alarming proportions in recent times. The problem is not of Tibet's own making but is largely the outcome of unthwarted Chinese ambition to bring weaker nations on her periphery within her active domination. Tibetans have for long lived in cloistered life in their mountain fastness remote and aloof from the rest of the world except insofar as His Holiness the Dalai Lama, as the acknowledged head of the Buddhist Church, confers benediction and receives homages from followers in many countries. In the years preceding 1912 there were indeed close friendly relations of a personal nature between the Emperor of China and His Holiness the Dalai lama. The connection was essentially born of belief in a common faith and may correctly be described as the relationship between a spiritual guide and his lay followers; it had no political implications. As a people devoted to the tenets of Buddhism, Tibetans had long eschewed the art of warfare, practiced peace and tolerance, and for the defence of their country relied on its geographical configuration and in non-involvement in the affairs of other nations. There were times when Tibet sought but seldom received the protection of the Chinese Emperor. The Chinese, however, in their natural urge for expansion, have wholly misconstrued the significance of the time of friendship and interdependence that existed between China and Tibet as neighbors. To them, China was suzerain and Tibet a vassal state. It is this which first aroused legitimate apprehension in the mind of Tibet regarding the designs of China on her independent status.

The Chinese conduct during their expedition in 1910 completed the rupture between the two countries. In 1911-12, when Tibet under the thirteenth Dalai Lama declared her complete independence [-] even as Nepal simultaneously broke away from allegiance to China [-] the Chinese revolution in 1911 which dethroned the last Manchurian

emperor snapped the last of the sentimental and religious bonds that Tibet had with China. Tibet thereafter depended entirely on her isolation, her faith in the wisdom of Lord Buddha, and occasionally on the support of the British in India for her protection. No doubt in those circumstances the latter could also claim suzerainty over Tibet. Tibet, not with standing Anglo-Chinese influence from time to time, maintained her separated existence, in justification of which it may be pointed out that she has been able to keep peace and order within the country and remain at peace with the world. She continued to maintain neighbourly goodwill and friendship with the people of China but never acceded to the Chinese claim of suzerainty in 1914. It was British persuasion which led Tibet to sign a treaty which superimposed on her the nominal (non-interfering) suzerainty of China and by which the Chinese were accorded the right to maintain a mission in Lhasa though they were strictly forbidden to meddle in the internal affairs of Tibet. Apart from that fact even the nominal suzerainty which Tibet conceded to China is not enforceable because of the non-signature of the treaty of 1914 by the Chinese. It will be seen that Tibet maintained independent relations with other neighbouring countries like India and Nepal. Furthermore, despite friendly British overtures, she did not compromise her position by throwing in her forces in world war two on the side of China. Thus she asserted and maintained her complete independence. The treaty of 1914 still guides relations between Tibet and India, and the Chinese, not being a party to it, may be taken to have renounced the benefits that would have otherwise accrued to them from the treaty. Tibet's independence thereby resumed *de jure* status.

The slender tie that Tibet maintained with China after the 1911 revolution became less justified when China underwent a further revolution and turned into a full-fledged Communist state. There can be no kinship or sympathy between such divergent creeds as those espoused by China and Tibet.

Foreseeing future complications, the Tibetan Government broke off diplomatic relations with China and made a Chinese representative in Lhasa depart from Tibet in July, 1949. Since then, Tibet has not even maintained formal relations with the Chinese Government and people. They desire to live apart uncontaminated by the germ of a highly materialistic creed, but the Chinese are bent on not allowing Tibet to live in peace. They have, since the establishment of the Chinese People's Republic, hurled threats of liberating Tibet and have used devious methods to intimidate and undermine the Government of Tibet.

Tibet recognises that she is in no position to resist. It is thus that she agreed to negotiate on friendly terms with the Chinese Government. It is unfortunate that the Tibetan Mission to China were unable to leave India, through no fault of their own but for want of British visas which were required for transit through Hong Kong. At the kind intervention of the Government of India the Chinese Peoples Republic

condescended to allow the Tibet Mission to have preliminary negotiation with the Chinese Ambassador to India who arrived in New Delhi only in September. While these negotiations were proceeding in Delhi, Chinese troops without warning or provocation, crossed the Dre Chu [Upper Yangtse] River, which has for long been the boundary into Tibetan territory, at a number of places on 7th October, 1950. In quick succession places of strategic importance like Demar, Kamto, Tunga, Tshame, Rimochegotyu, Yakalo, and Markham fell to the Chinese. Tibetan frontier garrisons in Kham, which were maintained not with any aggressive design but as a nominal protective measure, have all been wiped out. Communist troops in great force converged from five directions on Chamdo, the capital of Kham, which succumbed soon after. Nothing is known of the state of a Minister of the Tibetan Government posted there. Little is known in the outside world of this sneak invasion. Long after the invasion had taken place the Chinese announced to the world that they had asked their armies to march into Tibet.

This unwarranted act of aggression has not only disturbed the peace of Tibet [,] it is in complete disregard of a solemn assurance given by the Chinese to the Government of India. It has created a grave situation in Tibet and may eventually deprive Tibet of her long and cherished independence. We can assure you, Mr. Secretary-General, that Tibet will not go down without a fight, though there is little hope of a nation dedicated to peace resisting the brutal effort of men trained to war, but we understand the United Nations have decided to stop aggression whenever it takes place.

The armed invasion of Tibet for the incorporation of Tibet within the fold of Chinese Communism through sheer physical force is a clear case of aggression.

As long as the people of Tibet are compelled by force to become a part of China against the will and consent of her people, the present invasion of Tibet will be the grossest instance of violation of the weak by the strong. We therefore appeal through you to the nations of the world to intercede in our behalf and restrain Chinese aggression.

The problem is simple. The Chinese claim Tibet as part of China. Tibetans feel that, racially, culturally, and geographically, they are far apart from the Chinese. If the Chinese find the reactions of the Tibetans to their unnatural claim not acceptable, there are other civilised methods by which they could ascertain the views of the people of Tibet, or should (settle) the issue (by) purely judicial (means). They are open to seek redress in an international court of law. The conquest of Tibet by China will only enlarge the area of conflict and increase the threat to the independence and stability of other Asian countries.

We Ministers, with the approval of His Holiness the Dalai Lama, entrust the problem of Tibet in this emergency to the ultimate decision of the United Nations and hope that the conscience of the world would

not allow the disruption of our state by methods reminiscent of the jungle. The Kashad [*sic*: Kashag] (The Tibetan Cabinet) and the National Assembly of Tibet. Dated Lhasa the 27th of the day of the 9th Tibetan month of the Iron Tiger year, seventh November, 1950. Tibetan delegation Shakabpa (house Kalimpong) [Ends].

2. Words in brackets [parentheses] appeared in New York Times version and fill obvious blanks in copy supplied by Secretariat.<sup>34</sup>

The United Nations Secretariat immediately ruled that because Tibet was not a member of the United Nations and because the telegram was from a delegation outside Tibet rather than from the Tibetan government itself, they would simply record in its routine list of communications from nongovernmental organizations the fact that such a communiqué had been received. However, they did informally pass out copies of the appeal to delegations on the Security Council. The Secretariat also said that the Tibetan telegram would not be issued as a Security Council document unless a member of the Security Council requested that it be so issued or unless a member of the United Nations asked for the subject to be placed on the council's agenda.<sup>35</sup> Both Britain and India could easily have clarified this mistaken interpretation concerning the "nongovernmental" origin of the appeals, since they knew that the Tibetan government sent official messages from Kalimpong due to communications limitations in Tibet. Neither chose to do so.

