

# THE EASTERN HIMALAYAS IN SINO-INDIAN RELATIONS

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## Introduction.

31,438 sq. miles<sup>1</sup> in area and with a population of 3.4 lakhs (1965), the North East Frontier Agency (NEFA) seems too big to become a boundary question. Even if it is a territorial claim, with such a large area and with so much population involved, students not aware of its terrain and history should not normally be in any doubt as to whether the area has actually been under Indian or Chinese control; and the only dispute can be as to where its legal boundary should be. The fact, however, is that not only NEFA's boundary with Tibet but its past and present status are also in dispute.

The territorial question as to whom does NEFA properly belong—India or Tibet or China—can be dealt with from two angles; (i) the territory's status in law past as well as present and (ii) the actual position on the ground, again the past as well as present. The former, that is the legal issue, need be touched upon only for clarifying the background to the problem to the extent it involves the boundary's formalisation in 1914, involving Tibet's treaty-making powers and her status vis-a-vis China. The issue of de facto historical status, that is the position on the ground, also is really too large a problem to be discussed here and even the 1960 report does so only briefly. A study of one aspect of it may however be possible as well as of interest i.e., the Buddhist pockets of NEFA. Once the subject of NEFA's status

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\*Murty was Political Officer in Tawang during 1956-61. The article expresses entirely the author's personal views and are not to be attributed to the Government of India or any other organisation.

1. This and other statistical data used in the article are from the **Statistical outline of North-East Frontier Agency** (Shillong, April 1965).

de jure as well as de facto is dealt with one can study the location of NEFA's boundaries which too have been questioned.

An attempt would be made herein to discuss the following issues: How do China and India differ in their interpretation of the validity of the Simla Agreement and Simla Convention of 1914 and to what extent can China be regarded as acquiescing in that line? Does the 1954 Sino-Indian Agreement on Tibet imply an acceptance of the McMahon Line? Is China serious in its claim to the four districts of NEFA or is her interest limited only to certain isolated Buddhist/Buddhist-influenced pockets; which again results in the query whether these Buddhist pockets in NEFA have been traditionally under Chinese/Tibetan control? If China is held to take seriously her claims to these pockets only, does the traditional frontier between these Buddhist pockets and Tibet correspond to the McMahon Line as drawn in the Simla Agreement map and the Indian conception of that line?

### Legal Status of Tibet

The first of these issues, that is the legal status, involves an examination of whether the 1914 formalisation of the traditional boundary was in order. No discussion of the Indo-Tibetan boundary in the Eastern Himalayas can escape entanglement in this question of the validity of the 1914 Agreement and the status of Tibet. In fact, the position of Tibet and her relations vis-a-vis China and India were the only aspects of the problem that received any attention till late in the nineteen-fifties. Perhaps the best study of the type is the article on 'International situation in Tibet' by Sardar D. K. Sen. However, neither that article nor the innumerable other less knowledgeable studies of the subject escape from the fallacy of looking at Tibet's status as something immutable. They insist on treating Tibet as having always been independent, always been a protectorate or always been a vassal. This may have considerably facilitated discussion on a purely theoretical level. On the other hand, it ignored the objective realities of the developments in international law after the Second World War and the change of almost all former colonies and protectorates into independent states.

There is of course an element of unreality attending discussions now on the subtleties of suzerainty involving or not involving sovereignty; of the sharing of sovereignty; the rights of protectorates; powers of nations who are not colonies but are not sovereign either; what constitutes Tib-  
eration of territories which had existed separately for decades etc. Whether justifiably or not, however these issues are being debated at length in respect of Tibet and at least China and India seem to consider them as of vital concern in settling the rights and wrongs of their boundary claims. The best exposition of the views of the Chinese and Indian Governments is that available in the Sino-Indian Officials' Report of 1960.<sup>2</sup> Another and largely different stand is that of the former Government of Tibet.<sup>3</sup> A detailed analysis of these stand points will be beyond the scope of an article primarily concerning itself with the boundary. A brief re-  
sume of the Chinese and Indian views can, on the other hand, be of relevance.

### **China on the Status of Tibet.**

The basic elements of the Chinese position with regard to Tibet's status and the treaty making powers of Tibet may be discussed as follows:

- (i) The Simla Conference of 1914 was a part of the British plan to separate Tibet from China, make Tibet an independent State and bring it completely under Britain's control. The aggressive intentions of Britain towards Tibet are given out in Lord Curzon's letter dated 11 June 1901 addressed to the Secretary of State for India and the British Memorandum of 17 August 1912. When the 17 August 1912 Memorandum of the British Government proposing a tri-

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2. **Report of the Officials of the Governments of India and the People's Republic of China on the boundary question** (New Delhi 1961), (hereafter referred to as **SIOR**) pp. 110-16 and 243-50. Also CR 19-28 and CR 158-63.

3. The best brief account of this is perhaps His Holiness the Dalai Lama's letter of 20-9-1960 addressed to the Secretary General of the United Nations. The entire text is reproduced as Appendix-II in **My Land and My People: The Autobiography of His Holiness the Dalai Lama of Tibet**. ed. D. Howarth. (Asia Publishing House, New Delhi, 1962), pp. 239-46.

partite conference was presented, China expressed her regret and dissatisfaction with it. These aggressive intentions of Britain were recognised by Prime Minister Nehru also in his statement of 30th March 1959.

- (ii) On 15 April 1914, the Chinese representative objected to Tibet being given an equal status with China in the preamble to the draft Simla Convention. As such, the question of China accepting Tibet's equal status did not arise. The 26 June 1913 communication from Great Britain to China should not be regarded as indicating acceptance by China of Tibet's status since it was a position forced on China by Great Britain. On 17 March 1959, Prime Minister Nehru said in the Lok Sabha that no country had recognised the independence of Tibet.
- (iii) China enjoys sovereignty over Tibet. The Chinese representative made clear on 30th October 1913 that Tibet was an integral part of Chinese territory.
- (iv) Tibet had no right to conclude treaties with foreign countries, independently of the Chinese Central Government unless authorised by and consented to by the Chinese Central Government. The 1684 treaty which India alleges as not conforming to this, does not exist at all. The Treaties of 1842, 1856, 1904 were all entered into with the prior or ex-post-facto approval of the Chinese Central Government. The March 1914 Agreement, the July 1914 Convention and the 1914 Trade Regulations are illegal. The 1921-27 Anglo-Tibetan negotiations on boundary problems were of a local nature. The delimitation of the Indo-Tibetan boundary in NEFA is a problem concerning a major internal administrative division of China and no agreement made without China's explicit concurrence can be valid.
- (v) The Simla Conference did not deal with the question of the Sino-Indian (i.e. Indo-Tibetan) boundary. The Chinese representative did not agree to any discussion between the British and the Tibetan repre-

sentatives regarding the Indo-Tibetan boundary. No part of these discussions on the Indo-Tibetan boundary was reported to the Chinese representative. The only map which was presented to the conference showing the Indo-Tibetan boundary showed all of Tibet's external boundaries and not those with India alone. Even this map was not referred to in the 25th March 1914 Agreement or the 3 July 1914 Convention.

- (vi) The 3 July, 1914 Simla Convention signed between India and Tibet was invalid. China made clear that the Convention would not be recognised by her in statements made on 21 April, 1914; 3 July, 1914; and 7 July, 1914.
- (vii) The Nationalist Government's letters of 5 November 1947 and February 1948 enquiring whether India was taking over British responsibilities in Tibet, cannot constitute a recognition of the validity of the Simla Convention. In fact the Nationalist Government of China sent notes in July 1946, September 1946, November 1946, January 1947 and February 1947 protesting against British administrative activity in NEFA.
- (viii) China's non-acceptance of the Simla Convention is recognised in Prime Minister Nehru's letter dated 26 September 1959 to Premier Chou-En-lai.
- (ix) Tibet herself had repudiated the validity of the 1914 Agreement, as emphasized by the letter dated 18 April 1945, to the Political Officer, Sikkim, regarding withdrawal of British troops from Kalkatang and Walong.
- (x) The equivocal nature of the Simla Agreement of 25 March 1914 can be seen from the fact that the British Government did not dare publish till 1929, either the letters or the map constituting the Agreement.
- (xi) Since the McMahon Line was widely at variance with the traditional customary boundary, Great Britain was not competent to change it unilaterally.

## India on the status of Tibet

The views of the Indian Government are as follows:—

- (i) The Chinese were not intimidated into joining the Simla Conference. China was willing and eager to commence negotiations with Tibet. She took full and whole-hearted part in the proceedings.
- (ii) The British Memorandum of 17 August, 1912 had envisaged Tibet taking part in the Simla Conference as an equal partner with China. This was reiterated, among other occasions, on 25 May, 28 July, and 25 August, 1913 and was accepted by China on 30th January, 1913. China also recognised Tibet's right to participate on equal basis in the Simla Conference in accepting the credentials presented by the Tibetan representative. One of the causes for convening the Simla Conference was the Chinese Government's anxiety to re-establish her relations with Tibet.
- (iii) Long before the Simla Conference, Sino-Tibetan relations had virtually ceased to exist. The Tibetans had issued a declaration of independence and resisted China's attempts to re-establish her authority. During 1940-44, Tibet even refused the combined requests of China, Britain and America to allow Indian military supplies for China to pass through Tibet. The fact that in 1950 the Chinese Government considered it necessary to 'liberate' the Tibet region was a further proof that the areas contiguous with the Indian frontier were parts of Tibet and the power to confirm the boundaries of Tibet rested with the Tibetan Government in Lhasa.
- (iv) Tibet was competent to settle her own boundaries with India and Chinese adherence or recognition of the Anglo-Tibetan Boundary Agreement of March 1914 or Anglo-Tibetan Convention of July 1914 was not relevant to the formalisation of the Indo-Tibetan boundary. Tibet had signed with Kashmir the treaties of 1684 and 1842. The Chinese had themselves agreed that Tibet was competent to sign a 'non-

aggression pact' in 1853. The treaty-making power of Tibet, as different from that of China, is seen in the inability of China to enforce the 1894 Anglo-Chinese Convention concerning Tibetan trade. This Convention had in fact to be renegotiated all over again with Tibet. China had accepted the treaty-making powers of Tibet by including the 1904 Anglo-Tibetan Convention in the Anglo-Chinese Convention of 1906 and by abrogating the Nepal-Tibet Treaty of 1856 in the Sino-Nepalese Treaty of 1956. Extra territorial rights, as in the Treaty of 1856, can be conferred only by sovereign nations. The Tibet Trade Regulations of 1914 signed independently of China were also operative till their abrogation in 1954. Tibet's competence to settle her own boundary with India, without consulting China, is further evident from the negotiations on her southern border which Tibet held with India in 1921, 1924 and 1926.

