

SECRET

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From Shri A.K. Bakshi,
Indian Trade Agent, Gartok.

To
The Political Officer in Sikkim,
Gangtok.
Dated Camp New Delhi, the 30th November, 1960.

Sir,

I have the honour to submit below my annual report on the tour of Western Tibet during the trading season, 1960.

General.

1. I left New Delhi on the 23rd June, 1960 for tour of Western Tibet and was joined by the Agency doctor at Almora on the 25th. After recruiting the seasonal staff at Dharchula we were scheduled to enter Taklakot on the 12th July, 1960 but in view of the Ministry's instructions received on the 30th June at Dharchula, we had to defer our onward march. The Chinese persistently expressed their inability to afford protection to the Agency personnel in view of disorderly conditions in Western Tibet and it was only on the 13th August that we were finally cleared to resume our journey. Yet another hinderance awaited us near Jipti, where a suspension bridge over river kali crashed on the 16th August, stranding bulk of my party and luggage on other side of the river for about 10 days. However, we finally reached Taklakot on the 31st August, 1960 and thence to Gartok, our headquarters, on the 12th September.

On our return journey we left Gartok on 12th October, halted at Taklakot from 14th to 21st and crossed into India on the 23rd October, 1960. The seasonal staff was disbanded at Dharchula on the 1st November and, after dispatching the rest of my party to

Gangtok, I reported to the Ministry for consultation duty on the 7th November, 1960.

Impressions of the journey through our border areas.

2. With the creation of Uttarkhand division comprising of districts Pithoragarh, Uttar Kashi and Chamoli in Uttar Pradesh bordering on Western Tibet, a sense of urgency in the over-all development of this backward area, especially improvement of communications, was in evidence. Previously there used to be only one road from Kathgodam to Almora via Ranikhet, but now a new short route, commonly known as Khairna – Almora road has been completed which cuts short the distance between Kathgodam and Almora by 26 miles. Similarly, between Almora and Pithoragarh (77 miles) a new road has been constructed which is a very useful link, because previously the people of Almora had to go all the way via Tanakpur in Nainital district, which was a very long distance. From Pithoragarh to Askote (33 miles) is a good road, which is being extended to Dharchula via Jauljibi (27 miles). The road is in-fact complete and is only awaiting completion of a bridge over Gori Ganga near Jauljibi. The work on this bridge was going apace and it was expected that through motor traffic upto Dharchula would be a reality by about April next. From Dharchula to Tawaghat (10 miles) is an easier alignment and P.W.D. authorities hoped to complete this portion in about a year's time. However, beyond Tawaghat upto Garbyang is an extremely difficult terrain. Not to speak of a motor road, even the present bridle path was not being properly maintained and was unfit for animal transport at many places, especially between Jipti and Malpa. This lapse on the part of local P.W.D. authorities has brought them quite a disrepute for their alleged inefficiency etc. I understand that even the alignment of the proposed road from Tawaghat to Garbyang has not been

finalized so far. Beyond Garbyang upto foot of Lipulekh pass it is an easier alignment and most of the track has already been laid.

Now that a separate Border Works Division of the U.P. P.W.D. has been created with Superintending Engineer's headquarters at Pithoregarh and an Executive Engineer with four Asstt. Engineers at Dharchula, the road construction work is bound to be speeded up.

Other development activities including exploration of possibilities of alternative employment for the local Bhotia residents, are being ably supervised by Shri J.C. Pande, Deputy Commissioner of Pithoragarh district, who has endeared himself to the local population by touring farflung areas, where handicrafts are being encouraged. The climate of these border areas being ideal for fruit cultivation, a number of Nurseries have also been set up, especially the one at Sosa, which augurs well for the prosperity of this area.

Road development activities in Western Tibet.

3. Tibet being a vast table-land with less difficult terrain, this natural advantage makes it easier for the Chinese to develop means of communication more speedily. Already Western Tibet is linked with Sinkiang in the North and Lhasa in the East by motorable roads. Another irregular motor road from Gargunsa to Nagchukha via Napuk, Garge and Kungjen passing through Changtha-ng (Country beyond Kailash range) is said to be more or less open to traffic, though Tibetan forced labour were still reported to be working on it. It is said that the Chinese have surveyed some other feeder roads from Rudok Tashigang side towards Ladakh border as also one from Barkha plains to Tholing via Gyanima.

We had the opportunity of travelling by Chinese trucks from Taklakot to Gartok and vice versa and found this 250 Kilometer portion of the Sinkiang Highway as an all-weather one fit to take

heavy traffic. The entire length was without a single bridge or culvert and did not bear the least semblance of a hill road. However, this was certainly no feat of Engineering as even the ground did not seem to have been scratched here and there for tens of miles. My impressions of these journeys, giving exact alignment of Taklakot-Gartok road, in kilometers, are enclosed as Appendix 'A' and 'B'.

Trade.

4. Due to uncertain trade prospects in Western Tibet during 1960 season, Indian traders particularly from Himachal Pradesh, Punjab and Ladakh did not visit Western Tibet in usual numbers. Even U.P. traders went up very late and carried comparatively less stock of goods.

Trade fairs, took place at the Trade Marts of Gyanima (Johar traders), Chhakra (Darma traders), Nabra (Niti traders), Gartok (Johar and Niti traders), Ta-klakot (bians and Chaudas traders) and at Tarchen. A few traders also visited Dongbra and Tashigang Trade Marts on their way to Tibetan villages, as also the interior, - Rudok and Changthang areas.

Generally speaking, trade at Gyanima, Tarchen and Taklakot was good where Indian traders were able to dispose off their last year's stocks at good margin of profit and procured sufficient wool as several batches of Dokpas (peasant traders) visited these Trader Marts.