The Tibetan government, again through Shakabpa, also asked Britain, Canada, and the United States to support their appeal. The letter sent to the United Kingdom high commissioner in India said:

According to the information received by wireless from the Government of Tibet the Chinese Communists have made sudden invasion into Tibet from number of different places in Eastern Tibet on 17th October, 1950 while negotiations were proceeding in Delhi. Now the Cabinet [Kashag] and the National Assembly of Tibet have appealed to the United Nations for ultimate judgement of this treacherous action by the Peking Government, a copy of which is enclosed herewith for your information. Tibet being a religious country is naturally weak in political and military activities. Thus we request Your Excellency to approach your Government for effective support in the United Nations so that the peace-loving religious country may be saved from destruction of war.

Your kind advice and acknowledgement will be greatly appreciated.<sup>36</sup>

The letter sent to the United States was similar:

According information receive by wireless from Government of Tibet, Chinese Communists have made sudden invasion into Tibet while negotiation was proceeding Delhi. Now Cabinet [Kashag] and National Assembly of Tibet have appealed UN for ultimate judgement this treacherous act by Peking Government, copy of which enclosed herewith your information.

Tibet being religious country is naturally weak in political and military activities, thus we request Your Excellency approach your Government for effective support in UN so that peace-loving religious country may be saved from destruction or war.

Your kind advice and acknowledgement will be greatly appreciated.

Signed Tshchag and Tsepon Shakabpa (Tibetan delegations).<sup>37</sup>

Tibet found support for its appeal from a most unlikely source—El Salvador. On 14 November, Hector David Castro, the chairman of El Salvador's delegation, telegraphed the U.N. Secretary-General requesting that the "invasion of Tibet by foreign forces" be added to the agenda of the present session based on the United Nation's primary responsibility "to maintain international peace and security" as cited in paragraph 1 of Article 1 of the United Nations Charter. El Salvador had hoped that this issue could be brought directly before the General Assembly, but the Secretariat instead ordered that the issue first be brought up before the General Committee for a discussion of whether it should be referred to the General Assembly.<sup>38</sup>

The draft resolution proposed by El Salvador asked not only for condemnation of the Chinese but also for creation of a special committee to develop proposals for the United Nations regarding actions that could be taken:

The General Assembly,

Taking note that the peaceful nation of Tibet has been invaded, without any provocation on its part, by foreign forces proceeding from the territory controlled by the Government established at Peking.

Decides,

1. To condemn this act of unprovoked aggression against Tibet.



2. To establish a Committee composed of (names of nations) ... which will be entrusted with the study of the appropriate measures that could be taken by the General Assembly on this matter.
3. To instruct the Committee to undertake that study with special reference made to the United Nations by the Government of Tibet, and to render its report to the General Assembly, as early as possible, during the present session.<sup>39</sup>

These events—the invasion of Tibet in October, the Tibetan government's appeal to the United Nations in November, and El Salvador's action on behalf of Tibet—forced India, Britain, and the United States to weigh their own national interests carefully against their historical connections with Tibet and their moral and legal obligation to assist her at this critical time.

### British and Indian Reactions to Tibet's Appeal

The British Foreign Office found it difficult to establish a course of action with regard to Tibet's appeal to the United Nations. They began by examining Tibet's eligibility to appeal in the light of Article 35, paragraph 2, of the United Nations Charter, which stipulated that the appealing party must be a "state."<sup>40</sup> At question was whether Tibet could qualify as a state. The British Foreign Office's legal examination concluded that it could easily be argued that Chinese suzerainty was so amorphous and symbolic that it did not preclude Tibet's having its own international identity. The reasons supporting this position was stated in a telegram from the Foreign Office to the British high commissioner in India:

The actual control which China in virtue of her suzerainty exercised over Tibet varies at different times. In 1911 Tibet threw off Chinese control and expelled all Chinese troops from her territory. By 1913 she had established independence of China and she participated in a tripartite Conference in Simla in 1914 in her own right. As a result of this Conference representatives of Britain, China and Tibet drew up a Convention recognising Tibetan autonomy under Chinese suzerainty but expressly precluding China from incorporating Tibet as a Chinese province or from sending troops into Tibet other than an escort of 300 men for the representative in Lhasa. It was made plain by this

Convention that Tibet was entitled to conduct foreign relations directly and not through China. The Convention was signed by Britain and Tibet but only initialled by China. The Chinese government subsequently repudiated the initialling of the Convention by their representative but on occasions they have stated that they accept the terms of the convention apart from the clauses fixing the boundary between China and Tibet. Though China did not sign the Convention, it was only on the faith of the conditions in it that Tibet agreed to accept Chinese suzerainty again. If, therefore, China repudiated the Convention in its entirety, as her present actions clearly show she has done, she has no right whatever over Tibet, not even to a nominal suzerainty. Since 1913 Tibet has not only enjoyed full control over her internal affairs but also has maintained direct relations with other states. She must therefore be regarded as a state to which Article 35 (2) of the Charter applies.

2. It is important to stress that the right enjoyed by Tibet to engage in foreign relations on her own account distinguished her case from, for example, that of British protected state with internal autonomy but no right to engage in foreign relations.

3. Our recognition of Chinese suzerainty over Tibet after 1914 was conditional on the recognition by China of Tibetan autonomy; in other words the suzerainty which we recognized was of the nominal kind envisaged in the Simla Convention, and we have since 1914 accepted the right of Tibet to enter into direct relations with other states.<sup>41</sup>

The Foreign Office also examined the meaning of *suzerainty* and, in particular, the status of any vassal state or territory that was subordinate to a suzerain. It concluded that such divergent situations were lumped under this rubric that the status of a vassal state under a suzerain depended in a large measure on the facts of the specific case. Two factors in particular were critical: first, whether all international treaties concluded by the suzerain state are also concluded for the vassal; and second, whether war of the suzerain is *ipso facto* war of the vassal. On both these counts the research division of the Foreign office concluded that all the evidence showed that Tibet was not merely a portion of China but, rather, had a clear international identity of her own.<sup>42</sup>

Based on these briefs, the British Foreign office decided that Tibet had the right to bring her case before the United Nations and, on 10 November—three days before the Tibetan appeal even reached New York—sent the following telegram to the

British high commissioner in India and the British United Nations delegation in New York:

We are considering what attitude to adopt should the Tibetan appeal come up in the United Nations. We are clearly committed in general way to India's support and this will doubtless extend to [the] line she adopts at Lake Success. *Though we fully acknowledge preponderance of Indian interest in this matter and recognise that initiative must lie with her*, we consider it of utmost importance to have a preliminary exchange of views with her on account of grave implications of discussion of Tibetan issue in United Nations on our relations with China.

2. For your personal information we view present situation on following lines:

(a) We consider that Tibetan autonomy is sufficiently well established for her to be regarded as a "state" within the meaning of the United Nations Charter. My immediately succeeding telegram gives our views on the legal aspect: these are also for your information only at this stage and not for communication to Government of India. Whether we shall be prepared to support this interpretation of Tibet's international status in the course of preliminary debate in United Nations on validity of her appeal remains for decision. Assuming that India takes this attitude we should be prepared to do so too, though implications are far reaching.