- (v) The preliminaries to the Simla Conference discussed relations not only between Tibet and China but also between Tibet and India. The proceedings of the Simla Conference leading to the March 1914 Agreement and the July 1914 Convention were attended by India, China and Tibet. On 18th November 1913, the British representative pointed out that the territorial limits of Tibet should be defined before her political status could be discussed. As a result, the Indo-Tibetan frontiers in the eastern region were shown in maps presented to the Conference on 17 February, 1914 and 22 April, 1914. If the Indo-Tibetan boundary shown in these maps was not discussed at the plenary session among all the three representatives, it was because the problem concerned India and Tibet only and not China.
- (vi) Under international law, failure of ratification by one of the parties to a multilateral treaty cannot affect its binding value on other parties or the validity of the obligations assumed by them. Throughout the proceedings of the Simla Conference and in the subsequent diplomatic communications from China, no objection was made by China to the boun-

daries between India and Tibet as shown in the maps presented to the Conference. Her objection was always regarding the delineation of the Sino-Tibetan boundaries in those maps. This is clear from the Chinese statements of 7 March, 1914; 19 March, 1914; 20 April, 1914; 27 April, 1914; 1 May, 1914 and 13 June, 1914.

- (vii) The correspondence during 1946-48 between Nationalist China and the Government of India regarding India taking over the former British responsibilities in Tibet shows that the then Government of China accepted the validity of the arrangements made in 1914 and since enforced. The present Chinese Government are the successor State to the Governments in power in Tibet during 1914-50. They have therefore to accept the obligation imposed on Tibet by the 1914 Treaty. The present Chinese Government is similarly the successor State in respect of the Nationalist Government of China and should not repudiate the actions of the Nationalist Government, just because it does not suit its present purpose.
- (viii) The Indian Government announced publicly on several occasions during 1946-50 that it regarded China as continuing to accept the validity of the McMahon Line.
- (ix) The Tibetan Foreign Office wrote to the Indian Government on 18 April, 1945 reiterating its continuing adherence to the 1914 boundary agreement.
- (x) The Simla Agreement and the Simla Convention of 1914 were not kept as secrets. The boundary line accepted in those agreements was the same as that shown in several maps presented at the Simla Conference. The Agreement and the Convention were published in the very first edition of Aitchison, issued after they were signed.
- (xi) The Indo-Tibetan Boundary in the eastern sector has been settled by the boundary Agreement of 25 March, 1914 and the Simla Convention of 3 July, 1914. The



Agreement formalised the natural, customary, traditional boundary in this sector and did not set up a new boundary.

### **Treaties with Tibet.**

The treaties around which the discussion of Tibet's treaty-making powers has revolved (which certainly are not the only ones signed by or even concerning Tibet) thus are:-

- (i) Treaty of 1684 between Tibet and Kashmir after the Ladakh war.
- (ii) Treaty of 1842 between Tibet and Kashmir (Ladakh) following Raja Zorawar Singh's expedition into Tibet
- (iii) The 1853 Agreement between the Monpa Chiefs of Kameng and East India Company.
- (iv) Treaty of 1856 between Nepal and Tibet, following the Nepalese expedition into Tibet.
- (v) The Anglo-Chinese Convention of 1890 ending the 1888 Anglo-Tibetan war regarding Sikkim's border.
- (vi) Tibet Trade Regulations of 1893 signed between China and Great Britain.
- (vii) The Lhasa Convention of 1904 between Tibet and Britain concluded after the Younghusband expedition and reiterating the provisions of the 1890 and 1893 agreements.
- (viii) The Anglo-Chinese Convention of 1906 between China and Britain confirming the provisions of the Lhasa Convention of 1904.
- (ix) The 1908 Trade Regulations signed by Great Britain, China and Tibet, confirming the Anglo-Chinese Convention of 1906.
- (x) The exchange of notes on 24/25 March, 1914 between Great Britain and Tibet regarding the Indo-Tibetan boundary in the eastern sector.

- (xi) The Simla Convention of 3 July, 1914 between Tibet and Britain. (This Convention had been initialled earlier on 27 April, 1914 by the Chinese representative but has been later repudiated by China).
- (xii) The Anglo-Tibetan Trade Regulations of 1914 signed between Tibet and Britain
- (xiii) The 1954 Sino-Indian Agreement on Trade and Intercourse with the Tibet region.
- (xiv) The 1956 Agreement between China and Nepal, abrogating the Treaty of 1856.

### The Anglo-Russian Convention of 1917

It will be seen that the treaties quoted above do not include the Anglo-Russian Convention of 31 August, 1917 signed at St. Petersburg. By this convention both sides recognised Chinese suzerainty over Tibet and engaged to respect the territorial integrity of Tibet and neither to seek nor to obtain any concession for railways, roads, telegraphs and mines or other rights in Tibet. The Russian Government conveyed in 1914 that the Tripartite Convention of Simla was acceptable to her.<sup>4</sup>

### 1954 Sino-Indian Agreement.

Another treaty, the 1954 Sino-Indian Agreement on Trade and Intercourse, has also received limited attention only in the official exchanges. The Agreement is referred to by India and China only to the extent that the Five Principles of Peaceful Co-existence, necessitating respect for each other's territorial integrity, can indicate China's acquiescence of the McMahon Line. Whether the 1954 Agreement was or was not intended to cover any part of the Tibetan areas adjoining the McMahon Line, on the other hand, had not been spelt out. The text of the Agreement refers to a *Tibet region of China* in the English version and a *Hsi-tsang ti-fang* in the Chinese, without specifying the connotation of the term. The 1960 Offi-

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4. For the texts of telegrams regarding the Russian view, see G.N. Rao, **The India-China Border—a re-appraisal** (Asia Publishing House, Bombay, 1968) Pp. 105-06.

cials Report contains a brief reference to the Tibet Trade Regulations of 1914 being regarded by the local Tibetan authorities of Tsona as covering the Tibet-Tawang border, till they were abrogated by the 1954 Agreement.<sup>5</sup> As far as actual implementation of the Agreement is concerned, a considerable number of Indian traders visited Tibet on the basis of identity certificates issued by the Indian check-posts on the McMahon Line during 1954-58, as did the Tibetan traders visiting Indian territory. The issue of such identity documents has to be legally based on the 1954 Treaty covering NEFA. Again, there have been occasions in the correspondence which has taken place since 1959 between India and China on border matters, when China referred to the area adjoining the McMahon line as comprising the *Tibet region*,<sup>6</sup> for instance in the Chinese notes of 26 April, 1960 and 16 September, 1960 regarding air-intrusions. In another note on 27 August, 1960 China refers to the entry of Tibetans from Tsona in the *Tibet region* into the Tawang sub-division of NEFA.

The Truce of Rongbatsa had fixed the boundary between Chinese held territory and Lhasa-controlled one as approximately along the Upper Yangtse. in 1918 and in the opinion of neutral observers, this de facto boundary at the Chin-sha chiang lasted right down to 1950. (The river is also the eastern boundary of the *Tibet Autonomous Area* after the 1960 administrative re-organisation of Tibet). This conception of the defacto position prior to 1950 is however not accepted by China. The official (and officially-sponsored) maps published in China ignore this. From 1946 when the Nationalist Chinese Government announced its new Constitution, right upto 1960 when the administrative re-organisation of Tibet was announced, they have treated what the outside world has regarded as Tibet, as comprising two distinct parts.<sup>7</sup> One of these covers roughly Western and Central

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5. **SIOR** Pp. 231-32.

6. **White Paper IV** p. 24; p. 32; p. 34.

7. I am not going into the position of Jyekundo and western Drenchu (Upper Amdo) here. These too have traditionally been part of Tibet and under her administrative control but included in Chinese maps as part of Ch'ing-hai province. The southern boundaries of that province are practically the same in all Chinese maps.

Tibet and variously called *Hsi-tsang ti-fang* (Tibet region) *Hsi-tsang* (Tibet) or *Hsi-tsang tzu-chih Ch'u* (Tibet autonomous area). The other part roughly covers Eastern Tibet and is named *Hsi-K'ang* or *Ch'ang-tu ti ch'u* (Chiamdo territory). The boundary between the two is in the vicinity of Giamda (T'ai chao) and roughly along 92°30' long. West Kameng and Tsona are placed in these maps (with one exception) outside *Hsi-K'ang*. The 1960 administrative organisation removed this division and designated the whole of Tibet, from Ladakh in the west to Chin-sha chiang in the east, as the *Tibet Autonomous region*. The maps<sup>8</sup> which reveal this position can be listed as following:

1) The 4M Map of Modern China (*Hsien-tai chung-kuo ti-t'u*) (Ya-kuang Jan 1947) designates Western and Central Tibet as *Hsi-tsang* and *Hsi K'ang* as all area east of it. *Hsi-K'ang's* boundary with *Hsi-tsang* is at Giamda and approximately along 92°30' long. West Kameng and Tsona are shown as in *Hsi-tsang*.

