

India and Tibet

Francis Younghusband

Mr. White went to Giagong on June 26, 1902, with 200 men, and camped half a mile from the Tibetan wall, where the Khamba Jongpen and 40 men were stationed. He gave them twenty-four hours' notice in which to move to the other side of the boundary. On the following morning, after some protests, the Tibetans removed across the boundary. On July 4 a number of Tibetan officials visited him, and said they had come under instructions from the Tashi Lama to show him the Giagong boundary. Mr. White told them that his orders were to lay down the boundary as shown in the Convention of 1890, which had been signed by the Chinese Amban on behalf of the Tibetans. To which they replied that they had heard of the treaty, but that it was invalid, as it had not been signed by any Tibetan. The Tibetans, however, asked for a copy of the treaty and for the names of the passes, and Mr. White told them they could see for themselves if the water ran into the Sikkim Valley or into Tibet, and where the water parted into Sikkim and Tibet was the boundary. He found on the tract 6,270 sheep, 737 yaks, out of which only 1,143 sheep and 80 yaks belonged to the Sikkimese, and the remainder were Tibetan. Near the top of the Naku La he found a Tibetan wall running across the valley, with a blockhouse on the east.

The immediate consequence of this action was, that at the end of July the Viceroy received a letter from the Chinese Resident at Lhasa, asking for an explanation of the object and reasons of Mr. White's proceedings, and saying that he had appointed Mr. Ho Kuang-Hsi to proceed to Giagong, and had further arranged with the Dalai Lama for the despatch of a Tibetan official to act conjointly with Mr. Ho in any discussion with Mr. White which should arise.

Erection of Pillars

SENDING PAPERS UNDER COVER OF FOREIGN SECRETARY'S, No. 30-M.,
DATED THE 27TH JULY 1905.

Exd.— W.G.B.

No. 47B. M., dated the 5th July 1905.

From: J.C. WHITE, Esq., C.I.E., Political Agent in Sikkim,

To: The Secretary to the Government of India in the Foreign Department.

In reply to your letter No. 1632 E.-C. of the 1st May 1905, I have the honour to report—

(1) The question of grazing rights at or near Giagong, now that the boundary has been finally settled, can easily be arranged amicably between the people of the Lachen valley and the Tibetans. I would interfere very little, if at all, with the old customs, and would allow the Tibetans to bring in their yaks to graze at certain times of the year, provided they allow the Sikkim people to do the same in Tibet, as was formerly done.

(2) The number of pillars required would be only ten—one on the Naku La, one on the Sebu La, and eight along the remaining northern boundary from near the Sebu La to Kangchung La. They would be situated approximately as shown on the accompanying map. There is no necessity for any pillars along the western portion, as it is an inaccessible ridge.

(3) The time required to erect the pillars would be two to three weeks, as I would send up all the necessary materials beforehand to Giagong.

(4) There appears to me no urgency. I would go up this year and talk over the question of grazing rights, and think the erection of pillars might be postponed till next year, and in this way I would keep up more constant interview with the local officials.

(5) This letter has been delayed owing to my having to send to Captain O'Connor regarding the attitude of the Lhasa authorities. I have now received his reply. Captain O'Connor is of opinion that "the Lhasa Government will raise no objection to the proposed demarcation, as the erection of pillars on this frontier, as defined in the Convention of 1890, is clearly legislated for in clause I of the Treaty signed at Lhasa in September last. The co-operation of the Lhasa Government in the determination of the actual boundary line and the erection of pillars thereon might, in my opinion, be requested to meet you at a time and place convenient to yourself".