(b) If this view of Tibet's status is conceded and validity of her appeal is upheld in debate, it follows that Chinese action constitutes aggression against, and in the Security Council which would presumably follow two obvious possibilities would present themselves:

(i) the Council might content itself with a condemnation of the Chinese action;

(ii) it might call on China to withdraw her forces from Tibet and to restore the *status quo*.

(c) We should hope that Security council action would be restricted to (i) above. We should particularly wish to avoid action on lines of (ii) above, which would at best be likely to lead to a resolution which China would defy and which could only be enforced by armed action which neither we, nor we assume India or anyone else, e.g., the United States, would be prepared to take. In the result the United Nations would lose prestige.<sup>43</sup>

The British Foreign Office at this stage, then, wanted to support Tibet in some fashion and to prevent China's aggression from going completely unnoticed, but they did not want to go counter to the policy of the Indian government, whom they now considered had the primary responsibility for Tibet,<sup>44</sup> and they

did not want the United Nations to pass resolutions it could not enforce.

The British delegation to the United Nations felt that the position presented in the telegram was too strong. The head of the delegation, Sir Gladwyn Jebb, argued that whatever opinion might be held about the Chinese aggression, the reality was that no one could possibly give effective aid to Tibet. He argued that the Indians themselves had doubts about Tibet's status as a state and that Britain should therefore modify its views on the matter. He recommended, as the best line to take in the United Nations, to argue that the Tibetan issue was wrapped in legal obscurity. This was conveyed in a telegram to the Foreign Office sent from New York on 14 November 1950:

Since Indian Government themselves seem to have strong doubts regarding the "absolute independence" of Tibet, I feel that we should do well to modify our own legal views on this subject. If indeed we are to argue that Tibet is fully independent, there seems no doubt that an act of aggression has occurred and in these circumstances there might be strong pressure brought on us to support some far reaching resolution in the Security Council and when that is vetoed, transfer the whole matter to the General Assembly under the terms of the recent resolution "Uniting for Peace."

2. I greatly hope therefore that I shall be instructed, when and if the Indians raise this matter in the Security Council, to argue to the general effect that the legal situation is extremely obscure and that in any case Tibet cannot be considered as a fully independent country.<sup>45</sup>

This response prompted the Foreign Office to ask the British attorney-general for a ruling on Tibet's international status. It also led to an attempt to ascertain more clearly the policy of the Indian government toward the Tibetan appeal, since their views were considered primary to those of Britain.

### **India's Response to the Chinese Invasion**

Although India had decided that friendship with China outweighed obligations inherited from Britain regarding Tibet, it had been unwilling to back openly China's claim of sovereignty. India had addressed this dilemma by creating

conditions that would compel Tibet to accede to China's terms. News of the Chinese invasion therefore came as a shock to Delhi, which responded by sending a note of protest to the Chinese government on 21 October:

The Central People's Government are fully aware of the views of the Government of India on the adjustment of Sino-Tibetan relations. It is therefore, not necessary to repeat that their interest is solely in a peaceful settlement of the Issue. My government are also aware that the Central People's Government have been following a policy of negotiations with the Tibetan authorities. It has, however, been reported that some military action has taken place or is about to take place, which may affect the peaceful outcome of these negotiations.

The Government of India would desire to point out that a military action at the present time against Tibet will give those countries in the world which are unfriendly to China a handle for anti-Chinese propaganda at a crucial and delicate juncture in international affairs. The Central People's Government must be aware that opinion in the United Nations has been steadily veering round to the admission of China into that organisation before the close of the present session. The Government of India feel that military action on the eve of a decision by the (General) Assembly will have serious consequences and will give powerful support to those who are opposed to the admission of the People's Government to the United Nations and the Security Council.

At the present time when the international situation is so delicate, any move that is likely to be interpreted as a disturbance of the peace may prejudice the position of China in the eyes of the world. The Government of India's firm conviction is that one of the principal conditions for the restoration of a peaceful atmosphere is the recognition of the position of the People's Republic of China, and its association with the work of the U.N. They feel that an incautious move at the present time even in a matter which is within its own sphere will be used by those who are unfriendly to China to prejudice China's case in the U.N. and generally before neutral opinion. The Government of India attach the highest importance to the earliest settlement of the problem of Chinese representation in international organizations and have been doing everything in their power to bring it to a successful conclusion. They are convinced that the position of China will be weakened if through military action in Tibet those who are opposed to China admission are now given a chance to misinterpret China's peaceful aims.

The Government of India feel that the time factor is extremely important. In Tibet there is not likely to be any serious military opposition and any delay in settling the matter will not therefore affect Chinese interests, or a suitable final solution. The Government of

India's interest in this matter is, as we have explained before, only to see that the admission of the People's Government to the U.N. is not again postponed due to the causes which could be avoided and further that, if possible, a peaceful solution is sought while military action may cause unrest and disturbance on her own borders.<sup>46</sup>

This protest is interesting in that it does not in any way indicate that China does not have the right to invade and militarily to incorporate Tibet, but instead focuses on China's admission to the United Nations. The letter accepts the Chinese position that Tibet is "a matter which is within its own sphere" and ignores the Indo-Tibetan Agreements of 1914 through which India held rights regarding Tibet's status.<sup>47</sup>

India received no response to this communication, so on 26 October, one day after the Chinese publicly announced that their troops had liberated Chamdo, it sent another, somewhat stronger, note. This letter stated that because China had given assurances that its intentions were peaceful and that negotiations in good faith were going on between Tibet and China, the advance of China's troops into Tibet appeared "most surprising and regrettable." It also said India deplored the invasion, but negated the force of this by saying that her advice to China had been "friendly and disinterested." The note read:

We have seen with great regret reports in newspapers of official statements made in Peking to the effect that "People's Army units have been ordered to advance into Tibet."

We have received no intimation of it from your ambassador here or from our ambassador in Peking.

We have been repeatedly assured of the desire of Chinese Government to settle the Tibetan problem by peaceful means and negotiations. In an interview which India's ambassador had recently with the Vice-Foreign Minister, the latter, while reiterating the resolve of the Chinese Government to "liberate" Tibet, had expressed a continued desire to do so by peaceful means.

We informed the Chinese Government through our ambassador of the decision of the Tibetan delegation to proceed to Peking immediately to start negotiations. This delegation actually left Delhi yesterday (25th). In view of these facts, the decision to order an advance of China's troops into Tibet appears to us most surprising and regrettable.

We realise there has been a delay in the Tibetan delegation proceeding to Peking. This delay was caused in the first instance by the inability to obtain visas for Hong Kong, for which the delegation was in

no way responsible. Subsequently, the delegation came back to Delhi because of the wishes of the Chinese Government that preliminary negotiations should first be conducted in Delhi with the Chinese ambassador.

Owing to lack of knowledge on the part of the Tibetan delegation of dealing with other countries and the necessity of obtaining instructions from their government, who in turn had to consult their assemblies, certain further delay took place.

The Government of India do not believe any foreign influence hostile to China has been responsible for the delay in the delegation's departure.

Two. Now that the invasion of Tibet has been ordered by the Chinese Government, peaceful negotiations can hardly be synchronised with it and there will naturally be fear on the part of the Tibetans that negotiations will be under duress.

In the present context of world events, the invasion by Chinese troops of Tibet cannot but be regarded as deplorable and, in the considered judgement of the Government of India, not in the interest of China or of peace.