2) The 4.2M Map of the administrative areas of the Chinese Republic issued by the Ministry of Interior of the Govt. of China in December 1947 has the area now taken as Tibet comprise a *Hsi-tsang ti-fang* (Tibet region) and a *Hsi-K'ang sheng* (i.e. *Hsi-K'ang province*). The boundary between this *Tibet region* and the *Hsi-K'ang province* is the same as in the earlier Ya-kuang map, in the vicinity of Giamda and roughly along the 92°30' long. Tsona and the western half of Kameng frontier-district are included in the *Tibet region*.

3) The 4.2M Ya-kuang Large Map of the Peoples Republic of China of January 1951 has the same western boundary

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8. It is difficult to differentiate between the Chinese phrases *ti-fang*, *ti-ch'u* and *ch'u*. I have translated them as *region*, *territory* and *area* respectively; wherever there has been no consistency in the practice of the Foreign Language Press-Peking *Ti-fang cheng-fu* is best translated as *Area Government*. The official Chinese translations however render *Hsi-tsang ti-fang cheng-fu* as the *Local Government of Tibet* and *Hsi-tsang tzu chih ch'u* as *Tibet Autonomous Region*.

Of the maps used 1-4, 8-10 and 13 have been reproduced in the *Atlas of the Northern Frontier* (1963) while 14-17 are from my personal collection.

for *Hsi-K'ang*; but designates the area beyond it as *Hsi-tsang tzu-chihch'u* (*Tibet autonomous area*).

4) The 2.25M *Ta-chung New Map of Tibet* (*Hsi-tsang hsin ti-t'u*) brought out in March 1951 roughly keeps to the same western boundary for *Hsi-K'ang*; except at its southern tip where West Kameng is now included in *Hsi-K'ang*. Tsona continues to be in *Hsi-tsang*.

5) The *New Atlas of the provinces of the Peoples Republic of China* (*Chung-hwa jen-min kung-he kuo fen-sheng hsin-t'u*) brought out by the *Ta-lung yu-tishe* (Shanghai-October 1951) shows the same boundary as the earlier *Ya-kuang* map and the area west of it as *Hsi-tsang*; while east of it is *Hsi-K'ang*. The gazetteer part refers to a pre-liberation *Hsi-tsang ti-fang cheng-fu* (*Local Govt. of Tibet*).

6) The December 1951 4.2M *Ya-kuang Large map of the Peoples Republic of China* (*Chung-hwa jen-min kung-he kuo ta ti-t'u*) repeats the delineation in its Jan. 1951 map. That is 92° 30' is the boundary. West of it is *Hsi-tsang tzu-chih ch'u* and east of it is *Hsi-K'ang*.

7) The May 1953 edition of this map and (8) the November 1953 edition were brought out by the *Ti-tu ch'u-pan she* (Peking) and show the same boundary; but refer to the western part as *Hsi-tsang* and the eastern part as *Hsi-K'ang*.

9) The 6M January 1955 *Great Fatherland map* (*Wei-ta de dzu-kuo*) issued by the *Hsin-hwa shu-chu* continues this delineation.

10) The 6M *Wall Map of the Peoples Republic of China* brought out by *Ti-t'u ch'u-pan she* in January 1956 introduces a change. The area west of *Giamda* continues to be *Hsi-tsang* but the area east of it is designated the *Ch'ang-tu ti-ch'u* (*Chiamdo territory*).

11) The position is similar in the *Atlas of the provinces of China* (*Chung-kuo fen-sheng ti-t'u*) published by *Ti-t'u chu-pan she*. The gazetteer part of the atlas however treats *Hsi-tsang* as the same as *Hsi-tsang ti-fang*. According to it, these *Hsi-tsang ti-fang* and *Ch'ang-tu ti-ch'u* together com-

prise the *Hsi-tsang ch'u* (Tibet territory), and the May 1951 agreement on liberation of Tibet was between this *Hsi-tsang ti-fang cheng-fu* (Local Govt. of Tibet) and the Govt. of China.

12) The delineation in this atlas is continued in the 4M Wall map of the peoples' Republic of China. (*Chung-hwa jen-min kung-he kuo kwa-t'u*) brought by the same firm in August 1958 and (13) a revised edition of the map in November 1959.

14) The Atlas of the provinces of China (*Chung-kuo jen-sheng ti-t'u*) of March 1960 and the (15) World atlas (*Shih-chieh ti-t'u chi*) of April 1960, brought out by Tit'u ch'u-pan she break altogether new ground. The entire area from Ladakh in the west to the Chin-sha chiang in the east is designated as *Hsi-tsang tzu-chih ch'u*; without indicating any of the internal divisions. (The gazetteer part of this provincial atlas however refers to eight special administrative districts as currently in the process of establishment).

16) The 5M Map of the frontier regions of southwestern China (*Chung-kuo hsi-nan pien-chiang t'u*) handed over by the Chinese delegation to the June 1960 official talks does not give the internal divisions; but shows a *Hsi-tsang tzu Chih Ch'u* and a *Ch'ang-tu-ch'u* (*Chiamdo area*). The boundary between the two is not given and it is not clear whether the latter is a separate entity or part of the former.

17) The 4M Map of the Peoples Republic of China (*Chung-hwa jen-min kung-he kuo ti-t'u*) of March 1966 shows the 1960 administrative re-organisation and also gives the internal boundaries of the *Tzu-chih ch'u*. The Kameng and Subansiri frontier divisions now adjoin *Shan-nan* (i.e. Lhoka), while Siang adjoins *Lin-chih* (i.e. Lintsi) and Lohit adjoins *Chiamdo*. The entire area formerly referred to as Tibet and most of what used to be shown as Hsi-K'ang, is included in the *Hsi-tsang tzu-chih ch'u*.

The cartographic evidence thus has the Local Govt. of Tibet not controlling the *Chiamdo area*; and the boundaries of this Chiamdo area prior to 1960, the same as the notional boundary between the erstwhile Hsi-K'ang province and

Tibet, roughly along 92°30'. While China has taken different stands at various times on the authenticity of 'non-official' Chinese maps, those quoted above carry the legend that the internal boundaries of China are depicted according to the latest information on the subject except in a few cases where there is no reference at all to boundaries.<sup>9</sup> On the other hand, Chinese maps can be misleading and some of the very maps quoted give the administrative divisions of Hsi-tsang as comprising the Ch'en-tsang and Hou-tsang of the Ch'ien-Lung era; divisions which never existed after the 18th century (if they did even then).

Some official Chinese pronouncements<sup>10</sup> are at variance with the Sino-Indian exchanges of 1959 referred to earlier and treat the present *Tibet Autonomous Region* as having comprised, during 1954-59, three separate parts: (i) *Hsi-tsang* administered by the *Local Govt. of Tibet*. (ii) Shigatse administered by the *Panchen Lamas' Council of Khempas* (*Panchen Khempo Lija Committee*) and (iii) *Chiamdo* area administered by the *People's Liberation Committee of Chiamdo*. A statement dated 19 March, 1955 by the Central Govt's representative in Tibet, Chiang Ching-wu speaks of the necessity for uniting the *Local Govt. of Tibet*, *Panchen Khempo Lija Committee* and the *Chiamdo* area and setting up of a *Preparatory Committee* "for the purpose of providing conditions for the future actual establishment of a united Government for the Tibet Autonomous Region". A resolution the same day by the State Council of the National Peoples Congress approved the establishment of this *Preparatory Committee for the formation of the Tibet Autonomous Region*. The *Preparatory Committee* would have representatives of the three administrations referred to earlier and a standing *Permanent Committee* which would direct the work of the *Local Government of Tibet*, the *Shigatse Council of Khempas* and the *Peoples Liberation Committee of Chiamdo*. The *Preparatory Committee* was thus to function as a sort of federal Government of Lhasa, Shigatse and Chiamdo, till such time as the

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9 See T. S. Murti 'Boundaries and Maps'. *Indian Journal of International Law* (July, 1964) Pp. 367-88.

10. Complete texts of the documents quoted are give in Ling nai-min, *Tibetan source-book* (Hongkong 1964) Pp. 105; 141-43; 162; 171; 348-52; 357; 388 and 407.