The total volume of trade was, however, considerably less, say, half of the past average. This decrease in volume of trade may be attributed to the following reasons: -

- (a) Due to uncertain trade prospects, and unsettled conditions, many Indian traders avoided visit to Western Tibet and those who took a chance carried very little goods.

- (b) Our executive ban on the export of certain articles of military value, for which there was quite a demand both from the Chinese and Tibetan people, affected volume of exports to Western Tibet.
- (c) Official interference in free trade was another reason for decrease in volume of trade as will be explained in the following pages.
- (d) Direct supplies of wool and borax to the mainland and import of several articles of daily use to Western Tibet, where the Chinese have opened cheap shops at Gartok, Gargunsa, Rudok and Taklakot has also limited the scope of Indian trade. It may be mentioned here that previously the Chinese and their Tibetan employees used to make lot of purchases from Indian shops but now all their requirements are being met by the Chinese shops, where they have introduced a coupon system. Possibly under instructions, these people now avoid visiting Indian shops.
- (e)

Difficulties experienced by Indian traders in Western Tibet.

5. Indian traders experienced many difficulties in carrying on their traditional trade, due mainly to official interference, as explained below:

- (a) Disappearance of traditional pattern of barter trade.

The traditional pattern of barter trade has practically disappeared and the Chinese Trade Office at Taklakot has assumed the role of middle-manship between the Indian traders and the Dokpas, who were not permitted to have direct dealings. It may be recalled that who had been objecting to this role of middle-man played by some Tibetan officials in past, but the Chinese have gone much beyond and have almost up-rooted the Mitra system of trade based on traditional friendship of Indian and Tibetan border

traders. At present 90% of the supplies are purchased by the Chinese themselves, who place direct orders with the traders.

As is well known, there used to be three main traditional items of export from Western Tibet, viz, wool salt and borax, which are gradually being eliminated as explained below:

Wool: Wool trade has been practically monopolized by the Chinese, who have raised its price to Rs.135/- per maund. The Chinese have also started exporting wool to the main-land (Sinkiang) from this year.

Salt: The other item of trade is salt but this too has been rendered unprofitable. Previously the salt used to be measured against barley at a certain ratio, say three to one, but from this year it has been ordered that it should be weighed against the food grain. Naturally the salt being heavier, our traders no longer find it worth-while to continue in this trade, as they do not get even half of what they were getting upto last year. The present price of salt had risen to Rs.14/- per md.

Borax: The sale of borax to our traders has been totally stopped for the last two years and the entire product is being purchased by the Chinese themselves for use in their Steel mills in main-land.

It may be emphasized here that this official interference in free trade has hit our petty traders who used to do barter of grain with salt/borax/wool very hard, as they find it difficult to procure wool and salt even for their personal

requirements. To my mind this is the most serious development resulting from monopolization of wool by the Chinese, whose orders for supply of goods cannot be met by these petty Indian traders.

- (b) Taxation: From this season the Chinese have levied a duty of 3% on all exports and imports. Strangely enough even the last year's stocks of our traders already lying at Taklakot, were also assessed to duty. It may be mention here that previously the tax was levied at source i.e. Tibetans had to pay tax on wool, salt etc. but now they have been exempted and the whole burden shifted to Indian traders. Moreover, while assessment of duty is made on supposed sale value which the goods sometimes do not fetch the actual realization in kind is arbitrarily made even below the cost price of goods, thus putting our traders to undue loss, both-ways.

The common impression, however, was that with the introduction of this new customs levy of 3%, all old and customary taxes, including last year's wool tax at the rate of Rs.8/- per md. Have been abolished as these were not collected this year. However, there was no official confirmation regarding this.

- (c) Currency difficulties. Our traders faced currency difficulties for payment of the new tax and since they had no option but to offer payment in kind, their goods were realized in tax at reduced prices, thus putting they to loss as explained above. It is suggested that arrangement should be made through the People's Bank at Calcutta for issue of drafts valid at Taklakot/Gartok against deposit of Indian currency.

Exchange facilities are however, being given by the People's Bank at Taklakot but I understand that they charge over 4% commission on issue of drafts which is rather exorbitant.

(d) Restriction on movements. This year, few of our traders were allowed to visit the interior at their own risk, but I understand now they have been warned that from next year they would not be permitted to go beyond the recognized Trade Marts. This restriction is bound to affect free trade and realization of debts as well as disposal of animal properties by our traders.

(e) Realisation of debts (i) From erstwhile officers:
Erstwhile Tibetan officers used to do private trade and often purchased goods from our traders on credit basis. Since many of these officials are not traceable, some having been killed and other arrested and their properties confiscated, our traders have not been able to recover their dues from them. It may be mentioned here that the Chinese did not allow our traders to contact the detained officers and hence denied legitimate assistance in the recovery of their debts.

(ii) From local people: There has not been any appreciable progress in the recovery of debts from the local people also for the following reasons:

(a) Tibetans who used to procure articles of daily use by bartering their goods to Indian traders, could not do so due to official interference. As a result, they had to spend sale proceeds of wool on cash purchase of essential articles practically leaving no balance to repay debts.

(b) Ban on export of live-stock, which remained the only other alternative media for settlement of debts, completely blocked the recovery.

Although there has not been any open instigation to Tibetans to stop payment of debts, yet it can be safely said that the Chinese authorities are not at all helpful in facilitating settlement of dues amounting to about Rs.3 lakhs.

(f) Recovery of animal properties of Indian traders.

Indian traders had been traditionally keeping their animals with local people on various basis. These animals, chiefly yaks, mares and sheep were divided into two main categories, viz, (i) for use as beasts of burden and (ii) for rearing purposes and for deriving animal products.