The Government of India can only express their deep regret that in spite of the friendly and disinterested advice repeatedly tendered by them, the Chinese Government should have decided to seek a solution of the problem of their relations with Tibet by force instead [of] by the slower and more enduring method of peaceful approach. [Signed] K.M. Panikkar<sup>48</sup>

Two days later, China responded in a most disparaging and unequivocal manner, stating that Tibet was a part of China and that whatever China did there was an internal matter, of concern to no foreign country. It went on to insult Nehru and India by charging that India had been "affected by foreign influences hostile to China in Tibet." It was a strong statement, especially in contrast to the Indian notes:

The Central People's Government of the People's Republic of China would like to make it clear:

Tibet is an integral part of Chinese territory and the problem of Tibet is entirely a domestic problem of China. The Chinese People's Liberation Army must enter Tibet, liberate the Tibetan people, and defend the frontiers of China. This is the resolved policy of the Central People's Government.

The Central people's Government has repeatedly expressed the hope that the problem of Tibet may be solved by peaceful negotiations, and it welcomes, therefore, the declaration of the local authorities of Tibet

to come to Peking at an early date to proceed with peaceful negotiations.

Yet, the Tibetan delegation, under outside instigation, has intentionally delayed the date of its departure for Peking. The Central People's Government, however, has not abandoned its desire to proceed with peaceful negotiations.

But regardless of whether the local authorities of Tibet wish to proceed with peaceful negotiations, and whatever results may be achieved by negotiations, the problem of Tibet is a domestic problem of the People's Republic of China and no foreign interference shall be tolerated.

In particular, the problem of Tibet and the problem of the participation of the People's Republic of China in the United Nations are two entirely unrelated problems.

If those countries hostile to China attempt to utilise as an excuse the fact that the Central People's Government of the People's Republic of China is exercising its sovereign rights in its territory of Tibet and threaten to obstruct the participation of the People's Republic of China in the U.N. Organization, it is then but another demonstration of the unfriendly and hostile attitude of such countries toward China.

Therefore, with regard to the viewpoint of the Government of India on what it regards as deplorable, the Central People's Government of the People's Republic of China cannot but consider it as having been affected by foreign influences hostile to China in Tibet and hence express their deep regret.<sup>49</sup>

Strung by this insulting note, the Indian government made its strongest response. In this third note, India openly articulated the cause of Tibetan autonomy (within the context of Chinese suzerainty), arguing that this was not unwarranted interference in Chinese internal affairs "but well-meant advice by a friendly government which has a natural interest in the solution of the problems concerning its neighbors by peaceful means." India, however, still unilaterally relinquished its traditional rights regarding Tibet. India wanted to maintain its Missions in Tibet as well as the McMahon border delimitation; strangely, however, it felt that the best way to accomplish this end was by renouncing the very legal rights on which these were based:

The Indian Ambassador in Peking has transmitted to the Government of India the note handed to him by the vice-foreign minister of the People's Republic of China on October 30. The Government of India have read with amazement the statement in the



last paragraph of the Chinese Government's reply that the Government of India's representative to them was affected by foreign influences hostile to China and categorically repudiate it.

At no time has any foreign influence been brought to bear upon India in regard to Tibet. In this, as in other matters, the Government of India's policy has been entirely independent and directed solely towards a peaceful settlement of international disputes and avoidance of anything calculated to increase the present deplorable tensions in the world.

Two. The Government of China are really mistaken in thinking that the Tibetan delegation's departure to Peking was delayed by outside instigation. In their previous communications the Government of India have explained at some length the reasons why the Tibetan delegation could not proceed to Peking earlier. They are convinced that there has been no possibility of foreign instigation.

Three. It is with no desire to interfere or to gain any advantage that the Government of India have sought earnestly that a settlement of the Tibetan problem should be effected by peaceful negotiations, adjusting legitimate Tibetan claims to autonomy within the framework of Chinese suzerainty. Tibetan autonomy is a fact, which, judging from reports which they have received from the Indian Ambassador in China and also from other sources, the Chinese Government were themselves willing to recognise and foster.

The Government of India's repeated suggestions that Chinese suzerainty over Tibet and Tibetan autonomy should be reconciled by peaceful negotiations were not, as the Chinese Government seem to suggest, unwarranted interference in China's internal affairs, but well-meant advice by a friendly government which has a national interest in the solution in the problems concerning its neighbours by peaceful methods.

Four. Wedded as they are to ways of peace the Government of India have been gratified to learn that the Chinese Government were also desirous of this, the Government of India advised the Tibetan Government to send their delegation to Peking, and were glad that this advice was accepted. In the interchange of the communications which had taken place between the Government of India and the Government of China, the former received repeated assurances that peaceful settlement was aimed at.

In the circumstances, the surprise of the Government of India was all the greater when they learnt that military operations had been undertaken by the Chinese Government against a peaceful people. There has been no allegation that there has been any provocation or any resort to non-peaceful methods on the part of the Tibetans. Hence, there is no justification whatever for such military operations against them. Such a step involving an attempt to impose a decision by force, could not possibly be reconciled with a peaceful settlement. In view of

these developments, the Government of India are no longer in a position to advise the Tibetan delegation to proceed to Peking, unless the Chinese Government think it fit to order their troops to halt their advance into Tibet and thus give a chance for peaceful negotiations.

Five. Every step that the Government of India have taken in recent months has been to check the drift to war all over the world. In doing so, they have adhered to their policy regardless of the displeasure of great nations. They cannot help thinking early operations by the Chinese Government against Tibet greatly added to the tensions of the world in general, which they are sure the Government of China also wish to avoid.

Six. The Government of India have repeatedly made it clear that they have no political or territorial ambitions in Tibet and they do not seek any novel or privileged position for themselves or for their nationals in Tibet. At the same time they have pointed out that certain rights have grown out of usage and agreements which are natural between neighbors with close cultural and commercial relations.

These relations have found expression in the presence of an agent of the Government of India in Lhasa, the existence of trade agencies at Gyantse and Yatung and the maintenance of post and telegraph offices at the trade route up to Gyantse. For the protection of this trade route a small military escort has been stationed at Gyantse for over 40 years. The Government of India are anxious that these establishments which are to the mutual interest of India and Tibet, and do not detract in any way from Chinese suzerainty over Tibet, should continue. The personnel at the Lhasa mission and the agencies at Gyantse have accordingly been instructed to stay at their posts.

Seven. It has been the basic policy of the Government of India to work for friendly relations between India and China, both countries recognising each other's sovereignty, territorial integrity and mutual interests.

Recent developments in Tibet have affected friendly relations and the interest of peace all over the world; this the Government of India deeply regret.

In conclusion, the Government of India can only express their earnest hope that the Chinese Government will still prefer the methods for peaceful negotiations and settlement to a solution under duress and by force.<sup>50</sup>

While this exchange was occurring, the Tibetan appeal to the United Nations reached Lake Success. India's reaction was particularly important because Britain (and to a lesser extent the United States and others) was committed to following India's lead. For several weeks, India did not arrive at an

official response and tried to satisfy the British by making informal statements. For example, on 13 November, Bajpai reiterated that India would support Tibetan appeal and said he hoped that support would be forthcoming from other powers on the Security Council.<sup>51</sup> And again on 17 November, he told the British that the head of the Indian delegation to the United Nations had been instructed to make inquiries to see if some non-superpower would present the Tibetan appeal to the United Nations Security Council. Bajpai said, however, that if no other country would do so, he thought it more than probable that the Indian government would be prepared to act.<sup>52</sup>

By mid-November, the Chinese reply to the last Indian note arrived in New Delhi. Dated 16 November, it led India to decide not to support the Tibetan appeal:

On November 1, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China received from H.E. Ambassador Panikkar a communication from the Government of the Republic of India on the problem of Tibet.