*Tibet Autonomous Region* was actually established. Simultaneously, work was also started on a revision of the internal administrative boundaries by the setting up of 'special administrative districts' corresponding to the *chwan ch'u* of mainland China designated *ch'i ch'iao* and presumably a transliteration of *Chikyap*, corresponding to *Revenue division* of the Indian administrative structure. According to a statement by Vice Premier Chen-yi on 15 September, 1956, some of these *ch'i ch'iao* had already started working by that year. The functioning of the *Tibet-Autonomous Region*, itself should be regarded as occurring after the abortive Tibet revolt of 1959; when the State Council ordered on 28 March, 1959 the setting up of a Military Control Committee for Tibet. These orders also dissolved the Local Govt. of Tibet, handed over its work to the *Preparatory Committee* and directed the Military Control Committee to set up administrative bodies in areas upto the Chin-sha chiang, at various levels in the *Tibet Autonomous Region*. The authorisation for the formal establishment of the *Tibet-Autonomous Region* was then given by a resolution of the National Peoples Congress on 28 April, 1959 directing the *Preparatory Committee* to carry out the functions of the *Tibet Autonomous Region*. This was apparently followed by the Military Control Committee constituting the *special administrative districts* not already in existence; and by April 1960 all the eight *ch'i ch'iao*<sup>11</sup> were functioning. The *Tibet Autonomous Region* is referred to as having been functioning for some time in the *People's Daily* article of 15 December, 1960 on Tibet. While the post-1960 position is thus fairly clear, none of the official pronouncements give details of what areas were actually controlled by Lhasa, Chiamdo and Shigatse during 1954-59. If the extent of the *Chiamdo area* was the same as the present *Chiamdo Special Administrative District*, the authority of the *Local Government of Tibet* covered all areas contiguous with NEFA. It seems, in any case, safe to conclude that *Hsi-tsang ti-fang* covered at least all land west of 92°30' long, and probably all area upto the Chin-sha

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11. The Shigatse Council of Khempas was dissolved in May, 1961. George Ginsburg and Michael Mathos, *Communist China and Tibet* (The Hague 1964) Pp. 142-43. The authors also quote an April 1960 communique from Lhasa which treats the eight *Ch'i ch'iao* as already set up. *Ibid* p 142.



chiang. That is, the *Tibet region of China* (*Chung-kuo Hsi-tsang ti-fang*) in the 1954 Agreement would not be less than the area shown as Tibet (*Hsi-tsang*) and *Tibet autonomous area* (*Hsi-tsang tzu-chih ch'u*) in Chinese maps during 1951-58. It may well cover what is designated by the latter term, after 1960.

### Historical and de facto Position of the Buddhist Pockets.

Coming next to the historical de facto position in NEFA it is doubtful whether the Chinese have ever taken seriously their ostensible claim for the four northern districts (divisions) of NEFA. The evidence presented in its support, especially for the thousands of square miles of territory inhabited by tribes such as the Bungni and the Tagin, is so limited in scope and there is such a lack of knowledge of the terrain and its demography as to make the claim (but for the fervour with which it is pressed), frivolous. For the very large bulk of the NEFA area claimed by her, China has attempted to prove only that some Indians treated the northern limits of Indian administrative control as along the foot-hills; and that the tribes themselves were on occasions unruly and were the targets of punitive expeditions (some major and some not—but all openly carried out) by the authorities in the Brahmaputra valley. For the bulk of the area, the Chinese did not even try to prove that Tibetan administrative limits had extended south of the Himalayas and included the warrior tribes or that there was any Tibetan administrative (which may here cover military) activity, at all there. Such evidence has been sought to be produced by China only in respect of four pockets of territory; i) The Tawang chu valley, ii) Mechuka valley, iii) the Tsangpo-Siang loop and iv) parts of the Lohit valley, that is, the Walong circle. These were also the four areas into which the Chinese crossed over in strength in 1962. A fifth which can be studied along with the above is the Limeking sub-division. Here, the Chinese did not produce any evidence that Tibetan administrative limits did cover Longju-Taksing or that Tibetan administrative activity had existed there. Longju was, however, the scene of a serious armed clash as early as 1959; while it, as well as Taksing, were major Chinese military targets in 1962.

Apart from the validity of the McMahon line, therefore a study is necessary also of the extent and population of the five areas, their history and the degree of clarity regarding

their traditional boundaries with the trans-Himalayan population. We could regard the territory generally comprising each of these pockets as a self-contained unit and seek to establish its boundary with the adjoining Tibetan territory. That is, in these five stretches where China has shown specific interests, after discussing whether or not Kameng district is Indian territory, one takes it that the Mompa, the Miji and the Bugni are not Tibetans and seeks to check whether their traditional boundary with the Tibetans across the Himalayas was located along the main Himalayan range. As part of such a study, it can be seen whether the McMahon line is along the main Himalayan range or departs from it and whether the traditional tribal boundary tallies with the McMahon Line or not. While studying the position of these Buddhist and Buddhist-influenced pockets, it is the Tibetan administration and organisation of the administrative units covering the areas contiguous to the Himalayas that will be relevant. Properly speaking, we should investigate such units as existed prior to 1959-60 when Chinese cadres took over administrative tasks at all levels including lower ones since the administrative acts which establish the claim of sovereignty of China to the areas are claimed to have been performed primarily through Tibetan agency.

### **Tawang.**

The Mompa area of the Kameng frontier-district covers the entire Tawang sub-division as well as the Dirang and Kalaktang circles of the Sadar sub-division. A separate circle at Rupa, also part of the Sadar sub-division administering the 1,200 strong Thongji (Shardukpan) tribe has since been merged in the Kalaktang circle. The area of Tawang sub-division is taken as 805 sq. miles while the 1961 census gave its population as 14,807. The Dirang and Kalaktang circles together have an estimated area of 2,352 sq. miles and a population of 11,000. The language spoken by the Mompa is influenced by Tibet, though the percentage of Tibetan words markedly comes down as one proceeds from the Himalayas towards the plains. While it may not be possible to say there is more than one Mompa dialect in Western Kameng, significant differences exist between what is spoken by the Northern Mompa of Tawang, the Central Mompa of Dirang and the Southern Mompa of Kalaktang. Unlike Tibetan, the percen-

tage of Assamese words that can be traced in what is spoken in the three areas is roughly the same. Thongji has even less of a Tibetan element than Southern Mompas.

According to local tradition the people now called Mompas are immigrants from the plains. The father of the Mompas race is Rupati, a prince who came with a thousand soldiers and settled down somewhere in the Himalayas. The conversion of the Mompas to Buddhism from the Hindu faith which they presumably adhered to from the time of Rupati, is regarded as having taken place in the 8th century and credited to Padma Sambhava. The first Buddhist monasteries which can still be identified in Tawang are those founded by Karmapa Rangchung Dorjee (1109-1192 AD). The introduction of Gelukpa Buddhism to the Northern Mompas is accepted as the work of Dharma Prasarak Sumati (Lobasang Temple of Tibetan tradition) of Mera village of Bhutan, around the middle of the 17th century.<sup>12</sup> The foundation of the Harsha Sila Vihara at Tawang itself was done by his nephew Bhikku Gyana Sagara (Lama Lodrue Gyatso of Tibetan tradition) in 1680 AD.

The Tibetan territory adjoining the McMahon line in West Kameng is with the villages (west to east) of Lebu (actually four hamlets comprising Lebu Tso-shi), Shou and Lambu-Chuna; all under the Dzongpons of Tsona till 1959-60. Unlike Lambu-Chuna, a certain degree of social and commercial intercourse existed between the Tso-shi and Shou people and the Mompas of Tawang. There is however a distinct difference in the dialects spoken by these Tibetan villagers and those of the adjoining Mompas. Again, the Mompas villages had committed themselves to various types of duties to the Tawang monastery while the Tibetan villages had no connection with that monastery.

The Thongji, unlike the Mompas, regard themselves as immigrants from Tibet tracing their descent to a grandson of the 8th century King, Srongtsan Gonpo.<sup>13</sup> This prince

12. The complete name of the Tawang Monastery is Harsha Sila Kuberaadhipatya Pavitra Srunga vihara, and in Tibetan Ganden Namgye Lhatse Gospa.

13. R.R.P. Sharma, *The Sherdukpens* (Shillong, 1961), Pp 5-8.

iled to the then Kamarupa, married into the local Hindu nobility and was granted the hill areas of Kameng as his fief; which, later evidence indicates, included the Northern Mompā area also. The dialect spoken by the tribes is akin to Southern Mompā but showing some marked differences — a wholesale borrowing of Tibetan honorifics, an almost identical vocabulary with Miji-Hruso in the case of basic words and a larger percentage of Assamese words than even Mompā.

At the risk of over-simplification, one could take the essence of the Chinese claim as the administration of the Mompā having been the responsibility of the Tawang monastery and that monastery being under the control of the Tibetan Government. The Indian view, on the other hand, is that administration of the area had been carried out largely by the Mompā Chiefs and that the Tibetan Government concerned itself with the Tawang monastery only to the extent that its religious work and the allotment of revenues from its estates in trans-Himalayan areas needed attention. The executive authority of the monastery was in any case in the hands of an elected council and not the representatives of the Tibetan Government at Tsona. After Assam became British territory in 1826, the East India Company inherited the right to the area. In 1844, the company signed agreements with the Sat Raja who formed the governing council of the Thongji and with the Tawang monastery which had taken over a part of the administrative work in the Mompā area. By these agreements, the Tawang monastery and the Sat Raja swore to obey all orders received by them from the British authorities<sup>14</sup> The agreement between the East India Company and the Tawang monastery was reiterated in a separate agreement signed in 1853 with its representatives and various Mompā Chiefs. One of the obligations imposed by these agreements was attendance at the annual *Darbar* held by the Dy. Commissioner of Darang district (and subsequently the Political Officer, Balipara, Bomdila). The

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14. Lamb refers to a demarcation of the Indo-Tibetan frontier as about 11 miles north of Udalguri in 1873. *infra* p. 301.

G.N. Rao accepts Lamb's point but views the demarcation as one of inter-district boundaries: *op-cit.* Pp. 68-69. A check with the connected Bhutan records would have shown that actually there was no demarcation at all done at this point.

representatives of the Tawang monastery and the Sat Raja would renew at this *Darbar*, their fidelity to the East India Company Govt. of India. The most important of the official visits to Tawang are those of G. A. Nevill (1914), G. Sheriff (1934) and G. Lightfoot (1938), who held the post of Political Officers (NEFA) successively. During 1944, Tawang figured in the discussions between the Tibetan Kashag and Basil Gould, Political Officer, Sikkim. The introduction of regular Indian administration to the Tawang area took place in 1951, when at a *Darbar* held at Tawang on 2 February, 1951 attended by senior Tibetan official representatives from Tsona, local Mompas chiefs and officers of the Tawang monastery, it was announced by R. Khating that the Government of India had decided to administer the area directly.