The ban imposed by the Chinese on the export of live-stock from Tibet has virtually amounted to confiscation of animal properties of Indian traders, valued at over Rs.100000/- as our traders can neither take these animals to India nor can they sell to others except the keepers, who being poor people cannot afford to pay even inadequate cash price. We took up this issue with the Chinese Foreign Bureau at Gartok but they were not prepared to make an exception in this case of animal properties of Indians.

(g) Transport difficulties. As explained above the Chinese have banned the export of live-stock as beasts of burden and have also discouraged Tibetans from undertaking transportation of goods beyond their borders. This lack of direct of transport to the home towns of the Indian traders, is a great hinderance and the problem could have been eased if our traders were permitted to utilize their own animals now kept with the Tibetans for this purpose. It may be mentioned here that some of our traders wanted to take down their own animals as beasts of burden/assurances of returning the same to Tibet but the Chinese authorities did not allow this.

It is suggested that this matter may be taken up with the Chinese at higher level for facilitating release/disposal of animal properties of Indian traders, as reference to local authorities would be of no avail.

- (h) Storage difficulties. There is no facility for storage of unsold goods at the end of the trading season. The Chinese maintained that our traders should make their own arrangements, but apparently it was not possible as most of their erstwhile Tibetan friends with whom they used to keep goods, have been up-rooted from their homes. Moreover, the Tibetan people, who though helpful, are scared of the Chinese and generally avoid dealings with our traders. It was with great difficulty that our traders at Gartok were able to arrange a room in the house of a local Tibetan this year, though without any guarantee of the safety of their goods. We, however, informed the Chinese Foreign Bureau officially regarding this arrangement so that necessary protection against theft etc. was afforded.

Miscellaneous

6. (a) Nabra Tax. Niti traders who visited Western Tibet this year are reported to have paid Nabratax with arrears except for the current year. It may be recalled that this so-called land tax which in-fact, is the weigh-man's wages, was not paid by Niti traders for several years and we supported their stand. This year, however, the Chinese sent them a word of warning that they could visit Tibet only if they were prepared to pay the tax with arrears and our traders seem to have succumbed to the threat. However, we could not confirm this as we did not come across Niti traders.
- (b) Recovery of goods stored in the house of the Bhutanese officer at Tarchen.

As usual, our traders had stored their goods valued at about Rs.50,000/- in the house of the Bhutanese officer at Tarchen in 1959 but, since the said officer had left his post, the Chinese sealed his house and have not released goods of Indian traders

stored in a separate room there on the ground that they could not deliver the same till the Bhutanese officer was personally present.

Our suggestion to secure a letter of authority from the Bhutanese officer was also of no-avail. The denial of reasonable assistance and facilities to our traders in this matter resulted in undue hardship and financial loss as many of the traders concerned who had undertaken this long and difficult trip to Western Tibet in the hope of disposing off their last year's stocks, had to return disappointed.

Since there is very little chance of the Bhutanese officer returning to his post in near future, it is suggested that necessary arrangement for the release of these goods may kindly be made at higher level.

(c) Smuggling activities. Barley, Gur, Cloth, Kerosine oil and other articles of general merchandise used to be the main exports from India to Western Tibet. Now we have an executive ban on the export of several items like coloured jeans, Kerosine oil, articles of steel and 'any other articles of military value'. The last-mentioned term is rather vague and it is imperative to precisely define this to avoid embarrassment to our traders and the Checkpost authorities concerned. Confusion about the precise nature of banned articles (e.g. food grains and edible oils) has led to certain cases of corruption and smuggling across the border. The Chinese who seem to be intent on making Taklakot the main market in Western Tibet are seriously trying to take advantage of the close proximity of this border market with Nepal and India, to encourage smuggling of banned articles to Tibet. In fact, they have evolved a new pattern of trade, viz, contract system or direct supply orders and even pay 30% advance to our traders for obtaining supplies within a specified time. The main requirements of the Chinese, of a rather contraband nature, include candles, torch cells, Kerosine oil, coloured jeans, plain sheets, steel

furniture, leather goods, watches and sugar. The Chinese are so short of these articles that they were prepared to pay very handsome prices and even wrote letters to our important traders at Garbyang inviting them to come for trade, though the latter avoided visit to Taklakot for fear of being involved in false cases of alleged sale of arms and ammunition to the rebel elements. I understand that the Chinese officials openly encourage our traders to smuggle contraband goods even by bribing the Check post officials. I learnt this at Taklakot and deputed my Accountant to go and check up 250 yak loads of luggage received on the night of 19th October, 1960, but he reported that all these yak-loads had been taken to the Chinese Trade office over-night and that the shops were all empty. What I personally feel is that our traders, by not bringing anything for the Tibetans, are fast losing touch with the common people and have reduced themselves merely to the role of supply Agents of the Chinese. Not only this, but they even seemed to vie with each other to get Chinese favours and this was a dangerous tendency which could pose a security threat in due course of time. The need of the hour is to educate and restrain them from this course and to post really honest and patriotic officers to man our border check posts. At present the modus-operndi of the smugglers is to export goods to village Chhangru in Nepal (about 2 miles from Garbyang) in the first instance and this loophole needs to be effectively plugged. In case, our check post officials cannot legally stop the flow of contraband articles to this border Nepali village, they can at least take down the particulars of goods and the traders concerned so that we can know who are the black sheep, because after-all these goods go from India to another country. So far as Nepal prop is concerned, lot of smuggling of timber was going on and the persons engaged in this clandestine trade were mostly Nepalese of

Humla side (Yangri village), who smuggle logs of timber to Taklakot from across Nara pass via Khojernath.