The Central People's Government of the People's Republic of China in its past communications with the Government of the Republic of India on the question of Tibet has repeatedly made it clear that Tibet is an integral part of Chinese territory. The problem of Tibet is entirely a domestic problem of China. The Chinese People's Liberation Army must enter Tibet, liberate the Tibetan people and defend the frontiers of China. This is the firm policy of the Chinese Government. According to the provisions of the common programme adopted by the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, the regional autonomy granted by the Chinese Government to the national minorities inside the country is autonomy within the confines of Chinese sovereignty.

This point has been recognized by the Indian Government in its *aide mémoire* to the Chinese Government dated August 26, 1950. However, when the Chinese Government actually exercised its sovereign rights and began to liberate the Tibetan people and drive out foreign forces and influences to ensure that the Tibetan people will be free from aggression and will realise regional autonomy and religious freedom, the Indian Government attempted to influences and obstruct the exercise of its sovereign rights in Tibet by the Chinese Government. This cannot but make the Chinese Government greatly surprised.

The Central People's Government of the People's Republic of China sincerely hopes that the Chinese People's Liberation Army may enter Tibetan peacefully to perform the sacred task of liberating the Tibetan people and defending the frontiers of China. It has therefore long since

welcomed the delegation of the local authorities of Tibet, which has remained in India, to come to Peking at an early date to proceed with peace negotiations. Yet the said delegation, obviously as a result of continued outside obstruction, has delayed its departure for Peking. Further, taking advantage of the delay of the negotiations, the local authorities of Tibet have developed strong armed forces at Chengtu [Chamdo] in Sikang province in the interior of China, in an attempt to prevent the Chinese People's Liberation Army from liberating Tibet.

On August 31, 1950, the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs informed the Indian Government through Ambassador Panikkar that the Chinese People's Liberation Army was going to take action soon in West Sikang according set plans, and expressed the hope that the Indian Government would assist the delegation of the local authorities of Tibet so that it might arrive in Peking in mid-September. The Chinese Chargé d'Affaires, Shen Chien, and later Ambassador Yuan Chung-hsien, both in person, told the said delegation that it was imperative that it should hasten to Peking within September, or that the said delegation would bear the responsibilities and be held responsible for all the consequences resulting from the delay. In mid-October, the Chinese Ambassador Yuan again informed the Indian Government of this. Yet still owing to outside instigation the delegation of the local authorities of Tibet fabricated various pretexts and remained in India.

Although the Chinese Government has not given up its desire of settling the problem of Tibet peacefully it can no longer continue to put off the set plan of the Chinese People's Liberation Army to proceed to Tibet. And the liberation of Chengtu [Chamdo] further proved that through the instrument of Tibetan troops, foreign forces and influences were obstructing the peaceful settlement of the problem of Tibet. But regardless of whether the local authorities of Tibet wish to proceed with peace negotiations and regardless of whatever results may be achieved by negotiations, no foreign intervention will be permitted. The entry into Tibet of the Chinese People's Liberation Army and the liberation of the Tibetan people are also decided.

In showing its friendship with the Government of the Republic of India, and in an understanding of the desire of the Indian Government to see the problem of Tibet settled peacefully, the Central People's Government of the People's Republic of China had kept the India Government informed of its efforts in this direction. What the Chinese Government cannot but deeply regret is that the Indian Government, in disregard of the facts, has regarded a domestic problem of the Chinese Government—the exercise of its sovereign rights in Tibet—as an international dispute calculated to increase the present tensions in the world.

The Government of the Republic of India has repeatedly expressed its desire for developing Sino-Indian friendship on the basis of mutual respect for territory, sovereignty, equality and mutual benefit, and of

preventing the world from going to war. The entry into Tibet of the Chinese People's Liberation Army is exactly aimed at the protection of the integrity of the territory and the sovereignty of China. And it is on this question that all those countries who desire to respect the territory and sovereignty of China should first of all indicate their real attitude towards China.

In the meantime, we consider that what is now threatening the independence of nations and world peace is precisely the forces of these imperialist aggressors. For the sake of maintenance of national independence and defence of world peace, it is necessary to resist the forces of those imperialist aggressors. The entry into Tibet of the Chinese People's Liberation Army is thus an important measure to maintain Chinese independence, to prevent the imperialist aggressors from dragging the world towards war, and to defend world peace.

The Central People's Government of the People's Republic of China welcomes the renewed declaration of the Indian Government that it has no political or territorial ambitions in China's Tibet and that it does not seek any new privileged position. As long as our two sides adhere strictly to the principles of mutual respect for territory, sovereignty, equality and mutual benefit, we are convinced that the friendship between China and India should be developed in a normal way, and that the problems relating to Sino-Indian diplomatic, commercial and cultural relations with respect to Tibet may be solved properly and to our mutual benefit through normal diplomatic channels.<sup>53</sup>

Although still completely unequivocal concerning Chinese sovereignty over Tibet, the Indian government saw positive aspects in the letter with regard to Indian commercial rights in Tibet and India's interest in achieving a peaceful settlement. Menon, the Indian foreign secretary, told the British High Commissioner in India that the Chinese note did not specifically question the Indian right to maintain their trade agencies and so forth in Tibet, and it referred to discussions through diplomatic channels of Indian interest in Tibet. Menon commented that this contrasted favorably with the Chinese ambassador's preceding statement.<sup>54</sup> Consequently, the Indian government pulled back from support of the Tibetan appeal, sending the following instructions to their U.N. delegation:

- a) the Government of India did not like the El Salvador resolution and B.N.Rau was not to support it.
- b) the question of timing of the handling of the Tibetan appeal needed careful consideration. Korea was obviously of first importance and

it was therefore desirable that nothing should be said or done which was likely to embitter relations with China at this critical stage, and it would be preferable therefore for *no action to be taken on the Tibetan appeal for the present*. Little good could come out of any condemnation of the Chinese action in Tibet and at this stage such condemnation might conceivably do a great deal of harm.<sup>55</sup>

### The United Nations Debate on the Tibetan Appeal

On Friday, 24 November, a mere week after the Dalai Lama became ruler of Tibet, the issue of whether to include "the invasion of Tibet by foreign forces" as an additional item in the United Nations General Assembly was debated by the General Committee at the request of El Salvador. The U.N. report of the ensuing debate (written in the third person) is cited below. The move to defer action on Tibet's appeal was suggested by the British representative, K. Younger, and strongly supported by India.