The traditional inter-village boundaries between the Tibetan villages of the Tso-shi, Shou and Lambu-Chuna with the Mompas area were clearly known to the people as well as the local administrations on both sides. These inter-village boundaries also correspond to the water-shed and the only difference of opinion was regarding a claim to the pasturage in the northern valley of the Namkha stream by the Tibetans which was the subject matter of correspondence between the Assistant Political Officer, Tawang and the Dzongpon of Tsona during 1953. (Copies of this correspondence were handed over by the Indian side to China in 1960). Finally a civil suit was filed in the court of the Assistant Political Officer by the Tibetans, a verdict being given on 20 October, 1953 in favour of the Mompas.

The delineation of the boundary on the 1":8 miles map which was appended to the Simla Agreement of 25 March 1914 too is held as sufficiently clear by both India and China.<sup>15</sup>

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15. The only opinions to the contrary that I have come across among students of the 1962 happenings are those of Alastair Lamb, John and Dalvi. Regarding Lamb, please see foot-note 16. According to John,

"After the Simla Convention a copy of the map showing the Indo-Tibetan boundary had been handed over to the Chinese Government and another was kept in New Delhi. A copy of this map has been included in an atlas published by the Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India. The scale

of the Map is roughly sixteen inches to a mile and the line representing the Indo-Tibetan boundary is quite thick. The thickness of the line on the map easily covers a width of about a couple of miles on the ground. This drawback in the boundary line on the map provided an excuse to the Chinese to advance their territorial claim to confuse the Indo-Tibetan boundary....."The map which the representatives of Britain, Tibet and China signed was 1" to 80 miles. As such it could not show the details of the Indo-Tibetan border areas accurately." Maj. S. R. Johri, **Chinese Invasion of NEFA** (Lucknow, 1968) p. 43.

Within the limitations of his lack of access to official records and topographical data, Maj. Johri's work is a painstaking, detailed and valuable account of the 1962 fighting. His observations on the 1914 maps are, however, both careless as well as incorrect. First there is no 1":16 miles map which shows the boundary by thick line, or a 1":80 miles map either. Two editions of the **Atlas of the Northern Frontier** have been published by the Ministry of External Affairs in 1960 and 1963. The **Atlas** contains the 27th March, 1914, Simla Agreement map as well as the April-July, 1914 Simla Convention map. (i.e., One copy was initialled by all three delegates on 27th April, 1914 and another by the British and Tibetan delegates only on 3rd July, 1914). The March, 1914 map was on a scale 1":8 miles and reduced to about 1":18 miles in the **Atlas**. The April-July 1914 map was, I think, on a scale of 1":40 miles in the original. It is reduced to about 1":100 miles in the **Atlas**. (The scale data appears blurred in the reproduction). The boundary line in the April-July 1914 map may or may not be thick; but, it is intended only to show along which of the main ranges are Tibet's boundaries. The detailed delineation of the McMahon line is laid down as that given in the 8-mile topographical map and it is doubtful whether any competent cartographer will find it difficult to interpret the alignment in the Tawang sector shown in it. The Chinese certainly do not seem to share Maj. Johri's doubts regarding where the alignment is (even if they are bashful about disclosing it).

Dalvi is dissatisfied both with the maps as well as their use by the Indian Government (though largely reserving his reasons for the feeling). On page 136 of his book, he says that the Thagla ridge had been defined by India unilaterally as the boundary and the Thagla area was not strictly territory that India should have been convinced was hers. On p 137, he finds the whole experience to be an "unplanned and thoughtless drift into a disputed area because of an archaic map." Brig. J. P. Dalvi (Retd.), **Himalayan Blunder** (Bombay, 1969).

It is worth noting that Gen. Kaul does not share Brig. Dalvi's views. Lt.-Gen. B. N. Kaul (Retd.). **The Untold Story** (Allied Publishers, New Delhi, 1987) Pp. 367-68.

The Chinese have however appeared to indicate doubt at two points about the Indian views on the location of this line on the ground-at Kenzernane and Bumla. The details of the Indian version of this boundary were explained by me to the local Chinese commander on 5 August, 1959 after the exchange of fire at Bumla and on 14 August, 1959 immediately after the clashes at Drokung Samba. These views were repeated during the 1960 discussions between Chinese and Indian officials.

From the data available in the voluminous correspondence of 1962-63, the question of the boundary in the vicinity of the Namkha is essentially one of where the trijunction of the NEFA-Bhutan, NEFA-Tibet and Bhutan-Tibet boundaries occurs. In as far as the Bhutan (Tashigong)-Tibet (Tsona) and the Bhutan (Tashigong)-NEFA (Tawang) boundaries are concerned, these are along the water-shed of the Tashyangtse chu (Kulong) and the Nyamjang (Dargong) that is the Mela ridge. The Nyamjang flows from the north to south with a number of tributaries having their origin in the Mela ridge and flowing eastwards into Nyamjang. According to the Simla Agreement map, one of the water-partings separating these various streams is the boundary between Tawang and Tibet. From north to south, the water partings are i) the Seychung ridge which is the water-parting of the Shen chu and the Le chu, ii) the Thagla ridge which separates the Le chu and Namkha (iii) the Hathongla ridge between the Namkha and the Sumba and (iv) the Gorsam ridge between the Sumba and Bludi. The Simla Agreement map is on a scale of 1":8 miles with considerable topographical detail. Competent technical opinion has it that the boundary here, as shown in the Simla Agreement map, can be translated on the ground as only along the Thagla ridge and the trijunction as Teygala, at the meeting point of the Thagla and Mela ridges. The Chinese have not come out with any arguments of a technical nature questioning this view. They assert that the Thagla ridge is not the boundary and the trijunction is not in the vicinity of Teygala but without clarifying why they hold such a view.<sup>16</sup> If the Namkha valley alone is involved in this

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16. The only explanation of this appears briefly on **Reference map 5** included in the **Sino-Indian Boundary Question** (enlarged edition) (Peking 1962). This map gives a part of the Simla Agree-

difference of opinion, the area in question is about three square miles. The position is roughly the same at Bumla where the Chinese seem to hold Bumchungri, approximately 500 sq. yards in area and immediately east of that 15,100 ft. high pass, as in Tibet and not on the boundary.

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ment Map of 24th March, 1914 enlarged to a scale of about 1" : 6 miles and covering West Tawang as well as adjoining areas of Bhutan and Tibet. The map carries the following legend:

"This is an enlargement of that part of the original map of the illegal McMahon line showing the Western end of the line. It can be seen that the western extremity of the Line is at 27° 44.6' N, 91°39.7' E, that the Line runs from here eastward, and that the Kechilang River and the Che Dong area are north of the Line. But the Indian side insists that the western extremity of this Line is at 27°48' N, 91°40' E. In this way the Line is pushed north of the Kechilang River. This is arbitrarily shifting the position of the so-called McMahon Line."

The argument can hardly be taken seriously. Apart from other considerations, an elementary knowledge of map-reading will indicate that to compare data in two different maps, one has to take into account the grids on which they are based. The maps used for delineating the Simla Agreement Line were N.E.F. Sheet I (Provisional issue) (Rough compilation), General Staff of India (February, 1914) and North East Frontier Sheet II (provisional issue) (Rough compilation), General Staff of India (February 1914). These maps were obviously based on surveys which had taken place prior to 1914 (in fact much earlier). Co-ordinates given on the basis of modern surveys, decades later in 1959, can hardly be super-imposed on those maps.

The Chinese observations are quoted with approval by Alastair Lamb who thereupon comments that the Indian stand on this and in selecting the Thagla ridge as nearest to the 1914 co-ordinates is "a trifle absurd." According to Dr. Lamb, anyone of the various water-parting ridges of the streams flowing west-to-east into the Nyamjang can do equally well as the water-parting ridge the McMahon line was intended to be along, so that the question of which ridge should be boundary must be left to a joint-commission. **McMahon Line: a study of the relations between India-China-Tibet 1904-1914** (London, 1966) Vol. II: p. 581.

According to Brig. Dalvi, who was captured when Tawang was over-run by the Chinese and spent sometime in a POW Camp, the Chinese version of the McMahon line runs here along Tsangdur, Hathongla and Drokung Samba. *op. cit.* p. 382.



According to China, one of the points during 1944 Gould talks was the possibility of Tawang's cession to Tibet. The circumstances attending the Gould discussions were that Tibet was under very considerable pressure from China as a result of the Hwang mu-sung and Wu chung-hsin missions. The Dalai Lama himself was a minor and numerous factions were contending for power in Lhasa. The discussions covered various proposals by both sides, the details of which have not yet been disclosed to the public. Neither the data on the Gould offer released now nor the evidence of title to Tawang furnished by the Chinese indicate that the Gould offer was an admission by Great Britain of the superiority of the claim, which China will in due course be making to Tawang, over that enjoyed by Great Britain in 1944. It may indicate even less of a superiority over the title enjoyed by India, when China later made its claim to Tawang on behalf of Tibet in 1959.

According to a distinguished western scholar who has examined the McMahon Line problem on the basis of 'secret' records of the Government of India available in London, a similar offer was made regarding the boundary alignment also. These records showed that Great Britain had considered during 1913-14, three alternative versions (apparently worked out by the Indian General staff) of the strategic boundary that India needed, if Tibet was over-run by China. One of these was much farther to the north of the main Himalayan ranges, a second was along that range while the third ceded Tawang to Tibet and had the boundary along the Sela range. It is difficult to see how the existence of these alternate versions indicates that the McMahon Line may not be the valid boundary between Tibet and India (even ignoring the consideration that the main Himalayan range here is treated as the traditional boundary). If suggesting a line south of Tawang makes the boundary along the main Himalayan range invalid, a proposal for a boundary north of the main Himalayan range will presumably go against the claim China puts out for Tawang. If one extends the principle to the Sino-Tibetan boundary, the Simla negotiations, which dealt with a variety of lines suggested by each of the three parties as a possible final boundary between Tibet and China, were purposeless.