Smuggling poses a serious problem and has to be viewed from both the military as well as the political points of view. From the purely military point of view, everything that reaches the Chinese eases their supply position. But from the political point of view we cannot afford to snap our age old ties with the Tibetans by blocking trade, which will also create a serious problem of resettlement of innumerable Bhotia families traditionally dependent on Tibet trade. In fact, we have to strike a balance so that the traditional trade continue and we go on supplying the ordinary needs of the Tibetan population without, of course, allowing the Chinese to build stocks for their army, at our expense.

This is, no doubt, a difficult problem but experience shows that in such confused situations, it is really the honest trader who suffers and not the unscrupulous smuggler. With a view to stopping this undesirable tendency, it is necessary, therefore, to allow the regulated flow of purely civilian type of goods for use of the common man in small quantities. This calls for some sort of liberalization of exports of even some of the banned items like coloured jeans (other than Khaki and blue), flannel, sugar candy (Misri), candles, leather shoes, ordinary house-hold utensils, etc.

I discussed the problem of smuggling with some of the responsible Bhotia traders, who favoured the idea of forming a Trade Association on co-operative basis with some sort of official supervision. This is, no doubt, a good idea and will give the united body of our traders better bargaining power to withstand Chinese pressure and will also eliminate the chances of smuggling by individual traders, who possibly could not afford to defy their association. We could then possibly consider affording some concessions like remission of sale tax and excise duty to this

export organisation to enable them to compete with the Chinese cheap shops.

Conclusion

To sum up, the trade prospects do not look very bright as, out of the three traditional Tibetan items, borax has already been eliminated while wool trade has been monopolized by the Chinese and trade in salt rendered unprofitable as explained above. Moreover, constant attempts are being made through Chinese middle-manship to raise the prices of Tibetan products and to lower those of Indian goods by denying direct barter dealings between our traders and the Dokpas, who are poisoned to believe that our traders had been exploiting them for centuries. The whole pattern seems to be squeeze out the Indian traders from Tibet slowly but surely, as soon as the Chinese were able to achieve self-sufficiency in food and could open a few woolen mills in the area.

It will not be out of place to mention here that when we took up the subject of trade difficulties with the Chinese Foreign Bureau at Gartok, we found their attitude very unreasonable. Instead of giving appropriate reply to our queries they maintained that individual traders could get necessary clarifications from the Chinese Trade Organs concerned and that if we wanted any official clarification regarding trade and taxes, we could obtain the same through our Consul General at Lhasa, as these were consular functions not falling within the jurisdiction of this Trade Agency. This was, no doubt, an extra-ordinary interpretation to render the functioning of this Agency totally ineffective. We cannot possibly allow this contention to go unchallenged and must know where exactly we stand if we have to be of any real help in safeguarding the interest of our traders, for whose sake we take this hazardous trip to an inhospitable land, every year.

Pilgrimage.

7. In view of the Chinese advice against visits to Kailash and Mansarovar due to disturbed conditions in Western Tibet, there was no attraction for pilgrimage this season. In all, not more than 25 pilgrims visited Kailash and Mansarovar. The main party of 13 pilgrims led by Swami Vidyananda of Nainita-1, who had entered Western Tibet via Unta Dhura pass returned to Garbyang via Lipulekh pass on the 22nd August, 1960. No particular difficulty was encountered by our pilgrims as they did not have to depend on the local authorities for any facilities like transport etc. The Rest House difficulties, however, remained as acute as before and the only Rest House near Rakshastal lake, where we happened to stay for a day on our return journey, was found literally unfit for human habitation and looked worse than a stable. We understood from our pilgrims that there was restriction on taking radio and news-papers and that the Chinese did not favour the idea of Kailash Parikrama for security reasons.

We took up the difficulties of our pilgrims with the Foreign Bureau at Gartok and informed them that our pilgrims had not been able to visit Holy Kailash and Mansarovar for the last 2 years in view of the Chinese advice regarding disturbed conditions in Western Tibet. The Foreign Bureau Chief assured that in case the situation in Ari region became normal, our pilgrims could visit these places in usual numbers from next year.

It may be pointed out that Rest House Facilities for the pilgrims on our side of the border are also lacking and were badly needed at Tawaghat, Jipti, Malpa, Buddi and Gunji on Lipulekh pass route. I understand the P.W.D. authorities have already got the necessary sanction for construction of Rest Houses along this route and they hoped to construct the more important ones in about two year's time.

Swami Pranavananda's boats.

8. After a vacillating attitude, the Chinese finally agreed to the release of Swami Pranavananda's boats and other articles stored in Thokar Monastery near Lake Mansarover. Accordingly, it was decided that on our return journey we will stop for a day at Rakshastal Rest house, from where a Secretary of the Foreign Bureau and our Agency Accountant will jointly visit the said Monastery for effecting the take over. We made it clear to the Foreign Bureau that in view of the absence of alternative storage facilities and transport arrangements, it will not be possible for us to take this property to India and that we will lock it up in one of the rooms of the same Monastery, which we actually did on the 13th October, 1960. A list of the articles found scattered in the corridor of the Monastery (including a metal boat) which were taken possession of, was supplied to the Foreign Bureau and the Ministry. Instructions regarding the final disposal of this property are being sought separately, as these articles are of no use and their storage or transportation to India will involve lot of difficulty and unnecessary expense.

Khampas activities / Political situation.

9. There was comparatively less Khampa activity in Western Tibet. We understood that a big clash took place between the Chinese troops and Nationalist Khampas somewhere east of Thokchin in June/July last. It is said that Khampa rebels who were active in this area after having fled Eastern Tibet were able to enlist the active support of Dokpas (Nomads) from Changthang area (Country beyond Kailash range). These rebel elements, it is said, carried out some depredations including the looting of the house of the pro-Chinese family of late Gartse-pon who had to flee for life and took refuge in Gargunsa, where the family is now permanently settled. The Chinese organized a large scale punitive

expedition against these Nationalist elements and after using modern weapons, were able to crush the uprising. Casualties were reported on both sides and the rebels fled to Nepal and other areas leaving at least 500 of them, who were taken prisoner by the Chinese. The movable and immovable property of these people including thousands of heads of cattle and arms were confiscated.