The debate began at 2.30 P.M. on Friday, 24 November 1950, under the chairmanship of Nasarolla Entezam of Iran. The chairman first asked Hector David Castro from El Salvador to give his proposal. The official U.N. report of the meeting stated:

Two weeks ago the El Salvador delegation had asked the Secretary-General for a copy of the appeal forwarded to the United Nations by the Government of Tibet. The Secretary-General had agreed to that request but so far had taken no action in the matter. In pursuing the aims of the Charter, however, the United Nations should be careful not to isolate itself and lose all touch with governments which were not members of the Organization. Every important communication sent to the United Nations by the government of a non-member State should be made known to all member states. He [Castro] regretted that the Secretary-General had not distributed to delegations the appeal from the Government of Tibet. He [Castro] asked the President of the General Assembly to do everything possible to see that communications and documents sent by non-member States, like those sent by member States, were distributed to members of the United Nations when those members were called upon to take an important decision. The invasion of Tibet by Chinese armed forces had been announced by the press of the whole world. As the Government of Tibet had refused to comply with the orders of the Government of the so called People's Republic

of China, the latter had decided to send a military expedition to Tibet. It should be borne in mind that the Government of Tibet had always shown readiness to enter into peaceful negotiations with the so-called People's Government of China. A delegation from the Government of Tibet had been on the point of proceeding to Peking when the invasion occurred.

Little information was available; it was known that Tibet was invaded by a foreign army but the extent of the territory won by the army was not known.

Before submitting its proposal to the General Committee, the Salvadorean delegation had had rather peculiar questions put to it. It had been asked whether its government was not, in the present case, acting under the influence of another government. The Government of El Salvador had always exhibited the fullest independence and the delegation of El Salvador had always complied with its Government's instructions. No other government therefore could have influenced the Government or the delegation of El Salvador. He [Castro] then recalled the terms of the telegram and the letter sent on 14 November 1950 to the President of the General Assembly by the Chairman of the delegation of Salvador (A/1534).

The delegation of El Salvador had hoped that the General Assembly could make a decision on that question without referring to it to the General Committee. This was a case of international aggression which the General Assembly could not overlook. Under the terms of Article 1, paragraph 1, of the Charter, the United Nations must "maintain international peace and security." Tibet, of course was not a member of the Organization, but the United Nations must maintain peace not only between member states, but throughout the whole world.

The aggression committed against Tibet should be of particular concern to the great powers. He recalled that a permanent member of the Security Council has accused the other permanent member of dealing with questions only in so far as their own political interests were concerned. There is no basis for that accusation, but, if the General Assembly refused to consider the proposal, some weight might attach to that charge.

Mr. Dulles had stated, in regard to threats to the independence and territorial integrity of China, that if the General Assembly took no action in that matter, it would disappoint the whole world. It would be equally disappointing if the General Assembly disregarded an act of international aggression on the pretext that consideration of that question would complicate still further the present situation. It might also be asked whether there was any basis for such an argument. Representatives of member States frequently made strong statements before the General Assembly and charge certain other Governments with pursuing a dangerous policy. Such statements showed the complete

freedom of expression of delegations, but were more likely to complicate the international situation than was consideration of the aggression committed against Tibet.

Some claimed that Tibet was not autonomous at all and that it was a province of China, so that its invasion by a Chinese army would be an internal affair which came within the competence only of the Chinese Government. He [Castro] wished to submit certain information to members of the General Committee to show that that argument was unfounded. He then read an extract from *Chambers Encyclopaedia* (Volume XIII) where it was stated that the Central Government of Tibet consisted of the Dalai Lama acting through a Minister appointed by the chief Lamas. That Minister presided over a Grand Council or Cabinet of four members. The country was divided into 170 administrative districts, each in the charge of a district magistrate who was responsible for the collection of taxes, the administration of civil affairs and the working of a civilian code of laws based on Buddhist teachings. The Central Government's authority decreased in proportion as the distance from Lhasa increased. The revenue, used largely to finance monasteries, religious festivals and the army, was raised by taxes levied on the lower classes and on exports. There were no banking facilities and taxes were frequently paid in kind, barter was common although there was a local currency and Indian coinage and paper money were used. The army, about 10,000 strong, was recruited by conscription and was stationed mainly on the eastern borders. Many senior officers had been trained in India.

...He [Castro] did not think the General Assembly could disregard the aggression against Tibet on the mere pretext that that country was isolated and had but a few means of communication with the outside world. Tibet was a particularly important strategic position; the high plateaus of Tibet dominated India. These were facts which the general Assembly could not disregard.

The representatives of the Tibetan Government were coming to New York to lay a complaint before the General Assembly or the Secretary-General. The General Assembly could not dismiss their case unheard.

The Government of El Salvador had done its duty by drawing the attention of the General Committee to the aggression against Tibet. If the General Assembly disregarded that aggression, it would be neglecting its responsibilities.

Finally Mr. Castro read the draft resolution submitted by his delegation (A/1534) and concluded by saying that the General Assembly should at least condemn the unprovoked act of aggression against Tibet.<sup>56</sup>

Following this, the British representative, Younger, spoke. As we saw earlier, the U.K. delegation preferred to avoid debate



on the Tibetan issue. The Foreign Office, however, had been in favour of supporting some form of Tibetan appeal and on 18 November 1950 had sent relatively clear interim instructions to the U.N. delegation for any preliminary debate. These instructions stated:

You should maintain that Tibet is entitled to submit an appeal under Article 35 (2) of the Charter for the reasons contained in Commonwealth Relations Office telegram No. 2539 to New Delhi [discussed above]. If the point is raised you should explain that, even if a nominal Chinese suzerainty subject to Tibetan autonomy is recognised, Tibet's right of appeal is not thereby invalidated. But you should not commit us either to continuing or to repudiating recognition of Chinese suzerainty in the new circumstances. You should deplore the Chinese resort to force and stress that it was taken without provocation and while peaceful negotiations were in progress. You could, if necessary, support a resolution condemning Chinese action on these lines. You should not, however, without further instructions, support any resolution which calls for or implies the threat of military action by the United Nations<sup>57</sup>

Although the British archives show no subsequent telegrams contravening these instructions, it appears that the general British policy of following India's lead gave Younger enough leeway to recommend taking no action at this time because, as will be seen, India wanted to prevent a United Nations General Assembly debate. Thus, as soon as the General Committee discussion was opened to the floor, Younger said that he

did not think he could participate at that time in a general discussion on the question of Tibet. That did not mean that the United Kingdom delegation was attempting to shirk its own responsibilities or to prevent the United Nations from assuming its full responsibilities. The question before the Committee was one of procedure. The point was to decide what was the best way of considering the question of Tibet. Consideration of the question was not an end in itself, but rather a way of trying to settle the problem.

The Committee did not know exactly what was happening in Tibet *nor was the legal position of the country very clear*. Moreover, it could still be hoped that the existing difficulties in Tibet could be settled amicably by agreement between the parties concerned. In those circumstances before taking a decision the members of the General Committee would be wiser to wait until a better idea could be formed

of the possibilities of a peaceful settlement. He proposed therefore, that the Committee should defer decision on the request made by the delegation of El Salvador.<sup>58</sup>

Although the British Foreign Office did not consider the matter closed at this time and saw Younger's statement to the United Nations as a procedural postponement, news of this speech devastated the Tibetan pro-West leadership, who were stunned to find that Britain, of all countries, could say that the legal status of Tibet was unclear.<sup>59</sup>

Younger was followed by the Indian delegate, the Jam Saheb of Nawanagar, who made a very strong speech stating that India, the country most closely involved, felt there was a chance for a peaceful settlement and argued that the United Nations could aid this not by discussing the Tibetan plea but, rather, by abandoning it. According to the official U.N. report, he said:

His Government [India] had given careful study to the problems raised by the proposal of El Salvador to place the question of the invasion of Tibet by foreign forces on the General Assembly agenda. That was a matter of vital interest to both China and India. The Committee was aware that India, as a neighbour of both China and Tibet, with both of which it had friendly relations, was the country most interested in a settlement of the problem. That was why the Indian Government was particularly anxious that it should be settled peacefully.