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17. The 1944 exchanges are dealt with in **SIOR** Pp. Cr. 106 and 172 For the Indian side's reply see p 229.

Fortunately, students of the Indo-Tibetan boundary in the eastern sector are nowhere near as exercised about the 1914 General Staff lines or the 1944 Gould discussions regarding Tawang, as they are in the western sector about the 1899 exchanges on the northern boundaries of Kashmir. Title to backward areas, especially along traditional frontiers may be inchoate. In disputes occurring from inchoate title, a decision is possible only on the basis of considering as to whose position is less weak and the less-than-complete establishment of the title to a part of the area by one side is no proof of the opponent's title to that area. A concomitant of negotiations involving inchoate title is often the attempt to compound the dispute. Sovereign states, and the Governments in power at any given time, will (in the very nature of normal international relations) put forth demands and claims or make offers of concessions in return for other benefits. Such claims and concessions can be overt or covert. It may or may not be explicitly stated whether an offer is being made without prejudice to one's own title to the interests which are offered to be surrendered. While ideally all such offers should invariably spell out that they are without prejudice to the claims of the two parties, in diplomatic practice such stipulations are often only implicit.

The necessity or otherwise of making an offer to surrender title is no aid to an accurate evaluation of the strength of the relative claims. While the establishment of one's own title may be incomplete, the title of the opponent may be even more so. Similarly, a claim may be made to a particular area or a type of facility as return for services rendered without serious pretensions that the claim is the concomitant of ownership-title. The necessity to determine the evidentiary value of an item in the overall context and not by itself is an integral part of all law and offers to cede, surrender or vacate a territory should be viewed in the context of the concessions to be made by the opponent in return, immediately or at a future date. (The concessions being demanded as *quid pro quo* from the other side need not necessarily be territorial either). Without going into the complete details of the case, an offer to give up a territory can by itself be only of limited relevance to the strength or weakness of title to the territory

in question.<sup>18</sup>

### - Limeking

The second area in which the Chinese may be regarded as having evinced interest and which also had some contact with Tibet is the Naba (Limeking) sub-division, now a part of the Subansiri frontier-district. The sub-division has an estimated area of 1,376 sq. miles and a population of 6,757 (1965). It is served by administrative centres at Nacho, Limeking, Siyum, Longju (Maja) and Taksing. The population consists entirely of Adi-Tagin, inhabiting settlements located along the banks of the Subansiri river (here known as the Mara) and its tributary the Golen. The Tibetan areas across the international boundary comprise the valley of the Tsari chu (as the Subansiri is known in Tibet) and the main Chayul chu valley; all under the control, till 1959-60, of the Lhoka Chikyap with headquarters at Neptong. The minor administrative centres under the authority of the Chikyap and directly concerned with the border were those of Chayul, Sangacholing, Guru Namgye, Kimdong and Konam.

Tagin tradition has it that till some centuries ago the main Tsari chu valley and the main Chayul chu valley were also under their effective control and used to pay tribute to the tribe. This Tagin interest in the trans-border territories was recognised by local Tibetan authorities till 1959 and the responsibility for the collection and payment of the tribute lay with Yume, Yuto and Migyitun. In addition to this payment, the twelve-year Tsari Ringkor pilgrimage used to be preceded by an agreement, formally concluded on each occasion, between senior representatives of the Tibetan Government and the Na-Mara Tagin Chiefs. By this agreement, the Tagins gave safe passage to the pilgrims in return for a payment in kind amounting to several thousand rupees. The last such agreement and pilgrimage occurred in 1956. The next was due in 1968, but did not take place.

Ethnically, there is nothing in common between the Tagins and the adjoining Tibetans. In religion, the Mara valley is

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18. See T. S. Murty, 'Frontier studies in India' in the *Proceedings of the Fifth Annual Conference of the Institute of Historical Studies* (Patiala, December 1967); and 'India's Himalayan Frontier' *International Studies* (N. Delhi, April, 1969).

entirely animistic. With some minor exceptions, therefore, the cultural boundaries between the Upper Mara Tagins and the Tibetans of the Chayul and Tsari chu valleys may now be regarded as clear-cut. Tibetan and Chinese interest in the area is due entirely to the pilgrimage centres in the border areas, visits to which comprise the Tsari Nyekor (literally the Tsari pilgrimage). The pilgrimage centres are Takpo shar-ri, the Tso Karpo and Tsari Sarpa. Without exception,<sup>19</sup> all students of the boundary in this area have confused the three. Takpo Shar-ri is a peak on the Yume-Pindigo water-parting. Tso Karpo is a lake approximately 30 miles east of it, as the crow flies, on the slopes of the main Himalayan range while Tsari Sarpa is similarly located, but another 40 miles away (on the northern boundary of Mechuka circle). The circumambulation of the Takpo Shar-ri is supposed to confer exceptional merit. This circumambulation and a visit to the Tso Karpo constitute the Tsari Nyingpa (literally-old *Tsari*) pilgrimage. To complete the pilgrimage one has to do a circumambulation of the Tsari Sarpa (literally new *Tsari*) also. The circumambulation of the Takpo Shar-ri pilgrimage can be of two types. The annual short pilgrimage, that is the Tsari Ningkor; or the longer Tsari Ringkor occurring at twelve-year intervals. Neither the annual nor the twelve-yearly circumambulations touch Tso Karpo and Tsari Sarpa. The shorter pilgrimage route passes through un-inhabited areas, though touching Tagin grazing grounds. The longer twelve-year pilgrimage route runs through Tagin territory for roughly half its length and during this part (starting south of Migyitun and ending in the vicinity of Taksing) of the longer pilgrimage, the pilgrims obtain Tagin protection.

The 8-Mile map on which the 25 March 1914 Simla Agreement delineated the Indo-Tibetan boundary shows the boundary as running in an arc till it crosses the Gelen river near Migyitun. Neither China nor India have however spelt out whether this arc in the 1914 map is intended to be later

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19 I would ascribe this to the only two accounts of it being those of F. M. Bailey, *No Passport to Tibet* (London, 1957) and F. Kingdon-Ward, *Assam Adventure* (London, 1914) Both of these were travelogues dealing with the subject incidentally. Attempts to expand them have resulted in various garbled versions. The best study of the area perhaps is that of S.M. Krishnatry (1956) unfortunately not published.

pilgrimage route as entirely in Tibetan territory. In the letters rectified on the basis of ground surveys or indicates the actual location of the boundary.<sup>20</sup> The arc seems to show the shorter forming part of the 25 March 1914 Agreement, it was further specified that if the sacred places of Tso Karpo and Tsari Sarpa fell south of the line delineated (subject to some conditions), the frontier would be rectified to include them in Tibet. The 1960 official report states that Tso Karpo and Tsari Sarpa are in fact already located north of the range regarded by India as comprising the international boundary so that the question of any rectification does not arise.

Except for a trans-border raid by the Tagins into the Tibetan territory in 1906, the Limeking sector used to be regarded as one of the peaceful stretches of the Indo-Tibetan boundary. On 26 August, 1959 however, the Chinese garrison at Mig-yitun attacked the Indian check-post at Longju, over-running it after a short but bitter fight. Subsequently, in the summer of 1962, China protested at an alleged intrusion by an Indian patrol into Tibetan territory in the Chayul chu valley. The same year in October, Naba sub-division was attacked as part of the large scale Chinese offensive in Ladakh and NEFA. The thrust of this attack was concentrated on the Chayul valley where both Asaphila and Taksing were over-run. Shortly afterwards, the areas occupied were vacated by the Chinese forces as part of their unilateral cease-fire arrangement. The extent of Chinese penetration into Limeking and the actual duration of their stay in the sub-division have not been disclosed to the public by either China or India.

The only place where the proper location of the McMahon line on the ground, as understood by India, has been legally questioned by the Chinese (as different from armed inroads) is at Longju. China claims that Longju is north of the McMahon line but has not specified where exactly the line itself is located according to them. It is worth noting that there is a distinct similarity between the Chinese claim that the McMahon line does not run through Kenzeman in the Nyamjang valley and that it does not run north of Longju in the Gelen valley. One can only guess whether the protest

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20. Paragraph 26 of Prime Minister Nehru's letter of 26th September, 1959 deals with this. **White Paper II**, p.44.

regarding Taksing in the summer of 1962 and the large scale attack mounted on Taksing in the autumn of that year pre-  
sage a similar quarrel regarding where the boundary crosses  
the Chayul chu.

### Mechuka

Mechuka sub-division<sup>21</sup> of the Siang frontier-district is another area in which the Chinese seem to be interested. The sub-division has an estimated area of 800 sq. miles with a population of 5,474 (1961). Of these, 1,065 are Kargyupa Buddhists, popularly referred to as Memba. The sub-division is divided into three circles: Mechuka, Manigong and Tato. The Memba population is concentrated entirely in the Mechuka circle and the other two circles are predominantly Bokar, a sub-tribe of the Tagin. Prior to 1959-60, the Tibetan area as a whole, adjoining the Mechuka sub-division formed part of the Kongbo district of Kham province, with its headquarters at Tsela dzong. However, since the villages actually adjoining the main Himalayan range were estates of various Tibetan nobles, the actual administration was carried on from Gaza and Orang.