However, during our stay in Western Tibet in the months of September and October, 1960, the law and order situation was quiet and we did not hear of any overt rebellious activity or military skirmishes connected therewith. In fact, after crushing the uprising, the Chinese now seemed to be firmly in the saddle though they still do not trust the Tibetans and take full security precautions and go about armed in batches. We did not come across a single Chinese civilian also who did not carry arms, while moving about.

To achieve total annihilation of the local people, the Chinese have sown seeds of discord between the erstwhile ruling class and the general public. Several influential people who were either land-lords or connected with erstwhile administration, are under arrest. It is estimated that at least 1000 Tibetans are in Chinese custody at Rudok, Gargunsa, Gartok and Taklakot. Further, the Chinese have divided the local population into three main categories viz, loyal intelligentsia, local influential people and the common Tibetans. Last-mentioned class, i.e. people of lower starta have been specially benefitted by freeing them from debts and taxes and by allotment of lands confiscated from the Monasteries etc. Generally speaking, all these various classes of people have been indoctrinated at various levels and some of them have even been associated with administration also. Many such so-called loyal Tibetan families have been moved to Gargunsa for permanent settlement.

New Administrative set up and appointment of Tibetans to high posts.

10(a). The Chinese have sub-divided the Ari Special District (with headquarters at Gargunsa) into seven administrative countries, as under: -

S. No	Name of county.	Headquarters	Area covered.
1	Gar	Gartok	Minsar to Gargunsa
2	Pulang	Taklakot	Erstwhile Purang Dzong
3	Ling	Tholing	Erstwhile Daba and Chhaprang Dzongs.
4	Shaya	Shangdoring	Changthang and Gartse areas
5	Rudok	Rudok	Rudok and Tashigang areas
6	Barkha (probably)	Bungdu	Areas east of Minsar
7	Tamsang (probably)	Tamsang	Areas east of Thokchin.

Many so-called loyal Tibetans are being associated with administration and some of them have been promoted to respectable posts. One Lobzang Gyalzin (now christened with a Chinese name of Tu Hua-ying) who was merely an interpreter till 1958, when he was made Vice Chief of Preparatory Committee at Gargunsa, is now supposed to be the highest authority on civil side, viz, Commissioner of Ari Special District. Similarly two other Tibetans, - Tempa-tutang and Tashi Phunjo are the new Chiefs of Gar and Tansang counties, respectively. Some other loyal Amdo interpreters are also expected to be rewarded by giving them responsible jobs in the newly created sub-divisions. It is however, of interest to note that these Tibetans belonging to the new official class have started wearing Chinese National dress and, in many cases, have even taken to Chinese names.

Similarly, village Panchayats have also been set up with Sengtangs as headmen assisted by Turens, Uyens and Chuktangs as other petty officials. It may be mentioned here that all these are Chinese terms and except for the Sengtangs or Tso-tangs all other ranks are honorary and are mostly filled by the people of lower starta and bad characters who, after their indoctrination seem to have become over-jealous to please their new masters by spying against the well-to-do people for their alleged anti-Chinese sentiment. Some of these petty officials have even been to Peking. The idea behind giving respectable status to such men in the new village administrative set-up appears to be to create friction and class hatred with a view to wean away the people of lower starta from the influence of the local intelligentsia as also to keep the village population divided for ruling them effectively. The result is that at present a stage has been more or less reached when no Tibetan can openly dare to criticize the Chinese in public, though there is lot of hidden sentiment against the Chinese rulers.

A list of all the known Tibetan officials, in Western Tibet, is enclosed as appendix 'C'.

Indoctrination classes.

10 (b) Area-wise indoctrination classes were in full swing throughout Western Tibet including an administrative training class at Gartok which looked more like a detention camp. It seems that this measure was designed to separate the intelligentsia from the masses for avoiding recrudence of rebellious activity as also to control the Tibetans from escaping and to insulate them from out-side influence. The ultimate idea was, of course, to communize the country. In this connection it may be mentioned that even the Commissioner of Ari region in his National Day address to the Tibetans at Gartok (1-10-60), emphatically appealed to them for their whole hearted co-operation with the Chinese efforts to establish socialism and a classless society in Tibet for improving their living standards.

In fact, through propaganda teams, pamphlets, theatrical performances and Cinema shows the influence of religion and of Dalai Lama is being up-rooted from the minds of the Tibetans, who are being persuaded to leave their age-old customs. Lamas and Dabas are being encouraged to lead house-holder's life and to do manual labour instead of wasting their time and money by burning butter lamps and reading scriptures. The plan of the Chinese is to mould the younger generations to their own way of thinking and are, therefore, mainly concentrating on the youth, who are being encouraged to study the Chinese language and taken to Main-land for education. In a nutshell, the object of their propaganda is to make the Tibetans believe that the Chinese are their best friends, who have rescued them from the miserable oppression and plight which they were suffering during the erstwhile feudal regimes and that communism was the short-cut to prosperity.

A list of some important trainees who attended the indoctrination administrative training course (1960) at Gartok is enclosed as appendix 'D'.

Economic.

10. Although the Chinese have exempted the poor Tibetans from payment of debts, taxes, and free supply of transport, yet due to general insecurity of life and property as well as hinderance in free trade, the economic condition of the local people in Western Tibet is still as bad as before. In the beginning the Chinese paid handsome wages to the labourers (about Rs.5/- per day) but now they have brought it down to about annas 12 only. As is well known, the richer classes have been deprived of their lands etc. The Chinese, however, seem to be keen on improving living standards and are making propaganda that religion was an opium and that sheer hard labour on the part of Tibetans could bring about betterment in their lot. Also through indoctrination, it was

being instilled into their minds that communism was the only short-cut to prosperity.