He had no desire to express an opinion on the difficulties which had arisen between China and Tibet, but would point out that, *in the latest note received by his Government, the Peking Government had declared that it had not abandoned its intention to settle those difficulties by peaceful means.* It would seem that the Chinese forces had ceased to advance after the fall of Chamdo, a town some 480 kilometers from Lhasa. The Indian Government *was certain* that the Tibetan Question could still be settled by peaceful means, and that such a settlement could safeguard the autonomy which Tibet had enjoyed for several decades while maintaining its historical association with China.

His delegation considered that the best way of obtaining that objective was to abandon, for the time being, the idea of including the question in the agenda of the General Assembly. That was why he supported the United Kingdom representative's proposal that consideration of the request for inclusion should be adjourned.<sup>60</sup>

The forceful Indian statement argued that the United Nations should abandon the issue because: (1) the Chinese had

stopped their advance on Lhasa, that is to say, the precipitating crisis had ended; and (2) the last Chinese note to India on this issue suggested that it could be settled peacefully, and the Indian government was certain that would prove to be the case. However, since the Indian government knew very well that the Chinese and Tibetans were not negotiating at that time and that they were far apart in their aims, it is difficult to believe that India was *certain* of a peaceful outcome. In this regard, it is revealing to note that a British Foreign Office minute of 28 November thought that the last Chinese note to India "holds little hope of peaceful settlement."<sup>61</sup>

After the Indian delegate's speech, all the other countries fell into line. Australia's representative, Keith Officer, said that he "agreed with the representative of the United Kingdom and India. In view of the statement made by the Indian representative, he would unreservedly support the United Kingdom proposal that consideration of the request for inclusion by El Salvador should be adjourned."<sup>62</sup> And the Russian representative

agreed with the United Kingdom proposal. However he wished to explain his delegation's view on the substance of the question. It was an extremely simple question. Tibet was inalienable part of China and its affairs were the exclusive concern of the Chinese Government.

The representative of El Salvador had referred to newspaper articles and encyclopaedia, but he had not cited any international instrument in support of the argument that Tibet was an independent country, which had been invaded by Chinese troops. Chinese sovereignty over Tibet had been recognized for a long time by the United Kingdom, the United States and the U.S.S.R.

The question was therefore one which came essentially within the national jurisdiction of China; the United Nations could not consider it. If it did so, it would be guilty of unwarranted intervention in the internal affairs of the Chinese people, who had been liberated after centuries of foreign domination. That being so, his delegation would vote for the adjournment of consideration of the request submitted by the representative of El Salvador and even for its outright rejection.<sup>63</sup>

Finally, after a long speech by the representative of the Chinese Nationalist government on Taiwan, it was unanimously decided to adjourn consideration of the El Salvador proposal.

Following this, the United States' representative, Ernest Gross, spoke. According to the U.N. report, he said:

[Gross] had voted for adjournment in view of the fact that the Government of India, whose territory bordered on Tibet and which was therefore an interested party, had told the General Committee that it hoped that the Tibetan question would be peacefully and honourably settled. In accordance with its traditional policy the United States would in any other circumstances have voted for the inclusion of the item in the General Assembly agenda. His government had always supported any proposal to refer to the United Nations international disputes or complaints of aggression, which could thus be aired, considered and settled at international hearings. This was the principal applied by the United States Government even in the case of accusation made against the United States and despite the illogical and fraudulent nature of the accusations.

However, in the present case, the United States delegation wanted to support the proposal made by the States most directly concerned in the subject matter of the request submitted by the delegation of El Salvador.<sup>64</sup>

Tibet's first appeal to the United Nations, therefore, had failed, although the United Nations had still not completely shut the door on the Tibetans. The Tibetan government's response and subsequent actions will be the subject of Chapter Twenty.

#### Footnotes:

1. USFR, 793B.00/10-2850, conversation with the Tibetan Trade Mission cited in a telegram from the U.S. Ambassador in India to the U.S. State Department, dated 28 October 1950; Zhwa sgab pa (Shakabpa) 1976:423.
2. Zhwa sgab pa (Shakabpa) 1976:423.
3. The Tibetan Trade Mission (Surkhang and Khenchung) had called on Ambassador Henderson on 16 October to discuss Tibet's military-aid requirements. They were told to return for discussions on the eighteenth, but instead sent the U.S. Embassy a cryptic letter which said they could not make the appointment due to "urgent works." (USFR, 793B.00/10-2650, telegram from the U.S. Ambassador in India to the U.S. Secretary of State, dated 26 October 1950).
4. Zhwa sgab pa (Shakabpa) 1976:423-25.
5. Ibid.: 424-25.
6. Carlyle 1953:550-51.

7. Zhwa sgab pa (Shakabpa) 1976:424-25.
8. As was seen in Chapter 18, Ngabö left Chamdo with his officials early in the morning on 18 October, without telling Ford or sending a final wireless message informing Lhasa that Chamdo was being evacuated. Lhasa therefore could only surmise that the absence of messages from Chamdo and the failure of Chamdo to respond to Lhasa-originated messages indicated that Chamdo had fallen.
9. Zhwa sgab pa (Shakabpa) 1976:425.
10. Ibid.
11. *Statesman* (of India) 26 September 1950.
12. Dalai Lama, interview.
13. Dalai lama, interview; J. Taring, interview; Anon 1, interview.
14. Shakabpa, interview.
15. Zhwa sgab pa (Shakabpa) 1976:426-27.
16. Ibid.:426-28.
17. Ibid.:429.
18. Zhwa sgab pa (Shakabpa) 1976:429-30.
19. *U.S. Foreign Relations*, 1950, volume 6, p.555.
20. USFR, 793B.00/10-2750, telegram from the U.S. Secretary of State to the U.S. Ambassador in India, dated 27 October 1950. G.S. Bajpai was the senior Indian official in the Foreign Office under Nehru, who was both Prime Minister and Foreign Minister. S. Dutt, the Indian Commonwealth Secretary in the Foreign Office at this time says of Bajpai: "Bajpai was the principal official advisor of the Prime Minister on both foreign and Commonwealth Affairs....Nehru found in him an able aide and depended a good deal on his advice." (Dutt 1977:24).
21. USFR, 693.93B/10-3150, telegram from the U.S. Ambassador in India to the U.S. Secretary of State, dated 31 October 1950.
22. USFR, 793.00/11-350, telegram from the U.S. Ambassador in India to the U.S. secretary of state, dated 3 November 1950.
23. Lha'u rta ra [Lhautara] 1982:97) reports that it was Chömphel Thubten who said this but the late Talama Cawtang himself told Gelek ([Rimpoche], interview) that it was he who intervened, and this was confirmed by the Dalai Lama (interview) and many other participants.
24. Ibid.
25. Khe smad (KHEME) 1982:109.
26. Ibid. One not unlikely possibility is that one or more key officials in favor of the Dalai Lama taking over from Taktra knew this and manipulated the convening of the oracle session with the expectation that Nechung or Gadong would suggest this change. When they did not, Cawtang made a desperate attempt to prompt Gadong to act. No Tibetan official would confirm this interpretation, although many indicated that key officials wanted to get the regent in favor of the Dalai Lama. A few cryptically hinted that a conscious effort was made to produce a shift in power. Cawtang was later questioned by the government about what he had done and said at the ceremony. He replied that there was a precedent for his