The original inhabitants of the Mechuka valley, as far as the evidence now available shows, are the Tagin claiming descent from Abotani and the first headquarters of the paramount Tagin chiefs is traditionally held to be Eyo village, from where it shifted later to Hika. Traditional accounts of the presence of the Buddhist population in this admittedly Tagin area are conflicting. There was apparently no single wave of immigration. Instead, individual Tibetan families from various places in Tibet or other parts of the Himalayas were attracted by the availability of arable land in the Mechuka valley and the protection offered by the powerful Tagin chiefs to seek refuge in the area, from time to time. This explains the presence of persons claiming descent from Tibetan families of Kongbo, Tsona, Lhagyari, Takpo and the Yamdrok and even Mompa from West Kameng. The migrations were preceded by a visit during the period of Tsongkapa by missionaries of the Red Sect to the Tagin area and the presen-

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21. I acknowledge with gratitude the help received from Shri U Pulger in examining the case regarding Mechuka, Shri P. Wangchuk for Tuting and Shri LTY Ao for Walong.

tation of gifts to the then paramount Tagin chief, Pangdukiri. The initial efforts of these monks were attempted to be followed by another missionary from Kham who was less successful than his predecessors and was put to death by the Marang Tagin. The first migration of any substantial number of Red Sect families is generally regarded as occurring probably in the 18th century. The Buddhists accepted Tagin overlordship and are said to have even persuaded the Tagin to give them escorts if they had to return to Tibet for trade. There was also the payment of an annual tribute, ended in the case of the cis-Himalayan Buddhists, over a century ago, by mutual consent. According to the Tagin, their protection of Buddhist settlements extended across the Himalayas upto Bala, Langla and Molo and Tagin tribesmen were located at various settlements in the headquarters of the Lilung, to act as resident representatives of the Tagin authorities. The payment of tribute to the Tagin by trans-border villages apparently continued till the Chinese take over of Tibet in 1950 and the posting of the Chinese officials to the areas adjoining Mechuka. The Tagin residents of the Tibetan villages were permitted to stay on even after the Chinese started taking a direct interest in the administration of the area, but were treated as foreigners. At least till 1960, no special restrictions were imposed by the occupying authorities on the trans-border Tagins.

The southern slopes of the Himalayan range are entirely and exclusively utilised for purposes of grazing and hunting by the Memba and the Tagin and as far as the traditional boundary is concerned, there seems to be little doubt that the water-shed was regarded as an important dividing line. Apart from the vassal-protector arrangements which are the relic of the earlier relationship between Tibetans and the Tagins, the limits upto which administrative control was exercised by the Tsela authorities and by the Tagins were well-defined. These limits along the main Himalayan range correspond to the frontier delineated in the Simla Agreement of 1914. The only obscurity that can exist may be about Tsari Sarpa. As stated while discussing the Tsari pilgrimage, the 25 March 1914 agreement provided for this pilgrimage centre being in Tibet. According to the description of the boundary communicated by the Government of India in 1960, the McMahon Line and the traditional Tagin-Tibet boundary

are south of the pilgrimage area. No published material is available on the circumambulation route of this lake and how much of the lake is in Tibetan and Indian territory.

The Mechuka sector of McMahon Line was always regarded as one of the quietest sectors of the Indo-Tibetan border even after the Chinese take over of Tibet. According to published material,<sup>22</sup> the only activity here was in 1958 when an Indian police picket was set up at Tamadem, at the request of the local population. It was withdrawn later when it was found that Tamadem was to the north of the McMahon Line. During the 1962 Sino-Indian clashes, the Chinese crossed over into Mechuka sub-division also, later withdrawing as part of their unilateral ceasefire arrangement. There has been no formal statement either by the Government of India or by the Government of China on the points up to which the Chinese penetrated and the duration of their occupation.

### **Tuting**

The Tuting sub-division in which also the Chinese have evinced interest, has an estimated area of 1,300 sq. miles and is a part of the Siang frontier district. It includes the circles of Tuting, Gelling and Singa (Yangsang). The adjoining Tibetan areas are under the control of the Pemako Dzong which has its headquarters at Tompo. The majority of the population are Adi-Tagin and animists while there is also a Buddhist minority of Memba and another of Khamba. The total population of the sub-division is about 4,000, of whom approximately 1,200 are Buddhists. The Adi are divided into three sub-tribes. The Ashing occupy the area south of Tuting on the right bank of the Siang and now number over a thousand while the Tangam are north of it and numbering less than a thousand. The Shimong do not really belong to the present Tuting sub-division and are now located mostly on the left bank of the valley, in the Yinkiong circle. Two other sub-tribes with whom the Tangam and the Ashing tradition-

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22. Indian note of 26th June, 1959, **White Paper I**, p. 35; and Chinese note of 1st September, 1959, **White Paper II**, p. 4. Also Indian note of 10th September, 1959, **White Paper II**, p. 9.



ally accepted kinship are those of Mishing and the Hayhangko. All the five sub-tribes regard themselves as stemming from common ancestors who migrated to the present location, some centuries ago, from the present Bori areas of Siang.

Prior to the formation of the Kingdom of Pemako, the Tsangpo valley between the great bend of the river upto Khapu and Chindru chu is traditionally held to have been inhabited by the Mishing. From Khapu and Chindru chu to the Tsangpo loop in the vicinity of Kepangla was similarly the habitat of the Hayhangko. The rivalry between the Mishing-Hayhangko and the Tangam-Ashing was so serious that by the middle of the 18th century, the two northern-sub-tribes were almost completely wiped out. There are no Hayhangko left now, while about 400 Mishings in the Tuting sub-division itself are all that remains of the other sub-tribe. This former home of the Mishing and the Hayhangko received its first Buddhist settlers at the beginning of the 18th century, when a group, who later came to style themselves Memba (meaning according to local tradition, *dwellers of low-lands*) headed by a Bhutanese Lama travelling in search of a promised land of happiness called 'Pemako Chung' obtained the permission of the Adi to settle down there. Probably after the disappearance of the two northern sub-tribes, two small groups of Memba also settled down in the Ringong valley and at Korbo.

The Memba<sup>23</sup> settlements north of the Kepangla continued to be regarded as under the protection of the Adi till about the end of the 19th century, when serious fighting broke out between the trans-Himalayan Adi aided by the Memba there and the cis-Himalayan Adi. This led to a major expedition of the Adi across the boundary and the destruction during the fighting, of all Memba villages upto a day's march beyond Kepangla. The Memba who had meanwhile switched over their loyalty to the Kingdom of Po-Kanam, after the collapse of the Mishing and Hayhangko, obtained help from Tibetans

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23. According to G. N. Rao, the cis-Himalayan 'Mombas' were independent and not subject to either the Poba, (i.e., trans-border Tibetans) or the Abors, (i.e., Adi-Tagin); since 'occasional depredations and exactions' cannot constitute evidence of control. He however does not explain what does constitute control of one primitive tribe by another. *op. cit.* p. 79.

and succeeded in pushing all Adi into the area south of Kepangla. Peace between the two contestants was finally restored with the visit of several senior Buddhist monks to areas on both sides of Kepangla. The prominent among the religious dignitaries visiting the Adi areas are said to be Gya Phakpala, Trulku Pema of Chola and Jogchan Lama Dzedo. The peace settlement led to the construction of Buddhist temples at Jido, Korbo and Gelling and also seems to have laid down that the Buddhist population in the Adi area could contribute directly to the maintenance of various trans-border Buddhist shrines. It should be recalled that at this time Po-Kanam was yet to become a part of Tibet proper. The Kingdom continued to manage its own affairs for at least two decades after this settlement. The Chao eh-feng invasion of 1910 barely touched the Pemako area and its incorporation into the normal administrative structure of Tibet may be regarded as occurring only in 1927 after which Pemako itself was handed over to the Sera monastery.

In as far as the Adi are concerned, the traditional inter-tribal boundaries between the Tangam and the Hayhangko are known and correspond to the main Himalayan range. Prior to 1959 there has also been no indication that the Chinese had any doubt as to where this traditional boundary lay or how the McMahon Line should be regarded as located on the ground in this sector. During the 1960 official discussions, however, the Chinese claimed that practically the entire Siang frontier district was Chinese territory. The detailed evidence submitted in support of this contention, comprised accounts ledgers of the trans-border Tibetan authorities showing various amounts as collected from areas south of Kepangla. Apart from this, the Chinese also claimed that the Indian delineation of the traditional frontier and the McMahon line were wrong but did not disclose to which part of the NEFA boundary this objection was and whether the difference of opinion pertained to the Siang district. It is difficult to see how it can.

In October-November 1962, the Chinese attacked the Indian frontier out-post of Gelling, penetrated upto a few miles of the sub-divisional headquarters of Tuting and withdrew shortly thereafter. The details of the Chinese penetra-

tion and its duration have not yet been given out by either the Government of India or China.

### **Walong**

The last of the areas in which China has shown some interest may be regarded as the northeastern part of Hayuliang sub-division in the Lohit frontier-district. Till 1951, the entire circle used to be administered from Walong. In that year, however, it was split into two separate units—the southern part under Walong and the northern part, Kibithoo. The total tribal population of the area is given as 797 (1965). The major part of the population is Mishimi, often referred to as the Miju. There is a substantial minority of Meyor. The Tibetan areas north of the international boundary are popularly referred to as Zayul and the land immediately adjacent to the international boundary comprised the Zayul dzong, with its headquarters at Rima. South of the international boundary, the population is concentrated entirely along the main valley of the Lohit as are the settlements north of the boundary where the Lohit is called the Zayul chu.