Land reforms/Agriculture.

11 (a) 'Self-sufficiency in food and grow more vegetables and trees', - seems to be the slogan of the Chinese, who are experimenting with crop cultivation at higher altitudes, including Nakyu near Gartok at over 15,000 ft. Lands belonging to ex-Tibetan officials have been allotted to landless peasants and seed is distributed among them as loan to be recovered at the time of harvest. It is of interest to note that the Chinese officials and soldiers are also expected to go to work in the fields, where several batches of soldiers could be seen helping the Tibetans in harvesting their crops etc. An effort is also being made to encourage co-operative farming but without much success, as the Tibetans have not relished the idea. However, land attached to various Monasteries and that belonging to refugees etc. is being cultivated by the Chinese troops with the help of certain Tibetan families on an experimental co-operative farming basis, particularly in Khunglung (near Gyanima), Daba and Rudok areas. At the last-mentioned place a tractor and a water pump was also said to be in use besides introduction of chemical manures. It is said that each person and animal working on the co-operative farm is treated as a single unit and the produce is shared among the families on the basis of units of human and animal labour provided by each.

Promotion of Agriculture and animal husbandry even formed the key-note of Commissioner Tu Hua-ying's National Day address to the Tibetans on 1st October, 1960. He emphasized that it was difficult for the Government to import everything from the Main-land and that people must produce something locally. He further stressed that all Tibetans should make best use of vast lands, of which there was no dearth, for producing crops and that they would be given all facilities like irrigation, manure, seeds etc. The other stress was on improvement of cattle

wealth of that pastoral land about which the Commissioner suggested that each village should select two to three young men for training in veterinary science. Even awards were instituted for heroes in the field of agriculture and sheep rearing and targets of production set, viz, 95% annual increase in sheep flocks and 25 times grain production of the seed sown.

With the emphasis on agriculture and road development as also the talk about bringing rail to Western Tibet in about 3 year's time, the idea seems to be, apart from any military considerations, to achieve self-sufficiency in food and to lessen this traditional dependence on India.

Exploitation of mineral resources.

11. As was to be expected, the Chinese are reported to have started survey and exploitation of mineral resources in Western Tibet. They are reported to be extracting lot of borax from Lagmar (near Gargunsa) for export to Main-land as also working on a salt lake at Chhak and a coal mine near Gargunsa. It is felt that the Chinese will decide on the final alignment of the proposed railway track to Western Tibet after making sure about the location and presence of mineral wealth like iron and coal in this area. There is also a possibility of their setting up few woolen factories to improve the economy of the country and, this may deprive India of this essential raw material (wool).

Military movements.

12. The main concentration of Chinese troops is reported to be in Changthang area (country beyond Kailash range) and around Konggyu lake (near Nepal border). During the Chinese offensive against Khampas in June/July last, our traders claimed to have seen hundreds of trucks passing to and fro in Western Tibet. However, at the present moment there were not more than 300

soldiers permanently stationed at Taklakot (where a piggery has also been attached to their mess), a platoon strength at Bungdu (Barkha plains) and others at Tholing, Khojernath and other villages. The main army headquarters in Western Tibet is supposed to be at Gargunsa, where the military fort with a moat around, is said to cover an area of over one square mile. Other important military stations are at Rudok and Tashigang opposite Demchok sector near Ladakh. There was no regular army posted at Gartok, the summer capital of Western Tibet and we have no precise estimate of the actual strength as so many batches of soldiers are reported to have been dispersed in various villages throughout Western Tibet. However, it can be said that there was no indication of a 'massive Chinese build-up' anywhere near our U.P.borders

13. The Chinese have much better communication facilities as compared to our border areas. They have several wireless stations with R/T facilities and their military trucks can ply right from Sinkiang in the north to Lhasa in the east via Gartok. These are three ton trucks with double rear wheels of Russian and Chinese makes (145 H.P.). Most of the soldiers that we came across seemed to be in their teens and twenties and equipped with automatic weapons like Sub-machine Guns etc. However, their uniforms were quite shabby full of several ugly patches. We did not, however, hear of any air activity in that area though it should not be difficult to land an aircraft on the natural landing strips available all along the vast and firm plateau of Western Tibet. May be, they have an air field somewhere near Ladakh border but we have no definite information about this.

Chinese Check posts.

14. There is no report about establishment of any check-posts towards our border except the one at Tashigang near Taklakot,

where about half a dozen soldiers and a Hindi interpreter are posted.

15. Vulnerability of Tinkar pass.

We reliably understood at Taklakot that the Chinese had been making secret enquiries about the passability of Tinkar pass during Winter as also the nature of country and the terrain beyond. It was rumoured that during last November (1959) some Chinese soldiers actually crossed Tinkar pass and proceeded five miles beyond upto Dingang, presumably for reconnaissance purposes. I found a general apprehension in our border area that Tinkar pass and Chhangru village (in Nepal) were extremely vulnerable spots, surprise entry through which, could endanger the security of our border areas upto Garbyang, as our advance Checkposts at Gunji and Kalapani could be cut out. During past years the Nepalese used to maintain a Checkpost at Tinkar pass but this year their Check-post staff did not stir out of Dharchula. Presumably, this was because Tinkar came within 20 kilometers of the Sino-Nepalese boundary.

Tibetan refugees.