- action and that the Yigtsang Office can insist the oracles speak clearly. He argued that he was only following this tradition. (Cawtang's comments derive from Shingsa Awala, interview.)
27. Lha'u rta ra (Lhautara) 1982:96-98.
  28. Pandenla, interview.
  29. Dalai Lama 1983:83. In an interview in 1984, the Dalai Lama could not confirm that he suggested that the Assembly be consulted, saying only that he might have but he was not sure (Dalai Lama, interview).
  30. F0371/84457, report of conversation with G.S. Bajpai cited in a telegram from the United Kingdom High Commissioner in India to the Commonwealth Relations Office in London, dated 5 November 1950.
  31. Ibid.
  32. Shakabpa, interview.
  33. The British High Commissioner informed London that he had been told in strict confidence that the Tibetan appeal had been drafted by Sinha, the Indian representative stationed in Lhasa (F0371/84454, the United Kingdom High Commissioner to Commonwealth Relations Office, dated 16 November 1950). Shakabpa (interview) confirms this.
  34. F0371/84454, telegram from the United Kingdom's U.N. delegation to the British Foreign Office, dated 14 November 1950.
  35. F0371/84454, telegram from the United Kingdom's U.N. delegation to the British Foreign office, dated 13 November 1950.
  36. F0371/84454. letter sent by Shakabpa, dated 12 November, to the United Kingdom High Commissioner in India, cited in a telegram from the United Kingdom High Commissioners in India to the Commonwealth Relations Office in London, dated 16 November 1950.
  37. USFR, 793B.00/1-1550, cited in a telegram from the U.S. Ambassador in India to the U.S. Secretary of State, dated 15 November 1950.
  38. United Nations Document A/1534, cited in Bureau of His Holiness Dalai Lama n.d. The motivation behind the El Salvador move is unclear.
  39. Ibid.
  40. Article 35 said: "A State which is not a member of the United Nations may bring to the attention of the Security Council or the General Assembly any dispute to which it is a party if it accepts in advance, for the purposes of the dispute, the obligations of pacific settlement provided in the present Charter" (FO371/84454, given in a letter from the British Foreign Office to the Attorney-General, dated 25 November 1950).
  41. FO371/84454, telegram from the British Foreign Office to the United Kingdom High Commissioner in India, dated 9 November 1950.
  42. FO371/84458, minute by R.H. Scott, Southeast Asia Department of the British Foreign Office, dated 2 November 1950.
  43. FO371/84454, telegram from the Commonwealth Relations office in London to the United Kingdom High Commissioner in India, dated 10 November 1950 (emphasis added).
  44. In some ways, the Indian government resented Britain acting as if it no longer had interest in the area. India conveyed this resentment to the

British Foreign Office in their answer to Britain's request for India's opinion on the following draft response, which the British wanted to use in a Parliamentary Question about whether Britain would press for the inclusion of the Tibetan problem in the Security Council: "The situation in Tibet is one which primarily concerns the Government of India and for this reason we would not ourselves wish to take the initiative. We are however in close consultation with the Government of India on this matter" (FO371/84454, the Commonwealth Relations office to the United Kingdom High Commissioner in India, dated 11 November 1950). The Indian government informed Britain that they preferred the first sentence of the statement to read, "The situation in Tibet is one which primarily concerns the Government of India *although His Majesty's Government are also interested.*" The reason they gave for this was that they were worried that the statement in the original British draft suggested that the initiative lay completely with India. (FO371/84454, telegram from the United Kingdom High Commissioner in India to the Commonwealth Relations Office in London, dated 13 November 1950. (Emphasis added)

45. FO371/84454, telegram from the United Kingdom delegation in New York to the British Foreign office, dated 14 November 1950. (Emphasis added)
46. Carlyle 1953:550-51.
47. Jain 1960:45-46.
48. International Commission of Jurists 1959: 132-33.
49. Ibid.: 133.
50. Ibid.: 133-35.
51. FO371/84454, telegram from the United Kingdom High Commissioner in India to the Commonwealth Relations Office, dated 13 November 1950.
52. FO371/84454, telegram from the United Kingdom High Commissioner in India to the Commonwealth Relations Office, dated 17 November 1950.
53. Ibid.
54. FO371/84455, telegram from the United Kingdom High Commissioner to the Commonwealth Relations Office, dated 21 November 1950. Menon, however, also commented that he thought the Chinese would, in fact, try to clear the Indians out of Tibet as soon as they were in a position to do so, and indicated general agreement with the British interpretation of Tibet's legal position (ibid.)
55. FO371/84455, instructions related by G.S. Bajpai in a conversation with the United Kingdom High Commissioner in India, cited in a telegram from the United Kingdom High Commissioner to the Commonwealth Relations Office, dated 30 November 1950.
56. As given in Bureau of His Holiness the Dalai Lama n.d.: 7-10.
57. FO371/84454, telegram from the Foreign Office to the British U.N. delegation, dated 18 November 1950.
58. Bureau of His Holiness the Dalai Lama n.d.: 11 (emphasis added).
59. Because the British Attorney-General had not yet commented on the Foreign Office's interpretation of Tibet's legal status, the United Kingdom

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U.N. representative was, from the British point of view, technically not completely deceitful when he said that the British government felt Tibet's legal status was not clear.

60. As given in Bureau of His Holiness the Dalai Lama n.d.: 11-12 (emphasis added).
61. FO371/84455, Foreign Office minute by R.H. Scott, dated 28 November 1950.
62. As given in Bureau of His Holiness the Dalai lama n.d.: 12.
63. Ibid.
64. Ibid.



## The Institution of the Dalai Lama as a Symbolic Matrix

P. CHRISTIAAN KLIEGER

One of the most significant accomplishments of the late Tibetan historian and statesman, Tsepon Shakabpa, was to clearly introduce of the West the ideological establishment of the institution of the Dalai Lama and subsequent formation of a strong central Tibetan government in the form of the Ganden Phodrang. For the first time (1967), perhaps, primary Tibetan historical sources were utilized, providing a dimension to the political system of Tibet that had heretofore been unknown in the West: Indigenous Tibetan history is not a secular history—the chronicles of important people and events cannot be readily interpreted without an implicit understanding of the Buddhist ideological framework in which they were written. Official Tibetan histories reflect the operation of a centuries-old political system that has effectively combined secular and ecclesiastic powers (*chos-srid zung-'brel*). Attempts to understand major Tibetan political institutions solely on the basis of secular paradigms have resulted in certain unacceptable distortions (see Wang and Suo 1984; Tang Ke-an 1985 Grunfeld 1987).

Since Shakabpa's seminal study, other scholars have interpreted the institution of the Dalai Lama within the context of Buddhist understanding. The works of Glenn Mullin have provided us a richly interpretive and descriptive history of the development of the institution of the Dalai Lama (e.g. 1988). Robert Paul has utilized a psycho-analytic mode to delve into the secrets of rule by incarnation (1982). Anthropologists, in their frequent attempt to understand possible general patterns of human behaviour on the basis of particular cultural phenomena have also been sensitive to the ideological foundation of Tibetan history (see Goldstein 1973, 1978; Michael 1982;

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