The Mishimi inhabiting the Kibithoo (including Walong) area, and the Hawai (Changwainty) circle immediately below it, belong to the Kaman sub-tribe and comprise in all six clans—(i) Tausit (ii) Yuen (iii) Mali (iv) Tulang (v) Dilang and (vi) Tamam. Mishimi tradition, which is also substantiated by the brief references of visitors to the valley since the end of the 19th century, bears out that the first settlers in the Walong area were the Kaman. The original habitat of these Kaman is regarded as the Dibang valley; and the earliest migrations of the Kaman were those of the Tayeng and Pull houses of the Tayeng clan, who had a feud with the Taran (Digaro) Mishimi and sometime around the 15th century over-ran and settled down in the Lohit valley proper, around Hayuliang. This first Tayeng settlement in the Lohit valley is credited to have taken place more than 20 generations ago, at Pangkong, while settlement of the upper Lohit valley is generally regarded as having taken place 15 to 16 generations ago, by the Yuen. The Chief of the first wave of the Yuen to reach the area is popularly regarded as Haremso, who established the earliest Yuen village in the vicinity of Walong, during the 17th century. The Kaman are animists by religion and

till recently were practising shifting cultivation, supplemented by hunting. Economically, they were more advanced than their neighbours, maintaining large herds of cattle.

The Meyor, who traditionally regarded themselves (and this was accepted by the Tibetan trans-border authorities) as under the protection of the Mishimi Chiefs, now number slightly over 200. Early travellers passing along the Lohit valley have regarded them as slaves of the Mishimi, employed mostly in looking after the Mishimi herds. They were also generally taken to be people of Tibetan origin. A careful study of the Meyor, however, suggests that these views may be incorrect. Meyor religion is not Buddhism, but animism. No Buddhist shrine has been built or is in existence in the various Meyor settlements. Apart from this, the language spoken by the Meyor is different from Tibetan including Khampa and the Zayul dialects; though obviously belonging to the Tibeto-Birmanic group. All Meyor are fluent in the Kaman dialect, while few of them can understand Tibetan.

The traditional explanations of Meyor presence in the Lohit valley vary. According to Mishimi folk-lore, the Meyor took refuge in their area to escape from the exactions of Tibetan tax-collectors about 9-10 generations ago. Another account has them as immigrants from the Hkamti-long coming to the Lohit valley via the Kumjang pass, initially settling down at Thongang, from where they gradually moved north, after the area was opened by the Yuen. The latter explanation is likely to be the correct one, since there are no Meyors left north of the international boundary (with the exception of seven families, who had migrated there approximately two generations ago). It also explains the religious and linguistic difference. The trade between the Mishimi and Tibetan areas used to be largely in the hands of the Meyor.

Prior to the introduction of regular administration in the area, the Meyor were often victims of raids by Tibetan bandits, from Zayul, resulting in retaliatory raids (or even raids merely for plunder) by the Mishimi upon Sama and Sangu. Mishimi tradition refers to arrangements by which, from time to time, the raiders were attempted to be bought off by one side or the other on fixed payments, to avoid destruction and

bloodshed. According to both the Mishimi and the Meyor, there is no question as to where exactly the traditional boundary between them and the Tibetans is located. They regard that boundary and the traditional limits of the Tibetan control as ending at Sama and Sangu, and Mishimi attempts at punitive expeditions or raids for plunder always used to have as their targets these two villages. All area south of them belong to the tribes. According to Mishimi-Meyor tradition, this historic boundary at Tatapti was also confirmed by an agreement between the Tibetan local officials and the Mishimi chiefs five generations ago. The Mishimi representatives visited Rima and after various sacrifices swore to respect the boundary; this being followed by the visit of Tibetan representatives to Walong where the Tibetans also made sacrifices and took oath that the Tatapti shall be the limit of jurisdiction for each of them.

There is an important difference between the Chinese claims to Walong and that to Tawang, Limeking, Mechuka or Tuting; in that the control exercised over the area prior to 1950 is claimed to have been directly by China and not Tibet (even though, actually, the trans-border areas were entirely under Tibetan, and not Chinese, administration). The only instance given of such Chinese activity dates back to the Chau eh-feng expedition to Tibet when a Chinese party crossed the international boundary (presumably in 1910) and came up to Walong. An extract from the report submitted by a Tuan peng-jui, the officer in-charge of this work, was made available by the Chinese in 1960. It reads like a reconnaissance report. The *Chronicle of Khemai county* said to contain this report and another *Annals of South West Kham* (1914) by Cheng feng-hsiang also referred to by the Chinese, are not available for detailed study. The next known Chinese activity is a border encroachment in 1957, when two Chinese survey parties entered the Dichu valley through Taluk pass, but left the area before they could be intercepted. Another intrusion occurred on 27/28 September, 1958 and was the subject of an Indian protest. The Lohit valley proper of the Walong circle, was attacked and over-run by the Chinese in October-November 1962 and later vacated under the unilateral cease-fire arrangement proclaimed by China. Details of the points actually reached by the Chinese and the duration of their stay have not been released by China or India. No clear

statement of the Chinese views is available on whether they question the traditional boundary between Tibetans and the Mishimi-Meyor, the way the McMahon Line has been located on the ground by India or where the main Himalayan range should be regarded as crossed here by the Lohit. However, they have claimed that the main Lohit valley up to and including Walong is their territory.

## Conclusion

What has been attempted in these pages is not a filling of all the lacunae in our present understanding of the problem or an assessment of the wrongs of China's claim to NEFA or the validity of India's stand. It is also not an attempt to indicate how the differences between the two countries can be resolved. Instead, it has been sought to isolate a few of the issues involved. First, what is the crux of the stands taken on the Simla Agreement of 1914, by China and India. Then, if China is serious in her claims to only some parts of NEFA, is an assessment of such claims possible? Last dealt with is the traditional boundary of those parts of NEFA in which China has shown particular interest, with the adjoining areas of Tibet. One's hope is that a study of these matters may contribute to a clarification of the complicated problem with which India is faced.

The Sino-Indian problem regarding the Eastern Himalayas is primarily a territorial problem. In as far as the legal status of the McMahon line is concerned, diametrically opposite views are held by India and China on whether Tibet was competent to formalise the boundary in this sector and whether China had acquiesced in that formalisation. It is possible to view the Chinese claim as not to the four northern districts of NEFA but only to the Buddhist/Buddhist-influenced pockets of West Kameng (Tawang), Limeking, Mechuka, Tuting and Walong. The position with regard to these pockets is that West Kameng (including Tawang) is inhabited by the Mompa who follow Tibetan Buddhism but are linguistically and racially different from Tibetans. The traditional boundary between the Mompa and the Tibetans is known and corresponds to the McMahon line. The Chinese have questioned the Indian version of this line at Namkha and at Bumla. While an offer is said to have been made in 1944 to cede

Tawang to Tibet, the details of this offer and the concessions which Tibet was to make in its turn, are not known. The people of Limeking are Tagin and totally different from Tibetans in religion, race and language. The Tsari pilgrimage route passes through Tagin area and Tibet has acknowledged Tagin authority over that area. The traditional boundary between the Tagin and the Tibetan areas is known and does not seem to be in dispute. The Indian view that it corresponds to their version of the McMahon line has been disputed by China, near Longju. Mechuka is Adi territory settled by Tibetan immigrants known now as Memba. Prior to the 1962 fighting, there was no dispute about Adi control over Memba, the location of the traditional boundary between the Memba and the Tibetans or its tallying with the McMahon line. Tuting is also Adi territory. Formerly, Adi control split over the main Himalayan range. For the last 100 years or so, however, the boundary between the Adi and the Tibetans has been at Kepangla where the McMahon line also falls. Walong is Mishimi territory, inhabited by Meyer immigrants from Burma. The traditional boundary between the Tibetans and the Mishimi is at Tatapti where the McMahon line also falls. Unlike the other four pockets, the Chinese claim that they had been administering Walong directly. Prior to 1959, little or no interest was evinced by China in these areas. While all the five pockets have been the targets of Chinese attack during 1962, information on the extent of Chinese penetration and its duration can only be roughly guessed from the unilateral cease-fire maps on small-scale and the published accounts of authors such as Kaul, Dalvi and Johri. The Chinese have said that the Indian version is not the proper alignment on the ground of the McMahon line. Except briefly with regard to Namkha, they have not given out where their version of where the McMahon line falls.

The material presented during the 1960 discussion dealt with the problem of NEFA in general and not with the individual Buddhist/Buddhist influenced pockets; possibly since the aspect was not of primary interest. The two official teams also did not go into the processes leading to the formation of the frontier along the main Himalayan range, the cultural characteristics of the population on the two sides of that range, the historic<sup>n</sup> movements of the border-populations or their acceptance of a particular frontier. No attempt was made to

compare the two sides' views regarding the detailed location on the ground of the Simla Agreement line. In as far as China is concerned, there has been a positive refusal to discuss these matters. Some neutral observers hold that the Chinese reluctance to spell out where their understanding of the McMahon line differs from the Indian view, may only be a disinclination to discuss the Simla Agreement map's delineation of the boundary, even on a hypothetical basis. Prior to 1962, the question of ignorance of topography of the area could also have been one such reason. Still another explanation of the Chinese disinclination to give details of the claim that they are making and the evidence they have to justify the claim in law, is their viewing the problem primarily as a political one. Perhaps the solution to it, according to the Chinese, will and should involve concessions by the two sides. At this stage, it is not known what these concessions will be. Announcing and reiterating or giving details of their claims can cause embarrassment, if at a future date, political considerations make a concession with regard to that particular claim expedient, or data presented by India makes it necessary to re-fashion the claim. Without going into the merit (or lack of it) of the Kutch award, the pressure upon the Government of India to repudiate that award, is an obvious pointer to what can happen where national boundaries are involved and the issues are debated in public before they are settled by adjudication, arbitration or negotiations.