16. There have been large scale desertions of refugees from Western Tibet to India and Nepal during the last six months. Almost all the villages which go to make Taklakot, namely, Mughram, Nai, Kunam, Dulam, Theti and Chejing etc. were found half-empty. Similarly several Tibetan families from Mayang, Tiag, Tholing and Be-dongba side were reported to have fled to Himachal Pradesh. The areas beyond Tholing Math towards Shipke, as also several village in Changthang area, were also reported more or less deserted. Several well-to-do refugees were able to bring their live-stock along and included, among others, Karma s/o. Salang Rubing of Mughram, ex-Tax Collector of the Chinese at Gyanima and Chhakra Trade Marts, and Lobzang s/o.

Pema, Tso-tang of village Mughram. The main reason for these large scale desertions was, the fear of Chinese torture who interfered in religious matters and confiscated entire grain from several villages, as also due to general insecurity of life. The Chinese fear of breaking up families by removing able-bodied men to far-off places for working on roads as forced-labour, was another special reason for saying good-bye to their ancestral homes.

In fact, it is difficult to understand the Chinese policy regarding refugees. Sometimes they chased them while on other occasions, they did not seem to mind at all. I understand that in the last week of August, 1960 the Chinese openly declared at Taklakot that there was no need for Tibetans to run away during night hours, they could openly do so during broad day-light and none would stop them. Apparently, their policy seems to be that of pruning by a gardener, to allow the old and useless people to take refuge in India but not permit live-stock and property to be carried by them. In fact, the Chinese made capital out of the refugee's properties which have all been confiscated including land and houses, gold and silver and thousands of sheep and other heads of cattle.

However, on our return journey we found the Chinese attitude little different. Now they seemed to be keen on stopping Tibetans from running away and had, with this object in view, ordered the local population of Purang (Taklakot) to sell all their surplus grain to them and deposit the sale-proceeds in the Chinese Bank. Not only this, but the Chinese were even reported to be making propaganda that the border agreement with India was likely to be signed soon and that all the refugees will have to return to their homes. So even if they fled, they will have to come back humiliated and, in the process, would have also lost their properties, which would be confiscated. In spite of these measures,

several Tibetans, being afraid of public torture at the hands of the Chinese on flimsy grounds, were reported to have set their heart on fleeing and may cross over into India before the passes get finally blocked due to snow. There are also chances of certain decoys being infiltrated in the garb of refugees, about whom we will have to be careful.

Indian enclave at Minsar.

17. We passed through Minsar village twice during our tour of Western Tibet. The village was found practically deserted and its erstwhile headmen and respectable persons were reported to have been taken to Gartok for indoctrination course. It is learnt that this Kashmiri enclave has more or less been completely merged in Gar county of the Ari Special district for administrative purposes.

Bhutanese enclaves.

18. The Bhutanese officer is no longer at Tarchen, where his house is reported to have been sealed by the Chinese. It is learnt that the local Tibetans, instigated by the Chinese, are making a lot of propaganda against the alleged acts of high-handedness of this officer, who has no prospect of returning to his post in the near future.

Difficulties experienced by Gartok Agency during the present tour.

19. Although, the Chinese were quite courteous and behaved very well on social and personal level, yet in official matters there were many pin-pricks to face, as detailed below:
 - (a) Disarming of our non-diplomatic staff: The non-diplomatic staff of the Indian Trade Agency, Gartok in accordance with past practice, used to carry with them sporting guns and small arms for self-protection. This year, however, they

were not permitted to do so and we had to deposit these arms at Taklakot Check-post. This inconvenience could have been avoided if the Chinese had informed us about this new regulation earlier at the time of grant of visas.

- (b) Hitch in I.T.A's tour of Trade Marts and places of pilgrimage. The Trade Agent's itinerary which included visits to Gyanima and Chhakra Trade Marts and to Kailash and Mansarover between 6th and 20th September, 1960 was given at Taklakot to the Foreign Bureau representative, who insisted that as per instructions of the Foreign Bureau Chief, we should first proceed to Gartok and then apply for permission to visit other places. Although we explained to him that any further delay will defeat the object of our visits as trade season at these marts would be over by then, yet we were not allowed to visit these places from Taklakot. We repeated our request at Gartok but even here this was not agreed to in view of alleged transport difficulty. Similarly, exit through another pass (Shipke-la) was ruled out for security reasons. Patently, the Chinese tactic is to tie us down to the Lipulekh pass so that we cannot visit any other Trade Marts except Taklakot and Gartok. This has been happening for the last two years and virtually amounts to putting impediments in the discharge of our normal duties.

- (c) Ban on Tibetans from visiting our camp.

The local authorities almost totally stopped Tibetans from visiting the Agency camp even for selling articles of daily use. Some people who came for medical treatment to our Agency hospital were also discouraged. In short, we were totally out of touch with the local population.

In this connection, it may also be submitted that although we were invited to a reception and other shows during Gartok Annual Fair, yet the Indian Trade Agent was

deliberately excluded from the main function where the Commissioner of Ari had to deliver his National Day address to Tibetans on the 11th anniversary of the People's Republic of China. This was a departure from old practice, for the first time.

(d) Interference with our bag service.

Our Diplomatic bag for the Ministry was stopped by the Check-post authorities at Taklakot (6-9-60) on the ground that our mail-riders did not possess diplomatic passports with multi-journey visas and hence could not be treated as couriers. It was only after 3 days of repeated representations that they permitted carriage of our bag on the 9th September. There was, however, no trouble thereafter since the Ministry took up the matter with the Chinese embassy at a higher level.

Although luckily there has been no mishap in the past, yet I feel that the practice of sending diplomatic bags by hand of a single mail-rider all the way through an inhospitable land, is not desirable from the security point of view, especially in the present context. There are chances of the mail-rider falling sick or being stranded in an isolated area. It will, therefore, be better if the couriers travel in batches of twos. A proposal in this regard is being submitted separately.

Miscellaneous.

20. I would now like refer to two important matters which require special attention: -

- (i) Indianization of Bhotias. Our Uttar-Khand Division in U.P. bordering Western Tibet, is inhabited by a hill tribe, commonly known as 'Bhotias' whose age-old connections with Tibet have considerably influenced their social customs, which are quite different from rest of the country. Except perhaps for Johar area, which has seen some light of education, these people are,

generally speaking, very back-ward. Barring a few educated families in Bians and Chaudas, they do not have even a civilized marriage system,- as they still practise kidnapping of girls for purposes of marriage. Similarly, they have many other vices, which are mainly due to excessive drinking even by women and children.

I happened to talk to some of the respectable traders of this community at Garbyang and found that they were very keen to adopt Hindu customs like 'Shradh' (in place of 'Dhudang') provided these were less expensive. In fact, many of them claim to have already left Tibetan customs.

Since the Bhotias inhabit the Inner line adjoining Tibet, which country, they have been traditionally visiting for trade since generations, they are, therefore, most susceptible to Tibetan influence and could also be vulnerable to Chinese propaganda. The need of the hour is to pay special attention towards their social, educational, cultural and economic uplift. We must try to raise their living standard to ensure that these match favourably well with those of Tibetans and Chinese, if we have to effectively fight the communist propaganda war-fare from within and across the borders. However, the foremost problem is to Indianize the Bhotias completely.

(ii) A supposed Tibetan Boundary pillar within our territory.

A sixty ft. rock pillar, commonly known as 'BARMi DHUNGA' (Dhunga means stone) alleged to bear some Tibetan inscriptions, can be seen from Tawaghat onwards near Pangu and Khela villages in Dharchula sub-division of Pithoragarh district (U.P.). Tibetans call it LOLUNG, i.e. boundry. It is some sort of a victory tower built by some Tibetan ruler who possibly carried an expedition to this area centuries ago. I found a mistaken idea even among our own people in this area to the same effect because some Tibetan officials had been coming to that area

(Bians and Chaudas) for collection of some trade tax in the past, though this practice has since been stopped. It may be mentioned that this pillar is clearly more than 50 miles within our territory (from Lipulekh pass). I suggest that we request the U.P. Govt. to depute some officer to go and find out what it really is and the inscriptions it contains. However, if found necessary, we may even consider blasting it out before this sore becomes sceptic (of course, without making any fuss).

A photograph of the area showing the said pillar, is enclosed.

(iii) Gen-Zorawar Singh's tomb. There were misgivings in certain quarters about the fate of Gen Zorawar Singh's tomb. With a view to ascertaining the correct position, I deputed a member of my staff to visit the General's 'Samadhi' in village Toyo (about 2 miles from Taklakot) on the 1st September, 1960. Again we passed through this village on the 14th October and learnt that the tomb had not been interfered with and was intact.

(iv) Construction of Agency buildings at Gartok.

This year an Engineering party comprising of two C.P.W.D. officials accompanied us from New Delhi but since we were stranded at Dharchula for a considerable time, so that there very little time left for actual construction work, the Ministry decided to recall the Engineers who left Dharchula for Delhi on the 11th July, 1960.

We have paid the first instalment of rupees six hundred towards rent of leased land at Gartok and took up the matter of construction of Agency buildings with the Chinese Foreign Bureau Chief, Mr.Liu, who assured his co-operation by way of providing egg-stones, labour and transport but not cement and timber, which were not locally available.

In case the construction of Agency buildings is to be speeded up, the C.P.W.D. officials shall have to be selected well in time and asked to accompany the Trade Agent's party in about

May / June, 1961. I suggested that the Chinese offer of assistance in construction of a Kacha house on the local pattern should be accepted for the present, as procurement of baked bricks, steel, cement and timber would present a great difficulty. The transportation of such heavy materials from India would be a difficult and uneconomic proposition and is sure to delay the construction by several years.

(v) Weather. The weather in Western Tibet is very tricky. During bright sun-shine it is quite warm and pleasant but the moment Sun goes behind the clouds and it starts blowing, the temperature suddenly falls by a score of degrees. In fact, during our stay at Gartok from 15th September onwards the minimum temperature was always below freezing point and it snowed twice in September and October.

Relevant temperature humidity chart covering our period of stay in Western Tibet, is enclosed as Appendix 'E'.

(vi) Health of staff. Generally speaking, the Agency personnel kept good health by regularly playing out-door games and taking other medical precautions. 'Bialladin' Kerosine heaters, purchased this year, proved extremely useful. It is suggested that the import of this essential equipment should be liberalized to enable our border check-posts etc, to equip themselves properly against the paralyzing cold above 10,000 ft.

The annual Medical report submitted by the Agency doctor, Shri P.G.Dey, who would be willing to serve with us for the next term, is enclosed as Appendix 'F'. It is suggest that the Medical Officer should be asked to join the Agency at least a week in advance of the actual commencement of the tour, to enable him to check up medical stores and to make local purchases, if necessary.

(vii) A word of thanks. In the end, I would like to express my thanks to the Uttar Pradesh authorities, especially Shri J.C. Pande,

Deputy Commissioner of Pithoragarh, Shri B.R.Tamta, S.D.M. Dharchula and Major Kochhar, Superintending Engineer, P.W.D., Pithoragarh, who were extremely helpful and offered their whole hearted co-operation by way of providing transport and other facilities for making our stay and journey through difficult area more comfortable.

I would be failing in my duty if I do not mention the conspicuous good work done by Shri B.S. Rawat, who served me very ably as my general assistant, throughout this difficult tour.

Yours faithfully,

(A.K. Bakshi)

Indian Trade Agent, Gartok

(Western Tibet)

P.S.

A set of photographs, pertaining to our tour of W.Tibet, is enclosed.

Indian Trade Agent, Gartok